

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING
BRIEF AT ARCH 54, FARRIER
STREET, WORCESTER,
WORCESTERSHIRE

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Archaeological watching brief at Arch 54, Farrier Street, Worcester, Worcestershire

James Goad

Part 1 Project summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on a pipe trench outside Arch 54, under the railway bridge at Farrier Street, Worcester (NGR SO 8484 5520). It was undertaken on behalf of The Cyril Orchard Group who were acting on behalf of Railtrack Spacia. Railtrack intended to refurbish Arch 54 and install a sewer connection from the arch into the street. The project aimed to monitor the groundworks and determine if any significant archaeological remains were present and if so to determine their location, date and nature.

The watching brief succeeded in locating cellar walls, probably dating to the 18th century. In addition to this were the remnants of several layers, which were not dateable.

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Part 2 Detailed report

1. Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Arch 54, Farrier Street, Worcester, Worcestershire (NGR SO 8484 5520), for Cyril Orchard Group who were acting on behalf of Railtrack Spacia. The client intended to alter and refurbish Arches 50 and 54, which required deep groundworks in the form of a sewer connection from Arch 54 into the street. This was believed to be a length of between 10-15m. The client submitted a planning application to Worcester City Council (reference P02L0655), who considered that it lay within an area of archaeological sensitivity.

1.2 Project parameters

The project conforms to the *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IFA 1999). The project also conforms to a brief prepared by Worcester City Museum Archaeology Section (WCMAS 2003).

1.3 Aims

The aims of the watching brief were to try and locate archaeological deposits during the course of the groundworks and determine, if present, their extent, state of preservation, date and type.

2. Methods

2.1 Documentary search

Prior to fieldwork commencing a search was made of the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). In addition the following sources were also consulted:

Cartographic sources

- Map of Worcester, Speed 1610
- Map of Worcester, Vaughan 1653
- An exact ground plot of the City of Worcester as it stood fortified 3rd September 1651, Anon 1660
- Plan of Worcester City, Doharty 1742
- Plan of the City and Suburbs of Worcester, Young 1779
- Plan of the City and Suburbs of Worcester, Nash 1781
- Plan of the City and Suburbs of Worcester, Green 1795
- Map of Worcester, Eaton 1810
- A Plan of the City and Environs of Worcester, Eaton 1829

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- A Map of the City of Worcester, Crisp 1832
 - A Map of the City and the Suburbs of Worcester showing the Boundary of the Elective Franchise with the Municipal Wards, Clements 1835
 - Plan of Worcester, Bentley 1840
 - 1884-1886 Ordnance Survey 1st edition map, 1:2500
 - 1904 Ordnance Survey map, 1:2500
 - 1924 Ordnance Survey map, 1:2500
 - 1934 Ordnance Survey map, 1:2500

Documentary sources

- Barker 1968-69
- Dalwood *et al* 1994
- Edwards, Griffin and Dalwood 2002
- Jones and Vyce 2000
- Mundy 1985

2.2 **Fieldwork**

2.2.1 **Fieldwork strategy**

A short specification was prepared by the Service. The fieldwork conformed to the points laid down in the Brief (WCMAS 2003).

Fieldwork was undertaken between 23rd May and 13th June 2003.

The total amount of trenching observed came to just under 16m² in area. The trenching was done in stages across the road in order to keep one side of the carriageway open, with the final stage of trenching leading up from the road to Arch 54. The location of the trenching is shown in Figure 2.

Trenching was undertaken by first removing the concrete and tarmac with a breaker and then trenching with a mini digger and digging by hand. The resulting excavation was then inspected for archaeological features. Access was limited as far as gaining entry to the trench was concerned. This was due to health and safety considerations. Deposits were recorded according to standard Service practice (CAS 1995). In order to hasten the recording process on site, the scale drawings of the trench sections were annotated using deposit descriptions, rather than on the standard pro forma record sheets. On completion, the trenches were filled with excavated material and fresh stone chippings.

2.2.2 **Structural analysis**

All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced. Analysis was effected through a combination of structural, artefactual and ecofactual evidence, allied to the information derived from other sources.

2.3 **Artefacts**

2.3.1 **Artefact recovery policy**

All artefacts were retrieved by hand and retained in accordance with the service manual (CAS 1995 as amended).

2.3.2 **Method of analysis**

All hand-retrieved finds were examined. Artefacts were identified, quantified, dated and recorded on a Microsoft Access 97 database. The pottery was examined and recorded by fabric type according to the fabric reference series maintained by the Service (Hurst and Rees 1992).

2.4 **Environment**

2.4.1 **Sampling policy**

Given the nature of the deposits found during the project it was unnecessary to take any samples.

2.5 **The methods in retrospect**

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved

3. **Topographical and archaeological context**

Worcester lies in the valley of the River Severn, just above its confluence with the Teme. The historic core of the city is situated on the east bank of the river, on a terrace of sand and gravel overlying Mercia Mudstone (Keuper Marl), which rises at a height of c26m OD. Evidence of the earliest settlement dates to the Iron Age and continued, with varying degrees of intensity, through the Roman and medieval periods to the present day (Barker 1969, 9-42).

The site in question lies to the north of this historic central city core and outside the line of the medieval city walls, today delineated by Shaw Street and The Butts. Arch 54 is located within an area of proven archaeology from the Roman period, as well as lying on the western edge of the medieval Foregate Street suburb. The area of the watching brief is within an area of high archaeological potential.

Excavations immediately within the city wall in the northern part of the city revealed evidence of a Dominican friary at Blackfriars, and also exposed a major Roman road running north to south with roadside occupation, together with extensive evidence for Roman iron smelting in the 3rd to 4th centuries (Barker 1969, 63-98; Mundy 1985). The road, which continued north out of the city centre, was initially constructed with cobbles and later capped with iron slag (Dalwood *et al* 1994).

A major excavation was undertaken adjacent to the watching brief area in the area of land south-west of the intersection of Cherry Tree Walk and Farrier Street, at Orchard House and Graveney House (WCM 100181). This investigation produced evidence of extensive Roman industry outside the main centre of the city, served by the aforementioned road, which passed through the western portion of the site. In contrast to the Deansway ironworking, the date attributed to the Farrier Street site was 3rd to 4th centuries (Dalwood *et al* 1994).

Roman occupation is in evidence further to the north as well, with occupation material in evidence at the Condor building (WCM 100592). A clay oven base dating to the 3rd or 4th

century was located, along with quantities of daub and painted wall plaster, indicative of a well-appointed building in the vicinity. Industrial activity was also in evidence, which was dated by the associated pottery to be of a 3rd and 4th century date, which is consistent with the date at the Orchard House site (Sherlock 2002).

The Kardonia building, a little further to north up Farrier Street, was also subject to archaeological investigation (HWCM 22105). This excavation revealed an abundance of industrial waste in the form of iron slag. Metalled surfaces were also in evidence along with pits containing large assemblages of pottery. A quantity of painted wall plaster was also recovered, pointing to the existence of a high status building in the locale (R Jackson pers comm).

The area of Roman activity has been located at sites in Castle Street. The Magistrate's Court site at Castle Street revealed intensive occupation in the 3rd and 4th centuries (Jones and Vyce 2000) whilst the material and deposits of the site of the Castle Street Police Station appeared to be domestic, agricultural and pastoral, given the bone evidence for knackerage (Edwards, Griffin and Dalwood 2002).

Little evidence for medieval occupation has been recovered from this part of Farrier Street, apart from abraded sherds of pottery in post-Roman ploughsoil horizons. It seems probable that this site lay just within the medieval Foregate Street suburb at its western limits.

This area was part of the medieval tile-making industry during this period, up to the destruction of the suburb during the Civil War. The industry is believed to have thrived in the backplots of people's properties. The suburb is also believed to have been bounded by a ditch to mark its western limits (WCMAS 2003).

The map evidence examined, which dates from the 17th century onwards, seems to show that the site was developed in the post-medieval period. Doharty's map of 1742 shows the location of the present railway arch to be cutting across a building fronting onto Farrier Street. The building is surrounded on two sides by gardens. Later maps invariably show a progressively more built-up area (Green 1795, Eaton 1829, Bentley 1840). A narrow road or passageway is also visible (Young 1779 and Green 1795) in this location, leading up to the rear of one of the properties on The Tything. This is located very closely to the same access road existing alongside the arches today. The potential for encountering archaeology from the post-medieval period is high.

4. **Description**

The results of the artefact analysis are presented in Table 1, with Table 2 summarising the contexts recorded. The trenches and features recorded are shown in Figures 2 and 3.

Medieval

The only possible material of medieval date were two pieces of brick and one piece of flat roof tile from context 114. The brick was highly abraded with no surfaces surviving whilst the tile may have been produced at any time between the 13th and 18th century and may, therefore, have been medieval or post-medieval in date. No contexts were datable to the medieval period.

Post-medieval

All the contexts had a *terminus post quem* date in the post-medieval period. Context 108 and 114 had a *terminus post quem* of 18th century, and 109 had a *terminus post quem* of early 18th century.

The brick recovered from context 109 was 2.25 inches thick and had lime mortar adhering to it. It probably dates from the late 17th or early 18th century (J D Hurst, pers comm).

The sherds of post-medieval red ware from context 108 were base angle sherds from the same vessel, probably a large pancheon. The size of the vessel, and the poorly mixed clay it's composed of, suggest an 18th century date.

4.1 Artefact analysis

Table 1- Summary of artefacts

Context	Material	Type	Total	Weight (g)	Date range
108	Pot	Post-medieval red ware	2	460	18th C
108	Bone		2	54	
109	Brick		1	3300	L17th –E18th century
114	Tile	Flat roof tile	1	188	13 th – 18 th century
114	Brick		2	104	Medieval / post medieval

The material dated from the possible medieval to post-medieval period. It was not highly abraded.

4.1.1 Significance

The assemblage is very small, and reflects documented occupation in the post-medieval period. No evidence for activity in the Roman period was recovered, and very little for the medieval period.

4.2 Phase 1 Natural deposits

Deposit descriptions are listed in Table 2.

There is a possibility that natural deposits were reached towards the base of the sewer trench as it crossed the road. The excavation was at its deepest here, being 2.40m in depth. This possible natural layer (context 104) was a very gravelly layer of mid brown sand.

4.3 Prehistoric to Roman

No deposits or artefacts from these periods were found during the course of the groundworks.

4.4 Medieval

Possible medieval brick was found in layer 114 which pre-dates the brick structure 112/113. The brick could also be from the post-medieval period though. A piece of tile from this same deposit was dated from 13th to the 18th century, so is also possibly from the medieval period. The date range for the manufacture of such material unfortunately cannot tie it down to the medieval period. It's possible that layer 115 below 114 is medieval ploughsoil.

4.5 Post-medieval

Most of the material recovered from the layers and structures visible in the sides of the trench were dated to this period. Wall 109 had brick that was dateable to the 18th century and is a later feature than layer 108, which is also dateable to the same century. Layer 114 beneath brick surface 112 has a similar broad date range on the material found within it.

It can be assumed that walls 109 and 113 are cellar walls probably dating to the 18th century. The maps of this area (Figures 3-6) show upstanding buildings which fronted on to the street in the location of the groundworks. By the time of the Ordnance Survey map of 1928 some of the buildings in this location have been demolished.

5. Discussion

The trenching did not locate any remains dateable to the Roman period, despite the wealth of Roman material recovered from Orchard House/Graveney House (WCM 100181) just over the road to the south-west, along with further remains in Arch 49 to the west. Furthermore there was no evidence of the medieval tile making industry that existed in some of the backplots of the Foregate Street suburb or any evidence of a large ditch marking the rear boundary of these medieval properties.

There are deposits that might date from the Roman and medieval periods, but unfortunately no dating evidence was retrieved from them. It seems possible that traces of the former medieval ploughsoil was detected in the form of layer 115.

The development of the area in the post-medieval period seems to be the phase of activity best reflected in the results from this project. It is most likely that the walls detected in the trenches were cellars for upstanding buildings probably built in the 18th century and which are clearly visible on maps from the early to mid 19th century (as listed previously). These buildings seem to have been demolished since the 1940's.

The trenching revealed a substantial amount of cellaring which helped confirm the presence of post-medieval buildings on this site.

The groundworks had only a limited impact upon the archaeological deposits present in this location.

6. 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 Railtrack Spacia at Arch 54, Farrier St, Worcester (NGR SO 8484 5529; WCM 101103). The trenching revealed several brick walls, which were dated to the 18th century. These were probably the remains of cellars for houses or buildings which existed on this site probably up to the mid 20th century. Similarly there was a layer pre-dating the walling which was broadly dateable from the 13th to the 18th centuries. There were several layers of deposits in the sections that went undated but could have been earlier than the post-medieval period.

7. The archive

The archive consists of:

10	Fieldwork progress records AS2
18	Digital colour photos
1	Scale drawings
1	Box of finds (not retained)
1	Computer disk

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Worcester City Museum

Foregate Street

Worcester

8. **Acknowledgements**

The Service would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Railtrack Spacia and James Dinn.

9. **Personnel**

The fieldwork and report preparation was led by James Goad. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Hal Dalwood. Fieldwork was undertaken by James Goad, finds analysis by Erica Darch and illustration by Carolyn Hunt.

10. **Bibliography**

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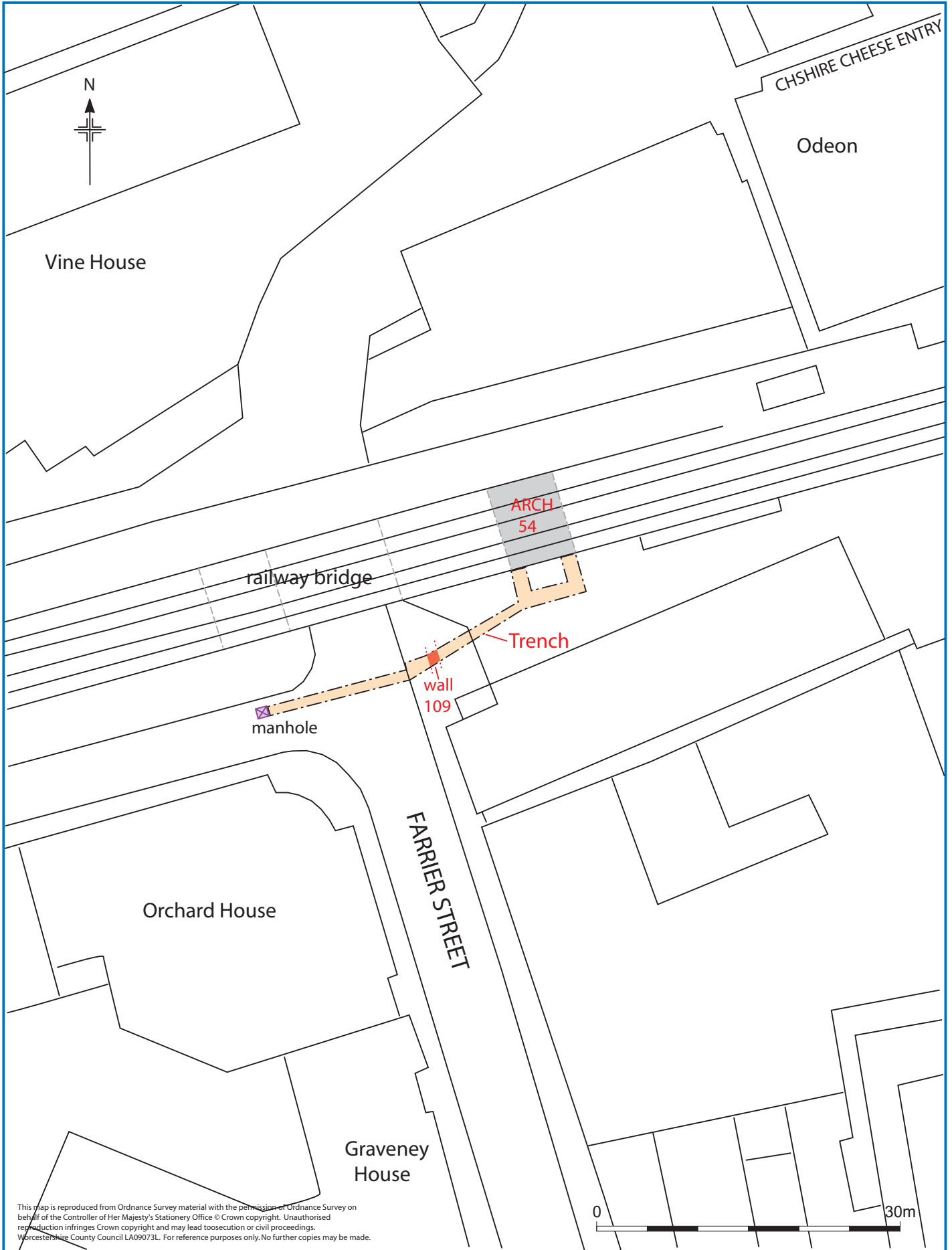
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11. **Abbreviations**

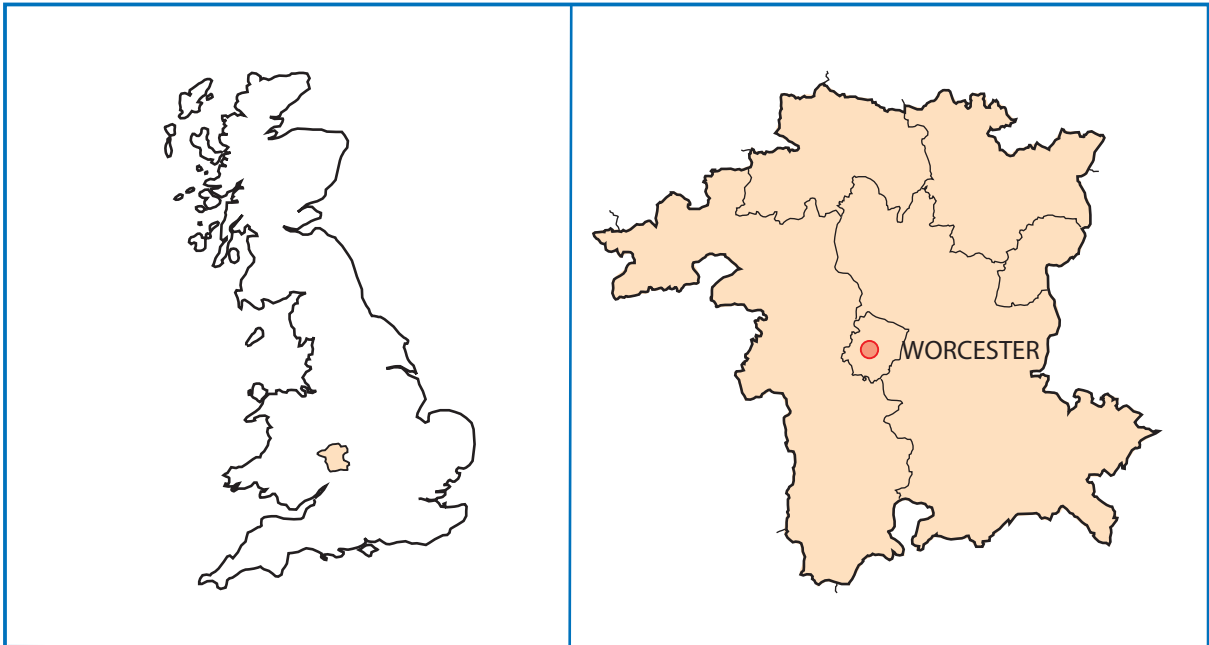
WCM	Numbers prefixed with 'WCM' are the primary reference numbers used by Worcester City Historic Environment Record
WCMAS	Worcester City Museum Archaeology Section
WCRO	Worcestershire County Records Office.
WHEAS	Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service
NMR	National Monuments Record.
SMR	Sites and Monuments Record.



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Trench location plan

Figure 2



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Location of the site.

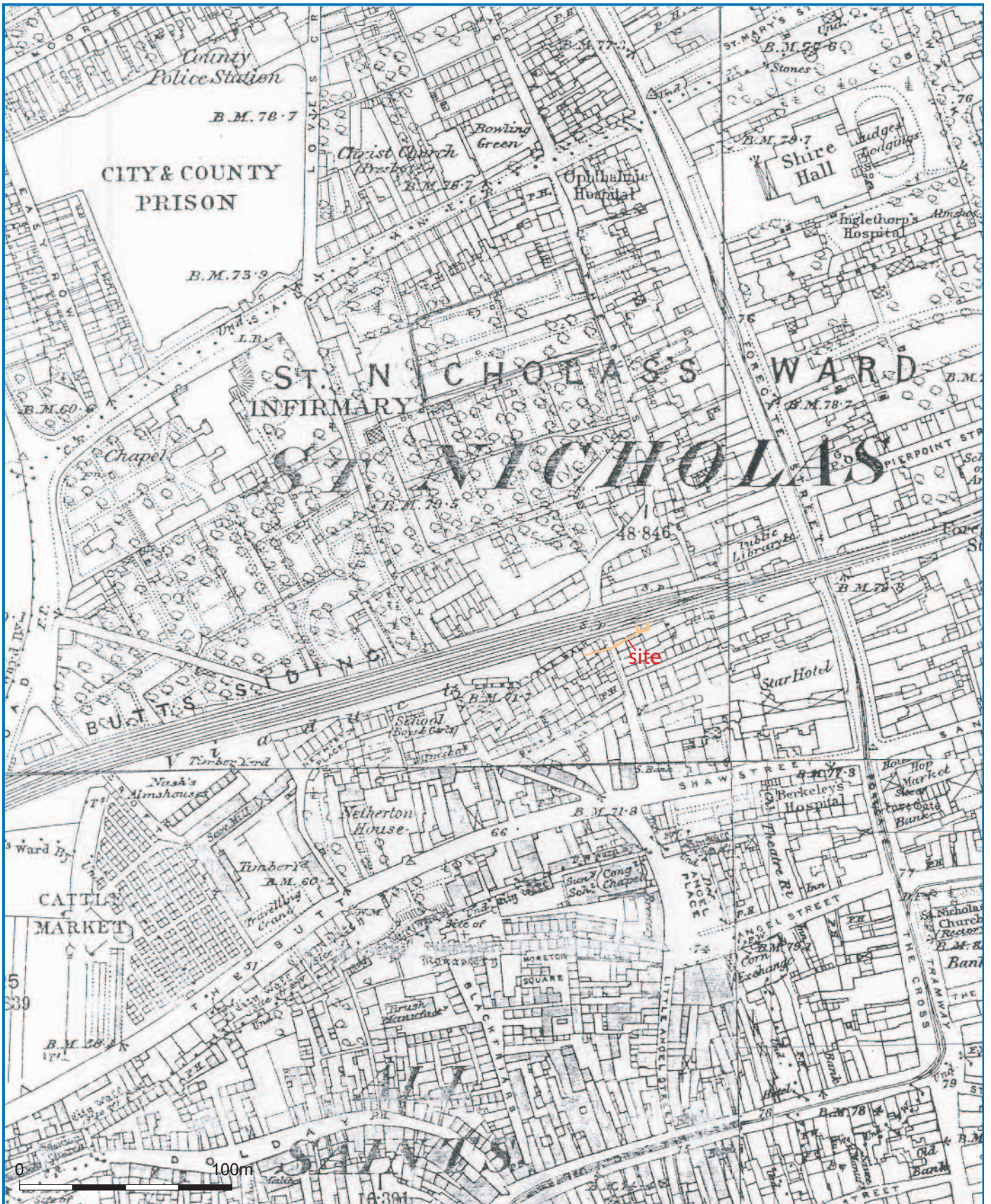
Figure 1



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Eaton's map of Worcester(1829)

Figure 3



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Figure 4

Extract from Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map first edition sheets XXXIII.3 (1887), XXXIII.4, XXXIII.7 and XXXIII.8 (1888).

384600

384700

384800

384900

385000



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0 100m

Extract from 1904 Ordnance Survey

Figure 5



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0 100m

Extract from 1928 Ordnance Survey

Figure 6

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Table 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 36m Width: 0.60m Depth: 0.90-2.20m

Orientation: Various

Main deposit descriptions

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Road surface	Tarmac	0-0.13m
101	Make-up/bedding layer for tarmac	Angular stones laid down to support tarmac road surface	0.13-0.58m
102	Layer	Friable dark grey sandy silt. Moderate brick rubble inclusions	0.58-1.40m
103	Layer	Loose mid brown sandy gravels. Occasional to moderate charcoal flecking inclusions	1.40-1.91m
104	Layer	Loose mid brown sandy gravels. Quite sterile-looking.	1.91-2.20m
105	Concrete surfacing	Light grey concrete	0-0.12m
106	Make-up layer for 105	Angular stone layer	0.12-0.20m
107	Modern services trench	Collection of services cutting through layer 108	0.18-0.94m
108	Possible post-medieval plough soil	Friable dark grey sandy silt layer with moderate charcoal inclusions. Truncated by services 107 and brick wall 109	0.20m-
109	Brick wall dating to late 17 th -early 18 th century. Possible cellar wall.	North-south running wall composed of brick in regular courses. Also a series of courses on an east-west alignment which ideally placed to intercept the front N-S wall.	0.20-1.50m
110	Probable cellar backfill	Dark grey silty sand with moderate rubbly backfill	0.20-1.50m
111	Sandy make-up layer in between brick floor 112 and stone layer 106	Sand layer covering old brick floor surface	0.20-0.28m
112	A brick floor associated with wall 113	A single course of bricks over a rubbly layer. Sealed by sandy layer 111	0.29-0.42m

113	Brick wall, possibly a cellar. Same building as 109?	At least 6 regularly-laid brick courses visible.	0.28-1.20m
114	Layer, possibly cut by 113 and predating floor surface 112	Friable light grey silty sand. Moderate rounded stones and occasional brick and tile within the deposit	0.40-0.80m
115	Layer, possibly a medieval ploughsoil	Homogenous mid grey sandy silt with occasional rounded stone inclusions	0.80-1.20m
116	Layer of make-up material	Layer of dark grey sandy silt with modern brick rubble. Located in a short stretch of trench immediately adjacent to Arch 54.	0.30-0.60m
117	Thin layers of demolition or make-up material	Brown or light grey sandy gravels. Modern material present within them.	0.60-0.90m
118	Thin layers of modern demolition and/or make-up material	Brown or light grey sandy gravels with modern material present within them	0.25-0.90m