

# Mardol Quay Gardens Shrewsbury Shropshire



## Archaeological Watching Brief Report

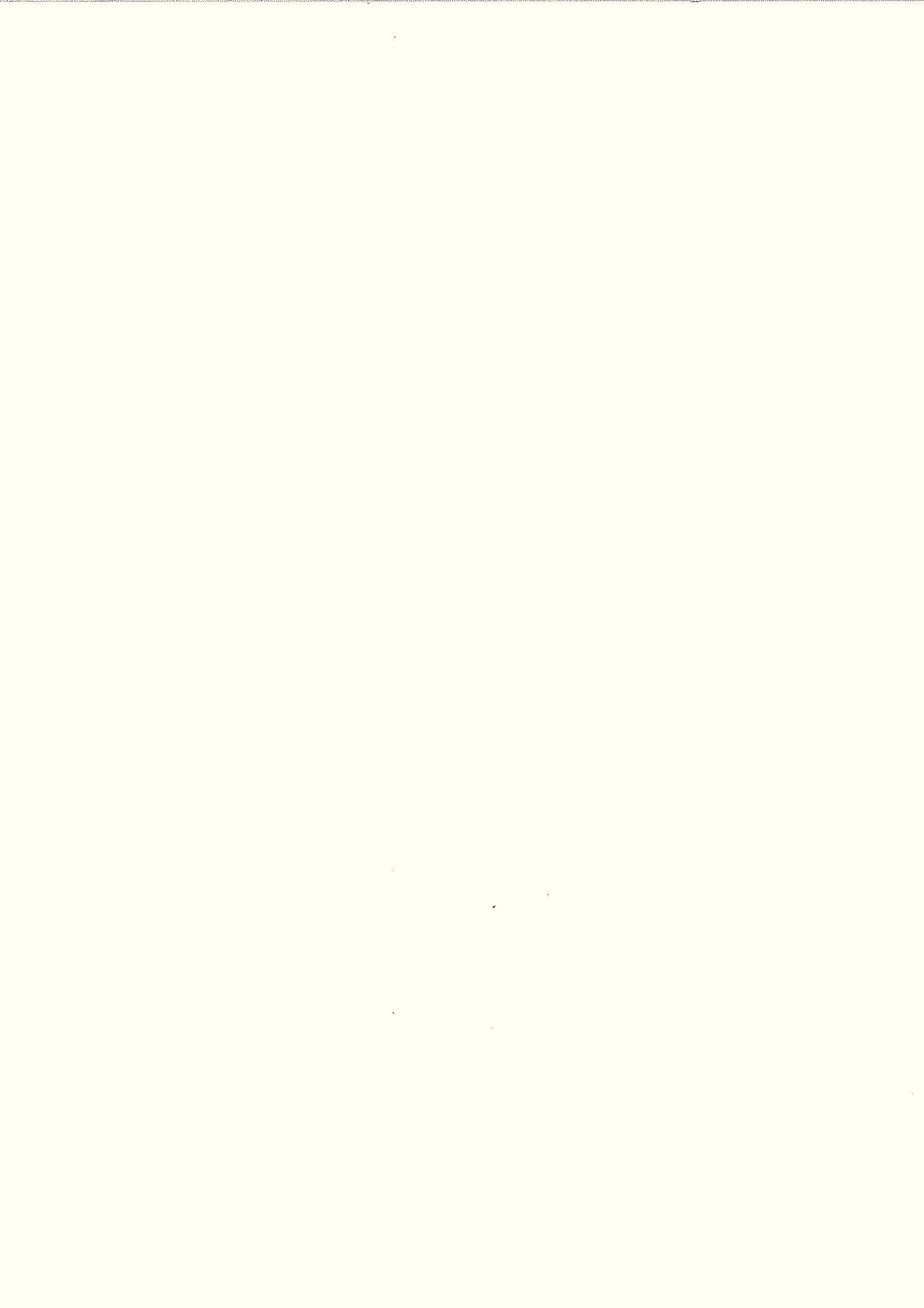


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Archaeological Watching Brief Report



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Illustrated by Hannah Brown

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# Mardol Quay Gardens, Shrewsbury, Shropshire

## *Archaeological Watching Brief*

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## Summary

*In October 2008 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Mardol Quay Gardens, Shrewsbury, Shropshire during the excavation of geotechnical test pits. The work was commissioned by Pearce & Lal in advance of proposed redevelopment for a public art project to celebrate the centenary of the birth of Charles Darwin. The watching brief revealed 19th century structures and deposits probably associated with the areas use as a quay.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 A Project Brief was set by the Historical Environment Officer for Shropshire, Michael Watson (SCC 2008). In response to the Project Brief, Oxford Archaeology (OA) prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation (OA 2008) detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief.

### 1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site lies at approximately 52 m OD and is located 350 m from the centre of Shrewsbury. The site is bounded by the River Severn to the north, Smithfield Road to the south and east and Welsh Bridge to the West (Fig. 1). The site lies on the river terrace deposits of the River Severn overlying Westphalian and Stephanian (undivided of Barren Red) deposits (BGS Sheet 152, Solid and Drift 1:50,00). The site is centred on NGR: SJ 489 127.

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief was detailed in the Mardol Quay Gardens Archaeological Evaluation report (OA 2008) and is reproduced below.

1.3.2 Mardol Quay Gardens is an area of lawned gardens, trees and pathways that front onto the south bank of the River Severn. The area is within the site of the southern abutments of the medieval St George's Bridge which was in existence by the 12th century and demolished in 1795, when part of the bridge was heavily damaged by flood waters. This was then replaced by Welsh bridge which is still in use today. The medieval town is also known to have extended to the area.

1.3.3 Mardol Quay itself was constructed in 1607 and by the 18th century much of the area was substantially built up. The quay remained in use until the 1950's, when the area was redeveloped as landscaped gardens, which still exist today.

## 2 EVALUATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

2.1.1 List project design aims below:

- (i) To identify and record the presence/absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- (ii) To signal, before the destruction of the material in question, the discovery of a significant archaeological find, for which the resources allocated were not sufficient to support a treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.



- (iii) To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

## 2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The watching brief was conducted as a single visit consisting of continuous monitoring of the excavation of 4 geotechnical test pits (fig. 2).
- 2.2.2 Sections and plans, where appropriate, were produced for each of the test pits, showing the relative location of archaeological deposits and structures at a scale of 1:20. A full digital photographic record of the archaeological deposits was produced, as well as a general photographic record of the work

## 3 RESULTS

### 3.1 Distribution of archaeological deposits

#### *General*

- 3.1.1 Four test pits were excavated all of which were 0.3 m x 0.5 m in size and on average 0.5 m deep. Natural geology was not encountered in any of the test pits.
- 3.1.2 The test pits will each be described in turn, with a description of any archaeological deposits encountered. A generalised interpretation of the results can be found in section 4. Accurate OD levels information was unavailable. The approximate height above OD across the site is 52 m.

#### *Test Pit 1 (TP 1)*

- 3.1.3 Test Pit 1 (Fig. 3, section 100) was the westernmost of the excavated test pits and was approximately 0.65 m deep. The test pit contained no significant archaeological deposits and consisted of 0.15 m of topsoil (101) overlying a 0.3 m thick layer of probable subsoil (102).

#### *Test Pit 2 (TP 2)*

- 3.1.4 Test Pit 2 (Fig. 3, section 200) was approximately 0.95 m deep and contained similar topsoil (201) and subsoil (202) deposits to those recorded in Test Pit 1, overlying a 0.1 m thick possible cobbled surface (203) which in turn overlay a 0.2 m thick layer of demolition rubble or possible industrial waste (204). A compact surface (205), consisting of small fragments of CBM (19th century in date) bedded in a coke dust and silty-clay matrix was sealed by 204.

#### *Test Pit 3 (TP 3)*

- 3.1.5 Test Pit 3 (Fig. 3, section 300) was approximately 0.6 m deep. The test pit contained a single course of bricks (303), consisting of north/south aligned stretchers, which probably constituted the remains of a surface and was 19<sup>th</sup> century in date. Surface 303 was sealed by c. 0.3 m of topsoil and subsoil (301 and 302 respectively) and overlay a 0.2 m thick deposit of sandy-silt with mortar and hand-made brick inclusions (304, also 19<sup>th</sup> century in date).

#### *Test Pit 4 (TP 4)*

- 3.1.6 Test Pit 4 (Fig. 3, section 400) was the easternmost of the test pits excavated and was approximately 0.85 m deep. The test pit consisted of 0.5 m of topsoil and subsoil (400 and 401 respectively) overlying two successive brick surfaces (403 (uppermost) and



405) separated by 0.05 m of orange sand (404), which was presumably a bedding material for 403. The upper surface of 405 was blackened by coal dust, but showed no evidence of having been burnt.

### **3.2 Finds**

3.2.1 19th century pottery and CBM was retained from contexts 205, 303, 304, 402 and 403.

### **3.3 Paleo-environmental evidence**

3.3.1 No deposits deemed suitable for paleo-environmental sampling were encountered.

## **4 DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 Interpretation**

4.1.1 The archaeological features recorded during the course of the watching brief were probably associated with the latter part of the site history as Mardol Quay, which was constructed during the 18th century and was out of use by the 1950s when the site became landscaped gardens (OA 2008).

4.1.2 This is suggested by a combination of dating evidence, which dates the structures and associated deposits to the 19th century, and the fact that they are stratified immediately below deposits associated with the landscaped gardens which were immediately preceded by Mardol Quay and its associated buildings (OA 2008)



## APPENDIX A. CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context	Type	Depth (m)	Width	Comments	Finds	Date
Test Pit 1						
101	Layer	0.15	-	Topsoil	-	-
102	Layer	0.3	-	Subsoil	-	-
Test Pit 2						
201	Layer	0.15	-	Topsoil	-	-
202	Layer	0.3	-	Subsoil	-	-
203	Structure	0.1	-	Cobbles	-	-
204	Layer	0.2	-	rubble/ind. waste	-	-
205	Structure	0.1	-	CBM and coke surface	CBM	19th C
Test Pit 3						
301	Layer	0.14	-	Topsoil	-	-
302	Layer	0.13	-	Subsoil	-	-
303	Structure	0.1	-	Brick Surface	Brick	19th C
304	Layer	0.2	-	Demolition rubble?	Brick	19th C
Test Pit 4						
400	Layer	0.2	-	Topsoil	-	-
401	Layer	0.3	-	Subsoil	-	-
402	Layer	0.05	-	Orange grit	Tile	19th C
403	Structure	0.1	-	Brick surface	Brick	-
404	Layer	0.1	-	Sand bedding	-	-
405	Structure	0.1	-	Brick surface	-	-



## APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

SCC, 2008 Brief for Mardol Quay Gardens – 2

OA, 2008 Mardol Quay Gardens, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, Archaeological Evaluation Report

## APPENDIX C. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

**Site name:** Mardol Quay Gardens, Shrewsbury, Shropshire

**Site code:** SHMAQU08

**Grid reference:** NGR SJ 489 127

**Type:** Watching brief

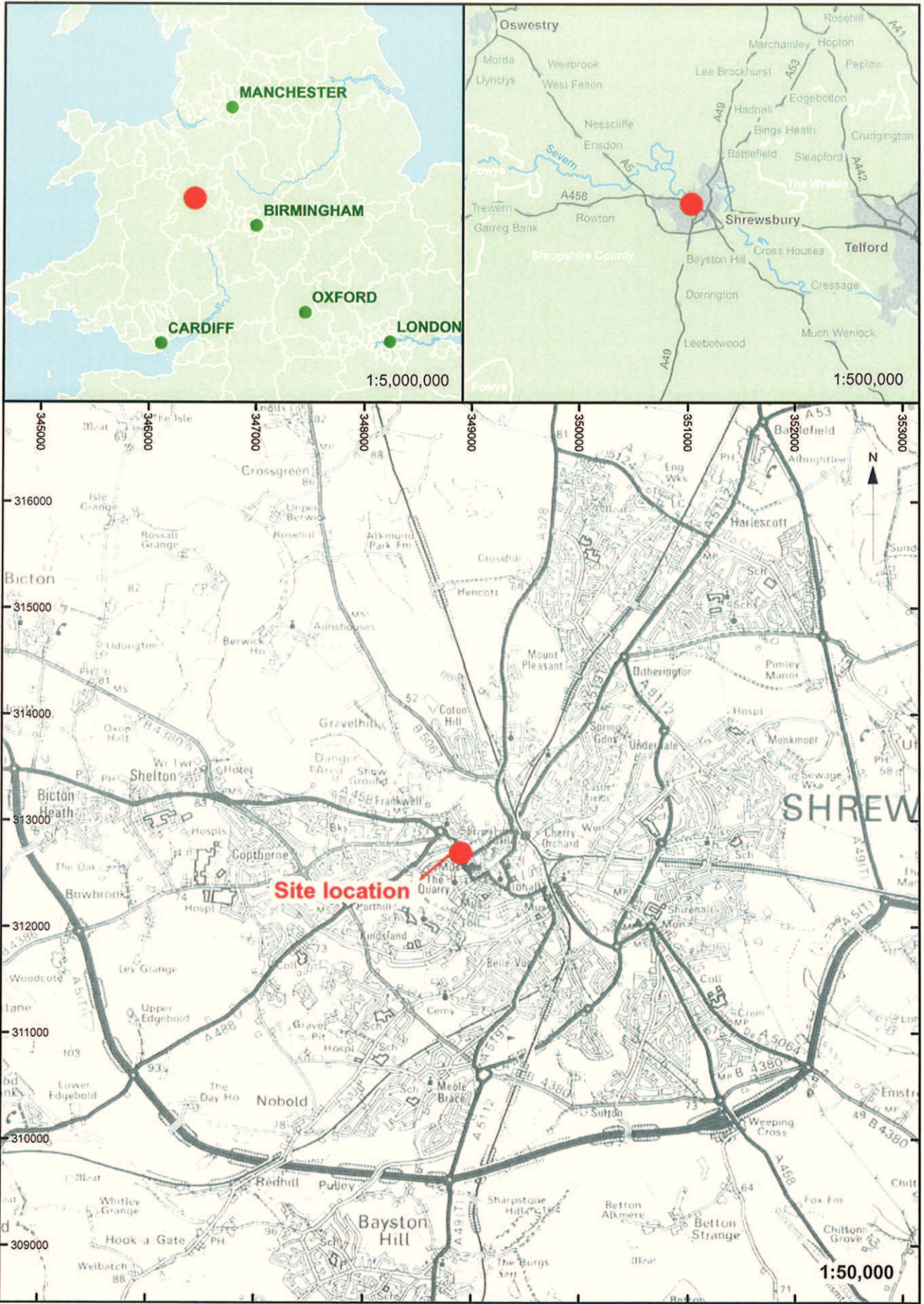
**Date and duration:** 6th October 2008

**Area of site:** 0.18 ha

**Summary of results:** Throughout the course of the watching brief, deposits and structures relating to post-medieval activity at Mardol Quay Gardens was observed.

**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with the Shrewsbury Museum Service in due course, under the following accession number: SHYMS:A/2008/6101





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Figure 1: Site location

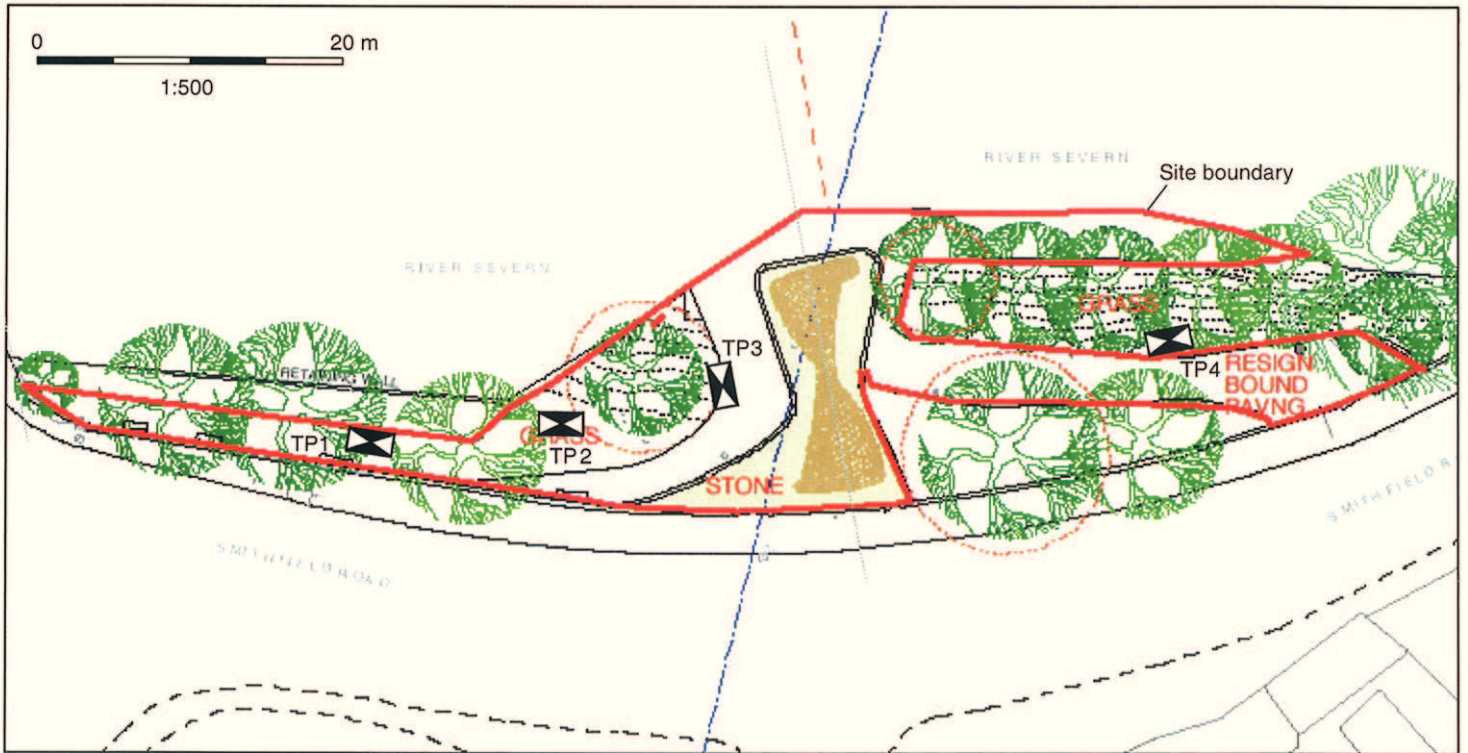
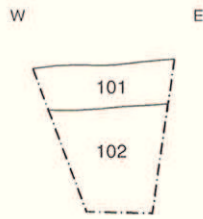


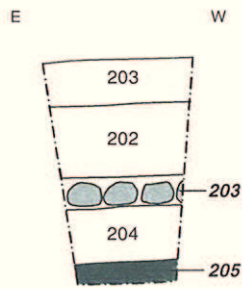
Figure 2 : Site plan



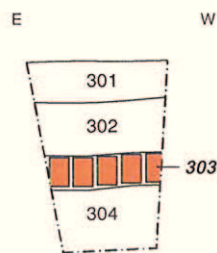
### Section 100



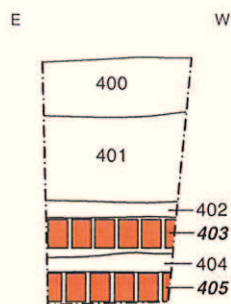
### Section 200






### Section 300



### Section 400



-  Cobble
-  Brick
-  Hardcore surface

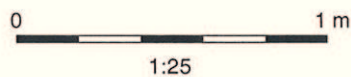


Figure 3: Sections 100, 200, 300 and 400



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