

CATHEDRAL VILLAGE, ASTLEY GATE, BLACKBURN LANCASHIRE

Building Assessment



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SUMMARY

Following a proposal by Ellis Hillman Partnership to redevelop a number of properties along Astley Gate in Blackburn (centred on SD 682 280) a programme of archaeological work was requested by the Specialist Advisor (Archaeology) at Lancashire County Council. This comprised a rapid desk-based assessment and an assessment of the standing buildings.

The desk-based assessment revealed that the area developed before *c*1795, during a period of rapid growth in Blackburn. Most of the buildings within the study area (six in total) were commercial in nature; buildings **1**, **2** and **3** were shops while two (Buildings **4** and **5**) were well-established public houses. Building **6** was probably an outbuilding associated with buildings facing onto Fleming Square. They were part of an important commercial district in the centre of Blackburn that continued to develop with the construction of Fleming Square in 1822. All of the buildings within the study area have retained some of their historic character, although it is evident that most have been extensively altered or even rebuilt.

Recommendations for additional recording prior to the development of the area were made, including more detailed recording of the standing buildings and evaluation for below-ground remains. Previous work in the area has revealed some potential for buried remains, but has also identified the presence of cellars in the general area.

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Oxford Archaeology North would like to thank Ellis Hillman Partnership for commissioning the project. Further thanks are also due to Peter Iles and Lesley Mitchell at the Lancashire County Council Archaeology Service (LCCAS) for their help and information. Thanks are also due to the staff of the Lancashire Record Office in Preston and Blackburn Central Library for their help and patience.

Daniel Elsworth undertook the desk-based assessment, carried out the building investigation and wrote the report. Mark Tidmarsh produced the illustrations. Alison Plummer managed the project and edited the report, which was also edited by Alan Lupton.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 Following a proposal to redevelop an area adjacent to Blackburn Cathedral including Market Street Lane and Astley Gate, known as Cathedral Village (centred on SD 683 279), the Specialist Advisor (Archaeology) to Lancashire County Council (LCC) requested a programme of archaeological work be undertaken. This was to comprise a rapid desk-based assessment and an assessment of the standing buildings in order to identify structures of archaeological interest and areas with the potential for below-ground archaeological remains. The development has been split into two separate planning applications, one for Market Street Lane, and the other for Astley Gate. This report deals with Astley Gate.
- 1.1.2 This assessment forms the first stage of a three-stage approach. The second stage would potentially involve additional investigation of any buildings of historical or archaeological interest, and the third stage would examine the area for below-ground remains following any demolition of standing buildings.

1.2 LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 1.2.1 Astley Gate is situated to the west of Blackburn Cathedral and is orientated east/west, running west from the west end of Church Street towards Mincing Lane and King Street (centred on SD 682 280). Its east end actually forms part of Church Street (known as Higher Church Street), although there is no particular break in the road itself. The area is at approximately 110m above sea level (Ordnance Survey 1978) and the solid geology comprises thick deposits of coal measures (Countryside Commission 1998, 102), overlain by glacial till (*ibid*). The topography is entirely urban in character, obscuring the overlying soil cover (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983), and the site is situated in the centre of Blackburn.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 OA North submitted a project design (*Appendix 1*) in response to a request from the Ellis Hillman Partnership for an archaeological desk-based assessment and building assessment prior to redevelopment of the site. Following submission of the project design to the Specialist Advisor (Archaeology) at LCC and its acceptance OA North undertook the work in June and July 2005. The project design 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 DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

- 2.2.1 A rapid desk-based assessment covering the study area was carried out. This concentrated on the southern side of Astley Gate, part of which is the west end of Church Street (and known as Higher Church Street), where the majority of the development was to take place.
- 2.2.2 Three main sources of information were examined: early maps, which enable an examination of the arrangement and form of the buildings; directories and other documents, which identify the occupiers and trades undertaken within the buildings; and secondary sources, which provide general background information and information on the nature of archaeological deposits in the immediate area.
- 2.2.3 A number of places were visited in order to examine suitable sources: Blackburn Central Library, for cartographic and secondary material; the Lancashire Record Office in Preston (LRO(P)), for primary sources and some secondary references; Lancaster City Library for additional secondary sources such as directories; and OA North's library for secondary material such as unpublished reports.

2.3 BUILDING INVESTIGATION

- 2.3.1 The building investigation comprised a RCHME Level I-type survey (RCHME 1996). This is primarily descriptive, with only a limited consideration of the phasing and periods of development of the buildings, and is made up of three parts:
- 2.3.2 **Descriptive:** records are compiled on OA North *pro forma* record sheets and comprise a brief descriptive account of all of the accessible parts of the buildings, specifically identifying areas of architectural and historic interest.
- 2.3.3 **Photographic:** photographs in the form of both black and white contact prints and 35mm colour slides were taken for inclusion in the archive. In addition, colour digital shots were taken for illustrative purposes.

- 2.3.4 **Planning:** an as-existing site plan was hand-annotated to mark the location of the surviving buildings. As the buildings were either in use or derelict and boarded up, it was not feasible to gain access to the interiors but, where possible, notes were made on them and photographs taken. Nor was it possible in many cases to gain full access to the sides or rears of the properties.

2.4 ARCHIVE

- 2.4.1 A full archive has been compiled to a professional standard in accordance with current IFA and English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage 1991). The archive will be deposited in the Lancashire County Record Office in Preston on completion of the project, and a copy of the report will be lodged with the Lancashire County Archaeological Service.

3. BACKGROUND

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 assessment. It is not intended to be a comprehensive history of Blackburn, and concentrates specifically on Astley Gate and the area around the Cathedral. The information forming the background history is mainly taken from secondary sources and previous reports on the general area (LUAU 1995; 2000; Lancashire County Council and Egerton Lea Consultancy 2005).

3.2 HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

- 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. A number of burials dating to the Bronze Age have been identified in the area around the city, demonstrating human activity from at least this date (Lancashire County Council and Egerton Lea Consultancy 2005, 16). It is not clear whether the area was densely or permanently occupied during this period, although 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*).
- 3.2.2 Blackburn is situated on the line of the Roman road orientated north/south from Manchester to Ribchester, probably passing to the east of the Cathedral (*ibid*). The remains of this road have been identified in a number of locations. At Hallows Spring an inscribed stone with a dedication naming legion VI *Victrix* was reputedly discovered in the seventeenth century, although this is difficult to place in any meaningful context as legion VI *Victrix* was based in York and there is no known Roman base located at Blackburn (*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*).
- 3.2.3 **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 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD

- 3.3.1 The Historic Environment Record (HER) for Lancashire was consulted in order to assess whether there were any recorded sites of archaeological interest in the vicinity of the study area. Only one site (Building 5; HER No **20115**; Fig 2) was present within the proposed development area, and a small number are recorded in the surrounding area. These are presented in Table 1 below:

<i>HER No</i>	<i>Grid Ref</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Description</i>
974	SD 6823 2802	Medieval	Blackburn market cross. Erected 1101, rebuilt 1533, vandalised 1642, demolished post-1820.
975	SD 6825	Post-	The Old Bull Hotel, pre-seventeenth

	2801	medieval	century, rebuilt 1847 and demolished 1950.
14174	SD 6824 2796	Post-medieval	Hotel on Darwen Street shown on Ordnance Survey map of 1848.
14242	SD 6821 2801	Post-medieval	Hotel in Fleming Square shown on Ordnance Survey map of 1848.
14243	SD 6821 2797	Post-medieval	Hotel on Market Street Lane shown on Ordnance Survey map of 1848.
16844	SD 6822 2802	Post-medieval	Bank, corner of Church Street, opposite cathedral. Massive nineteenth century block, almost square in plan, with high base, heavy quoins, heavy cornice or modillions, and balustraded parapet. Three windows to Darwen Street, two to Church Street, all round-arched and linked to one another, with composite columns and enriched ornament. The angle is cut out, forming a square entrance, with iron entrance gates set in a round arch across the angle.
20115	SD 6817 2802	Post-medieval	Early nineteenth century, probably purpose-built inn. Frontage has decorated moulding displaying name etc. These are likely to be of early twentieth century date.
20116	SD 6820 2802	Post-medieval	Purpose-built shopping arcade on the site of the former Fish Stones and close to the former cloth market.
20117	SD 6825 2801	Post-medieval	One of the oldest inns in Blackburn, previously known as the Paslew Arms and possibly of medieval origins. Rebuilt in nineteenth century and later twentieth century.
20118	SD 6825 2801	Post-medieval	Hargreaves Wraith's Chemists. Probable eighteenth century building, rebuilt in the nineteenth century, demolished in twentieth century.

Table 1: Sites recorded in the Lancashire HER

- 3.3.2 This information demonstrates the historic social importance of the area around Astley Gate, which evidently contained several inns. Although only one of these sites is likely to be affected (Building 5; HER No. 20115), the loss of historic fabric along Astley Gate would be likely to have a damaging affect on other historic buildings in the surrounding area. The recommendations (Section 6.1) therefore reflect this.

3.4 MAP REGRESSION

- 3.4.1 ***Eighteenth Century***: the earliest map depicting streets and buildings within the study area 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 (*op cit*, 24). Astley Gate is evident at the end of Church Street and there are some structures shown on its south side (Plate 1). The buildings fronting onto Darwen Street are situated to the east of the study area, but it is likely that plots associated with them ran westwards towards it. The junction of Darwen Street and Church Street probably formed the focus of the medieval town (*op cit*, 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 entire area was apparently built on (Plate 2).
- 3.4.2 ***Gillies' Map of 1822***: by this date there has been considerable growth in development in the centre of Blackburn. The entire study area has 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).
- 3.4.3 ***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. To the south of Astley Gate, facing onto the north side of Fleming Square is a row of terraced houses, perhaps weavers' cottages, and it is possible that Building 6, may be made up of part of one of these.
- 3.4.4 ***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 has clearly been some rebuilding as the footprint of many of the buildings is noticeably different. The small passageway between Buildings 3 and 4 may also have been infilled by this time, adding extra space to Building 3.
- 3.4.5 ***Ordnance Survey 1911-1931***: Astley Gate evidently remained essentially unchanged during the beginning of the twentieth century (Plates 6-7). The two public houses are marked, but otherwise the arrangement of buildings is essentially the same.
- 3.4.6 ***Post 1931***: although no maps providing detailed coverage for this period were available, it is evident from the building investigation that the row of buildings facing south onto Fleming Square have been demolished.

3.5 ASTLEY GATE

- 3.5.1 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).
- 3.5.2 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 the two public houses are present (Buildings 4-5). Subsequent directories providing information about the occupations taking place within the various buildings on Astley Gate and the west end of Church Street can be followed throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. 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. Nevertheless, in the later directories it is possible to identify all of the extant buildings (see Tables 2-9 below).
- 3.5.3 A brief examination of a selection of directories covering the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries gives an idea of the type of businesses present on Astley Gate and the west end of Church Street. Unfortunately, the style of listing and evident re-numbering of the streets means that in the earliest cases only the two public houses (Buildings 4-5) can be positioned within the study area with any certainty; in later directories it is possible to establish which numbers relate to the buildings within the study area, and from the 1860s onwards these are 1-5 Astley Gate and 2-6 Church Street. Of these The Sun (Building 4) may have been original called 'The Higher Sun', which is recorded as being sold by Thomas Sharples in 1796 (Miller 1992, 300). The information from the directories is summarised in Tables 2-9 below:

<i>Address</i>	<i>Occupier</i>	<i>Trade</i>
-	Thomas Sharples	Sun: inn (Building 4).
-	Thomas Sharples	Swan-With-Two-Necks: inn (Building 5).

Table 2: Residents of the inns on Astley Gate in c1796 (Anon c1796, 21)

<i>Address</i>	<i>Occupier</i>	<i>Trade</i>
61 Church Street	Mary Sharples	Sun: inn (Building 4).

8 Astley Gate	Jas Bolton	Swan-With-Two-Necks: inn (Building 5).
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Table 3: Residents of Astley Gate and Church Street in 1828-9 (Pigot 1828-9, 57)

<i>Address</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Trade</i>
16 Astley Gate	John Sagar	Sun: inn (Building 4).
15 Astley Gate	Richard Greenwood	Swan: inn (Building 5).

Table 4: Residents of Astley Gate in 1854 (Mannex and Co 1854, 319)

<i>Address</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Trade</i>
1 Astley Gate	Henry Robinson	The Sun: inn (Building 4).
3-5 Astley Gate	Jph Eatough	Swan: inn (Building 5).
2 Church Street	James Hargreaves	Tobacconist (Building 3).
4 Church Street	John Sames	Wine and spirit merchant (Building 2).
6 Church Street	William Walmsley	Eating house (Building 1).

Table 5: Residents of Astley Gate and Church Street in 1868 (Mannex and Co 1868, 704 and 708)

<i>Address</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Trade</i>
1 Astley Gate	Thomas Nicholson	Sun Inn and iron merchant (Building 4).
3-5 Astley Gate	Eliz A Edge	Swan Inn (Building 5).
4 Church Street	William Sames	Wine and spirit merchant (Building 2).
6 Church Street	CM Brewster and Co	Cabinet maker, upholsterer and general house furnisher (Building 1).

Table 6: Residents of Astley Gate and Church Street in 1881 (Barrett and Co 1881, 252 and 262)

<i>Address</i>	<i>Occupier</i>	<i>Building description</i>
1 Astley Gate	S Atkinson	Sun Hotel (Building 4).
3-5 Astley Gate	J Sherry	Swan Hotel (Building 5).
2 Church Street	Miss A Aspden	Milliner (Building 3).

4 Church Street	W Sames	Spirit merchant (Building 2).
6 Church Street	W Wilson	Hosier (Building 1).

Table 7: Residents of Astley Gate and Church Street in 1897 (Barrett and Co 1897, 305 and 326)

<i>Address</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Trade</i>
1 Astley Gate	A Proctor	Sun Hotel (Building 4).
3-5 Astley Gate	Mrs Margt Neville	Swan Hotel (Building 5).
2 Church Street	Miss AM Lavender	Milliner (Building 3).
4 Church Street	W Pickering (manager)	Lower Sun Inn (Building 2).
6 Church Street	W Wilson	Hatter (Building 1).

Table 8: Residents of Astley Gate and Church Street in 1909 (Barrett 1909, 373)

<i>Address</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Trade</i>
1 Astley Gate	J Speight	Sun Hotel (Building 4).
3-5 Astley Gate	P Riley	Swan Hotel (Building 5).
2 Church Street	The Dainty Shop	Milliners (Building 3).
4 Church Street	A Ainsworth	Lower Sun Inn (Building 2).
6 Church Street	W North	Gents outfitters (Building 1).

Table 9: Residents of Astley Gate and Church Street in 1935 (Barrett 1935, 335 and 369)

- 3.5.4 It was more difficult to provide information about Building 6, although this appears to be all that remains of part of a larger complex of buildings to the south of Astley Gate that faced onto Fleming Square. It is possible that this may be, therefore, part of what was originally a much larger building, or the altered remains of a number of small buildings.

3.6 CONCLUSIONS

- 3.6.1 The map evidence shows that the area began to develop before 1739, but that it was not until c1795 that extensive building had taken place. The directories show that the two public houses were certainly present by c1796. Although it is difficult to identify the other premises until the mid-nineteenth century, it is likely that they were always essentially commercial in character and made up of shops and eating-houses. This situation does not seem to have changed dramatically at the beginning of the twentieth century, although an additional

public house is present, presumably as a result of the conversion of the former spirit merchants (Building 3). The area was clearly dominated by commercial activity.

- 3.6.2 Both the maps and the directories show that the arrangement of the building plots had changed relatively little from the first detailed depiction in 1848 and the beginning of the twentieth century. Some infilling of available space took place in the nineteenth century, but in general there seems to have been relatively few major alterations until the end of the nineteenth century, although some rebuilding on existing plots is likely. Even during the twentieth century the buildings along the south side of Astley Gate have undergone only minor alterations, with major demolition being confined to the area to the south, around Fleming Square, and the north side of Astley Gate (Cotton Town n.d.).

4. BUILDING INVESTIGATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

- 4.1.1 The building assessment comprised a RCHME Level I-type survey (RCHME 1996). This is primarily descriptive, with only minimal examination of phasing or the development of the buildings.

4.2 ARRANGEMENT OF THE BUILDINGS

- 4.2.1 Astley Gate effectively forms the west end of Church Street and the north end of Mincing Lane, and is a junction with King Street to the west and a series of minor streets to the north (Fig 2). It is orientated approximately east/west, with the buildings facing north onto it and the modern shopping centre along the north side. The buildings on the south side form an unbroken row between the Swan Inn (Building 5) at the east end and bank at the junction with Darwen Street. The rear of the row is open to the recently redeveloped Fleming Square although it is separated from it by boundary walls and fences.
- 4.2.2 All but one of the buildings within the proposed development area are situated along the south side of Astley Gate and face north onto it (Buildings 1-5, from east to west). Building 6 is a small structure to the rear of Buildings 2-4). The buildings are divided up according to their original layout, as far as this could be ascertained.
- 4.2.3 The results of the building assessment were combined with the information from the map regression (*Section 3.4*) and background history (*Section 3.5*) so that a presumed original use and date of origin can be given. In addition, any details that suggest rebuilding that were identified during the site investigation are also incorporated within the presumed dating. A summary of recommendations for further work (expanded in *Section 6*) is also included. This is summarised in the gazetteer below.

4.3 GAZETTEER OF RESULTS

Building No: 1

Description: This is a three-storey building, built of brick with a slate roof (Plates 8 and 13). The north elevation comprises a skin of modern, dark brown brick, with two windows on the second floor and three on the first. There is a large, modern, aluminium shop front on the ground floor with a single central doorway and large flanking windows. Above is a hoarding stating 'East Lancs Moneyline'. The west gable is slightly taller than Building 2, and has a chimney. This is built in the original mid to dark orange brick, as is most of the gable. The south elevation is finished with a rough render although two small areas of ceramic tiles on the east side suggest that there may have been a more decorative finish at one time.

Original use: Shop/eating house

Date: Pre-1822, presumably subsequently altered

Further work: RCHME Level II recording

Building No: 2
Description: This is two storeys high, and probably brick built with a slate roof (Plates 8, 12 and 13). It is now a public house called 'Bar Code'. The north elevation has a rendered finish with four windows on the first floor, which surrounded by engaged pilasters decorated with egg and dart, acanthus leaves and rose bosses around the capitals. The ground floor has a timber shop front decorated with beaded panels. There are two doorways and two large windows flanked by engaged pilasters with flat capitals. The south elevation has a rendered finish. On the first floor there is a single window and there are two conjoined chimney stacks on the east end against Building 1.
Original use: Shop/public house
Date: Pre-1822, presumably subsequently altered
Further work: RCHME Level II recording

Building No: 3
Description: This is also two storeys, constructed from brick (which is painted) in English garden wall bond, and has a slate roof (Plates 8, 12 and 13). There are two windows on the first floor each apparently with stone surrounds comprising quoins, sloping sills and roll-moulded lintels. Both of the windows have the original sliding sash panes. The ground floor comprises a large shop front with a window and doorway. The front is decorated with engaged pilasters with projecting heads finished with denticulate decoration and rose bosses. The name 'Abbey Telecom' is painted above the shop front. To the west there is another doorway accessing a passageway, this has a rounded head with chamfered jambs. The south elevation is rendered and has two windows on the first floor, and the passage on the west side is stepped back slightly.
Original use: Shop
Date: Pre-1822, presumably subsequently altered
Further work: RCHME Level II recording

Building No: 4
Description: This is a two-storey building, the 'Sun' public house, built of brick in a stretcher bond (Plate 8 and 12). It has a slate roof and three brick chimney stacks. The north elevation has five windows on the first floor with stone surrounds as per Building 3 (the quoins are picked out by being painted). The ground floor has three windows, the one on the east side being much wider than the other two, although all are two-light sliding sash frames and have the same surrounds as those on the first floor. There are two pedestrian doorways flanking the larger east window, both with round heads decorated with a rolled moulding. Above this is a moulded entablature supporting a rounded pediment. The door jambs are chamfered and contain engaged pilasters and either side of the arched door top are carved stone bosses: roses to the west and 'sun faces' to the east. The rear (south) elevation is unfinished brick and there are numerous small windows with dressed sandstone sills and lintels and a skin of glazed brick covers the south-west and south-east corners. There are boundary walls connecting it to Building 6.
Original use: Public house (Sun)
Date: Pre-c1796, presumably subsequently altered
Further work: RCHME Level II recording

Building No: 5
Description: This is a large, three-storey building, 'The Swan Hotel' (Plate 11). It is probably built of brick, but is finished with render scored to look like ashlar blocks on the north (front) elevation (which projecting quoins at the corners) and rough render to the rear. The north elevation has two large windows on the second floor, both of which have six-lights, and there is a large panel of decorative tiles with a picture of a swan and the words 'The Swan Hotel' on the west side. The first floor has two large windows on the east side and two smaller ones on the west. The ground floor has very large window on the west side and two large ones to the east, all of which are decorated with a plain square border with a single quoin and key stone in each side. There is a

doorway between the two eastern windows with a projecting moulded entablature supported by fluted corbels. The doorway is further decorated with a crenellated effect beneath the entablature, perhaps mimicking a earlier period datestone, and quoins, and has a single-light window above it. Below the windows is a moulded rail, below which is a row of large panels with the words 'The Swan Hotel' in large raised letters. The east elevation forms the gable of the building and end of the row, and is rendered and painted. There are modern lights and letters attached (again saying 'The Swan Hotel'). The rear (south) elevation has an irregular three-storey extension (not quite as tall as Building 5 itself) with numerous small windows. Attached to this are two smaller outshut. All of these are finished with render and have doorways and windows within them.

Original use: Public house (Swan)
Date: Pre-c1796, presumably subsequently altered
Further work: RCHME Level II recording

Building No: 6

Description: This is a single-storey outbuilding associated with Building 4, it is built-brick with a slate roof, and is attached to various boundary walls, which connect it to a further small monopitch outshut to the west (Plate 12). The south elevation is constructed in brick, in an English Garden Wall bond. The west elevation forms the gable end while there are walls attached to the east forming a yard that is connected to the smaller outshut.

Original use: Unknown
Date: Pre-1848, presumably subsequently altered
Further work: RCHME Level II recording

4.4 CONCLUSIONS

4.4.1 The building investigation revealed that most of the buildings shown on the early maps of the site remain *in situ* along Astley Gate and Higher Church Street. The majority of these seem to have been used as shops or other commercial buildings, as well as at least two public houses. In this sense the character of the street has changed very little for over 100 years, and it has remained while much of the immediately surrounding area has been extensively redeveloped.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 ASTLEY GATE AND HIGHER CHURCH STREET

- 5.1.1 The area around Astley Gate and the west end of Church Street has formed around an important part of the historic centre of Blackburn, with connections to its medieval development and post-medieval growth. The street patterns probably echo the original medieval land divisions, and from the beginning of the nineteenth century it was part of a busy commercial and social area comprising various shops and public houses.
- 5.1.2 The cartographic evidence suggests that Astley Gate developed before *c*1795, and there are structures shown on the site in 1739, (Plates 1-2). By the time of the 60": 1 Mile Ordnance Survey map of 1848 (Plate 4) the area had clearly taken on much of its present form, and this was certainly the case by 1894 (Plate 5). All of the buildings within the study area seem to have survived until the present day, although a large number to the rear (south) were evidently recently demolished (Cotton Town n.d.).
- 5.1.3 It has been possible to identify in the historic record what the various uses of almost all of the buildings have been. In general, they were used as shops, eating establishments and public houses. Some suggestion of the possible date of origin of the buildings can be gained from the cartographic sources, although on this evidence alone it is impossible to be certain that they have not completely rebuilt on the same footprint. The plots were clearly all developed between 1739 and *c*1795, with the possible exception of the area to the south of Astley Gate (including Building 6), which may not have been extensively built on until the construction of Fleming Square in 1822.
- 5.1.4 It is not until the detailed Ordnance Survey maps of 1848 to the present day that individual buildings are depicted, and this general arrangement has survived to the present day. The style of some of the buildings, however, and evident infilling of a passageway forming part of Building 3, would suggest that many of them have been rebuilt or extensively altered at a later date on the same plots. Similarly, the architectural detail evident during the site investigation shows typically nineteenth century decorative details, to the façades at least, which would further demonstrate later rebuilding.

6. IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 THE BUILDINGS

- 6.1.1 The majority of the buildings, although not closely dated, would appear to have their origins in the nineteenth century, although the plots were occupied from at least the end of the eighteenth century. They all formed part of a busy commercial part of the town, dominated by shops, businesses and public houses. Most of the original divisions between the properties still exist, although the architectural style of Buildings **3** and **4** would suggest that they were built at the same time and probably as part of a single building (The Sun Inn). The two public houses, the Sun (Building **4**) and the Swan (Building **5**), are the easiest to trace in the historical records and it is known that they were present by c1796 (Anon c1796). The origins of the remaining buildings are probably of a similar date, and this would correspond to the cartographic evidence, which shows the area as fully developed by c1795 (Plate 2; although there were apparently structures on the site prior to this date; Plate 1).
- 6.1.2 The buildings form an interesting group of post-medieval structures in what is an important part of the commercial centre of historic Blackburn. While not particularly rare, either architecturally or in terms of the uses they were put to, they are now an unusual survival in an area that has seen much modern development. They are perhaps typical of shops and public houses of their period; of a type that could be found in many towns in Northern England, and they therefore contribute a significant amount to Blackburn's character. They are also demonstrative of the town's rapid growth during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a period of considerable expansion in this area which formed the commercial heart of Blackburn. In effect, Astley Gate continues the western end of Church Street, one of the oldest streets in the town, and it has been stated by Miller (1970) that: *'There is no exaggeration in claiming that citizens of Blackburn have pursued their livelihoods along the line of this busy thoroughfare for over a thousand years'*.
- 6.1.3 The importance of adequate recording of historic buildings has also been recently highlighted by the North West Regional Archaeological Research Framework (Brennand 2005, 27). Work brought about as a result of development is seen as key to this (*ibid*). Similarly, areas where there are good quality standing buildings should also be considered suitable for excavation (Newman and McNeil 2004, 4; see *Section 6.2*).
- 6.1.4 It is therefore recommended that all of the buildings identified during the assessment be subject to additional investigation. This should take the form of a RCHME Level-II type survey, including the production of plans of all of the principal floors, cross-sections and drawings of significant features. Additional background research into buildings should also be carried out in order to identify the date of origin, phases of use, owners, occupiers, uses, and so forth.

6.2 BELOW-GROUND REMAINS

- 6.2.1 Previous archaeological work in the immediate vicinity of the study area has revealed considerable post-medieval building remains (LUAU 2001), as well as some slight traces of late medieval activity (UMAU 1999). The proximity of the Cathedral, which is situated close to the site of an earlier medieval church (LUAU 1995), and the probable medieval origins of the landscape within which Astley Gate and the west end of Church Street developed would suggest that there is considerable potential for medieval and post-medieval archaeology within the study area. The cartographic sources suggest that there were a few buildings on the site in 1739, and that the whole area between Astley Gate and Market Street Lane had been built on by *c*1795 (Plates 1 and 2). The positive identification of cellars on nearby sites during previous archaeological (UMAU 1999; LUAU 2001) and building (Cotton Town n.d.) work and the nature of the buildings does, however, mean that it is likely that any earlier deposits will have been damaged or truncated. Blackburn is at present the only town in east Lancashire to have been subject to any serious archaeological investigation, and where this has been carried out the potential for below-ground remains is evident (McNeil and Newman 2004, 6).
- 6.2.2 It is therefore recommended that during the building survey particular efforts be made to identify and locate the presence of cellars within the standing buildings. Where these are evidently extensive there is only a limited value in carrying out additional below ground investigation. Nevertheless, archaeological remains could still survive, so it is still recommended that a watching brief be maintained in those areas. In areas where there is no evidence for cellars or they are thought to have less extensive coverage, it is recommended that archaeological evaluation of a suitable percentage be carried out. Should any significant archaeological features or deposits be encountered during the evaluation or watching brief then further excavation may be considered necessary.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURES

Figure 1: Location map

Figure 2: Site plan

PLATES

Plate 1: Part of a plan of Blackburn from 1739 showing the study area (after Lancashire County Council and Egerton Lea 2005, 24)

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

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: General view of north elevations of Buildings **1-4**, looking south-west

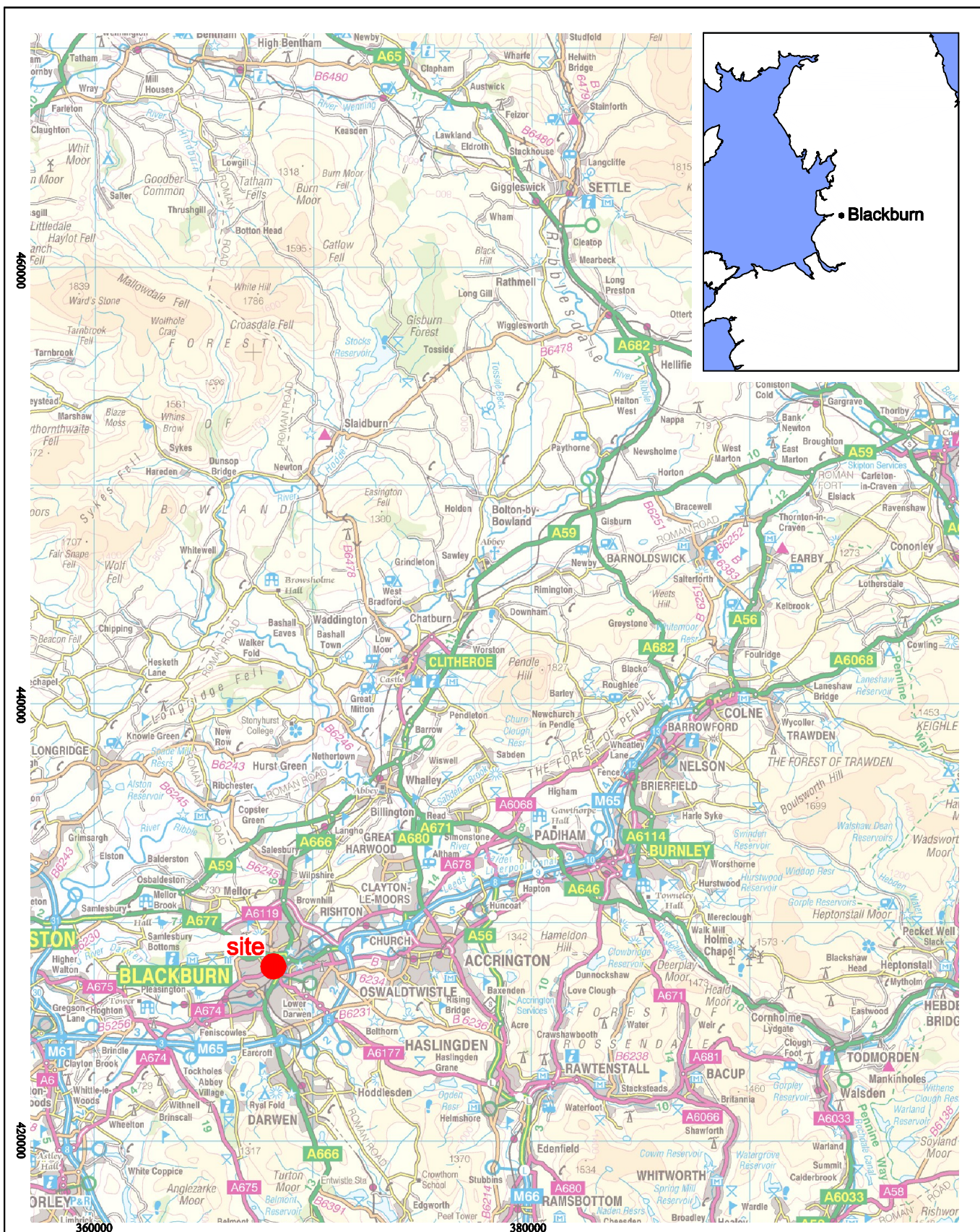
Plate 9: General view of north elevations of Buildings **1-4**, looking south-east

Plate 10: North elevation of Building **5**, looking south-east

Plate 11: Rear (south) elevation of Building **5**, looking north

Plate 12: Rear (south) elevations of Buildings **2-4** and Building **6**, looking north-west

Plate 13: Rear (south) elevations of Buildings **1-3**, looking north-east



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Figure 1: Location Map



Plate 1: Part of a plan of Blackburn from 1739 showing the study area (after Lancashire County Council and Egerton Lea 2005, 24)



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

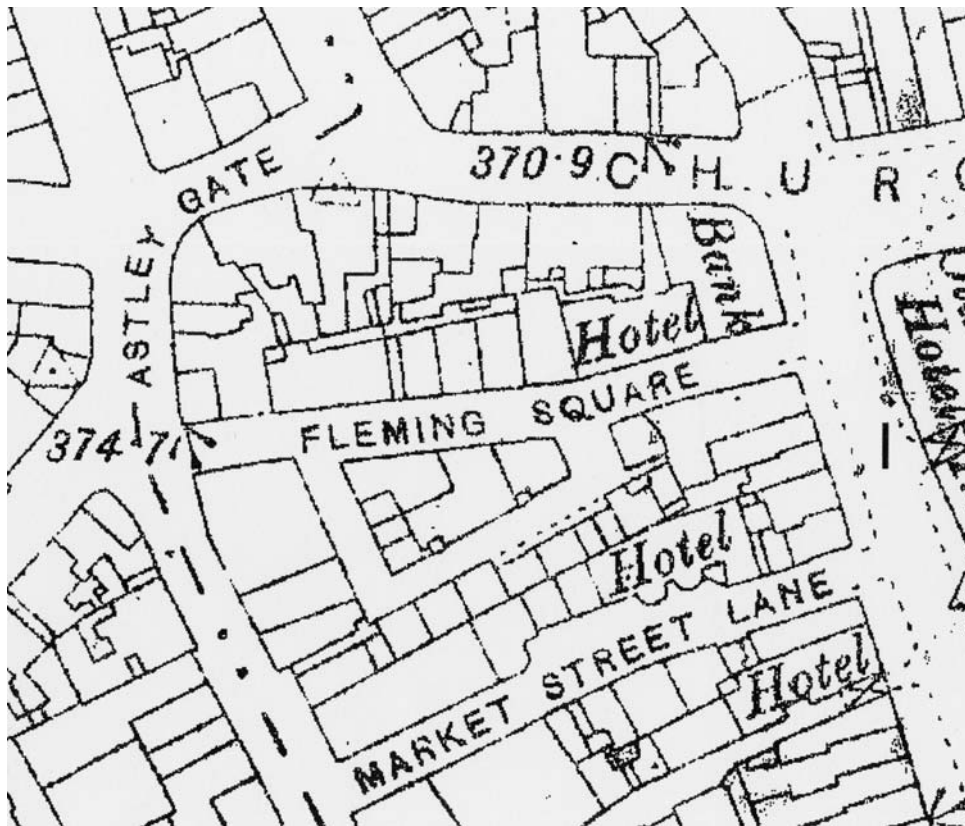


Plate 5: Part of the Ordnance Survey 25": 1 Mile map of 1894



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

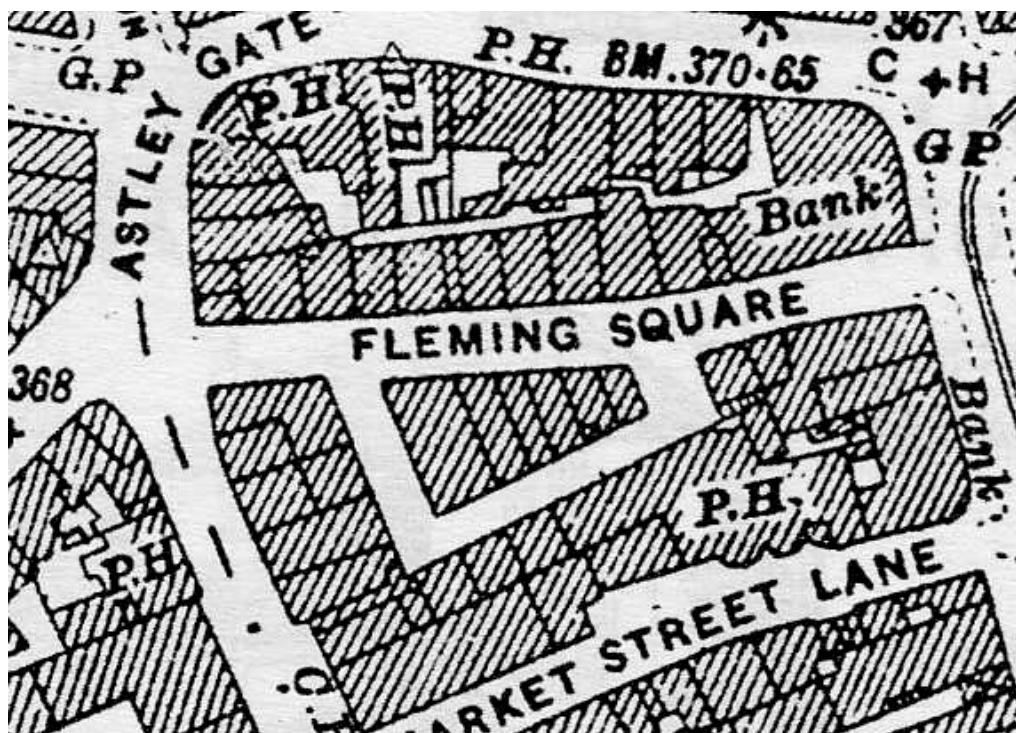


Plate 7: Part of the Ordnance Survey 25": 1 Mile map of 1931



Plate 8: General view of north elevations of Buildings **1-4**, looking south-west



Plate 9: General view of north elevations of Buildings **1-4**, looking south-east



Plate 10: North elevation of Building 5, looking south-east



Plate 11: Rear (south) elevation of Building 5, looking north



Plate 12: Rear (south) elevations of Buildings **2-4** and Building **6**, looking north-west



Plate 13: Rear (south) elevations of Buildings **1-3**, looking north-east

APPENDIX 1: PROJECT DESIGN

**ASTLEY GATE, BLACKBURN,
LANCASHIRE**

**BUILDING ASSESSMENT PROJECT
DESIGN**



Oxford Archaeology North

July 2005

Ellis Hillman Partnership

OA North Tender No: t2495

Planning Application: 10/04/0945

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 **The Development:** this project design has been compiled for the Ellis Hillman Partnership (hereafter the client). It presents proposals for a rapid building assessment of the proposed development area known as Cathedral Village, Astley Gate, Blackburn. The cathedral Village Development incorporates both Market Street Lane and Astley Gate; however, the former has been subject to a separate planning approval.
- 1.2 **Archaeological Programme of Work:** this document, compiled following consultation with Mr P Iles at Lancashire County Council, offers a methodology for the assessment of the buildings along Astley Gate. The assessment will aim to inspect all of the properties subject to the development for the purposes of identifying buildings of particular historic significance. This should be seen as the **first phase** of the archaeological investigation. Should any such buildings be identified then recommendations for a **second phase** of archaeological investigations would be made. Such recommendations would be likely to include RCHME-type building investigations. The appraisal would also serve to identify areas with the potential for archaeological remains to exist below ground, and offer recommendations for the investigation of these areas by a programme of evaluation (trial trenching). This would be the **third phase** of archaeological work and it is unlikely that this work would be undertaken prior to demolition of the existing buildings. This outline programme of work should not be seen as exhaustive.
- 1.3 Section 2 of this document states the objectives of the project, Section 3 deals with OA North's methodology. Section 4 addresses other pertinent issues including details of staff to be involved, and project costs are presented in Section 5.
- 1.4 OA North has extensive experience of assessment and building assessment, as well as the evaluation and excavation of sites of all periods in this area, having undertaken a great number of small and large-scale projects during the past 20 years. These have taken place within the planning process, to fulfil the requirements of Clients and planning authorities, to very rigorous timetables.
- 1.5 OA North has the professional expertise and resources to undertake the project detailed below to a high level of quality and efficiency. OA North is an **Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) registered organisation, registration number 17**, and all its members of staff operate subject to the IFA Code of Conduct.

2 OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The following programme has been designed to provide an accurate archaeological assessment of the designated area within its broader context. The required stages to achieve these ends are as follows:
- 2.2 **Rapid Desk-Based Assessment:** to provide an outline desk-based assessment of the proposed development area;
- 2.3 **Building Assessment:** to provide visual record of the buildings within the proposed development area to RCHME Level I type standard;
- 2.4 **Report and Archive:** production of a report following the collation of data during section 2.2 to 2.3. 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 RAPID DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

3.1.1 The focus of the assessment will be the proposed development area but mention will be made of the immediate surroundings to allow an historical background to the setting of the site to be established.

3.1.2 **Documentary and Cartographic Material:** this work will comprise a rapid desk-based assessment of the existing resource. It will include an appraisal of the data in the County Sites and Monument Record (Preston).

3.1.3 **Historic Map Regression:** 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.

3.2 BUILDING ASSESSMENT

3.2.1 **Assessment:** a visual inspection of the buildings will be undertaken to RCHME Level I-type survey standards. This level of survey is a visual record, which will serve to identify the location, age and building type. The emphasis of the building assessment will be the exterior of the buildings, with an inspection of the interior being undertaken (where access permits) to note significant features.

3.2.2 The written record will include:

- (i) the precise location of the buildings;
- (ii) details of listing;
- (iii) description of the type of buildings, purpose, materials and possible date.

3.2.3 **Photographic Archive:** a photographic archive will be produced utilising a 35mm camera to produce both colour slides and monochrome contact prints. A high-resolution digital camera (4 megapixels) will also be employed for general coverage. A full photographic index will be produced. The photographic archive will comprise the following:

- (i) The external appearance of the buildings;
- (ii) Any external or internal detail, structural or decorative, which is relevant to the design, development and use of the buildings.
- (iii) Any internal detailed views of features of especial architectural interest, fixtures and fittings, or fabric detail relevant to phasing the buildings.

- 3.2.4 **Site Drawings:** there is no requirement to produce site drawings (plans/elevations/sections) as part of the assessment, however, a site plan will be produced to show the location of the buildings subject to the assessment.

3.3 REPORT

- 3.3.1 The report will include the following:

- (i) a concise, non-technical summary of the project results;
- (ii) an introduction to the circumstances of the project and the aims and objectives of the study;
- (iii) a summary of the methodology and an indication of any departure from the agreed project design;
- (iv) a copy of the agreed project design;
- (v) an outline of past and present land-use;
- (vi) a summary of the archaeological/historical background;
- (vii) a location plan and gazetteer of the buildings;
- (viii) an initial assessment of the likely archaeological implications of the proposed development;
- (ix) recommendations for further work as appropriate;
- (x) appropriate figures and plates;
- (xi) a full list of references to and bibliography of primary and secondary sources consulted and a list of any further sources identified but not consulted;
- (xii) an index of the project archive.

- 3.3.2 **Report:** this will be issued within eight weeks of completion of the fieldwork. One bound and one unbound copy of a written synthetic report will be submitted to the Client, and a further copy submitted to the LCC SMR within eight weeks of completion of the study. The report will include a copy of this project design, and indications of any agreed departure from that design. It will present, summarise, and interpret the results of the programme detailed above. The report will also include a complete bibliography of sources from which data has been derived.

- 3.3.4 Provision will be made for a summary report to be submitted to a suitable regional or national archaeological journal within one year of completion of fieldwork, if relevant results are obtained.

- 3.3.5 **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.

3.4 ARCHIVE

- 3.4.1 **Archive:** the results of all archaeological work carried out will form the basis for a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition, 1991). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project. 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). The paper archive will be deposited with the County Record Office, Preston. Arrangements for deposition of the full site archive will be made with an appropriate receiving museum.

4 OTHER MATTERS

- 4.1 **Project Monitoring:** whilst the work is undertaken for the Client, the LCC Archaeological Officer will be kept fully informed of the work. Any proposed changes to the project design will be agreed with the Archaeological Officer and the Client.
 - 4.1.1 **Access:** OA North will consult with the Client regarding access to the site.
 - 4.1.2 **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.
 - 4.1.3 **Work Timetable:** the desk-based element is expected to take approximately two days to complete, as is the building assessment two days. The final report will be completed within approximately eight weeks following completion of the fieldwork, although a shorter deadline can be arranged.
 - 4.1.4 **Staffing:** 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. An OA North supervisor will undertake all elements of the project. Present timetabling constraints preclude who this will be.
 - 4.1.5 **Insurance:** OA North has professional indemnity to a value of £10,000,000, 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.