

# Development Area 4 Kingfisher Centre Redditch Worcestershire



## Archaeological Watching Brief Report



**Oxford Archaeology**

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Thornfield Redditch Ltd Partnerships**

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Illustrated by Luke Adams

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## Development Area 4, Kingfisher Centre, Redditch, Worcestershire

### *ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF*

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## SUMMARY

*Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a watching brief within and to the east of Development Area 4 at the Kingfisher Centre, Redditch, Worcestershire on behalf of Simons Construction. Natural gravel was seen to the east of the site, overlain by a series of modern levelling and make-up deposits. No archaeological deposits were encountered.*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 Between August 2001 and May 2002 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a watching brief within Development Area 4 at the Kingfisher Centre, Redditch, Worcestershire (NGR SP 0410 6740) on behalf of Simons Construction (Fig. 1). The work was in respect of a planning application for the alteration of existing retail units and the construction of new retail units with associated works, services and access (Planning Application No. 2000/484). A brief, outlining the archaeological requirements of the works, was set by Mike Glyde of the Worcestershire Archaeological Service (WAS) on behalf of Redditch Borough Council. In response, a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), outlining how OA would implement the brief, was produced and approved by WAS.

1.1.2 Development Area 4 (DA4) is located at the north-eastern limit of the Kingfisher Centre. It is located partly within, and immediately south-west of, the medieval core of Redditch. The area of DA4 which was archaeologically monitored was approximately 0.5 ha in area (Fig. 2).

#### 1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 Redditch lies on a small plateau on the side of a valley at the bottom of which flows the River Arrow, situated c 1.5 km to the north and east. Development Area 4 is situated on an 'island' of localised Quaternary Glacial Sand and Gravel within an area of Jurassic Mercia Mudstone (BGS Sheet 183).

#### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 In July 2000 OA (then OAU) was commissioned by Tweeds Project Management, on behalf of Thornfield Redditch Limited Partnerships, to undertake a desk-based assessment of the archaeological potential of the six areas proposed for re-development (OAU 2000). Below is a summary of the results of that assessment for DA 4.

1.3.2 The area monitored during the watching brief lies within an area of potential medieval tenement plots on the south side of the green of the medieval town. Although the tenement plots are no longer extant and were probably removed prior to the construction of the Kingfisher Centre in the 1970s, there is some potential for the presence of remains of the footings of buildings of medieval and post-medieval date

along with features such as rubbish pits, remains of small-scale industrial activities and garden features, situated in the backyards of the plots. The extent to which such features have been truncated is not known: it is possible that they have been completely removed by modern foundations or survive beneath Modern Made Ground.

- 1.3.3 The earliest detailed map of the area, dated to c. 1870, shows several buildings in the north-eastern and eastern parts of the site. The OS 1:500 map of 1884 names these as 'Saw Mill' and 'Needle and Pin Factory'. The years between 1870 and 1884 saw a growth in the number of buildings in the area of the Mill and the Factory.
- 1.3.4 In March 2001, OA carried out a field evaluation at Royal Square, in the west of DA4. Two modern brick structures were revealed although no remains of archaeological significance were encountered (OAU 2001).

## 2 WATCHING BRIEF AIMS

- 2.1.1 The aims of the watching brief were to establish the presence/absence of any archaeological remains exposed on site during the course of the works, and to record these to established OA standards (Wilkinson 1992), in order to secure their preservation by record and to determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date.
- 2.1.2 The watching brief also aimed to inform the research cycle, taking into account local, regional and national research frameworks.
- 2.1.3 A primary aim was to make available the results of the investigation.

## 3 WATCHING BRIEF METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Scope of fieldwork

- 3.1.1 A constant presence was maintained during the initial landscaping to reduce the level of the ground around the beginning of the access ramp. Discussions with the WAS during the process allowed for a reduction in the level of monitoring once it became apparent that significant remains were unlikely to survive.
- 3.1.2 A stratigraphic record of deposits exposed by groundworks was made.
- 3.1.3 A record of the extent and depth of the groundworks was made.
- 3.1.4 Close co-operation was maintained with the City's Archaeological Representative, to ensure adequate monitoring.

### 3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 3.2.1 Sections through the removed deposits were drawn at scales of 1:20. The exposed deposits were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D. Wilkinson, 1992).

### 3.3 Finds

3.3.1 No finds were recovered during the watching brief.

### 3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

3.4.1 No samples were taken because deposits of archaeological significance were not encountered.

## 4 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

### 4.1 Description of deposits

4.1.1 Natural sand and gravel was encountered at the south of the monitored area (Fig. 2) at 125.2 m OD. This was sealed by 2.5 m of red gravely sandy silt. The silt contained fragments of frogged and stamped bricks and was interpreted as a modern levelling/made ground deposit. In the north of the area, below the hump of made ground supporting the elevated section of Silver Street, the levelling deposit was seen in pile holes to a depth of more than 123.4 m OD, 2 m below the level of natural to the south. The area may have been reduced during landscaping or there may be a sharp natural drop towards the north. The levelling material was overlain by dumps of rubble and hardcore below a concrete surface.

## 5 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

5.1.1 No evidence of activity pre-dating the construction of the Kingfisher Centre was observed. Natural sand and gravel was seen to the south of the area but no evidence of medieval tenements, or post-medieval industrial activity were encountered. The lack of such evidence suggested that the area had been landscaped during the construction of the Kingfisher Centre in the late 20th century. Subsequent to the landscaping, a mound of material appears to have been deposited so as to construct the ramp supporting the elevated section of Silver Street. Natural gravel was not seen below the mound which suggests that ground level may have sloped down to the north, or that significant truncation has taken place. The ground may also have been landscaped during the construction of the 'Needle and Pin' factory but no archaeological evidence was encountered. This would indicate that the landscaping observed was entirely a result of the construction of the Kingfisher Centre.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

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

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

OAU, (March 2001), Development Area 4, Kingfisher Centre, Redditch, Worcestershire. Archaeological Evaluation (Unpublished Client Report).

## APPENDIX 2 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

**Site name:** Development Area 4, Kingfisher Centre, Redditch, Worcestershire

**Site code:** WSM30363

**Grid reference:** SP 0410 6740

**Type of watching brief:** Monitoring of ground reduction and intrusive below ground works

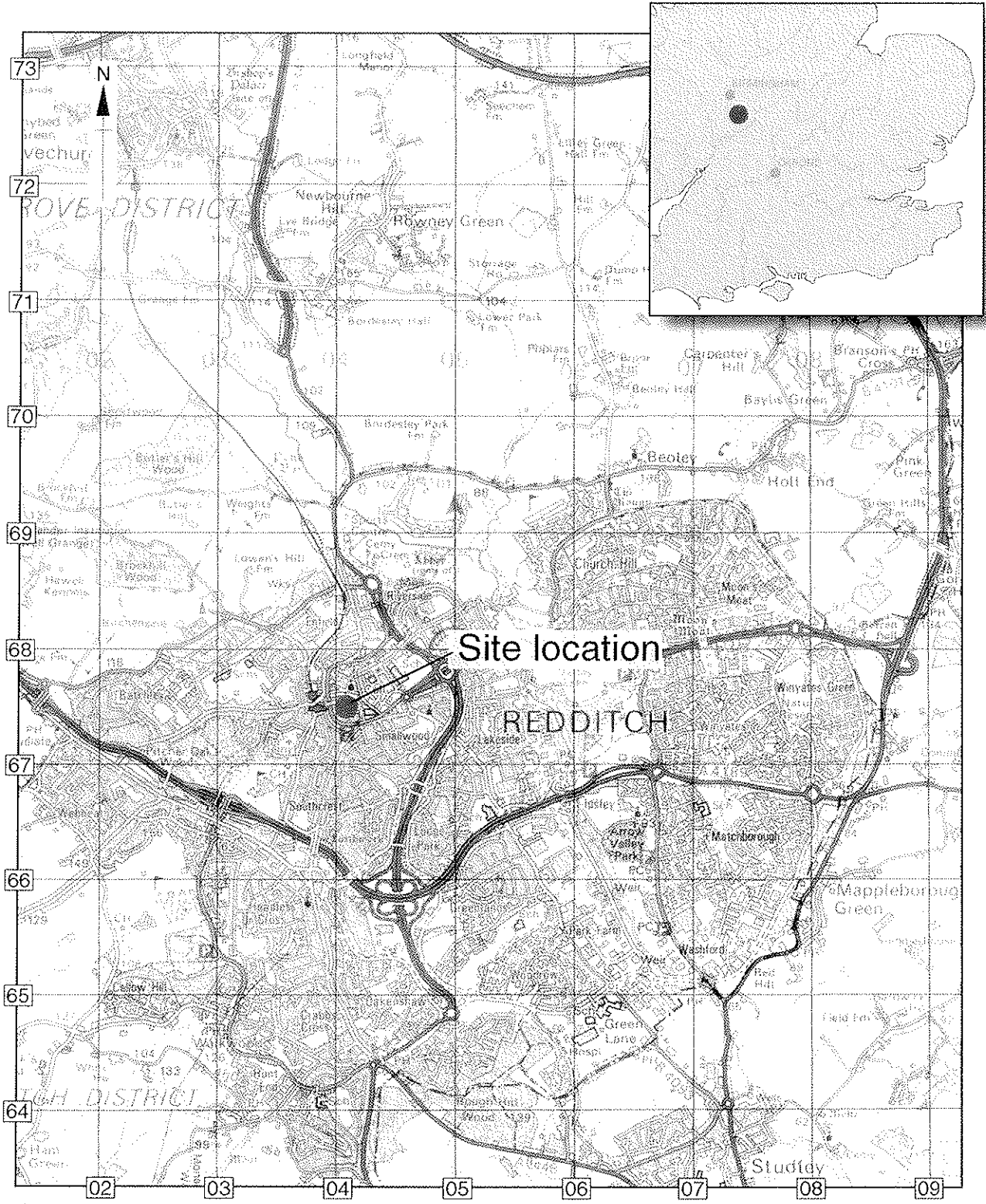
**Date and duration of project:** August 2001-May 2002

**Area of site:** 0.5ha

**Summary of results:** No archaeological features were seen

**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Worcester County Museums Service in due course, under the following accession number: WSM 30363

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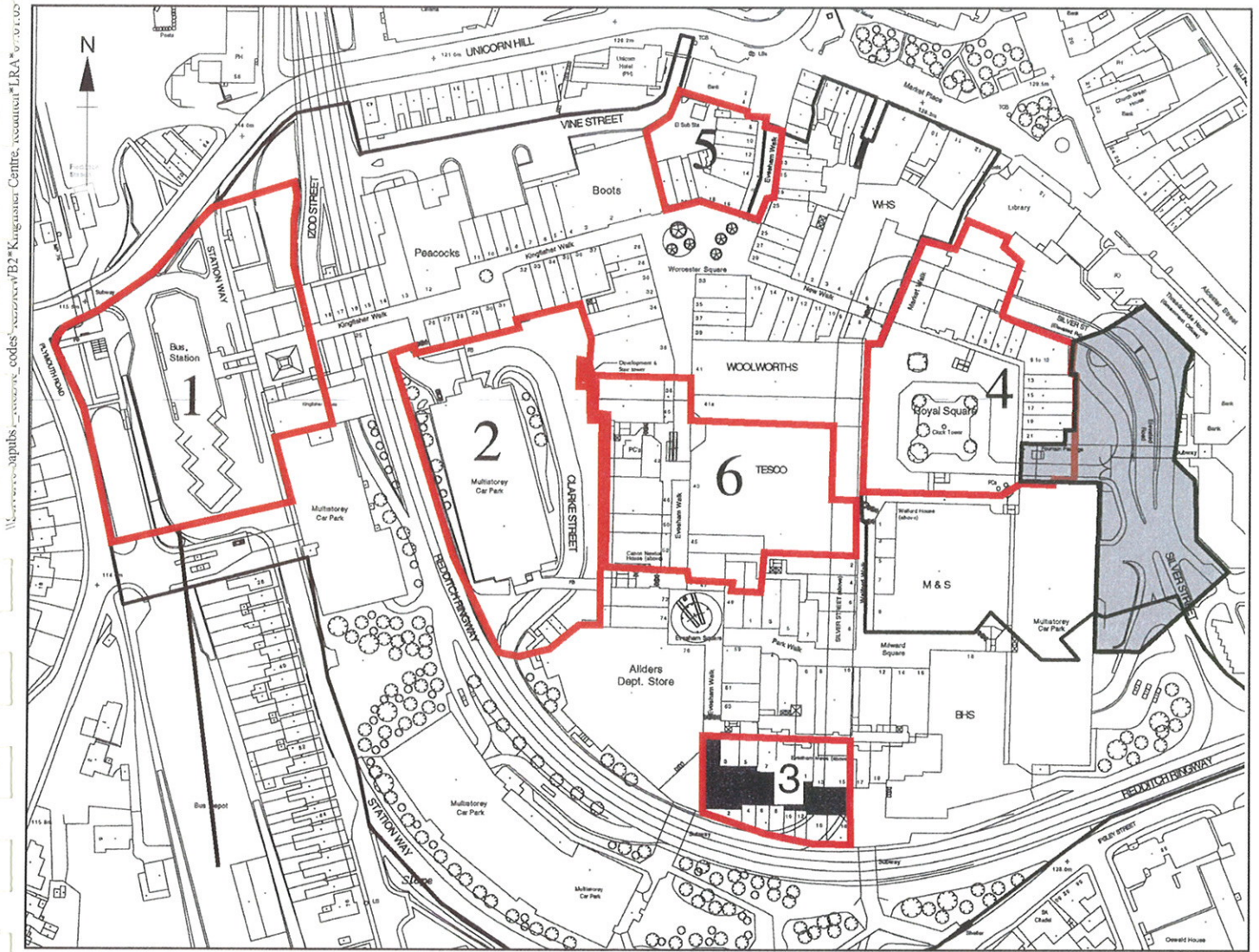


Scale 1:50,000

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Figure 1: Site location





Scale 1:2500

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-  Development areas (DA) 1-6
-  Watching brief

Figure 2: Development areas and area monitored during watching brief



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