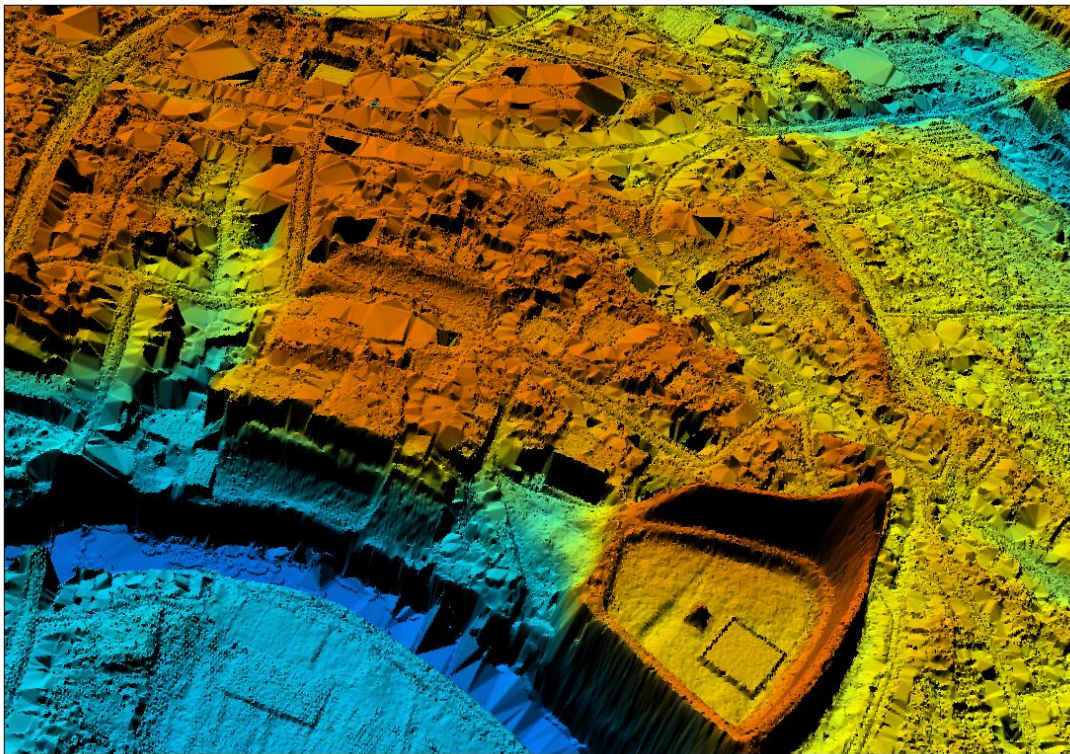




# AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH FRAMEWORK for the CITY of HEREFORD



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# 1: INTRODUCTION

## Summary; the scope and purpose of this document

This research framework is a brief review of current understanding of the archaeology of the city of Hereford – its significance, its potential, and, above all, its gaps and its limitations, with a view to the identification of research priorities for the immediate future.

Because views of and understanding of the city's past can potentially change with every new excavation, the present version of this document should be regarded as a summary based on current knowledge which will necessarily become out of date and required revision – its future redundancy will be an indicator of the success of continuing archaeological research. For this reason, this research framework is primarily intended as an internet resource, to be viewed on line on the ***Herefordshire through time*** website, where it can be subject to periodic review and updating.

The format used for this document is primarily period-based, with particular research priorities considered for the prehistoric, Roman, Saxon, medieval and post-medieval periods in turn. Each issue is briefly stated and discussed and then summarised as a numbered 'research priority' (***RP*** in bold italic type); ***RPs*** 1, 2, 3 and so on therefore referring to the remoter prehistoric period and not to general priorities or policies. Nevertheless, some problems are common to all periods, arising most often through lack of investigation in some particular part of the city. These are grouped towards the end of this document as 'general themes'. Finally, the section entitled 'neighbourhood research agendas' gathers together in brief summary form the outstanding research issues that are most directly relevant to each of the twenty five *townscape character areas* discussed in the 2010 *Central Hereford historic townscape characterisation*, to which readers are referred for further information.

## The background to this document

The immediate background to the production of this Research Framework lies in the English Heritage-funded *Hereford Urban Archaeological Strategy Project*. This commenced in July 2006 with the Hereford Urban Archaeological Database (UAD) following a long period of discussion and consideration of design options stretching back to 1994-5 and the work of the *Central Marches Historic Towns Survey*, the extensive urban survey of Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire (HWCC/CHAU 1995). The original design, which first expressed the need for a research framework for the city, remained unimplemented through the 1990s. A management review of Herefordshire towns in 2001 identified production of an urban archaeological strategy for Hereford, based on a UAD and subsequent resource assessment, as the leading item on the urban agenda (Ray 2001, 35).

The UAD project was redesigned in early 2006 (Baker 2006) and the bulk of the database work undertaken in 2006-7. The 2006 revised project design for the UAD identified the need for a subsequent assessment stage that would comprise two principal elements: an archaeological resource characterisation, and a research framework (Baker 2006, section 10). The resource characterisation would itself have two components: a historic townscape characterisation to describe and analyse the present urban landscape; and an archaeological deposit model to identify the presence, absence, depth and type of buried archaeological deposits. This approach had first been tried in the City of Worcester, as an alternative to the commissioning of a major academic volume that would have contained a (rather briefer) research agenda and resource characterisation. Previously, the English Heritage Urban Archaeological Strategy programme had resulted in the production of 'archaeological assessment' volumes for two towns – Cirencester (the pilot or prototype, published as Darvill and Gerrard 1994) and St Alban's (Niblett and Thompson 2005). Both volumes contained elements along these lines. The Cirencester volume contained a section on archaeological 'sensitivity' which surveyed the town, area by area, looking at a combination of depth and preservation of archaeological deposit combined with the known or predicted 'archaeological interest' of that deposit. The (longer) St Alban's volume similarly considered depth of deposit, and factors influencing deposit formation and survival, and raised the question of future research imperatives separately, though very briefly.

For Worcester it was felt that the resource characterisation element should give equal weight to buried deposits and to townscape, as the 'above-ground' archaeological resource, and one which had by then in Worcester received some academic attention independently (Baker and Holt 2004). Moreover it was felt that the then recent appearance of two major volumes on the city, Baker & Holt's 2004 study of Church institutions and urban growth, and the Deansway excavations volume (Dalwood and Edwards 2004) raised a large number of research issues that were in urgent need of systematising, codifying, and embedding in archaeological policy while removing, for the moment, the need for a large-scale published synthesis.

This is broadly the situation that currently (2013) exists in Hereford. The two elements of the resource characterisation process were completed in February 2010 (Baker 2010 a and b) in the form of a deposit model and a historic townscape characterisation. Meanwhile, the broader archaeological picture is one of relatively complete and up-to-date publication, with the last (fourth) city excavations volume published in 2002 (Thomas and Boucher 2002) and at least interim 'grey-literature' reporting of most major excavations that have taken place subsequent to that date. A fifth city excavations volume is currently in preparation (Pikes, forthcoming). The 2002 volume also contained extensive discussion of progress on a variety of research issues since Shoesmith's 1982 city excavations volume (no.2) and, though not expressed as a 'research agenda' as such, it contains the material from which such an agenda may be formulated.

Work on the present document may be said to have begun in earnest with a seminar, the Hereford Archaeological Research Framework Seminar, hosted in the Museum Learning & Resource centre, Friar Street, Hereford, by Herefordshire Heritage Services on January 25<sup>th</sup> 2012. The seminar was attended by staff from Herefordshire Archaeology, Herefordshire Heritage Services, English Heritage, the leading archaeological contractors and consultants operating in the area, and by individuals with knowledge and experience of working in the city. The format adopted was for a speaker to summarise the state of knowledge of a number of topics within period or specialist areas and to seek the views of audience members on issues arising from these. The headings presented to the seminar are fairly closely those that appear here, and the document incorporates aspects of the discussions that took place during the seminar. Individuals' comments are referenced in the form (name, *seminar*) in the text.

References to other research frameworks are in blue. References to archaeological investigations (Sites & Monuments Record 'archaeological recording events') and monuments are in bold type in brackets: **(00000)** with recent event numbers prefixed **EHE**.

## Abbreviations

CHAU	City of Hereford Archaeological Unit
HWCC	Hereford & Worcester County Council
LiDAR	Light detection & ranging
SMR	Sites & Monuments Record
UAD	Urban Archaeological Database
WMRRFA	West Midlands Regional Research Framework for Archaeology

## 3. Research aims, objectives and scope

The underlying purpose of this document is to inform and enable the effective management of change through the planning system, by guiding the development of the knowledge base that underpins it. And, like the wider *West Midlands Regional Research Framework for Archaeology*, to which it refers, it will assist in providing 'a proper means of selecting and targeting local...priorities in order to justify curatorial policies and decisions' (*WMRRFA website*). The research framework will, it is hoped, provide reasoned justification for curatorial decisions, but not just *post facto*: the comprehensive re-consideration of the archaeological record, thematically, chronologically and geographically, being an essential part of the assessment process and an essential key to the long-term informed management of the archaeological resource.

Its objectives may be summarised as follows:

- to provide reasoned justifications for curatorial decisions

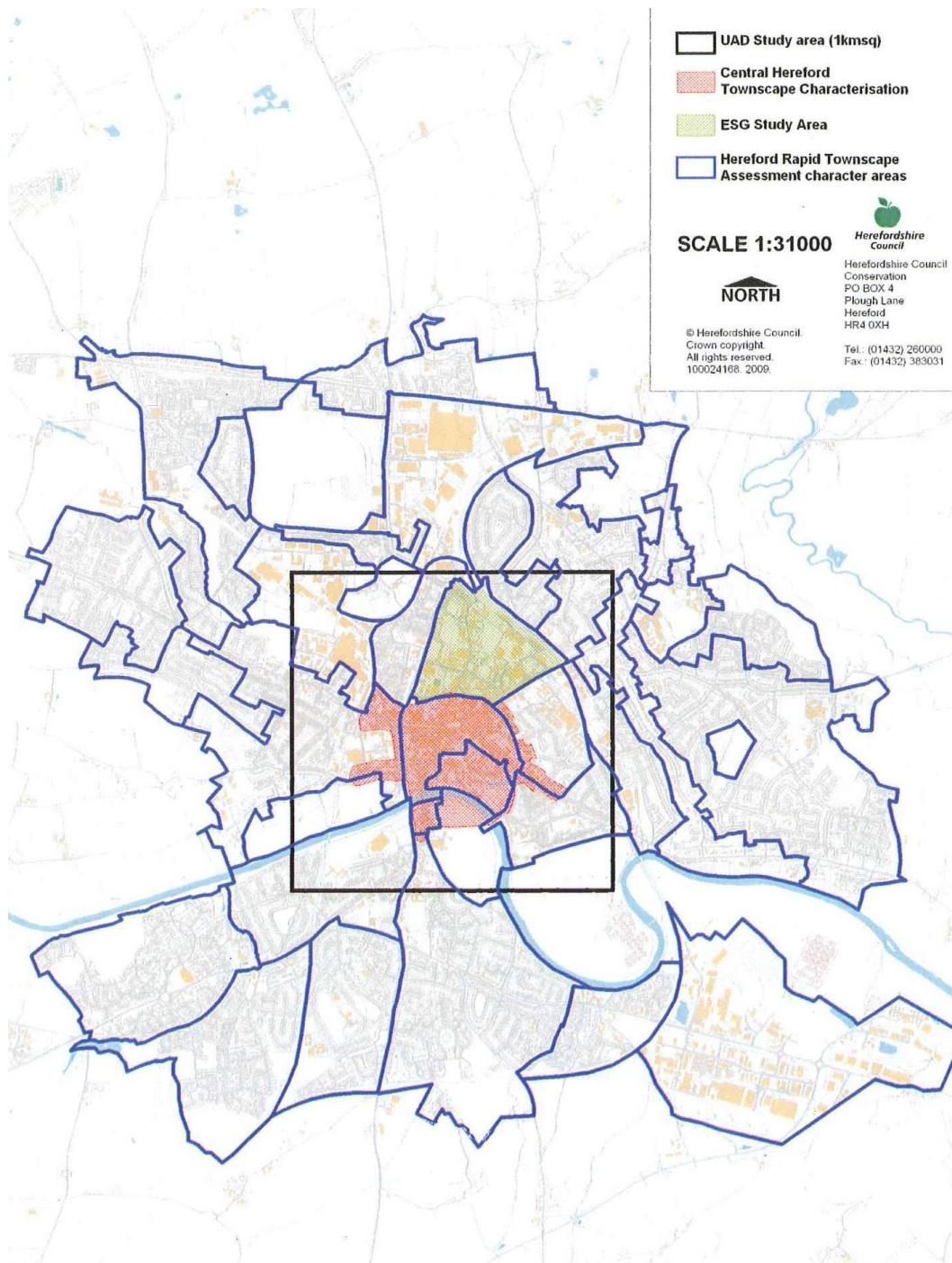
- to provide a rapid overview of archaeological research issues to brief external specialists and consultants
- to assess the archaeological data held on the UAD for lacunae that need to be addressed.
- to assess the archaeological data held on the UAD in terms of its significance, expressed locally, regionally and nationally
- to support initiatives to make information on Hereford's past more widely available

## Scope

The scope of this report may best be defined, first, in terms of the geographical area it covers, secondly, with reference to the periods it covers, and lastly, but perhaps most importantly, in terms of what is meant by the terms 'archaeology' and 'the archaeological resource'.

Geographical scope is best defined at two levels of resolution. At the higher, more detailed, level, the focus is the UAD study area, the one-kilometre Ordnance Survey grid square that contains the medieval walled city and its pre-industrial suburbs. However, it is also necessary in some instances to selectively widen the scope of the enquiry into the city's hinterland, for example in discussing the town fields and suburban infrastructure (approach roads and bridges) of the medieval and late pre-Conquest periods, and outlying monuments relating to the city's immediate environs and its ancient, pre-Conquest, Liberty, for example traditional sites for public assemblies. The city's wider economic hinterland, defined in terms of, for example, patterns of recorded trade debts or burgess recruitment, is outside the scope of this document.





1. The City of Hereford, showing the UAD one-kilometre study area, the main focus of the research framework, together with the areas covered by three recent characterisation studies. *(Not to scale as printed)*

The chronological scope of the research framework is again defined at two levels of resolution. The Hereford UAD had a post-medieval cut-off date of c.1800, reflecting Hereford's European significance as a place where evidence for urbanism during the middle Saxon period has been extensively explored, and its national significance as an important Saxon, medieval and early modern regional centre, and this has been adopted for much of the material considered by the Research Framework. Nevertheless, many significant episodes in the development of the city took place after this date and some at least are susceptible to archaeological investigation and will be



considered below. The single most important example of this is argued by this writer to be the state of the city – in terms of issues such as population density, sanitation and the condition of housing – addressed by the 1854 Hereford Improvement Act, which effectively created much of the infrastructure necessary for the successful growth of the city in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Finally, the word ‘archaeology’ and the term ‘archaeological resource’ are taken to refer to the *totality* of the historic environment, the physical remains of the past, in whatever form they occur: buried archaeological deposits, historic buildings, and the urban landscape that contains them

## A short history of archaeological research in Hereford

The serious historical study of Hereford began, as in so many English cities, in the later 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Two works stand out. The first, the much shorter of the two, was John Price’s *An historical account of the City of Hereford* of 1796, with a strong topographical bias but in essence a popular work of history. The second work appeared within a decade, John Duncumb’s *Collections towards the history and antiquities of the County of Hereford*, the first parts of which (it was never completed) were published in 1804. Hereford is treated at length over 600 pages in part 2 of the first volume, and follows a format widely familiar from other towns: etymology, major historical events, government, customs and privileges, before turning in chapter 3 to a description of Hereford ‘ancient and modern’ and to ecclesiastical history in chapter 4. While the topographical chapter is invaluable – covering parishes, roads, chapels, the bridge, houses, streets, suburbs and ancient institutions – its perspective is inevitably historically based, with the physical remains of the past considered largely under the heading of architectural history.

The early years of the Woolhope Naturalists’ Field Club (founded 1851-2), the equivalent in Herefordshire of the county archaeological societies springing up all over England, largely by-passed the city in favour of the rural, mostly prehistoric and Roman, heritage but even this was very much secondary to the natural environment: urban archaeological concerns would have to wait until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In fact ‘urban archaeology’ in a recognisably modern sense began in Hereford outside the ranks of the county’s learned society and academia. The leading figure here is Walter Pilley, confectioner and antiquarian, who in 1899 published a short article in the *Hereford Times*, ‘The first town of Hereford’, illustrated with a map, in which, for the first time, he reconstructed the perimeter of the Saxon town based on his observations on building sites and on topographical evidence. His work was followed up (with appropriate acknowledgements) and given greater academic weight by Alfred Watkins in his 1920 paper ‘The King’s Ditch of the City of Hereford’ in the *Woolhope transactions*. In brief, the Pilley/Watkins model proposed that the pre-Conquest defended town was smaller than that enclosed by the medieval city walls, having a northern perimeter marked by parallel streets: on the outside of the former defences, Eign Gate, High Town, St Owen Street, and on the inside, West Street and East Street. Watkins also drew attention to the

'King's Ditch' west of Broad Street, a natural defile running north-south within the pre-Conquest enclosure, suggesting that this marked the western boundary of an even earlier enclosure whose opposite side lay along the eastern side of the Cathedral Close.

Apart from a 1940 paper by local archaeologist George Marshall arguing for a Roman origin for the enclosure with its west side based on the King's Ditch, and reports on small-scale excavations by F G Heys and J F L Norwood, also following up Watkins' King's Ditch paper, there was little further progress on these issues until the mid-1960s. Then, in response to plans for an inner relief road, largely following the medieval defences but in a couple of locations cutting through them, excavations on a number of sites began under the direction of Frank Noble, Helen Sutermeister, Stan Stanford and Ron Shoesmith. Exploratory trenches on the western defences in 1967 by Noble and Shoesmith were followed the next year by the major Victoria Street area excavation by Philip Rahtz which revealed the full defensive sequence for the first time, with five phases of rampart and seven phases of occupation, one of which consisted of a pair of corn drying ovens, of an aceramic phase but of probable 7<sup>th</sup>- 8<sup>th</sup>-century date, sealed by the earliest gravel bank.

These excavations, together with Shoesmith's Berrington Street area excavations of 1972-6, earned Hereford its place in the archaeology and history text-books of the time (e.g. Biddle 1976) as an example of both early Mercian public fortification – and town planning, as a consequence of the excavation of two parallel middle Saxon streets and the observation of their relationship to the town plan as a whole. They also led directly to the foundation of the City of Hereford Archaeological Committee, together with its operational arm, the City of Hereford Archaeological Unit, in 1974 under the direction of Ron Shoesmith with City Council and central government funding. The investigations on the city defences were published as a single volume by Shoesmith in 1982 and the model formulated then for the creation of a planned grid of streets and their subsequent enclosure within defences that were extended and modified on a number of occasions, still – for the most part – remains the orthodox archaeological understanding of the way the city has developed, reiterated most recently by Thomas and Boucher (2002, 8-11). Very baldly summarised, the main outline of this model is as follows:

- The origins of Hereford remain enigmatic. There is now an increasing body of evidence for Roman activity, including buildings and occupation of some kind in the vicinity of the present cathedral.
- c.676AD. The probable foundation of the cathedral. The recent orthodoxy has been that it was founded next to a crossroads at the junction of a north-south route (approximating to Broad Street) heading for the 'Palace Ford' across the Wye, and an east-west route represented by King Street and Castle Street. Contemporaneous burials were taking place on the St Guthlac's site (later Castle Green) to the east.

- Late 8<sup>th</sup> century/early 9<sup>th</sup> century. Undefended settlement developed in the Victoria Street/Berrington Street area, possibly within a local planned framework of north-south streets, one excavated west of Berrington Street, the latter implied by excavation to be of the same date.
- 9<sup>th</sup> century. The first defended town, its gravel and clay rampart and ditch demonstrated by excavation on the west and north sides but the putative eastern side returning down the eastern side of the Cathedral Close remaining unproven.
- c.900AD. The town was refortified with a turf, clay and timber rampart extended well to the east (proved by excavations at Cantilupe Street) to include the St Guthlac's site. The defences were strengthened by stone walls later in the 10<sup>th</sup> century.
- Late 10<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> century. There is evidence from both the west and east sides of the city for the neglect or abandonment of the defences before an episode of refurbishment involving the re-excavation of the ditch to the west and the provision of a timber fence or palisade on the east. These may be associated with the documented refortification of the city in 1055. Recent C14 dates from the Bishop's Meadow Row Ditch south of the river suggest it may date from the same episode.
- The castle is built following the Norman Conquest. From the 1070s a new market place (High Town) was established outside the old defences, and this rapidly became the new commercial core of the city
- Late 12<sup>th</sup> century. New defences were built to enclose the newly-developed High Town area, re-using the western and eastern sides of the old perimeter but establishing a new line further north. At first of earthwork and timber construction, this line was fortified in stone from the 13<sup>th</sup> century on

## Previous research agendas

Research agendas for Hereford – though not referred to as such at the time – have previously appeared in print on two occasions. The first was in Ron Shoesmith's *The City of Hereford, archaeology and development* of 1974. This influential document was published by WEMRAC (the West Midlands Rescue Archaeology Committee) and was an example of the type of publication, common at that time, known as an 'implications report'. These generally spelt out what was already known about the archaeology of a place, usually a town, and the likely implications in terms of the loss of information of further, or already planned, redevelopment. Thus Shoesmith's report rehearsed the general documentary history of the city, the advances made in particular directions (mostly on the defences) by archaeological research, particularly in the preceding twenty years, the 'potential and problems'

remaining in the city and finally by the administrative arrangements then in place, and the urgent need for further archaeological provision in the face of the impending redevelopment of the northern quarters of the medieval intramural city. Section 4, 'the archaeological potential and problems of Hereford', was short (one page) but listed a number of very general research issues that were couched in terms of being potentially answerable by archaeology, and by archaeology alone. These can be briefly summarised as follows:

- The potential of archaeology as a source of information for many undocumented aspects of everyday life in the pre-Industrial centuries
- The potential of archaeology as a source of information on the growth and development of the city prior to the earliest map (John Speed's) of 1610
- The already-demonstrable success of archaeology in unravelling the pre-Conquest defensive sequence and finding contemporaneous domestic buildings, putting Hereford 'in the forefront of current research on Anglo-Saxon town problems' and highlighting the importance of the examination of 'every site threatened by redevelopment [which] must be examined as it becomes available'
- The additional archaeological potential of the city arising from the lack of large-scale redevelopment prior to the mid-1970s
- The potential of archaeological excavations to elucidate specific problems such as the growth and decline of Hereford's importance as a communications hub, and as a religious and commercial centre, and the importance of a dated sequence of pottery for the study of other sites in the hinterland

Section 5 of *The City of Hereford, archaeology and development* went on to examine proposals for future developments on a number of sites around the city, examining the potential of each for solving particular problems, for example: the redevelopment of the NW quarter and the potential there for exploring Saxon extramural occupation; the Maylords Orchards area (NE quarter) and its potential for revealing the medieval Jewry; or the potential of work on the City Arms Hotel (now Barclay's Bank) at the head of Broad Street for revealing the Saxon northern defences.

The second and most recent statement of some of the outstanding problems remaining in the city formed part of the *Hereford City Excavations* volume 4 by Alan Thomas and Andy Boucher in 2002. Their chapter 9, 'Evolving interpretations', with contributions by the historian David Whitehead, explored a wide range of detailed issues and questions that had been formulated and refined over the preceding twenty-eight years, in the context of the major body of work undertaken by the City of Hereford Archaeological Unit in those years and, in particular, subsequent to the publications by Shoesmith on Castle Green (1980), work on and close to the defences (1982) and the excavated

artefacts (1985). The issues debated by Thomas, Boucher and Whitehead are still very much current a decade later even where some partial answers have now been found, or the original question reformulated to take account of new evidence or a new perspective. In brief, the main issues they raised can be summarised as follows:

#### The prehistoric and Roman periods

- The authors noted that work between 1976 and 1990 had concentrated on the northern half of the intramural city, away from the centre and its south (the cathedral area and the riverside) where the earliest occupation on the city site was most likely to be found.
- Flints occurred widely in residual contexts in excavations though a concentration on the south bank on the Sack Warehouse site was significant

#### The Saxon period

- While little further evidence of early or middle-Saxon occupation had been found since that published by Shoesmith in the early 80s, the question of the existence of a continuous, ancient, east-west routeway extending through the city just north of the cathedral, was raised by excavations along King Street. These found the boggy ground of the north-south 'King's Ditch' feature to have been crossed by timber causeway, a corduroy road, at a date between the late 10<sup>th</sup> and mid-12<sup>th</sup> century but not, apparently, any earlier
- Nearby, however, the Mappa Mundi excavation site at the west end of the cathedral church, had found the edge of an area of pre-Conquest metalling, extending north-south and interpreted as the edge of a wider Broad Street, on its way south to connect to a ford downstream of the present bridge
- The question of the construction of the bridge was explored, together with the possibility that it was linked with the westward expansion of the ecclesiastical precinct over the approach to the ford
- The possibility of the re-planning of the river crossing approaches on the north bank – including the development of Bridge Street and St Nicholas' Church – being matched by the development of the St Martin's Street suburb and chapel on the south bank was raised
- The status of the area of the Deen's Court excavations (south of St Nicholas Street), apparently unoccupied in the pre-Conquest period, raised questions about the internal geography of this part of the *burh* (borough) and the probability that open land was enclosed within the defences

- The hinterland. Understanding the relationship of the Saxon settlement to its immediate hinterland was inhibited by a lack of environmental work on early soils around the *burh*. The role of grazing in the *burh* was examined, and the monopolising of the rich meadowlands of the Lugg floodplain by the king, bishop and canons was noted
- Extramural occupation, in the form of boundary ditches and late 10<sup>th</sup>-century and later post-holes and pits, was discussed in the context of the development of the Eign Gate area, and the foundation of All Saints Church, to the north of the *burh* perimeter.

### The medieval period

- The creation of the new post-Conquest market place of High Town and its subsequent development is reflected in the archaeological record by pottery of the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries in Bewell Street, its eastern end also known as *Frenschmanestrete*. Burgages on Widemarsh Street were bisected for construction of the new defences of the late 12<sup>th</sup> century. The block of housing between Bewell Street and Eign Gate is suggested to have originated as market-place encroachment within a much widened space.
- To the north of High Town on Maylord Street, a lack of evidence for settlement prior to c.1150 may be a reflection of a lack of early activity right at the back of the plot series. Later activity in this area was industrial. Late 11<sup>th</sup>-century pottery was found further east along Commercial Street but excavated features on the frontage were of uncertain character.
- The defences. Excavations between 1976 and 2000 added little new material to that published by Shoesmith in 1982
- The South Bank. Settlement of this suburb was thought to have begun with the pre-Conquest church of St Martin, and to have been enclosed within the Bishop's Meadow Rowe Ditch in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century, at the same time as the rest of the city was enclosed. Later activity in the area – from the Sack Warehouse site (a peripheral riverside site) – appeared to be primarily industrial, with evidence of iron working, pottery and tile manufacture

### The post-medieval period

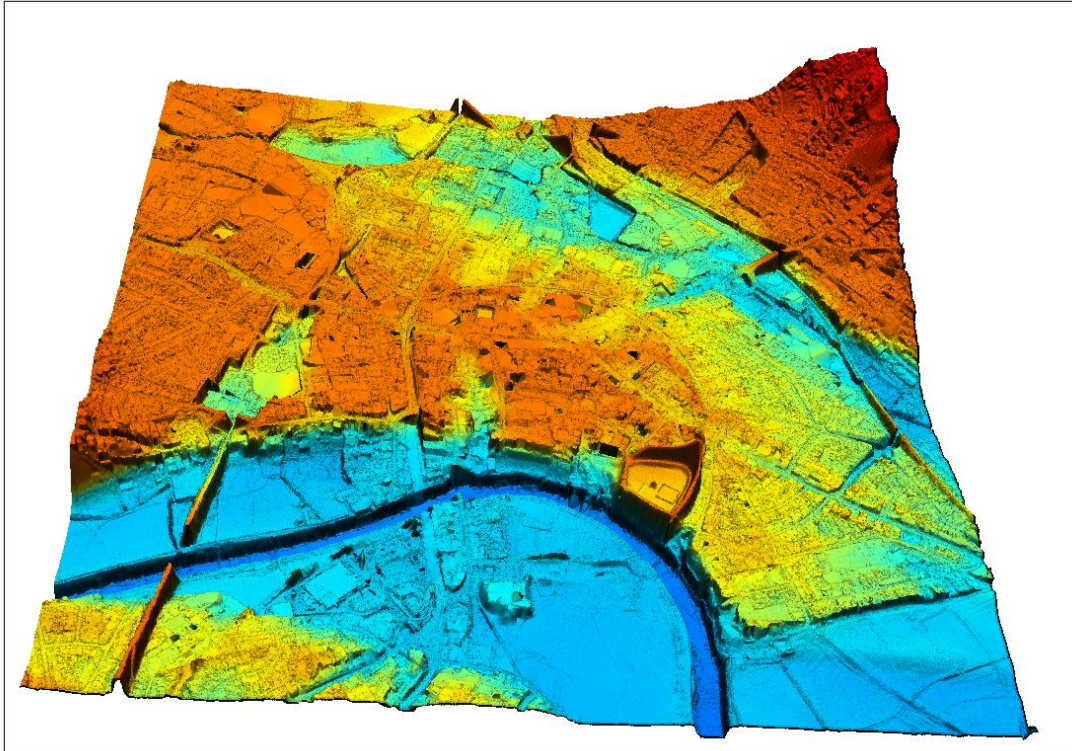
- The value of archaeological work carried out on this period was identified in terms of documenting the process of infill behind established frontages, and identifying more sudden changes in land use in a variety of contexts, for example the establishment of a hospital on a former commercial and residential frontage.



- Standing buildings were however seen as a resource of great value for the period. 'The study of such buildings and their status in conjunction with the buried remains was identified as a major aim of future archaeological work on the post-medieval city'.

## 2: PERIOD STUDIES

### 2.1 The Prehistoric period (Keith Ray)



2. LiDAR image of the site of Hereford with the Wye and its floodplain to the south, the Eign (Widemarsh) Brook and its floodplain to the north, and Aylestone Hill beyond to the north-east. In the south-east corner of the image, the Bartonsham Rowe Ditch forms a straight and abrupt boundary to the floodplain (Environment Agency Geomatics Team)

#### Overview

The centre of the historic city of Hereford occupies a broad gravel terrace overlooking the river Wye from the north. The digital terrain model makes clear the character and the potential of the location for pre-urban settlement, in that in addition to the resources of the Wye floodplain the Eign Brook provides a parallel floodplain to the north where it flows east and then southwards to join the Wye below Aylestone Hill. This tributary brook also in effect makes the terrace also a peninsula of higher ground, with lower areas to north, east and south. A steeply descending and narrow north-south coombe, later known as the King's Ditch, exists to the west of the Cathedral and Bishop's Palace, and once extended (all the while becoming shallower in profile) as far north as West Street. This served further, and subtly, to isolate the 'promontory', although a considerable distance of apparently quite level ground separated its most northerly point from the Eign Brook valley to the north.

The environs were at least visited in remoter prehistory, although the first indications for post-Glacial settlement are of Mesolithic date. The earliest recorded archaeological 'context' dates from c.3500BC in the Early Neolithic period, and the first settlement activity is currently attested c.2000BC just to the north of the city centre. This Early Bronze Age activity is followed by indications of locally intensive activity in the wider environs of the city through to the early 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC. A single find represents activity in the period just before the Roman invasion.

## **PALAEOLITHIC**

A single biface handaxe of elongated oval form and worked from an igneous (volcanic ash) raw material was recovered from a depth of 0.80m at 16, Seaton Avenue, Tupsley (not far from Folly Lane, Aylestone Hill, a kilometre east of the city centre) in 1977 (**2367**). This is of Lower Palaeolithic date in the Middle Pleistocene period. In common with similar finds from Warwickshire and Worcestershire, it is thought likely to date from the warm phase before the Anglian glaciation, so may fit within the bracket 524,000 - 478,000 yrs BP (Lang and Keen, 2005; Lang and Buteux, 2007). It is likely, however, to have been discarded in deposits that were re-sorted during the Anglian and even also the subsequent Devensian glaciations. It does nonetheless complement the three other finds of Palaeolithic handaxes from elsewhere in the county.

***RP1 The discovery of the Tupsley handaxe emphasises the possibility that the gravels underneath Hereford may contain further artefacts of Lower, or of Middle Palaeolithic, date***

## **MESOLITHIC**

Flint microliths of likely Later Mesolithic (c.6,000-4,000BC) date were retrieved as residual finds in later contexts during the excavations at Berrington Street and at Victoria Street (**447, 391**), and at the latter site a (claimed) Mesolithic point was also found. A bladelet core of likely Late Mesolithic date was recovered (along with a burnt blade) from a probable late 14<sup>th</sup>-century pit at the Trinity Almshouses site on the north side of Commercial Street just within the former Bye Street gate (Thomas and Boucher, 2002, 42-4; McNabb and Roberts, *infra*, 150 cat. 10+11).

From this limited data, it is clear that there was Mesolithic activity at more than one location within the 'promontory', and casual mention of further such residual finds indicates the likelihood that some at least of these finds may be associated with in-situ traces of occupation which is inevitably going to be of ephemeral character (stake-holes etc). Such contexts are going to be best preserved where early land-surfaces have been preserved either in highly localised hollows or where later peat deposits may have sealed the relevant levels over larger areas, as recorded at King Street, and as dated to the Bronze Age in the area to the east of Widemarsh Street and north of the former Blackfriars monastery.

*(NB The discussion of stray or redeposited finds of worked flints is derived from published reports, and not from a systematic trawl of 'grey literature' reports. Nor have finds from recent excavations that have not been followed up yet even by the production of 'grey literature' reports been accessed either).*

***RP2 There is some likelihood of discovering in situ if not entirely intact later Mesolithic occupation traces at sites in or near the city centre. Almost by definition, these will be of regional significance***

## **NEOLITHIC**

Residual finds of worked flint blades and scrapers have been made during excavations at several sites in and around the city centre. A flint blade, scrapers and flakes were recovered among a larger assemblage including flint working debris at the Victoria Street site. Two flakes in two different (redeposited) contexts were nonetheless found in pristine condition at each of the two Tesco sites at the west end of Bewell Street (**35290, 44358**), and a flake and a blade were found at Wall Street (Tesco exitway) adjacent to the inner ring road and just to the west of Widemarsh Street (Thomas and Boucher, 2002, 27-39; McNabb and Ashton, *infra*, 149 cat. 6+7; 150 cat. 45+46). The latter needs to be considered in reference to the discoveries of later Neolithic/Early Bronze Age material from the Old Cattle Market site (albeit at the northern end; see below).

A total of 24 flint flakes and 4 blade fragments were retrieved from the two trenches excavated in 1985-6 at the Sack Warehouse site directly upon the south bank of the Wye just to the east of Old Wye Bridge (**47268, 34322**). These were either found in the riverine silts, or in features dug into them (Thomas and Boucher, 2002, 54-7; McNabb, *op. cit.*). They are matched by finds from the year 2000 evaluation project at the Asda (Causeway Farm) site just upstream (**36592**). Here, further worked flints were found in alluvial deposits, and a single pit/shallow scoop sealed within a sequence of alluvial deposits produced several large and unabraded sherds of 'plain bowl' pottery and many cereal grains. A mixed charcoal sample from the same feature produced a radiocarbon date of 3800-3510 cal BC (95% probability; WK-9688). Just to the west, also south of the Wye, a Neolithic polished axe was found in Hunderton (**8357**).

Together, these finds beneath the city centre and along the south bank of the Wye indicate a significant level of Neolithic activity in and around the city. This suggests the at least periodic and episodic use of the riverside and adjacent areas in both the fourth and the third millennia BC.

***RP3 Priority should be given to establishing the character of any traces of in-situ Neolithic occupation (for instance in association with pits and ditches) wherever flintwork is found in any concentration, and especially***

***on the floodplains of the Wye and Eign, and in the vicinity of the 'King's Ditch'***

***RP4 The possible existence of a ditch (or segments thereof) cutting off the promontory between the Eign and Wye across a level area of c.600m in length extending from the vicinity of West Street to an embayment of the Eign floodplain to the east of the football stadium, should be tested (such a feature need not be of Neolithic date)***

## **BRONZE AGE**

From the city centre, some of the individual flint flakes already noted may be of later third or early second millennium date, not least since there is a fragmentary barbed and tanged arrowhead likely to be of this period among the Victoria Street finds. Another similar arrowhead was found at Cantilupe Street (again in a secondary context: **361**). More certainly from the Early Bronze Age was a pit containing a Beaker sherd from the Old Cattle Market field evaluation of 2007 close to the western end of Blackfriars Street (**44131**). A series of pits directly across that street to the north, found in a subsequent evaluation on the site of the new Hereford United south stand (Children 2009) may also be of this date.

The basal peats at King Street (**44603**), and the broad peat deposits at the former West Mercia Police training ground east of Widemarsh Street (**44627**), are broadly dated to the Middle Bronze Age, around the mid-second millennium BC. However, no cultural remains have yet been found in direct association with, or beneath, these deposits. A paved/cobbled surface was found sealed beneath mixed deposits at an unspecified depth to the south of Station Approach under what is now a supermarket car park (**30326**). This could possibly represent a trackway similar to the street discovered beneath Maylord's Orchard (of probable late 14<sup>th</sup> century date: Thomas and Boucher, 2002, 43-4). However, given the existence of similar paved areas dated to the Early Bronze Age at Redhill and Rotherwas only 1.5km south and 2.5km south-east of the city, respectively, a similar origin for the Station Approach surface cannot yet be ruled out entirely.

Another site at Redhill was a pond barrow excavated at the Bradbury Lines development east of the A49. This featured a circular hollow 18m in diameter, hollowed out to depth of nearly 2m, with a raised platform in the centre on which had been placed a rectangular oak coffin (or built a timber chamber), on top of which had been placed a deposit of cremated bone and pottery sherds of Middle Bronze Age form. The timber produced a date of c.1500BC (**51602**). At the Hereford Academy site nearby, at Bullinghope just to the south, and at Rotherwas industrial estate, sites featuring burnt stone spreads or dumps have been dated to broadly the same period.

A group of fragmentary Late Bronze Age bronze swords and daggers was discovered at Fayre Oaks adjacent to King's Acre near Whitecross 1.5km to the west of the city centre in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (**8358**).

***RP5 A priority is to establish the circumstances of the activities associated with the onset of peat growth (climatic or anthropogenic?) in at least two localities in and close to the city centre***

## **IRON AGE**

Only a single, late, find of certain Iron Age date has been found. This is a Dobunnic gold coin found at Greyfriars Avenue in 1981 (**4035**). It may simply be the easternmost find in a distribution that extends westwards to Kenchester, where several Dobunnic gold coins have been found (**8368**).

The Bartonsham Row Ditch, a straight linear earthwork bank running east-west and with no obvious associated ditch, is of some potential interest. It extends from Bartonsham Farm eastwards towards the mouth of the Eign Brook (to the west of which its continuation is obscured by the Cardiff-Manchester railway line as it crosses onto the north bank of the Wye and approaches Hereford station from the south). In doing so the linear earthwork cuts off the Bartonsham loop of the river Wye, in a similar manner as does the Dyke Hills a loop of the Thames at Dorchester south of Oxford. However, the earthwork marks the edge of higher ground at the northern edge of the floodplain, and perhaps makes more sense as an earthwork built to defend Saxon Hereford on its vulnerable south-east flank. The western end of the 'Ditch' meets the left bank of the Wye only 200m south of the point that the Bishop's Meadow Row Ditch (in this case an east-west bank with a southern ditch, at least one phase of which is dated to the mid-11<sup>th</sup> century) meets the right bank.

***RP6 A priority is to locate almost any activity of this period in the city or environs***

## **2.2 The Romano-British period (Keith Ray)**

### **Roads**

Much discussion has taken place, but no real evidence has emerged for the disposition of Roman roads in the vicinity of Hereford, or at the suggested (imagined?) ford across the river Wye. If there was a ford, the later route-ways would tend to suggest that it would have been in the vicinity of the Old Wye Bridge (see below). The possibility that a Roman bridge existed here, though unlikely, cannot be ruled out, perhaps more especially in view of the concentration of Romano-British finds in the area around and to the north-west of Broad Street.



## Pottery finds

Although a number of individual sherds of Romano-British pottery have been found at various locations and in excavations across Hereford, only at Victoria Street have they been retrieved in any quantity. However, even here, where the assemblage dominated by Severn Valley ware nonetheless also included a Samian ware bowl fragment, there were no finds in primary contexts (391).

***RP7 There is a need to carry out a detailed audit of the location of Romano-British pottery finds across the city, and in particular to see if any material has been derived from what may be re-interpreted as primary contexts***

## Romano-British building debris

A nearly complete Roman altar in sandstone was found at some depth in 1821 beneath a garden to the east of St. John Street (458/EHE 44596). It is now in Hereford Museum. It has traditionally been assumed to have been transported to Hereford from the ruins of Kenchester. However, in view of discoveries in the Victoria Street and Broad Street areas (below), alternative hypotheses now need to be considered.

The Victoria Street excavations also produced the earliest Anglo-Saxon remains, buried beneath the earliest phase, mid-late Saxon (ninth century), rampart. These remains included corn-driers or ovens, which were built from re-used Romano-British building rubble including dressed stone (used also in the foundations of the 10<sup>th</sup> century wall facing the earlier rampart), and pieces of two stone altars. It has again been assumed that these re-used altar stones, and the other Romano-British stonework, were transported from Kenchester to Hereford. Besides the Romano-British pot-sherds, however, there were also several pieces of ceramic building material, including both roofing tiles and hypocaust flue-tiles, and this strongly indicates the existence of substantial Roman-period buildings in the near vicinity.

Linear trenching for water-mains replacement took place in Broad Street in 2000, and was subject to archaeological monitoring. On the west side of the street south of The Green Dragon Hotel the lowest levels for the cut intercepted potentially important deposits beneath a series of medieval gravelled street surfaces. The excavators characterised these deposits as comprising building debris with much Roman mortar, or *opus signinum*. It was not clear whether this represented a floor level, or an in-situ building. Just under 100 metres to the south-east, on the east side of Broad Street, the Mappa Mundi excavations of 1993 (47257) found two sections of a ditch containing Roman tile debris and no other ceramics. The ditch could itself have been of Roman or Saxon date, but the excavation was not brought to publication and, as far as is known, C14 dates on associated animal bone were not obtained.

***RP8 The distribution of this material should also be mapped, and also re-examined to establish its precise character***

***RP9 A significant priority is to locate in situ deposits, and in particular to determine the nature of the structures in the Broad Street area***

### **Other Romano-British finds**

Coins have been found at various sites in the city, but in addition there have been two finds of Romano-British bronze items. The first, and simplest, found along with a coin during the Bewell House excavations, was a fibula brooch of 2<sup>nd</sup>-century date. The second such find was in Eign Street where a bronze figurine of Hermes was found in 1829 (**26969**).

Romano-British quern-stone fragments were also found among the rubble re-used in the Saxon stone wall excavated at Victoria Street. This is of particular interest given also the reported discovery of a 'Roman' quernstone during the construction of the Woolworths store in Eign Gate (**44571**).

Individual finds of Roman coins have been reported from Blackfriars Street and near Coningsby's Hospital east of Widemarsh Street nearby (**20237**, **20235**). These finds, like another in the Hunderton area, may suggest that a farmstead or other domestic settlement once existed in the vicinity.

***RP10 An audit of Romano-British coin finds (including Portable Antiquity Scheme finds) from Hereford is well overdue, and should be a priority***

### **Conclusions: temples?**

The available evidence points to the existence of a modest settlement, probably located to the west of the later Cathedral precinct. The discovery of multiple altars in and around this part of Hereford suggest the former existence of at least one temple, of which the building remains located at depth in Broad Street may have been the foundation.

The existence of a ritual complex near a significant river-crossing is a common occurrence in the archaeology of Roman Britain. An example is the site at Frilford west of Abingdon in Oxfordshire, where a temple in its own precinct and associated with a minor settlement and an amphitheatre associated with fairs held at the site existed to the east of a road crossing the river Ock (Henig and Booth, 2000, 68-72). Hereford is located equidistantly between walled settlements at Kenchester (to the west) and Stretton Grandison (to the east), and ritual complexes are often found in such 'border' locations.

## 2.3 The Pre-Conquest Period

### ORIGINS

It is only certainly in the middle Saxon period (though possibly in the Roman period) that the archaeological record of activities on the site of Hereford begins to stand out as qualitatively and quantitatively different from that of its surroundings in this part of the Wye Valley. The earliest archaeologically-identifiable activity (as opposed to discrete artefact finds) on the city site comes from two locations. First, the in-situ Roman remains, some structural, identified in the area west of the cathedral, on both sides of Broad Street (see above); second, the Castle Green burials dating back to c.700AD excavated by Shoesmith in the early 1970s on the top of the escarpment overlooking the Wye (31921). These burials were the earliest in a sequence that continued into the post-Conquest period and, certainly later in the pre-Conquest period, were associated with the royal minster church of St Guthlac which remained on the site until its re-location in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Whereas the burial ground may have *originated* as solely that, an open cemetery unaccompanied by any related institutions or buildings, St Guthlac's is more likely to have been an adjunct to a royal hall located somewhere in the vicinity, the precursor of the immediately post-Conquest royal castle (Whitehead 2007).

Whether the foundation of the cathedral sometime around the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century was connected with the activity found in the vicinity in the Roman period is currently unknown and recent excavations in the close have not shed further light on this. However, a recent find of what appears to have been a Roman religious precinct at Ross-on-Wye on an eminence overlooking the river on a site that had, before the Norman Conquest, become an episcopal palace, may offer a model for a thread of institutional continuity linking the foundation of a cathedral at Hereford to activity, probably religious activity, on the same site some two centuries earlier (see above). At present this hypothesis is highly speculative, but underlines the importance of further archaeological research under and around the present cathedral church, in the close around it, and in the Broad Street area generally.

***RP11 Further archaeological investigation of the cathedral close and its surroundings may shed more light on the origins of Hereford and should be accorded a high priority***

***RP12 Further archaeological investigation of the early, possibly pre-Mercian, burial ground, and the suspected site of St Guthlac's in the south-east corner of Castle Green should be accorded a high priority***

***RP13 Further archaeological investigation of the castle is required to establish the character of any pre-Conquest secular activity on the site, specifically to test the possibility of the presence of a pre-Conquest royal palace***

Secular activity, probably non-agricultural but more reliably characteristic of relatively dense urban-like occupation, can be demonstrated first in the

Berrington Street area in the extreme west of the city, from around the late 8<sup>th</sup> century, with iron smithing present in the following phase (447). The presence of what appear to have been two parallel metalled streets strongly suggest an element of deliberate planning in the spatial organisation of this settlement. However, recent excavations on the east side of Aubrey Street (the Kemble House car park, at the rear of a Broad Street plot) failed to find evidence of this early period.

***RP14 Further archaeological investigation of the relatively well preserved pre-Conquest levels in the Berrington Street area should be accorded a high priority***

## **COMMUNICATIONS AND INHERITED STRUCTURE**

The 'Cathedral at the crossroads' model developed by Shoesmith appears to be no longer tenable. This hypothesis has two elements. The first is the postulated existence of an east-west road, running parallel to the river, now represented by St Nicholas Street and King Street to the west of the cathedral and Castle Street to the east, whose middle section was closed as the cathedral close encroached over it. The second element is the postulated north-south road, represented by Broad Street, bringing traffic from the north to the alleged 'Palace Ford' just downstream of the medieval Wye Bridge and suggested to have been the 'army ford' referred to in the place name Hereford. A number of problems make maintenance of this hypothesis difficult:

- Despite recent excavations in the cathedral close (though excavations north of the cathedral church were depth-limited) there is still no excavated evidence for an early east-west route crossing the precinct
- Observation of service trenching on King Street in 1980 found evidence of a corduroy road of oak logs crossing the waterlogged deposits of the King's Ditch (3892). C14-dates of the 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> century suggested that the recorded surface was therefore a relatively late feature of the early medieval town, though sighting of earlier timbers at a greater depth may indicate that this was not the first such surface constructed over the ditch (Thomas and Boucher 2002, 24-25).
- More tellingly perhaps, the postulated east-west route has no continuations outside the built-up area. In contrast, the east-west route represented within the walls by Eign Gate, High Street, High Town and St Owen Street is clearly a section of a long-distance route into Wales following the north side of the Wye, and, as suggested by Thomas and Boucher (2002, 183-4), is equally or more likely to have been the primary east-west route through the area of the early town

While an early date for Broad Street is entirely plausible, and supported by the discovery of metalling down the western edge of the Mappa Mundi excavation (47257) in the 1990s, the plausibility of the Palace Ford has been challenged,

on the grounds of recent material having been found within the gravel deposits forming the ford (PJ Pikes, *seminar* and forthcoming), on the possibility that the gravel deposits may be the consequence of the bridge just downstream rather than its predecessor, and on the lack of obvious road connections either side of the ford. Just how the river was crossed in the earlier pre-Conquest period remains a mystery, but a crossing on the site of the Wye Bridge (in place by the late 11<sup>th</sup> century), scoured away by the action of the current through the cutwaters, is a strong possibility. Whether there was a bridge on the site of the present Wye Bridge before the late 11<sup>th</sup> century is unknown.

The status of the 'Castle Ford' in remote history is also obscure. This is a second natural ford, roughly opposite the bottom of Mill Street at the south-east corner of Castle Green. While this could have been a significant crossing, and the early cemetery within Castle Green could have been located with reference to it, it has no obvious connection on the south bank and appears peripheral to the local road network. The only further clue to its possible early significance is the street name 'Britons Street' attached to Mill Street by Speed's map of 1610, a parallel perhaps to Birdport (aka Britport or Bridport) in pre-Conquest Worcester.

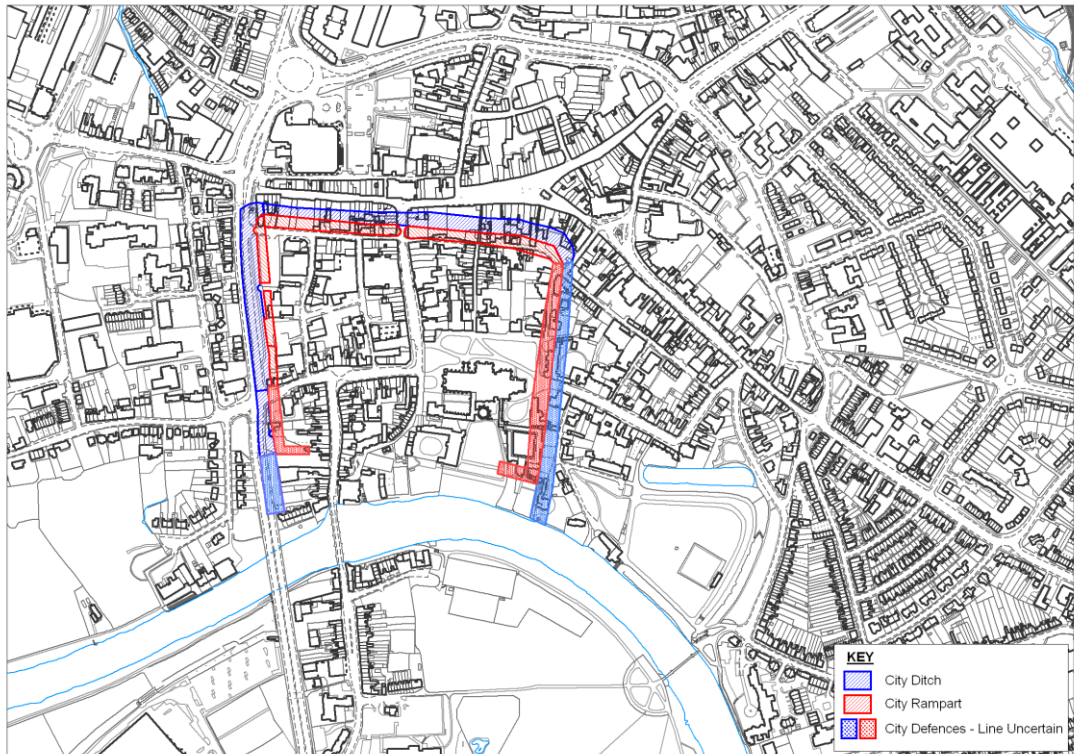
***RP15 Further work is required, particularly now on the south bank of the Wye (the Left Bank having been built on the north side), to determine the full history of the Wye crossing at Hereford***

## THE DEFENCES

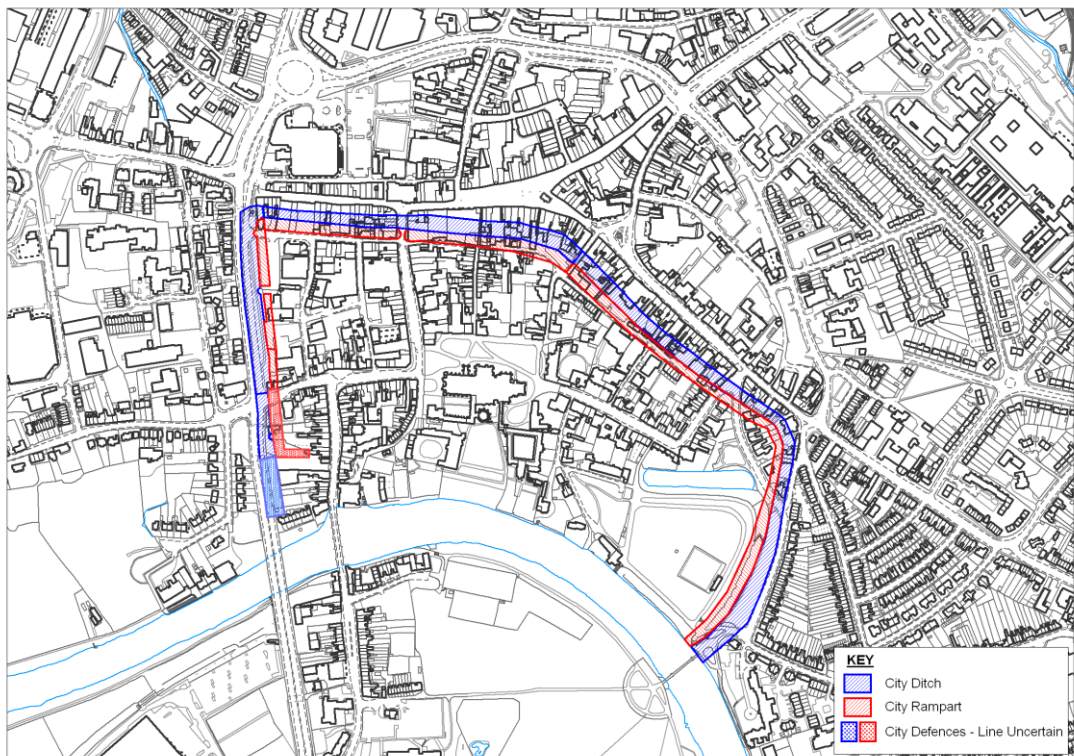
Although the main points in the evolution of Hereford's pre-Conquest defences were established thirty years ago, a few problems remain unsolved (mainly as a consequence of the location of research carried out) and some aspects of the sequence, dating mostly, lack precision.

- Although the west and north sides of the primary enclosure (Shoesmith stage 1) have been firmly established, there is still no evidence for the missing eastern side. This is likely to have been approximately on the east side of the cathedral close, running south from the very suggestive change in alignment of East Street, which follows the second-phase rampart. While there are possible clues to its location (for example a depression, and subsidence reported, in the Harley Court area), no hard archaeological evidence has been forthcoming
- Were the defended enclosures open to the river? The question was raised by Thomas and Boucher (2002, 184-6) who speculated that a defensive line overlooking the river could be encapsulated in terracing on the west side of Bridge Street, and by the terracing on the slope immediately below the Bishop's Palace. On the west side of the city the defences have not been seen south of the Deen's Court excavation site on the south side of St Nicholas Street at the top of the terraced gradient on Bridge Street (42945). And, unlike the remainder of the

## THE HEREFORD DEFENCES SEQUENCE

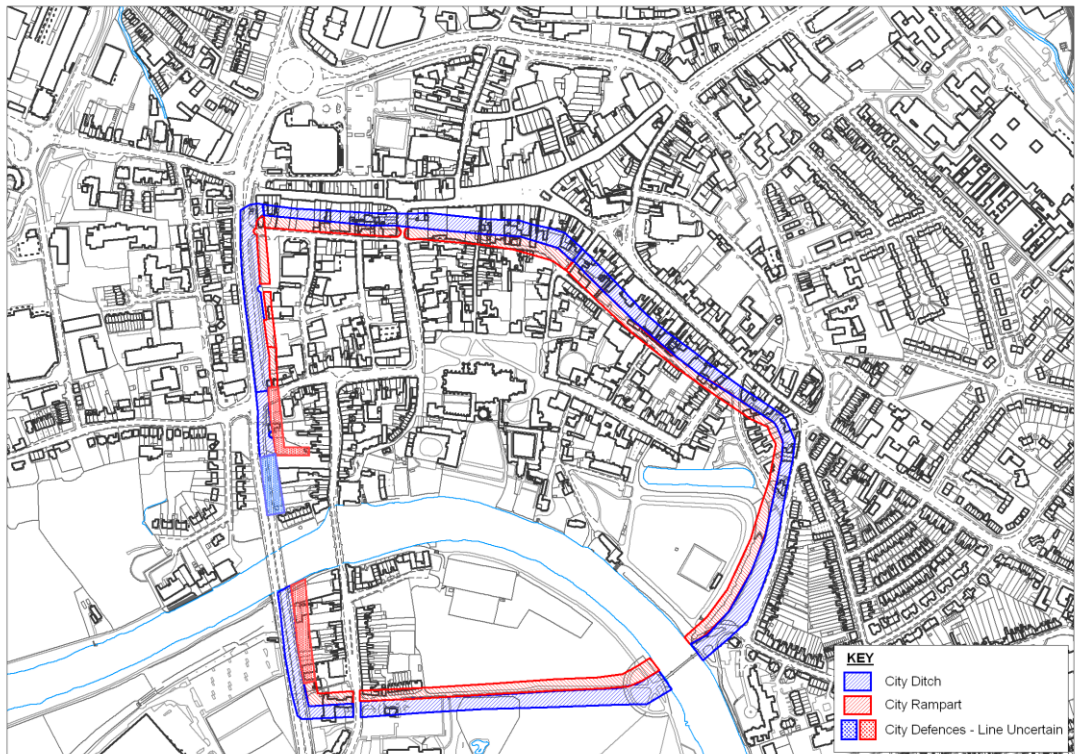


3. The earliest enclosure, probably 9<sup>th</sup>-century. The north and west sides have been well tested; the east side has yet to be confirmed, as has the existence of a southern riverside defence

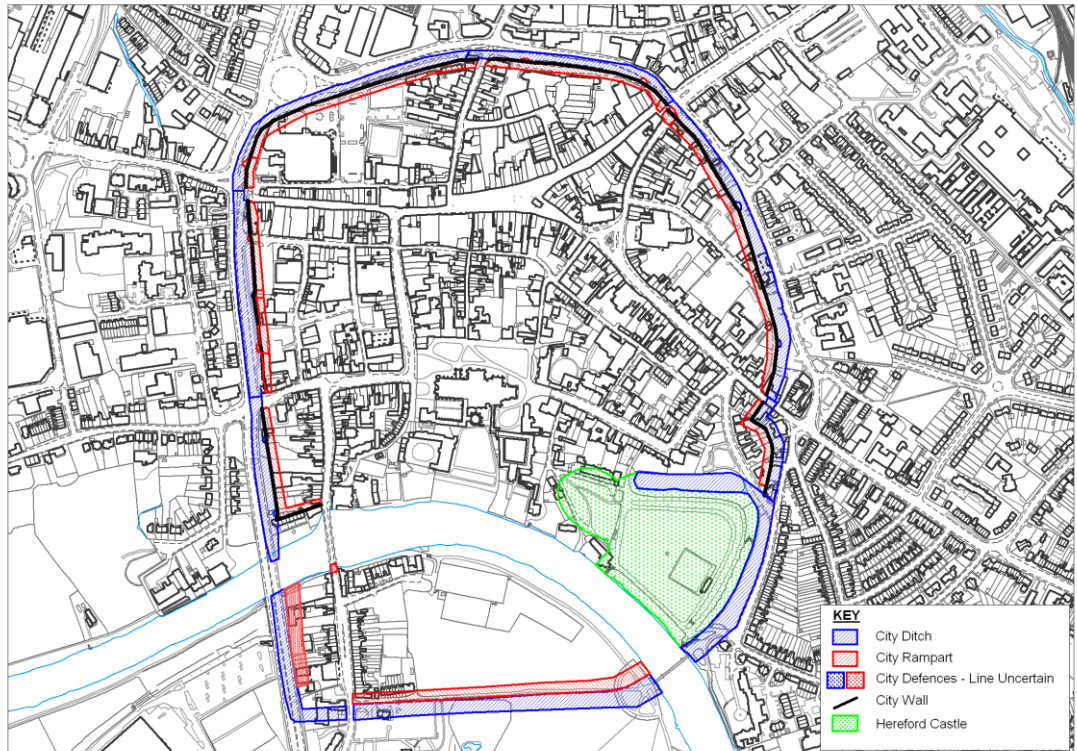


4. The extended enclosure, c.900AD with stone wall added in the course of the 10<sup>th</sup> century





5. Further extension, mid-11<sup>th</sup> century. The addition of the Bishop's Meadow Row Ditch, possibly by Harold Godwinson 1056AD



6. Post-Conquest. The addition of the Norman royal castle of the 1060s followed by the rebuilding and extension of the circuit north, around High Town, mid/late 12<sup>th</sup> century, and rebuilding in stone north of the river in the 13<sup>th</sup> century

- western defences, there is no standing rampart evident behind the medieval city wall south of that point. Given the shallow depth of much of the River Wye as it passes Hereford, it seems unlikely that the riverside would have been left undefended and vulnerable prior to the construction of the Bishop's Meadow Row Ditch, recently dated to the mid-11<sup>th</sup> century
- While the Bishop's Meadow Row Ditch (more properly the King's Ditch) south of the Wye has recently been dated to the mid-11<sup>th</sup> century (44518), no such dating has been obtained for the Bartonsham Row Ditch well to the east of the city, cutting it off from the floodplain at the Wye – Widemarsh Brook floodplain. This feature is traditionally ascribed to the 17<sup>th</sup>-century Civil War but a pre-Conquest or even an Iron Age date (see above) cannot be ruled out
- The conventional wisdom that the Shoemith stage 2 defences were first constructed in timber-faced earth and clay in the late 9<sup>th</sup> century and were upgraded with a stone front wall in the early 10<sup>th</sup> has recently been challenged (Bassett 2008), underlining the tenuous character of the present dating evidence and the need for more precise dating for all phases of the pre-Conquest defences. Given the tendency for ditches to be regularly scoured, the most crucial zones for reliable dating will be the ramparts, and buried ground surfaces sealed by the ramparts
- No pre-Conquest gates have been seen, though late 19<sup>th</sup>-century observations of roadworks on the site of the Saxon north gate (Norgate) at the head of Broad Street tentatively suggest it could have been a masonry structure. As this is the only known gate site on the pre-Conquest circuit not rebuilt massively later in the medieval period it is of considerable potential significance
- Recent excavation of the Bishop's Meadow Row Ditch has produced a probable mid-11<sup>th</sup>-century date from the earliest fill of the ditch, which was cut, or re-cut, to a width of about 20 metres. The extramural ditch to the defences north of the river appears to have been re-cut to this width too, probably at the same time, possibly as a consequence of Harold Godwinson's documented refortification of Hereford in 1056 after the successful Welsh attack the previous October when the town and the cathedral church were burnt (44518; Andy Boucher, *seminar*)

***RP16 There is a need to locate the east side of the phase 1 defences, probably in the St John's Street – Castle Street – Quay Lane area***

***RP17 Investigation of the terraced gradients west of Bridge Street and below the Bishop's Palace to establish the presence or absence of a riverside defence is essential to understanding the tactical functioning of the pre-Conquest defences as a whole***

***RP18 The Bartonsham Row Ditch has never been the subject of an archaeological excavation and remains undated – it is potentially of anything from late prehistoric to Civil War date***

***RP19 Further investigation of the known pre-Conquest defences, in particular to find precise dating evidence, whether C14, dendro from timber elements, or securely stratified coinage from the rampart sequence, is a priority, may shed further light on the documented refortification of 1056 by Harold Godwinson, and will have regional implications in the context of recent debates on the origins of Mercian burh defences***

## **THE CHURCH**

There have been recent, tantalising, small advances in knowledge of the two senior churches of the pre-Conquest town. Geophysical survey by AIL Ltd on Castle Green revealed a number of structures including what may be a substantial aisled apsidal structure, close to the early burial ground, that may be the minster church of St Guthlac (**51690**). At the cathedral, recent large-scale excavations SE of the present cathedral church revealed, east of the Lady Chapel, a length of very substantial beam slot with settings for massive timber posts, probably of pre-Conquest date: although on the northern edge of the excavated area, this could represent the (or one of the) pre-Conquest cathedral church(es)..

***RP20 Every opportunity should be taken to advance knowledge of the complete building sequence of Hereford Cathedral (including pre-church structures) by investigation in and around the standing building, by geophysical survey and, as necessary, by targeted excavation***

***RP21 Although it is unlikely that a threat will arise in the foreseeable future necessitating excavation on the suspected site of St Guthlac's on Castle Green, the presence of a lost Anglo-Saxon minster beneath the public lawns of Castle Green represents an opportunity for research, in particular for the development of non-invasive remote survey techniques.***

## **SETTLEMENT AND PLANNING**

As noted already in a number of contexts, Hereford is regarded as a town of national significance as a consequence of the evidence for regular town planning in the middle Saxon period, well before the celebrated activities of Alfred the Great in late 9<sup>th</sup>-century Wessex (Biddle and Hill 1971; Biddle 1976). The core evidence for a planned street grid in Hereford is the excavated evidence from the Berrington Street and Victoria Street excavations of the late 1960s and early 1970s (**447, 391**). While this is not in dispute, and the evidence for three parallel streets (the 'lost' street under the defences, Berrington Street and Aubrey Street) points strongly to higher-order

decision-making in the layout of the city's western quarter, the 2010 townscape characterisation drew attention to the different plan characteristics evident east of Broad Street and to the probable difference in jurisdiction west and east of the King's Ditch. It is probable that late Saxon Hereford was a town of multiple planning episodes, some under royal jurisdiction/sponsorship, and some under the bishops.

The area north of the cathedral is dominated by a series of very large rectilinear plots accommodating canonical residences grouped around the close. The origin of these residences is at present unknown: they may be a product of late 11<sup>th</sup>-century re-organisation of the cathedral clergy (Barrow 2000), but they may well be pre-Conquest.

Understanding the developing plan-forms of English towns generally is important enough nationally to have been recognised as a distinct research programme in the English Heritage *Thematic research strategy for the urban historic environment* (English Heritage 2010). This is even more than usually significant for Hereford, given its place in the literature of Anglo-Saxon town planning (see e.g. Biddle 1976).

Town-planning activity may not have been confined within the defences. Domesday Book refers to the king's tenants who lived outside the walls, making it clear that extramural occupation is to be anticipated, and the results of excavations on Bewell Street are consistent with occupation in the immediate vicinity, though not on the north side of the street (35290, 44358, 41928, 38459). It was suggested in the townscape characterisation (Baker 2010b) that Bewell Street may well represent a planned service lane at the rear of occupied plots along Eign Gate. All Saints' Church too may be a pre-Conquest foundation that was part of this development. South of the river, excavation has recently established a probable mid-11<sup>th</sup>-century date for the earthwork defences crossing the Bishop's Meadow. Unless this was a development intended to protect Hereford as a whole from the south because its river frontage was undefended (see above) it is likely that this implies a late pre-Conquest origin for settlement south of the river in the St Martin's suburb and very probably a late pre-Conquest date for St Martin's chapel itself. The latter was referred to as 'the mother church of All Saints' in the late 13<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries (Whitehead and Budd 1977, 4). Pre-Conquest pottery has also been found in later contexts on the 'King's Fee' excavation site on Commercial Road (Archenfield Archaeology, unpublished), well outside the walls, and may suggest activity along the north-eastern approach road to the city. Similarly, pre-Conquest pottery has been found outside the walls on the western approach road, Eign Street, on the former Eye Hospital site (32127)

***RP22 The area north of the Cathedral Close around the Church Street – St John's Street block, and particularly around the known canonical residences, is of critical importance in view of the unusual survival of large ancient tenements in a city centre and in terms of potential buried evidence for the origins of the canonical tenements and the character of occupation in the area***



***RP23 Small-scale excavations in the very densely built-up street block between Eign Gate and Bewell Street may be able to contextualise the results of the series of excavations over recent decades along Bewell Street to the rear***

***RP24 The site of the Chapel of St Martin at the St Martin's Street/Wye Street junction has never been investigated. Excavation is likely to be able to establish the foundation date of the chapel and its subsequent development through to demolition in the 17<sup>th</sup> century***

***RP 25 Further investigation is needed of sites across the Eign Street – Eign Gate – Commercial Street – Commercial Road arc to better establish the extent, nature and density of later pre-Conquest extramural occupation***

While the evolving framework of streets in pre-Conquest Hereford is a major issue, so too is the content of that framework – the social and occupational composition of the *burh* interior. At present, metalworking appears almost ubiquitous across the city (Berrington Street, the south side of East Street behind the rampart (44378), the northern edge of the Cathedral Close (Headland Archaeology, forthcoming), and within the Close south and east of the Cathedral (ibid.), but the immediate spatial settings of this activity are not clear. So, while the topographical evidence might suggest a potentially clear social and functional difference between the high-status canonical residences grouped around the close and other parts of the city, this may be a gross over-simplification or conceivably not at all applicable to the pre-Conquest situation. Variations in the character, particularly the density, of settlement within the defences are not understood. The character of settlement in the immediate area of Berrington Street is known, and pre-Conquest occupation has been established at a number of points right across the city to its eastern limits, where, at the Castle Hotel site on Castle Street, a burnt building was found containing loom weights and a coin of Alfred the Great, suggesting occupation c.900AD (31780, 31829). But whether the whole intramural city was built up in a way similar to the Berrington Street area is unknown.

Neither is the evolving physical character of the building stock at all clear, particularly with regard to the street frontages (a problem also apparent in the post-Conquest period, see below). While complete building plans were obtained by the area excavations in Berrington Street and Victoria Street – post-built buildings, some with through-passages and metalled yards – there is a conspicuous absence of the timber-lined cellared buildings characteristic of late pre-Conquest English towns, or of the double-rank tenement planning with which they are most often associated as back-range buildings. The Mappa Mundi excavation of the early 1990s (47257) scored a notable success with the discovery of a (unique?) stone-lined cellared building on the main-street or market frontage, but whether this was exceptional or common, commercial or part of the cathedral precinct, remain unknown.

The search for complete building plans and uncellared frontages have both been identified as priorities in urban work at a regional level (Watt 2011, 181, 184).

***RP26 High priority should be given to the identification of areas of uncellared street frontage within the probable limits of the pre-Conquest built-up area***

***RP27 Interventions that penetrate to pre-Conquest levels throughout the burh interior may be able to establish its evolving physical, social and economic character, and contextualise the highly significant body of work carried out on the Saxon town since the end of the 1960s. Given the apparent ubiquity of metal-working throughout the settlement, and its presence in the Domesday account of the city, further analysis of metallurgy residues may shed significant light on the role of these activities in Hereford***

## 2.4 The medieval period

### HEREFORD CASTLE

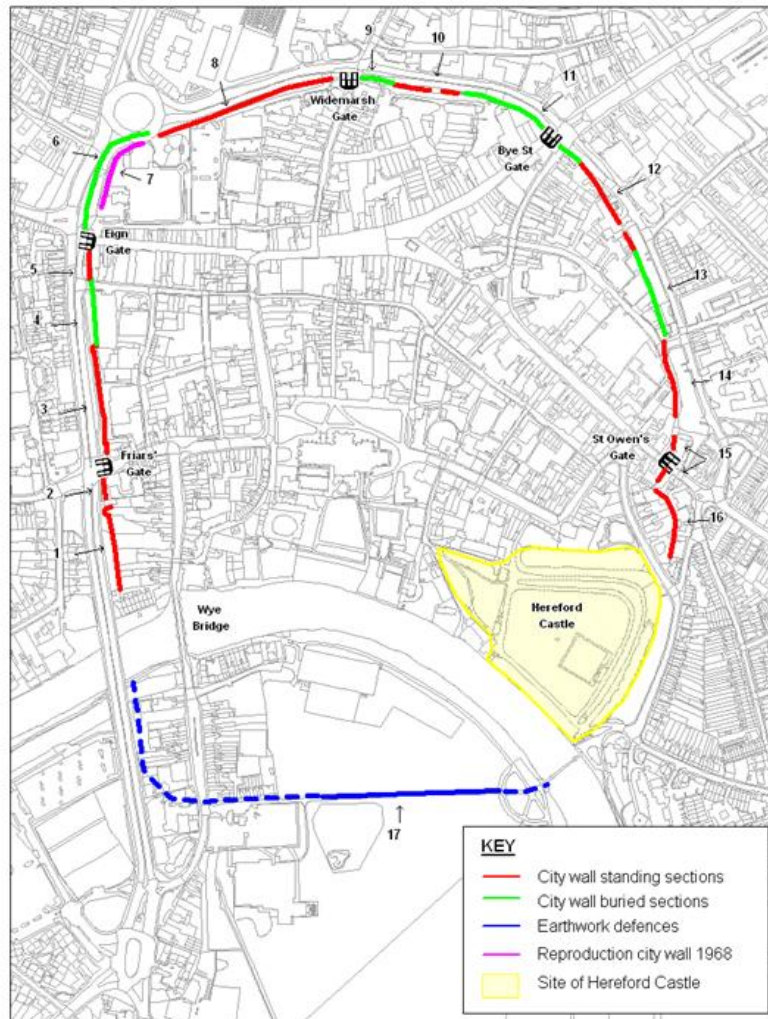
Hereford Castle was a significant royal fortress, initially part of the French suppression of the English town, it was besieged in the 1130s, and functioned as a major campaign base until the pacification of Wales in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century. However, with the exception of excavations on a small scale by Shoesmith in the south-eastern corner (Shoesmith 1980), trenching of the motte ditch in the late 1960s (**35318, 35319**) and minor recent interventions, and a geophysical survey of Castle Green (**51690**), little is known of it. The removal of the motte in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the (earlier) conversion of its bailey to a public park mean that it now bears little resemblance to a recognisable castle. Major unknowns include: the scale and character of its defences; the date of the timber to masonry transition; the density and character of the bailey buildings (Castle Green); the material culture associated with the occupation of the castle; and the chronology and trajectory of its military decline. One standing building survives within it (Castle Cliffe) but its original purpose and immediate context are unknown.

The investigation of the early phases of urban castles has been identified as a priority at regional level (Watt 2011, 184).

***RP28 Further geophysical survey and excavation at Hereford Castle is required to establish its basic characteristics, development and decline. Geophysical survey should be extended, using ground-penetrating radar, to the raised walks or ramparts of Castle Green in order to determine their composition and the survival, or not, of the curtain walls, gatehouse and mural towers within them***



## THE CITY DEFENCES



7. The medieval defences: survival and status (standing/demolished/earthwork/replica)

Because of the excavation campaigns of c.1964-74, a detailed survey of the south-western sector of the city wall circuit in the late 1990s (**30550**) and the recent (2011) conservation management plan, the medieval city wall is one of the more intensively-studied aspects of medieval Hereford, with a degree of consensus as to its main developmental stages: refortification of the city with an extended circuit in earth and timber commencing c.1189-90 followed by upgrading in stone, with bastions, from some point in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. This consensus has however been challenged on the basis that the St Owen Gate was in existence by the 1150s (P J Pikes, *seminar*), probably implying a slightly earlier start date for the post-Conquest defences, or at least for the maintenance of some kind of perimeter with controls on traffic on the major roads. And other gaps in knowledge remain, notably for the city gates, none of which survived into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. None has been excavated, though elements of St Owen's Gate were observed in service trenching (**32112**) and the site of Eign Gate proved to have been heavily disturbed (**31751**). As a result, our current understanding of them relies heavily on small-scale block plans on Taylor's map of 1757, illustrations of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, and historical sources. For the wall itself, it is clear that there was a single

masonry build type that was used around the western and north-western parts of the circuit. Where the wall survives to the north east it has (at least over a short distance in the Barrels pub) a different though probably also medieval build type, but the significance of this difference is not known.

***RP29 Investigation of one or more of the city gates is a priority, to establish scale of construction, design, and subsequent changes of form and use***

The city walls have additional archaeological value in that their internal ramparts provide a zone of increased archaeological preservation, with deposits sealed by the ramparts and an increased depth of accumulated material immediately to their rear.

## **THE CHURCH AND RELIGION**

**The Cathedral Close.** Major excavations have recently been concluded on the Cathedral Close and have already resulted in a mass of new information, principally relating to the burial ground (the cathedral exercised a monopoly of burial over the city throughout the Middle Ages), the medieval population of Hereford, its demography and pathology. Very small-scale excavation on the adjacent Cathedral Barn site and the nearby Dean's House as part of the same scheme of works have also located a substantial stone wall that has been interpreted as the medieval precinct wall enclosing the close, hitherto apparent solely as a sketched feature on Speed's manuscript and published maps of Hereford. The major unknowns of the Cathedral Close therefore relate mainly to the pre-Conquest period (see above), though there are outstanding issues relating to some of the major medieval buildings.

***RP30 Investigation of the demolished ranges of the bishop's establishment (the Bishop's Chapel and the accommodation/service ranges associated with the internationally-significant 12<sup>th</sup>-century aisled hall) should be a priority***

**Parish Churches and chapels.** The two surviving parish churches, All Saint's and St Peter's have been subject to various investigations published in grey literature format, the latter more than the former. The locations of the major demolished churches and chapels, St Nicholas (top of Bridge Street), St Martin's (south bank) and St Owen's (outer end of St Owen Street), are known but are mostly uninvestigated (St Nicholas: **44590**). Two further chapels, St Candida and St Eligius, are known to have existed in St Martin's parish (probably in the area of the Asda roundabout), but have never been located (Whitehead and Budd 1977).

The development of urban parish churches is virtually unstudied in the west of England, in stark contrast to the east, and the investigation of urban parish churches has been identified as a regional research priority (Watt 2011, 184).

***RP31 Continued repairs-related fabric-recording of the surviving medieval parish churches is an on-going priority and repairs-related below-ground works should be monitored archaeologically or preceded by excavation***

***RP32 The city contains five demolished medieval churches and chapels. None have been satisfactorily investigated, though such research would be likely to yield significant evidence for their origins, development and use***

**Monastic Houses.** The Hereford Dominican (Blackfriars) precinct is the best preserved and also the best understood in terms of the excavated sample (43804, 43794, 43795). But even here, while the location of the church is known and one range survives, the other claustral ranges have never been seen. Geophysical survey of the gardens immediately west of the surviving claustral range was indicative of considerable complexity of the buried remains there (43796), but their significance remains untested. The location of the Franciscan (Greyfriars) precinct is known in general terms but its internal geography, including the location of the church and claustral ranges, remains obscure. There has been extensive evaluation and some excavation of the re-located suburban site of St Guthlac's (the General Hospital site) but, while the cemetery has been well sampled (43794, 43795) and the enclosure containing it has been defined (31750), its church, claustral ranges, general layout, scale and development all remain remarkably elusive.

The regional research framework (Watt 2011, 200) went so far as to claim that 'monastic archaeology is not a current research activity' in Herefordshire and that our knowledge of urban monastic houses was, across the region, 'generally poor'.

**Hospitals.** Apart from very limited excavation in the surviving Coningsby's Hospital (43790, 43793), there has been virtually no investigation of the medieval hospitals. The Hospital of St Ethelbert, unusually, had a centrally-placed site on the north side of the Cathedral Close (possibly on the site of an earlier nunnery) until it was moved to Castle Street in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, where it survives (Whitehead 1986); its original site has not been investigated. St Giles' Hospital (21717) was sited more conventionally to the east of the city on the corner of St Owen Street and Ledbury Road; the nearby 12<sup>th</sup>-century circular chapel (41409) was planned and photographed when exposed by road-widening in 1927, but this is the sum total of archaeological knowledge of the site. A leper hospital is known to have been founded some distance west of the city on White Cross Road (Above Eign) (39327).

***RP33 The almost complete absence of archaeological evidence for the city's monastic houses and hospitals is a significant gap in our knowledge of medieval Hereford, which should be addressed***

**The pre-1290 Jewish community.** From historical evidence this can be located with some confidence on the north side of High Town, though whether

it could be located archaeologically is another question, both on account of the likely nature of the evidence and deposit survival issues in the Maylord Orchards area. The medieval Jewish community is also likely to have been associated with extramural infrastructure, specifically a Jewish cemetery and possibly one or more ritual baths. Historical evidence places the cemetery east of the city, to the rear (north) of the medieval hospital of St Giles, on the corner of St Owen Street and Ledbury Road (Hillaby 1990, 474-5) – but it has not been seen archaeologically.

***RP34 Location and investigation of the medieval Jewish cemetery; identification of deposits/structures relevant to the medieval Jewish community on the north side of High Town***

## **SETTLEMENT AND OCCUPATION**

**The suburbs.** In the absence of historical evidence, archaeology is the only source from which to chart the outward growth and (if any) contraction of medieval settlement. The suburbs have been better served in Hereford by development-related intervention than other comparable towns in the region, notably Shrewsbury, and the long-term accumulation of data will allow an accurate estimation of long-term trends in the economy of the medieval city (particularly in combination with dendro-dating of surviving buildings – see below). Some medieval suburbs are better known than others – inevitably so, given patterns of modern redevelopment. For example, Commercial (Bye) Street, St Owen Street and St Martin's are relatively well known, Widemarsh Street rather less so. Whether post-Black Death depopulation and late medieval urban decline impacted on the extent of the suburbs is not yet clear. What is clear is that there had been substantial outward growth along the principal approach roads (evident from the distribution of 12<sup>th</sup>-century pottery) before the medieval defences were built in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century and cut through it.

Understanding suburban growth and the form of suburbs is important enough nationally to have been recognised as a distinct research programme in the English Heritage *Thematic research strategy for the urban historic environment* (English Heritage 2010).

***RP35 Continued investigation of the historic suburbs in order to understand patterns of growth and decline, in extent and in density of settlement***

**Industry, crafts, occupations.** Similarly, the long-term accumulation of data from excavation is resulting in a growing body of evidence for economic and occupational diversity around the city. Results to date broadly indicate a familiar pattern in which the suburbs and peripheral areas were dominated by lower-value land-uses and urban 'nuisance' trades, either dangerous or polluting. Excavated evidence from the suburbs emphasises the leather trades, tiling and potting. Tanning was evident in the Widemarsh Street

suburb, on the Magistrates' Court site (37147) in Commercial Road and in the Canal Road area in between (43795). There is considerable further scope for the investigation of extremely well-preserved deposits relating to the leather processing trades where the Widemarsh Street suburb crosses the Widemarsh Brook floodplain (20110, 43805). In the further reaches of the St Martin's suburb on the south bank, the Asda site (42303) produced evidence of pottery production in the vicinity, waster dumps suggesting the nearby production of pottery, including jugs, flat tiles, glazed tiles and ridge tiles (Kath Crooks, *seminar*). Ironworking slag was a feature of the deposits excavated on the Sack Warehouse site (47268) on Wye Street, close to the bridge, from the 13<sup>th</sup> century into the post-medieval period.

Low-status, low-value occupations were also evident in the peripheral intramural district of Grope Lane (Gaol Street) in the north-east quarter of the city: certainly tanning and arguably prostitution (43650). In the peripheral/intramural north-west quarter, bell-founding appears to have taken place on the Brewery excavation site (44353) in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries while close-by on the Bewell House site (44354) a corn-drying oven was operating in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century. Further south on Berrington Street, again, just within the city wall, cauldrons were being manufactured. On the south side of the city ironworking was taking place (an armourer's) on the Meade & Tompkinson site at the bottom of Bridge Street (44595).

***RP36 Continued extension of the excavated sample to determine occupational/land-use patterning across the city and suburbs, variations in wealth, status and living conditions, and the scale, character and variety of industrial production***

## **THE IMMEDIATE HINTERLAND AND THE LIBERTY OF HEREFORD**

One aspect of the economy of the medieval and early post-medieval city that is in doubt is the value of the River Wye for commercial navigation. Recent historical writing has tended to minimise the economic value of the river for transport although a number of wharves in Hereford are known from historical evidence from the medieval and later periods. This issue may possibly be addressed by archaeology from two sources: excavation of waterfront infrastructure, and the determination of trading links, and by implication routes, from excavated artefacts. The former is the more difficult aim to achieve, given the possibility that shallow-draught vessels used for navigating the Wye in post-medieval centuries required little more than a gang-plank for loading/unloading from the shore.

***RP37 Continued attention should be paid to riverside sites (including those on, for example, Wye Street, where the medieval waterfront lies some metres inland from the present river frontage) to establish the nature of activities taking place there and the presence or not of a formal, engineered waterfront***

Hereford's economy has always been closely tied to agriculture, evident from almost the earliest pre-Conquest excavated deposits, represented by the corn-drying ovens found at Victoria Street sealed by the earliest rampart (391), and still evident today, exemplified by the presence of the Bulmer's factory. Hereford, like other medieval towns, had its own fields, the Port Fields, concentrated to the north of the city on the gentle slopes down to the Widemarsh or Eign Brook whose floodplain would have provided substantial grazing for livestock. Recent LiDAR images have also revealed ridge and furrow on the Bishop's Meadow south of the river, and at Bartonsham to the east, suggesting that arable cultivation, at its peak, extended close to the edge of the built-up area.

Milling would have been fundamental to feeding the growing urban population and is most likely to have taken place at the watermills along the Widemarsh Brook, which would have provided a faster but more even flow than the main river, without the latter's gross seasonal variations in level. But, apart from two early interventions at Monkmoor Mill (43801, 43802), this issue, and the chain of watermills along the Widemarsh Brook (Widemarsh Mill, Monkmoor Mill, Scutt Mill and Eign Mill) remains virtually uninvestigated.

***RP38 Further investigation of the Widemarsh Brook watermill sites in the vicinity of Hereford, in particular to establish their origins and medieval development.***

The infrastructure of the pre-Conquest and medieval town was not confined to the walled area, nor even to the town fields that surrounded it. Recent research has drawn attention to the importance of the King's Acre Lime, a veteran tree marking the site of a piece of land set aside for public assemblies on the boundary of the Liberty of Hereford, probably one of the most ancient jurisdictions in county and almost certainly of pre-Conquest date, pre-dating the formation of the local parishes (Whitehead 2008, 32-33). It may be that there was no physical structure associated with this assembly place – but neither has the possibility ever been investigated. Similarly the pre-Conquest shire moot was held on Aylestone Hill, just north of the city (Coplestone-Crow 1989, 101), but whether at a natural landmark, a historic landmark, or within a dedicated place of assembly is not at present known

***RP39 Determining the character of pre-Conquest and medieval public assembly sites in the Liberty of Hereford***

Hereford, as a central place of political, strategic and economic importance, was dependent on its communications network, not just within its walls, or even within the Liberty, but further afield too. It would be illogical to study the developing communications infrastructure of the city itself, the Wye Bridge for example, while ignoring the engineering of the approach roads leading to it.

The three road crossings of the Lower Lugg need to be considered in this context. Lugg Bridge, just north-east of Aylestone Hill, took the Hereford to Worcester road across the River Lugg and its floodplain. The bridge itself is of medieval date, with three arches, and was first recorded when repaired in



1409 (914). The crossing is also that of the Roman (Kenchester – Worcester) road but its Roman and post-Roman history has never been established; the causeway approaching the bridge across the floodplain from the west is equally an unknown quantity. To the south, next downstream, Lugwardine Bridge carries traffic to and from Hereford and Ledbury (and thence to Gloucester). The bridge was not recorded until 1690 and the structure itself may be of slightly earlier date (15282); its causeway to the west has again escaped attention. The last/lowest of the Lugg bridges is Mordiford Bridge. This is said to have existed by 1352 and one of the arches is of medieval, probably 14<sup>th</sup>-century, date, though excavation here determined that a bridge had existed at an earlier date with its carriageway at a lower level (915) Again, there is a substantial causeway crossing the floodplain.

A similar situation may be found within the medieval built-up area, where the Widemarsh Street suburb crosses the floodplain of the Widemarsh or Eign Brook (the Wide Marsh). Although occupation along the street (intramural and extramural) appears to commence only in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the road/route is possibly substantially earlier, as it connects Hereford to the major pre-Conquest monastic centre at Leominster and ultimately with Shrewsbury and Chester. No observations have been made under the present street but it is likely to have been carried over the alluvium and above the level of minor flood events on at least two bridges and a causeway. Because of its situation on the edge of the inhabited area of the medieval town any stratified sequences would be likely to contain dateable cultural material.

***RP40 Any opportunity should be taken to gather data on the River Lugg and Widemarsh Brook crossings, particularly where stratified causeway sequences may yield dateable deposits***

## **BUILDINGS**

**Standing buildings** of medieval date form a substantial component of the archaeological resource for the period from the late 12<sup>th</sup> century on (the date of the Bishop's Palace hall), and their value as a source of information about medieval life, social organisation, design and technology is only eclipsed by their contribution to the historic environment and townscape. Buildings in Hereford have, for the most part, been studied on an individual basis prompted by repairs-related recording. Comparative studies have been limited and only one substantial volume *The historic houses of Hereford* (formerly *The secular buildings of Hereford*) has been produced to date. This is currently (2013) being revised and edited, its publication programme having stalled in the 1990s, and will provide a detailed architectural and documentary study of a key group of about thirty buildings, many of which have been or are being dendrochronologically dated. This process will provide crucial and precise dating evidence for changes in building form and carpentry. It is also the case that extension of the data set will eventually yield a much clearer picture of the direction of the late medieval economy (in terms of new building starts) than is available from any other source. Further extension of the data available (in general, not just dating) will however only be possible when



repairs-related recording with archived reporting is standard practice and, while this seems to have been the case in the 1980s, it does not seem to be universal at the present.

Understanding early urban buildings is important enough nationally to have been recognised as a distinct research programme in the English Heritage *Thematic research strategy for the urban historic environment* (English Heritage 2010). The historic buildings stock of Hereford city is of unusual national significance on account of the number of early (pre-15<sup>th</sup>-century) buildings that survive, particularly timber-framed buildings, the smaller towns of the county having few if any secular buildings pre-dating 1400 and the neighbouring county towns being dominated by a (usually very small) number of surviving stone buildings earlier than that date.

***RP41 Archaeological recording to an appropriate and proportionate level of detail should be undertaken on all major repairs interventions to significant historic buildings***

***RP42 Dendrochronological dating should be sought whenever medieval buildings are subject to major repair and restoration campaigns***

Surviving medieval buildings are however overwhelmingly of high status, with the housing stock of the period dominated in Hereford by canonical residences. In contrast, there is a gap in the record for poorer building types that have not survived, and even basic row buildings do not seem to be numbered amongst the survivors of the period. This emphasises the importance of excavated evidence as a complementary source, filling the social gap, and providing evidence of the progress of technological change in the 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> centuries by documenting the earth-fast-post to solid-footing timber-frame transition in different parts of the city.

One major gap in knowledge is the development of the commercial frontage. Neither from standing buildings nor from excavated sites is the development of the commercial frontage clear in the medieval period: standing buildings being generally subject to the most intensive alteration on the frontage, and excavations often unable to expose front rooms or wings where they are covered by the present pavement or road carriageway.

These problems occur widely throughout the region and have been identified in the regional research framework (Watt 2011, 184). There is a very clear need for the excavation of uncellared main-street frontage sites wherever they can be identified. It is also the case that very few *complete* building plans for the period have been excavated (Gaol Street is a recent example, ref 000)

***RP43 High priority should be given to the identification of uncellared medieval frontages***

***RP44 High priority should be given to the recovery of complete building plan-forms by the investigation of complete plots***

## 2.5 The Post-Medieval Period

### SETTLEMENT

Whereas complementary sources (maps, documents) become available in this period to chart some of the undocumented issues of earlier centuries (extent of settlement, occupational geography) only archaeology is available to illustrate the intensification of settlement from the late 16<sup>th</sup> century in terms of 'inward colonisation' – the building-up of back-plot areas – known to geographers as 'the burgage cycle'. Such sequences are likely to reflect both very local fortunes (the economic rise and fall of particular neighbourhoods) and those of the city and its region. The one area of the city in particular where such back-plot sequences can be found, and in origin extend right back into the middle Saxon period, is the Berrington Street – Aubrey Street western quarter, still open land in use as surface car-parking ('urban fallow' in geographical terminology) and not rebuilt since the clearance of sub-standard housing and other structures in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Excavation has already demonstrated the great potential of the Hereford western quarter itself (Berrington Street, Victoria Street) as well as similarly un-rebuilt areas in other cities (Deansway, Newport Street in Worcester, for example). Occupation density may be difficult to determine archaeologically but one extreme manifestation of overcrowding, the use of cellars as dwellings, may be observable.

In addition to the dynamics of the structural sequence, archaeological excavation has the capacity to comment on changes in sanitary and living conditions. These issues were fundamental to the health reforms of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and specifically the 1854 Hereford Improvement Act.

***RP45 The investigation of post-medieval sequences on complete plots and substantial samples of back-plot areas to determine their structural and functional evolution and changes in living and sanitary conditions***

### HOUSES & HOUSING

A very substantial part of the archaeological resource of the post-medieval centuries is formed by the standing buildings of the period. These have been studied on an individual basis, case-by-case, mainly via the large volume of 'grey literature' contractor reports published by CHAU in the 1980s and early 90s as a result of repairs-related recording. Comparative studies, and a survey of the building stock as a whole, have been much more limited. The main vehicle for this approach is the volume *The historic houses of Hereford* (formerly *The secular buildings of Hereford*) currently (early 2012) being revised and edited. Dendrochronological dating of many of the buildings covered by the book is helping to accurately date trends in the building stock. The reason for the glut of repairs-related building recording and reporting in the 1980s, and for its comparative scarcity in the present century, is not

entirely clear, but is a negative trend of great concern if conservation is taking place without clear historical understanding.

Further dendrochronological dating of carefully-verified primary timbers of timber-framed buildings under repair will not only cumulatively yield data of great precision on the chronology of change in building styles and techniques (it will for example be able to document the impact/incidence of the 'Great Rebuilding' on the city), but also reveal with accuracy long-term trends in the city's economy and rebuilding cycles.

## THE DEFENCES

Older work (Whitehead in Shoesmith 1982), reinforced by a more recent study (Baker 2011) on the city defences suggests that in this period the city authorities generally withdrew from active intervention in the fabric of the city walls, the responsibility passing to householders with the consequence of plot-by-plot variation in the fabric now visible. Two issues are however particularly pertinent to this period. The first and more significant is the treatment of the former castle and its transition from a disused fortification to a public park. The relationship between the present substantial 'ramparts' and the medieval ramparts, curtain walls and former interval and corner towers known from Speed's maps of 1606 and 1610 and two early sketch plans is not at present understood, though the discovery of inverted stratigraphy, with a layer containing 17<sup>th</sup>-century material buried 1.5 metres deep *under* a layer containing 12<sup>th</sup>-century pottery suggests substantial post-medieval earth-moving episodes, possibly that soil was scraped up from the interior of Castle Green to create the present raised walks around the perimeter (Andy Boucher, *seminar*). The true nature of Hoggs Mount, in the north-east corner of Castle Green, is similarly uncertain; there being insufficient evidence at present to determine whether (as has been suggested) it is an early (medieval) second motte, or a 17<sup>th</sup>-century viewing platform raised over the rubble of a reduced but not demolished medieval corner tower.

A second issue is the ability to distinguish work on and features of the defences that date to the Civil War sieges of the 1640s from general post-medieval repairs.

***RP46 Further understanding of the formation of Castle Green as it now appears is required: what is its relationship to the medieval castle bailey?***

## THE CHURCH

The study of the archaeology of the Dissolution and the post-Dissolution trajectories of the city's monastic houses is as seriously under-developed as other aspects of monasticism, though promising Dissolution-period deposits have been located by small-scale evaluation at Blackfriars.

***RP47 Understanding the post-suppression uses of monastic sites on the city fringes***

**MATERIAL CULTURE**

Archaeology is well placed to chart the rise of consumerism from the late 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries through recoverable artefact types excavated in context. Two main areas of research can be identified: (1) the hinterland – sourcing products consumed in Hereford, and (2) the internal social geography of Hereford recoverable via the distribution of (e.g.) ceramic products.

Archaeology could also provide a view on the situation, emphasised by the historian John Price in 1796, that the economy of Hereford suffered unduly at that time because of the relative inaccessibility of cheap coal. Excavation should be able to identify and date the spread of the use of coal via sampling of excavated deposits.

***RP48 Adding to knowledge of the production and consumption of all forms of material culture in the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries via the excavation of securely stratified consumption-related deposits and production sites***

**THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES**

While most 18<sup>th</sup>-century buildings and virtually all known 17<sup>th</sup>-century and earlier buildings have statutory protection, the same cannot be said of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>-century buildings, though they may nevertheless be highly significant in the industrial, commercial, social or transport history of the city in those centuries. For example, Hereford at its Victorian peak had five railway lines served by three stations of which only one now remains (Barr's Court, 1855, a listed building) the others having been demolished (R Shoesmith, *seminar*). From an earlier phase of the transport revolution, the Hereford Railway Company was a tramroad bringing coal from the Monmouthshire coalfield to Hereford completed in 1829. Its terminus at the Wye Bridge wharf on the outh bank was demolished in 1965 when Greyfriars Bridge was built. To the north of the city was the terminus of the Ledbury and Hereford canal, opened in 1845 and briefly of importance for transporting coal from the Severn until it was bought out by the railways and closed in 1881 (Roberts 2001, 46-7).

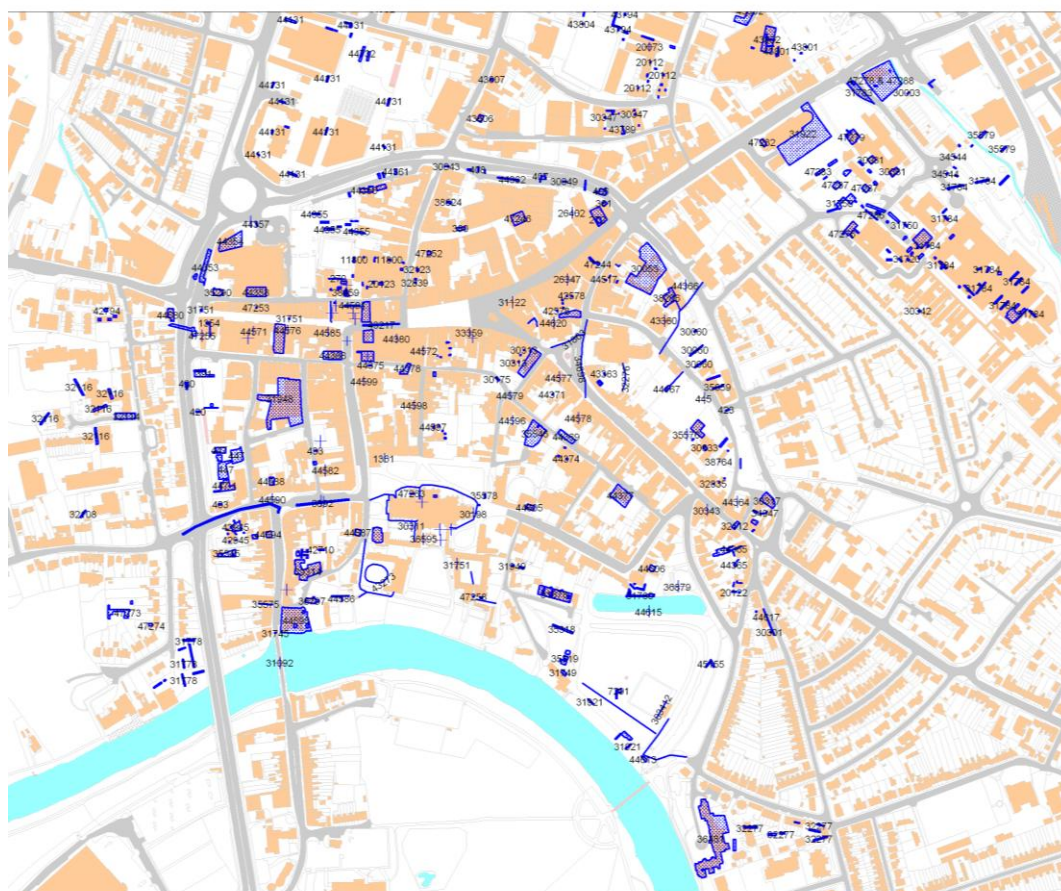
The 1854 Hereford Improvement Act was of major importance for the growth of the city as it led directly to a series of measures to improve public health and to the provision of new infrastructure, notably the new cattle market north of the city wall, a new cemetery, a new waterworks, and a system of sewers at a level to drain every house in every street (Roberts 2001, 110-11).

***RP49 The major engineering projects of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century are fully part of the archaeological story of Hereford. Significant standing buildings should be recorded prior to demolition or alteration and buried remains adequately recorded***

### 3: GENERAL THEMES

The following issues – which have already arisen in the preceding pages – are common to all periods in the history of Hereford and require separate, if brief, reconsideration. The first is the most fundamental as it affects the evidential base of the whole of the *realised* archaeological resource (in other words, that part of it that has been sampled, analysed and published, as opposed to what remains uninvestigated in the ground).

#### THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE EXCAVATED SAMPLE



8. Archaeological events (investigations) in Hereford to 2009

The map above is the UAD (urban archaeological database, now part of the SMR) archaeological events map of the city (updated to 2009) and shows at a glance the distribution of archaeological work across the city – largely also a distribution of development activity from c.1970 – from which a number of simple observations can be made:

- The concentration of interventions around the northern half of the medieval defences, principally the Inner Relief Road work of the late 60s and early 70s.

- The lack of interventions at the date at which this map was last revised around the Cathedral Close
- The lack of interventions north and east of the Cathedral Close (still current)
- The lack of interventions on the former castle/Castle Green (still current)
- The lack of work on Broad Street and Aubrey Street (west of the cathedral (still current, save for one excavation on Aubrey Street)
- The dense concentration of interventions on the Commercial Road hospital (St Guthlac's II) site NE of the centre

The relative concentrations of work in the suburbs should *not* be read from this map, which requires updating for the southern (St Martin's suburb) and outer St Owen Street (east).

Minor interventions that did not penetrate into significant archaeological deposits are not distinguished from those that did, with the result that some of the gaps in the distribution are in fact more acute than at first appears. This was particularly relevant to the Cathedral Close prior to the large scale excavations of 2009-11 (not yet mapped).

There are also qualitative variations in the interventions around the city, but these are far less of an issue than in other towns. In Hereford, archaeological interventions mostly date from the period after c.1970, so the situation found in places like Worcester and Shrewsbury, where archaeological interventions on High Street sites generally date from redevelopment episodes of the 1950s and early 1960s, done to the standards then current, does not apply in Hereford. Instead, the interventions are far more qualitatively uniform, undertaken to higher standards.

From this, it is apparent that, with the exception of the extreme western periphery, it is Saxon Hereford and the castle that are least well represented in the excavated sample. The interrelated reasons for this are not difficult to identify:

- The presence of the Cathedral Close
- The lack of recent development
- The presence of large numbers of listed buildings

***RP50 Where preservation in-situ is not a realistic option, appropriate opportunities for excavation of significant archaeological deposits within the Saxon perimeter and in the vicinity of the Cathedral should be taken to broaden the existing below-ground sample***

## THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SAMPLE AND DEPOSIT VARIABILITY

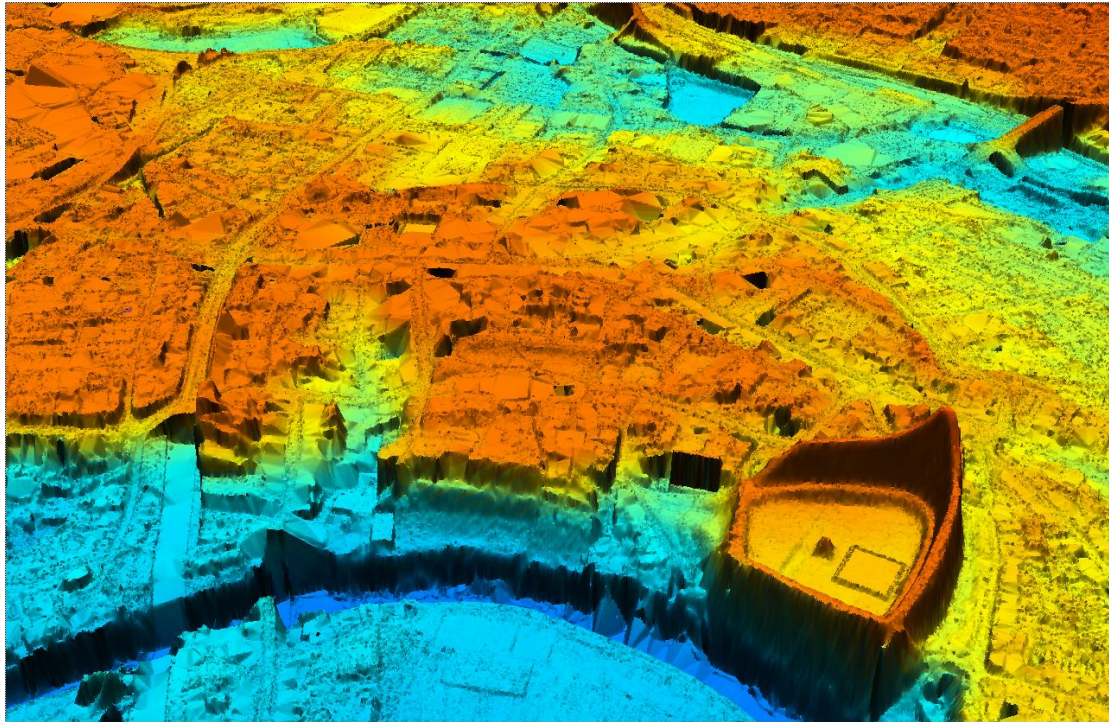
Readers are referred to the 2010 Archaeological Deposit Model for Hereford for detailed information on this. However, expressed very crudely, a uniform depth of around two metres of stratified deposit can be found within the Saxon defences, increasing to about three metres immediately behind the defences. Between the Saxon and the medieval defences, broadly the High Town area, deposit depth is generally between c.1.05m and 1.95m. In the extramural suburbs deposit depth is generally significantly less. Deeper and waterlogged deposits are confined to watercourses and their margins or floodplains. Where these coincide with the historic occupied area, deposits of exceptional importance occur. These can be listed as follows:

- The Wye riverside (sampled at the bridgehead Meade & Tompkinson/Left Bank site)
- The King's Ditch (a north-south stream valley west of the cathedral, sampled in three locations, one large-scale, the others small-scale)
- The Widemarsh floodplain (sampled on one evaluation site in the Widemarsh Street suburb)
- The old Saxon north ditch (running parallel to High Town, High Street and Eign Gate, sampled at various locations)

Of these four, the Saxon north ditch is the best known and the Widemarsh and Wye floodplains are very little known. All interventions into these zones have however yielded outstanding results in terms of the preservation of organic material (structural and artefactual), preservation of environmental remains and overall depth of stratified deposit.

***RP51 The extension of the excavated sample within or into identified zones of exceptional deposit preservation***





9. LiDAR bare-earth image of the modern surface of Hereford with the Wye in the foreground, the king's Ditch running down to it just left of centre and the Widemarsh floodplain behind the city in the background. The vertically-exaggerated earthworks of Castle Green are in the right (east) foreground (Environment Agency Geomatics Team)

## THE PALEOENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

Following on from above, there is a need for further work on environmental evidence from exceptional deposits, specifically leading to a clearer view of:

- The ecological setting from which settlement at Hereford emerged
- Changes in the ecology of the hinterland in response to the growth of Hereford
- Evidence for everyday urban life, changes in diet, use of agricultural materials in industrial processes

***RP52 There is a need for further environmental sampling and analysis from well-preserved deposits in the city centre and its immediate hinterland***

## UNDERSTANDING DEPOSITS

In order to facilitate the better management of the buried archaeological resource and protect the most significant assets, the continued evolution of the Hereford deposit model is vital. To do this, it is imperative that published interventions are accompanied by the essential information of levels related to Ordnance Datum. It is also highly desirable that as many interventions as

possible – in the absence of sound archaeological reasons not to penetrate significant archaeological horizons – penetrate to and record the depth and character of the natural ground

***RP53 Publication of contractor and final excavation reports with reduced O.D. levels and, wherever possible, drawn sectional information***

## 4. NEIGHBOURHOOD RESEARCH AGENDAS

In 2010 the *Characterisation of the historic townscape of central Hereford* (Baker 2010b) examined the historic urban landscape of Hereford from the standpoint that the historic streets, plots and buildings of the city centre are as much a part of the archaeology as buried archaeological deposits and individual standing 'ancient monuments'. The characterisation sought to identify, map, and, most importantly, explain, the differences in character that are clearly apparent between one street and the next around the historic city. The variables used to identify and express these character differences were:

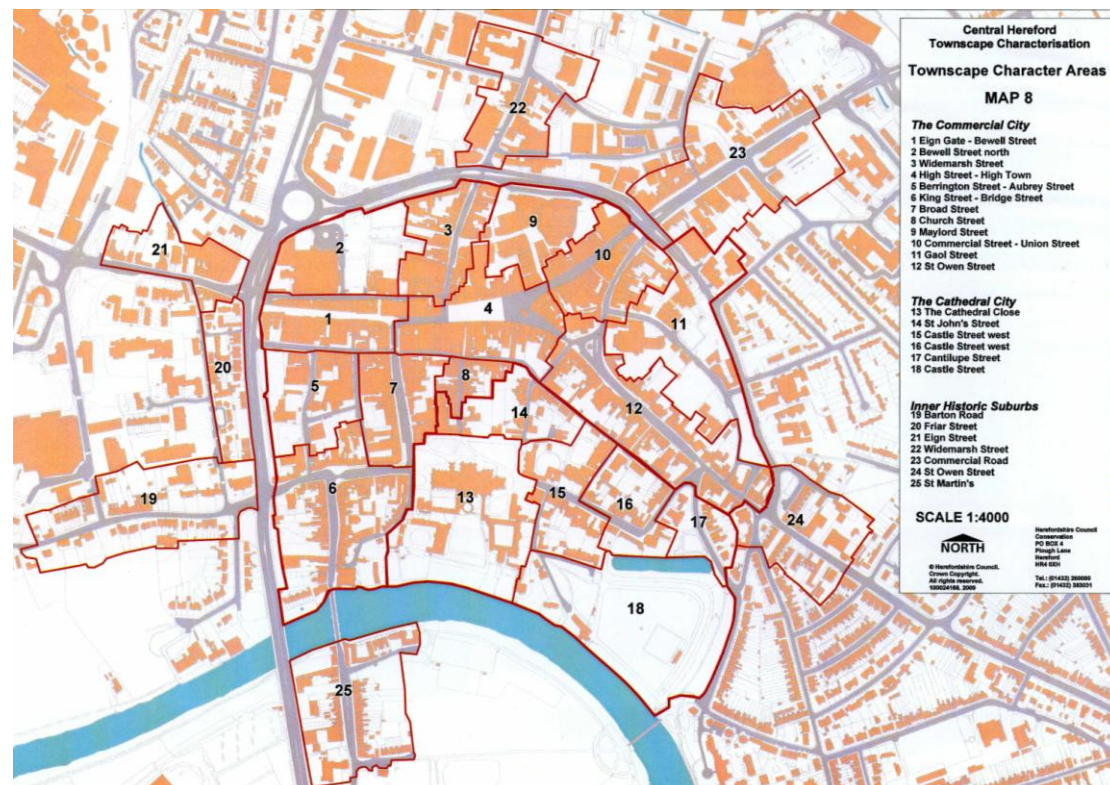
- The natural topographical background ('the site')
- Building form
- Building age
- Townscape grain character
- Modern land-use

These variables were assessed against the background of a town-plan analysis – breaking-down the two-dimensional form of the urban landscape into its component streets and associated plot-series – and the archaeological data, to produce a map of 'character areas', each of which is argued to be identifiably distinct from neighbouring areas. Above and beyond these individual areas, the city (exclusive of the suburbs) was argued to be divisible into two broader component parts or districts, higher-order plan divisions, labelled 'the commercial city' and 'the cathedral city', the former characterised by generally commercial land-uses and very roughly coterminous with High Town and the adjacent streets, the latter dominated by the cathedral and its close, the cathedral school, and professional and residential land uses. These character areas are illustrated by the map below. Because these modern character areas have been, to a large extent, formed by ancient or very long-term historical processes, the archaeological character of each also, to some degree, varies.

The following very brief summary reiterates the points made above in relation to research priorities (**RPs**) and gaps in current knowledge, but is organised according to character area, providing an alternative, spatial, view of the principal issues facing the future of archaeological research in the city. The most general, city-wide, research priorities (for example RP 42 the need for repairs-related building recording) are taken to apply to all character areas and are not listed separately for each.

Readers are therefore referred to the text above for further details of the research priorities listed, and to the 2010 *historic townscape characterisation* for further details of the derivation of the character areas. **The townscape**

**characterisation is available on line via the Conservation Resources section of the Herefordshire Council website.**



10. Hereford townscape character areas: the historic 'neighbourhoods' defined by the 2010 historic townscape characterisation

## TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

## The Commercial City

## 1. Eign Gate – Bewell Street

## RP25 Late pre-Conquest extramural occupation and planning

## RP29 Investigation of medieval city gates

RP31 Continuing investigation of the parish churches

RP51 Area of exceptional deposit (Saxon north ditch)

## RP52 Further environmental sampling of exceptional deposit

## 2. Bewell Street north

## RP25 Late pre-Conquest extramural occupation and planning

### 3. Widemarsh Street

## RP29 Investigation of medieval city gates

### RP34 Investigating the Jewish quarter

#### **4. High Street – High Town**

RP19 Dating the pre-Conquest defences  
RP34 Investigating the Jewish quarter  
RP51 Area of exceptional deposit (Saxon north ditch)  
RP52 Further environmental sampling of exceptional deposit

#### **5. Berrington Street – Aubrey Street**

RP14 Further investigation of middle-Saxon occupation  
RP19 Dating the pre-Conquest defences  
RP27 Further investigation of character of burh interior  
RP44 Investigating complete tenement plans and building plans  
RP45 Investigating back-plot intensification and the 'burgage cycle'  
RP51 Area of exceptional deposit (King's Ditch, and riverside)  
RP52 Further environmental sampling of exceptional deposit

#### **6. King Street – Bridge Street**

RP17 Investigating presence of pre-Conquest riverside defences  
RP27 Further investigation of character of burh interior  
RP29 Investigation of medieval city gates  
RP32 Investigation of demolished churches  
RP51 Area of exceptional deposit (King's Ditch)  
RP52 Further environmental sampling of exceptional deposit

#### **7. Broad Street**

RP9 Further investigation of in-situ Roman deposits  
RP19 Dating the pre-Conquest defences  
RP22 Investigation of canonical plots and residences  
RP27 Further investigation of character of burh interior  
RP29 Further investigation of medieval city gates ('Norgate')

#### **8. Church Street**

RP19 Dating the pre-Conquest defences  
RP22 Investigation of canonical plots and residences  
RP27 Further investigation of character of burh interior

#### **9. Maylord Street**

RP34 Investigating the Jewish quarter



## **10. Commercial Street – Union Street**

RP29 Further investigation of medieval city gates

## **11. Gaol Street**

## **12. St Owen Street**

RP32 Investigation of demolished churches

RP29 Further investigation of medieval city gates

RP51 Area of exceptional deposit (Saxon north ditch)

RP52 Further environmental sampling of exceptional deposit

## **The Cathedral City**

### **13. The Cathedral Close**

RP11 Further investigation of the cathedral close

RP17 Investigating presence of pre-Conquest riverside defences

RP20 Investigation of the cathedral churches building sequence

RP30 Investigation of demolished medieval close buildings

### **14. St John's Street**

RP16 Search for missing east side of stage 1 defences

RP19 Dating the pre-Conquest defences

RP22 Further investigation of canonical plots and residences

RP27 Further investigation of character of burh interior

### **15. Castle Street west**

RP16 Search for missing east side of stage 1 defences

RP22 Further investigation of canonical plots and residences

RP27 Further investigation of character of burh interior

### **16. Castle Street east**

RP27 Further investigation of character of burh interior

### **17. Cantilupe Street**

RP19 Dating the pre-Conquest defences

RP27 Further investigation of character of burh interior

## **18. Hereford Castle**

RP13 Further investigation of pre-Conquest background  
RP12, 21 Further investigation of St Guthlac's and burial ground  
RP16 Search for missing east side of stage 1 defences  
RP28 Further investigation of the medieval character of Hereford Castle  
RP46 Investigation of Castle Green – castle relationship

## **Inner historic suburbs**

### **19. Barton Road**

### **20. Friar Street**

### **21. Eign Street**

RP25 Late pre-Conquest extramural occupation and planning  
RP35 Post-Conquest suburban growth and decline  
RP36 Post-Conquest suburban occupational structure

### **22. Widemarsh Street**

RP35 Post-Conquest suburban growth and decline  
RP36 Post-Conquest suburban occupational structure  
RP51 Area of exceptional deposit (Widemarsh industrial tenements)  
RP52 Further environmental sampling of exceptional deposit

### **23. Commercial Road**

RP25 Late pre-Conquest extramural occupation and planning  
RP35 Post-Conquest suburban growth and decline  
RP36 Post-Conquest suburban occupational structure

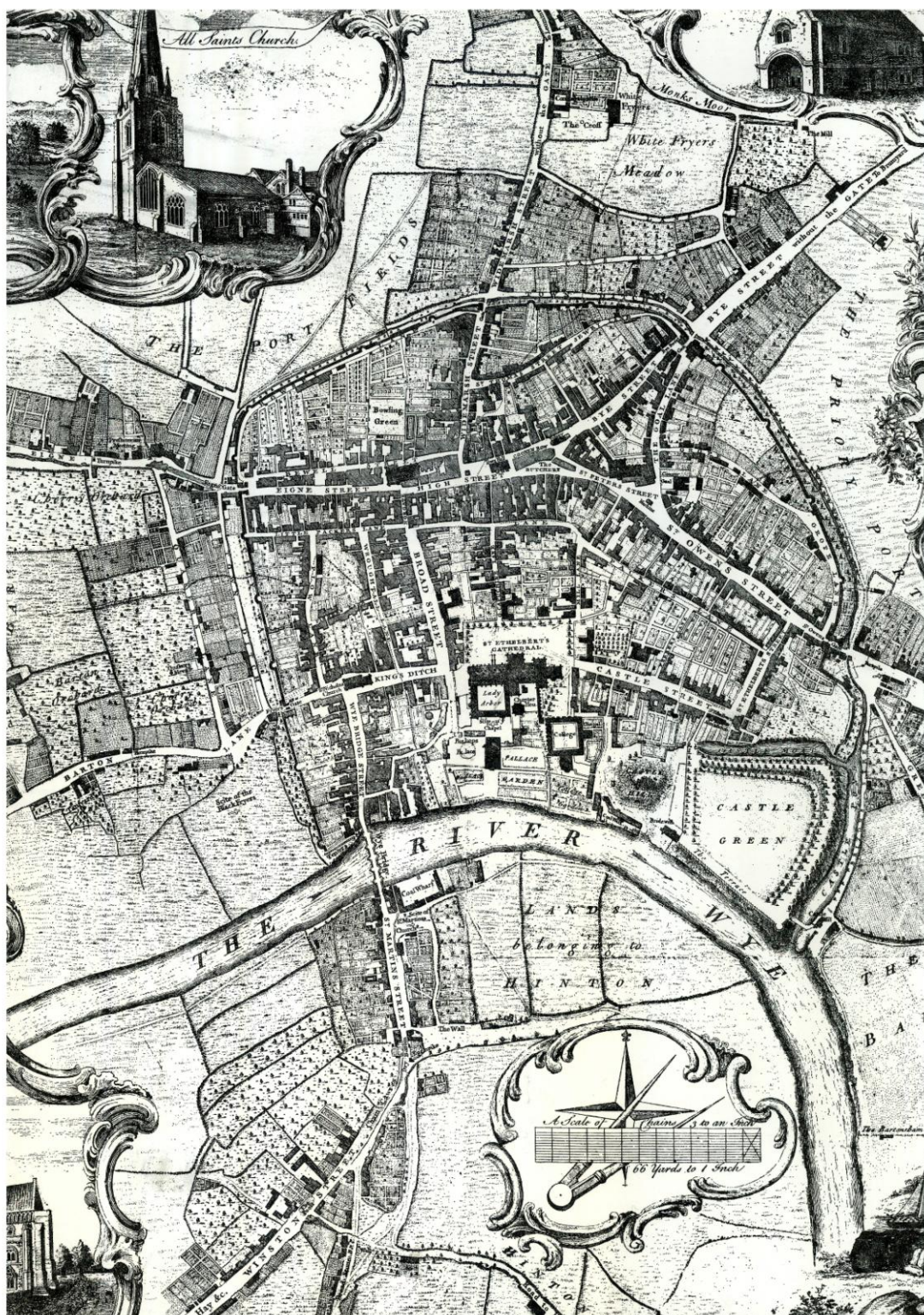
### **24. St Owen Street**

RP32 Investigation of demolished churches  
RP35 Post-Conquest suburban growth and decline  
RP36 Post-Conquest suburban occupational structure

### **25. St Martins**

RP15 Further investigation of the Wye crossing  
RP25 Late pre-Conquest extramural occupation and planning  
RP32 Investigation of demolished churches  
RP35 Post-Conquest suburban growth and decline  
RP36 Post-Conquest suburban occupational structure





11. Isaac Taylor's 1757 Map of Hereford (detail of central area)

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Abbreviation: TWNFC: Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club

## APPENDIX:

The Hereford archaeological research framework seminar, January 25<sup>th</sup> 2012

### ATTENDEES

Nigel Baker  
Andy Boucher  
Dan Barrett  
Henry Connor  
Julian Cotton  
Kath Crooks  
James Dinn  
John Eisel  
Tony Fleming  
Tim Hoverd  
Pat Hughes  
Duncan James  
Mike Kimber  
Lisa Moffett  
PJ Pikes  
Stephanie Ratkai  
Keith Ray  
Melissa Seddon  
Huw Sherlock  
Ron Shoesmith  
Judy Stevenson  
Neil Surety  
(and one indecipherable signature, with apologies)

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