



aeon archaeology

---

## Land to the East of New Street, Wem, Shropshire SY4 5AE.

**June 2018**  
**V 1.0**



Archaeological Evaluation  
Project Code: A0166.1  
Report no. 0172

---



---

# Land to the East of New Street, Wem, Shropshire SY4 5AE.

## June 2018 V 1.0

Report no. 0172

Archaeological Evaluation

Aeon Archaeology  
25, Mold Road  
Broughton  
Chester  
CH4 0PQ

Written by:	Richard Cooke BA MA MCIfA	Date: 29/06/2018
Checked by:	Josh Dean BA ACIfA	Date: 29/06/2018
Approved by:	Josh Dean BA ACIfA	Date: 29/06/2018

# Figures

**Figure 01:** Location of proposed development site at New Street, Wem, Shropshire. Scale 1:20,000 at A4.

**Figure 02:** Location of proposed development site at New Street, Wem, Shropshire. Scale 1:5,000 at A4.

**Figure 03:** Location of proposed evaluation trenches at New Street, Wem, Shropshire. Scale 1:1,000 at A4.

**Figure 04:** Plan of trench 1 showing inspection chamber (101) and plate locations. Scale 1:150 at A4.

**Figure 05:** Plan of trench 2 showing inspection chamber (201), sandstone wall (202) and plate locations. Scale 1:150 at A4.

**Figure 06:** Approximate location of evaluation trenches on the 25 inch first edition county series Ordnance Survey map of 1881.

**Figure 07:** Approximate location of evaluation trenches on the 25 inch second edition county series Ordnance Survey map of 1901.

# Plates

**Plate 01:** Trench 1, from the northwest. Scale 1.0m.

**Plate 02:** Trench 1, from the southeast. Scale 1.0m.

**Plate 03:** Trench 1 showing inspection chamber (101), from the north. Scale 0.3m.

**Plate 04:** Trench 1 showing inspection chamber (101), from the northwest. Scale 0.3m.

**Plate 05:** Trench 1 southwest facing section, from the southwest. Scale 1.0m.

**Plate 06:** Trench 2, from the north. Scale 1.0m.

**Plate 07:** Trench 2, from the south. Scale 1.0m.

**Plate 08:** Trench 2 showing inspection chamber (201), from the northeast. Scale 1.0m.

**Plate 09:** Trench 2 showing inspection chamber (201), from the north-northeast. Scale 0.3m.

**Plate 10:** Trench 2 showing inspection chamber (201), from the west. Scale 1.0m.

**Plate 11:** Trench 2 showing sandstone wall (202), from the north-northwest. Scale 1.0m.

**Plate 12:** Trench 2 showing sandstone wall (202), from the west-southwest. Scale 0.3m.

## Contents

1.0	NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY .....	2
2.0	INTRODUCTION .....	3
3.0	PROJECT AIMS .....	5
4.0	METHODOLOGY.....	7
4.1	Evaluation trenches .....	7
4.2	Data Collection from Site Records .....	7
4.3	Artefact Methodology.....	8
4.4	Environmental Samples Methodology.....	8
4.5	Report and dissemination .....	8
5.0	SITE LOCATION .....	9
6.0	HISTORY OF THE SITE.....	10
7.0	QUANTIFICATION OF RESULTS .....	11
7.1	The Documentary Archive .....	11
7.2	Environmental Samples .....	11
7.3	Artefacts.....	11
8.0	RESULTS OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION TRENCHES .....	12
9.0	CONCLUSION .....	15
10.0	10.0 SOURCES.....	16
11.0	APPENDIX I – WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION	17

## **1.0 NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY**

Aeon Archaeology was commissioned by Shropshire Housing Group to carry out a programme of archaeological evaluation as part of a development proposal on land located to the east of New Street, Wem, Shropshire.

The archaeological evaluation phase at Edinburgh House, New Street, Wem has shown that the majority of the foundation remains of the 19<sup>th</sup> century terraced housing at the Site were grubbed out during the demolition phase of the 1970s. It is likely that the construction of the terraced housing would have removed any trace of earlier medieval remains, with further disturbance taking place during the demolition at the Site.

There was no evidence found for the presence of cellars at the site and the limited amount of remains uncovered suggests that the Site has little potential to contribute to the historical narrative of the area of the regional research agenda.

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

Aeon Archaeology was commissioned by Shropshire Housing Group, hereafter the Client, to carry out a programme of archaeological evaluation as part of a development proposal for the erection of six new dwellings, including alterations to the carpark and access on land located to the east of New Street, Wem, Shropshire (centred on **NGR: SJ 51426 29141**) (figures 01 and 02).

The southern part of the development site is currently in use as a carpark and is covered by an area of hardstanding, while the northern part forms part of a grassed lawn to a row of tenement bungalows.

The Natural and Historic Environment Manager at Shropshire Council, hereafter SC, (Dr Andy Wigley) did not produce a formal brief for the archaeological evaluation but the following was made a condition of full planning permission (**ref: 17/03582/FUL**):

### *Condition 5*

*No development approved by this permission shall commence until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a phased programme of archaeological work in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation. This written scheme shall be approved in writing by the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of works.*

*Reason: The site is known to hold archaeological interest.*

The use of such a condition is in line with the guidance set out in paragraph 141, Section 12 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), published by the Department for Communities and Local Government and Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2 (Historic England 2015).

This document reports on the details of a programme of archaeological evaluation work for the Site carried out between 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>rd</sup> June 2018 in response to the spirit and intent of Condition No. 5.

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was undertaken by Aeon Archaeology in May 2018 (appendix I) which outlined the principle aims of the evaluation and the methods by which they would be met. This formed the basis of a method statement submitted for the work. The archaeological evaluation trenching was undertaken in accordance with this document. The assessment of the site through two (15.0m x 1.8m) archaeological evaluation trenches was deemed adequate for the purposes intended as represented in the trench array reproduced in figure 3. Upon attendance at the Site a number of constraints due to the proximity of live utilities were identified restricting the siting of trenches 1 and 2, and as such they were reduced in length to 14.0m and 10.5m respectively.

The aim of this programme of archaeological evaluation was to establish the archaeological significance of the site, to assess the impact of the development proposals on surviving monuments or remains, and to help inform future decision making, design solutions and further potential mitigation strategies. This report includes an assessment of the potential for further investigative work if required, and where relevant gives recommendations for an appropriate mitigation strategy.

This report is offered for consideration to the Natural and Historic Environment Manager at SC for verification with reference to the Condition applied to the planning permission and the relevant provisions in NPPF.



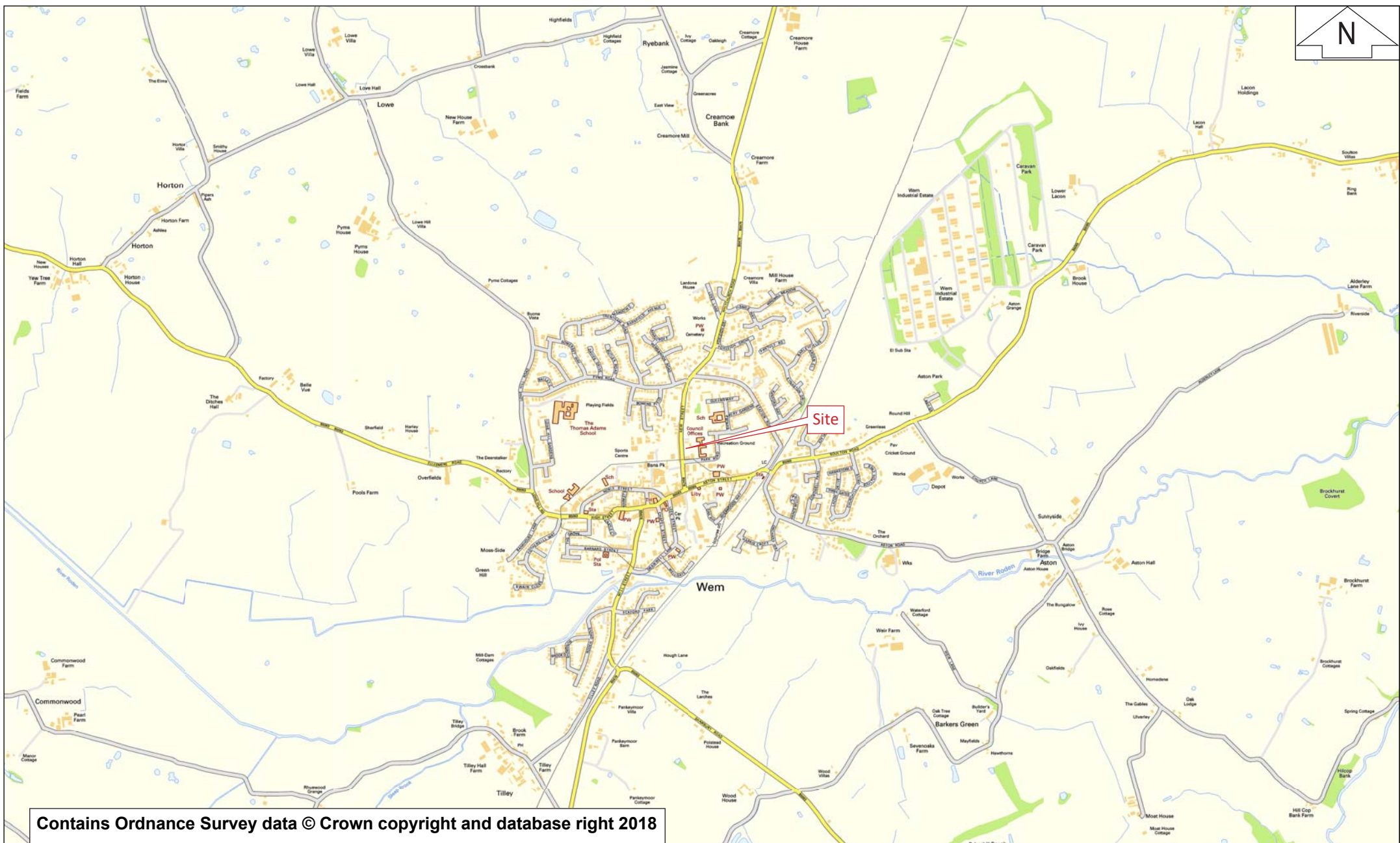


Figure 01: Location of proposed development site at New Street, Wem, Shropshire.  
Scale 1:20,000 at A4.



**Aeon Archaeology**  
Richard Cooke BA MA MCifA  
25 Mold Road, Broughton, Chester CH4 0PQ  
Tel: 07866925393 / 01244 531585  
[www.aeonarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.aeonarchaeology.co.uk)

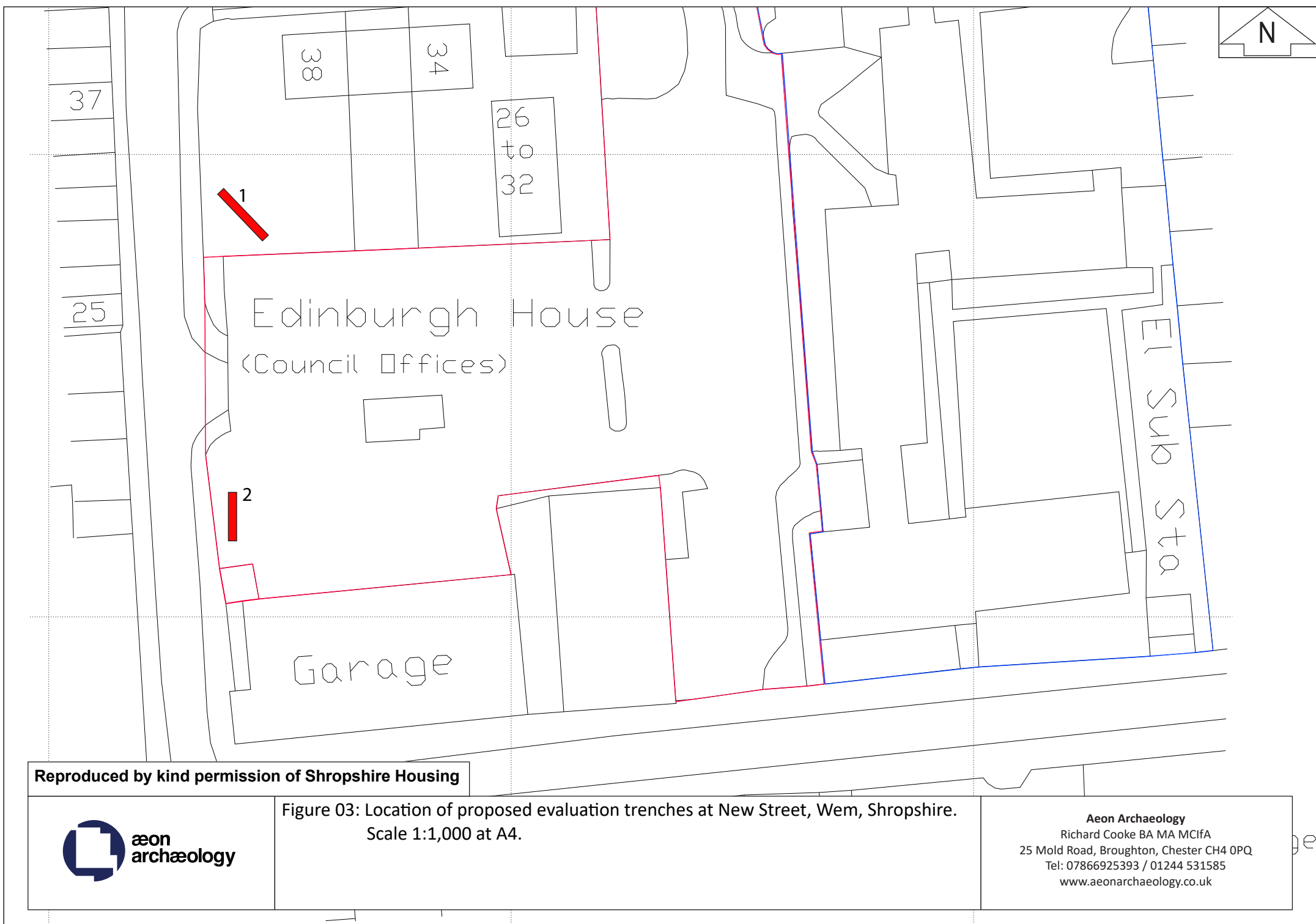




Figure 02: Location of proposed development site at New Street, Wem, Shropshire.  
Scale 1:5,000 at A4.



**Aeon Archaeology**  
Richard Cooke BA MA MCifA  
25 Mold Road, Broughton, Chester CH4 0PQ  
Tel: 07866925393 / 01244 531585  
[www.aeonarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.aeonarchaeology.co.uk)



### 3.0 PROJECT AIMS

The aim of the evaluation work was to characterise the known, or potential, archaeological remains uncovered during the excavation of the archaeological evaluation trenches.

The broad aims of the archaeological evaluation trenches were:

- To determine, as far as is reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains on the site, the integrity of which may be threatened by development at the site.
- To establish the nature and extent of existing disturbance and intrusion to sub-surface deposits and, where the data allows, assess the degree of archaeological survival of buried deposits of archaeological significance.
- To enable the client to establish a schedule for archaeological risks.
- To allow the Natural and Historic Environment Manager at SC to make an informed decision on the need for and scope of further evaluative and/or mitigatory archaeological works.

The detailed objectives of the archaeological evaluation trenches were:

- Insofar as possible within methodological constraints, to explain any temporal, spatial or functional relationships between the structures/remains identified, and any relationships between these and the archaeological and historic elements of the wider landscape.
- Where the data allows, identify the research implications of the site with reference to the regional research agenda and recent work in Shropshire.

The broad characteristics of the number, size, orientation and distribution of the trenches were considered to be appropriate and were agreed with the Natural and Historic Environment Manager at SC. The trench array was proposed as part of the WSI prepared by Aeon Archaeology and was designed to evaluate the potential of the Site for preserved buried remains, with a contingent trenching facility designed for site characterisation, the characteristics of which were insufficiently resolved within the core trenching provision. Contingent trenching was optional, upon the discovery of archaeological artefacts, deposits, features or structures the characteristics of which could only be sufficiently determined upon further spatial investigation.

The management of this project has followed the procedures laid out in the standard professional guidance *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment Project Manager's Guide* (English Heritage 2006; 2015), and in the *CIFA Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* (Chartered Institute For Archaeologists, 2014). Five stages are specified:

Phase 1: project planning

Phase 2: fieldwork

Phase 3: assessment of potential for analysis and revised project design

Phase 4: analysis and report preparation

Phase 5: dissemination

The current document reports on the phase 4 analysis and states the means to be used to disseminate the results. In this instance it was not necessary to prepare a revised project design as alluded to in Phase 3; as there was a paucity of evidence recovered in Phase 2 in terms of

archaeological features and artefacts, which therefore did not warrant any alteration to the initial project design.

The site is to be set in its landscape context so that its full character and importance can be understood. All the information is to be presented in a report that will be held by the Shropshire Historic Environment Record and lodged with the Oasis online database so that it can be accessible to the public and future researchers. This phase of work also includes archiving the documentary records from the project.

## 4.0 METHODOLOGY

Before the evaluation trenching commenced an agreed programme of excavation timing, siting, duration, surface re-instatement and health and safety protection measures were agreed with the Client, and the Natural and Historic Environment Manager at SC.

The archaeological evaluation trenches consisted of the following:

**Trench 1** – 14.0m x 1.8m: Located at the northern end of the site and testing the site for discreet features. This trench will be excavated on to the first archaeological horizon or natural glacial substrata, whichever is encountered first.

**Trench 2** - 10.5m x 1.8m: Located at the southern end of the site and testing the site for discreet features. This trench will be excavated on to the first archaeological horizon or natural glacial substrata, whichever is encountered first.

### 4.1 Evaluation trenches

The evaluation trenching array was designed to investigate areas that may contain archaeological features. There was latitude on the location of each trench and slight repositioning to take account of buried services and other constraints was acknowledged as a possibility within the WSI.

A 14-ton tracked excavator with 1.8m wide toothless ditching bucket equipped was used to open the trenches under constant archaeological supervision. Topsoil and overburden were to be removed by machine in spits down to archaeological deposits or natural sub-soils, whichever were encountered first. All uncovered archaeological features were to be excavated by hand.

A written record of the deposits and all identified features in each evaluation trench was to be completed via Aeon Archaeology pro-formas. All subsurface remains were to be recorded photographically, with detailed notations. The photographic record was completed using a digital SLR camera (Canon Eos 600D) set to maximum resolution.

Contingency provision was made for the following:

- Additional excavation of up to 100% of any given feature should the excavated sample prove to be insufficient to provide information on the character and date of the feature.
- Expansion of trench limits, to clarify the extent of features equivalent to an additional 20% of the core area.

The archaeological works were surveyed with respect to the nearest Ordnance Survey datum point and with reference to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. The trenches and any archaeological features within them were to be accurately located on a site plan prepared at the most appropriate and largest scale.

All excavations were backfilled with the material excavated and upon departure the site was left in a safe and tidy condition.

### 4.2 Data Collection from Site Records

A database of the site photographs was produced to enable active long-term curation of the photographs and easy searching. The site records were checked and cross-referenced and

photographs were cross-referenced to contexts. These records were used to write the site narrative and the field drawings and survey data were used to produce an outline plan of the site.

All paper field records were scanned to provide a backup digital copy. The photographs were organised and cross-referenced to the digital photographic record so that they can be archived with the Shropshire Historic Environment Record (HER).

#### **4.3 Artefact Methodology**

All artefacts were to be collected and processed including those found within spoil tips. Finds numbers would be attributed and they would be bagged and labelled as well any preliminary identification taking place on site. After processing, all artefacts would be cleaned and examined in-house at Aeon Archaeology. If required, artefacts would be sent to a relevant specialist for conservation and analysis.

The recovery policy for archaeological finds was kept under review throughout the evaluation trenching. Any changes in recovery priorities would be made under guidance from an appropriate specialist and agreed with the Client, Aeon Archaeology and the Natural and Historic Environment Manager at SC. There was a presumption against the disposal of archaeological finds regardless of their apparent age or condition.

#### **4.4 Environmental Samples Methodology**

The sampling strategy and requirement for bulk soil samples was related to the perceived character, interpretational importance and chronological significance of the strata under investigation. This ensured that only significant features would be sampled. The aim of the sampling strategy was to recover carbonised macroscopic plant remains, small artefacts particularly knapping debris and evidence for metalworking.

Advice and guidance regarding environmental samples and their suitability for radiocarbon dating, as well as the analysis of macrofossils (charcoal and wood), pollen, animal bones and molluscs would be obtained from a relevant specialist if required.

#### **4.5 Report and dissemination**

A full archive including plans, photographs and written material resulting from the project was prepared. All plans, photographs and descriptions were labelled, and cross-referenced.

Upon approval from the Client copies of the report will be sent to the Client, the Natural and Historic Environment Manager at SC, and the Oasis online database.



## **5.0 SITE LOCATION**

The proposed development Site lies to the east of New Street, Wem, Shropshire SY4 5AE, centred on NGR: SJ 51426 29141.

The southern part of the development site is currently in use as a carpark and is covered by an area of hardstanding, while the northern part forms part of a grassed lawn to a row of tenement bungalows.

The bedrock geology is of the Lias Group, a mudstone sedimentary bedrock that formed approximately 170 to 210 million years ago in the Jurassic and Triassic Period when the local environment was dominated by shallow seas. The superficial geology is of Glaciofluvial Deposits of sand and gravel that formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period when the local environment was dominated by Ice Age conditions ([www.bgs.ac.uk](http://www.bgs.ac.uk)).



## **6.0 HISTORY OF THE SITE**

The Natural and Historic Environment Manager at SC made the following scoping comments as part of the development application (dated 21st September 2017):

The proposed development site lies within the historic core of Wem, as defined by the Central Marches Historic Towns Survey, and within a group of tenement plots (HER PRN 05539) which are understood to represent a late medieval planned extension to the town. It is also located immediately north of the line of the town's Civil War defences (HER PRN 01637) and the associated former Whitchurch Gate (HER PRN 01633). Historic editions of the Ordnance Survey indicate that proposed development site was occupied by a number of terraced properties fronting onto New Street and a side alley in the later 19th century. These buildings appear to have been demolished when the site was subsequently redeveloped to facilitate the construction of Edinburgh House in the 1970s. Whilst it is not known whether the buildings that occupied the site in the later 19th century were cellared, it remains possible that archaeological deposits relating to the towns medieval and earlier post-medieval development are present on the proposed development site. The proposed development site is therefore deemed to have moderate archaeological potential.

## **7.0 QUANTIFICATION OF RESULTS**

### **7.1 The Documentary Archive**

The following documentary records were created during the archaeological evaluation trenching:

Trench sheets	2
Digital photographs	24

### **7.2 Environmental Samples**

No bulk samples were taken during the archaeological evaluation as no suitable deposits or fills were encountered.

### **7.3 Artefacts**

#### Summary

This report summarises the pottery and ceramic building materials recovered from an archaeological evaluation undertaken at Edinburgh House, New Street, Wem, Shropshire.

The pottery is quantified by sherd count, and according to ware names commonly in use by archaeological ceramic specialists across the North West and West Midlands regions.

#### Modern Ceramic

A large quantity of modern 20<sup>th</sup> century ceramic was observed within four modern refuse pits within trench 1. These features were not evaluated due to their modern origin and as such the ceramic sherds were not recovered or collated.

#### Post-Medieval Ceramic

The evaluation produced 2 sherds of post-medieval pottery from a blackware vessel of unstratified context within trench 1. The pottery spans the period from the mid to late 18<sup>th</sup> century through to the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The pottery was in a degraded and chipped condition overall, fragmented with the sherds representing two vessels.

#### Conclusions

The finds assemblage from the evaluation reflects activity within the vicinity of the site during the post-medieval period. The pottery is weighted to the mid-18th to mid-19th century comprised of table wares. The assemblage overall is predominantly domestic in character.

The finds assemblage from Edinburgh House, Wem requires no further study. Retention of the finds is not recommended but disposal should not be carried out without due consultation of the legal owner/s of the finds.

## 8.0 RESULTS OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION TRENCHES

The evaluation trenches were designed to evaluate and characterise the known, or potential, archaeological remains. Each trench is described and discussed separately. The location of the trenches can be found on figure 3. The location and orientation of photographs is shown on figures 4 and 5.

### **Trench 01** (Plates 1-5, figures 1-3, and 4)

Centred on NGR SJ 51426 29181

#### Discussion

Trench 1 measured 14.0m in length by 1.8m in width by 1.0m in depth (maximum) orientated northwest to southeast and was located at the northern part of the site testing the site for discreet features, in particular the foundation remains of 19<sup>th</sup> century terraced housing.

The trench was excavated through a 0.1m deep soft mid red-brown clay-silt topsoil deposit which overlaid a 0.1m deep friable, light white –grey demolition deposit with frequent brick, mortar and stone rubble inclusions. This deposit lay above a 0.6m deep moderately compacted mid/dark black-grey clay-silt deposit with occasional brick and mortar fragment inclusions. Beneath this deposit the natural glacial mid yellow-orange sand substrata was encountered.

Towards the north-western end of the trench four sub-rounded pits were uncovered excavated into the natural substrata. These were infilled with modern 20<sup>th</sup> century ceramic as well as red-brick and mortar fragments, and as such were not investigated further.

At the south-eastern limit of the trench a red-brick inspection chamber (101) was encountered immediately beneath the topsoil horizon and at 80.69m OD. This was constructed from unfrosted red-bricks bonded by mortar and standing to five courses high by two courses wide, and measuring >1.0m in length (east-west) by >1.0m in width (north-south). The bricks measured 0.19m in length by 0.12m in width by 0.07m in depth and the inspection chamber continued into the south-eastern and north-eastern limits of excavation.

#### Interpretation

The foundation remains of the 19<sup>th</sup> century terraced housing was not encountered within the trench, however a distinct demolition deposit was observed, as was inclusions of red-brick and mortar fragments within the deposit below. Moreover, four modern refuse pits were identified cut into the natural glacial sand within the base of the trench. All of this suggests that the terraced housing stock did not contain cellars and that the structural foundation remains were grubbed out in their entirety during demolition in the 1970s.

The discovery of the red-brick inspection chamber at the south-eastern limit of the trench is likely due to an effort to not disturb existing drains at the Site during the demolition phase rather than an indication of sporadic preservation in-situ of foundation remains.

The first and second editions 25" county series Ordnance Survey maps of 1881 and 1901 respectively (figures 6 and 7) show a row of terraced houses at this location, the latter of which depicts a small rectangular structure within the enclosed rear garden of the property, and at the approximate location that the inspection chamber was found within the trench. This feature is not shown on the

earlier first edition map and it may be that there was improvement of the drains within the Site between the production of the 1881 and 1901 maps.



**Plate 01:** Trench 1, from the northwest. Scale 1.0m.





**Plate 02:** Trench 1, from the southeast. Scale 1.0m.

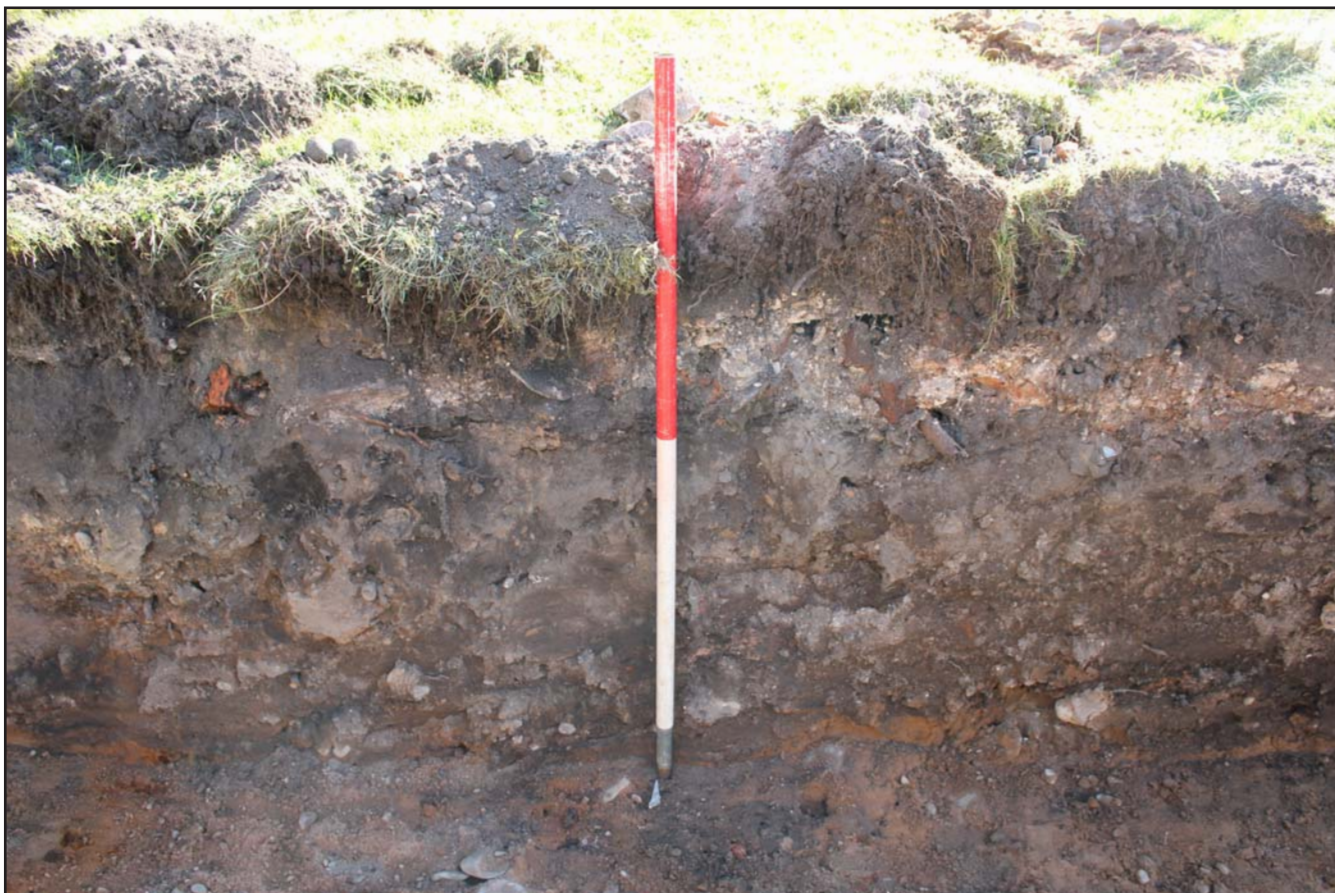


**Plate 03:** Trench 1 showing inspection chamber (101), from the north. Scale 0.3m.





**Plate 04:** Trench 1 showing inspection chamber (101), from the northwest. Scale 0.3m.



**Plate 05:** Trench 1 southwest facing section, from the southwest. Scale 1.0m.



Spot Heights - OD (m)
1 = 80.69



Figure 04: Plan of trench 1 showing inspection chamber (101) and plate locations.  
Scale 1:150 at A4. Located on figure 03.

**Aeon Archaeology**  
Richard Cooke BA MA MCifA  
25 Mold Road, Broughton, Chester CH4 0PQ  
Tel: 07866925393 / 01244 531585  
[www.aeonarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.aeonarchaeology.co.uk)

## **Trench 02** (Plates 6-12, figures 1-3, and 5)

Centred on NGR SJ 51426 29110

### Discussion

Trench 2 measured 10.5m in length by 1.8m in width by 0.9m in depth (maximum) orientated north to south and was located at the southern part of the site testing the site for discreet features, in particular the foundation remains of 19<sup>th</sup> century terraced housing.

The trench was excavated through a 0.06m deep layer of tarmac and a 0.16m deep deposit of light-grey gravel hardcore straight on to the natural glacial mid yellow-orange sand substrata.

Towards the southern end of the trench a square or possibly rectangular structure (201) was uncovered, constructed from unfrogged red-brick bonded by mortar and measuring 2.5m (northwest-southeast) by >1.0m (southwest-northeast). The structure was of six courses high by two courses wide using bricks measuring 0.12m in length by 0.1m in width by 0.06m in depth. Only the south-western and south-eastern faces remained, with the north-western end being entirely absent and represented only by a foundation cut [203], and the north-eastern face lying beyond the limit of excavation. The structure lay immediately beneath the hardcore gravel deposit and at 79.77m OD.

Foundation cut [203] measured >1.5m in length by 0.5m in width orientated southwest to northeast and continued into the eastern limit of excavation. It had been infilled by a mid brown-grey sand-silt (204).

At the northern end of the trench a linear dry-bonded sandstone wall (202) measuring 2.13m in length by 0.35m in width by 0.2m in height and orientated north-northwest to south-southeast was uncovered running across the trench. The wall was constructed from five large sub-rounded sandstone cobbles averaging 0.6m by 0.35m by 0.2m and laid directly on to the natural glacial sand. The wall also laid directly beneath the hardcore gravel deposit and at 79.95m OD. Towards the south-southeast limit of the structure the remains of an upper course of unfrogged red-brick was observed.

### Interpretation

It is likely that the red-brick structure observed at the southern end of the trench was the remains of an inspection chamber similar to that seen within trench 1. It had been partially demolished, presumably during the demolition of the 19<sup>th</sup> century terraced housing at the Site, suggesting that the drains associated with it were no longer in use.

The linear sandstone wall appears to represent the foundation remains of the 19<sup>th</sup> century terraced housing stock, with the stratigraphic evidence suggesting that it formed the lowest foundation course above which unfrogged red-brick had been utilised for the construction of the properties. The survival of this wall appears to be merely by chance, suggesting that although the majority of foundation remains had been grubbed out during the demolition phase in the 1970s, some very limited sporadic remains do persist at this part of the Site.





**Plate 06:** Trench 2, from the north. Scale 1.0m.



**Plate 07:** Trench 2, from the south. Scale 1.0m.





**Plate 08:** Trench 2 showing inspection chamber (201), from the northeast. Scale 1.0m.





**Plate 09:** Trench 2 showing inspection chamber (201), from the north-northeast. Scale 0.3m.



**Plate 10:** Trench 2 showing inspection chamber (201), from the west. Scale 1.0m.

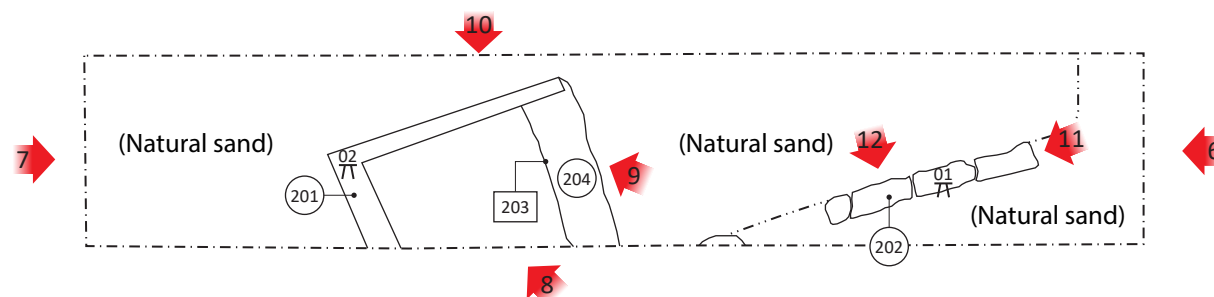




**Plate 11:** Trench 2 showing sandstone wall (202), from the north-northwest. Scale 1.0m.



**Plate 12:** Trench 2 showing sandstone wall (202), from the west-southwest. Scale 0.3m.



Spot Heights - OD (m)

1 = 79.95

2 = 79.77

0 5m

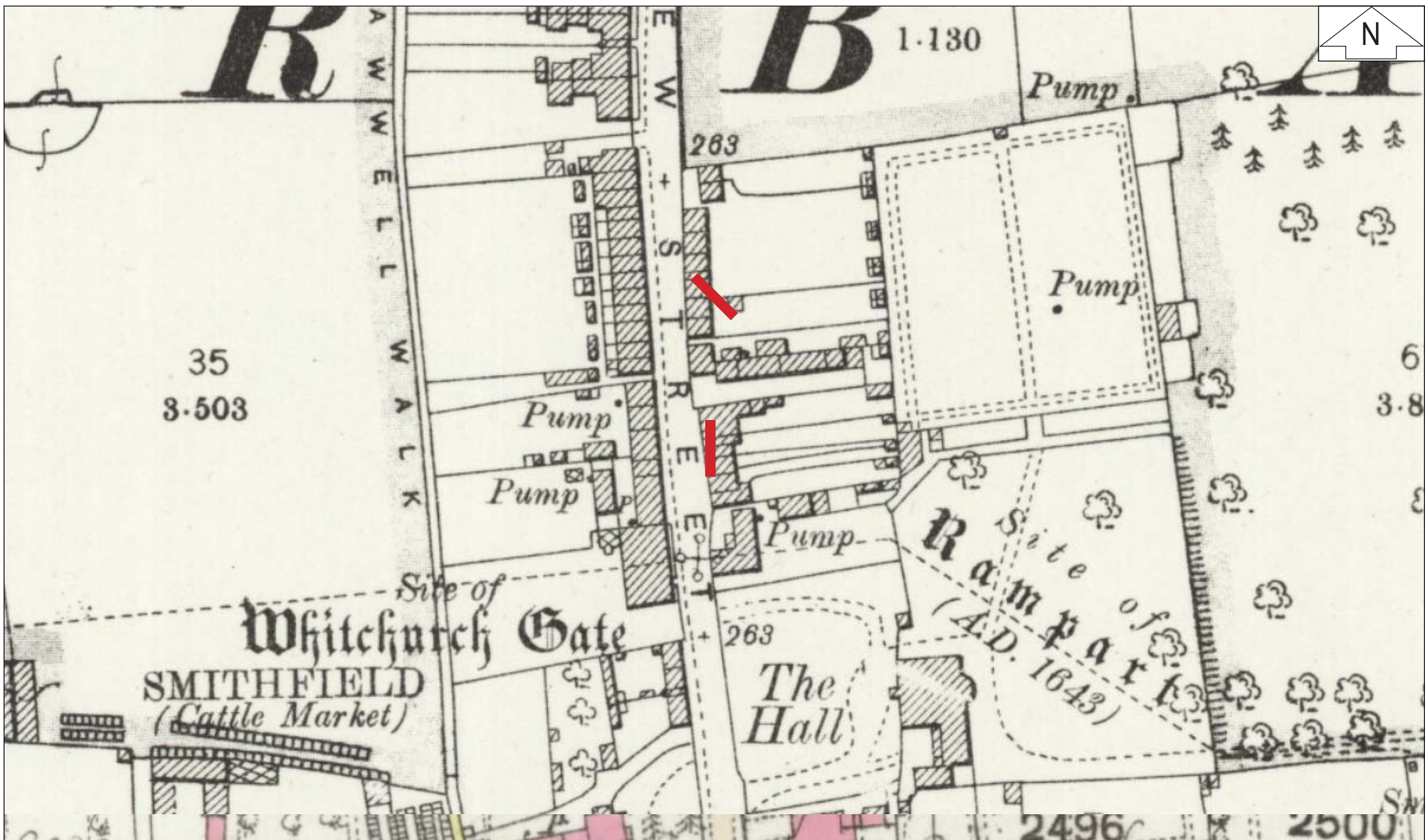


Figure 05: Plan of trench 2 showing inspection chamber (201), sandstone wall (202) and plate locations. Scale 1:150 at A4. Located on figure 03.

**Aeon Archaeology**  
Richard Cooke BA MA MCifA  
25 Mold Road, Broughton, Chester CH4 0PQ  
Tel: 07866925393 / 01244 531585  
[www.aeonarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.aeonarchaeology.co.uk)









## 9.0 CONCLUSION

The archaeological evaluation phase at Edinburgh House, New Street, Wem has shown that the majority of the foundation remains of the 19<sup>th</sup> century terraced housing at the Site were grubbed out during the demolition phase of the 1970s. It is likely that the construction of the terraced housing would have removed any trace of earlier medieval remains, with further disturbance taking place during the demolition at the Site.

There was no evidence found for the presence of cellars at the site and the limited amount of remains uncovered suggests that the Site has little potential to contribute to the historical narrative of the area of the regional research agenda.

This evaluation enables an informed, sustainable and responsible approach to the development at Edinburgh House, New Street, Wem. The information provided meets the expectations of legislation in that the applicant has evaluated the presence of archaeological assets that may be affected by proposed development at the Site. It is considered that the level of detail provided is proportionate to the assets' importance and provides sufficient information to understand the potential impact of the proposal on the significance of archaeological remains. Ultimately, therefore, and without prejudice to the findings of any future archaeological, or other investigations at the Site, it is considered that the archaeological potential at the Site is of a low to negligible importance level and that there would not be a requirement for any further assessment or mitigation concerning treatment of the buried archaeological remains at the Site. This recommendation is in line with the relevant provisions in current legislation.

## 10.0 10.0 SOURCES

Brown D. H., 2007. Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation. Archaeological Archives Forum

British Geological Survey website. [www.bgs.ac.uk](http://www.bgs.ac.uk)

Chisholm, H. 1911. Encyclopaedia Britannica

English Heritage, 1991. Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2)

English Heritage, 2006. Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE)

Laing L. 2014. Pottery in Britain: 4000BC to AD1900, Greenlight Publishing, Witham, Essex.

Richards, J. & Robinson, D., 2000. Digital Archives from Excavation and *Fieldwork: Guide to Good Practice* (Second Edition). The Archaeology Data Service Guide to Good Practice: Oxbow Books

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014. *Code of Conduct*

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014. *Code of Approved Practice* for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014. *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014. *Standard and Guidance for the Collection, Documentation, Conservation and Research of Archaeological Materials*

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014. *Standard and Guidance for the Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives*

## **11.0 APPENDIX I – WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**



aeon archaeology

---

**Land to the East of New Street, Wem,  
Shropshire SY4 5AE.**

**Written Scheme of Investigation  
for Archaeological Evaluation.**

**May 2018 v2.0**



Project Code: A0166.1  
Planning Ref: 17/03582/FUL

---

1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	2
2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AIMS .....	4
3.0 METHOD STATEMENT – ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION .....	5
4.0 EVALUATION REPORT.....	6
4.2.1 Post-excavation Assessment .....	6
4.2.2 Post-excavation Report .....	6
4.3 Archive .....	7
5.0 FURTHER ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS.....	8
6.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES .....	8
7.0 HUMAN REMAINS.....	8
8.0 SMALL FINDS.....	9
9.0 UNEXPECTED DISCOVERIES: TREASURE TROVE.....	9
10.0 STAFF & TIMETABLE .....	10
10.1 Staff .....	10
10.2 Timetable .....	10
11.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY .....	10
12.0 INSURANCE .....	10
13.0 GENERAL .....	11
14.0 SPECIALISTS .....	11

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

A development proposal has been submitted by Shropshire Housing Group, hereafter the Client, for the erection of six new dwellings, including alterations to the carpark and access on land located to the east of New Street, Wem, Shropshire (centred on **NGR: SJ 51426 29141**) (figures 01 and 02).

The development site is currently in use as a carpark and is covered by an area of hardstanding.

The Natural and Historic Environment Manager at Shropshire Council, hereafter SC, (Dr Andy Wigley) did not produce a formal brief for the archaeological evaluation but the following was made a condition of full planning permission (**ref: 17/03582/FUL**):

### *Condition 5*

*No development approved by this permission shall commence until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a phased programme of archaeological work in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation. This written scheme shall be approved in writing by the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of works.*

*Reason: The site is known to hold archaeological interest.*

The Natural and Historic Environment Manager at SC has confirmed that the first phase of archaeological work at the Site should include the excavation of two evaluation trenches measuring 1.8m by 15.0m across the location of the proposed development.

The topsoil and any overburden / hardstanding will be removed by mechanical excavator, and any archaeological features encountered will be sample excavated by hand in order to determine their character and date. The location of the trench array is shown on Figure 03.

This WSI states the aims, objectives and methodology for implementing the archaeological evaluation.

The use of such a condition is in line with the guidance set out in paragraph 141, Section 12 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), published by the Department for Communities and Local Government and Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2 (Historic England 2015).

The Natural and Historic Environment Manager at SC made the following scoping comments as part of the development application (dated 21<sup>st</sup> September 2017):

The proposed development site lies within the historic core of Wem, as defined by the Central Marches Historic Towns Survey, and within a group of tenement plots (HER PRN 05539) which are understood to represent a late medieval planned extension to the town. It is also located immediately north of the line of the town's Civil War defences (HER PRN 01637) and the associated former Whitchurch Gate (HER PRN 01633). Historic editions of the Ordnance Survey indicate that proposed development site was occupied by a number of terraced properties fronting onto New Street and a side alley in the later 19th century. These buildings appear to have been demolished when the site was subsequently redeveloped to facilitate the construction of Edinburgh House in the 1970s. Whilst it is not known whether the buildings that occupied the site in the later 19th century were cellared, it remains possible that archaeological deposits relating to the towns medieval and earlier post-medieval development are present on the proposed development site. The proposed development site is therefore deemed to have moderate archaeological potential.



Reference will be made to the guidelines specified in Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014).

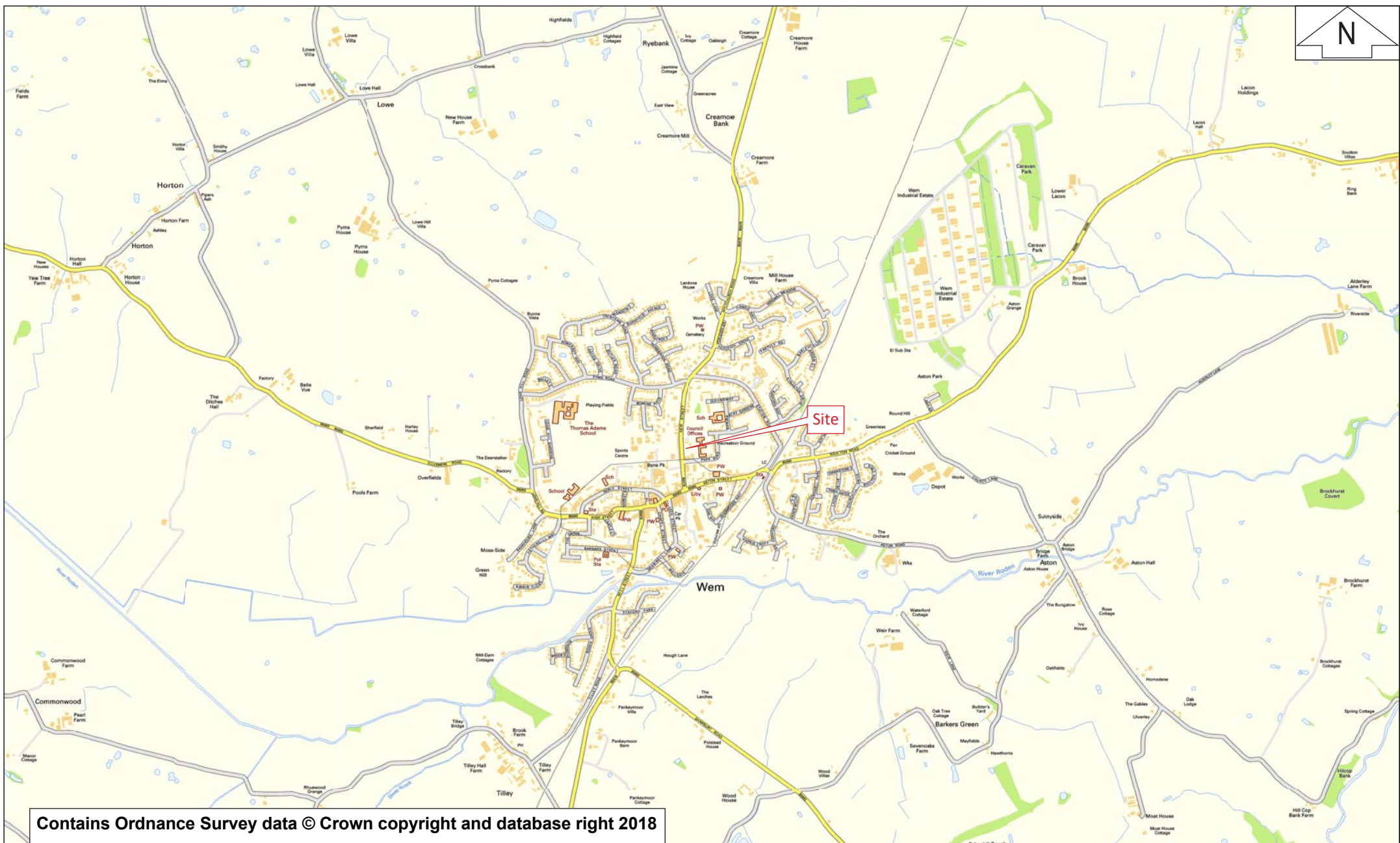


Figure 01: Location of proposed development site at New Street, Wem, Shropshire.  
Scale 1:20,000 at A4.

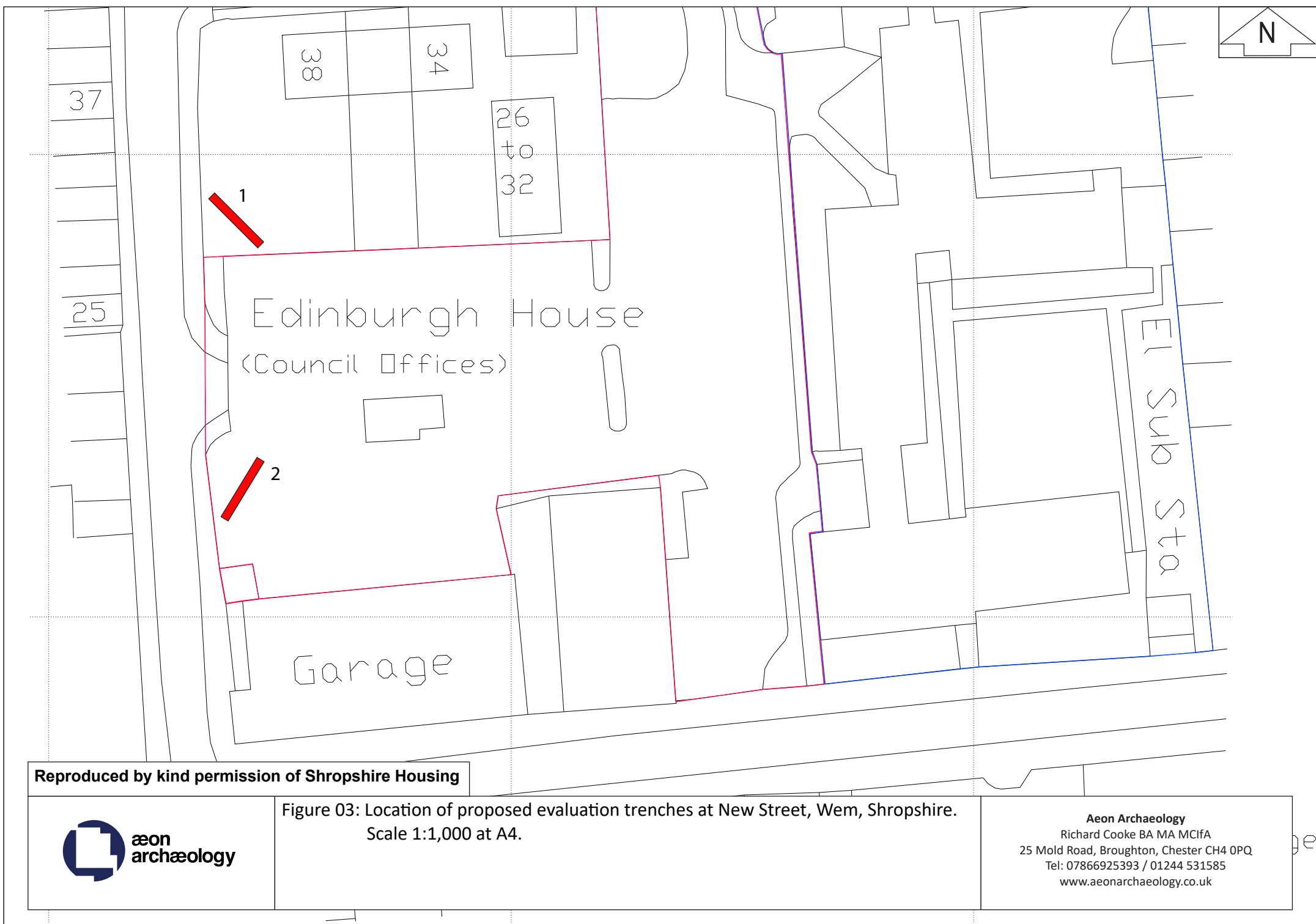


**Aeon Archaeology**  
Richard Cooke BA MA MCifA  
25 Mold Road, Broughton, Chester CH4 0PQ  
Tel: 07866925393 / 01244 531585  
[www.aeonarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.aeonarchaeology.co.uk)





Figure 02: Location of proposed development site at New Street, Wem, Shropshire.  
Scale 1:5,000 at A4.



## 2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AIMS

Before trial trenching commences an agreed programme of excavation timing, siting, duration, surface re-instatement and health and safety protection measures will be agreed with the Client and the Natural and Historic Environment Manager at SC.

The number, size, orientation and distribution of trenches will be agreed in advance so as to best target areas that may contain the archaeological features within the development footprint.

The broad aims of the archaeological evaluation are:

- To determine, as far as is reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains on the site, the integrity of which may be threatened by development at the site.
- To establish the nature and extent of existing disturbance and intrusion to sub-surface deposits and, where the data allows, assess the degree of archaeological survival of buried deposits of archaeological significance.
- To enable the client to establish a schedule for archaeological risks.
- To allow the Natural and Historic Environment Manager at SC to make an informed decision on the need for and scope of further evaluative and/or mitigatory archaeological works.

The detailed objectives of the archaeological evaluation are:

- Insofar as possible within methodological constraints, to explain any temporal, spatial or functional relationships between the structures/remains identified, and any relationships between these and the archaeological and historic elements of the wider landscape.
- Where the data allows, identify the research implications of the site with reference to the regional research agenda and recent work in Shropshire.

The archaeological evaluation trenches will consist of the following:

**Trench 1** – 15.0m x 1.8m: Located at the northern end of the site and testing the site for discrete features. This trench will be excavated on to the first archaeological horizon or natural glacial substrata, whichever is encountered first.

**Trench 2** - 15.0m x 1.8m: Located at the southern end of the site and testing the site for discrete features. This trench will be excavated on to the first archaeological horizon or natural glacial substrata, whichever is encountered first.



### 3.0 METHOD STATEMENT – ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

If archaeological deposits are identified they will be manually cleaned, excavated and recorded to determine extent, function, date and relationship to adjacent features.

Contingency provision will be made for the following:

- Additional excavation of up to 100% of any given feature should the excavated sample prove to be insufficient to provide information on the character and date of the feature.
- Expansion of evaluation trench limits, to clarify the extent of features equivalent to an additional 20% of the core trench area.

The archaeological works will be surveyed with respect to the nearest Ordnance Survey datum point and with reference to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. The trenches, deposits, features and structures within them will be accurately located on a site plan prepared at most appropriate and largest scale.

A written record of the trench content and all identified features will be completed via Aeon Archaeology pro-formas.

Any subsurface remains will be recorded photographically, with detailed notations, measured drawings, and a measured survey. The photographic record will be maintained using a digital SLR camera (Canon 600D) set to maximum resolution (72dpi) with photographs taken in RAW format and later converted to TIFF format for long-term storage and JPEG format for presentation and inclusion in the archive. Photographic identification boards will also be used.

All trenches will be opened with a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket in spits of approximately six inches on to the first archaeological horizon or natural glacial substrata, whichever is encountered first. After this all cleaning will be done by hand.

Trenches and spoil heaps will be routinely investigated through the use of a metal detector and any finds/artefacts collected and processed as outlined in section 8.0.

All excavations will be backfilled with the material excavated and upon departure Aeon Archaeology will leave the site in a safe and tidy condition. Aeon Archaeology has not been requested to re-lay turf/lawn surface nor reinstate hard standing surfaces as found.

Aeon Archaeology will not be held responsible for delays and subsequent costs incurred through the onset of adverse weather. If such conditions occur additional costs may be incurred.

The archive produced will be held at Aeon Archaeology under the project code **A0166.1**.



## **4.0 EVALUATION REPORT**

### **4.2.1 Post-excavation Assessment**

A report on the results of the archaeological evaluation, in accordance with the recommendations in *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment Project Manager's Guide* (English Heritage 2006), and in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological evaluation* (2014) will be required to be produced upon conclusion of the archaeological fieldwork. The report will be completed within a maximum of two months of completion of work on site and may include examination and quantification leading to the identification of function, form, date, method of manufacture, material/fabric type, source, parallels, attributes and condition of artefacts; of the exploitation of wild or domesticated resources; the reconstruction of environments; and the nature of human populations.

Full analysis of the results of the project, including: dating and interpretation of excavated features; pottery and other finds analysis; analysis of industrial residues by an appropriate specialist or specialists; analysis of samples for environmental data (including pollen, plant macrofossils and beetles) by an appropriate specialist or specialists; radiocarbon dating; discussion of the results in their local, regional and national context, including relating the excavated features and palaeoenvironmental data to evidence from nearby sites, and discussion of the results in their local, regional and national context may be required.

The scope of post-excavation assessment will be subject to a specification for approval by the Natural and Historic Environment Manager at SC, upon the conclusion of the fieldwork project and preliminary report.

### **4.2.2 Post-excavation Report**

Following completion of the stages outlined above, a report will be produced that will include:

- A non-technical summary.
- A table of contents.
- An introduction with acknowledgements, including a list of all those involved in the project and the location and description of the site.
- A statement of the project aims.
- An account of the project methodology undertaken, with an assessment of the same to include a statement on preservation bias and the means of data collection and sampling strategies.
- A factual summary of the history, development and use of the site.
- A statement setting out the nature, quantity and condition of the material archive (artefacts and ecofacts) including commentary on any bias observed due to collection and sampling strategies and commentary on long-term storage requirements.
- A statement setting out the nature and quantity of the documentary archive (notes, photographs, drawings, digital data).
- A general site plan indicating the position and size of the evaluation trenches and the locations of archaeological deposits identified and recorded during the works.
- Plans and sections at appropriate scales, augmented with appropriate photographs. All plans and sections will be related to the Ordnance Survey datum levels and to the National Grid.
- Other maps, plans, drawings, stratigraphic matrices and photographs as appropriate.
- Summary assessment reports on the artefact, bio-archaeological, dating and other assessments/analyses.
- A discussion of the location, extent, date, nature, condition, quality and significance of any archaeological deposits and finds identified during the project.
- A discussion of any research implications arising from the archaeological work.

- Notes on consultations with conservators and the nominated archive repository related to the immediate and long-term conservation and storage requirements for the data held in the site archive and recommendations of retention/discard of artefacts and ecofacts.
- A bibliography of sources consulted.
- Appendices to the report will include artefact catalogues, reports on assessments/analyses and an index to the project archive and a statement on its location/proposed repository.
- In addition the post-excavation report will summarise and draw together the findings of all of the phases of work.

### **4.3 Archive**

A full archive including plans, photographs, written material and any other material resulting from the project will be prepared. All plans, photographs and descriptions will be labelled, and cross-referenced, and retained at Aeon Archaeology, Chester. A digital copy of the report including scanned copies of all proformas will be lodged with the Shropshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and Oasis online database.

## 5.0 FURTHER ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS

If archaeological features are encountered that cannot satisfactorily be characterised within the limits of the evaluation then further archaeological works may be required. This may involve the excavation of additional evaluation trenches or the extension of the limits of existing trenches. This will require the submission of new cost estimates to the Client and may be subject to a separate WSI, to be agreed with the Natural and Historic Environment Manager at SC prior to implementation.

## 6.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES

If necessary, relevant archaeological deposits will be sampled by taking bulk samples (a minimum of 10.0 litres and maximum of 30.0 litres) for flotation of charred plant remains. Bulk samples will be taken from waterlogged deposits for macroscopic plant remains. Other bulk samples, for example from middens, may be taken for small animal bones and small artefacts.

Bulk environmental samples will also be taken from any fills, deposits or structures which yield archaeological artefacts, charcoal flecks/ fragments, bone, or any other historic remains.

Advice and guidance regarding environmental samples and their suitability for radiocarbon dating, as well as the analysis of macrofossils (charcoal and wood), pollen, animal bones and molluscs will be obtained from Oxford Archaeology.

For guidance purposes the following volume criteria represent the minimum feature sampling requirements:

- 50% of each discrete feature (e.g. pits and postholes)
- 25% of the exposed areas of each linear feature and all terminals/intersections
- 50% of structural features (e.g. beamslots, ring-ditches)
- 50%-100% of domestic/industrial working features (e.g. hearths and ovens)

## 7.0 HUMAN REMAINS

Any finds of human remains will be left *in-situ*, covered and protected, and both the coroner and the Natural and Historic Environment Manager informed. If removal is necessary it will take place under appropriate regulations and with due regard for health and safety issues. In order to excavate human remains, a licence is required under Section 25 of the Burials Act 1857 for the removal of any body or remains of any body from any place of burial. This will be applied for should human remains need to be investigated or moved.

## 8.0 SMALL FINDS

The vast majority of finds recovered from archaeological excavations comprise pottery fragments, bone, environmental and charcoal samples, and non-valuable metal items such as nails. Often many of these finds become unstable (i.e. they begin to disintegrate) when removed from the ground. All finds are the property of the landowner; however, it is recommended that all finds are donated to an appropriate museum where they can receive specialist treatment and study. Access to finds must be granted to Aeon Archaeology for a reasonable period to allow for analysis and for study and publication as necessary. All finds would be treated according to advice provided within *First Aid for Finds* (Rescue 1999). Aeon Archaeology staff will undertake initial identification, but any additional advice would be sought from a wide range of consultants.

The recovery policy for archaeological finds will be kept under review throughout the fieldwork phase. Any changes in recovery priorities will be under guidance from an appropriate specialist and agreed with the Natural and Historic Environment Manager. There will be a presumption against the disposal of archaeological finds with the exception of unstratified items dating to the twentieth or twenty-first centuries AD which will be recorded by material, type, form, identification and weight, and discarded.

All finds will be collected and processed including those found within spoil tips. Their location will be recorded; finds numbers attributed, bagged and labelled as well any preliminary identification taking place on site. Where specialist advice is required provision will be made to do so at the earliest possible convenience.

After processing, artefacts which are suitable will be cleaned and conserved in-house. Artefacts requiring specialist cleaning and conservation will be sent to the relevant specialist. All finds will then be sent to a specialist for analysis, the results of which will then be assessed to ascertain the potential of the finds assemblage to meet the research aims of the project. The value of the finds will also be assessed in terms of the wider educational and academic contributions.

## 9.0 UNEXPECTED DISCOVERIES: TREASURE TROVE

Treasure Trove law has been amended by the Treasure Act 1996. The following are Treasure under the Act:

- *Objects other than coins* any object other than a coin provided that it contains at least 10% gold or silver and is at least 300 years old when found.
- *Coins* all coins from the same find provided they are at least 300 years old when found (if the coins contain less than 10% gold or silver there must be at least 10. Any object or coin is part of the same find as another object or coin, if it is found in the same place as, or had previously been left together with, the other object. Finds may have become scattered since they were originally deposited in the ground. Single coin finds of gold or silver are not classed as treasure under the 1996 Treasure Act.
- *Associated objects* any object whatever it is made of, that is found in the same place as, or that had previously been together with, another object that is treasure.
- *Objects that would have been treasure trove* any object that would previously have been treasure trove, but does not fall within the specific categories given above. These objects have to be made substantially of gold or silver, they have to be buried with the intention of recovery and their owner or his heirs cannot be traced.

The following types of finds are not treasure:



- Objects whose owners can be traced.
- Unworked natural objects, including human and animal remains, even if they are found in association with treasure.
- Objects from the foreshore which are not wreck.

All finds of treasure must be reported to the coroner for the district within fourteen days of discovery or identification of the items. Items declared Treasure Trove become the property of the Crown.

The British Museum will decide whether they or any other museum may wish to acquire the object. If no museum wishes to acquire the object, then the Secretary of State will be able to disclaim it. When this happens, the coroner will notify the occupier and landowner that he intends to return the object to the finder after 28 days unless he receives no objection. If the coroner receives an objection, the find will be retained until the dispute has been settled.

## **10.0 STAFF & TIMETABLE**

### **10.1 Staff**

The work will be managed and undertaken by Richard Cooke BA MA MCIfA, Archaeological Contractor and Consultant at Aeon Archaeology.

### **10.2 Timetable**

The archaeological evaluation can currently be undertaken from June 2018, although the client is encouraged to give as much notice as possible to Aeon Archaeology as project commitments are currently high.

## **11.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Aeon Archaeology has a Health and Safety Policy Statement which can be supplied upon request. Furthermore, site-specific Risk Assessments and Method Statements are compiled and distributed to every member of staff involved with the project prior to the commencement of works.

## **12.0 INSURANCE**

### *Liability Insurance – Insignia Underwriting Policy 347002*

- Employers' Liability: Limit of Indemnity £10m in any one occurrence
- Public Liability: Limit of Indemnity £2m in any one occurrence
- Legal Defence Costs (Health and Safety at Work Act): £250,000

The current period expires 07/09/18

### *Professional Indemnity Insurance – Insignia Underwriting Policy 347002*

- Limit of Indemnity £500,000 any one claim

The current period expires 07/09/18

### 13.0 GENERAL

All project staff will adhere to the *Code of Conduct of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists*.

The project will follow the requirements set down in the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* prepared by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

A Method Statement and Risk Assessment will be prepared prior to the commencement of fieldwork and circulated to all staff concerned.

Please note the following:

Aeon Archaeology will not be held responsible for any delays to the work programme resulting from the discovery of archaeological sites or finds.

### 14.0 SPECIALISTS

Specialist advice required will be sought from the following list if required:

- Bone: Nora Bermingham
- Glass: Hilary Cool, Barbican Research Associates.
- Metal artefacts: Phil Parkes, Cardiff Conservation Services, Cardiff.
- Slag, burnt clay, hammerscale: Dr. Tim Young, Geoarch, Cardiff.
- Stone artefacts: Oxford Archaeology
- Wood artefacts: Jane Foley, Foley Conservation, Builth Wells.
- Leather: Quita Mould, Barbican Research Associates.
- Waterlogged environmental: Dr Mike Allen, Allen Environmental Archaeology.
- Environmental samples: Oxford Archaeology
- Numismatics: Peter Guest, Barbican Research Associates.
- Pottery (all periods): Oxford Archaeology
- Clay pipe: Oxford Archaeology

Depending upon the material of the remains the following experts will be consulted regarding the conservation of waterlogged material:

- Organic material: Mr Phil Parkes, Cardiff Conservation Services (tel: +44(0)29 2087 5628)
- Non-organic material: Mr Phil Parkes, Cardiff Conservation Services (tel: +44(0)29 2087 5628)

