

**Patton House Cottages, Bourton,
Shropshire:
An Archaeological Watching Brief.
2005**

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by
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*Patton House Cottage, near Bourton, Shropshire:
Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief.*

Patton House Cottages, Bourton, Shropshire: An Archaeological Watching Brief. 2005

SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was carried out at Patton House Cottages, Bourton, Shropshire (NGR SO 5861 9472) in December and January 2004/5. Birmingham Archaeology was commissioned to undertake the work in order to meet a condition of the planning permission, requested by Shropshire County Council. The development concerned the construction of a garage and an extension to the existing 18th century house.

The proposed development site lay within the core of the deserted medieval village of Patton (SMR 14072), which existed from at least the 11th century. No archaeology relating to the village was observed during the course of groundworks. This was perhaps surprising since the earthworks were visible on the ground only c.15m from the site of operations. It is possible that the ground here was terraced when the present house was built, so truncating any archaeology.

Two features were recorded which related to the post-medieval occupation of the site. A stone built well and a wall foundation. The well remained undated but may have been contemporary with the construction of the house since it was made of the same limestone. Both the well and the house were probably constructed with stone cut from the large quarried area evident at the front of the house to the west of the development site. The wall foundation, made of limestone, on which rested the remains of a brick wall, butted up against the house and probably represents an extension to the property which has since been demolished.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report details the results of a watching brief undertaken at Patton House Cottages, Bourton, Shropshire (NGR SO 5861 9472) in December and January 2004/5. Birmingham Archaeology was commissioned to carry out the work in order to meet a condition of the planning permission requested by Shropshire County Council (planning reference 04/243). The development concerned the construction of a garage and an extension to the existing house.

The work was undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation prepared by Birmingham Archaeology at the request of Mike Watson, the Historic Environment Officer for Shropshire County Council.

2.0 SITE LOCATION, GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

Patton House Cottages are located on the east side of the B4378 between Brockton and Bourton, just outside Much Wenlock, Shropshire. The site is situated on high ground, on a southeast facing slope just below the visible earthworks of the deserted medieval village of Patton (Plate 1). The natural geology of the area is limestone bedrock with overlying clays.

Patton House Cottages, upon which the extension was due to be built appeared, from its construction to be of roughly 18th century date (Malcolm Hislop pers. comm. Plate 2). It is currently in a state of disrepair and is not a listed building.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

There is evidence of prehistoric activity in the vicinity of Patton. A Neolithic flint scraper and a Bronze Age axe (SMR 11218) were recovered at Bourton. Whilst to the west of the B4378 there are indications of a Bronze Age barrow (SMR 3701) and a double ditched enclosure of Iron Age or Romano-British origin (SMR 11517).

The proposed development site lay within the core of the deserted medieval village of Patton, which existed from at least the 11th century. In 1086 Patton had six recorded inhabitants, it also had a priest and was *caput* of a hundred. An undated trackway (SMR 3702) was also visible running from the village off to the east and this may be contemporary with the settlement. By the 14th century the village was reduced in size; earthworks of abandoned dwellings, still visible in the landscape (SMR 14072), may date from this period. Four farms are registered at Patton in the 1540s and three by 1716; around c.1800 Patton House was built, followed by Patton Grange later on around c.1830.

Just to the west of the development site, c.20m to the front of the house there was evidence of an episode of quarrying. This is not mentioned in the SMR and is currently undated, but may relate to the quarrying of stone used to build Patton House Cottages.

4.0 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

- to monitor all groundworks, including the excavation of foundation and service trenches.
- to record the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains affected by the development works.
- to identify all previously unrecorded sites in order to update the SMR.
- to preserve all archaeological deposits 'by record', and conserve for long term conservation and future analysis all artefactual/ ecofactual material recovered from the site.

The excavation of foundation trenches for a double garage and an extension to the house was monitored by a qualified archaeologist. The excavation was undertaken using a 3CX mechanical excavator fitted with a 0.6m toothed bucket. All stratigraphy was then recorded, even where no archaeology was present. Recording was by means of pre-printed *pro-forma* record cards for contexts and features, supplemented by hand drawn plans and sections (at 1:50) where appropriate, and monochrome print and colour slide photography.

Provision was made for the sampling of deposits for environmental evidence should it have been necessary. Any environmental samples taken would have been bulk samples of a minimum of 20 litres. Any human remains recovered would have been dealt with in accordance with Home Office guidelines.

The site archive conforms to the guidelines set down in Appendix 3 of the *Management of Archaeology Projects* (English Heritage 1991); the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage* (UKIC, 1990) and *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological collections* (Museum and Art Galleries Commission, 1992). The archive, together with recovered finds, will be placed with an appropriate repository within a reasonable time of completion of the watching brief.

5.0 RESULTS

The foundation trenches for the garage covered an area approximately 6.0m x 4.0m and were 0.6m wide and 1.3m deep. The natural subsoil (1001) was exposed at a depth of 0.5m below the current ground level. This was a grey/ beige clay with small angular limestone lumps throughout. In the northwest foundation trench the solid limestone geology was exposed at a depth of c.1.0m, sloping down towards the southeast. Above the natural subsoil, a grey-brown slightly silty clay layer (1000) was observed to a depth of 0.5m. This contained post-medieval pottery of 17th and 18th century date. No features were observed.

Foundation trenches for the house extension were excavated over an area approximately 6.0m x 8.0m. The trenches were c.0.6m wide and 1.4m deep. Natural clay was recorded at a depth of 0.4m below the ground surface.

Excavation was initially stopped soon after it began following the discovery of a well, F100. The well (Fig. 3, Plate 3), was located roughly 2.0m away from the back wall of the house, on the edge of the foundation trench. It was 0.9m in diameter, built of stone and was still full of water. It was capped with a large stone slab c.3.0m square.

A wall foundation F101, was recorded which butted up against the back wall of the house (Fig. 3). It jutted out roughly 1.0m from the house within the new foundation trench and was similarly aligned. It cut the natural subsoil and comprised the remains of a brick wall on a limestone foundation. Very little survived and no dating evidence was recovered.

A mid-brown clay layer was observed in the top 0.4m of the foundation trenches. This contained 19th century pottery and overlay both F100 and F101.

6.0 DISCUSSION

No archaeology which related to the deserted medieval village was noted during the groundworks. This was somewhat surprising since earthworks associated with the village are visible on the ground only c.15m from the footings of the proposed development. It is possible that the ground at this location was terraced when the present house was built and that any archaeology was subsequently truncated. The house is situated on a flat platform and it is likely that the ground surface was lowered in the north of the site where the garage was constructed, and built up in the south. It is possible therefore, that features of archaeological significance may survive to the south below any subsequently made up ground.

Two features were recorded which related to the post-medieval occupation of the site. The well was undated but may be contemporary with the construction of the house since it was constructed of the same stone. Both the well and the house were probably constructed with stone cut from the large quarried area which was evident at the front of the house, to the west of the development site.

The exposed wall stub was a later addition to the house and probably represented an former extension to the property, now demolished. There was no stratigraphic relationship between the well and the wall since the foundation trench runs just to the south of the well. The well had been capped at some stage, perhaps when the wall of the earlier extension was constructed.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the proximity of the buildings discussed in this report, to the deserted medieval village of Patton, it is recommended that any future development be undertaken with that in mind. In the south where it appears likely that the ground surface has been made-up there is the potential for preservation of archaeological remains. Whereas to the north of the development area preservation is less likely due to possible cutting down of the natural ground surface.

8.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due initially to Paul Bent who commissioned the project. Mary Duncan and Emma Hancox undertook the site work. Emma Hancox wrote the report and Bryony Ryder prepared the illustrations. Dr. Malcolm Hislop commented on the date of Patton House Cottages. The project was managed for Birmingham Archaeology by Mark Hewson who also edited the report. Mike Watson the Historic Environment Officer for Shropshire County Council monitored the project.

9.0 REFERENCES

English Heritage 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects*, Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England, London

Hewson, M.P. 2004 *Patton House Cottage, near Bourton, Shropshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*. Birmingham Archaeology.

IFA 2001 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (UKIC) 1998 *First Aid for Finds*, (new edition)

Watson, M.J. 2004 *Brief for a Programme of Archaeological Work at Patton, Nr Bourton, Shropshire*. Shropshire County Council



Fig.1

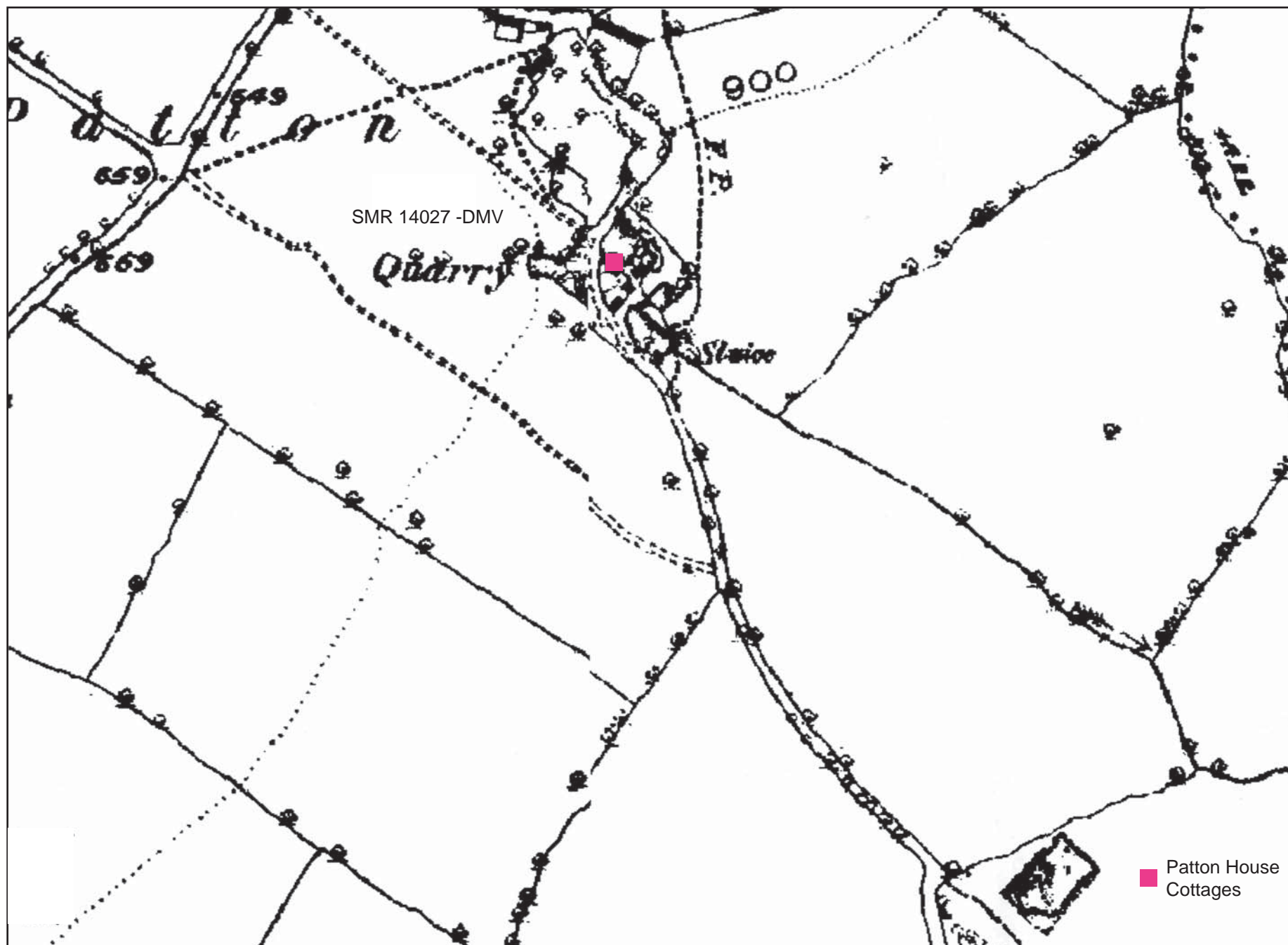


Fig.2

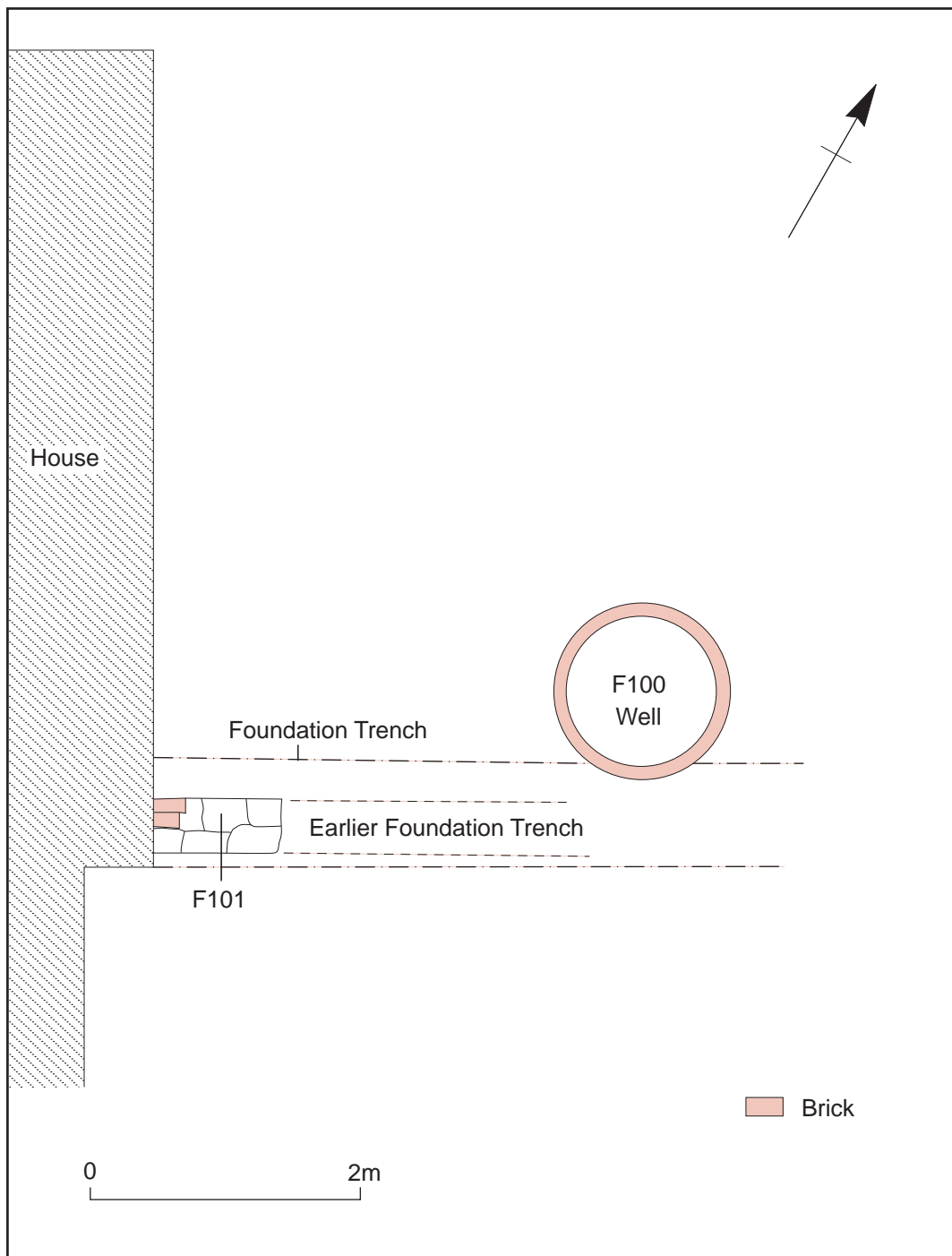


Fig.3



Plate 1



Plate 2



Plate 3

THE UNIVERSITY
OF BIRMINGHAM

**Proposed Building Works at Patton House Cottage
near Bourton, Shropshire.
Written Scheme of Investigation
for Archaeological Watching Brief
Client: Paul Bent
planning reference 04/243
Archaeological Contractor: Birmingham Archaeology**



Birmingham Archaeology

1.0 Introduction

This document outlines the programme of work required to undertake a watching brief at the above site. It forms a written scheme of investigation as requested by M.J. Watson, Historic Environment Officer for Shropshire County Council and is required as part of the planning permission (planning reference 04/243), granted by Shropshire County Council to Paul Bent. The development concerns the construction of an extension to the house and a garage. Any variation in the scope of work would be agreed with the Historic Environment Officer prior to implementation.

2.0 Aims

The archaeological watching brief is intended to preserve and provide a record of any archaeological deposits or features which might be revealed during the excavation of trenches for the establishment of wall foundations. The chief aim being to contribute to an understanding of the history and the significance of the archaeology of the site as a whole. The aims will be achieved through a programme of archaeological monitoring on site during the excavation of all foundation trenches. The watching brief will be maintained on all such excavations, including any service/waste water management trenches that may be required.

3.0 Archaeological Background

The site is centred on NGR SO 5861 9472, at Patton House Cottage, near Bourton, Shropshire.

The proposed development site is located within the core of the deserted medieval village of Patton, which existed from at least the 11th century. In 1086 Patton had six recorded inhabitants. It had a priest and was *caput* of a hundred. By the 14th century, however, the

settlement was reduced in size and earthworks of abandoned dwellings may date from this period.

Four farms are registered at Patton in the 1540s and three by 1716; around c.1800 Patton House was built, followed by Patton Grange later on around c.1830.

There is evidence of prehistoric activity in the vicinity of Patton. A Neolithic flint scraper was recovered at Brockton, whilst to the west of the B4378 there are indications of a Bronze Age barrow and several ditched enclosures of Iron Age or perhaps Romano-British origin.

4.0 Archaeological Watching Brief

4.1 Aims

- to monitor all groundworks, including the excavation of foundation and service trenches.
- to record the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains affected by the development works.
- to identify all previously unrecorded sites in order to update the SMR.
- to preserve all archaeological deposits 'by record', and conserve for long term conservation and future analysis all artefactual/ecofactual material recovered from the site.

4.2 Method

All groundworks will be monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist. This will be complemented by salvage recording of any archaeological deposits and features revealed by contractors' groundworks. All artefacts and faunal remains will be recovered and recorded and a programme of post-excavation analysis will be undertaken following the fieldwork.

5.0 Staffing

The fieldwork will be monitored for Birmingham Archaeology by Dr. Mark Hewson (Project Manager) and will be undertaken by an appropriately experienced professional archaeologist.

Specialist staff will be, where appropriate:

- Dr. Wendy Smith- charred plant remains.
- Emma Hancox - animal bone.
- Dr James Greig - pollen and plant macro-fossils.
- Dr David Smith - micro-fauna.
- Dr Susan Limbrey - soils.
- Dr Ann Woodward - Prehistoric ceramics.
- Jane Evans - Romano-British ceramics.
- Stephanie Ratkai - Medieval and Post-Medieval ceramics.

6.0 Report

The results of the archaeological fieldwork will be described in an illustrated report, which will contain the following:

- (a) Description of the archaeological background.
- (b) Method.
- (c) A narrative description of the results and discussion of the evidence, set in their local and regional context, supported by appropriate plans and sections.
- (d) Summary of the finds and environmental evidence.
- (e) Specialist assessments of the finds and environmental evidence.

The written report will be made publicly accessible, as part of the Shropshire Sites and Monuments Record within twelve months of completion. Copies, both hardcopy and digital if required will also be submitted to the Local Planning Authority, the SCC curatorial staff and, if merited by the results of the work, a summary report will be submitted for inclusion in an appropriate archaeological journal.

7.0 Archive

The site archive will conform to the guidelines set down in Appendix 3 of the *Management of Archaeology Projects* (English Heritage 1991); the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage* (UKIC, 1990) and *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological collections* (Museum and Art Galleries Commission, 1992). The archive, together with recovered finds, will be placed with an appropriate repository within a reasonable time of completion of the evaluation.

8.0 Health and Safety

All current legislation, regulations and guidance will be complied with.

9.0 Timetable

An archaeological watching brief will be maintained throughout the groundworks described above in section 4.1. This is scheduled to begin on Monday 11th October 2004.

10.0 General

Birmingham Archaeology is a Registered Archaeological Organisation with the Institute of Field Archaeologists. All staff will adhere to the Code of Conduct of the Institute.

The project will follow the requirements set down in the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (Institute of Field Archaeologists 2001).

In the event of human remains being encountered all relevant statutory and Home Officer requirements shall be fully complied with.

Any items suspected to be 'Treasure' will be reported in accordance with *The Treasure Act 1996*.

Birmingham Archaeology
September 2004