

WATCHING BRIEF OF THE ARBORETUM WATER MAIN REPLACEMENT SCHEME TEST PITS, WORCESTER



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Status:	rev 1
Date:	3 June 2013
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Project reference:	P3964
Report reference:	1964
HER reference:	WCM 101951

Watching brief of the Arboretum water main replacement scheme test pits, Worcester

Graham Arnold

Background information

<i>Client</i>	Pick Everard
<i>Site address</i>	Various north of Worcester city centre (see Figs 1-4)
<i>National Grid reference</i>	Centred on SO 85067 55485
<i>Historic Environment Record reference</i>	WCM 101951
<i>Planning authority</i>	Worcester City Council
<i>Brief</i>	WCC 2012
<i>Project design</i>	WA 2012b
<i>Project parameters</i>	IfA 2008

Archaeological background to the site

A full HER search was completed for the scheme prior to work being undertaken (WCC 2012b). As the scheme covers a large area in the centre of Worcester the search included 106 records. The most important are discussed below.

The central open space in Britannia Square is a Scheduled Monument due to the discovery of a Roman building here in the 1820s. This was believed to be a villa or temple complex (WCM 96391 SAM 1005277 Worcester City Centre (WT 343 A-E) Britannia Square). Circular stone foundations and a collection of Roman coins were found by J Allies whilst the foundations for Springfield House were being excavated. Further Roman buildings have been found on the south side of the square and in Back Lane South (WCM 96393, 101854 and 101763) in 2009 and 2010.

Further South, along Britannia Road, the Roman occupation was denser and had an industrial character. There are also indications of Roman activity in the Lowell Street area and northwards towards Lansdowne Road (WCM 98494).

Foregate Street and The Tything was one of the main suburbs of medieval Worcester, established just after the Norman Conquest, with occupation including ditches found (WCM 101424). Medieval St Mary's Street, Taylors Lane and Pierpont Street are later streets within this suburb. Excavated evidence (WCM 10129) suggests that much of this suburb was industrial in character.

Aims

The aim of the watching brief was to observe and record archaeological deposits, and to determine their extent, state of preservation, date and type, as far as reasonably possible.

In particular it was considered that the project had the potential to provide information on the following research areas (WCC 2007):

- The character and development of the Frog Brook valley and stream (RP1.2)
- Documenting the extents of Roman Worcester (RP3.30)
- Character of Roman activity in the Britannia Square area (RP3.18)
- The medieval suburbs (RP5.1)
- Analysis of the city defences in the post-medieval period (RP6.14)
- The landscape of the 1651 battle (RP6.15)
- Civil War destruction (RP6.21)

Methods

General specification for fieldwork

WA 2012a

Sources consulted

HER

Dates of fieldwork

19 October 2012 to 15 January 2013

Dimensions of excavated areas observed

17 Test Pits length 1.15 - 1.20m

width 0.60 – 0.80m

depth 0.80 – 1.20m

Access to or visibility of deposits

Twenty one of the 42 Test Pits were deemed by the Curator to be within areas of archaeological potential (TPs 1-11, 15, 16, 25-27, 33, 34, 41, 43 and 44). Observation of Test Pits 4 and 6-11 was undertaken during machine and hand excavation. The other test pits were observed after hand excavation. The exposed surfaces were sufficiently clean to observe well-differentiated archaeological deposits.

Statement of confidence

Test Pits 8, 9, 33 and 44 were excavated without archaeological monitoring. Otherwise access to, and visibility of, deposits allowed a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

Deposit descriptions

Test Pits 1-5, 7, 10, 11, 15, 16, 25-27, 34, 41 and 43

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 700, 1000, 1100, 1500, 1600, 2500, 2600, 2700, 3400, 4100, 4300	Tarmac	Modern road or footpath surface	0.00 -0.20m
101, 201-5, 1101, 1102, 1501, 2701,	Hardcore	Compacted levelling material under tarmac	0.10 – 0.30m
102, 105, 206-8, 301, 401, 501, 701, 1001, 1103, 1502, 1601, 2501, 2601, 2702, 3401, 4101, 4301	Made ground/ disturbed soils	Moderately compact / loose dark grey or black sandy silty clay with inclusions of brick fragments, ceramic building material (CBM) and modern rubble	0.05-1.20m

Test Pit 6, Back Lane South

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
600	Tarmac	Modern tarmac road surface	0 – 0.10m
601	Hardcore	Compact orange sand and rounded and angular pebbles	0.15 – 0.25m
602	Metalled surface	Very compact metalled road with rounded cobbles, inclusions of brick fragments and tar – post medieval date, no other finds	0.25 – 0.30m
603	Made ground	Friable black sandy clay with frequent stone, concrete and brick fragments	0.30 – 0.60m
604	Redeposited natural	Orange sand, redeposited when pipe was laid	0.60 – 0.85m

Discussion

Test Pit 6 included a metalled surface of very compact rounded cobbles and brick fragments that lay directly under the tarmac and hardcore gravel of the modern road surface. This is considered to have been a post-medieval road surface due to the brick fragments within the structure (Plates 1 - 4). This measured 0.75m in width and continued across the length of the test pit.

In Test Pit 7 to the south-west of Britannia Square (Plates 5 and 6), a small number of residual finds were recovered: one abraded sherd of Roman pottery and a fragment of medieval tile within the backfill of the existing water main trench (pers comm Dennis Williams). The finds have not been retained.

The other test pits that were observed contained disturbed modern made ground and material for the backfill of the existing water main and other services and road surfacing. There were no finds or features of archaeological significance.

Conclusions

The residual evidence from Test Pit 7 is of continued Roman activity extending beyond Britannia Square, which is a Scheduled Monument, and accords with Roman activity observed previously to the south and close to Back Lane South. However it does not add materially to the research frameworks such as the Character of Roman activity in the Britannia Square area that was identified in the aims of the project. No significant archaeology was found in any of the other test pits that were monitored.

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 watching brief was undertaken on behalf of Pick Everard of the Arboretum water main replacement scheme test pits, Worcester (NGR centred on SO 85067 55485; HER ref WCM101951). A metalled surface that was possibly a post-medieval road surface, and residual Roman and medieval finds in backfill of a modern service trench were the only archaeological

features and deposits found during the works. These were found in close proximity to the Scheduled Monument (WT 343 A-E) at Britannia Square.

Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Mike Wilson (Principal Civil Engineer, Pick Everard), James Dinn (Archaeological Officer, Worcestershire City Council) and Sheena Payne-Lunn (Historic Environment Record Officer, Worcestershire City Council).

Bibliography

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WA 2012b *Proposal for an archaeological watching brief at the Arboretum Road water main test pits, The Arboretum, Worcester*, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document dated 3rd October 2012, **P3964**

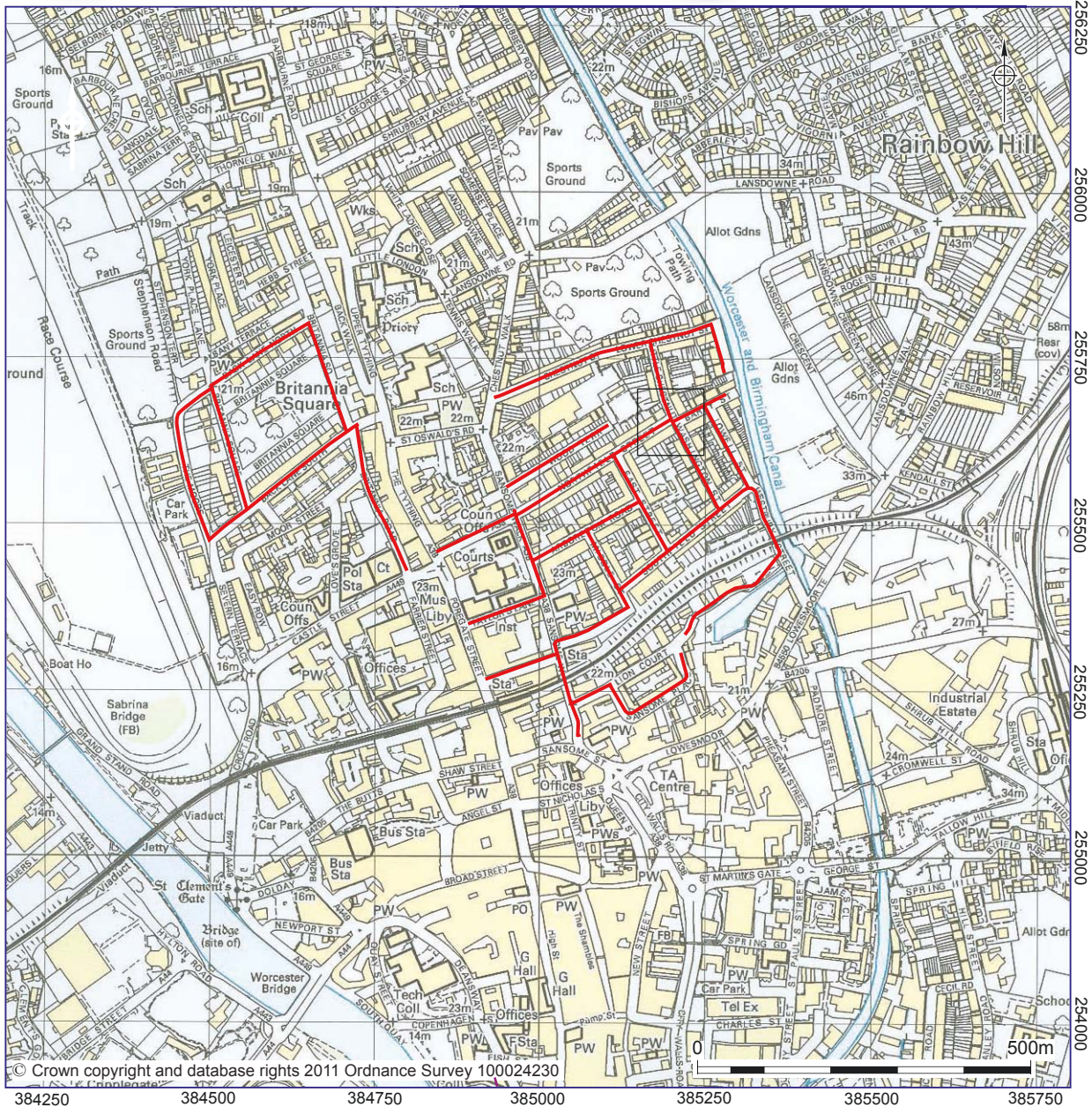
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WCC 2012a *Brief for an archaeological watching brief Arboretum Road water mains replacement scheme (test pits), Worcester*, Worcester City Council Heritage and Design (Archaeology) brief 12 / 8, unpublished document issued 18 September 2012

WCC 2012b *HER Events Full Report – HER Search Arboretum water main scheme*, Worcester City Council Historic Environment Record, unpublished document, dated 19 October 2012

Figures



Location of the route

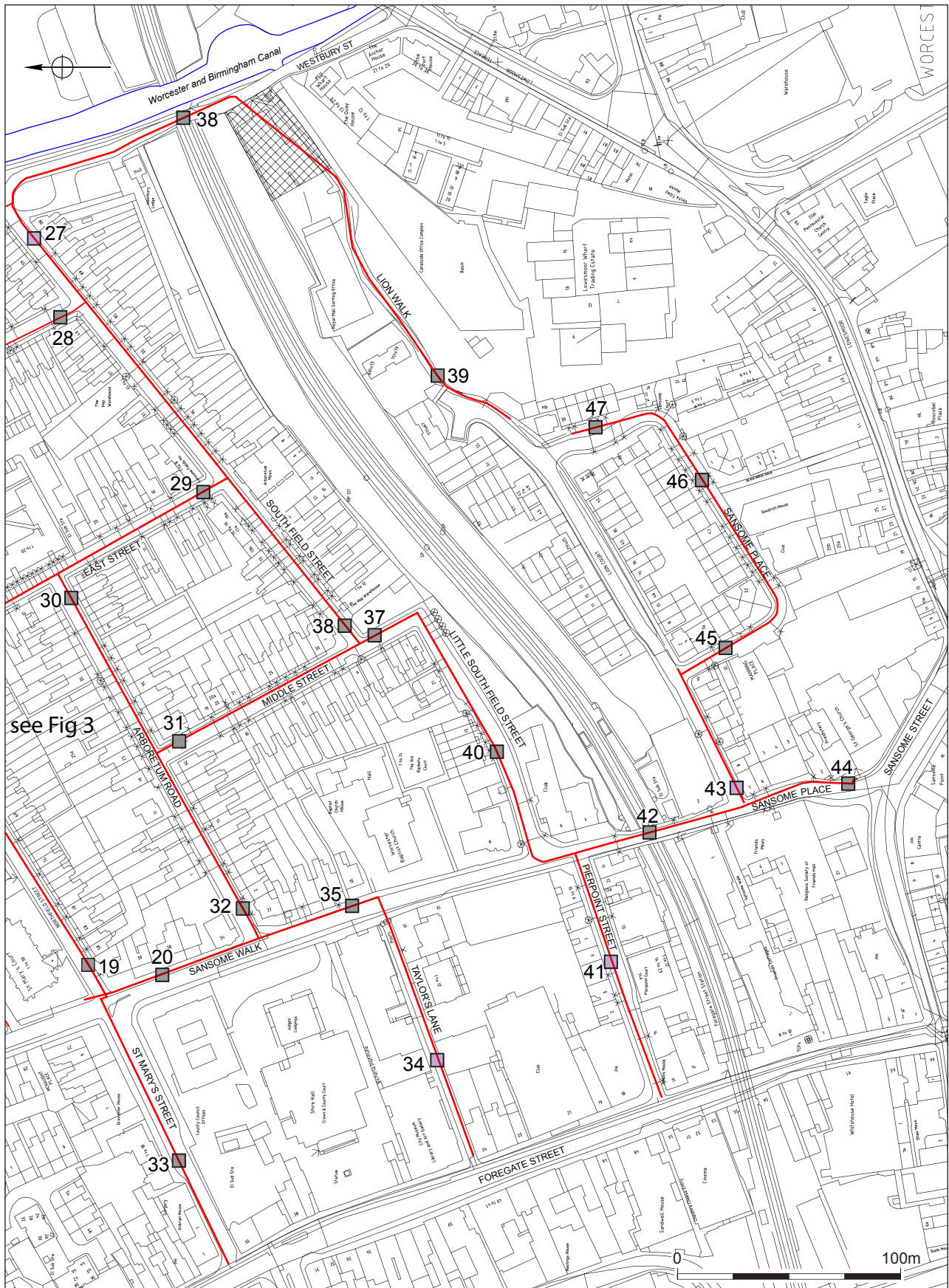
Figure 1



Trench locations: Britannia Square (based upon Morgan Sindal Drg No 120288/C/408) Figure 2



Trench locations: Arboretum north (based upon Morgan Sindal Drg No 120288/C/408) Figure 3



Trench locations: Arboretum south (based upon Morgan Sindal Drg No 120288/C/408) Figure 4

Plates



Plate 1 Test Pit 6 on Back Lane South whilst backfilling



Plate 2 Post-medieval metallised road surface (602) uncovered in Test Pit 6 looking south-west



Plate 3 Test Pit 6 after excavation looking north-east



Plate 4 A fragment of the metalling (602) after removal including the brick fragment that was within the surface (0.5m scale)



Plate 5 Test Pit 7 off the south-west corner of Britannia Square



Plate 6 Test Pit 7 excavated looking north-west



Plate 7 Test Pit 16 on Wolverton Road, sample section looking North



Plate 8 Test Pit 41 on Pierpont Street, sample section looking south

Appendix 1 Technical information

The archive (site code: WCM 101951)

The archive consists of:

- | | |
|-----|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | Context records AS1 |
| 4 | Field progress reports AS2 |
| 2 | Photographic records AS3 |
| 127 | Digital photographs |
| 1 | Scale drawings |
| 21 | Trench record sheets AS41 |
| 1 | Computer disk |
| 1 | Copy of this report (bound hard copy) |

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Worcester City Museum and Art Gallery
Museums Worcestershire
Foregate Street
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