

October 2001

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**PEEL HALL, WARRINGTON**  
**CHESHIRE**

**Evaluation Report**

Peel Hall, Warrington,  
Cheshire

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Archaeological Evaluation Report

Report no 2000-2001/101/AUA8152

Checked by Project Manager. ..... Date
Passed for submission to client. ..... Date

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October 2001

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## SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in July 2001 of the area around Peel Hall, Warrington, Cheshire (centred at NGR SJ 6150 9165), by Lancaster University Archaeological Unit, on behalf of CPM Planning and Design Ltd for Satnam Millennium Ltd. The work comprised a programme of trial trenching to determine the character and extent of the archaeological resource within the area. The evaluation involved the excavation of 0.5% of the site and comprised 36 trenches, mostly 50m in length. The trenches were targeted to give maximum coverage of the area, and within areas of greatest archaeological potential, as informed by the desk-based assessment undertaken by CPM. Several areas within the site, however, were not evaluated because of ecological constraints.

The principal known site within the development area was a moat which was first documented in the thirteenth century when the manor of Houghton (as then called) was granted by Robert de Winwick to the Southworth family. On the Tithe map of 1840 a 'U'-shaped building is shown within a sub-rectangular moat, but by the time of the OS first edition (1849) the structure was no longer depicted and had presumably been demolished.

The evaluation revealed significant remains of the moated site associated with the demolished Peel Hall, identifying the existence and position of three large ditches, presumably the sides of the moat, although one does not coincide with evidence from the 1840 tithe map. In addition, the remains of a post-built structure set into the northern section of moat were identified, which was presumably a bridge. It has also shown that the moat fill was waterlogged, and contained quantities of preserved timber, probably relating to the former Peel Hall. The evaluation discovered dressed sandstone footings within the platform of the moat which may have been a component of the former Peel Hall.

A series of deep cut features, of unclear date and function, was identified in the north-eastern part of the site. Whilst later post-medieval pottery was recovered from the upper fills of several of the features, that recovered towards the base of the fills was of medieval / early post-medieval date.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU) would like to thank Ben Stephenson, Archaeology Consultant, CPM Environmental Planning and Design, Colin Griffiths, Satnam Millennium Ltd, and Mark Leah, Archaeology Officer, Cheshire County Council, for their interest and support during the project. Thanks also go to Mark Olly for his interest and useful local knowledge. LUAU would also like to thank Dr Allan Hall of the Environmental Archaeology Unit at the University of York for his advice about the archaeobotanical record in Cheshire.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Chris Wild, Neil Wearing and Sean Jackson. The report was written by Chris Wild, the finds analysis was by Chris Howard-Davis, the environmental analysis was by Elizabeth Huckerby, and the drawings were by Emma Carter; the report was edited by Jamie Quartermaine and Rachel Newman. The project was managed by Jamie Quartermaine.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF PROJECT

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation has been undertaken of the study area at Peel Hall, Warrington (centred at NGR SJ 6150 9165; Fig 1) by Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU), on behalf CPM Environmental Planning and Design, for Satnam Millennium Ltd, in advance of the proposed development of the site for housing and other uses. The programme of work was undertaken during July 2001, and comprised the excavation of 36 trial trenches, the results of which are presented within this report.
- 1.1.2 This report sets out the results of the work in the form of a short document which outlines the findings, followed by a statement of the archaeological potential of the area, and an evaluation of the impact of the proposed development.

### 1.2 TOPOGRAPHICAL AND GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 1.2.1 **Topography:** the site lies on the north-eastern outskirts of Warrington, flanked by housing developments on the eastern, southern and western sides; the M62 motorway forms the northern boundary of the study area. The topography comprises a gentle slope from the western edge of the study area (c18m OD) to the central part, around Peel Hall. To the east the land is almost flat. The site is former arable field with some dense scrub cover on the edges and has in the past been deep ploughed.
- 1.2.2 **Geology:** the area lies within the Mersey Valley and comprises Triassic red sandstone beneath deep superficial deposits of alluvial silts and wind blown sand. There are also large deposits of glacial boulder clay with pockets of gravels and sand (Countryside Commission 1998). There is also a slight occurrence of peat within the site, particularly towards the west, but it is very shallow and patchy.

### 1.3 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 1.3.1 **Prehistoric:** the earliest archaeological evidence recorded by the documentary study (CPM 1999) is a Neolithic axe (CSMR 569; approx SJ 610 900), found at an unspecified location, somewhere near Orford to the south of the site. A Bronze Age round barrow (CSMR 571/1/3) lies c1km to the north of the site (SJ 6189 9358), with a second possible round barrow (CSMR 2412; SJ 6050 9230) located only 400m to the north-east of the present site.
- 1.3.2 **Roman:** Roman activity has been demonstrated within the environs of the site; the Roman road between Warrington (*Veratinum*) and Wigan (*Cuccium*) (CSMR 614/1; SJ 6037 9100) passes c500m to the west of the site, and Roman coins have been found at Hulme (CSMR 580; SJ 6070 9110) at c1km to the south-west of the site. Aerial photographs suggest a settlement (CSMR 2411; SJ 6120 9260) c500m to the north of the site, which is potentially of Roman date. Similarly, the cropmark of a rectangular enclosure has been identified at Midhops Farm (SJ 6192 9208), which is no more than 100m from the present site; though undated it has the potential to be of Roman or prehistoric date (CPM 1999).

- 1.3.3 **Early Medieval:** excavation near the Bronze Age round barrow (SMR 571/1/3; SJ 6189 9358) revealed a substantial pre-Norman cemetery (SMR 625/1; SJ 6189 9358), with several hundred graves identified from an area of only 1500m<sup>2</sup>; although such a structure has not been identified, the presence of such a large cemetery would suggest the existence of an associated church or at least a cross at the site. A pre-Norman cross was, however, recovered in the last century, from the churchyard of St Oswald's Church at Winwick (SMR 570/1/1; SJ6039 9280), c1km to the north-east of the site (CPM 1999) and c1.7km from the cemetery. Although the earliest fabric of St Oswald's church is from the thirteenth century, this may have been established on the site of an earlier church.
- 1.3.4 **Medieval and Post-medieval:** three manors, Houghton, Middleton and Arbury, were granted by Robert de Winwick to the Southworth family in the thirteenth century (Baines 1891; Farrer and Brownbill 1911, 167), and Matthew de Southworth held the capital messuage by 1329 (*ibid*). Myddleton Hall (SMR 583/1; SJ 6200 9297) is to the north of the site, Arbury (SMR 585/1; SJ 6127 9280) to the north-west of the site, and Houghton (formerly Houghton Peel) corresponds to the site of the present day Peel Hall (SMR 585) and lies within the study area. The building within the moat was still depicted on the Tithe map of 1840 (LRO DRL 1/38), had a 'U'-shaped outline, and was in the centre of a sub-rectangular moat with surviving western, northern and southern sides. Extending eastwards from the site was the principal road across a causeway over the moat in the direction of the present farm buildings, where a barn structure was shown. By the time of the OS first edition (1849) the whole area of the moat and original farm had become absorbed into an area of woodland and was not depicted at all.
- 1.3.5 Cartographic evidence shows that by the time of the earliest maps (LRO DRL 1/38; 1840) the area was in exclusively agricultural use with small fields radiating out from Peel Hall Farm to the south and west; to the east are larger fields which have been enlarged by the removal of field boundaries.



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## 2. METHODOLOGY

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### 2.1 PROJECT SPECIFICATION

- 2.1.1 A project specification (*Appendix 1*) was supplied to LUAU in February 2001 by CPM, for an archaeological evaluation of the site around Peel Hall, Warrington, which was in accordance with a verbal brief by Mark Leah, Archaeology Officer for Cheshire County Council.
- 2.1.2 The project specification provided for a 0.5% area of trial trenching, consisting of 36 trenches, to determine the nature of possible archaeological features within the extent of the study area, yet concentrating on the moated site at Peel Hall. Parts of the site are of ecological importance, notably Radley Plantation, an area of rough grassland to the south of it, and also an area of rush pasture in the western part of the study area. All these areas were excluded from the trenching programme as defined within the project specification.
- 2.1.3 Following completion of the trial trenching programme, and the recovery of potentially significant environmental samples from the fill of the moat and of ditches elsewhere on the site, the Archaeology Officer for Cheshire County Council required a programme of macrofossil assessment on the samples. The results of this assessment are presented in this report (*Section 3.6*). In all other respects the evaluation has been carried out in accordance with the project specification.

### 2.2 EVALUATION TRENCHING

- 2.2.1 **Excavation Methodology:** the excavation trenching was undertaken by a mechanical excavator (a 13 ton tracked 360° excavator) fitted with a 2.1m toothless ditching bucket, followed by hand cleaning for the purposes of examining archaeological detail. All excavation was carried out stratigraphically, whether by machine or by hand. The depth and character of the natural subsoil was identified in all trenches, and on completion the trenches were mechanically backfilled, laying the topsoil on top of subsoils.
- 2.2.2 **Recording:** the recording methods employed by LUAU accord with those recommended by English Heritage's Centre for Archaeology (CFA). Recording was principally in the form of *pro forma* Trench Sheets for each trench, which recorded the orientation, length, and depth of machining, and described the nature of the topsoil, subsoil (where applicable), and geological deposits. Where there were anticipated significant archaeological features, such as in the area of the moated site, or where significant features were identified, the features and deposits were recorded using *pro forma* context sheets based on those designed by MoLAS and English Heritage's Centre for Archaeology (CFA). A full textual, drawn, and photographic record was maintained for all deposits and features.
- 2.2.3 The positions of the trenches were recorded using a Global Positioning System (GPS) which provides for accuracies of +/- 0.2m. The locational information was incorporated with digital map data within a CAD system to create the location map (Fig 2).

## 2.3 FINDS

- 2.3.1 All finds recovered were bagged and recorded by context number; all finds were retained for analysis and were recorded and have been processed and temporarily stored according to standard practice (following current Institute of Field Archaeologists guidelines). The finds have been analysed by the LUAU in-house finds specialist (*Section 3.5*).

## 2.4 PLANT MACROFOSSIL ASSESSMENT

- 2.4.1 **Quantification:** three bulk samples, one from moat fill **3001** and the other two from ditch fills **1609** and **1604**, were assessed for plant macrofossils.
- 2.4.2 **Preparation:** a one litre subsample from moat fill **3001** was wet sieved through sieves of 2mm and 500 $\mu$  mesh sizes. The samples from ditch fills **1609** (10 litres) and **1604** (8 litres) were floated and the flot retained on a 500 $\mu$  mesh and dried. A small representative sample of the residue from fill **3001** and the flots from ditch fills **1609** and **1604** were examined with a low power Wild/ Leitz stereozoom microscope to assess for plant macrofossils. The nature of the matrices of the flots from the ditch fills was also recorded. The heavy mineral fraction was rapidly scanned to supplement the information about each matrix. In both samples the carbonised and uncarbonised seeds were recorded as a presence or absence, and other material was recorded on a scale of 1-5 (where 1 = rare and 5 = very abundant); the results are presented in Tables 1 and 2 (*Section 3.6*).

## 2.5 ARCHIVE

- 2.5.1 A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with the project design and in accordance with current IFA and EH guidelines (English Heritage 1991). The paper, finds and digital archive will be deposited, as appropriate, with Cheshire Museums Service and a copy to the Cheshire Record Office, in agreement with the Client.

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### 3. EVALUATION RESULTS

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#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1.1 Over the majority of the site, the evaluation produced evidence typical of an agricultural landscape within the region, revealing evidence of ditches, drains and ploughing. The stratigraphy of the site as a whole was very shallow, with modern disturbance along the motorway corridor at the northern edge. Two parts of the site, however, revealed features of archaeological significance; the north-eastern part of the study area produced evidence of relatively deep ditches, potentially similar to those identified within the putative late prehistoric / Romano-British enclosure to the north of the site at Midhops Farm (SJ 6192 9208; M Leah pers comm). The area around the site of Peel Hall also revealed significant features relating to the moat and probable structures on the moat platform.
- 3.1.2 In total, 36 trenches were excavated. Initially these were positioned to provide a good general coverage of the study area, with the exception of the ecologically sensitive area in the east, which had a reduced amount of trenching, and the area of the moated site which had a greater density of trenching. Following discussions with Mark Leah (Archaeology Officer, Cheshire County Council) and Ben Stephenson (Archaeology Consultant, CPM) it was decided to increase the concentration of trenching in the north-eastern part of the study area to investigate the extent of a ditch identified in Trench 02. The detailed descriptions of the individual trenches is presented in *Appendix 2*, and the significant results are summarised below.

#### 3.2 NORTH-EASTERN AREA

- 3.2.1 Four trenches (Trenches 01, 02, 03 and 6) were initially excavated in the north-eastern part of the site (Figs 2 and 6). Trenches 01 and 03 revealed up to 1.5m of dumped hardcore and clay, associated with the construction of the motorway to the north, which overlay natural sands; no archaeological features were identified in either trench. The excavation of Trench 06 revealed natural silty sands at a depth of c0.3m, disturbed only by an occasional root-bole. Trench 02, however, revealed the butt-end of a steep-sided, and relatively deep (0.96m) ditch (**202**), which was cut into the natural silty sands and clay. The ditch was 1.9m wide, aligned approximately north-east / south-west (Figs 5 and 6), and was filled with a dark grey silty-sand, **201**, containing occasional charcoal flecks. One sherd of abraded medieval pottery was also recovered from the feature (*Section 3.5.8*).
- 3.2.2 Subject to discussions with the Archaeology Officer for Cheshire County Council, it was agreed that additional trenches be excavated on either side of Trench 02 to investigate the extent of the steep-sided ditch, **202**. Trench 17, to the north, revealed some tree-bole disturbance to the natural silty sands, and a very shallow (0.1m deep), probably truncated, linear feature, **1702**. This contained nineteenth century pottery in its base, and probably represents the base of a field boundary ditch. Trench 16, to the south of Trench 02, revealed the sub-rounded southern termini of three features, **1605**, **1607** and **1608**, which were probably ditches, and a possible post-hole, **1614**, cut into the natural sands and clay (Figs 5 and 6). The three features were sectioned, to examine the relationship between them, but the

similarity of the leached silty sand fills, and seasonal waterlogging of the soil, made distinctions between them almost impossible. It was apparent, however, that the central feature, **1607**, was cut into the outer features, **1605** and **1608** (Fig 5). The relationship was further complicated by a nineteenth century land drain, the butt-end of which had been cut into the centre of the central ditch, **1607**. Two sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from the lower part of the eastern fill (**1604**) of feature **1605**, dating to the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries (*Section 3.5.7*). The possible post hole, **1614**, was roughly square, with vertical sides and a flat base, and was only 0.08m deep. No finds were recovered from the feature, which appeared to have been truncated.

- 3.2.3 Following further discussion with the Archaeology Officer, Cheshire County Council, it was decided to excavate a further trench (Trench 36) to the south to investigate the southern extent of these archaeologically significant features (**1605**, **1607** and **1608**). The trench was opened purely to establish the presence or absence of features similar to those in Trenches 02 and 16, and there was no requirement to excavate any archaeological remains fully. Excavation and manual cleaning of the trench revealed a wide linear feature, aligned roughly north-west / south-east, which was cut by modern land drains, a sub-circular feature, potentially similar to those in Trench 16, and a smaller linear feature, cutting the eastern edge of the trench. Medieval pottery was recovered from surface cleaning of the eastern two features (*Section 3.5.7*).

### 3.3 MOATED AREA

- 3.3.1 Three trenches (30, 31 and 32) were excavated in the area of the moat (Fig 3). Trench 30 was a 53m long trench across the area of the moated site, which identified two deep ditches, one at each end of the trench; these were potentially parts of the moat. The western ditch, **3002**, was 19m wide and at least 3.2m deep; it approximately corresponds to the position of the moat, as abstracted from the Tithe map (LRO DRL 1/38 (1840)) and superimposed on the OS 1:10,000 base (Fig 3), although it is substantially wider than that shown on the Tithe map. The eastern ditch, **3011**, was at least 10m wide and was greater than 2.1m deep; by contrast with ditch **3002**, it does not coincide with the position of the eastern moat section as depicted on the Tithe map, being c16m short of the depicted moat edge. Trench 30, as defined within the specification, did not extend sufficiently to the east in order to examine the plotted position of the eastern line of the moat (as shown on the Tithe map) (Fig 3); in addition, at the time the fieldwork was undertaken the map analysis was not available and therefore the potential significance was not fully understood. The eastern ditch, as identified in Trench 30, is either not the moat in its final form or the depiction on the Tithe map is severely inaccurate. The Tithe map in other respects appears to correspond relatively closely to the modern 1:10,000 OS map and does not appear to have sufficient errors to create this level of discrepancy; however, the possibility exists that this discrepancy reflects survey error on the Tithe map. Alternatively, it is possible that this ditch is not that depicted on the nineteenth century map, and potentially it may be an earlier line of the moat.
- 3.3.2 Between ditches **3002** and **3011** there was a substantial deposit of redeposited clay, apparently forming a building platform, and large quantities of this clay, **3003**, had been pushed into the moat, sealing it on the western side; this was a late event in the filling of the moat and possibly occurred following the demolition of the Hall.

The northern return of the moat, **3203**, was observed in Trench 32, but only its southern edge was identified; it was, however, at least 6.8m wide and was deeper than 1.9m. The position of this ditch approximately correlated with the moat shown on the Tithe map (LRO DRL 1/38 (1840); Fig 3). The three identified ditches were all deep, wide, and flat-bottomed, with relatively gently sloping sides, and each had peaty organic primary silts that were about 1.8m below the surface and at least 1.4m thick (Fig 4). A relatively large amount of mid-seventeenth century pottery (*Section 3.5.7*) was recovered from the lower fills of the ditches in both Trenches 30 and 32, with large quantities of nineteenth and twentieth century pottery and debris in the upper parts. The mid-seventeenth century pottery probably indicates a *terminus post quem* for the date when the moat was last cleaned, and the nineteenth / twentieth century ceramics potentially indicate when it was finally backfilled and levelled.

- 3.3.3 Also revealed in Trench 32 was evidence of timber supports, possibly for a bridge, **3201**; these comprised two vertically set posts, probably of oak, observed at a depth of 1.9m below present ground level set within the primary fill of the moat. Both posts were sub-circular in cross-section and measured c0.3m diameter; they were set only c0.2m apart and their alignment was orientated north-west/south-east, along the line of the moat. A third post, **3202**, was 1.6m to the south of the other two, and appeared to be set at an angle, about 30° from the horizontal. A detailed record of the posts was not possible as there was a risk of collapse of the trench sides, limiting access to the trench for both cleaning and surveying; the plan in Figure 4 is thus schematic, being drawn from outside the trench. Adjacent to the third upright was a c2m long, 0.25m wide timber set in the base, and along the line, of the moat, with a series of seven c0.2m x 0.1m small elongated timbers set horizontally, in part beneath the large timber; these short timbers were roughly dressed, of rectangular cross-section, and were set 0.2m apart with struts set between them. The timbers were probably not *in-situ*; they do, however, form a coherent unit, perhaps the remains of a timber structure that had collapsed into the ditch. Alternatively, they may have been deliberately placed in this position, thereby reusing the material for some secondary purpose.
- 3.3.4 Trench 31, positioned in the centre of the moated platform (Fig 2), revealed a clay subsoil with small sub-circular features cut into it. These were all shallow (<0.1m deep) and were filled with exclusively nineteenth and twentieth century material. The clay layer itself probably formed part of a built-up moat platform. At the north-western end of the trench a sub-rectangular red sandstone wall foundation, **3101**, cut into the clay, at a height of 10.27m OD (Fig 3; Plate 2). The feature comprised a single course of roughly dressed red sandstone blocks, up to 0.72m x 0.30m in size, which apparently formed the northern end of a north-east / south-west aligned structure, faced to the east; it was 1.6m wide at its north-eastern end. The feature extended into the south-western section of the trench, and was partially overlain by further sandstone rubble. Behind the facing was loose silty clay and sand, containing numerous sandstone pieces.
- 3.3.5 Trench 24, situated c120m to the south-east of the moated area, revealed a possible boundary or hollow way orientated towards the moated site. This comprised a gently sloping 'U'-shaped feature, **2402**, 5.7m wide, which was cut into the natural silty clay. The feature was 0.7m deep, was waterlogged in the base, and was filled with a dark-brown wet silty loam, containing a fragment of sandstone against its southern side. It was aligned approximately north-west / south-west and, even with

the height of vegetation at the time of the evaluation, it corresponded to a slight surface hollow that extended north-west, towards the moated site. Parallel to **2402** was a similarly aligned, ditched field boundary, **2401**. This was 2.5m wide and 0.19m deep, and was 10.5m to the south of the larger feature.

### 3.4 GENERAL FEATURES

- 3.4.1 **Field Boundaries / Ditches:** several trenches produced features typical of post-medieval agricultural activity. A linear feature, shown as a field boundary on the Tithe map (LCRO DRL 1/38; 1840) and on the OS first edition map (1849), was observed within Trench 5 (Fig 2), measuring 1.3m wide and up to 0.8m deep. A large modern pit, c2m deep and c4m in diameter, was observed to the north, filled with modern brick, wood and plastic. Shallow field boundary / ditch features were also observed in Trenches 08, 09, 10, 11, 13, 19, and 20 (Fig 2). Most contained nineteenth/twentieth century pottery, although one sherd of early post-medieval pottery was recovered from the fill of the ditch in Trench 11, **1101** (Section 3.5.7).
- 3.4.2 **Drainage Features:** ceramic land drains were observed in nearly all the trenches. Most appear to be of late nineteenth century origin or later, and there was no typical alignment for drainage; in several trenches the drains intersected each other at oblique angles. A soakaway, filled with sandstone fragments, was observed in Trench 27 (Fig 2). Given the boggy nature of the site, it would appear that drainage was a constant problem, with many attempts to improve the land.
- 3.4.3 **Structures:** evidence of a structure was observed in Trench 35, in the south-western part of the study area (Fig 2). It comprised a concrete foundation, 0.6m wide on a roughly north-east / south-west alignment, with a south-eastern return. The exposed interior of the feature was filled with rubble, and it appears to have had an associated pit, that was larger than 1.5m<sup>2</sup>, and was served by at least two ceramic drains.

### 3.5 FINDS

- 3.5.1 A total of 129 fragments of artefacts or ecofacts was recovered, of which, the majority derived from ceramic vessels. Small amounts of glass, animal bone, wood, leather, and ironwork were also present, but none in significant quantities. Material was recovered from Trenches 02, 08, 11, 16, 30, 31, 32, and 36, with most being recovered from Trenches 30 and 32, associated with the moated site.
- 3.5.2 **Pottery:** a small amount of medieval pottery was recovered, in small fragments and badly abraded. None was particularly diagnostic and no date more refined than the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries is possible, although the material concentrates towards the later part of that period. The amount of medieval material is not large enough to be able to make any confident assertion with regard to activity of that period on the site, and the abraded nature of the fragments would imply that they have been considerably disturbed, possibly reaching their place of deposition as a result of agricultural activity.
- 3.5.3 Later pottery, typically of later sixteenth and seventeenth century date, survived in greater quantity and in larger fragments than the medieval material. It was unabraded, and had clearly been recovered from archaeological deposits which had remained relatively undisturbed since deposition. The preponderance of this

material is probably mid-seventeenth century in date and its presence within the moat fills could potentially reflect a recutting / cleaning of the moat in a period of upheaval associated with the Civil War. An increase in deposition at this time has been noted at a number of moated sites in the locality, including Old Abbey Farm, Risley (Howard-Davis forthcoming a) and Bewsey Old Hall (Lewis forthcoming). Indeed, the material from Trench 30, moat fill **3001**, bears a strong resemblance to material from a pit cut through the floor of the Friary Church at Warrington (Howard-Davis forthcoming b) and parallels can be found with the large assemblage of sixteenth/seventeenth century pottery from Norton Priory (Vaughan forthcoming). The vessels probably derive from a number of local potteries, not least amongst them Prescott (Holgate 1982-3) which was known to have been producing during the seventeenth century. Activity around this date can be confirmed by the recovery of a clay pipe bowl dated 1640-1670, from Trench 32, **3203**, although it should be noted that this was residual amidst material of considerably later date. It is likely that pottery and other objects continued to be deposited within the moat into the twentieth century, when it was finally backfilled.

- 3.5.4 **Glass:** all glass recovered from the evaluation was modern, with the exception of a single fragment of window quarry from Trench 30, **3001**, of seventeenth to eighteenth century date, which was probably contemporary with the group of seventeenth century pottery, although it could be later.
- 3.5.5 **Metalwork:** a single fragment of industrial residue, a typically plano-convex hearth bottom, is indicative of blacksmithing on site, but, as it was recovered in isolation in Trench 16, **1609**, no date can be offered. Fragments of hand-forged nail recovered from Trench 11, **1105**, also cannot be dated.
- 3.5.6 **Leather:** the fill of the moat, **3203**, in Trench 32 produced a small amount of waterlogged wood and leather. A poorly-preserved leather shoe sole could be as early as the seventeenth century, but, as the material from this context includes pottery likely to be of early twentieth century date, this cannot be stated with confidence.
- 3.5.7 **Timbers:** two complete timbers, and several fragments of further timbers, were recovered from the moat, **3203**, within Trench 32; three additional upright timber posts were identified, set into the lower sediments of the moat, but these were left *in-situ* and have not been subject to detailed examination. The two complete timbers appear to be wall panel staves, most probably of medieval or early post-medieval date. Both were roughly fashioned with blade tooling, rather than a saw, having crude wedge tapers at both ends; this is somewhat unusual for staves, which usually have a point at the upper end. Both timbers have nail holes in each face, and one has a surviving lath *in-situ*, nailed with a moulded, rather than a hand drawn, nail. A maximum of eight nail holes were observed on any one face, with one nail head surviving. The timbers themselves appear much earlier than the laths, with the laths probably being added during a later phase of the structure from which the timbers originated.
- 3.5.7 **Animal Bone:** small amounts of animal bone were recovered from Trench 30, **3001**, and Trench 32, **3203**, and seem likely to represent domestic waste.
- 3.5.8 **Trench Summaries:** the following list the assemblage from each trench:
- 3.5.9 **Trench 2:** one fragment of medieval pottery was recovered from the fill of ditch **202**.

- 3.5.10 **Trench 8:** a single fragment of late field drain was recovered from the silty-sand sub-soil, **801**.
- 3.5.11 **Trench 11:** several hand-forged nails (five fragments) and a fragment of possibly early post-medieval pottery were recovered from the trench; these suggest a seventeenth century date for activity in this area.
- 3.5.12 **Trench 16:** eight fragments of pottery were recovered from this trench, which included two fragments of medieval pottery. One from the subsoil, **1601**, is very similar in fabric to the small piece from Trench 36, and the other, from ditch **1604**, is in an incompletely reduced fabric; this provides a general date in the fourteenth-sixteenth century. It is of significance that the same contexts, **1601** and **1604**, also produced fragments of possibly sixteenth/seventeenth century date, perhaps suggesting activity in this area during the transition between the medieval and post-medieval periods, with activity continuing into the mid-seventeenth century. A large fragment of hearth-bottom slag, from the fill (**1609**) of ditch **1608**, implies some blacksmithing in the vicinity, although this cannot be dated accurately.
- 3.5.13 **Trench 30:** substantial amounts of pottery were found in this trench. The material from the putative moat, fill **3001**, is of significance, providing an approximate date for its last cleaning. The majority of the vessels date from the mid-seventeenth century, and can be paralleled with material from the Civil War deposits at Beeston Castle in Cheshire (Noake 1993) and from a number of sites at Prescott (Holgate 1982-3; Cowell and Chitty 1982-3), thought to have been a producer of Black-glazed redwares during this period. What appears to be small fragments of modern brick from this context may be intrusive, or equally could potentially be of earlier date; a fragment of window glass, however, would appear to be contemporary with the pottery. Material from **3006**, a fill of ditch **3011**, is mixed, with a ceramic pan handle of possibly sixteenth/seventeenth century date associated with a complete mineral water bottle of mid-twentieth century date. A range of material was also recovered from **3016**, an upper fill of **3011**, the majority of which is of later nineteenth to earlier twentieth century date, but it incorporated an element of residual seventeenth century material.
- 3.5.14 **Trench 31:** the small group (nine fragments) from a layer, **3102**, overlying structure **3101**, is similar in composition to that from Trench 30, ditch fill **3001**. It cannot, however, be dated with precision, and might be slightly later.
- 3.5.15 **Trench 32:** a relatively substantial assemblage, was recovered, predominantly from the fill of moat **3203**. The material is varied in date, ranging from the seventeenth to the twentieth century; if, however, the single fragment of twentieth century bottle glass is disregarded, the date range is narrowed to the mid-seventeenth to late eighteenth centuries and could be seen as predominantly deriving from the earlier part of that range. Wood from structure **3202** appears to represent structural elements deposited subsequent to a period of demolition or refurbishment and there is evidence to suggest some of the wood had been reused. The shoe sole could be seventeenth century in date, but this cannot be stated with confidence.
- 3.5.16 **Trench 36:** three sherds of medieval pottery, in an orange sandy fabric with splashes of glaze, were recovered from the fill of ditch **3602**.



### 3.6 PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

- 3.6.1 **Results from ditch fills 1609 and 1604 (Trench 16):** these two samples from the north-eastern part of the site contained some well preserved plant remains of weed taxa of both damp ground (Rush, *Juncus*) and waste, open or arable land, including Corn Marigold (*Chrysanthemum segetum*), Common Sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*), Small Nettle (*Urtica urens*), and Blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus*). Both samples contained amorphous plant material, charcoal and wood fragments, and insect remains, with abundant sand and silt and some coal pieces. There was a single sherd of medieval pot in ditch fill **1604** (Section 3.5.7).
- 3.6.2 **Results from moat fill 3001 (Trench 30):** the moat fill, **3001**, was waterlogged and as a result contained excellently preserved plant and insect remains. The sample contained abundant wood, amorphous plant material and insect remains with some charcoal, monocotyledon fragments, and coal. It was very rich in well-preserved seeds, with assemblages of aquatic taxa, shrubs, weeds of open, waste or arable land and plants of wet ground.
- 3.6.3 The assemblage of weed taxa from open, waste or arable land includes Corn Marigold (*Chrysanthemum segetum*), Black Bindweed (*Polygonum convolvulus*), Common Sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*), Chickweed (*Stellaria media*), and both Stinging (*Urtica dioica*) and Small Nettle (*Urtica urens*). Woody plants are represented by large numbers of Elderberry (*Sambucus nigra*), some Blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus*), and alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) seeds. The former, together with the Nettles, suggest a nitrogen-rich soil near to the moat. Pondweed (*Potamogeton* sp), Bulrush (*Typha*), sedges (*Carex*), Rush (*Juncus*) and *Chara/Nitella* are either aquatic or wet ground plants and suggest that the moat was still partly filled with water as the deposit was forming.
- 3.6.4 **Conclusions:** the three samples, in particular the moat fill, **3001**, contained well-preserved plant and animal remains and therefore provide some evidence of the environment and landuse in the environs of Peel Hall. The plant assemblages from the three samples are indicative of communities from wet, open, waste and cultivated ground. The very large numbers of elderberry and nettle seeds in the sample from the moat fill, **3001**, are indicative of nitrogen-rich conditions adjacent to the moat area, which is to be expected close to habitation. The aquatic plants recorded from moat fill **3001** indicate the continuing presence of at least shallow water as the fill accumulated. The presence of seventeenth century material within the lower fill of the moat and the nineteenth century ceramics associated with the final backfilling (Section 3.5) suggest that the deposits were formed between these dates.

Context no		3001	1604	1609
Sample no		300	301	302
Volume processed litres		1	8	10
Amorphous organic matter		5	2	2
Monocot frags		3		
Bryophyte remains	Moss	1		1
Wood fragments		5	2	1
Charcoal fragments		2	2	4
Fly puparia		1		

Insect fragments		5	2	3
Silt and clay		2	5	5
Sand and gravel		3	5	5
Coal		3-4		1
Clinker/cinder			1	
Modern roots		2	2	1
Brick/tile		1		1
Clay pipe		1		
Medieval pot			1	
Nineteenth century pot		1		
Fabric frags				1
Earthworm cases		3		1
Fungal sclerotia		1	1	

Table 1: Palaeoenvironmental assessment of three samples (**3001**, **1604** and **1609**): matrix components recorded on a scale of 1-5 (1=rare and 5=very abundant)

<i>Alnus glutinosa</i> seed	Alder	+		
<i>Brassica</i> sp	Cabbage family	+	+	
<i>Chara/Nitella</i> oospores	Aquatic alga	+		
<i>Carex lenticular</i>	Sedge	+		
<i>Carex trigynous</i>	Sedge	+		
<i>Chenopodium album</i>	Fat Hen	+		
<i>Chrysanthemum segetum</i>	Corn Marigold			+
<i>Conium maculatum</i>	Hemlock	+		
Gramineae<2mm	Grass	+		
<i>Juncus</i>	Rush	+		+
<i>Polygonum convolvulus</i>	Black Bindweed	+		
<i>Potamogeton</i> sp	Pondweeds	+		
<i>Potentilla erecta</i> -type	Cinquefoils		+	+
<i>Prunella</i> sp	Selfheals	+		
<i>Ranunculus repens</i> -type	Creeping buttercup	+		
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg	Blackberry	+	+	
<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Common Sorrel	+		+
<i>Rumex acetosella</i>	Sheep's Sorrel	+		
<i>Rumex</i> sp	Sorrels	+		+
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elderberry	+		
<i>Stellaria media</i>	Chickweed	+		
<i>Typha</i> sp	Bulrush	+		
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Common Nettle	+		
<i>Urtica urens</i>	Small Nettle	+		+

Unknowns		+		+
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Table 2: Seeds recorded as present or absent from the palaeoenvironmental assessment of three samples (**3001**, **1604** and **1609**).

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## 4. DISCUSSION

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### 4.1 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The evaluation has revealed significant archaeological deposits within the study area, concentrated in the area of the Peel Hall moated site, and also in the north-eastern part of the site. Elsewhere the trenching revealed occasional archaeological features of lesser significance, principally relating to drainage.
- 4.1.2 **Peel Hall Moated Site:** although the layout of a sub-rectangular moat was depicted on the Tithe map (LRO DRL 1/38 1840), subsequent to this date much of the moat was backfilled and only the southern section survives as an earthwork. The evaluation, however, has confirmed the existence of three sides of the moat, of which only one side has had a complete profile recorded, **3002**, from Trench 30. This has revealed a relatively shallow, but an extremely broad (19m wide) ditch, which is unusually wide for a moat. Within the northern section was a series of structural timber posts, probably forming a bridge; its position broadly corresponds to the line of the principal access route to the site and with a causeway shown on the Tithe map (LRO DRL 1/38 (1840)). The primary fill of this moat section was waterlogged, within which were large upright timber posts, and a possibly collapsed timber structure, which has been interpreted as wall panel staves with associated studs and laths (*Section 3.5.7*). This structure does not have any direct relationship with the large uprights and was potentially an *ex-situ* section of wall, from a nearby structure, which had been cast into the base of the moat. There is, however, some possibility that it may have had some, perhaps *ad hoc*, secondary use within the moat and as such the timbers may have been placed there. Also within the moat were well-preserved organic deposits which have the potential to give a picture of the ecology of the site and its environs during the post-medieval occupation of the site.
- 4.1.3 Significant stone-founded structural remains, **3101**, were observed on the moat platform; this feature was very small (only 1.6m wide), and was probably a projection from a wall face, such as a chimney stack or an outshut. Despite its small size, it provides a strong indication that other structural remains are likely to survive on the platform. The discovery of dressed sandstone footings are of some importance as they give an indication of the structural components of at least part of Peel Hall, about which little substantial is known. The timbers observed in the moat, **3203**, within Trench 32, suggest that a structure, incorporating timber-framed components, once stood on the site prior to the infilling of the moat, and the stone structure suggests that such buildings may have had stone foundations. This is similar in character to the building on the moated site at Risley, c5km to the east (LUAU 1999).
- 4.1.4 The ditch-like feature in Trench 24, 110m to the south-east of the moat, appears to be orientated on Peel Hall, and possibly represents a hollow way extending south-east out from the Hall. No trenches, however, were excavated between Trench 24 and the moated site and thus this speculation cannot be confirmed.
- 4.1.5 **North-Eastern Area:** the series of deep cut features, identified in the north-eastern part of the site, are of unclear date and function. Whilst later post-medieval pottery was recovered from the upper fills of several of the features, that recovered towards the base of the fills was of medieval / early post-medieval date (*Section 3.5.8*).

Despite the presence of medieval material within the ditch fills, there are noted parallels of form between this site and the nearby prehistoric / Roman enclosure site at Midhops Farm (SJ 6192 9208) (M Leah pers comm) and there is consequently a degree of uncertainty as to the date and form of the complex. The presence of comparable features in Trenches 02, 16 and 36 would suggest that these were components of an interrelated complex, and the lack of features in Trench 17 does not preclude features lying elsewhere in the environs. Given the configuration of the trenches it is not possible to provide a precise indication of the extent of the complex. To the north any continuation of the complex has been lost as a result of disturbance from the construction of the M62 motorway, as identified in Trenches 01 and 03, and to the west and south it does not appear to have extended as far as Trenches 06 and 07, given the absence of related features in these trenches.

- 4.1.6 **Drainage:** the evaluation revealed that the whole site has been subject to repeated attempts at drainage, although several marshy patches and ponds still remain.

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## 5. IMPACT

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### 5.1 IMPACT

- 5.1.1 **Moated Site:** the sub-surface preservation of the moat appears to be good; the evaluation has demonstrated the survival of structural remains on the moat platform and also within the moat which was found to contain *in-situ* timbers. Although moated sites are not uncommon in this region, given the good sub-surface survival of the site, it can be regarded as being of high archaeological significance.
- 5.1.2 **North-East Area:** the ditch complex in the north-eastern area comprises substantial, deep and steep-sided ditches, containing medieval pottery, although potentially being of earlier date. The complex is potentially archaeologically sensitive and would warrant further investigation.
- 5.1.3 **Conclusions:** the proposed development will result in extensive disturbance in the areas of proposed housing and also in adjoining lands to accommodate the landscaping of the site. The two main areas of archaeological sensitivity, the moated site and the north-eastern area, are vulnerable to any ground works during construction and landscaping in their vicinity, and, given the anaerobic survival of organic deposits within the moat fills, the alteration of the drainage pattern in the area has the potential to result in the decay of such deposits.

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APPENDIX 1  
PROJECT SPECIFICATION

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## APPENDIX 2

### TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS

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**Trench No:** 1  
**Alignment:** North-east / south-west  
**Length:** 50.2m  
**Depth:** 1.50m (max)

Dark-brown topsoil, 0.4m in depth, overlay up to 1.0m of mixed silty clays intermixed with much modern backfill (brick debris and plastics). The exception to this was the north-eastern 4.0m of the trench where the same depth of topsoil overlay 0.50m of mid to pale brown silty sand subsoil, with occasional patches of mid-brown plastic clay. This subsoil deposit contained charcoal and brick flecking, and overlay less mixed, mottled pale reddish brown natural sands.

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**Trench No:** 2  
**Alignment:** East/west  
**Length:** 51.0m  
**Depth:** 1.05m

A dark-brown topsoil (0.3m in depth) overlay 0.4m of mid-brown silty sand subsoil, which was much disturbed by roots and contained charcoal flecks. This overlay natural orange/brown silty sands with occasional clay patches. The presence of iron panning and leaching was noted. The butt-end of a ditch, **201/202**, was observed towards the western end of the trench; a large tree bole was also noted in the central part of the trench.

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**Trench No:** 3  
**Alignment:** North/south  
**Length:** 50m  
**Depth:** 1.35m (max)

A dark-brown topsoil (0.35m in depth) overlay 0.6-0.7m of hardcore backfill consisting of brick, tarmac, concrete kerbstone and rubble stone, contained in a matrix of mid-brown silty sand. This overlay reddish-brown silty sand 0.4m in depth. This had occasional inclusions of brick, sandstone, charcoal, glass and tarmac, and was probably a make-up layer related to the construction of the nearby M62 motorway. No archaeological features were observed.

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**Trench No:** 4  
**Alignment:** East/west  
**Length:** 50m  
**Depth:** 0.4m

Turf and topsoil, to a depth of 0.4m, overlay varying deposits of rubble hardcore, mixed with redeposited natural sands. No archaeological features were observed.

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**Trench No:** 5  
**Alignment:** North-west/south-east  
**Length:** 50m  
**Depth:** 2.5m

At the north-west end of the trench was a 0.3m deep topsoil which overlay natural pale grey silty sands. In the south-western part of the trench (32m from south-west end) was a deposit of modern debris, which was 4m x 1.75m in extent. At 2m to the south-west of the modern debris a ditch, **501/502**, ran across the width of the trench. No finds were recovered from the ditch and no date could be assigned.

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**Trench No:** 6  
**Alignment:** East/west

**Length:** 50m  
**Depth:** 0.85m

A dark-brown topsoil, 0.35m in depth, overlay 0.5m of mixed brown / grey silty sand subsoil. Much root disturbance and occasional to moderate charcoal flecking were noted. There were no archaeological features.

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**Trench No:** 7  
**Alignment:** South-west/north-east  
**Length:** 50m  
**Depth:** 0.55m

A dark-brown topsoil (0.15m in depth) overlay 0.4m of mid-brown sandy clay subsoil. Having noted the presence of twelve post-medieval ceramic pipe drains, crossing the trench at regular intervals over a length of 45.5m, only the north-eastern 4.5m was examined in detail. This revealed one more ceramic drain and an area of iron panning.

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**Trench No:** 8  
**Alignment:** East/west  
**Length:** 50m  
**Depth:** 0.9m

A dark-brown topsoil (0.3m in depth) overlay 0.3m of orange / brown silty sand subsoil. This overlay mixed orange / brown / yellow natural sands, in which areas of iron panning were noted. At the western end of the trench a modern ditch, **804/805**, which was 2.4m wide, ran across the width of the trench. A distinct second backfill and recut, **801/802**, were recorded.

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**Trench No:** 9  
**Alignment:** North/south  
**Length:** 50m  
**Depth:** 0.7m

A dark-brown topsoil, 0.3m in depth, overlay 0.3–0.4m of a dark-brown medium clay sand subsoil. This overlay mottled yellowish brown / pale grey natural fine sands. Near the north and south ends of the trench were two post-medieval ceramic pipe drains, which both ran across the trench. At 15m from the south end was a linear feature, **901/902**, which extended across the trench at an angle of 45°. This was partially excavated to reveal a ditch 1.1m wide and 0.5m maximum depth, containing modern (transfer printed) pottery.

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**Trench No:** 10  
**Alignment:** North/south  
**Length:** 50m  
**Depth:** 0.9m (at sondage)

A dark-brown topsoil, 0.2m in depth, overlay 0.2m-0.3m of mid-brown medium clay sand subsoil, which then overlay natural mixed sands. Three ceramic pipe drains crossed the trench at regular intervals. The extreme ends of the trench exposed areas of redeposited natural clay which contained brick and charcoal flecking throughout.

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**Trench No:** 11  
**Alignment:** North-west/south-east  
**Length:** 51.3m  
**Depth:** 0.55m

A dark-brown topsoil, 0.28m in depth, overlay natural sands and clays. Root disturbance, mineralisation and iron panning were noted throughout. Two ceramic pipe drains ran almost parallel to the line of the trench. Extending across the north-west end of the trench was a ditch, **1106/1102/1103/1104/1105**, which was 2.6m wide and had a maximum depth of 1.0m. This was cut by the drains and contained two sherds of seventeenth century? pottery, one from the upper fill, **1101**, and one from **1104**. The basal/primary fill, **1105**, contained a length of extruded metal cable running parallel to the ditch.

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**Trench No:** 12  
**Alignment:** North-west/ south-east  
**Length:** 50m  
**Depth:** 0.75m

A dark-brown topsoil, 0.33m in depth, overlay a mixed subsoil, ranging from 0.05m to 0.2m in depth, and varying from a mid-brown silty clay subsoil to a dark grey sandy silt. This overlay a natural mottled yellowish brown silty sand with mid-brown and pale grey banding. No archaeological features were observed within this trench.

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**Trench No:** 13  
**Alignment:** North-east/ south-west  
**Length:** 50m  
**Depth:** 0.84m

Natural mixed yellow and white sands were exposed along the entire length of the trench. Into these were cut three drainage ditches, **1304**, **1306** and **1307**, running across the trench. These contained clay pipe and white glazed pottery. A tree bole was noted at the south-west end of the trench, with a damaged modern ceramic pipe drain at the north-west end.

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**Trench No:** 14  
**Alignment:** East/west  
**Length:** 50m  
**Depth:** 0.6-0.7m

Dark-brown topsoil, 0.18m in depth, overlay 0.4-0.5m of a mid-brown medium clay sand subsoil. This overlay a mottled yellowish brown / pale grey silty sand. At the approximate centre of the trench a sub-square deposit was noted, 1.5 x 1.5m, of very dark fine grey sand. No defined cut could be established and no finds were recovered; it was assumed to be natural variation in the sands.

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**Trench No:** 15  
**Alignment:** East/west  
**Length:** 50m  
**Depth:** 0.65m

A dark-brown topsoil, 0.2m in depth, overlay 0.35-4m of a mid-brown medium clay sand subsoil. This overlay mottled yellowish brown natural silty sands, and was cut by two modern ceramic pipe drains.

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**Trench No:** 16  
**Alignment:** East/west  
**Length:** 21m  
**Depth:** 1.6m

A dark-brown topsoil, 1.1m in depth, overlay 0.1m to 0.5m of a mid-brown medium clay sand subsoil. This overlay banding of yellow clay and orange natural sands. The terminae of three ditches (**1605**, **1607** and **1608**) were located along the northern section of the trench, beginning 4.4m from the western end and running for 5.6m to the east. The two westerly ditch fills were very similar and a relationship was difficult to discern, further compounded by a ceramic pipe drain cutting both features. The ditch to the east, **1604/1605**, yielded two sherds of medieval green glazed pottery.

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**Trench No:** 17  
**Alignment:** East/west  
**Length:** 30m  
**Depth:** 0.4m

Excavation revealed a dark orange natural sand with early stages of iron pan formation and evidence of much root activity. The eastern end of the trench contained three tree boles, filled with a mixed grey-brown silty sand, and a north-west / south-east aligned linear feature, **1701/1702**, running across the trench. This is probably the remains of a field boundary.

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**Trench No:** 18  
**Alignment:** East/west  
**Length:** 50m  
**Depth:** 0.65m

A dark-brown topsoil, 0.25m in depth, overlay 0.3-0.4m of a mid-brown medium clay sand subsoil. This overlay natural mottled yellowish mid-brown / pale grey sands. A single feature, **1801**, 27m from the east end of the trench, was probably the butt end of a boundary ditch. Running north-east / south-west for 4m, with a maximum exposed width of 1.7m, the feature was no deeper than 0.2m and had no associated finds.

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**Trench No:** 19  
**Alignment:** East/west  
**Length:** 50m  
**Depth:** 0.55m

A dark-brown topsoil, 0.2m in depth, overlay 0.35m of mixed topsoil and plastic clay. This overlay mottled orangey brown / pale grey natural silty sands. The remains of two probable hedgerows, **1901** and **1902**, evidenced by uneven linear features with irregular profiles showing root activity, were seen in the central part of the trench. A 0.75m diameter sub-circular feature was seen at the western end and determined to be a tree bole.

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**Trench No:** 20  
**Alignment:** East/west  
**Length:** 50m  
**Depth:** 0.65m

A dark-brown topsoil, 0.2m in depth, overlay 0.45m of mid-brown medium clay sand subsoil. This overlay a yellow / orange fine sandy natural subsoil. At the east end of the trench was a linear feature, **2001**, of undetermined date, 0.34 x 5.5m in observed extent, 0.2m deep, and irregular in profile. It yielded no finds and was thought to be a probable hedgerow. At the centre of the trench was a butt end of a ditch, **2002**, (1.5m x 0.9m in extent and 0.7m thick) which ran beyond the southern section. It was fully excavated to the limit of the trench, but no finds were recovered from the firm clay fill. At the west end a ceramic pipe drain crossed the trench, and a tree bole and area of iron pan were also noted.

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**Trench No:** 21  
**Alignment:** East/west  
**Length:** 50m  
**Depth:** 0.4m

A dark-brown topsoil, 0.25m in depth, overlay 0.15m of yellowish-brown silty sand. This overlay a reddish brown undulating natural subsoil interspersed with infrequent occurrences of plastic clay.

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**Trench No:** 22  
**Alignment:** East/west  
**Length:** 50m  
**Depth:** 0.35m

A dark-brown topsoil, 0.3m in depth, overlay 0.05m of pale greyish brown silty sand. Five ceramic pipe drains ran across this trench. Three lenses of peat were determined to be of natural origin.

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**Trench No:** 23  
**Alignment:** North-west / south-east  
**Length:** 50m  
**Depth:** 0.5m

Excavation revealed 0.5m of root-disturbed topsoil overlying pale brown plastic silty clay. A modern dump of plastic, brick and glass was contained within blackish topsoil at the southern end.

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**Trench No:** 24

**Alignment:** East/west

**Length:** 50m

**Depth:** 1.3m

A dark-brown topsoil, 0.5-0.6m in depth, overlay natural clay into which was cut a large ditch, **2402**, 18.4m from the north-east end of the trench. The ditch measured 5.7m long, running the width of the trench, and was a maximum of 1.2m deep; it contained two distinct fine silty sand fills, **2403** and **2404**, and rapidly filled with water, thus limiting the recording. Further to the north-east a shallow linear feature, **2401**, ran across the trench from which no finds were recovered. At the south-west was an area of disturbed natural subsoil.

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**Trench No:** 25

**Alignment:** North-north-east / south- south-west.

**Length:** 50m

**Depth:** 0.45m

A 0.35m deep humic black topsoil overlay pale brown mottled silty sand with occasional clay and gravel patches. It was cut by one ceramic drain pipe which was aligned north-east / south-west.

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**Trench No:** 26

**Alignment:** East/west

**Length:** 50m

**Depth:** 0.5m

A 0.35m deep humic black topsoil overlay pale brown mottled silty sand with occasional clay and gravel patches. Two east/west aligned ceramic pipe drains were seen.

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**Trench No:** 27

**Alignment:** East/west

**Length:** 50m

**Depth:** 0.5m

A 0.35m deep humic black topsoil overlay pale brown mottled silty sand with occasional clay and gravel patches. One ceramic pipe drain and one sandstone soakaway, both east / west aligned, were noted.

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**Trench No:** 28

**Alignment:** South-west / north-east

**Length:** 50m

**Depth:** 0.55m

A 0.35m deep humic black topsoil overlay pale brown mottled silty sand with occasional clay and gravel patches. Two ceramic pipe drains were identified at the south-west end and one brick-lined drain 25m from the south-east end.

---

**Trench No:** 29

**Alignment:** South-east / north-west

**Length:** 50m

**Depth:** 0.65m

A 0.35m deep humic black topsoil overlay pale brown mottled silty sand with occasional clay and gravel patches. No archaeological features were seen.

---

**Trench No:** 30

**Alignment:** East/west

**Length:** 57m

**Depth:** 3.2m at base of moat

The south-east end of the trench exposed ditch cut **3011**, which flooded during machining and was bottomed at 2.1m. The section, beyond the area that was drawn, flooded and collapsed, thus limiting further recording. Four main fills were observed in the ditch: **3006/3007/3008/3009**, all of which were seen to extend to the east end of the trench, with no sign of a return for the cut. Post-medieval pottery was found within the fills of the ditch. Six 0.25 x 0.25 x 0.2m deep square shallow features, **3012 - 3017**, were spaced relatively evenly around the central part of the trench; they appeared to be of modern date, and were of unknown function.

Two ceramic pipe drains and one stone-lined drain crossed this central area. The western end of the trench, exposed a further section through a ditch, **3002**, which was found to be some 19m long (though this section may be at an oblique angle) with a maximum depth of 3.2m. The unstable fills were found to have been buried under a deposit of clay, **3003**, that was 1.8m thick. The lower fills, **3002** and **3010**, contained early post-medieval pottery. The wide ditch at the western end of the trench approximately coincided with the line of the moat, as depicted on the Tithe map (LRO DRL 1/38).

---

**Trench No:** 31  
**Alignment:** North-north-west / south-south-east  
**Length:** 21m  
**Depth:** 1.2m

Two irregular linear features, **3103** and **3104**, were seen to be cutting disturbed or redeposited natural subsoils, both yielding transfer printed pottery. Four features (**3105-3108**), identical to the six small squares features in Trench 30, were also noted. At the north-north-west end of the trench were the remains of the return for an unmortared sandstone wall, and several other large fragments of sandstone, thought to be tumble, were also present. This was overlain by a dark silty deposit, including burnt material (**3102**).

---

**Trench No:** 32  
**Alignment:** North-east / South-west  
**Length:** 9m  
**Depth:** 2.3m

The trench was machine-excavated in order to expose a profile through approximately half of the putative moat, **3203**, identified in Trench 30. Three stubs of vertical timbers, **3201**, could be seen, two in line across the trench at 2.9m from north-east end of trench, and one 4.5m from north-east end of trench. The features could not be recorded to any degree of accuracy, as the trench was at risk of collapse and it was not possible to enter the trench safely; the archaeological features were, therefore, recorded from the top of the trench. One large timber, thought not to be *in-situ*, also rested at 4.5m from the north-east end of the trench at a depth of 2.3m from the current ground surface; it had a series of struts and laths associated with it, **3202**. A deposit of clay, **3204**, 0.8-1.0m thick, capped the ditch and acted as consolidation for the unstable deposits.

---

**Trench No:** 33  
**Alignment:** East / west  
**Length:** 30m  
**Depth:** 0.45m

A dark-brown humic topsoil, 0.35m in depth, overlay 0.15m of natural pale grey silty sand. No features were seen.

---

**Trench No:** 34  
**Alignment:** North / south  
**Length:** 50m  
**Depth:** 0.5m

A dark-brown topsoil, 0.35m in depth, overlay 0.2m of pale-brown silty sand. At the north-east end was a 'U'-shaped linear feature, **3401**, which cut this deposit, and was probably a modern drain. This feature was 0.7m wide, running the width of the trench and was no deeper than 0.27m; it was filled with mottled mid-brown and grey plastic clay, and yielded no finds. A ceramic pipe drain extended across the trench to its south.

---

**Trench No:** 35  
**Alignment:** South-west / north-east  
**Length:** 50m  
**Depth:** 0.6m

Topsoil, to a depth of 0.35m, overlay a mixed reddish brown natural clay with occasional silty sand patches similar to those seen in Trench 34. A north-east / south-west aligned land drain, at 7.3m from the south-west, was cut by a north-west / south east aligned modern brick-filled linear feature, which was 0.7m wide. A concrete base of a structure, north-east / south-west aligned and 0.6m wide, cut the trench and returned to the

south-east; modern brick and rubble was found inside. A similarly aligned clinker, brick and glass-filled land drain was identified at 28.2m from the south-west end.

---

**Trench No:** 36  
**Alignment:** East/west  
**Length:** 36m  
**Depth:** 0.9m

A large linear feature, 3601, ran across the trench at 45° for at least 8.7m, from a point 6.1m from the western end of the trench. The feature was not fully excavated. The central part of the trench was waterlogged and disturbed by modern activity. East of this, two features were noted, and were probably the butt ends of two ditches, 3602 and 3603; they were seen in plan as having a dark-brownish grey mix of silty sands and firm clay. Two sherds of pot were found on the surface. A third discrete feature was seen to the east of these, which in plan was probably also a butt end of a ditch. Post-medieval pottery was recovered from the topsoil.

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### APPENDIX 3 FINDS CATALOGUE

Trench	Context	Material	Category	Frag <sup>s</sup> N	Description	Date
08	801	Ceramic	drain	1	Fragment of land drain.	Post-medieval/Modern
11	1101	Ceramic	vessel	1	Strap handle fragment, very hard-fired oxidised sandy fabric, with mixed inclusions.	Seventeenth century?
11	1105	Iron	nail	5	Fragments of large hand-forged nails?	
16	Subsoil	Ceramic	vessel	1	Body fragment, black-glazed redware.	Seventeenth-eighteenth century
16	Subsoil	Ceramic	vessel	1	Strap handle fragment, in a sandy orange oxidised fabric, very similar to body fragment from Trench 36.	Medieval
16	Subsoil	Ceramic	vessel	1	Body fragment, in a similar fabric to slip-decorated vessel from the same context, but ostensibly undecorated.	Post-medieval
16	Subsoil	Ceramic	vessel	1	A small fragment of slip-decorated dish, pinkish fabric.	Seventeenth century?
16	Subsoil	Ceramic	vessel	1	A base fragment, in a very hard-fired reduced or incompletely reduced gritty fabric.	Sixteenth-seventeenth century?
16	1604	Ceramic	vessel	1	A body fragment, in a hard-fired incompletely reduced green glazed fabric.	Fourteenth to sixteenth century?
16	1604	Ceramic	vessel	1	A body fragment, in a fully reduced green glazed fabric.	Sixteenth-seventeenth century?
16	1609	Ind. debris	smithing	1	Hearth-bottom slag?	
30	3001	Bone	animal	1	Fragment.	
30	3001	Ceramic	vessel	14	A joining rim and body fragments, very hard-fired coarse purplish fabric. Handled jar.	mid-seventeenth century
30	3001	Ceramic	vessel	1	Rim fragment, laminated, relatively fine fabric, thick black glaze.	Eighteenth century?
30	3001	Ceramic	vessel	1	A complete profile (half vessel) three-handled mug. Hard-fired purplish fabric with ill-sorted sand temper. Thick black glaze with brownish opaque patches. Flaring rim. Similar to vessels in mid seventeenth century contexts at Beeston Castle (Period 7).	Mid-seventeenth century
30	3001	Ceramic	vessel	2	Joining rim fragments, very coarse red fabric with numerous large (up to c 4mm) irregular inclusions, mainly white. Thin black glaze.	Post-medieval
30	3001	Ceramic	vessel	1	A rim fragment, in a coarse red fabric with thin, brownish-black glaze. It has a flaring jar rim.	Mid-late seventeenth century
30	3001	Ceramic	building material	3	Small fragments of modern brick.	Eighteenth-twentieth century
30	3001	Ceramic	vessel	9	Joining fragments of a slip-decorated dish, complete profile. Cream-pink fabric with ill-sorted inclusions, mainly red and probably grog. Thrown and knife-trimmed. Pattern geometric. Similar to examples from the Civil War deposits at Beeston Castle (Period 7).	Mid-seventeenth century
30	3001	Glass	window	1	A pane-edge fragment, cylinder-blown glass. Square quarry. Diamond-cut and grozed. Minimum dimensions 66mm x 55+mm x 1.5mm thick.	Late seventeenth-eighteenth century
30	3001	Stone	coal	1	Small fragment.	
30	3006	Ceramic	vessel	1	A handle fragment, in a fully reduced green-glazed fabric. It was from a shallow pan.	Sixteenth-seventeenth century?
30	3006	Ceramic	building material	2	Brick.	
30	3006	Glass	vessel	1	A complete colourless mineral water bottle.	Mid-twentieth century
30	3006	Stone	roofing tile	1	Fragment.	
30	3016	Ceramic	vessel	3	One rim, two body fragments in a pale orange laminated, coarse sandy fabric, dark-brown-black glaze.	Nineteenth century?
30	3016	Ceramic	vessel	3	Body fragments, dark-brown glaze.	Nineteenth century?
30	3016	Ceramic	vessel	1	Base fragment, fine red fabric, colourless glaze.	Nineteenth-twentieth century



30	3016	Ceramic	vessel	1	Rim and body fragments, in a fine red fabric, with a thick and lustrous black glaze. Storage vessel/jug with narrow neck and at least one horizontal handle.	Eighteenth century?
30	3016	Ceramic	vessel	2	Body fragments, in a fine red fabric, colourless-brown glaze.	Nineteenth-twentieth century
30	3016	Ceramic	vessel	1	A neck fragment, brown stoneware with slight metallic sheen. A jug?	Sixteenth-seventeenth century?
30	3016	Ceramic	vessel	1	A rim fragment of a Mocha-ware bowl.	Nineteenth century
30	3016	Ceramic	vessel	1	A body fragment, in a cream fabric, with a brown mottled glaze.	Seventeenth-eighteenth century
30	3016	Ceramic	vessel	1	A body and base fragment, in a late brown stoneware.	Nineteenth-twentieth century
30	3016	Ceramic	vessel	1	A body fragment, in a coarse red fabric with very large inclusions (up to c5mm), and irregularly sorted.	Modern?
30	3016	Ceramic	vessel	1	A rim fragment, in a coarse red fabric, black glaze. A large bowl.	Eighteenth-nineteenth century?
30	3016	Ceramic	vessel	1	A body fragment of a large vessel, in a redware, brown glaze.	Nineteenth-twentieth century
30	3016	Ceramic	vessel	3	Body and base fragments, of a whiteware jug, under-glaze transfer printed decoration.	Nineteenth-twentieth century
30	3016	Ceramic	vessel	6	Rim and body fragments, of a whiteware jug, under-glaze transfer printed decoration.	Nineteenth-twentieth century
30	3016	Ceramic	vessel	1	A rim fragment, in a hard-fired purplish fabric, brownish-black glaze. Jug?	Seventeenth century?
30	3016	Ceramic	vessel	2	Rim fragments of a Mocha-ware mug.	Nineteenth century
30	3016	Ceramic	vessel	1	A base fragment, in a fine red fabric with white internal slip and bronze metallic glaze. Teapot? The same as in Trench 32, <b>3203</b> .	Modern
30	3016	Ceramic	vessel	1	A complete profile, white earthenware with thick yellow glaze. A coffee can?	Nineteenth-twentieth century
30	3016	Ceramic	building material	1	Brick.	
31	3102	Ceramic	vessel	1	A body fragment, in a cream fabric, self glaze. A thrown plate or dish.	Post-medieval?
31	3102	Ceramic	vessel	3	Body and base fragments, in a medium-soft red fabric, brownish purple glaze.	Seventeenth-eighteenth century
31	3102	Ceramic	vessel	1	Rim fragment, orange sandy fabric, self glaze. A small jar.	Post-medieval
31	3102	Ceramic	vessel	4	Body and base fragments, hard-fired purplish fabric, black glaze.	Seventeenth-eighteenth century
32	3203	Bone	animal	2	Two fragments, no evidence of butchery.	
32	3203	Ceramic	vessel	1	A body fragment, in a fine red fabric with white internal slip and bronze metallic glaze. Teapot? The same as in Trench 30, <b>3016</b> .	Modern
32	3203	Ceramic	clay pipe	1	A bowl fragment. Bulbous with short, ill-formed spur, no rouletting. Oswald's type 17.	AD 1640-1670
32	3203	Ceramic	vessel	3	Rim and body fragments (two joining) cream fabric, brown mottled glaze. Chamber pot.	Late eighteenth century
32	3203	Ceramic	vessel	1	A body fragment, in a hard-fired purplish fabric, with a patchy glaze.	Seventeenth century?
32	3203	Ceramic	vessel	2	Body fragments, in a red, fine fabric, black-glazed.	Post-medieval
32	3203	Ceramic	vessel	1	Body fragment, greyish paste porcelain, blue-painted.	Eighteenth century?
32	3203	Ceramic	vessel	1	Rim fragment, hard-fired laminated, bichrome fabric with black glaze. Very large open form - pancheon?	Late seventeenth-nineteenth century
32	3203	Ceramic	vessel	1	Rim fragment, coarse red fabric, poor and patchy black glaze, firing cracks. Storage vessel with horizontal handles.	Seventeenth-eighteenth century
32	3203	Ceramic	vessel	2	Body fragments ?Pearlware jug with under-glaze transfer printed decoration.	Late eighteenth century?
32	3203	Ceramic	vessel	1	Body fragment, hard-fired purplish fabric, black-glazed.	Seventeenth century
32	3203	Ceramic	vessel	1	Rim fragment, fine, laminated bichrome fabric. Slip decorated mug.	Seventeenth century
32	3203	Ceramic	vessel	2	Base fragments, laminated irregular, coarse fabric, black-glazed. Distinctive jutting foot. Very drippy glaze and firing faults.	Post-medieval
32	3203	Ceramic	vessel	4	Three rims, one body fragment, fine red fabric, thick black glaze, open vessels.	Eighteenth century?

32	3203	Ceramic	vessel	1	Body fragment, cream sandy fabric, brown streaky glaze, applied decoration similar to mottled ware vessel from Beeston Castle (Period 8).	AD 1690-1780
32	3203	Ceramic	vessel	2	Joining rim fragments, laminated bichrome, in a coarse fabric, black glazed. Storage vessel.	Seventeenth century?
32	3203	Glass	vessel	1	A mould-blown bottle fragment, pale green.	Late nineteenth-early twentieth century
32	3203	Leather	shoe	1	A shoe sole in thick leather, nailed sole, ?clump heel.	
32	3203	Wood	structural	2	Structural timbers, possibly from a wall.	
32	3203	Wood	structural	1	Small fragment.	
36	3601	Ceramic	vessel	1	A small and very abraded body fragment of an oxidised orange sandy fabric. The surfaces have been lost.	Medieval?
36	3601	Ceramic	vessel	2	Small body fragments, in a pale sandy oxidised orange fabric with small splashes of glaze.	Medieval

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## ILLUSTRATIONS

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- Fig 1 Peel Hall - Location Map
- Fig 2 Trench Location Plan
- Fig 3 Detail of Moated Site - Trenches 30-32
- Fig 4 Moated Site: Plan of Trench 32 and Section of Trench 30
- Fig 5 Detailed Trench Location Plan of North-Eastern Area
- Fig 6 North-Eastern Area: Plans and Sections of Trenches 2 and 16



based upon the Ordnance Survey 1:50000  
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Fig 1: Peel Hall - Location Map

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 LANCASTER  
 LA1 1TF  
 TEL: 01524 840666

PROJECT:

**Peel Hall  
 Warrington, Cheshire**

DRAWING No:

2

0 100m

Scale 1:5000

DRAWN BY: ELC

DATE: September 2001

LOCATION:



KEY

T08 / Trench

Study Area Boundary

TITLE:

Trench Location Plan

COMMISSIONED BY:

CPM and Sattam Ltd

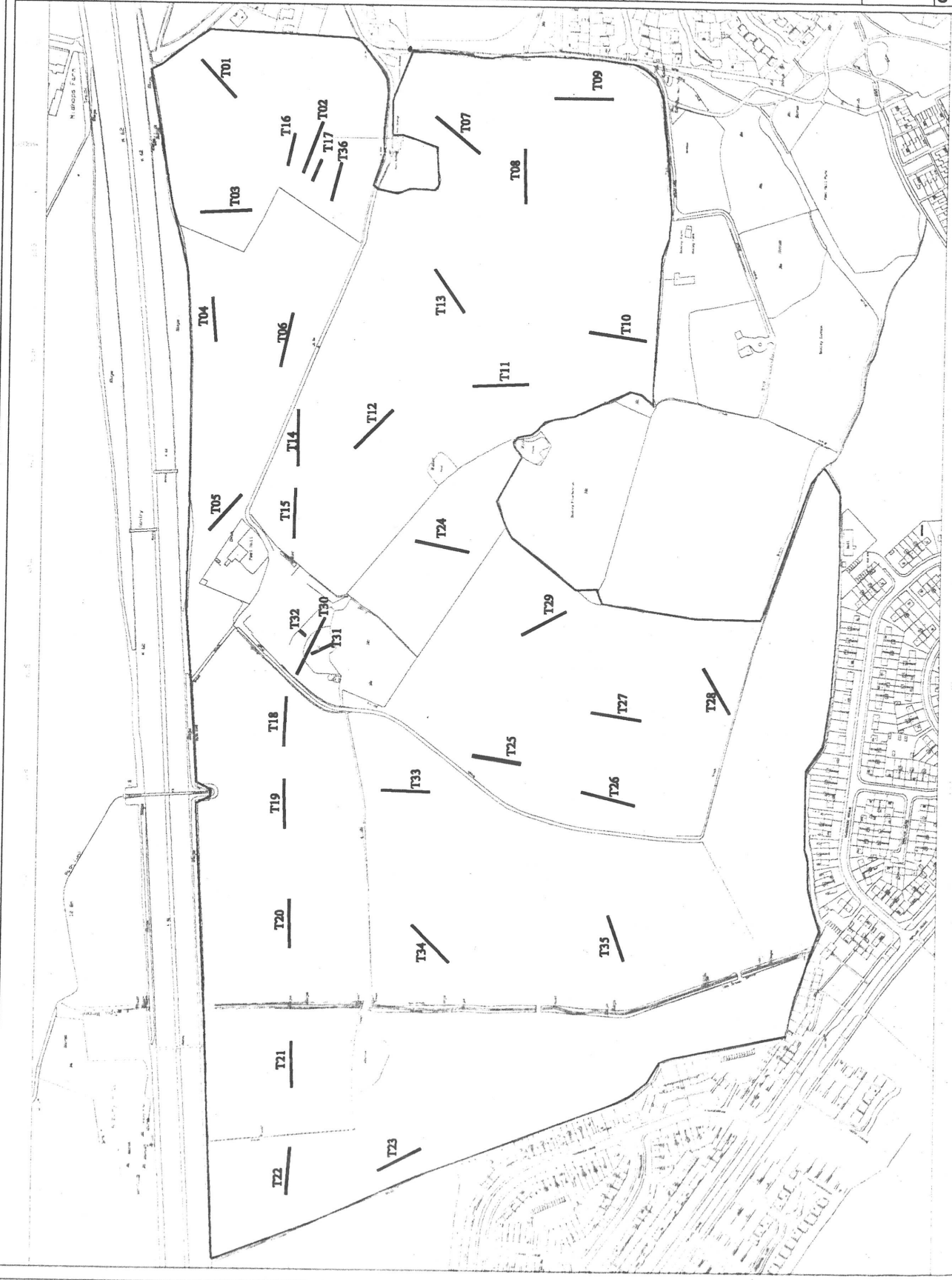


Figure 2 : Trench Location Plan

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LANCASTER  
LA1 1JT

TEL: 01524 848666



PROJECT:

Peel Hall  
Warrington, Cheshire

DRAWING No: 3

Scale 1:1000



DRAWN BY: ELC

DATE: September 2001

LOCATION:



KEY

modern map data

From Tithe Map (LRO DRL  
1/38)

Sections of Moat

TITLE:  
Detail of Moated Site  
Trenches 30-32

COMMISSIONED BY:  
CPM and SATNAM Ltd

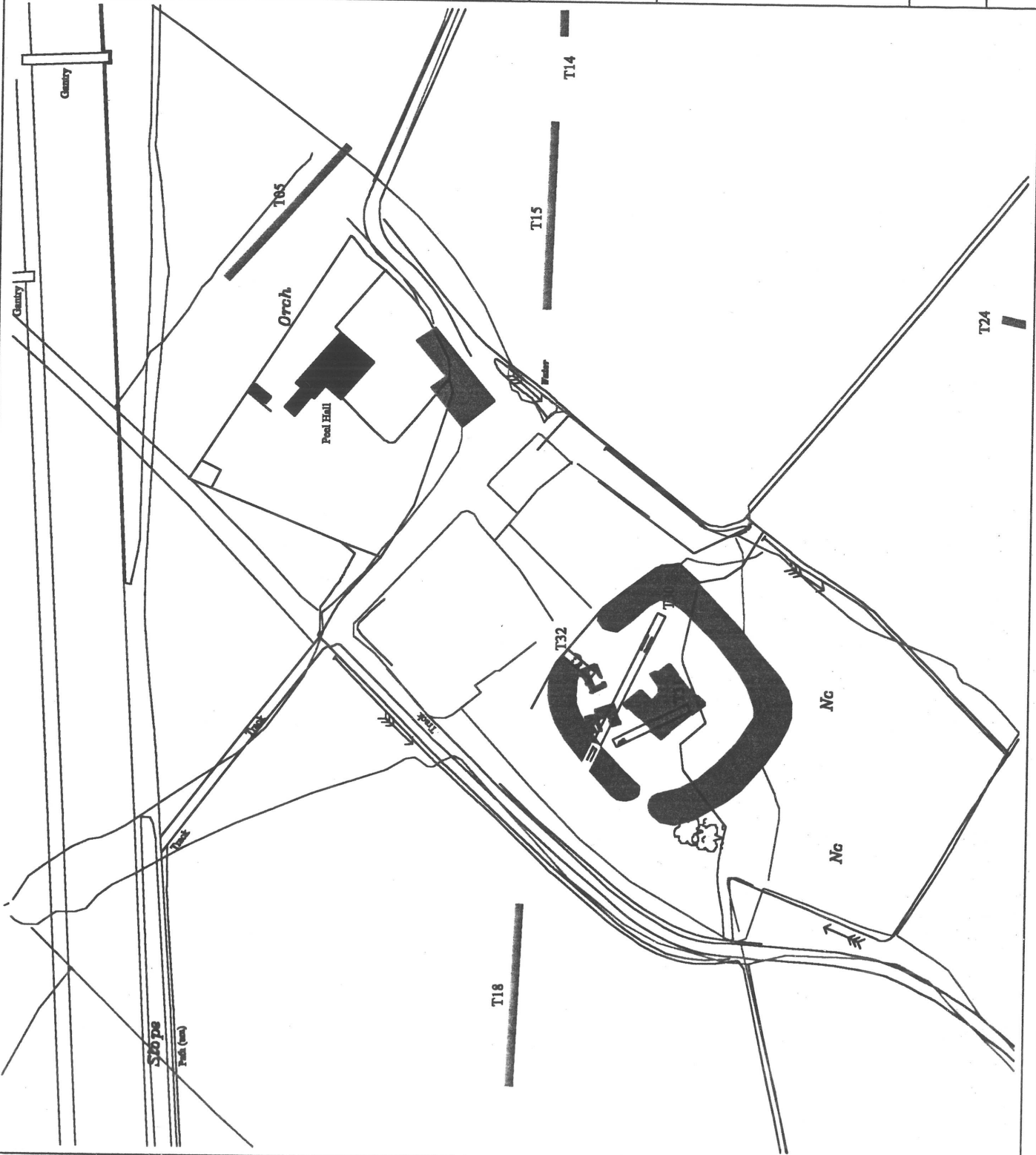


Figure 3: Detail of Moated Site - Trenches 30 - 32



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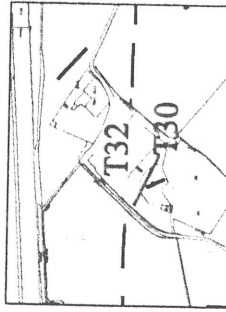
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Warrington, Cheshire

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DATE: August 2001

LOCATION:



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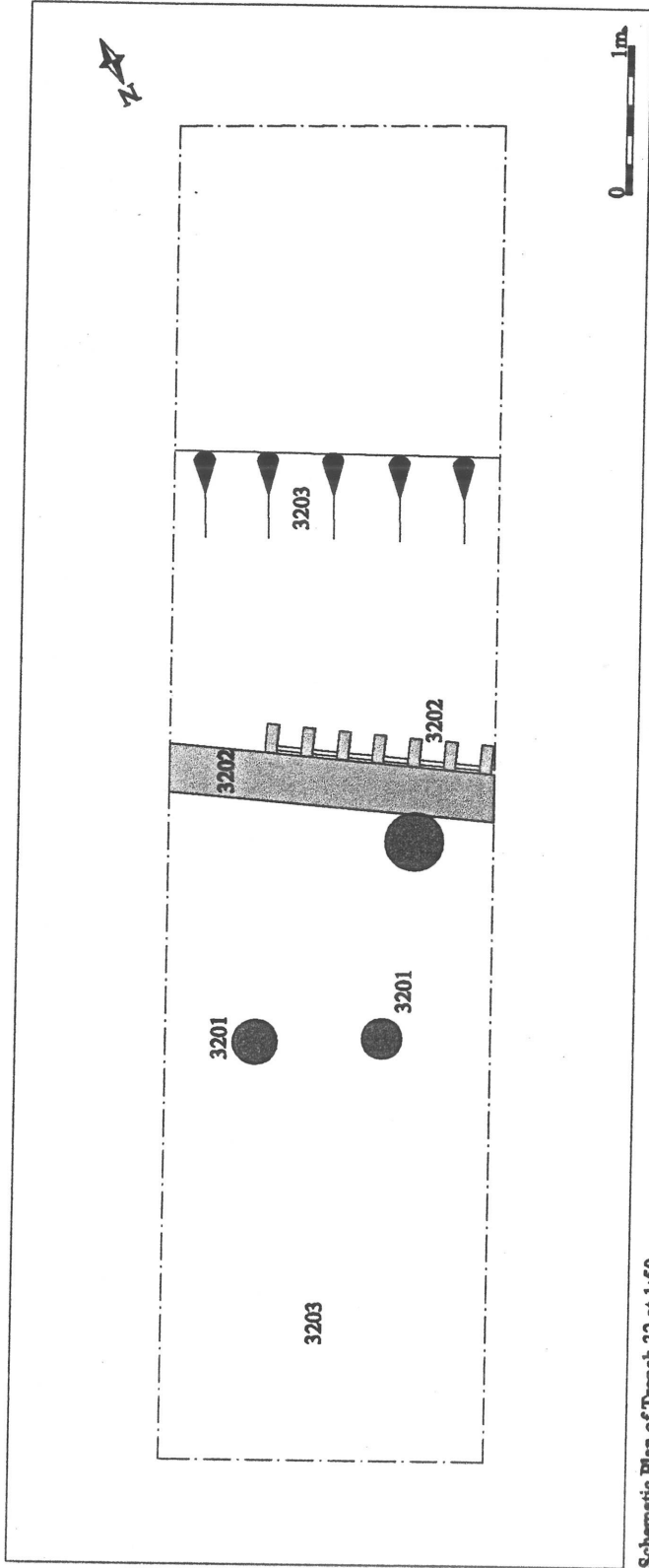
● vertical timbers

□ horizontal timbers

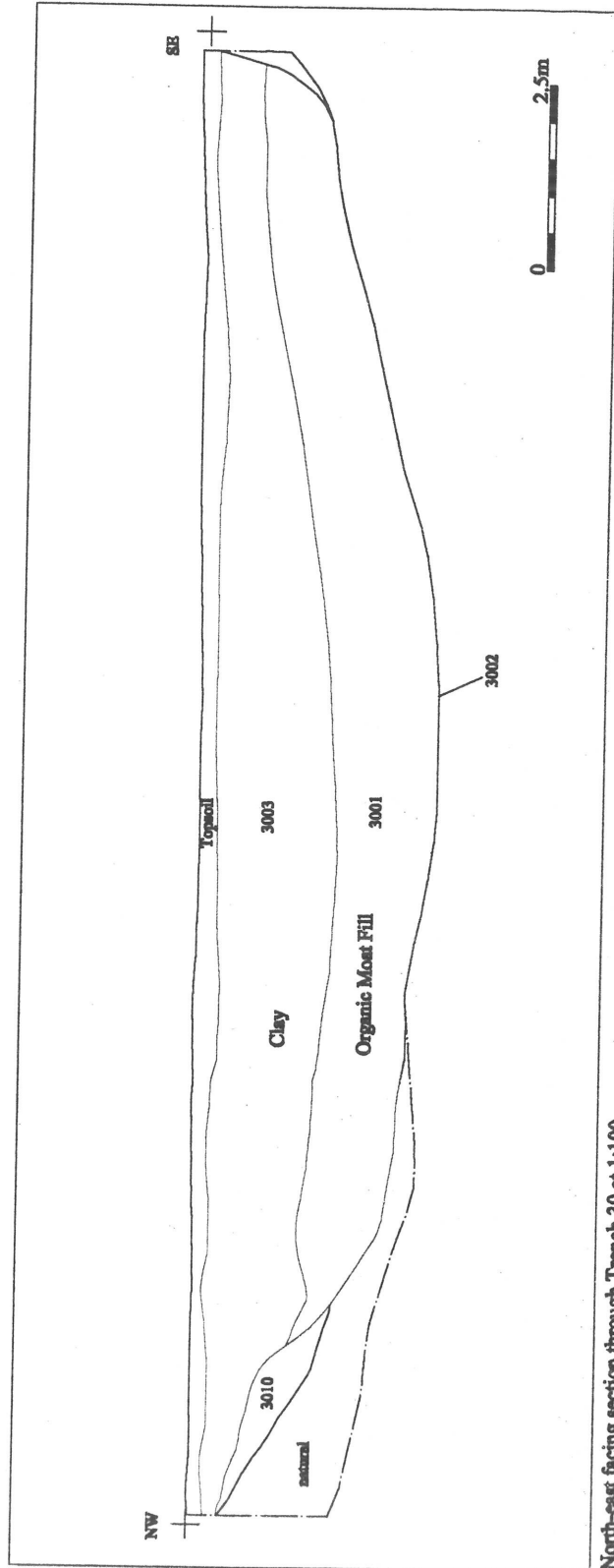
TITLE: Moated Site  
Plan of Trench 32  
Section through Trench 30

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Schematic Plan of Trench 32 at 1:50



North-east facing section through Trench 30 at 1:100

Figure 4: Moated Site: Plan of Trench 32 and Section Through Trench 30



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Warrington, Cheshire

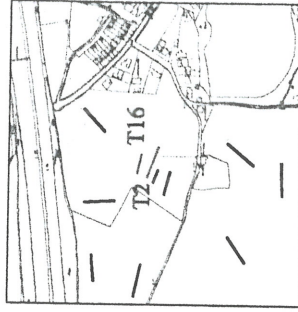
DRAWING No: 5

Scale 1:20 and 1:50

DRAWN BY: ELC

DATE: August 2001

LOCATION:



KEY

TITLE:  
North Eastern Area - Plans and  
Sections of Trenches 2 and 16

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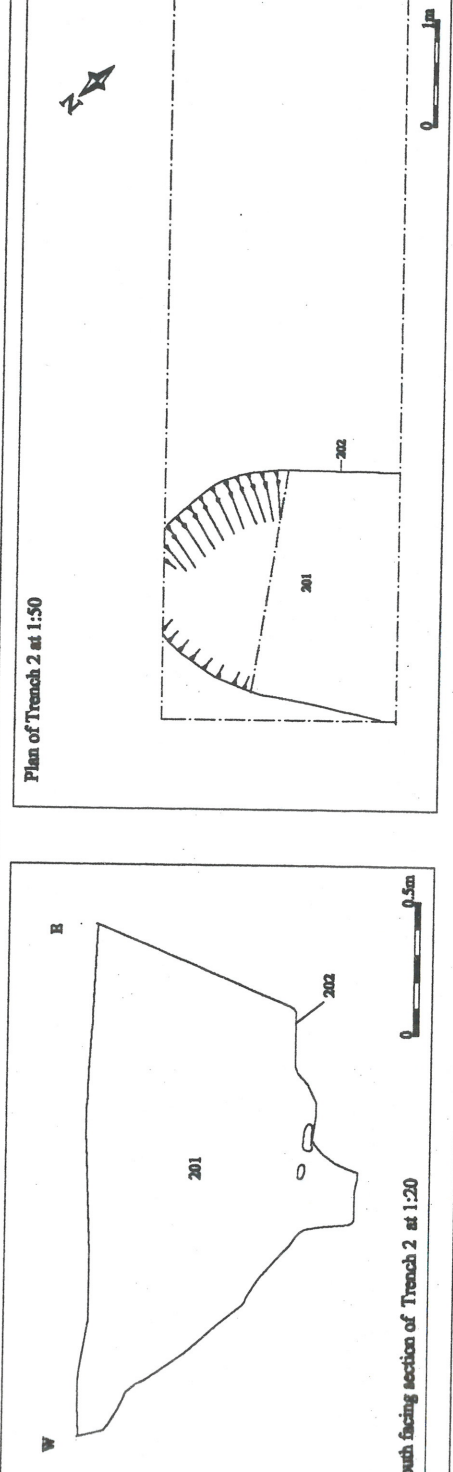
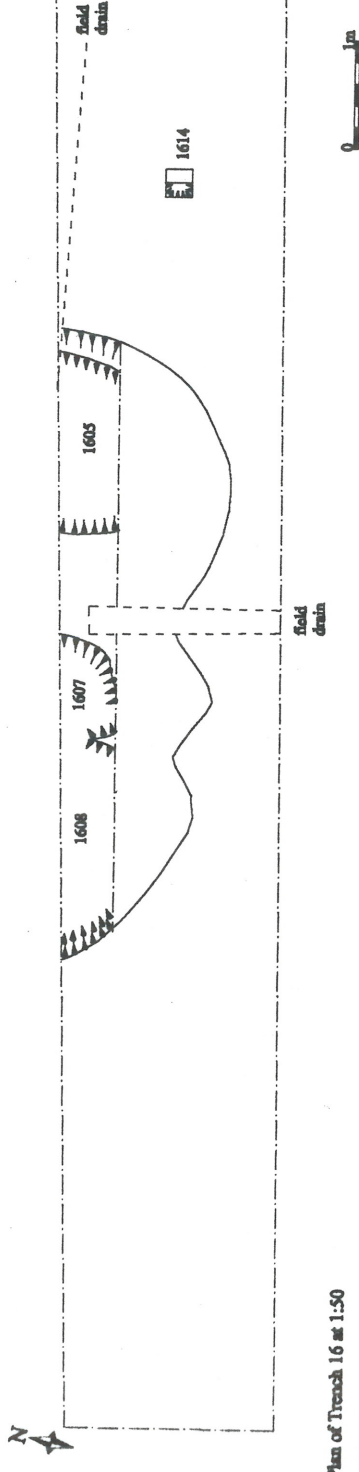
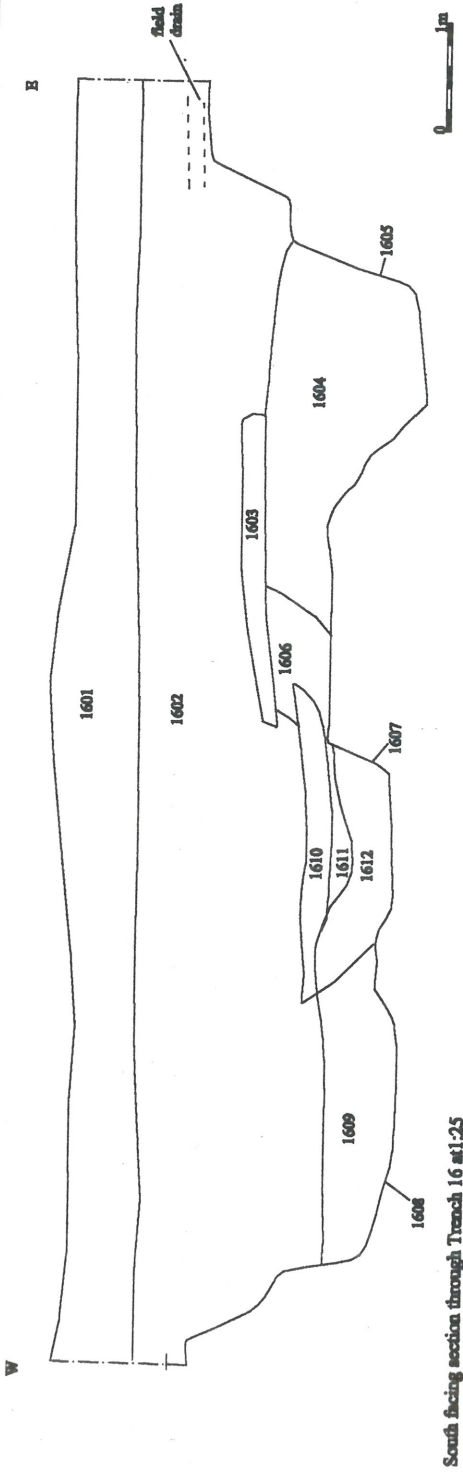


Figure 5 : North Eastern Area; Plans and Sections of Trenches 2 and 16



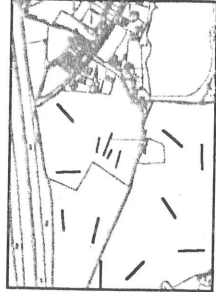
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**PROJECT:**  
 Peel Hall  
 Warrington, Cheshire

**DRAWING No:**  
 6

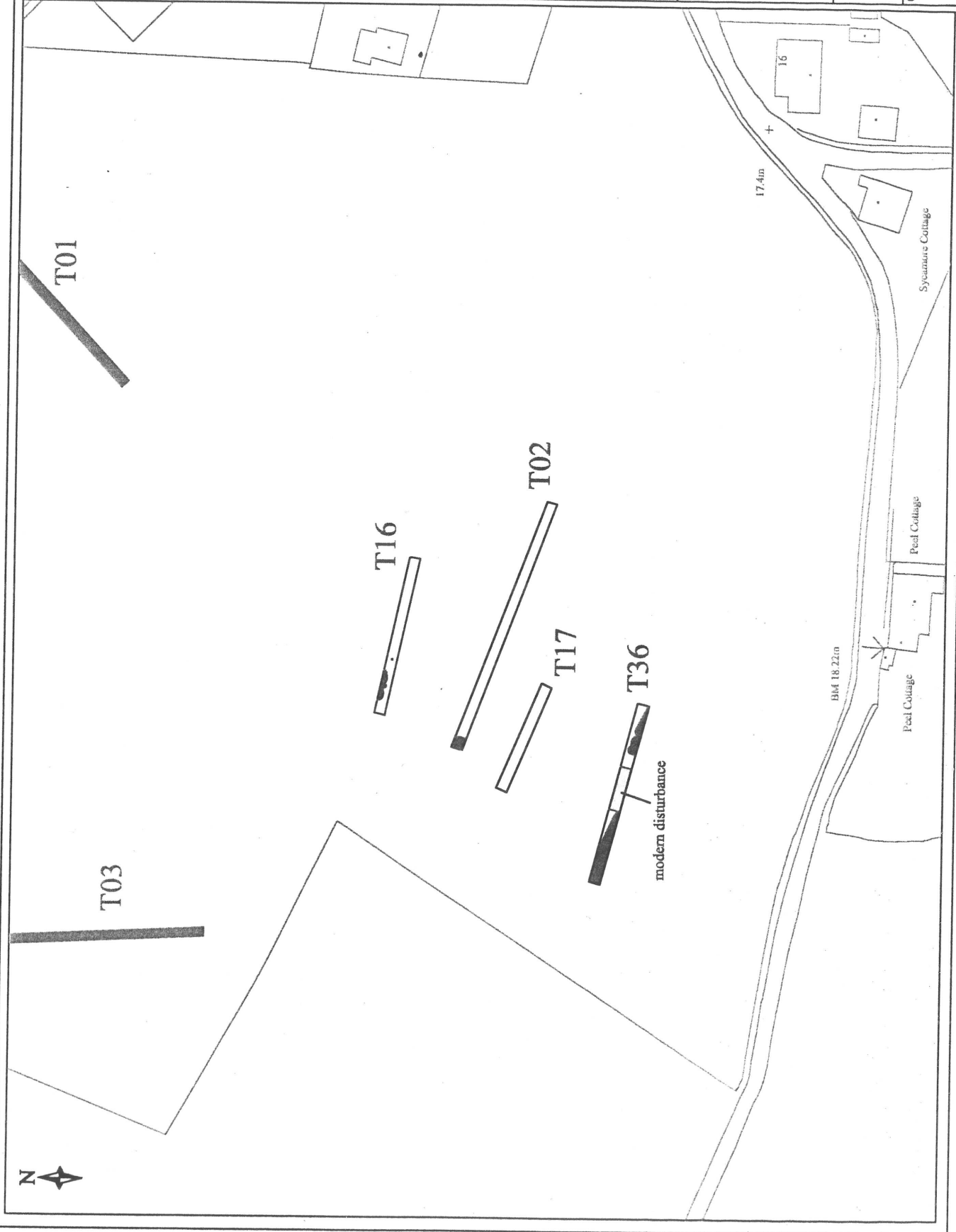
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**DRAWN BY:** ELC  
**DATE:** July 2001  
**LOCATION:**



**KEY**  
 archaeological features

**TITLE:**  
 Detail of North Eastern Area  
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**Figure 6 : Detail of North Eastern Area**

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## PLATES

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- Plate 1 Butt end of steep ditch, **202**, in Trench 2, looking north-east  
Plate 2 Wall foundation, **3101**, in Trench 31, looking west



Plate 1: Butt end of steep ditch, *202*, in Trench 2, looking north-east



Plate 2: Wall foundation, *3101* (Trench 31), looking west