

The Wash House, Bluecoat School, Chester.

Environmental Assessment



Oxford Archaeology North

January 2007

**Earthworks Archaeological
Services Ltd**

Issue No: 2006-7/626

OA North Job No: L9678

Document Title: The Wash House, Bluecoat School, Chester

Document Type: Environmental Assessment

Client Name: Earthworks Archaeological Services Ltd

Issue Number: 2006-7/626

OA Job Number: L9678

Prepared by: Sandra Bonsall &
Denise Druce
Position: Assistant Supervisor/Project Officer
Date: January 2007

Checked by: Elizabeth Huckerby Signed.....
Position: Environmental Manager
Date: January 2007

Approved by: Alan Lupton Signed.....
Position: Operations Manager
Date: January 2007

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

© Oxford Archaeological Unit Ltd 2007

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

THE WASH HOUSE, BLUECOAT SCHOOL, CHESTER (E813): ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) was commissioned by Earthworks Archaeological Services Ltd on behalf of their client Chester Municipal Charities, to assess one environmental bulk sample, from a layer sealed below a third century Roman Road, for charred and waterlogged plant remains from The Wash House, Bluecoat School, Chester (site E863). It was hoped that the sample would inform about the economy and environment on and around the site during its period of use.

2 QUANTIFICATION AND METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 One five litre bulk sample was taken and processed for the assessment of charred and waterlogged plant remains.
- 2.2 The sample was hand-floated, and the flot was collected on 250 micron mesh and air-dried. The flot was scanned with a Leica MZ6 stereo microscope and plant material was recorded and provisionally identified. Plant remains were recorded on a scale of abundance of 1-5, where 1 is rare (less than 5 items) and 5 is abundant (more than 100 items). The components of the matrix of the flot were also noted. Botanical nomenclature follows Stace (1997).

3 RESULTS

- 3.1 The results of the assessment are shown in Table 1. The only plant remains recorded were very rare *Juncus* sp. (rush) seeds. The sample contained abundant charcoal fragments of, primarily *Quercus* (oak) wood and a moderate amount of industrial waste/hammerscale. Small mammal bone fragments were also recorded in the sample.

4 DISCUSSION

- 4.1 The abundant charcoal fragments, industrial waste and small mammal bone fragments suggest that the sealed layer contained some element of domestic/industrial waste. However, the absence of charred plant remains and very limited waterlogged remains means that very little additional data would be obtained through further analysis.
- 4.2 The charred and waterlogged plant assemblages from other Roman features from Chester have proven to be similarly impoverished (OA North 2005, 2007).

5 POTENTIAL AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 There is no potential for the further analysis of plant remains from this sample.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 6.1 Sandra Bonsall processed the sample and both Sandra and Denise Druce undertook the assessment and wrote the report. Elizabeth Huckerby and Alan Lupton both checked the report and managed the project.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Stace, C. 1997, *New Flora of the British Isles*, 2nd ed, Cambridge

OA North, 2005, Grosvenor Park Precinct, Chester: Environmental Assessment, unpubl. client report

OA North, 2007, King's Mews, Chester, Cheshire: Environmental Assessment, unpubl. client report

Context	Feature	Sample vol. (litres)	Flot description	Plant remains	Potential
<i>14</i>	Sealed layer below 3rd C Roman road	5	1000ml. Charcoal 5, >2mm (5), Mammal bone (2), Industrial waste/ hammerscale (3)	WPR ; Weed Seeds (1) incl. <i>Juncus</i> sp. (rushes)	None

TABLE 1. The Wash House, Bluecoat School, Chester. Assessment of charred and waterlogged plant remains. Plant remains are recorded on a scale of 1 - 5, where 1 is rare (1-5 items) and 5 is abundant (more than 100 items)

WPR=Waterlogged plant remains