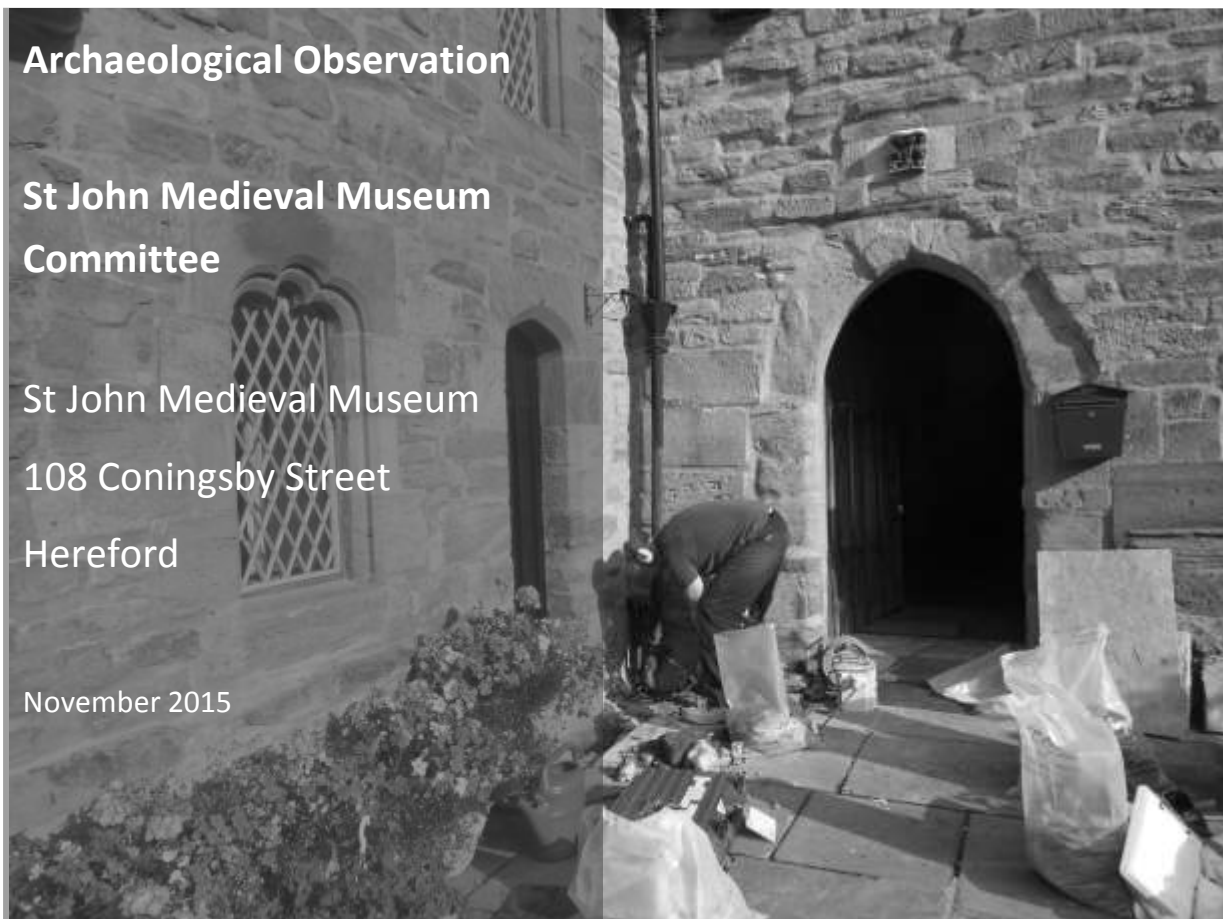


Archaeological Observation

St John Medieval Museum  
Committee

St John Medieval Museum  
108 Coningsby Street  
Hereford

November 2015



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*Cover: View northwest showing work taking place on the drain*

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## 1 Executive Summary

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*Border Archaeology Limited (BAL) was instructed by Alex Whibley Esq of Hook Mason Architects to carry out a programme of Archaeological Observation (or 'watching brief') on behalf of the St John Medieval Museum Committee relating to engineering works for the installation of an internal WC and drainage connection at St John Medieval Museum 108 Widemarsh Street Hereford (figs. 1-3).*

*No deposits of archaeological significance were observed during the course of the engineering works and deposits only relating to the existing drain were removed.*



## 2 Introduction

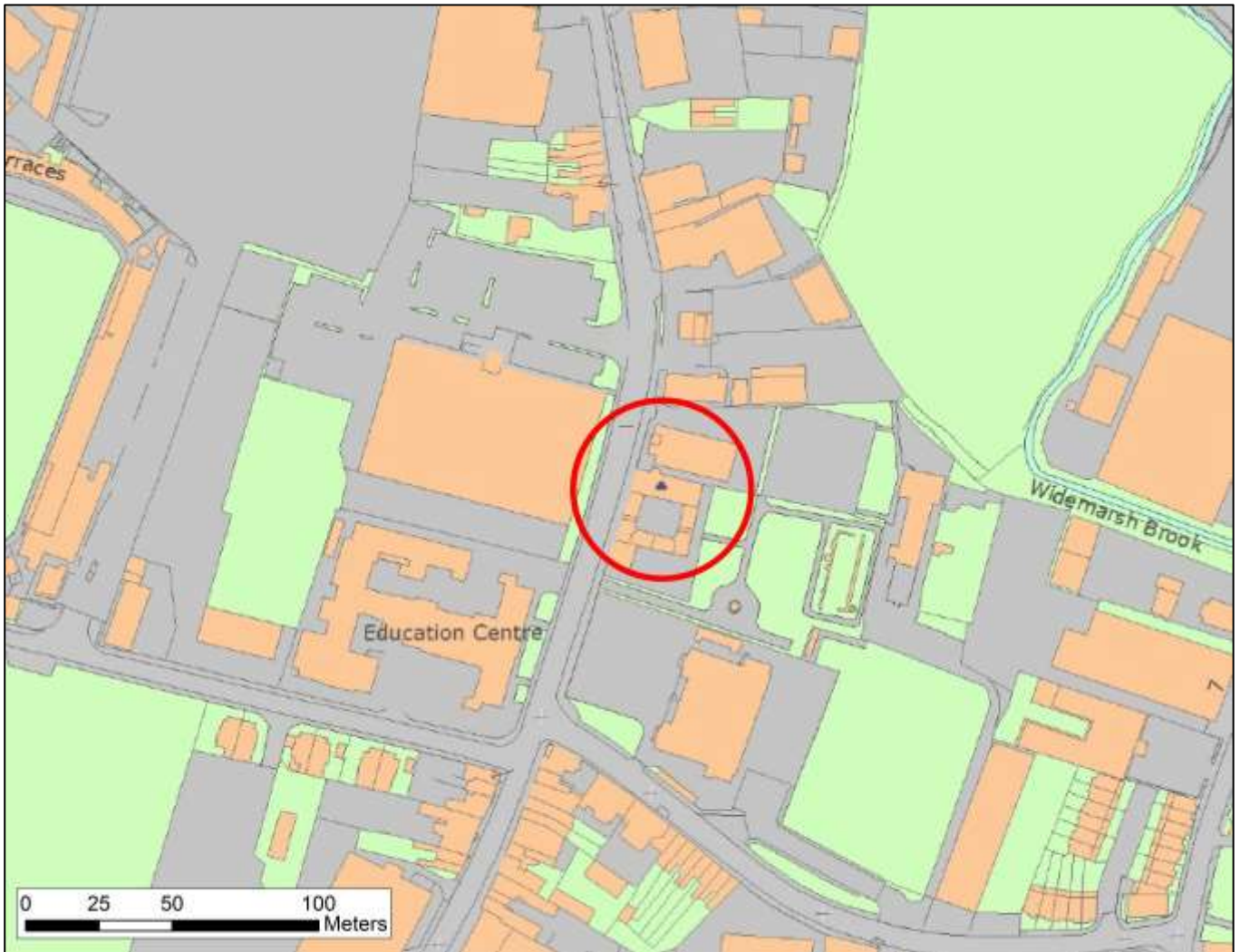
Border Archaeology Limited (BAL) was instructed by Alex Whibley Esq of Hook Mason Architects to carry out a programme of Archaeological Observation (or 'watching brief') on behalf of the St John Medieval Museum Committee relating to engineering works for the installation of an internal WC and drainage connection at St John Medieval Museum 108 Widemarsh Street Hereford (NGR: SO 51122 40456) (figs. 1-3).

The site lies within a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM No. 13610). Work was carried out on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2015.



Fig. 1: General site location plan





*Fig. 2: Detailed site location plan*

Copies of this report will be submitted to Dr Howard Tomlinson of St. John Medieval Museum Committee, Alison MacDonald Historic England Assistant Inspector of Ancient Monuments (Herefordshire and Shropshire) and Julian Cotton Archaeological Advisor Herefordshire Council. A copy will also be supplied to the Herefordshire Historic Environment Record.

## 2.1 Soils & Geology

The historic city of Hereford occupies a broad gravel terrace overlooking the River Wye from the N.

### 3 Historical and Archaeological Background

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The site lies within a Hereford City Area of Archaeological Importance and at the NE extent of the Central Area Conservation Area (Area 012); it forms an Inner Historic Suburb (Townscape Character Area 22) as identified in the *Central Hereford Townscape Characterisation* (Baker 2010b), where substantial outward growth is presumed to have taken place along the principal approach roads prior to construction of the medieval defences in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century.

A series of peat deposits revealed at the former West Mercia Police training ground E of Widemarsh Street (Herefordshire HER Ref. 44627) appeared to date roughly to the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC (Middle Bronze Age); however, no cultural remains directly associated with these deposits have yet been found (Baker 2013).

Little evidence of Romano-British activity has been identified in the immediate vicinity of the site, although individual finds of Roman coins are reported (Herefordshire HER Ref. 20237, 20235).

The Hospital of St John (SO 5112 4044) (Herefordshire HER Nos. 419, 43791) is a Grade II\* listed building (LB Ref. 1196898). The hospital was founded after 1221; parts of the hall and chapel range are evidently of 13<sup>th</sup> -century date. The hospital became a dependency of the Preceptory of the Knights of St John of Jerusalem at Dinmore, which was itself founded before 1189 and which supported the services of a Chaplain. The dedication in 1340 was to the Holy Ghost and St. John and this may represent the date of its transfer to the Hospitallers. The Hospital continued to administer to the poor until its dissolution c. 1540.

The Hospital was re-founded c. 1614 by Sir Thomas Coningsby, who left provision in his will for an almshouse; the 13<sup>th</sup> -century hall and chapel range were partly reconstructed and the three other ranges surrounding the courtyard were added, together with the gatehouse range. The building was comprehensively restored in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The Scheduled Area (Scheduled, No. 13610) also includes the Grade II\* listed remains of the Blackfriars Dominican Priory (Herefordshire HER Nos. 418, 43804, 43794, 43795 (LB Ref. 1293327) - comprising the 14<sup>th</sup> -century W range, cemetery and preaching cross (Herefordshire HER No. 3983). Whilst the Blackfriars precinct is regarded as relatively well preserved and understood, apart from the location of the church and one range, little is known of the other claustral ranges, although the results of a geophysical survey carried out in the gardens immediately W of the surviving claustral range revealed the considerable complexity of buried remains in this area (Herefordshire HER No. 43796), the significance of which as yet remains unclear (Baker 2013, 35).

The preaching cross is also a Grade II\* listed structure (LB Ref. 1279469) and dates to the 14<sup>th</sup> century; it is the only surviving example in England of a Friars' preaching cross (Pevsner 1963).

## 4 Methodology

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Archaeological Observation within the area specified was carried out in accordance with *Management of Research Projects in the Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014). Border Archaeology adheres to the *ClfA Code of conduct* (2014) and with *Standards for Archaeological Projects in Herefordshire (Issue 1)* (Herefordshire Council, 2004). BAL is cognisant of *Archaeology & Development Supplementary Planning* (Herefordshire Council 2010).

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists states (2014, 4) that the purpose of a watching brief is:

- 1) 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;
- 2) 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 works comprised installation of a ground floor WC facility which involved a below-ground excavation to a maximum depth of 500mm. The existing paving slabs were lifted and replaced upon completion of the groundworks (*fig. 3*).

The area of paving affected measured 0.9m<sup>2</sup> and the area of below-ground excavation measured 0.665m<sup>2</sup>. The depth of the pipe where it penetrated the wall was 500mm. No internal floor excavations took place.

Full written, graphic and photographic were made using *pro-forma* record forms and sheets in accordance with BAL's *Field Recording Manual* (2014).

A photographic record was made using a high-resolution digital camera, comprising photographs of archaeological features and appropriate groups of features and structures. An appropriate scale is included in each photograph and all photographic records have been indexed and cross-referenced to written site records. Details concerning subject and direction of view are maintained in a photographic register, indexed by frame number.

The progress of the works was recorded & assessed using the Company's ISO 9001 procedures.



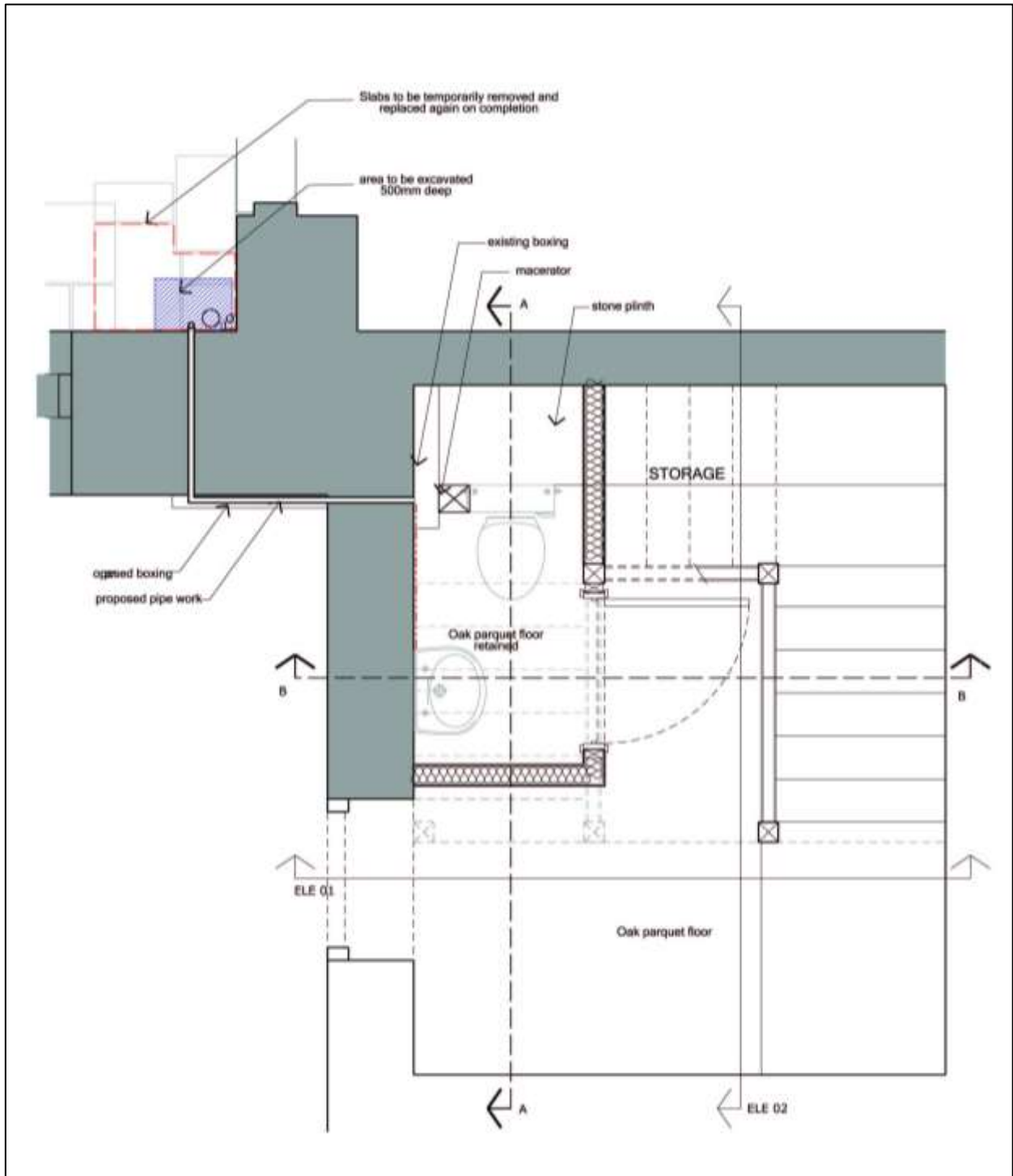


Fig. 3: Plan showing extent of engineering works (excavation area shaded blue)  
(Drawing No. 6574-1-2 as supplied to BAL by Hook Mason Architecture for information)

#### 4.1 Palaeoenvironmental/palaeoeconomic sampling

No archaeological deposits or features were encountered. No samples were taken.

#### 4.2 Recovery, processing and curation of artefactual data

No artefacts were present.

## 5 Results

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	101		Deposit	Concrete screed	Hard grey concrete; extended 40mm thickness, trench wide	-	-	-	-	-	
2	102		Deposit	Fill of existing drainage trench	Compact pink gravel & concrete; extended 200mm thickness, trench wide.	-	-	-	-	-	
3	103		Deposit	Disturbed soil	Moderately compacted dark greyish-brown silt clay, frequent gravel; extended >30mm thick, in base of trench	-	-	-	-	-	Disturbed brown soil
4	104		Structure	Drain	Ceramic drainpipe; aligned N/S; partially removed during work	-	-	-	-	-	

## 6 Discussion

The trench excavations for the new drain did not extend beyond the area disturbed by previous drainage installation works carried out in the 1980s (*Plate 1*).

Following temporary lifting of the existing paving slabs, a concrete screed (101) was revealed extending to approximately 0.40m thickness. Below (101) was the existing trench fill, consisting of compact pink gravel & concrete (102) some 200mm in thickness, which overlay a ceramic drainpipe running N/S (104); this was partially removed during the groundworks. A disturbed soil (103) was noted across the base of the trench consisting of moderately compacted dark greyish-brown silty clay containing frequent gravel inclusions.

No features or deposits of archaeological significance were observed during the work.



*Plate 1: View W showing the existing drain following excavation*



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## 7 Copyright

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