

# Archaeological Watching Brief at 3 Britannia Square Worcester

Worcestershire Archaeology  
*for Nick Joyce Architects*

December 2018



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# 3 BRITANNIA SQUARE WORCESTER WORCESTERSHIRE

## Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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## SITE INFORMATION

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Site name: 3 Britannia Square, Worcester

Site code: WCM102329

Local planning authority: Worcester City Council

Planning reference: P18D0383

Central NGR: SO 8467 5563

Commissioning client: Nick Joyce Architects

Client project reference: -

WA project number: P5493

WA report number: 2638

HER reference: WCM102329

Oasis reference: fieldsec1-334453

Museum accession number: -

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## DOCUMENT CONTROL PANEL

Version	Date	Author	Details	Approved by
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# Archaeological Watching Brief at 3 Britannia Square, Worcester

By Andrew Walsh

## Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology in November 2018 at 3 Britannia Square, Worcester. The watching brief comprised observation of the excavation of lightwells which were being constructed as part of the refurbishment of the existing basement.

Number 3 Britannia Square is located on the south side of Britannia Square (Figure 1), which is located about 700m north of the centre of Worcester. The central part of Britannia Square is a Scheduled Monument. In the 1820s a Roman building, thought to be a villa or temple complex, was discovered during excavation of the basement for Springfield House which stands in the centre of the square.

No archaeological features, deposits or finds associated with the scheduled Roman site were identified during the watching brief. The earliest deposit identified was a sand and gravel, probably of natural origin but redeposited within the cut for the house at 3 Britannia Square. The remaining deposits and features were all clearly associated with 3 Britannia Square.

# Report

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background to the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in November 2018 at 3 Britannia Square, Worcester (NGR SO 8467 5563). The project was commissioned by Nick Joyce Architects on behalf of Catherine Wightman. The watching brief comprised observation of the excavation of lightwells which were being constructed as part of the refurbishment of the existing basement (planning application ref P18D0383). The archaeological advisor to the local planning authority considered that the works had the potential to impact upon heritage assets and planning permission for the works was granted by Worcester City Council (reference number P18D0383) subject to conditions including a programme of archaeological works.

No site specific brief was provided but the project conformed to briefs previously issued and the *Guidelines for archaeological work in Worcester* (Worcester City Council 2016). A written scheme of investigation (WSI) was prepared by WA (2018) and approved by James Dinn Archaeological Officer for Worcester City Council. The watching brief conformed to the industry guidelines and standards set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists in or *Standard and guidance: for an archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2014).

### 1.2 Site location, topography and geology

Number 3 Britannia Square is located on the south side of Britannia Square (Figure 1), which is located about 700m north of the centre of Worcester. The topography of the area is generally level with the underlying geology mapped as Sidmouth Mudstone Formation, overlain by superficial deposits of sand and gravel of the Worcester Member (BGS 2018).

## 2 Archaeological and historical background

The central part of Britannia Square (Springfield House and grounds) is a Scheduled Monument (NHLE 1005277). In the 1820s a Roman building, thought to be a villa or temple complex, was discovered during excavation of the basement for Springfield House. Evidence of further Roman buildings has been found on the south side of the square and in Back Lane South (WCM 96393, 101854 and 101763) in 2009 and 2010.

## 3 Project aims

The aim of the watching brief was to observe, investigate and record archaeological deposits, and to determine their extent, state of preservation, data and type, as far as reasonably practical within the constraints of the groundworks.

## 4 Project methodology

The watching brief was undertaken on 19 November 2018 during the excavation of two lightwells. They were hand excavated by ground workers under constant archaeological supervision. Surfaces were cleaned and inspected by the archaeologist to determine their nature. The excavated spoil was also inspected for artefactual evidence. Deposits were recorded according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012).

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



The project archive is currently held at the offices of Worcestershire Archaeology. Subject to the agreement of the landowner it is anticipated that it will be deposited with Museums Worcestershire.

## 5 Archaeological results

Lightwell 1 measured 1.4m by 0.7m, and Lightwell 2 measured 1.3 by 0.7m. Both lightwells were excavated to a depth of 1.3m below the present ground level (Plate 1). Context information is presented in Appendix 1 and the position of the lightwells is indicated in Figure 2

The earliest deposit identified was a mid-brown sand and gravel with frequent patches of light yellow brown sand, which visible in both lightwells (103 and 205). Although it was generally sterile, occasional small fragments of CBM appeared be within the deposit, rather than intrusive. No cut for the existing house was observed within the excavated lightwells (Plate 1).

Above the sand and gravel was a mixed rubble backfill, observed in both lightwells (102 and 204). In Lightwell 2 the remains of a former lightwell or coal shoot (202), which had been blocked up were exposed and removed (Plate 2). A layer of hardcore (101/201), over which a slabbed patio had been laid (100/200), sealed these deposits.

## 6 Artefactual evidence

Recovery of artefacts was undertaken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). In the event no artefacts were identified which were considered to be suitable for analysis.

## 7 Environmental evidence

Environmental sampling was undertaken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). In the event no deposits were identified which were considered to be suitable for environmental analysis.

## 8 Discussion and conclusions

No archaeological features, deposits or finds associated with the scheduled Roman site in the centre of Britannia Square were identified during the watching brief. The earliest deposit identified was a sand and gravel, probably of natural origin but possibly redeposited within the cut for the house, although no cut was observed within the areas covered by the watching brief. The remaining deposits and features were all clearly associated with the house and grounds.

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved. Conditions were suitable in all of the trenches to identify the presence or absence of archaeological features.

## 9 Project personnel

The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Walsh, who also wrote this report. The project was managed by Tom Rogers.

## 10 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following: John Middleton of Nick Joyce Architects for commissioning the project, the owner Mr David Wightman for his help on site and the groundwork team for their patience and help.

## 11 Bibliography

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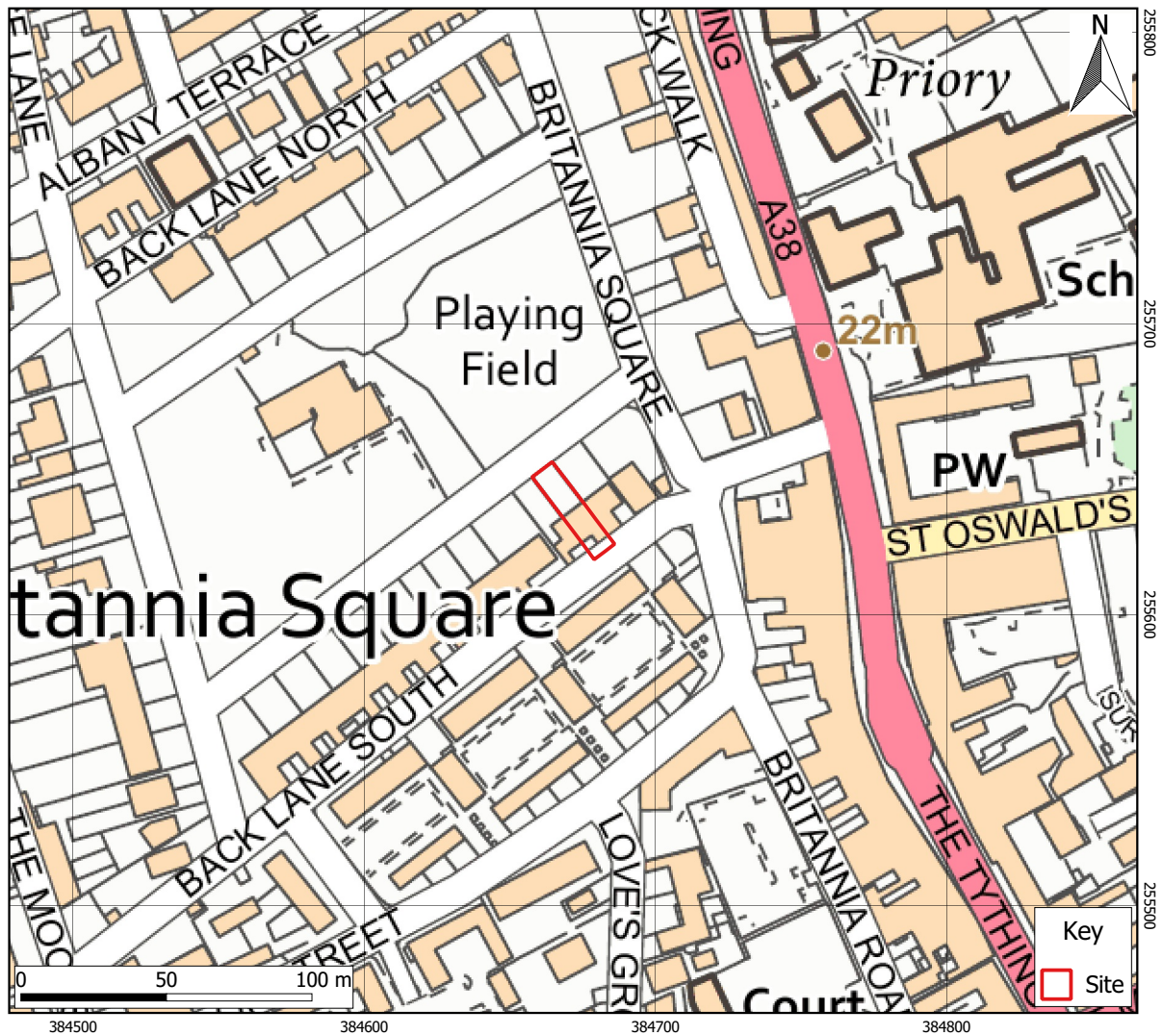
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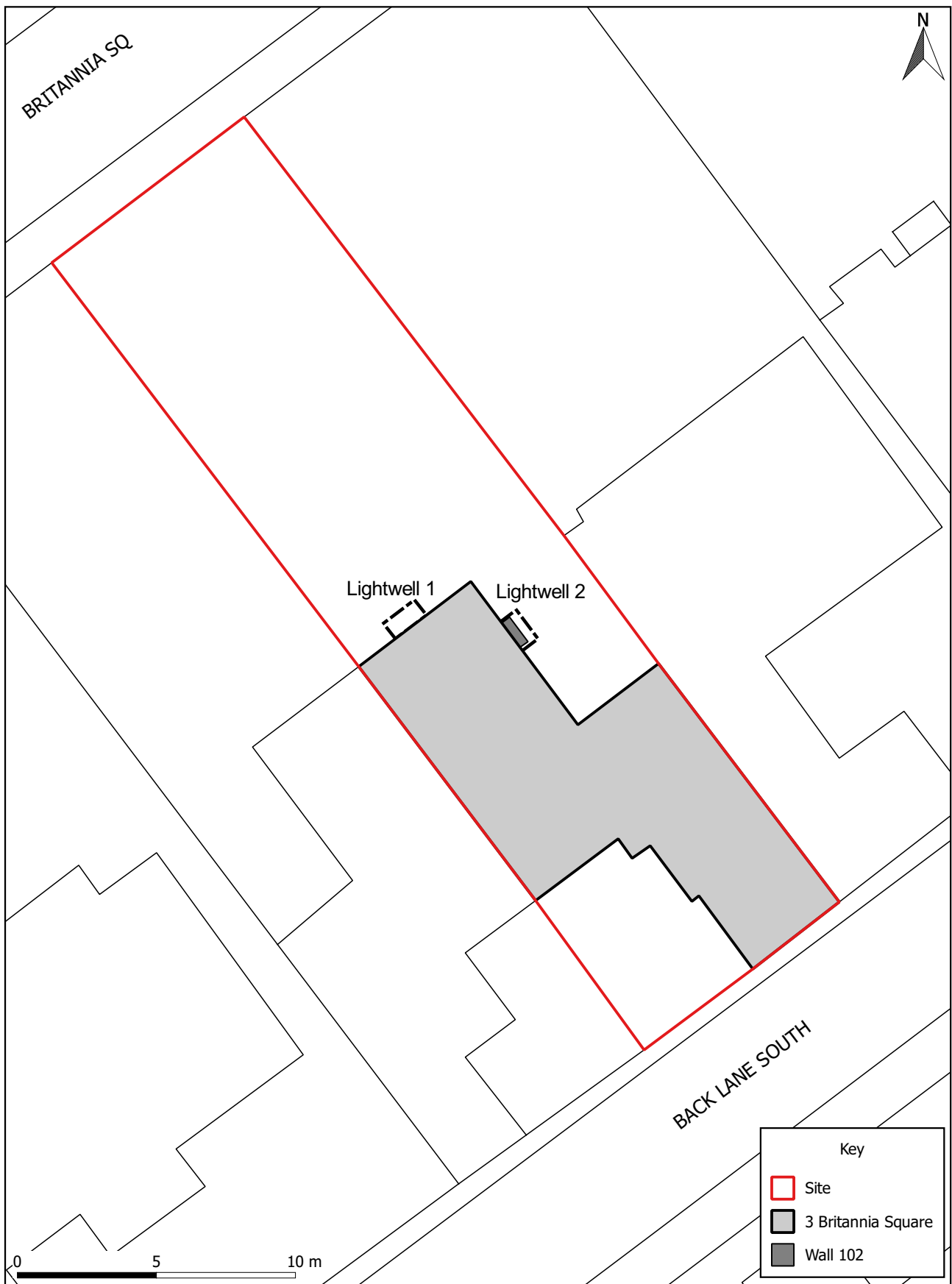
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## Figures



Location of the site

Figure 1



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*Location of the lightwells*

*Figure 2*



## Plates



*Plate 1: Lightwell 1. No evidence for the cut of 3 Britannia Square was visible in section. Photo looking south-west*



*Plate 2: Lightwell 2. The remains of a blocked-up lightwell or coalshoot were identified and removed. Photo looking south-west*

## Appendix 1: Context descriptions

### LIGHTWELL 1

CONTEXT	CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION	DEPTH BELOW GROUND LEVEL (M)
100	Layer	Paving slabs	0.0-0.03
101	Layer	Hardcore base for 100	0.03-0.13
102	Rubble	Mixed rubble backfill in a dark grey brown sandy silt	0.13-0.45
103	Infill?	Mid-brown sand and gravel with frequent patches of light yellow brown sand	0.45-1.3 (limit of excavation)

### LIGHTWELL 2

CONTEXT	CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION	DEPTH BELOW GROUND LEVEL (M)
200	Layer	Paving slabs	0.0-0.03
201	Layer	Hardcore base for 200	0.03-0.13
202	Wall	Brick wall for earlier lightwell or coal shoot which had been blocked up	0.1-0.85
203	Rubble	Brick rubble infill in 202	0.1-0.85
204	Rubble	Mixed rubble backfill in a dark grey brown sandy silt	0.13-0.85
205	Infill?	Mid-brown sand and gravel with frequent patches of light yellow brown sand	0.85-1.3 (limit of excavation)

## Appendix 2: Summary of project archive

TYPE	DETAILS*
Artefacts and Environmental	None
Paper	Context sheet, Photograph, Report
Digital	Images raster/digital photography

\*OASIS terminology