



St Martins Allotments Hereford

(NGR SO 5074 3940)

Archaeological watching brief.



H.A.S 719
SMR 43216
August 2006

This report is produced by

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Cover picture

Excavation underway on the weir chamber during works on the site at Saint Martins Allotments, Hereford.

Hereford City & County Archaeological Trust : Company Number 3283805
Registered Charity Number 1060840
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St Martin's Allotments Hereford

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Archaeological watching brief.

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St Martins Allotments

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Archaeological watching brief.

1. Summary

AMEC wished to carry out excavations required to replace the existing sewer and storm drains along the south-west side of the Greyfriars Bridge adjacent to the Saint Martins Allotments (Fig 1).

The proposed works were considered likely to affect a site of potential archaeological significance. Discussions were held with Julian Cotton of Herefordshire Archaeology and permission was granted with a condition requiring a programme of archaeological work.

No previous archaeological work had been carried out on the site itself, and the extent to which archaeological remains had survived was not known. Previously archaeological work had been undertaken on the new Asda site as well as the nearby Greyfriars monastery and Greyfriars bridge. Results of previous archaeological work undertaken in the nearby area showed potential for surviving remains from the Neolithic period and/or the medieval period.

The main aim of the project was to enable archaeological features to be adequately recorded in the areas affected by the proposal. Groundworks were monitored and the findings were recorded by an experienced archaeologist.

No archaeological features or finds of significant date were present within the excavated areas of the site.

2. Introduction

Archaeological Investigations Ltd was commissioned by AMEC to carry out an archaeological watching brief. The scope of the work encompassed monitoring and recording of groundworks relating to the renewal of parts of the sewer.

The project arose in response to proposals related to excavations required to replace the existing sewer and storm drains, discussions were held prior to commencement of the work with Julian Cotton of Herefordshire Archaeology. Permission was granted with a condition requiring a programme of archaeological work.

The archaeological site work took place between 12/01/06 and 28/07/06.

The site lies approximately quarter of a mile to the south-west of the City of Hereford, just south of the River Wye. The site is adjacent to Greyfriars Bridge and includes allotments (Fig 2), which are adjacent to the new Asda development. Potential for Saxon remains in the area was quite high, but as the site lies beyond the walls of the town, agricultural use of the area was considered most likely. There was also potential for medieval building remains on the site relating to the expansion of the city in and around the 13th century.

The site is centred at NGR SO 5074 3940, with a height of c.52m O.D. The underlying geology consists of alluvium overlying fluvio-glacial gravel above Devensian mudstone bedrock.

Currently the site is open ground between Saint Martins allotments and Greyfriars bridge. The site is fairly level and well drained.

3. Historical Background (adapted from HAS 500)

This discussion will rapidly summarise the conclusions of the earlier documentary study undertaken in 2000 (Boucher *et al*) and results of the evaluation (Rouse 2001, Hereford Archaeology Series 500).

"No Prehistoric sites are known from the immediate environs of the site, although some flints have been found on sites close by. Potential for prehistoric occupation cannot be ruled out where you have an ancient river valley.

Little evidence of Roman occupation has been found in Hereford. However enough finds have been recovered from around the city area to suggest that some occupation of this date is likely. One interpretation of the name "Causeway Farm" could be taken to imply the presence of a Roman road, but the link is thin.

Potential for Saxon remains in the area is quite high. But as the site lies just beyond the known walls of the Saxon town, agricultural use was considered most likely. A pre-medieval vill is known to have existed nearby but possibly not encroaching onto the site.

Causeway Farm (SMR 27007) may date from medieval times, and at least from the 12th century when the area was owned predominantly by the Cathedral, as it was until the mid 20th century. There is the possibility for other medieval buildings to survive along the lines of earlier road frontages in the area.

Lovell Johns Ltd's map (based on Brayley's 1806 map) suggests there was a northern return from "Row Ditch" connecting to the River Wye, and continuing the western line of the city defences. The ditch line lay almost parallel to the present sewer line. This ditch would be along the line of and underlying the present Greyfriars Bridge. Speede's map of 1610 shows no details in this area, but Taylor's map of 1757 shows boundaries to the west of the St Martin's suburb respecting the supposed line of the ditch. The known extent of Row Ditch located to the south of the St Martin's suburb was dug by the Scott's Army during the Civil War, but it may be a re-cut of an earlier, medieval or Saxon ditch. Excavations carried out recently on the Bishop's Meadow by Cotswold Archaeological Trust found evidence of an earlier ditch underlying the Civil War Row Ditch.

Some post-medieval features may have survived, at least in part, such as the large linear garden features originally interpreted as "canal gardens" which appear on Taylor's map of 1757. Taylor's map shows no other features in the immediate site area, but does show a strip of land to the west of the plots on Saint Martins Street with a building towards the north-west corner close to the site, this area is now under partly under the 19th century tramway and partly under Greyfriars Bridge which was built in 1967 (Fig 4).

Brayley's map of 1806 shows that a new building replaced the one mentioned above on Taylor's map and appears to be located within a "coal yard". Otherwise there appear to be no changes that affect the site adjacent to Saint Martins allotments (Fig 5).

The tram road (SMR 9410) is the most significant surviving feature of the 19th century. The earthwork bank is the most obvious feature within the study area and a stretch outside of Hereford is considered of national importance. This length of the bank is largely overgrown now and rather neglected. The tramroad is shown on the 1886 Ordnance Survey map (Fig 6), it appears to come to a dead stop coincidental with a plot boundary. Formerly the tramway continued across Saint Martins Street terminating in a tram shed (now part of the Saracen's Head public house). Evidence of the tram shed opening can still be seen in the lowest parts of the southernmost building of the Saracens Head Pub.

It is evident from the 1928 Ordnance Survey Map (revised 1945) that 20th century activity on the site included allotment gardens on the north side of the tramway, with a new building constructed to the east end of the plot. Two new buildings are also shown along the western side of the field boundary where the tramway ceases, just within the site area. No other features are shown intruding onto the site area (Fig 7).

By 1958 all the buildings added to the 1928-45 O.S map have been destroyed. The plot on the east side of the allotments still remains but no buildings survive. Nothing new has been built on or near to the site (Fig 8).

By the time of the 1967 Ordnance Survey map, the Greyfriars Bridge (31284) had been built. The bridge cuts through or close to all the features described in the above sections (Figs 3-7).

The "Wyelands" caravan site occupied the site from the 1950s until 1968 though, since its abandonment, the site has become an overgrown wilderness.

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on the site in 2001, which concluded: *"The soil survey and geophysical results identified levels and forms of earlier terrain, including a slightly raised gravel ridge aligned NE/SW through the middle and at the west end of the site. There was a truncated soil horizon at around 0.90m below the present surface that showed signs of probable ice cracking. Later alluvial deposits above this horizon predated the medieval period"*.

Archaeological features were identified in four out of the seventeen trenches excavated. Medieval remains from the 12th century onwards were found around the road frontage. At least some of these might suggest an earlier origin to Causeway Farm.

Remains of the farm itself survived beneath rubble from its demolition. These included a wall and surface of probable Post-medieval date. It appeared that ecclesiastical masonry was reused in the wall. The surface sealed organic clay deposits, however, pollen survival was not good in these deposits (assessed as having the highest potential from all the deposits on the site for preserving this type of material).

Two re-deposited sherds of Roman pottery were found near the river above the level of the earlier soil horizon providing a Terminus Post Quem for the truncation of this ancient ground surface.

The most significant find from the site was an early Neolithic pit, which was located (0.60m below the present surface) at the west end of the site in an area where the gravel is elevated. The pit contained a quantity of pot, flint and a good amount of carbonised material including emmer, hazelnut and apple. The carbon date from the charcoal is between 3800BC-3510BC at the outside. The find could be considered to be rare even in a national context, particularly given the presence of pottery and cereal" (Rouse 2001).

4. Aims and Objectives

The project was considered likely to produce results that would be of local archaeological importance.

The main aim of the project was to enable archaeological features to be adequately recorded in the areas affected by the proposal.

The main objectives of the work were to:

- a. Identify the date and nature of features exposed being investigated.
- b. Assess survival, quality, condition and relative significance of any archaeological features, deposits and structures within the study area.
- c. Produce a record of the features.

5. Method

Documentary.

The following repositories were consulted

The Asda site (Causeway Farm) report.

The Asda documentary report.

General archaeological method.

The ground works were monitored by an experienced archaeologist. Trenches were excavated by mechanical digger, occasionally under archaeological supervision. Trenches were then examined and recorded by an experienced archaeologist.

The areas of ground disturbance were tied into features shown on the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 mapping. A temporary site bench mark was set up using the known levels from work carried out on the Asda development site adjacent.

Context records were not made as no archaeological features were found to be present within excavated areas.

General biological samples were not taken as no archaeological deposits or features were present.

The finds were predominantly post medieval and modern pottery found in the site topsoil. The finds had no archaeological value and a policy of record and discarded was utilised onsite.

During the excavation generally and after cleaning the trench sections, photographs were taken using colour and black and white 35mm film.

Recording was carried out in accordance with Archaeological Investigations Ltd's site manual. Registers were kept for photographs and site drawings.

A hand auger was used to establish the sequence of deposits within the site area. It was originally proposed that these would be positioned at regular intervals along a line offset along the length of the drain run. This was unfortunately not possible due to ground conditions and it was necessary to reposition the sample holes. The amended positions are illustrated on Figure 10. Five sample holes were augured and recorded on the site although it was only possible to reach the underlying gravel in four instances.

The augur had a head diameter of 100mm, which is usually sufficient for the collection of soil samples, and identification of relatively fine changes in stratigraphy. Site notes and sketches were made in a site notebook.

The code of conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists was adhered to.

6. Results

The proposed site work began in the top north-east corner of the site, close to the tramway bank and adjacent to the western side of the Greyfriars Bridge. The groundwork in this part of the site was for the construction of a discharge chamber and “wet well” as part of the flood alleviation works connected to the existing surface water sewer. Levels (50m O.D.) were transferred from known ordnance datum to a convenient location on the site.

The work started with the setting out of a 14m diameter ring, this area was going to be the wet well. The outer edge of the ring was sheet piled prior to excavation. The digging commenced using a large mechanical excavator up to its maximum reach and then continued by a mini digger lowered into the hole.

The stratigraphy within the 14m ring was as follows, The topsoil had been stripped from this area during an earlier stage of work relating to the Asda site and had been replaced with a layer of grey stone scalpins, about 0.15m deep.

Underlying the grey stone were some remaining traces of a similar (but red stone) scalpin layer. The red scalpin deposit was not more than 0.10m deep and only survived as a few discreet patches.

The scalpins were bedded onto a 0.20m deep layer of blue-grey silt. The silt deposit appeared to have been affected by ground water and when disturbed smelled quite strongly of organic matter. The blue-grey clay was very similar in nature to deposits observed close to the road frontage on Belmont Road, which have been subject to flooding since at least the medieval period (although it is not suggested that these deposits are that old. Plant roots were visible penetrating up to about 0.50m below the bluey silt into alluvial silts and clays underlying.

The alluvial deposits were reddish-yellowish in colour and up to 1.70m deep. There were no signs of any variation or changes such as banding in the deposit which looked even in texture and colour all the way down. At a depth of about 2.15m below the existing ground level, the natural underlying gravel was reached. No finds or features were present within the excavation of the ring.

Adjacent to the ring, two large excavations were carried out as part of the discharge chamber. The outside edges were sheet piled in the same way as the wet well. The excavations involved digging out two large rectangular boxes measuring approximately 3.5m wide x 8m long x 3m+ deep. One of the boxes was positioned to the north and one was to the eastern side of the wet well. Neither of the excavations for the boxes were dug under archaeological supervision, and no information is available about what archaeological finds or features may have been present.

More excavation was carried out, connecting the excavation on the eastern side of the wet well to the existing sewer line. Some of the old sewer was to be disconnected as part of it was being diverted from its original line. The excavation was carried out for construction of a weir chamber, this time under archaeological supervision.

This part of the site still retained some of its topsoil which was around 0.20m deep. Pottery finds were recovered from the topsoil, all of which were later Post-medieval or modern.

Underlying the topsoil was a layer of red-brown silty clay, around 0.20m deep with evenly distributed rounded cobbles and smaller stones, no finds or features were present within the layer. The mixed red clay came down onto a pale red-yellow silty clay subsoil layer that averaged 0.30m deep. Below this layer was the same reddish-yellowish silts and clays seen in the excavation of the wet well. No features or finds were present within these deposits.

Most of the remaining stretch of pipeline from this point to near the road frontage where it connected to work recently done by Nuttalls as part of the same project was not excavated under archaeological supervision. The nature of some of the excavation carried out was such that it was very difficult to obtain archaeological evidence. Present health and safety regulations require that box shoring is used in excavations that are going beyond a certain depth, which often means shoring is going in as the hole is being dug out, leaving little or no opportunity to see the deposits before they are dug out.

Part of the surface water sewer ran directly beneath the existing Saint Martins allotments. This pipeline was to be replaced with new pipes of a larger gauge and on a different line to the existing. As the allotments are still in use the new pipe was "moled" through, underground using a large boring tool. A large rectangular hole was dug to house the moling equipment, which was not dug under archaeological supervision.

It had been agreed on site before the digging started that if the pipe trench work could not be monitored archaeologically, that a series of auger holes would be bored along a line at regular intervals to cover anything that was missed during excavation.

As mentioned in the method section this was not possible but five holes were augured on the site (figures 10 & 11).

Bore Hole 1

Bore hole 1 was positioned to the far southwest of the site. In this area the topsoil had been removed and the upper deposit in the bore hole was layer of mid brown silt (001) which was present to a depth of 0.66m. Underlying this was a mid brown layer of silty clay (002) 0.29m thick. This in turn is underlain by a yellow brown fine grain clay deposit (003) 0.2m thick. Beneath this was a darker deposit of red brown fine grained clay (004) 0.67m thick. Underlying this was a slightly paler red brown clay deposit with dark brown mud fleck inclusions (005) 0.78m thick. This overlay a thin band of black sand (006) approximately 0.01m in thickness. This lay above the natural gravels (007) which were reached at a depth of 2.61m.

Bore Hole 2

Bore hole 2 was positioned near the southern end of the western allotment fence. This area was covered with dark brown silty clay topsoil (008) which was present to a depth of 0.30m. This topsoil is broadly similar to that observed in bore holes 3-5. Beneath this was a mid red brown silty clay deposit with rare stone inclusions (009). This deposit was 0.38m thick. Underlying this was paler red brown fine grained silty clay (010), 0.22m thick. This was underlain by a darker deposit (011) with inclusions of tiny rounded stone and flecks of dark brown mud similar to those present in deposit 005. Deposit 011 was 0.18m thick. Beneath this was slightly paler red brown silty clay with pale clay spots and rare mudstone flecks (012) 0.11m thick. These inclusions were the only factor distinguishing deposit 012 from the underlying deposit (013). In this instance the inclusions were red sandstone flecks. Beneath this was a red clay deposit with low silt content (014). Deposit 013 was 0.54m thick and 014

0.009m. No inclusions were visible in deposit 014. Deposit 015 is also very similar to those overlying it although in this instance the deposit is a slightly lighter colour. This deposit was 0.82m thick. The lowest level in this bore hole is the underlying natural gravels (016) which were reached at a depth of 2.64m. It is presumed that the gravel is a uniform context throughout the site.

Bore Hole 3

Bore hole 3 was positioned near the south-western corner of the allotment fence. As in trenches 2-5 the upper deposit was a layer of loose brown silty clay topsoil. In this instance it was 0.32m thick. Beneath this was a subsoil deposit (018), similar in character but with a higher clay proportion. This was underlain by a red brown silt layer (019) with inclusions of white crushed stone and occasional flecks of topsoil. This deposit was 0.77m thick. Underlying this deposit was a red brown clay layer with dark brown mud fleck inclusions (020) identical to 005. In this instance the deposit was 1.65m thick. This overlay the gravel natural which was reached at a depth of 3m.

Bore Hole 4

Bore hole 4 was located near the south-eastern corner of the allotment fence. The topsoil (022) in this bore hole was thinner than in the other holes and in this case was only 0.1m thick. Underlying this was a light brown silty clay deposit (023) which was 0.6m thick. Beneath deposit 023 was a layer of red brown clay (024) which was augured for 0.2m. At a depth of 0.9m the bore hole was abandoned as the ground became too hard to dig into. It is presumed that there was a context change at this depth although it was not possible to test this hypothesis as no soil sample could be recovered. It is unlikely that the gravel was reached however as in nearby bore hole 5 the gravel was not reached until a depth of 2.08m.

Bore Hole 5

Bore hole 5 was located near bore hole 4 in the south eastern side of the site. The topsoil (025) in this bore hole was present to a depth of 0.21m. Underlying this was a light brown silty clay deposit (026) which was 0.44m thick. Beneath deposit 026 was a layer of red brown silty clay 1.3m in thick. This was underlain by a similar layer of red brown silty clay with frequent inclusions of angular and sub-angular grey gravel fragments. This overlay the natural gravel (029) which was reached at a depth of 2.08m.

7. Discussion

Trench Monitoring

No archaeological features of early or significant date were present within the excavated areas. Finds were limited to post medieval and modern pottery in the topsoil.

Auguring

The stratigraphy observed in the 5 bore holes was broadly similar in nature with a layer of dark brown silty clay topsoil overlying various layers of red brown silty clay and clay. Gravel is the underlying material in all cases where the base of the bore hole was reached. This is also generally in-keeping with the results of previous bore hole and trial trench survey in the area (Boucher & Eisel 2000) although the sandy silt layer observed overlying the gravels in Boucher's survey was not observed.

The increased depth of the gravels at bore hole 3 and also the greater depth of the same in bore holes 1 & 2 compared to 5 appear to support the possibility of an earlier channel cutting through the east end of the site at this point. The depth of the gravel in this area is in keeping with the earlier survey results.

8. Conclusions

In conclusion the aims and methods of the project were not entirely satisfied, as only a small part of the site was actually evaluated. No features of archaeological significance were encountered.

9. Bibliography

Rouse, D., 2001, "Causeway Farm, Hereford, A report on an archaeological evaluation". *Hereford Archaeology Series 500*.

Boucher, A., and Eisel, J., 2000, "Causeway Farm, Hereford, Archaeological desk based study". *Hereford Archaeology Series 465*.

Appendix 1 Site Archive (Acseesion No HFD MG 2006-2)

The archive will be held by Hereford City Museum.

- 15 Pages of site note book notes and drawings.
- 1 Copy of this report.
- 4 Photographic registers.
- 3 Sets of colour prints from 35mm, 36 exp film.
- 1 Sets of black and white prints from 35mm, 36 exp film.

Appendix 2 Bore Hole Results

Bore Hole 1

Context number	Depth to surface	Deposit thickness	Deposit Description
001	0	0.66m	Mid brown silt
002	0.66m	0.29m	Silty clay similar in appearance to 001
003	0.95m	0.20m	Paler fine grained yellow brown clay
004	1.15m	0.67m	Red brown fine grained clay
005	1.82m	0.78m	Paler red brown clay with dark brown mud flecking
006	2.60m	0.01m	Black course sand
007	2.61m	-	Gravel

Bore Hole 2

Context number	Depth to surface	Deposit thickness	Deposit Description
008	0	0.30m	Dark brown silty clay topsoil
009	0.30m	0.38m	Mid red brown silty clay with rare stone inclusions
010	0.68m	0.22m	Pale red brown silty clay
011	0.90m	0.18m	Darker red brown silty clay. Inclusions – tiny rounded pebbles and flecks of dark brown mud
012	1.08m	0.11m	Slightly paler red brown silty clay with pale clay spots and rare crumbling mudstone flecks
013	1.19m	0.54m	Pale red brown silty clay with red sandy flecks
014	1.73m	0.09m	Red clay – low silt content. No visible inclusions
015	1.82m	0.82	Slightly paler red clay – low silt content. No visible inclusions
016	2.64m	-	Gravel

Bore Hole 3

Context number	Depth to surface	Deposit thickness	Deposit Description
017	0	0.32m	Dark brown loose silty clay topsoil
018	0.32m	0.26m	Subsoil – as above but with higher clay content

019	0.58m	0.77m	Red brown silt with crushed white stone and dark mud fleck inclusions
020	1.35m	1.65m	Red brown clay, dark brown flecks
021	3.00m	-	Gravel

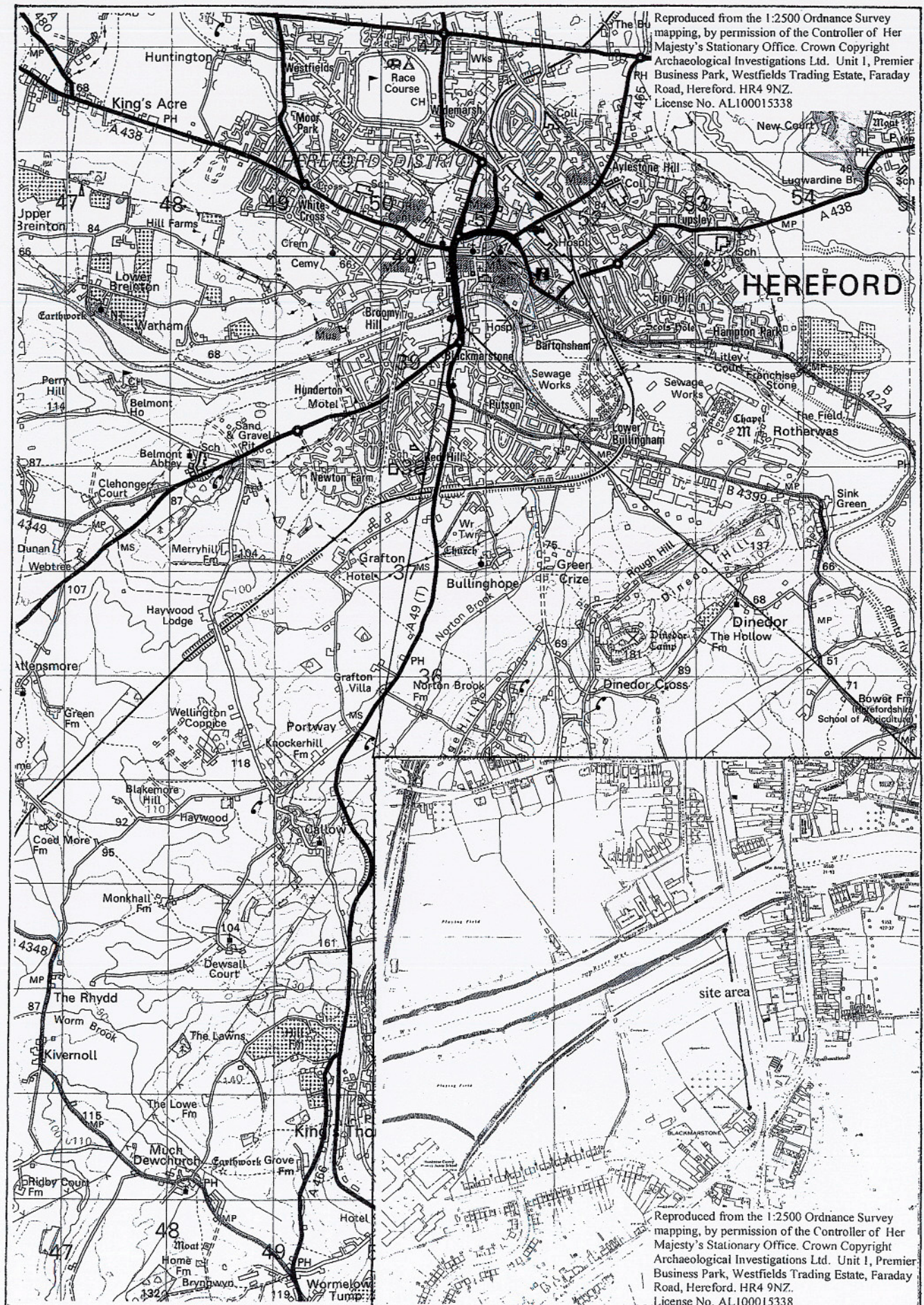
Bore Hole 4

Context number	Depth to surface	Deposit thickness	Deposit Description
022	0	0.10m	Mid brown silty clay topsoil
023	0.10m	0.60m	Light brown silty clay
024	0.70m	0.20 m	Red brown clay

Bore hole abandoned at 0.90m

Bore Hole 5

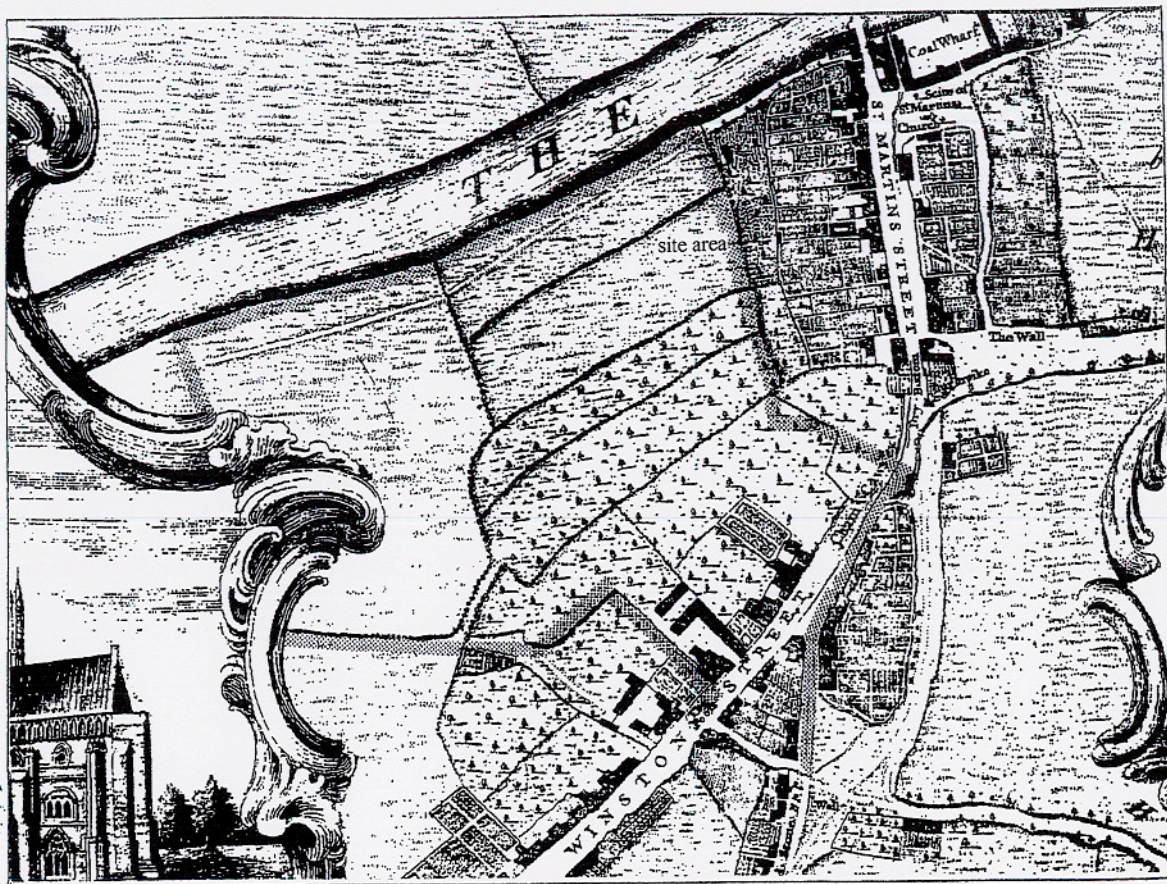
Context number	Depth to surface	Deposit thickness	Deposit Description
025	0	0.21m	Dark brown silty clay topsoil
026	0.21m	0.44m	Light brown silty clay
027	0.65m	1.30m	Red brown silty clay
028	1.95m	0.13m	Red brown silty clay with frequent inclusions of angular and sub-angular grey gravel fragments
029	2.08m	-	Gravel



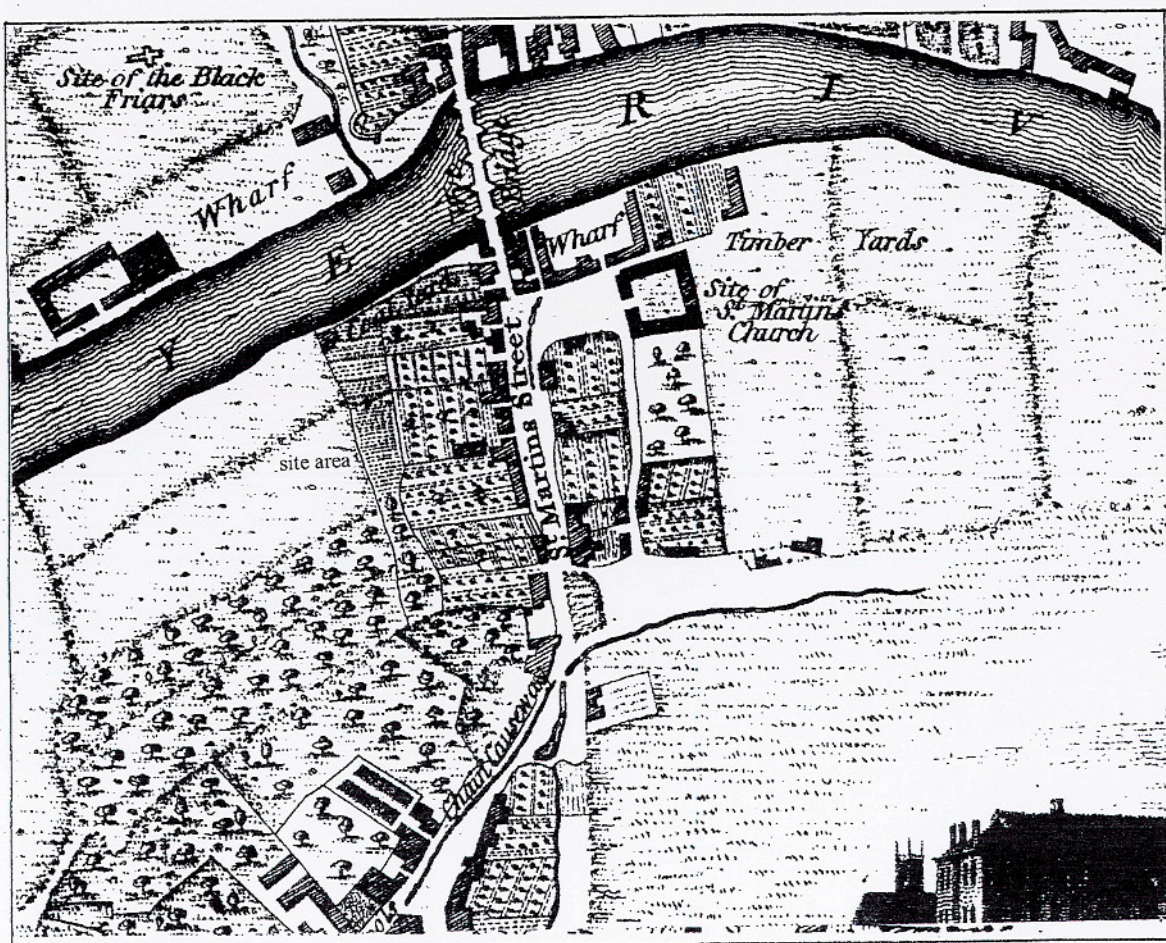
The site and its location in relation to Hereford City, Fig 1.

[illegible]

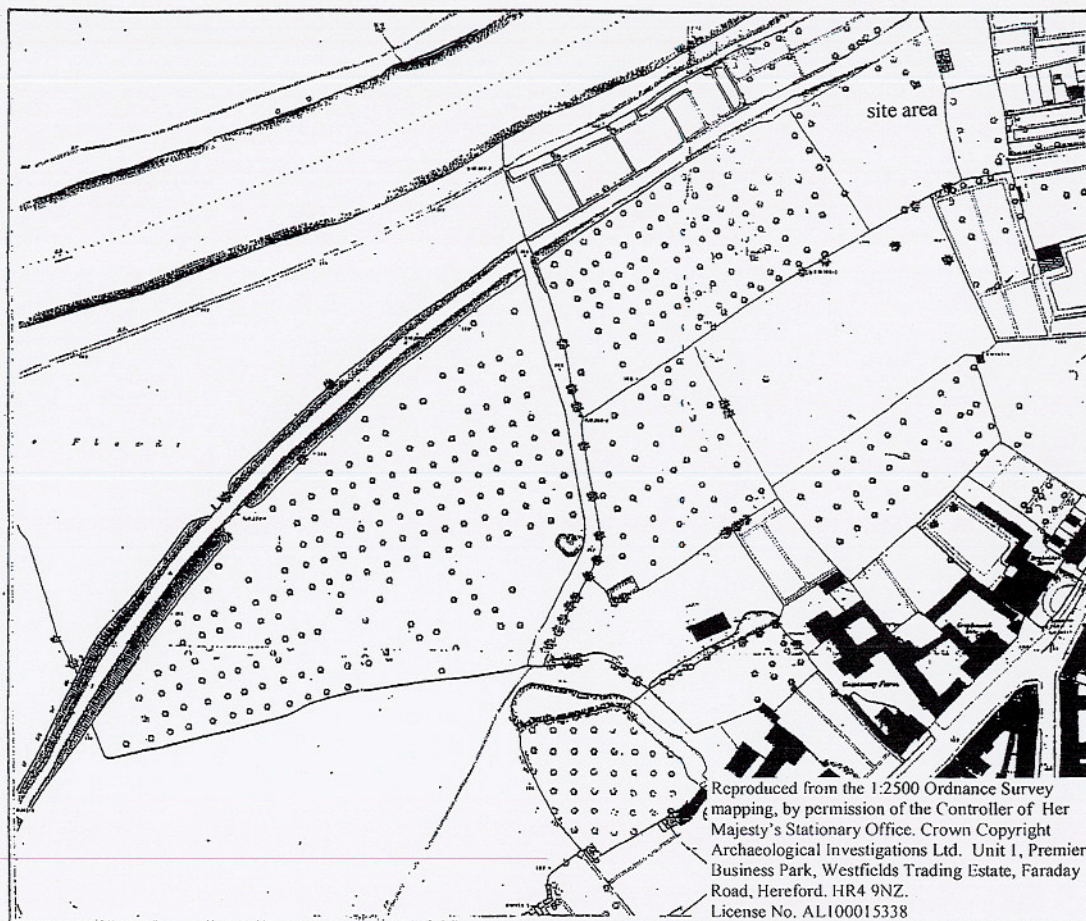
The site showing the extent of the excavated areas, Fig 2.



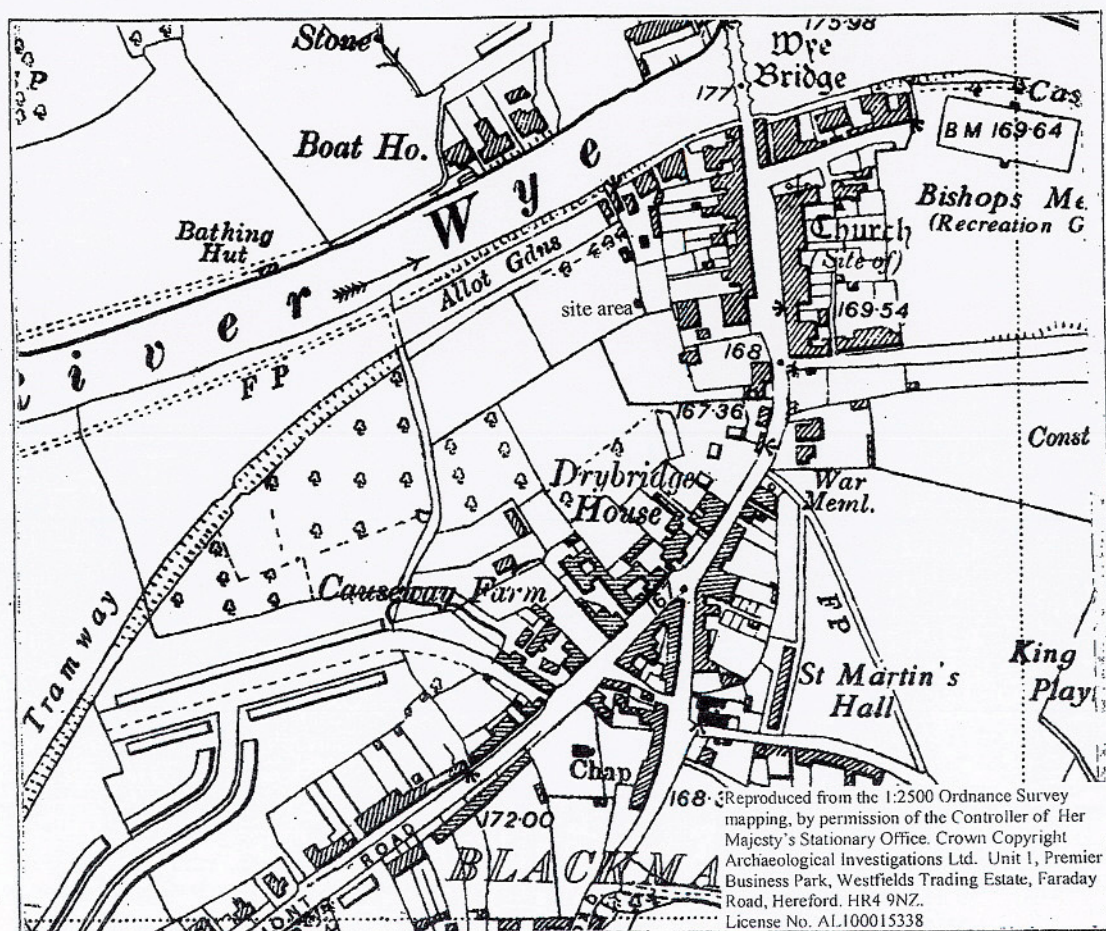
Extract from Taylor's map of 1757, Fig 4.



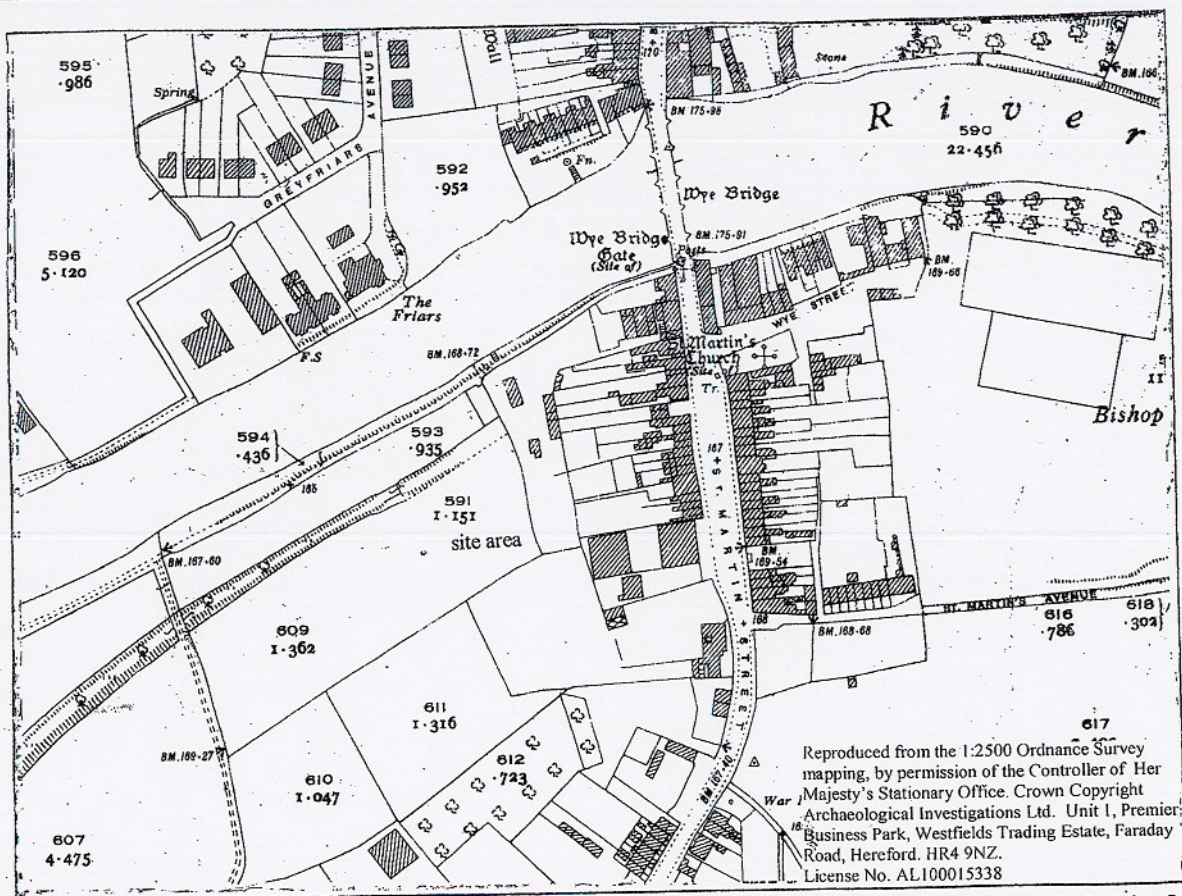
Extract from Brayley's map of 1806, Fig 5.



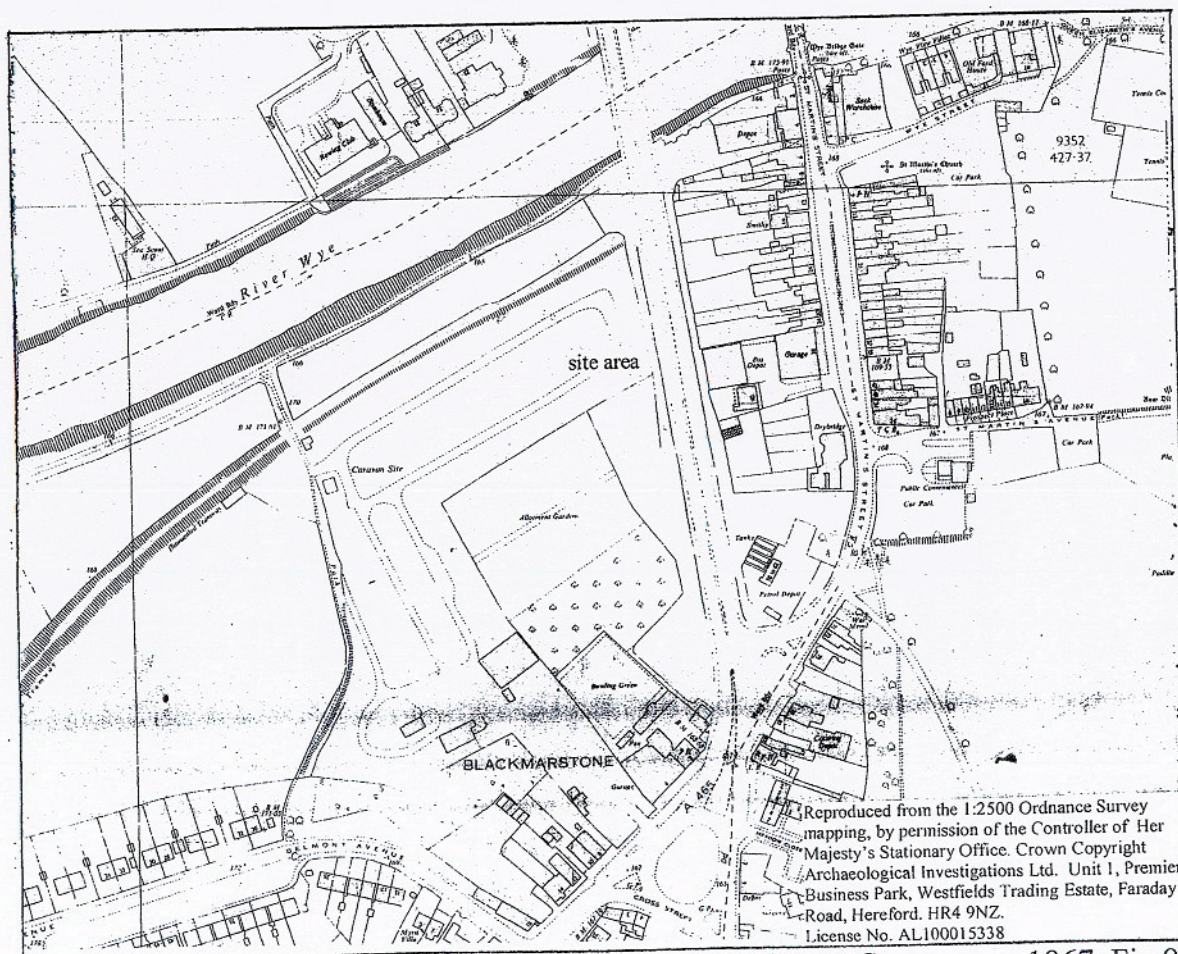
First Edition Ordnance Survey map, 1886, Fig 6.



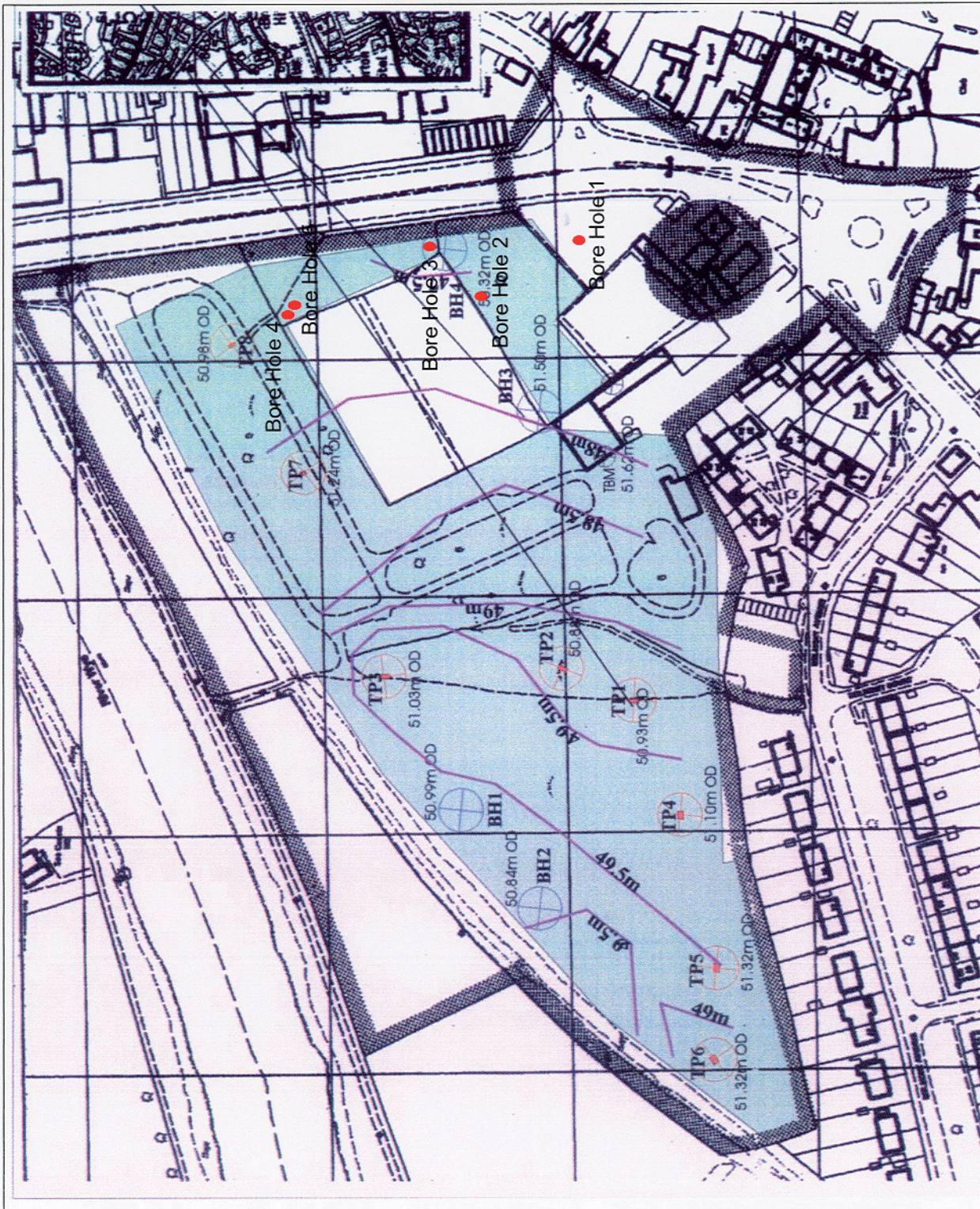
Ordnance Survey map 1928 (revised 1945), Fig 7.



Ordnance Survey map 1958, Fig 8.



Ordnance Survey map 1967, Fig 9.



Scale 1:2500

Fig. 10 Positions of Bore Holes

Fig. 11 Bore Hole Sections Scale 1:10

