

WATCHING BRIEF
AT
GREYFRIARS, WORCESTER

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Illustrated by Carolyn Hunt

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Project 2491
Report 1209
WCM 101211

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Background information

<i>Client</i>	National Trust
<i>Site address</i>	Greyfriars, Friar Street Worcester
<i>National Grid reference</i>	SO 85144 54729
<i>Sites and Monuments Record reference</i>	WCM 100092
<i>Planning authority reference</i>	Worcester City Council
<i>Brief</i>	None
<i>Project design</i>	None
<i>Project parameters</i>	IFA 1999

Previous archaeological work on the site

A watching brief was undertaken on the removal and replacement of the courtyard surface and its formation and a drain installation. Although no significant deposits were encountered due to disturbance by services, the foundations of the building were exposed in the entry. These were seen to consist of red sandstone blocks supporting the sill beams of the timber frame and were set in foundation trenches packed with quarry waste. Traces of a possible infilled cellar were located in the south-east corner of the courtyard (Ings 1994).

A building recording survey was undertaken at the rear (City Walls) area of the property. The City Wall was composed of a plinth of three or four courses of roughly squared sandstone blocks surmounted by a course of chamfered stone. Above that the medieval portion of the wall rose to a height of 2.8m above the base of this plinth. Built upon the medieval wall is the post-medieval and modern portion of the wall, composed of red brick. The brick dated from the 18th to the mid 20th centuries. Some of the brick used to be part of the walls of buildings built up against the medieval wall (Cook 1996).

Historical background

The Franciscan Friars of Worcester settled in the city about 1225. They established themselves by the city wall and their property fronted on to the street that remains "Friar Street". The settlement thrived and became a premier Franciscan Order (VCH II, 169-173).

At the Dissolution, the City Fathers petitioned the king for the Grey Friars' buildings and lands, which they wanted for the repair of the City Walls and bridge. The request was granted. It is not easy to determine the extent of this property on the frontage of Friar Street, but it may have stretched from the house now known as "Greyfriars" (No 19 Friar Street) as far as No 25 to the south of Union Street (Beardsmore 1980).

Aims

The aims of the watching brief were to clean and record the archaeological deposits and structures revealed by the kitchen refurbishment.

Methods

General specification for watching brief	CAS 1995
Sources consulted	SMR Sources cited by the SMR Eaton's Plan of the City and Environs of Worcester 1829 Ordnance Survey 1 st edition 1:10560 1887
Date(s) of fieldwork	9 th December 2003
Area of deposits observed	c 5.50m ² . Indicated on Figure 2
Dimensions of excavated areas observed	Roads/floors length 2.20m width 2.50m depth 0.03-0.38m

Access to or visibility of structure

Access to the deposits and structures was undertaken after hand removal of an existing floor surface and the layers immediately below it. The exposed surfaces were cleaned to expose the stonework and reveal the extent of the soil deposits in between them. Selected areas totalling 5.50m² were cleaned by hand.

Statement of confidence

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

Table 1: Context descriptions

Context	Type Colour Texture	Description	Date	Interpretation	Depth (OD value - metres)
101		Roughly hewn limestone block	Material probably medieval /post-medieval	Building stone. Used as part of foundation course for present wall. Aligned with stones 102, 103 and 104. Originally a possible stone pad supporting timber-framed wall	21.87
102		Roughly hewn sandstone block. Only top few centimetres visible.	Material medieval /post-medieval	Part of stone alignment running east-west on this side of the room. Part of foundation material for modern wall. Original use probably a supporting feature for timber-framed wall	21.81
103		Large roughly hewn limestone block with mortar covering the top.	Material medieval /post-medieval	Sits over cut 112. Foundation course for present wall but possibly re-used from elsewhere, again possibly an original feature of the timber-framed structure	21.84
104		Cluster of	Material	The three stones form a post	21.99

		three roughly hewn stone blocks. Two limestone and one sandstone. Supports an existing timber upright.	medieval /post-medieval	pad. Probably an original feature of the timber-framed late medieval house. Stone has probably not been re-used like stones 101-103.	
105	Friable dark grey sandy silt.	Occasional small brick and mortar fragments. Occasional coal and charcoal flecks and occasional small irregular stones	Modern	Layer of accumulated material that seems to predate the structures within the area. Cut by wall 107 and 106 along with "wall cut" 112	21.76
106		Composed of half bricks and pieces of tile in an irregular coursed pattern. Seems to abut an earlier stone/structure (102). Abuts brick wall 107.	Modern	Bottom courses of a wall. Composed of a variety of re-used material (brick and tile). Post dates 102 and 107	21.79
107		East-west orientated wall. Composed of half bricks – "tudor" style. Three courses visible laid out in headers and stretchers. Abutted by walls 111 and 106 and cuts layers 105, 109 and 110 as well as pit 114.	Modern	Foundation courses for an outer wall of a previous structure or an internal wall of the present extant building	21.88
108		Several courses of	Modern	Foundation courses for present outer north wall of building	21.92

		irregular half brick below present outer north wall of building			
109		Brick fragments lying haphazardly in a mortar setting. Material has been poured over surface.	Modern	Layer of material to act as support for west wall of room.	21.80
110	Quite firm mid grey silty sand with occasional brick, mortar and tile frags		Modern	Accumulated material seemingly pre-dating brick walls	21.65
111	Top of feature visible only but it was heavily mortared and abutting wall 107 and cuts layer 110. Much more substantial than wall 106 to the north		Modern	Foundation for internal wall of existing building	21.64
112		Cuts through layer 105 and filled by 113	Modern	Possible construction cut for modern wall base, with stones 103 as one of the courses? Possible construction cut for present upstanding wall	
113	Loose dark grey silty sand with occasional small irregular stones		Modern	Fill of cut 112	21.76

114	Marked change in surface of layer 110 with an ashy spread delineating possible intrusive feature. Filled by 115		Modern	Probable pit cut, filled by 115	
115	Loose ashy sandy deposit, covered by mortar/brick layer 109		Modern	Pit fill of 114	21.66

Artefact recovery policy

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

Method of analysis

All hand retrieved finds were examined. A primary record was made of all finds on a Microsoft Access 2000 database. Artefacts were identified, quantified and dated and a *terminus post quem* produced for each stratified context.

Pottery was examined under x20 magnification and recorded by fabric type and form according to the fabric reference series maintained by the service (Hurst and Rees 1992).

Artefactual analysis

A summary of the artefacts recovered can be seen in Table 2. The assemblage recovered from the watching brief came from six stratified contexts and the site surface. The assemblage ranged in date from the medieval to modern periods. The recovered pottery assemblage consists of 10 sherds of which only two were recovered from an identifiable context (105).

The pottery was identified and grouped by fabric and context (see table 3). The majority of the sherds were undiagnostic but could be dated between the 14th and 20th century by fabric type.

The majority of finds consisted of common building material for (72% of the assemblage) and dated to the modern 19th to 20th century. Of these, 14 pieces of brick, seven pieces of tile and twelve shards of window glass were recovered. As this modern material was present within all features containing artefacts except context 103, it has been used to provide *terminus post quem* dates for those features.

Other finds included three clay pipe stems, a modern clout fastener, an unidentified piece of iron and a penny coin dated 1920.

Discussion of the artefacts

The discussion below is a summary of the finds and associated location or contexts by period. The importance of individual finds has been commented upon as necessary.

Medieval

Two sherds of pottery from a single vessel and three fragments of roof tile were identified as medieval in date. The pottery consisted of two large base sherds from a pot of oxidised glazed Malvernian ware (fabric 69; context 105). The sherds were in good condition, internally glazed with sooting on the outside. They were identified against a parallel form from Deansway as coming from a multipurpose pancheon dating from the 14th to 15th century (Bryant 2001, 68; type 69.9, see figure 40).

Context 105 also contained a single piece of highly abraded roof tile identified as Worcester roof tile (fabric 2B). As context 105 also contained finds of modern floor tile and mortar the medieval tile (fabric 2B) and pottery (fabric 69) are categorised as residual material.

Two pieces of medieval tile were also recovered as unstratified surface material. Both were of small size and identified respectively as one piece of Worcester roof tile (fabric 2A) and one piece of Malvernian ridge tile, both produced between the 13th to 16th centuries.

Post-medieval

Three sherds of pottery were identified as post-medieval in date. All were recovered as surface finds lying with modern common building material and therefore classed as residual surface material. One sherd represents 98% of the medallion from a Bellarmine jug. This was further identified as of German Frechen stone ware (fabric 81.11) dated to the 16th to 17th century. The medallion depicts an as yet unidentified town or family coat of arms.

A single rim piece of red sandy ware (fabric 78.1) and one piece of miscellaneous late stoneware (fabric 81.4) were also recovered and dated to the 17th to 18th century. A sample of in situ mortar from context 103 was also identified as being of late post-medieval date (late 18th century) onwards.

Three clay pipe stems from the post medieval period were also recovered amongst the surface finds.

Modern

Five contexts (105, 106, 107, 110, 115) were identified as being of modern *terminus post quem* on the basis of the artefacts retrieved. All contained brick and brick fragments datable to the modern period (19th to 20th century). Remaining stratified material included four pieces of modern mortar (contexts 105,110), floor and roof tile (contexts 105, 106) and a fragment of ceramic base plate for an electrical switch (context 105).

All of the modern pottery was retrieved as unstratified surface finds. These included three pieces of porcelain (fabric 83) and one sherd of miscellaneous modern ware (fabric 101).

Other modern unstratified finds included in the assemblage were a King George V penny dated 1920, twelve shards of window glass, one galvanised nail (clout), an unidentified corroded piece of iron and a single piece of roof slate.

Significance

Of the recovered medieval finds all were identified as being residual artefacts within modern contexts. The only post-medieval feature was identified as context 103 based on the analysis of mortar recovered (late 18th century). The remaining features with associated finds (contexts 105,106, 107,110,115) are of modern origin.

Material	Total	Weight (g.)
Modern brick	14	5221
Modern ceramics	1	9
Coinage	1	8
Window glass	12	169.5
Modern iron artefacts	2	18
Modern building mortar	6	653
Post-medieval building mortar	1	572
Clay pipe fragments	3	5
Pottery	10	161
Roofing slate	1	86
Roof and floor tile	11	2704

Table 2: Quantification of the assemblage.

Context	Fabric name	Fabric	Total	Weight (g.)
Unstratified	Miscellaneous modern wares	101	1	1
105	Oxidised glazed Malvernian ware	69	2	102
Unstratified	Red sandy ware	78.1	1	5
Unstratified	Frechen stone ware	81.11	1	35
Unstratified	Miscellaneous late stoneware	81.4	1	1
Unstratified	Porcelain	83	4	17

Table 3: Quantification of assemblage fabrics by context.

Discussion

The archaeological deposits and structures in the kitchen area display several different phases of activity. The earliest original feature of the room appears to be context 104, which is composed of a collection of limestone and sandstone blocks. These still act as a post-pad for a substantial, existing timber upright. The various large roughly hewn stones (101-103) seemingly exist as the foundation course for the present brick wall. Stone 103 had a small amount of mortar stuck to the top of it. This dated to the 18th century onwards. It is common in the area to find roughly hewn stone blocks as a foundation courses for brick walls (*Woodiwiss pers comm*). It seems that the southern wall or the room has undergone a rebuild, with most of the brickwork dating to the 19th century. The “foundation stones” (101-103), might have previously served a similar purpose to their present function, being incorporated in what was presumably originally a wholly timber-framed affair, serving as either post-pads, or supports for horizontal wooden beams.

Layer 105/110 seem to be similar in nature and date from the 19th and 20th centuries and seem to pre-date all the other phases of activity. Layer 105 was cut by a feature (112), although the relationship between this cut and stone post-pad 104 is unclear. Layer 110 was cut by a pit (114) and then had a mortar layer poured over it with brick throughout. This latter context seems to have been used to stabilise the surface prior to the erection of the west wall of the present room. Both layers 105 and 110 were cut by wall 107 and then by walls 106 and 111, which abutted the earlier wall

107. Wall 108 cuts through 110, 114 and 109 much like 107 does. Given that they are neatly parallel one can assume that they could be contemporary, with the inner wall 107 being demolished at some date to create more space in the building.

Conclusions

The structures uncovered in this small area of the have revealed a series of activity with the deposition of layers, pitting and the construction of walls. The layers appear to have been of a modern 19th and 20th century date, with the pitting and the brick walls being of the same period. The limestone and sandstone building material currently acting as foundation material for the room's southern wall has probably been reused from an earlier, probably late-medieval/early post-medieval, phase of the wall.

At some stage some of the smaller internal walls of this 19th/20th century extension have been demolished, presumably to create some extra room or alter its function.

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 The National Trust at Greyfriars, Friar Street, Worcester (NGR SO 385144 254729: WCM 101211). The project succeeded in locating a post-pad relating to the surviving late medieval or early post-medieval part of the property, along with building material from probably the same period, now re-used as part of the existing brick wall rebuild. Aside from these were a number of layers dating to the modern period. These were cut through by a pit and brick walls dating to the same period.

Archive

Fieldwork progress records AS2	1
Photographic records AS3	1
Digital photographs	13
Drawings	1
Boxes of finds	1
Computer disks	1

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

*Worcestershire City Museum and Art
Gallery
The Tything
Worcester WR1 2PW
01905 25371*

telephone

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