



**9-13 St Owens Street
Hereford**

(NGR SO 5123 3995)

Archaeological Trenching



HAS 723
SMR 43647
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This report is produced by

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Cover picture Vaulted cellar ceiling to the rear of 9 St Owens Street

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9-13 St Owens Street Hereford

Archaeological Trenching

Site Work

C Rees

Text

C Rees

Illustrations

C Rees

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Archaeological Trenching

NGR SO 5123 3995

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1. Summary

Archaeological Investigations Ltd was commissioned by Bindi (London) Ltd to undertake a scheme of archaeological trenching prior to a planned extension to the existing building. Fieldwork was undertaken on July 5th 2006.

The site lies in the centre of Hereford, to the north of the Saxon defences and within the medieval town. Previous excavation in the area uncovered a yard surface and 14th-15th century wall, along with a small number of sherds of residual medieval pottery.

In this case excavation revealed the remains of two cellar walls associated with an earlier phase of building on the site. The remains of an internal wall fitted with fire place and internal openings were still visible on the north-western side of the trench and indicate the buildings were once much more extensive.

The cellar appears to have been empty when the car park was built. It was therefore likely that the cellar roof was removed and the void was filled with aggregate.

To the south-east of the cellar the ground had been built-up and levelled using building waste. The surface had been tarmaced to provide a car park surface.

The creation of the cellar is likely to have destroyed most underlying archaeological deposits.

2. Introduction

A planning application was submitted to the Herefordshire County Council to extend number 9, St Owens Street.

The site is located at the north-western end of St Owens Street in Hereford (NGR SO 5123 3995) (Figure 1). The site lies within the medieval town, just to the east of the medieval market place.

The planned work entailed the machine excavation of a trench on three sides of the proposed extension measuring 7m x 8m with a width of 0.8m. Excavation was carried out to maximum depth of 1.6m.

A trial trench undertaken to the rear of nearby 5a St Owens Street revealed features of medieval date or later, and residual medieval pottery sherds were present.

The site is currently utilised as a car park. The geology is old fluvio-glacial gravels overlying Old Red Sandstone.

3. Historical and Archaeological Background

St Owens Street is situated to the north of the city's Saxon defences although at present the extent of contemporary extramural development is unknown. The Saxon defences were replaced in the 12-13th century by a substantial gravel and turf rampart which was in turn superseded by a stone wall in the later 13th century. The curve of nearby Gaol Street (prior to 1841 named Grope Lane) is thought to track the base of the aforementioned gravel rampart (Stanford 1966, 204).

During the medieval period St Owens Street lay within the old town and was known as Hungreye Street, a name first recorded in the cathedral muniments of 1296 (Crooks 2004).

The earliest cartographic evidence for the street is found on Speed's 1610 map (figure 2), although the schematic nature of this map makes it impossible to identify the precise location of number 9 St Owens Street. In Taylor's 1757 map (figure 3a) it is possible to locate the plot somewhat more accurately and, in this instance, it is shown as containing more buildings than survive at present. Curley's 1856 map and the OS maps of 1886 and 1967 (figures 3b, 4a & 4b) also show the structures covering more than twice the area than those currently remaining on the site.

A number of small excavations/watching briefs have been undertaken at sites along St Owens Street at numbers 5a, 39-43, 53, 65, 71-73. These investigations have yielded relatively little archaeologically significant material, with the majority producing little more than a limited amount of residual material. Archaeological deposits were only recorded at 65 St Owens Street where excavation revealed an undated early yard surface, and a sandstone wall dated to the 14th-15th century. Several stages of rebuilding were noted at this site (Poole 2002).

4. Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of the project was to establish the presence or absence of archaeological features in the areas affected by the proposed scheme of works and to record any archaeological remains prior to their removal.

The objectives of the project were

- To identify the extent, date and nature of any features/deposits identified
- To assess the survival, quality, condition and relative significance of any archaeological features, deposits and structures within the study area
- To produce a record of the features
- To report on and archive the findings from the excavation

5. Method

A 0.8m wide trench (7m x 8m) was excavated on three sides of the proposed extension to a depth of 1.6m (maximum) using a mini-digger. It was proposed that any archaeological deposits uncovered would be excavated by hand. Cellar walls/ceiling arches were uncovered but left in situ. There was no need for hand excavation.

The sections of the cellar structures uncovered were recorded on an annotated sketch section. In addition to this a photographic record (utilising both black & white and colour film) was compiled.

Sample sections of the trench were also recorded photographically.

The position of the trench was recorded in plan at a scale of 1:50. Trench positions were tied in to features shown on the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 mapping.

A photographic record was compiled of features visible in the dividing wall at the rear of the property. The wall had previously been an internal wall and contained blocked up windows and a fireplace. This was complimented by an annotated sketch diagram showing the measurements and positions of features within the wall. In addition photographs were taken of original features remaining within number 9 St Owens Street, which is in the process of being refurbished.

No sampling strategy was implemented due to the modern nature of material present.

6. Results

The upper layer of trench fill was an edging of concrete curb slabs (1001) lining the outside north-western trench edge. Below this was a layer of tarmac approximately 0.2m thick which formed the car park surface. Below this was a layer of green-grey gravel (1002). The thickness of this layer was not determined but in places was present to a depth of over 1.6m (plate 3).

This fill is largely contained between cellar walls/vaults 1003 (plates 1-2) and 1004 (plate 3) and appears to have been utilised in the backfilling of an empty cellar to provide a secure base upon which the existing car park was constructed. Outside cellar wall 1004 this deposit is only around 0.2m in depth.

The two cellar walls/vaults appear to correspond with the structure represented above ground by the standing wall (1006) which currently acts as a boundary between the car park and the garden of the adjacent building. Both the cellar and the wall probably once formed part of the building shown on the 19th century OS and Curley's 1856 map (figures 4a and 3b).

At the outside edge of wall 1004 was a mixed clay deposit containing building rubble and modern services (plate 5). This material appears to be associated with the levelling of the ground although not necessarily undertaken at the time of car park construction.

No archaeological finds were recovered during the excavation.

7. Discussion

The cellar walls/vaults excavated in the trench are likely to have belonged to an earlier building phase of 9 St Owens Street as seen on the 1757, 1856, 1886 and 1967 maps (figures 3a, 3b, 4a & 4b). In his work Pevsner (1963) describes St Owen's Street as 'the most consistent Georgian Brick Street in Hereford'. This era is normally defined as including the reigns of kings George I, George II, George III and George IV, covering the period from 1714-1830 (Wikipedia 2006). However behind the street façade the building can be seen to undergo a number of structural changes, and building materials utilised in the construction of the cellar and rear standing wall indicate a slightly later erection date (A. Boucher pers com).

The chimney breast behind the fireplace visible in the boundary wall (plate 9) appears on the 1886 OS map of Hereford. It is not shown on the previous maps and may therefore be a sign of a late construction date. Caution must nevertheless be exercised in this interpretation as it must be noted that the 1886 map contains far more detail than its predecessors and the earlier omission may be a result of this factor.

8. Conclusions

Two cellar walls/vaults were recorded during the archaeological watching brief. These are likely to have belonged to the cellar of an earlier phase of building on the site. The creation of these cellars is likely to have resulted in the destruction of most underlying archaeological deposits.

9. Bibliography

Crooks, K, 2004, Land to the rear of 53 St Owens Street. *Hereford Archaeological Series 649*

Poole, B, 2002, 65 St Owens Street, Hereford. *Hereford Archaeological Series 558*

Pevsner, N, 1963, *The Buildings of England: Herefordshire*, Penguin

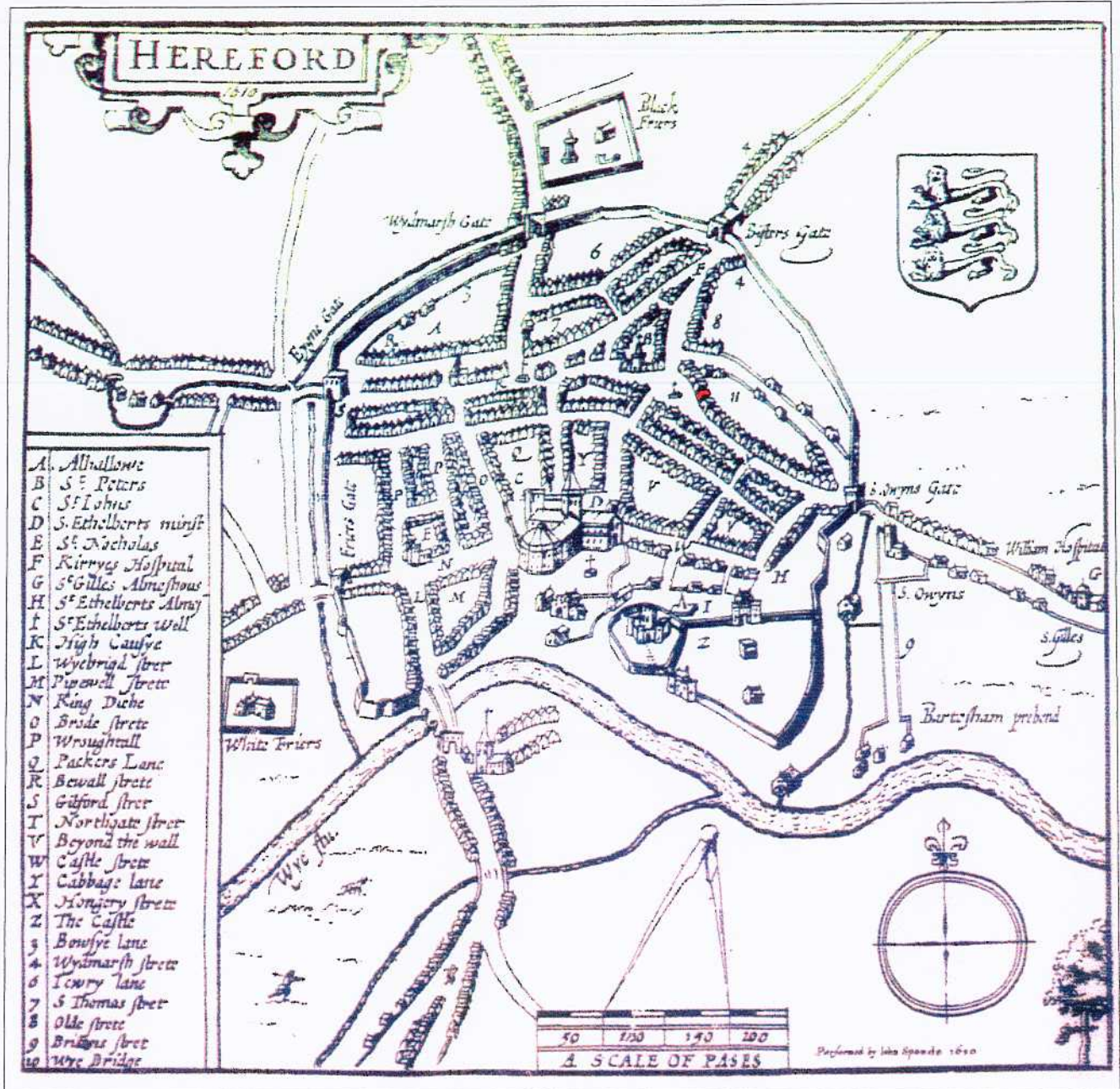
Stanford, S C, 1966, Excavations in Bath Street, Hereford, *TWNFC Vol XXXVIII Part III*

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georgian_era

Appendix 1

Footings Trench

Context	Type	Description	Finds	Interpretation
1000	Deposit	Tarmac	None	Car park surface
1001	Deposit	Curb stones	None	Curb stones
1002	Deposit	Green-grey gravel	None	
1003	Structure	Red brick arched wall running approx east along the outer trench side. Full extent not uncovered	None	Cellar wall/vaulted ceiling
1004	Structure	Red brick wall, slightly arched. Approx 0.7m in width	None	Cellar wall/vaulted ceiling
1005	Deposit	Mixed deposit containing building rubble, gravel and service pipes	None	Modern material associated with the levelling/preparation of the area for use as a car park
1006	Structure	Standing red brick wall. Would have previously formed an internal house wall on the side visible. Contained a window and fireplace which had been bricked up.	None	House wall associated with an earlier phase of the building at number 9 St Owens Street



Approximate location of 9 St Owens Street

Figure 2 Speed's 1610 map of Hereford

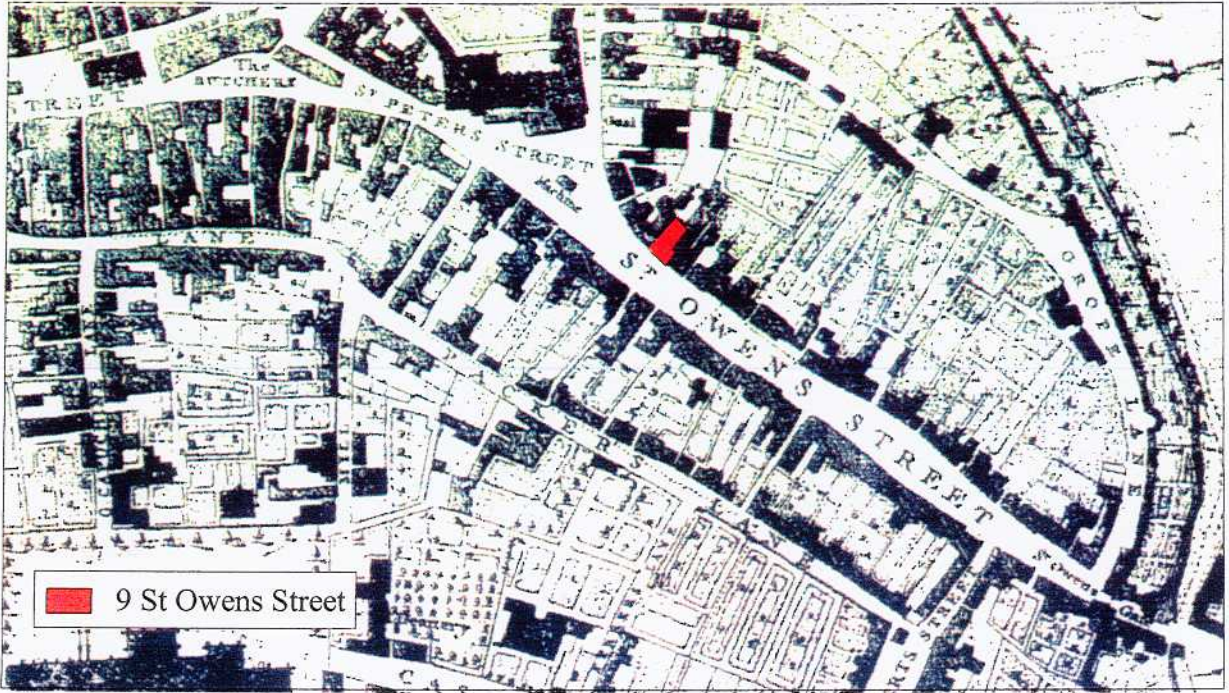


Figure 3a Taylor's 1757 map of Hereford

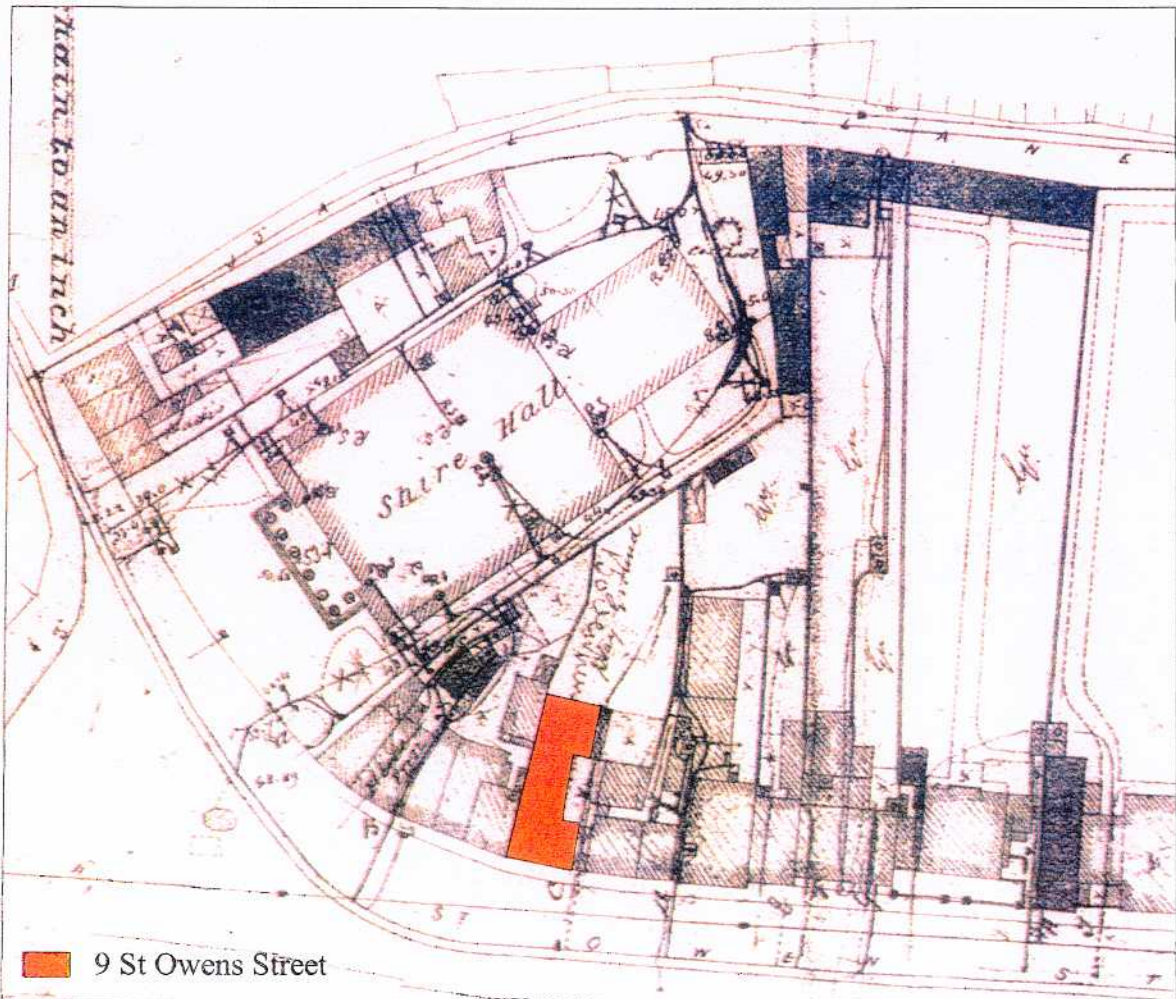


Figure 3b Curley's 1856 map of Hereford

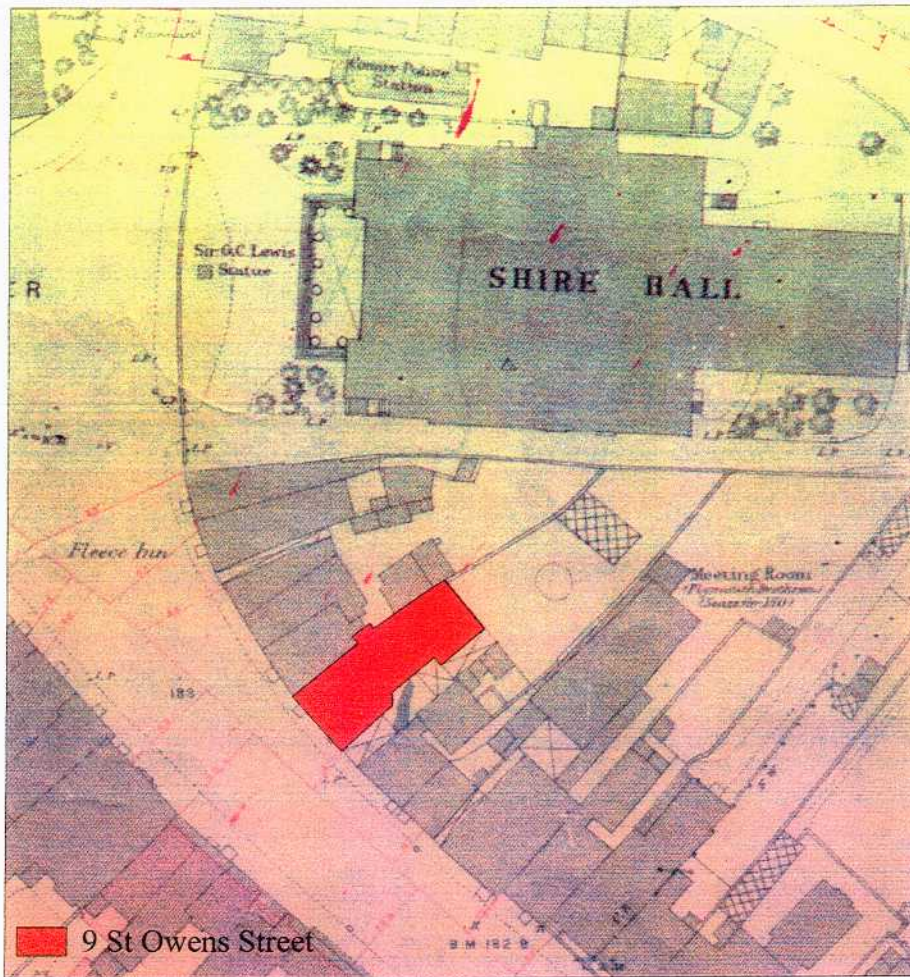


Figure 4a 1886 First edition Ordnance Survey Map of Hereford

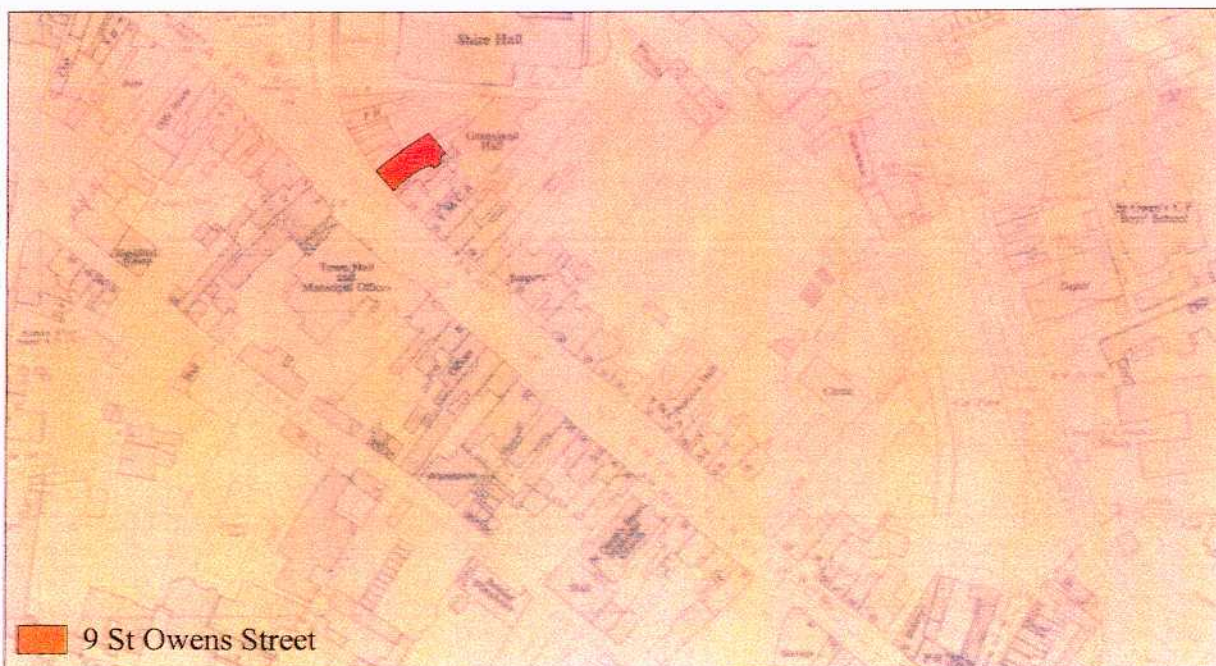


Figure 4b 1967 Ordnance Survey Map of Hereford

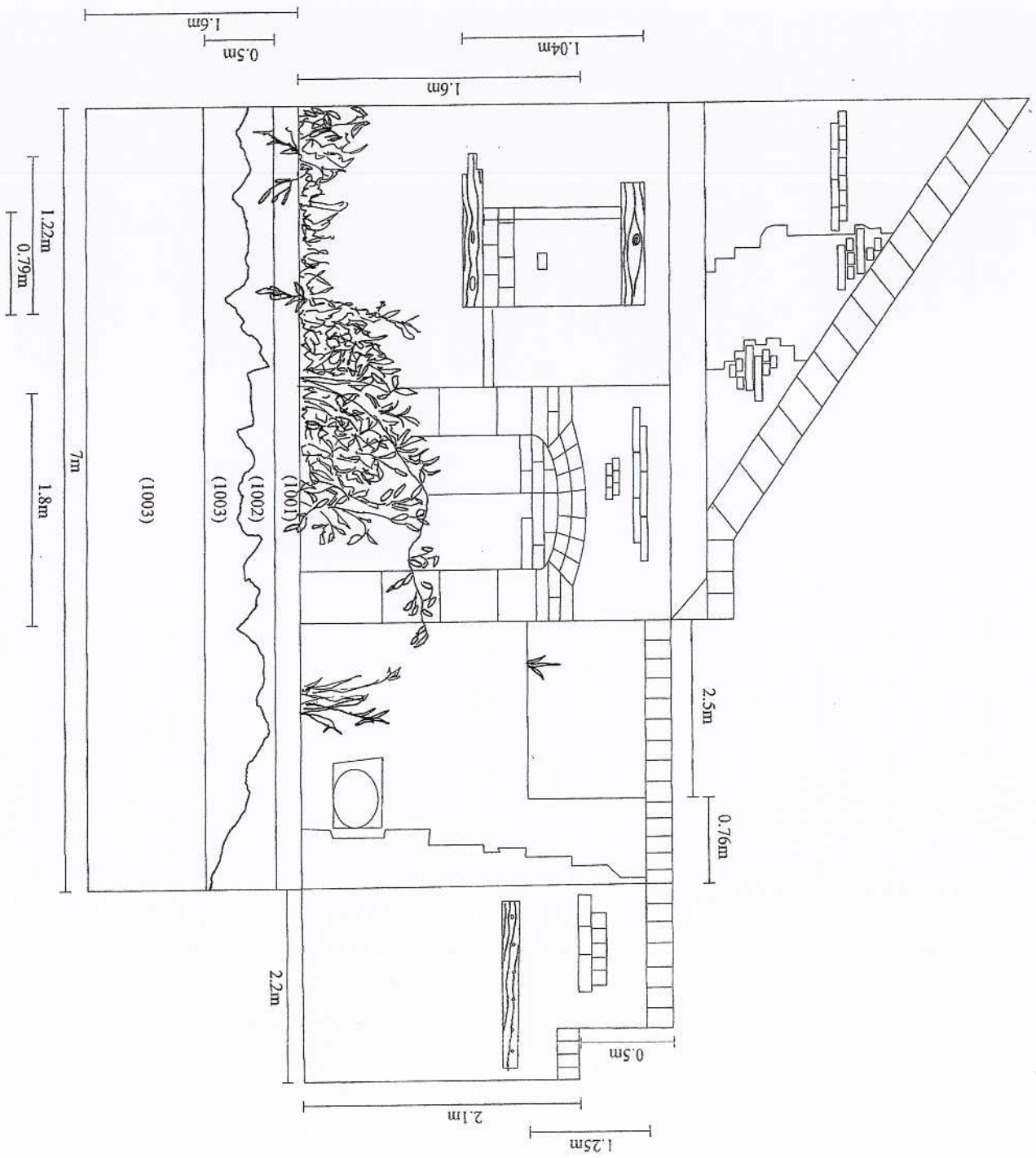


Figure 5 Sketch Section of Boundary Wall to the Rear of 9 St Owens Street
 NB Not to scale. Brick work samples drawn only to show brick arrangements



Figure 6 Trench Location Map (Scale 1:937.5)

Plates

Cellar Wall/Vault 1003

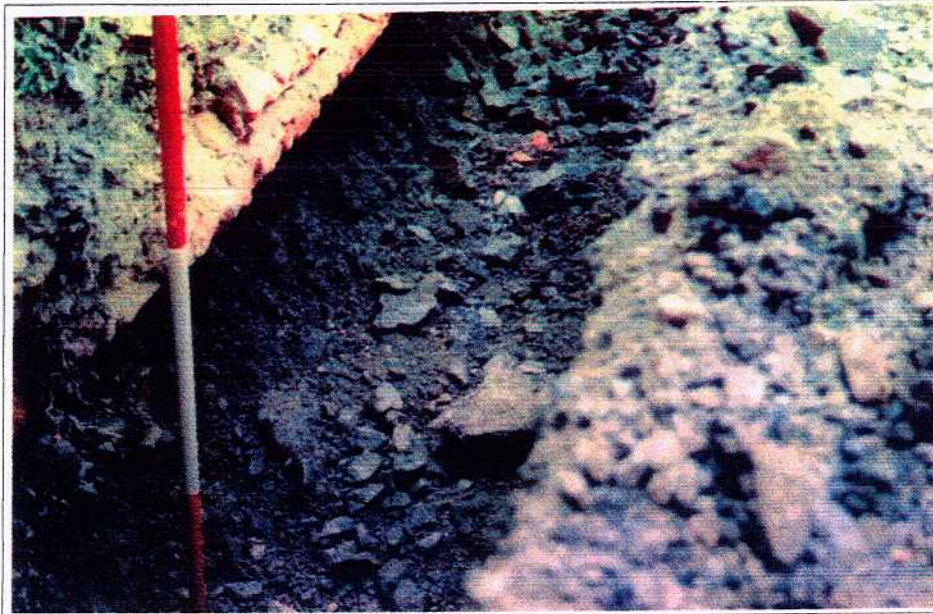


Plate 1 Cellar ceiling vault 1003 showing gravel in section



Plate 2 Cellar ceiling vault 1003



Plate 3 Cellar wall and vault 1004

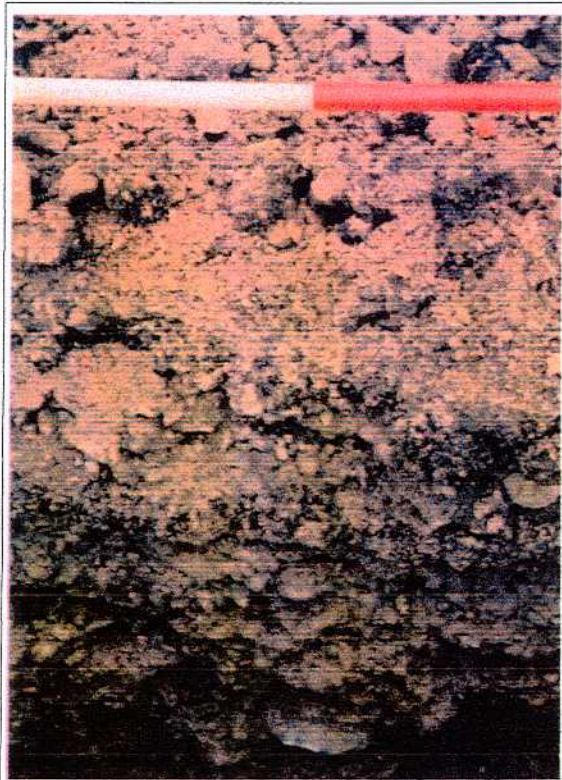


Plate 4 Sample section to the NW of cellar wall 1004

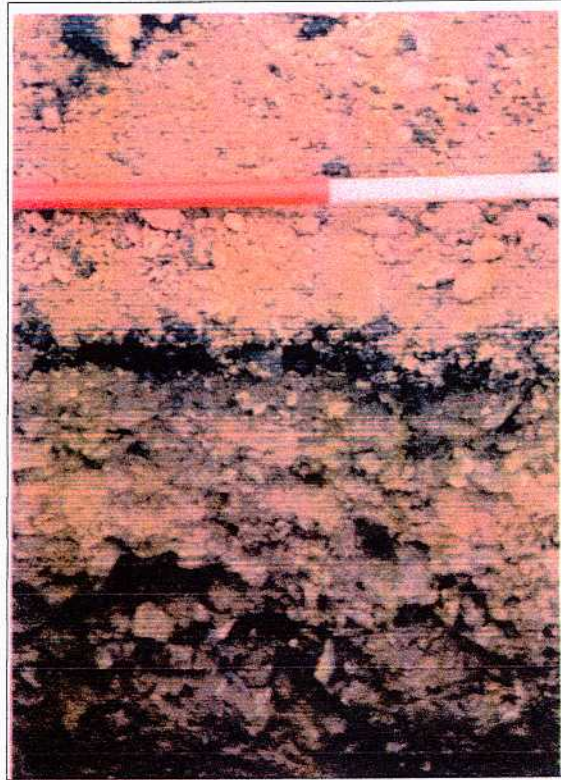


Plate 5 Sample section to the SE of cellar wall 1004

Photographic Record
Boundary wall to the rear of St Owens
Street



Plate 6

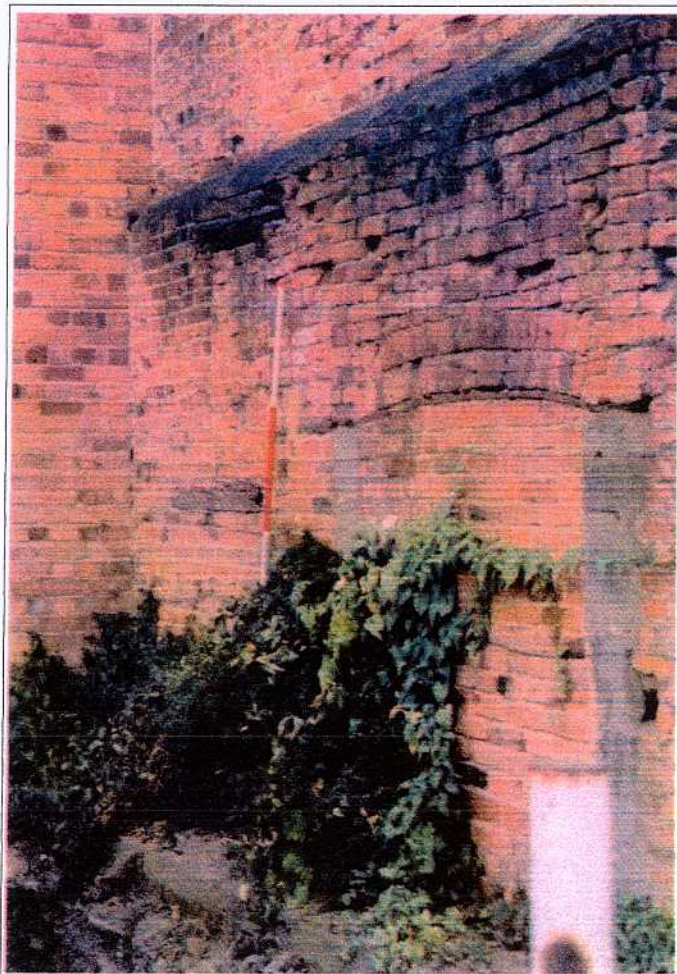


Plate 7

Photographic Record
Exterior Wall to the Rear of 9 St Owens
Street

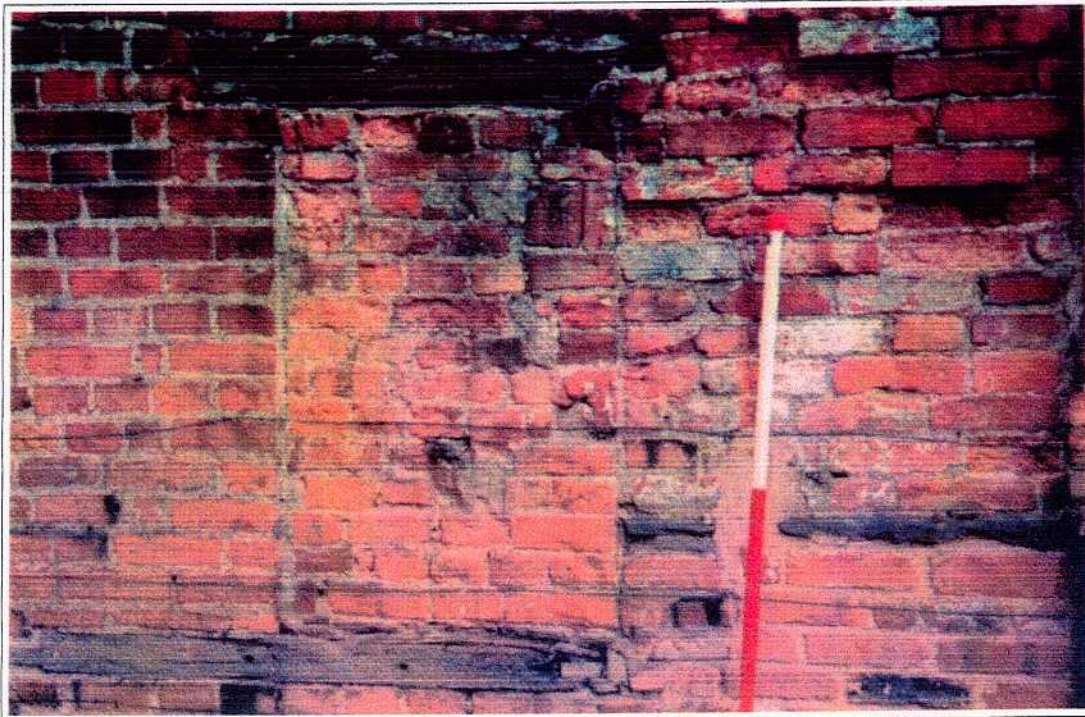


Plate 8 Bricked up window in boundary wall to the rear of 9 St Owens Street



Plate 9 Bricked up fireplace in boundary wall to the rear of 9 St Owens Street