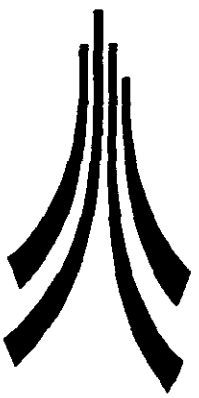
PRN 25234 (Fund)

Lancaster City Centre

An Archaeological Assessment of The Market Hall and Damside Street

LANCASTER
UNIVERSITY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
UNIT



March 1991

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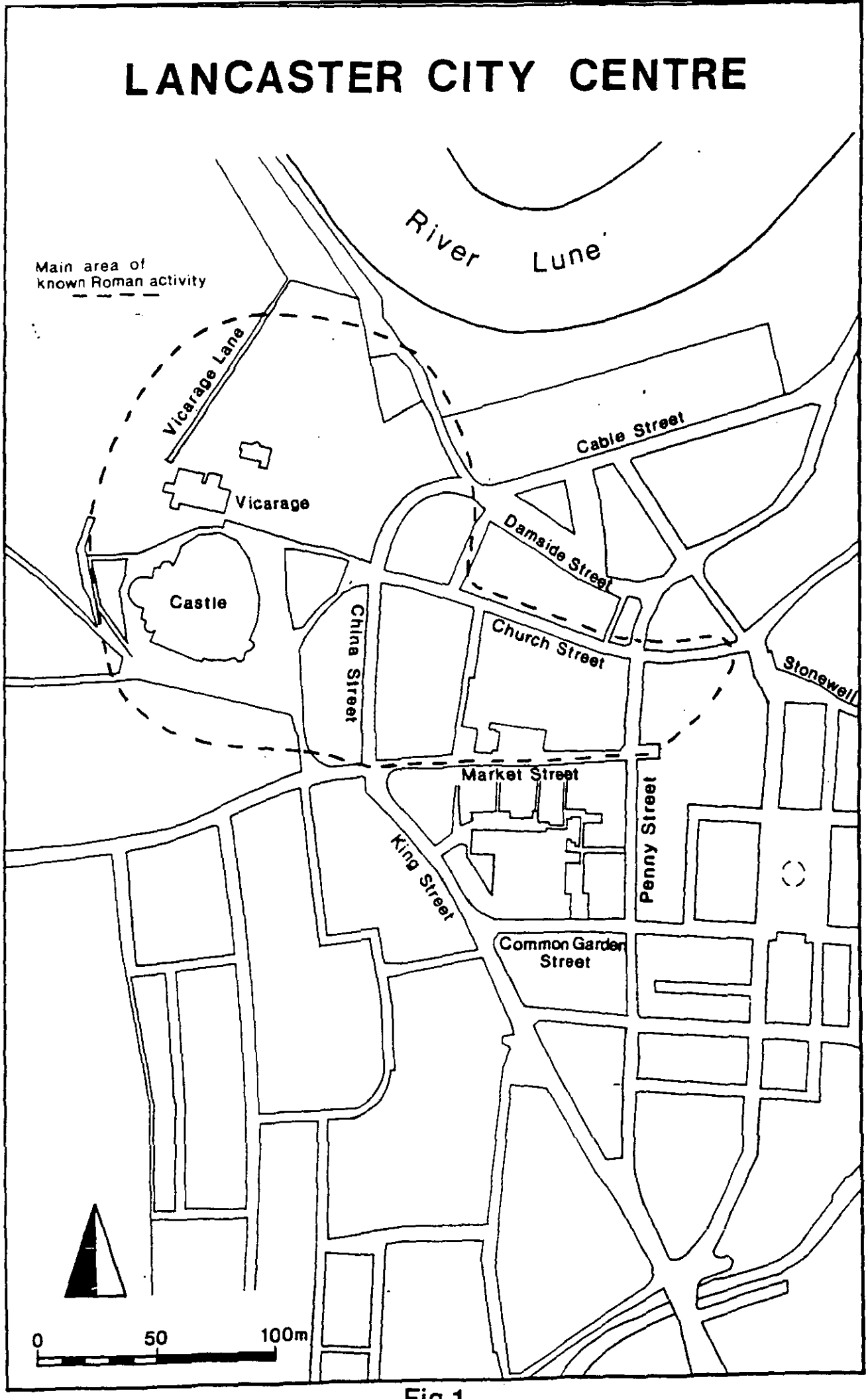
LANCASTER CITY CENTRE
River Lune
Main area of known Roman activity
Vicarage Lane
Vicarage
Cable Street
Damside Street
Castle
China Street
Church Street
Stonewell
Market Street
King Street
Penny Street
Common Garden Street
0
50
100m

Fig.1

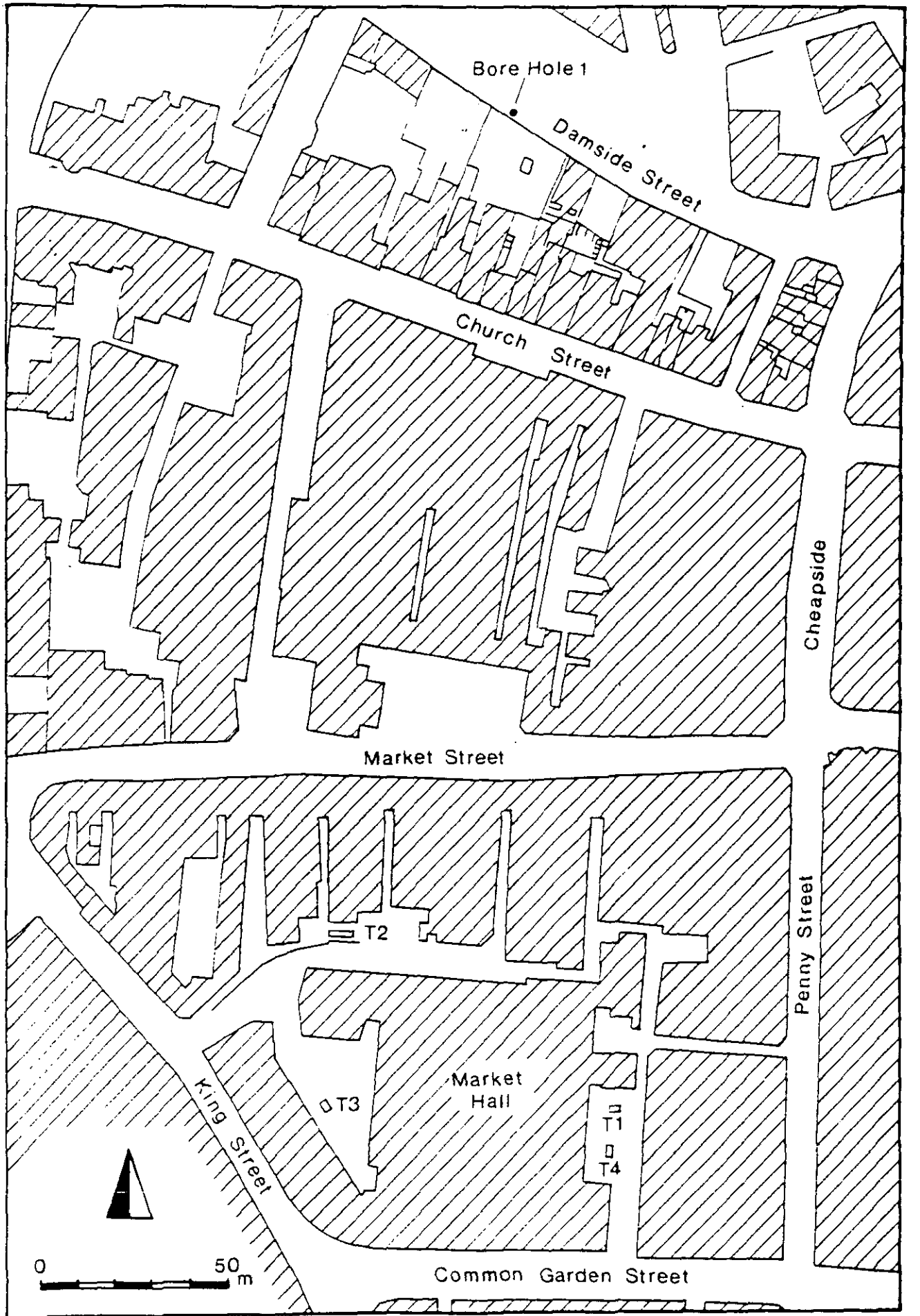

Fig.2 Trench Location Plan

LANCASTER CITY CENTRE

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE MARKET HALL AND DAMSIDE STREET

INTRODUCTION

In November 1990 a number of trial excavations were undertaken in Lancaster City Centre by Lancaster University Archaeological Unit on behalf of Lancaster City Council. A series of small trenches were located around the Market Hall and one deep trench was excavated on a vacant plot at 15 Damside Street (figs 1 & 2). The purpose was to evaluate the character, date and depth of deposits in these areas, prior to possible redevelopment. The excavations were financed by Lancaster City Council and Lloyds Bank. The civil engineering company Harbour and General also greatly assisted in the work by providing professional assistance and shoring equipment for the deep excavation at Damside Street. On-site recording involved the compilation of context and object record sheets, the drawing of scale plans and sections, and the assembly of a photographic record. Bulk samples of all significant contexts were retrieved for future environmental analysis.

BACKGROUND

The development of a settlement at Lancaster is known from the time of the Roman military exploitation of its strategic position at the end of the 1st century AD. Successive forts were situated on Castle Hill, which afforded a commanding position of the lowest fording point of the river Lune. The fourth century fort is thought to have been realigned parallel to the Lune, and it has been tentatively suggested that it may have guarded a harbour. The principal development of the extra-mural settlement (*the vicus*) associated with Roman Lancaster took place primarily along Church Street and Penny Street. However, the full extent of this settlement is not certain, although some isolated discoveries of cremation material may indicate its outer limits, as burials were not normally permitted within a town.

Following the Roman occupation, little is known of Lancaster apart from isolated archaeological finds and place name evidence which may give some indication of the nature of the settlement. Early medieval Lancaster may have developed from two dependent vills of the manor of Halton mentioned in the Domesday Survey; one based on the Castle Hill area (*Chercaloncastre* or Church Lancaster) and the other perhaps in the Stonewell area (*Loncastre*) to the east, possibly linked by what is now Church Street. Knowledge of later medieval development has been largely derived from documentary sources, the archaeological record for this period in Lancaster being limited. By the seventeenth century there are cartographic representations which add another dimension to the understanding of the layout and development of the town.

The subsequent growth of the settlement of Lancaster eventually led to the physical expansion of the town and also to an increase in building density. The growth of the population in the eighteenth century resulted in much redevelopment including many buildings that were cellared. Excavations and construction work have shown that cellarage has had a significant impact on the archaeological record, destroying medieval remains and, depending on the depth of deposits, intruding on the Roman levels.

In the following text context numbers are shown in parentheses.

THE MARKET HALL SITES

Introduction

The site of the Market Hall, bounded by Market Street, Penny Street, King Street and Common Garden Street, is central to present day Lancaster; however, early settlement at Lancaster was concentrated to the north of this area. The Market Hall site is to the south of Castle Hill, the centre of Roman occupation, which, in conjunction with the Stonewell area was also the focus of medieval development.

Little is known about the Market Hall site in Roman times; however, in 1976 an uninscribed Roman altar

was discovered adjacent to the site at the Slip Inn (although it was not necessarily *in situ*) and in 1987 a Roman vessel containing cremated bone was found to the south of the site at a depth of approximately 1.50m. Apart from these isolated finds, revealed during previous construction work, which at least indicate some activity in the area, there is no other archaeological record for this site (previous redevelopment has not included archaeological monitoring or investigation). It has been suggested that this area to the south of the known *vicus*, astride Church Street, may have included the site of a Roman cemetery.

Similarly the history of the Market Hall site during the expansion of settlement is not known. On Docton's reconstructed map of 1684, buildings and property boundaries are shown with a greater degree of accuracy than Speed's sketch map of 1610, and the area of the present market was shown to have been occupied by the yards of buildings which fronted onto Market Street. The increasing population eventually led to infilling of the open land behind the street frontages and in the mid-eighteenth century the market moved to its present site. Initially a series of permanent stalls, known as the Shambles, the market gradually expanded to the east and was eventually replaced by a purpose built market hall in the late nineteenth century. The growth of Lancaster in the eighteenth century led to rebuilding, and many of these houses were cellared; excavation and development in the surrounding area has shown that this cellarage has destroyed much of the archaeological record.

The aim and purpose of the Market Hall excavations was to assess the potential for, and the nature of, surviving archaeological deposits in the area. The trenches provided an opportunity to investigate an area where previously no archaeological work had been carried out. Four small trenches were opened, located to the west, north and east of the Market Hall. The position and size of the trenches was, in part, determined by the location of the underground services and the continued functioning of a working market. Test bore holes had been made in the environs of the Market Hall during 1989 and the results of these were supplied by Building Design Partnership. It transpired, due to the considerations described above, that two of the trial trenches included sites of bore holes.

The trenches were excavated mainly by machine: a Case Backhoe Loader, fitted with a 1m wide bucket without teeth; breaking or cutting tools were used as required to penetrate the ground surface. Excavation was carried out by hand where there was the potential for surviving archaeological deposits, and in confined spaces. Immediately following excavation the trenches were backfilled and the appropriate surface reinstated.

THE TRENCHES

Trench 1 and Trench 4

Trench 1 and Trench 4 were located in the loading bay to the east of the Market Hall, adjacent to James Street. The area is surfaced with asphalt (*c.* 0.15m deep) over a bed of hardcore (up to 0.20m deep). Both trenches measured approximately 3m by 2m. The long axis of Trench 1 was orientated east-west, that of Trench 4 was north-south. Trench 4 lay approximately 8m to the south of Trench 1.

Trench 1

Excavation of Trench 1, in the northern half of the loading bay, revealed a shallow layer (0.09m deep) of compact dark brown gritty loam containing some small fragments of building debris (3); this was probably the result of part of the levelling of the area prior to surfacing. Within this layer there was a defunct glazed ceramic drain. Below this a layer of building debris and cellar walls were observed; two of the walls were clearly seen, at the south and west edges of the trench, and survived to a height of 1.10m. The walls (9) were constructed of roughly dressed, but well fitted blocks of sandstone, bonded by mortar. The cellar had been infilled with rubble and building debris (4), including a deposit of broken roof slates (0.40m in depth), lying directly over the cellar floor (6); it appeared that a building had been demolished and the debris used to infill the cellar.

The cellar floor was well made, composed of rounded sandstone cobbles set in a yellow brown sandy clay; one large sandstone block, probably a surviving step, was set within the cobbles, adjacent to the western wall. Both the cobbles and the lower portion of the walls were blackened, presumably by coal dust.

Due to the unstable nature of the fill there was a certain amount of section collapse. Consequently the eastern wall of the cellar was partially seen, set back from the edge of the trench, giving an east-west dimension for the cellar of 3.50m. The cellar fill continued to the north; however a buttress was, again, partially seen, projecting 0.36m into the cellar from the west wall, 2.20m from the south wall.

The cellar infill was excavated by machine to floor level then the cobbles were removed in order to examine the material not disturbed by cellarage. Below the cobbles there was a yellow brown sandy clay (7) containing a few stones and some charcoal flecking. No features were seen at this level. A test pit was dug by machine on the north side of the trench; the upper reaches of the profile may have been contaminated by the setting of the cobbles and the use of the cellar. Approximately 0.35m below this was a more compact dark yellow brown sandy clay with light reddish brown clay patches which appeared to be more like the natural subsoil, although there was some charcoal flecking present.

Trench 1 included the site of a test bore hole, at the eastern end of the trench. Excavation revealed that the material produced by the bore reflected the fact that it had been cut through an infilled cellar.

Conclusion

Trench 1 was situated directly over a cellar, the construction of which appeared to have removed any archaeological evidence which may have been present. The cellarage appears to have been cut into the natural subsoil. In the limited area available there was no evidence of surviving features which had been cut into natural.

Trench 4

Below the asphalt and hardcore in Trench 4 there was a depth of light to medium brown sticky clay loam with a concentration of rubble and building debris in a friable matrix in its upper reaches. At the west edge of the excavation, and parallel to it, a modern service trench (53) was observed. The investigation therefore concentrated on the eastern side of the trench to avoid any possible damage to underground services.

Directly below the hardcore there was a small structure in the north-west corner of the trench. The structure consisted of two stone built walls (54 & 66) bonded by mortar, standing to a height of 0.60m; and within the walls large stone slabs (55) formed a surface. The structure appeared to have been truncated to the west by the service trench. The area defined by the walls was infilled by a mixed layer of mottled appearance (51), a light grey to brown gritty silt loam containing ash, charcoal, traces of mortar and patches of orange sandy silt. This discrete deposit contained pottery sherds of post-medieval date. There were no evident foundations for the walls; given their nature, they may have been placed thus, or the level of soil outside the wall may have been substantially changed since its' construction.

The main, west facing, section revealed a considerable depth of deposition; at the lower level this appeared to be fairly uniform in nature but at the higher level the material was more mixed and may have been the result of dumping and/or levelling in the area. At the base of the section a shallow feature (64) was observed, cut into the disturbed upper reaches of natural and filled by a charcoal-rich grey to orange brown silty clay (57) and containing some medium sized rounded stones. A sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from this context. The feature was cut into an orange brown friable sandy clay (58) that may have been the disturbed upper reaches of natural; this produced pottery sherds of Roman and medieval date.

A test pit was dug into natural by machine, adjacent to the section; approximately 0.40m below the disturbed material the profile was much cleaner and appeared to be natural subsoil, a yellow orange slightly sandy clay (67), although occasional charcoal flecks were still visible.

Conclusion

Situated 8m to the south of Trench 1, Trench 4 did not encounter cellarage. The excavation revealed a considerable depth of soil deposition; the lower reaches produced Roman and medieval pot sherds which indicates activity in the area at these levels and demonstrates that archaeology survives where there has been no modern intrusion. The post-medieval structure, partially seen in the upper reaches of the trench, did not have deep foundations; it may have been part of a yard, such as an outbuilding, perhaps associated with a dwelling, or an earlier phase of the market.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was located to the north of the Market Hall, on the paved ramp, adjacent to Barrows Yard electricity substation. The trench measured 6.80m by 1.20m, with its long axis orientated east-west. The upper levels were made up of hardcore (0.10m deep) topped with bedding sand (0.09m deep) and the surface was made of 0.60m square pre-cast paving slabs (0.065m in depth). The removal of the modern surface revealed building debris and two separate cellars which had possibly cut through any archaeological deposit; however, a narrow strip between the cellars appeared not to have been disturbed and this was investigated more closely (Plates I & II).

The lowest level that it was possible to expose fully between the cellar walls was a cobble surface (29), measuring 1m by 0.78m, composed of small, mostly rounded stones which were fairly closely packed (Plate III). The matrix between the stones was an orange grey sandy silt, with iron panning present around the stones. Part of the cobbled surface was removed and a small test pit was dug. From the limited area available it appeared that the cobbles may have been set in the upper reaches of natural. Below the cobbles was an orange brown slightly sticky sandy clay containing a few small stones (30), which appeared to be lighter (70) towards the base of the sondage. There were no discernible features or finds below the cobbles but traces of charcoal flecks were observed towards the base of the test pit (*c*.0.30m below the cobbles).

There was a series of fairly shallow deposits lying above the cobbles, which produced a small number of Roman pot sherds. Immediately above the cobbles was a layer (0.07m deep) of friable pale orange grey sand containing charcoal flecks (28). Over this was a deposit (0.15m deep) of light grey brown sticky sandy silt with many charcoal flecks and a few small stones (27), from which some sherds of Roman coarseware and a few fragments of daub were recovered. Above this was a compact light orange brown sandy loam (26) which partially covered the area excavated. It was truncated to the east, as were all these layers, but petered out to the west; its maximum depth as seen in section was 0.20m. These deposits were sealed by a depth (0.82m) of orange brown sandy clay (18). Within this layer there were no clear distinctions between the top and the base but the lower portion appeared slightly lighter in colour; this context produced pottery sherds spanning a period from Roman to post-medieval.

The layers described above were truncated to the east and west by cellar walls (19 & 16); however, no foundation trenches were observed for these although it should be noted that the walls were not exposed to their full depth. It would appear that the cellar was constructed by means of building immediately against the cut made to accommodate the cellar; certainly both outer faces of the exposed walls were irregular. All other material post-dated the construction of the cellars and was part of the processes of building demolition and levelling.

The cellarage effectively divided the trench in two; at the west end of the trench the corner of a cellar was uncovered. The walls were made of large dressed sandstone blocks bonded by crumbly mortar and yellow brown sand. The top two courses were removed by machine, the rest of the walls remain *in situ*. The north-south wall (16) did not appear to continue to the north, although the northern extent was not fully excavated due to the unstable nature of the section. The cellar was infilled with building debris (14), including red house bricks, slates, blocks of dressed sandstone and partially decayed wood in a dark grey silty matrix. The infill was only partially excavated due to the unstable nature of the sections and the confined area. Thus it was not feasible to excavate to cellar floor level and below in order to investigate the degree of disturbance caused by the cellarage. To the north and west of this cellar there was a layer of rubble (17) distinct in composition from the infill of the cellar consisting of medium to large sized rounded stones in a medium brown gritty silt loam matrix. Presumably this was part of the destruction and levelling processes.

At the east end of the trench a second cellar, of similar construction, featured a spiral stone staircase. A wall (19), 0.52m wide, was aligned north-south across the trench and formed the western extent of a cellar. The cellar was infilled with broken house bricks, fragments of dressed stone blocks and some pieces of coal (21), above which was a medium brown silt loam which was relatively free of building debris (20). During the process of excavation, due to the unstable condition of the sections, the east and south walls were observed beyond the limits of the trench. Therefore the east-west dimension of the cellar was shown to be 3.42m and the south wall was seen 0.04m beyond the southern edge of the trench. The staircase (22), which did not show signs of wear, was composed of large rectangular blocks of stone, offset to form a spiral, which were keyed into a rectangular column of masonry (23 & 24), of similar construction to the cellar walls: a fairly regular outer face formed by a single skin approximately 0.25m wide. The area behind was filled with well fitted

stone bonded by crumbly mortar, including a large slab which was keyed into the wall. The steps and the lower part of the west wall (19) were darkened, probably by coal dust. Part of the column of masonry was removed in order to excavate to cellar floor level. Unfortunately, due to the unstable nature of the cellar infill and the depth of the trench it was not possible to excavate an area of any size or to examine closely the material below the cellar. What was seen resembled that which had been encountered below the cobbles in the undisturbed area of the trench.

Conclusion

The only remaining archaeology was the ground between the cellar walls; it would appear from the limited amount of information available that the cellarage had removed most archaeological evidence, although perhaps deep cut features into natural may survive. The surviving archaeology, in particular the cobbled surface, indicates that there may have been activity in the area during the Roman period and that locating areas of surviving archaeology would be of considerable importance in helping to establish the nature and extent of that activity.

Plate I: Market Hall, Trench 2, from the east showing the cellars and the surviving archaeology (centre of trench)

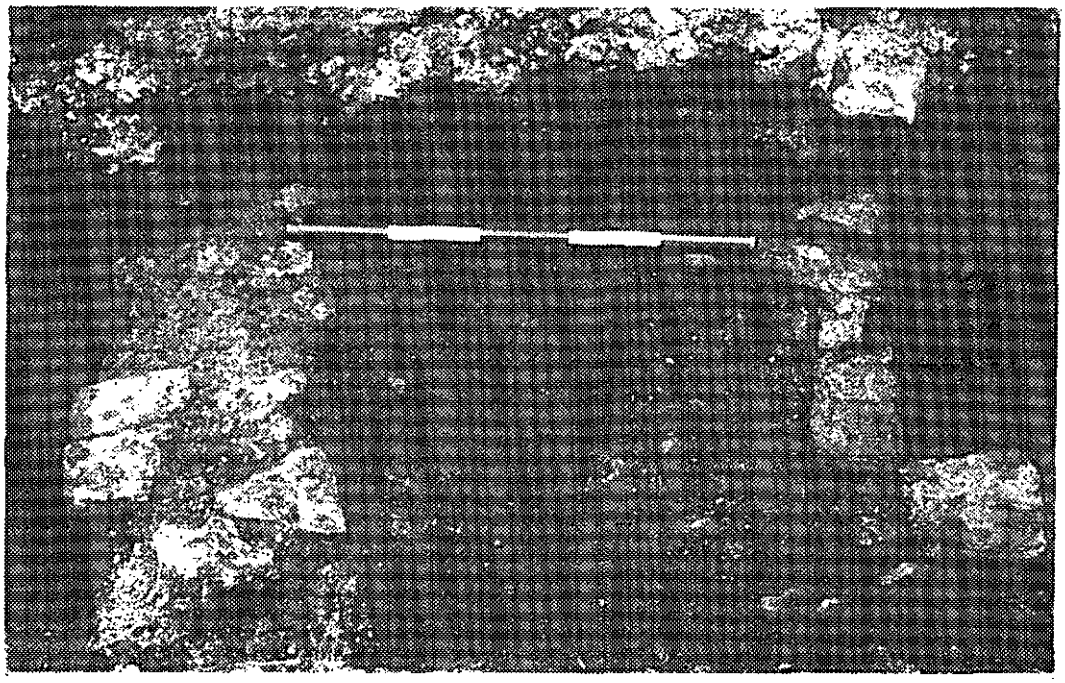

Plate II: Market Hall, Trench 2, surviving archaeological deposits truncated to the east and west by modern cellarage

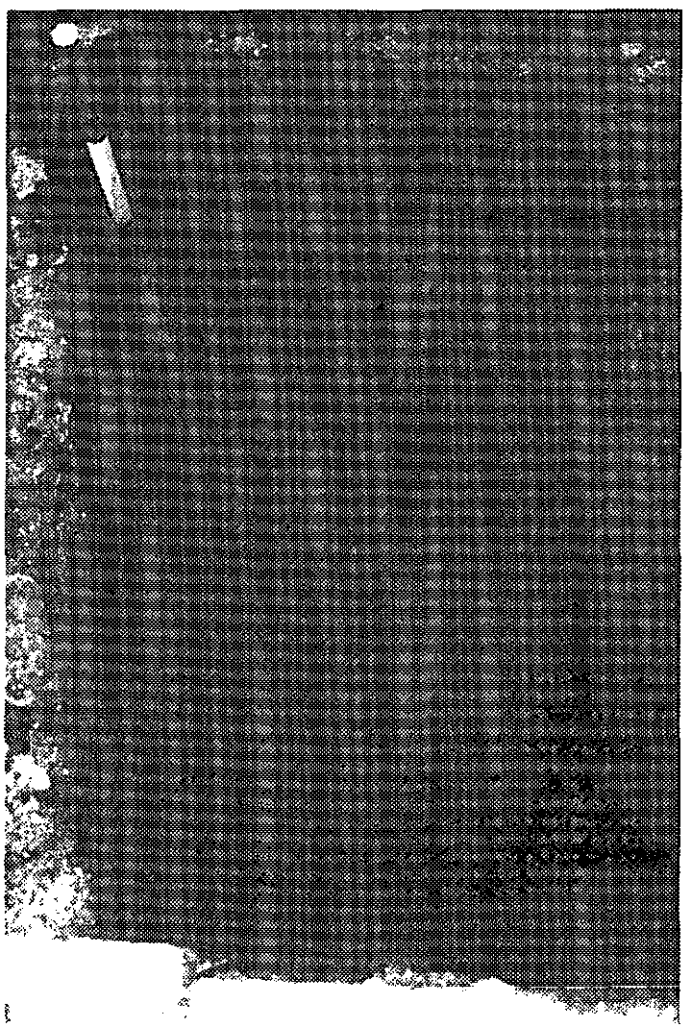

Plate III: Market Hall, Trench 2, cobbled surface, possibly Roman, with modern cellar walls at either side

Trench 3

Trench 3 was situated to the west of the Market Hall, and measured 3m by 1.30m, with its long axis orientated north-south. The area of the loading bay was surfaced with reinforced concrete to a depth of 0.20m laid over a 0.10m bed of clinker and ash. Prior to the present surface a service trench (47) had been cut and this was evident at the western edge of the excavation, parallel to the trench. Consequently excavation was concentrated on the eastern part of the trench to avoid any possible damage to services. The trench was excavated to a depth of 1.50m and revealed little in plan; a test pit was dug, by machine, to examine the natural profile.

At the base of the section there was a yellow sandy clay containing a few medium sized rounded stones (36); the test pit revealed this layer to be approximately 0.40m deep. Below this a light red brown silty clay (37) containing a few small stones and occasional medium sized rounded stones, appeared to be natural subsoil. The deposits above this consisted of a depth of, apparently, sterile material which was lighter towards the base of the profile; however the changes were not always distinct. The lower part of the section was a light yellow brown sandy clay (35), 0.43m deep; above that there was a depth of 0.40m of very light brown orange sandy clay (34). The upper part of the section had a mottled appearance and layers were not readily discernible. A light orange brown sandy clay loam (68) including small patches of fawn friable clay loam (48) was evident at the southern end of the trench, but was less clear further north. The material above was darker and less sandy (33) and directly below the present surfacing the soil was disturbed by levelling.

In section, at the north-west corner of the trench, a steep sided feature, 1m deep, was observed. Possibly a pit, it had a gently rounded base, marked by iron panning. The top of the pit was not well defined, but it clearly had cut through most of the material described above. The base of the pit was filled by sticky pink brown clay (43) 0.30m deep; it appeared that some slumping (44) had then occurred at the western edge, over which there was 0.22m of light brown grey sandy silt (42). The upper fill consisted of a light brown yellow sandy clay (41).

Trench 3 included the site of a test bore hole situated toward the north-west corner of the excavation. It appears that the material produced by the bore, from below the concrete surface, reflects its' proximity to the presumed service trench which was observed at the western edge the site.

Conclusion

The eastern section in Trench 3 revealed a depth of material which did not appear to be natural subsoil. There appeared to have been some activity in the area, for example the possible pit cut, although it was not possible to determine its nature or function. As the ground had not been disturbed by cellarage there may be the potential for archaeology surviving in the area. Unfortunately the trench did not yield any finds to aid dating.

THE FINDS

Summary (Appendix I for brief finds catalogue)

The small trial trenches yielded few finds; much of the material was of post-medieval date, which was largely produced by the trenches that were cut through cellars. However, the sherds of Roman and medieval pot that were recovered are of interest, both in clearly residual contexts and that which appeared to be well stratified. The Roman coarseware, in association with the cobbled surface in Trench 2 is of particular interest in demonstrating the presence of *in situ* Roman deposits. Trenches 2 and 4 produced Roman and medieval pottery, Trench 1 contained only post-medieval material and Trench 3 did not produce any finds.

DISCUSSION

The four trial trenches around the Market Hall site have shown that archaeology does survive in the area, albeit fragmented by modern intrusions. Furthermore it was possible to retrieve material for dating. The excavations have provided evidence of activity, in both the Roman and medieval periods, although the extent and nature of this cannot be estimated from the limited areas investigated. The presence of Roman activity, particularly the cobbled surface in Barrows Yard, is of great importance, since it may be an indication that the Roman civilian settlement was larger than previously believed. However, it is not only the periods of activity but also periods of abandonment of a site that can increase our understanding of the larger picture of the development of a settlement.

Given the fragmentary nature of the surviving archaeology further information on the more recent use of the site would aid the assessment of the potential of the area. The trenches provided information on the depth of the natural subsoil and indicated its gradient across the site, which would be useful, in conjunction with other factors, in identifying the areas where the archaeological deposits have not been disturbed. The further investigation of the Market Hall site can contribute to our understanding of the changes and growth of the settlement at Lancaster.

DAMSIDE STREET

Introduction

Present day Damside Street lies to the east of the Roman fort complex, in close proximity to Church Street, probably within the bounds of the Roman civilian settlement. The river Lune may have lain further to the south in Roman times, possibly along a line now occupied by North Road and Damside Street. The area to the immediate south of Damside Street represents a possible interface of the *vicus* with the River Lune.

Church Street and Calkeld Lane, which are both located close to present day Damside Street, were established by the thirteenth century (Penney, 1981). Indeed Calkelk is a modern translation of the Old Norse words *kaldr* and *kelda*, meaning cold-well (Ekwall, 1922), suggesting that this area was of some significance in the early-medieval period. A mill was in existence certainly from the twelfth century, opposite Calkeld Lane on a low lying area of marshy wasteland known as the Green Ayre. This area was bounded by the Lune to the north, and the mill leat to the south. The alignment of the leat probably echoes the Lune's earlier meander. John Speed's map dated to 1610 and Kenneth Docton's reconstructed map of 1684 indicate that the area to the south of present day Damside Street comprised burgage plots associated with the properties erected along Church Street. The maps also indicate that the Green Ayre was undeveloped in this period, containing no buildings except for the mill.

Stephen Makreth's map of 1778 illustrates the expansion of the town in the eighteenth century. The Green Ayre is no longer visible, having undergone widespread property development. Associated with this was the building of new roads such as Damside Street, Cable Street and Chapel Street.

THE EXCAVATIONS

Analysis of bore hole samples, taken from just outside the property, indicated the survival of up to 4m of undisturbed stratigraphy. Pottery sherds, bone, charcoal and palaeoenvironmental remains were retrieved from the core samples, indicating human activity.

Immediately to the north of Church Street the land surface dips steeply prior to forming the floodplain of the River Lune. The trench was positioned at the base of this bluff on poorly drained flat ground. It was aligned roughly north-south, and located towards the eastern side of the property. The predicted depth of the stratigraphy, together with its unstable nature necessitated the use of box shoring and trench sheeting. This limited the practical size of the trench to 3.50 by 2m. It was excavated manually, although a Hitachi FH150LC mechanical excavator was used to install the shoring, and also assisted with spoil removal.

The uppermost layer comprised a dull clay (1), c0.30m deep, which was clearly disturbed and contained modern, medieval and Roman pottery sherds. It was cut to the north by a shallow gently sloping ditch (9), c0.40m deep. Only the southern edge of this was visible, orientated south-west - north-east. It was filled by a buff stony clay (2), containing animal bone and medieval pottery sherds.

Layer 1 sealed a horizon of dark clay (7), c0.35m deep, which contained medieval and Roman pottery. Cutting it to the north was a shallow circular pit (6), c0.85m in diameter, with vertical sides, c0.05m deep, and a flat base. It was filled with a light clay (5), containing charcoal flecks and lime fragments. This may represent the base of a tanning or cesspit, similar examples have been found close to Church Street. The south side of a large ditch (17) was identified cutting clay horizon 7 in the north of the trench. It was c1m deep, and its profile became steeper towards the east. Its upper fill (8) comprised a stony clay matrix, c0.30m deep, below which was a less stony clay (16), c0.60m deep. Both contained Roman and medieval pottery sherds. A large sub-circular pit (13), with vertical edges and a flat base, cut clay horizon 7 in the south of the trench. It was c1.40m in diameter, c0.90m deep and contained a dull, very stony, fill (12), which contained small fragments of waterlogged wood, medieval and Roman pottery sherds; it extended beyond the north facing section.

A substantial layer of brown organic clay (14) was sealed by clay horizon 7. This was very distinct from the layer above, as it contained plant remains and had a slightly spongy texture. It was cut by a large sub-rectangular pit (11) in the centre of the trench (Plate VI). This was c1.40m wide and had straight vertical

sides c1.15m deep, and an almost flat base. It may have been cut from the top of clay horizon 7 although it was not recorded at this level. It was filled with a dark organic-rich clay (10), which contained small fragments of waterlogged wood, medieval and Roman pottery sherds.

A large feature (22), which was probably a ditch, cut organic clay layer 14 in the north of the trench. This was aligned east-west, only its southern edge being visible within the excavation. It had a gently sloping side, c0.50m deep, and was cut by the later ditch (17), which partially obscured its profile. The west-facing section indicates that ditch 22 was cut from the top of organic clay layer 14, although the east section suggests that it may have been cut from clay layer 7. It was filled with a sequence of discontinuous shallow horizons, all of which followed the gentle contours of cut 22. Its upper fill comprised a grey clay (15), c0.10m thick. Below this was a dark organic clay (18), c0.10m deep, under which was a thin sandy silt horizon (19). A layer of brown organic clay (20), c0.10m thick, lay below 19. Its lower fill consisted of a cream mottled clay (21), c0.10m deep; this contained a large number of shell fragments. Both Roman and medieval finds were retrieved from contexts 19, 20 and 21. It seems probable that 22 represents the recut of an earlier ditch (24), visible only in the east facing section. Ditch 24 also had a gentle profile and a flat base some c0.30m below recut 22. It was filled with a dull organic clay (23), containing small wood fragments and medieval pottery.

Underlying organic clay layer 14 was a thick horizontal horizon of browny grey silty clay/marl (25), c0.20m deep. This had a spongy soapy texture and contained organic debris, mainly consisting of plant rootlets. No finds, features or coarse components were identified from within it. Below 25 in the north of the trench was a wedge shaped layer of grey slightly sandy silty clay/marl (26). This was c0.10m thick, tapering towards the north. Unlike 25 it contained no organic debris, but was otherwise identical. Under 26 was a substantial layer of orange silty sand (27). This was c0.50m thick, but dipped towards the north and east truncating the horizons below. It contained no organic debris, coarse components, or features. A single fractured bovine metatarsal was retrieved from within it. Below 27, and cut by it to the north, was a layer of grey silty clay/marl (28). This was c0.20m thick, and contained no finds, features or coarse components.

Layers 25, 26, 27 and 28 shared similar characteristics in that none contain features or coarse components and very few finds were recovered. Indeed only a single bone was retrieved from c1.20m of stratigraphy. All consisted of silty clay/marl (except 27 which was a silty sand), and had a similar texture. The silts appear to be archaeologically sterile and were probably deposited naturally.

Sealed by clay marl horizon 28 was a layer of dark brown very organic silty clay (29). This had a friable texture, and contained 5% medium to large rounded and angular stones. It was c0.20m deep and dipped gently towards the north. Unlike the horizons above it, 29 contained a small assemblage of Roman pottery. Generally the sherds were of small size and heavily abraded. A vertical waterlogged branch fragment was also retrieved, which may have been a stake. Under clay/marl layer 29 in the south-east corner of the trench was a lens of dull silty clay (31), c0.05m deep. This sealed a small lens of orange grey silty clay (32), c0.20m thick.

Below 29 in the north of the trench was a wedge-shaped horizon of grey brown silty clay/marl (33). This was similar in character to 25, 26, 27 and 28. It was c0.40m deep at the south-facing section, but tapered sharply northwards. No finds were retrieved from it, although it did contain some large rounded pebbles.

A second black organic layer (30) was sealed by organic layer 29 and clay/marl horizon 33. It consisted of an organic clay silt similar to 29, but containing substantial lenses of compact yellow green ironpanning. This was c0.20m thick, and dipped gently northwards. Like 29 it contained Roman pottery sherds, but these tended to be larger in size and were less abraded than in the former case.

A silty clay layer (34) was revealed below organic layer 30. This consisted of a number of distinct horizons, which were impossible to remove individually due to water seepage within the trench. 34 was c0.30m deep, tapering slightly towards the north. It contained a small amount of animal bone and Roman pottery. Below 34 was a thin layer of silty sand (36), c0.05m deep. A concentration of large rounded and angular stones was noted in the south-east corner of the trench. These were left *in situ* whilst 34 was removed, revealing more stones below, and beyond the south and east trench sections. Some were roughly worked to form irregular blocks, on average c0.35m x c0.30m x c0.20m, whilst others were simply large rounded pebbles. They seemed to have been placed in very rough courses forming a densely packed irregular stone structure (38), although this had no obvious face, or bonding agent associated with it (Plate VII). Structure 38 was sitting in a shallow depression (37), c0.10m deep, cut into 36. Also contained within this depression interspersed with the stones

was a grey silty clay (35). Fragments of animal bone, burnt bone, Roman glass, and Roman pottery were retrieved from 35. A number of irregularly spaced, small, sub-rectangular, ephemeral dull organic stains were identified around the external edge of cut 37. These may have represented the remains of stakes, perhaps used to form an insubstantial palisade around the structure.

Silty sand layer 36 sealed a horizon of very clean, light silty sandy clay (39). This was c0.30m deep and contained medium and large rounded pebbles, whose frequency increased with depth. No ceramic finds were recorded within it, although two bones were retrieved, a bovine mandible and rib. The latter had evidence of butchery marks on it. Below this was a layer of sterile red/purple compact gritty clay (40). This contained c40% small grits, gravels, and rounded pebbles (average diameter c0.05m). It was c0.60m deep, and is thought to be a natural glacial subsoil. It sealed red sandstone bedrock.

THE FINDS

Summary

Initial analysis of the finds revealed a total of 195 pottery sherds from the Damside Street trench. 100 medieval sherds were identified; all, with one possible exception, were recovered from above the silt horizons (25, 26, 27 and 28). 92 Roman pottery sherds were retrieved, most from below the silt horizons, although some were incorporated within the medieval stratigraphy. On-site conditions appear to have favoured the preservation of animal bone, examples of which were retrieved from 20 contexts. Other finds recovered from throughout the trench stratigraphy include glass fragments, tile, brick, stone and two corroded small iron objects.

The rare waterlogged nature of the site made it an invaluable source of palaeoenvironmental information, 13 wood samples were recovered from the trench. Bulk soil samples were taken from 27 contexts, selected examples of which will undergo further laboratory analysis. An environmental assessment of the bore hole cores identified numerous species of carbonised seeds, in addition to grass and bracken debris. Faunal remains included fragments of shells, flies and beetles. The bore hole results indicated an environment possibly close to a river bank in which cultivation had taken place.

DISCUSSION

The earliest recorded phase of activity on the site relates to stone structure 38, lying within its own possible bedding trench (37). Some roughly worked stones were identified within it indicating human activity at this level. Clay infill 35, situated amongst the lower stones within the cut, contained a number of glass fragments and pottery sherds identifying it as Roman in date. The precise function of the structure was not established, due to its irregular construction and indeterminate size, much of it lying outside the trench. It may represent the *in situ* collapse of a structure, or may have been heavily eroded by the deposition of the overlying silt horizon 34. A core sample removed from bore hole 1 (figs 2 & 3) identified a thin horizon 0.10m thick, of silty sandy gravel from which one small fragment of glass was recovered probably of Roman date. The bore hole results thus accurately predicted Roman activity at this level.

Two very organic layers (29 and 30) lay above clay/marl 34; these were rich in Roman finds. They were separated to the north by a sterile layer of silt (33), which was probably deposited naturally. It remains unclear as to how these organic horizons were deposited. They may be the remnants of *in situ* Roman occupation: the presence of a possible stake within 29, supports this theory. Alternatively they may represent a Roman hillwash sediment, derived originally from the bluff on which Church Street stands. The small size and abraded nature of the sherds within 29, supports this view, but does not account for the well preserved finds within 30.

The Roman levels were separated from the medieval by an accumulation of silts (25, 26, 27 and 28) which were all very similar in character, and had a total depth of 1.20m. There was no evidence of any archaeological features within the silts. They were originally thought to have been deposited by the River Lune. However, their lack of coarse components and considerable depth suggests that this is unlikely. They may have been laid down by a post-Roman marine transgression, evidence for which has been found elsewhere along the Fylde coastline. Bore hole 1 identified this silt accumulation as a possible river bed

horizon (figs 2 & 3), although at a slightly greater depth; indicating that the stratigraphy may dip slightly towards the north.

Above the silts were two substantial medieval horizons (7 and 14). Two medieval features cut organic clay 14, a large sub-rectangular rubbish pit (11), and a ditch (24) aligned east-west. Layer 7 sealed 14 and contained a large circular rubbish pit (13) and a ditch (17) situated in an identical position to 24. Bore hole 1 (figs 2 & 3) identified this medieval activity correctly as made ground, and fragments of post-medieval, medieval and Roman pottery were retrieved from the core. The above rubbish pits probably relate to activity within one of the burgage plots associated with the properties fronting Church Street. This suggests that these plots extended for a considerable distance downslope from Church Street. The sequence of ditches identified in the north of the trench ran parallel to the recorded medieval mill leat, which may survive culverted under Damside Street. The ditches were only partially excavated, making it difficult to determine their function, but they seem to represent a northern boundary to the burgage plots.

Very little post-medieval activity survived intact on the site, much of it having been removed prior to the commencement of the evaluation. A single post-medieval horizon (1) was recorded, comprising a very disturbed clay. This sealed a truncated eighteenth century circular tanning/cesspit pit (6), suggesting that this area was still open land at this time.

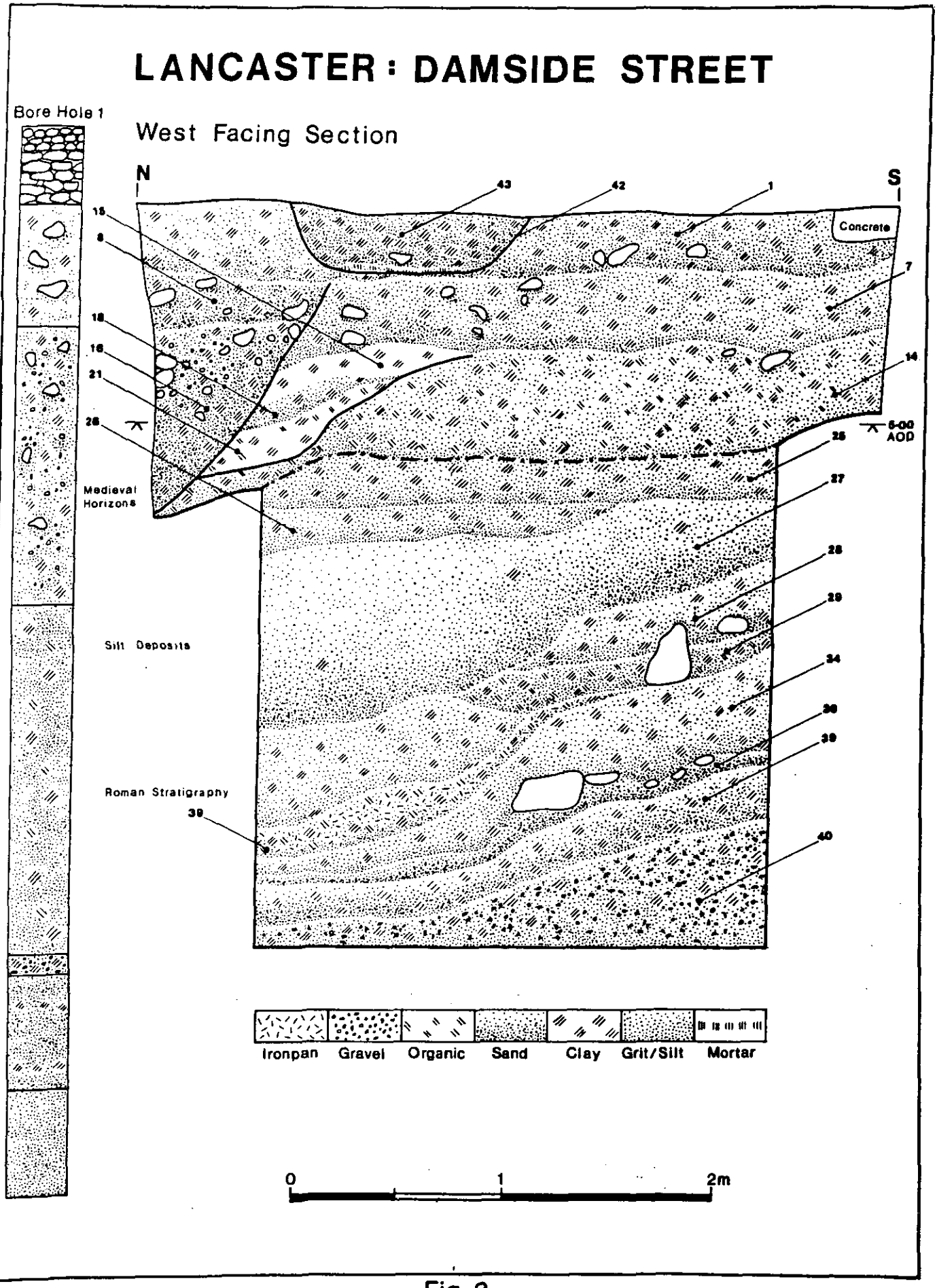
LANCASTER : DAMSIDE STREET
Bore Hole 1
West Facing Section
N
S
Concrete
5-00 AOD
Medieval Horizons
Silt Deposits
Roman Stratigraphy
Ironpan
Gravel
Organic
Sand
Clay
Grit/Silt
Mortar
0
1
2m

Fig. 3

Plate IV: General view of the Damside Street excavation

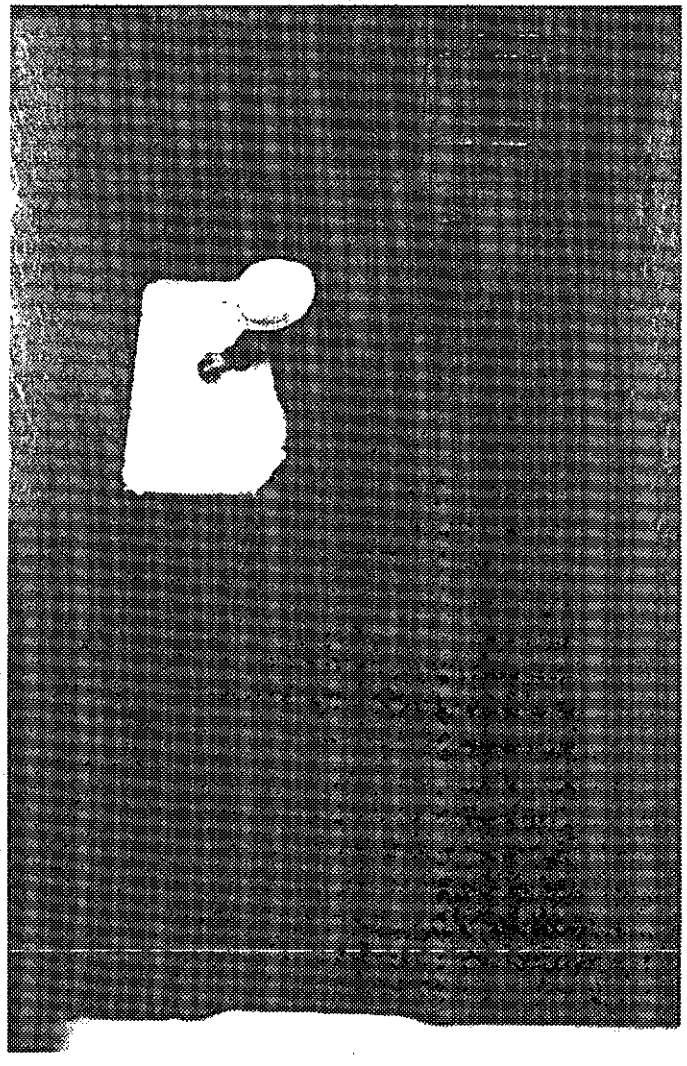

Plate V: Recording the stratigraphy towards the base of the Damside Street excavation

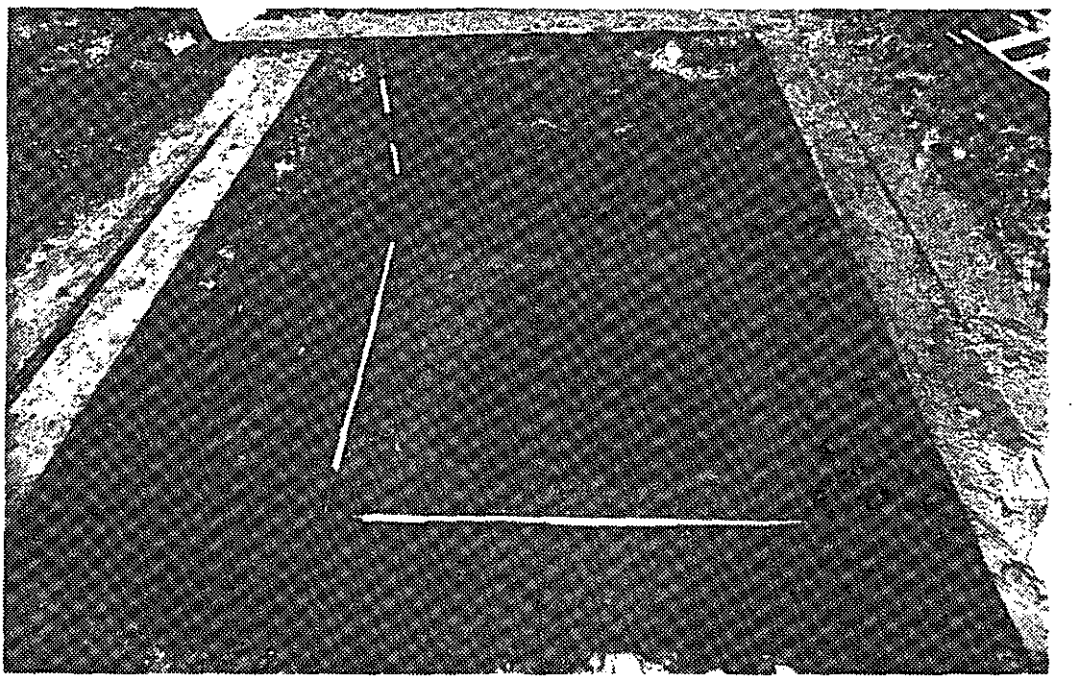

Plate VI: View of an excavated medieval pit (11)
at Damside Street

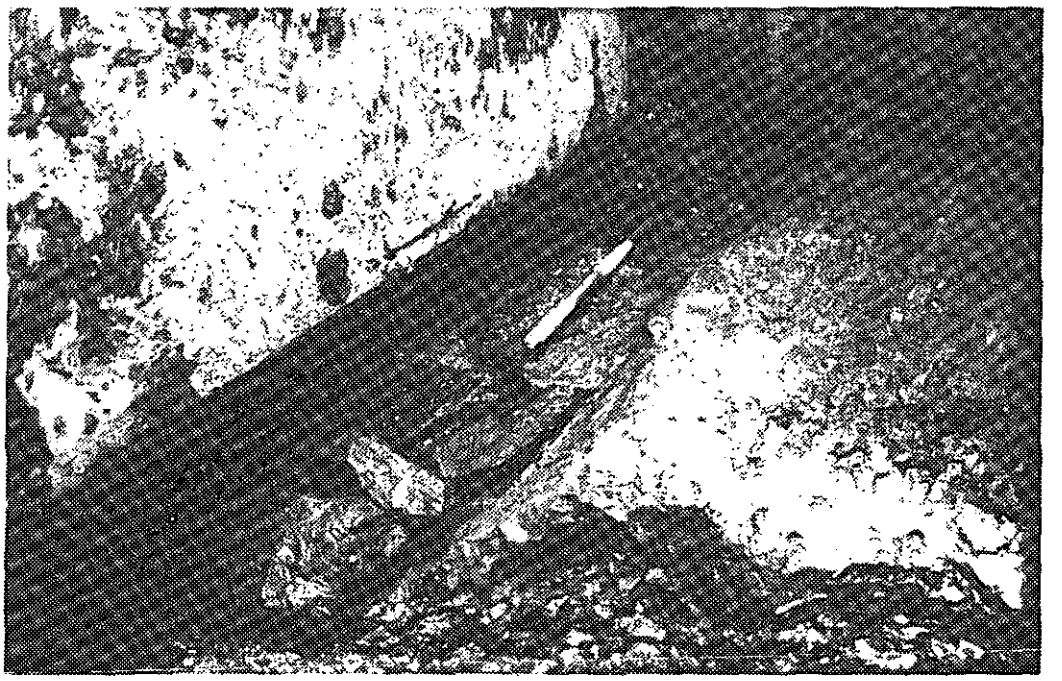

Plate VII: View of the partially excavated
Roman stone structure (38)

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Market Hall Sites

The opportunity to conduct trial excavations around the Market Hall has shown that islands of archaeology survive despite modern intrusions, in particular cellarage, which may have obscured or destroyed archaeological deposits. Further investigation may reveal the use and development of the site and contribute to our knowledge and understanding of the changes which have occurred not only in the Roman period but also of the later growth of Lancaster. It may be possible to determine Roman activity in the area lying outside the known extent of extra-mural settlement. It is therefore important to identify the areas which have not been disturbed; a cartographic survey of the area would be valuable in order to locate buildings, now demolished, which may have been cellared.

If redevelopment should take place on the site it is hoped that there would be an opportunity to examine further the archaeology. The results of the excavations undertaken so far provide a basis on which to formulate plans for future work. Such a response would, in the particular case of the Market Hall site, be selective and based upon considerations of the depth and extent of the disturbance which has already taken place when assessing the potential for the survival of archaeological deposits. Identification and thorough investigation of the surviving archaeology may provide further information on the type and level of activity on the site which would contribute to the wider understanding of development and expansion of the settlement of Lancaster.

Damside Street

In summary, the evaluation confirmed that almost 4m of undisturbed archaeological stratigraphy survived within the trench. This stratigraphy contained evidence of activity from the early Roman period up to the present day. Some of the questions revealed by the evaluation still remain unanswered, although future analysis of the recovered palaeoenvironmental samples should resolve many of these.

Priority should be given to understanding more fully the deposition of the Roman stratigraphy, as it was impossible to assess its exact character in the small confines of the trench. The earliest level of Roman activity is represented by stone structure 38; this appears to be *in situ*. A provisional assessment of the Roman pottery (appendix II) carried out by Andrew White (Lancaster City Museum) has indicated that the Roman layers seem to be chronologically stratified, suggesting *in situ* depositiion. The pottery retrieved from the Roman contexts (30, 34 and 35) located below the silts was not generally abraded, with the exception of that from 29, the uppermost Roman horizon; again tentatively indicating *in situ* Roman deposition. Palaeoenvironmental analysis of the organic Roman horizons should provide useful information about the past environment of the Roman settlement.

The silts which separated the Roman and medieval horizons may be of great significance. Their sterile nature suggests that they were deposited by a natural event, which took place after the major Roman activity on the site, and prior to the recorded medieval activity. Their method of deposition at present remains uncertain but they may have been deposited by fluvial activity, or perhaps by a marine transgression. Future particle size and diatom analysis should determine the origin of these silts, and hence aid in determining the local geological events which have taken place in this area over the past two thousand years.

The evaluation revealed the presence of well preserved medieval remains. Little is known about medieval Lancaster, and these deposits alone justify the need for further excavation in the area. Selected palaeoenvironmental samples will undergo scientific analysis, in order to determine more fully the contents of the medieval features, and contribute to reconstructing Lancaster's medieval environment.

There was little evidence of any significant post-medieval disturbance in the trench. This, combined with deep, archaeologically rich, waterlogged deposits, makes Damside St, an invaluable source of information, for the future interpretation of Lancaster's past. It is therefore strongly recommended that a programme of archaeological excavation should precede any future redevelopment of this area.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Gratitude is expressed to the following people, without whom, this evaluation would not have taken place. Thanks to Keith Bewley, Shona Connolly, Stephen Haigh and Alan Lupton who excavated the trenches. Thanks also to Ken Ralph, Vic Atkinson and Brian Fothergill for their tender use of the diggers.

Members of the Archaeology Unit greatly assisted in this project, thanks to Christine Howard-Davis, Peter Lee, Jamie Quartermaine and Angela Whitworth, particular gratitude is expressed to Rachel Newman. Thanks to the staff at Lancaster City Museum especially Andrew White and Marie Bailey. Thanks to John Harpley of Lancaster City Council for providing geological and bore hole information and to all who provided information and gave their time in assisting our endeavours, including all the bodies who provided essential information concerning underground services. Finally special thanks to all at Harbour and General, particularly Ian Thistlethwaite, whose expertise and enthusiasm proved invaluable.

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March 1991

APPENDIX I

Market Hall Sites Finds Catalogue

The table below is a basic finds catalogue by context number, including a broad dating of the pottery.

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	MATERIAL	DATE	COUNT
4	Cellar infill	Glass		4
		Pottery	Post-medieval	1
14	Cellar infill	Glass		3
		Pottery	Post-medieval	1
18	Layer:surviving archaeology	Pottery	Post-medieval	4
		Pottery	Medieval	2
		Pottery:coarseware	Roman	2
		Fired clay		1
21	Cellar infill	Copper alloy		1
		Glass:bead		1
		Glass		1
		Pottery	Post-medieval	1
27	Layer:surviving archaeology	Pottery:coarseware	Roman	7
		Burnt clay:daub		5
51	Layer:infill of small structure	Ceramic:clay pipe		3
		Pottery	Post-medieval	11
52	Layer	Glass		3
		Pottery	Post-medival	11
57	Fill of feature	Pottery	Medieval	4
58	Layer	Pottery	Medieval	1
		Pottery:coarseware	Roman	1
60	Layer	Pottery	Post-medieval	2

APPENDIX II

Damside Street Provisional Dating of Roman Stratigraphy

The table below illustrates the chronological stratification of the Roman horizons, based on a provisional identification of the pottery carried out by Andrew White. (35) is the earliest Roman level containing finds and (29) the latest, below the silt horizons.

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	NO. OF SHERDS	FABRIC TYPE	DATES
(35)	Fill of bedding trench for structure (38)	1	Samian ware	100-150 AD
(34)	Interleaving silts above structure (38).	2	Quernmore fabric	80-120 AD
		2	Samian ware	80-150 AD
(30)	Organic ironpanned clay silt below (29).	1	Samian ware	125-175 AD
		1	Mortaria	230-340 AD
		1	Blackburnished ware	210-230 AD
		2	Colour coated ware	210-250 AD
		1	Quernmore fabric	80-120 AD
(29)	Organic clay silt above (30).	1	Grey ware	c200-300 AD
		4	Castor ware	180-320 AD
		8	Samian ware	100-200 AD
		1	Possible medieval	

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