

**Archaeological Desk-Based
Assessment**

On behalf of

John Needham Associates

Concerning

**Land N of Granary Steps,
Bridgnorth, Shropshire**

February 2016



Report Specification:

Compilation:

Owain Connors MA PhD & Stephen Priestley MA

Artwork:

Owain Connors MA PhD & Holly Litherland BA (Hons)

Editing:

George Children MA MCIfA & Stephen Priestley MA

Final Edit & Approval:

Neil Shurety Dip.M G M Inst M

Report Ref:

BA1605GSB

Grid Reference:

NGR: SO 71819 93346

OS Licence No:

100055758

Date:

February 2016

Cover: View looking N across the site at Granary Steps, Bridgnorth

General Enquiries: E: info@borderarchaeology.com | T: 01568 610101

Border Archaeology Regional Offices

Bristol

Park House, 10 Park Street,
Bristol, BS1 5HX
T: 0117 907 4735

Leeds

No 1 Leeds, 26 Whitehall Road,
Leeds, LS12 1BE
T: 0113 3570390

Leominster (Administration)

Chapel Walk, Burgess Street,
Leominster, HR6 8DE
T: 01568 610101

London

23 Hanover Square, London, W1S 1JB
T: 020 3714 9345

Milton Keynes

Luminous House, 300 South Row,
Milton Keynes, MK9 2FR
T: 01908 933765

Newport

Merlin House, No1 Langstone Business Park,
Newport, NP18 2HJ
T: 01633 415339

Winchester

Basepoint Business Centre, Winnal Valley Road,
Winchester, SO23 0LD
T: 01962 832777

[Bristol](#) | [Leeds](#) | [Leominster](#) | [London](#) | [Milton Keynes](#) | [Newport](#) | [Winchester](#)

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1 Executive Summary

This Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment of land to the north of Granary Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire (NGR: SO 71819 93346) has enabled Border Archaeology Ltd (BAL) to reach the following conclusions regarding the potential and significance of the archaeological resource within the specific study area, which are presented in the table below:

Period	Potential	Importance	Justification
Prehistoric & Roman	Low	N/A	The potential for encountering archaeological evidence of prehistoric activity has been assessed as Low . This is due to the lack of any recorded evidence for prehistoric or Roman occupation in the vicinity of the site.
Medieval	High	High	<i>Potential:</i> The potential for encountering archaeological remains of a medieval date has been assessed as High . This reflects the location of the site within an area of known medieval tenements, the proximity of the site to both the projected line of Bridgnorth's urban defences and the Franciscan Friary, and the possibility of encountering unrecorded caves and rock cut dwellings. <i>Importance:</i> Due to the documented history of medieval occupation on the site, as well as the proximity of important features of the medieval landscape of Bridgnorth, such as the town defences and the Friary, the importance of this potential archaeology has also been adjudged to be High .
Post-medieval	High	High	<i>Potential:</i> The potential for encountering archaeological remains of a post-medieval date has been assessed as High . This assessment has been reached due to fact that the site of the proposed development encompasses a known post-medieval house, or series of houses, known as 'Rock House', which is documented between at least the late-17 th century and the mid-20 th century, when it was demolished. There is also potential for revealing evidence of caves at the bottom (E-end) of the site which are recorded on mid-19 th century historic maps of the site. <i>Importance:</i> Whilst Rock House was demolished following the Second World War, the topography of the site, as well evidence provided from LiDAR surveys of the area, suggests that there is a possibility that substantial amounts of the building's foundations remain. Consequently, due to the evidence for continual occupation of the site from the early post-medieval period through to the mid-20 th century, the importance of this potential archaeology has also been assessed as High .

Conclusion: *The overall archaeological potential of the site has been assessed as High, with specific potential for revealing evidence of medieval and post-medieval occupation. Documentary evidence confirms the presence of a dwelling and outbuildings on the site from the late 17th century until the site was cleared in the late 1940s. There is significant potential for revealing evidence of remains associated with the post-medieval house and outbuildings documented as occupying the site and it is possible that evidence of earlier medieval occupation may also be encountered. There is also potential for revealing evidence of caves at the bottom (E-end) of the site which are recorded on mid-19th century historic mapping of the study area.*

2 Introduction

Border Archaeology Limited (BAL) was instructed by John Needham Associates to undertake an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment to determine the nature of the archaeological resource within the vicinity of a proposed development (a dwelling with a detached double garage and a car lift) at land to the N of Granary Steps and to the W of Friars Street, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, centred on NGR: SO 71819 93346 (fig. 1). The planning reference for this project is: 15/05277/FUL.

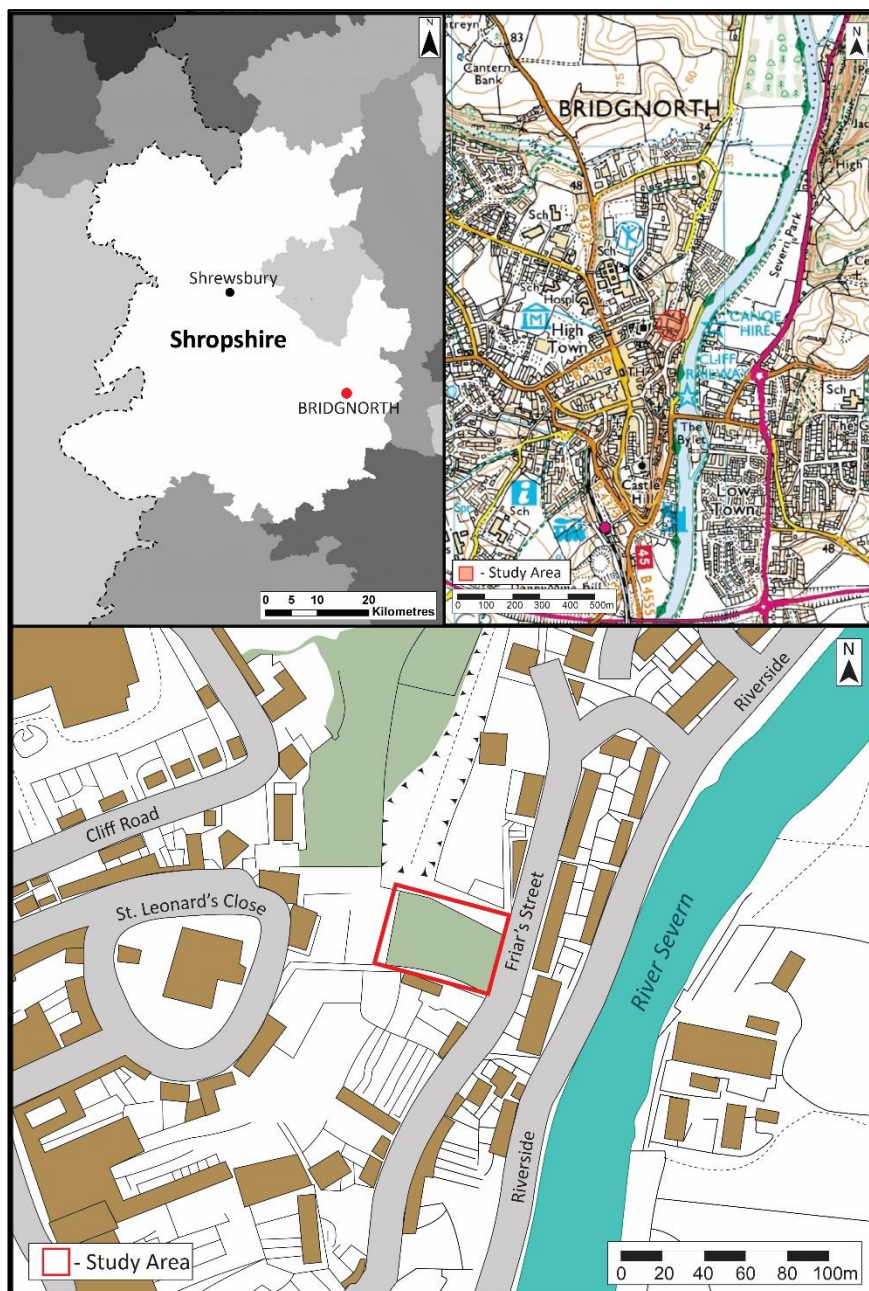


Fig. 1: Site Location Plan

2.1 Site Description

The site of the proposed development consists of a plot of land to the N of Granary Steps and to the W of Friars Street, Bridgnorth, Shropshire. The site is accessed from Granary Steps through a small gap in the S boundary, and consists of an undulating plot of land on the side of the hill, heavily overgrown with vegetation and a number of trees.

2.2 Soils & Geology

The Soil Survey of England and Wales (SSEW 1983) defines classifies the site as 551a BRIDGNORTH Permo-Triassic and Carboniferous reddish sandstone. This underlies well drained sandy and coarse loamy soils, defined as brown sands. On the E border of the site, closer to the river, the soils change to 561a WHARFE river alluvium, consisting of deep stoneless fine loamy brown alluvial soils.

3 Methodology

3.1 Aims and Objectives

This Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment seeks to identify any known or potential archaeological and built-heritage assets (both designated and undesignated) in the vicinity of the proposed pipeline and to establish the importance of these archaeological and built heritage assets (including an assessment of their character, extent and quality) within a local, regional and national context.

3.2 Criteria for Assessment of Potential and Importance of Heritage Assets

3.2.1 Potential

This Assessment contains a record of the known and potential archaeological and built-heritage assets in the vicinity of the proposed pipeline. The potential for encountering a particular resource in the vicinity of the proposed pipeline has been assessed according to the following scale:

Low – Very unlikely to be encountered.

Moderate – Possibility that features may be encountered in the vicinity of the site.

High – Remains highly likely to survive in the vicinity of the site.

3.2.2 Importance

The criteria used to determine the importance of archaeological and built-heritage assets in the vicinity of the proposed site (*Table 1*) has been informed by guidelines for assessing cultural heritage assets contained in the *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* Vol. 11 Section 3 part 2 (Highways Agency 2009).

Border Archaeology is also fully cognizant of general guidelines on the assessment of heritage assets contained in the *National Planning Policy Framework, Planning Guidance Section 12* ('Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment').

Table 1: Factors for assessing the importance of archaeological and built heritage assets

Very High	World Heritage Sites (including nominated sites). Assets of acknowledged international importance. Assets that can contribute significantly to acknowledged international research objectives.
High	Scheduled Monuments (including proposed sites). Undesignated assets of schedulable quality and importance. Assets that can contribute significantly to acknowledged national research objectives.
Medium	Designated or undesignated assets that contribute to regional research objectives.
Low	Designated and undesignated assets of local importance. Assets compromised by poor preservation and/or poor survival of contextual associations. Assets of limited value, but with potential to contribute to local research objectives.
Negligible	Assets with very little or no surviving archaeological interest.
Unknown	The importance of the resource has not been ascertained.

4 Assessment

4.1 Consultation of Archaeological Records

This section analyses the information available from records of archaeological work carried out in the vicinity of the proposed pipeline and discusses its implications with regard to the nature of the archaeological resource within the study area and the likely depth and survival of significant archaeological deposits and features.

4.1.1 Research Methods

The research carried out for this Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment consisted of the following elements:

4.1.2 Evaluation and Study of Archaeological Databases

The Shropshire County Council Historic Environment Record (HER) and the National Monuments Record (NMR) Swindon were both consulted and lists obtained of all known archaeological sites, listed buildings and Scheduled

Ancient Monuments (SAMs) in the study area (the search radius was defined as 150m from the approximate centre of the site at NGR SO 71819 93346).

4.1.3 Evaluation and Study of Primary Sources

Primary documentary sources relating to the study area (including deeds, surveys and tithe apportionments) were consulted at the Shropshire Archives, Bridgnorth Library, the British Library and the National Archives.

4.1.4 Evaluation and Study of Secondary Sources

All published and unpublished works relating to sites and structures of archaeological and historical interest within the study area were examined, utilizing collections held at the Shropshire Archives, Bridgnorth Library, the British Library and the National Archives.

4.1.5 Evaluation and Study of Cartographic Evidence

Historic maps and illustrations (including engravings, paintings and photographs) dating back to the 17th century were consulted at the Shropshire Archives, Bridgnorth Library, the British Library and the National Archives.

4.1.6 Conservation Areas

The site lies within the Bridgnorth Conservation Area (DSA8338).

4.1.7 Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs)

No SAMs lie within the boundaries of the site of the proposed development. The nearest SAM is Bridgnorth Castle (SAM 1004783), 562m to the S of the site.

4.1.8 Archaeological Sites

The Shropshire County Council Historic Environment Record and the NMR were consulted to determine the nature and extent of the archaeological resource within the specific study area; a buffer zone of 150m was defined around the site of the proposed development, centered on NGR SO 71819 93346.

4.1.9 Site Visit

BAL undertook a site visit on the 25th of January 2016 in order to determine the potential for surviving archaeological remains on the site.

4.2 Assessment Results

4.2.1 Prehistoric & Roman

No evidence of either prehistoric or Roman activity has been identified within the site of the proposed development or its wider vicinity. Whilst the possibility remains for prehistoric occupation of sandstone caves which may be uncovered at the site, the potential for encountering archaeological remains from these periods has been assessed as **Low**.

4.2.2 Medieval

The site of the proposed development lies within the N boundary of the medieval urban form of Bridgnorth, as recorded on a supposedly 13th century map of Bridgnorth and defined by the Central Marches Historic Town Survey (HER 06044; Bellet 1856; Buteux 1996). Bridgnorth possessed urban defences (HER 00374), the first of which were constructed in the early 13th century in the form of a timber stockade and a moat, except for on the E edge of the town where the steep topography made a ditch unnecessary (Mason 1957, 10; Buteux 1996, 6). It appears that the establishment of masonry defences took place in the early 13th century, based on the evidence of a series of murage grants recorded from 1220 onwards (Croom 1992, 34).

Although only a few fragments of the urban defences have survived intact, the line of the walls is reflected by some of the later property boundaries, and a number of authors have postulated the potential line of the town walls (Bond 1987; Slater 1988; 1990). Despite this, many sections of the circuit cannot be precisely located, particularly on the E side of the town, close to the site of the proposed development (Buteux 1996, 6-7). Here it is not clear whether the Franciscan Friary was situated outside of the town walls, or protected by an extra section of wall to the N of the Friary, running down from the main circuit of the walls to the river, as suggested by Bond (1987). Murage grants for Bridgnorth continued to be granted into the 15th century, however by the mid-16th century the town walls were described by John Leland as being "all in ruins" (Chandler 1993, 392; Buteux 1996, 7).

The Shropshire HER records two different possible courses for the E edge of the town defences, one running 22m to the W of the site of the proposed development, and one running c.55m to the W of the site, closer to the church. The HER also records a section of defences running down from the N circuit of the town walls to the site of the Franciscan Friary, which represents the wall suggested by Bond (1987). This runs immediately adjacent to the N edge of the site of the proposed development. This is supported by the field morphology depicted on historic cartographic sources (see Section 4.3). The site of a possible town gate of medieval date on the E circuit of the town defences, known as the 'Cripple Gate', is located 41m to the SE of the site of the proposed development (HER 00397; Mason 1957, 10). If the course of the town defences did run along any of the boundaries of the site, it is likely that evidence for these structures, either in the form of masonry foundations or remains of the earlier ditch and rampart, may be encountered.

The Shropshire HER lists a number of areas of medieval and post-medieval tenement plots in the vicinity of the site of the proposed development, one of which occupied the site itself (HER 05650). This represented an irregularly developed area of small burgage plots situated on a very steep bank of the Severn. It is suggested that this area

may have been developed on the basis of riverine trade prior to the establishment of the medieval borough, or may have developed on the fringe of the new borough and the Franciscan priory (Slater 1988, 10-11). The N extent of this area of tenements appears to have been defined by the town's defences, and correlates with the N extent of the site of the proposed development (Buteux 1996). Further areas of medieval/post-medieval tenement plots are recorded to the E of the Cartway (HER 05649; 31m to the SE of the site of the proposed development), and to the E of the High Street (HER 05640; 100m to the SW of the site of the proposed development).

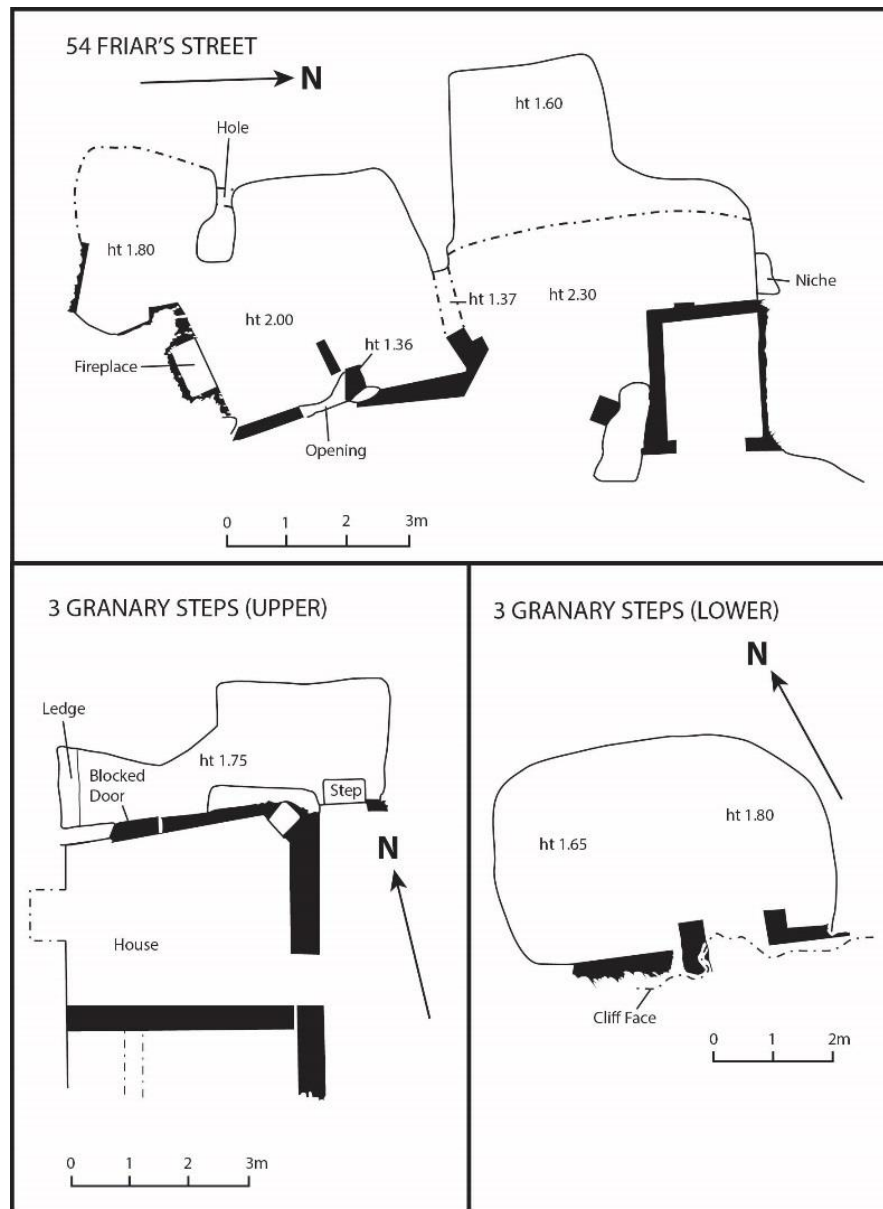


Fig. 2: Plans of caves recorded within the immediate vicinity of the site by Sewter (1990; redrawn by BAL)

A number of rock-cut dwellings of a medieval/post-medieval date are recorded on the fringes of the site (fig. 2): a cave at 54 Friars' Street (HER 04800; adjoining the site of the proposed development to the E), and an Upper Cave

(HER 04802) and a Lower Cave (HER 04801) at 3 Granary Steps (on the opposite side of Granary Steps from the site of the proposed development; Sewter 1990).

The cave at 54 Friars' Street overlooks the site of the former Franciscan Friary, and consists of a three chambers cut into the sandstone and fronted in brick. The main section of the cave measures 5m by 3m, and is 2.3m in height. A further section, 1.6m high and 2.7m wide, extends the cave into the cliff-face by a further 2.7m. Overall, the cave at 54 Friars' Street extends c.5.7m into the cliff-face to the W of Friars' Street, under the site of the proposed development

Of the two caves at 3 Granary Steps, the higher cave consists of two chambers (one 2.8m by 2m and at least 1.75m high and the other 2.0m by 1.1m wide and the same height as the other chamber), and the lower cave of a single ovoid chamber 5.5m long by 3.7m wide, with a height varying between 1.65m and 1.8m (Sewter 1990). A further rock-cut dwelling of medieval/post-medieval date, which became a wash house in the post-medieval period, is located at 6 Riverside (HER 04803; 71m to the site of the proposed development).

The 'High Town' of Bridgnorth sits atop a sandstone ridge, rising approximately 32m above the river (c.250m wide at its widest point and c.500m N to S), and most of the caves are found towards the S end of this cliff, overlooking the river (Sewter 1990, 2). Caves played a significant role in the social and economic life of the town, particularly from the 16th century onwards when the cliff and the riverside suburb around the bridge-head was the hub of the town's commercial activity (Sewter 1990, 8).

As such, the known caves form an important local heritage asset of some archaeological interest and, despite being on the N edge of the known area of cave occupation in Bridgnorth, the site retains the potential for as yet unrecorded caves not included in the 1989 survey (Sewter 1990; Charlotte Orchard *pers. comm.*). Importantly, the documentary evidence for the estate of the Friary, as well as the carpet factory which occupied the site in the 19th and 20th centuries, suggests that there were more caves in the area than those identified by Sewter (see Section 4.3).

Granary Steps, the narrow lane/footpath which runs along the S boundary of the site (HER 05647), is recorded on the Shropshire HER as being part of the medieval street system of Bridgnorth, connecting Friar's Street with St Leonard's Close. Granary Steps also led down to an area of medieval/post-medieval wharves fronting onto the Severn, known as Skinners Load and Friars Load, a name derived from the nearby Franciscan Friary (HER 05610; 41m to the SE of the site of the proposed development; Slater 1988, 10). Granary Steps took its name from a granary at its summit, which was serviced by mules hauling grain up to 'High Town' from the wharves, and in the 19th century a house at the top of the steps, bordering the rectory, was known as 'Granary House'.

A Franciscan Friary recorded as being in existence at Bridgnorth by 1244, the site of which is c.10m to the E of the site of the proposed development (HER 00381). The Friary appears to have had its main period of importance between the late-13th and early-14th centuries, when most of the stone buildings presented were constructed. However, by the time the house was dissolved in 1538 the buildings were recorded as being very run down (Ferris 1996). By the early-19th a malthouse stood on the site of the Friary. In 1856 most of the great hall, or refectory was still standing, next to a carpet factory. However, most of the structure was demolished during an extension of the

carpet factory in the 1860s (Clark-Maxwell 1928). Large portions of the medieval buildings were preserved under the carpet factory, and a surviving section of Red Sandstone wall has been given Grade II listing.

Discoveries of burials have also been reported at the site, and it is possible that a cemetery was attached to the complex (Clark-Maxwell 1922). However, it is not clear how far the Friary extended beyond the known buildings (Buteux 1996, 7). Excavations were undertaken at the site of the Friary in 1989 (fig. 3), prior to the redevelopment of the site following the demolition of the factory, and whilst this investigation uncovered substantial remains under the site of the former Victorian carpet factory, most of the archaeological features in the rest of the site of the friary had either been destroyed or badly truncated by later building activity (Ferris 1996, 74; ESA411).

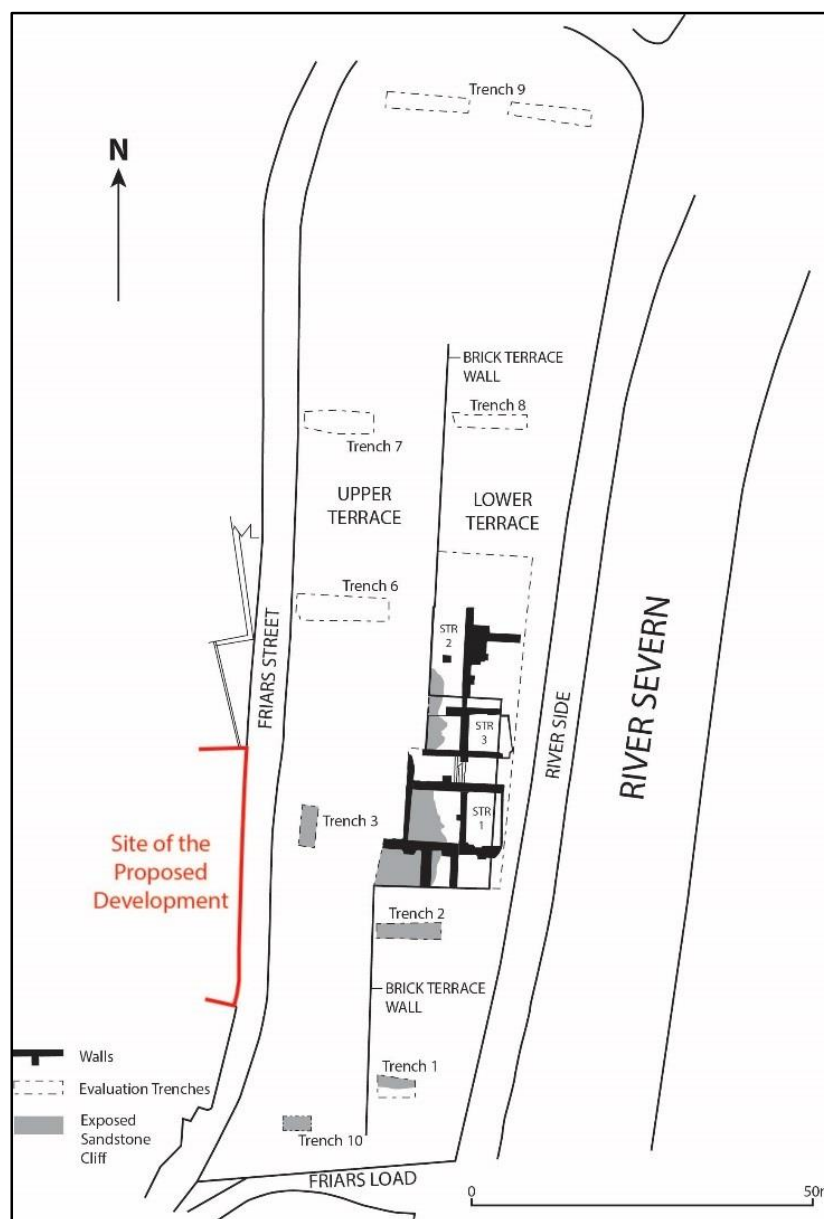


Fig. 3: Plans of excavations undertaken at the site of the Franciscan Friary, Bridgnorth in 1989 (Ferris 1996; redrawn by BAL)

A further element of the medieval ecclesiastic landscape in the vicinity of the site is the church of St Leonard's, 57m to the NW of the site of the proposed development (HER 00410). This constitutes an Anglo-Norman church, undocumented until c.1350, which was largely rebuilt in the Gothic style in 1862 retaining fragments of medieval masonry dating from the 12th century onwards (Pevsner 1958, 79-80). A possible pre-Conquest date for the church was hinted at by the identification of some fragments of Anglo-Saxon stonework in the 1860s (HER 05632), however these are now lost and their correct identification cannot be confirmed (Mason 1957, 5).

In the medieval period the church was surrounded by a larger churchyard than is present today (HER 05633; 30m to the W of the site of the proposed development), and it is possible that St Leonard's represented a rural hilltop church serving a riverside settlement which was eventually engulfed by the growing town of Bridgnorth. This is suggested by the fact that the church had a large extra-mural parish, suggesting that the town grew on the edge of a large rural estate, is referred to independently of Bridgnorth in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, and did not act as a borough chapel, as it had its own cemetery separated from the borough (Croom 1992, 21-22).

The medieval town defences marked the N side of St Leonard's close, and the 19th Century rectory was built on the site of the ditch (Slater 1988, 12). The close contains the sites of a couple of further ecclesiastical buildings. A chapel dedicated to St John the Baptist is recorded in 1352 (HER 04135; 39m to the E of the site of the proposed development) and it is suggested that the chapel was eventually united with a chapel contained with the church itself (Thompson 1911). St Leonard's College (HER 00411; 89m to the SW of the site of the proposed development) represents the site of a dwelling house for priests situated in St Leonard's Close, mentioned in rental of 1502. The house was destroyed by fire in 1646.

Conclusion: Based on the evidence discussed above, the site of the proposed development lies within an area of medieval/post-medieval tenements situated to the N of the Cartway, the N extent of which was defined by the town's defences. This means that it is likely that archaeological deposits may be encountered which relate to medieval/post-medieval occupation which predates the buildings depicted on the earliest available cartographic sources (see Section 4.3). The site of the development is also in the vicinity of a number of medieval/post-medieval rock-cut dwellings, a characteristic feature of the historic landscape of Bridgnorth. It is also important to highlight the possibility of further, unrecorded, caves and rock-cut dwellings being located within the boundaries of the site.

The site is also situated close (approximately 10m) to the site of the Franciscan Friary on the riverfront at Bridgnorth, the full extent of which is yet to be fully determined, and the possibility remains that features and deposits associated with the foundation may be encountered. Finally, the suggested line of a wall connecting the main circuit of the town's defences with the Franciscan Friary on the banks of the Severn runs along the N boundary of the site of the proposed development, and therefore it is possible that features associated with the urban defences of Bridgnorth may be uncovered. Therefore, the potential for encountering archaeology of a medieval date has been assessed as **High**, and the importance of this potential archaeology has also been adjudged to be **High**.

4.2.3 Post-medieval

By the date of the earliest accurate cartographic sources, the site of the proposed development was occupied by a substantial residence named 'The Rock House' or 'Rock House'. The 1884 OS 1:500 map of Bridgnorth shows Rock House situated within the centre of the site with lawns to the E and gardens with tree-lined paths to the W. Rock House was demolished in the late 1940s on sanitary grounds (SRO DA2/846/1). It appears that the house had a number of rooms recorded as 'underground rooms'. These may constitute cellarage, rooms backing into earth due to the house's location on a hill-side, or rooms consisting of caves. However, their precise form and extent is unclear. A more detailed discussion of the history of Rock House is provided in Section 4.3.

All of the rock-cut dwellings in the immediate (HER 04800, HER 04802, and HER 04801) and wider (HER 04803) vicinities of the site are listed as being of medieval/post-medieval date on the Shropshire HER, suggesting that whilst they may have been medieval in origin, they may also have been post-medieval in origin and were certainly occupied throughout the post-medieval period (Sewter 1990). Similarly, the medieval tenements recorded within the boundaries of the site (HER 05650), and the vicinity of the site (HER 05649 & HER 05640), are listed as medieval/post-medieval, so it is likely that features and deposits from the post-medieval period may be encountered at the site.

Bridgnorth's post-medieval urban form (HER 06045) includes a further area of post-medieval tenements located 62m to the NW of the proposed development (HER 06043), and these plots are thought to date to the infilling of the town ditch in the 17th or 18th century, and represent the expansion of Bridgnorth in the post-medieval period (Buteux 1996). The medieval street system, including granary steps, continued in use into the post-medieval period, with a few alterations following the infilling of the town and castle defences (HER 06046)

The expansion of Bridgnorth in the post-medieval period is demonstrated by the growth of settlement into areas formerly used as part of religious foundations. Tenement plots are recorded in 19th century maps in areas surrounding the church known to have constitute part of the medieval churchyard (HER 06036; 23m to the W of the site of the proposed development). Whilst this may have occurred in the late medieval period, the earliest surviving building in this area dates from the 16th century (Buteux 1996). This clearly shows that the post-medieval churchyard of St Leonard's (HER 06037; 55m to the W of the site of the proposed development), was smaller than its medieval counterpart. By the 16th century a grammar school had been founded in St Leonard's close. The school is thought to have originally been housed in the former chapel of St John the Baptist, but was moved to the present building in 1629 (HER 06038; 118m to the W of the site of the proposed development). Palmer's Hospital (HER 05615; 105m to the SW of the site of the proposed development), an almshouse dated to 1687, was also located on St Leonard's Close (Mason 1957).

The area formerly occupied by the Franciscan Friary appears to have fallen into private hands following the dissolution: a capital messuage called 'Fryers House' is recorded in 1618, which may have incorporated part of the monastic buildings, and in 1770 Sir Richard Acton is noted as a resident (HER 06040; c.10m to the SE of the site of the proposed development; Buteux 1996). In 1795 a malthouse (HER 06927) is recorded on the site. This was demolished in the 1860s to make way for the expansion of the Southwells Carpet Works (HER 06925 & HER 06039). By 1890 the works occupied virtually the whole of the upper and lower terrace plots between Friars Load and the

N arm of Friars Street. Excavation in the area in 1989 also indicated a row of 18th-19th century houses on the N side of Friars Load. These had been deeply cellared and destroyed any trace of earlier cellars (Ferris 1996).

The route of the former Severn Valley Railway (HER 06024), opened in 1862 and closed in 1963, passes through the NW corner of the site. However, it passes through a tunnel underneath the town of Bridgnorth. Whilst the Severn Valley Railway reopened in 1970 as a preserved heritage line, the N terminus of the route is Bridgnorth Station (towards the S of the town) with services running S to Kidderminster.

Conclusion: As the site of the proposed development lies within an area of medieval/post-medieval tenements recorded on the Shropshire HER to the N of the Cartway, it is likely that archaeological deposits may be encountered which relate to medieval/post-medieval occupation. Most notably the foundations and/or cellaring and underground rooms associated with 'Rock House', a substantial post-medieval dwelling which stood on the site until the mid-20th century. Features associated with the medieval/post-medieval tenement plots which preceded Rock House may also be encountered.

The site of the development is also in the vicinity of a number of medieval/post-medieval rock-cut dwellings and, as has already been discussed in Section 4.2.2, it is possible that further unrecorded caves may be encountered within the boundaries of the site. Consequently, the archaeological potential of the site for producing archaeological material of a post-medieval date has been assessed as **High**, and the importance of this potential archaeology has also been assessed as **High**.

Table 2: Archaeological Events Recorded on the Shropshire HER in the Vicinity of the Site

EvUID	Name	Date	NGR
ESA6570	Survey of Bridgnorth historic town development	Pre-1989	SO 716 931
ESA4882	Evaluation of land to rear of 62/63 High Street	2000	SO 716 932
ESA411	Excavation at Franciscan Friary	1989	SO 718 933
ESA4938	Central Marches Historic Towns Survey	1996	SO 716 931
ESA6859	Trial trenching at 63A High Street	2012	SO 717 932
ESA5465	Cave survey	1989	SO 718 933
ESA6860	WB at 63A High Street	2012	SO 717 932
ESA6870	WB at St Leonard's Church	2012	SO 717 933
ESA429	Ordnance Survey field observation	1960	SO 718 932
ESA5820	English Heritage site visit	2001	SO 718 933

Table 3: Archaeological Monuments & Listed Buildings Recorded on the Shropshire HER in the Vicinity of the Site

Number	MonUID	HER Ref	Name	Date	NGR
1	MSA278	00374	Medieval Town Defences	Medieval	SO 710 930
2	MSA285	00381	Franciscan Friary	Medieval	SO 718 933
3	MSA291	00388	Foundry Yard, site of Hazeldine's Foundry, Bandon Lane	Post-medieval	SO 719 932
4	MSA297	00397	Cripple Gate	Medieval	SO 718 932
5	MSA306	00410	Church of St Leonards	Med./Post-med.	SO 717 933
6	MSA307	00411	St Leonards College	Med./Post-med.	SO 717 932
7	MSA2714	04135	St John Baptists Chapel	Medieval	SO 718 934
8	MSA16395	04800	Cave at 54 Friars St	Med./Post-med.	SO 718 933
9	MSA16396	04801	Lower cave at 3 Granary Steps	Med./Post-med.	SO 718 933
10	MSA16397	04802	Higher cave at 3 Granary Steps	Med./Post-med.	SO 718 933
11	MSA16398	04803	Cave at 6 Riverside	Med./Post-med.	SO 718 932
12	MSA11918	05610	Wharves to N of bridge	Med./Post-med.	SO 718 931
13	MSA11923	05615	Palmers Hospital	Post-medieval	SO 716 932
14	MSA11940	05632	Find of Saxon stonework at St Leonards	Medieval	SO 717 933
15	MSA11941	05633	Medieval churchyard of St Leonard's	Medieval	SO 717 933
16	MSA11948	05640	Tenement plots to E of High St, Bridgnorth	Med./Post-med.	SO 716 931
17	MSA11955	05647	Medieval street system	Medieval	SO 715 927
18	MSA11908	05649	Tenement plots to E of the Cartway	Med./Post-med.	SO 718 931
19	MSA11907	05650	Tenement plots to N of the Cartway	Med./Post-med.	SO 717 932
20	MSA11965	05689	Carpet factory, Bandon Lane	Post-medieval	SO 719 932
21	MSA11981	06024	Severn Valley Railway	Post-medieval	SO 641 940
22	MSA11993	06036	Tenement plots around St Leonard's Churchyard	Post-medieval	SO 716 932
23	MSA11994	06037	Post-medieval churchyard, St Leonard's	Post-medieval	SO 716 933
24	MSA11995	06038	Grammar School, St Leonards Close,	Post-medieval	SO 716 933
25	MSA11996	06039	Carpet factory, Friars St	Post-medieval	SO 718 933
26	MSA11997	06040	Post-medieval occupation to N of Friars Load	Post-medieval	SO 718 933

27	MSA12000	06043	Tenement plots to S of Cliff Rd	Post-medieval	SO 716 934
28	MSA13170	06044	Medieval urban form	Medieval	SO 717 930
29	MSA13171	06045	Post-medieval urban form	Post-medieval	SO 717 930
30	MSA12001	06046	Post-medieval street system	Post-medieval	SO 715 927
31	MSA3554	06925	Friars Mill Carpet Manufactory	Post-medieval	SO 718 933
32	MSA3556	06927	Malthouse	Post-medieval	SO 719 932
33	MSA6332	11560	Nos 28 & 29, Friars Street – GII Listed	Post-medieval	SO 718 932
34	MSA6333	11561	No 32, Friars Street – GII Listed	Post-medieval	SO 718 932
35	MSA6430	11659	Old Grammar School, St Leonards Close – GII Listed	Post-medieval	SO 716 933
36	MSA6432	11661	Palmers Hospital, St Leonards Close – GII Listed	Post-medieval	SO 716 932
37	MSA6433	11662	No 4 (Municipal Offices), St Leonards Close – GII Listed	Post-medieval	SO 717 932
38	MSA6434	11663	Nos 5 to 7 (Grammar School House), St Leonards Close – GII* Listed	Post-medieval	SO 717 932

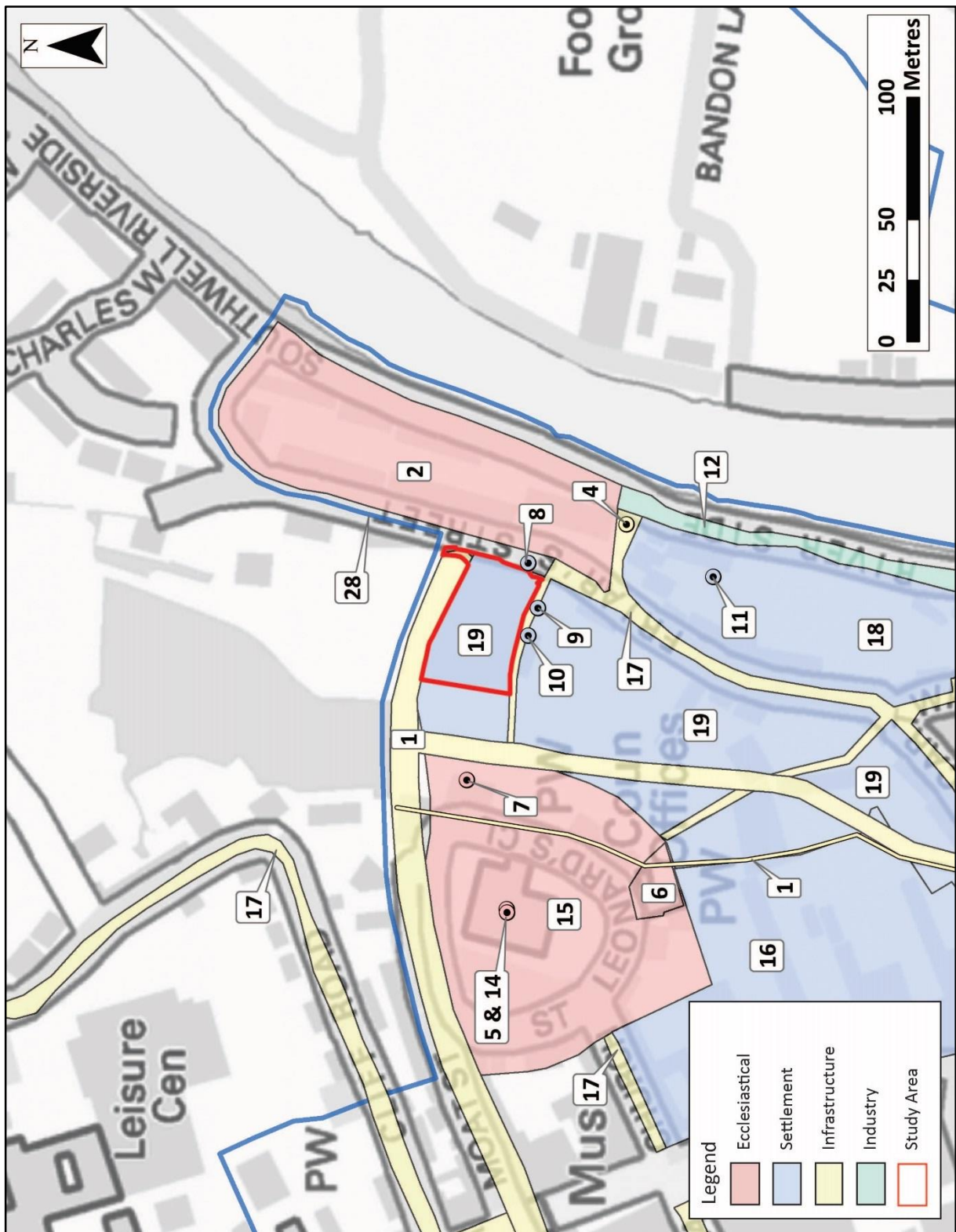


Fig. 4: Archaeological features of a medieval date recorded on the Shropshire HER in the vicinity (150m) of the site of the proposed development

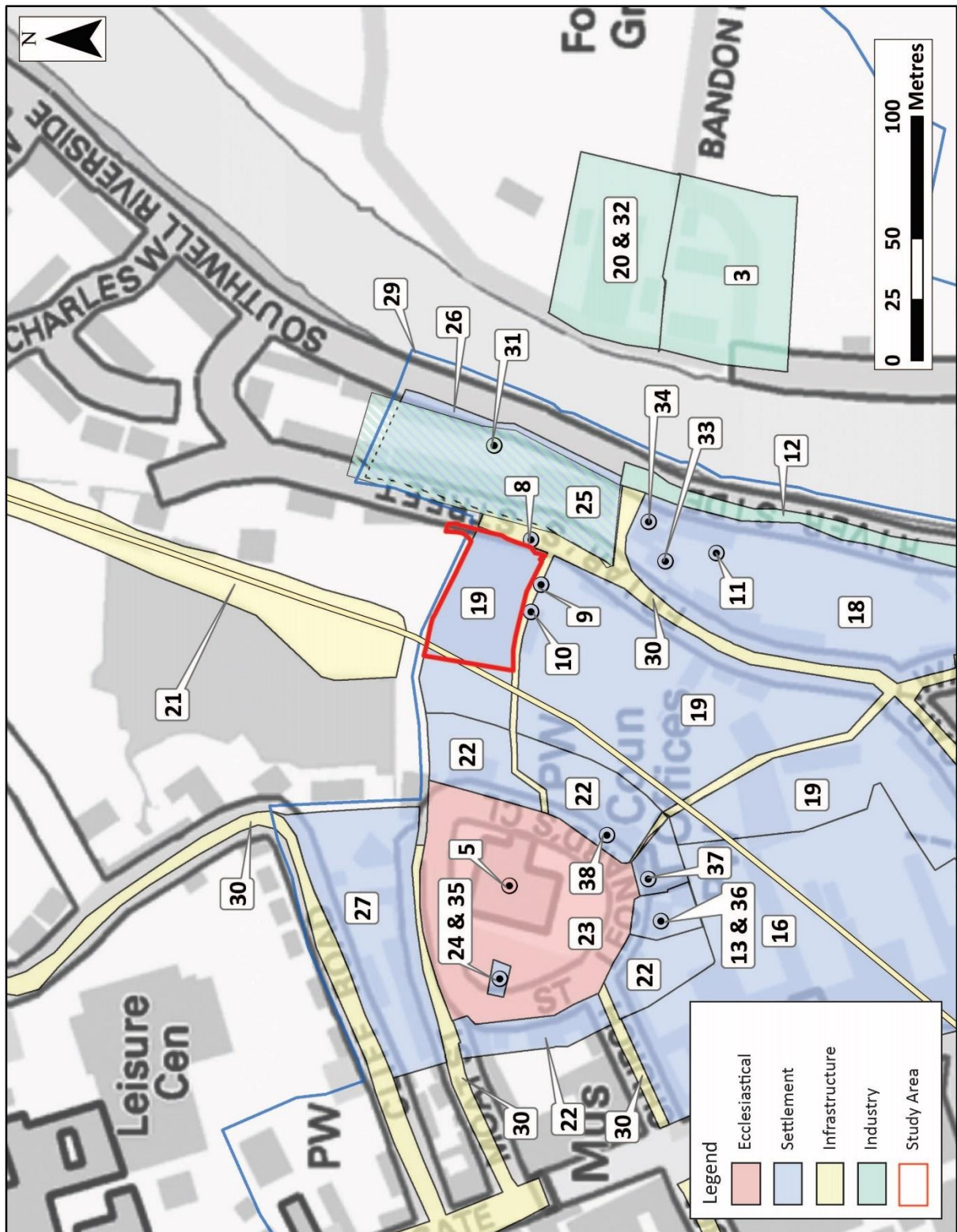


Fig. 5: Archaeological features of a post-medieval date recorded on the Shropshire HER in the vicinity (150m) of the site of the proposed development

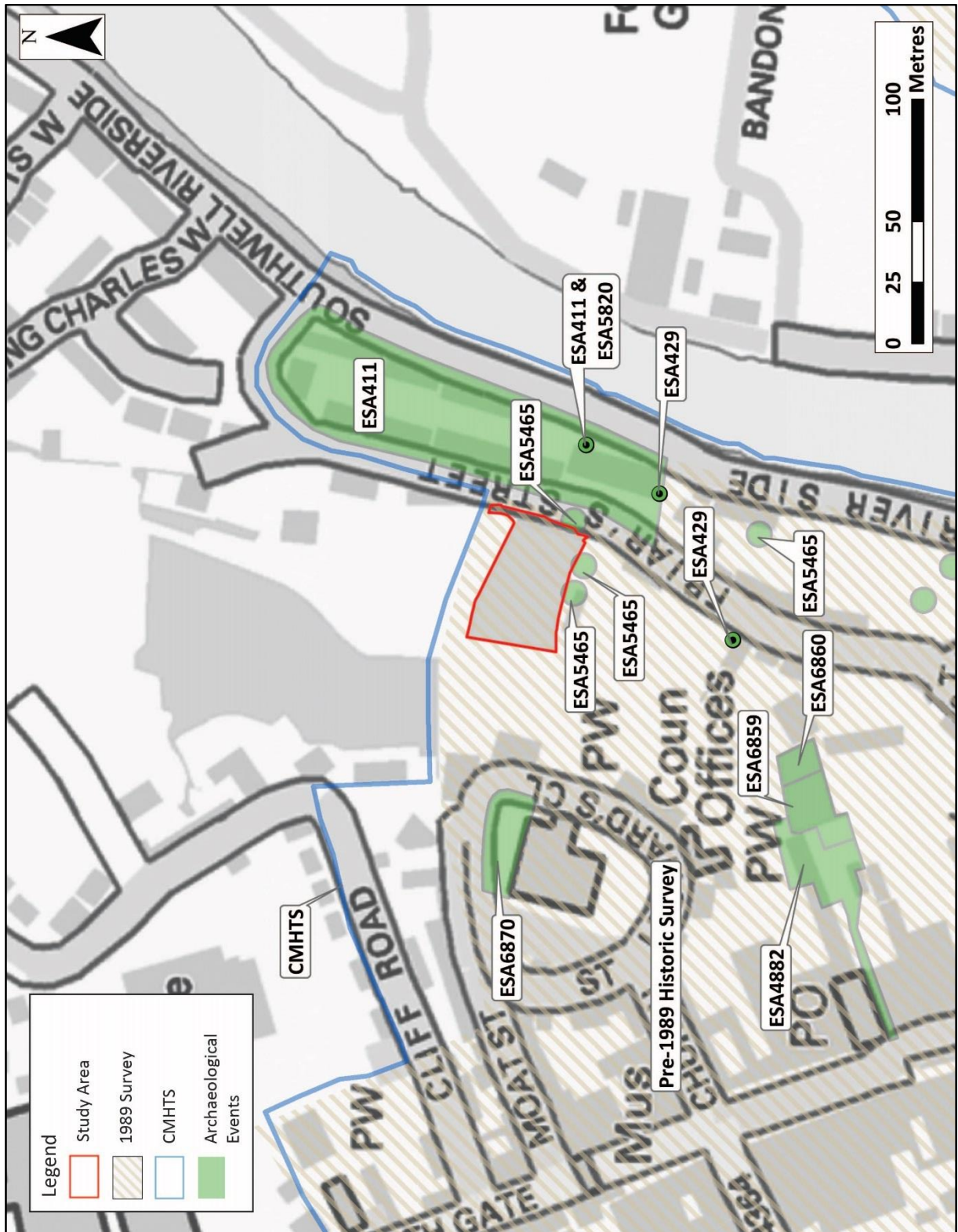


Fig. 6: Archaeological events recorded on the Shropshire HER in the vicinity (150m) of the site of the proposed development

4.3 Documentary Study and Map Regression

4.3.1 Medieval

Bridgnorth was a town of great strategic significance in the medieval period as, along with Shrewsbury and Worcester, it represented one of only three bridging points in the middle of the Severn Valley, until the construction of a bridge at Bewdley in 1447 (Slater 1988, 4). The first mention of Bridgnorth is in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle entry for 895-896, which records that the Danes built a camp and overwintered at a place they called *Cwatbrycge*, which may represent Quatford downstream (Gwilt 2009, 9). According to the Mercian Register and Florence of Worcester in 912 Æthelflæd, the Lady of Mercia and King Alfred's daughter, built a *burh* at *Bricge/Brycge* on the W bank of the river (Slater 1988, 4).

Roger de Belleme, son of Roger de Montgomery, succeeded his father as Earl of Shrewsbury in 1098, and in 1101 he transferred the church, castle and borough to a more defensible site on the sandstone ridge at Bridgnorth (Gwilt 2009, 11). The castle was besieged again in 1155 (by Henry II), and was granted charters establishing as an independent royal borough in the 1150s (Slater 1988, 4). The earliest settlement at the borough was within the bailey of the castle, but later expanded out along the High Street, surrounded by dry moats and later, in 1260, encased in high stone walls.

Historically, settlement in Bridgnorth consisted of two main components: the 'High Town' atop the sandstone ridge, and the 'Low Town' on the E bank of the Severn. The place-name *Bricge/Brycge* suggests that a bridge was present prior to the Conquest, although the bridge does appear to have been rebuilt or substantially repaired at the beginning of the 12th century, including to construction of a bridge chapel dedicated to St Sythe/Osyth (Slater 1988, 10). Bridgnorth is recorded as *Brug* in the 1156 Pipe Rolls, and the first documented use of Bridgnorth or *Brugg'Norht* was in the Close Rolls of 1282 (Mason 1957; Ekwall 1960). Bridgnorth was still locally referred to through variations of *Brug* or 'Bridge' up to the 18th century (Mason 1957, 15; Buteux 1996, 3).

The Franciscan Friary, situated to the E of the site, was found prior to 1244, and provided the bridge chapel's chaplains. The Friary was granted permission to enlarge their site in 1247, and the Friary grounds were further enlarged in the later 13th century by reclaiming land from the Severn to reclaim land from the river (Slater 1988, 10). The site of the Friary marked the NE extremity the town on the W bank of the river.

The area containing the site of the proposed development is described as 'an irregularly developed area of small plots and switchback lanes' on the steep slopes of the promontory, focused on the bridge, the river (particularly the wharves at 'Skinner's Loade' and 'Friar's Loade'), and the Cartway, which constituted the main route to the High Town (Slater 1988, 10). Slater suggests that the area may have already developed prior to the establishment of the medieval borough due to the bridge and the presence of riverine trade, or that it may have developed subsequent to the growth of the new borough (Slater 1988, 10). The area surrounding the site of the proposed development also contained four steep flights of steps with medieval origins, connecting the High Town with the riverside: Stoneway, St Mary's Steps, St Leonard's Steps, and Granary Steps.

During the 14th century, Bridgnorth had risen to become the second most important town in Shropshire, and was important enough to have been included on Matthew Paris' map of Britain (Beresford 1967, 252; Slater 1988). However, by the mid-16th century the town had fallen into economic decline. The town declared for the King at the outbreak of the English Civil War in 1642, and in 1646 most of the High Town was burned to the ground by a fire started by Royalists forces retreating to the castle in the face of Parliamentarian forces (Buteux 1996, 3). St Leonard's church was also badly damaged. The castle eventually surrendered and was slighted, causing the keep to lean at an angle of 15 degrees (Gwilt 2009, 21).



Fig. 7: Extract from a copy of an early 17th century map of Bridgnorth. Granary steps is depicted on this source running from St Leonard's church to the friary (SRO P/40/v/2/5)
(Reproduced by courtesy of Shropshire Archives)

4.3.2 Early Post-medieval (c.1600-1800)

Documentary and cartographic evidence for occupation on the site prior to the late 17th century is limited. A plan of the town dated to the early 17th century shows the site as lying within a rectangular plot to the S of the oval enclosure of St Leonard's Churchyard, bounded to the S by a lane (Granary Steps) leading downslope to the site of the Friary. No indication of building activity is shown in this area (fig. 7).

By the mid-late 17th century, it appears that the site was occupied by a house and outbuildings belonging to a wealthy surgeon named William Clarke, who also held several other properties in Bridgnorth.

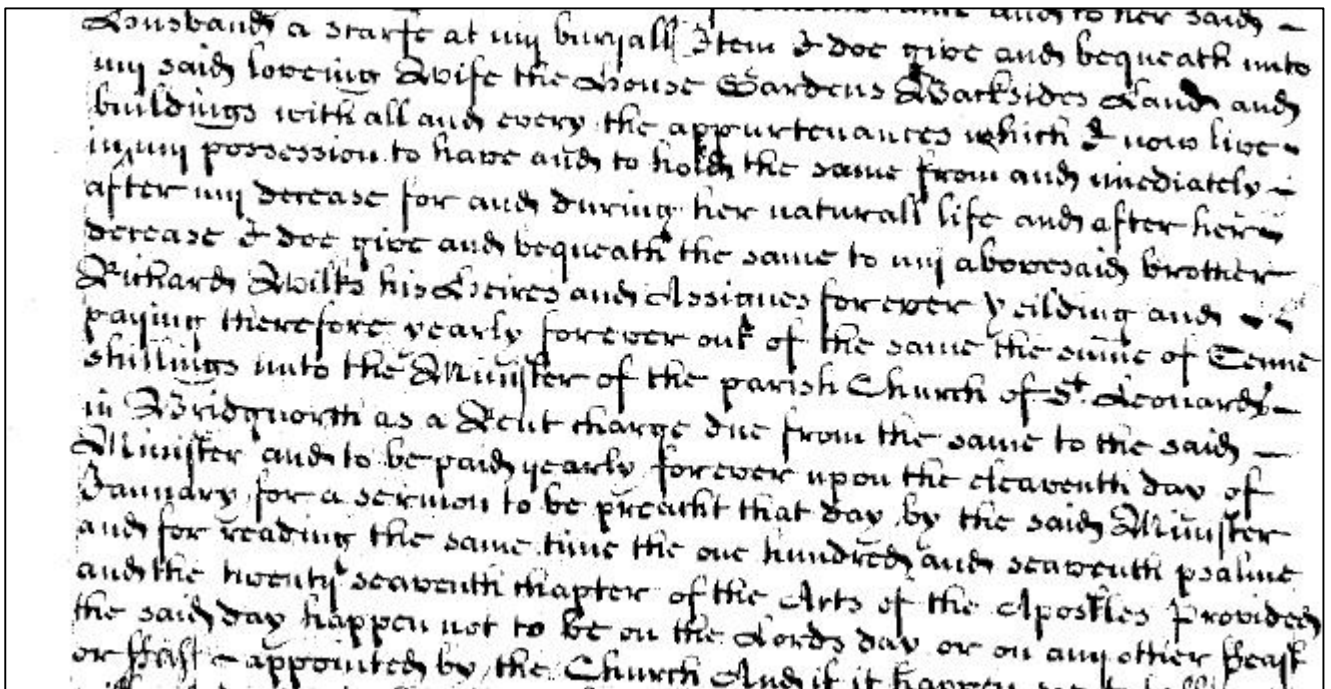


Plate 1: Extract from the will of William Clarke (1679, proved in 1687) concerning his bequest of a rent charge of 10 shillings from his property (identifiable with the site of Rock House) to St Leonard's Church for the preaching of a sermon
(Reproduced by courtesy of the National Archives)

William Clarke's will (proved in 1687) mentions a bequest of a rent charge of 10s from his own property, described as comprising a 'house, gardens, backsides and buildings with all and every appurtenances which I now live in', to the minister of St Leonard's Church for the preaching of a sermon annually on the 11th of January (NA Prob 11/388; Plate 1).

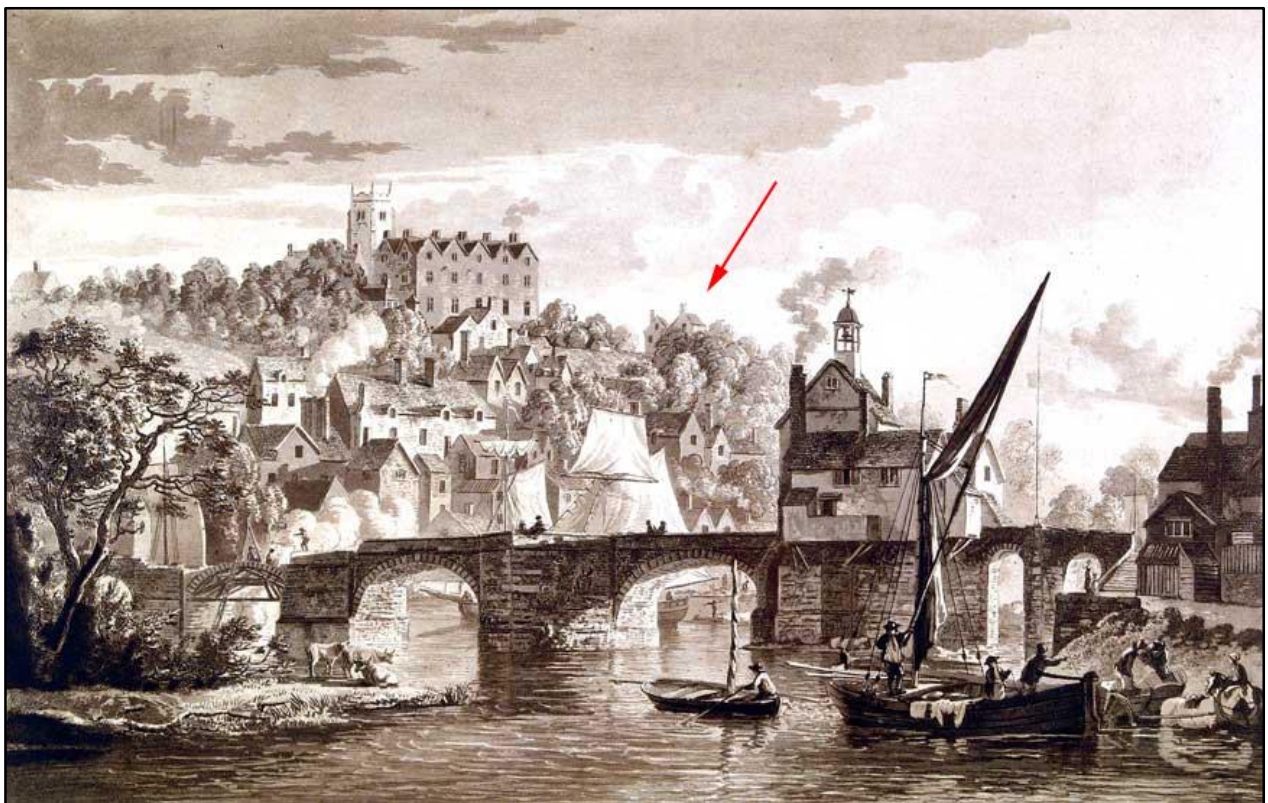
This property can be positively identified with the specific site to the E of Granary Steps (later known as Rock House), on the basis of a survey of charities in Bridgnorth undertaken by the Charity Commissioners in 1820 which records that 'Mr Clarke', a surgeon, bequeathed a rent charge of 10s from his property at Rock House for the preaching of an annual sermon on the 11th of January'. These payments were still being made annually by successive owners of Mr Clarke's property at Rock House, with John Hinkesman Esq. being recorded as the owner in 1820 (*Charities Com. V*, 236).

While there is no clear evidence that the Rock House present on 19th and early 20th century historic mapping was of 17th century origin, it is clear that there was a dwelling and outbuildings on the site by the late 17th century, which may have survived or been rebuilt. The reference to 'backside' plots in Clarke's will suggests that either William Clarke or a preceding owner had acquired a block of several contiguous burgage plots and amalgamated them to form a single property.

William Clarke left his property at Rock House to his wife Elinor in the first instance, and it subsequently descended after her death to his brother Richard Wilkes, whose family appear to have continued to hold the property until

the late 18th century. It appears likely that Bernard Wilkes, a descendant of Richard Wilkes, sold the property to John Hinkesman Esq. of Oldbury, at some point during the late 18th century. John Hinkesman is recorded in the Charity Commissioners' Survey of 1820 as being in possession of Rock House and liable for the rent charge to St Leonard's Church.

There is also documentary evidence suggesting the presence of cave dwellings along the W side of Friars Street (at the bottom end of the site) by the early 18th century, which appear to have been associated with the property of the former Franciscan Friary. A record of a conveyance of the former Friary site (known as the 'Friar's Estate') dated 1713 makes reference to seven caves used as dwellings and several other caves (Head & Thompson 2004, 4). Although the 1713 deed does not specifically locate these caves, it is worth noting that later cartographic evidence marks the location of a row of caves along the W side of Friars Street, carved into the sandstone cliff face beneath the site of the proposed development. In 1770 these seven caves are listed as being occupied by John Beard, James Hagnar, Roger Stretton, Luke Goodwyn, Elizabeth Reese, James Parry, and Elizabeth Pool (Head & Thompson 2004, 4).



*Plate 2: An aquatint based on an original watercolour of Bridgnorth Bridge (looking NW) by Paul Sandby (c.1774).
(Reproduced courtesy of Shrewsbury Museums Service)*

From the late 18th century onwards, there is an increasing body of engravings, watercolours and other pictorial views of Bridgnorth which provide valuable information regarding the topography of the site. A 1774 watercolour of Bridgnorth Bridge by Paul Sandby appears to show a twin-gabled building situated on the hillside below St Leonard's Church and the Grammar School (*Plate 2*). It is possible that the gabled building depicted below St

Leonards Church and the Grammar School may be identified with Rock House, although the topographical accuracy of this depiction is questionable.

A more topographically reliable sketch of the same riverside view, drawn by another noted landscape artist Joseph Farington in 1789 shows a building situated downslope of St Leonard's Church and the Grammar School, which is depicted as a gabled two storey house with projecting wing to the W (*Plate 3*). It is possible that this may correspond to Rock House, based on comparison with later 19th century historic mapping and a photograph of the nearby Southwell carpet works taken in 1912 (*Plate 4*).

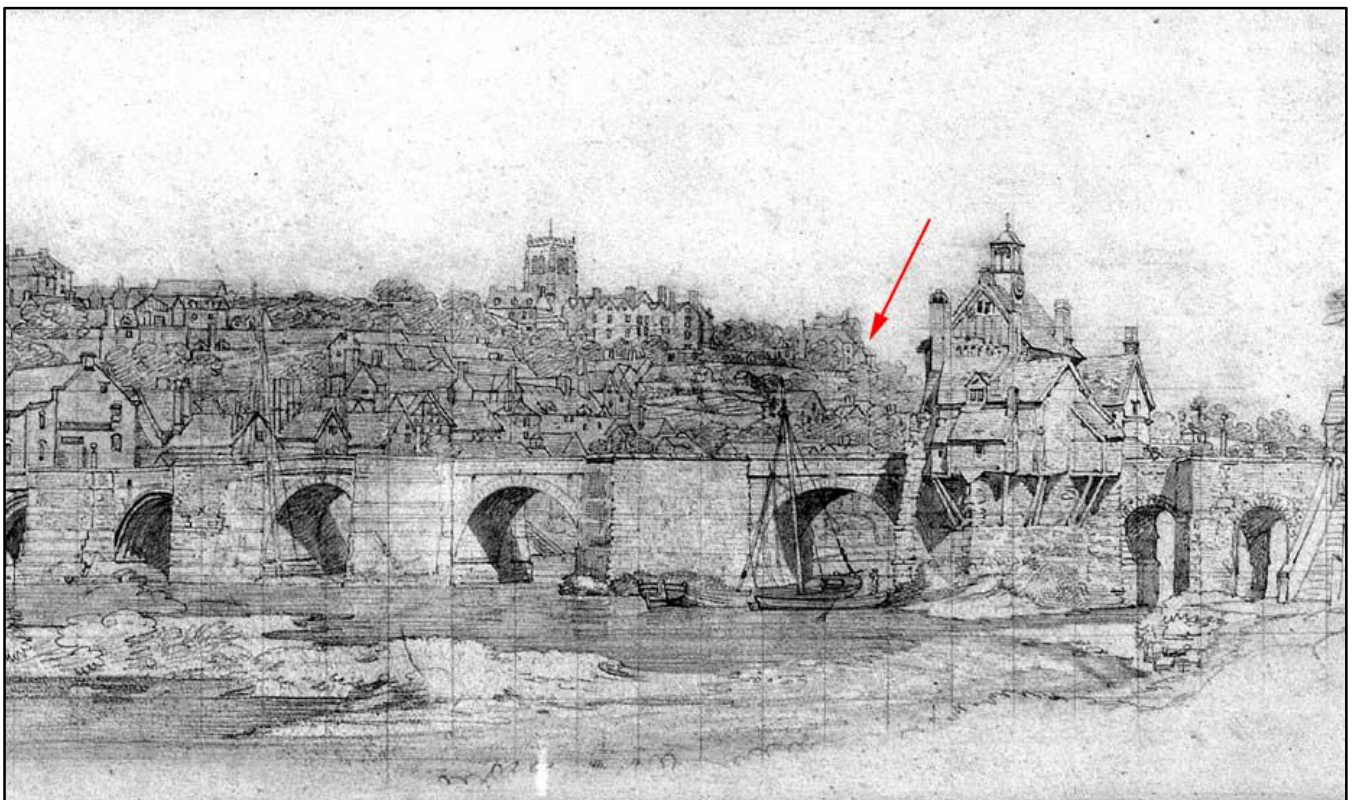


Plate 3: A pen and ink sketch by Joseph Farington of a view looking NW from the riverside to the S of Bridgnorth Bridge (1789). Rock House may be the building depicted on the skyline between St Leonard's Church close and the medieval bridge chapel

(Reproduced courtesy of Shrewsbury Museums Service)

4.3.3 c. 1800-80

The earliest topographically detailed map to depict the site is John Wood's 1835 map of Bridgnorth (*fig. 8*). This valuable cartographic source shows Rock House as an L-shaped building fronting onto Granary Steps, with a square outbuilding to the rear and yards and gardens surrounding on three sides.

Wood's 1835 map also provides one of the earliest records of a carpet factory on the Friar's Lane site, and the factory is also mentioned in Hulbert's 'History and Description of the County of Salop, dated to 1837 (Head & Thompson 2004, 5). The factory appears to have been founded by Joseph Southwell, who was first recorded as a carpet weaver in the town in 1809, and the factory appears to have been built between 1824 and 1826, with Southwell & Co. being established by 1828 (Head & Thompson 2004, 43-46). In 1860 the factory was taken over by Thomas Martin Southwell and Henry Foxall Southwell, and the firm was renamed 'H & M Southwell; (Head & Thompson 2004, 47). The firm remained in family ownership until 1943, when it was bought out by a company from Kidderminster. Eventually, the factory was demolished in 1989, to be replaced with housing, and the demolition of the factory allowed for excavations to take place on the site of the medieval friary.

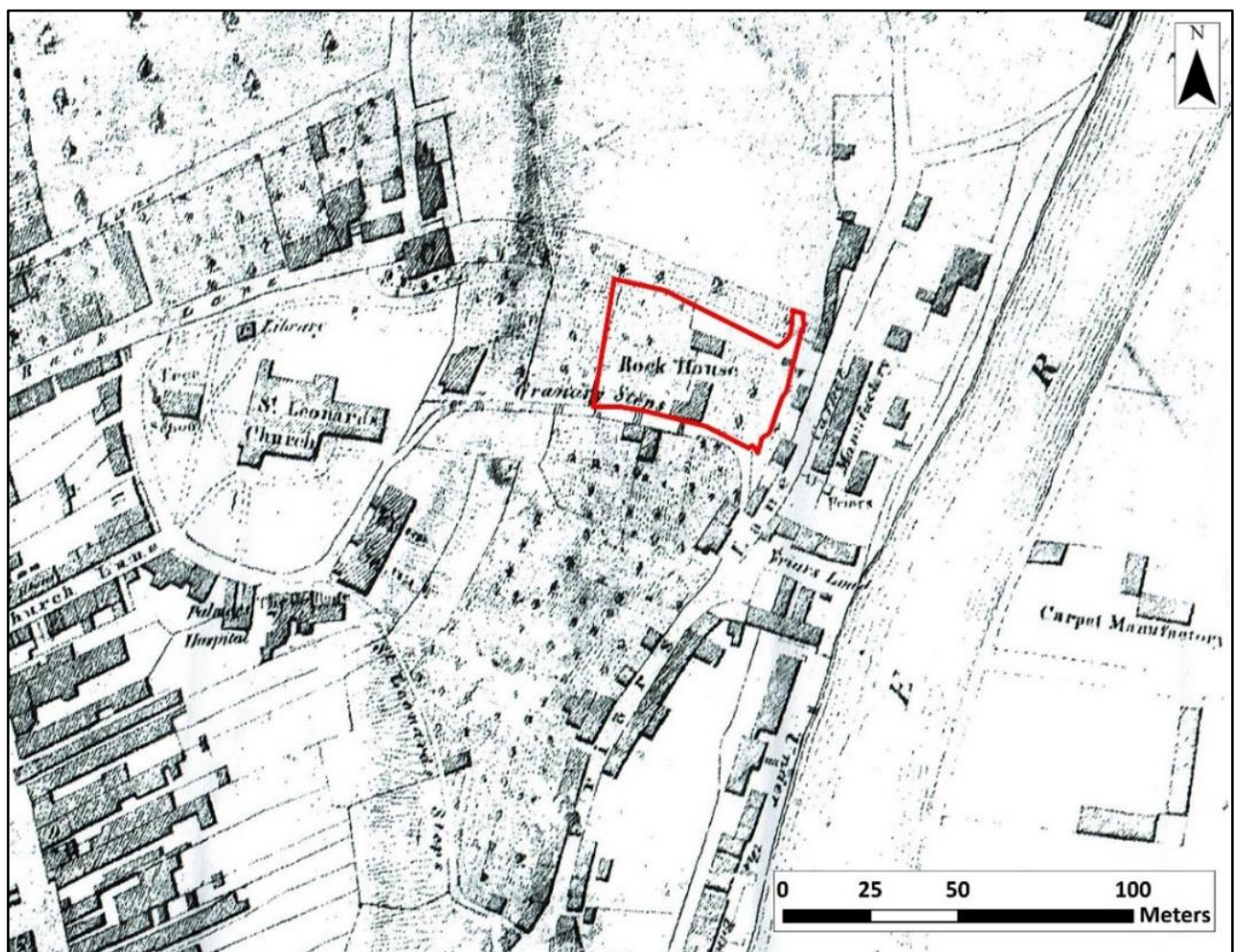


Fig. 8: Extract from Wood's 1835 map of Bridgnorth. Site boundary depicted in red
(Reproduced courtesy of Bridgnorth Library)

Pigot's 1835 directory records that a 'Stephen Greuber' was resident at Rock House at the time of Wood's cartographic depiction of the site. The fact that Mr. Greuber is listed as part of the 'Gentry and Clergy' of the town, combined with a listing for a sale of 'elegant house hold furniture, property and effects' of a 'Stephen Henry Gruber Esq.' on the 3rd and 4th of April 1839 in the Wolverhampton Chronicle for the 13th of March 1839, suggests that Mr

Greuber/Gruber had either died without heirs, or been bankrupted, and that he was previously a man of some means.

Samuel Bagshaw's 1851 'History, Gazetteer, & Directory of Shropshire then records a Mr. William Southwell as being resident at Rock House, but does not mention whether he is related to the Southwells who own the carper factory to the E of Rock House. However, an 1855 parish map of St Leonard's records the site of Rock House in the possession of a John Hinksman (*fig. 10*), suggesting that both Mr. Greuber and Mr. Southwell were renting the property from the Hinksman family.

The 1840 tithe map for the parish of St Leonard's Bridgnorth does not depict the site of the proposed development, leaving it blank (*fig.9*). When urban sites are left unrecorded on tithe maps it is usually for one of two reasons: because they are either part of a borough exempt from tithes, or are located on ecclesiastical or glebe land.

However, the 1803 Glebe Terrier for St Leonard's (SRO P40/F/3/1) makes no mention of Rock House, so it is likely that the house was either tithe exempt due to it being part of the borough, or built on ecclesiastical land which formerly belonged to the nearby Franciscan Friary. Interestingly, the T-shaped morphology of field 326 on the 1840 tithe map, to the W and N of the site of the proposed development, may be the result of the former urban defences, and the plots of land which formerly made up the site of the proposed development may have backed onto the town wall.

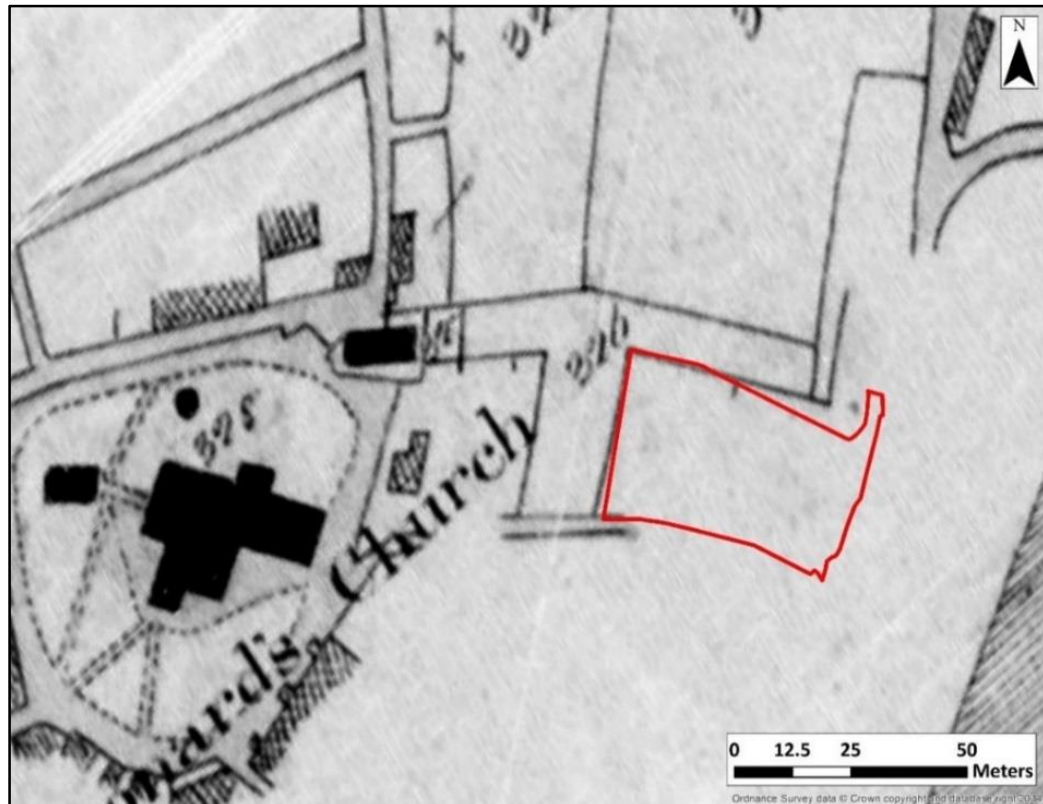


Fig. 9: Extract from the 1840 tithe map for St Leonard's Bridgnorth. Site boundary depicted in red (Reproduced courtesy of Shropshire Archives)

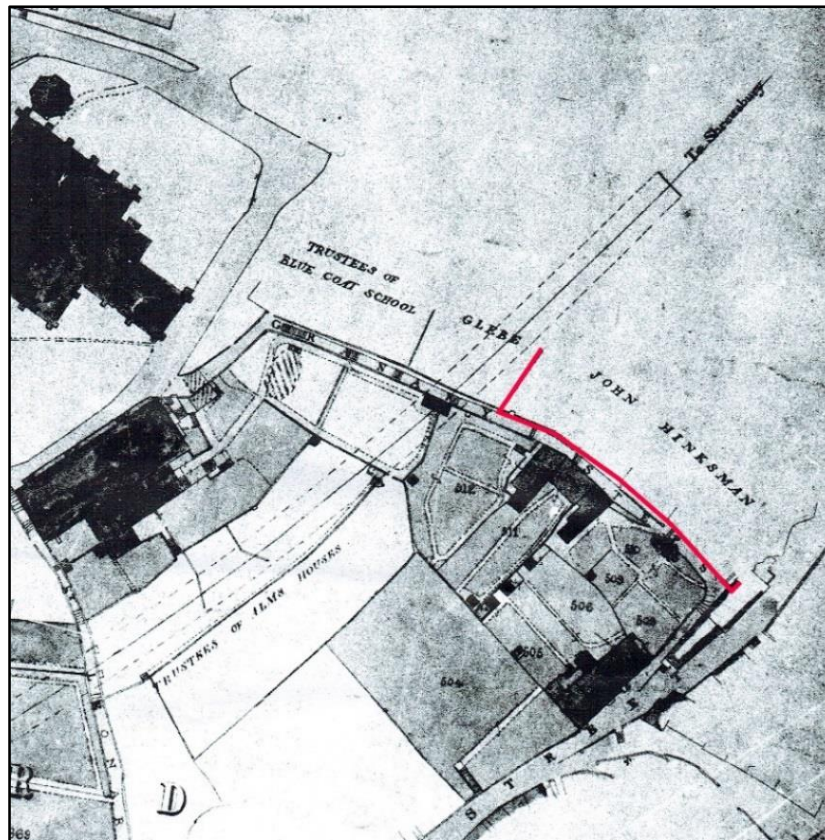


Fig. 10: Extract from an 1855 map of the parish of St Leonard's, Bridgnorth. Site boundary depicted in red (Reproduced courtesy of Shropshire Archives)

The evidence of mid-late 19th century census returns indicates that Rock House also known as 4 Granary Steps, appears to have been occupied by residents of a much more working class nature. In the 1861 census it is occupied by a John Taylor, his wife Martha, and their five children. John Taylor is recorded as a 'wool dyer'. Furthermore, the 1871 census records the property as being occupied by Jacob Collins, his wife Jane, and their six children. Jacob Collins is listed as a 'carpet weaver', and his two eldest sons (aged 13 and 11) are also in employment.

A plan of the Southwell Carpet Manufactory Works dated 1854 (fig. 11) depicts Rock House in outline, showing a detached rectangular outbuilding to the N of the L-shaped house and two smaller outbuildings to the NE.

Significantly, the 1854 plan marks a terraced row of 'rock caves' carved into the hillside along the E edge of the site, fronting onto Friars Street directly opposite the carpet factory. These caves are also depicted on a later indenture of 1864 relating to the Southwell Carpet Works (SRO DA2/150/1). These maps provide further evidence to suggest that there are more caves contained within the boundaries of the site than were recorded in Sewter's 1989 Cave Survey. It would appear that these caves were being utilized as dwellings and also as store rooms or workshops associated with the nearby carpet factory. A series of sketches drawn by Joseph Powell between 1825 and 1830 at an unrecorded location along Friar's Lane appear to show a terraced row of cave dwellings fronting onto the road, which may possibly depict the row of caves on the E fringe of the site (Tonkin 1957).

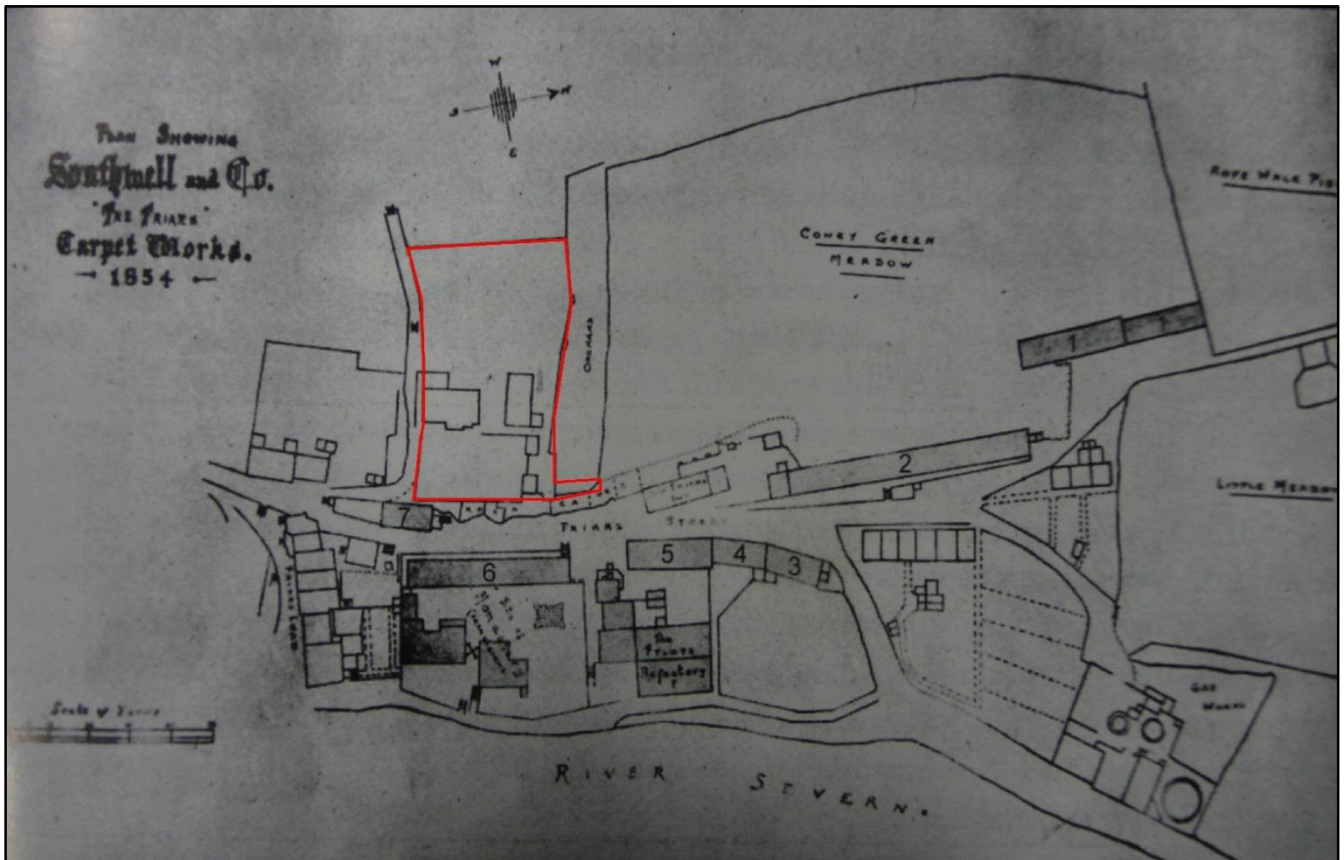


Fig. 11: Extract from a plan of the Southwell & Co Carpet Works dated 1854 showing Rock House to the NW of the Carpet Works. Site boundary depicted in red
(Reproduced by courtesy of Shropshire Archives)

4.3.4 c. 1880-1945

The Ordnance Survey 1884 town plan (*fig. 12*) clearly shows the layout and location of 'The Rock House', with a large building adjoining Granary Steps to the N in the S half of the site of the proposed development, various outbuildings to the N of the main building, an open space to the E of the site and gardens laid out the W. The building appears to have maintained its largely L-shaped morphology, as depicted on Wood's map of 1835, albeit with a few additional outbuildings and structures built on the NW side of the building to make the structure more rectangular than L-shaped. The N border of the site of the proposed development is also only c.10m to the S of the railway cut where the Severn Valley Railway emerges from the tunnel under the town of Bridgnorth.

Little change to the layout of the site appears to have occurred during the early decades of the 20th century, as evidenced by the Ordnance Survey 2nd and 3rd edition 1:2500 maps dated 1903 and 1927 respectively (*figs. 14 & 15*).

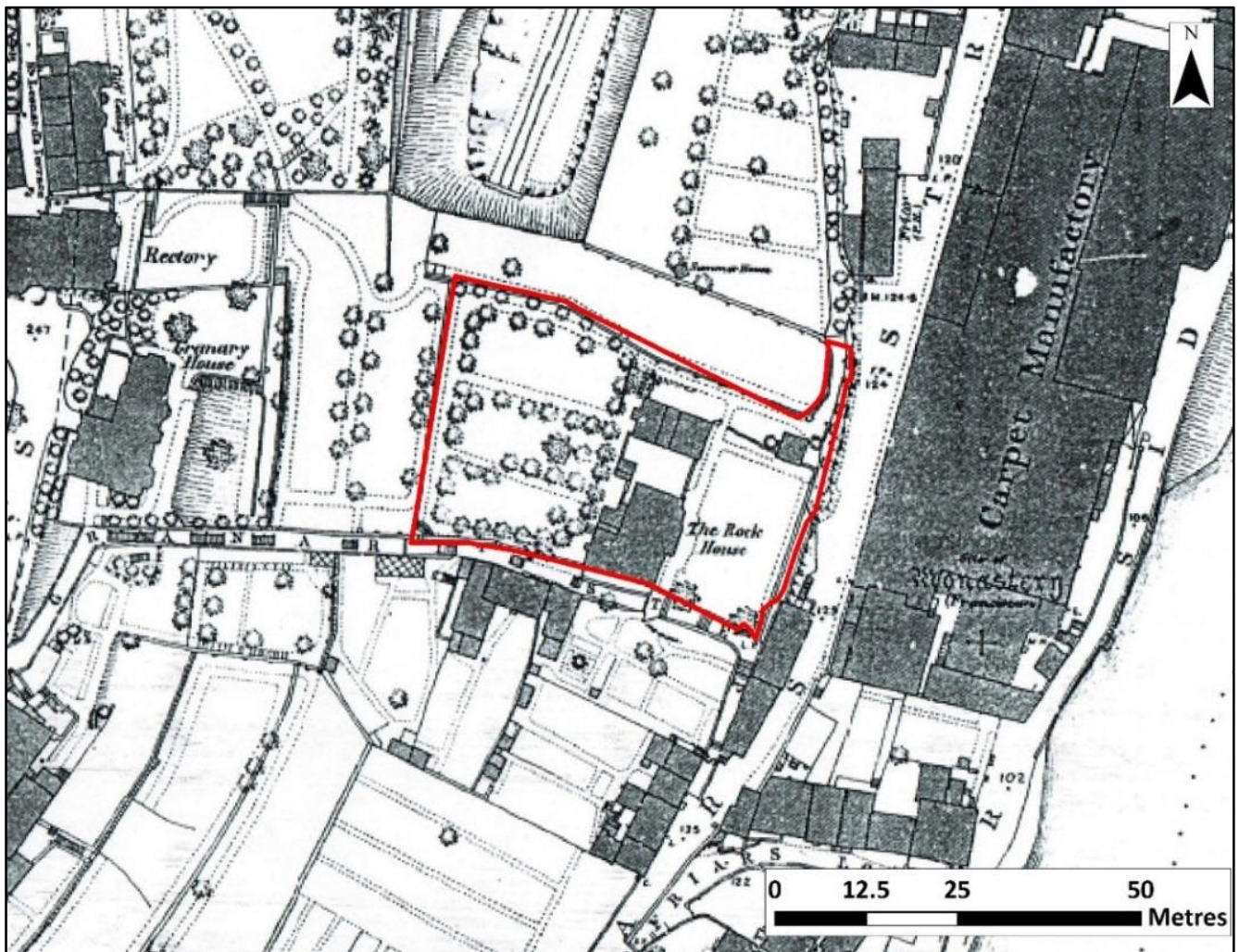


Fig. 12: Extract from the 1884 1:500 Ordnance Survey town plan of Bridgnorth. Site boundary depicted in red
(Reproduced courtesy of Shropshire Archives)

The 1881 Census records that 4 Granary Steps (The Rock House) was occupied by a George H. Doughty (48), accountant, with his wife Caroline (46), and daughter Gwendolen (15). They also had a boarder, named James Kenyon, who was a 34-year-old Solicitor. George Doughty's occupation as an accountant is considerably middle class than those of the occupants in the 1861 and 1871 census (wool dyer and carpet weaver), and the fact that at the time of Rock House's demolition in the mid-20th century the property was in the ownership of a 'C.H. Doughty', suggests that the Doughty's had bought the house and were not renting it.

The Doughty family are recorded resident at Rock House/4 Granary Steps in the 1891 and 1901 censuses, in both of which George Herbert Doughty is listed as a 'Solicitor's Managing Clerk and Accountant'. Furthermore, George Herbert Doughty is recorded as the occupant of Rock House in Kelly's Directory of Shropshire for the years 1885, 1891, 1893, 1900, 1905, 1913, and 1917. In Kelly's directories he is variously listed as a private resident of the town and as an accountant and political agent.

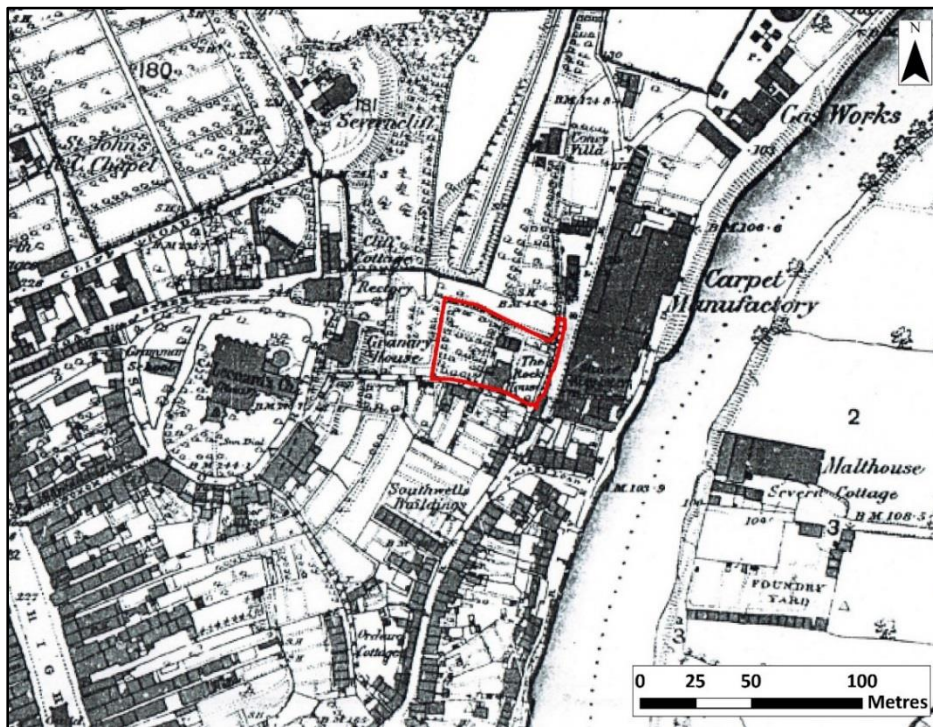


Fig. 13: Extract from the 1884 Ordnance Survey 1st Edition 1:2500 Map. Site boundary depicted in red (Reproduced courtesy of Shropshire Archives)

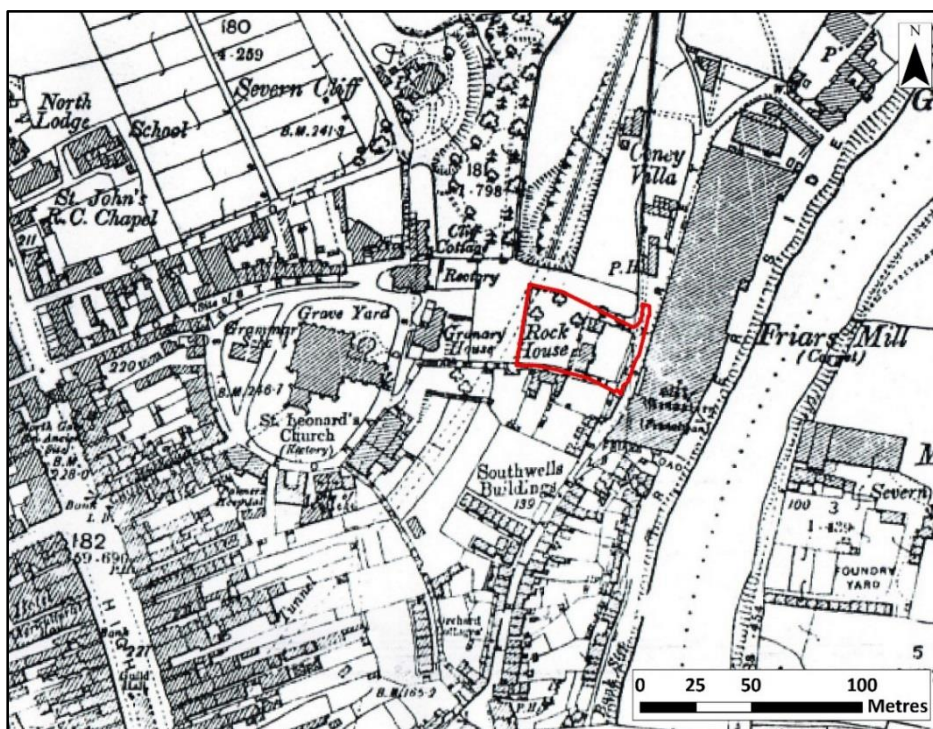


Fig. 14: Extract from the 1903 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 2nd Edition Map. Site boundary depicted in red (Reproduced courtesy of Shropshire Archives)

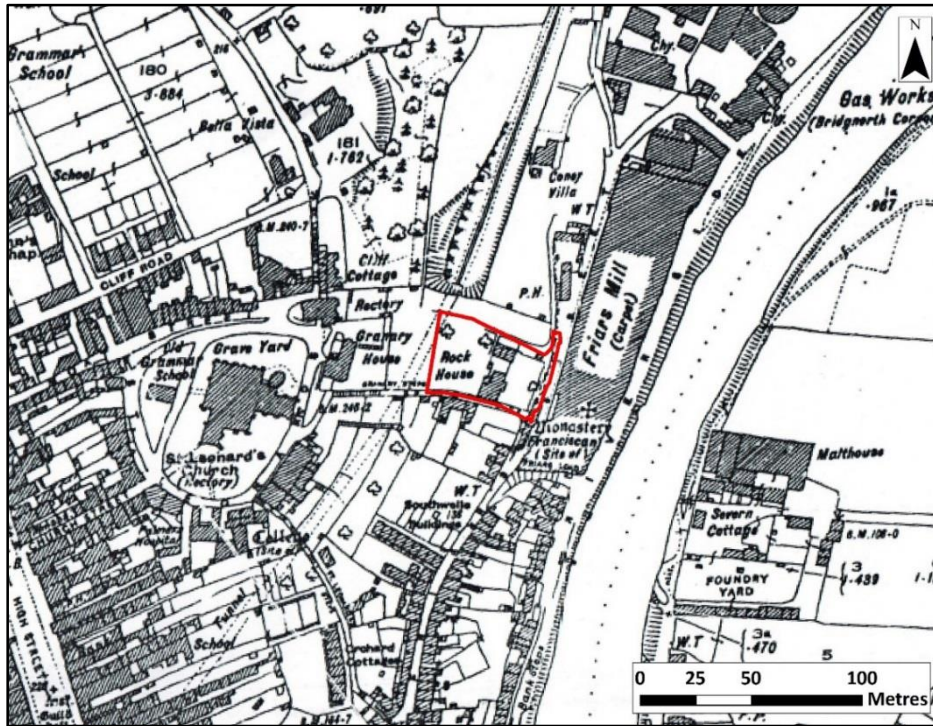


Fig. 15: Extract from the 1927 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 3rd Edition Map. Site boundary depicted in red
(Reproduced courtesy of Shropshire Archives)

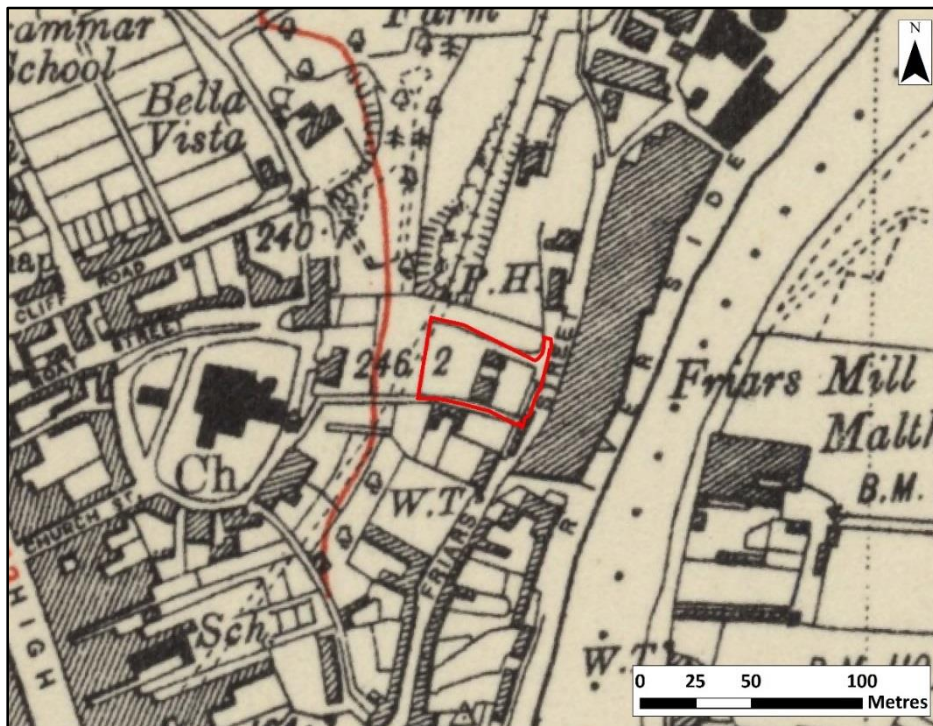


Fig. 16: Extract from the 1938 Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 Map. Site boundary depicted in red
(Reproduced courtesy of Shropshire Archives)

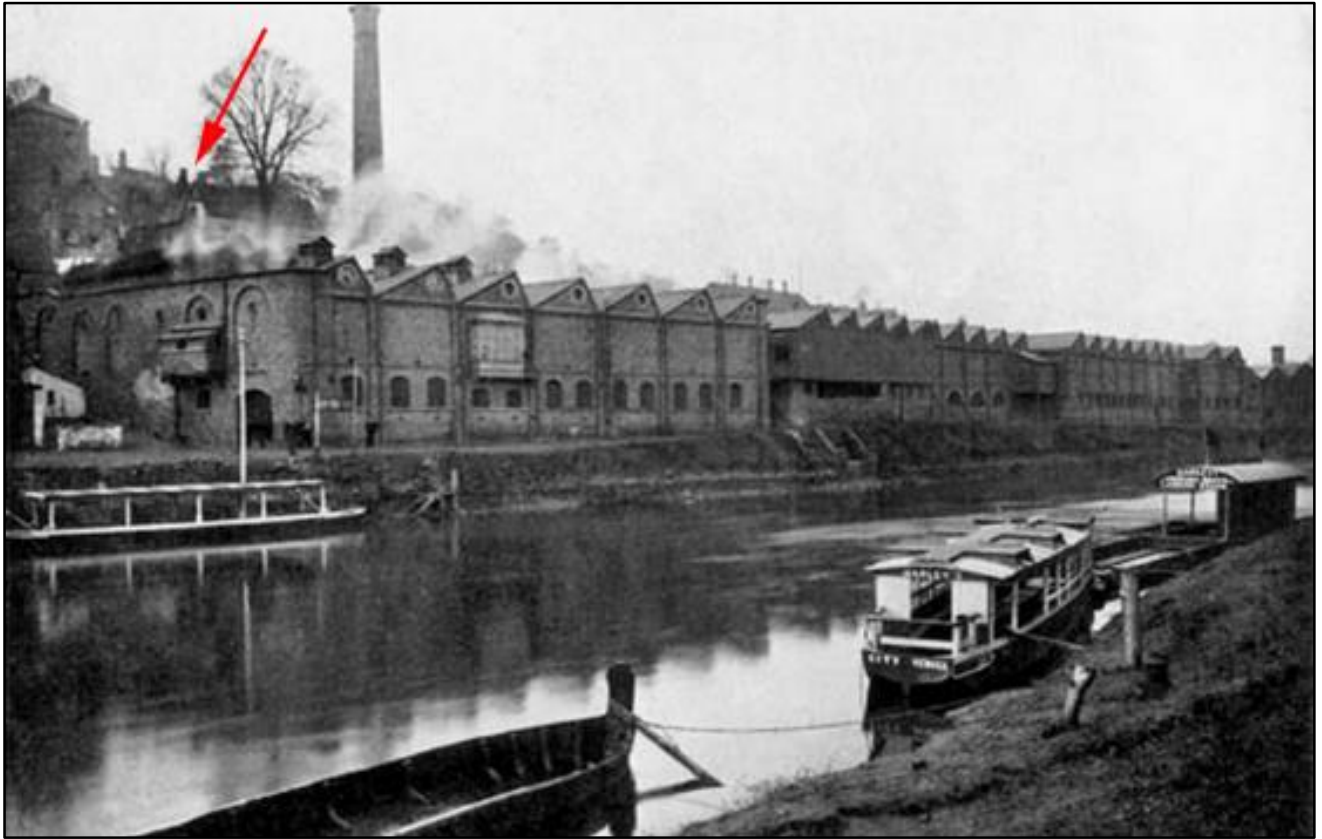


Plate 4: View looking NW towards the Southwell Carpet Factory from the river dated 1912. Rock House would appear to be the gabled, rendered house overlooking the factory at the top left hand side of the photograph (indicated by a red arrow)

(Reproduced Courtesy of Bridgnorth Library)

Unfortunately, despite an extensive search of photographic records held at Bridgnorth Library and Shropshire Archives, there appears to be very few clear photographic views of Rock House prior to its demolition in the late 1940s. A photographic view looking NW from the E side of the river showing the Southwell carpet factory (dated 1912) appears to provide a partial view of Rock House (*Plate 4*). The photograph shows a two storey house, sitting atop a ridge overlooking the factory, rendered externally with a gable at the S end of the E-facing elevation with the Rectory and Cliff Cottage visible in an elevated position above it. When this view is cross-referenced with available cartographic sources, it is likely that the two storey rendered building is indeed Rock House and this is corroborated by a later survey of the property dated 1943 which refers to it as being rendered externally.

4.3.5 c. 1945 to present

Little had changed in the morphology of the site by the mid-20th century (*Fig. 16*), and Rock House had clearly fallen into a state of disrepair. By 1939 plans were being drawn up by the Town Council to have the property demolished on sanitary grounds. A collection of papers relating to the demolition of Rock House are held by Shropshire Archives (SRO DA2/846/1). They show that at this point the house was occupied by Thomas and Ellen Gittos/Gittos, who

had lived in Rock House since 1925. By this point ownership appears to have passed to a Mr. C.H. Doughty of Welshpool, whose relationship to the now deceased Gwendoline Doughty is unknown. The demolition order was not granted until 1943 due to issues with settling the estate of the late Miss Doughty.

Whilst the report on the inspection undertaken in 1943 in relation to the demolition order does not include a plan, it does provide valuable information on the structure and layout of Rock House, demonstrating that it was quite a substantial property, with no less than thirteen rooms, a separate wash-house, and a summer-house, as well as yards and gardens.

The state of disrepair catalogued by the inspectors is quite substantial, and their report makes mention of cracked and defective brickwork, worm eaten and rotten timbers, a large hole in the tiled roof, rising damp, defective plastering, rotten wall boarding and paneling, damp and uneven brick flooring in the kitchen, rotten ceilings and windows, a defective fire-grate, and rotten floorboards which, in some of the upstairs rooms, are collapsing. The inspectors also note that there is no internal running water (only an external tap), no toilet facilities (the inhabitants made use of buckets and pit in the garden, before spreading the waste in the garden), 'choked' drainage, and no bin (again, refuse was spread over the garden). Externally, both the wash house (presumably the rectangular building shown to the N of Rock House on the 1884 town plan) and the summerhouse (presumably the small square building shown to the NE of Rock House on the 1884 town plan) are described as being 'rotten and defective', and the gardens and yards are described as lacking both paving and drainage (SRO DA2/846/1).

Whilst the report does not directly mention any cellars, the house appears to have been built into the hill-side, and many of the rooms are described as either being 'underground rooms' or 'backing into earth', and may have been largely subterranean in nature (possibly carved out as caves). Most of the bedrooms appear to have been on the ground floor or set into the hillside as one of the 'underground' rooms. These are all of varying heights, presumably due to the hilly topography of the site, and the minimum height/depth of the 'underground rooms' is 7' 3" (2.2m), whilst the maximum height/depth is 9" (2.7m) (SRO DA2/846/1).

In terms of the origins of the building, the description contained within the inspection report allows us to reach the following conclusions about Rock House. The house was largely constructed of sandstone covered in render, with brick built bay windows, as well as brick built chimneys and rooms to the rear of the property. The roof of the property was tiled, with gables and dormers, and the majority of the windows were sash windows. At least one of the rooms was panelled, and the flooring was a mixture of uneven brick and wooden floorboards (which on the ground floor was set directly atop the earth). This description, particularly the references to sash windows and a rendered exterior, tentatively suggest the building was of an 18th/19th century date, presumably built on the site of the 17th century Rock House recorded in the 1679 will of William Clarke.

However, a 1948 aerial photograph of Castle Hill and Bridgnorth available on Britain from Above (<http://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/image/eaw017332>) appears to show a white rendered gabled, building on Granary Steps which bears a striking similarity to the house shown on Farington's 1789 sketch and the 1912 photograph of the carpet manufactory. This correlates with the 1943 description of the house as being built of rendered sandstone. This also, when combined with the L-shaped morphology of the building shown on Wood's 1835 map, later changed to a more rectangular shape by the time of the 1884 Ordnance Survey town plan, may

suggest that Rock House was a 17th century house, remodeled after 1835 with the addition of brick bay windows, sash windows and dormers.

Following the 1943 demolition order, a number of attempts were made by the owner, C.H. Doughty, the Gittos family, and a Capt. A.H. Gibbs (who had purchased the property from Mr. Doughty for £1500 and planned to renovate it) to halt the demolition of Rock House. None of these were successful and the building was demolished at some point after 1948 (SRO DA2/846/1).

The Ordnance Survey 1964 1:2500 national survey shows the site of the proposed development clear of any buildings, apart from a small structure in the NE corner of the site. Exactly the same picture is presented by the Ordnance Survey 1970 and 1982 1:2500 national surveys, however the small building in the NE corner of the site of the proposed development has disappeared by the time of the 1991 1:2500 national survey, leaving the site clear of any buildings.

A 2014 LiDAR DTM (Digital Terrain Model) of Bridgnorth (*fig. 17*) clearly depicts the steep terraced morphology of the site, and appears to show a number of undulations and features cut into the hill-side which probably represent the remains, and buried remains, of Rock House left after its demolition in the mid-20th century. A large indentation in the centre of the site corresponds with the location of Rock House itself, and may represent when the building was cut into the hill-side.

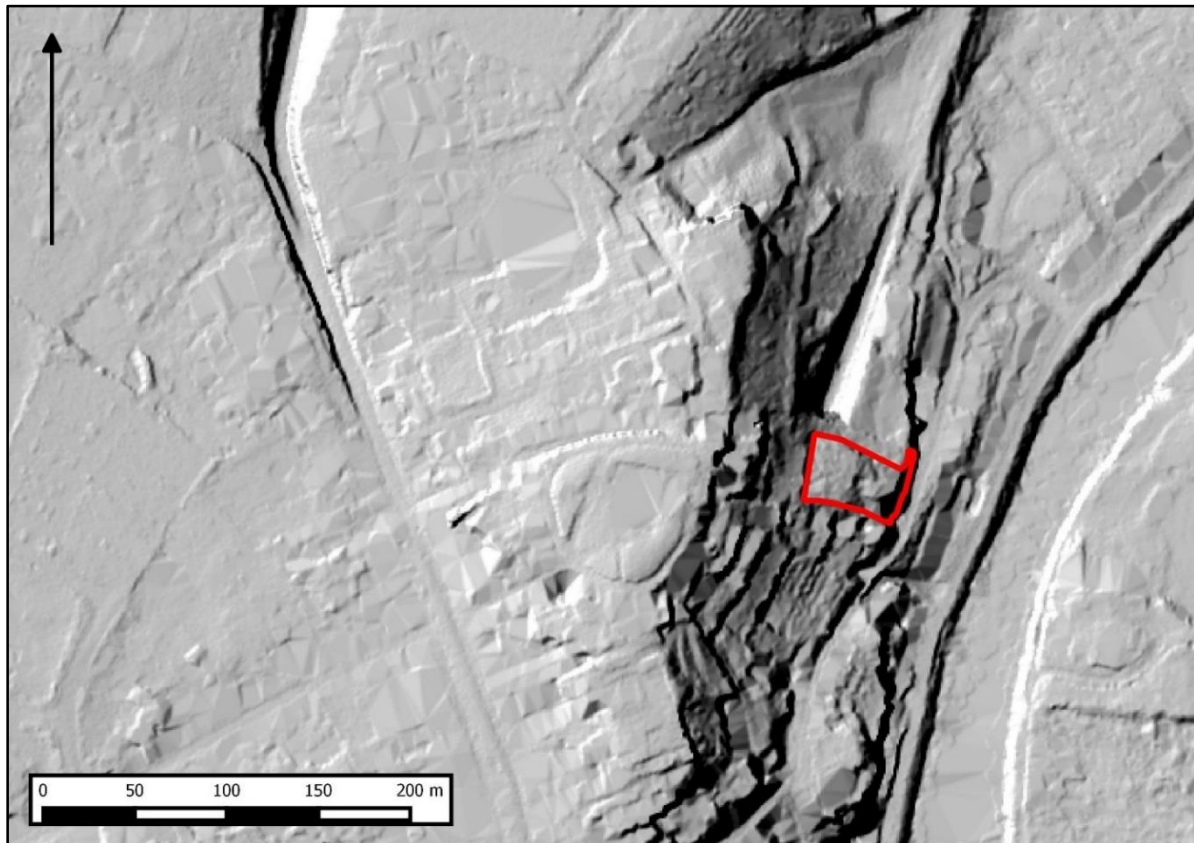


Fig. 17: Extract from the 2014 LiDAR Survey. Site boundary depicted in red

5 Site Visit

BAL undertook a site visit on the 25th of January 2016 in order to determine the potential for surviving archaeological remains on the site. The site was accessed from Granary Steps through a small gap in the S boundary, and consists of a terraced plot of land on the side of the hill, heavily overgrown with scrub and a large number of trees. A series of raised earthworks were visible extending across the site, which appear to correspond to the site of the house and outbuildings associated with the former property known as 'Rock House', demolished in the mid-20th century (*Plates 5 & 6*). Due to the dense cover of undergrowth, it was difficult to see evidence for wall foundations or other features associated with Rock House, although it is likely that they survive at a relatively shallow depth.



Plate 5: View looking N across the site from Granary Steps

At the E end of the site, there is a sheer drop of about 10m from the cliff top on which the site is located, down to Friars Street, where it is proposed to construct a car lift tower to allow vehicular access to the property. This area was visited to determine whether there was any visible evidence for the caves recorded in this location (to the N of 54 Friars Street) on the Shropshire Historic Environment Record and elsewhere along the W side of Friars Street on a plan of the Southwell Carpet Manufactory dated 1854. No entrance to the caves was noted along this section of the sandstone cliff face, however it is worth noting that this area has been heavily revetted with modern brick masonry, presumably to ensure its stability (*Plates 8 & 9*). A semi-circular archway leading to a chamber beneath the cliff face was noted to the rear of No. 52 Friars Street, further to the N.



Plate 6: View looking NE across the site



Plate 7: View looking W along Granary Steps



Plate 8: View looking SW from Friars Street upwards towards the site



Plate 9: View looking W showing detail of cliff face immediately N of 54 Friars Street

6 Heritage Impact Assessment

This section considers the impact of the proposed development on archaeological assets, both recorded and unrecorded, in the immediate vicinity of the site. The proposed development consists of a large five bedroom detached dwelling, a detached double garage with garden store and loft space over and a car lift and driveway to allow vehicular access to the site from Friars Street below.

6.1 Recorded Archaeological Assets

The site itself is recorded on the Shropshire Historic Environment Record as lying within an area of medieval tenement plots. It is possible that there were several dwellings with associated tenement plots within the site boundary during the medieval period; however no documentary evidence has been found to conclusively prove their existence. By the late 17th century, it appears that the site was occupied by a single dwelling and associated outbuildings.

The precise location and density of medieval occupation activity within this area remains undetermined as there has been no previous archaeological work undertaken in this specific location.

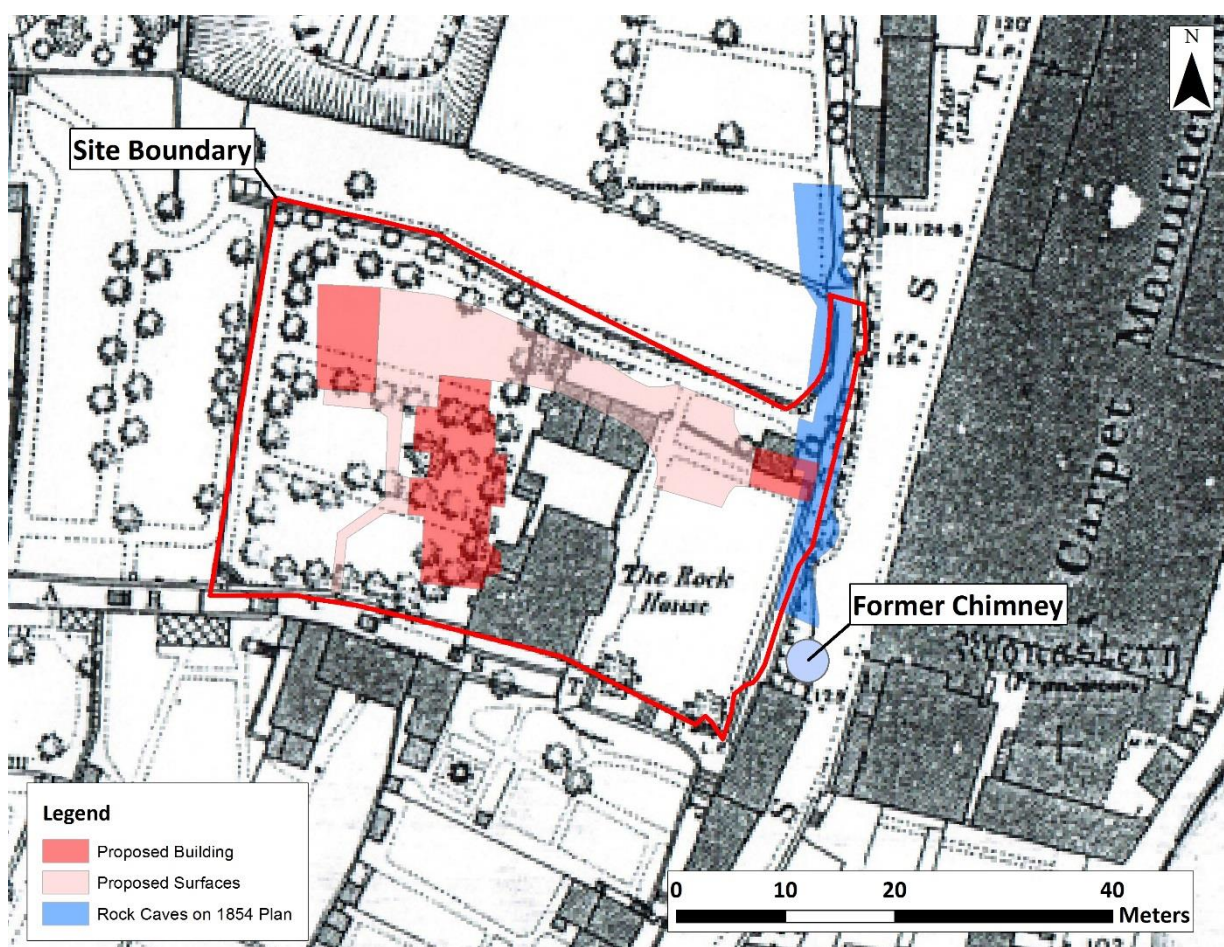


Fig. 18: Extract from the OS 1st edition 1:500 plan of 1884 showing the location of the proposed new buildings in relation to the footprint of Rock House and associated structures

The proposed car lift, situated in the NE corner of the site, appears to be located in the vicinity of a series of caves recorded on historic mapping of the area as extending to the N of 54 Friars Street, immediately beneath the site. The caves comprise three chambers measuring between 2.3 and 2.7m in height and appear to have been occupied as dwellings, although it is possible that they may also have been utilized as storerooms and or workshops associated with the nearby 19th century carpet manufactory works on the opposite side of Friars Street.

Conclusion: Based on the available information, there would appear to be potential for the development to impact upon archaeological deposits and features associated with medieval tenements recorded as occupying the site on the Shropshire HER. There is significant potential for the construction of the proposed car lift to impact upon the caves recorded to the N of 54 Friars Street.

6.2 Unrecorded archaeological assets

In terms of unrecorded archaeological assets, the proposed development lies within the plot previously occupied by Rock House, a post-medieval dwelling with associated outbuildings which was demolished in the late 1940s. The precise date of Rock House is unclear; it is first mentioned by name in 1820 although documentary evidence indicates the presence of a dwelling and associated outbuildings on the site in the late 17th century. The extent of Rock House and its outbuildings is first clearly indicated on Wood's map of 1835, but it is unclear whether the building as shown on Wood's map represents the late 17th century house or a later 18th-19th century rebuild.

The proposed five bedroom detached house, based on the plan submitted by the client, appears to be situated immediately W of the footprint of Rock House, within an area previously occupied by formal terraced gardens while the new garage block would also lie within the NW corner of the gardens formerly belonging to Rock House. However, it should be noted that a survey of the property made in 1943 (shortly before its demolition) makes reference to several underground rooms located beneath the house, the precise extent of these rooms remains unclear.

The proposed car lift is located in the immediate vicinity of a small square building first recorded on the OS 1st edition map of 1884 (probably a summer house or gazebo) located in the NE corner of the gardens of Rock House. The course of the proposed driveway leading from the car lift to the house and garage would appear to directly cross the site of a rectangular detached building first marked in this location to N of Rock House on Wood's map of 1835.

Conclusion: It would appear that, while the site of the proposed detached house appears to lie outside the footprint of Rock House (as recorded on historic mapping from the early 19th century onwards), there remains potential for the proposed development to impact upon 1/the remains of an earlier post-medieval house and outbuildings at Rock House and 2/underground rooms beneath Rock House recorded in a survey of 1943, the full extent of which remains unclear.

Moreover, there is potential elsewhere on the site for the development to impact upon the footings of the post-medieval outbuildings associated with Rock House.

Recommendation: It is BAL's recommendation that an archaeological field evaluation in the form of trial trenching will be necessary to assess the full extent, survival and significance of any archaeological remains on the site.

7 Copyright

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SRO DA2/846/1 - Papers relating to the demolition of Rock House, Bridgnorth

SRO P40/F/3/1 - 1803 Glebe Terrier for St Leonard's Bridgnorth

SRO P40/V/2/5 - A copy of an early 17th century map of Bridgnorth

8.1.2 The National Archives

Prob./11/388 - Will of William Clarke, surgeon of Bridgnorth (1687)

Prob./11/1333 - Will of Bernard Wilkes Esq. (1799)

8.1.3 Shrewsbury Museums Service

FA/1990/60/01 – Pencil Sketch of Bridgnorth Bridge, Shropshire by Joseph Farington (1789)

FA/1991/59/03 - Aquatint of Bridgnorth Bridge, Shropshire by Paul Sandby (c.1774)

8.1.4 Bridgnorth Library and Local History Centre

Pigot's 1835 directory

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9 Cartography and Aerial Survey

9.1 Cartographic Records

(All maps were consulted at Shropshire Archives unless otherwise stated)

Copy of an early 17th century map of Bridgnorth

Wood's 1835 map of Bridgnorth

1840 Tithe map for St Leonard's Bridgnorth

1854 Plan of the Southwell Carpet Works Bridgnorth

1855 Map of the parish of St Leonard's, Bridgnorth

1884 1:500 Ordnance Survey Town Plan of Bridgnorth

1884 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 1st Edition Map of Shropshire

1903 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 2nd Edition Map of Shropshire

1927 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 3rd Edition Map of Shropshire

1938 Ordnance Survey 1:105600 Map of Shropshire

1964 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 National Survey

1970 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 National Survey

1982 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 National Survey

1991 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 National Survey

9.2 Aerial Survey Records

1948 Aerial Photograph of Castle Hill and the Town, Bridgnorth
(<http://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/image/eaw017332>)

2014 LiDAR Survey

Report Title		Report Ref	
Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment: Land N of Granary Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire		BA1605GSB	
Report written by	Owain Connors MA PhD & Stephen Priestley MA		
Report edited by	George Children MA MCIfA & Stephen Priestley MA		
Issue No.	Status	Date	Approved for issue
1	Final	February 2016	Neil Shurety Dip. M G M Inst M