



# High Street Refurbishment HEREFORD

NGR SO 5095 4003

*Watching Brief on Drainage Work*



**March 2006**  
**SMR 43217**

Hereford Archaeology Series 700

This report is produced by

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### **Cover picture**

*The northern section with bands of gravel representing early road surfaces.*

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# High Street Refurbishment, Hereford

## Watching Brief on drainage work

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### **Text and Site Work**

K H Crooks

### **Illustrations**

S Porter

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March 2006

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# High Street Refurbishment HEREFORD

## *Watching Brief on Drainage Work*

NGR SO 5095 4003

SMR no 43217

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### 1. Summary

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*Archaeological Investigations Ltd was commissioned by Herefordshire Council to undertake archaeological monitoring during drainage works associated with the High Street Refurbishment Scheme.*

*The site lies in the centre of Hereford, inside the Saxon defences and within the Hereford Area of Archaeological Importance (Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979).*

*While the majority of the works were too shallow to affect archaeological deposits the excavation of an inspection chamber meant that there was a possibility that archaeological deposits could be disturbed. A watching brief on water main replacement work in the area had demonstrated that in areas outside previous service runs there was the possibility of undisturbed medieval deposits (Crooks 2002).*

*A series of surfaces and associated occupation deposits were present in the northern section of the trench for the inspection chamber. Attempts to find dating evidence associated with these surfaces proved unsuccessful, but in nature they were similar to medieval surfaces recorded in Broad Street and Bridge Street and it is suggested that they too may have been medieval in date.*

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## **2. Introduction**

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Archaeological Investigations Ltd was commissioned by Herefordshire Council to undertake archaeological monitoring during drainage works associated with the High Street Refurbishment scheme.

The site lies in the centre of the city, inside the Saxon defences and within the Hereford Area of Archaeological Importance (Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979).

The planned works entailed the excavation of a trench c.0.45m deep and the excavation and construction of an inspection chamber to the depth of 3m. It was considered likely that were archaeological deposits to be encountered they would be found during excavation of the inspection chamber. In the event the hole was excavated to a depth of c.2m beneath the existing surface.

The site lies at NGR SO 5095 4003 and at approximately 56.75mOD. Underlying geology consists of older fluvio-glacial gravels above Raglan mudstone.

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## **3. Historical and Archaeological Background**

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High Town originally formed part of market place established by William FitzOsbern in the period immediately following the Norman Conquest with the church of All Saints at the western end and St Peter at the east. This market centred on the area to the north of the Saxon defences and, together with the rebuilding of the castle caused a change in focus of the town. An archaeological watching brief in the basement of No 10-11 High Town revealed deposits dating to the medieval period (Shoosmith and Hoverd 1996)

During water mains renewals a large hole at the western end of High Town was examined for deposits of archaeological significance. Beneath the modern surfaces and a layer of red clay was a greenish clay, containing charcoal flecks and frequent animal bone. It overlay a compact layer of gravel, with occasional fragments of Old Red Sandstone. The gravel was probably a road surface, with silting above it. Despite no dating evidence being recovered, the presence of animal bone could suggest a medieval date.

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## **4. Aims and Objectives**

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The aim of the project was to enable archaeological features to be adequately recorded in the areas affected by the proposal. The main objective of the work was to identify the date and nature of features being investigated and to assess the survival, quality, condition and relative significance of any archaeological features, deposits



and structures within the study area. A further objective was to produce a record of the features.

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## 5. Method

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Groundworks were carried out by the contractors with monitoring visits by an archaeologist at intervals throughout the work. Where archaeological deposits were identified these were hand cleaned and photographs were taken on 35mm film. A section drawing and notes were made in a site notebook. Context numbers were allocated to archaeological deposits.

In the event the excavation for the inspection chamber was approximately 2m deep, and, when recorded measured 2.3m wide and 3m in length. The upper 0.84m of this depth consisted of the existing and former modern road surfaces. No samples were taken as a result of the likelihood of contamination from modern drainpipes in the area.

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## 6. Results

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Archaeological deposits were visible in the northern section of the trench only and for a distance of about 3m. At the eastern end of the trench a drainpipe or duct ran southwards into the trench, cutting through archaeological deposits, which were not seen to continue on its eastern side. To the west disturbance from modern services had destroyed any archaeological features that might have been present. Archaeological deposits continued for about 0.2m southwards from the northern section but further to the south disturbance from both gas and water mains meant that no archaeology survived.

The earliest deposit in the trench was a clean brown silt (101) which gave the impression of having been water deposited. It continued beneath the depth of the excavation. A silty material above this (102) was similar but more organic; once again it gave the impression of being water deposited.

The silts were sealed by a thick (0.38m) layer of clean red gravel (103), which seemed to have been a consolidation layer for the surfaces above it. The earliest surface (104) was a very compact layer of crushed sandstone about 60mm deep. The dirty grey silt layer (105) above this apparently resulted from use of the surface. It contained animal bone, but, despite attempts to recover dating evidence, none could be found. Above it was a compact pink gravel, with few visible inclusions (106). This seems likely to have formed either a further surface sealing the occupation debris or consolidation for a cleaner layer of pink gravel (107) apparently another surface. The dirty brown gravel above 107 (108) may have been another layer of occupation debris. One more thin layer of clean gravel was present in the trench, very compact and clean (109). This seems to have formed the latest surviving surface before damage associated with modern services and road surfaces. Immediately above 109 was a salt glazed drainpipe, above which ran the previous and existing road surfaces.

Further to the west the trench continued at a depth of 1.5m beneath the existing road surface. This was deep enough for archaeological deposits to be visible if any were present, but it was apparent that none had survived the damage caused by the insertion of existing services in this area.

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## **7. Discussion**

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Two or possibly three early road or market surfaces survived for a short distance in High Street, where they had not been disturbed during insertion of existing services or their maintenance. Similar sequences were found in other parts of Hereford during the programme of water main replacement in 1998-1999, which had demonstrated that surfaces survived just to the east of the present work, on the eastern side of High Street.

Crushed sandstone was used for surfaces elsewhere in Hereford during the later medieval and early post-medieval periods, notably on Bridge Street and in Broad Street (Crooks 2002). In both these cases Malvernian pottery, dated to the 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, was associated with the crushed Old Red Sandstone surfaces. No dating evidence was recovered from similar sandstone surfaces on East Street.

Close to the High Street site possible surfaces were found during work in the basement of Boots the Chemist in High Town and one of these comprised a mixture of crushed Old Red Sandstone and gravel.

The surfaces had occupation debris above them. Although animal bones were present no dating evidence was recovered either from the surfaces or the debris above them.

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## **8. Conclusions**

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Work demonstrated the intermittent survival of archaeological deposits between existing services. The pipes inserted during work by Welsh Water and Transco were visible in the southern part of the trench.

Previous watching briefs had demonstrated that small sections of archaeological deposits had survived disturbances by existing services. The watching brief on the drainage trenches demonstrated survival in one part of the trench of road or market surfaces, possibly of medieval date. These surfaces survived in only a limited area and extended into the trench for c.0.2m.

A watching brief carried out at intervals during and after excavation of the inspection chamber was therefore the most appropriate response to the amount of archaeology present.



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## 9. Bibliography

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Crooks, K, 1999, All Saints Church, Hereford Trial excavation and Salvage recording, *Hereford Archaeology Series No. 426*

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Shoesmith R & Hoverd T, 1996, 10-11 High Town, Hereford, A Report on a Watching Brief, *HAS 280*

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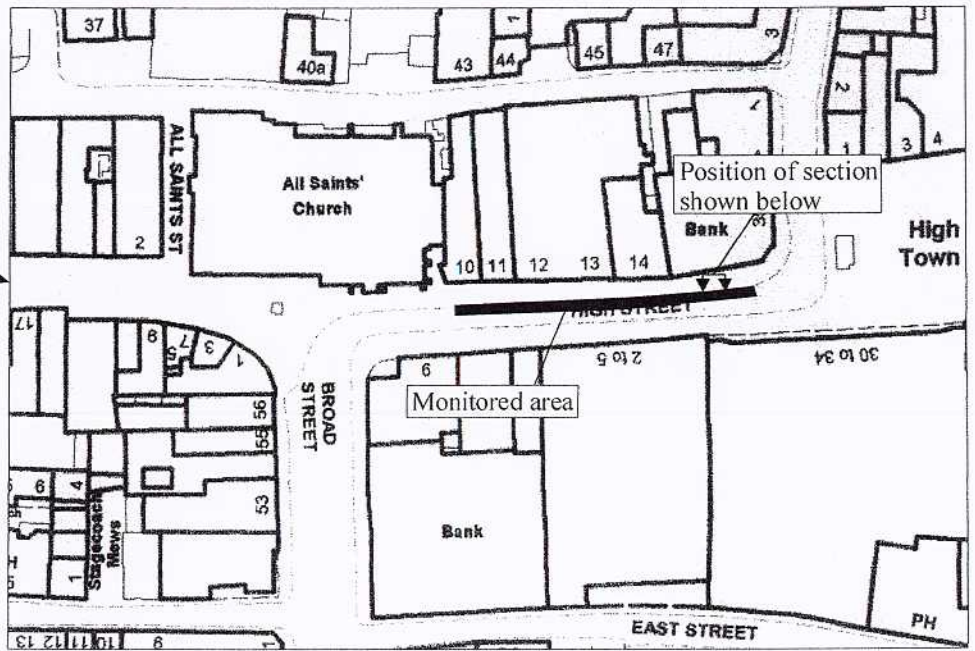
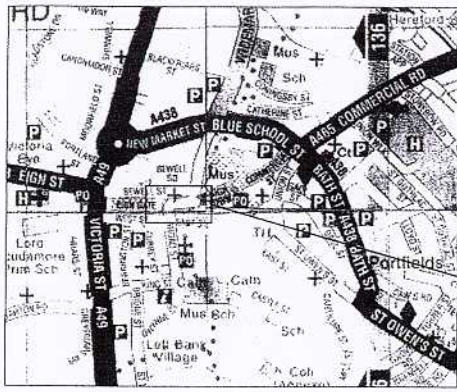
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## Appendix 1: Site Archive

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No finds were recovered from the site. The paper archive, including the photographs, was deposited at Hereford Museum – Accession No HFD MG 2006-3.





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Figure 1. Site location

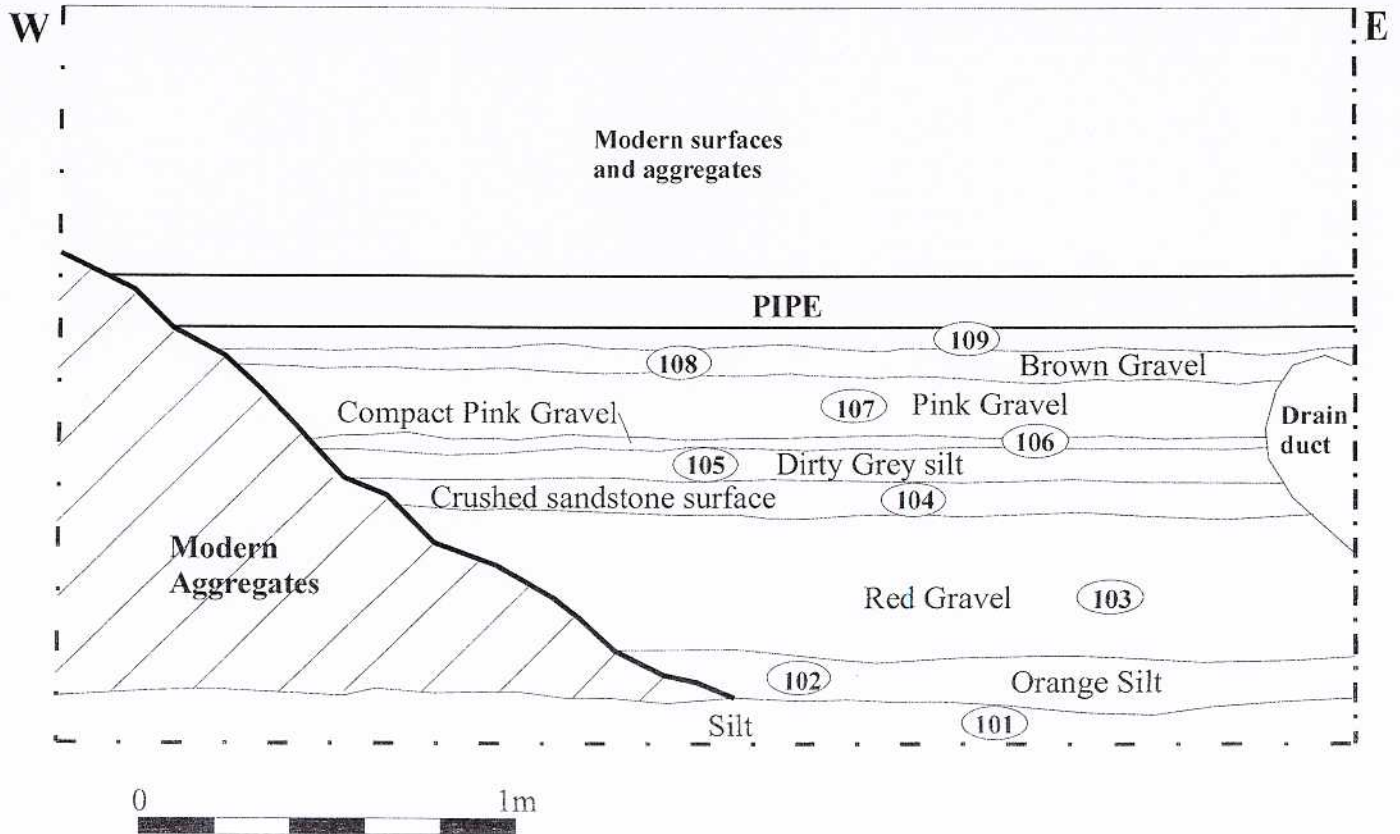


Figure 2. South facing section



<b>Report Name and Title</b>	High Street Refurbishment, Hereford	
<b>Archaeological Contractor etc (Name &amp; Address)</b>	Archaeological Investigations Ltd, Unit 1, Premier Business Park, Westfields Trading Estate, Faraday Road, Hereford HR4 9NZ	
<b>Site Name</b>	High Street, Hereford	
<b>Grid References (8 fig)</b>	NGR SO 5095 4003	
<b>SMR Numbers</b>	43217	
<b>Planning or Other Ref</b>		
<b>Date of Field Work</b>	January 2006	
<b>Date of Report</b>	30 Mar. 06	
	<b>NUMBER AND TYPE OF FINDS</b>	
<b>Pottery</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Number of sherds</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Quantity</b>
	<b>NUMBER AND TYPE OF SAMPLES COLLECTED</b>	
<b>Sieving for charred plant remains</b>	<i>No of Features sampled</i>	
	<i>No of buckets</i>	
<b>C14/scientific dates</b>	<i>No and Type</i>	
	<i>Result</i>	
<b>Pollen</b>	<i>No of Columns/spot samples</i>	
	<i>Name of pollen specialist</i>	
<b>Bone</b>	<i>Number of buckets coarse sieved for bone</i>	
	<i>Quantity Recovered</i>	<i>Period</i>
<b>Insect</b>	<i>No of Columns/spot samples</i>	
	<i>Name of pollen specialist</i>	
<b>Other</b>	<i>Type and specialist</i>	
<b>Summary of the report</b>	Archaeological monitoring of drainage works during the High Street Refurbishment Scheme revealed a series of surfaces and associated occupation deposits in the northern section of the trench for the inspection chamber. Attempts to find dating evidence associated with these surfaces proved unsuccessful but their similarity with medieval surfaces in Bridge Street suggested that they, too, may have been medieval in date.	