



**33-35 PENNY
STREET,
LANCASTER,
LANCASHIRE**

**Archaeological
Watching Brief**

Oxford Archaeology North



May 2005

Seddon Construction

Issue No: 2005-6/363
OA North Job No: L9426
NGR: SD 4776 6161

Document Title: 33-35 PENNY STREET, LANCASTER, LANCASHIRE

Document Type: Archaeological Watching Brief

Client Name: Seddon Construction

Issue Number: 2005-6/363

OA Job Number: L9426

National Grid Reference: SD 4776 6161

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Document File Location Alison/Projects/L9426Penny/report/9426Rep.doc

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SUMMARY

A watching brief was undertaken by Oxford Archaeology North on 4th August 2004 at 33-35 Penny Street, Lancaster (centred on SD 4776 6161). Seddon Construction propose to redevelop the present building, which lies within an area of recognised archaeological potential. Following a request for a watching brief by Lancashire Council Archaeological Service, Oxford Archaeology North were commissioned to undertake the watching brief on the digging of two exploratory test pits within the yard to the rear of the present building. The digging of further test pits within the street front area of the building was precluded by the discovery of a cellar beneath the entirety of that part of the building.

No archaeological horizons were encountered during the excavation of the two test pits. An assemblage of finds recovered from Test Pit 2 were generally undiagnostic, possibly dated to the eighteenth to nineteenth century, and proved to be of little archaeological significance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) would like to thank Seddon Construction for commissioning the project, and to Mr Richard Roberts of CC Geotechnical and Mr Norman Steel of TD Bingham Consulting Engineers for their assistance on site.

The watching brief was undertaken by David Tonks, who also wrote the report. The drawings were compiled by Emma Carter. The project was managed by Alison Plummer, while Stephen Rowland edited the report along with Alan Lupton.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 Following the submission by Seddon Construction of a planning application to redevelop the existing building at 33-35 Penny Street, Lancaster (centred on SD 4776 6161), Lancashire County Archaeology Service (LCAS) recommended that an archaeological watching brief be conducted during any associated groundworks. In accordance with this verbal brief, a project design (*Appendix 1*) was supplied by Oxford Archaeology North (OA North). The project design was approved, and OA North were duly commissioned to undertake the watching brief. This was undertaken on 4th August 2004 during the excavation of two test pits in advance of construction of the proposed extension to the rear of the property. Although further test pitting had been planned within the building itself, the discovery of a cellar, beneath the entirety of the building, precluded the necessity for such action. 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 The project design approved by LCAS, was adhered to in full and the work was consistent with the relevant standards and procedures of the Institute of Field Archaeologists and generally accepted best practice.

2.2 WATCHING BRIEF

- 2.2.1 Close liaison was maintained between OA North staff and the site contractors during the watching brief. The programme of field observation accurately recorded the location, extent, and character of any surviving archaeological features. This work comprised observation during the groundworks, the examination of any horizons exposed, and the accurate recording of all archaeological features, horizons and any artefacts found during the excavations. The ground works were effected by a small mechanical excavator using both a concrete breaker and a toothless bucket.
- 2.2.2 The recording comprised a full description and preliminary classification of features or structures revealed on OA North *pro-forma* sheets, and their accurate location in plan. In addition, a photographic record in colour slide and monochrome formats was compiled.

2.3 ARCHIVE

- 2.3.1 A full archive of the work undertaken has been produced to a professional standard in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage 1991). The archive will be deposited in the Lancaster 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

3.1.1 Numbers 33-35 Penny Street lie on the east side of Penny street, just to the north of that street's intersection with Brock Street (Fig 2, SD 4776 6161). The main building fronting Penny Street is of three stories and occupies the full width of plots 33 and 35. It is currently a disused shop, is roughly 20m long by 10m wide and has seen many phases of alteration in both brick and stone, but it likely that the oldest extant fabric dates to the eighteenth century, if not earlier. At the rear of this building is a yard area, 10m wide by about 22m in length, much of which was covered by a late extension, now demolished. The test pits were located at the rear of the yard, which backs on to Mary Street.

3.2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

3.2.1 The solid geology of Lancaster 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 (British Geological Survey 1992). These sandstones are thickly bedded with thin siltstone partings but with mixed sandstone/siltstone units near the top. The drift geology has been mapped as glaciofluvial sheet deposits of clayey sands and gravels. However, the soils in the vicinity of the specific site are classified only as Urban by the Soil Survey (1983) and otherwise remain unclassified.

3.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.3.1 This historical background is largely compiled from a client report held in OA North's archive (OA North 2003), a copy of which is available from Lancashire Sites and Monuments Record in Preston. It is intended only as a brief summary of the archaeological development of the settlement of Lancaster, with specific reference to Penny Street where possible.

3.3.2 There is scarce evidence of prehistoric activity within the general vicinity, this being limited to find spots, recorded on the Sites and Monuments Record, of three possible Bronze Age burials. The Roman period is well evidenced in Lancaster as a whole, with a fort being founded on Castle Hill in the AD 70s. It was almost certainly in existence during the governorship of Agricola in the later years of that decade, but it was not until the reign of the Emperor Hadrian in the early years of the second century AD that the settlement grew and thrived. 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 to some distance south along the line of Penny Street, on which the present site is located. Romano-British burials have been found in the southern part of the city, including cremations recovered during excavations at 77-79 and 81

Penny Street, while evidence of a road and wattle and daub structures were found closer to the heart of the city, at number 1 Penny Street.

- 3.3.3 The early medieval period is represented archaeologically by a hoard of ninth century coins (Northumbrian stycas) found at Vicarage Fields near St Mary's church. Further evidence includes fragments of stone crosses from the Priory Church, which implies the presence of an earlier church on that site. Lancaster is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086, the castle built in 1094 and a borough was created in 1193, with Church Street and Penny Street being the main thoroughfares. The Medieval period is evidenced by place names and previous excavations, and it is mentioned in the Domesday book of 1086.
- 3.3.4 For the post-medieval period there are extensive cartographic and documentary sources available, in addition to numerous excavations in the area. The earliest map record is that produced by John Speed in 1610, which shows Penny Street as a street with continuous building along the eastern side (occupied by number 33-35). It is probable that such burgage plots have medieval origins. Mackreth's Map of 1778 indicates features within the yards of the Penny Street burgage plots, although it is unclear whether those observed in the plot of number 33-35 represent small buildings or areas of cultivation. Mary Street is not recorded cartographically until Clarke's map of 1807, which indicates the presence of small buildings at the rear of the Penny Street burgage plots, fronting on to Mary Street. Baines' 1824 map indicates a progression of this pattern, with much larger buildings fronting onto the west side of Mary Street, within what had previously been Penny Street burgage plots.

4. RESULTS

4.1 OBSERVATIONS

- 4.1.1 **Introduction:** two test pits were opened to the rear of the present building (Fig 2). Further excavations were anticipated, but the discovery of a large cellar beneath the entirety of the building precluded the need for further exploratory test pits.
- 4.1.2 **Test Pit 1:** this measured 0.9m x 0.6m x 1.4m deep (Plate 1) and was located to the rear of the present building adjacent to a modern manhole with associated drains. The stratigraphy comprised a layer of concrete over a 0.6m thick deposit of mid-brownish-grey sandy, rubblely clay infill which lay directly over a layer of very soft, mid-brown clay with some sand, at least 0.8m thick, the bottom of which was not encountered. This was very probably natural subsoil. No archaeological horizons or deposits were encountered.
- 4.1.3 **Test Pit 2:** this measured 0.8m x 0.45m x 1.2m deep (Plate 2) and was located to the rear of the present building adjacent to the north wall. The stratigraphy comprised a 0.15m thick layer of reinforced concrete over a layer of mid- to dark-brown redeposited sandy-clay infill containing brick and sandstone fragments, which was excavated, without finding the base, to a depth of 1.05m. This layer was entirely made ground, from which was recovered finds of glass, pottery, bone and shell. No significant archaeological horizons were encountered.

4.2 FINDS

- 4.2.1 **Introduction:** in total, eight artefacts were recovered from Test Pit 2 during the watching brief. The artefacts were largely undiagnostic but generally date to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and comprise two sherds of pottery, two fragments each of clay tobacco pipe and mollusc and single pieces of glass and animal bone.
- 4.2.2 **Pottery:** the pottery sherds comprise body fragments of dark glazed red earthenware and glazed white earthenware. Both sherds can be broadly dated to the eighteenth to twentieth centuries.
- 4.2.3 **Kaolin Tobacco Pipe:** the clay tobacco pipe fragments consist of two undecorated stems. However, little can be said of these as they are too small to be diagnostic.
- 4.2.4 **Glass:** one small thin-walled green glass body fragment from a wine bottle, could date to the eighteenth or nineteenth century.
- 4.2.5 **Bone:** a small (<15mm) undiagnostic fragment of animal bone was collected.
- 4.2.6 The shells comprise of an upper valve of an oyster, and a fragment of cockle.

4.2.7 *Conclusion:* the finds add little to enhance our understanding of the site since they were from unstratified deposits and, consequently, their value is limited, merely suggesting the presence of domestic refuse within the deposit.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 CONCLUSION

- 5.1.1 Although located within a general area of recognised archaeological potential, no significant finds nor archaeological horizons were encountered during the works that would enhance our current understanding of the area. Considering the location of the test pits, to the rear of a tenement dating to at least 1610 (and most likely, earlier), it might be expected that evidence for rubbish or cess pits might be encountered. It is possible that such remains survive beneath the thick make-up deposit that was recorded during the watching brief of test pit 2, which could have originated from when the cellar was dug out.
- 5.1.2 An alternative explanation for a lack of stratified archaeological deposits may be that before the more modern (and now demolished) extension was built, construction was preceded by a period of levelling, with redistribution of some of the existing deposits. This would have the effect of creating deposits of made-up ground in some areas and exposing subsoil in others, as was observed within the test pits.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

6.1 PRIMARY SOURCES

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Binns, J, 1821, Map of Lancaster

British Geological Society 1992, 5 Nottingham

Clark, C, 1807, A Plan of the Town of Lancaster

Docton, K, 1684, Map of Lancaster (reproduction)

Mackreth, S, 1778, Map of Lancaster

Ordnance Survey (OS) First Edition 60" to 1 mile 1848

Ordnance Survey 1983 Soil Survey of England and Wales

Speed, J, 1610, Map of the County Palatine of Lancashire

6.2 SECONDARY SOURCES

OA North 2003, *81 Penny Street, Lancaster, Fieldwork Report*, unpubl rep

APPENDIX 1: PROJECT DESIGN

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Seddon Construction (hereafter the client) intend redevelop 33 to 35 Penny street, Lancaster (SD 4776 6161). The development will replace the structure at the rear of numbers 33 to 35 with a larger structure, which will require new and more substantial foundations. Due to the possibility that archaeological remains may exist in this area, Lancashire County Archaeology Service has recommended that a watching brief should be carried out. This project design has been written to comply with a brief issued by the County Archaeology Service.
- 1.2 Penny Street is first recorded in the twelfth century (PRN 4193) but it is possible that its origins are associated with a routeway that linked the end of the Roman settlement with the road which is now followed by the line of King Street. Finds of Roman date retrieved along Penny Street include structures, pottery, and road surfaces (PRN 2023) and cremation burials (PRN 19247). There is the potential for burials, or material disturbed from burial on this site. There is also the potential for medieval archaeology on site.
- 1.3 Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) has considerable experience of excavation of sites of all periods, having undertaken a great number of small and large scale projects throughout Northern England during the past 20 years. Evaluations, assessments, watching briefs and excavations have taken place within the planning process, to fulfil the requirements of clients and planning authorities, to very rigorous timetables. OA North has the professional expertise and resources to undertake the project detailed below to a high level of quality and efficiency. OA North has carried out a number of excavations, watching briefs and evaluations in Lancaster and the surrounding area. Of most relevance, OA North undertook the recent excavation of the Streamline Garage site, opposite Penny Street.
- 1.4 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 evaluate the archaeological deposits affected by the proposed developments. The required stages to achieve these ends are as follows:
- 2.1.3 **Permanent Presence Watching Brief:** archaeological monitoring during all ground disturbing activities on site.
- 2.1.4 **Report and Archive:** a report will be produced for the client within eight weeks of completion of the fieldwork. A site archive will be produced to English Heritage guidelines (MAP 2) and in accordance with the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage* (UKIC 1990).

3. METHOD STATEMENT

- 3.1 The following work programme is submitted in line with the stages and objectives of the archaeological work summarised above.

3.2 PERMANENT PRESENCE WATCHING BRIEF

- 3.2.1 A permanent programme of observation will accurately record the location, extent, and character of any surviving archaeological features within the excavations in the course of the proposed development. This work will comprise observation during the excavation for these works, the systematic examination of any subsoil horizons exposed during the course of the foundation works, and the accurate recording of all archaeological features and horizons, and any artefacts, identified during observation.
- 3.2.2 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, or as grid co-ordinates where appropriate). All archaeological information collected in the course of fieldwork will be recorded in standardised form, and will include accurate national grid references. Features will be planned accurately at appropriate scales and annotated on to a large scale plan provided by the Client.
- 3.2.3 It is assumed that OA North will have the authority to stop works for up to one hour to enable the recording of significant archaeological deposits. It may also be necessary to call in additional archaeological support if a find of particular importance is identified or a high density of archaeology is discovered, but this would only be called into effect in agreement with the Client and the County Archaeology Service and will require a variation to costing. Also, should evidence of burials be identified, the 1857 Burial Act would apply and a Home Office Licence would be sought. This would involve all work ceasing until the proper authorities were happy for burials to be removed. In normal circumstances, field recording will also include a continual process of analysis, evaluation, and interpretation of the data, in order to establish the necessity for any further more detailed recording that may prove essential.
- 3.2.4 **Health and Safety:** OA North provides a Health and Safety Statement for all projects and maintains a Unit Safety policy. All site procedures are in accordance with the guidance set out in the Health and Safety Manual compiled by the Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers (1997). A written risk assessment will be undertaken in advance of project commencement and copies will be made available on request to all interested parties.
- 3.2.5 OA North has professional indemnity to a value of £2,000,000, employer's liability cover to a value of £10,000,000 and public liability to a value of £15,000,000. Written details of insurance cover can be provided if required.

3.3 REPORT AND ARCHIVE PRODUCTION

- 3.3.1 **Archive:** the results of Stage 3.2 will form the basis of a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*Management of Archaeological Projects, 2nd edition, 1991*) 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.
- 3.3.2 This archive can be provided in the English Heritage Centre for Archaeology format, both as a printed document and on computer disks as ASCII files (as appropriate). The paper archive will be deposited with the Lancashire Record Office within six months of the completion of the fieldwork. The material archive (artefacts and ecofacts) will be deposited with an appropriate museum following agreement with the client. A synthesis of the archive will also be available for deposition in the National Monuments Record.
- 3.3.3 **Report:** one bound and one unbound copy of the report will be submitted to the client within six weeks of completion of the fieldwork. A further copy of the collated final report will be

submitted to the County SMR within six months of the completion of the fieldwork. The final 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, and will include recommendations for any further mitigation works and details of the final deposition of the project archive.

- 3.3.4 **Confidentiality:** the final report is designed as a document for the specific use of the client, and should be treated as such; it is not suitable for publication as an academic report, or otherwise, without amendment or revision. Any requirement to revise or reorder the material for submission or presentation to third parties beyond the project brief and project design, or for any other explicit purpose, can be fulfilled, but will require separate discussion and funding.

4. WORK TIMETABLE

- 4.1 The various stages of the project outlined above will fall into two distinct phases, which would follow on consecutively, where appropriate. The phases of work would comprise:
- 4.1.2 **Permanent Presence Watching Brief:** the development programme will dictate the timescale of this phase. OA North generally calculates a 1:0.5 ratio of fieldwork: post-fieldwork (archive, analysis, and report preparation) if the level of archaeology observed is low or 1:1 if the level of archaeology is high.
- 4.1.3 **Archive/Report:** the report and archive will be produced following the completion of all the fieldwork. The final report will be submitted within six weeks of completion of the fieldwork and the archive deposited within six months.

5. OUTLINE RESOURCES

- 5.1 The project will be managed by **Alison Plummer, BSc (Hons)** (OA North Senior Project Manager) to whom all correspondence should be addressed.
- 5.2 Present timetabling constraints preclude detailing exactly who will be carrying out each specific task, but all elements of the project are likely to be supervised by an OA North project 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.
- 5.3 Assessment of the finds from the watching brief will be undertaken by OA North's in-house finds specialist **Christine Howard-Davis BA MIFA** (OA North project officer). Christine acts as OA North's in-house finds specialist and has extensive knowledge of all finds of all periods from archaeological sites in northern England.

6. MONITORING

- 6.1 Monitoring of the project will be undertaken by the County Development Control Officer (DCO).
- 6.2 Access to the site for monitoring purposes will be afforded to the DCO at all times.

ILLUSTRATIONS

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Location map

Figure 2: Test pit location plan

LIST OF PLATES

Plate 1: Test Pit 1

Plate 2: Test Pit 2



Plate 1 : Test Pit 1



Plate 2 : Test Pit 2