

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

THE CROFT BARGATES

For Mr Ron Giddings

Rebecca Jones MA

L~P:ARCHÆOLOGY

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

THE CROFT, BARGATES

Client:	Mr Ron Giddings
Local Authority:	Shropshire Council
NGR:	353995,341886
Planning App:	15/01454/FUL
Author(s):	R Jones
Doc Ref:	LP2158C-WBR-v1.2
Date:	July 16
Site Code:	LP2158C

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Abstract

An archaeological Watching Brief was carried out during groundworks at The Croft, Bargates, Whitchurch. The Watching Brief was implemented because of the potential for archaeological remains on the site. The work was carried out by L - P : Archaeology. This report has been prepared by Rebecca Jones of L – P : Archaeology on behalf of Mr R Giddings.

The site lies in an area of high archaeological potential with findspots attesting to the Roman and Medieval periods in close proximity to the site.

The objectives of the Watching Brief were to observe, identify, characterise and record any archaeological remains with a specific aim to record any remains relating to the Roman and Post Medieval activity on the site.

No archaeological features were exposed during the groundworks. Former Post Medieval garden walls for The Croft property were recorded.

1. Introduction

1.1. This report details the results of an archaeological Watching Brief carried out on groundworks for the development at The Croft, Bargates, Whitchurch for Mr Ron Giddings. The local authority is Shropshire Council.

1.2. The fieldwork was undertaken by Rebecca Jones of L - P: Archaeology in June 2016. This report was written by Rebecca Jones of L - P: Archaeology on behalf of Mr Ron Giddings.

1.3. The site is located at The Croft, Bargates, Whitchurch, SY13 1LW, within the county of Shropshire (FIGURE 1). The site is centered on NGR is 353995,341886. The site code allocated by L - P: Archaeology is LP2158C.

1.4. The work was carried out in accordance with a written specification (LP2158C-WSI-V1.1) prepared by Blair Poole of L - P : Archaeology.

2. Site Background

2.1.PLANNING

2.1.1. Planning consent has been granted for the erection of one bungalow with first floor loft bedrooms, and associated detached double garage. The application reference is 15/01454/FUL.

2.1.2. A detailed comment was submitted by the archaeological advisor to the Local Planning Authority in May 2015, which states:

The proposed development site lies within the historic core of Whitchurch as defined by the Central Marches Historic Towns Survey; within the area of the probable Roman cemetery on the north-western edge of the town (HER PRN 05918) and partially within a group of tenement plots of presumed post-medieval date (HER PRN 05956). Whilst the site is understood to have been disturbed to some extent as a result of the construction of London Road in the mid-20th century and the recently completed supermarket, there remains a possibility that archaeological features and deposits relating to the Roman and post-medieval development of the town may be present within it. It is therefore deemed to have moderate archaeological potential.

RECOMMENDATION:

In view of the above and in line with Paragraph 141 of the NPPF, I recommend that a programme of archaeological work, to comprise an archaeological watching brief, be made a condition of any planning permission for the proposed development.

2.1.3. When considering an application, Shropshire Council is bound by governmental policy NPPF (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012) regarding archaeology and planning. As such, the following condition was attached to the development.

Condition 5 of the planning conditions attached to the development states:

No development approved by this permission shall commence until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI).

This written scheme shall be approved in writing by the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of works.

Reason: The development site is known to have archaeological interest.

2.1.4. Mr Giddings and Shropshire Council have agreed the methodology for these

works in the written scheme of investigation, LP2158C-WSI-v1.1 (POOLE, 2016).

2.1.5. This document seeks to satisfy the condition by describing the results of the watching brief and clarifying the status and location of the project archive.

2.2.GEOLOGY

2.2.1. The bedrock geology is thought to be Halite stone and Mudstone of the Wilkesley Halite Member. The drift deposits are thought to be glaciofluvial deposits of Devensian sand and gravels (BRITISH GEOLOGICAL SURVEY 2014).

2.3.TOPOGRAPHY

2.3.1. The site lies at the northern extent of Whitchurch town centre at approximately 100mOD. To the west of the site is Bargates (B5476), with London Road (B5395) lying to the south of the site. To the east of the site is a large supermarket site.

2.4.ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

2.4.1. This section outlines a brief summary of the historic development of the site, containing research carried out by L – P : Archaeology from Historic England's database, local sources and bibliographic texts.

2.4.2. The site lies in an area of high archaeological potential.

PREHISTORIC

2.4.3. The prehistoric periods are not well attested, a single findspot in Whitchurch itself records a perforated stone adze having been recovered from Edgeley Road (MON. REF: 71003), in the wider area around Whitchurch a findspot of a stone axe and macehead was recorded at Dearnford Hall (MON. REF: 70865) and a single flint flake has been recorded northwest of Whitchurch (MON. REF: 71029). The potential for prehistoric archaeological remains is limited.

ROMAN

2.4.4. The Roman period is well represented and the development site lies in an area of particular scope for roman settlement deposits. Whitchurch identified as the

Mediolanum in the Antonine Itinerary (JONES AND WEBSTER, 1968: 193) was a town which lay on a major route-way between Deva Vitrix (Chester) and Viroconium Cornoviorum (Wroxeter) (MON. REF: SJ54 SW3). *Mediolanum* is a Gallo-Brittonic place-name and means "the central plain" (RIVET, 1970: 77).

2.4.5. Initially developed as a fort around AD52, the military moved on and the vicus began to thrive as a town, being established as such by AD133. The primary settlement consisted of timber-framed buildings, but as the town reached prosperity in the early 3rd Century redevelopment in stone took place (MON. REF: SJ54 SW3).

2.4.6. In 1950, c.20m west of the site, the remains of an old road surface were recorded 2' 6" below ground level (MON. REF: 70988) the remains are considered to follow the alignment of Dr M Gelling's RR6a, a portion of road running from Whitchurch to Peover (MON. REF: 1325958), also alluded to as 'Watling Street West' (LAFLIN, 2015:20). Adjacent to this, now known as London Road, is a suspected Roman cemetery (HER: 05918). Also recorded in 1950, on the land adjacent to The Croft an alleged find spot of 7 extended skeletons was recorded but with no other comments and of no definable date (MON. REF: 70985).

2.4.7. Excavations at Bollandsfield, Tarporley Road revealed Roman settlement features (WILSON PARRY, 2015). Within a 1km radius of the development site 3 Roman coins have been recorded at Doddington, Whitchurch (MON. REF: 71027), excavations on Heath Road revealed a Roman occupation site (MON. REF: 70838) and evaluations by this company at 11-11a High Street revealed a Roman ditch (STATTER, 2006, A & B).

EARLY MEDIEVAL

2.4.8. It has been suggested that the dedication of the church to St Alkmund indicates an Anglo-Saxon foundation although the church is not mentioned at Domesday (DUGGAN, 1935: 54). There is, at present, no evidence of a medieval settlement at Whitchurch prior to the 11th century.

MEDIEVAL

2.4.9. Whitchurch is noted in the Domesday Survey of 1086 as *Westune/tone* and under the lordship of William of Warenne. Whitchurch was a large settlement of 41 households, with 23 villagers, 9 smallholders, 2 slaves and 7 others with enough woodland for 400 pigs (WILLIAMS AND MARTIN, 2003). The first recorded use of 'Whitchurch' is in 1271-2 (GELLING, 1990: 311). The medieval period is well represented in the historic core of the town, however the proposed development site lies just to the north. The medieval market was cited to have its first charter in 1190, however this is recorded in a 13th Century document (JAMES, 1996), in 1199 Whitchurch is listed as 'Album Monastarium' (MON. REF: 1300084) the name likely refers to a new stone church than a white church (ELKWALL, 1985: 513) and references to a castle in Whitchurch arise at the same date (HER 00904) it is recorded that the castle along with most of the town was destroyed by Owain Glyndwr in 1404, the castle gates however surviving until the construction of the Natwest Bank (MON. REF: 71000).

POST MEDIEVAL

2.4.10. The later periods are well attested by numerous buildings and findspots. Within 500m of site are situated seven Grade II listed buildings, including The Old Rectory (LISTING 1056006), Coach House and forecourt (LISTING 1366509) Game Larder (LISTING 1177619) and Ice House (LISTING 1055990) dating from 1749.

Of particular interest is The Mount Hotel, c300m west of site, which is an early 19th century former house made of red brick and sandstone (LISTING 1056005) which was used during WWII as accommodation by the Army Signals Headquarters Office. c.10m north of the hotel is an associated early 19th century stable block and coach house (LISTING 1177402).

2.5.SITE CONDITIONS

2.5.1. The site is a former garden and is the western boundary of the London Road Sainsbury's development site.

3. Aims and Objectives

- 3.1. The general aims of the archaeological watching brief were to record the character, date, type, state of preservation, and extent of any archaeological remains on site exposed or disturbed during groundworks.
- 3.2.. The specific aim of the archaeological watching brief was to record any remains relating to the Roman and Post Medieval activity on the site.

4. Methodology

4.1. SITE WORKS

- 4.1.1. The site area is approximately 865m² and is an irregular polygon in shape. Groundworks associated with the proposed development (FIGURE 2) were archaeologically monitored. The methodology for the archaeological monitoring is outlined below.
- 4.1.2. All works were carried out in accordance with the Code of Conduct as set out by the Cifa (2014A). Accordingly the monitoring archaeologist abided by the Cifa's code of Professional Conduct (2014B) and Cifa's Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief (2014C).
- 4.1.3. All excavations were undertaken utilising suitable plant, in this case a tracked 360° machine with a toothless ditching bucket. A qualified and experienced archaeologist monitored these excavation activities to ensure that appropriate care was taken. Undifferentiated topsoil and overburden of recent origin was removed in successive spits no greater than 0.10m in depth until required ground level was reached.
- 4.1.4. All plan and section surfaces were examined for archaeological deposits and features, with each deposit being allocated a three digit identifier (context number) and recorded on standard L - P : Archaeology recording sheets. Digital photography played an integral part in the recording of this site with general shots taken to show wider site context.
- 4.1.5. The monitored groundworks consisted of clearing 860mm (at deepest) of modern rubble deposits to grade the site for a flat terrace prior to bunglow construction, approximately to 100m OD.

5. Results

- 5.1.1. Results are given below. Not all context numbers referred to in the text are illustrated, but all are in the archive. Context numbers are given in (parentheses) and cut numbers are given in [square brackets].
- 5.1.2. Prior to development this site had formerly been the western boundary of the London Road Sainsburys development. During that construction a deposit of demolition material was spread across site at a maximum depth exceeding 0.86m below current ground level.
- 5.1.3. A 200mm thick deposit of modern hardcore gravel, (100), was removed to reveal a 210mm thick very dark brownish grey compact and friable silt deposit, (101) which had built up as the modern 'topsoil' after the deposition of the demolition material, (102) across the site.



Plate 1 - South-facing representative section, with 1 x 1m scale

- 5.1.4. The full depth of demolition material was not excavated as the required ground level at 100.86m OD was reached within this context, as such, no archaeological features were exposed in plan or section.
- 5.1.5. The demolition material abutted two former Post Medieval garden walls of The Croft property. A 12 course (1m) high brick and mortar wall, (103), extended for 2m from the western limit of excavation and turned at a 90 ° angle to continue for a further 2m before extending into the northern limit of excavation.



Plate 2 - East-facing cross section of wall (103), with 1 x 1m scale

5.1.6. A second wall (104) was recorded in the northern limit of excavation, extending c.1.4m from wall (103), remnants of wall (104), aligned east to west was excavated to 5 courses high. Made of brick and mortar this wall is also likely to be associated with the gardens of The Croft, the stratigraphic relationship however is outside the limits of excavation.

6. Discussion and Conclusions

- 6.1. The watching brief consisted of the monitoring and recording of stripping the soil deposits to create a levelled terrace for the construction of a new bungalow.
- 6.2. No archaeological features were exposed during these groundworks and no finds were recovered.
- 6.3. Given the depth of modern deposits, which have built up the ground level, it is likely that any remaining archaeological resource are preserved in-situ.

7. Archive

7.1.The paper archive consists of:

- ◆ 2 x Watching Brief Record Sheets
- ◆ 1 x Drawing Film
- ◆ 1 x Drawing Register
- ◆ 1 x Photographic Register
- ◆ 1 x Context Register
- ◆ 5 x Context sheets

7.2.The archive is to be deposited at the Shropshire Museums Service.

SOURCES CONSULTED

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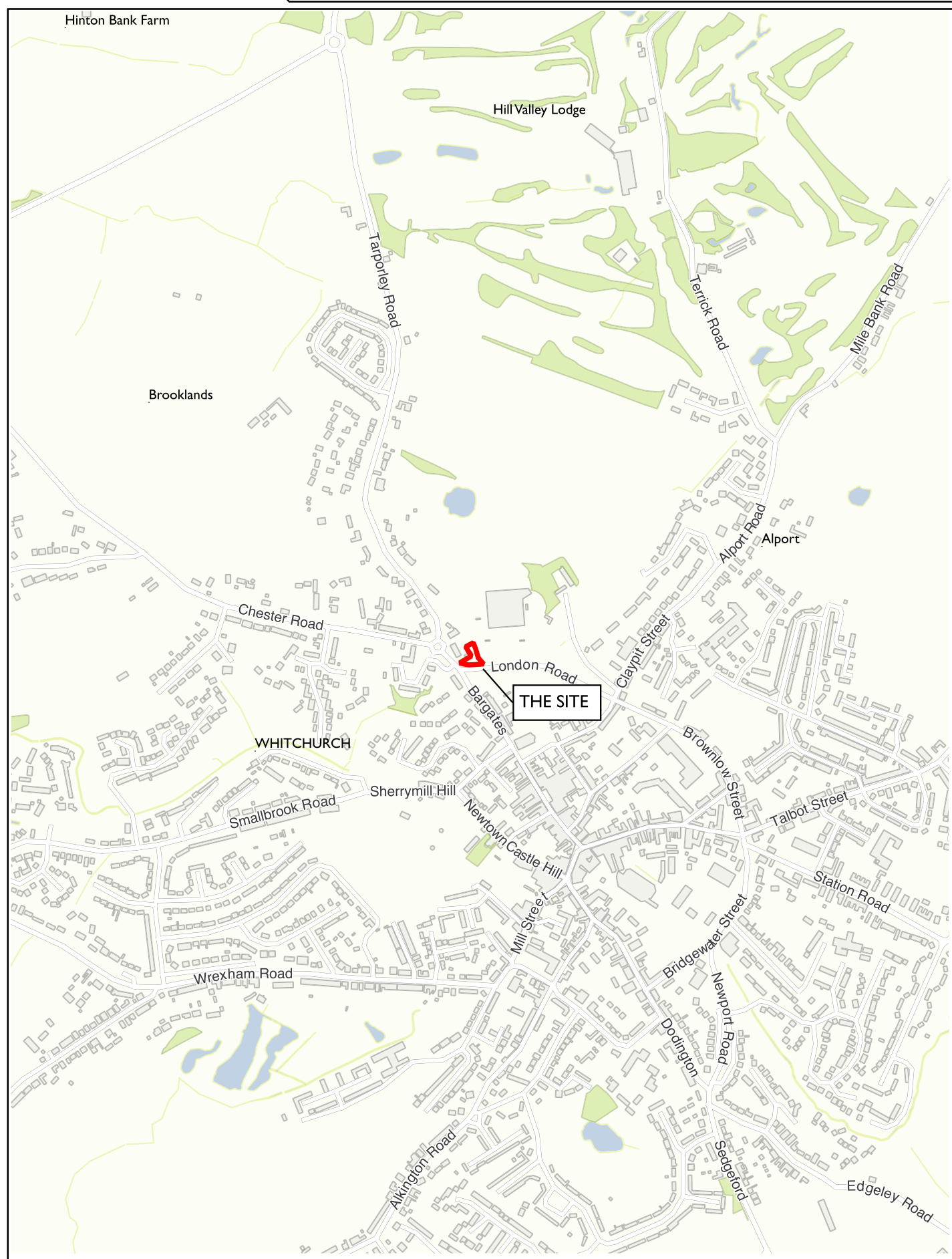
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FIGURES

FIGURE I // Site Location - General



0 500 m



PROJECT // LP2158C - The Croft, Bargates

DESCRIPTION // Site Location

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DOC REF: LP2158C-WBR-v1

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FIGURE 2 // Site Plan



0

20 m



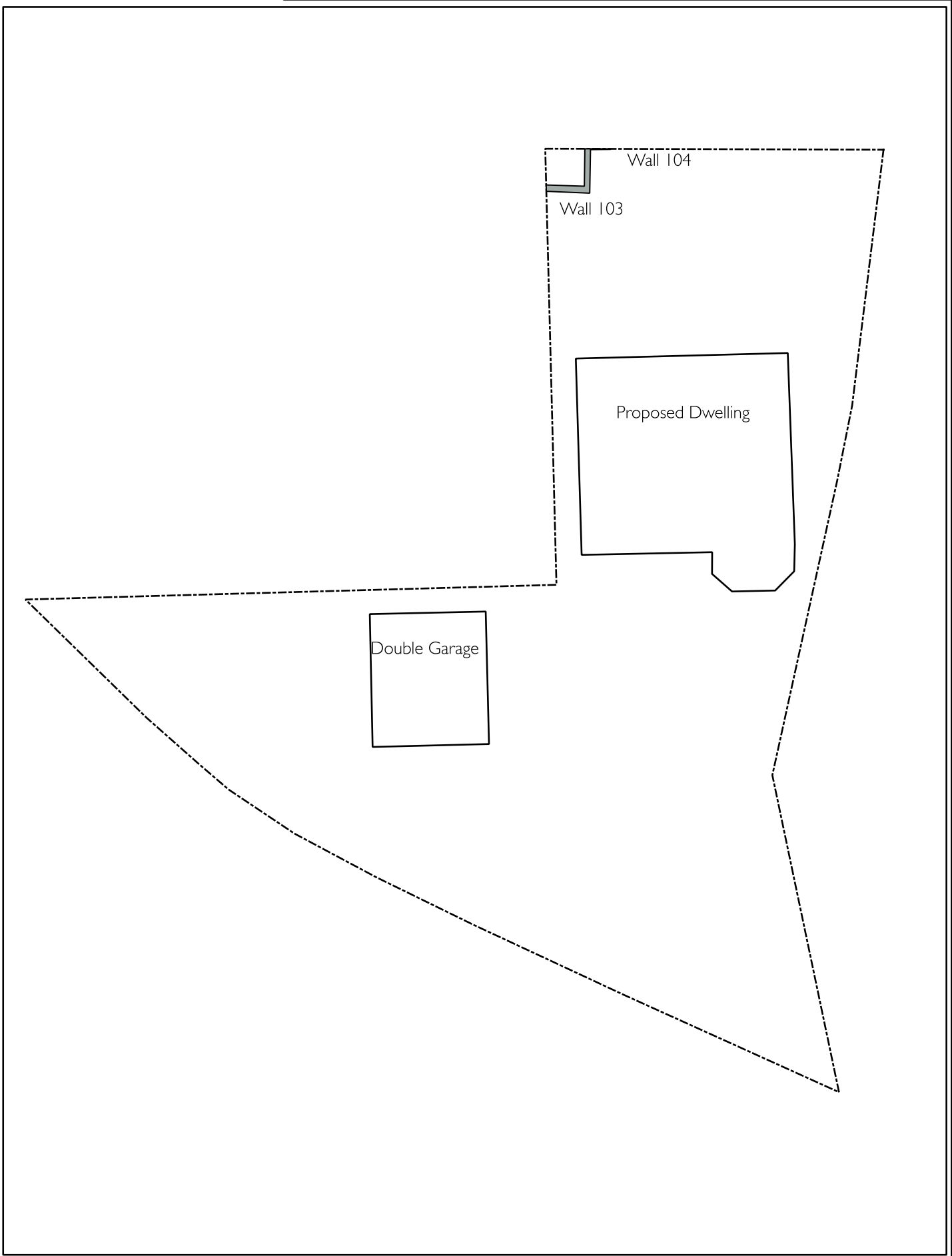
PROJECT // LP2158C - The Croft Bargates

DESCRIPTION // Site Plan

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0 15 m



PROJECT // 2158C - The Croft Bargates

DESCRIPTION // Archaeology

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OASIS FORM

APPENDIX I

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

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OASIS ID: lparchae1-254105

Project details

Project name	Archaeological Watching Brief - The Croft, Bargates, Whitchurch
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief was carried out during groundworks at The Croft, Bargates, Whitchurch. The Watching Brief was implemented because of the potential for archaeological remains on the site. The work was carried out by L - P : Archaeology. This report has been prepared by Rebecca Jones of L - P : Archaeology on behalf of Mr R Giddings. The site lies in an area of high archaeological potential with findspots attesting to the Roman and Medieval periods in close proximity to the site. The objectives of the Watching Brief were to observe, identify, characterise and record any archaeological remains. No archaeological features were exposed during the groundworks. Former post-medieval garden walls for The Croft property were recorded.
Project dates	Start: 06-06-2016 End: 30-06-2016
Previous/future work	Not known / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	LP2158C - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	WALL Modern
Significant Finds	NA None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

Project location

Country	England
Site location	SHROPSHIRE NORTH SHROPSHIRE WHITCHURCH URBAN Land at The Croft, Bargates, Whitchurch
Postcode	SY13 1LW
Study area	865 Square metres

Site coordinates SJ 53991 41868 52.971878482588 -2.685197527888 52 58 18 N 002 41 06 W Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 100.87m Max: 101.71m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	L - P : Archaeology
Project brief originator	Self (i.e. landowner, developer, etc.)
Project design originator	L - P : Archaeology
Project director/manager	Blair Poole
Project supervisor	Rebecca Jones

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive Exists?	No
Paper Archive recipient	Shropshire Museum Service
Paper Archive ID	LP2158C
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Report"

Project bibliography 1

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