

**Dormston House,  
Dudley St. Sedgley**  
An Archaeological  
Watching Brief

Checked by	
Supervisor.....	date.....
Project Manager.....	date.....

**Project No. 1717**  
**Dormston House, Dudley St. Sedgley**  
An Archaeological Watching Brief

By

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For

Daynote Ltd., property Development and Investment

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**DORMSTON HOUSE, DUDLEY ST. SEDGLEY**  
**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

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## SUMMARY

**Site Name:** Dormston House, Dudley St. Sedgley  
**NGR:** SO 9190 9350  
**Type:** Watching brief  
**Date of fieldwork:** 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> October 2007  
**Client:** Daynote Ltd. Property Development and Investment

In October 2007 an archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Birmingham Archaeology at Dormston House in Sedgley on behalf of Daynote Ltd. during groundworks associated with the construction of a new extension.

No archaeological features, structures, deposits or horizons were identified during the course of the groundworks. No artefactual material predating the modern period was recovered.

## **DORMSTON HOUSE, DUDLEY ST. SEDGLEY AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF, 2007.**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

In October 2007 Birmingham Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief at Dormston House in Sedgley (hereafter referred to as the study area). The work was commissioned by Daynote Ltd. in advance of a proposed residential extension to the existing property.

This report outlines the results of the archaeological monitoring, which was carried out in accordance with a brief produced by Sandwell and Dudley Council, and a Written Scheme of Investigation (BA 2007, Appendix 1) which was approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to implementation, in accordance with guidelines laid down in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (DoE 1990). The project conformed to the Institute of Field Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (IFA 1999)

### **2 LOCATION AND GEOLOGY**

The site is located to the rear of Dormston House at 41 Dudley St, to the immediate south of the centre of Sedgley and is centred on NGR SO 9190 9350 (Fig. 1)

The current character of the site is open waste ground, the buildings that previously occupied the site having been demolished. To the immediate west of the site lies Dormston House which fronts onto Dudley Street. To the north and south lie commercial and residential buildings and to the east of the site are playing fields belonging to Dormston School (Fig. 2).

The underlying geology of the site is Aymestry Limestone Formation that gives way to Lower Quarried Limestone to the east.

### **3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The principle aim of the watching brief was to record any archaeological features, structures, deposits, or horizons exposed during intrusive groundworks across the site.

More specific aims were to:

- To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the development area.
- To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.
- To contribute to the existing corpus of academic knowledge.
- To prepare a brief report summarising the findings

## 4 METHODOLOGY

The work involved the archaeological monitoring of a series of foundation trenches located to the rear of Dormston House as part of building work and extension here. Groundworks comprised of the excavation of foundation trenches with a mechanical excavator fitted with a 0.5m toothed bucket. This was monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist and complemented with the salvage recording of any archaeological deposits and features revealed during works.

All stratigraphic sequences were recorded, even where no archaeology was present. A comprehensive written record was maintained using a continuous numbered context system on *pro-forma* context and feature cards. Photographs supplemented written records and scale plans and sections.

The full site archive includes all artefactual remains recovered from the site. The site archive 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 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The first authenticated settlement in Sedgley was Roman (coins have been found at Hurst Hill), and it is recorded that a lane at Lower Gornal was once named "The Roman Way". In the pre-Norman period the manor of Sedgley formed part of the Kingdom of Mercia. During this time Sedgley became inextricably involved with Dudley with the foundation of Dudley fortress (c. 700 AD). For the next three hundred years a succession of Saxon rulers controlled Dudley, and therefore Sedgley. During this period Sedgley was largely comprised of a wooded solitude and probably formed part of the much larger hunting grounds of the Saxon earls of Dudley ([www.sedgleymanor.com](http://www.sedgleymanor.com)).

After the Norman Conquest King William rewarded his followers by dividing the country into baronies which they were to control. The entry for the manor of Sedgley, within Domesday Book (1086), ends with a valuation of ten pounds, and gives the following description:

*"There are six hides. The arable land is 12 carucates. In demesne there is one carucate, and three servants, and 40 villiens, with a priest: the two bordars have 18 carucates. There also are 16 acres of meadow: a wood one mile in length and one mile in breadth"*

During the latter part of the Tudor period and throughout the 17th century, nail making and coal mining were the main industries of the parish and it was thought that during this period there were no less than 2,000 nailers in the district (Barnett 1991). The population grew rapidly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in 1867 the vast parish was divided into two, Upper and Lower Sedgley

Very few buildings of historical importance now remain at Sedgley, though one that does is Dormston House. The site lies to the rear of this structure, an early 19<sup>th</sup> century Grade II listed villa of Grecian design. The land plot has remained largely unaltered since the first edition Ordnance Survey map (fig. 3).

## 6 RESULTS

The natural geology (**1003**), consisting of dirty yellow gravels and clay, was identified at a depth of 0.50m below current ground level. This was sealed by 0.3m of clay subsoil (**1002**) which, in turn, was overlain by 0.20m of topsoil (**1001**) (fig. 4).

No significant archaeological deposits were uncovered during the excavation of the foundation trenches.

## 7 CONCLUSION

The absence of archaeological deposits suggests that the area to the rear of the house had been scoured or redeveloped previously. The presence of a formed clay sub-soil (1002) and topsoil (1001) suggests the area was undisturbed and no development had occurred to the rear of the house plot.

Despite the potential of the development site, the watching brief identified no archaeological remains within the area.

## 8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project was commissioned by Daynote Ltd., property Development and Investment. Thanks are due to Jim Drennan for his co-operation and assistance throughout the project. The fieldwork was undertaken by Sam Paul. Sam Paul produced the written report which was illustrated by N. Dodds, and edited by C. Hewitson who managed the project for Birmingham Archaeology.

## 9 REFERENCES

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[www.sedgleymanor.com/historical/a\\_brief\\_history.html](http://www.sedgleymanor.com/historical/a_brief_history.html)

## **APPENDIX 1: WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

### **1.0: PLANNING BACKGROUND**

The current development represents the demolition of several buildings to the rear of Dormston House, No. 41 Dudley Street, Sedgley a Grade II listed building and subsequent construction of new extensions. As such it was envisaged that foundation works for the new extension would affect below-ground archaeological remains associated with the grade II listed building. Due to this a programme of archaeological monitoring was placed upon the proposal as part of the planning consent.

### **2.0: LOCATION**

The site of Dormston House, 41 Dudley Street is located to the northeast of Dudley Street opposite the junction of the Vicar Street in Sedgley, Dudley, West Midlands (NGR: SO91909350). The site itself is located to the rear and northeast of the main building.

### **3.0: ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

The site lies to the rear of the Grade II listed building Dormston House, and early 19<sup>th</sup> century villa of Grecian design. The buildings to be demolished lie to the rear of the main house and may reveal archaeological deposits associated with the earlier development of the house.

### **4.0: SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS**

The archaeological watching brief will involve the monitoring of any below ground excavations involved within the proposed development.

### **5.0: STAFFING**

The project manager will be Chris Hewitson and the watching brief will be maintained by an experienced archaeologist.



## **A: 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.

## **B: 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 and Archaeological Consultant (if any) will be consulted immediately 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.

## **C: REPORT FORMAT**

The archaeological watching brief report will comprise:

- 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.

## **D: 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 specific guidelines and requirements laid down in the Design Brief prepared by the relevant Planning Archaeologist, and the particular requirements set down in this document, which will be

followed by all project staff. All variations will be agreed in advance with the relevant Planning Archaeologist and Archaeological Consultant (as appropriate).

#### **E: HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- A Risk Assessment will be undertaken before commencement of the archaeological watching brief.
- 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.

#### **F: PROGRAMME**

The watching brief programme will follow that of the general contractor undertaking construction groundworks, with regular liaison between Birmingham Archaeology and the general contractor to ensure that regular archaeological attendance is maintained during the groundworks sufficient to ensure that the requirements of the Design Brief are fulfilled.

A suitable time allowance for hand-cleaning and recording of archaeological features and deposits should be made by the developer and their construction groundworkers. The archaeologist undertaking the watching brief will maintain regular liaison with the site manager/foreman to keep disruption of the construction programme to a minimum.

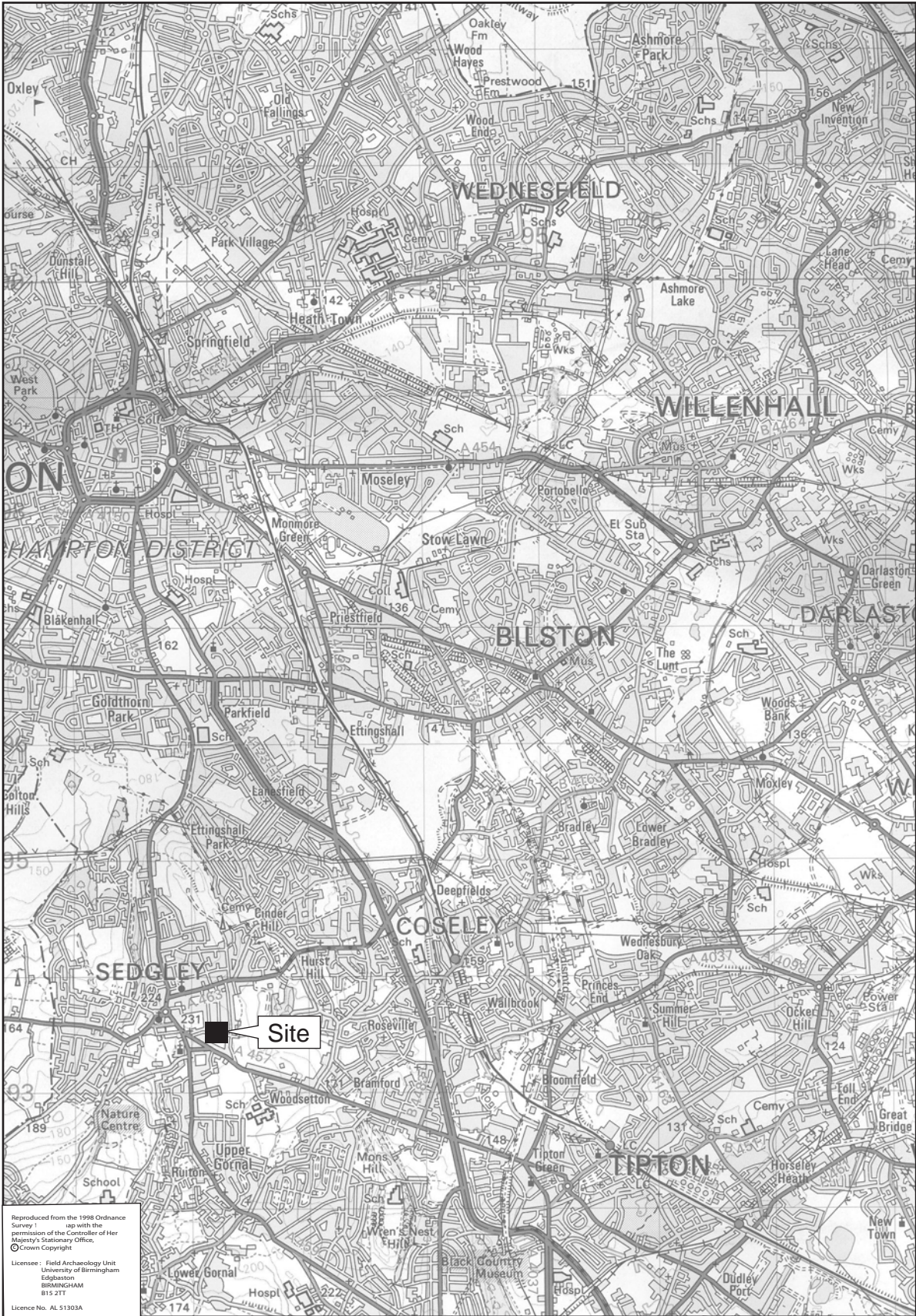


Fig.1



Fig.2



Fig.3

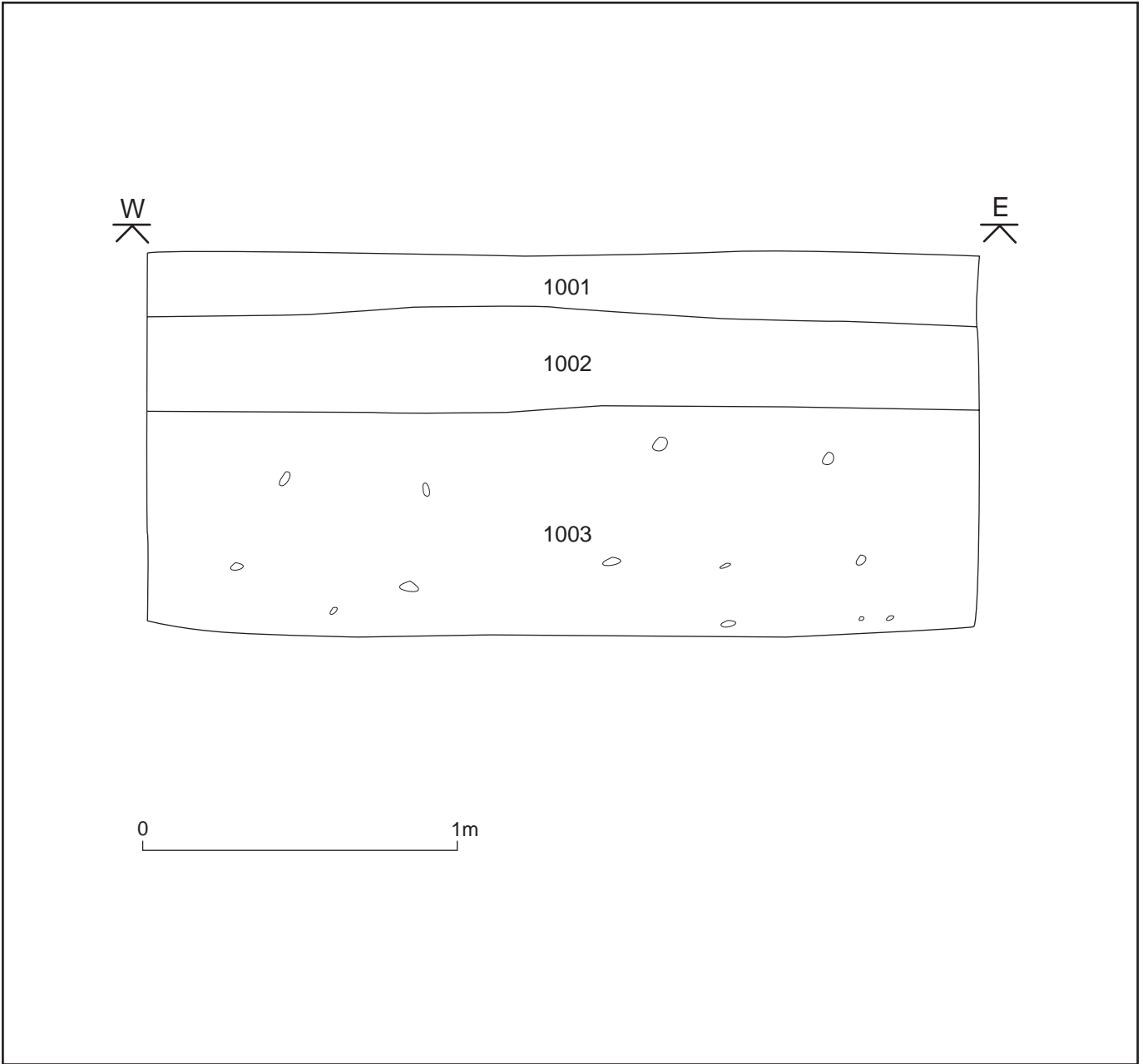


Fig.4



Plate 1



Plate 2