

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
INVESTIGATIONS AT
BRECK ROAD, POULTON-LE-FYLDE,
LANCASHIRE**

**POST-EXCAVATION
ASSESSMENT REPORT**

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PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY


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**BRECK ROAD, POULTON-LE-FYLDE,
LANCASHIRE**

POST-EXCAVATION ASSESSMENT REPORT

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Archaeological Investigations at Breck Road, Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancashire

Post-Excavation Assessment Report

Central National Grid Reference: SD 35095 39881

Site Code: BRP 15

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PART A: PROJECT SUMMARY

1. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

- 1.1 Archaeological investigations were undertaken during October 2015 by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited on land adjacent to Breck Road, in Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancashire. The site, centred at National Grid Reference SD 35095 39881, comprised a block of land covering c. 245m² located on the north-eastern edge of the market town of Poulton-le-Fylde, which lies c. 5km north-east of Blackpool. Prior to the fieldwork, the site was mostly derelict land that included the disused Fleetwood branch line of the Preston to Wyre Joint Railway.
- 1.2 The project entailed an archaeological strip, map and record exercise to document archaeological remains of interest ahead of development of the site for housing by Redrow Homes. The archaeological potential of the site was identified in an archaeological desk-based assessment (Oxford Archaeology 2005).
- 1.3 Outline planning permission for residential development was granted in 2007 with a condition requiring a programme of archaeological work to be carried out as part of the development programme. The footprint of Apartment Block 1 in the proposed development layout overlaid elements of the 19th-century Poulton Breck Railway Station, including an associated goods shed and signal box.
- 1.4 The excavation area was located at the north-western end of site (the area of the former Poulton Breck railway station) and measured c. 8m by 30.50m. Modern overburden was removed to a maximum depth of 0.40m below ground level. Numerous features attributed to the railway were observed including a brick wall associated with the station, a stone-sett surface, concrete column bases, timber rail sleepers and the base of an iron buffer stop, as well as a timber surface.
- 1.5 The archaeological features recorded during the archaeological investigation have been placed within three broad phases of activity: Phase 1, the 19th-century railway station and environs; Phase 2 the 20th-century goods yard; and Phase 3 modern activity. Natural geological material was not encountered during the excavation.
- 1.6 Phase 1 was represented by part of the station wall, as well as concrete column bases that may have supported signal semaphore posts. The platform survived in the form of a sandstone sett surface with 19th-century timber sleepers running north-west to south-east on the eastern side of the excavation area.
- 1.7 The rail line to the fishing town of Fleetwood ran in a straight line to the east of the town. From 1846, there was a junction to Blackpool just north of the station, with tight connecting curves facing either way. In 1893 a fatal accident occurred when a train took the curve too fast. Subsequently, in 1896, the tracks were realigned to follow a much gentler westward curve to Blackpool, with the new station being construction approximately 400m to the south-west. The old station continued in use and was converted into a goods station that was in use until 1968.
- 1.8 Phase 2 represented the change from passenger station to goods yard with a timber surface being constructed over the original railway sleepers to facilitate better access for road freight and the movement of livestock (a cattle pen can be seen on the Second Edition of the Ordnance Survey map of 1912 located to the south-east of the former railway station).
- 1.9 After the goods sheds had been demolished in the late 1960s, numerous services were excavated across the area (Phase 3).
- 1.10 This Assessment Report is divided into three parts. Part A, the Project Summary, begins with an introduction to the site, describing its location, geology and topography, as well summarising the planning and archaeological background to the project. The aims and objectives of the work are then set out,

followed by full descriptions of the archaeological methodologies employed during both the fieldwork and the subsequent post-excavation work. This part concludes with an illustrated summary of the archaeological remains.

- 1.11 Part B, the Data Assessment, quantifies the written, graphic and photographic elements of the Site Archive. This part then sets out an archaeological summary discussion before summarising the potential for further analysis of all elements of the collected project data.
- 1.12 Part C of the report contains acknowledgements and references. There are three appendices to the report, the third being a selection of photographs from the fieldwork.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 General Background

- 2.1.1 This report details the methodology and results of a programme of archaeological investigations undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited (PCA) 5th to 16th October 2015, on land adjacent to Breck Road, Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancashire. The central National Grid Reference for the site is SD 35095 39881 (Figures 1 & 2). The investigations were commissioned by Redrow Homes (the Client) with work being carried out ahead of the development of the site. The archaeological project was undertaken as a condition of planning permission (ref. 07/00599/OUTMAJ) on the recommendation of Peter Iles of Lancashire County Archaeology Service who provide archaeological advice to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) Wyre Borough Council. The condition was discharged prior to any field work taking place (07/00599/DIS) (refer to Section 2.4-Planning Background).
- 2.1.2 The archaeological potential of the site was established by a desk-based assessment produced by Oxford Archaeology in 2005. The assessment identified 41 heritage sites on the development site or within a surrounding 0.5km radius. The sites ranged in date from the Roman period to the post-medieval period.
- 2.1.3 This report details the work in the north-western corner of the site, occupied from the mid-19th century by Poulton Breck Railway Station and an associated goods shed (Plate 1). The project was carried out according to a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), prepared by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (2012) and approved by the LPA. The WSI required a scheme of archaeological strip, map and record.
- 2.1.4 An area was excavated to record any below ground remains relating to the railway at Poulton. The excavation identified part of the station wall as well as a stone sett surface and timber sleepers relating to the Fleetwood branch line of the Preston to Wyre Joint Railway.
- 2.1.5 The archaeological project herein described was designed according to the guidelines set out in Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) (English Heritage 2006). In line with MoRPHE guidelines, this Assessment Report sets out a formal review of the data collected during the fieldwork.
- 2.1.6 At the time of writing, the Site Archive, comprising written, drawn, and photographic records is housed at the Northern Office of PCA, Unit N19a Tursdale Business Park, Durham, DH6 5PG. When complete, the Site Archive will be deposited at the Museum of Lancashire, Preston, under the site code BRP 15. The Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) reference number for the project is: preconst1-227997.

2.2 Site Location and Description

- 2.2.1 The site is located on the north-eastern edge of the market town of Poulton-le-Fylde, which lies c. 5km north-east of Blackpool. Centred at National Grid Reference SD 35095 39881 (Figure 1& 2), the site is bounded to the north by Breck Road and to the east by properties on Breck Road, Moorland Road and Moorlands Gardens and by Fylde Cricket Club and adjacent playing fields. It is bounded to the west by Station Road, industrial premises and by properties on Fylde Road and Howarth Crescent, and to the south by a land boundary at the eastern end of Howarth Crescent.
- 2.2.2 At the time of the fieldwork, the site was mostly derelict land, including the disused Fleetwood branch line of the Preston to Wyre Joint Railway which ran north-west to south-east through the site.



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Figure 1
 Site Location
 1:2,000,000 and 1:25,000 at A4

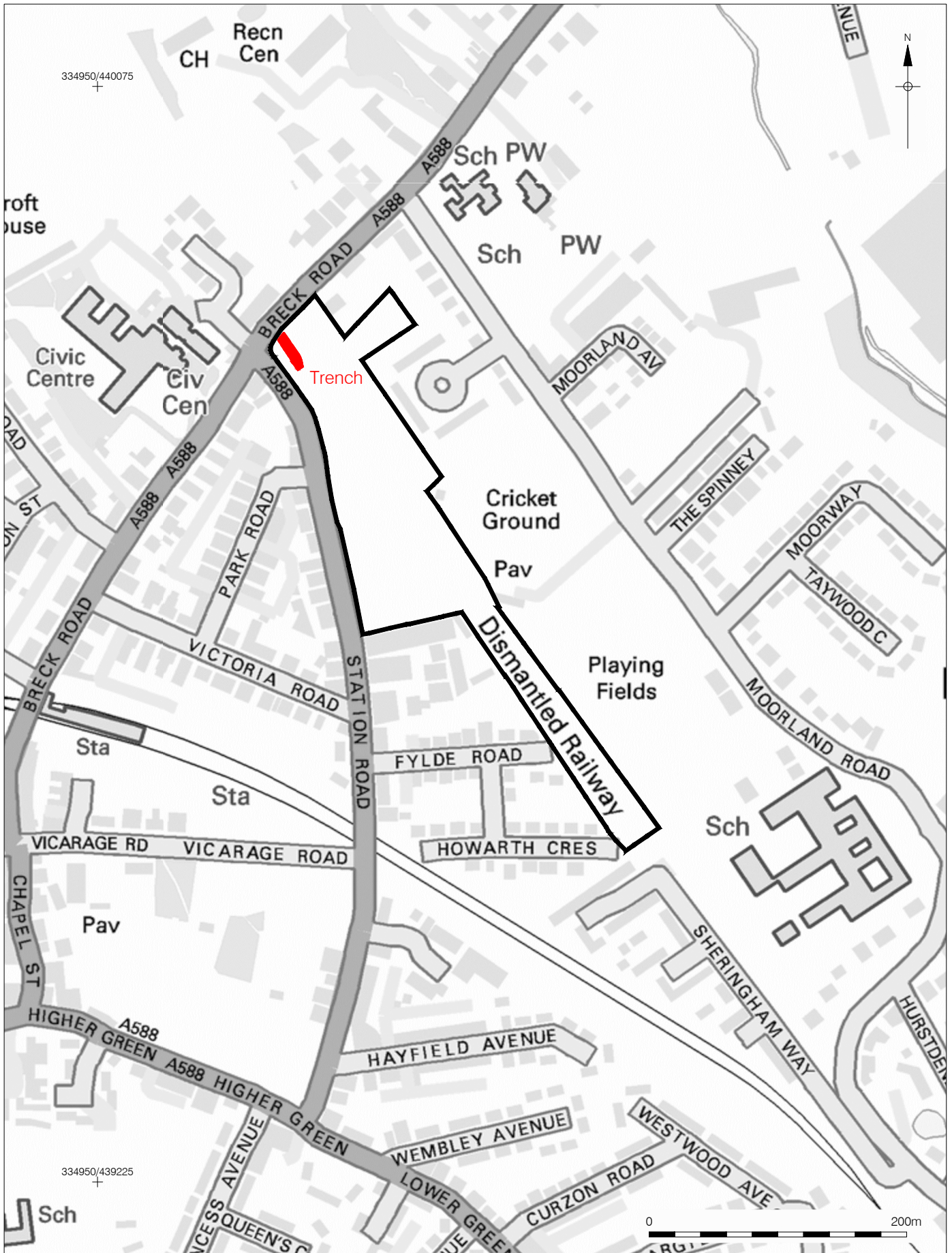


Figure 2
 Trench Location
 1:4,000 at A4

2.3 Geology and Topography

- 2.3.1 The solid geology of the area is Sidmouth Formation Mudstone with overlying superficial Devensian-Diamicton Till deposits (*British Geological Survey website*).
- 2.3.2 The market town of Poulton-le-Fylde is situated approximately 5.8m above sea level on a coastal plain known as the Fylde. The town is located on flat, slightly raised ground 2km from the river Wyre and 5km from the Irish Sea.

2.4 Planning Background

- 2.4.1 The 2007 planning permission was for a development of 83 dwellings and associated road network, parking and open space. Planning permission for the proposed scheme (07/00599/OUTMAJ) had an archaeological condition (No.2) to ensure an appropriate archaeological mitigation strategy was implemented:

“No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme or archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, including a timetable for the investigation, which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.”

- 2.4.2 The planning permission also had to comply with paragraphs 135 and 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012):

Para. 135: *“the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset”*

Para. 141: *“Local planning authorities should make information about the significance of the historic environment gathered as part of plan-making or development management publicly accessible. They should also require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted”*

- 2.4.3 The work had originally been agreed as an archaeological strip, map and record exercise across three specific areas, the first to the north-west, to encompass the railway station and goods shed, the second to the west to take in two possible dwellings and the third at the southern extent of site to record the remains of a gas works, smithy and warehouse. However, on receipt of the WSI (PCA 2012) the condition was then discharged by Wyre Borough Council (07/00599/DIS). Unfortunately the majority of the development was remediated prior to any archaeological work taking place. The works that followed involved a small excavation on ground around an old gas main at the north-west end of the site where part of the old station was located.

2.5 Archaeological and Historical Background

(Information in this section is largely extracted from the desk-based assessment (Oxford Archaeology 2005), and the WSI (PCA 2012); the research and writing of those responsible is acknowledged. Below is a summary of the archaeological and historical background. For a detailed description refer to the DBA (ibid. 2005).

- 2.5.1 The 2005 desk-based assessment identified 41 heritage sites on the development site or within the surrounding 0.5km radius; 35 of these being entries on the Lancashire Historic Environment Record and the remaining 6 being recorded from cartographic sources. The sites ranged in date from the Roman period to the post-medieval period. There were no designated heritage assets, such as scheduled monuments or listed buildings, on the site itself, but there were several listed buildings in the wider study area.
- 2.5.2 The development site had some potential for Roman archaeology, given that a coin dating to the reign of Domitian (AD 81-96) was reportedly found at Poulton Breck Railway Station in the 19th century, this was just one of several coins dating to the Roman period that have been found in the area. Approximately 15km south-east of the site, a Roman fort was established in the Agricolan period (AD 78-84) at Kirkham, on the north bank of the river Ribble; it was relatively short lived and had been abandoned by the mid-2nd century. Since the desk-based assessment was undertaken in 2005, the remains of two 2nd-century roundhouses were uncovered in 2008 near Garstang Road East, Poulton-le-Fylde, to the south-east of the site. Archaeological remains of the Roman period would be of local or regional archaeological interest.
- 2.5.3 The desk-based assessment identified numerous heritage assets within the development boundary that related to the post-medieval expansion of Poulton-le-Fylde. During this period the town developed with access to the small port at Skippool, and became well established by the early 17th century with imports of timber from the United States, and flax and tallow from Russia (Farrer & Brownbill 1912, 225-6). The flax was used for flax dressing and twine manufacturing, as well as sacking, sail cloth and sheet-making industries until the 19th century (Storey 2001, 47). The decline of the port in the 19th century was largely due to the growth of other ports, such as Fleetwood.
- 2.5.4 When railway lines to Fleetwood were opened in 1840, Poulton initially benefitted from the rapid expansion of Blackpool, as visitors had to alight at Breck Station near Poulton and continue their way to the seaside resort by horse-drawn charabanc or omnibus (Storey 2001, 71). The opening of the first railway station in 1840, the Poulton Breck Railway station, brought visitors and industry to the area, such as the brickworks to the south-east (Farrer & Brownbill 1912, 29). Several additional railway structures associated with the Fleetwood Branch Line can be seen on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map (1847) at the north-western end of the development area; these included a goods shed and a signal box (see Figure 5). The railway station was linked to the centre of Poulton along Breck Road, where goods could be brought into the station and transported easily to the market.
- 2.5.5 In 1896 a new railway line was constructed through Poulton towards Blackpool and opened in 1896 (*ibid.*, 225). The former Fleetwood line was considered to be too dangerous for passenger use after a derailment accident on 1st July 1893 with the death of three people and a further 30 injured (Website: *Hansard 1803-2005*). The line was consequently straightened with the adjoining Blackpool line. Nevertheless, the Fleetwood branch line still remained in use until 1968, mainly for goods purposes as evidenced by a goods buildings and an area marked as cattle pens. The old Poulton railway station was converted into a goods shed with the line becoming a coal and goods siding.

- 2.5.6 For the agricultural community, the railway provided invaluable links, as seen on early Ordnance Survey maps with buildings such as the seed and bulb warehouse positioned next to the Fleetwood railway line. Evidence of livestock transportation can be seen in the form of cattle pens at the station (Ordnance Survey Second Edition 1912, 25 inch series), which enabled cattle from further afield to be brought to market. This change is reflected on the 1912 25 inch series and 1913 6 inch series maps which label the station as a Goods Station (see Figure 7).
- 2.5.7 Other small-scale industries operated within the area, such as a smithy. A gas works was also established on the proposed development site in the second half of the 19th century (see Figures 6 and 7), and this is likely to have been associated with the lighting of the town in 1851 (Farrer & Brownbill 1912, 226).

3. PROJECT AIMS AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

3.1 Project Aims

3.1.1 From the outset, the aim of the work was set out in a WSI produced by PCA (2012). The archaeological work had the following site specific objectives :

- to expose all remains in the area associated with the railway station and goods shed through a programme of archaeological monitoring of machine removal of overgrowth, hard surfaces and overburden;
- to map the locations of all archaeological remains thus exposed, in order to establish the location and extent of the sites archaeological activity;
- to define and sample excavate all exposed archaeological features, in order to clarify the character and date of the sites archaeological activity.

3.1.2 The broad aim of the project was to record the heritage assets within the development site prior to their destruction. Additional aims of the project were:

- to compile a Site Archive consisting of all site and project documentary and photographic records, as well as all artefactual and palaeoenvironmental material recovered;
- to compile a report that contains an assessment of the nature and significance of all data categories, stratigraphic, artefactual, etc.

3.2 Research Objectives

3.2.1 Preservation *in situ* of important archaeological remains is almost always the preferred option in any development scheme. In the majority of cases, however, this is not possible with the result that appropriate and satisfactory provision for the recording of archaeological remains is usually implemented, followed by post-excavation analysis and publication of results. Therefore, the principal research objective of the archaeological investigations herein described was to further expose, record and excavate any remains relating to the railway, in order to gather information on construction techniques, and phases of development. Given the results of the desk-based assessment (Oxford 2005), the project was considered to have some potential to contribute to the knowledge of Roman Poulton-le-Fylde and a very high potential to contribute to existing knowledge of the 19th-century development of the railway within the market town.

3.2.2 *The Archaeology of North West England: An Archaeological Research Framework* (Newman & McNeil 2007) highlights the importance of research as a vital element of development led archaeological work. Behind much of the industrial and urban development of the late 18th and 19th centuries were developments in transport infrastructure. These transport systems changed the lifestyles of the local population and especially transformed the relationship between towns and their rural hinterlands as access to the ever increasing range of manufactured goods became limited only by income, not by distance from a navigable watercourse. Railways reduced the need for industrial workers to live close to the factory gates, allowing the development of first suburbs and later commuter and dormitory settlements. The framework notes that a potential for further research lies in the study of routeways and transport systems as single linear, monuments and catalysts for landscape change.

3.2.3 As described in the previous section, the site had the potential for archaeological remains not only from the dismantled railway line but also the former station, a goods shed and potentially the below ground remains of a signal box. The study of these railway structures is important as signal boxes have been

reduced steadily from around 10,000 in 1948 to under 500 in England today with both line closures and new signalling technology contributing to the decline in numbers (Minnis 2012).

- 3.2.4 Railway goods sheds are also a building type that is of importance, easily overlooked and widely threatened. Goods traffic was more important for the railways than passenger traffic, yet both it and the buildings that were associated with it tend to be neglected. Although the buildings associated with goods traffic have not, in most cases, been used for their intended purpose for many years, it does not mean that they are of negligible importance. They played a fundamental role in the economic infrastructure of the 19th and earlier 20th centuries. The goods shed was the hub through which raw materials arrived and finished goods were forwarded. It was essential to the development of modern retailing making possible the distribution of national brands to shops in cities, towns, and villages. Minnis (2015) argues that they deserve study on the same basis as the textile mills, ironworks, potteries, and other industrial plant that played such a vital role in making possible Britain's dominant 19th-century economic position.
- 3.2.5 Nevell (2010) has drawn attention to the lack of study of railway goods sheds and warehouses, the failure to assess accurately the total number built (or their survival rate), and a tendency to view and assess them on an art-historical basis, failing to recognise their significance as functional structures. Although many still remain, development pressure, combined with a widespread lack of appreciation or knowledge means that goods sheds are very much under threat, not in the same way as signal boxes (where an entire building type will be eliminated within a generation), but by the process of gradual attrition. An analysis of those in Sussex revealed that over half of those extant in 1980 had been demolished in the subsequent 35 years (Minnis 2015).
- 3.2.7 Morris (2003) notes the need for more work on the nation's railways. Further research for locomotive hauled railways include the development of lime depots, coal depots, signal and level crossing boxes, linesman's cabins, bridges and viaducts.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGIES

4.1 Fieldwork

- 4.1.1 The WSI produced by PCA (2012) set out the research aims and objectives of the project and, in a series of detailed method statements for project execution, described the techniques and approaches to be employed to achieve those aims and objectives. The programme of archaeological investigation consisted of a strip, map, and record exercise at the north-western end of the development area to record archaeological remains relating to the disused railway at Poulton-le-Fylde (Figure 2).
- 4.1.2 The archaeological fieldwork was undertaken 5th to 16th October 2015. All fieldwork was undertaken in accordance with the relevant standard and guidance documents of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) (CIfA 2014a). PCA is a CIfA-Registered Organisation.
- 4.1.3 The excavation area was located at the north-western end of the site and measured 8m NE-SW by 30.64m NW-SE. The area was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.40m below ground level; modern overburden and deposits of limited archaeological significance were excavated using a 13-tonne tracked excavator with a toothless ditching bucket under archaeological supervision.
- 4.1.4 Investigation of archaeological levels was done by hand, with cleaning, examination and recording both in plan and in section, where appropriate. Cleaning was restricted to portions of probable and certain archaeological features identified during machine removal of overburden. Investigations followed the normal principals of stratigraphic excavation and were conducted in accordance with the methodology set out in PCA's site manual (PCA 2009).
- 4.1.5 An overall plan of all archaeological features was drawn at 1:20. The elevations of structures were located using the site grid and recorded, using a single context recording system utilising pro forma context recording sheets. Plans were drawn at 1:20 and sections at 1:10.
- 4.1.6 A photographic record of the investigations was compiled using a digital SLR camera illustrating in both detail and general context the principal features and finds discovered. The photographic record also included 'working shots' to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted. All record photographs included a legible graduated metric scale.
- 4.1.7 A Leica Viva Smart Rover GNSS was used to establish Temporary Bench Marks (TBMs) on the site, as well as locate planning baselines. The height of all principal strata and features were calculated relative to Ordnance Datum using the TBM and indicated on the appropriate plans and sections.

4.2 Post-excavation

- 4.2.1 The stratigraphic data generated by the project is represented by the written, drawn and photographic records. A total of 25 archaeological contexts were defined during the course of the archaeological investigations (Appendix B). The contents of the paper and photographic elements of the Site Archive are quantified in Section 6. Post-excavation work involved checking and collating site records, and phasing the stratigraphic data (Appendix A). The archaeological remains were assigned to three broad phases of activity. A written summary of the archaeological sequence was then compiled, as described below in Section 5.
- 4.2.2 No artefactual or eco-factual material was recovered from the archaeological excavation.
- 4.2.3 The complete Site Archive, in this case comprising the written, drawn and photographic records (including all material generated electronically during post-excavation), will be packaged for long term curation.

- 4.2.4 In preparing the Site Archive for deposition, all relevant standards and guidelines documents referenced in the Archaeological Archives Forum guidelines document (Brown 2007) will be adhered to, in particular a well-established United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (UKIC) document (Walker, UKIC 1990) and an ClfA publication (ClfA 2014b). The depositional requirements of the body to which the Site Archive will be ultimately transferred will be met in full.
- 4.2.5 At the time of writing the Site Archive is housed at the Northern Office of PCA, Unit N19a Tursdale Business Park, Durham, DH6 5PG. When complete, the Site Archive will be deposited with the Museum of Lancashire, Preston, under the site code BRP 15. The Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) reference number for the project is: preconst1-227997.

5. RESULTS: THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

5.1 The Archaeological Sequence

During the investigations, separate stratigraphic entities were assigned unique and individual 'context' numbers, which are indicated in the following text as, for example, [100]. The archaeological sequence is described by placing stratigraphic sequences within broad phases, assigned on a site-wide basis in this case. Refer to Figure 3 & 4 for plan and sections. Site overviews can be seen in Plates 2 & 3.

5.1.1 Phase 1: 19th-Century Station

- 5.1.1.1 The earliest archaeological deposits encountered during the investigations comprised compact black coarse-sand ballast material [13] which was excavated for a maximum thickness of 0.20m thick, continuing below the base of excavation. The ballast deposit survived for a distance of 8m NE–SW by 30.64m NW–SE, being truncated to the north, east, and west, and the highest surviving level at which the ballast was recorded was 7.24m OD. This deposit comprised the 19th-century track bed and acted as a firm foundation for timber sleepers as the material restricted movement and therefore maintained the gauge of the railway.
- 5.1.1.2 At the north-eastern end of the excavation area, 22 timber sleepers were observed [19] which represented the remains of the original 19th-century Preston to Wyre Joint Railway (Figure 3). The track bed survived for a distance of 20.92m, truncated to the north-west by the installation of a new gas main gas, and was aligned NW–SE with timbers spaced c. 0.5m apart. The height in top of the sleepers was level along the length of the surviving portion at 7.17m OD. The sleepers measured 0.24m x 2.62m and 0.11m thick and were set horizontal with a box halved conversion and treated with creosote. A slight recess was observed on some of the timbers that measured 370mm x 210mm as well as three holes at either end with a 20mm diameter. The recess and holes would have housed fittings for the rail chairs that would have been screwed to the sleepers. No rail chairs were observed that related to Phase 1 activity, but it is highly likely that the rail chairs described in section 5.1.2 (Phase 2) were the same as those used in this earliest phase of railway as they both shared the same coach screw configuration.
- 5.1.1.3 At the north-western end of the excavation area, wall [11] was recorded that survived 7.70m NW–SE, with a NE-SW return recorded for a distance of 0.72m (Plate 4). To the north-west and the south-east the structure was truncated by ground remediation work. The wall measured 0.50m wide and was exposed for a height of 0.34m (four courses) to the base of excavation. The highest surviving level of the masonry was 7.43m OD. The bricks measured 220mm x 115mm x 70mm and were bonded with light grey lime mortar in the Flemish style. The wall was perhaps the only remains of the former Poulton Breck Railway Station (as shown on Plate 1) as it was on the same alignment as the station as shown on early Ordnance Survey maps (see 1847 map, Figure 5). To the south-west of the wall, a ground raising dump [12] was observed that comprised loose, dark brownish grey, sandy gravel. The deposit may have represented the backfill of a construction cut, but due to the limited area of excavation and the truncated nature of the surrounding area, no construction cut was identified.
- 5.1.1.4 To the north-east of the wall, a series of levelling deposits were observed the earliest exposed of which [9] comprised compact light brownish yellow sandstone fragments. This deposit survived for a distance of 3.82m NE–SW by 8.66m NW–SE and was exposed for a maximum thickness of 0.20m, continuing below the base of excavation. Overlying the sandstone deposit was a 60mm thick deposit of compact, dark

bluish grey, clayey sand [8] which acted as a levelling deposit for the overlying stone sett surface [7] (Plate 5).

- 5.1.1.5 The stone sett surface [7] was flush with brick wall [11] and comprised sandstone blocks ranging in size from 80mm x 120mm x 130mm to 140mm x 210mm x 210mm. The surface was recorded at a highest level of 7.43m OD. The blocks were roughly-hewn and set in a dark brownish grey medium sand. The surface was 0.12m thick and survived for a distance of 10.90m NW–SE, truncated to the north-west and south-east, by 3.60m NE–SW, truncated along its length by a service trench. A Victorian silver shilling dated to 1875 was found within the sandy matrix of the surface. Due to the location of the surface (trackside of the station wall [11]), it is likely that the surface formed the platform of the station during the Victorian period.
- 5.1.1.6 Beyond the truncation to the south-east, a small area of brick surface [10] was observed that was constructed with frogged bricks (105mm x 125mm x 80mm) across an area that measured 1.10m NW–SE by 0.38m NE–SW. The surface perhaps represented a repair in the stone-sett surface but this is uncertain as the majority of the stone setts had been removed during demolition of the railway structures.
- 5.1.1.7 At the south-eastern extent of the excavation area, two concrete column bases were observed [24] & [25] (Plate 6). The bases were composed of formed concrete in the shape of an octagon with a smaller concentric octagon in the centre. They were 0.36m apart and each measured 0.77m x 0.77m and were 0.16m thick. The highest surviving level on the masonry was 7.12m OD. The purpose of concrete bases is unknown but it is likely that they were used as a support base for a semaphore signal post (Plate 1).

5.1.2 Phase 2: 20th-Century Goods Yard

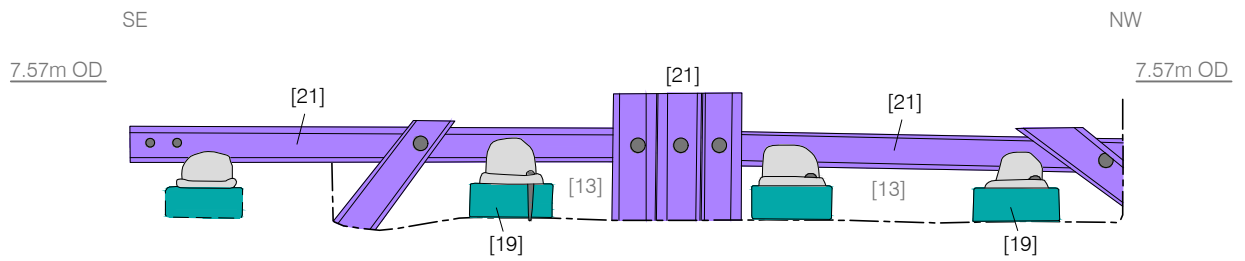
- 5.1.2.1 Phase 2 represents activity associated with the closure of the Poulton Breck Railway Station and its conversion into a goods shed, as shown on the later editions of the Ordnance Survey maps (see 1913 Map, Figure 7). No evidence of the goods shed shown on early Ordnance Survey maps to the north-east of the development area was discovered during the investigations; this is likely to have been truncated by ground remediation work.
- 5.1.2.2 Two iron rails [20] and [21] were observed at the north-western edge of the excavation area (Figure 3; Plates 7 & 8). The rails were bullhead in profile and measured 60mm wide, 120mm thick and 2.96m in length. The gauge (measured from the inside edge of the rails) was 1450mm, c. 4.757ft (the average British rail gauge is c. 4.8ft). Both rails were attached to timber sleepers [19] by iron rail chairs (Figure 4). The rail chairs measured 370mm x 210mm and had three holes, c. 20mm in diameter, for screw spike coach-screws. The holes were configured with two bolts on the inside track and one on the outside. Highly degraded wood was observed within the rail chair that represented the rotted remains of a wooden rail key. Attached to the iron rails were three upright bullhead rails with a further bullhead rail set diagonally on either side. The resulting structure would have formed a rail-built buffer stop. The buffer stop was anchored down by a stone deposit [15] that consisted of compact fragments of large sandstone cobbles with a further layer of compact black coarse sand ballast [14] dumped over the top.
- 5.1.2.3 A further addition to the area was a construction cut [23] for timber surface [17] which partially truncated the north-eastern edge of the stone-sett platform surface (Plate 9 & 10). The surface was constructed with timber levelling joists [18] that were bolted to the top of the earlier rail sleepers [19]. A timber surface [17] was then fixed to the levelling joists so it was positioned at the same level as the stone-sett surface [7]. The surviving element of the timber surface [17] comprised 38 horizontal, box-halved timbers aligned NW–SE. The 0.11m thick surface survived for a distance of 15.70m NW–SE by 2.42m NE–SW, truncated to the south-east and north-east. It is possible that the timbers were reused rail sleepers, but no holes for rail

chair screws were identified. The construction cut for the timber surface was backfilled with compact black gravel [22].

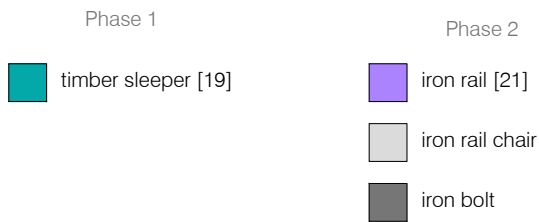
- 5.1.2.4 The conversion of the earlier railway line with the addition of the buffer stop and timber surface represents the closure of the line as a passenger railway and the conversion of the site into a goods yard; the station complementing the earlier goods shed on the other side of the tracks. Trains would have stopped outside the former station with goods being stored inside with timber surface [17] acting as a wooden road so that trucks could manoeuvre across the site. The goods shed had the simple function of transferring and temporarily storing goods from rail to road and vice versa. This meant that there had to be a platform on which the goods could be unloaded from either train, horse and cart, or later lorries.

5.2.3 Phase 3: Modern

- 5.2.3.1 Phase 3 was represented by modern services and ground raising dumps, with all railway related structures being demolished in the late 1960s/early1970s.
- 5.2.3.2 A NW-SE aligned gas main [6] ran along the length of the excavation area; the cut for this was 2.20m wide and was backfilled with brownish grey sandy clay [5]. A further service trench [4] truncated the gas main and housed a plastic pipe [3] with the cut backfilled with reddish pink gravel [2].
- 5.2.3.3 A ground raising dump was observed overlying timber surface [17] that consisted of weakly cemented light grey gravel. The deposit is likely to represent a period of disuse after the goods yard had closed in 1968 (Suggitt 2003).
- 5.2.3.4 The modern ground level was composed of compact dark brownish grey coarse sand [1] that measured 80-200mm thick.



Section 1
North-east facing section of rail, rail chairs and buffer stop



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Figure 4
Section 1
1:25 at A4

PART B: DATA ASSESSMENT

6. STRATIGRAPHIC DATA

6.1 Paper Records

6.1.1 The paper element of the Site Archive is as follows:

Item	No.	Sheets
Context register	1	1
Context/Group Sheets	25	25
Section register	1	1
Section drawings	1	1
Plans	1	8

Table 6.1: Contents of the paper archive

6.2 Photographic Records

6.2.1 The photographic element of the Site Archive is as follows:

Item	No.	Sheets
Monochrome print registers	1	1
Monochrome prints	18	3
Monochrome Negatives	18	1
Digital photograph registers	1	2
Digital photographs	45	N/A

Table 6.2: Contents of the photographic archive

6.3 Site Archive

6.3.1 The complete Site Archive, including the paper and photographic records, is currently housed at the PCA Northern Regional Office.

6.3.2 The Site Archive will eventually be deposited with the Lancashire Museum, Preston, under the Site Code BRP 15, for permanent storage and the detailed requirements of the repository will be met prior to deposition.

7. SUMMARY DISCUSSION OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDINGS

7.1 Phase 1: 19th-Century Station

7.1.1 Elements of early railway structures at the site formed part of the Preston to Wyre branch line station at Poulton. The station was constructed in 1840 and remained in use for 53 year as a passenger station. Poulton initially benefitted from the rapid expansion of Blackpool, as visitors had to alight at Breck station near Poulton and continue their way to the seaside resort.

7.1.2 The station was modest in design, being small and functional (Plate 1). The main station building was constructed of red brick with a wooden recessed lean-to trackside structure that would have sheltered passengers with gas lamps situated along the platform. A small section of station wall was recorded within the excavation area as well as patches of the original platform surface. Both were well preserved below ground level prior to ground remediation taking place at the site. Evidence of what could have been bases for semaphore posts, which would have been controlled by the signal box seen on the right side of Plate 1, were also noted to the south-east of the station wall.

7.1.3 The Fleetwood branch line was evident in a series of timber rail sleepers on the eastern edge of the excavation area that would have previously continued across Breck Road via a level crossing.

7.1.4 Due to the limited depth of the excavation, no geological deposits were observed.

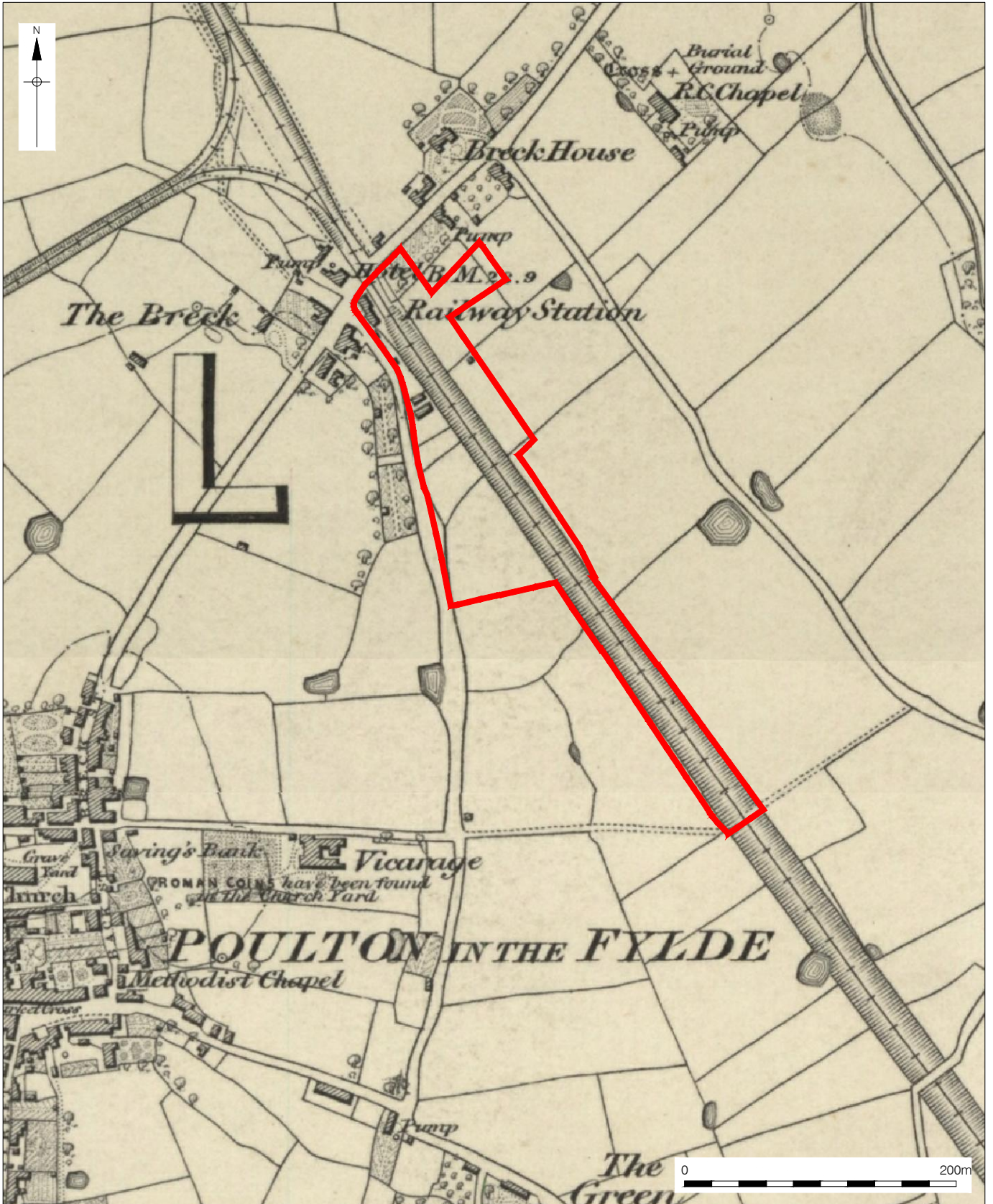
7.2 Phase 2: 20th-Century Goods Yard

7.2.1 The Breck Road Railway Station closed to passengers in 1893 following a fatal accident when three people died and 30 were injured. Due to public pressure, the Fleetwood line was straightened out with the adjoining Blackpool line and a new passenger station constructed to the south-west. The former line was considered too dangerous for passenger use following the derailment and the old station was converted into a goods shed. The 1913 Ordnance Survey map shows both goods sheds within the development area and a rail siding in front of the newly converted goods shed (see Figure 7). This rail siding was observed during the excavation in the form of the buffer stop.

7.2.2 The excavation area also revealed that the old rail sleepers had been covered with a timber surface that would have facilitated movement around the goods yard for transferring goods from road to rail and vice versa.

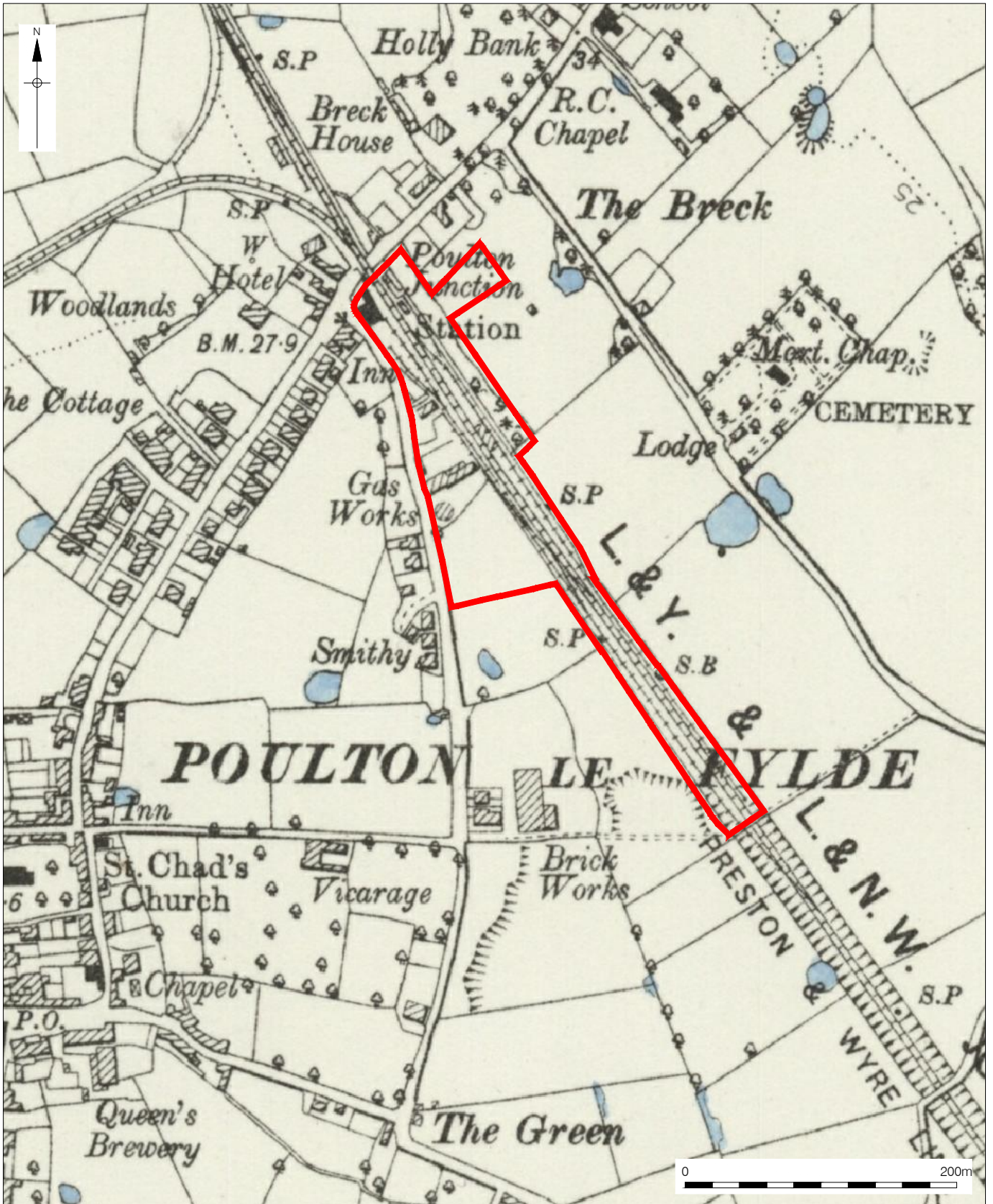
7.3 Phase 3: Modern

7.3.1 The goods yard closed in 1968 and the railway dismantled. On the Fourth edition Ordnance Survey map (1990) the goods shed has been removed with the land becoming derelict.



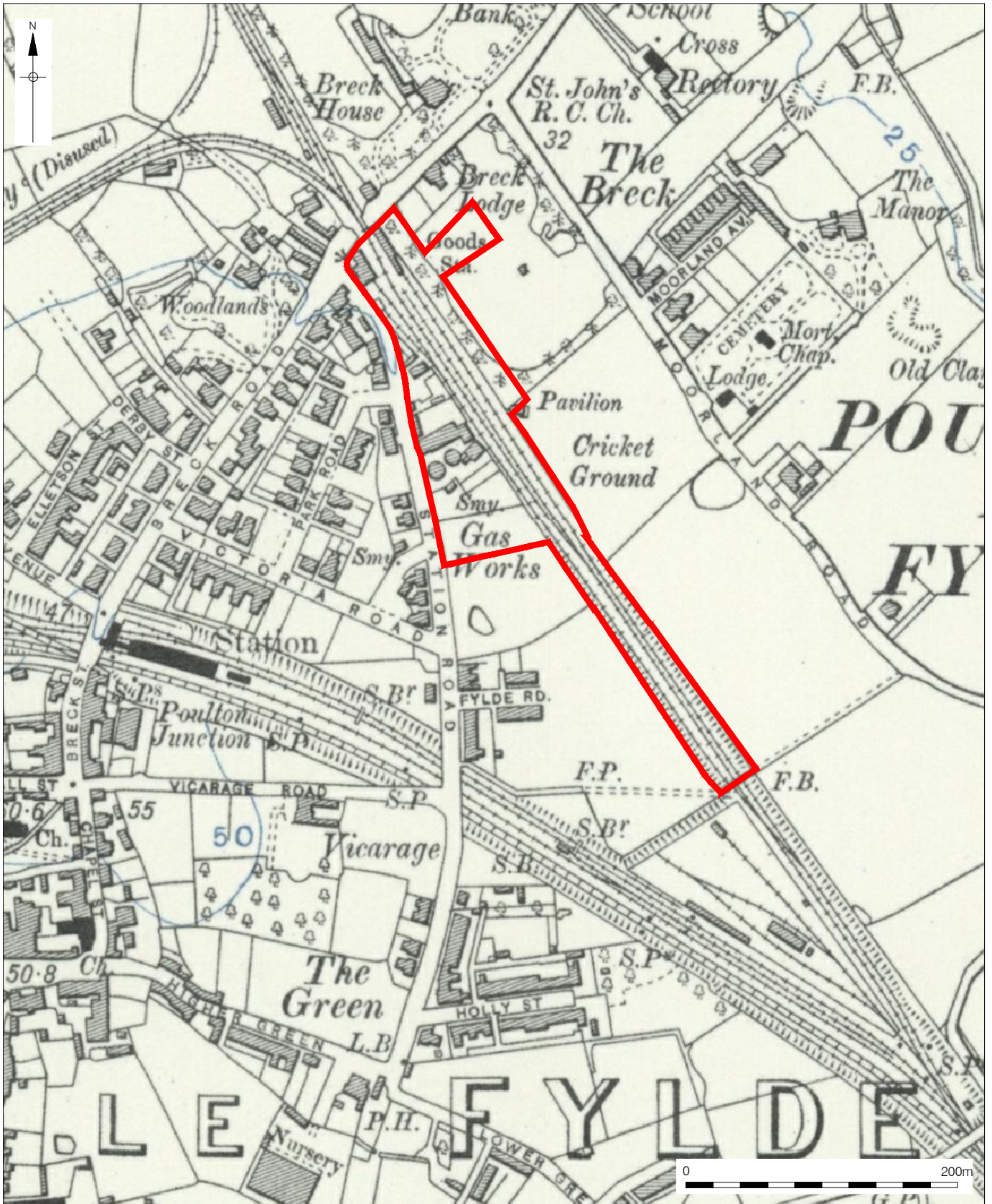
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Figure 5
Ordnance Survey Map, 1847 (6 inch series)
1:4,000 at A4



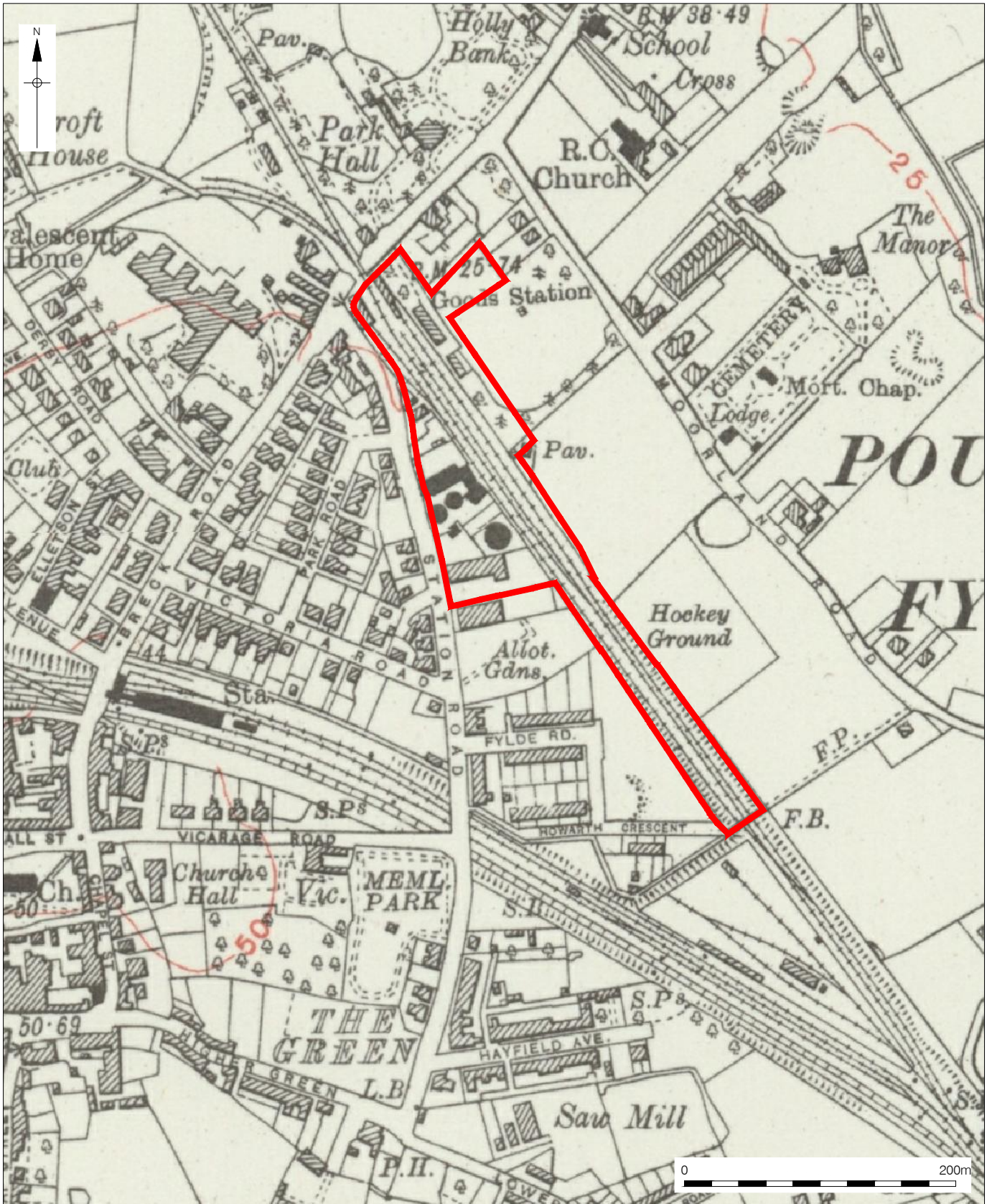
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Figure 6
 Ordnance Survey Map, 1895 (6 inch series)
 1:4,000 at A4



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Figure 7
 Ordnance Survey Map, 1913 (6 inch series)
 1:4,000 at A4



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Figure 8
Ordnance Survey Map, 1930 (6 inch series)
1:4,000 at A4

8. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROJECT DATA AND SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS

8.1 The archaeological investigations at the Breck Road site have demonstrated that below-ground remains of railway infrastructure survived in a moderate state of preservation in the north-western part of the site (located around the former gas main). Ground remediation schemes, however, had removed any sign of the 19th-century structures associated with the railway, namely the entire footprint of the passenger station, the early goods shed and the signal box.

8.2 The principal remains identified at the site comprised a wall and platform of the Breck Road passenger station, originally constructed in the 1840s and converted into a goods shed in the 1890s and timber sleepers of the Fleetwood branch line. As highlighted by Minnis (2015), although many goods sheds remain, development pressure, combined with widespread lack of appreciation or knowledge means that they are very much under threat by a process of gradual attrition. An analysis of those in Sussex revealed that over half of those extant in 1980 had been demolished in the subsequent 35 years. The work undertaken at Breck Road ensures the preservation by record of part of the passenger station/goods shed and the project is therefore of particular value to local historians and archaeologists of the industrial period as a source of information about Poulton's history, and as material evidence for 19th- and 20th-century railway goods yards, which are increasingly at risk of destruction.

8.3 Along with the archaeological and architectural significance of the project data, the site of the former station and its archaeological remains hold value for a number of different communities and groups, such as railway enthusiasts, former railway workers, local residents and students of all ages.

8.4 The proposed method for dissemination of the final publication report/paper is within a web-based outlet. The publication report/paper would, as a minimum, contain the following:

- **Abstract:** *an introductory paragraph summarising the publication, particularly the main archaeological periods represented and the main findings and their significance.*
- **Introduction:** *the introduction will include the site location, and will set out the overall background to the investigations and outline the main methodologies employed.*
- **Geological and topographical background:** *this section will detail the geology and topography of the site.*
- **Archaeological background:** *this section will set the archaeological results in local and regional context, with particular focus on local trades, practises and industry, conducted on the margins of smaller towns in the county during the 19th century.*
- **Excavated evidence:** *this core section of the paper will detail the results of the investigations and will include a brief synthesised description of the recorded evidence.*
- **Discussion:** *the discussion will propose an interpretation of the archaeological remains based on the excavated features and the artefactual evidence.*
- **Illustrations:** *the paper will be illustrated, including: site location plan; location plan of the excavated area; plans (and sections) of recorded remains; interpretative plans; and photographs.*

8.5 A draft of the proposed final report would be sent to the Lancashire Archaeological Planning Officer for comment prior to publication in the proposed web-based form.

PART C: REFERENCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

9. REFERENCES

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Cartographic Sources

Ordnance Survey Map, First Edition, 1847, 1 mile: 6"

Ordnance Survey Map, 1895, 1 mile: 6"

Ordnance Survey Map, 1912, 1 mile: 25"

Ordnance Survey Map, First Edition, 1913, 1 mile: 6"

Ordnance Survey Map, 1930, 1 mile: 6"

Ordnance Survey Map, Fourth Edition, 1990, 1 mile: 25"

10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND CREDITS

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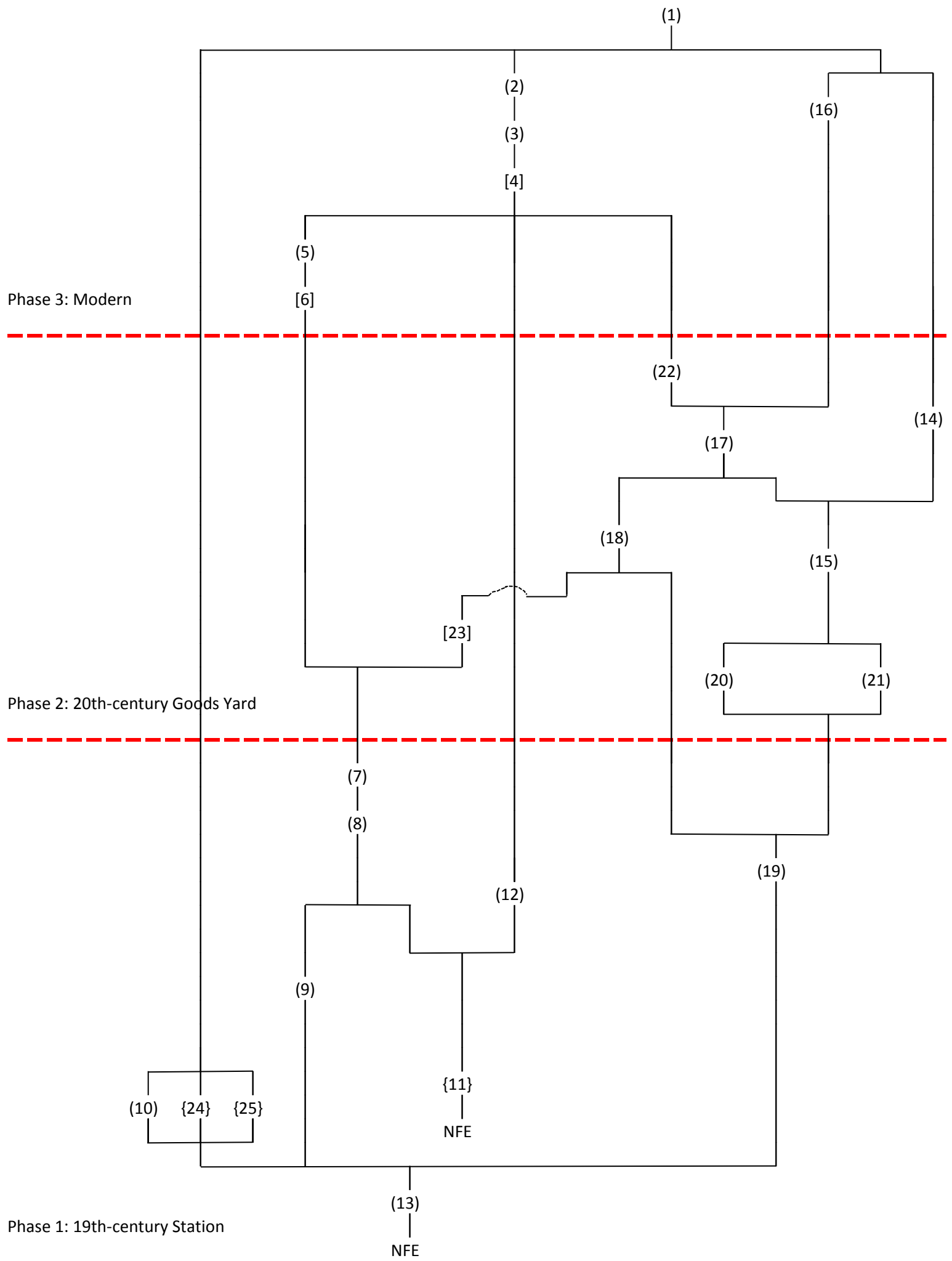
Post-excavation management: Jenny Proctor

Report: Scott Vance

Illustrations: Jennifer Simonson

APPENDIX 1
STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX

BRP 15: Stratigraphic Matrix



BRP 15: CONTEXT INDEX

Context	Phase	Type 1	Type 2	Interpretation
1	3	Deposit	Layer	Modern Ground Level
2	3	Deposit	Fill	Fill of pipe cut [4]
3	3	Deposit	Pipe	Plastic pipe
4	3	Cut	Linear	Cut for pipe [3]
5	3	Deposit	Fill	Fill of gas main cut [6]
6	3	Cut	Linear	Gas main cut
7	1	Masonry	Surface	Stone sett surface
8	1	Deposit	Layer	Levelling for stone setts [7]
9	1	Deposit	Layer	Ground raising dump?
10	1	Masonry	Surface	Brick surface
11	1	Masonry	Structure	Brick wall
12	1	Deposit	Layer	Ground raising dump
13	1	Deposit	Layer	Ballast
14	2	Deposit	Layer	Ballast
15	2	Deposit	Layer	Stone dump
16	3	Deposit	Layer	Ground raising dump
17	2	Timber	Horizontal	Timber surface
18	2	Timber	Horizontal	Timber levelling?
19	1	Timber	Horizontal	Rail sleepers
20	2	Structure	Rail	Iron rail
21	2	Structure	Rail	Iron rail
22	2	Deposit	Fill	Fill of [23]
23	2	Cut	Linear	Cut for timber surface [17]
24	1	Masonry	Structure	Concrete column base
25	1	Masonry	Structure	Concrete column base

**APPENDIX 3
PLATES**



Plate 1. Poulton Breck Railway Station. Courtesy of Poulton-le-Fylde Historical & Civic Society



Plate 2. Site overview, looking north-west (2 x 2m scales)



Plate 3. Site overview, looking south-west (2 x 2m scales)



Plate 4. Wall [11], looking south-east (2m scale)



Plate 5. Stone-sett surface [7], looking south-east (2m scale)



Plate 6. Concrete bases [25] & [24], looking south-west (1m scale)



Plate 7. Timber sleepers with iron rails and base of a buffer stop, looking west-north-west (2m scale)



Plate 8. Timber sleepers, showing rail chairs, iron rails and base of a buffer stop, looking south-west (2m scale)



Plate 9. Timber surface [17], looking north-west (1m scale)



Plate 9. Timber surface [17], looking south-west (2m scale)

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