

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING OF A WALL TO THE REAR OF
NOS. 11-13, MARDOL, SHREWSBURY 2017**

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A Report for
Shropshire Council Premises Services

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In September 2017 the Archaeology Service made a photographic record of a wall on the eastern edge of the Barker Street car park, Shrewsbury which forms the boundary with the rear of Nos. 11 to 13 Mardol (NGR SJ 4900 1258). The upper courses of the wall are in poor condition and it is considered that remedial work is needed to stabilise the wall.

1.2 The wall is constructed of brick and timber over lower courses of red sandstone, and is likely to be a survival of buildings that were demolished to make way for the car-park in the 1930s.

1.3 Because the wall is considered to be of archaeological interest, Shropshire Council's Historic Environment Manager recommended that it should be recorded archaeologically prior to any remedial works (including partial demolition). This record was to comprise a full photographic record, together with a desk based study to provide an understanding of the context for wall and fuller interpretation of it.

1.4 The Archaeology Service, Shropshire Council, was commissioned to carry out this programme of archaeological work by Shropshire Council's Premises Services.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The Saxon settlement of Romaldesham The study area lies on the eastern edge of the early medieval settlement of Romaldesham (HER 08630) where it borders on to the rear of Mardol. Romaldesham was a distinct district within the Saxon and early medieval town, by a former fording point of the River Severn. The place-name Romaldesham was, in the later Middle Ages, attached to what are now Barker Street and Bridge Street. Earlier, it had referred to the wider district, probably a separate settlement subsumed into Shrewsbury. The 'ham' or 'hamm' element of the name translates as a secluded place in the bend of a river, or at a junction of two rivers. The first element of the name is generally thought to refer to the saint's name, Romald, sometimes spelt as Rumwald or Rumbold, found in the dedication of a chapel that formerly stood near the junction of Barker Street and Hills Lane. Recent linguistic studies suggest however that the personal name Romald may have come first, and may refer to an otherwise unrecorded individual who held land in this area. The chapel dedication may have been made later on, in the belief that it was the saint (an early Mercian royal infant prince, a grandson of Penda) whose name had stuck to the locality (Gelling 2004, pp19-20).

2.2 The study area in the Medieval period

The car park southeast of Rowley's House was built up long before the earliest maps become available. It formed part of the medieval Romaldesham district and contained the site of Cole Hall. Cole Hall (PRN 01512) was a high-status medieval house and was named after the Cole or Colle family, one of whom was M.P. in 1337, another a town bailiff in 1453, another an M.P. in the 1520s. Cole Hall was still in the family's hands

after 1741, though in 1696 it was licensed for non-conformist worship, and was known as Cole Hall Chapel. Part of the hall survived into the 20th century, and photographs pre-dating the clearance of the site in the 1930s show a two-storey stone building with a broad, two-centred arched doorway, probably of 14th century date. The building looks like the remaining portion of a first-floor hall or related type of building, a common building form in 13th/14th century Shrewsbury. (Baker, 2007)

The eastern part of the study area is formed by a tenement plot series bounded by Hills Lane, Mardol and Claremont Street (PRN 62415) and comprises in the main plots running west from Mardol, and shorter plots running north from Claremont Street. Some at least of these appear to represent sub-divisions of larger land parcels. As a street Mardol is likely to have originated in the Saxon period, running from the higher part of the town to the river crossing in the former St George's (Old Welsh) Bridge area. Knockyn Street formed the northern boundary of this plot series; the street was renamed Hill's Lane in c. 1700 after a former Mayor of the borough (Hobbs, 1954, p69).

2.3 The study area in the Post-Medieval period

The Burghley Map of the 1570s shows this area just before the development of Rowley's House with built-up street frontages on all sides and garden ground in the middle. John Rocque's map of Shrewsbury of 1742 also shows the area as being built up, but with no detail of individual structures. John Wood's map of 1838 is the first to show the study area in detail (Fig. 3), and this plan and the 1:500 scale Town Plan of 1882 (Fig. 4) show that the study area was densely built up by the 19th century.

The Gullet Inn (PRN 01522) The Gullet Inn stood at the northern end of the study area until it was demolished in the 1960s. The Inn was a timber framed building of possibly c.1600 comprising an open hall with a central hearth on the Hills Lane frontage, and a smaller wing attached at a right angle, believed to be the solar and consisting of two working rooms. The site is now an open, paved area.

No. 11 Mardol (PRN 10352) No 11 Mardol is a shop, formerly a dwelling, dated to 1700 but incorporating a 16th century structure. The building is brick with partial timber-framing internally, and although it has been modernised it retains a few interesting features, including cusped bargeboards on the western gable, a wheel hoist in the rear wing, and a drainhead with the date 1700 and the initials JP (Moran, 2003). No 11 Mardol is a Grade II Listed Building (National Ref. 1254603)

Nos. 12-13 & No. 14 Mardol (PRN 10353) Nos. 12-13 Mardol are a pair of early 19th century shops, with inserted 20th century shop fronts, but possibly encapsulating a medieval building with a hall range parallel to the frontage behind the commercial range. This building included No. 14 and at the south end of No. 14 it is a cross passage running through the front and rear units suggests that although the block had a commercial use it was also a home, and the family probably had use of the chambers over the shops. (Moran, 2003) Nos. 12-13 & No. 14 Mardol are protected as a Grade II Listed Buildings (National Refs. 1270733 & 1254623)

John Wood's 1838 map shows a rectangular structure, aligned north-south, in the approximate area of the wall subject to this recording exercise. The Ordnance Survey 1st edition 25" map of 1882 and 1:500 scale Town Plan of 1882 show that the wall that is the subject of the present study is on the line of the eastern side of this building. The structure lies on the east side of a lane named "Colehall" on the 1882 1:500 Town Plan.

2.4 The modern period

In the early 20th century the Barker Street area had become run down and many of the buildings were supposedly derelict or in poor condition. The photographic evidence suggests that while some buildings may have been derelict, many of the timber-frame structures seem superficially at least to have been sound. Nevertheless, in 1930 the Borough Council decided to clear the entire area and to create the town's first municipal car park. As a result of lobbying by Arthur W Ward, the Borough Surveyor, Rowley's House and Mansion were retained, donated to the town, and restored in 1932. The car park to the south of Rowley's House was for a time the Midland Red bus station, but in the 1990s was re-converted for public car parking.

2.5 Previous archaeological interventions

Building recording of the Old Gullet Inn carried out by the NMR in 1964 revealed that the building had been wholly gutted internally. The building was of two storeys with an attic, originally timber framed (Mercer, 1964). (The building was fully demolished soon afterwards).

Following on from a desk-based assessment of the Barker Street car parks (Baker, 2007), a ground penetrating radar (GPR) survey was carried out at Barker Street in 2008, including all available areas between Rowley's House, Barker Street, Hill's Lane and the rear of the Claremont Street frontages. Good useful data was obtained from the site of the Gullet Inn and features of archaeological interest were found. However, in the car park, formerly the site of the Midland Red bus station, penetration by the GPR was limited to a few tens of centimetres by the presence of electrically conductive material, (which limited test-pitting proved to be compact brick rubble). (Roseveare, & Lafuente, 2008)

An archaeological evaluation trench at the rear of 8 Mardol, formerly the Elephant and Castle Public House, showed that well preserved medieval deposits lay at a depth of c.400mm below ground level, where not disturbed by 19th century and later building work. The medieval deposits suggested a lightly cultivated garden area, possibly part of the 13th century Cole Hall (PRN 01512), or the rear of burgage plots extending from Mardol. Ceramic finds dated mainly to the 14th to 16th centuries (Frost, 2008).

3 THE PHOTGRAPHIC RECORD

3.1 The west and east facing elevations of the wall were photographed in September 2017. A selection of the photographs are reproduced in this report, the remainder form part of the site archive, to be deposited with the Shropshire Council Historic Environment Record.

3.2 The west elevation of the main section of wall was 3.20m in height. The wall is of two distinct sections, separated by a brick buttress. The lower courses of the southern section of the wall were of red sandstone bonded in a brown mortar of late medieval to early post-medieval type, with some re-pointing in 17th – 18th century white lime mortar. The main body of the wall was of bricks of 22.5cm by 12cm x 5.5cm dimensions, probably dating to the later 17th or early 18th century. The brickwork was interlaced with horizontal timbers, though these were not joined with vertical timbers. The parapet was of modern (20th century) brickwork. This section of the wall had been pierced for a doorway with a square window to either side, and a smaller rectangular opening, all now blocked with brickwork. The northern section of the wall was built of 18th century bricks, bonded in hard light grey mortar, with some cement re-pointing. The brickwork suggested that the wall was composed of two sections. The northern was plain, but the southern had a bricked up opening, and its lower courses had a timber sole-plate and filled holes for five floor joists. The brickwork is in poor condition, with some bricks missing, and the top courses are leaning back.

3.3 The southern return wall butted onto the east wall, and was built of 18th to 19th century bricks. This end wall was pierced for two windows, one with a brick arch, both filled with brickwork. The north wall also butted against the east wall, and was built of 19th century bricks, but these were bonded in cement and indicate that this wall is of recent build.

3.4 The east elevation of the main wall, seen from the rear of Nos. 11 & 12 Mardol, is of late 18th or early 19th century brickwork and clearly of different construction to its west elevation, with a brick arched opening for the doorway (see Photos 7 & 8). The timber courses on the west elevation do not come through to the east elevation, and none of the blocked window openings are apparent in this face. This east elevation of the wall is in poor condition, leaning severely inward from its base, and with a number of vertical cracks, particularly at its southern end.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 The wall which forms the boundary wall between the car park and the rear of the plots of Nos. 11 to 13 Mardol contains the last surviving fragment of a red sandstone building dating to the medieval or early post-medieval period. The remains are too fragmentary to say anything more about the details of this structure, although it is likely that more remains survive below ground. The building is likely to have formed part of the Coles Hall complex.

4.2 In the late 17th or early 18th century the surviving sandstone wall was used as the footing for a rectangular brick building composed of three bays or a terrace of three buildings. The southern section of the wall, containing the sandstone masonry, corresponds to the southernmost bay of this structure. From the 19th century map evidence this building was about 20m long by 10m wide, and is likely to have comprised a row of three cottages. Whilst there are a number of surviving illustrations and photographs of the area around Rowley's House before the 1930s clearance, none appear to show this building. The eastern face of the wall is of different and apparently later construction to the west face, suggesting possibly that the building may have been re-faced in the later 18th or early 19th century.

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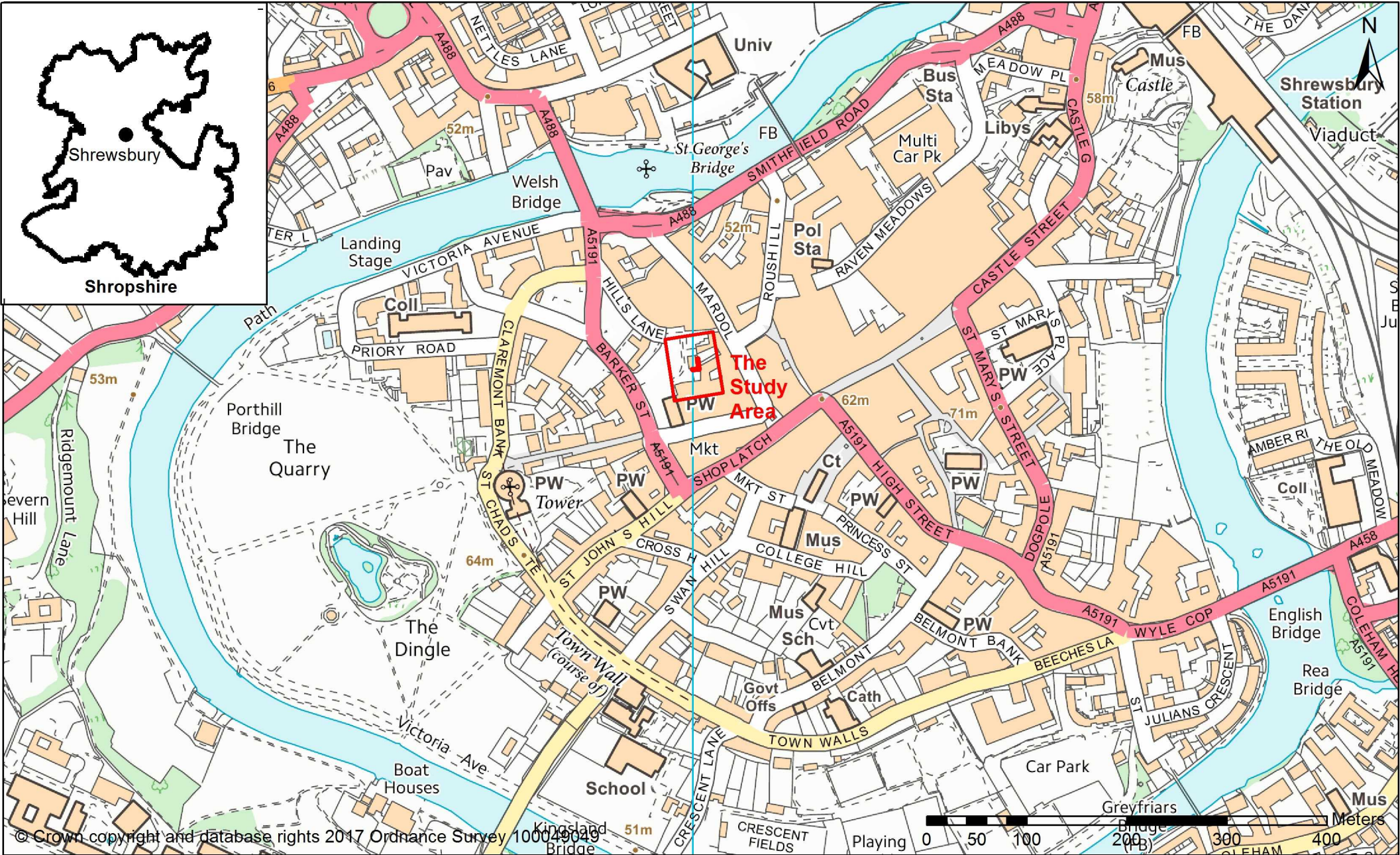
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- 1902 **OS** 1902 25" (1:2,500) 2nd edition, Shropshire Sheet XXXIV.10
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ABBREVIATIONS

HER	County Historic Environment Record, Shirehall, Shrewsbury
OS	Ordnance Survey
PRN	Primary Record Number (HER)
SA	Shropshire Archives, Castle Gates, Shrewsbury
SABC	Shrewsbury & Atcham Borough Council
SNL	Shropshire News Letter, Shropshire Archaeological Society
 TSAHS	Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society
TSAS	Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society



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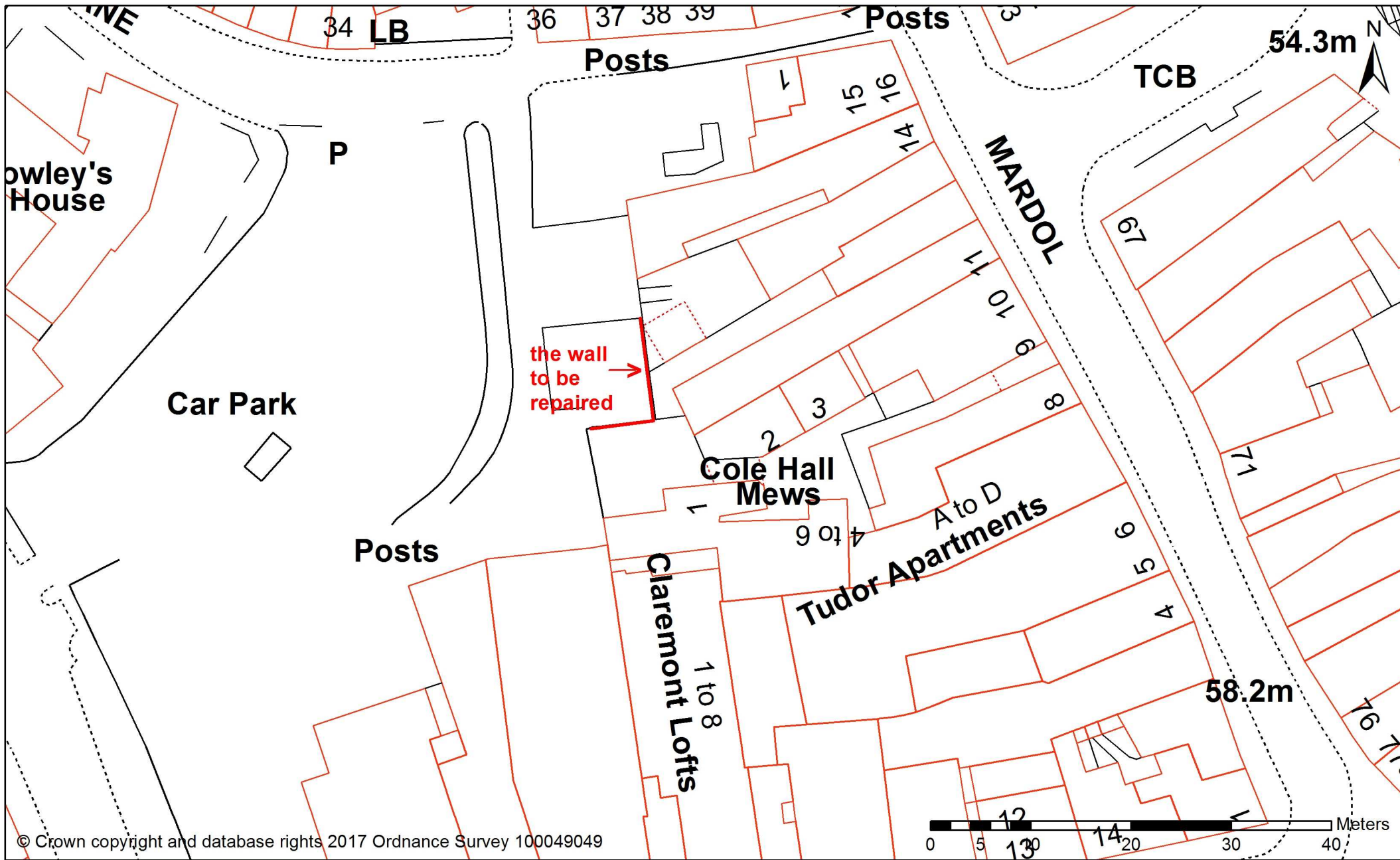


11-13 MARDOL, SHREWSBURY 2017

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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11-13 MARDOL, SHREWSBURY 2017

Figure 2: The location of the wall to the rear of Nos. 11-13 Mardol

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

Scale: 1:500



WALL TO REAR OF NOS. 11-13 MARDOL, SHREWSBURY 2017

Figure 3: Extract from John Wood's town plan of 1838 (showing the wall to be repaired in red).



WALL TO REAR OF NOS. 11-13 MARDOL, SHREWSBURY 2017

Figure 4: Extract from the OS 1:500 Town Plan of 1882 (not to scale).



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11-13 MARDOL, SHREWSBURY 2017

Figure 5: Extract from the 1902 OS 25" map showing the former building on Colehall

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

Scale: 1:500



Photo 1: The study area, looking E



Photo 2: The east wall, S section, looking E; scale bar 2m



Photo 3: The east wall, S section, looking E; scale bar 2m



Photo 4: The east wall, N section, looking E; scale bar 2m



Photo 5: The south wall, looking S

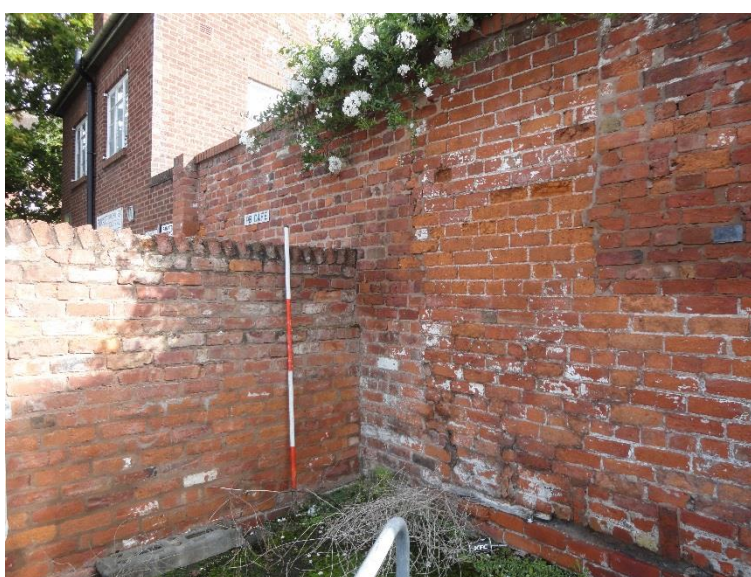


Photo 6: The north and east walls, looking NE; scale bar 2m



Photo 7: The wall from the rear of 11-12 Mardol, looking NW; scale bar 2m



Photo 8: The wall from the rear of 11-12 Mardol, looking SW; scale bar 2m

WALL TO REAR OF NOS. 11-13 MARDOL, SHREWSBURY 2017