

Archaeological watching brief at City Walls Road Worcester

Worcestershire Archaeology
for Jacobs

July 2019



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CITY WALLS ROAD WORCESTER

Archaeological watching brief report



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SITE INFORMATION

Site name: City Walls Road, Worcester
Scheduled Monument number: NHLE 1005506
Local planning authority: Worcester City Council
Planning reference: -
Central NGR: SO 85229 54514
Commissioning client: Jacobs
Historic England reference: S00212078
WA project number: P5221
WA report number: 2713
HER reference: WCM102401
Oasis reference: fieldsec1-357399
Museum accession number: -

DOCUMENT CONTROL PANEL

Version	Date	Author	Details	Approved by
1	05/07/2019	Tim Cornah	Draft for comment	Tom Vaughan
2	16/07/2019	Tim Cornah	With Curator comments	Tom Vaughan

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Archaeological watching brief at City Walls Road, Worcester

By Tim Cornah

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at City Walls Road, Worcester, Worcestershire (NGR SO 85229 54514). It was commissioned by Jacobs, on behalf of Worcestershire County Council, after the granting of Scheduled Monument Consent for the excavation of two test trenches within the existing footpath and roadway, over the projected location of the former City Wall, in order to test its level of survival ahead of proposed roadwork alterations.

No significant archaeological features, deposits, structures, layers or horizons were revealed, nor artefacts recovered. Despite being within an area that is documented with a high archaeological potential for the Roman and medieval periods, the test trenches demonstrated that the medieval City Wall was extensively truncated at the point of insertion of the current road in 1975, as it was not present within either of the test trenches which were dug to a depth of 1m.

Report

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in June 2019 at City Walls Road, Worcester, Worcestershire (NGR SO 85229 54514). It was commissioned by Jacobs, on behalf of Worcestershire County Council, after the granting of Scheduled Monument Consent for the excavation of two test pits within the existing footpath and roadway, ahead of proposed roadwork alterations.

Historic England (the Curator) considered that the proposed development had the potential to impact upon a specific heritage asset, the former medieval City Wall (NHLE 1005506).

Historic England granted Scheduled Monument Consent in correspondence dated 6 March 2019 (the Brief). A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by WA (2019) and approved by Historic England. The watching brief also conforms to the industry guidelines and standards set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists in *Standard and guidance: for an archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2014a) and the *Guidelines for archaeological work in Worcester* (Worcester City Council 2016).

1.2 Site location, topography and geology

The site is located on the southern side of Worcester city centre, in an area known as Sidbury. The site lies within the A38, City Walls Road, and is broadly flat at a height of approximately 19m AOD. The geology is recorded as Sidmouth Mudstone Formation overlain by alluvium such as clay, silt, sand and gravel (BGS 2019).

2 Archaeological and historical background

Prior to fieldwork commencing, a search of the Worcester City HER was completed, covering a search area of 150m around the site. Documentary sources at Worcestershire Archives, historic mapping and aerial photographs were also consulted. A summary of the results of this research are presented below.

The alluvial superficial geology of the site as noted above is due to the presence of the Frog Brook (WCM96579) to the east of the site along the line of the existing canal, which is thought to have been a prehistoric water course.

The area of the city within which the site is located was occupied in the Roman period, as shown by the presence of buildings remains (WCM96396, WCM96397, WCM96398) and a road (WCM96401) of that date approximately 50-70m to the west under what is now a cinema complex. No known Anglo-Saxon activity is recorded within the immediate area of the site, as it is considered to have been outside of the defences in this period.

The layout of the area from the medieval period to the present has been defined to a large degree by the presence of the City Wall which is considered to have been constructed in the 12th century and ran in this area (WCM96102) on a north to south alignment between St Martin's Gate to the north and the Sidbury Gate to the south (WCM96101). Parallel and to the east of this was the City Ditch (WCM96135). The medieval nature of the layout of both Friar Street and Sidbury, the A44, is evident from medieval buildings and tenement plots remaining. These street frontages developed largely in their remaining form through the post-medieval era.

An 80m length of the city wall was demolished in 1975 to accommodate the current City Walls Road layout (WCM100156; NHLE 1005506; <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1005506>).

3 Project aims

The aims of the watching brief were to observe, investigate and record archaeological deposits, and to determine their extent, state of preservation, date and type, as far as reasonably possible within the constraints of the Client's groundworks.

The Brief indicates that significant deposits may be defined as those likely to be of medieval and post-medieval date, relating to the City Walls

4 Project methodology

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2019). Fieldwork was undertaken between 28 and 30 May 2019.

Two test trenches each 1.30m by 0.70m were excavated over the projected line of the City Wall. The trenches were to 1m deep, the impact depth of the proposed roadworks. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed by hand under constant archaeological supervision. Clean surfaces were inspected and selected deposits were excavated to retrieve artefactual material and environmental samples, as well as to determine their nature, as appropriate. Deposits were recorded according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012).

All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced. Analysis was undertaken through structural 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 at Worcester City Museum.

5 Archaeological results

5.1 Trench descriptions

Both of the trenches encountered modern coverings such as path and road surfaces as well as topsoil for planting. Below these were a series of deposits entirely consistent with made ground deposits and therefore post-date the road layout changes of 1975. At no point was any remnant of the City Wall revealed.

Below are further details of the trenches. The trench locations are shown in Figure 2.

Trench 1

Length: 1.3m Width: 0.7m Depth 1m

Context summary:

Context	Context type	Interpretation	Depth (AOD)	Deposit description
100	Structure	Modern Surface	19.18-19.06m	Tarmac path surface
101	Layer	Modern made ground	19.06-18.63m	Fairly compact sub-angular light grey stones and gravels
102	Layer	Modern made ground	18.63-18.48m	Compact red marl with some rounded pebbles and rare small brick fragments
103	Layer	Modern made ground	18.48-18.33m	Soft grey silty sand with occasional small rounded pebbles
104	Layer	Modern made ground	18.33-<18.18m	Compact grey brown silty sand with very frequent small rounded pebbles

Trench 2

Length: 1.3m Width: 0.7m Depth 1m

Context summary:

Context	Context type	Interpretation	Depth	Deposit description
200	Structure	Topsoil	19.95-19.79m	Loose mid grey brown silty sand
201	Layer	Modern made ground	19.79-19.17m	Loose mid yellow brown silty sand with occasional brick fragments
202	Layer	Modern made ground	19.17-<18.95m	Firm mid reddish brown sand and gravels
203	Structure	Modern kerb edge	19.95-19.61m	Concrete road edging kerb
204	Layer	Modern made ground	19.95-19.19m	Road stone makeup layer beneath kerb

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 Conclusion

No significant archaeological features, deposits, structures, layers or horizons were revealed, nor artefacts recovered. Despite being within an area that is documented with a high archaeological potential, the test pits demonstrated that the City Wall was truncated to at least 1m depth below the present road surface during its construction in 1975.

9 Project personnel

The fieldwork was led by Tim Cornah (ACIfA) and Pete Lovett (ACIfA). The project was managed by Tom Vaughan (MCIfA). The report was produced and collated by Tim Cornah. Carolyn Hunt prepared the illustrations (MCIfA).

10 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following: Stuart Minton and John Costello (Jacobs), Nick Churchill (Worcestershire County Council), Nick Carter (Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Historic England), James Dinn (Archaeological Officer, Worcester City Council) and Sheena Payne-Lunn (Historic Environment Record Officer, Worcester City Council).

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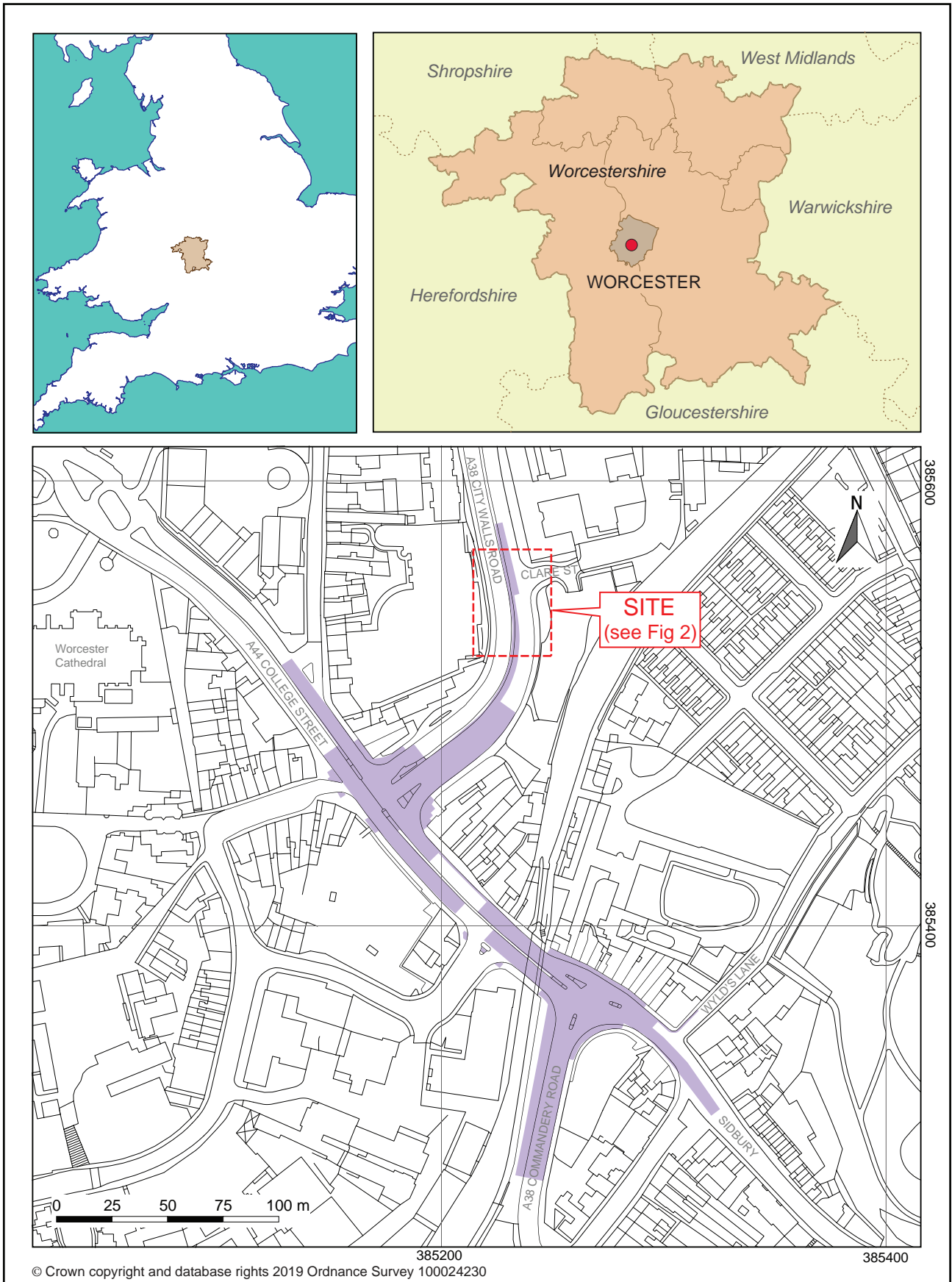
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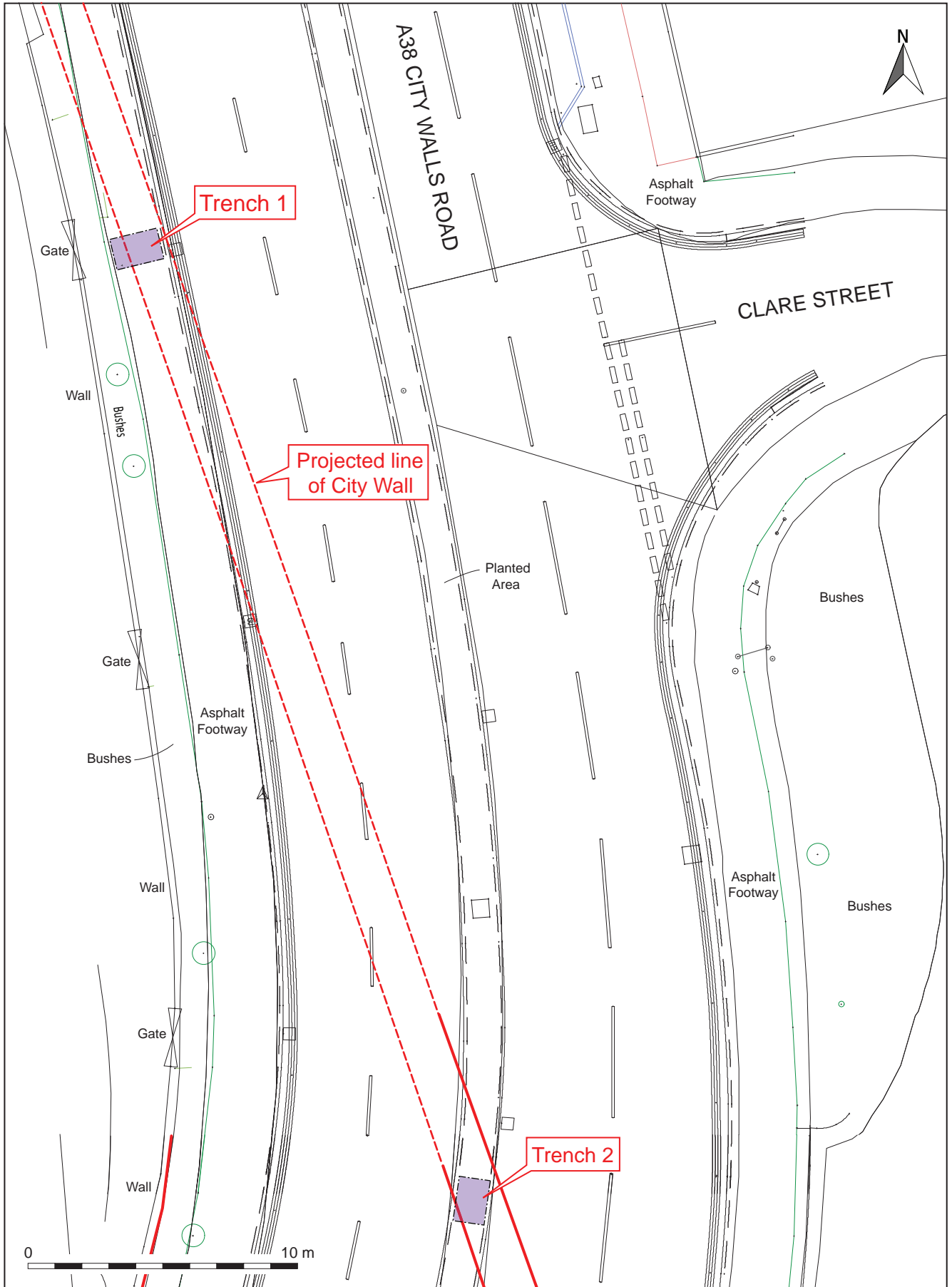
Worcester City Council 2016 *Guidelines for archaeological work in Worcester*, version 1.1, dated December 2016

Figures



Location of the site (overall road scheme in purple)

Figure 1



Trench location plan (based upon Jacobs' Dwg 0002)

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1: Trench 1 looking north, scale 0.5m



Plate 2: Trench 1 looking north, scale 0.5m



Plate 3: Trench 2 looking north-west, scale 1m



Plate 4: Trench 2 looking south, scale 1m

Appendix 1: Summary of project archive

TYPE	DETAILS*
Artefacts and Environmental	None
Paper	Context sheet, Diary (Field progress form), Photograph, Report,
Digital	Images raster/digital photography, Text

*OASIS terminology