

Archaeology Wales

The Square, Church Stretton Shropshire

Archaeological Watching Brief



By

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Report No. 1359

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Archaeology Wales

3, The Square, Church Stretton Shropshire

Archaeological Watching Brief

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CONTENTS

Summary	1
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Location and Scope of Work	1
1.2 Geology and Topography	1
2. Aims and Objectives	2
3. Methodology	2
4. Results	3
4.1 Bay 1	3
4.2 Bay 2	3
4.3 Bay 3	4
5. Summary and Conclusions	4
5.1 Summary	4
5.2 Conclusions	5
6. Bibliography	5

Appendix 1 Written Scheme of Investigations

Figures

1. Map showing location of site
2. Plan showing the three-bay building

Plates

1. Working Shot, Looking West
2. General External Shot of Building. Looking NW
3. Bay 1, Post Ex. Looking West
4. Bay 2, Post Ex, looking West
5. Rear Wall of Bay 2. Looking West
5. Bay 3, Post Ex. Looking North
6. Bay 3, Pre Ex. Looking North
7. Detail of Rear Wall, Bay 3. Looking NW
8. Detail of Rear Wall, Bay 3. Looking SW
9. Location Shot of Small Pit. Bay 3. Looking South
10. Small Pit, Bay 3. Looking WSW

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Summary

This report results from a Watching Brief undertaken during groundworks associated with the refurbishment of an outbuilding at 3, The Square, Church Stretton, Shropshire. It was carried out at the request of Mr Duane Morris of DM Design Services as a condition of planning consent (14/02641/FUL).

The Watching Brief monitoring was undertaken during June 2015. No archaeologically significant features, deposits or finds were identified. A mixed soil/rubble deposit was identified below the floor slab in all three of the areas investigated (the three bays of the building). In all three areas this overlay a natural deposit comprised of clay, silt and shale. The soil/rubble deposit was probably used to level the internal area of the outbuilding and appears to have deposited after an episode of ground truncation that exposed or cut into the natural ground surface. It is probable that this truncation was contemporary with the construction of the outbuilding.

Introduction

1.1 Location and Scope of Work (Fig. 1 & Fig. 2)

1.1.1 In June 2015, Archaeology Wales (AW) undertook a Watching Brief during groundworks associated with the refurbishment of 3, The Square, Church Stretton, Shropshire. The development area comprised a rectangular building consisting of three bays, aligned north to south, parallel to, and east of, the eastern edge of The Square. The building measures 12.0m long by 4.5m wide and was centred on NGR SO 45266 93729. The work was carried out at the request of Mr Duane Morris of DM Design Services and undertaken as a condition of planning consent (Shropshire Council 14/02641/FUL).

1.1.2 The work was undertaken to requirements specified by Charlotte Orchard of the Shropshire Council Historic Environment Team (SC-HET) in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigations (T2289 – see Appendix 1), a copy of which was submitted to, and approved by, SC-HET prior to the start of works.

1.1.3 All work undertaken by Archaeology Wales conforms to the Standards and Guidelines of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 Church Stretton is situated astride the famous Church Stretton Fault and contains some of the oldest rocks in England, over 560 million years old, forming the well-known hills

either side of the valley. The sandstone of the Long Mynd, as well as the surrounding volcanic hills, bear witness to numerous periods of often violent geological activity. The town rises from a height of 120m at the valley floor to over 250m OD, with the development site at approximately 180m OD.

The historic core of the settlement, including the development site, is located on the western side of the valley. This area is occupied by sands, gravels and clay much of which was eroded away from the slopes the Longmynd and deposited by melt waters in the valley (Soil Survey of England and Wales, Ragg *et al* 1984). These deposits vary considerably in thickness, with the deepest being located in the base of the Church Stretton valley.

2. Aims and Objectives

The Watching Brief was undertaken:

- To allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works.
- To provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching brief archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.
- To establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on the site.

3. Methodology

3.1 General

3.1.1 The Watching Brief was carried out by Ian Davies, an experienced Watching Brief archaeologist at Archaeology Wales. All work followed the CIfA Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief (2014).

3.1.2 The building was sub rectangular in shape and orientated north south. It was approximately 12.0m long, 4.5m wide and 4.0m high, and was capped with a pitched roof. The building had been partitioned into three bays, two of which were sub-square and had similar dimensions, whereas the larger third bay was sub-rectangular, similar in width but longer. The overall condition of the building was very poor.

3.2 Detailed

3.2.1 SC-HET were contacted prior to the start of works in accordance with the WSI.

3.2.2 The Watching Brief was carried out during the reduction of the existing floor surface within each of the bays by approximately 0.50m (as denoted by the red paint line on the walls in the photographs) in preparation for the pouring of a new concrete floor pad. All excavation work was carried out by a 1.5t mechanical excavator fitted with a 0.50m wide toothed ditching bucket.

3.2.3 Groundworks did not expose the existing foundations to the front and the rear of the property

3.2.4 Potential archaeology was identified in Bay 3, so here it was necessary to stop work in order that the supervising archaeologist could clean and identify the extent and nature of potential deposits and assess the need for excavation and recording to take place.

3.2.5 Potentially significant archaeological deposits were not identified, so it was not necessary to undertake any on-site recording or sample excavation.

4. Results

4.1 Bay 1

4.1.1 Bay 1 measured 3.25m by 3.70m internally and was the southernmost bay. The walls were rendered internally with a mid grey plaster, but gaps in the render revealed 'stretcher' courses of 18th/19th C brickwork bonded with a hard greyish white mortar. The excavation of the extant floor slab exposed a very mixed and loose backfill of a mid greyish brown soil mixed with very frequent fragments of loose 18th/19th C brick and undressed stones varying in size and shape.

4.1.2 The composition of this mixed soil deposit strongly suggests that it represents imported material brought in either during or after initial construction of the outbuilding.

4.1.2 Machine removal of the mixed soil deposit revealed a firm, compacted matrix of a mid yellowish grey clay, silt and shale. This appeared to represent the natural horizon. No archaeological features were revealed.

4.2 Bay 2

4.2.1 Bay 2 measured 2.95m by 3.70m internally and was the central bay of the outbuilding. The north and south facing walls were identical in character to those in Bay 1,

whereas the approximately 2.50m high rear east facing wall was of a different construction , comprising irregularly sized undressed limestone blocks ranging in size from 0.10m to 0.50m in width, with bricks inserts in various locations. The majority of the bonding material identified consisted of a hard but slightly powdery mid pinkish white lime mortar, but with patches of repair comprised of a very hard mid grey cement.

4.2.2 Excavation of the floor slab revealed a mixed deposit similar to that uncovered in Bay 1. However it was noted that no natural stone fragments were recovered in this bay. As in Bay 1, the removal of this material revealed a compacted, mid yellowish grey, clay silt/shale matrix, presumed to be a natural deposit, in which no archaeological features were revealed.

4.3 Bay 3

4.3.1 Bay 3 measured 5.05m by 3.70m internally and was the northernmost bay. It appears to have been used as a modern laundry room with evidence of removed wall fittings for wash basins and power sockets for electrical appliances. Far more of the mixed limestone and brick rear wall was exposed in this bay, the character of which was identical to that seen in Bay 2, with some larger areas of brick infilling that may have been due to repairs or the blocking of apertures. It is also possible that these brick inserts were contemporary with the original construction of the wall.

4.3.2 Excavation of the floor slab revealed a mixed soil deposit similar to that seen in Bays 1 and 2. In addition, the removal of this material revealed a presumed natural deposit of compacted, mid yellowish grey, clay silt/shale (slightly lighter to that observed in Bay 1 and 2).

4.3.3 A small and very shallow sub-square depression, measuring 5.05m by 1.30m and 0.05m deep, cut into the presumed natural deposit in a central location against the rear stone wall. This pit did not appear to contain its own fill and was instead filled with the same material removed from elsewhere above the natural.

5. Summary & Conclusions

5.1 Summary

5.1.1 No archaeological features were revealed in the floor area of Bays 1 or Bay 2 during the works. One small feature was revealed in the floor of Bay 3, but it was very shallow and did not appear to have its own individual fill. The deposits revealed in all three bays are likely to be contemporary with the construction of the outbuilding. They were identical in composition in all three bays, and it probably represent imported material brought in to level the internal space.

5.1.2 The large stone rear wall of the outbuilding is quite possibly the oldest part of the structure. It appears likely that this wall originally functioned as the property boundary wall of the main house, and was incorporated into the later outbuilding at some point. The brick inserts may be evidence of repair and renovation of the wall, possibly at the time the outbuilding was constructed, but they could also be contemporary with the original construction of the wall. Some of the bricks had a slightly irregular character suggesting they were handmade but it is likely that this wall is 18th C in origin, with the outbuilding being of later 19th or even 20th century construction.

5.2 Conclusions

5.2.1 No archaeologically significant deposits were identified. The mixed soil/rubble deposit identified in all three bays appears to have deposited after an episode of ground truncation that exposed or cut into the natural ground surface. It is probably that this truncation was contemporary with the creation of the outbuilding.

6. Bibliography

British Geological Survey, 1:250,000, sheet 52°N-O.4°W

Institute for Archaeologists 2008, revised 2014, *Standards and Guidance: for an archaeological desk based assessment*

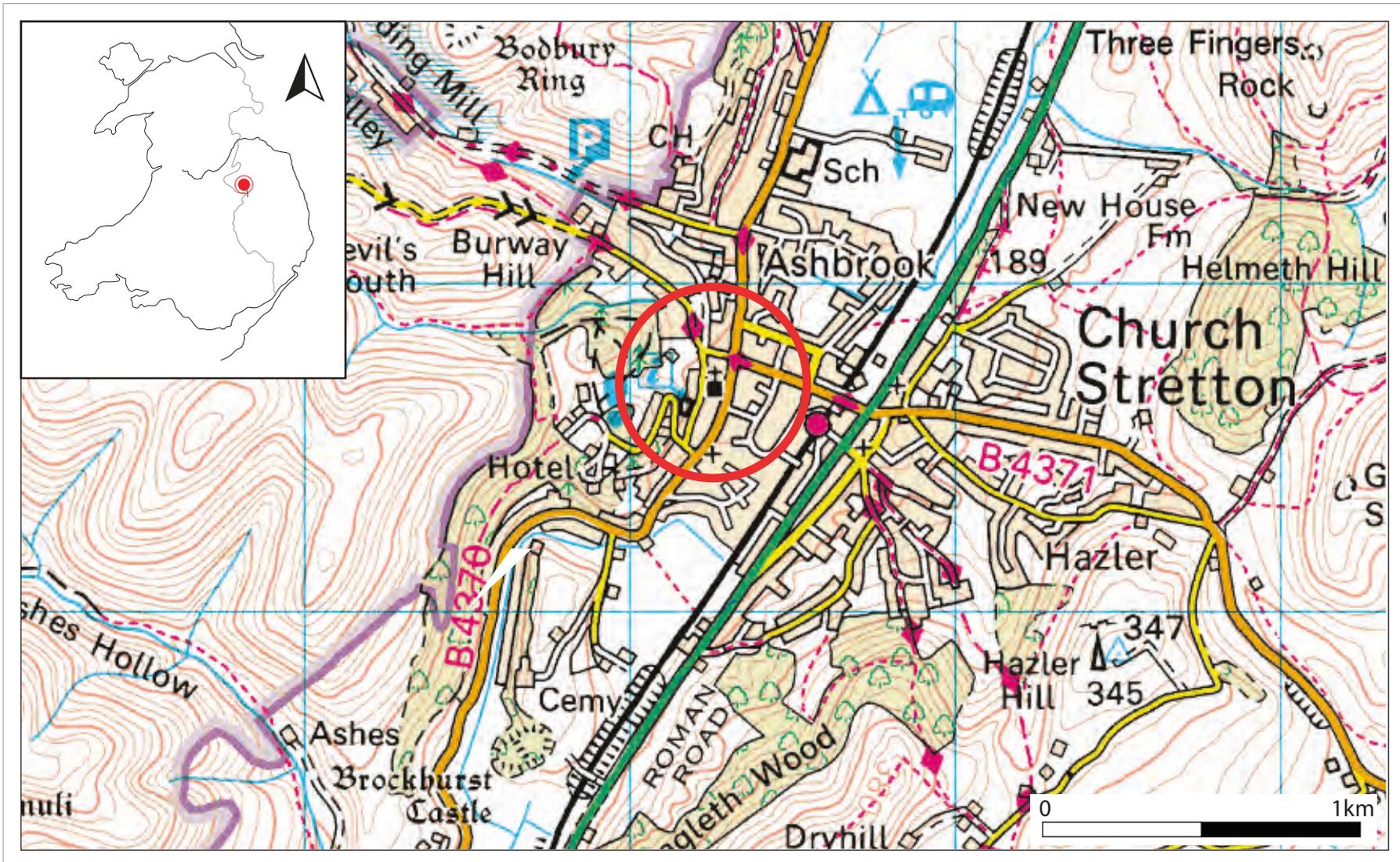
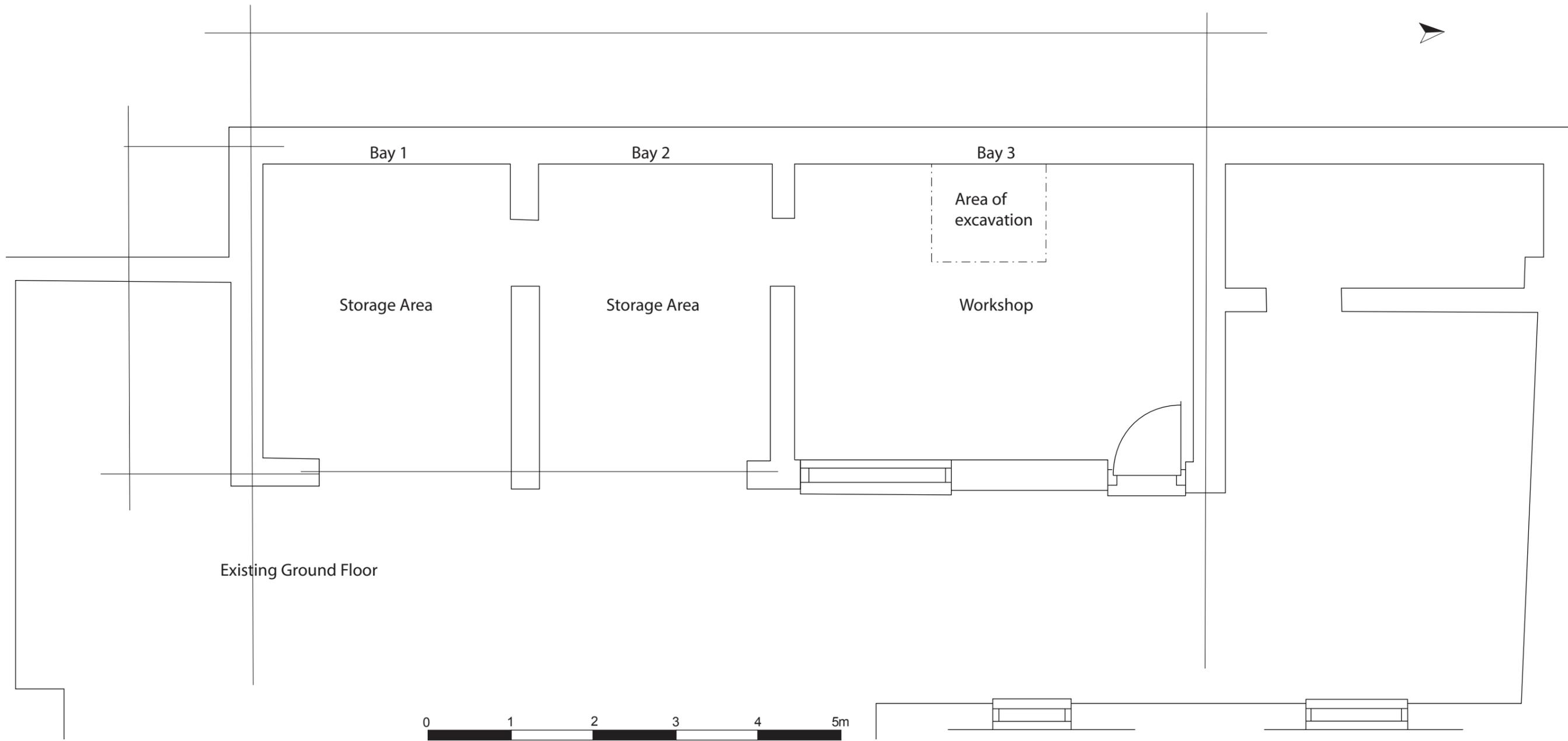


Fig 1: Map showing area of Watching Brief



Job Title: 3, The Square, Church Stretton

Drawing Title: Location plan of Bay 1, 2 and 3

Date: January 2016

Drawn By: ILB

Figure 2





Plate 1. Working Shot, Looking West



Plate 2. General External Shot of Building. Looking NW.



Plate 3. Bay 1, Post Ex. Looking West



Plate 4. Bay 2, Post Ex. Looking West



Plate 5. Rear Wall of Bay 2. Looking West



Plate 6. Bay 3, Post Ex. Looking North



Plate 7. Bay 3, Pre Ex. Looking North



Plate 8. Detail of Rear Wall, Bay 3. Looking NW.



Plate 9. Detail of Rear Wall, Bay 3. Looking SW.



Plate 10. Location Shot of Small Pit. Bay 3.
Looking South



Plate 11. Small Pit, Bay 3. Looking WSW.

Archaeology *Wales*

APPENDIX I:

Written Scheme of Investigations

Archaeology Wales

SPECIFICATION

FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

3 The Square, Church Stretton, Shropshire

Prepared for:

Duane Morris
DM Design Services

21st November 2014

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NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

This Written Scheme of Investigation details the proposal for an archaeological Watching Brief during groundworks associated with refurbishment of 3, The Square, Church Stretton, Shropshire (Planning Application No. 14/02641/FUL).

1. Introduction and archaeological background

This Written Scheme of Investigations (WSI) has been prepared by Chris Smith (MIfA), Project Manager, Archaeology Wales Ltd (AW) at the request of Mr Duane Morris of DM Design Services. It provides information on the methodology which will be employed by AW during an archaeological watching brief at 3, The Square, Church Stretton, Shropshire (Henceforth - the site). The planning application number is 14/02641/FUL.

The methodology set out in this WSI has been agreed with Dr Andy Wigley, Principal Archaeologist, Shropshire County Council – Historic Environment Team (SCC-HET). SCC-HET have recommended that a watching brief is carried out during all groundworks due to be carried out on the site.

All work will be undertaken in accordance with the standards and guidelines of the Institute for Archaeologists (2011).

2 Site specific objectives

The aims of the watching brief, as defined by the IfA (2011) are:

- To allow a rapid investigation and recording of any archaeological features that are uncovered during the proposed groundworks within the application area.
- To provide the opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief are not sufficient to support the treatment to a satisfactory or proper standard

3 Watching Brief Methodology

General

The archaeological watching brief will be undertaken by AW staff using current best practice.

All work will be carried out by a suitable qualified archaeologist with relevant level membership of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) and will follow the IfA Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief (2011).

Detailed

The Watching Brief will be carried out by a suitably qualified archaeologist during the removal of the existing floor slab and the reduction of internal ground levels by up to 0.35m. This will include exposing the existing foundations to the front and the rear

of the existing property and the excavation of the existing floor level to 900mm below the formation level. An extended toe-beam will also require an excavation of approximately 0.45m depth by 0.6m width.

If archaeological features, finds or deposits are uncovered, work will be stopped in the area of the exposed feature in order that the supervising archaeologist can clean and identify the extent and nature of the feature and for excavation and recording to take place.

All archaeological deposits that are identified will be mapped, cleaned, recorded and fully excavated. The developer will provide a safe working area and sufficient time to record and excavate all features to the satisfaction of AW and SCC-HET. Full excavation of identified features will not be compromised by the construction programme.

Contingency Arrangements

In the event of significant archaeological features being discovered all activities in this area of the site can be temporarily suspended. This will allow a period of consultation with the SCC-HET and if required the opinion of specialists.

Following such consultation, recommendations will be presented to the Developer and the Local Planning Authority.

The methodology and timescale of additional archaeological work to investigate such features will be presented and included in the Developers Programme; the feature will be fenced off and secured thus allowing the site programme to continue

Recording

Recording will be carried out using AW recording systems (pro-forma context sheets etc), using a continuous number sequence for all contexts.

Plans and sections will be drawn to a scale of 1:50, 1:20 and 1:10 as required and related to Ordnance Survey datum and published boundaries where appropriate.

All features identified will be tied in to the OS survey grid and fixed to local topographical boundaries and related to the developer's site plan. The location of all features will also be recorded using a Topcon GTS725 total station.

Photographs will be taken in digital format, using a 14MP camera with photographs stored in Tiff format. Should significant remains be identified that require excavation, photographs will also be taken in black and white and colour slide (35mm film).

The archaeologist undertaking the watching brief will have access to the AW metal detector and be trained in its use.

Artefacts

Archaeological artefacts recovered during the course of the excavation will be cleaned and labelled using an accession number, which will be obtained from the local museum. A single number sequence will be allocated to all finds. The artefacts will be stored appropriately until they are deposited with a suitable local museum.

All finds of gold and silver will be removed to a safe place and the Environment Agency, HET-SC and the local coroner informed, within the guidelines of the Treasure Act 1996.

Any finds which are considered to be in need of immediate conservation will be referred to a UKIC qualified conservator (Phil Parkes at Cardiff University).

Human remains

In the event of burials or cremations being found all work will be halted in the area of the burials and their extent and nature established. The client, SCC-HET and the Ministry of Justice will be informed and a methodology of excavation agreed which will adhere to Ministry of Justice Guidelines.

Environmental and technological samples

Environmental samples will be taken where necessary when significant deposits are located. Technological samples will be taken where necessary when significant deposits are located.

Specialists

In the event of certain finds/features etc. being discovered, the site archaeologist may have to seek specialist opinion for assistance. Such specialists will be accessed either internally within AW itself or from an external source. A list of external specialists is given in the table below.

Type	Name	Tel No.
Flint	Dr Amelia Pannett	02920 899509
Animal bone	Jen Kitch	07739 093712
CBM, heat affected clay, Daub etc.	Rachael Hall	01305 259751
Clay pipe	Hilary Major	01376 329316
Glass	Andy Richmond	01234 888800
Cremated and non-cremated human bone	Malin Holst	01759 368483
Metalwork	Kevin Leahy	01652 658261
Neo/BA pottery	Dr Alex Gibson	Bradford University
IA/Roman pottery	Jane Timby	01453 882851
Post Roman pottery	Mr Stephen Clarke	
Charcoal (wood ID)	John Carrot	01388 772167
Waterlogged wood	Nigel Nayling	University of Wales (Lampeter)
Molluscs and pollen	Dr James Rackham	01992 552256
Charred and waterlogged plant remains	Wendy Carruthers	01443 233466

4 Post-Fieldwork Programme

Conservation

After agreement with the landowner arrangements will be made for the long term conservation and storage of all artefacts in an appropriate local or county museum.

Archive

The site archive will be prepared in accordance with Morphe (English Heritage 2006). It will comprise all the data recovered during the fieldwork and shall be quantified, ordered and indexed and will be internally consistent. The archive will be deposited with the finds in a suitable local museum.

Reporting

The results of the watching brief will be submitted in an illustrated and bound report, which will include the following material:

- Non-technical summary
- Location plan showing the area/s covered by the watching brief, all artefacts, structures and features found
- Plan and section drawings with ground level, ordnance datum and vertical and horizontal scales.
- Written description and interpretation of all deposits identified, including their character, function, potential dating and relationship to adjacent features. Specialist descriptions and illustrations of all artefacts and soil samples will be included as appropriate.
- An indication of the potential of archaeological deposits which have not been disturbed by the development
- Statement of local, regional and national context of the remains
- A detailed archive list at the rear listing all contexts recorded, all samples finds and find types, drawings and photographs taken. This will include a statement of the intent to deposit, and location of deposition, of the archive.

Monitoring

Any changes to the specification that the contractor may wish to make after approval will be communicated to SCC-HET for approval on behalf of the Planning Authority.

Representatives of SCC-HET will be given access to the site so that they may monitor the progress of the watching brief. SCC-HET will be kept regularly informed about developments, both during the site works and subsequently during any potential post-excavation.

Archive Format & Deposition

The full site archive will be deposited within one month of the completion of the client report.

The paper/drawing/digital archive will be deposited at the offices of HET-SC with the finds will be deposited with the appropriate local museum. AW will agree the location and timing of the deposition of the archive before the contract commences.

The archive will include all site notes, finds, documents, drawings, photographs, digital data and a copy of the final report and any prior draft versions. All of these items will be clearly quantified in tabular form in an 'archive deposition statement' located at the rear of the clients report, and their ultimate location and proposed date of deposition stated.

An OASIS record will also be established and uploaded for the site.

5 Resources and timetable

Standards

The watching brief will be undertaken by AW staff using current best practice.

All work will be undertaken to the standards and guidelines of the IFA.

Staff

The project will be undertaken by suitably qualified AW staff.

Equipment

The project will use existing AW equipment.

Timetable of archaeological works

The watching brief will be undertaken at the convenience of the client.

Insurance

AW is an affiliated member of the CBA, and holds Insurance through the CBA insurance service.

Health and safety

All members of staff will adhere to the requirements of the *Health & Safety at Work Act, 1974*, and the Health and Safety Policy Statement of AW.



SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL
 07 JUL 2014
 14/02641
 CENTRALIZATION
 14/02642

3 THE SQUARE
 CHURCH STREETON
 SY6 6DA
 REF: 14/02642.

OS MasterMap 1250/2500/10000 scale
 03 July 2014, ID: HMC-00340203
 www.themapcentre.com
 1:1250 scale print at A4, Centre: 345286 E, 293712 N

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