

Archaeological evaluation of land at The Clock House, Tettenhall, Wolverhampton



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Contents
Summary

1

Report

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt	1
1 Background.....	2
1.1 Reasons for the project	2
2 Aims.....	2
3 Methods.....	2
3.1 Personnel.....	2
3.2 Documentary research	2
3.3 List of sources consulted	2
3.4 Fieldwork strategy	3
3.5 Structural analysis	3
3.6 Statement of confidence in the methods and results	3
4 The application site	3
4.1 Topography, geology and archaeological context.....	3
4.2 Current land-use	3
5 Results	4
5.1 Structural analysis	4
5.1.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits	4
5.1.2 Phase 2: Undated deposits	4
5.1.3 Phase 3: Modern deposits	4
5.2 Artefact and environmental analysis	4
6 Synthesis	4
6.1 Research frameworks	4
7 Significance and impact of the development	4
8 Publication summary	4
9 Acknowledgements	5
10 Bibliography	5

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Tim Cornah

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Land at The Clock House, Tettenhall, Wolverhampton (NGR 388782 300450). It was undertaken on behalf of CgMs Consulting, whose client McCarthy and Stone Retirement Lifestyles Limited intends the construction of residential apartments, access roads, car parking and landscape gardens.

The site lies within the Medieval settlement of Tettenhall Regis, as defined by the Historic Environment Record. Planning permission for the development was approved by Wolverhampton City Council subject to conditions including a programme of archaeological works,

The site is a former garden of a house known The Clock House, referring to a miniature of the Grade II listed clock tower constructed in Upper Green for the coronation of George V in 1911 which stands in the garden. Three trenches were excavated within the former garden revealing the natural substrate at a shallow depth. No archaeological features were recorded apart from one small undated pit and it is concluded that there is no archaeological potential within the site.

Report

1 Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Land at The Clock House, Tettenhall, Wolverhampton (NGR 388782 300450). It was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, whose client intends to the construction of residential apartments, access roads, car parking and landscape gardens. A planning application has been submitted to Wolverhampton City Council (reference 15/00289/FUL and was approved subject to conditions including a programme of archaeological works as the proposed development site was considered to include potential heritage assets the significance of which may have been affected by the application.

The project conforms to a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by CgMs Consulting (CgMs 2016). The project also conforms to the *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014a).

2 Aims

The specific aims of this project as outlined in the WSI are, where possible:

- To establish the presence/absence, extent and character of any archaeological features on the site and to consider the archaeological interest of these in the context of the regional archaeological framework
- To examine any available evidence for economic activity and environmental conditions
- To generate an archive which will allow future research of the evidence to be undertaken if appropriate
- To disseminate the results of the work in a format and manner proportionate to the significance of the findings

3 Methods

3.1 Personnel

The project was led by Timothy Cornah (BA (hons.), MSc) who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2006 and has been practicing archaeology since 2003, assisted by Jessica Wheeler (BA (hons.)). The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Rogers (BA (hons.)). Illustrations were prepared by Carolyn Hunt (BSc (hons.); PG Cert; MCIfA).

3.2 Documentary research

Documentary research for this site was undertaken elsewhere (CgMs 2015) and will only be briefly summarised below.

3.3 List of sources consulted (in the desk-based assessment)

Cartographic sources

- 1613 Map of Tettenhall Haye
- 1840 Map of Tettenhall
- 1887 Ordnance Survey Map
- 1919 Ordnance Survey Map
- 1944-1955 Ordnance Survey Map
- 1956-1974 Ordnance Survey Map

- 1992 Ordnance Survey Map

Documentary sources

Published and grey literature sources are listed in the bibliography.

3.4 Fieldwork strategy

Fieldwork was undertaken between 20 and 21 June 2016. Three trenches, amounting to just over 108m² in area, were excavated over the site area of 0.4 ha, representing a sample of 2.7%. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 1. The trenches were located in order to cover a reasonable proportion of the site and target the development areas.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed using a wheeled excavator, employing a toothless bucket and under archaeological supervision. Subsequent excavation was undertaken by hand. Clean surfaces were inspected and selected deposits were excavated to retrieve artefactual material and environmental samples, as well as to determine their nature. Deposits were recorded according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). On completion of excavation, trenches were reinstated by replacing the excavated material.

3.5 Structural analysis

All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced. Analysis was effected through a combination of structural, artefactual and ecofactual evidence, allied to the information derived from other sources.

3.6 Statement of confidence in the methods and results

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

4 The application site

4.1 Topography, geology and archaeological context

The site lies to the north-west of the centre of both Tettenhall and Wolverhampton in an area known as Stockwell End. The area of the site is broadly flat and located at a height of around 141m AOD. The wider area slopes south-easterly direction towards Smestow Brook and the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal. To the north, the topography undulates, but generally slopes uphill (CgMs 2015). Bedrock geology is recorded as being Bromsgrove Sandstone Formation from the Triassic period. No superficial deposits are recorded (BGS 2016).

The desk based assessment (CgMs 2015) highlighted a low potential within the site for any features predating the medieval era. A greater potential was suggested for the medieval era as the site lies within medieval settlement area known as Tettenhall Regis. This area was mapped in 1613 and illustrated with a settlement at this date. The road system of the area is shown on the map in the form that it largely retains. This map shows a further settlement at Upper Green, to the south-west of the study site. Ridge and furrow have been recognised to the west and north-west of the site, suggesting that the area was at least partly an agricultural hinterland (CgMS 2015).

The agricultural use of the site is suggested by the Post-medieval mapping which shows it as a field into the 20th century. By the time of the 1944-1955 mapping, the Clock House is visible on the site. The clock tower itself is a miniature of one constructed in Upper Green for the coronation of George V in 1911 (CgMs 2015).

4.2 Current land-use

The site contains a house with garden to the rear, all of which are now disused.

5 Results

5.1 Structural analysis

The trenches and features recorded are shown in Fig 2. The results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1.

5.1.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits

Natural deposits (102, 202 and 302) consisted of compact red clay marls with areas of yellow and orange sand banding. This is consistent with weathered mudstone.

5.1.2 Phase 2: Undated deposits

A single cut feature was present in Trench 1 [104] and was filled by deposit (103). This contained no material culture and had a sterile fill. The interpretation of this feature is difficult given its lack of dating and the lack of associated features. It did not have a profile appropriate to a posthole, and no features such as a post pipe were seen in its fill. It was located below subsoil deposit (102).

Subsoil deposits were seen across all three trenches (101, 201 and 301) and consisted of mid-orangey brown silty sand. These deposits contained no material culture so therefore remain undated.

5.1.3 Phase 3: Modern deposits

Topsoil (100, 200 and 300) covered the site and consisted of dark grey brown silty sand with frequent rooting. This was part of a garden or plough soil and contained no pre-modern material culture. Some gravels were present at the top of this deposit in Trench 1 which are likely to have been part of a garden surface.

5.2 Artefact and environmental analysis

No artefactual or ecofactual remains appropriate for further analysis were present on site.

6 Synthesis

Whilst deposits of the medieval period were previously highlighted as potentially being present on the site, no such features were seen. A small cut feature located below the sub-soil deposits remained difficult to interpret given the lack of any other associated features.

To the north and east of the site, ridge and furrow had previously been recorded. Evidence for such features on this site was not present though depth of plough soil would suggest a previous agricultural use of the site.

6.1 Research frameworks

The lack of archaeological features on this site does not allow its inclusion into any known research frameworks.

7 Significance and impact of the development

Little archaeological significance can be given to this site. The impact of the development will consequently be low.

8 Publication summary

Worcestershire Archaeology has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, Worcestershire Archaeology intends to use this summary as the basis for publication through local or regional journals. The client is requested to consider the content of this section as being acceptable for such publication.

A archaeological evaluation was undertaken on behalf of CgMs Consulting at Land at The Clock House, Tettenhall, Wolverhampton (NGR 388782 300450).

Previous research highlighted the potential for features of a medieval date within this site. No such features were present. Only one small undated feature remained giving the site a low archaeological significance.

9 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Richard Smalley of CgMs Consulting and Ellie Ramsey of Wolverhampton City Council.

10 Bibliography

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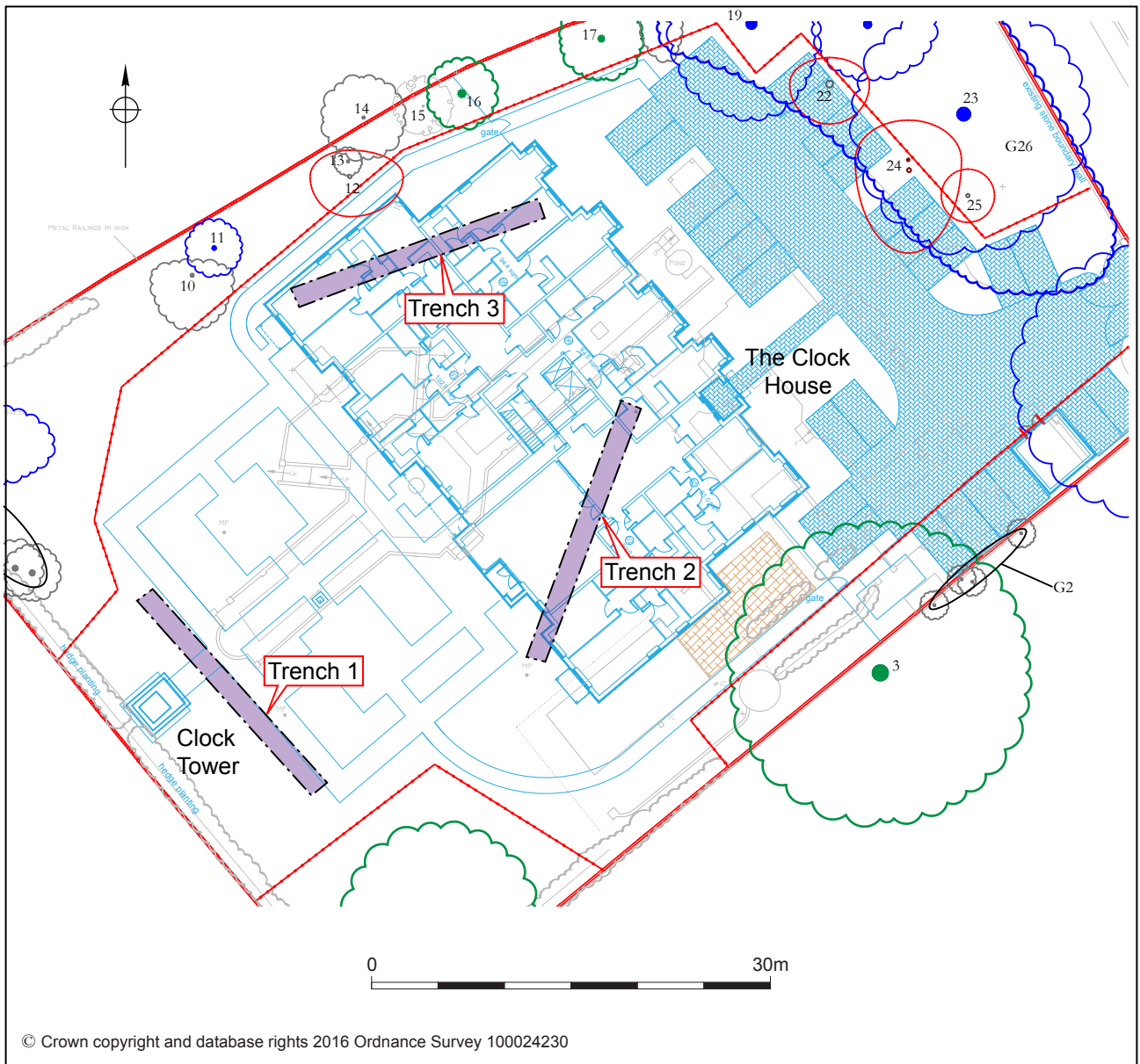
Watt, S, (ed) 2011 *The archaeology of the West Midlands: a framework for research*, Oxbow Books, Oxford

Figures



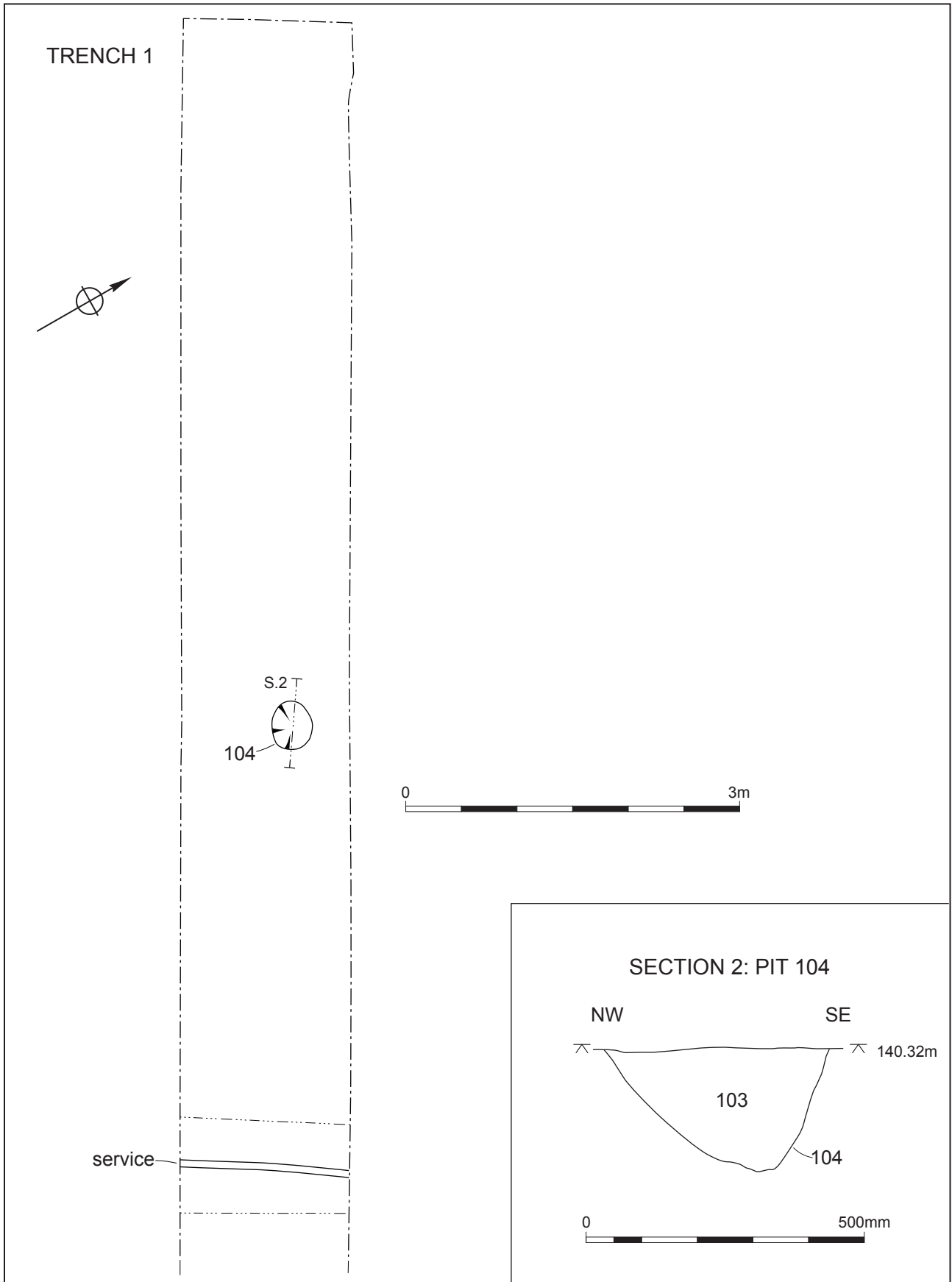
Location of the site

Figure 1



Trench location plan (based upon CgMs Proposed Trench Plan)

Figure 2



Trench 1 plan and section of pit 104

Figure 3

Plates



Plate 1 Trench 1, looking north-west



Plate 2 Possible post-hole [104], looking north-east



Plate 3 Trench 2, looking north



Plate 4 Trench 2 baulk showing topsoil, subsoil and natural deposits, looking west



Plate 5 Trench 3, looking north-east



Plate 6 Trench 3 baulk showing topsoil, subsoil and natural deposits, looking north-west

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Trench 1

Maximum dimensions: Length: 20m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0-0.80m

Orientation: NW-SE

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Dark grey brown silty sand with occasional sub-rounded stones and frequent rooting.	0-0.38m
101	Subsoil	Mid-orangey grey silty sand with occasional sub-rounded stones and frequent rooting.	0.38-0.70m
102	Natural	Compact red clay marl with bandings of yellow and orange sand	0.70->0.80m
103	Fill	Soft light grey brown sandy clay/silt with some rooting and occasional small sub-rounded stones	0.70-0.91m
104	Cut	Small round cut feature with rounded sides and base	0.70-0.91m

Trench 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 20m Width: 1.8m Depth 0-0.72m

Orientation: N-S

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
200	Topsoil	Dark grey brown silty sand with occasional sub-rounded stones and frequent rooting.	0-0.32m
201	Subsoil	Mid-orangey grey silty sand with occasional sub-rounded stones and frequent rooting.	0.32-0.72m
202	Natural	Compact red clay marl with bandings of yellow and orange sand	0.72m

Trench 3

Maximum dimensions: Length: 20m Width: 1.8m Depth: 0-0.92m

Orientation: NE-SW

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
300	Topsoil	Dark grey brown silty sand with occasional sub-rounded stones and frequent rooting.	0-0.20m
301	Subsoil	Mid-orangey grey silty sand with occasional sub-rounded stones and frequent rooting.	0.20-0.77m
302	Natural	Compact red clay marl with bandings of yellow and orange sand	0.77m

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive

The archive consists of:

- 1 Context records AS1
- 1 Field progress reports AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 33 Digital photographs
- 1 Drawing number catalogues AS4
- 1 Scale drawings
- 3 Trench record sheets AS41
- 1 CD-Rom/DVDs
- 1 Copy of this report (bound hard copy)

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Wolverhampton Arts and Museums Service
Wolverhampton City Council
Wolverhampton Art Gallery
Lichfield Street
Wolverhampton
WV1 1DU
