

HWMH/01



# WATER MAIN LIFECYCLE REPLACEMENT, COUNTY HOSPITAL, HEREFORD

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

commissioned by Sodexo

EHE80300

May 2017



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project info

HA JOB NO. HWMH/01  
HAS NO. 1230  
NGR SO 51537 40122  
PARISH Hereford  
LOCAL AUTHORITY Herefordshire  
OASIS REF. headland3-283487

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## PROJECT SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was carried out, in advance of the replacement of a water main at the site of The County Hospital, Hereford. The works were carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) agreed by the archaeological advisor to Herefordshire County Council and entailed the monitoring of the excavation of two slot-trenches through a service road to the south of the Age Care/ Rehabilitation Unit. The site lies within the Hereford Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI) and, in part, within the postulated extent of a burial ground associated with St Guthlac's Priory, which formerly occupied part of the hospital site. Each of the trenches was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.0m below ground level and the natural geology was not reached in either case. The earliest deposit encountered appeared to represent a former horticultural soil horizon, heavily truncated by numerous extant services. Whilst occasional small fragments of probable human bone were identified within this matrix within the southernmost trench, no articulated remains were identified. The small fragments were incorporated into the backfill of the trenches upon completion of the ground investigations. No further archaeological features or deposits were encountered during the course of the watching brief.

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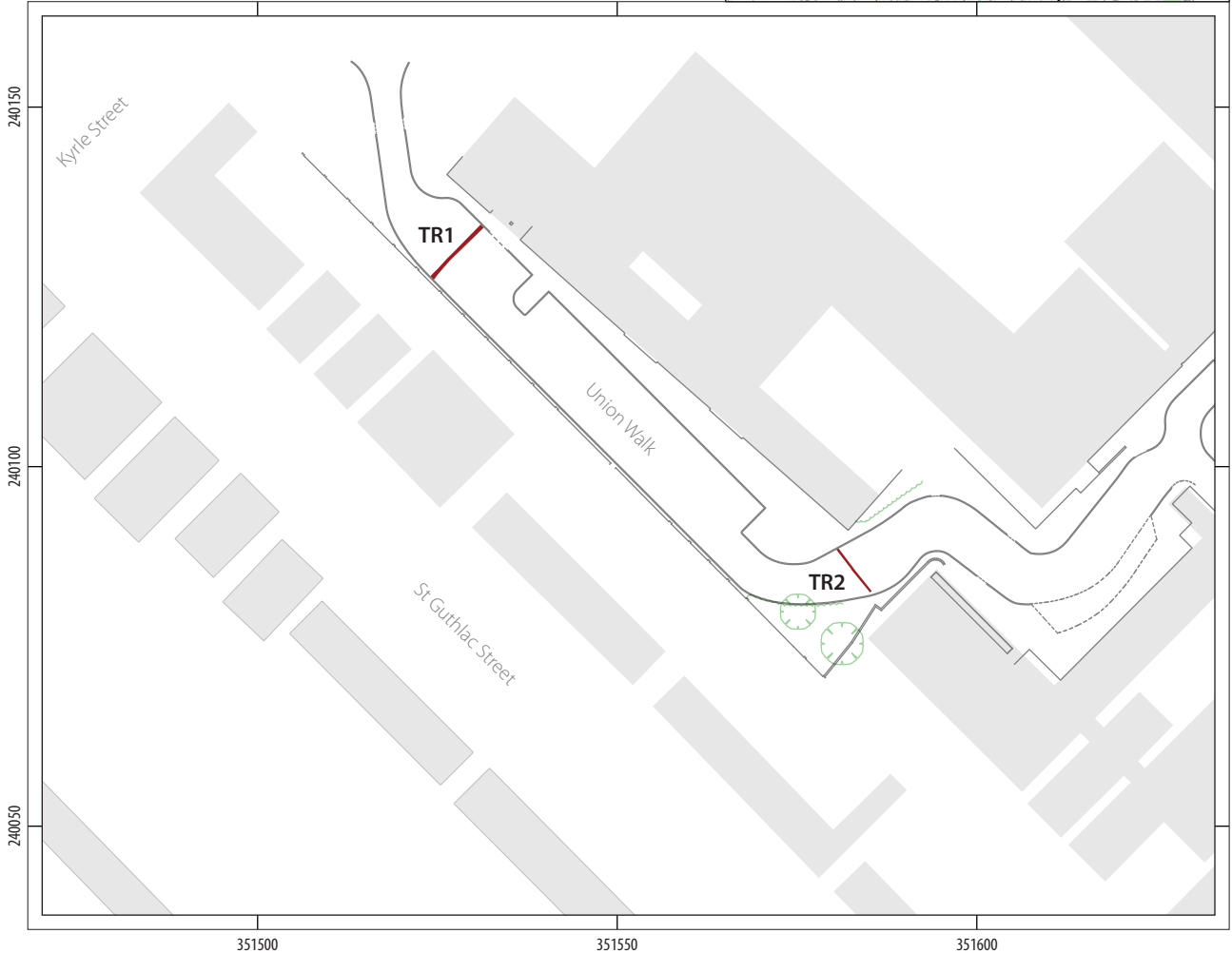
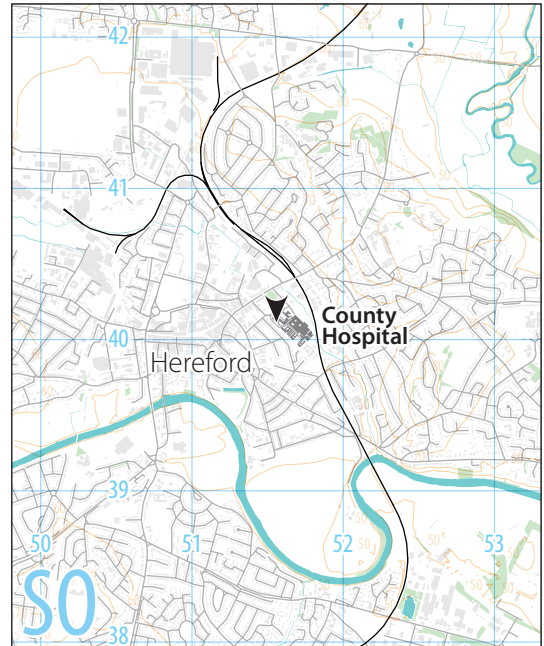
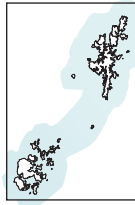
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HWMH/01  
land at Union Walk  
County Hospital  
Hereford  
Herefordshire

0 200km  
1:10,000,000 @ A4

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0 20m  
1:1,000 @ A4

 trench location

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ILLUS 1 Site location



# WATER MAIN LIFECYCLE REPLACEMENT, COUNTY HOSPITAL, HEREFORD

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Two slot trenches were hand excavated within the service road to the immediate south of the Age Care/Rehabilitation Unit, toward the south-western limit of the County Hospital complex (Illus 1). The trenches were designed to identify the route and position of any extant services which were present below the surface of the service road. The watching brief was carried out in order to identify and record any archaeological features or deposits disturbed by the excavation and, in particular, to potentially assist in identification of the eastern limit of the former burial ground of St Guthlac's Priory.

#### 1.1 SITE DESCRIPTION

The trenches were located within the confines of the live service road, to the north-east of St Guthlac Street and the south-east of the Age Care/Rehabilitation Unit, the structure of which formed part of the former Hereford Union Workhouse (NGR SO 51537 40122). The roadway was surfaced with stone setts and edged with concrete kerbing.

The geology of the site consists of siltstones and mudstone of the Raglan Mudstone Formation, overlain by sands and gravels of Devensian date (BGS 2017).

#### 1.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Previous excavations in the vicinity of the site have located the burial ground of St Guthlac's Priory which was founded on the site in 1143<sup>AD</sup> and prospered until dissolution in 1539<sup>AD</sup>. Previous archaeological work within the hospital complex suggested that the burial ground for the priory extended to the south of the area in which Trench 1 was located, with its easterly limit to the west of the location of Trench 2.

The Hereford Union Workhouse was constructed in 1837, eventually becoming the County Hospital. New hospital buildings were constructed in the late 1930s and early 1940s (Crooks 2005) with considerable alterations having since been made. The presence of numerous burials, some in stone cists, was noted and recorded during the 1930s building works and later in the 1970s and 1980s.

The trenching was situated to the south of buildings associated with the former Hereford Union Workhouse.

### 2 METHOD

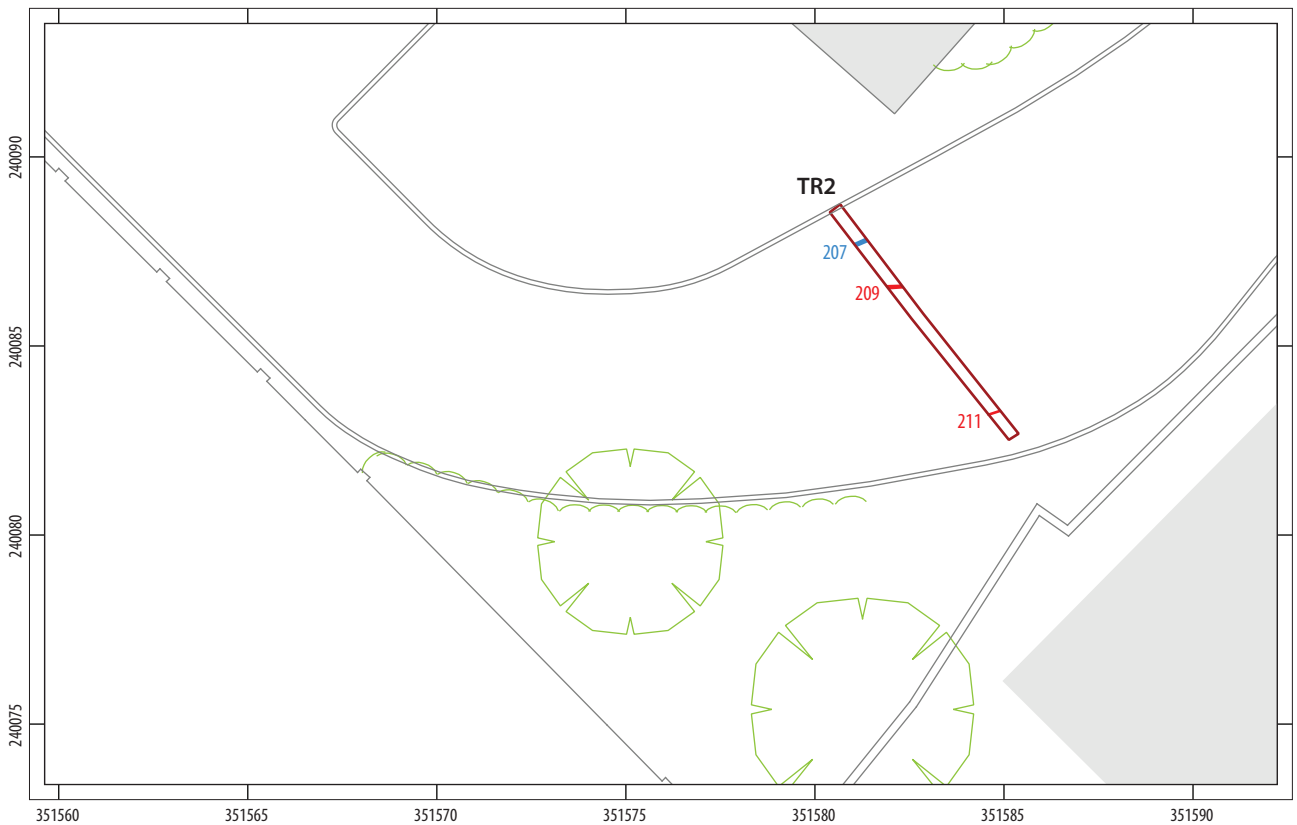
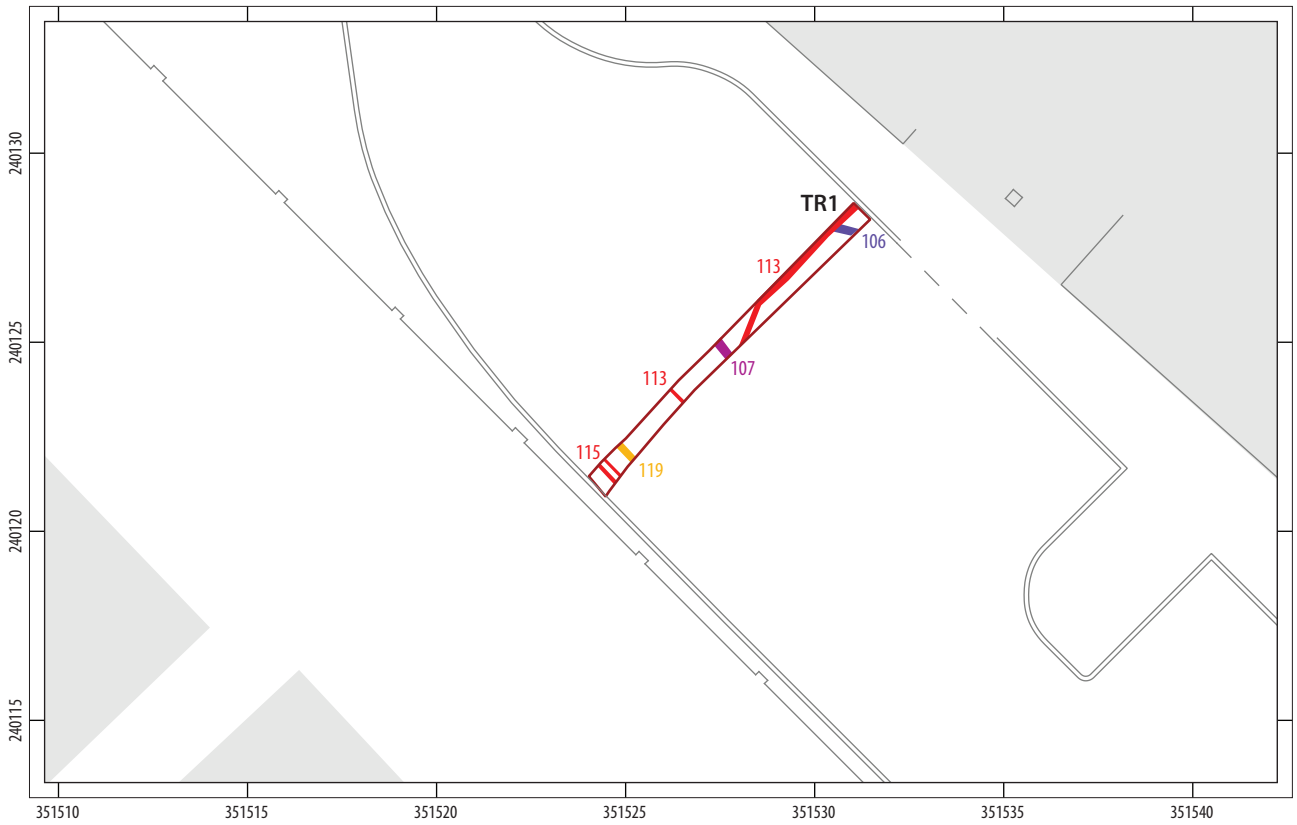
The trenches were excavated by hand, each in two separate episodes, one half of each being backfilled prior to opening the second half, in order to maintain access along the service road.

All excavations were monitored by an appropriately qualified archaeologist.

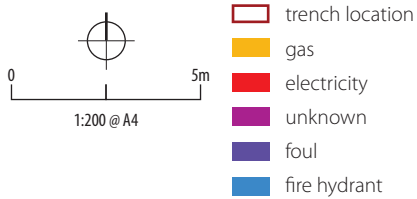
On completion of the excavation, the stratigraphic sequence was recorded in full in each of the trenches, even where no archaeological deposits were identified.

All recording followed ClfA and County Standards and Guidance, using pro forma record cards. The photographic record comprised 35mm monochrome negatives, supplemented by a full digital photographic record of the work using a minimum 7.2mp camera.

Plans of all the trenches excavated during the evaluation were drawn on pro forma trench record sheets at an appropriate scale, and surveyed using a Trimble dGPS. All plans and drawings were related to the National Grid and Ordnance Datum.



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ILLUS 2 Detail plans of Trenches 1 and 2

### 3 RESULTS

Full trench and context descriptions are presented in Appendix 1.

**Trench 1** (Illus 2, 3, 4) was located toward the north-western end of the service road and measured 10m long and 0.50m wide, on an approximate northeast-southwest orientation. The earliest deposit that was encountered within the trench was a dark reddish brown silty-clay (105/114), encountered at a depth of 0.60m (BGL) and continued beyond the lower limit of excavation. This horizon was truncated by numerous modern services on both northwest-southeast and northeast-southwest alignments at various depths throughout the trench. The uppermost stratigraphic units were made up of several layers of levelling and bedding to support the modern road surface.

**Trench 2** (Illus 2, 5, 6) was also situated within the road corridor and was located approximately 70m to the south-east of Trench 1. The earliest deposit encountered in the trench comprised reddish brown silty clay (206), consistent with the lower stratum within Trench 1 (105/114). The deposit was encountered at a depth of approximately 0.70m (BGL) and, again was truncated repeatedly by modern services. Within its matrix a small number of human bone fragments were identified, these were noted as part of the record, but as they represented disarticulated material, they were not recovered. The bone fragments were incorporated into the backfill of the trench. The deposit was sealed by up to five further layers, the lowest of which (204 and 205) were represented by silty clays containing fragments of modern building materials and other detritus, whilst the uppermost (201–203) formed the makeup of the roadway.

### 4 CONCLUSIONS

No archaeological features were identified during the watching brief. It seems plausible, however, that the lowest stratigraphic unit encountered (105/114/206), represented the upper limit of an archaeological horizon, whether as former horticultural soil or as a deposit related to the burial ground itself. The presence of probable human bone in Trench 2 does not necessarily imply that the burial ground extended to this location, indeed, it seems more likely that the fragments were deposited as a result of the disturbance and movement of soils from the wider site.

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ILLUS 3 Trench 1 NE end, looking SW    ILLUS 4 Trench 1 SW end, looking NE    ILLUS 5 Trench 2 NW end looking SE    ILLUS 6 Trench 2 SE end looking NW

## 6 APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1 TRENCH AND CONTEXT REGISTER

DBGL = Depth below ground level

TR1	ORIENTATION	L (M)	W (M)	AV. D (M)
NE END	NE-SW	10	0.60	0.90

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	DBGL (M)
101	Block sets of road surface	0.00 – 0.09
102	Foundation deposit for (101); coarse sand	0.09 – 0.18
103	Stone/brick levelling	0.18 – 0.40
104	Black, cinder levelling	0.40 – 0.60
105	Brown silty clay	0.60 – 0.90
106	Concrete services block (white)	0.20 – 0.45
107	Cut of large services trench	0.18 – 0.80
108	Fill of [107]	0.18 – 0.80

Summary: Access road into hospital. Services found in trench, Post med deposit lower down?

TR1	ORIENTATION	L (M)	W (M)	AV. D (M)
SW END	NE-SW	-	0.50	0.90

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	DBGL (M)
109	Same as (101) – Cobble/brick sett road surface	0.00 – 0.08
110	Same as (102) – Sand below brick setts/cobbles	0.08 – 0.16
111	Dark grey compact sand + stone levelling deposit below (110)	0.16 – 0.30
112	Mixed reddish brown compact silt clay with rubble fragments below (111). Cut by 2 NW-SE services at SW end. Appears to be infill of NE-SW aligned electric line with tile caps (113)	0.30 – 0.60
113	NE-SW aligned electric line with brick/tile caps (unclear)	0.60 – 0.70?
114	Same as (105) Mid brown silty clay – quite clean, occasional pebbles. Appears to be truncated by gas pipe + low level duct (NW-SE) but cuts not clearly visible due to truncation by upper services	0.70 – 1.00
115	Cut of NW-SE service pipe (duct) 0.42 wide x 0.36 deep	0.26 – 0.60

116	Fill of [115] – tarmac/planings	0.26 – 0.60
117	NW-SE service pipe/duct cut – 0.52+ wide x 0.28 deep	0.30 – 0.64
118	Fill of NW-SE service [117]	0.30 – 0.64
119	Gas pipe – No cut visible (NW-SE)	0.74 – 1.00+
120	NW-SE service duct – no cut visible due to services above	0.66 – 0.78
121	N-S service duct crossing S corner, No cut visible	0.66 – 0.86

Summary: At W. end of approach road to NR immediate SW of chapel, in road NE of boundary wall. Continuation of previously recorded segment of Tr1 (NE) – Contexts do not appear to match but this is almost certainly due to truncation and variation in backfills of numerous services that cross the trench in both NW-SE and NE-SW alignment. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered. (114) is probably equivalent to (105).

TR2	ORIENTATION	L (M)	W (M)	AV. D (M)
	NE-SW	6.70	0.50	0.90

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	DBGL (M)
201	Surface cobbles; single course; 0.10m x 0.20m x 0.25m	0.00 – 0.10
202	Hardcore foundation; coarse sand; 0.10m thick	0.10 – 0.20
203	Course gravel levelling deposit	0.20 – 0.25
204	Pebbles sand levelling deposit	0.25 – 0.40
205	Dark brown, cindery, gravel (make-up)	0.40 – 0.70
206	Silty clay deposit (containing frags of human bone)	0.70 – 0.90+
207	Cut of water services trench	0.20 – 0.70
208	Fill of water services trench [207]	0.20 – 0.75
209	Cut of modern services (electric)	0.20 – 0.75
210	Modern service trench fill [209]	0.20 – 0.75
211	Cut of service trench (electric)	0.30 – 0.80
212	Fill of service trench	0.30 – 0.80

Summary: SE end of trench contains 1x electric cable duct and was 4.05m long – NW end recorded on GPS







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