

**A WATCHING BRIEF AT THE LAURELS,
CONDOVER HOUSE, CONDOVER, SHROPSHIRE 2017**

by
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A Report for
CHARTERS PROPERTY LTD.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In December 2016 & May 2017 the Archaeology Service carried out a watching brief on groundworks associated with a development at Condover House, Condover, Shropshire SY5 7AA (NGR SJ 4930 0595). The works comprised the construction of a single detached dwelling to the south of Condover House (Planning Refs. 15/03572/FUL & 16/03480/FUL). A watching brief had previously been carried out in March 2016 on the excavation of foundations for a garage associated with the conversion Condover House to two dwellings (Hannaford, 2016).

1.2 The village of Condover is believed to have early medieval origins. In the late Saxon period Condover was a large royal manor of 13 hides with 10 outliers, held by King Edward the Confessor. At the time of the Domesday Survey of 1086, the manor was held by Roger of Montgomery, Earl of Shrewsbury, who kept over half of it as a demesne estate. In 1226 the manor was briefly held by Henry III's sister Joan (wife of Llewelyn the Great of Wales), but by 1284 it had been acquired by Robert Burnell, Bishop of Bath and Wells. In the later medieval period, the manor passed through a number of owners, but in the late 16th century it was acquired by the Owen family, who held it until the estate was broken up and sold in 1896. (Thorn & Thorn, 1986, 4,1,2 and notes).

1.3 The area of the current development around Condover House was an undeveloped garden area within the village. It was therefore considered possible that archaeological features and deposits relating to the medieval and later development of the settlement 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. The Archaeology Service, Shropshire Council was commissioned to carry out this programme of archaeological work.

2 THE WATCHING BRIEF

2.1 On the site of the new dwelling on the south side of the existing house, the groundworks comprised the excavation of a new access drive and the foundation trenches for the new dwelling.

2.2 The ground level on the site was about 1.1m above road level where the new access was taken off the road. A section of the brick retaining wall had been taken down and the new access was cut sloping back from the road edge. The deposits immediately behind the wall had been disturbed by services (an old sewer) and roots, but in general a depth of about 0.5m of topsoil lay over the natural orange brown sand.

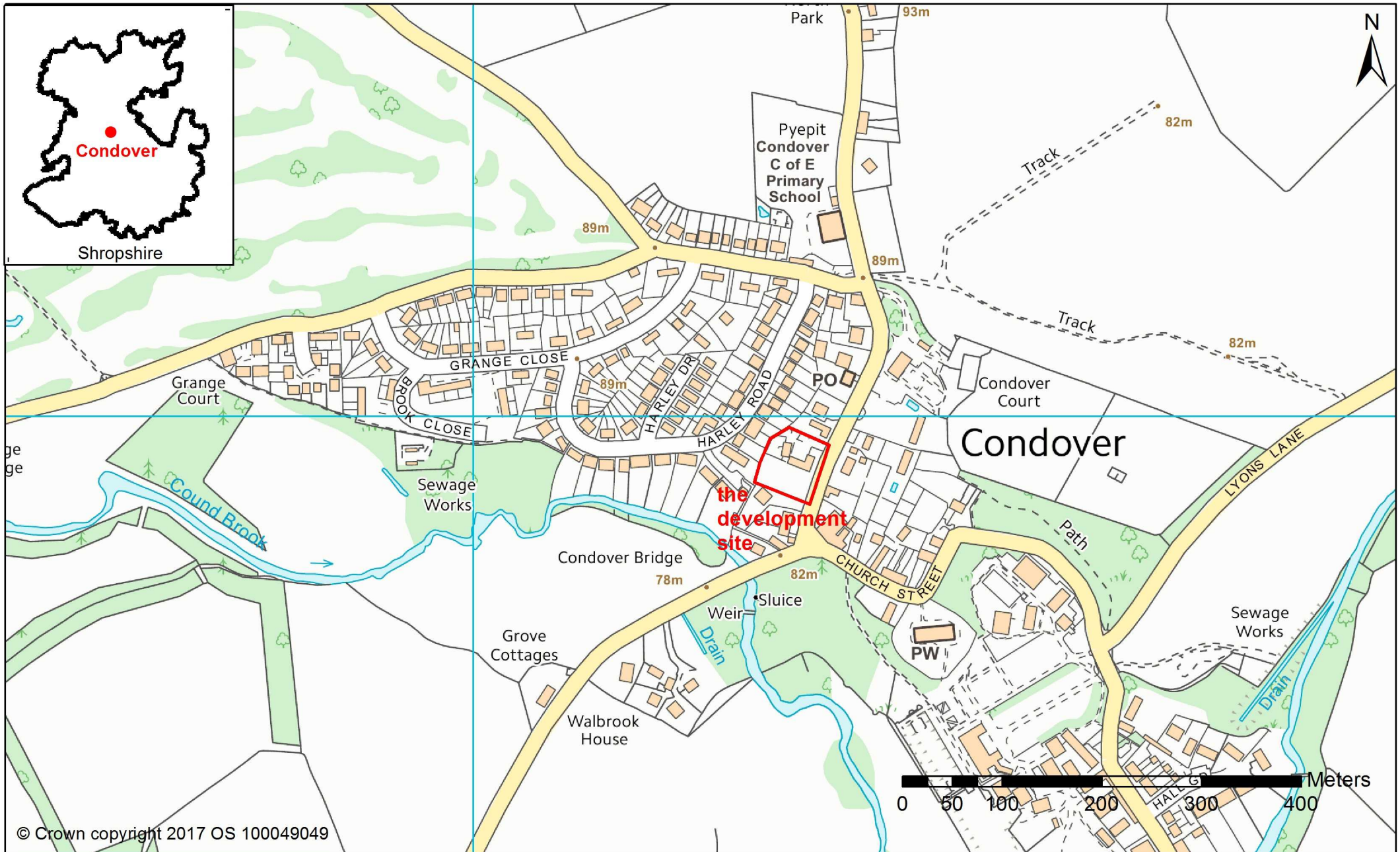
2.3 To the west, the foundations for the new dwelling were cut to a depth of about 0.9m though topsoil of about 0.25m depth, over 0.4m of a brown sandy loam. This in turn lay over the natural subsoil, which consisted of orange brown sand.

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

3 REFERENCES:

Eyton, Rev. W, 1858: *Antiquities of Shropshire*, vol. vi, p8-20

Thorn, F and Thorn, C (eds), 1986: *Domesday Book: Shropshire*, Chichester



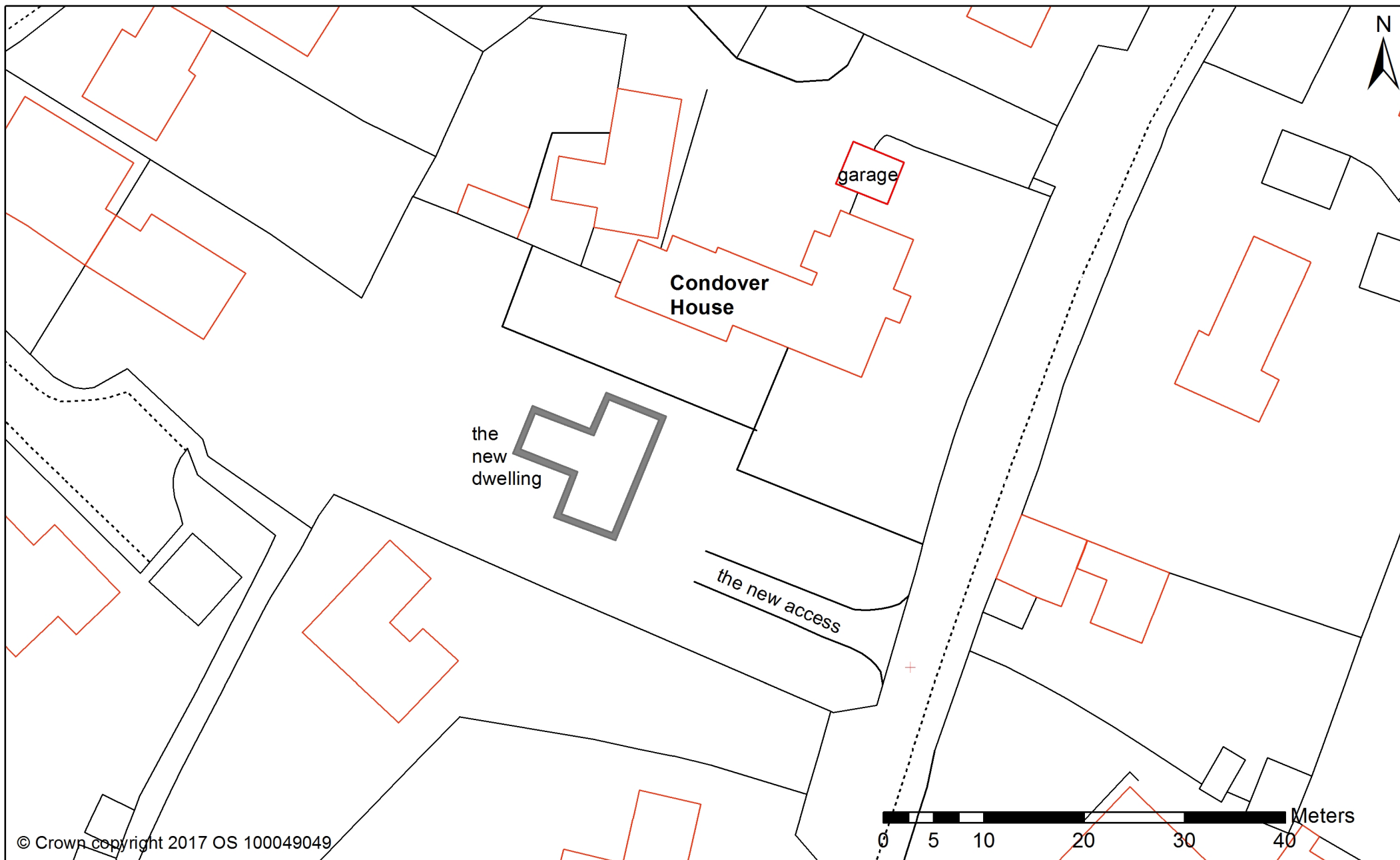




Photo 1: The excavation for the new access to plot 3, looking N; scale bar 1m



Photo 2: Plot 3, looking SE



Photo 3: Western foundation trench, looking S; scale bar 1m

CONDOVER HOUSE, CONDOVER 2017