

# Archaeological Evaluation at 195 Oldbury Road, Worcester



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## **Archaeological Evaluation at 195 Oldbury Road, Worcester**

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Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

### **Summary**

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at 195 Oldbury Road, Worcester, Worcestershire (NGR 382985 255373). It was undertaken on behalf of CgMs Consulting, whose client intends to develop a specialist care home facility for which a planning application has been granted subject to conditions.

Two trenches totalling 35m in length were excavated across an area of 0.6ha. All of the deposits identified were of modern date, consisting of rubble filled made ground overlain by a redeposited natural sealing layer and a compacted demolition layer making up the current surface. These are likely to relate to the construction and demolition of a public house which formerly existed on the site. No evidence of earlier settlement was found, despite the proximity to the Laughern Brook.

## Report

### 1 Background

#### 1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at 195 Oldbury Road, Worcester, Worcestershire (NGR 382985 255373). It was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, whose client intends to develop a specialist care home facility, for which a planning application has been submitted to Worcester City Council and granted subject to conditions, including a programme of archaeological works (reference P17K0500).

Following production of a desk-based assessment (DBA; CgMs 2017), consultation between CgMs Consulting and James Dinn, Archaeological Officer for Worcester City Council, established the requirement for an archaeological evaluation of the site to support the planning application.

No specific brief for the project was provided but a trench plan was produced by CgMs and agreed with the archaeological officer, as a result of which a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) outlining the methodology for the project was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2017). The evaluation was carried out following this trench arrangement.

The project conforms to the *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014).

### 2 Aims

The archaeological evaluation aimed, in general terms, to gather information on the archaeological potential of the site and prepare a report in order to inform decision making. This was broken down into a series of objectives set out in the WSI (WA 2017) as the following:

- determine the presence or absence of archaeological deposits beyond reasonable doubt;
- identify their location, nature, date and preservation;
- assess their significance;
- assess the likely impact of the proposed development.

Based on the DBA (CgMs 2017), it was anticipated that any potential archaeological remains on the site were likely to be of medieval date and related to agricultural activities.

### 3 Methods

#### 3.1 Personnel

The fieldwork project was led by Richard Bradley (BA (hons.), MA; ACIfA), who has been practicing archaeology since 2005. The report was prepared by Elspeth Iliff (BA (hons.), MSc; PCIFA), assisted by Richard Bradley. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Rogers (BA (hons.); MSc). Illustrations were prepared by Carolyn Hunt (BSc (hons.); PG Cert; MCIfA)..

#### 3.2 Documentary research

As noted above, an archaeological desk-based assessment (DBA) of the site was undertaken by CgMs Consulting (CgMs 2017) on behalf of their client. This document, alongside the WSI, provides research and background information on the project and is, therefore, not repeated in this report. Only a brief summary on the historical and archaeological background is presented below (Section 4.1).

The DBA consulted the Worcester City Historic Environment Record (HER), analysing a search area with a 1km radius from the centre of the site. Worcestershire Archives were also visited in order to examine historic maps relating to the site.

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### **3.3 Fieldwork strategy**

A detailed methodology was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2017). Fieldwork was undertaken on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2018 and the project reference used by Worcestershire Archaeology is P5224.

Two trenches (20m and 15m in length), amounting to just over 87m<sup>2</sup> in area, were excavated over the site area of 0.6ha, representing a sample of just under 1.5%. These were not targeted on any known features but were positioned so as to avoid intersecting with the possible remains of a later 20th century public house, which existed on the site until recently. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 1.

It was originally intended for the second trench to be 25m in length but after observing the nature and depth of the deposits encountered in both trenches, and following discussion with the consultant and curator, this was not completed.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed under archaeological supervision using a wheeled excavator, employing a toothless bucket. Clean surfaces were inspected. Deposits were recorded according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012) and trench and feature locations were surveyed using a differential GPS with an accuracy limit set at <0.04m. On completion of excavation, trenches were reinstated by replacing the excavated material.

### **3.4 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.

### **3.5 Artefact methodology**

#### **3.5.1 Artefact recovery policy**

The artefact recovery policy followed standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). In the event, no artefacts pre-dating the modern period were identified and due to the nature of the deposits artefact retrieval was considered unnecessary.

### **3.6 Environmental archaeology methodology**

#### **3.6.1 Sampling policy**

Sampling policy was followed according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). However, no deposits were identified which were considered to be suitable for environmental sampling.

### **3.7 Statement of confidence in the methods and results**

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

## **4 The application site**

### **4.1 Topography, geology and archaeological context**

The site is located around 2km to the north west of Worcester city centre, on the south side of the Oldbury Road. The site is relatively level, at around c.30m AOD, with a slope down towards the Laughern Brook which bounds the site to the east. Residential properties define the western and southern boundaries of the site.

The underlying geology is mapped as Sidmouth Mudstone with superficial deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel recorded across the eastern part of the site, associated with the Laughern Brook (BGS 2018).

The archaeological and historical background to the site from the archaeological desk-based assessment (DBA) undertaken by CgMs Consulting (CgMs 2017) is summarised below:

No designated archaeological assets were recorded on the study site, and the nearest Scheduled Monument, Earl's Court moated site (HER WCM91064, NHL 1017229), situated c.800m southwest, was not considered near enough for the proposed development to have any impact. A single undesignated heritage asset has been recorded on the site, a find of a medieval jug (HER WCM100882).

The DBA considered the potential for prehistoric and Roman remains to be low, and any medieval and later archaeological remains were thought likely to be limited to agricultural features as the site was used for agricultural purposes until the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when it was developed. The overall potential for archaeological remains was low, with 20<sup>th</sup> century ground disturbance likely reducing this potential further.

## **4.2 Current land-use**

The site was, until recently, occupied by a public house, which has since been demolished, with a tarmac carpark to the rear. The land is now levelled rubble ground in preparation for redevelopment.

# **5 Results**

## **5.1 Structural analysis**

The trenches and features recorded are shown in Figure 1. The results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1.

### **5.1.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits**

Possible natural deposits were encountered 1.60-1.72m below the current surface. This consisted of a firm, mid pinkish clay.

### **5.1.2 Phase 2: Modern deposits**

Trench 1 contained a 0.50m deep redeposited natural layer (101) sealing a 1.20m+ deep deposit of made ground (102). This consisted of modern landfill material including wood, plastic, pipes, brick, charcoal and metal and was found in a machine made cut [103]. It is possible that the landfill pre-dated the construction of the public house as it was cut by a modern sewer or drain pipe [107] and the remains of a modern manhole, likely associated with toilet facilities in the building. The modern landfill itself was cut through another layer of redeposited natural (105) containing brick and CBM. A modern posthole was recorded that still contained wood and was observed from very high up in the sequence [109].

Trench 2 also contained a 0.90m+ deep made ground deposit containing very modern landfill waste (202), again sealed by redeposited natural (201).

The deposits in both trenches were overlain by a layer of compacted hardcore/rubble and ash (100)/(200).

# **6 Synthesis**

All deposits identified during the project were of modern date, probably late 20th century, and of limited significance. No artefactual material was retained as a result of the nature of the deposits. There was no evidence of earlier settlement extending to this area, despite the proximity to the Laughern Brook. A large amount of modern landfill material was brought in to the site as a dump of made ground, sealed by a redeposited natural layer, and is probably related to the construction of the public house.

The depth of the modern material encountered would suggest that if any significant archaeological features do survive on the site then they are deeply buried and at limited risk of impact from construction.



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## 7 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 evaluation was undertaken at 195 Oldbury Road, Worcester, Worcestershire (NGR 382985 255373). It was undertaken on behalf of CgMs Consulting, whose client intends to develop a specialist care home facility for which a planning application has been granted subject to conditions.*

*Two trenches totalling 35m in length were excavated. All of the deposits identified were of modern date, consisting of rubble filled made ground overlain by a redeposited natural sealing layer and a compacted demolition layer making up the current surface. These are likely to relate to the construction and demolition of a public house which formerly existed on the site. No evidence of earlier settlement was found, despite the proximity to the Laughern Brook.*

## 8 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project: Phil Bethell (CgMs Consulting) and James Dinn (Worcester City Council).

## 9 Bibliography

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CgMs 2017 *Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment: 195 Oldbury Road, Worcester*, CgMs Ltd, unpublished document dated September 2017

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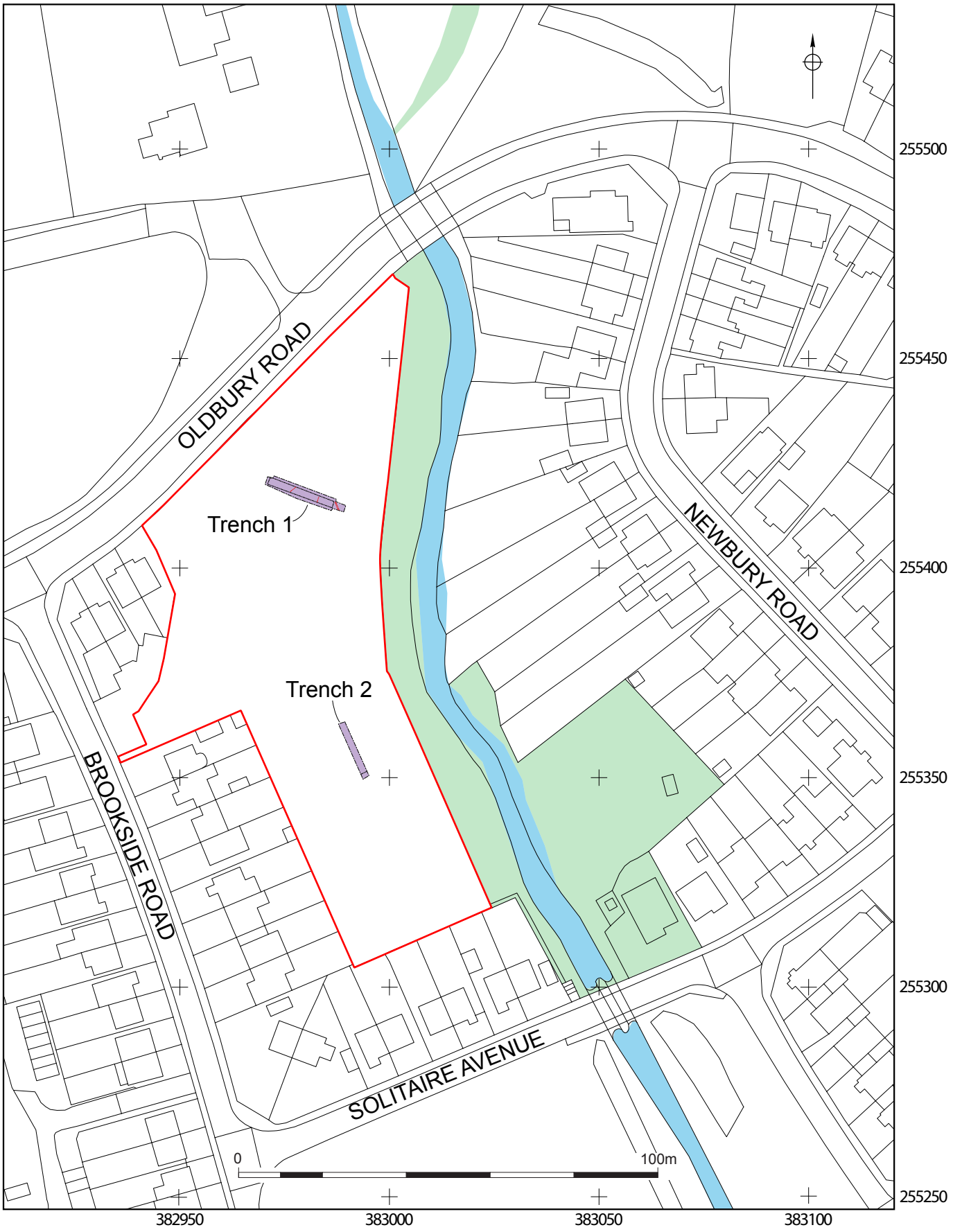
DCLG 2012 *National Planning Policy Framework*, Department for Communities and Local Government

WA 2012 *Manual of service practice, recording manual*, Worcestershire Archaeology, Worcestershire County Council, report **1842**

WA 2017 *Written scheme of investigation for an archaeological evaluation at 195 Oldbury Road, Worcester*, Worcestershire Archaeology, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document dated 15 January 2017



**Figures**



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Location of the site and trenches 1 and 2

Figure 1

## Plates



*Plate 1: Overview of the site, facing south west*



*Plate 2: General view of Trench 1, facing south east, with modern deposits visible*

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*Plate 3: General view of modern landfill in Trench 2, facing south*

## Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

### Trench 1

Maximum dimensions: Length: 20m      Width: 3.10m      Depth: 2m

Orientation:                      NW-SE

Context	Type	Short Description	Description	Interpretation	Dimensions
100	Layer	Demolition Layer	Compacted rubble and ash with brown clay silt. Contains plastic, electronic wiring, brick, CBM, wood etc.	Demolition layer, compacted down. Current surface.	0.30m in depth
101	Layer	Sealing Layer	Firm mid reddish pink silty clay, with occasional charcoal, hardcore and CBM.	Redeposited natural sealing layer.	0.50m in depth
102	Fill	Fill of modern cut	Firm dark grey brown silty clay with wood, plastic, pipes, bricks, charcoal, ash metal etc.	Made ground, modern dump, in a cut.	1.20m+ in depth
103	Cut	Modern cut		Modern cut for infill 102. Machine dug, has scalped away the natural ground.	1.20m+ in depth
104	Layer	Natural	Fractured siltstone and mid pinkish red silty clay marl.	Probable natural.	0.2m+ in depth
105	Layer	Redeposited natural	Firm mid red pink with brick and CBM.	Redeposited natural	0.2m+ in depth
106	Fill	Drain in 107		Ceramic sewer/drain pipe.	Unexc.
107	Cut	Cut for drain		Cut for sewer/drain pipe.	Unexc.
108	Fill	Fill of modern cut 109	Blue clay – wood and CBM in fill.	Fill of cut for wooden post.	0.1m in depth
109	Cut	Modern cut		Base of cut for wooden post.	0.1m in depth

**Trench 2**

Maximum dimensions: Length: 15m    Width 1.7m    Depth 1.92m

Orientation: SSE-NNW

Context	Type	Short Description	Description	Interpretation	Dimensions
200	Layer	Demolition Layer	Compacted hardcore and ash/clinker	Demolition layer, compacted by machine. Current site surface.	0.22m in depth
201	Layer	Sealing Layer	Compact mid pinkish red brown marl with sandy silt, charcoal, brick, CBM, hardcore.	Redeposited natural sealing layer.	0.60m in depth
202	Layer	Made ground	Dark blackish brown clay sandy silt with ash, brick, pipes, CBM, metal, oil drum, tyre, bed springs, plastic, paint tins etc.	Landfill – made ground, very modern.	0.90m+ in depth
203	Layer	Natural	Firm mid red pinkish clay.	Possible natural	0.20m+ in depth.



## **Appendix 2 Technical information**

### **The archive (site code: WCM102282)**

The archive consists of:

- 1 Field progress reports AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 22 Digital photographs
- 2 Trench record sheets AS41
- 1 CD-Rom/DVDs
- 1 Copy of this report (bound hard copy)

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Museums Worcestershire  
Worcester City Art Gallery and Museum  
Foregate Street  
Worcester  
WR1 1DT  
Tel 01905 25371

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