

**36 Stafford Street  
Market Drayton  
Staffordshire**

*Archaeological Watching Brief*



*for:*  
McCarthy Stone

CA Project: CR0528  
CA Report: CR0528\_1  
Site Code: SMD20

May 2021



# 36 Stafford Street Market Drayton Staffordshire

## *Archaeological Watching Brief*

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## SUMMARY

<b>Project name:</b>	Land at 36 Market Street, Market Drayton, Shropshire – Archaeological Watching Brief
<b>Location:</b>	36 Market Street, Market Drayton
<b>NGR:</b>	367713, 334269
<b>Type:</b>	Watching brief
<b>Date:</b>	February – March 2021
<b>Planning reference:</b>	19/02964/FUL
<b>Location of Archive:</b>	To be deposited with Shropshire Museums and the Archaeological Data Services (ADS)

In February and March 2021, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with development at 36 Stafford Street, Market Drayton.

A pre-commencement inspection of the site identified that considerable truncation and disturbance had occurred in the past, particularly to the rear two-thirds of the development area where a pronounced change in ground level as a result of extensive terracing was apparent moving east to west down the slope between No.38, No. 36, and No.32 and the adjacent Joules Brewery car park.

During the groundworks only very small quantities of 19th and 20th century pottery was observed in the upcast from the exploratory test pits dug to locate services in the forecourt area. This material potentially derived from a topsoil sealed beneath the forecourt surface and had most likely been brought onto the site via the disposal of domestic waste, possibly via manuring. A brick recovered from the excavations in the forecourt area had “P B Co Ltd” impressed in the frog, indicating that it was made by one of the companies that belonged to the Potteries Brick Co Ltd. It is unclear when the Company was founded but P B Co Ltd bricks are recorded in many buildings and structures dating from the latter part of the 19th century. The company was dissolved in 1966.

The absence of any archaeological remains within the development area is considered to most likely be a reflection of much of the plot not having been developed until the very late 19th or early 20th century, seemingly having been in agricultural use until that time. In addition, it is clear that extensive terracing/ ground reduction works have taken place within the plot, which would have truncated any remains that may have been present.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. In December 2020, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief during development works on land at 36 Stafford Street, Market Drayton (centred at NGR: 367713, 334269; Fig. 1). The watching brief was undertaken for McCarthy Stone.

1.2. Shropshire Council have granted planning consent (19/02964/FUL) for the *Development of one block of 53 retirement apartments; formation of parking area(s), estate roads and landscaping scheme; all following the demolition of existing buildings on Land At 36 Stafford Street Market Drayton TF9 1HY*. Consent was granted subject to a condition requiring a programme of archaeological of works. Condition 3 states:

*No development approved by this permission shall commence until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI). This written scheme shall be approved in writing by the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of works.*

*Reason: The development site is known to have archaeological interest.*

1.3. The scope of the works required under the WSI was defined by the Historic Environment Team at Shropshire Council, in their capacity as archaeological advisors to the local planning authority, as comprising an archaeological watching brief during groundworks. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CA (2020) and approved by Shropshire Council.

1.4. The watching brief was also undertaken in accordance with the *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014; updated October 2020), *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) PPN 3: Archaeological Excavation* (Historic England 2015) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide* (Historic England 2015).

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### The site

- 1.5. The site, encompassing an area of 0.56ha, is located to the east of Market Drayton town centre, on the south side of Stafford Street. The site is bordered by residential properties to the east, a supermarket and car park immediately to the west, and a bowling green and the rear area of plots fronting onto High Street and Great Hales Street also to the west and to the south. Prior to demolition, the front of the plot was occupied by a forecourt area with garage buildings behind and a range of outbuildings previously associated with No.36 Stafford Street (Figs 1 – 4).
- 1.6. The British Geological Survey record the Site as lying on bedrock geology of the Chester Formation, comprising interbedded sandstone and conglomerate. Superficial Glaciofluvial Deposits of sand and gravel are recorded to the north and south of the site and may extend into the development area (BGS 2020).

## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The archaeological background of the site has already been set out in a Heritage Statement submitted in support of the planning application (Keevill Heritage Ltd 2019). The following archaeological background is summarised from this source.
- 2.2. The town of Market Drayton grew in prosperity during the late 17th century and the site is located to the east of the historic, medieval and early post-medieval core of the town, in an area of 18th and 19th century expansion. Archaeological investigations undertaken to date in the vicinity of the site, including works at Frogmore Road, No's 3-5 Stafford Street, No. 12 Stafford Street, and the former Longslow Dairy, to the north-west of 36 Stafford Street, have identified only 18th-century and later activity, including rubbish pits, wells and 19th century building remains. The adjacent Grade II Listed 38 Stafford Street is of 18th century date, with now delisted and demolished elements of No.36 previously included in the Listing for No.38.

## 3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1. The general objectives of the watching brief were:
  - to monitor the development groundworks, and to identify, investigate and record any significant buried archaeological deposits/features thus revealed;

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- at the conclusion of the project, to produce a report setting out the watching brief results and the archaeological conclusions that can be drawn from the recorded data;
  - at the conclusion of the project, to compile a stable, ordered, accessible project archive (see Section 6).

3.2. The specific objectives of the watching brief were too:

- establishing the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation in the development site;
- establishing the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes;
- recovering artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region;
- recovering palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions as an intrinsic part of the investigation.

3.3. If significant archaeological remains had been identified this report would have sought to place those remains in their local and regional context with reference to *The Archaeology of the West Midlands: A Framework for Research* (Watt 2011). However, given the absence of any significant archaeological remains then the results of the investigation will not contribute to any research objectives.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. The watching brief comprised the observation by a competent archaeologist of all intrusive groundworks associated with the proposed development, including the removal of existing underground petrol and oil tanks, lifting of the existing garage floor slab and the reduction of ground levels.

4.2. Records were maintained in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*.

4.3. Deposits were assessed for their Palaeoenvironmental potential. No deposits were identified that required sampling and no artefactual material was retained.



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- 4.4. CA will make arrangements with Shropshire Museums for the deposition of the project archive. A digital archive will also be prepared and deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). The archives (museum and digital) will be prepared and deposited in accordance with *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (ClfA 2014; updated October 2020).
- 4.5. A summary of information from this project, as set out in Appendix B will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

## 5. RESULTS

- 5.1. This section provides an overview of the watching brief results. Detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are given in Appendix A.
- 5.2. An inspection of the Site prior to the commencement of groundworks identified that considerable truncation of the plot had previously occurred as a result of the formation of a series of terraces, extending back off the Stafford Street frontage to the south, with each terrace lower in level to that to east and higher in level than that to the west.
- 5.3. The result of this was that land to the rear of 38 Stafford Street was significantly higher than the land to the rear of No.36, with a further very pronounced drop in level from the land to the rear of No.36 to the car park for the adjacent ASDA store and the carpark to the rear of Joule's Brewery, which fronts onto the High Street (Figs 5 – 8). Further terracing had taken place to the front of the Site, to create a level platform for the existing garage building, which was set back approximately 12m from Stafford Street, with a forecourt area formerly containing petrol pumps located between the front of the garage and the road.
- 5.4. Exploratory test-digging within the forecourt area revealed considerable disturbance from modern services, including pipes, drains and a series of underground petrol tanks, which had collectively resulted in a large amount of truncation to the natural substrate, which in this part of the site comprised an orange sand (001). Immediately in front of the garage building the substrate was overlain by a thin subsoil layer, consisting of a mid-brown silt sand (002), which was in turn overlain by a dark brown humic remnant topsoil (003) approximately 10cm thick and possibly a remnant garden soil associated with the agricultural use of the Site evidenced by historic maps prior to the construction of a dairy on part of the Site in the late 19th century. This

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was directly overlain by the concrete slab for the garage forecourt (004 and Fig 9). In other parts of the forecourt area exploratory digging showed that the natural substrate was directly overlain by a gravel base layer for a tarmac surface, with no surviving topsoil or subsoil visible beneath the base layer (Fig 14).

- 5.5. Deposits 001 – 003 were only visible in section following removal of the petrol tanks, which also revealed a possible large pit or similar feature at the east end of the tank trench. However, due to the unstable nature of the trench sides the feature could not be fully investigated (Fig 9).
- 5.6. A further set of underground tanks were identified on the south side of the garage and removed prior to demolition of the garage building. The tanks had been installed within a brick-lined pit cut into the natural substrate, which had in turn been backfilled with sand. The exposed edge of the tank pit, which was backfilled upon removal of the tanks revealed a similar sequence to that seen at the front of the Site, with tarmac overlaying a remnant topsoil (Fig 10).
- 5.7. Following demolition of the existing structures at the front of the Site and the removal of the floor slabs to the buildings (Fig 11), the upper surface of the sand substrate was revealed, which had been truncated by the reduced level excavation for the slab. Sub-surface features such as foundations and a third set of underground tanks, located to the rear of the building were then removed by mechanical excavator. To the rear of the buildings the existing tarmac yard surface and the vegetation horizon was removed, prior to a cut and fill operation to create a level platform for the new building. This comprised bulk excavation of that part of the Site to the rear of No. 38 Stafford Street, with the material spread over other parts of the building footprint. Where fill operations were not required a geotextile membrane was placed over the exposed surface prior to laying of a piling mat (Fig 12).

## 6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1. It is clear from the pre-commencement inspection of the Site that considerable truncation and disturbance had occurred in the past, particularly to the rear two-thirds of the development area, where a pronounced change in ground level as a result of extensive terracing was apparent moving east to west down the slope between No.38, No. 36, and No.32 and the Brewery car park.

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- 6.2. The 1837 Tithe Map depicts No.36, with the remaining part of the development area including land fronting on to Stafford Street, as a series of fields or paddocks. The 1886 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map depicts the same part of the site as an undeveloped plot, possibly laid out as a garden(?) with footpaths and trees. That part of the plot laying to the east is first shown with built structures upon it on the Ordnance Survey map of 1902 when a dairy was constructed just behind the street frontage, in the location of the later garage. This previous use as agricultural land would account for the in-situ topsoil and subsoil noted in the forecourt area, which does not appear to have been subject to development prior to the laying of the concrete and tarmac hard surface of the forecourt.
- 6.3. The dairy buildings are recorded as having been partially demolished by the 1930s, with the garage first recorded on the 1965 Ordnance Survey map, largely on the same footprint and then subsequently extended. Demolition of the garage buildings, including removal of the floor slab and foundations will have also removed any traces of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century dairy buildings.
- 6.4. During the groundworks only very small quantities of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century pottery was observed in the upcast from the exploratory test pits dug to locate services in the forecourt area. This material potentially derived from the topsoil sealed beneath the forecourt surface and had most likely been brought onto the site via the disposal of domestic waste, possibly via manuring. A brick recovered from the excavations in the forecourt area had "P B Co Ltd" impressed in the frog, indicating that it was made by one of the companies that belonged to the Potteries Brick Co Ltd (Fig 13). This was a marketing and sales company with an administrative office in the centre of Stoke-on-Trent, that at one time consisted of seventeen brick producers. It is unclear when the Company was founded but P B Co Ltd bricks are recorded in many buildings and structures dating from the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The company was dissolved in 1966 (<https://www.stafford-riverway-link.co.uk/Brick%20article.pdf>).
- 6.5. The absence of any archaeological remains within the development area is considered to most likely be a reflection of much of the plot not having been developed until the very late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century, seemingly having been in agricultural use until that time. In addition, it is clear that extensive terracing/ ground reduction works have taken place within the plot, which would have truncated any remains that may have been present in those areas. Conversely, in other parts of the Site where ground levels were to be raised then only a minimal depth strip was

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undertaken to remove the vegetation horizon and topsoil. In the unlikely event that any remains were present in these areas, which were in the central and rear part of the development area, then the strip would not have been deep enough to clearly reveal them.

## 7. CA PROJECT TEAM

- 7.1. Fieldwork was undertaken by Adrian Scruby and Joe Price. The report was written by Adrian Scruby. The report illustrations were prepared by Keighley Wasenczuk. The project archive has been compiled and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Adrian Scruby.

## 8. REFERENCES

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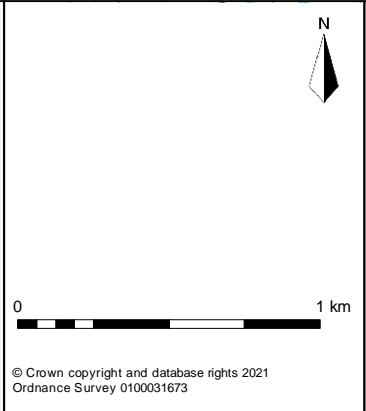
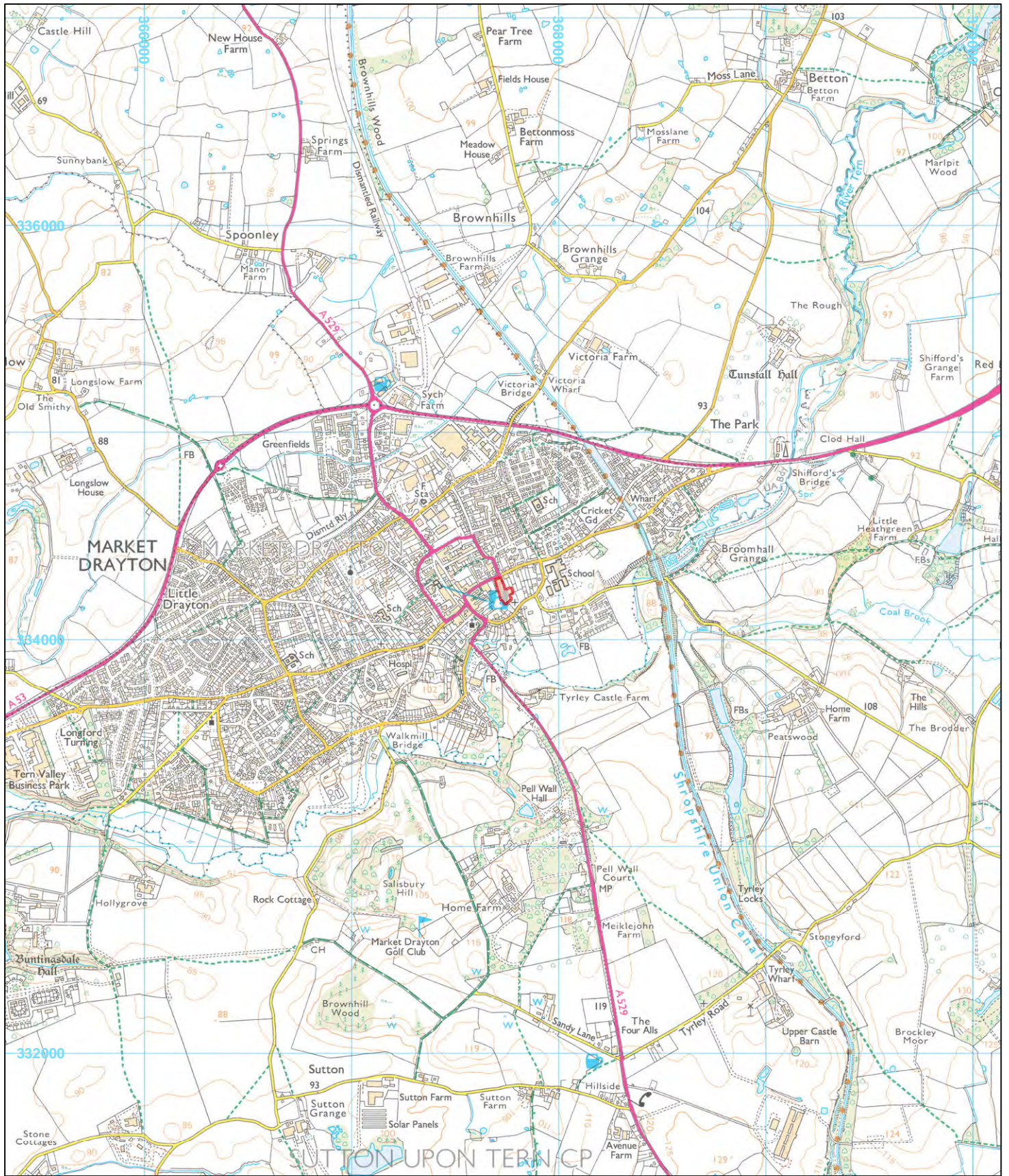
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## APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Area	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Interpretation	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth/thickness (m)
1	001	Layer		Natural substrate	Orange sand	-	-	-
1	002	Layer		Sub-soil	Mid-brown silt sand	-	-	0.1
1	003	Layer		Topsoil	Humic dark brown silt sand	-	-	0.1
2	004	Layer		Surface	Modern concrete/ tarmac hard surface	-	-	0.1
2	005	Layer		Topsoil	Humic mid-brown silt sand (same as 003?)	-	-	0.1-0.15

## APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project name	Land at 36 Stafford Street, Market Drayton	
Short description	<p>In February and March 2021, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with development at 36 Stafford Street, Market Drayton.</p> <p>A pre-commencement inspection of the site identified that considerable truncation and disturbance had occurred in the past, particularly to the rear two-thirds of the development area where a pronounced change in ground level as a result of extensive terracing was apparent moving east to west down the slope between No.38, No. 36, and No.32 and the adjacent Joules Brewery car park.</p> <p>During the groundworks only very small quantities of 19th and 20th century pottery was observed in the upcast from the exploratory test pits dug to locate services in the forecourt area. This material potentially derived from a topsoil sealed beneath the forecourt surface and had most likely been brought onto the site via the disposal of domestic waste, possibly via manuring. A brick recovered from the excavations in the forecourt area had "P B Co Ltd" impressed in the frog, indicating that it was made by one of the companies that belonged to the Potteries Brick Co Ltd. It is unclear when the Company was founded but P B Co Ltd bricks are recorded in many buildings and structures dating from the latter part of the 19th century. The company was dissolved in 1966.</p> <p>The absence of any archaeological remains within the development area is considered to most likely be a reflection of much of the plot not having been developed until the very late 19th or early 20th century, seemingly having been in agricultural use until that time. In addition, it is clear that extensive terracing/ ground reduction works have taken place within the plot, which would have truncated any remains that may have been present.</p>	
Project dates	February and March 2021	
Project type	Watching Brief	
Previous work	None	
Future work	No	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
Site location	36 Stafford Street, Market Drayton, Shropshire	
Site co-ordinates	367713, 334269	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project design (WSI) originator	Adrian Scruby	
Project Manager	Adrian Scruby	
Project Supervisor	Adrian Scruby, Joseph Price	
<b>MONUMENT TYPE</b>		
	None	
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS</b>		
	None	
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVES</b>		
	<b>Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.)</b>	<b>Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)</b>
Physical	None	-
Paper	Shropshire Museums	Day sheets, photo registers, report
Digital	ADS	Report and photographs
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
Cotswold Archaeology 2021. <i>Land at 36 Stafford Street, Market Drayton, Shropshire: Archaeological Watching Brief</i> CA typescript report <b>CR0528_1</b>		





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**PROJECT TITLE**  
 36 Stafford Street  
 Market Drayton, Shropshire

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**FIGURE TITLE**  
 Site location plan

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- Legend**
- Site boundary
  - Direction of view



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**PROJECT TITLE**  
36 Stafford Street  
Market Drayton, Shropshire

**FIGURE TITLE**  
**Site area showing  
proposed development plan**

<b>DRAWN BY</b> KW	<b>PROJECT NO</b> CR0528	<b>FIGURE NO.</b>
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Fig. 3. No.36 and forecourt area, looking southeast



Fig. 4. Garage and forecourt area looking southwest



Fig. 5. Site looking north toward Stafford Road



Fig. 6. Evidence of terracing looking west towards rear of 38 Stafford Street



Fig. 7. Evidence of terracing – rear of plot, looking south



Fig. 8. Evidence of terracing – rear of plot, looking west towards Joules Brewery



Fig. 9. Forecourt area following removal of petrol tanks, looking south



Fig. 10. Petrol tanks to west side of garage under removal



Fig. 11. Garage floor slab and sub-base under removal



Fig. 12. Vegetation and topsoil strip for piling mat



Fig. 13. P B Co. Ltd brick recovered from the forecourt area



Fig. 14. Forecourt area showing service trenches and modern hard surface and sub-base directly overlaying natural sand geology



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