



**Herefordshire Archaeology**  
Conservation and Environmental Planning  
Planning Services  
Environment Directorate  
Herefordshire Council

# **Pembridge Market Hall Pembridge Herefordshire: A Ground Investigation**

**Herefordshire Archaeology Report No. 91**

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**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. The County Archaeologist is Dr. Keith Ray.

**Pembridge Market Hall**  
**Pembridge**  
**Herefordshire:**  
**A Ground Investigation**  
**Herefordshire Archaeology Report No. 91**  
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***Summary***

*Herefordshire Archaeology investigated the base of Pembridge's 16<sup>th</sup> century Market Hall for the Pembridge Amenity Trust, in order to supply information for its renovation. The specific aim of the work was to establish whether there was, or had been, a man-made floor within the hall i.e. cobble or flagstone.*

*This report (EHE36582) presents the results of the work undertaken. It appears that the base of the Market Hall consists of naturally deposited glacial till, with a grading of clasts down through the profile. The existing pillar base appears to have been created during works carried out in 1927. The pillar base was set into a shallow foundation that cut into the till. The shallow nature of this footing indicates an awareness of the stability of the substrate. In turn, this reinforces the impression gained during this site investigation that the substrate is natural till and does not appear to be levelling material brought to the site.*

**Disclaimer:** It should not be assumed that land referred to in this document is accessible to the public. Location plans are indicative only. NGR's 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.

Figure 1 contains material from the Ordnance Survey. The grid in this material is the National Grid taken from the Ordnance Survey map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. This material has been reproduced in order to locate the site in its environs.

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***Introduction***

The Market Hall in Pembridge stands to the north of the New Inn, at the centre of the present market place. It is in origin a late Medieval structure, and its importance both

locally and more widely has recently been set out in a Conservation Plan (Joyce, n.d. c.2001). Stylistically, the structure has been dated to the late 15<sup>th</sup> century or early 16<sup>th</sup> century (ibid, 11). Dendrochronological work in 2002 has confirmed this broad chronology.

The stone base of a former Medieval market cross has been used to support the north-east upright of the structure. This not only indicates a predecessor location for the market in these environs, but also suggests two further historical possibilities. The first is that the market cross was dismantled when the new market hall was built in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. The second possibility is that the entire structure has been moved, subsequent to its original erection.

Following upon the Conservation Plan, a scheme for renovation works has been drawn up by Messrs Trevor Hewitt, Architects, of Hereford. In order to help inform these works, a request was made by Pembridge Amenity Trust to the County Archaeologist, Dr Keith Ray, to carry out a modest archaeological investigation of the base of the structure. In particular, there had been a query raised in reference to a painting of c.1760 as to whether there had ever existed a cobbled or other constructed floor surface, later covered by earth.

The fieldwork was undertaken on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2003.

#### ***Aims and Objectives***

The aim of the work therefore was to establish the presence or otherwise of previous floor surfaces associated with the market hall, to aid the decisions associated with the restoration project.

#### ***Location and Geology***

Pembridge Market Hall is located at NGR: SO 390 581, approximately 15km west of Leominster and 9km east of Kington.

Pembridge lies at a height of between 100m and 125m OD, on the south bank of the River Arrow; the market hall itself is situated at a height of 120m OD.

The soils of the Rowton association are typically agrillic brown earths overlying glaciofluvial or river terrace gravels and till (Soils Survey of England and Wales, Ragg et al). The underlying geology consists of Downtonian Raglan Mudstone (British Geological Survey, 1:250,000, sheet 52) (Buteux 1996).

#### ***Previous fieldwork / records***

**Market Hall, Status LBII\*, NGR SO 390 581**

“Located in the middle of the road, 60 yards W.N.W. of the church, is now a single storeyed building of timber with a hipped roof of stone slates. It was built in the first half of the 16th century and formerly had an upper storey. This was removed at some uncertain date and the building now consists only of an open structure on eight posts ' four on each side. The posts are chamfered and have remains of moulded caps; from these spring curved brackets, now supporting the caves of the roof and the head-beams. The interior has exposed beams and joists” (RCHME, III, 163).

**Cross base, Status LBII, NGR SO 390 581**

“The N.E. angle-post (of the Market Hall) stands on the stone base of a medieval cross; it is square to octagonal on plan” (RCHME, III, 163).

***Methodology***

A single 1m x 1m test pit was excavated by hand, to a depth of 0.70m. It was decided to site this mid way along the western side of the structure, and under the canopy, in order to minimise any disturbance.

The stratigraphic sequences exposed during the excavation were recorded by context and scale drawings (1:20 for plans and 1:10 for sections). Photographic records were also made on 35mm film (both black and white and colour) during the excavation.

All levels referred to are taken from the benchmark located on the west side of the north porch of St Mary’s Church, Pembridge (115.01m OD).

***Results***

**001**

This is the uppermost layer, and consists of a 0.03m thick layer of orange brown clay or weathered glacial till. This layer extends over the entire excavated area and contains few, very fine, angular and rounded stones. The boundary between this layer and 002 is unclear. Finds from this layer consisted of two fragments of clay pipe, a piece of worked lead, three pieces of 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery and a few fragments of animal bone.

**002**

This layer underlies 001 and consists of the naturally deposited till, to a depth of 0.67m. The stone within this horizon is predominantly rounded with occasional angular fragments (max 0.08m diameter). No finds or organic material (suggesting re deposition) was present within this horizon.

**003**

This is the foundation cut for the pillar base. This was excavated (presumably in 1927) to depth of 0.25m; it cuts 001 and cuts into 002 (see Plate 1).

#### **004**

This is the fill of 003. It consists of mainly angular stone (max 0.07m diameter), set in a mix of clay and weak friable mortar. The pillar base stone is set into this deposit (see Plate 1).

#### **005**

This was the base layer excavated. It consisted of larger stones (max 0.20m x 0.10), both angular and rounded, set in a matrix of clay, identical to that recorded above. No finds or organic material was present within this horizon.

### ***Discussion***

As a result of the excavation it appears that the area underlying the Market Hall comprises naturally deposited glacial till. The upper layer (001) consists of weathered till that is slightly softer than that underlying it, and this may account for the presence of the finds trampled into its surface. It is of note that the lead found within this horizon most likely dates to the refurbishment of the monument in 1927. "Lead was put under the pillars and the finials flashed around with the same material", Jack, 1929, 34.

Underlying this is un-weathered till (002) with occasional small stones. Cut into this layer was the pillar base foundation cut 003 and its fill 004. It would appear that this is most likely the result of work carried out in 1927. Jack (1929, 34) states that "five other new bases were supplied resting on concrete". He also states that this method of construction was "an improvement, if I may say so, on the original constructor's work" perhaps suggesting that the original pillar bases were laid straight onto the solid till. If this assumption is correct then any floor that may have been laid, would have been flush with the pillar bases. No other cuts or postholes were identified during the excavation.

The base layer (005) marks the point at which the heavier clast sizes begin to fine upwards towards the top of the depositional sequence (Plate 2).

In conclusion, no man-made surfaces were identified during the excavation, and the only disturbance to the natural glacial till was the result of refurbishment in 1927. It can also be suggested that the road on the east side of the monument, is "sunken" as a result of wear and subsequent erosion, rather than the market hall site having been raised prior to construction. The fact that no surfaces were found beneath the present earth floor indicated the strong likelihood that no such surfaces ever existed there. It can be observed that a very thin laid mortar surface has been laid over this natural clay surfacing, probably in the last (20<sup>th</sup>) century.

### ***Site archive***

1. Site notebook
2. Photographs
3. This document
4. Assorted finds

### ***Bibliography***

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### ***Acknowledgements***

I would like to acknowledge the help and co-operation of the Pembridge amenity trust, especially \_\_\_\_\_ and Robert Anderson for their help on-site.

Dr. Keith Ray, County Archaeologist, for his editorial input into this report.

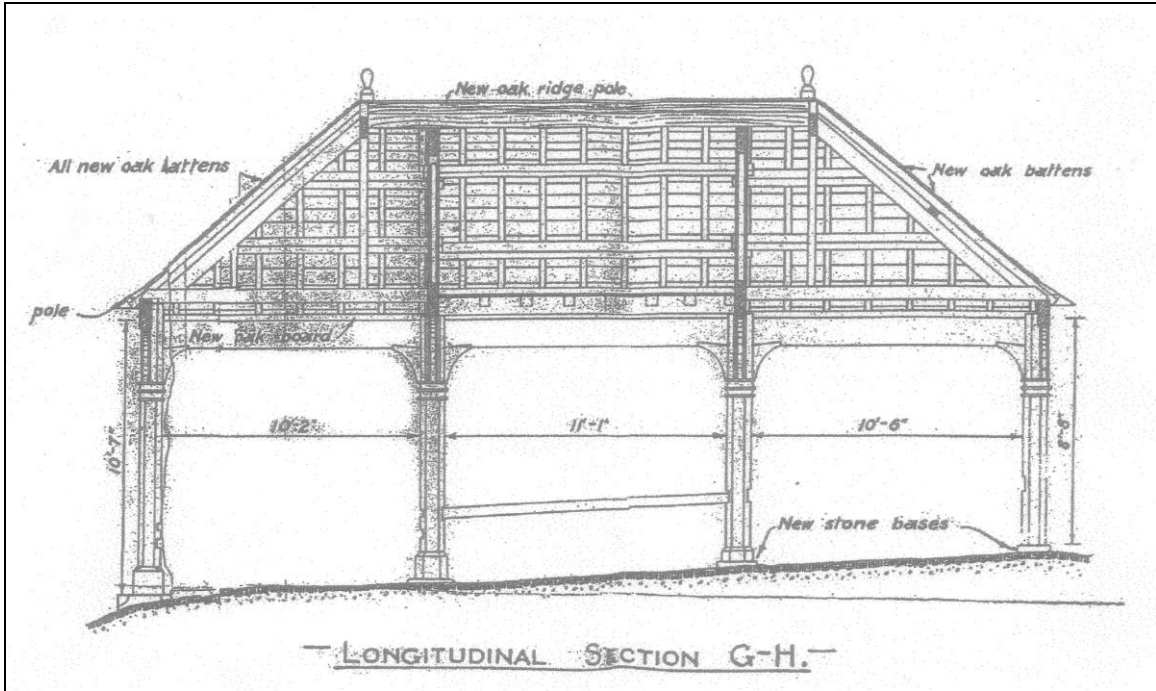


Figure 1: West facing section of the market hall (detail of 1927 survey drawing by G.H. Jack, County Surveyor).

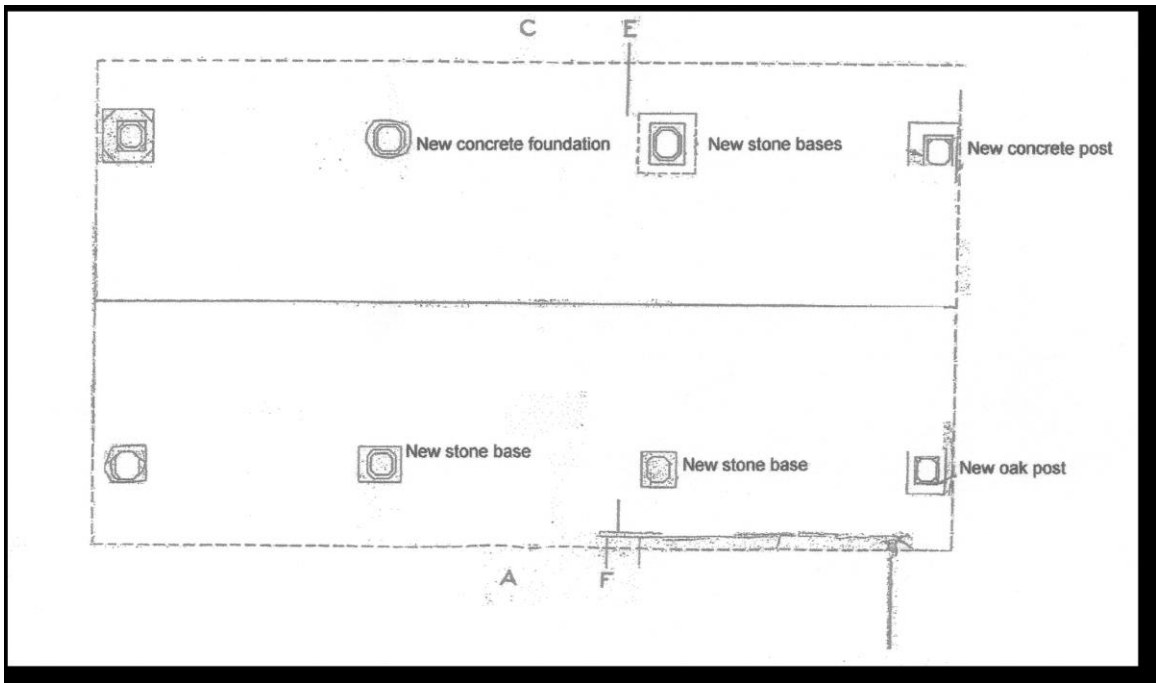
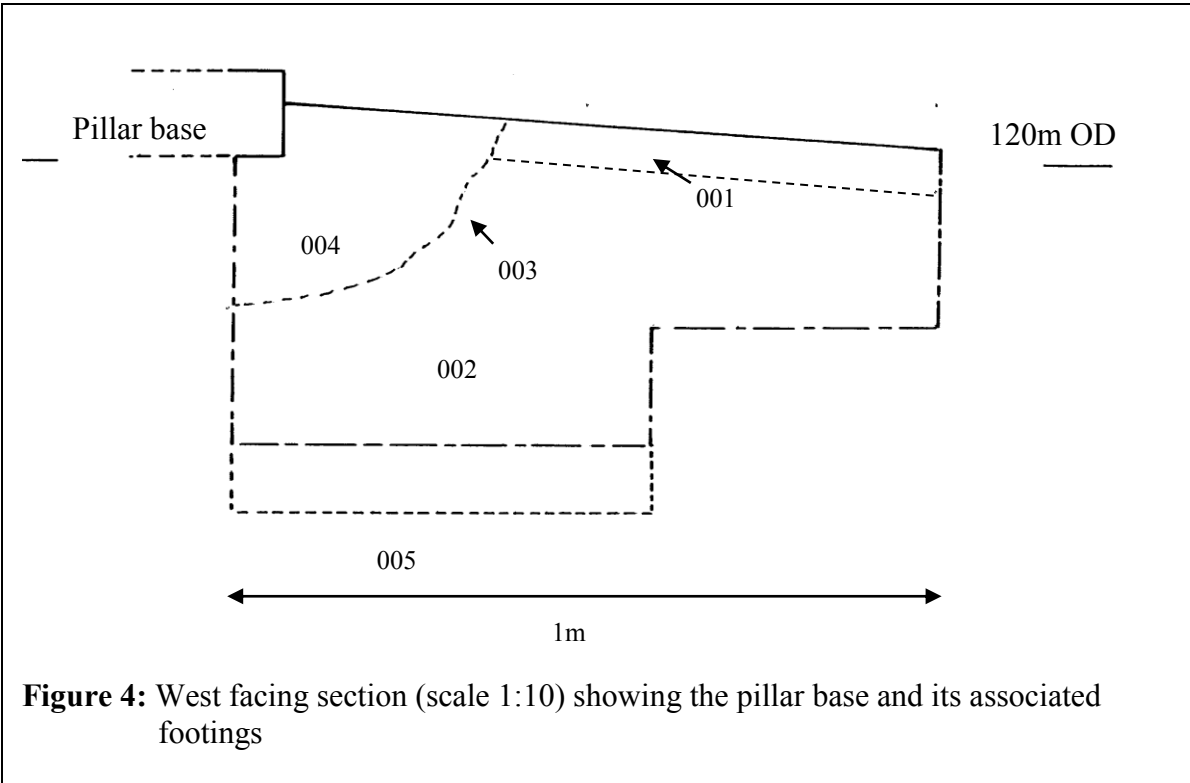
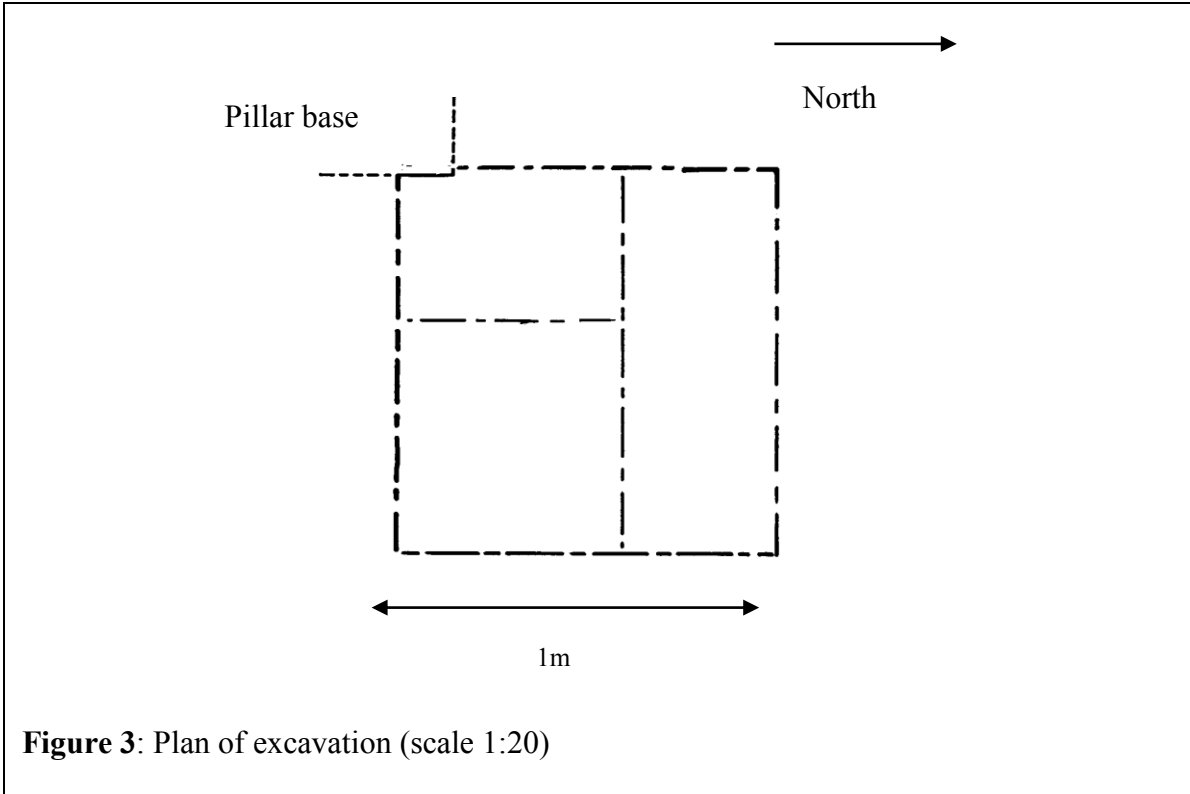


Figure 2:





**Plates**



**Plate 1:** South section with pillar base and associated footings in the top right hand corner. It is believed that these are the result of refurbishment in 1927. (© Robert Anderson Marketing Services).



**Plate 2:** East section showing the gradation of stone towards the base, and the otherwise 'clean' profile. (©Robert Anderson Marketing Services).