

Archaeological Watching Brief Report for Land off

FLAT LANE

KELSALL

For Richardson Projects Ltd

Claire Statter BA

L~P:ARCHÆOLOGY

Archaeological Watching Brief Report for Land off

FLAT LANE KELSALL

Client: Richardson Projects Ltd

Local Authority: Chester City Council

NGR: 352210,367740

Planning App: 06/01919/FUL

Author(s): C Statter

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Abstract

This report considers the results of an Archaeological Watching Brief carried out during the topsoil strip, excavation of foundation trenches and the grading down of a new road, at land off Flat Lane Kelsall (NGR 352210,367740). A metal detecting survey was also carried out during the works on site.

The Watching Brief was carried out intermittently between 14th May and 12th July 2007. Fieldwork was carried out by Claire Statter of L – P : Archaeology on behalf of Richardson Projects Ltd.

No archaeological features were identified on the site during the archaeological monitoring.

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1. Introduction and Scope of Study

- 1.1. Between 14th May and 12th July 2007 an archaeological watching brief was carried out at Flat Lane, Kelsall. The fieldwork was commissioned by Richardson Projects Ltd.
- 1.2. The site is located at NGR 352210,367740 (FIGURE 1).
- 1.3. The Local Authority is Chester City Council.
- 1.4. The site is being redeveloped with a series of 7 new semi-detached residential units, with a central road.
- 1.5. The archaeological site recording was carried out by Claire Statter of L – P : Archaeology.
- 1.6. The investigation comprised the monitoring of the topsoil strip of the site, along with the excavation of foundation trenches and the excavation of the new road.
- 1.7. The aims of the archaeological watching brief were to make a record of any archaeological deposits or features and to establish their date, character and importance.

2. Planning Background

- 2.1. In November 1990 the Department of the Environment issued PPG 16, "Archaeology and Planning". This document provides guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the preservation and investigation of archaeological remains.
- 2.2. In considering any planning application for development the Local Planning Authority, Chester City Council, is bound by the policy frameworks provided by Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG 16), and the policies within the Chester District Local Plan which was adopted in May 2006.

CHESTER LOCAL PLAN

POLICY ENV 32

Where development proposals affect sites of known or potential archaeological interest, the City Council will require an archaeological assessment/evaluation to be submitted as part of the planning application. Planning permission will not be granted without the adequate assessment of the nature, extent and significance of the remains and the degree to which the proposed development is likely to affect them.

POLICY ENV 33

Development proposals affecting the site or setting of a site of regional or county importance will only be permitted if the integrity of the archaeological remains has been secured.

POLICY ENV 34

Development proposals affecting the site or setting of a site of district or local importance will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the particular site or monument can be preserved in situ or, where this is not feasible, by record.

POLICY ENV 45

Planning permission will be refused for proposals that fail to have regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

- 2.3. Full planning permission, reference number 06/01919/FUL, has been granted by Chester City Council with the following condition:

No development shall take place within the application site area until full details of a programme of archaeological work have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The archaeological works shall be undertaken/allowed to be undertaken wholly in accordance with the agreed watching brief.

2.4. Mike Morris Archaeological Advisor to Chester City Council agreed that a watching brief was required during all groundworks. This report details the results of the Archaeological Watching Brief.

2.5. This report details the results of the watching brief undertaken in response to the above planning condition.

3. Geology and Topography

3.1. Geology

3.1.1. The British Geological Survey indicates that the solid geology of the area is Triassic mudstones including Keuper Marl. This information is presented in a low resolution and therefore only gives a general indication of the geology of the area.

3.1.2. Excavations did not extend to a depth sufficient to encounter bedrock, however, as expected the drift deposits identified during excavation were of fine red alluvial sand at approximately 1.10m below original ground level.

3.2. Topography

3.2.1. The site is bounded to the northeast by Flat Lane and the east of the site is bounded by domestic dwellings. To the south and west however lay farm land.

3.2.2. The site itself is relatively flat, laying at c. 62m OD with a site area of 0.5 hectares.

4. Archaeological and Historical Background

TIMESCALES USED IN THIS REPORT:

PERIOD	FROM	TO
PREHISTORIC		
PALAEOLITHIC	450,000	12,000 BC
MESOLITHIC	12,000	4,000 BC
NEOLITHIC	4,000	1,800 BC
BRONZE AGE	1,800	600 BC
IRON AGE	600	43 AD
HISTORIC		
ROMAN	43	410 AD
EARLY MEDIEVAL	410	1066 AD
MEDIEVAL	1066	1485 AD
POST MEDIEVAL	1485	PRESENT

PREHISTORIC

- 4.1. A search of the Historic Environment Record (HER) has revealed a single Mesolithic find spot within Kelsall. It records the finding of a microlithic flint core and a thumb scraper (HER 1857). This would suggest that prehistoric activity did take place in the area, however due to the nature of prehistoric finds it is unclear as to the nature and scale of activity.
- 4.2. HER 1872, records the site of a Bronze Age burial at Kelsall. This was not a burial mound but a small stone circle which held two filled pits, one of which contained stones laid over a cremation urn and boar tusk.
- 4.3. This burial is probably related to the settlement of people in this period on Kelsborrow Hill, where traces of a Bronze Age settlement have been discovered (SCHOLES 1999).
- 4.4. Later during the Iron Age Kelsborrow Hill formed one of the forts built along the main trackway from the north to the south. Kelsborrow Hill is located approximately 1km to the east of the study site.

4.5. Iron Age field systems have also been identified in Kelsall (CROSBY 1996). These Iron Age field systems have also been recorded as HER 1984, and have also been registered as a Scheduled Monument by English Heritage. The field systems are located approximately 1.5km to the north east of the study site. However, it is possible that these field systems date to the Roman period (BRENNAND 2006). The presence of these agricultural systems show that some areas of Kelsall were settled and farmed during the Iron Age, however it is unclear as to how widespread this occupation was in the area.

ROMAN

4.6. Kelsall during the Roman period appears to have remained a small agricultural area, evidence for substantial Roman activity here is sparse. A major road did however run through the north side of Kelsall, which was the main route from Chester to Manchester. This road runs approximately 800m to the north of the study area and is recorded as HER 844/1/27.

4.7. Other records within the HER relating to this period include HER 1858, which records a sherd of Roman pottery and HER 2868 the findspot of a Roman *denarius* of Atoninus Pious. A third findspot has been recorded as HER 1863, this refers to a *denarius* of Titus which was found on a building site at Hallowsgate, the name given to an area of Kelsall, in 1965. The study site itself lies within Hallowsgate and it is likely that the find was recovered during the building of the dwellings bounding the site to the east.

4.8. Although no significant settlement dating to this period has been discovered in Kelsall it is clear that the area was used as a throughfare on the route between Chester and Manchester. Agricultural activity may have continued to take place in Kelsall during this period, as a continuation of the Iron Age activity. The evidence for this comes from the field systems mentioned above, as the methods used for farming during the Romano-British period were similar to those used in the preceding period.

EARLY MEDIEVAL

4.9. The coverage of Kelsall within Domesday book seems uncertain. It may be that Kelsall is referred to as Cogle, whose location has not been established, or it could have been

part of the parish of Tarvin (CHESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL 1993).

4.10.No records exist within the HER relating to this period. However as mentioned above, field systems which can be seen within the scheduled area also refers to lynchets which are earthen banks formed by plough soil moving downhill (HER 1984), which are thought to date to the Early Medieval period.

MEDIEVAL

4.11.A search of the HER revealed two findspots relating to this period. The first being HER 2866, a silver half penny from the reign of Edward III. The second, HER 2867, refers to a silver coin dating to the 15th century from the French or Spanish Netherlands.

4.12.This coin could have been brought into the area by a number of activities and exchanges, and was probably lost here accidentally.

POST MEDIEVAL

4.13.A search of the HER revealed two records relating to this period. The first HER 1859 refers to fragments of pottery and glass dating to the 18th century. These finds were recovered whilst fieldwalking and therefore it is likely that the finds had been part of a rubbish deposit and had been ploughed across the field.

4.14.The second, HER 2986, records four carved stone heads within a barn wall, dating to the 17th century.

4.15.Up until the late 18th century most of Kelsall remained as common agricultural land. However during the 19th century Parliamentary enclosure began, the scope for change included the lowland commons of Kelsall (CROSBY 1996). Common land was now divided up and spread out evenly. It appears that Kelsall still remained a mainly farming community for many years after this.

4.16.St Philip's Chapel of Ease in Kelsall was erected in 1860 as a local social and religious centre (LATHAM 1985). This indicates that Kelsall was beginning to grow during this period.

4.17.A map regression exercise has shown that Kelsall only began to grow as a non-agricultural community after 1912. This can be seen on the Ordnance Survey maps of

the area, the 1912 edition shows limited urbanisation with the majority of the land being fields. However by the 1989 OS map much of eastern Kelsall has been developed into housing. This included the area directly to the east of of the study site.

4.18. It appears from other evidence such as the building site finds in 1965, mentioned above (4.7), that much of the development within Kelsall took place during the modern period.

5. Methodology

- 5.1. The watching brief consisted of archaeological monitoring of the topsoil strip of the whole site along with the foundation trenches and the grading down of the new road.
- 5.2. Sections were recorded at a scale of 1:10 on drawing film with the site code and relevant information.
- 5.3. Photographs were taken with an appropriate scale bar on 35mm colour slide and black and white plate media and digitally on a Cannon Ixus5.1 digital camera.
- 5.4. Full drawing, photographic and context registers were kept on site and all contexts were recorded on pro-forma sheets.
- 5.5. No samples were taken on the site.
- 5.6. A metal detecting survey took place across site and significant finds were located and given a National Grid Reference.

6. Results

6.1. In this report context numbers are indicated by brackets, with round brackets indicating fills and deposits (33) and square brackets indicating cut features [4], levels are indicated in metres Below Ground Level (BGL).

TOPSOIL STRIP

6.2. The topsoil strip of the whole site revealed two main archaeological contexts. The uppermost deposit being topsoil (101), comprising a dark brown silty loam with root matter and grass inclusions. This deposit extended beneath the maximum depth of the topsoil strip at 0.35m below ground level.

6.3. Underlying this was (102) a mid to light brown red sandy silt subsoil, with charcoal and chalk inclusions. The charcoal relates to ploughed in waste, including the finds, across the site. This deposit reached beyond the base of the strip at 0.50m below ground level.

6.4. The topsoil strip revealed a single linear feature towards the east of the site area, running on an east west orientation. The feature was half sectioned at the east end, the fill was given context number (103). This feature was cut into context (102), the cut was given context number [103]. The feature measured 4.2m long and 0.65m wide (FIGURE 2 & PLATE 1).

6.5. The fill of the feature (104) comprised a firm red orange clay with grass inclusions. The cut for the feature consisted of vertical machine cut sides. This feature was investigated to a depth of 0.65m below ground level. At this point grass was revealed therefore it was concluded that the feature was a possible modern machine test trench therefore was no longer investigated, although the clay fill did extend beyond this depth.



Plate 1 - Linear feature [103] (104)

6.6.No further archaeological features were recorded during the topsoil strip area.

FOUNDATION TRENCHING

6.7.Seven foundation trenches were dug across the site and monitored. Each trench revealed similar deposits. These foundations were of varying size and orientation, they were also excavated to depths of between 0.4m to 0.85m BGL. The location and size of these foundations can be seen in **FIGURE 2**.

6.8.The first context recorded within the foundation excavation was (102), subsoil as recorded during the topsoil strip. This deposit varied in depth across the site from 0.2m to 0.5m below the level of the newly stripped site.

6.9.Underlying (102) lay (105) a friable light brown sand. This measured a maximum depth of 0.6m below stripped ground level, this deposit was archaeologically sterile and was interpreted as different coloured natural sand within (106).

6.10.(106) was a friable orange red sand with occasional gravel inclusions. This sand was a natural sand deposit across the site. This deposit extended to a depth of between 0.4m to 0.7m below the stripped site level.



Plate 2 - South facing section of foundation trench 5

6.11. Sealed by (106) lay (107), firm red clay. This deposit was only seen in foundation trench 7 as it was excavated to a depth of 0.85m, deeper than any of the previous foundations. This measured a depth of 0.15m and extended beyond the base of the trench. This deposit was the natural clay underlying natural sand (106) (FIGURE 3).



Plate 3 - Foundation trench 1 facing northeast

6.12. No archaeological features were noted during this stage of the archaeological investigations.

SOAKAWAYS

6.13. The excavation for each soakaway for each domestic plot were also monitored.

These measured two 2.5m by 2.5m square pits excavated to a depth of 2m, connected by a 6.5m long 1.5m wide trench measuring 1.45m deep. These can be seen in more detail on FIGURE 2.

6.14. Within the soakaways the contexts encountered matched those of the foundation trenches. That is (102) measuring a depth of 0.35m, over (105) measuring a depth of 0.75m below ground surface. Underlying (105) was (106) measuring a depth of 1.35m below ground surface, over the natural clay (107). The natural clay extended beyond the base of the trench at a depth of 2m.



Plate 4 - Soakaway 2 facing north

6.15. A larger soakaway was excavated within the area where the new access road is to be built. This consisted of two 3.5m diameter circles excavated to a depth of 3m, linked by a trench measuring 26m by 1.5m which was also excavated to a depth of 3m.

6.16. The contexts encountered within the road soakaway reflected those across the site. However a thin layer of gravel (108) had been laid within this area over subsoil (102) as a temporary surface. Below (108), (102) measured a depth of 0.4m which sealed in context (105) which measured a depth of 0.5m. Below (105) lay (106) the natural orange red sand, this deposit extended beyond the base of the trench at a depth of 3m (FIGURE 4).

6.17. No archaeological features were encountered during this stage of the monitoring.

7. Results of Metal Detecting Survey

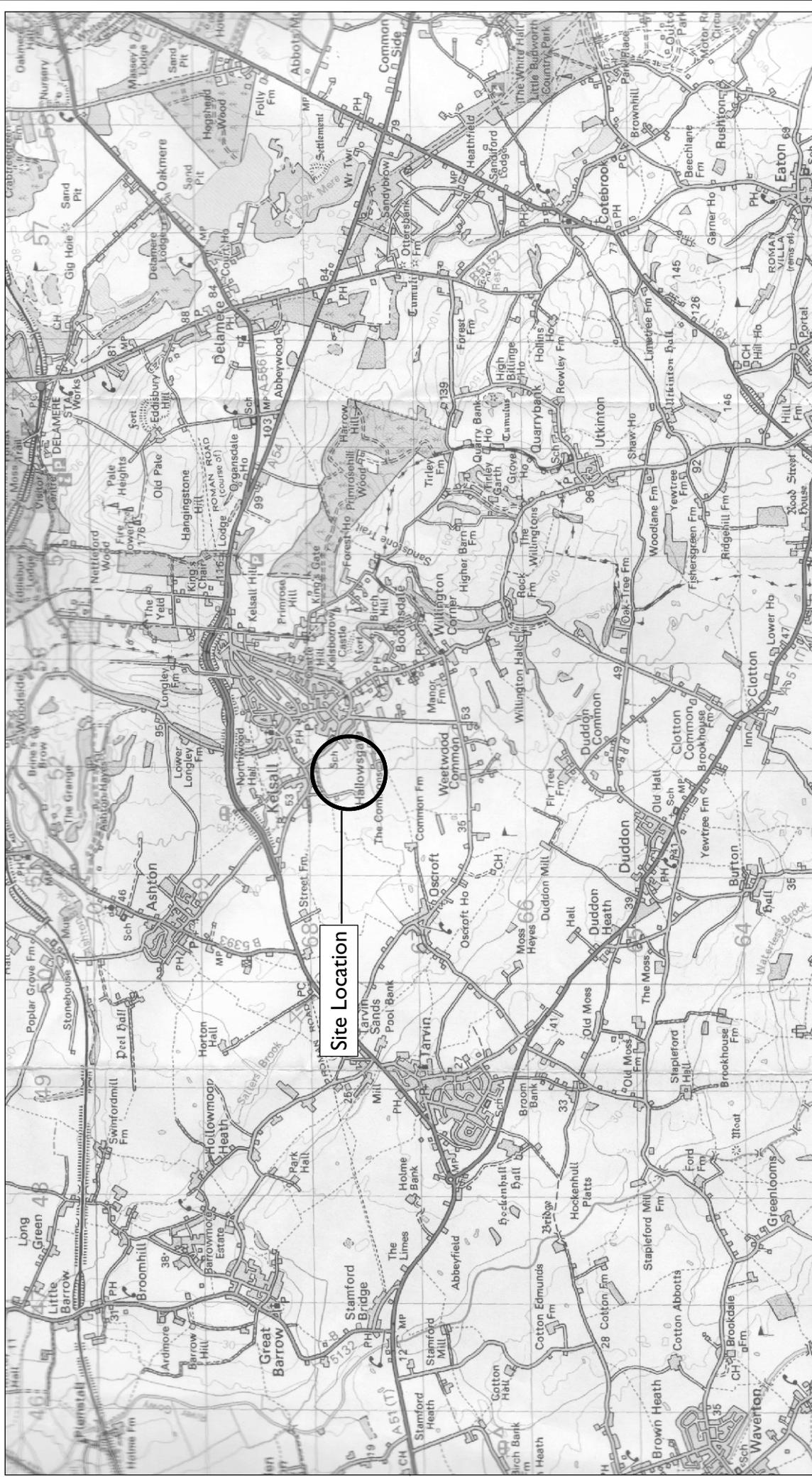
- 7.1. A metal detecting survey took place on the site. This survey was carried out after the topsoil strip in order to avoid unnecessary interference from modern litter. The survey was carried out by volunteers from the Crewe and Nantwich Metal Detecting Society. All volunteers were supervised at all times by Claire Statter.
- 7.2. The whole site was surveyed by the detectorists, none of the finds merited locating.
- 7.3. A single Roman coin was recovered measuring 3cm in diameter. This coin is badly degraded and therefore the date can not be established at this time, only the faint outline of a head is visible on the obverse side.
- 7.4. The majority of the finds however range in date and form. Several of the finds date to the early 20th century. Several finds of note include a Nickel Silver spoon handle dating to the reign of King George VI (1936-52) and three coins dating from 1918 to 1952.
- 7.5. Other non datable finds recovered from this survey include iron nails, lead waste and buttons. This range of finds from a relatively short period of time probably relates to a time when the site was ploughed and used for agriculture. The finds will have been thrown away like modern litter and then ploughed into the soil .
- 7.6. This range of finds indicates modern disturbance of any archaeological features which may have been present.

8. Summary and Conclusions

- 8.1. The archaeological watching brief involved the monitoring of all groundworks taking place on site, including the topsoil strip and the excavation of foundation trenches and soakaways.
- 8.2. The watching brief revealed no archaeological features. However a modern feature was recorded within the monitoring of the topsoil strip. Once this feature had been investigated it was seen to be a very modern straight cut trench with grass remains still present.
- 8.3. The watching brief showed the sequence of deposits on site to be topsoil, overlaying medieval plough soil which in turn overlay the natural sand. There was no evidence of medieval field systems.
- 8.4. The metal detecting survey did not reveal any significant finds or assemblages, however the results did indicate that the site has been disturbed, which may have resulted in the truncation of any existing archaeological features.

FIGURES

FIGURE 1 // Site location general



Scale 1:50,000 @ A4

0

3,500m

PROJECT // 0579C - Flat Lane, Kelsall

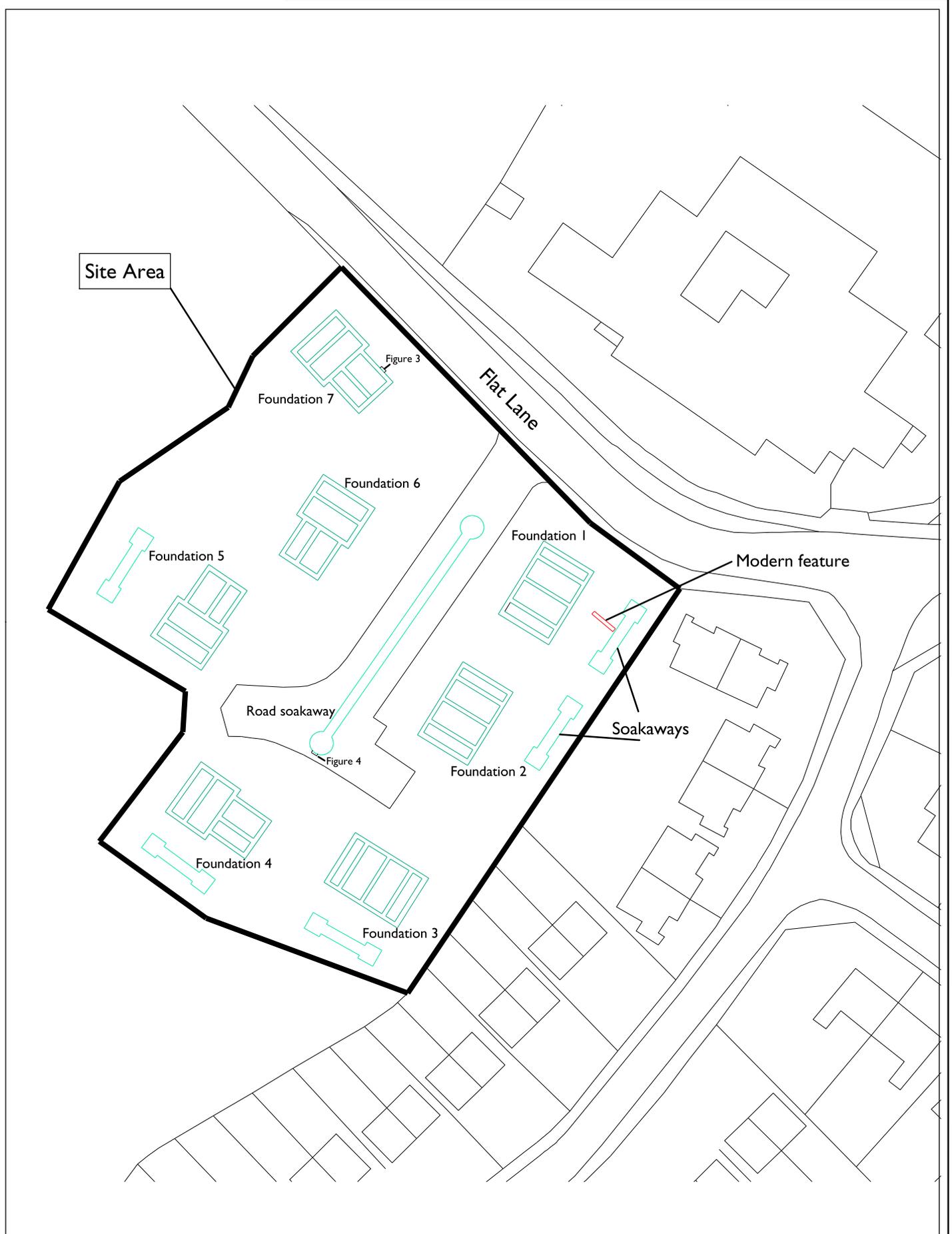
DESCRIPTION // Site location general

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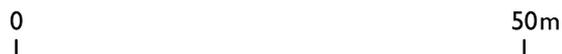
DOC REF: LP0579C-AWB-v1

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FIGURE 2 // Site detailed & monitored areas



Scale 1:750 @ A4



PROJECT // 0579C - Flat Lane Kelsall

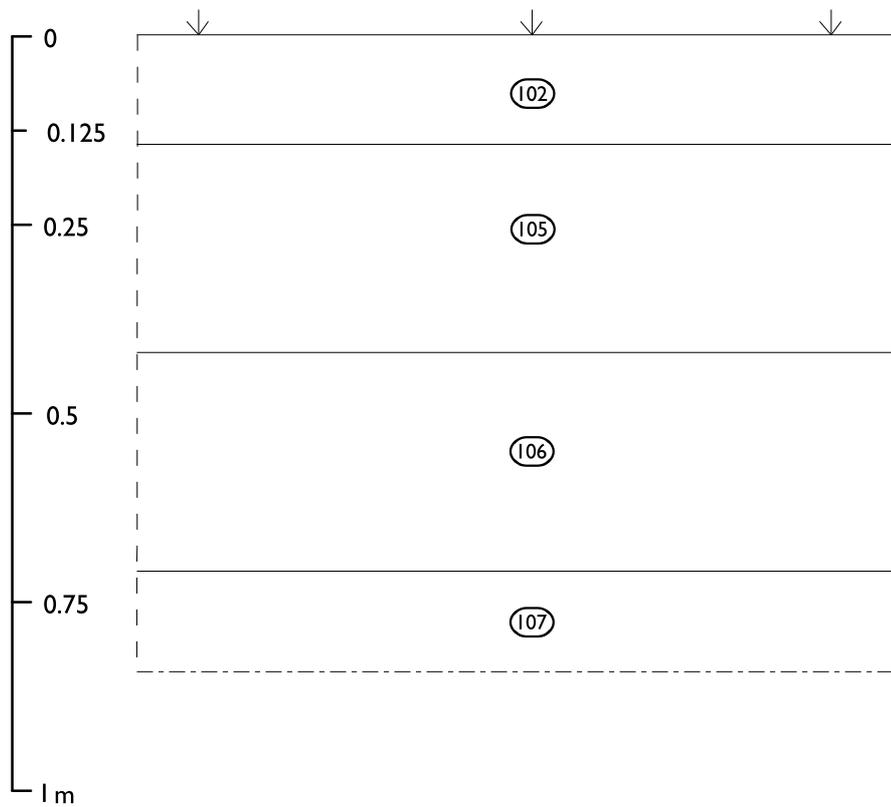
DESCRIPTION // Site detailed and monitored areas

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FIGURE 3 // Section of Foundation Trench 7



Scale 1:10 @ A4

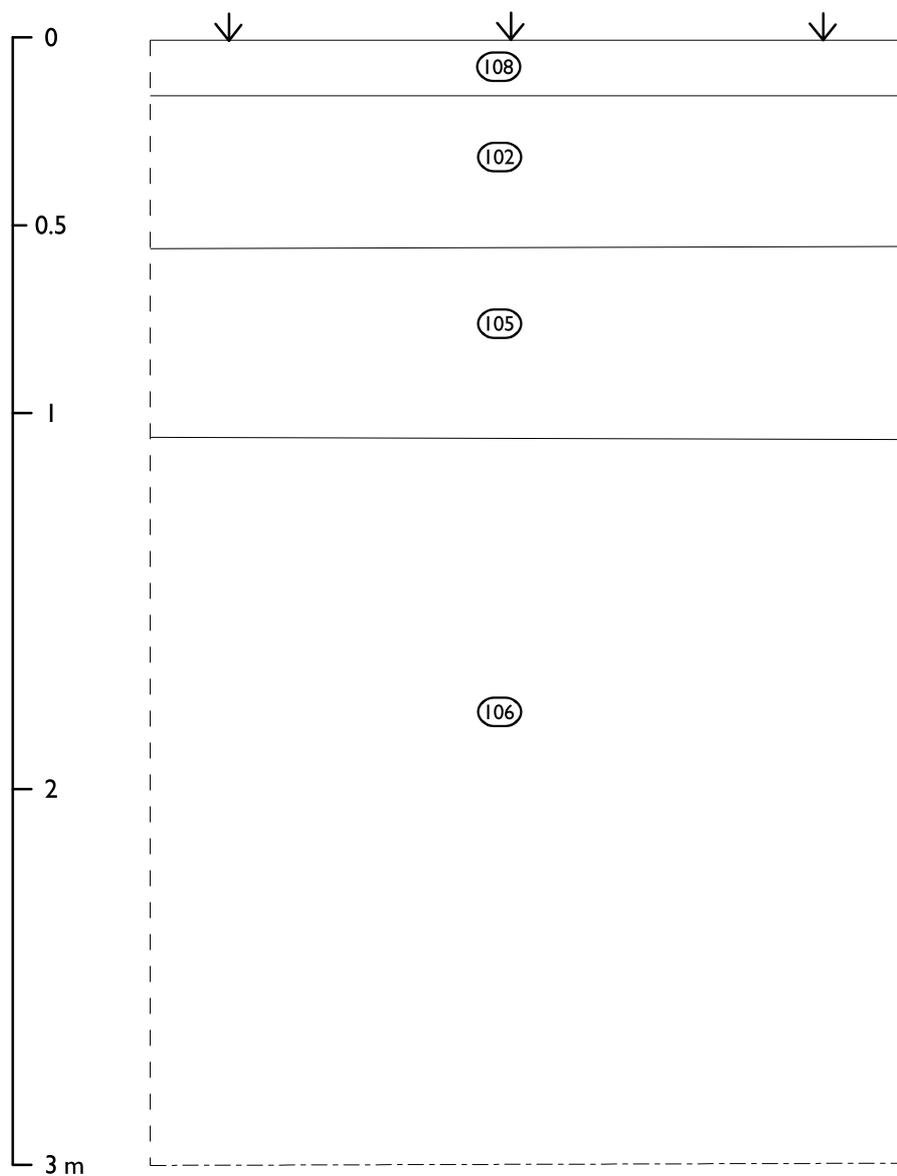
PROJECT // 0579C - Flat Lane Kelsall

DESCRIPTION // South facing section of foundation trench 7

DOC REF: LP0579C-AWB-v1

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FIGURE 4 // Section of Road Soakaway



Scale 1:20 @ A4

PROJECT // 0579C - Flat Lane Kelsall

DESCRIPTION // North facing section of road soakaway

DOC REF: LP0579C-AWB-v1

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SOURCES CONSULTED

APPENDIX I

BIBLIOGRAPHIC

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OASIS FORM

APPENDIX 2

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

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OASIS ID: lparchae1-29670

Project details

Project name	Flat Lane, Kelsall
Short description of the project	Watching brief comprising the monitoring of the topsoil strip and the excavation of the foundation trenches and soakaways. The watching brief revealed no archaeological features on the site.
Project dates	Start: 14-05-2007 End: 12-07-2007
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	CHE/FLL 07 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Vacant Land 2 - Vacant land not previously developed
Significant Finds	COIN Roman
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	CHESHIRE CHESTER KELSALL Flat Lane
Postcode	CH6 0PU
Study area	5577.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	SJ 52261 67718 53.2041028304 -2.714799731050 53 12 14 N 002 42 53 W Point
Height OD	Min: 62.00m Max: 62.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	L - P : Archaeology
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	L - P : Archaeology
Project director/manager	Claire Statter
Project supervisor	Claire Statter

Type of sponsor/funding body Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body Richardson Projects Ltd

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No
Digital Archive Exists? No
Paper Archive recipient Grosvenor Museum
Paper Contents 'Stratigraphic','Survey'
Paper Media available 'Context sheet','Photograph','Plan','Report','Section'

Project bibliography**1**

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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FINDS TABLE

APPENDIX 3

TABLE OF FINDS RECOVERED BY METAL DETECTORISTS

Find	Date
5 pieces of unidentified Iron	Various
11 Iron nails	Various
6 buttons	20 th Century
1 dining fork	20 th Century
1 Nikel Silver spoon handle	20 th Century
10 coins (various)	Ranging from 1918 - 1957
1 decorated badge (cat shaped)	20 th Century
1 belt/shoe buckle	20 th Century
11 pieces of lead waste	Various
1 bag seal with XI on one side	Unknown