

BBHH/01



PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF NEW UNITS TO REAR OF 16–18 HIGH TOWN, HEREFORD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION
PLANNING REF. P172824/L

commissioned by Elevate Property Group

August 2017

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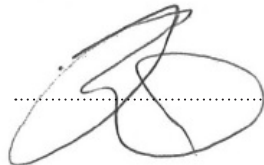
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PROJECT INFO:

HA Job No. **BBHH/01** / HAS No. **HAS-1244** / NGR **SO 51058 39993** / Parish **Hereford** / Local Authority **Herefordshire** / OASIS Ref. **headland3-291103** / Archive Repository **Herefordshire Museums Service**

PROJECT TEAM:

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Approved by **Kate Bain**



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Iain Bennett', is positioned above a horizontal dotted line.

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PROJECT SUMMARY

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd carried out an archaeological field evaluation, through the excavation of a single trial trench to the rear of 16–18 High Town, Hereford. The trench was excavated in advance of the construction of new residential units, located toward the eastern limit of the site. The work was designed to inform foundation design, with regard to a probable interface with the buried remains of the rampart and ditch relating to the defences of Saxon Hereford. The trench revealed what appeared to be the line of the rampart with a possible stone revetment, and the remains of associated ditch deposits, sealed by 1.80m of modern deposits and made ground.

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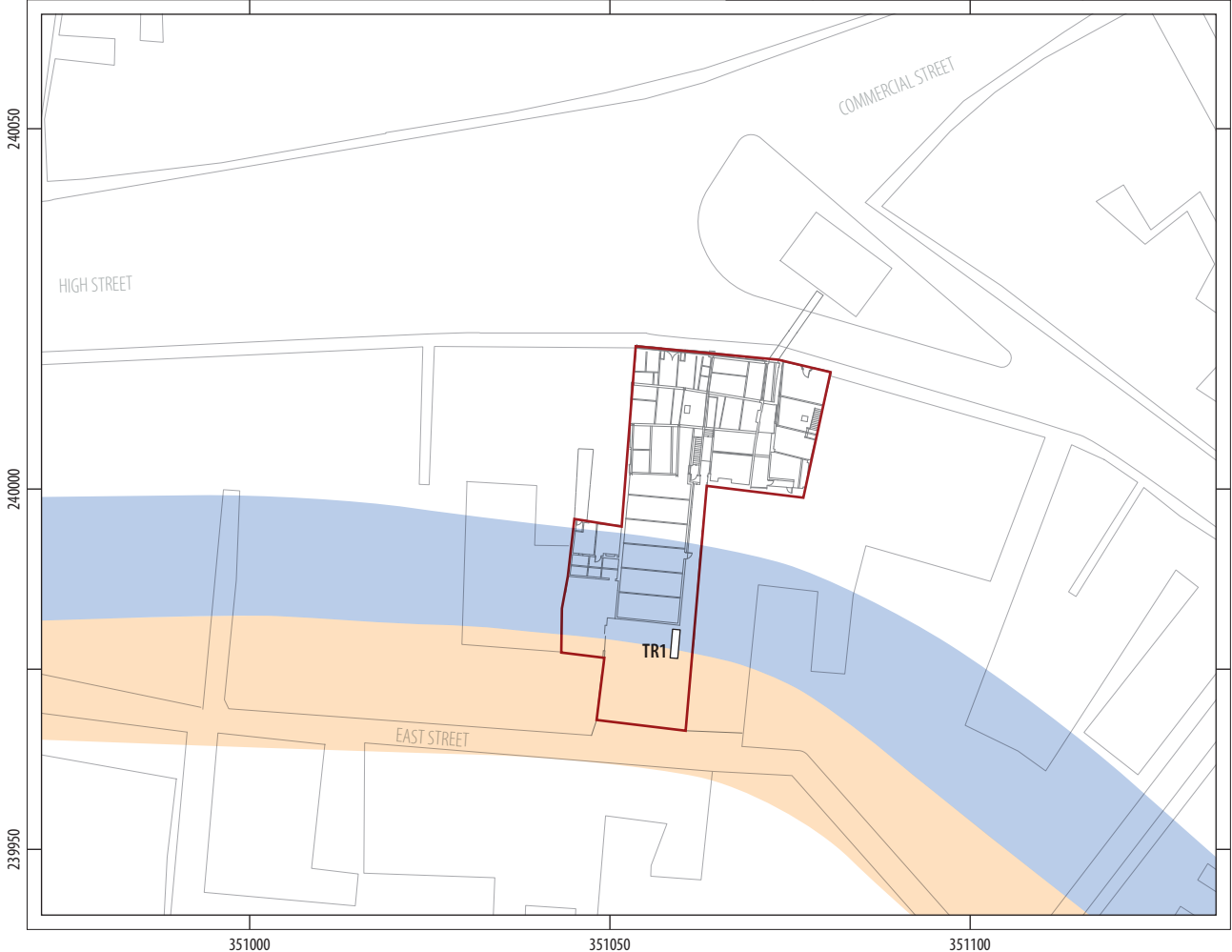
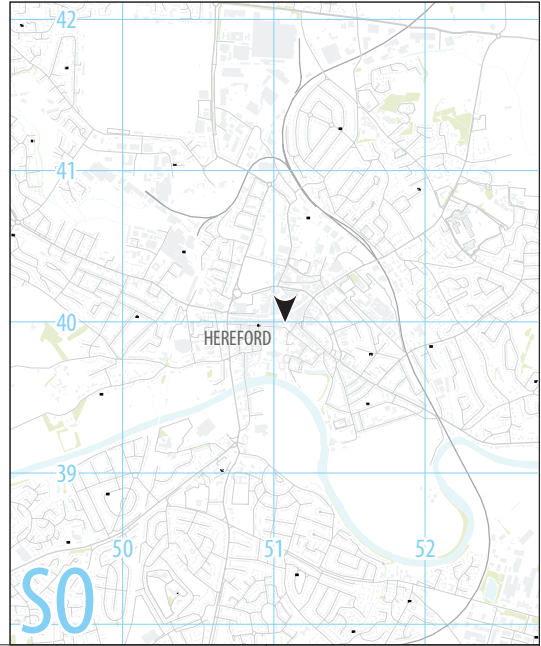
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BBHH/01
 East Street
 Hereford
 Herefordshire

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

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0 20m
 1:1,000 @ A4

- development boundary
- trench location
- estimated position of rampart
- estimated position of ditch



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ILLUS 1 Site location

PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF NEW UNITS TO REAR OF 16–18 HIGH TOWN, HEREFORD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION

1 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of an archaeological site investigation on land to the rear of 16–18 High Town, Hereford. The site is proposed for commercial and residential development.

1.1 PLANNING BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

The site represents part of a plot of land in central Hereford, the buildings on which were badly damaged as the result of an extensive fire. Planning permission to rebuild and redevelop the site was granted by Herefordshire Council on 17th October 2011.

A revised planning permission is being sought for an alteration to the consented development, resulting in the construction of new units on the southern side of the site. Given the nature of the proposals and the archaeological sensitivity of the site, a requirement was put in place for a programme of archaeological investigation in order to inform the foundation design of the new units.

Discussions with Julian Cotton of Herefordshire Archaeology, undertaken on 22nd June 2017, agreed on a suitable approach; the excavation of a single trench adjacent to the proposed footings at the locus at which the foundations were most likely to coincide with the rampart associated with the Saxon defensive ditch.

1.2 SITE LOCATION, DESCRIPTION AND SETTING (ILLUS 1)

The site is located in the core of central Hereford, centred at NGR SO 51058 39993 and is within the Hereford Area of Archaeological Importance.

The ground is currently covered by a tarmac surface on relatively level land and is flanked by buildings to the east and west.

The underlying solid geology within the site comprises Triassic Mercia Mudstone overlain by glacial sands and gravels (NERC 2017).

1.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The new buildings proposed under the development straddle the buried former line of the Saxon ditch which formed part of the city defences.

An archaeological bore-hole survey carried out at 31 Eign Gate (Daffern 2011) revealed that the top of the ditch was present at approximately 2m below the existing ground surface. The ditch itself was approximately 1.5m deep. This observation was made approximately 280m to the west of the currently proposed development.

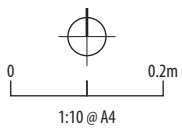
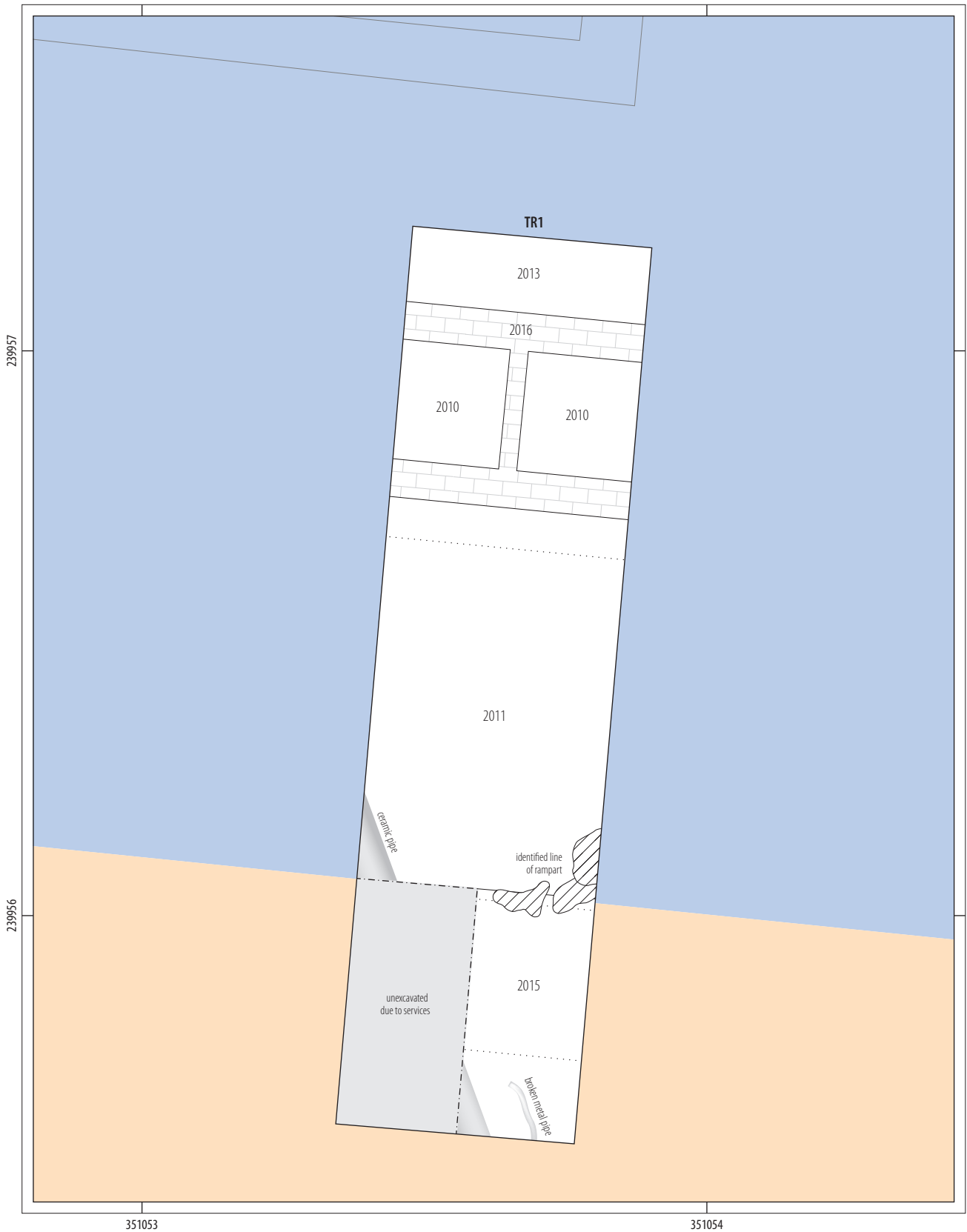
During the refurbishment of 16–18 High Town in 1992 a salvage excavation was mounted to record the stratified levels going back to the Saxon defences, preserved beneath two bays of a 15th century building. Stratified archaeological deposits over 2m thick were identified. These deposits were identified to the north of the currently proposed excavation area.

Evaluation trenches excavated in 2016 (Thomson 2016), just to the north-east of the new footprint proposal, revealed evidence of possible late Medieval ground surfaces and other post-medieval activity extending to depths of at least 1.5m below current ground level.

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the investigation were set out in the WSI.

The primary objectives were identified as follows:



- development boundary
- trench location
- estimated position of rampart
- estimated position of ditch
- stone

ILLUS 2 Trench plan

- › to enable the development by mitigating the impact of the foundation design of new units to the satisfaction of the planning authority;
- › to excavate a trench measuring 6m by 1.6m, located in a suitable position to explore the potential interface with the historic ditch and rampart;
- › to enhance understanding of the archaeological interest and significance of the site; and
- › to produce and deposit a satisfactory archive and disseminate the results of the work via grey-literature reporting and publication as appropriate.

3 METHOD

The fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the WSI and Method Statement and with the following documents:

- › Code of Conduct (CIfA 2014a)
- › Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations (CIfA 2014b)

A single trench measuring approximately 6m by 1.6m was excavated in the south of the development site in the position indicated on the first illustration.

Trenches were excavated using a 360° 1.5 tonne mini-digger using a toothed bucket to remove demolition debris and, where possible, a toothless bucket to reveal deposits below this. Where there were services present a narrow toothed bucket was used to enable the continued excavation in the restricted space, as agreed by the archaeological advisor.

All recording followed standard archaeological guidelines as set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). The recorded contexts were assigned unique numbers and recording was undertaken on Headland Archaeology pro forma trench and context record sheets.

Digital and black and white photographs were taken of trenches and identified features, with a graduated metric scale clearly visible. An overall site plan of the trenches and recorded features was produced.

4 RESULTS

4.1 TRENCH 1 (ILLUS 2)

The trench was excavated to a depth of approximately 2m deep revealing a sequence of stratified modern made ground deposits with evidence for the Saxon rampart and ditch at the base of the trench (Illus 3 and 4).

The earliest deposit encountered almost certainly represents the

Saxon rampart (2015) at a depth of 1.80m below ground level (BGL). It was composed of a firm mid-grey brown gravelly clay with occasional small to medium sub-rounded stones throughout. At the northern extent of the rampart 3 large sub-rounded stones were visible angled down and partially covered by (2011), the material infilling the associated defensive ditch. This deposit was composed of a soft mid-orange grey sandy clay with frequent gravel and occasional charcoal throughout, the deposit was also encountered at 1.80m BGL.

The infilled ditch was sealed by deposit (2009), a mid-reddish grey silty clay between 0.95–1.80m BGL which in turn was sealed by two separate demolition deposits (2012) and (2014). These two separate deposits had a disused modern metal water pipe, running approximately north-south, between them through the centre of the trench and a ceramic service pipe running approximately northwest-southeast through the southern third of the trench.

A further layer of made ground, comprising demolition debris and gravels (2006), was sealed by a brick surface (2003) and make up layers (2005), (2004). The final deposits were represented by the present tarmac and make up layer (2001) and (2002) respectively.

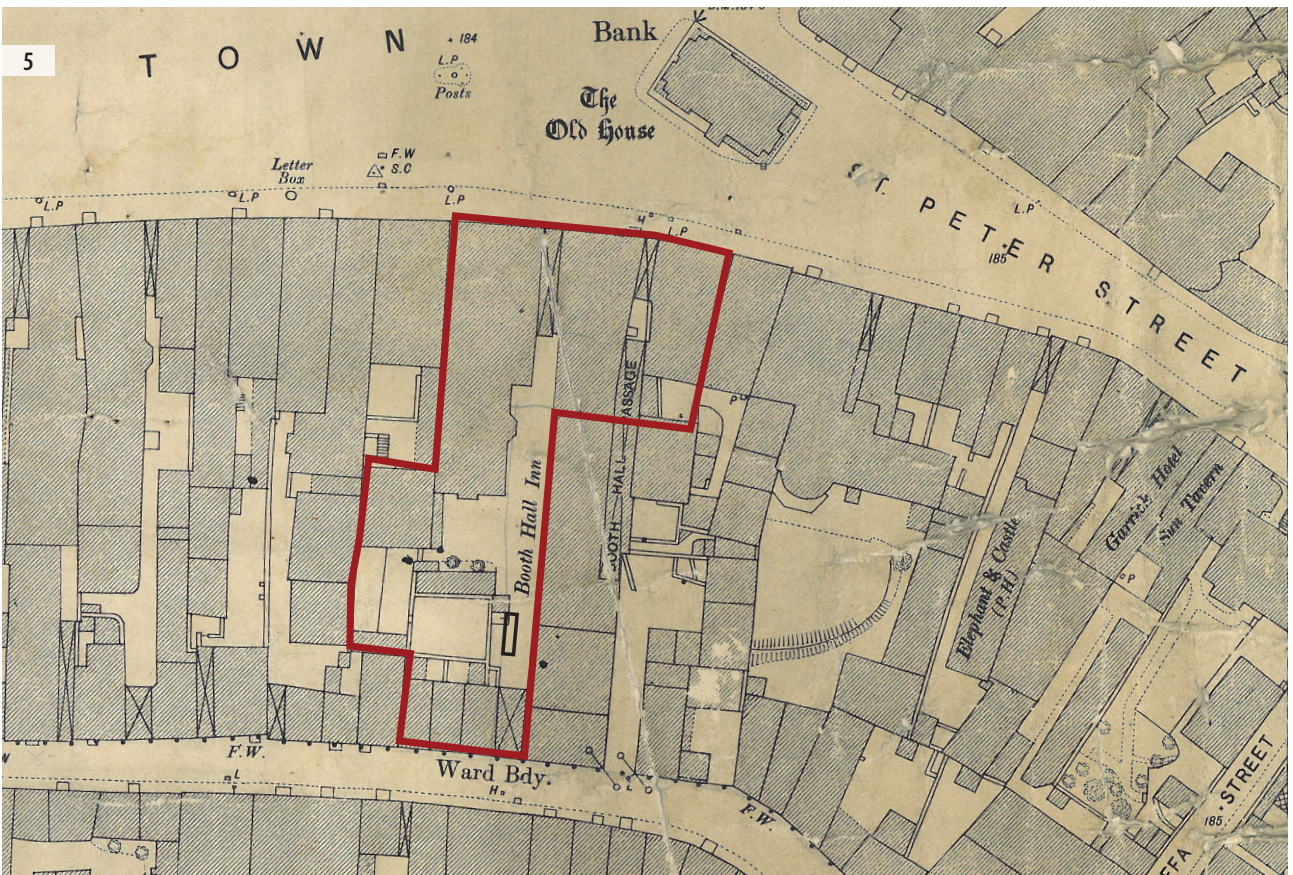
At the very north of the trench were the remains of the foundations for a brick structure (2016) and associated rubble infills (2010) and (2013) that likely relate to buildings defined on the 1886 Ordnance Survey map (see Illus 5).

5 DISCUSSION

The excavations undertaken were targeted on the presumed line of Hereford's Saxon defences and revealed the potential remains of the Saxon ditch and rampart. Due to the presence of services it was only possible to excavate a 0.84m wide slot to a level that revealed the upper part of the remains of the probable rampart. The remains identified appeared to indicate that the rampart itself may have had a stone revetment, evidenced for by the presence of large, sub-rounded stones at its interface with the deposit infilling the ditch to its northern side. The deposits were encountered at a depth of 1.80m, from the modern ground surface, which meant that no hand excavation or cleaning was possible due to health and safety concerns.

6 REFERENCES

- Bain K 2017 *Proposed construction of new units to rear of 16–18 High Town, Hereford; Written Scheme of Investigation for Trenching to Inform Foundation Design* [unpublished client document] Headland Archaeology, Ref. BBHH17/01
- Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) 2014a *Code of Conduct* [online document] available from www.archaeologist.net/site/default/files/CodesofConduct.pdf
- Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) 2014b *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* [online document] available from www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/CIfAS&GFieldevaluation_1.pdf



ILLUS 3 West facing section of trench showing site stratigraphy ILLUS 4 South-east facing shot showing remains of probable Saxon ditch (2011) and rampart (2015)
 ILLUS 5 Trench location on 1886 OS mapping showing location of structure (2016)

Daffern N 2011 *Assessment of Environmental remains from a bore-hole survey at 31 Eign Gate, Hereford, Herefordshire* [unpublished client document] WHEAS

Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) 2017 *British Geological Survey* [online] accessed 20 July 2017 from www.bgs.ac.uk/

Thomson S 2016 *Land 16-18 High Town Hereford; Archaeological Evaluation* [unpublished client document] Headland Archaeology, Ref. BBHH11/02

7 APPENDICES

Appendix 1.1 Trench and context register

TR01

L (M)	W (M)	MIN. D (M)	MAX. D (M)
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6.36	1.70	0.53	2.00
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CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	DBGL (M)
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2001	Tarmac	0–0.03
2002	Mid brown–yellow sand and gravel make up layer	0.03–0.06
2003	Red Brick yard surface	0.06–0.17
2004	Reddish grey brown setting deposit for (2003)	0.17–0.34
2005	Grey white concrete	0.34–0.53
2006	Mid grey–brown sandy clay demolition debris	0.53–0.96
2007	Mid grey–brown silty clay demolition debris	0.64–0.95
2008	Infill for modern pipe	0.62–0.95
2009	Mid reddish grey levelling deposit	0.95–1.80
2010	Demolition debris associated with (2016)	0.53+
2011	Mid orange–grey sandy clay – Saxon ditch fill	1.80+
2012	Mid grey brown silty clay levelling deposit	0.96–1.55
2013	Demolition debris associated with (2016)	0.53+
2014	Dark grey black silty clay deposit	0.95–1.63
2015	Saxon Rampart – Mid grey–brown gravelly clay	1.80+
2016	Brick wall	0.53–1.63

SUMMARY

A series of made ground deposits sat above a ditch and rampart.



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