

# Archaeological watching brief on land south of Childe Road, Cleobury Mortimer, Shropshire



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## Archaeological watching brief on land south of Childe Road, Cleobury Mortimer, Shropshire

**Graham Arnold**

With contributions by Rob Hedge

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

### Background information

<i>Client</i>	Mike Humphries (Architect) and AJ Bate (Builders)
<i>National Grid reference</i>	SO 67300 75868
<i>Planning authority</i>	Shropshire Council
<i>Reference</i>	17/01937/FUL
<i>Project design</i>	WA 2017
<i>Project parameters</i>	CifA 2014

The site lay in a concave ditch, which had been highlighted as a castle moat or hollow way but had recently been infilled with dumped material. Works involved monitoring the levelling of ground prior to piling and raising the ground level.

The geology on site is recorded by the BGS as the Clee Sandstone Formation, with bands of sandstone and mudstone (BGS 2017) and was only exposed in the south west bank of the site.

Prior to fieldwork commencing a search was made of the Historic Environment Record (HER).

The HER search highlighted a medieval Holloway along the north side of town followed by Childe Road (PRN 06204). This was thought to be a probable original plot lane to rear of burgage plots and was identified during field investigation in 1994 in the Central Marches Historic Town Survey (Dalwood 1996). This site represents a hollow way of medieval date. It is also suggested that the ditch as being the original moat for the motte of Cleobury Mortimer castle (PRN 03248) which is situated directly south of the site, on Castle Hill. Various excavations around the town have uncovered evidence of medieval settlement activity related to the motte and bailey castle.

### Aims

The aim of the watching brief was to observe and record archaeological deposits, and to determine their extent, state of preservation, date and type, as far as reasonably possible. as far as within the constraints of the Client's groundworks.

### Methods

Groundworks were monitored on 15 December 2017. Fieldwork was undertaken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). Groundworks were undertaken over the area of the proposed new dwelling. A topsoil strip was undertaken across an area of 118m<sup>2</sup>, over the total site area of 232m<sup>2</sup>, with excavations to a greater depth to the north and south sides of the site (whereas a hollow previously existed within the centre of the site). The area of groundworks monitored is indicated on Figure 2 (the areas in green on either side were those dug to a greater depth than the central area).

#### *Access to or visibility of deposits*

Observation of the excavated areas was undertaken during machine excavation. The exposed surfaces were sufficiently clean to observe well-differentiated archaeological deposits.

#### *Statement of confidence*

Access to, and visibility of, deposits allowed a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

## Deposit description

Maximum dimensions: Length: 12.50m Width: 9.5m Depth: 0.40- 0.90m

Orientation: N-S

Main deposit descriptions

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Friable, humic dark greyish brown clayey silt with frequent vegetation, rooting, charcoal and modern plastics, metal and modern debris. Also blue and white porcelain, stone ware and modern machine made bricks. Southern edge and southwest spoil heap.	0.00-0.40m
101	Made ground	Compact light greyish yellow sandstone, limestone and gravels, with frequent modern cbm, bricks and glass inclusions. On southern bank only, sloping from west to east.	0.40-0.50m
102	Natural	Soft orangey brown clayey sand and gravels with occasional charcoal and rooting from adjacent hedgerow. Becoming solid sandstone at 0.70m bgl + in southwest corner of site only.	0.50-0.90m +
103	Made ground	Modern type 1 yellow and grey gravels and modern brick hardcore surface on north bank side of site, adjacent to Childe Road.	0.00 – 0.50m +

## Discussion

Modern made ground (101) and topsoil (100) with vegetation and modern debris was observed during the excavations. Natural sandstone (102) was exposed within the southern side of the excavated area, below a hedgerow (Plates 2-3). No significant archaeological features, layers, structures or horizons were revealed, nor artefacts recovered.

## Finds Analysis (Rob Hedge pers comm)

All of the finds were residual within the modern made ground (101) and topsoil (100), which also included plastic debris and metal wire. A small quantity of post-medieval and modern pottery was recovered from topsoil (100). The assemblage comprised seven pieces, weighing 593g and including:

- three conjoining sherds of a large late stoneware (Worcs fabric 81.4) jar;
- a sherd from a Hartley's ribbed late stoneware marmalade or jam jar — it bears the name 'LIVERPOOL' with a trace of the trademark lighthouse image below, so is likely to be one of the 'WP HARTLEY LONDON AND LIVERPOOL' jars, post-dating the opening of the London factory in 1900 and identical to those produced in the Caledonian Pottery works, which closed in 1929 (Will 2017, 9-10);
- a complete late stoneware necked jar, probably an ink bottle;
- a sherd of plain stone chine (fabric 85);
- a scalloped rim sherd of a hand-painted porcelain (fabric 83) plate.

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It is a typical domestic assemblage of early 20<sup>th</sup> century date. No further work on the assemblage is recommended, and it will be discarded unless a specific request is made to retain it.

## Conclusions

The shallow nature of the excavations on site and the depth of modern made ground meant that no significant archaeology was exposed during the works. The area was a concave ditch, which was formerly a castle moat and later used as a hollow way but had been recently used as a modern dumping ground. No significant archaeology was exposed during the works or are considered likely to be impacted upon by the development.

## 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.

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on land south of Childe Road, Cleobury Mortimer, Shropshire (NGR SO 67300 75868). The site lay in a concave ditch, which had been highlighted as a moat bounding the northern side of Cleobury Mortimer Castle motte, later used as a medieval hollow way to the rear of medieval burgage plots, but had recently been used as a modern dumping ground. Only modern made ground was excavated on site with natural deposits only revealed in the south west corner of site, part of a modern hedgerow bank. Finds recovered from site were thought to be a typical domestic assemblage of 20<sup>th</sup> century date. No significant archaeological deposits, or features were exposed, nor finds recovered, relating to any medieval or earlier occupation.*

## Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Mike Humphries (Architect), Mike Bate (AJ Bate Builders), Giles Carey (Historic Environment Records Officer, Shropshire Council), and Charlotte Orchard (Archaeological Advisor, Historic Environment, Shropshire Council).

## Bibliography

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Dalwood, H, 1996 *Historic landscape survey report: Archaeological Assessment of Cleobury Mortimer, Shropshire, Central Marches Historic Towns Survey*, Hereford & Worcester County Archaeology Service report **308**, P945

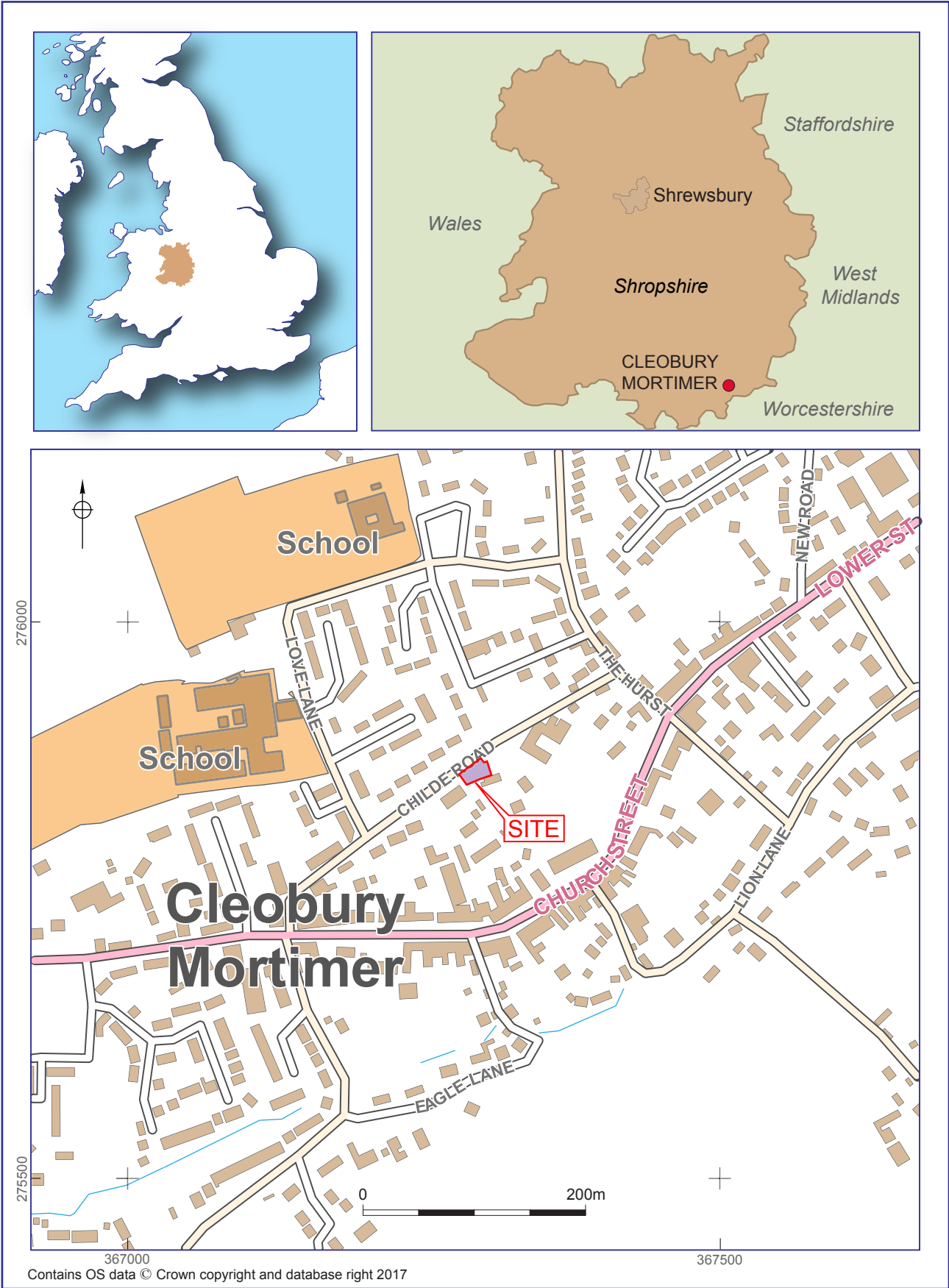
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WA 2017 *Proposal for an archaeological watching brief on land south of Childe Road, Cleobury Mortimer, Shropshire*, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document dated 13 November 2017, **P5209**

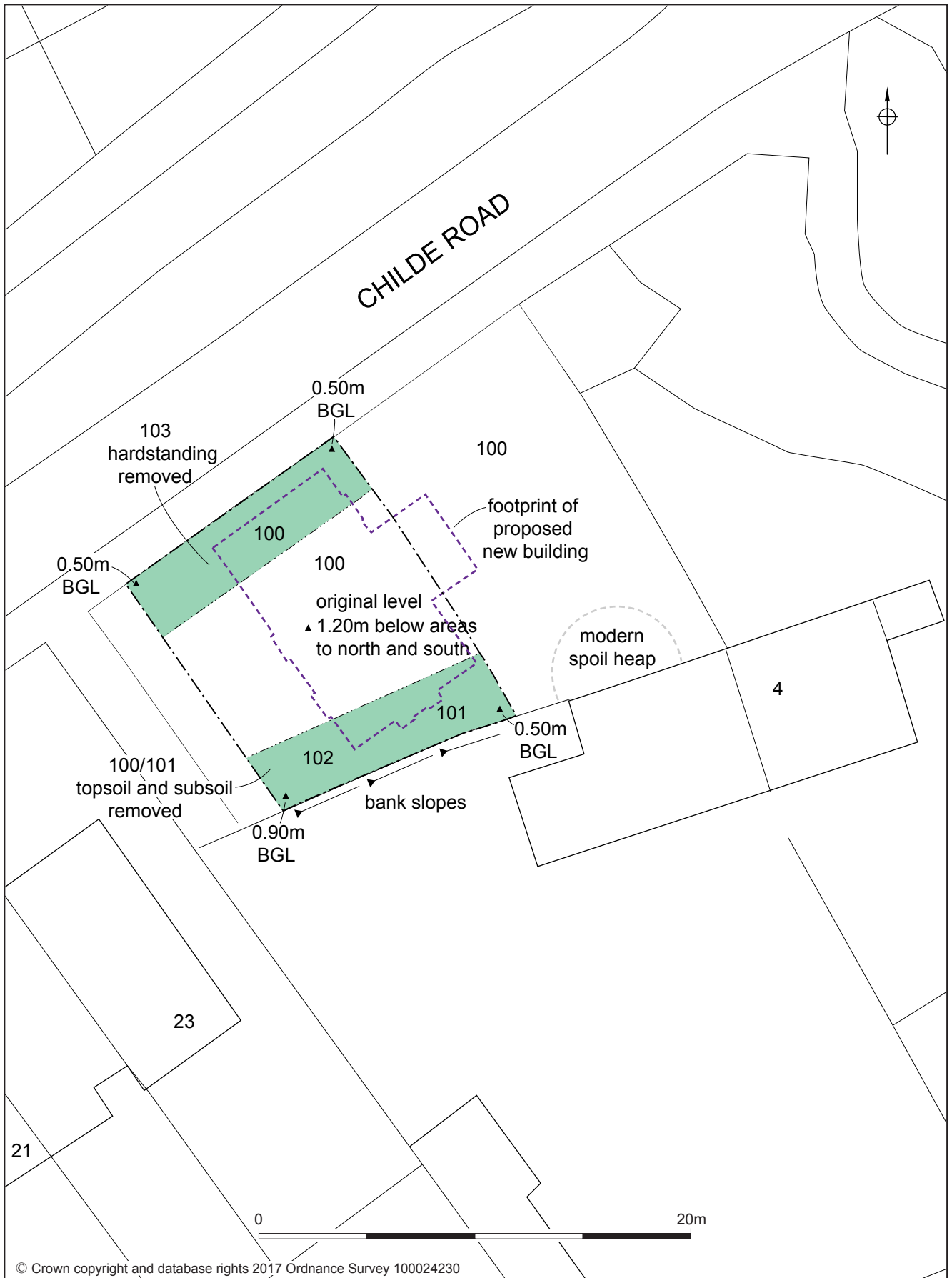
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**Figures**



Location of the site

Figure 1



Trench location plan

Figure 2

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## Plates



*Plate 1 The site prior to excavation; view south-east; 2x 1m scales*



*Plate 2 View south after excavation and levelling; 2x 1m scales*





*Plate 3 South-west bank showing topsoil, made ground and natural ground, below hedgerow; view south; 2 x1m scales*



*Plate 4 View north of north bank showing modern made ground reduced; 2 x1m scales*



*Plate 5 The site after ground reduction and levelling of material; topsoil, made ground and modern spoil heap in south-east corner of site; view east; 2 x1m scales*

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## Appendix 1 Technical information

### The archive (site code: P5209)

The archive consists of:

- 1 Field progress reports AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 20 Digital photographs
- 1 Scale drawings
- 1 Trench record sheets AS41
- 1 Computer disk
- 1 Copy of this report (bound hard copy)

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery,  
Barker Street  
Shrewsbury, SY1 1QH

Tel: 01743 281512

Email: [emma-kate.lanyon@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:emma-kate.lanyon@shropshire.gov.uk)

A copy of the report will be deposited with the appropriate Historic Environment Record (HER).