

Archaeological watching brief at Snow Hill Wharf, Shadwell Street, Birmingham

Worcestershire Archaeology
for St Joseph Homes Ltd

January 2019



Find out more online:
www.explorethepast.co.uk



SNOW HILL WHARF SHADWELL STREET BIRMINGHAM

Archaeological watching brief report



©Worcestershire County Council

Worcestershire Archaeology
Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service
The Hive
Sawmill Walk
The Butts
Worcester
WR1 3PD

Explore
the Past

SITE INFORMATION

Site name: Snow Hill Wharf, Shadwell Street, Birmingham
Local planning authority: Birmingham City Council
Planning reference: 2017/09308/PA
Central NGR: 407028, 287650
Commissioning client: St Joseph Homes Ltd
WA project number: P5487
WA report number: 2642
Oasis reference: fieldsec1-334786

DOCUMENT CONTROL PANEL				
Version	Date	Author	Details	Approved by
1	17/12/2018	G Arnold	Draft for comment	TVR

This report is confidential to the client. Worcestershire Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability to any third party to whom this report, or any part of it, is made known. Any such party relies upon this report entirely at their own risk. No part of this report may be reproduced by any means without permission.

CONTENTS

SUMMARY	1
REPORT	2
1 INTRODUCTION	2
1.1 Background to the project	2
1.2 Site location, topography and geology.....	2
2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	3
3 PROJECT AIMS	3
4 PROJECT METHODOLOGY	3
5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS	4
6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS	4
7 PROJECT PERSONNEL	4
8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	4
9 BIBLIOGRAPHY	5

FIGURES

PLATES

APPENDIX 1: PRELIMINARY GEOTECHNICAL SUMMARY : LEAP ENVIRONMENTAL LTD 2018

Archaeological watching brief at Snow Hill Wharf, Shadwell Street, Birmingham

By Graham Arnold

Illustrations by Laura Templeton

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Snow Hill Wharf, Shadwell Street, Birmingham (NGR 407028, 287650). It was commissioned by St Joseph Homes Ltd, in advance of the proposed demolition of warehouses and construction of 404 apartment blocks in five residential blocks. It was considered that the proposed development had the potential to impact upon possible heritage assets relating to canal side structures, evidence relating to construction of the canal and for industrial-related features and planning permission was granted subject to conditions including a programme of archaeological works.

Within the areas monitored during groundworks a series of 20th Century made ground deposits and building foundations relating to the recent developments on site were recorded. This supports the evidence of geotechnical; works on the site showing a considerable depth of modern made ground throughout the site.

No significant archaeological deposits, canal-side structures or industrial-related activity were observed during the works, and it is thought that earlier deposits were heavily truncated by 20th Century developments and no longer survive on site.

Report

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in November 2018 at Snow Hill Wharf, Shadwell Street, Birmingham (NGR 407028, 287650). This comprised monitoring groundworks, following the demolition of the existing warehouses on site and lifting the modern slab. The project was commissioned by St Joseph Homes Ltd, in advance of a proposed demolition of the existing warehouse structures and construction of 404 apartment blocks in five residential blocks.

It was considered by Birmingham City Council that the proposed development had the potential to impact upon possible heritage assets relating to canal side structures and planning permission was granted subject to a programme of archaeological works (2017/09308/PA).. A previous archaeological technical note (Orion Heritage 2018) and subsequent geotechnical works (Leap Environmental 2018) on the site identified that the site had been heavily truncated by 20th Century developments and that between 2m and 4.5m of modern made ground was present on site.

No brief was provided but discussions with Ross Brazier at Birmingham City Council during the planning process highlighted the importance of observing and recording canal-side structures, evidence relating to construction of the canal and for industrial-related features. A WSI was prepared by Orion Heritage (Orion Heritage 2018) and approved by Birmingham City Council.

The watching brief conforms to the industry guidelines and standards set by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists in *Standard and guidance: for an archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2014).

1.2 Site location, topography and geology

The site was subject to an archaeological technical note as part of the preparation for the planning application. This provided detailed information about the site location, topography and geology on site, as well as the archaeological and historical background. The results of this are summarised below.

The site is located within Birmingham City Centre, on the northern side of St. Chad's Queensway, bounded by Lower Loveday Street to the east, Shadwell Street to the south, modern development to the west and the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal to the north. The Birmingham and Fazeley Canal forms the site's northern boundary; the River Rea is located over 1.4km to the south of the site.

The site was subject to a topographical survey by NJC Surveys Ltd in 2016 (Figure 2).

A level of 117.3m above Ordnance Datum is recorded at the junction of Shadwell Street and Little Shadwell Street. Shadwell Street rises to 118.87m above Ordnance Datum at the western extent of the site. Levels along the northern side of the site, along the canal towpath are significantly lower at 114m and 114.15m above Ordnance Datum.

The sites underlying geology comprises bedrock of the Wildmoor Sandstone Formation, overlain by superficial deposits of Glaciofluvial Deposits (Devensian) – Sand and Gravel (Geology of Britain Viewer; accessed 27 November 2018). The Sandstone geology was measured at between 8 -11m below the ground level across site in a geotechnical survey carried out by Leap Environmental (Appendix 1).

2 Archaeological and historical background

An archaeological technical note or desk-based assessment (DBA) of the site was undertaken by Orion Heritage in July 2017, on behalf of St Joseph Homes Ltd. The findings presented in the Archaeological Technical Note are summarised below.

Evidence from historic mapping showed that the site was heavily developed by the 1889 1st edition OS map, with the area next to the Birmingham – Fazeley canal occupied by a chemical works and a mill.

Mapping evidence following the Second World War demonstrates major bomb damage to the area, clearing buildings, with further development in the 1950s showing the construction of another chemical works, mill and garage. The site had later become car-parking by 1969, with the warehouses currently on site and demolished as part of the current works constructed between 1976 and 1978.

The archaeological technical note concluded that the potential for significant buried archaeological remains within the study site was low.

3 Project aims

The principal aims of the archaeological observation and recording were to:

- determine the character, extent, date, complexity, integrity, state of preservation and quality of the archaeological remains present within the areas impacted by foundation design, especially with regard to canal-related and industrial structures, therefore ensuring their preservation by record.

The general objectives were to ensure:

- the protection and recording of archaeological assets discovered during the development works;
- that any below-ground archaeological deposits exposed are promptly identified;
- the recording of archaeological remains, to place this record in its local and regional context and to make this record available.

4 Project methodology

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Orion Heritage (OH 2018).

Fieldwork was undertaken between 8th and 22nd November 2018 in the western area of the site.

Monitoring of the groundworks followed the demolition of the existing warehouse and the removal of any hardstanding. No further groundworks took place before the area had been subject to archaeological monitoring. A number of trial holes were excavated by a 360° tracked excavator under archaeological supervision. The trial holes were excavated to the maximum depth of the construction impact and demolition groundworks.

Deposits were recorded according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced. Analysis was allied to the information derived from other sources.

Once groundworks had been monitored on the western part of the site and the trial pits had been excavated demonstrating that a depth of made ground was present on the site, Chris Patrick, Conservation Officer for Birmingham City Council was contacted and it was agreed that no further archaeological intervention was required.

5 Archaeological results

The groundworks monitored and the location of the archaeological trial holes and geotechnical boreholes are shown in Figures 1-2. The trial holes demonstrated various layers of 20th Century modern made ground deposits throughout the area. These continued below the maximum construction impact level for site. Plates 1 – 10 show the areas excavated and the stratigraphy on site.

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Modern made ground	Mixed deposits of modern made ground, with frequent truncation by 20 th Century building footings and services seen throughout the site to the base of the construction impact level	0.00 – 2.20m

Table 1: Trial hole stratigraphic deposits

6 Discussion and conclusions

A series of 20th Century made ground deposits and building foundations relating to the recent developments on site were recorded in the trial pits and groundworks in the western part of the site. This supports the evidence of geotechnical works on the site showing a considerable depth of modern made ground throughout the site. It is thought that any early industrial deposits or deposits related to the canal are likely to have been removed during the development of the site which took place in the middle decades of the 20th Century.

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved. Conditions were suitable in the areas investigated to identify the presence or absence of archaeological features. It is considered that the nature, density and distribution of archaeological features provides an accurate characterisation of the development site as a whole.

7 Project personnel

The fieldwork was led by Graham Arnold.

The project was managed by Tom Rogers. The report was produced and collated by Graham Arnold and Tom Rogers. Illustration work on figures was undertaken by Laura Templeton.

8 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following: Ben Clarke, (Technical Director) St Joseph Homes Limited, John Rodgers (Site Manager) and Stephen Rose (Site Supervisor), DSM Group Ltd, and Cathy Patrick and Rob Smith of Orion Heritage Ltd for background preparatory works. The project was monitored by Archaeological planning officer Chris Patrick, Birmingham City Council and Worcestershire Archaeology would also like to thank them for their advice.

9 Bibliography

BGS, 2018 Geology of Britain viewer. Available: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>
Accessed: 26 November 2018

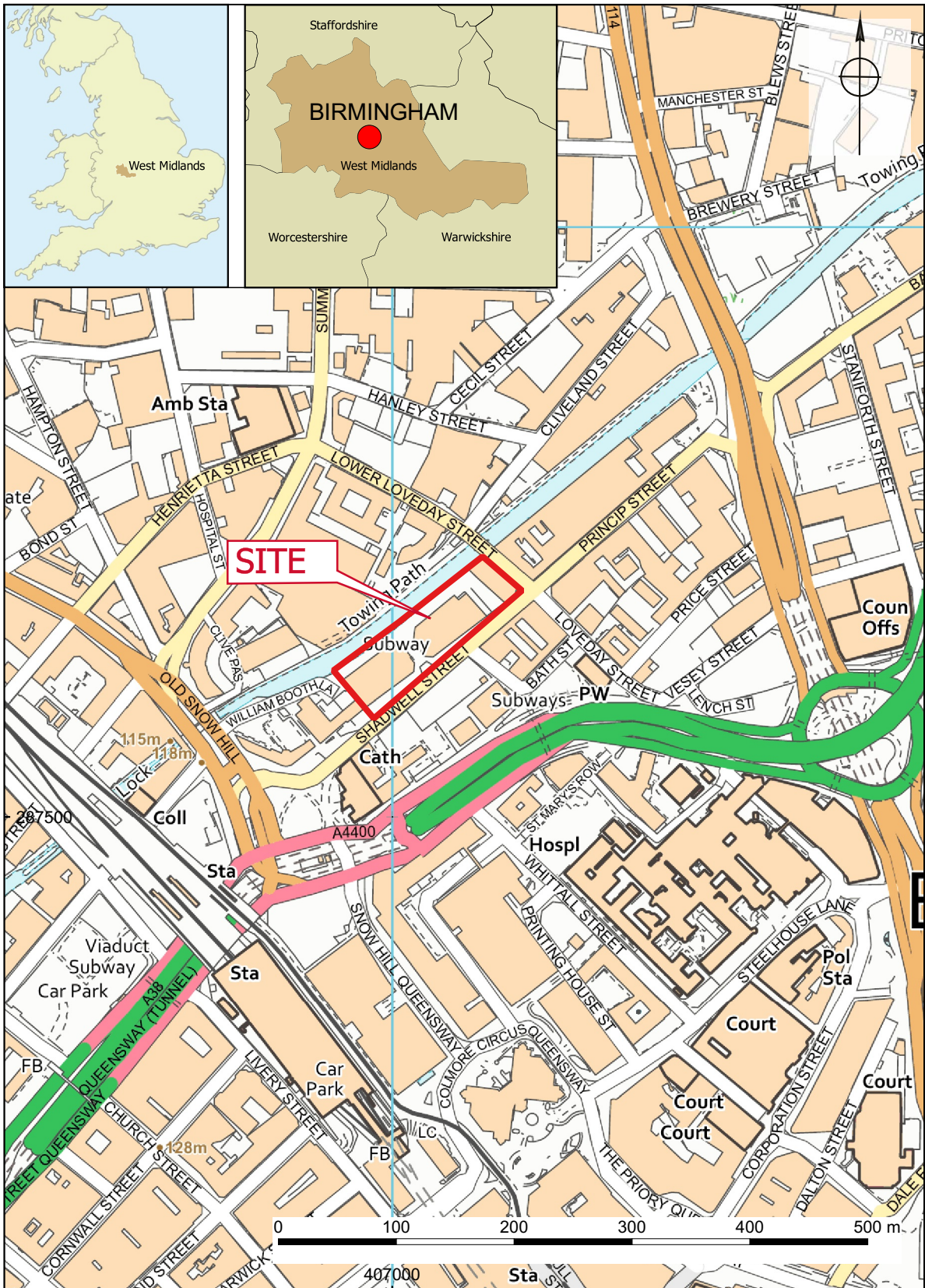
CIfA, 2014 *Standard and guidance: for an archaeological watching brief*. Reading: Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

Orion Heritage, 2017 *Land at Shadwell Street, Birmingham - Archaeological Technical Note* Orion Heritage Limited, Unpubl report written July 2017

Orion Heritage, 2018 *Land at Shadwell Street, Snow Hill Wharf, Birmingham – Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation* Orion Heritage Limited, Unpubl report written August 2018

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

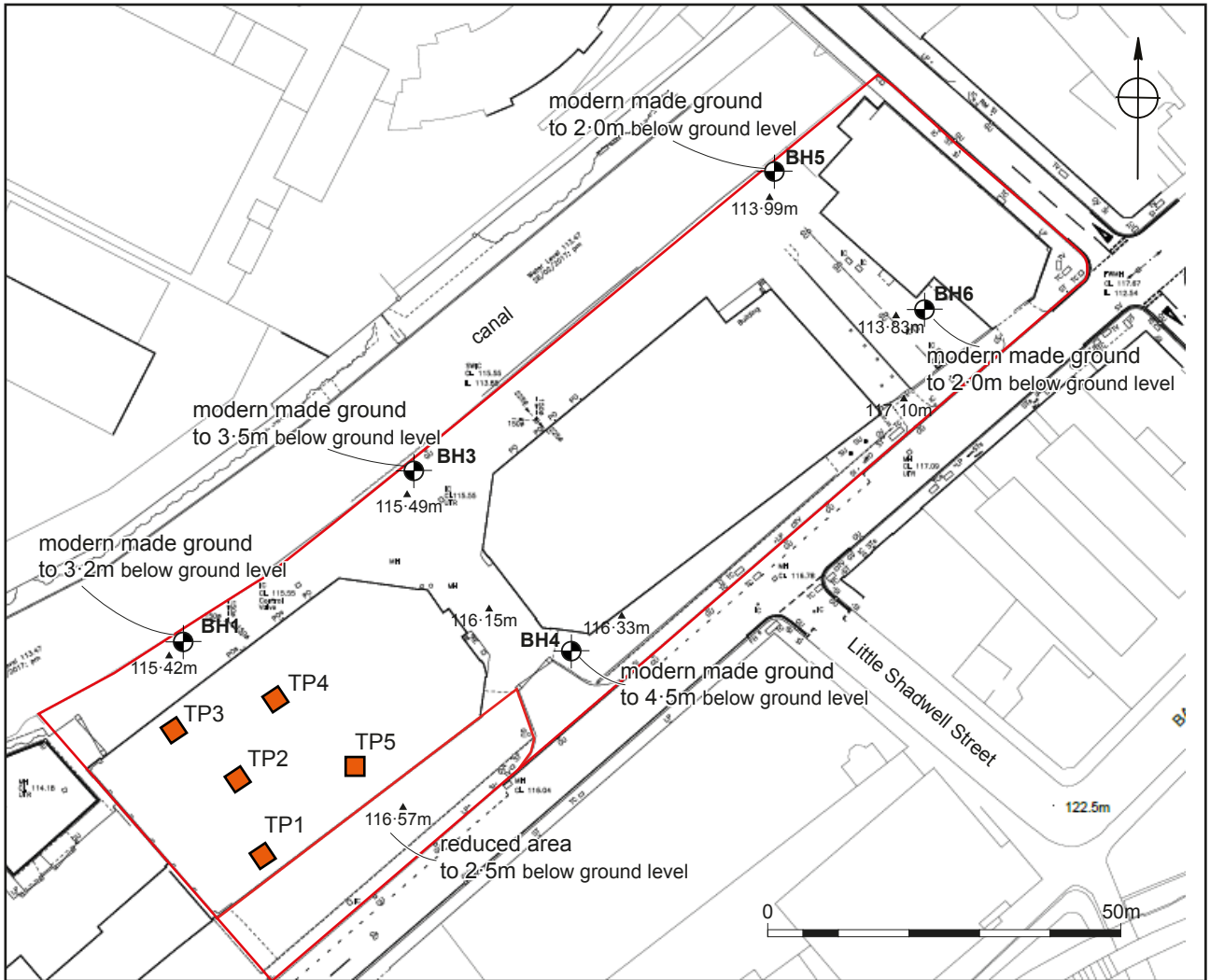
Figures



Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right 2018

Location of the site

Figure 1



Site observations

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1: Western end of site following warehouse demolition and hardstanding removal. View southwest



Plate 2: The eastern end of the demolished warehouse, looking south



Plate 3: Example deposits of modern made ground in Trial Hole 1. View west with 2 x 1m scales



Plate 4: Modern made ground, including 20th Century building footings in Trial Hole 2. View south



Plate 5: Trial Hole 3 showing concrete footing of existing warehouse. Looking west



Plate 6: Modern made ground deposits, including 20th Century footings, within Trial Hole 3. Looking East with 2x1m scales



Plate 7: Southwest facing section of Trial Hole 5, showing modern deposits and service truncations. 1m scale



Plate 8: Location shot of Trial Hole 5 looking northwest towards Birmingham and Fazeley canal



Plate 9: Modern made ground deposits in raised area at southwest corner of site. View southwest with 2x1m scales



Plate 10: General shot showing existing concrete retaining wall in being removed. View northwest towards canal-side

**Appendix 1: Preliminary Geotechnical Summary LEAP
Environmental Ltd 2018**