

WATCHING BRIEF
AT
33-35, HIGH STREET,
DROITWICH SPA,
WORCESTERSHIRE



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Worcestershire Archaeology
Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service
The Hive
Sawmill Walk
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Status:	
Date:	30 August 2013
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Project reference:	P4134
Report reference:	2038
HER reference:	WSM 49621

Watching brief at 33-35, High Street, Droitwich Spa, Worcestershire

Author Tim Cornah

Background information

<i>Client</i>	Western Power Distribution
<i>National Grid reference</i>	SO 9003 6338
<i>Historic Environment Record reference</i>	WSM49621
<i>Written Scheme of Investigation</i>	WCC 2013
<i>Project parameters</i>	IfA 2012

Archaeological background

The site lies within a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 30097) which includes multi-period salt production remains that date from the Iron Age period into the modern era (Hurst 2001; Vaughan 2003; Williams *et al* 2002).

An archaeological evaluation (WSM 07313) was undertaken within very close proximity in 1988. One of its two trenches was located only a few metres to the north-east of the present investigations. This contained 19th and 20th century deposits to a depth of about 1.10m above a series of cobbled surfaces dated to the medieval period. The other trench also contained 19th to 20th century material to the base of excavation at 1.25m (Hurst 1988). This is consistent with other archaeological works in the area such as the watching brief (WSM 33531) undertaken before the construction of Waitrose to the north which revealed large amounts of modern industrial material spread across the site for ground levelling purposes. Below this, significant archaeological deposits of Romano-British date were found, as well as some that are possibly Saxon in date (Goad 2007).

Aims

The aims and scope of the project are to observe and record archaeological deposits, and to determine their extent, state of preservation, date and type, as far as reasonably possible within the confines of the proposed groundworks.

Methods

General specification for fieldwork

WA 2012a

Sources consulted

HER

Sources cited by the HER

1885 Ordnance Survey Map

Bibliographic references

Date of fieldwork

29 July 2013

Dimensions of excavated areas observed –

Services	length 9.70m
	width 0.30-1.0m
	depth 0.60m

Access to or visibility of deposits

The trenches were hand excavated to a maximum depth of about 0.60m allowing close inspection of all deposits during excavation. Hand excavation also allowed for the greater potential for the retrieval of artefacts. The sections and the base of the trench were hand cleaned in order to observe archaeological deposits.

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	Type	Description	Depth (below ground level)
100	Modern surface	Brick surface with layers of sand and grey stone aggregates below acting as levelling deposits.	0.00-0.35m
101	Makeup or levelling deposit	Soft dark grey clinker and ash deposit containing 19 th and 20 th century pottery.	0.35-0.60m

Discussion

The areas excavated did not exceed 0.60m in depth and only layers dating from the 19th century at the earliest were observed. This is consistent with the evaluation to the north undertaken in 1988 (Hurst 1988) which concluded that medieval and earlier archaeological features are deeply buried below modern deposits. The limited depth of excavation during this project means that none of these medieval or earlier deposits were reached.

Conclusions

The excavations observed during this watching brief revealed no significant archaeological deposits, features or artefacts. The potential remains for significant deposits and features to exist at a greater depth below the modern deposits, as has consistently been seen within previous archaeological work across the area. The site is within a Scheduled Ancient Monument considered to have contained salt works from at least the Iron Age period until the modern era so features from all of these periods are potentially present.

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 Western Power Distribution at 33-35, High Street, Droitwich, Worcestershire (NGR SO 9003 6338; HER ref WSM 49621). This site has good potential for the survival of significant archaeological remains, lying within a Scheduled Ancient Monument encompassing the site of salt works from at least the Iron Age period onwards. The trenches were not excavated beyond 0.60m below the present ground surface, revealing clinker and ash deposits with 19th and 20th century debris. The potential remains for significant deposits and features to exist at a greater depth below the modern deposits, as has consistently been seen within previous archaeological work across the area.

Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Mark Bates and Caroline Sinclair (Western Power Distribution), and Jacqueline Allonby (English Heritage).

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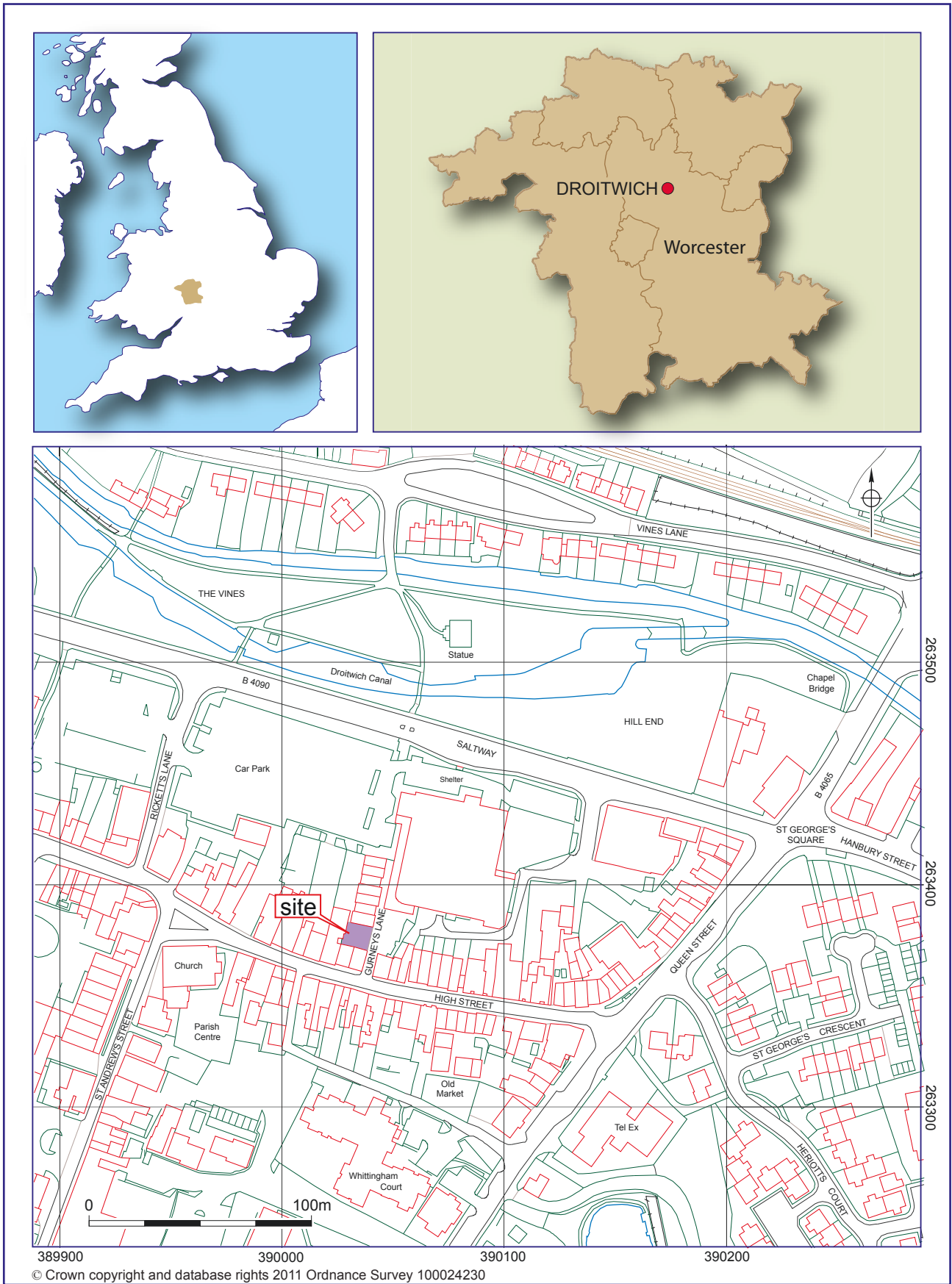
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Figures



Location of the site

Figure 1



Trench location plan

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1 The site looking south-east



Plate 2 Deposits observed within the trench

Appendix 1 Technical information

The archive (site code: WSM 49621)

The archive consists of:

- 1 Field progress report AS2
- 7 Digital photographs
- 1 Trench record sheet AS41
- 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