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# Bath Road, Worcester, Worcestershire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Planning Reference: P15L0290

Ref: 111480.03

April 2016



**Bath Road, Worcester,  
Worcestershire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

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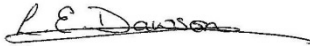
**April 2016**

**111480.03**



## Quality Assurance

<b>Project Code</b>	111480	<b>Accession Code</b>	TBC	<b>Client Ref.</b>	
<b>Planning Application Ref.</b>	P15L0290	<b>Ordnance Survey (OS) national grid reference (NGR)</b>	385228, 251972		

Version	Status*	Prepared by	Checked and Approved By	Approver's Signature	Date
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\* I = Internal Draft; E = External Draft; F = Final

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# Bath Road, Worcester, Worcestershire

## Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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## **Bath Road, Worcester, Worcestershire**

### **Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

#### **Summary**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by DBK Ltd. to conduct an archaeological watching brief, monitoring groundworks associated with construction, on the site of the former Homebase store at Bath Road, Worcester, Worcestershire. The development is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 385228, 251972. Fieldwork was conducted between 31st of March and 1st April 2016.

Areas impacted by the construction of a new loading bay in the north-west part of the site were stripped under archaeological supervision to the level of natural geology, with no archaeological remains encountered. The site appears to have been significantly truncated by previous development, with the surrounding plots of land built up to a significant height in comparison. The identified truncation is likely to have affected the survival of any archaeological remains.

A further small trial hole was excavated in the north-east part of the site, which encountered natural geology at 0.3 m depth.

It has been agreed with James Dinn, Archaeological Officer for Worcester City Council, that no further monitoring works are necessary.

The archive is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Sheffield, under Wessex Archaeology project code 111480. The archive will be deposited with Worcester City Art Gallery and Museum under an accession number to be determined. An OASIS form will be submitted at the time of deposition.



# **Bath Road, Worcester, Worcestershire**

## **Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

### **Acknowledgements**

The archaeological watching brief was commissioned by DBK Ltd. and thanks are extended to Simon Hargreaves in this regard. Thanks are also extended to Peter Allen of Islwyn Pugh Construction. The archaeological works were approved by James Dinn, Archaeological Officer for Worcester City Council. Fieldwork was conducted between 31st of March and 1st April by Philip Wright. Illustrations were created by Alex Sperr. The project was managed by Chris Swales for Wessex Archaeology.



# Bath Road, Worcester, Worcestershire

## Archaeological Watching Brief Report

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by DBK Ltd. (hereafter the 'Client') to conduct an archaeological watching brief to monitor groundworks associated with construction on the site of the former Homebase store at Bath Road, Worcester, Worcestershire. The development is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 385228, 251972 and is hereafter referred to as 'the Site' (**Figure 1**).
- 1.1.2 The archaeological watching brief and this report are intended to fulfil the archaeological conditions attached to the consent for planning (planning Ref 15L0290). A desk-based assessment has previously been compiled by Applied Geology (Applied Geology 2014).
- 1.1.1 The programme of archaeological works comprised a watching brief on the excavation of three trenches (Trenches 1 -3). A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced by Wessex Archaeology outlining the strategy and methodology for the work (Wessex Archaeology 2015). The WSI was approved by James Dinn of Worcester City Council (WCC) who also monitored the fieldwork. All work was undertaken in line with industry best practice (ClfA 2014a-d).
- 1.1.2 In format and content this document conforms with current best practice and to the guidance outlined by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists and Historic England (ClfA 2014a; 2014b, Historic England 2015).

#### 1.2 The Site

- 1.2.1 The Site is currently in use as a retail outlet. It is bounded to the west by a steep slope leading down to a caravan park on the bank of the River Severn. To the south is an access road leading to the caravan park, and to the east is the A38 Bath Road. North of the Site is a residential development accessed from Barbel Crescent.
- 1.2.2 The Site is broadly level at around 20 m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The underlying geology of the Site comprises mudstone of the Sidmouth Mudstone Formation with recorded superficial deposits of sand and gravel (British Geological Survey 2015).
- 1.2.3 The Site appears to have been significantly levelled during the construction of the existing buildings and the level of back gardens of houses to the north of the site was observed to be significantly higher than the current level of the Site. This may have affected the survival of archaeological remains within the Site.





## 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The following section is reproduced from the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2015) and has been comprised from information available online at Heritage Gateway and from information provided by the Client.

### 2.2 Prehistoric and Roman

2.2.1 There is little recorded activity within the Site and its immediate environs from the prehistoric or Roman periods. A Bronze Age barbed bronze spearhead was recovered during dredging of the River Severn in 1844. The spearhead is recorded as having been found approximately 650 m north of the Site, although its exact location is unknown. Additionally, the spearhead was probably residual and found *ex situ* in the alluvial deposits of the River Severn.

2.2.2 Approximately 280 m to the north of the Site archaeological work revealed the location of a probable small rural settlement spanning the transition from the Iron Age to the Roman period (Rogers 2014). This was evidenced by ditches, pits and shallow gullies which contained sherds of diagnostic pottery including Malvernian ware pot and Roman pottery (*ibid.*). One of the ditches likely represented a section of a circular enclosure, the remainder of which continued outside of the excavation area (*ibid.*). In the southeast of the excavation area, industrial by-products within a ditch which included coal ash, hammer scales and slag suggest this area was used for smithing, with three post holes to the west potentially tracing the outline of a structure (*ibid.*). A small cluster of pits within the excavation contained worked flint largely comprising flakes and blades thought to have been from the Mesolithic or early Neolithic period (*ibid.*). Other flint implements found across the site included residual microliths and an early Neolithic leaf shaped arrowhead (*ibid.*).

2.2.3 The Site is located close to the route of the River Severn which has been of great importance as a route of communication since the prehistoric period, as such there is a general potential for encountering remains from this period within the Site.

### 2.3 Anglo-Saxon, medieval and post-medieval

2.3.1 There is no recorded activity from the Anglo-Saxon period within the Site or the surrounding area. The Site is surrounded by settlements mentioned in the Domesday Book including *Wick Episcopi*, *Powick*, *Whittington* and *Kempsey*. Their presence in the Survey of 1086 suggests their establishment prior to the Norman Conquest of 1066 with the Site well within the agricultural hinterland of these settlements (Heritage Gateway).

2.3.2 The remains of a moat are noted (Heritage Gateway) as lying approximately 980 m south-east of the Site, with fragments of its north-west and south-west corners still visible. The moat probably enclosed a timber-framed farm house. In addition a possible moat is also recorded approximately 180 m east of the Site at Timberdine Farm. Both features are visible on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map and are difficult to accurately date, however, it is likely they originate in the medieval or post-medieval periods. The farmhouse at Timberdine is recorded as being of late 16th or early 17th century, with late 19th century alterations, although it is unknown as to whether an earlier building stood at this location.

2.3.3 There is little evidence for activity during the medieval and post-medieval periods within the Site and its environs, with the area likely used for agricultural purposes.



## 2.4 19th century and modern

- 2.4.1 There is little recorded evidence from the 19th century within the Site although cartographic evidence from 1884 shows the Site to be mainly within agricultural land, with a pond in the centre and a small section of woodland along the western edge. The surrounding area is of a similar character to the Site. Little changes within the Site until the mid-to late 1920s when the western half of the Site is shown to be wooded with two buildings constructed in the east of the Site and another on the south-west boundary. By the 1940s the pond has been filled in and two greenhouses constructed in the centre of the Site. By the late 1940s to mid-1950s the greenhouses are no longer visible with additional buildings constructed across the Site and labelled as a 'Depot' by the early 1970s. By 1994 the Site has been redeveloped to its present layout with the surrounding area having been developed with residential housing from the 1980s onwards.
- 2.4.2 There are numerous features recorded in the area which date to the Second World War. These include a roadblock, machine gun emplacement, anti-landing piles and an air raid shelter. Two depots are also recorded, a fuel depot on the site of the Iron Age/Romano-British settlement noted above, and the depot for the Royal Army Service Corps. These features highlight the strategic importance of the area during this period.

## 3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

### 3.1 General

3.1.1 The general aims of the project were:

- *to identify any archaeological remains present;*
- *to accurately record the location and stratigraphy of areas excavated;*
- *to record all archaeological remains disturbed by the groundworks;*
- *to determine the extent, condition, character, importance and date of any archaeological deposits encountered;*
- *to provide information that will enable the archaeological remains to be placed within their local, regional and national contexts; and*
- *to produce an accurate and comprehensive record and report of any archaeological deposits disturbed by the works.*

## 4 METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2015) and professional standards and guidelines (ClfA 2014a-d). The fieldwork consisted of the monitoring of the excavation of trenches in order to assess the impact of groundworks associated with the construction of a loading bay in the north-west of the Site and one small trench in the north-east part of the Site to assess the impact of service trenches.

### 4.2 Machine excavation

4.2.1 Excavation was conducted using a mechanical excavator fitted with toothless bucket, working under the continuous direct supervision of a suitably experienced archaeologist. In the area affected by the loading bay groundworks the areas of impact were stripped in level spits to the level of natural geology and recorded. No archaeological features were encountered.



### 4.3 Recording

- 4.3.1 All deposits encountered were recorded using Wessex Archaeology *pro forma* recording sheets and a continuous unique numbering system. A digital photographic record was maintained but no features were encountered which would require recording with 35 mm film.

### 4.4 Specialist strategies

- 4.4.1 Strategies for the recovery of finds and environmental samples were included in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2015) but were not required during fieldwork.

## 5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

### 5.1 Summary

- 5.1.1 Two trenches were excavated to assess the impact of the loading bay groundworks in the north-west of the Site (**Figure 1 and 2**). Trench 1 was located in order to encompass the footprint of the first phase of the loading bay and Trench 2 was located in order to encompass the impact of the footings required for the loading bay extension to the north-west.
- 5.1.2 Trench 3 represents a small trial hole excavated on 1st March 2016 in order to assess the likely impact of service trenches, which were to be excavated at a later date. The trench was located in the north-eastern part of the Site (**Figure 1**).

### 5.2 Trench 1

- 5.2.1 Trench 1 measured 29 m north-east to south-west by up to 11.5 m south-east to north-west and encompassed the entire footprint of the loading bay. It was necessary to assess the entire footprint of the building rather than just the wall footings as an internal ramp meant that groundworks would impact the entire area (**Plate 1**).
- 5.2.2 No archaeology was present in Trench 1, although a number of modern services were visible. The natural substrate of compact mid-reddish-brown sandy clay / mudstone bedrock, 102, was encountered at a depth of 0.24 m, overlain by a layer of hardstanding 101. No subsoil horizon was present (**Plate 2**).
- 5.2.3 It appears that the Site has been significantly truncated, presumably during the construction of the present buildings on the Site (illustrated by **Plate 3**).

### 5.3 Trench 2

- 5.3.1 Trench 2 represented an extension of Trench 1, forming an 'L'-shape 10 m north-east to south-west by 6 m north-west to south-east and 1.8 m wide. The trench was located to assess the impact of wall footings for the loading bay extension. The internal slab of the loading bay extension will not further impact the present level of the ground (**Plates 4 and 5**).
- 5.3.2 No archaeology was present in Trench 2, although some modern service disturbance was evident. The natural substrate, 202, was encountered at an average depth of 0.3 m, overlain by a layer of hardstanding, 201 (**Plate 6**). No subsoil horizon was present in Trench 2. The natural geology varied between compact mid-reddish brown sandy clay at the north-east of the trench (same as 102), with superficial deposits of mid-yellowish-brown sandy clay and moderately loose mid-yellowish-brown sand encountered towards the south-west of the trench.



## **5.4 Trench 3**

- 5.4.1 The trench measured 3 m by 0.7 m and was excavated to a depth of 0.45 m (**Plate 7**). The natural substrate of compact mid-reddish-brown sandy clay / mudstone bedrock, 303, was encountered at a depth of 0.3 m. This was overlain by subsoil 302 (0.06-0.24 m from the surface) and topsoil 301 (0-0.06 m from the surface). No archaeology was encountered.

## **5.5 Conclusions**

- 5.5.1 The monitored groundworks revealed no surviving archaeological remains. The Site appears to have been significantly truncated by previous development, with the surrounding plots of land built up to a significant height in comparison. The identified truncation is likely to have affected the survival of any archaeological remains.
- 5.5.2 It has been agreed with James Dinn, Archaeological Officer for Worcester City Council, that no further monitoring works are necessary.

## **6 STORAGE AND CURATION**

### **6.1 Archive**

- 6.1.1 The complete project archive will be prepared in accordance with National guidelines for archive preparation and in accordance with guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage (UKIC 2001, SMA 1995; ClfA 2014d; Brown 2011; ADS 2013). The archaeological contractor will retain the archive until deposition with the relevant body.
- 6.1.2 All archive material will be prepared to Worcester City Art Gallery and Museum's requirements and guidelines and will be marked with the Museum's accession number. If necessary, the paper records of the Site archive will be security microfilmed prior to deposition. Archive deposition will be arranged in consultation with the Worcester Museums Service.

### **6.2 Copyright**

- 6.2.1 The archaeological contractor retains full copyright of any report under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved; excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the Client for the use of the report by the Client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the specification. Any document produced to meet planning requirements can be copied for planning purposes by the Local Planning Authority.
- 6.2.2 The archaeological contractor will assign copyright to the Client upon written request but retains the right to be identified as the author of all project documentation and reports as defined in the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (Chapter IV, s.79).

### **6.3 Security Copy**

- 6.3.1 In line with current best practice (e.g. Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.



## 7 REFERENCES

### 7.1 Bibliography

ADS, 2013, *Caring for Digital Data in Archaeology: a guide to good practice*, Archaeology Data Service & Digital Antiquity Guides to Good Practice

Applied Geology, 2014, *Report on Desk Study at Bath Road, Worcester.*

Brown, D.H., 2011, *Archaeological Archives: A Guide to Best Practice in Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Curation.*

ClfA, 2014a, *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief*

ClfA, 2014b, *Standard and Guidance for the Collection, Documentation, Conservation and Research of Archaeological Materials.*

ClfA, 2014c, *Codes of Conduct*

ClfA, 2014d, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (ClfA), 2014c. *Standard and Guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives*, Institute for Archaeologists

Historic England, 2015, *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide.*

Rogers, A. 2014. *The Archaeology of Roman Britain*. Routledge.

Society of Museum Archaeologists (SMA), 1995, *Towards an Accessible Archaeological Archive*

United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (UKIC), 2001, *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage.*

Wessex Archaeology, 2015, *Bath Road, Worcester, Worcestershire: Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Watching Brief.*

#### **On-line resources**

British Geological Survey: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

Heritage Gateway: <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/>



## 8 APPENDICES

### 8.1 Appendix 1: Trench context descriptions

<b>Trench 1</b>	<b>Description:</b>	<b>Dimensions:</b>
<b>Context No.</b>	<b>Loading bay (phase 1)</b>	<b>29 x 11.5 m</b>
		<b>Depth: 0.35 m</b>
101	Hardstanding – Loose mid grey aggregate and rubble.	0 – 0.24 m
102	Natural substrate – Compact mid reddish-brown sandy clay / mudstone bedrock.	0.24 m +

<b>Trench 2</b>	<b>Description:</b>	<b>Dimensions:</b>
<b>Context No.</b>	<b>Loading bay extension</b>	<b>10 m NE-SW x 6 m NW-SE x 1.8 m</b>
		<b>Depth: 0.58 m</b>
101	Hardstanding – Loose mid grey aggregate and rubble.	0 – 0.30 m
102	Natural substrate – Varies between mid reddish-brown sandy clay / mudstone bedrock at the NE of the trench (same as 102) with superficial deposits of firm mid yellowish-brown sandy clay and moderately loose mid yellowish-brown sand towards the SW of the trench.	0.3 m +

<b>Trench 3</b>	<b>Description:</b>	<b>Dimensions:</b>
<b>Context No.</b>	<b>Trial hole to assess likely impact of service trenches</b>	<b>3 m x 0.7 m</b>
		<b>Depth: 0.45 m</b>
301	Topsoil – Friable dark yellowish-brown clayey silt with frequent small sub-angular stone inclusions.	0 – 0.06 m
302	Subsoil – Moderately compact dark yellowish-brown silty clay with occasional small sub-angular stone inclusions.	0.06 – 0.3 m
303	Natural substrate – Compact mid reddish-brown sandy clay / mudstone bedrock.	0.3 m +



## 8.2 Appendix 2: OASIS form

### 8.3 OASIS ID: wessexar1-231225

#### Project details

Project name	Bath Road, Worcester, Worcestershire
Short description of the project	Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by DBK Ltd. to conduct an archaeological watching brief to monitor groundworks associated with the construction of a retail development on the site of the former Homebase store at Bath Road, Worcester, Worcestershire. The development is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 385228, 251972. Fieldwork was conducted between 31st of March and 1st April 2016. Areas impacted by the construction of a new loading bay in the northwest part of the site were stripped under archaeological supervision to the level of natural geology and no archaeological remains were encountered. The site appears to have been significantly levelled and this may have affected the survival of any archaeological remains. A further small trial hole was excavated in the northeast part of the site, which encountered natural geology at 0.3 m depth. It has been agreed with James Dinn, Archaeological Officer for Worcester City Council, that no further monitoring works are necessary.
Project dates	Start: 31-03-2016 End: 01-04-2016
Previous/future work	Not known / No
Any associated project reference codes	15L0290 - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	T21090 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	111480 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 3 - Retailing
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

#### Project location

Country	England
Site location	WORCESTERSHIRE WORCESTER ST PETER THE GREAT COUNTY Bath Road, Worcester, Worcestershire



Postcode WR5 3QU  
Site coordinates SO 85228 51972 52.165412226649 -2.215994558388 52 09 55 N 002 12 57 W  
Point  
Height OD / Depth Min: 20m Max: 20m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation Wessex Archaeology  
Project brief originator DBK Ltd.  
Project design originator Wessex Archaeology  
Project director/manager Chris Swales  
Project supervisor Phillip Wright  
Type of sponsor/funding body Developer  
Name of sponsor/funding body DBK Ltd.

### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No  
Physical Archive recipient Worcester City Museum  
Digital Archive recipient Worcester City Museum  
Digital Contents "none"  
Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography"  
Paper Archive recipient Worcester City Museum  
Paper Contents "none"  
Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Diary", "Drawing", "Map", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Unpublished Text"

### Project bibliography 1



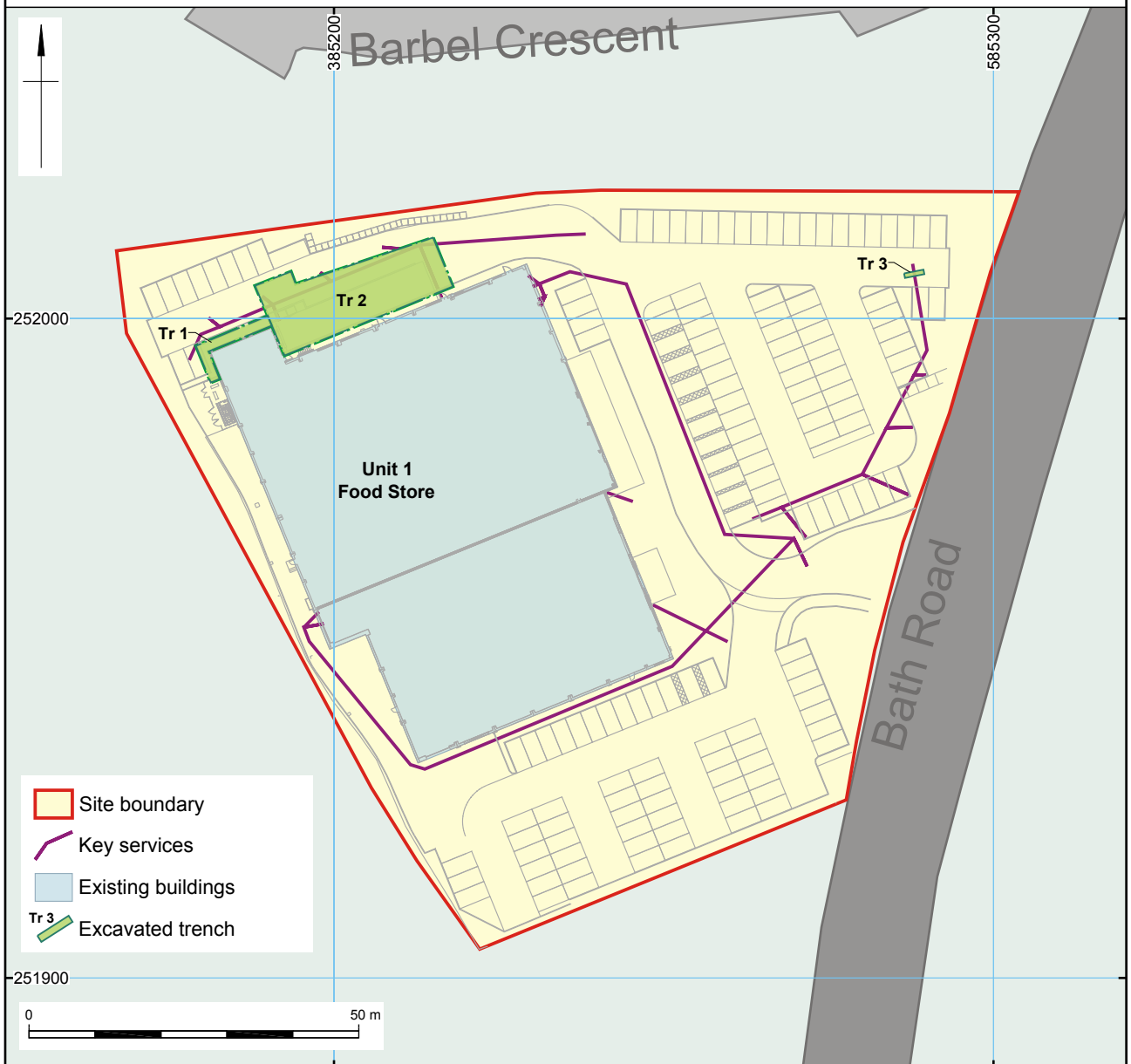
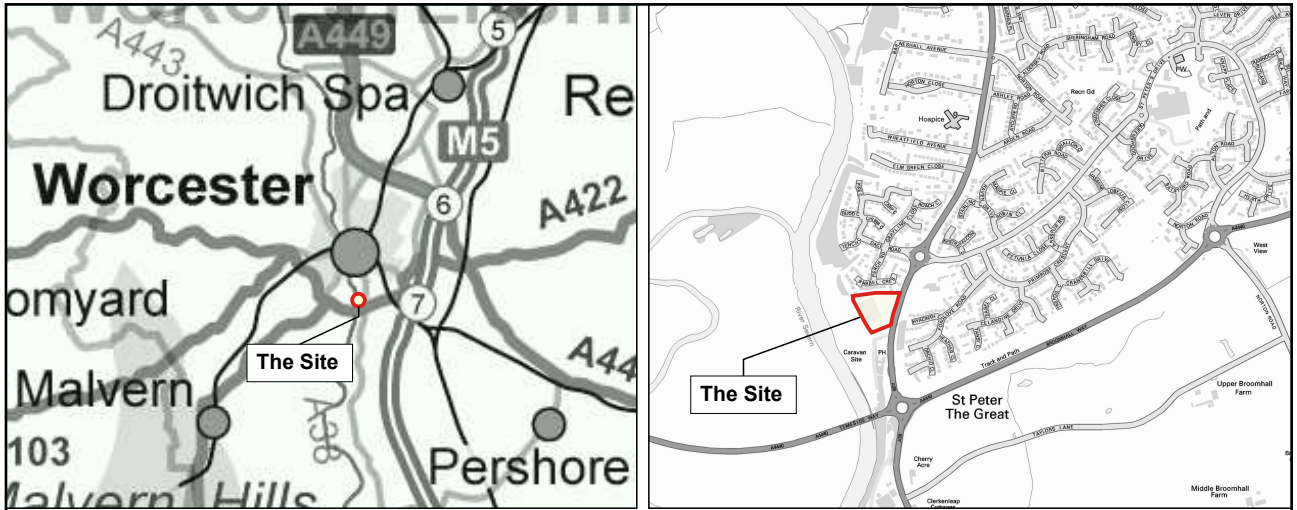



Publication type      Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

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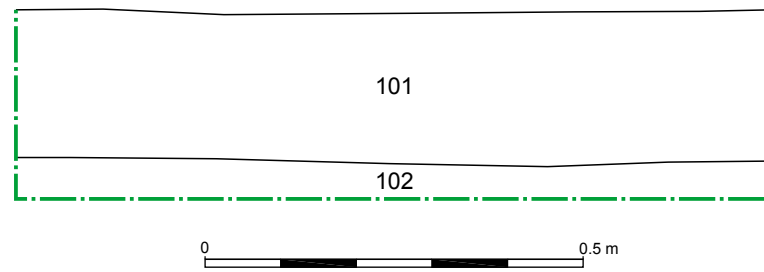
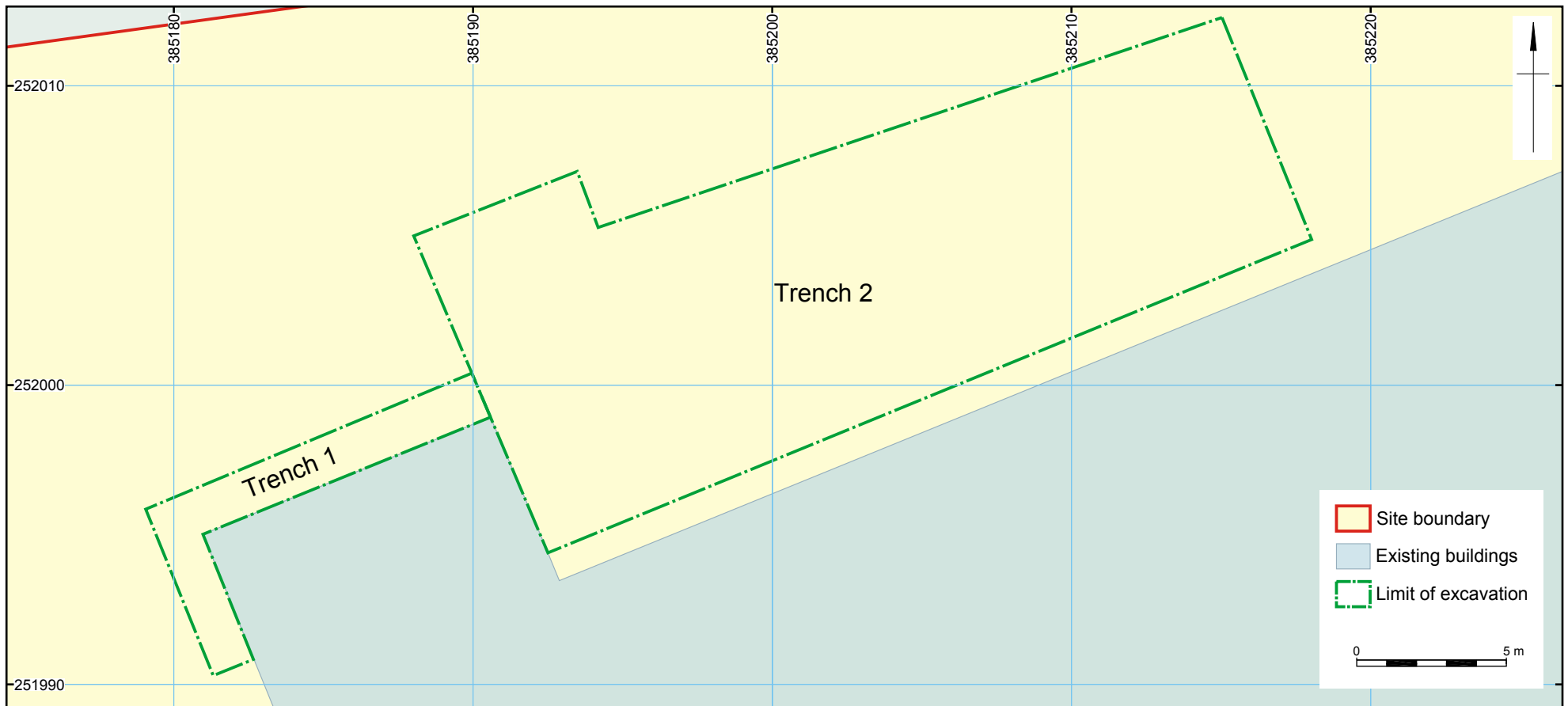
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Site location and plan of watching brief areas

Figure 1



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Plan of trenches 1 and 2, and representative section

Figure 2



Plate 1: General view of Trench 1 from the south-west



Plate 2: Representative section of Trench 1 from the north-west


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Plate 3: General view of Trench 1 from the south-east to illustrate the truncation of the Site



Plate 4: General view of Trench 2 from the north-east


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Plate 5: General view of Trench 2 from the south-east



Plate 6: Representative section of Trench 2 from the south-east



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Plate 7: Representative section of Trench 3 from the north

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