



47-49 CHINA STREET, LANCASTER

Archaeological Watching Brief



Oxford Archaeology North

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CONTENTS

SUMMARY	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	3
1. INTRODUCTION	4
1.1 Circumstances of the Project	4
2. METHODOLOGY.....	5
2.1 Project Design	5
2.2 Watching Brief.....	5
2.3 Archive.....	5
3. BACKGROUND.....	6
3.1 Location, Geology and Topography	6
3.2 History and Archaeology	6
4. WATCHING BRIEF	9
4.1 Results.....	9
4.2 Finds.....	10
5. CONCLUSIONS.....	11
5.1 Discussion	11
BIBLIOGRAPHY	12
ILLUSTRATIONS	13
List of Figures	13
List of Plates	13
APPENDIX 1: PROJECT DESIGN.....	14
APPENDIX 2: FINDS SUMMARY	18

SUMMARY

Oxford Archaeology North was commissioned by Rowmor Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief on the site of a proposed three-storey building (Planning Application ref 03/01163/FUL) at 47-49 China Street, Lancaster, Lancashire (centred SD 482 613). The watching brief was carried out during the excavation of investigative trial pits in order to inform Lancashire County Archaeological Service of the amount of disturbance to, or survival of, archaeological deposits across the site that will be available for archaeological excavation prior to development.

The site has lain vacant since the demolition in 1973 of two buildings deemed unsafe. These buildings dated from the seventeenth and early eighteenth century and were two of the few buildings not to have been demolished when China Lane was widened around 1908. An archaeological excavation had been carried out on the site in 1979 by Lancaster Archaeological Society who were able to take the rare opportunity to investigate an area which had not been cellared. Evidence from the excavation suggested the area had been used for cultivation until the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century; a sequence of building phases were identified from thence onwards.

The watching brief found no evidence of the post-medieval building sequence. A layer of cultivation soil identified in two trial pits may represent the medieval soil horizon; the disturbance of the deposits within the remainder of the trial pits suggests that the 1979 excavation had removed the archaeological evidence in these areas.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Oxford Archaeology North would like to thank Mick Pilkington of Rowmor Ltd for commissioning the project.

The watching brief was undertaken by Anthony Lee, who also wrote the report, and the finds were examined by Jo Dawson. Christina Clarke produced the drawings. The project was managed by Emily Mercer, who also edited the report together with Alan Lupton.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 Rowmor Ltd (hereafter the client) submitted a planning application (ref 03/01163/FUL) to Lancashire County Council for the construction of a three-storey building on currently vacant land at 47-49 China Street, Lancaster (centred SD 482 613).
- 1.1.2 Planning approval was granted for the redevelopment with a requirement for an archaeological excavation. However, due to the previous occupation of the site by a building with a suspected cellar, Lancashire County Archaeology Service (LCAS) advised that in the first instance an archaeological watching brief be carried out during the excavation of investigative geotechnical trial pits. This information will inform LCAS of the amount of disturbance to, or survival of, archaeological deposits across the site that will be available for subsequent archaeological excavation prior to any development. In accordance with a verbal brief from LCAS, a watching brief was carried out on 8th January 2004. This report sets out the results of the watching brief in the form of a short document.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

2.1.1 A project design (*Appendix 1*) was submitted by Oxford Archaeology North (OA North), in response to a request by the client, for an archaeological watching brief, and in consultation with LCAS. The project design was adhered to in full and the work was consistent with the relevant standards and procedure of the Institute of Field Archaeologists and generally accepted best practise.

2.2 WATCHING BRIEF

2.2.1 Close liaison was maintained between OA North staff and the site contractors during the watching brief of the trial pit excavations. A programme of field observation was undertaken during the groundworks to record the location, extent and character of any surviving archaeological features and deposits revealed during the excavations.

2.2.2 The five trial pits were excavated using a mechanical excavator fitted with a 0.58m wide toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision.

2.3 ARCHIVE

2.3.1 A full archive of the work undertaken has been produced to a professional standard in accordance with current United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (UKIC 1990) and English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage 1991). The archive will be deposited with the Lancashire County Record Office in Preston, and a copy of the report will be forwarded to the Lancashire Sites and Monuments Record.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 LOCATION, GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 3.1.1 China Street is positioned in the centre of Lancaster, at the foot of Castle Hill, on a bluff overlooking the River Lune. The site is located at the southern end of China Street, on the east side of the road (Fig 1).
- 3.1.2 The drift geology of the area has been mapped as glaciofluvial sheet deposits of clayey sands and gravels. The underlying solid geology of the area consists predominantly of Silesian (Upper Carboniferous) grey brown or reddened, medium to coarse-grained sandstones of the Pendle Grit Formation, which is part of the Millstone Grit Group. These sandstones are thickly bedded with thin siltstone partings but with mixed sandstone/siltstone near the top (British Geological Survey 1992).

3.2 HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

- 3.2.1 **Introduction:** the historical and archaeological background is principally compiled through secondary sources and is intended to provide a context for the site.
- 3.2.2 **Prehistoric Period:** there is scarce evidence of prehistoric activity in and around Lancaster, although three find spots of Bronze Age burials are known to the south and east of the site. Unfortunately, it does not provide much indication of settlement and, in addition, the sites were all found pre-1900 when insufficient information was gathered to rule out the possibility of these being Romano-British burials rather than prehistoric (OA North 2003).
- 3.2.3 **Romano-British Period:** a fort was founded on Castle Hill in the AD 70s when the Romans pushed northwards along the west coast into Scotland. This was followed by a sequence of forts on the site at Castle Hill and the latest of these, in the fourth century AD, seems to have been realigned parallel to the Lune. It has been suggested that its form was similar to the Saxon Shore forts of southern Britain and that it would potentially have served as a fleet supply base and ensured the security of the harbour (Shotter 1993).
- 3.2.4 Evidence from numerous excavations in Church Street, thought to have been the main road leading to and from the fort and linking it to the overall road system, suggests that the beginnings of extramural civilian settlement were effectively contemporary with the foundation of the first fort. Few, if any, structures are known from this early activity and it may well have been less than robust leaving a somewhat nebulous impression of settlement. It was not until the early years of the second century AD that the settlement grew and thrived. Archaeological investigation has focused on Church Street, which as a result, is relatively well understood. The full extent of the Roman settlement is as yet unknown, but it seems to have extended almost as far as Cheapside to the east, and some distance south along the line of Penny Street, presumably running westwards as far as the fort, if not beyond (inhumation burials were

excavated to the west of the fort in Westfield village during the 1930s). To the north the River Lune forms a natural boundary. It seems likely that the settlement continued in existence well into the fourth century AD when a drastic realignment of the fort seems to have coincided with a major contraction of the town. Whether it shrank progressively as its inhabitants withdrew to the safety of the fort walls (marked today by the Wery Wall on Castle Hill) in troubled times, or that it was simply abandoned is not known, but there is very little, if any, evidence for fifth century activity beyond the fort (Edwards 1988).

- 3.2.5 Burials have been found in the southern part of the town, including those excavated in 1996 at Penny Street, individual burials between King Street and Penny Street, and another at St Thomas's Church. These seem to imply an arc of perhaps superimposed funerary activity extending around the southern side of the settlement and dating from the second to fourth centuries AD (OA North 2003).
- 3.2.6 **Medieval Period:** the early medieval period is represented archaeologically by a hoard of ninth century coins from the Castle Hill are. Further evidence for activity during this period comprises fragments of stone crosses from the area of the Priory Church, indicating the presence of an earlier church. The Castle Hill area probably represents *Chercaloncastre*, one of two villas in Lancaster listed in Domesday Book (OA North 2004).
- 3.2.7 By the later medieval period, place names and documentary sources provide the main source of evidence, although excavations have also provided an indication of the physical form of the settlement at Lancaster. Lancaster Castle, on the site of the earlier Roman forts, was established by 1094 along with a priory on the church site. The town seems to have developed rapidly after the granting of a borough charter in 1193, which encouraged the establishment of full urban functions, including a weekly market. Though there is no evidence of deliberate town planning, as occurs in many towns of the period, many of the streets were divided into individual burgage plots. Church Street, Market Street and Penny Street were the main thoroughfares at the time. This may imply a continuation of settlement pattern, surviving from the Roman period, when activity was concentrated in these same areas (*ibid*).
- 3.2.8 China Lane, as it was formerly called, is first referred to in the town's Constitutions and Orders of 1362 where reference is made to "Cheyney Lane". On a map of Lancaster drawn up by an unknown surveyor in 1684, the lane appears as Chiney Lane and by the eighteenth century (Makreth's map 1778) the name had completed its transmutation to China Lane (Penney 1980, 3).
- 3.2.9 Numbers 47-49 China Street were most recently occupied by two Grade II Listed seventeenth and early eighteenth century houses; these were two of the few buildings not to have been demolished when China Lane was widened in around 1908, but were themselves demolished in 1973. Excavation of part of the site took place in 1979 by Lancaster Archaeological Society who were acting on a rare opportunity to excavate a site in Lancaster which had not previously been cellared (*op cit*, 4). The investigations were restricted to an area 5m x 3m and found a sequence of building remains and deposits dating

from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. The excavation report suggested that any pre-medieval stratigraphy was destroyed by the cultivation of the soil which had taken place from the thirteenth century onwards (*op cit*, 5).

4. WATCHING BRIEF

4.1 RESULTS

- 4.1.1 **Introduction:** five trial pits were excavated in all (Fig 2). The first two were situated so as to establish the depth of existing foundations of neighbouring properties; the remaining three pits were excavated to assess the general ground conditions across the site.
- 4.1.2 **Trial Pit 1:** Trial Pit 1 measured 2m x 1.2m x 2m depth. The removal of overburden, consisting of topsoil and demolition debris, revealed a smooth concrete slab, 0.5m thick, in the south-facing section of the pit, at a depth of 0.35m. Elsewhere the layer of modern debris continued to a depth of 1.2m, where a dark brown clayey-sand layer with frequent charcoal inclusions was encountered. This was interpreted as a possible ploughsoil horizon, and the deposit gradually gave way to a gravelly-sand natural layer at a depth of 1.6m. The foundation of the adjoining building appeared to be modern to a depth of 0.35m, below which an older stone slab foundation was observed, continuing to a depth of 1.9m. No archaeologically significant deposits were encountered and no finds were recovered.
- 4.1.3 **Trial Pit 2:** Trial Pit 2 measured 2m x 1.2m x 2.5m depth. A 0.3m thick layer of demolition debris was found to overlie three undated layers of sandy-clay dumped material to a depth of 1m. Below this a layer of gravelly-sand was interpreted as undisturbed natural subsoil, and became stonier towards the bottom of the trench at a depth of 2.5m. No archaeologically significant deposits were encountered and no finds were recovered.
- 4.1.4 **Trail Pit 3:** Trial Pit 3 measured 1.2m x 1.2m x 0.8m depth. A 0.3m thick layer of demolition debris was removed to reveal a 0.3m layer of disturbed green-grey sand, below which was a 0.2m layer of disturbed sandy-clay. A gravelly-sand deposit was reached at a depth of 0.8m and was presumed to represent the natural subsoil horizon. No archaeologically significant deposits were encountered and no finds were recovered.
- 4.1.5 **Trial Pit 4:** Trial Pit 4 measured 2m x 1.2 m x 2m. A 0.8m thick layer of demolition debris was removed to reveal a 1m thick layer of clayey-sand, thought to be a preserved cultivation soil horizon. In the south-facing section of the trench, at a depth of 0.8m, a thin layer of sandy-clay was encountered. The deposit contained a concentration of post-medieval pottery sherds.
- 4.1.6 **Trial Pit 5:** Trial Pit 5 measured 2.8m x 1.2m x 0.8m depth. A 0.3m thick layer of demolition debris was removed to reveal a 0.3m layer of disturbed green-grey sand, below which was a 0.2m layer of disturbed sandy-clay. A gravelly-sand deposit was reached at a depth of 0.8m and was presumed to represent the natural subsoil horizon. No archaeologically significant deposits were encountered and no finds were recovered.

4.2 FINDS

- 4.2.1 In total, twenty artefacts were recovered during the watching brief. All of these were post-medieval pottery dated to the seventeenth to twentieth centuries, and were retrieved from a thin deposit observed in the south-facing section of Trial Pit 4. A summary of the finds can be found in *Appendix 2*.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 DISCUSSION

- 5.1.1 The watching brief discovered no remains relating to the late medieval/post-medieval building sequence recorded by Penney's excavation of part of the site in 1979. There are two possible reasons for this. Trial Pits 1 and 2 may have been situated outside the footprint of the buildings remains; it is also thought possible that Test Pits 3, 4 and 5 may have been located within areas that were subject to full archaeological excavation, which removed all trace of the building sequence. The only tantalising glimpse of the archaeological potential of the site was provided in Trial Pit 4, where the northern edge of the trench sliced through an apparently *in situ* deposit that yielded a high concentration of post-medieval pottery sherds.
- 5.1.2 The watching brief confirmed the presence of a cultivation soil layer in Trench Pit 1 and Trench Pit 4, although it was not possible to date the deposit, it is most likely to represent the medieval cultivation soil recorded in the 1979 excavation. The investigations provided no further evidence for the recorded building remains, however, and without further investigation of the site it remains unclear how much of these survive.
- 5.1.3 There is often little opportunity for excavation in medieval and post-medieval contexts in the towns of Lancashire. The building sequence recorded on the site in the 1979 excavation proved valuable for informing us about the late medieval and post-medieval development of the area. However, the watching brief cast doubt over the site's potential for significant further knowledge enhancement. It may be pertinent to ascertain the exact location and findings of the 1979 excavation prior to determining the location and extent of any future evaluation.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Location map

Figure 2: Detailed location plan of 47-49 China Street

Figure 3: Approximate location of the trial pits

LIST OF PLATES

Plate 1: 47-49 China Street, mid-seventeenth and early eighteenth century houses. Demolished 1973. Photographed c1960.

Plate 2: The site during excavation of the trial pits, looking east.

Plate 3: Trial Pit 2, showing the foundation of the adjacent property, looking north.

Plate 4: Trial Pit 5 during excavation, looking east.

APPENDIX 1: PROJECT DESIGN

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

1.1.1 Rowmor Ltd (hereafter the client) has requested that Oxford Archaeology North undertake a watching brief at the presently vacant site at 47-49 China Street, Lancaster, Lancashire (centred SD 482 613). Planning approval has been granted for the redevelopment of the site (reference 03/01163/FUL) with a requirement for archaeological evaluation. However, due to the previous occupation of the site by a building with a suspected cellar Lancashire County Archaeology Service (LCAS) have advised that in the first instance an archaeological watching brief should be carried out during the excavation of investigative trial pits. This will inform LCAS of the amount of disturbance or survival of archaeological deposits across the site which will be available for archaeological evaluation. Consequently, the client has requested that Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) submit proposals to undertake the watching brief. This project design has been prepared in accordance with a verbal brief from LCAS. Should an archaeological evaluation be required a separate project design will be issued.

1.1.2 **Prehistory:** there is scarce evidence of prehistoric activity in and around Lancaster, although three find spots of Bronze Age burials are known to the south and east of the site. Unfortunately it does not provide much indication of settlement and, in addition, the sites were all found pre1900 when insufficient information was gathered to rule out the possibility of these being Romano-British burials rather than prehistoric.

1.1.3 **Romano-British:** a Roman fort was founded on Castle Hill in the AD 70s when Agricola, as Governor, pushed northwards along the west coast into Scotland. This was followed by a sequence of forts on the site and the latest of these, in the fourth century, seems to have been realigned parallel to the Lune. It has been suggested that its form was similar to the Saxon Shore forts of southern Britain and that it would potentially have served as a fleet supply base and ensured the security of the harbour.

1.1.4 Evidence from numerous excavations in Church Street, thought to have been the main road leading to and from the fort and linking it to the overall road system, suggests that the beginnings of extramural civilian settlement were effectively contemporary with the foundation of the first fort. Few if any structures are known from this early activity and it may well have been less than robust leaving a somewhat nebulous impression of settlement rather than anything. It was not until the early years of the second century that the settlement grew and thrived. Archaeological investigation has focused on Church Street which is, as a result, relatively well-understood. The full extent of the Roman settlement is as yet unknown but it seems to have extended almost as far as Cheapside to the east, and some distance south along the line of Penny Street to the south, presumably running westwards as far as the fort, if not beyond (inhumation burials were excavated to the west of the fort in Westfield village during the 1930s. To the north the River Lune forms a natural boundary. It seems likely that the settlement continued in existence well into the fourth century when a drastic realignment of the fort seems to have coincided with a major contraction of the town. Whether it shrank progressively as its inhabitants withdrew to the safety of the fort walls (marked today by the Weary Wall on Castle Hill) in troubled times or was simply abandoned is not known but there is very little, if any, evidence for fifth century activity beyond the fort.

1.1.5 Burials have been found in the southern part of the town including those excavated in 1996 at Penny Street and individual burials between King Street and Penny Street and another at St Thomas's Church. These seem to imply an arc of perhaps superimposed funerary activity extending around the southern side of the settlement and dating from the second to fourth centuries AD.

1.1.6 **The Medieval Period:** the early medieval period is represented archaeologically by a hoard of ninth century coins. Further evidence for activity during this period comprises fragments of stone crosses from the area of the Priory Church indicating the presence of an earlier church. This gave rise to the vill of *Chercaloncastre*, one of the two in Lancaster listed in Domesday Book.

1.1.7 By the later medieval period, place names and documentary sources provide the main source of evidence, although excavations have also provided an indication of the physical form of the settlement at Lancaster. Lancaster Castle, on the site of the earlier Roman forts, was established by 1094 along with a priory on the church site. The town seems to have developed rapidly after the granting of a borough charter in 1193, which encouraged the establishment of full urban functions, including a weekly market. Though there is no evidence of deliberate town planning, as occurs in many towns of the period, many of the streets were divided into individual burgage plots. Church Street, Market Street and Penny Street were the main thoroughfares at the time. This may imply a continuation of settlement pattern, surviving from the Roman period, when activity was concentrated in these same areas.

1.2 OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY NORTH

1.2.1 OA North has considerable experience of the assessment of sites of all periods, having undertaken a great number of small and large-scale projects during the past 20 years. Such evaluations have taken place within the planning process, to fulfil the requirements of clients and planning authorities, to very rigorous timetables. In recent years, OA North has undertaken similar types of work in many parts of Lancashire but more specifically in the immediate environs to the site on Dowbridge Close and Myrtle Drive.

1.2.2 OA North has the professional expertise and resources to undertake the project detailed below to a high level of quality and efficiency. OA North is an Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) registered organisation, registration number 17, and all its members of staff operate subject to the IFA Code of Conduct.

2 OBJECTIVES

2.1 The following programme has been designed to provide for accurate recording of any archaeological deposits that may be encountered during investigative trial pits for the proposed development.

2.2 **Watching brief:** a watching brief, during associated ground disturbance, will determine the quality, extent and importance of any archaeological remains on the site.

2.3 **Report:** should there be no further archaeological work required in the form of an evaluation a report will be produced for the client within eight weeks of completion of the fieldwork. However, should further work be undertaken the results will be included in one final report.

3 METHOD STATEMENT

3.1 WATCHING BRIEF

3.1.1 **Methodology:** a programme of field observation will accurately record the location, extent, and character of any surviving archaeological features and/or deposits during the excavation of trial pits across the proposed development area. This work will comprise observation during the excavation, the systematic examination of any subsoil horizons exposed during the course of the groundworks, and the accurate recording of all archaeological features and horizons, and any artefacts, identified during observation.

3.1.2 The watching brief of the trial pits should cover the whole of the area to be disturbed by the development including building foundations, service trenches and other earthmoving activities.

3.1.3 Putative archaeological features and/or deposits identified by the machining process, together with the immediate vicinity of any such features, will be cleaned by hand, using either hoes, shovel scraping, and/or trowels depending on the subsoil conditions, and where appropriate sections will be studied and drawn. Any such features will be sample excavated (ie. selected pits and postholes will normally only be half-sectioned, linear features will be subject to no more than a 10% sample, and extensive layers will, where possible, be sampled by partial rather than complete removal).

3.1.4 During this phase of work, recording will comprise a full description and preliminary classification of features or materials revealed, and their accurate location (either on plan and/or section, and as grid co-ordinates where appropriate). Features will be planned accurately at appropriate scales and annotated on to a large-scale plan provided by the Client. A photographic record will be undertaken simultaneously.

- 3.1.5 A plan will be produced of the areas of groundworks showing the location and extent of the ground disturbance and one or more dimensioned sections will be produced.
- 3.1.6 **Contingency plan:** in the event of significant archaeological features being encountered during the watching brief, discussions will take place with the Planning Archaeologist or his representative, as to the extent of further works to be carried out. Any further works required prior to an archaeological evaluation would be subject to a variation to this project design. In the event of environmental/organic deposits being present on site, it would be necessary to discuss and agree a programme of palaeoenvironmental sampling and or dating with the Planning Archaeologist.
- 3.2 **Archive/Report**
- 3.2.1 **Archive:** the results of all archaeological work carried out will form the basis for a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition, 1991) and the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage* (UKIC 1990). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project. The deposition of a properly ordered and indexed project archive in an appropriate repository is considered an essential and integral element of all archaeological projects by the IFA in that organisation's code of conduct.
- 3.2.2 **Report:** should a report be required for the watching brief this shall be submitted as one bound and one unbound copy of a written synthetic report to the client, and a copy submitted to the County Archaeological Officer and to the Lancashire SMR as a paper copy and digital copy on CD within eight weeks of completion of fieldwork. The report will include a copy of this project design, and indications of any agreed departure from that design. It will present, summarise, and interpret the results of the programme detailed above
- 3.2.3 **Confidentiality:** all internal reports to the client are designed as documents for the specific use of the Client, for the particular purpose as defined in the project brief and project design, and should be treated as such. They are not suitable for publication as academic documents or otherwise without amendment or revision.
- 4 PROJECT MONITORING
- 4.1 Monitoring of this project will be undertaken through the auspices of the County Archaeologist LCAS, who will be informed of the start and end dates of the work.
- 5 WORK TIMETABLE
- 5.1 OA North will carry out the archaeological programme of works on Thursday 8th January 2004.
- 5.2 The duration of the archaeological presence for the watching brief should be for one day as dictated by the schedule of works.
- 5.3 Should a client report will be required (ie if no further archaeological investigation is to be undertaken) it will be completed within eight weeks following completion of the fieldwork.
- 6 STAFFING
- 6.1 The project will be under the direct management of **Emily Mercer BA (Hons) MSc AIFA** (OA North Senior Project Manager) to whom all correspondence should be addressed.
- 6.2 The watching brief will be supervised in the field by either an OA North project officer or supervisor experienced in this type of project. All OA North project officers and supervisors are experienced field archaeologists capable of carrying out projects of all sizes.
- 6.3 Present timetabling constraints preclude detailing at this stage exactly who will be undertaking the watching brief element of the project.
- 7 INSURANCE
- 7.1 OA North has a professional indemnity cover to a value of £2,000,000; proof of which can be supplied as required.

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OA North 2003 *81 Penny Street, Lancaster* unpubl client report

OA North forthcoming *27 Castle Hill, Lancaster* unpubl client report

United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (UKIC), 1990 *Guidelines for the preparation of archives for long-term storage*

APPENDIX 2: FINDS SUMMARY

All the finds were pottery, and were recovered from Test Pit 4

Quantity	Description	Date range
14	Mostly refitting body fragments from largish, thin-walled brown-glazed red earthenware bottle with white slip-trailed lines on upper half of vessel; handle terminal present, and rough, unglazed sandy interior surface	Late seventeenth - early twentieth century
3	Black-glazed red earthenware pancheon fragments, comprising refitting rim and lug handle, and base from a different vessel	Late seventeenth - early twentieth century
1	Fine yellowish-glazed white slip-coated red earthenware jug (?) handle terminal	Late seventeenth - early nineteenth century
1	White earthenware base fragment with blue transfer-printed lacustrine landscape pattern	Nineteenth century
1	Self-glazed red earthenware hollow-ware fragment	Late eighteenth - twentieth century



Plate 1: 47-49 China Street, mid-seventeenth and early eighteenth century houses. Demolished 1973. Photographed c1960



Plate 2: The site during excavation of the trial pits, looking east



Plate 3: Trial Pit 2, showing the foundation of the adjacent property, looking north



Plate 4: Trial Pit 5 during excavation, looking east.

December 2003

47-49 CHINA STREET, LANCASTER, LANCASHIRE

**WATCHING BRIEF
PROJECT DESIGN**

Proposals

The following project design is offered in response to a request by Rowmor Ltd for an archaeological watching brief in advance of the proposed redevelopment of the site at 47-49 China Street, Lancaster.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1 Rowmor Ltd (hereafter the client) has requested that Oxford Archaeology North undertake a watching brief at the presently vacant site at 47-49 China Street, Lancaster, Lancashire (centred SD 482 613). Planning approval has been granted for the redevelopment of the site (reference 03/01163/FUL) with a requirement for archaeological evaluation. However, due to the previous occupation of the site by a building with a suspected cellar Lancashire County Archaeology Service (LCAS) have advised that in the first instance an archaeological watching brief should be carried out during the excavation of investigative trial pits. This will inform LCAS of the amount of disturbance or survival of archaeological deposits across the site which will be available for archaeological evaluation. Consequently, the client has requested that Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) submit proposals to undertake the watching brief. This project design has been prepared in accordance with a verbal brief from LCAS. Should an archaeological evaluation be required a separate project design will be issued.
- 1.1.2 **Prehistory:** there is scarce evidence of prehistoric activity in and around Lancaster, although three find spots of Bronze Age burials are known to the south and east of the site. Unfortunately it does not provide much indication of settlement and, in addition, the sites were all found pre1900 when insufficient information was gathered to rule out the possibility of these being Romano-British burials rather than prehistoric.
- 1.1.3 **Romano-British:** a Roman fort was founded on Castle Hill in the AD 70s when Agricola, as Governor, pushed northwards along the west coast into Scotland. This was followed by a sequence of forts on the site and the latest of these, in the fourth century, seems to have been realigned parallel to the Lune. It has been suggested that its form was similar to the Saxon Shore forts of southern Britain and that it would potentially have served as a fleet supply base and ensured the security of the harbour.
- 1.1.4 Evidence from numerous excavations in Church Street, thought to have been the main road leading to and from the fort and linking it to the overall road system, suggests that the beginnings of extramural civilian settlement were effectively contemporary with the foundation of the first fort. Few if any structures are known from this early activity and it may well have been less than robust leaving a somewhat nebulous impression of settlement rather than anything. It was not until the early years of the second century that the settlement grew and thrived. Archaeological investigation has focused on Church Street which is, as a result, relatively well-understood. The full extent of the Roman settlement is as yet unknown but it seems to have extended almost as far as Cheapside to the east, and some distance south along the line of Penny Street to the south, presumably running westwards as far as the fort, if not beyond (inhumation burials were excavated to the west of the fort in Westfield village during the 1930s. To the north the River Lune forms a natural boundary. It seems likely that the settlement continued in existence well into the fourth century when a drastic realignment of the fort seems to have coincided with a major contraction of the town. Whether it shrank progressively as its inhabitants withdrew to the safety of the fort walls (marked today by the Weary Wall on Castle Hill) in troubled times or was simply

abandoned is not known but there is very little, if any, evidence for fifth century activity beyond the fort.

- 1.1.5 Burials have been found in the southern part of the town including those excavated in 1996 at Penny Street and individual burials between King Street and Penny Street and another at St Thomas's Church. These seem to imply an arc of perhaps superimposed funerary activity extending around the southern side of the settlement and dating from the second to fourth centuries AD.
- 1.1.6 **The Medieval Period:** the early medieval period is represented archaeologically by a hoard of ninth century coins. Further evidence for activity during this period comprises fragments of stone crosses from the area of the Priory Church indicating the presence of an earlier church. This gave rise to the vill of *Chercaloncastre*, one of the two in Lancaster listed in Domesday Book.
- 1.1.7 By the later medieval period, place names and documentary sources provide the main source of evidence, although excavations have also provided an indication of the physical form of the settlement at Lancaster. Lancaster Castle, on the site of the earlier Roman forts, was established by 1094 along with a priory on the church site. The town seems to have developed rapidly after the granting of a borough charter in 1193, which encouraged the establishment of full urban functions, including a weekly market. Though there is no evidence of deliberate town planning, as occurs in many towns of the period, many of the streets were divided into individual burgage plots. Church Street, Market Street and Penny Street were the main thoroughfares at the time. This may imply a continuation of settlement pattern, surviving from the Roman period, when activity was concentrated in these same areas.

1.2 OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY NORTH

- 1.2.1 OA North has considerable experience of the assessment of sites of all periods, having undertaken a great number of small and large-scale projects during the past 20 years. Such evaluations have taken place within the planning process, to fulfil the requirements of clients and planning authorities, to very rigorous timetables. In recent years, OA North has undertaken similar types of work in many parts of Lancashire but more specifically in the immediate environs to the site on Dowbridge Close and Myrtle Drive.
- 1.2.2 OA North has the professional expertise and resources to undertake the project detailed below to a high level of quality and efficiency. OA North is an Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) registered organisation, registration number 17, and all its members of staff operate subject to the IFA Code of Conduct.

2 OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The following programme has been designed to provide for accurate recording of any archaeological deposits that may be encountered during investigative trial pits for the proposed development.
- 2.2 **Watching brief:** a watching brief, during associated ground disturbance, will determine the quality, extent and importance of any archaeological remains on the site.
- 2.3 **Report:** should there be no further archaeological work required in the form of an evaluation a report will be produced for the client within eight weeks of

completion of the fieldwork. However, should further work be undertaken the results will be included in one final report.

3 METHOD STATEMENT

3.1 WATCHING BRIEF

- 3.1.1 **Methodology:** a programme of field observation will accurately record the location, extent, and character of any surviving archaeological features and/or deposits during the excavation of trial pits across the proposed development area. This work will comprise observation during the excavation, the systematic examination of any subsoil horizons exposed during the course of the groundworks, and the accurate recording of all archaeological features and horizons, and any artefacts, identified during observation.
- 3.1.2 The watching brief of the trial pits should cover the whole of the area to be disturbed by the development including building foundations, service trenches and other earthmoving activities.
- 3.1.3 Putative archaeological features and/or deposits identified by the machining process, together with the immediate vicinity of any such features, will be cleaned by hand, using either hoes, shovel scraping, and/or trowels depending on the subsoil conditions, and where appropriate sections will be studied and drawn. Any such features will be sample excavated (ie. selected pits and postholes will normally only be half-sectioned, linear features will be subject to no more than a 10% sample, and extensive layers will, where possible, be sampled by partial rather than complete removal).
- 3.1.4 During this phase of work, recording will comprise a full description and preliminary classification of features or materials revealed, and their accurate location (either on plan and/or section, and as grid co-ordinates where appropriate). Features will be planned accurately at appropriate scales and annotated on to a large-scale plan provided by the Client. A photographic record will be undertaken simultaneously.
- 3.1.5 A plan will be produced of the areas of groundworks showing the location and extent of the ground disturbance and one or more dimensioned sections will be produced.
- 3.1.6 **Contingency plan:** in the event of significant archaeological features being encountered during the watching brief, discussions will take place with the Planning Archaeologist or his representative, as to the extent of further works to be carried out. Any further works required prior to an archaeological evaluation would be subject to a variation to this project design. In the event of environmental/organic deposits being present on site, it would be necessary to discuss and agree a programme of palaeoenvironmental sampling and or dating with the Planning Archaeologist.

3.2 Archive/Report

- 3.2.1 **Archive:** the results of all archaeological work carried out will form the basis for a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition, 1991) and the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage* (UKIC 1990). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the

data and material gathered during the course of the project. The deposition of a properly ordered and indexed project archive in an appropriate repository is considered an essential and integral element of all archaeological projects by the IFA in that organisation's code of conduct.

3.2.2 **Report:** should a report be required for the watching brief this shall be submitted as one bound and one unbound copy of a written synthetic report to the client, and a copy submitted to the County Archaeological Officer and to the Lancashire SMR as a paper copy and digital copy on CD within eight weeks of completion of fieldwork. The report will include a copy of this project design, and indications of any agreed departure from that design. It will present, summarise, and interpret the results of the programme detailed above

3.2.3 **Confidentiality:** all internal reports to the client are designed as documents for the specific use of the Client, for the particular purpose as defined in the project brief and project design, and should be treated as such. They are not suitable for publication as academic documents or otherwise without amendment or revision.

4 PROJECT MONITORING

4.1 Monitoring of this project will be undertaken through the auspices of the County Archaeologist LCAS, who will be informed of the start and end dates of the work.

5 WORK TIMETABLE

5.1 OA North will carry out the archaeological programme of works on Thursday 8th January 2004.

5.2 The duration of the archaeological presence for the watching brief should be for one day as dictated by the schedule of works.

5.3 Should a client report will be required (ie if no further archaeological investigation is to be undertaken) it will be completed within eight weeks following completion of the fieldwork.

6 STAFFING

6.1 The project will be under the direct management of **Emily Mercer BA (Hons) MSc AIFA** (OA North Senior Project Manager) to whom all correspondence should be addressed.

6.2 The watching brief will be supervised in the field by either an OA North project officer or supervisor experienced in this type of project. All OA North project officers and supervisors are experienced field archaeologists capable of carrying out projects of all sizes.

6.3 Present timetabling constraints preclude detailing at this stage exactly who will be undertaking the watching brief element of the project.

7 INSURANCE

7.1 OA North has a professional indemnity cover to a value of £2,000,000; proof of which can be supplied as required.

REFERENCES

English Heritage, 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edn, London

Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA), 1992 *Guidelines for data collection and compilation*

OA North 2003 *81 Penny Street, Lancaster* unpubl client report

OA North forthcoming *27 Castle Hill, Lancaster* unpubl client report

United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (UKIC), 1990 *Guidelines for the preparation of archives for long-term storage*