



101-106 St Owen's Street, Hereford:
archaeological monitoring

Huw Sherlock
2007



archenfield archaeology ltd

Principal Archaeologist: Huw Sherlock BA, Diparch, MIFA

Archenfield Archaeology Ltd is a multidisciplinary archaeological consultancy, offering a complete range of archaeological advice and services to the public and private sector. We specialise in giving archaeological advice to developers, housing associations and private individuals. We also undertake archaeological intervention, from monitoring to full-scale excavation; building survey; landscape and geophysical surveys and community-based historical and archaeological projects.

*101-106 St Owen's Street, Hereford: archaeological evaluation
2007*

Client: Mr D Marriott, land owner

Text: Huw Sherlock BA (hons), Diparch, MIFA

Project Manager: Huw Sherlock BA (hons), Diparch, MIFA

Illustrations: Graham Arnold BA (hons), MSc

Cover Photograph: Peter Nash Cars showroom, St Owen's Street, Hereford looking north-west



Contents

Summary.....	3
1.0 Introduction	4
2.0 Geological and historical background.....	6
2.1 Geological background and land use	6
2.2 Historical background.....	6
2.3 Archaeological background.....	9
3.0 Project aims and objectives.....	11
3.1 Site specific aims	11
3.2 Objectives of field evaluation	11
4.0 Methodology.....	12
4.1 Field methodology	12
4.2 Processing methodology	13
5.0 The stratigraphy	14
5.1 Trench 1	14
5.2 Trench 2	16
6.0 Discussion.....	18
Bibliography	19

Figures

Figure 1: Site location plan.....	5
Figure 2: Plan showing plots along St Owen's Street in 1787.....	7
Figure 3: Extract from the 1886 1/500 OS map.....	8
Figure 4: Trench location plan.....	12
Figure 5: Trench 1 plan and south-facing section	14
Figure 6: Trench 1; after cleaning	15
Figure 7: Trench 2 during excavation.....	16
Figure 8: Trench 2 plan and south-facing section	17

Summary

Archenfield Archaeology Ltd was commissioned to archaeologically evaluate land at St Owen's Street Hereford at the former Peter Nash car dealership. The work was commissioned to provide additional information for the demolition of existing buildings and the erection of a block of 22 flats.

The site was in an area which may have been first developed as a suburb by the later 11th and early 12th centuries. Cartographic evidence shows that the modern plot boundaries still reflect the medieval partitioning of the site.

Two evaluation trenches were excavated which showed that the stratigraphic sequence is well preserved and were not truncated by Victorian and modern intrusions. No medieval features were encountered, but there is clearly a high potential for the preservation in situ of medieval deposits across the site.

1.0 Introduction

NGR: SO 51502 39722

Planning Authority: Herefordshire County Council ref app/ DCCE2007/2022/F

Mr David Marriott (the client) commissioned a programme of archaeological evaluation at 101 – 107 St Owen's Street, to the east of the city centre.

This followed advice by Herefordshire County Council that an archaeological evaluation was required prior to the determination of the client's planning application and in accordance with the planning guidelines laid down in the Department of Environment (DoE) Planning Policy Guideline (PPG) No 16 (November 1990). The site lies within the Hereford Area of Archaeological Importance, as designated under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979). The development therefore affects a site on which archaeological remains of importance were likely to exist.

A project design (Sherlock, 2007) was submitted to and agreed by the Archaeological Advisor to Herefordshire Council and stipulated that two 10 x 2 metre trenches in the area of the proposed development should be examined by means of excavation. The trenches were to be located in available space at the rear of the property.

The project was also to include a documentary search which, as a minimum, was to include information held by the local Sites and Monuments Record, the County Record Office and other standard sources of information. The fieldwork took place over three days in July 2007.

The subsequent research, evaluation excavation and recording exercise, undertaken by Archenfield Archaeology Ltd, was conducted in accordance with the stipulations of the project design and this post-evaluation statement outlines the initial (pre-specialist analysis) results of the project.

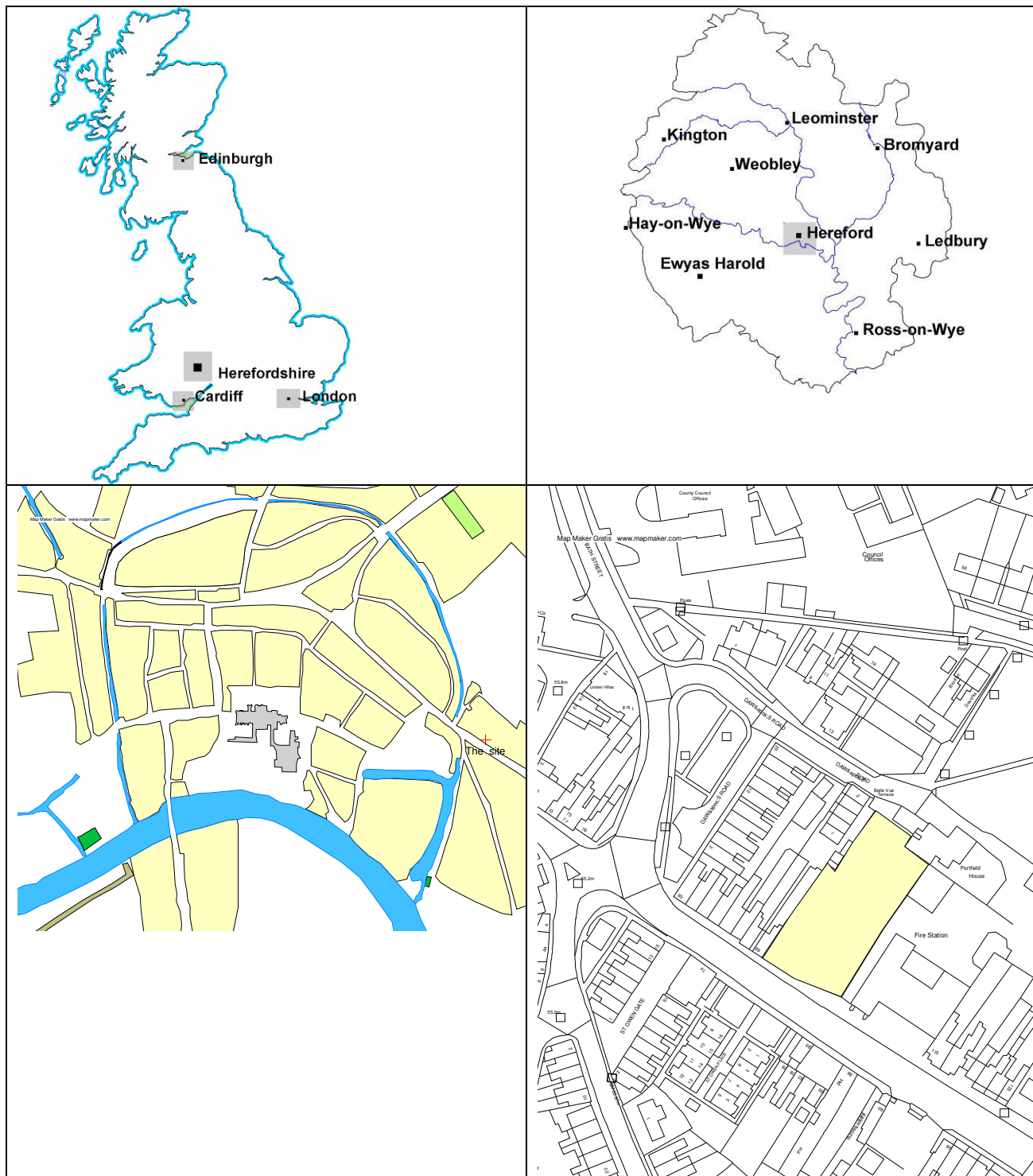


Figure 1: Site location plan

From top right, clockwise: Herefordshire in its geographical setting, the site in relation to the medieval layout of the town and its defensive circuit and the modern Superplan data (reproduced under license drawing reference number 010603519A)

2.0 Geological and historical background

2.1 Geological background and land use

The area of the site lies on level ground to the east of the city centre towards the top of what appears to be a natural slope along St Owen's Street as it runs east – west.

The underlying drift deposit is Hereford gravels, being an outwash fan from the last glaciation, the terminal moraine of which lies just to the west of the city (Brandon and Hains, 1981).

In general the area comprises a row of small to medium sized domestic and commercial properties of various types – a public house, bakery and until recently a car dealership on the site itself.

The site is currently used as a car park and commercial premises with a garage to the rear.

2.2 Historical background

St Owen's Street runs from St Peter's Square in Hereford south – east to Ledbury Road and was formerly called Hungry Street. The street was probably originally a single uninterrupted development of a series of burgage plots leading from the Norman market place to the circular chapel of the Knights Templar at the junction of St Owen's Street, Eign Road and Ledbury Road.

When Hereford's post-Conquest defences were built in the 12th century, a new gate was built on a site which cut the street in half. A Norman church just outside these defences was dedicated to St Owen and the name, with some variation, became that of the church. The south-eastern part of the street would become known as St Owen's Street. The suburb was certainly destroyed in 1264, when Roger Mortimer led an army towards Hereford, and houses and mills around the city were burnt or pulled down.¹

John Leland described the St Owen's suburb in the mid 16th century (he refers to as 'St Andrew's').

'There is a suburbe without St. Andrew's gate. Ther is a parocshe church of St. Andrew in the middle of the street. There is a hospital of St. Giles, wher ons wer friers Graye and the Templaries. King Richard gave this chapel to the towne, and it was mad into a hospital.'²

Speede's plan of the city in 1610 shows ribbon suburbs outside all the city gates, including St Owen's Church and houses opposite it as far as St Giles Chapel on the corner of Ledbury Road. These were to be demolished during the Civil War when the Scottish army approached the city in 1645, causing great distress to their inhabitants.³

On this occasion, the area of St Owen's Gate was the scene of particularly intensive fighting with mining and counter-mining. Although St Owen's Church appears to have been spared by the defenders, it was so badly damaged by heavy Scottish fire that it was demolished immediately after the war.⁴

¹ Noble, 1965

² Leland, part V, p 69

³ Webb, 1879 p216; Herefordshire Archives – (Hereford City Docs 21 iii xiii)

⁴ Webb, 1879 p219

Again the suburbs were rebuilt. Houses were occupied outside St Owen's Gate by 1654, when there was a dispute between neighbours in this area.¹ By 1684 continuous occupation of the north side of the street, from St Owen's Gate to St Giles Chapel, appears to have been re-established.²

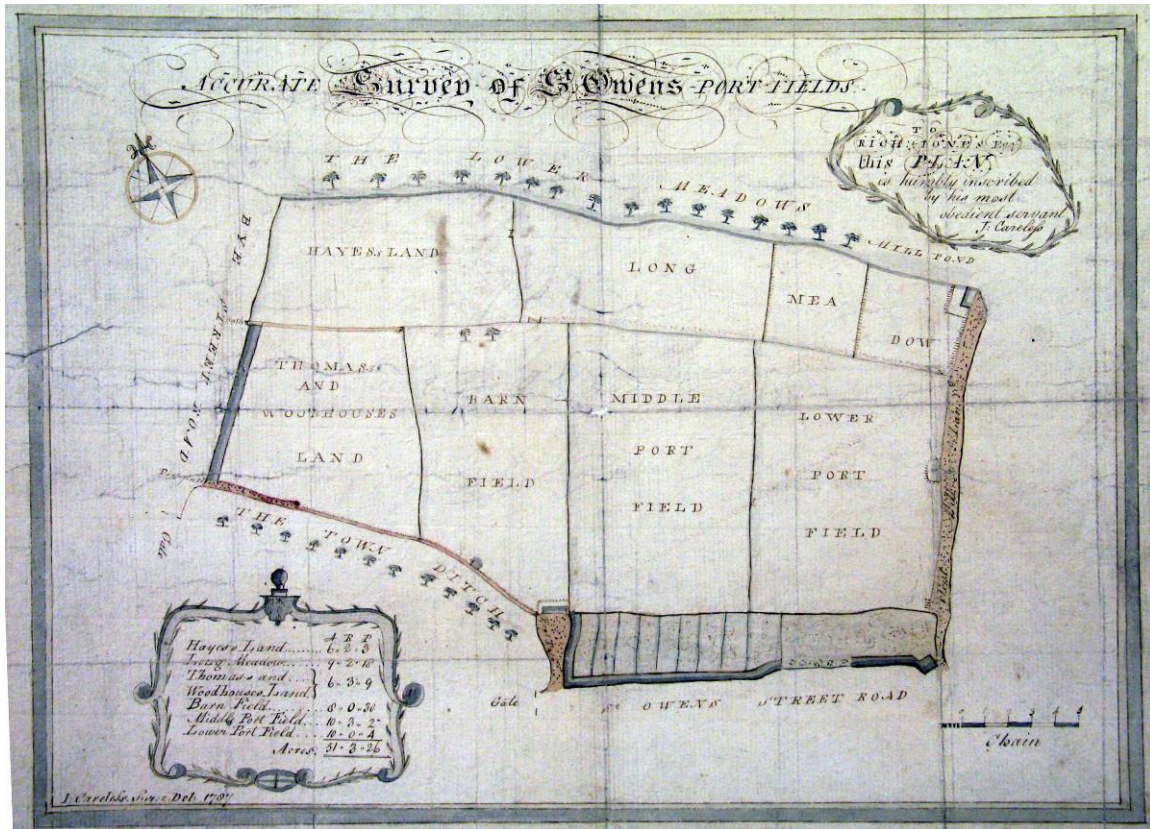


Figure 2: Plan showing plots along St Owen's Street in 1787

Bell Court was the name of a row of cottages in 19th century Hereford. In order to cram as many houses in as possible such small cottages were constructed as a terrace at right angles to the streets. Bell Court was a row of one up/one down cottages. The privies, originally earth, were probably connected to the main sewers by the time of the 1886 1st edition 1/500 scale map (Figure 3).

Such rows of cottages were common and similar rows existed in Hereford in Commercial Road at Hop Pole and Hop Bine Places³ and as the Sun cottages further north-west along St Owen's Street.⁴

On the 1880s 1/500 OS map (Figure 3) a covered entrance (conventionally marked by a cross) leads behind Bell Court into a yard. By 1928 the yard and its buildings were the premises of Messrs Edmunds & Laurence, motor engineers. The site has an association with the motor trade of 90 years.

¹ Herefordshire Archives – (Hereford City Docs 22-xv xi)

² A list of the occupiers of properties from the gate to St Giles Hospital who were responsible for scouring the roadside ditch – Herefordshire Archives – (Hereford City Docs 31-i xx)

³ Sherlock and Pikes, 2000

⁴ Sherlock and Pikes, 1999



Figure 3: Extract from the 1886 1/500 OS map

Another business within the present property in the earlier part of the 20th century was Charles Cook, builder & contractor.¹

By the mid 1930s the building firm had gone. The motor business had become *Victory Garages*, the proprietor being Walter Laurence. In 1937 the entry in Kelly's directory reads, '*automobile engineers, repairs and overhauls: quick service, distributing agent for Jowett cars & agent for all leading makes & motor car garage, Victory garages, St Owen's Street, telephone 2270*'.

But the sites association with transport is older than the motor car; in 1867 one of the occupiers, at number 48, was the wheelwright and blacksmith Alfred Morgan. In 1858 J Morgan had been a wheelwright there, and although the precise address is not given, in 1847, Thomas Morris had been the only wheelwright in St Owen's Street.²

¹ Kelly's Directory 1909

² Hunt's Directory

2.3 Archaeological background

The 13th century wall and 12th century gravel rampart have been observed during several of the excavations in this area in similar proximity to the line of the city wall. These features can occur as little as 0.5 – 1 metre below the modern ground surface. In 1989 two evaluation trenches were excavated in the extreme southern end of the Gaol Street/Bath Street car park (Shoesmith, Beeley & Hoverd, 1989). The foundations of the wall were found to be present at the western end of the trenches backing onto Gaol Street, and lay within 0.20 – 0.30 metres of the surface. No trace of the city ditch was found during these excavations.

The ditch is shown on early maps (Taylor, 1757) as running parallel to the circuit of the 13th century wall, separated by a patch of open ground. Excavations towards the northern end of the present Gaol Street car park, where it flanked Bath Street, undertaken in 1942 by W.M. Shimmin, the City Engineer,¹ revealed the ditch to exist to a depth of approximately 3 metres, with the top one metre being made ground. The fill of the ditch was waterlogged, and well-preserved rich silt deposits were found to contain wooden stakes.

There have been relatively few excavations of sites that lie outside but in close proximity to the line of the city defences. In 1991 an evaluation excavation on the site of a car park on the northern side of Bath Street close to the junction with Commercial Road revealed a sequence of buried soils dating from the pre-Conquest period (Stone, 1991). A layer containing 10th to 11th century pottery and metalworking residues were also found on the site.

At the Godsell's Garage site (Hoverd, 1998b) the 12th century rampart lay within 1 metre of the surface underneath a layer of made ground and was up to 1.20 to 1.60 metres thick. The rampart consisted of relatively clean pink gravel, of varying coarseness. This was material re-deposited during the digging of the town ditch. Traces of turf layers can sometimes be seen, and in places this feature has been found overlying yard surfaces and pits of late Saxon date (Hoverd, 1997). A borehole survey at Bastion Mews, behind the line of the wall (Sherlock, 1998a), also revealed evidence of a substantial layer of gravel similar to that used in the construction of the 12th century rampart. Here it lay within one metre of the surface, and appeared to seal earlier occupation levels.

Stone chippings and other debris relating to the construction of the city wall in the period from 1224 – 1265 AD have been encountered on other sites close to the line of the city wall (Stanford, 1966; Shoesmith, Hoverd & Beeley, 1989; Stone, 1991 & 1995; Sherlock, 1998). As the wall fell into disuse and the defensive embankment was lowered many of the later archaeological layers may well have been disturbed, but the ditch continued in use.

Excavations in the yard of the Lamb Hotel (now the Barrels public house) in 1973 (Shoesmith, 1982) showed that natural gravels were present at 0.70 metres below the surface of the yard, and that the berm in front of the wall was at least two metres wide. In 1858 an excavation close to this point uncovered evidence of a mine, possibly from the Civil War (Watkins, 1912).

A recent archaeological evaluation took place in advance of the construction of new buildings on the site of the former Toyota sales showroom in Mill Street (Hoverd, 1998a). An excavation in this area of the city was carried out during the refurbishment of the

¹ (HCR K38/Cd/6/Box 1)

Castle Pool hotel in Castle Street. Deeply stratified deposits of apparently Saxon date were uncovered during excavation of the cellars (*pers comm* Keith Ray).

Excavations by Archenfield Archaeology (Pikes and Sherlock, 1999) at Harrison Street revealed well-preserved medieval stratigraphy including a series of medieval ditches running parallel to the line of the city ditch and a well-preserved early medieval trackway. The ditches continued beneath the foundations of a post medieval cellar. Two well-preserved medieval cess pits were also found at the back of the plot close to the line of Bath Street.

3.0 Project aims and objectives

The evaluation aims were to gain information about the archaeological resource within the confines of the specified site, to include its presence or absence, character and extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and relative quality, in order to make an assessment of its worth in the appropriate context.

3.1 Site specific aims were:-

- to provide information that will enable the Archaeological Adviser to Herefordshire Council to make a decision for the archaeological provision of the area to be affected by the proposed development

3.2 The objectives of field evaluation were: -

- to open two trenches on the site in areas agreed upon by the Archaeological Adviser. The trenches were placed so that the presence/absence of medieval features relating to burgage plots along St Owen's Street can be established.
- to make a record of any archaeological features or deposits exposed
- to record the presence of archaeological material within the trench and to retrieve any potential dating evidence
- to make a record of all finds and any environmental material recovered
- to ensure that if any environmental evidence was preserved, that a sufficient sample be retained to allow for further analysis
- 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
- This information will lead to:-
 - the formulation of a strategy for the preservation and/or management of the resource
 - the formulation of an appropriate response of mitigation strategy to planning applications or other proposals which may affect the archaeological resource
 - the formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigation within a programme of research

4.0 Methodology

4.1 Field methodology



Figure 4: Trench location plan

The following methodology was employed:

Two trenches were excavated by means of a 2 ton tracked mini-excavator with a toothless bucket. Trench 1 was positioned as close as possible to the street frontage to assess whether evidence of medieval housing positioned along St Owen's Street had survived and to assess whether later post-medieval housing which had later occupied the site had cellars beneath the buildings. Trench 2 was oriented south-east/north-west and was positioned towards the rear of the property to assess the presence or absence of archaeological features associated with medieval urban use of garden plots.

Suitably qualified archaeologists monitored the machine excavation of the two trenches

An assessment of the archaeological significance of finds, structures and deposits was made and appropriate action taken

Structures and stratigraphic sequences observed were recorded on scaled drawings, and any archaeological features were located on them

The presence of artefacts were recorded with a description of their type, quantity and original location

All descriptions of structures and deposits, photographic records and drawing numbers were recorded on the relevant data capture documents in accordance with Archenfield Archaeology Ltd standard site recording procedures

Significant features were, where possible, photographed next to an appropriate scale. Each photographic exposure was recorded in the photographic log.

Staff carrying out the evaluation excavation followed the guidelines laid down in the Archenfield Archaeology Ltd health and safety policy

Archenfield Archaeology Ltd 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 retained artefacts and ecofacts were cleaned, conserved and catalogued

All data were entered into a Microsoft ©Access relational database

5.0 The stratigraphy

5.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 was positioned along the St Owen's Street frontage and was oriented north-west/south-east. The modern ground surface consisted of tarmac (1) covering a skin of concrete (2). This was removed by machine and revealed a layer of dark, compact soil layer (103) containing frequent inclusions of crushed brick, tile and mortar. Beneath this layer at the north-western end of the trench a salt glazed waste pipe (104) ran across the trench from south-west/north-east, flanking the line of a modern brick foundation wall (105). Across the middle of the trench a layer of mixed clay and pebbles (122) was directly below the overburden and was in turn directly over the natural gravels (17). At the south-eastern end of the trench a series of brick sets (126) lying over a stone foundation (118) was found directly below the tarmac and make up layer, and below this lay a pit (125) containing 16th century and 17th century slip ware pottery, ceramic building material and decayed mortar. Flanking this, but separated from it, was a foundation cut (133), presumably for the return of a wall which had subsequently been robbed out.

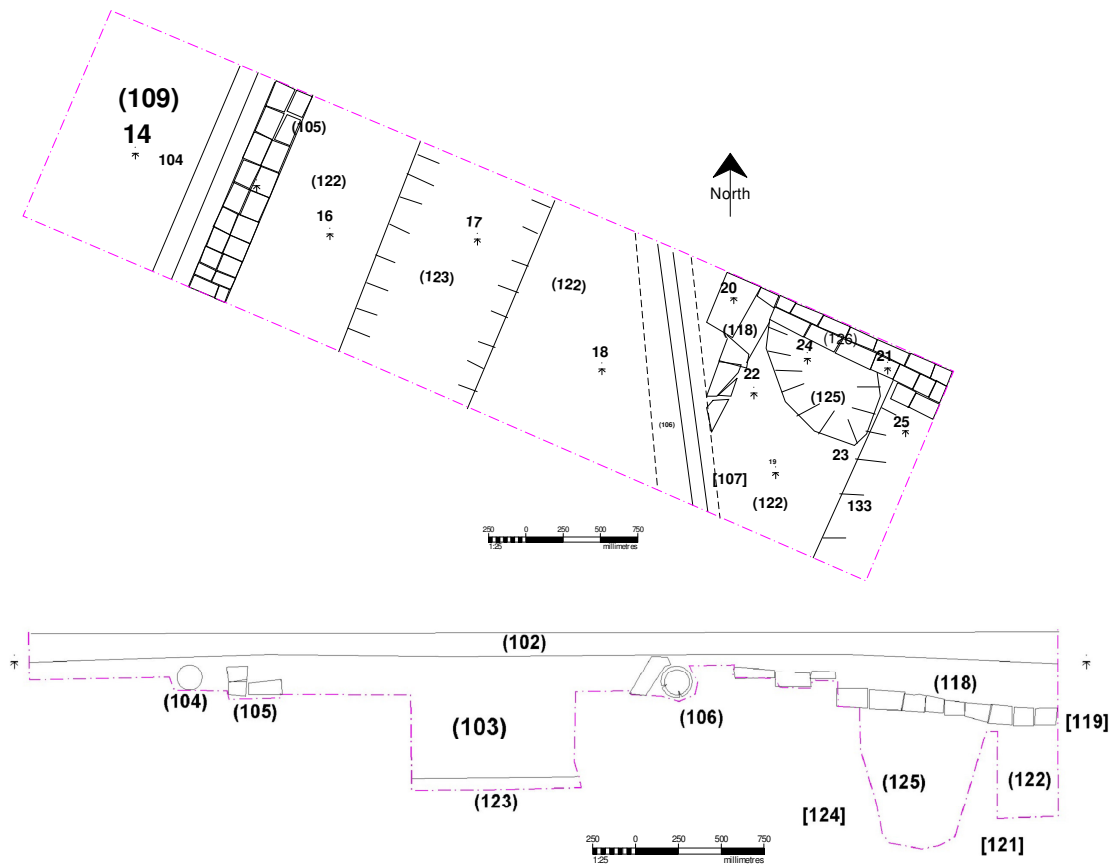


Figure 5: Trench 1 plan and south-facing section showing excavated features. Original scale 1:20

No finds dating to earlier than the 16th century were found in this trench. The fact that the natural gravels were detected undisturbed at a high level across the centre of the trench may reflect the fact that the position of the trench coincides with an entrance way to the yard to the rear of buildings as shown on the 1886 1:500 OS map (see Figure 3).

This may therefore have always been an access way and has remained undisturbed since the original plot boundaries were established in the post-Conquest period. The height at the top of Trench 1, where excavation began was at 53.86 OD, whilst the greatest depth was at 52.64 OD.



Figure 6: Trench 1; clockwise from top left; looking north-west along trench after cleaning; stone foundations (118); pit (125) and foundation cut (133) after excavation

5.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 was positioned at the rear of the property and was oriented south-west/north-east, parallel with the frontage of the plot and across what appears to have been an original burgage boundary. The level at the top of trench 2 began at 55.10 OD, whilst the greatest depth at the base reached 53.50 OD.

A skin of tarmac (1) lay over a double layer of concrete (210) which in turn covered a make-up layer consisting of crushed brick and hardcore. This overlay a layer of dark, friable soil (215); this was very humic and is consistent with a prolonged period of horticultural use. This in turn, lay over a mid red brown layer of very fine clay with silt and sand (216) which was undisturbed and lay directly over the natural gravels (17). A brick-lined pit was present which had truncated the deposits. Further to the south-west a brick-lined vehicle inspection pit (231) was present which had been backfilled with modern building rubble.

Two stone post pads on concrete bases (227 & 228) with the base of an upright wooden post still *in situ* was also uncovered. No finds pre-dating the 19th century were found in this trench.



Figure 7: Trench 2 during excavation (clockwise from top left, trench after cleaning; brick structure during excavation; stone pad and wooden upright; photograph of section showing depositional sequence.

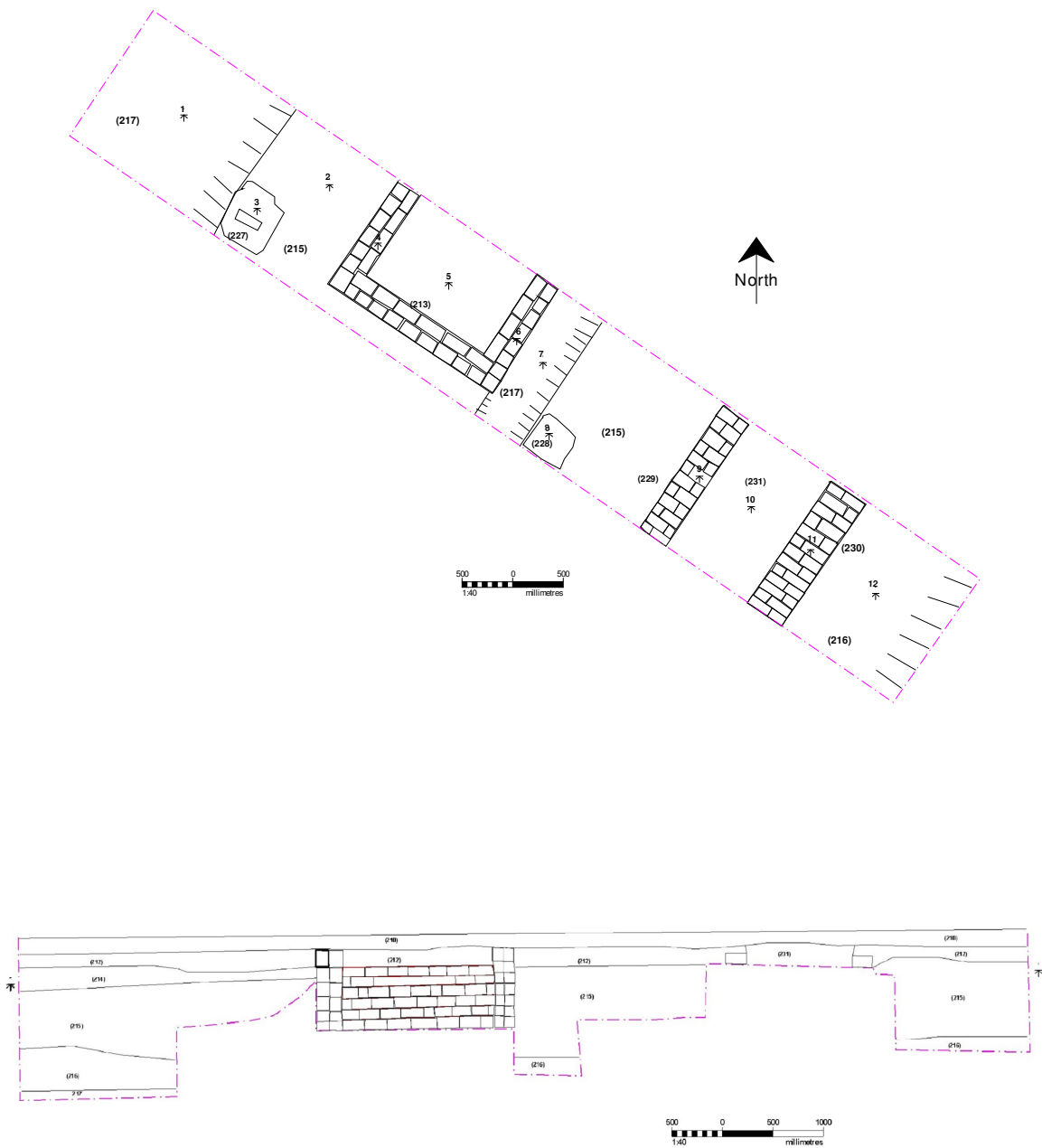


Figure 8: Trench 2 plan and south-facing section, showing excavated features. Original scale 1:20

6.0 Discussion

In conclusion, the evaluation has demonstrated the potential for well-preserved stratigraphy to be present across the site where it can be clearly demonstrated that later post-medieval and modern intrusions have not directly impacted on the integrity of the deposits. At the Harrison Street site immediately to the north-west of this site, well-preserved early medieval ditches were preserved at depth below the foundations of Victorian cellarage, so it should not be presumed that the presence of 18th century and 19th century buildings on the street frontage and across the centre of the site will definitely have removed the archaeology. On the street frontage the natural gravels appeared close to the current ground surface in the centre of the trench; this may reflect the fact that the trench was positioned across what had historically been an entrance onto the site, which again would indicate that where no direct intrusion has occurred the potential for preservation of archaeological features and deposits is high.

To the rear of the site a complete archaeological deposition sequence was observed in those portions of the trench not disturbed by later intrusions. In other sites with a similar location in terms of their proximity to the city wall and the fact that they were established during the post-Conquest establishment of suburbs before the defensive circuit was established' These, such as at the King's Fee and Hop Pole sites in Commercial Road, Harrison Street and St Owen's Street and sites within the Catherine Street / Coningsby Street suburb had well-preserved medieval archaeology. This was frequently preserved at the rear of burgages beneath up to 1 metre of dark humic soils such as those observed here. As such there is a high probability that well-preserved medieval back plot structures such as wells, pits and cesspits may be preserved.

Bibliography

Various Directories	
Brandon, A, & Hains, B A, 1981	Geological notes and local details for 1:10,000 sheets SO43NE, SO44SE, SO53NW and SO54SW Hereford City. <i>Institute of Geological Sciences</i>
Hoverd, T, 1995	Gaol Street/Bath Street Car Park, Hereford an Evaluation Excavation. <i>HAS 257, City of Hereford Archaeology Committee.</i>
Hoverd, T, 1997	Maylord Orchards Hereford, Archaeological Watching Brief for a CCTV Pole <i>HAS 338, City of Hereford Archaeology Committee</i>
Hoverd, T, 1998a	The Former Toyota Centre, Green Street/Mill Street Hereford – A report on Trial Trenches <i>HAS 348, City of Hereford Archaeology Committee</i>
Hoverd, T, 1998b	Godsell's Garage, Hereford - A Report on an Evaluation Excavation <i>HAS 382, City of Hereford Archaeology Committee</i>
Leland, John, 1907 –1909	The Itinerary of John Leland in or about the years 1535-1543 – Parts I to III; Parts IV and V; Parts VII and VIII edited by Lucy Toulmin Smith (), London: George Bell and Sons
Noble, F, 1965	Herefordshire and Simon de Montfort Trans Woolhope Nat Field Club. <i>XXXVIII, pp 111 – 118</i>
Sherlock, H D, 1998 a	A Report on the Watching Brief of a Borehole Survey at Bastion Mews, Hereford. <i>Unpublished report by Archenfield Archaeology</i>
Sherlock, H D & Pikes, PJ, 1999	Excavations at 16-18 Harrison Street, Hereford: Unpublished report by Archenfield Archaeology
Sherlock, H D & Pikes, PJ, 2000	Archaeological Watching Brief at 58 Commercial Road, Hereford. <i>Unpublished report by Archenfield Archaeology</i>
Sherlock, H D & Pikes, PJ, 1999	Excavations at 16 – 18 Harrison Street, Hereford An Interim Statement <i>Unpublished report by Archenfield Archaeology</i>
Sherlock, H and Pikes, P J, 2000	A report on an archaeological watching brief at 58 Commercial Road, Hereford. An unpublished report by Archenfield Archaeology
Shoesmith, R, 1982	Excavations On And Close To The Line of The Defences Hereford City Excavations, <i>Vol.2 CBA Research Report 46</i>
Shoesmith, R, Hoverd, T & Beeley D, 1989	Bath Street Car Park, Hereford – Evaluation Excavation – Interim Report, <i>HAS 61, City of Hereford Archaeology Committee</i>
Stanford, S, 1966	Excavations in Bath Street, Trans .Woolhope Nat Field.Club <i>XXXVIII, part III, pp 204-210</i>
Watkins, A, 1912	Supposed Subterranean Passage Near Hereford Trans Woolhope Nat Field.Club. vol for 1912 & 1913 pp26 – 30

Copyright

Archenfield Archaeology will retain full copyright of any commissioned reports, tender documents or other project documents, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1998 with all rights reserved; excepting that it hereby provide an exclusive licence to the client for use of such documents by the client in all matters relating to the project.