

# LAND AT HOOD STREET, ANCOATS, MANCHESTER

## Archaeological Evaluation Report



**Oxford Archaeology North**

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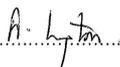
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## SUMMARY

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Manchester Life Development Company has submitted a planning application (109593/FO/2015/N1) for the redevelopment of a plot of land at Hood Street in the Ancoats area of Manchester (centred at NGR 384925 398615). The proposals allow for a mixed-use development comprising commercial space, three residential town houses and 28 residential apartments, together with associated car parking and landscaping works. The construction works required for the proposed development will necessitate considerable earth-moving works, whilst an archaeological desk-based assessment that was prepared to support the planning application concluded that the site had potential pertaining to the early development of Ancoats as Manchester's first industrial suburb based on steam power.

In order to secure archaeological interests, the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service, in their capacity as archaeological advisor to Manchester City Council, recommended that it would be appropriate to undertake a programme of archaeological evaluation to inform the development process, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 141. The programme of work recommended comprised the excavation of three evaluation trenches, which were targeted on the footprint of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century workers' housing and an iron foundry.

The evaluation trenching was carried out by Oxford Archaeology North in September 2015. The natural geology was revealed in all of the excavated trenches at depths of less than 1m below the modern ground surface. The archaeological features identified comprised elements of buildings depicted on the sequence of historical mapping, with the earliest potentially dating to the late eighteenth century. However, the structural remains were fragmentary, with little physical evidence for internal floors, fixtures or fittings, reducing their archaeological significance. All buried remains were overlain by demolition rubble that seemingly derived from the clearance of the site in the second half of the twentieth century.

The results obtained from the evaluation trenching demonstrate that there are few buried archaeological remains surviving within the development area. It is concluded that there is little potential for significant archaeological remains to survive *in-situ*, and is thus unlikely that any earth-moving works associated with the proposed development would have a negative impact on the buried archaeological resource. It is considered unlikely that any further intrusive investigation of the site is merited.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) would like to thank Richard Hattan of Mace Ltd for commissioning and supporting the project on behalf of the Manchester Life Development Company (MLDC). Thanks are also expressed to Norman Redhead, Heritage Management Director with the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS), for his advice and guidance.

The evaluation was directed by Graham Mottershead, who was assisted by Lewis Stitt and Andy McGuire. The report was written by Lewis Stitt, and the illustrations were prepared by Mark Tidmarsh. The report was edited by Ian Miller, who was also responsible for project management.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 Manchester Life Development Company (MLDC) has submitted a planning application (109593/FO/2015/N1) for the redevelopment of a plot of land at Hood Street in the Ancoats area of Manchester. The proposals allow for a residential-led mixed use development providing 28 residential apartments and three town houses, 140 square metres of ground-floor commercial floorspace (Use Class A1, A2, A3, B1, D1) within an eight- to nine- (including ground) storey building, multi-storey car-parking provision, with access and servicing arrangements and associated works.
- 1.1.2 An archaeological desk-based assessment that was prepared to support the planning application concluded that the site had potential to contain buried archaeological remains pertaining to the early development of Ancoats as Manchester's first industrial suburb based on steam power (Arup 2015). In order to secure archaeological interests, the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS), in their capacity as archaeological advisor to Manchester City Council, recommended that it would be appropriate to undertake a programme of archaeological evaluation to inform the development process, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 141. In the light of this advice, MLDC Ltd commissioned Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) to undertake the recommended scheme of evaluation trenching. This comprised the mechanical excavation of three targeted trenches within the study area, which aimed to establish character, extent, date and significance of the below-ground archaeological resource. The evaluation trenching was carried out in September 2015.

### 1.2 SITE LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 1.2.1 The study area lies within the Ancoats area of Manchester, which is situated less than 1km to north-east of the city centre (Fig 1). It is bounded by Cotton Street to the west, Jersey Street to the south and Hood Street to the north, and lies at the western end of the Ancoats Conservation Area (centred at NGR 384925 398615). Topographically, the Manchester Conurbation as a region is within an undulating lowland basin, which is bounded by the Pennine uplands to the east and to the north. The region comprises the Mersey river valley, which is dominated by its heavily meandering river within a broad flood plain (Countryside Commission 1998, 125).
- 1.2.2 The solid geology of the area comprises Carboniferous sedimentary material and a series of Permo-Triassic rocks, consisting mainly of New Red Sandstone. The overlying drift incorporates Pleistocene boulder clays of glacial origin, and sands, gravels, and clays of fluvial/lacustrine origin (Hall *et al* 1995, 8).



*Plate 1: Aerial view across the study area*

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## 2. METHODOLOGY

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### 2.1 EVALUATION TRENCHING

2.1.1 Three trenches were excavated mechanically across the footprint of buildings of potential archaeological interest depicted on historical mapping. Excavation of the modern ground surface was undertaken by a mechanical excavator using a toothless ditching bucket to the top of the first significant archaeological level. The work was supervised closely by a suitably experienced archaeologist. Thereafter, all archaeological deposits were cleaned manually to define their extent, nature, form and, where possible, date. The trenches were recorded following the methodology set out in the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (OA North 2015).

### 2.2 ARCHIVE

2.2.1 A full archive of the work has been prepared to a professional standard in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (1991) and the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage* (UKIC 1990). The archive will be deposited with the Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester on completion of the project. In addition, a copy of the report will be forwarded to the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record (HER).

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### 3. BACKGROUND

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#### 3.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO ANCOATS

- 3.1.1 The origin of the name Ancoats is uncertain, although it is likely to have derived from the Old English *ana cots*, which may be translated as ‘lonely cottage’ (Cooper 2002, 13). It was an area of open land throughout the medieval period, considered by Swindells (1908, 19-26) to have been ‘an almost idyllic rural backwater’, and was recorded in a survey of 1320 to have formed one of eight hamlets within the township of Manchester (Harland 1861). It is likely that settlement comprised a few cottages and farmhouses along Ancoats Lane, Newton Lane and Butler Lane, although the most notable building in the area by the end of the medieval period was undoubtedly the timber-framed Ancoats Hall, which overlooked the river Medlock on the eastern fringe of the area.
- 3.1.2 Ancoats retained a semi-rural aspect until the late eighteenth century, when the population of Manchester expanded at an unprecedented rate, and resulted in the transformation of Ancoats into a key industrial suburb. This process of industrialisation began in the 1770s, when land owned by the Leigh family was sold to Thomas Bound, a builder, who then sold it on to others for development. The focus for initial development was at the corner of Great Ancoats Street and Oldham Road, and contemporary maps depict the main elements of the existing street plan laid out on former fields of the area. Building speculation then drove further expansion, with plots of land within a grid pattern of streets being sold for development (Miller and Wild 2007). An early stage in the development of the area is depicted on William Green’s map 1787-94, and shows in excess of 60 plots laid out.
- 3.1.3 The earliest factories in the area included several water-powered mills erected along Shooters Brook, to the south of Union (now Redhill) Street. However, in seeking a solution to the inadequate power supplied to their waterwheels from Shooters Brook, several firms experimented with steam power. A notable example was Salvins’ Factory, where John Kennedy is reputed to have first applied steam power to one of his spinning mules in 1793 (Miller and Wild 2007). In order to achieve this, Kennedy utilised a steam-powered pumping engine that delivered water to a waterwheel, and it was on the basis of a breakthrough in the application of steam power that created the explosion of factory building in Ancoats (Little 2004, 31).
- 3.1.4 The completion of the Ashton-under-Lyne Canal in 1796, and a proposal to construct the Rochdale Canal through the area offered the potential of cheap transport for goods to and from Ancoats. The completion of the Rochdale Canal in 1804 coincided broadly with the efficient application of steam power to cotton-spinning machinery, and a growth in the national demand for textiles. A small number of enterprising firms seized the opportunity presented by this combination of factors, resulting in the evolution of a new breed of steam-powered mill building in Ancoats, and the creation of ‘the world’s first industrial suburb’ (Williams 2002, 34).

### 3.2 SUMMARISED DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDY AREA

- 3.2.1 The earliest reliable cartographic sources to show the study area is William Green's map of 1787-94, which shows the site to be situated within an existing street grid that included Jersey Street (formerly Elliott Street) and Hood Street (formerly Heath Street). The only buildings in the present study area at that date comprised a terrace of houses along the Elliot Street frontage, with the remainder of the plot being undeveloped.
- 3.2.2 Ancoats was subject to considerable residential and industrial development during the early nineteenth century. It was during this period that the south-western part of the study area was developed as Robinson's Court, which comprised a block of houses arranged around a triangular-shaped courtyard, as depicted on Bancks & Co's detailed survey of the area of 1831 (Plate 2). The north-eastern part of the study area, however, remained undeveloped.



Plate 2: Extract from Bancks & Co's survey of 1831, marking the position of the study area

- 3.2.3 The first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1850 (Fig 2), and Adshead's plan of 1851 (Plate 3), show that the study area had been developed entirely by the mid-nineteenth century. Robinson's Court is shown on both maps occupying the western part of the site, with an entrance off Hood Street, and the terrace of houses along the Cotton Street frontage. The north-eastern part of the site had been developed as an iron foundry, although Adshead's map shows that this foundry was somewhat larger than indicated by the Ordnance Survey. The absence of any pavement lights against the buildings in the study area on the detailed Ordnance Survey map suggests that none of the houses contained cellars.

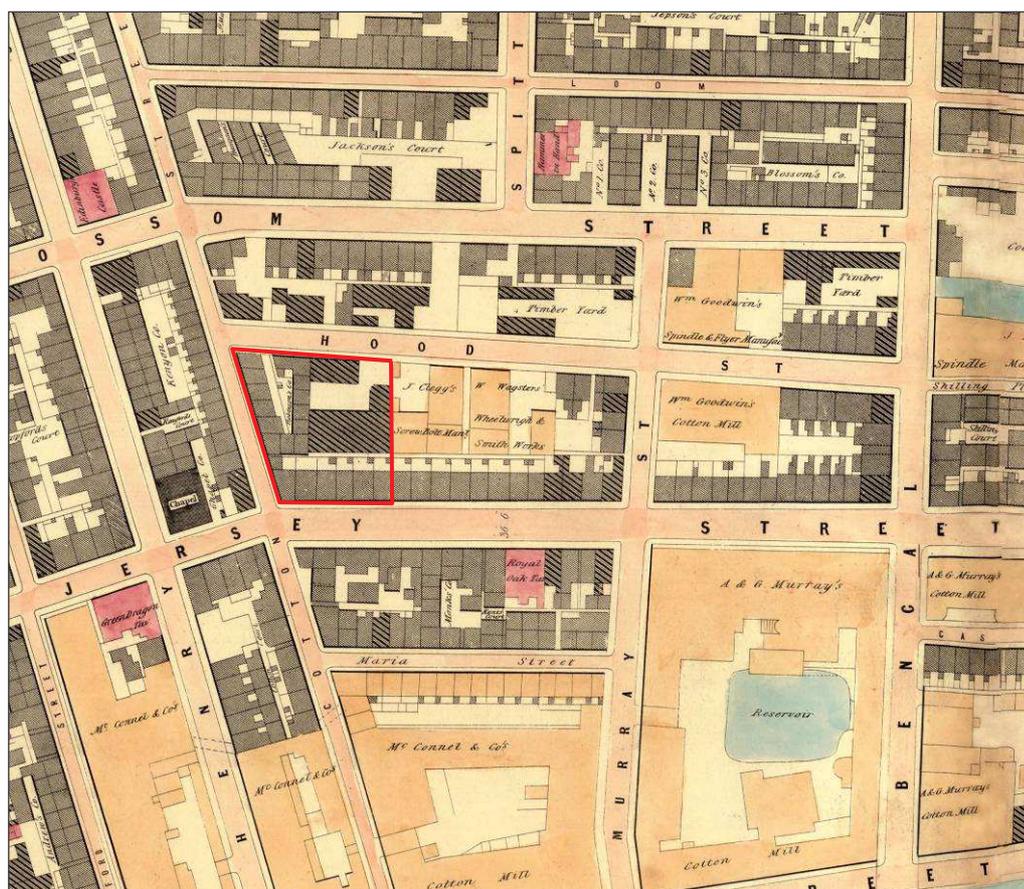


Plate 3: Extract from Adshead's map of 1851, marking the position of the study area

- 3.2.4 The layout of buildings on the Jersey and Cotton Street frontages, with commercial premises entered from Hood Street, remained largely unchanged throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century. The nature of the business carried on in the commercial properties seems to have changed from iron founding and screwbolt manufacturing to warehousing and ice-cream making by the 1920s (Arup 2015).
- 3.2.5 The footprint of the buildings in the study area is shown on the Ordnance Survey 1:1250 map of 1948 to be largely the same as depicted on earlier mapping, although those to the rear of the street frontage are annotated as being ruinous. The site of these ruinous buildings is shown as vacant on the 1955 edition of Ordnance Survey mapping, implying that they had been demolished. Some of the buildings fronting onto Hood Street had also been demolished by this date. This is confirmed on a photograph of Hood Street taken in the early 1960s (Plate 4).
- 3.2.6 The next edition of Ordnance Survey mapping, published in 1965, show that the houses fronting onto Cotton Street had been demolished. The only buildings remaining in the study area at that date were those occupying the northern part of the site, which had been demolished by 2006.



Plate 4: View along Hood Street in the early 1960s, showing some single-storey buildings along the street frontage in the study area and the site of other demolished buildings in use for car parking

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## 4. SUMMARY OF RESULTS

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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.1.1 The Written Scheme of Investigation allowed for the excavation of three trenches, placed across the footprint of buildings of archaeological interest identified in the desk-based assessment (Arup 2015). Trench 1 was placed across the foundry shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1850, and Trench 2 was targeted on the buildings comprising Robinson's Court (Fig 2). Trench 3 was placed parallel to Jersey Street, adjacent to the southern boundary of the site, across the footprint of late eighteenth-century dwellings.

### 4.2 EVALUATION TRENCHING

4.2.1 **Trench 1:** this trench measured 12 x 2.8m, and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.10m (Plate 5). It was aligned broadly north/south within the northern part of the site, and aimed to investigate the presence or absence of any buried remains pertaining to iron foundry marked on the Ordnance Survey map of 1850.

4.2.2 A layer of mixed grey clay (**104**) was exposed along the base of the excavated trench, clearly representing the natural geology. This upper surface of the natural geology was encountered at a depth of 0.92m below the modern ground surface.

4.2.3 Natural geology **104** was cut at the northern end of the trench by a wall (**102**). The fabric of wall **102** comprised of hand-made bricks bonded with lime-based mortar, consistent with an early to mid-nineteenth-century construction date. The wall was four brick-courses wide, and survived to a maximum height of 11 courses. Unusually, the wall had been laid on a timber plank foundation (Plate 6). The position of the wall corresponded closely to the north-eastern external wall of the iron foundry shown on historical mapping (Fig 2).

4.2.4 Fragmentary elements of a second brick wall (**103**) were identified at the south-eastern end of the trench. The fabric of this wall mirrored that used in wall **102**, suggesting that the two walls were of a similar construction date. The position of wall **103** corresponded broadly with part of the iron foundry depicted on Adshead's map of 1851 (Plate 3), but absent from the Ordnance Survey map of 1850. Despite locating walls **102** and **103**, however, no physical remains of interior surfaces, fixtures or fittings remained *in-situ*. This lack of remains suggests that the demolition of the building had been comprehensive.

4.2.5 The walls were overlain by a thick layer of demolition rubble, which incorporated numerous fragments of nineteenth-century pottery, together with twentieth-century material. The rubble was sealed beneath a 60mm thick concrete raft.



Plate 5: View along Trench 1, looking north



Plate 6: Wall 102, Trench 1, looking south-east

- 4.2.6 **Trench 2:** this trench measured 12 x 1.8m, and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.15m (Plate 7). It was aligned north-east/south-west, and was placed across the footprint of buildings shown on mid-nineteenth-century mapping as Robinson's Court (Fig 2).
- 4.2.7 A layer of mixed grey clay, very similar to deposit **104** in Trench 1, was exposed along the base of the excavated trench, clearly representing the natural geology. This had been cut by a series of walls, which all represented the fragmentary foundations of Robinson's Court.
- 4.2.8 Wall **105** was revealed in the north-western corner of the excavated trench (Fig 4). This survived for a distance of 1.5m, beyond which it had been removed. The wall was two courses wide, and comprised hand-made bricks bonded in lime-based mortar, consistent with an early to mid-nineteenth-century construction date. It was associated with wall **107**, which was aligned north-west/south-east across the trench, and similarly comprised hand-made bricks, but was three courses wide. These two walls enclosed the fragmentary remains of a brick floor (**108**), which appeared to continue beyond the northern edge of the trench (Plate 8).



*Plate 7: Trench 2 during excavation, looking north-east*



Plate 8: Brick floor **108** at the northern end of Trench 2

- 4.2.9 Situated 1.65m to the south-west of wall **106** was another wall (**109**) on the same alignment, and possibly representing a continuation of the same structure. This section of wall survived for a length of 1.5m, and comprised hand-made bricks bonded in lime-based mortar.
- 4.2.10 Walls **105**, **107** and **109**, together with floor **108**, probably represented the remnants of a building depicted on the Ordnance Survey map of 1850, although the position of the walls did not corresponded closely to those shown on the historic mapping.
- 4.2.11 Excavation to the south-west of wall **109** revealed the remains of a flagstone floor (**110**) at a depth of 0.35m below the modern ground surface (Plate 9). This probably represented the remnants of the central yard in Robinson's Court. It had seemingly remained in use into the twentieth century, as the flagstones had been re-surfaced with a skim of concrete. The surface was abutted by fragmentary elements of three walls (**111**, **112** and **113**), all of which comprised hand-made bricks set in lime-based mortar. These walls may have represented the vestiges of a small structure such as an ash pit or privy, although firm evidence was lacking.
- 4.2.12 Another wall (**114**) of hand-made bricks was revealed towards the south-western end of the trench. This wall was only a single course wide, suggesting that it had formed an internal partition within one of the houses fronting onto Cotton Street. However, no internal floors of these houses survived *in-situ*.



Plate 9: Surface **110**, together with the fragmentary remains of walls **111**, **112** and **113**

- 4.2.13 **Trench 3**: this north-east/south-west-aligned trench measured 14.8 x 1.8m, and was placed across the footprint of workers' housing fronting onto Jersey Street (Fig 2). As with the other trenches, the natural clay geology was revealed along the base of the excavated trench (Plate 10).
- 4.2.14 The remains of two walls (**115** and **116**) were revealed at the north-eastern end of the trench. Wall **115** had been cut into the natural geology, and comprised hand-made bricks bonded with lime-based mortar. It was two courses wide, and survived to a maximum height of six courses (Plate 11). The wall had been capped with 0.06m thick layer of concrete, presumably representing the demolition of the original structure. The concrete provided a foundation for wall **116**, which comprised machine-pressed bricks of twentieth-century date (Plate 11).
- 4.2.15 Wall **117** was revealed in the central part of the trench. This two-course wide wall comprised hand-made bricks with lime-based mortar, consistent with a late eighteenth- to early nineteenth-century construction date. The position of the wall corresponded closely to the partition wall of the houses fronting Jersey Street, as shown on nineteenth-century mapping (Figs 2 and 3).
- 4.2.16 Excavation towards the south-western end of the trench revealed the remains of a drain (**118**), together with the vestiges of a brick wall. The drain comprised hand-made bricks and had a slate base. The wall was similarly of hand-made bricks, and may have represented the vestiges of a partition wall between houses.



*Plate 10: Trench 3 during excavation, looking north-east*



*Plate 11: Walls 115 and 116 at the north-eastern end of Trench 3*

### 4.3 THE FINDS

4.3.1 In total, 20 artefacts were recovered from the evaluation trenching, although this represented a selective sample from the three trenches. The assemblage was composed entirely of pottery sherds, all of which were recovered from the demolition overburden, and are thus essentially unstratified. The possibility that the finds were imported to the site during demolition cannot therefore be discounted.

4.3.2 **Pottery:** several distinct types of fabrics were recognised amongst the group of pottery (Table 1). These included utilitarian dark-glazed red earthenware vessels, together with finer tablewares, reflecting some degree of affluence amongst former occupants of the site, which can be seen as unusual in the context of Ancoats. The fragments of pottery were all in a reasonable condition, and have a date range spanning the late eighteenth to early twentieth century.

Fabric	Count	Date
Dark-glazed red earthenware	6	Late eighteenth to early twentieth century
Pearlware	3	Late eighteenth to early nineteenth century
Under-glaze transfer-printed ware	11	Nineteenth to twentieth century

Table 1: Relative quantities of post-medieval pottery recovered during the evaluation

4.3.3 **Dark-glazed red earthenwares:** the largest group from the evaluation trenches consists of dark-glazed red earthenwares (Table 1). This particular ware was ubiquitous in the North West, and largely represents utilitarian kitchen wares. Notable groups of this pottery type have been recovered from Salford, Wigan and Liverpool (OA North 2014; OA North 2008; Philpott 1985). The vessel forms that could be recognised amongst the group included cylindrical jars (Plate 12), typical used for storage purposes in a kitchen.

4.3.4 In terms of source, the dark-glazed red earthenwares could have been produced at any of a number of different local manufacturing sites using the clays of the South Lancashire coalfields, including Rainford, active in the seventeenth century (Davey 1989, 104-5), and Prescot, Merseyside, which was producing dark-glazed redwares from the sixteenth to the early twentieth century (*op cit*, 103-4). The excavated examples, however, are more likely to have been manufactured locally, and whilst a firm date cannot be ascribed with any degree of confidence, they are likely to have been manufactured during the late eighteenth or nineteenth centuries. The lack of chronological precision is a reflection on the longevity of the dark-glazed red earthenware tradition, which has a long life-span and is notoriously difficult to date, unless accompanied by other, more precisely dated, pottery types.

4.3.5 **Pearlware:** seven fragments of pearlware vessels were present in the assemblage, including at least one sherd of a feather-edge plate (Plate 13). This type of pottery had become the most widely used tablewares by the early nineteenth century, partially because of their cheapness (Barker 2010, 15). These date, in broad terms, to between 1780 and the 1830s (Barker 2008).



Plate 12: Fragments of dark-glazed earthenware vessels



Plate 13: Fragments of pearlware feather-edged plates

- 4.3.6 *Underglaze transfer-printed ware*: this type of pottery characterised the ceramic supply during the nineteenth century, although the range of forms present in the evaluation trenches (albeit from unstratified contexts) was notable. This included numerous tableware and tea ware forms, such as sugar bowls and butter dishes, and a large fragment of a prayer plate (Plate 15).



Plate 14: Underglaze transfer-printed wares



Plate 15: Prayer plate

4.3.7 Notwithstanding the range of ceramic forms, and the apparent relative affluence that they imply, the finds recovered from the evaluation trenches were all from unstratified contexts, reducing their archaeological importance. It is thus recommended that the finds are ultimately discarded.

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## 5. CONCLUSIONS

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### 5.1 THE STRATIGRAPHY

5.1.1 The natural geology was revealed in all of the excavated trenches at depths of less than 1m below the modern ground surface. The archaeological features identified comprised fragmentary elements of buildings depicted on the sequence of historical mapping, with the earliest potentially dating to the late eighteenth century. The structural remains were overlain by demolition rubble that seemingly derived from the clearance of the site in the second half of the twentieth century. Only the vestiges of floor surfaces survived *in-situ*, suggesting that the demolition programme was comprehensive.

### 5.2 SIGNIFICANCE

5.2.1 The results obtained from the evaluation trenching demonstrate that there are few buried archaeological remains surviving within the development area. Notwithstanding the fragmentary survival of several wall foundations, the buried remains are considered to be of low archaeological significance due to the comprehensive nature of demolition.

### 5.3 IMPACT

5.3.1 The results obtained from the evaluation trench demonstrate that there is little potential for significant archaeological remains to survive *in-situ*. It is thus unlikely that any earth-moving works associated with the proposed development would have a negative impact on the buried archaeological resource, and it is considered unlikely that any further intrusive investigation of the site is merited.

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## ILLUSTRATIONS

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Figure 1: Site location



Figure 2: Evaluation trenches superimposed on the Ordnance Survey 60":1 mile map of 1850



Figure 3: Evaluation trenches superimposed on the Ordnance Survey 25":1 mile map of 1893



Figure 4: Evaluation trench plans