Botchergate, Carlisle

Archaeological Watching Brief

Oxford Archaeology North

December 2003

Alfred McAlpine Utility Services

Issue No: 2003-4/179
OAN Job No:L9308
NGR:NY 4040 5552

Document Title: **BOTCHERGATE, CARLISLE**

Document Type: **Archaeological Watching Brief**

Client Name: Alfred McAlpine Utility Services

Issue Number: **2003-4/179**

OA Job Number: L9308

National Grid Reference: **NY 4040 5552**

Prepared by:	Arran Ferguson	
Position:	Supervisor	
Date:	December 2003	
Checked by:	Alison Plummer	Signed……..
Position:	Project Manager	
Date:	December 2003	
Approved by:	Alan Lupton	Signed……..
Position:	Operations Manager	
Date:	December 2003	
Document File Location	Alsion/Projects/9308/Report	

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

w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk
e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk

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

CONTENTS

SUMMARY

Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) was commissioned by Alfred McAlpine Utility Services to undertake an archaeological watching brief to monitor the excavation of 18 open cut trenches along Botchergate in Carlisle during October 2003. As the potential for archaeology in this area is high and as the possibility of trenches infringing upon undisturbed ground was possible, it was felt necessary to implement an archaeological watching brief. The works were undertaken in order to make general repairs to extant services, this being the case the trenches were invariably located in areas where the ground had previously been disturbed.

A total of 15 access pits were excavated over the course of three weeks in October 2003. The access pits were all located on the east side of Botchergate apart from a single trench that was excavated on Rydal Street 5.4m from the north east corner of Botchergate and Rydal Street. Without exception the access trenches failed to locate any finds, features or deposits of an archaeological nature.

The stratigraphy of all trenches consisted of varying depths of modern backfill, primarily gravels and sands, which underlay road surfaces and road foundations, and overlay service conduits.

ACKNOWLEGMENTS

Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) would like to extend thanks to Keith Milligan and Alfred McAlpine Utility Services for commissioning the watching brief. Thanks are also due to Phil Tyson for liasing with OA North staff whilst on site.

The watching brief was undertaken, and the subsequent report compiled and written by Arran Ferguson. Alison Plummer managed the project and co-edited the report with the assistance of Ian Miller. Illustrations were compiled by Emma Carter.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

1.1.1 Alfred McAlpine Utility Services designed a scheme for the required maintenance of the water services and their connections along a portion of Botchergate between Mary Street and Rydal Street.

1.2 LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHICAL SETTING

1.2.1 Carlisle is situated towards the northern edge of the Solway Plain, some eight miles upstream from the Solway Firth and about five miles above the tidal limit (Fig 1). The Scottish border, established finally in the thirteenth century, lies nine miles to the north of Carlisle, whilst the Roman frontier, marked by Hadrian's Wall, traverses the village-suburb of Stanwix, which lies on the opposite bank of the Eden immediately north of the city centre. For nearly two millennia, Carlisle has been a military and administrative centre for what is now known as Cumbria (McCarthy 1990, 1). The historic core of the city is located on the south bank of the river Eden, to the south-east its confluence with the river Caldew. During the medieval period the city centre was clearly defined by the city walls (Fig 1), and there is evidence to suggest that the core of the Roman settlement is almost identical in size and situation to the medieval town (*ibid*).

1.2.2 Botchergate follows the course of the former Roman road believed to lead from the south to the civilian settlement and fort at Carlisle. It lies on the north-eastern side of the valley of the river Caldew, rising gently from a height of *c* 18m OD at its south-eastern end, near the junction with St Nicholas Bridge Road, to *c* 22.5m OD at its north-western end at the southern gateway, the English Gate, to the medieval city.

1.2.3 The underlying geology of the area is composed mainly of mudstones and sandstones of Permo-Triassic age. The most important sandstone formation, the St Bees Sandstone, has been much quarried for use as building stone, and has imparted a distinctive character to much of the area's architecture (Countryside Commission 1998, 20). During the last glaciation, thick ice-sheets crossed the area, carrying with them vast quantities of rock debris, which was deposited as boulder clay (*ibid*). As a result of the extensive mantle of glacial deposits, exposures of the solid geology are few, although significant exposures occur in some of the deeper valley sides to the south and east of Carlisle.

1.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1.3.1 A limited amount of evidence for prehistoric activity has been found at a number of sites in the Carlisle area, including Annetwell Street (Caruana forthcoming), Blackfriars Street (McCarthy 1990, 13-4), 46-52 Lowther Street (Flynn 1995), and the Northern Lanes (Zant forthcoming a), but little is known of any prehistoric settlement in the Botchergate area.

1.3.2 In AD 72-3 a fort was established by the Romans on the site of the later medieval castle. By the end of the first century the fort formed part of the Tyne-Solway isthmus frontier known as the Stanegate; indeed, the presence in Carlisle, known as *Luguvalium* in the Roman period, of an official known as the *centurio regionarius* suggests that Carlisle may have been the command centre for this early northern frontier (Shotter 1997, 49). The area continued to be important strategically in the following century, and though the focal point of the emperor Hadrian's new frontier moved to the nearby fort of Stanwix, the recent millennium project excavations (Zant forthcoming b) have shown that the fort at Annetwell Street in Carlisle continued to be occupied into the post-Roman period.

1.3.3 A large civilian settlement grew up around the fort at Carlisle and by the early third century the town may have formed the *civitas* capital of the Carvetii, the indigenous tribal unit in the area. The full extent of this extramural settlement is not known but, though considered to be large in comparison to other Roman settlements in the North West, it was thought largely to be confined to the approximate area of the later medieval walled city (McCarthy 1991, 53); this view may be refined in the light of archaeological evidence from the Botchergate excavation.

1.3.4 The fate of Carlisle at the end of the Roman occupation is less clearly defined, although scattered traces of late fourth- and fifth-century occupation have been identified (McCarthy *et al* 1990, 4). An Anglian monastery is attested on documentary grounds (Colgrave 1940), and archaeological evidence suggests the presence of an important church below the Cathedral in the tenth century (McCarthy *et al* 1990, 4). Other churches are also suspected to have existed between the seventh and eleventh century, although the supporting evidence is slight (*ibid*). The archaeological evidence for this period is largely based on coin-finds, notably a *sceatta, stycas,* and pennies of Aethelstan, Edgar, and Aethelred II (*op cit*, 5). Following the arrival of the Normans in 1092, and the construction of the medieval castle and town walls, Carlisle became a major frontier city on the borders of England and Scotland, continuing in this role until the Jacobite rebellion of 1745.

1.3.5 During the medieval period, Botchergate appears to have formed an extramural suburb to Carlisle (Giecco and Zant 2001, 4). Cartographic evidence shows that certainly during the early post-medieval period settlement fronted Botchergate outside of the town defences. By the early part of the nineteenth century much of the land to the rear of the buildings fronting Botchergate was still open, but by the time of the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1876, Carlisle's suburbs had expanded rapidly, infilling the backplots of earlier buildings on the Botchergate street frontage (*op cit.* 5).

1.4 PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK

1.4.1 Numerous chance discoveries of burials on both sides of Botchergate in the nineteenth century suggested that the area had been used as a cemetery for much of the Roman period (Charlesworth 1978): this was to be expected given that Roman cemeteries are conventionally situated alongside the main roads leading out of settlements.

1.4.2 Recent investigations seemed to confirm that the Botchergate area lay outside the focus of the extramural settlement in Carlisle. In 1994 Carlisle Archaeology Unit (CAU) undertook an evaluation in the Cecil Street car park, south of Tait Street on the eastern side of Botchergate, which identified remains of cremation burials, together with boundary ditches, probably Roman in date (McCarthy and Flynn 1994). In 1997 the Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU) uncovered traces of Roman cremations and also of a small settlement, probably a Romano-British site, at St Nicholas Yard to the west of Botchergate (Howard-Davis and Leah 1999). Also in 1997, CAU undertook an excavation to the rear of the former Co-op building at 40-78 Botchergate, revealing a complex sequence of Roman activity, including part of a large-scale linear earthwork of unknown function, evidence of a prolonged period of landfilling and refuse disposal, and two truncated late second century cremations (Zant 2000). In 1999 an evaluation was conducted by CAU to the rear of 114-132 Botchergate, again on the western side of the street, revealing evidence for Roman buildings, yards and roads, at least one phase aligned at an angle of *c* 60^0 to Botchergate, and another parallel (Reeves 2000).

1.4.3 However, the extent of Roman settlement in the area was not known until the evaluation and excavation work undertaken by Carlisle Archaeology Ltd (formerly CAU) between Mary Street and Tait Street (Giecco and Zant 2001), on the eastern side of Botchergate between September 1998 and March 1999. This revealed the survival of deeply stratified archaeological deposits in parts of the development area, particularly those closest to the Botchergate Street frontage. Between 63 and 85 Botchergate, trenches located a sequence of Roman and post-Roman stratigraphy including evidence for different phases of Roman timber buildings, and subsequent use of the site for cremation and inhumation burial (*ibid*).

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 WATCHING BRIEF

2.1.1 The work undertaken followed the method statement detailed in the project design (*Appendix 2*) and complied with current legislation and accepted best practice, including the Code of Conduct and the relevant professional standards of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA). Close liaison between OA North staff and the site contractors, and a permanent presence during the excavations, was maintained at all times.

2.1.2 The programme of field observation recorded accurately the location, extent, and character of any surviving archaeological features. This work comprised observation during the groundworks, the examination of any horizons exposed, and the accurate recording of all archaeological features, horizons and any artefacts found during the excavations.

2.1.3 The recording comprised a full description and preliminary classification of features or structures revealed, on OA North *pro-forma* sheets, and their accurate location in plan. In addition, a photographic record in colour slide and monochrome formats was compiled.

2.2 ARCHIVE

2.2.1 A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with the project design (*Appendix 2*), and in accordance with current IFA and English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage 1991). The archive will be deposited with the Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle and a copy of the report will be sent to the Cumbria Sites and Monuments Record, Kendal.

3. RESULTS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1 The groundworks comprised a total of 18 open cut trenches designed to access extant services along the east side of Botchergate. A wheeled mechanical digger under close archaeological supervision undertook the work. One access pit was located on the north east corner of Rydal Street and Botchergate, the remaining 17 were all located in Botchergate proper (Fig 2).

3.2 THE TRENCHES

3.2.1 In all cases the services were located without excavation of previously undisturbed ground. The pits were of varying dimensions and depth depending upon the size of the service main sought after for maintenance, but typically measured 2.5m x 1.8m and were no more than 2.10m deep.

3.2.2 In all trenches the stratigraphy remained consistent, comprising layers of modern backfill (primarily coarse sands and pea gravels) underlying road foundations and tarmac. No deposits, features or finds of an archaeological nature were noted in any of the trenches excavated.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 THE WATCHING BRIEF

4.1.1 As the removal of modern surfaces and subsurface deposits carried the risk of disturbing below ground archaeological remains an archaeological watching brief was undertaken for the duration of all groundworks.

4.1.2 As the whereabouts of the services to be maintained were well documented it was possible to excavate accessing pits with precision. This resulted in no new ground disturbance, with the stratigraphy in all pits made up entirely of modern backfill. A close inspection of all spoil heaps yielded no stray finds of any archaeological importance.

5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Caruana, ID, forthcoming The Roman Forts at Carlisle: Excavations at Annetwell Street 1973-84

Charlesworth, D, 1978 Roman Carlisle, *Archaeol J*, ***135***, *115-37*

Colgrave, B, 1940 *Two lives of St Cuthbert*, Cambridge

Countryside Commission, 1998 *Countryside Character, Volume 2: North West*, Cheltenham

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

Faegri, K, Kaaland, PE, and Krzywinski, K, 1989, *Textbook of modern pollen analysis*, 4th edn, Chichester

Flynn, PA, 1995 A watching brief at 46-52 Lowther Street, Carlisle, *Trans Cumberland Westmorland Antiq Archaeol Soc*, n ser, **95**, 278-82

Giecco, F and Zant, JM, 2001 *Interim Report on Archaeological Excavation between Mary Street and Tait Street, Botchergate, Carlisle*, Carlisle Archaeology Rep, **15/01**, unpubl rep

Howard-Davis, CLE, and Leah, M, 1999 Excavations at St Nicholas Yard, Carlisle, 1996-7, *Trans Cumberland Westmorland Antiq Archaeol Soc*, **99**, 89-115

McCarthy, MR, 1990, *A Roman, Anglian, and medieval site at Blackfriars Street, Carlisle*, Cumberland Westmorland Antiq Archaeol Soc Res ser, **4**, Kendal

McCarthy, MR, 1991, *Roman waterlogged remains at Castle Street*, Cumberland Westmorland Antiq Archaeol Soc, Res ser, **5**, Kendal

McCarthy, MR, and Flynn, P, 1994 *Botchergate relief Road, Carlisle, Cecil Street Car Park*, unpub rep

Reeves, J, 2000 *Report on an Archaeological Evaluation at King Street, Botchergate, Carlisle*, unpubl rep

Shotter, DCA, 1997, *Romans and Britains in North West England*, Lancaster

Zant, JM, 2000 *Report on an Archaeological Excavation at 40-78 Botchergate, Carlisle*, unpubl rep

Zant, JM, forthcoming a, The Northern Lanes, Carlisle

Zant, JM, forthcoming b, Gateway City: Millennium Excavations at Carlisle

APPENDIX 2: PROJECT DESIGN

Oxford Archaeology North

October 2003

BOTCHERGATE, CARLISLE, CUMBRIA

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

PROJECT DESIGN

Proposals

The following project design is offered in response to a request by Alfred McAlpine Utility Services for an archaeological watching brief in advance of refurbishment to watermains located along Botchergate, Carlisle, Cumbria.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Alfred McAlpine Utility Services (hereafter the client) are undertaking the refurbishment of watermains along the length of Botchergate, Carlisle, Cumbria (NY 4040 5552). The route runs through an area of high archaeological potential and affects a number of known sites. The Cumbria County Archaeology Service (CCAS) has issued a verbal brief for a programme of archaeological work to be undertaken during the development works. The programme involves a watching brief during the opening of trenches or pits throughout the course of the works.

1.2 Bothergate follows the course of the Roman road and is believed to lead to the civilian settlement and fort at Carlisle. Numerous chance discoveries of burials on both sides of Botchergate suggested that the area was used as a cemetery for much of the Roman period; as was to be expected given that Romano-British cemeteries are conventionally situated alongside the main roads leading out of settlements. Recent excavations in 2001 (Geicco and Zant 2001) revealed the survival of deeply stratified archaeological deposits, including evidence for Roman timber buildings. Further excavations (OA North 2001) revealed late first century AD Roman cremations industrial activity relating to the second century.

1.3 OA North has considerable experience of the assessment, evaluation and excavation of sites of all periods, having undertaken a great number of small and large-scale projects during the past 20 years. Watching briefs, evaluations and excavations have taken place within the planning process, to fulfil the requirements of clients and planning authorities, to very rigorous timetables.

1.4 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 provide for accurate recording of any archaeological deposits that are disturbed by the trench cutting associated with the refurbishment works.

2.2 ***Watching Brief:*** a permanent presence watching brief to be undertaken during all trench cutting or excavation of inspection/launch pits.

2.3 ***Report and Archive:*** production of a report following the collation of data during section 2.2 above.

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 pipetrench. This work will comprise observation during the excavation for these works, 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 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.

3.1.3 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.

3.1.4 Putative archaeological features and/or deposits identified by the machining process, 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).

3.1.5 It is assumed that OA North will have the authority to stop the works for a sufficient time period to enable the recording of important deposits. It may also be necessary to call in additional archaeological support if a find of particular importance is identified or a high density of archaeology is discovered, but this would only be called into effect in agreement with the Client and the County Archaeology Service and will require a variation to costing. Also, should evidence of burials be identified, the 1857 Burial Act would apply and a Home Office Licence would be sought. This would involve all work ceasing until the proper authorities were happy for burials to be removed. In normal circumstances, field recording will also include a continual process of analysis, evaluation, and interpretation of the data, in order to establish the necessity for any further more detailed recording that may prove essential.

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

3.1.7 OA North has professional indemnity to a value of £2,000,000, employer's liability cover to a value of £10,000,000 and public liability to a value of £15,000,000. Written details of insurance cover can be provided if required.

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). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project. The deposition of a properly ordered and indexed project archive in an appropriate repository is considered an essential and integral element of all archaeological projects by the IFA in that organisation's code of conduct. OA North conforms to best practice in the preparation of project archives for long-term storage. This archive will be provided in the English Heritage Centre for Archaeology format and a synthesis will be submitted to the CSMR (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 appropriate 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. Wherever possible, OA North recommends the deposition of such material in a local museum approved by the Museums and Galleries Commission, and would make appropriate arrangements with the designated museum at the outset of the project for the proper labelling, packaging, and accessioning of all material recovered.

3.2.2 The Arts and Humanities Data Service (AHDS) online database *Online Access to index of Archaeological Investigations* (OASIS) will be completed as part of the archiving phase of the project.

3.2.3 ***Report:*** one bound and one unbound copy of a written synthetic report will be submitted to the client, and a further three copies submitted to the Cumbria SMR within eight weeks of completion of fieldwork. The report will include a copy of this project design, and indications of any agreed departure from that design. It will present, summarise, and interpret the results of the programme detailed above and will include a full index of archaeological features identified in the course of the project, with an assessment of the overall stratigraphy, together with appropriate illustrations, including detailed plans and sections indicating the locations of archaeological features. Any finds recovered will be assessed with reference to other local material and any particular or unusual features of the assemblage will be highlighted and the potential of the site for palaeoenvironmental analysis will be considered. The report will also include a complete bibliography of sources from which data has been derived.

3.2.4 This report will identify areas of defined archaeology. An assessment and statement of the actual and potential archaeological significance of the identified archaeology within the broader context of regional and national archaeological priorities will be made. Illustrative material will include a location map, section drawings, and plans. This report will be in the same basic format as this project design; a digital copy of the report can be provided, if required.

3.2.5 Provision will be made for a summary report to be submitted to a suitable regional or national archaeological journal within one year of completion of fieldwork, if relevant results are obtained.

3.2.6 ***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 CCAS Archaeologist, who will be informed of the start and end dates of the work.

5 WORK TIMETABLE

5.1 The duration of the watching brief will be dictated by the progress of the contractor.

5.2 The client report will be completed within eight weeks following completion of the fieldwork.

6 STAFFING

6.1 The project will be under the direct management of **Alison Plummer BSc (Hons)** (OA North Senior Project Manager) to whom all correspondence should be addressed.

6.2 Present timetabling constraints preclude detailing at this stage exactly who will be undertaking the rapid walkover survey and targeted watching brief, but both of these elements of the project are likely to be supervised by an OA North project supervisor experienced in these types of project. All OA North project officers and supervisors are experienced field archaeologists capable of carrying out projects of all sizes.

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.

ILLUSTRATIONS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF PLATES

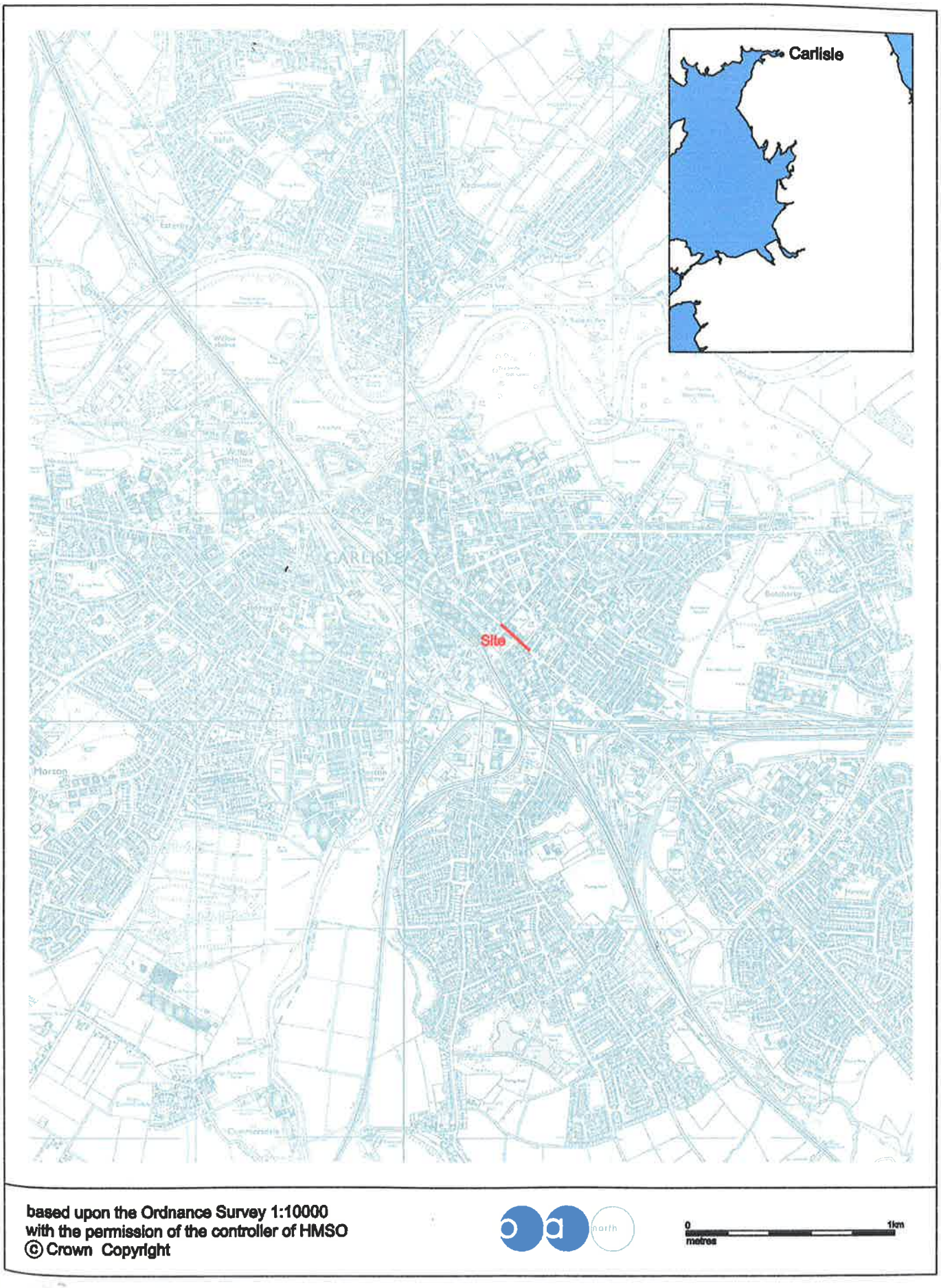
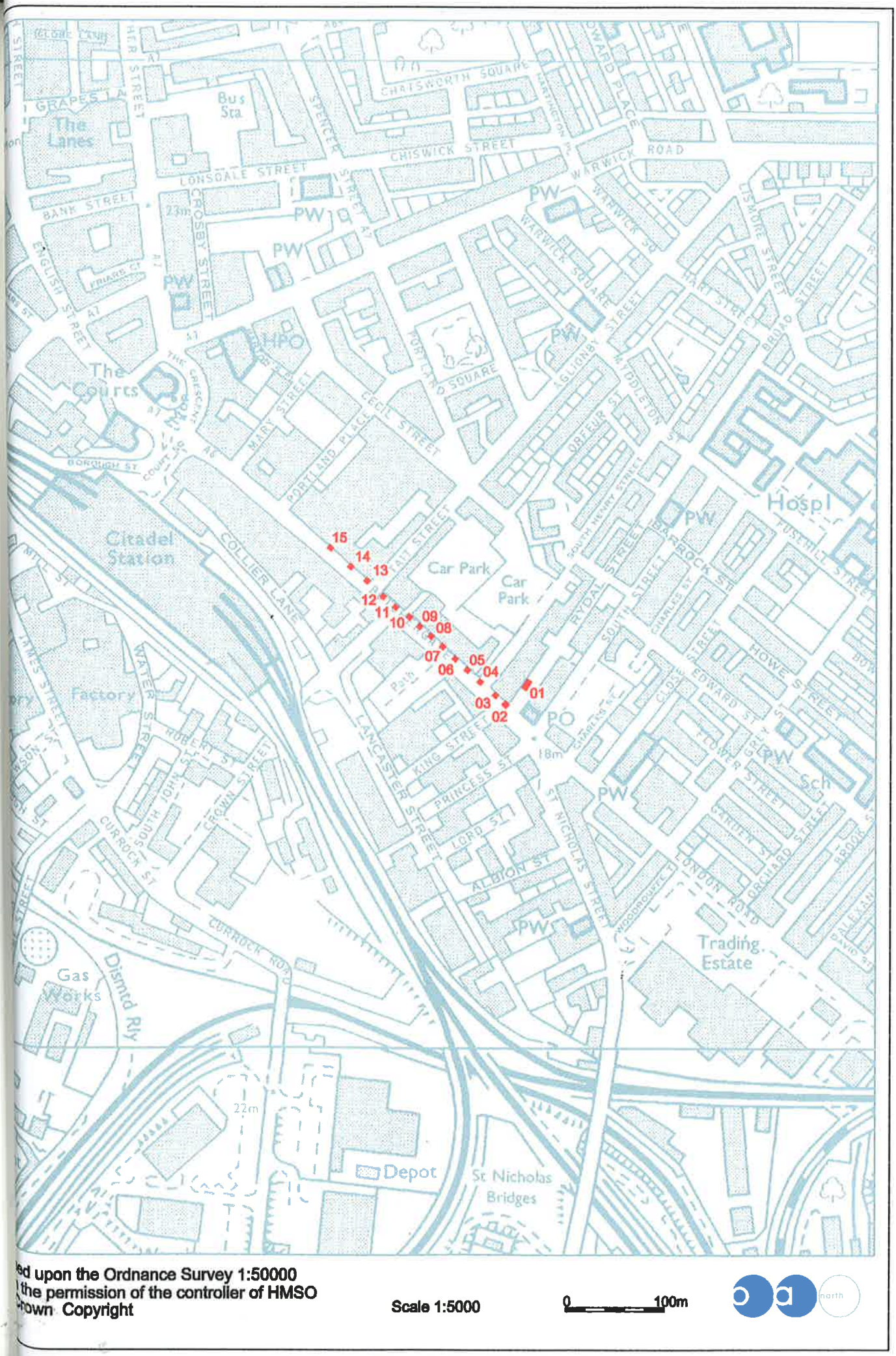


Figure 1: Location map



ed upon the Ordnance Survey 1:50000
the permission of the controller of HMSO
rown Copyright

Figure 2 : Trench location plan

Plate 1. View North of Pit 4

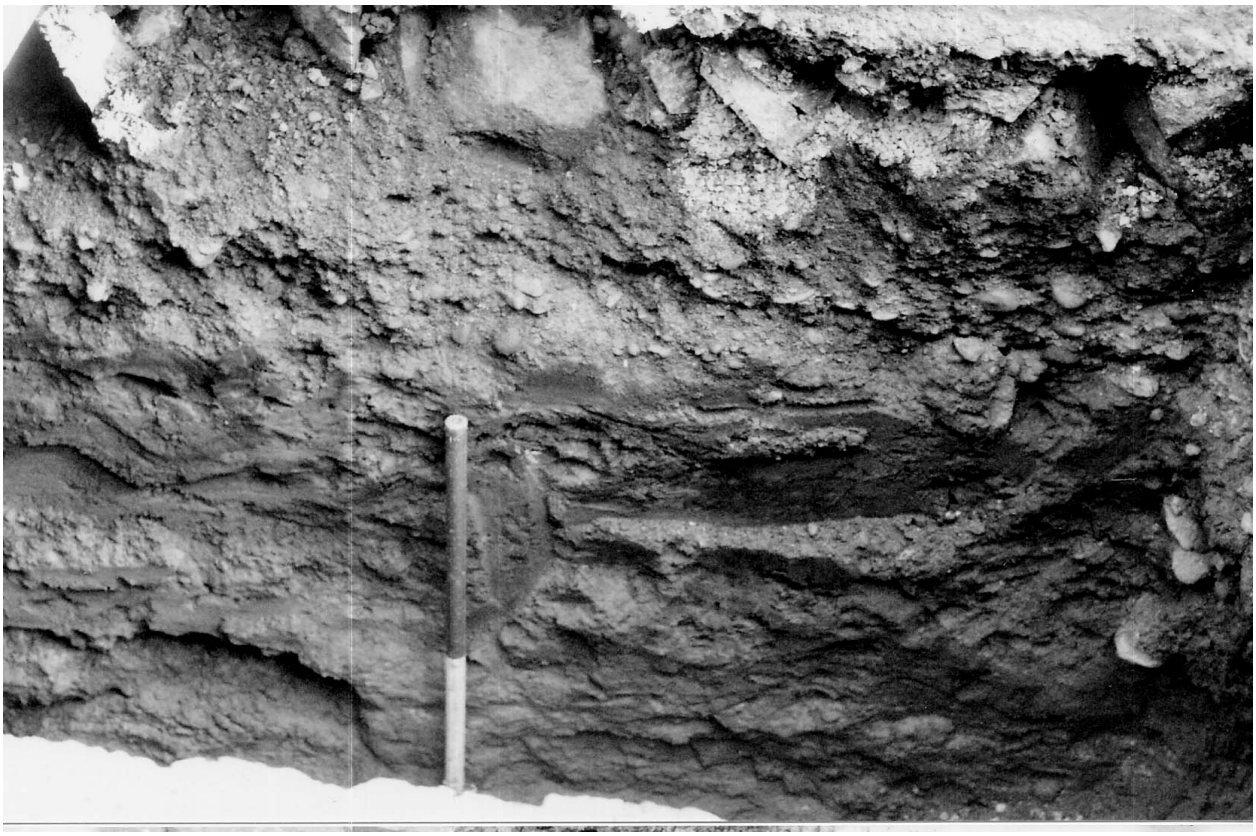


Plate 2. View North of Pit 10

Plate 3. View East of Pit 8