

The Embankment, Gaol Street

Archaeological Investigations Ltd was commissioned by Colburn Homes Ltd to undertake excavation on the western part of the area lying between Gaol Street and Bath Street in Hereford, prior to development of the site. Trial trenching undertaken in 1995 (Hoverd and Shoesmith 1995) had demonstrated the presence of layers and features, including gravel surfaces, a wall and rubbish pits, dating to the 13th century. The survival of the rampart associated with the city defences, constructed following the Norman Conquest, was also demonstrated. The southern part of the site, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, is occupied by the City Ditch. A borehole survey undertaken in 2004 proved the survival of evidence associated with the ditch and its environment. The excavation revealed the profile of the rampart. Two phases of building, the latest with stone sills and the earlier of posthole and beamslot construction, cut into the defensive rampart. Little pottery was associated with the earlier phase, but the later phase was associated with pottery of mid 13th century date. The earlier building seems to have been used for industrial purposes, though the process undertaken must have been organic, as no waste material associated with it was recovered from the site. A number of exciting finds were made during the excavation. Part of a stone crucible was found along with numerous horn cores, suggesting a connection with the tanning industry. Two bear bones were discovered in a 13th century deposit along with a bone tuning peg from a musical instrument. Medieval dancing bears in Hereford maybe?! .