



# **THE SWAN PUBLIC HOUSE, ASTLEY GATE, BLACKBURN LANCASHIRE**

## **Rapid Desk-Based Assessment, Archaeological Building Investigation and watching Brief**



**Oxford Archaeology North**

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Prepared by: Karl Taylor  
Position: Project Officer  
Date: September 2007

Checked by: Alison Plummer  
Position: Senior Project Manager  
Date: September 2007  
Signed.....

Approved by: Alan Lupton  
Position: Operations Manager  
Date: September 2007  
Signed.....

**Oxford Archaeology North**

Storey Institute  
Meeting House Lane  
Lancaster  
LA1 1TF  
t: (0044) 01524 848666  
f: (0044) 01524 848606

w: [www.oxfordarch.co.uk](http://www.oxfordarch.co.uk)  
e: [info@oxfordarch.co.uk](mailto:info@oxfordarch.co.uk)

**© Oxford Archaeological Unit Ltd (2007)**

Janus House  
Osney Mead  
Oxford  
OX2 0EA  
t: (0044) 01865 263800  
f: (0044) 01865 793496

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## SUMMARY

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A new development in Blackburn, Lancashire, known as Cathedral Village, which incorporates both Market Street Lane and Astley Gate, will affect a number of buildings in the area. All of the buildings within the proposed development area were subject to an archaeological building assessment in 2005 (OA North 2005), which identified buildings of archaeological significance. The Swan Public House on Astley Gate SD 681 280 (earmarked for demolition) was identified and recommendations were made to carry out a more detailed building investigation.

Subsequently, a scheme of archaeological investigations including an English Heritage Level II-type building survey, a rapid desk-based assessment and watching briefs were recommended by Lancashire County Archaeological Service. Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) were commissioned by Brighthouse Construction to carry out the work in February 2007.

Demolition of the Swan Hotel was due to be carried out following the building investigation. Unfortunately, demolition of building was commenced early, which resulted in the curtailment of the building survey after only two days. Instructions from the demolition contractors forbade all access to the building due to health and safety restrictions. This resulted in a very limited building investigation record and the full extent of the required survey could not be carried out.

Despite this, the investigations at The Swan Hotel, Astley Gate, Blackburn revealed that the building was probably constructed towards the end of the eighteenth century. The results of the rapid desk-based assessment to trace the history of the Swan Public House from c1796 to 1935. The cartographic evidence suggested that the area became built over by about 1795. It appears that one Thomas Sharples owned the Swan Public House in c1796 when he is listed as also owning the Sun Inn, which is situated next door. Watching brief investigations following demolition of the Swan failed to uncover any evidence for the presence of any previous structure on the site.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) would like to thank Brighthouse Construction for commissioning and supporting the project and for supplying the plans. Thanks are also extended to the Lancashire Record Office in Preston and central Library in Blackburn.

Karl Taylor and Chris Wild undertook the building investigation, and Karl Taylor wrote the report. Andrew Bates, Kathryn Levey, Christina Robinson, and Alastair Vannan carried out the watching brief. Jeremy Bradley carried out the rapid desk-based assessment and Mark Tidmarsh produced the drawings. Alison Plummer managed the project, and also edited the report.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 The proposed development area known as Cathedral Village incorporates Market Street Lane and Astley Gate, Blackburn, Lancashire. All of the buildings within the proposed development area were subject to an archaeological building assessment in 2005 (OA North 2005), which identified buildings of archaeological significance. The Swan Public House on Astley Gate was identified as being of particular significance and recommendations were made to carry out a more detailed building investigation.
- 1.1.2 The scheme of works being carried out for Brighthouse Construction was the result of consultation with Doug Moir at Lancashire County , who requested a programme of building investigation and a rapid desk-based-assessment of the Swan Public House, Astley Gate, Blackburn (SD 681 280).
- 1.1.3 During the building investigation, demolition of the structure was started which resulted in the premature curtailment of the survey. The client advised that the structure was unsafe and was not to be entered or approached under any circumstances. Survey work was thus ended after two days and as a result of this a very limited record was obtained. The Planning Archaeologist was duly informed of the change to the programme of work. A watching brief was maintained during ground disturbance undertaking following the demolition.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

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### 2.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 OA North produced a project design (*Appendix I*) which was accepted by the client and were subsequently commissioned to undertake the rapid desk-based assessment and building investigation. The building investigation was scheduled to be carried out over four days but due to circumstances beyond the control of OA North, was reduced to two days (Monday 5<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2007). Due to the early demolition of the building, the demolition contractor prohibited close access to the building.

### 2.2 RAPID DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

- 2.2.1 The rapid desk-based assessment comprised a search of both published and unpublished records held by the Blackburn Central Library and Lancashire County Archives in Preston and the archives and library held at OA North.
- 2.2.2 **Lancashire Record Office (LRO):** the County Archives held in Preston was consulted to try and establish a date for the construction of the building
- 2.2.3 **Blackburn central Library:** the library in Blackburn and the Cotton Town web site created by Blackburn and Darwen Library and Information services ([www.cottontown.org](http://www.cottontown.org)) was consulted in order to access historic photographic material and additional archival information relating to the building.
- 2.2.4 **Oxford Archaeology North:** OA North has an extensive archive of secondary sources relevant to the study area, as well as numerous unpublished client reports on work carried out both as OA North and in its former guise of Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU). These were consulted where necessary.

### 2.3 BUILDING INVESTIGATION

- 2.3.1 **Descriptive Record:** written records to (English Heritage Level-II standard) using OA North *pro forma* record sheets were made of all principal building elements, both internal and external, as well as any features of historical or architectural significance. Particular attention was also paid to the relationship between parts of the building, especially those that would show its development and any alterations. These records are essentially descriptive, although interpretation is carried out on site as required.
- 2.3.2 **Site drawings:** plans of the ground and first floors were supplied by the client and were manually annotated to show the form and location of features of structural and historical significance. A cross-section was not produced due to the survey being terminated early.

- 2.3.3 **Photographs:** due to the early curtailment of the investigation only a small number of photographs were taken. These were limited to general digital photographs on the first floor and some general external digital and black and white and colour slide photographs.

## **2.4 WATCHING BRIEF**

- 2.4.1 A programme of field observation accurately recorded the location, extent, and character of any surviving archaeological features and/or deposits within all ground disturbance associated with the development works. This work comprised observation during the excavation for these works, the systematic examination of any subsoil horizons exposed during the course of the groundworks, and the accurate recording of all features of archaeological interest and horizons, and any artefacts, identified during observation. The recording comprised description and preliminary classification of features and structures revealed on OA North *pro-forma* record sheets.

## **2.5 ARCHIVE**

- 2.5.1 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). The original record archive of project will be deposited with Lancashire HER.
- 2.5.2 The Arts and Humanities Data Service (AHDS) online database *Online Access to index of Archaeological Investigations* (OASIS) will be completed as part of the archiving phase of the project.

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## 3. BACKGROUND

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### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1.1 The background history of the site is intended to provide an historical and archaeological context for the results of the desk-based assessment and building recording. It is not intended to be a comprehensive history of Blackburn, and concentrates specifically on Astley Gate. The information forming the background history is mainly taken from secondary sources and previous reports on the general area (OA North 2005; LUAU 1995; 2000; Lancashire County Council and Egerton Lea Consultancy 2005).

### 3.2 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.2.1 **Prehistoric to Romano-British:** Blackburn is known to have medieval origins, but there is also evidence from the general area for activity prior to this, including a number of Bronze Age burials (OA North 2005, 8; Lancashire County Council and Egerton Lea Consultancy 2005, 16). The site of Hallows Spring (a short distance to the east of the Cathedral) is considered likely to have been a focus for settlement and religious interest from at least the Iron Age (*ibid*). The importance of the spring in following periods cannot be denied, however, and it may have influenced the assumed position of an early medieval church (*ibid*).
- 3.2.2 Blackburn is situated on the line of the Roman road from Manchester to Ribchester, which probably ran close to the Cathedral and the remains of this road have been identified in a number of locations (*ibid*).
- 3.2.3 **Medieval:** the earliest written reference to Blackburn is in the Domesday Book, the name referring to the stream running through the settlement, which is still known as Blakewater or Blackwater (*op cit*, 17). The town appears to have been of some importance in the early medieval period and is named as the site of one of three early churches in east Lancashire in the fourteenth century, traditionally thought to have been founded in AD 598 (*ibid*). Whether this is true is a matter of some debate, but nevertheless Blackburn did form the centre of a major early territorial division, which later became the Hundred of Blackburn (*ibid*), and it was also the centre of the Bishopric of Blackburn. Evidence for an earlier structure, exposed during rebuilding of the Cathedral in 1820, suggested a Norman church on the site and that Blackburn may have been an important local centre into the twelfth century (*ibid*).
- 3.2.4 Blackburn probably also formed an important market centre for a large surrounding area from an early date, although the earliest reference to this taking place dates to 1498 (*op cit*, 18). There may have been a corn market before this date, as a manorial corn mill was certainly in existence by 1271 (*ibid*). The size of Blackburn at this time is unclear, but it is probable that it did not grow considerably until the sixteenth century, the initial settlement probably focussing around Church Street and Darwen Street and the market place (*ibid*). This is essentially the arrangement shown in Lang's map of

Blackburn from 1739 (*op cit*, 24), which suggests that development of the town had been relatively slow even as late as the eighteenth century.

- 3.2.5 **Post-medieval:** from the sixteenth century onwards Blackburn gradually grew in size and local importance. It gained a grammar school, probably before 1564, which was replaced after 1567 and renovated in 1653 and 1660 (*op cit*, 23). A prison was also constructed prior to 1611, adding to the evident growth of the town (*ibid*). During the eighteenth century the improvement of common land around Blackburn also increased the town's prosperity but by the middle of the century it had still not grown far beyond the confines of its medieval streets (*op cit*, 24). By the end of the eighteenth century Blackburn had dramatically increased in size, and new streets and alleys developed, particularly to the west of the cathedral (*op cit*, 25). This growth was largely based on the wealth of the textile industry, and led to a number of fashionable middle-class developments but also the provision of workers housing, particularly for hand-loom weavers (*op cit*, 26). During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Blackburn became renowned as a centre for cotton cloth production, although woollen weaving had been prevalent for centuries (*op cit*, 28-9). Despite this, the influence of large cotton mills was not felt until the beginning of the nineteenth century, although these soon came to dominate and massively increase production (*op cit*, 29). The town's increased size was recognised in 1851 when it received a charter of incorporation (*op cit*, 30). Its population continued to grow throughout the nineteenth century and into the beginning of the twentieth (*ibid*).

### 3.3 ASTLEY GATE AND THE SWAN PUBLIC HOUSE

- 3.3.1 Astley Gate developed out of the original medieval town, and was evidently built on land extending westwards from the properties along Darwen Street. Although it is not clear when this first began it probably corresponds to the period of rapid development that took place in the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries. Astley Gate essentially forms the western end of Church Street, one of the oldest streets in Blackburn (Miller 1970), which formed part of the original axis of roads on which the town was situated and was depicted as early as 1739 (Plate 1).
- 3.3.2 The cartographic evidence shows that Astley Gate and the west end of Church Street developed prior to c1795, before which the area had a small number of buildings on it. Examination of a selection of trade directories reveals a wide range of activities taking place on the street, although the area was clearly commercial in character. The National Directory of c1796 (Anon c1796) does not give details of streets, but two public houses are present, one of which was the was the Swan Inn- then known as the Swan with two necks with the other being the Sun. The property numbers given in the directories are evidently not consistent, however, as streets were often re-numbered as new properties were built and old ones merged or destroyed. The Swan public house can be traced through directories from the above date until 1935 (see Tables 1 below).

| <i>Name</i>         | <i>Address</i>  | <i>Occupier</i>   | <i>date</i> | <i>Source</i>                     |
|---------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| Swan-With-Two-Necks | -               | Thomas Sharples   | c1796       | (Anon c1796, 21)                  |
| Swan-With-Two-Necks | 8 Astley Gate   | Jas Bolton        | 1828-9      | Pigot and Co 1828-9, 57)          |
| Swan                | 15 Astley Gate  | Richard Greenwood | 1854        | Mannex and Co 1854, 319           |
| Swan                | 3-5 Astley Gate | Jph Eatough       | 1868        | Mannex and Co 1868, 704 and 708   |
| Swan Inn            | 3-5 Astley Gate | Eliz A Edge       | 1881        | Barrett and Co 1881, 252 and 262  |
| Swan Hotel          | 3-5 Astley Gate | J Sherry          | 1897        | Barrett and Co 1897, 305 and 326  |
| Swan Hotel          | 3-5 Astley Gate | Mrs Margt Neville | 1909        | Barrett and Co 1909, 373          |
| Swan Hotel          | 3-5 Astley Gate | P Riley           | 1935        | Barrett and Co 1935, 335 and 369) |

Table 1: A chronology of the Swan public house, Astley Gate, c1796-1935.

- 3.3.3 The earlier history of the building cannot be traced back any further than c1796. Avenues of enquiry such as Land Tax documents (QDL/B/10, 1783-85) from the 1780s and the Ale House Recognizance, (QSB/3, 1784) did not reveal any direct evidence. The land tax assessments - a tax on land first introduced in the 1690s, which later became a tax on land, buildings and rent due - was after 1780 a way of assessing eligibility for voting in county elections ([www.archivesnetworkwales.info](http://www.archivesnetworkwales.info); Sharp France 1985, 11). The Ale House Recognizance was introduced in 1552 and required licensed victuallers to enter into a bond of good behaviour (Sharp France 1985, 11).
- 3.3.4 Unfortunately, both documents are ordered by surname, rather than building and thus no earlier date for the Swan Public House could be deduced. Nevertheless, it was possible to indicate that the Sun public house - next door to the Swan - was in existence certainly by 1785. The 1785 Land tax Assessments for Blackburn show that Thomas Sharples ran and owned the Sun on Astley Gate and was bound to “keep a regular and orderly house” in the Ale House Recognizance of a year earlier (QSB/3, 1784), although it was not clear which public house this was for. Thomas Sharples, as well as running the Swan in c1796, also ran a number of other pubs in Blackburn including the Dun Cow and the Bird in Hand (QDL/B/10, 1783-85). Although the presence of the Swan cannot be indicated with any certainty in the 1780s, the building next door to it can. Whether this implies that The Swan had been built, but was not occupied by Thomas Sharples and, therefore, difficult to trace, or whether it implies that the public house had not been constructed during this period is not clear.
- 3.3.5 The later arrangement of rooms within the building and possibly those that survived up until the present day were recorded within a report of 1893, which gave details of the rooms used for accommodation, presence of vaults, and a back yard, as well as assessment of the general state of the premises, which were summed as an; “Old house; fair accommodation” (County Borough of



Blackburn 1893, 9). An abstract of the account of the report for the Swan appears in Table 2, below.

|   |                                      |   |  |  |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Swan Inn, 3 and 5 Astley Gate                                     | Fully licensed                       | Tied House  | No Accommodation for travellers; accommodation for supplying refreshments to 6 persons | No stabling                                    |
| Vaults rated fair   | Small back yard                      | 6 rooms on ground floor including kitchen and vault | 4 rooms suitable as bedrooms   | Other rooms include sitting room and club-room |
| Distance from two nearest licensed houses; next door and 30 yards | Four tenants in the last three years | General remarks: Old house; fair accommodation      | Whether back entrance and way to it afford adequate means of police supervision - Yes  |  |

Table 2: Detailed inventory and remarks of the Swan Inn in 1893 (County Borough of Blackburn).

### 3.4 MAP REGRESSION ANALYSIS

***Eighteenth Century:*** the earliest map Astley Gate in any detail dates to 1739 (Plate 1), and shows Darwen Street, Church Street and Back Lane, with buildings fronting onto the two former streets (OA North 2005; LUAU 1995; 2000; Lancashire County Council and Egerton Lea Consultancy 2005, 24). Astley Gate is evident at the end of Church Street and there are some structures shown on its south side (Plate 1). The junction of Darwen Street and Church Street probably formed the focus of the medieval town (OA North 2005, 8; Lancashire County Council and Egerton Lea Consultancy 2005, 18), and so these plots are undoubtedly medieval in origin. Subsequent maps by Yates (1786, in Timmins 1993, pl 2) and a map of c1795 show that Blackburn had continued to expand (BCL MM076), and by this date the area in and around Astley Gate was apparently built on (Plate 2).

3.4.1 ***Gillies' Map of 1822:*** by this date there has been considerable growth in development in the centre of Blackburn. The entire study area around Astley Gate had certainly been built on by this date, although all of the buildings along Astley Gate are shown as a single block without any individual detail (Plate 3; Timmins 1993, pl 16).

3.4.2 ***Ordnance Survey 1848:*** the detailed 60": 1 Mile map of this year reveals the position of individual buildings for the first time (Plate 4), and it is evident that all of the plots currently occupied were established by this point. Although not marked on the map the position of the two public houses can be deduced from later surveys, with The Swan being the most easterly. The boundary between the two public houses was also distinctly dog-legged and this feature was still evident nearly fifty years later.

3.4.3 ***Ordnance Survey 1894:*** while the arrangement of the buildings has not changed significantly by this date there are some minor points of interest

(Plate 5). There had clearly been some rebuilding, as the footprint of both public houses is noticeably different. This is particularly evident to the rear of both licensed premises, where off-shot buildings have been added and building at the rear of the plots removed.

- 3.4.4 ***Ordnance Survey 1911-1931:*** Astley Gate evidently remained essentially unchanged during the beginning of the twentieth century. The two public houses, including the Swan are marked, but otherwise the arrangement of buildings is essentially the same.
- 3.4.5 ***Post-1931:*** although no maps providing detailed coverage for this period were available, it is evident from the 2005 building investigation (OA North 2005, 16) that the row of buildings facing south onto Fleming Square had been demolished.

## 4. BUILDING INVESTIGATION RESULTS

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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

- 4.1.1 The building is situated at the corner of Astley Gate in Blackburn, Lancashire and is immediately adjacent to the Sun public house, which was trading at the time of the survey. Unfortunately, a full English Heritage Level-II survey was not carried out due to the early commencement of demolition of the building (Plate 12). During the survey the front elevation was partially obscured by scaffolding (Plate 11). It was only possible to compile plans for the ground floor and first floor of the building (Figs 2 and 3).
- 4.1.2 A limited description of the building will be outlined below, and will discuss the plan form and function of the building together with any recorded architectural and historical features, fixtures, and fittings. Discussion of the findings will follow and will aim to briefly explain how the features of the building relate to its development and use.

### 4.2 THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE BUILDING

- 4.2.1 The Swan Hotel comprises two main parts as illustrated on Plate 12. The main, eastern part of the building is 'L-shaped' and is laid out over three floors together with a basement. The layout of each floor is not identical, the ground floor containing three rooms, the first floor (Fig 3) has six rooms (the top floor was briefly inspected but not planned). The west side of the building is of two storeys each floor having two rooms. There are two single storey extensions attached to the rear of the property. The building lies on a north-east/south-west axis and the front elevation of the building faces Astley Gate. The site slopes gently to the south.
- 4.2.2 The main structure of the building is three rooms wide and two rooms deep (Figs 2 and 3) and has a central staircase, which allows access to and from the first floor. The basement has a separate flight of steps. The only access to the building was via a small door within an extension at the rear of the property.

### 4.3 FABRIC

- 4.3.1 The whole of the building is cement rendered, the application of which has obscured the main fabric of the building (Plate 12). Hand-made brick with lime mortar bonding was revealed during the limited internal inspection, and it is reasonable to assume that the building is quite probably entirely of brick construction (although the bonding and type is impossible to deduce). A number of windows at the rear of the building have been blocked with cinder block. All the windows are of timber construction. The front elevation is painted and has painted sandstone window surrounds and sills. There is a large tiled 'The Swan Hotel' frieze on the upper part of the front elevation and there is tiled plinth at the base of the elevation also with the 'The Swan Hotel' lettering.

- 4.3.2 Internally, many of the partition walls appear to be either of plasterboard or lath and plaster construction. Most of the rooms are decorated with wallpaper or are plain plastered. The floors are all timber and all the ceilings appear to be lath and plaster.
- 4.3.3 The roof was being removed at the time of the survey but it appears to have been of Welsh slate with clay ridge tiles. There are no chimney-stacks present. All of the rainwater goods are plastic.

#### **4.4 EXTERIOR DETAILS**

- 4.4.1 Due to early commencement of demolition of the building, detailed inspection of the exterior of the building was not possible due health and safety restrictions. The following description is, therefore, necessarily brief and may not fully document all the exterior details.
- 4.4.2 ***The Main (Front) Elevation:*** as already mentioned (*Section 4.1.1*) the front elevation was obscured by scaffolding at the time of survey (Plate 11). It does appear, however, that the elevation was not much altered since the photograph (Plate 10) was taken, and is of painted stucco with painted rusticated quoins at the extremities.
- 4.4.3 The main part of the elevation is three storeys high and has varying fenestration (Plate 10). The west side of the elevation is two storeys high. The ground floor windows are wide and have painted sandstone surrounds and slightly projecting sills. The wide windows on the ground and first floors have decorative mullions (not inspected in detail). All the upper windows are similar, with plain surrounds and slightly projecting sandstone sills (Plates 8 and 9 illustrate the upper windows as having similar surrounds to those on the ground floor). The windows on the first floor of the west side of the elevation are narrower than the others. Most of the windows are boarded but they appear to be of late twentieth century timber construction.
- 4.4.4 There is a low painted tiled plinth at the base of the elevation, the tiles of which appear to be green-glazed. The name 'The Swan Hotel' is present along the plinth in white-painted relief lettering (Plate 10), the nature of these is unknown, although they appear to be plaster. The main front door to the building is present in the main part of the building (Plates 10 and 11) and has a painted sandstone surround with projecting hood moulding and console brackets.
- 4.4.5 Located at the upper west side of the elevation is a large tiled panel with 'The Swan Hotel' and an illustration of a white swan swimming on water. This was partly obscured by the scaffolding but appears to have remained unaltered in form as illustrated on Plate 10. The panel has a green tiled, slightly projecting moulded border, and the lettering is picked out in gold. A selection of modern spotlights are fixed to the elevation.
- 4.4.6 ***The Rear of the Building:*** there are several single storey extensions attached to the rear of the public house (Plate 12). Plate 12 clearly illustrates the two

main parts of the building, with the western part being lower and not as deep as the main (east) part. The whole is rendered and all of the windows (except one) are blocked or boarded. Interestingly, the eaves of the main roof slopes down to the east (Plate 13). It is apparent that the join between the Swan Hotel and the adjacent Sun Inn is not clearly defined (Plate 13 and Figs 2 and 3)

- 4.4.7 There are two extensions at the rear of the main part of the building: one with a flat roof, the other being pitched. Entry into the building is currently made via the pitched roof extension, the other contains boarded modern PVCu patio doors. Two other extensions are present which are attached to the west part of the building. Both of these have mono-pitch sloping roofs. All the rainwater goods are plastic and there is a satellite dish attached to the elevation.
- 4.4.8 ***The West Elevation:*** this forms the west gable of the building and is plain and rendered (Plate 12). Gold lettering 'The Swan Hotel' is attached to the wall, and is probably modern.

## 4.5 INTERIOR DETAILS

- 4.5.1 The investigation of the interior of the building was limited to the second floor of the main part of the building only. There was limited access to most rooms on the third floor due to large areas of floorboards being missing (Plate 14) so a limited record was obtained. All the rooms are numbered, with those on the ground and first floors illustrated on Figures 2 and 3. The second floor rooms follow on from these and are numbered Rooms **18** to Room **22**.
- 4.5.2 ***Room 18:*** this forms the landing on the second floor, from which access to all the other rooms is available. It is rectangular in plan and has a high ceiling and there is evidence that a roof light once existed. All the walls are solid except the south wall, which is constructed from lath and plaster. There are two windows within this room. The window in the south wall may have been a stair window. The other is at high level and has sash ovolo glazing bars. The architrave to this window is similar to the door architraves. For the most part this room is inaccessible, the floor has been removed to expose the ceiling below (Plate 15). The room is wallpapered and of plain appearance. It is likely that this room has been created from the stairwell and landing as the exposed ceiling appears to be a later insert.
- 4.5.3 ***Room 19:*** this room is located at the south-east corner of the second floor and functioned as a bedroom (Plate 14). It is an odd shaped room, the east wall (forming the west wall of the adjacent Sun Hotel) lies at an oblique angle. All the walls are of solid construction and there is a 2.62m high picture rail on the north, east and west walls. A small section of brickwork is visible, which appears to be hand-made and bonded with lime mortar (Plate 17).
- 4.5.4 The ceiling is 2.93m high and is divided into two by a single east/west beam (which is boxed in). The southern part of the ceiling follows the slope of the roof and the whole ceiling is of lath and plaster construction. The floor is laid down to 5 ½ inch wide tongue and groove boards, most of which have been

removed. The floor joists are thus revealed, and some of these appear to have been reused, as there are features such as holes and notches visible.

- 4.5.5 There is a single fireplace set within a chimney-breast at the east side of the room (Plate 14). The surround and grate have been removed but the slate hearth remains *in situ*. The doorway into Room **18** contains a four panelled door of Victorian appearance (Plate 18) with a simply-moulded architrave. There is a single window located within the south wall.
- 4.5.6 **Room 20:** this rectangular room is of similar appearance to Room **19** and appears to have functioned as a bedroom (Plate 16.). It lies in the south-west corner of the building and access is from Room **18**. All the walls are solid except for the north wall, which is of lath and plaster construction. There is a picture rail at 2.58m and the ceiling is the same height as that in Room **19** and it slopes to respect the roofline. The floor is laid down to 5 ½ inch wide tongue and groove boards and there is a two-over-two sliding sash window (with horns) located in the south wall. The door and doorway onto Room **18** are identical to those in Room **19**. Evidence is present to suggest that a water tank or cistern was once fixed to the wall in the north-west corner of the room (Plate 16).
- 4.5.7 **Room 21:** this room is located in the north-west corner of the second floor and is very similar in appearance to all the other rooms on this floor. There was no access to this room at the time of survey due to missing floorboards. All the joists are visible and are of similar appearance to those in Room **19**. There is a window located in the north wall, which is wide, and contains a modern casement window. A blocked fireplace is present within a chimney-breast on the west wall, and a small built-in cupboard is present in the south-west corner.
- 4.5.8 **Room 22:** this is a large square room that appears to be one of the main bedrooms (Plate 17). At the time of the survey, and in common with the other examined rooms, access was limited due to missing floorboards. The room shares identical features to the other rooms already discussed. the removal of the floorboards allowed a view of the ceiling below (Room **15**, Fig 3), which is of be of reed and plaster construction (Plates 18 and 19). Most of this had been damaged during removal of the floorboards. There is a wide window located on the north wall, which contains a late twentieth century casement (damaged).

## 5. WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

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### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

- 5.1.1 Following demolition of the Swan Hotel a watching brief was maintained within the footprint of the building whilst clearance of the cellars was carried out. Four separate visits to the site were made and features and structures of significance were duly recorded. The following sections outline the results of the watching brief.

### 5.2 WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

- 5.2.1 During the first phase of the watching brief (Plate 20), carried out on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2007, a north/south aligned cellar-like structure was discovered, which was approximately 5m in length. This was located beneath the south-east corner of the building (Fig 2). The width of the feature was unable to be ascertained due to demolition debris. Unfortunately, plans of the basement of the Swan Hotel were not supplied by the client, and the basement was not surveyed or inspected due to the early curtailment of the building survey.
- 5.2.2 The cellar was excavated to a depth of approximately 2m where a concrete floor surface was discovered. It appears that the cellar room had a barrel vaulted ceiling and the spring point is visible in the east wall. All the walls are of hand-made brick construction and appear to have been whitewashed. A line of modern brick is visible which projects from the east wall.
- 5.2.3 The second phase of watching brief was carried out on 26<sup>th</sup> February. This confirmed that the cellar observed during the first visit (*Section 5.2.1*) extended in a westerly direction (beneath the rear portion of the hotel). A second cellar of coursed sandstone construction and bonded with a lime mortar, was present towards the north of the other cellar (beneath the west end of the front of the building). A section of the brick foundation of the hotel was also observed. This measured 0.40m in width and was located in the north-west corner of the footprint of the building.
- 5.2.4 A third visit on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March revealed further excavation of both the cellars beneath the Swan Hotel. A large drainpipe encased in concrete was recorded which lay on an east/west orientation. Other foundation walls were revealed which appear to represent the walls of the demolished building. The level approximately 0.3m to 0.5m below the surface was found to be heavily disturbed by services and modern concrete and brick layers.
- 5.2.5 The final visit to the site was made on 7<sup>th</sup> March and the extent of the excavated area remained unaltered (Plate 21). The level of the excavated area was being reduced, however, and a further 0.5m of demolition rubble together with underlying orange-brown, friable, silty-sand and dark grey firm silty-clay had been removed from the western half of the excavated area.

- 5.2.6 The sand and clay deposits were seen to contain a high proportion (approximately 30%) of gravelly stones. These were both angular and rounded and between 0.5m and 0.1m in diameter. However, at least 10% of the stones were between 0.5m and 0.1m in diameter. These appear to be natural in origin, although excavation methods made exact identification impossible. A further 0.5m of material was removed to reveal a consistently firm dark grey silty-clay material.
- 5.2.7 The results from the watching brief appear to show that the excavated cellars follow the footprint of the demolished building. Further, deeper excavation revealed no evidence for any previous structures on the site adding credence to the suggestion that the area was undeveloped until the Swan Hotel was constructed. Access to the cellars was restricted and a full assessment could not be made.



## 6. DISCUSSION

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### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

- 6.1.1 Due to the early curtailment of the building, a limited building investigation was carried out, which has obviously restricted the scope of this report. Despite this, evidence from the building investigation suggests the current building dates to at least the late eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries. Evidence from the documentary investigation appears to support this with the earliest known reference to the Swan occurring in c1796 when Thomas Sharples was listed as being the owner of the Swan Public House (see 3.3.4 below). The Swan Hotel appears to have always been a public house since its construction.
- 6.1.2 The rapid desk-based assessment has enabled the historical development of the Swan Public House to be established from c1796 to 1935. Only the properties belonging to the owner of the Swan Public house in c1796 - Thomas Sharples - can be traced back any further to 1784, when it is known at this date that he was in possession of the next door premises the Sun Inn. This suggests that either that he was only the owner of the Sun at the time, or else that the Swan had yet to be built. Cartographic evidence would suggest that the south side of Astley gate was un-developed in 1739 (Lancashire County Council and Egerton Lea Consultancy 2005, 24) but was largely built over by c1795 (BCL MM076).
- 6.1.3 The results from the watching brief appear to show that the excavated cellars follow the footprint of the demolished building. No evidence for previous use of the site was observed.

### 6.2 PHASING

- 6.2.1 Based on the results from the building investigation it appears that the building has undergone three main phases of building and/or alteration. The first phase of construction probably took place some time around 1795 when the area was apparently built upon (Plate 2) and was almost certainly was carried out by 1822 (Plate 3). Certainly, the nature of some of the beams and the reed plaster on the third floor would seem to support a late eighteenth date for the original phase of construction. The 1822 map shows that the building more or less had its current shape. This may have always been the case but earlier mapping is less detailed.
- 6.2.2 The second phase of development took place in the nineteenth century when the tile decoration on the front elevation were added along with fairly elaborate tiled decoration on the ground floor. It appears probable that the inn was redecorated and altered and has a distinct late Victorian appearance. Table 2 outlines the inventory of 1893, which describes the inn as being 'Old house, fair accommodation' and having six rooms on the ground floor. At the time of survey there were a total of six rooms on the ground floor (Fig 2) but some of

these appeared to be of late twentieth century date. Some of the rooms on the ground floor appear to have been knocked through so the total number of rooms remains the same.

- 6.2.3 Phase three dates to the late twentieth century when many of the windows were replaced, the chimney-stacks removed (carried out after 1959, see Plate 8) and some of the internal walls on the ground floor were removed. The adjacent buildings to the west were also demolished after this date.

### **6.3 CONCLUSION**

- 6.3.1 Clearly, the investigations carried out at the Swan Hotel have highlighted some features consistent with a probable late eighteenth or early nineteenth century date of construction. However, due to the early curtailment of the investigation due to demolition of the building it is impossible to deduce with any great accuracy the exact date of construction.

## 7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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LRO, QDL 1785/B/10 (Land Tax Assessment)

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Ordnance Survey 25": 1 Mile map of 1894

Ordnance Survey 25": 1 Mile map of 1911

Ordnance Survey 25": 1 Mile map of 1931

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## 8. ILLUSTRATIONS

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### 8.1 LIST OF FIGURES

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Figure 2: Ground Floor Plan

Figure 3: First Floor Plan

### 8.2 LIST OF PLATES

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Plate 2: Part of a plan of Blackburn from c1795 showing the study area (BCL MM076)

Plate 3: Part of Gillies' map of Blackburn from 1822 (after Timmins 1993, Plate 16)

Plate 4: Part of the Ordnance Survey 60": 1 Mile map of 1848

Plate 5: Part of the Ordnance Survey 25": 1 Mile map of 1894

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Plate 8: The Swan public house post-1959

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Plate 14: Room **19**

Plate 15: Room **18** illustrating the inserted ceiling

Plate 16: Room **20**

Plate 17: Room **22**

Plate 18: Reed plaster in Room **22**

Plate 19: The window in Room **22**

Plate 20: General view of watching brief excavated area

Plate 21: View of northern part of watching brief area

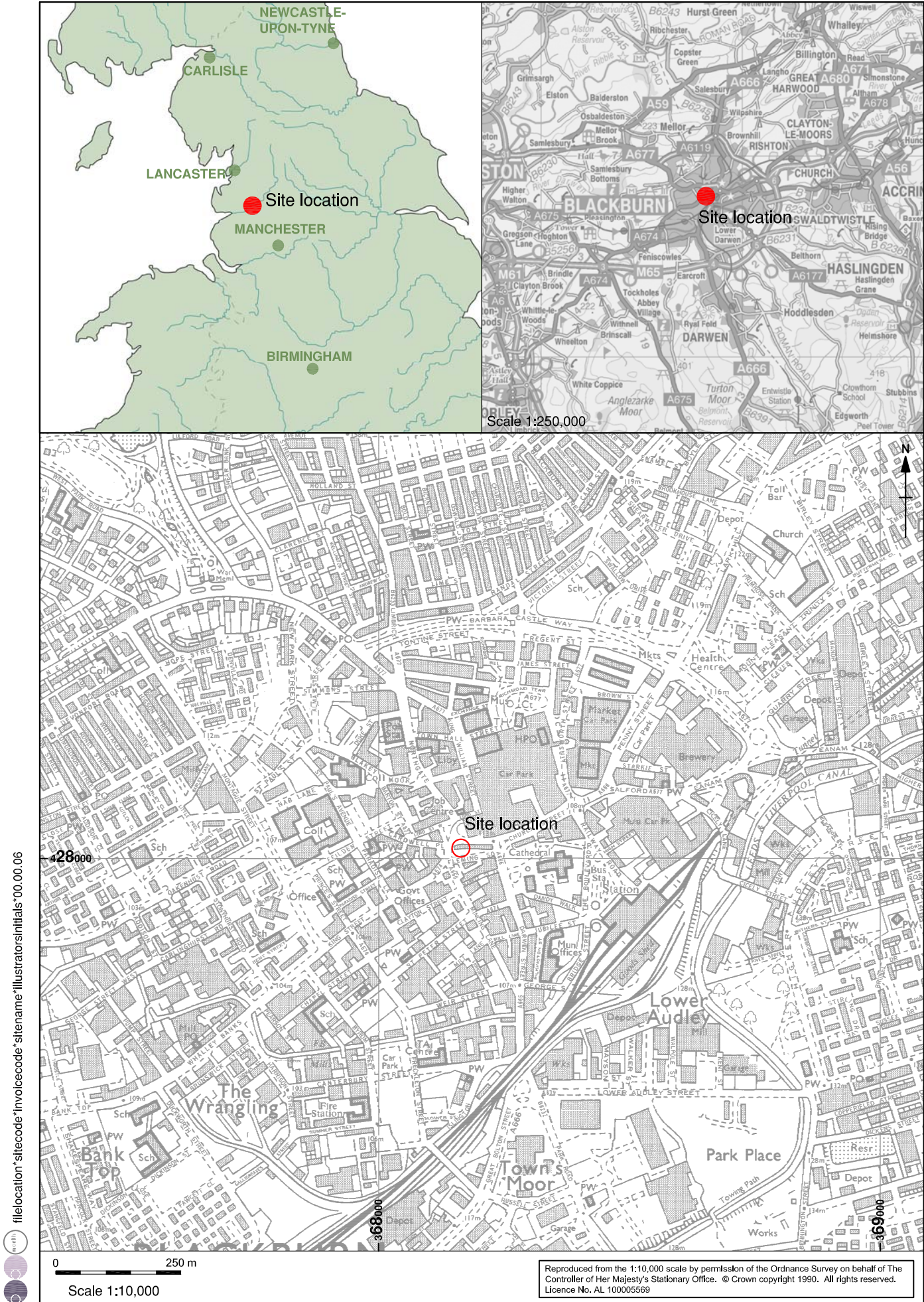
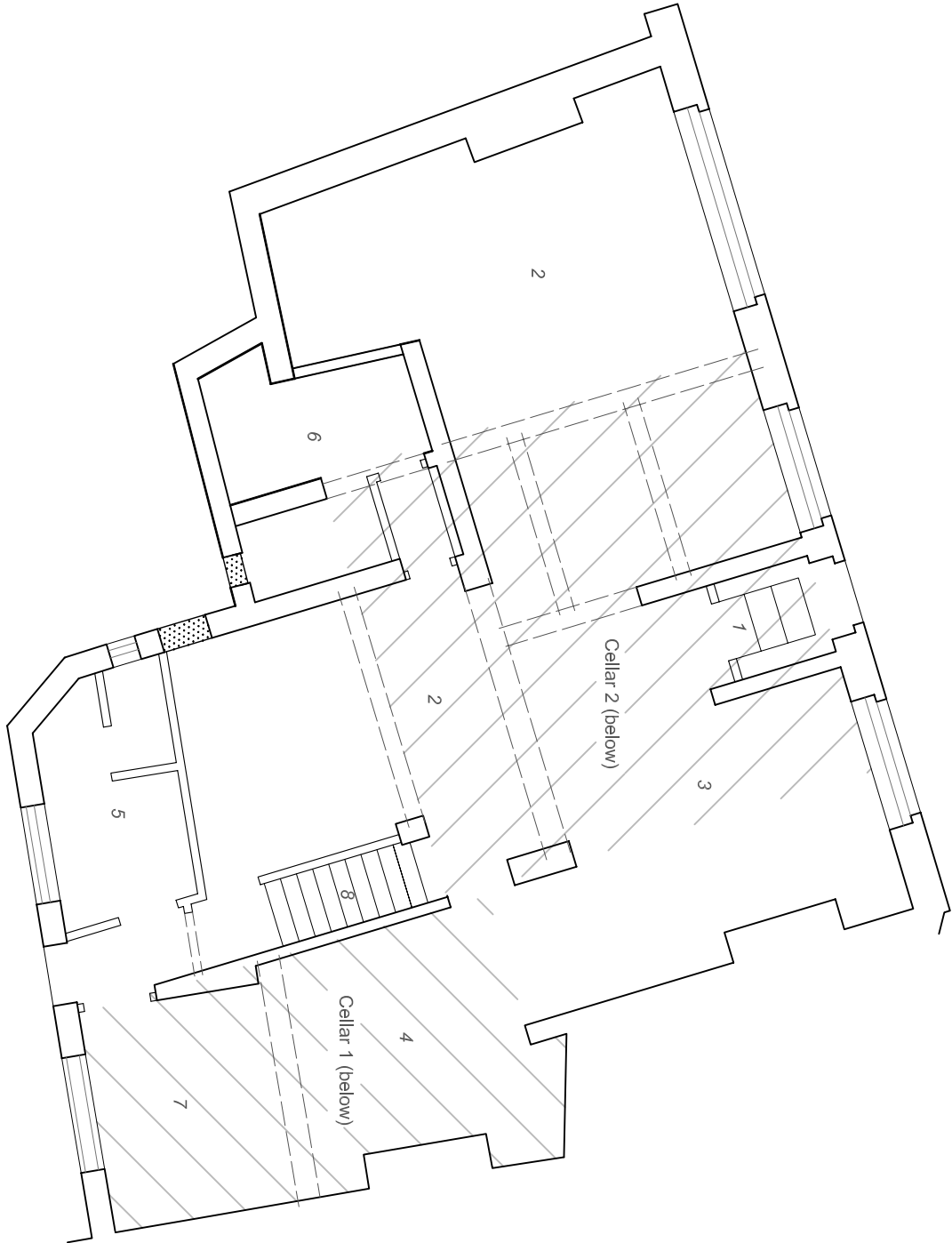


Figure 1: Site Location



| Key |              |
|-----|--------------|
|     | main walls   |
|     | blocking     |
|     | beam-over    |
|     | partition    |
|     | openings     |
|     | room numbers |

0 2.5m  
Scale 1:100@A4

Figure 2: Ground floor plan



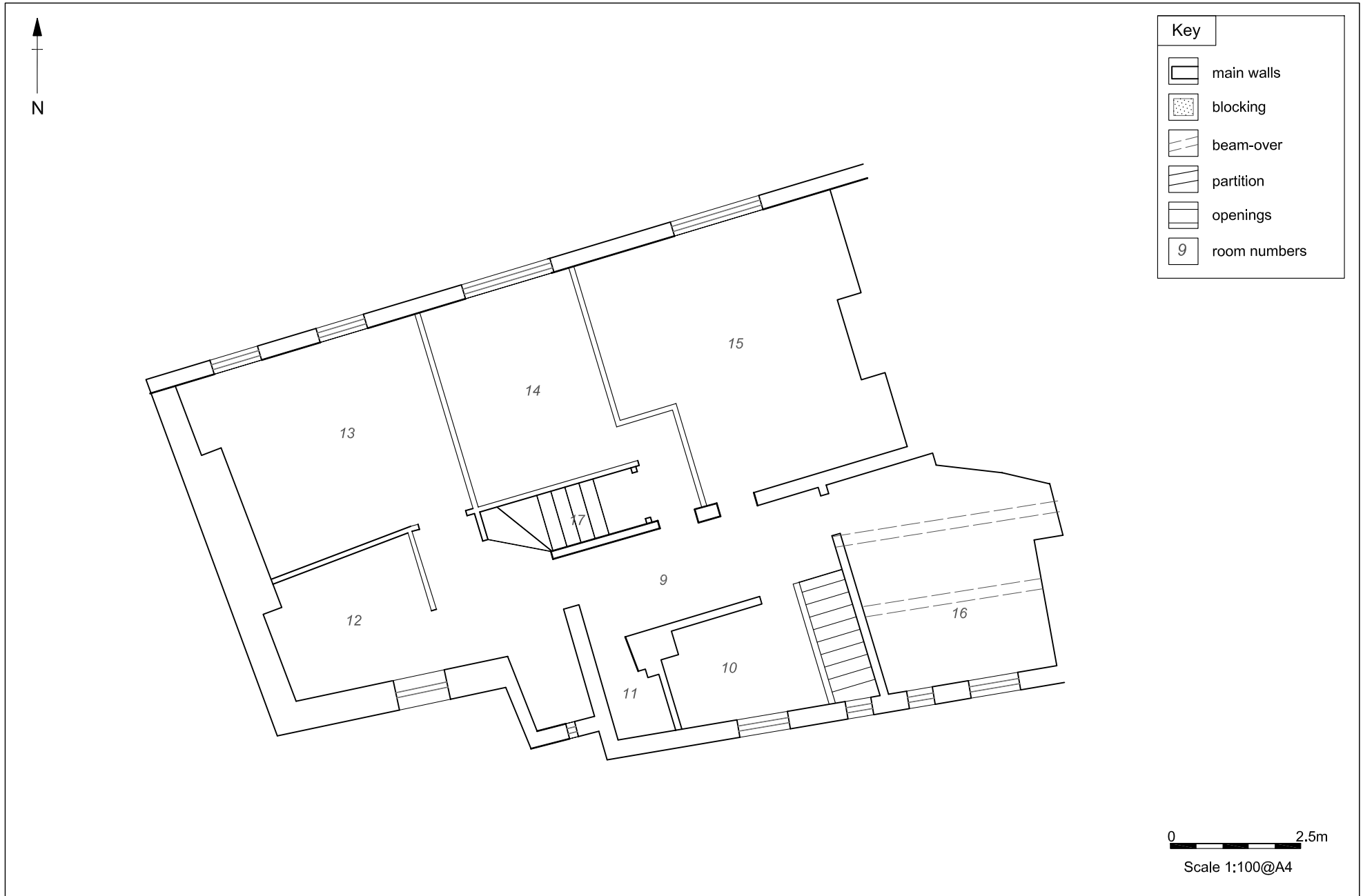


Figure 3: First floor plan

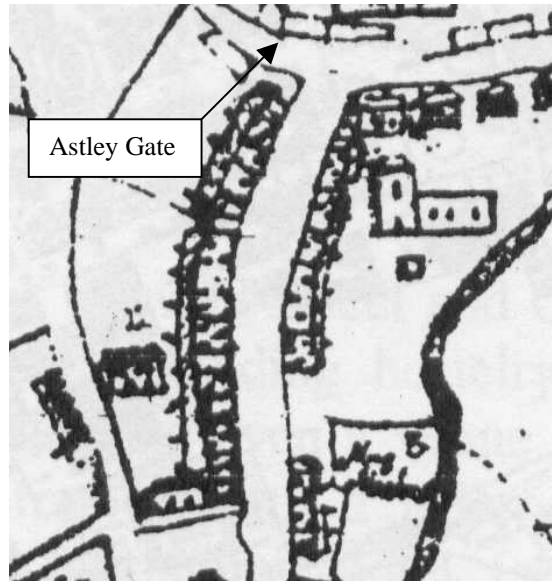


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Plate 3: Part of Gillies' map of Blackburn from 1822 (after Timmins 1993, Plate 16)

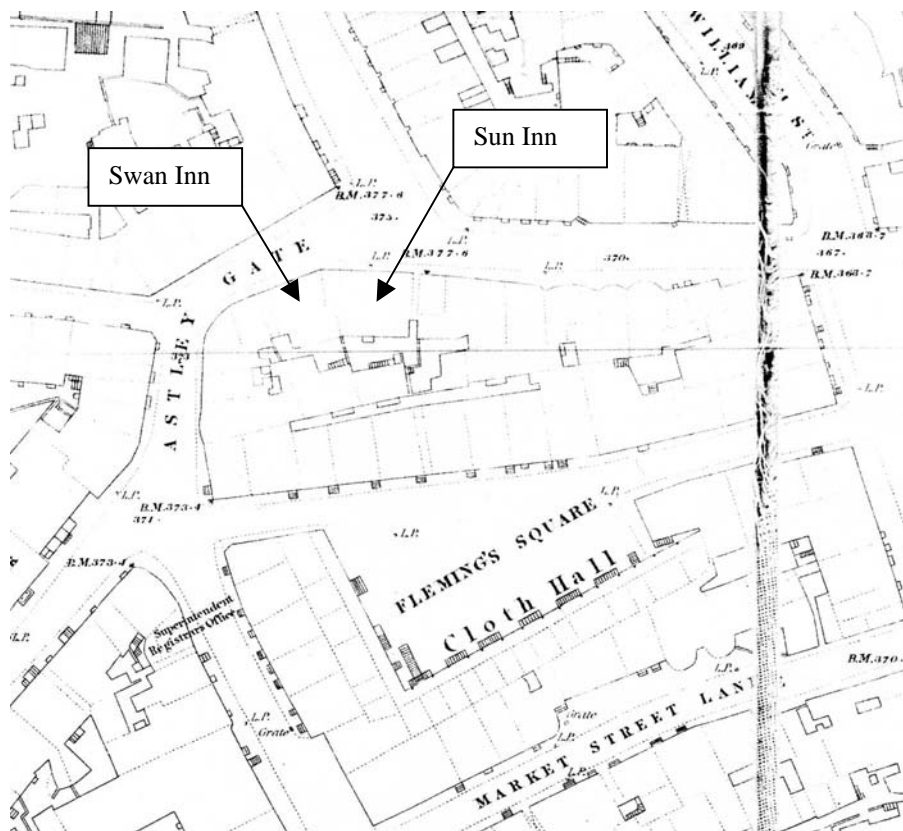


Plate 4: Part of the Ordnance Survey 60": 1 Mile map of 1848



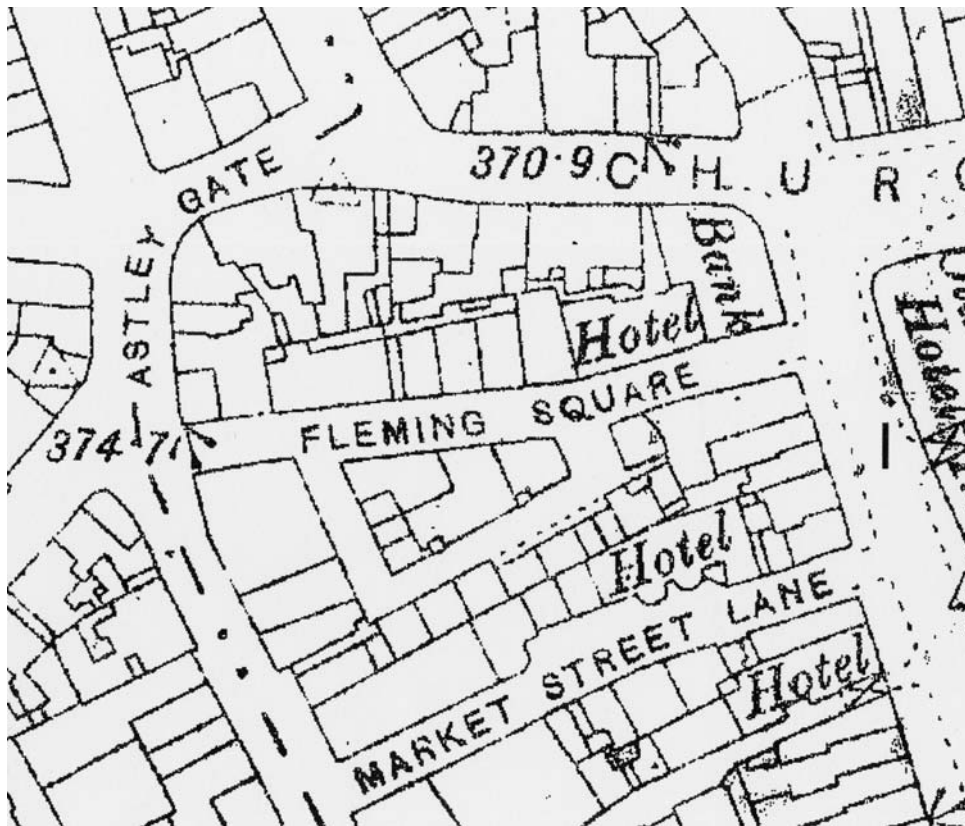


Plate 5: Part of the Ordnance Survey 25": 1 Mile map of 1894



Plate 6: Part of the Ordnance Survey 25": 1 Mile map of 1911

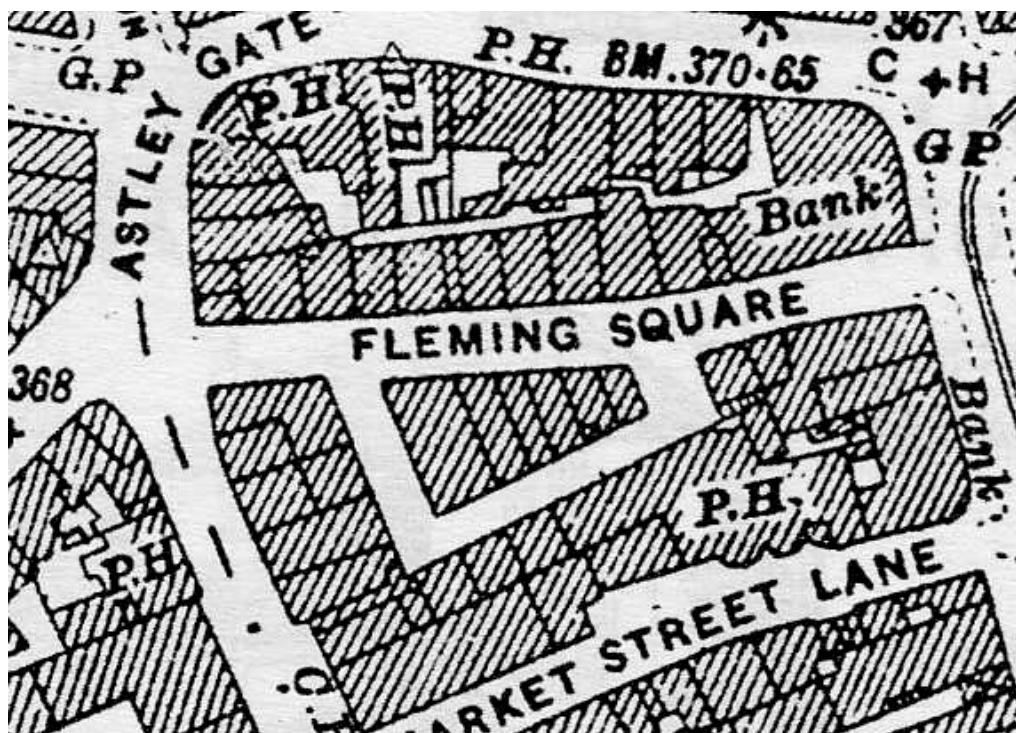


Plate 7: Part of the Ordnance Survey 25": 1 Mile map of 1931



Plate 8: The Swan public house post-1959



Plate 9: Astley Gate showing both the Swan (on the right) and the Sun (on the left)





Plate 10: North elevation of the Swan public house, looking south-east



Plate 11: North Elevation of The Swan Hotel



Plate 12: Rear of The Swan Hotel





Plate 13: The rear elevation illustrating the sloping eaves line



Plate 14: Room 19



Plate 15: Room **18** illustrating the inserted ceiling



Plate 16: Room 20





Plate 17: Room 22



Plate 18: Reed plaster in Room 22





Plate 19: The window in Room **22**



Plate 20: General view of watching brief excavated area



Plate 21: View of northern part of watching brief area



## APPENDIX 1: PROJECT DESIGN

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# **THE SWAN PUBLIC HOUSE, ASTLEY GATE, BLACKBURN LANCASHIRE**

## **Archaeological Building Investigation Project Design**

**Oxford Archaeology North**



Revised February 2007

**Brighthouse Construction**

OA North Tender No: t2596  
Planning Application Ref:  
10/04/0945



## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 **The Development:** this project design has been compiled for the Brighthouse Construction (hereafter the client). It presents proposals for a building investigation of the Swan public house, Astley Gate, Blackburn prior to demolition of the building as part of the Cathedral Village Development. This development incorporates both Market Street Lane and Astley Gate; however, the former has been subject to a separate planning approval.
- 1.1.2 **Archaeological Programme of Work:** this document, compiled following consultation with Mr Douglas Moir at Lancashire County Council, offers a methodology for the archaeological investigation of the building on Astley Gate known as the Swan public house. This follows the recommendations of a first phase of building assessment for Astley Gate undertaken by OA North (*Cathedral Village, Astley Gate, Balckburn, Lancashire: Building Assessment*, 2005).

## 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 24 years. Such projects 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 also has extensive experience of archaeological work in Northern England.
- 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 objectives of the archaeological building investigation are to provide an outline analysis of the plan, form, function, age and development of the public house.
- 2.2 To achieve the objectives outlined above the following listed specific aims are proposed:
- 2.3 **Building Investigation:** to provide an origin, development sequence, and a drawn and textual record of the public house to RCHME Level II-type survey;
- 2.4 **Report and Archive:** a written report will assess the significance of the data generated by this programme within a local context. It will present the results of the building investigation.

### 3. METHOD STATEMENT

#### 3.1 BUILDING INVESTIGATION

- 3.1.1 **Rapid Desk-Based Assessment:** a limited assessment of both documentary and cartographic sources held by the County Record Office (Preston) will be undertaken in an attempt to establish the origin of the construction of the building and any subsequent development. In particular, trade directories will be consulted.
- 3.1.2 **Historic Map Regression:** an examination will be undertaken of all historic Ordnance Survey maps available. Cartographic sources will be consulted in an attempt to trace the development of the site back to the earliest available cartographic source. This will provide information on additional sites not included in the SMR, as well as ascertaining potentially any areas of more recent development.
- 3.1.3 Prior to commencement of the building investigation the client should remove all moveable materials which obstruct the fabric of the building.
- 3.1.4 **Photographic Archive:** a photographic archive will be produced utilising a 35mm camera to produce colour slides and black and white prints. A full photographic index will be produced and the position of photographs will be marked on the relevant floor plan. The archive will comprise the following:
- (i) The external appearance and setting of the building;
  - (ii) The overall appearance of principal rooms and circulation areas;
  - (iii) Any external or internal detail, structural or architectural, which is relevant to the design, development and use of the building and which does not show adequately on general photographs;
  - (iv) Any internal detailed views of features of especial architectural interest, fixtures and fittings, or fabric detail relevant to phasing the building.
- 3.1.5 **Site Drawings:** the following architect's drawings (supplied by the client) will be annotated for the building:
- (i) Ground and first floor plans of the public house to be annotated to show form and location of any structural features of historic significance and recording the form and location of any significant structural details (1:100 scale);
  - (ii) One cross-section where appropriate (1:50).
- 3.1.6 There is no requirement to produce a measured survey of the cellar, however, a sketch drawing and descriptive record will be maintained.
- 3.1.7 OA North does not undertake to correct survey inaccuracies in the client's drawings, which shall remain the responsibility of the client. However, if inaccuracies significantly impede the progress of the archaeological survey and must be rectified to allow the archaeological survey to proceed, a charge for this correction will be made (see *Section 9*).
- 3.1.8 The drawings will be used to illustrate the phasing and development of the public house. Detail captured by the annotation will include such features as

window and door openings, an indication of ground and roof level, and changes in building material. The final drawings will be presented through an industry standard CAD package.

- 3.1.9 **Interpretation and Analysis:** a visual inspection of the public house will be undertaken utilising the OA North building investigation proforma sheets. A description will be maintained to RCHME Level II-type survey. This level of survey is descriptive and will provide a systematic account of the building's origins, development and use and present the evidence.

- 3.1.10 The written record will include:

- (i) An analysis of the plan, form, fabric, function, age and development sequence of the building;
- (ii) An account of the past and present use of the building;
- (iii) An account of the fixtures, fittings associated with the building, and their purpose;
- (iv) Identification of key architectural/agricultural features (including fixtures and fittings) which should be preserved in-situ;
- (v) A discussion of the relative significance of rooms within the building;
- (vi) A description of the buildings historic context including its relationship with nearby buildings in architectural and functional terms and so forth.

## 3.2 **REPORT /ARCHIVE**

- 3.2.1 **Report:** the report will comprise the results of the building investigation, and this will be issued within eight weeks of completion of fieldwork. The report will include:

- (i) a site location plan related to the national grid;
- (ii) a front cover to include the planning application number and the NGR;
- (iii) a concise, non-technical summary of the results;
- (iv) an explanation to any agreed variations to the brief, including any justification for any analyses not undertaken;
- (v) a description of the methodology employed, work undertaken and results obtained;
- (vi) copies of plans, photographs, and other illustrations as appropriate;
- (vii) a copy of this project design, and indications of any agreed departure from that design;
- (viii) the report will also include a complete bibliography of sources from which data has been derived.

- 3.2.2 The report will be in the same basic format as this project design; a copy of the report can be provided on CD, if required. Two copies of the reports will be supplied to the client and further digital copies to the SMR.

- 3.2.3 **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). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project.
- 3.2.4 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. OA North conforms to best practice in the preparation of project archives for long-term storage. This archive will be provided in the English Heritage Centre for Archaeology format and a synthesis will be submitted to the Lancashire SMR (the index to the archive and a copy of the report). OA North practice is to deposit the original record archive of projects with the appropriate County Record Office.
- 3.2.5 The Arts and Humanities Data Service (AHDS) online database project *Online Access to index of Archaeological Investigations* (OASIS) will be completed as part of the archiving phase of the project.
- 3.2.6 **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. HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 4.1 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.

#### 5 PROJECT MONITORING

- 5.1 **Access:** liaison for basic site access will be undertaken through the client.
- 5.2 Whilst the work is undertaken for the client, the County Archaeologist or his representative will be kept fully informed of the work and its results and will be notified a week in advance of the commencement of the fieldwork. Any proposed changes to the project design will be agreed with LCAS in consultation with the client.

#### 6 WORK TIMETABLE

- 6.1 **Building Investigation:** approximately four days in the field will be required to complete this element.

- 6.2 **Report/Archive:** the building investigation report will be issued within eight weeks of completion of the fieldwork. OA North can execute projects at very short notice once a formal written agreement has been received from the client.

## **7 STAFFING**

- 7.1 The project will be under the direct management of **Alison Plummer BSc (Hons)** (OA North senior project manager) to whom all correspondence should be addressed.
- 7.2 Both elements of the fieldwork will be undertaken by a suitably qualified archaeologist experienced in the recording and analysis of historic buildings in the North West. Present timetabling constraints preclude who this will be.

## **8 INSURANCE**

- 8.1 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*, second edition, London

OA North, 2005 *Cathedral Village, Astley Gate, Blackburn, Lancashire: Building Assessment*, unpubl client rep

## APPENDIX 2: ARCHIVE CONTENTS

| <b>Record group</b> | <b>Contents</b>  | <b>Comments</b> | <b>Box/File Number</b> |
|---------------------|--|-----------------|------------------------|
|                     | <b>Introduction</b><br>Project Design  |                 | 1                      |
| <b>A</b>            | <b>Report</b><br>Final Report  |                 | 1                      |
| <b>B</b>            | <b>Primary Fieldwork Records</b><br>Building Records Sheets  |                 | 1                      |
| <b>C</b>            | <b>Primary Drawings</b><br>Developers Plans<br>Drawing Indices<br>Plans/Sections                             |                 | 1                      |
| <b>D</b>            | <b>Finds Box and Bag Lists</b><br>Finds compendium<br>Object Record Sheet<br>Specialist Reports<br>Box Lists | N/A             |                        |
| <b>E</b>            | <b>Environmental Records</b><br>Primary Records<br>Specialist Reports  | N/A             |                        |
| <b>F</b>            | <b>Photographic Record</b><br>Photographic Indices<br>Monochrome<br>Colour Slides<br>Digital                 |                 | 1                      |
| <b>G</b>            | <b>Electronic Media</b>  |                 | 1                      |