

*An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment of Alterations to the*  
***Whitchurch Civic Centre, Whitchurch,  
Shropshire, 2012***

by  
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Archaeology Service



**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT OF  
ALTERATIONS TO THE WHITCHURCH CIVIC CENTRE,  
WHITCHURCH, SHROPSHIRE, 2012**

by

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A report for

COMMISSIONING AND PROCUREMENT,  
SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL

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Photo 1: Whitchurch Civic Centre, looking NE

Photo 2: The High Street, looking NW

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## SUMMARY

*There is currently a proposal to carry out alterations to the Whitchurch Civic Centre on the High Street, Whitchurch, Shropshire. The development site has probably been occupied since the later 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, and lies within the area of a Roman fort and town, and the centre of a medieval and post medieval market town. Because of the potential historical and archaeological significance of the site, an archaeological desk-based assessment has been carried out of the proposed development site. This assessment suggests that archaeological features and deposits dating back to the Roman period may survive on part of the site, and has recommended that further field evaluation in the form of trial excavation may need to be carried out in order to assess the survival, nature, and significance of these remains prior to determination of the planning application.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

**1.1** There is a proposal to make alterations and improvements to the Civic Centre, High Street, Whitchurch, (NGR SJ 5414 4160). The High Street lies within the historic core of the town of Whitchurch, Shropshire.

**1.2** The area around the High Street, Whitchurch, is known to have been occupied since Roman times. The proposed development lies within the area of an early Roman fort (Historic Environment Record [HER] no. 00909) and the heart of a later Roman civil settlement (HER 02702) alongside the Wroxeter to Chester Roman road (HER 00066). The study area also lies at the core of the medieval town (HER 05959) and post-medieval town (HER 05960) of Whitchurch. Previous episodes of building work on the proposed development site in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries have produced finds of Roman pottery. Archaeological evaluations and watching briefs immediately opposite and adjacent to the proposed development have revealed surviving significant archaeological deposits. It is probable therefore that archaeological remains relating to the Roman, medieval and post-medieval development of this part of the town survives within the study area

**1.3** Because of the potential archaeological significance of the proposed development site, it has been recommended that an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment be carried out as part of the planning application for the scheme. This should provide an assessment of the archaeological potential of the site, consider the likely impact of the proposed development on any heritage assets with archaeological interest, and present recommendations for mitigating these impacts.

**1.4** The scope of this desk-based assessment was agreed with the Principal Archaeologist, Shropshire Council, following consultation with English Heritage. This assessment includes the proposed development site itself (the site) and an area of archaeological assessment around the site (the study area, see Fig. 1).

## **2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

**2.1** National policy for archaeology is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF] paras. 126-141 (Department for Communities and Local Government, March 2012). Paragraph 128 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should require an applicant for a development to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by a development, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

**2.2** The aim of this archaeological desk-based assessment is to provide information that will enable an informed and reasonable decision to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for the area affected by the proposed alterations to the Whitchurch Civic Centre on the High Street, Whitchurch.

**2.3** The objectives were:

- a) To locate any known archaeological features and deposits within the study area.
- b) To assess the likely survival, quality, condition and relative significance of any archaeological features, deposits and structures.

- c) To assess the likely impact of the proposed development on the designated and non-designated heritage assets within the study area (as defined in 1.3 above).
- d) To identify and recommend options for the management of the archaeological resource, including any further archaeological provision where necessary.
- e) To recommend a strategy for further archaeological field evaluation where the character and value of the resource is not sufficiently defined to permit a mitigation strategy or other response to be devised.

### **3 METHODOLOGY**

**3.1** The methodology for this assessment is based on requirements agreed with the Principal Archaeologist of the Historic Environment Team, Shropshire Council.

**3.2** This desk-based assessment aims to examine and assess all appropriate sources. These have included: archaeological databases, historic documents (including cartographic and pictorial documents), aerial photographs, geotechnical information, and secondary and statutory sources. The assessment includes an outline history of the development and land use of the study area, supported by copies of relevant historic maps and documents.

**3.3** The study area for this desk-based assessment comprises an area centred on the proposed development site (Fig. 1) bounded by the frontage of the properties on the west side of High Street, by Church Street to the north, and by St. Mary's Street to the east and south. The size of the study area has been chosen to ensure that the documentary and cartographic sources provide sufficient information about the proposed development site and its setting to enable an assessment of the potential impacts on the heritage resource. All known heritage assets identified within and immediately adjacent to the boundary of this study area have been considered in this assessment.

**3.4** A site visit was also undertaken on 21st November 2012 in order to identify any potential archaeological features not recorded by the documentary or cartographic sources, and to assess possible factors and their effect on the survival or condition of the archaeological resource.

## **4 THE HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

### **4.1 Designated sites and non-designated sites**

#### **4.1.1 Designated sites** (Designated assets are individually listed in Table 1 in Appendix 1 of this report).

No World Heritage Sites or sites included on the Tentative List of Future Nominations for World Heritage Sites (January 2012) are situated within the study area or its vicinity. There is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Fig. 2, Site 1: "Sundial in St Alkmund's churchyard" Monument No. Salop 247, HER 01038) just outside the study area in the churchyard of St Alkmund's Church (Fig. 2, site 2). St Alkmund's Church itself is a Grade I Listed Building ("Church of Saint Alkmund, Church Street", Nat. Ref. 260599, HER 00906 & 05902). There is one Grade II\* Listed Building in the study area ("The Old Shop, 21 and 23 High Street", Nat. Ref. 60645, HER 12580; Fig. 2, site 3). The study area lies within the Whitchurch Conservation Area.

There are 21 Grade II Listed Buildings (see Fig. 2, sites 4-24) within the study area around the development site (see sections 4.7.2-4 & 7.1.2 below).

#### **4.1.2 Non-designated heritage assets (summary)** (Non-designated heritage assets are individually listed in section 7.1.2 of this report).

There are 3 recorded heritage assets within the site. There are 22 (non-designated) heritage assets (including these) recorded on the Shropshire Council Historic Environment Record (HER) within or immediately adjacent to the study area (see Fig 2).

### **4.2 Previous Archaeological Work**

**4.2.1** The study area lies within the area covered by the Central Marches Historic Towns Survey (CMHTS) assessment of Whitchurch (Buteux, 1996). There are numerous records from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present time of finds of artefacts of Roman and later date being made during construction work. Archaeological interventions, in the form of salvage recording, watching briefs, evaluations, and excavations have taken place since the 1960s, and these in particular have demonstrated the survival of Roman deposits, including the remains of stone and timber structures, and ground surfaces.

**4.2.2** There have been a number of finds from the proposed development site itself. In 1872, finds of Roman pottery (HER 05852) were made during the excavations for the foundations of the Town hall and Library (Fig 2, site 29). The pottery included a mortarium rim in a red fabric with cream slip of c. 80-120 AD date, part of a grey flrilled "incense cup" of late 1<sup>st</sup>/early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD date, a sherd of grey "Upchurch ware" with a lattice pattern (probably Black Burnished Ware category 2 – BB2) of 2<sup>nd</sup> century date, and a late 1<sup>st</sup>/early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD red hemispherical bowl (Duggan, 1935, p28). A Roman pottery jar, possibly Severn Valley ware, and a bronze lamp (HER 05814) were found when digging the foundations of a new shed adjoining the market (Fig. 2, site 30; Thompson, 1903). And Roman pottery was again found during construction work on the Civic Centre, High Street, in the 1980s (HER 05909; Fig 2, site 31).

**4.2.3** In 1978 the Whitchurch Area Archaeology Group carried out a watching brief when the floor of no 21-3 High Street (site 3) was being lowered (ESA 77; HER 05821). Finds included Roman and medieval pottery and a bone object, but due to dangerous conditions further archaeological investigations were not carried out (SNS 8, p8).

**4.2.4** During a watching brief in 1993 on highways work in the High Street (ESA 89), a test pit at the southwestern corner of the Civic Centre revealed former road surfaces of probable Roman and medieval date at 0.42m, 0.70m and 0.88m below the existing road surface (Hannaford, 1993).

**4.2.5** A 1996 evaluation at 34-40 High Street found well preserved significant deposits of medieval date as little as 0.4m below the ground surface (ESA 4972). The edge of the medieval High Street, before later post-medieval encroachment, was seen in the eastern part of the site. These deposits were seen to seal Roman deposits. A substantial ashlar stone wall of early medieval or possibly Roman date, which had been partially robbed, was also seen. (Perkins, 1997)

**4.2.6** In 2006, an archaeological evaluation was carried out at 11/11a High Street (ESA 6024), at the southern end of the study area. This evaluation located features and finds of Roman, medieval, post-medieval, and 19<sup>th</sup>-century date, although there had been some truncation of deposits on that site. (Statter, 2006)

### **4.3 Geology and topography**

**4.3.1** Whitchurch lies on bedrock that comprises sedimentary rock of the Wilkesley Halite Member of the Sidmouth Mudstone Formation (formerly the Upper Keuper Saliferous Beds), a halite stone and mudstone formed approximately 221 to 227 million years ago in the Triassic Period, in a local environment previously dominated by hot deserts. (BGS, 2012; Toghil, 1990, p 152).

**4.3.2** The superficial geology comprises Quaternary glacial till of the Devensian phase , formed from c. 80,000 years ago to the end of the last Ice Age c. 13,000 years ago when ice sheets spread south across the Shropshire landscape depositing moraines of till with outwash sand and gravel deposits from seasonal and post glacial meltwaters. (BGS, 2012; Toghil, 1990)

**4.3.3** The study area lies between 102m and 105m above sea level on the south side of the low hill on which the centre of Whitchurch stands. The hill originated as a glacial terminal moraine.

### **4.4 Prehistoric (pre-43AD)**

**4.4.1** There are no known prehistoric period sites within the study area.

### **4.5 Roman (43AD – 410AD)**

**4.5.1** The development of the town has its origins in the Roman period. The Roman road from Wroxeter (Viroconium Cornoviorum) to Chester (Deva) (HER 00066) runs through the study area (Fig. 2, site 25). A Roman auxiliary fort (HER 00909) was constructed on the line of the road in the first century AD (site 26). The fort is thought to have covered the area that is today bounded to the southwest by Newton, by Yardington and St Alkmunds to the northwest, by St Mary's Street to the northeast, and by Pepper Street and Bluegates to the southeast (Buteux, 1996, pp6-7). The study area lies within the area of this fort.

**4.5.2** The fort appears to have gone out of use by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, and was

succeeded by a civilian settlement (HER 02702; Fig. 2, site 27), occupying the area of the fort, but also spreading out along the road to the south. Industrial activity and stone buildings of Roman date (HER 02718) have also been seen during their destruction by building work in the early 1980s to the north of Yardington. The main axis of the Roman street pattern (HER 05869) appears to have been Watling Street (site 25), followed by the modern High Street. There have been several sightings of Roman road surfaces, including one just to the southwest of the development site (Buteux, 1996, pp6-7).

**4.5.3** In the later 2<sup>nd</sup> century, town defences (site 28) were constructed, comprising a ditch and rampart, with a stone wall added to the rampart at a later date (HER 05868). The study area lies within the circuit of these defences. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries timber buildings in the area to the west of Watling Street (HER 05914) were replaced by stone structures set back from the street frontage. Roman pottery of 2<sup>nd</sup> century date and a coin of Trajan (AD 98-117) have been found at the Victoria Hotel, High Street (HER 05912, site 32). Industrial activities including metalworking and salt production, dating to the 4<sup>th</sup> century, have also been recorded within the defences in the Newtown area to the west of Watling Street. Less is known about the occupation of the area east of Watling Street (HER 05915) - which includes the development site - although there have been a number of finds of Roman material from this area. In 1984, late 1<sup>st</sup> – early 2<sup>nd</sup> century Roman pottery was found during foundation work to the rear of no. 33 High Street (HER 05832, site 33). Finds have also been recovered from the site of the Civic Centre itself (section 4.2.2, above).

#### **4.6 Early medieval (5<sup>th</sup> century - 1066AD) and Medieval (1066 – 1540)**

**4.6.1** There have been no finds recorded in the study area from the early medieval period. However, Saxon settlement is inferred from the Domesday name for the settlement *Westune* (OE “west settlement”). The name *Whitchurch* derives from “white church”, and the town was known from the late 12<sup>th</sup> or early 13<sup>th</sup> century as *Album Monasterium* and *Blancmustier*. (Thorn & Thorn, 1986, 4,13,1 & notes; Gelling, 1990, p310). At the time of the Domesday Survey of 1086, Whitchurch was held by William de Warenne from Roger of Montgomery, Earl of Shrewsbury; before the conquest it had been a royal manor held by King Harold. It was a large manor, with a number of members and outliers. The manor was held by the de Warennes for the next 200 years, before passing by descent and marriage to the Le Strange and de Bracy families. The larger part was held by the Le Stranges through the later medieval period. (Eyton, 1860, p23-5)

**4.6.2** A castle was built in the northeast part of the town centre, probably around 1100, probably in the Newtown, Castle Hill, and Yardington area. There are no published documents referring to town defences in the medieval period. Nevertheless, there is archaeological evidence for their existence (HER 05867, site 34). A large 5m wide ditch has been recorded 20m to the west of Newtown and its southern end was seen turning to the east across Castle Hill. The defences are then thought to follow St Mary’s St, along the eastern side of the study area, turning west again to the north of St Alkmund’s Church. It is thought probable that the town defences date to the 12<sup>th</sup> century - the lower fills of the ditch contained 12<sup>th</sup> century pottery. The defences appear to have gone out of use by the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and Newtown is thought to have been laid out across the line of the western defences by 1400. (Buteux, 1996, p12.)

**4.6.3** The High Street (along the line of the former Roman road, Watling Street) will have



continued to be the main thoroughfare through the settlement, and domestic and commercial buildings will have occupied the street frontage. These properties will have occupied burgage plots extending back for some distance from the High Street frontage (HER 05919 & HER 05920). It is thought that the laying out of these burgage plots was more or less contemporary with the creation of the town defences in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Whitchurch is thought to have obtained a charter from Richard I for a weekly market in the 1190s. The market was originally held on a Wednesday, but by the 14<sup>th</sup> century there were two markets, on Mondays and Fridays. In 1362 Edward III granted a charter to John le Strange, lord of the manor, allowing a second fair on 28<sup>th</sup> October (a Whitsun fair had already been granted). The markets will have been held within the defences, most probably in the High Street. (Anderton, 2009, p95; Buteux, 1996, p11.)

**4.6.4** Chance finds and archaeological excavation have demonstrated that significant archaeological features and deposits of medieval date survive within the study area (Buteux, 1996).

#### **4.7 Post-medieval (1540 – 1800) and Modern (1800 – present)**

**4.7.1** Post-medieval occupation in the study area has been documented from archaeological excavation, but is principally evidenced by a number of standing buildings along both sides of the High Street. The reliable cartography for the study area dates from 1761 with the production of George Grey's plan of Whitchurch (Grey, 1761). The principal buildings here have been studied in some detail and published by Madge Moran; she describes High Street thus: (there is "no great display of timber framing – where it survives it is hidden behind brick or stuccoed facades", the exception being no. 21-3 High Street "The Old Shop" (Moran, 1999). Nevertheless, a number of the buildings on High Street are of post-medieval date and include several Listed Buildings.

**4.7.2** There are 15 Listed Buildings on High Street. Starting at the bottom of the west side of High Street, no. 32 High Street (HER 12586, site 40) is a late 18<sup>th</sup> century brick structure (this building is not listed). No. 34 High Street (Grade II, Nat Ref 260654, HER 12587) is a 3 storeyed Georgian house (site 4) with a four-bayed brick frontage, and is thought to have been the townhouse of the Bridgewater family (the post-medieval lords of the manor) or possibly the house of their steward (Moran, 1999, p101). No. 36 and 38 High Street (Grade II, Nat Ref 260655, HER 12588) is a brick house probably incorporating timber framing, dated to 1677 at the rear, and remodelled in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century (site 5). No. 40 and 42 High Street (Grade II, Nat Ref 260656, HER 12589) is a shop and hotel, now a pair of shops (site 6), built in 1904, by William Webb of Whitchurch in red brick with a cast-iron façade cast by McFarlanes of Glasgow. From 1780 to 1904 this was the site of the factory of Joyce clockmakers. It was redeveloped in 1904 by Caleb Birchall for his ironmongery retail business. (Moran, 1999, p102). No. 42a and 44 High Street (Grade II, Nat Ref 260657, HER 19513) is a brick house, now a pair of shops and flats, of early 18<sup>th</sup> century date with some 19<sup>th</sup> century alterations (site 7). The Victoria Hotel, 46 High Street (Grade II, Nat Ref 260658, HER 12590) is a red brick house, now an inn, of early 19<sup>th</sup> century date, incorporating a substantial early 18<sup>th</sup> century core (site 8). Outside the front of the hotel is an 18<sup>th</sup> century red sandstone milestone (site 9) - Milestone adjoining North East Front of Number 46 (Victoria Hotel), High Street (Grade II, Nat Ref 260659, HER 19514). No. 56 High Street (Grade II, Nat Ref 260660, HER 19515) is an early to mid 18<sup>th</sup> century brick house, now a shop and surgery (site 10). And at the top of the west side of the High

Street, no. 58 and 60 High Street (Grade II, Nat Ref 260661, HER 19516) is a pair of early to mid 19<sup>th</sup> century brick houses, now shops, with some timber framing and incorporating a core of probable 17<sup>th</sup> century date (site 11).

**4.7.3** At the bottom of the east side of the High Street, no. 9 High Street (Grade II, Nat Ref 260643, HER 12578) is an early 19<sup>th</sup> century redbrick house and shop (site 12). 19a Bluegates (Grade II, Nat Ref 260644, HER 12579) is an early to mid-17<sup>th</sup> century timber framed building on a brick plinth with painted brick nogging, remodelled in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and refaced in brick with planted timbers (site 13). No. 21-3 High Street "The Old Shop" (Grade II\*, Nat. Ref. 260654, HER 12587) is a timber-framed hall range rebuilt in the late 16<sup>th</sup> or early 17<sup>th</sup> century (site 3). The premises were owned by the Burghall family in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> century it was a pub known as "The Swan" and the alleyway to the south was known as Swan Hill Yard or Bluegates. By 1774 the property had been divided into a number of shop units. (Moran, 1999, p95). 25 High Street (Grade II, Nat Ref 260646, HER 12581) is a red brick house, now a bank, dated to 1753 (rainwater head) with 20<sup>th</sup> century alterations (site 14). No. 27 High Street (HER 12582) is an early 19<sup>th</sup> century brick-fronted building with an earlier timber frame (site 37); this building is not listed. Nos. 35 and 35a High Street (Grade II, Nat Ref 260647, HER 19528) is a pair of brick houses, now shops and a flat, of early 19<sup>th</sup> century date but probably incorporating a 17<sup>th</sup> century core (site 15). Painted brick; the right-hand gable end is rendered (probably over a timber frame) on a sandstone plinth. No. 35 was formerly the "Ring of Bells" public house. (Moran, 1999, p104). Nos. 37 and 39 High Street (Grade II, Nat Ref 260648, HER 13881) are two houses, now 2 shops and a flat, of mid-17<sup>th</sup> century date with late 17<sup>th</sup> century additions, and remodelled in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (site 16). The building is timber framed, with a front wall rebuilt in red brick. A building assessment and photographic survey was undertaken in 2008 on a structure at the rear of 35-37. The structure was shown to be the surviving ground-floor portion of a bay of an early 19<sup>th</sup> century coach house or stable block. (Baker, 2008). Nos. 41-45 (odd) High Street (Grade II, Nat Ref 260649, HER 19510) is a row of three mid to late 17<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed houses, now shops and flats, with early 19<sup>th</sup> century alterations and remodelling in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (site 17). At the top end of the east side of the High Street on the corner with Church Street is "The Black Bear" Public House, 49 High Street (Grade II, Nat Ref 260650, HER 19511) a timber-framed house, now a public house, of late 16<sup>th</sup> or early 17<sup>th</sup> century date with later 17<sup>th</sup> century additions, remodelled in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (site 18).

**4.7.4** There are six Grade II Listed Buildings along St Mary's Street to the rear of the development site. To the southeast of the development site is the site (site 38) of a former timber-framed building with 19<sup>th</sup> century stucco (HER 12602). The town's Heritage Centre occupies the former Post Office, 12 St Mary's Street (Grade II, Nat Ref 260675, HER 12603) originally a Wesleyan Chapel (site 19). The former chapel dates to 1810 and is built of grey sandstone. Sitoni House, 14 St Mary's Street (Grade II, Nat Ref 260676, HER 12604) is an early 19<sup>th</sup> century brick house, now offices (site 20). No. 16 St Mary's Street (Grade II, Nat Ref 260677, HER 12605) and no. 18 St Mary's Street (Grade II, Nat Ref 260678, HER 19522) are both timber-framed houses of probable 17<sup>th</sup> century date, remodelled in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (sites 21 & 22). Set back from the street front, The Hermitage, flats nos. 1 to 7 (consec.), Church Street (Grade II, Nat Ref 260598, HER 19493) is made up of two brick houses, now flats, of mid-to late 18<sup>th</sup> century date with late

20<sup>th</sup> century alterations (site 24) . And at the top of the street, 20 St Mary's Street (Grade II, Nat Ref 260680, HER 12606) is a late 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century timber frame house, remodelled in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (site 23).

**4.7.5 The proposed development site** In the centre of the east side of High Street is the present Whitchurch Civic Centre and Library. The High Street and Bull ring continued in use as a market place throughout the post-medieval period. In 1637 Richard Hyde, bailiff to Thomas Egerton, the lord of the manor, built a market hall (HER 05872) at the bottom of the High Street "a little place in Whitchurch where poore people may sit in the dry and sell butter and cheese" (Anderton, 2009, p97). This was replaced in 1718 by a new brick and sandstone Town Hall and Corn Market (HER 12577, site 35). By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the need for a new, larger, market hall was pressing, and in 1869 the Coach and Horse Inn and neighbouring houses were bought by the Local Board for the construction of a new Town Hall and Market (Anderton, 2009, p102). The layout of the buildings on the Coach and Horses site is shown on a plan of 1761 (SA 212/479/4), and a rare early photograph survives of the Coach and Horses Inn before its demolition, showing it to have a plain, brick frontage. The Town Hall and Market (HER 05870, site 36) was built by John Stringer of Sandbach to designs by the architect Thomas M Lockwood of Chester, was completed at a cost of £6,100, and was opened in 1872, the occasion being marked by a ball (with tickets on sale at 10s 6d). The Local Board had offices on the ground floor, on the High Street frontage, alongside a corn market, with a general market and a small fish market behind. On the first floor was a large hall, the Assembly Rooms. The layout of the ground floor of the Market Hall, Corn Exchange, and Fish Market is shown on the Ordnance Survey Town Plan of Whitchurch of 1880 (OS, 1880; see Fig. 4). The Market Hall was enlarged in 1902 (OS 1901; see Fig. 5). In 1941 fire destroyed the Assembly Rooms (then in use as the Regent Cinema), and considerable damage was done to the Corn Exchange underneath and to the reference library (although exhibits from the museum and art gallery housed there were rescued). Nevertheless, the market continued in use into the 1950s. Plans made of the Town Hall and Market in 1956 and held by Shropshire Archives show that cellars covered the whole of the front of the Town Hall building for a distance of 15.9m back from the street frontage (SA DA15/701/29; see Fig. 6). Soon after 1970 the site was cleared and the present Civic Centre was erected in 1982. Two town houses on St Mary's Street (Nos 10 and 12) were also demolished (HER 14048, site 39). (Anderton, 2009, p104-7). It is not known whether the Library building along the northern side of the proposed development site was also cellared.

## **5 IMPACT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST**

### **5.1 Impact on the Setting of Designated Heritage Assets**

**5.1.1** Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5) defines the setting of a heritage asset as “the surroundings in which (the asset) is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.” (English Heritage, 2011, p3). This definition remains unchanged for the current National Planning Policy Framework (*English Heritage Commentary on the National Planning Policy Framework*, March 2012)

### **5.1.2 Designated Heritage Assets**

The designated heritage assets within and immediately adjacent to the study area are listed in section 4.1.1 above and section 7.1.2 below. The proposed development site is not visible from the Grade I Listed St Alkmund’s Church or from the Scheduled Ancient Monument in the churchyard.

**5.1.3** It is considered that the proposed development will have a moderate positive impact on the setting of the designated heritage assets on the High Street, by replacing the present concrete, brick, steel and glass frontage with a frontage design that is more in sympathy with the immediate built environment. The development would have a neutral effect on the designated heritage assets on St Mary’s Street to the rear.

### **5.2 Impact on the non-designated assets**

**5.2.1 Significance of recorded archaeological features** This assessment has identified that finds of Roman pottery and artefacts were made on the proposed development site on three separate occasions in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. None of these findings were made under archaeological conditions.

**5.2.2 Potential for archaeological remains** This desk-based assessment has identified that there is a high potential for significant archaeological deposits of Roman to post-medieval date within the northern part of the proposed development site. The southern half of the development site was excavated for cellars beneath the Town Hall in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and archaeological features and deposits will have been removed from this part of the site.

**5.2.3 Survival of archaeological remains** If there is no former cellarge beneath the Library and The Mall passageway, the potential survival of any archaeological remains here is considered to be high. Previous archaeological investigation has demonstrated that archaeological deposits survive in the area of the High Street at a relatively shallow depth below the ground surface.

**5.2.4 Potential impact of the proposed development** The re-location of the front wall of the Civic Centre will require excavation for foundations that would remove any surviving archaeological deposits. Excavation for services including drainage would have a similar effect. The proposed repaving of the High Street and associated drainage works and services may impact on early road surfaces and deposits on the street frontage.

## **6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

**6.1** In view of the above it is considered that limited trial excavation may need to be undertaken in order to assess the survival, quality, condition and relative significance of the archaeological features and deposits within the northern part of the study area covered by the present library part of the building and “The Mall” passageway.

**6.2** Depending on the results of this evaluation, further archaeological provision may be required in mitigation of any loss to the archaeological resource from the proposed development.

## **7 REFERENCES AND SOURCES CONSULTED**

### **7.1 Sources**

The repositories and sources consulted for the desk-based assessment included the Shropshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and Shropshire Archives (SA).

#### **7.1.2 Shropshire Historic Environment Record**

Aerial Photography:

Digital Aerial photographs provided by GetMapping held as part of Shropshire Council's GIS database

HER computer files for Primary Record Numbers (PRNs):

Scheduled Ancient Monuments:

HER 01038, Sundial in St Alkmund's churchyard, Salop 247, (site1)

Grade I Listed Buildings:

HER 00906 & 05902, Church of Saint Alkmund, Church Street, Nat Ref 260599, (site 2)

Grade II\* Listed Buildings:

HER 12580, The Old Shop, 21 and 23 High Street, 260645, (site 3)

Grade II Listed Buildings:

HER 12587, 34 High Street, Nat Ref 260654, (site 4)

HER 12588, 36 and 38 High Street, Nat Ref 260655, (site 5)

HER 12589, 40 and 42 High Street, Nat Ref 260656, (site 6)

HER 19513, 42a and 44 High Street, Nat Ref 260657, (site 7)

HER 12590, Victoria Hotel, 46 High Street, Nat Ref 260658, (site 8)

HER 19514, Milestone adjoining North East Front of Number 46 (Victoria Hotel), High Street, Nat Ref 260659, (site 9)

HER 19515, 56 High Street, Nat Ref 260660, (site 10)

HER 19516, 58 and 60 High Street, Nat Ref 260661, (site 11)

HER 12578, 9 High Street, Nat Ref 260643, (site 12)

HER 12579, 19a Bluegates, Nat Ref 260644, (site 13)

HER 12581, 25 High Street, Nat Ref 260646, (site 14)

HER 19528, 35 and 35a High Street, Nat Ref 260647, (site 15)

HER 13881, 37 and 39 High Street, Nat Ref 260648, (site 16)

HER 19510, 41-45 (odd) High Street, Nat Ref 260649, (site 17)

HER 19511, The Black Bear Public House, 49 High Street, Nat Ref 260650, (site 18)

HER 12603, Post Office, 12 St Mary's Street, Nat Ref 260675, (site 19)

HER 12604, Sitoni House, 14 St Mary's Street, Nat Ref 260676, (site 20)

HER 12605, 16 St Mary's Street, Nat Ref 260677, (site 21)

HER 19522, 18 St Mary's Street, Nat Ref 260678, (site 22)

HER 12606, 20 St Mary's Street, Nat Ref 260680, (site 23)

HER 19493, The Hermitage, flats nos. 1 to 7 (consec.), Church Street, Nat Ref 260598, (site 24)

Non-designated sites:

HER 00066 Roman Road from Wroxeter to Rutinium, Whitchurch and Chester, (site 25)

HER 00909 Whitchurch Roman fort, (site 26)

HER 02702 Whitchurch Roman town, (site 27)

HER 05868 Roman town defences, Whitchurch, (site 28)

HER 05869 Roman street system, Whitchurch, (site 29)

HER 05914 Roman occupation to west of High St, Whitchurch

HER 05915 Roman occupation to east of High St, Whitchurch

HER 05852 Roman Pottery, Town Hall site, Whitchurch, (site 30)

HER 05814 Roman pottery from Whitchurch, (site 31)  
HER 05909 Roman pottery, Civic Centre, Whitchurch, (site 32)  
HER 05912 Roman finds, Victoria Hotel, High St, Whitchurch, (site 33)  
HER 05832 Finds from 33, High St, Whitchurch, (site 34)  
HER 05959 Medieval urban form, Whitchurch  
HER 05942 Medieval street system, Whitchurch  
HER 05867 Medieval town defences, Whitchurch, (site 35)  
HER 05919 Burgage plots on east side of High St, Whitchurch  
HER 05920 Burgage plots to west of High St, Whitchurch  
HER 05960 Post Medieval urban form, Whitchurch  
HER 05951 Post Medieval street system, Whitchurch  
HER 12577 Post medieval Town Hall and Corn Exchange (site 36)  
HER 05870 19th century Town Hall, High St, Whitchurch, (site 37)  
HER 05821 Watching brief at 21-23, High St, Whitchurch  
HER 12582 27 High Street, Whitchurch, (site 38)  
HER 12602 Premises Occupied by Evans & Sons, St Marys Street, Whitchurch, (site 39)  
HER 14048 Site of 10 & 12 St Mary's Street, Whitchurch, (site 40)  
HER 12586 32 High Street (site 41)

HER files for events:

ESA 4938 Central Marches Historic Towns Survey  
ESA 89 1993 WB on test pits in High Street, Whitchurch by SCCAS  
ESA 885 1995 evaluation of 34/40 Market Street by Giffords  
ESA 4972 1996 evaluation of 34/40 Market Street by Giffords  
ESA 4763 2001 WB at the car park at Castle Hill, Whitchurch by Giffords  
ESA 6024 2006 April Evaluation at 11 - 11A High Street, Whitchurch by L - P Archaeology  
ESA 6056 2006 June Evaluation at 11 - 11A High Street, Whitchurch by L - P Archaeology  
ESA 6217 2008 building assessment of a structure at the rear of 35-37 High Street,  
Whitchurch, by Nigel Baker

### **7.1.2 Shropshire Archives:**

Among the various sources consulted at Shropshire Archives, the following proved the most productive sources of information for the particular requirements of this assessment of the study area:

Cartographic sources

Ordnance Survey Town Plan of Whitchurch 1880 1:500 Shropshire Sheet No. VII.4.4  
Ordnance Survey 1880 & 1901 1:2500 (25") Shropshire Sheet No. VII.4  
Field-name maps by H D G Foxall from the Tithe Apportionment and maps  
Block Plan of Whitchurch Town Hall, c. 1930, SA Ref DA15/701/21  
Block Plan of Whitchurch Town Hall Cellars and Corn Exchange, 1956, SA Ref  
DA15/701/29

Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society

## 7.2 Other sources and bibliography

- Anderton, P**, 2009: *Exploring Whitchurch History – Growth of a Shropshire Town*, WHAG
- Baker N J**, 2008: *An historic building assessment of a structure at the rear of 35-37 High Street, Whitchurch*
- Barton, J, (ed)**, 2000: *Whitchurch Remembered (Millenium Edition)*, WHAG
- British Geological Survey** 2010: *Geology of Britain Viewer*. Online resource at [http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer\\_google/googleviewer.html](http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html) viewed 20 November 2012
- Buteux, V**, 1996: *Archaeological Assessment of Whitchurch, Shropshire*, Hereford and Worcester County Council Archaeology Service Report No. 354
- Discovering Shropshire's History** website:  
<http://www.shropshirehistory.org.uk/html/search/verb/GetRecord/theme:20070302102331> viewed 20 November 2012
- Duggan, T C**, 1935 *History of Whitchurch, Shropshire*, Whitchurch
- Earnshaw, D, et al**, 1980: *Whitchurch Remembered*, Shrewsbury
- Eyton, Rev. W**, 1861: *Antiquities of Shropshire*, vol. x, p14-25
- Hannaford, H R**, 1993: *A Watching Brief in the High Street, Whitchurch, Shropshire*, Shropshire County Council Archaeology Service Report No. 27
- Moran, M**, 1999: *Vernacular Buildings of Whitchurch and Area and their occupants*, Almeley
- Perkins, J L**, 1997: *Report on an Archaeological Evaluation at 34/40 High Street, Whitchurch, Shropshire*, Gifford and Partners Report No. B0297.2R
- Shropshire News Sheet** 1978: *Whitchurch Archaeological Group- Archaeological Investigations*, SNS 8 October 1978, p6-8
- Statter, C**, 2006: *Archaeological Evaluation report of 11/11a High Street, Whitchurch*, L-P:Archaeology Doc Ref LP0449C-AER-v1.4
- Thompson E P**, 1903: *Find of an Ancient Pottery Vase at Whitchurch*, TSAHS Ser 3, Vol III (Vol 26), pxxvii.
- Thorn, F and Thorn, C (eds)**, 1986: *Domesday Book: Shropshire*, Chichester
- Trumper, D, & Farlow, R**, 2010: *Around Whitchurch and Market Drayton*, Stroud

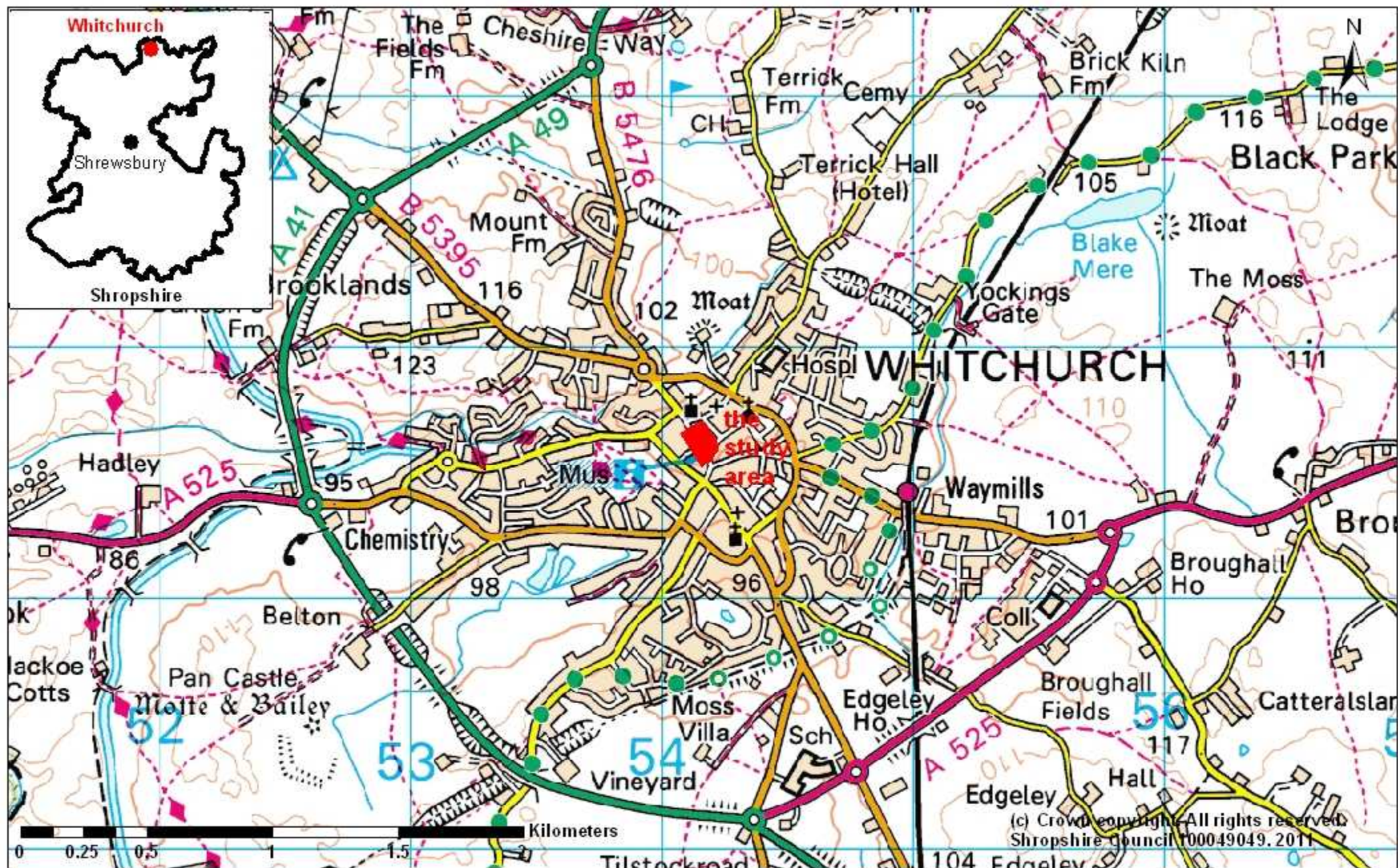
### Cartographic sources

- 1752 **Rocque, J**, 1752: *Actual Survey of the County of Salop*
- 1761 **Grey, G**, 1761: *Map of Whitchurch Manor and Town*
- 1808 **Baugh, R**, 1808: *Map of Shropshire*, Llanymynech
- 1827 **Greenwood, C**, 1827: *Map of the County of Salop*
- 1841 Tithe Apportionment map for Whitchurch Township in the Parish of Whitchurch (SA ref P303/T/1/4)
- 1841 **Foxall, H D G**, 1978: Fieldname map based on Tithe Apportionment and Map for Whitchurch Township in the Parish of Whitchurch, 1841
- 1880 **OS** Town Plan of Whitchurch, 1:500, 1880 Shropshire Sheet No. VII.4.4
- 1880 **OS** 1880 25" (1:2,500) 1<sup>st</sup> edition, Shropshire Sheet VII.4
- 1901 **OS** 1901 25" (1:2,500) 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Shropshire Sheet VII.4
- 1930 Block Plan of Whitchurch Town Hall, c. 1930, SA ref DA15/701/21
- 1956 **Sanders, F W**, Block Plan of Whitchurch Town Hall Cellars and Corn Exchange, 1956, SA ref DA15/701/29
- 1999 **UK Perspectives**, 1999 (digital aerial photography)
- 2010 **GetMapping**, 2010 (digital aerial photography)

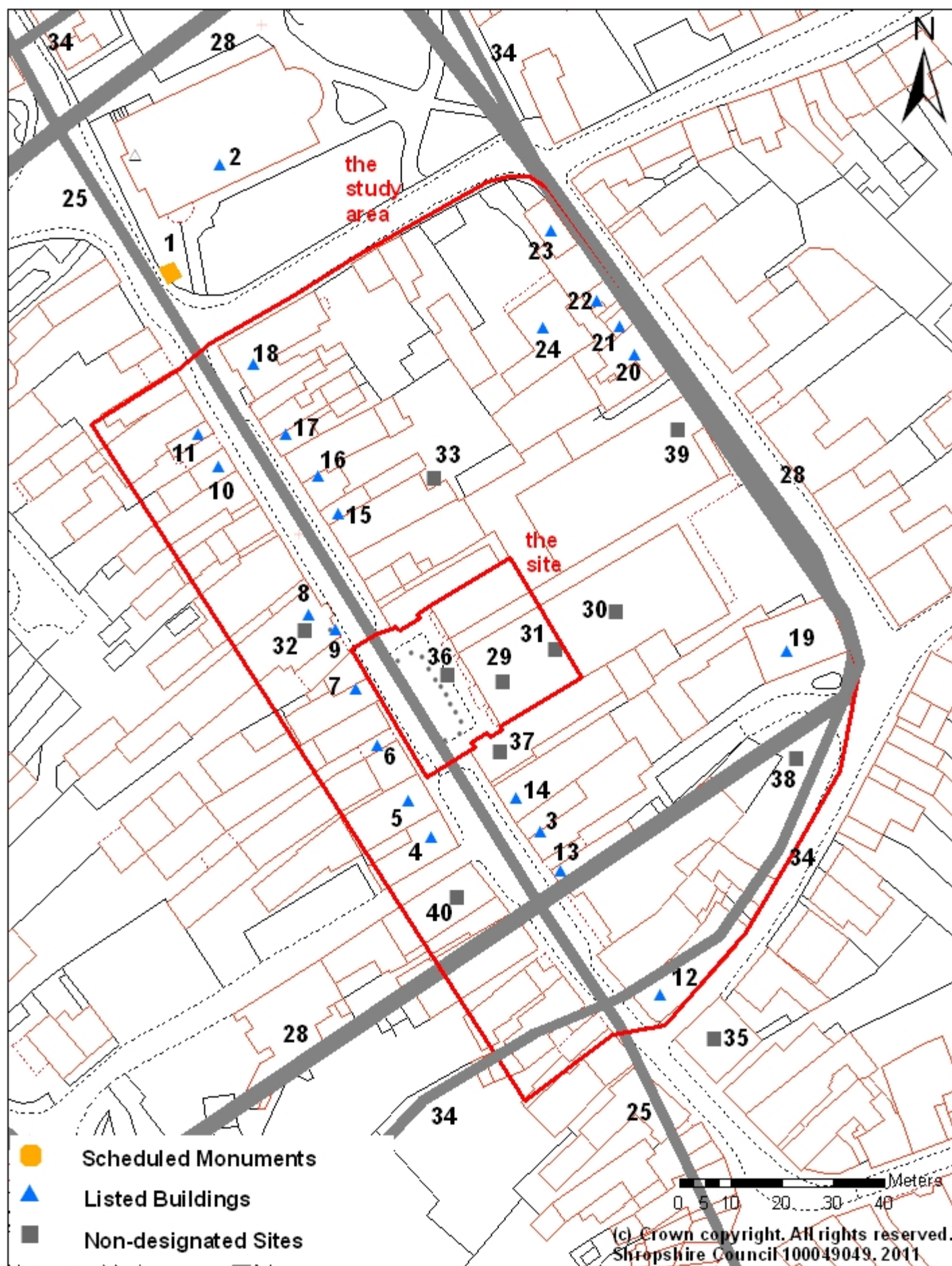
### ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AOD</b>	Above Ordnance Datum
<b>BGS</b>	British Geological Survey
<b>CMHTS</b>	Central Marches Historic Towns Survey
<b>OS</b>	Ordnance Survey
<b>HER</b>	County Historic Environment Record, Shirehall, Shrewsbury
<b>SA</b>	Shropshire Archives, Castle Gates, Shrewsbury
<b>SNS</b>	Shropshire News Sheet, Shropshire Archaeological Society
<b>TCSVFC</b>	Transactions of the Caradoc and Severn Valley Field Club
<b>TSAHS</b>	Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society
<b>TSAS</b>	Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society
<b>WHAG</b>	Whitchurch History & Archaeology Group











## WHITCHURCH CIVIC CENTRE 2012

Figure 3: Extract from the 1761 George Grey map of Whitchurch Manor and Town, showing the study area

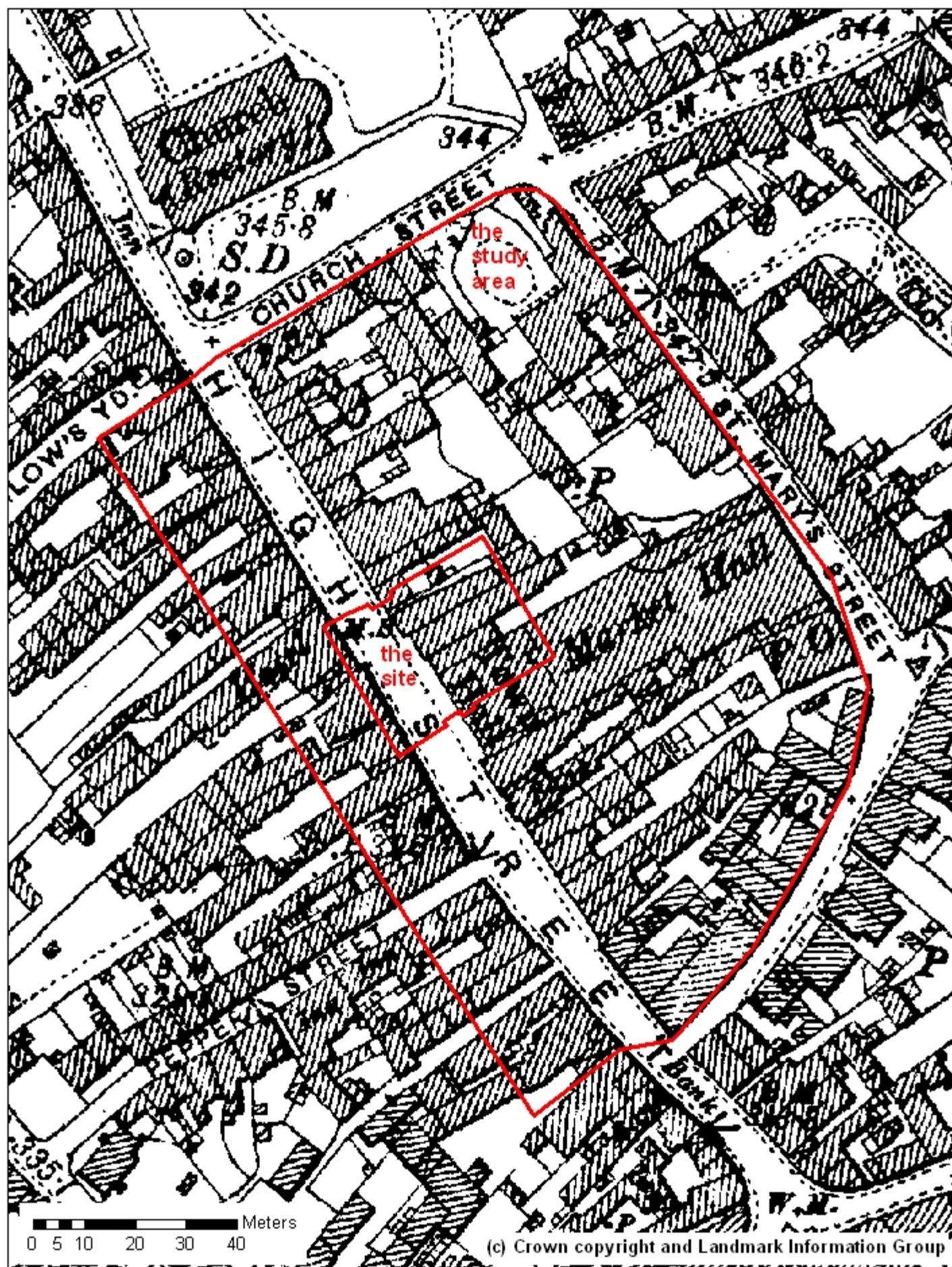




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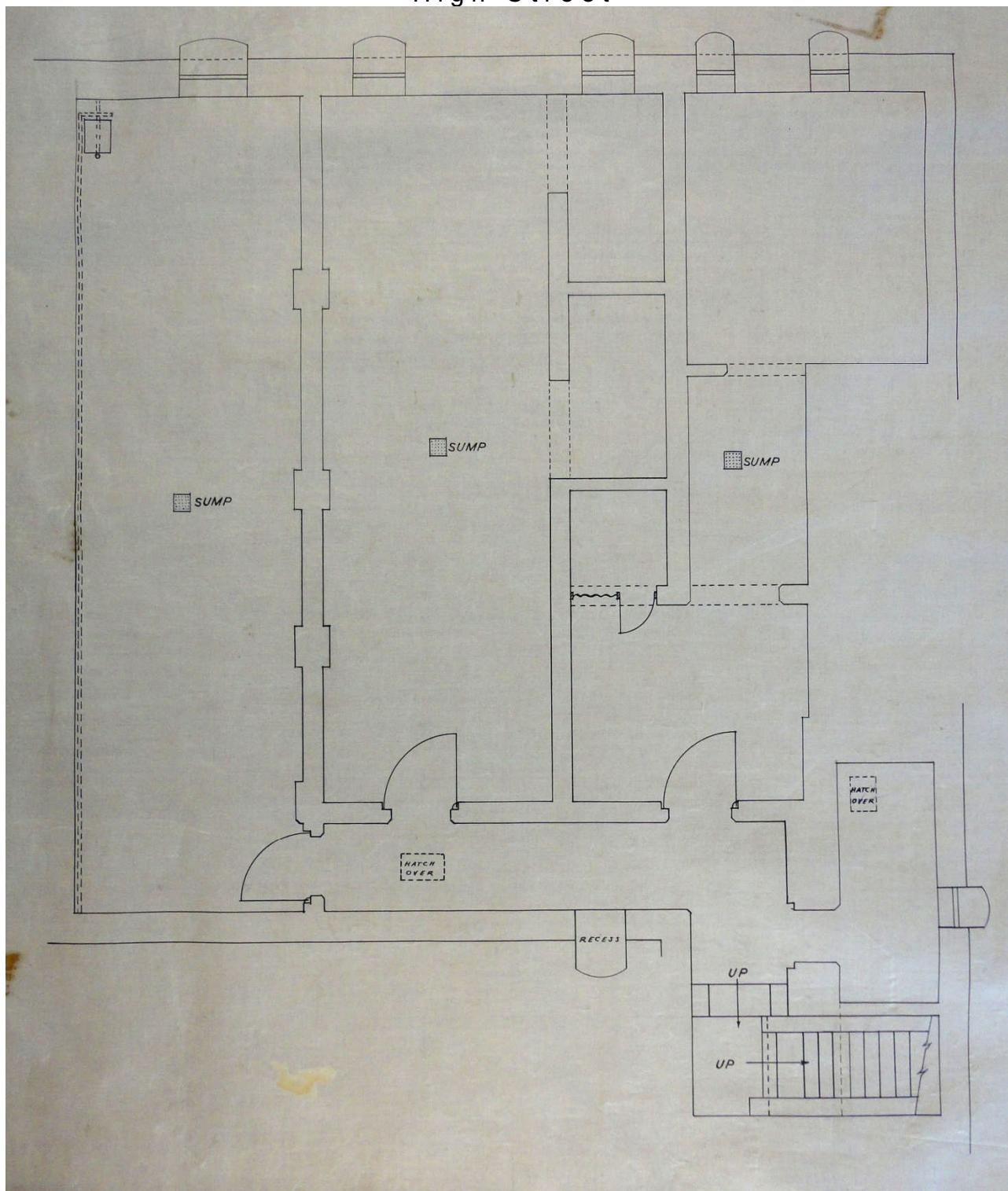
## WHITCHURCH CIVIC CENTRE 2012

Figure 4: Extract from the 1880 OS Town Plan, Sheet VII.4.4, showing the study area (not to scale)





High Street



© Shropshire Archives

0 5 metres

WHITCHURCH CIVIC CENTRE 2012

Figure 6: Extract from the 1956 plan of the Whitchurch Town Hall cellars (SA Ref DA15/701/29)



*An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment of Alterations to the  
Whitchurch Civic Centre, Whitchurch, Shropshire, 2012*



Photo 1: Whitchurch Civic Centre, looking NE



Photo 2: The High Street, looking NW



Photo 3: The High Street, looking SE

WHITCHURCH CIVIC CENTRE 2012