

Watching brief of works associated with the replacement of a water pipe, East Street, Hereford.



**Report prepared by
Tim Hoverd**

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Contents:-

Summary
Introduction
Aims and Objectives
Background History
Fieldwork in 2016
Conclusions
Site Archive
Acknowledgements
Bibliography

Herefordshire Archaeology is Herefordshire Council's county archaeology service. It advises upon the conservation of archaeological and historic landscapes, maintains the county Sites and Monument Record, and carries out conservation and investigative field projects.

Herefordshire Archaeology, Herefordshire Archives & Records Centre, Fir Tree Lane,
Rotherwas, Hereford, HR2 6LA

Summary:

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of three trenches needed to mole a replacement water pipe within the car park close to the East Street / Ethelbert Street Junction.

The trenches were excavated by machine under close archaeological supervision. Trench 1 (closest to the southern side of East Street, revealed the foundations for a well constructed stone wall, which ran along the frontage of East Street. At a depth of 0.85m, the top of well compacted, clean gravel was encountered which appears to represent the top of the Saxon Rampart. Trench two was excavated to a depth of 0.95m through a well mixed layer of garden soil. No other deposits were noted within this trench. Trench 3 was excavated into a layer of loose rubble and scalplings which had been severely affected by a water leak, no archaeological deposits were encountered.

The presence of the stone wall within trench one was of interest as this provides an indication of the material used in the construction of features which are apparent on Taylor's map of 1775. The wall is thought to pre-date the 18th century.

The top of the rampart at this location has not been recorded before and will provide useful information when taking into account future works within this area.

Disclaimer: It should not be assumed that land referred to in this document is accessible to the public. Location plans are indicative only. NGRs are accurate to approximately 10m. Measured dimensions are accurate to within 1m at a scale of 1:500, 0.1m at 1:50, and 0.02m at 1:20.

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Introduction

This report (EHE 80194) provides an account of small scale watching brief carried out by Herefordshire Archaeology. The watching brief was required in order to provide archaeological information regarding the possibility of the survival and nature of significant archaeological deposits within a car park on the southern side of East Street, next to Pullings Mews. East Street is located within the Hereford Area of Archaeological Importance as designated by the 1979 Scheduled Ancient Monuments Act.

The fieldwork comprised the excavation of three, 1m long and 0.75m wide, trenches along the eastern edge of the car park which were needed to be excavated for the purpose of installing a new water pipe.

The aim of the archaeological fieldwork was to provide information regarding the depth, nature and survival of significant archaeological deposits associated with the pre-conquest defences and structure built into the internal tail of the rampart. Watching briefs during the salvage recording of an excavation within the road at the East Street / Offa Street junction in 1998 (Hoverd, 1998), revealed the presence of well preserved rampart at relatively shallow depth below the present ground surface.

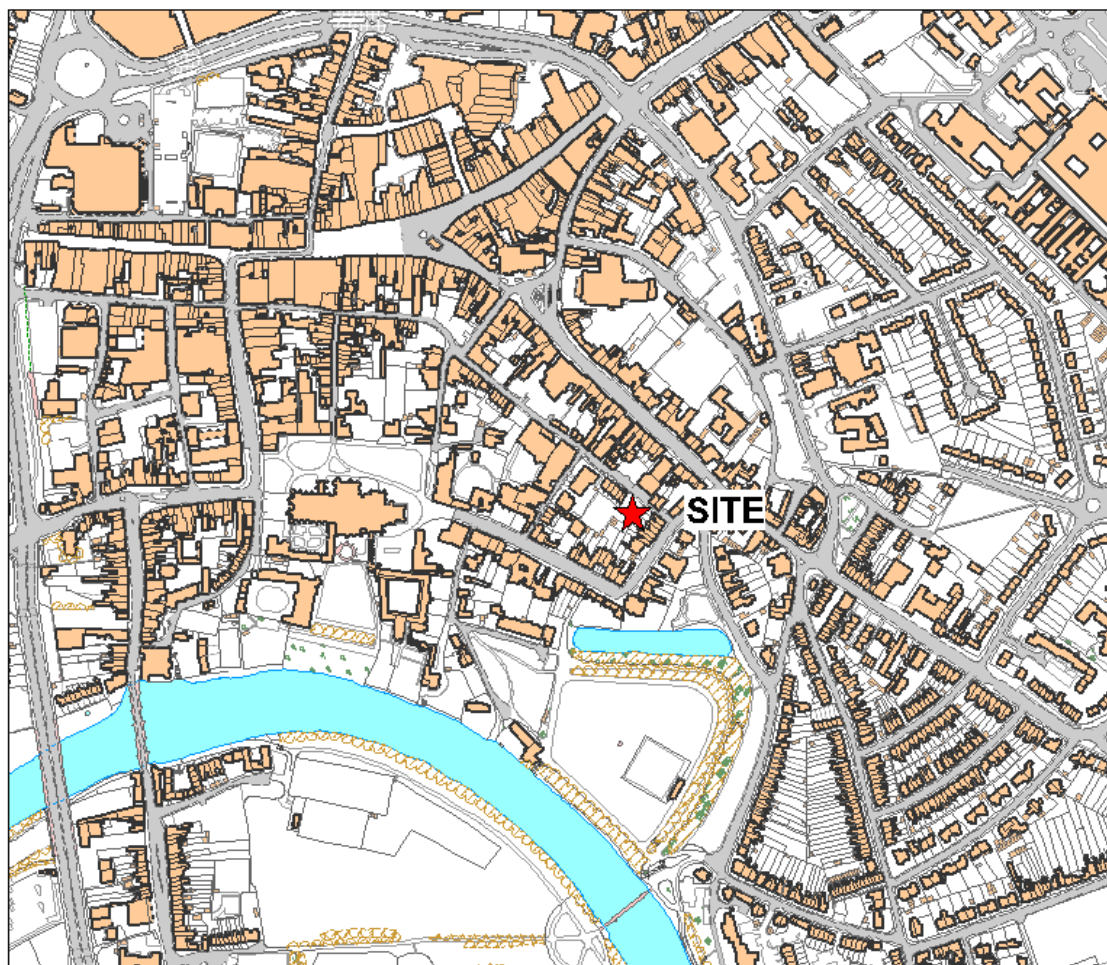


Figure 1: location of the site within the City of Hereford

Background history and previous archaeological work

The site lies immediately to the south of the Saxon defensive circuit. The defences comprised a turf and gravel rampart with a defensive ditch to the north. The northern portion (including the length which runs along the frontage of the site) of the defensive line was incorporated into the enlargement of the Norman city when the defences were pushed northwards to include the development of a huge new market area, (now High Town and St. Owen's Street). The Saxon rampart was to a degree flattened and the old defensive ditch filled in.

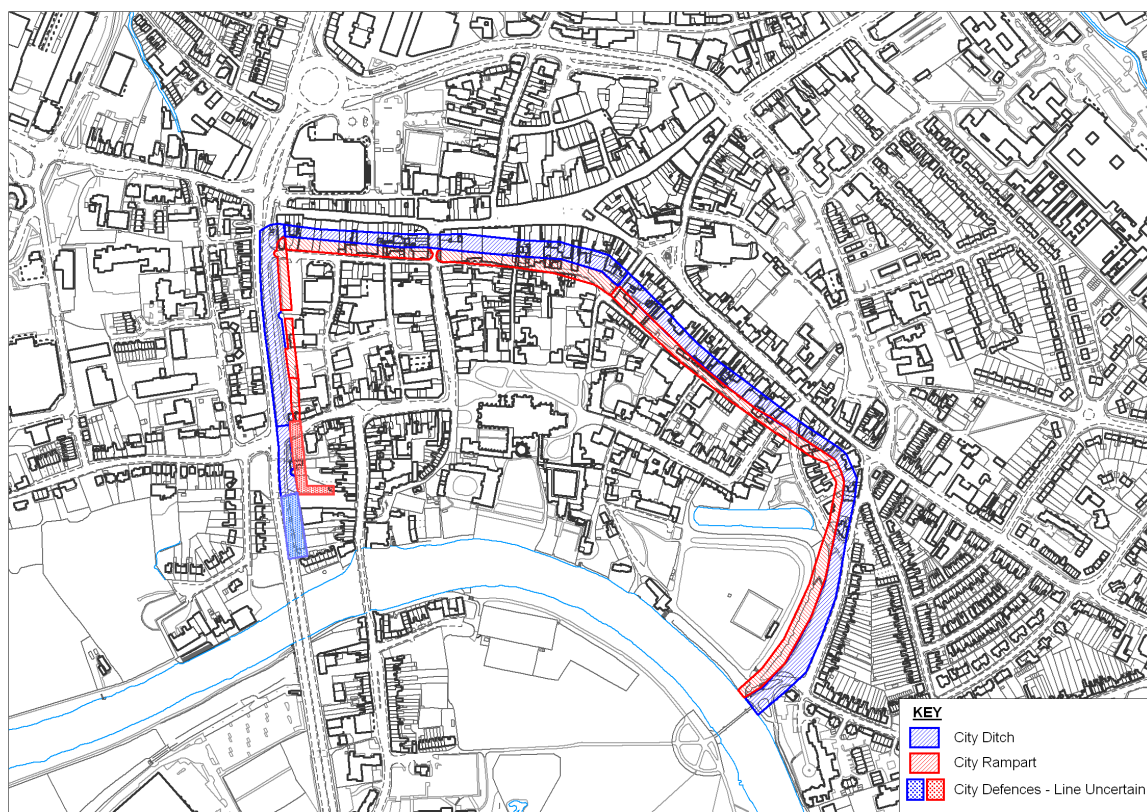


Figure 2: Plan of 10th-11th century defensive circuit of pre-conquest Hereford.

There has been relatively little archaeological investigation of this end of East Street. East Street, formerly Packers Lane, follows the line of the intra mural road which ran along the inside of the pre-conquest defences. With the creation of the new market place and the enlargement of the post-conquest defensive circuit during the late 11th century, East Street appears to have lost some of its importance and became a back road to the new properties which faced the new market area of High Town and St. Owen's Street. The western side of the site follows the parish boundary between St. John's to the west and St. Owen's to the east, in which parish the site lies. The date of the establishment of the parish boundaries in Hereford is unknown but they appear to have been fixed in the medieval period.

Speed's map of 1610 shows the whole of the southern side of East Street as built up but Speed appears to be unreliable in his detail and it is now thought that the rows of building are fairly generic in nature and certainly areas such as East Street may not

have been so densely populated as his map implies. The 1775 Map (Taylor) is far more detailed and reliable and shows the entire area of the carpark and Pullings Mews as garden plots bounded on the northern side by a substantial wall fronting East Street. By Curley's map of 1865, the garden plots still largely remain but the western portion of the frontage has been developed with a bonded warehouse and a cottage covering roughly the same footprint as Pullings Mews does today. The warehouse was used by William Pulling & Co., distillers, whose distillery was on the corner of East Street and Barroll Street. Their offices were in Broad Street.

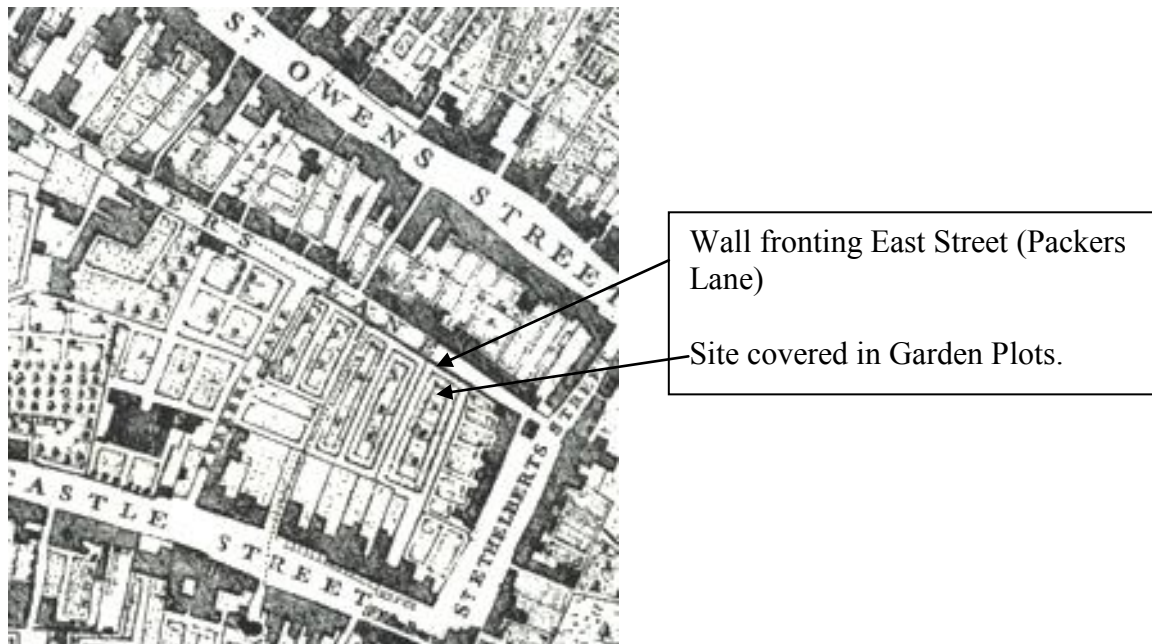


Figure 3: Extract from Taylor's Map of 1775

In 1992, the City of Hereford Archaeology Unit was commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation excavation of the proposed development of the warehouse into 5 houses (Appleton-Fox and Stone 1992). The evaluation comprised the excavation of seven trenches within the building fronting East Street and the eastern end of the warehouse (the main area of the warehouse being cellared. The trenches were located along the line of the proposed partition walls of the new development. The trenches were approximately 1m deep and failed to find any significant archaeological deposits. This was mainly due to the fact that there had been a degree of disturbance during the construction of the warehouse cellar which appears to have resulted in the spoil from the cellar being spread over the rest of the site. This material overlay soils associated with the post medieval garden plots. Excavations did not go deep enough to investigate what lay below the garden soil deposit.



Figure 4: Extract from the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1886-7) Trenches marked in red).



Figure 5: Plan showing location of 2016 trenches (marked in red).

2016 Fieldwork

Site work began on Monday 25th January 2016 by Wye Water. The works comprised the excavation of three small trenches in order to mole a replacement water pipe along the eastern boundary of the site. The works were carried out by machine excavation using a mini digger and cleaned out by hand.



Plate 1: View southwards along line of works.

Trench 1, closest to the frontage with East Street, revealed the footings of a substantial wall which appears to have run along the East Street frontage. The wall comprised a number of well squared, grey sandstone blocks (see Figure 6) and had been neatly cut through in order to install the original water pipe. The wall, although robbed and damaged by the water pipe appeared to be approximately 0.5m wide and the footings continued through the base of the trench. It is presumed that this is the boundary wall present on the 1775 map, its construction date is not known. The wall footing was cut into a layer of very well compacted, clean gravel, the old water pipe had also been laid immediately on top of this gravel deposit. It is thought that the gravel represents the top of the surviving deposits which were used to construct the pre-conquest rampart. The excavation did not go into this layer.



Plate 2: Trench 1 looking west

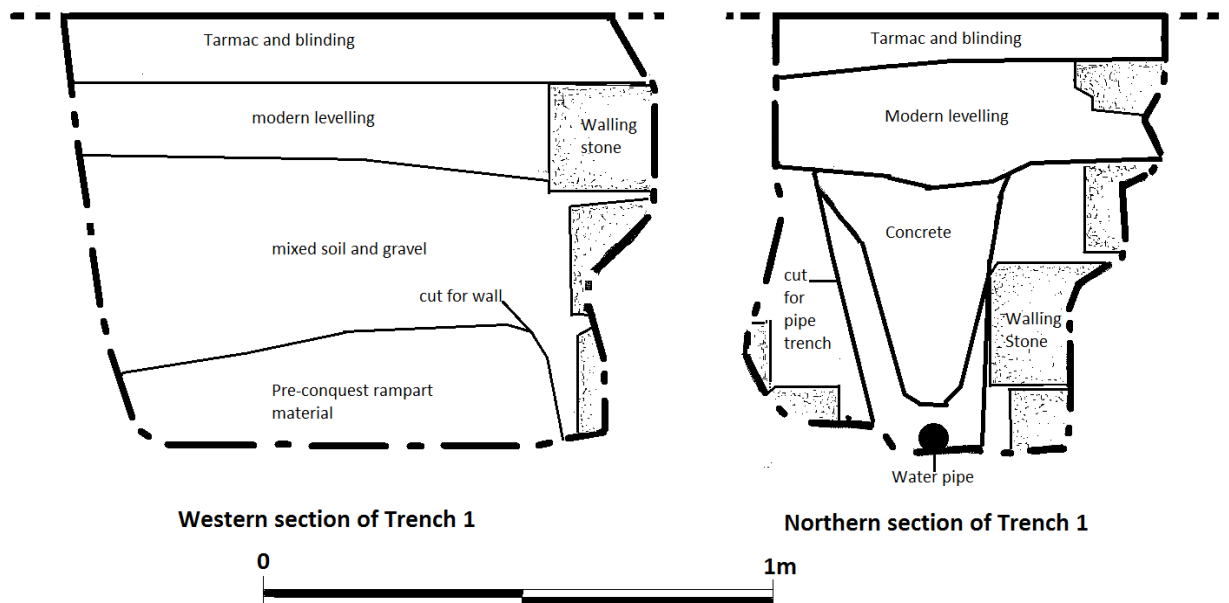


Figure 6: Northern and western sections showing wall foundation and other significant deposits.

Trench 2 was located approximately 13.5m to the south of Trench 1. This was excavated to a total depth of 0.9m and was filled to and beyond its base with a well-

mixed, clay loam, garden soil. Nothing of archaeological significance was noted except that the presence of the thick soil layer confirms the early map evidence of this part of the site being laid to garden for at least 250 years.



Plate 3: Trench 2 looking west.



Plate 4: Trench 3 looking north.

Trench 3 was excavated approximately 12m to the south of Trench 2. Immediately after the removal of the tarmac surface, it was apparent that the water leak had had a considerable effect on the underlying deposits. The area immediately to the west of the trench had clearly been undermined by the scouring effect of the water under pressure and this had resulted in sinkage within the tarmac. The western side of the trench collapsed as the water rushed in and whilst the underlying stratigraphy could not be recorded in situ, it was apparent that it comprised of large quantities of brick rubble and comprised modern "made ground".

Conclusions

The watching brief has provided useful information concerning the survival and depth of what appears to be the pre-conquest rampart. This appears to survive (albeit truncated by the later wall foundation), at a depth of less than a metre below the present car park surface.

The recording of the stone wall which ran along the East Street frontage is of interest as it suggests that (being of well-cut and squared stone rather than rough stone or brick), this feature may be older and more substantial than may otherwise be thought.

The recording of a considerable depth of well mixed garden type soil within Trench 2 has confirmed that the plots to the rear Castle Street / Ethelbert Street had not been intensively infilled during the post-medieval period.

Site Archive

12 digital photographs
1 site notebook entry
This document

Acknowledgements

Herefordshire Archaeology would like to thank the landowner of the site and Wye Water for their assistance and co-operation.

Bibliography

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