CHESHIRE HISTORIC TOWNS SURVEY

Audlem

Archaeological Assessment

2003

CHESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

ENGLISH HERITAGE

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1. SUMMARY

Audlem is a small historic town, whose origins can be traced back to the early medieval period. It was granted a market charter in the late 13th century and although the success of this is unknown, Audlem was home to a successful market in the post medieval period. The historic character of the township has been retained, with a number of post medieval buildings still standing, including a fine mid-17th century Grammar School.

1.2. Topography and Geology

The town lies c 60m AOD in the south, rising to 70m AOD in the north. It is close to the Shropshire border in an area of undulating pasture land, approximately 7km south of Nantwich.

The underlying geology is Middle Keuper Marl and Upper Keuper Marl Saliferous Beds, above which is Glacial Sand and Gravel (Geological Survey of Great Britain 1967). The soils developed on these deposits are brown sands and argillic brown earths which are graded classes 2-3 and are suited to pasture (Furness 1978, 82).

The River Weaver passes to the west of Audlem and a tributary stream to the east. It is situated on two major roads which have been important from at least the 18th century: the A529 which runs north to Nantwich and south to Market Drayton, and the A525 which runs west to Whitchurch and east to Newcastle-under-Lyme.

1.3 Administrative Unit

During the medieval period Audlem parish lay within the hundred of Nantwich, which included four other townships (Sylvester and Nulty 1958, 36). Dunn suggests that Audlem parish may have originally been part of the parish of Wybunbury, it was also part of Nantwich Deanery (1987, 10, 24). Today Audlem is a Civil Parish in the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich.

1.4 Place Name

Audlem is first recorded in 1086, as *Aldelime*. The second element of the name refers to 'The Lyme', an ancient name for the Pennine borders. The first element may be a personal name such as *Alda* or *Ealda*, however it is more likely to be a reference to 'Ald' meaning 'old or former', and translates as '*formerly in the Lyme*' (Dodgson 1971, 83).

2.   SOURCES

2.1   Historical

The few sources that are available for Audlem include Ormerod's *History of Cheshire* (1882, 253 - 268) which provides a good narrative of Audlem's manorial and ecclesiastical histories and Latham's (1986) account of the parish of Audlem and its townships. The County Record Office (CRO) contains a collection of primary documents including deeds and parish registers. These potentially contain valuable information but are unfortunately beyond the remit of the present survey.

2.2   Cartographic

The earliest maps to depict the settlement of Audlem are Saxton's map of 1577 and John Speed's map of 1605-10. Burdett's county map of 1777 is the first to show an outline plan of the town and the road network. However, the first map to show the township in detail, prior to the Ordnance Survey (OS) First Edition 6":1 mile map surveyed 1875, is the tithe map of 1840.

2.3   Archaeological

Before the present assessment there were seven entries listed for Audlem in the County Sites and Monuments Record (CSMR), which are depicted on Figure 1. Where sites and finds have been identified from the CSMR, the relevant reference is provided throughout this assessment. The present survey has generated six new sites, which are mainly places of nonconformist worship.

In 1948, a medieval pottery kiln was discovered at Audlem, to the north of St James' church (CSMR 2088/4 see 3.3.4). In recent years a handful of archaeological excavations and watching briefs have taken place in Audlem. The most notable of these is the excavation undertaken by Earthworks Archaeological Services (2000) which uncovered, amongst other features a corn drying kiln behind the Lamb Public House. This has been radiocarbon dated to between the early 14th and the 15th centuries.

Watching briefs carried out at Audlem include an observation of the foundations of St James' church as renovations to the boiler complex were carried out (Earthworks, 2000) and the discovery of a possible 18th century property boundary at St James' Court, to the west of the medieval back lane called Churchfields (Earthworks, 1999).

3.   HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SUMMARY

3.1   Prehistoric and Roman

There are no known archaeological records or sites in Audlem or the surrounding area, to suggest that there was any activity during the prehistoric and Romano British periods.

3.2   Early Medieval

St James' churchyard is sub-circular and this shape is typical of ecclesiastical foundations of the early medieval period (Friar 1991, 75). However, whether the medieval church of St James had an early medieval predecessor is unknown.

The Domesday Survey records that:

'*The same Richard [De Vernon] holds ALDELIME. Osmaer held it. There [are] 2 hides that pay geld. The land is for 5 ploughs. In demense is 1 [plough] and 1 serf, and 1 villein and 1 radman and 1 bordar with 1 plough. There [are] 2 acres of meadow. Wood 2 leagues long a and 1 league wide, and 2 hays and a hawks eyrie. Value before TRE it was worth 20s; now 8s. He found it waste.*'

(Harris and Thacker 1987, 352)

The Domesday Survey records a small agricultural settlement but does not provide any clues as to its location. Audlem obviously suffered from the 'harrying of the north', which reduced the value of the settlement significantly.

3.3   Medieval

3.3.2 The Manor

The vill of Audlem was a parcel of the Norman Barony of Shipbrook, held by Richard de Vernon. The first lord of the manor after the conquest was Sir Hugh Traylebrew, whose family had assumed the local name of *Aldelym* by 1296. Later in this year the manor was divided, giving the families of the Hughs and Wrenburys a moeity (Ormerod 1882, 465). The daughter and heir of Richard de Hugh married Richard de Massey before 1403, and until 1712 this part of the manor was held by the Massey family (Latham 1997, 24). During the late 14th century, one sixth of the manor was conveyed to the Wettenhall family, by the Wrenburys (Latham 1997, 24).

3.3.3 Settlement

The location of a medieval manor house is unrecorded, although Moss House, 'the ancient hall of the manor' which lies c 500m north-west of St James' church, was the seat of the Masseys (and later the Taylors) until the 18th century (Latham 1997, 24).

The rights to hold a market and fair at Audlem were granted to Thomas de Aldelym in 1295. The weekly market was to be held on a Thursday, and a three day fair was held over the vigil, feast and morrow of the feast of St James the Apostle on the 24th-26th July (Letters 2002; Ormerod 1882, 468). However, the commercial success of the medieval market is unrecorded.

3.3.4 Economy

Data for Cheshire towns is rare because in the medieval period the shire was exempt from national taxation, having its own taxation system, the Mize. The 'Cheshire Mize' return for *Aldelym* of 66s 8d was a respectable sum, comparable

with Malpas (64s.) and Sandbach (60s 10d) (Booth 1985). Much of the town's prosperity appears to have been derived from agriculture. In the manorial records of Audlem there are numerous references to lands at Audlem and in a will of 1591 '...two thirds of a moiety of the manor of Audlem, consisting of 13 messuages, 200 acres of land, 40 of meadow, 200 of pasture, 20 of wood and 100 of turbary' were recorded (Ormerod 1882, 468). Evidence of the former open field system is observed on the OS First Edition 6":1 mile map surveyed 1875, which shows a number of long narrow fields typical of enclosed ridge and furrow.

Other evidence of possible commercial activity was discovered at Audlem in 1948 when a pottery kiln was uncovered to the north of the Church of St James (CSMR 2088/4). It has been suggested that pottery was produced here for about fifty years, between c AD 1250 and 1300 (Webster and Dunning 1960, 125). Pottery vessels reconstructed from sherds found during the excavation, are similar to those found in the surrounding area (Webster & Dunning 1960, 124-5). Audlem's ceramic products have been found at the medieval manor house at Northwood Farm in the adjacent parish of Dodcott-cum-Wilkesley (SJ64574008), which suggests that pottery manufacture at Audlem was undertaken as a commercial enterprise, and may have supplied the local hinterland. Of the six hundredweight of sherds recovered from the kiln site, most were of a soft, rather sandy fabric with the colour ranging from light red to cream. Glazed sherds had an irregular spread of a dark green coloured glaze, some with an orange tinge (Webster & Dunning 1960, 124-5).

Also indicative of the local economy is the corn drying kiln that was found to the rear of the Lamb Public House in 2000 by Earthworks Archaeological Services. Interestingly the kiln was found to contain a thick layer of oats which had been processed prior to burning. It has been suggested by comparison with similar examples, that the oats were used as a fuel rather than as part of the brewing process (Earthworks, 2000, interim information). Two samples were taken from the kiln and radiocarbon dated, from which the following results were obtained: cal AD 1302-1443, and cal AD 1321- 1453 (ibid).

It is not known whether there was a medieval mill at Audlem. Audlem is omitted from the most reliable source available in Cheshire (Bott 1985) but it has been suggested that the Old Mill which was first documented in 1819 may have had medieval origins (Latham 1979, 88).

3.3.4 Religion

Although the church of St. James is Perpendicular in style (Salter 1995, 21), the earliest architectural feature is the south porch, which dates from the late 13th century. The plan of the church comprises a nave with a north and south aisle, and a chapel and chancel at the eastern end. The tower at the west end of the north aisle includes some 14th century work (Pevsner and Hubbard 1971, 68). During the reign of Edward I (1272-1307) the church was presented to the Priory of St Thomas in Stafford, which also appropriated the rectory (Ormerod 1882, 468). It is not clear whether these acts occurred simultaneously. Latham records that by 1291, the church was a parochial centre in the *Taxatio Ecclesiastica* (Latham 1997, 21). In the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of 1535, Audlem's church was valued at £5 16s 8d (Ormerod 1882, 465).

3.3.5 The Surrounding Area

There are a handful of medieval moated sites in the area, for example, at Butterley Heys, 2km south-west of Audlem, in the parish of Dodcott-cum-Wilkesley, a 17th-century farmhouse stands on the site of a partially surviving medieval moat (CSMR 394/1).

3.4   Post Medieval

3.4.1 Landowners

The Massey and Wrenbury families continued to hold their moieties of the manor, until it was united by the Taylors in 1817. The manor then passed to the Earl of Kilmorey, who held it in 1880 (Ormerod 1882, 468).

3.4.2 Settlement

In 1779 Bishop Porteus's visit to Audlem recorded that the village contained some 500 houses (Latham 1997, 42), a figure which appears to be an overestimation. Animal baiting and cock fighting were a popular pastime amongst the residents of Audlem, and a tethering stone for bear baiting still stands below the church steps. Stocks also appear to have '...stood by the church' (Crossley 1949, 49). From the mid-18th century onwards a number of civic buildings were established in Audlem, including a Police Station (1853), a Fire Station (1898) and a Public Hall (1904) (Crossley 1949, 44-49).

As early as 1635, William Gamul bequeathed £30 for the 'maintenance, erection and continuance' of a school. William's brother Thomas (a London grocer), entrusted £500, which was used to build a schoolhouse and Master's dwelling house and in 1666-7 Sir William Bolton (Lord Mayor of London), left the sum of £20 to Audlem school, where it is believed he was a former pupil (Latham 1997, 36). Audlem Grammar School was erected between 1652-5, and was built of brick, with two tiers of mullioned windows, and four small gables (Pevsner and Hubbard 1971, 69). An original Free School was founded by Trypheua Bolton for the education of poor boys and girls of Audlem and Hankelow Parish. This school appears to have been replaced by a new building in 1846 (Bagshaw 1850, 353).

3.4.3 Economy

Until the Industrial Revolution, a significant proportion of the population was employed in agriculture. During most of the post medieval period, arable regimes were widely practised, primarily concerned with the production of potatoes, oats and hay. However, during the 19th century these practices changed to the rearing of stock, and dairy farming (Latham 1997, 81). In 1850, 21 farmers were recorded (Bagshaw 1850, 353).   In 1914, farmers, agricultural implement makers, cow keepers and a miller were all recorded (Kelly 1914, 55). Other trades represented at Audlem include a tailor, chemist and grocer (1850), a watchmaker (1861), a corn dealer (1872), a coal merchant (1873), a shoemaker and ostler (1881) (Latham 1997, 87-93). Exhaustive lists of other occupations practised in the town from the mid 19th century to the early 20th centuries can be found in Bagshaw (1850), Morris

and Co (1874) and Kelly (1892, 1914 and 1939). The population of Audlem also boasted a number of 'professional men', including Gabrial Wettenhall, a barrister of considerable repute, who occupied a house on the north side of Foregate Street before 1745. Another resident was the architect William Barker (d 1771), who was responsible for the design of The Phoenix and The Crown inns (Latham 1997, 39-40).

The existence of the market, and Audlem's location on two important routeways may have provided the commercial incentive for the establishment of a brewing industry and public houses. As early as 1657, the Quarter Session recorded their '*...dislikes of the byndinge of Richard Eldershaw of Audlem to brew and sell ale...*' (Morrill 1974, 241). Between 1765-77 five inns were recorded in the town - The Griffin, The Hawk and Buckle, The Horseshoe, The Phoenix and The Goat's Head (MacGregor 1992, 87). The Bridge Inn, which stands adjacent to the canal, catered for waterborne traffic and included the provision of stabling for horses (Latham, 1997, 105).

An industry closely associated with the canal was that of rope making. A characteristic of the industry was a 'Rope Walk' (located between Corbrook and Little Heath at Audlem), a lengthy street, which was used to lay out the component fibres prior to their being twisted into rope (Latham, 1997, 90).

The fate of the medieval and early post-medieval market is unclear, but it appears to have lapsed, because a new market was established c1660 (Phillips and Smith 1994, 105). This later market may have enjoyed some commercial success, since the present market hall or 'Butter Market' (CSMR 2088/5) was constructed in the early 18th century to the south of the church, and comprises a roof, with a forward facing pediment supported by eight Tuscan pillars. The structure is open on all sides, a design feature common in post medieval market structures. (DoE, 1986, 11). Towards the close of the 18th century the markets and fairs of Audlem were in apparent decline, as they are omitted from the 1792 survey of Cheshire Fairs (Phillips and Smith 1994, 105). In the late 19th century the market was: '...recently revived by Mr. Taylor', but 'The revival was short, however, and both market and fair may be said to be now represented by the wakes - Wake Sunday being that nearest to the second of October' (Ormerod 1882, 468). A form of market was still held in 1906, and in 1939 the Parish Council bought the market rights for the sum of £5 (Latham 1997, 90).

3.4.5 Religion

In 1538 Combermere Abbey was dissolved, with all its possessions including the tithes of Audlem passing to the Crown (Harris, 1980, 155). The value of St James' church at this time is unrecorded, although during the 16th and 17th centuries the tithes and glebes of Audlem were known to be small (ibid, 7). During the Commonwealth (1649-60) the church was awarded £40 per annum for the maintenance of a Minster, by the 'Committee for Plundered Ministers' (Latham 1997, 36). In 1700 the vicar of Audlem, a John Oliver, possessed a stipend valued at approximately £60 (Latham 1997, 39). The tithes of the parish were commuted in 1839 (Ormerod 1882, 469).

During the late 16th century the church appears to have been remodelled, possibly to accommodate a rise in the town's population (Latham 1997, 29). The original vicarage, which was located on the corner of Vicarage Lane opposite the church steps, was replaced by a new building in 1632 (Latham 1997, 31). The fabric of the church building was severely damaged during the late 18th century, when the Parish Registers record that: 'In September 1777 when the People were in church a great earthquake happened which shook the Fabrick so that a large stone fell out of one of the Windows of the steeple' (Ormerod 1882, 472).

The damage sustained by the church does not appear to have been rectified because in 1815 the side of the church tower collapsed (Latham 1997, 42). It was not until 1884 that serious consideration was given to repairing the church, when Reverend Atkinson began a campaign to raise funds. The campaign raised the sum of three thousand pounds, and the reconstructed church was opened for worship in 1885 (Latham 1997, 45).

During the 1790s emigration from Ireland to the north-west of England began to rise. This demographic phenomenon was a consequence of those seeking employment in the rapidly expanding industrial areas, and later to the effects of the potato famine. This emigration of Roman Catholics during the early years of the 19th century saw Audlem become a centre for the 'saying of mass' (VCH, 1980, 93).

The earliest references to nonconformity in Audlem appear in 1805, when the American Evangelist Lorenzo Dow is thought to have preached here (Latham, 1997 53). The Wesleyans had opened their chapel in the town by 1833, followed by the Primitive Methodists in 1847, and a Baptist Chapel was opened in 1841 (Bagshaw, 1850, 353).

3.4.6 Population

The population in 1664 has been estimated as 575 (MacGregor 1992, 84). From 1801-1971, with the exception of 1881 for which data is omitted, population data for Audlem parish is available from the census returns (printed in Harris, 1979, 204) and for 1981 and 1991 census data has been reproduced under Class Licence Number C01W0000125 with the permission of the Controller of the HMSO.

1801	965	**1911**	1480
1811	1040	**1921**	1394
1821	1307	**1931**	1346
1831	1558	**1951**	1315
1841	1621	**1961**	1172
1851	1,591	**1971**	1293
1861	1510	**1981**	1654
1871	1521	**1991**	1797
1891	1371		
1901	1455		

3.4.7 The Surrounding Area

There are a number of 17th-century farmhouses dotted across the surrounding landscape, of which many are listed Grade II. For example, Dairy House Farmhouse at Buerton 2km east of Audlem, which dates back to the 17th century (CSMR 2096/1); and Ball Farmhouse at Hankelow 2km north of Audlem which dates back to the 16th or early 17th century (CSMR 2079/1).

3.4.8 Transport and Communications

The Nantwich - Audlem road was turnpiked in 1767, as was the Whitchurch - Audlem Road The Market Drayton - Nantwich road was turnpiked in 1887, with a toll house located on the corner of the Market Drayton Road (Harrison 1886, 80).

Thomas Telford's Shropshire Union Canal was opened in 1835, with the Audlem section incorporating a flight of fifteen locks. A small wharf area was established in the town, and was used to ship products such as cheese, butter, coal and road stone. The Census of 1851 recorded that 66 people were living on boats in the town (Latham 1979, 118). As late as 1920, commercial trade was still significant, although after this time it rapidly declined (ibid, 118).

The Nantwich - Market Drayton Railway was opened in 1863, and included a station at Audlem (located approximately 1km to the south-west, at Copthorne). The line was primarily used for the movement of freight, especially agricultural produce such as cheese, hay and fruit, as well as some livestock. In September 1874 approximately sixty tons of freight was moved, at a cost of £14 4s 10d. The station was decommissioned in 1967 (Latham 1997, 120-1).

4.   PLAN COMPONENTS : (Figure 2)

The settlement has been divided into 14 components (prefixed by **COM**). These have been tentatively sub-divided by period, although there is need for further work to define the components more closely. Many would have spanned more than one period but are discussed under their earliest likely date of occurrence. The primary documentation for Audlem has been little studied and what archaeological work has been carried out has tended to be concentrated in the area to the north of the church. In these circumstances it is only possible to present a model for development to be tested and refined against future work.

EARLY MEDIEVAL AD 540-1066 (Figure 2)

COM 1 - Early Medieval Settlement?

MEDIEVAL c 1066-1540 (Figure 2)

COM 2 - St James' Church
COM 3 - Tenements
COM 4 - Tenements/Green
COM 5 - Market Place
COM 6 - Tenements

COM 7 - Tenements
COM 8 - Tenements
COM 9 - Tenements
COM 10 - Moss Hall, site of medieval manor house?

POST MEDIEVAL c.1875 (Figure 2)

COM 11 - Settlement
COM 12 - Flour Mill
COM 13 - Shropshire Union Canal
COM 14 - Great Western Railway

MODERN c 2000 (Figure 2)

COM 15 - Settlement

4.1   Early Medieval (Figure 2)

COM 1 outlines the area of a potential early medieval religious centre located within the churchyard of St James' Church and a sub-circular enclosure to the north. The circularity of the churchyard and its raised internal level, are topographical features often associated with early medieval ecclesiastical foundations (Friar 1991, 75). If Audlem possessed an early medieval church its logical location would be on the site of the later church of St. James', a phenomenon evident in other settlements (Platt 1988, 26-9, Taylor and Muir 1983, 58-61). If this model is correct, then it is likely that the churchyard would have extended over a larger area, which is suggested by the truncation and angularity of the northern boundary of the churchyard.

4.2   Medieval (Figure 2)

The present church of St. James has been dated architecturally (Pevsner and Hubbard 1971, 68) to the late 13th century, placing it firmly within the medieval period. The church and churchyard are identified as **COM 2**. As discussed above, **COM 3** and **COM 4** together with **COM 2,** form a compact sub-circular unit. However, by the medieval period **COM 3** had become an area of tenements. This layout persists even on modern OS maps, with buildings fronting onto Cheshire Street and long parallel property boundaries running at right angles from the street back towards what was presumably the common fields. Each of the tenements share a common and regular rear boundary, which appears to be a classic 'back lane', running between the settlement and its open fields (Friar 1991, 273). A pottery kiln was discovered in 1948 in the back of one such tenement in **COM 3** and more recently a corn drying kiln has been discovered, which suggests that this was also an area of industrial activity and agricultural processing. It is likely that these were just some of a wide range of activities that were carried out in these properties.

It has been suggested that **COM 3** may have been a Green, later undergoing development but this is far from clear. In 1812 a reference was made to 'Audlem Green' (Latimer 1979, 42), and although cited as being adjacent to a Blacksmith's shop, its location is unknown.   **COM 4,** meanwhile appears to have been undeveloped in 1840 as shown on the tithe map and only partially developed on the

Ordnance Survey First Edition 6":1 mile map surveyed 1875. This area, which is triangular in shape may have been a green, the site of a market or fair or it may simply have been an extension of **COM 3.**

Although there is no historical evidence recording the location of Audlem's medieval market, its likely location is the site of the post medieval market, which was held at the junction of Shropshire Street, Stafford Street and Cheshire Street (**COM 5**) In c1660 a market was revived at Audlem (Phillips and Smith 1994, 105), with the present market hall or 'Butter Market' being built in the early 18th century (Pevsner and Hubbard 1971, 68). The size of the market area suggests activity on a small scale. It may have been unsuccessful due to the competing market held in the nearby medieval settlement of Nantwich.

Six settlement components have been identified at Audlem, these are **COMs 3, 4**, **6**, **7, 8** and, **9**. Medieval tenements are usually (although not always) aligned along both sides of a street, and form a continuous street frontage, however **COM 6** shows a disrupted pattern. The morphology of tenements in the south of **COM 6** is unclear, with a disordered pattern of buildings, and no internal property boundaries. To the north there are just two properties, both with well preserved property boundaries of a similar length to **COM 3**. It is not clear whether all of **COM 6** was settled: it may even have extended as far north as **COM 4** on the east of Cheshire Street, later undergoing shrinkage. Alternatively, the whole of **COM 6** may have been developed on a piecemeal basis, and not fully developed during the medieval period.

To the south of the market place and the church, lie three other areas of potential medieval settlement plots (**COMs 7, 8** and **9)**. Of these, only **COM 7** shows a regular pattern, with buildings fronting onto Shropshire Street and demarcated property boundaries to the rear.

COM 8 has two building alignments: along Stafford Street to the north, and along School Lane to the east. The northern alignment has a disrupted pattern of internal boundaries, although its rear boundary is consistent and this appears to be the dominant frontage. Meanwhile, the School Lane area has a number of internal boundaries, and a regular rear boundary but, as the name suggests, it provides access to the Grammar school which was established in the mid-17th century. Therefore, it is possible that any development that took place along School Lane occurred after this date. Interestingly the shape of School Lane as shown on the tithe map of 1840 and the OS First Edition 6": 1 mile surveyed 1875, forms a reversed S-shape. This is a common characteristic of medieval ridge and furrow, which indicates that this area was formerly agricultural land. Buildings front onto Stafford Street in **COM 9**, which displays similar characteristics to **COM 8**.

Moss Hall (**COM 10**) has been identified as the possible site of a medieval manor house, based upon the location of a post medieval manor house from the 16th or 17th centuries (Pevsner and Hubbard 1971,69).

4.3   Post Medieval (Figure 2)

The nature of development during the earlier post medieval period is generally unknown, although the Grammar school dates from the mid-17th century. The later

post medieval development (identified as **COM 11**) includes the redevelopment of the medieval core, a ring of development surrounding the historic core, linear development along Stafford and Shropshire Street, the development of Little Heath, and a small number of commercial developments, notably the construction of the canal side quay. The expansion of the town is likely to have been stimulated by the opening of the Shropshire Union Canal (**COM 13**) in 1835, which provided Audlem with a small wharf area from which products such as cheese, butter, coal and road stone were transported. In 1863 the Nantwich - Market Drayton branch of the Great Western Railway (**COM 14**) was opened, which included the station, located approximately one kilometre to the south-west of Audlem, at Copthorne. The station was in use for over one hundred years, before being closed in 1967.

4.2.4 Modern (Figure 2)

Modern development at Audlem has generally occurred in areas outside of the town's historic core.   These developments include areas of housing, municipal leisure, civic institutions such as the Fire Service, and utilities such as sewage works. Little Heath is shown on the OS First Edition 6":1mile map surveyed 1875 as separate from Audlem, though modern development has joined the two settlements together.

5.   ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL POTENTIAL

5.1   Above-Ground Remains

The centre of Audlem still retains its historic character. The street pattern dates back to the medieval period if not earlier, and although the settlement has undergone development it is still possible to identify property boundary patterns that date back to the medieval period.   There are a number of historic buildings that survive, including the Grade II Listed Market Hall, which stands below the church of St James within the area of the medieval and post medieval market place. Another significant aspect of the town's architectural heritage are those structures associated with the canal, such as Wharf Cottage and two of Telford's bridges (DoE 1986, 1-14).

5.2   Below-Ground Remains

From the archaeological work carried out, there appear to be well preserved surviving medieval and post medieval archaeological deposits at Audlem. The first excavation to prove that archaeological deposits survive at Audlem was undertaken in 1948 to the rear of St. James's church and revealed a pottery kiln of a medieval date (Webster G & Dunning G 1960). In close proximity to this site, over fifty years later excavations carried out by Earthworks Archaeological Services in 1999 and 2000 led to the discovery of a potential corn drying kiln dating between the 14th and 15th centuries. The report for this is awaited so the level of preservation and the depth at which it was located are as yet unknown. Also uncovered was a series of post holes, which it has been suggested may even date back to the early medieval period. These are known to have been sealed below between 0.60m and 1m of overburden (Earthworks, 1999, 19). However, this work has been limited to a small area to the north of St James' Church, and the preservation and survival of deposits in the wider settlement has not been assessed.

6. PRIORITIES FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK

6.1 General

The study of Audlem would form part of a national research priority to examine the origins and development of medieval small towns and rural markets (Priority H5; English Heritage 1997, 49). Work at Audlem would fit into a number of these national priorities, particularly the following processes of change:

- PC6 Late Saxon to medieval

- PC7 Transition from medieval to post medieval traditions (c1300-1700AD)

6.2 Early Medieval

- Establish the nature and extent of settlement during the early medieval period.
- Establish whether there was a Saxon church on the site of St James' church and the nature and extent of this.

6.3 Medieval

- Establish the precise location of settlement areas and date their phases of expansion and contraction.
- Establish the nature of buildings on settlement plots.
- Examine evidence for medieval trade and industry.
- Establish the foundation date of the church of St James, and date phases of expansion.
- Establish the location of the town mill.

6.4 Post Medieval

- Establish precise location of settlement areas and date their phases of expansion and contraction.
- Examine any evidence for post medieval trade and industry.

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7.2   Maps

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8.   ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1: Audlem and the Surrounding Area
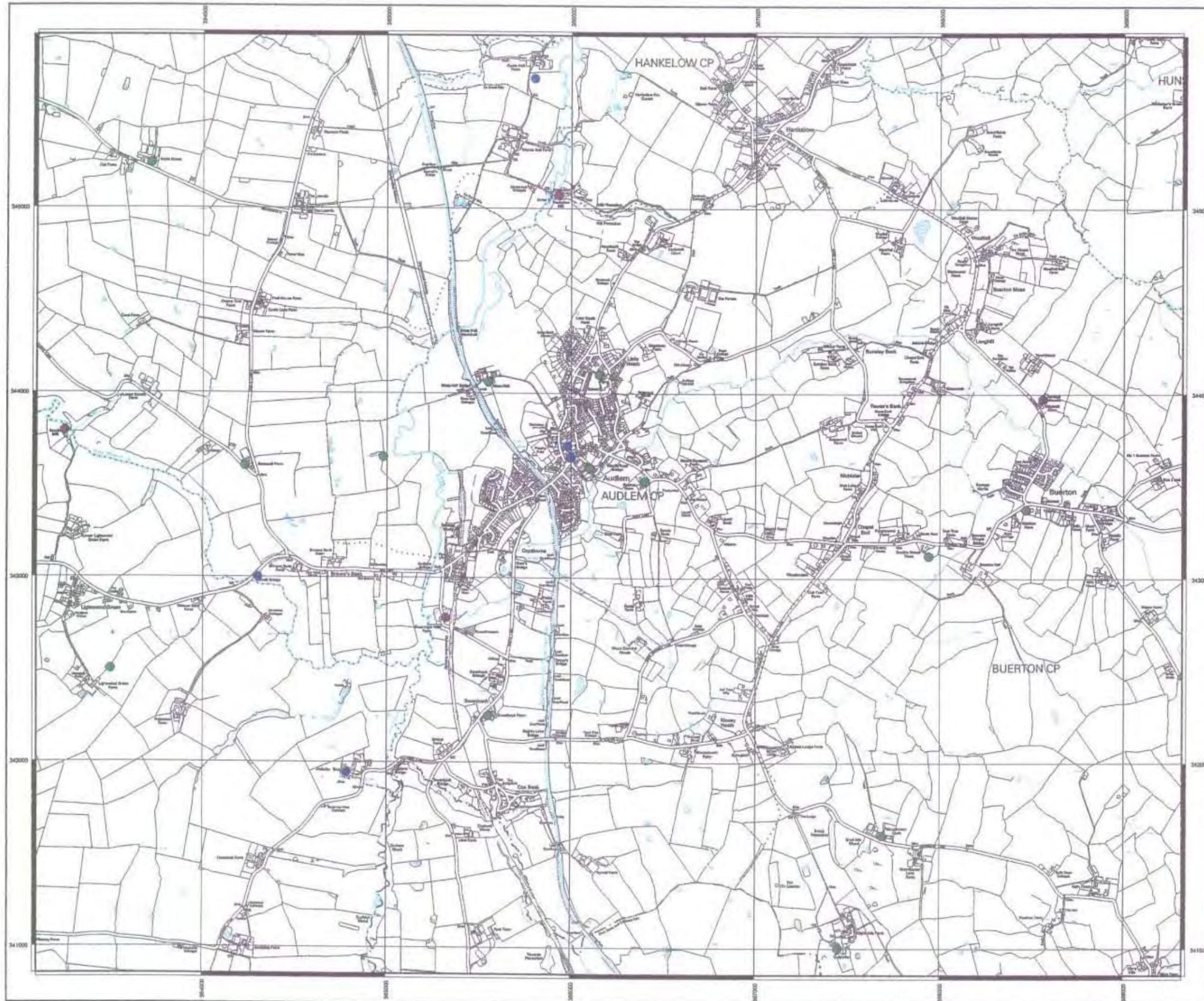Figure 2: The Development of Audlem

Figure 1
Audlem and the
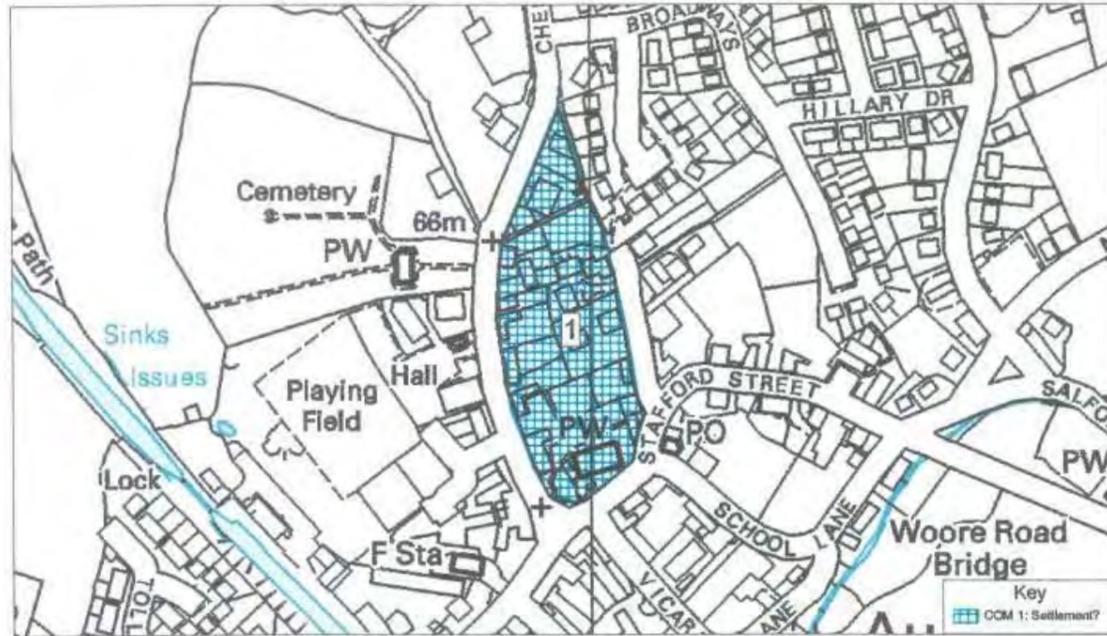Surrounding Area

Sites and Monuments

○ Prehistoric
● Romano-British
● Early Medieval
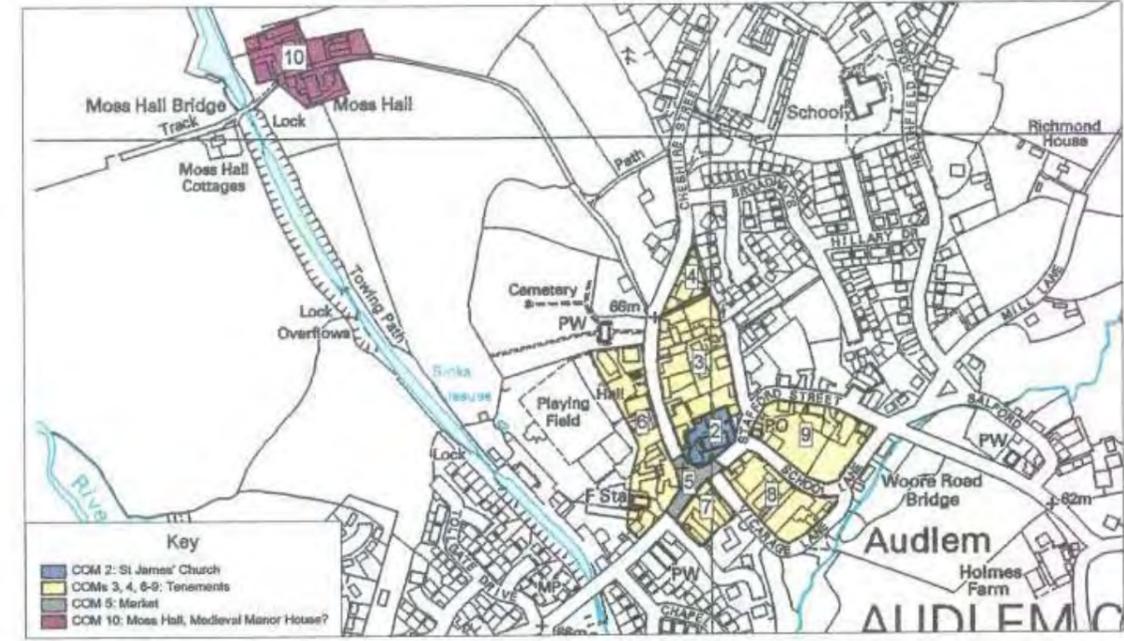● Medieval
● Post Medieval
● Modern

1:20000

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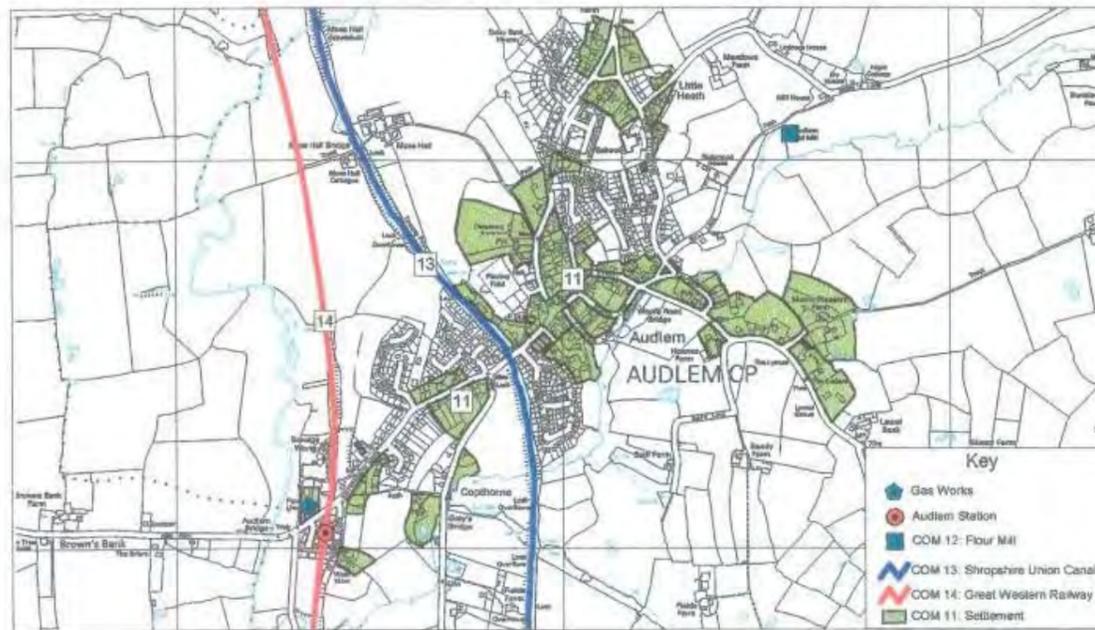
0   0.5   1 Kilometres
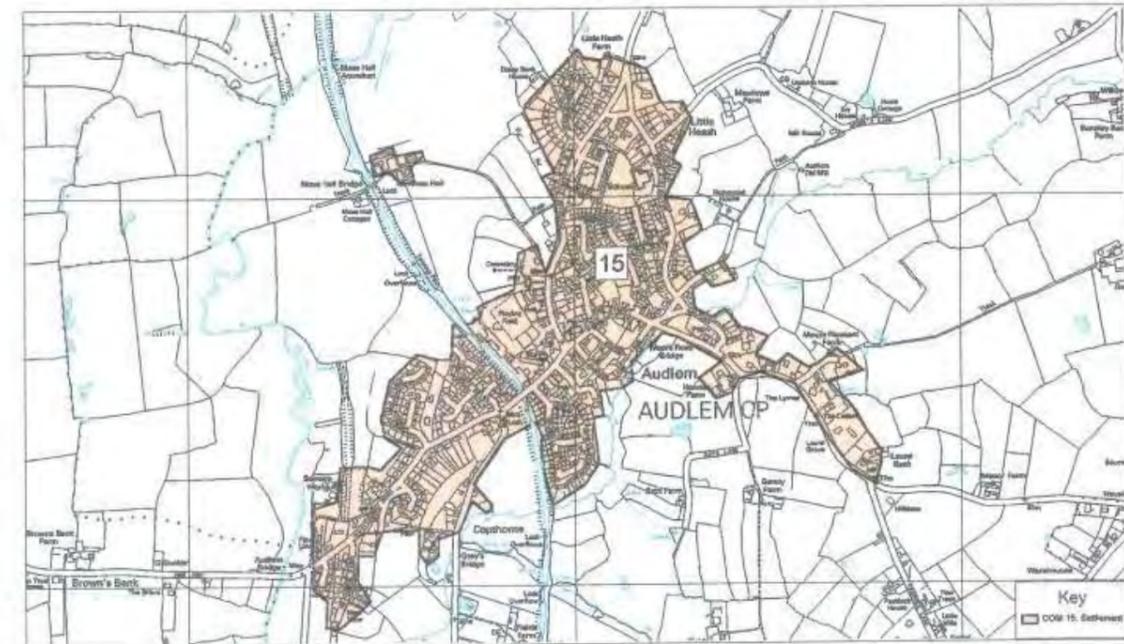
Early Medieval

0   50   100   Metres

1:4000

Key
COM 1: Settlement?

Medieval

0   200   400   Metres

1:7000

Key
COM 2: St James' Church
COMs 3, 4, 6-9: Tenements
COM 5: Market
COM 10: Moss Hall, Medieval Manor House?

Post Medieval c 1875

0   200   400   Metres

1:16000

Key
Gas Works
Audlem Station
COM 12: Flour Mill
COM 13: Shropshire Union Canal
COM 14: Great Western Railway
COM 11: Settlement

Modern c 2000

0   200   400   Metres

1:16000

Key
COM 15: Settlement

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