

**Trenches 12 and 13, Area A, Severn Street,
Royal Worcester Porcelain, Worcester**

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Berkeley Homes (Oxford and Chiltern) Limited

by Simon Cass

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code RWP 04/65

April 2007

Summary

Site name: Trenches 12 and 13, Area A, Severn Street, Royal Worcester Porcelain, Worcester

Grid reference: SO 8500 5420

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 19th-20th February 2007

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Simon Cass

Site code: RWP 04/65

Summary of results: No finds or features of archaeological significance were noted. Extensive areas of deep modern truncation were observed in one trench

Monuments identified: None.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Worcester City Museum in due course.

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Trenches 12 and 13, Area A, Severn Street, Royal Worcester Porcelain, Worcester An Archaeological Evaluation

by Andy Taylor and Simon Cass

Report 04/65d

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Area A, Severn Street, Royal Worcester Porcelain, Worcester (SO 850 542) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Cliff Buddery of Berkeley Homes (Oxford and Chiltern) Ltd, Berkeley House, Abingdon Science Park, Barton Lane, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 4NB.

Planning permission (App no P05D0432) has been gained from Worcester City Council to redevelop the site of the Royal Worcester Porcelain works for a hotel complex and new residential apartments, with the refurbishment and reuse of other historic buildings. This permission applies to both the northern and southern (Portland Walk) parts of the Porcelain Works complex, and the planning consent is subject to three archaeological conditions (54, 55 and 56). Conservation Area consent has also been gained (App no L05D0073) with a further condition (2) for a record of the factory buildings and manufacturing processes prior to demolition. A summary of the relevant consents is presented in a brief for the project (WCM2007). The conditions attached are in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the City Council's policies on archaeology.

The development proposals for the site are for residential use and includes for refurbishment of some existing structures and new buildings on other parts of the site. In order to manage the redevelopment of the Severn Street site, the area was zoned into three- areas A-C (Fig. 2) with area A being the first to commence redevelopment.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification for area A approved by Mr James Dinn, Archaeological Officer for Worcester City Council and following a brief for the work prepared by him. This report is concerned only with a part of the proposed field evaluation, specifically the findings of trenches 12 and 13 in the south western tip of the site. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Taylor, Simon Cass, Andrew Lawler and David Platt between 19th and 20th February 2007, and the site code is RWP 04/65. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Worcester Museum Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located in the Diglis area of Worcester, which is situated in the Severn Valley, to the north of the Severn's confluence with the River Teme. The site itself lies in the valley of a former tributary to the Severn, the Frog Brook, whose extant part now comprises part of the Birmingham to Worcester Canal. According to the British Geological Survey, the underlying geology consists of alluvial drift deposit overlying the Eldersfield mudstone formation (BGS 1993). A preliminary borehole investigation (STATS 2004) showed that, generally, made ground overlay alluvial deposits to a depth of 0.4-1.3m below current ground level for the Severn Street Area A. At the time of the evaluation, the site comprised an irregular parcel of land, the majority of which was occupied by large industrial buildings, undergoing demolition. The site is reasonably flat and lies at a height of approximately 17m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological background and potential of the site has been summarized in a brief for the project (WCM 2007) issued by Mr James Dinn, Archaeological Officer at Worcester City Museum, drawing on information presented in a desk-based assessment and evaluation (Sherlock and Feryok 2005, ArchaeoPhysica 2005; Lewis D 2005a and b). In summary the Severn Street site partly incorporates components of Roman, Saxon, medieval, post-medieval and industrial Worcester. The northern zone, Areas B and C of the planning and development timetable, includes the medieval town wall and ditch, a tower, the site of St Peter's Church and graveyard, and tenements. The church is recorded in Saxon times and it is likely that late Saxon remains are to be found in the same zone as the medieval deposits. The extent of the Roman town is less clear but the earlier limited pre-determination evaluation located some Roman deposits at the northern end of the site in Area B. Roman occupation and burial are recorded just to the north-west of the redevelopment site and further burial deposits are recorded to the south-west in the general vicinity of the two trenches discussed below. Saxon and medieval deposits have recently been recorded to the south of the proposal site (J Dinn pers. comm.). At the time of the Civil War, the site was traversed by the earthen defences erected to defend the city. The site area was occupied in later post-medieval times for pottery production and eventually became the Royal Porcelain Works. Three evaluation trenches were located within Area A itself (with others to the north in Areas B and C) including two close to the trenches discussed below, but revealed few deposits earlier than late post-medieval times (Lewis 2005a).

The site in general lies close to the confluence of the Frog Brook and River Severn (Fig. 1). Such a riparian location, especially if a terrace edge can be identified, is often one preferred for earlier prehistoric settlement and the Worcester City Historic Environment Record notes the presence of prehistoric metalwork finds recovered from the river nearby.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development.

Specific aims of the project were;

To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on the site.

To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.

To determine if there are any deposits of prehistoric, Roman or later date.

To determine if there are any deposits present relating to Royal Porcelain Works manufacturing or any earlier pottery manufacturing facilities.

Trenches 12 and 13 were both sited to investigate specifically the possibility of surviving Roman occupation and/or burial deposits. They were excavated using a 5-tonne 360° machine fitted with a 1.6m toothless bucket under constant archaeological supervision. They measured 7.5m and 8.2m long respectively and were positioned as near as possible to their intended positions. All spoilheaps were monitored for finds.

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Results

Trench 12 (Plate 1)

This trench measured 7.50m in length and was 2.30m deep at the base of the test pit dug at the south western end. The stratigraphy consisted of concrete overlying made ground overlying redeposited natural mid/dark reddish brown silty clay and post-medieval/modern truncations containing occasional brick and tile fragments. The trench was initially excavated to a depth of c. 1.3-1.5m along most of its length as, from the previous two evaluation trenches dug near by (Lewis 2005a), and trench 13, the natural geology was encountered at about this depth. However, when the natural geology was not encountered as expected a test pit was excavated at the southwestern end down to a depth of 2.3m in an attempt to locate the natural geology and/or surviving

archaeological layers. The stratigraphy exposed clearly showed the continuation of post-medieval/modern disturbance as a series of banded deposits in plan representing tip lines down to the maximum reach of the machine being used to excavate, still without revealing undisturbed geology or archaeology. It was concluded therefore that the whole of this trench had been previously disturbed in relatively modern times with no prospect of in-situ archaeological deposits being present

Trench 13 (Plate 2)

This trench measured 8.20m in length and was 1.80m deep. The stratigraphy comprised concrete overlying 19th century or modern made ground to a depth of c. 1.0m overlying a mid yellow grey brown silty sand which was considered as possibly representing disturbed natural geology, to a depth of 1.5m. Below this was patchy sand and gravel which was unambiguously the natural geology. This was overdug to confirm that it was undisturbed in situ natural and not a redeposited masking layer over further archaeology. At the southern end of the trench a large pit was encountered which bottomed out at 1.75m depth thus truncating the archaeologically relevant level. This pit was visibly cut from immediately below the concrete surface and provided no finds other than occasional brick/tile fragments and was considered an essentially modern feature. No deposits of archaeological interest were observed in this trench.

Finds

A small collection of artefactual material was retained from the made ground deposits in the two trenches. This comprised fragments of a clear glass including a jug, green bottle glass, wall plaster, animal bone, an iron bracket and nail, and pottery comprising white/red glazed earthenware; Blue glazed earthenware and unglazed red earthenware (plant pot?)

Conclusion

One of the trenches (12) dug showed the presence of deep modern truncation well below the level at which the natural geology was anticipated. The archaeologically relevant levels had unambiguously been removed from this area of the site. For the other trench (13), the natural geology was revealed more or less at the level at which it was expected but the trench did not reveal any finds or deposits of archaeological interest. There was also a large modern truncation cutting into the natural deposits by approximately 0.25m. The results from these two

trenches, taken together with the results of the earlier evaluation (Lewis 2005a) would suggest that this part of the Severn Street site has no archaeological potential.

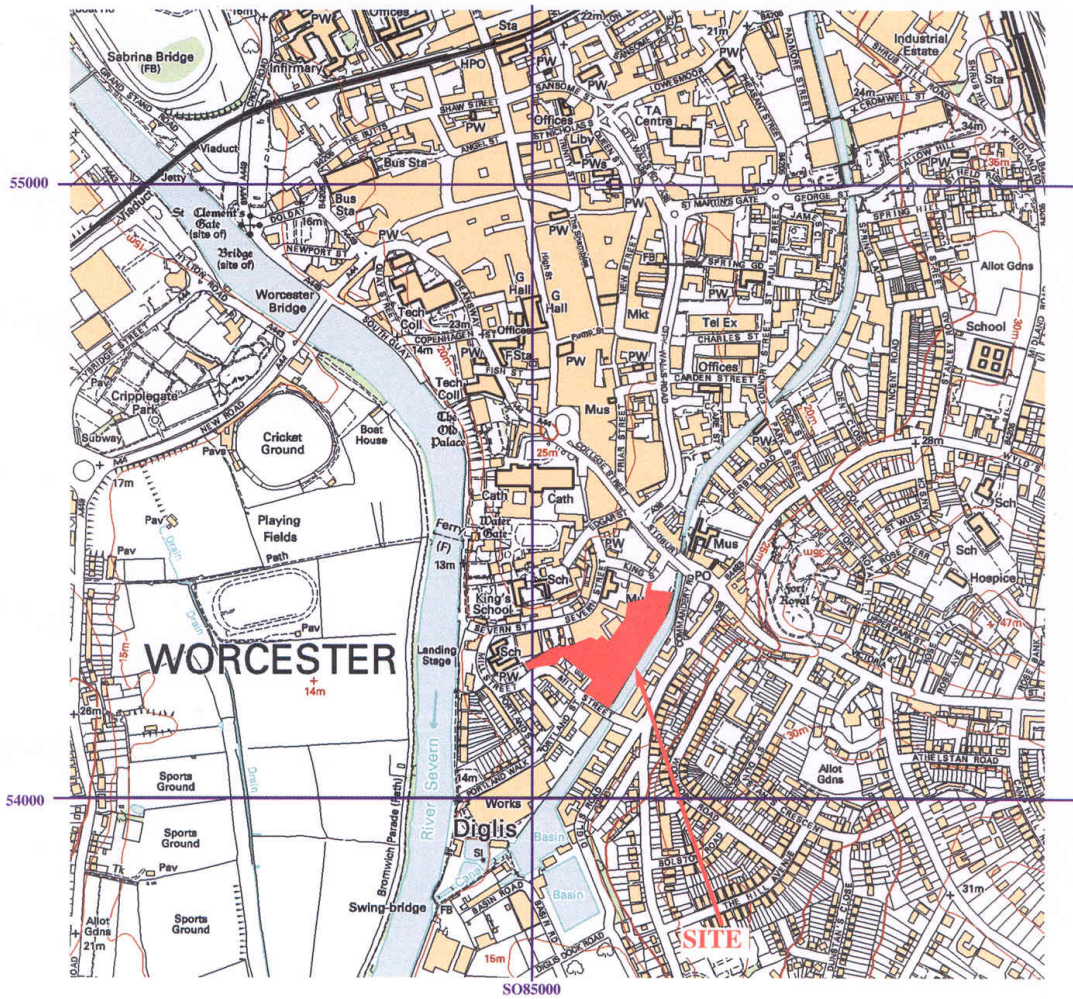
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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at S or W end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
12	7.50	1.60	2.30	0.00m-0.10m concrete; 0.10m-0.77m dark brown black silty clay made ground; 0.77m-+ mid/dark reddish brown silty clay -redeposited natural and mid grey silty clay modern truncations. Natural geology not observed [Plate 1]
13	8.20	1.60	1.80	0.00m-0.20m concrete; 0.20m-1.00m made ground; 1.00m-1.50m mid yellowish grey brown silty sand (disturbed natural geology?); 1.50m+ Natural geology- patchy sand and gravel. [Plate 2]



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**Royal Worcester Porcelain, Severn Street
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Figure 1. Location of site within Worcester.

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Area A, Severn Street, Royal Worcester Porcelain, Worcester, 2007



Figure 2: Locations of trenches 12 and 13 and showing site development areas and previous evaluation trenches.

Area A, Severn Road, Royal Worcester Porcelain, Worcester, 2007

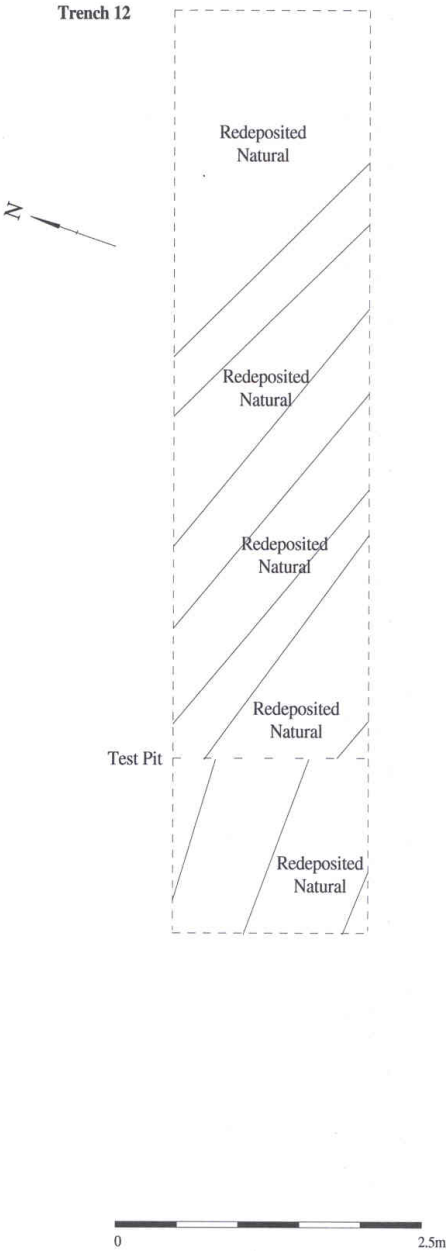


Figure 3. Plan of Trench 12.

Area A, Severn Street, Royal Worcester Porcelain, Worcester, 2007



Figure 4. Representative section of Trench 12

Area A, Severn Street, Royal Worcester Porcelain, Worcester, 2007

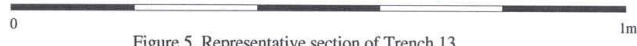
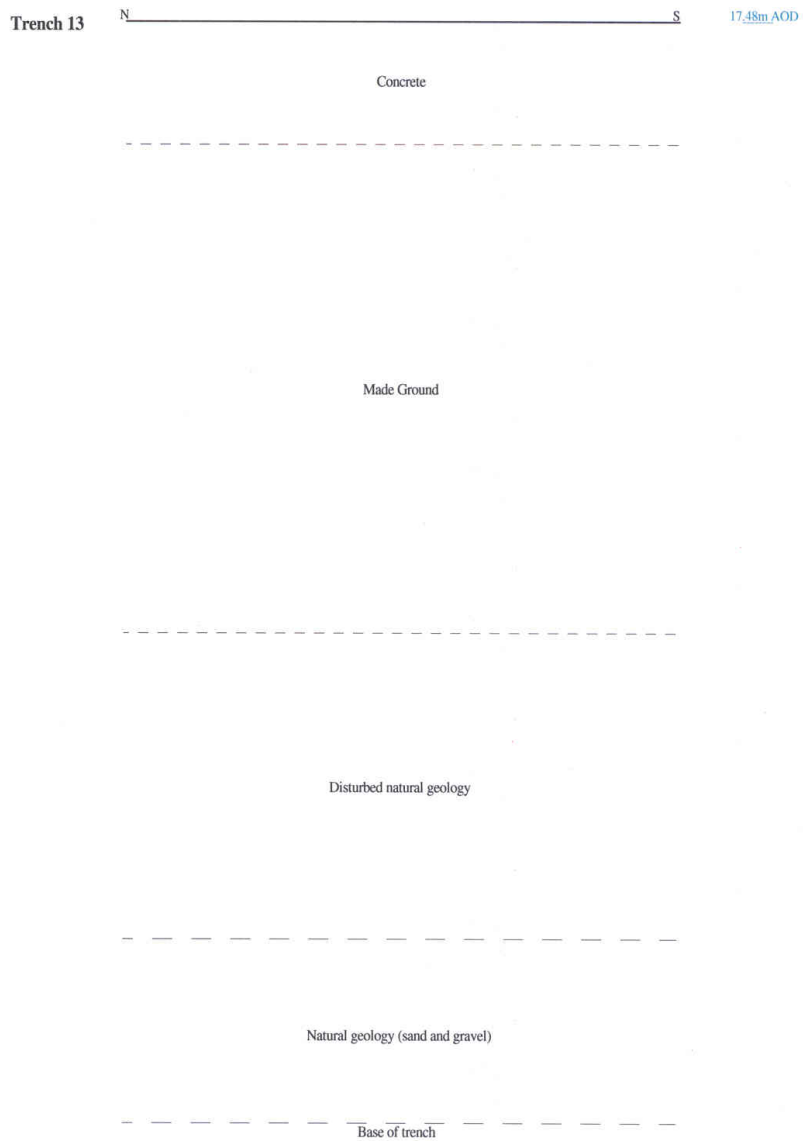


Figure 5. Representative section of Trench 13

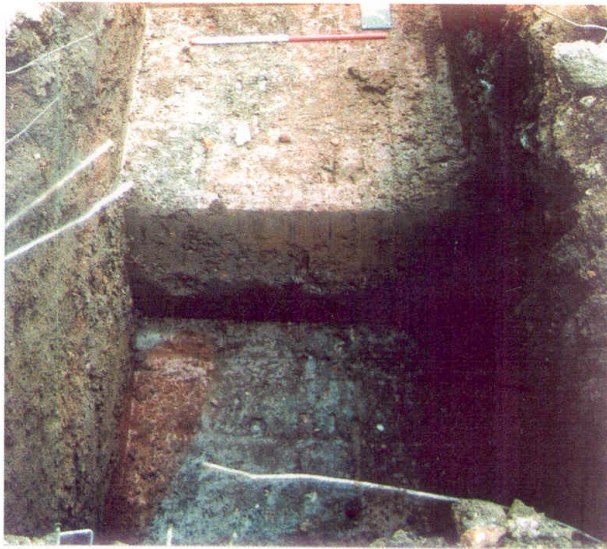


Plate 1. Trench 12, detail of south end looking north east, Scale 1m.



Plate 2. Trench 13 looking north-east, Scales 2m and 1m.