

birmingham archaeology

Tutbury Mill, Rocester

An Archaeological Watching Brief
2007

Project No. 1573

Tutbury Mill, Rocester
An Archaeological Watching Brief
2007

By

Elisabeth Bishop

For

The Department of Education and Skills

For further information please contact:

Alex Jones (Director)

Birmingham Archaeology

The University of Birmingham

Edgbaston

Birmingham B15 2TT

Tel: 0121 414 5513

Fax: 0121 414 5516

E-Mail: bham-arch@bham.ac.uk

Web Address: <http://www.arch-ant.bham.ac.uk/bufau/>

Tutbury Mill, Rocester

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	LOCATION AND GEOLOGY	1
3	AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	1
4	METHODOLOGY.....	2
5	RESULTS.....	2
6	CONCLUSION.....	3
7	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	3
8	REFERENCES.....	3
	8.1. PRIMARY	
	8.2 SECONDARY	

Figures

Fig. 1. Location Map

Fig.2. Pit Locations

Plates

Plate 1. Trial Pit 9, looking east

Plate 2. Trial Pit 13, looking east

Plate 3. Hand-dug Trial Pit 3

Plate 4. Hand-dug Trial Pit 6

SUMMARY

In February 2007 an archaeological watching brief was carried out during geotechnical groundworks carried out by AEG. This was in advance of a proposed redevelopment of Tutbury Mill, Rocester, Staffordshire NGR SK 1128 3923, into a JCB Academy. Five trial pits were excavated by machine and five by hand. No significant archaeological features or deposits were recorded.

TUTBURY MILL, MILL LANE, ROCESTER, STAFFORDSHIRE

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF, 2007

1 INTRODUCTION

In February 2007 Birmingham Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief of Tutbury Mill, Rocester, Staffordshire (hereafter referred to as the study area). The work was commissioned by The Development Planning Partnership on behalf of The Department of Education and Skills in advance of a proposed redevelopment, as a JCB Academy.

This report outlines the results of the watching brief, which was carried out during February 2007, and which was prepared in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (IFA 2001)

The watching brief conformed to a brief produced by a Written Scheme of Investigation (Birmingham Archaeology 2007) (Appendix 1). A desk-based assessment carried out in 2006 implied potential archaeological remains within the study area (Kelleher 2006). On a walkover in February 2007, Roman pottery was collected from near the football ground within the study area.

2 LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

The site is located on the north side of Mill Street, on the eastern edge of Rocester, Staffordshire (Fig.1). It is approximately 4 ½ miles northeast of Uttoxeter, and is centred on NGR SK 1128 3923.

The underlying geology consists of alluvial fan and deposits of a higher river terrace (Geological Survey 1983, Ashbourne Sheet 124). Rocester's soil has been described historically as loam with subsoil gravel (Kelly's Directory 1896, 292).

The present character of the site is undisturbed grassland with areas of hardstanding surrounding the historic mill buildings. To the north of the study area is the former millpond, and West View, a late 19th-century terraced development associated with the mill. To the west are the remains of a Roman fort, within which are the below-ground remains of a 12th-century Augustinian Abbey. To the east, on the east bank of the river Dove is the home ground of Rocester FC. To the south, across Mill Street, is Millholme, the former Mill Manager's house, which was constructed by 1831 (Kelleher 2006, 1).

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The principal aim of the project was to assess the survival and potential significance of any archaeology within the study area.

More specific aims were to:

- record archaeological features and deposits uncovered during machine and hand-cleaning of excavations in advance of construction or infrastructure projects
- to prepare a brief report summarising the findings.

4 METHODOLOGY

The geotechnical groundworks comprised the excavation of five trial pits (numbered 9 to 13) dug by a mechanical excavator, and five hand dug trial pits (numbered 3 to 7) (See Fig.2). These were all monitored by a qualified archaeologist and recorded using the standard archaeological practices. Boreholes were also carried out by the geotechnical team, however, owing to their narrow dimensions and the limited disturbance of the ground surface, they were not monitored by Birmingham Archaeology.

All stratigraphic sequences were recorded, even where no archaeology was present, using a continuous numbered context system on pro-forma context and feature cards. A photographic record was also maintained to supplement the written record, along with scaled sections.

The full site archive includes all artefactual remains recovered from the site, and will be prepared according to guidelines set down in Appendix 3 of the *Management of Archaeology Projects* (English Heritage, 1991), the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage* (UKIC, 1990) and *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections* (Museum and Art Galleries Commission, 1992). The paper archive will be deposited with the appropriate repository subject to permission from the landowner.

5 RESULTS

The trial pits were excavated to a maximum depth of 3.5m and numbered 9 to 13, and are therefore referred to in that sequence.

Trial Pit 9

This pit could only be excavated to a depth of 1.80m owing to the collapse of the section, the soil comprising coarse sand and rubble. At a depth of 0.4m a late 19th or early 20th century culvert consisting of bricks and stone slabs was revealed (Plate. 1) This culvert covered a service pipe running south-east towards the mill.

Trial Pit 10

This pit contained three stratigraphic layers: topsoil to a depth of 0.40m lying above a layer of orange brown sandy clay, which was, in turn, above the natural subsoil, which first became evident at a depth of 3.2m.

Trial Pit 11

The pit was excavated to a depth of 3.5m, however, even at this depth the natural layer was not evident. There were three stratigraphic layers present [1100-1102]

1100 - Topsoil: silty clay sand to a depth of 0.2m

1101 - Mid orange brown sandy clay, 1.6m thick, with evidence of charcoal, small stones and brick rubble material.

1102 – Mid-brown (turning lighter at a greater depth) silty clay. There was evidence of burning within this layer. Finds included bone, burnt stone and post-medieval pottery.

Trial Pit 12

Excavated to a depth of 3.5m, Trial Pit 12 also contained three stratigraphic layers: topsoil, subsoil and natural. However, also present was a high percentage of general waste material that appeared to have been dumped. Local knowledge implied this area of the site was used by the adjacent houses to dispose of materials no longer needed. This is highlighted by the finds recovered, consisting of general household material and scrap metal.

Trial Pit 13 (Plate 2)

This pit is located in close proximity to Trial Pit 12 and had a fill of similar character, again with a high level of general waste material. Typical soil composition was a sandy silt overlying the natural silty clay.

Hand-Dug Trial Pits

In total five hand-dug trial pits were excavated, ranging in depth 1.2m to 1.5m, and no wider than 0.5m. In general these pits consisted of ground make-up layers and no archaeological features or finds were discovered. (Plates 3 & 4)

It is worth mentioning that local residents have witnessed the site being redeveloped over the years. One local person reported the demolition and burying of greenhouses and sheds in the area where the trial pits were excavated. Another mentioned the destruction of an air raid shelter.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The watching brief was carried out in order to assess the possible archaeological remains of the site, taking into consideration the high level of Roman and medieval remains within the vicinity. Much of the evidence given above points to this specific area of the site as having accumulated a heavy overburden in the years following the construction of Tutbury Mill, and much of the archaeological evidence dates from the 19th and 20th century. This does not preclude the possibility that earlier material exists, but the results of the watching brief have not revealed any supporting evidence.

7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project was commissioned by Buro Four on behalf of The Department of Education and Skills. The watching brief was undertaken by Kristina Krawiec and Elisabeth Bishop who produced the written report which was illustrated by Nigel Dodds, and edited by Malcolm Hislop who also monitored the project for Birmingham Archaeology.

8 REFERENCES

8.1 Primary References

1896 Kelly's Directory of Staffordshire.

8.2 Secondary References

Birmingham Archaeology 2007, *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological*

Watching brief at Tutbury Mill, Mill Street, Rocester.

Institute of Field Archaeologists 2001. *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief.*

Kelleher, S. 2006, *Tutbury Mill, Rocester: Archaeological Desk-Based and Historic Buildings Assessment*, Birmingham Archaeology Report No. 1520.

APPENDIX 1

WATCHING BRIEF AT TUTBURY MILL, ROCESTER, STAFFORDSHIRE

1.0: INTRODUCTION

This written scheme of investigation describes an archaeological watching brief to be carried out at Tutbury Mill, Rocester, Staffordshire, during the excavation of a number of geo-technical test pits associated with a proposed redevelopment of the site as the JCB Academy. A desk-based and historic building assessment of the site undertaken by Birmingham Archaeology in 2006 revealed that the study area is located on the outskirts of a Roman fort and civil settlement, is within the immediate environs of a medieval Augustinian abbey, and contains structures built by and associated with Richard Arkwright, one of the key personalities and catalysts of the industrial revolution. The assessment revealed that the standing buildings incorporated seven distinct and separate phases of construction, beginning with the mill constructed by Arkwright in 1781 and ending in 20th-century additions. It was also clear that the site has a long history in the production and processing of textiles, and that it is the possible location of a medieval mill associated with the abbey.

2.0: LOCATION

Tutbury Mill is located on the north side of Mill Street, on the eastern edge of Rocester, Staffordshire. It is approximately 4½ miles northeast of Uttoxeter, centred on NGR SK 1128 3923.

3.0 AIMS

The general aims of an archaeological watching brief is to identify and record archaeological features and deposits uncovered during hand-cleaning of excavations in advance of construction or infrastructure projects, and to prepare a brief report summarising the findings.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

An experienced archaeologist will attend site to monitor construction groundworks, as required in the Design Brief.

Groundworks to be observed will include the stripping of topsoil, B-horizon subsoils, and trenches cut into the natural subsoil.

Following the stripping of topsoil the machined surface will be inspected, and sufficient hand-cleaning will be undertaken to facilitate the definition of archaeological or possible archaeological features and deposits.

Where it is safe to do so, the archaeologist will enter construction trenches for the purpose of undertaking hand-cleaning of the trench sides and base for the better definition of any archaeological features or deposits present. No excavation of archaeological features, other than hand-cleaning, would be undertaken. Where it is unsafe to enter deep trenches archaeological recording will be confined to photography and the completion of pre-printed pro-formas.

Should significant, or potentially significant groups of archaeological features be uncovered the Planning Archaeologist will be consulted so that an alternative strategy for more detailed investigation can be devised, in consultation with the developer.

Human remains

No excavation of human remains would be undertaken until a Home Office Licence was obtained, and the Planning Archaeologist, the local Coroner, the Police, the Archaeological Consultant (if any) consulted.

Recording

Recording would be by means of pre-printed pro-formas for contexts and features, supplemented by plans (1:20 and 1:50 as appropriate) and sections (1:10 and 1:20 as appropriate), and 35mm monochrome print and colour slide photography.

Finds

Finds would be recovered by context would be washed, marked and bagged. Appropriate conservation work would be undertaken. A metal detector would be used as an aid to finds recovery.

Environmental sampling

All datable features would be sampled objectively for the recovery of charred or waterlogged plant remains, pollen and insect remains.

Specialist staff will be, where appropriate:

Dr Lawrence Barfield - Flint artefacts, freelance consultant lithics specialist.

Dr Ann Woodward- Prehistoric pottery, Research Fellow, Birmingham Archaeology, University of Birmingham.

Dr Jeremy Evans- Roman pottery, Honorary Research Fellow, Birmingham Archaeology, University of Birmingham.

C. Jane Evans- Roman pottery, freelance consultant pottery specialist

Stephanie Rátkai- Saxon, medieval and post-medieval pottery, Honorary Research Associate, (University of Birmingham).

Erica Macey-Bracken- Small finds, Birmingham Archaeology, University of Birmingham

Andy Howard- Geomorphology, Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity, University of Birmingham.

Matilda Holmes- Animal bone, freelance consultant archaeozoologist.

Dr David Smith- Micro-fauna, Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity, University of Birmingham.

Dr Megan Brickley- Human Bone, Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity, University of Birmingham.

Dr Roger White- Coins and brooches, Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity, University of Birmingham.

Jane Cowgill- slag and industrial residues, freelance consultant.

Rowena Gale- charcoal and wood.

5.0: STAFFING

The project will be managed for Birmingham Archaeology by Malcolm Hislop BA, PhD, MIFA, and the fieldwork carried out by Elisabeth Bishop BA.

6.0 REPORTING

The results of the project will be presented in a report including the following information:

- Non-technical summary
- Description of the development and archaeological background
- Details of the archaeological results, set within their context.
- Spot-dating of datable finds, and brief finds and environmental reports
- A discussion of the watching brief results.
- Plans showing the locations and extent of the development site subjected to the watching brief, supported by historic map extracts to place the watching brief results in the wider context.
- Simplified feature plans and sections, where applicable.
- A selection of colour photographs, where applicable.

7.0 PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

- Birmingham Archaeology is a Registered Archaeological Organisation (RAO) with the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA)
- All Birmingham Archaeology staff will follow the Code of Conduct of the IFA at all times.
- The watching brief will be undertaken in accordance with the standards laid down in the 'Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs' (1999).
- The archaeological watching brief will follow the particular requirements set down in this document, which will be followed by all project staff.

8.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY

Birmingham Archaeology staff will follow the Health and safety guidelines contained in the Birmingham Archaeology Health and Safety Manual. This follows the requirements of the SCAUM Health and Safety Manual, and is approved by the Health and Safety Unit of the University of Birmingham.

9.0 PROGRAMME

The watching brief programme will follow that of the contractor undertaking the geo-technical test pitting, with regular liaison between Birmingham Archaeology and the contractor to ensure that regular archaeological attendance is maintained during the groundworks and that a suitable time allowance is made for hand-cleaning and recording of archaeological features and deposits.



Plate 1



Plate 2



Plate 3



Plate 4



Fig.1

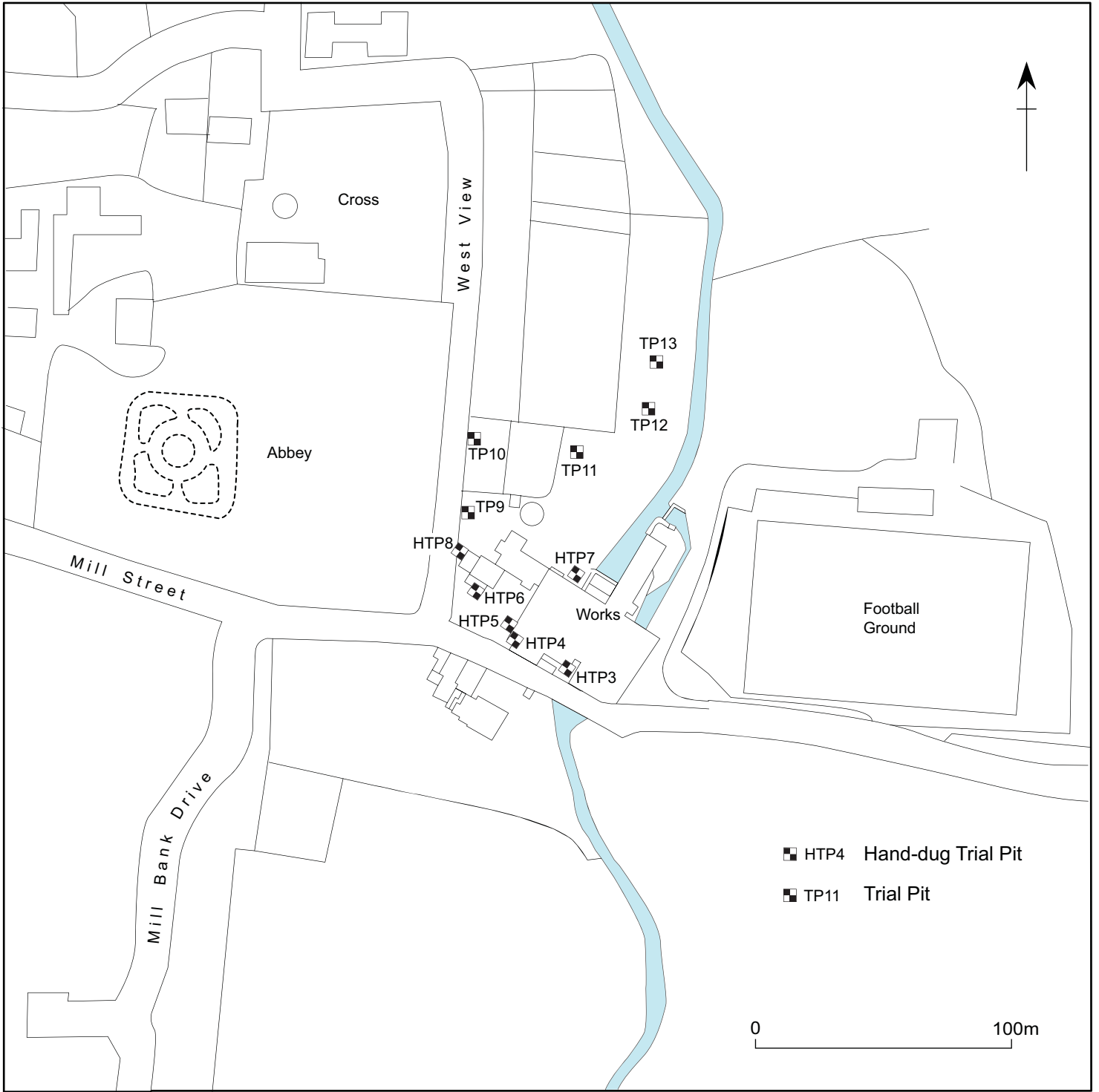


Fig.2