

21 CHURCH STREET, RIBCHESTER, LANCASHIRE



Archaeological Watching Brief



Oxford Archaeology North

June 2009

Mr D Porter

Issue No: 2009-10/775

OA North Job No: L9840

NGR: SD 6490 3520

Document Title: 21 CHURCH STREET, RIBCHESTER, LANCASHIRE

Document Type: Archaeological Watching Brief

Client Name: Mr D Porter

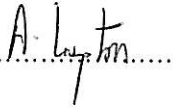
Issue Number: 2009-10/775
OA North Job Number: L9840
Site Code: CS07
National Grid Reference: SD 6490 3520

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SUMMARY

In 2007 Mr David Porter submitted proposals for the construction of a new kitchen extending into the rear garden of his property at number 21 Church Street, Ribchester, Lancashire (SD 6490 3520). The town of Ribchester lies within an area of archaeological potential, much standing within the bounds of the Scheduled Ancient Monument for a Roman fort and parts of its extramural settlement. Accordingly, Lancashire County Archaeology Service (LCAS), the County Council's body responsible for advising local planning authorities on heritage matters, issued a verbal brief that a programme of archaeological works should form a condition of any planning permission for the development. Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) subsequently produced a project design for an archaeological watching brief and, following approval of the document by LCAS, was commissioned by Mr Porter to undertake the works on the 16th of April 2007.

Groundworks comprised the manual excavation of an L-shaped foundation trench, some 10.75m in length and up to 0.92m deep. Close to the base of the trench, a charcoal-rich clay layer was identified and interpreted as a relict medieval soil horizon that had formed when the area had lain to the rear of a burgage plot fronting the ancient thoroughfare of Church Street. This horizon in turn sealed a possible Roman midden deposit, which was over 0.5m thick and contained pottery dating from the late first to third centuries AD, including Gaulish samian, Black Burnished wares and more locally produced fabrics from Mancetter/Hartshill and Wilderspool, as well as several fragments of Spanish amphora. Also present were a number of fragments of burnt daub, suggestive of nearby structures, as well as a piece of smithing residue. Evidence from a processed palaeoenvironmental sample from the refuse deposit also indicated the likelihood of some industrial activity in the area, although the only substantive evidence for diet and/or agricultural activity comprised a single degraded charred (cf) wheat grain. A lone sherd of medieval pottery from this deposit is likely to have been intruded by later horticultural activity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) would like to thank Mr David Porter for commissioning the project. OA North is also grateful to Doug Moir and Peter Iles of Lancashire County Archaeology Service, for their advice and liaison. Kelly Clapperton undertook the fieldwork and wrote the report, which was illustrated by Marie Rowland. The palaeoenvironmental sample was processed and assessed by Sandra Bonsall and Elizabeth Huckerby, whilst the finds were examined by Christine Howard-Davis and Sean McPhillips. The project was managed by Stephen Rowland, who also edited the report.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

1.1.1 In 2007 Mr David Porter submitted proposals for the construction of a new kitchen extending into the rear garden of his property at Number 21 Church Street, Ribchester, Lancashire (SD 6490 3520; Fig 1). The town of Ribchester lies within an area of archaeological potential, mostly standing within the bounds of the Scheduled Ancient Monument for a Roman fort and parts of its extramural settlement. Accordingly, Lancashire County Archaeology Service (LCAS), the County Council's body responsible for advising local planning authorities on heritage matters, issued a verbal brief that a programme of archaeological works should form a condition of any planning permission for the development. Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) subsequently produced a project design (*Appendix 1*) for an archaeological watching brief and, following approval of the document by LCAS, was commissioned by Mr Porter to undertake the works. The following report documents the results of the archaeological watching brief, which was undertaken on the 16th of April 2007.

1.2 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

1.2.1 Number 21 Church Street is located towards the southern end of the small town of Ribchester, which is situated on the northern bank of the River Ribble, seven miles to the north-west of Blackburn. The landscape is generally flat at c 30m OD but rises gently northwards to Pendle Hill and Bowland, and more sharply southward from Clayton-le-Dale to Blackburn (Countryside Commission 1998).

1.2.2 The solid geology around Ribchester is dominated by Sabden shales of the Millstone Grit Group masked by thick (up to 50m to rock head) boulder clay deposits (Aitkenhead *et al* 1992). Ribchester town and its Roman fort are thought to stand on deposits of a second terrace of the Ribble (*ibid*), which rises to c 3-4m above the floodplain. This terrace formation is being actively eroded, with about one third of the area of the fort lost to fluvial processes to date. Soils of the second terrace comprise 0.6-0.8m of unmottled sandy loams overlying slightly mottled sandy clay loams (Ordnance Survey 1983).

1.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1.3.1 **Introduction:** the following section is intended to provide only a brief context for the present programme of works, rather than an exhaustive account of the history and archaeology of Ribchester, examples of which are readily available elsewhere.

1.3.2 **Prehistoric period:** little is known of prehistoric activity in the Ribchester area, although Bronze Age activity was recorded by Olivier and Turner (1987) who excavated a circular ditch enclosing an arc of five cremation burials in

collared urns at Parsonage Avenue, to the north of the site. The discovery of a Late Bronze Age triple-headed bracelet mount indicates a definite later prehistoric presence (LCC 2006), as does the discovery of a bent rapier likely to have been ritually deposited within the Ribble (Barrowclough 2008). Soil analysis has indicated some agricultural disturbance on the banks of the Ribble during the Bronze Age, but also implied that the site had been abandoned some hundreds of years before the arrival of the Romans (Buxton and Howard Davis 2000). Although there is increasing evidence for Iron Age activity in the south of the county (Nevell 1999) only very occasional finds of Iron Age date have been made in central or northern Lancashire. However, previous watching briefs carried out at Ribchester Primary School and on Church Street have recovered fragments of possible Iron Age pottery (LCC 2006).

- 1.3.3 **Roman period:** the presence of extensive Roman remains at Ribchester is well-known and its identification as *Bremetenacum* is secure, based on a third-century dedication to Apollo Maponus (RIB 583) from the town (Rivet and Smith 1981, 277). The site was strategically well-placed at the western end of one of the few major trans-Pennine routes, leading to York, and the route's intersection with a major north/south road between Manchester, Chester and, eventually, Hadrian's Wall (Margary 1973, 370; Buxton and Howard-Davis 2000). In addition, the settlement also lies at, or close to, a crossing point of the River Ribble at the approximate point where it becomes navigable.
- 1.3.4 Evidence from recent excavations (1989-1990) suggests a timber fort was established in the early AD 70s, during the governorship of Petilius Cerialis (AD 71-73/74), and modified *c* AD 82-86. Subsequent demolition of this fort, and its rebuilding in stone, probably occurred around AD 125-135, possibly as a result of activity in the area of Hadrian's Wall (Buxton and Howard-Davis 2000). The headquarters were then rebuilt twice, in AD 161-9 and AD 198-209. The main stone buildings comprised the headquarters, the commander's house, granaries and a building of unknown function, possibly an armoury or hospital. Ribchester also has one of the few examples of a cavalry drill hall in Britain. It has also been suggested that the majority of the fort, except for the administration centre, was covered in gravel and used as a display ground (*ibid*). The identity of the Ribchester garrisons is uncertain for the first two centuries AD, although Legion VI and Legion XX are attested epigraphically (*ibid*). From the early third century AD, the fort was garrisoned by several units of Sarmation auxiliary cavalry (descendants of nomadic steppe warriors who had settled in parts of modern Hungary), including the *numerus equitum Sarmatarum Bremmetennacensium* recorded from a stamped tile, and later, the *cuneus Sarmatarum, Bremetenraco*, recorded in the fourth-century Notitia Dignitatum. Upon retirement, these soldiers were granted land outside of the fort, founding the extramural settlement (or *vicus*) of *Bremetannacum Veteranorum*, the limits of which extend up to 500m north of the fort (LCC 2006), and thus encompass the present development area.
- 1.3.5 The fort, and parts of the extramural settlement are of national importance and accordingly have been designated a scheduled monument (Lancashire Monument No. 55). Church Street corresponds with one of the main roads from the fort through the *vicus*, and has been the focus of concentrated

archaeological deposition, including the only known *in-situ* Roman cremation burials from the town (LCC 2006). Of particular relevance to the present development was the discovery of a probable Roman square hearth at Number 20 Church Street, just next door (OA North 2004). Although this feature produced no finds, several very similar second-century hearths with layered clay and sandstone construction indicative of multiple use, have been excavated within a building in the area of the Roman fort's extramural annexe (Buxton and Howard-Davis 2000, 114). The duration of the Roman settlement is unclear at Ribchester as evidence for continued settlement beyond AD 200 is inconclusive (LCC 2006). It is thought that the bath house may post-date the third century, and a Gratian coin dating to AD 367 has been recovered, but evidence for later activity is scarce (*ibid*).

- 1.3.6 **Medieval period:** the circumstances of Ribchester in the early post-Roman period are uncertain, although artefacts in the museum or described by antiquaries suggest the site continued as a focus of activity in the early medieval period (Buxton and Howard-Davis 2000). Whether indicative of continuity or the resettlement of an abandoned installation, the establishment, c 596, of the Church of St Wilfrid within the bounds of the ruinous fortifications is the most obvious indication of early medieval activity (Farrer and Brownbill 1912). Ribchester is listed in the Domesday Survey as *Ribelcastre*, a dependent vill of Preston, the principal manor of Amounderness (Hinde 1985, 154). It is described only briefly in 1086, and was possibly uninhabited wasteland at that time. It may well have undergone 'sweeping desolation' as a result of the rebellions of 1069-70 (*ibid*), a fate which appears to have befallen the community again around 1320 'by the great incursion of the Scots' (Whitaker 1823).
- 1.3.7 Post-Conquest, Ribchester was held by Roger de Poitou, and became part of the Blackburn hundred in the twelfth century. It was later granted to the de Lacy family, from whom it subsequently descended to the Earls and Dukes of Lancaster before finally falling into the hands of the Crown (LCC 2006). The town did not become a borough and remained a small rural settlement well into the post-medieval period. There is possible evidence for a medieval market, perhaps within the triangular space in front of the White Bull Pub and close to the village cross, which was not pulled down until the nineteenth century (*ibid*).
- 1.3.8 **Post-medieval Period:** it seems unlikely that there was much significant change in the layout or status of the settlement until the Industrial Revolution. In the seventeenth century Ribchester was described as impoverished, with a lawsuit of 1634 citing the poor road connection, whilst a lack of a market contributed to the poverty of the village (LCC 2006). During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the economy was based on agriculture supported by small-scale flax and linen production. By the mid-eighteenth century, with the improvements in weaving technology, Ribchester's fortunes increased, which was reflected in the investment put into the architecture of the time (*ibid*). By the 1820s the majority of people in the town were involved in manufacturing, craft and trading industries, although seasonal farm work was probably undertaken by many of the villagers (*ibid*). Several textile mills were built on

the outskirts of the settlement, which affected both the layout and economic focus of the town. Corry (1825) notes that in 1821 Ribchester had 300 houses, 303 families, and was inhabited by 1760 persons. The population of Ribchester peaked during the mid-nineteenth century at the time of the weaving boom; however, it then steadily decreased as people went to search for work in the larger towns of Blackburn and Burnley (OA North 2004).

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

- 2.1.1 The LCAS-approved OA North project design (*Appendix 1*) was adhered to in full, and the work was consistent with the relevant standards and procedures of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, and generally accepted best practice.

2.2 WATCHING BRIEF FIELDWORK

- 2.2.1 The development groundworks comprised the hand-excavation of an L-shaped trench for the strip footings for the extension. This trench, 0.6m wide and 0.9m deep, measured 6.5m north-east/south-west from the south-western corner of 21 Church Street, by 4.25m, to the extension of Number 20 Church Street. All excavations were under constant observation by an archaeologist. All significant horizons and the base of the trench were hand-cleaned by the archaeologist using a trowel, and all significant deposits were investigated, recorded and sampled as appropriate.
- 2.2.2 All information identified in the course of the site works was recorded stratigraphically, using a system, adapted from that used by the Centre for Archaeology Service of English Heritage, with sufficient pictorial record (plans, sections and photographs) to identify and illustrate individual features. Written notes were made on *pro-forma* recording sheets and accurate plans and sections were produced at an appropriate scale. A full, detailed and indexed photographic record was maintained of individual contexts, features, general views and working shots from standard view points using 35mm cameras on archivable monochrome print film and colour transparency. All frames included a visible, graduated metric scale and digital photographs were taken for presentation purposes. Primary records were available for inspection at all times.

2.3 FINDS

- 2.3.1 All finds recovered were 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 guidelines of the Ribchester Museum and the Museum of Lancashire.

2.4 ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES

- 2.4.1 During the watching brief, a single 30 litre bulk sediment sample was taken from a sealed Roman deposit (*I03*), and was subsequently processed for the assessment of charred and waterlogged plant remains. The sample was desegregated in water and hand-floated, with the flots (light fractions) collected on a 250 micron mesh and air-dried. The flots were scanned with a Leica MZ60 stereo microscope and the plant material was recorded and

provisionally identified (Table 1) with botanical nomenclature following Stace (2001). Plant remains were scored on a scale of abundance of 1-4, where 1 is rare (up to 5 items) and 4 is abundant (>100 items). The components of the matrix were also noted.

2.5 ARCHIVE

- 2.5.1 The results of the archaeological work undertaken will form the basis of a full professional archive, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (1991). The archive will be provided in the English Heritage Centre for Archaeology format and a synthesis will be submitted to the Lancashire County Council Historic Environment Record (HER) in Preston. The original archive, including paper, magnetic and plastic media, will be deposited in the Lancashire County Record Office, also in Preston.

3 RESULTS

3.1 FIELDWORK

- 3.1.1 **Introduction:** the following section presents a brief narrative of the results of the fieldwork. For the sake of brevity and clarity, detailed descriptions of the observed features and deposits can be found in *Appendix 2*. Natural deposits were not reached during the works.
- 3.1.2 **North-east/south-west-aligned foundation trench:** the uppermost deposits revealed within this trench comprised dark brown/grey friable loam topsoil, which sealed two subsoil layers, **100** and **101**, both containing fragments of later post-medieval pottery. Towards the north-western end of the trench all the deposits had been heavily disturbed by the installation of a manhole and drainage pipes, whilst to the south-east, a sewerage pipe and lead water pipe had a similar effect (Fig 2). Beneath subsoil **101**, and generally at the base of development groundworks at 0.8m below ground level (bgl), was green/grey clay layer **102**. This contained a substantial amount of charcoal flecks and smears and, in turn, sealed refuse deposit **103**. Excavation of an investigative slot through deposit **103** recovered a quantity of Roman pottery and indicated that the deposit continued beyond a depth of 1.15m bgl.
- 3.1.3 **North-west/south-east-aligned foundation trench:** this trench was excavated to an average depth of 0.92m and displayed similar stratigraphy to that described in *Section 3.1.2*. Deposits within the western corner were disturbed by the sewerage pipe, while clay deposit **102** had been truncated by a twentieth-century refuse pit, **105**, approximately mid-way along the trench. This pit contained large quantities of modern garden and kitchen refuse, **104**, including nearly whole terracotta plant urns and teapots, none of which were retained. An investigative slot dug through the material indicated that the pit was of substantial depth, and any underlying deposits would have been heavily disturbed.

3.2 FINDS ASSESSMENT

- 3.2.1 In all, 61 fragments of artefact were recovered during the investigation, 16 of which were collected from the residue of the palaeoenvironmental sample. Of these 61, 41 were from refuse deposit **103**, the remainder being either from subsoils **100** and **101**, or unstratified. Both groups were mixed in date, although there was a strong representation of Romano-British pottery in each. All the finds are catalogued and described in *Appendix 3*.
- 3.2.2 Together with a few later sherds, the Romano-British pottery formed a group typical of later first to late second century activity in Ribchester, and would not have been out of place in any assemblage from the fort or the extramural settlement. Two large fragments of amphora, both identified as vessel form Dressel 20 on the basis of their fabric, came from the unstratified material, as did a single fragment of very worn mortarium, with the mixed multi-coloured

grits suggesting a Mancetter/Hartshill origin, and probably pre-dating *c* AD 150. Material from refuse deposit **103** included a second fragment of worn mortarium, again probably Mancetter/Hartshill, and two more pieces of Spanish amphora. The remainder of the group from this context included small fragments of orange oxidised wares, some without doubt from Wilderspool, and a flat rimmed bowl, of second century date. A single small fragment of what appears to be a ring-necked flagon was recovered, probably of late first century date. Six fragments of Category 1 Black Burnished ware included one jar and three dish rims, all pointing to a mid-second century date. The one fragment of samian, probably from a South Gaulish form Dr 37 bowl, could be residual in the group, dating from the later first century. The latest Roman material from the deposit appeared to be single sherds of Crambeck-type and parchment ware, of third to fourth century date.

- 3.2.3 The fairly wide date range of the material from refuse deposit **103** may mean that it represents an accumulation or collection of material from rather disparate origins, as indicated by the presence of smithing debris and burnt daub. The group from refuse deposit **103** also produced a single fragment of white-glazed earthenware and a piece of medieval pottery in a buff sandy fabric; the context is thus likely to have suffered a certain amount of disturbance. Overall, the finds contribute to the interpretation and dating of the site, but none warrant illustration or further analysis.

3.3 PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

- 3.3.1 The results of the assessment of the sample from refuse deposit **103** are summarised in Table 1. No waterlogged plant remains were identified, whilst the assemblage of charred plant remains was limited, comprising a single undifferentiated charred cereal grain, possibly wheat (*Triticum* sp). The flot also contained charcoal (mostly oak, *Quercus*), coal, glassy spheres and bone.

Sample	Context	Flot volume ml	Flot description	Charred plant remains	Potential
1	103	100	Charcoal >2mm (4), coal/clinker (2), glassy spheres (3), bone (4), ceramic (1)	Cerealium (1) cf <i>Triticum</i> sp	None ¹⁴ C dating?

Table 1: Assessment of charred and waterlogged plant remains from 21 Church Street, Ribchester. Plants scored on a scale of 1-4, where 1 is rare (up to 5 items) and 4 is abundant (>100 items).

- 3.3.2 The glassy spheres may be indicative of some industrial activity on the site and it seems likely that deposit **103** contains both domestic and industrial refuse. The identification of a single cereal grain in the sample is of no great significance and there is no potential for further analysis.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 DISCUSSION

- 4.1.1 The remains, and deposit **103** in particular, identified during the works at Number 21 Church Street provide an interesting insight into activity within Ribchester Roman *vicus*. Unfortunately, deposit **103** bore evidence of modern disturbance, and so little was exposed and investigated that it was not possible to establish whether it represented a layer of refuse, perhaps a midden, or had been the fill of a now-truncated pit. However, the fact that it had been sealed by a relatively even and demonstrably more extensive horizon of clay, **102**, may imply that it was the former.
- 4.1.2 Although the artefacts from deposit **103** could be interpreted as spanning a relatively long date range, those from the Roman period predominated. The single sherd of nineteenth-century pottery could have been intruded during the insertion of modern services, whilst the lone medieval sherd is likely to have been deposited when midden **103** was closer to, or at, the contemporary ground surface. Indeed, it seems probable that midden **103** accumulated during the Roman period, whilst sealing layer **102** could represent a relict medieval soil horizon. Such a depositional sequence supports the premise that activity in the area during the Roman period was more intense than in the medieval period.
- 4.1.3 The majority of finds from midden **103** seem to date to the late first and second centuries AD, when Roman Ribchester was at its height (Buxton and Howard Davis 2000), but it appears that material from both domestic and metal-working activity was added over a fairly long period of time, providing clues about activities within the *vicus* in the immediate surroundings. The presence of burnt daub and a nail could imply the presence of timber-framed buildings within the near vicinity, perhaps even the same one that housed the hearth identified during a watching brief at Number 20, next door (OA North 2004). The finds provide evidence of a wide trading network, with more far-flung British products (Black Burnished ware from Dorset) gradually replaced by those of more local origin (Mancetter/Hartshill and Wilderspool) as the consolidation of the Roman economic and military hegemony encouraged the development of industrial centres in the region. Romanised food preparation is indicated by the mortaria, whilst culinary tastes are evidenced by the amphorae, which probably contained Spanish olive oil or the sort of fish sauces that are unlikely to appeal to modern tastes.
- 4.1.4 Evidence of later settlement is more slight, but of some significance given the presently limited state of knowledge about medieval Ribchester. It seems likely that, much as today, the development site would have been within the rear plot of a burgage fronting onto Church Street. As such, any associated building probably lies under the present house, whilst charcoal-rich relict soil horizon **102** is likely to have formed through the use of the rear plot for horticulture and the admixture of manure through night-soiling.

4.2 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 4.2.1 The present scheme of development has not had a particularly severe impact on the buried archaeological deposits. It has, however, provided indirect evidence for intensive Roman settlement and industry, as well as for medieval activity, elements of which could survive within this, and neighbouring properties.

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5.2 SECONDARY SOURCES

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6 ILLUSTRATIONS

6.1 FIGURES

Figure 1: Site Location

Figure 2: Plan and section of foundation trench

Figure 3: Detailed location plan of site and previous excavations relative to the Roman fort

6.2 PLATES

Plate 1: South-east-facing section through the deposits, note the lead pipe to the left

Plate 2: South-east-facing section through the deposits, without scale

Plate 3: North-east/south-west-aligned foundation trench with slots dug in the north-eastern end, looking north-east

Plate 4: North-west/south-east-aligned trench, looking south-west

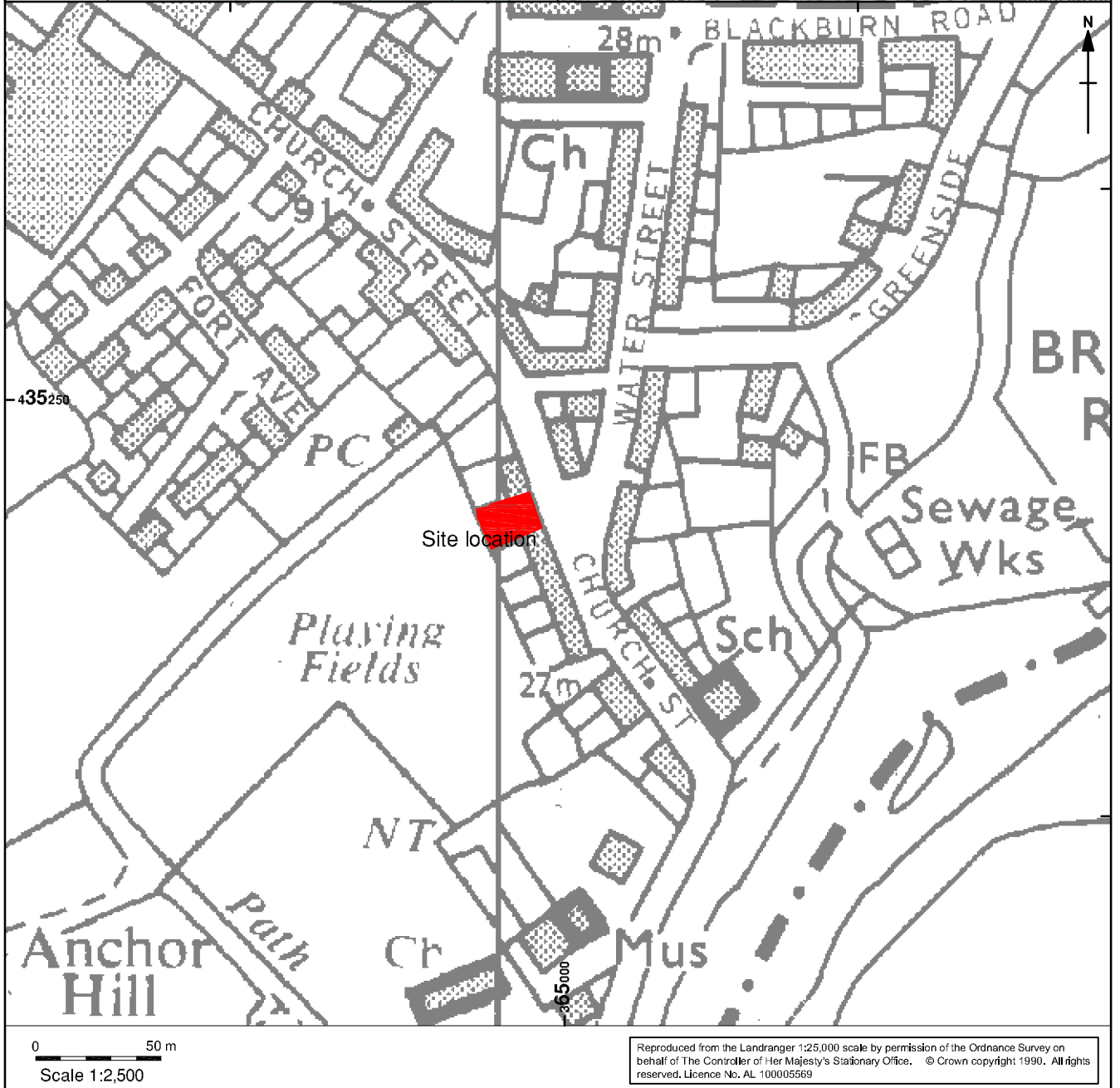


Figure 1: Site Location

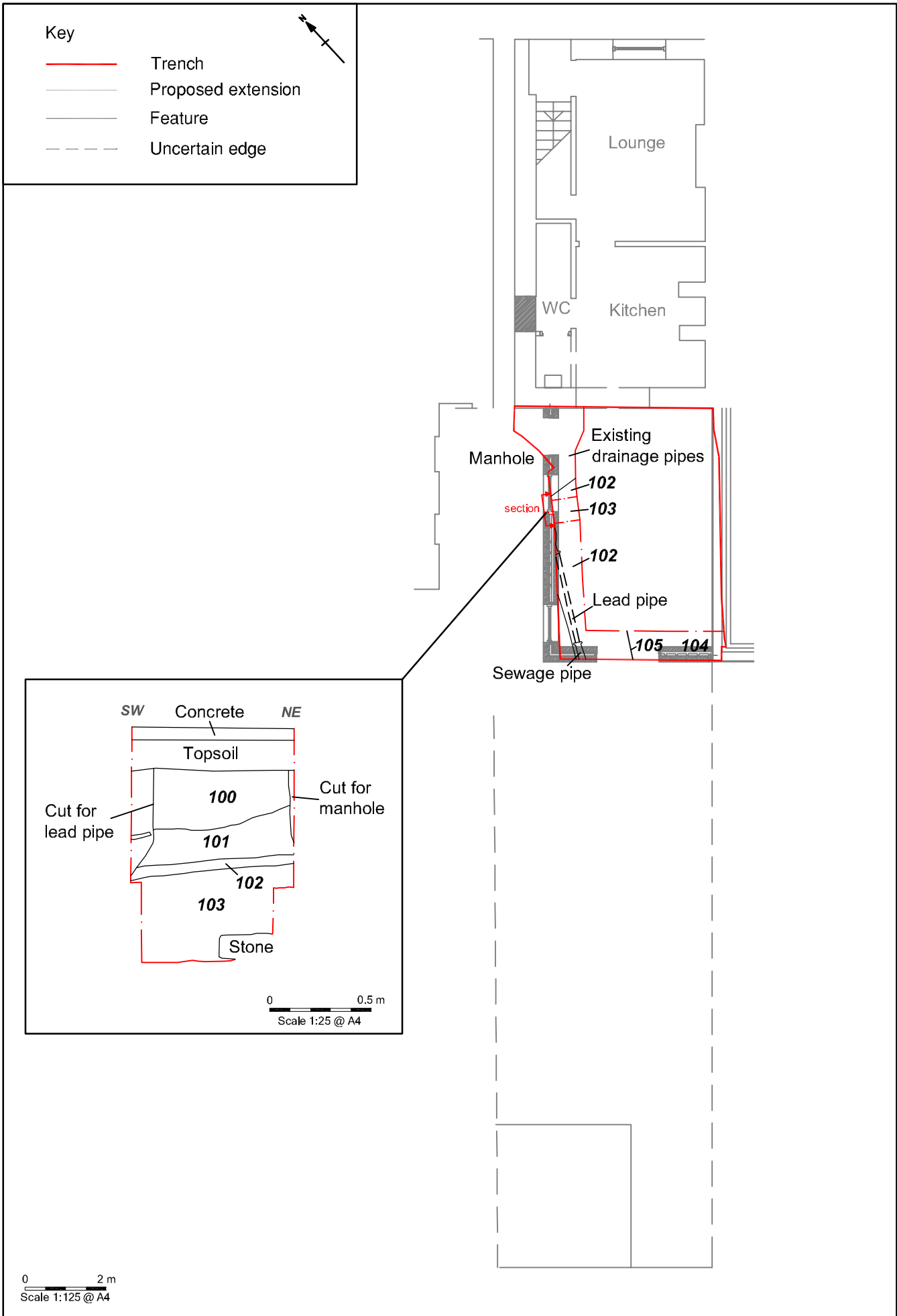


Figure 2: Plan and section of foundation trench



Plate 1: South-east-facing section through the deposits, note the leadpipe to the left



Plate 2: South-east-facing section through the deposits, without scale

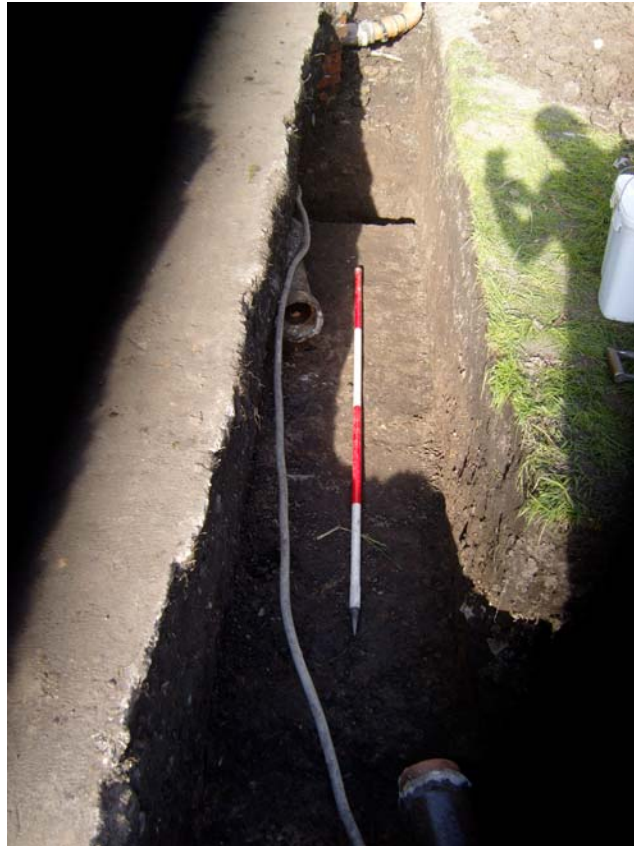


Plate 3: North-east/south-west-aligned foundation trench with slots dug in the north-eastern end, looking north-east



Plate 4: North-west/south-east-aligned trench, looking south-west

APPENDIX 1: PROJECT DESIGN

**NUMBER 21
CHURCH STREET,
RIBCHESTER,
LANCASHIRE**

**Archaeological
Watching Brief
Project Design**



Oxford Archaeology North

March 2007

Mr D Porter

OA North Reference No: t2986

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1 Mr D Porter (hereafter 'the Client') has requested that Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) submit a project design and cost to undertake an archaeological watching brief in accordance with a verbal brief from Lancashire County Archaeology Service (LCAS), during groundworks associated with the construction of a single-storey extension at number 21 Church Street Ribchester (NGR SD 649 352). The development area comprises a yard to the rear of the property, which lies on the south side of the street. Planning permission has been granted on the condition of the completion of the following scheme of work.

1.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 1.2.1 There is limited evidence for prehistoric activity in Ribchester, but this does include a small Bronze age cremation cemetery which lay around 200m to the west of the proposed development and comprised five collared urns arranged in an arc and surrounded by a circular ditch. During the Iron Age, Ribchester lay within the territory of the Brigantes, whose tribal seat, at least by the time of the Roman conquest, was the oppidum at Stanwick, North Yorkshire. The strategic importance of the site of Ribchester was recognised by the Romans: it lay at the confluence of several important communication routes, including that running between Carlisle in the north and Chester and Manchester to the south as well as that along one of the few major trans-Pennine routes, running eastwards to York from the fort at Kirkham in the west. Its position on the Ribble is close both to a crossing point, but also marks the limit of navigability. During the early AD70s, under the governorship of Petilius Cerealis, a wooden fort had been built on the site, replaced in stone some time between AD 125-135, and potentially occupied up to, and beyond, the end of Roman authority in AD 410. Epigraphic evidence indicates that this installation, named *Bremetanacum*, was garrisoned by elements of the II, VI and XX legions until their replacement in the early third century AD by several units of Sarmation auxiliary cavalry (descendants of nomadic steppe warriors who had settled in parts of modern Hungary), including the *numerus equitum Sarmatarum Bremmetennacensium* recorded from a stamped tile, and later, the *cuneus Sarmatarum, Brementenraco*, recorded in the Notitia Dignitatum. Upon retirement, these soldiers were granted land outside of the fort, founding the extramural settlement (or vicus) of *Bremetannacum Veteranorum*, the limits of which extend up to 500m north of the fort. The fort, and parts of the extramural settlement are of national importance and accordingly have been designated a scheduled monument (Lancashire Monument No. 55). Church Street corresponds with one of the main roads from the fort through the vicus, and has been the focus of concentrated archaeological deposition, including the only known *in-situ* cremation burials from the town.
- 1.2.2 The church of St Wilfrid, constructed within the site of the fort in c596, is mentioned in the Domesday Book, but the medieval village is likely to have been far smaller and less significant than its Roman predecessor, suffering at the hands of the Normans during their Harrying of the North and at the hands of Scots invaders during the fourteenth century.
- 1.2.3 Numerous archaeological investigations in Ribchester have uncovered extensive and deeply stratified deposits of Roman material, revealing evidence of the fort, the civilian settlement and of public and military buildings such as the two bath houses. A number of these excavations have uncovered the waterlogged remains of organic materials such as leather, and environmental remains, such as plants and insects that can provide vital information about the daily lives of Ribchester's past inhabitants.

1.3 OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY NORTH

- 1.3.1 Oxford Archaeology North has considerable experience of excavation of sites of all periods, having undertaken a great number of small and large scale projects throughout Northern England during the past 25 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.

- 1.3.2 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 of Field Archaeologists (**IFA**) **registered organisation, registration number 17**, and all its members of staff operate subject to the IFA Code of Conduct.

2 OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The following programme has been designed to identify any surviving archaeological deposits and provide for accurate recording of any archaeological remains that are disturbed by groundworks for the proposed development.
- 2.2 **Watching brief:** to carry out a watching brief during associated ground disturbance, to determine and record the location, quality, extent and importance of any archaeological remains on the site; to add to an understanding of the history and development of the site and its surroundings; to provide information to further inform planning decisions within the area.
- 2.4 **Report and Archive:** a report will be produced for the client within eight weeks of completion of the fieldwork. A site archive will be produced to English Heritage guidelines (MAP 2) and in accordance with the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage* (UKIC 1990).

3 METHOD STATEMENT

3.1 WATCHING BRIEF

- 3.1.1 **Methodology:** a programme of field observation will accurately record the location, extent, and character of any surviving archaeological features and/or deposits within the whole area of the proposed ground disturbance. This work will comprise observation during the excavation for these works, including building foundations and service trenches, the systematic examination of any subsoil horizons exposed during the course of the groundworks, and the accurate recording of all archaeological features and horizons, and any artefacts, identified during observation.
- 3.1.2 The watching brief will cover the whole of the area to be disturbed by the development including, topsoil stripping, foundation trenches and other earthmoving activities.
- 3.1.3 Putative archaeological features and/or deposits identified during groundworks, together with the immediate vicinity of any such features, will be cleaned by hand, using either hoes, shovel scraping, and/or trowels depending on the subsoil conditions and, where appropriate, sections will be studied and drawn. Any such features will be sample excavated (ie. 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).
- 3.1.4 During this phase of work, recording will comprise a full description and preliminary classification of features or materials revealed, and their accurate location (either on plan and/or section, and as grid co-ordinates where appropriate). Features will be planned accurately at appropriate scales and annotated on to a **large-scale plan provided by the Client**. A photographic record will be undertaken simultaneously.
- 3.1.5 A plan will be produced of the areas of groundworks showing the location and extent of the ground disturbance and one or more dimensioned sections will be produced. The height of features above OD will be established from architects plans.

- 3.1.6 **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.
- 3.1.7 **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.
- 3.1.8 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. Where appropriate, basic conservation and consolidation will be undertaken of organic and metal finds in order to stabilise them. Since it is not possible to predict whether many, if indeed, any, such finds will be made, the costs for conservation would need to be agreed with the Client as a variation.
- 3.1.9 **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. LCAS and the local Coroner will be informed immediately. If removal is essential, the exhumation of any funerary remains will require the provision of a Department of Constitutional Affairs 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.
- 3.1.10 **Environmental sampling:** bulk samples of 60 litres would be taken from any appropriate sealed and uncontaminated archaeological features that would have potential for preservation of organic remains suitable for palaeoenvironmental and dietary reconstruction, for faunal remains, or for technological residues. The requirement for laboratory processing and assessment of such remains would be established with LCAS, contingency costs for which are included in *Section 9*, and would be agreed with the Client prior to processing.
- 3.1.11 **Contingency plan:** in the event of significant archaeological features being encountered during the watching brief, discussions will take place with the Planning Archaeologist or his representative, as to the extent of further works to be carried out. All further works would be subject to a variation to this project design, and would be agreed with the Client prior to taking place. In the event of environmental/organic deposits being present on site, it would be necessary to discuss and agree a programme of palaeoenvironmental sampling and or dating with the Planning Archaeologist.

3.2 ARCHIVE/REPORT

- 3.2.1 **Archive:** the results of all archaeological work carried out will form the basis for a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition, 1991). This archive will be provided in the English Heritage Centre for Archaeology format and a synthesis will be submitted to the Lancashire SMR (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, and a full copy of the record archive (microform or microfiche) together with the material archive (artefacts, ecofacts, and samples) with an appropriate museum.
- 3.2.2 **Report:** one bound and one unbound copy of a written synthetic report will be submitted to the Client. One bound copy and a digital copy (.pdf version) will be submitted to the Lancashire SMR within eight weeks of completion of fieldwork. Any finds recovered will be assessed with reference to other local material and any particular or unusual features of the assemblage will be highlighted. The report will detail the results of the fieldwork and of any post-excavation assessment of finds and environmental samples, with a suitably brief historical introduction. The report will include a copy of this project design, a non-technical summary, a

summary of the archive, and a complete bibliography of sources from which data has been derived. Illustrations within the report will include a plan of the location of the groundworks and, where appropriate, of archaeological features, which may also be illustrated through sections or photographically. A brief summary report of the fieldwork will be produced for the Council for British Archaeology North West *Archaeology North West* within one year of the completion of the fieldwork.

- 3.2.3 **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.

4 PROJECT MONITORING

- 4.1 Monitoring of this project will be undertaken through the auspices of the LCAS, who will be informed of the start and end dates of the work.

5 WORK TIMETABLE

- 5.1 The duration of the archaeological presence for the watching brief is as yet unknown, being dictated by the schedule of works.
- 5.2 The client report will be completed within approximately eight weeks following completion of the fieldwork.

6 STAFFING

- 6.1 The project will be under the direct management of **Stephen Rowland** (OA North Project Manager) to whom all correspondence should be addressed.
- 6.2 The watching brief and any subsequent excavation will be supervised in the field by an OA North project supervisor. All OA North project supervisors are experienced field archaeologists and are capable of independently undertaking small to medium-sized projects.
- 6.3 Assessment of the finds from the evaluation will be undertaken under the auspices of OA North's in-house finds specialist **Chris Howard-Davis** (OA North Finds Manager). Chris acts as OA North's in-house finds specialist and has extensive knowledge of all finds of all periods from archaeological sites in northern England.

7 INSURANCE

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

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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

Buxton, K and Howard-Davis, C, 2000, *Bremetenacum: Excavations at Roman Ribchester 1980, 1989-1990*, Lancaster University Archaeological Unit

United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (UKIC), 1990 *Guidelines for the preparation of archives for long-term storage*

APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT REGISTER

Context No.	Description
100	Upper subsoil; 0.29m thick Dark grey firm silty clay with <10% small to medium sub-angular and sub-rounded stones. Unstratified finds included modern ceramics, glass, metal and CBM
101	Lower subsoil; 0.2m thick Mid- to dark grey compact silty clay with <5% small sub-rounded pebbles and <5% charcoal flecks. Unstratified finds included post-medieval pottery and CBM
102	Redeposited clay; 0.05m thick Grey/brown clay with green mottling, fine, compact and sticky. The deposit contained <20% charcoal flecks and smears. No finds were recovered from the deposit.
103	Roman midden; >0.6m thick Dark brown/grey clay silt, with a coarse yet firm texture and very damp. Inclusions of <i>c</i> 15% medium water-worn pebbles, and 20% small sub-rounded stones were observed. Several fragments of Roman and Romano-British pottery were recovered as well as a few pieces of CBM. A 30ltr sample was removed from the deposit for further analysis. Dug to a maximum depth of 1.15m bgl, although not fully excavated.
104	Modern refuse pit, fill of 105 ; >0.7m thick Dark grey friable silt matrix with over 50% of the deposit consisting of modern building and garden rubble, large fragments of ceramic flower urns, cobbles, metal (including a fizzy drinks can), bone, crockery etc was recovered from the deposit. Not fully excavated.
105	Cut for modern refuse pit. It was not fully excavated.

APPENDIX 3: FINDS CATALOGUE

Context	Material	Category	No of frags	Description	Date
US	Ceramic	Vessel	2	Large body fragments amphora. Fabric suggests Dr 20.	Late first/ early third century
US	Ceramic	Vessel	1	Very worn Mancetter/ Hartshill fabric mortarium, multi-coloured grits.	Before mid-second century
US	Lead	Weight	1	Battered cylindrical weight, possibly originally with iron suspension loop.	Not closely dateable
100	Ceramic	Vessel	9	Late grey stoneware storage jar with seated lid.	Late nineteenth century or later
100	Ceramic	Vessel	1	Complete small brown stoneware ink bottle.	Late nineteenth century or later
100	Ceramic	Vessel	3	White-glazed earthenware, one probably from a teapot.	Nineteenth century
100	Copper alloy	Plaque?	1	Fragment of thin sheet with stamped decoration. Although the design is classical it is unlikely that the piece of Roman date.	Modern
101	Ceramic	Vessel	2	Body fragments lustrous black-glazed white fabric. Probably teapot.	Later eighteenth to nineteenth century
103	Ceramic	Vessel	1	Very worn Mancetter/ Hartshill fabric mortarium, predominantly red grits.	Later second century
103	Ceramic	Vessel	1	Small body fragment, oxidised orange fabric with white slip. Wilderspool?	Second century
103	Ceramic	Vessel	4	Small body fragments, oxidised orange fabric	Second century
103	Ceramic	Building material	6	Small undiagnostic and eroded fragments.	Not closely dateable
103	Ceramic	Vessel	1	White oxidised fabric. Large flagon handle.	Not closely dateable
103	Ceramic	Vessel	1	Fine cream-beige fabric, footring.	Not closely dateable
103	Ceramic	Vessel	1	Lower body fragment with basal wreath. South Gaulish samian. Dr 37?	Late first century?
103	Ceramic	Vessel	1	White-glazed earthenware.	Nineteenth century
103	Ceramic	Vessel	1	Small fragment cream-pink fabric. Probably ring-necked flagon.	Late first century?
103	Ceramic	Vessel	1	Small body fragment, oxidised beige fabric	Not closely dateable
103	Ceramic	Vessel	6	Black Burnished Ware 1. One small jar rim fragment, two undiagnostic body fragments, and three small bowl rim fragments with narrow lattice decoration.	Second century
103	Ceramic	Vessel	1	Flat-rimmed bowl fragment in oxidised orange fabric.	Second century
103	Ceramic	Vessel	2	Amphora body sherds. At least one, and probably both, are Spanish (DR20)	First to third century

Context	Material	Category	No of frags	Description	Date
103	Ceramic	Vessel	1	Body sherd in cream-biege fabric; probable parchment ware	Third century
103	Ceramic	Vessel	1	Body sherd of Crembeck-type late greyware	Third to fourth century
103	Ceramic	Vessel	1	Body sherd in very hard buff-coloured sandy fabric	Thirteenth to fourteenth century
103	Ceramic	Building material	7	Various-sized fragments of buff-coloured burnt daub	Not closely datable
103	Bone	Food refuse	2	Calcined fragments of large mammal bone	Not closely datable
103	Iron	Object	1	Probably a nail	Not closely datable
103	Industrial residue	Slag	1	Fragment of vesicular iron smithing waste with small glassy inclusions	Not closely datable

APPENDIX 4: ARCHIVE INDEX

Record group	Contents	Comments	Box/File Number
	Introduction Project Design		1
A	Report Final Report		1
B	Primary Fieldwork Records Context Records & Indices Watching Brief Records		1
C	Primary Drawings Developers Plans Annotated Plans Plans/Sections		1
D	Finds Box and Bag Lists		1
E	Environmental Records		1
F	Photographic Record Photographic Indices Monochrome Colour Slides Digital		1
G	Electronic Media		1