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Archaeological Observation

Bastien Jack Ltd
Former Cheltape Engineering Works
Stoneville Street
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire GL51 8PH

September 2014



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1 Executive summary

Border Archaeology carried out a programme of Archaeological Observation (Watching Brief) on September 8th & 10th 2014 on behalf of Bastien Jack Ltd Suite 8 The Regatta Henley Way Doddington Road Lincoln with respect to the redevelopment of the former Cheltape Engineering Ltd site in Stoneville Street Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL51 8PH (NGR: SO 9423 2287)

Merrett's 1834 Map of Cheltenham shows the area and depicts the White Hart Inn and adjacent wine vaults, with orcharding and a coal & stone wharf to the SW adjoining Bloomsbury Street, with little evidence of residential development at that time. However, at some time between 1860 and 1880, the orcharding and coal & stone wharf had been completely swept away and rows of narrow terraced housing built, represented by Stoneville Street and, further to the S, Bloomsbury Street, as shown on the OS 1st edition 25 inch map of 1880. The eastern part of the study area was subsequently impacted by the construction of the GWR Cheltenham and Honeybourne Railway in 1906.

Stoneville Street suffered a direct hit during a major bombing raid in Cheltenham on 11th December 1940, killing 10 people and demolishing most of the mid-19th century terraced housing on both sides of the street. A plan of Cheltenham city centre dated 1965 shows the terraced housing along the N side of Stoneville Street had been completely destroyed and replaced by a T-shaped building used as a Scout Hall.

A previous programme of fieldwork undertaken by Border Archaeology in 2008 on the neighbouring site at Gloucester Road immediately to the NE of the present site revealed evidence of a ditch aligned NE-SW which was interpreted as a boundary ditch of medieval origin, possibly relating to a burgage plot. This suggested that the pattern of medieval burgage strips originally extended further to the W than had been previously supposed, possibly up to the line of present-day Gloucester Road, which appears to have marked a long-established boundary.

The present ground works were limited in extent, comprising a single drainage trench excavated by machine to a depth of 0.8-1.0m alongside the existing abutment wall of the former railway, now a cycle route and walkway.

This offered little opportunity to investigate the character of below-ground deposits across the site generally and much of the material excavated consisted of deposits of Cheltenham sand & gravel, with modern deposits found to directly overlie the natural substrate in places. Evidence of brick and slate demolition debris was also revealed, possibly relating to structures shown on historic mapping to have previously occupied the site. Limited exposure of the railway abutment wall was attained, with evidence of foundation cut tentatively identified in places; a concrete & brick foundation structure (102) was also revealed relating either to the railway abutment or to the former engineering works.

No evidence of the medieval settlement activity identified to the NE on the neighbouring site at Gloucester Road (BA 2008) was revealed and it is confirmed that no significant archaeological deposits were adversely affected by the ground works required in preparation for the proposed development.

2 Introduction

Border Archaeology was instructed by Bastien Jack Ltd Suite 8 The Regatta Henley Way Doddington Road Lincoln LN6 3QR to carry out a programme of Archaeological Observation (Watching Brief) with respect to the redevelopment of the former Cheltape Engineering Ltd site in Stoneville Street Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL51 8PH (NGR: SO 9423 2287) (*fig. 1*). Archaeological Observation took place on September 8th & 10th 2014

The existing industrial premises were demolished prior to the commencement of ground works in preparation for the erection of two dwellings facing Stoneville Street, two apartments facing Market Street and two dwellings and four apartments served from Bloomsbury Street, together with associated services and facilities (Planning Ref. 11/00138/FUL-resubmission following 10/00552/FUL).

Charles Parry Esq Archaeologist Gloucestershire County Council advised on February 16th 2011 that the application site, which is largely occupied by the existing industrial structures, is archaeologically sensitive, since it is located within Cheltenham's medieval settlement area and significant archaeological deposits may be adversely affected by any ground works required for the proposed development.

Mr Parry subsequently confirmed to BA on February 2nd 2014 that the site lies within the medieval settlement area and, in view of its archaeological sensitivity, he recommended a programme of archaeological recording to comprise a Watching Brief (Archaeological Observation).

Copies of this report will be submitted to the Client, Mr Parry and to the Gloucestershire Historic Environment Record.

3 Aims & objectives

2.1 The aim of the Archaeological Observation was to record any surviving below-ground archaeology revealed during ground disturbance associated with the development.

The objectives were:

- identify all archaeological remains revealed during the course of ground disturbance within the affected area
- ensure preservation by record of all archaeological remains revealed during the course of this ground disturbance
- prepare an appropriate archaeological archive of the site including the treatment and preservation of any finds

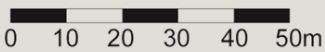
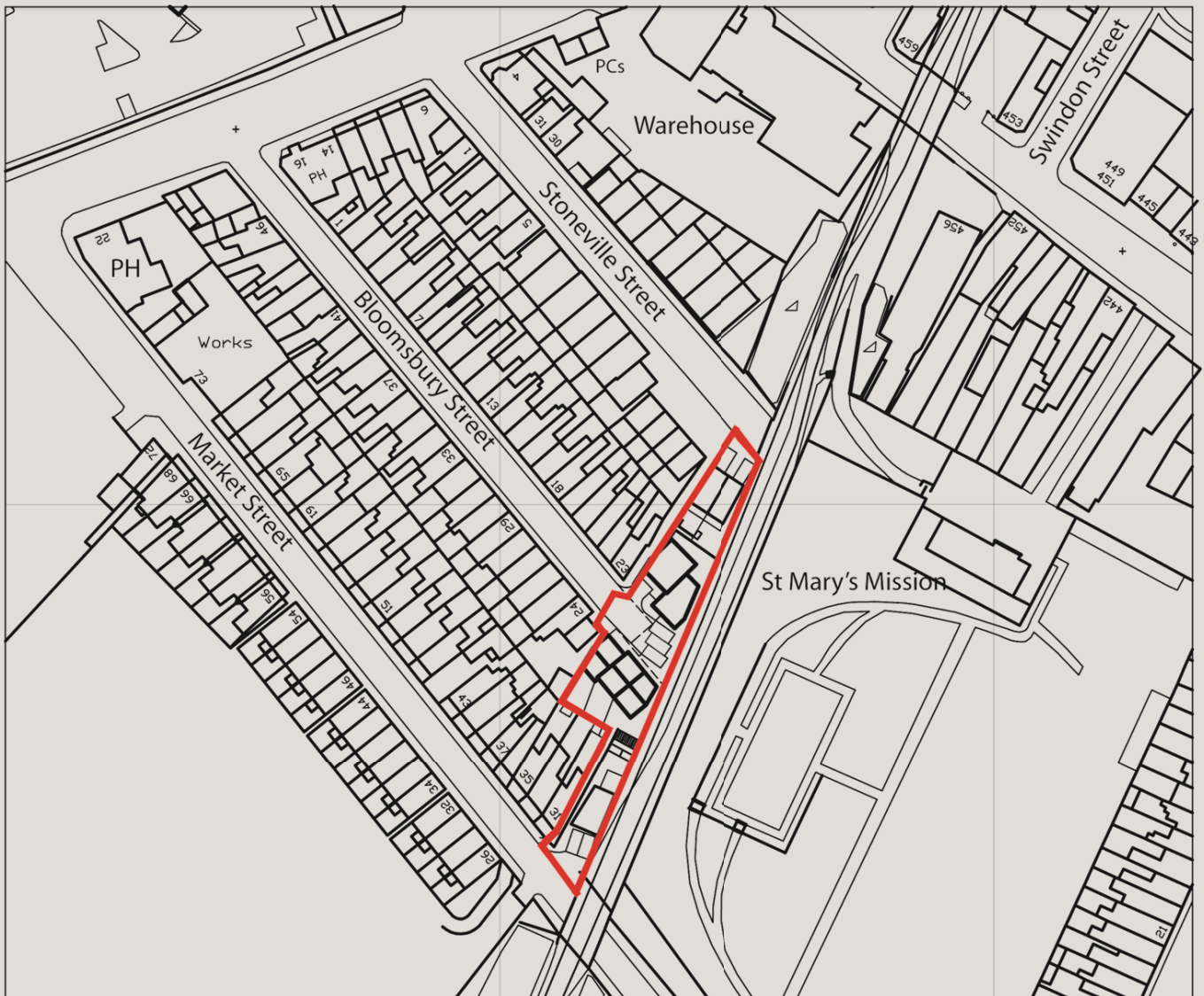


Fig. 1: Plan showing location and extent of the site



Fig. 2: Site construction plan showing location of trenching

4 Site Description

Stoneville Street is situated at approximately 55m AOD on the western side of Cheltenham, close to the junction of Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury Road, High Street and Townsend Street. It is a largely residential cul-de-sac characterised by terraced properties with several former industrial premises having been replaced with housing.

Prior to demolition, the site comprised a substantial brick premises located towards the end of two cul-de-sacs and extending on a linear alignment adjacent to the former Honeybourne Line (a cycle route and walkway).

Cheltenham is recorded as an un-surveyed area by the Soil Survey of England and Wales (1983). However, the ground works revealed localised geological deposits of Cheltenham Sands & Gravels extending to the base of the excavated trenching.

5 Historical & Archaeological Background

Little evidence of prehistoric activity has been recorded within the vicinity of the study area, although Palaeolithic remains were reported during sewage works in 1854 approximately 150m S of the site near Alstone Mill (SO 942226) (SMR 9412).

Several Roman coin finds are recorded in the wider vicinity of Stoneville Street and a cemetery comprising long stone-built chests containing bones, glass bottles, vases and coins were reported during the 1820s at the brick works in the area of St. James Square (SO 9440 2247). However, no clear evidence of Roman occupation has thus far come to light within the vicinity of the proposed ground works.

The first documentary reference to Cheltenham appears in the account of a dispute between the bishops of Worcester and Hereford which was heard at the Council of Cloveshoe in AD 803. Both had claimed the right to the revenues of a monastery at *Celtanham* (Cheltenham), the precise location of which remains unknown. No further references occur until the Domesday survey, when Cheltenham is recorded as Crown land.

The site lies at the NW extent of the medieval settlement of Cheltenham within Settlement Area 6 as identified in the *Gloucestershire Historic Towns Survey* (Douthwaite & Devine 1998; Grubb 2007). The topography of the medieval town chiefly consisted of a pattern of narrow rectangular burgage plots regularly distributed on either side of the High Street. A market charter granted in 1226 contains no mention of burgesses; however, by 1307 the town's urban status is acknowledged. Cheltenham is recorded as a borough in the tax lists of 1313 and 1336 and the Court Rolls attest to the importance of the office of bailiff from the early mid-14th century. A survey of the property of the manor of Cheltenham undertaken during the reign of Henry VI lists 359 tenants and their holdings, which includes 130 burgage tenants and 142 copyhold tenants (Hart 1981, 40).

At the time of the Dissolution, the manor was held by the monastery of Syon at Twickenham, a 15th-century foundation of the Bridgettine Order with extensive holdings, which, by virtue of its wealth, was among the first of the monastic foundations to have its possessions confiscated by the Crown. The manor was subsequently held by a series of secular landlords and in 1612 was bought by Sir Baptist Hicks. It was later purchased by John Dutton, whose family retained the manor for more than 200 years.

Evidence of Civil War activity has been identified in various part of the town; a number of skeletons, bullets and coins of the Civil War period are reported to have been found to the SE of the site (NGR: SO 944 225) in 1823.

Cartographic evidence indicates that significant changes to the topography of the area occurred between c.1800 and 1835. In 1808, a new turnpike road from Gloucester to Cheltenham was established, represented by present-day Gloucester Road. Two years later, in 1810-11, a tram-road was opened to link Gloucester quay and docks with Cheltenham and the newly opened quarries at Leckhampton (SMR Ref. 5593). The line of the tram-road ran alongside the new turnpike road to Gloucester and remained in use until 1861.

Merrett's 1834 Map of Cheltenham shows the White Hart Inn and adjacent wine vaults, with orcharding and a coal & stone wharf to the SW adjoining Bloomsbury Street, with little evidence of residential development at that time. However, at some time between 1860 and 1880, the orcharding and coal & stone wharf had been completely swept away and rows of narrow terraced housing built, represented by Stoneville Street and, further to the S, Bloomsbury Street, as shown on the OS 1st edition 25 inch map of 1880. The eastern part of the study area was subsequently impacted by the construction of the GWR Cheltenham and Honeybourne railway line in 1906 (SMR Ref. 11184).

Stoneville Street suffered a direct hit during a major bombing raid in Cheltenham on 11th December 1940, killing 10 people and demolishing most of the mid-19th century terraced housing on both sides of the street. A plan of Cheltenham city centre dated 1965 shows the terraced housing along the N side of Stoneville Street had been completely destroyed and replaced by a T-shaped building used as a Scout Hall.

Evaluation trenching previously opened by Border Archaeology (BA 2008) on the neighbouring site at Gloucester Road immediately to the NE of the present site revealed evidence for medieval occupation in the form of a ditch aligned NE-SW. The ditch, which was identified within Trench 3 in the central area of the site, contained sherds of medieval pottery and was interpreted as a boundary ditch of medieval origin, possibly relating to a burgage plot. This suggested that the pattern of medieval burgage strips originally extended further to the W than had been previously supposed, possibly up to the line of present-day Gloucester Road, which appears to have marked a long-established boundary.

Trench 1, located to the rear of Stoneville Street, immediately N of the northernmost extent of the present site, revealed evidence of two ceramic tiled surfaces relating to paved yards to the rear of two mid-19th -century terraced cottages located at the E end of Stoneville Street, which were destroyed by the bombing in December 1940.

6 Methodology

All archaeological site works within the study area will be undertaken in accordance with accepted standards of professional and ethical procedure as set out in *Management of Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers Guide* (EH 2009) and *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IfA 2008 – updated 22nd Nov 2013). Border Archaeology adheres to the *IfA Code of conduct* (2013 - updated 20th Mar 2014) and *Code of approved practice for the regulation of contractual arrangements in archaeology* (2008- updated 20th Mar 2014).

A single drainage trench of approximately 80m was excavated along the SE perimeter of the site (NGR: SO 94248 22904 to NGR: SO 94216 22832), as defined by the abutment wall of the former GWR Cheltenham and Honeybourne Railway, now used as a cycle route linking Wymans Brook and the railway station. The trench measured 0.6m wide and attained a depth of 0.8-1.0m and was excavated by machine; examination and cleaning of deposits was carried out manually, using appropriate hand tools.

6.1 Recording

Full written, graphic and photographic records were made in accordance with Border Archaeology's *Archaeological Field Recording Manual* (2014).

These records included:

- A *pro-forma* context record was completed for each stratigraphic unit examined
- A plan showing the extent of the area (tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid and located on a 1:2500 plan) is included (*fig.1*). An overall plan of the site shows the location of the trenching (*fig. 2*).
- A photographic record of all stratigraphic units was compiled using a high-resolution digital camera, in addition to a representative photographic record of the progress of the archaeological work.

6.2 Recovery, processing and curation of artefactual data

No artefacts, building materials, industrial residues, environmental material, biological remains or decay products were encountered during the course of the ground works.

6.3 Recovery and assessment of palaeoenvironmental/palaeoeconomic data

No deposits suitable for palaeoenvironmental sampling were encountered.

6.3.1 Geoarchaeology

No buried soils or sediment sequences reflecting the pedology of the site were encountered.

7 Results

Item	Context No.	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
					Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	(101)	Deposit	Crushed demolition material deposited as sub-base for proposed development	Brick and concrete rubble. Extended site-wide to thickness of c. 0.25m. Overlies (106)	-	-	-	-	-	This recently laid deposit comprising demolition rubble from the former engineering works was cleared back in this part of the site prior to the commencement of trenching
2	(102)	Structure	Concrete & brick structure relating either to railway abutment or to the former engineering works	Indurated brick, stone & concrete. Extended c. 45m NE/SW	-	-	-	-	-	Projected some 0.25m from base of abutment wall. Terminated approx. 45m from NE extent of trenching. Relationship to railway wall unclear
3	[103]	Cut	Possible cut for railway abutment wall	Cut; linear in plan; aligned NE/SW. Extended >80m, width and depth unknown	-	-	-	-	-	The cut was seen only sporadically & was visible only in plan. No

Item	Context No.	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
					Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
										details of its profile and dimensions were obtainable
4	(104)	Structure	Abutment wall of former GWR Cheltenham to Honeybourne Railway, currently a cycleway	Masonry; Staffordshire blue construction brick; aligned NE/SW; cement-bonded brickwork laid in English bond	-	-	-	-	-	Much of the wall survives above ground; however, the ground works revealed a very limited extent of below-ground masonry.
5	(105)	Structure	Pier /wall marking SW extent of (102)	Masonry; brick; measured >0.25m x c. 0.25m x c. 1.0m	-	-	-	-	-	Possibly relates to former engineering works & is part of same construction as (102)
6	(106)	Structure	Remains of brick plinth	Masonry; brick; stretcher bond; single brick thickness; measured 0.5m x >0.25m x 0.2m	-	-	-	-	-	Brick plinth of unknown function
7	(107)	Deposit	Remains of former ground surface following site clearance	Loose, dark brown silty sand, frequent small sub-angular & sub-rounded stones, occasional brick & brick fragments.	-	-	-	-	-	Truncated former ground surface
8	(108)	Deposit	Possible evidence of levelling during ground works associated with construction of	Loose, mid to dark orange-brown sand, moderate medium sub-rounded stones, frequent small angular & sub-angular stones, occasional charcoal, frequent fragmentary brick, slate & mortar.	-	-	-	-	-	Found generally in central area & NE extent of trenching beneath (107)

Item	Context No.	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
					Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
			the former building occupying the site.							
9	(109)	Deposit	Natural substrate	Compacted/friable, greyish-brown sandy gravel, frequent small angular & sub-angular stones.	-	-	-	-	-	Limited exposure observed in places at base of trenching
10	(110)	Deposit	Sub-base for (102)	Compacted, mid grey gravel.	-	-	-	-	-	-
11	(111)	Deposit	Construction backfill associated with former engineering works	Loose, mid to dark brown silty sand, frequent gravel, brick & slate	-	-	-	-	-	Mixed deposit extending some 20m SW of termination of (102)
12	(112)	Deposit	Natural sand	Loose/friable mid ochre sand, occasional medium sub-rounded & flattish stones.	-	-	-	-	-	Found at SW extent of trenching beneath (107)
13	(113)	Deposit	Demolition rubble	Loose mid brown silty sand, frequent brick (some of which was mortared), slate & loose mortar, moderate medium angular flattish stones, frequent small sub-rounded stones	-	-	-	-	-	Found in discrete areas



Plate 1: SE-facing trench section showing deposit (108)



Plate 2: View SE showing detail of (102) as revealed during the course of the ground works excavation for the manhole located at the NE extent of the trenching



Plate 3: View SE showing termination of (102) as defined by remains of brick pier/wall (105) with deposit (111) shown right of picture



Plate 4: View SW showing deposits of sand (112) revealed adjacent to Market Street at SW extent of trenching



Plate 5: View SE of (106)



Plate 6: View of trench base showing demolition rubble (113) revealed in places along the trench



Plate 7: View SW towards Market Street showing extent of trenching

8 Discussion & conclusion

The ground works were limited in extent comprising a single drainage trench excavated alongside the existing railway abutment wall and approximately 0.4m from its base. This offered little opportunity to investigate the character of below-ground deposits across the site generally and much of the material excavated consisted of deposits of Cheltenham sand & gravel, with modern deposits found to directly overlie the natural substrate in places. Evidence of brick and slate demolition debris was also revealed, possibly relating to structures shown on historic mapping to have previously occupied the site. Limited exposure of the railway abutment wall was attained, with evidence of foundation cut tentatively identified in places; a concrete & brick foundation structure (102) was also revealed relating either to the railway abutment or to the former engineering works.

No evidence of the medieval settlement activity identified to the NE on the neighbouring site at Gloucester Road (BA 2008) was revealed and it is confirmed that no significant archaeological deposits were adversely affected by the ground works required in preparation for the proposed development.

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IfA, 2013, *Code of Conduct* (updated 20th Mar 2014)

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10.1 Cartography

(All maps, unless stated, were consulted at the Gloucestershire Archives)

Merrett's Map of Cheltenham, 1834

Ordnance Survey 1st edition 25 inch map 1880 (Gloucestershire 26.3)

Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 25 inch map 1900 (Gloucestershire 26.3)

Ordnance Survey 3rd edition 25 inch map 1925 (Gloucestershire 26.3)

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