

Archaeological Watching Brief Report for

RELIANCE WORKS KELSALL

For Millkirk Investors Limited

Claire Statter BA PIFA

L~P:ARCHÆOLOGY

Archaeological Watching Brief Report for

RELIANCE WORKS KELSALL

Client: Millkirk Investors Ltd

Local Authority: Chester City Council

NGR: 351902,367920

Planning App: 02/02020/FUL

Author(s): C Statter

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L-P: ARCHAEOLOGY

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Abstract

This report considers the results of an Archaeological Watching Brief carried out during the excavation of foundation trenches for a series of new residential properties at the Reliance Works, Chester Road, Kelsall (NGR 351902,367920). Removal of contaminated soils was archaeologically monitored.

The Watching Brief was carried out intermittently between 7th July and 15th August 2008. Fieldwork was carried out by Claire Statter and Blair Poole of L – P : Archaeology on behalf of Millkirk Investors 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 7th July and 15th August 2008 an Archaeological Watching Brief was carried out at the Reliance Works, Chester Road, Kelsall. The fieldwork was commissioned by Millkirk Investors Ltd. The site is located at NGR 351902,367920 (FIGURE 1).
- 1.2. The Local Authority is Chester City Council.
- 1.3. The site is being redeveloped with a series of 5 new residential units along with the alteration of existing structures, with a central road.
- 1.4. The archaeological site recording was carried out by Claire Statter and Blair Poole of L – P : Archaeology.
- 1.5. The investigation comprised the monitoring of the excavation of the foundation trenches for the new units along with contamination removal.
- 1.6. 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 02/02020/FUL, has been granted by Chester City Council with the condition that an Archaeological Watching Brief be carried out on the site during groundworks.

2.4. 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 (WWW.BGS.AC.UK/GEOINDEX/).

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 reddy orange alluvial sand at approximately 0.25m below ground level extending below the base of the trench at a maximum depth of 2.5m below ground level.

3.2.TOPOGRAPHY

3.2.1. The site is bounded to the north by Chester Road and to the east and west by residential properties. To the south of the site lies farmland.

3.2.2. The site itself is relatively flat, laying at c. 57m OD with a site area of 2268 square metres.

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

4.1. It is not the aim of this assessment to present a complete history of Aldersey from earliest times, nor is it the intention of this report to examine every artefact found in the local area. Rather, the aim is to review the data readily available and to use this to construct a discursive model of the development of the area in question.

PREHISTORIC

4.2. 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 find clearly suggests Mesolithic activity in the area, however without further evidence it is difficult to determine the nature and scale of activity.

4.3. HER 1872, records the site of a Bronze Age burial at Kelsall. This was not a burial mound but a small stone circle which enclosed two filled pits, one of which contained stones laid over a cremation urn and boar tusk.

4.4. This burial is probably related to the settlement of people in this period on Kelsborrow Hill, 1.3km to the south east of the site, where traces of a Bronze Age settlement have been discovered (SCHOLLES 1999).

4.5. Iron Age field systems have also been identified in Kelsall (CROSBY 1996). These Iron Age field systems have been recorded as HER 1984, and have also been registered as a Scheduled Monument by English Heritage. The field systems are located approximately 2km to the north east of the study site. It is difficult to distinguish between Iron Age and Roman field systems as the same techniques were used (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, this 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.

4.8. An Archaeological Watching Brief was carried out by L – P : Archaeology in 2007 on the site of Hallowsgate. The watching brief also involved a metal detector survey. This survey recovered a single Roman coin however it was badly degraded and therefore the date could not be ascertained (STATTER 2007).

4.9. 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.

4.10. However 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 proceeding period.

EARLY MEDIEVAL

- 4.11. The coverage of Kelsall within Domesday book seems uncertain. It may be that Kelsall is referred to as Cocle, whose location has not been established, or it could have been part of the parish of Tarvin (CHESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL 1993).
- 4.12. No records exist within the HER relating to this period. However the scheduled area around the Iron Age field systems also includes several lynchets which are thought to date to the Early Medieval period (HER 1984).

MEDIEVAL

- 4.13. There is no evidence for Medieval activity on the site itself, it is therefore thought that the area was largely agricultural.
- 4.14. 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.
- 4.15. This coin could have been brought into the area by a number of activities and exchanges, and was probably lost here accidentally.

POST MEDIEVAL

- 4.16. 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.
- 4.17. Until the late 18th century most of Kelsall remained as common agricultural land. However during the 19th century Parliamentary enclosure began, the commons of Kelsall were divided up (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.
- 4.18. 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.

- 4.19. 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.
- 4.20. The Tithe map dating to the 1840s shows the site to be occupied by several buildings stepped back from Chester Road along with a larger building behind running in an east west orientation (FIGURE 3).
- 4.21. The first edition Ordnance Survey map dated 1874 also shows these properties on the site. In addition it also shows two further buildings located in the north west of the site. It is thought that these buildings are the dwellings named Escott and The Cottage.
- 4.22. This layout is also shown on the 1910 Ordnance Survey map (FIGURE 4). The 1954 Ordnance Survey map reflects this, however by 1972 the map shows that the building running east west has been demolished and a new building on a north south orientation has been added.
- 4.23. The 1989 Ordnance Survey map labels this new north south building as 'works', this will be referring to the Reliance Works on the site. It can therefore be assumed that the Reliance Works were built on the site between 1954 and 1972. This building along with The Cottage and Escott however do not appear on the modern 2008 map of the site. The dates of their demolition however could not be ascertained at the time of writing.

5. Methodology

- 5.1. The Watching Brief consisted of archaeological monitoring of the excavation of foundation trenches for the new dwellings along with contamination removal.
- 5.2. Sections were recorded at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20 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 and no finds were recovered.

6. Results

- 6.1. In this report context numbers are indicated by brackets, with round brackets indicating fills and deposits (1) and square brackets indicating cut features [2], levels are indicated in metres Below Ground Level (BGL).
- 6.2. Four sets of foundation trenches were dug across the site and monitored. The fifth building plot was to be constructed using a floating raft as foundation. Each trench revealed similar deposits. These foundations were of varying size and orientation, and were excavated to depths of between 0.4m to 1.5m BGL. The location and size of these foundations can be seen in FIGURE 5. The contaminated area has also been marked on this figure.
- 6.3. The first two foundations dug were for houses 3 and 4. These two sets of foundations revealed the same sequence of deposits. Topsoil (100) comprising a firm mid brown sandy loam containing root matter, this deposit reached a depth of between 0.2m and 0.25m BGL.

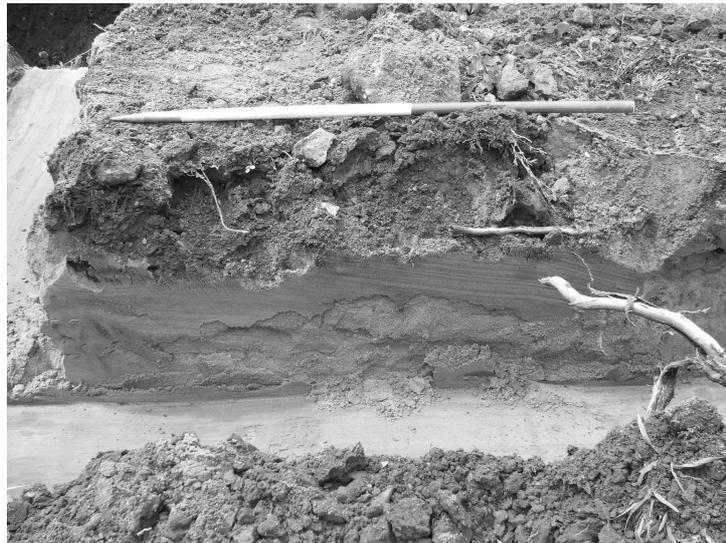


Plate 1 - East facing section of foundations for house 4. Scale 1m

- 6.4. Sealed by (100) lay (101), a friable orangy brown sand with no inclusions. This sand was seen as the natural deposit for the area. (101) extended below the base of the trench at between 0.4 and 1.5m BGL. FIGURE 6 shows a representative section of this deposit located on the east facing section in the centre of house 4.
- 6.5. To the rear of the site a large amount of contamination required removal before the foundations for houses 1 and 2 were excavated (FIGURE 5). The contamination was removed under archaeological supervision.

- 6.6. An area measuring c. 16m by 6.5m was excavated to a depth of 2.5m in order to remove the contamination. The first context recorded in this area of the site was (102) a thin layer of loose grey gravel measuring a depth of 0.3m. It is thought that this gravel had been imported onto the site in order to cover and stabilise the ground above the contamination.
- 6.7. Sealed by (102) was (103) a layer of redeposited mid brown sandy loam subsoil. This deposit measured a maximum 1m in depth. Below (103) was (104) a large deposit of black sandy loam measuring c. 1.2m in depth.
- 6.8. (104) contained contamination such as car parts, oil drums, plastic bags and bits of scrap metal. This contamination is probably the waste from the reliance works which were previously located on the site.



Plate 2 - East facing section showing removal of contamination

- 6.9. Below (104) lay the natural sand (101) which extended below the base of the trench.
- 6.10. Once this contamination had been removed the area was filled with the spoil generated from the excavation of foundations for houses 3 and 4. The foundations for house 2 were then excavated in this area.



Plate 3 - Foundation for house 1 facing south west

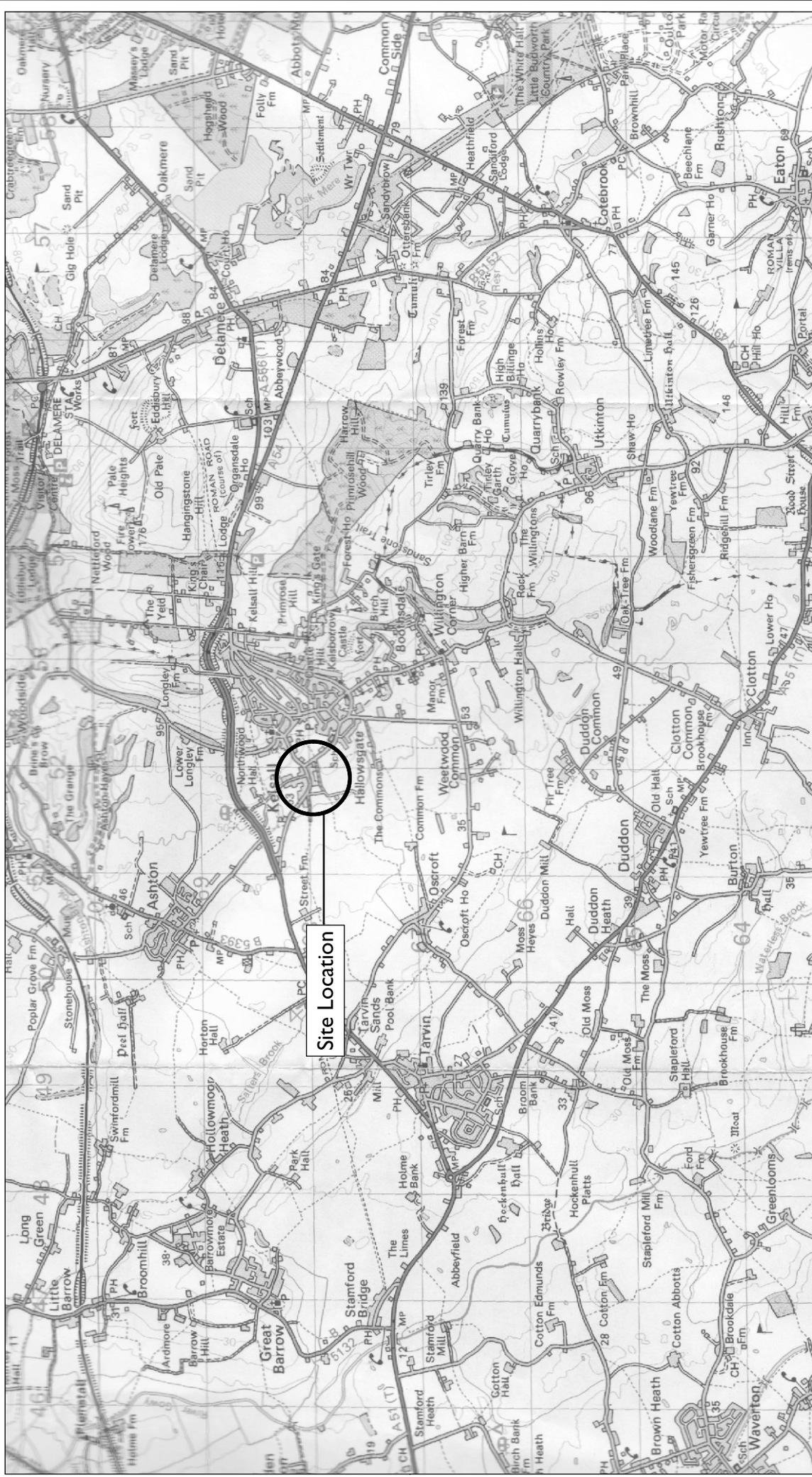
- 6.11. The foundations for house 1 revealed two deposits, the uppermost being (102) a 0.3m layer of grey gravel as described above. Below (102) lay (103) the redeposited subsoil as seen in the contamination area. This deposit extended below the base of the trench at 0.5m BGL.
- 6.12. No archaeological features were encountered during the archaeological monitoring.

7. Summary and Conclusions

- 7.1. The Archaeological Watching Brief involved the monitoring of groundworks taking place on site, including the excavation of foundation trenches and the removal of contamination.
- 7.2. The Watching Brief revealed no archaeological features.
- 7.3. The Watching Brief showed the sequence of deposits on site to be topsoil, overlaying natural sand.
- 7.4. To the rear of the site there had been much disturbance caused by the burying of contaminated material. If any archaeological features had been present, such as field systems, these will have been removed during the deposition of this material.
- 7.5. Although the front of the site area was not excavated it is thought that the remains of The Cottage and Escott could be present in this area.

FIGURES

FIGURE 1 // Site location general



Site Location

Scale 1:50,000 @ A4

3,500m

PROJECT // 0625C - Reliance Works, Kelsall

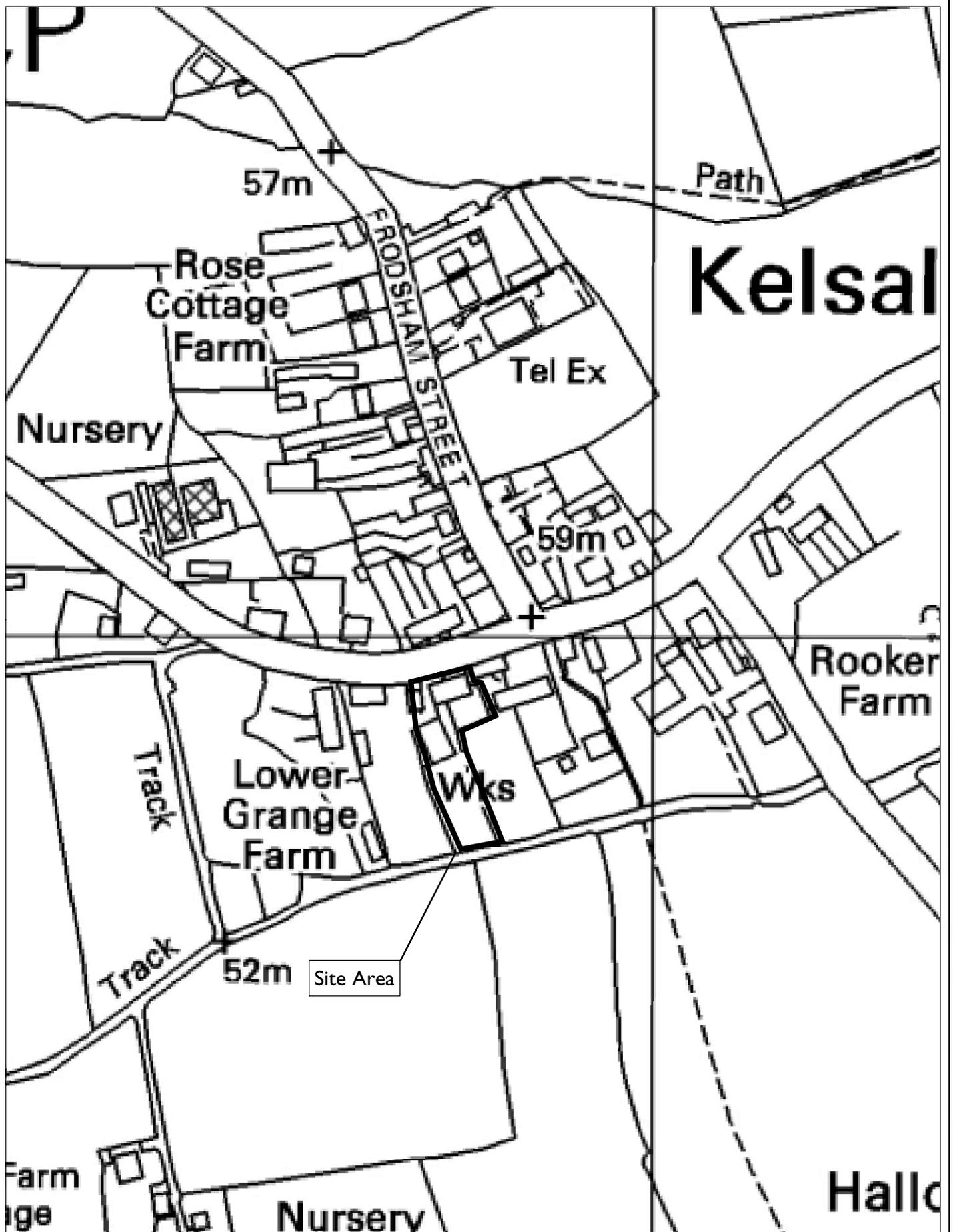
DESCRIPTION // Site location general

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FIGURE 2 // Site location detailed



Scale 1:2,500 @ A4

0 150m



PROJECT // 0625C - Reliance Works, Kelsall

DESCRIPTION // Site location detailed

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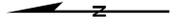
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FIGURE 3 // 1840's Tithe Map



Scale 1:1,000 @ A4

0 50m



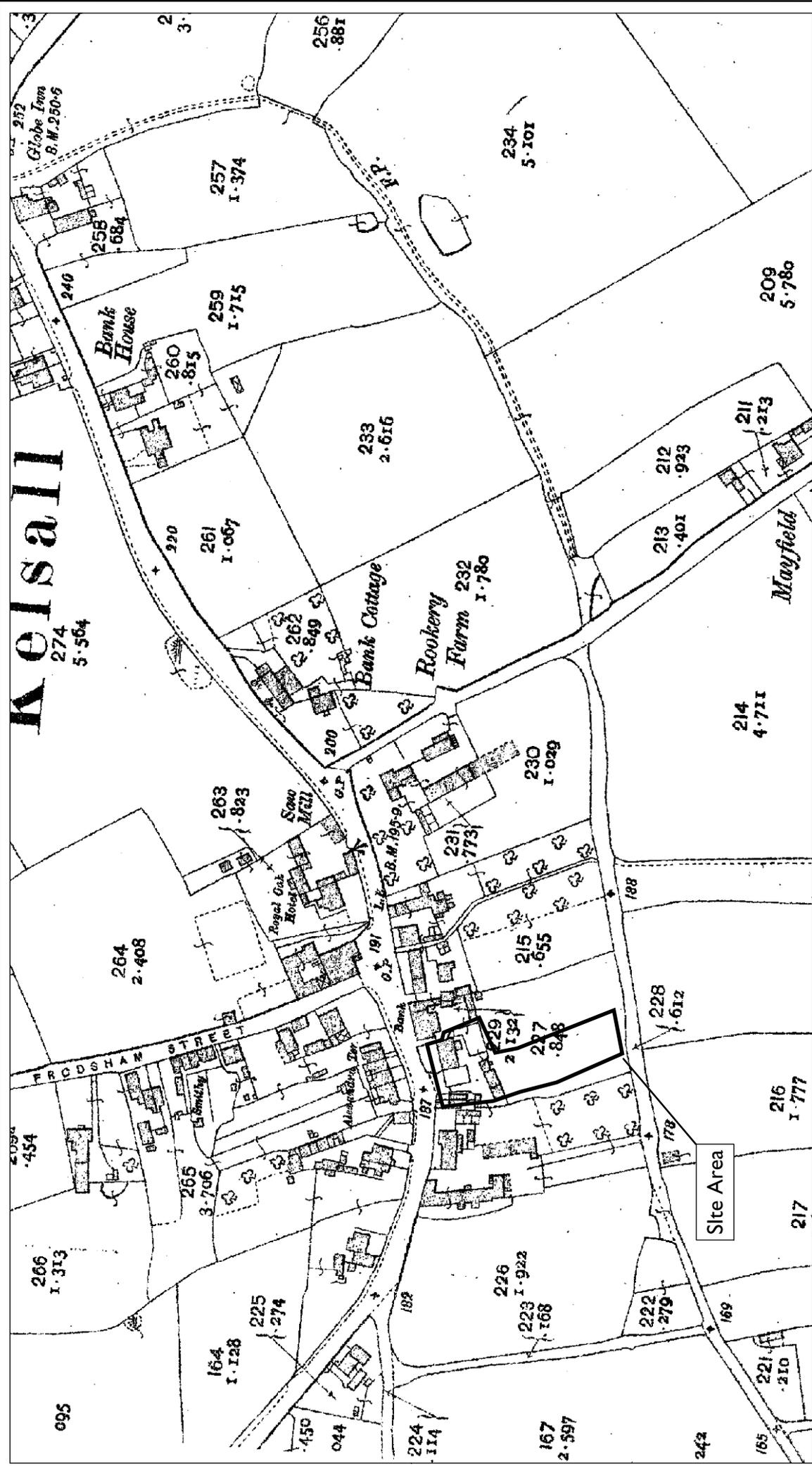
PROJECT // 0625C - Reliance Works, Kelsall

DESCRIPTION // 1840's Tithe Map

DOC REF: LP0625C-AWB-v1

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FIGURE 4 // 1910 Ordnance Survey Map



Scale 1:2,500 @ A4



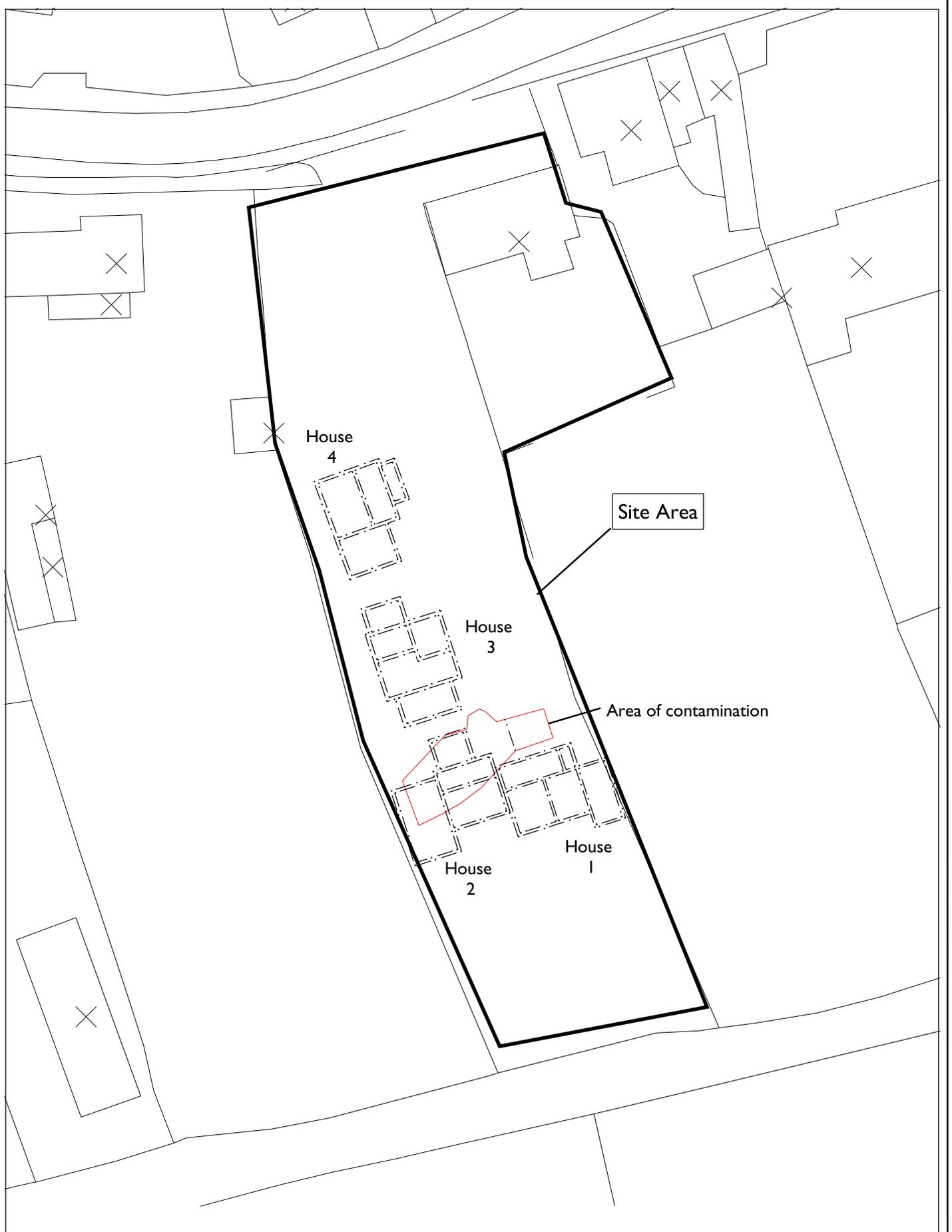
PROJECT // 0625C - Reliance Works, Kelsall

DESCRIPTION // 1910 Ordnance Survey Map

DOC REF: LP0625C-AWB-v1

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FIGURE 5 // Location of Foundations



Scale 1:500 @ A4

0 25 m



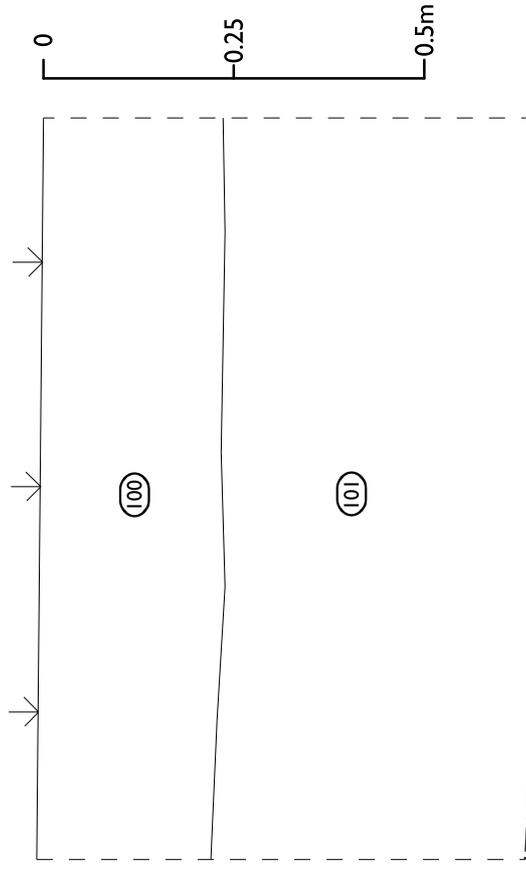
PROJECT // 0625C - Reliance Works, Kelsall

DESCRIPTION // Location of Foundations

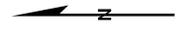
DOC REF: LP0625C-AWB-v1

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FIGURE 6 // East Facing Section



Scale 1:10 @ A4



PROJECT // 0625C - Reliance Works, Kelsall

DESCRIPTION // East Facing Section of Foundations for House 4

DOC REF: LP0625C-AWB-v1

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SOURCES CONSULTED

APPENDIX I

BIBLIOGRAPHIC

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- www.bgs.ac.uk/GeoIndex/

OASIS FORM

APPENDIX 2

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

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OASIS ID: lparchae1-48841

Project details

Project name	Chester Road Kelsall
Short description of the project	Archaeological Watching Brief for land off Chester Road Kelsall
Project dates	Start: 07-07-2008 End: 15-08-2008
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	KEL/CHR 08 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	CHESHIRE CHESTER KELSALL Chester Road
Postcode	CW6 0RJ
Study area	2268.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	SJ 51902 67920 53.2058862759 -2.720205046690 53 12 21 N 002 43 12 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 56.00m Max: 58.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	L - P : Archaeology
Project brief originator	City/Nat. Park/District/Borough archaeologist
Project design originator	L - P : Archaeology
Project director/manager	Claire Statter
Project supervisor	Blair Poole
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer

Name of sponsor/funding body Millkirk Investors Limited

Project archives

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

Project bibliography 1

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