

**A WATCHING BRIEF AT
27 SHEINTON STREET, MUCH WENLOCK, SHROPSHIRE 2016**

by
H R HANNAFORD MCIFA

A Report for

Mr J & Mrs C Wilson

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In October 2016 the Archaeology Service carried out a watching brief on groundworks associated with a development at 27 Sheinton Street, Much Wenlock, Shropshire TF13 6HY (NGR SO 6220 0028). The works comprised the erection of Erection of a single storey rear extension and associated works.

1.2 The development site is located on the edge of the Medieval settlement of Much Wenlock (Shropshire Historic Environment Record [HER] No. 05029) as defined in the Central Marches Historic Towns Survey, adjacent to part of the Medieval street system (HER 05019) forming a hollow way in this location (HER 05032), and within a group of tenement plots of possible Medieval date, west of Sheinton Street (HER 05005).

1.3 It was therefore considered possible that archaeological features and deposits relating to the medieval and later development of the town might survive on the proposed development site.

1.4 Because of the potential archaeological significance of the development area it was made a condition of the planning consent that the development should be accompanied by a programme of archaeological work, to comprise a watching brief on groundworks associated with the development (Planning Ref. 15/01496/FUL). The Archaeology Service, Shropshire Council was commissioned to carry out this programme of archaeological work.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The town of Much Wenlock is known to have been occupied since Roman times. Evidence for a Roman settlement has come from a number of chance finds from the town and it has been suggested that the town was the centre of a pagan water-cult. A late Roman or early Saxon cemetery within the modern town was discovered in 1983-4, when three burials (HER 03768) were found beneath 23 Barrow Street, and subsequently provided radio-carbon dates ranging from the 3rd to 7th centuries AD. (Buteux, 1996, 2-4; Staelens 1985 & 1995; HER 03768)

2.2 A monastery at Wenlock was founded some time after 654AD (HER 00307). Anglo-Saxon settlement remains in the form of timber lined pits and Stafford-ware pottery were identified during salvage recording in The Square in 1988 (HER 05013).

2.3 In c. 1080, the abbey was (again) re-founded as a Benedictine monastery. The religious house and settlement at Much Wenlock were recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086 (Thorn and Thorn, 1986). A weekly market was established by 1224, and by the mid 13th century the settlement was calling itself a borough (Buteux, 1996, 2). The monastery was dissolved in 1540, and most of the abbey buildings were allowed to decay.

2.4 Cloth manufacture was the town's principal industry in the medieval period, and continued to be so through the earlier post-medieval period. The manufacture of clay tobacco pipes had become the town's chief industry by the early 18th century. A period of growth in the early 19th century resulted from increased limestone quarrying and lime burning. Although some limestone quarrying continues on Wenlock Edge just outside the town, lime-burning in the area had ceased by the early 20th century (Buteux, 1996, 2).

2.5 The study area lies within a block of tenements of possible Medieval date, on the west side of Sheinton Street (HER 05005). There have been no previous archaeological interventions in the immediate vicinity of 27 Sheinton Street. In 1993 "Time Team" carried out an excavation as part of a programme broadcast in 1993 on the east side of Sheinton Street, closer to the town centre, to the rear of No. 48. The excavations recorded a series of rear boundary features, the earlier, at least, of medieval date (Time Team, 1993).

3 THE WATCHING BRIEF

3.1 The watching brief at 27 Sheinton Street was carried out on 3rd October 2016. The area of the new extension lay on the site of an existing garden patio terrace cut into the side of the hill to the northwest of the house. The patio slabs and a section of the modern terrace wall (Fig.3; 2) along the northwest side of the patio had been removed and the showed that the patio had already been cut down into the natural clay subsoil (9).

3.2 The removed section of wall showed that beneath the topsoil (1) and garden soil deposits (4 – 6) a deposit of burnt clay (8) and grey to buff redeposited subsoil (7) had been cut through when the patio had been originally created. No dating evidence was associated with these deposits, though they were likely to be of post-medieval date.

3.3 No other significant archaeological features or deposits were recorded during the watching brief.

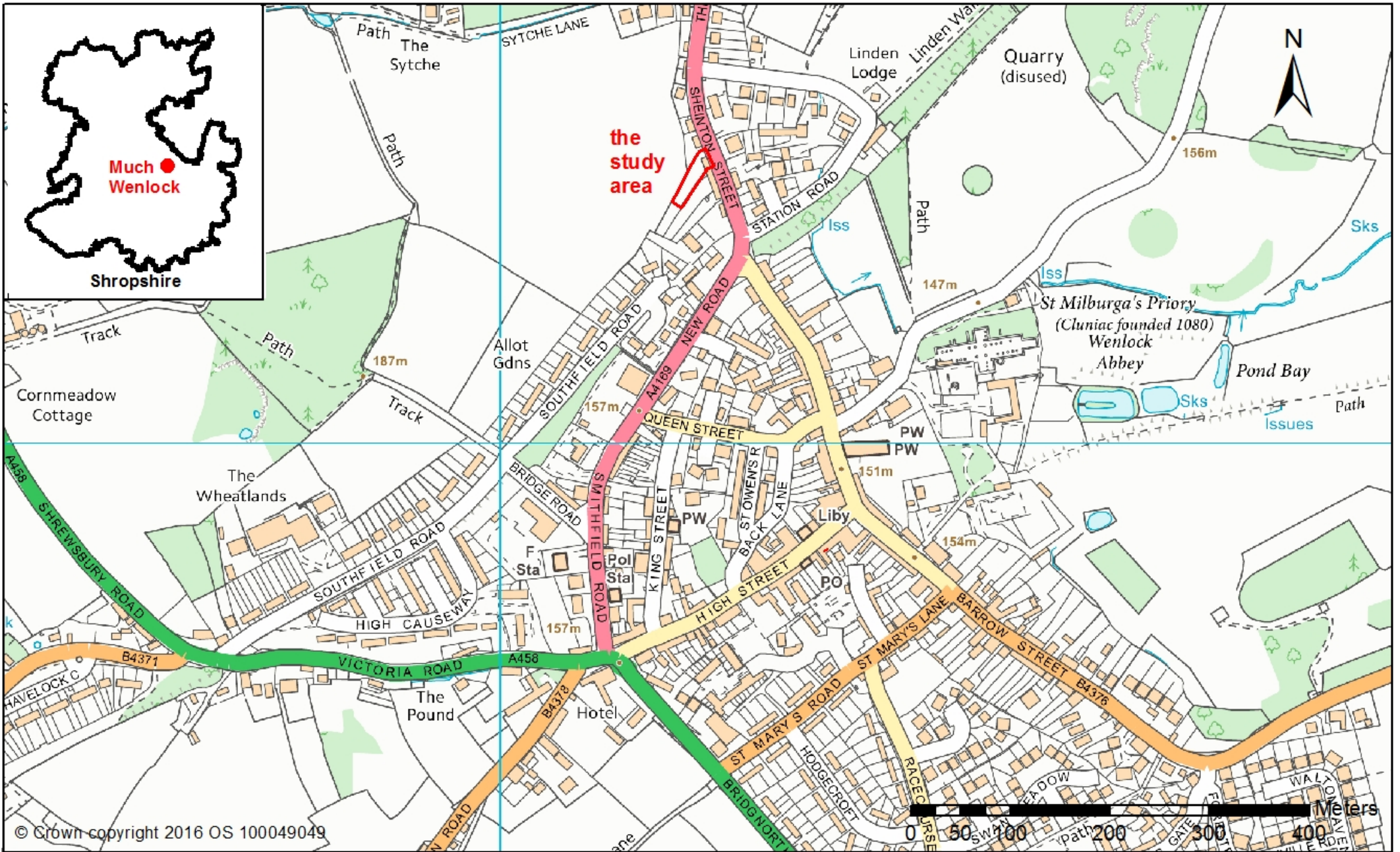
4 REFERENCES

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ABBREVIATIONS

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



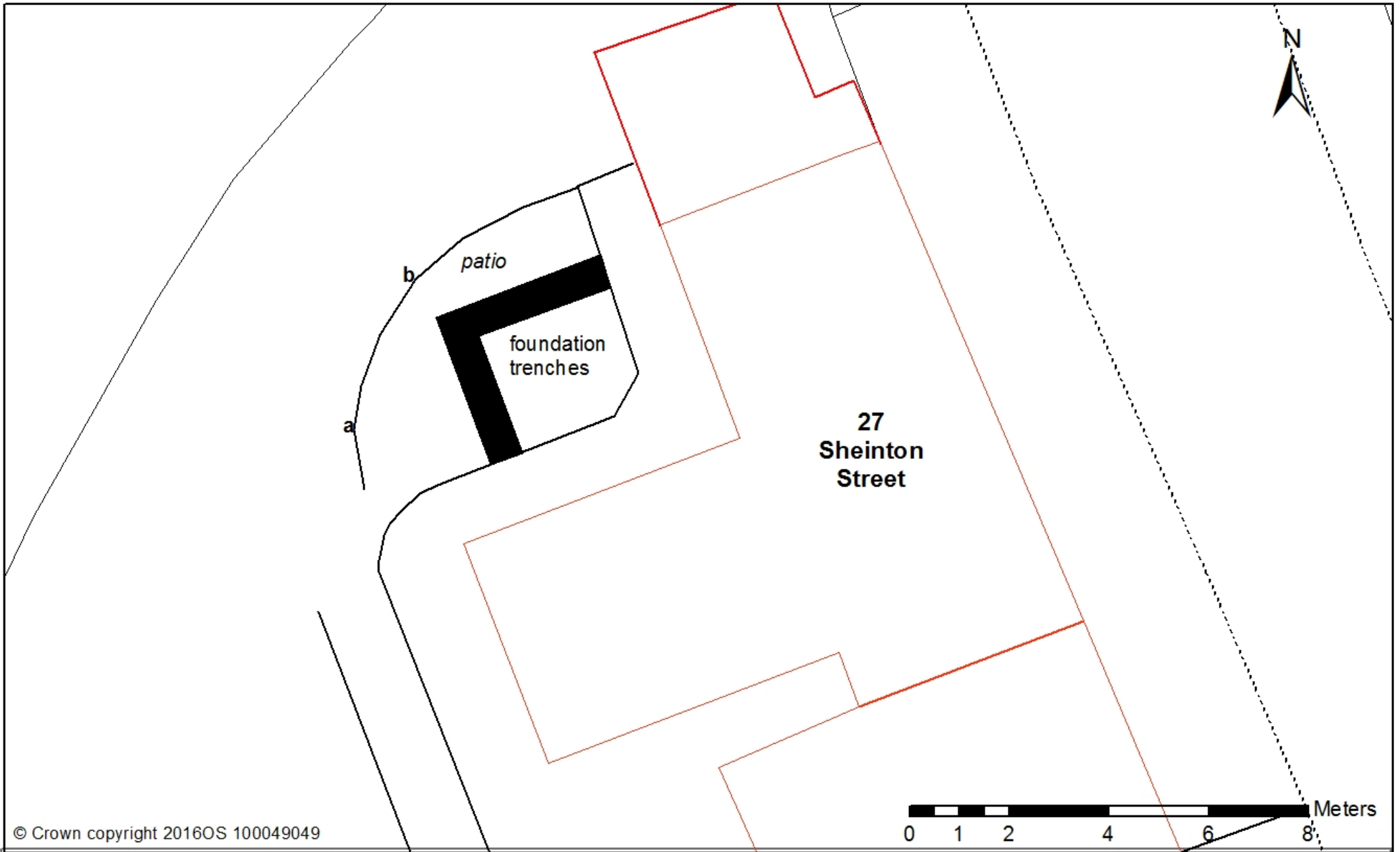
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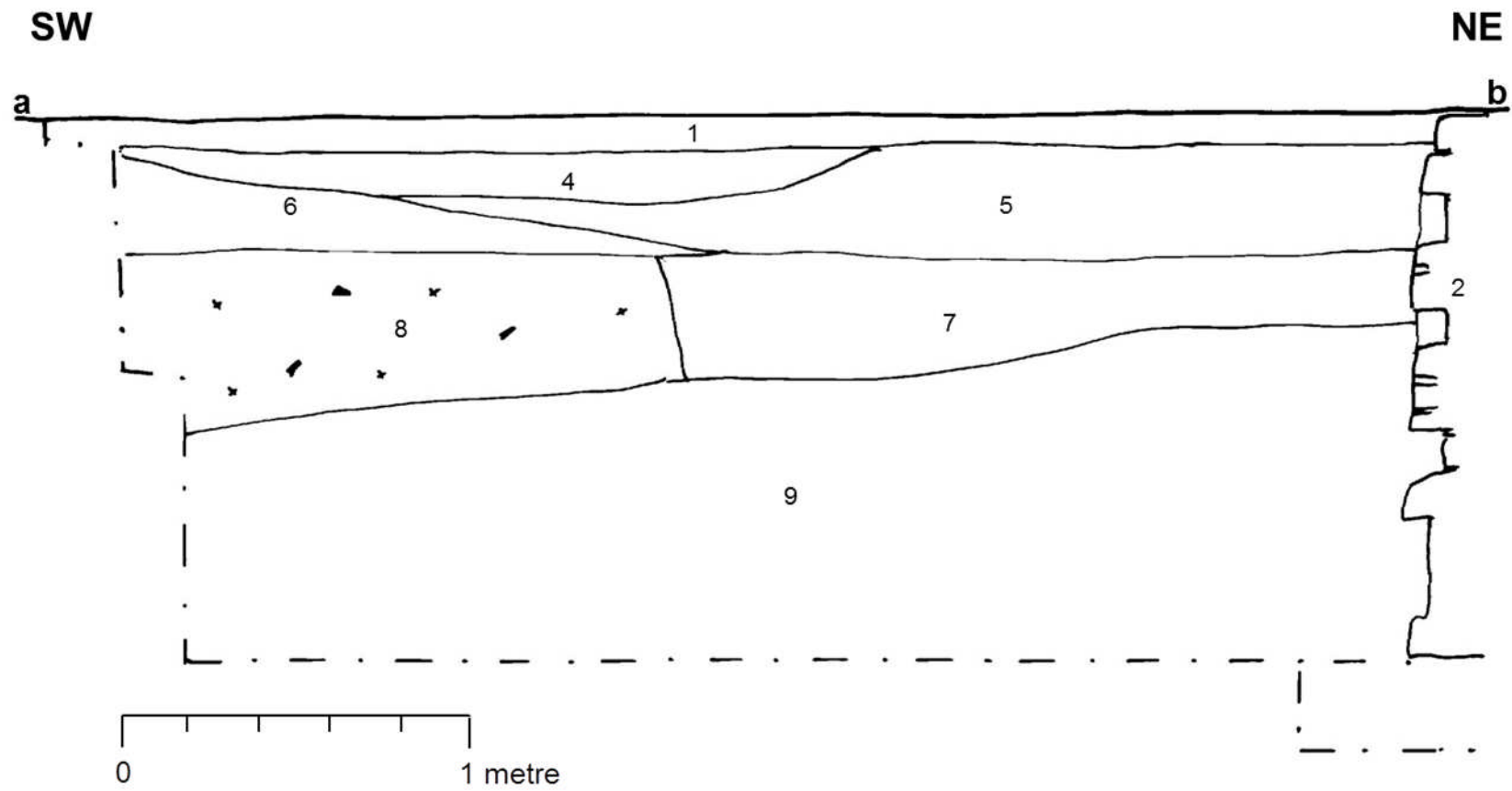


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 Figure 1: The location of the study area

Archaeology Service,
 Historic Environment Team, Shropshire Council,
 Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND

Scale: 1:5,001





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Figure 3: Deposits exposed behind the removed section of the modern patio terrace wall; scale: 1:20 (for location, see Fig. 2, a – b)



Photo 1: The development site showing the deposits behind the patio terrace wall; looking NW; scale bar 1m



Photo 2: The development site; looking NE

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