

December 1997

COUNTY HOTEL GARAGE
LANCASTER

Archaeological Evaluation Report

County Hotel Garage,
Lancaster

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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December 1997

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SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at County Hotel Garage, County Street, Lancaster (SD 471617) by Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU) on behalf of Norman Jackson Contractors Ltd, and in accordance with a verbal brief by the Lancashire County Archaeological Service. This followed an assessment of documentary and cartographic sources which had previously been undertaken in September 1997 (LUAU 1997). The site lies to the south-west of Lancaster Castle, a medieval foundation sited over the remains of a series of Roman forts on Castle Hill, to the west of the medieval town. A short distance to the west of the site, in the Westfield Memorial Village, remains of Roman burials were discovered in the 1930s.

The evaluation involved the excavation of one trench, measuring 24m by 1.7m, which was mechanically dug, under archaeological supervision, prior to being cleaned and inspected by experienced archaeologists. No artefacts or features of archaeological significance were recovered during the evaluation.

The negative results reinforce the opinion that this part of the city was undeveloped during both Roman and Medieval times, although, it does appear that the subsoils of the site were truncated, thus removing any potential archaeological deposits.

The development will thus not have an impact upon an identified archaeological resource and therefore it is recommended that no further archaeological investigation be undertaken.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to Malcolm Laurie of Norman Jackson Contractors Ltd for ensuring access, the disconnection of all services and for providing the use of a mechanical excavator for the work.

The evaluation was undertaken by Chris Wild and Mark Chesterman. Finds analysis was undertaken by Chris Howard-Davis. This report was written by Chris Wild and edited by Jamie Quartermaine who also acted as project manager.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF PROJECT

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by the Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU), on behalf of Norman Jackson Contractors Ltd, at the County Hotel Garage site, County Street, Lancaster (SD 471617) in advance of housing development on the site. The evaluation study area lies within the urban extent of Lancaster, toward the foot of a steep west-facing slope, lying some 250m to the south-west of the site of Lancaster Castle, sited over the remains of the Roman fort on Castle Hill. The western slope of the hill is relatively steep at the top, with the gradient becoming less pronounced toward the base, from where the land slopes down towards the area known as the Marsh, and the River Lune.
- 1.1.2 The purpose of the evaluation was to identify any sub-surface archaeological remains of previous activity within the study area, especially relating to the Roman and Medieval periods.
- 1.1.3 This report sets out the results of the work in conjunction with a methods statement, and an assessment of the impact that the development proposals will have upon the archaeological resource.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

- 2.1.1 A project design (*Appendix 1*) was submitted by LUAU in response to a request from Norman Jackson Contractors Ltd for an evaluation of the County Hotel Garage site, County Street, Lancaster (SD 471617). This was designed to meet the requirements of a verbal brief by Peter McCrone of Lancashire County Archaeological Service.
- 2.1.2 The project design provided for an archaeological evaluation involving the excavation of one trial trench. The work has been carried out entirely in accordance with the project design and the results are presented within this report.

2.2 TRIAL TRENCHING

- 2.2.1 The programme of trial excavation was intended to investigate the less disturbed parts of the study area, highlighted by an earlier assessment, and was to be achieved through the excavation of a single trench, 24m in length. After the initial removal of the surface cobbles, using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothed ditching bucket, the excavation of the trenches was undertaken with a 1.6m toothless ditching bucket, and was followed by manual cleaning and excavation for the purposes of examining archaeological detail. All excavation was carried out stratigraphically, whether by machine or by hand. Excavation was undertaken to the depth of the natural subsoils.
- 2.2.3 The recording methods, employed by LUAU, accord with those recommended by English Heritage's Central Archaeology Service (CAS). Recording was in the form of a *pro forma* Trench Sheet for the trench, which recorded the orientation, length, and depth of machining, and described the nature of the topsoil, subsoil (where applicable), and geological deposits. Contexts were ascribed for each deposit and are presented within *Appendix 2*. A photographic record was maintained and any finds recovered were bagged and recorded by context.
- 2.2.4 The position of the trench was recorded by taped measurement with respect to the site buildings. This information was then overlaid onto a map digitised from a drawing provided by the client (Fig 2).

2.3 ARCHIVE

- 2.3.1 A full archive of the field inspection has been produced to a professional standard in accordance with the current English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage 1991). The archive will be deposited with the County Record Office with a copy of the report given to the Lancashire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). A discard policy for the finds will be discussed with the client.

2.4 HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 2.4.1 Both Lancaster University and LUAU maintain Safety Policies, the latter based on the SCAUM (Standing Conference of Unit Managers) Health and Safety Manual (1991). In keeping with current Health and Safety at Work Regulations, prior to commencing on-site work, a risk assessment for each activity was completed. Due

regard was given to all Health and Safety considerations during all aspects of the project. It is LUAU standard practice to scan the positions of all trenches for underground cables using a U-scan meter. No current services were revealed during the course of the evaluation programme, although disused electric and water cables were identified.

3. RESULTS

3.1 TRIAL TRENCHING

- 3.1.1 A single trench was excavated to evaluate the archaeological potential of the proposed housing development site (Fig 2).
- 3.1.2 The trench dimension was restricted to 24m in length due to the petrol storage tanks located in the southern part of the site. The position was laid out, in agreement with Peter McCrone (Lancashire County Archaeological Service), to give a representative coverage of the area. The trench was aligned in a north/south orientation and was located slightly east of a central position, to avoid drainage channels.
- 3.1.3 The excavation of the trench revealed a *c* 0.08m depth of rough, sub-rounded cobbles [1], laid on a base of fine sand [2] of between 0.02m and 0.05m in depth. This overlay 0.30-0.45m of mixed dark brown silty clay [3] containing small sub-rounded pebbles (up to 0.10m diameter) and large quantities of ash, burnt material, brick and modern ceramic fragments. This overlay a reddish brown, natural silty sandy clay [5] containing large amounts of gravels and sub-rounded stones up to *c*0.40m diameter. This was observed to the limit of excavation at a depth of 1.3m. A sondage, excavated at the northern end of the trench to a depth of 2.80m, revealed that this deposit continued, becoming a finer sand/gravel layer with depth. Banding horizons of alternate fine gravels and sands were observed within the deposit at levels below *c* 2.0m.
- 3.1.4 At the southern end of the trench the cut of a deep wide feature was observed, which had a steep (near verticle) angle of cut. The feature extended 4.4m into the trench from the south, and was not fully excavated at a depth of 1.40m, when excavation was stopped for reasons of health and safety. The upper 0.65m depth of the fills consisted of four, equally deep, horizontally deposited layers [7-10] all containing large amounts of post-medieval ceramics, brick and glass. The upper layer comprised a reddish brown mixed sandy clay [7], whilst the other layers comprised a yellowish brown silty sand sandwiched between two layers of black, burnt deposits. Underlying these layers was an infilling of re-deposited reddish brown sandy clay containing small quantities of ash and brick fragments [11]. This layer had a much higher clay concentration and a lower percentage of stones than the natural deposits to the north, and was more mixed in its nature. This overlay a mid-brown silty clay [12] containing brick fragments which was observed to a depth of 0.07m where excavation ceased. This cut was adjacent to a large petrol tank, beneath the present pumps to the south of the trench, and it is is probable that this modern cut was excavated during the laying of the tank.
- 3.1.5 No other archaeological features were identified within the trench. Three disused ceramic land drains were observed, all aligned approximately east/west across the trench.

3.2 FINDS

- 3.2.1 A small amount of pottery and glass was recovered in the course of the evaluation. All was late, comprising kitchen and table wares of late nineteenth and early twentieth century date. All fragments were largely unabraded, suggesting that they

were not far removed from their original place of deposition. In this context the finds are of little, if any, archaeological significance.

4. DISCUSSION

- 4.1 As identified by the Archaeological Assessment (LUAU 1997) the main concentration of both Roman and Medieval features and finds decreases on the western side of Castle Hill away from the immediate environs of the fort and the core of the medieval town. The earliest mapping (Speed 1610), whilst only approximating to the real detailed layout, suggests that the area to the west side of the Castle Hill was largely open ground, depicting only a road down to the River Lune, towards The Marsh. Subsequent town plans frequently excluded the area beyond the plot occupied by the Friends Meeting House (established 1709) although roads are depicted leading westward; one labelled 'Lane into fields' (Doctor 1684) probably gives a fair indication of the type and level of activity on the western side of the town. Whilst the medieval history of the area remains unknown it would seem likely that, as in later periods, the land here, on the outskirts of the town, was in agricultural use.
- 4.2 The evaluation revealed no significant archaeological features or finds. This lack of Roman or Medieval remains supports the widely held views that this area was outside the core of the Medieval and Roman settlements (*Section 4.1*). However, the relatively shallow nature of the deposits observed for an urban site may also indicate that the subsoils have been truncated and that any archaeological evidence that may once have been present has been removed. Given that the site is located on the side of a hill, it is quite likely that the area was terraced to provide a suitable building platform prior to the construction of the coaching house courtyard in the nineteenth century.
- 4.3 The sub-rounded nature of the stones, the large quantities of gravels and sands, and the banding within the sand and gravel layers of the natural subsoils, suggest that these were alluvial deposits, and potentially a product of glacial action, bearing in mind that it is part way up a hill.

5. ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 IMPACT

- 5.1.1 The assessment and evaluation have highlighted the archaeological potential of the locality around the study area, being within the vicinity of both the Roman fort and Medieval Castle on Castle Hill. The evaluation trench, however, did not recover evidence of settlement or associated artefactual material, earlier than the construction of the nineteenth century coaching house, that would be affected by the proposed development.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.2.1 The evaluation of the site of the proposed housing development at County Hotel Garage, County Street, Lancaster has not revealed any archaeological features which would be compromised by the proposed development, and the identified resource was not of sufficient archaeological importance to justify recommending any further formal archaeological work.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

NB. sources used as background information but not directly quoted in the text are included here

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APPENDIX 1
PROJECT DESIGN

**Lancaster
University
Archaeological
Unit**

October 1997

**COUNTY HOTEL GARAGE,
COUNTY STREET,
LANCASTER**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Proposals

The following project design is offered in response to a verbal brief provided by Lancashire County Council, on behalf of Norman Jackson Contractors Ltd, requesting an archaeological evaluation in advance of a proposed development of the County Garage site, County Street, Lancaster.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The proposed development area at County Garage site, County Street, Lancaster, occupies a location bounded by County Street to the south (SD 471617 centred) and Fairfield Road to the west and is immediately to the west of the Lancaster railway station.
- 1.2 The site has been the subject of a desk-based archaeological assessment (LUAU 1997), which has outlined the nature of the finds from the area around the garage, the archaeological potential of the site itself, and the post-medieval history of the area since it was built up from the late eighteenth century onwards.
- 1.3 The main interest of the site lies in the discovery of a Roman Cemetery close to the west of the site (LUAU 1997, 15). There is no information regarding Roman activity within the development area but, given the proximity of the site to the Roman Fort on Castle Hill, there is the possibility that subterranean evidence survives at the site.
- 1.4 It appears that the site remained largely undeveloped in the historical period until the nineteenth century (LUAU 1997, 15) and the only other evidence of post-roman date will take the form of medieval and earlier post-medieval field boundaries. The main development of the site seems to have occurred following the construction of the railway and the present buildings were in place by 1893, when a steam-powered saw mill was built.
- 1.5 The Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU) has considerable experience of the assessment, evaluation, and excavation of sites of all periods, having undertaken a great number of small and large projects during the past 17 years. Evaluations have taken place within the planning process, to fulfil the requirements of clients and planning authorities, to very rigorous timetables. LUAU has considerable knowledge of the archaeology of Lancaster, having undertaken many excavations and evaluations over the years in areas such as Church Street, Penny Street, Damside Street, Pye's Warehouse, Market Hall, Brock Street and also within and around Lancaster Castle.
- 1.6 LUAU has the professional expertise and resource to undertake the project detailed below to a high level of quality and efficiency. LUAU and all its members of staff operate subject to the Institute of Field Archaeology (IFA) Code of Conduct.

2. METHODS STATEMENT

- 2.1 The aim of the below-ground evaluation is to confirm the presence or absence of buried deposits of archaeological significance. This aim will be achieved by means of the excavation of a single long machine-dug trench, which will be cut through the centre of the courtyard. The precise location of the trench will be discussed at the start of the evaluation with the County Archaeologist, in the light of the services map and information on the extent and condition of below ground petrol storage tanks. It is anticipated, however, that the trench will be up to 24m long and will be restricted to the south by fuel tanks and to the north by drains. A further trench may be excavated east/west across the courtyard, subject to the results of the excavation of the north/south trench and an agreement with the client and the County Archaeologist. The costs (section 9) do not make provision for this east/west trench, which would have to be costed separately.
- 2.2 Modern surfaces and obvious nineteenth to twentieth century deposits, of little or no archaeological significance, will be removed by machine. A 1.5m wide toothless ditching bucket will be used during excavation.
- 2.3 Excavation will be continued by machine to the top of archaeological deposits. Excavation by hand will be undertaken in order to investigate any features or deposits of archaeological interest. Cut features, such as pits and postholes, will normally be half-sectioned, linear features will be sectioned as appropriate to at least a 10% sample, and extensive layers will, where possible, be sampled by partial rather than complete removal. No deposits of archaeological significance will be completely removed unless this proves unavoidable, and only following agreement with the County Archaeologist.

- 2.4 Any non-modern artefacts encountered will be recovered, recorded, and spot-dated by LUAU's finds specialist.
- 2.5 Selective bulk samples will be taken from any deposits which may have potential for the recovery of ecofactual evidence and palaeoenvironmental remains. Any materials recovered will be rapidly examined by the Environmental Archaeology Unit, York University, in order to determine the importance of the deposits for preservation or further work during mitigation.
- 2.6 Results of the evaluation will be recorded using a system, based on that used by Central Archaeology Service of English Heritage. The archive will include both a photographic record and accurate large scale plans and section drawings of any meaningful features, surfaces, and sections. All artefacts and ecofacts will be recorded using the system, and will be handled and stored according to standard practice (following current Institute of Field Archaeologists guidelines) in order to minimise deterioration. Samples will be collected for technological, pedological, palaeoenvironmental and chronological analysis, if appropriate. If necessary, access to conservation advice and facilities can be made available. LUAU maintains close relationships with Ancient Monuments Laboratory staff at the Universities of Durham and York and, in addition, employs artefact and palaeoecology specialists with considerable expertise in the investigation, excavation and finds management of sites of all periods and types, who are readily available for consultation. Any conservation advice is costed in as an additional contingency.
- 2.7 An evaluation report will collate and analyse the data generated by 2.1 - 2.6 above, to provide an assessment of the location, depth, chronology and importance of the archaeological deposits, in a regional and local context.

3. HEALTH AND SAFETY AND INSURANCE

- 3.1 LUAU provides a Health and Safety Statement for all projects and maintains a Unit safety policy. As Principal Contractor on site LUAU would provide a written Health and Safety Plan. 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 (1991). 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 Full regard will be given to all constraints (services, proximity to standing buildings, etc) during the excavation of the trenches. As a matter of course, a U-Scan device is used prior to the commencement of excavation. It is understood that the site will be closed during the evaluation and that there will be no public access to the site. It is also understood that overhead cables across the yard will be removed by the client prior to the implementation of the evaluation programme.
- 3.4 No excavation will be undertaken below a depth of 1.25m without adequate shoring. However, if it proves necessary to excavate below these depths then there will be a requirement to draw upon contingency funding to cover shoring costs. Any excavation to these depths will be subject to agreement with the client and the County Archaeologist.
- 3.5 LUAU holds Professional Indemnity insurance to a limit of £2 million in any one claim (£1 million for pollution claims).
- 3.6 All other terms and conditions will be in accordance with LUAU's standard legal agreement, unless otherwise agreed by both parties.

4. ARCHIVE

- 4.1 The results of the evaluation 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). 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 quantified, ordered, and indexed project archive in an appropriate repository is considered an essential and integral element of all archaeological projects by the Institute of Field Archaeologists in that organisation's Code of Conduct. The expense of preparing such an archive is part of the project's cost, but only represents a very small proportion of the total. The project archive would be deposited, as appropriate, with Lancaster Museum and Lancashire Record Office, in agreement with the Client and the relevant bodies.

- 4.1.2 The textual archive will be provided both as a printed document and on computer disks as ASCII files. Any drawings will be provided as originals; copies of drawings from other sources will be provided as photocopies.

5. REPORT

- 5.1 One bound copy of a written synthetic report will be submitted to the Client, and a further copy will be submitted to the County Archaeologist. The report will be produced in a format similar to this Project Design, subject to any comments from the Client. It will include:

- details of any agreed variations on the project design
- a method statement
- an analysis of the data generated by 2.1 to 2.7 above, to assess the location, depth, quality, and importance of the archaeological remains or deposits
- illustrative material will include a site plan locating the trenches, at a suitable scale, indicating National Grid, feature plans and sections, as appropriate. Heights above OD will be given related to plans and sections
- bibliography of all sources used
- recommendations on the need or otherwise for any mitigation measures to offset the impact of the development on archaeological deposits.

5.2 CONFIDENTIALITY

- 5.2.1 The report is designed as a document for the specific use of the Client, for the particular purpose as defined in this project design, 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 or for any other explicit purpose can be fulfilled, but will require separate discussion and funding.

6. PROJECT MONITORING

- 6.1 Any proposed changes to this project design will be agreed with the Client and the Lancaster County Archaeologist. LUAU will arrange a preliminary meeting if required, and will inform the Lancaster County Archaeologist of the commencement of the project, by telephone, during the preceding week.

7. WORK TIMETABLE

The phases of work would comprise:

- 7.1 ***Evaluation trial trenching***
Two days would be required to undertake this work.
- 7.2 ***Post-excavation***
One day would be necessary to undertake the finds and excavation assessment.
- 7.3 ***Preparation of archive and report***
To be completed and submitted within three weeks following completion of all fieldwork

7.4 Site work could commence within one week of approval being given and access assured, and can be completed within two days, subject to no further constraints on access and working methods being imposed beyond the control of LUAU.

7.5 The final report will be completed within three weeks of completion of fieldwork. If required, an interim report can be submitted within one week of completion of fieldwork, providing sufficient information for planning purposes.

8. RESOURCES

8.1 The total cost quoted on the accompanying sheet is a fixed price, inclusive of all management, overheads, and other disbursement costs (travel and expenses), to undertake the programme of work as defined in the project brief and this project design. Any other variations from this programme of work at the Clients' direction will require recosting.

8.2 STAFFING

8.2.1 The project will be under the management of **Jamie Quartermaine, BA, Surv Dip MIFA** (LUAU Project Manager), to whom all correspondence should be addressed.

APPENDIX 2 CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

GENERAL STRATIGRAPHY

<i>Context No.</i>	<i>Description</i>
1.	0.08m depth of rounded cobbles, which was bedded on a layer of fine sand [2]. This is the former cobbled surface of the yard.
2.	A 20-50mm deep deposit of pale yellow sand, overlain by the cobbles of the courtyard surface [1]. This was clearly the foundation deposit for the cobbles.
3.	A 0.3-0.45m deep stony silty clay deposit, containing some modern pottery, brick fragments, cables and pipes. 50% of the stone material is sub-rounded and up to 0.10m in diameter. There was some localised banding corresponding to tip deposits.
4.	0.4-0.5m deep deposit of dark brown gravels, overlain by [2] and [3]. The gravels are markedly finer in the centre of the trench and towards the northern end. It overlies [5].
5.	A reddish-brown gravelly, sandy clay containing 50% large (>0.3m diam.) and small sub-rounded stones, with occasional gravel or sand patches. This is overlain by [3 and 4] and is greater than 1m in depth. All three contexts appear to be natural hill-wash/alluvial deposits.

FILLS OF THE CUT AT THE SOUTHERN END OF TRENCH

<i>Context No.</i>	<i>Description</i>
6.	A cut at the extreme southern end of the trench. It was filled by [7 - 12]. The ceramic material is generally twentieth century in date. It was found to extend to a depth of 1.4m. It is in the immediate proximity of a petrol tank, and there is an implication that this is a pit excavated during the laying of the tank.
7-10	A series of four banded layers of dumped material containing much ash, sand, brick and modern ceramic material. It extends to a maximum depth of 0.65m. It overlies [11].
11	A redeposited reddish brown sandy stony clay, mixed with a higher percentage of clay and occasional brick and tile fragments. It extends to a depth of 1.3m below ground surface.

- 12 A mixed mid-brown sandy clay deposit with some brick fragments. It was overlain by [11].

ILLUSTRATIONS

- Figure 1 Site Location Plan, 1:25,000
- Figure 2 Trench Location Plan
- Figure 3 Trench Plan

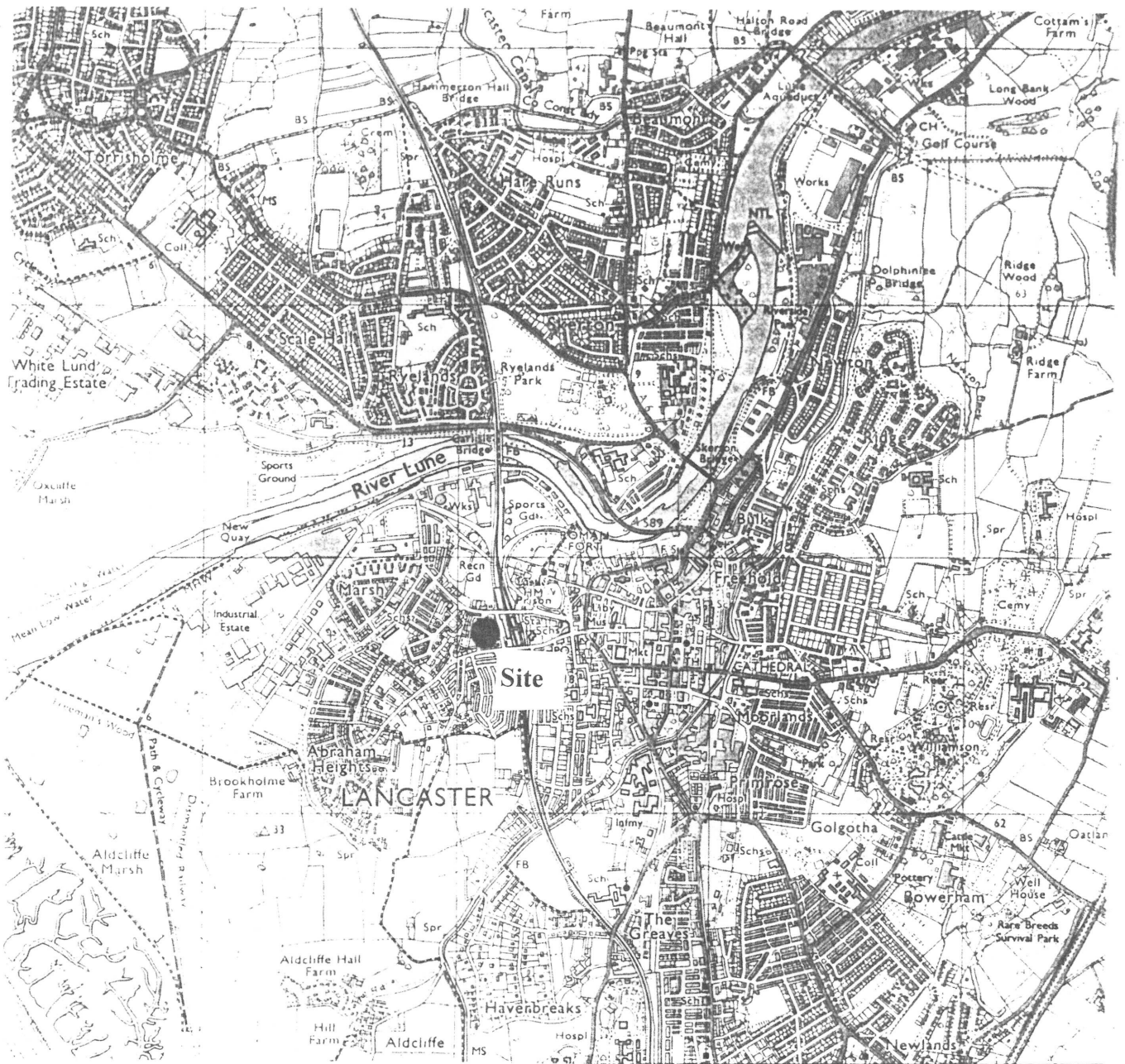


Fig 1: site location plan

COUNTY HOTEL GARAGE
 ARCHAEOLOGICAL
 EVALUATION

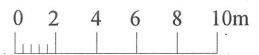
DRAWING NAME:

Figure 2
 Trench Location Map

LOCATION:

COMMISSIONED & FUNDED BY:





NORMAN JACKSON
 CONTRACTORS LTD



DRAWN BY: CW

DATE: 11/1997

KEY

-  Land Drain
-  Metal Pipe
-  Sondage
-  Fine Gravels

LANCASTER UNIVERSITY
 ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT



Fig 2 Trench Location Plan

COUNTY HOTEL GARAGE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION

DRAWING NAME:

Figure 3
Trench Plan

LOCATION:

COMMISSIONED & FUNDED BY:





NORMAN JACKSON
CONTRACTORS LTD



DRAWN BY: CW

DATE: 11/1997

KEY

-  Land Drain
-  Metal Pipe
-  Sondage
-  Fine Gravels

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

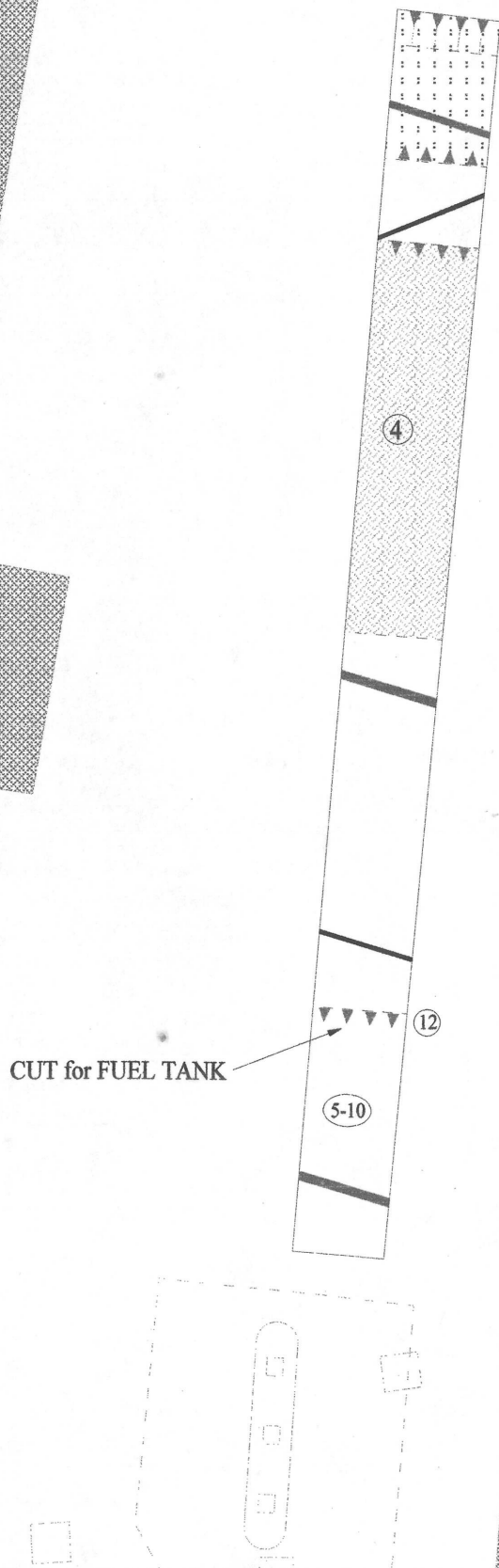


Fig 3 Trench Plan