

Archaeological Field Evaluation

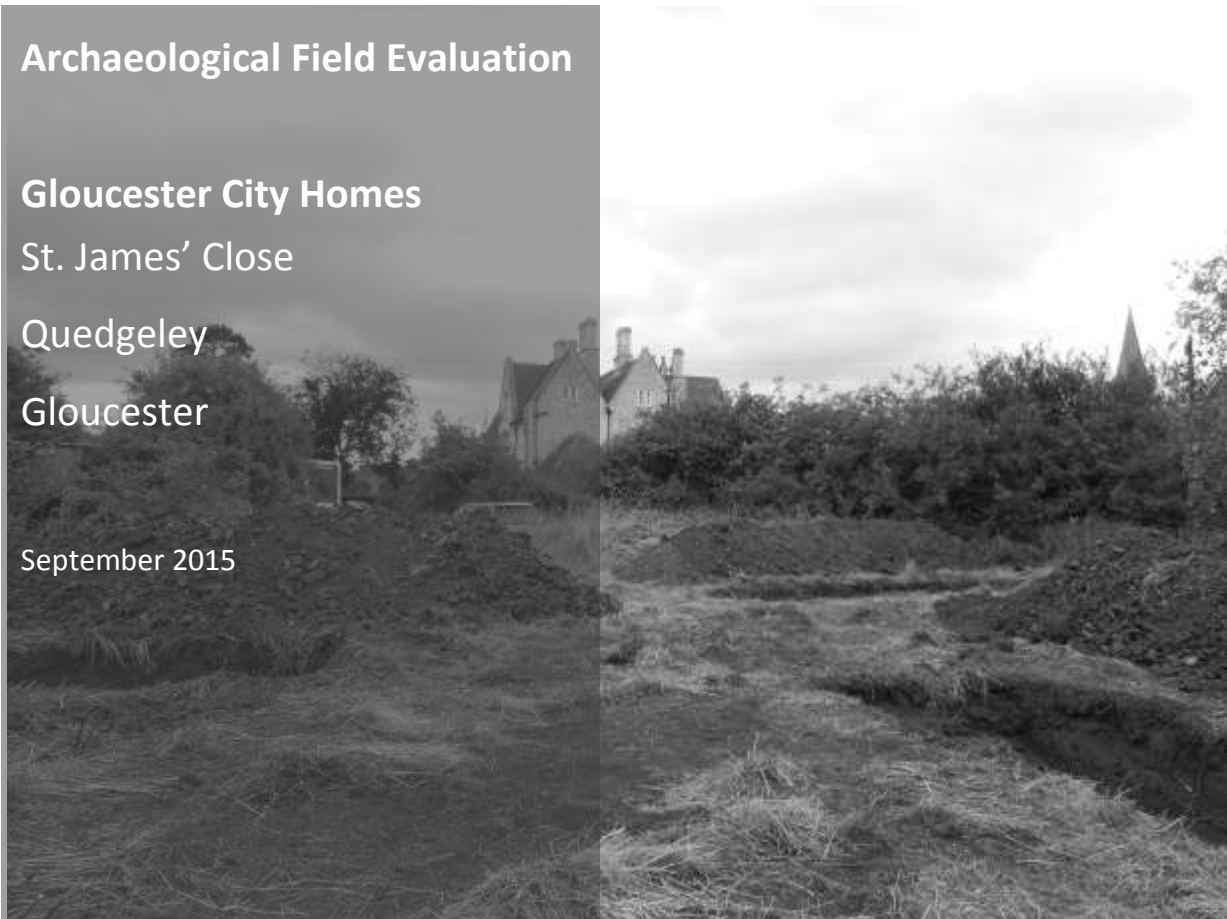
Gloucester City Homes

St. James' Close

Quedgeley

Gloucester

September 2015



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Cover: View of site looking SSW towards St. James' Church and The Old Rectory

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Contents:

1	Executive Summary	1
2	Introduction.....	2
3	Site Description	2
3.1	Soils and Geology	3
4	Historical and Archaeological Background	3
4.1	Prehistoric	3
4.2	Roman	3
4.3	Medieval.....	4
4.4	Post-medieval.....	4
5	Methodology.....	5
5.1	Recording.....	6
5.2	Recovery and Retention of Finds	6
6	Results.....	7
6.1	Trench 1.....	7
6.2	Trench 2.....	10
6.3	Trench 3.....	12
6.4	Trench 4.....	14
6.5	Trench 5.....	16
7	Discussion.....	19
8	Copyright.....	20
9	Bibliography	21
9.1	Cartography.....	21
10	Appendix 1: Assessment of the post-medieval pottery and burnt clay	22
10.1	Summary	22
10.2	Method.....	22
10.3	The pottery	22
10.3.1	Context (505)	22
10.3.2	Context (507)	23
10.4	Discussion	23
10.5	Conclusions.....	23
10.6	References	23

1 Executive Summary

Border Archaeology Ltd was instructed by Gloucester City Homes to undertake a programme of archaeological field evaluation on land at St. James's Close Quedgeley Gloucester (centred upon NGR SO 8081 1423) (fig. 1) prior to proposed residential development. The site is currently an undeveloped area of grassland, scrub and hard-standing; the extant remains of brick structure of late 18th -or early 19th -century date are present within the eastern part of the site.

St James' Close lies within the core of the medieval settlement of Quedgeley and - based upon the results of previous investigation carried out to the north - the course of the Roman road between Gloucester (Glevum) and the port of Sea Mills (Abonae) would appear to run on a northeast/southwest alignment through the site.

Five trenches were opened to determine the extent of the surviving archaeology. These revealed only a modern shallow ditch and posthole located close to the extant building. No evidence for the Roman road was identified, although it is possible that significant previous ground disturbance may have removed any remains.

No further features or deposits of archaeological significance were identified.

2 Introduction

Border Archaeology Ltd (BAL) was instructed by Gloucester City Homes to undertake a programme of archaeological field evaluation on land situated at St. James' Close Quedgeley Gloucester (centred upon NGR SO 8081 1423) (*fig. 1*). The site currently comprises an area of undeveloped grassland, scrub and hard-standing; the remains of a pair of late 18th -or early 19th -century brick-built farm labourers' cottages are present at the eastern edge.

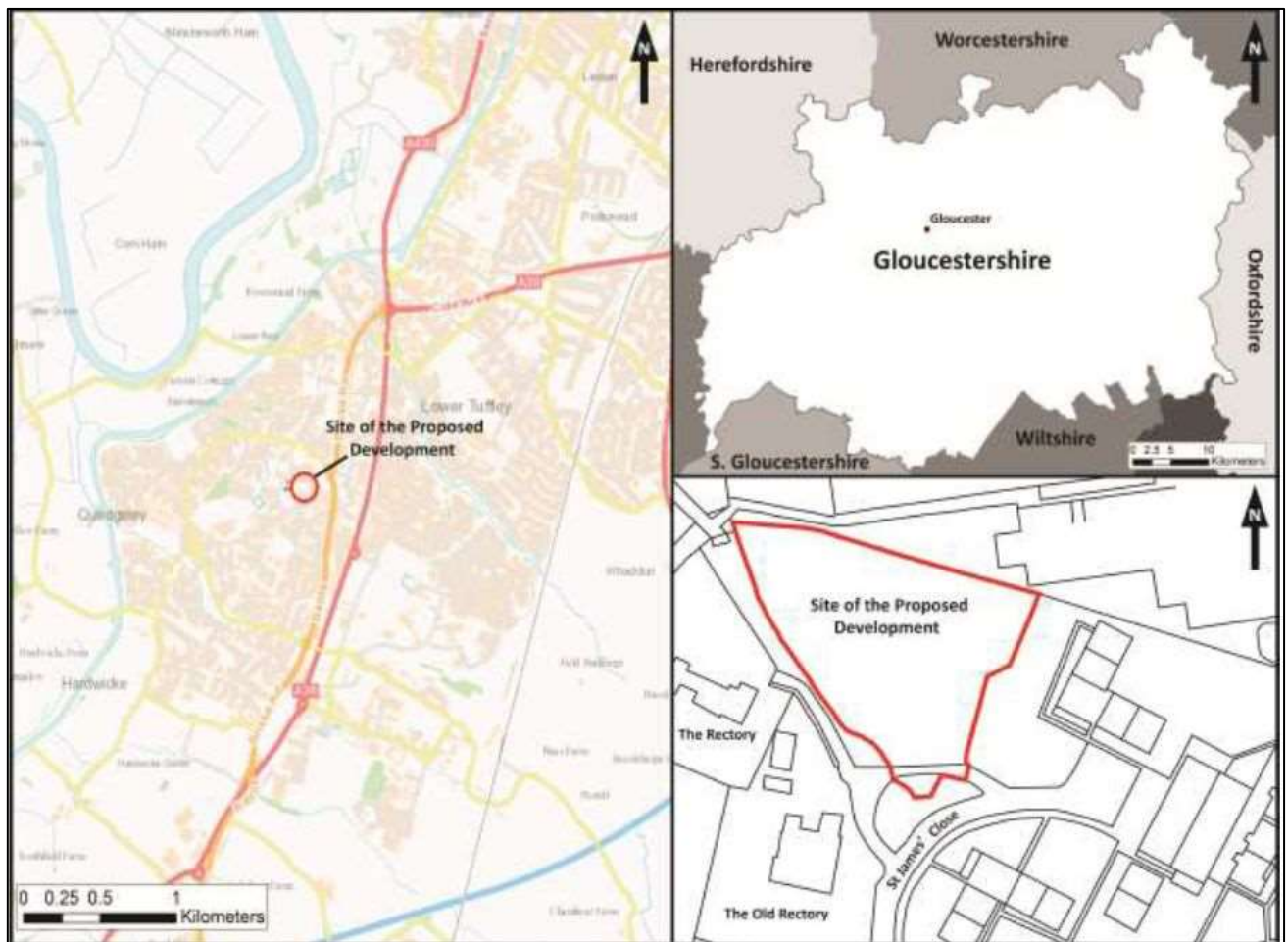


Fig. 1: Site location plan

Copies of this report will be provided to Gloucester City Homes and to Andrew Armstrong Esq City Archaeologist (CA) Gloucester City Council and the Gloucestershire Historic Environment Record.

3 Site Description

The site lies within the core of the medieval settlement of Quedgeley at a height of approximately 18m AOD and adjoins a Tesco superstore development along its NE boundary. The course of the Roman road between

Gloucester (*Glevum*) and the port of Sea Mills (*Abonae*) would appear, based upon the results of previous investigations undertaken to the N, to run through it on a NE/SW alignment.

The site has not been affected by large-scale modern development and it was thus considered likely that any buried remains would be well-preserved.

3.1 Soils and Geology

The soils present within the study are typical calcareous pelosols of the EVESHAM 2 series (411b) comprising slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils, with some slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged non-calcareous clayey and fine loamy or fine silty over clayey soils. The underlying geology is Jurassic and Cretaceous clay (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983).

4 Historical and Archaeological Background

4.1 Prehistoric

Whilst little direct evidence of prehistoric activity has been identified within the immediate vicinity of the site, finds of prehistoric worked flint recovered during archaeological evaluation programmes conducted on the Olympus Park site, located approximately 600m to the NE of the present study area, suggest a possible focus of occupation in this area.

4.2 Roman

Significant evidence of Roman road construction has been found immediately N of the site and in the wider vicinity. These sections of roadway were aligned NE-SW on the course of the Roman road between Gloucester (*Glevum*) and the port of Sea Mills (*Abonae*). Continuing SW along the projected line of the road, it would appear to run directly through the site at St James' Close.

The first of these discoveries was made in 1994 during the course of a programme of archaeological field evaluation prior to the construction of a petrol station at the N end of the Tesco superstore located approximately 170m N of the site. The road surface was bedded directly onto the natural clay and consisted of a single layer of close-set oolitic gravel mixed with bunter pebble. The original width was measured to be approximately 7.5m and defined by two 1m-wide shallow ditches (Greatorex 1994).

In 2002, geophysical survey and excavation undertaken within Quedgeley recreation ground to the N of the Tesco superstore revealed similar evidence of a road on a NE-SW alignment, overlain by a post-medieval ploughsoil 0.3m deep. However, the course of the road appeared to be located about 15m W of the alignment suggested by the results of the 1994 investigation. A coin of possible 2nd -3rd -century date was recovered from the earliest construction layer (Sermon 2003).

Archaeological trial-trenching carried out within the Tesco superstore, immediately NE of the site at St James' Close, revealed two ditches, a possible posthole and a beam-slot of unspecified date; it appears that archaeological deposits in this area had been heavily truncated by the construction of the Tesco store and car park (AOC 2009).

Evidence of a substantial Roman villa complex was recorded in 1994 during construction works at the Olympus Park development site, to the NE of Bristol Road, approximately 600m from the site. During these works, large amounts of Roman building material was discovered, as well as structural remains including several walls, the possible remains of a hypocaust system and *opus signinum* flooring. Other occupation features of Roman date were also identified, including ditches, rubbish pits, a kiln or hearth and a stone-lined pit. A substantial quantity of Roman pottery, dated to the 1st-4th centuries AD, was recovered from the site. Further excavation of the same site revealed an intact stone coffin containing a probable female inhumation oriented N-S, with grave goods including six jet pins between the feet of the individual, which were dated to the mid-3rd century (Sermon 1994, 1995).

4.3 Medieval

The site lies within the core of the medieval village of Quedgeley, a settlement of medieval origin first recorded in 1095, when it was held by Walter of Gloucester. The manor of Quedgeley subsequently passed to Miles of Gloucester, Earl of Hereford, and, after his death, was divided between his daughters, who granted the estate to the Priory of Llanthony Secunda, which held it until the Dissolution.

The site lies approximately 70m NE of the parish church of St James' Quedgeley, which is first documented as a chapel in 1095, although by the 12th century it had become a fully-fledged parish church, also held by Llanthony Priory. No evidence has been found to indicate that the boundaries of the churchyard extended to include any part of the site.

The site appears to have formed part of the estate belonging to the Rectory, which is located adjacent to the parish church, immediately to the S of the site. Located to the W of the churchyard (approximately 270m SW of the site) are the Scheduled earthworks of a medieval moated site, probably identifiable with Woolstrop Manor, which is recorded from c.1246 onwards.

4.4 Post-medieval

Consultation of historic mapping dating back to the early 19th century shows that a complex of outbuildings had been erected within the site by no later than 1884. The date of these outbuildings is unclear but they may have been constructed at the same time that the Rectory was rebuilt in about 1840. These buildings were intact in 1955 but it appears that they had been partially demolished in 1971, when part of the site was occupied by a depot. It was considered possible that partial remains of these post-medieval outbuildings would survive above ground, with significant potential for encountering buried foundations of the demolished outbuildings within the site.

5 Methodology

The programme of archaeological work was carried out in accordance with practices set out in *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014), *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (CIfA 2014) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The Project Managers' Guide* (Lee 2015). Border Archaeology adheres to the CIfA Code of conduct (2014).

The overall area of the site at St James' Close is approximately 2,065 m² of which an agreed 5% sample gives a total trench area of some 103.25m².

Five trenches, each measuring 10m × 2m, were opened by machine within the study area (*fig. 2*).

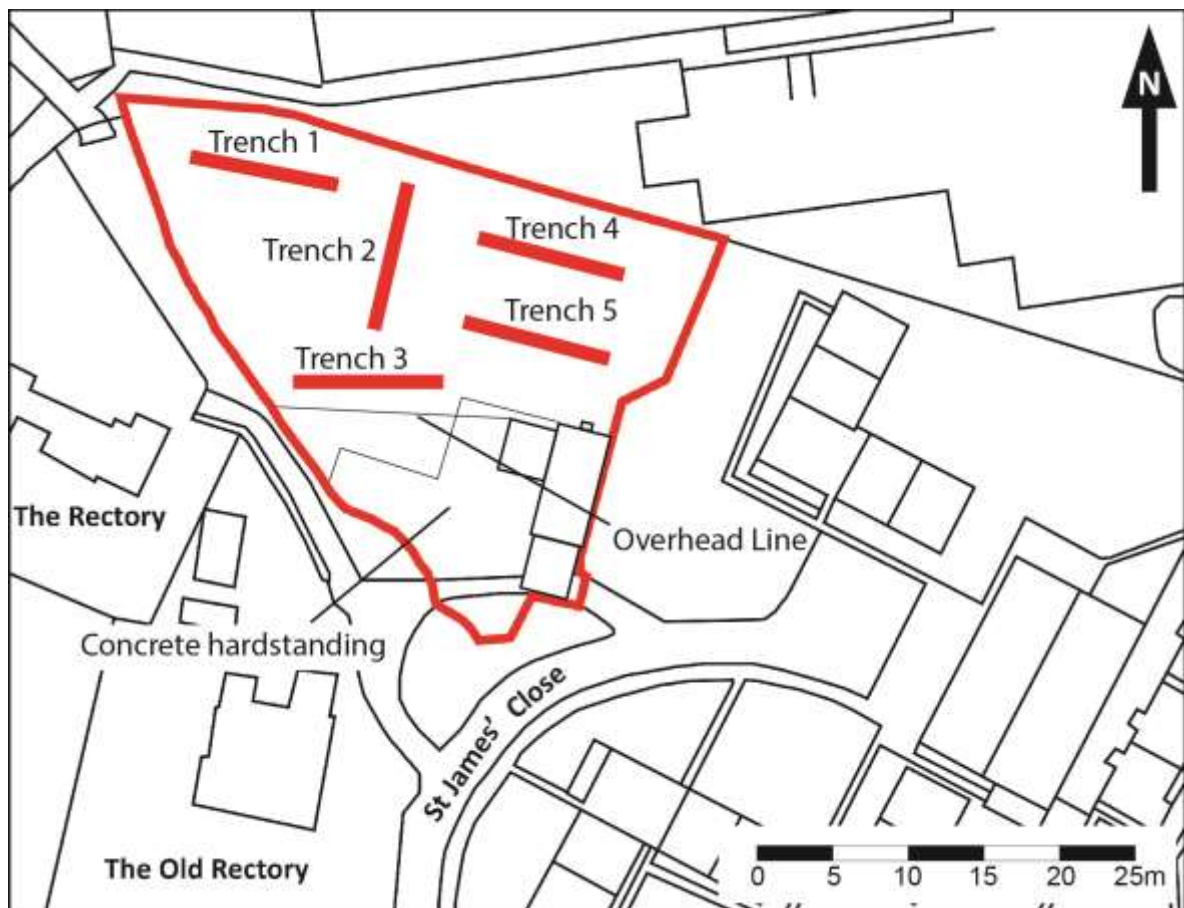


Fig. 2: Trench location plan

Machine excavation took place using an un-toothed ditching bucket under archaeological supervision. Only undifferentiated topsoil and overburden of recent origin were removed by machine; associated spoil was scanned for artefacts.

The trenching revealed no significant archaeological deposits or finds, although the remains of a shallow modern linear feature aligned NE-SW and a modern posthole were revealed in Trench 5.

5.1 Recording

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

- A *pro-forma* context record for each stratigraphic unit
- Plans of excavated areas showing the extent of the area (tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid and located on a 1:2500 plan), the extent of all stratigraphic unit and appropriate detail within stratigraphic units
- A photographic record of all stratigraphic units, which included representative photographic record of the progress of the archaeological work. A high-resolution digital camera was used throughout and each photograph contained an appropriate scale; all photographic records have been indexed and cross-referenced to written site records. Details of subject and direction of view were maintained in a photographic register, indexed by frame number.

5.2 Recovery and Retention of Finds

Six sherds of pottery were recovered, all of which were from Trench 5; no pottery was found in Trenches 1-4. Four pieces of burnt clay or ceramic building material (CBM) were found in the same contexts as the pottery. None of the fragments of CBM/burnt clay were diagnostic in terms of form or function (*Appendix 1*).

The process of selection and retention of archaeological materials has been informed by principles set out by Brown (2011, 23), which in essence specify that this process should be sufficient 'to produce a project archive that allows a full re-examination and interpretation of all the results of the project whilst avoiding replication, repetition or the retention of materials not germane to future analysis', decisions regarding retention generally being made at the pre-analysis stage of the project.

All such materials were recovered, packaged and stored in accordance with ClfA standards (2014), *First Aid for Finds* (Watkinson & Neal 2001) and with standards for data-gathering set out by Brown (2011, 18-20). All finds were labelled and documented before being removed from site.

6 Results

6.1 Trench 1

Item	Context No.	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Date
					Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	(101)	Layer	Topsoil	Loose, dark brown clayey silt; moderate small sub-angular stones; extending trench wide, average thickness 0.3m. Overlying (102)						Modern
2	(102)	Deposit	Levelling, made-ground	Moderately compact dark brown silty clay; frequent small sub-angular stones, brick & CBM fragments & charcoal; extending trench-wide, average thickness 0.22m. Underlying (101), overlying (103)						Modern
3	(103)	Layer	Heavily disturbed natural geology	Firm mid yellowish-brown clay; frequent small sub-angular stones, CBM & charcoal; extending trench wide, average thickness 0.11m.						Post-medieval
4	(104)	Layer	Natural substrate	Firm mid greyish-blue/yellowish-brown mottled clay & patches of compact mid yellowish-brown sand & gravel; extending trench-wide at L.O.E.						N/A

Trench 1 measured 10m × 2m and was excavated to a depth of 0.7m. No finds or deposits of archaeological significance were encountered (*Plate 1*); several linear areas of compact sandy natural were investigated but these were proved to be geological (*Plate 2*).

The stratigraphic profile comprised topsoil (101) overlying a modern made-ground layer containing large quantities of modern CBM and charcoal refuse material (102). This in turn sealed a 'dirty' clay natural layer (103) that appeared too well-compacted to represent a deliberate levelling layer of re-deposited natural. This material overlay the sterile clay natural substrate (104).



Plate 1: Trench 1, view E

It appears likely that the site has been subject to extensive ground reduction and disturbance at some point and has subsequently been levelled following the importing of large quantities of modern made-ground refuse material. During this ground reduction and subsequent levelling, the upper layer (103) of the underlying natural substrate (104) was heavily disturbed and contaminated with modern material resulting in the appearance of a 'dirty' natural layer.

Historic mapping shows that from the mid-1950s onwards the site was used as a depot and it is highly likely that any ground disturbance and reduction occurred during this period of use.



Plate 2: View E of sondage into natural geology at base of Trench 1

6.2 Trench 2

Item	Context No.	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Date
					Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	(201)	Layer	Topsoil	Loose, dark brown clayey silt; occasional small sub-angular stones; extending trench wide, average thickness 0.32m. Overlying (202)						Modern
2	(202)	Deposit	Levelling, made ground	Moderately compact dark brown silty clay; frequent small sub angular stones, brick & CBM fragments and charcoal inclusions; extending trench wide at an average thickness 0.4m. Underlying (201), overlying (203)						Modern
3	(203)	Layer	Heavily disturbed natural geology	Firm mid yellowish-brown clay; moderate small sub-angular stones, CBM & charcoal; extending trench wide, average thickness 0.07m. Underlying (202), overlying (204)						Post-medieval
4	(204)	Layer	Natural substrate	Firm mid greyish-blue/yellowish-brown mottled clay & patches of compact mid yellowish-brown sand & gravel; extending trench wide at L.O.E. Underlying (203)						N/A

Trench 2 measured 10m × 2m and was excavated to a depth of 0.85m. No finds or deposits of archaeological significance were encountered (*Plate 3*).

The stratigraphic profile was the same as that in Trench 1, and across the site, comprising topsoil (201) overlying modern made ground (202), which sealed the 'dirty' clay natural (203) that overlay the sterile clay natural substrate (204).



Plate 3: View N of Trench 2

6.3 Trench 3

Item	Context No.	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Date
					Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	(301)	Layer	Topsoil	Loose, dark brown clayey silt; occasional small sub-angular stones; extending trench wide, average thickness 0.32m.						Modern
2	(302)	Deposit	Levelling, made ground	Moderately compact dark brown silty clay; frequent small sub-angular stones, brick & CBM fragments, charcoal; extending trench-wide, average thickness 0.41m. Underlying (301)						Modern
3	(303)	Layer	Heavily disturbed natural geology	Firm mid yellowish-brown clay; occasional small sub-angular stones, CBM & charcoal; extending trench-wide, average thickness 0.13m Underlying (302), overlying (304)						Post-medieval
4	(304)	Layer	Natural substrate	Firm mid greyish-blue/yellowish-brown mottled clay, patches of compact mid yellowish-brown sand & gravel; extending trench wide at L.O.E. Underlying (303)						N/A

Trench 3 measured 10m x 2m and was excavated to a depth of 0.92m. No finds or deposits of archaeological significance were encountered (*Plate 4*).

The stratigraphic profile again revealed topsoil (301) overlying a modern made-ground layer (302) above the 'dirty' clay natural (303) overlying sterile clay natural (304).



Plate 4: View W of Trench 3

6.4 Trench 4

Item	Context No.	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Dating
					Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	(401)	Layer	Topsoil	Loose, dark brown clayey silt; moderate small sub-angular stones; extending trench wide, average thickness 0.29m.						Modern
2	(402)	Deposit	Levelling, made ground	Moderately compact dark brown silty clay; frequent small sub-angular stones, brick, CBM fragments & charcoal; extending trench wide, average thickness 0.36m.						Modern
3	(403)	Layer	Heavily disturbed natural geology	Firm mid yellowish-brown clay; occasional small sub-angular stone, CBM and charcoal inclusions; extending trench wide, average thickness 0.16m.						Post-Medieval
4	(404)	Layer	Natural substrate	Firm mid greyish-blue & yellowish-brown mottled clay & patches of compact mid yellowish-brown sand and gravel; extending trench wide at L.O.E.						N/A

Trench 4 measured 10m x 2m and was excavated to a depth of 0.88m and the stratigraphic profile was the same as that revealed elsewhere on the site. Again, no finds or deposits of archaeological significance were encountered (*Plate 5*).

Topsoil (401) overlay modern made ground (402) overlying the same 'dirty' clay natural deposit (403) overlying natural sterile clay (404) that was revealed elsewhere.



Plate 5: View E of Trench 4

6.5 Trench 5

Item	Context No.	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Dating
					Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	(501)	Layer	Topsoil	Loose, dark brown clayey silt; moderate small sub-angular stones; extending trench wide, average thickness 0.31m. Overlying (502)						Modern
2	(502)	Deposit	Levelling, made ground	Moderately compacted dark brown silty clay, frequent small sub-angular stones, brick & CBM fragments & charcoal inclusions; extending trench wide, average thickness 0.32m. Underlying (501), overlying (503)						Modern
3	(503)	Layer	Heavily disturbed natural geology	Firmly compacted mid yellowish-brown clay, moderate small sub-angular stone, CBM & charcoal inclusions; extending trench wide, average thickness 0.15m. Underlying (502)						Post-Medieval
4	(504)	Layer	Natural substrate	Firm mid greyish-blue & yellow brown mottled clay, patches of compact mid yellowish-brown sand & gravel; extending trench wide at L.O.E. Cut by [506], [508]						N/A
5	(505)	Deposit	Fill of posthole [506]	Firm mid brownish-grey silty clay, frequent small CBM, brick, wood & charcoal fleck inclusions; measured 0.5m diameter × 0.14m thickness. Fill of [506]		✓		✓		Modern
6	[506]	Cut	Cut of modern	Circular plan; break of slope top sharp, sides vertical						Modern

Item	Context No.	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Dating
					Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
			posthole	to steeply sloping, break of slope base sharp to moderate, base flat; extended 0.5m diameter × 0.14m thickness. Cuts (504), filled by (505)						
7	(507)	Deposit	Fill of linear [508]	Firm light greenish-grey clay, moderate CBM & charcoal flecking; measured >2m × 0.5m × 0.21m. Fill of [508]		✓				Modern
8	[508]	Cut	Modern boundary ditch	Linear plan; aligned NNE-SSW; break of slope top moderate, sides moderate to gradual, break of slope base gradual, base concave; measured >2m × 0.5m × 0.21m.						Modern

Trench 5 measured 10m × 2m and was excavated to a depth of 0.90m (*Plate 6*). No finds or deposits of archaeological significance were encountered, although a modern shallow ditch and posthole were identified.

The stratigraphic profile was the same as that in Trench 1 and across the site. The modern made-ground layer (502) underlay topsoil (501) and sealed the 'dirty' clay natural (503) overlying sterile natural clay (504). The features were cut into the natural layer (503).



Plate 6: View E of Trench 5

At the E end of the trench, a shallow linear [508] on a NNE-SSW alignment was present (*Plate 7*), which was filled by a single backfill deposit (507) containing sherds of post-medieval pottery.

As [508] truncated the 'dirty' natural layer present across the site and contained modern dating material, it is evident that this was a fairly recent feature. Historic mapping indicates that, by the time of the 1956 OS 1-2500 plan, a change of use had occurred and the grounds associated with the late 18th –early 19th century building present at the far E extent were occupied by as a depot, which appears to be separated from the property by a boundary aligned NNE-SSW that is clearly visible on the plan (*fig. 3*).

The location, date and alignment of [508] strongly suggest that the feature may reasonably be interpreted as a remnant of this boundary ditch. The shallowness of the feature also suggests a significant level of ground disturbance and alteration across the site.

Also present in Trench 5, located to the E of ditch [508], was a mid-sized posthole [506], also containing post-medieval pottery fragments and pieces of degraded wood, presumably from a post (*Plate 8*).

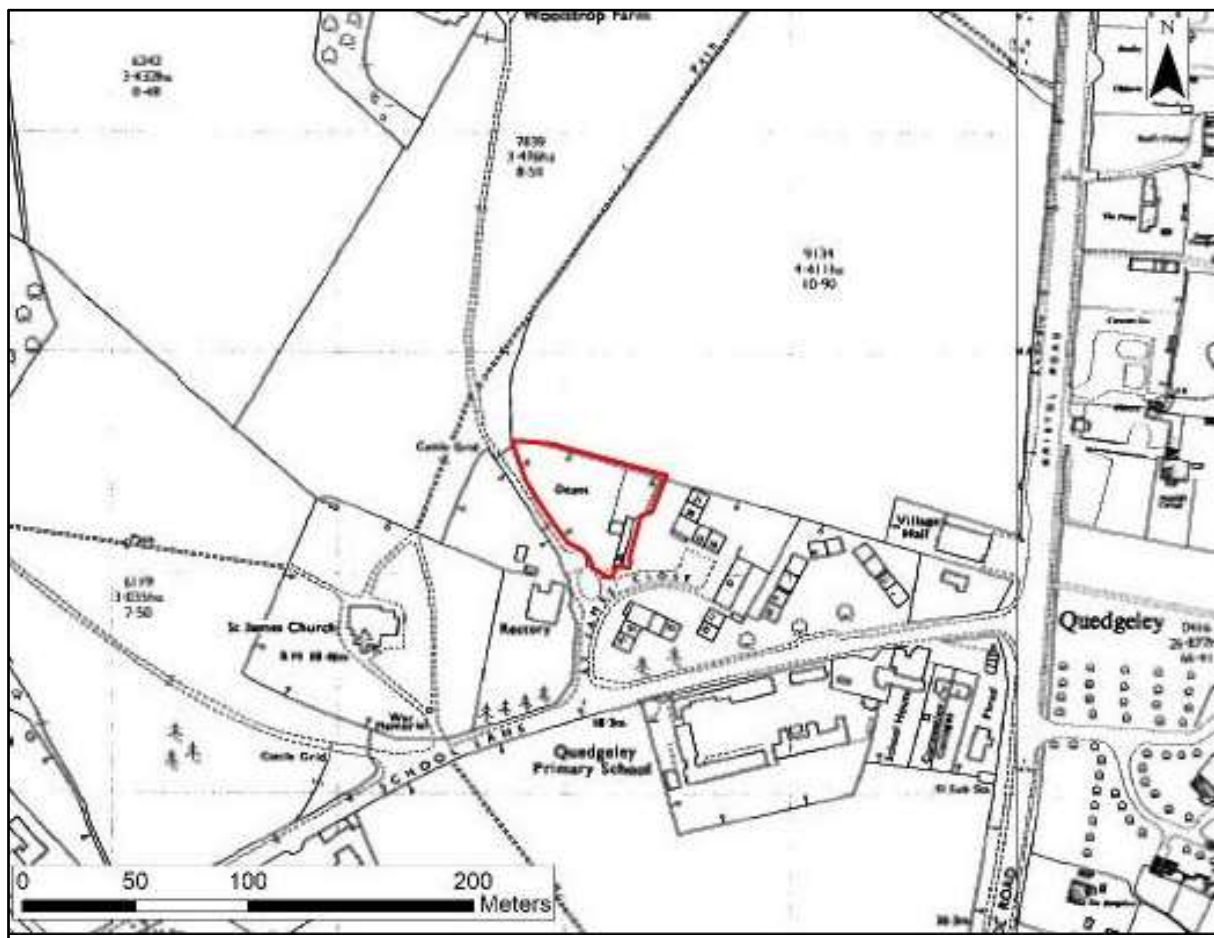
Although posthole [506] was a discrete isolated feature, its date and proximity to the boundary ditch [508] may suggest that it also formed part of a boundary line or it that it may have been part of a feature related to the small area of land that appears to have continued to form a part of the property at the eastern extent of the site following the change of use affecting most of the area by the mid-1950s.



Plate 7: View SSW of NNE-facing section of boundary ditch [508]



Plate 8: View NE showing SW-facing section of posthole [506]



*Fig. 3: Extract from the OS 1956 1-2500 map
(Reproduced courtesy of the Gloucester Archives)*

7 Discussion

The evaluation trenching revealed no significant archaeological deposits or features, with only a modern boundary ditch [508] and posthole [505] identified within Trench 5 at the SE edge of the site, in close proximity to the extant building of late 18th -early 19th -century date.

The results of previous investigations to the N of the site suggested the likelihood of encountering remains of Romano-British date, specifically, those relating to the NE-SW road alignment that appeared - based on its projected course - to extend directly through the site; however, no evidence of any features, deposits or finds of Romano-British date were encountered.

Extensive disturbance appears to have affected the natural substrate over all areas of the site to create a 'dirty' upper layer of disturbed natural encountered in each of the trenches, which is further supported by the lack of any subsoil deposits, the shallowness of the boundary feature [508] and no evidence for any buried foundations

associated with the outbuildings previously occupying the site (from no later than 1884 to their demolition after 1955) when part of the site was occupied by a depot.

Below-ground post-medieval structural remains were also anticipated and the lack of evidence for these may indicate that the entire site had been heavily impacted by ground-reduction works to facilitate their removal prior to the site's reuse as a depot in the mid-1950s.

The presence of hard-standing at existing ground level potentially relating to the depot, together with the substantial quantity of brick and modern refuse material encountered within made-ground deposit present across the entire site (as represented by contexts 102, 202, 302, 402 & 502), also indicates that, following initial ground-reduction, the site had been reworked using demolition material to create a level made-ground deposit, which was then overlaid by hard-standing.

Both ditch [508] (evidently corresponding to a boundary feature associated with the depot) and posthole [506] were overlain by this levelling deposit and also truncated the upper 'dirty' disturbed layer of the natural substrate (represented by contexts 103, 203, 303, 403 & 503); it would therefore seem likely that the boundary ditch, which separated the depot from the grounds that continued to form part of the curtilage of the structure occupying the E extent of the site, had been excavated during the initial phase of depot usage and then partially truncated by ground-reduction works. The existing made ground and hard-standing probably represent either a later phase of depot usage or levelling activity following its closure.

It is thus entirely possible that the widespread evidence of ground disturbance and/or reduction works recorded in each of the trenches had removed any trace of deposits associated with the presumed Roman road alignment and indeed would explain why no evidence of archaeological features or deposits of any period were present within the site.

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9.1 Cartography

OS 1956 1-2500 national survey (1956)

10 Appendix 1: Assessment of the post-medieval pottery and burnt clay

*K H Crooks
Border Archaeology*

10.1 Summary

Six sherds of pottery were recovered from Trench 5; no pottery was found in Trenches 1-4. Four pieces of burnt clay or ceramic building material (CBM) were found in the same contexts as the pottery. None of the fragments of CBM/burnt clay were diagnostic in terms of form or function.

10.2 Method

All material was washed, examined by eye and using a hand lens (×10) and sorted by form and fabric.

10.3 The pottery

10.3.1 Context (505)

Five sherds of pottery were recovered from context (505), together with a non-diagnostic fragment of fired clay.

Context	Fabric	Sherd No.	Wt. g	Comments
505	WBorder	1	12.6	Internal gl. C17-C18
505	WBorder	1	7.5	Internal gl. C17-C18
505	MMW	1	4.1	Plain white ware C19+
505	yellow	1	2.0	Machine made yellow ware C19+
505	China	1	0.4	Blue ?willow pattern
505	Fired clay	1	4.6	Non-diagnostic

Table 1: Summary of the pottery and CBM from context (505)

The pottery included two sherds of local red coarse wares with an internal clear/tan glaze. Both sherds were likely to be from large jars or bowls which were used as kitchen ware. Welsh Borderland ware was produced at several kiln sites in the area, with little variation in fabric. The closest kiln producing such material would be Newent Glasshouse. Welsh Borderland ware dates to the 17th to 18th centuries (Vince 1985), although a later date for the context is indicated by the presence of china and machine-made white ware, the latter being of 19th-century or later date. A sherd from the same context may be from a yellow ware mixing bowl, although it may

be a sherd of mocha ware. A similar date in the early 19th century or later is likely.

10.3.2 Context (507)

Context	Fabric	Sherd No.	Wt. g	Decoration/comments
507	MMW	1	2.6	Plain machine-made white ware
507	Fired clay	3	2	Non-diagnostic—probably brick

Table 2: Summary of the pottery and CBM from Context (507)

A single sherd of machine made white ware was recovered from context (507) (2.6g), which can be dated to the 19th century or later. No pottery of Roman or medieval date was found.

10.4 Discussion

All of the pottery was of post-medieval and later post-medieval date. No Roman pottery was found on the site, which is perhaps surprising in view of the evidence for Roman occupation in the surrounding area.

The site is shown as a depot on maps between the middle and the last quarter of the 20th century and it seems likely that major site clearance took place either previous to the establishment of the depot or after it was decommissioned. This activity would appear to have removed the vast majority of finds and possibly features relating to earlier periods of activity.

10.5 Conclusions

The recent date of the pottery and the lack of features of archaeological significance mean that it is considered unnecessary for further work to take place on this material.

10.6 References

Vince, A. G., 1985, 'The ceramic finds', in Shoesmith, R., *Hereford City Excavations Vol 3: The Finds*, CBA, London

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