



# An Archaeological Watching Brief at 107 High Street, Broadway, Worcestershire

*A report for Building Solutions*

November 2003

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**Project: PJ 111**

**WSM 32989**

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# 1. Project Background

## 1.1. Location of the Site

Broadway is perhaps one of the most picturesque and most photographed villages of England. It lies in the Vale of Evesham on the southern extremity of the County of Worcestershire (NGR SO 927 474), bordering the Cotswolds.

The development site (107 High Street) is located on the southern side of the High Street, Broadway, which runs east to west, with village expansion to the north along and off Leamington Road (Figure 1). The rear of the property, where the development work took place, is bounded by permanent pasture now used for grazing sheep.

## Development Details

A planning application has been made to Wychavon District Council by Mr M Hodges, via his agent Mr Simon Marson, for the construction of a single storey double garage at the rear of 107 High Street, Broadway (reference W/03/0442). The planning process determined that the proposed development was likely to affect an existing archaeological site (WSM 17732: Tenement plots along High Street). As a result, the Planning Archaeologist, Worcestershire County Council, placed a 'watching brief' planning condition on the application, for which a brief of work was written (WAS 2003).

## 1.3. Reasons for the Watching Brief

The archaeological watching brief has been suggested as the appropriate response to the threat posed to the archaeological site by the development process. This would involve the excavation of foundation trenches for the proposed double garage. A watching brief is defined as:

*A formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. This will be in a specified area on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed (IFA 1999).*

The watching brief at the site was proposed in order that a record of any archaeological remains or deposits encountered during the excavation of the foundations for the building may be made.

## 2. Methods and Process

### 2.1. Project Specification

- ❑ The project fieldwork conforms to the Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief (IFA 1999).
- ❑ The project conforms to a brief prepared by the Planning Advisory Section, Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service (WHEAS, 2003) and for which a project proposal and detailed specification was produced (Mercian Archaeology (2003).
- ❑ Mercian Archaeology adhere to the service practice and health and safety policy as contained within the Mercian Archaeology Service Manual (Williams 2003)

### 2.2. Aims of the Project

The watching brief aimed to:

- ❑ Record any archaeological deposits encountered during the watching brief by a combination of photography, drawn and textual records.
- ❑ To record the sequence of deposits revealed during the work, either natural or cultural.
- ❑ To determine if there is any evidence of medieval occupation on the site.

### 2.3. The Methodology

The watching brief was undertaken on October 15<sup>th</sup> 2003.

The photographic survey was carried out using monochrome and colour print. A scale was used where possible.

Proforma Record Forms were used to record the site stratigraphy in tandem with site notes to produce the final record contained within this report.

The methodology adopted and the favourable working conditions meant that the aims and objectives of the brief could be fully met and the fieldwork was successfully concluded.

Prior to the fieldwork a search was made of all the relevant documentary and cartographic sources.

## Cartographic Sources Used

Source	Reference Number
Inclosure Award Plan for Broadway Parish (1771)	Worcester Records Office: BA 368 r264.72
Ordnance Survey 1 <sup>st</sup> Edition 25". Worcestershire Sheet LVII.2 (1884)	Worcester Records Office

Other sources used are referenced within the report.

## 3. The Background

### 3.1. The historic background

Broadway has its roots in the Anglo Saxon period. The church of St Eadburg, which stands to the south of the current town, is an Anglo Saxon foundation, although the earliest remaining fabric appears to date from the Norman period (Miller *et al*, 2000). The earliest settlement is likely to have been close to the church. Documents from the 10<sup>th</sup> century show that The Abbey of St Mary and St Eadburg held estate at Broadway (Griffin and Jones, 1999). It appears that The Abbey of Pershore laid out the medieval town in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century. In 1196 a licence to hold a weekly Wednesday market and a three-day fair was granted to the town. A further licence to hold a weekly Tuesday market was granted to the town in 1251 and by the 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> century Broadway had reached its economic zenith (VCH IV, 1971). The town appears to have declined into the following centuries, eventually losing its urban status. There was a slight upturn in fortune during the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, when many houses, which still survive along the High Street, were built. The upturn coincides with the construction of Turnpike Roads and Broadway seems to have become a thriving coaching centre (Miller 2000). There was a small-scale glove making industry in the town into the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Miller 2000).

The earliest recorded place name for Broadway was *Braden Wege*, literally meaning ‘a broad way, or broad road’ (Hooke 1990,229). The Central Marches Historic Town Survey analysed the street plan and urban form of the town and identified areas of medieval occupation based on upstanding fabric, recognition of typical medieval plot boundaries, archaeological and historic evidence. The focus of medieval activity was along High Street (Dalwood et al, 1982). It was concluded by the survey that ‘buried archaeological deposits have moderate potential’ (Dalwood et al 1982).

There are several listings on the Worcestershire Sites and Monuments Record for the relevant stretch of High Street, Broadway. These are all post-medieval buildings (WSM 10915 to 10918).

### 3.2. The Archaeological Background

There have been various archaeological projects undertaken in High Street, Broadway over the last few decades, helping us to further understand the development of the medieval town. Watching briefs at the rear of 58b (Topping 1995), number 96 (Wichbold 1994) and 108 High Street (Topping 1996) all produced no evidence for medieval activity.

## 4. The Watching Brief

The foundation trenches for the double garage were designed to be stepped down to the north, as it was thought that tree roots would impair the structure if conventional strip foundations were used. Consequently, the foundation trenches were 2.50 metres deep on the northern side and 1.50 metres deep across the opposite southern side.

The humic topsoil [100] containing fragments of pottery dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and occasional local stone fragments was removed to reveal the yellowish-brown sandy-silt subsoil [101] below. The subsoil layer [101] was around 0.55 metres deep and was penetrated by small roots. The top of the layer contained a moderate quantity of crushed building rubble and some charcoal flecking, the layer was noticeably clayier and sterile towards the bottom. The undisturbed subsoil [103] was noted at about 0.80 metres below the current ground level. This was a loose yellow brash with abundant angular fragment of local stone. At 1.75 metres below the current ground level, a further natural undisturbed layer [103] was encountered. This was a wet and stiff yellowish-grey silty clay.

No significant archaeological deposits or features were encountered during the watching brief.

## 5. Discussion of the Physical and Documentary Evidence

The watching brief produced no evidence for medieval activity on the site. There were no cultural deposits that could be dated to earlier than the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The topsoil [100] contained an occasional shard of modern pottery. The subsoil [101] showed evidence of some disturbance in the upper levels and is probably a disturbed garden layer. The natural [102] was undisturbed. The deep foundations allowed the opportunity to investigate the natural processes that have laid down the lower levels of the stratigraphy. The layer of silty-clay [103] noted at 1.75 metres below the present ground surface represents a wet and warmer segment of the Quaternary period (2 million years ago to the present).

The property plots laid out along this stretch of High Street are typically medieval, as indicated by Dalwood *et al.* The earliest available map, the 1777 Inclosure Award Plan, does not relay any useful information regarding the tenement plots as it focuses on enclosure of the open fields around the town.

The 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map (1884) shows a small building adjacent to the south of the site of the new garage. The architect's plans show this as a 'former school'. There were no traces of this on the ground, although there was a spread of well-degraded building rubble across the upper level of the site.

## 6. Conclusion

*The results of the archaeological watching brief demonstrated that there was no medieval activity on the site and that the area was most likely used as a garden for at least two centuries.*

## 7. Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Mr Phil Walker of Building Solutions. The author would also like to thank Simon Marsen of Marsen, Rathbone, Taylor Architects for supplying plans of the proposed development; thanks are also due to Mike Glyde, Planning Archaeologist, Worcestershire County Council and Martin Cook of Mercian Archaeology.

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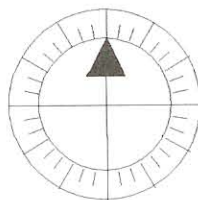
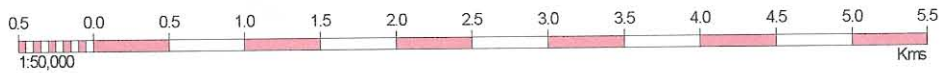
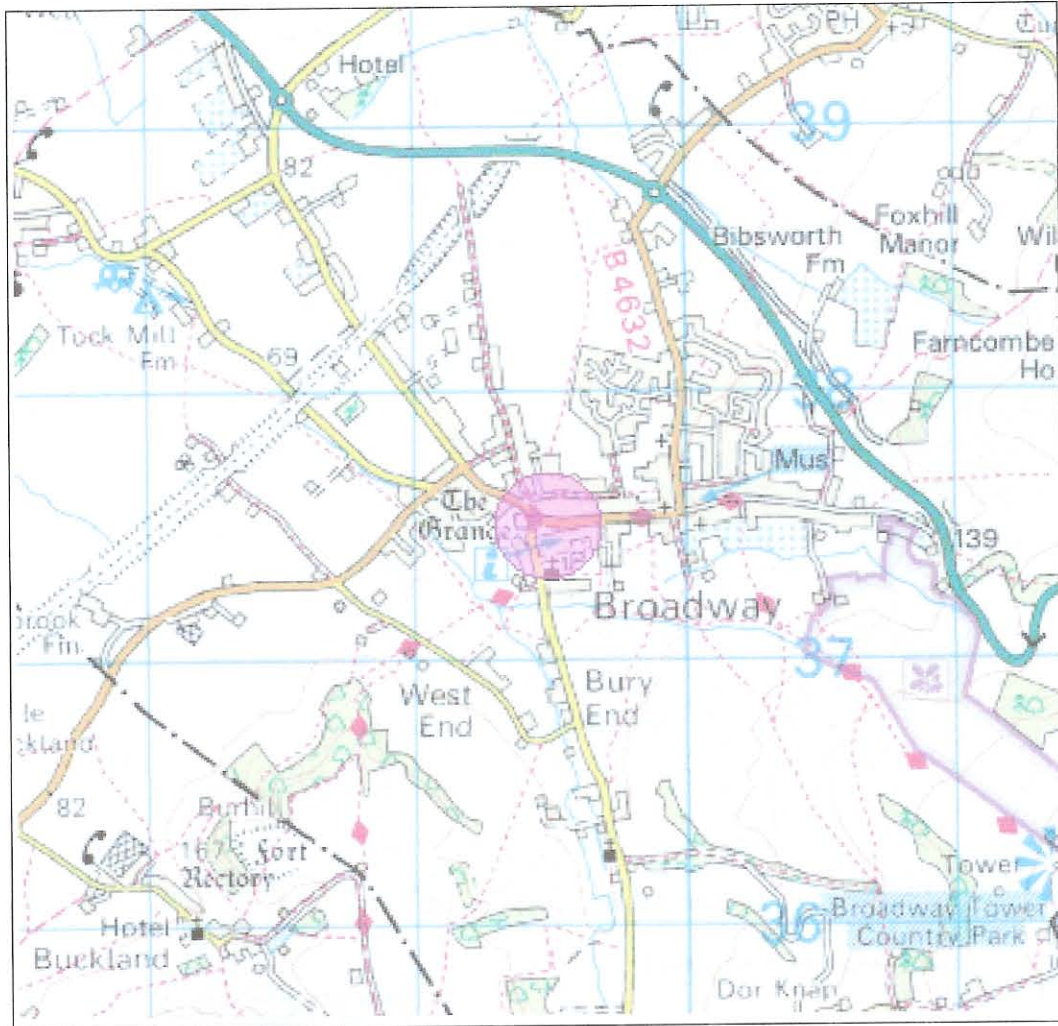
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# Figure 1: Location of Site

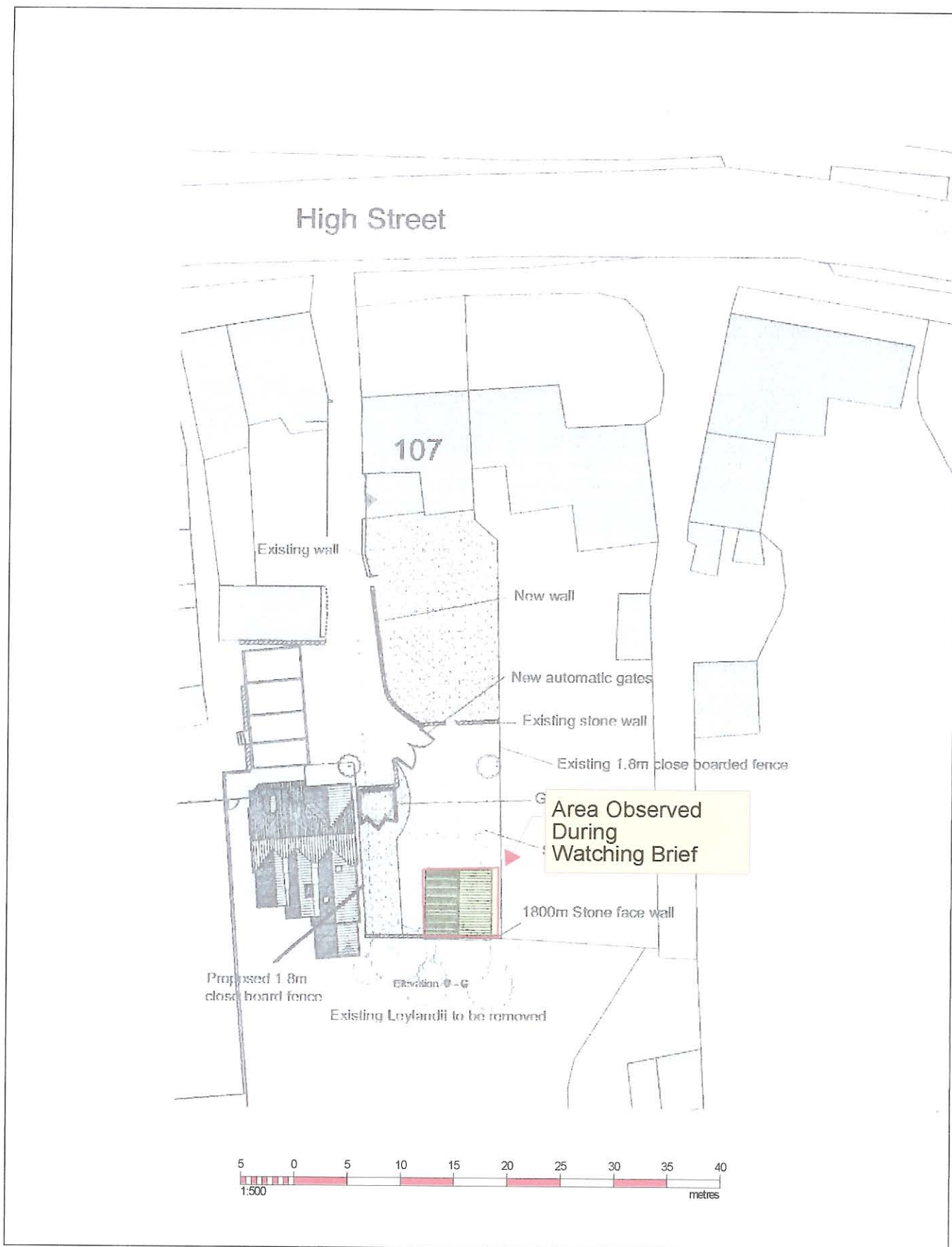


Location of Broadway

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Figure 2. Area observed during the archaeological watching brief



Based on survey drawing kindly supplied by Marsen, Rathbone, Taylor Architects

