

## **7.0 HERITAGE AND ARCHAEOLOGY**

**7.1 This section provides a summary of the archaeological report produced by the University of Birmingham and the subsequent watching brief report produced by Marches Archaeology – Refer to Appendixes 7.1 & 7.2 for full reports.**

### **Introduction**

7.1.1 An archaeological desk – based assessment and walkover survey of 40 hectares of land to the south of Bilston and the Black Country Route was commissioned by Wolverhampton City Council in advance of the proposed development of ‘Bilston Urban Village’. The desk – based assessment was designed to update a previous report (White BCSMR 10950), and to propose specific mitigation strategies in advance of the development. The assessment highlighted the importance both historically and archaeologically of the area surrounding the historic core of Bilston, from the early industrial sites of the medieval period through to the massive expansion and development of the iron and coal industries during the post – medieval period. It suggested that while the area as a whole had been subjected to a lot of modern development and landscaping, there was still the potential for earlier archaeological deposits to survive in discrete areas across the site. The significance of any surviving industrial archaeology is not only important in relation to Bilston itself, but, as Bilston is a typical example of a Black Country town, the industry based here had an effect at a national level.

### **Site Location**

7.1.2 The town of Bilston forms part of the City of Wolverhampton. It lies on a knoll of boulder clay that overlies the Staffordshire middle coal measure. The study area covers an area of around 40ha of largely former industrial land to the south of the historic core of Bilston and the Black Country Route. The area is irregular, but its broad limits can be defined as the Black Country Route on the north, Coseley Road on the west, the canal on the south and the disused railway line (which lies west of Railway Drive and Station Road) on the east. In the historic period most of this area would have lain within the township of Bilston, but some portions on the southern edge were outliers of Sedgley Parish. In addition the Bilston Brook formed the southern bounds of the manor of Bilston (or Stow Heath), with the area south of the Brook not in Sedgley part of the separate manor of Bradley.

### **Objectives**

7.1.3 The objectives of the report were to :-

- Consult the Black Country Sites and Monuments Record to check for new sites or amendments to existing descriptions since 1998.

- Locate the sites on modern Ordnance Survey maps and older maps not included in the original desk – based assessment.
- Report on a visual inspection of the sites assessing the likely survival of the remains and the impact of subsequent activity on them.
- Assess the original, existing and proposed ground levels in order to assess which of the sites are likely to be affected by the proposed works.
- Assess the value of the archaeological sites within the area and propose mitigation works for the most significant sites, if necessary.

## **Recommendations**

7.1.5 The recommendations of the report were as follows :-

- To locate and assess ant medieval remains and deposits, specifically the location of Bilston Mill, and the environmental potential of Bilston Brook.
- To assess the nature, date and survival of early industrial activity within the study area.
- To identify and record any archaeological remains relating to the later, nationally important, iron and coal industries in Bilston

7.1.6 Specific areas of potential archaeological interest were identified as:

- Bankfield Brook
- Bilston Mill
- Wolleys House
- Bankfield Road
- Capponfield Furnaces and Settlement
- walling along the east side of Dudley Street

## **Archaeological Watching Brief**

7.2 The areas specified were investigated during the ground investigation works in November 2004. The watching brief report, carried out during the ground investigation by Marches Archaeology is attached at Appendix 7.2.

7.2.1 The report confirms substantial made ground across much of the proposed development site. It is unlikely that development would therefore impact on any Archaeological remains.

7.2.2 Appendix 7.3 is a letter from Wolverhampton City Council Archaeologist . He is agreed that the proposals will not affect significant archaeological deposits. However, there is

less made ground close to the canal at the site of the Capponfield furnaces and the Council's advisor has confirmed that an archaeological watching brief will be required in this area on intrusive works.

- 7.2.3 The limiting of any further archaeological investigation to monitoring during construction activity is indicative of the absence of any significant impacts on archaeology resulting from the proposals.