The Residence, 9 Mill Street Nantwich,

Cheshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Oxford Archaeology North

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Alexandra Countryside Investments Ltd

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SUMMARY

Alexandra Countryside Investments Ltd is seeking planning permission to construct a hotel and function room suite at 9 Mill Street, Nantwich, Cheshire (centred at SJ 65045 52219). This proposed development is situated on the site of Nantwich Bowling Green, and is adjacent to a Grade II* listed Georgian town house which currently operates as The Residence Restaurant and Bar. The town of Nantwich is known to be the site of significant historic remains, dating from the Roman Period to the present day, and has been included in the Cheshire Historic Towns Survey of 2003. The areas of Nantwich to the north and west of Mill Street have been subject to archaeological investigation, which provided evidence of extensive Roman and medieval activity alongside the River Weaver. As a consequence of this, Oxford Archaeology North was commissioned to undertake a programme of archaeological trial trenching on the site of the proposed development. The location of the trial trenches was designed to target areas which will be impacted upon by the construction of the function suite, accommodation block and by landscaping within an area of new car parking adjacent to Water Lode Street. The work was undertaken in July 2011.

Four trenches were excavated within the perimeter of the current bowling green. Trench 1 was at the north end of the site, measured 10m by 2m, and was orientated east/west. It was positioned to target the identification of any archaeological remains that might lie within the area of the proposed function suite and hotel. Trench 2A measured 15m by 2m on a north/south orientation, positioned at the eastern limit of the site. Excavation of this trench was halted after the discovery of a 575mm diameter live sewer pipe running the length of the trench. An alternative trench, Trench 2B, was then sited parallel to Trench 2A, but situated 2m further west. This trench also measured 15m by 2m, the aim of which was to target and identify any remains of archaeological significance within the area of the proposed hotel accommodation block. Trench 3 was positioned at the western limit of the site to target any archaeological remains that might be affected by construction of a new car park, where ground works will include landscaping and the excavation of tree pits. This was parallel to Water Lode Street, on a north/south orientation, and measured 5m by 2m.

The excavation of the trial trenches provided evidence for phases of activity dating from the late medieval to the post-medieval period, specifically alluvial deposits associated with the river, ditches or drainage channels (Trenches 1 and 2B) cutting through the natural clay, and brick walls associated with the division of the land around 9 Mill Street when it was split between a garden and orchard (Trenches 2B and 3). In addition, a number of modern services were also identified (Trenches 2A and 2B), as well as structural evidence and negative features (Trenches 1, 2B and 3). A small number of discreet waterlogged features remain undated, and their origin is as yet unresolved.

It is recommended that a programme of further archaeological works, in the form of an ongoing watching brief, be undertaken to inform whether the discreet features identified comprise part of larger sites of archaeological significance. This would entail an on-site presence throughout the duration of any intrusive subterranean works including piling and the excavation of foundation trenches. Further to this, it is also

recommended that a further assessment of the pottery assemblage recovered during the course of the preliminary evaluation work and subsequent watching brief be carried out.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) would like to thank Rex Brockway, working on behalf of Alexandra Countryside Investments Ltd, for commissioning and supporting the project. Thanks to Ben Rafferty and the staff of The Residence Restaurant and Bar for their patience and support throughout the course of the work. Special thanks to the staff of Scanlan plant hire for their patience and expertise during the course of the machining and, particularly, digger driver, Dave Salmon.

Thanks to Mark Leah, Development Control Archaeologist at the Cheshire Planning Advisory Service for his support and advice throughout the course of the project.

The evaluation was directed by Caroline Raynor, who was assisted by Phil Cooke and Graham Motteshead. The report was compiled by Caroline Raynor, and the illustrations were produced by Marie Rowland. The animal bone was examined by Andy Bates, the pottery was examined by Christine Howard-Davies and the environmental samples were processed by Sandra Bonsall and assessed by Elizabeth Huckerby. The project was managed by Emily Mercer, who also edited the report.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF PROJECT

1.1.1 Alexandra Countryside Investments Ltd is seeking planning permission to construct a hotel and function room suite, car parking and associated access (planning application reference P03/1071), at 9 Mill Street, Nantwich, Cheshire. The planning application (11/1536N) has been submitted to Cheshire East Council and is currently being processed. This proposed development is situated on the site of Nantwich Bowling Green, and is adjacent to a Grade II* listed Georgian town house which currently operates as The Residence Restaurant and Bar. The town of Nantwich is known to be the site of significant historic remains, dating from the Roman Period to the present day, and has been included in the Cheshire Historic Towns Survey of 2003. The areas of Nantwich to the north and west of Mill Street have been subject to archaeological investigation, which provided evidence of extensive Roman and medieval activity at the alongside the River Weaver.

1.1.2 In order to inform the planning process, Cheshire's Development Control Archaeologist, Mark Leah, has requested that a small programme of archaeological trenching is carried out to investigate the potential for surviving below ground remains. The results from this would inform the requirements for any necessary mitigation, either by design (to preserve the archaeological remains *in situ*), or through archaeological recording.

1.1.3 As a consequence, Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) was commissioned to undertake a programme of archaeological trial trenching on the site of the proposed development on the bowling green (Plate 1). The location of the trial trenches was designed to target areas which will be impacted upon by the construction of the function suite, hotel accommodation block and by landscaping within the provision of new car parking adjacent to Water Lode Street. The work was undertaken in July 2011.

1.1.4 The following document presents the results of the evaluation trenching. The concluding chapter assesses the significance of the archaeological resource, and recommends an appropriate strategy for any further archaeological investigations.

1.2 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

1.2.1 ***Location:*** the area of investigation is within the historic market town of Nantwich, Cheshire (centred at NGR SJ 65045 52219; Fig 1), and lies some 30km south-east of Chester and 6km south-west of Crewe. The site at the Residence Bar and Restaurant, 9 Mill Street, Nantwich, is situated to the east of the River Weaver. It is bounded to the north by Mill Street and Castle Street, to the east by Baker Street, and to the south by the continuing curve of Water Lode Street, and a densely-wooded area to the rear of several properties which front onto the western side of Baker Street. The site is currently occupied by a terraced garden area to the north and east, which are used by The Residence, Bar and Restaurant. The development site, which previously

operated as a bowling green, but has not been used in this function for over two years, is now most frequently used as an area for large marquees during events hosted by The Residence. The extension to The Residence, along with associated car parking and landscaping, will be located entirely within the current boundary of the bowling green (formerly the gardens associated with 9 Mill Street).

1.2.2 ***Geology:*** Nantwich lies on an extensive low-lying tract of boulder clay, known as the Cheshire Plain, which separates the hills of North Wales and the Peak Distict of Derbyshire. The underlying solid geology of the area is Keuper Marl within which are salt beds from which the brine was derived. Above this are drift deposits, comprising river gravel on the west side of the town, with alluvium in the immediate area of the river and boulder clay on the east side (British Geological Survey 1967; CCC 2002, 1).

1.2.3 ***Topography:*** the potential development site is located on a flat, open green space, on the east bank of the River Weaver. The site is bounded by a perimeter wall on all sides. The landscaping of the area means that the site is slightly lower than the surrounding area of Mill Street, and close proximity to the river means that this site would have been prone to flooding, with the consequent deposition of alluvial silts.

1.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1.3.1 ***Introduction:*** in the absence of the provision of a detailed desk-based assessment for the site, a brief *precis* of the area and historic background is provided below in order to place of the results of the evaluation into some context. Specific research should be undertaken for the site for any more detailed assessment of the results.

1.3.2 There is a limited amount of evidence for prehistoric activity within the Nantwich area, including finds of prehistoric pottery and a Bronze Age palstave which was discovered in Henhull Parish, 1km north-west of Nantwich, but there are no documented prehistoric sites or findspots within Nantwich (CCC 2003, 3). Whilst salt would presumably have been an important commodity for prehistoric communities, no evidence has yet been discovered that points to the exploitation of Nantwich's salt springs in the pre-Roman period. In particular, excavations at Kingsley Fields in 2001-2, and in Snow Hill car park in 2004, did not produce any evidence for pre-Roman activity in two key salt manufacturing areas of the town. However, these archaeological investigations may not have been deep or extensive enough to reveal any prehistoric remains. In addition, the excellent waterlogged preservation of the archaeological sites already investigated indicates that survival of remains from this period is a strong possibility (OA North 2007b, 10).

1.3.3 The Roman period in Cheshire is relatively well documented, notably from archaeological investigations at Chester, Middlewich and Northwich, although, as with much of the North West region, research has been generally aimed towards the military aspects of the period (Philpott 2006, 59). This is

evident not only by the remains of the forts themselves, but by the network of roads, supply chains, non-military settlement, and industrial activity (*op cit*, 71).

1.3.4 A significant amount of Roman material has been identified within Nantwich, which provides detailed evidence of activity during the Roman Period and identifies Nantwich as "an important part of the wider Roman landscape" (CCC 2003, 3). Up until relatively recently, the majority of Roman activity has been identified through individual find spots. However, excavations conducted from the 1970s to the present day have gradually brought to light more extensive elements of Roman settlement and activity.

1.3.5 Early indications of the industrial nature of Roman activity in Nantwich were provided by the discovery of two lead salt pans within the waterlogged deposits near Kingsley Field Farm (0.6km north-west of the investigation area, on the western side of the River Weaver) in the 1880s (OA North 2007a, 11).

1.3.6 Excavations during the 1970s at the Crown Hotel in the town centre (within the area of the High Street, north-east of the development site) produced a large number of Roman pottery fragments (Williams 1975; McNeil *et al* 1981), indicating significant activity on the east bank of the River Weaver (Connelly and Power 2005, 33). Further evidence for Roman activity was provided in 1985 by the discovery of a timber-lined pit, perhaps intended for holding brine, in St Annes Lane (McNeil 1987, 287-8), and excavations in the mid-1990s revealed a second-century ditch to the south of Welsh Row (Earthworks 1997 and 1998).

1.3.7 The Kingsley Field excavations delimited the northern and western extents of the Roman industrial area to the west of the River Weaver, although the southern and eastern extent of Roman activity in the town remains unknown. (Connelly and Power 2005, 40). It has been suggested that this industrial activity was controlled by the Roman military, raising the question of a fort in the vicinity (*ibid).*

1.3.8 During the early medieval period the physical evidence for activity in Nantwich is scarce, although the Kingsley Fields excavations (OA North 2007a) showed that the industrial activity on the site was in decline by the second half of the third century. It is likely that the importance of salt as a commodity might have helped sustain some production activity in the town into this period. Higham has suggested that the royal estate at Acton, of which Nantwich was historically a part, may have been created in the post-Roman period specifically to control the saltworkings (1993, 143-5). The location and extent of settlement at Nantwich remains unknown during this time (CCC 2003a, 4).

1.3.9 In the later medieval period, the emergence of Nantwich as an urban centre was closely linked with its dominance as a centre for salt production, leading to the development of a densely-occupied commercial core around the market centres and High Street, incorporating Pepper Street, Beam Street, Hospital Street and Pillory Street, and a network of salt-trading routes to other towns

(*ibid*). Evidence for the salt industry itself is clear by the time of the Domesday survey of 1087, which records eight salt houses in Nantwich (Morris 1978, 268), despite the town having been laid waste by the anti-Norman rebellion of 1069-70 (CCC 2003, 4). However, around 1160-1170 Nantwich Castle was built by William Malbank for his brother Piers, to serve as a look-out point and a defence against Welsh attack from the west (Whatley 2004). The castle served its purpose until 1282, when the Welsh were conquered. After that it became a ruin, and the stones were reused to build a chapel dedicated to the life of John de Kyngeslegh at St Mary's Church in the mid-fifteenth century (*ibid*). Evidence for the moat of the castle has subsequently been uncovered in excavations at Bower's Row car park (Gifford and Partners 1995). Castle Street still remains today and is located north of the investigation area on Mill Street (OA North 2007b, 13).

1.3.10 By the fourteenth century, the principal streets of the town had assumed their present layout, focusing on the central market place and St Mary's Church, which are still a focal point of town life today, and some indication of the wealth of the town is given by the foundation of St Nicholas' Hospital in 1285 and a second children's hospital in 1354 (Gifford and Partners 1995).

1.3.11 In 1583 Nantwich was partially destroyed by fire, which started in a wooden wich-house adjacent to Water Lode, and spread extensively around the area of Welsh Row, where 150 buildings and two barns were razed before the blaze was brought under control (CCC 2003, 6). During the civil war (1642 - 1651), Nantwich was once again subject to a level of destruction. As the only town in Cheshire to declare for Parliament it was attacked by Royalist forces (OA North 2007b, 13). The siege was eventually lifted when the Parliamentary forces were victorious in the Battle of Nantwich on January 26th 1644.

1.3.12 Nevertheless, industry in Nantwich had continued to thrive with the salt extraction industry peaking in the late sixteenth century when it is believed that a total of 216 salt houses were established within the town (*ibid*). However, with the discovery of rock salt in Northwich shortly after this time the brine extraction industry went into a period of slow decline, and the last salt works in Nantwich closed in 1856 (McNeil 1983, 68).

1.3.13 The principal extant structure within the boundary of the investigation area is Number 9 Mill Street (Plate 2). This building was constructed *c* 1736 as a large town house and remained privately occupied until it was subsequently altered, in 1852, to form the premises for District Bank, along with accommodation for the manager. The 1876 Ordnance Survey (OS) map shows the town house, now in use as a bank, accessed from Mill Street via a long sweeping driveway, surrounded by landscaped areas and trees. A larger open green space (now the site of the bowling green) is accessed via a path on the west side of the building and appears to have been in use as a well-ordered orchard. The boundary of the land edges directly onto the eastern bank of the River Weaver in the area of the Mill Pond. By this time, the pattern of buildings backing onto the site from Mill Street and Baker Street has been firmly established, as have the boundary walls of the associated gardens. There is no evidence of Water Lode or any predecessor along the edge of the river at this point.

1.3.14 The 1881 OS Map shows a similar lay out, again showing that many land boundaries had been well established, although the map does suggest the simplification or amalgamation of the garden plots to the north of the site. Again, Water Lode has still not been developed as a main thoroughfare with the land still bounded by the limits of the Mill Pond. By 1898 the OS Map shows little change to the area, however the orchard is no longer indicated on the map suggesting that the area may have been cleared of trees by this point.

1.3.15 Further to this, 9 Mill Street was purchased as a base for the local Liberal Club, prior to becoming a licensed bar and restaurant, which is its principal function today.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

2.1.1 A project design (*Appendix 1*) was submitted by OA North, prepared in accordance with a verbal brief provided by Cheshire's Development Control Archaeologist, whom also subsequently approved the evaluation proposals. The project design was adhered to in full, in terms of the methodology. However, Trench 2 was found to be positioned over a live 575mm diameter ceramic sewer pipe. Consequently, this was abandoned and backfilled (to become known as Trench 2A), and an alternative trench (Trench 2B) excavated.

2.1.2 The work was consistent with the relevant standards and procedures of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2008a, 2008b and 2010) and English Heritage (2006), and generally accepted best practice.

2.2 TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

2.2.1 ***Trench configuration:*** the trial trenches varied in length but all measured 2m wide (Fig 2). Trenches 1, 2A and 2B were excavated within the footprint of the proposed development, whilst Trench 3 was within an area which will be impacted by public realm and landscaping work. Initially, Trench 1 was intended to be wholly within the function suite footprint, but the discovery of live services in the area of Trenches 2A and 2B that appeared to be running in the direction of Trench 1, together with lighting cables associated with the bowling green's floodlights discovered during a pre-excavation cable scan, meant that Trench 1 was moved south and westwards.

TRENCH NO.	LOCATION AND ORIENTATION	DIMENSIONS
1	NE area of site orientated E/W within function suite and hotel footprint	10m x 2m
2A	Aborted due to presence of live services	15m x 2m
2B	Eastern limit of site orientated N/S within accommodation block footprint	15m x 2m
3	Western limit of site orientated N/S within area of public realm and car parking	25m x 2m

Table 1: Summary of trench locations

2.2.2 ***Excavation:*** each trench was excavated by a 1.5 ton 360° mini digger, fitted alternately with a 1m wide ditching bucket, although a small toothed bucket was used where the ground was particularly compacted, and a small bladed bucket. The machine was operated under archaeological supervision, down to the depth of the archaeological deposits or natural geology, depending upon

which was encountered first. Thereafter, all excavation was undertaken manually, and all spoil was scanned for artefacts.

2.2.3 Recording comprised a full description and preliminary classification of the deposits and materials revealed on OA North *pro-forma* sheets. The trenches were located with a differential GPS (accuracy ± 0.01m). Hand-drawn plans were produced in the field showing the contents of the trenches, with representative sections being drawn at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20, as appropriate. The field survey data was incorporated with digital map data in a CAD system to create the figures used in this report.

2.2.4 A full and detailed photographic record of the trenches was maintained, and general views of the trench locations were also produced. Photography was undertaken using 35mm cameras on archival black and white film, and digital images using a 7.1 megapixel digital camera and a 10 megapixel digital camera, which provided the illustrations for the present report.

2.3 FINDS

2.3.1 The recovery of finds and sampling programmes were in accordance with current best practice (e.g. IfA 2010) and subject to appropriate expert advice. Handling of finds, their management and storage during and after fieldwork followed professional guidelines (IFA 2008c; UKIC 1984 and 1998). All artefacts recovered from the evaluation trenches were retained for assessment.

2.4 PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES

2.4.1 The on-site environmental sampling programme followed EH guidelines (2002). During the trial trenching, three bulk samples for the recovery, assessment and potential analysis of charred, waterlogged and mineralised plant remains, and other environmental remains, were taken from appropriate, securely stratified contexts: two samples were taken from Trench 1, from basal fills ***046*** and ***049*** of pit or tree bole ***047*** and linear feature ***050***; and one from Trench 2B, from basal fill ***029*** of linear feature ***028***. Ten litres from each of the three samples were processed, so that any charred, waterlogged and mineralised plant remains present could be assessed.

2.4.2 The samples were hand-floated and the flots were collected on a 250 micron mesh and air dried. The flots were examined for waterlogged, charred and mineralised plant remains using a Leica MZ6 binocular microscope. All plant material was provisionally identified and the total number of waterlogged seeds is quantified on a scale of 1-5, where '1' is less than five items and '5' is more than 100. The individual seed types were recorded as present (+) of absent. Plant nomenclature follows Stace (1991) and identification was aided by comparison with the modern reference collection held at OA North. The components of the matrix were noted and recorded as present (+) or abundant (++).

2.5 ARCHIVE

2.5.1 The results of the archaeological evaluation will form the basis of a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (2006) and the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage* (UKIC 1990). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project. The deposition of a properly ordered and indexed project archive in an appropriate repository is considered an essential and integral element of all archaeological projects by the IfA in their *Code of Conduct* (2010).

2.52 OA North conforms to best practice in the preparation of project archives for long-term storage. It is intended that the paper archive material be deposited with Cheshire County Record Office in Chester, and a further copy of the archive can be made available for deposition in the National Archaeological Record. In addition, the Arts and Humanities Data Service (AHDS) online database project *Online Access to Index of Archaeological Investigations* (OASIS) will be completed as part of the archiving phase of the project. The paper archive generated from the evaluation will be transferred in accordance with the guidelines on archive transfer (AAF 2007). All finds will be cleaned, catalogued and appropriately stored prior to and after analysis.

3. EVALUATION RESULTS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1 Initially, it was proposed that three evaluation trenches with a combined area of 30 linear metres should be excavated within the perimeter of the bowling green. However the identification of a live sewer within partially excavated Trench 2 (Fig 2) led to the premature closure of this trench and it being renamed Trench 2A, followed by the opening of an alternative trench, designated Trench 2B, parallel to the original trench but 2m further to the west. All of the trenches were excavated across the study area, and measured between 5m and 15m in length, and 2m wide (Fig 2-5). An overview of the results is presented below. All of the trenches produced a wide variety of finds which are discussed in *Section 3.5*.

3.2 TRENCH 1

3.2.1 Trench 1 was aligned east/west, in the northern area of the site, as defined by the perimeter of the bowling green and its interface with the paved terraced area currently in use by The Residence. This trench was located to correspond with the potential impact of the proposed function suite (Figs 1, 2 and 3; Plate 2), although the presence of live services discovered on site prior to excavation of the trench meant that it was moved south and westwards slightly from its original position. This put the trench around the area of the proposed shared wall between the function suite and hotel accommodation block. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.2m below surface, with a slot through the centre of a linear feature reaching a maximum depth of 2.11m below the current ground surface.

3.2.2 The earliest deposit encountered in Trench 1 was ***051***, a thick basal layer of orange-brown compact, plastic clay natural (Plate 3), which was in turn overlain at the western end by ***043***, a mid-light greyish-brown deposit of alluvial sand, and also by ***054*** and ***055***, two finer layers of alluvial sandy material directly beneath dumping layers ***042***. At the eastern end of the trench the natural clay was cut by two negative features; sub-circular pit or tree bole ***047*** (Plate 4) and ***050***, a substantial linear cut orientated roughly north/south and located at the eastern limit of the trench (Plate 5). Possible pit or tree bole ***047*** was half-sectioned and found to contain three separate fills: at the base ***046***, a homogeneous dark brownish-black waterlogged peaty fill, which contained a horse scapula and radius/ulna, as well as a sherd of post-medieval pottery and one fragment of CBM (ceramic building material). This was overlain by ***045***, a 0.1m thick silty, stony layer that sealed the more organic deposit beneath. This was in turn overlain by ***044***, a mixed compact dark grey-brown clay mixed with stones, slate fragments and CBM fragments. The complete excavation of this feature showed a shallow, sub-circular pit measuring 1.4m in diameter, with uneven sides and a shallow break of slope, with evidence of root activity.

3.2.3 Linear cut ***050*** was located to the east of ***046/047***. This feature was not completely excavated, but a slot measuring approximately 0.4m in width was excavated across it on an east/west orientation, to a depth of 0.91m, where the base of the cut was identified. This feature was filled with a single homogenous waterlogged dark greyish-black organic fill ***049***, which contained wood fragments, a sherd of post-medieval pottery and six large fragments of material which has tentatively been identified as horse-hair plaster. Directly overlying fill ***049*** was a layer of redeposited clay, ***048***, which was sterile and 0.08m thick layer.

3.2.4 Both of these features appear to have been cut from the same height and are likely to be broadly contemporary. The sub-circular pit feature does appear to be a tree-bole and, given that this land was once used as a garden and orchard, the presence of such a feature is not surprising. Both fills ***046*** and ***049*** were sampled for environmental analysis (see *Section 3.7*, below).

3.2.5 A further linear cut ***052***, orientated north/south and probably part of a soakaway from a small drainage system, was identified. This feature partially truncated the larger linear ***050*** and was filled with a single mixed layer ***053*** of grey sandy-clay, which measured 0.32m deep.

3.2.6 All features were sealed by an extensive 0.7m thick layer of dark grey-black silty organic material. This deposit extended across the full width and length of Trench 1 and was found to contain two broken, but not heavily abraded, fragments of CBM, as well as four early kaolin clay pipe bowls (all stamped with a clear makers mark), and five clay pipe stems. Directly overlying this was ***041***, a very compact grey silty layer, 0.46m thick , which may represent a purpose-laid levelling layer for the bowling green. This deposit was sealed by the modern topsoil, ***040***, which measured 0.06m deep.

3.3 TRENCH 2A

3.3.1 Trench 2A was aligned north/south in the eastern area of the bowling green, parallel to the perimeter pathway (Fig 4). This trench was laid out to measure 15m long by 2m wide and the topsoil was stripped accordingly. However, a limited amount of excavation within the southern 3m of the trench revealed the presence of a live mains sewer pipe running on a north/south orientation through the mid-line of the proposed trench (Plate 6 and 7). The presence and location of the sewer pipe were noted and surveyed in and, following consultation with the Development Control Archaeologist, it was decided to close Trench 2A and open an additional trench parallel to this immediately to the west.

3.4 TRENCH 2B

3.4.1 Trench 2B (Fig 4) was aligned north/south in the central, eastern part of the bowling green and, as with Trench 2A, it measured 15m long by 2m wide (Plate 8). The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.2m across the southern and central extent. However, the northern third of the trench was

only excavated to a depth of 0.5m, as a further live ceramic sewer pipe of approximately 300mm diameter was identified (Plate 9: NB this sewer pipe is not indicated on any of the available United Utilities service plans for the area).

3.4.2 The earliest deposits encountered within Trench 2B were the natural basal deposits of ***016*** and ***015***, a compact plastic orange-brown clay natural and pale yellow coarse sand natural, respectively (Plate 8). These were overlain by a 0.4m thick layer of dark grey sandy alluvial silts, which were visible in both the east- and west-facing sections of the trench. These deposits are representative of alluvial deposition around the River Weaver (located to the west of the site). Cutting the natural clay ***016*** was a linear feature ***028*** (Plates 10 and 11), which was located at the centre of the trench and orientated roughly east/west. It was excavated to a depth of 0.81m without the base being clearly defined, and was found to contain ***029***, a homogeneous mixture of organic waterlogged deposits with lenses of re-deposited orange-brown natural clay. Calcined bone fragments and post-medieval pottery were retrieved from the upper 0.15m of deposit ***029***, and it is likely that this feature represents a post-medieval drainage channel that fed into the nearby river.

3.4.3 Located at the centre of the trench was a series of post-medieval hand-made red-brick walls and surfaces, and their associated foundation cuts, ***018***, ***020*** and ***023*** (Fig 4), all of which probably relate to activity on the site while it was in use as an orchard rather than a bowling green (Plate 10). All of these features extended beyond the limit of excavation. Structure ***018***, appears to be earlier than ***020*** and ***023*** and was found to be at a greater depth, and on a north-east/south-west orientation rather than an east/west orientation.

3.4.4 These structures were overlain by a series of made ground or levelling deposits, which were visible in three of the four excavated trenches (all but Trench 1). These included ***026***, ***021***, ***019***, ***013***, ***012*** which comprised a mixture of materials, including crushed CBM and mortar demolition material, layers of coarse sand, clinker and discrete dumps of pottery and broken bottle glass (Plate 12). The large scale of this dumping material, as well as its varied nature, may be indicative of a programme of organised reclamation or levelling at the edge of the river in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Dumped layer ***012***, a 0.35m thick layer of orangey-grey crushed CBM and mortar, was particularly rich in pottery and bottle glass, and it was from this deposit that a large percentage of the finds assemblage was retrieved.

3.4.5 The whole trench was sealed by ***011***, a 0.08m thick layer of light grey compact subsoil, and ***010***, a 0.10m thick layer of modern topsoil.

3.5 TRENCH 3

3.5.1 Trench 3 was aligned north/south at the western side of the study area within the perimeter of the bowling green, adjacent to the boundary wall that borders Water Lode Street (Plate 13 and 14). The trench measured 5m in length and 2m wide, and was positioned in an area that might be impacted upon by the

installation of landscaping features, such as tree pits, and work associated with the car park (Figs 2 and 5).

3.5.2 The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.2m; however, the depth of the trench varied across its length, being shallower at the northern end due to the discovery of the southern wall and interior brick floor of a small subterranean room or cellar. The earliest deposit encountered within Trench 3 was ***006***, a layer of compact sandy brown clay. Located at the southern end of the excavation. Overlying this deposit, across the northern extent of the trench, was ***009*** a bedding layer comprising sandy yellow-white lime mortar mixed with crushed brick fragments. This deposit was purposefully laid to act as a bedding layer for the construction of ***007*** and ***008***, an east/west orientated red brick wall, and corresponding uneven, roughly-constructed red brick floor (Plate 14).

3.5.3 Wall ***007***, was located at roughly the centre of the trench, was orientated east/west and effectively divided the trench into a northern and southern half. It was constructed from hand-made red brick, and was two courses wide and six courses high, bonded with a white lime mortar in a stretcher bond arrangement. Abutting this, on the north side of the wall, was red brick floor/surface ***008***, which is contemporary with the wall and may represent a cellar floor or sunken exterior area. The position of this wall and floor roughly correspond with the presence of a wall seen on the 1852 map of the area, which showed that the garden associated with 9 Mill Street was divided into a landscaped garden area to the north and an area of orchard to the south. The floor was uneven and only a limited section of ragged hand-made brick remained, as the surface had been truncated to the north; it was not possible to tell, within the confines of the trench, the nature of the event responsible for the truncation.

3.5.4 On the south side of wall ***007*** was a backfill or demolition layer, associated with either the construction cut for the wall or with the demolition of the wall. This deposit, ***004***, was a 0.4m thick layer of mixed mortar, slate and crushed brick that was used as levelling or backfill. Later than this deposit was a similar layer of backfill/make-up material which was located on the northern side of wall ***007***. This deposit, ***003***, was a reasonably compact demolition layer consisting of mixed crushed brick, mortar and cinders that sealed floor ***008***. This deposit was 0.44m thick, and extended across the northern area of the trench within the limits of excavation.

3.5.5 It is likely that this demolition and levelling associated with the late eighteenth/early nineteenth century structures occurred just prior to the construction of the bowling green, as, following the deposition of the demolition material, a network of ceramic land drains ***005***, was laid down. The land drain identified within Trench 3 is positioned on the south side of wall ***007***, and runs parallel to it across the trench on an east/west orientation. There is no evidence for a foundation cut, which suggests that the land drains were laid prior to the final levelling layer ***002***, which is located beneath the modern topsoil and turf, ***001***.

3.5.6 Levelling layer ***002*** comprised a 0.66m thick layer of compact clay and rubble overburden which extended across the whole length and width of Trench 3. This deposit was homogenous and contained a mixture of artefacts, including

clay tobacco pipe, glass fragments, oyster shell, post-medieval pottery and glass. This deposit was in turn sealed by a 0.16m thick layer of modern topsoil and turf which represents the existing surface of the bowling green.

3.6 FINDS

3.6.1 The quantities of artefacts recovered by type are presented in Table 2. The bulk of the material consists of pottery and glass, with smaller assemblages of animal bone, clay tobacco pipe and CBM also being present.

3.6.2 ***Pottery:*** some 524 fragments of artefacts and ecofacts were recovered from the site, comprising 257 of pottery, 20 of clay tobacco pipe, 109 of glass, two of iron, 89 of animal bone, and 12 of other materials. Their distribution between trenches and contexts is shown in Table 2. All were examined for the purpose of this assessment and an outline database created.

Tr. no	**Ctxt**	**Pottery**	**Tobacco pipe**	**Building mat**	**Glass**	**Iron**	**Animal bone**	*Totals*
1	***041***	13	1	0	0	0	13	*27*
1	***042***	18	9	4	0	0	0	*31*
1	***046***	1	0	1	0	0	2	*4*
1	***049***	1	0	1	0	0	0	*9*
1	***U/s***	0	0	0	0	0	40	*40*
2a	***U/s***	18	1	0	1	1	1	*24*
2b	***Top-soil***	0	1	0	0	1	0	*2*
2b	***012***	133	1	17	103	0	17	*272*
2b	***019***	14	0	1	0	0	9	*24*
2b	***029***	3	0	0	0	0	3	*6*
2b	***U/s***	0	0	7	0	0	0	*7*
3	***02***	56	7	4	5	0	4	*78*
Totals		*257*	*20*	*35*	*109*	*2*	*89*	***524***

Table 2: Distribution of finds (U/s = unstratified)

3.6.3 The main interest in the site regarding finds lies with the pottery. Two fragments can be identified as of probable medieval date, but both are undiagnostic, highly abraded body sherds, and identification can proceed no further. Consequently, there is a significant hiatus, with the main period of deposition lying in a period from the mid-late seventeenth to the late eighteenth centuries, although it must be noted that deposition clearly continued into the nineteenth century, although most of the later pottery was recovered unstratified.

3.6.4 The majority of the pottery is from Trench 2b, dump deposit ***012***, where Metropolitan-type slipwares are probably the earliest fabric/s represented, pointing to a possible mid-seventeenth-century start to deposition. Amongst the generally undiagnostic black-glazed redwares, there are a few fragments of

the hard-fired fabrics associated with the later seventeenth century, and a single multi-handled cup, again pointing to later seventeenth-century deposition. There are, however, also later press-moulded slipware dishes, normally regarded as coming into production in the eighteenth-century and, although production seems to have finished in Staffordshire towards the end of the century (Jennings 1981, 106), it seems likely that more local potteries would have continued producing them into the nineteenth century. Tin-glazed ware is a notable absence, with only a single fragment noted amongst the unstratified material. Mottled wares are also present in some quantity, and although developed in the late seventeenth century, they are again characteristic of the eighteenth century, continuing in production, for instance at Prescot, Merseyside, until at least 1780 (Oswald *et al* 1982). White salt-glazed stoneware, dipped white stonewares, and fine brown stonewares are all present, again demonstrating eighteenth-century deposition (Noel Hume 1969, 114), with a mug, found unstratified, bearing an excise stamp of William III, although it must be noted that such stamps remained in use well into the eighteenth century, if not later (Noel Hume 1969, 113).

3.6.5 The many (at least 20 vessels) dark olive green wine bottles from dump deposit ***012*** seem to cover a date range from ceramic 1740 to the end of the century, reinforcing the overall dating of the pottery. In all, six stamped clay tobacco pipes were recovered, all can be provisionally dated to the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century. Interestingly, they derive from Trench 1, dump deposit ***042*** rather than Trench 2B, dump deposit ***012***, from which clay tobacco pipe is absent. None of the other finds are of particular interest.

3.6.6 Although this is a relatively small group of finds, it appears to have a relatively confined date range, with stratified material confined to the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The range of pottery vessels is also restricted, with drinking vessels well-represented and, if considered with the large number of glass wine bottles, may be of significance in interpreting the nature and origin of the deposit. A brief literature search suggests that assemblages of this date are not well-known from Nantwich, and it is recommended that a full analysis of the group be undertaken.

3.6.7 ***Faunal assemblage:*** in total, 88 fragments of animal bone were recovered from the evaluation trenches; the majority of which was retrieved from backfill and levelling layers, with a small number of bones coming from discrete features in Trenches 1 and 2B. The assemblage was rapidly scanned to identify the species present, and to assess the potential of the material. It has been determined that the animal bone has no real potential for further analysis.

3.6.8 A fairly wide range of animal bone was recovered from the four trenches and the majority of material was not so abraded or fragmented that it could not be quickly identified. Species identified within the assemblage include; cow, pig, sheep/goat, red deer and horse. Despite the proximity to the river, no fish bones were identified, however the ulna of one species of water fowl (possibly domestic goose) was identified.

3.6.9 Animal bone was found to be most numerous in Trench 1 with 52 fragments being recovered from this area (Fig 3). The majority of the bone was

recovered from dump deposit ***042***. Within this deposit cow, pig, sheep/goat and horse were all identified, with cow and horse making up the majority of the assemblage. A horse scapula and ulna/radius were also retrieved from the fill of sub-circular feature ***047***, within deposit ***046***, a dark, moist peaty fill which had caused the bones to take on a dark and stained appearance.

3.6.10 Within Trench 2B, 28 fragments of bone were retrieved. Again, the majority of bone was recovered from a levelling layer ***012***, and the variety of bone including the ribs, pelvis, radius, scapula, mandible and carpals of numerous animals (cow, pig, dog and bird), suggest that animals were being butchered on or near the site. Of the 28 fragments, seven were recovered from the post-medieval backfill ***019*** of a foundation cut for the construction of red brick wall ***018***. Two fragments of unidentified calcined (burnt white) bone were recovered from the upper 0.05m of organic deposit ***029***, within linear cut ***028.***

3.6.11 Within Trench 3, five fragments of bone were recovered, all of which (cow/red deer, plus two unidentified species) were recovered from ***002***, a layer of compact silty-clay directly beneath the modern topsoil. This deposit may have been imported to the site to act as a levelling or make-up layer for the bowling green.

3.7 PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

3.7.1 The results from the assessment of the three samples are summarised in Table 3, below. The plant remains were mainly preserved in waterlogged conditions with a few charred seeds from Trench 2B, in fill ***029*** of linear feature ***028***, in which a single charred grain of bread wheat (*Triticum aestivum*) and one seed of sheep's sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*) were recorded. A few fragments of charcoal were observed in the samples from Trenches 1 and 2B.

3.7.2 In contrast, the waterlogged plant remains were abundant, and in fill ***049*** of linear feature ***050*** (Trench 1), and in fill ***029*** of linear feature ***028*** (Trench 2B) they were very diverse. The assemblage of seeds in the first sample includes plants of waste, cultivated, open ground and grassland, with a lesser number of wet ground plants. Corn marigold (*Chrysanthemum segetum*) and parsley piert (*Aphanes arvensis*) are found growing on cultivated ground and, together with charred grains of bread wheat, suggest possible cultivation or crop processing. The seeds identified in Trench 2B come from less specific habitats, although the very high numbers of nettle seeds (*Urtica dioica* and *U urens*) suggest that the soil from the area were nitrogen rich. Plants from wet ground were most frequent in fill ***046*** of pit/tree bole ***047*** [***050***] in Trench 1.

3.7.3 The matrices of the three samples all contained vegetative plant remains, including wood fragments, amorphous plant remains and roundwood, together with insect remains and, in Trench 1, fly puparia. The latter suggesting that this linear feature remained open for some period of time.

3.7.4 Fill ***046*** of pit/tree bole ***047*** [***050***] in Trench 1 yielded a very large flot of 450ml, which was composed of a large volume of very degraded wood. The very large amounts of wood in this fill may corroborate the interpretation of

pit 47 as a tree bole. Alternatively, the presence of six large fragments of material which have tentatively been identified as horse-hair plaster in linear cut ***050***, positioned to the east of ***046/047***, might indicate the collapse of a timber-framed building on the site. Environmental samples taken during the Carlisle Millennium Project from features described as floors produced very similar flots to the one of fill ***046,*** pit/tree bole ***047*** from Nantwich (E Huckerby pers com). This material, which is tentatively identified as horse-hair plaster, could also be heat-modified limestone, which can become fibrous in nature (Dick Rutherford pers com).

Trench number	**1**	**1**	**2B**
Sample number	1	2	3
Context number	***046***	***049***	***029***
Feature type and number	Pit or tree bole ***047***	Linear feature ***050***	Linear feature ***028***
Sample size (litres)	10	10	10
Flot size ml	450	125	25-30
Potential for analysis	**Possible**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Potential for scientific dating	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**
Matrix			
Amorphous plant remains	++	++	++
Wood fragments	++	++	++
Roundwood	++	++	+
Buds and bud scales	+	+	
Leaf fragments	+		
Thorns			+
Charcoal		+	+
Moss remains			++
Insect remains	+	++	+
Fly puparia	+	+	
Heat affected vesicular material (HAVM)	+		+
Coal	+		++
Fungal sclerotia			+

Vivianite			+
Earthworm egg cases		+	+
Waterlogged seeds scale of 1-5	**5**	**5**	**5**
Plants of waste, cultivated or open ground			
Aethusa cynapium - Fool's parsley		+	
Aphanes arvensis - Parsley piert		+	
Arctium sp - Burdocks or *Onopordum* sp - Cotton thistles		+	
Chrysanthemum segetum - Corn marigold		+	
Conium maculatum - Hemlock		+	
Polygonum aviculare – Knotgrass		+	
Stellaria media - Common chickweed		+	
Urtica dioica - Common nettle		+	+
Urtica urens - Small nettle			+
Grassland plants			
Linum catharticum - Fairy flax		+	
Rumex acetosella - Sheep's sorrel		+	+ Cpr
Rumex acetosa - Common sorrel		+	
Stellaria graminea - Lesser stitchwort		+	
Wet ground plants			

Carex trigonous - Sedge with three sided seeds	+	+	+
Carex lenticular - Sedge with biconvex seeds		+	
Eleocharis palustris - Common spike-rush	+		
Isolepis setacea - Bristle club-rush	+		
Juncus-Rushes	+		
Montia fontana - Blinks	+		
Ranunuculus flammula - Lesser spearwort	+	+	
Plants from broad ecological groupings			
Chenopodium spp - Goosefoots	+	+	+
Cirsium sp - thistles		+	+
Lamium sp - Dead nettles			+
Poaceae - Grasses with small seeds	+		
Potentilla erecta - type - Cinquefoils	+		
Ranunculus repens type - Creeping Buttercup			+
Solanum sp – Nightshade		+	
Sonchus sp - Sow thistles		+	
Possible food plants			
Corylus avellana - hazel nut fragments			+ Cpr
Sambucus nigra - Elder	+	+	+
Triticum aestivum - Bread wheat Cpr		+	
Unknowns	+		

Table 3: Palaeoenvironmental assessment of three environmental bulk samples (Cpr = charred plant remains. Waterlogged seeds scored on a scale of 1-5 where 1 is less than 5 items and 5 is more than 100 items. + = present, ++ = abundant)

3.7.5 The potential for further analysis and radiocarbon dating is shown in Table 3. Palaeoenvironmental remains were observed in the three bulk samples and diverse assemblages of weed seeds were identified. Analysis of the waterlogged plant remains may provide information about the economy, dietary requirements and crop production associated with the site in late medieval and post-medieval Nantwich. No samples were assessed as being suitable for charcoal analysis.

3.7.6 Furthermore, the majority of samples produced material suitable for radiocarbon dating. Although the origin of such material within the context should be given careful consideration, there is good potential for refining the site chronology once the environmental material from the site has been combined with stratigraphic data.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 DISCUSSION

4.1.1 In total, three trial trenches were excavated (with a fourth having been partially excavated then aborted in favour of a new location due to the presence of live services). All of the trenches produced evidence of earlier activity, as well as a significant assemblage of finds, including pottery, kaolin clay pipes, glass, metal objects, butchered animal bone and CBM. The large number of finds recovered demonstrates the level of activity along the edge of the river in the late medieval and post-medieval period, with discrete layers suggesting that some of the material was brought to the site *en masse* to be added to a make-up or levelling process. Further analysis of the finds is necessary in order to provide a clearer understanding of the dating of the area.

4.1.2 ***Negative features (pits and linear ditches):*** four negative features were identified during the course of the excavation work; a shallow pit or tree bole, and a linear orientated roughly north/south at the eastern end of Trench 1, and a probable linear ditch feature associated with a further inter-cutting pit feature in Trench 2B. All of these features cut the natural clay deposits and were sealed by layers of imported dumped material, likely sourced from elsewhere in the town

4.1.3 ***Dumped deposits and make-up layers:*** the majority of the deposits above the natural clay and alluvial deposits in Trenches 1, 2B and 3 were represented by dumped material and make-up or levelling layers. The southern extent of the site seems to have been heavily made up with at least 1m of mixed deposits, including clinker, crushed CBM, and sand layers and lenses. The mixed material from particular deposits, e.g. deposit ***012***, suggests that the material was being imported onto the site as part of a larger programme of levelling which began in the late seventeenth century and was effectively completed when the area of land to the west of 9 Mill Street made the transition from orchard and landscaped garden to bowling green.

4.1.4 ***Post-Medieval Walls and Surfaces:*** red brick walls and surfaces were identified in Trenches 2B and 3 respectively. The two walls and stone slab surface edged with hand-made red bricks were identified in Trench 2B. The structures continued beyond the limit of the excavation, so were not fully defined during the evaluation work. Similarly, the east/west orientated wall and red brick surface in Trench 3 continued beyond the limit of excavation. The shallow depth of the walls suggests that they were probably boundary or garden walls relating to the layout of the orchard.

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.2.1 Most of the features or structures found within the evaluation trenches are associated with the enclosure of the land following the construction of 9 Mill Street *c* 1736. The red brick walls and structures all appear to relate to the period of time when the area was in use as an orchard and landscaped garden. A small number of discreet features, however, remain ambiguous in their

origin, but likely predate this period and may be associated with late medieval or early post-medieval drainage channels that were cut into the natural clay and fed into the River Weaver. The excavation of the evaluation trenches also yielded a medium-sized assemblage of pottery that would be worthy of further study as it appears to be a tightly-dated collection of pottery dating from *c* 1680.

4.2.2 With this in mind, further analysis of the pottery assemblage could potentially provide a more secure context to be used to obtain radiocarbon dating of suitable material identified from the palaeoenvironmental samples. Until recently, little was known about the medieval and post-medieval urban sites in North West England, and the Regional Research Agenda and Strategy stress the importance of adequate palaeoenvironmental sampling for all medieval and post-medieval urban sites (Newman and Newman, 2007, 104 and Newman and McNeil 2007, 120). Archaeobotanically, medieval and post-medieval records west of the Pennines are sparse, with a few sites mentioned in Chester, Lancaster, Carlisle, Risley, and Kendal (Hall and Huntley 2007, 157, 207), although the record has been extended more recently, for example Nantwich (OA North 2007) and the Carlisle Millennium site (Huckerby and Graham 2009).

4.2.3 It is further recommended that an ongoing archaeological monitoring watching brief be undertaken throughout the course of any future intrusive works prior to the planned construction phase. This watching brief should then continue on throughout the course of the excavation work monitoring the excavation of foundation trenches, piling, the installation of services and any further landscaping work that involves reducing the existing ground level either inside or outside the development footprint. Where significant finds This work may inform whether the discrete features identified during the evaluation are components of larger sites of archaeological significance, together with obtaining a larger sample of the pottery assemblage abundant on the site which is locally significant.

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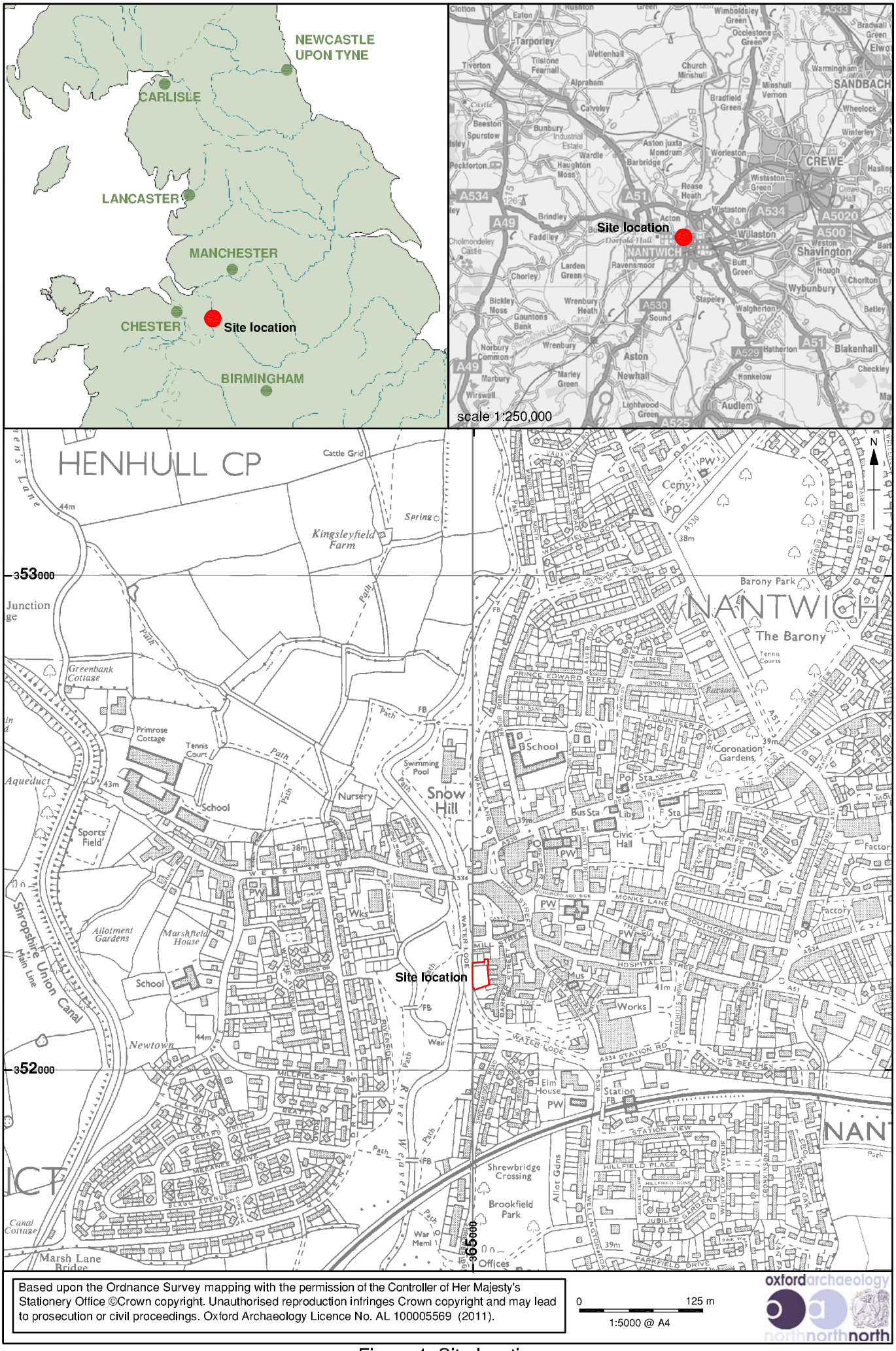
6. ILLUSTRATIONS

6.1 LIST OF FIGURES

6.2 LIST OF PLATES



EM*L9877*MECR*29.07.11

Figure 1: Site location

EM*L10384*AMS*240811

Figure 2: Trench locations

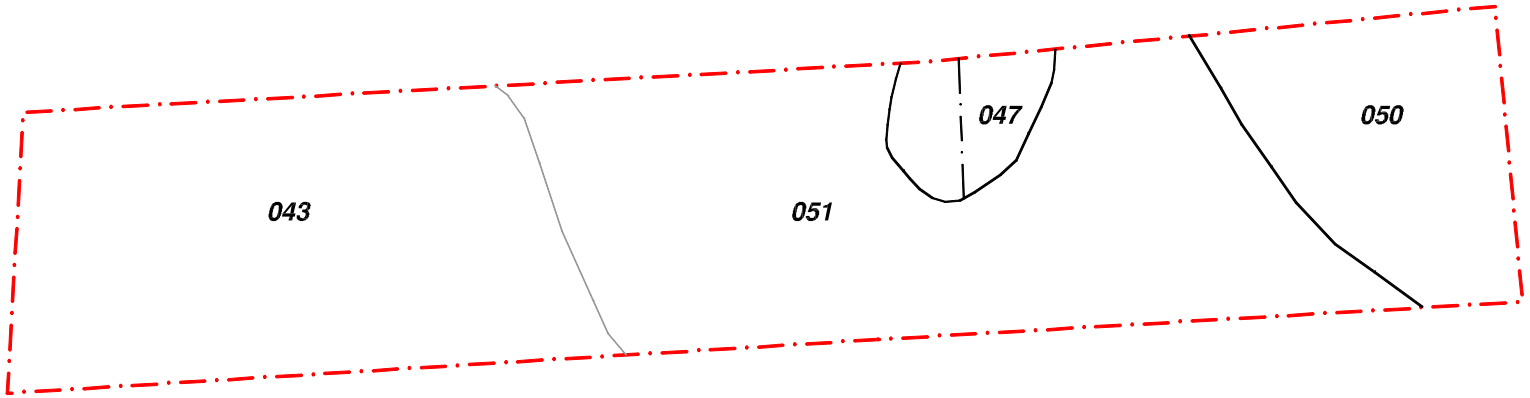


Figure 3: Trench 1

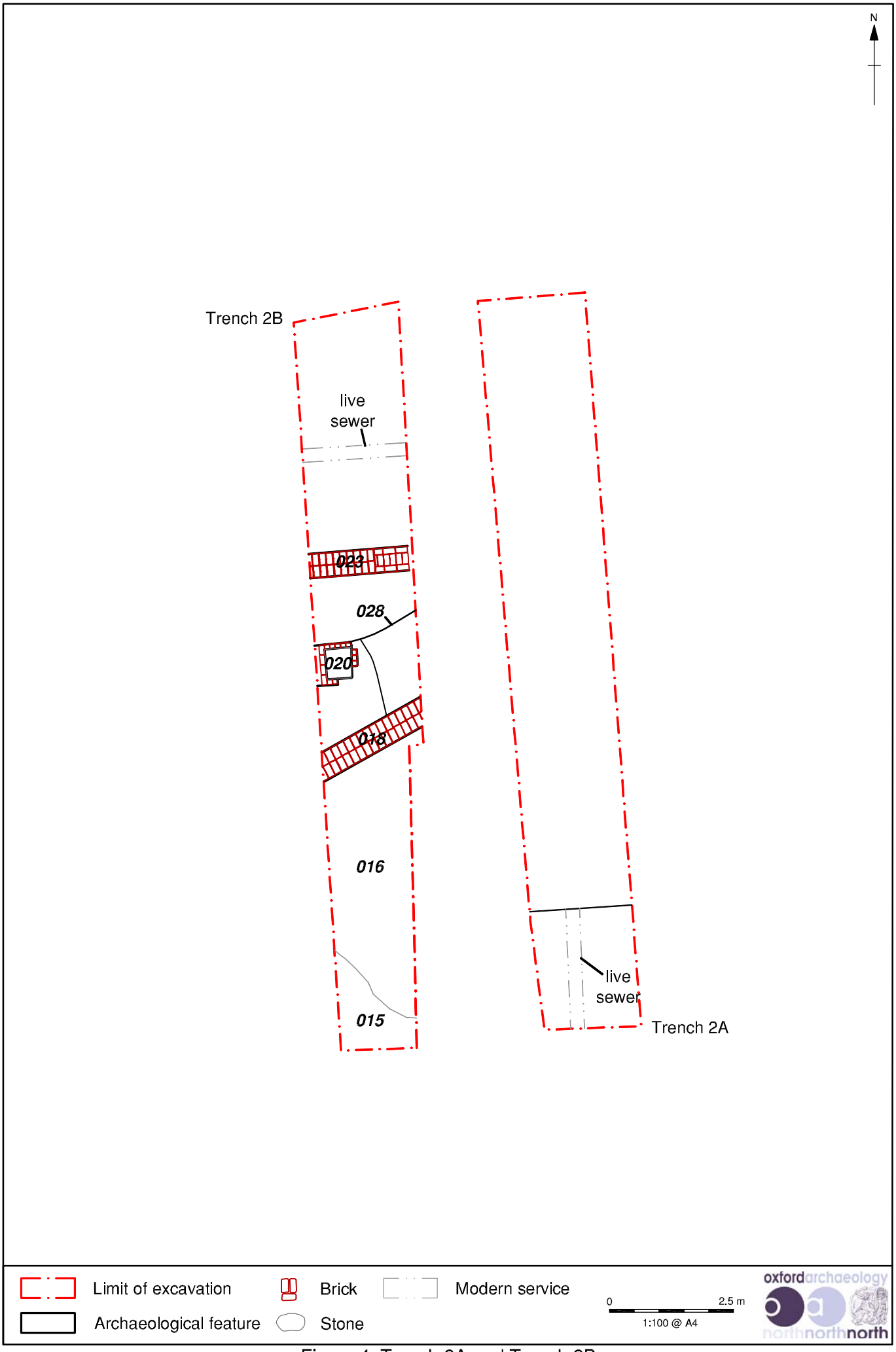


Figure 4: Trench 2A and Trench 2B

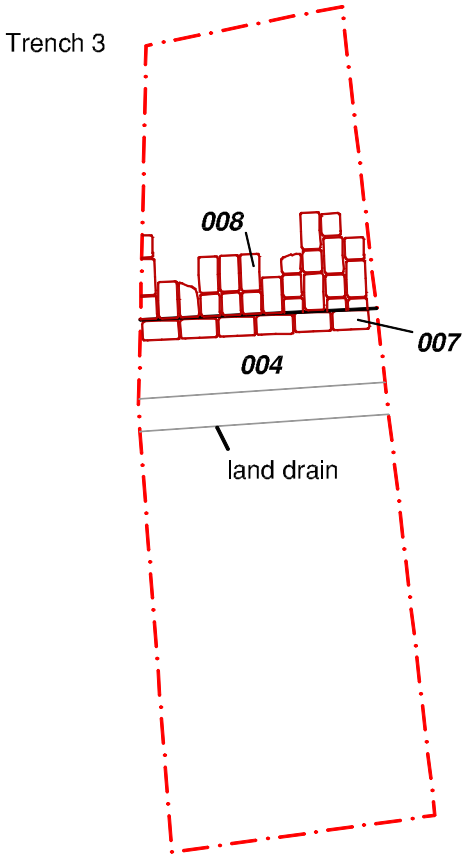


Figure 5: Trench 3

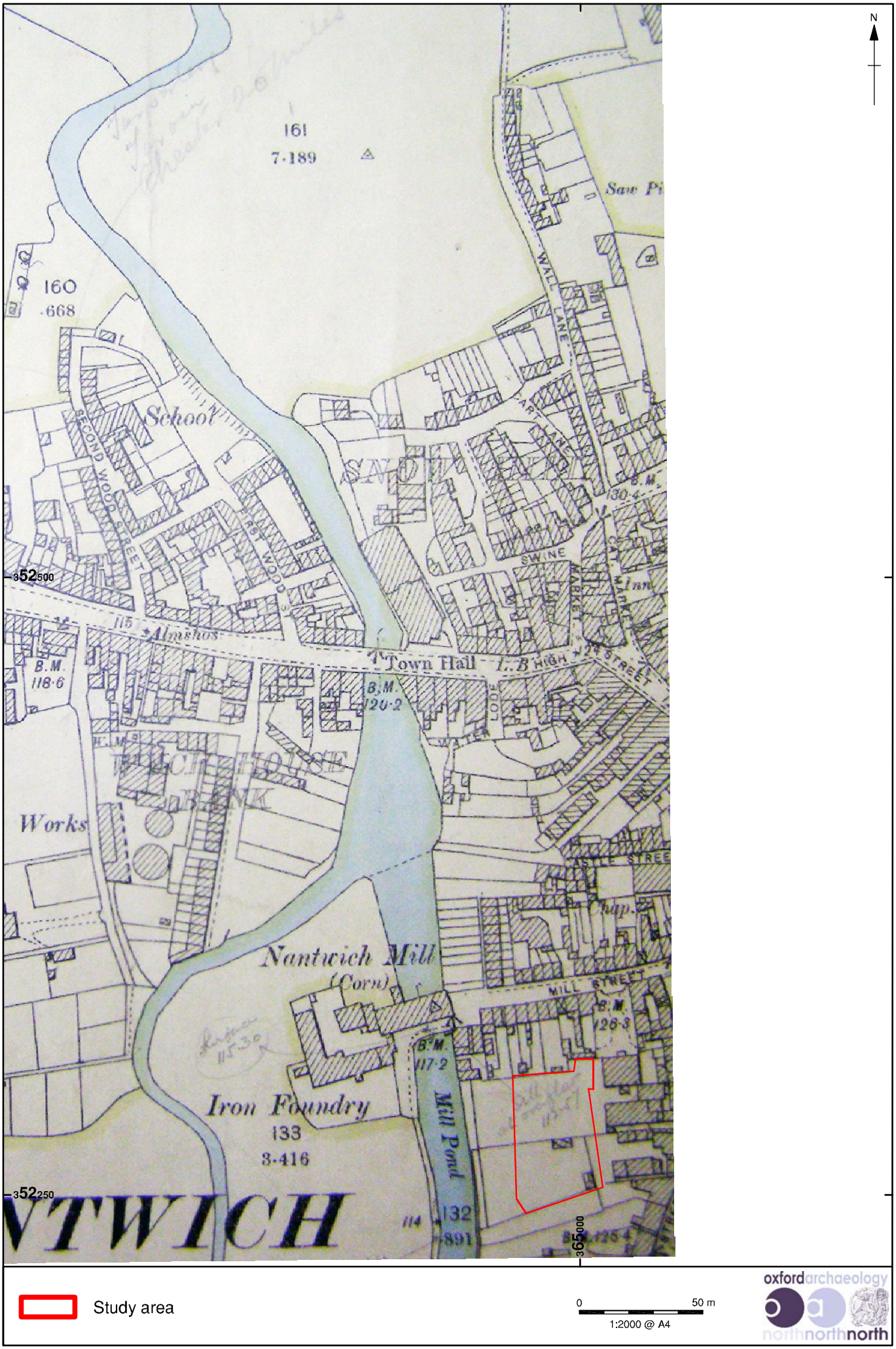


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Figure 6: Ordnance Survey map of 1898

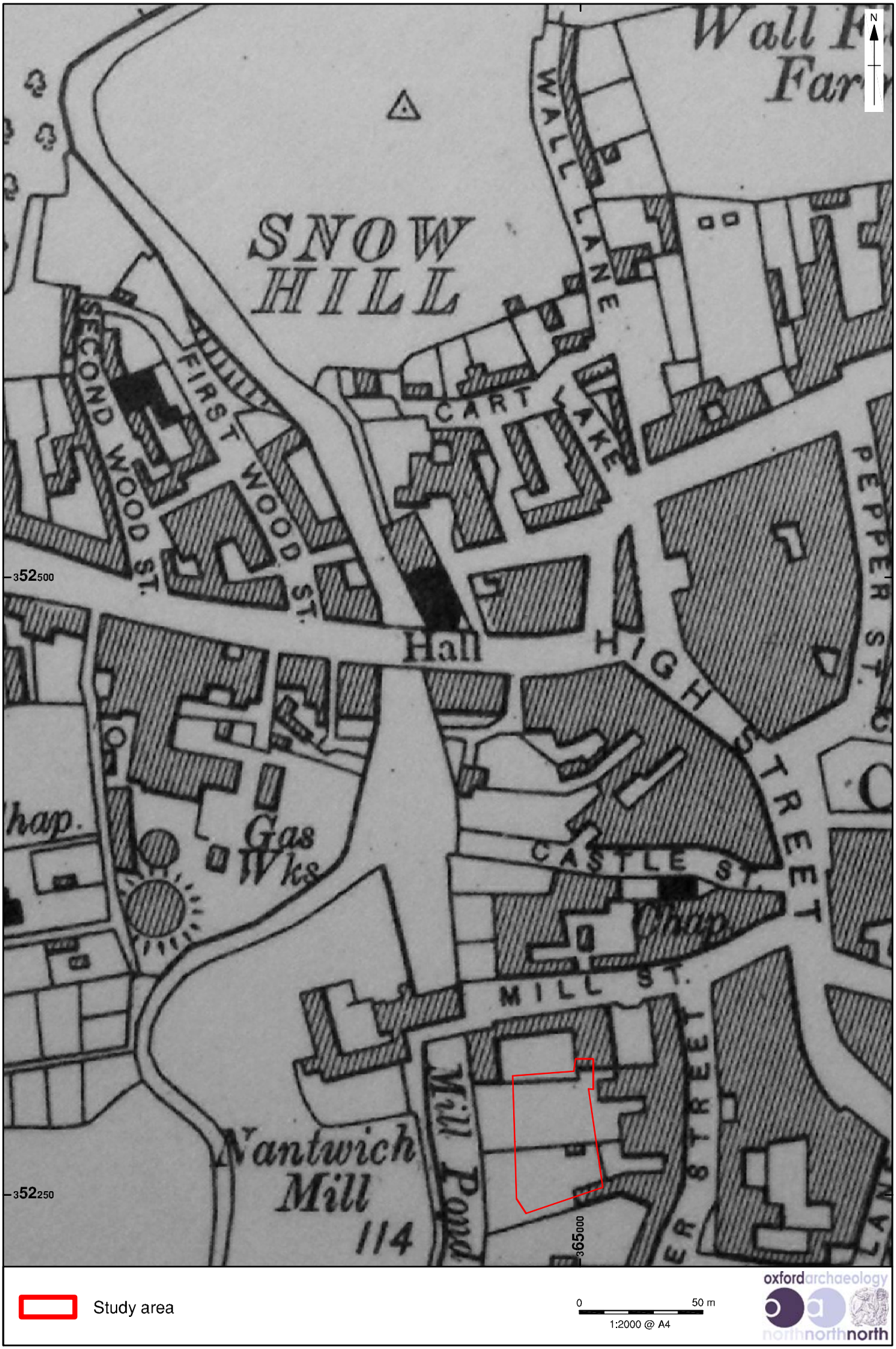

Figure 7: Ordnance Survey map of 1910

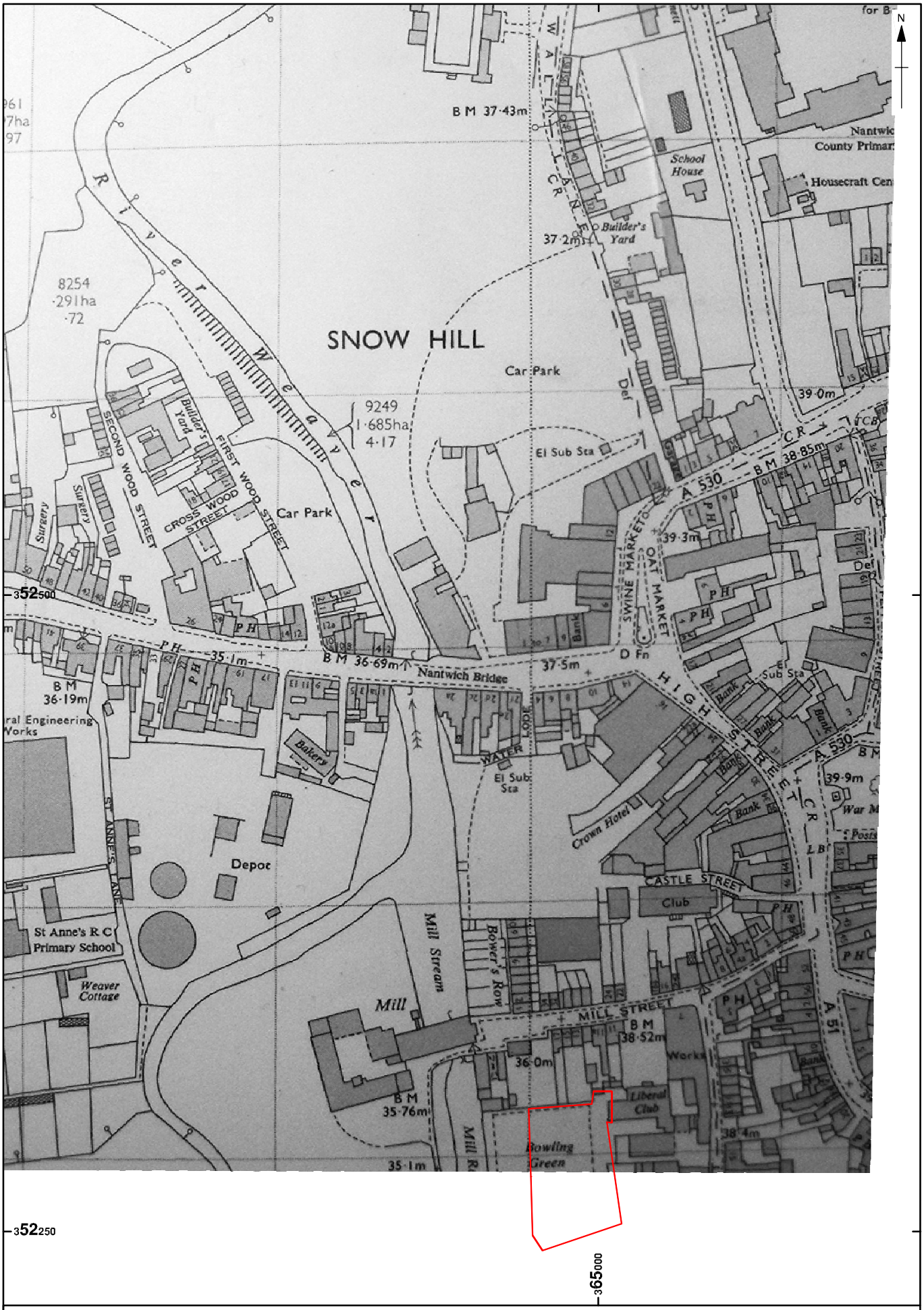

Figure 8: Ordnance Survey map of 1970

Plate 1: General view of area to the west of 9 Mill Street

Plate 2: North-facing elevation of Grade II listed town house, 9 Mill Street

Plate 3: Trench 1, looking west

Plate 4: Trench 1, showing sub-circular feature ***047***

Plate 5: Trench 1, showing linear feature ***050***

Plate 6: Trench 2A, showing limit of excavation due to location of live services

Plate 7: Trench 2A, showing east-facing section

Plate 8: Trench 2B, looking north

Plate 9: Trench 2B, looking south

Plate 10: Trench 2B, showing walls ***018*** and ***023***

Plate 11: Trench 2B, showing section through linear feature ***028***

Plate 12: Trench 2B, showing east-facing section

Plate 13: Trench 3, looking north

Plate 14: Trench 3, looking south

APPENDIX 1: PROJECT DESIGN

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

1.1.1 Rex Brockway, acting on behalf of Alexandra Countryside Investments Ltd, requested that Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) submit proposals for an archaeological evaluation over a bowling green at 9 Mill Street, Nantwich, Cheshire (centred NGR SJ 710530), which is proposed for redevelopment for a hotel and function room, car parking and associated access (planning application reference P03/1071). The planning application (11/1536N) has been submitted to Cheshire East Council and is currently being processed. However, in order to inform the planning process, Cheshire's Archaeological Officer (Development Control) (AO), Mark Leah, has requested that a small programme of archaeological trenching is carried out to investigate the potential for disturbance of any surviving below ground remains during the proposed development. The results from this would inform the requirements for any necessary mitigation, either by design (to preserve the archaeological remains *in situ*), or through archaeological recording. The following project design has been prepared in accordance with a verbal brief issued by the AO, and has been revised in light of access restrictions, in terms of plant and the forthcoming events on site.

1.2 OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY NORTH

1.2.1 OA North has undertaken a great number of small and large scale projects throughout Northern England during the past 30 years. Evaluations, assessments, watching briefs and excavations have taken place within the planning process, to fulfil the requirements of clients and planning authorities, to very rigorous timetables.

1.2.2 OA North has the professional expertise and resources to undertake the project detailed below to a high level of quality and efficiency. OA North is an Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) registered organisation, registration number 17, and all its members of staff operate subject to the IfA *Code of Conduct* (2010).

2. OBJECTIVES

2.1 The assessment aims to evaluate archaeological deposits that may be threatened by the proposed development in order to determine their presence, extent, nature and significance. To this end, the following programme has been designed to provide Cheshire East Council with the necessary information to determine the requirement for either further mitigation works prior to, or during, the development, or whether the remains should be preserved *in situ*, in accordance with PPS 5 (DCLG 2010). The required stages to achieve these ends are as follows:

a) ***Archaeological Evaluation:*** to implement a programme of trial trenching examining a maximum of 30m of trenching around the outlined development area (in accordance with the Cheshire County Council guidelines (2003) and IfA standards (2008)).

b) ***Report:*** in accordance with the verbal brief, an interim report will be issued within one week of completion of the site work in order to inform the planning process. This will be followed by the full and final report that will be produced for the client within eight weeks, unless a report submission deadline is agreed with the client at the time of commission.

c) ***Archive:*** an archive will be produced to English Heritage guidelines (MAP 2 (1991) and submitted within 6 months.

3 METHOD STATEMENT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1 The following work programme is submitted in line with the objectives summarised above.

3.2 TRIAL TRENCHING

3.2.1 The programme of trial trenching will establish the presence or absence of any previously unsuspected archaeological deposits, and provide information to inform any necessary mitigation strategy.

3.2.2 ***Trench configuration:*** the evaluation is required to examine a total of 30m of trenching, measuring *c* 2m in width (the approximate width of a typical excavator bucket). This will be divided into two or three trenches, depending on the proposed impact by the development, and will be agreed with the Cheshire AO prior to work commencing.

3.2.3 ***Methodology of excavation:*** the trenches will be excavated using a 1-1.5 tonne excavator. The size of plant is restricted by the necessity to have it lifted over the site's boundary wall due to restricted access otherwise. It is feasible to excavate with such a machine but it will be a much slower process than that usually employed, such as a JCB 3CX or similar.

3.2.4 Excavation will proceed by first removing the topsoil and modern overburden by machine (fitted with a toothless ditching bucket) under archaeological supervision to the surface of the first significant archaeological deposit or natural deposits. All trenches will be excavated in a stratigraphical manner, whether by machine or by hand. The first archaeological surface or natural geology will be cleaned by hand, using either hoes, shovel scraping, and/or trowels depending on the subsoil conditions, and inspected for archaeological features. All features of archaeological interest will be investigated and recorded unless otherwise agreed by the Cheshire AO.

3.2.5 Trenches will be located by use of a dGPS or Total Station (the use of a dGPS may be inhibited by the presence of buildings). Altitude information will be established with respect to Ordnance Survey Datum.

3.2.6 The trenches will not be excavated deeper than 1.2m to accommodate health and safety constraints, without shoring or stepping out of the trench sides. Should this be required, this may be costed as a variation.

3.2.7 Any investigation of intact archaeological deposits will be exclusively manual. Selected pits and postholes will normally only be half-sectioned, linear features will be subject to no more than a 10% sample, and extensive layers will, where possible, be sampled by partial rather than complete removal. It is hoped that in terms of the vertical stratigraphy, maximum information retrieval will be achieved through the examination of sections of cut features. All excavation, whether by machine or by hand, will be undertaken with a view to avoiding damage to any archaeological features, which appear worthy of preservation *in situ*.

3.2.8 All information identified in the course of the site works will be recorded stratigraphically, using a system, adapted from that used by Centre for Archaeology Service of English Heritage, with sufficient pictorial record (plans, sections, monochrome contacts, and digital photographs for presentation purposes) to identify and illustrate individual features. Primary records will be available for inspection at all times.

3.2.9 Results of all field investigations will be recorded on *pro forma* context sheets. The site archive will include both a photographic record and accurate large scale plans and sections at an appropriate scale (1:50, 1:20 and 1:10). All artefacts and ecofacts will be recorded using the same system, and will be handled and stored according to standard practice (following current Institute for Archaeologists guidelines and the Cheshire County Council guidelines (2003)) in order to minimise deterioration.

3.2.10 ***Environmental Assessment:*** it is anticipated that the excavation of trenches will be into waterlogged deposits. Therefore, environmental samples (bulk samples of 40 litres volume, to be sub-sampled at a later stage) will be collected from stratified undisturbed deposits and will particularly target negative features (gullies, pits and ditches). An assessment of the environmental potential of the site will be undertaken through the examination of suitable deposits by the in-house palaeoecological specialist, who will examine the potential for further analysis. The pollen in the sediment will be assessed to help understand the nature and processes of accumulation of the waterlogged deposits, and also the contemporary local environment, and the potential for waterlogged and charred plant remains will be assessed in sub-samples from the sediment samples. Plant remains may record the nature of the deposits, the local environment and the economy of the sites. The costs for the palaeoecological assessment are defined as a contingency and will only be called into effect if good deposits are identified and will be subject to the agreement of the Cheshire AO and the client.

3.2.11 Advice will also be sought as to whether a soil micromorphological study or any other analytical techniques will enhance the understanding of the site formation processes, including the amount of truncation to buried deposits and the preservation of deposits within negative features. Should this be required a variation to the cost will be agreed with the client.

3.2.12 ***Faunal remains:*** if there is found to be the potential for discovery of bones of fish and small mammals a sieving programme will be carried out. These will be assessed as appropriate by OA North's specialist in faunal remains, and subject to the results, there may be a requirement for more detailed analysis. A contingency has been included for the assessment of such faunal remains for analysis.

3.2.13 ***Human Remains****:* any human remains uncovered will be left *in situ*, covered and protected. No further investigation will continue beyond that required to establish the date and character of the burial. Cheshire East Council and the local Coroner will be informed immediately. If removal is essential the exhumation of any funerary remains will require the provision of a Home Office license, under section 25 of the Burial Act of 1857. An application will be made by OA North for the study area on discovery of any such remains and the removal will be carried out with due care and sensitivity under the environmental health regulations. Any delays caused by unforeseen and complex excavation of inhumations may be subject to a variation to the cost of the contract and will be agreed with the client.

3.2.14 ***Treatment of finds:*** all finds will be exposed, lifted, cleaned, conserved, marked, bagged and boxed in accordance with the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (UKIC) *First Aid For Finds*, 1998 (new edition) and the recipient museum's guidelines.

3.2.15 ***Treasure:*** any gold and silver artefacts recovered during the course of the excavation will be removed to a safe place and reported to the local Coroner according to the procedures relating to the Treasure Act, 1996. Where removal cannot take place on the same working day as discovery, suitable security will be employed to protect the finds from theft.

3.2.16 All identified finds and artefacts will be retained, although certain classes of building material can sometimes be discarded after recording if an appropriate sample is retained on advice from the recipient museum's archive curator.

3.2.17 ***Contingency plan:*** a contingency costing may also be employed for unseen delays caused by prolonged periods of bad weather, vandalism, discovery of unforeseen complex deposits and/or artefacts which require specialist removal, use of shoring to excavate important features close to the excavation sections etc. This has been included in the Costings and would be in agreement with the client.

3.2.18 The evaluation will provide a predictive model of surviving archaeological remains detailing zones of relative importance against known development proposals. In this way, an impact assessment will also be provided.

3.3 REPORT AND ARCHIVE

3.3.1 ***Interim Statement:*** an interim statement of the results will be issued to the client and AO within one week of the completion of the fieldwork in order to inform the planning process.

3.3.2 ***Final Report:*** one bound copy of a written synthetic report will be submitted to the client, together with a pdf version on CD within eight weeks of the completion of the fieldwork, unless an alternative deadline is agreed with the client beforehand. A copy will also be forwarded to the Cheshire HER and AO for references purposes. It will present, summarise, and interpret the results of the programme detailed above in order to come to as full an understanding as possible of the archaeology of the development area. The report will be prepared in accordance with the Cheshire County Council guidelines (2003) and will include;

- a site location plan related to the national grid
- a front cover to include the planning application number and the NGR
- a concise, non-technical summary of the results
- the circumstances of the project and the dates on which the fieldwork was undertaken
- description of the methodology, including the sources consulted
- a summary of the historical background of the study area
- an interpretation of the results and their significance, using the 'Secretary of State's criteria for scheduling ancient monuments' (Annex 1; DCMS 2010)
- appropriate plans showing the location and position of features or sites located
- a statement, where appropriate, of the archaeological implications of the proposed development
- monochrome and colour photographs as appropriate
- a copy of this project design, and indications of any agreed departure from that design
- the report will also include a complete bibliography of sources from which data has been derived, and a list of any further sources identified but not consulted
- plans and sections showing the positions of deposits and finds
- an index to the project archive.

3.3.3 ***Confidentiality:*** all internal reports to the client are designed as documents for the specific use of the client, for the particular purpose as defined in the project brief and project design, and should be treated as such. They are not suitable for publication as academic documents or otherwise without amendment or revision.

3.4 ARCHIVE

3.4.1 The results of all archaeological work carried out will form the basis for a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with Appendix 3 of the current English Heritage guidelines (*Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition, 1991) and UKIC (1990). This archive will be provided in the English Heritage Centre for Archaeology format and a synthesis will be submitted to the HER (the index to the archive and a copy of the report). OA North practice is to deposit the original record archive of projects (paper, magnetic and plastic media) with the County Record Office.

4. HEALTH AND SAFETY

4.1 ***Risk Assessment:*** OA North provides a Health and Safety Statement for all projects and maintains a Company Safety policy. All site procedures are in accordance with the guidance set out in the Health and Safety Manual compiled by the Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers (1997). A written risk assessment will be undertaken in advance of project commencement and copies will be made available on request to all interested parties.

4.2 ***Services and other constraints:*** full regard will, of course, be given to all constraints (services etc) during the evaluation as well as to all Health and Safety considerations. As a matter of course the field team will use a Cable Avoidance Tool (CAT) prior to any excavation to test for services. However, this is only an approximate location tool. Any **information regarding services**, i.e. drawings or knowledge of live cables or services, within the study area and held with the client should be made known to the OA North project manager prior to the commencement of the evaluation.

4.3 ***Contamination:*** any known contamination issues or any specific health and safety requirements on site should be made known to OA North by the client to ensure all procedures can be met, and that the risk is dealt with appropriately. Should any presently unknown contamination be discovered during excavation, it may be necessary to halt the works and reassess the risk assessment. Should it be necessary to supply additional PPE or other contamination avoidance equipment, or should this effect the timetable of works, this will be costed as a variation.

4.4 ***Staff issues:*** all project staff will be CSCS qualified, proof of which can be provided in the form of CSCS cards.

4.5 A toilet and hand washing facilities is required and can be provided and located on or adjacent to the site, unless the client would prefer to arrange alternative facilities. Therefore, the cost has been provided as a contingency item.

4.6 ***Fencing requirements:*** the excavation trench and any areas of archaeological sensitivity will be protected with barrier tape whilst open, and any appropriate signage. The trenches will be opened and backfilled within the same day for purposes of site security, once archaeological recording has been completed, unless otherwise directed by the Cheshire AO. Any other requirements for fencing at the client's request (e.g. Heras-type security fencing) may be charged as a variation.

5 OTHER MATTERS

5.1 ACCESS

5.1.1 Liaison for basic site access will be undertaken through the client - there is restricted access which will accommodate pedestrian traffic only. Therefore, the plant will be lifted in and out over the western boundary wall to the bowling green. This obviously restricts the size of machine that can be used to one that is easily lifted over the wall, which is a 1 to 1.5 tonne excavator.

5.2 SPOIL/REINSTATEMENT

5.2.1 Spoil from the excavation will be stored alongside the trenches during excavation. The ground will be backfilled so that the topsoil is laid on the top, and the ground will be roughly graded with the machine. Should there be a requirement by the client for more specialised reinstatement, this may need to be agreed as a variation as this would be beyond the scope of the works.

5.3 **PROJECT MONITORING**

5.3.1 Whilst the work is undertaken for the client, the Cheshire AO, Mark Leah, will be kept fully informed of the work and its results and will be notified a week in advance of the commencement of the fieldwork. This will enable Mark to visit the site to view the trenches whilst open to aid the planning process. Any proposed changes to the project design will be agreed with Mark Leah in consultation with the client.

5.4 **INSURANCE**

5.4.1 OA North has a professional indemnity cover to a value of £2,000,000; proof of which can be supplied as required.

5.5 **WORK TIMETABLE**

5.5.1 ***Archaeological Trenching:*** it was initially anticipated that this element would require one day for a team of three people. However, due to the limited size of the machine excavator and the restrictions in access, these factors may contribute to the fieldwork running into an extra day. If so, a separate cost has been provided for an additional site day for the team.

5.5.2 ***Report:*** an interim statement will be supplied within one week of completion of the fieldwork, and the final report will be submitted to the client within eight weeks, unless an earlier deadline is agreed at the time of commission.

5.5.3 ***Archive:*** the archive will be deposited within six months.

5.6 **STAFFING**

5.6.1 The project will be under the direct management of **Emily Mercer** (OA North Senior Project Manager) to whom all correspondence should be addressed.

5.6.2 The evaluation will be supervised by an OA North project officer who is experienced in this type of project. Due to scheduling requirements it is not possible to provide these details at the present time. All OA North project officers are experienced field archaeologists capable of carrying out projects of all sizes.

5.6.3 Assessment of the finds from the evaluation will be undertaken under the auspices of OA North's in-house finds specialist **Christine Howard-Davis** (OA North finds manager). Christine has extensive knowledge of finds from many periods.

5.6.4 Assessment of any palaeoenvironmental samples will be undertaken by or under the auspices of **Elizabeth Huckerby MSc** (OA North project officer). Elizabeth has extensive knowledge of the palaeoecology of the North West through her work on the English Heritage-funded North West Wetlands Survey.

REFERENCES

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Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), 2010 Scheduled Monuments: identifying, protecting, conserving and investigating nationally important archaeological sites under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979

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English Heritage, 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edn, London

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Institute for Archaeologists, 2010 *Code of conduct* (revised edition), Reading

SCAUM (Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers), 1997 *Health and Safety Manual*, Poole

UKIC, 1990 *Guidelines for the Preparation of Archives for Long-Term Storage*, London

UKIC, 1998 *First Aid for Finds*, London

APPENDIX 2: FINDS CATALOGUE

Trench	Context	Material	Category	No frags	Description	Date
1	***041***	Ceramic	Vessel	13	One salt-glazed stoneware; one brown salt-glazed stoneware; one yellow ware; one mottled ware; one refined white earthenware; one black-glazed redware; one mottled ware, four press-moulded Cream-bodied slipware, one press-moulded pink-bodied slipware, one mottled ware with applied decoration	Eighteenth century
1	***041***	Ceramic	Tobacco pipe	1	Stem fragment	Not closely dated
1	***041***	Bone	Animal	13	Well-preserved	Not closely dated
1	***042***	Ceramic	Tobacco pipe	9	Four stamped bowls, five stem fragments	Late seventeenth century??
1	***042***	Ceramic	Building material	2	Sand-cast tile, some over-firing	Post-medieval
1	***042***	Ceramic	Vessel	17	Two Metropolitan-type ware; seven Staffordshire-type slipware; one imported stoneware; one Ceramic cream-grey fabric with yellow glaze; six black-glazed redware, including an over-fired base	Eighteenth century
1	***042***	Ceramic	Vessel	1	Cream gritty fabric, abraded	Medieval
1	***042***	Ceramic	Building material	2	Sand-cast tile	Post-medieval
1	***046***	Bone	Animal	2	-	Not closely dated
1	***046***	Ceramic	Building material	1	Sand-cast tile	Post-medieval
1	***046***	Ceramic	Vessel	1	Metropolitan-type ware plate rim	Late seventeenth - eighteenth century
1	***049***	Ceramic	Building material	1	Sand-cast tile	Post-medieval
1	***049***	Lead	Vessel	1	Splash glaze, gritty cream fabric	Medieval?
1	***049***	Wood	-	1	Small, dried roundwood twig	Not closely dated
1	***049***	Not identified	-	6	Peculiar light stony/calcified organic material	Not closely dated
1	***U/s***	Bone	Animal	40	Well-preserved, whole bones, horn cores	Not closely dated

2a	***U/s***	Bone	Animal	1	-	Not closely dated
2a	***U/s***	Iron	Object	1	Nail?	Not closely dated
2a	***U/s***	Glass	Vessel	1	Dark olive green wine bottle	Eighteenth century
2a	***U/s***	Ceramic	Tobacco pipe	1	Stem fragment	Post-medieval
2a	***U/s***	Ceramic	Vessel	17	One Chinese porcelain; two white stoneware mug, brown rim; two Metropolitan-type; one mottled ware; one white salt-glazed stoneware; four refined white earthenware; two black-slipped redware; five joining fragments brown stoneware mug crowned WR stamp; one self-glazed redware.	Eighteenth century
2a	***U/s***	Ceramic	Vessel	1	One unglazed hard, gritty fabric	Seventeenth century??
2b	***01***	Ceramic	Tobacco pipe	5	One stamped bowl, four stem fragments	Late seventeenth century?
2b	***011***	Iron	Object	3	Wire grid	Not closely dated
2b	***012***	Ceramic	Building material	1	Flat, sand cast	Post-medieval
2b	***012***	Ceramic	Vessel	1	Base, small black-glazed redware vessel	Eighteenth century?
2b	***012***	Ceramic	Vessel	42	Twelve Metropolitan-type slipware; one black-glazed stoneware; five black-glazed redware, slip-decorated mug; three brown stoneware; three mottled ware; one self-glazed redware; one black-glazed redware multi-handled mug, 16 black-glazed redware.	Eighteenth century
2b	***012***	Glass	Vessel	14	Dark olive green wine bottle	Eighteenth century
2b	***012***	Ceramic	Tobacco pipe	1	Stem fragment	Post-medieval
2b	***012***	Glass	-	1	Textured sheet glass	Twentieth century?
2b	***012***	Ceramic	Vessel	90	One mottled ware mug; one mottled ware bottle; five mottled ware other; one brown-glazed redware base; four brown-glazed redware; 42 black-glazed redware; one black-slipped ware; 13 Metropolitan-type ware; one Cistercian-type ware; one tin-glazed ware; one creamware; two white salt-glazed stoneware mug; two fine black-glazed redware; three refined white earthenware, transfer-printed; one brown stoneware; six coarse brown mottled ware handled dish; two unglazed rims	Late seventeenth - eighteenth century
2b	***012***	Mollusc	Oyster	1	Oyster	Not closely

						dated
2b	***012***	Bone	Animal	17	Well-preserved bone	Not closely dated
2b	***012***	Glass	Vessel	88	All dark olive green wine bottle, mainly bases	Mid-late eighteenth century
2b	***012***	Ceramic	Tobacco pipe	1	Bowl, stamped	Late seventeenth century?
2b	***019***	Ceramic	Vessel	7	Three black-glazed redware (two bowls); one mottled mug; one Staffordshire press-moulded dish; one Staffordshire slipware; one mottled, sooted outside	Eighteenth century
2b	***019***	Glass	Vessel	1	Dark olive green wine bottle, with odd cracked-off rim	Late seventeenth – early eighteenth century
2b	***019***	Glass	Vessel	1	Dark olive green wine bottle base	Mid-late eighteenth century
2b	***019***	Ceramic	Building material	1	Flat, sand-cast tile	Post-medieval
2b	***019***	Ceramic	Vessel	5	Three black-glazed redware plate; one, body brown-glazed redware; one cream fabric, brown glaze	Eighteenth century
2b	***019***	Bone	Animal	9	Well-preserved bone	Not closely dated
2b	***029***	Ceramic	Vessel	3	One black-glazed redware; one unglazed chip; one reduced grey fabric, thick lead glaze with streaky green/yellow glazed inside and out.	Eighteenth century
2b	***029***	Bone	Animal	2	Calcined, small fragments	Not closely dated
2b	***U/s***	Ceramic	Building material	4	Sand-cast tile	Post-medieval
2b	***U/s***	Ceramic	Building material	1	Thick floor tile, or large brick	Post-medieval
2b	***U/s***	Ceramic	Building material	2	Thin hand-made brick	Post-medieval
3	***02***	Glass	Window	1	Colourless sheet glass	Nineteenth century onwards
3	***02***	Ceramic	Vessel	54	Three white salt-glazed stoneware; nine black-glazed redware; two black slipped; one lustre ware; one creamware; one pearlware; one brown stoneware; one white bone china; thirty-five refined white earthenwares, blue, purple and green printing	Late eighteenth – nineteenth century

3	***02***	Glass	Vessel	2	Bottle, bluish	Nineteenth century?
3	***02***	Ceramic	Tobacco pipe	7	Stem fragment	Not closely dated
3	***02***	Ceramic	Building material	1	Sand-cast tile	Post-medieval
3	***02***	Glass	Vessel	2	Dark olive green wine bottle	Eighteenth century
3	***02***	Bone	Animal	4	All sawn	Not closely dated
3	***02***	Mollusc	Oyster	2	Oyster	Not closely dated
3	***02***	Ceramic	Vessel	2	Garden ware	Eighteenth century onwards
3	***04***	Ceramic	Building material	3	Sand-cast tile	Post-medieval