QUEEN'S PARK HOSPITAL, BLACKBURN Lancashire



Archaeological Evaluation



Oxford Archaeology North December 2002

Balfour Haden JV

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SUMMARY

In July 2002, Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) carried out an archaeological evaluation close to the former site of Edge Nook Farm, to the east of the Queen's Park Hospital, Blackburn, and to the south of Old Bank Lane, at SD 6971 2668. The area investigated measured approximately 50m x 50m (0.25 ha).

The evaluation was commissioned by Balfour Haden QV, on behalf of the Queen's Park Hospital, in advance of the determination of a planning application for the erection of further hospital buildings and external facilities. The total development area, comprising c 9.5ha, had earlier been considered within a desktop assessment and rapid identification survey of a wider area, conducted during 2000 by the former Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU). However, only Edge Nook Farm was eventually evaluated.

Three machine-excavated evaluation trenches, totalling 80m in length, were cut down to the level of naturally-deposited clay, and the archaeological features revealed were sample-excavated by hand. Amendment to the original project brief had to be made during fieldwork, as modern dumped deposits were encountered towards the western end of Trench 1, and Mr Eric Hardie, of Balfour Haden QV, instructed that all further trenching be undertaken to the east of this point for the avoidance of contamination. In effect, this meant that land immediately east of Edge Nook Farm was evaluated, rather than the remains of the farm buildings.

A relatively low density of archaeological features was encountered, comprising a small pit revealed towards the east end of Trench 1, and a shallow linear feature towards the centre of Trench 3. The pit may represent a posthole, and the linear feature a drainage ditch/field boundary, although a function as a beam slot cannot be ruled out. A further possible pit was revealed in Trench 2, but this had a depth of only 0.06m, and was too shallow for adequate interpretation. No finds were recovered from any of these features, and they remain undated; elsewhere, four sherds of modern pottery were recovered from the topsoil or subsoil. In addition, several post medieval or modern field drains were unearthed. Most were either constructed of flat stone slabs, or contained ceramic drain pipes.

The trenching suggests that the area evaluated may be of limited archaeological potential. However, it should be noted that the site of Edge Nook Farm itself could not be investigated.

Oxford Archaeology North is grateful to Balfour Haden JV for commissioning the project, and to Eric Hardie for his practical assistance. The evaluation was undertaken by Richard Heawood and Tony Platt, the report being written by Richard Heawood, and the report drawings prepared by Emma Carter. Alison Plummer acted as project manager and Alison Plummer and Carol Allen edited the report.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF PROJECT

- 1.1.1 Balfour Haden JV, on behalf of Queen's Park Hospital, commissioned Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) to undertake an archaeological evaluation of the site of Edge Nook Farm, lying to the east of the existing buildings of the Queen's Park Hospital, and to the south of Old Bank Lane, on the south-eastern fringe of Blackburn (SD 6971 2668; Fig 1). The evaluation was commissioned in advance of the proposed extension of the hospital, on the advice of the Lancashire County Archaeology Service (LCAS), who also produced the brief for the project (*Appendix 2*).
- 1.1.2 The Lancashire County Archaeology Service (LCAS) had advised that four sites should be subject to evaluation trenching (Edge Nook Farm, Whinny Edge Farm, Edge Nook Coal Pits, and the buildings of a former workhouse subsequently incorporated into the hospital), and prepared a brief for their evaluation. However, the former workhouse site lies beyond the present development area, the site of Whinny Edge Farm is now occupied by a carpark and large water tank, and the site of the probable coal pits was demonstrated by geotechnical investigation to be covered by a substantial depth of modern dumping, including asbestos. Consequently, LCAS advised that the site of Edge Nook Farm only should be subject to evaluation trenching in advance of development works, and that the site of the probable coal pits should be subject to an archaeological watching brief during the course of development works.

1.2 SITE LOCATION, GEOLOGY, AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 1.2.1 The subject site Edge Nook Farm, comprised an area of c 0.25ha within the 9.5ha development area, and was under rough grass and scrub when the project was conducted. It lies immediately south of Old Bank Lane, between 196m OD and 200m OD, on an elevated plateau some 2km south-east of Blackburn town centre. This was formerly farmland, but now lies immediately east of relatively recent hospital buildings, and is no longer cultivated or grazed.
- 1.2.2 The underlying drift geology consists of stiff brownish yellow clay. The solid geology comprises rocks of the Silesian Upper Carboniferous series, with Lower Westphalian productive coal measures (Ordnance Survey 1979).

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 **PROJECT DESIGN**

2.1.1 Further to the client's request for an archaeological evaluation, a project design (*Appendix 1*) was submitted by Oxford Archaeology North (OA North). Following formal acceptance of the project design by LCAS, OAN undertook the fieldwork in August 2002. The work conducted was consistent with the relevant standards and procedures of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, and generally accepted best practice.

2.2 EVALUATION

- 2.2.1 In total, three 1.55m wide evaluation trenches were opened, using a mechanical excavator working under full archaeological supervision; the trenches had a combined length of 80m. Mechanical excavation continued down to the level of the first potentially significant archaeological deposit, or the upper surface of the natural geology, depending on the deposits revealed in each trench. All subsequent excavation of archaeological features was by hand.
- 2.2.2 Recording was by means of OA North's standard context recording system, with context records and supporting registers and indices. A photographic record in colour slide and monochrome formats was compiled, and section and plan drawings were made of relevant areas of the trenches at appropriate scales.

2.3 HEALTH AND SAFETY

2.3.1 Full regard was given to all health and safety constraints, as well as to all Health and Safety regulations. A risk assessment was carried out in advance of work commencing; 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 (rev 1999).

2.4 ARCHIVE

2.4.1 A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with the project design (*Appendix 1*), and in accordance with current IFA and English Heritage guidelines (1991). The paper archive will be deposited with the Lancashire Record Office (Preston).

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

3.1.1 The archaeological and historical context was considered at length in the Archaeological Assessment Report (LUAU 2000). The bulk of the evidence will not be repeated here, although the origins of Edge Nook Farm need brief consideration.

3.2 EDGE NOOK FARM

- 3.2.1 The evaluation area lies on Whinny Edge, which forms the southernmost part of the parish and township of Blackburn (Farrer and Brownbill 1911, 236). The name Whinny Edge is of topographic origin, 'edge' denoting an escarpment, whilst Whinny is derived from the Old Norse *hvin*, meaning land on which gorse, or furze, abounded (Ekwall 1922, 20). This derivation suggests that the ground was moorland in the early medieval period.
- 3.2.2 The earliest recorded archaeological evidence in the vicinity of the evaluation area derives from the Roman period. A section of the Manchester to Ribchester Roman road passes c 0.5km south-east of the site, but there is no known Roman settlement evidence associated with the road, nor is any evidence for early medieval or medieval activity in the immediate area known (LUAU 2000, 7). The area appears to have been enclosed in the seventeenth century, but there is little evidence that it was settled until the late eighteenth century, and no farms are marked on Yates' map of Lancashire of 1786, although the scale is too small to be reliable (*ibid*). Buildings at Edge Nook were first depicted on the Ordnance Survey map of 1849; they were shown again in 1894, when they were labelled Edge Nook Farm. The 1894 map also marks two 'Old coal pits', immediately west of the farm, and to the north of Old Bank Lane; these were not marked on the 1849 map, but this may be because they were relatively small. Coal was mined in this area from the sixteenth century onwards, and the area is dotted with the remains of old pits (Miller 1950, 115).
- 3.2.3 The major development in the area was the construction of Blackburn Union Workhouse in 1861-4, on a site c 200m west of Edge Nook Farm (LUAU 2000, 8). In the early part of the twentieth century, the workhouse became the Queen's Park Hospital.
- 3.2.4 Buildings at Edge Nook Farm were still standing in 1982 on the Ordnance Survey map of that year.

4. RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.1.1 Summary results of the evaluation trenching are presented below. Figure 2 shows the Trench locations, and the context list is reproduced as *Appendix 3*.

4.2 **TRENCH 1**

- 4.2.1 Trench 1 (Fig 3, Plate 1) measured 21m long x 1.55m wide, and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.5m. Four deposits were removed by machine; the uppermost was a dump of redeposited soft yellowish brown clay, 1, which was at least 1.5m thick at the west end of the trench, but became gradually thinner, ceasing to be present 16m to the east. It overlaid a loose brownish grey clay silt deposit, 2, which contained frequent fragments of ash, concrete, and brick, and varied in thickness from 0.2m-0.4m. Deposit 2 overlaid a layer of redeposited yellowish brown silty clay, 3, which contained frequent fragments of modern brick and stone and was 0.3m thick, and a deposit of buried topsoil, a soft brown sandy clay, which was 0.35m thick. Deposits 3 and 4 had no stratigraphic relationship, being found to the west and east respectively of a concrete and brick structure, aligned west-south-west/east-north-east, and measuring at least 3.4m x 1.0m. This appeared to be a modern floor. As no construction cut was visible, it is probable that deposits 2, 3, and 4 abutted this structure. The surface of a natural deposit of brownish yellow clayey sand was revealed below deposits 3 and 4, at a depth which varied from 1.4m towards the west end of the trench, to 0.55m at the east end.
- 4.2.2 A small pit, $\boldsymbol{6}$, was recorded, cut into the natural clay, some 6m from the eastern end of the trench (Fig 3, Plate 2). It measured $0.8m \ge 0.7m \ge 0.24m$ deep, and had concave sides and a gently rounded base. Its fill, 7, consisted of very soft grey sandy clay, with occasional charcoal flecks. No finds were recovered, and the function and date of the pit were not determined, although an origin as a posthole is a possibility. Pit $\boldsymbol{6}$ was truncated by a modern field drain aligned west/east.

4.3 **TRENCH 2**

4.3.1 Trench 2 (Plate 3) measured 40m long x 1.55m wide, and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.4m. A maximum thickness of 0.35m of soft dark greyish brown clay silt topsoil, 8, was removed by machine, revealing the surface of a natural deposit of soft brownish yellow sandy clay, 10. A shallow, subcircular deposit of mottled grey and yellowish brown clay, measuring 0.6m x at least 0.4m x 0.06m deep, was recorded between the topsoil and natural clay; it may have represented the base of a truncated pit, but was too thin for adequate interpretation. Elsewhere, six field drains or modern service trenches were recorded, one being of dry stone construction. A linear feature measuring 7.0m

x at least 1.0m x at least 0.8m deep was recorded towards the south end of the trench. Its character suggested that it was a modern geotechnical test pit of very recent origin.

4.4 TRENCH 3

4.4.1 Trench 3 (Fig 4) measured 20m long x 1.55m wide, and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.4m. A maximum thickness of 0.2m of soft dark greyish brown clay silt topsoil, 8, was removed by machine, together with an underlying deposit of soft greyish brown clay silt, 9, which probably represents a diffuse interface between topsoil and natural. The surface of a natural deposit of soft brownish yellow sandy clay, 10, was revealed at a depth of 0.35m. A linear cut, 11, was recorded cutting the natural clay, aligned east/west. It was rather irregular in plan, and although the edges were well defined at the eastern end, they became diffuse and difficult to trace to the west. Cut 11 was 0.68m wide and 0.26m deep, with irregular sides and a gently rounded or flat base. Fill 12 consisted of soft light grey silty clay with moderate charcoal flecks, and mottles of brownish yellow clay. The irregularity of the feature, mottled fill, and indistinct western end suggests that it may represent the base of a hedge, although a function as a ditch or even beam slot cannot be ruled out. Elsewhere in the trench, three field drains were revealed, one of which was of dry stone construction.

4.5 FINDS

4.5.1 No finds were recovered from any of the excavated features; elsewhere, four sherds of modern pottery were recovered from the topsoil or subsoil. It is recommended that these be discarded.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 The presence of modern dumped deposits in the vicinity of Edge Nook Farm, some of which contained asbestos, meant that the evaluation trenches designed to investigate the farm had to be excavated immediately east of the site of the farm buildings, rather than within the building footprint.
- 5.2 Two archaeological features were revealed: a pit of indeterminate function in Trench 1, and a linear feature in Trench 3, which may represent the base of a hedge. Both of these were undated. In addition, a very shallow subcircular feature in Trench 2 may represent the bottom of a further pit. No artefactual dating evidence was obtained from any of these features, and the only finds recovered from the evaluation were four sherds of modern pottery recovered from topsoil.
- 5.3 No evidence was recovered to suggest that the site of Edge Nook Farm was occupied any earlier than the eighteenth century. However, the paucity of modern pottery, despite the presence nearby of an historically-attested eighteenth century farm, demonstrates that this should not be regarded as conclusive negative evidence.
- 5.4 In view of the presence of deep modern dumped deposits at the west edge of the area investigated, the possible presence of asbestos further west, and the lack of clear evidence of archaeological potential recovered to date, it is recommended that no further archaeological fieldwork is conducted on the site of Edge Nook Farm. However, it is understood that an archaeological watching brief will be conducted during redevelopment at the site of Edge Nook Farm Coal Pit (SD 6967 2670).

10

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	Health and safety manual, Poole	
Yates 1786	Map of Lancashire	

APPENDIX 1: PROJECT DESIGN

June 2002

Oxford Archaeology North

QUEEN'S PARK HOSPITAL, BLACKBURN, LANCASHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION PROJECT DESIGN

PROPOSALS

The following project design is offered in response to a request from Balfour Haden JV for an archaeological evaluation in advance of development work at the Queen's Park Hospital, Blackburn, Lancashire.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Balfour Haden JV (hereafter the client), on behalf of Queen's Park Hospital, Blackburn have submitted a planning application for the erection of further buildings at the hospital. During 2000 an archaeological desk based assessment and rapid identification survey of the proposed development area was undertaken (LUAU). This indicated a number of areas of potential archaeological significance.
- 1.2 The sites identified comprise the sites of eighteenth century farms, and nineteenth century coal pits. Other sites include the remains of the former workhouse incorporated into the remains of the building.
- 1.3 The Lancashire County Archaeology Service (LCAS) has issued a brief for a programme of archaeological evaluation for a number of named sites within the development area. For health and safety reasons this project design varies slightly from the brief. A copy of the project design has been sent to the LCAS for approval. The sites to be evaluated are Edge Nook Farm Coal Pits (SD 69672670), site of Whinny Edge Farm (SD 69442669) and the site of Edge Nook Farm (SD 69712668). The remainder of the sites identified during the LUAU 2000 assessment do not fall into the current development area (see map attached).
- 1.1 Oxford Archaeology (North) (OAN) 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 20 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. OAN has the professional expertise and resources to undertake the project detailed below to a high level of quality and efficiency.
- 1.2 OAN 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 evaluate the archaeological deposits affected by the proposed developments. The required stages to achieve these ends are as follows:
- 2.1.1 *Archaeological Evaluation:* to undertake evaluation of at least 5% of the area of each specified site (for the purposes of this proposal the sites are defined as an area of 50m x 50m each) to determine the quality, extent and importance of any archaeological remains on the site.
- 2.1.2 **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. METHODS STATEMENT

3.1 The following work programme is submitted in line with the stages and objectives of the archaeological work summarised above.

3.2 STRIP AND RECORD

3.2.1 For reasons of health and safety the area of the coal pit will be subject to a strip-and-record-type evaluation rather than the excavation of deep trenches. This will be undertaken by the client (plant to be supplied by client) under archaeological supervision. The topsoil will be removed as *section 3.2.1 below* to the surface of the first significant archaeological deposit, and the investigation of intact archaeological features undertaken as *section 3.3.2 to 3.3.4 below*. No further excavation will be undertaken.

3.3 TRIAL TRENCHING

- 3.3.1 Following initial topsoil removal by machine a minimum 5% sample of each of the specified farm sites will be subject to evaluation trenching (approximately 4 x 1.5m x 20m trenches for each farm site). The topsoil will be removed by machine (fitted with a toothless ditching bucket) under archaeological supervision to the surface of the first significant archaeological deposit. This deposit will be cleaned by hand, using either hoes, shovel scraping, and/or trowels depending on the subsoil conditions, and inspected for archaeological features. Thereafter all excavation will proceed by hand in a stratigraphic manner.
- 3.3.2 Any investigation of intact archaeological deposits will be exclusively manual. Selected pits and postholes will normally only be half-sectioned, linear features will be subject to no more than a 10% sample, and extensive layers will, where possible, be sampled by partial rather than complete removal. It is hoped that in terms of the vertical stratigraphy, maximum information retrieval will be achieved through the examination of sections of cut features. All excavation, whether by machine or by hand, will be undertaken with a view to avoiding damage to any archaeological features, which appear worthy of preservation *in situ*.
- 3.3.3 All information identified in the course of the site works will be recorded stratigraphically, using a system, adapted from that used by Centre for Archaeology Service of English Heritage, with sufficient pictorial record (plans, sections and both black and white and colour photographs) to identify and illustrate individual features. Primary records will be available for inspection at all times.
- 3.3.4 Results of all field investigations will be recorded on *pro forma* context sheets. The site archive will include both a photographic record and accurate large

scale plans and sections at an appropriate scale (1:50, 1:20 and 1:10). All artefacts and ecofacts will be recorded using the same system, and will be handled and stored according to standard practice (following current Institute of Field Archaeologists guidelines) in order to minimise deterioration.

- 3.3.5 The deposition and disposal of any artefacts recovered in the evaluation will be agreed with the legal owner and an appropriate recipient museum prior to the work taking place.
- 3.3.6 Where environmental deposits are encountered, an appropriate sampling strategy will be agreed with LCAS. (Environmental sampling would be subject to a variation to this project design).
- 3.3.7 *Health and Safety*: OAN 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.
- 3.2.8 OAN 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.

3.3 REPORT AND ARCHIVE PRODUCTION

- 3.3.1 *Archive:* the results of Stages 3.2 and 3.3 will form the basis of a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*Management of Archaeological Projects, 2nd edition, 1991*) and the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage* (UKIC 1990). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project. The deposition of a properly ordered and indexed project archive in an appropriate repository is considered an essential and integral element of all archaeological projects by the IFA in that organisation's code of conduct.
- 3.3.2 This archive can be provided in the English Heritage Centre for Archaeology format, both as a printed document and on computer disks as ASCii files (as appropriate). The paper archive will be deposited with the Lancashire Record Office within six months of the completion of the fieldwork. The material archive (artefacts and ecofacts) will be deposited with an appropriate museum following agreement with the client. A synthesis of the archive will also be available for deposition in the National Monuments Record.
- 3.3.3 **Report:** one bound and one unbound copy of the report will be submitted to the client within eight weeks of completion of the fieldwork. A further copy of the collated final report will be submitted to the County SMR within six months of the completion of the fieldwork. The final 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 recommendations for any further mitigation works and details of the final deposition of the project archive.

3.3.4 **Confidentiality:** the final report is designed as a document for the specific use of the client, and should be treated as such; it is not suitable for publication as an academic report, or otherwise, without amendment or revision. Any requirement to revise or reorder the material for submission or presentation to third parties beyond the project brief and project design, or for any other explicit purpose, can be fulfilled, but will require separate discussion and funding.

4. WORK TIMETABLE

- 4.1 The various stages of the project outlined above will fall into three distinct phases, which would follow on consecutively, where appropriate. The phases of work would comprise:
- 4.1.2 *Strip and Record*: this should take in the region of four days to machine strip under archaeological supervision, and a further four days to record.
- 4.1.3 *Trial Trenching:* the evaluation trenches should take in the region of sixteen days in the field.
- 4.1.4 *Archive/Report:* the report and archive will be produced following the completion of all the fieldwork. The final report will be submitted within eight weeks of completion of the fieldwork and the archive deposited within six months.

5. OUTLINE RESOURCES

- 5.1 The project will be managed by **Alison Plummer, BSc (Hons)** (OAN Senior Project Manager) to whom all correspondence should be addressed.
- 5.2 Present timetabling constraints preclude detailing exactly who will be carrying out each specific task, but all elements of the project are likely to be supervised by an OAN project supervisor experienced in this type of project. All OAN project officers and supervisors are experienced field archaeologists capable of carrying out projects of all sizes.
- 5.3.1 Assessment of the finds from the watching brief will be undertaken by OAN's in-house finds specialist **Christine Howard-Davis BA MIFA** (OAN project officer). Christine acts as OAN's in-house finds specialist and has extensive knowledge of all finds of all periods from archaeological sites in northern England.

6. MONITORING

- 6.1 Monitoring of the project will be undertaken by a representative of the Lancashire Archaeology Service.
- 6.2 Access to the site for monitoring purposes will be afforded to the Lancashire Archaeology Service at all times.

APPENDIX 2: PROJECT BRIEF

Context	Trench	Description
1	1	Overburden
2	1	Dark ashy deposit
3	1	Deposit of modern brick and stone rubble
4	1	Buried topsoil
5	1	Glacial drift (brownish yellow clayey sand)
6	1	Pit
7	1	Fill of 6
8	2, 3	Topsoil
9	3	Subsoil
10	2, 3	Glacial drift (brownish yellow silty clay)
11	3	Linear cut
12	3	Fill of <i>11</i>
13	2	Thin deposit of grey clay

APPENDIX 3: CONTEXT LIST

ILLUSTRATIONS

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Location Map

Figure 2: Trench Location Plan

Figure 3: Plan and Sections of Trench 1

Figure 4: Plan and Section of Trench 3

LIST OF PLATES

- Plate 1: Plan View of Trench 1, facing west
- Plate 2: Section Through Pit 6, facing north
- Plate 3: North End of Trench 2, facing south

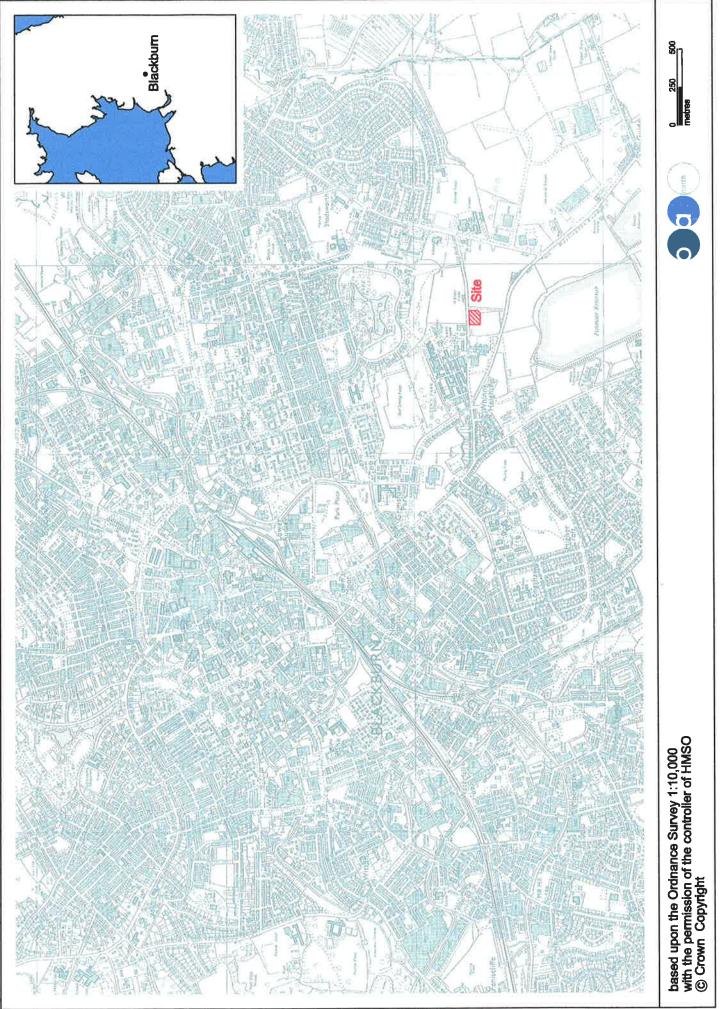
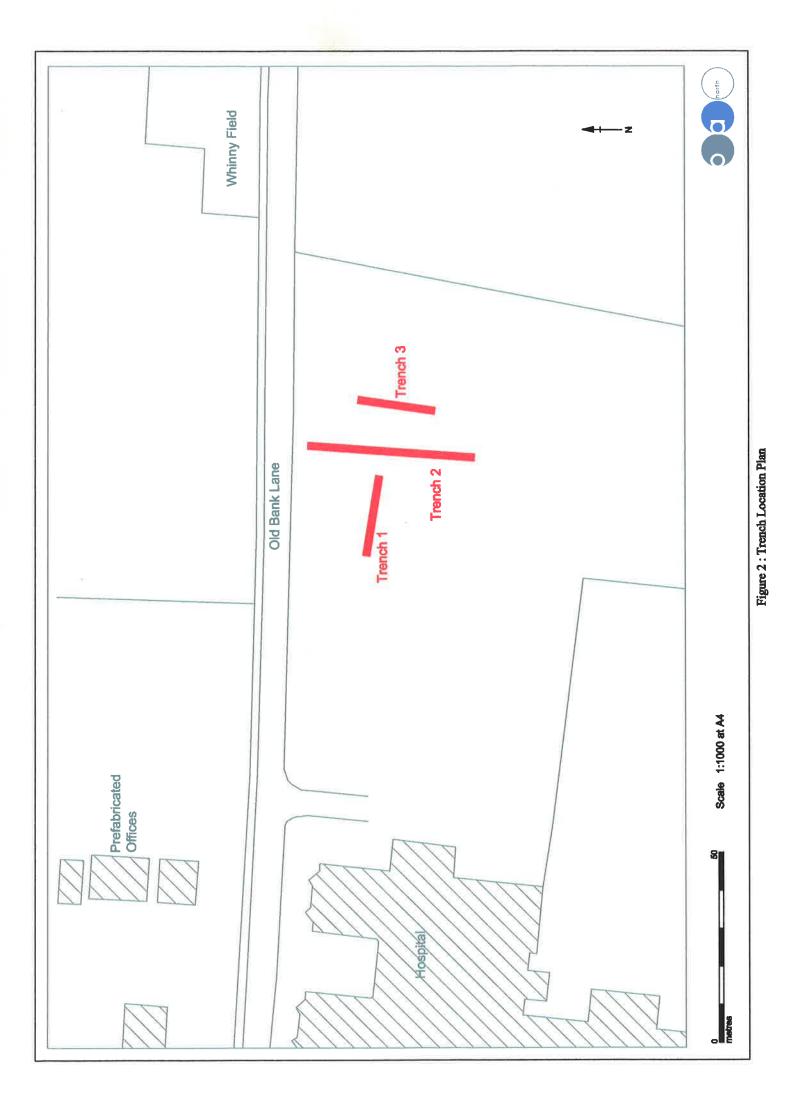


Figure 1: Location Map



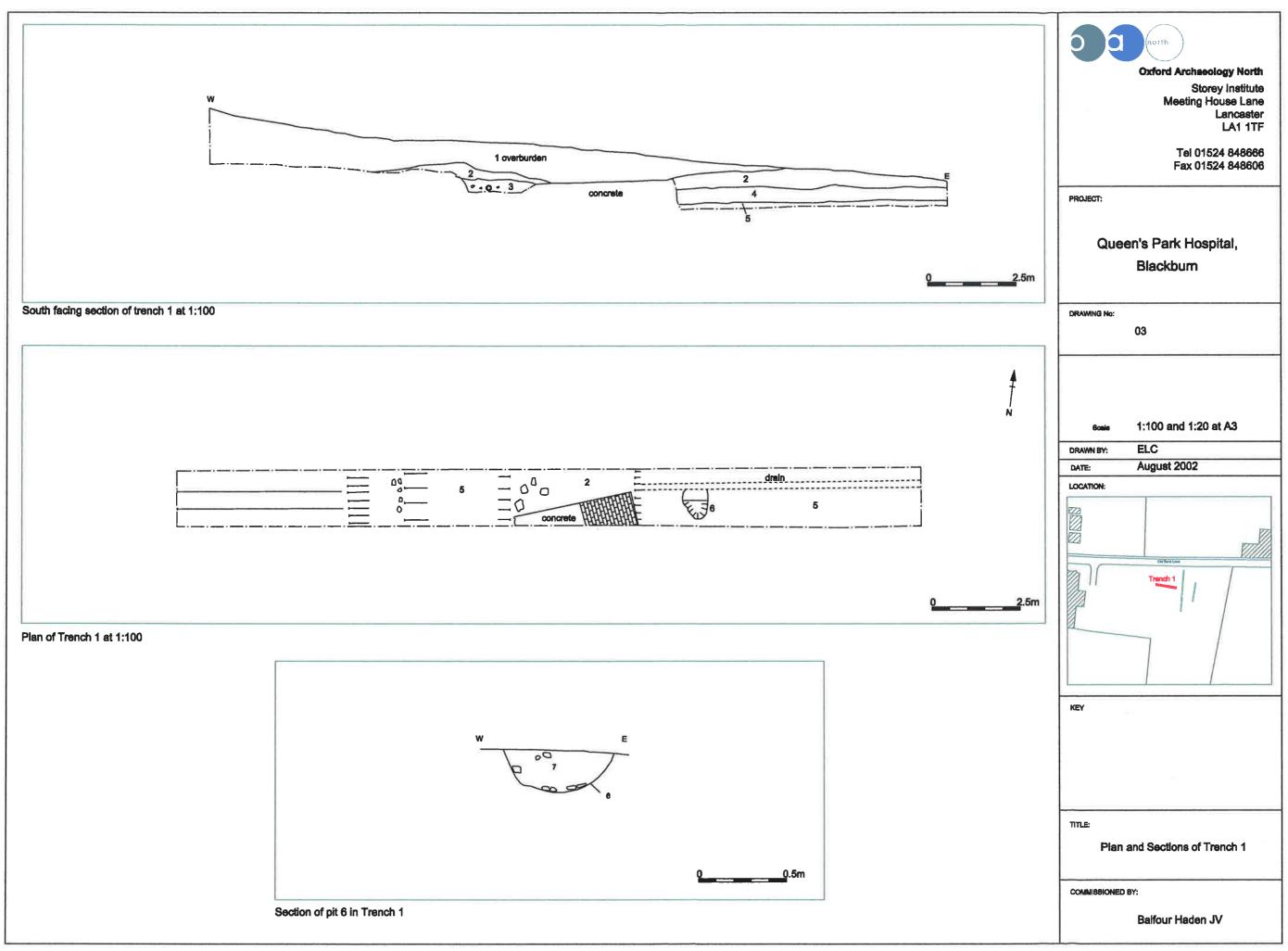


Figure 3 : Plan and Sections of Trench 1

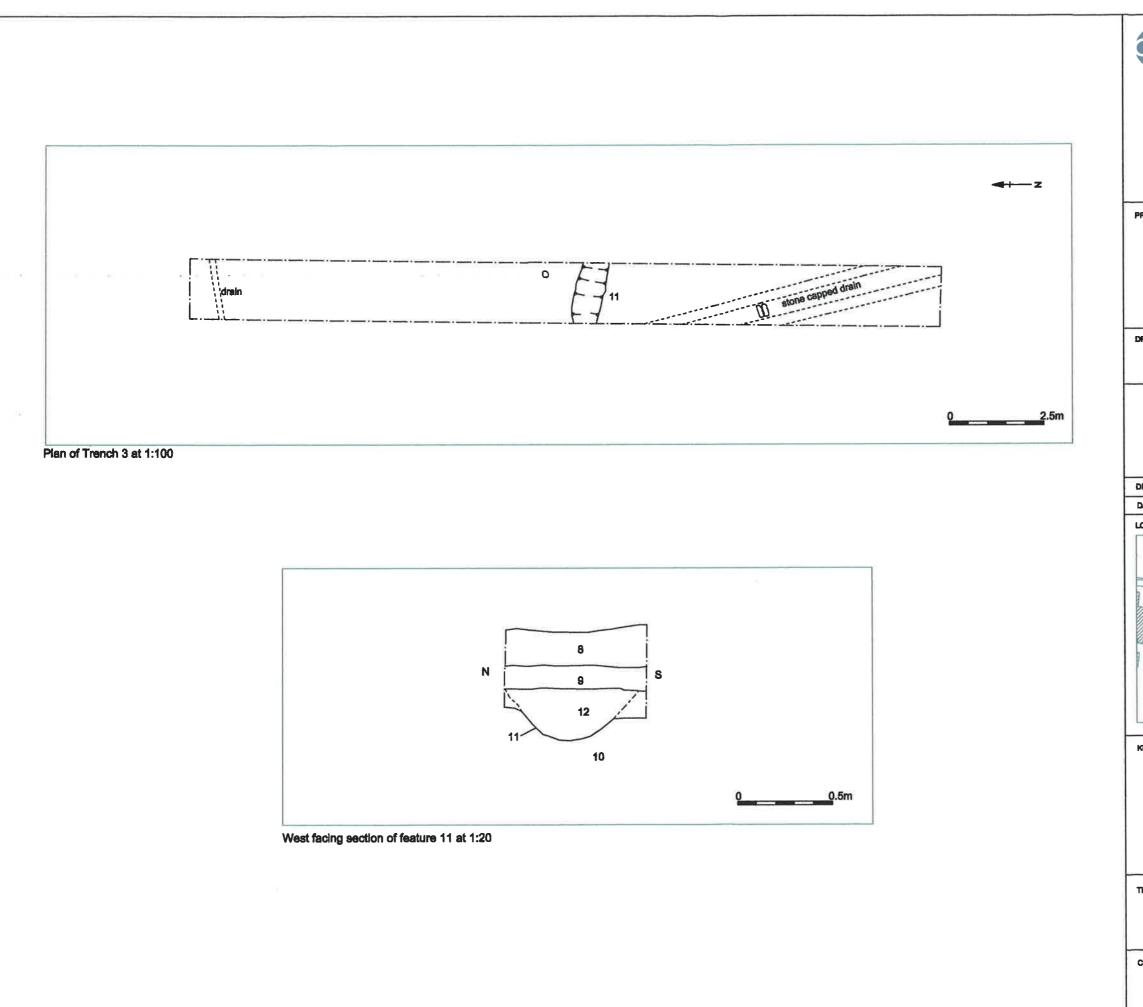


Figure 4 : Plan and Section of Trench 3

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ROJECT:
Queen's Park Hospital,
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RAWING No:
04
some 1:100 and 1:20 at A3
DRAWN BY: ELC
DATE: August 2002
OCATION:
222
Trench S
/
KEY
NTLE:
Plan and Section of Trench 3
COMMISSIONED BY:
Balfour Haden JV
Danour Hagen JV



Plate 1: Plan View of Trench 1, facing west



Plate 2: Section Through Pit *6*, facing north



Plate 3: North End of Trench 2, facing south