

**BUILDING RECORDING
OF
BEWDLEY BRIDGE ABUTTMENT,
BEALE'S CORNER, BEWDLEY,
WORCESTERSHIRE**



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Worcestershire Archaeology
Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service
The Hive
Sawmill Walk
The Butts
Worcester
WR1 3PB

Status:
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Author: Shona Robson-Glyde, srobson-glyde@worcestershire.gov.uk
Contributors:
Illustrator: Shona Robson-Glyde
Project reference: P3970
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HER reference: WSM 48237

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Building recording of Bewdley Bridge Abutment, Beales Corner, Bewdley, Worcestershire

Shona Robson-Glyde

Report

1 Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

Recording of a historic building was undertaken at Bewdley Bridge, Bewdley, Worcestershire (NGR SO 7877 7454). It was commissioned by the Halcrow Group Limited on behalf of Worcestershire County Council, who were intending to carry out repairs to the piers, railings and balusters of the bridge abutment on the Wribbenhall side of the river at Beale's Corner.

Bewdley Bridge is a designated heritage asset, a Grade I listed building, within the terms used by the *National Planning Policy Framework*. The building is also registered with the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record (HER; WSM 11174).

The project conforms to a brief prepared by the Planning Advisory Section of Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service (Glyde 2012) and for which a project proposal (including detailed specification) was produced (WA 2012).

The project also conforms to the *Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (IfA 2008) and *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2010).

The event reference for this project, given by the HER is WSM 48237.

2 Aims

The aims of the project were to produce a photographic and detailed measured survey of the sections of the bridge abutment that were to be repaired.

3 Methods

3.1 Personnel

The project was undertaken by Shona Robson-Glyde (BA, PG Dip Arch); who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 1998 and has been practicing buildings archaeology since 1995. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Hal Dalwood (BA, MIfA). Illustrations were prepared by Shona Robson-Glyde.

3.2 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification has been prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2012).

Fieldwork was undertaken between 6th February and 14th February 2013. The site reference number and site code is WSM 48237.

Building recording consisted of a photographic survey of the bridge section and measured survey. The photographic survey was carried out with a Sony α350 digital SLR camera. All photographs were recorded on a pro-forma Photographic Record Sheet. Measured drawings were completed on drafting film at 1:10 and 1:1 scales.

The project conformed to the English Heritage document *Understanding historic buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (EH 2006).

4 The building

The recording took place on the Wribbenhall side of the River Severn at Bewdley and involved the recording of a number of the piers on the bridge abutment. Bewdley Bridge is a large sandstone structure with three wide arches spanning the River Severn. The bridge is flanked with abutments both on the Bewdley and Wribbenhall sides of the structure. The main part of the bridge has sandstone balusters between its piers but the side abutments had delicate cast iron balusters.

Bewdley Bridge is a Grade I listed historic building that is an 18th century replacement of an earlier bridge. The listing building description states that the following: *1798 by Thomas Telford. Ashlar and cast iron. Three arches over river, two towpath arches on south bank, 14 arches on north bank extending about 50 metres to south-east; balustrades on river part of stone, cast iron on land. South front: three segmental arches with rusticated voussoirs, triangular cutwaters with pyramidal caps, above which pilasters rise to the moulded cornice below the balustrade which has bulbous balusters; central pedimented tablet in balustrade bearing the arms of Bewdley* (NHLE 2013, List Entry No 1100000).

The history of the bridge is detailed in the HER record for the structure (WSM 11174) and in the HER record for the site of the earlier bridge (WSM 8161). The HER record for the current bridge states that it was designed by Thomas Telford and was built in 1798 out of local stone. The medieval bridge of the late 1400s needed to be replaced at this after being badly damaged in floods of the severe winter of 1794-5. This followed on from repairs that had already been carried out in the late 1500s and after the Civil War in the 1650s. Because Bewdley was a prosperous town in the late 18th century, it was decided to call in the distinguished engineer Thomas Telford to design a new bridge. The bridge was in a different position to earlier structures and its construction at the end of Load Street required that a number of properties were demolished. The stone for the bridge came from Arley, and then from Billingsley and Highley when the Arley stone ran out. Work started in the spring of 1798 and was finished about four months later at a cost of £11,000. The bridge was officially opened on 28th September 1798.

5 The record

The recording of Bewdley Bridge abutment consisted of recording the road side and river side of piers two to six (working away from the bridge itself). Plates 1 and 2 are the photographs of both sides of the section of bridge abutment recorded. Each of the piers was drawn to scale and photographed individually. The photographs are reproduced as Plates 3 to 12. The scale drawings of the individual piers have reproduced as Figures 1 to 3.

As part of the record, the railing and balusters between each of the piers was also recorded. A profile of one of the balusters has been produced as Figure 4 and a detailed photograph can be seen as Plate 13. Photographs of the road side baluster and railing spans between the piers are reproduced as Plates 14 to 17 and a photomontage of the whole length of the recorded section can be seen as plate 18. The individual sections of railing and balusters have also been drawn and can be as Figure 5 with the full length being included as Figure 6.

The section of the bridge abutment recorded was part of the original 18th century Telford bridge. Very little had been done to the bridge prior to the recording project, with only remedial pointing having been carried out in places. The condition of this original fabric was remarkable considering its age of 215 years. The most notable problem being the eroded stonework on the north west side of the piers showing. This side of the piers would be of greatest risk of erosion during floods as the River Severn flows from the north west to south east at the point. The balusters were on the whole in fairly good condition although one of them was missing and a number had been unseated from their original position and were leaning at a raking angle.

6 Publication summary

Worcestershire Archaeology has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, Worcestershire Archaeology intends to use this summary as the basis for publication through local or regional journals. The client is requested to consider the content of this section as being acceptable for such publication.

Building recording was undertaken on behalf of Worcestershire County Council at Bewdley Bridge, Beale's Corner, Bewdley, Worcestershire (NGR ref SO 7877 7545; HER ref WSM 48237). A programme of recording of a section of the bridge abutment on the Wribbenhall side of Bewdley Bridge was carried out prior to essential repair. The recording entailed the scale drawing and photography of five piers of the railing and balusters between each of the piers. Bewdley Bridge is a Grade I listed building that was designed by Thomas Telford and opened in 1798. The section of bridge recorded was an original part of this 18th century bridge.

7 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank Worcestershire County Council Highways department, Phil Knight of Halcrow Group Limited and Peter Bassett, Wyre Forest Conservation Officer, for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project.

8 Bibliography

EH 2006 *Understanding historic buildings: a guide to good recording practice*, English Heritage

Glyde, M, 2012 *Requirements for historic building recording work on Bewdley Bridge, Worcestershire*, Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council unpublished document dated November 16th 2012

IfA 2008 *Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures*, Institute for Archaeologists

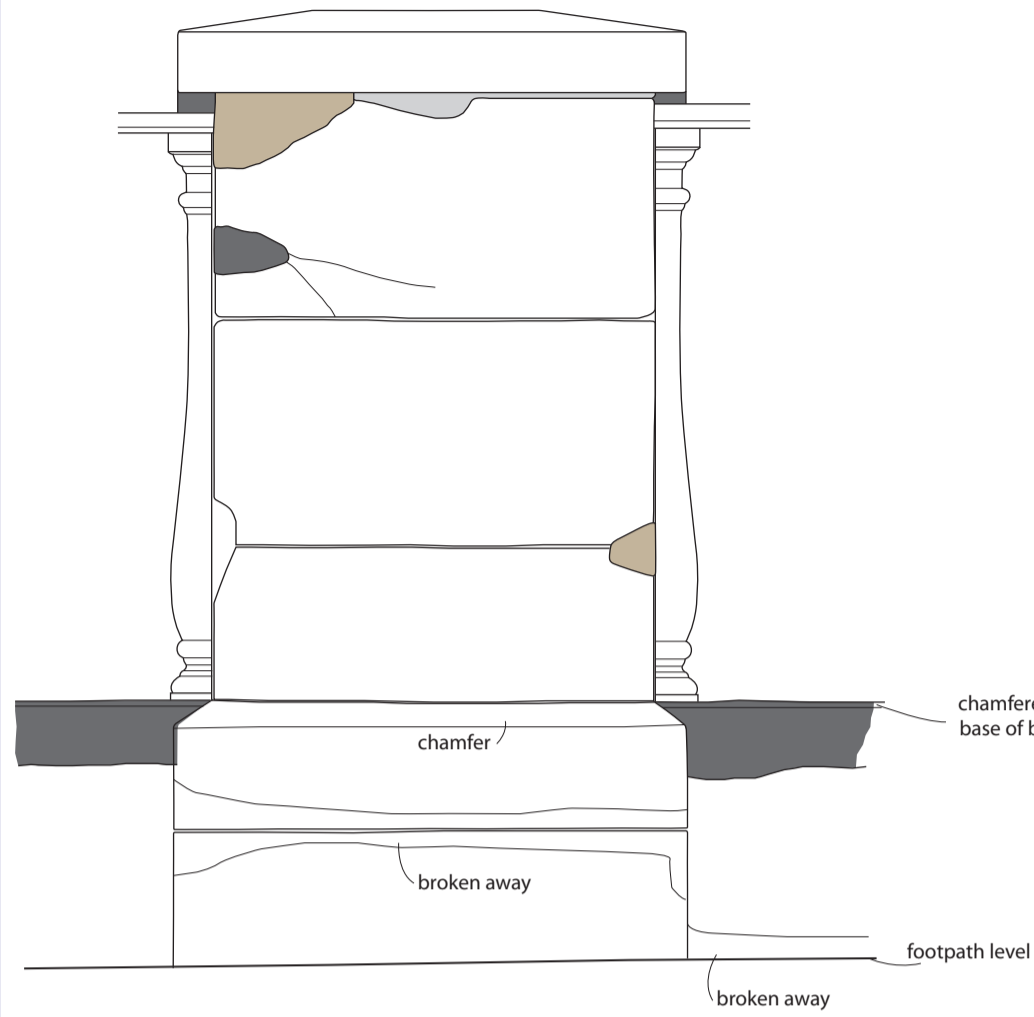
NHLE 2013 *National Heritage List for England*, English Heritage, online database accessed April 2013, **List entry no. 1100000** (<http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1100000>)

WA 2012 *Proposal for the recording of the historic building of Bewdley Bridge, Bewdley, Worcestershire*, Worcestershire Archaeology, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document dated 7th December 2012, P3970

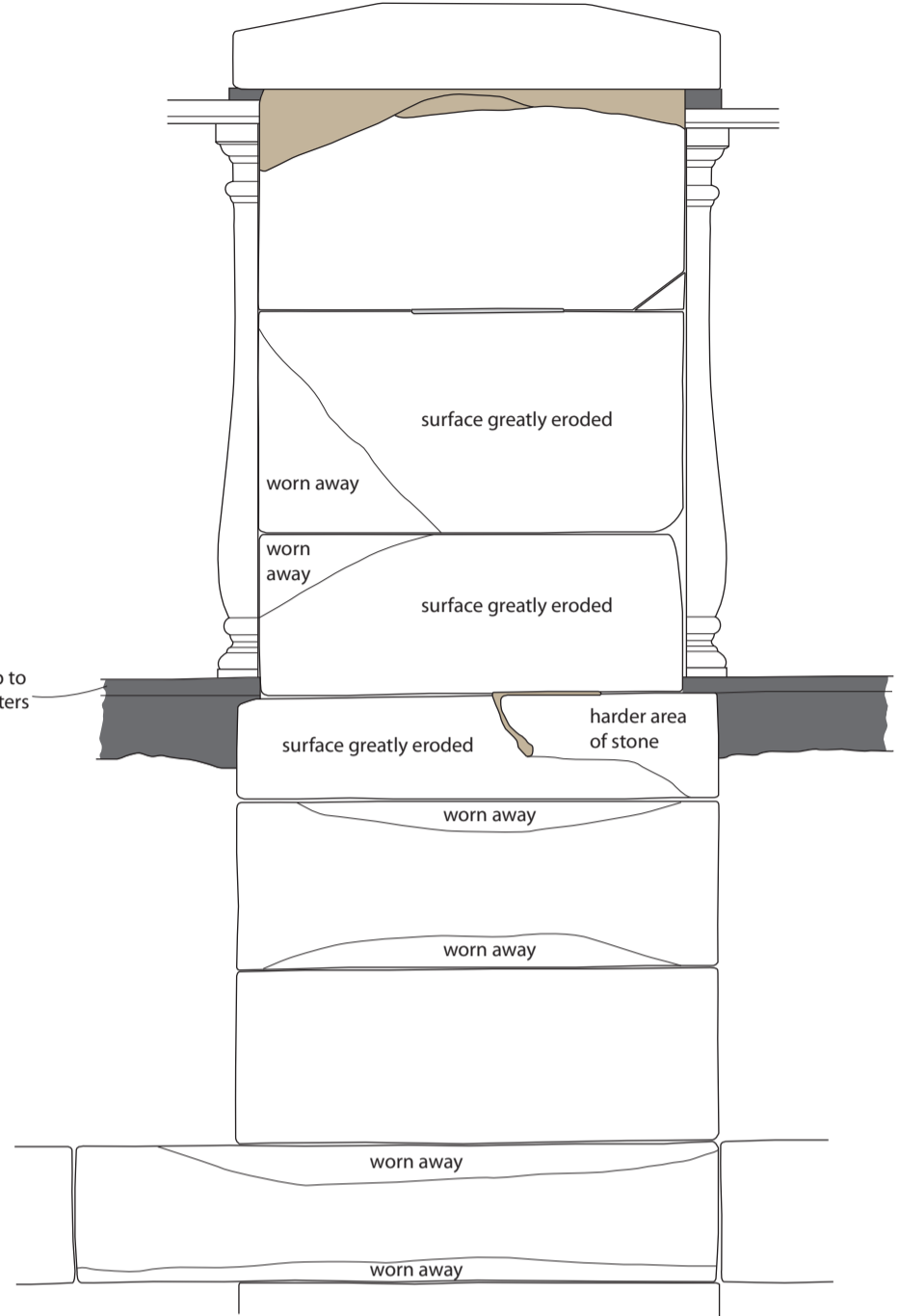
WCC 2010 *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire*, Planning Advisory Section, Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council unpublished report **604**, amended July 2012




Figures

Pier 6 - Road side elevation

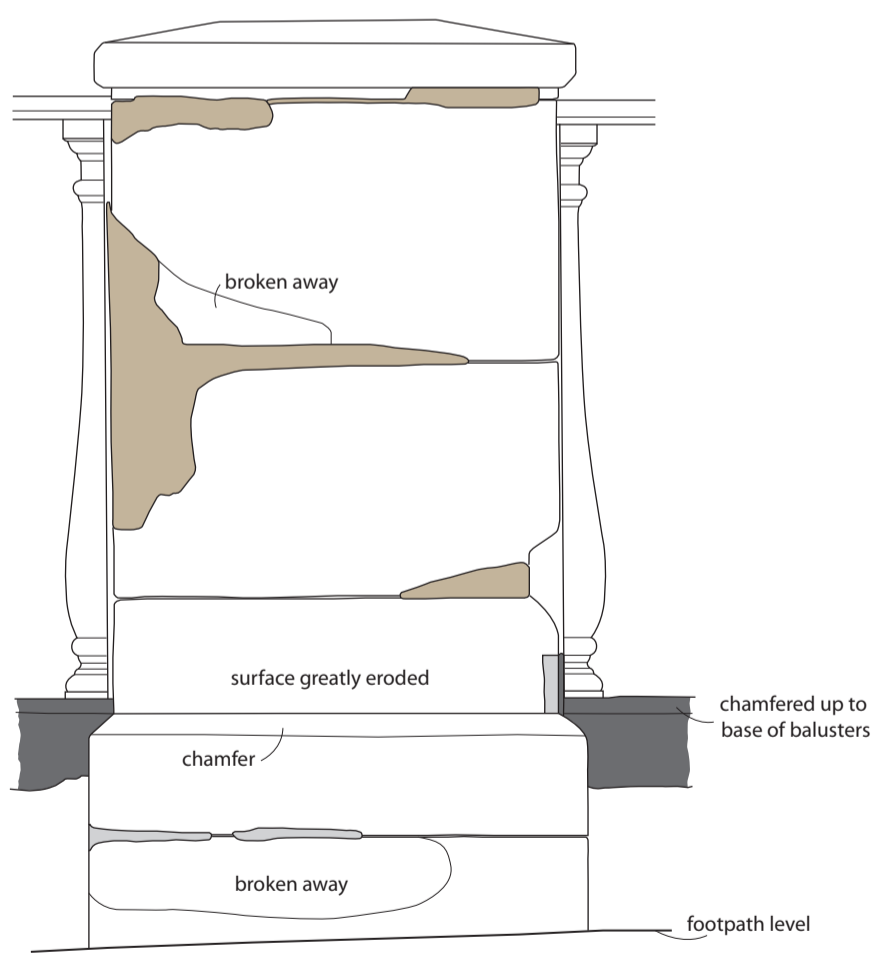


Pier 6 - River side elevation

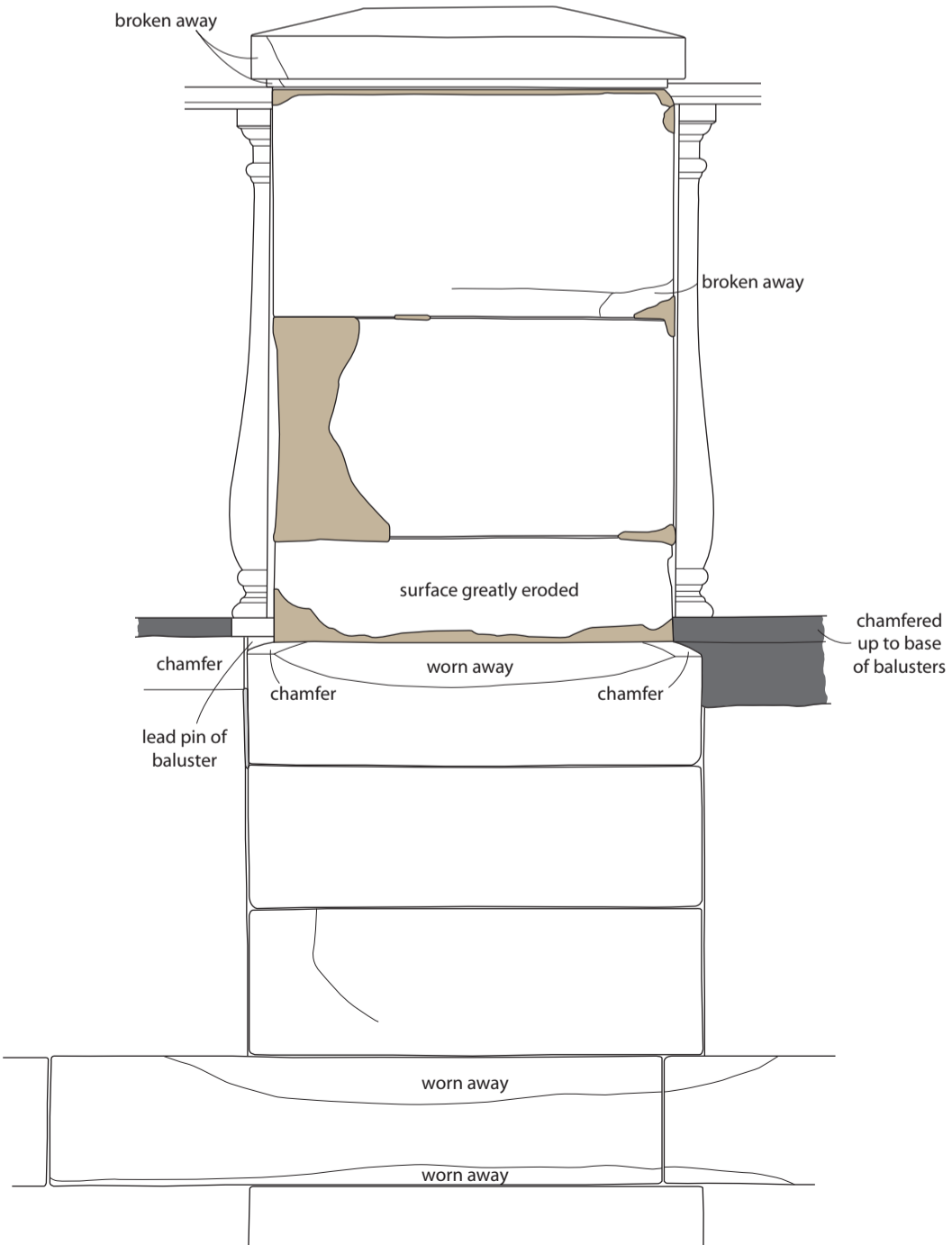


-  pale grey cement mortar
-  pink or buff cement mortar
-  concrete

Pier 5 - Road side elevation



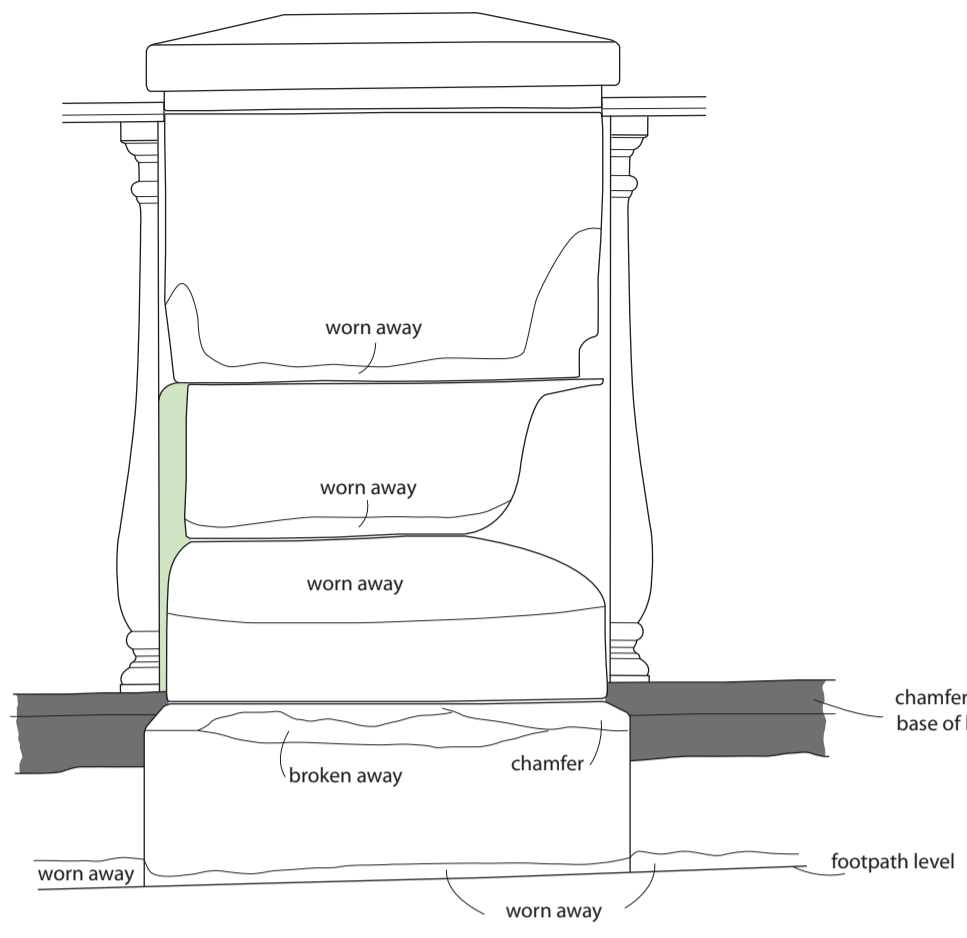
Pier 5 - River side elevation



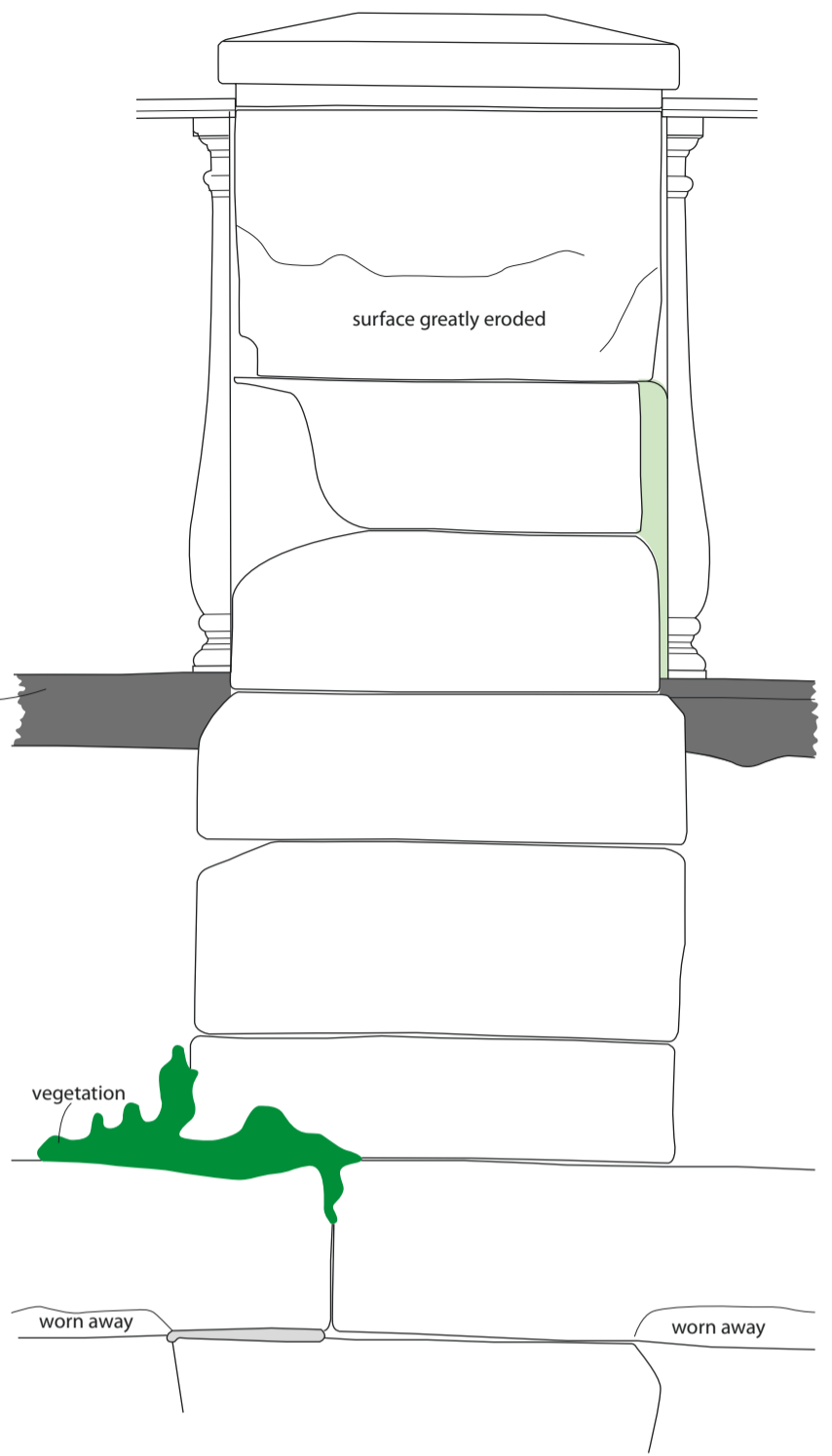
0 500mm





Figure 1: Bewdley Bridge Abutment Piers 6 and 5

Pier 4 - Road side elevation

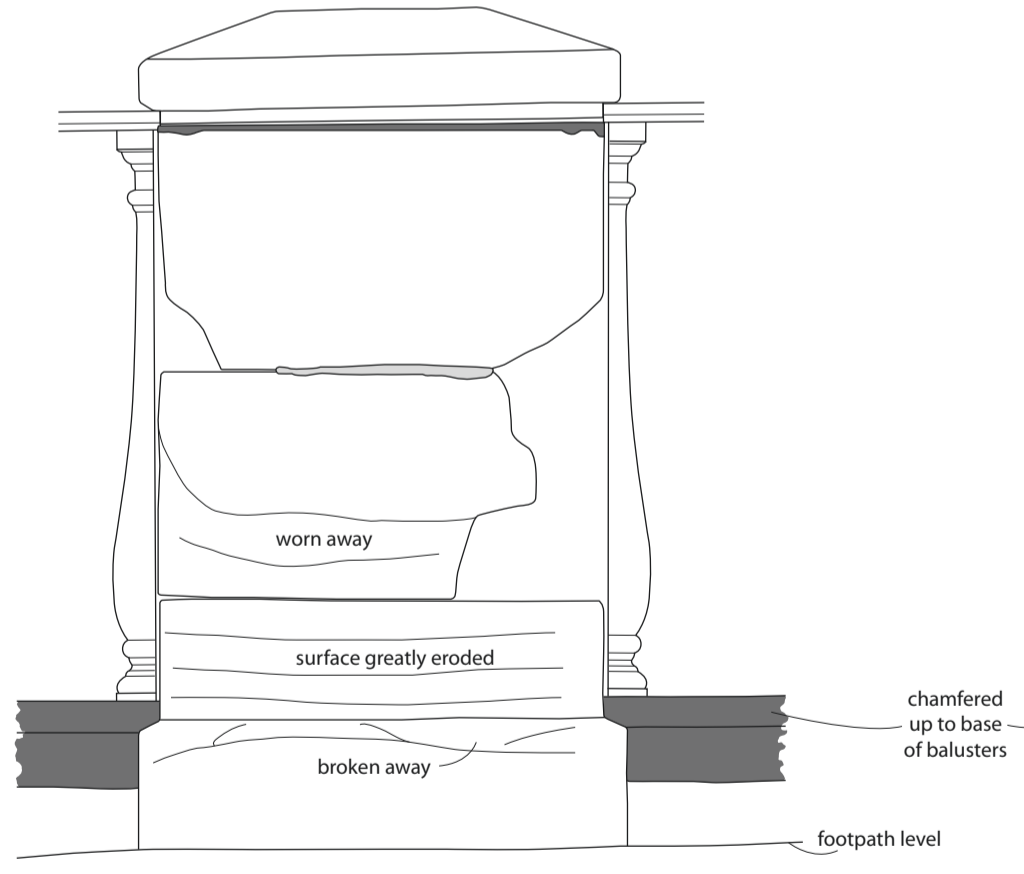


Pier 4- River side elevation

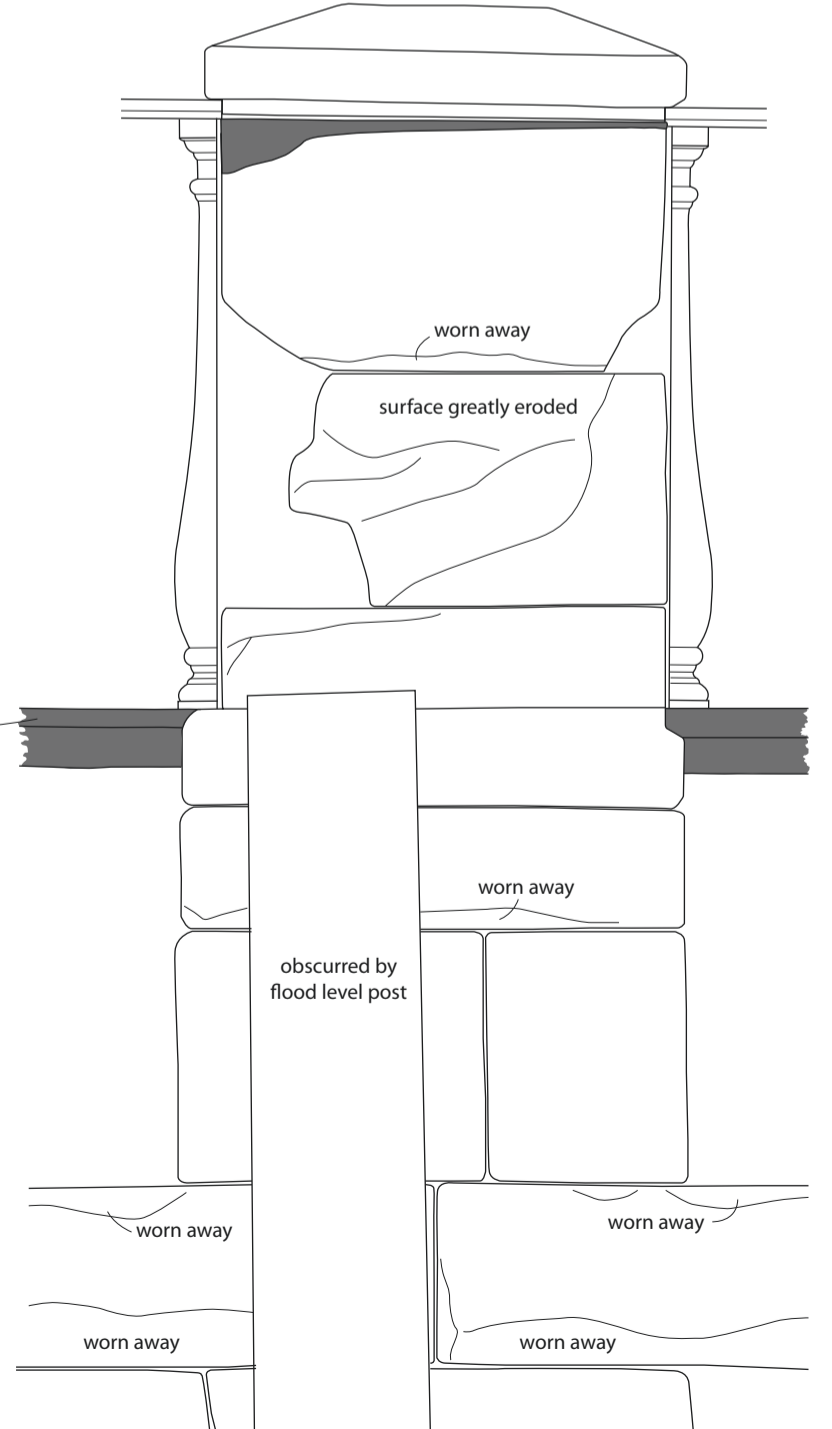


-  pale grey cement mortar
-  pink or buff cement mortar
-  concrete
-  silt and decayed stone

Pier 3 - Road side elevation



Pier 3 - River side elevation



0 500mm

Figure 2: Bewdley Bridge Abutment Piers 4 and 3

Pier 2 - Road side elevation

Pier 2- River side elevation

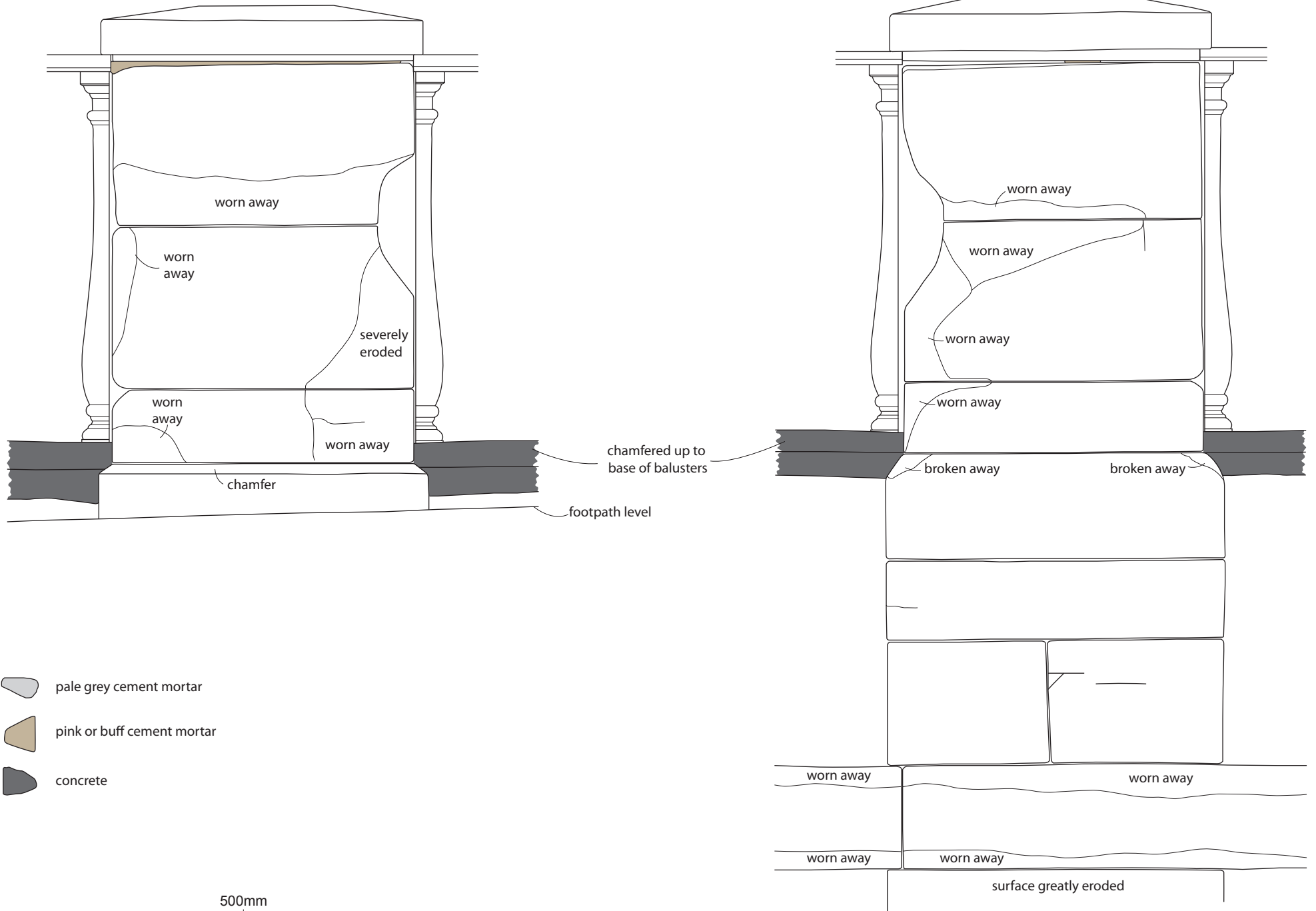
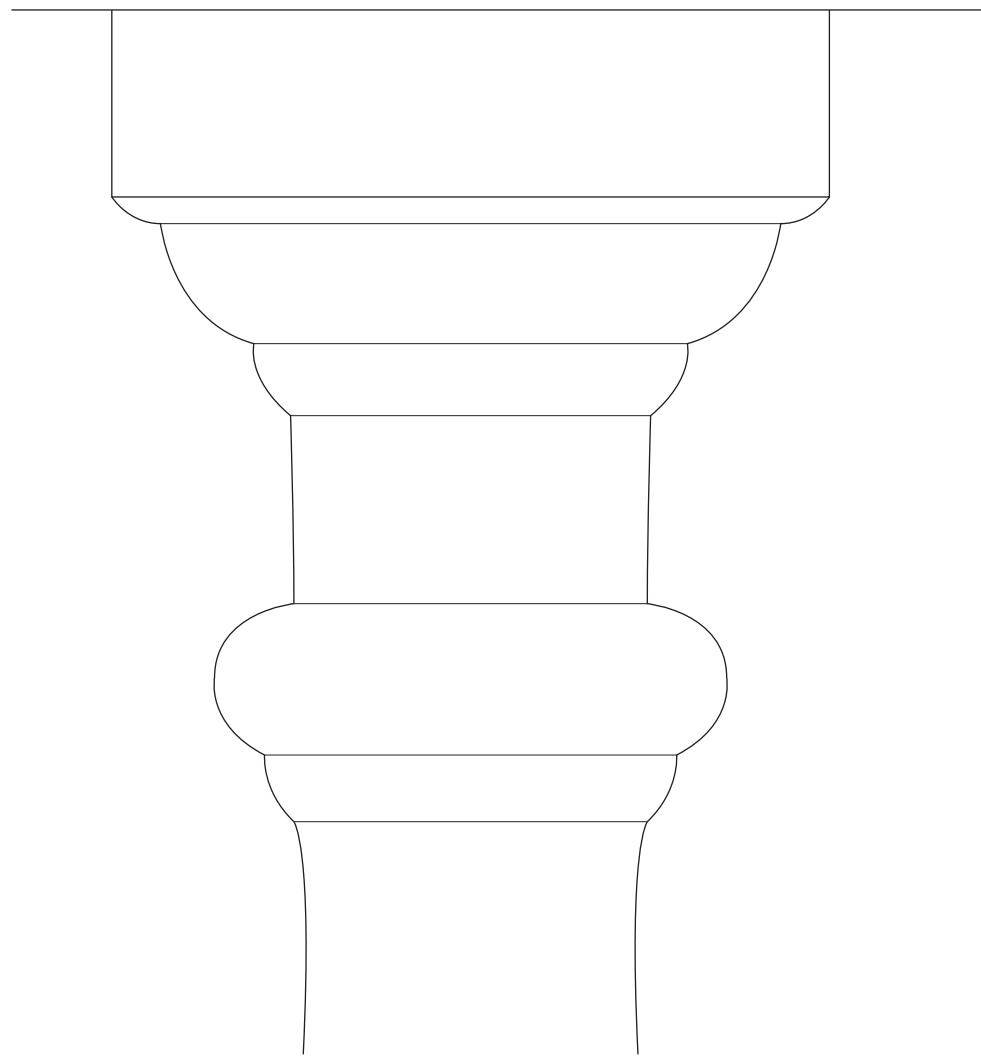


Figure 3: Bewdley Bridge Abutment Pier 2

0 50mm



0 300mm

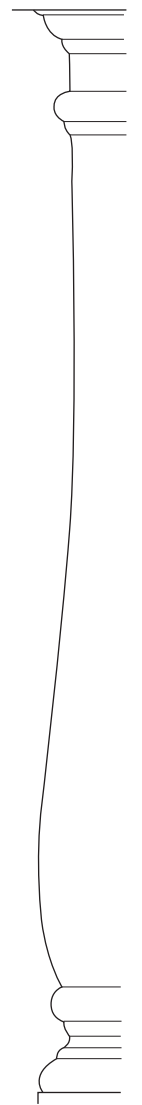
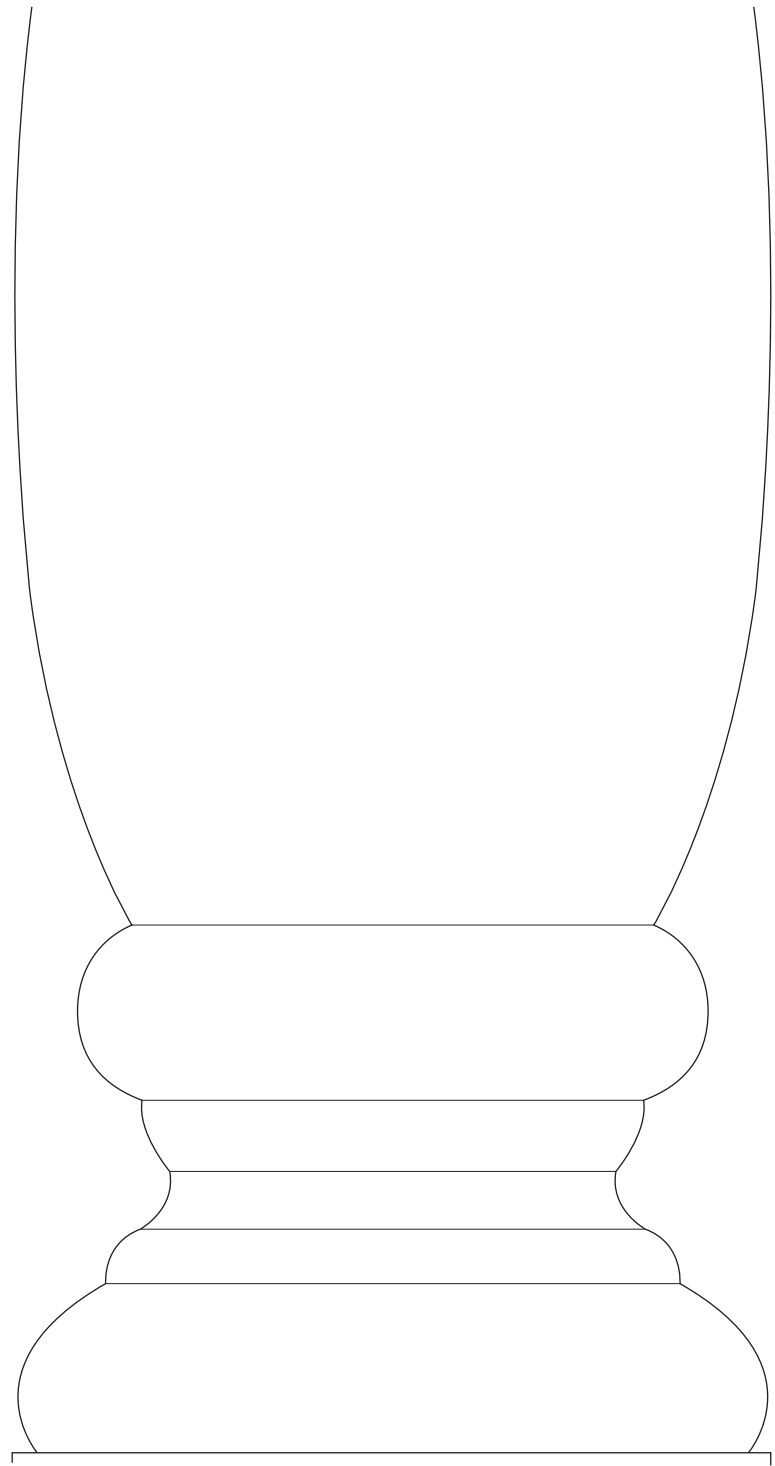


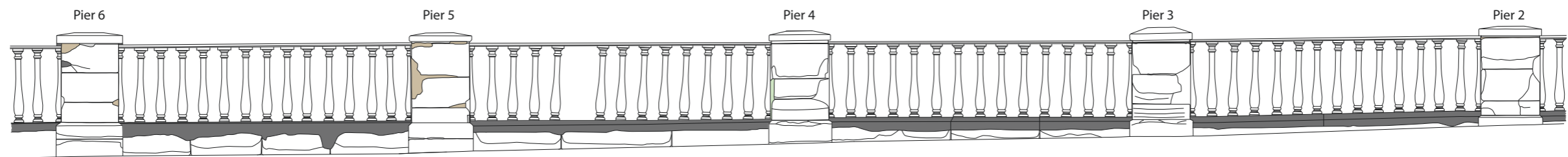
Figure 4: Bewdley Bridge Abutment Baluster profiles



0 500mm

pale grey cement mortar pink or buff cement mortar concrete

Figure 5: Bewdley Bridge Abutment, road side



1:50 0 3m

pale grey cement mortar

pink or buff cement mortar

concrete

silt and decayed stone

Figure 6: Bewdley Bridge Abutment, road side

Plates



Plate 1: Road side elevation of Bewdley Bridge abutment (pier 6 on the left)



Plate 2: River side elevation of Bewdley Bridge abutment (pier 2 on the left)

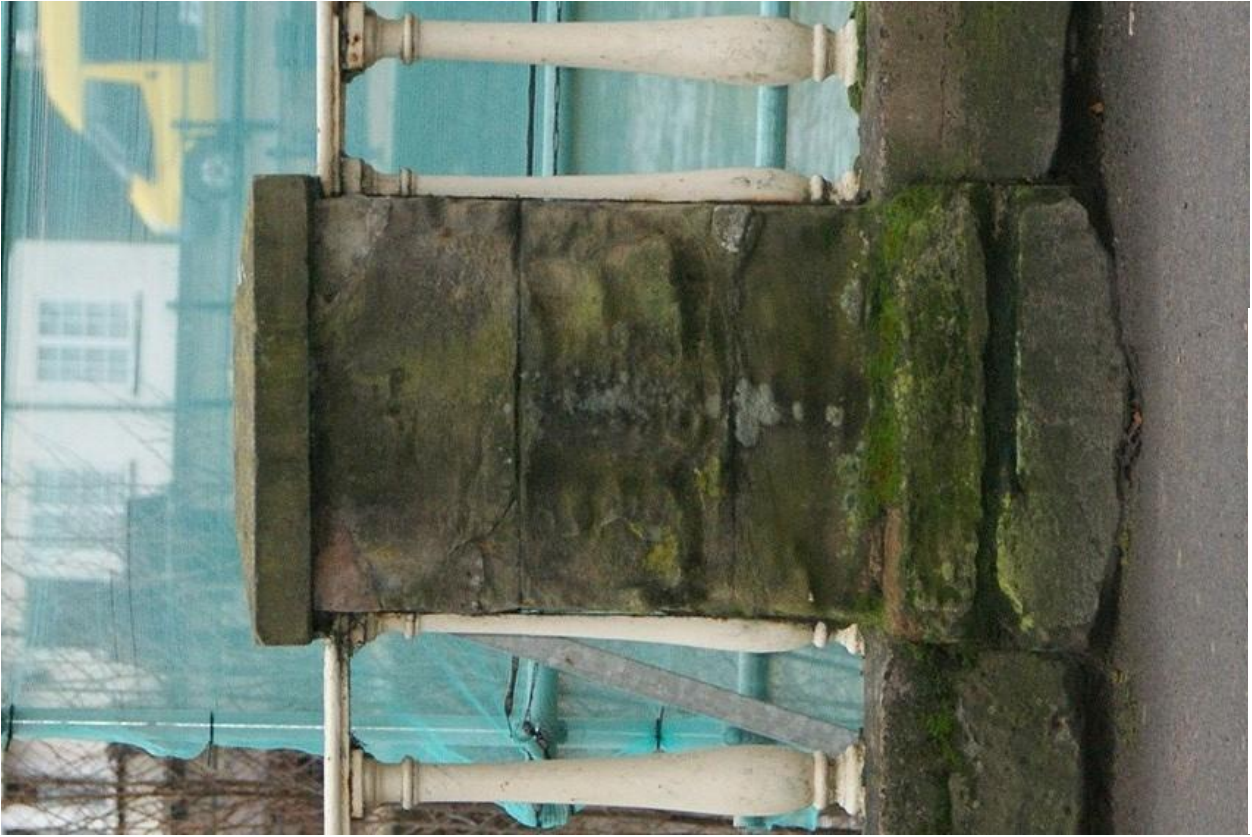


Plate 3: Road side elevation of pier 6

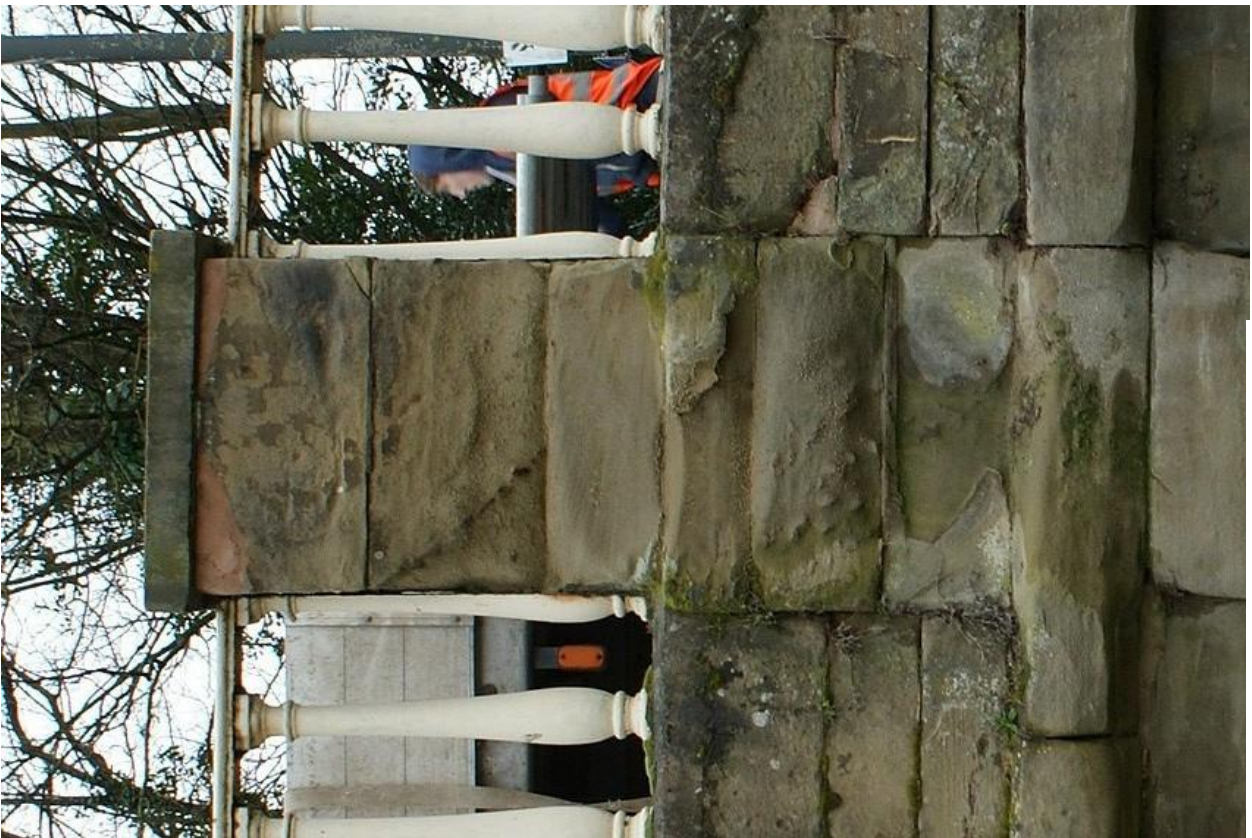


Plate 4: River side elevation of pier 6



Plate 5: Road side elevation of pier 5



Plate 6: River side elevation of pier 5



Plate 7: Road side elevation of pier 4



Plate 8: River side elevation of pier 4



Plate 9: Road side elevation of pier 3



Plate 10: River side elevation of pier 3



Plate 11: Road side elevation of pier 2



Plate 12: River side elevation of pier 2



Plate 13: Detail of cast iron balusters on Bewdley Bridge abutment



Plate 14: Bewdley Bridge abutment road side, pier 6 (on left) to 5



Plate 15: Bewdley Bridge abutment road side, pier 5 (on left) to 4



Plate 16: Bewdley Bridge abutment road side, pier 4 (on left) to 3



Plate 17: Bewdley Bridge abutment road side, pier 3 (on left) to 2



Plate 18: Road side elevation of bridge abutment piers 6 to 2

Appendix 1 Technical information

The archive (site code: WSM 48237)

The archive consists of:

- 5 Field progress reports AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 36 Digital photographs
- 1 Drawing number catalogues AS4
- 6 Scale drawings
- 1 CD-Rom/DVDs

1 Copy of this report (bound hard copy)

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Worcestershire County Museum
Museums Worcestershire
Hartlebury Castle
Hartlebury
Near Kidderminster
Worcestershire DY11 7XZ
Tel Hartlebury (01299) 250416