

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION AT 68-70, BROOK
ROAD, FAIRFIELD,
BROMSGROVE,
WORCESTERSHIRE

James Goad and Erica Darch

Illustrated by Carolyn Hunt

3rd March 2003

© Archaeological Service, Worcestershire County Council

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



Project 2348
Report 1144
WSM 32260

Contents

Part 1 Project summary

1

Part 2 Detailed report

1.	Background	2
1.1	Reasons for the project	2
1.2	Project parameters	2
1.3	Aims	2
2.	Methods	2
2.1	Documentary search	2
2.2	Fieldwork.....	2
2.2.1	Fieldwork strategy	2
2.2.2	Structural analysis.....	3
2.3	Artefacts	3
2.3.1	Artefact recovery policy	3
2.3.2	Method of Analysis.....	3
2.3.3	Artefact Analysis	3
2.3.4	Significance	4
2.4	Environment	4
2.4.1	Sampling policy	4
2.5	The methods in retrospect.....	4
3.	Topographical and archaeological context	4
4.	Description	5
4.1	Phase 1 Natural deposits.....	5
4.2	Phase 2 Post-medieval to modern.....	5
5.	Discussion	5
6.	Significance	6
7.	Publication summary	6
8.	The archive	6
9.	Acknowledgements	7
10.	Personnel	7
11.	Bibliography	7
12.	Abbreviations	7

Archaeological evaluation at 68-70, Brook Road, Fairfield, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire

James Goad and Erica Darch

Part 1 Project summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at 68-70, Brook Road, Fairfield, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire (NGR SO 9447 7467). It was undertaken on behalf of Mr and Mrs William Barney, who intended the demolition of the existing houses and the construction of a new property on the site for which a planning application has been submitted. The project aimed to determine if there was any evidence of the 19th century glassworks, which are believed to be located on the site, and if so, to indicate what its location and nature were.

The evaluation located a possible post-hole, along with a couple of land drains. A brick soakaway was located at the northern end of the trench, which was serviced by a metal water pipe. Artefacts from the post-hole were dated to the post-medieval period. This might have been contemporary with the glassworks but cannot be associated with the industrial process in any way. No artefacts related to the glassworks were recovered.

Part 2 Detailed report

1. Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at 68-70, Brook Road, Fairfield, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire (NGR SO 9447 7467), on behalf of Mr and Mrs William Barney. Mr and Mrs Barney intended to demolish the existing cottages and build a new house on the grounds. They submitted a planning application to Bromsgrove District Council (reference B/02/1269), who considered that a site of archaeological interest was affected (WSM 32124).

1.2 Project parameters

The project conforms to *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IFA 1999) The project also conforms to a brief prepared by the Planning Advisory Section (AS 2002) and for which a project proposal (including detailed specification) was produced (AS 2003).

1.3 Aims

The aims of the evaluation were from the brief – to put a single evaluation trench across the area of the proposed new dwelling. The aim of the trench is to determine whether this site is suitable in terms of avoiding significant deposits or structures associated with the glass-working site.

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

- Ordnance Survey 1st edition, 1:2500 as held on SMR
- Ordnance Survey, 1:1000 map, 2000.

Documentary sources

- County histories (VCH I, II and III).
- Site archives (Hurst and Pearson 1995).

2.2 Fieldwork

2.2.1 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification has been prepared by the Service (CAS 1995).

Fieldwork was undertaken on 17th February 2003.

A single evaluation trench, amounting to just under 20m² in area, were excavated over the site area of 1.69ha, representing a sample of 1.18%. The location of the trench is indicated by Figures 2 and 3.

The topsoil, which was not considered to be of archaeological interest, was machined using a 360° tracked mini-digger, employing a toothless ditching bucket. Excavation was carried out under archaeological supervision. Subsequent excavation was undertaken by hand. Clean surfaces were inspected and selected deposits were excavated to retrieve artefactual material, as well as to determine their nature. Deposits were recorded according to standard Service practice (CAS 1995).

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. A *terminus post quem* (TPQ) date was assigned to each stratified context. The pottery was examined and recorded by fabric type according to the fabric reference series maintained by the Service (Hurst and Rees 1992).

2.3.3 **Artefact Analysis**

The assemblage was recovered from two stratified contexts, and unstratified material. It dated almost entirely to the modern period, with a few artefacts which may have been post-medieval or modern. The artefacts recovered are summarised in Table 1, below. All except the drain pipe were small and abraded.

Table 1

The finds

Context	Material	Type	Fabric No.	Total	Weight	Period
103	GLASS	VESSEL		1	8	Modern
103	TILE			2	11	Post-medieval / modern
105	GLASS	VESSEL		1	33	Modern
105	POT	MOD	85	1	5	Modern
105	TILE			4	99	Post-medieval / modern
105	MORTAR			2	134	Post-medieval / modern
105	PIPE	DRAIN		1	460	Post-medieval / modern
U/S	POT	MOD	85	3	38	Modern
U/S	GLASS	WINDOW		1	25	Modern
U/S	BRICK			1	29	Post-medieval / modern

Fabric 85 = Modern Stone China.

2.3.4 Significance

The assemblage is too small to draw many conclusions. Both contexts have a *TPQ* of modern. The glass and pottery are consistent with a domestic function, and small pieces of tile, brick and drain are usually found in urban excavations. None of the material recovered suggests industrial activity.

2.4 Environment

2.4.1 Sampling policy

Given the nature and knowledge of the site it was thought there was little need for an environmental profile of the deposits encountered.

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

The natural soil in this area is composed of the Whimple 3 series. These are reddish fine loamy or fine silty over clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging. Some similar clayey soils on brows. Slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged fine loamy and fine silty over clayey soils exist on lower slopes. Land use associated with such soils are activities such as dairying and stock rearing, with the production of winter cereals and short term grassland.

Fairfield was not separately mentioned in the Domesday book but was probably included in with the village of Boughton, which subsequently became Belbroughton and Fairfield (VCH III, 14).

Archaeological finds in Fairfield include an urn with over 100 coins of Hadrian, Pius, Gordian, Philip and some others. This find was made around the village in 1833 (VCH I, 218).

A Roman cemetery was also located on Glover's Meadow Farm (WSM 20974) approximately 500m north of the evaluated area.

The area is mentioned as one with an agricultural background, especially on allotments and smallholdings, which furnished employment for most of the inhabitants (VCH III, 13).

Industrial activity is recorded as being present in the area: "Glass is made on a small scale at Fairfield" (VCH III, 13).

As well as the site in question, glassworks factories were present in the locality at Elmsdale in Fairfield (WSM 04977) and in the Orchard Cottage area of Bournheath in adjacent Belbroughton (WSM 01263). It seems then, that glass making was a popular local cottage industry in the area from the 19th century.

The proposed development site may be the site of Thomas Evans' fancy glassworks, which were converted from a group of cottages in Fairfield in the late 19th century. This "cribs", or cottage industry glassworks, is little understood, with few being investigated. Work on such a site in Wollaston near Stourbridge has shown sub surface deposits including kiln bases and flue systems (AS 2002).

4. **Description**

The list of contexts are presented in Table 2, with Table 1 summarising the artefacts recovered. The trench and features recorded are shown in Figure 4.

NB The transposing of the 1st edition and modern Ordnance Survey maps in Figure 3 is not an accurate overlay, merely a guide as to the form of the past and present buildings on the site.

4.1 **Phase 1 Natural deposits**

Natural deposits were encountered along almost the whole length of the trench. The natural was a light greyish brown sandy clay with moderate small to medium rounded and sub-rounded stones.

4.2 **Phase 2 Post-medieval to modern**

Along with the presence of two land drains in the trench a brick soakaway fed by a metal pipe seemed to reflect the 20th century activity.

The "ironing board-shaped" feature was dated by the material within it to the post-medieval or modern period. This was probably a garden feature of some description, or perhaps represents a post setting. There were no other features like it in the trench.

5. **Discussion**

There was no evidence of any settlement prior to the post-medieval period.

The trench was located across the proposed site of the new house and did not uncover any structural evidence associated with Thomas Evans's glassworks. The glassworks are most likely located under the present buildings (numbers 68-70). All the features found were dated to the post-medieval and modern periods but did not merit any special consideration, given that they were not industrial features associated with the glassworks.

It's highly likely that the area designated for the new development will not affect any buried archaeology associated with the old glassworks.

6. **Significance**

The evaluation proved that there was no archaeology associated with the glassworks on the site of the new development. Archaeological deposits should therefore remain preserved *in situ* given the current arrangements for the siting of the new house.

The glassworks on the site, or any archaeology associated with it, will not be disturbed as no features or structures associated with the glassworks were located in the evaluation trench. It is understood that the remains of the cottages that formed the glassworks factory lie under the buildings earmarked for demolition.

No finds which related to the glassworks eg glass waste, were recovered during the course of the evaluation.

7. **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 evaluation was undertaken on behalf of Mr and Mrs Barney at 68-70, Brook Road, Fairfield, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire (NGR SO 9447 7467; WSM 32260). The site is reputed to be the Thomas Evans glassworks factory, and an evaluation trench was thought necessary to see if any structures relating to the glassworks were in the area affected by the development. No archaeological deposits or artefacts that could be associated with the glassworks factory were found during the project.

8. **The archive**

The archive consists of:

1	Context records AS1
1	Fieldwork progress records AS2
1	Photographic records AS3
1	Colour transparency film
1	Black and white photographic film
1	Scale drawings
1	Box of finds
1	Computer disk

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Worcestershire County Museum

Hartlebury Castle

Hartlebury

Near Kidderminster

Worcestershire DY11 7XZ

Tel Hartlebury (01299) 250416

9. Acknowledgements

The Service would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Mr and Mrs Barney and Mike Glyde.

10. Personnel

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

11. Bibliography

AS, 2002 *Brief for an archaeological field evaluation at 68-70, Brook Road, Fairfield, Worcestershire*, Archaeological Service, Worcestershire County Council unpublished document 12th December 2002.

AS, 2003 *Proposal for an archaeological evaluation at 68-70 Brook Road, Fairfield, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire* Archaeological Service, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document dated 10th february 2003, **P2348**

CAS, 1995 (as amended) *Manual of Service practice: fieldwork recording manual*, County Archaeological Service, Hereford and Worcester County Council, report, **399**

Hurst, J D, and Rees, H, 1992 Pottery fabrics; a multi-period series for the County of Hereford and Worcester, in Woodiwiss, S G (ed), *Iron Age and Roman salt production and the medieval town of Droitwich*, CBA Res Rep, **81**

IFA, 1999 *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation*, Institute of Field Archaeologists

VCH I,II and III, Page, W (ed), 1913 *Victoria History of the County of Worcestershire*, **I , II and III**

12. Abbreviations

BSB	Break of slope from the top
BST	Break of slope to the base
WSM	Numbers prefixed with 'WSM' are the primary reference numbers used by the Worcestershire County Sites and Monuments Record.
WCRO	Worcestershire County Records Office.
NMR	National Monuments Record.
SMR	Sites and Monuments Record.

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Table 2

Evaluation trench

Site area: Garden of 68-70, Brook Road, Fairfield

Maximum dimensions: Length: 12.50m Width: 1.55m Depth: 0.35-0.45m

Orientation: North-east to south-west

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Machine cut of trench.	0-0.45m
101	Natural	A brown sandy clay natural. Moderate stone inclusions – small to medium, rounded and sub-rounded.	0.35-0.45m
102	Field drain	Linear feature, located in south-west end of trench	0.35m
103	Fill of 104	Mid brown sandy silt. Moderate charcoal inclusions and occasional small rounded stones	0.35-0.45m
104	Probable modern garden feature, filled by 103	BST-Sharp Sides-Straight BSB-Sharp Base-Flat On the surface feature appeared ironingboard-shaped.	0.34-0.45m
105	Fill of 106	Very mixed backfill material – dark grey silty clay with occasional amorphous blobs of brown sandy clay natural	0.45m-
106	Field drain	Excavated to reveal modern orange ceramic pipe. Pipe left in situ and rest of feature unexcavated	0.55m-
107	Brick soakaway serviced by a length of metal pipe	Located at north-eastern end of trench, the service occupied most of the trench. Probable early 20 th century date	

