

ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION

LAND ADJACENT TO WILDGOOSE CHASE
BROAD STREET
WEOBLEY
HEREFORDSHIRE
HR4 8SA

NGR: SO 40238 51652
Planning Ref.: N122694/F
JOB N^o: BA1316WCW



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Cover: Site clearance prior to topsoil stripping.

REPORT SPECIFICATION

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1. Non Technical Summary

Archaeological observation of topsoil stripping and groundworks was undertaken on the 29th and 30th of April 2013. At which point 0.2m of topsoil was stripped resulting in less than 0.1m of topsoil remaining until subsoil would be encountered. Subsequent reassessment of the building levels suggested a further 0.1m of topsoil was required to be stripped but this was delayed by the discovery of an unmapped sewer that halted all groundworks.

Nothing archaeological was discovered and where the natural subsoils were revealed these were found to be as sterile as the 2012 evaluation suggested.

2. Introduction

Border Archaeology has been instructed by Mr Malcolm Lloyd to carry out a programme of archaeological observation (watching brief) in respect of the proposed erection of a detached house on land adjoining Wildgoose Chase, Broad Street, Weobley, Herefordshire HR4 8SA (NGR SO 40238 51652). The instruction is in response to a planning condition relating to an application (Planning Ref. N122694/F) submitted to Herefordshire Council on 19th October 2012.

2.1 *Soils, geology & topography*

The site consists of typical argillic brown earths of the ESCRICK 1 series (571p), these being deep well drained reddish coarse loamy soils, some similar soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging and some slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged reddish fine silty soils. The underlying geology consists of a reddish till (SSEW, 1983).

The topography of the site is broadly flat and level with the roadway of Broad Street, although garden landscaping and the construction of Wildgoose Chase have altered the original ground surface level.

3. Brief historical & archaeological background

Weobley is an historic village with Broad Street occupying a central position, however the settlement history of the site is sparse. The earliest map information for the site, the tithe map of 1838, shows a sequence of preserved burgage plots. By 1887 these houses and plots have been cleared and the site converted to an orchard. By 1948 the orchard is starting to be encroached upon in favour of housing.

A previous evaluation undertaken by Border Archaeology in 2007 in gardens to the rear of Wildgoose Chase produced evidence of post-medieval occupation, but little evidence of earlier activity. Evidence of a significant accumulation of post-medieval garden soils and several rubbish pits of probable post-medieval date were noted, reflecting the prolonged usage of the area as garden plots lying to the rear of the burgage properties which previously occupied the site. The garden soils were clearly of considerable depth, extending down to the base of the trench, and two ceramic fragments of medieval date were encountered in the lowest observed deposit.

Conversely, an evaluation in September 2012 in the front garden of Wildgoose Chase, on the site concerned in this watching brief, revealed a similar sequence of garden soils but with limited quantities of ceramic material and animal bone. None of the pottery appeared to be earlier than the post-medieval period and comprised what may be termed a typical garden assemblage. It would appear that natural deposition was attained at the base of each trench exemplified by a sterile reddish

clay soil and no significant archaeological deposits, features or structures were identified during the course of the investigation.

4. Methodology

Archaeological Observation was carried out in accordance with practices set out in *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IfA, 2008). Border Archaeology adheres to the *IfA Code of conduct (2010)* and *Code of approved practice for the regulation of contractual arrangements in field archaeology (2008)*.

Topsoil stripping was to a depth of 0.2m. However, it is unlikely that the current ground surface is at all relatable to previous ground surfaces. Re-excitation of previous service trenches was to variable depths and, in all cases, did not appear to encounter undisturbed stratigraphy as the re-excitation was wholly within the earlier cut.

Archaeological observation was undertaken on the 29th and 30th of April, before the discovery of an unmapped sewer halted excavation.

Full written, graphic and photographic records were made using *pro-forma* record forms and sheets, these being in accordance with Border Archaeology's *Field Recording Manual (2010)*.

A photographic record was made using a high-resolution 14.1MPX digital camera. All photographic records were indexed and cross-referenced to written site records. Details concerning subject and direction of view were maintained in a photographic register, indexed by frame number.

5. Results

The proposed new timber framed house is to be constructed in the front gardens of Wildgoose Chase, Broad Street, Weobley. Wildgoose Chase occupies the western side of Broad Street, the main road through Weobley. As an historic village the site required archaeological observation. However, previous building works and service provision compounded the relative lack of archaeological features in this area.

Topsoil stripping was to a depth of 0.2m and comprised a loose dark grey brown silty clay. This modern garden soil included occasional post medieval debris. While a redeposited version of the natural was encountered, it was not observed in an undisturbed state.



Plate 1: Facing North-East: the unmapped sewer, surrounding stratigraphy largely still the disturbed backfill of the original service trench.

6. Summary & Conclusion

Nothing of archaeological merit was revealed. Although further archaeologically monitored works are expected, it is not anticipated that anything will be found at the engineering limits expected.

7. Copyright

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8. Bibliography

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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