

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING
BRIEF OF
KEMPSEY FLOOD ALLEVIATION
SCHEME, KEMPSEY,
WORCESTERSHIRE

Adam Lee

Illustrated by Carolyn Hunt

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Historic Environment and Archaeology Service,
Worcestershire County Council,
Woodbury,
University of Worcester,
Henwick Grove,
Worcester WR2 6AJ

Project 3112
Report 1574
WSM 38365

Archaeological watching brief of Kempsey Flood Alleviation Scheme, Kempsey, Worcestershire

Adam Lee

Background information

<i>Client</i>	Dean and Dyball Construction (on behalf of the Environment Agency)
<i>Site address</i>	off Squire's Walk, Kempsey, Worcestershire
<i>National Grid reference</i>	SO 8481 4892
<i>Historic Environment Record (HER) ref.</i>	WSM 38365
<i>Brief</i>	N/A
<i>Project design</i>	HEAS 2007
<i>Project parameters</i>	IFA 1999

Previous archaeological work on the site

There has been no previous archaeological work undertaken on the immediate site, although a desk-based assessment has been compiled (Marches Archaeology 1998).

Archaeological background

Kempsey lies 3.4 miles due south of Worcester on a bend of the River Severn on a gravel terrace above the flood plain. A tributary of the Severn, the Hatfield Brook, runs through the village. There are records of several former names for the village, the first recorded being *Kemesei* and *Cymesig* from the 8th century. In the 11th century it is referred to as *Chemesege*, *Camesi* and *Cameseia*. By the 17th century *Kemsey* was the recorded spelling (Mawer and Stenton 1927, 144).

The earliest known activity around Kempsey dates from the Bronze Age: a spearhead was dredged from the River Severn close to Kempsey in the 19th century (WSM 02562). To the south of the development site, southwest of Kempsey, a number of cropmarks have been identified (WSM 02109, WSM 02111, WSM 02112) the most notable being a double ditch square enclosure (WSM 02109) which is of probable prehistoric date. It is possible that features associated with these cropmark sites may extend into the development area. To the north of the development area is the site of a hillfort (WSM 02113) of Iron Age date. There is also evidence of Romano-British activity in Kempsey: artefacts were found at the 'The Moors' (WSM 02125). Close to the development site is St Mary The Virgins Church (WSM 02123) which dates back to the 12th Century and to the west of the church is the Bishops Palace (WSM 07192) which dates to the 9th century, the earliest part being a monastery for the church.

There have been several pieces of archaeological fieldwork carried out in Kempsey, the most notable being an archaeological watching brief at 15, Old Road South (WSM 31960) where possible later prehistoric features were identified, containing hammerscale, which suggests industrial activity. A sherd of Roman pottery from this site again suggests Roman activity in Kempsey.

The desk-based assessment identified the likelihood of Palaeolithic activity along the loops and tributaries of the River Severn and two undated, but probable prehistoric enclosures to the southeast (WSM 02109 and 02110) which may have been surrounded by field systems and accessed via track ways (Marches Archaeology 1998, 6).

Aims

The aim of the watching brief was to observe and record archaeological deposits, and to determine their extent, state of preservation, date and type, as far as reasonably possible.

Methods

General specification for fieldwork	CAS 1995
Sources consulted	HER Sources cited by the HER
Date(s) of fieldwork	22 nd November 2007
Area of site strip	c 4.14m ²
Dimensions of excavated areas observed	Test Pit 1: length 2.50m width 0.60m depth 3.10m Test Pit 2: length 2.40m width 0.60m depth 2.40m Test Pit 3: length 2.00m width 0.60m depth 2.90m

Access to or visibility of deposits

Observation of the excavated areas was undertaken during and after machine excavation. The exposed sections were sufficiently clean to observe well-differentiated archaeological deposits, though any less clear may have not been identified. Access to the trenches was not made for safety reasons.

Statement of confidence

Access to, and visibility of, deposits allowed a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

Deposit descriptions
Test Pit 1

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Firm mid brown clay silt. Moderate rooting	0 – 0.25m
101	Subsoil	Firm mid orange brown silty clay	0.25 – 0.65m
102	Natural	Firm mid brown orange slightly silty clay	0.65 – 1.30m
103	Natural	Soft grey orange clay	1.30 – 1.70m
104	Natural	Soft grey blue clay with sand lenses	1.70 – 3.00m
105	Natural	Firm grey blue clay	3.00m +

Test Pit 2

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
200	Topsoil	Firm mid brown clay silt. Moderate rooting	0 – 0.60m
201	Subsoil	Firm mid orange brown silty clay	0.60 – 1.20m
202	Natural	Firm mid brown orange slightly silty clay.	1.20m +

Test Pit 3

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
300	Topsoil	Firm mid brown clay silt. Moderate rooting	0 – 0.45m
301	Subsoil	Firm mid orange brown silty clay	0.45 – 0.85m
302	Natural	Firm mid orange brown clay	0.85 – 1.80m
303	Natural	Firm blue grey clay	1.80 – 2.80m
304	Natural	Friable red orange silty clay	2.80m +

Discussion and conclusion

Three trenches were excavated in order to assess the sequence of deposits adjacent to the Hatfield Brook prior to the construction of an earth bank, which will form part of the Kempsey Flood Alleviation Scheme. No significant archaeological features or deposits were identified and no artefacts were recovered. The full sequence of undisturbed topsoil and subsoil was recorded, directly overlying the natural matrix of orangey brown (silty) clay at 0.60-0.85m depth.

The lack of any archaeological features, horizons or deposits observed within the excavated trenches does not necessarily mean that this area is entirely devoid of archaeological remains, as the area sampled was arguably too small to assess the full archaeological potential of this side of the Hatfield Brook.

Publication summary

The Service has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, the Service 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.

A archaeological watching brief was undertaken on behalf of Dean and Dyball Construction (on behalf of the Environment Agency) on land off Squire's Walk, Kempsey, Worcestershire (NGR: SO 8481 4892; HER ref. WSM 38365). Three test pits were excavated. No significant archaeological features, horizons or deposits were observed, nor artefacts recovered. The full sequence of undisturbed topsoil and subsoil was recorded, directly overlying the natural matrix of orangey brown (silty) clay at 0.60-0.85m depth.

Acknowledgements

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Bibliography

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IFA, 1999 *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief*, Institute of Field Archaeologists

Marches Archaeology, 1998 *Kempsey Flood Alleviation Scheme, Worcestershire*, unpublished report, dated July 1998, Marches Archaeology Series **033**

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Figure

Plates



Plate 1: Test Pit 1 with blue clay 105 visible in the base of the trench, looking southeast



Plate 2: General shot of site with Test Pit 1 in foreground, looking southwest.

Appendix 1 Technical information

The archive

The archive consists of:

3	Trench records AS41
1	Fieldwork progress records AS2
1	Photographic records AS3
9	Digital Photographs
1	Scale drawings

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Worcestershire County Museum
Hartlebury Castle
Hartlebury
Near Kidderminster
Worcestershire DY11 7XZ
Tel Hartlebury (01299) 250416