

ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION

AT

LAND TO THE REAR OF
NO 9 KYRLE STREET
HEREFORD
HR1 2ET

NGR: SO 51400 40146
Planning Ref: CE092625/F



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JOB No: BA1319KSH

APRIL 2013



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Cover: View of No 9 Kyrle Street looking N



1. Non-Technical Summary

Border Archaeology was instructed by J. Ball Esq to carry out a programme of archaeological observation of ground-works relating to a proposed single-storey two-bed dwelling on land to the rear of No 9 Kyrle Street Hereford HR1 2ET (SO 51400 40146).

The site appears to occupy an area forming part of the Priory Portfields and would probably have remained farmland until recent development, although it is also possible that it lies at the end of plots fronting onto Commercial Road

Excavations at the County Hospital revealed traces of a bank and ditch thought to form the boundary of the precinct of the medieval foundation of St Guthlac's Priory on the NE side of Union Walk. During excavation of a gas main trench in the centre of Union Walk no evidence of burials or other deposits associated with the priory were found and it thus seems unlikely that the priory extended as far to the west as Kyrle Street.

There was no evidence for industrial activity of the kind frequently found at the rear of plots of medieval date

REPORT SPECIFICATION

Archaeological Observation & draft report: Kath Crooks BA.

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Approved: Neil Shurety Dip. M. GM. Inst.M

2. Introduction

Border Archaeology was instructed by J. Ball Esq to carry out a programme of archaeological observation of ground-works relating to a proposed single-storey two-bed dwelling on land to the rear of No 9 Kyrle Street Hereford HR1 2ET (SO 51400 40146) (*fig.1*), this being in response to a Condition attached to a planning application (Ref CE092625/F) submitted to Herefordshire Council on October 16th 2009.

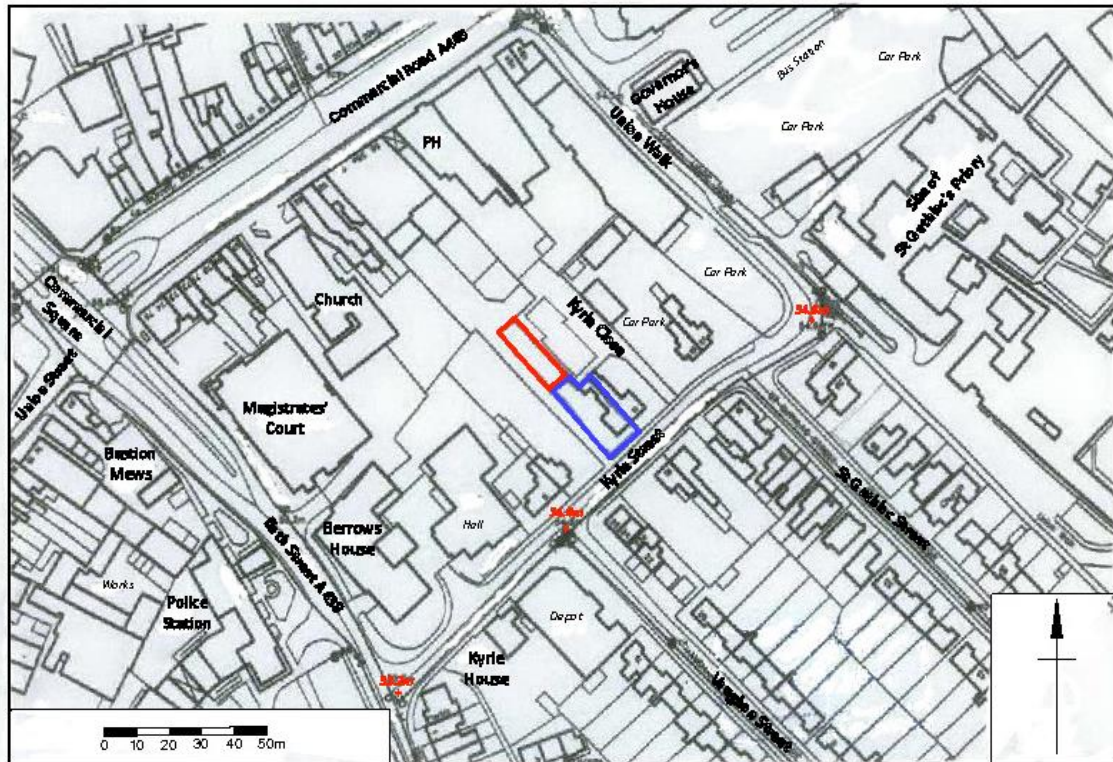


Fig 1: Plan showing location of No 9 Kyrle Street

Copies of this report will be submitted to Jim Ball, Julian Cotton Esq Archaeological Advisor Herefordshire Council and to the Herefordshire HER.

3. Historical & Archaeological Background

The site at No 9 Kyrle Street lies within the Hereford Area of Archaeological Importance (Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979) and immediately SE of the important medieval suburb of Bishop Street or Bye Street centred upon present-day Commercial Road. The area largely retains its medieval plan-form (grain), although much of its fabric is 19th century and later (Baker 2010).

The remains of the 12th century defensive circuit (SMR No 52357) lie approximately 100m W of the development site, extending roughly SE from Bastion Mews along the line of Bath Street and continuing SSE as a car-park boundary wall composed of rough, un-coursed

sandstone rubble with blocked features and inserted brickwork. Much of the wall appears to be a post-medieval rebuild.

Speed's 1610 map of Hereford indicates a pattern of ribbon development running NE from the Bye Gate located in the vicinity of present-day Commercial Square. This pattern appears to have emerged during the post-Conquest period when a market was established on a triangular site to the N of the city bounded by High Town, Union Street and Commercial Street. Commercial Road served as the main arterial route into Hereford from the NE at this time and extra-mural settlement appears to have intensified accordingly, transforming the largely agricultural character of the area.

Settlement was based on a system of burgage tenements set at right angles to the road, those on the SE extending back from the street frontage towards Kyrle Street. The plots appear to have been largely occupied by French immigrants, who enjoyed preferential legal status.

A number of archaeological interventions have revealed evidence of development during the medieval period, such activity possibly being under the direction of the bishops of Hereford (Sherlock & Pikes 2001). Leather processing was identified in the W part of the Magistrates' Court site in Bath Street in 2001 (SMR No 38451) (SO 5132 4012), prior to construction of an underground car park, with five phases of activity noted, the earliest extending from the later 12th - early 13th centuries. An apparent break in occupation was noted between the 14th and 17th centuries.

Archaeological monitoring and recording in 2000 to the rear of the Litten Tree public house (No 58 Commercial Road) (SO 51370 40190) (SMR No 30350) revealed further small-scale industrial usage. A series of 12th – 13th century rubbish pits set back from the street frontage contained horn cores attesting to the probable manufacture of horn utensils in the vicinity of the site (Sherlock & Pikes 2002).

Broadly contemporary activity found at the King's Fee Commercial Road in 2001 consisted of a 12th - century well and rubbish pits (Sherlock & Pikes 2001) and in 2006 a 'T' shaped trench was opened at the Hope Pole Commercial Road approximately 50 metres from the road frontage to reveal further pits and ditches containing medieval pottery and horn cores and smithing gromps indicative of industrial activity. The medieval features on the King's Fee site underlay a substantial thickness of well-mixed garden soil that had remained largely undisturbed until the late post-medieval period (Lewis & Pikes 2006).

Development of the suburban area was clearly influenced by the proximity of the Benedictine Priory of St Guthlac (or SS Peter, Paul & Guthlac) (SMR No 6498) (SO 5153 4019) which had been relocated from its previous site at Castle Green to the area now occupied by the bus station and County Hospital. The conventual buildings date from around 1143. Excavations carried out at the County Hospital in May 1978 revealed the remains of 25 individuals interred within stone-slab coffins. These were originally interpreted as adult male monastic burials; however, subsequent analysis carried out by Charlotte Roberts of the University of Durham confirmed this to be a mixed burial assemblage including eight definite males and 12 definite females with at least six non-adults present.

A further 38 NW-SE aligned burials were subsequently revealed in 1984-5 during the building of three extensions to the County Hospital, some of which had been buried in wooden coffins.

The priory's burial ground remains its best-defined archaeological feature, although other structures have also been identified. A metalled surface, possibly the remains of a path or yard, was identified on the bus station site in 1986 and cess pits were excavated in 1987 at the cinema; these were presumed to have been situated near the precinct wall, separating the monastery from Bye Street and possibly serving a building in the Outer Court during the mid to late 13th century (Thomas & Boucher 2002).

It is possible that the precinct wall on the SW of the monastic site ran on the alignment of present-day Union Walk, which would place the development site at No 9 Kyrle Street marginally beyond its bounds. That building activity associated with the Priory was minimal in this area was corroborated to some extent by the results of evaluation trenching opened to the rear of No.11 Kyrle Street (SO 51445 40153) in 2006 (Border Archaeology 2006). Neither trench had any evidence relating to the medieval period.

The site did however reveal evidence of garden plot activity consistent with the general pattern observed elsewhere within the suburban area; both trenches produced considerable depths of cultivation soils and the site appears to have remained under cultivation until the late 19th century. The absence of archaeological deposits was again noted in the vicinity during archaeological monitoring of ground works adjacent to No. 68 St Guthlac St, located some 30m from the monastic burial ground (Crooks 2005).

St Guthlac's was dissolved in 1539 and the site passed to John ap Rice (Price) whose family eventually disposed of it in 1675, by which time the Priory buildings had incurred considerable damage and lay in a ruinous state. In the summer of 1645, during the English Civil War, the buildings together with much of the suburban area, was laid waste by Royalist forces to create an open field of fire in readiness for an assault by Scottish forces loyal to parliament. The city lay under siege for five weeks until a relief force led by the king drove the Scots from the field.

By the mid-18th century the area appears to have recovered and Isaac Taylor's 1754 map of Hereford clearly shows buildings on the street frontage with narrow plots extending back from the street, probably reflecting the layout of the original medieval tenements (Hillaby, 1983). The site of St Guthlac's Priory was subsequently acquired by the County and the Regency architect John Nash engaged to design a new Gaol (SMR No 20124). Work began in 1793 with the demolition of a two-storey property known as 'The Priory' and was completed in 1796. The buildings remained in use until 1929 and were demolished in 1930. Several features associated with the Gaol have since been revealed during ground works activity on the bus station site, including a large portion of the former debtors' wing, several cells measuring 2.5m x 3m square arranged either side of a central passageway and a dry brick-lined well.

In 1836-7, a new Union workhouse housing 250 inmates (SMR No 20127) was built at a cost of £5,600, the foundations of which were found to overlie the burials uncovered in 1978. Architect John Plowman's design followed a cruciform plan with an entrance block at the front and four accommodation wings to the rear extending out from a central hub to form a

range of yards designated for use by different pauper classes. The location and layout are shown on the 1903 OS map.

The workhouse later assumed a new role as the Public Assistance Institute providing support facilities for the new County Hospital (SMR No 30323) (SO 5164 4021), which opened as a three-storey block accommodating 115 patients in 1940 between the workhouse and bus station. Hutted wards were constructed during the Second World War to treat casualties and since then the county hospital has gradually taken over the entirety of the monastic precinct and some of the surrounding area. The hospital's present layout was developed from 1999.

4. Site description

The site (*figs. 1 & 2*) is situated on the NW side of Kyrle Street at a height of approximately 55mOD and lies on the gravel terraces of the river Wye, which overlie Devonian mudstones and sandstones. The site lies within the Hereford Area of Archaeological Importance (Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979). The County Hospital situated roughly 100m NNE occupies the site of St Guthlac's Priory and Hereford County Gaol

5. Methodology

Archaeological observation was carried out in accordance with *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IfA 2008). Border Archaeology adheres to the *IfA Code of conduct (2012)* and *Code of approved practice for the regulation of contractual arrangements in field archaeology (2008)* and to Herefordshire Archaeology's *Standards for Archaeological Projects in Herefordshire* (Issue 1) (Herefordshire Council, 2004) Border Archaeology is cognisant of Herefordshire Council's *Archaeology & Development Supplementary Planning Document (2012)*.

All intrusive ground-works were subject to observation. Archaeological deposits were examined and cleaned using appropriate hand-tools. Archaeological deposits were examined and recorded both in plan and section.

5.1 Recording

Full written, graphic and photographic records were made in accordance with Border Archaeology's *Field Recording Manual (2012)*. The written record comprised detailed stratigraphic recording using a context numbering system.

A site plans was drawn at a scale of 1:50 (*fig. 2*). All drawings were numbered and listed in a drawing register, these drawing numbers being cross-referenced to written site records.

A photographic record was made using a high-resolution digital camera, comprising photographs of archaeological features and appropriate groups of features and structures. Included in each photograph was an appropriate scale. 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.

5.2 Recovery of finds

Finds identified on this site were predominantly late 19th or early 20th century in date thus no finds were retained, although a record of their presence has been made.

5.3 Sampling levels

No deposits revealed were considered suitable for sampling.

6. Results

The uppermost deposit across the site (101) consisted of a soft mid brown sandy silt topsoil. The only finds in this deposit dated to the later post-medieval or modern periods and were therefore not retained. The topsoil was a maximum of 0.53m deep.

Beneath 101 was a cleaner, mid brown silt clay, thought to be an interface with the subsoil (*Plate 1*).



Plate 1: View of trenching looking SE

This was seen on the northern part of the site only. It contained a moderate amount of small natural sandstone fragments but no finds were present.

At the northern end of the site, the foundation trench cut a pit of modern date [103] (*Plate 2, fig 2*). It measured 1.10m in length and contained a quantity of scrap metal and wood (104), although the feature remained unexcavated.



Plate 2: View SE showing pit [103]



Plate 3: The finds from pit [103]

Due to their recent date the finds were photographed but they were not retained (*Plate 3*). The fill of the feature was a dark greyish-brown silt, fairly organic in nature. The only sherd of pottery was of blue and white Transfer Printed Ware (19th century and later) which, as with the scrap metal, owing to its late date was not retained.

No further features or deposits were present on the site.

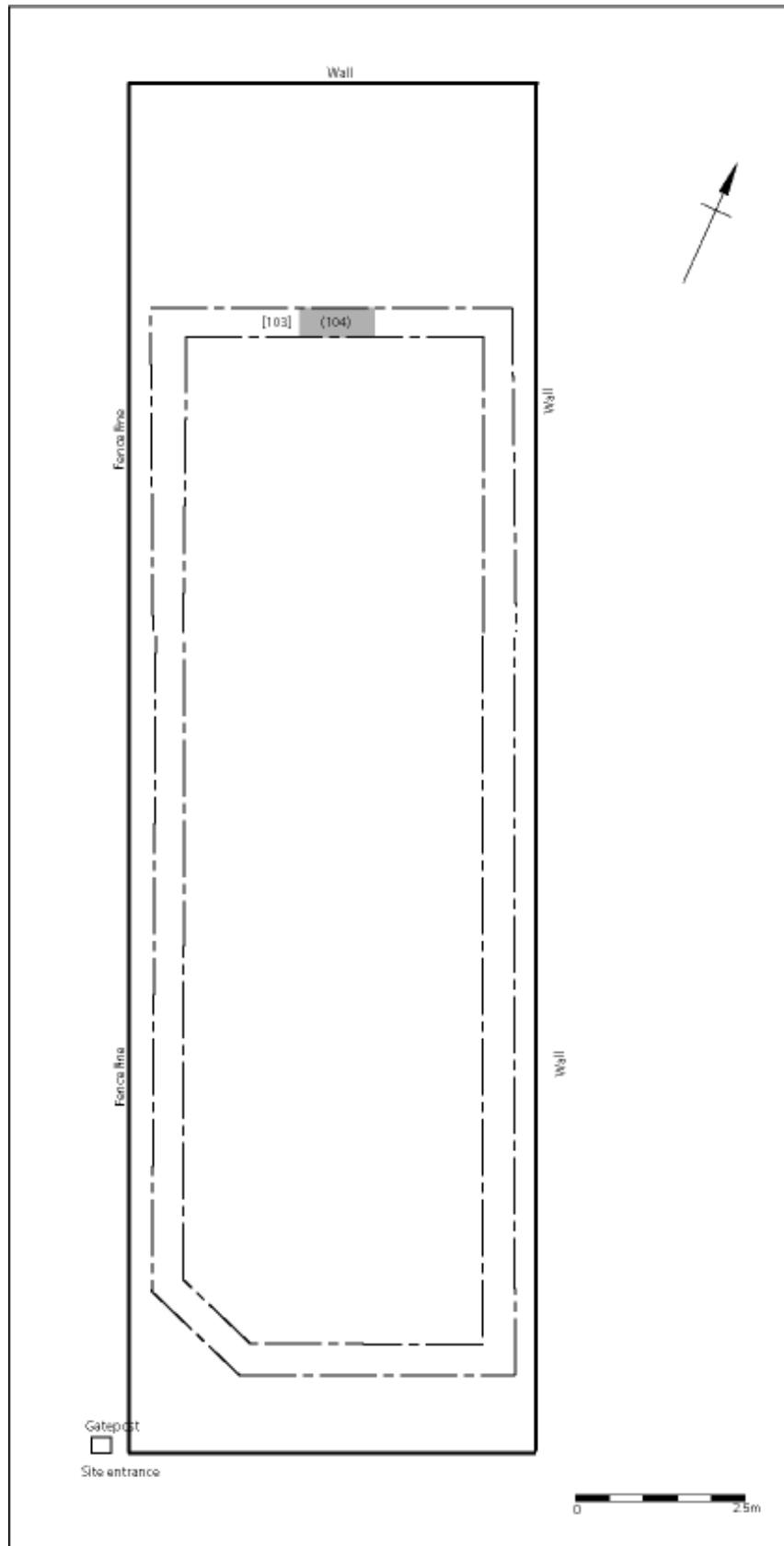


Fig. 2: Plan showing location and extent of trenching



7. Discussion of Results

It seems likely that the site occupies an area forming part of the Priory Portfields or possibly the end of plots fronting onto Commercial Road. As such it would probably have remained farmland until recent development.

During excavations at the County Hospital traces of a bank and ditch thought to form the boundary of the precinct were found on the NE side of Union Walk. During excavation of a gas main trench in the centre of Union Walk (Vyce 1999) no traces of burials or other deposits associated with the priory were found. It therefore seems unlikely that the priory extended as far to the west as Kyrle Street.

There was no evidence for industrial activity of the kind frequently found at the rear of plots of medieval date.

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10. Appendices

10.1 Context Register

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION
(101)	Soft mid brown sandy silt topsoil, occasional later post-medieval & modern ceramics (not retained, trench-wide to a maximum depth of 0.53. Overlies (102), cut by [103]
INTERPRETATION:	<i>Topsoil</i>
(102)	Firm mid brown silty clay, moderate small natural sandstone fragments, no finds present. Underlies (101)
INTERPRETATION:	<i>Probable interface with subsoil. Seen on N part of the site only</i>
[103]	Cut, profile unknown as unexcavated, measured 1.10m in length, frequent scrap metal and wood (not retained). Cuts (101), filled by (104)
INTERPRETATION:	<i>Cut of modern pit at N end of site</i>
(104)	Dark mid greyish-brown silt, fairly organic, single sherd of blue and white Transfer Printed Ware (C 19 th & later) which, as with the scrap metal (not retained). Fills [103]
INTERPRETATION:	<i>Fill of modern pit</i>