

# Archaeological Watching Brief at Churchfields, Kidderminster, Worcestershire

Worcestershire Archaeology  
*for Worcestershire Highways*

December 2019



Find out more online:  
[www.explorethepast.co.uk](http://www.explorethepast.co.uk)



# CHURCHFIELDS, KIDDERMINSTER, WORCESTERSHIRE

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: Churchfields, Kidderminster  
Local planning authority: Wyre Forest District Council  
Planning reference: 18/000025/REG3  
Central NGR: SO 8325 7705  
Commissioning client: Jacobs Consulting Ltd  
Client project reference: 694944CH  
WA project number: P5584  
WA report number: 2756  
HER reference: WSM 72014  
Oasis reference: Fieldsec1-364127  
Museum accession number: -

---

DOCUMENT CONTROL PANEL				
Version	Date	Author	Details	Approved by
1	04/12/2019	Graham Arnold	Draft for comment	Tom Vaughan

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

---

<b>SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>REPORT</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>2</b>
1.1 Background to the project .....	2
1.2 Site location, topography and geology.....	2
<b>2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND</b> .....	<b>2</b>
2.1 Previous archaeological work on the site .....	2
<b>3 PROJECT AIMS</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>4 PROJECT METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS</b> .....	<b>3</b>
5.1 Trial Pit descriptions.....	3
<b>6 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>7 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>8 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>9 PROJECT PERSONNEL</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>10 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>11 BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	<b>5</b>

## FIGURES

## PLATES

## APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF PROJECT ARCHIVE

## APPENDIX 2: SUMMARY OF DATA FOR HER

# An archaeological watching brief at Churchfields, Kidderminster, Worcestershire

By Graham Arnold

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

## Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Churchfields, Kidderminster (NGR SO 8325 7705). It was commissioned by Jacobs Consulting Ltd on behalf of Worcestershire County Council Highways, in advance of proposed alterations to the road system in the area. Planning permission has been granted subject to a programme of archaeological works.

The watching brief followed on from earlier evaluation, where two trenches were excavated to the north and south of a former car showroom (Bradley 2019). Only deposits of post-medieval and modern date, dating from the 17th to 18th century onwards, were identified. Soil deposits suggested that the land was formerly in agricultural or horticultural use before being developed. Structural remains of 19th century date, including part of a cellar, as well as an associated yard surface, can be associated with properties shown on historic mapping prior to their demolition in the 20th century. There was no evidence of earlier features, although a single medieval pitcher jug handle was of particular interest. Whilst residual, this was unabraded and may reflect the reported presence of medieval manor house (WSM20721) in the vicinity.

The watching brief was undertaken of eleven Trial Pits, excavated to locate modern services, to a maximum depth of 1.20m. Natural deposits were only observed in the Trial Pits adjacent to the roundabout to the south, where the ground is lower, with modern made ground and road surfacing recorded elsewhere.

The cellars recorded on the southside of Churchfields are a continuation of the cellars recorded in evaluation Trench 1. A brick wall foundation orientated north to south was also recorded on Clensmore Street and St Mary's Street carpark. All the structures recorded related the 19th century deposits and were visible on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map. There was no evidence of any earlier features recorded during this stage of investigations. No artefacts were recovered, nor environmental samples taken.

## Report

### 1 Introduction

#### 1.1 Background to the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA), in October 2019, at Churchfields, Kidderminster, Worcestershire (NGR SO 8325 7705). This comprised observation of the excavation of eleven Trial Pits to locate modern services. The works followed on from evaluation trenching carried out in August 2019 (Bradley 2019). The project was commissioned by Jacobs Consulting on behalf of Worcestershire County Council Highways, in advance of proposed road alterations and development to the area. Planning permission has been granted subject to a programme of archaeological works (planning reference 18/000025/REG3).

The archaeological advisor to the local planning authority considered that the development had the potential to impact upon possible heritage assets located in the vicinity of Churchfields and Clensmore Street (WSM20721).

The previous evaluation on the site (Bradley 2019) identified deposits of post-medieval and modern date, dating from the 17th to 18th century onwards. Soil deposits suggested that the land was formerly in agricultural or horticultural use before being developed. Structural remains of 19th century date, including part of a cellar and an associated yard surface, could be identified with properties shown on historic mapping prior to their demolition in the 20th century.

A written scheme of investigation (WSI) was prepared by Jacobs Consulting Ltd (Thomas 2019) and approved by the archaeological advisor. The watching brief also conforms to the industry guidelines and standards set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists in the *Standard and guidance: for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014) and the *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2010).

#### 1.2 Site location, topography and geology

The watching brief followed on from the earlier evaluation (Bradley 2019), as summarised below.

The site is located to the north of Kidderminster town centre, just beyond what was historically the core of the medieval town. Around 200m to the south-west is St Mary and All Saints Church, with the name Churchfields reflective of this proximity. The site is largely level, at around 50m AOD, on land that until recently was used for commercial purposes and is currently occupied by a former car showroom and garage with associated car parking (Plate 1). Surrounding buildings, both to the northeast and south-west, serve similar functions. The north-west side of the site is bounded by Churchfields road, the south-east side by a roundabout which forms part of St Mary's ring road. The underlying geology comprises sandstone bedrock of the Wildmoor Sandstone Member, formed during the Triassic period, overlain by superficial deposits of Holt Heath sand and gravels (BGS 2019). (Bradley, 2019)

### 2 Archaeological and historical background

The archaeological and historical background can be found in the Environmental Assessment Report, summarised in the WSI (Thomas 2019) and the evaluation phase (Bradley 2019) that was carried out prior to these works.

#### 2.1 Previous archaeological work on the site

The watching brief followed on from an earlier evaluation when two trenches were excavated to the north and south of a former car showroom (Bradley 2019). Only deposits of post-medieval and modern date, dating from the 17th to 18th century onwards, were identified. Soil deposits suggested that the land was formerly in agricultural or horticultural use before being developed. Structural remains of 19th century date, including part of a cellar, as well as an associated yard surface, can be associated with properties shown on historic mapping prior to their demolition in the 20th century.

There was no evidence of earlier features, although a single medieval pitcher jug handle was of particular interest. Whilst residual, this was unabraded and may reflect the reported presence of medieval manor house (WSM20721) in the vicinity.

### 3 Project aims

The WSI required an archaeological watching brief of groundworks, particularly within the western part of the Scheme (Clensmore Street junction) within the vicinity of the possible site of Kidderminster Manor House (WSM20721).

The WSI (Thomas 2019) states that the aims of the watching brief were to:

- To enable the timely discharge of the archaeological planning conditions;
- To establish the presence/absence, extent and significance of any previously unknown archaeological assets within the Scheme;
- To mitigate the impact of the Scheme on any archaeological assets present through investigation and recording;
- To disseminate the results of the archaeological investigation in a format and manner appropriate to their significance;
- To generate an accessible and useable archive which will allow future research of any evidence identified to be undertaken.

### 4 Project methodology

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Jacobs Consulting Ltd (Thomas 2019). Fieldwork was undertaken between 30 September and 3 October 2019.

Eleven Trial Pits, amounting to 25m<sup>2</sup> in area, were excavated across the site. The location of the Trial Pits and the previous evaluation trenches is indicated in Figure 2.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed under constant archaeological supervision using a 360° tracked excavator, employing a toothless bucket. Subsequent excavation was undertaken by hand. Excavations ceased at a maximum of 1.20m below ground level, or once services were exposed.

Observation of excavated trial pits was undertaken during and after machine excavation. The exposed surfaces were sufficiently clean to observe well-differentiated archaeological deposits.

Deposits were recorded according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012) and trench and feature locations were tied into scaled plans provided by developer and georeferenced in QGIS.

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 Worcestershire Museum with the evaluation phase works.

### 5 Archaeological results

#### 5.1 Trial Pit descriptions

In all of the trial pits a series of made ground deposits were overlaid by modern footpath and road surfacing. Natural deposits comprised of orangey brown sands and gravels were only observed in Trial Pits 8 and 9, at a depth of 0.50m below the ground level, cut by modern service trenches. 19<sup>th</sup>

century cellars were recorded in Trial Pits 2 and 3 (Figs 2 and 4; Plates 3-5), on the south side of Churchfields and a brick wall recorded on Clensmore Street, in Trial Pits 5 and 11 (Figs 2 and 3; Plates 6-7). These structures are all visible on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map (Figs 3 and 4).

Trial Pit	Dimension (m)	Max depth (m)	Plate Number	Road surfacing depth (m)	Made ground depth (m)	Natural	Comments
1	7.00 x 0.60	1.20	1	0.40	0.80+	Not reached	No archaeology Located on edge of Churchfield road
2	7.00 x 0.60	1.20	3-4	0.40	0.80+	Not reached	Cellar walls 0.20m wide with 9" x 4" x 3 ½" machine made bricks, backfilled with modern demolition rubble, ash and clinker. Floor not reached
3	7.00 x 0.60	1.20	5	0.40	0.80+	Not reached	Cellar walls 0.20m wide with 9" x 4" x 3 ½" machine made bricks, backfilled with modern demolition rubble, ash and clinker. Floor not reached
4	1.80 x 0.70	0.80	-	0.27	0.53+	Not reached	No archaeology
5	1.50 x 0.48	0.75	6	0.15	0.60+	Not reached	Brick wall with cement bonding 0.35m wide and footing 0.40m wide. Brick dimensions 9" x 4" x 2 ½". 0.15m - 0.75m bgl. Same as in TP 11.
6	1.80 x 0.60	1.10	9	0.20	0.90+	Not reached	No archaeology
7	2.00 x 0.60	1.20	10	0.20	1.00+	Not reached	No archaeology
8	1.60 x 0.60	1.20	11-12	0.10	1.10+	Orangey brown sand and gravel	No archaeology
9	1.60 x 0.40	1.00	-	0.10	0.90+	Orangey brown sand and gravel	No archaeology
10	2.00 x 0.90	0.65	13-14	0.30	0.35+	Not reached	No archaeology
11	1.50 x 0.50	0.90	7-8	0.20	0.70+	Not reached	Brick wall with cement bonding 0.35m wide and footing 0.40m wide. Brick dimensions 9" x 4" x 2 ½". 0.20m - 0.90m bgl. Same as in TP 5.

Table 1: Trial Pit descriptions

## 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 approached using standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). In the event, no deposits were excavated which were considered to be suitable for environmental analysis.

## 8 Discussion and conclusions

The cellars recorded on the south side of Churchfields are continuations of the cellars recorded in evaluation Trench 1 to the south. All of the structures related the 19<sup>th</sup> century deposits and were visible on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map. Natural deposits were only observed in the Trial Pits adjacent to the roundabout, where the ground is lower, whilst only modern made ground was exposed elsewhere. No artefacts were recovered, nor environmental samples taken.

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/areas 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.

## 9 Project personnel

The fieldwork was led by Graham Arnold, PCIfA.

The project was managed by Tom Vaughan, MCIfA. The report was produced and collated by Graham Arnold. Illustrations were completed by Carolyn Hunt, MCIfA.

## 10 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for the successful conclusion of the project: Nathan Thomas (Senior Archaeologist, Jacobs Consulting Ltd), Mark Mills (Contracts Project Manager, Worcestershire County Council Highways), Christian Bird (Site Agent, Worcestershire County Council Highways), Justin Baldwin (Alun Griffiths Ltd), and Emma Hancox (Historic Environment Policy and Advisory Manager, Worcestershire County Council).

## 11 Bibliography

Bradley 2019 Archaeological evaluation at Churchfields, Kidderminster, Worcestershire County Council, Worcestershire Archaeology, Unpubl report **2730**, dated 5 September 2019, WSM71456, P5584

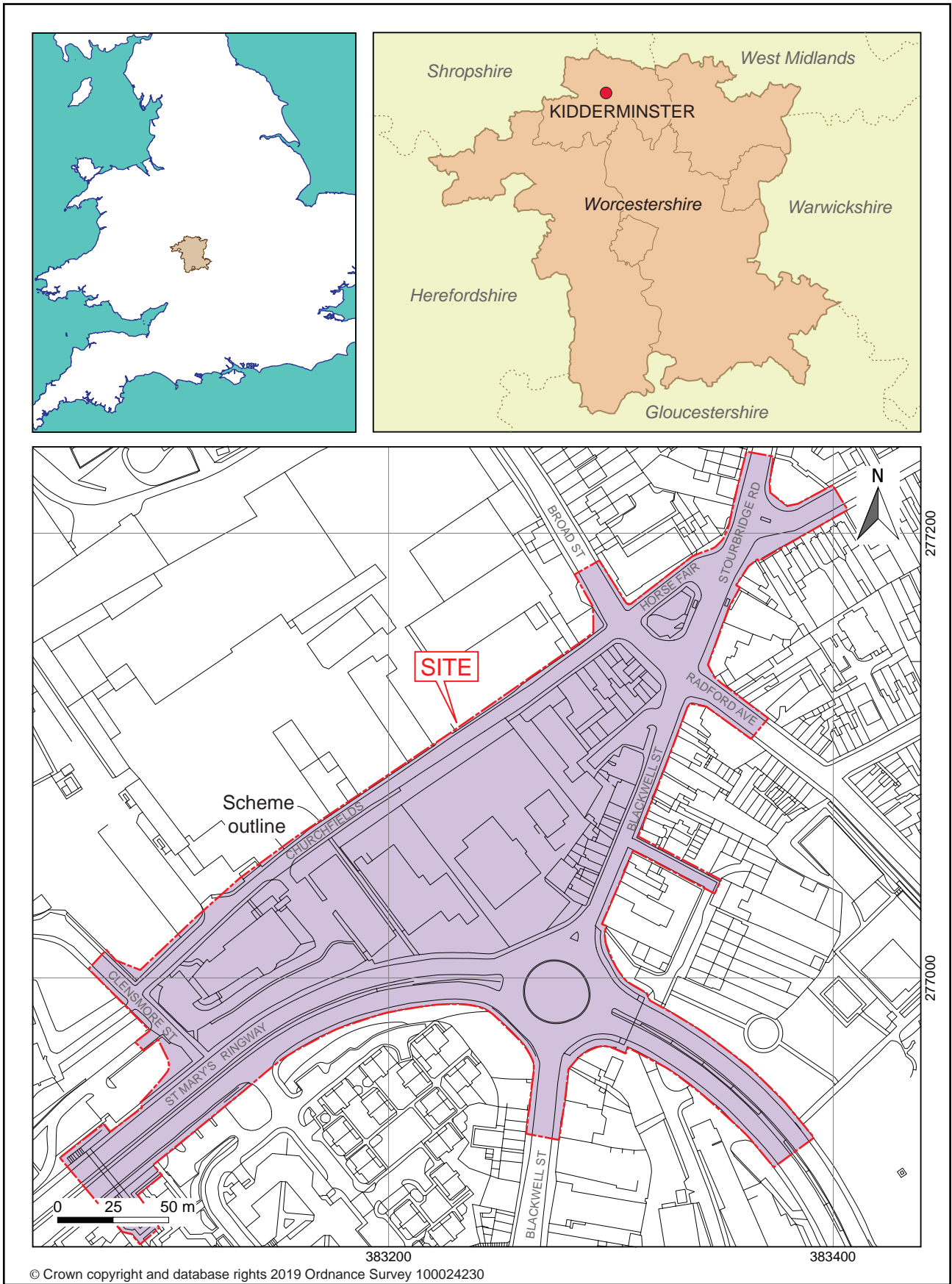
ClfA, 2014 *Standard and guidance: for an archaeological watching brief*. Reading: Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

Thomas, N, 2019 *Churchfields Highway Infrastructure Scheme, Worcestershire County Council: Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation*, Jacobs Consulting Ltd Unpubl document dated 11 March 2019.

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

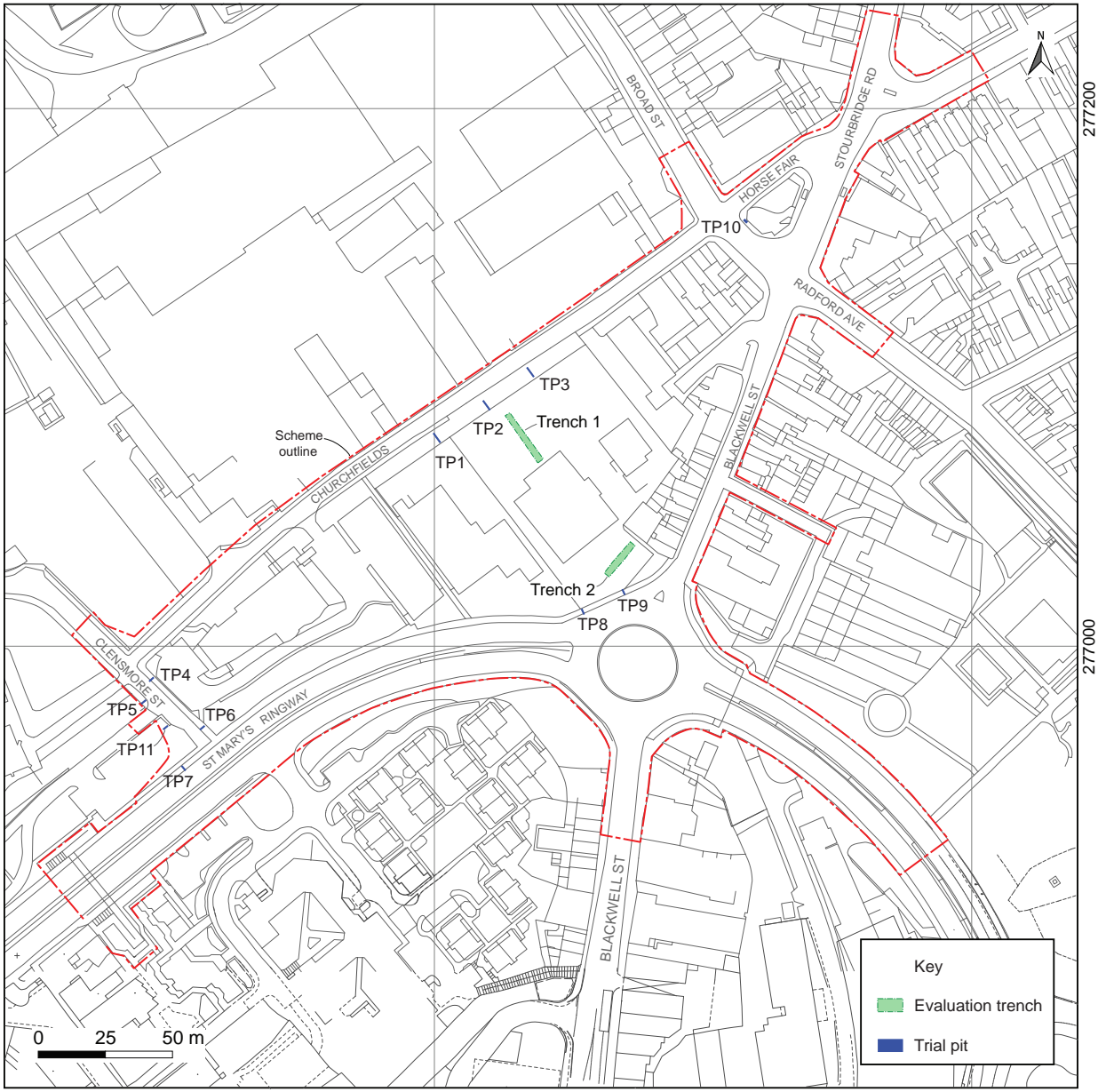
WCC 2010 (amended March 2016) Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire, Planning Advisory Section, Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service Unpubl report **604**. Worcestershire County Council

## Figures



Location of the site

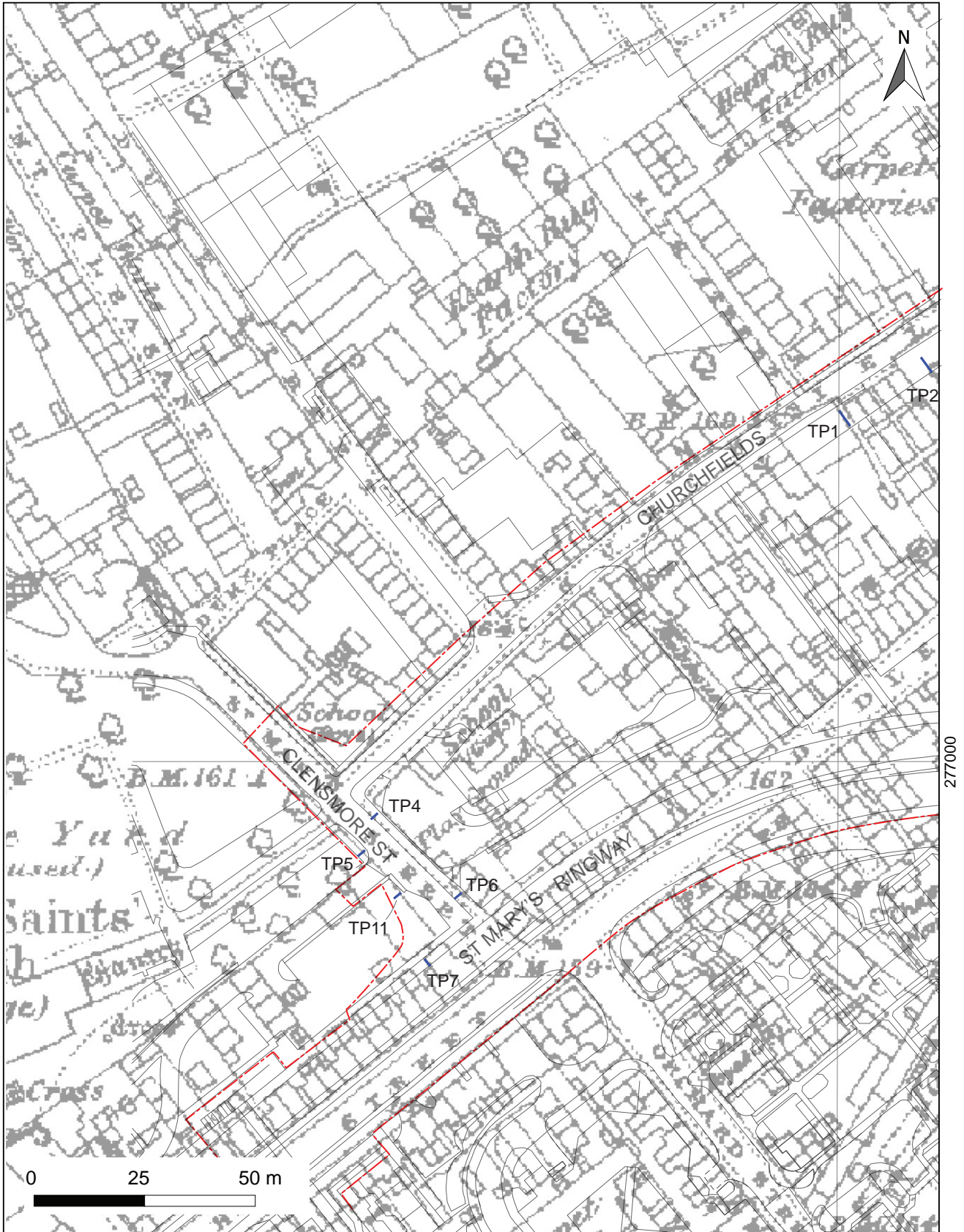
Figure 1



© Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey 100024230

Location of trial pits monitored

Figure 2

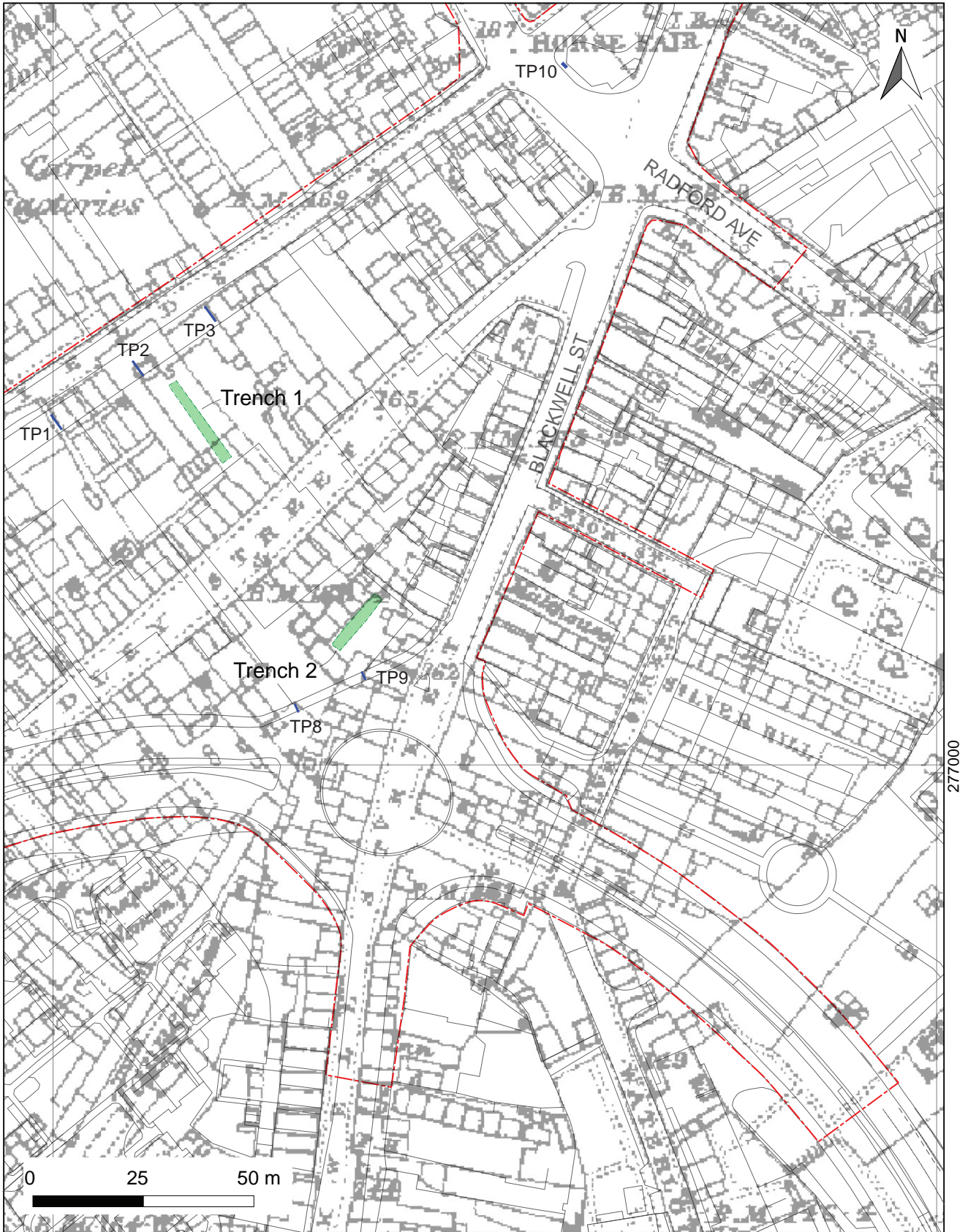


© Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey 100024230

383200

Trial pits overlying 1st edition OS map (western area)

Figure 3



383200 383400  
 © Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey 100024230

Trial pits and evaluation trenches overlying 1st edition OS map (eastern area)

Figure 4

## Plates



Plate 1: Location of Trial Pits 1-3 on Churchfields, adjacent to former car showroom, view south-west, no scales



Plate 2: Location of Trial Pits 4, 5 and 11 on Clensmore Street, view south, no scales



Plate 3: Brick structures relating to cellars and modern backfill in Trial Pit 2, view south-west, 2x 1m scales



Plate 4: Cellar structures and modern backfill, cut by modern services in Trial Pit 2, view south, 1m scale





Plate 5: Cellar walls and modern backfill in Trial Pit 3, cut by modern services, view south, 2x 1m scales



Plate 6: Brick wall and foundation in Trial Pit 5, view north, 2x 1m scales



Plate 7: Brick wall in Trial Pit 11, with modern service to east, view north, 0.2m and 1m scales



Plate 8: Location of Trial Pit 11 within car park, view west towards St Mary and All Saints church, no scale



Plate 9: Trial Pit 6 showing modern services and backfill, view west, 2x 1m scales



Plate 10: Trial Pit 7 showing modern services and backfill, view west, 2x 1m scales



Plate 11: Trial Pit 8 showing modern services and backfill, view west, 2x 1m scales



Plate 12: Trial Pit 8 location with Trial pit 9 in background, 1m scale looking northeast



Plate 13: Trial Pit 10 showing modern services and backfill, view north, 2x 1m scales



Plate 14: Location of Trial Pit 10 on Horsefair crossroads, view north-east, no scales

## Appendix 1: Summary of project archive

TYPE	DETAILS*
Artefacts and Environmental	-
Paper	Context sheet, Diary (Field progress form), Report
Digital	Images raster/digital photography, text

\*OASIS terminology

## Appendix 2: Summary of data for HER

WSM 72014

No artefacts were recovered, nor environmental samples taken.