

***A Watching Brief on Demolition Works at
The Garage, The Mines, Benthall,
Shropshire***

by
H R Hannaford

Archaeology Service



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**A WATCHING BRIEF ON DEMOLITION WORKS AT
THE GARAGE, THE MINES, BENTHALL, SHROPSHIRE**

by
H R HANNAFORD MifA

A report for
Artemis Developers Ltd.

Archaeology Service

Historic Environment Team, Environment,
Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND
Tel: (01743) 252575 Fax: (01743) 252505



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Photo 3: The site, looking south

Photo 4: Doorway on the street frontage, with stone work to either side; (scales 2m and 1m)

Photo 5: The rear of the buildings on the street frontage, looking northeast

Photo 6: Demolition work in progress, looking southeast

SUMMARY

In December 2011 demolition work was carried at The Garage, The Mines, Benthall, Shropshire, in order to prepare the site for redevelopment. The site lies in an area formerly occupied by a clay tobacco pipe factory, which started in the 18th century and continued production until 1900. It was a condition of the planning consent that the demolition of the existing structures on site be accompanied by an archaeological watching brief.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Benthall is situated in east Shropshire on the south side of the Ironbridge Gorge, some 20km southeast of Shrewsbury town centre and 6km south of Telford town centre. There is a proposal to demolish the existing buildings and factory unit and level the site at The Garage, The Mines, Benthall, Shropshire (NGR SJ 6698 0264).

1.2 The development site lies in an area formerly occupied by a clay tobacco pipe factory, which started in the 18th century and continued production until 1900. In 1885 it was said to be one of the largest factories of its kind in England (Historic Environment Record [HER] No. 03984 "Clay pipe works c 510m SE of Broadacres Farm"). It was considered possible therefore that archaeological remains relating to this former industry might survive within the study area.

1.3 Because of the potential significance of the archaeological resource it was considered necessary that any groundworks associated with the demolition be accompanied by the implementation of a programme of archaeological work.

1.4 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 works.

1.5 The Archaeology Service, Shropshire Council, was commissioned by Artemis Developers Ltd. to carry out the archaeological watching brief on the demolition work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) approved by the Historic Environment Team, Shropshire Council.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The Pitchyard pottery probably began working in the 18th century, and may have continued until at least 1833. In c. 1858 Edwin Southorn took over the business which by this time was producing clay pipes (Higgins, D, in Clark and Alfrey, 1987, p141). In the late 1870s the factory was rebuilt as the Raleigh Tobacco Pipeworks, said in 1885 to be one of the largest factories of its kind in England. In the 20th century, the pottery operated as the Salop Pottery Company and the Leigh Pottery. Production had ceased by the 1950s. A chimney and parts of the buildings were still identifiable in the late 1980s (Clark and Alfrey, 1987, p71).

3 THE WATCHING BRIEF

3.1 A watching brief on demolition work was carried out in December 2011. No groundworks were carried out during this work that disturbed the ground surface, and no below-ground archaeological deposits were therefore seen or recorded.

3.2 A photographic record of the exterior of the structures to be demolished was made prior to demolition.

3.3 The buildings were largely of brick construction of 18th and 19th century date with some 20th century modifications. Parts of the lower courses of the east wall on the street frontage were of limestone construction. These buildings will have been part of the 18th and 19th century pipeworks, and it is probable that the stonework in the east wall may have represented the remains of the earliest phases of the former industrial complex.

4 REFERENCES

Clark, C and Alfrey, J, 1987: Benthall and Broseley Wood: Third Interim Report of the Nuffield Archaeological Survey, Ironbridge Institute

Stamper, P A, 1985: Benthall and Posenhall Parishes, Victoria County History of Shropshire

ABBREVIATIONS

HER	Historic Environment Record, Shropshire Council
NGR	National Grid Reference
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

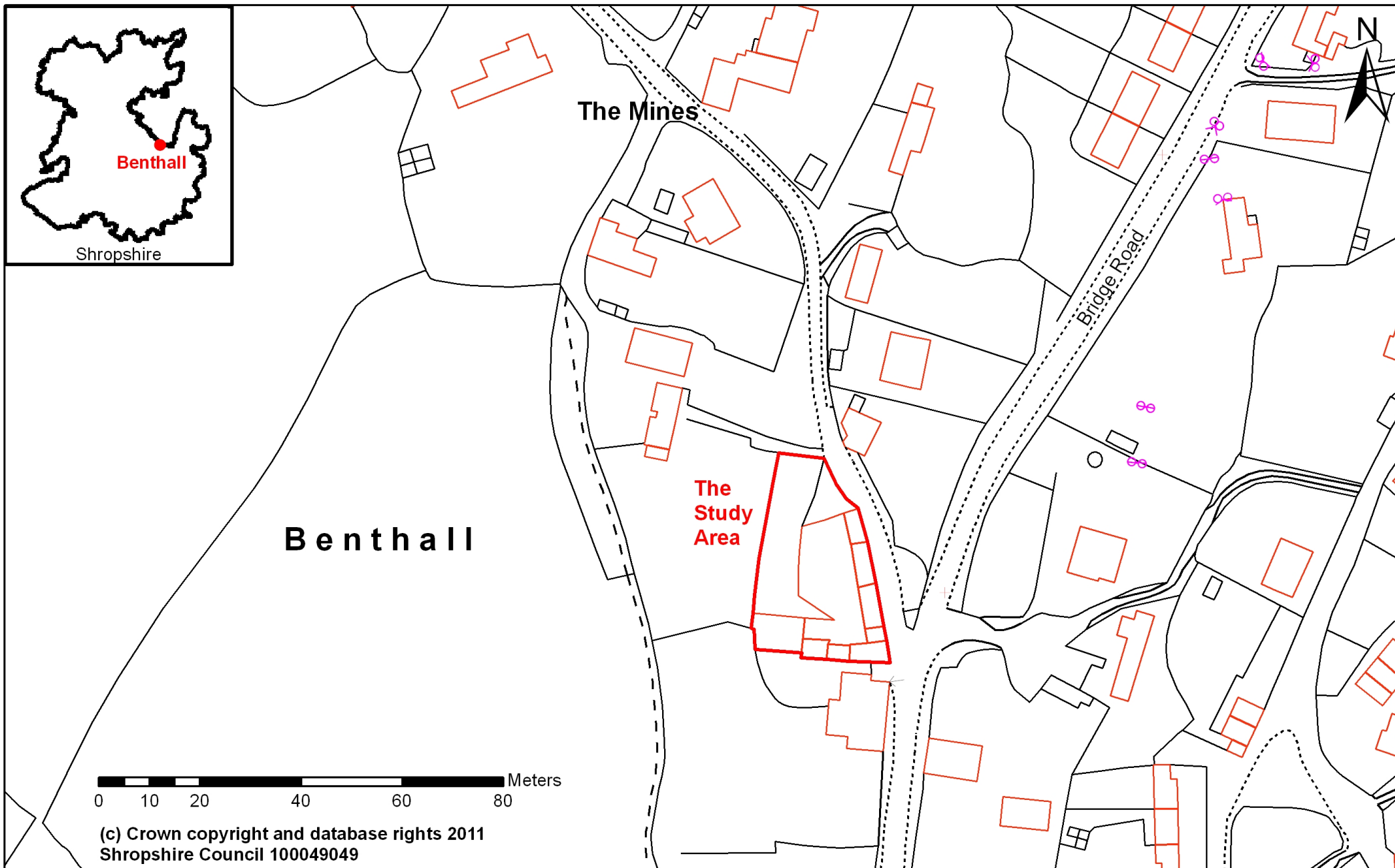




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