

REDDITCH (W0)

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Thornfield Properties Ltd

**KINGFISHER CENTRE, REDDITCH, WORCESTERSHIRE
DEVELOPMENT AREA ONE**

NGR SP04106740

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

Planning Reference: R/00/0168

Oxford Archaeological Unit

May 2001

Thornfield Properties Ltd

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DEVELOPMENT AREA ONE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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Date: May 2001

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Date: June 2001

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Date:

10/6/2001

Oxford Archaeological Unit

May 2001

Summary

Between February and April 2001 Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) undertook a watching brief within Development Area 1 of the re-development of the Kingfisher Centre, Redditch, Worcestershire (Planning Ref. R/00/0168). Due to the potential disturbance of below ground archaeological deposits, a condition for an archaeological watching brief was attached to the planning consent. No archaeological features were observed during the watching brief as the development only had an impact on the substantial depth of modern made ground already present on the site.

1 Introduction

The Kingfisher Centre is located to the south-west of the historic centre of Redditch (Fig. 1) and partly encompasses the south-west third of the historic settlement as defined by Hereford and Worcester County Council in their Central Marches Historic Towns Survey (Dalwood 1996). Redditch lies on a small plateau on the side of the valley at the bottom of which flows the River Arrow, situated *c* 1.5 km to the north and east. Most of the site is situated on an 'island' of localised Quaternary Glacial Sand and Gravel within an area of Jurassic Mercia Mudstone (BGS Sheet 183). However, Development Area 1 (DA1) located at the north-western limit of the area to be re-developed, (Fig. 2) is the exception in that geophysical surveys indicate that it lies on the Mercia Mudstone rather than the glacial sand (Soil Consultants 2000, 1).

A desk-based assessment of the site was carried out by OAU in July 2000 (OAU, 2000) and is summarised below.

2 Background

DA 1 is located *c* 100 m south-west of the medieval town as defined by the Worcester County Council in their Central Marches Historic Towns Survey (CMHTS). The northern edge of the site lies on the south side of the main historic road into the town from the west, and the possibility exists for the presence of a roadside settlement on the outskirts of the town dating to the medieval/early post-medieval period. The earliest detailed map of DA 1 dates to *c* 1870 and shows some development on the site, including a number of tenement plots along sections of street frontage; a large building and a formal garden which the OS 1:500 scale map of 1884 marks as Littleworth House; a large building with a formal garden marked on the OS map of 1884 as Park House; and a railway station. The line of the railway once ran along a north-south aligned cutting along the western edge of the site.

The development within DA 1 involves the construction of a new four-storey building; the building's foundations comprised groups of piles of various dimensions located to the west of station way (the area formerly occupied by the bus station) along the western edge of the existing car park (which is to be retained) and in the north-eastern part of DA 1. The piles were predominantly bored and an average of 600mm in diameter and were placed uniformly across the area covered by the footprint of the new building (Fig. 3).

3 Aims

The aims of the watching brief were to identify any archaeological remains exposed on site during the course of the works, and to record these to established OAU standards (Wilkinson 1992), in order to secure their preservation by record.

4 Methodology

The watching brief was undertaken as a series of separate monitoring visits; all groundwork was undertaken by mechanical excavator.

Within the constraints imposed by health and safety considerations the deposits exposed were cleaned, inspected and recorded in plan, section and by colour slide and monochrome print photography. Written records were also made on proforma sheets. Soil description utilised standard charts for the approximation of percentage of inclusion types in soil deposits.

5 Results

The watching brief involved the monitoring of the installation of the piles and pile caps, as well as the excavations for the foundations of the stair and lift core to the west of the existing car park (Fig. 3).

The only deposit impacted by the groundwork was the existing made ground consisting of mixed brick rubble and other construction / demolition debris, presumably associated with the construction - and subsequent demolition - of the bus depot and car park.

As indicated by the geotechnical survey, deposits of Mercia Mudstone were observed to the north-east of the site at a depth of *c* 1 m. However, it seems likely that these were re-deposited, as they appeared to overlie made ground similar in composition to that observed across the rest of the site.

6 Finds

The deposits observed during the watching brief contained concentrations of 20th century building material which was not retained.

7 Environmental results

While due consideration was given to various environmental sampling strategies, no suitable deposits were observed during the watching brief.

8 Discussion

During the monitoring of the intrusive groundworks associated with the development at DA1, modern made ground deposits were observed at depths consistently in excess of 7 m. It therefore seems likely that any archaeological evidence for the buildings

and features identified in the desk-based assessment have been truncated by more recent development within the area of DA1.

Although difficult to establish given the quantity of made ground across the site, the natural topography of the area appears to be a considerable slope from south to north and it is feasible that archaeological remains survive to the north of the site below the made ground. No evidence of these remains was observed during the watching brief.

References.

Wilkinson, D (ed) 1992 Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual, (First edition, August 1992).

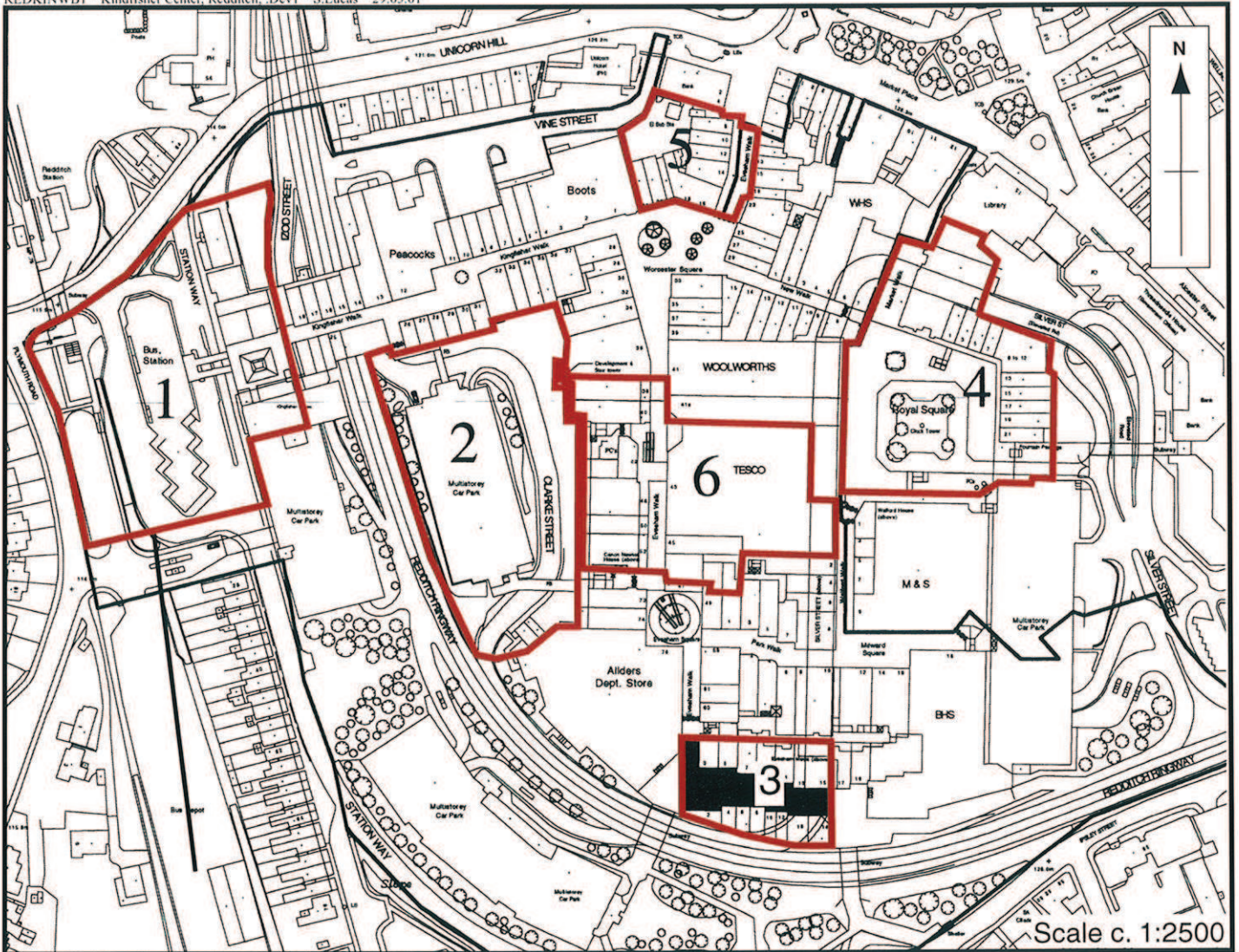
Soil Consultants Ltd (Feb 2000) Kingfisher Centre, Station Way, Redditch. Foundation Appraisal (Development 1), (Unpublished Client Report).

OAU (July 2000) Proposed Development, Kingfisher Centre, Redditch, Worcestershire. Archaeological Desk Dased Assessment (Unpublished Client Report).



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Figure 1: Site Location.



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 Development Area (DA) 1-6

Figure 2: Location of Development Areas.

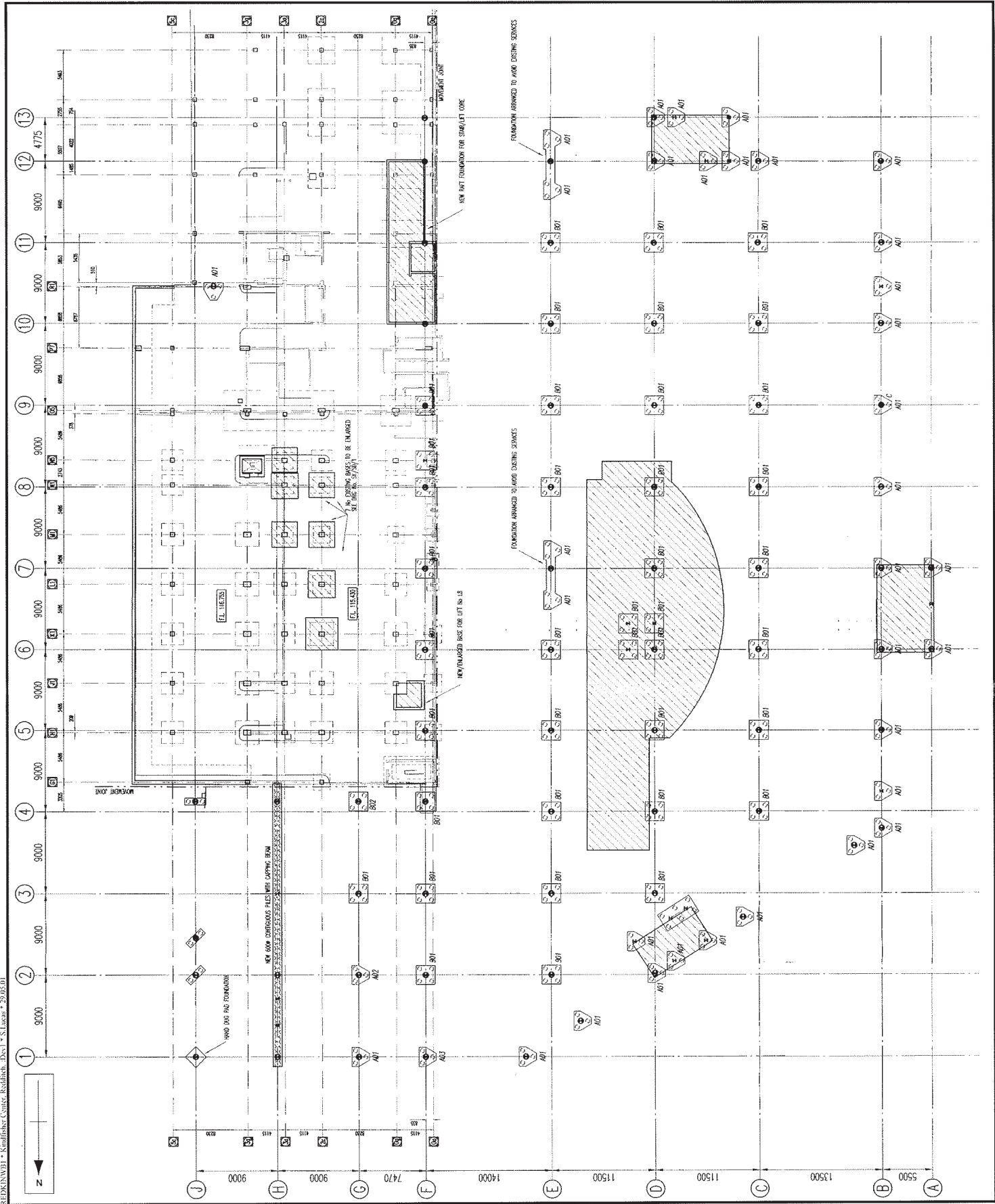


Figure 3: Piling Layout in Development 1.



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