

# Archaeological Evaluation

**Rai Fashions  
Bye Street  
Ledbury  
Herefordshire**

**NGR: SO 7108 3765**

**SMR No: 45159**

## **BORDER ARCHAEOLOGY**

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*Approved:* Neil Shurety



# 1. Non Technical Summary

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*A single evaluation trench was opened within the car-parking area to the rear of Rai Fashions, Bye Street, Ledbury, which lies within the precinct of the medieval St Katherine's Hospital and is considered likely to contain evidence of associated service buildings.*

*The evaluation has established that the survival of archaeological deposits is good, with a number of well-preserved early post-medieval features and deposits revealed at around 1m below the existing ground level. It appears likely that these overlie intact medieval deposits.*

## 2. Introduction

Border Archaeology was instructed by Mr D. Rai to carry out a programme of archaeological evaluation in respect of a proposed development to the rear of his property situated on Bye Street (NGR: SO 7108 3765) (**Fig. 1**), the criteria for which were outlined by Julian Cotton, Archaeological Advisor, Herefordshire Council.

Copies of this report will be sent to Mr Rai, Herefordshire Archaeology and the county Sites & Monuments Record.

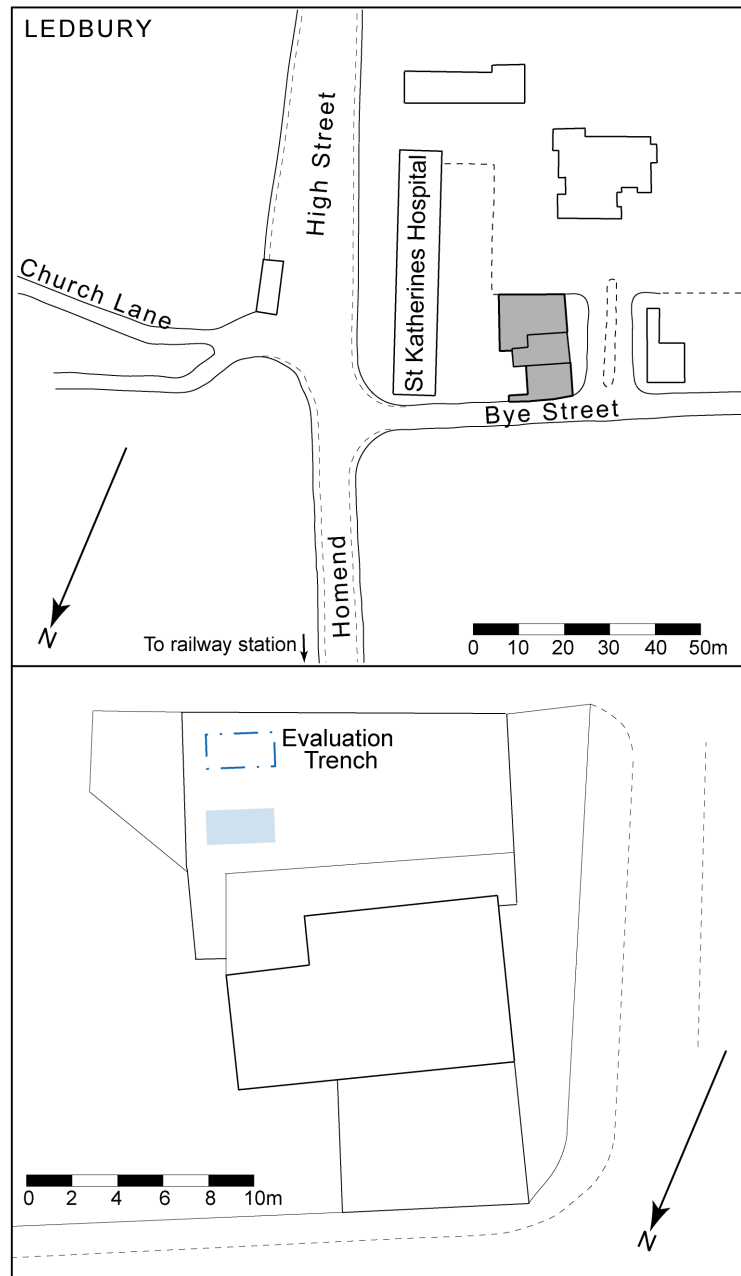


Fig. 1: Site location plan

## 2.1 Soils & Geology

The site and surrounding area comprise typical argillic brown earths of the BROMYARD (571b) series, consisting of well-drained reddish fine silty soils over Devonian reddish silty shale, siltstone and sandstone.

## 3. Historical & Archaeological Background

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The site is located in the historic core of the town and within the former grounds of St Katherine's Hospital, which was founded in 1232 by Bishop Hugh Foliot. Records indicate that the precinct contained a wide range of service buildings, including barns, malt houses, kitchens, stables and a piggery (Buteux, 1995: 5). To the S of the present hospital premises, which are of 19<sup>th</sup> century date, is the 14<sup>th</sup> century chapel and hospital range and, set back from that, the former Master's House, which is of 15<sup>th</sup> century date (Pevsner, 2001: 219)

## 4. Methodology

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Full written, drawn and photographic records were made in accordance with archaeological practices set out in *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1994; rev. 2001); Border Archaeology adhered to the IFA's *Code of conduct* and *Code of approved practice for the regulation of contractual arrangements in field archaeology*.

A stratigraphic record was made using a context numbering system. Archaeological deposits, features and structures were recorded in plan & section at a scale of 1:20. Features were photographed using a high-resolution 10.3 MPX digital camera.

One evaluation trench was opened in the specified location within the footprint of the proposed new building. The trench measured 3m x 1.5m and was excavated entirely by hand; all spoil and removed material were scanned for artefacts, which were recorded and, where appropriate, retained.

A temporary benchmark was established with a value of 69.94m AOD.

## 5. Results

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The uppermost deposits within the trench related to the hard standing of the car-parking area. Context (101), tarmacadam, overlay a compact gravel base material (102), which in turn overlay a 0.3m-thick compacted deposit comprising brick, CBM rubble, sand and mortar (103). This deposit contained building debris such as asbestos, plastic, string, white glazed pottery and glass, indicating that it was of fairly recent deposition, probably contemporary with construction of the car-parking area. Also within the deposit were two pieces of hand-chiselled masonry, the provenance of which could not be established. Underlying (103) was a typical post-medieval garden soil (110) extending trench wide to a thickness of at least 0.1m. In the W corner of the trench, overlying (110), was an area of heated sandy clay and charcoal, possibly representing the remains of a hearth, although the overlying brick rubble of (103) had

heavily disturbed the feature. Approximately in the centre of the trench was a small concentration of CBM and sand (105) within (110). Upon sectioning this area, a posthole [104] containing grey ash (106) was located immediately underlying this material. No obvious continuation of [104] could be observed within (110) and, although the material comprising (105) directly correlated with outline of cut [104], and filled the upper 0.05m of it, it could not be established for certain whether (105) comprised a secondary fill of the posthole or an inclusion within (110) that just happened to accumulate at this point. For the sake of this report it has been assumed that (105) comprises a secondary fill of [104].



Plate 1: Trench overview, looking NE

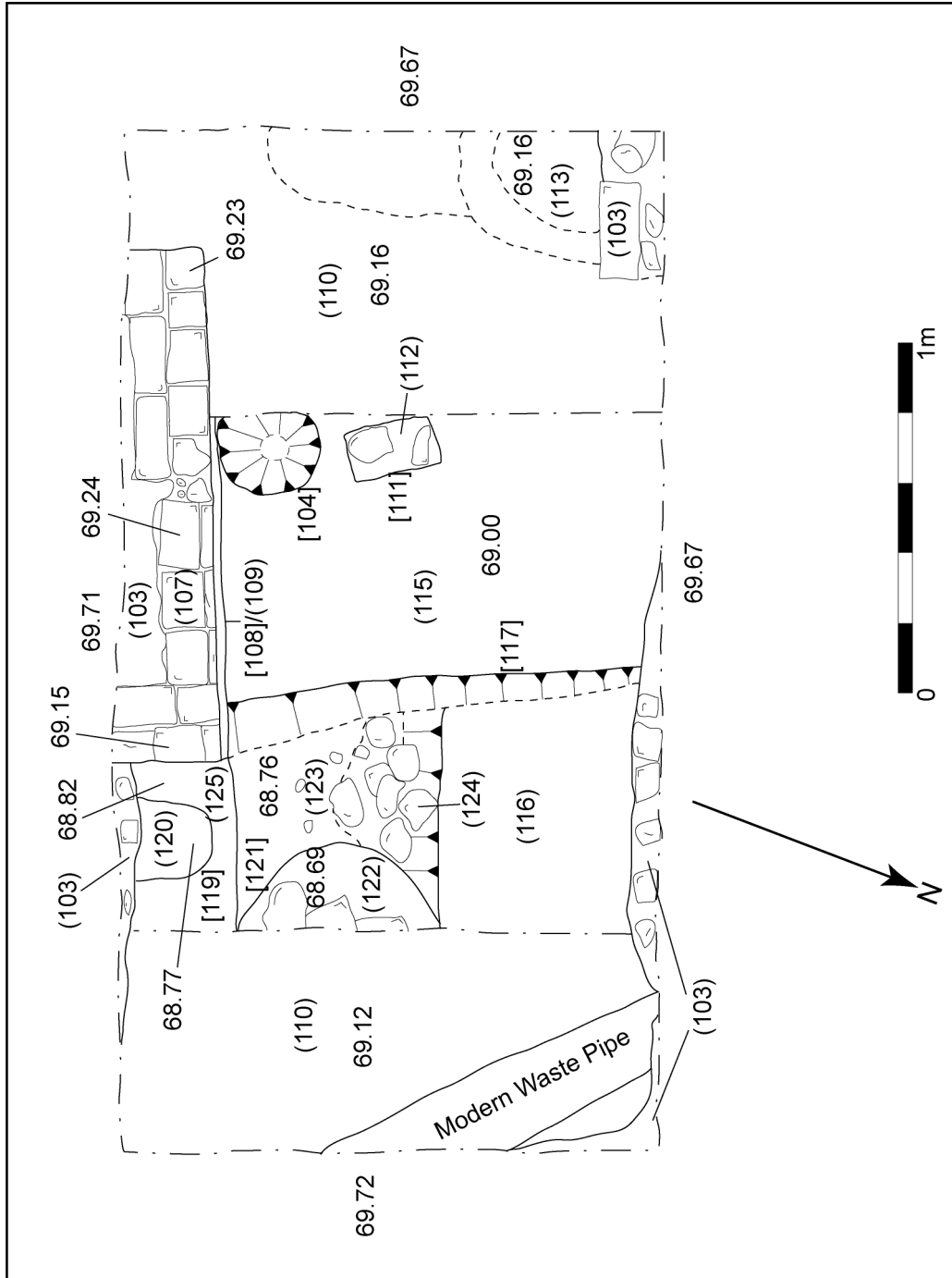


Fig. 2: Final excavation plan Trench 1.





Plate 2: View SE showing overview of sondage

A sondage (**Plate 2**) was excavated through the central part of the trench to avoid a drainage pipe that was located in the N corner and preserve the possible hearth in the W corner. Underlying (110) at the SW end of the sondage was a moderately compacted brownish-grey sandy clay and cess deposit, within which the cut of [104] was clearly defined. Cutting (115), and lying adjacent to [104], was a small rectangular cut [111] filled with a compact orange and brown mixture of mortar, CBM and silty sand (112) that appeared to be either a posthole or beam slot.



Plate 3: Contexts [104] and [111], looking SE



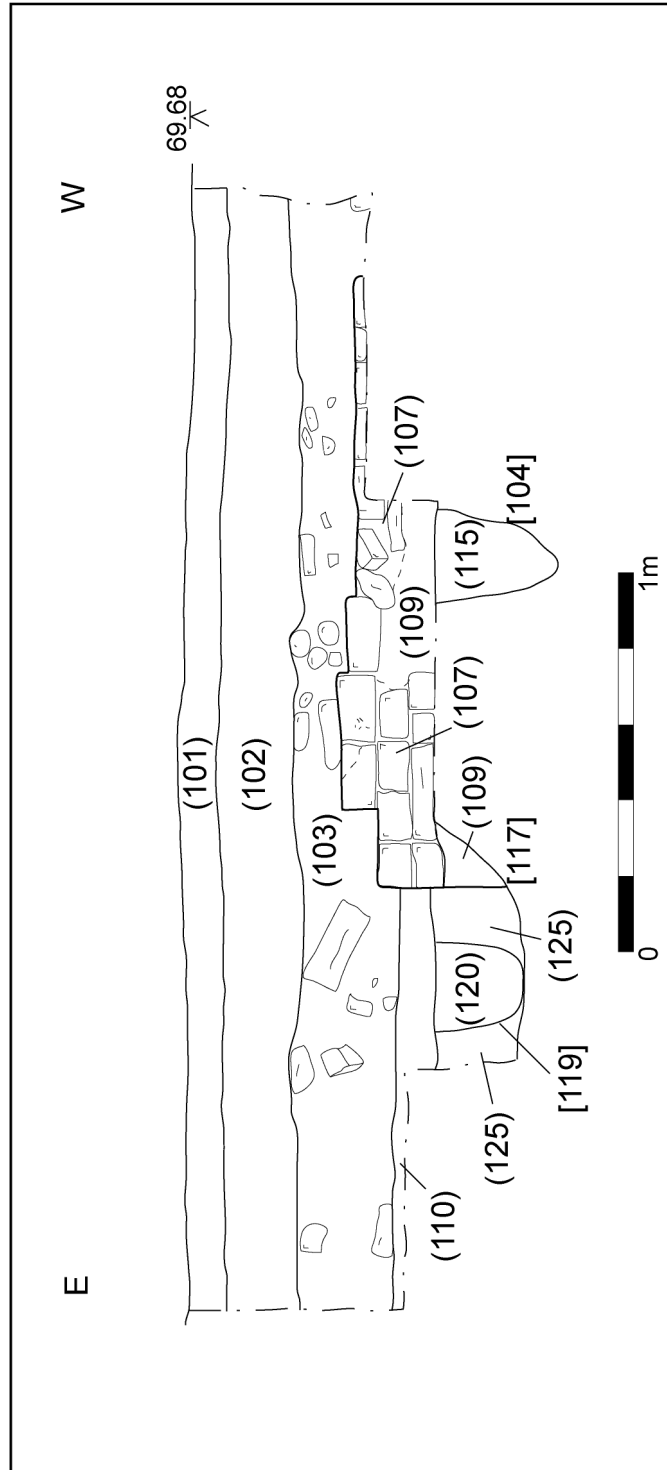


Fig. 3: Trench 1 SW-facing section.

To the immediate SE of these two features was a brick wall / foundation (107) on a NW–SE alignment measuring 1.4 x > 0.4 x > 0.4m, the construction cut for which [108] ran through (115). The wall ended in two returns running off in a SE direction, suggesting it formed part of a small structure. No discernible bonding style was observed within the structure and the bricks used were of varying dimensions. The wall exhibited some shared characteristics with later parts of the hospital complex and may represent the remains of a brick outbuilding.



Plate 4: View SE showing wall (107) and posthole [120].

Also cutting through (115) was part of what appeared to be a shallow linear feature [117], filled with a moderately compacted to firm dark brown silty clay with frequent charcoal and occasional CBM, post-medieval pottery, glass and one residual fragment of medieval green glazed ware (118). This cut was truncated by [108], which also cut into (125), which appeared to be a continuation of (115). Cutting through context (118), and partially outside the sondage, was a small post-medieval pit or posthole [121] filled with a loose to moderately compacted dark brown clay (122) that was very similar to (110). Also cutting through (118) was a posthole [119] filled with loose dark brown silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks (120).

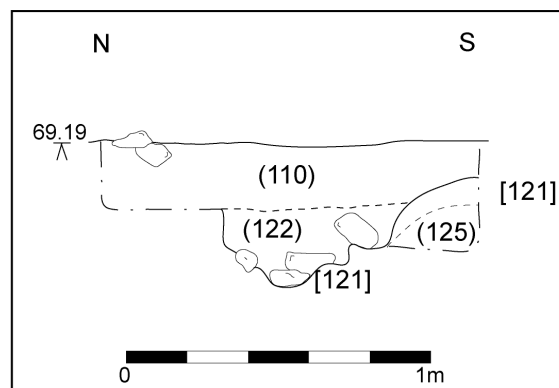


Fig. 4: Section through sondage



Plate 5: Contexts (116), [121]/(122), (123), (124). View - NE

Underlying (118), and possibly within cut [117], were three deposits, (116), (123) & (124). The relationship of these deposits with (115) could not fully be established within the framework of the evaluation. Context (116) was a firm red clay with moderate charcoal flecking and a single animal bone. Apparently overlying (116) was a loose white mortar lense (123). Context (124), a loose mixture of small angular, subangular and rounded stones appeared to be part of the fill of [117], although its full relationship could not be established without further excavation. There was some suggestion that contexts (124) and (123) were directly related and that they formed part of a robbed-out wall or foundation, although this could not be established without further investigation.

## 6. Conclusion

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The evaluation has established that the survival of archaeological deposits within the area is good, with a considerable number of early post-medieval features identified, all of which occurred at depths of less than 1m below the existing ground level and directly beneath the tarmacadam and underlying base materials. The features all appeared to be of 16<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> century date and the likelihood is that earlier features underlie these deposits.

Pottery recovered from the site was generally of early post-medieval date, although a residual sherd of medieval green glazed pottery was found in the fill of one of the post-medieval features.

## 7. References

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Buteux, V., (1995) 'Archaeological Assessment of Ledbury, Hereford and Worcester', *Central Marches Historic Towns Survey*, Worcestershire County Council Service Report 323

Pevsner, N., (2001) *The Buildings of England: Herefordshire*, London

## 8. Copyright

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Border Archaeology shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports, tender documents or other project documents, under the Copyright, Designs & Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved; excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client for the use of the report by the client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the Project Specification.

## 9. APPENDIX 1: Context Register

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CONTEXT	INTERPRETATION
(101)	Tarmacadam, extending over entire trench area to a thickness of < 0.1m.
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Modern tarmac yard</i>
(102)	Loose to moderately compacted grey gravel extending over entire trench area to a thickness of 0.2m, occasional post-medieval brick.
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Modern gravel sub-base.</i>
(103)	Compact brick / CBM and sand (sandy mortar), occasional asbestos, plastic, string, white glazed pottery and glass.
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Demolition rubble used as hard core.</i>
[104]	Sub-circular cut measuring 0.3 x 0.3 x 0.15m. Break of slope top sharp, sides steeply sloping, break of slope base sharp, base tapering, inclination of axis vertical. Filled by (105?), (106).
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Cut of posthole. Unclear whether this was cut into (110) or (115), as there was a hint given by increased inclusions in (110) that it might have been cut from the later date. The edge was not clear, however, until the point at which it cut (115).</i>
(105)	Moderately compacted mid brown silty clay, frequent charcoal and sandy mortar, occasional CBM, indistinct outline.
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Possible secondary fill of (104)</i>
(106)	Loose grey / white ash-like material measuring 0.3 x 0.3 x 0.15m, occasional charcoal flecks.
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Primary fill of [104].</i>
(107)	Coursed brickwork measuring 1.4 x > 0.4 x > 0.4m, bonded by yellow sandy mortar, brick size variable generally 0.1 x 0.08 x 0.08m, greater than four courses in height.
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Post-medieval structure / foundation.</i>
[108]	Rectilinear / square cut, corners 90 degrees, dimensions 1.4 x > 0.4 x > 0.2m. Break of slope top sharp, sides vertical, break of slope base not excavated, base not excavated, orientation roughly NE-SW. Filled by (107), (109).
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Cut for probable post-medieval wall / foundation.</i>
(109)	Loose dark brownish-red silty sand & sand, dimensions 1.4 x 0.05 x > 0.2m, moderate pieces of small CBM.
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Packing fill of wall (107) and cut [108].</i>
(110)	Moderately compacted to firm dark brown silty clay extending over entire trench to a thickness of 0.1m, frequent charcoal, moderate CBM (particularly in upper part), occasional pottery, glass, mortar flecks, clay pipe & animal bone.
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Post-medieval garden soil.</i>
[111]	Sub-rectangular cut, corners rounded, dimensions 0.2 x 0.12m (unexcavated). Break of slope top not excavated, sides not excavated, break of slope base not excavated, base not excavated. Filled by (112).

<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Possible cut of beam slot or posthole.</i>
(112)	Compact orangey-brown mortar, CBM & sandy silt, dimensions 0.2 x 0.12m (unexcavated), moderate small to medium angular stones.
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Packing fill of possible beam slot or posthole.</i>
(113)	Compact black / orange heated sand / clay, dimensions 0.6 x 0.4m (unexcavated).
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Possible post-medieval hearth.</i>
(114)	Firm red clayey sand measuring 0.4 x > 0.1 x 0.04m, no inclusions
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Thin undiagnostic clay lense</i>
(115)	Moderately compacted brownish-grey sandy clay / cess, dimensions >1 x > 1m (unexcavated), moderate charcoal flecks.
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Occupation deposit.</i>
(116)	Firm red clay measuring 0.7 x 0.55m (unexcavated), moderate charcoal flecking, single fragment of animal bone.
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Occupation deposit.</i>
[117]	Rectilinear cut, corners not within trench, dimensions > 1.25 x > 0.7 x 0.25m, break of slope top sharp, sides moderately to steeply sloping, break of slope base gentle to sharp, base not fully defined, orientation NW-SE. Truncated by [108], [119] & [121]. Filled by [118].
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Cut of late medieval / post-medieval ditch or linear.</i>
(118)	Moderately compacted to firm dark brown silty clay measuring > 1.25 x > 0.7 x 0.25m, frequent charcoal, moderate CBM, occasional pottery, glass, mortar flecks, clay pipes & animal bone.
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Probably part of (110) which fills [117].</i>
[119]	Sub-circular cut measuring 0.2 x 0.1 x > 0.2m. Break of slope top sharp, sides steeply sloping, break of slope base not fully excavated, base not fully excavated, inclination of axis vertical. Filled by (120).
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Posthole</i>
(120)	Loose dark brown silty clay measuring 0.2 x 0.1 x > 0.2m, occasional charcoal flecks.
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Fill of posthole [119].</i>
[121]	Sub-circular cut measuring 0.5 x > 0.3 x > 0.15m. Break of slope top sharp, sides steeply sloping, break of slope base undulating, base undulating, inclination of axis vertical. Filled by (122).
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Large posthole or small pit.</i>
(122)	Loose to moderately compacted dark brown silty clay measuring 0.5 x > 0.3 x > 0.15m, occasional charcoal flecking, single brown glazed pottery sherd.
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Fill of [121].</i>
(123)	Loose white mortar measuring 0.4 x 0.4m (unexcavated), no inclusions
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Mortar lense.</i>
(124)	Loose deposit of small angular, subangular and rounded stones measuring 0.4 x 0.2 x 0.08m, no inclusions.
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Small rubble spread.</i>
(125)	Moderately compacted brownish-grey sandy clay / cess measuring 0.5 x 0.35 x 0.1m, moderate charcoal flecks.
<i>INTERPRETATION:</i>	<i>Appears to be a continuation of occupation deposit (115).</i>

## SITE SUMMARY

<b>Report Name &amp; Title</b>	BA0715DRBSL	
<b>Contractor's Name and Address</b>	Border Archaeology Chapel Walk Burgess Street Leominster Herefordshire HR6 8DE	
<b>Site Name</b>	Rai Fashions Bye Street Ledbury Herefordshire	
<b>Grid Reference (8 fig)</b>	SO 7108 3765	
<b>Planning Application Number</b>	N/A	
<b>SMR Number/s of Site</b>	45159	
<b>Date of Fieldwork</b>	November 2007	
<b>Date of Report</b>	December 2007	
<b>NUMBER AND TYPE OF FINDS</b>		
<b>Type</b>	<b>Period:</b>	<b>Quantity</b>
<b>Pottery</b>	Post-medieval	46
	Medieval	1
<b>CBM</b>	Post-medieval	2
<b>Clay pipe</b>		13
<b>Animal bone</b>	Post-medieval	21
<b>Metal finds</b>	Post-medieval	1
<b>Other</b>	Post-medieval	7
<b>NUMBER AND TYPE OF SAMPLES COLLECTED</b>		
<b>Sieving for charred plant remains</b>	<b>No of features sampled</b>	0
	<b>No of buckets</b>	0
<b>C<sup>14</sup>/scientific dates</b>	<b>No and Type</b>	N/A
	<b>Result</b>	N/A
<b>Pollen</b>	<b>No of columns/spot samples</b>	0
	<b>Name of pollen specialist</b>	N/A
<b>Bone</b>	<b>Number of buckets sieved for bone</b>	0
	<b>Quantity Recovered</b>	N/A
	<b>Period</b>	NA
<b>Other (type and specialist)</b>	N/A	
	N/A	
<b>Summary of the report:</b>		
<p>An evaluation trench was opened within the car-parking area to the rear of Rai Fashions, Bye Street, Ledbury. The site lies within the precinct of St Katherine's Hospital, founded in 1232, and is considered likely to contain the remains of associated service buildings. The evaluation revealed a number of well-preserved early post-medieval features and deposits at around 1m below the existing ground level. Although evidence for surviving medieval material was limited, it seems likely that medieval deposits lie intact beneath the post-medieval remains.</p>		





## Document Control

<b>Job title</b>	Evaluation at Bye Street Ledbury Herefordshire	<b>Job No</b>	BA0715DRBSL
<b>Report written by</b>	<i>Thomas Wellicome BSc AIFA</i>		
<b>Report edited by</b>	<i>George Children MA AIFA</i>		
<b>Issue No</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Approved for issue</b>
1	Final	December 2007	<i>Neil Shurety</i>