

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
WATCHING BRIEF
AT
SUCKLEY SCHOOL,
CHURCH LANE
SUCKLEY,
WORCESTERSHIRE



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

Status:
Date: 10 June 2013
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Project reference: P4057
Report reference: 2003
HER reference: WSM 48221

Watching brief at Suckley School, Church Lane, Suckley, Worcestershire

Graham Arnold

Background information

<i>Client</i>	Resources Directorate Worcestershire County Council
<i>National Grid reference</i>	SO 37205, 25160
<i>Historic Environment Record reference</i>	WSM 48221
<i>Planning authority reference</i>	Malvern Hills District Council MH/12/1217
<i>Brief</i>	WCC 2013
<i>Project design</i>	WA 2013
<i>Project parameters</i>	IfA 2012

Previous archaeological work on the site

There has been no previous archaeological work undertaken on this site.

Previous archaeological work on associated sites

While modest in scale, the groundwork's associated with this scheme may affect deposits of archaeological interest relating to the medieval settlement of Suckley. There have been little or no archaeological investigations in the settlement to date; however Suckley derives its name from the Anglo Saxon personal name, 'Succ'a and Ley meaning place, indicating early origins for the settlement.

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. The brief indicates that significant deposits may be defined as those likely to be of medieval date.

Methods

General specification for fieldwork

WA 2012a

Sources consulted

HER

Date(s) of fieldwork

24/01/2013 - 25/01/2012

Area of site c 100m² (indicated on Fig 2)

Dimensions of excavated areas observed –

Foundations	length 10m
	width 10m
	depth 1.06m max

Access to or visibility of deposits

Observation of the excavated areas was undertaken during machine excavation. The exposed surfaces were sufficiently clean to observe well-differentiated archaeological deposits, though any less clear may have not been identified. Access to deep trenches was not made for safety reasons.

Statement of confidence

Access to, and visibility of, deposits allowed a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

Deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
1000	Tarmac ground surface	Tarmac yard surface, butts directly against school wall foundations.	0.00 – 0.15m
1001	Layer	Modern made ground consisting of frequent red clinker, containing moderate inclusions of charcoal, mortar, stone and brick fragments, found towards the northern extent of excavation.	0.15 – 0.19m
1002	Modern made ground	Orange and cream concrete mortar, bedding levelling material for modern surfacing.	0.13 – 0.27m
1003	Modern made ground	Compact, firm mid grey clay with frequent large modern brick fragments and stones. Appears to have been deposited to raise the ground level as it original dropped away to the north and east, either from previous landscaping or the natural gradient.	0.27 – 0.40m
1004	Tarmac	Black Tarmac, former ground surface butts against school wall foundations.	0.13 – 0.41m
1005	Modern made ground	Compact firm mid grey clay large modern brick fragments and stones. Same as 1003.	0.50 – 0.60m
1006	Natural substrate	Very compact light reddish brown clay / marl with rare small rounded stone and pockets of degraded sandstone. Sterile and homogenous throughout. Cut by a number of modern services.	0.32 – 1.06m +

Discussion

No significant archaeological deposits were observed during the works. The area had been heavily landscaped in recent times and the stratigraphy consisted of a series of layers of modern made ground. These lay above the natural marl, which was heavily truncated by service trenches for the school. The natural clay marl was recorded at between 0.30m and 0.60m below the current ground level. The ground originally sloped down to the north and east, prior to landscaping when the main school building was constructed.

Conclusions

There is no archaeological evidence of medieval activity in this location, although the area has been heavily landscaped during the construction of the main school and services truncated the natural marl.

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 Worcestershire County Council Resources Directorate at Suckley School, Church Lane, Suckley, Worcestershire (NGR ref SO 37205, 25160; HER ref WSM 48221). The works involved construction of a new classroom and the groundworks were observed. Only modern made ground and service trenches were observed above the natural clay marl, that lay at a depth of between 0.32 – 0.60m below ground level. The area had been landscaped numerous times previously and modern services cut the natural clay. No significant archaeological deposits were present.

Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Chris Neath, Resources Directorate, Worcestershire County Council, and Mike Glyde, Historic Environment Planning Officer, Worcestershire County Council.

Bibliography

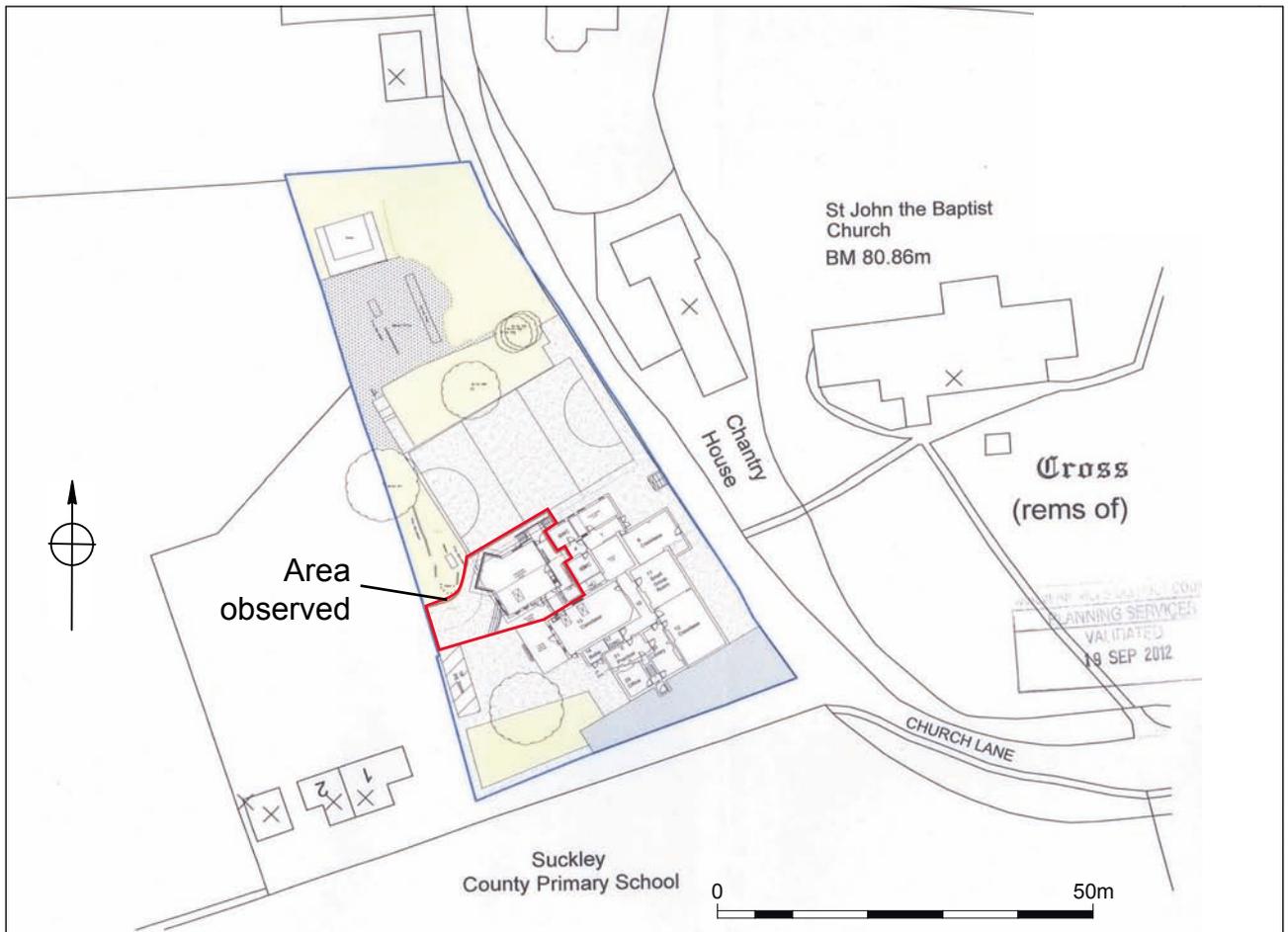
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- WA 2013 *Proposal for an archaeological watching brief at Suckley School, Church Lane, Suckley, Worcestershire*, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document dated 15 January 2013, **P4057**
- WCC 2010 *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire*, Planning Advisory Section, Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council unpublished report **604**, amended July 2012
- WCC 2013 *Requirements for a programme of archaeological work at Suckley School, Church Lane, Suckley, Worcestershire*, Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document 15 January 2013

Figures



Location of the site

Figure 1



Location of watching brief

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1 South-west facing section through modern made ground deposits.



Plate 2 The site from the south-west



Plate 3 South-west facing section through modern made ground deposits



Plate 4 South-east facing section through modern made ground deposits



Plate 5 The site from the north-east

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Trench 1

Maximum dimensions: Length: 3.50m Width: 0.70m Depth: 1.06m max

Orientation: Foundations for new classroom Northwest of main school

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
1000	Tarmac ground surface	Tarmac yard surface, butts directly against school wall foundations.	0.00 – 0.15m
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Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive (site code: WSM 48221)

The archive consists of:

- 1 Context records AS1
- 1 Field progress reports AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 39 Digital photographs
- 1 Scale drawings
- 1 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