

**CHESTER ROAD,
HUNTINGTON, CHESHIRE:
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING
BRIEF**

Prepared for: Metnor Construction



SLR Ref: 402.07754.00001
Version No:1
September 2018



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Status of report: FINAL

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Date	6 th September 2018
Reviewed	Tim Malim
Date	3 rd October 2018
Revisions	Map update and grammatical issues

The SLR staff involved in the implementation of this project were:

Name	Job Title	Role in project
John Winfer	Project Archaeologist	Field work
Tim Malim	Technical Director	Management

Acknowledgements

SLR is grateful for the assistance of Paul Crame (Metnor Construction) and Mark Leah (Cheshire County Council) during the course of the site works.

The investigation was designed by Tim Malim (SLR). Fieldwork was undertaken by John Winfer.

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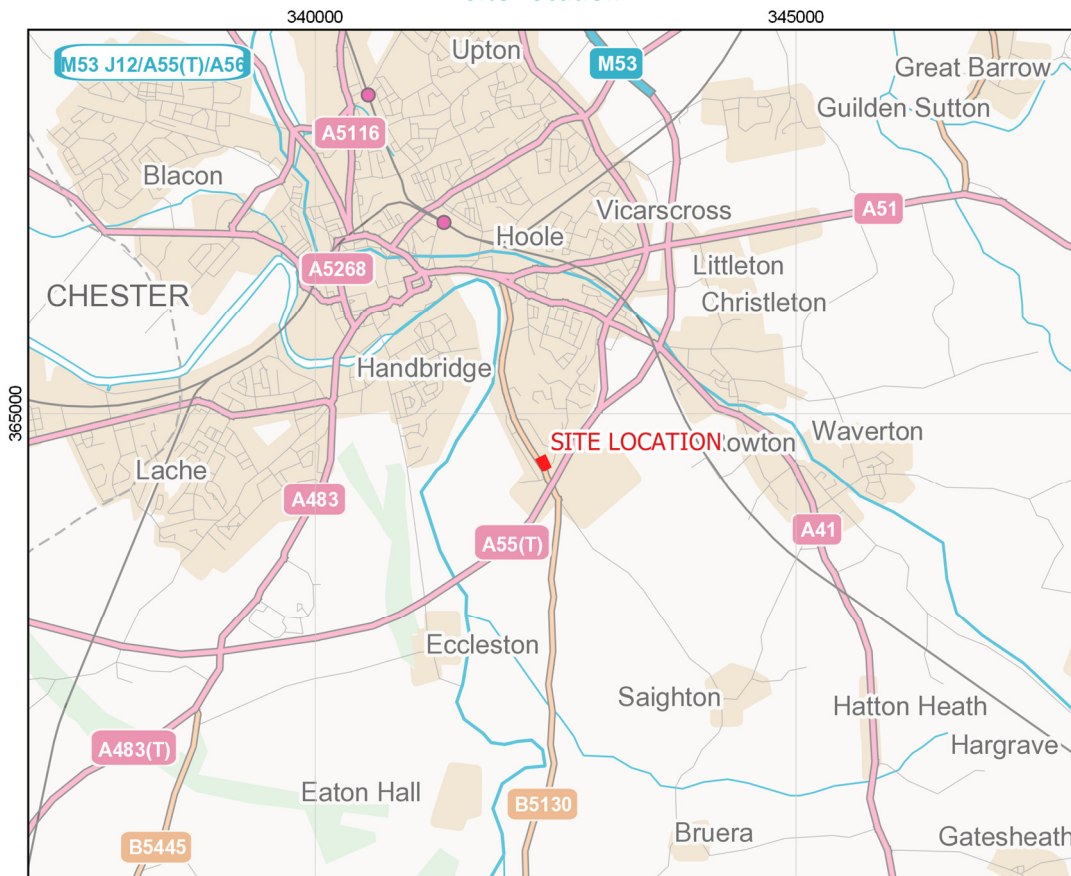
1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Project

SLR Consulting was instructed by CARE UK to prepare a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording (watching brief) at 97 - 99 Chester Road, Huntington, Cheshire, CH3 6BH. This report outlines the results of the watching brief which was commissioned by their Principal Contractors, Metnor Construction Ltd.

Planning permission has been granted for the demolition of an existing garage and the erection of a care home with car parking, landscaping and amenity space (application no. 19/00662/FUL). The site is located at Grid Ref. SJ 42378 64487, and comprises an area of c.3800m².

**Figure 1-1
Site Location**



OpenData Mapping: Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2018

When the watching brief began the garage had been demolished and removed and the 'Site' comprised a levelled area of exposed made ground. Chester Road runs at the west of the site with Gorse Way at the south. Housing borders the site at the north and east. The watching brief monitored the excavation of strip footings for the care facility, excavation works relating to the construction of a basement and excavation works involved in the installation of attenuation tanks.

Figure 1-2
Plan of approved scheme



2.0 Archaeological Background and Potential

The following is taken from the WSI written for the work in June 2018 by SLR Consulting¹.

2.1.1 Geology and Topography

The site is located on the Chester Pebble Beds Formation, made up of pebbly (gravelly) sandstone formed approximately 246 to 251 million years ago in the Triassic Period. These sedimentary rocks were the results of rivers depositing mainly sand and gravel detrital material in channels creating river terrace deposits, comprising: fine silt and clay from overbank floods forming floodplain alluvium; some areas of peat; and areas of estuarine and coastal plain deposits mapped as alluvium.

The superficial geology of the site is Devensian Till formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period, in a local environment previously dominated by ice age conditions. These rocks were formed in cold periods with Ice Age glaciers scouring the landscape and depositing moraines of till with outwash sand and gravel deposits from seasonal and post glacial meltwaters.

2.1.2 Prehistoric and Roman

Approximately 300m south east of the site, two parallel U-shaped prehistoric field boundary ditches and a third V-shaped ditch, to the southwest of the other two, are described by the Historic Environment Record (HER) as prehistoric or possibly Roman (HER 7417). The alignment of the ditches, which differs from that of the Roman field boundaries discussed below, may indicate a prehistoric date. One associated Iron Age sherd of pottery was found.

To the north is a north/south orientated Roman road (HER 8019/1/0) which heads from Great Boughton to the north, to the village of Aldford approximately 5 miles to the south of the Site. The Roman field boundaries (HER 7418/1) approximately 300m to the east and south east of the site indicates that the Roman road forks near a crossing at the Caldly Brook to form another (south easterly) route heading towards the village of Saighton and beyond. It has been suggested that the field boundaries are indicative of 'centuriation' of the landscape as seen elsewhere in the Roman world, the purpose being the allocation of land for retired soldiers. Approximately 850m south east of the Site a possible Roman rural settlement was identified (HER 7418/2), dating from the 1st to 4th century AD. This took the form of a broadly rectangular enclosure with associated features and ceramic building material as well as sherds of pottery.

2.1.3 Early Medieval and Medieval

Immediately adjacent and to the south of the Roman settlement enclosure mentioned above is a medieval moated site (HER 1946). The site is thickly covered with trees and undergrowth and to date traces of internal habitation have not been identified. The moat still held water in 1954 but was dry by 1964. Ridge and furrow and a medieval boundary ditch (HER 7419/1) were identified to the south east of the Site. To the south of the ridge and furrow was a medieval rural settlement (HER 7419/2). Sherds of 13th-14th century pottery were recovered from the site, and the fill of one of the postholes has been radiocarbon dated to AD 1039- 1164.

Two routes have also been identified as medieval. An historic route from Sandy Lane (HER 11395), first mentioned in the 14th century and frequently used as the boundary of the City of Chester, passes to the west of the Site along Chester Road. It was frequently referred to as the 'road in the hollow' or the 'sandy lane' in the medieval and post medieval periods. However given it was already a hollow way in the medieval period

¹ SLR 2018 *Chester Road, Huntington, Cheshire; A Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

and runs on a parallel trajectory with the projected Roman road to Saughton mentioned above, it is possible that this route has Roman origins – either as part of the centuriation of the land or as a routeway.

The second medieval routeway, Green Lane (HER 11384), is located to the north of the Site and is recorded on Bryant's map of 1831. The HER dates it as medieval to post-medieval (1066 – 1900), however it follows the same route as the Roman road (8019/1/0) from Great Boughton to Aldford, except for a deviation to the east from the Roman route just north of the Caldly Brook.

2.1.4 Post-Medieval and Modern

Saughton Camp, a World War II Army training camp (HER 7420), is situated approximately 200m south east of the Site and was initially built in 1939. It was slowly decommissioned from 1983 and by 1997 much of the camp had been demolished. The site included a training camp, hospital, gymnasium, barrack block, armoury and air raid shelter among other features.

Approximately 500m north east of the Site is the location of Adder Hill Brickworks (HER 11201) extant from 1800 to 1899. The brickworks are recorded on Ordnance Survey 1st edition maps from the late 19th century along with associated buildings and a brick pit.

The earliest Ordnance Survey (OS) map evidence for the site is the first edition 1:2,500 map of 1874. The area of the Site is located within part of an enclosed field system, with an orchard directly to the north. Subsequent OS maps depict no significant change to this area until the 1960 1:2,500 map, which shows a dance hall and other building on the Site. The 1986 1:2,500 OS map shows the existing garage, which is scheduled for demolished.

3.0 Aims and Objectives

3.1.1 Aims

The aims set out in the WSI for this work were:

- to allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence of which has not been established in advance of the development prior to potential damage and destruction by earthmoving activities; and
- to provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard

The objectives that were set out were:

- to monitor the intrusive groundworks taking place at the Site;
- to clean (where necessary) and record any archaeological remains exposed;
- to excavate and record any archaeological remains that will be removed by construction work;
- to recover all artefacts from deposits of potential significance;
- to analyse the site records and artefacts to produce a report on the archaeology of the Site; and
- to submit an ordered archive to a suitable local repository.

4.0 Methodology

All fieldwork was carried out as outlined in the WSI for this work.²

The work was carried out in four phases. The first and third phases involved the monitoring of the excavation of foundation trenches at the south and north of the site. The first phase at the south of the site was carried out between 14th and 17th May 2018. The second phase, which involved the excavation of a basement area at the centre of the site, was carried out on 4th June 2018. The third phase was carried out on 25th July 2018. The fourth phase, which involved the excavation of attenuation tanks, was carried out on 5th September 2018.

In all phases made ground was removed from the watching-brief area down to the underlying naturally deposited strata by a tracked excavator. This process was monitored by SLR to ensure the optimum conditions for identifying archaeological features. Where no archaeological features were present excavation was continued to the depth necessary for construction. Areas devoid of features were recorded as such.

4.1 Monitoring

All archaeological work was monitored by the Cheshire Archaeological Advisory Service Team Leader (CAASTL) Mark Leah.

4.2 Destination Museum

Grosvenor Museum has been contacted regarding potential deposition of the archive. An OASIS record has been completed under slrconsu1-321446.

4.3 Reporting

Approved versions of this report will be circulated to:

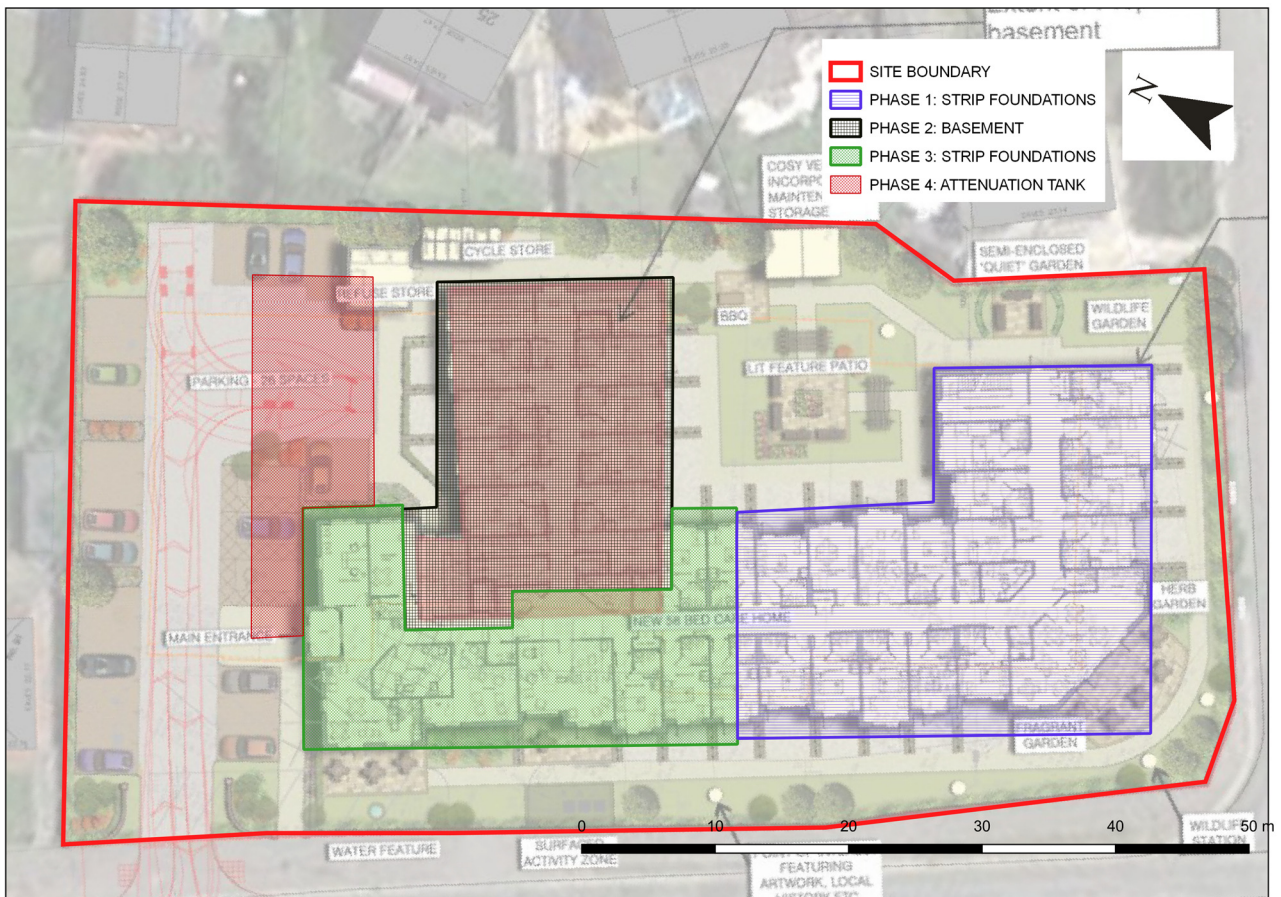
- The Client;
- The CAASTL;
- SLR Consulting Limited; and
- the OASIS record of the work.

² SLR 2018 *Chester Road, Huntington, Cheshire; A Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

5.0 Results

The watching brief was carried out between 14th May and 5th September 2018 during four phases (Figure 5-1). Phases 1 and 3 involved the monitoring of the excavation for strip foundations (Figures 5-2, 5-3, 5-4 and 5-6) while Phases 2 and 4 comprised the monitoring of the stripping of larger areas (Figures 5-4 and 5-7).

Figure 5-1
Areas observed during watching brief



Stratigraphy across this site comprised between 0.5 and 2.5m of mottled brown red clay silt made ground (100) which contained building rubble and overlay brown red clay silt natural subsoil (101). Much of made ground (100) appeared to comprise the surrounding subsoil mixed with building rubble suggesting the site may have been heavily landscaped during previous phases of development. Prior to these excavation works the site was relatively flat and sat at between 20m and 20.5m AOD. Natural subsoil was observed at between approximately 17.5m and 20m AOD. The original level appeared to be between 19.5m and 20m AOD. The site was particularly disturbed at the south east of the site where remedial works relating to contamination had previously taken place. There was further disturbance at the north west of the site where oil tanks were identified and removed. No features of archaeological features were observed during these works.

Figure 5-2
Foundation trench during Phase 1 of works looking north west



Figure 5-3
Excavation of foundation trenches during Phase 1 looking north west



Figure 5-4
Phase 2 Basement area looking north east



Figure 5-5
Removal of oil tank during Phase 3 looking north



Figure 5-6
Excavation of Phase 3 foundations looking east



Figure 5-7
Phase 4 attenuation tanks area looking south west



6.0 Conclusion

The watching brief successfully established the stratigraphy across the site with mottled brown red clay silt made ground, containing significant quantities of modern building rubble, overlaying brown red clay silt natural subsoil. Occasional modern disturbance was recorded across the site. The made ground appeared to be derivative of the natural subsoil suggesting the site has been significantly disturbed during different phases of development during which any archaeology previously present would have been destroyed.

No features of archaeological significance were observed.

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