

**A WATCHING BRIEF AT
HAUGHMOND FARM, HAUGHMOND, SHREWSBURY 2017**

by
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A Report for
Western Power Distribution Ltd

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In August 2017 the Archaeology Service carried out a watching brief on groundworks associated with laying an electricity cable below ground at Haughmond Farm, Shrewsbury, Shropshire (between NGR SJ 5459 1523 & SJ 5443 1529).

1.2 The proposed works site lies just to the east of the former precinct of Haughmond Abbey. The work area lies just outside the former precinct of Haughmond Abbey. It was considered that there was a possibility that archaeological remains might be encountered during the cable trenching.

1.3 Because of the potential significance of the archaeological resource it was considered necessary that the groundworks associated with the cable trenching alongside the track to Haughmond Farm should be accompanied by the implementation of a programme of archaeological work..

1.4 The Archaeology Service, Shropshire Council, was commissioned to carry out this programme of archaeological work by Western Power Distribution plc..

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Haughmond Abbey (Shropshire Council Historic Environment Record [HER] No. PRN 00116) lies 5km northeast of the centre of Shrewsbury Shropshire (NGR: SJ 541 151). The abbey probably began as a small religious community towards the end of the 11th century, and in 1135 William Fitzalan established a house of Augustinian canons at Haughmond. By the end of the 12th century the abbey housed 24 canons, though by 1377 this had fallen to 13.

2.2 Following its Dissolution in 1539, the abbey was acquired by Sir Rowland Hill, from whom it passed to the Barker family. The Barkers demolished the church but converted some of the cloistral buildings for use as a private mansion. Extensive areas to the north of the abbey were landscaped as formal gardens. This residence was destroyed in the Civil War and the property passed to the Corbet family in the 18th century, by which time it was in use as a working farm. There were still farm cottages on the site in the 1930s. Haughmond Abbey is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (NHLE: 1021364).

2.3 Haughmond Farm is a farmstead first identified and classified by the Historic Farmsteads Characterisation Project, 2008 – 2010. The farm contains buildings of various periods, some dating back to the 17th century (PRN 18172) which is a Grade II Listed Building (National Ref. 1273700).

2.4 The field through which the cable trench ran lies partly within the precinct (PRN 08267) of Haughmond Abbey (and within the Scheduled Monument). The line of the precinct boundary through the field is marked by a slight bank. The line of the cable trench lay outside and between 30m to 140m to the east of the former precinct boundary

and Scheduled area (see Fig. 1). Other earthworks in the field include a former field boundary beyond the former abbey precinct (marked by an L-shaped bank with a number of mature and some recently planted trees), and the remains of ridge and furrow ploughing running approximately north from this bank towards the farm track.

3 THE WATCHING BRIEF

3.1 The watching brief at Haughmond Farm was carried out in August 2017. The cable trench was cut by mechanical excavator along the south side of the track to the farm. The turf was removed from a strip about 1.5m wide, and the cable trench then cut with a 200mm bucket to a depth of up to 1m.

3.2 The surface of the bedrock lay between 0.8m and 0.2m depth below the ground surface. At the deeper levels, it lay beneath a deposit of reddish brown sandy silty loam subsoil up to 0.25m thick. Elsewhere it lay below a dark grey-brown topsoil and turf. In places the topsoil was mixed with hardcore from the edge of the farm track, and other services.

3.3 No archaeological features or deposits were recorded during the watching brief on the cable trench.

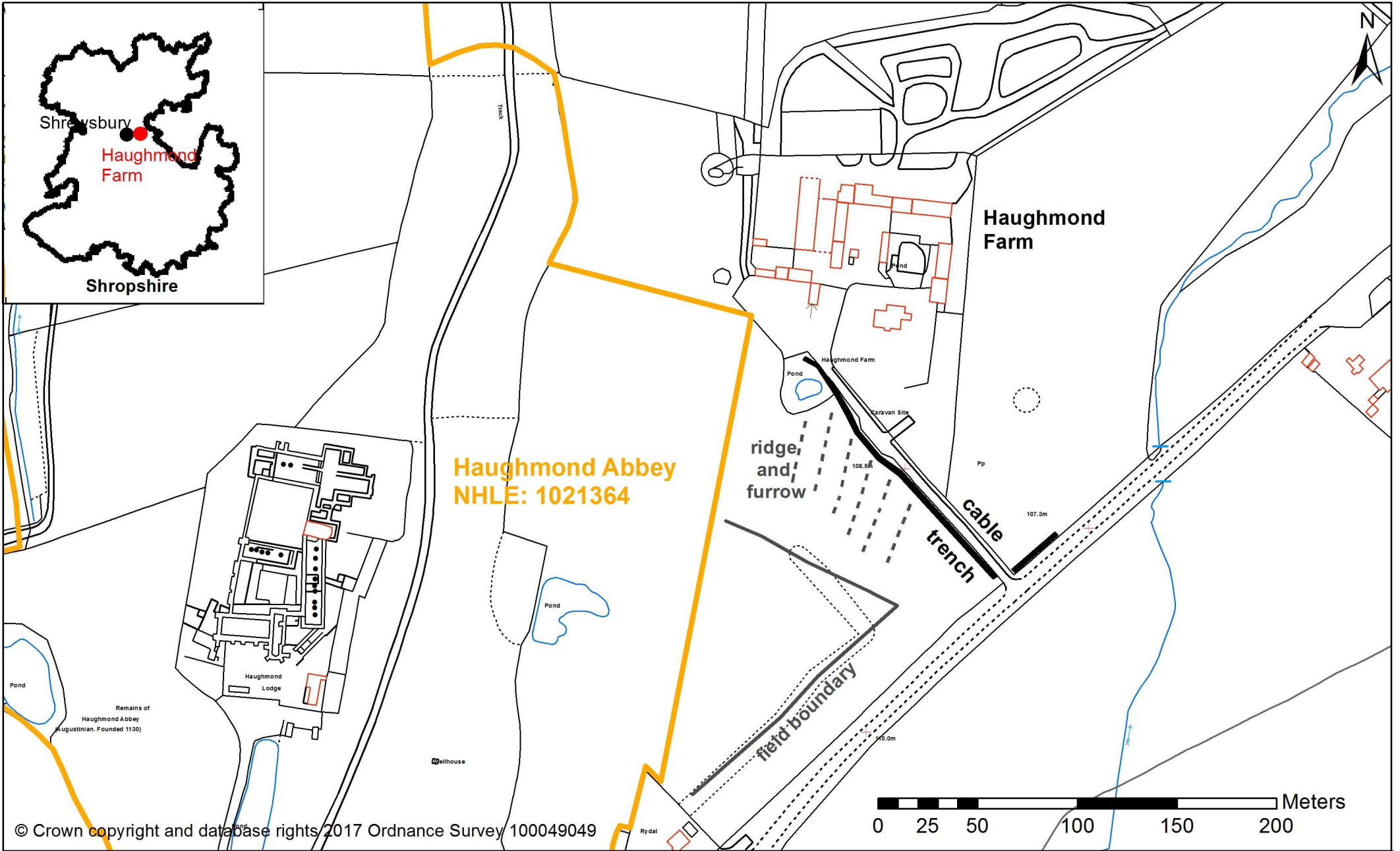




Photo 1: The study area, looking N



Photo 2: The topsoil strip, looking NW



Photo 3: The cable trench, looking NE; scale bar 1m