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The Hop Pole, Commercial Road, Hereford
archaeological evaluation

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2006

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*The Hop Pole, Commercial Road, Hereford: archaeological evaluation
2006*

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Cover Photograph: The Hop Pole street frontage



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Summary

Archenfield Archaeology Ltd was commissioned to archaeologically evaluate land to the rear of the Hop Pole Inn on Commercial Road, Hereford. The work was commissioned in response to planning application CE 06/1158/F for the demolition of existing rear extensions and the erection of living accommodation for 38 key worker properties.

The site was in an area which seems likely to have been first developed as a suburb by the bishops of Hereford in the later 11th and early 12th centuries. It was adjacent to the presumed site of the Benedictine priory of St Guthlac, which was established to the north-east of the old Anglo-Saxon town in the 1140s, having been re-located from the site of Hereford Castle.

A single 'T' shaped trench was opened within the area of the development and revealed well preserved archaeological features. Pits and ditches contained pottery dating from the medieval period and horncores and smithing gromps that possibly indicate industrial activity. The medieval features were covered by a 1.50 metre thick layer of well-mixed garden soil that remained relatively undisturbed until the late post-medieval period when the site was re-utilized. Several rubbish pits recorded in the evaluation probably date to this period.

The trench was approximately 50 metres from the road frontage and it may be expected that archaeological features will increase in density closer to the Commercial Road frontage.

1.0 Introduction

NGR: SO 51370/40190

Planning Authority: Herefordshire County Council ref app/ CE06/1158/F

Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record - Event No: 43482

Regimental Inns Ltd (the client) commissioned a programme of archaeological evaluation on land to the rear of Commercial Road, the main Hereford to Worcester road, to the north-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 affected a site on which archaeological remains of importance were likely to exist.

A project design (Sherlock and Lewis, 2006) 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 May, 2006.

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.

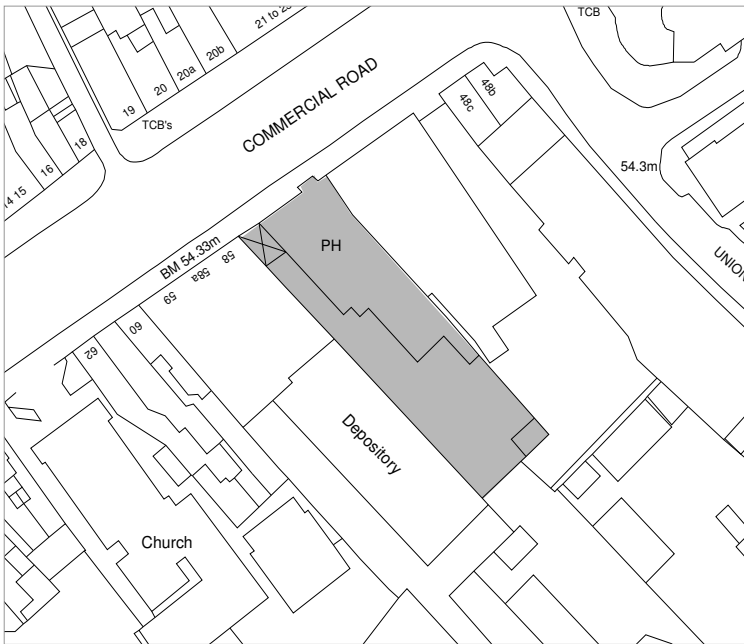
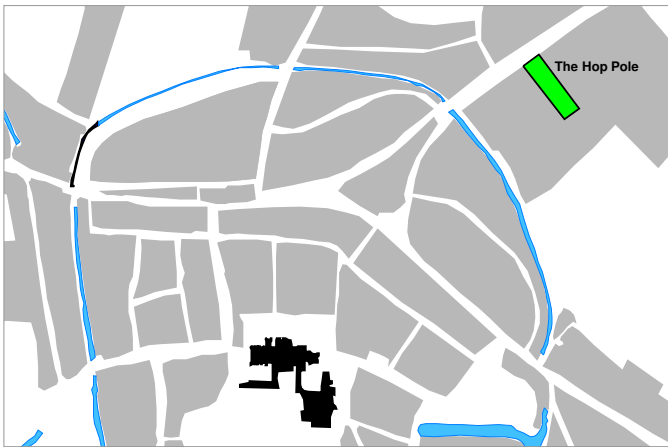
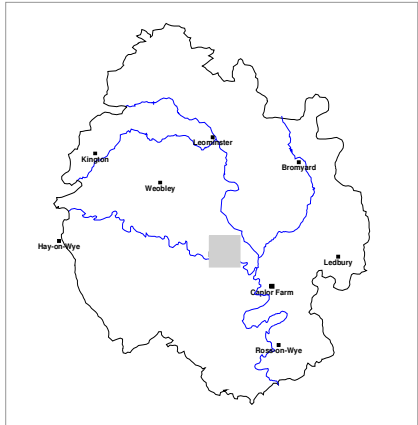
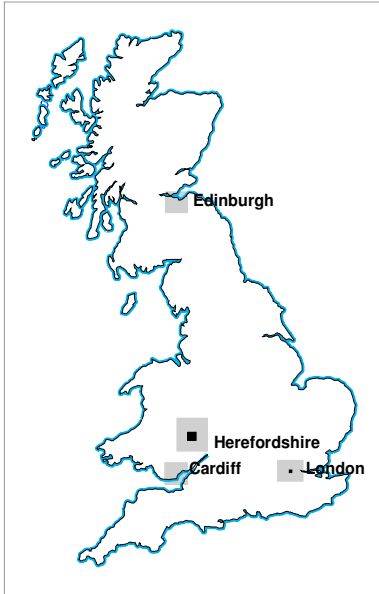


Figure 1: Herefordshire in its geographical setting, the site in relation to the medieval layout of the town and its defensive circuit and the modern Superplan data (reproduced under license drawing reference number 010603519A)

2.0 Geological, historical and archaeological background

Geological background and land use

The area of the site lies on a low rise to the south-east of Commercial Road with what appears to be a natural slope down to the road itself.

The geomorphology in the immediate area of the site was investigated at the Kings Fee (Sherlock and Pikes, 2002) and was unusual for central Hereford. A band of natural sand ran across the site and underlay the top 0.5 metre of the gravels and was exposed in the sides of many of the features.

Whatever the detail of the geomorphology, its general structure was consistent with the standard interpretation of the Hereford gravels as 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). The level of this gravel, recorded during the Kings Fee excavation (Sherlock and Pikes, 2002) was at approximately 53.80 metres OD.

In general the area comprises a row of small to medium sized commercial properties of various types – on and off licensed premises, shops and restaurants.

The site is currently used as a car park and summer beer garden (see Plate 1).

Historical background – PJ Pikes

The walls of Saxon Hereford formed a circuit which ran from the River Wye at a point to the east of the present Greyfriars Bridge, via the eastern side of Victoria Street, the south sides of Eign Street, High Street, High Town and St Owen's Street and returned to the Wye at the east side of the Castle Green.

Commercial Road appears to be the original road approaching Hereford from the north-east and, before the Norman Conquest, would have led to the Saxon north gate of the city at the north end of what is now Broad Street.¹ Although Domesday records that there were houses outside the walls in King Edward's time, it seems likely that the land this far out of the Saxon town was purely agricultural.

After the Conquest a large triangular market was laid out immediately to the north of the town, in the area now bounded by High Town, Union Street and Commercial Street. The approach roads to the new market appear to have been wide, and Commercial Road, extending north-east from the triangle, at 25 metres, remains a very wide street. The width was utilised in the late 18th century when the beast fair, previously held in the slightly narrower Broad Street, was relocated here.²

Along both sides of the roads approaching the market from the north-east (Commercial Road) and south-east (St Owen's Street), burgage plots were laid out. As in other English towns, French immigration was encouraged by means of preferential legal treatment (Hillaby, 1983). It would have been these immigrants who populated these plots. The plots were long and narrow, and aligned at right angles to the road. Burgage plots along the south-eastern side of what is now Commercial Road were part of this development. Their rear boundary was formed by the common Portfields, which stretched south to the rear of the plots on the north side of St Owen's Street.

¹ The northern end of Broad Street was much narrower until the late 18th century when it was widened by the Duke of Norfolk, who rebuilt the old Swan and Falcon Inn there as the City Arms Hotel. Up until that time this length of street was known as the North-gate. It is marked as such on Isaac Taylor's 1757 map of Hereford.

² Public Notice in the Hereford Journal, 3rd October 1776

The new town plan was further developed in the 1140s when the Priory of St Guthlac, which had become isolated within the outer bailey of the expanded Hereford Castle, was re-located to a new site on the extreme north-east of the town (Martin, 1954). The precise lay-out of St Guthlac's remains elusive, but the site was on the south-eastern side of Commercial Road with the Eign Brook bounding its north-eastern side. Although the south-western precinct wall has not been located it may lie on the present Union Walk in which case it was preserved at the dissolution and was re-emphasised in the 1790s when John Nash's new county gaol was erected on the priory site (Shoesmith and Crosskey, 1994). In any event the boundary of the precinct would have marked the north-eastern limit of the secular development on the south-east side of Commercial Road.

In the 1180s the old town, the new market place and many of the inner burgage plots were enclosed within a new defensive rampart and ditch. This circuit left the priory, and the burgage plots furthest from the market place, outside the defences, and defined them, for the first time, as suburbs. These limits – the street, the priory, the Portfields and the 12th century defences on the line of the present Bath Street, define an area of Hereford in which many properties appear to have retained their medieval integrity until the recent past. The Hop Pole site, then, lies within this area, on the south-eastern side of the medieval *Bishop-street* suburb.

During the 13th century the earthen defences of Hereford were upgraded by the construction of a massive stone wall. These works seem not to have been completed until the end of the century (Whitehead, 1982, 21). The existing defences were however sufficient to protect the city when Roger Mortimer of nearby Wigmore Castle, with other lords, together with men of the Prior of Leominster, attacked it in November 1265. Some extra-mural buildings were pulled or burnt down by the defenders, both before Mortimer arrived on the 10th November, and by sortie that night '*while the army was about the town*'. However, the total destruction of the suburb containing the site was effected by the attackers on the 11th when '*some of the said great men cast fire upon the street called Bissoppestret, and burned all that suburb*'.³

The area was rebuilt, and in the 1530s Leland noted that '*outside Bishopgate Street there is a pleasant suburb*' (Chandler, 1993, 220). This suburb is clearly visible on John Speed's 1610 map of Hereford (Figure 3), which shows it as ribbon development extending north-east from the Bye Gate. Many of these buildings would have served as business premises as well as accommodation. In the year that Speed's map was published, one of the houses was Jane Draper's alehouse from where one Mary Powell was accused of stealing a gold ring, the property of Thomas Traherne with whom she had been drinking.⁴

³ An account of this action is to be found in the Inquisitions Miscellaneous of the reign of Henry III. The background is the baronial war between Simon de Montfort and Henry III in which Hereford took Simon's side, while Mortimer bitterly opposed him. At this time, following Simon's victory at the Battle of Lewes in May 1264, both Henry and his son Prince Edward (later Edward I) were his *de facto* prisoners. After summoning his famous parliament to Westminster in January 1265, Simon arrived in Hereford with Henry and Edward on the 6th May. On the 28th Prince Edward escaped from his escorts while riding on the outskirts of the town. He was soon in the field at the head of a loyalist army. In late June, Simon moved the court to Monmouth, but prevented from crossing the estuary to Bristol, returned to Hereford. From here he marched east to the Severn, and having forded it, was defeated and killed by Edward at Evesham on 4th August. The leading citizens of Hereford were summoned to court and the city was fined five hundred marks for its support of Simon.

⁴ Hereford City Documents – transcript of sacks – Bag 12, bundle 1 – 9, Herefordshire Record Office

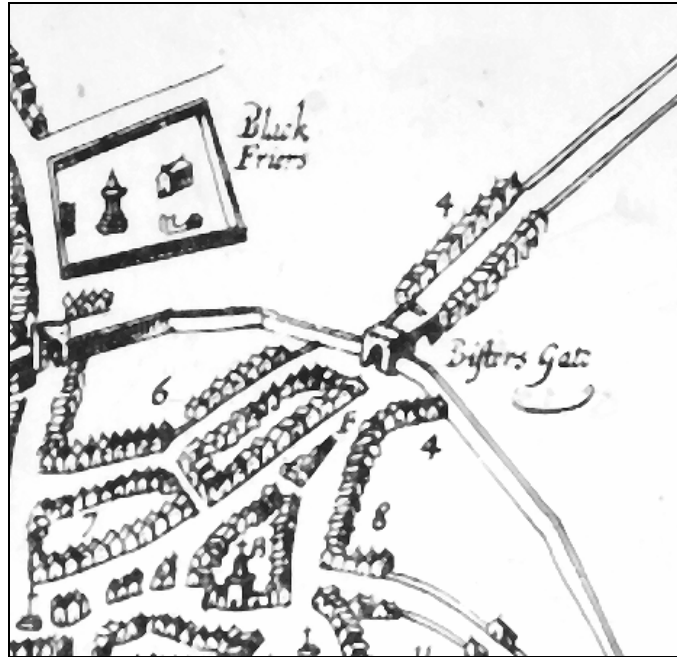


Figure 2: Extract from John Speed's map of Hereford, 1610

Hereford's suburbs were to undergo another phase of destruction in the English Civil War. In the summer of 1645 royalist Hereford prepared itself for assault by a Scottish Army in support of parliament. As the Scots approached, houses in the suburbs were pulled down in order to clear the field of fire for the defenders and deprive the enemy of cover, and earthworks were constructed to augment the dated medieval walls. The siege began on 31st July and lasted for five weeks. The Scots were finally driven off by the approach of the king with a relieving force.⁵ Again the suburbs had to be rebuilt.

In the mid 18th century Isaac Taylor's map of Hereford clearly shows buildings on the street frontage of the site (Figure 3). The narrow plots stretching back from the street are likely to reflect the original medieval burgage lay-out (Hillaby, 1983). In the 18th century Commercial Road was known as Bye-street-without, and for the greater part of the first half of the 19th century as New Street.⁶ By the mid 19th century the properties in Commercial Road included residences of the gentry, the county prison, a rope and twine manufacturer, a fellmonger and wool dealer, a patent brick and tile maker, the city gasworks⁷ and the Zion Baptist Chapel.⁸

⁵ The siege is commemorated on Hereford City coat-of-arms which has a border of ten St Andrew's crosses representing the ten divisions of the besieging Scots army. This was the third occasion that parliamentary forces had approached Hereford. On the previous two occasions they had taken the city with little opposition. The fourth occasion was to be in the December following the siege, when Colonel Birch took the city by means of a ruse. Disguising some soldiers as workmen breaking the ice in the ditch at the Bye Gate, he hid a small force in the ruins of St Guthlac's Priory. While the disguised soldiers grappled with the guards, the group from the priory charged up to and through the gate. They would have run past the site on the way.

⁶ The name *New-street* is used in 1819 by J P Wright in his *A walk through Hereford or the stranger's guide to that ancient and interesting city*. By 1850 Slater's Directory uses the name *Commercial Road*.

⁷ Various local directories - Hunt & Co's 1847, Lascelle's 1851, Cassey's 1848, Slater's 1859 and others

⁸ Harold A Neal, *History of Hereford Baptist Church*, 1978

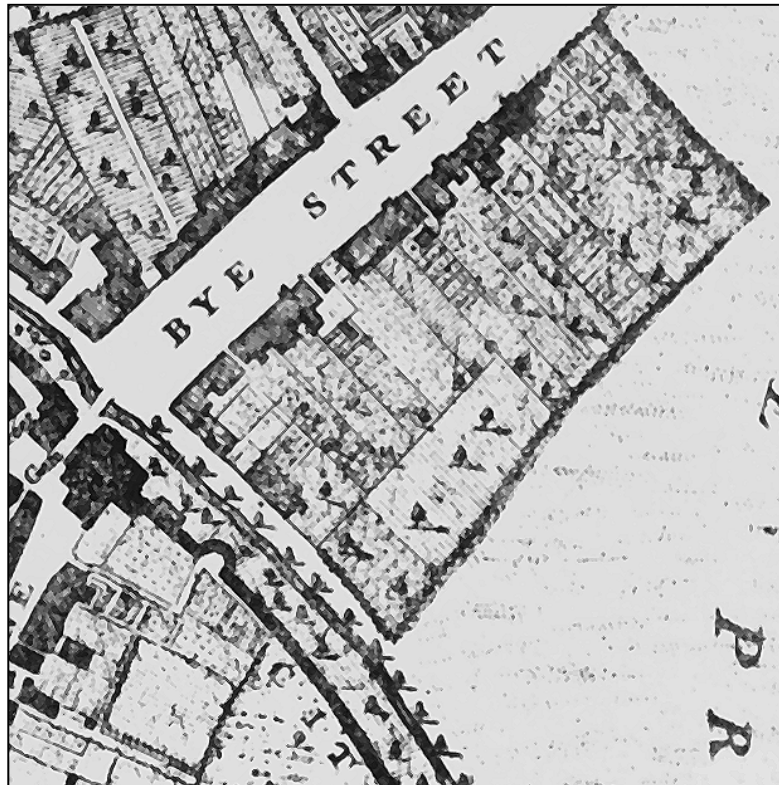


Figure 3: Extract from Isaac Taylor's map of Hereford, 1757

Number 54 was the Hop Pole Inn, which had been a public house since before 1755 when two properties outside Bysters Gate were described as the Fox and Duck public house.

In 1777 William Gough moved from the Elephant and Castle to replace Mr James Hayes at the (renamed) Hop Pole public house.⁹

By 1858 a terrace of four two-up/two-down cottages had been built behind the Hop Pole with their fronts onto the rear part of the yard. This row was known as Hop Pole Passage (see Figure 6). By 1871 another row of four cottages, Hop Bine Place, had been built, facing Hop Pole Passage (by then Hop Pole Place) across the rear of the combined property.¹⁰

By 1893 a block of property, which had belonged to the late Mark Samuel Davies of Hunderton, Hereford, was on the market.¹¹ This consisted of the Hop Pole and the four shops extending along the street frontage to the south-west (numbers 55 to 58), together with the cottages to the rear.

⁹ Hereford Journal, 27th March 1777

¹⁰ 1871 census

¹¹ Sales particulars in Herefordshire Record Office – M5/14/11

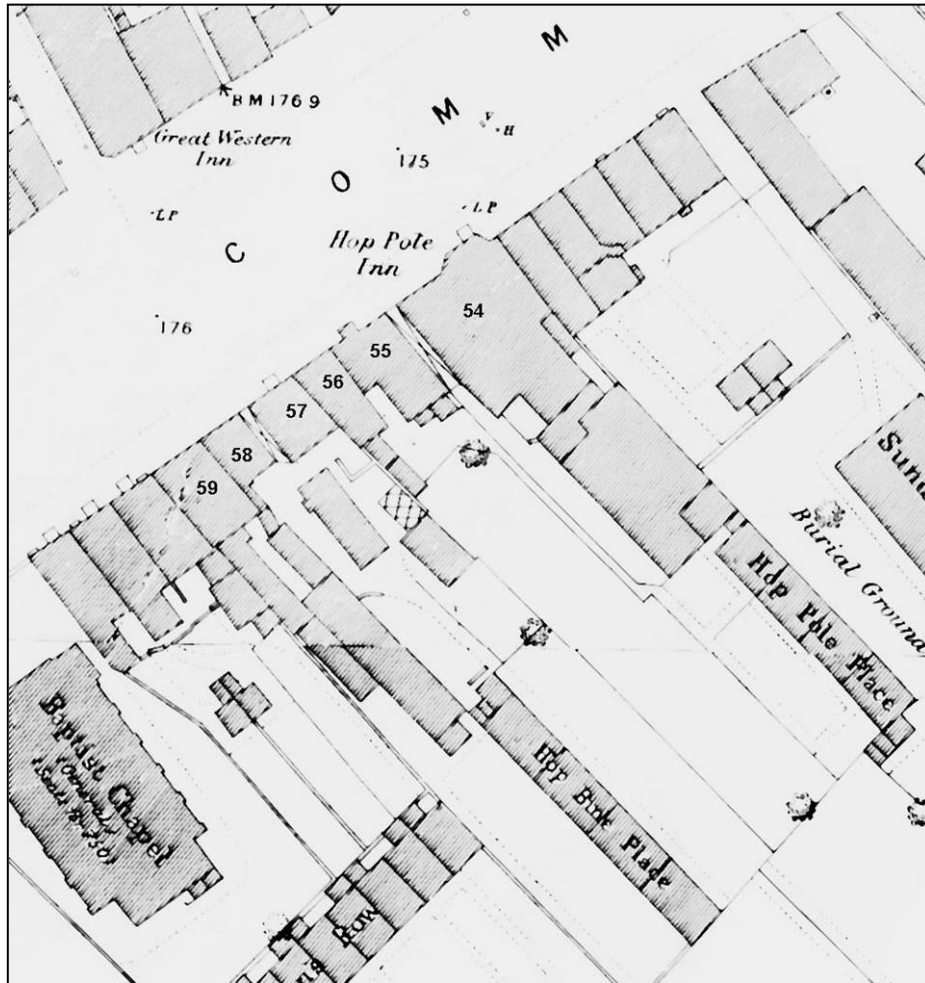


Figure 4: Extract from the 1886 Ordnance Survey 1:500 scale map of Hereford. The relevant property numbers are shown in bold type (the Hop Pole is No 54).

In 1903 the Hereford Society for Aiding the Industrious, who had presumably purchased the property in 1896, instructed Messrs Stooke and Son to place the property, augmented by the addition of number 59, on the market again.¹² The property apparently failed to sell as a single unit and was divided into two lots (Shoemith, 1998, 240).

¹²

Sales particulars in Herefordshire Record Office – M5/14/12

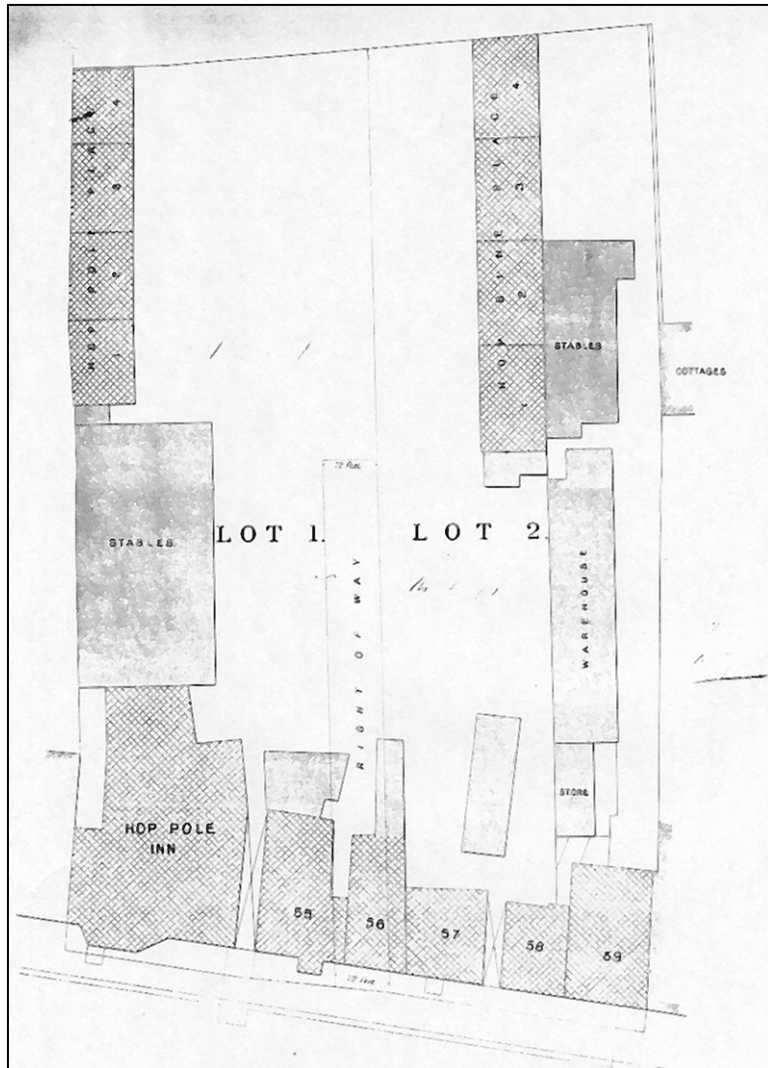


Figure 5: 1903 plan of the site included with sales particulars. The top of the plan is to the south-west.

At this time, with the exception of number 59, the buildings on the street front of the property were demolished. With this act the 11th century boundaries disappeared. The new boundary cut through number 56, and a new, larger, Hop Pole public house was built to the north-east of that boundary, incorporating the original Hop Pole at number 54, the adjacent shop at number 55 and the greater part of number 56. Two years later the cottages of Hop Pole Place were converted into stabling (see Figure 1).

For a few years the Hop Pole Inn adopted an Irish theme and was known as O'Neills. It reverted back to the more traditional Hop Pole Inn in June 2005.

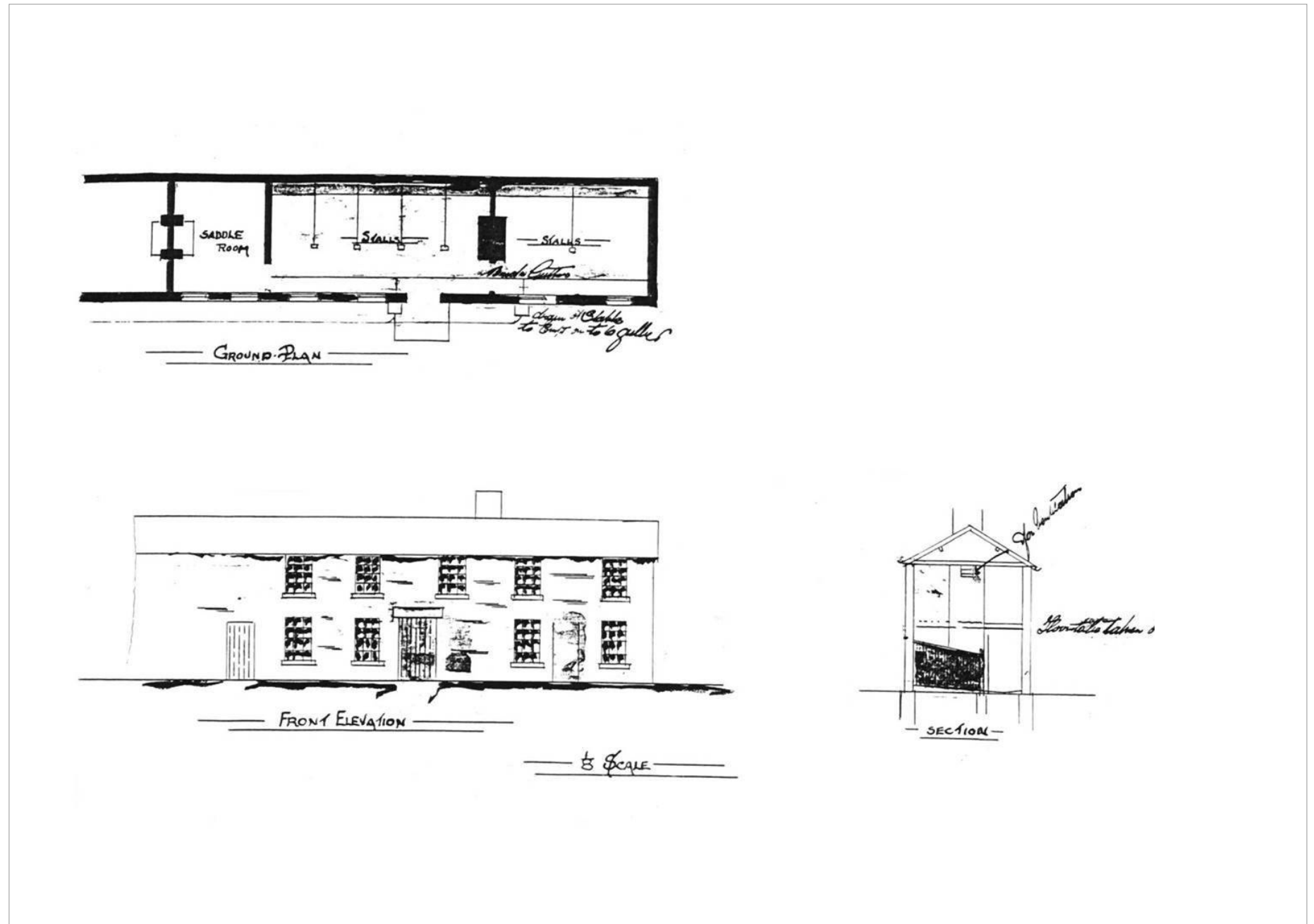
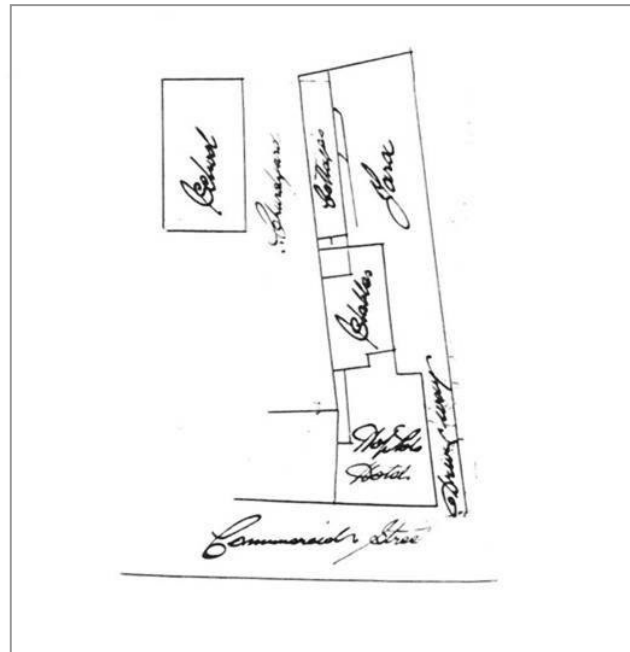


Figure 6: Architects' plans and elevations for the conversion of the Hop Pole Place into stables. The plans were approved at a meeting of the Roads and Buildings Committee on 14th March 1905.

Archaeological background

Although a number of archaeological projects have been undertaken in this north-eastern quadrant of Hereford, they have tended to have been concentrated to the east and north-east of the present site, where the medieval priory of St Guthlac was located.

Despite a considerable amount of recent work in the area (Appleton-Fox 1994a, b and c; Appleton-Fox 1995; Stone 1995 a and b; Williams 1996; Williams and Rouse 1999; Williams and Mayes, 1999; Vyce and Williams, 1999; Sherlock and Pikes, 2000) substantial traces of the monastic structures themselves have remained elusive.

In 1983 stone wall foundations, one metre wide, running north-west to south-east were discovered to the south-west of Stonebow Road and may represent the north-eastern wall of the priory precinct. To the south-east a watercourse shown on the 1842 tithe map seems to follow the same alignment. To the south-west of this alignment human remains have been discovered since at least the mid 19th century. Excavations in this area have recovered numerous male skeletons from the 1930s through to the 1960s, and again in 1984-1985 skeletons were found (Thomas, 2002, 59). Wherever sex could be determined these burials were male, and suggest the presence of a monastic cemetery (Shoesmith, 1996). The most recent excavations uncovered more male skeletons, again presumed to be monks, in May 2002.¹³

There has also been more recent archaeological work undertaken in the area of the priory. Boucher (1998a) reviewed the archaeological evidence to that date and discussed the deposits relating to the Eign Brook. This was followed by extensive trial trenching and excavation for the new Hereford hospital between 1998 - 2003 (Boucher 1998b, Crooks, 2005).

In 1987 a small trench was excavated immediately to the south-west of the cinema building.¹⁴ At 40 metres to the north-east, this is one of the nearest pieces of fieldwork to the present site and is within the presumed precinct of the priory. Some evidence of medieval small-scale industry was recovered from this in the form of smithing slag (Thomas, 2002, 61). Here the base of a hearth was cut into the fluvioglacial gravel and incorporated part of quernstone of late Silurian/Lower Devensian Sandstone Grit (Stone, 2002, 143, no 10).

To the east of this site, a large area within the bus station area was monitored during resurfacing and other work in 2001. This project located many parts of the footings of John Nash's county gaol of 1797, only one feature, a ditch, was medieval (Lockyer, 2002).

Within the block defined by Commercial Road, Union Walk, the rear property boundaries and Bath Street, very little archaeological investigation has been undertaken.

In 1992, an archaeological assessment of property 20 metres to the south-east concluded that its archaeological potential was very low (Shoesmith, 1992).

In 2000 archaeological monitoring at the Litten Tree recorded rubbish pits to the rear of street-front housing, dating from the 12th or 13th centuries. Horn cores from the pits suggest that the manufacture of horn utensils may have been a nearby industry (Sherlock and Pikes, 2000).

¹³ Hereford Journal, May 16th 2002

¹⁴ Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record 20126

Similar industrial activity is also suggested by mid-to-late 12th century timber and clay lined pits, possibly used for tanning, found during excavations at the new magistrates court on Bath Street. The pits were relocated in the 13th century to the opposite side of the site. A hiatus until the 17th century is reflected by a 1.50 metre thick soil horizon that covered this early activity. (Vyce, 2001)

A borehole survey, evaluation excavation and full excavation was conducted at 49 – 53 Commercial Road (the Kings Fee Inn). The work was carried out during the summers of 2000, 2001 and 2002 and the results are to appear in a forthcoming publication (Pikes and Sherlock, forthcoming).

The evidence suggested domestic occupation of the site from the 11th /12th century. This agrees with the dates from other recent excavations in this part of Hereford (Ratkai, forthcoming; Sherlock and Pikes, in preparation) and suggests that the whole frontage of Commercial Road – Union Street – St Owen's Street between St Guthlac's Priory and the centre of the Norman market place was planned and developed as a single project.

Occupation along Commercial Road appears to have ceased in the 14th or possibly 15th century. This would suggest shrinkage of the town in this period. Re-expansion in the 17th and 18th centuries is suggested by the cartographic evidence and supported by the presence of archaeological features recorded at the magistrates court where boundaries were re-established (with a different alignment to the 12th – 14th century boundaries) and cess pits from the 18th century recorded at the Litten Tree.

Archaeological monitoring at Catherine Street in 2006 found cess pits in rear plots of properties fronting Commercial Road. The pits were cut into the natural gravel and date from the both the medieval and post-medieval periods. Possible medieval ditches were also recorded at the site, including possibly boundary ditches (*pers comm*, S, Meadows)

It was in this historical and archaeological context that the present site was investigated.

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.

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

The objectives of field evaluation were: -

- to open a trench within the site in an area agreed upon by the Archaeological Adviser. The trench will evaluate the presence/absence of medieval features relating to burgage plots on Commercial Road.
- 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

Field methodology

The following methodology was employed: -

- a 'T' shaped trench (due to restrictions it was decided a single 'T' shaped was more appropriate) was excavated by means of a 3 ton tracked mini-excavator with a toothless bucket. The east-west orientation of the trench was partially positioned over the former Hop Pole Place terrace (and later stables) to assess whether there were cellars within the building. The north-south orientation was to check for archaeological features associated with urban use of rear 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.

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 results

The stratigraphy

A single 'T' shaped trench was excavated approximately 52 metres from the frontage of Commercial Road. The main section of the 'T' was orientated north-east/south-west and ran parallel with Commercial Road.

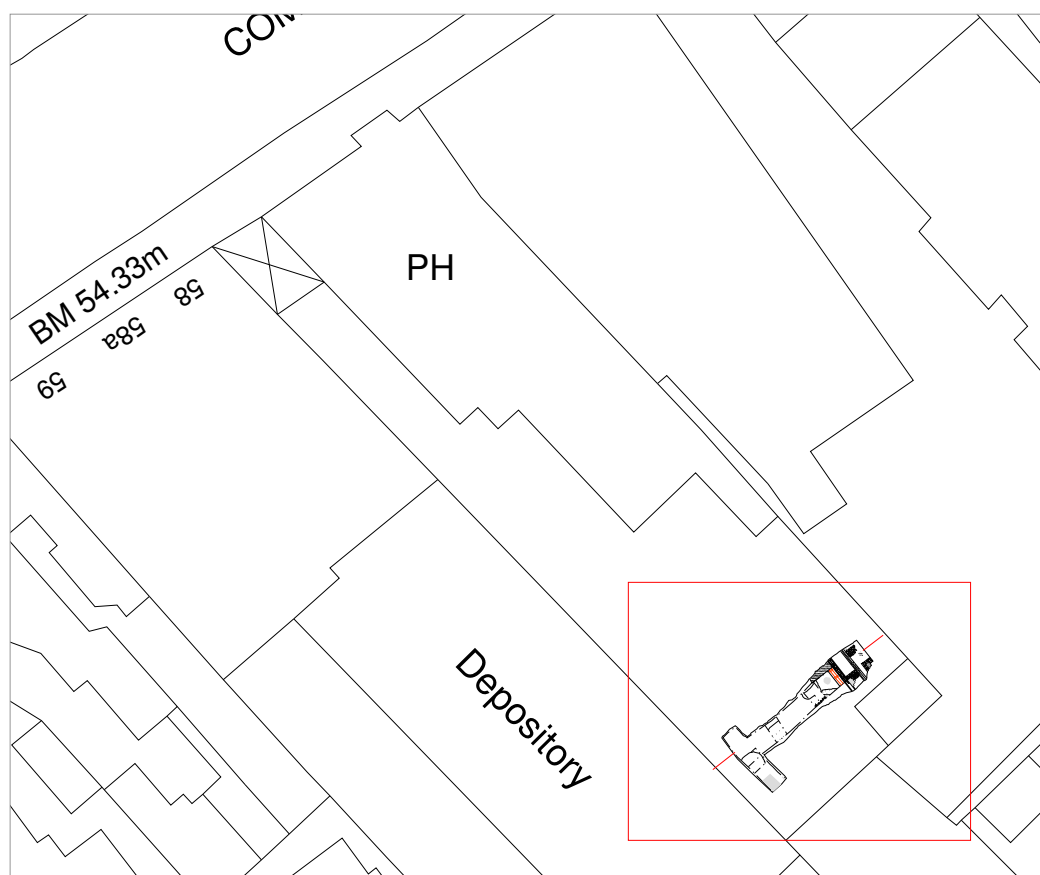


Figure 7: The 'T' shaped trench in the car park to the rear of the Hop Pole Inn

The trench was excavated by machine to what were deemed to be important archaeological features.

The first archaeological features to be exposed immediately below the current car park surface were a brick wall, floor and drain (see Plate 2).

The wall was orientated north-west/south-east with the brick floor to the north-east. The drain ran parallel with wall and extended beyond both the north and south limits of the excavation.

To the south-west of the brick wall and a ceramic service pipe (4) of the same orientation, the trench was excavated to an average depth of 1.30 metres (54.01 metres OD).

Below the tarmac were hardcore layers 45 and 46, a concrete slab that butted wall 3 and a roughly laid brick floor (51) in the south-east corner of the trench. Below these layers was the first consistent layer across the site. It was well mixed layer 8 with 20th century domestic rubbish and was cut by several later features that included a circular bottle dump dating from c1900 – 1905 (see Plate 4).

A series of post-holes, 38, 33, 28 (see Plate 7) 17 and 14 were orientated roughly east west and cut layer 8. Within the fill of each of the post-holes were the

remains of square cut wooden posts that probably formed a fence line demarking the rear of the property. Some of the post-holes cut early pit-like features 14, 31 and 42. In the east section the largest of the pits was 47. It was square cut and its backfill (48 – see Plate 6) was a mixed building dump with brick, tile and stone and slate roof tiles.

Below layer 8, the post-holes and pits was a thick layer of well-mixed garden soil (10) that was up to 1.20 metres thick. This layer extended throughout the area of the trench and covered earlier archaeological features. It has been preliminary dated to the 13th to 15th century.

In the north east area of the trench, layer 10 covered a gravel surface (59 – see Plate 11) that sealed an area of pits. The surface was approximately 0.05 metres thick and extended west for some 4 metres. The gravel surface was cut by linear feature 22 and a depression in the gravel was originally recorded as circular pit 20 (see Plate 8). However, excavation of the feature revealed that it was a depression, not cut, in the gravel surface.

Sondage 3 was excavated through the gravel to examine the cause of the depression. The sondage was 1.0 metre wide and extended roughly north-south across the trench. Below the gravel were two inter-cutting pits – 60 and 64.

Pit 60 was directly under the depression in the gravel surface and finds recovered from its backfill suggest an initial late post-medieval date. This pit cut earlier pale yellow clay that was probably the latest fill of a medieval cess pit. It covered earlier fills 63 and 65. The finds recovered from the three fills suggests that the pit was dug during the medieval period and in-use through to the post-medieval period. The pit itself (64 – see Plate 11) was only partially visible in the north-facing section and cut the natural sandy gravel (54). It had vertical edges and a slightly curved southern edge. An auger hole was sunk to a depth of 52.51 metres through layer 65. The last 0.20 metres of the fill consisted of fine grey green sandy silt (66) that may have been cess. The limited amount of fill 66 retrieved from the auger was not enough to warrant its retention for environmental sampling. The red gravel of 59 was probably laid to seal the pit.

Sondage 1 was excavated to the east and a 1 metre section was excavated north south across the trench. The remaining 0.20 metres of layer 10 was removed and an east-west linear feature (52 see Plate 10) was uncovered. It cut the natural gravel (54) and its backfill (53) contained medieval pottery. The extent of the feature was not clear within the confines of the trench, it probably had stratigraphic relationships with the inter-cutting pits to the west and a large, circular, cess pit (24) to the east.

Pit 24 was excavated in sondage 2 and was probably circular. It had steep sides that were slightly undercut (see Plate 9).

The base of the feature was established by auger hole that reached a depth of 51.47 metres OD. A single backfill (25) contained medieval pottery, slag¹⁵ animal bones and horncores.

¹⁵

Included in the slag was a gromp - a leftover bit of mixed slag and reduced iron that would litter the furnace site after a smelt

Evaluation trench plan

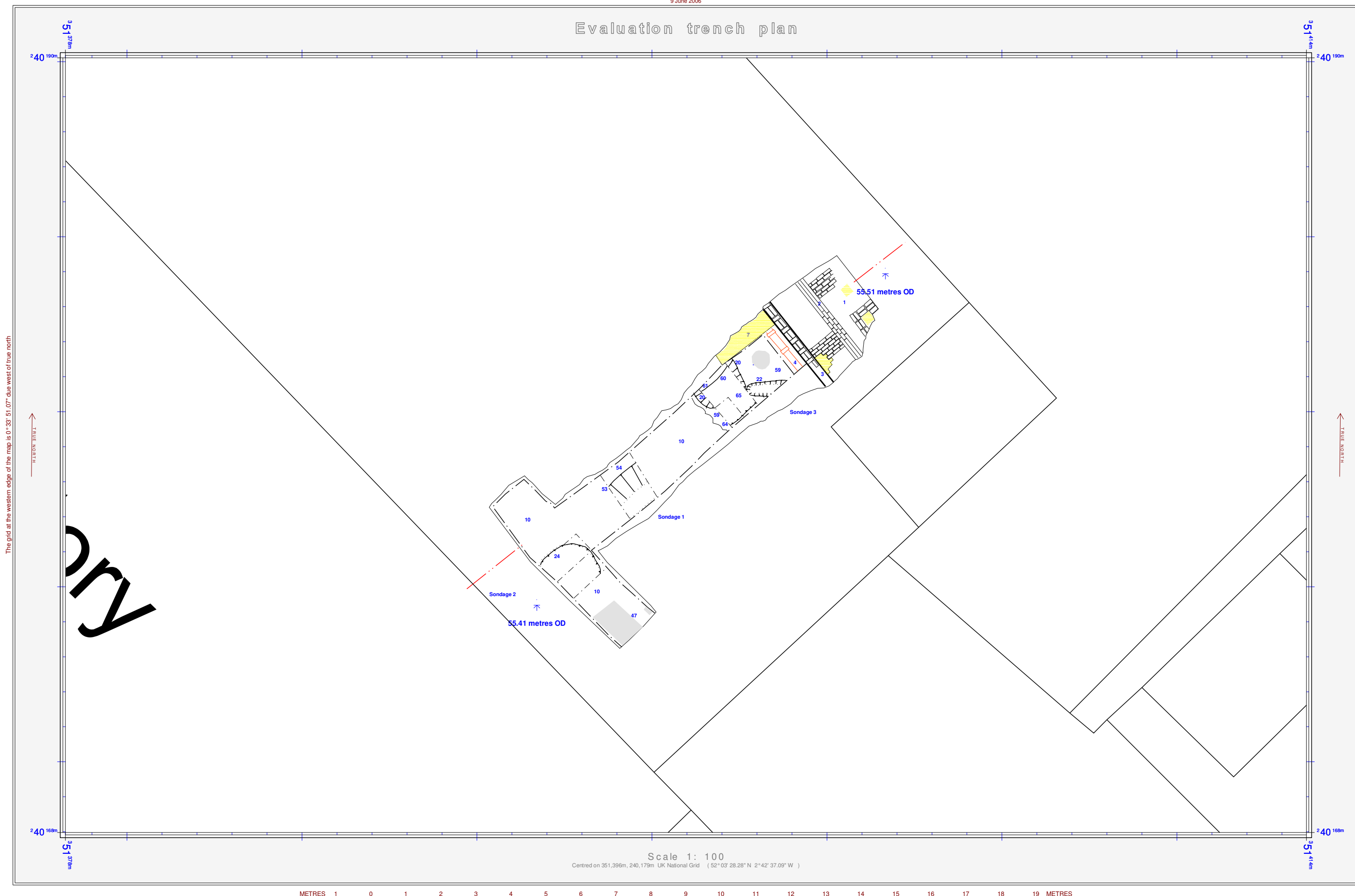


Figure 8: Trench plan
© archenfield archaeology ltd AA_89 Hop Pole, Hereford: post-evaluation statement

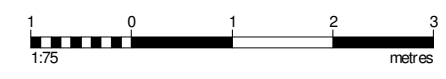
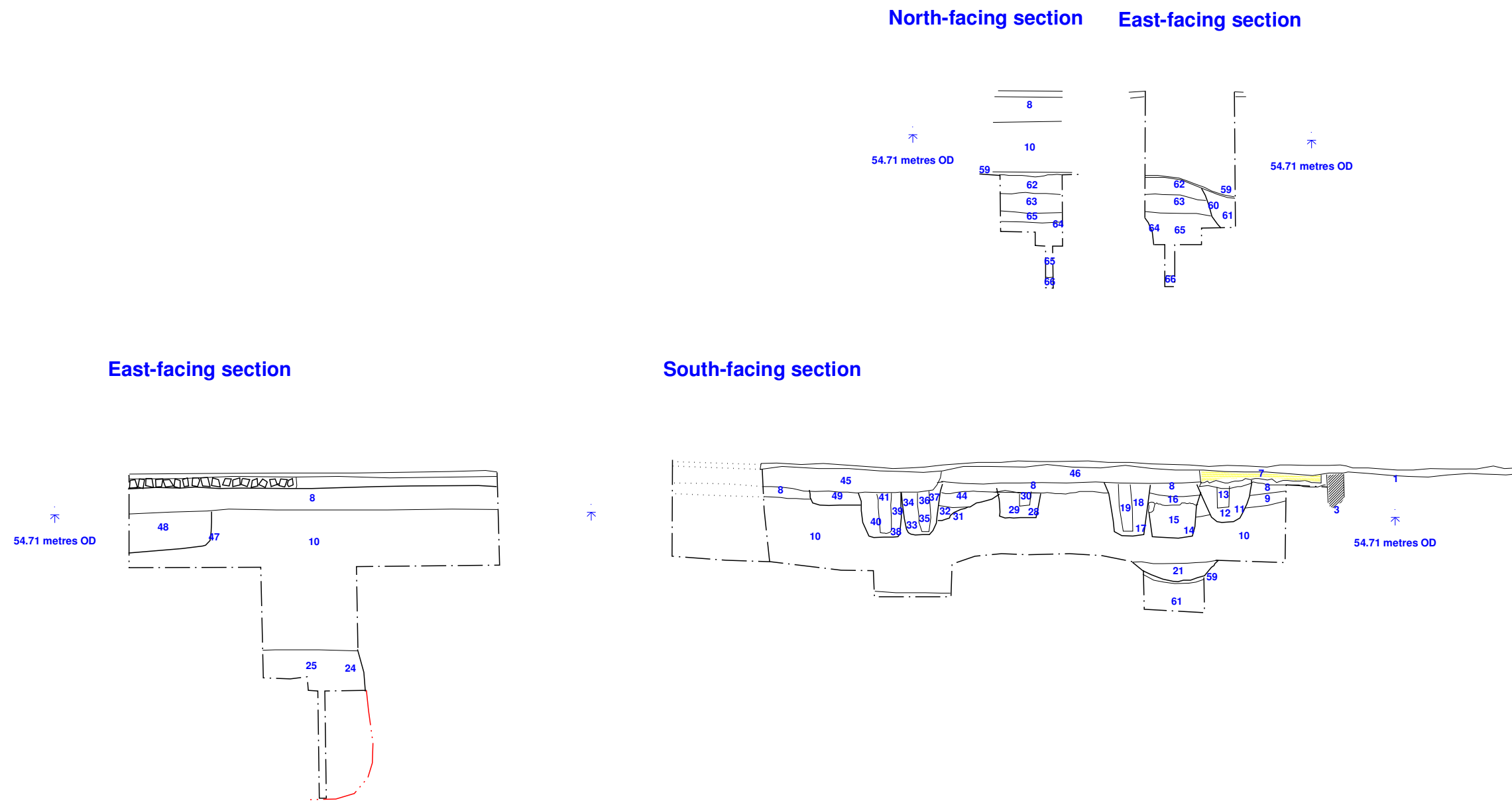


Figure 9: Trench sections
 © archenfield archaeology ltd AA_89 Hop Pole, Hereford: post-evaluation statement



Plate 1: The site prior to opening the evaluation trench



Plate 2: The floor of the former stables



Plate 3: Concrete below the stable floor



Plate 4: Bottles from feature 26



Plate 5: Ceramic drain and feature 26 after excavation



Plate 6: Building dump in feature 47



Plate 7: Post 30 within post-hole 28



Plate 8: Pit 20 and linear cut 22



Plate 9: Pit 24



Plate 10: Linear 52



Plate 11: Gravel surface 59 and the southern edge of pit 64



Plate 12: The excavated evaluation trench

The finds

All finds from the evaluation have been processed.

The pottery, ceramic building material, clay pipes and animal bone will be sent to recognised specialists. The pottery and ceramic building material will be to Stephanie Ratkai, the clay pipe to Allan Peacey and the animal bone to Ian Baxter.

These will be included in an interim report.

The initial *in-house* quantification of the retrieved finds can be seen in Appendix 1.

6.0 Recommendations

The evidence from archaeological interventions along both sides of Commercial Road has proved the density of archaeological features in this area. The evaluation itself showed that important medieval features survive within the confines of the site. Such features are likely to increase in density towards the Commercial Road frontage. Development on the site will ultimately impact this archaeological resource and a programme of archaeological work will be required.

The results presented in this report will be considered by the Archaeological Advisor to Herefordshire Council, who as the archaeological curator, will decide upon the level of any future archaeological conditions attached to the development.

When these conditions are known, a programme of archaeological mitigation can be designed.

7.0 Conclusions

That Commercial Road was developed as part of a planned Norman new town seems fairly well established. The medieval features recorded in the present project further confirm the survival of domestic/industrial features presumably associated with houses built closer to the main road. The successors to these houses are shown on Taylors map of 1757. Traces of these street front structures would have been destroyed by later development, although such destruction may not have been complete until the early 20th century when the new Hop Pole public house incorporated the original public house (number 54) and adjacent shops (number 55 and part of 56).

The evidence recovered from the pits is suggestive of everyday medieval domestic activity. The horncores may indicate some specific industrial activity, such as the production of utensils, which would leave the core of the horns as waste material. An inference could be drawn that butchery and tanning were likely to be occurring nearby, as this would be true of any medieval town. The smithing groups also hint at industry,

The good state of preservation of medieval features is probably related to their depth. A 1.5 metre thick layer overlay the medieval features. This layer was undisturbed until the late 17th/early 18th century when pits and post-holes suggest the re-use of the site. A similar layer of 'abandonment' was also recorded at the new magistrate court (Vyce, 2001). If the 14th century Black Death caused the sort of depopulation that it is commonly supposed to have done,¹⁶ it might have been several centuries before occupation in the town re-expanded to its 12th to 13th century limits.

¹⁶ Evidence for St Peter's parish, in which the site is located, does suggest high mortality rates (Langford, 1956; Martin, 1956).

The relative levels of the top of current ground surface, the top of archaeological features and the top of natural gravel deposits compare with the results of the Kings Fee excavation (Sherlock and Pikes, 2002). The ground level to the rear of the Kings Fee was approximately 55 metres OD and the top of archaeological features cutting the natural gravel approximately 53.80 metres. The levels at the current site (55.21 metres OD and 53.91 metres respectively) are virtually identical.

8.0 Archive deposition, publication and dissemination proposals

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 plan 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 evaluation and any further archaeological work at the site with the Hereford City Museum. On completion of all site 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.

9.0 Appendices

Quantified finds from Trench 1

<i>Context</i>	<i>Weight (g)</i>
6	14
8	15
10	2618
12	3
21	36
23	11
25	1768
29	5
36	197
48	168
62	92
65	110

Table 1: Animal bone

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Weight (g)</i>
1	Brick - hand made	1	4180
3	Brick - hand made	1	3633
8	Stone ball	1	3242
10	Roof tile - glazed	1	41
10	Roof tile - unglazed	2	110
21	Unclassified	1	8
25	Stone quern ?	0	298
41	Roof tile - unglazed	1	140
48	Roof tile - unglazed	2	387
48	Stone roof tile	1	131
58	Stone glaze tile	1	817

Table 2: Ceramic building material

<i>Context</i>	<i>Bowls</i>	<i>Stems</i>	<i>Weight (g)</i>
6	0	3	5
10	1	0	9
12	1	1	2
15	2	0	15
18	0	3	2
21	3	8	37
29	0	3	3
32	0	2	2
34	1	1	12
48	2	2	37
50	0	1	5

Table 3: Clay pipe

<i>Context</i>	<i>Body</i>	<i>Rims</i>	<i>Bases</i>	<i>Handles</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Weight (g)</i>
6	5	1	0	0	0	20
8	10	0	5	0	2	682
10	55	9	2	2	0	744
12	2	0	2	0	0	16
15	11	16	15	1	4	2543
18	4	0	1	0	0	40
21	5	1	0	0	0	28
23	2	0	0	0	0	5
25	28	4	2	1	0	314
29	3	1	1	0	0	17
32	1	0	0	0	0	1
34	1	2	0	0	0	35
41	2	1	0	0	0	20
48	8	2	1	0	1	386
50	1	1	1	0	0	534
53	0	1	0	0	0	41
62	0	0	0	0	0	25
65	3	1	0	0	0	32

Table 4: Pottery

<i>Context</i>	<i>Small find Number</i>	<i>Object</i>	<i>Material</i>
18	1	Nail	Fe
18	2	beads	ceramic
15	3	Object	Fe
15	4	spoon	Cu Alloy
15	5	knife handle	Bone
15	6	Object	Cu Alloy
25	7	Object	flint
25	8	Object	Cu Alloy
25	9	Object	Cu Alloy
8	10	ball	Pb
8	11	Object	Pb
8	12	pipe fitting	Cu Alloy
8	13	Object	Fe
8	14	Object	Fe
8	15	Object	Cu Alloy

Table 5: Small finds

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Weight (g)</i>
10	Layer	380
25	Fill	256
21	Fill	41
8	Layer	65
29	Fill	96
65	Fill	27

Table 6: The metal residue

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