



**A programme of archaeological monitoring  
investigation and recording on land  
adjacent to Castle View, Watling Street  
Craven Arms, Shropshire  
August 2015 – August 2016**

Report No. 17/45

Author: David J Leigh

Illustrator: James Ladocha





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## STAFF

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Text	David J Leigh
Fieldwork	David J Leigh
Illustrations	James Ladocha BA

## OASIS REPORT FORM

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		<b>OASIS: molanort1-283990</b>	
Project name	A programme of archaeological monitoring, investigation and recording on land adjacent to Castle View, Watling Street, Craven Arms, Shropshire		
Short description	A programme of archaeological monitoring, investigation and recording was undertaken by MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) on behalf of Saxonby Homes, during the construction of a new residential development on land adjacent to Castle View, Watling Street, Craven Arms, Shropshire. A single musket ball with a broad 16th to 18th century date range was recovered from an unstratified deposit. No pre-modern archaeological deposits were present.		
Project type	A programme of archaeological monitoring, investigation and recording		
Site status	None		
Previous work	Trial trench evaluation, geophysical survey		
Current Land use	Pasture		
Future work	No		
Monument type/ period	-		
Significant finds	-		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>			
County	Shropshire		
Site address	Land adjacent to Castle View, Watling Street, Craven Arms, Shropshire		
Height	135m – 140m aOD		
OS Easting & Northing	SO 4239 8289		
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>			
Organisation	MOLA		
Project brief originator			
Project Design originator	SLR Consulting (Tim Malim)		
Director/Supervisor	David J Leigh MOLA		
Project Manager	Anthony Maul MOLA		
Sponsor or funding body	Saxonby Homes		
<b>PROJECT DATE</b>			
Start date	August 2015		
End date	August 2016		
<b>ARCHIVES</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)</b>	
Physical		Lead musket ball	
Paper	Shropshire Museums	Watching brief forms, Photographic record sheets, Black and white photographs, Digital photographs	
Digital		Report text and figures	
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>			
Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (MOLA report)			
Title	A programme of archaeological monitoring, investigation and recording on land adjacent to Castle View, Watling Street, Craven Arms, Shropshire		
Serial title & volume	MOLA Northampton report 17/45		
Author	David J Leigh		
Date	May 2017		

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Back cover: The investigation area, looking north-east

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*Abstract*

*A programme of archaeological monitoring, investigation and recording was undertaken by MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) on behalf of Saxonby Homes, during the construction of a new residential development on land adjacent to Castle View, Watling Street, Craven Arms, Shropshire. A single musket ball with a broad 16th to 18th century date range was recovered from an unstratified deposit. No pre-modern archaeological deposits were present.*

**1 INTRODUCTION**

A programme of archaeological monitoring, investigation and recording was undertaken by MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) between August 2015 and August 2016 during the construction of a new residential development on land adjacent to Castle View, Watling Street, Craven Arms, Shropshire (NGR SO 4239 8289; Figs 1, 2, and 3). The work was undertaken on behalf of Saxonby Homes, acting for their client Shropshire Homes and following a WSI (Malim 2015) approved by the Archaeological Officer, Shropshire County Council. The work adhered to the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012) and the procedural document MoRPHE issued by Historic England (HE 2015) along with the appropriate national standards and guidelines, as recommended by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014a).

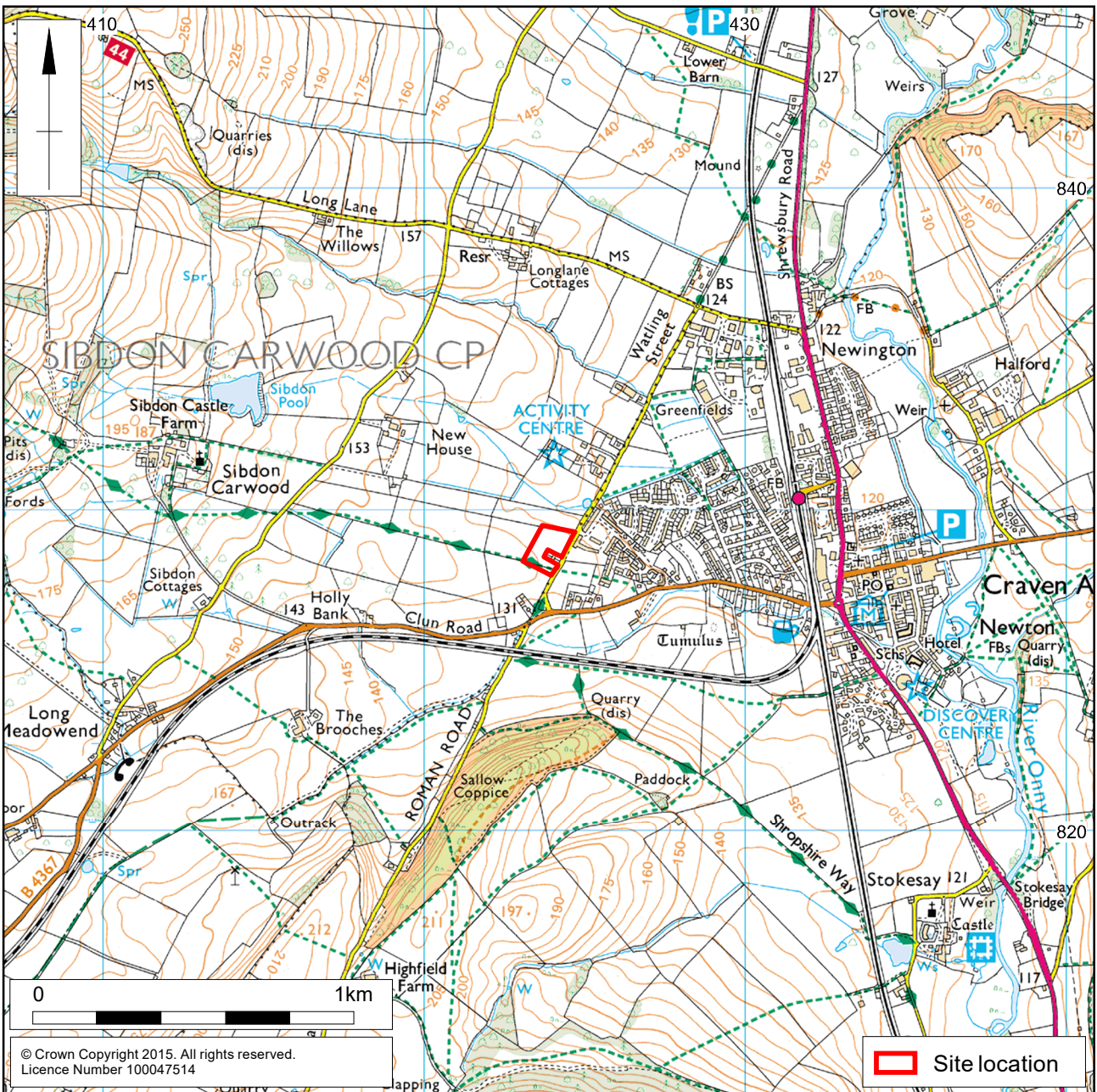
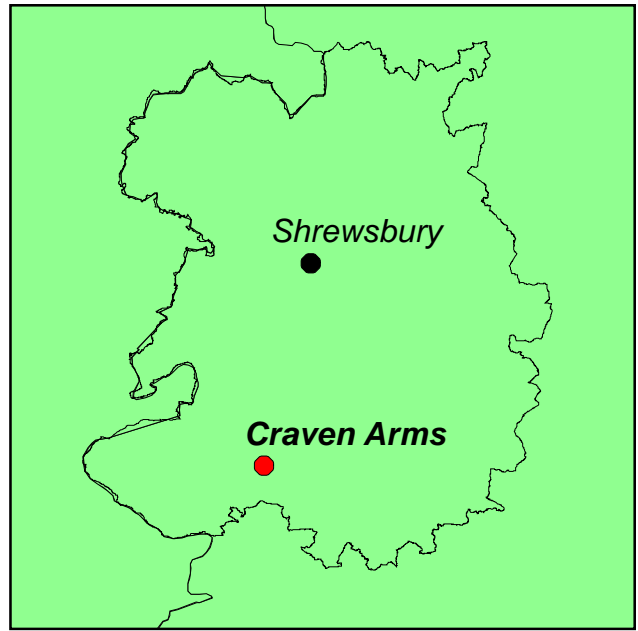
**2 BACKGROUND**

**2.1 Location and topography**

The site lies on pasture land which slopes gently down to the north from 140m to 135m aOD. It is located on the western side of present day Watling Street (Figs 1 and 4) to the west of the centre of Craven Arms.

The underlying geology has been mapped by the British Geological Survey of Great Britain as comprising mudstone of the Coalbrookdale Formation overlain by superficial deposits of glacial till (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/home.html>).





Scale 1:20,000

Site location Fig 1





Scale 1: 1000

Area of archaeological observation Fig 2

## 2.2 Historical background

The development area lies in an area of archaeological interest and to the west of, and adjacent to the former Roman Road, known as Watling Street.

A Written Scheme of Investigation produced by SLR Consulting (Malim 2013) records a number of sites of archaeological interest within the immediate vicinity of the investigation area.

A probable Iron-Age rectilinear enclosure is located 50m east of the development area. This was initially thought to have been the site of a Roman temple, however subsequent investigations suggested an earlier date and different function. Further to the east lie two possible pit groupings with a linear feature crossing the Roman Watling Street to the south of the investigation area.

Previous archaeological investigations have comprised a geophysical survey and a trial trench evaluation (SLR 2014) which recorded only a shallow undated pit cutting an earlier linear feature also of undetermined date but considered to have a medieval or earlier origin.

## 3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The aims of the archaeological investigation were to:

- ◆ Observe the groundworks for the redevelopment and to record all archaeological deposits uncovered;
- ◆ Determine the date, character, state of preservation and depth of any archaeological deposits observed and to retrieve all datable artefacts;
- ◆ Create a permanent archive and record of the archaeological information collected during the course of the fieldwork and analysis.

A photographic record in both black and white negative and digital format was kept. The written record used MOLA pro-forma sheets (MOLA 2014). The programme of archaeological monitoring, investigation and recording was carried out in accordance with the *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014b).

The fieldwork was undertaken between August 2015 and August 2016 during groundworks for the new residential development. The groundworks were carried out using a combination of 360° and JCB type mechanical excavators.

## 4 THE RECORDED EVIDENCE

A consistent stratigraphy was recorded throughout the investigation area. The natural substratum was encountered at a depth of approximately 0.58m below present ground level. It comprised mid-pale brown coarse sand containing pockets of clean orange-red sand.

This was overlain by mid-brown sandy loam subsoil, up to 0.25m, containing occasional irregular stones. This in turn was sealed by grey-brown sandy loam topsoil, up to 0.33m thick, containing occasional irregular stones. A single lead musket ball was recovered from the topsoil just to the south of Castle View (Fig 2).

## 5 THE MUSKET BALL

A single lead musket ball dating from between the 16th and 18th centuries was recovered from the topsoil. This measures 15mm in diameter with a single seam running around the circumference. No evidence of flattening or firing is present suggesting that this represents a casual loss.



The investigation area prior to the start of groundworks, looking north Fig 3



View north-east along the line of the present Watling Street Fig 4



General view of the groundworks in progress, adjacent to Castle View Fig 5





The stratigraphic sequence Fig 6

**6 THE SITE ARCHIVE**

The project has generated a small archive comprising:

<b>RECORD</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>
Watching brief forms	48
Photographic record sheets	8
Black and white photographs	99
Digital photographs	120
Lead musket ball	1

The project archive will be consolidated and prepared for deposition with Shropshire Museums.

## 7 CONCLUSIONS

An undisturbed stratigraphy was recorded throughout the investigation area, with only a single lead musket ball recovered from an unstratified deposit.

Asides from the musket ball, it was of particular note that no other pre-modern artefacts were present across the site as a whole, nor any evidence of the medieval and post-medieval background pottery scatter usually expected to be on such a site.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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