

Archaeological Evaluation of land south of Blackfriars Street, Hereford



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Archaeological Evaluation of land off Blackfriars Street, Hereford

Graham Arnold

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at land at Blackfriars Street, Hereford, (NGR SO 5098, 4033). It was undertaken on behalf of Western Power, who intend to construct a new control building and install two transformers to expand the current electricity sub station for which a planning application has been submitted.

Three 10m trenches were opened on the footprint of proposed transformers and a new control building. The trenches revealed cellars and a series of brick and concrete structures dating to the 1920's construction of an early electricity works or industrial depot building. Trench 1 had a narrow gauge rail track orientated north-south, set in a concrete base. It may be associated with the railway system that is recorded on the 1929 OS map of the area heading east-west across the Cattle Market, and may have used to transport fuel or goods into, or around the electricity works.

No significant archaeological deposits were recorded due the heavy impact of 20th Century landscaping of the site and urban developments.

Report

1 Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at land at Blackfriars Street, Hereford (NGR SO 5098, 4033). It was commissioned by Western Power, who intend to expand the current electricity sub-station for which a planning application has been submitted to Herefordshire Council.

A small part of the proposed development site is considered to be within the designated Area of Archaeological Importance, the significance of which may be affected by the application.

The project conforms to a Written Scheme of investigation prepared by CgMs (CgMs 2013).

The project also conforms to the *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2009) and *Standards for archaeological projects in Herefordshire: issue 1* (Herefordshire Archaeology 2004).

The event reference for this project, given by the Herefordshire Historic Environment Record is EHE 2121.

2 Aims

The aims of this evaluation are to:

- determine the presence or absence of archaeological remains and deposits and define any level of truncation;
- date, characterise and record any surviving archaeological deposits;
- clarify, if possible, the role of the site in Hereford's historic development

3 Methods

3.1 Personnel

The project was undertaken by Andy Walsh (BSc, MSc, AIfA) who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2013 and has been practicing archaeology since 2004. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Rogers (BA, MSc). Illustrations were prepared by Laura Templeton. Graham Arnold (BA, MSc) assisted with fieldwork on site and prepared the report.

3.2 Documentary research

A Desk-based assessment was produced by CgMs as part of the project proposal (CgMs 2013).

Prior to fieldwork commencing a search was made of the Historic Environment Record (HER).

3.3 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification has been prepared by CgMs (CgMs 2013). Although three 10m long trenches were originally planned, Trench 1 was shortened to 8.5m due to the presence of a modern drain on site.

Fieldwork was undertaken between 19 June 2013 and 20 June 2013. The site reference number and site code is EHE 2121.

Three trenches, amounting to 57m² in area, were excavated over the locations of the proposed two transformers and a new control building on the site. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 1.

Trenches were excavated down to the first archaeological horizon or natural deposits. Deposits considered not to be significant were removed using a 360° wheeled excavator, employing a toothless bucket and under archaeological supervision. Subsequent excavation was undertaken by

hand. Deposits were recorded according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012a). On completion of excavation, trenches were reinstated by replacing and compacting the excavated material.

3.4 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.

3.5 Artefact methodology

No significant archaeological artefacts were recovered from the evaluation due to the modern nature of all of the deposits encountered.

3.6 Environmental archaeology methodology

No deposits containing significant environmental deposits were encountered during the evaluation.

3.7 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 following is taken from the Written Scheme of Investigation and Desk-based Assessment provided by CgMs (2013).

The solid geology is listed as Mudstone Formation with interbedded siltstone and mudstone. The superficial deposits are described as Glaciofluvial deposits of sand and gravel (British Geological Survey online geology viewer).

Originally the site would have been located on a gravel terrace adjacent to a floodplain. It now lies within an urban area of Hereford. Levels within the site are largely consistent at c. 54m Above Ordnance Datum. This is a result of 20th century landscaping which would have taken place following demolition of 19th century buildings and establishment of the carparking area. The Eign Brook (also known as Widemarsh Brook) crosses under Edgar Street to the north of its junction with Prior Street - to the north of the site. It crosses Merton Meadow and then joins with Ayles Brook (now culverted) at the junction of Widemarsh Street and Newtown Road.

The Desk-based assessment identified a modest potential for Prehistoric and medieval activity. Previous archaeological work has been carried out at the football ground to the north-east of the site (Border Archaeology 2009) and in the adjacent Cattle Market site to the south and west (Archaeological Investigations 2007; CgMs 2012-13). Other investigations have focussed on the Blackfriars Friary (SAM 00124) to the north-east of the site and the City Walls and Ditch to the south (SAM 13610). The Desk-based assessment also noted that 20th Century activity on site may have had significant impact upon these below-ground deposits.

4.2 Current land-use

The site is currently a car park adjacent to an electricity sub-station.

5 Structural analysis

The trenches and features recorded are shown in Fig 2-5. The results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1.

5.1.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits

The natural strata consisted of a compact reddish orange sandy clay with frequent rounded river gravels. The natural deposits were encountered in trenches 1 and 3 at a level of 52.70m OD and 53.91m OD (plates 2 + 6). This is consistent with levels encountered across the Cattle Market that is adjacent to the site.

5.1.2 Phase 2: modern deposits

Above the natural geological deposit was a homogenous mid brown silty clay with frequent inclusions of brick fragments, mortar and cbm seen in sondages down to the natural in trenches 1 and 3. This was cut and truncated by a series of concrete and brick structures, cellars and industrial cellars.

In trench 1 this consisted of brick and concrete structure [107] in the northwest end of the trench, with a concrete block near the centre [103]. Narrow gauge rail tracks (104) were set within the concrete [103]. A thick brick wall [105] orientated east-west and associated with structure [107]. The 20th Century industrial buildings were sealed by concrete slabs levelling the area for the car park surfacing, A brick and concrete structure in trench 2 was cut by a modern service trench.

Trench 2 was entirely covered by a brick and concrete industrial cellar structure (plates 3 + 4), with the structure cut by a later modern service trench on the north side. The structures were backfilled with rubble and type 1 levelling material.

Trench 3 (plate 5) had further 20th Century concrete and brick structures [303], overlying the made ground (304) and sealed by a concrete floor surface [302] of the previous early 20th Century building on site.

6 Synthesis

6.1 Modern 20th Century deposits

The remains of the early 20th century electricity works or industrial depot were encountered in all of the trenches constructed of brick and concrete. These were occasionally cut by modern service trenches. The structures included a narrow gauge rail track used to transport fuel or goods into the electricity works or depot. The tracks were of a gauge of 1ft 8in and were aligned north to south. They could be associated with the tracks recorded running across the Cattle Market to the south and west on the 1929 Ordnance Survey map, and may have been used to move fuel into or around the electricity works.

6.2 Research frameworks

The evaluation has shown that the 20th Century activity on the site has truncated any earlier deposits. All of the evidence related to early 20th Century activity or later. There is no significant archaeology remaining on site as a result of the 20th Century impact.

7 Significance

7.1 Nature of the archaeological interest in the site

No significant archaeology was recorded during the works. The area was heavily impacted by 20th Century landscaping and major urban development.

7.2 Relative importance of the archaeological interest in the site

No significant archaeology was recorded during the works. The area was heavily impacted by 20th Century landscaping and major urban development. Physical extent of the archaeological interest in the site

From the evaluation it is likely that the whole area has been heavily impacted and truncated by the 20th Century development of the site. The natural deposits were located 1.15m – 1.35m below ground level with 20th Century deposits above.

8 The impact of the development

The modern deposits recorded on site demonstrate that the development is highly unlikely to have a negative impact on archaeological deposits.

9 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.

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on behalf of Western Power at land off Blackfriars Street, Hereford (NGR SO 5098, 4033; HER ref 2121). Three 10m trenches were opened on the footprint of proposed transformers and a new control building. The trenches revealed cellars and a series of brick and concrete structures dating to the 1920's construction of an early electricity works or industrial depot building. Trench 1 had a narrow gauge rail track orientated north-south, set in a concrete base. It may be associated with the railway system that is recorded on the 1929 OS map of the area heading east-west across the Cattle Market, and may have used to transport fuel or goods into, or around the electricity works.

The series of brick and concrete structures and cellars sealed a homogenous silty clay made ground above the natural ground level, that was consistent with works on the adjacent site.

10 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Vitesh Mistry (Western Power), Cathy Patrick (CgMs Consulting) and Julian Cotton (Archaeological Advisor, Herefordshire County Council).

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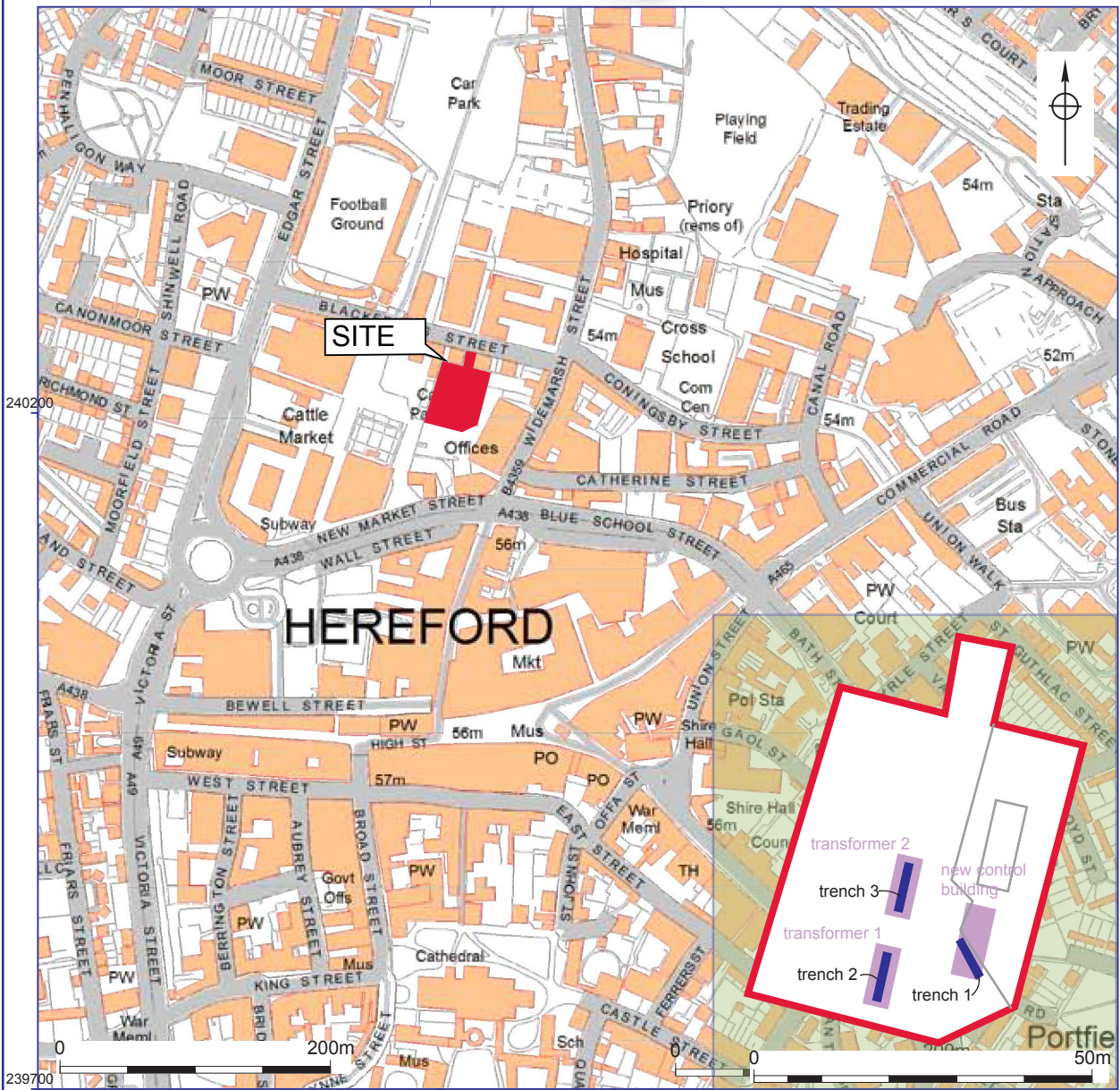
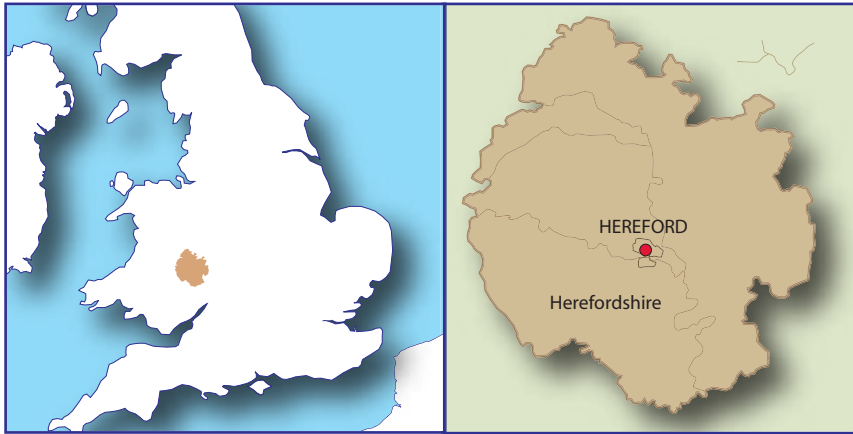
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Figures

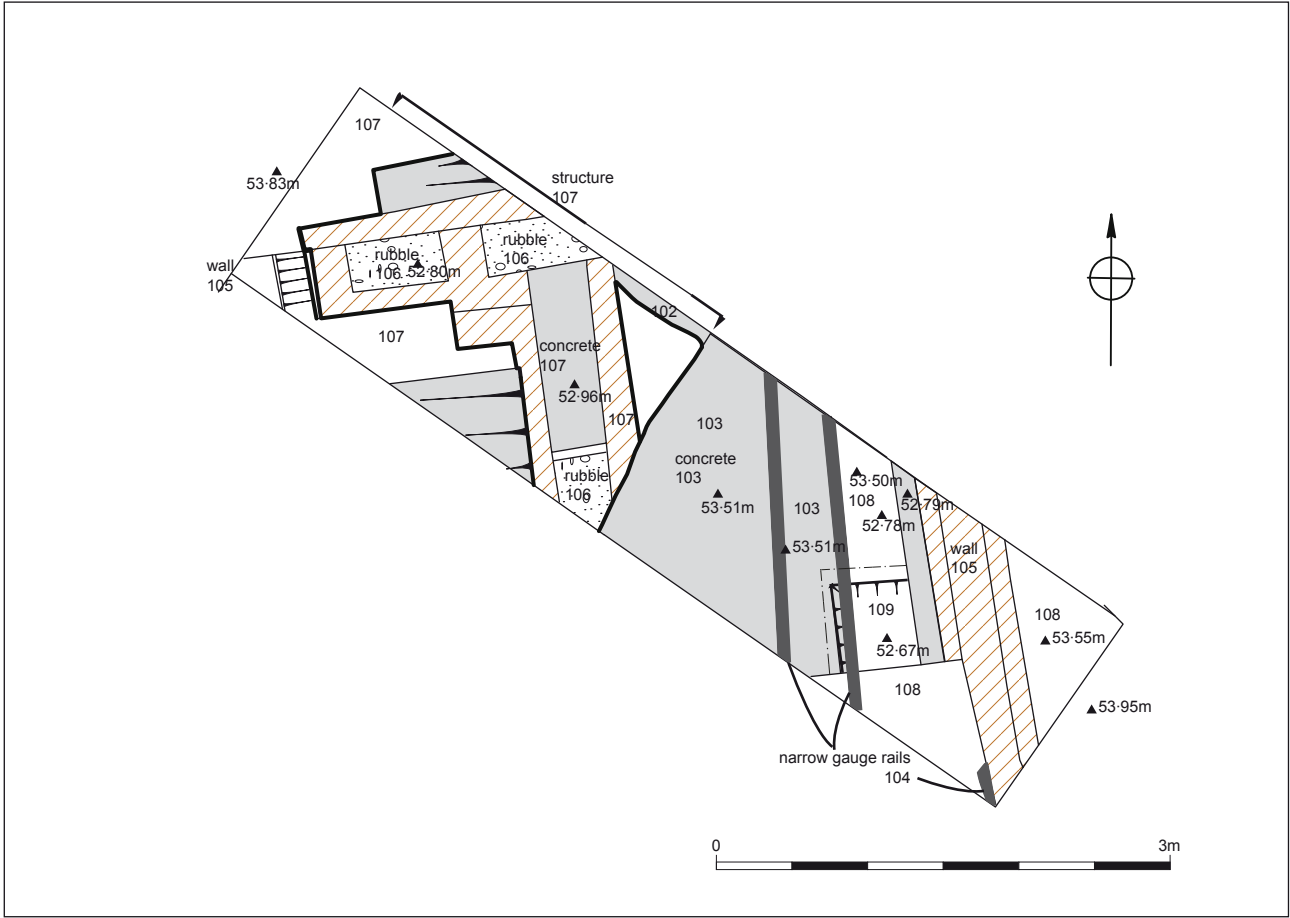




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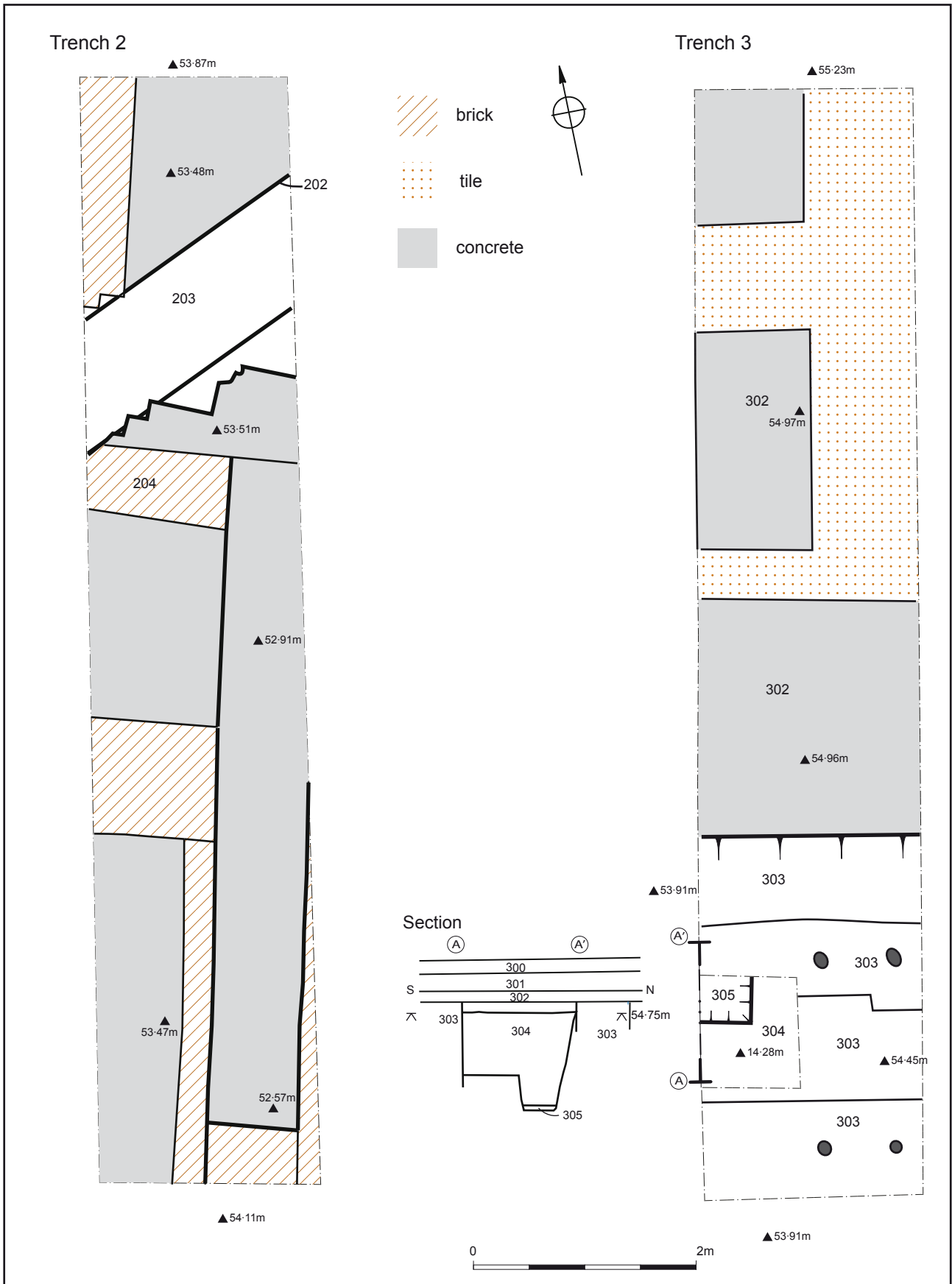
Location of the site

Figure 1



Trench 1

Figure 2



Trenches 2 and 3 and section across contexts 303/304

Figure 3

Plates



Plate 1 Trench 1 looking southwest showing 20th Century brick and concrete structures



Plate 2 Trench 1 at southwest end, facing south, showing sondage through made ground into natural, the narrow gauge rail tracks (104) and brick wall (105, part of the 20th Century industrial buildings).



Plate 3 Trench 2 looking North showing modern 20th Century structure and truncation by a service trench to the north.



Plate 4 Trench 2 looking North showing modern 20th Century structure and truncation by a service trench to the north.



Plate 5 Trench 3 looking North showing modern 20th Century structure (304) and sondage into natural.



Plate 6 Trench 3 looking North showing modern 20th Century structure (304) and sondage into natural.

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Trench 1

Site area: New control building footprint

Maximum dimensions: Length: 8.50m Width: 2.00m Depth: 1.28m

Orientation: Northwest - southeast

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Tarmac	Modern car park surfacing	0.00 – 0.12m
101	Layer	Grey type 1 stone chippings for levelling area of car park	0.12 – 0.32m
102	Layer	Modern concrete slab and stone underlay	0.32 – 0.43m
103	Structure	Solid concrete base structure in centre of trench with narrow gauge rail tracks (104) set within this. Possibly part of an early 20th Century Power Station or later industrial building.	0.43 – 0.90m +
104	Rail tracks	Narrow gauge rail tracks orientated on a north-south alignment and set within the concrete base 103. 1" wide iron tracks with a 20" gap between the tracks. Possibly part of an early 20th Century Power Station or later industrial building.	0.43 – 0.48m
105	Structure	19 th -20 th Century Brick wall structure associated with industrial building. 0.90m wide. Possibly part of an early 20th Century Power Station or later industrial building.	0.47 – 1.27m
106	Layer	Mixed infill of modern brick and concrete structures including clay, sand and silts with frequent inclusions of brick fragments, clinker, mortar and reinforced concrete.	0.47 – 1.20m
107	Structure	Brick and concrete structure with a series of walls and sunken storage areas. Possibly part of an early 20th Century Power Station or later industrial depot building.	0.47 – 1.20m
108	Layer	Mid grey brown homogenous silty clay with frequent cbm, brick fragments, mortar, charcoal and concrete. Made	0.65 – 1.15m

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
		ground to level area when car park and cattle market was constructed.	
109	Natural	Compact reddish orange sandy clay with abundant rounded river gravels	1.15 – 1.27m

Trench 2

Site area: Transformer 1 footprint

Maximum dimensions: Length: 10.00m Width: 2.00m Depth: 1.50m

Orientation: North - South

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
200	Tarmac	Modern car park surfacing	0.00 – 0.13m
201	Layer	Grey type 1 stone chippings for levelling area of car park. Seals whole trench	0.13 – 0.51m
202	Cut	Cut of possible service trench. Not excavated.	0.51m+
203	Fill	Rubble fill of service trench containing frequent modern brick and ceramic insulator material from sub-station. Not excavated.	0.51m+
204	Fill	Rubble infill of structure 205. Contains frequent brick and reinforced concrete fragments.	0.51 m- 1.50m
205	Structure	Brick and concrete structure, cut by 202. Possibly part of an early 20 th Century Power Station or later industrial depot building.	0.47 – 1.27m

Trench 3

Site area: Transformer 2 footprint

Maximum dimensions: Length: 10.00m Width: 2.00m Depth: 1.35m

Orientation: North - South

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
300	Tarmac	Modern car park surfacing	0.00 – 0.13m
301	Layer	Grey type 1 stone chippings for levelling area of car park. Seals whole trench	0.13 – 0.25m
302	Layer	Modern concrete slab floor surface (0.15m) and gravel hardcore underlay (0.10m).	0.25 – 0.50m
303	Structure	Brick and concrete structure. Continues under 302 for whole trench. Possibly part of an early 20 th Century Power Station or later industrial depot building.	0.40 – 1.00m
304	Layer	Mid grey brown homogenous silty clay with frequent cbm, brick fragments, mortar, charcoal and concrete. Made ground to level area when area was developed and cattle market was constructed.	0.40 – 1.30m
305	Natural	Compact reddish orange sandy clay with abundant rounded river gravels	1.30m +

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive (site code: EHE)

The archive consists of:

- 1 Context records AS1
- 2 Field progress reports AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 44 Digital photographs
- 1 Drawing number catalogues AS4
- 4 Scale drawings
- 4 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:

Hereford City Museum and Art Gallery

Broad Street

Hereford

HR4 9RU

Tel. Hereford (01432) 268121 extension 207/334
