

***A Watching Brief at  
33 Broad Street, Ludlow,  
Shropshire, 2011***

by  
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Archaeology Service



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**A WATCHING BRIEF AT  
33 BROAD STREET, LUDLOW,  
SHROPSHIRE, 2011**

by  
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A report for  
PAV Building Restoration

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## **SUMMARY**

*In June and July 2011 groundworks were carried out for an extension to the rear of 33 Broad Street, Ludlow, Shropshire. Broad Street lies within the historic core of the medieval town, and is known to have been occupied since the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It was thus considered possible that archaeological remains might be encountered during the groundworks for the development. A watching brief on the development was carried out by the Archaeology Service, Shropshire Council. The foundation remains of a wall of possible medieval date were seen in one of the foundation trenches. Otherwise significant archaeological features or deposits comprised mixed yard soils and rubbish pits of post-medieval date.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

**1.1** Ludlow is situated in south Shropshire, about 37km south of Shrewsbury town centre. Broad Street is located in the historic core of the medieval town, and is known to have been occupied since the early part of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

**1.2** In June 2011 work began at No. 33 Broad Street on the construction of a single storey extension, replacing an existing extension on the east side of the house.

**1.3** The development site (see Figure 1) lies within a group of tenement plots on the south side of the town's historic core (Historic Environment Record [HER] no. 06193). It occupies a position close to the historic street frontage and within a former medieval burgage plot known to have been in existence by the 13th century. The medieval town defences, built between 1233 and 1304, form the southern boundary of the development site (HER no. 01177). The town wall here is also a scheduled Ancient Monument (Salop 147 Town Walls) though it was not directly affected by the development. 33 Broad Street is a Grade II Listed Building (no. 389759, HER no. 11004)

**1.4** It was considered possible that archaeological remains relating to the medieval and later development of this part of the town might therefore survive within the development site.

**1.5** Because of the potential significance of the archaeological resource it was considered necessary that the groundworks associated with the development be accompanied by the implementation of a programme of archaeological work. The Archaeology Service, Shropshire Council, was commissioned by PAV Building Restoration to undertake this programme of archaeological work in accordance with a scheme of investigation approved by the Historic Environment Team, Shropshire Council.

**1.6** The aim of the programme of archaeological work was to allow for the preservation by record of any archaeological remains that were encountered during the groundworks. The programme of archaeological work comprised two elements. Phase 1 comprised the monitoring of the excavation of a number of test-pits required for construction purposes. Based on the results of this work, phase 2 comprised the archaeological monitoring of groundworks associated with the development.

## **2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

**2.1** The historic town of Ludlow is situated on a hilltop on the eastern side of the confluence of the Rivers Teme and Corve. The town lies on a major routeway (although the modern road, the A49(T) now by-passes the town) and is situated between crossing points of this routeway over the River Teme and the River Corve.

### **2.2 Prehistoric and Roman Activity**

There is evidence for prehistoric activity on the hill occupied by the modern town centre. Place-name and documentary evidence suggests that a (presumably) Bronze Age barrow over three cist burials on the hilltop was removed when the medieval church was extended in 1199 (Wright, 1852, 13-5). A Neolithic stone axe and a number of flint flakes have been recovered from the general area of the town, and in 1996 a Bronze Age barb and tang flint arrowhead was found in trial excavations for the evaluation of the Library and Museum Resource Centre site (Dalwood, 1996, 2; Hannaford and Stamper, 1996; Wright 1852, 13-15).

It has been suggested that Corve St and Old St follow the line of a Roman road, part of a postulated road between Gloucester (*Glevum*) and Wroxeter (*Viroconium Cornoviorum*) (Shoesmith and Johnson, 2000, p6-7). However, no Roman finds have been made in the town, and the course of this road between Ashton (Herefs.) and its supposed junction with Watling Street (South) in the Craven Arms area is entirely conjectural.

### **2.3 The Medieval Town**

There is no mention of either a settlement or a castle at Ludlow in the Domesday Survey of 1086. However, the manor of Ludford on the south side of the crossing of the River Teme is mentioned. There was probably also a small rural settlement, Dinham, with a chapel and a market green on the southwest side of the hill, and possibly also at Galdeford in an area that later in the medieval period became the eastern suburb of the town. (Dalwood, 1996, 2)

A castle was founded on the hill-top in the late 11th century, as a major fortress on the frontier with Wales, and was used as the base for campaigns in Wales and the Marches in the 12th and 13th centuries. The town grew up in the shadow of the castle, and it seems that the first elements of the town were laid out in the early 12th century. Ludlow has the appearance of a planned town, and it is generally agreed that it was laid out and expanded in several distinct phases. It has been suggested that the Old Street and Corve Street tenement blocks were the earliest elements, being laid out along an existing road linking crossing points on the River Teme on the south and the River Corve on the north sides of the hill. The Old Street block is thought perhaps to have been the earlier of the two. It has been suggested that the Broad Street burgrave plots form part of a plan unit laid out in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century, curtailing the earlier Old Street burgages (HER 06193).

The fat cigar-shape of upper Corve Street might indicate that it may have served as an early market street, before and possibly in addition to the new market place established in High Street towards the end of the 12th century. The town was granted a charter in the 13th century, and there is a documentary reference to the marketplace in 1255. An annual fair was being held by 1241. The mainstay of the town's economy in the Middle Ages was the wool trade, and associated industries developed in the town from the 13th century. The trade in cloth gradually became more important to the town's economy than the trade in raw wool during the medieval period. (Dalwood, 1996, 2-3; Shoesmith

and Johnson, 2000, 65)

In 1473 the Council of the March of Wales was based at the castle, which was made a provincial court in 1501. In 1534 the Council of the Marches became a form of regional government for Wales, Herefordshire, and Shropshire, with its capital at Ludlow. This became an important factor in the town's economy, providing a large income and attracting business to the town. The Council was suspended during the Civil War period, and finally abolished in 1689.

## **2.4 The Town Defences**

The town was granted a licence to build defences in 1233, although these do not seem to have been completed on the south side of the town until at least the 1290s. The town defences were built to respect the topography of the hilltop, and so large parts of the town were excluded from the defended area, becoming extra-mural suburbs. This included the lower part of Old Street to the south and all but the uppermost (southern) end of the Corve Street tenements to the north. (Dalwood, 1996, 2; Lloyd and Klein 1984, 13; Klein and Roe 1987, 42 & 46; Morriss and Hoverd 1993, 36)

## **2.5 The Civil War**

Ludlow's strategic location on the main routeway along the western side of the country suddenly became important again with the outbreak of the Civil War in 1642. Ludlow was garrisoned by the Crown, and briefly came under threat of attack in May 1643. The defensive strength of the town and particularly the castle enabled the Royalists to maintain control of most of south Shropshire throughout the war, and Prince Rupert used Ludlow as a base when recruiting in Wales and Herefordshire. Charles I also visited Ludlow in 1645 after his defeat at the battle of Naseby. In May 1646 the Royalist garrison surrendered after a month-long siege by a Parliamentary army under Col. John Birch and Sir William Brereton; Ludlow was then garrisoned by Parliament until 1655. (Shoesmith and Johnson, 2000, 87-8; Bracher and Emmett, 2000, 81-2. Hannaford and Stamper, 1996, 4-5)

## **2.6 The Study Area in the later Post-medieval and Modern Periods**

Broad Street was a fashionable part of the town in the post-medieval period, occupied by wealthier elements of the town's inhabitants (Dalwood, 1996, p4). There was substantial re-building (or re-fronting) of the properties on Broad Street in the late 17<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. No. 33 Broad Street itself is a 17<sup>th</sup> century house with a 19<sup>th</sup> century frontage. Medieval timber in the roof indicates a chamber to the rear of the frontage building parallel to the street. (HER no. 11004)

**2.7 Previous archaeological work** There has been no previous archaeological work on the proposed development site itself, although the study area does lie within the area covered by the Central Marches Historic Towns Survey (Dalwood et al, 1996), and the Architectural Survey of Ludlow (Manchester University School of Architecture, 1966). A watching brief on the construction of a gazebo at the rear of 27 Broad Street suggested that the rear of this plot was open ground until the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century

### **3 THE WATCHING BRIEF**

#### **3.1 The test pits (phase 1)**

**3.1.1** Six test-pits (Figure 2; A-F) were excavated along the lines of the foundations for the new extension in June 2011. The test pits were all dug by hand in the area of the former extension and in the gardens to the northeast and east to a depth of up to 1m below the existing ground surface. A number of archaeological features and deposits were encountered, characterized by what appeared to be medieval and post-medieval yard deposits.

##### **3.1.2 Test pit A**

Test pit A was excavated alongside the boundary wall on the north side of the development area. The garden wall (Figure 3a; 4) was constructed of brick built on foundations of greenish-grey siltstone. A deposit of dark grey-brown sandy silty loam (18) 0.45m thick had built up against the south face of the foundations. Above this was a layer of dark grey sandy loam (17) 0.1m thick, which in turn lay beneath topsoils of dark grey humic loam (2 & 3), and the slabs of a garden path (1).

##### **3.1.3 Test pit B**

Test pit B was excavated alongside the boundary wall on the north side of the development area. A stone wall (Figure 3b; 6) of siltstone bonded in a buff sandy mortar was seen to abut the stone foundations of the garden wall (4). These were sealed by a deposit of garden soil (5) of dark greyish brown humic loam.

##### **3.1.4 Test pit C**

Test pit C was excavated at the southeast corner of the proposed new extension, in the lawn to the east of the house. The lawn lay approximately 0.8m lower than the terrace along the north edge of the garden, and 0.6m lower than the gardens to the east. A sequence of deposits were revealed here, the lowest of which comprised a greenish grey sandy silt (Figure 3c; 11) with small silt-stone fragments, which was seen at a depth of 0.96m below the ground surface and represented the fragmentary surface of the natural bedrock. This lay beneath a deposit of brown sandy silty loam (10) 0.25m thick which contained a small quantity of 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century medieval pottery. This in turn lay beneath a brown silty loam (9) 0.2m thick with siltstone fragments, and a dark grey brown sandy silty loam (8) 0.3m thick which produced post medieval pottery (mainly 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century in date, glass, clay tobacco pipe fragments, and animal bone. This lay beneath a topsoil and turf layer 0.25m thick (7).

##### **3.1.5 Test pit D**

Test pit D was excavated alongside the boundary wall on the north side of the development area. The wall (Figure 4a; 4) here was seen to have been built up from the surface of the natural buff sandy clay (25). A deposit of brown silty loam (23) with siltstone fragments 0.45m thick covered the foundations of the boundary wall and in turn lay beneath a greyish brown silty loam (22) 0.2m thick. A siltstone and brick wall (24) ran south from the boundary wall cutting through these deposits – this may have been the footings for a former garden wall. These were sealed by garden soil (21) up to 0.5m thick.

##### **3.1.6 Test pit E**

Test pit E was excavated alongside the east wall of the present house in the area of the former extension. The earliest deposit seen here was a dark brown silty loam (Figure 4b; 20) with stone fragments, which butted against the east face of the house wall at a depth of 0.8m below the existing ground surface. This lay beneath a former yard

surface (16) of stone fragments, whose upper surfaces were rounded and smoothed. A small pit (15) filled with dark greyish brown sandy loam (14) had cut into the stone surface, and was itself sealed by a deposit 0.5m thick of dark grey brown sandy silty loam (13). This lay beneath a modern rubble layer (12) up to 0.2m thick.

### **3.1.7 Test pit F**

Test pit F was excavated at the northeast corner of the present house. A brick wall (Figure 4f; 28), of 19<sup>th</sup> century red brick, ran north from the corner of the house towards the northern site boundary, in line with the wall (24) seen in test pit D. On the east side of this wall, a deposit of buff sandy clay (29) was seen at depth of 0.5m. This lay beneath a very dark greyish brown sandy silty loam (27) a typical yard soil, which was cut by modern drains (26). The ground on the west side of the brick wall (28) consisted of a deposit of very dark grey sandy silty loam (30) for the full 0.9m depth of the trench, suggesting that the brick wall had served as a terrace wall separating the garden area to the east of the house from the yard on its north side.

## **3.2 The watching brief (phase 2)**

**3.2.1** In July 2011 the foundation trenches for the extension were excavated (Figure 2). These trenches were dug out by machine under archaeological supervision.

**3.2.2** The surface of the natural buff siltstone bedrock (Figures 5 & 6; 36) was seen in the southern and eastern part of the site at a depth of 0.9m below the ground surface, rising to the north where it lay at 0.4m depth. In the southern foundation trench, the natural was cut by the foundation trench (40) for a siltstone wall (Figure 5; 38), aligned northwest-southeast. The wall appeared to be about 0.5m wide; only a single course of these foundations survived intact, although they were sealed by a localised rubble spread (37) around 1.6m wide by 0.2m thick which contained some larger fragments of siltstone. A deposit of decayed lime mortar (41) abutted the east face of the wall. These were sealed by a layer of dark reddish brown clay loam (35) up to 0.3m thick, producing some post-medieval pottery, and which in turn lay beneath a layer of dark brown sandy silty loam (34) 0.15m thick.

**3.2.3** In the southeast corner of the site this layer was cut by a large pit (43) filled with a reddish brown sandy clay loam (42) with siltstone and sandstone rubble. This pit partly coincided with the location of test pit C and it is possible that the layer (9) recorded in the test pit corresponds to part of the fill (42). The pit was sealed by a deposit of very dark grey brown sandy silty loam (33; test pit C, 8) with stone and brick rubble, which in turn lay beneath the turf and garden soil (7).

**3.2.4** Along the northern edge of the site, the natural bedrock lay beneath a deposit of greyish brown silty loam (Figure 6; 45) up to 0.5m thick with siltstone fragments. This deposit dipped down to the south, following the underlying bedrock, and its southern edge lay beneath a deposit of yellowish brown clay (44) which in turn lay beneath the dark brown sandy silty loam (34).

**3.2.5** The brown silty loam (45) along the north edge of the area was cut by a pit (47) filled with dark grey sandy loam (46) containing pig bones and 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> century pottery. This pit was also sealed by the sandy silty loam with stone and brick rubble (33).



**3.2.6** At the northeast corner of the study area, the same sequence of deposits was observed as seen in test-pit A. A dark grey brown sandy silty loam (32 / test pit A, 18) lay beneath garden soil (31 / test pit A, 3). The southern side of these deposits were bounded by a modern siltstone terrace wall.

**3.2.7** No other significant archaeological features or deposits were seen during the watching brief.

### **3.4 Discussion**

The earliest deposits encountered during the watching brief were associated with the foundation remains of a stone wall running northwest-southeast in the southern part of the development area, i.e. roughly in the middle of the lawn. Only the lowest course of these foundations survived, and they were covered by a mixed yard-type deposit of post-medieval date. Elsewhere, the deposits encountered were of mixed yard soils, containing mainly post-medieval pottery, with a couple of post-medieval rubbish pits visible, one in the south east angle of the foundation trenches, one in the centre of the northern trench.

## **4 REFERENCES**

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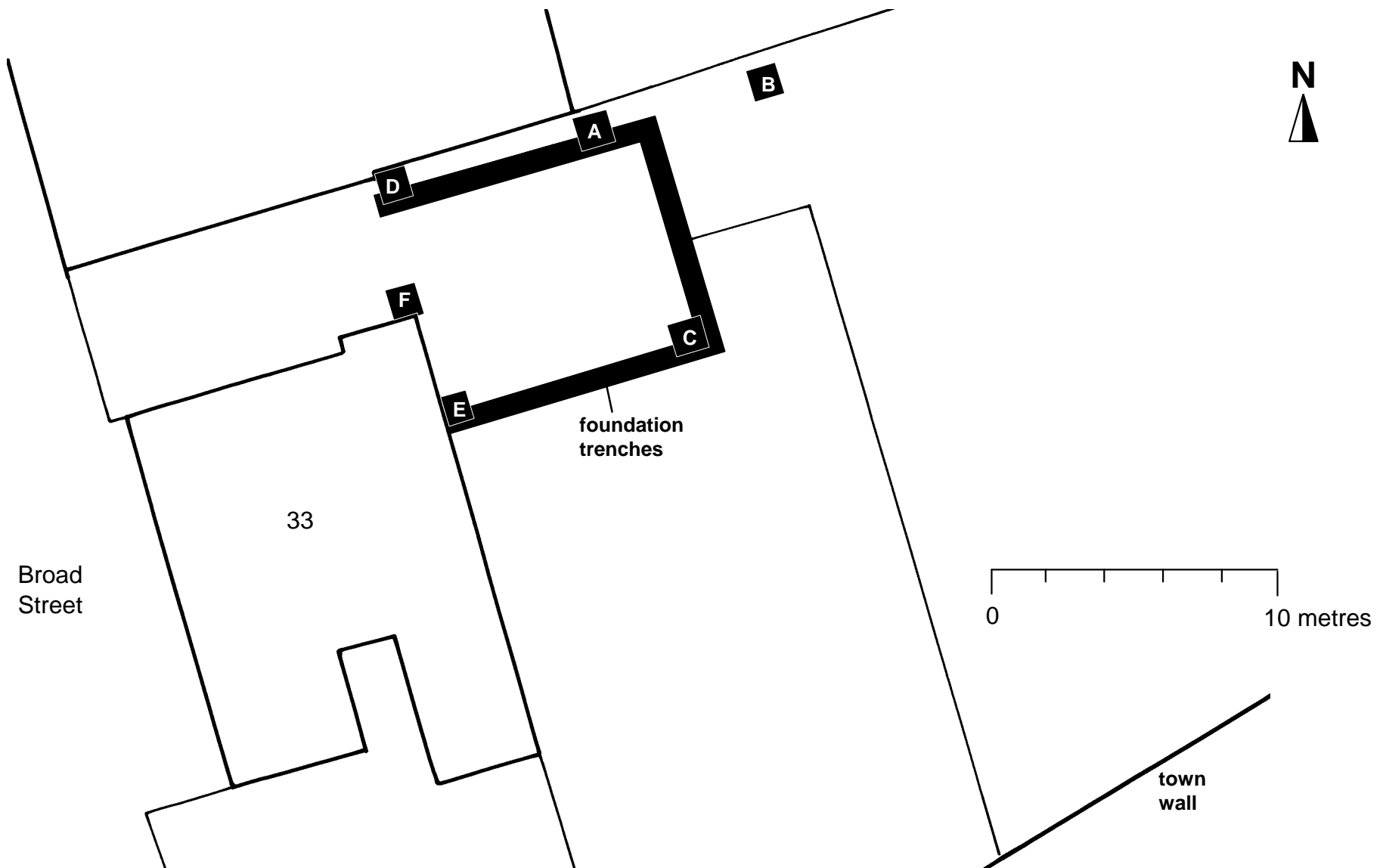
## **ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>HER</b>	Historic Environment Record, Shropshire Council
<b>OS</b>	Ordnance Survey
<b>SA</b>	Shropshire Archives, Castle Gates, Shrewsbury
<b>TSAS</b>	Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society
<b>TSAHS</b>	Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society



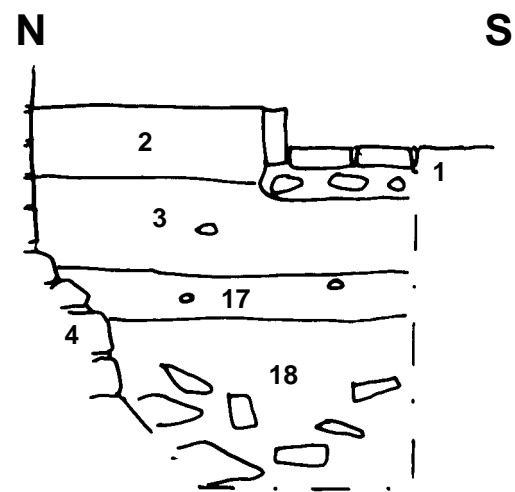




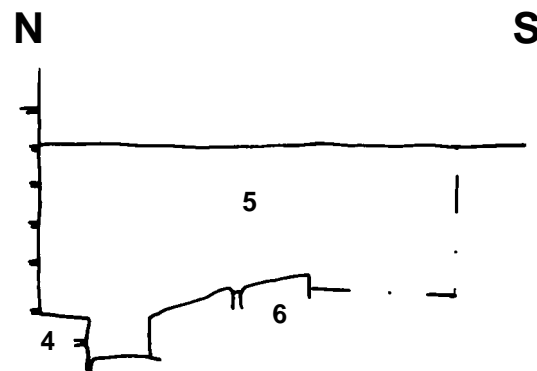


### 33 BROAD STREET, LUDLOW 2011

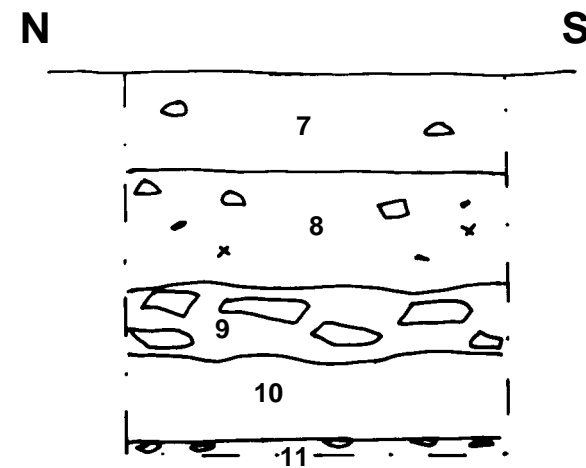
Figure 2: The study area, showing the location of the test pits (A - F) and the foundation trenches; 1:200 scale



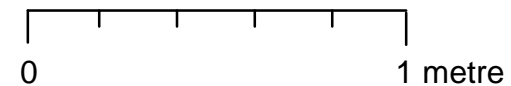
a) Test pit A



b) Test pit B

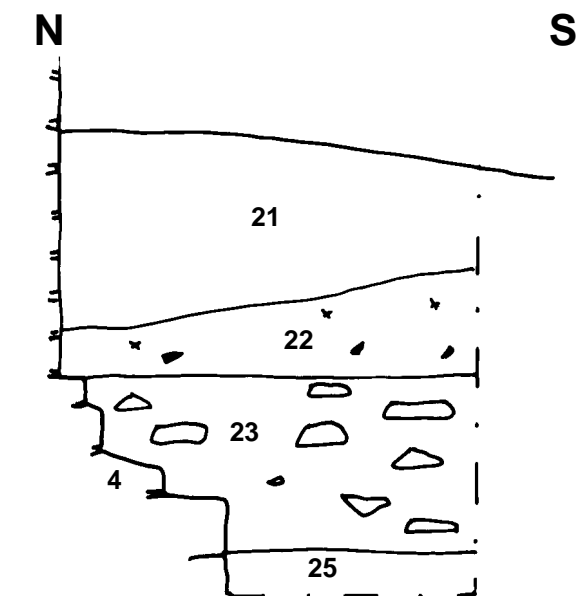


c) Test pit C

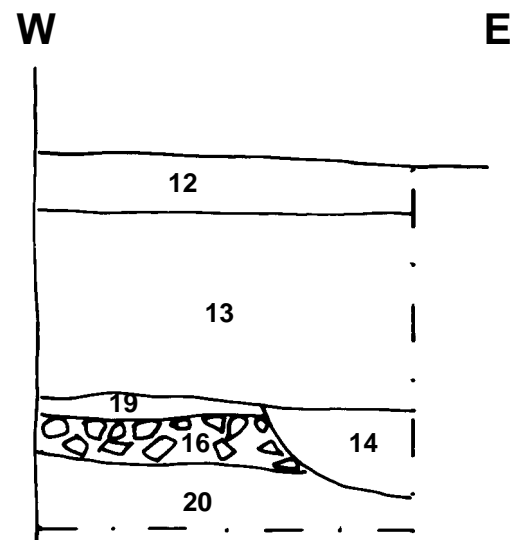


### 33 BROAD STREET, LUDLOW 2011

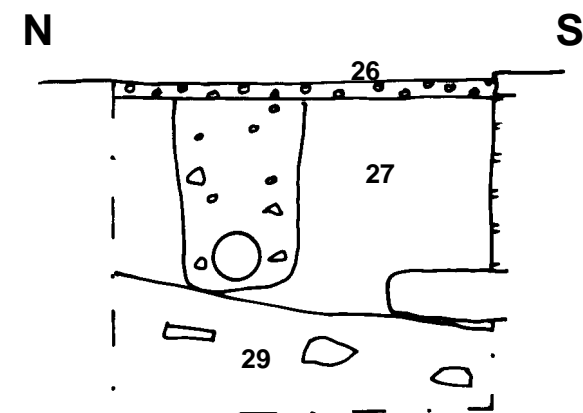
Figure 3: Sections through test pits A - C; 1:20 scale



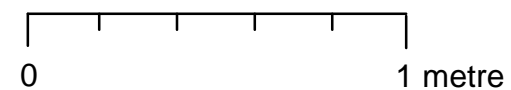
d) Test pit D



e) Test pit E



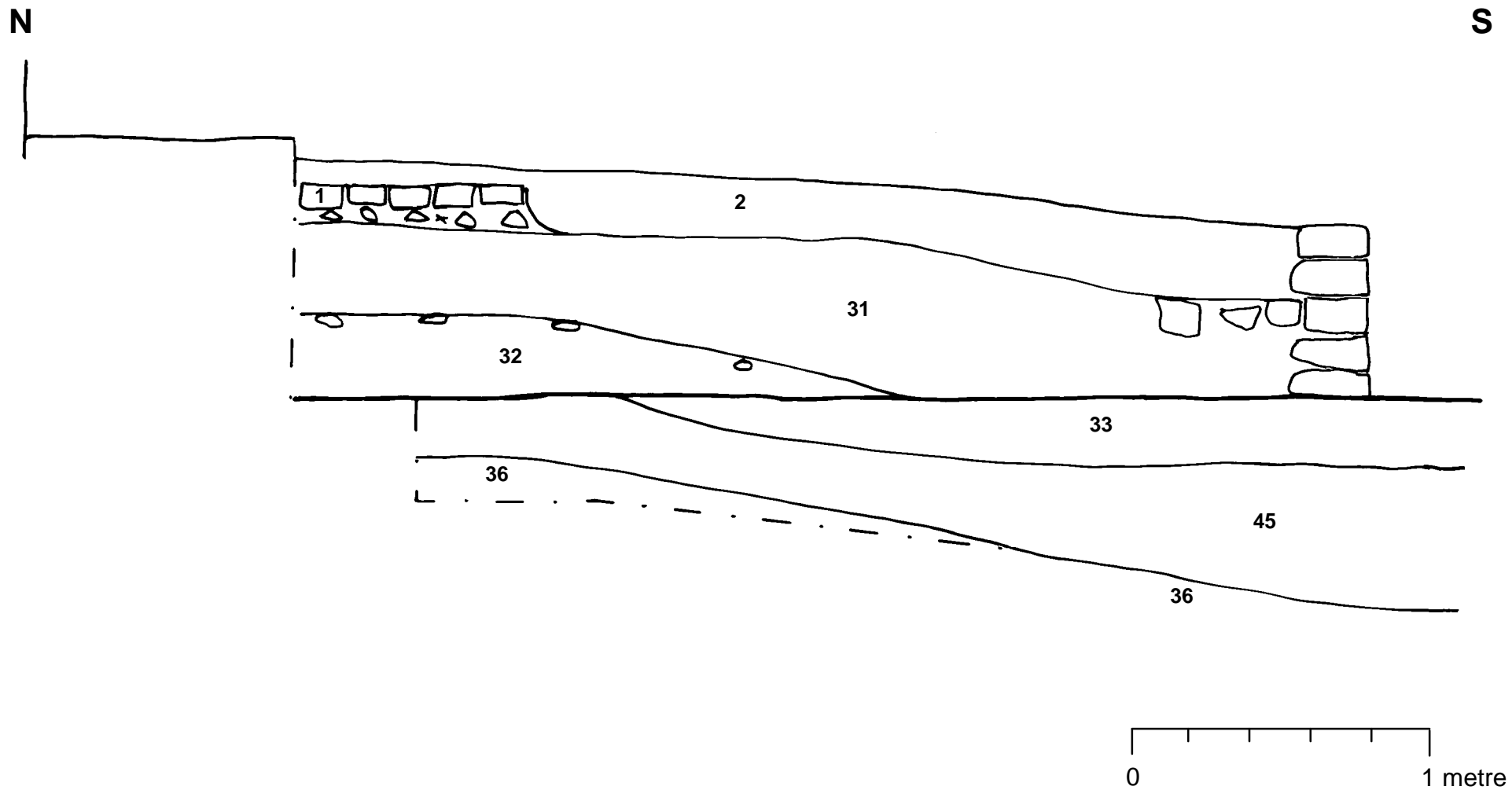
f) Test pit F



### 33 BROAD STREET, LUDLOW 2011

Figure 4: Sections through test pits D - F; 1:20 scale





**33 BROAD STREET, LUDLOW 2011**

Figure 6: Eastern arm of the foundation trench, showing the deposits in the northeast corner of the development area; 1:20 scale





Photo 1: The study area, looking northwest



Photo 2: The remains of wall 38, looking northeast



Photo 3: The post-medieval rubbish pit 47, looking northwest