

***A Watching Brief at
4 St Mary's Street, Market Drayton,
Shropshire, 2011***

by
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Archaeology Service



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**A WATCHING BRIEF AT 4 ST MARY'S STREET,
MARKET DRAYTON, SHROPSHIRE, 2011**

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A report for

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Photo 3: The foundation trench looking northwest

SUMMARY

In September 2011 groundworks were carried out for an extension to 4 St Mary's Street, Market Drayton, Shropshire. The study area lay within the core of the historic medieval town, and it was 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. No significant archaeological features or deposits were seen during the course of the watching brief.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The town of Market Drayton is situated in the northeastern part of the county of Shropshire. The town lies on a main road junction between the A53 Shrewsbury to Newcastle-under-Lyme and the A41/A529 Wolverhampton to Nantwich roads. There is evidence that a settlement existed at Market Drayton in Anglo-Saxon times. The settlement was developed as market town by its owner, Combermere Abbey (Cheshire) in the 13th century. The town has remained a small to medium-sized market town since that time.

1.2 In September 2011 work began on the construction of an extension to a kitchen at the rear of 4 St Mary's Street, Market Drayton. The groundworks involved the excavation of a foundation trench for the new extension.

1.3 The development area lies within the core of the area of the historic medieval and post-medieval town, as defined by the Central Marches Historic Towns Survey (Dalwood, 1996) and it was considered that there was a possibility that archaeological remains might be encountered during the groundworks for the development.

1.4 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.

1.5 The Archaeology Service, Shropshire Council, was commissioned by the site owner, Mr Z Hoque, to carry out this programme of archaeological work in accordance with a scheme of investigation approved by the Historic Environment Team, Shropshire Council.

1.6 It was considered appropriate that the programme of archaeological work would comprise an archaeological watching brief. All ground disturbance works associated with the development would be carried out under archaeological supervision. In the event of significant archaeological features, structures, or deposits being encountered, these would be investigated and fully recorded prior to their removal or disturbance. An illustrated report would be produced for the client detailing the results of the project.

1.7 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.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The Medieval Manor

Drayton is first recorded by name (*Draitune*) in the Domesday Survey of 1086. At the time of the survey, the manor was held from earl Roger of Montgomery by William Pandolf, lord of Noron in Normandy. William Pandolf gave Market Drayton to the priory of Noron, whose English estates were managed by the prior of Ware (Herts.), and Drayton was held from him on a perpetual lease by the Abbot of Combermere (Cheshire). A charter of 1266 confirmed the acquisition of the manor of Drayton by Combermere Abbey. (Thorn and Thorn, 1986, 4,14,9, 4,19,8, & notes; Rowley and Rowley, 1966, 2).

It has been suggested that the core of the Late Saxon and Norman pre-urban settlement lay around the road junction between Phoenix Bank and Great Hales Street. The western end of this postulated location for the early settlement would have been marked by St Mary's Church and Church Street (the likely route into the settlement from the south and west).

2.2 The Medieval Town

Combermere Abbey controlled and was responsible for developing the settlement at Drayton into a town. In 1245 Henry III granted the abbey a charter to hold a weekly market and a 3-day annual fair in September in the town. A charter of 1341 authorised a Friday market, and a six-day fair in October (the modern Dirty Fair). (Pitt, 1977, 45). A recent analysis of the town plan suggests that the town developed in several stages around an original planned element. It is thought that the core of the medieval planned town was laid out, probably in the 13th century, around the road junction at the centre of the town. A market place with associated burgage plots was established north of the junction along High Street and Cheshire Street. Land parcels along the main roads to the market (Shropshire Street, Cheshire Street and Stafford Street) were then developed as tenement or burgage blocks with back lanes. (Dalwood, 1996; Baker, 2002)

2.3 The Post-medieval Town

After the Dissolution of the monasteries, Sir Rowland Hill acquired most of Combermere Abbey's holdings in Drayton. On his death the lordship of the manor of Market Drayton descended with the Corbets of Adderley (Rowley and Rowley, 1966, 3-5). Market Drayton appears to have remained a relatively small town during the early post-medieval period. Leatherworking seems to have been prominent among trades in the town from the middle of 16th century (Rowley and Rowley, 1966, 52).

On 10th August 1651, a fire badly damaged the town; a second fire may have damaged parts of Shropshire Street in 1667 (Rowley and Rowley, 1966, 46-8). Most of the town's timber-framed buildings (many of which were later hidden by rendered or brick façades) date to the later 17th century.

2.4 The Industrial and Modern Periods

In the 18th century the town seems to have declined, but improvements to communications led in turn to an improvement in trade and expansion of the town (Dalwood, 1996, 2-3). In 1835 the completion past Drayton of the Birmingham and Liverpool Canal and a connection in 1863 to the railway network with the construction of the Wellington & Market Drayton Branch of the Great Western Railway provided further boosts to local trade (Trinder, 2000).

Market Drayton, however, through the 19th and 20th centuries remained a small market

town. A large yoghurt and dairy produce factory was located on the edge of the town in the late 20th century, emphasising the town's continuing dependence on the rural economy.

2.5 Previous archaeological work

There has been no previous archaeological work on the development site itself, although an archaeological evaluation was carried out in 1997 on a property in Church Street close by the current study area (Hannaford, 1997). The evaluation found slight traces of possible medieval or early post-medieval activity in the form of features cut into the natural sandstone bedrock. The site appeared to have served as a backyard or garden from the post-medieval through to the early modern periods, though the ground had been heavily disturbed by the excavation of a number of large pits, probably domestic rubbish pits, in the 18th to early 20th centuries.

3 THE WATCHING BRIEF

3.1 The foundation trenches for the current development were excavated by machine under archaeological supervision. The trenches were excavated to a depth of 0.8m and a width of 0.5m (Figure 2).

3.2 The natural subsoil consisted of a reddish brown sand (Figure 3; 5). At the northeastern end of the trench the top of the natural sand lay at a depth of 0.26m below the present ground surface. Here it was cut by a pit (Figure 3a; 4) filled with a very dark greyish brown loam which produced some 19th century china pottery (discarded). The pit was sealed by a layer of very dark grey brown sandy loam (2) 0.17m deep, probably a former yard soil, which lay beneath the present yard surface (1) of brick, stone slabs, and thin concrete.

3.3 At the northwestern end of the trench, within the existing kitchen extension, the natural sand (5) lay at a depth of 0.44m below the present ground surface. It lay beneath a layer of very dark grey sand (Figure 3b; 8) 0.18m thick and a layer of light brown sand (7) 0.18m thick with brick rubble and mortar fragments, and the floor (6) of the existing extension.

3.4 No significant archaeological features or deposits were seen during the watching brief.

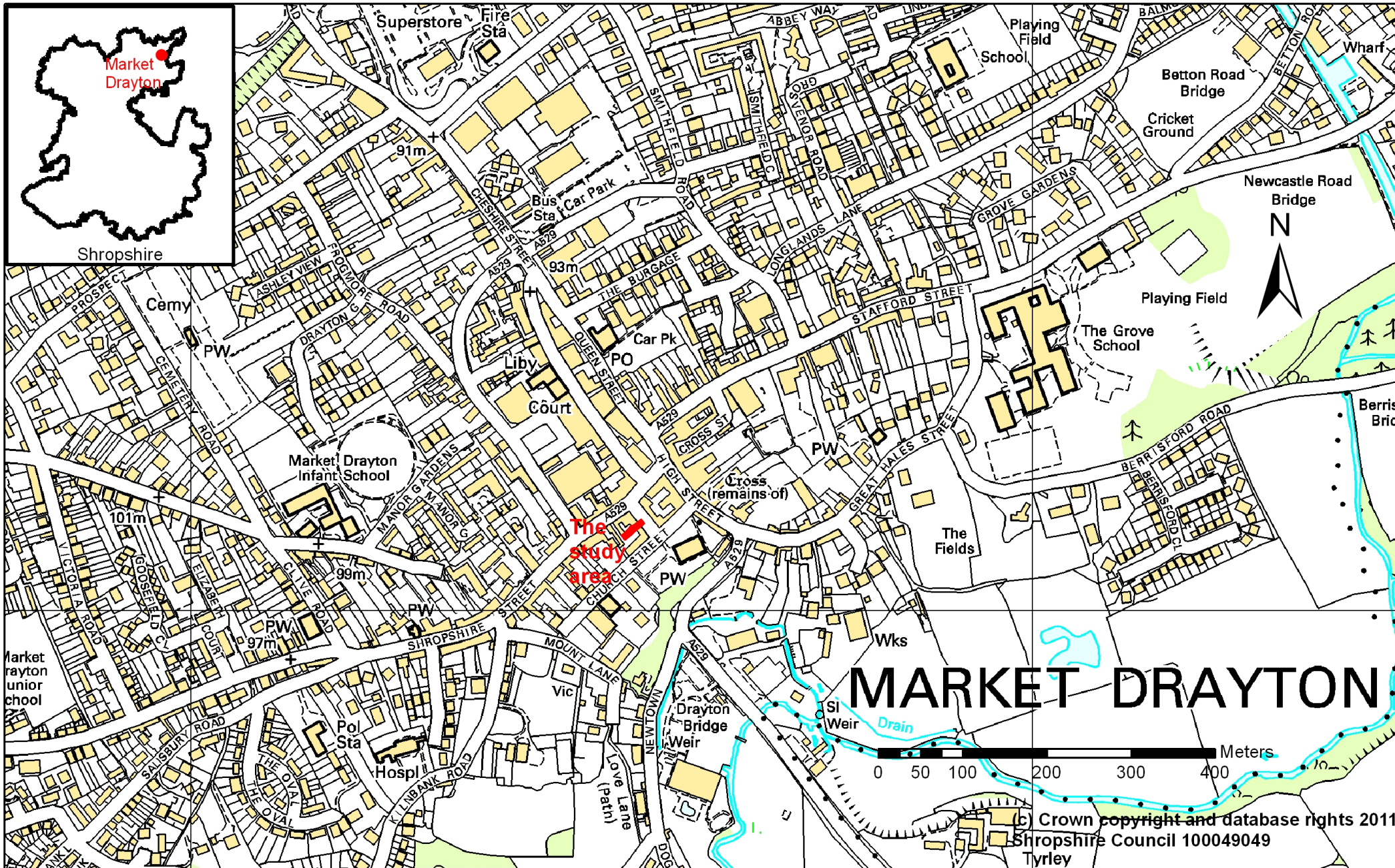
3.5 The findings of the watching brief in September 2011 are entirely consistent with those found during the nearby 1997 evaluation on Church Street. The only archaeological feature located was a rubbish pit of 19th century date, cut into the natural subsoil, and sealed by 19th century and modern yard soils and surfaces.

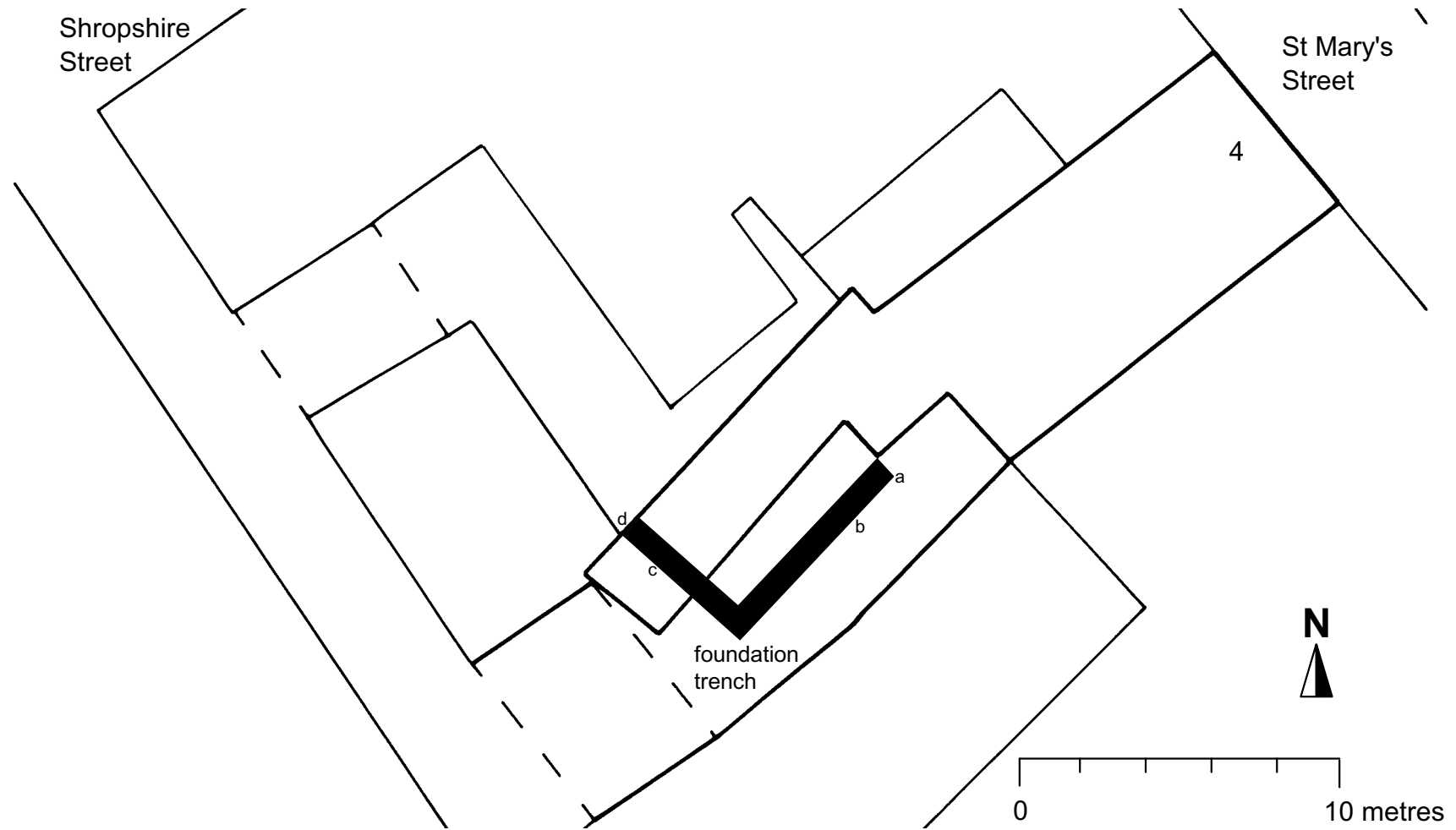
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ABBREVIATIONS

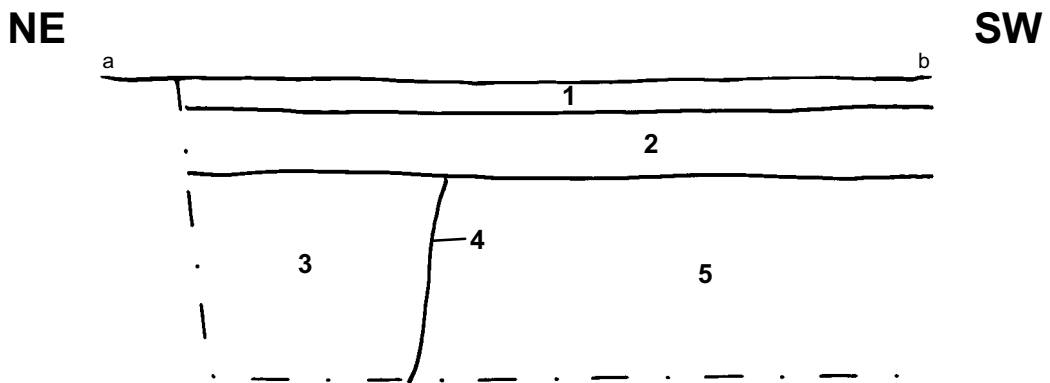
CMHTS	Central Marches Historic Towns Survey
HER	Historic Environment Record, Shropshire Council
OS	Ordnance Survey
SA	Shropshire Archives, Castle Gates, Shrewsbury
TSAS	Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society
 TSAHS	Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society



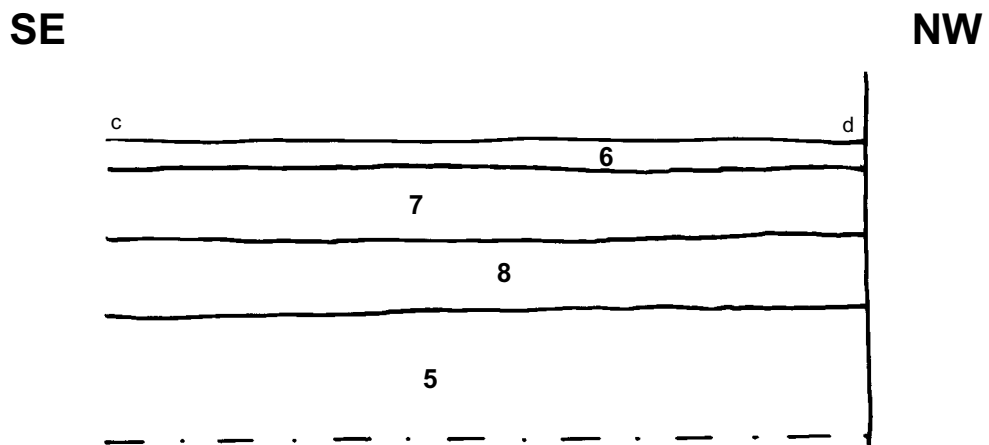


4 ST MARY'S STREET, MARKET DRAYTON 2011

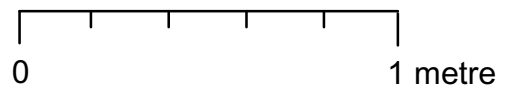
Figure 2: The study area, showing the location of the foundation trench; 1:200 scale



a)



b)



4 ST MARY'S STREET, MARKET DRAYTON 2011

Figure 3: a) northwest-facing section at the northeastern end of the foundation trench; b) northeast facing section at the northwestern end of the trench; (for locations see Fig.2, a-b & c-d); 1:20 scale



Photo 1: The foundation trench, showing pit 4, looking south



Photo 2: The foundation trench, looking southwest



Photo 3: The foundation trench looking northwest

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