



# Whitaker's Garden Centre, Prescot, Knowsley, Merseyside

## Archaeological Evaluation Report

May 2021

**Client: Lanpro Services on behalf of Taylor  
Wimpey North West**

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Prepared by: Paul Dunn (Senior Project Manager)  
Checked by: Paul Dunn (Senior Project Manager)  
Edited by: Paul Dunn (Senior Project Manager)  
Approved for Issue by: Alan Lupton (Operations Manager)  
Signature: 

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**OA South**

Janus House  
Osney Mead  
Oxford  
OX2 0ES

t. +44 (0)1865 263 800

**OA East**

15 Trafalgar Way  
Bar Hill  
Cambridge  
CB23 8SQ

t. +44 (0)1223 850 500

**OA North**

Mill 3  
Moor Lane Mills  
Moor Lane  
Lancaster  
LA1 1QD

t. +44 (0)1524 880 250

e. [info@oxfordarch.co.uk](mailto:info@oxfordarch.co.uk)

w. [oxfordarchaeology.com](http://oxfordarchaeology.com)

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Director and Chief Executive

Gill Hey, BA PhD FSA MCIFA

Private Limited Company, No: 1618597

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Registered Office: Oxford Archaeology Ltd  
Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES

# Whitaker's Garden Centre, Prescott, Knowsley, Merseyside

## *Archaeological Evaluation Report*

*Written by Paul Dunn*

*With illustrations by Mark Tidmarsh*

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## Summary

Oxford Archaeology (OA) North was commissioned by Lanpro Services on behalf of Taylor Wimpey North West to undertake a trial trench evaluation at the site of a proposed residential development on land north of Whitaker's Garden Centre, Prescott, Knowsley, Merseyside (NGR: SJ 46021 92951).

The work was undertaken as condition 6 of Planning Permission (planning ref. 19/00684/FUL). During consultation for the application, the archaeological advisors to Knowsley Council, Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS), recommended that an archaeological evaluation be undertaken in the vicinity of the former nursery gardens, comprising four trenches measuring 50m x 2m. A written scheme of investigation (WSI) was produced by Lanpro Services detailing the Local Authority's requirements for work necessary to discharge the planning condition. OA North were subsequently commissioned to undertake the necessary fieldwork, which was carried out over two days; 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2021.

Only three of the four proposed trenches were excavated, Trench 2 could not be excavated due to spoil bunds and a compound in the trench's proposed location. The three trenches which were excavated were realigned and extended, where possible, to avoid spoil bunds, drains and services, and to account for some of the coverage lost by not being able to excavate Trench 2. Archaeological remains were only identified in Trench 1, these remains being structural features likely relating to buildings within the former nursery garden, as depicted on historic mapping. None of the deposits produced dating evidence, although the fabric of the structural remains suggested that they were of Industrial Period date, wall **103** comprised hand-made bricks bonded with lime mortar, whilst the walls of structure **106** comprised hand-made and machine-made frogged bricks bonded with a cement-based mortar.

The results of the evaluation are of local significance, in that they were heavily truncated and too little of the nursery gardens survived within the trenches to justify inclusion in a higher grade. The evidence of a possible flue system within structure **106** does potentially contribute to our understanding of technological developments in the propagation and growing of nursery stock from the late eighteenth century through to the twentieth century (North West Regional Research Framework 2021), however, the remains were heavily truncated, with only the lowest courses of the structure surviving. As such no further work was required by MEAS.

## Acknowledgements

Oxford Archaeology (OA) North would like to thank Emily Mercer of Lanpro Services and Joe Meadows of Taylor Wimpey North West for commissioning this project. Thanks are also extended to Alison Plummer of Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS), who monitored the work on behalf of Knowsley Council.

The project was managed for OA North by Paul Dunn, who also wrote this report. The fieldwork was directed by Jane Roberts, who was supported by Selina Dean. Survey was undertaken by Selina Dean and illustrations were produced by Mark Tidmarsh.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Scope of work

1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) North was commissioned by Lanpro Services on behalf of Taylor Wimpey North West to undertake a trial trench evaluation at the site of a proposed residential development on land north of Whitaker's Garden Centre, Prescott, Knowsley, Merseyside (NGR: SJ 46021 92951; Fig 1).

1.1.2 The work was undertaken as condition 6 of Planning Permission (planning ref. 19/00684/FUL). Condition 6 stated:

***6. Prior to the commencement of any part of the approved development, including site clearance a written scheme of investigation for archaeological work has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The agreed details shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved programme.***

1.1.3 During consultation for the application, the archaeological advisors to Knowsley Council, Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS), recommended that an archaeological evaluation be undertaken in the vicinity of the former nursery gardens, comprising four trenches measuring 50m x 2m. A written scheme of investigation (WSI) was produced by Lanpro Services (*Appendix A*) detailing the Local Authority's requirements for the work necessary to discharge the planning condition. OA North was subsequently commissioned to undertake the archaeological fieldwork, which was carried out over two days; 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2021. This document outlines how OA implemented the specified requirements.

### 1.2 Location, topography and geology

1.2.1 The site lies approximately 0.5 miles to the west of Prescott town centre and immediately to the north of Liverpool Road (NGR: SJ 46021 92951; Fig 1). The area of the site is within two fields to the immediate north of Whitaker's Garden Centre, on land previously occupied by the former nursery gardens. The topography of the area is relatively flat and lies at approximately 63m aOD.

1.2.2 The solid geology of the area is mapped as mudstone, siltstone and sandstone of the Pennine Lower Coal Measure Formation (BGS 2021). The overlying drift geology is mapped as Devensian Till (*ibid*). Whilst the soils of the site are mapped as slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soils (Cranfield 2021).

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background of the site is discussed in detail in the Heritage Assessment produced by CgMs Heritage (2020) and summarised in the written scheme of investigation (*Appendix A*). A brief summary is provided here.

1.3.2 There are no recorded archaeological assets within the proposed development. The site had low potential for prehistoric and Roman remains, although archaeological investigations on the A5300, several kilometers to the south, identified prehistoric and Roman remains (Cowell and Philpott 2000). There was also low potential for non-

agricultural medieval remains, as the town of Prescott is known to have been in existence since at least the twelfth century, with speculation that it may have early medieval origins.

- 1.3.3 The site appeared to have been in agricultural use until the late eighteenth century when the nursery garden was established. The first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1850 (Fig 3) depicts the site in detail with the nursery garden occupying the majority of it. By the late twentieth century, the nursery gardens were much reduced in size and concentrated within the south-west area of the proposed development.

## 2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims and objectives

2.1.1 The principal aim of the archaeological evaluation was to obtain sufficient information to establish the presence or absence, character, extent, state of preservation and date of any archaeological deposits within the proposed development area, to allow reasoned and informed recommendations to be made regarding any further requirements of the site. The objectives were as follows:

- i. to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition and significance of any archaeological remains within the portion of the development site outlined for evaluation;
- ii. to excavate and record identified archaeological features and deposits to a level appropriate to their extent and significance;
- iii. to assess vulnerability and significance of any exposed remains;
- iv. to assess the potential for survival of environmental evidence;
- v. to inform a strategy to avoid or mitigate impacts of the proposed development on surviving archaeological remains;
- vi. to undertake sufficient post-excavation assessment to confidently interpret identified archaeological features; and
- vii. to report the results of the evaluation and place them in their local, regional or national context and to make this record available.

### 2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 The full methodology is outlined in the WSI (*Appendix A*) and was adhered to in full, and, as such, was fully compliant with prevailing guidelines and established industry best practice (CifA 2019; 2020a; 2020b; Historic England 2015). A programme of field observation accurately recorded the character of the deposits within the excavations.

2.2.2 The topsoil and subsoil were removed by an 21-ton 360° tracked excavator, fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, to the surface of the first significant archaeological deposit, natural geology or a safe working depth, under direct archaeological supervision at all times. Subsequent cleaning and investigation of all archaeological deposits was undertaken manually, using either hoes, shovel scraping, and/or trowels depending on the subsoil conditions. All features of archaeological interest were investigated and recorded.

2.2.3 The trenches were located by use of a differential Global Positioning System (dGPS), accurate to within 0.02-0.03m, and altitude information was established with respect to Ordnance Survey Datum. Only Trench 1 (Fig 2) was able to be excavated in the western field due to the presence of spoil bunds, this trench was moved to fit between the spoil bunds and extended where possible to account for the loss of total area due to not being able to excavate Trench 2. Trenches 3 and 4 were excavated in the eastern field, however, their intended positions were altered due to their proximity to drains and possible services (Fig 2). Prior to excavation, the trenches were scanned using a Cable Avoidance Tool (CAT) and Signal Generator (Genny), to identify any potential services. All trenches were excavated in a stratigraphic manner.

- 2.2.4 All information identified during the site works was recorded stratigraphically, using a system adapted from that used by the former Centre of Archaeology of English Heritage, with an accompanying pictorial record (plans, sections, and digital photographs). Primary records were available for inspection at all times.
- 2.2.5 Results of all field investigations were recorded on *pro forma* context sheets. The site archive includes both photographic images and accurate large-scale plans and sections at appropriate scales (1:50; 1:20; 1:10).
- 2.2.6 A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with the WSI, and in accordance with current CfA (2020b) and Historic England (2015) guidelines. The archive will be deposited with the National Museums Liverpool in due course.

## 3 RESULTS

### 3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

3.1.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below, and include a stratigraphic description of the trench that contained archaeological remains. The full details of all trenches with dimensions and depths of all deposits can be found in *Appendix B*. Only three of the four trenches were excavated, due to the presence of spoil bunds, drains and services; as such, the trenches were realigned or extended to account for the loss in total area to be investigated.

### 3.2 Evaluation trenching

3.2.1 The soil sequence in the trenches was fairly uniform. The natural geology of mid- to light-yellow orange clay, was overlain by a mid-brown orange silty clay subsoil, approximately 0.05 to 0.1m thick, which in turn, was overlain by topsoil, approximately 0.25m thick.

3.2.2 Ground conditions throughout the evaluation were generally good, and the site remained dry throughout. Archaeological features, where present, were easy to identify against the underlying natural geology.

### 3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits

3.3.1 Archaeological features, in the form of structural remains, were only present in Trench 1. Trenches 3 and 4 were devoid of archaeological features, with only field drains being identified cutting the natural geology (Plates 1 and 2), and will be discussed no further.



*Plate 1: Trench 3 looking south-east, scales 1m and 2m*



*Plate 2: Trench 4 looking north-east, scales 1m and 2m*

### 3.4 Trench 1

- 3.4.1 Trench 1, located in the northern part of the west field of the proposed development, was aligned approximately north-west/south-east (Fig 2) and targeted the remains of the nursery garden depicted on historic mapping (Fig 3). The trench was realigned slightly to avoid spoil bunds, services and drains within this field; it was also extended and expanded to the south to account for some of the coverage lost by not being able to excavate Trench 2. Natural geology **102** was identified throughout the trench, overlain by subsoil **101**, which was cut by wall **103** and structure **106** (Fig 2 and Plate 3).



*Plate 3: Trench 1 looking north-west, scales 1m and 2m*

3.4.2 Wall **103** was located at the northern end of the Trench 1 (Fig 2 and Plate 4); it comprised a hand-made brick and stone-built wall, which was a single brick wide, spanning the width of the trench and survived to a height of three courses, bonded with lime mortar. To the north of wall **103** was mid- to dark brown clay silt **104**, approximately 0.2m thick. Wall **103** and deposit **104** were overlain by demolition rubble **105**, a mid-brown clay silt containing a large quantity of brick rubble, approximately 0.2m thick, which was, in turn, overlain by topsoil **100**.



*Plate 4: Wall 103 looking north, scale 2m*

3.4.3 Structure **106** was located at the southern end of Trench 1, and the area of the trench was extended around it, to a length of 4.7m and a width of 4m, to expose a greater area of the remains (Fig 2 and Plate 5). The structure comprised three brick walls visible within the trench; **108**, the northern wall, **109**, the eastern wall and **110**, the southern wall, with no evidence of a western wall within the excavated trench. All three brick walls comprised machine-made brick, some of which were frogged, a single brick wide and survived to at least a single course, bonded with a light grey cement-based mortar.



*Plate 5: Structure 106 looking east, scales 1m and 2m*

- 3.4.4 There was possible evidence for an internal division within the structure, wall **111**, which extended west from the centre of eastern wall **109**, on an east/west alignment. The wall did appear to be tied into wall **109** (Plate 6), and was only exposed to a length of 1m within the trench, so it was uncertain whether it originally extended the full length of the structure.



*Plate 6: Chimney base or flue in the eastern wall of structure **106**, scale 1m*

- 3.4.5 Also along the eastern wall (**109**), there was evidence for a possible flue system either side of dividing wall **111** (Fig 2 and Plate 6); comprising flues **112**, to the south, and **113**, to the north. Both flues appeared to be constructed from the same materials as wall **109**, on the same north/south alignment, half a brick wide, and leaving a gap of approximately 0.2m to wall **109**.
- 3.4.6 The flue system appears to have been modified at a later date, with chimney base or flue **114** (Fig 2 and Plate 6) being built into wall **109**. It measured 0.7m square and comprised machine-made bricks bonded with dark grey hard Portland cement-based mortar, a single brick wide and surviving to a height of at least two courses. This feature appeared to remove a section of wall **109** and also truncate flue **112**. Like the rest of structure **106** it was sealed by topsoil **100**.

### 3.5 Environmental and finds summary

- 3.5.1 There were no samples taken during the archaeological evaluation, as there were no suitable deposits identified. There were also no finds recovered, as none were identified.

## 4 DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Reliability of field investigation

4.1.1 Although the trenches could not be excavated in their intended positions (Fig 2), due to spoil heaps, drains and services, the results produced were likely representative of the surviving archaeological remains. The ground conditions throughout the evaluation were generally good, although the sunlight was very strong, and archaeological features were easily identifiable against the underlying natural geology.

### 4.2 Evaluation objectives and results

4.2.1 The principal aim as identified above in *Section 2.1.1* was to obtain sufficient information to establish the presence or absence, character, extent, state of preservation and date of any archaeological deposits within the proposed development, and to provide sufficient information as to the need for and scope of any subsequent mitigation strategy. To meet these aims, the programme of trenching was designed to provide adequate coverage across the site. Three of the four trenches were successfully excavated, with the trenches which were excavated being extended to account for some of the coverage lost by not being able to excavate Trench 2.

### 4.3 Interpretation

4.3.1 Archaeological remains were only identified in Trench 1, likely relating to structures within the former nursery garden, the nursery garden being depicted on historic mapping from 1850 (Fig 3). None of the deposits produced dating evidence, although the fabric of the structural remains suggested that they were of Industrial Period date, wall **103** comprising hand-made bricks bonded with lime mortar, whilst the fabric of structure **106** comprised hand-made and machine-made frogged bricks bonded with a cement-based mortar. There was no evidence of earlier features in any of the trenches.

### 4.4 Significance

4.4.1 The results of the evaluation correspond fairly well to what was expected from the historic mapping and also the heritage assessment (CGMS 2020). Trench 1 in the western field contained archaeological remains likely relating to structures of the nursery garden, which was itself depicted on historic mapping (Fig 3). Trenches 3 and 4 only contained evidence of field drains, suggesting that they had only been previously used as agricultural fields, as depicted on historic mapping.

4.4.2 The archaeological remains identified in Trench 1 were heavily truncated. However, what does survive of their form and fabric suggests that they date to the Industrial Period and likely relate to the nursery garden. Structure **106**, with evidence for a chimney or flue system, indicates the presence of a heated structure, possibly a glass house. Wall **103** was only identified as a single wall within Trench 1, with deposit **104** extending to the north and beyond the limits of the trench.

4.4.3 The results of the evaluation are of local significance, in that they were heavily truncated and too little of the nursery gardens survived within the trenches to justify inclusion in a higher level of significance. The evidence of a possible flue system within

structure **106** does potentially contribute to our understanding of technological developments in the propagation and growing of nursery stock from the late eighteenth century through to the twentieth century (North West Regional Research Framework 2021), however, the remains were heavily truncated, with only the lowest courses of the structure surviving. As such no further work was required by MEAS.

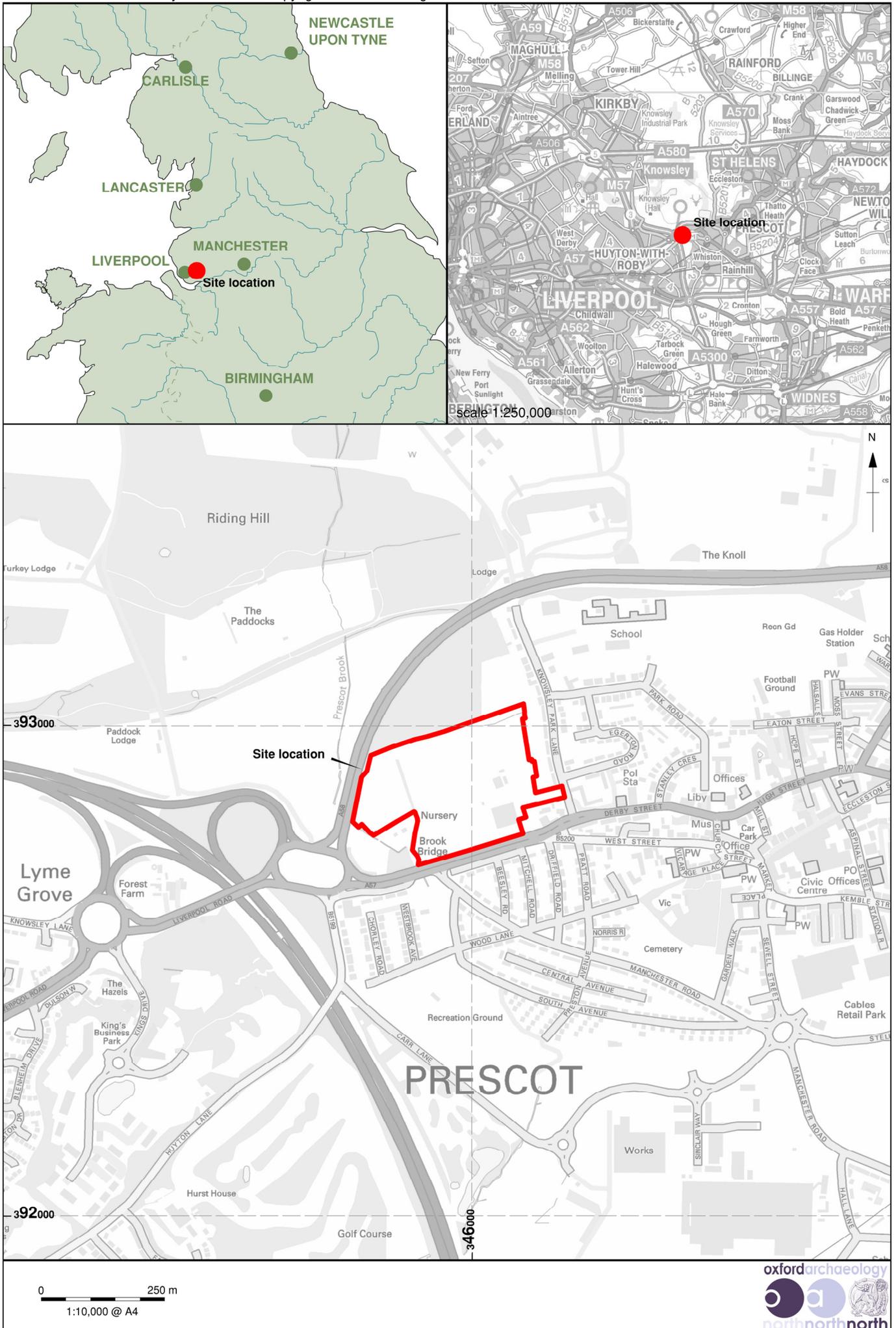


Figure 1: Site location

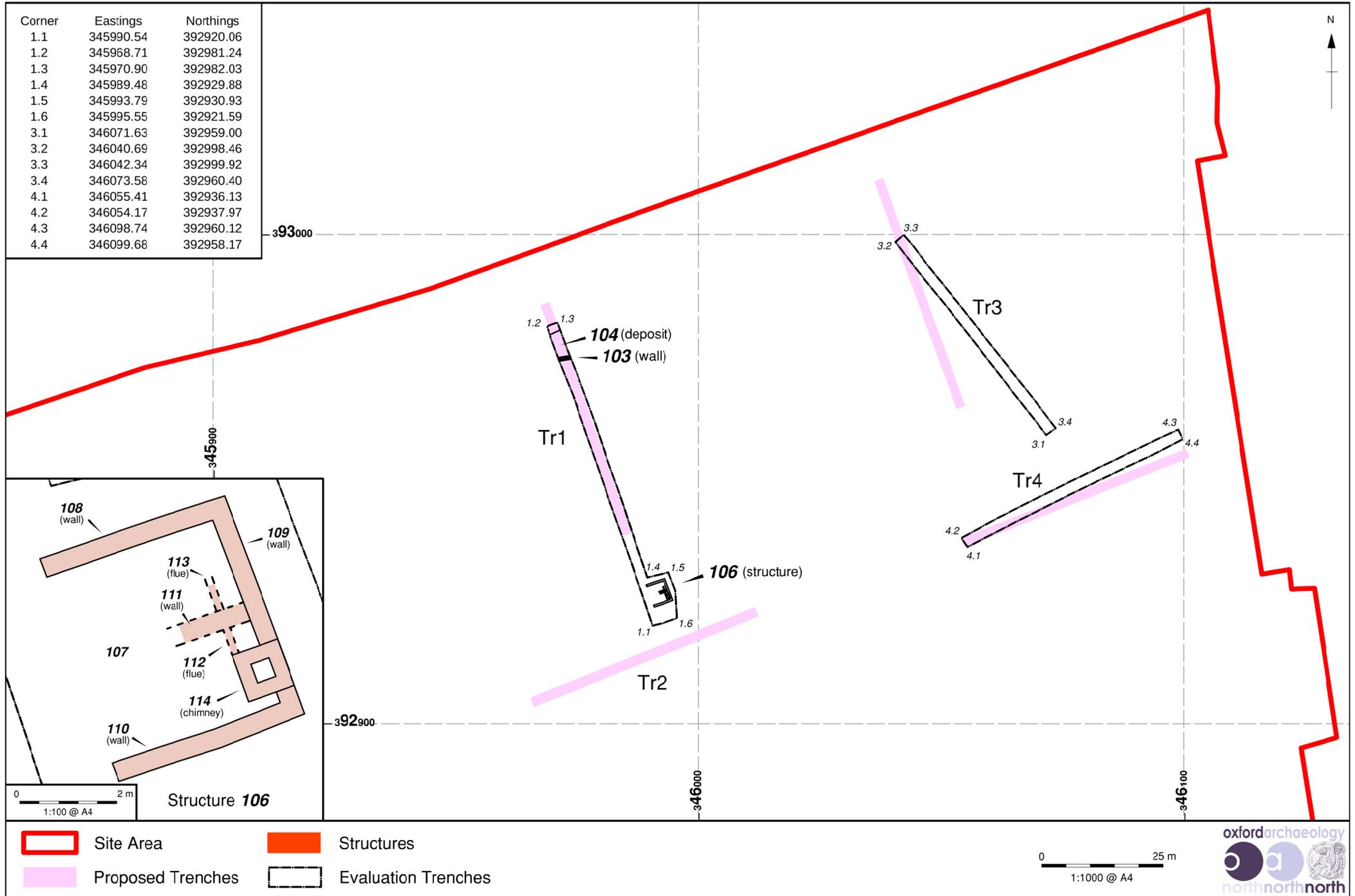


Figure 2: Trench location plan

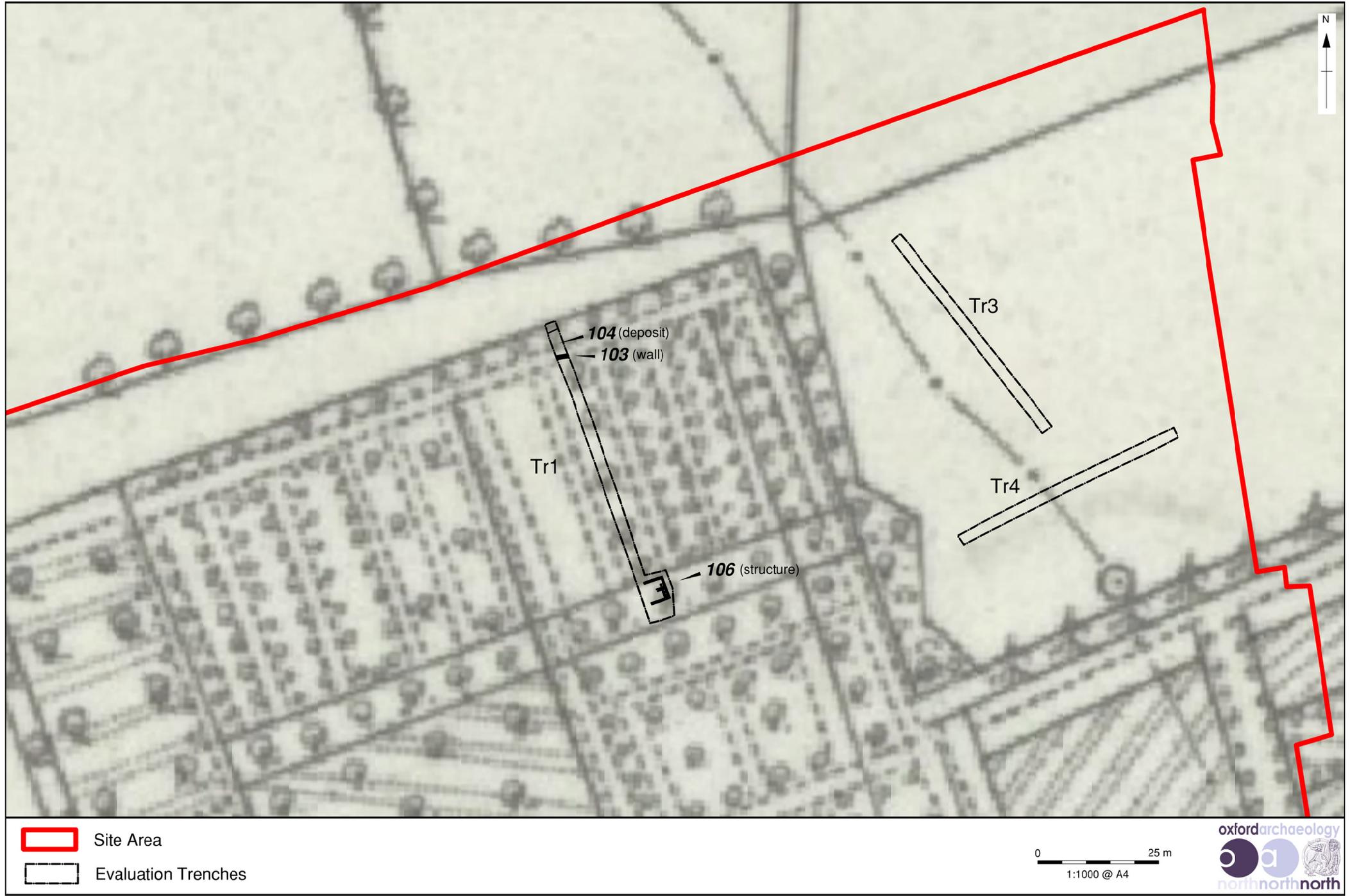


Figure 3: Evaluation trenches superimposed on the Ordnance Survey 6":1 mile map of 1850

## APPENDIX A WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION

**WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION FOR  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

**WHITAKER'S GARDEN CENTRE  
PRESCOT  
KNOWSLEY  
MERSEYSIDE**

**PREPARED BY LANPRO SERVICES  
ON BEHALF OF  
TAYLOR WIMPEY NORTH WEST**

**Planning ref: 19/00684/FUL**

**APRIL 2021**



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Figure 2. Trial trenches overlying 1850 Ordnance Survey map

Figure 3. Trial trenches overlying aerial view

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been prepared by Lanpro on behalf of Taylor Wimpey North West (the client) and details the methodology for undertaking a scheme of archaeological evaluation of land measuring c. 6.1ha in extent at Whitaker's Garden Centre, Prescot (Figure 1).
- 1.2 The archaeological evaluation will comprise a programme of trial trenching to establish the presence or absence of buried archaeological remains and their nature, date, extent and significance. The results of the evaluation will be used to inform decisions on the need for any further archaeological mitigation investigation and, should this be required, the scope of any additional excavation will be detailed in a further WSI.

## 2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The study site consists of a garden centre and former nursery with associated land c. 0.5 miles to the west of Prescot town centre and immediately to the north of Liverpool Road (A57). The area subject to archaeological evaluation is within two fields to the immediate north of the garden centre once occupied by the former nursery (centred at NGR SJ 46021 92951; see Figure 1). It is understood that much of the site has been subject to remediation.
- 2.2 To the west of the study site is the A58, with the rear gardens of dwellings along Knowsley Park Lane to the east and playing fields to the north.
- 2.3 The topography of the area of the study site subject to evaluation is relatively flat at approximately 63m AOD.
- 2.4 Prescot Brook runs north/south to the west of the study site, west of the A58.
- 2.5 The bedrock geology of the study site comprises mudstone, siltstone and sandstone of the Pennine Lower Coal Measure Formation. This is overlain by Devensian Till (bgs.ac.uk).

## 3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The study site was allocated for residential development within the Knowsley Local Plan and received planning permission on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2019 for the erection of 227 no. dwellings together with vehicular/pedestrian accesses, landscaping and associated infrastructure.
- 3.2 Consent was provided with a condition (number 6) for a programme of archaeological work:
6. *Prior to the commencement of any part of the approved development, including site clearance a written scheme of investigation for archaeological work has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The agreed details shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved programme.*

- 3.3 A programme of evaluation, comprising four trenches measuring 50m x 2m within the north-east area of the study site (Figure 1), has been agreed with the Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS).
- 3.4 This WSI provides a detailed methodology for undertaking the programme of archaeological evaluation work across the proposed development site. This is aimed at identifying, recording and sampling any archaeological features that may be present, and assessing the need for further mitigation excavation if required.

## **4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The archaeological background below is based on the heritage assessment submitted as part of the planning application (RPS/CgMs October 2020).
- 4.2 There are no recorded archaeological assets within the proposed development site.
- 4.3 There is a low potential for prehistoric evidence to be discovered within the study site. The nearest known evidence for prehistoric activity was located during archaeological investigations undertaken along the A5300 corridor during the early 1990s which is several kilometres to the south. Furthermore, the rather heavy poorly drained clays underlying the study site are considered to be less favourable for settlement at least than more elevated areas underlain by sands and gravels.
- 4.4 Similarly, there is also a low potential for the discovery of Roman remains or deposits within the study site. Archaeological investigations on the A5300 link road recovered evidence of a Roman-British rectilinear enclosure of second century AD date but there is little evidence elsewhere within the surroundings of the study site.
- 4.5 The town of Prescott is known to have been in existence since at least the 12<sup>th</sup> century, with speculation that its origins may lie in the early medieval period. However, the study site is likely to have been within the agricultural hinterland of the medieval core of Prescott and, therefore, there is a low potential for non-agricultural evidence of medieval date to be encountered.
- 4.6 The study site would appear to have been in agricultural use until the late 18<sup>th</sup> century when a nursery was established. The first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1850 (Figure 2) shows the study site in detail with the nursery occupying the majority of it; the area of Trenches 1 and 2 appear to have been open beds with Trenches 3 and 4 within an open area. These were replaced with glasshouses in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when it was known as Prescott Nursery, and the area around Trenches 3 and 4 appears to still be undeveloped. By the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the nursery was much reduced in size, concentrated within the south-west area of the study site. Aerial photographs show that between 2005 and 2011 the present-day Whitaker's Garden Centre was constructed (Figure 3).

## 5 RESEARCH DESIGN

### Aims and Objectives

- 5.1 The overall aim of the archaeological evaluation will be to obtain sufficient information to establish the presence/absence, character, extent, state of preservation and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of the proposed development. This will allow reasoned and informed recommendations to be made regarding any requirements for mitigation, the scope of which would be detailed in a subsequent WSI in agreement with MEAS.
- 5.2 This will be achieved through the following objectives:
- To determine the location, extent, date, character, condition and significance of any archaeological remains within the portion of the development site outlined for evaluation;
  - To excavate and record identified archaeological features and deposits to a level appropriate to their extent and significance;
  - To assess vulnerability/sensitivity of any exposed remains;
  - To assess the impact of previous land use on the site;
  - To assess the potential for survival of environmental evidence;
  - To inform a strategy to avoid or mitigate impacts of the proposed development on surviving archaeological remains;
  - To undertake sufficient post-excavation assessment to confidently interpret identified archaeological features;
  - To report the results of the evaluation and place them in their local, regional or national context and to make this record available.

### Research Framework

- 5.3 The programme of archaeological work is aimed at investigating the early 20<sup>th</sup> century glasshouses and associated nursery structures. There is also potential for the north-east corner of the site to have remained undeveloped.
- 5.4 The evaluation findings have the potential to contribute to research priorities originally identified in the regional research framework *The Archaeology of North West England - An Archaeological Research Framework for the North West* (Brennand 2006), and recently revised and updated (NWRRF, <https://researchframeworks.org/nwrf/>). In particular, the results may contribute to the understanding of farming and agricultural activities mainly during the industrial and 20<sup>th</sup> century on the fringes of the expanding town of Prescot. More specifically, the investigation may reveal information regarding technological developments in the propagation and growing on of nursery stock from the late 18<sup>th</sup> through to the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

- 5.5 The investigation will also take account of the national research programmes outlined in English Heritage's *Strategic Framework for Historic Environment Activities and Programmes in English Heritage* (SHAPE) first published in 2008.

## 6 STANDARDS AND GUIDANCE

- 6.1 All work will be undertaken to fully meet the requirements of all nationally recognised guidance for such work, including standards laid down by the former English Heritage (now Historic England) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA).
- 6.2 The programme of archaeological evaluation will be managed in line with the standards laid down in the Historic England guideline publication *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE): Project Managers Guide* (2015a), as well as to meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF; Chapter 16: 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment'; revised 2019). All excavation will be undertaken using recording standards detailed in the *Archaeological Field Manual* (MOLAS 1994).
- 6.3 Guidance of particular relevance to the programme of works are:
- *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014a);
  - *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (CIfA 2014b);
  - *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: PPN3: Archaeological Excavation* (English Heritage 2008).

## 7 METHODOLOGY

- 7.1 The programme of archaeological evaluation will comprise:
- trial trenching;
  - report production.

### Project initialisation

- 7.2 The appropriate museum will be contacted by the archaeological fieldwork contractor, Oxford Archaeology North to arrange for the project archive to be created and deposited in accordance with their deposition and archiving standards.
- 7.3 Before fieldwork commences an OASIS online record will be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creator forms.

### Trial Trenching

- 7.4 The configuration of the trial trenches has been agreed with MEAS and comprises 4 no. 50m x 2m trenches.

- 7.5 Topsoil across the trenches will be stripped using a mechanical excavator fitted with a 2m wide toothless grading bucket, down to the first archaeological horizon or natural sub-soil.
- 7.6 Spoil from mechanical excavation will be scanned by eye and by metal detector to aid the recovery of artefacts, and topsoil and subsoil will be stored separately.
- 7.7 All excavation by mechanical excavator will be undertaken under direct archaeological supervision, by a suitably experienced and qualified archaeologist, with one archaeologist responsible for monitoring each excavator. Mechanical excavation will cease at either undisturbed natural deposits or when archaeological deposits are identified.
- 7.8 All archaeological features and deposits revealed will be cleaned and excavated in an archaeologically controlled and stratigraphic manner, in order to establish their extent, form, date, function and relationship to other features.
- 7.9 All structures, deposits and finds will be recorded according to accepted professional standards. Individual descriptions of all archaeological strata and features exposed or excavated will be entered onto prepared pro-forma recording sheets. Sample recording sheets, sample registers, finds recording sheets, access catalogues, and photo record cards will also be used.
- 7.10 Any excavation, by machine or by hand, will be undertaken with a view to avoiding damage to any archaeological features or deposits which appear to be demonstrably worthy of preservation in situ.
- 7.11 There will be a presumption of the need to cause the minimum disturbance to the site consistent with adequate evaluation. Significant archaeological features (e.g. solid or bonded structural remains, building slots or postholes), will be preserved intact even if fills are sampled. For linear features, minimum 1m wide slots should be excavated across their width. For discrete features, such as pits, 50% of their fills will be sampled.
- 7.12 Metal detector searches will take place at all stages of the evaluation. Metal detecting of trench locations will be carried out before trenches are excavated, with trench bases and spoil scanned once trenches have been opened. Any metal finds will be located using survey-grade GPS and metal detectors will not be set to discriminate against iron. Metal detecting will also be conducted over the surface of all exposed features before the end of each working day as a countermeasure to 'nighthawking'.
- 7.13 Should the excavation of the trenches reach 1m in depth (or limit of safe working depth) without natural geology being encountered, a machine dug sondage will be excavated in order to establish the depth of natural geology. Where depth of excavation is required to be greater than 1m, suitable stepping will be employed.
- 7.14 All identified finds and artefacts will be collected and retained, bagged and labelled according to their context. Finds of significant interest will be given a 'small finds' number, and information on their location in three dimensions will be entered on a separate pro-

forma sheet. No finds will be discarded without assessment by an appropriate finds specialist.

- 7.15 A full written, drawn and photographic record will be made of all features revealed during the course of the archaeological evaluation. The location and extent of archaeological features will be recorded by GPS. Plans will be completed at a scale of 1:20 (as appropriate), with section drawings at a scale of 1:10. All plans will be tied in with the Ordnance Survey National Grid with levels given to above OD.
- 7.16 A photographic record of the project will be maintained. This will illustrate the detail and context of the principal features and finds discovered. The photographic record will also include working shots to illustrate more generally the progress of the programme of archaeological works. All photography will follow the Historic England guidance for digital image capture (HE 2015b). All images will have accompanying metadata specifying; photo ID, capture device, converting software, colour space, bit depth, resolution, date of capture, photographer, caption, and any alterations made to the image.
- 7.17 Following excavation and recording of any archaeological remains, the evaluation trenches will be backfilled with the previously excavated spoil.

#### **Palaeoenvironmental sampling strategy**

- 7.18 Soil samples will be taken from all suitable features or deposits for palaeoenvironmental sampling. This will comprise the removal of a bulk sample from every securely sealed and hand-excavated context, excepting those with excessive levels of residuality or those with minimal 'soil' content (such as building rubble).
- 7.19 Bulk samples will comprise representative 40 litre samples. Where a context does not yield 40 litres of material, smaller samples will be taken (generally the maximum amount of material practicable to collect). Bulk samples will be used to recover a sub-sample of charred macroplant material, faunal remains and artefacts where necessary, as well as any industrial residues.
- 7.20 If buried soils or other deposits are encountered, column samples may be taken for micromorphological and pollen analysis. Environmental material will be stored in a controlled environment and specialists consulted during the course of the work if necessary.
- 7.21 The post-excavation processing of all palaeoenvironmental samples will be undertaken in line with the requirements of the former English Heritage's (now Historic England) *Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods from sampling and recovery to post-excavation* (2011).

#### **Human remains**

- 7.22 The discovery of human remains is not anticipated during the evaluation fieldwork. However, should these be encountered then the archaeological contractor must contact the Ministry of Justice for an appropriate licence and MEAS will be informed. The contractor will comply with

all statutory consents and licences under the Disused Burial Grounds (Amendment) Act, 1981 or other Burial Acts regarding the exhumation and interment of human remains.

- 7.23 If human remains are encountered, they will be cleaned with minimal disturbance, prior to recording and removal, following receipt of the required Ministry of Justice licence. Investigation and excavation of human remains will be undertaken by, or under supervision of, suitably experienced specialist staff and in accordance with former Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) guidelines *Excavation and Post-excavation Treatment of Cremated and Inhumed Human Remains* (McKinley and Roberts 1993) and the *Updated Guidelines to the standards for recording human remains* (Mitchell and Brickley 2017). Assessment of excavated human remains will be undertaken in line with English Heritage guidelines *Human Bones from archaeological sites: Guidelines for the production of assessment documents and analytical reports* (English Heritage 2004). The archaeological contractor will comply with all reasonable requests of interested parties as to the method of removal, re-interment or disposal of the remains or associated items. Every effort will be made, at all times, not to cause offence to any interested parties.
- 7.24 If required a qualified and experienced osteoarchaeologist will undertake site visits to discuss the recording and assist in the removal of any human skeletal remains.

### Scientific dating

- 7.25 Provision will be made to recover material suitable for radiocarbon, archaeomagnetic, dendrochronological and other scientific dating. Where material suitable for dating is recovered, sufficient dating will be undertaken to meet the aims of the evaluation.

### Other finds

- 7.26 Finds will be exposed, lifted, cleaned, conserved, marked, bagged and stored in accordance with the guidelines set out in United Kingdom Institute for Conservation's Conservation Guidelines No. 2 (1990) and the ClfA guidelines *Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (2014b).
- 7.27 If required, conservation will be undertaken by approved conservators in line with the *First Aid for Finds* guidelines (Watkinson and Neal 1998). Significant iron objects, a selection of non-ferrous artefacts (including all coins), and a sample of any industrial debris relating to metallurgy should be X-radiographed before assessment.
- 7.28 Any finds of gold and silver will be moved to a safe place. Where removal cannot be undertaken immediately, suitable security measures will be taken to protect the artefacts from theft or damage. All finds of gold and silver, and associated objects, will be reported to the coroner according to the procedures relating to the Treasure Act 1996 (and the act's amendment of 2003).

### **Unexpectedly significant or complex discoveries**

- 7.29 Should unexpectedly extensive, complex or significant remains be uncovered that warrant, in the professional judgment of the archaeologist on site, more detailed recording than is appropriate within the terms of the WSI, the scope of the WSI will be reviewed.
- 7.30 In the event of a review of the WSI being required, Lanpro will contact the client and MEAS with the relevant information to enable them to resolve the matter. This is likely to require an on-site meeting between the relevant stakeholders to review the archaeological remains on-site and identify a way forward. Any variations to this WSI will be put in writing and agreed by the relevant stakeholders including MEAS and the client.

### **Plant and equipment**

- 7.31 The on-site groundworks contractor and client will be responsible for the provision of all required welfare and plant, with Oxford Archaeology North providing necessary health and safety equipment for the fieldwork operators during the trial trenching.

## **8 POST-FIELDWORK**

- 8.1 Upon completion of the evaluation fieldwork, the artefacts, soil samples and stratigraphic information will be assessed for their potential and significance for further analysis if required and the relevant parties notified accordingly. A report on the fieldwork will be produced within 4-6 weeks following completion.

### **Finds**

- 8.2 Finds will be cleaned, conserved, marked, bagged and stored in accordance with the guidelines set out in United Kingdom Institute for *Conservation's Conservation Guidelines No. 2* (1990) and the ClfA guidelines *Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (2014b).
- 8.3 In accordance with appropriate procedures, significant iron objects, a selection of non-ferrous artefacts (including all coins), and a sample of any industrial debris relating to metallurgy will be X-radiographed before issue of the final report.
- 8.4 All material will be packed and stored in optimum conditions, as described in *First Aid for Finds* (Watkinson and Neal 1998). Any waterlogged organic materials will be dealt with in line with the English Heritage guidance documents, *Waterlogged Organic Artefacts. Guidelines on their Recovery, Analysis and Conservation* (2018) and *Waterlogged Wood. Guidelines on the recording, sampling, conservation and curation of waterlogged wood* (2010).
- 8.5 The preservation state, density and significance of material retrieved will be assessed, following the English Heritage guidelines *Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods from sampling and recovery to post-excavation* (2011).

- 8.6 Any finds for dating will be submitted to specialists promptly, so as to ensure that results are available to aid development of a project design for the analysis stage, if required.

### **Environmental Sample Processing**

- 8.7 The processing of any palaeoenvironmental samples will be undertaken in line with the requirements of the English Heritage publications *Archaeological Science at PPG16 Interventions: Best Practice Guidance for Curators and Commissioning Archaeologists* (2006b) and *Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods from sampling and recovery to post-excavation* (2011).
- 8.8 The samples will be processed, and ecofacts collected and assessed with regard to the potential for detailed analysis of pollen, charred plant macrofossils, land molluscs, faunal remains (including small mammals and fish) and soil micromorphology. Samples suitable for radiocarbon, or other dating methods, will also be identified. The environmental assessment will be reported within the overall post-excavation assessment report for all phases of investigation and include proposals for full analysis if required. Unprocessed sub-samples will be stored in conditions specified by the appropriate specialists. Samples for dating will be submitted to specialists promptly, so as to ensure that results are available to aid development of the project design for any further analysis stage if required.

### **Conservation**

- 8.9 If required, conservation will be undertaken by approved conservators in line with the *First Aid for Finds* guidelines (Watkinson and Neal 1998). Material considered vulnerable will be selected for stabilisation after specialist recording. Where intervention is necessary, consideration must be given to possible investigative procedures (e.g. glass composition studies, residues in or on pottery, and mineral-preserved organic material).

### **Report**

- 8.10 As a minimum the evaluation report shall contain the following information:
- A title page, with the name of the project, the name of the author(s) of the report, the title of the report and date of the report;
  - A non-technical summary of the scope, methodology and results of the work;
  - Introduction which includes site code/project number, dates when the fieldwork took place and grid reference;
  - Description of the topography and geology of the site;
  - Description of the archaeological background to the site;
  - Description of the aims, methodology and extent of fieldwork completed;
  - Factual assessments of stratigraphic, artefactual and environmental evidence;

- An assessment of the archaeological potential of the stratigraphic, artefactual and environmental records;
- Proposed programme for further analysis and reporting if required, including the identification of specialists;
- Conclusions;
- Plans and sections to include site and trench location plans displaying NGR co-ordinates;
- List of plans and sections;
- Details of archive location and destination (with the museum accession number), together with a catalogue of what is contained in that archive;
- Copy of the OASIS entry form and any entry updates;
- Appendices as appropriate; and
- References and bibliography of all sources used.

8.11 A draft copy of the evaluation report will be provided to MEAS in PDF format for comment.

8.12 Following approval, copies of the final reports will be produced and submitted to the Merseyside HER in a PDF/A format.

## 9 ARCHIVING

9.1 Oxford Archaeology North will contact the National Museums Liverpool (NML) in advance of commencing any fieldwork to determine the preparation, and deposition of the archive and finds, and obtain an accession number for all archaeological works. The landowner will be encouraged to transfer ownership of the finds to the museum.

9.2 Adequate resources will be provided during fieldwork to ensure that all records are checked and internally consistent.

9.3 The archive will contain all the data collected during the archaeological works, including all digital and paper records, finds and environmental samples. The archive will be prepared in accordance with the ClfA guidelines detailed in *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (ClfA, 2014b). The preparation of the archive will also be informed by the *Guidelines for the preparation of Excavation Archives for long-term storage* (United Kingdom Institute for Conservation, 1990), *Standards in the museum care of archaeological collections* (Museums and Galleries Commission 1994), and in accordance with NML's archive deposition guidelines, which stipulates digital archiving.

9.4 Digital copies of the assessment report and associated data will be submitted to the Merseyside HER, together with OASIS and ADS to allow the results of the work to be accessible online to the wider archaeological community and general public.

## **10 TIMETABLE**

- 10.1 The fieldwork is anticipated to start Wednesday 21st April 2021 and will take two days on site to complete and 4-6 weeks for the report to be issued.
- 10.2 MEAS will monitor implementation of the programme of archaeological works on behalf of Knowsley Council and evaluate the work being undertaken on site against the methodology detailed in this WSI and will be afforded the opportunity to inspect the site and all records of Oxford Archaeology North at any stage of the work.

## **11 STAFFING**

- 11.1 Emily Mercer (Principal Heritage Consultant, Lanpro) will be in overall charge of the management of the project on behalf of Taylor Wimpey North West.
- 11.2 The appointed archaeological sub-contractor is Oxford Archaeology North and CVs can be provided to relevant interested parties.

## **12 INSURANCE**

- 12.1 The archaeological contractor will produce evidence of Public Liability Insurance to the minimum value of £5m and Professional Indemnity Insurance to the minimum of £5m.

## **13 HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- 13.1 The management of all health and safety for the archaeological staff on site during the trial trenching will be the responsibility of Oxford Archaeology North. All works will be undertaken by the contractor in compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and all applicable regulations and Codes of Practice.
- 13.2 All archaeological staff will undertake their operations in accordance with safe working practices and will be CSCS certified. At least one First Aider will be present on site at all times. A site-specific risk assessment will be produced by Oxford Archaeology North, prior to the commencement of work on site, which will be subject to regular review.
- 13.3 Suitable Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and welfare facilities will be provided by Oxford Archaeology North, including hi-visibility coats/vests, hard hats, safety boots and gloves, as well as safety glasses if required.
- 13.4 All staff will receive a health and safety induction prior to starting work on site to be provided by Oxford Archaeology North.
- 13.5 Regular audits of health and safety practices will be carried out during the course of the project by Lanpro and Oxford Archaeology North in consultation with the site workforce. Toolbox talks on health and safety issues will be conducted at minimum weekly intervals and/or after changes in working practices or identification of new threats/risks. The risk

assessment will be reviewed and updated as necessary. Control measures will be implemented as required in response to specific hazards.

- 13.6 Safe working will take priority over the desire to record archaeological features or remains, and where it is considered that recording is dangerous, any such features will be recorded by photography at a safe distance.
- 13.7 All areas of excavation will be scanned with a Cable Avoidance Tool (CAT) prior to ground works commencing. Necessary measures will be taken to avoid disturbing any services.
- 13.8 Plant operators will be required to produce evidence of qualification within an industry accepted registration scheme. Sub-Contractors health and safety performance will be kept under review and action taken if necessary. All spoil will be stored and managed safely in line with the standards of the *Construction Code of Practice for Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites* (DEFRA 2009).
- 13.9 Site welfare accommodation and car parking should be located within the site and the location of these facilities will be agreed between the archaeological contractor, Lanpro and the client in advance of the commencement of work.

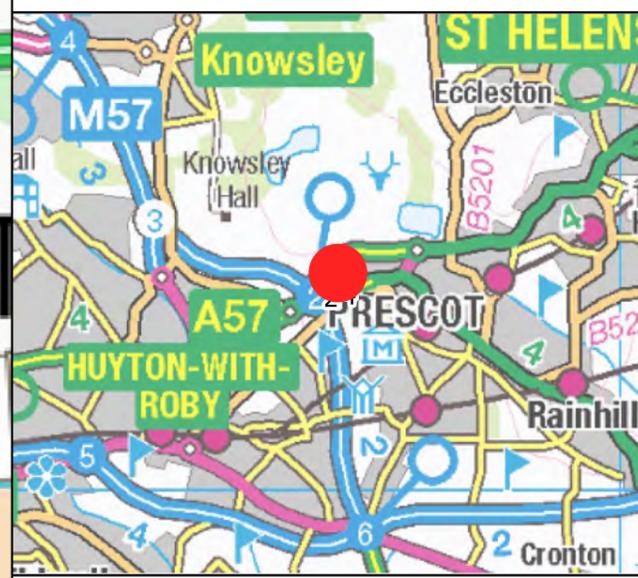
## **14 COPYRIGHT AND PUBLICITY**

- 14.1 Copyright of the documentation prepared by the archaeological contractor and specialist sub-contractors should be the subject of additional licences in favour of the client and the Merseyside HER to use such documentation for their statutory and educational functions, and to provide copies to third parties as required.
- 14.2 Under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR 2004), information submitted to the HER becomes publicly accessible, except where disclosure might lead to environmental damage, and reports cannot be embargoed as 'confidential' or 'commercially sensitive'.
- 14.3 It is recognised that the project may identify remains which are of interest to the public and these may be publicised through appropriate media. Any publicity for the project proposed by Oxford Archaeology North should be approved by the client in advance.
- 14.4 The appointed archaeological contractor will not issue any information on the work through media, internet or social media without prior agreement of the client. Care will be taken to ensure that any publicity does not compromise the security of archaeological remains that may have been identified or recovered. Any approaches by the press to the archaeological contractor should be referred to the client in the first instance.

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## Figures



- ▭ Development site
- ▭ Trial trenches

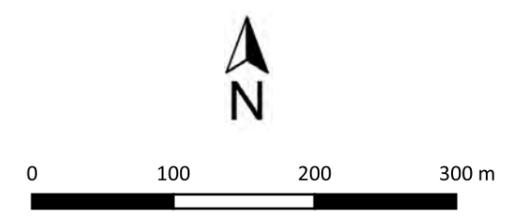


Figure 1. Location of the development site and trial trenches

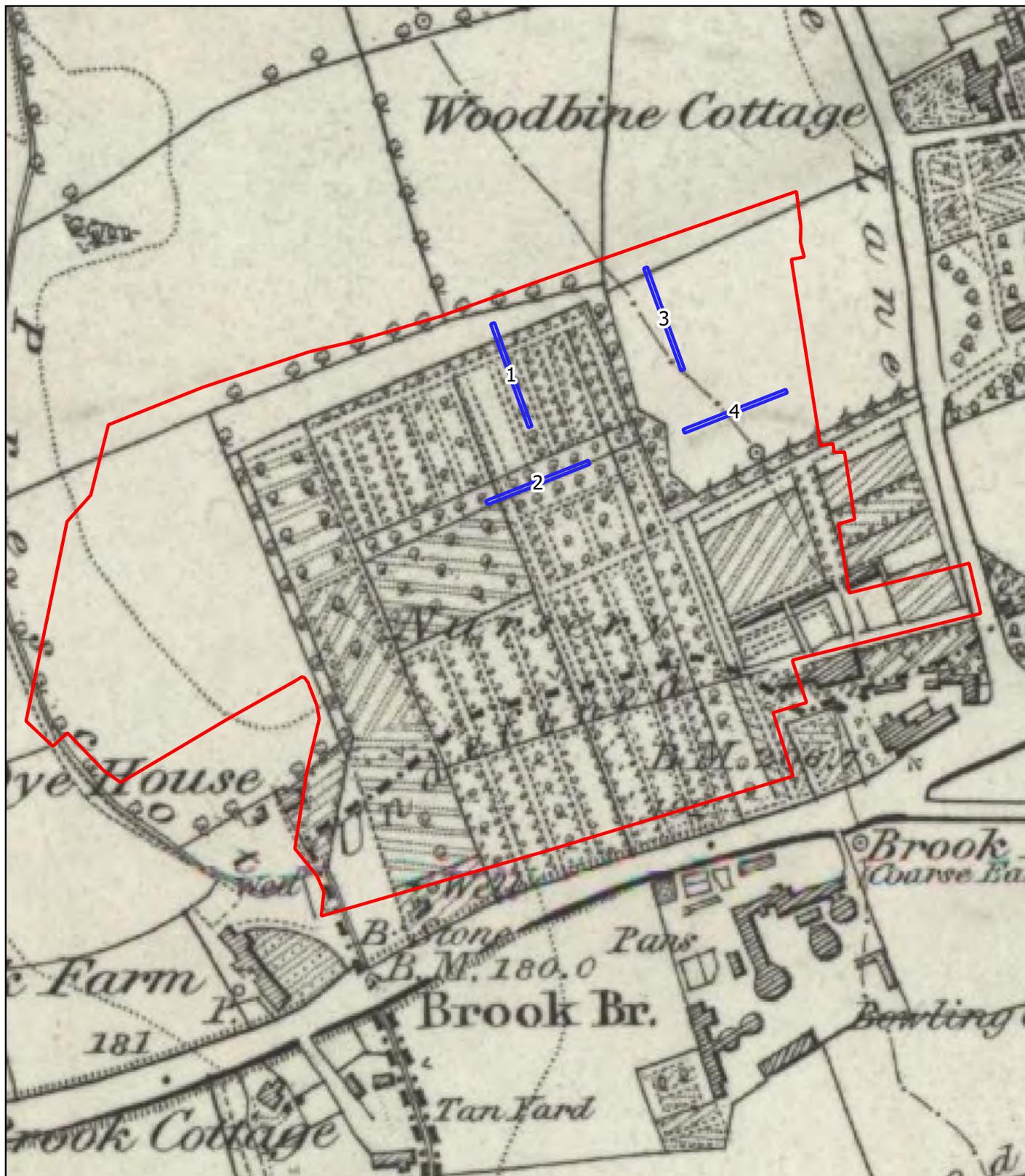


Figure 2. Trial trenches overlying 1850 Ordnance Survey map

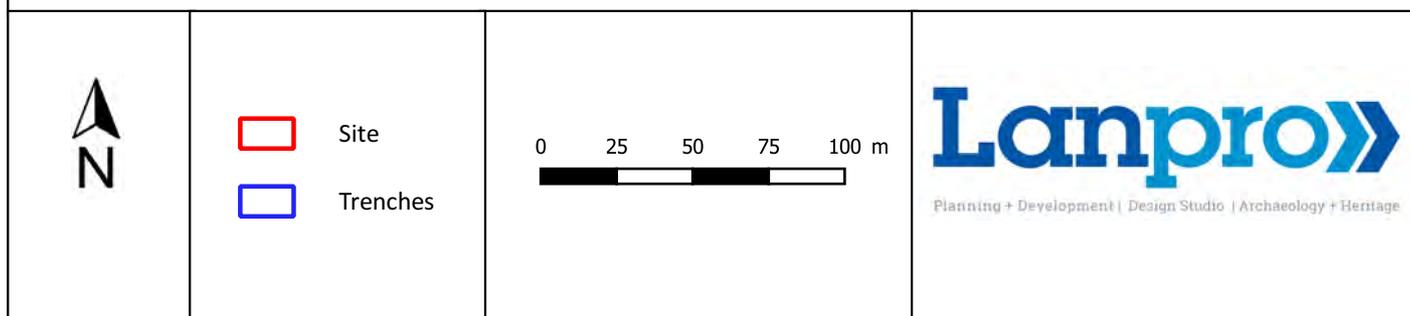
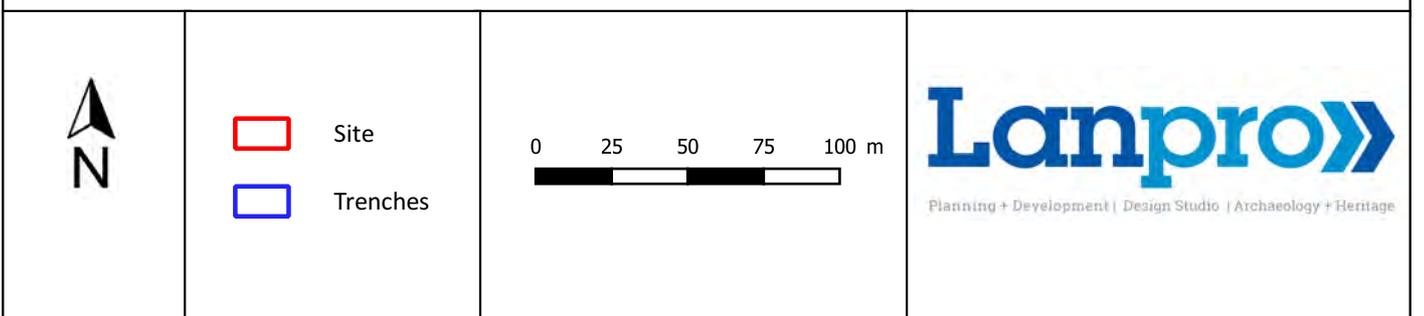




Figure 3. Trial trenches overlying aerial view



**Norwich:**

Brettingham House  
98 Pottergate,  
Norwich  
Norfolk  
NR2 1EQ  
01603 631 319

**London:**

70 Cowcross Street  
London  
EC1M 6EL  
020 3011 0820

**Retford:**

Retford Enterprise Centre  
Randall Way  
Retford  
DN22 7GR  
01777 552 001

**York:**

Blake House  
18 Blake Street  
York  
Y01 8QG  
01904 803 800

**Manchester:**

Peter House  
Oxford Street  
Manchester  
Greater Manchester  
M1 5AN  
0161 711 1740



[info@lanproservices.co.uk](mailto:info@lanproservices.co.uk)

## APPENDIX B TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
<b>General description</b>					<b>Orientation</b>	NW-SE
Trench aligned approximately north-west/south-west, extended and expanded at the southern end of the trench. Two structural features identified, <b>103</b> at the northern end of the trench and <b>106</b> at the southern end of the trench. The structural features appeared to cut subsoil <b>101</b> and were sealed by topsoil <b>100</b>					<b>Length (m)</b>	65
					<b>Width (m)</b>	2 – 6.5
					<b>Avg. depth (m)</b>	0.30
<b>Context No.</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Width (m)</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>100</b>	Layer	-	0.25	Topsoil	-	-
<b>101</b>	Layer	-	0.05	Subsoil	-	-
<b>102</b>	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
<b>103</b>	Structure	2	-	Brick and stone-built wall at the northern end of the trench. Comprised stone and hand-made brick, a single brick wide, bonded with lime mortar	-	Industrial Period
<b>104</b>	Layer	5.3	0.2	Dark brown black silty clay within structure <b>103</b>	-	Industrial Period
<b>105</b>	Layer	5.3	0.2	Overburden sealing structure <b>103</b>	-	Industrial Period
<b>106</b>	Structure	4	-	Brick-built structure at the southern end of the trench, measuring 4.7m long by 4m wide. Comprising brick walls <b>108, 109, 110, 111</b> , flues <b>112</b> and <b>113</b> , and chimney <b>114</b>	-	Industrial Period
<b>107</b>	Layer	4	-	Dark brown black silty clay withing structure <b>106</b>	-	Industrial Period
<b>108</b>	Structure	4.7	-	Northern brick wall of structure <b>106</b> . Comprised machine-made brick, some frogged, a single brick wide, and bonded with cement-based mortar	-	Industrial Period
<b>109</b>	Structure	4	-	Eastern brick wall of structure <b>106</b> . Comprised machine-made brick, some frogged, a single brick wide, and bonded with cement-based mortar	-	Industrial Period
<b>110</b>	Structure	4.7	-	Southern brick wall of structure <b>106</b> . Comprised	-	Industrial Period

				machine-made brick, some frogged, a single brick wide, and bonded with cement-based mortar		
<b>111</b>	Structure	1	-	Internal dividing wall of structure <b>106</b> . Comprised machine-made brick, some frogged, a single brick wide, and bonded with cement-based mortar. Appeared to be keyed into wall <b>109</b>	-	Industrial Period
<b>112</b>	Structure	0.6	-	Possible flue to the south of dividing wall <b>111</b> . Comprised machine-made brick, some frogged, half a brick wide, and bonded with cement-based mortar.	-	Industrial Period
<b>113</b>	Structure	0.6	-	Possible flue to the north of dividing wall <b>111</b> . Comprised machine-made brick, some frogged, half a brick wide and bonded with cement-based mortar	-	Industrial Period
<b>114</b>	Structure	0.7	-	Chimney or flue cutting wall <b>109</b> and flue <b>112</b> . Comprised machine-made brick, a single brick wide and bonded with Portland cement	-	Industrial Period

Trench 2						
<b>General description</b>					<b>Orientation</b>	-
Unable to excavate trench due to spoil bunds					<b>Length (m)</b>	-
					<b>Width (m)</b>	
					<b>Avg. depth (m)</b>	-
<b>Context No.</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Width (m)</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Finds</b>	<b>Date</b>
-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Trench 3						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of light- yellow orange clay.					Length (m)	50
					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	0.30
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
<b>300</b>	Layer	-	0.25	Topsoil	-	-
<b>301</b>	Layer	-	0.05	Subsoil	-	-
<b>302</b>	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 4						
General description					Orientation	SW-NE
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of light- yellow orange clay.					Length (m)	50
					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	0.30
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
<b>400</b>	Layer	-	0.25	Topsoil	-	-
<b>401</b>	Layer	-	0.05	Subsoil	-	-
<b>402</b>	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

## APPENDIX C      BIBLIOGRAPHY

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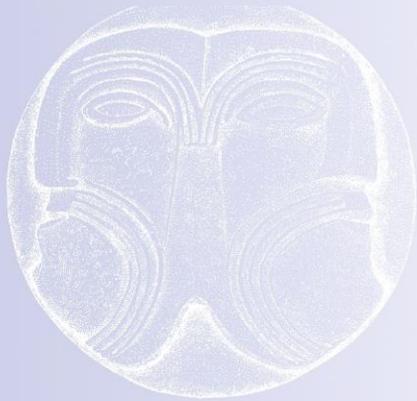
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**APPENDIX D****SITE SUMMARY DETAILS**

<b>Site name:</b>	Whitaker's Garden Centre, Prescott, Knowsley, Merseyside
<b>Site code:</b>	WGC21
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SJ 46021 92951
<b>Type:</b>	Archaeological Evaluation
<b>Date and duration:</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> and 22 <sup>nd</sup> April 2021; 2 days
<b>Area of Site</b>	6.1ha
<b>Location of archive:</b>	The archive is currently held at OA North, Mill 3, Moor Lane Mills, Moor Lane, Lancaster, LA1 1QD, and will be deposited with National Museums Liverpool in due course
<b>Summary of Results:</b>	<p>Only three of the four proposed trenches were excavated, Trench 2 was unable to be excavated due to spoil bunds and also a compound in the trenches proposed location. The three trenches which were excavated were realigned and extended, where possible, to avoid spoil bunds, drains and services, and to account for some of the coverage lost by being unable to excavate Trench 2. Archaeological remains were only identified in Trench 1, these remains being structural features likely relating to structures within the former nursery garden, as depicted on historic mapping (Fig 4). None of the deposits produced dating evidence, although the fabric of the structural remains suggested that they were of Industrial Period date, wall <b>103</b> comprised hand-made bricks bonded with lime mortar, whilst the walls of structure <b>106</b> comprising hand-made and machine-made frogged bricks bonded with a cement-based mortar.</p> <p>The results of the evaluation are of local significance, in that they were heavily truncated and too little of the nursery gardens survived within the trenches to justify inclusion in a higher grade. The evidence of a possible flue system within structure <b>106</b> does potentially contribute to our understanding of technological developments in the propagation and growing of nursery stock from the late eighteenth century through to the twentieth century (North West Regional Research Framework 2021), however, the remains were heavily truncated, with only the lowest courses of the structure surviving. As such no further work was required by MEAS.</p>



**Head Office/Registered Office/  
OA South**

Janus House  
Osney Mead  
Oxford OX20ES

t: +44 (0) 1865 263 800  
f: +44 (0) 1865 793 496  
e: [info@oxfordarchaeology.com](mailto:info@oxfordarchaeology.com)  
w: <http://oxfordarchaeology.com>

**OA North**

Mill 3  
Moor Lane  
Lancaster LA1 1QD

t: +44 (0) 1524 541 000  
f: +44 (0) 1524 848 606  
e: [oanorth@oxfordarchaeology.com](mailto: oanorth@oxfordarchaeology.com)  
w: <http://oxfordarchaeology.com>

**OA East**

15 Trafalgar Way  
Bar Hill  
Cambridgeshire  
CB23 8SQ

t: +44 (0) 1223 850500  
e: [oaeast@oxfordarchaeology.com](mailto: oaeast@oxfordarchaeology.com)  
w: <http://oxfordarchaeology.com>



**Director:** Gill Hey, BA PhD FSA MCIfA  
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