



# **50 CHURCH STREET, RIBCHESTER, LANCASHIRE**

## **Archaeological Watching Brief**



**Oxford Archaeology North**

January 2006

**Mr and Mrs Fry**

Issue No: 2005-6/426

OAN Job No: L9588

NGR: SD 6499 3529

Planning Reference: 3/2004/0674

**Document Title:** 50 CHURCH STREET, RIBCHESTER, LANCASHIRE

**Document Type:** Archaeological Watching Brief

**Client Name:** Mr and Mrs Fry

**Issue Number:** 2005-6/426  
**OA Job Number:** L9588  
**National Grid Reference:** SD 6510 3513  
**Planning Reference:** SD 6499 3529

Prepared by: Jason Clarke  
Position: Assistant Supervisor  
Date: November 2005

Checked by: Stephen Rowland Signed.....  
Position: Project Manager  
Date: December 2005

Approved by: Alan Lupton Signed.....  
Position: Operations Manager  
Date: January 2006

**Oxford Archaeology North**

Storey Institute  
Meeting House Lane  
Lancaster  
LA1 1TF  
t: (0044) 01524 848666  
f: (0044) 01524 848606

w: [www.oxfordarch.co.uk](http://www.oxfordarch.co.uk)  
e: [info@oxfordarch.co.uk](mailto:info@oxfordarch.co.uk)

**© Oxford Archaeological Unit Ltd (2006)**

Janus House  
Osney Mead  
Oxford  
OX2 0EA  
t: (0044) 01865 263800  
f: (0044) 01865 793496

Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited is a Registered Charity No: 285627

**Disclaimer:**

*This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and should not be relied upon or used for any other project without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and prior written authority of Oxford Archaeology being obtained. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than the purposes for which it was commissioned. Any person/party using or relying on the document for such other purposes agrees, and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Oxford Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the person/party by whom it was commissioned.*

---

## CONTENTS

---

<b>SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1 Circumstances of the Project.....	4
<b>2. METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1 Introduction .....	5
2.2 Watching Brief .....	5
2.3 Archive.....	5
<b>3. BACKGROUND.....</b>	<b>6</b>
3.1 Location, Topography and Geology .....	6
3.2 Historical Background .....	6
<b>4. FIELDWORK RESULTS .....</b>	<b>8</b>
4.1 Watching Brief Results .....	8
<b>5. DISCUSSION.....</b>	<b>9</b>
5.1 Conclusions .....	9
<b>6. BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>7. ILLUSTRATIONS .....</b>	<b>11</b>
7.1 List of Figures .....	11
7.2 List of Plates.....	11
<b>APPENDIX 1: PROJECT BRIEF .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2: PROJECT DESIGN.....</b>	<b>13</b>

---

## SUMMARY

---

Following proposals by Mrs N Fry for an extension to the dwelling at 50 Church Street, Ribchester, Lancashire (SD 6510 3513), planning application 3/2004/064 and listed building consent application 3/2004/1026 were granted on the condition that a programme of archaeological recording be undertaken, as requested by Lancashire Archaeology Service (LCAS). Accordingly, Mrs N Fry requested that Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of wall footings.

The development site measured 3m by 3m, and lay to the rear of 50 Church Street, Ribchester, within the Roman *vicus*, and situated between the Scheduled monuments of the Roman fort and the Legionary bathhouse (together designated LSM55). The site is also located on a main thoroughfare through the village. Therefore, there was high potential for Roman, medieval and post-medieval remains being encountered during groundworks at the site.

The watching brief was undertaken in September 2005 and identified two layers of made ground below a modern tarmac surface. No archaeological features were observed although it is possible that the made ground may have related to the surface of a haulage yard known to have occupied the area between the late Victorian period and the 1990s.

---

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

Oxford Archaeology North would like to offer thanks to Mrs N Fry for commissioning the project, to Lancashire County Archaeology Service for issuing the project brief and Andrew Wright, the building contractor, for his assistance on site.

The watching brief was undertaken by Jason Clarke, who also compiled this report. The drawings were produced by Mark Tidmarsh. The project was managed by Stephen Rowland, who also edited the report, together with Alan Lupton.

---

## 1. INTRODUCTION

---

### 1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 Mr and Mrs Fry propose to construct a two-storey extension to their domestic dwelling at 50 Church Street, Ribchester, Lancashire (SD 6499 3529) (Figs 1&2). Planning permission (Application 3/2004/0674) and listed building consent (Application 3/2004/1026), was granted on the condition that a programme of archaeological recording was undertaken during groundworks associated with the development. Accordingly, a brief was issued by Lancashire County Archaeology Service (LCAS) (*Appendix 1*). Subsequent to the submission of a project design (*Appendix 2*) to meet the requirements of the LCAS brief, Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Fry to undertake an archaeological watching brief.
- 1.1.2 The current terraced house lies close to the scheduled monument of the Roman fort (LSM55) and is known to stand within the area of Ribchester formerly occupied by the *vicus*, the civilian settlement associated with the fort. It lies between the fort itself and the Roman bathhouse to the east (collectively designated as LSM55). Previous archaeological investigations in the area have revealed extensive Roman remains (Fig 2). Consequently, the potential for archaeological remains was high, resulting in the need for a watching brief during ground disturbance for the proposed development. This report sets out the results of the work in the form of a short document.

---

## 2. METHODOLOGY

---

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1.1 In response to a brief issued by Lancashire County Archaeology Service (LCAS) (*Appendix 1*), Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) produced a project design (*Appendix 2*) for undertaking an archaeological watching brief. The OA North project design was adhered to in full throughout the duration of the project.

### 2.2 WATCHING BRIEF

- 2.2.1 The site comprised an area measuring 3m x 3m to the rear of the property. The groundworks for the development consisted of an 'L' shaped trench 0.8m wide and 0.9m deep forming the footings for the extension wall. The trench ran 2.5m east/west from the rear of the property before turning at a right angle to the north for 3m (Fig 3). The trench was dug by a combination of hand and JCB mechanical excavator, under constant archaeological supervision. The results of the watching brief were recorded using OA North *pro-forma* sheets, and a monochrome and colour slide photographic record was maintained throughout.

### 2.3 ARCHIVE

- 2.3.1 A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with current UKIC (1990) and English Heritage guidelines (1991). The paper and digital archive will be deposited in the Lancashire Record Office, Preston.

---

### 3. BACKGROUND

---

#### 3.1 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 3.1.1 Church Street (NGR SD 6499 3529) is located on the northern bank of the river Ribble. It is at the southern edge of the village of Ribchester in central Lancashire, roughly mid-way between the central Pennine uplands and the Irish Sea (Figs 1 & 2). Number 50 Church Street is an end terrace house with no rear garden or boundary and backs onto a tarmac yard, serving two industrial units, a house built in 1997 and a car park.
- 3.1.2 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 the 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 0.6m-0.8m of unmottled sandy loams overlying slightly mottled sandy clay loams.

#### 3.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.2.1 **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 to the north of the site. 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. Indeed, the county is noted for this as yet little discussed, or fully explained, anomaly (Haselgrove 1996).
- 3.2.2 **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.
- 3.2.3 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). Discharged veterans are thought to have been settled at or around the



fort; hence the name of the settlement, *Bremetennacum Veteranorum*. Extra-mural settlement has been proven as far as 500m to the north of the fort, therefore, encompassing the present development area (*ibid*).

- 3.2.4 **Medieval period:** the circumstances of Ribchester in the early post-Roman period are uncertain. Whitaker suggested the town was abandoned, and then later inhabited by '*... a few Saxon settlers of uncertain period*' (1823), and certainly a number of items recorded by antiquarians as coming from Ribchester; a small collection of objects in the Ribchester Museum also suggest post-Roman occupation.
- 3.2.5 Continuity may be inferred from the building, reputedly in *c* AD 596, of the church of St Wilfrid situated within the walls of the fort, (Baines 1870, 2), and a church certainly stood on the site before the Domesday Survey (Farrer and Brownbill 1912). Ribchester is listed in the Domesday Survey as *Ribelcastre* (Hinde 1985, 154), although it 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).
- 3.2.6 **Post Medieval:** it seems unlikely that there was much significant change in the layout or status of Ribchester until the Industrial Revolution. 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 property of 50 Church Street is situated on the end of a row of cottages dated 1795; however, the differences in the building style of number 50 would suggest that it had been added to the terrace in the Victorian period. From the late Victorian period until the late 1990s the yard area to the rear of the property was used by a haulage company, starting with horse-drawn coaches through to modern wagons.

---

## 4. FIELDWORK RESULTS

---

### 4.1 WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

- 4.1.1 The 0.8m wide foundation trench was excavated to a depth of 0.9m and formed two of the external sides of the proposed extension. The overall area excavated was approximately 3m x 3m (Fig 3). No archaeological features were seen during the excavation.
- 4.1.2 The deposits below the modern tarmac surface consisted of a dark grey stony silt, **1001**, 0.4m in depth, which contained modern debris, such as factory-made and frogged brick, slate and metal (Fig 4). This overlay a light brown compacted cobbley sand layer, **1002**, which contained no artefacts. The base of this deposit was not reached during excavation and had been heavily truncated by modern services from the property.

---

## 5. DISCUSSION

---

### 5.1 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1.1 The watching brief carried out during the excavation revealed no archaeological features: the 0.9m of stratigraphy exposed within the foundation trench comprised entirely make-up layers and preparation for the current ground surface. It is possible that the thickness of the made ground, and particularly the compacted nature of lower deposit **1002**, relates to the previous use of the area as a haulage yard. The surface would have had to have been regularly maintained due to the weight of the wagons running over it and this, over time, could have led to accumulation and compaction of deposits. There was, however, no evidence to suggest that the yard had been consistently resurfaced over a large area, although it is possible that the current tarmac surface represents the latest phase of activity at the haulage yard.
- 5.1.2 Considering the large amounts of archaeological features identified at nearby sites, such as 20 Church Street (OA North 2004), it is possible that well-preserved archaeological remains could survive beneath the excavated made-ground deposits and at deposits greater than 0.9m below current ground level.

---

## 6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

---

- Aitkenhead, N, McBride, D, Riley, NJ, and Kimbell, SF, 1992 Geology of the country around Garstang, *Memoir for 1:50 000 geological sheet 67 England and Wales*, Brit Geol Surv, London
- Baines, E, 1870 *The History of the County Palatine, and Duchy of Lancaster*, 2 (revised by J Harland), London
- Buxton, K, and Howard-Davis, CLE, 2000 *Bremetanacum: Excavations at Roman Ribchester 1980, 1989-1990*, Lancaster Imprints, 9, Lancaster
- Corry, J, 1825 *History of Lancashire*, London
- English Heritage, 1991, *Management of Archaeological Projects*, Second Edition, London
- Farrer, W, and Brownbill, J, 1912 *Victoria History of the Counties of England; Lancaster*, 7, London
- Haselgrove, C, 1996 The Iron Age, in R Newman (ed), *The Archaeology of Lancashire. Present state and future priorities*, 61-74, Lancaster
- Hinde, T (ed), 1985 *The Domesday Book: England's heritage then and now*, London
- Margary, ID, 1973 *Roman roads in Britain. Vol II North of the Fosse Way - Bristol Channel (inc Wales and Scotland)*, Second Edition, London
- Nevell, M, 1999 Iron Age and Romano-British settlement in North West England, in M Nevell (ed), *Living on the edge of Empire: models, methodology and marginality*, 14-26, Manchester
- Olivier, ACH, and Turner, RC, 1987 Excavations in advance of sheltered housing accommodation, Parsonage Avenue, Ribchester, 1980, in Edwards and Webster, 1987a, *Ribchester Excavations Part 2: Excavations in the Civilian Settlement- A, The Structures*, Cardiff
- Oxford Archaeology North 2004 *Archaeological watching brief at 20 Church Street Ribchester* Unpubl Rep
- Rivet, ALF, and Smith, C, 1981 *The Place-names of Roman Britain*, London
- United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (UKIC), 1990 *Guidelines for the preparation of archives for long-term storage*, London
- Whitaker, TD, 1823 *An History of Richmondshire in the North Riding of the County of York*, 2, Manchester

---

## 7. ILLUSTRATIONS

---

### 7.1 LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Location Map

Figure 2: Detailed location plan of site and previous excavations relative to the Roman fort

Figure 3: Plan of footing trench

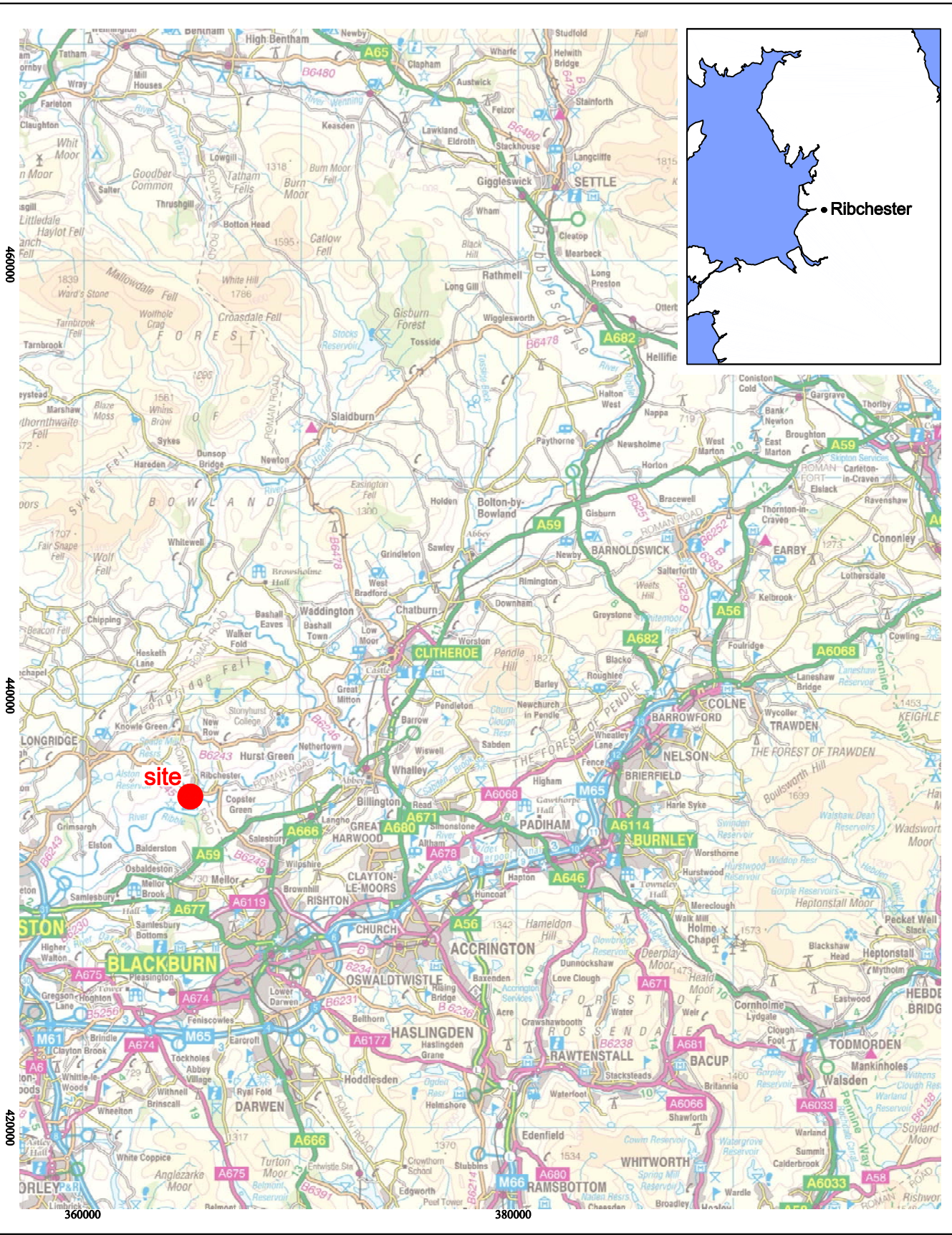
Figure 4: West-facing section of footing trench

### 7.2 LIST OF PLATES

Plate 1: Top of layer **1002**

Plate 2: West-facing section showing **1001** and **1002**

Plate 3: Plan shot of excavated footing trench



Reproduced from the Landranger 1:250,000 scale by permission of the Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office. © Crown copyright 1990. All rights reserved. Licence No AL 100005569

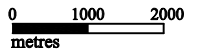


Figure 1: Location Map

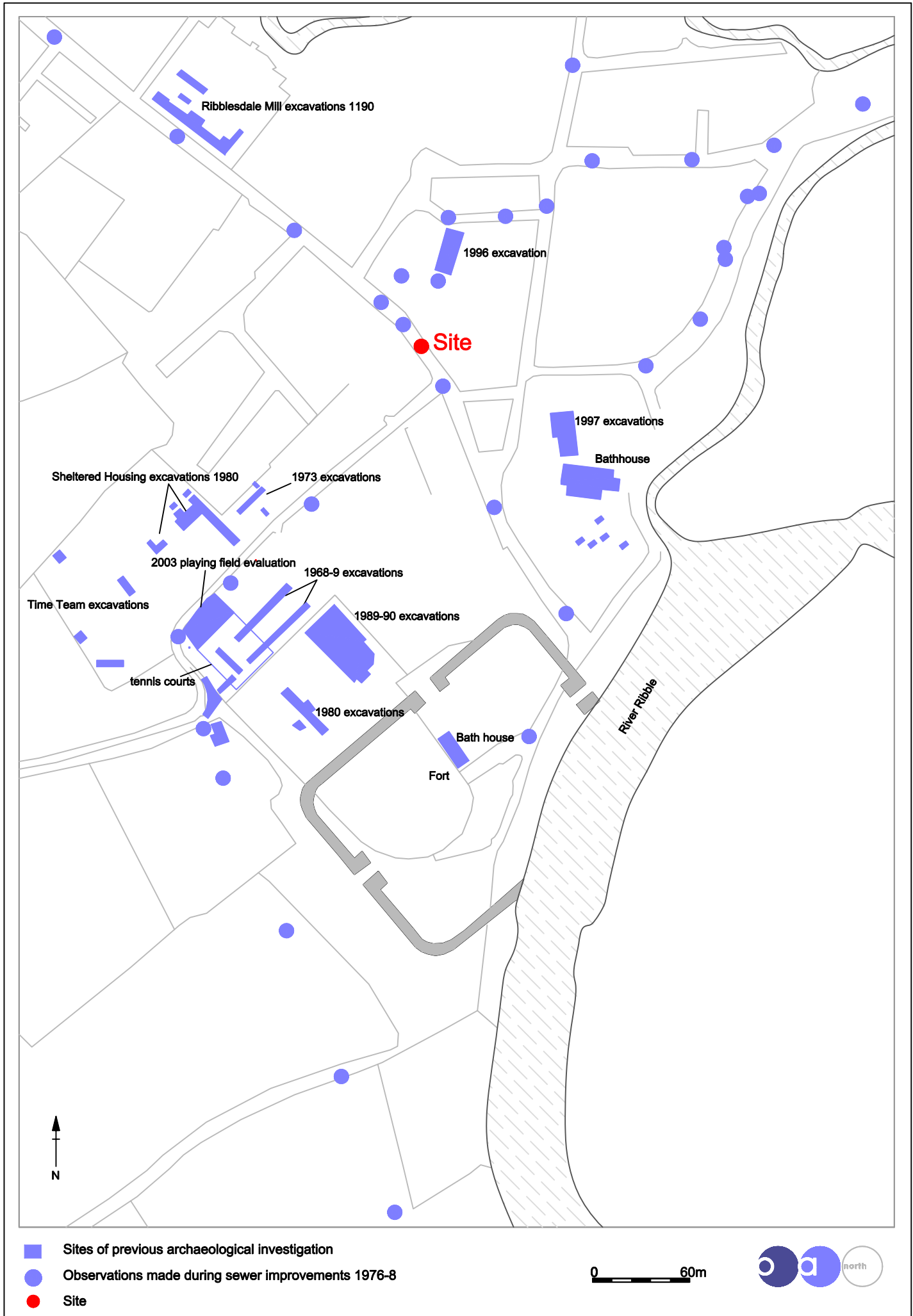


Figure 2: Detailed location plan of site and previous excavations relative to the Roman fort

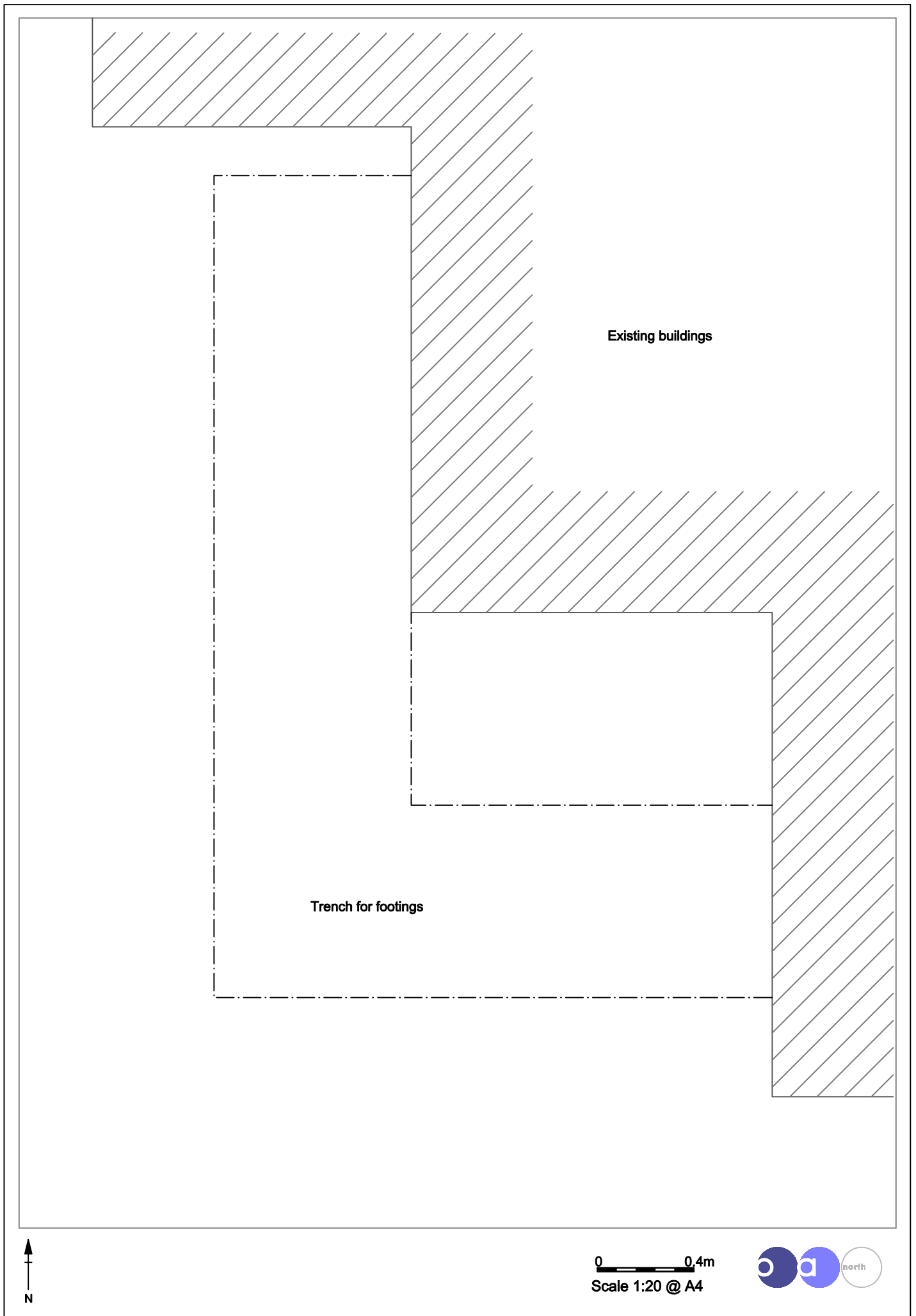
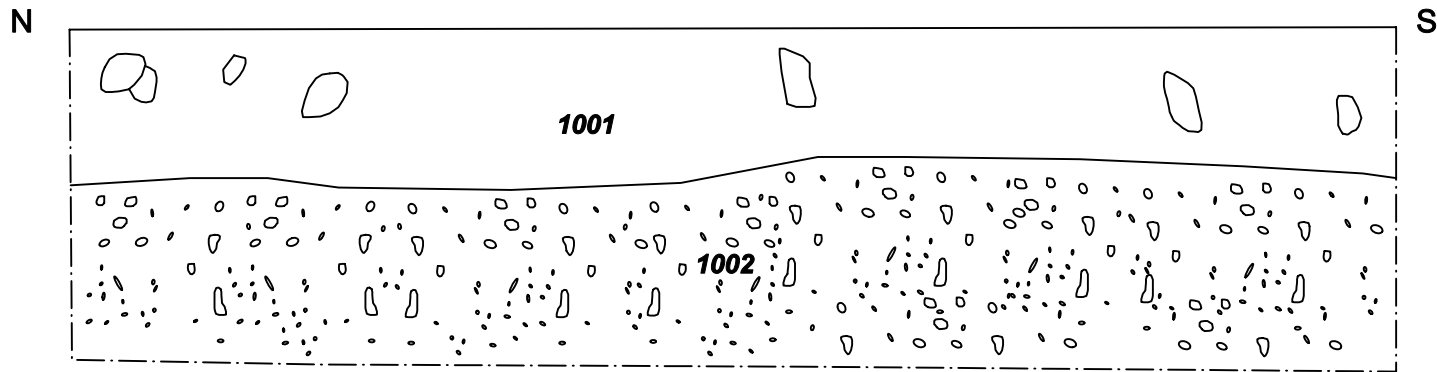


Figure 3: Plan of footing trench





0 0.4m  
Scale 1:20 @ A4



Figure 4: West-facing section of footing trench

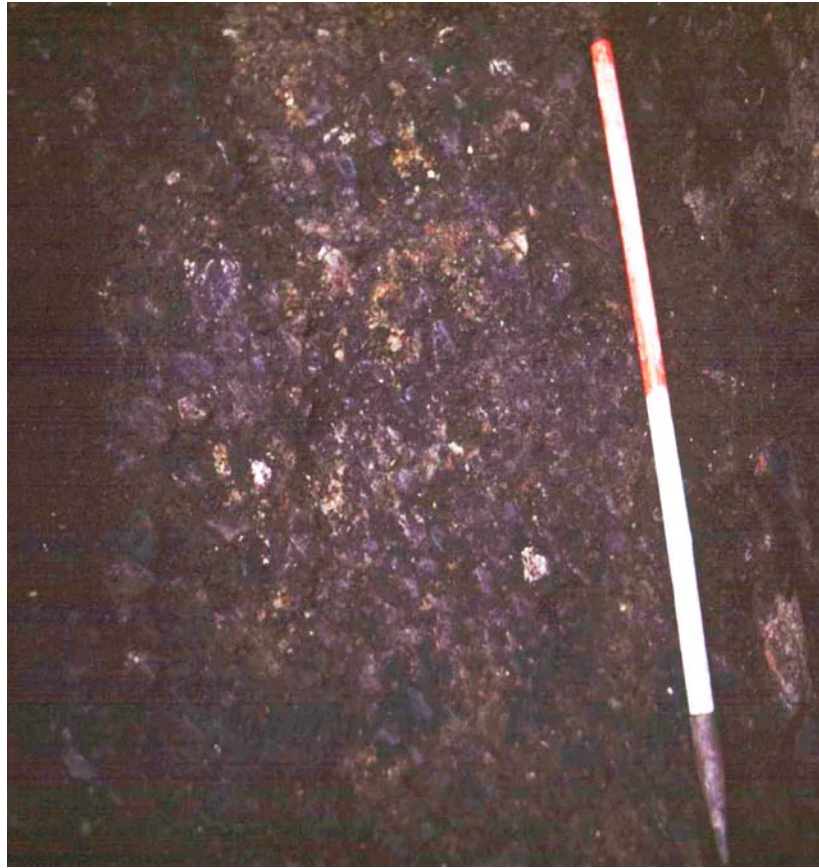


Plate 1: Top of layer *1002*



Plate 2: West-facing section



Plare3: Plan shot of excavated footing trench

---

## APPENDIX 1: PROJECT BRIEF

---

## AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

**Location: 50 Church Street, Ribchester**

**Proposal: Demolition of existing single storey extension and replacement with 2 storey extension**

**Prepared on behalf of Ribble Valley Borough Council for Mrs N Fry, applicant**

### 1. Summary

- 1.1 Applications for both Listed Building consent (3/2004/0674) and planning permission (3/2004/1026) have been submitted to Ribble Valley Borough Council for the demolition of an existing single storey extension and its replacement with a 2 storey extension at 50 Church Street, Ribchester. There is a potential for archaeological deposits associated with settlement of the Roman period to be encountered by the proposals.

### 2. Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The site is located at SD 6499 3529 on the north side of Church Street. Current Land Use and Vegetation Cover: Rear outbuildings and yard.

### 3. Planning Background

- 3.1 The proposed development comprises the demolition of an existing single storey extension to the rear of the property and the construction of a two storey extension. The Listed Building Consent application was refused in August 2004, and the application for planning permission in December 2004. Both applications were the subject of planning appeals, which were allowed. Planning permission was granted, subject to a condition containing a requirement for an archaeological watching brief to be undertaken.

### 4. Archaeological Background

- 4.1.1 The Ribchester area has been settled since prehistoric times, and is the site of *Bremetennacum*, a Roman fort and associated extra-mural settlement (LSMR PRN 4210), first occupied during the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD and with military occupation until the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Remains of the fort and settlement are exposed to view within the town and more extensive archaeological deposits are present below the surface. The fort and settlement have been recognised as being of national importance and parts have been designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Lancashire Monument No. 55).
- 4.1.2 Archaeological deposits relating to the civilian settlement extends a considerable distance from the known location of the fort's defences and the boundary of the annexe, which lay to the north of the fort. These appear to be particularly concentrated along the lines of the main roads, such as Church Street and Ribblesdale Road, which led from the fort through the vicus and out beyond the

settlement. Developments along Church Street in the past (PRNs 11886, 15103 & 23734) have produced several finds of Roman material and one occasion early prehistoric finds. Excavations close to No. 50 Church Street (PRN 1847) have also recovered cremation burials, the only known in situ evidence for the cemeteries of the settlement.

- 4.2 Further details of these sites can be obtained from the Lancashire Sites and Monuments Record, quoting the PRNs.

## **5. Requirement for an Archaeological Watching Brief**

- 5.1 The proposed development would damage or destroy archaeological remains which may be present on the site. It has therefore been recommended that an archaeological watching brief should take place to record the presence and state of preservation of any archaeological deposits.

## **6. Objectives**

The objectives of the watching brief are to gain information about the archaeological resource within a given area or site, including its presence or absence, character and extent, integrity, state of preservation and relative quality, in order to make an assessment of its worth in the appropriate context.

- 6.2 The results of the watching brief may be used to:
- produce a record of the location, nature and date of any archaeological remains encountered on the site; and
  - add to knowledge about the previous history of activity on the current site and its surroundings; and
  - provide information to influence future planning decisions in the area.
- 6.3 The watching brief will cover the whole of the area to be disturbed by the development including the removal of existing foundations and services, excavation of new building foundations, service and drainage trenches and other earthmoving activities.

## **7 Schedule of Works**

- 7.1 An adequate written record will be maintained of archaeological features and finds encountered.
- 7.2 The location of all archaeological features and finds will be indicated on a measured plan of the site at an appropriate scale.
- 7.3 Where appropriate, measured drawings will be made of archaeological features encountered.

- 7.4 An adequate photographic record of the watching brief will be prepared. This will include black and white prints with colour transparencies illustrating in both detail and general context the principal features and finds discovered. The photographic record will also include working shots to illustrate more generally the nature of the works.

## **8 Reporting and archiving.**

- 8.1 The evaluation will result in the production of a report comprising a written description of the features observed and an interpretation of their significance, together with sketch plans, drawings and photographs as appropriate. A copy of this brief, and the project design for the work, should be appended to this report.
- 8.2 Copies of the report will be supplied to the Planning Officer (Archaeology) or Specialist Advisor (Archaeology) and to the Lancashire Sites and Monuments Record on the understanding that it will become a public document after an appropriate period [a maximum of 6 months after the completion of the fieldwork unless another date is agreed in writing with the Planning Officer (Archaeology) or Specialist Advisor (Archaeology)]. This should be provided as an 'Acrobat Adobe pdf' file on CD-ROM.
- 8.3 The watching brief will result in an archive of notes, drawings and photographs. A copy of these, together with a copy of the report and any finds, will be deposited with an appropriate museum
- 8.4 A brief summary report of fieldwork, to appear in the Council for British Archaeology North West *Archaeology North West* should be produced, even when the watching brief encountered no archaeological deposits. This should be sent to the editor of *Archaeology North West* in accordance with the standard format for summary reporting, and in time for it to appear within a calendar year of the completion of fieldwork.

## **9 General**

- 9.1 A written project design, detailing how the assessment is to be undertaken, the name of the project director, the proposed staffing levels and the proposed programme of work shall be produced prior to the commencement of the project. This design should be to the appropriate IFA standard. The archaeological contractor may wish to refer to sections of this brief in the project design, rather than transcribe them. Costings shall be submitted under a separate cover to the project design.
- 9.2 The document entitled "General Conditions for Appropriate Archaeological Contractors in Lancashire" is in use as a model of expected practices and procedures. A copy of that document is attached as Appendix One.
- 9.3 The archaeological work shall be monitored by the LCAS. The archaeological contractor should contact the LCAS to discuss and arrange this monitoring.

- 9.4 Access to the land will be arranged by the client and the successful contractor will need to liaise to ensure that suitable arrangements are established
- 9.5 This brief shall not be altered without the express consent of the LCAS. It allows some flexibility of approach but deviations from the agreed project design shall be discussed and agreed in advance with LCAS. A copy of the brief on computer disc can be supplied upon request.

## 10 Further information

- 10.1 Further information and details of the proposed development can be obtained from the applicant, Mrs Nicola Fry, 50 Church Street, Ribchester, PR3 3YE.
- 10.2 Further queries regarding this brief or the general conditions can be addressed to the Lancashire County Archaeology Service, Lancashire County Council Environment Directorate, Guild House, Cross Street, Preston, PR1 8RD, Tel. 01772 531734. Fax 01772 533423.

Doug Moir  
Planning Officer (Archaeology)  
e-mail: [Douglas.moir@envlancscc.gov.uk](mailto:Douglas.moir@envlancscc.gov.uk)

June 2005

This specification will remain valid for up to one year from the date of issue. After that time it may need to be revised to take into account new discoveries, changes in policy or the introduction of new working practices or techniques.



---

APPENDIX 2: PROJECT DESIGN

---

**NUMBER 50  
CHURCH STREET,  
RIBCHESTER,  
LANCASHIRE**

**Archaeological  
Watching Brief  
Project Design**



**Oxford Archaeology North**

July 2005

**Mr and Mrs Fry**

OA North Reference No: t2480

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

1.1.1 Mrs N Fry (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 specification provided by Lancashire County Archaeology Service (LCAS), during groundworks associated with the construction of a two-storey extension at number 50 Church Street Ribchester (NGR SD 6499 3529; Planning Application 3/2004/0674; Listed Building Consent Application 3/2004/1026). The development area comprises a yard and outbuildings to the rear of the property, which lies on the north side of the street. The current single storey extension will be demolished and will be replaced with a two storey extension. 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, Bremetenraco*, 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 24 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.
- 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.
- 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 Home Office license, under section 25 of the Burial Act of 1857. An application will be made by OA North for the study area on discovery of any such remains and the removal will be carried out with due care and sensitivity under the environmental health regulations.
- 3.1.10 **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. 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 also include a complete bibliography of sources from which data has been derived. 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*, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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*