

Archaeological assessment of Weobley, Hereford and Worcester

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with contributions by Derek Hurst, Richard Morriss, Elizabeth Pearson and Paul Stamper

Summary

The historic town of Weobley was surveyed during the Central Marches Historic Towns Survey, a desk-based study of the 64 smaller historic towns in Shropshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire. Archaeological and documentary evidence relating to the historic core of Weobley was carefully analysed, comprising topographic data, published and unpublished archaeological reports, museum collections, primary and secondary historical sources, historical maps, and field data recorded by the project team.

Detailed evidence is provided on the character and layout of the settlement in the medieval and post-medieval periods. For each period the available information is analysed and mapped in detail, and a model of the development of the town is proposed. In addition, the evidence for pre-urban occupation is considered, together with evidence of 19th century occupation. All archaeologically-relevant information has been recorded as part of the county Sites and Monuments Record. Specialist assessments of artefacts, ecofacts, standing buildings and documentary sources are included. A detailed archaeological research framework has been developed for Weobley, which will inform future archaeological investigations as well as management decisions.

The historic core of Weobley contains buried archaeological deposits, and these are judged to have moderate potential. In addition there is moderate potential for the recovery of artefact and ecofact assemblages. The historic buildings constitute a complementary body of evidence, and are judged to have very high potential for detailed study and recording. The surviving documentary sources are average in quantity and consequently there is moderate potential for further study.

1 Introduction

1.1 Location and landuse

The urban area of Weobley is located at NGR SO 403515 in Leominster District. The modern settlement of Weobley comprises a village on the B4230 with modern housing development to the east and southeast of the historic core.

1.2 Topography, geology and soils

Weobley lies at a height of between 90m and 110m OD. The underlying topography is a small shallow valley: the settlement lies on relatively flat ground on both sides of a watercourse that drains to the north. The soils are typically argillic brown earths of the Escrick 1 association over Downtonian Lower Red Sandstone (Soil Survey of England and Wales, Ragg *et al* 1984).

1.3 Chronological outline

Weobley was recorded in Domesday Book when the manor was held by Roger de Lacy (Thorn and Thorn 1983, 184d). A priest is recorded which probably indicates that a church was built before the conquest. The church is documented in 1101 (Phillott 1888, 249-50); it contains some 12th century masonry although it mostly dates from the 13th century (RCHME 1934, 192). The construction of the castle is dated to the early 12th century, prior to capture by Stephen in 1139 (Noble 1964, 65). The castle was the caput of the de Lacy manors in Herefordshire (Salt 1954, 11). The castle was rebuilt in stone in the 13th century (RCHME 1934, 196; Stirling-Brown 1989, 21).

The foundation of the borough is not accurately dated, but appears to date to the mid-13th century. Although there is no borough charter, and the development of urban functions appears to have been rapid. A fair was held before 1231, and there were market charters dating from 1261; shops are documented in 1294 (Salt 1954, 11, 19). There was a small Jewish community in the town in the late 13th century (*ibid*, 19). A town ditch was documented in the 13th century (*ibid*, 20). There are some records of the transfer of messuages from the late 13th century onwards, and occupational names include a glover (*ibid*, 21). However medieval documentary evidence is slight, and little is known of the town's economy. It has been suggested that Weobley benefited from lying outside the Marches, in the most westerly location that English merchants would travel within the jurisdiction of the king (Noble 1964, 69).

The borough was represented in parliament for a few years, between 1295 to 1307, one of only three medieval parliamentary boroughs in Herefordshire (Salt 1954, 19; Merewether and Stephens 1835, 2277). In 1304 there were 17 taxpayers in the borough (Merewether and Stephens 1835, 673). It has been suggested that Weobley escaped attack during the rebellion of Owain Glyndwr in the early 15th century, which accounted for the survival of many medieval buildings (Noble 1964, 69). The castle was of reduced defensive importance from the end of the 13th century, and one source indicates it was in ruins in 1327-8 (Salt 1954, 17). However it was clearly in good repair in 1330, and it was used as a gaol in 1357 (*ibid*). In 1483 the castle was used as a base for a rebellion by the Duke of Buckingham (*ibid*, 20). Leland described its condition in the early 16th century as good if rather dilapidated (Chandler 1993, 222). The castle was still standing in 1655 when it was sketched by Silas Taylor (Hillaby 1985, fig 17).

Weobley, unlike other some other small towns in west Herefordshire, continued as a market town in the post-medieval period, and was noted as a market town by Leland (Chandler 1993, 222; O'Donnell 1971, 191). The borough was re-enfranchised in 1628 at the instigation of local landowners, and returned members of parliament until disenfranchised by the Reform Act of 1832 (Hillaby 1967). By the late 17th century Weobley was in economic decline; in Richard Blome's *Britannia* (1698) Weobley was said to have "formerly enjoyed a good trade which is of late less considerable by the growth of its neighbouring town, Kington" (O'Donnell 1971, 191).

Weobley was only modestly prosperous in the 18th century, but it was noted for the brewing of ale, which was produced for sale in Wales (Salt 1954, 41). Documentary evidence indicates that Weobley was not regarded as a town by the end of the 18th century (*ibid*, 64). Weobley was a pocket borough and most of the burgage or "vote houses" were owned by the Marquess of Bath; after the Reform Act many fell into disuse and 84 buildings were pulled down in 1844-5 (Leather 1926, 174). An annual fair was still held in the early 19th century (O'Donnell 1971, 192).

1.4 Placename studies

The form of the placename in Domesday Book is *Wibelai* meaning "Wibba's clearing" (Coplestone-Crow 1989, 200).

1.5 Syntheses of documentary and archaeological data

The documentary evidence relating to Weobley has not been comprehensively reviewed, but accounts of the history of the lordship and castle can be found in Robinson (1872, 131-4), Phillott (1888) and Salt (1954), and the parliamentary history of borough in the 17th and 18th century has been described by Hillaby (1967). Some post-medieval records (probate records, inventories etc) have been transcribed (ETHG 1972). Archaeological evidence has been briefly assessed previously (Anon nd).

The present assessment was carried out by the Central Marches Historic Towns Survey in 1993. The text was revised in March 1995 to incorporate the results of fieldwork undertaken by the Survey (see section 1.7). No information published after December 1994 has been incorporated into this assessment.

1.6 Cartographic sources

Nineteenth century maps include the 1838 tithe map (HFNS nd) and the Ordnance Survey first edition 1:2500 map (*Herefordshire sheet XXV.3* (1887)).

1.7 Archaeological excavations and surveys

Recorded archaeological investigations at Weobley include a trench through the town defences (unpublished; HWCM 19462) and a watching brief on a development site west of the castle (unpublished; HWCM 3705). Following the discovery of pottery and kiln debris from a nursery west of Back Lane, a magnetometer survey was carried out (Bartlett 1982; HWCM 1069). A salvage record at the rear of The Old Forge, Mill Bank, recorded post-medieval structural evidence (Fagan and Topping 1994; HWCM 21980). The earthworks of the castle (HWCM 1068) and adjacent monuments were surveyed by the Ordnance Survey in 1887 and RCHME (1934); a more recent survey has identified the curtain wall (Stirling-Brown forthcoming). Fieldwork was undertaken by the Central Marches Historic Towns Survey in November 1994. This identified remains, investigated and revised the extent of components, and recorded 18th and 19th century cellarage and modern developments in the urban area.

1.8 Acknowledgments and personnel

Survey fieldwork was undertaken by Hal Dalwood and Paul Godbehere. Analysis was aided by Roger Stirling-Brown who provided a typescript of an article about Weobley castle in advance of publication (Stirling-Brown forthcoming). Analysis, report writing and editing were carried out by Hal Dalwood.

2 Pre-urban evidence

There is no evidence for pre-medieval occupation at Weobley, although it is possible that the church pre-dates the conquest and lies at the focus of an Anglo-Saxon settlement. Although the date of origin is uncertain, it is probable that the original settlement focus was around the church and Bell Square, which is identified as a green or market place.

3 Medieval archaeological evidence

3.1 Medieval remains and buildings

A trench was excavated through a bank northeast of the town, identified as the town defences. This has not been published but medieval pottery was reputedly recovered (HWCM 19462). Other medieval earthworks have been identified which may be part of the town defences (HWCM 12484 and HWCM 21975).

A watching brief east of the castle produced no evidence of medieval occupation (HWCM 3705), and salvage recording to the rear of The Old Forge, Mill Bank, recovered a single sherd of medieval pottery (Fagan and Topping 1994; HWCM 21980). Medieval pottery dated to the 13th century together with kiln debris was recovered from a site east of Back Lane, but a magnetometer survey was unable to locate a kiln (Bartlett 1982; HWCM 1069).

Weobley contains at least 18 medieval buildings. The church of St Peter and St Paul has been described and planned, and the sequence of construction interpreted (RCHME 1934, 192-5; HWCM 6911). Further description of the medieval fabric are contained in Marshall (1943) and Morris (1973). The 14th and 15th century timber-framed houses have been described by Leather (1926) and RCHME (1934, 197-203; see also section 5.4).

3.2 Medieval urban components

Analysis of the evidence summarised above and of cartographic and documentary sources indicated the existence of 18 urban components. The characteristics of these urban components are summarised below.

Castle (HWCM 19484). The castle was probably built in the early 12th century and rebuilt in stone on a substantial scale in the 13th century. The castle forms a readily identifiable component comprising the earthworks of the ringwork and bailey to the north (HWCM 1068), a less well-defended northern outer bailey (HWCM 19483), and a pond dam to the southwest (HWCM 19484).

Town defences (HWCM 21977). The town defences were documented in the 13th century, and are believed to consist of a bank and palisade with an outer ditch. However little of the defences survives as earthworks or can be confidently inferred. A bank identified as part of the defences was excavated in the northeast corner of the urban area (unpublished; HWCM 19462), and earthworks in other areas have been identified as possibly part of the defences (HWCM 12484 and HWCM 21975). There is currently insufficient evidence to trace the full course of the defences.

Churchyard (HWCM 19485). The churchyard is identified as an area larger than the modern churchyard, defined by modern property boundaries and the stream on the west side. It contains the 12th to 13th century church of St Peter and St Paul (HWCM 6911) and a medieval churchyard cross (HWCM 5584).

Market places (HWCM 19486 and HWCM 19487). Two market places are identified. Bell Square consists of a small rectangular area (HWCM 19486) which may be the earlier market place, forming the focus of the 11th century village prior to the laying out of the 12th century borough (Anon nd).

The larger Broad Street market place (HWCM 19487) is aligned on the castle and is defined by blocks of regular tenements (HWCM 19488 and HWCM 19489). The area in the centre of the market place contained a market cross (HWCM 12122) and was encroached on by buildings in the medieval period (HWCM 19498). It is probable that this market place was laid out at the creation of the borough in the early 12th century, and that it postdates the northern market place (Anon nd).

Tenement plots (HWCM 19488, HWCM 19489, HWCM 19490, HWCM 19491, HWCM 19502, HWCM 19493, HWCM 19494, HWCM 19498, HWCM 19499). The extent of medieval tenement plots was deduced from cartographic sources, and a total of eight tenement plot components were identified. All the tenement plot components contain medieval buildings (with the exception of HWCM 19493 and HWCM 19494). It is possible that the focus of the pre-12th century village was the Bell Square market place (HWCM 19486). This may be reflected by the alignment of modern plot

boundaries in the northern part of HWCM 19488, and of former plot boundaries in the southern part of HWCM 19491 and HWCM 19493 (HFNS nd), on Bell Square.

The two tenement plot components (HWCM 19488 and 19489) aligned on the Broad Street market place (HWCM 19487) contain regular narrow plots and are defined by lanes and continuous property boundaries. These two components probably represent the earliest elements of the medieval planned borough. The tenement plot component (HWCM 19499) south of the market place may represent medieval encroachment on open space around the castle, as one of the buildings in this area is dated to the 14th century (RCHME 1934, 201-2; HWCM 12511). The area in the centre of the market place is a medieval tenement plot component (HWCM 19498), representing encroachment on the market place; the area formerly contained late medieval buildings (RCHME 1934, 201; HWCM 12506). Further tenement plots are identified west of Back Lane and Mill Bank (HWCM 19490), where a single sherd of medieval pottery has been recovered (Fagan and Topping 1994; HWCM 21980]), south of High Street and east of Mill Bank (HWCM 19499), west and east of Church Road (HWCM 19491 and HWCM 19494), and west and east of Meadow Street (HWCM 19492 and HWCM 19493).

Street system (HWCM 19497). The medieval street system consists of an axial street, together with back lanes and streets that are formed from routes that converge on the settlement and are partly marked by a holloway (HWCM 19482).

Open spaces (HWCM 19495 and HWCM 19496). The areas west and east of the castle (HWCM 19495 and HWCM 19496) are identified as open space outside the castle defences.

Mill site (HWCM 7371). The medieval mill component is identified west of the castle, and is defined by earthworks.

3.3 Medieval urban form

Definition and classification. The medieval urban form (HWCM 12475) has been defined and mapped, based on the extent of the identified urban components. The available evidence indicates that the urban form of Weobley can be classified as a medieval small market town (English Heritage 1992).

Survival. The castle component survives as earthworks but documentary evidence indicates that the castle had stone fortifications that probably survive as buried remains (RCHME 1934, 196; Stirling-Brown 1989, 21; Stirling-Brown forthcoming). The mill component survives as earthworks (HWCM 7371). The depth and survival of medieval deposits has not been recorded in Weobley, although 13th century pottery and kiln debris has been recorded from one site (HWCM 1069) and medieval pottery was reputedly retrieved from another site (unpublished; HWCM 19462). The components of the urban form (the castle, market places, tenement plots and street pattern) can be readily identified.

4 Post-medieval archaeological evidence

4.1 Post-medieval remains and buildings

Post-medieval pottery and other artefacts have been reported from one site in the town (HWCM 12484) and also from nearby fields (HWCM 19461). Weobley contains at least 45 buildings dated to between the 16th and 18th centuries.

4.2 Post-medieval urban components

Analysis of the evidence summarised above and of cartographic and documentary sources indicated the existence of 19 urban components. The characteristics of these urban components are summarised below.

Castle (HWCM 19484). The medieval castle continued in use in the post-medieval period although it was largely redundant as a military stronghold. A mid-17th century plan shows a schematised view of the castle with towers and buildings in the bailey (Hillaby 1985, fig 17), and the castle was probably occupied until this period.

Churchyard (HWCM 19503). The post-medieval churchyard is identified from the 1838 tithe map (HFNS nd) and is smaller than the identified medieval churchyard component (HWCM 19485). It is defined by the modern churchyard with the exception of an area south of the church which represents 20th century expansion.

Market places (HWCM 19486 and HWCM 19487). The two medieval market places may have continued in use into the post-medieval period, although it seems likely that the Bell Square market place was disused. The Broad Street market place contained a 16th century market house (HWCM 12527) at the southern end, which was demolished in the mid-19th century.

Tenement plots (HWCM 19488, HWCM 19489, HWCM 19490, HWCM 19491, HWCM 19493, HWCM 19494, HWCM 19498, HWCM 19499, HWCM 19500, HWCM 19501, HWCM 19502). All the medieval tenement plot components identified above were occupied in the post-medieval period, and contain standing buildings and demolished buildings dated to the 17th and 18th centuries. Two additional post-medieval tenement plot components are identified: regular tenement plot boundaries are identified west and east of Hereford Road (HWCM 19500 and HWCM 19501). Post-medieval pottery and structural features were recorded at Mill Bank (Fagan and Topping 1994; HWCM 21980).

Public buildings (HWCM 12478). The Grammar School was founded in 1653 and built west of the castle (Salt 1954, 39; HWCM 12478).

Street system (HWCM 19497). The medieval street system continued in use in the post-medieval period.

Open spaces (HWCM 19495 and HWCM 19502). The area identified as medieval open space west of the castle (HWCM 19495) continued as open space in the post-medieval period, although that east of the castle was occupied (cf HWCM 19500). A further area of open space (HWCM 19502) is identified west of the post-medieval churchyard (HWCM 19503), an area that is identified as part of the medieval churchyard (HWCM 19485).

Mill site (HWCM 7371). The medieval mill component probably continued in use into the post-medieval period, although the mill moved to a different site in the 19th century (cf HWCM 16455).

4.3 Post-medieval urban form

Definition and classification . The post-medieval urban form (HWCM 19504) has been defined and mapped, based on the extent of the identified urban components. The available evidence indicates that the urban form of Weobley can be classified as a post-medieval small market town (English Heritage 1992).

Survival. No earthworks dated to the post-medieval period have been recorded in Weobley and the depth and survival of post-medieval deposits has not been recorded,

although post-medieval pottery and other artefacts have been recovered from a number of sites (Fagan and Topping 1994; HWCM 21980). The components of the urban form (the castle, market places, tenement plots and street pattern) can be readily identified.

5 Post-1800 archaeological evidence

The remit of the present study has not allowed for a detailed study and assessment of the archaeological evidence relating to Weobley for the period from 1800. Further work is required before such an assessment can be carried out. However a number of 19th century archaeological remains have been identified, including the mill (HWCM 16455), a tannery (HWCM 19459), timber yard (HWCM 19458) and the pound (HWCM 19460).

6 Specialist assessments

6.1 Assessment of artefactual evidence J D Hurst

The earliest artefacts definitely from the study area are medieval finds. There are also Roman coins (HWCM 6310) and a neolithic axe (HWCM 6312) from the Weobley area, but their exact provenance is unknown. There are medieval finds from a number of sites (HWCM 19462 and HWCM 1069); the latter being identified as the site of a medieval pottery kiln, with associated structural fragments and waster sherds. Pottery of post-medieval date has been recovered at various sites (ie HWCM 12484, HWCM 19461), one of which has been reported fully (Fagan and Topping 1994; HWCM 21980).

6.2 Assessment of environmental evidence E A Pearson

No environmental sampling has been carried out on archaeological investigations in Weobley to date. However an assemblage of cattle horn cores and one antler fragment associated with post-medieval pottery were recovered from a house in Meadow Street (HWCM 12484). The horn cores probably represents waste from tanning and horn working industry.

6.3 Assessment of primary documentary sources P A Stamper

The level of documentation for the medieval period is poor, although there is more material for the post-medieval period (section 9).

6.4 Assessment of buildings analysis R K Morriss

Weobley has undoubtedly the finest and most complete collection of late medieval timber-framed houses in the study area. The majority of the houses within the central area of the settlement are timber-framed and seem to have been built between the late 14th and early 17th centuries. There is documentary evidence to indicate that the survival of buildings could have been even more remarkable had it not been for widespread destruction of derelict and empty buildings in the mid-19th century. The town is mainly laid out on Broad Street that runs north from the castle. All the present streets are lined with historic timber-framed buildings, clearly demonstrating the medieval layout of the settlement. Broad Street narrows towards the north, but the width of the southern portion indicates the market place. Regular planned burgage plots run at right angles to Broad Street and on the west side the former service lane remains as Back Lane. This is continued northwards by Meadow Street. At their end-on junction, Bell Square runs eastwards to the north end of Broad Street.

The distribution of medieval buildings indicates that the entire area of modern Weobley was built up in the medieval period. Their present scattered layout further demonstrates

that the medieval town was much more densely settled, and more heavily populated. The quality of the surviving medieval buildings is uniformly good, indicating that these were the houses of relatively wealthy people, and it follows that the less well-built houses of the poor have not survived. The distribution of these relatively high-status houses is spread throughout the settlement and thus casts no light on the prosperity or otherwise of individual areas. Equally, there is insufficient evidence within the structures themselves to indicate the pressure on land within the medieval borough. However the fact that there were buildings infilling the market area of Broad Street shows that demand was sufficient for this to have happened.

The general pattern that emerges from surviving medieval hall houses is of halls built parallel to the street with flanking cross-wings gable-end on to it. Thus, two similar 14th or 15th century hall houses survive on the south side of Bell Square (1 and 2 Bell Square, although the former has lost a cross-wing: HWCM 12492 and HWCM 12493). No 7 Broad Street is a 15th century house with the same 'half-H' plan form and hall parallel to the street (HWCM 12502). Most interestingly of all, there is what appears to be a set of semi-detached 'Wealden' houses, probably of 15th century date, now partly incorporated in the Unicorn Hotel on the High Street (HWCM 12508). This is an urban adaptation of a standard south-eastern rural type. There are scattered concentrations of the generic type outside the south-east (eg in Warwick, Stratford and Coventry) but the type is rare in the west of England.

The distribution of surviving 16th and 17th century buildings is as widespread as the medieval ones, suggesting organic renewal as new buildings were needed to replace old ones. However there is a marked decline in the quality of design and construction from the start of the 17th century. The Old Grammar School on the Hereford Road (HWCM 12478) is one of the few exceptions to the general rule, being of good quality. Most of the other 17th century timber-frames have plain square framing with little embellishment.

There appears to have been a marked decline in the town's fortunes from the mid-17th century, judging from the architectural evidence. There was virtually no 18th or 19th century new building, and there were no determined attempts to remodel existing structures in the new fashions of the age. Instead, there appears to have been a protracted decline that resulted in buildings being pulled down and not being replaced. Some patching and remodelling in rubblestone or brick occurred in the 19th century. This is a process that probably continued well into the twentieth century and one that has only been reversed in the last few decades. This has also resulted in the loss of rear plot buildings in equal numbers, but there has been little large scale development behind the frontages.

Survey and analysis. Not surprisingly the town of Weobley has attracted considerable attention from architectural historians (Leather 1926; Pevsner 1963, 313-4). There have been several surveys of buildings within the town and some overviews, but as yet it has not been subject to the intense academic study it deserves.

Assessment of the listing details. The list is a modern one (1987) and well up to the standards now expected, being comprehensive and well-detailed.

7 Archaeological research framework

7.1 Model of urban development

A model of the medieval and post-medieval town of Weobley has been produced which is predictive and capable of testing through archaeological investigation. This model has both chronological and spatial (landuse) dimensions (see sections 2 to 6) and is based on an analysis of documentary, cartographic and archaeological sources. The model is derived from the current academic understanding of urban development in Britain, and forms one element of a developing regional research framework. The model is provisional and will

be subject to confirmation or revision in the future as new information becomes available, or new studies lead to changing understandings of towns in the region.

7.2 Chronological framework

The archaeological and documentary evidence indicates that urban occupation commenced in the 13th century but probably developed from the nucleus of a medieval rural settlement (possibly originating in the Anglo-Saxon period). The focus of the 11th century settlement was the northern part of the settlement, focused on the church and Bell Square, the probable original market place. The construction of the castle has been dated to the early 12th century, but the development of the town probably originated in the 13th century. The Broad Street market place and adjacent tenement plots were probably laid out at this period. The evidence of standing buildings and the analysis of cartographic sources indicates the extent of the medieval urban form, and the area continued to be occupied in the post-medieval period, with some minor expansion.

Standing buildings and documentary evidence indicate that the settlement suffered some economic and population decline in the 18th century, and by the end of the 18th century Weobley had become a rural settlement, although it retained its status as a parliamentary borough until the mid-19th century. The broad outlines of this chronological framework are provisional and require testing through archaeological investigation.

7.3 Urban landuse

The medieval and post-medieval components identified here (sections 3.2 and 4.2) have been mapped and constitute a model of urban landuse for each period. These landuse models are partial and provisional and capable of testing through archaeological investigation. The urban components of Weobley have been archaeologically investigated, in the case of the tenement plots (Fagan and Topping 1994) and the town defences (unpublished; HWCM 19462). The identified medieval pottery kiln is an important and rare site (HWCM 1069), but the nature of the buried remains is not known, and the material requires reassessment (see section 7.5). The castle has not been investigated but the surviving earthworks have recently been resurveyed (Stirling-Brown forthcoming). There is potential for recovering archaeological evidence relating to the layout of burgrave plots in the 12th century and details of their medieval development, as well as structural evidence relating to medieval and post-medieval buildings.

7.4 Potential for survival of buried remains

The earthworks of the castle can be predicted to preserve stratified deposits that are of national importance. The ditches forming the defences of the bailey are seasonally wet, and may contain waterlogged organic deposits relating to medieval and later occupation. Parts of the town defences also appear to survive as earthworks. Stratified medieval deposits have been demonstrated to exist within Weobley, although most of the evidence is from unpublished excavations. No information has been recorded for the depth of significant deposits below the modern ground surface in Weobley, but it is probable that these are located beneath relatively shallow modern deposits.

The decline of the settlement in the 19th century may have implications for the density and depth of deposits throughout the urban area; building foundations and paved areas were observed in empty plots on the east side of Broad Street in the 1920s (Leather 1926, 175), and a possible house plot survives in Meadow Street (HWCM 21979). Fieldwork was undertaken by the Central Marches Historic Towns Survey in November 1994. The extent of 18th and 19th century cellarage was mapped, together with the extent of 20th century development (new buildings and major landscaping work). This showed that there was little cellarage along the main streets and little modern redevelopment within the historic core.

7.5 Potential for artefactual studies J D Hurst

Only limited archaeological excavation has been undertaken in Weobley, and so the extent of surviving artefactual evidence in buried deposits cannot yet be assessed in any detail. However it is likely that some waterlogging may be present in the vicinity of the castle and associated fishponds, and so artefactual evidence may be exceptionally well preserved in parts of the town.

Period discussion. Few artefacts have so far been discovered in Weobley, and no artefactual assemblages from archaeological fieldwork have been published in detail (ie HWCM 1069, HWCM 3705, HWCM 19462), though they include an important assemblage relating to medieval industrial activity (HWCM 1069), and a small post-medieval assemblage (Fagan and Topping 1994; HWCM 21980). Accounts of the material from the medieval kiln site (HWCM 1069) are variable, especially concerning dating. An anonymous note in the SMR file dates the pottery to the 14th-15th century, while the SMR entry records a 17th century date for the material at Hereford City Museum. Vince (1984, 35) has indicated a late 13th to early 14th century date for this pottery. He also provides the most detailed description of the pottery, which he identified as Malvern Chase and Hereford A7b (or similar fabric) wares. The presence of glazed examples of Malvern Chase ware is certainly a little unexpected in the context of pottery production at Weobley. Therefore it would be useful to review this evidence in more detail. In general, only limited quantification and identification of fabrics has taken place. Overall the quantity of medieval pottery from Weobley is probably small (ie less than 100 sherds). Some quantification and limited identification has been undertaken of post-medieval pottery. The post-medieval pottery assemblages were small.

Comparison with documentary evidence. Little indication of any craft or industrial activity was noted in documentary evidence for Weobley.

7.6 Potential for environmental remains E A Pearson

As a limited range of biological material has been recovered to date, there is little indication of the full potential for environmental archaeological research. Although the local soils are generally well drained, waterlogged organic material may survive near the watercourse and possibly in the pond dam and the ditches forming the defences of the castle bailey, particularly as the latter are seasonally wet. These deposits may provide information relating to the surrounding natural environment and dumped occupation rubbish.

The earthworks of the castle may overly buried soils from which information may be gained on the previous use of the land (eg whether the land was under cultivation or pasture) using soil micromorphology and pollen analysis. In some cases there may be little other archaeological evidence for the previous landuse.

As no environmental studies have been undertaken in Weobley, any environmental material would be of interest. This could provide information on diet, living conditions and agricultural and industrial economy. Future excavation should include a policy of sampling and wet-sieving soil during excavation in conjunction with hand-collection of larger items.

7.7 Potential for study of standing buildings R K Morriss

Weobley is almost unique in this area in possessing such a high percentage of surviving medieval and post-medieval timber-framed buildings. It is deserving of an intensive architectural survey that could provide a detailed and synthetic study of the town. Such a study would serve as a bench-mark of architectural development against which other more architecturally fragmented towns could be compared.

7.8 Summary of research potential

The historic core of Weobley contains buried archaeological deposits, and these are judged to have moderate potential. In addition there is moderate potential for the recovery of artefact and ecofact assemblages. The historic buildings constitute a complementary body of evidence, and are judged to have very high potential for detailed study and recording. The surviving documentary sources are average in quantity and consequently there is moderate potential for further study.

8 Management framework

8.1 Urban archaeological area

The mapped extent of the medieval and post-medieval urban forms defined above indicated the extent of the urban area (Weobley Urban Archaeological Area).

8.2 Existing protection measures

The archaeological urban area of Weobley has been defined (section 8.1). The different parts of the urban area are afforded different measures of protection through legislation and the planning process. Directly relevant measures are outlined below.

Scheduled ancient monument. There are two Scheduled Ancient Monuments in Weobley, the castle (Here and Worc no 122; HWCM 1068) and the kiln site (Here and Worc no 208; HWCM 1069). It is possible that following the current Monuments Protection Programme English Heritage may modify the scheduled areas or add monuments in Weobley to the schedule.

Listed buildings. There are a total of 70 buildings listed as of historical or architectural importance within the urban area. Buildings of special architectural or historic interest should receive very special attention. Such buildings are limited in their number and there is a need to protect and preserve them. The presumption when considering applications to demolish or alter is in favour of preservation. This presumption is also likely to preserve archaeological remains beneath and immediately around such buildings from development. It is important that the architectural and archaeological interests are considered together.

The alteration of listed buildings requires the greatest skill and care to avoid damage to historic structures. Specialist architectural advice is given by the County Conservation Architect or through the District's own conservation officer where that District Council has their own specialist staff.

Conservation Area. A Conservation Area has been defined which entirely encompasses the archaeological area (Leominster District Local Plan deposit draft (1996)).

8.3 Management approach

The archaeological urban area of Weobley contains buried remains relating to medieval and post-medieval settlement, associated with contemporary buildings. The buried remains may vary in complexity and depth, and probably contain significant archaeological information. It is desirable that any proposed development within the urban area that has a potential impact on buried remains should be assessed by the appropriate archaeological body.

The course of action recommended will depend upon the nature of the development and current planning legislation and frameworks. The archaeological response will be based on

both the archaeological information summarised in this document and any subsequent archaeological information recorded on the County Sites and Monuments Record.

9 Principal groups of primary sources compiled by P A Stamper

(HRO: Hereford Record Office)

HRO AD 63	Parish records. Registers 1635-54, 1682 onwards
HRO N 3	Parish records. Churchwardens' accounts 1691-1731; overseers' accounts 1692-1731; rate books 1723-38; vestry minutes 1793-1820
HRO L 57/59	Glebe terrier 1630
HRO <i>passim</i>	Scattered in various collections is a moderate number of deeds and related documents, mostly post-medieval
HRO HD S 25	Tithe map (nd) and apportionment (1839)

10 References

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11 Mapping

The illustrations for this report comprise CAD plots of the urban components for each period and a location plot of archaeological remains combined with OS digital map data (1995) at 1:5000. These plots are current at the date of the completion of this report (March 1995). After this date new information will be held by the Hereford and Worcester County Council Sites and Monuments Record.

- * Historic buildings (listed and other recorded buildings) and urban area
- * Archaeological remains and urban area
- * Medieval urban form and components
- * Post-medieval urban form and components
- * Observed cellarage and 20th century development
- * Urban area and scheduled ancient monuments