

*Archaeological recording at*  
***The Old Rectory, College Street,  
Ludlow, Shropshire, 2016***

by  
H R Hannaford

Archaeology Service



**ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING AT  
THE OLD RECTORY, COLLEGE STREET,  
LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, 2016**

by

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A report for

**MR SIMON GRAY**

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## SUMMARY

*In the second half of 2016 work began on alterations and repairs to The Old Rectory, 4 College Street, Ludlow. The alterations were relatively minor, however some of the necessary repairs and refurbishment in the event were more extensive. The work also involved the construction of a single storey rear extension, following the demolition of an existing structure. The work was accompanied by a programme of archaeological work, comprising building recording of the areas affected by the alterations and a watching brief on the groundworks for the new extension.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

**1.1** Ludlow is situated near the southern side of the county of Shropshire. College Street lies in the northern part of the medieval core of the town, (Shropshire Historic Environment Record [HER] PRN 06293) running from the High Street up to and through the northern side of the town's medieval defences (Fig. 1). St Laurence's Church and churchyard lie on the eastern side of the street. The western side of the street is built up with housing, including a row of former almshouses at the High Street end and the Old Rectory at the northern end (NGR SO 5110 7474) where the street crosses the town walls (Fig. 2).

**1.2** In 2016 work began at The Old Rectory to erect a single storey rear extension, following the demolition of an existing structure, and to carry out some minor internal alterations.

**1.3** The Old Rectory is a Grade II\* Listed Building (National Ref: 1220817) and is a house of 17<sup>th</sup> century date with a 14<sup>th</sup> century core, comprising roughcast walls and an old plain tile roof. The house consists of three distinct units, two of which, the northern range and the crosswing, have been dendro-chronologically dated to 1313-1328 (Moran, 2003). The Old Rectory lies within a group of tenement plots north of Castle St and west of College St, (PRN 06243), and also lies immediately adjacent to the Scheduled and Listed remains of the Ludlow Town Defences (National Ref: 1006278 & 1202825) and the Linley Gate (PRN 01767).

**1.4** Because of the potential significance of the archaeological resource it was made a condition of the planning consent for the works (Ref. No. 16/01386/FUL) that they should be accompanied by a programme of archaeological work, to comprise an archaeological watching brief and building recording. The architects for the scheme had commissioned measured scale plans and elevations for the existing structure.

**1.5** The aim of the programme of archaeological work was intended to allow for the preservation by record of any historic fabric that might be lost or altered by the works, and of any archaeological remains that might be encountered during the groundworks.

**1.6** The Archaeology Service, Shropshire Council, was commissioned by Arrol and Snell Ltd., Architects, on behalf of their client, to carry out the programme of archaeological work.

## 2 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

**2.1** There is evidence for prehistoric activity on the hill occupied by the modern Ludlow 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).

**2.2** It has been suggested that Corve St follows the line of a Roman road, part of a postulated road between Gloucester (*Glevum*) and Wroxeter (*Viroconium Cornoviorum*) (Shoesmith and Johnson, 2000, p6-7). Although the existence of this road between Ashton (Herefs.) and its supposed junction with Watling Street (South) in the Craven Arms area (and particularly its course through Ludlow) is entirely conjectural, Roman occupation has recently been found during excavations (HER Event Record ESA 7638) in the Pepper Street area of Ludlow town centre (Crooks & Logan, 2015).

**2.3** 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; Lloyd, 2008, p52).

**2.4** 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. 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)

**2.5 The Town Wall** The town of Ludlow 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 already in existence were excluded from the defended area, becoming extra-mural suburbs.

**2.6 Tenement plots** The study area sits within a tenement plot component defined by Castle Street, College Street, Ludlow Castle and the town defences. The component contains a medieval building (The Old Rectory, PRN 11087) and a number of post medieval buildings. It has been suggested that the burgage plots in this area were laid out as part of a plan unit in the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century. This is identified as the earliest element of the town (although later than the rural settlement focus at Dinham).

## **2.7 The Old Rectory**

The Old Rectory is described and discussed by Moran in 'Vernacular Buildings of Shropshire' with elevation, plan, and a reconstruction drawings (Moran, 2003, pp 112 & 141-6). Dye-line copies of the originals of these drawings are held by the Shropshire Historic Environment Record (HER). Moran identifies three distinct units, two of which (the northern range and the crosswing) were dendro-dated to 1313-28. The northern range is set parallel to the street and originally comprised a stone undercroft with an open-roofed chamber above. The central crosswing was a timber-frame two-bayed cart entrance with a jettied upper chamber. The southern range, also parallel to the street, was of 16<sup>th</sup> century date, with a second floor accommodation in the roof space.

## **3 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING**

**3.1** The Archaeology Service made an initial visit in early July 2016 to carry out the recording of the parts of the Old Rectory that were to be subject to alterations and required prior recording. These included the hall screen and partition inside the entranceway, the south wall of the undercroft, and the outshot kitchen. Recording of other areas if required was to be scheduled immediately prior to works being started. Further visits were accordingly made in November 2016 to record features revealed during the initial stages of the works following the removal of certain modern partitions and some internal render in the undercroft, and again in January 2017. There was no evidence from the watching brief and recording to alter the conclusions arrived at in the 2003 assessment of the building.

### **3.2 Ground floor**

**3.2.1 Entrance Hall.** A drawn and photographic record was made of a partition screen in the entrance hall prior to its removal. The partition did not appear to be original, and was made of re-used timbers. (See Figs. 4 & 5 and Photos 2 & 3)

**3.2.2 Sitting room.** In the south range, removal of the plaster from the west wall of the sitting room revealed a siltstone wall with a brick insert of 19<sup>th</sup> century date for a former range which had itself been removed and infilled with a smaller brick fireplace. (See Photo 4).

**3.2.3 Undercroft.** A possible former fireplace was suspected in the south wall of the undercroft. The modern plaster was removed to reveal a possible blocked opening, with a vertical join on its west side, but an irregular joint on its eastern side. There was no sign of a chimney space rising from this so it was decided not attempt to open up this feature. (Photo 5.)

Modern panelling and plasterwork were also removed from the northern end of the undercroft. A doorway in the north wall of the undercroft gave access to a narrow void in the wall. It was suggested that the back of this void may have been the rear face of the Town Wall; this is considered unlikely, though not impossible, but if so the town wall would have to be 4m thick here.

**3.2.4 Kitchen/Outshot extension.** The interior of the kitchen was photographed before demolition (Photo 6.), and an inspection made of the ground following removal of the existing floor. The soils beneath the floor comprised 20cms of disturbed brown clay loam over the top of the natural siltstone bedrock surface. The only feature revealed was a stone-lined well with an internal diameter of about 0.7m (Fig. 2; Photo 14).

### **3.3 1<sup>st</sup> Floor**

**3.3.1 Hall (drawing room).** There was limited work proposed in the In the hall (drawing room). The central ceiling beam below the partition between bedrooms 1 and 2 required repairs and a wood-burning stove was to be installed in the fireplace. The opportunity was taken to record the fireplace in the south end of the room (Figure 7; Photo 7). The sides of the fireplace are of grey sandstone with trefoil headed side panels, of probable late medieval date. The lintel comprised a timber beam.

### **3.4 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor**

**3.4.1** The partition between bedrooms 1 and 2 was about 60cms thick, and the removal of the modern plasterboard revealed why this partition was so unusually thick. The modern plasterboard had been masking a timber frame leaning to the north. The exposed frame was photographed and a measured sketch drawing made (Fig. 6; Photos 8 & 9). The intention was to re-instate the leaning frame to the vertical.

**3.4.2** A new stairwell was inserted in bedroom 4 up in to the roof-space above the bedroom in the southern range (Photo 11). The location of the new stairwell was positioned to minimise the need for alterations to the historic fabric of the ceiling joists. There was limited opportunity to photograph the roof space (Photo 12). Looking south, an earlier truss has been incorporated into the 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century brickwork at the end of the building representing the party wall with the adjoining property (Photo13). It has been suggested that this may be a remnant of an earlier open hall in this location.

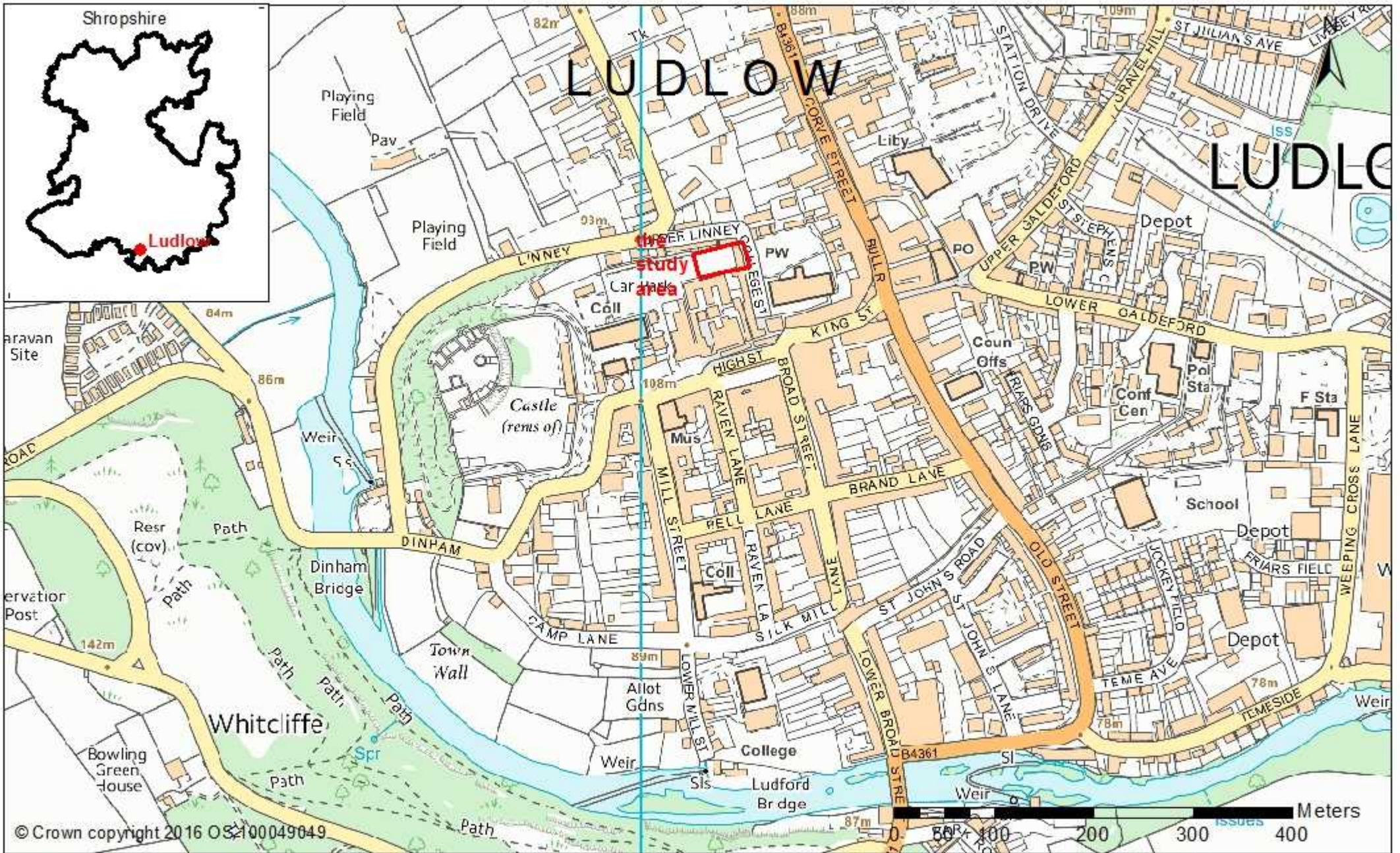
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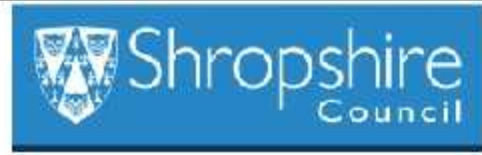
## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>BAR</b>	British Archaeological Reports
<b>BGS</b>	British Geological Survey
<b>CMHTS</b>	The Central Marches Historic Towns Survey
<b>HER</b>	County Historic Environment Record, Shirehall, Shrewsbury
<b>OS</b>	Ordnance Survey
<b>SA</b>	Shropshire Archives, Castle Gates, Shrewsbury
<b>SNL</b>	Shropshire News Letter, Shropshire Archaeological Society
<b>TSAHS</b>	Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society





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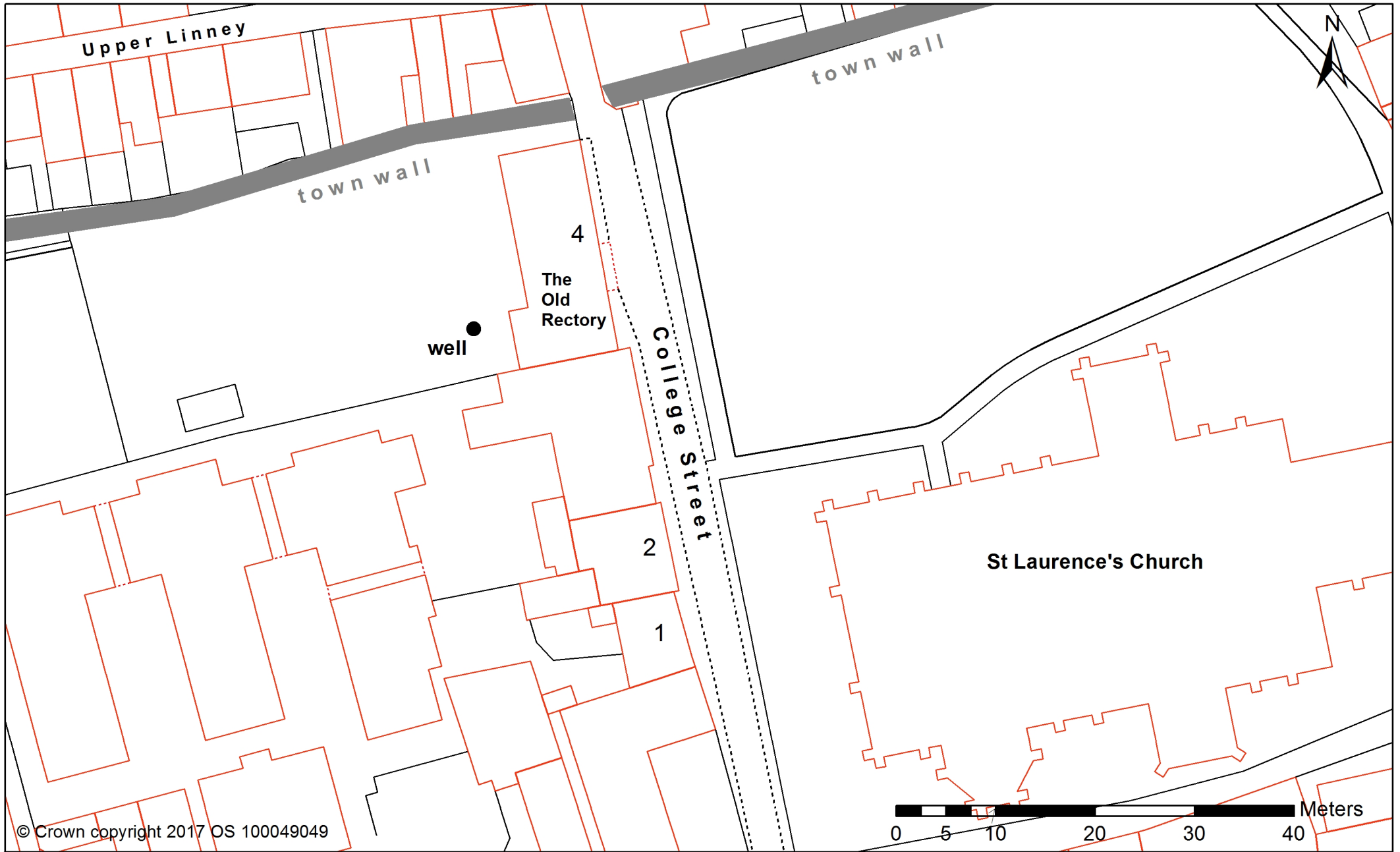


**THE OLD RECTORY, 4 COLLEGE STREET, LUDLOW 2016**

Figure 1: The location of the study area

Archaeology Service,  
 Historic Environment Team, Shropshire Council,  
 Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury,  
 Shropshire, SY2 8ND

Scale: 1:5,001



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**THE OLD RECTORY, 4 COLLEGE STREET, LUDLOW 2016**

Figure 2: The location of the Old Rectory on College Street

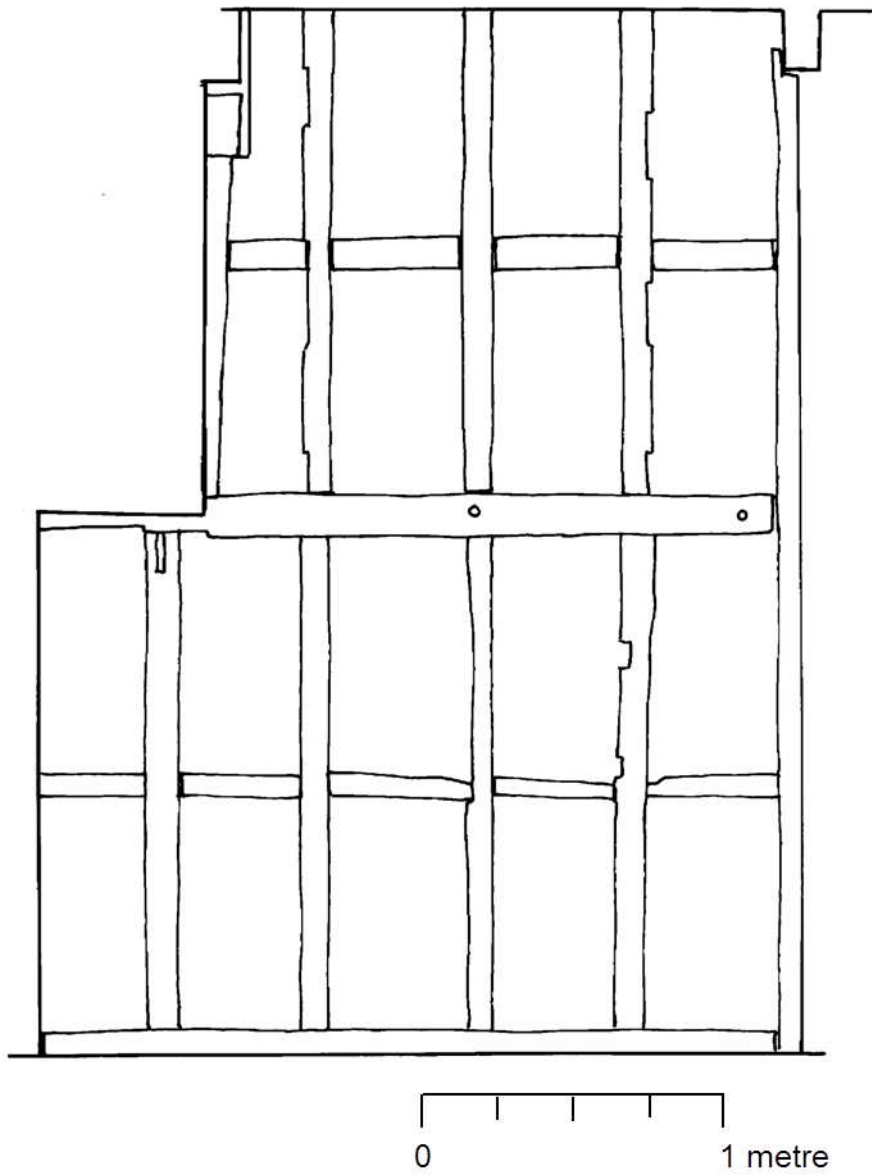
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 Shropshire, SY2 6ND

Scale: 1:500



**THE OLD RECTORY, 4 COLLEGE STREET, LUDLOW 2016**

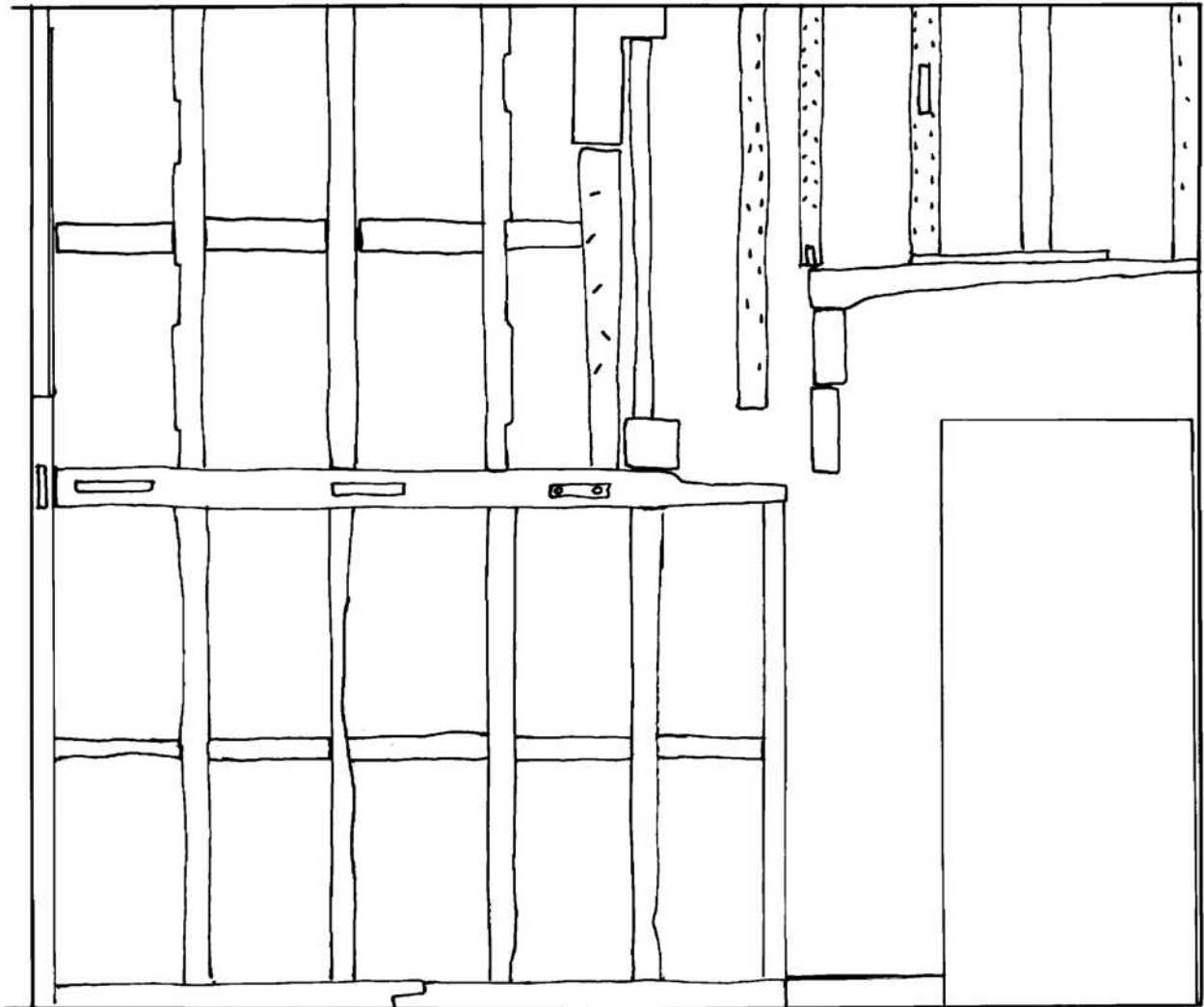
Figure 3: Floor plans showing the location of the main rooms (after Arrol & Snell Ltd); scale 1:200 approximately.



Scale: 1:25 @A4

**THE OLD RECTORY, 4 COLLEGE STREET, LUDLOW 2016**

Figure 4: The partition in the entrance hall, looking W

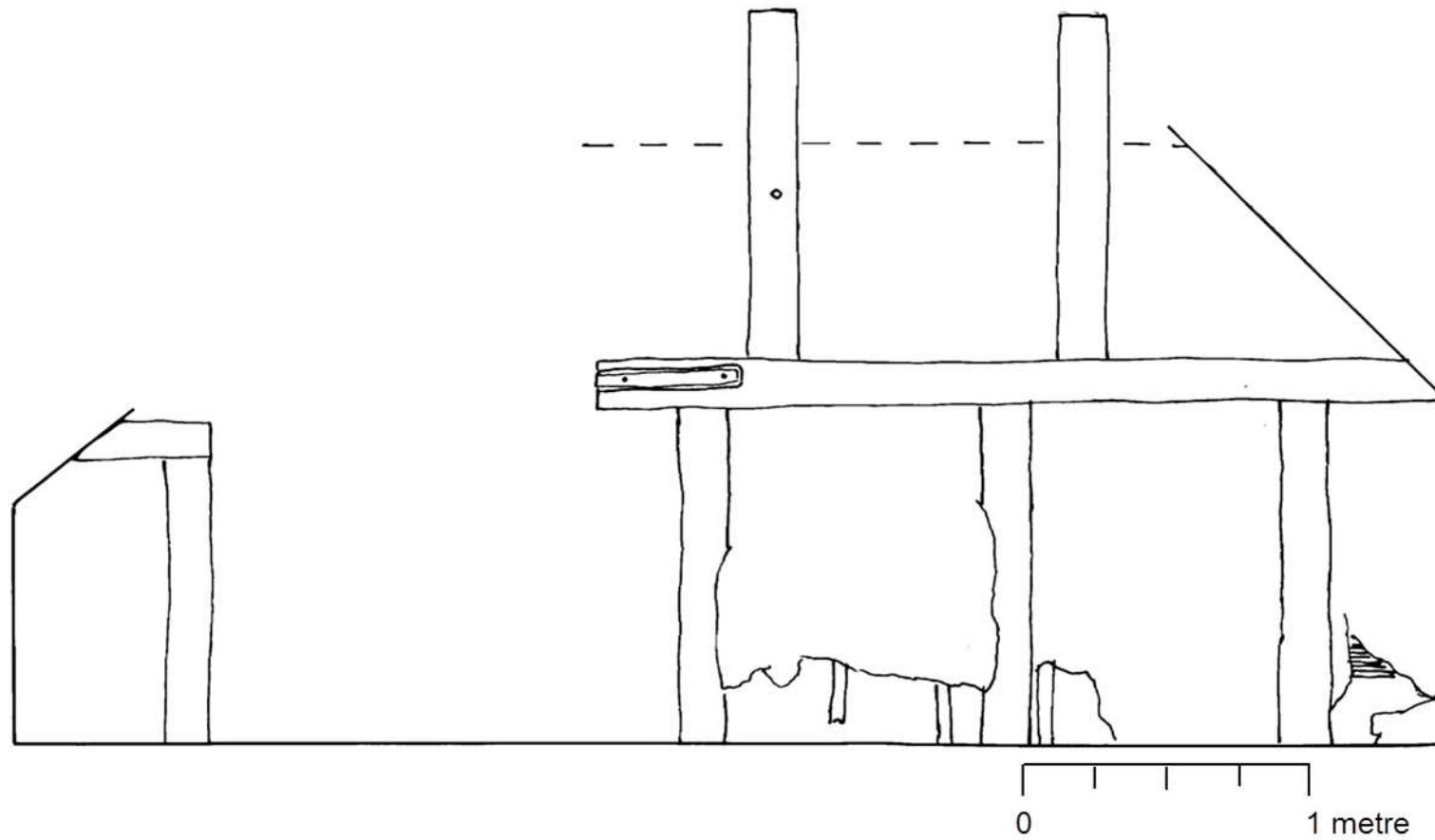


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**THE OLD RECTORY, 4 COLLEGE STREET, LUDLOW 2016**

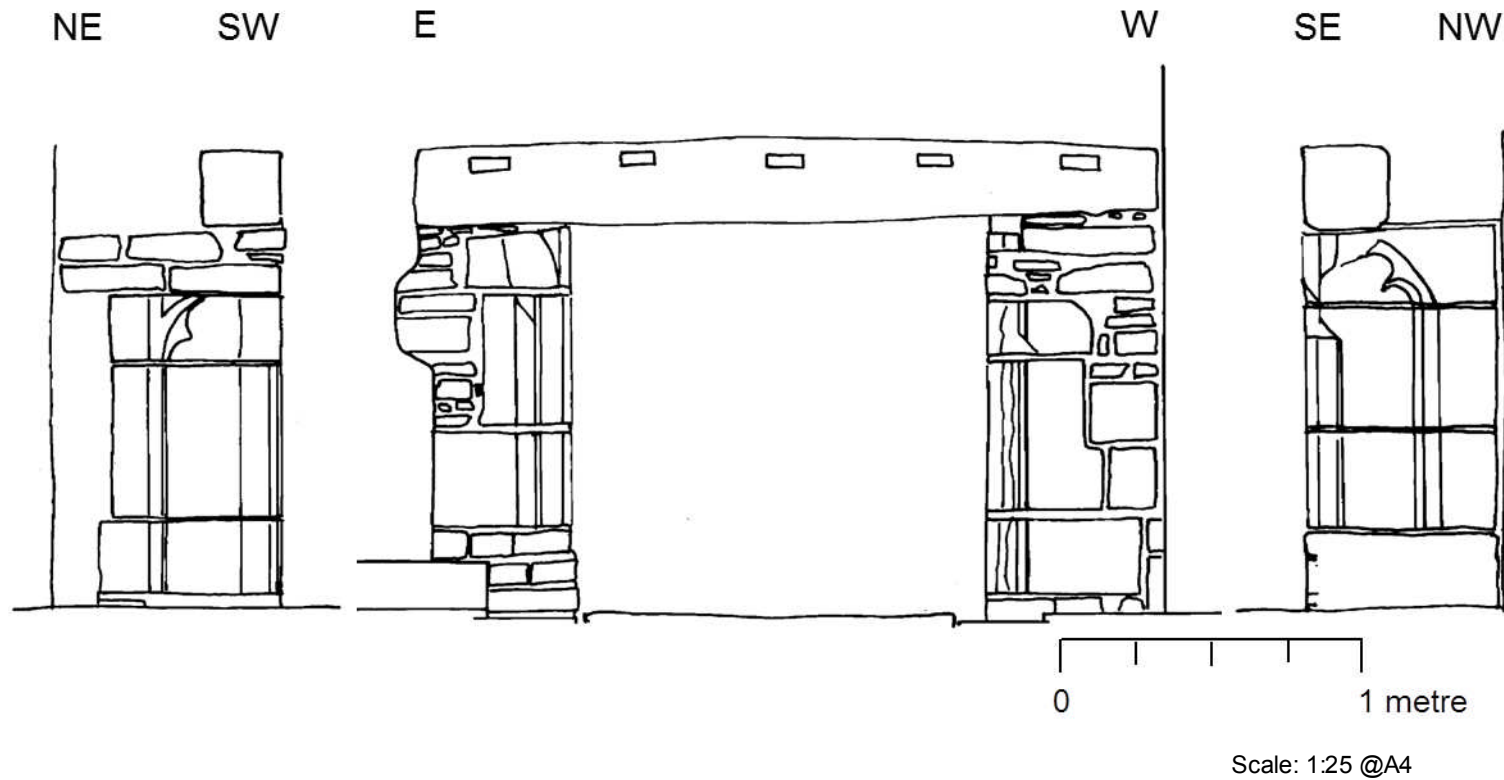
Figure 5: The partition in the entrance hall, looking E



Scale: 1:25 @A4

**THE OLD RECTORY, 4 COLLEGE STREET, LUDLOW 2016**

Figure 6: The frame between bedrooms 1 & 2, looking N



**THE OLD RECTORY, 4 COLLEGE STREET, LUDLOW 2016**

Figure 7: The stone fireplace in the hall



Photo 1: The Old Rectory, looking E



Photo 2: The hall partition looking W;  
scale bar 1m



Photo 3: The hall partition looking E;  
scale bar 1m

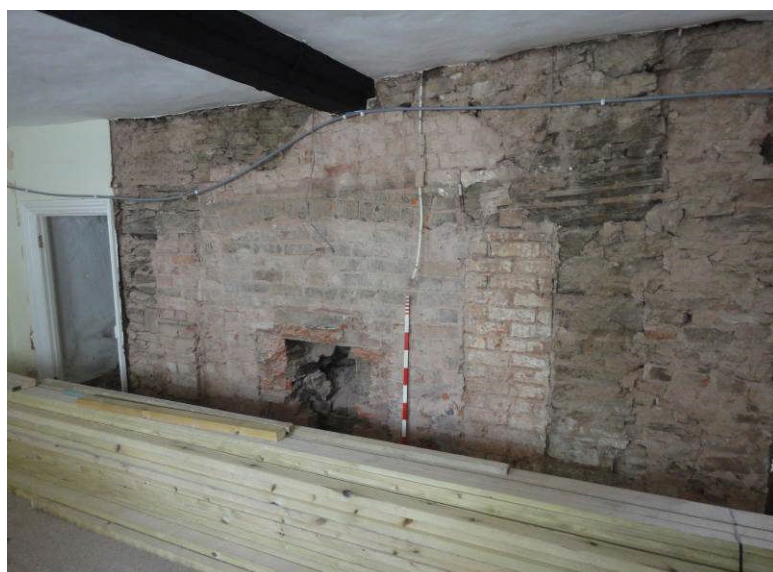


Photo 4: The fireplace in the sitting room, looking NE; scale bar 1m





Photo 5: The chimney base in the undercroft, looking S; scale bar 1m



Photo 6: The outshot kitchen, looking S; scale bar 1m



Photo 7: The fireplace in the hall



Photo 8: The frame between bedrooms 1 & 2, looking S



Photo 9: The frame between bedrooms 1 & 2, looking N



Photo 10: The roof-space above bedroom 1, looking N



Photo 11: The location of the new stairwell in bedroom 4, looking SW



Photo 12: The roof-space above bedrooms 4 & 5, looking N



Photo 13: The truss in the S end wall above bedroom 5, looking S



Photo 14: The stone-lined well in the garden