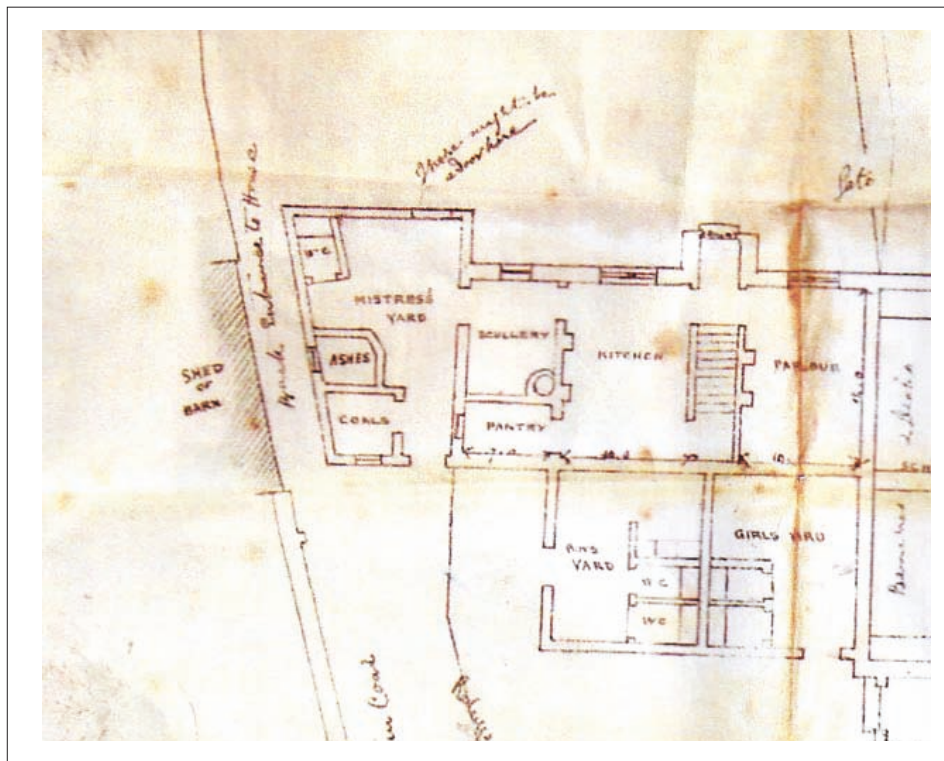


Archaeology Wales

Old School House, Edgton Shropshire

Archaeological Watching Brief



By
Chris E Smith BA (Hons) MA MifA
Report No. 1292

Archaeology Wales

Old School House, Edgton Shropshire

Archaeological Watching Brief

Prepared For: Pierre Brayford

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Report No: 1292

Date: December 2014

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Non-Technical Summary

This report results from work undertaken by Archaeology Wales Ltd (AW) for Mr & Mrs P Brayford at Old School House, Edgton, Shropshire. It draws upon the results gained by an archaeological Watching Brief carried out during the excavation of new foundation trenches for an extension to the east side of the Old School House structure. The site is located adjacent to the 13th century church of St Michael and is within the historic medieval core of the village of Edgton.

The watching brief was maintained during the excavation of all of the foundation trenches associated with the new development. No finds or features of archaeological interest were located.

1 Introduction

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In November 2014 Archaeology Wales Ltd (AW) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Old School House, Edgton, Shropshire. The work was undertaken as a planning condition (Planning Ref -14/00628/FUL) during excavation of foundation trenches at the site.
- 1.1.2 The new foundation trenches totalled approximately 28m in length with widths varying from 0.75m to 1.2m. The area of the development was located at NGR SJ 387 858 (Figs 1&2).
- 1.1.3 A Specification for the work was drawn up by Chris E Smith (AW) and subsequently approved by Mick Krupa of Shropshire County Council – Historic Environment Team (SCC-HET). The AW Project Number for the work is 2263 and the Site Code OSHE/14/WB.
- 1.1.4 The assessment area is located adjacent to the 13th century church of St. Michael and is within the historic medieval core of the village of Edgton.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The underlying solid geology of the assessment area is composed of limestone in the Ludlow series from the Silurian era. The natural geology is overlain by freely draining, slightly acid, loamy soils of low fertility (Geological Survey Map, 2001).
- 1.2.2 The village of Edgton lies on lower ground (237m above OD) forming a natural pass between two higher peaks to the north west (290m) and south east (289m). The landscape surrounding Edgton is characterised by predominantly pastoral fields and isolated and scattered settlements.

1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 1.3.1 The medieval church of St Michael within the village of Edgton dates from at least the 13th century. The 13th century nave has an original west doorway and window above it whereas the chancel and vestry are wholly 19th century in date (Salter, 2001).
- 1.3.2 The village of Edgton is very small and appears to historically have never been of a much bigger size than it is currently. The church is therefore likely to have acted as the focal point for the medieval village, around which any settlement would have developed.

2 Aims and Objectives

2.1 Watching Brief

- 2.1.1 The aims and objectives of a watching brief are, as defined by the Institute for Archaeologists (2008):
 - To allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works.
 - To provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.
 - The main objective of a watching brief is to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on a site.

3 Methodology

3.1 Watching Brief

- 3.1.1 Excavation of the foundation trenches was undertaken by mechanical excavator (JCB) under close archaeological supervision.
- 3.1.2 The on-site work was undertaken by Ian Davies (AW). The overall management of the project was undertaken by Chris E Smith (MifA). All areas were photographed using high resolution digital photography
- 3.1.3 All on-site illustrations were undertaken on drafting film using recognised conventions and scales (1:10, 1:20, 1:50) as appropriate.

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and bagged by context.

3.3 Palaeo-Environmental Evidence

- 3.3.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were encountered during the course of the excavation.

4 Watching Brief Results

4.1 Soils

- 4.1.1 The topsoil and overburden deposits varied across the foundation trenches from a homogenous mid brown silt to a dark brown/black silt containing brick rubble.
- 4.1.2 The subsoil deposits, where not disturbed by earlier building activities, were composed of a brown/grey clay silt with occasional small stone inclusions.
- 4.1.3 The natural deposits, where exposed, were composed of a mid-yellow/green limestone and clay material.

4.2 Ground Conditions

- 4.2.1 The watching brief was undertaken during a period of overcast and mild weather with good light conditions.

4.3 Watching Brief Areas

- 4.3.1 Consultation of the 1871 architects plan of the Old School House building showed an area marked as 'Mistress Yard' to the east of the structure, in the area of the new footings. This appears to have been a former yard area with separate small structures for storage of coal and ashes as well as a toilet.
- 4.3.2 None of this survives above ground and may have been removed in the 20th century when other additions/extensions were made to the structure in this area.
- 4.3.3 The area of the watching brief consisted of the footprint of the new extension as defined on figure 4.

4.4 Description (Plates 1-10, Fig 2)

- 4.4.1 Removal of the topsoil and overburden deposits (100) across the surface of the foundation trenches showed evidence of previous ground disturbance and development. This was apparent from the brick and rubble proliferations within the overburden deposits.
- 4.4.2 For ease of description, the different areas of the foundation trench are labelled A-F and are shown on figure 5.

- 4.4.3 The most northerly of the east-west aligned foundation trenches (A) showed, within the upper levels of the section, evidence of a brick surfaced yard (101) to adjacent to the Old School House. This is likely to have been part of the 'Mistress Yard' depicted on the 1871 architects drawings. The yard surface appeared to be laid out on a bed of dark brown/black ashy silt material (102) which overlay a hardcore rubble foundation layer (103). The yard surface had been cut where it butted the wall of the Old School House for the insertion of a later, now defunct, service (104). The remainder of the foundation trench in this area was cut through a very disturbed, mixed grey, silt (105) with occasional stone inclusions. At the base of this deposit, at a depth of 1m below the current ground surface, the natural deposits of mid-yellow/green limestone and clay material (106) were encountered at which point excavation ceased.
- 4.4.4 Foundation trench B, running parallel with, and to the south of A, was aligned over the top of a now removed stone wall (107), likely associated with one of the Mistress Yard structures. Where visible, the wall appeared to be composed of roughly faced limestone blocks bonded with an off-white lime mortar with charcoal fleck inclusions. The wall survived in better condition beneath the extant east facing brick wall of the Old School House, where it appeared to be acting as a foundation.
- 4.4.5 Projecting south from the stone wall (107) was a further brick wall (108), visible in the foundation trench section. This appeared to be constructed of the same brickwork as the majority of the Old School House (with the exception of the modern additions) so is likely to be contemporary with the 1871 construction. The brick wall (108), projecting from the stone wall (107), is likely to have been forming one of the structures shown in the 1871 architects plan.
- 4.4.6 Located either side of the north south running brick wall (108) was a mixed silt deposit (109) containing rubble, brick and other construction materials. Located beneath (109), and similarly beneath wall (108) was a thin layer of crushed brick material (110). This is likely to have represented the ground surface during construction of the Old School House. Beneath (110), a mixed grey silt (111) very similar in appearance to that of (105) was noted. Excavation in this foundation trench ceased at 0.75m below the current ground surface.
- 4.4.7 Foundation trench C showed very similar stratigraphic sequence to that of trench C. The mixed silt (109) was again observed to overlie a lens of crushed brick material (110) likely representing the original ground level at the time of construction. A mixed grey silt (111) was located beneath the brick material lens. No natural deposits were exposed within this trench and the excavation ceased at 1m below the current ground surface.
- 4.4.8 Foundation trench D again showed a very similar stratigraphic sequence to that observed elsewhere. A mixed silt and rubble overburden was seen to overlie the homogenous mixed grey silt (111). This, in turn, was seen to overlie the mid-yellow/green limestone and clay natural (106). The foundation trench at the southern end of the area was cut to a deeper depth than elsewhere (up to 1.6m). The natural was exposed at a depth of 1.1m below the current ground surface.

- 4.4.9 Foundation trench E, projecting 90° from trench D, showed the same depth and stratigraphic sequence. At its northern end however, where it butted against the structure of the Old School House, the foundation trench was cut through a defunct concrete lined water collection tank (112) associated with the use of the School House.
- 4.4.10 Area F, the long foundation trench running north south, varied in depth along its length from 0.75m in the north to 1.7m in the south. This was partly to accommodate the much greater depth of softer silt deposit towards the southern end of the trench. A defunct service was observed within the continuous west facing section which obscured much of the detail. Where visible, however, the disturbance from building activities was much less in evidence further away from the Old School House structure. The stratigraphic sequence in this area was largely silty topsoil overlying a mixed grey homogenous silt which, in turn, overlay the natural deposits.

5 Discussion and Interpretation

5.1 Overall interpretation

- 5.1.1 The watching brief located no features which were not associated with the 19th century Old School House.
- 5.1.2 No evidence of occupation or use of the land prior to the construction of the Old School House was observed. Although the ground in the area immediately surrounding the Old School House has been disturbed by its construction and later alterations, enough of the original stratigraphy and deposits survive to show that the site is very likely to have been unoccupied prior to the construction of the Old School House.
- 5.1.3 No evidence of the likely medieval core of the village of Edgton was observed in any of the excavated areas.
- 5.1.4 The 1871 architects plans show several more walls in the area of the Mistress Yard which were not noted during the watching brief. It is possible that, with later redevelopment, and the demolition of the Mistress Yard and associated structures, the walls were completely removed.

5.2 Acknowledgements

- 5.2.1 Thanks are due to: Ian Davies (AW) for undertaking the Watching Brief, Mick Krupa (SCC-HET) for his curatorial assistance and Pierre Brayford for his valuable liaising.

6 Bibliography and references

British Geological Survey. 2001, 4th Edition. Solid Geology Map, UK South Sheet

Institute for Archaeologists. 2008, *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

Salter, M. 2001. The Old Parish Churches of Shropshire. Folly Publications Ltd, Leominster

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APPENDIX I: Figures

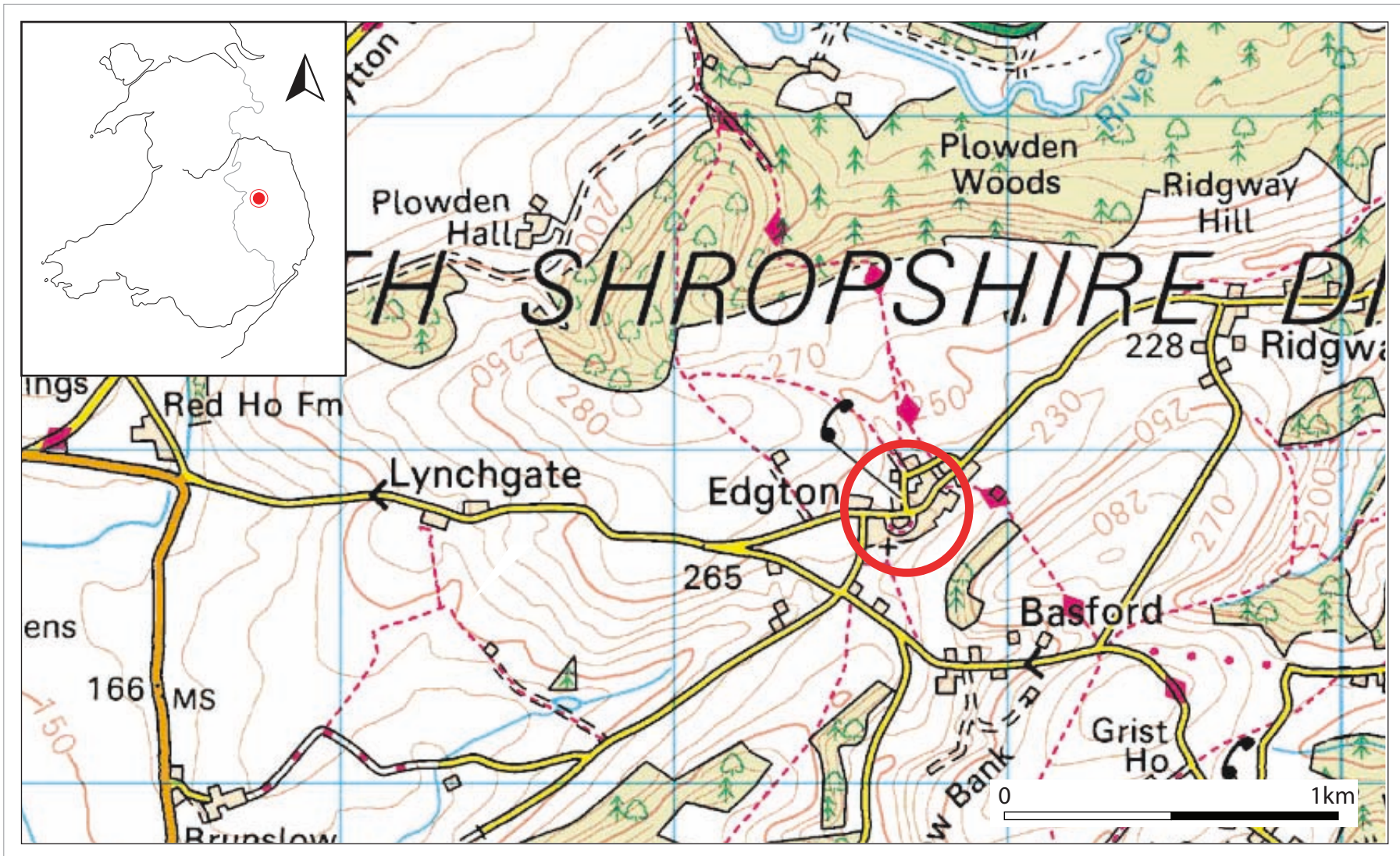
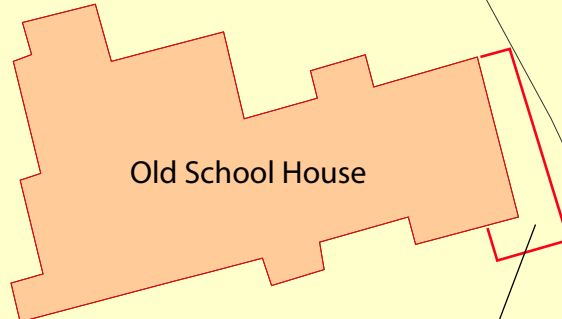


Fig 1: Map showing location of assessment area



St Michael's Church

Churchyard



Old School House

Area of watching brief

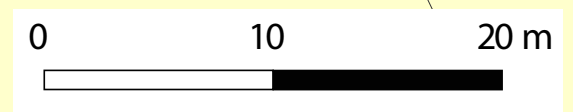


Fig 2: Detailed plan showing location of Old School House within Edgton

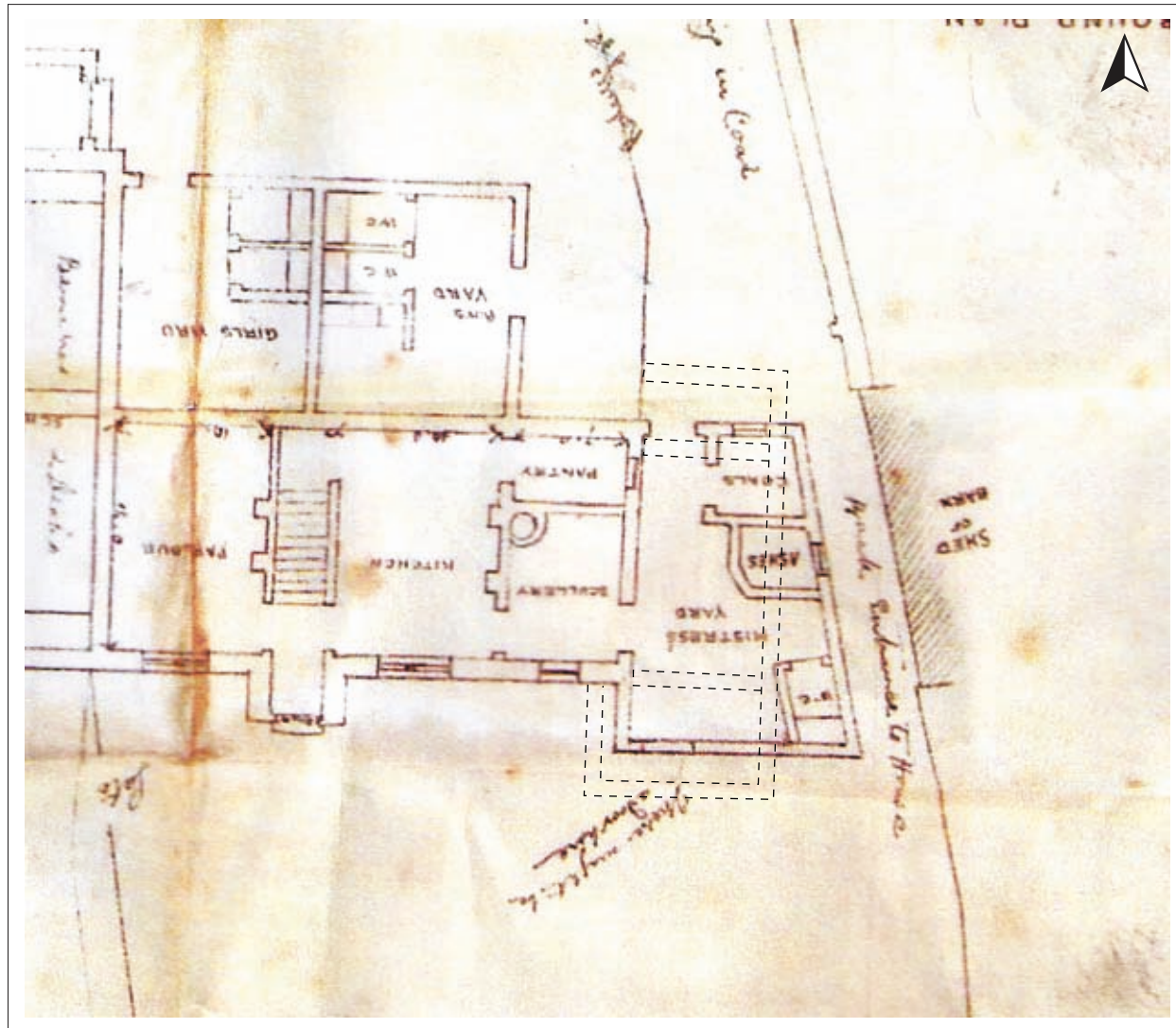


Fig 3: 1871 Architects plan of Old School House, Edgton, showing approximate locations of new footings

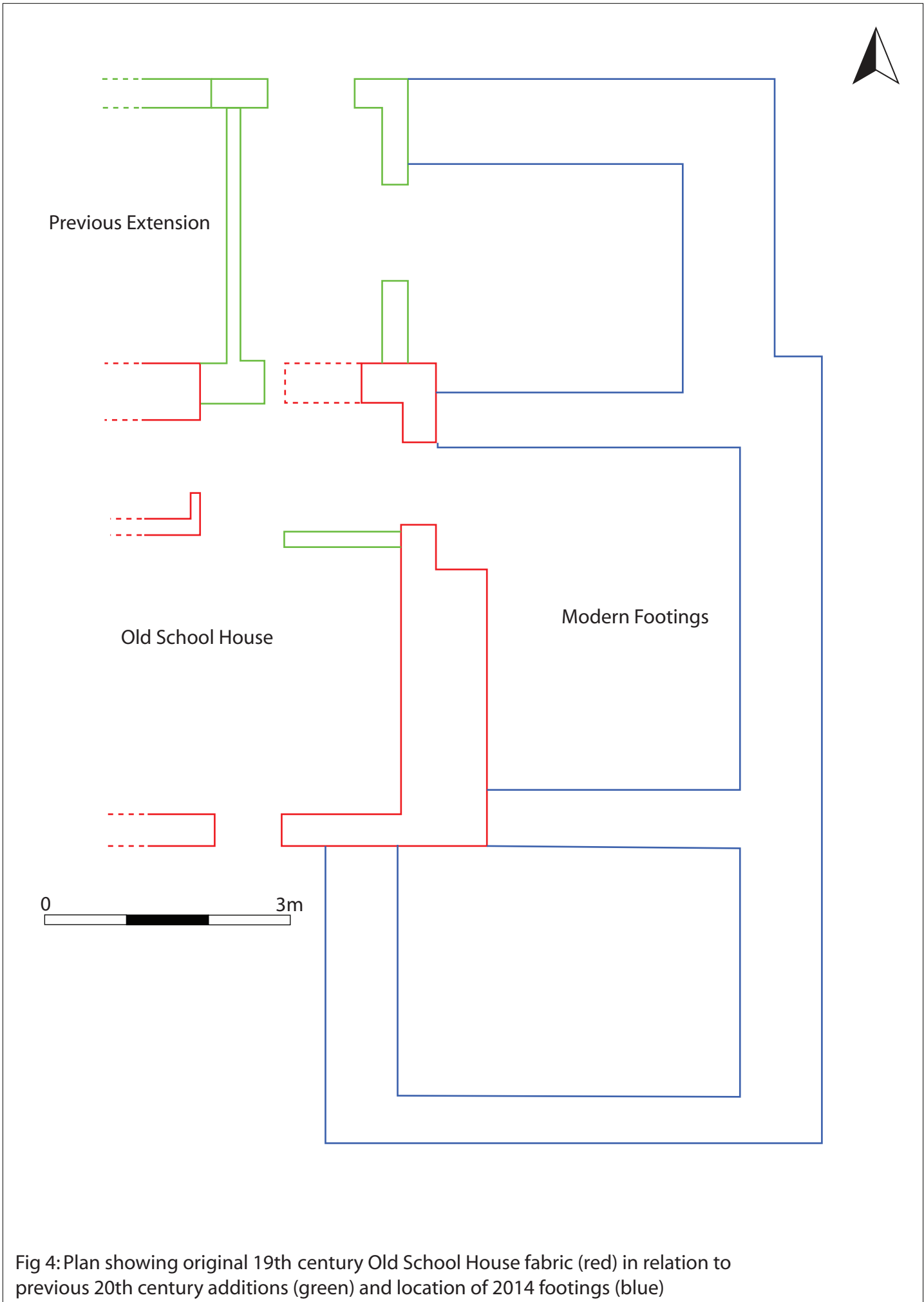


Fig 4: Plan showing original 19th century Old School House fabric (red) in relation to previous 20th century additions (green) and location of 2014 footings (blue)

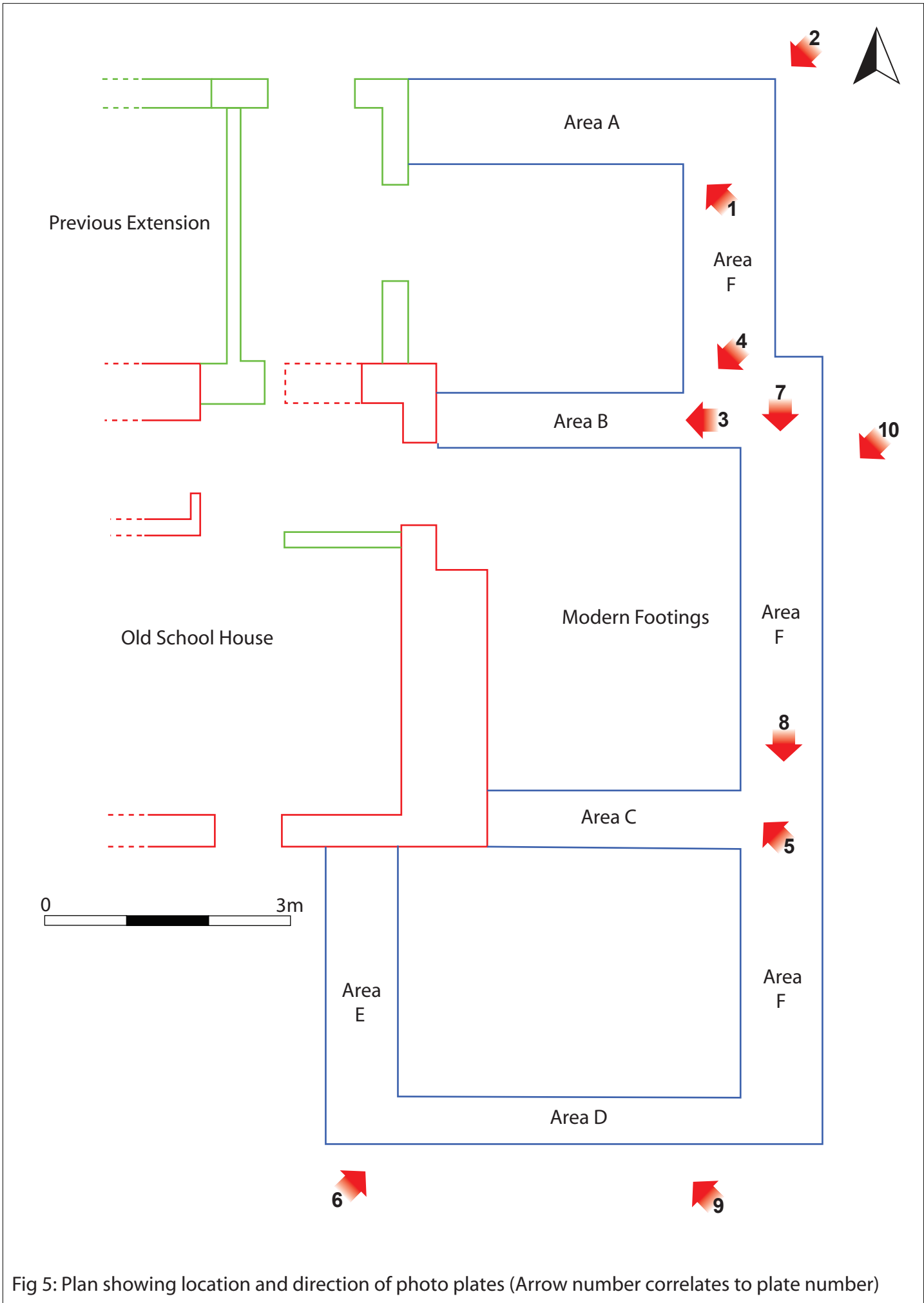


Fig 5: Plan showing location and direction of photo plates (Arrow number correlates to plate number)

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APPENDIX II: Plates



Plate 1 - North Facing Section of Area A. Looking S. Note Brick Yard Surface.
Scale 1m.



Plate 2 - South Facing Section of Area A. Looking NW.
Scale 1m.



Plate 3 - Footings of Mistress Yard Wall in Area B.
Looking W. Scale 1m x 2m.



Plate 4 - Area B, with Mistress Yard Wall Footings and
N. Facing Section. Looking SW. Note N S Brick Wall of Coal House
in Section. Scale 1m x 2m.



Plate 5 - South Facing Section of Area C. Looking W.
Scale 2m.



Plate 6 - South Facing Section of South Footing. Looking NE. Scale 2m.



Plate 7 - Overall Shot of Excavation. Looking S. Scale 2m.



Plate 2 - North Facing Section of Area . Looking W. Scale 2m.



Plate 9 - South Facing Section of Area D. Looking NW. Scale 2m.

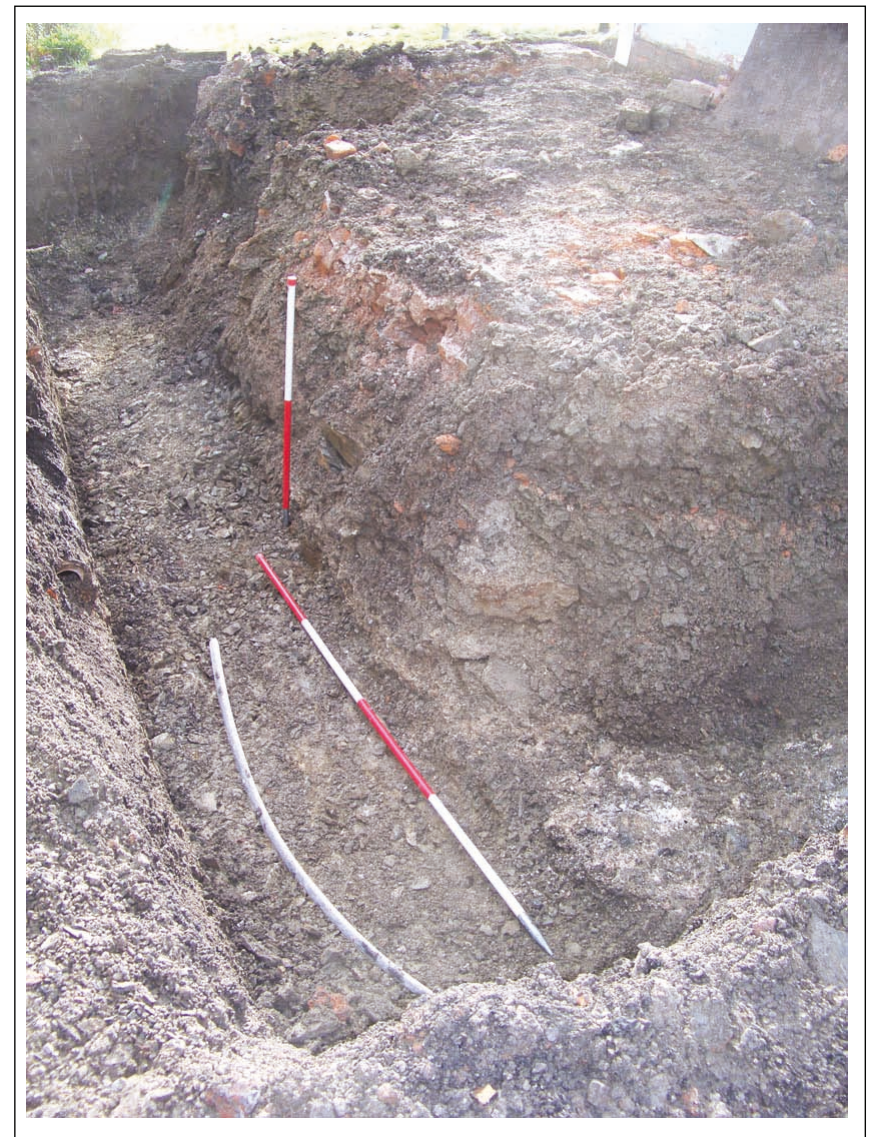


Plate 10 - View along section of Area F. Looking SSW.
Scale 1m x 2m.

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APPENDIX III: AW Ltd Specification

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SPECIFICATION

FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

**Old School House, Edgton, Craven Arms
Shropshire**

Prepared for:

Mr & Mrs P Brayford

1st August 2014

Archaeology Wales Limited
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NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

This Written Scheme of Investigation details the proposal for an archaeological Watching Brief during groundworks associated with construction of two storey extension to residential dwelling at Old School House, Edgton, Craven Arms, Shropshire (Planning Application No. 14/00628/FUL).

1. Introduction and archaeological background

This Written Scheme of Investigations (WSI) has been prepared by Chris E Smith (MIfA), Project Manager, Archaeology Wales Ltd (AW) at the request of Mr & Mrs P Brayford. It provides information on the methodology which will be employed by AW during an archaeological watching brief at the site (NGR SO 387 858). The planning application number is 14/00628/FUL

The methodology set out in this WSI has been agreed with Dr Andy Wigley, Principal Archaeologist, Historic Environment Team, Shropshire Council (HET-SC). HET-SC have recommended that a watching brief is carried out during all groundworks due to be carried out on the site.

All work will be undertaken in accordance with the standards and guidelines of the Institute for Archaeologists (2011).

2 Site specific objectives

The aims of the watching brief, as defined by the IfA (2011) are:

- To allow a rapid investigation and recording of any archaeological features that are uncovered during the proposed groundworks within the application area.
- To provide the opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief are not sufficient to support the treatment to a satisfactory or proper standard

3 Watching Brief Methodology

General

The archaeological watching brief will be undertaken by AW staff using current best practice.

All work will be carried out by a suitably qualified archaeologist with relevant level membership of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) and will follow the IfA Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief (2011).

Detailed

The Watching Brief will be carried out during the groundworks (excavation of foundation trenches and service runs as well as ground level reduction) and all other associated work where the previously undisturbed sub-soil is likely to be exposed or

cut into. Any mechanical excavation will be undertaken by a machine using a toothless ditching bucket wherever possible.

It is envisaged that the demolition and removal of the 1873 walls and the 1950s concrete flooring will have been undertaken prior to the commencement of the watching brief.

If archaeological features, finds or deposits are uncovered during the groundworks, work will be stopped in the area of the exposed feature in order that the supervising archaeologist can clean and identify the extent and nature of the feature and for excavation and recording to take place.

All archaeological deposits that are identified will be mapped, cleaned, recorded and fully excavated. The developer will provide a safe working area and sufficient time to record and excavate all features to the satisfaction of AW and HET-SC. Full excavation of identified features will not be compromised by the construction programme.

Contingency Arrangements

In the event of significant archaeological features being discovered all activities in this area of the site can be temporarily suspended. This will allow a period of consultation with the HET-SC and if required the opinion of specialists.

Following such consultation, recommendations will be presented to the Developer and the Local Planning Authority.

The methodology and timescale of additional archaeological work to investigate such features will be presented and included in the Developers Programme; the feature will be fenced off and secured thus allowing the site programme to continue

Recording

Recording will be carried out using AW recording systems (pro-forma context sheets etc), using a continuous number sequence for all contexts.

Plans and sections will be drawn to a scale of 1:50, 1:20 and 1:10 as required and related to Ordnance Survey datum and published boundaries where appropriate.

All features identified will be tied in to the OS survey grid and fixed to local topographical boundaries and related to the developer's site plan. The location of all features will also be recorded using a Topcon GTS725 total station.

Photographs will be taken in digital format, using a 14MP camera with photographs stored in Tiff format. Should significant remains be identified that require excavation, photographs will also be taken in black and white and colour slide (35mm film).

The archaeologist undertaking the watching brief will have access to the AW metal detector and be trained in its use.

Artefacts

Archaeological artefacts recovered during the course of the excavation will be cleaned and labelled using an accession number, which will be obtained from the local museum. A single number sequence will be allocated to all finds. The artefacts will be stored appropriately until they are deposited with a suitable local museum.

All finds of gold and silver will be removed to a safe place and the Environment Agency, HET-SC and the local coroner informed, within the guidelines of the Treasure Act 1996.

Any finds which are considered to be in need of immediate conservation will be referred to a UKIC qualified conservator (Phil Parkes at Cardiff University).

Human remains

In the event of burials or cremations being found all work will be halted in the area of the burials and their extent and nature established. The client, HET-SC and the Ministry of Justice will be informed and a methodology of excavation agreed which will adhere to Ministry of Justice Guidelines.

Environmental and technological samples

Environmental samples will be taken where necessary when significant deposits are located. Technological samples will be taken where necessary when significant deposits are located.

Specialists

In the event of certain finds/features etc. being discovered, the site archaeologist may have to seek specialist opinion for assistance. Such specialists will be accessed either internally within AW itself or from an external source. A list of external specialists is given in the table below.

Type	Name	Tel No.
Flint	Dr Amelia Pannett	02920 899509
Animal bone	Jen Kitch	07739 093712
CBM, heat affected clay, Daub etc.	Rachael Hall	01305 259751
Clay pipe	Hilary Major	01376 329316
Glass	Andy Richmond	01234 888800
Cremated and non-cremated human bone	Malin Holst	01759 368483
Metalwork	Kevin Leahy	01652 658261
Neo/BA pottery	Dr Alex Gibson	Bradford University
IA/Roman pottery	Jane Timby	01453 882851
Post Roman pottery	Mr Stephen Clarke	
Charcoal (wood ID)	John Carrot	01388 772167
Waterlogged wood	Nigel Nayling	University of Wales (Lampeter)
Molluscs and pollen	Dr James Rackham	01992 552256
Charred and waterlogged plant remains	Wendy Carruthers	01443 233466

4 Post-Fieldwork Programme

Conservation

After agreement with the landowner arrangements will be made for the long term

conservation and storage of all artefacts in an appropriate local or county museum.

Archive

The site archive will be prepared in accordance with Morphe (English Heritage 2006). It will comprise all the data recovered during the fieldwork and shall be quantified, ordered and indexed and will be internally consistent. The archive will be deposited with the finds in a suitable local museum.

Reporting

The results of the watching brief will be submitted in an illustrated and bound report, which will include the following material:

- Non-technical summary
- Location plan showing the area/s covered by the watching brief, all artefacts, structures and features found
- Plan and section drawings with ground level, ordnance datum and vertical and horizontal scales.
- Written description and interpretation of all deposits identified, including their character, function, potential dating and relationship to adjacent features. Specialist descriptions and illustrations of all artefacts and soil samples will be included as appropriate.
- An indication of the potential of archaeological deposits which have not been disturbed by the development
- Statement of local, regional and national context of the remains
- A detailed archive list at the rear listing all contexts recorded, all samples finds and find types, drawings and photographs taken. This will include a statement of the intent to deposit, and location of deposition, of the archive.

Monitoring

Any changes to the specification that the contractor may wish to make after approval will be communicated to HET-SC for approval on behalf of the Planning Authority.

Representatives of HET-SC will be given access to the site so that they may monitor the progress of the watching brief. HET-SC will be kept regularly informed about developments, both during the site works and subsequently during any potential post-excavation.

Archive Format & Deposition

The full site archive will be deposited within one month of the completion of the client report.

The paper/drawing/digital archive will be deposited at the offices of HET-SC with the finds will be deposited with the appropriate local museum. AW will agree the location and timing of the deposition of the archive before the contract commences.

The archive will include all site notes, finds, documents, drawings, photographs, digital data and a copy of the final report and any prior draft versions. All of these items will be clearly quantified in tabular form in an 'archive deposition statement' located at the rear of the clients report, and their ultimate location and proposed date of deposition stated.

5 Resources and timetable

Standards

The watching brief will be undertaken by AW staff using current best practice.

All work will be undertaken to the standards and guidelines of the IFA.

Staff

The project will be undertaken by suitably qualified AW staff.

Equipment

The project will use existing AW equipment.

Timetable of archaeological works

The watching brief will be undertaken at the convenience of the client.

Insurance

AW is an affiliated member of the CBA, and holds Insurance through the CBA insurance service.

Health and safety

All members of staff will adhere to the requirements of the *Health & Safety at Work Act, 1974*, and the Health and Safety Policy Statement of AW.

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APPENDIX IV:

Archive Cover Sheet

ARCHIVE COVER SHEET

Old School House, Edgton, Shropshire

Site Name:	Edgton
Site Code:	OSHE/14/WB
PRN:	-
NPRN:	-
SAM:	-
Other Ref No:	Planning App 14/00628/FUL
NGR:	NGR SO 387 858
Site Type:	19 th Century Structure
Project Type:	Watching Brief
Project Manager:	Chris E Smith
Project Dates:	Nov 2014
Categories Present:	Post-medieval - Modern
Location of Original Archive:	AW
Location of duplicate Archives:	-
Number of Finds Boxes:	-
Location of Finds:	-
Museum Reference:	-
Copyright:	AW
Restrictions to access:	None

Archaeology Wales



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