

PN. 1351

**PARK STREET, SHIFNAL,
SHROPSHIRE**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
WATCHING BRIEF, 2005.**

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Brief for a programme of archaeological work at Park Street, Shifnal, Shropshire.

*Proposed Residential Development, Park Street, Shifnal, Shropshire.
Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Watching Brief*

SUMMARY

In 2005 and 2006 Birmingham archaeology carried out a watching brief at Park Street, Shifnal, Shropshire. The watching brief was concerned with the monitoring of all below ground works ahead of a proposed residential development. An archaeological evaluation and desk based assessment had already been carried out on the site (Border Archaeology 2002) both of which suggested the potential survival of medieval and post-medieval remains. The site was initially terraced in order to more easily develop the natural slope. The terracing revealed the remains, at the eastern side of the site, of a tessellated tile surface thought to demarcate the entrance of a post-medieval structure. Remnants of brick walling were also observed in the centre of the area and a second tiled floor surface was observed in groundworks near to the western site boundary. A cellar and well associated with these structures were identified in the south east quadrant of the site. Both of these were primarily of brick construction with the exception of a small number of sandstone ashlar blocks included in the matrix of the cellar. Similar stone blocks were observed in both the standing boundary wall and in shallow wall remains near to the western site boundary. A very small area of cobbles, interpreted as an exterior yard surface was observed near the centre of the site beyond the limit of the previously revealed wall footings. The evidence suggests that the structural remains are those of the Nags Head public house and that any earlier features or deposits may have been destroyed during its construction and subsequent demolition.

**PARK STREET, SHIFNAL, SHROPSHIRE
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF, 2005.**

1 INTRODUCTION

In 2005 Birmingham Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief at Park Street, Shifnal, Shropshire (hereafter referred to as the site; Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Anthony Wilson Homes Ltd in advance of proposed residential development.

This report details the results of an assessment, which was carried out between 2005 and 2006. It was prepared in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for Archaeological watching brief (IFA 2001). The assessment conformed to a brief produced by Shropshire Council and a Written Scheme of Investigation (Birmingham Archaeology 2005, Appendix), which was approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to implementation, in accordance with guidelines laid down in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (DoE 1990).

2 LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

The site is located on land adjacent to the Jerningham Arms, Park Street, Shifnal, Shropshire (NGR SJ 749075). The site is bounded by Park Street to the east and Church Street to the west with standing structures to the north and south. The natural geology consists of glacial till and sand overlying Triassic sandstone (Fig. 2). The site, immediately prior to development was utilised as a car park.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The Site is centred on NGR SK 749075, on land adjacent to the Jerningham Arms, Park Street, Shifnal, Shropshire and lies within the historic core of the medieval town. The area occupied by the site is thought to be the probable location of the earliest market place for the settlement, prior to its development into the planned town of the 13th and 14th centuries. Buildings are known to have encroached on the market place site from at least the 17th century and a desk-based assessment and field evaluation conducted in 2002 located the remains of 18th and 19th century structures (Border Archaeology 2002).

4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The principle aim of the project was to assess the survival and potential significance of any archaeology within the study area.

More specific aims were to:

- To monitor all groundworks, including the excavation of foundation and service trenches.
- To record the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains affected by the development works.
- To identify all previously unrecorded sites and update the SMR.

- To preserve all archaeological deposits 'by record' and conserve for long term conservation and future analysis all artefactual/ecofactual material recovered from the site.

5 METHODOLOGY

The site was stripped by a 360 degree mechanical excavator to remove the modern carpark surface, due to the sloping nature of the site; it was then divided into tree terraces to ensure safe operating.

All of the groundworks were monitored by a suitably qualified field archaeologist and all deposits were recorded even where no archaeological remains were evident.

All archaeological features and deposits were hand cleaned and recorded by means of pre-printed pro-forma record cards for contexts and features, supplemented by plans (at 1:20 and 1:100) as appropriate and monochrome and colour slide photography.

All stratified finds were collected by context whereas unstratified finds were only collected where they contributed to the project objectives or were of particular intrinsic interest. On-site conservation advice was to be provided by the appropriate specialist in the event of artefacts requiring conservation and 'lifting'. Finds of treasure were to be reported to the Coroner in accordance with the Treasure Act procedures.

The Full site archive includes all artefactual and/or ecofactual remains recovered from the site. The site archive will be prepared according to guidelines set down in Appendix 3 of the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 1991), the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-Term Storage* (UKIC, 1990) and *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections* (Museum and Art Galleries Commission, 1992).

6 RESULTS

The initial stripping of the tarmac surface of the site revealed a post medieval tessellated tile surface near to the eastern boundary of the site. The surface was constructed of black white and yellow ceramic tiles and presumably marked the interior entrance way to a brick built structure (Plate 1). Similar surfaces could be seen in the extant adjacent properties.

To the west of the surface were the remains of a brick structure, which terminated in a barrel vaulted cellar (Plate 2). At the eastern end of the cellar and entrance way could be clearly identified with steps leading down and the remains of a hand rail still in place. The eastern end appeared to have a sloping access onto the Park Street frontage. Just to the north of this structure a brick built well was also identified (Fig. 3; Plate 3).

Excavations of footings at the eastern side of the site revealed the natural ground surface, silt- sand and gravel (1005), at a depth of 1.4m. Overlying this was a shallow layer of darker, siltier material (1004). Sealing this was a deeper layer of

dark brown silt clay (1003) which was overlain by a very dark grey, mixed clay, rubble and ash layer (1002). Bedded on to the top of this layer was a ceramic tile surface, truncated on its southern side (Plate 4), and part of a structural wall made up of brick and sandstone (1022). A similar stratigraphic sequence was seen across the rest of the western side of the site. Several further fragmentary walls were observed most of which were truncated by existing service trenches. Sealing the all of the structural remains was a demolition layer comprising silt sands and brick rubble (1000).

7 DISCUSSION

The bulk of the western side of the site would appear to have been taken up by one or more brick built structures. The open access to the cellar on the Park Street frontage immediately suggested that the building was that of the 'Nags Head' public house cited in the desk-based assessment (Border Archaeology 2002). This is further supported by further analysis of the map evidence (Ordnance Survey 1st edition) all of the structural walls revealed directly reflecting those shown on the map.

The brick structural remains fronting Church Street also appear to be the remains of buildings shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey. Inclusions of sandstone within its matrix are similar to those seen with the cellar structure to the east which may suggest a contemporary date for its construction. Further inclusions of sandstone can be seen in the adjoining building to the south and in the standing boundary wall. All of the features on the site are of a post-medieval date possibly destroying any evidence of earlier archaeology associated with the medieval town. The site is also truncated by several large service trenches, further reducing the possibility of survival of earlier features or deposits.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project was commissioned by Anthony Wilson Homes Ltd. Thanks are due to Michael Watson, who monitored the project on behalf of Shropshire County Council. The Watching brief was undertaken by Kate Bain, Mary Duncan, Erica Macey-Bracken and Kristina Krawiec, over the course of a number of visits. Kate Bain produced the written report, which was illustrated by Nigel Dodds and edited by Mark Hewson, who also monitored the project for Birmingham Archaeology.

9 REFERENCES

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Plate 1



Plate 2



Plate 3



Plate 4