

**A WATCHING BRIEF AT
12 CHURCH CLOSE, CRUCKTON, SHROPSHIRE, 2018**

by
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A report for
Mr Dan Sanders

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In April 2018 the Archaeology Service carried out a watching brief on groundworks for extensions to the rear and side of 12 Church Close, Cruckton, Shropshire.

1.2 The development site lay adjacent to the site of a Roman villa (Shropshire Council Historic Environment Record [HER] No. PRN 00112) discovered when the Church Close estate was built in 1949-50. The line of the Forden Gaer to Wroxeter Roman road (HER 00098) also runs some 275m to the north of the development site.

1.3 The area of the Roman villa is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (National Ref. 1006245) and the Scheduled area includes the raised ground of the central green enclosed by Church Close, extending south to the main road, and including the housing to the west and east of the green. 12 Church Close lies just outside the northern edge of the Scheduled area.

1.4 In accordance with condition 4 of the planning permission for the development (Planning Ref.: 17/04886/FUL), the Archaeology Service was commissioned by the owner to carry out a programme of archaeological work in the form of a watching brief during the groundworks for the development. The aim of the archaeological watching brief was to allow for the preservation by record of any archaeological remains that were encountered during the groundworks.

PREVIOUS WORK

2.1 During the construction of Church Close in 1949-50 the remains of a Roman villa were unearthed. Walls, floors and a hypocaust of Roman date were partially excavated in 1950 by E Sladdin for the Shropshire Archaeological Society. However, the extent and precise location of these remains is not known as the excavation was never published.

2.2 In 1991 a watching brief during the excavation of trenches for a gas main to serve the housing estate at Church Close observed no archaeological features or deposits (Watson, 1991). Likewise a watching brief in 2007 at 3 Church Close and another in 2009 at 17 Church Close observed no archaeological features or deposits (Frost, 2007 & 2009).

2.3 This suggests that the construction of the housing estate had removed all sub surface deposits down to the natural clay, and that significant archaeological deposits are only likely to have survived within the area of open ground in the centre of Church Close.

3 THE WATCHING BRIEF

3.1 The foundation trenches for the rear and side extensions were excavated with a mechanical mini-digger to a width of 0.45m and a depth of 1.1m. The footprint of the new porch was reduced by about 0.2m.

3.2 Over most of the site, the removal of the existing turf and yard surface exposed the natural subsoil, which consisted of a buff to greyish brown clay with pebbles banded with grey silty clay with pebbles and gravel. In the central part of the trench for the north wall of the rear extension, a shallow scoop of buried ploughsoil up to 4m wide by no more than 0.2m thick survived in the top of the natural. This may well have represented the base of a furrow of very truncated ridge and furrow ploughing. Indeed, Environment Agency LiDAR shows traces of earthworks of ridge and furrow ploughing of probable medieval date running down the hillside to Church Close.

3.3 The deposits seen in the foundation trenches were cut by two 19th century horseshoe-shaped ceramic field drains and modern services.

3.4 No other significant archaeological features or deposits were encountered.

4 REFERENCES

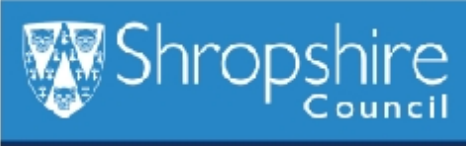
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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------------|--|
| CAP | Cambrian Archaeological Projects |
| HER | Historic Environment Record, Shropshire Council |
| NGR | National Grid Reference |
| OS | Ordnance Survey |
| SAM | Scheduled Ancient Monument |
| SCCAS | Shropshire County Council Archaeology Service |
| TSAHS | Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society |



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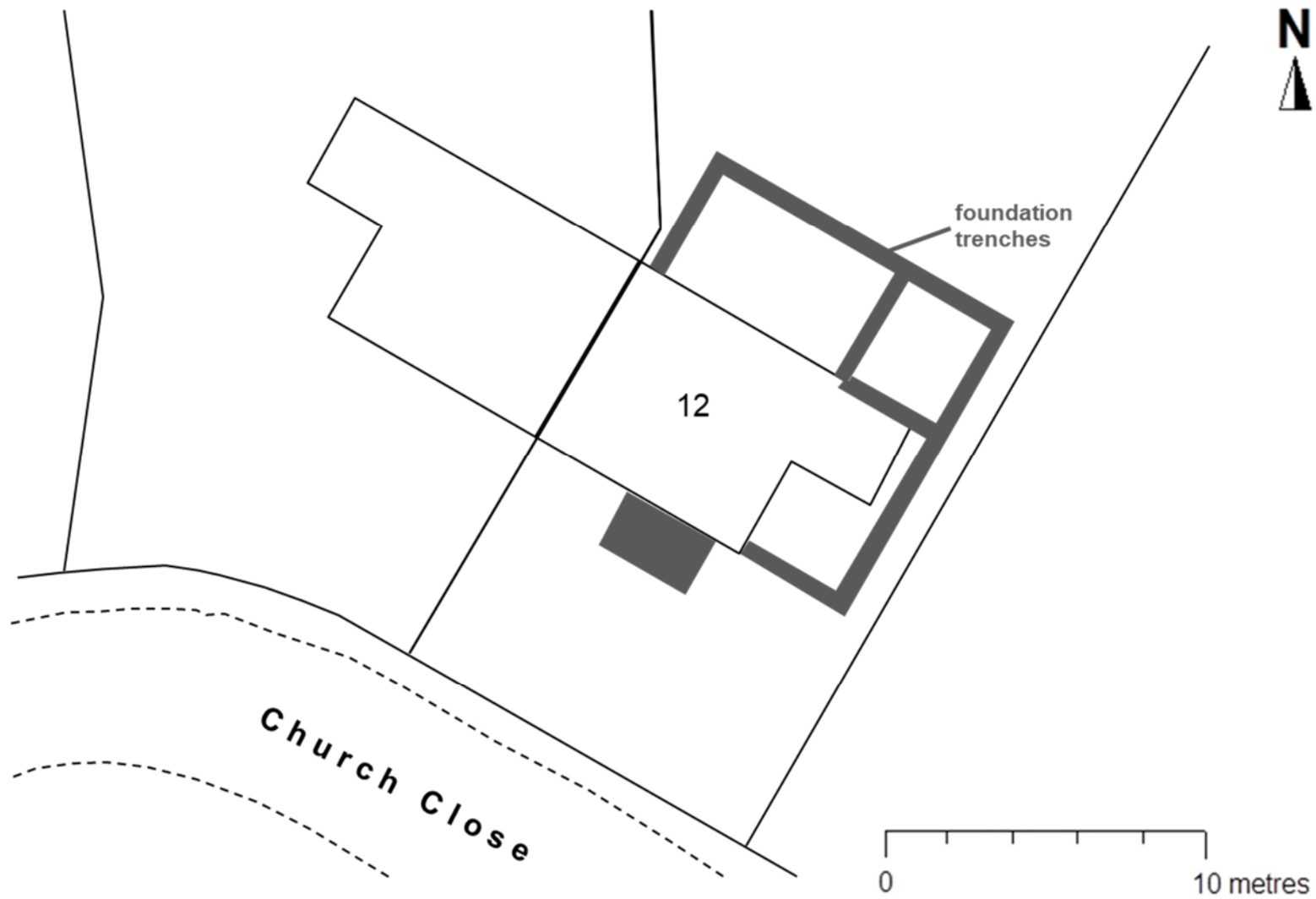


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Figure 1: The location of the development site

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Scale: 1:5,001



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Figure 2: The location of the foundation trenches



Photo 1: The site of the Roman villa at Cruckton, looking S



Photo 2: The development site, looking SW



Photo 3: The foundation trenches, looking SE