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# Salisbury Market Place, Salisbury, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Ref: 89120.01  
January 2014



**Salisbury Market Place,  
Salisbury, Wiltshire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

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# Salisbury Market Place, Salisbury, Wiltshire

## Archaeological Watching Brief Report

### Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Atkins Heritage to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Salisbury Market Place, Salisbury, Wiltshire (NGR 414450 130000) during development works associated with the refurbishment of the Market Place.

Planning consent (S/2012/1317) was granted by Wiltshire Council to refurbish and enhance the Market Place; to include improvements to parking, lighting and drainage, surface improvements and landscaping, subject to a condition requiring a programme of archaeological works to be undertaken. The Assistant County Archaeologist at Wiltshire Council agreed that an archaeological watching brief, maintained during groundwork, would be sufficient to mitigate the impact of construction works on any archaeological remains.

The watching brief followed an earlier watching brief undertaken during geotechnical works, which revealed an extensive sequence of modern surfaces, as well as made ground deposits and a wall of post-medieval date. The fieldwork in 2013 consisted of the monitoring of groundwork associated with the excavation of drainage trenches and the reduction of ground levels across virtually the entire Market Place prior to the laying of a new surface. The watching brief was undertaken at various times from mid-April to mid-September 2013.

Ground level reduction over most of the Market Place was of insufficient depth to reveal anything other than comparatively recent levelling and make-up deposits. However, in the eastern third, in front of the Guildhall, a short length of wall was revealed and is likely to have been associated with the Old Council House, built 1580-1584, but subsequently burnt down in 1780. An adjacent brick-lined well of some size and quality may also have been of pre-19th century date, associated with either the existing Guildhall (built 1795) or its medieval predecessor. A further, more substantial stone structure in the north-east corner of the Market Place, partly exposed in a pipe trench, is more enigmatic and was associated with a substantial dump of demolished building stone. It is suggested that this may have been an abutment for a bridge, which is shown on John Speed's map of c. 1600, crossing the watercourse that ran along the centre of Queen Street, immediately to the east of the Market Place. A bridge in this location would have provided access to the north-east corner of the Market Place from Winchester Street, a major route into the city from the east. When it was constructed is unknown; a late medieval or early post-medieval date is possible, but it is almost certain to have been removed by the early 19th century, by which time the watercourses had been moved to the sides of the streets and most now run within existing culverts.



# Salisbury Market Place Salisbury, Wiltshire

## Archaeological Watching Brief Report

### Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by Atkins Heritage, and the assistance of Andrew Holmes of Atkins Heritage is gratefully acknowledged in this regard. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Clare King (Wiltshire Council) for assistance and advice. Andy Fry (Site Manager) of Mildred Construction was particularly helpful throughout the fieldwork, providing access and site facilities.

The watching brief was undertaken by Phil Andrews, Phil Harding, Lorrain Higbee, Oliver Good, John Powell, Piotr Orczewski and Matt Kendall. This report was written and compiled by Phil Andrews, with illustrations drawn by Liz James. Bob Davis and Rosie Thornber provided help with the identification and dating of the structural remains. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Sue Farr.



# Salisbury Market Place Salisbury, Wiltshire

## Archaeological Watching Brief Report

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Atkins Heritage to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Salisbury Market Place, Salisbury, Wiltshire (hereafter 'the Site'), centred upon National Grid Reference (NGR) 414450 130000 (**Figure 1**).
- 1.1.2 Planning consent (S/2012/1317) was granted by Wiltshire Council to refurbish and enhance the Market Place to include improvements to parking, lighting and drainage, surface improvements and landscaping, subject to a condition requiring a programme of archaeological works to be undertaken. The archaeological potential of the Site, within the centre of medieval and later Salisbury, was well known (see below) and no specific archaeological desk-based assessment was undertaken for the proposed work. The initial stage comprised a watching brief carried out during geotechnical works, which revealed an extensive sequence of modern surfaces, as well as made ground, and a wall of post-medieval date along the north side of the Market Place (Oxford Archaeology 2010). Following this the Assistant County Archaeologist at Wiltshire Council advised that an archaeological watching brief should be maintained during groundwork to mitigate the impact of construction works on any archaeological remains.
- 1.1.3 The watching brief was undertaken over eight days in April 2013 during surface stripping and trenching for drains in the eastern part of the Market Place, and on single days in May, June, July, August and September 2013 during similar work in the western part of the Site.

#### 1.2 The Site

- 1.2.1 The Market Place is located centrally within Salisbury and is bordered by Blue Boar Row to the north, Queen Street to the east, Butcher Row to the south and Minster Street to the west (**Figure 1**).
- 1.2.2 The Market Place prior to the current works was an open area surfaced using a mixture of stone paving, brick paving and tarmac, and used for a combination of pedestrian access and car parking.
- 1.2.3 The Site slopes gradually from south to north between 47.44m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) to 46.41m aOD.
- 1.2.4 The British Geological Survey map for the area (1:50,000 Solid and Drift Series, sheet 298) indicates that the underlying geology of the Site consists of river terrace gravels overlying the Newhaven Chalk Formation.





## **2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Introduction**

- 2.1.1 The Extensive Urban Survey for Salisbury (WCC 2004) and the Victoria County History of Wiltshire, Volume 6 (VCH 1962) provide details of the archaeological and historical development of the city and are briefly summarised below.
- 2.1.2 In common with all existing Wiltshire towns, Salisbury has no clear foundation in the prehistoric or Romano-British periods, although pre-medieval features and finds have been recorded within the city.
- 2.1.3 Salisbury is documented as having moved at the beginning of the 13th century from its earlier medieval location at Old Sarum to a comparatively empty site on the low-lying area of Myrifiel. It was set out as a large, planned city with the cathedral at its centre. Historical and documentary records hint at the presence of earlier settlement, possibly dating from the Saxon period, existing around St Martin's Church, the Town Mill, Fisherton and at Milford, which lay within or on the edge of the area planned for the new city (WCC 2004).

### **2.2 Archaeological background**

- 2.2.1 Palaeolithic hand axes have been found at the Market Place and to the north at White Horse chequer. Indeed, more than 280 hand axes are known from the gravel ridge forming Milford Hill, largely to the east of the Site.
- 2.2.2 Overall there is a relatively limited number of prehistoric finds from the city, including Mesolithic and Neolithic flint tools, a Bronze Age sword and an Iron Age brooch and a coin. Romano-British activity is similarly sparse within Salisbury and includes a coin hoard from the Old George Inn to the south-west of the Site and several coins found by metal detectorists at the river crossing by Fisherton Bridge.
- 2.2.3 There have been very few Saxon finds within the area of the medieval city. However, sherds of 5th to 8th century pottery have been recovered during development works at the Old George Mall to the south-west of the Site.
- 2.2.4 There is a considerable amount of archaeological evidence for medieval Salisbury reflecting redevelopment particularly in the eastern chequers.

### **2.3 The Market Place**

- 2.3.1 The large Market Place, covering a whole chequer, was an integral and essential part of the Bishop's new city. Documentary evidence shows that permission was given for the market from the very start of the city in 1219, with a royal charter being granted eight years later.
- 2.3.2 The Market Place is likely to have developed around the settlement of St Thomas' Church on level open ground designated for this use. It was originally larger than it is now, but encroachment had begun by the early 14th century with permanent shops replacing earlier stalls along the southern and western sides. The maximum extent of encroachment took place in the 17th and 18th centuries, with the encroachments now fossilised in Silver Street, Minster Street, Oatmeal Row, Ox Row, Butcher Row and Fish Row, the names reflecting the goods once sold there.
- 2.3.3 The Market Place was deliberately sited on the northern side of Milford Street - the main east-west route through the city - and to the east of Castle Street, the main route to and



from Old Sarum, to ensure that traffic passing through Salisbury was directed into it. By the end of the medieval period it appears the traffic was also coming into the city on the remaining north-east corner of the Market Place along Winchester Street, ensuring that any of the main routes into Salisbury would have brought the traveller into one or other corner of the Market Place.

## **2.4 Previous fieldwork**

- 2.4.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA 2010) undertook a watching brief during geotechnical works within the Site.
- 2.4.2 Eight test pits were machine excavated, all but two in the northern half of the Site, and ranged in depth from 0.16m to 1.05m. Eight boreholes were also undertaken.
- 2.4.3 Extensive deposits of made ground, of likely post-medieval date, and a post-medieval east to west aligned dry stone wall were recorded, the latter along the north side of the Market Place. These deposits and wall were overlain by a combination of tarmac and paved surfaces dating between the 19th and 20th centuries.

## **3 METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Aims and objectives**

- 3.1.1 The objective of the watching brief was to establish within the constraints of the agreed strategy the presence or absence, location, extent, date, character, condition, and depth of any surviving remains which may be affected by the proposed development.
- 3.1.2 In particular, the watching brief aimed to clarify the impact upon the archaeological resource of any groundwork necessary for the construction of the new development, and ensure the preservation by record of all archaeological remains within the Site, including the known post-medieval remains.

### **3.2 Fieldwork methodology**

- 3.2.1 The full detailed methodology of the archaeological works was set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation (Wessex Archaeology 2013).
- 3.2.2 Based on the proposed development, two elements were identified where groundworks were to be subject to a watching brief. These comprised the excavation of new drainage trenches and the wider area of ground level reduction (**Figure 1**). The drain trenches, excavated first, effectively acted as evaluation trenches, and informed on the likely impacts on archaeological deposits of the subsequent ground level reduction. The initial and, as it transpired, principal phase of monitoring was of the area at the eastern end of the Market Place, to the north of the Guildhall, within an area approximately 45m by 35m (0.16ha) (see **Cover**). This area was known to have been occupied by historic, post-medieval structures, in particular the Old Council House. The area to the west covered an area approximately 65m by 50m (0.33ha) and has always been an open space within the Market Place.
- 3.2.3 Archaeological deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* record sheets with a unique numbering system for individual contexts. Archaeological features and deposits were hand-drawn at either 1:10 or 1:20 as appropriate. Monitored works were referenced to OS mapping.



3.2.4 A full photographic record was compiled using digital images. The record illustrated both the detail and the general context of the principal features, finds excavated, and the Site as a whole.

3.2.5 A unique site code **89120** was allocated to the Site, and was used on all records.

### **3.3 Best practice**

3.3.1 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the relevant guidance given in the *Institute for Archaeologists' Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (IfA 2008).

## **4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

4.1.1 Due to the nature of the development, the potential impact on the buried archaeological resource was limited in scale. The ground level reduction was largely confined to relatively modern surfaces and associated make-up deposits, with restricted elements of some earlier (possibly late post-medieval) demolition / levelling deposits exposed. There was also extensive disturbance caused by an array of modern service trenches. Observable groundworks were, therefore, largely restricted to the excavated drain trenches.

4.1.2 The excavated drain trenches had a maximum width of 0.8m and were generally up to 1.2m deep (though in many areas they were 0.75m or less, particularly in the western two-thirds of the Site), with two inspection chambers up to 1.5m deep. Elsewhere, ground level reduction was up to c. 0.6m deep.

### **4.2 Features and deposits**

#### *East side of Market Place, north of the Guildhall (Figure 2)*

4.2.1 A short length of wall [120] was exposed during ground level reduction at the north-east corner of the existing Guildhall steps (**Plate 1**). Wall [120] was aligned approximately north-south, and at least 3.5m long, 0.7m wide and 0.35m high. It was unfaced and comprised uncoursed bricks and brick fragments, set in a hard creamy white mortar containing broken flint fragments. Part of the wall foundation was also exposed, comprising at least two courses of mortared brick, laid flat at right angles to, and extending slightly beyond, the base of the wall. The bricks in the foundation measured 230 x 115 x 65mm and were unfrogged. It is assumed that this wall, probably a boundary wall (see below), was on the west side of the area it bounded, but no associated surfaces survived. The date of wall [120] is uncertain, but a late post-medieval date is probable, perhaps late 17th or 18th century.

4.2.2 Approximately 2m to the west of the existing Guildhall steps was well [121]. The top had been truncated and capped (with cement), but it was open to a depth of approximately 3m, with the existing water level at c. 2.5m depth (**Plate 2**); it had silted up below this and its full depth was not established. Well [121] was lined with unmortared bricks (38 courses were visible) and had an internal diameter of 0.95m. The unfrogged bricks were of similar dimensions to those used in wall [120], but of better quality and finish, and a late 18th or early 19th century date is likely.

4.2.3 No contemporary surfaces immediately adjacent to well [121] survived, but a small patch of flint cobbles (122) was exposed approximately 8m to the west. Whether the well and

cobbling were contemporary could not be ascertained, but they may have lain in the same yard area (see below).

- 4.2.4 An L-shaped pipe trench in the north-east corner of the Site revealed one feature of interest, a stone structure [114] aligned approximately east-west, parallel to Blue Boar Row and close to Queen Street to the east. Structure [114] was exposed in the base of the pipe trench and adjoining inspection chamber pit, crossing these on an oblique alignment (**Plate 3**). A length of approximately 7m of structure [114] was exposed, continuing to the east and west beyond the limits of trenching, but its width could not be ascertained; the north side lay within the trench, revealed within the inspection pit, which showed it to be at least 0.9m wide. The base of the structure was also reached in the bottom of the inspection pit, at a depth of c. 1.5m from the existing ground surface, and it survived to a height of between 0.5 and 0.75m. Although only a small part of structure [114] was visible, it comprised blocks of Chilmark limestone of varying size, apparently regularly coursed with neat, vertical jointing (two courses were seen *in situ*; no mortar was apparent).
- 4.2.5 No clear construction cut for structure [114] was visible and no contemporary surfaces were identified. The area had been disturbed by tree roots, particularly on the south side, but on the north side were deposits of greyish brown and dark greyish brown silty clay loam containing several layers/lenses of crushed brick and mortar. Above the *in-situ* remains of structure [114] was a substantial demolition deposit (113), comprising blocks of Chilmark limestone mixed with pale cream crushed mortar. These blocks, some of them removed in the process of trenching, were of various shapes and sizes (e.g. 0.90 x 0.38 x 0.30m and 1.45 x 0.50 x 0.20m; minimum thickness 0.15m), and are presumed to derive from structure [114]. They included several quoin stones and, though not of high quality ashlar, had clearly been fashioned for use in a substantial structure (**Plate 4**). A pre-19th century date is probable for this worked stone (and associated structure), although it could be somewhat earlier (see below).
- 4.2.6 The War Memorial in the central part of the Site was retained and ground level reduction and pipe trenches in the surrounding area were of insufficient depth to reveal any features of archaeological interest, specifically those which might relate to the Old Council House.

#### *West side of Market Place (Figure 2)*

- 4.2.7 Ground level reduction and the drainage trenches were generally of relatively shallow depth, and nothing other than what appeared to be modern (19th and 20th century) levelling and make-up deposits were seen during the various site visits.

## **5 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE**

- 5.1.1 Notes and measurements of the stone and ceramic building materials (brick and some small pieces of peg tile) were made on Site, with none of the material retained.
- 5.1.2 The very few finds other than stone, brick and tile were either recovered from the spoil heaps from trenching or from the surface of the stripped areas. They comprised a few sherds of 19th – 20th pottery and glass, two pieces of clay pipe, and several sheep/goat metapodials, all of the latter from the north-east corner of the Site. As all of these finds were found unstratified, none of them have been retained.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1.1 The generally superficial nature of the development and refurbishment works, coupled with the fact that most of the Site has remained as an open space, in this case the Market Place (with temporary market stalls and booths), has resulted in relatively little archaeological interest being exposed during the watching brief. However, there were two exceptions, both at the eastern end of the Market Place. These included a short length of wall [120] which was likely to have been associated with the Old Council House, built 1580-1584, but subsequently burnt down in 1780. An adjacent brick-lined well [121] of some size and quality may also have been of pre-19th century date, associated with either the existing Guildhall (built 1795) or its medieval predecessor. A further, more substantial stone structure [114] in the north-east corner of the Market Place, partly exposed in a pipe trench, was associated with a substantial dump of demolished building stone and may have been an abutment for a bridge, which is shown on John Speed's map of c. 1600.
- 6.1.2 Although no certain medieval features, deposits (including market surfaces) or finds were identified, as was the case with the earlier watching brief on the geotechnical investigations (Oxford Archaeology 2010), stone structure [114] could be of late medieval or early post-medieval date. Very little was seen *in situ*, but this and the associated demolition debris (113) indicates a relatively substantial structure of reasonable quality which, it is suggested, formed part of a bridge abutment which is depicted on John Speed's plan of Salisbury in c. 1600 (Figure 3). He shows at least four bridges at street junctions, crossing the network of watercourses, which supplied water to the city and originally ran along the middle of the streets defining Salisbury's 'chequers'. One of these bridges lay at the north-east corner of the Market Place and crossed a watercourse which flowed along the west side of Queen Street, adjacent to the Market Place. This location matches closely with structure [114] which could represent part of the west abutment of this bridge.
- 6.1.3 When the bridge at the north-eastern corner of the Market Place was constructed is unknown. It may also have had a timber precursor, with other timber bridges or crossings elsewhere in the city; perhaps not shown by Speed because they were less substantial or temporary in nature. It may be significant that the other three bridges shown by Speed all lay at street junctions along Castle Street, the major route into Salisbury from the north, with one of these at the north-west corner of the Market Place. A bridge here would have provided a link to Winchester Street, certainly by the end of the medieval period an important route into the city from the east. Whether intentionally or not, these three bridges are all shown slightly larger than that at the north-east corner of the Market Place, corresponding with structure [114]. It can be suggested with some caution, and allowing for errors and inaccuracies in Speed's map, that these four structures, apparently built at least partly of stone, were constructed where the heaviest movement of people and goods occurred and watercourses needed to be crossed. When these bridges fell into disuse and were removed is not precisely known, but there is some, hint of them still being present on William Naish's map of Salisbury published in 1716, by which time the watercourses were apparently not being maintained. In 1737 an Act was passed to move the watercourses from the centre to the side of the streets, and they were subsequently put into channels with brick beds, with most culverted by the early 19th century. It is therefore likely that the bridges were demolished during or before the early 19th century, and perhaps they disappeared (or were modified or replaced) several decades earlier when the watercourses were moved.
- 6.1.4 Wall 120 is thought likely to represent a small, surviving fragment of a boundary wall surrounding the Old Council House, which occupied a site to the north of the former Guildhall and Gaol, itself the site of the existing Guildhall. The location of the Old Council

House is shown on William Naish's 1716 map of Salisbury (relevant details transcribed on **Figure 2**), and whose history is well documented (VCH 1962). The erection of a new Council House (replacing the medieval Council House at the west end of the Market Place) 'in the best and most fitting place' was proposed in 1565, but work was not begun until 1580 and was completed four years later on a site at the east end of the Market Place 'where the great elm late stood'. This new Council House comprised a timber-framed gabled building of three stories with open colonnades at the sides and a central turret; and in 1685 the lower part was being used as a market house. A possibly reasonably accurate depiction of this building is included as an inset on John Speed's plan of Salisbury in c. 1600 (**Figure 3**). Apart from wall [120] nothing of this complex, which burnt down in 1780, survived or was exposed in the watching brief. The replacement Council House, the present Guildhall, was completed in 1795, built on the site of the former Guildhall and prison, which was demolished after some dispute with the Bishop of Salisbury who held the property at that time.

- 6.1.5 The late 18th or early 19th century date of well [121] makes it uncertain as to which building it was associated with. Its high standard of construction using good quality brick (rather than chalk and flint) indicates that it was an important feature. If pre-1780, then it lay within what appears from maps to have been a small, enclosed yard at the rear (north) of the old Guildhall and prison. If post-1780 (or 1795), then it would have lay close to the main entrance to the new Guildhall on the north front, perhaps providing a source of water for the Guildhall, and possibly also for watering horses and other uses elsewhere in the Market Place. The present Guildhall portico was built c. 1889, replacing a former Doric colonnade recessed between the wings on the north front, and thus if this well was of early 19th century date, then it would not have been as close to the then Guildhall entrance as it is to the existing portico/steps today.

## 7 STORAGE AND CURATION

### 7.1 Museum

- 7.1.1 It is recommended that the project archive resulting from the excavation be deposited with the Museum of Salisbury and South Wiltshire. The Museum has agreed in principle to accept the project archive on completion of the project, currently under the project code **89121**. There are no retained finds.

### 7.2 Preparation of archive

- 7.2.1 The complete site archive, which will include paper records, photographic records, graphics, artefacts, ecofacts and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by the Museum of Salisbury and South Wiltshire, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; IfA 2009; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).
- 7.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the site code (**89120**), and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive comprises the following:

- 1x file of paper records and A3/A4 graphics

### 7.3 Discard policy

- 7.3.1 Wessex Archaeology follows the guidelines set out in *Selection, Retention and Dispersal* (Society of Museum Archaeologists 1993), which allows for the discard of selected artefact and ecofact categories which are not considered to warrant any future analysis. Any discard of artefacts will be fully documented in the project archive.



7.3.2 The discard of environmental remains and samples follows nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1993; 1995; English Heritage 2002).

#### **7.4 Copyright**

7.4.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative archive relating to the Site will be retained by Wessex Archaeology Ltd under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved. The recipient museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use shall be non-profitmaking, and conforms with the *Copyright and Related Rights regulations 2003*.

7.4.2 This report may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (e.g. Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which we are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferrable by Wessex Archaeology. Users are reminded that they remain bound by the conditions of the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of the report.

#### **7.5 Security copy**

7.5.1 In line with current best practice (e.g. Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.



## 8 REFERENCES

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## 9 APPENDIX: OASIS FORM

### 9.1 Salisbury Market Place, Salisbury - Wessex Archaeology

OASIS ID - wessexar1-169384

#### Versions

View	Version	Completed by	Email	Date
<a href="#">View 1</a>	1	Sue Farr	s.farr@wessexarch.co.uk	23 January 2014

#### Completed sections in current version

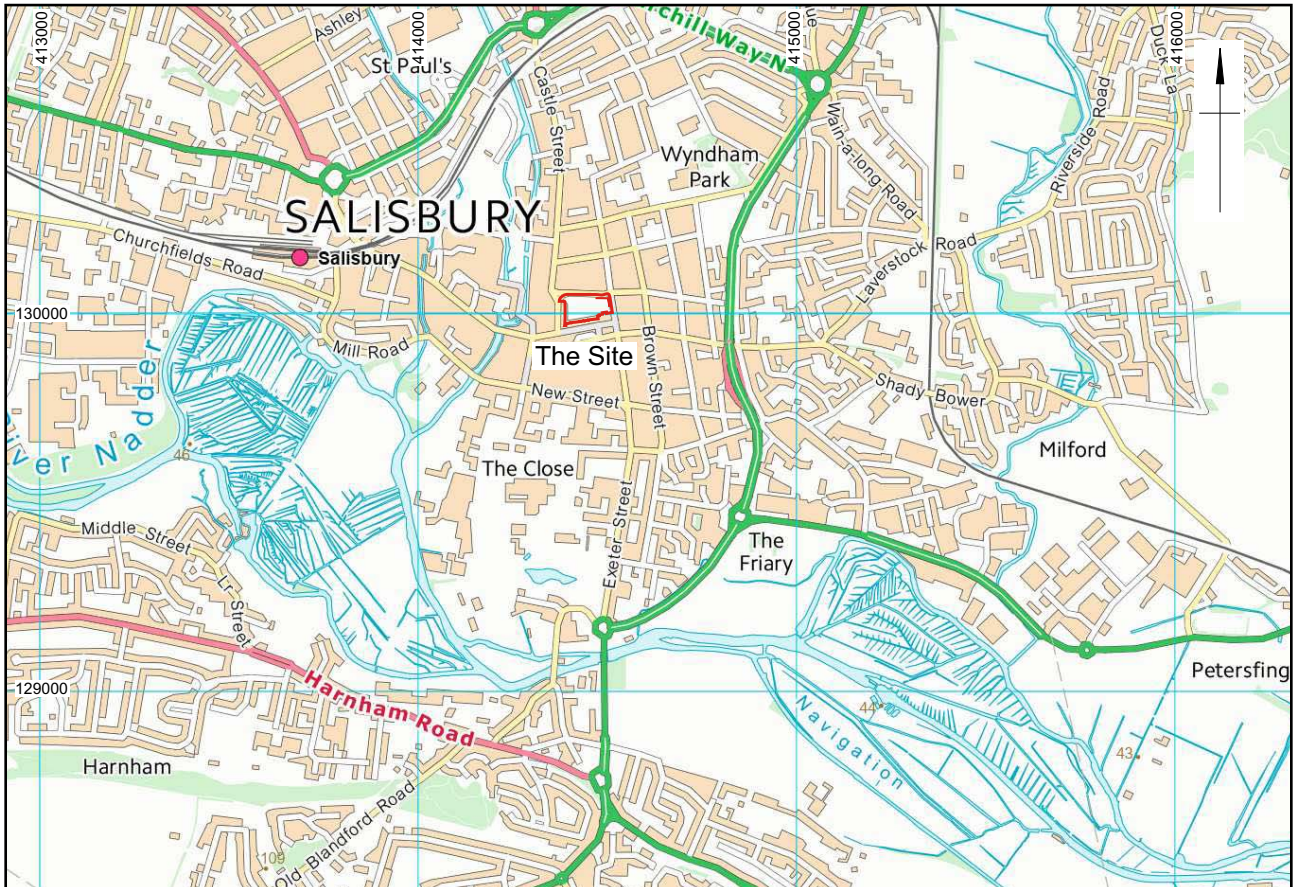
Details	Location	Creators	Archive	Publications
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	1/1



#### Validated sections in current version

Details	Location	Creators	Archive	Publications
No	No	No	No	0/1

#### File submission and form progress

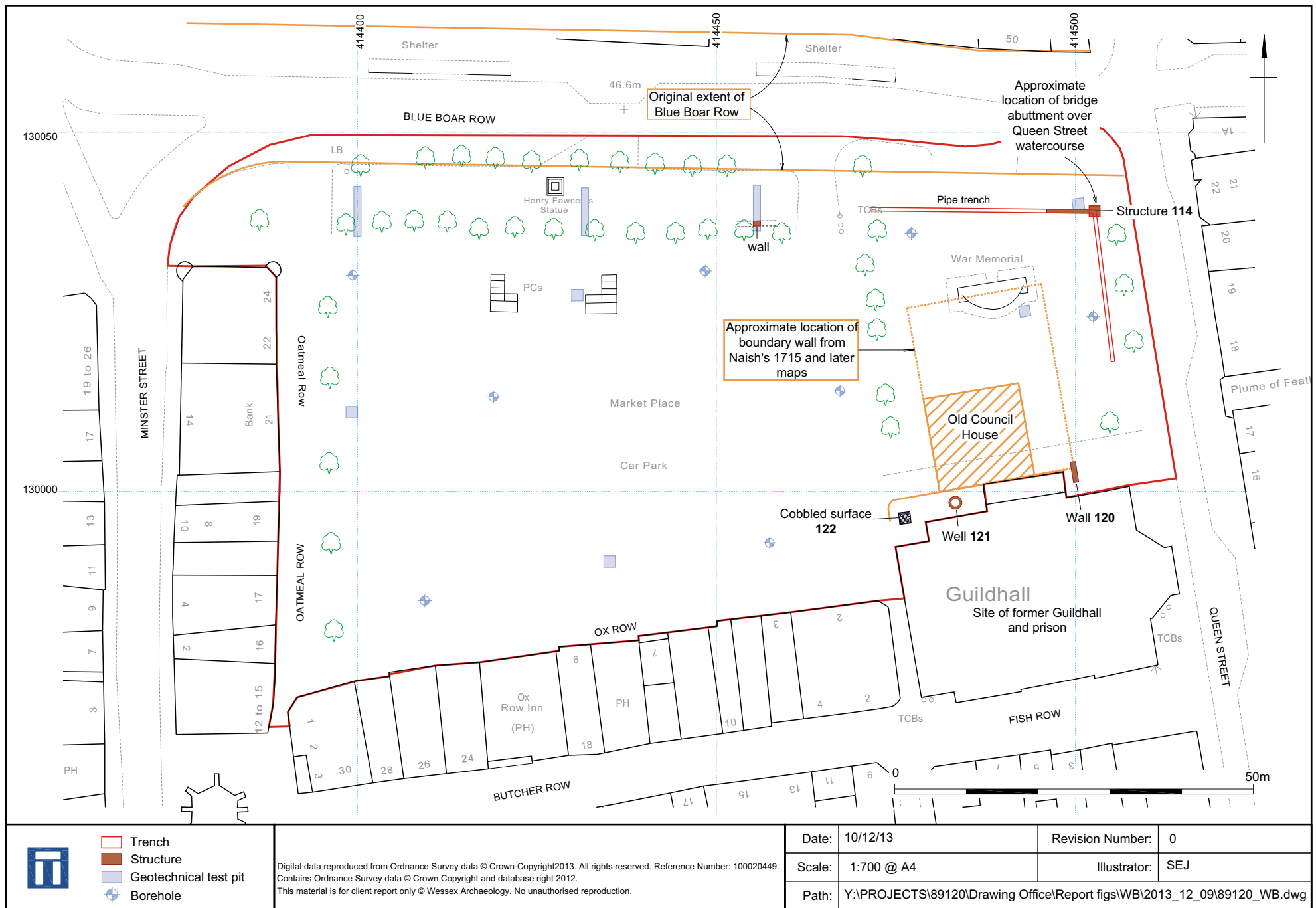
Grey literature report submitted?	No	Grey literature report filename/s	
Report release delay specified?	Yes	Release delay	Release into ADS library once signed off
Images submitted?	No	Image filename/s	
Boundary file submitted?	No	Boundary filename	
HER signed off?		NMR signed off?	



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	Date: 23/01/14	Revision Number:	1
	Scale: 1:20 000 & 1:1000 @ A4	Illustrator:	SEJ
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Location of site and observed work.

Figure 1



Principal features shown in relation to historic structures

Figure 2



 Market place [The Site]

 Bridge



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Plate 1: Wall 120, adjacent to Guildhall steps (view from south-east; scale = 0.5m)



Plate 2: Well 121 (view from east; scale = 1m)



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Plate 3: Structure 114, exposed in base of pipe trench (view from north; scale = 0.5m)



Plate 4: Demolition rubble, probably derived from structure 114

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