

WATCHING BRIEF
AT
HOUSMAN CLOSE,
BROMSGROVE,
WORCESTERSHIRE



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Worcestershire Archaeology
Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service
The Hive
Sawmill Walk
The Butts
Worcester
WR1 3PB

Status:	
Date:	27 th November 2012
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Report reference:	1956
HER reference:	WSM 47396

Watching brief at Housman Close, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire

Graham Arnold

Background information

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at land off Housman Close, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire. It was undertaken on behalf of Bromsgrove District Housing Trust who are developing the land for residential use. Planning permission was granted for the development (B/12/0070) by Bromsgrove District Council, subject to conditions including a programme of archaeological works. A brief (The Brief) was written by the Historic Environment Planning Officer for Worcestershire who considered that the development had the potential to disturb an archaeological site.

<i>Client</i>	Bromsgrove District Housing Trust
<i>National Grid reference</i>	SO 95231 69687
<i>Historic Environment Record reference</i>	WSM 47396
<i>Planning authority</i>	Bromsgrove District Council
<i>reference</i>	B/12/0070
<i>Brief</i>	WCC 2012
<i>Project design</i>	WA 2012
<i>Project parameters</i>	IfA 2008

Previous archaeological work on the site

There has been no previous archaeological work undertaken on site.

The proposed development lies slightly to the east of the recorded line of the Roman road from Worcester to Lickey (WSM 30529). It was thought that Roman remains associated with the road may have survived within the site.

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.

Methods

General specification for fieldwork - WA 2012a

Sources consulted – HER

Access to or visibility of deposits

Observation of the excavated areas was undertaken during and after machine excavation. This included the topsoil strip, and the excavation of foundation trenches (labelled 1-5 on Figure 2). The exposed surfaces were sufficiently clean to observe well-differentiated archaeological deposits. Selected areas were cleaned by hand.

The brief required a metal detector survey of the site. However after an initial site strip of made ground it was discovered that the original topsoil and subsoil had been removed during the previous development and imported material used to level the area. Therefore, it was agreed with the curator that the metal detector survey was not necessary.

Dates of fieldwork	01-10- 2012 – 12-11-2012
Area of site	c 1250m ²
Sampling	area sampled c 1250m ² . Indicated on Fig 2
	sample size c 100%

Dimensions of excavated areas observed –

Site strip

Trench 1	length	25.00m
	width	1.50m
	depth	0.70m
Trench 2	length	12.00m
	width	1.50m
	depth	0.60m
Trench 3	length	3.00m
	width	1.50m
	depth	0.85m

Foundations

Trench 4	length	14.00m
	Width	11.00m
	Depth	1.20m max
Trench 5	length	11.00m
	Width	0.80m
	Depth	1.20m max

Statement of confidence

Access to, and visibility of, deposits allowed a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved. The observed trenches were sufficiently spread and consistent to demonstrate that the entire site had been truncated previously.

Deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Friable dark brown clayey silt with frequent rooting and occasional small rounded and sub-rounded stones and modern material	0.00 – 0.25m
101	Made ground Levelling	Moderately compact dark greyish brown silty clay with frequent brick and tarmac	0.25 – 0.60m
102	Subsoil	Moderately compact mid orange brown silty clay with occasional porcelain, tarmac and modern disturbances.	0.60 – 0.70m
103	Natural	Compact reddish orange clayey sand truncated by modern disturbance down to 0.80m in places.	0.60m – 0.85m +
104	Natural	Solid Mercian mudstone geology	0.60m – 1.20m +

Discussion

The area was shown to have been truncated to natural levels and levelled with imported made ground in the late twentieth century when the area was developed as a play ground. The made ground contained creamware dating to the 1760-1770 (pers comm. D. Hurst) and other 19th Century white porcelain, although this material was probably imported and also contained modern plastics within the same context, 401. The natural clayey sands were also disturbed in places. Pockets of natural sandstone were present within the natural substrate, with the solid Mercian mudstone geology present in places from 1m below ground level 82.40 AOD. No archaeology was observed during the groundworks. The stratigraphy was consistent in all of the trenches across the site and it is unlikely that any original undisturbed ground survives above natural levels.

Conclusions

No evidence of Roman occupation relating to the proposed line of the Roman road was found on site as the area had been heavily truncated by modern levelling material when the area was previously developed.

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 watching brief was undertaken on behalf of Bromsgrove District Housing Trust at Housman Close, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire (NGR ref SO 95231 69687; HER ref WSM

47396). The site which is being developed for residential use lies to close to the line of the Roman Road from Worcester to Lickey which passes through Bromsgrove. Observation of topsoil stripping and foundation trenches demonstrated that the area had been truncated to natural levels and levelled with imported made ground in the late twentieth century when the area was developed as a play ground. No features or deposits of archaeological significance were recorded.

Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Peter Foster, Bullock Construction Site Manager, Mr Calum Walmsley, Development Officer of bdht and Mike Glyde, Historic Environment Planning Officer, Worcestershire County Council.

Bibliography

IfA 2008 *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief*, Institute for Archaeologists

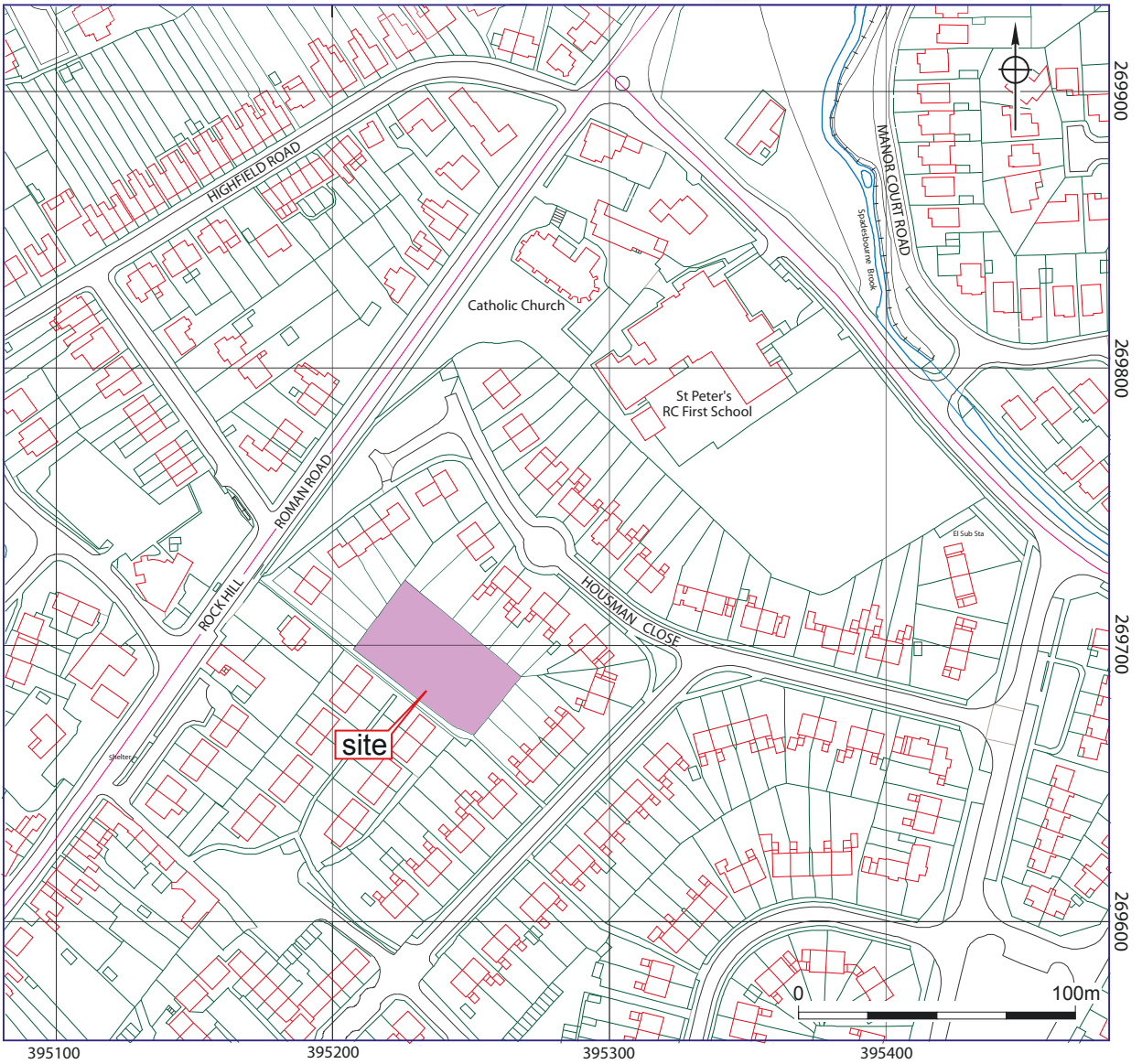
WA 2012a *Manual of service practice, recording manual*, Worcestershire Archaeology, Worcestershire County Council, report **1842**

WA 2012 *Proposal for an archaeological watching brief at Housman Close, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire*, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document dated 20 July 2012 **P3917**

WCC 2010 *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire*, Planning Advisory Section, Historic Environment and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document dated December 2010

WCC 2012 *Requirements for a programme of archaeological work at Housman Close, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire*, Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document dated 19 July 2012

Figures



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Location of the site

Figure 1



Trench locations

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1 De-turfing for new footpaths on entrance to site



Plate 2 General shot of trench 1 topsoil strip looking Northwest



Plate 3 Trench 1 Northeast facing sample section



Plate 4 General shot of trench 2 topsoil strip, facing Northwest



Plate 5 Trench 2 Northwest facing sample section



Plate 6 General shot of trench 3



Plate 7 General shot of trench 4



Plate 8 North-east facing section of trench 4 showing modern overburden



Plate 9 South-west facing section of trench 4 showing natural sand and Mercian mudstone



Plate 10 General reduced dig onto Mercian mudstone in area of plots 3 – 5 looking north



Plate 11 Bedrock in Trench 5 only 0.60m below the ground surface



Plate 12 South-west facing section of Trench 5

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Trench 1

Maximum dimensions: Length: 25.00m Width: 1.50m Depth: 0.70m

Orientation: NE-SW

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Friable dark brown clayey silt with frequent rooting and occasional small rounded and sub-rounded stones and modern material	0.00 – 0.25m
101	Made ground Levelling	Moderately compact dark greyish brown silty clay with frequent brick and tarmac	0.25 – 0.60m
102	Subsoil	Moderately compact mid orange brown silty clay with occasional porcelain, tarmac and modern disturbances.	0.60 – 0.70m
103	Natural	Compact reddish orange clayey sand truncated by modern disturbance down to 0.80m in places.	0.70m +

Trench 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 12.00m Width: 1.50m Depth: 0.60m

Orientation: NE-SW

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
200	Topsoil	Friable dark brown clayey silt with frequent rooting and occasional small rounded and sub-rounded stones and modern material	0.00 – 0.25m
201	Made ground Levelling	Moderately compact dark greyish brown silty clay with frequent brick and tarmac	0.25 – 0.60m
202	Subsoil	Moderately compact mid orange brown silty clay with occasional porcelain, tarmac and modern disturbances.	0.60m +

Trench 3

Maximum dimensions: Length: 3.00m Width: 1.50m Depth: 0.85m

Orientation: NE-SW

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
300	Topsoil	Friable dark brown clayey silt with frequent rooting and occasional small rounded and sub-rounded stones and modern material	0.00 – 0.25m
301	Made ground Levelling	Moderately compact dark greyish brown silty clay with frequent brick and tarmac	0.25 – 0.60m
302	Natural	Compact reddish orange clayey sand truncated by modern disturbance down to 0.80m in places.	0.60m – 0.85m +

Trench 4

Maximum dimensions: Length: 14.00m Width: 11.00m Depth: 1.20m bucket width 0.45-0.60m

Orientation: NW-SE

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Friable dark brown clayey silt with frequent rooting and occasional small rounded and sub-rounded stones and modern material	0.00 – 0.25m
101	Made ground Levelling	Moderately compact dark greyish brown silty clay with frequent brick and tarmac	0.25 – 0.60m
102	Natural	Compact reddish orange clayey sand truncated by modern disturbance down to 0.80m in places.	0.40 – 1.00m
103	Natural	Solid Mercian Mudstone geological substrate	1.00 – 1.20m

Trench 5

Maximum dimensions: Length: 11.00m Width: 0.80m Depth: 1.20m

Orientation: NE-SW

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Friable dark brown clayey silt with frequent rooting and occasional small rounded and sub-rounded stones and modern material	0.00 – 0.25m
101	Made ground Levelling	Moderately compact dark greyish brown silty clay with frequent brick and tarmac	0.25 – 0.40m
102	Natural	Compact reddish orange clayey sand truncated by modern disturbance down to 0.80m in places.	0.40 – 0.70m
103	Natural	Solid Mercian Mudstone geological substrate	0.70 – 1.20m

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive (site code: WSM 47396)

The archive consists of:

- | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|
| 4 | Field progress reports AS2 |
| 1 | Photographic records AS3 |
| 66 | Digital photographs |
| 1 | Scale drawings |
| 5 | Trench record sheets AS41 |
| 1 | Computer disk |
| 1 | Copy of this report (bound hard copy) |

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Worcestershire County Museum
Museums Worcestershire
Hartlebury Castle
Hartlebury
Near Kidderminster
Worcestershire DY11 7XZ
Tel Hartlebury (01299) 250416