

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING
BRIEF AT DODDERHILL SCHOOL,
DODDERHILL,
WORCESTERSHIRE**

Chris Patrick

Illustrated by Carolyn Hunt

19th July 2002

© Archaeological Service, Worcestershire County Council

Archaeological Service,
Worcestershire County Council,
Woodbury Hall,
University College Worcester,
Henwick Grove,
Worcester WR2 6AJ



Project 2264
Report 998
Fieldwork SMR no 31926

Archaeological Watching Brief at Whitford Hall and Dodderhill School, Dodderhill, Worcestershire

Chris Patrick

Background information

<i>Client</i>	Whitford Hall and Dodderhill School
<i>Site address</i>	Whitford and Dodderhill School, Droitwich Spa, Worcestershire
<i>National Grid Reference</i>	SO 9026 6371
<i>Sites and Monuments Record reference</i>	WSM 31926
<i>Planning authority</i>	Wychavon District Council
<i>Project design</i>	AS 2002
<i>Project parameters</i>	IFA 1999
<i>Previous archaeological work on the site</i>	

Dodderhill is the site of a Roman fort (SAM 339) which overlooks the ancient town of Droitwich to the south. The fort was placed strategically on high ground overlooking several road junctions and a river bridging point. It is thought to have been in use between c.61-65AD and has been the subject of several archaeological investigations. These have shown the fort to have consisted of a large double-ditch that enclosing a large area that is currently occupied by the school, its playing field, the houses on St Augustine Drive and St Augustine's church which lies between the inner and outer ditches. No traces of a rampart and wall have been found. Archaeological work inside the fort has identified beam slots from Roman wooden buildings and cobbled yard surfaces. A watching brief carried out during the extension of the school in 1999 also identified earlier Iron Age activity on the hill (Dawkes 1999).

Aims

The aim of the Archaeological 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 type of project	CAS 1995,
Sources consulted	SMR
Date(s) of fieldwork	18 th July 2002
Area of deposits observed	c 6.25m ² . Indicated on Fig 1
Dimensions of excavated areas observed	Services
	length 2.5m
	width 2.5m
	depth 1.5m

*Access to or visibility of **deposits***

Observation of the excavated areas was undertaken both during and after machine excavation.

Statement of confidence

Access to, and visibility of, deposits allowed a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved. However it was not possible to view the base of the excavated pit as it flooded with sewage.

Deposit description

Context	Type Colour Texture	Date	Interpretation	Depth (OD or below ground level)
1000	Medium brown sandy silt	Modern	Topsoil	0-0.3m
1001	Medium brown sandy silt with large quantities of brick and other rubble	Modern	Layer of modern levelling material	0.3-1.5m

Discussion

A small pit was excavated in the southeastern corner of the school playing field (Fig 1) to find a foul sewer pipe that had become blocked. The blockage was located precisely by Dynorod with the use of cameras and a pit measuring approximately 2.5m by 2.5m was excavated to find the pipe. A man hole cover was located about 1.5m below the present surface of the playing field, which had been buried by the dumping of rubble over it. The rubble appears to have been used to level off the sloping sides of the hill to facilitate a large playing field. According to the school groundsman the rubble may have come from a former stable block that once existed on the eastern side of the old school building, which was demolished in the 20th century.

Conclusions

No significant archaeological remains were found during the ground works. It seems that large quantities of rubble had been dumped around the edges of the playing field in the modern period to enlarge it. Any archaeological remains that survive in this area would be buried beneath this material.

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.

A watching brief was undertaken on behalf of Whitford Hall and Dodderhill School at Dodderhill, Droitwich, Worcestershire (NGR ref SO 9026 6371; SMR ref WSM 00603). The school and its playing fields are sited on the hilltop once occupied by a Roman Fort. The fort was in use for a short period between c.61-65AD and has been the subject of several archaeological investigations.

The watching brief was required to observe the excavation of a small pit in the southeastern corner of the school playing field to find a foul sewer pipe that had become blocked. The hole showed that the area had been covered in 1.5 metres of rubble to level off the sloping sides of the hill to enlarge the playing field. No significant archaeological remains were found during the ground works.

Archive

Fieldwork progress records AS2	1
Black and white photographs	4

Computer disks

1

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Worcestershire County Museum
Hartlebury Castle, Hartlebury
Near Kidderminster
Worcestershire DY11 7XZ
01299 250416

telephone

Acknowledgements

The Service would like to thank Ms Pat Lewis and Mr Stewart Bevan of Whitford Hall and Dodderhill School for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project.

Bibliography

AS 2002 *Proposal for an archaeological watching brief at Dodderhill School, Dodderhill, Worcestershire*, Archaeological Service, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document dated 16th July 2002, **P2264**

Dawkes, G 1999 Junior school and multi-purpose hall, Dodderhill School, Droitwich, Archaeological WB, Marches Archaeology 085

IFA, 1999 *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief*, Institute of Field Archaeologists