

**Bournville Lane Baths
Stirchley
Birmingham**

Archaeological Watching Brief

for

Mansell Plc

on behalf of

Birmingham City Council

CA Project: 4707
CA Report: 14120

March 2014

Bournville Lane Baths
Stirchley
Birmingham

Archaeological Watching Brief

CA Project: 4707
CA Report: 14120

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signed	
date	
issue	01

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Fig. 2 The site, showing location of observed groundworks (1:1000)



SUMMARY

Project Name: Bournville Lane Baths
Location: Stirchley, Birmingham
NGR: SP 0533 8123
Type: Watching Brief
Date: 18-19 March 2014
Planning Reference: 2012/08200/PA
Location of Archive: To be deposited with Birmingham City Museum
Site Code: BLS 14

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the redevelopment of the former Bournville Lane Baths, Stirchley, Birmingham.

No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks, and no artefactual material was recovered.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In March 2014 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for Mansell Plc, on behalf of Birmingham City Council, at Bournville Lane Baths, Stirchley, Birmingham (centred on NGR: SP 0533 8123; Fig. 1). The watching brief was undertaken to fulfil a condition attached to planning consent granted by Birmingham City Council (BCC) for the partial demolition and conversion of a Grade II listed Building to form a community centre with associated childrens play area and car parking (planning ref: 2012/08199/PA; condition 22). The archaeological works were recommended by Dr M Hodder, Planning Archaeologist, BCC.

1.2 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a detailed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by CA (2014) and approved by BCC acting on the advice of Dr M Hodder. The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IfA 2009), the *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage 1991), and the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (EH 2006).

The site

1.3 The proposed development area is approximately 0.2ha in extent, and is occupied by an existing, derelict bath house and associated grounds that largely comprise a former bowling green. The site lies at the junction of Bournville Lane and Hazelwest Street, Stirchley at approximately 128m AOD.

1.4 The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as Mercia Mudstone Group of the Triassic period overlain by superficial deposits of Quaternary Glaciofluvial sand and gravel (BGS 2014)

Archaeological background

1.5 The development site lies adjacent to the course of a Roman road, Ryknild Street, that runs from Alcester to Metchley Roman fort (Margary 1973; road 18b; Birmingham City Council Historic Environment Record 1902) that is fossilised by the modern A441 Pershore Road.

- 1.6 The Bournville Lane Baths were designed in 1910 by architect John Osborne in an Edwardian Baroque style (Acivico n.d.). An existing building was demolished to make way for the construction of the new baths (ibid.). The Baths were opened to the public on the 25 June 1911 by King's Norton and Northfield Urban District Council (ibid.). Following concerns that the building which had lain empty for 12 years, the Baths were first listed by English Heritage on 20 November 1998 under the title of Stirchley Public Baths (ibid.).

Archaeological objectives

- 1.7 The objectives of the archaeological works were:
- to monitor groundworks, and to identify, investigate and record all significant buried archaeological deposits, particularly those associated with the Roman road and/or contemporary road-side activity, revealed on the site during the course of the development groundworks;
 - at the conclusion of the project, to produce an integrated archive for the project work and a report setting out the results of the project and the archaeological conclusions that can be drawn from the recorded data.

Methodology

- 1.8 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2014). An archaeologist was present during intrusive groundworks comprising ground reduction throughout the area of the former bowling green (Fig. 2).
- 1.9 Where archaeological deposits were encountered written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual* (2013).
- 1.10 The archive from the watching brief is currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. This will be deposited with Birmingham City Museum. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix B, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.



2. RESULTS (FIG. 2)

- 2.1 Natural geological substrate 102, consisting of mid yellow-grey sandy clay with frequent patches of gravel, was revealed throughout the former bowling green at an average depth of 0.4m below present ground level. This was overlain by dark ash and clinker make-up/levelling deposit 101, averaging 0.25m in thickness, which was in turn sealed by 0.15m of topsoil, 100.
- 2.2 No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks and, despite visual scanning of spoil, no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 Despite the archaeological potential of the application area (see archaeological background above), the watching brief identified no archaeological remains within the area of observed groundworks. Ash/clinker deposit 101, interpreted as a make up and/or drainage layer for the former bowling green, was observed immediately sealing the natural clays and gravels. The absence of former topsoil and subsoil deposits suggests that the area of the bowling green was previously subject to groundworks during its construction in the early 20th century, although it remains undetermined whether such works had truncated previously surviving archaeological features and deposits. Alternatively, the absence of archaeological deposits may indicate that the Roman road and/or contemporary road-side activity does not extend as far as, or were not exposed by, the current development.

4. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Steven Sheldon. The report was written by Steven Sheldon. The illustrations were prepared by Lucy Martin. The archive has been compiled by Steven Sheldon, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Cliff Bateman.



5. REFERENCES

Acivico n.d. *Design & Access Statement for the proposed Stirchley Community Hub, Stirchley Birmingham*

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2014 *Geology of Britain Viewer*http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geology_viewer_google/googleviewer.html Accessed 10 January 2014

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2014 *Bournville Lane Baths, Stirchley, Birmingham: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*



APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth /thickness (m)	Spot-date
1	100	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey brown sand silt, frequent rounded pebble inclusions	>30	>28	0.15	Modern
1	101	Layer		Make-up/levelling	Dark black grey ash and clinker make-up/levelling deposit	>30	>28	0.25	Modern
1	102	Layer		Natural substrate	Mid yellow grey sand clay with frequent patches of gravel	>30	>28	L.O.E	

APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Bournville Lane Baths, Stirchley, Birmingham	
Short description	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the redevelopment of the former Bournville Lane Baths in Stirchley, Birmingham. No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks, and no artefactual material was recovered.	
Project dates	18-19 March 2014	
Project type	Watching Brief	
Previous work	None	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Bournville Lane Baths, Stirchley, Birmingham	
Study area (M ² /ha)	0.2ha	
Site co-ordinates (8 Fig Grid Reference)	SP 0533 8123	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Cliff Bateman	
Project Supervisor	Steven Sheldon	
MONUMENT TYPE		
None		
SIGNIFICANT FINDS		
None		
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	Birmingham City Museum	N/A
Paper	Birmingham City Museum	Trench recording forms, digital photographic register, groundworks plan
Digital	Birmingham City Museum	Digital photographs
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2014 <i>Bournville Lane Baths, Stirchley, Birmingham: Archaeological Watching Brief</i> . CA typescript report 14120		



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PROJECT TITLE

**Bournville Lane Baths, Stirchley
Birmingham**

FIGURE TITLE

Site location plan

PROJECT NO. 4707 DATE 2.4.14
 DRAWN BY LM REVISION 00
 APPROVED BY LM SCALE@A4 1:25,000

FIGURE NO.

1

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- site
- observed groundworks



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PROJECT TITLE

**Bournville Lane Baths, Stirchley
Birmingham**

FIGURE TITLE

**The site, showing location of observed
groundworks**

PROJECT NO.	4707	DATE	2.4.14	FIGURE NO.
DRAWN BY	LM	REVISION	00	2
APPROVED BY	LM	SCALE@A4	1:1000	