



LAND AT JERSEY STREET, ANCOATS, MANCHESTER

Archaeological Evaluation Report



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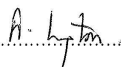
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SUMMARY

Manchester Life Development Company has submitted a planning application (Ref: 110077/FO/2015/N1) for the redevelopment of land bounded by Blossom Street, Bengal Street, Murray Street and Jersey Street in the Ancoats area of Manchester (centred at NGR 385010 398708). The proposals allow for the erection of a part seven- and part eight-storey mixed-use building, comprising ground-floor commercial units and 158 residential apartments 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 four evaluation trenches, which were targeted on the footprint of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century workers' housing and buildings associated with a nineteenth-century timber yard.

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 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.

The results obtained from the evaluation trenching concluded that there are no buried archaeological remains surviving within the northern part of the development area, and whilst some structural elements of historic buildings were revealed in trenches placed across the southern part of the site, these were considered to be of limited archaeological interest. It is thus concluded that any earth-moving works associated with the proposed development will have limited impact on the buried archaeological resource, and further intrusive investigation of the site is unlikely to be merited.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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), and to David Lakin of Arup for logistical support. 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.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 Manchester Life Development Company (MLDC) has submitted a planning application (110077/FO/2015/N1) for the redevelopment of a plot of land in the Ancoats area of Manchester. The proposals allow for the erection of a part seven- and part eight-storey mixed-use building, comprising ground-floor commercial units (Use Classes A1, A2, A3, B1 and D1) and 158 residential apartments with associated car parking at first floor, amenity space, hard and soft landscaping, boundary treatment and other works along with vehicular access from Jersey Street and pedestrian access from Murray Street.
- 1.1.2 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 (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.
- 1.1.3 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 four 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), and lies at the western end of the Ancoats Conservation Area (centred at NGR 385010 398708). It comprises a 0.48ha site that is bounded by Jersey Street, Bengal Street, Blossom Street and Murray Street, and straddles the former line of Hood Street (Plate 1).
- 1.2.2 The land lying to the north of Hood Street is occupied by a series of interconnected two-storey industrial buildings; these vacant buildings formerly comprised part of the Stockbridge Airco Works. The remainder of this plot is cleared, and consists of hard-standing, perimeter fencing and a perimeter line of trees and vegetation. The land lying to the south of Hood Street also contains a vacant two-storey industrial building, which covers approximately half of the site (Plate 1). The remainder of the plot is cleared hard-standing, with perimeter fencing and a line of trees and vegetation.

- 1.2.3 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).
- 1.2.4 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: Recent aerial view across the study area

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 EVALUATION TRENCHING

- 2.1.1 Four 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).

3. BACKGROUND

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), Blossom Street (formerly Elizabeth Street) Bengal Street and Hood Street (formerly Heath Street). The only buildings in the present study area at that date comprised a rectangular building range along the Elliot Street frontage, with the remainder of the plot being undeveloped. Green's map does not identify the function of the building range in the study area, although it is likely that it represented a terrace of workers' housing.

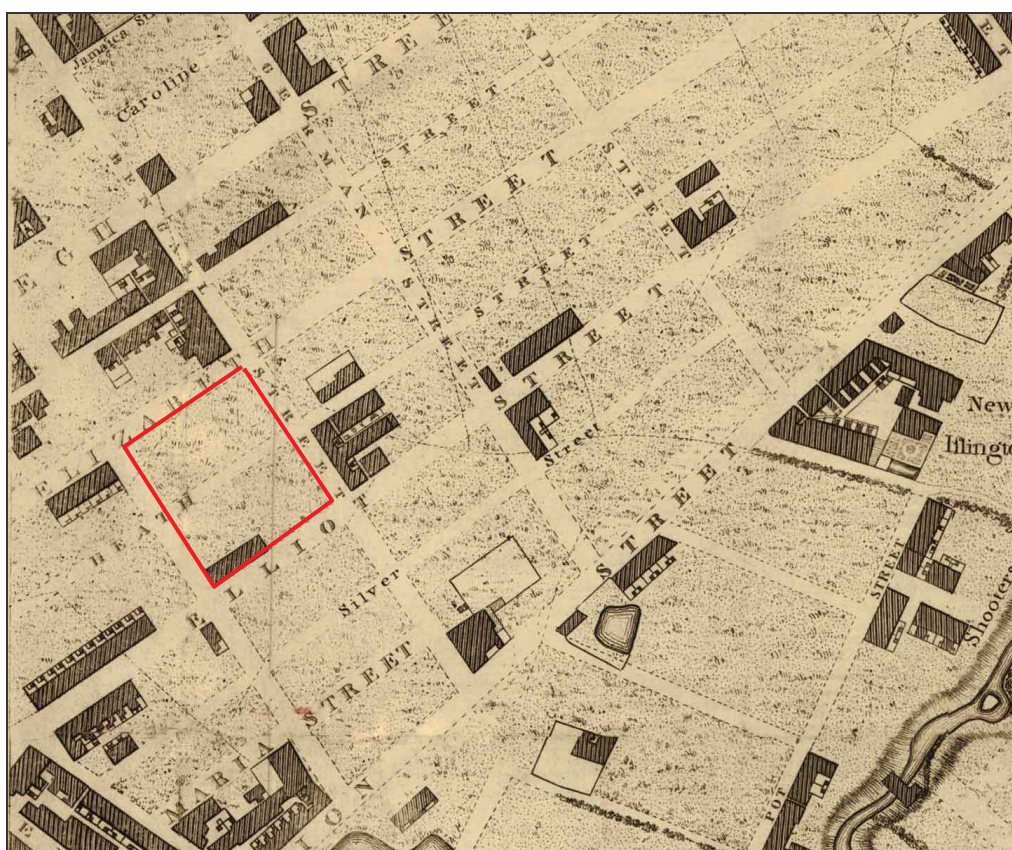


Plate 2: Extract from William Green's survey of 1787-94, marking the position of the study area

3.2.2 Ancoats was subject to considerable residential and industrial development during the early nineteenth century, which is captured on Bancks & Co's map of the area of 1831 (Plate 3). This shows the principal streets in Ancoats to have been established, and much of the area developed by factories and workers' housing. The present study area, however, does not appear to have been subject to intensive development since the late eighteenth century. The building range along Jersey Street that is depicted on Green's map of 1794 is shown by Bancks & Co to have comprised a terrace of seven residential properties, each with a small yard to the rear. Another building had been erected within the study area close to the junction of Jersey Street and Bengal Street, and further buildings at the junction of Bengal Street and Blossom Street (Plate 3). Curiously, Bancks & Co do not show Hood Street.



Plate 3: Extract from Bancks & Co's survey of 1831, marking the position of the study area

- 3.2.3 The next available detailed plans of the area are provided by the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1850 (Fig 2), and Adshead's plan of 1851 (Plate 4). These both show that the study area had been developed entirely by the mid-nineteenth century, but provide slightly differing detail of the component buildings. The Ordnance Survey shows the north-western part of the study area, situated at the junction of Blossom Street and Murray Street, to have been occupied by the Blossom Street Works, a wheelwright's shop. This is likely to have been associated with the timber yard that is shown to have occupied the north-eastern part of the study area. Hood Street is not marked, suggesting that it may not have actually been constructed across the study area by the mid-nineteenth century. The Jersey Street frontage is occupied by the houses shown on the earlier surveys, although the lack of any pavement lights suggests that these buildings did not have cellars. The building at the corner of Jersey Street and Bengal Street is shown to have been expanded into a small complex of buildings, implying an industrial function, whilst a larger building to the rear of the Jersey Street Houses is also likely to have been industrial.
- 3.2.4 Adshead's map of 1851 identifies the building to the rear of the Jersey Street houses as William Goodwin's cotton mill and shows it to have been bounded to the north by Hood Street, which crosses the centre of the study area to link with Bengal Street (Plate 4). A terrace of six properties is shown to have been built along the north side of Hood Street, which comprised five dwellings with commercial premises at the eastern end. The infrastructure of the timber yard appears to have been expanded, with additional buildings added to the site.

- 3.2.5 Adshead's map also shows the Blossom Street Works to have been expanded, and identifies it as William Goodwin's spindle and fly manufactory, which is likely to have been associated with the cotton mill situated to the south of Hood Street (Plate 4). Adshead also shows the buildings in the south-eastern corner of the study area to have comprised residential properties, with commercial premises occupying the corners of Hood Street and Jersey Street.

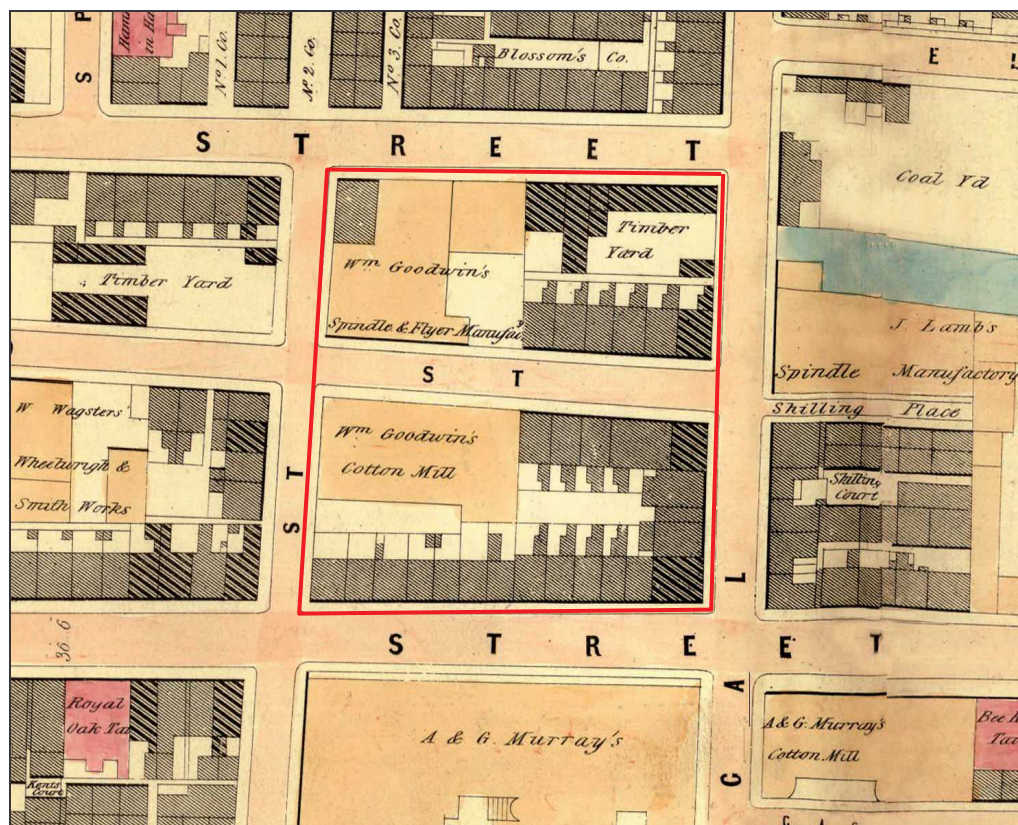


Plate 4: Extract from Adshead's map of 1851, marking the position of the study area

- 3.2.6 Entries in trade directories provide further evidence for the developing use of the buildings in the study area during the second half of the nineteenth century. A directory for 1879, for instance, indicates that the Blossom Street Works had become Rowland Archer's hessian and sacking works, and Goodwin's cotton mill was occupied by a packing-case manufacturer (Slater 1879).
- 3.2.7 Ordnance Survey mapping published in the early 1890s again shows the study area to have been traversed by Hood Street, dividing the site into two plots. The north-western part of the site had been redeveloped for use as a paper works, with the remaining part of this block developed into 15 terraced dwellings, each seemingly furnished with privies to the rear that were accessed via a narrow alley from Bengal Street. The site of William Goodwin's cotton mill in the southern part of the site is shown to have been occupied by another industrial building, although its use is uncertain. The remainder of the southern part of the site consists of 20 terraced dwellings, with the original terrace shown on earlier mapping still extant. The building on the corner of Bengal Street and Jersey Street, however, appears to have been remodelled slightly, with part of the building converted for use as a dwelling.

3.2.8 A similar configuration of buildings is depicted on the next edition of Ordnance Survey mapping, published in 1908. The only notable difference is that the buildings in south-western part of the site are identified as a saw mill. Subsequent mapping shows little change to the site until the mid-twentieth century, although a sheet metal warehouse had been established in the southern part of the site by the early 1950s. Cartographic evidence indicates that the dwellings along the Jersey Street frontage had been cleared by the early 1960s. This is confirmed by a photograph taken in c 1967, which shows part of the site to have been cleared of dwellings and in use as a car-parking area (Plate 5).



Plate 5: View across the study area from Jersey Street in c 1967, showing the south-eastern part of the site to have been cleared, and Blossom Street Works to the rear

4. SUMMARY OF RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.1.1 The Written Scheme of Investigation allowed for the excavation of four trenches, placed across the footprint of buildings of archaeological interest. Trenches 1 and 2 were placed across the footprint of two buildings associated with a timber yard as depicted on the Ordnance Survey map of 1850 (Fig 2), but redeveloped as houses by the end of the nineteenth century (Fig 3). Trenches 3 and 4 were targeted over buildings that are also shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1850 (Fig 2), and which had also been remodelled before the end of the nineteenth century (Fig 3).

4.2 EVALUATION TRENCHING

4.3.1 **Trench 1:** this trench was aligned north-east/south-west across the footprint of a mid-nineteenth-century building associated with a timber yard in the northern part of the site, parallel to Blossom Street (Fig 2). The trench measured 10 x 2m, and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.4m (Plate 6).

4.3.2 The trench encountered no archaeological remains, and no artefacts were recovered. The simple stratigraphic sequence consisted of the modern hard-standing (**100**) and an underlying layer of demolition material (**102**), comprising crushed brick, ash, clinker and clay. A thick deposit of clay (**103**), clearly representing the natural geology, was revealed at a depth of 1.2m below the modern ground surface.

4.3.3 **Trench 2:** this trench was aligned north-west/south-east, parallel to Bengal Street, and measured 10 x 2m and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.2m (Plate 7). It was also targeted on the footprint of a mid-nineteenth-century building associated with a timber yard (Fig 2).

4.3.4 As in Trench 1, no archaeological remains were encountered and no artefacts were recovered. The stratigraphic sequence comprised the modern hard-standing (**200**) and the underlying demolition deposit (**202**), which again comprised a mix of crushed brick, ash, clinker and clay. The natural clay (**203**) was encountered at 1.1m below the modern ground surface.

4.3.5 The results obtained from trenches 1 and 2 indicated that the northern part of the site, situated on the northern side of Hood Street, had been subject to comprehensive demolition in the second half of the twentieth century. This had culminated in the complete removal of all structural remains of the nineteenth-century buildings that had occupied the site.



Plate 6: General view along Trench 1, facing north-east



Plate 7: General view along Trench 2, facing north-east

- 4.2.3 **Trench 3:** this was aligned approximately north-west/south-east, parallel to Bengal Street, in the southern part of the site. The trench initially measured 10 x 2m and was excavated to a maximum depth of 2.9m. Consequently, the trench was widened and stepped out at the south-western end for safety considerations. The trench was targeted on the footprint of a commercial/small industrial building depicted on the Ordnance Survey map of 1850 (Fig 2).
- 4.2.4 Following the removal of the modern ground surface (300) and the underlying demolition overburden (301), some structural remains were revealed *in-situ* at the south-eastern part of the trench (Plate 8). The north-western part of the trench had evidently been subject to considerable disturbance, with modern infill continuing to a depth of 2.7m before the natural clay was revealed.
- 4.2.5 The remains in the south-eastern part of the trench comprised two brick walls (302 and 303), situated at a depth of 1.44m below the modern ground surface. Wall 302 comprised hand-made bricks, and survived to a height of five courses. The wall was two courses wide, with the component bricks each measuring 230 x 110 x 70mm (9" x 4¼" x 2¾"). The bricks were bonded with lime-based mortar, and retained traces of lime plaster. The wall was aligned north-east/south-west, and probably represented an internal element of the building depicted on historical mapping (Fig 2). This subsequently formed the rear wall of the remodelled building depicted on later mapping (Fig 3). Wall 303 was aligned north-west/south-east, and abutted wall 302. It also survived to a maximum height of five courses, and the fabric again comprised hand-made bricks bonded with lime-based mortar. However, the wall was only a single brick course wide, suggesting that it had formed an internal partition.
- 4.2.6 A flagstone floor (304) was discovered at a depth of 2m below the modern ground surface. The floor measured 1.5 x 1.6m, with the component flagstones each measuring 610 x 470mm. A cast-iron downpipe pipe cut through the floor against wall 302, presumably representing a drainage feature.



Plate 8: Trench 3, facing north, showing walls 302, 303 and floor 304

- 4.2.7 **Trench 4:** this was located to the south-west corner of Trench 3, and was aligned north-east/south-west parallel to Jersey Street. It initially measured 15 x 2m and was excavated to a maximum depth of 2.6m, but was widened and stepped out subsequently at its north-eastern end for safety considerations.
- 4.2.8 A brick floor (**402**) was revealed at a depth of 1.8m below the modern ground surface. The floor covered an area measuring 1.98m long and 2m wide, and comprised hand-made bricks. The north-eastern part of the floor had been removed, presumably during demolition in the twentieth century. This floor almost certainly represented the remains of a cellar within the building depicted on mid-nineteenth-century mapping (Fig 2).
- 4.2.9 The vestiges of a brick wall (**404**) were identified against the western edge of floor **402**. The wall was two courses wide, survived to a maximum height of 12 courses, and comprised from hand-made red bricks that were bonded with lime-based mortar. The position of this wall corresponded with the western wall of the building depicted on the Ordnance Survey map of 1893 (Fig 3). The archaeological remains were overlain by a thick deposit of demolition rubble (**401**), which was sealed by the modern ground surface (**400**).
- 4.2.10 No other archaeological remains were revealed in the trench, although part of the area had evidently been subject to considerable disturbance recently, with modern infill surviving to a depth of 2.4m below the ground surface. A thick deposit of clay, clearly representing the natural geology, was revealed beneath the modern infill.



Plate 9: Trench 4, showing wall **404** in the vertical section of the trench, and floor **402**

4.3 THE FINDS

4.3.1 No artefacts were recovered from any of the trenches.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 THE STRATIGRAPHY

- 5.1.1 The natural geology was revealed in all of the excavated trenches at depths in excess of 1.1m below the modern ground surface. The northern part of the site, occupied in the mid-nineteenth century by a timber yard and redeveloped subsequently for housing, was devoid of any archaeological remains, suggesting that the twentieth-century demolition programme was comprehensive.
- 5.1.2 The southern part of the site had similarly been subject to considerable disturbance, and much of the area contained a thick deposit of modern infill to depths in excess of 2m. Some fragmentary remains of the historic buildings were identified, however, sealed beneath demolition rubble along the Bengal Street and Jersey Street frontages in the southern part of the site. The position of these remains corresponded closely to the northern and western walls of a building shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1893 to have occupied the corner of Bengal Street and Jersey Street. The fabric of these walls, however, was consistent with a mid-nineteenth-century construction date, suggesting that the building shown on the map of 1893 represents a remodelling of the mid-nineteenth-century structure, rather than a complete rebuild.

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 survival of several wall foundations and brick-built floors, the buried remains are considered to be of low archaeological significance due to their fragmentary character.

5.3 IMPACT

- 5.3.1 The results obtained from the evaluation trench demonstrate that there is no potential for significant archaeological remains to survive in the northern part of the site, and whilst *in-situ* buried remains do exist in the southern part of the site, these are considered to be of limited archaeological interest. 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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- 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

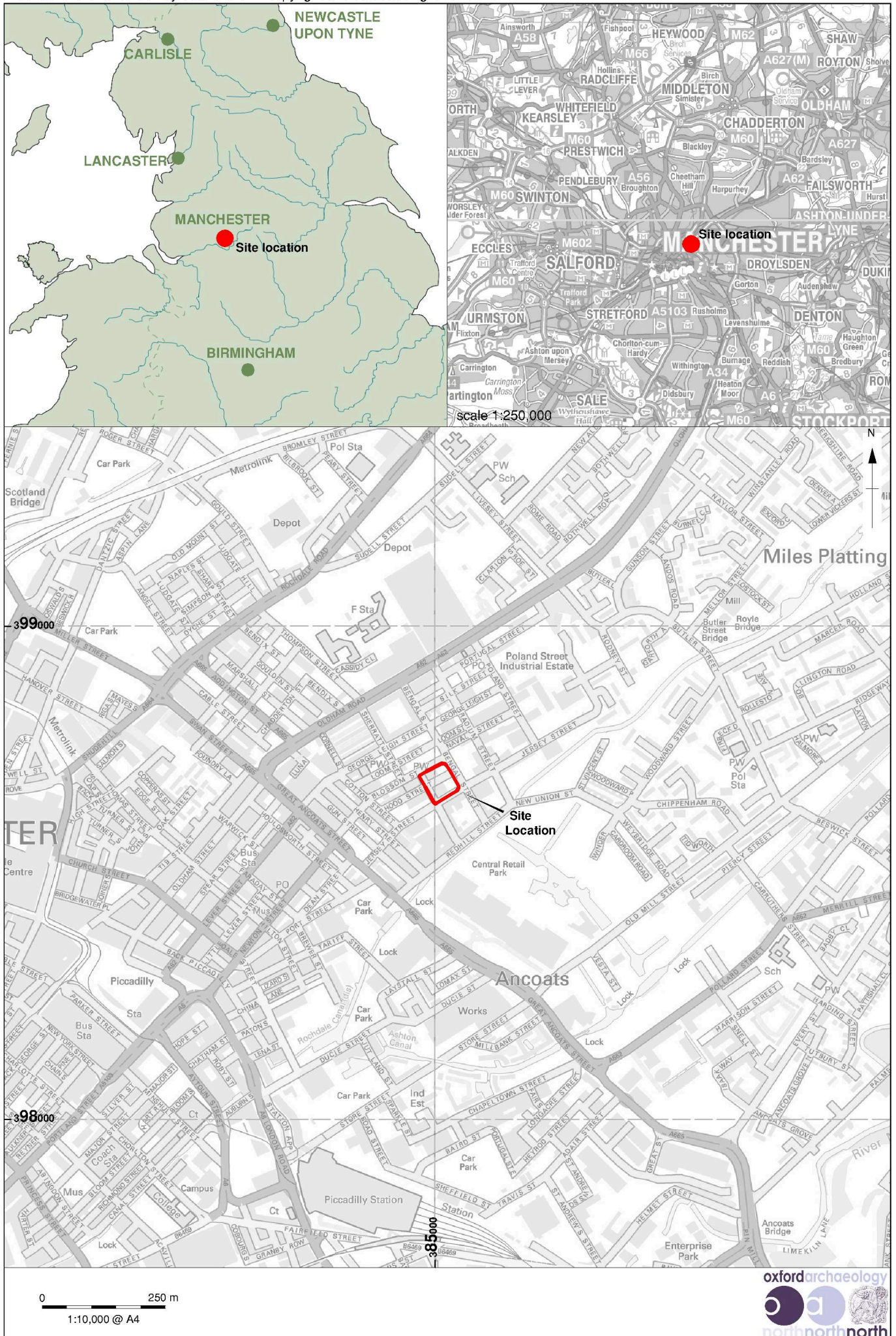


Figure 1: Site location



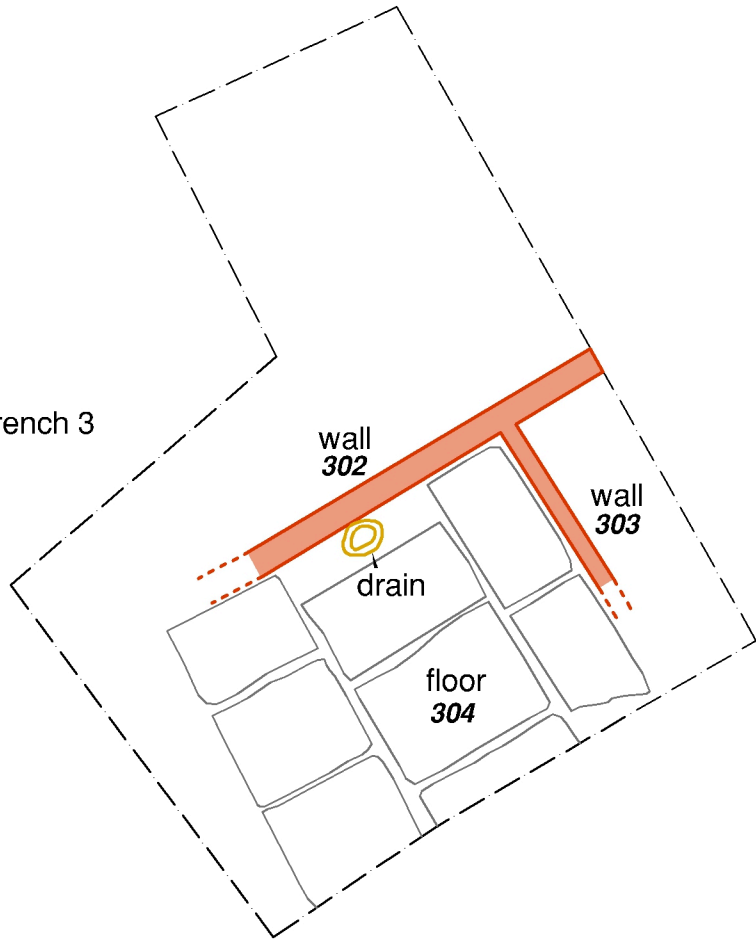
Figure 2: Evaluation trenches superimposed on the Ordnance Survey 60":1 mile map of 1850



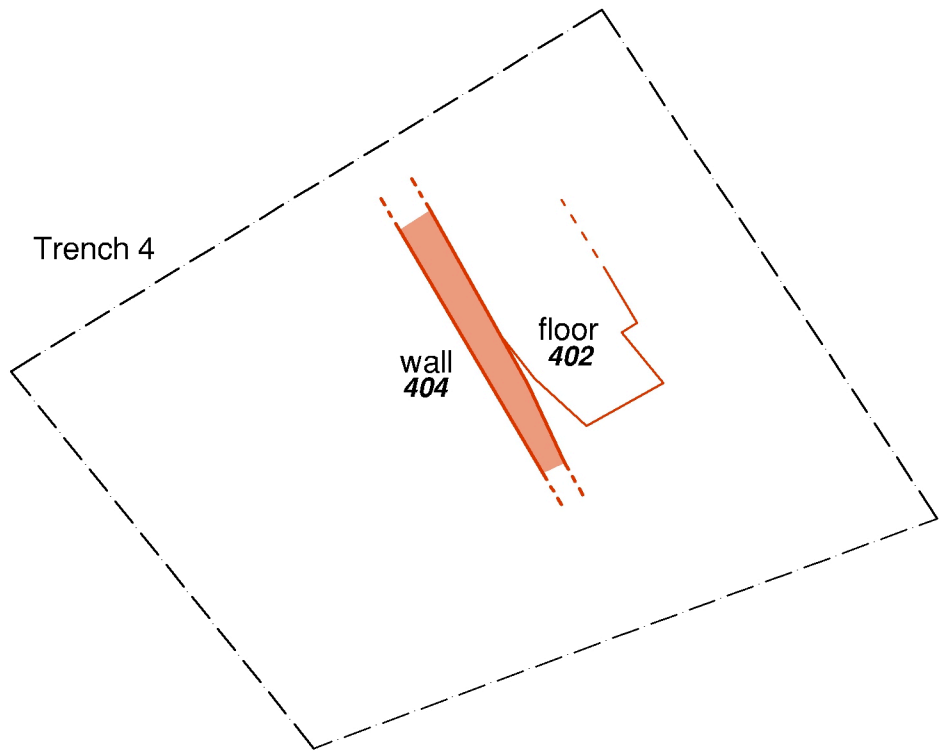
Figure 3: Evaluation trenches superimposed on the Ordnance Survey 25":1 mile map of 1893





Trench 3



Trench 4



-  Trench
-  Flags

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Figure 4: Plan of trenches 3 and 4