

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

MARDOL
SHREWSBURY

For Balfour Beatty

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L~P:ARCHÆOLOGY

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

MARDOL SHREWSBURY

Client:	Balfour Beatty
Local Authority:	Shropshire County Council
NGR:	348998, 312672
Planning App:	General Permitted development
Author(s):	C Matthews and S Cowell
Doc Ref:	LP2768C-WBR-v.1.2
Date:	September 19
Site Code:	LP 2768C

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Abstract

An Archaeological Watching Brief was carried out during the essential mains gas pipe replacement, on Mardol, Shrewsbury, Shropshire. 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 Chris Matthews and Sarah Cowell of L - P : Archaeology on behalf of Balfour Beatty.

The site forms one of the main Medieval streets to Shrewsbury centre, and almost every building on the street has Listed Building status. It is also located within the Shrewsbury Conservation Area.

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 there was no evidence for in situ Medieval remains, however, the works did uncover a Victorian culvert. Overall, the deposits comprised of modern spoil, used to backfill the previous gas pipe trenches.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report has been prepared by Chris Matthews and Sarah Cowell of L - P : Archaeology on behalf of Balfour Beatty, as part of mandatory gas main replacement works.
- 1.2. The fieldwork was managed by Blair Poole and carried out by Sarah Cowell, Christopher Matthews, Ric Buckle and Pascal Eloy of L – P : Archaeology intermittently between the February and April 2019. The works monitored the excavation and installation of new gas pipe services.
- 1.3. The site is located on Mardol, in Shrewsbury, Shropshire. The NGR is centred on 348998, 312672 (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 2019) and in conjunction with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (Cifa) Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief (CIFA 2014B). Accordingly the project team abided by the Cifa's code of approved practice (CIFA 2014A).

2. Site Background

2.1. PLANNING

2.1.1. An Archaeological Watching Brief was conducted on the installation of new gas mains works at Mardol, 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 (DCLG 2015), 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 County Council. This document seeks to satisfy a request from the Archaeological Adviser, Dr Andrew Wigley to Shropshire County Council.

2.1.4. Mardol is located within the heart of the Medieval town. It is thought to have been in use since the Early Medieval period. As such the site lies within the historic core of Shrewsbury and within the Shrewsbury Conservation Area. The site is surrounded by a multitude of Listed Buildings, close to a length of a Scheduled Monument: the Medieval town wall, sally port and interval tower (1003715).

2.2.GEOLOGY

- 2.2.1. The site is formed of Salop Formation, red and red-brown mudstone and red-brown sandstone containing beds of pebbly sandstone and conglomerates. This is overlain with superficial drift geology of undifferentiated Devensian glaciofluvial deposits. (BRITISH GEOLOGICAL SURVEY 2017).
- 2.2.2. The data provided by GeoIndex is low resolution data and should only be considered as a rough guide to the geology of the site.

2.3.TOPOGRAPHY

- 2.3.1. The town of Shrewsbury is situated in Shropshire, and is 9 miles east of the Welsh border. The River Severn passes through the town, causing a severe flood risk. However, much of Shrewsbury centre is built on an elevation up to 75m OD.
- 2.3.2. The site is located on Mardol, an active route in to the town centre from the Welsh Bridge which crosses the River Severn. Fronting either side of the street are multiple buildings comprising mostly of commercial properties and domestic dwellings (FIGURE 1).
- 2.3.3. Mardol is a road with a gentle incline, with heights of approximately 52m OD near to the river, increasing to almost 60m OD at its joining with Claremont Street. The site is located at the lower northern stretch of Mardol however, between Hill's Lane and Mardol Quay.

2.4.ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

- 2.4.1. The aim of this section is not to give an entire history of Shrewsbury but to highlight the heritage assets and periods of time with potential archaeological remains specific to the site.
- 2.4.2. There is little evidence of prehistoric activity near to the site or in Shrewsbury. However, near Sutton (approx 2km southwest of the site), at Sharpstones Hill was evidence of Neolithic activity (PRN 00087). A fourth century Roman coin was found at Mardol in 1881 (MARCHES ARCHAEOLOGY 2003).

- 2.4.3. Mardol is recorded in the HER as having a possibly late Saxon date (HER62417). It's name is obscure, though early variations have been suggested such as 'Merdevall'. The street was urban by the twelfth century, occupied by inns and hostels (SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL 2011).
- 2.4.4. After 1066, Shrewsbury was an important centre for the Norman control of the Welsh Marches. However, the settlement was devastated in 1069 after the rebellion of 'Wild Edric' Silvaticus. Therefore, Roger de Montgomery was given Shropshire in 1071, where he founded a castle and an abbey in Shrewsbury. The abbey was dissolved in 1540 and the buildings were almost completely demolished or altered by the mid nineteenth century (MARCHES ARCHAEOLOGY 2003) (ANGOLD MJ, BAUGH GC, CHIBNALL MM, COX DC, PRICE DTW, TOMLINSON M, TRINDER BS 1973).
- 2.4.5. Less than 100m east of Mardol are the remains of a length of the Medieval town wall, sally port and interval tower (scheduled monument ref 1003715). This town wall was built by 1242 (MARCHES ARCHAEOLOGY 2003).
- 2.4.6. A bridge exists close to the end of Mardol (the Welsh Bridge). Before this was a previous (probably wooden) bridge, called St George's Bridge. It is assumed this bridge was built in the early c12th as a charter reference from 1100-1135 mentions 'two bridges at Shrewsbury' (MARCHES ARCHAEOLOGY 2003).
- 2.4.7. Listed Buildings on the street today were built as early as the fifteenth century, such as The King's Head (1270680) and numbers 51 and 52 Mardol (1254614). In the early to late Post-Medieval period, seventeen more buildings were built which border the site, and are Grade II listed.
- 2.4.8. Burleigh's Plan of Shrewsbury was produced in 1575 and depicts Mardol as a very urban street connecting the town to the Welsh Bridge. Shrewsbury as a whole is a large settlement at this time, and the castle, town walls and abbey can be seen on the map.
- 2.4.9. Rocque's 1746 Plan of Shrewsbury labels 'Mardall'. It is again fronted by

buildings (though without detail) and connects the bridge to the main high street. Redundant street names such as 'Carnarvan Lane', 'Knucking Street' and 'Dog Lane' join Mardol. Mardol appears to be the widest street in Shrewsbury at this point.

2.4.10. The 1882 Shropshire XXXIV.10 OS map shows just how developed the centre of Shrewsbury has become by this time. Mardol is fronted by numerous buildings including the King's Head previously mentioned (seen as P.H. on the map). Hill's Lane now connects to Mardol and the road layout at Mardol Quay is similar to present.

2.4.11. The 1902 Shropshire XXXIV.10 OS map shows little change, except for a couple of demolitions/new constructions fronting Mardol. For example, building number 22 on Mardol today (currently used as 'Metropolitan House', 'Star Barbers' and 'Avatar'), was then one large building. This was constructed between 1882 and 1902. Little has changed since on Mardol.

2.5. SITE CONDITIONS

2.5.1. The site forms part of a narrow one-way traffic, street. As such, the westerly parking bays were out of use and barricaded by pedestrian barriers. This allowed traffic to pass one-way and allowed pedestrians access via both pavements.

3. Aims

3.1. The general aims of the Archaeological Watching Brief were to:

- ◆ To determine the presence or absence of archaeological deposits or features on the site,
- ◆ to record the character, date, location and preservation of any archaeological remains,
- ◆ 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 5 of the Written Scheme of Investigation (POOLE 2019).
- 4.2. The ground works were archaeologically monitored and recorded prior to and during the insertion of the gas mains. The excavations consisted of a multiple, irregular sized open trenches through the road surface on Mardol (FIGURE 3).
- 4.3. The trench was initially broken out with a machine to remove the tarmac road layer. It was then excavated using a small excavator with a narrow toothless ditching bucket and in part, hand excavated. In areas of hardcore build up, a pneumatic hammer was used by an appropriately trained person.
- 4.4. 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 present in the archive. Deposit numbers are given in (parentheses) and cut numbers are given in [square brackets].
- 5.2. The Archaeological Watching Brief monitored a combination of narrow open cut and small targeted trenches of irregular size along Mardol (Figure 3), for a length of approximately 125m between Hill's Lane and the junction with Mardol Quay.
- 5.3. The majority of the opened trenches on Mardol Street contained similar features, all with the targeted active steel gas main and adjoining services and including ceramic drains, lead water pipes and cables.
- 5.3.1. The general stratigraphy consisted of the tarmac surface with a gravel hardcore overlaying mid-dark pinky orange gravely-sands with inclusions of tarmac, CBM and modern debris likely associated with previous excavations onto the gas main.
- 5.3.2. Trench 15 located on Mardol Street consisted of the road tarmac surface with a gravel hardcore (1500) overlaying mid-dark pinky orange gravely-sands (1503) with inclusions of tarmac, CBM and modern debris (PLATE 1). The features within this included the active gas main and adjoining services, as well as, a sandstone feature in the southwest facing section (1501). The sandstone feature appeared to have been truncated during the original laying of the steel pipe but was overlying two small 1" service pipes (Figure 5). It is likely that this feature is an anchor or protection slab associated with the earlier inactive cast iron main which runs parallel to the northeast of the active gas main.



Plate 1- Trench 15, southwest facing section with Sandstone fragments (1501). 1m Scale, facing northeast.

- 5.3.3. Trench 16 located on Mardol Street, consisted of the road tarmac surface with a gravel hardcore (1600) overlaying mid-dark pinky orange gravely-sands (1601) with inclusions of tarmac, CBM and modern debris associated with pipe laying. The features within this trench included the active gas main, a ceramic drain and an inactive cast iron main. These features were cutting and partially bonded too, an earlier red brick arch culvert running east to west across the trench (1602) (Plate 2). The active gas main had been diverted underneath the culvert, with the cast iron pipe cut through the wall of the culvert and mortared in (Figure 6). The ceramic drain running parallel with the northeast facing section of the trench appeared to join the brick culvert, which then turned following the same direction as the ceramic drain (parallel with Mardol road).
- 5.3.4. The top of the culvert was then visible in the northeast facing section of trench 17 and likely served as an active drain. The culvert appeared to have been previously damaged, possibly during the original installation of the steel gas main or subsequent repairs and had been partially repaired with stone and concrete slabs. The un-frogged and roughly formed red bricks, bonded together with a lime mortar, suggests the culvert was 19th century in date.



Plate 2- Trench 16, brick culvert (1602).1m scale.

5.3.5. The trenches opened on Roshill Bank (Figure 4) consisted of the flag stone surface and bedding over yellowy orange sands. No notable features were identified in these trenches other than the targeted gas main and associated services (Plate 3).



Plate 3- Trench 23 Roshill Bank, facing southwest. 1m scale.

6. Finds

- 6.1.1. No finds were recovered from Mardol street with the majority of material consisting of 20th century plastics.
- 6.1.2. The trenches located on Roshill bank produced butchered animal long bones and a canine mandible.

7. Discussion and Conclusions

- 7.1. Development was permitted for the insertion of a new gas main, with associated enabling works along Mardol in Shrewsbury, NGR centred on 348998, 312672.
- 7.2. As part of the planning condition an Archaeological Watching Brief was carried out on all ground works. Archaeological works were carried out by Sarah Cowell, Christopher Matthews and Pascal Eloy of L – P : Archaeology between the February and April 2019.
- 7.3. No Prehistoric, Roman or Medieval deposits were identified during the Watching Brief.
- 7.4. As natural was not encountered in any of the trenches, there is potential for surviving features at a greater depth than 1.2m however, they may also have been truncated or removed by the later construction of services and the road.
- 7.5. In all trenches was re-deposited layers of modern backfill consisting of silty-sand, sand and gravels. These deposits are likely to be associated with the laying of earlier services such as the old gas main, water main and electrics under the pavement.
- 7.6. In Trench 16 a red brick Victorian arch culvert was identified, within it an active salt glaze ceramic drain.
- 7.7. No other archaeological features were identified during the works monitored, a maximum depth of 1.2m was achieved, in which natural was not reached. Excavation did not locate *in situ* archaeological deposits, subsoils or natural formations.

8. Archive

8.1. The paper archive consists of:

- ◆ 9 x Drawing Film
- ◆ ?x Photographic Register
- ◆ 55 x Digital Photographs
- ◆ ? x Context sheets

8.2. The archive is to be deposited with the Shropshire Museum Service.

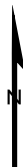
SOURCES CONSULTED

BIBLIOGRAPHIC

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FIGURES

FIGURE 2 // Site Location - Detail



PROJECT // 2768C - Pride Hill, Shrewsbury

DESCRIPTION // Site Location

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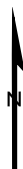
DOC REF: LP2768C-WBR-v2

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FIGURE 3 // Trench location - Mardol



0 10 m



PROJECT // 2768C - Pride Hill, Shrewsbury

DESCRIPTION // Trench Location - Mardol

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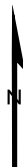
DOC REF: LP2768C-WBR-v2

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FIGURE 4 // Trench location - Roshill Bank



0 10 m



PROJECT // 2768C - Pride Hill, Shrewsbury

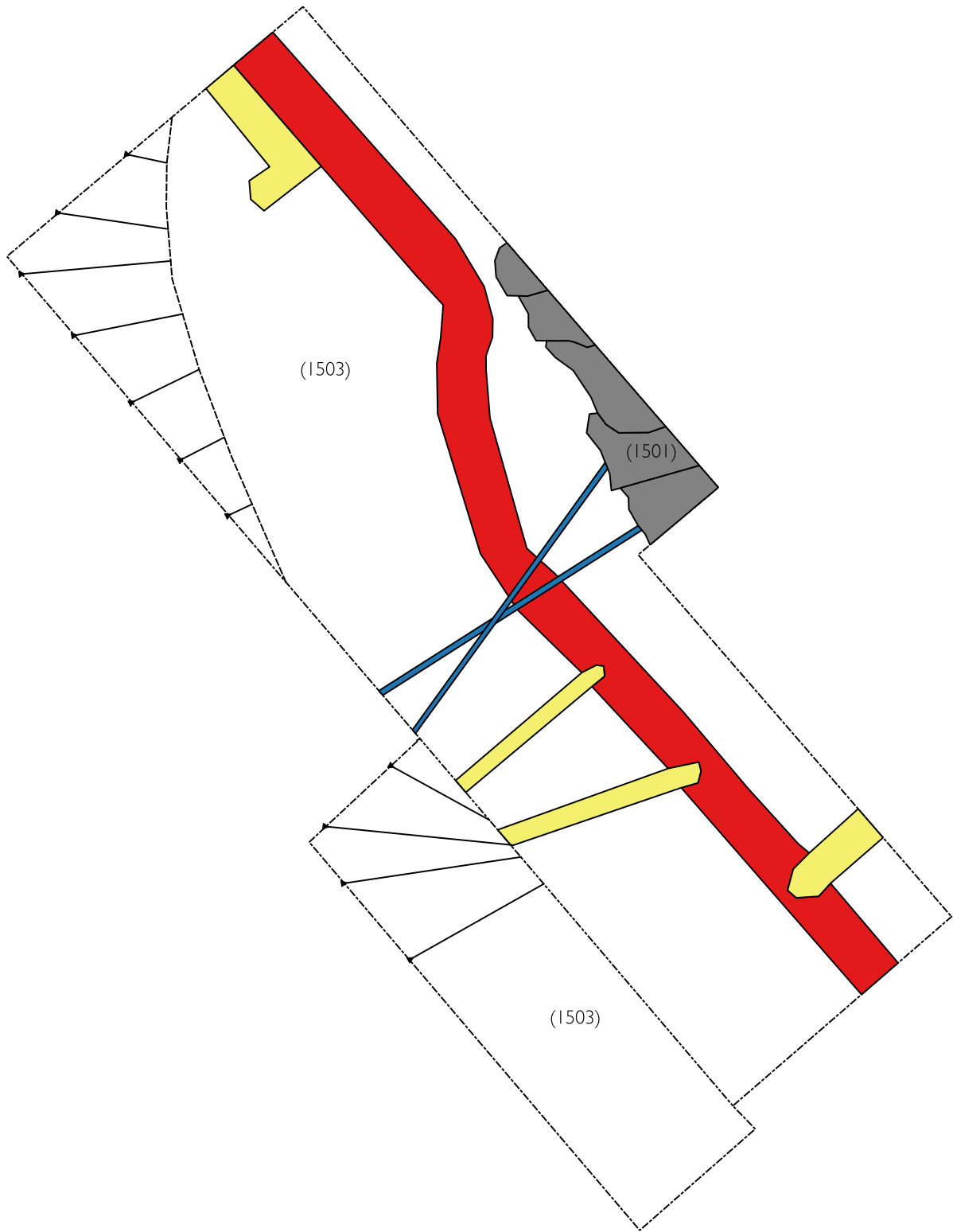
DESCRIPTION // Trench Location - Roshill Bank

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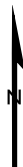
DOC REF: LP2768C-WBR-v2

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FIGURE 5 // Trench 15



0 1 m



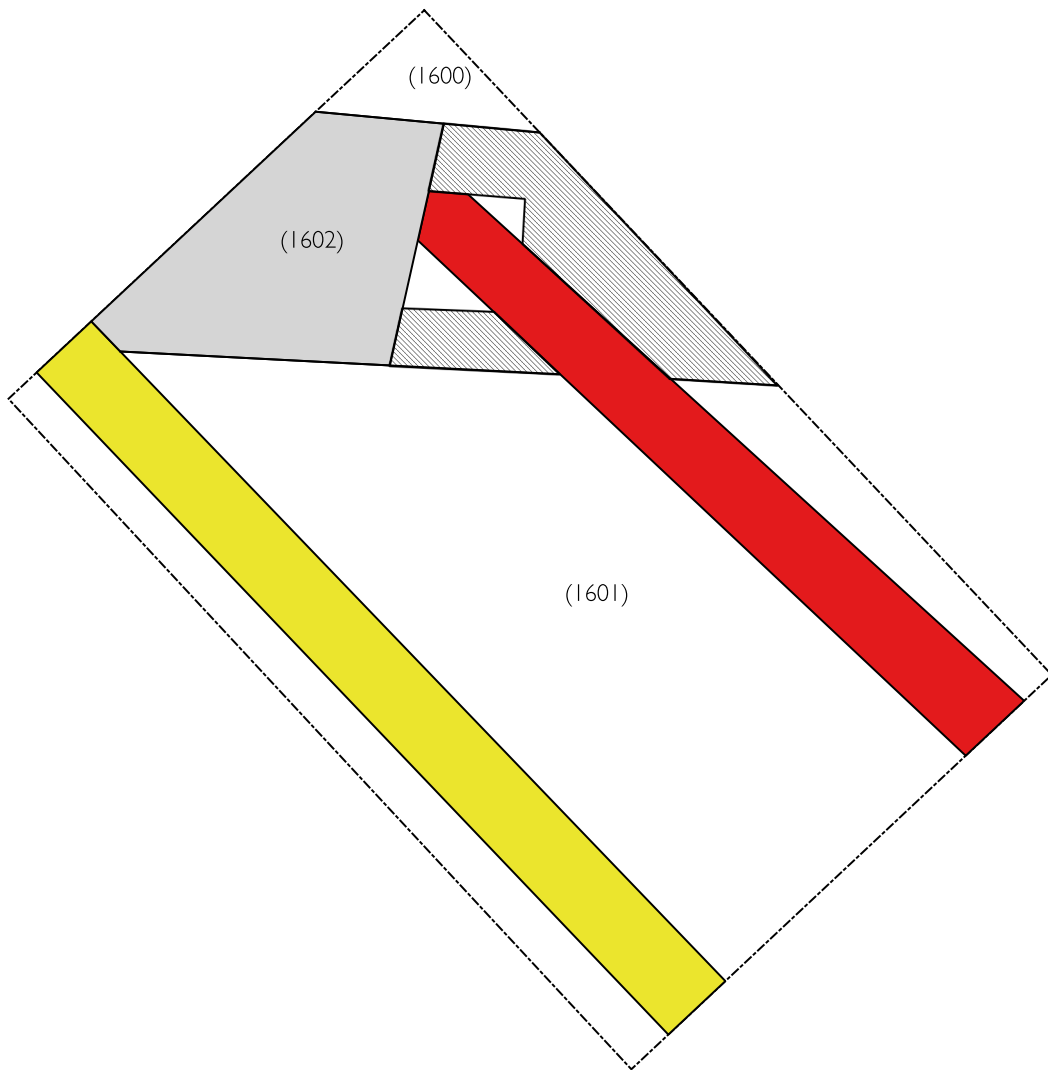
PROJECT // 2768C - Pride Hill, Shrewsbury

DESCRIPTION // Trench 15

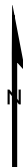
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FIGURE 6 // Trench 16



0 1 m



PROJECT // 2768C - Pride Hill, Shrewsbury

DESCRIPTION // Trench 16

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OASIS FORM

APPENDIX I

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

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OASIS ID: Iparchae1-364046

Project details

Project name	Mardol, Shrewsbury
Short description of the project	the second phase of an Archaeological Watching Brief carried out during the essential mains gas pipe replacement, on Mardol, Shrewsbury, Shropshire. The site forms one of the main Medieval streets to Shrewsbury centre, and almost every building on the street has Listed Building status. It is also located within the Shrewsbury Conservation Area. During the Watching Brief there was no evidence for in situ Medieval remains, however, the works did uncover a Victorian culvert. Overall, the deposits comprised of modern spoil, used to backfill the previous gas pipe trenches.
Project dates	Start: 01-02-2019 End: 01-10-2019
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	LP2768C - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Conservation Area
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 3 - Retailing
Monument type	HIGHSTREET Medieval
Significant Finds	N/A None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Conservation Area Consent

Project location

Country	England
Site location	SHROPSHIRE SHREWSBURY AND ATCHAM SHREWSBURY Mardol, Shresbury
Postcode	SY1 1PY
Study area	1202 Square metres
Site coordinates	SJ 348998 312672 52.874608069186 -2.96735250267 52 52 28 N 002 58 02 W Point

Lat/Long Datum Unknown
 Height OD / Depth Min: 75m Max: 75m

Project creators

Name of Organisation L - P : Archaeology
 Project brief originator Balfour Beatty
 Project design originator L - P : Archaeology
 Project director/manager Blair Poole
 Project supervisor Blair Poole
 Type of sponsor/funding body Balfour Beatty
 Name of sponsor/funding body client

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Shropshire Museum Service
 Physical Archive ID LP2768C
 Physical Contents "Animal Bones","Ceramics","other"
 Digital Archive recipient Shropshire Museum Service
 Digital Archive ID LP2768C
 Digital Contents "none"
 Digital Media available "GIS","Images raster / digital photography"
 Paper Archive recipient Shropshire Museum Service
 Paper Archive ID LP2768C
 Paper Contents "none"
 Paper Media available "Context sheet","Drawing","Report"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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