Archaeological Watching Brief Report

PRIDE HILL SHREWSBURY

For Balfour Beatty

C Matthews MRes

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

PRIDE HILL SHREWSBURY

Client:	Balfour Beatty
Local Authority:	Shropshire Council
NGR:	349198, 312586
Planning App:	General Permitted development
Author(s):	C Matthews MRes
Doc Ref:	LP2768C-WBR-v.1.3
Date:	July 18
Site Code:	LP2768C

A trading name of the $\mathsf{L}-\mathsf{P}$: Heritage LLP

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Abstract

An Archaeological Watching Brief was carried out during the essential replacement of a gas main beneath Pride Hill, Shrewsbury. 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 Christopher Matthews of L - P: Archaeology on behalf of Balfour Beatty.

The site forms one of the main pedestrianised high streets in the centre of the Medieval town of Shrewsbury and one of its early Medieval thoroughfares.

The objectives of the Watching Brief were to determine the presence or absence of archaeological deposits and where appropriate to record any archaeological remains found on site.

During the Watching Brief evidence of 18th and 19th century demolition material was identified, however, there were no surviving Medieval or earlier archaeological deposits present. This is likely due to the high number of truncations by modern and disused services and limited depth of excavation, which extended to a maximum of 1.2m, without encountering natural deposits. A small assemblage of finds were retrieved from Trench 3, located in the centre of the site area, which were all Post Medieval in date.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report details the results of an Archaeological Watching Brief carried out on Pride Hill, in Shrewsbury town centre, on behalf of Balfour Beatty, to monitor the replacement of a gas service pipe.
- 1.2. The fieldwork was carried out by Christopher Matthews of L-P: Archaeology between the 4^{th} of February and the 30^{th} of March 2018. This report was written by Christopher Matthews of L-P: Archaeology.
- 1.3. The site is located on Pride Hill in the centre of Shrewsbury. The NGR is (SJ) 349198, 312586 (FIGURE 1).
- **1.4.** The site code allocated by L P: Archaeology is LP2768C.
- 1.5. The work was carried out in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Blair Poole of L P: Archaeology (POOLE 2018).
- 1.6.All works were carried out in accordance with the Code of Approved Practice as set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CHARTERED INSTITUTE FOR ARCHAEOLOGISTS 2014A). Accordingly the project team abided by the CIfA's code of approved practice.

2. Site Background

2.1.PLANNING

- 2.1.1. An archaeological Watching Brief was conducted on gas mains replacement works at Pride Hill, Shrewsbury. This work was carried out under General Permitted Development.
- **2.1.2.** In 2015 the Town and Country Planning (General permitted Development) (England) Order was enacted, which is a national grant of planning permissions allowing certain building works and changes of use to be carried out without having to make a planning application.

The relevant part of the Act for these works is:

Part 15, Class A: gas transporters, relevant permitted development is granted for:

- (a) the laying of underground mains, pipes or other apparatus
- (d) the placing and storage on land of pipes and other apparatus to be included in the main or pipe which is being or is about to be laid or constructed in pursuance of planning permission granted or deemed to be granted under Part 3 of the Act (control over development)
- **2.1.3.** The Local Planning Authority is Shropshire Council. This document seeks to satisfy a request from the Archaeological Adviser to Shropshire Council.
- **2.1.4.** The site lies within the historic core of Shrewsbury and in the Shrewsbury Conservation Area. It is surrounded by a multitude of Listed Buildings and in close proximity to the Scheduled Monument of a length of the Medieval town wall, sally port and interval tower (1003715).

2.2.GEOLOGY

2.2.1. The British Geological Survey Geo Index for the site records the bedrock as Salop formation mudstone, sandstone and conglomerate. Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 272 to 310 million years ago, overlain with Devensian sand and gravel formed up to 2 million years ago (BRITISH GEOLOGICAL SURVEY 2017). This data is given at a relatively low resolution.

2.3.TOPOGRAPHY

- **2.3.1.** The site is located within a pedestrianised zone of the city centre. Shrewsbury is situated on the a meander of the River Severn which surrounds the city on all sides, but for a small gap to the north-west.
- **2.3.2.** The site lies on a slope area, varying from approximately 70m OD at its northeastern end to around 62m OD at its southwestern end. The area is currently part of the shopping district and is surrounded by commercial properties (FIGURE 2).

2.4.ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

2.4.1. The aim of this section is not to give an entire history of Pride Hill or Shrewsbury but to highlight the heritage assets and periods of time with potential archaeological remains specific to the site.

PREHISTORIC AND ROMAN

2.4.2. There is very little evidence of prehistoric or Roman activity within the centre of Shrewsbury, however, 2.2km to the south west of Pride Hill at Sharpstones Hill (Sudestone deserted Medieval village) near to the site of a Greek Orthodox church, excavations have uncovered evidence of Neolithic and Roman activity (PRN 00087).

MEDIEVAL

- 2.4.3. Pride Hill is thought to have been one of the main Medieval thoroughfares through the town since the Early Medieval period, it is first recorded as Pride Hill around 1378, which is thought to relate to the Pride family. The top of the street was known as High Pavement leading down to Butchers Row, which housed shoe makers and leather workers. The street is believed to have been divided into relatively large plots in the 13th to 14th century, with holding 'halls' running parallel to the street (POOLE 2018).
- **2.4.4.** During the 1970s a series of archaeological investigations were undertaken at 7-9, and 10-12 Pride Hill. These provided evidence of a series of activity spanning the late Saxon settlement dating between the 10th century and 21st

century. Cess pits associated with the 10th and 11th century Saxon town were identified, this was followed by a series of construction and demolition from the 13th to the 19th century. Associated pits, cellars and ovens were also identified with a large assemblage of of pottery, building material, coins, Clay pipe and animal bones (CARVER 1983).

POST MEDIEVAL

2.4.5. In the 18th and 19th centuries leather working was replaced by butchers, whose prominence and bank accounts grew. The street saw major development in the Georgian period, reflected in many of the buildings currently standing (POOLE 2018).

2.5.SITE CONDITIONS

2.5.1. The site forms part of an active pedestrian high street, in Shrewsbury town centre, surrounded by commercial and domestic buildings.

3. Aims and Objectives

- **3.1.**The general aims of the Archaeological Watching Brief were:
 - ◆ To determine the presence or absence of archaeological deposits or remains,
 - to record the character, date, location and preservation of any archaeological remains by record,
 - to record the nature and extent of any previous damage to archaeological remains on the site.

4. Methodology

- **4.1.**For a full description of the archaeological methodology please refer to section 4 of the Written Scheme of Investigation (POOLE 2018).
- **4.2.**The groundworks were archaeologically monitored and recorded prior to the insertion of the gas mains. The excavations consisted of eight strip trenches of varying dimensions, six located along Pride Hill and two single trenches on Butchers Row and St Mary Street. These were targeted over an existing ductile gas main and connecting services, which once located meant a new plastic main could be inserted into the old main, reducing the need for larger open cast excavation.
- **4.3.**There were no deviations from the WSI and only minor hindrances were encountered throughout works monitored.

5. Results

- **5.1.**The results of the Watching Brief are given below. Not all context numbers referred to in the text are illustrated, but all are in the archive. Deposit numbers are given in (parentheses) and cut numbers are given in [square brackets].
- 5.2. The Archaeological Watching Brief monitored work across eight excavations along Pride Hill, with one on Butchers Row and St Mary Street; these have been numbered in chronological order of excavation and the results are given in this format (FIGURE 3).

5.3.TRENCH 1

5.3.1. Trench one was excavated in two parts, firstly a small pit targeted over a possible service connection and the second a larger excavation for cutting and inserting the new main. This trench was situated outside 24 Pride Hill and the war memorial.



Plate 1 - Working shot of Trench 1 excavation showing gravel fills of services.

5.3.2. The top layer consisted of the modern brick surface (01) at 0.05m thick, with a buff sand bedding (02) 0.05m thick below(FIGURE 4).

- 5.3.3. This was not consistent along the trench with an earlier tarmac road (07) present at the southeast extents of the excavation, towards the centre of Pride Hill Street, with visible yellow road markings, with a mixed dark brown soil with stone and brick rubble (08) minimum of 0.4m thick below. To the northern extent and closest to the shop fronts was a grey stone hardcore (03), 0.3m thick, which sat above a mixed orange brown sandy soil (04) at a minimum of 0.4m thick, which contained fragments of CBM and rubble.
- **5.3.4.** Running through the centre of the trench were two mains service pipes, one a capped off gas main with a later plastic service connection (also cut off), the other was the active gas main with a plastic service connection heading towards the southern shop fronts. A cut [05] for the active gas main was visible c.0.6m wide in the northern end of the trench and a smaller cut likely associated with the service connection was visible in the south eastern edge of the trench.
- **5.3.5.** In the middle of the trench was a cut disused lead pipe and a second lead pipe connecting to a plastic water pipe (possibly active). Near to this and situated alongside the active gas main was an old disused iron hydrant and corroded iron pipe.

5.4.TRENCH 2

- **5.4.1.** Trench two located outside 19 Pride Hill and consisted of a small oval trench targeting a tap on the gas main.
- 5.4.2. The surface consisted of the modern brick high street (01) 0.05m thick, with a bedding of sand (02) 0.05m thick. Below this was remnants of the former tarmac road (13) 0.05m thick with inclusions of large round pebbles inset, suggesting a pavement. This overlaid a dark brown soil (08) with large cobble and rubble inclusions, 0.35m thick. This sat above a dark orange-brown mixed sandy silty soil (04) at a minimum of 0.6m thick, this is likely to be the back fill of the service cut and at the base of the trench three service pipes were identified close together with one possible cut (FIGURE 5).



Plate 2 - Trench 2 excavation showing gas mains and adjacent disused mains.

5.5.TRENCH 3

- **5.5.1.** The third trench was located on Pride Hill, opposite Butchers Row. It was a long L shaped trench, which was located to find a service connection, junction for the Butchers Row main and an extension for cutting and inserting the new pipe (FIGURE 6).
- **5.5.2.** The surface consisted of the modern brick high street (01) 0.05m thick, with a bedding of sand (02) 0.05m thick. Below which was the former tarmac road (07) 0.05 m thick with visible yellow road markings and a grey stone hardcore (03)0.15m thick. Beneath this was a mixed deposit of red and orange sand with degraded sandstone (possible redeposited natural) (09) seen at a thickness of 0.5m; which contained a spread of mostly 19th and early 20th century pottery, as well as, rough hand cut brick (possibly 18th century).
- **5.5.3.** Within the trench were several service cuts including the active gas main, a disused steal water pipe, an unknown corroded iron pipe, a modern plastic gas service connected to the main, a junction intersection for the gas main running towards Butchers Row and a cut with a capped water main consisting of both plastic and lead pipes.



Plate 3 - Oblique elevation shot of Trench 3 showing north west facing elevation.

5.6.TRENCH 4

- **5.6.1.** Trench 4 was excavated into Castle Street at the top of Pride Hill, outside numbers 35-44, adjacent to the pedestrian crossing.
- **5.6.2.** The trench was targeting the connection to the upgraded mains running through Castle Street, as well as excavating a length of the old service for cutting and inserting the new pipe. The trench was long and narrow with a smaller square trench detached to the north east, which was abandoned due to a damaged water main.
- **5.6.3.** The upper layer of this excavation consisted of a tarmac road surface and hardcore (12) 0.27m thick; below this was a dark orange brown sandy soil (08) with brick and rubble inclusions, at a minimum of 0.45m in thickness.
- **5.6.4.** Running across the trench and cut into the modern tarmac was a purple plastic electricity pipe (road lighting and/or CCTV) which turned and ran along the curb and set into the fine concrete (14). Also running across the top of the trench but cut immediately below the modern tarmac and hardcore was a degraded iron pipe.

- **5.6.5.** Adjacent to the pavement was a fine grain sandy concrete (14) which was set over the modern water main at a depth of 0.45m and directly below at the base of the trench was the active gas main with no visible cut.
- **5.6.6.** At the base of the north eastern smaller trench was a sloping concrete surface with crushed brick inclusions (15). Set into this was an unknown iron object but likely to be part of an earlier service.

5.7.TRENCH 5

5.7.1. Trench 5 was located on outside 10 Pride Hill and was located over a service connection. The trench was a small rectangular cut used to reconnect the service to the main (FIGURE 7). The surface consisted of the modern brick high street (01) 0.08m thick, with a bedding of sand (02) 0.03m thick. Below this was a former tarmac road (07) with visible yellow road markings 0.14m thick set onto a grey stone hardcore (03) 0.14m thick. This sat above a mixed deposit of orange-brown sandy soils (04) 0.46m thick and at the base of the excavation was a buff sand with white mortar fleck inclusion (possible service backfill) (16) at a minimum of 0.35m thick.



Plate 4 - Overview of Trench 5 with plastic services.

5.7.2. Within the base of the trench was the active ductile gas main and plastic service

connection, a disused steel gas main and a small corroded iron pipe. Truncated by these was an old cut for a lead water pipe.

5.8.TRENCH 6

5.8.1. Trench 6 was located at the southern end of the pedestrianised area of the high street, outside number 7 Pride Hill. The trench was located over a service connection to the mains and consisted of a small rectangular trench. The surface consisted of the modern brick high street (01) 0.08m thick with a bedding of sand (02) 0.04m thick, below this was former tarmac road (13) and grey stone hardcore (03) at a combined 0.12 m in thickness; cut into this layer was a modern plastic drain pipe. Below the former road surface was a deposit of mixed orange-brown sandy soils (09) seen at a minimum of 0.85m thick, with rubble inclusions of stone and CBM.



Plate 5 - Excavation of Trench 6 showing plastic drain pipe and gas service at the base.

5.8.2. Similar to Trench 5, within the base of the trench was the active ductile gas main with a plastic service connection, a disused steel gas main and a small corroded iron pipe.

5.9.TRENCH 7

5.9.1. Trench 7 was located at the southern end near 4 Pride Hill and was targeting a long section of pipe for cutting and inserting the new mains. The trench was not completed due to a drop in the mains which took it beyond the safe parameters for excavation.



Plate 6 - Trench 7 excavation showing dropping gas main

- 5.9.2. The matrix was the same as Trench 6, with the modern brick high street (01) 0.05m thick and sand bedding (02) 0.05m thick, above the former tarmac road (13) and grey stone hardcore (03)at a combined 0.12m thick. Again below this was a deposit of mixed orange-brown sandy soils with rubble inclusions of stone and CBM (09) at a minimum of 0.5m thick.
- **5.9.3.** At the base of the trench was the ductile gas main with a dropping bend.

5.10.TRENCH 8

- **5.10.1.**Trench 8 was located outside 1 Butchers Row and was targeting the join of the older ductile *gas* main and a more recent plastic gas main. The trench was a small rectangular excavation.
- 5.10.2. The surface consisted of square stone cobbles with a dark silty bedding (17)

- 0.2m thick. Below this was the mixed deposit of orange-brown sandy soils (09) with rubble inclusions of stone and CBM at 0.6m thick .
- 5.10.3.Cut immediately below the surface (17) were modern telecom cables contained within plastic piping which covered 50% of the trench. Seen beneath these cables were an active ductile gas main and connection to the new plastic main. Adjacent to this was a second large cast or ductile main (likely disused). Further services were identified beneath the gas main: a large ceramic salt glazed drain, with damage that had been repaired using a stone slab and fine concrete / mortar. Running across the trench was a truncated iron pipe which was being reused for cabling.

6. Finds

- **6.1.**A small assemblage of artefacts were recovered from Trench 3, all were Post Medieval in date. The objects recovered are summarised below:
- **6.2.**A total of 15 sherds of pottery weighing 413 grams were recovered from context (09). This included 19th century wares comprising 4 sherds of pearl ware decorated with blue transfer-printed designs and 3 sherds of Mocha ware. Earlier 18th century pottery was present as residual material including: 3 joining rim sherds from a large black-glazed earthenware storage jar with a lug-handle; and a rim sherd from a press-moulded slipware dish.
- **6.3.**Two fragments of ceramic building material weighing 91 grams were recovered from context (09) which represented unglazed red earthenware post-medieval roof tiles. One fragment had evidence of a nib.
- **6.4.**Two fragments of animal bone were recovered from context (09). One fragment was a small indeterminate piece of calcined bone weighing 2 grams. The second fragment was part of a cattle mandibular ramus with evidence of butchery.

7. Discussion and Conclusions

- 7.1.Development was permitted for the replacement of a gas main and associated enabling works along Pride Hill High Street in Shrewsbury town centre, NGR 349198 312586.
- 7.2.As part of the planning condition an Archaeological Watching Brief was carried out on all ground works with a maximum depth of 1.2m, in which natural was not reached. Archaeological works were carried out by Christopher Matthews of L-P: Archaeology between the 4^{th} of February and the 30^{th} of March 2018.
- 7.3. No archaeological features were identified during works monitored. The area had been highly truncated by multiple mains and service trenches, limiting the visibility of archaeological deposits. Excavation did not locate *in situ* archaeological deposits, subsoils or natural formations.
- **7.4.**A spread of finds were retrieved from trench 3 dating from the Post Medieval period and demolition rubble in the upper layers from across the site, give an indication of 19^{th} and 20^{th} century construction and demolition.
- **7.5.**No Medieval features or objects were identified during the watching brief, suggesting either a greater depth of survival than 1.2m or the absence of activity due to truncation. The former is the most likely explanation given the location and extent of known Medieval activity in the centre of Shrewsbury, as well as, no natural deposits observed during the excavation.

8. Archive

- **8.1.**The paper archive consists of:
 - ◆ 1 x Drawing Register
 - ◆ 2 x Drawing Film
 - ◆ 3 x Photographic Register
 - 88 x Black and white photographs and negatives
 - ◆ 4 x Watching Brief Record sheets
 - ◆ 1 x Context Register
 - ◆ 10 x Context sheets
- **8.2.**The finds archive consists of:
 - ◆ 1 x bag artefacts as described in Section 6.
- **8.3.**The archive is to be deposited with the Shropshire Museum Service.

SOURCES CONSULTED

L-P:ARCHÆOLOGY

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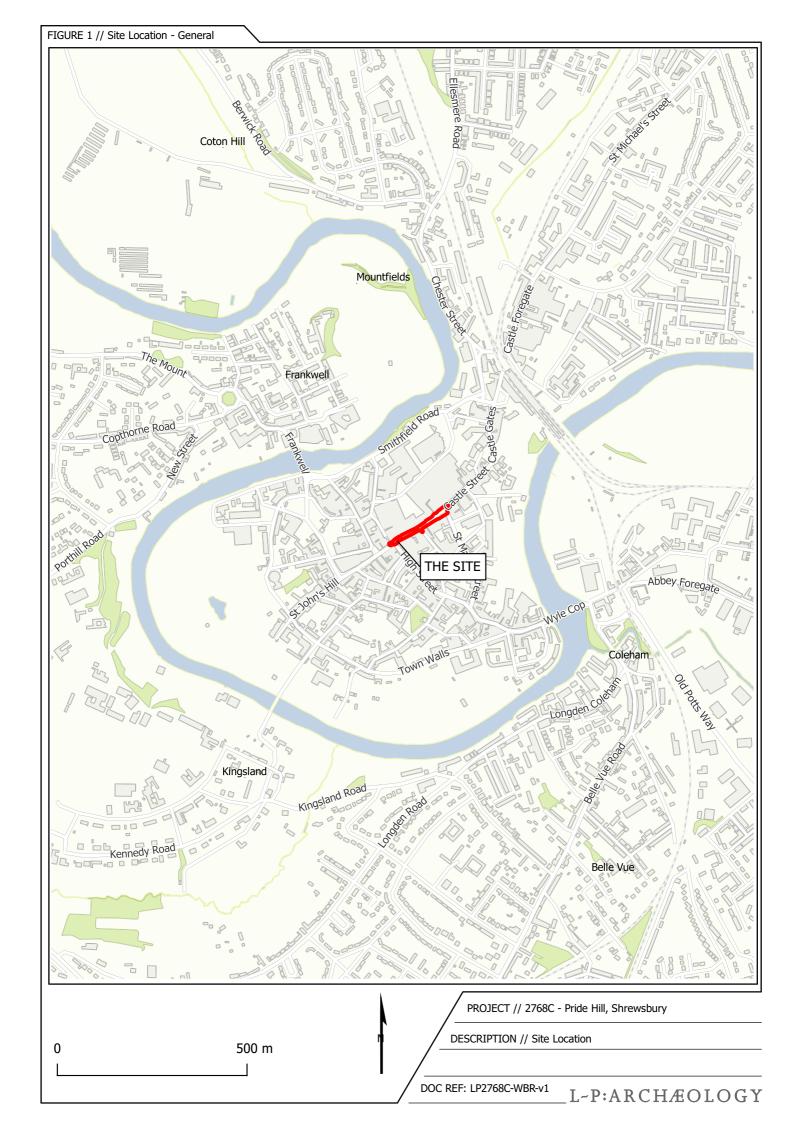
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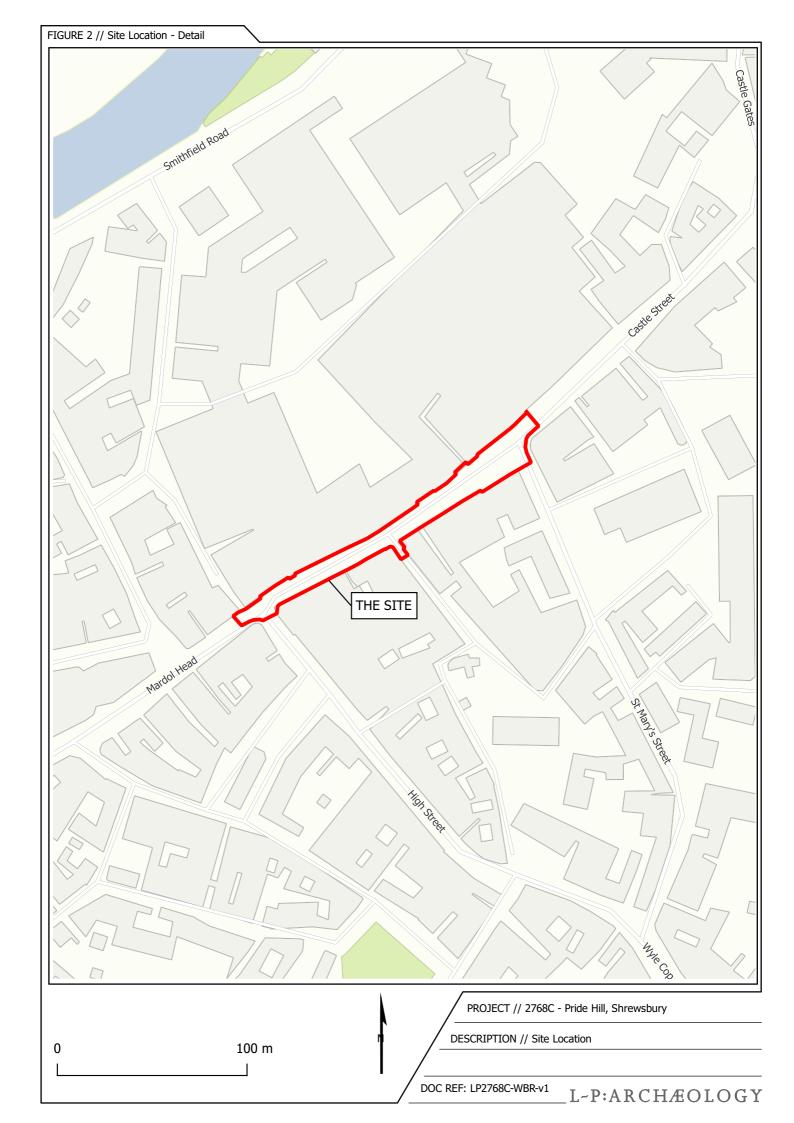
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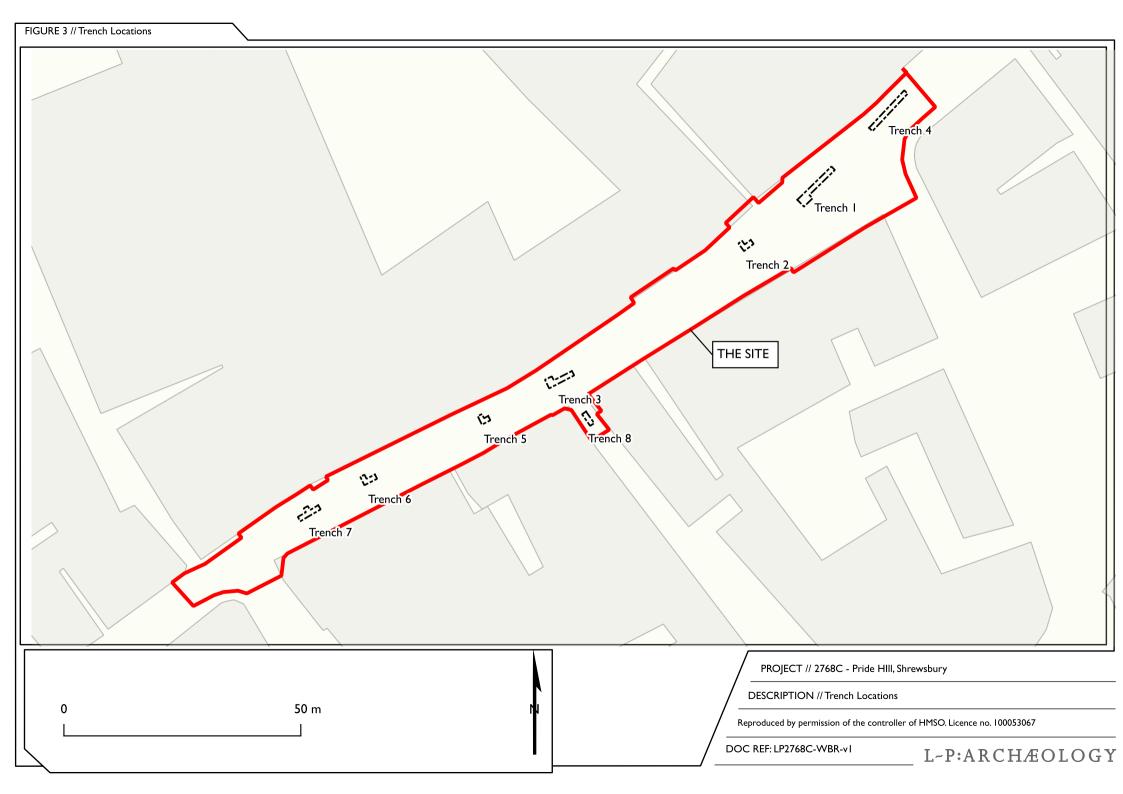
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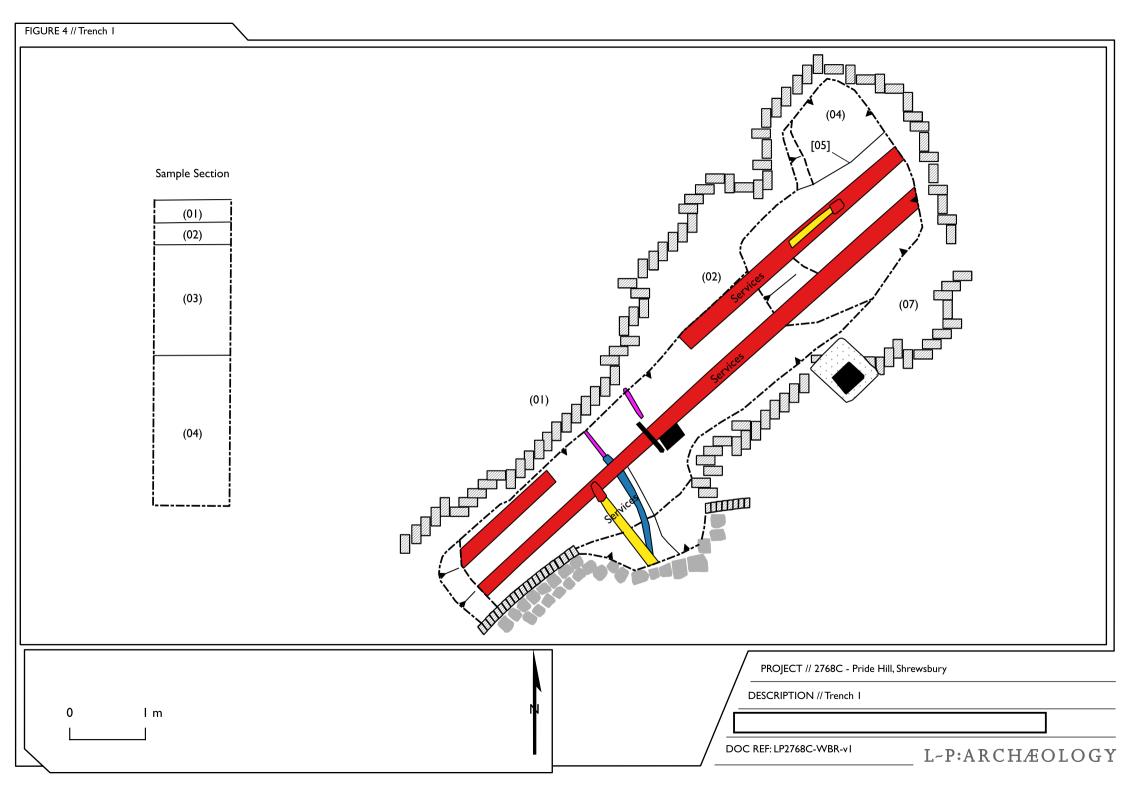
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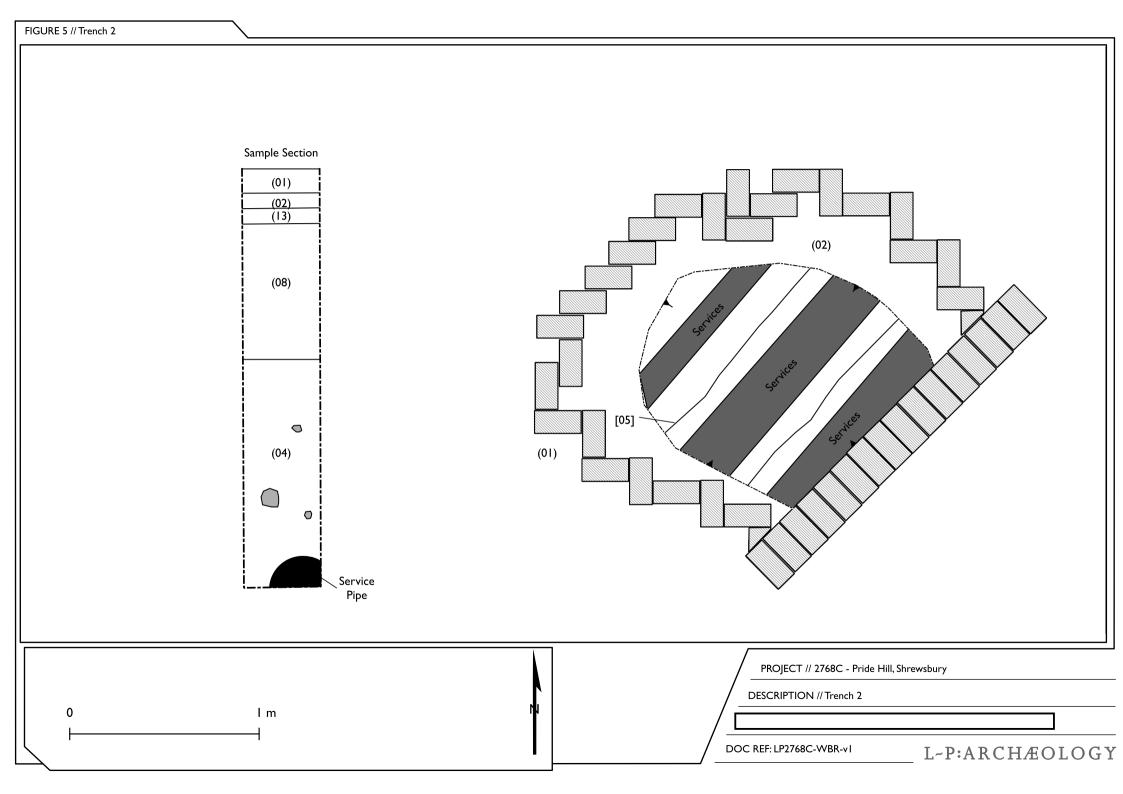
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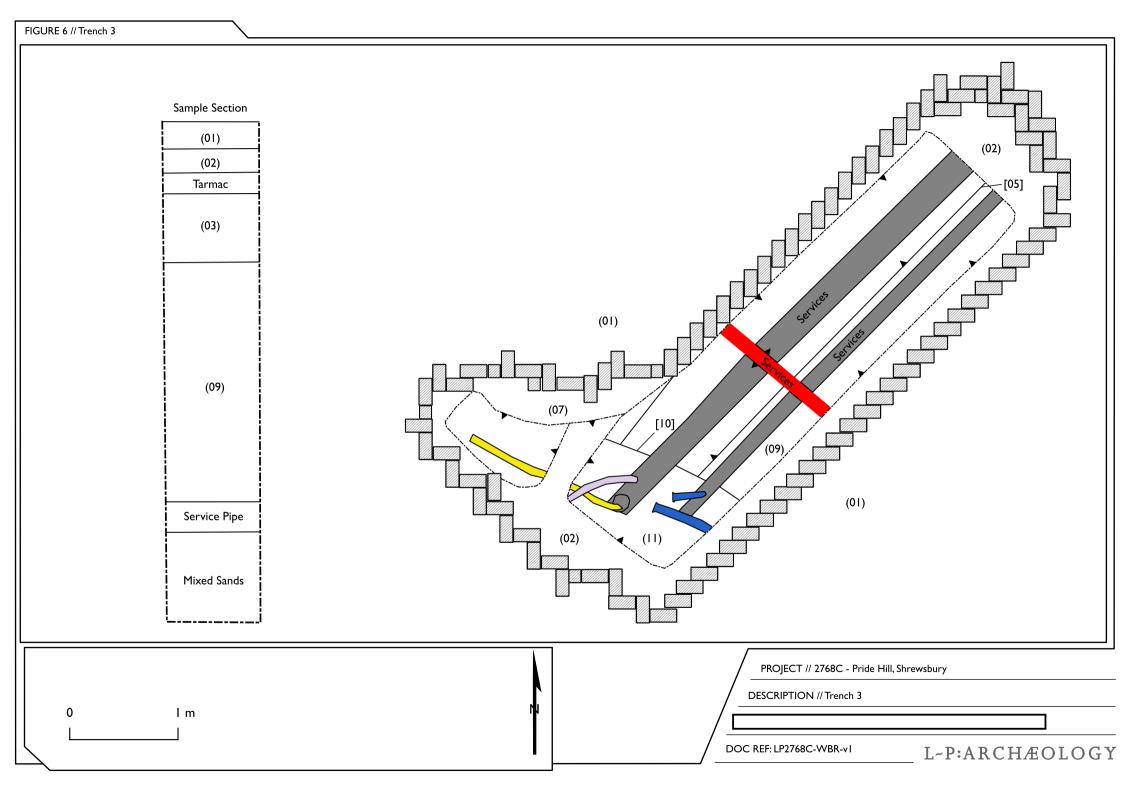


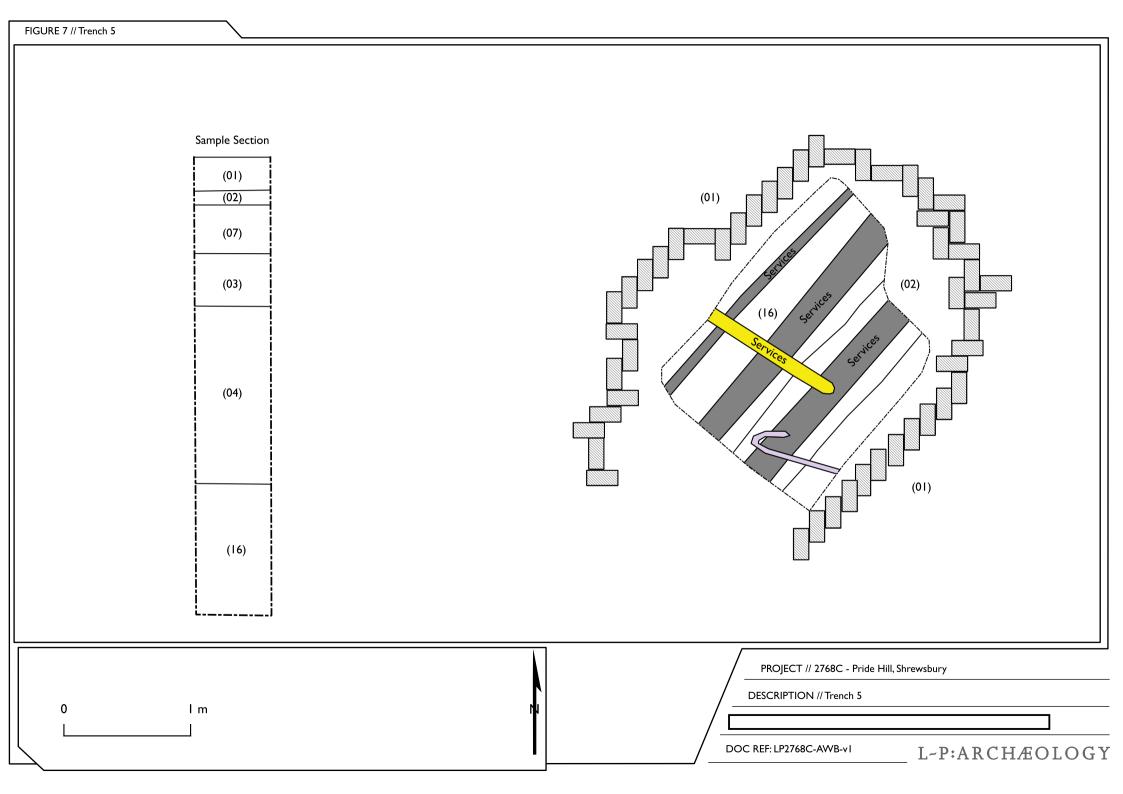












OASIS FORM

APPENDIX I

OASIS FORM - Print view 18/07/2018, 14:28

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

List of Projects | Manage Projects | Search Projects | New project | Change your details | HER coverage | Change country | Log out

Printable version

OASIS ID: Iparchae1-322815

Project details

Project name Pride Hill, Shrewsbury

Short description of the project

Archaeological Watching Brief at Pride hill in Shrewsbury, monitoring the replacement

and fitting of a new gas main. 18th and 19th century demolition material was

identified, however there was no surviving Medieval or early, archaeological features.

A few fragments of Post Medieval ceramics were retained.

Project dates Start: 01-02-2018 End: 01-08-2018

Previous/future

work

Not known / Not known

Any associated project reference

codes

LP2768C - Sitecode

Type of project Recording project
Site status Conservation Area

Current Land use Community Service 2 - Leisure and recreational buildings

Monument type NONE None

Monument type NONE None

Significant Finds NONE None

Significant Finds NONE None

Investigation type "Watching Brief"

Prompt General structure plan/local plan/minerals plan guidance

Project location

Country England

Site location SHROPSHIRE SHREWSBURY AND ATCHAM SHREWSBURY Pride Hill,

Shrewsbury

Postcode SY1 1DN

Study area 0.23 Hectares

Site coordinates SJ 349198 312586 52.874533184022 -2.967053640399 52 52 28 N 002 58 01 W

Point

OASIS FORM - Print view 18/07/2018, 14:28

Lat/Long Datum

Unknown

Height OD / Depth

Min: 62m Max: 70m

Project creators

Name of

L - P : Archaeology

Organisation

Project brief originator

Balfour Beatty

Project design

L - P : Archaeology

originator

Project Blair Poole

director/manager

Chris Matthews Project supervisor

Type of

sponsor/funding

body

Developer

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient

Shropshire Museum Service

Physical Archive

ID

LP2768C

"Animal Bones","Ceramics","other" Physical Contents

Digital Archive recipient

Shropshire Museum Service

Digital Archive ID LP2768C "none" **Digital Contents**

Digital Media available

"Images raster / digital photography"

Paper Archive

recipient

Shropshire Museum Service

Paper Archive ID LP26768C **Paper Contents** "none"

Paper Media available

"Context sheet","Drawing","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section"

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FIGURE 5 - TRENCH 2 PLAN AND SAMPLE SECTION

FIGURE 6 - TRENCH 3 PLAN AND SAMPLE SECTION

FIGURE 7 - TRENCH 5 PLAN AND SAMPLE SECTION

Appendix List:

APPENDIX 1 - OASIS FORM