

Recording of Ladygrove Stone Wall, Lawley Phase 11, Lawley Village, Telford, Shropshire

Worcestershire Archaeology
for Persimmon Homes

April 2020



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LADYGROVE STONE WALL, LAWLEY PHASE 11, LAWLEY, TELFORD, SHROPSHIRE

Wall recording report



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SITE INFORMATION

Site name: Ladygrove Stone Wall, Lawley Phase 11, Lawley Village, Telford, Shropshire

Local planning authority: Telford and Wrekin Council

Planning reference: TWC/2010/0828

Central NGR: SJ 68214 08426

Commissioning client: Persimmon Homes

WA project number: P5832

WA report number: 2806

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Recording of Ladygrove Stone Wall, Lawley Phase 11, Lawley Village, Telford, Shropshire

By Tim Cornah and Tom Vaughan

Summary

Recording of a wall was undertaken at Lawley Phase 11, Lawley Village, Telford, Shropshire (NGR SJ 68214 08426). It was commissioned by Persimmon Homes in advance of proposed residential development. A planning application has been granted subject to a programme of recording of the wall.

The wall is located on the eastern side of and at the north end of an unmetalled track known as Ladygrove. It is considered to date from the 19th century based upon cartographic evidence. It is very likely to have been built by 1885, if not by 1840, although it is not absolutely certain that the boundary shown on the maps is the present standing structure. Given the variety of material used in its construction, no clear sense of the original date is possible from the structure itself. This is particularly true of the bricks which were of a variety of width and firing quality, suggesting the use of easily available, probably second hand or waste, materials. The same is true of the stone to some degree where all sizes were used rather than more expensive single size or shaped blocks. The slag used for the capping can be seen in the same light, given that they are waste material, and could have been brought from any of the nearby iron smelting works, possibly via the local railway.

This lack of specific date or association to any one ironworks potentially reduces the significance, especially when compared with examples of walls with slag content in Ironbridge, which are considered likely to be associated with the Coalbrookdale ironworks, which is of national significance. Other unmoulded slag walls in Ironbridge also use the material throughout the construction, whereas in the Ladygrove wall, it forms the capping alone.

Report

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

Recording of a wall was undertaken by at Lawley Phase 11, Lawley Village, Telford, Shropshire (NGR SJ 68214 08426). It was commissioned by Persimmon Homes in advance of proposed residential development. A planning application has been granted by Telford and Wrekin Council (TWC), subject to a programme of recording of the wall (planning reference TWC/2010/0828).

The wall is an undesignated heritage asset, within the terms used by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). No brief was provided by the archaeological advisor to TWC, but the project conforms to the generality of briefs previously provided. The building recording also conforms to the industry guidelines and standards set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists in *Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (CIfA 2014a).

2 Project Aims

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists defines the aims of building recording as 'a programme of work intended to establish the character, history, dating, form and archaeological development of a specified building' (CIfA 2014a).

3 Project methodology

3.1 Documentary sources consulted

Prior to fieldwork commencing a search was made of the Historic Environment Record (HER) covering records relevant to slag built walls.

Cartographic sources

- 1752, Roques' map of Shropshire
- 1808, Baughs' map of Shropshire
- 1827, Greenwoods' map of Salop
- 1840, Tithe map transcription
- 1st edition, 1885, Ordnance Survey Map, scale 1:10,560
- 1903, Ordnance Survey Map, scale 1:10,560
- 1928, Ordnance Survey Map, scale 1:10,560
- 1938, Ordnance Survey Map, scale 1:10,560

3.2 Fieldwork strategy

The project conformed to the specification for a level 1 survey as defined in the Historic England document *Understanding historic buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (HE 2016). A level 1 record is essentially a basic visual record supplemented by the minimum of information needed to identify the structure's location, age and type.

The record should include the following elements of survey:

Photography

- view or views of the building in its wider setting or landscape

- External appearance of the building, using oblique and right angle shots

Drawings

- Roughly dimensioned sketched plan, section, or elevation

Written account

- A summary of the building's type or purpose, historically and at present, its materials and date (where possible)

3.3 Building analysis

Analysis of the wall was based on the study of existing records such as digitised online, a previous desk-based assessment (Orion Heritage 2019), supplemented by photographs supplied by the client.

4 Site context

4.1 Site location, topography and geology

Ladygrove is straight unmetalled track, aligned north-east to south-west, between Station Road to the north, and Old Office Road to the south, within Lawley, to the west of the centre of Telford. Lawley is an area of modern, largely residential, development, although there are fields alongside much of the south-east side of the track, whilst Lawley Common lies to the north-west. The wall lies at the north end of the track, at c 193m AOD, on ground sloping down to the west.

The underlying geology comprises bedrock of Pennine Middle Coal Measures Formation - mudstone, siltstone and sandstone overlain by superficial glacial till deposits (BGS 2020).

4.2 Historic and archaeological background

The Ladygrove wall is c 4km north of Coalbrookdale, in the Ironbridge Gorge. This is a site of national importance due to its extensive history of iron smelting from the early 18th century onwards. This is relevant to the discussion of slag built walls in the vicinity of this wall, most notably within Ironbridge itself which has a number of extant examples of such structures, most notably the Grade II listed wall on the southern side of the Lloyds (National Heritage List Entry Number: 1207703) which a long stretch of wall constructed from blocks of furnace slag. Each block is approximately 5 ft long by 4 ft high and 4 ft thick, and has a central hole of about 6 inches diameter, which would have been made by being poured into a mould. Similar such slag blocks are also visible on Waterloo Street, with short stretches of wall constructed of un-moulded slag on Madeley Road. Other forms of waste from the local industrial processes were also used for wall construction, such as pottery kiln saggars in a wall in Broseley woods to the south of the Gorge (Young and Trueman 1986).

The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1885 indicates the industrial character of the immediate site area around Ladygrove, with numerous coal mining shafts and an iron works 1.5km to the south which was connected to a railway which ran past the site c 600m to its west, with Lawley bank station c 700m to the north-west.

5 The wall

5.1 Historic information

The earliest map to indicate Ladygrove track with a boundary along the south-east side is the tithe plan of 1840, with a plot noted as "Lucy's Garden" to the east. The nature of the boundary is indeterminate. A building on the western side of the track is noted as a Wesleyan chapel. On the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1885 this is noted as a school, which remained until demolition before 1928. The 1885 map also shows the boundary in the position of the present wall as solid line, denoting a wall or fence. To its east was a small east to west aligned building, presumably a dwelling, which remained on the map of 1938.

5.2 Wall description

The wall (Plate 1 to Plate 7) is aligned in a broadly north-east to south-west direction on the eastern side of Ladygrove track, at its northern junction with Station Road. It was built primarily of undressed rubble stonework with inconsistent coursing, using a large variety of stone sizes. A benchmark has been carved into one of the stones at the northern end (Plate 2), registered at a 193.36m AOD. The wall is sporadically covered in dense patches of vegetation.

Brick of varying width and colour were used at structural key points such as its end in order to gain a squared and neat edge. Whilst these were more typically laid in horizontal coursing, they were of both whole and partial bricks, with most laid stretcher along the direction of the wall and others across with the headers showing. Occasionally, some bricks were vertically placed. Brick appears to have been the predominant material used in repair as there were a number of patched areas in the wall. It is possible that some of these were blocked vertical openings (Plate 4 and Plate 5), although these were not consistently vertical and much more likely to be patch repairs.

Grey slag blocks were used as a capping material along the top of the wall. These were irregular and unmoulded pieces, of varying sizes although often of sufficient width to span the wall head.

The visible bonding appears to be concrete, although this is considered likely to be a later repointing.

6 Discussion

The stretch of wall on the eastern side of Ladygrove is considered to date from the 19th century based upon cartographic evidence. It is very likely to have been built by 1885, if not by 1840, although it is not absolutely certain that the boundary shown on the map is the present standing structure. Given the variety of material used in its construction, no clear sense of the original date is possible from the structure itself. This is particularly true of the bricks which were of a variety of width and firing quality, suggesting the use of easily available inexpensive, probably second hand or waste, materials. The same is true of the stone to some degree where all sizes were used rather than more expensive single size or shaped blocks. The slag used for the capping can be seen in the same light, given that they are waste material, and could have been brought from any of the nearby iron smelting works, possibly via the local railway.

This lack of specific date or association to any one ironworks potentially reduces the significance, especially when compared with examples of walls with slag content in Ironbridge, which are considered likely to be associated with the Coalbrookdale ironworks, which is of national significance. The most notable of these in Ironbridge had blocks of slag poured into moulds and is Grade II listed. Other unmoulded slag walls in Ironbridge also use the material throughout the construction, whereas in the Ladygrove wall, it forms the capping alone.

7 Afterword

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved, although a fuller record would have been possible after clearance of vegetation and a site visit by Worcestershire Archaeology staff. This was not possible due to health and safety considerations during the Coronavirus outbreak.

8 Project personnel

The report was collated and drafted by Tim Cornah, ACIfA. The report was edited and completed by Tom Vaughan, MCIfA, who also managed the project.

9 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for the successful conclusion of the project: Kate Mackenzie (Engineer, Persimmon Homes West Midlands), Hugh Hannaford (Senior Archaeological Advisor, Shropshire Council) and Giles Carey (Historic Environment Records Officer, Shropshire Council).

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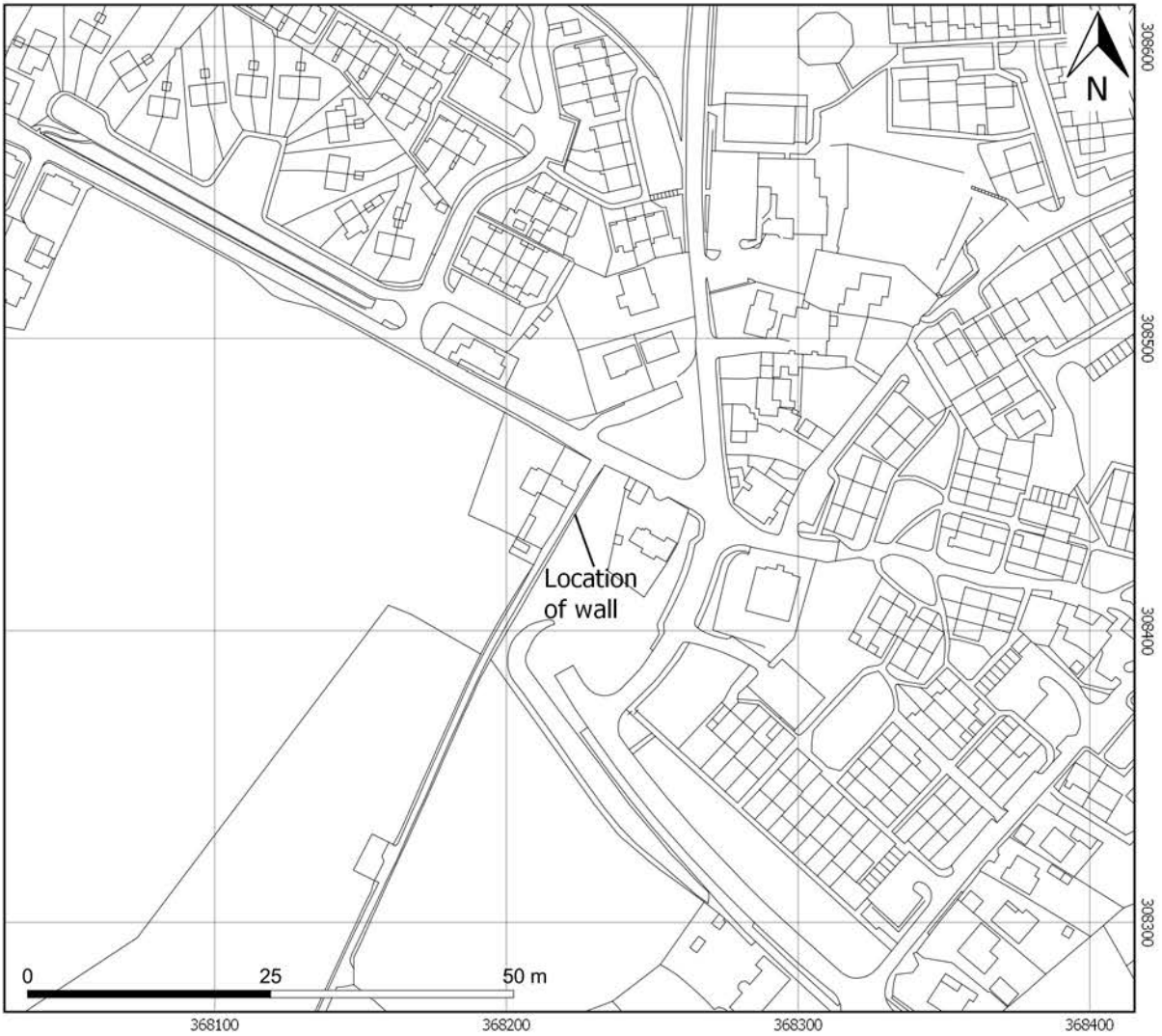
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Figure



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Location of the site and wall

Figure 1

Plates



Plate 1 The wall, south end, looking north-east



Plate 2 The wall, north end, at the junction of Ladygrove and Station Road, looking south-east



Plate 3 The wall, detail of south end, looking north-east



Plate 4 The wall, looking south-east



Plate 5 The wall, detail, looking south-east



Plate 6 The wall, looking south



Plate 7 The wall showing some deterioration in its condition, looking south-east