



Old Corner House, Weobley, Herefordshire  
archaeological evaluation

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## archenfield archaeology ltd

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### *Old Corner House, Weobley, Herefordshire: an archaeological evaluation*

*Report number 2004/66*

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Cover image: the Old Corner House and Weobley Church



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## Summary

*The Old Corner House, Weobley, Herefordshire, is a Grade II\* listed building which has been dated to the 15th century. It stands on the corner of Broad Street, a medieval street which runs north south through the centre of Weobley.*

*The de Lacy family founded the medieval borough of Weobley. Their castle there was probably built at the end of the 11th century or early in the 12th and the borough seems to have been founded outside its gates shortly afterwards. It apparently superseded an earlier village, which may have lain slightly further to the north, in the area of the present church. The orchard of the Old Corner House is situated roughly half way between the de Lacy castle and the church and the site is believed to have a high potential for the preservation of medieval archaeology.*

*During January 2004 Archenfield Archaeology conducted an evaluation in the orchard of the Old Corner House in advance of a proposed housing development. Four trenches measuring 10m x 2m were opened by machine to reveal in-situ archaeological deposits.*

*Archaeological deposits were recorded from the medieval to Victorian periods stretching from the Broad Street frontage through to the rear boundary of the property. Demolition rubble was found close to Broad Street, which may be associated with buildings on the 1838 tithe map. Further back from the street frontage post medieval pits and post holes cut through a layer with little archaeological activity. This layer sealed stone rubble containing green glazed roof tile probably dating to the 14<sup>th</sup> to 15th century. The stone rubble covered earlier in-situ burning.*

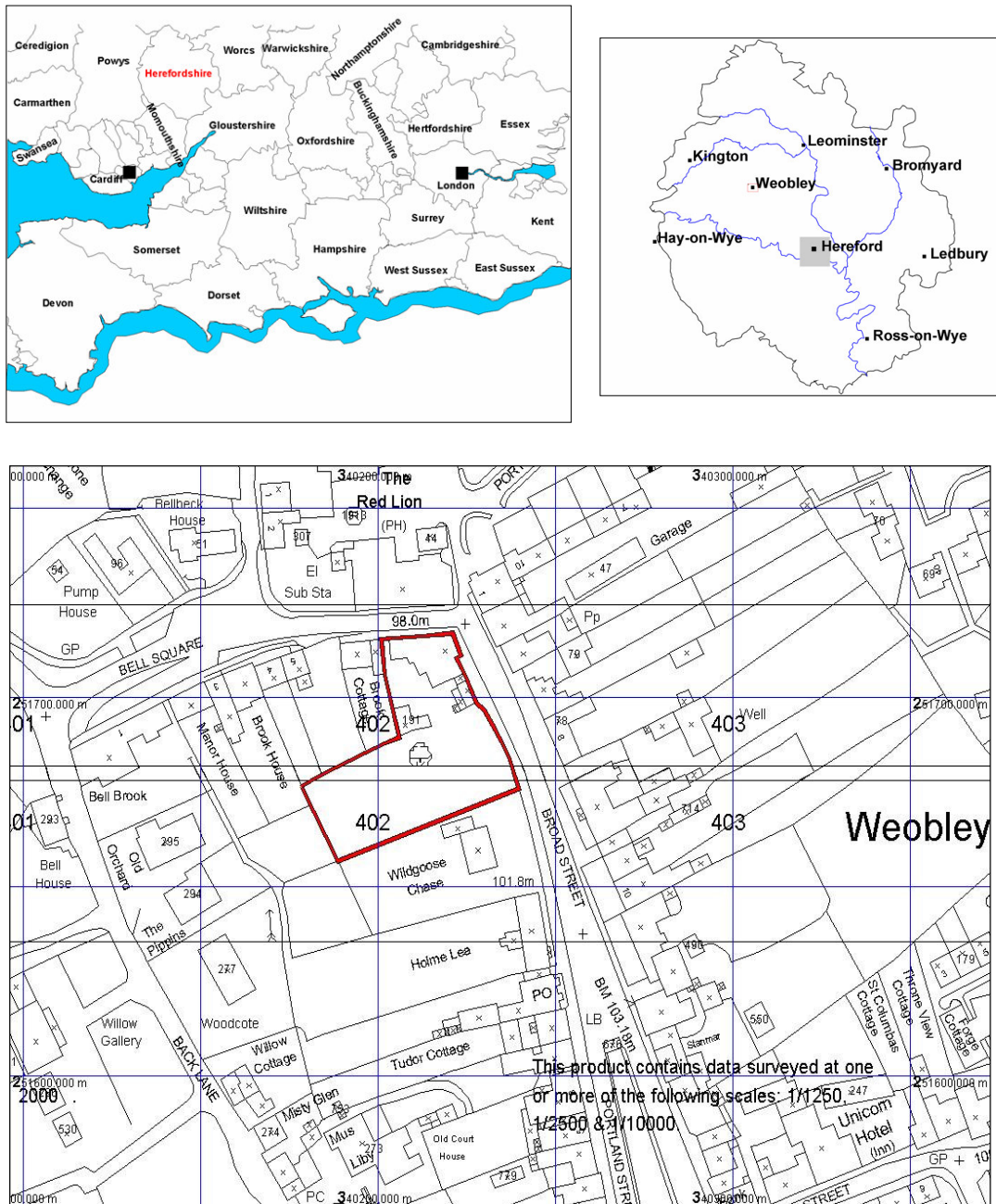
*East west linear features were found towards the rear of the property with a medieval ditch and its possible terminus occurring just inside the western boundary hedge of the orchard. This possible ditch could represent a boundary to one of the burgages mentioned in the brief and shown on the tithe map. Dating evidence from the fill of the ditch show that it was open for some 200/300 years.*

## **1.0 Introduction**

Mr & Mrs Kilvert (the Clients) commissioned a programme of archaeological evaluation and recording in advance of a proposed housing development adjacent to The Old Corner House, Weobley, Herefordshire. This was in response to a brief (Reference: HSM 1070) issued by Herefordshire Archaeology on 11/07/2002.

This brief stated that the development site was likely to contain important archaeological remains that were likely to be affected by the proposed development. The applicant was advised that more information about the archaeological impact of the proposal was needed before any planning applications could be determined. This information was to be obtained by means of an archaeological evaluation commissioned by the clients (Planning Policy Guidance note 16: Archaeology and Planning, Department of the Environment, November 1990, sections 21-23). Such an evaluation would also help to fulfil the aims of the County Structure Plan and the relevant Local Plan policies.

The brief added that the site was within the medieval core of the town, and retains the form of two medieval burgages.



## 2.0 Geological, historical and archaeological background

### 2.1 Geological background and land use

Weobley lies in a shallow valley and is bisected by the Marl Brook, which flows north through the village to its confluence with the Stretford Brook, which in turn flows westward into the River Arrow. The underlying geology is the Raglan Mudstone formation of the Old Red Sandstone (Brandon, 1989).

The tithe map of 1838 shows buildings running north south along the line of Broad Street, and plot boundaries running west. Some time after 1838 and before the production of the first edition O.S. Map of 1887 the buildings were dismantled. The O.S. Map shows the area having planted trees, possibly of fruit.

The land is grass turf with recently planted fruit trees. Older trees are also present in the orchard.

### 2.2 Historical background

That there was Roman activity around the village of Weobley is suggested by field-name evidence in the west of the parish (Richardson, 1996, p458) and a small number of Roman coins have been found in the village itself.<sup>1</sup> Early Germanic immigrants commonly utilised existing Romano-British farmland for the obvious reason that it was already there and such land was often extended or renamed by them.<sup>2</sup>

The name Weobley derives from the Old English personal name *Wibba* and in Domesday is *Wibelai*, Wibba's clearing (Copleston-Crow, 1989). Wibba appears as an element in Webbery (Wibba's BURG) in Devon and Webton in Herefordshire where the hundred of Webtree is also derived from the name (Ekwall, 1960). Although there has in the past been some speculation on the identity of the eponymous Wibba,<sup>3</sup> this was largely an idle pursuit. The second element of the name, *leah*, implies 'a permanent glade or clearing in woodland' (Rackham, 1990, p46). (The necessary part of the meaning of the *leah* element is probably the presence of nearby woodland. It should not be associated with any recent activity of actual woodland clearance (Smith, 1956, pp18-22).<sup>4</sup>

Before the Norman Conquest Weobley was held by Edwi. Domesday has the superscript *Cilt* above his name. Canon Phillot (1888) equated Edwi with Edwin, Earl of Mercia. Edwin was the grandson of Leofric, Earl of Mercia who died in 1057, and whose father Aelfgar, leading eighteen ships companies of Irish Vikings and in alliance with Gruffydd ap Llewellyn, King of Gwynedd and Powys, took part in the destruction of Hereford in 1055. This identification seems unlikely: certainly in the Worcestershire Domesday, Edwin is *Edouin* with the superscript *Comes*.

Whoever Edwi was (and the *cilt* seems to imply a membership of the English nobility) he held several other Herefordshire manors<sup>5</sup> and his western Herefordshire holdings may reflect some sort of English colonisation of Welsh lands (Wightman, 1966, p 130). Immediate confiscation of English-owned lands seems not to have been a deliberate policy of the Conqueror, who took pains to conform to a show of legality. Although the lands of Harold Godwinson and other

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<sup>1</sup> Two 1<sup>st</sup> century and one 3<sup>rd</sup> century: Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record number 6310

<sup>2</sup> As pointed out by Rackham, 1990, p57

<sup>3</sup> *Notes on Weobley* by the Rev Phillot – a bound, printed document, interleaved with drawings and photographs in Hereford City Library and Salt, 1953, p 6

<sup>4</sup> For a recent view of the way that the amount of woodland in the ancient and medieval countryside has tended to be exaggerated in the past see Veera, 2001

<sup>5</sup> Among them Fernhill, Letton Brobury and Staunton, the last held by Ernwy of Edwi. In Domesday, Edwi's son, Alwin, holds Butterley of Roger de Lacy (Thorn & Thorn)

'rebels' were forfeit, and were distributed among the Norman leaders, other English landholders may have retained their manors for some years. It has been suggested that confiscation of their land in the area may have been a result of events surrounding the revolt of Edric 'the Wild' in 1069 (*ibid.* p161).

In any event, William fitz Osbern become Earl of Hereford after the Conquest, and Weobley passed into his hands at some time thereafter. It was given in turn to Walter de Lacy, a member of fitz Osbern's household, who held it of the earl. Walter was the younger brother of Ilbert de Lacy, who founded the Honour of Pontefract in Yorkshire (*ibid.*). Fitz Osbern died in 1072 and in 1074 his heir, Roger of Breteuil, rebelled. Walter de Lacy, together with Urse d'Abitot, Sheriff of Worcester and the Saxon clerics Wulfstan, Bishop of Worcester and Aethelwig, Abbot of Evesham, raised an army against Roger and prevented him crossing the Severn. In 1075 Roger forfeited his lands for revolt and Walter became a tenant-in-chief of the crown (Hillaby, 1985). Walter's other holdings included a swathe of land in the south-west of Herefordshire which was Welsh at the time of the Conquest. This area was known as Ewyas Lacy and probably had its main stronghold at Pont Hendre Castle, near Longtown. Also in this area is the village of Walterstone, which may have been named after him (Marshall, 1938).

Walter died in 1085, falling from St Peter's Church in Hereford, during its construction, and his lands passed to his son, Roger de Lacy, who is recorded as holding Weobley in Domesday. Roger held 14 demesne and 50 tenants' manors in Herefordshire and had large holdings elsewhere (Hillaby, 1985, p195). Weobley was to pass down in a direct line of descent for centuries and the lord of the manor was to have considerable influence on its subsequent history.<sup>6</sup>

The Domesday manor of Weobley possessed 3 ploughs in lordship. There were 10 villeins, a priest, a reeve, a smith and 5 bordars with 9½ ploughs. There were 11 serfs, woodland measuring ½ league by 4 furlongs, and a park. Land newly brought into cultivation, or *assarting*, had provided land for one plough. One of the villeins belonged to the church of St Peter in Hereford, by the gift of Walter de Lacy.<sup>7</sup>

Although *assarting* is assumed to occur over many parts of England, Domesday only specifies it in Herefordshire, the other entries being for Fernhill, Much Marcle and Leominster (Darby, 1976, p 189). In general, by the 11<sup>th</sup> century England was one of the least wooded countries of Europe, and Domesday appears to indicate that Herefordshire was even less wooded than most of the rest of the country with woodland occupying perhaps around 8% of the land (Rackham, 1980, p 126). By the 1840s the percentage of woodland in Weobley was less than 10%.<sup>8</sup>

Specific mention of parks is also comparatively rare in Domesday, and only 35 are recorded. Emparking was a recent introduction, the earliest recorded park being at Ongar in Essex which was certainly pre-Conquest. Parks were large enclosures used to contain deer for the table and were not essentially associated with hunting, which took place in unenclosed areas. The deer would have been the native red and roe deer. Later centuries would see a large growth in the number of parks and the introduction of the fallow deer (Rackham, 1990, p152).

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<sup>6</sup> Major Salt's *The Borough and Honour of Weobley*, 1953, is dedicated to '[1953] Henry Frederick Thynne, seventh Marquis of Bath, Lord of the Manor of Weobley, in direct descent from Roger de Laci. Lord of the Manor of Weobley [1086]'

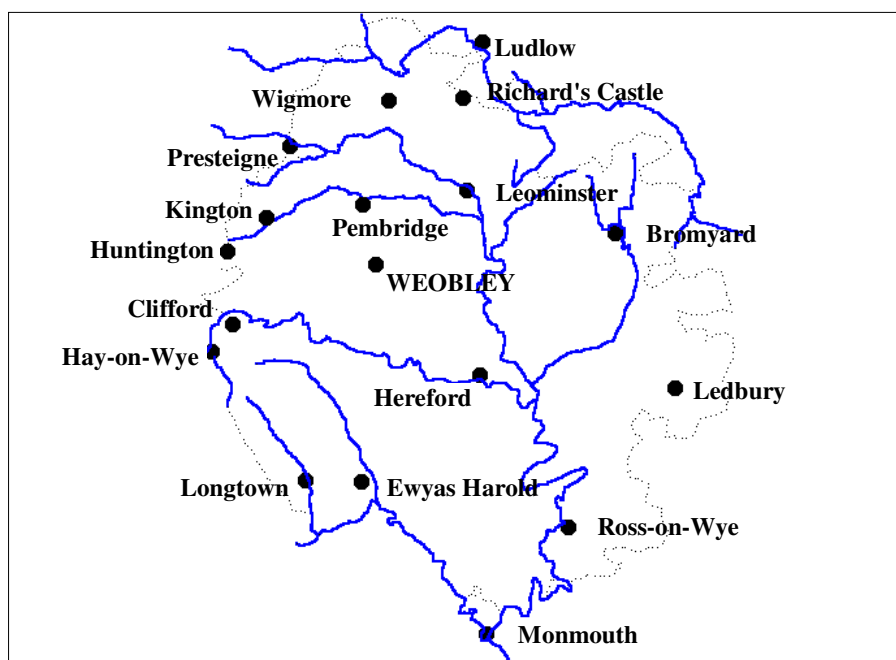
<sup>7</sup> One of Edwi's manors given to Walter was Priors Frome, which Walter, in turn, gave to his new church of St Peter in Hereford

<sup>8</sup> See map on page 54 of ADM Phillip's paper on land use in the Herefordshire Tithe Survey in the *Transactions of the Woolhope Nat. Field Soc.*, 1979

In 1088 Roger de Lacy was banished after his father's old ally Bishop Wulfstan, stopped him, in turn, from crossing the Severn, and his brother Hugh took over his estates (Phillot, 1871, p 350). The de Lacys were responsible for the construction of castles at Weobley and Ludlow. Both castles were associated with early boroughs. Ludlow appears to be a new plantation but Weobley was already a settlement and the street plans of the two boroughs illustrate the difference (Noble, 1964, p65).

The English surname Webley derives from the settlement and a Thomas de Webbele recorded in 1308 (Reaney, 1976). Webley was the most common of the Herefordshire place-name surnames in the London telephone directory for the year 2000 and is widely distributed. In 1337 Richard de Webbelye was the city of Hereford's mace-bearer (Salt, 1953, p 6) and in the 15<sup>th</sup> century a Walter and a Thomas Webbely witnessed deeds from Eastnor, in the East of Herefordshire.<sup>9</sup>

The castle at Weobley was probably built by either Roger or Hugh de Lacy in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century (Shoesmith, 1996). The castle was garrisoned on behalf of the Empress Matilda against Stephen in 1139 and was re-taken by Stephen himself the following year (Phillot, 1869, p47).



**Figure 2: Medieval Boroughs in Herefordshire**

Weobley was the *caput* of the de Lacy lands, which included the castles and boroughs at Ludlow and Ewyas Lacy (Longtown), held for the service of 7½ knights.<sup>10</sup> Presumably originally earthen, the castle seems to have been rebuilt in stone by the third Walter de Lacy in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century (Hillaby, 1985). In 1327 the castle was stated to be '*of no value being in ruins*'<sup>11</sup> and in 1328 referred to as

<sup>9</sup> Mss in the Shrewsbury Talbot Collection – Heref. A14, A22, A28, AA33, AA38, BB1, L12, L27  
Glos:Heref. HH5

<sup>10</sup> Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem for the reign of Henry III, 5<sup>th</sup> August 1271

<sup>11</sup> Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem of the reign of Edward III, 27<sup>th</sup> August 1327

'a ruinous castle of no value'<sup>12</sup> but this seems to have been a misrepresentation of its condition, for in 1331 it was stated that the castle had been undervalued. In 1332 the value was '£41 16d by the first extent and £81 10s 8½d by the second extent'.<sup>13</sup> In 1357 John Ailmond was pardoned for the offence of breaking out of his prison in 'the castle of Webbeleye', providing that he stood trial for the felony for which he was detained in the first place.<sup>14</sup> In 1483, Weobley was the centre of the rebellion of Henry, Duke of Buckingham against Richard III. Buckingham was executed in Salisbury and his wife captured in Weobley (Salt, 1953, p 20). John Leland, writing in the 1530s, says of Weobley 'where is a goodly castell, but somewhat in decay'.<sup>15</sup>

William fitz Osbern, like other Norman lords, had acquired the technique of borough founding in Normandy where William the Conqueror himself had employed it at Caen. Fitz Osbern, having been given the castle of Breteuil-sur-Iton in around 1050, constructed a *boorg* there, as he had previously at nearby Corneilles (Hillaby, 1983). If they founded boroughs at Ewyas Lacy and Weobley,<sup>16</sup> the de Lacys followed the pattern set by their old patron, and it is possible that the by-laws of these boroughs, as were Hereford's, were based on the customs of Breteuil, a code which was to become widespread among the new boroughs of the Marches, Wales and Ireland. The de Lacy borough at Ludlow has been shown to have been privileged with these customs (Noble, 1964). These laws were designed to encourage immigration from Normandy to provide soldiers and develop trade in the newly acquired lands.

Weobley, situated at a point equidistant from Hereford and Leominster, appears to have been a successful borough. It sent its own Jury to the Assize of 1255. At the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century Edward I empowered the Herefordshire boroughs of Weobley, Bromyard, Ledbury and Ross to return two members of parliament each. Weobley returned Adam Sagoun and John Compaygnoun as its members in 1295 and two members to the parliaments of 1298, September and October of 1302 and to the parliament of 1305. It returned Richard Yagon alone in 1306 (Williams, 1896, pp 155,156). At this time, Weobley, Bromyard, Ledbury and Ross had the privilege of representation withdrawn. This was at their own request, the two shillings per day payment to members being, they claimed, beyond their means (Noble, 1964, p69). Hereford and Leominster were then the only two Herefordshire boroughs represented until Weobley regained parliamentary borough status again in 1628.

Whatever problems Weobley may have experienced in paying its parliamentary burgesses (and much larger towns would experience the same problems in succeeding centuries) documentary evidence suggests that Weobley was at least reasonably prosperous. It was situated near the rich sheep farming area centred on Leominster, which produced the wool known as '*Lemster Ore*'. The value of this wool is indicated by a 1454 act of parliament which fixed the price of '*Herefordshire woll in Lemyst*' at £13 per bag in comparison with £8 6s 8d per bag for Cotswold wool (Roskell, 1992, p437).

In 1315 a grant was made to '*the bailiffs and good men of the town of Webbeleye of pavage for three years upon all wares for sale brought into their town*'.<sup>17</sup> When

<sup>12</sup> Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem of the reign of Edward III, 7<sup>th</sup> April 1328. In addition to the castle there is also arable land of 240 acres (97.2 Ha), 50 acres (20.25 Ha) of meadow. A water mill and a wind mill.

<sup>13</sup> Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem of the reign of Edward III, March 1332

<sup>14</sup> Calendar of Patent Rolls, Edward III, 16<sup>th</sup> June 1357

<sup>15</sup> The Itinerary of John Leland, part V, edited by Lucy Toulmin Smith, 1908,

<sup>16</sup> The date of the creation of the borough at Weobley is unknown.

<sup>17</sup> Calendar of Patent Rolls, Edward II, 7<sup>th</sup> December 1315

this was expired, a new grant was made in 1319, specifically at the instance of Queen Isobella, this time for 5 years.<sup>18</sup> Medieval Weobley possessed a market, a water-mill and by 1327, a wind-mill.<sup>19</sup> Apart from milling, the normal range of medieval trades were represented in the borough; in 1316 the local smith, Miles Smith (*fabri*), had a messuage near the castle<sup>20</sup> and in 1360 a Weobley tanner, John Geffes, was murdered in Worcestershire.<sup>21</sup> Deeds mention a tailor in 1363,<sup>22</sup> and a baker and a *muleward* in 1370.<sup>23</sup> A Jewish community was present in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century (Salt, 1953, p19).

The Subsidy of the Ninth and the Fifteenth records only three Herefordshire boroughs where burgesses paid the higher ninth part in 1341. Hereford has 87 names, Leominster 32 and Weobley 17 (Reeves, 1972, p45).

In the poll tax for the year 1377, every person not a genuine pauper, of 14 years or over was liable to pay one groat (four old pence). Unfortunately we do not have the Weobley figures for 1377, but the 1379 tax was on all males and all unmarried females of 16 years or over.<sup>24</sup> In this latter year, 152 persons were recorded as having paid the poll tax in Weobley (Fenwick, 1998). Among the occupations listed are carpenters, shoemakers, *piscator*,<sup>25</sup> a smith, a tanner, a butcher, a *petimarch* and a *tegulat*. The last term refers to someone who worked with bricks or tiles and implies that Weobley had buildings which required this skill, a *petimarch* is a small merchant or trader.

John Hayes was a butcher in Weobley in 1428<sup>26</sup> and in 1455 the tanner John Garston was pardoned of outlawry.<sup>27</sup> There are specific references to shops in 1292 (Salt, 1953, p19), 1294 (*ibid.* p 12) and in 1392, when a licence for alienation in mortmain for property including three shops was granted.<sup>28</sup>

The Old Corner House in Weobley is a Grade II\* listed building and dates to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, with some mid 19<sup>th</sup> century alterations and a 17<sup>th</sup> century barn added to the frontage of Bell Lane late in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (RCHM, 3, p 199 No 23). Mrs. F. H. Leather dates the same house to before 1350, noting the retained capitals at the corners with worn gothic mouldings and a hall with possible original timbers (Leather, 1926).

As in other medieval boroughs, the original burgage plots would have become split into separate holdings over a period of time. One of the ways in which property could become sub-divided is illustrated in the will of Alice Kimber of Weobley in 1408, a lady who seems to have had no high opinion of the men in her life.<sup>29</sup> Alice left to her daughter, Juliana, and Juliana's two sons, her burgage with buildings except for a chamber at the south end of the hall and a barn course (*cursu orii*) which she left to her husband John Rybbesford (she seems to have retained the surname of a previous husband). If John sold the chamber, Juliana's

<sup>18</sup> Calendar of Patent Rolls, Edward II, 8<sup>th</sup> May 1319

<sup>19</sup> Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem of the reign of Edward III, 7<sup>th</sup> April 1328.

<sup>20</sup> Deed A 8495, 30<sup>th</sup> November 1316 and deed A 9295 27<sup>th</sup> February 1323, deeds of the Treasury of the Receipt of the Exchequer, Ancient Deeds Volume IV

<sup>21</sup> Calendar of Patent Rolls, Edward III, 18<sup>th</sup> May 1360

<sup>22</sup> Deed A 9127, 16<sup>th</sup> March 1363, deeds of the Treasury of the Receipt of the Exchequer, Ancient Deeds Volume IV

<sup>23</sup> Deed A 8593, 29<sup>th</sup> September 1370, *ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Commonly held to have been subject to much more evasion than the 1377 tax

<sup>25</sup> *Piscator* as opposed to *piscar(ius)* – ordinarily a person who catches fish rather than sells them. This precision may be misleading in this case however.

<sup>26</sup> Deed A 8617, 14<sup>th</sup> November 1428, deeds of the Treasury of the Receipt of the Exchequer, Ancient Deeds Volume IV.

<sup>27</sup> Calendar of Patent Rolls, Henry VI, 29<sup>th</sup> November 1455

<sup>28</sup> Calendar of Patent Rolls, Richard II, 6<sup>th</sup> July 1392.

<sup>29</sup> Deed A 11565, 10<sup>th</sup> February 1408, deeds of the Treasury of the Receipt of the Exchequer, Ancient Deeds Volume IV



sons, Hugh and Walter were to be preferred as buyers. The son-in-law was to have no share – *‘if John Leather claimed the burgage in right of said Juliana his wife, the said Juliana to lose her right therein for the time (pro illo tempore)’*.

The 16<sup>th</sup> century saw a great growth in the popularity of the House of Commons as vehicle for social and political advancement. During the century the number of MPs rose from 296 to 462 (Neale, 1976). Some of these seats were created in order to increase the political power of magnates who sought to fill them with their clients. Most however were created by the initiative of local gentry who could not compete for the more prestigious county seats, those of the knights of the shire, against the more powerful families who controlled them.

The practice of parliamentary borough creation continued under the early Stuarts. 45 more seats were created in the reigns of James I and Charles I. It was of particular advantage, in order to become a parliamentary borough, to be able to demonstrate that that borough had anciently returned members. It was in this context that James Tomkins, from Garnstone, one mile outside Weobley, sought to regain the borough’s ancient seats. Tomkins, one of the MPs for Leominster, was successful and the two new MPs were returned on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1628 (Hillaby, 1967, p110). Sadly for the short term political careers and social expectations of the pair, William Walter and William Tomkins, Charles I chose to dissolve parliament early in 1629 and ruled by Royal Prerogative for the next eleven years (Davies, G, 1959).

In 1295, Weobley’s burgesses, Adam Sagoun and John Compaygnoun presumably had been, like the rest of the commoners, local men. The membership of the House of Commons remained legally defined in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, as it always had been, as two knights from every shire and two burgesses from every town.<sup>30</sup> The law was explicit that this should be so and there were occasional challenges to the increasing tendency of boroughs to be represented by non-resident country gentry. These gentry tended to be less parochial in their interests than the burgesses, and the increasing confidence of the gentry class as represented in parliament was ultimately to mount the challenge to royal authority which was to lead to the overthrow of the crown itself.

The disruption caused by the civil wars in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century did not pass Weobley entirely by. In the summer of 1645 the Scottish army besieging the city of Hereford had spread widely across the countryside and was present in Weobley. A letter from *‘his excellency, the Earl of Leven, Lord General of the Scottish Armies’* orders his troops not to molest the person or family of Thomas Bridges of the Ley, Weobley, nor to plunder his livestock nor property.<sup>31</sup>

Hillaby (1967) has demonstrated how, during the two hundred year period that the post-medieval parliamentary borough of Weobley existed, just six families dominated its politics. He showed that over time each family tended to be eclipsed in its influence by one of less local involvement and of greater national political power. This coincided with the growth of land ownership by the aristocracy. In 1663 peers owned very little property in Herefordshire; around 2% of the total. In Stretford Hundred, of which Weobley formed part, knights, baronets and lesser gentry owned 44% of the land. Peers owned 3%, and the remaining 53% was owned by others (Faraday, M, 1972, p 18). The growth of

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<sup>30</sup> The Welsh boroughs, first represented in the Commons in Henry VIII’s parliament of 1523, only returned one member each. Three of the English boroughs first represented in the reign of Mary I, Abingdon, Banbury and Higham Ferrers were also single member constituencies

<sup>31</sup> Document in Herefordshire Record Office, AA17/70

land ownership by the aristocracy in succeeding decades was to give it greater political influence.

The Thynnes, Viscounts Weymouth, and Marquises of Bath from 1789<sup>32</sup>, although Lords of the Manor of Weobley, exercised their influence from distant Longleat in Wiltshire. In 1749 Viscount Weymouth purchased, from Mansel Powell<sup>33</sup> some ancient (vote) houses in Weobley (Salt, 1953, p43). These houses were only inhabited at election time when tenants from outside the borough were brought in to occupy them and exercise the franchise, and so by 1754 Weobley became a pocket borough of the Thynne family (Hillaby, 1967, p109). The political affiliation of Weobley's members changed from Whig to Tory.

Elections entailed certain expenses for the Thynnes.<sup>34</sup> The payments made for the uncontested elections of 1771 and 1780 amounted to £175 14s 6d and £143 5s 8d respectively. The geographic origin of the electors is apparent in the 1771 expense account when payments were made to 11 Shropshire Burgesses, 4 *Gloucestershire* Burgesses, 4 Bodenham Burgesses, and 4 Brecknockshire and Radnorshire Burgesses. A *'treat promised the borough'* cost £20 9s.

In the 1780s and 90s, the hon. Thomas Thynne<sup>35</sup> (1786), Lord George Thynne (1790 and 1796) and Lord John Thynne (1796) all represented Weobley.<sup>36</sup> Thomas Thynne's sons took their turn; his eldest son Thomas, Viscount Weymouth in 1818 and his fourth son Lord William Thynne in 1830. In 1831 his second son, Lord Henry Frederick Thynne, and his fifth son, Lord Edward Thynne, were elected as members for the borough. These were the last MPs for Weobley: when parliament was dissolved in December 1832 the parliamentary borough ceased to exist.

With the passing of the 1832 Reform Act, the houses that had been used specifically for lodging the out-of-borough voters at election time were no longer required. In 1844-5 the Marquis's agent was instructed to pull down the vote houses. Local estimates put the number of them at the time as 84 but this has been thought to be an exaggeration (Leather, 1926).

The tithe map of 1838 shows buildings running north-south along the line of Broad Street, within the area that is now the orchard of The Old Corner House. Some time after 1838 the buildings were dismantled, possibly due to the Marquis's order to pull down vote houses. The houses were dismantled before the production of the first edition O.S. Map of 1887 (see Figure 7).

Leominster's fame for wool became supplemented by the high quality of its bread. Weobley, in the post-medieval period, was famous for its ale, so that Leominster bread and Weobley ale became by-words for the highest quality of the two main ingredients of the contemporary staple diet. The brewing trade began to disappear shortly after the loss of the parliamentary borough status. Another Weobley industry was glove making, which had disappeared by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (Phillot, 1869, p49). The last nail-maker died in 1840 (Education through History Group, 1972) and an industry associated with glove making and tanning, also disappeared with the closing of the tannery in 1850, and another aspect of local self-sufficiency was lost (*ibid.*).

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<sup>32</sup> The title Viscount Weymouth remained within the family to be bestowed upon the eldest sons of the marquises

<sup>33</sup> Powell had been acting surreptitiously as Lord Weymouth's agent in order to conceal his intentions

<sup>34</sup> Figures quoted are from Salt, 1953, who used documents preserved at Longleat.

<sup>35</sup> The eldest son of 3<sup>rd</sup> Viscount Weymouth, later 1<sup>st</sup> Marquis of Bath

<sup>36</sup> *Notes on Weobley* by the Walter Pilley – a bound, printed document, interleaved with plans, photographs, MSS etc dated 1888 in the Pilley Collection, Hereford City Library

## 2.3 Archaeological background

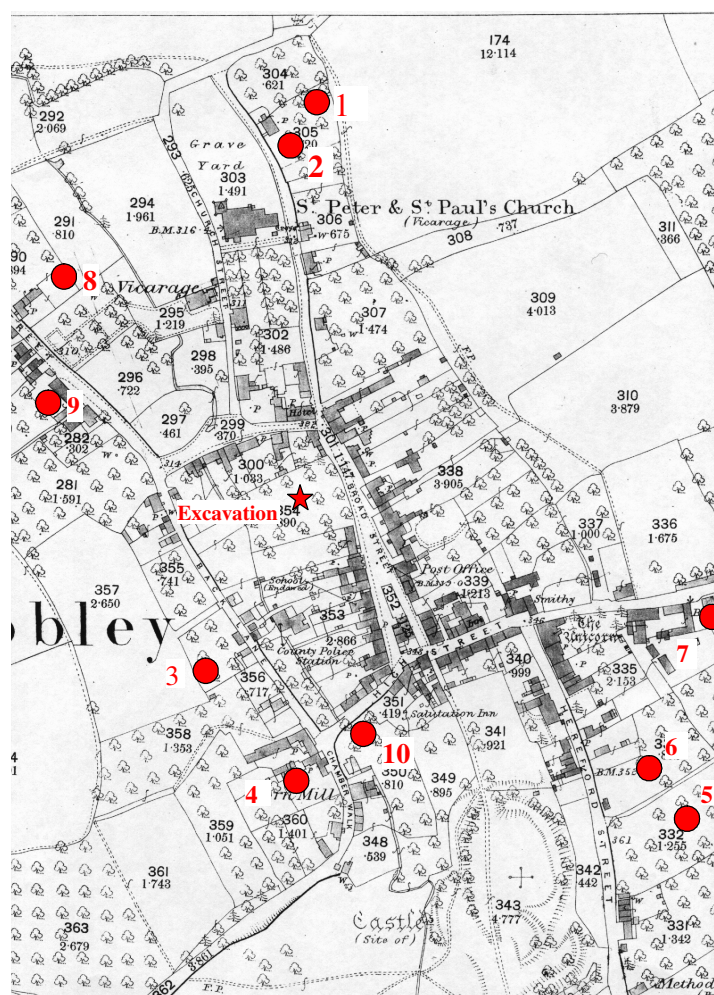


Figure 3: Archaeological projects in Weobley (based on the 1st edition 1:2500 OS plan)

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 1  | 'Town Ditch' – Crosskey, 2001   |
| 2  | Parkfields – Sherlock and Pikes, 2001b  |
| 3  | Back Lane Nursery - Bartlett, 1982  |
| 4  | Old Forge – Fagan and Topping, 1994   |
| 5  | Burton Gardens – Rouse, 2000  |
| 6  | Watching brief unpublished - Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record number 3705 |
| 7  | Throne Farm - Watching brief, Marches Archaeology 2000-2001                       |
| 8  | Dairy Farm evaluation - Sherlock and Pikes, 2001a                                 |
| 9  | Pugh's Yard - Watching brief, - Pikes, Sherlock and Williams, 2002                |
| 10 | DG Games - Evaluation, Archaeological Investigations Ltd, 2003                    |

Weobley was investigated as part of the Central Marches Historic Towns Survey, a project designed to record the archaeology of towns in the Welsh Marches undertaken in the 1990s (Dalwood, 1996). Old Corner House lies within the medieval core of Weobley<sup>37</sup> identified by this survey. Given the distribution of medieval buildings, the whole area of the old borough of Weobley was much more

<sup>37</sup>

Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record number 19493

densely occupied in the medieval period (Morriss, 1996) and can be demonstrated that old Weobley did indeed possess a larger number of houses (see over), including those fronting Broad Street.

Little other archaeological work has taken place in the area of the old borough. Kiln debris and pottery found west of Back Lane led to an inconclusive geophysical survey in 1982 (figure 3, no 3 - Bartlett)<sup>38</sup> and later salvage recording (figure 3, no 4 - Fagan and Topping, 1994).<sup>39</sup>

A small evaluation excavation at Burton Gardens, to the east of the castle in 2000, (figure 3, no 6 – Rouse, 2000), found no archaeological evidence apart from post-medieval pottery, while to the west of the castle an evaluation at DG Games in 2003, (figure 3, no 10 – Archaeological Investigations Ltd, 2003)<sup>40</sup> found evidence for the channelling of a stream and a wall for a building shown on the 1887 1<sup>st</sup> edition O.S. Map. At the northern frontage of the site a boundary wall or foundation containing medieval pottery was recorded while at the southern end a ditch was identified and suggested as a continuation of an earthwork from the northern end of the castle's defences.

An excavation through what has been interpreted as the north-eastern corner of the town bank was carried out in 1983 (figure 3, no 1 - Crosskey, 2001) and produced some late medieval pottery.<sup>41</sup> An evaluation excavation in December 2000 on the same property, that is immediately east of the church in the area thought to be the pre-borough core of Weobley, proved inconclusive (figure 3, no 2 - Sherlock and Pikes, 2001).<sup>42</sup>

An evaluation excavation in December 2000 to the rear of Dairy Farm in Meadow Street (figure 3, no. 2), a building of the 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, concluded that it was unlikely that, in general, the northern part of Weobley had ever been much more densely built-up than at the present time (Sherlock and Pikes, 2001a).<sup>43</sup>

Building recording and an evaluation excavation at Pugh's Yard (figure 3, no 9 – Pikes, Sherlock and Williams 2003)<sup>44</sup> found little direct evidence of archaeological features or deposits. This was due to a limited area which was investigated and the reduced ground levels caused by the creation of a yard associated with 17<sup>th</sup> barns. The report suggests that medieval activity may lie in the undisturbed ground immediately to the west of the standing buildings.

### 3.0 Project aims and objectives

The aims of the project were: -

- To evaluate by means of excavation, the potential for, and the nature of, archaeological remains in the area of the proposed development.
- To record any archaeological features or deposits exposed.
- To retrieve any potential dating evidence.
- To record all finds and any environmental material recovered.

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<sup>38</sup> Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record number 1069

<sup>39</sup> Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record number 21980

<sup>40</sup> Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record number 32808

<sup>41</sup> Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record number 19462, the report of this excavation forms an appendix in Sherlock and Pikes 2001

<sup>42</sup> Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record number 30644

<sup>43</sup> Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record number 30643

<sup>44</sup> Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record - Event No 32270

- To ensure that the location of the area excavated was accurately recorded on a suitably scaled plan.
- To record negative evidence and to consider its implications.
- To attempt to further the understanding of Weobley with regard to the medieval and post-medieval model postulated in the Central Marches Historic Towns Survey.

## **4.0 Methodology**

### **4.1 Field methodology**

The following methodology was employed: -

- Four 10.0 metre by 2.0 metre trenches were excavated by use of a bucket on the back actor of a tracked mechanical mini excavator supplied by David Lowe Contractors and manned by his staff. Suitably qualified archaeologists monitored all activity that involved disturbance of the ground surface.
- The cuttings were located across the site from east to west to investigate the areas of the proposed housing development. These cuttings were excavated to a depth determined by the in-situ archaeological deposits .
- An assessment of the archaeological significance of finds, structures and deposits was made and appropriate action taken.
- The descriptions of the deposits, photographic records and drawing numbers were recorded on the relevant data capture documents in accordance with Archenfield Archaeology's standard site recording procedures.
- Staff carrying out the fieldwork followed the guidelines laid down in the Archenfield Archaeology Health and Safety Policy

Archenfield Archaeology conforms to the Institute of Field Archaeologists' Code of Conduct and Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology. All projects are, where applicable, carried out in accordance with IFA Standards and Guidance or Draft Standards and Guidance.

### **4.2 Processing methodology**

- All data were entered into a Microsoft ©Access relational database.
- All retained artefacts and ecofacts were cleaned, conserved and catalogued.
- The pottery was examined and spot dates provided.
- All environmental samples were sent for further analysis.

## 5.0 The results

### 5.1 The stratigraphy

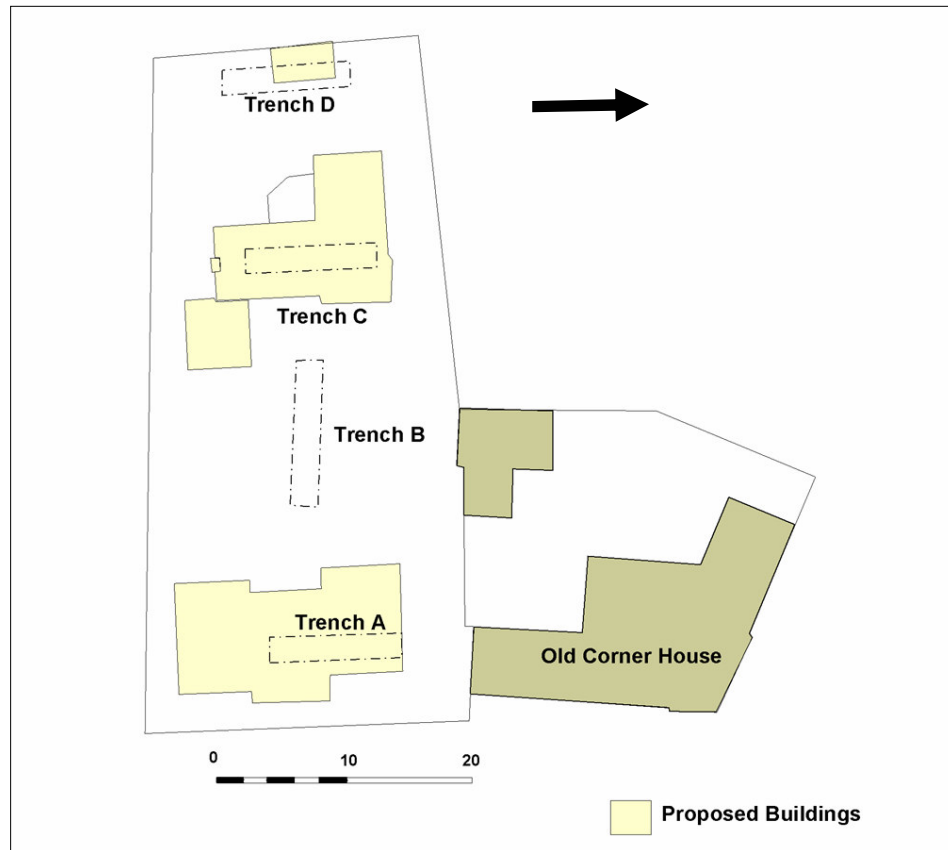


Figure 4: Site plan showing trench locations

## Trench A

Trench A was located at the east end of the site running north south along the line of Broad Street. It measured 10m by 2m and cut through grass turf that covered the whole of the area. The trench was positioned to investigate the possibility of buildings shown on the 1838 tithe map fronting Broad Street.

Immediately below the turf was dark black, very rich organic topsoil (1) that had a depth of 0.28m to the east of the trench and 0.18m to the west. This layer covered a light grey/black silty clay subsoil (2) that was well mixed with charcoal and stone inclusions. These two layers were removed by machine and covered archaeological deposits.

Layer 111 was a pinkish red clay marl/ gravel that was re-deposited across the trench to a depth of 0.70m to the west and 0.20m to the east. Three metres from the east of the trench this re-deposited layer was cut by a large sub-circular pit (15) that extended south and west from the trench. This sub-circular pit is filled by mortar and brick rubble (16) and represents the best evidence for material that has come from collapsed or demolished buildings.

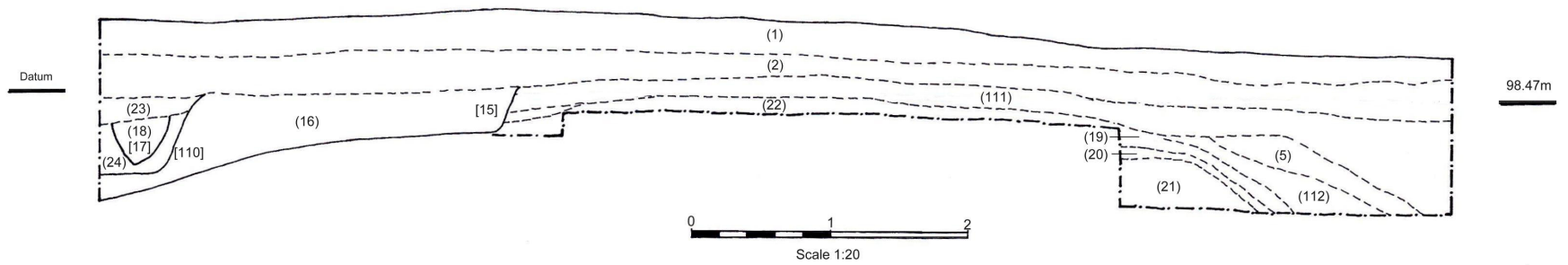
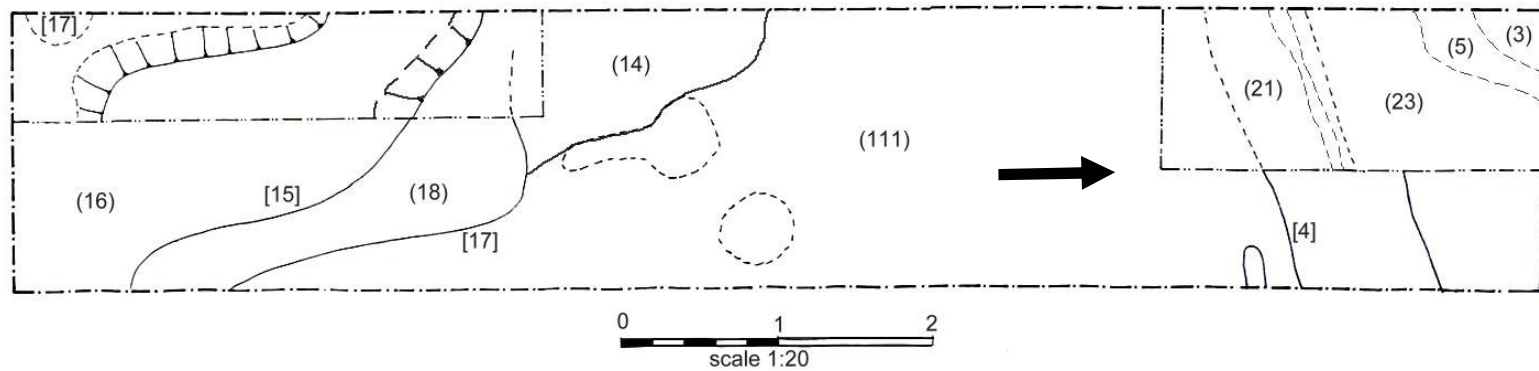
To the south the building debris (16) was cut by a later feature (110). This feature was recorded in section and had two fills. The first of the fills (24) was cut by a later feature (17) that was u-shaped and filled by (18). This was covered by 23, the upper fill of feature 110.



**Plate 1: Sondage in Trench A**

At the north end of the trench a sondage (see plate 1) was excavated to investigate a possibly linear feature running north-east south-west. Excavation showed that the linear feature was in fact one of several layers sloping north out of the trench. Layer 5 was dark brown/black silty clay with bone, brick, pot and glass inclusions that was covered by the re-deposited layer (111). Layer 5 covered another re-deposit of red clay/ marl (122) that covered three more archaeological layers, 19, 20 and 21 respectively. Layer 21 was dark brown/grey silty clay with inclusions of brick and pot, which dates from the 19<sup>th</sup> century.





**Figure 5: Trench A plan and section**



## **Trench B**

Trench B was located approximately 16.4m from the front of Broad Street running west towards the back end of the orchard. It measured 10m by 2m and cut through grass turf that covered the whole of the area. The trench was positioned to investigate possible archaeological features to the west and rear of the buildings marked on the 1838 tithe map. Cutting the turf and the subsoil (2) was a modern tree bowl (39) that was filled by a dark black humic fill (40) that had visible roots. These layers were excavated by machine to a depth of 0.32m to the west and 0.40m to the east.

Under layers 1 and 2 was a well mixed greyish brown silty clay (68) with small lenses of red clay and stone, gravel and charcoal inclusions. This layer separates two phases of archaeology.

To the east layer 68 was cut by several features. These include post holes 25, 46, 65 and 66. Post hole 25 was fairly substantial, with a split pebble and stone packing (26). The post hole was approximately 0.40m in diameter with a depth of 0.50m.

Post hole 46 was similar with a diameter of 0.42m and a depth of 0.50m (see plate 2) but cut an earlier square cut feature (30) which was possibly burnt in-situ.



**Plate 2: Post Hole 46 shown cutting earlier burnt layer 29**

In the same area were several possible pits including 28. This was over 0.60 metres in width and 0.44 metres deep. Pit 33 was unexcavated but was filled by 34 which had early to mid 17th Century pottery from its fill. Covering part of this fill was a circular layer of very thin ash/charcoal (60) that was mixed with beige clay.

Two early features in this area had been cut by the post holes and pits. Feature 30 was a possible square cut and filled by a dark black burning layer of ash and charcoal, surrounded by pinkish red baked clay (59). The baked clay suggests in-situ burning. The other earlier feature is this area (61) was again square cut and ash filled but shows no evidence of in-situ burning.



**Plate 3: Feature 50 in trench B**

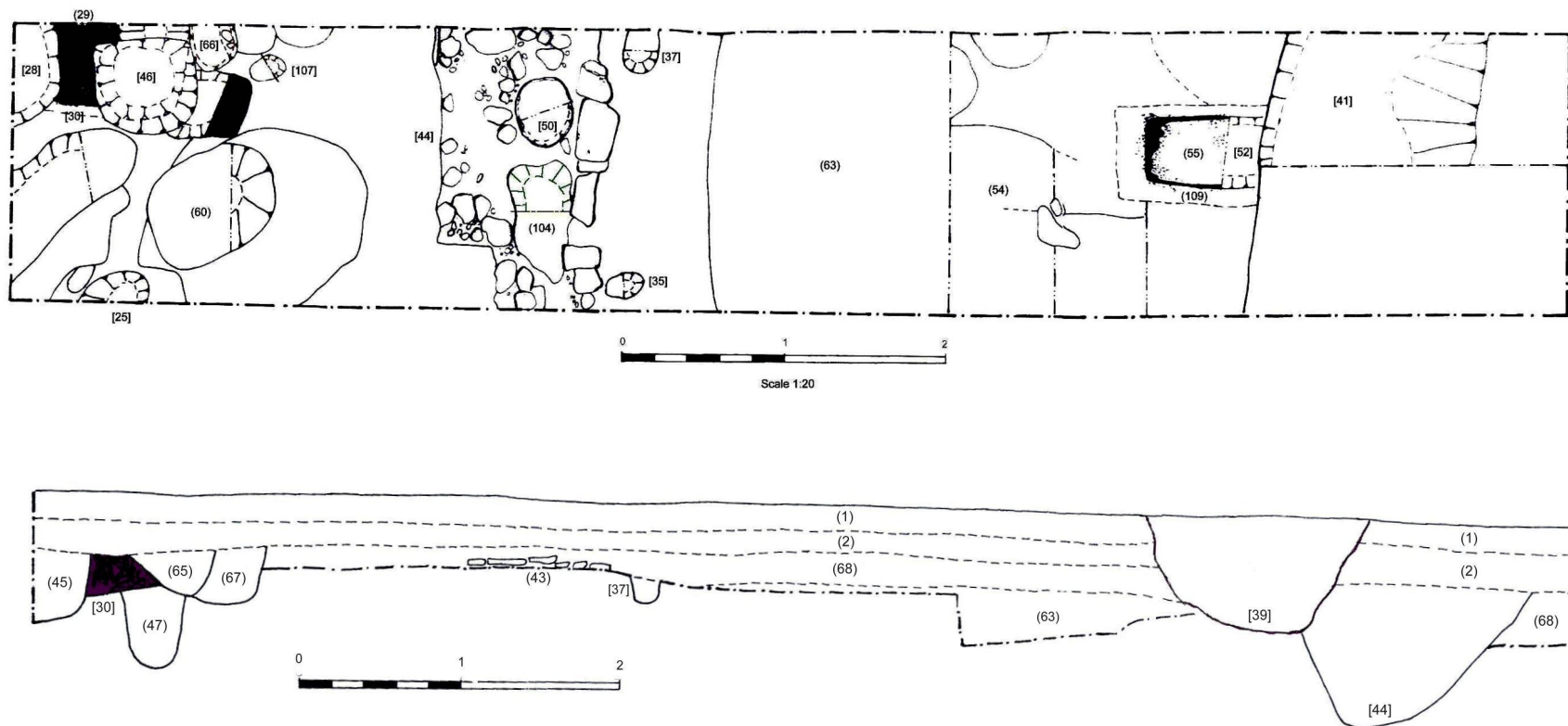
The only other feature cutting layer 68 was a north-south running ditch (41). This was located at the west end of the trench. All other features are covered by 68 and include a circular feature (50, see Plate 3) that was possibly a mixing pit for lime mortar, a layer containing animal horn and bones (104) and a stone layer (43) running north-south.



**Plate 4: Cut 52**

A rectangular feature (see Plate 2) running east-west, cut by a late 18<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> century ditch (41), had four burnt fills and was surrounded by baked clay (109) which suggests in-situ burning. Covering this feature was a layer of possible building debris (63) that consisted of a very stony fill mixed with dark grey silty clay. The stones were mostly angular flags and pebbles, and mixed within this layer were pieces of late medieval green glazed roof tile. Layer 63 was three

metres in width from east to west and covered one other layer of burning (54). Layer 54 was not burnt in-situ and contained fragments of a decayed copper alloy compound. Some of this material was found adhering to brick fragments.



**Figure 6: Trench B plan and section**

### **Trench C**

Trench C was located west toward the back of the orchard approximately 16m from the west boundary hedge, 4.5m from the north boundary hedge and 7m from the south hedge. It measured 10m by 2m running north-south and cut through grass turf that covered the whole of the area. The trench was located to investigate archaeological deposits including possible boundary markers running west from Broad Street.

The topsoil (1) and subsoil (2) were excavated by machine to a depth of 0.46m to the south and 0.40m to the north. Below this and cutting the subsoil was a ditch (71) running east west which had a small circular pit (79) cutting the upper fill. The ditch was covered by layer 76 that contained pottery of a 16th century date. The lowest fill found within this feature was 83 and contained the only exclusively late medieval assemblage of pottery found on the site, consisting of well preserved sherds of 14th and 15th century wares.

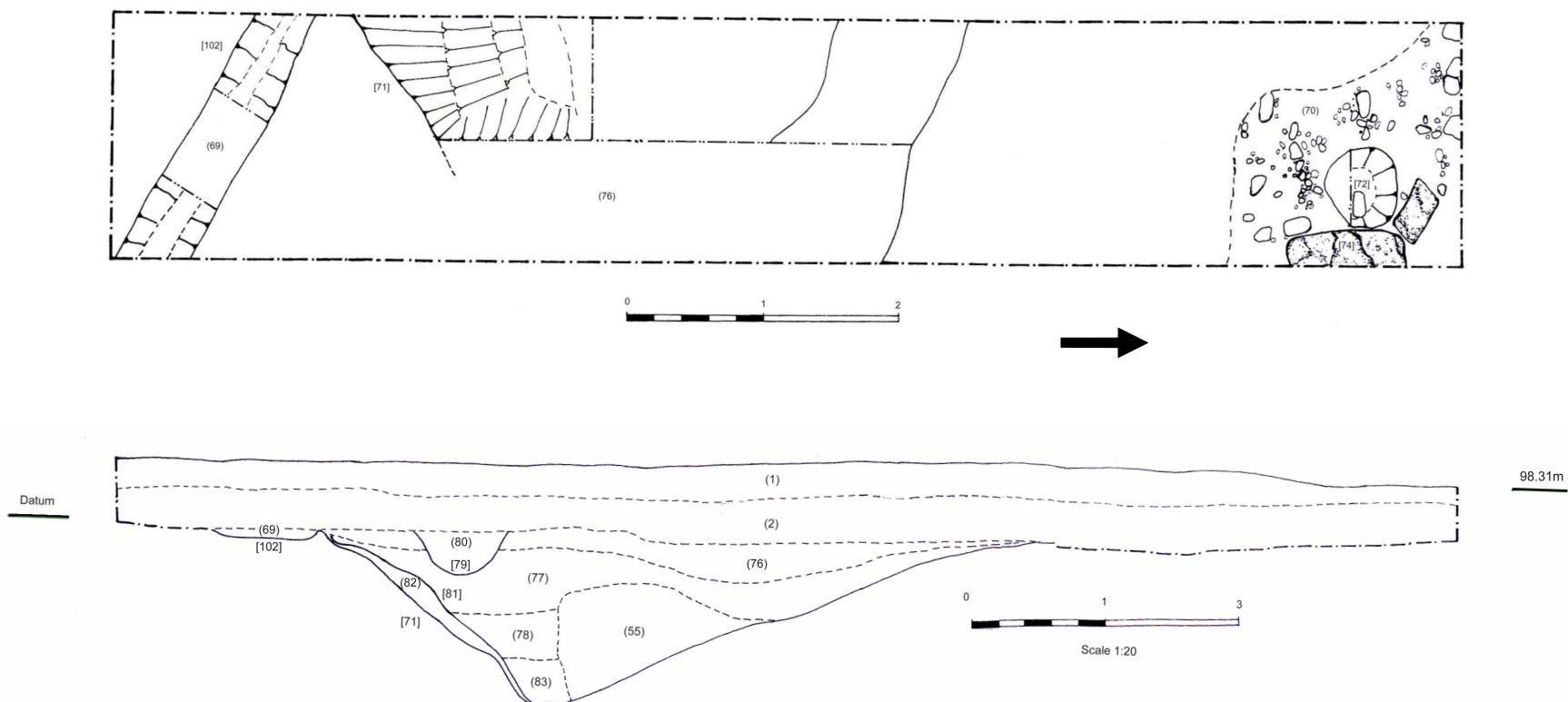
Ditch 102 ran south east/north west and contained pottery from the 15th to mid 16th century date.



**Plate 5: The rough stone surface (70) with stone flags and pit 72**

To the north of the trench was a possible rough stone and pebble surface (70) that was cut by a shallow circular feature (72). This feature contained pottery of 18th century date, and was flanked by flat stone flags (74). The stone flags continued under the eastern baulk of the trench and appeared to be laid on top of the stone and pebble surface.





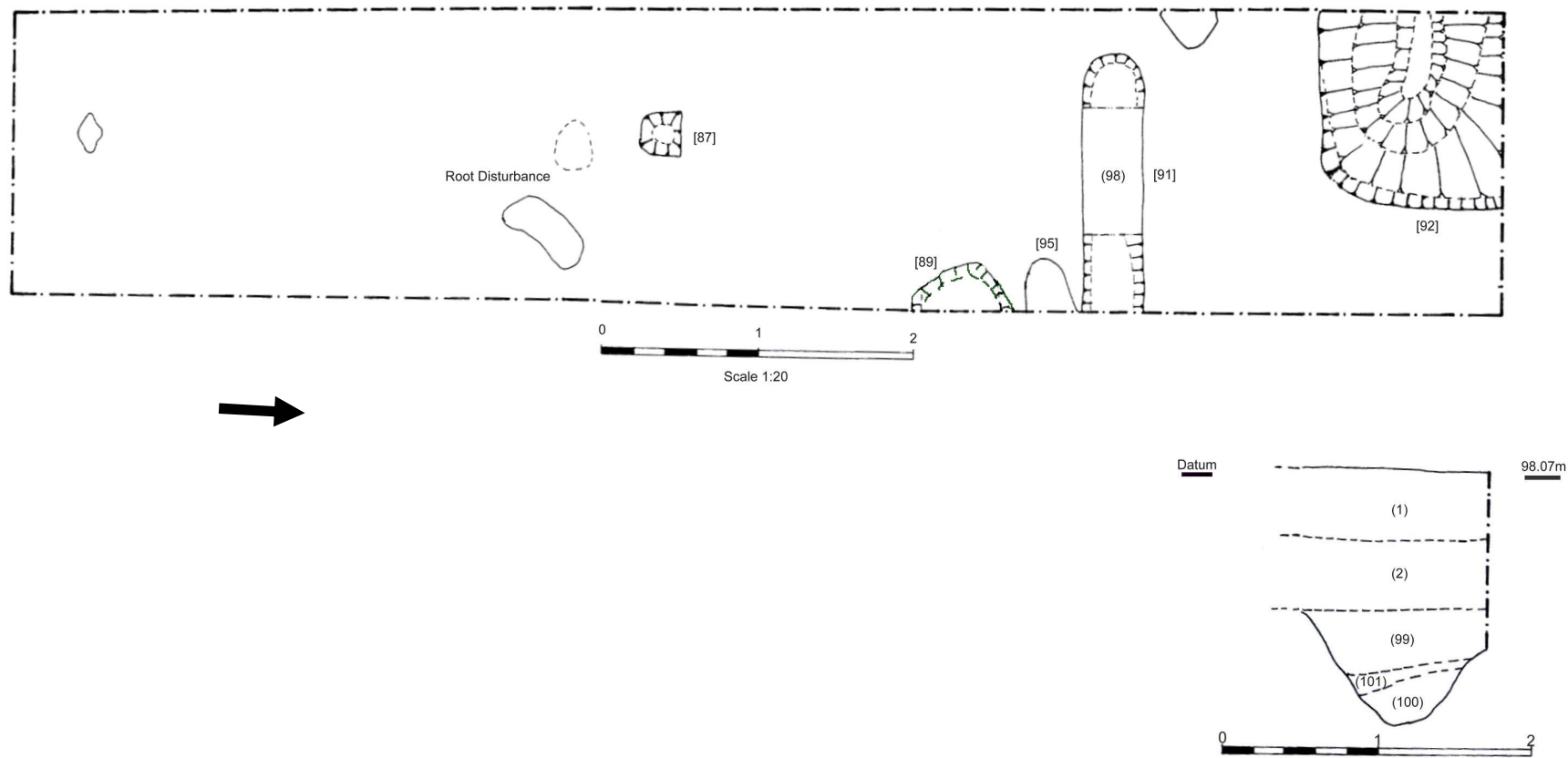
**Figure 7: Trench C plan and section**

## **Trench D**

Trench D was located running north south along the western hedge boundary at the back of the orchard. It was approximately 1.5m from the hedge. It measured 10m by 2m and cut through grass turf that covered the whole of the area. Layers 1 and 2 were excavated by machine to a depth of approximately 0.85m to show features cut into a pinkish red clay marl (3).

The only significant archaeological feature was a medieval ditch terminus (92) possibly the terminus of one of the ditches in Trench C.

The other features recorded in this trench were probably all caused by root and animal disturbance.



**Figure 8: Trench D plan and section**



## 5.2 The finds

### *The Pottery*

A total weight of 1.6 kg of pottery was recovered from 11 excavated contexts. The sampling policy adopted by the excavator was one of total retrieval of all excavated pottery, but only a sample of self evidently modern building materials (brick and tile etc) were retained.

Generally the recovered pottery was in good condition and did not appear to have been subjected to any great post depositional disturbance from agricultural activity or other intrusive ground disturbance. Most of the excavated contexts appear to be securely stratified and the pottery found within them does not include a great deal of intrusive or residual material.

This has allowed reasonably secure spot dates for the contexts to be arrived at, although further detailed analysis of some of the earlier material would be beneficial in order to be able to make a more definitive statement about the origins of some of the less commonly observed fabrics.

The bulk of the assemblage consists of later post medieval material (18th and 19th century). This represented 0.8 kg of the retrieved assemblage from 6 excavated contexts. The bulk of this material consisted of domestic bowls, cookware, plates and cups in a variety of fabrics. These were mainly Staffordshire earthenware, with a black internal glaze, and a variety of cream and pearl wares.

Late medieval-early post medieval pottery was exclusively found in only three contexts (34, 63, 76), and represented 7% of the total assemblage. Both of these contexts were, however, securely stratified and contained a minimal amount intrusive or residual material. Context 34 was a very homogenous layer and contained exclusively shards of Staffordshire red ware (STRE) with white slip trailed decoration. This has been found in early-mid 17th century contexts in Hereford (Vince 2002). Context 76 contained three sherds of fabric B4, (Malvernian hollow wares) that are most commonly found in later 15th century to early 16th century contexts in Hereford (Vince 2002). Two of the B4 sherds found in this context were pierced, and may have come from a chafing dish, which is thought to be an indicator of a high status dwelling.

No high medieval pottery was found, and the earliest pottery that can be reliably dated is of late 13th to 14th century date. This was found in context 83 and consisted of 7 sherds weighing a total of 269 grams. This included two pieces of pulled strap handles from late medieval jugs. This appears to be in fabric A7b, a locally made fabric that occurs in late medieval contexts in Hereford (Vince 2002).

Well stratified pottery from Weobley has scarcely ever been found in significant amounts. This assemblage is therefore of importance, despite being relatively small. If further archaeological work is carried out in the immediate area then more detailed analysis of any additional material should be carried out to allow significant statistical patterns to be identified and to allow more secure dating and fabric identification to be achieved.

### ***Ceramic building material***

This represented the largest part of the ceramic assemblage, with over 3.6 kg of all types ceramic building material (CBM) being recovered from nine separate contexts.

The bulk of the material appears to be of later post medieval date and consisted mainly of pieces of crushed handmade brick and handmade flat unglazed roof tile. Contexts 34, 63 and 76 contained datable pieces of glazed later medieval roof tile in fabric B4, which has found to form up to 44% of the CBM in later 15th and 16th century contexts in Hereford (Vince 2002).

Apart from roof furniture some floor tile (glazed and unglazed) and a variety of types of handmade brick were found to be present. As this assemblage is fairly small it is probably of limited value for further analysis. If further excavation work was to take place, however, this assemblage should be included in any future programme of post excavation assessment and analysis.

### ***The animal bone***

A total of 4.9 kg of animal bone was retrieved from 11 contexts. Over 25% of this came from later post medieval contexts. One context, 76, produced the bulk of the animal bone retrieved from the site, a total of 3.57 kg. This context is securely stratified and contains 16th century pottery. The study of assemblages of animal bone from this period has been identified as a priority by English Heritage. It is therefore proposed that this material should be assessed by a recognised archaeozoological specialist (Ian Baxter). The results of this assessment will be included in a final report.

### ***The environmental samples***

Two 20 litre soil samples were taken from securely stratified contexts, 29 and 55. These will be processed and assessed by Liz Pearson of the Worcester County Archaeology Service. They will be assessed in terms of the potential occurrence of charred cereal grains, cereal processing waste and other plant macro fossils, small animal, bird and fish bone.

Context	Type	Weight (in grams)	A7 b	B4	C1	Str e	cist	med	pm	archdate	Date	Comments
5	Fill	118							14	late post med	C19th	Pearl wares, cream wares, 1 sherd with 'pie crust' edged rim
18	Fill	20							2	late post med	C19th	
21	Layer	40							4	late post med	C19th	Polychrome wavy edged plate, 1 piece of STRE with white slip trail decoration, probably residual
34	Fill	169				8				post med	C17th	Homogenous context, almost all STRE with white trailed slip dec
47	Fill	56							2	post med	C18th	Mixed context, some pearl wares, mainly staffs red wares
49	Fill	340								later post med	C18th-C19th	
63	Layer	54		2						late med	C14th-C16th	Malvernian hollow wares
69	Fill	204	1	4			1			late med	C14th-C16th	1 piece (german?) stoneware, 1 piece of chafing dish, internally glazed vessels. 1 piece residual med unglazed earthenware rim
73	Fill	195							5	late post med	C18th	
76	Layer	114		3			2			Early post med	C16th	1 piece pierced B4, 2 possible chafing dish pieces, 1 possible Saintonge (internal glaze?)
83	Fill	269	2	1						late med	C14th-C15th	Two pulled strap handles with stabbing and green glaze, probably A7b. Exclusively med. context
99	Fill	22							1	?	?	! Very abraded unglazed sherd, 1 piece staffs black glazed (C19th).
999	Unstrat	131										

**Table 1: Ceramic fabric identification and spot dating**

## 6.0 Conclusions

The creation of new towns was common in the Middle Ages. Bishops, Monasteries and Temporal Lords created them as a means of increasing revenue. An early English example is St Albans, where the abbot created a triangular market place to the north-east of the monastery in the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century. Other new towns created by monasteries before the Norman Conquest may include Abingdon, Peterborough, Whitby and Hartlepool and certainly Durham (Beresford, 1988, p326). After the Norman Conquest the pace of borough creation accelerated with 21 new towns created between 1066 and 1100 and a further 19 by 1130 (*ibid.*).

In the Welsh Marches the borough foundations of the first phase include a group which were founded by fitz Osbern which include the boroughs attached to the castles at Monmouth (Kissack, 1996, p18) and Chepstow (Noble, 1964, p64).

In Herefordshire, apart from Hereford itself, for centuries the only borough in the county, Domesday records several places which may be identified as boroughs in 1086. At Wigmore the borough was specified '*burgo qd ibi est*' (Thorn and Thorn) as it was at Clifford which Gilbert the sheriff held of Ralph de Tony at a revenue of both the borough and the plough '*ten illud ad firma burga. Car*' (*ibid.*) and which had 16 burghers. At Ewyas Harold, the embryo of a borough might be discernible in the two houses within the castle itself '*in castello*' (*ibid.*).

Other boroughs followed - Kington was probably founded as a borough around its castle in the early years of the 12<sup>th</sup> century (Sinclair and Fenn, 1995) and Richard de Capella (Bishop of Hereford, 1121-1127) seems to have founded boroughs at Bromyard (Williams, 1987), Ledbury, Ross-on-Wye and Bishop's Castle during the same period (Hillaby, 1997).

The street and property boundary layout of Weobley possesses elements that clearly derive from having been planned. The central core of the present village, the main street leading to the castle gate with its tenement plots, would have been part of the de Lacy planted borough. However, if the area around the church is included, the street layout of Weobley possesses a disconformity, which probably results from the church pre-dating the new borough (Beresford, 1988, p450). A similar layout exists at Olney in Buckinghamshire, where there are also two distinct elements in the village plan, an original area round the church, and a later planned borough immediately to the north (*ibid.* p107).

The de Lacys also held in the manor of Stanton (Stanton Lacy in Shropshire) in Domesday, where the castle and town of Ludlow was later built on a new site. The original town may have been south of the castle and built around a triangular market place in the area known as Dinham (Shoesmith, 2000, p12). Joce de Dinan, who held Ludlow Castle between 1136 and 1156, may have originally built this town (Faraday, 1991, p3). Both forms of borough development, the totally new plantation and the deliberate development of an existing village, were common. In 1251, the Earl of Derby, William de Ferrers, created the borough of Higham Ferrers by giving burgess status to the villagers of Higham (Beresford, 1988, p105). The Ferrers' borough of Newborough in Needwood Forest, however, was a new plantation (*ibid.* p55).

The original road layout at Weobley appears to consist of an east-west road running north of the church, now represented by footpaths and the northernmost section of Church Street, and a north-south road, now the western part of Church Street. The north-south road may have continued to the north towards Pembridge, via Stockmoor, but if so, little evidence remains. This road seems to have run south from the western end of the church towards the southern part of

Hereford Street and thence on to Hereford, and is likely to have been diverted eastward to accommodate the construction of the castle.



**Figure 9: Extract from the 1838 tithe map of Weobley**

The Old Corner House stands on the junction of the north-south Broad Street, and Bell Lane at the north end of the central market square. It is within the new borough that appears to date to the mid 13<sup>th</sup> (Beresford 1973) and opposite The Red Lion Inn, a timber-framed building with a possible 14<sup>th</sup> century date.

Large-scale demolition of the vote houses occurred in 1844-5, estimated locally in the order of 70-80 dwellings. The demolitions in the area around The Old Corner House included the Market Hall and a fine old house that stood in the centre of Broad Street. Further timber houses probably stood on all vacant sites along the road with foundations and paving stones in the gardens of the houses on the east side of Broad Street (Mrs. F. H. Leather, 1926). On the Bell Square a plot known as 'Bell Garden' once housed an old coaching inn called The Bell. The inn was built round a square courtyard, had a projecting porch and probably dates from the 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century.

The demolition of houses and timber framed buildings around the Old Corner House and throughout the borough has been used as an argument in favour of a much denser occupation of the whole area of the historic borough in the medieval period.

A problem arises with the extent of the area concerned however. The medieval and early post-medieval houses in Weobley are distributed throughout an area which extends approximately 600 metres north to south by approximately 300 metres east to west. In comparison Hereford is less than twice the area. The population of Hereford has been estimated at about 2,850 in 1377.<sup>45</sup> If Weobley's density of settlement was similar to Hereford's then a population in excess of 1,500 would be expected in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. This is an unrealistically high figure and the 1379 poll tax return, with a total of 152 males and unmarried females of 16 and over, suggests a much lower one. Nor do later statistics suggest a high population; the muster of men of Weobley aged 16 and over, who were able to bear arms was 23 in 1539 and 36 in 1542 (Salt, 1953, p21). In 1664 there were 126 houses in Weobley of which 64 were exempt from paying the hearth tax (Faraday, 1972, p106). The hearth tax returns for 1665 list 51 householders who were assessed.<sup>46</sup>

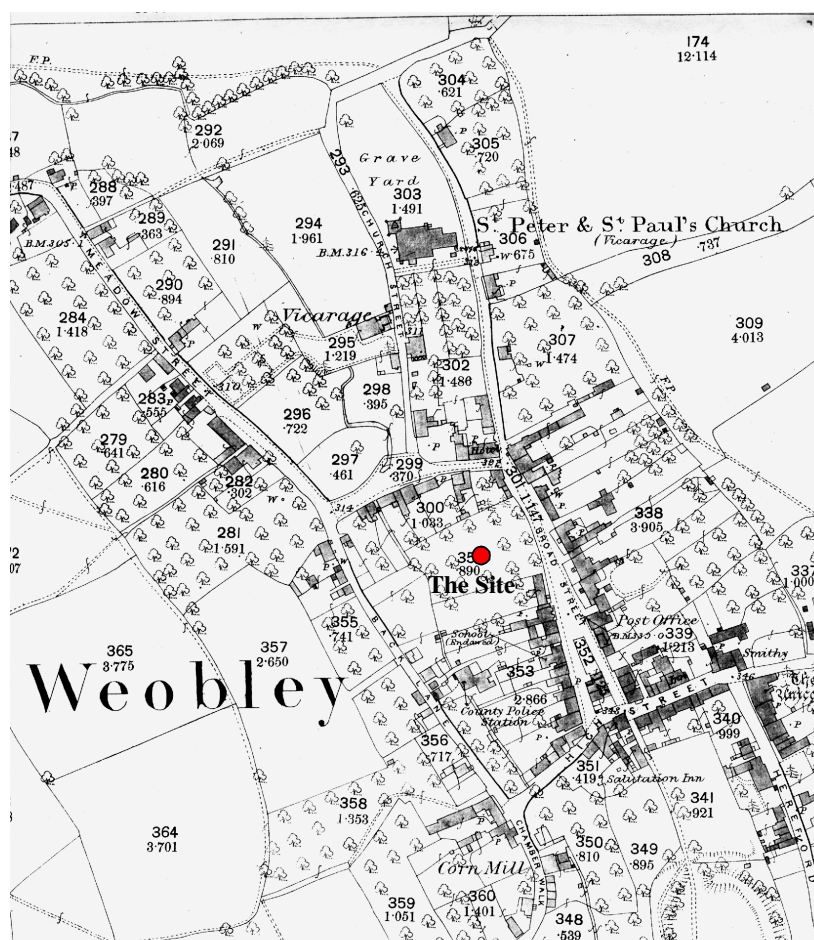


Figure 10: 1887 1<sup>st</sup> Edition 1:2500 plan of Weobley

<sup>45</sup> Entry for the Hereford constituency in Roskell, 1992. In 1377 1,903 males and females over the age of 13 were assessed for tax in Hereford (Fenwick, 1998)

<sup>46</sup> Microfilm in Herefordshire Record Office of original in the Public Record Office

The ownership and occupation according to Land Tax Returns<sup>47</sup> and the 1839 Tithe Appointment<sup>48</sup> has been looked at for three plots (Tithe Nos. 691, 695, [within the orchard] and 699) alone Broad Street, (see Appendix).

The tax returns show that Plot 691, to the east of The Old Corner House was owned by the Marquis of Bath from 1795 to 1826 and sold that year to a Stephen Jones. With Stephen Jones as the owner, the property is described as a house and shop up to 1830 while the Tithe Appointment (1839) describes the land as garden.

The plot (Tithe No. 695) lies within the land that is now the orchard of the Old Corner House. The property was owned from 1795 through to 1839 by the Marquis of Bath and occupied by John Baskerville. Some time before 1887 (The 1<sup>st</sup> edition O.S. map) the house on this property was demolished.



<sup>47</sup>

Hereford Record Office Q/REL/7 & MF33

<sup>48</sup>

Hereford record office IR29/4 & MF12

To the south of the orchard, the plot (Tithe No. 699) had two owners between 1795-1802, Mrs. Bridgett Price, Widow and Fran Price. From 1802-30 a Samuel Thomason is owner and occupier of the property that is described as houses and land. By 1839 his sons Richard and John are owners of the property.

With Broad Street situated on the market triangle it is likely some of the properties fronting it were houses shops and workshops. A Copy Conveyance<sup>49</sup> dating to 1837 recites back to 1772 and 1791, referring to Cottages, a Malthouse and Smith's shops at the bottom of Broad Street with that street on the east.

Figure 11 shows those buildings which appear on the Tithe Map in 1838 but not on the 1:2500 OS 1<sup>st</sup> edition map in 1887. These number at least 43 with two more possible buildings.<sup>50</sup> Some of these buildings were quite large and are likely to have contained more than one dwelling. The figure of 84 vote houses being demolished in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (see above) may therefore not be very much of an exaggeration. The buildings which survived from 1838 to 1887 numbered at least 67: many of these are also would be occupied by more than one dwelling.

Assuming that the demolished buildings were the older, more run-down ones, this would agree with the figure of around 120-130 late medieval and early post-medieval dwellings for Weobley suggested by the hearth tax assessment and may indicate a figure of 700 or more for the early 17<sup>th</sup> century population. Many of the houses would have been built as the result of original burgages being sub-divided over the years and one piece of research has catalogued around 75 sites that might be identified as the original burgage plots.<sup>51</sup> This number fits much more comfortably with the population which might be expected from the 1379 poll tax figures.

Again, although these figures are fairly speculative, the inevitable inference must be that most of the area of the old borough was not built up during the medieval period. It is possible that there was an original intention to build on the whole area of the old borough. Medieval new boroughs were sometimes laid out ambitiously and sometimes the burgage plots were never developed. In 1443 a burgage in the Bishop of Hereford's early 12<sup>th</sup> century borough of Ledbury was still not built on - '*non edificatum*' (Hillaby, 1970, p11).

The archaeological evidence from the evaluation shows that deposits from the Victorian to medieval periods stretch from Broad Street through to the rear of the property. Demolition rubble of brick and mortar was identified close to Broad Street while further back from the street frontage (within Trench B) post holes and pits (of a 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> century date) cut through a layer with little archaeological activity. This layer sealed stone rubble containing green glazed roof tile probably dating to the 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> century. The stone rubble covered earlier *in-situ* burning.

The buildings known to have existed in 1838 are fairly densely concentrated in the southern part of the village and this applies equally both to those which were demolished in 1844-5 and to those which survived. It is possible that the site was occupied by a building of medieval/post medieval date that stood until the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century when houses in the Borough of Weobley were demolished at the order from the Marquis of Bath.

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<sup>49</sup> Hereford Record Office R28/11253

<sup>50</sup> One of these is a building which in 1887 was on the same site as a building in 1838 but with a different shape – which may be a new building or an alteration to an existing one. The other seems not be in exactly the same place

<sup>51</sup> Information drawn from a GCE A level thesis which used a range of techniques to investigate the archaeology of Weobley. These techniques included building surveys, aerial photographs, the tithe map and hedgerow dating (Lucas, 1991)



Further back from the street frontage a possible boundary ditch runs east west. The pottery from the earliest fill of the ditch is the only exclusively medieval assemblage from the site and is from one of the deepest archaeological features (96.75 metres O.D.). It dates to the 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> century while the pottery from the latest fill/ covering layer dates to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The pottery range from the ditch shows that it was an open feature/boundary for at least two centuries up until the early post medieval period.

The evidence provides some of the only information from the historical core of Weobley relating to the medieval and post medieval occupation of the borough. The pottery, although not from an early medieval date, relates to activity from the 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> century through to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and was recovered from *in-situ* archaeological features.

These features, recorded from 0.30 metres below the ground surface (98.01 metres O.D.) to a depth of 1.8 metres (96.75 metres O.D.) represent some six centuries of archaeological activity, well preserved under the turf of the orchard of The Old Corner House.

## **7.0 Archive deposition**

The primary project archive, consisting of the excavated material and any original paper records, will be prepared and stored in accordance with the guidelines laid down in the Institute of Field Archaeologists' guidelines for the preparation and storage of archives. The primary archive will be stored with Hereford City Museum.

A copy of the digital archive, stored on CD and consisting of context, artefact and ecofact data, together with the site drawings and selected photographs, will accompany the primary archive.

The client, in consultation with the project manager, will make provision for the deposition of all finds from the excavation with Hereford City Museum. On completion of the fieldwork and the processing, collation, recording and analysis of the finds from the excavation all finds will be handed over to the museum staff, along with the project archive. Arrangements will be made with the museum for the transfer of title.

## **8.0 Publication and dissemination proposals**

Paper copies of this report will be lodged with the Archaeological Adviser to Herefordshire Council, Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record, Hereford City Library, and Weobley Museum. A short note on the project will be prepared for publication in the Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists Field Club.

Copies of this report on CD, including the supporting archival material will be available from Archenfield Archaeology.

The complete photographic record, including the negatives, will be retained by Archenfield Archaeology.

## Appendix

### (Tithe number 695) - Land Tax Assessment (HRO Q/REL/7 & MF33)

Year	Owner	Occupier	Description	Amount
1795	Marquis of Bath	John Baskerville		3/4
1797	Marquis of Bath	John Baskerville		3/4
1799	Marquis of Bath	John Baskerville		3/4d
1802	Marquis of Bath	John Baskerville		3/4
1804	Marquis of Bath	John Baskerville		(3/4d)
1811	Marquis of Bath	John Baskerville Senr.		8/5¼
1812	Marquis of Bath	John Baskerville Senr.		8/5¼
1814	Marquis of Bath	John Baskerville Senr.		7/6
1816	Marquis of Bath	John Baskerville Senr.		7/6

### (Tithe number 695) - Land Tax Assessment (HRO Q/REL/7 & MF33) continued

Year	Owner	Occupier	Description	Amount
1817	Marquis of Bath	John Baskerville Senr.		7/-
1818	Marquis of Bath	John Baskerville Senr.		7/6
1819	Marquis of Bath	John Baskerville Senr.		7/6
1820	Marquis of Bath	John Baskerville		7/6
1821	Marquis of Bath	John Baskerville #		7/6
1822	Marquis of Bath	John Baskerville Senr.		7/6
1823	Marquis of Bath	John Baskerville Senr.		7/6
1824	Marquis of Bath	John Baskerville		7/6
1825	Marquis of Bath	John Baskerville		7/6

1826	Marquis of Bath	John Baskerville		10/-
1827	Marquis of Bath	John Baskerville	Land	10/-
1828	Marquis of Bath	John Baskerville	Land	10/-
1829	Marquis of Bath	J. Baskerville	Land	10/-
1830	Marquis of Bath	J. Baskerville	Land	16/-

**# Witness - Wm Farmer's will, 1821 - HRO R28/11532**

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