

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING
BRIEF
AT
EVESHAM CONTACT CENTRE,
ABBAY ROAD, EVESHAM,
WORCESTERSHIRE

Tom Vaughan and Angus Crawford

Illustrated by Carolyn Hunt

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Project 2773
Report 1375
WSM 34495

Archaeological watching brief at Evesham Contact Centre, Abbey Road, Evesham, Worcestershire

Tom Vaughan and Angus Crawford

Background information

<i>Agent</i>	QMP Management and Design
<i>Client</i>	West Mercia Constabulary
<i>Site address</i>	Evesham Contact Centre, Abbey Road, Evesham
<i>National Grid reference</i>	SP 0354 4356
<i>Sites and Monuments Record reference</i>	WSM 24495
<i>Planning authority</i>	Wychavon District Council
<i>reference</i>	W/05/0531
<i>Brief</i>	HEAS 2005a
<i>Project design</i>	HEAS 2005b
<i>Project parameters</i>	IFA 1999

Previous archaeological work on the site

There has been no previous archaeological work undertaken on site.

Previous archaeological work on associated sites

Evesham has been the subject of a recent survey undertaken as part of the Central Marches Historic Towns Survey and a summary of previous archaeological work in the town has been compiled as part of this project (WSM 28993; Dalwood 1996).

The site lies within the outer precinct of Evesham Abbey, a Benedictine house whose origins date to the 8th century AD. The abbey was comprehensively rebuilt by Abbot Walter from 1078 and continued to be extended throughout the medieval period until its dissolution in 1540. It was almost completely demolished soon after, apart from the bell tower and the few fragments of the structure that remain today. However, some buildings such as the Abbey Gate became private dwellings and survived, although in an altered state (Patrick *et al* 2003, 2). The inner precinct is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 253). The present site lies within the outer Abbey precinct, an area that would have been occupied by gardens and allotments, with occasional associated structures, such as tithe barns, stables, kennels, byres as well as meadow land and fish ponds (WSM 15209 and 29029)

Recent investigations around the Abbey Gatehouse, 0.2km to the north-east revealed a small 2nd century pit, residual Roman pottery, a medieval flagstone floor and an undated cobbled surface (WSM 32766). The Roman remains may represent peripheral activity associated with settlement identified at Vine Street, approximately 0.3km to the north (WSM 30578; Patrick *et al* 2003)

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	CAS 1995
Sources consulted	HER

Context	Material	Type	Total	Weight (g)
1001	Brick	Late Post-Medieval	1	1
1001	Claypipe	Stem	1	0.5
1001	Pottery	Modern	1	9
2001	Bone	Animal	1	22
2001	Claypipe	Stem	2	4
2001	Pipe	Drain	1	5
2001	Pottery	Late Post-Medieval	1	0.5
2001	Tile	Roof	1	5
3001	Bone	Animal	2	7
3001	Iron	Unidentified	1	36
3001	Tile	Fragment	1	1

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

All sherds have been grouped and quantified according to fabric type (Table 2). A total of two sherds were datable by fabric type to their general period or production span.

The discussion below is a summary of the finds and associated location or contexts by period. Where possible, *terminus post quem* dates have been allocated and the importance of individual finds commented upon as necessary.

Context	Fabric number	Fabric name	Total	Weight
1001	81	Stoneware	1	9
2001	84	Creamware	1	0.5

Table 2: Quantification of the pottery by fabric

Discussion of the assemblage

Late post-medieval period.

Only a single sherd of pottery was datable to this period (context 2001). This was a body sherd of creamware with a white glaze present on both the inner and outer surface. The thinness of the sherd suggests that it originated from either a dinner service side-plate or a very fine dinner plate. Creamware's usage as a ceramic fabric for domestic dinner services was at its height around 1760-1780 when English porcelains and finer decorative stone chinas finally superseded it.

Other materials datable to this period were two small brick or roof tile fragments (dating from the 18th to mid 19th century, context 1001 and 2001) and fragments of clay pipe stems from contexts 1001 and 2001.

Modern Period.

As with the late post-medieval assemblage only a single sherd of pottery was datable to the modern period. This was a stoneware rim sherd with an ochre glaze (context 1001). This type of stoneware is extremely common in modern ceramic assemblages dating to the 19th - early 20th century. This particular ceramic fabric had a wide range of practical applications, of which the vast majority was for the production of storage jars, flagons and bottles.

The remaining material dating to this period were a small tile fragment (unglazed, context 3001), and a fragment of salt-glazed drainpipe similar to that for sewage or underground rainwater drainage (context 2001).

Conclusions

The small number of artefacts recovered during the watching brief indicates that there are no significant archaeological deposits or structures within or in the immediate vicinity of the site. The artefacts recovered and their late post-medieval to modern dates suggests that their disposition is the result of low level discard of general household and food waste. This is further confirmed by the small quantity of undatable animal bone also present.

The small size of the assemblage and the well-developed nature of the soils also indicate that the area has not been subject to intensive ploughing during the medieval or later periods, where large quantities of discarded material, are unintentionally introduced to the soil as part of the manuring process. The site was therefore probably largely undisturbed prior to the construction of the Abbey in the 8th century, and remained so, perhaps under pasture or low-intensity agriculture and gardens throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods.

Publication summary

The Service has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, the Service 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 West Mercia Constabulary at Evesham Contact Centre, Abbey Road, Evesham, Worcestershire (NGR: SP 0354 4356; HER ref. WSM 34495). Three underpinning pits and one foundation trench were observed, within which was revealed a well-developed soil sequence overlying a sandy clay and gravel natural matrix. No archaeological horizons, structures or features were identified. The small assemblage comprised largely late post-medieval ceramic finds and undatable animal bone. It is considered that the site was largely unoccupied prior to the construction of the Abbey, and that it remained undisturbed except for low intensity agricultural use throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods.

Archive

Fieldwork progress records AS2	3
Photographic record sheets	1
Digital photographs	16
Trench records AS41	4
Boxes of finds	1
Computer disks	1

It is intended to be place the project archive at:	Worcestershire County Museum Hartlebury Castle, Hartlebury Near Kidderminster Worcestershire DY11 7XZ
telephone	01299 250416

Acknowledgements

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Context No	Context type	Feature type	Colour	Texture	Consistency	Notes
4000	Layer	Natural	Yellowish orange	Sandy clay	Firm	tr 4, natural, occ fawn/grey streaks, frequent small pebble gravel, root holes/worm holes, irreg. boundary w/ 4001 above, >0.85m bgs.
4001	Layer	Subsoil	Light greyish brown	Sandy clay	Compact	tr 4, frequent small pebbles, v occ charcoal flecks, v diffuse boundary w/4002 above, irreg w/4001 below, 0.57-0.88m bgs.
4002	Layer	Topsoil	Dark-Brown	Sandy clay loam	Compact	tr 4, v diffuse boundary w/4001 below, irreg w/4003 above, occasional charcoal flecks, small pebbles & gravel, 0.39-0.65m bgs.
4003	Layer	Modern Layers	Dark grey brown	Sandy clay loam	Compact	tr 4, redep soil, frequent small-medium charcoal flecks and brick rubble, irreg boundary w/4002 below & 4004 above, 0.08-0.42m bgs.
4004	Layer	Modern Layers	mixed	tarmac & brick	cemented	tr 4, brick rubble hardcore and tarmac, defined boundary w/4003 below, 0.00-0.22m bgs.

Appendix 2 - Photographs



Plate 1: Pit 1, west-north-west section



Plate 2: Pit 3, west-north-west section



Plate 3: Trench 4, south-south-west section at east end



Plate 4: General shot of site, view south-west

Appendix 3 - Worcestershire Historic Environment Record: Artefacts

Date range	Material	Total	Weight (g)	Specialist report?	Important research assemblage?
	Bone	3	29		N
	Iron	1	36		N
17-18C	Claypipe	1	0.5	Y	N
1760-80	Pottery	1	0.5	Y	N
18-19	Brick	1	1	Y	N
18-19C	Claypipe	2	4	Y	N
18-19C	Tile	1	5	Y	N
20C	Pipe	1	5	Y	N
20C	Pottery	1	9	Y	N
20C	Tile	1	1	Y	N