

CPAT Report No. 1272

Proposed Development on Chester Street, Shrewsbury

Cultural Heritage Desk-based Assessment



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Summary

The Field Services section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust undertook a heritage desk-based study to assess the potential impact on the cultural heritage of a proposed development on Chester Street in Shrewsbury (SJ 4935 1300).

The study examined relevant sources available in the Shropshire Records and Research Centre and the Shropshire Historic Environment Record and has demonstrated that there are no recorded heritage assets, designated or undesignated, within the development plot, although the site of a medieval town cross is known to lie within the general area.

Using cartographic sources it has been possible to trace the development of the Chester Street area from the last quarter of the 16th century to the present day. Although the area of Castle Foregate is known to have developed as an extra-mural suburb during the medieval period the earliest mapped evidence, dating to 1575, shows the area between what is now Castle Foregate and Chester Street as a broad thoroughfare, within which was a cross, positioned towards the northern end. By the early 17th century this block of land had been partially infilled with buildings, forming the present day street pattern, with some of the buildings likely to have been located within the development plot. Later mapping shows that this area underwent several phases of redevelopment, though generally with buildings along the street frontages and yard areas and outbuildings to the rear. During the 19th century a row of what appear to be terraced houses occupied the front of the plot and these remained until the 1960s when they were demolished.

The assessment has demonstrated that the development plot has been occupied since around 1600 and it would not be unreasonable to expect that significant buried remains survive within the area. However, the footprint of the proposed new building almost exactly matches the position of the 19th-century terrace, which may have disturbed underlying deposits, particularly if the houses had cellars, although there is no evidence to confirm that this was the case.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Field Services section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) were invited by Gareth Edwards, Design and Planning Associates, to undertake a desk-based study to assess the potential impact on the cultural heritage of a proposed development on Chester Street in Shrewsbury (SJ 4935 1300).
- 1.2 The proposed development site lies both within the Shrewsbury Conservation Area and in the historic core of Shrewsbury, as defined by the Shrewsbury Urban Archaeological Database. The general area, known as Castle Foregate (HER PRN 08389), was one of the town's suburbs which developed from the medieval period onwards. Historic editions of the Ordnance Survey Map indicate that the proposed development site was partially occupied by buildings in the later 19th century, and that these were subsequently demolished in the later 20th century. It was therefore considered possible that archaeological deposits relating to the medieval and later development of this part of Shrewsbury might survive within the proposed development site and this assessment has been conducted to clarify further the potential impact of the development on any buried deposits.



Fig. 1 Location of the proposed development site

- 1.3 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by CPAT in March 2014 which presented a detailed programme of works to be undertaken as part of the assessment, including trial excavation. The WSI was approved by the Historic Environment Team at Shropshire Council in lieu of a curatorial brief, although as a first stage the client has requested that only the desk-based assessment be undertaken, which forms the subject of this report.
- 1.4 The development site is located on the east side of Chester Street (Fig. 1) and is currently occupied by a surfaced car park.

2 Methodology

- 2.1 The assessment consisted of a desk-based study of all readily available primary and secondary documentary, cartographic, and aerial/ground photographic sources in order to provide a historical framework for any surviving archaeological remains. This included all relevant records held at the following repositories: the regional HER, Shropshire County Council; and Shropshire County Archives, Shrewsbury.

3 Scope and Guidance

Scope of Assessment

- 3.1 The cultural heritage is a broad concept that embraces archaeological remains, the built heritage and historic landscapes. Cultural heritage is deemed to include the full range of man-made features that have been imposed on the landscape from the Palaeolithic, more than two hundred and fifty thousand years ago, to the 20th century. Some of these features will be visible as upstanding remains on the ground; others will be buried and only become apparent during ground disturbance. Some will have an archaeological interest and importance; others will be more historical in their origin. Individually all these features are known as heritage assets – as defined for instance, in the Highways Agency's Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB).
- 3.2 Heritage assets include the following designated (statutorily protected) and registered (non-statutorily protected) sites: World Heritage Sites; Scheduled Monuments; Listed Buildings (LBs); Conservation Areas; and Registered Historic Parks and Gardens.

Guidance

- 3.3 In England, the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) require a planning authority to consider whether a proposal is likely to have a significant effect on the environment, including the architectural and archaeological heritage. Further guidance is provided by the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) and the associated Planning Practice Guidance relating to conserving and enhancing the historic environment (updated March 2014).
- 3.4 At a local level guidance is provided by Shropshire Council's Local Development Framework Adopted Core Strategy (March 2011), and in particular policy CS17 Environmental Networks, which states that 'development will identify, protect, enhance, expand and connect Shropshire's environmental assets, to create a

multifunctional network of natural and historic resources. This will be achieved by ensuring that all development . . . protects and enhances the diversity, high quality and local character of Shropshire's natural, built and historic environment, and does not adversely affect the visual, ecological, geological, heritage or recreational values and functions of these assets, their immediate surroundings or their connecting corridors'

- 3.5 The revised Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB), Volume 11 Section 3 Part 2, HA 20/07 (August 2007) provides a framework for assessments of the historic environment, whether these be for environmental statements or for smaller developments that do not require environmental impact assessments. The approach to the historic environment which it promotes, though designed primarily for road developments, is more generally relevant as a methodology for other types of development and has been adopted here.

4 Historical Background

Prehistory

- 4.1 There are a number of finds of prehistoric date from within and around the town of Shrewsbury, mostly within the river loop, and it has been suggested that the river crossing may have been a focus for activity during the prehistoric and later periods, while the elevated and defensive site of the town could have been exploited in the later prehistoric period by the siting of a hillfort, though this remains a speculative belief (Baker 2010, 81-2).

Roman

- 4.2 There is no evidence to suggest a Roman origin for Shrewsbury, the main focus of settlement being at Wroxeter, some 7km to the east. A legionary fort was established there in around AD 57 and it was later abandoned and the site used for the construction of the civitas capital for the Cornovii. Shrewsbury is, however, one of a number of English towns that appear to have inherited their role as regional capitals from Roman predecessors that lay nearby, but not on the same site (Baker 2010, 83).

Saxon

- 4.3 In the 650s AD Shropshire became part of the Kingdom of Mercia which later in the 9th century was split between the Danes and the Kings of Wessex. The first mention of Shrewsbury (*Scrobbesbyrig*) as a town comes in 901 AD, with Shropshire as a county recorded in 1006 (Trinder, 1998). Baker (2010, 86-7), following Bassett, suggests that at least two of the churches, St Mary's and St Chad's, were potentially founded in the late 7th or early 8th centuries. There is only one recorded findspot of Saxon date within the town however, that of a small hoard of coins found during building work at Castle Foregate in 1936 (PRN 1370). Many of the coins were destroyed during their discovery, but the six that remain indicate a deposition date of c.920 AD.

Medieval and post-medieval

- 4.4 Shrewsbury has a number of entries in the Domesday Book of 1086, with the town and indeed most of Shropshire in the ownership of Roger de Montgomery. This gives an early indication of Shrewsbury's dominance with five churches and 252 houses listed in the town (Moran 2003). The first castle was constructed in 1067, and consisted of a motte with conjoined inner and outer baileys. There are the remains of 12th-century

curtain walls and a gateway, but the body of the current castle is late 13th-century in date. Baker (2010 122) refers to Castle Foregate, which was named 'Norforiet' in the late 12th and early 13th centuries. The defensive town walls, which provided a 2.2km-long circuit around the town, were ordered by Henry II in 1218, and were largely completed by 1242 (Watson 2002). The abbey, mentioned in the Domesday Book, was founded in 1086, with extensive rebuilding taking place in the 14th century. By 1334 Shrewsbury was counted as the seventh most prosperous town in the country, its royal connections and location in relation to the Welsh border having given it a role of some importance in the early part of the medieval period. From this time on however, its prosperity and importance diminished through the remainder of the medieval and post-medieval periods. Also around this time the pattern of building in Shrewsbury changed, with the emphasis shifting from semi-defensive stone houses to wholly timber-framed structures; a large number of timber-framed houses of medieval date survive within the town (Moran 2003).

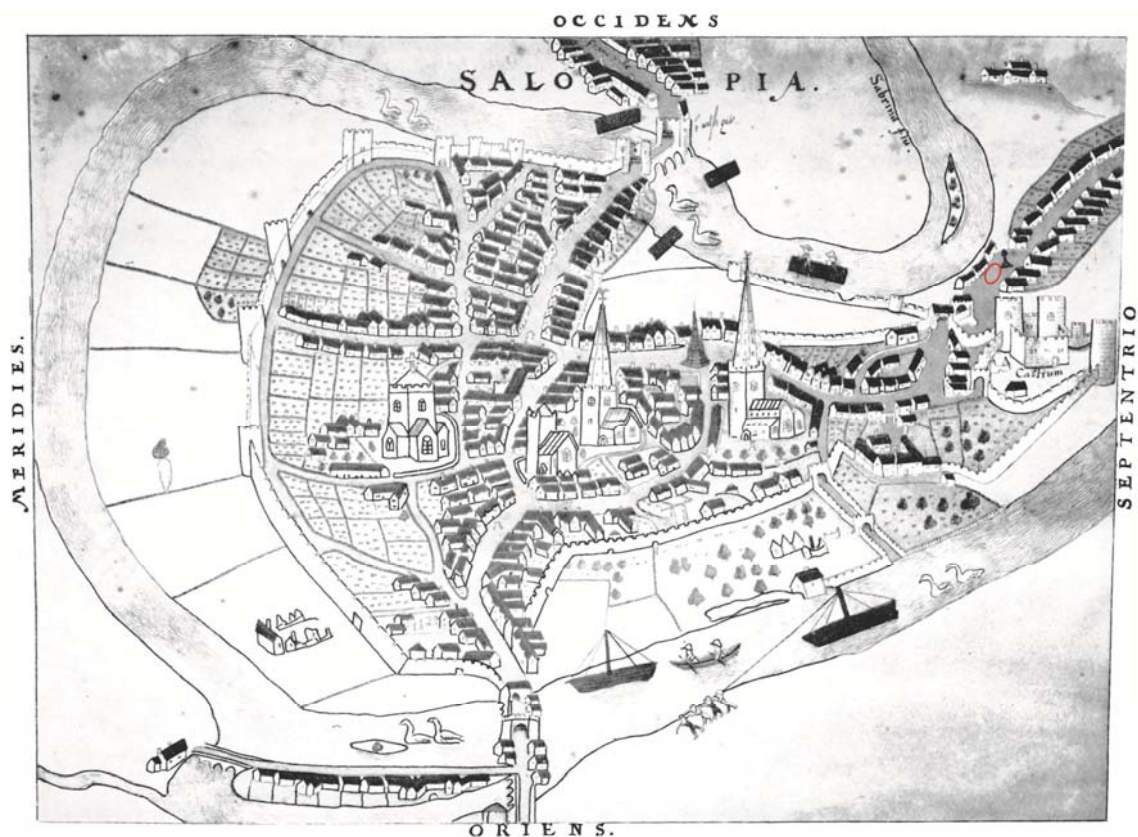


Fig. 2 The 1575 Burghley map of Shrewsbury with the approximate location of the development site shown in red (via internet at www.archivezone.org.uk)

The Development Plot

- 4.5 Shrewsbury is fortunate in having a series of large-scale historic maps through which it has been possible to trace the history of the development plot from the latter part of the 16th century to the present day. The earliest surviving cartographic source is the 1575 Burghley map of Shrewsbury (Fig. 2). This depicts the area of Castle Foregate as a wide thoroughfare, within which there was a standing cross (PRN 4044), which is likely to have been of medieval date. As far as it is possible to tell the development plot

would have formed part of this thoroughfare and consequently no buildings are depicted within it.

- 4.6 Thirty five years later the town was mapped by John Speed (Fig. 3). By the early 17th century the cross appears to have been removed and the modern day street plan had been established, with the development plot forming part of a triangle defined by what is now Castle Foregate, Chester Street and Cross Street. Although the detail is not to be relied upon with regard to individual buildings it seems to show that this area had become occupied by a number of buildings, some of which appear to lie within the development plot.

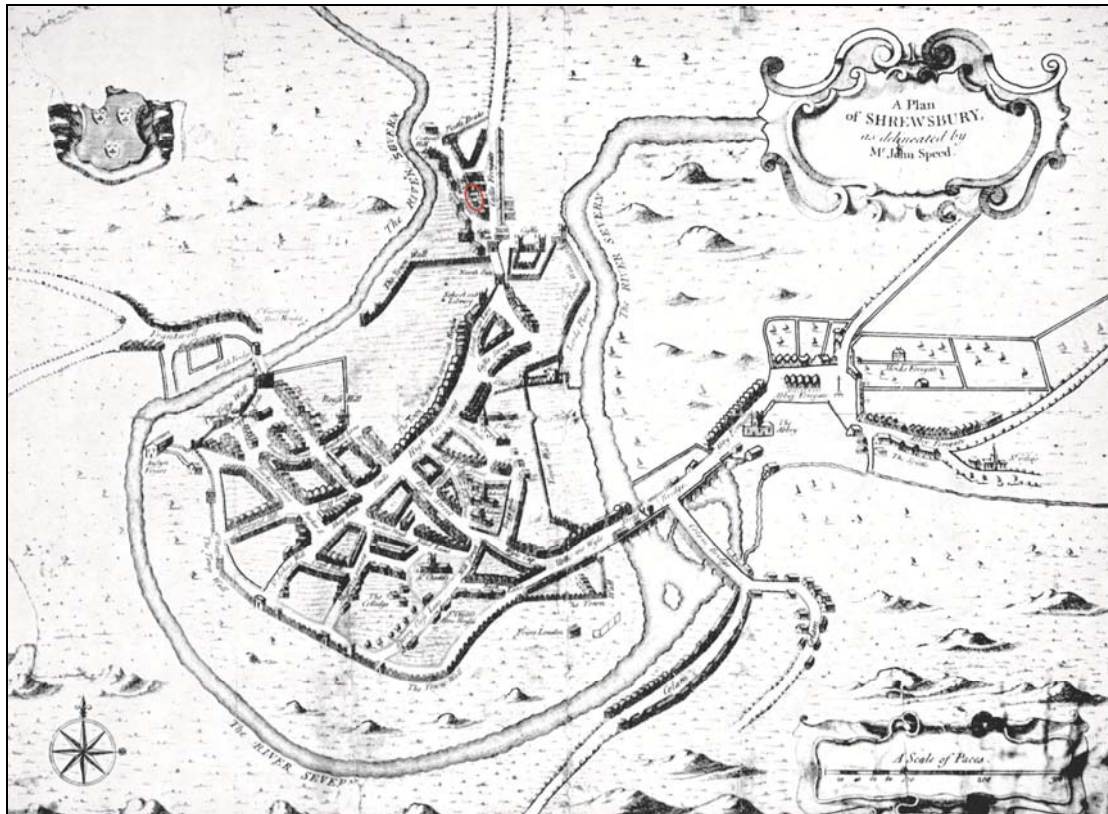


Fig. 3 Plan of Shrewsbury by John Speed with the approximate location of the development site shown in red

- 4.7 In 1746 Shrewsbury was mapped again in some detail, this time by John Rocque. This map (Fig. 4) shows that the triangle of land containing the development plot had evidently seen some reorganisation in the preceding century or so, with part of the area, including most of the development plot, appearing to be devoid of buildings. It is also apparent that at this time what is now Chester Street was then known as Back Lane.
- 4.8 There are three maps from the 1830s, although copyright restrictions prevent the reproduction of the two of them in this report. The earliest, an estate plan of 1830 (SRRC 731/Bdle359.4), shows a row of buildings on the plot and is largely the same as the 1832 depiction by Hitchcock, where a row of buildings, presumably terraced housing, is depicted along Chester Street, some of which were within the development

plot. The 1838 map by John Wood shows these structures in more detail, including a range of buildings towards the rear of the plot.

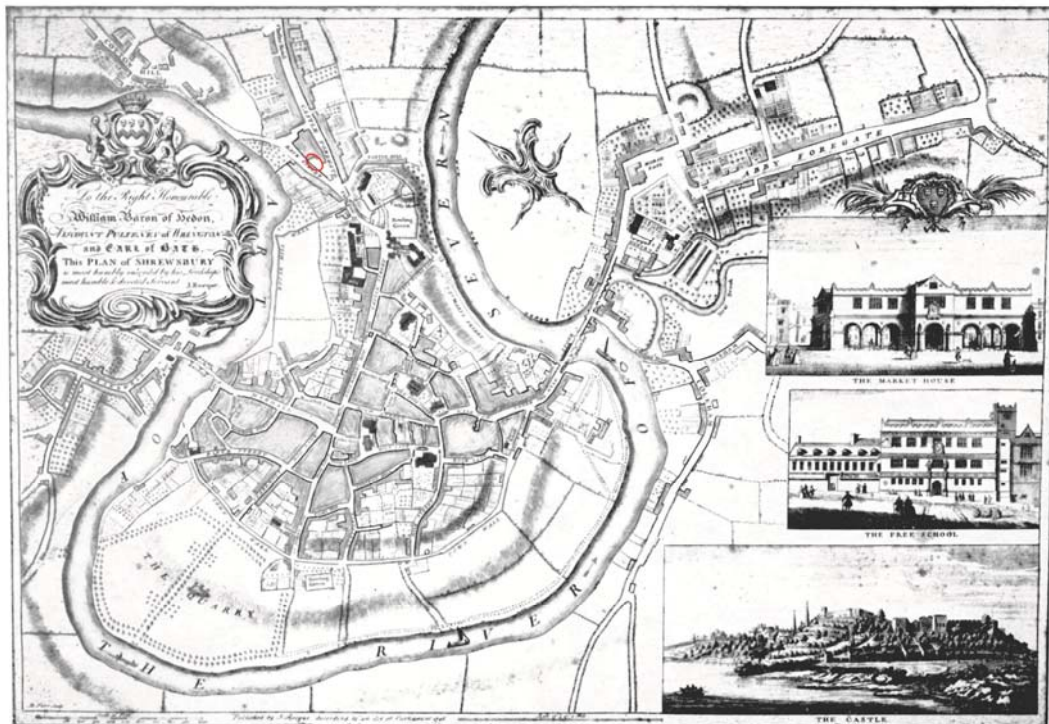


Fig. 4 1746 map of Shrewsbury by John Rocque (via internet at www.darwincountry.org)

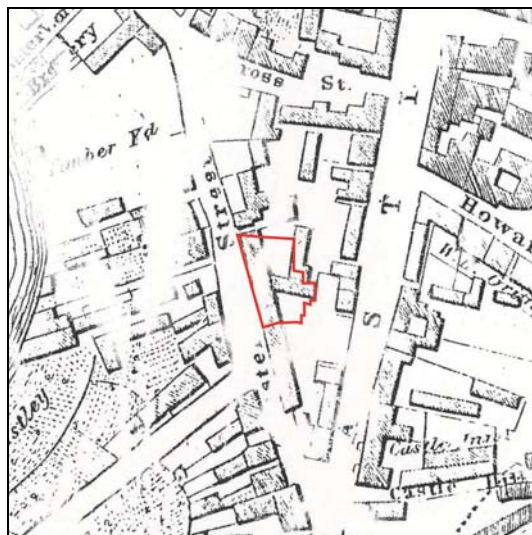


Fig. 5 Extract from John Wood's 1838 map of Shrewsbury, with the development plot outlined in red

- 4.9 In the years following the production of Wood's map the development locality underwent a significant change with the coming of the railway in the 1840s. The station was built in the plot on the opposite side of Castle Foregate to the proposed development, but the tracks extended across the triangle of land, presumably removing all traces of the structures in its northern part, particularly where it fronted Cross Street. Unfortunately the Shrewsbury and Birmingham Railway plans from 1844, held at the Shropshire Records and Research Centre, are too fragile to be accessed as it is likely that these show the situation immediately prior to the construction of the

railway and the schedule is likely to give details regarding the ownership and nature of the buildings, if not of the development plot then at least for the immediate locality.



Fig. 6 An extract from the 1882 Ordnance Survey 1:500 map of Shrewsbury showing the development plot outlined in red and the footprint of the new building in green.

- 4.10 The most detailed cartographic source available to us is the 1882 Ordnance Survey 1:500 town map of Shrewsbury (Fig. 6). The accuracy and scale of the map are such that it has been possible to overlay the outline of the development plot, together with the footprint of the proposed building, showing that much of the footprint was then occupied by a terrace fronting directly onto Chester Street, with a number of small buildings in the yard area to the rear. Later editions of the Ordnance Survey 1:2.500 mapping from the first quarter of the 20th century (Fig. 7) show little change within the development plot.

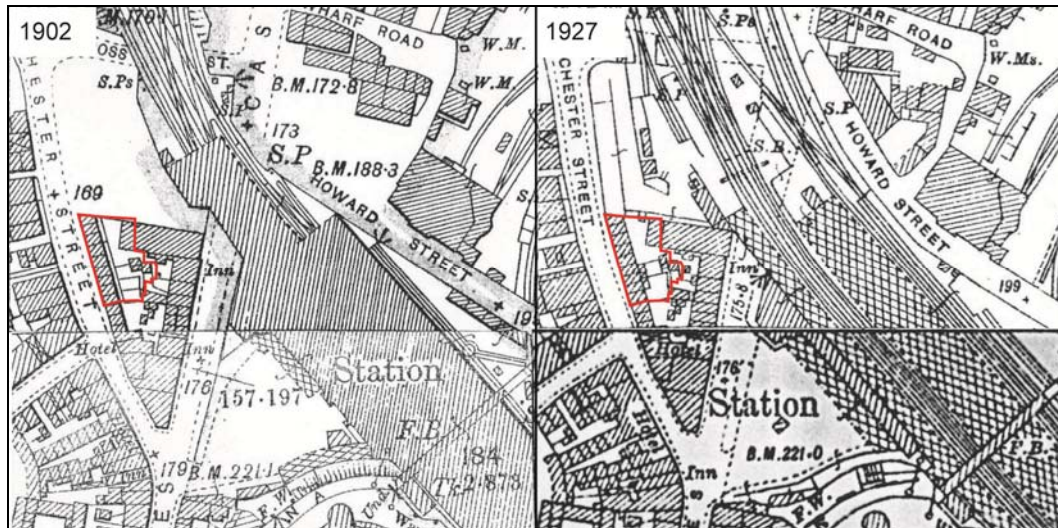


Fig. 7 Extracts from the Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 maps of 1902 and 1927 with the development plot outlined in red

- 4.11 One of the HER records (ESA 3755) for the immediate area relates that the level of the ground in the station yard was lowered by some 2-3m in 1902-3, to allow for the construction of a basement level in the station. Finds were reported to a depth of up to about 1.8m below the previous ground level, which implies that all archaeological features were removed in the process. However, the continuity of the buildings in the triangular plot suggests that it is unlikely this area was similarly affected, with the added implication that there could be a significant depth of stratigraphy on the site of the proposed development.
- 4.12 A photograph taken in September 1962 shows that the 19th-century buildings consisted of a terrace of three-storey, brick-built houses, although there is no indication as to whether they were cellared. It seems that the terrace was demolished in the later 1960s or early 1970s.

Undesignated heritage assets

- 4.13 The regional HER contains no records for any designated or undesignated heritage assets within the development plot. The medieval town cross (PRN 4044) depicted on the Burghley map of 1575 is located within the general area, although its precise location is not known. A gazetteer of heritage assets within the area is provided in Appendix 1.

Designated heritage assets

- 4.14 There are no designated heritage assets within the development plot, although it is located within the Shrewsbury Conservation Area. The nearest listed buildings are the Crewe Junction Signal Box (No. 1247161) and Shrewsbury Station (No. 1246546), both of which are listed at grade II and lie at distances of around 60m to the north and east respectively. Castle Gates, around 75m to the south, is lined with a group of grade II listed buildings and the scheduled monument of Shrewsbury Castle (SAM 1003706) lies 90m to the south-east.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 The desk-based heritage assessment has demonstrated that there are no recorded heritage assets, designated or undesignated, within the development plot, although the site of a medieval town cross is known to lie within the general area.
- 5.2 Using cartographic sources it has been possible to trace the development of the Chester Street area from the last quarter of the 16th century to the present day. Although the area of Castle Foregate is known to have developed as an extra-mural suburb during the medieval period the earliest mapped evidence, dating to 1575, shows the area between what is now Castle Foregate and Chester Street as a broad thoroughfare, within which the cross was positioned towards the northern end. By the early 17th century this block of land may have been partly infilled with buildings, forming the present day street pattern, with some of the buildings likely to have been located within the development plot. Later mapping shows that this area underwent several phases of redevelopment, though generally with buildings along the street frontages and yard areas and outbuildings to the rear. During the 19th century a row of what appear to be brick-built terraced houses occupied the front of the plot and these remained until the 1960s when they were demolished.
- 5.3 The assessment has demonstrated that the development plot has been occupied since around 1600 and it would not be unreasonable to anticipate significant buried remains surviving within the area. However, the footprint of the proposed new building almost exactly matches the position of the 19th-century terrace, which is likely to have disturbed underlying deposits; this would be particularly true if the houses had possessed cellars, although there is no evidence to indicate whether this was the case.

6 References

- Baker, N., 2010. *Shrewsbury: An archaeological assessment of an English border town*, Oxford: Oxbow Books/English Heritage.
- Moran, M., 2003. *Vernacular Buildings of Shropshire*. Logaston Press.
- Pannett, D and Trinder, B, 1972. *Old Maps of Shrewsbury*. Shrewsbury: Field Studies Council.
- Trinder, B., 1998. *A History of Shropshire (second edition)*. Chichester: Phillimore.
- Watson, M., 2002. *Shropshire: An Archaeological Guide*. Shropshire Books.

7 Cartographic sources

- 1547 Burghley Map of Shrewsbury
- 1610 John Speed's Map of Shrewsbury
- 1746 John Roque's Plan of Shrewsbury
- 1830 Plan of an estate in the Castle Foregate and on the Castle Terrace within the town and liberties of Shrewsbury (SRRC 731/Bdle 349.4)
- 1832 Hitchcock's Map of Shrewsbury
- 1838 Wood's Map of Shrewsbury

- 1844 Plans of the Shrewsbury and Birmingham Railway, Part 8 – Branch from Abbey Foregate to Castle Foregate (SRRC DP320) Item too fragile to be issued but represents the commencement of the railway construction period in the town
- 1882 Ordnance Survey 1:500 Town Plan, sheets 34.7.21 and 34.11.1
- 1902 Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 1:2,500 map, sheets 34.7 and 11
- 1927 Ordnance Survey 3rd edition 1:2,500 map, sheets 34.7 and 11

APPENDIX 1

Known heritage assets within 150m of the proposed development

Table 1: Heritage Assets recorded in the regional HER

| Monuid | Prefref | Designation | LB grade | Details |
|----------|---------|-------------|----------|--|
| MSA16737 | 10127 | | | Water Pump opposite Entrance Block to Shrewsbury Station, Shrewsbury |
| MSA16738 | 10137 | | | Building in Yard behind 3 & 4 Castle Gates, Shrewsbury |
| MSA3370 | 06741 | | | Saw Mills |
| MSA30857 | 28100 | | | Site of Original Lancastrian School, Castlefields |
| MSA11216 | 19658 | LB 1247161 | II | Crewe Junction Signal Box at SJ 4936 1306 CROSS STREET, Shrewsbury |
| MSA4988 | 10126 | SAM 1003706 | | Shrewsbury Railway Station, Castle Foregate, Shrewsbury |
| MSA4996 | 10136 | LB 1246552 | II | Nos 3 AND 4, CASTLE GATES, Shrewsbury |
| MSA11472 | 20116 | LB 1246553 | II | No 13, CASTLE GATES, Shrewsbury |
| MSA11473 | 20117 | LB 1271286 | II | The Bulls Head Public House (14), Nos 14 AND 15, CASTLE GATES, Shrewsbury |
| MSA11474 | 20118 | LB 1271197 | II | Nos 17 AND 17A, CASTLE GATES, Shrewsbury |
| MSA11475 | 20119 | LB 1271287 | II | Ludcroft Hotel (18), Nos 18 AND 19, CASTLE GATES, Shrewsbury |
| MSA11476 | 20120 | LB 12467822 | II | No 20, CASTLE GATES, Shrewsbury |
| MSA11478 | 20122 | LB 1246557 | II | Library, former Blowers Repository, CASTLE GATES, Shrewsbury |
| MSA11480 | 20124 | LB 1246884 | II | The Castle Vaults Public House, CASTLE GATES, Shrewsbury |
| MSA5176 | 10337 | LB 1254526 | II | The Butter Market, HOWARD STREET, Shrewsbury |
| MSA11477 | 20121 | LB 1271201 | II | Gala Bingo Club, CASTLE GATES, Shrewsbury |
| MSA14831 | 60255 | | | Medieval coin finds, The Dana, Shrewsbury |
| MSA1123 | 01467 | | | Find Spot in 1936 of Saxon coin hoard at Castle Foregate, Shrewsbury |
| MSA1103 | 01443 | | | Outer or Lower Castle Gate, or North Gate, Shrewsbury |
| MSA1102 | 01442 | | | Upper Castle Gate or Burgess Gate |
| MSA1090 | 01429 | | | Site of St Michael's College/ Church of St Michael |
| MSA1187 | 01534 | | | Bagley Bridge |
| MSA2648 | 04044 | | | Cross in Castle Foregate |
| MSA3369 | 06740 | | | Water Works |
| MSA3371 | 06742 | | | Saw Mill |
| MSA3382 | 06753 | | | Tannery, Shrewsbury |
| MSA1100 | 01440 | | | Find Spot in 1826 of Roman copper coin in a garden at Quarry Place, Shrewsbury |

| | | | | |
|----------|-------|--|--|---|
| MSA4381 | 60253 | | | Burial discovered during lowering of ground level in Station Yard |
| MSA24230 | 21489 | | | 22 Chester Street, Shrewsbury |

Table 2: Events recorded in the regional HER

| Event no | Details |
|----------|--|
| ESA5686 | 1993 recording of screen in Great Hall following fire |
| ESA3743 | 1996 WB on test holes for sewer repair |
| ESA3750 | 1993-1995 WB on construction of Shropshire Records and Research Centre by SCCAS |
| ESA1320 | 1960 field observation by the Ordnance Survey |
| | |
| ESA1321 | 1985 field observation by English Heritage |
| ESA1322 | 1996 WB by SCCAS |
| ESA1959 | 1960 field observation by the Ordnance Survey |
| ESA1974 | 1960 field observation by the Ordnance Survey |
| ESA1975 | 1960 field observation by the Ordnance Survey |
| ESA1979 | 1960 field observation by the Ordnance Survey |
| ESA2082 | 1960 field observation by the Ordnance Survey |
| ESA3922 | 1936 observation |
| ESA3938 | Duplicate of Event SA1320 |
| ESA3939 | Duplicate of Event SA1321 |
| ESA3755 | 1903 observations in station yard during addition of ground floor to railway station |
| ESA3754 | 1896 observation of pavement surfaces in Castle Gates |
| ESA5955 | 2005 WB and Excavation at Shrewsbury Castle |