WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL-TRENCHING

Church Lane, Middleton, Warwickshire
(NGR SP 178/ 983)
Planning Application PAP/2009/0420

1.0: INTRODUCTION

This document describes a programme of evaluation at the above site. It forms a written scheme of investigation for the fieldwork.

North Warwickshire BC had granted planning permission for the demolition of 6 almshouses, and the erection of 14 almshouses and affordable homes with associated parking/ access at Church Lane, Middleton, Warwickshire.

The archaeological trial-trenching is required in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS 5), in fulfilment of a brief set by the Planning Archaeologist, Warwickshire County Council.

This proposal is for a staged archaeological evaluation.

2.0: SITE DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION

The existing almshouses are located to the south of Church Lane, Middleton, to the west of Fairfield Cottage, and to the east of St Mabyn. Open land lies to the south of the almshouses. The almshouses are accessed by a driveway off Church Lane.

The approved proposal is for the demolition of the existing almshouses, and the construction of a total of 14 new almshouses/ affordable dwellings (Plots 1–14). The new development involves a total of five houses (Plots 10–14), to be built on undeveloped land to the south of the existing almshouses (see N. Baddison and Associates Ltd. Proposed Site layout Drawing no. 30208, August 2009).

3.0: BACKGROUND

The development is located within an area of archaeological potential. It lies within the likely extent of the medieval settlement of Middleton (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record (HER) MWA 9527), which is identified on the Ordnance Survey map of 1887.
A number of other areas of archaeological interest are recorded on the Warwickshire HER in the parish of Middleton, including features and finds of prehistoric, Roman, medieval and post-medieval date.

4.0: AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The principal aim of the project is to define the likely extent, survival and significance of archaeological remains within the proposed development, so as to provide sufficient information to allow an informed decision to be made concerning preservation *in situ* of below-ground remains, or further stages of archaeological work (if merited).

The particular aim of the project is to identify, map and date any evidence of the medieval settlement of Middleton and to recover any associated finds.

5.0: METHODOLOGY

Three stages of evaluation will be undertaken. Stages 1–2 would be undertaken in April 2012, and Stage 3 (and final reporting) would be undertaken when the remaining plots are available, provisionally in Autumn/Winter 2012.

Stage 1, Documentary reference (Brief, para. 4.2-4.3)

The sources to be consulted at this stage comprise:
- Warwickshire HER (search 300m all around the site centroid)
- Aerial photograph holdings of Warwickshire HER
- Available historic maps, Ordnance Survey maps, tithe and enclosure maps
- West Midlands Regional Research Agenda

In addition, a brief site inspection will be undertaken to identify any above-ground features (e.g. earthworks) of archaeological interest.

Following completion of this stage a draft trench plan for Stage 1 trial-trenching will be submitted to the Planning Archaeologist, Warwickshire County Council for approval. Trenches will target areas of archaeological potential (identified at Stage 1), the footprints of the new build and areas for which no archaeological/historical information is available.

Stage 2, trial-trenching (Plots 10–14)

A total length of 25m of trial-trenching will be excavated in these plots. A contingency for an additional 10% of trenching is identified in the project costing. This may be required to clarify the interpretation/extent of particular features/feature groups.

Following completion of this stage an interim report would be prepared, summarising the results of Stages 1 and 2, and including spot-dating of any finds. The report would be illustrated with plans and sections, as appropriate.

Stage 3, trial-trenching (Plots 1–9)

A total length of 75m of trial-trenching will be excavated in these plots. A contingency for an additional 10% of trenching is identified in the project costing. This may be required to clarify the interpretation/extent of particular features/feature groups.
The existing almshouse buildings will have been demolished to floor slab level before this stage of the fieldwork takes place. Any further demolition will be agreed with the Planning Archaeologist, Warwickshire CC.

**General methodology of trial-trenching (Stages 2–3)**

The health and safety of the archaeological staff and the general public is the uppermost consideration throughout all stages of this project. The trench locations will be scanned with a Catscan or similar device. All services will be assumed live unless proven otherwise.

In each trench the surface deposits would be excavated with a JCB excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket, working under continuous archaeological control. Mechanical excavation will expose the uppermost surface of the natural subsoil, or the first archaeological horizon, whichever is first encountered. Sufficient hand-cleaning will be undertaken to enable base-planning of the surfaces, features and deposits exposed by machining.

A representative sample of the identified archaeological features/ deposits will be hand-excavated, as follows:
- 50% pits/post-holes.
- Ditches, 25% by length.

The depth of archaeological deposits across the entire site will be assessed.

Mechanical excavation will ensure features/ deposits which may be worthy of preservation *in situ* are not destroyed/ damaged.

Throughout the excavation features and deposits will be recorded by means of pre-printed pro-formas. Sections will be drawn at scale 1:10 or 1:20, as appropriate, and plans will be drawn at 1:20 or 1:50, as required. The drawn and written record will be supplemented by digital photography.

Datable features will be sampled objectively for the recovery of plant and other environmental remains.

Any human remains will be left *in situ*; the local Coroner, the Police and the Planning Archaeologist will be informed.

All finds which may constitute ‘treasure’ under the Treasure Act, 1997 will be removed to a safe place and reported to the local Coroner.

An on-site monitoring meeting will be held during the trenching.

All finds will be cleaned, marked and bagged and remedial conservation work will be undertaken.

**6.0: STAFFING**

The project will be managed/ directed by Alex Jones, with the assistance of one site assistant.

Specialist staff will be:
- Post-Roman pottery: Stephanie Ratkai
- Small finds, Erica Macey-Bracken/ Hilary Cool
- Environmental: Liz Pearson, Worcestershire Archives and Archaeology Service
7.0: PROGRAMME

Stage 1
Alex Jones, site visit/ Warwickshire Record Office visit; prepare/ agree trench plan for Stage 1

Stage 2, Plots 10–14 trenching
Catscan/ machining, 1 day
Hand-cleaning/ excavation archaeological deposits Alex Jones + assistant, 2 days

Stage 3, Plots 1–9 trenching
Catscan/ machining, 1 day
Hand-cleaning/ excavation of archaeological deposits, Alex Jones + assistant, 3–4 days

8.0: FINAL REPORT

After completion of the fieldwork, the finds would be washed and marked, and the archive from both stages of fieldwork would be collated and checked for internal consistency.

An illustrated archive report will be prepared, to include the following sections:

- Summary
- Archaeological background
- Methodology
- A narrative description of the results and discussion of the evidence, set in their local, regional research context
- Spot-dating of the finds, and a summary of the environmental evidence
- Illustrations, to include location plan, historic map data, trench locations, plan/ sections of trenches, with heights AOD
- List/ spot-date significant finds recovered
- Interpretation of the evidence

Copies of the draft report will be circulated to the developer and the Planning Archaeologist, Warwickshire CC for comment.

Three copies of the report will be deposited with Warwickshire HER, and a further copy will be deposited with the Local Authority Planning Officer.

Summary reports will be prepared for West Midlands Archaeology and an appropriate period journal (eg Medieval Archaeology). An OASIS form will be submitted on project completion.

9.0: ARCHIVING

The full site archive will include all artifactual and/ or ecofactual remains recovered from the site. Finds and the paper archive will be deposited with Warwickshire Museum, subject to permission from the landowner.

Preparation and deposition of the site archive, from the excavation will be undertaken with reference to the guidelines provided by the receiving museum and to Guidelines for the Preparation of
Excavation Archives for Long-Term Storage (Walker 1990) and Archaeological Archives: a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation (Brown 2007).

10.0: PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Alex Jones, Project Manager/ Director is a Member (MIfA) of the Institute for Archaeologists.

All project staff will adhere to the Code of Conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

The project will follow the requirements set down in the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation (IFA 1999, as revised).

11.0: HEALTH AND SAFETY

A detailed risk assessment will be prepared prior to the commencement of fieldwork.

Work will be carried out in accordance with guidelines laid out in the Health and Safety in Field Archaeology Manual (SCAUM 2007).

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