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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT
HAUGHMOND ABBEY, SHROPSHIRE, 2010**

by
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A Report for
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INTRODUCTION

Haughmond Abbey (Shropshire Council Historic Environment Record [HER] No.: 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. 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. (HER 00116)

The ruins of Haughmond Abbey and its environs are scheduled as an ancient monument as defined by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (Monument No. 27548 Haughmond Abbey, post-medieval house and formal garden remains).

In March 2010 three stiles were replaced with kissing gates (Fig. 1; A, B & D) and a fourth stile removed (C) on footpaths at the abbey. In accordance with the scheduled monument consent for this work, an archaeological watching brief was maintained by the Archaeology Service, Shropshire Council, on the excavation of post-holes for the new gates. The excavations were all carried out by hand by staff of the SC Outdoor Recreation team.

THE WATCHING BRIEF

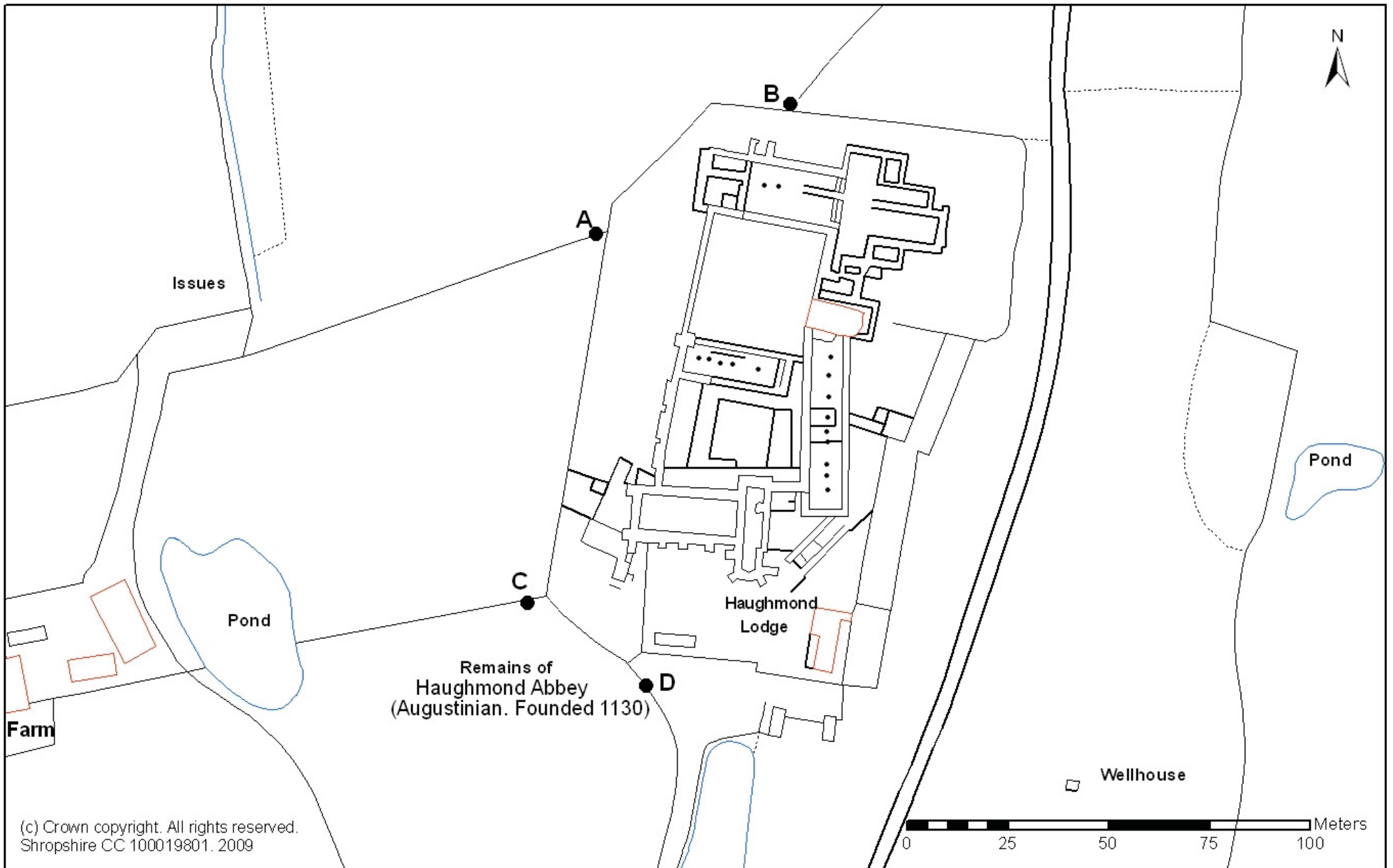
Each of the kissing gates required the excavation of two pairs of post-holes 0.6m deep by 0.25m diameter and set 0.7m apart, one pair of which were linked by a trench 0.25m deep by 0.2m wide.

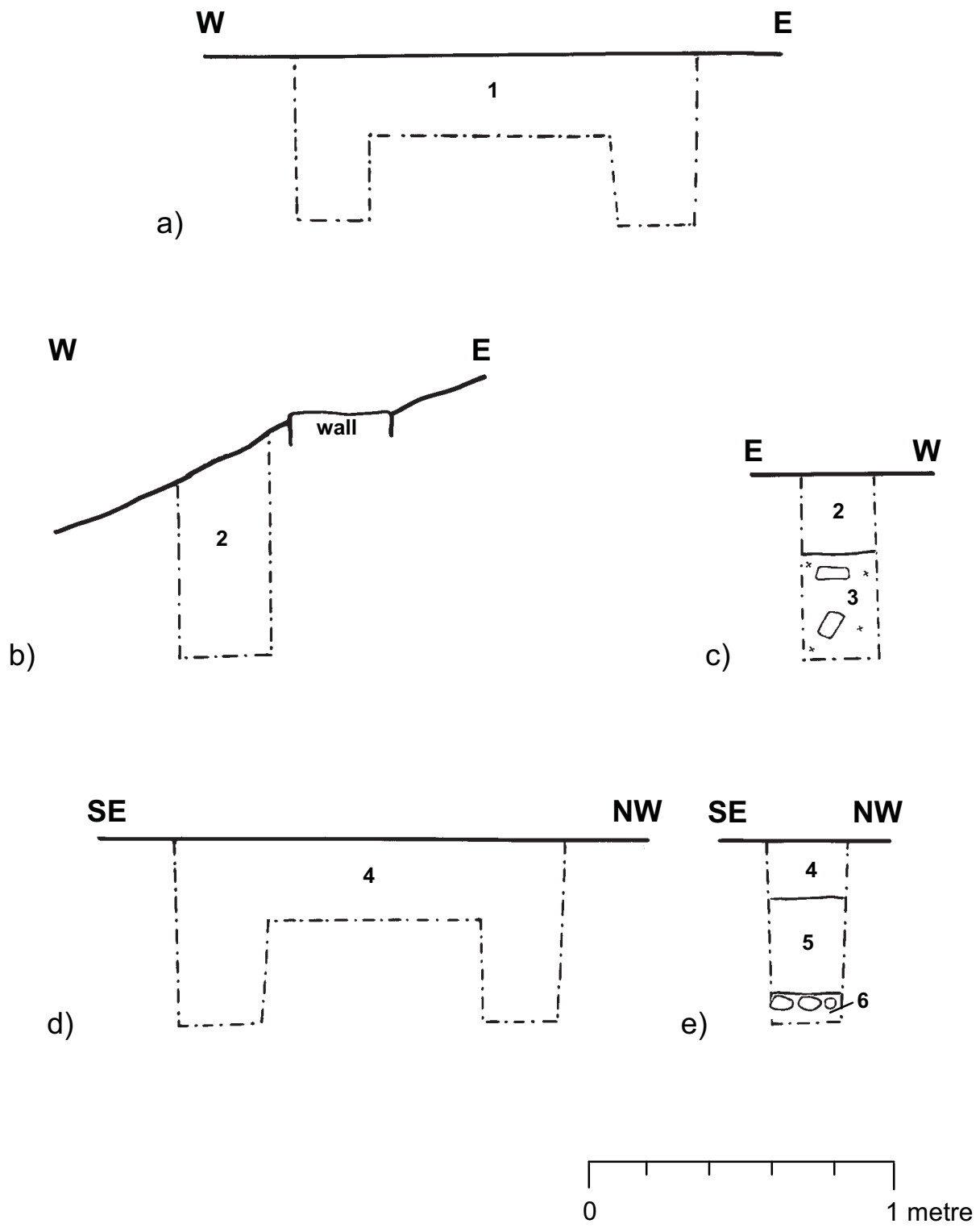
At gate A the post-holes cut into a topsoil layer of very dark greyish brown humic loam (Fig. 2a; 1) flecked with mortar and tile fragments.

At gate B the post-holes cut through a topsoil of dark greyish brown humic loam (Fig. 2b; 2). The eastern (linked) pair of post-holes here were set just to the west of the line of a boundary wall, which had been reduced in the past where it was crossed by the footpath. In the southwestern post-hole, set alongside the boundary to the abbey ruins, the topsoil overlay at a depth of 0.25m a deposit of dark greyish brown sandy humic loam (Fig. 2c; 3) with fragments of Grinshill sandstone, tile fragments, and crushed mortar and sandstone.

At gate D the post-holes were cut through a dark greyish-brown silty loam topsoil (Fig. 2d; 4). In the northeastern posthole (adjacent to car-park) this topsoil lay over a rubble layer (Fig. 2e; 5) and, at a depth of 0.5m below the ground surface, a layer containing some rounded purple stones (6), possibly a former yard surface.

No further archaeological features or deposits were observed.





HAUGHMOND ABBEY 2010

Figure 2 Sections through post-holes: a) gate A, b) & c) gate B; d) & e) gate D; (for locations see Fig. 1); scale 1:20



Photo 1: Location of gate A, looking SE



Photo 2: Gate B, looking E



Photo 3: Gate D, looking NW