



**HATHERSAGE
ROAD,
ARDWICK,
MANCHESTER**

**Archaeological Excavation
Report**



Oxford Archaeology North

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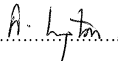
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SUMMARY

Nuffield Health is developing proposals for a new private hospital and integrated well-being facility on the site of the former Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) Elizabeth Gaskell Campus at Hathersage Road, in the Ardwick area of Manchester (centred on NGR 385432 395750). The construction works required for the proposed development will necessitate considerable earth-moving works, which will inevitably have a negative impact on any buried archaeological remains.

The archaeological potential of the site was highlighted by a desk-based assessment, which showed that the site had been occupied during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by a farmhouse and associated barn. In the light of the conclusions drawn by the desk-based assessment, Oxford Archaeology North was commissioned by Nuffield Health to carry out a programme of archaeological evaluation, carried out in May 2015. The evaluation trenching revealed that well-preserved remains, probably associated with the farmhouse and barn buildings, survived *in-situ*, although the limited nature of the trenching meant that little information about the form or character of either structure was obtained. Following consultation with the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service, OA North was further commissioned to undertake the stripping of the modern surfacing from across the full footprint of the farmhouse, in order for the extent, character and significance of the buried remains to be understood fully. This work was undertaken in July 2015.

The footprint of the farmhouse, identified as Blackstake Farm on nineteenth-century Ordnance Survey mapping, was excavated in two areas due to live service cables. Following the removal of a rough brick surface identified in the earlier evaluation, several original features of the farmhouse were observed, cut into the natural plastic clay, at a shallow depth of only approximately 0.3m below the modern ground level. These represented the foundational remains of the farmhouse, which appeared both stylistically and from the ceramic assemblage to have been of probable late seventeenth-century date, and comprising a two-unit house built in English bond. An internal sunken larder in the north-eastern corner of the structure may have been placed adjacent to the main doorway, and was almost certainly below the staircase to the upper floor, suggesting that the substantial full-brick thickness cross-wall between the large kitchen and smaller parlour housed an inglenook fireplace.

The rough brick surface of hand-made brick, revealed within Trench 2 of the earlier evaluation represented the re-use of the brick walls of the original farmhouse to form a surface following its demolition. This had probably been intended to create a yard for use during the construction of the adjacent college in 1912.

Whilst further buried archaeological remains of the former Blackstake farmhouse may lie beyond the limit of excavation, their likely poor level of preservation, and the information revealed by the excavation suggests that little detail might be added, and that it does not merit any further investigation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) would like to thank Kevin McNaull, Polly Betts and Andrew Hammond of EC Harris LLP for commissioning and supporting the project on behalf of Nuffield Health. Thanks are also expressed to Norman Redhead, Heritage Management Director with the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS), for his advice and guidance.

The excavation was undertaken by Chris Wild and Sarah Mottershead. The report was written by Chris Wild, and the illustrations were prepared by Mark Tidmarsh. The report was edited by Ian Miller, who was also responsible for project management.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 Nuffield Health is developing proposals for a new private hospital and integrated well-being facility on the site of the former Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) Elizabeth Gaskell Campus at Hathersage Road, in the Ardwick area of Manchester. The construction works required for the proposed development will necessitate considerable earth-moving works, which will inevitably have a negative impact on any buried archaeological remains.
- 1.1.2 The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted by a desk-based assessment produced by Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) in April 2015. This study showed that the site had been occupied during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by a farmhouse and associated barn, and had also been crossed by an early boundary ditch between the historic townships of Chorlton-on-Medlock and Rusholme. The desk-based assessment concluded that the farm buildings and the early township boundary merited intrusive evaluation by archaeological trial trenching.
- 1.1.3 In the light of the conclusions drawn from the desk-based study, OA North was commissioned by Nuffield Health to carry out a programme of archaeological evaluation. This comprised the mechanical excavation of four targeted trenches within the study area, which was carried out in May 2015, and revealed well-preserved and archaeologically significant remains in three of the four trenches (OA North 2015a). Of most significance were two rough brick surfaces comprising historic hand-made brick, in the position of both the farmhouse of Blackstake Farm, and of a further building of similar size, presumed to be a barn.
- 1.1.4 In order to assess the significance of these deposits, and determine whether further physical evidence for the farmhouse and probable barn lay beneath, OA North were further commissioned to undertake the stripping of the modern surfacing from across the full footprint of Blackstake farmhouse and the barn. The programme of work was devised in consultation with the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service, in their capacity as archaeological advisors to Manchester City Council, and aimed to establish the extent, character and significance of the buried remains. It was anticipated that this information would enable and allow a decision to be reached as to whether any more detailed archaeological excavation and recording was merited in advance of the proposed construction programme. Due to the programming of demolition work adjacent to the site of the probable barn, the excavation fieldwork has been split into two phases, with further investigation of the barn being proposed to be undertaken in early 2016.

1.2 SITE LOCATION

- 1.2.1 The study area (centred on NGR 385432 395750) lies within the grounds of the former Manchester Metropolitan University Elizabeth Gaskell Campus in the Ardwick area of Manchester. The site is bounded by Hathersage Road to the north, Upper Brook Street to the east and Oxford Place to the south (Fig 1). Further buildings associated with the universities and the hospital are situated between the study area and Wilmslow Road, to the west.
- 1.2.2 The area mainly comprises a relatively level area dominated by the three-storey School of Domestic Sciences building, fronting Hathersage Road, and a modern five-storey college building across the western part of the site. A series of twentieth-century buildings occupy much of the central area, and a row of Edwardian villas front Oxford Place in the south. Much of the open ground is tarmaced with a number of grassed areas (Plate 1).
- 1.2.3 The superficial geology comprises boulder clay with patches of sand and gravel, overlying Permo-Triassic rock formations of the Sherwood Sandstone Group (Hall *et al* 1995).



Plate 1: Ariel view across the study area, looking north. The excavation area lay to the left of the main collage building across the access road and lawn

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

- 2.1.1 Two large rectangular trenches were excavated mechanically across the footprint of features identified in Trenches 1 and 2 of an earlier programme of archaeological evaluation trenching (OA North 2015a) across the former Blackstake farmhouse that is depicted on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century mapping.
- 2.1.2 Excavation of the modern ground surface was undertaken by a mechanical excavator using a toothless ditching bucket to the top of the first significant archaeological level. The work was supervised closely by a suitably experienced archaeologist. Thereafter, all archaeological deposits were cleaned manually to define their extent, nature, form and, where possible, date.

2.2 ARCHIVE

- 2.2.1 A full archive of the work has been prepared to a professional standard in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (1991) and the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage* (UKIC 1990). The archive will be deposited with the Manchester Museum on completion of the project. In addition, a copy of the report will be forwarded to the County Historic Environment Record (HER).

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1.1 The earliest published map of the area is that produced by William Yates in the 1770s, which shows Chorlton Row to have been concentrated along the line of the Manchester to Stockport road. At this date, Chorlton Row was sparsely populated, with only 46 houses and 226 inhabitants recorded in 1774 (Brumhead and Wyke *nd, ii*).
- 3.1.2 Yates' map show relatively scant development along Oxford Road, which at this date was a branch road leading from the Stockport road at Ardwick Green. The Stockport road itself was part of an early major north/south routeway, which under an Act of Parliament in 1725 became one of the first turnpikes within the region, under the management of the Manchester and Buxton trust. In 1749 an Act was passed allowing the branch road from Ardwick Green to Didsbury, which included Oxford Road, to come under the care of the trust, and four years later a further Act extended this turnpike from Didsbury to Wilmslow. The section of the road through Chorlton-upon-Medlock ceased to be a turnpike under an Act of 1830, which handed over the responsibility for its upkeep to the township (Harrison 1916, 138-40, 150). The whole length of this road was called Oxford Street until about the 1880s (Makepeace 1995, 16).
- 3.1.3 The character of Chorlton-upon-Medlock was transformed during the first half of the nineteenth century by the southern spread of the industrial town of Manchester. Shortly after the opening of Oxford Road, the Chorlton Hall estate in the north of the township was bought by Samuel Marsland and his brother Peter, two prominent cotton manufacturers from Stockport, and William Cooper and George Duckworth of Manchester (Brumhead and Wyke *nd, ii*). Their intention was to develop the estate as a suburb of the Manchester, centred on a new square, known originally as Grosvenor Square and later as All Saints after the church which was built there in 1819-20.
- 3.1.4 The southern part of the Chorlton-upon-Medlock township during this period also emerged as a fashionable area in which to build villas for the town's wealthy elite. In 1837, Richard Love was commissioned to plan a 70-acre private estate. By 1845, about a dozen houses had been built and the Victoria Park Trust had been formed by residents. The size and distribution of these large villa residences in the vicinity of the present study area is captured on the Ordnance Survey map of 1848.
- 3.1.5 Professional classes moved into the area during the second half of the nineteenth century, and several of the villas came to be associated with prominent politicians and artists. Charles Halle, founder of the Halle Orchestra, and the painter Ford Madox Brown, both lived in Addison terrace, and Richard Cobden lived at Crescent Gate.

3.2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE

- 3.2.1 The earliest reliable cartographic sources to show the study area is William Yates' survey of the 1770s, which shows the site to have been undeveloped land situated a short distance to the south-west of a substantial building, probably a large farm, annotated 'Blakestake'. The next surveys of the area are provided by Greenwood's map of 1818, and William Johnson's *Map of the Parish of Manchester*, surveyed in 1818-19. Greenwood map appears to show Blakestake to have comprised three buildings, two of which lie within the proposed development area. Johnson similarly shows three buildings, although identifies them as 'Blackstake'. The buildings had an entirely rural prospect, and do not appear to have been served by any formal road that linked with the principal thoroughfares. Greenwood and Johnson also depict a significant boundary feature crossing the southern part of the Site Area. This formed the township boundary between Chorlton-upon-Medlock and Rusholme.
- 3.2.2 The rapid pace of development during the following decades can be seen on the first edition Ordnance Survey 6": 1 mile map that was surveyed in 1844 (Plate 2). The Ordnance Survey also produced a detailed map of the area at a scale of 1:1,056 in 1850, based on a survey that was completed during the previous year. This map clearly annotates Blackstake Farm, seemingly set in landscaped grounds, with what may have been an orchard to the south-west of the farmhouse (Plate 3). The farm was approached via a drive from High Street (Hathersage Road), which led to a central farmyard. A rectangular building on the eastern side of the central yard probably formed a barn and/or was used for livestock. The southern edge of the farm complex was formed by the historic township boundary ditch.

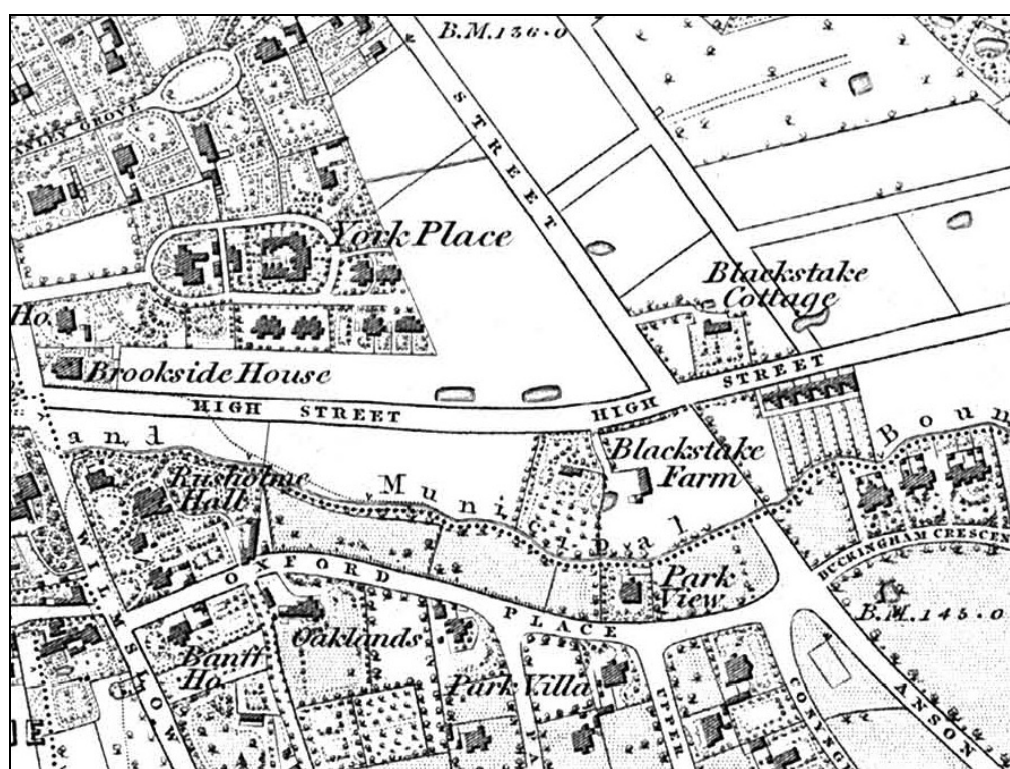


Plate 2: Extract from the Ordnance Survey 6": 1 mile map of 1848



Plate 3: Extract from the Ordnance Survey 1:1,056 map of 1850, showing the boundary of the proposed development area

- 3.2.3 The next available plan of the study area is provided by the next edition of Ordnance Survey mapping, which was published in 1892 at a scale of 25": 1 mile, and shows the site had been subject to some development during the second half of the nineteenth century. The footprint of Blackstake Farm and its associated outbuildings appears unchanged, although a glasshouse is shown to have been built opposite the farmhouse. The same configuration of buildings is shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1908, although part of the wooded area/orchard appears to have been cleared of trees.
- 3.2.4 Within a few years of 1908, however, Blackstake Farm and its outbuildings had been demolished, and a new school erected along the southern side of Hathersage Road. This school was built by the Manchester Education Committee in 1912 as the Manchester College of Domestic Science. The building was intended for the training of teachers of domestic subjects, and was designed to accommodate 300 students. However, the demand for housekeepers' courses and for the training of women entering the catering industry resulted in the college providing courses in demonstration and institutional management up to the level of the National Certificate Examination. The new building comprised an architecturally impressive three-storey range along Hathersage Road, with a wider wing block at each end. The footprint of the new school is shown on the next edition of Ordnance Survey mapping, which was published in 1922 (Plate 4). This map also marks the route of the historic township boundary between Chorlton-upon-Medlock and Rusholme, implying that it persisted as a feature of the landscape.

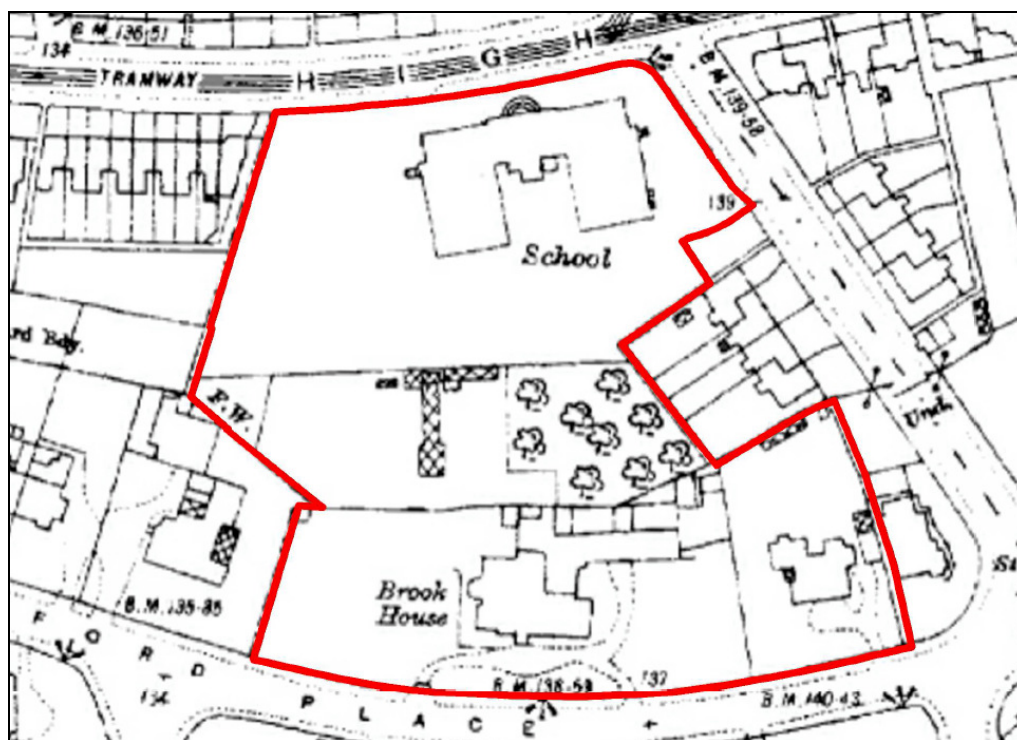


Plate 4: Extract from the Ordnance Survey 25": 1 mile map of 1922, showing the boundary of the proposed development area

- 3.2.5 In 1959, the college expanded its teacher training capacity to include primary school teachers, and new buildings were erected on the campus to cater for an expansion of the student capacity to 500. A speech therapy training course was introduced during the following year, creating the first link with the University of Manchester, to which the college became affiliated to subsequently. It was during this period that the name of Elizabeth Gaskell College of Education was adopted.
- 3.2.6 By the early 1970s, the college was offering a range of courses to degree level, together with a post-graduate certificate in education. The layout of the buildings on the site at this time is captured on the Ordnance Survey map of 1970. This shows a range of adjoining new buildings in the central part of the site, the north-eastern corner of which subsumed the footprint of the original outbuildings associated with Blackstake Farm, and the glasshouses to the south of the farmhouse. The historic township boundary appears to have been infilled by this date, with its route being marked by the Ordnance Survey as a dashed line.
- 3.2.7 In 1982, the Manchester Education Committee allowed Manchester Polytechnic (latterly MMU) to take over the college as part of a cost-cutting exercise.

4. RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.1.1 Following the results of the archaeological evaluation trenching (OA North 2015a), a programme of archaeological excavation was recommended to further investigate the well-preserved historic remains observed within Trenches 1-3. Due to the programming of demolition works within the site, the excavation was divided into two phases, with the first of these examining the remains of the farmhouse, located in the north-western part of the site (Fig 2). It was proposed that a single trench of 16 x 8m was placed across the area between evaluation Trenches 1 and 2 (Fig 2). However, due to the positioning of extant service cables, and the need to maintain vehicular access to the demolition being undertaken in the western part of the site, the trench was split into two parts (Fig 2).

4.2 EXCAVATION AREA A

4.2.1 This part of the excavation measured 8.7 x 7.5m, and was placed on an approximately east/west alignment, overlapping the earlier evaluation Trench 2. Excavation was halted at the kerb of the edge of the road, due to service cables underlying an extant hedge. The area of proposed excavation to the east was excavated as a separate trench (Area B; Fig 2).



Plate 5: General view of Area A, looking south

- 4.2.2 As in the earlier evaluation trench to the east, the subsoil comprised a layer of mixed yellowish-grey plastic clay (**09**), clearly representing the natural geology (Plate 5). Heavy rains during the excavation were retained by the clay, submersing the trench on several occasions (Plate 5), although several features cutting into the natural clay were identified.
- 4.2.3 The most significant of these features was an L-shaped brick wall, of full-brick thickness (**014**), surviving to a depth of only a single course (Plates 5 and 6). It comprised hand-made, mould thrown brick, the majority being heavily degraded, and representing the foundation of a full-brick thickness wall, with the bricks all apparently pressed into the natural clay (presumably by the weight of the wall above), rather than being placed within a cut trench (Plate 6). The approximately north/south-aligned section of wall (Fig 2) comprised two rows of bricks, forming a stretcher wall face, and measured 5.63m in length, continuing beyond the southern section of the trench. The perpendicular eastward return measured 2.42m to the section of the trench, and comprised a single edge-set brick placed across the wall (Plate 6), presumably forming a foundation plinth, but probably indicating a construction in English bond, which comprised alternating courses of stretchers and headers.



Plate 6: Detail of northern return of wall 014

- 4.2.4 Wall **014** was butted on its southern side by a square brick structure (**015**), measuring 0.52m², and comprising a single skin structure of two-brick lengths on each axis (Plate 7). The internal chamber created between walls **014** and **015** was infilled with rounded pebbles (Plate 7), and almost certainly represented a soakaway at the base of an external vertical drain placed against the outer wall of the building.

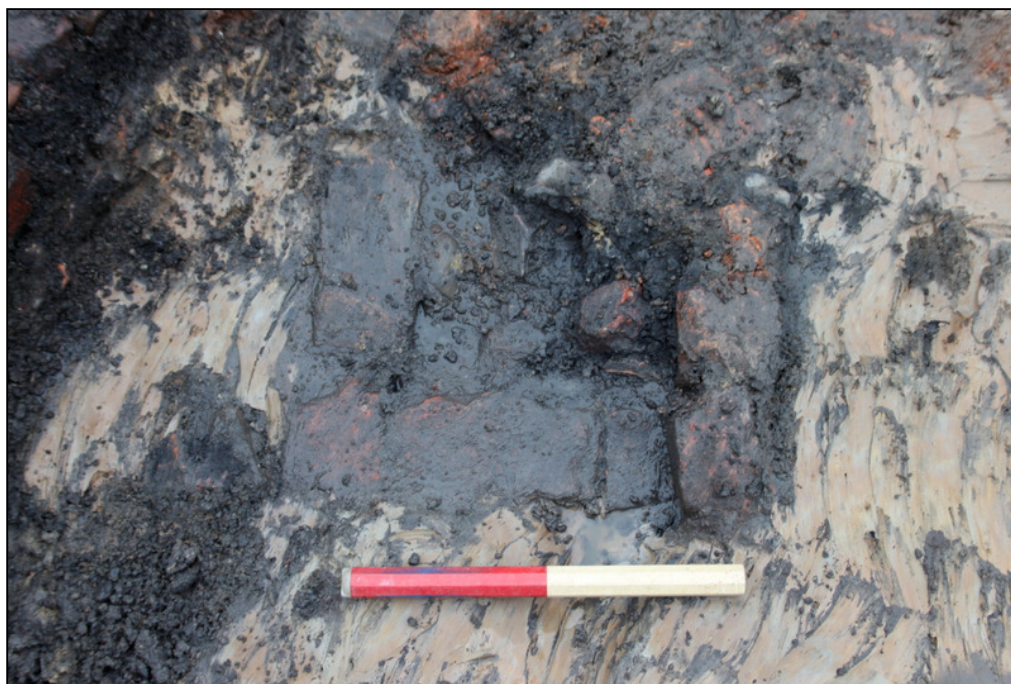


Plate 7: Drain **015** butting northern face of wall **014**

- 4.2.5 Two further features were cut into the plastic clay (**09**) within the internal area to the south-east of wall **014** (Fig 2; Plate 8). The northern of these comprised an almost triangular-shaped feature (**016**), measuring 0.40 x 0.50m, and filled with dark black silty clay soil containing fragments of plastic, confirming its modern origin. Immediately to the south, a 0.30m diameter sub-circular feature (**017**) was only 40mm deep, and was filled with a pale-grey clay containing a high percentage of ash (**018**). No dating evidence was recovered from the feature, which was probably cut through the later layers above.



Plate 8: Late, irregular features **017** and **018**, with Wall **013** and concrete beam **012** to rear

- 4.2.6 In the south-western corner of the trench, the natural clay (09) was cut by a steep-sided trench (019) housing a concrete sill beam (022), L-shaped in plan (Fig 2), and observed previously within Trench 2 of the earlier evaluation (OA North 2015a; Plate 9). Below the 0.12m thick concrete beam, the vertically-sided trench was filled with black clinker (Plate 10).



Plate 9: Brick surface 204 with concrete beam 022 in background



Plate 10: Clinker fill of beam cut 019

- 4.2.7 In the eastern part of Area A, the natural clay (**09**) and wall **014** were overlain by two north-west/south-east-aligned features, both approximately parallel to the southern part of the concrete beam cut **019** (Fig 2; Plates 5 and 8). The eastern of the two features (**012**) comprised a rough concrete surface of variable width, ranging from 0.45m wide at its southern end, to 0.61m in the extant northern part (Fig 2). This appeared to have formed a relatively late foundation beam, and was typically of 0.15m depth, continuing beyond the limit of excavation at either end. It was bounded on its western side by a row of edge-set bricks (**013**), comprising both full and broken hand-made bricks (Plate 8). These were clearly re-used and appear to have been placed to form an edge for the concrete beam (**012**) to be poured against.
- 4.2.8 The row of bricks appeared to have originally survived to two courses in height, the upper course forming part of a rough brick floor (**204**) observed within the earlier evaluation Trench 2 (OA North 2015a; Plate 9), and which continued across Area A to the upper course of Wall **013**. The uneven brick surface (**204**) comprised hand-made bricks, with occasional fragments of sandstone, which appeared to have been laid in north/south-aligned rows. It was overlain by a 0.15m thick layer of mid-brown silty clay (**202**), which was sealed by a 0.7-0.25m deposit of MOT grade limestone chippings (**201**) that formed levelling material for the modern asphalt surface. To the east, the brick surface was cut by the limestone chippings, overlying beam **012**, and also at its south-western extent above concrete beam **022** (Plate 5).

4.3 EXCAVATION AREA B

- 4.3.1 The eastern of the two excavation areas measured 8.2 x 4.0m, and was placed on an approximately north/south alignment, and at a distance of between 0.5m and 1.5m from the eastern extent of Area A (Fig 2). The proposed position of the trench continued further to the east, incorporating the western part of the earlier evaluation Trench 1 (OA North 2015a), but extant shallow service cables rendered this unfeasible. Unlike Area A, this part of the excavation site was excavated beneath a turfed and landscaped part of the site, to the east of the access road. (Fig 2; Plate 11).
- 4.3.2 Excavation revealed similar natural yellowish plastic clays to those within Area A (**09**), 0.35m below present ground level (Plate 11). This was cut by several features, mainly located in the northern and eastern parts of the trench (Fig 2).
- 4.3.3 An approximately east/west-aligned wall (**05**) was on similar alignment to Wall **014** within Area A, and represented a continuation of the same feature (Fig 2; Plates 11 and 12). It was similarly constructed to a full-brick width, but with a lower basal course surviving, and comprising edge-set hand-made bricks (Plate). Towards the eastern part of the trench, the upper extant course of the wall reduced to only a single-skin thickness for a length of 0.97m (Fig 2; Plate 12).



Plate 11: General view of Area B, looking south



Plate 12: North wall 05 with narrowing to right of junction with single-skin wall 07. A shallow linear depression, 010, is visible in the background

- 4.3.4 A perpendicular single-skin wall (**07**) to the immediate east of this narrowing of the wall appeared to have been keyed into Wall **05** (Plate 12), and continued southwards for a distance of 3.53m, before returning beneath the eastern section of the trench (Fig 2; Plate 13). This was again of hand-made brick construction, but was cut deeper into the natural clay, surviving to a depth of at least five courses, and forming the partition to a shallow cellar, or more probably a sunken larder (Plate 14). Partial excavation of the feature revealed an unbonded brick floor (**020**), laid parallel to the adjacent wall (**07**), and comprising bed-set and edge set rows of hand-made brick (Fig 2; Plates 14 and 15). These were placed only 0.32m below the extant wall top, and continued to the east, below the service ducting that formed the eastern limit of excavation. At its northern extent, the floor was accessed via a set of three steps (**021**), each apparently 0.61m wide, with a 0.35m tread formed by a single-piece, 0.08m thick sandstone step above two courses of brickwork (Plate). The upper step formed the southern extent of a degraded Welsh slate floor (**06**), which measured 0.5 x 0.36m, and partially overlay Wall **07**, possibly suggesting the position of a doorway adjacent to the larder stair (Fig 2).
- 4.3.5 The larder/cellar was infilled with typical late nineteenth-/early twentieth-century demolition rubble (**08**), comprising almost exclusively crushed lime plaster, brick and timber lath in the lower 0.15m, with darker silty clay containing clinker brick and less plaster above (Plates 13 and 14).
- 4.3.6 To the west of Wall **07**, the natural yellowish clay was cut by a 0.45m wide linear feature (**010**), which continued beyond the western limit of excavation (Fig 2; Plate 12). It was filled with a clinkerous black silty clay, surviving to a depth of between 30 and 50mm, with a shallow profile. The purpose of the feature remains unclear, but its alignment and position suggest that it perhaps formed a foundation cut for a wall, possibly an unbonded sleeper wall for carrying a timber floor during later occupation. Conversely, it may simply have represented the levelling of a natural depression below a flagstone floor.
- 4.3.7 To the north of Wall **05**, the natural clays were not observed at the same depth as to the south (Plate 11). Instead, the loamy dark clay subsoil (**01**), which contained brick fragments, continued to a greater depth, and housed two ceramic drains (**02** and **03**), running from east to west, and both comprising 0.30m long cylindrical sections (Plate 11). Although parallel in the eastern part of the trench, where they were sealed by a concrete beam (**04**) which underlay the modern service cable (Fig 2), the southern of the two pipes (**03**) dog-legged slightly to the south, apparently aligning it with vertical drain **015** (Fig 2). The deeper deposit of subsoil backfill to the north of Wall **05**, may represent infilling after the insertion of a deeper drain to the base of Drain **015**, along the northern side of Wall **05/014**.



Plate 13: Dog-legged return of single-skin wall 07



Plate 14: Shallow cellar formed by single-skin wall 07, with brick floor 020



Plate 15: Cellar steps 021 and floor 020

4.4 THE FINDS

4.4.1 In total, 56 artefacts were recovered from the archaeological investigations, 36 artefacts were from the initial trenches, and a further 20 objects from the final phase of excavation. The vast majority of the assemblage (55 fragments) comprised sherds of pottery. In addition, a single fragment of glass was also recovered.

4.3.1 **Pottery:** several distinct types of fabrics were recognised amongst the group of pottery (Table 1). These included utilitarian kitchenware vessels, together with finer tablewares, reflecting some degree of affluence amongst former occupants of the site. The fragments of pottery were all in a reasonable condition, and have a date range spanning the seventeenth to early nineteenth century. It is of note that wares such as under-glaze transfer-printed wares, which characterise mid- and late nineteenth-century pottery assemblages, were only recovered from the overburden, suggesting that most of the recovered material had not been subject to post-depositional disturbance.

Fabric	Count	Date
Blackware	3	Late seventeenth to early eighteenth century
Mottled ware	11	Early to mid-eighteenth century
Pearlware	7	Late eighteenth-early nineteenth century
Dark-glazed red earthenwares	15	Eighteenth-nineteenth century
White salt-glazed stoneware	6	Early to mid-eighteenth century
Brown salt-glazed stoneware	4	Early to mid-eighteenth century
Buff-bodied / red earthenware	5	Eighteenth to early nineteenth century
Under-glaze transfer-printed ware	4	Nineteenth to early twentieth century

Table 1: Relative quantities of post-medieval pottery recovered during the investigation

- 4.3.2 *Blackwares*: early Blackware is defined by Barker (2008) as a lead-glazed earthenware, the origin of which was in the Cistercian wares of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, with its popularity being at its greatest between *c* 1650 and 1720. Three sherds of this fabric type were present in Trench 1 (Plate 10), and whilst the sherds were all small, one fragment can be identified positively as part of a handle for a small mug or cup. These sherds probably represent the earliest pottery in the assemblage, and are likely to date to the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century.

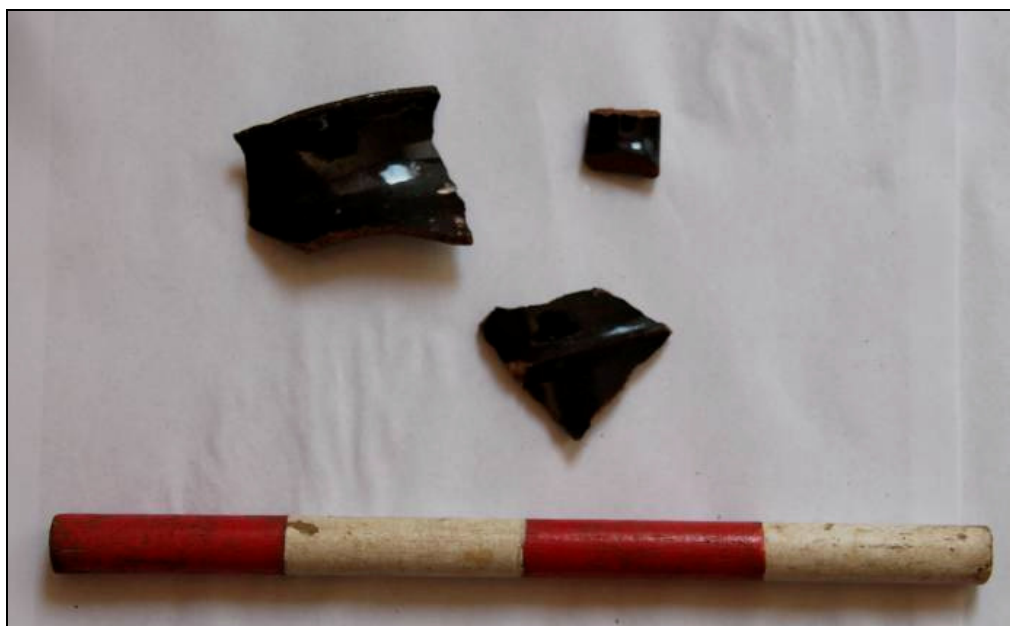


Plate 10: Fragments of Blackware from Trench 1

- 4.3.3 *Mottled Ware*: Barker (2008) suggests that manufacture of mottled ware occurred in *c* 1700-70, although Dr Plot, writing in the late seventeenth century, also notes that it was being produced at this time (Plot 1686, 123). The vessel forms that can be identified in the assemblage for the evaluation trenches includes dishes and/or bowls (Plate 11).
- 4.3.4 *Pearlware*: seven fragments of pearlware vessels were present in the assemblage, including at least one sherd of a feather-edge plate (Plate 12). This type of pottery had become the most widely used tablewares by the early nineteenth century, partially because of their cheapness (Barker 2010, 15). These date, in broad terms, to between 1780 and the 1830s (Barker 2008).
- 4.3.5 *White salt-glazed stoneware*: this fabric type was first introduced in the 1720s, and in the following two decades it was dominated by tea wares, following an increasing trend in the consumption of tea and coffee, with their relative cheapness allowing their use by a wider section of the populace (Skerry 2008).
- 4.3.6 White salt-glazed stoneware is quite brittle, and it can thus sometimes be difficult to positively identify vessel forms due to fragmentation. However, amongst the six sherds recovered from the evaluation (Plate 13), it seems that at least two fragments derived from cups or mugs, became common in the 1720s and 1740s (Barker 2010, 6).

- 4.3.7 *Brown salt-glazed stoneware*: four sherds of this fabric type were recovered from the evaluation (Plate 14). One sherd displayed a rouletted decoration of a type that has been dated to the earlier eighteenth century (Danby and Philpott 1985, 77-84). None of the fragments were large enough, however, to provide a firm indication of their original form.



Plate 11: Fragments of mottled ware dishes/bowls



Plate 12: Fragments of pearlware, including a feather-edged plate



Plate 13: Fragments of white salt-glazed stoneware



Plate 14: Fragments of brown salt-glazed stoneware

- 4.3.8 *Dark-glazed red earthenwares*: the largest group from the evaluation trenches consists of dark-glazed red earthenwares (Table 1). This particular ware was ubiquitous in the North West, and largely represents utilitarian kitchen wares. Notable groups of this pottery type have been recovered from Salford, Wigan and Liverpool (OA North 2014; OA North 2008; Philpott 1985). The vessel forms that could be recognised amongst the group from Trench 1 included cylindrical jars (Plate 15), typical used for storage purposes in a kitchen.



Plate 15: Fragments of dark-glazed earthenware

- 4.3.9 In terms of source, the dark-glazed red earthenwares could have been produced at any of a number of different local manufacturing sites using the clays of the South Lancashire coalfields, including Rainford, active in the seventeenth century (Davey 1989, 104-5), and Prescot, Merseyside, which was producing dark-glazed redwares from the sixteenth to the early twentieth century (*op cit*, 103-4). The excavated examples, however, are more likely to have been manufactured locally, and whilst a firm date cannot be ascribed with any degree of confidence, they are likely to have been manufactured during the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries. The lack of chronological precision is a reflection on the longevity of the dark-glazed red earthenware tradition, which has a long life-span and is notoriously difficult to date, unless accompanied by other, more precisely dated, pottery types.
- 4.3.10 The assemblage also included four fragments of brown-glazed earthenwares, which probably date to the eighteenth or early nineteenth century. These included tableware forms, such as cups and bowls.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

5.1.1 The earlier evaluation trenching (OA North 2015a) revealed that substantial buried remains survived across much of the footprint of Blackstake Farm, with accompanying fragments of pottery suggesting occupation from the late seventeenth to early nineteenth century. In order to mitigate the significant negative impact of the proposed development on these buried remains, further archaeological excavation was undertaken, which also examined deposits below the extensive brick floor observed within evaluation Trench 2 (*op cit*). The excavation was split into two areas to avoid live service cabling, but nevertheless revealed significant features relating to the farmhouse.

5.2 FARMHOUSE

5.2.1 The extensive brick floor observed within evaluation Trench 2 (Plate 9) was demonstrated to post-date the main occupation of the farmhouse, sealing earlier features and possibly relating to a yard associated with the construction or early use of the college erected in 1912.

5.2.2 Evidence for structural walls that clearly relate to the farmhouse was observed within both excavation areas. Ordnance Survey mapping of 1892 and 1908 show little detail within the main structure of Blackstake Farm, other than a single internal partition, offset to the western side of the rectangular structure, which appears to have small outbuildings at either end. This suggests a layout as a two-unit rural house, a style of construction typical from the mid-seventeenth century through to the beginning of the nineteenth century (Brunskill 1997, 77).

5.2.3 Overlaying the excavated remains onto the historic mapping clearly demonstrates that wall **05/014** represents this internal partition, and the north external wall of the farmhouse (Fig 3). Whilst external walls of full-brick thickness are typical in structures of all eighteenth- and nineteenth-century dwellings within Manchester and the surrounding area, the use of similar techniques for internal partitions, even within houses of relatively high status, are far less common, usually comprising only single-skin construction (OA North 2011).

5.2.4 The partition and associated shallow cellar/larder at the eastern end of the property revealed significant detail about the internal layout of the structure. Firstly, the larger rooms in other excavated examples of two-unit houses almost exclusively represented the kitchen/living area, with the smaller room being used as the parlour, or sometimes sub-divided into parlour and pantry. The inclusion of a slightly cellared room within the larger room of Blackstake Farm almost certainly represents a larder, but its position in the north-east corner of the larger room strongly suggests that it was placed within the corner of the kitchen.

- 5.2.5 Although the eastern wall of the farmhouse lay beneath service cabling, overlaying the excavation data onto historic mapping suggests that the shallow cellar was approximately 5'6" (1.68m) wide (Fig 3). The partial floor to the north of the cellar steps overlies the wall forming its western side, demonstrating the position of an entrance, which, given the relative depth of the footings of the external wall, was probably stepped down from the kitchen floor.
- 5.2.6 Cellared larders are common within pre- and industrial-period farmhouses in the region, with examples within Greater Manchester observed at Mill's Brow Farm near Atherton (OA North 2015b), and Kingsway near Rochdale (OA North 2005). Such features were typically of a greater depth, allowing crouched or stooped access, suggesting that the shallow cellar at Blackstake Farm was placed beneath the staircase, increasing the ceiling height. The dog-leg observed to the south of the cellar wall would be consistent with such an arrangement, and cellar stairs were also frequently placed below those to the upper floors.
- 5.2.7 The position of the larder and probable staircase also demonstrates that it would not have been feasible to place the large kitchen fireplace against the gable wall of the farmhouse. This strongly suggests that it would have been placed against the internal partition to the parlour, with that of the parlour probably placed back-to-back, or perhaps not even present in the original construction, as parlours were typically used for storage and sleeping prior to the Victorian period.
- 5.2.8 The principal entrance into the farmhouse would have been in the north wall, facing the driveway from High Street (now Hathersage Road). A typical location for this doorway within a two-unit house would have been approximately central to the façade, adjacent to the offset internal partition. However, a narrowing of the lowest course above the foundation plinth towards the eastern end of the excavated north wall, represented potential evidence for an alternative door position, adjacent to the stairs. Although the 3' (0.91m) width of this potential aperture is far wider than that required for a typical doorway of 2'6" (0.76m), dating evidence provided by the pottery suggests that the house may be of late seventeenth- or early eighteenth-century date, when entrance doorways were generally wider. The vertical drain appears to have been placed centrally within the elevation (Fig 3), demonstrating that the doorway was not in that position, but does not preclude its placement adjacent to the cross wall.
- 5.2.9 This probable seventeenth-century date of erection for the farmhouse is further supported by the apparent use of English bond construction for the main walls. This was the most common technique for brick wall construction until the late seventeenth century, when it was generally replaced by the increasingly fashionable Flemish bond, comprising alternating headers and stretchers within each course. However, Flemish bond does not feature as highly in the local tradition, generally only being used in higher status facades, before and following the introduction of English Garden Wall bond in the late eighteenth century, and which was used almost ubiquitously throughout the region during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

5.2.10 The roughly-laid brick surface (**204**) that sealed the western part of Area A has clearly been demonstrated by the excavation to post-date the occupation of the farmhouse. Pottery of late nineteenth- or early-twentieth-century date, recovered from the infill of the shallow cellar, suggests that the farmhouse was demolished very shortly before the erection of the college in 1912. The bricks incorporated within the surface almost certainly represent those of the farmhouse walls, with the surface itself probably representing a rough yard used during the construction of the college, which was probably covered by soft landscaping once the college was completed. The flagstone floors of the farmhouse were probably re-used for paving. The linear concrete beams observed within both excavation areas, and within Trench 2 of the earlier evaluation, appear, with the exception of the right-angled beam **022**, to have formed the foundation for service pipes. Beam **022** was placed within a substantial cut, and with services rarely having sharp-angled turns, almost certainly represents the footing of a building. This must have been of only short-lived existence, with nothing shown in this position on the Ordnance Survey mapping of 1908, 1922, 1951, or 1970, by which time the present entrance lodge had been erected to the north-west.

5.3 CONCLUSION

5.3.1 The excavation revealed extensive, albeit poorly-preserved remains of a rectangular structure, denoted on late nineteenth-century Ordnance Survey mapping as Blackstake Farm. The wall footings and shallow cellar represent those of a two-unit farmhouse, typical of the early seventeenth- through to the late eighteenth-century period, a date corroborated by ceramic finds from both the evaluation and excavation phases of the project. As such, Blackstake Farm represents a relatively rare survival of a pre-industrial agricultural dwelling on the fringes of Manchester, prior to its explosive expansion from the late eighteenth century. Its construction and plan-form appear to have broadly followed the local vernacular tradition, although it is of some interest that the main internal partition was of full-brick thickness, rather than the more typical single-skin construction of rural dwellings and early artisan dwellings seen elsewhere within the Manchester area. This may merely represent the construction of a more substantial wall to house an inglenook fireplace, rather than a departure from accepted local construction techniques. The building also provides evidence for the transition from timber directly to brick construction for dwellings within the Manchester Basin, whereas elsewhere within the wider region, the abundance of high-quality local supplies of primarily sandstones, but also limestone, gave rise to a tradition of almost-exclusively stone construction until around the turn of the twentieth century.

5.3.2 Whilst further *in-situ* remains of the farmhouse may lie beyond the limit of excavation within the site, the probable poor state of their preservation, and the information already obtained from the present excavation, no further archaeological work within the footprint of the farmhouse is recommended. A further structure to the east, *in-situ* remains of which were also identified by the earlier evaluation trenching (OA North 2015a), will be subject to a similar mitigation excavation during a future phase of the site redevelopment programme.

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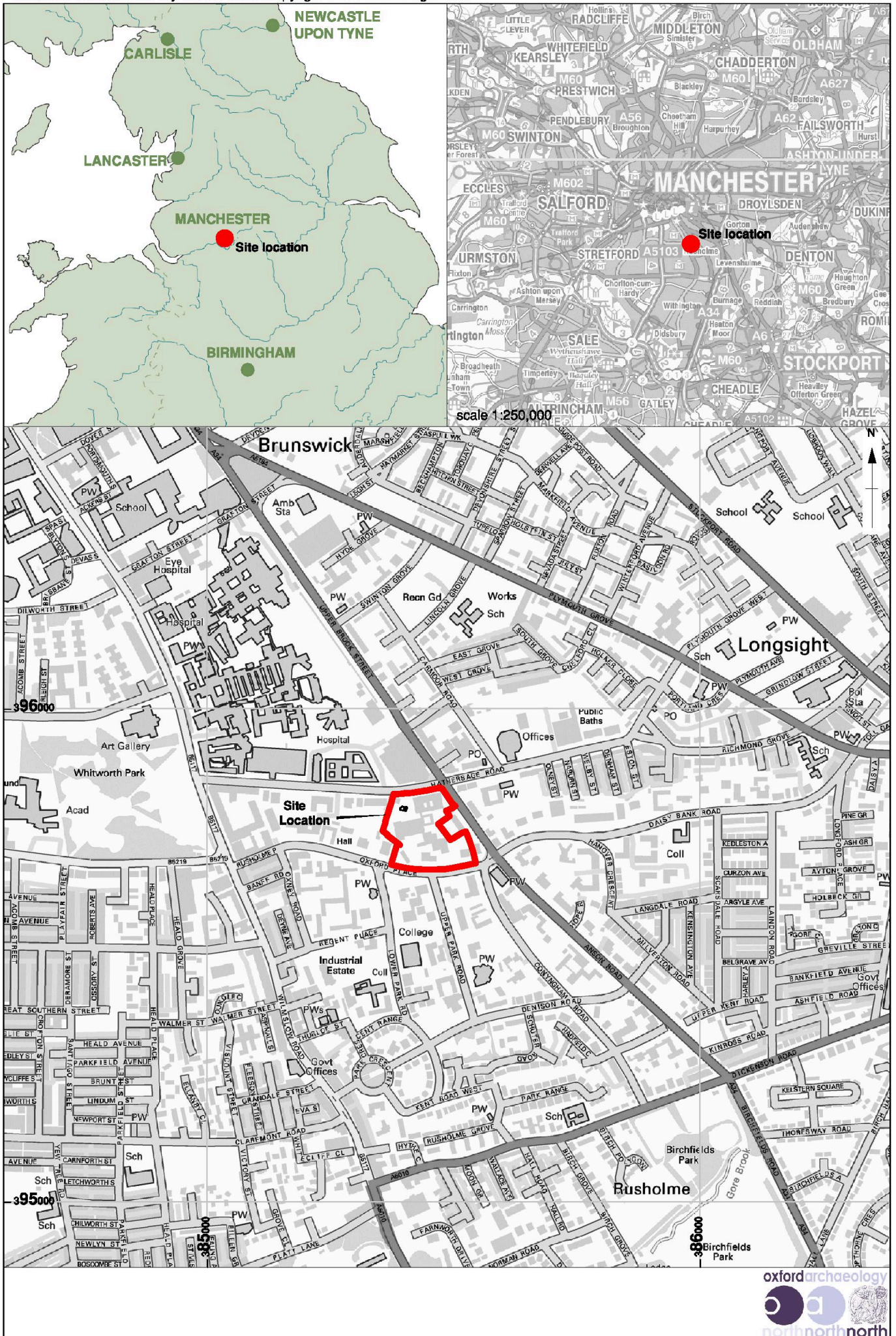


Figure 1: Site location



Figure 2: Plan of excavation



Figure 3: Plan of excavation superimposed on the Ordnance Survey 25":1 mile map of 1892