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# Land adjacent to Meadow House, Wrexham Road, Chester, CH4 7QQ.

July 2019  
V 1.0



Archaeological Watching Brief  
Project Code: A0173.1  
Report no. 0204

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# **Land adjacent to Meadow House, Wrexham Road, Chester, CH4 7QQ.**

## **July 2019**

Report no. 0204 v1.0

Archaeological Watching Brief

Aeon Archaeology  
25, Mold Road  
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Project Code: A0173.1  
Date: 15/07/2019  
Client: Elmridge Developments  
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# Land adjacent to Meadow House, Wrexham Road, Chester, CH4 7QQ.

## June 2019

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## **1.0 NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY**

Aeon Archaeology was commissioned by Elmridge Developments Ltd to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks associated with the erection of three detached dwellings together with associated access, parking and landscaping on land adjacent to Meadow House, Wrexham Road, Chester, CH4 7QQ.

The archaeological watching brief at Wrexham Road Service Station took the form of a monitored topsoil and subsoil strip in a central band across the development area. The archaeological watching brief succeeded in identifying relatively modern archaeological remains in the form of 4 tree boles related to a former orchard. These were considered to be of low significance when compared with the archaeological potential of the site. Furthermore, the site was partially covered in a layer of mixed overburden consisting of coarse building materials.

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

Aeon Archaeology was commissioned by Elmridge Developments Ltd (hereafter the Client) to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks associated with the erection of three detached dwellings together with associated access, parking and landscaping on land adjacent to Meadow House, Wrexham Road, Chester, CH4 7QQ (hereafter the Site) centred on (NGR SJ 39893 64012).

The following condition with regards to archaeology was assigned to the full planning permission (18/00932/FUL):

### Condition 3

*No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The work shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved scheme.*

### Reason

*Having regard to Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 as amended it is necessary to have these details before development commences to ensure there is no harm to heritage assets. The use of such a condition is in line with the guidance set out in Paragraph 141, Section 12 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), published by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the still current PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide (Department for Communities and Local Government, Department for Culture Media and Sport, English Heritage, 2010).*

Policy Relevant to this condition is set out in paragraph 199, Section 6 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019), published by the Department for Communities and Local Government; and Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2 (Historic England 2015).

The Development Management Archaeologist and Team Leader (hereafter DMA) at Cheshire Archaeology Planning Advisory Service (Total Environment) Cheshire Shared Services (hereafter CAPAS) made the following Consultee comments regarding the development proposal:

*The development is restricted in extent but will involve significant ground disturbance within an area that, based upon an examination of the historic and recent mapping and aerial photographs, has not been previously disturbed. Any archaeological deposits that are present, therefore, are likely to be relatively well-preserved but will be vulnerable to damage by works associated with the construction of the dwellings.*

The work adhered to the guidelines specified in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (hereafter CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief* (CIfA, 2014).



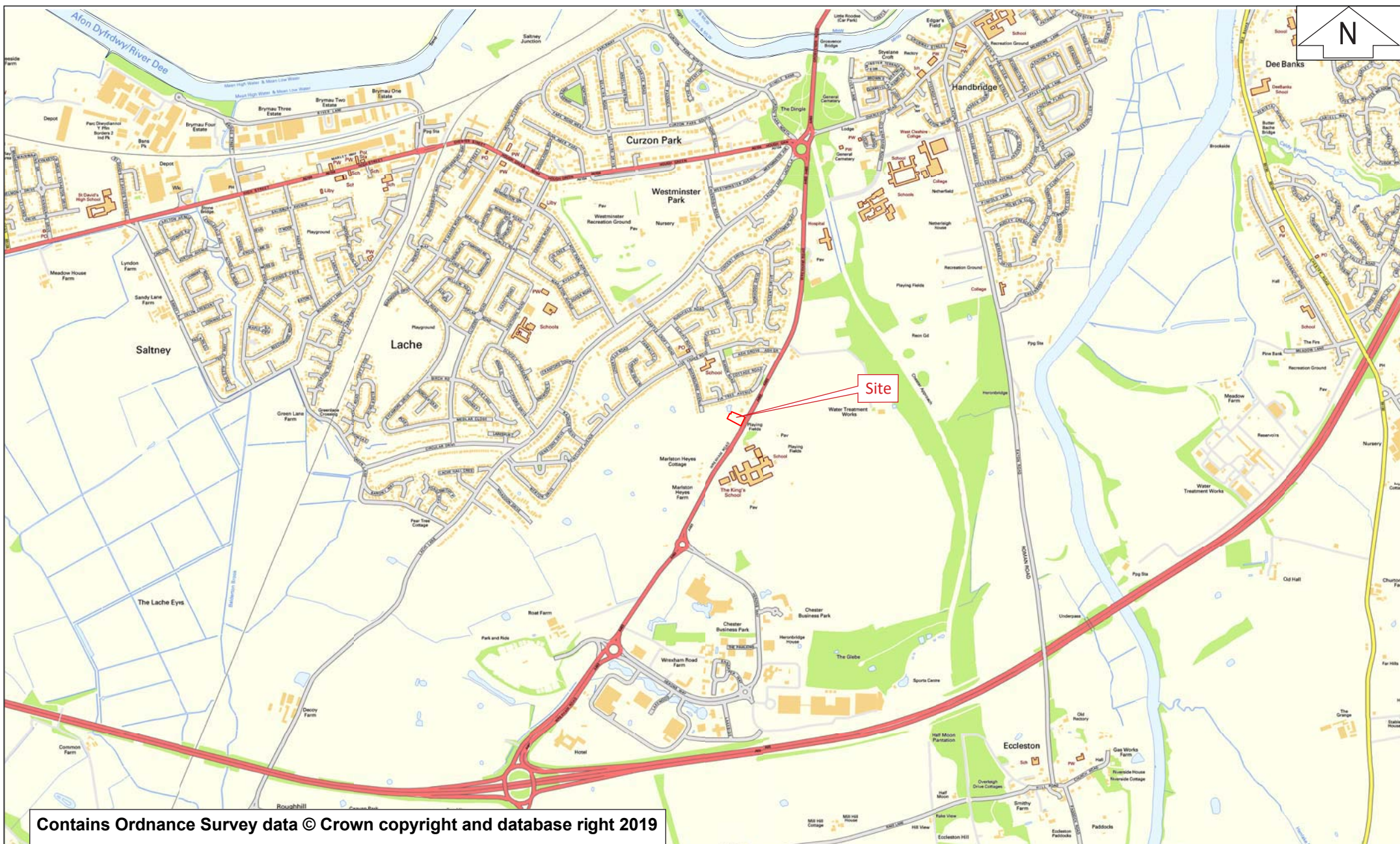


Figure 01: Location of the proposed development site at Wrexham Road, Chester.  
Scale 1:20,000 at A4.



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Figure 02: Location of the proposed development site at Wrexham Road, Chester.  
Scale 1:5,000 at A4.

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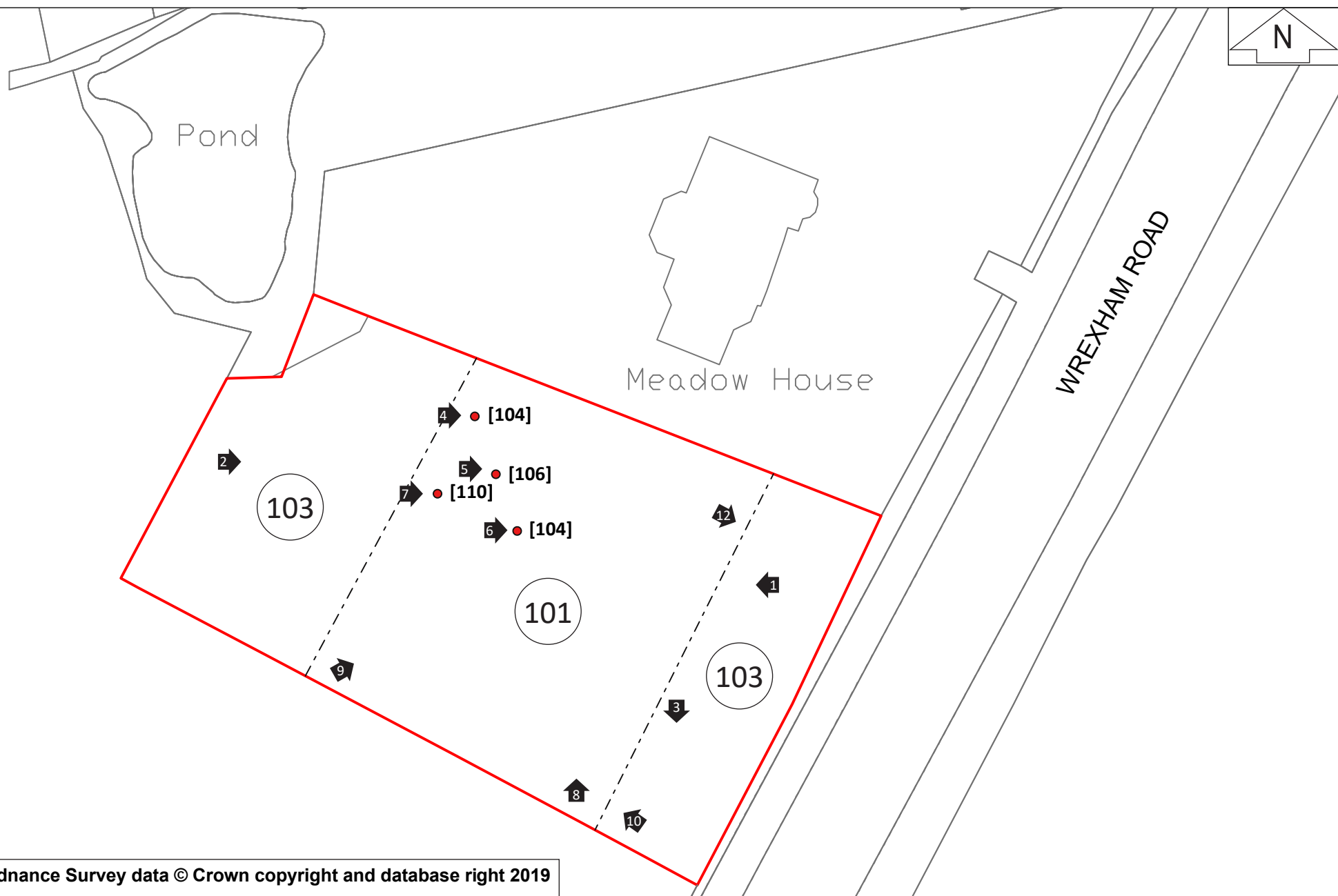
Figure 03: Location of the proposed development site at Wrexham Road, Chester.  
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### 3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

No sites are currently recorded on the Cheshire Historic Environment Record from within the application boundary but the site lies on the outskirts of Chester and lies immediately to the north of the ancient boundary of Chester parish. In addition, the area around Chester is known to have been part of an organised, enclosed landscape in the Roman period and evidence for this has come from a number of recent developments in and around Chester. These include Saighton Camp, the Boughton Retail Centre, and the Chester Business Park in 2003. The latter is probably the most relevant in this instance as it lies closest to the application area and saw the excavation of numerous Roman field boundaries and an extensive area of settlement. It is entirely possible that similar remains are present within the application area.

Following examination of historic map evidence (First, Second, Third and Fourth edition OS Maps 6 inch) there appears to be no evidence of structures or any landmarks within the area or within its immediate vicinity. However, the 1842 Tithe Map apportionment records the plot (number 105) as being in the township of *St. Mary on the Hill*, owned by *Rev. James Mainwaring* and occupied by one *Samuel Jones*. Its name is considered to be part of *Near Chester Field*, suggesting that this plot may have been enclosed from a larger field; this is recorded as *Pasture* with an area of *5 Acres, 1 Rood and 31 Perches*.

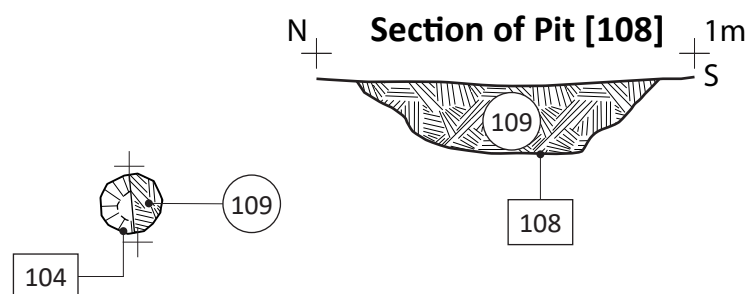
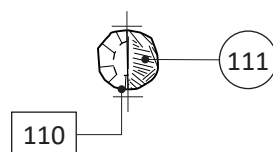
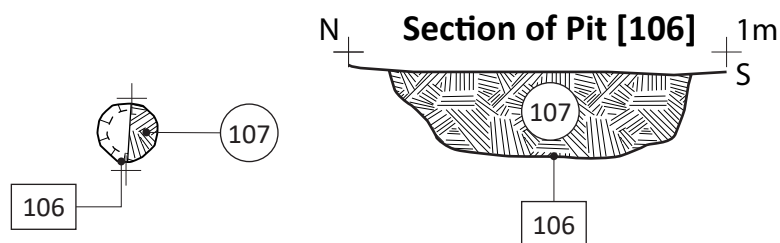
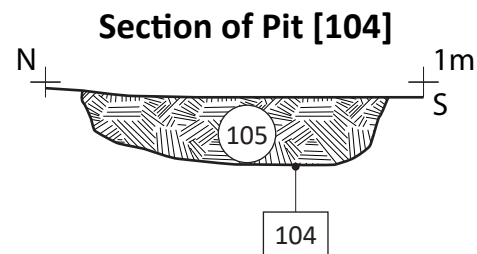
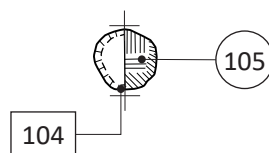
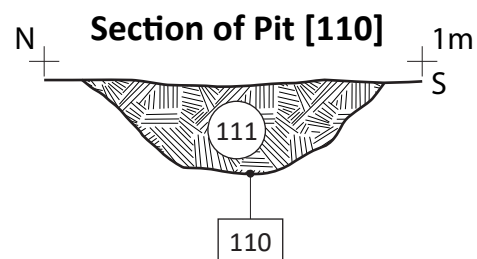


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**Figure 04:** Area following topsoil (103) and subsoil (102) strip showing locations of tree bowls and photographic plates. Scale 1:500 @ A4.

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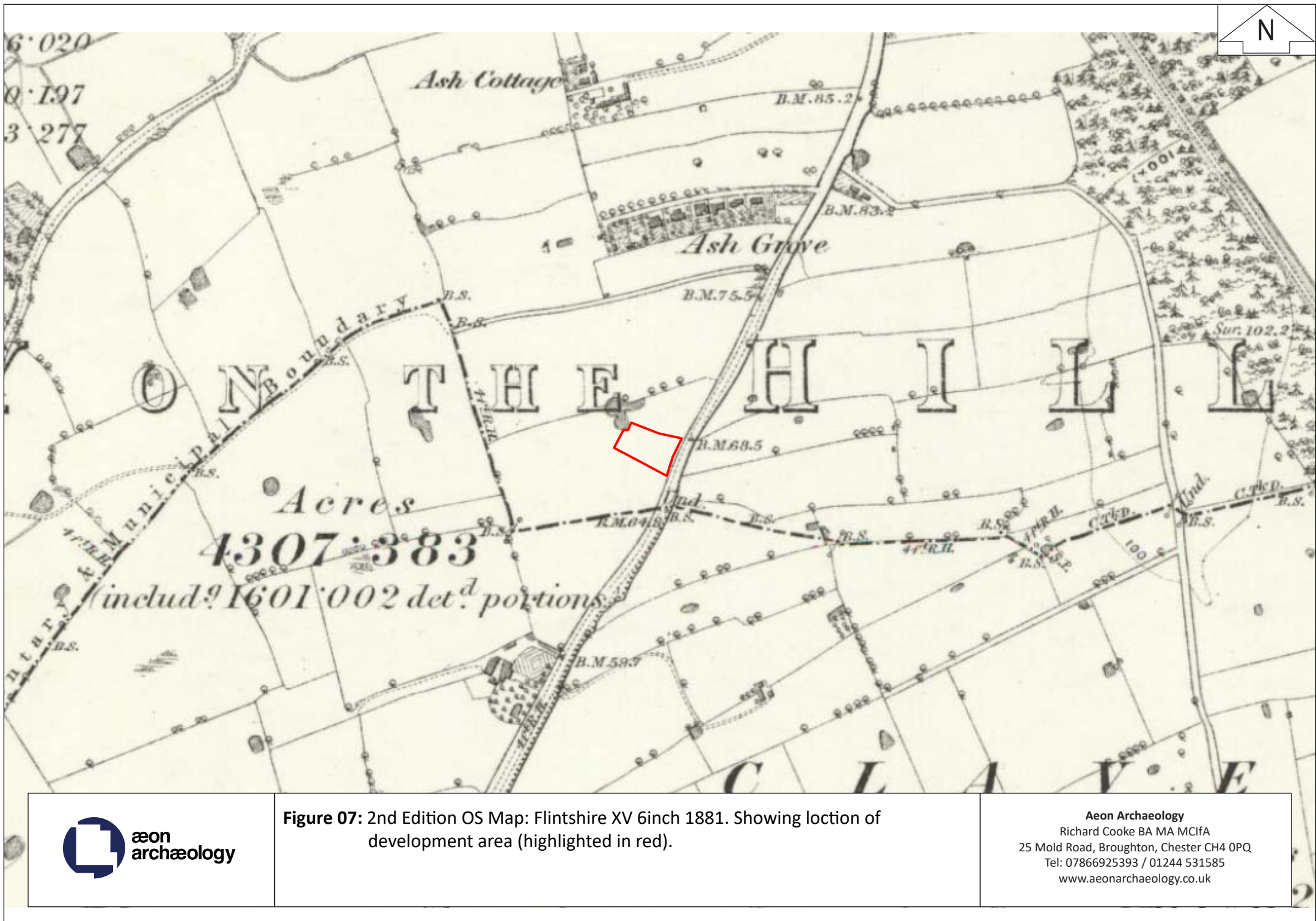






CITY AND COUNTY OF THE CITY OF CHESTER  
of ST MARY ON THE HILL <sup>Acres</sup> 1444.481 (includ<sup>d</sup> det<sup>d</sup> portion) in Sheets 31, 38, 46.  
ST MARY'S WARD  
XXXVIII 2.54'











**Figure 09:** 4th Edition OS Map: Flintshire XV.NW 1913. Showing loction of development area (highlighted in red).

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## 4.0 PROJECT AIMS

The aim of the watching brief was to characterise the known, or potential, archaeological remains uncovered during the excavation of foundation trenches and groundworks at the Site.

The broad aims of the archaeological watching brief were:

- To determine, as far as is reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains on the Site, the integrity of which may be threatened by development at the Site.
- To establish the nature and extent of existing disturbance and intrusion to sub-surface deposits and, where the data allows, assess the degree of archaeological survival of buried deposits of archaeological significance.
- To enable the client to establish a schedule for archaeological risks.
- To record and then report on the work and determine the need, if any, for further archaeological mitigation. This may consist of attempts to preserve significant remains in situ or, if this is not possible, more extensive excavation work and reporting. Less sensitive remains may require a watching brief. Any such further work may be secured by amendment to the condition.

The detailed objectives of the archaeological watching brief were:

- Insofar as possible within methodological constraints, to explain any temporal, spatial or functional relationships between the structures/remains identified, and any relationships between these and the archaeological and historic elements of the wider landscape.
- Where the data allows, identify the research implications of the Site with reference to the regional research agenda and recent work in Cheshire

The management of this project has followed the procedures laid out in the standard professional guidance *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment Project Manager's Guide* (English Heritage 2010) and in the *CIFA Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief* (Cifa, 2014). Five stages are specified:

Phase 1: project planning

Phase 2: fieldwork

Phase 3: assessment of potential for analysis and revised project design

Phase 4: analysis and report preparation

Phase 5: dissemination

The current document reports on the phase 4 analysis and states the means to be used to disseminate the results. In this case there was insufficient evidence to proceed with the phase 3 Assessment of Potential stage and the project moved directly to phase 4.

All the information gathered by this watching brief is to be presented in a report that will be held by the Cheshire Historic Environment Record and the OASIS database so that it can be accessible to the public and future researchers. This phase of work also includes archiving any material and documentary records from the project.



## 5.0 METHODOLOGY – ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

### 5.1 Watching Brief

The ClfA maintains a standard for archaeological watching brief which states that:

*An archaeological watching brief will record the archaeological resource during development within a specified area using appropriate methods and practices. These will satisfy the stated aims of the project, and comply with the Code of conduct and other relevant by-laws of ClfA.*

An archaeological watching brief is defined by the ClfA as a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons (ClfA 2014). The watching brief will take place within a specified area within the Site where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The ClfA further identifies the purpose of a watching brief as allowing, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works.

It is also important to note that a watching brief provides an opportunity, if needed, for a signal to be made to all interested parties, before the destruction of the archaeological materials, 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. A watching brief is, therefore, not intended to reduce the requirement for excavation or preservation of known or inferred deposits, and it is intended to guide, not replace, any requirement for contingent excavation or preservation of possible deposits.

All soil removal was undertaken using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. A photographic record was maintained throughout, using a digital SLR camera (Canon 600D) set to maximum resolution (72 dpi) and any subsurface remains were recorded photographically, with detailed notations and measured drawings being undertaken if required. The photographs were taken in RAW format to be converted into TIFF format for long-term storage and JPEG format for presentation and inclusion in the archive. The standards for the digital archive adhere to those set out in 'Digital Archiving: Appendix 6. Digital Archive Repository Requirements' (Archaeological Data Service, 2015).

In the event of archaeological discovery features were to be excavated by hand and fully recorded using Aeon Archaeology pro-formas, digital photographs, and plan and section drawings taken at a suitable scale (usually 1:20 for plan drawings and 1:10 for section drawings).

The archive produced is held at Aeon Archaeology under the project code **A0173.1**.

### 5.2 Data Collection from Site Records

A database of the site photographs was produced to enable active long-term curation of the photographs and easy searching. The site records were checked and cross-referenced and photographs were cross-referenced to contexts. These records were used to write the site narrative and the field drawings and survey data were used to produce an outline plan of the site.

All paper field records were scanned to provide a backup digital copy. The photographs were organised and precisely cross-referenced to the digital photographic record so that the Cheshire Historic Environment Record (HER) can curate them in their active digital storage facility.

### **5.3 Artefact Methodology**

All artefacts were to be collected and processed including those found within spoil tips. They would be bagged and labelled as well as any preliminary identification taking place on site. After processing, all artefacts would be cleaned and examined in-house at Aeon Archaeology. If required, artefacts would be sent to a relevant specialist for conservation and analysis.

The recovery policy for archaeological finds was kept under review throughout the archaeological watching brief. Any changes in recovery priorities would be made under guidance from an appropriate specialist and agreed with the Client and the Development Control Archaeologist. There was a presumption against the disposal of archaeological finds regardless of their apparent age or condition.

### **5.4 Environmental Samples Methodology**

The sampling strategy and requirement for bulk soil samples was related to the perceived character, interpretational importance and chronological significance of the strata under investigation. This ensured that only significant features would be sampled. The aim of the sampling strategy was to recover carbonised macroscopic plant remains, small artefacts particularly knapping debris and evidence for metalworking.

Advice and guidance regarding environmental samples and their suitability for radiocarbon dating, as well as the analysis of macrofossils (charcoal and wood), pollen, animal bones and molluscs would be obtained from Oxford Archaeology if required.

### **5.5 Report and dissemination**

A full archive including plans, photographs, written material and any other material resulting from the project was prepared. All plans, photographs and descriptions were labelled, and cross-referenced, and will be lodged within a suitable repository to be agreed with the archaeological curator within six months of the completion of the project.

A draft copy of the report has been sent to the Client and upon approval from the Client copies of the report (Aeon report #0204) will be sent to the Cheshire Historic Environment Record, the DMA at CAPAS, and the OASIS online database. Copies of all notes, plans, and photographs arising from the watching brief will be stored at Aeon Archaeology under the project code **A0173.1** with the originals being lodged in a suitable repository to be agreed with the archaeological curator.

## 6.0 QUANTIFICATION OF RESULTS

### 6.1 The Documentary Archive

The following documentary records were created during the archaeological watching brief:

Watching brief day record sheets	3
Digital photographs	28
Context Sheets	8
Drawings	1

### 6.2 Environmental Samples

No environmental samples were taken during the archaeological watching brief as no suitable deposits or fills were encountered.

### 6.3 Artefacts

#### **The Ceramic finds from land adjacent to Meadow House, Wrexham Road, Chester: A Summary Report**

##### **Summary**

This report summarises the pottery fragments recovered from the archaeological watching brief undertaken at land adjacent to Meadow House, Wrexham Road, Chester. The finds were recovered from the topsoil, subsoil and the individual fills of the rounded pits which in all cases consisted of a single fill in each case.

The pottery was quantified according to ware names commonly in use by archaeological ceramic specialists across the North West and West Midlands regions.

##### **Post-Medieval Pottery**

The watching brief produced a total of 22 sherds of post-medieval pottery. The pottery spans the period from the late-17th century through to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The pottery was in good condition overall although fragmented with most sherds representing a single vessel. The pottery is in stable condition and requires no long-term storage requirements. Following are some descriptions of the wares found across the site.

##### *Blue and White Transfer Printed ware*

The advent of printed underglaze designs on earthenware made production of the complex landscapes and geometric borders like those found on Chinese porcelain more cost-efficient for potteries to produce and more affordable for the consumer. The most enduring Chinese-style pattern was "Blue Willow," first introduced around 1790 by Josiah Spode and made by numerous potters into the present day. These motifs dominated printed designs from the introduction of underglaze printing in Staffordshire in the 1780s until 1814, with peak production between 1790 and 1814. These examples are much later probably late 19th century (Coysh and Henrywood 1982).

### *Annular Ware*

Annular ware is wheel thrown earthenware, popular between 1790 and 1820. Its exterior decoration is characterized by horizontal bands of various widths and colours. Earth tones were seen on early annular ware. Later, there was a shift towards varying shades of brown, green, orange, tan, grey and blue-green. Designs were pressed or rolled on to the vessel, or were cut into the vessel by engine turning. (Rensselaer, 1966)

### *Nottingham Stoneware*

Developed by James Morley at Nottingham, England at the end of the seventeenth century, production continued until the early nineteenth century. However, production began to decline after ca. 1775 (Oswald 1974). The earliest dated piece is marked "1700" and the latest "1799" (Lewis 1999). Similar brown salt glazed stoneware was also manufactured at Derbyshire, Staffordshire, Liverpool, and Yorkshire; hence the description of this ware as "Nottingham-type".

### *Brown Betty – Manganese Glaze*

The Brown Betty is a type of teapot, typically rounded and with a manganese glaze known as Rockingham Glaze. The original teapots came from a red clay that was discovered in the Stoke-on-Trent area of Britain, in 1695. This clay resulted in a ceramic which seemed to retain heat better and so found use as the material for the teapot as early as the seventeenth century. These early pots were tall and shaped more like coffee pots. In the nineteenth century the pots began to take on the more rounded shape of the modern Brown Betty. The Rockingham Glaze was brushed on the pot and allowed to run down the sides, creating a streaky finish as it was fired. In the Victorian era, when tea was at its peak of popularity, tea brewed in the Brown Betty was considered excellent. This was attributed to the design of the pot which allowed the tea leaves more freedom to swirl around as the water was poured into the pot, releasing more flavour with less bitterness

### *Lead Glazed Blackware*

Mid-17th to 19th centuries. Black lead glazed wares made from mixed red and yellow clays were being produced in Wales and England, particularly Northwest England, by the mid-17th century, and continued to be made into the 19th century (Cresswell & Davey 1989). The ubiquitous lead glazed blackware sherds found on the site are all most likely associated with the ceramic works at Buckley in North Wales which has been related with the production of pottery from the medieval period to the mid twentieth century. The most productive time was in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The blackware sherds in this context are probably examples from the late 18<sup>th</sup>–early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### *Staffordshire Slipware*

Staffordshire Trailed Slip Ware Ceramics used a thin buff-bodied earthenware coated with white and dark slips and decorated with trailed, combed, or marbled designs. In most cases white slip covers more of the surface than the dark slip and a clear lead glaze gives the piece a yellowish background colour. Sometimes these are reversed to produce a brown bodied vessel supporting yellow decoration. They were in production by around 1660, and continued to be made into the 1720s but there is also a persistence of the ware into the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### *Red Slipware (Metropolitan ware)*

In the last decades of the 17th century a popular fashion in pottery was slipware. Dotted and slip-trailed decoration, where a slip of liquid clay was applied as piping, required a special dexterity to do well and was probably at its very best in 17th century England when it was particularly favoured during the reign of Charles II (Barker 2007).

## **Conclusions**

The finds assemblage from the watching brief reflects activity within the vicinity of the site during the post-medieval period. The pottery and glass are heavily weighted to the late 19th century with only two or three sherds of pottery dating to a one hundred to one hundred and fifty years or so before this date. The pottery forms recorded comprised drinking and table wares supplemented by more utilitarian vessels such as storage jars and, as such, the assemblage overall is predominantly domestic in character.



## 7.0 RESULTS OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

The archaeological watching brief was designed to characterise the known, or potential, archaeological remains should they be revealed. Previous archaeological discoveries from developments within the surrounding area (outlined in this report's Archaeological Background section) meant that there was a likelihood of similar remains being present within the application area.

8<sup>th</sup> July 2019

The watching brief commenced at the north-eastern corner of the Site. The tracked excavator began to strip the topsoil (103) which was 0.27m in maximum depth and consisted of a soft mid brown-grey silt-clay with frequent red-brick, asbestos sheeting and plastic inclusions. No archaeological features were revealed subsequent to the removal of this initial topsoil layer. Immediately beneath the topsoil (103) was a subsoil layer (102), 0.14m in maximum depth, of firm dark grey-brown silt-sand-clay which produced occasional fragments of post-medieval pottery and had inclusions of frequent charcoal flecks and rare small sub-rounded pebbles. Occasional areas of redeposited clay natural were also noted within this subsoil/ relict surface (102). Immediately beneath this subsoil layer (102) was the natural glacial substrata of very firm dark yellow-brown sand-clay (101) which produced occasional sub-angular and rounded small cobbles and charcoal fleck inclusions and had a depth >0.25m. No archaeological features were noted in the north-eastern corner of the Site.

9<sup>th</sup> July 2019

The watching brief continued in the northern corner of the Site and upon removal of the upper two deposits, (103) and (102), four circular pit features were revealed as being cut into the natural sand-clay (101). These four features, numbered [104], [106], [108] and [110] were all shallow, vertical, rounded cuts with depths ranging from 0.07m to 0.12m. Of these four circular features, three ([104], [106] and [108]) were aligned on a north-south trajectory and equally spaced with 5m between each feature. The fourth feature [110] was off-set to the west of the other three and lay 3m from [106]. Each feature was evaluated via half-section and it was revealed that each cut had only one fill which consisted of a mid brown-grey clay-silt with patches of redeposited yellow clay natural. The fills were numbered in association with their correlating cut numbers as: (105), (107), (109) and (111) and all four produced fragments of lead-glazed black-ware post-medieval pottery and evidence of a wooden stake which was not centralised. No further features were noted throughout the remaining strip of the Site.

### Discussion

Within the northern corner of the site were four circular pits, of these 3 were aligned north to south, with a fourth pit offset to the west. These pits were roughly 5.00m apart and uniformly shallow in profile. In each of the pits there was evidence of a surviving wooden stake which was not centralised within the pits. The fill of these pits was also uniformly comprised of a mixed mid grey brown, clay sand, with redeposited yellow clay natural within the soil matrix. Each of these pits produced post-medieval pottery fragments (lead glazed blackware). These pits almost certainly represent four tree boles which have been removed (perhaps by machine - the perfectly rounded nature of these cuts do not appear to be anthropogenic); with the density of post-medieval pottery found within in the contexts (103) and (102) there is a high chance of post medieval pottery fragments arriving in the fills of these pits as residual finds during the backfilling events of each pit respectively; therefore these pits likely represent the removal of mature trees from an orchard.



**Plate 01:** Pre excavation shot of site on land adjacent Meadow House, Wrexham Road, Chester - from the west - scale 1m





**Plate 02:** Pre excavation shot of site on land adjacent Meadow House, Wrexham Road, Chester - from the east - scale 1m



**Plate 03:** Working shot of vegetation clearance on land adjacent Meadow House, Wrexham Road, Chester - from the north - no scale





**Plate 04:** Pit [104] Tree Bowl - from the west - scale 1m





**Plate 05:** Pit [106] Tree Bowl - from the west - scale 1m



**Plate 06:** Pit [107] Tree Bowl - from the west - scale 1m





**Plate 07:** Pit [108] Tree Bowl - from the west - scale 1m



**Plate 08:** Site following removal of topsoil (103) and subsoil (102) at land adjacent Meadow House, Wrexham Road, Chester - from the south - scale 1m



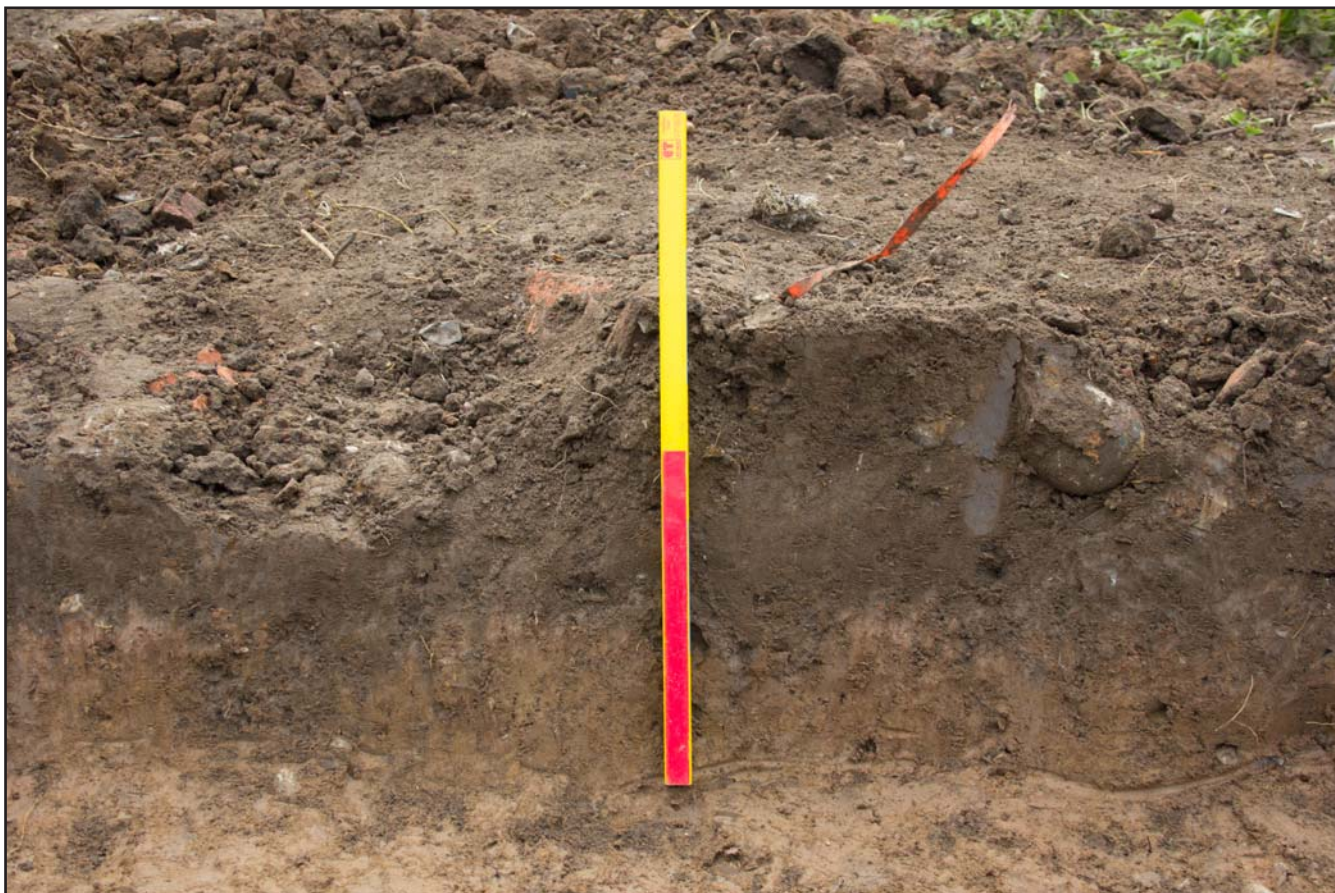


**Plate 09:** Site following removal of topsoil (103) and subsoil (102) at land adjacent Meadow House, Wrexham Road, Chester - from the southwest - scale 1m



**Plate 10:** Site following removal of topsoil (103) and subsoil (102) along south western edge at land adjacent Meadow House, Wrexham Road, Chester - from the southeast - Scale 1m





**Plate 11:** Section showing stratigraphy on site at land adjacent Meadow House, Wrexham Road, Chester - from the southeast - Scale 1m

## **8.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Following the archaeological watching brief on land adjacent to Meadow House, Wrexham Road (A483), Chester, the anticipated archaeological potential of the sub-surface deposits was not realized. The results of the archaeological watching brief however do mean that much of the aims and objectives were addressed in full. The collection of artefactual remains reflect a sustained period of activity relating to the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Although some cut archaeological features were uncovered and investigated these were all of modern date and considered to be of low significance.

Considering the results of the archaeological watching brief and the requirements of this project, no recommendations for further archaeological mitigatory works are proposed and it is recommended that the archaeological condition be discharged.

## 9.0 SOURCES

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aeon archaeology

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**Land adjacent to Meadow House,  
Wrexham Road, Chester CH4 7QQ.**

**Written Scheme of Investigation  
for Archaeological Watching Brief.**

**July 2018 v1.0**



Project Code: A0173.1  
Planning Ref: 18/00932/FUL

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Aeon Archaeology has been commissioned by Elmridge Developments Ltd, hereafter the Client, to provide a written scheme of investigation (WSI) for carrying out an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks associated with the erection of three detached dwellings together with associated access, parking and landscaping on land adjacent to Meadow House, Wrexham Road, Chester CH4 7QQ (**centred on NGR SJ 39893 64012**).

A mitigation brief was not prepared for this scheme by the Development Management Archaeologist and Team Leader (Mr Mark Leah) at Cheshire Archaeology Planning Advisory Service (Total Environment) Cheshire Shared Services (hereafter CAPAS) but the following condition was assigned to full planning permission (**18/00932/FUL**):

### Condition 3

*No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The work shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved scheme.*

*Reason: Having regard to Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 as amended it is necessary to have these details before development commences to ensure there is no harm to heritage assets. The use of such a condition is in line with the guidance set out in Paragraph 141, Section 12 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), published by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the still current PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide (Department for Communities and Local Government, Department for Culture Media and Sport, English Heritage, 2010).*

In addition the Development Management Archaeologist and Team Leader at CAPAS made the following Consultee comments regarding the development proposal:

*The development is restricted in extent but will involve significant ground disturbance within an area that, based upon an examination of the historic and recent mapping and aerial photographs, has not been previously disturbed. Any archaeological deposits that are present, therefore, are likely to be relatively well-preserved but will be vulnerable to damage by works associated with the construction of the dwellings.*

The work will adhere to the guidelines specified in Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014).

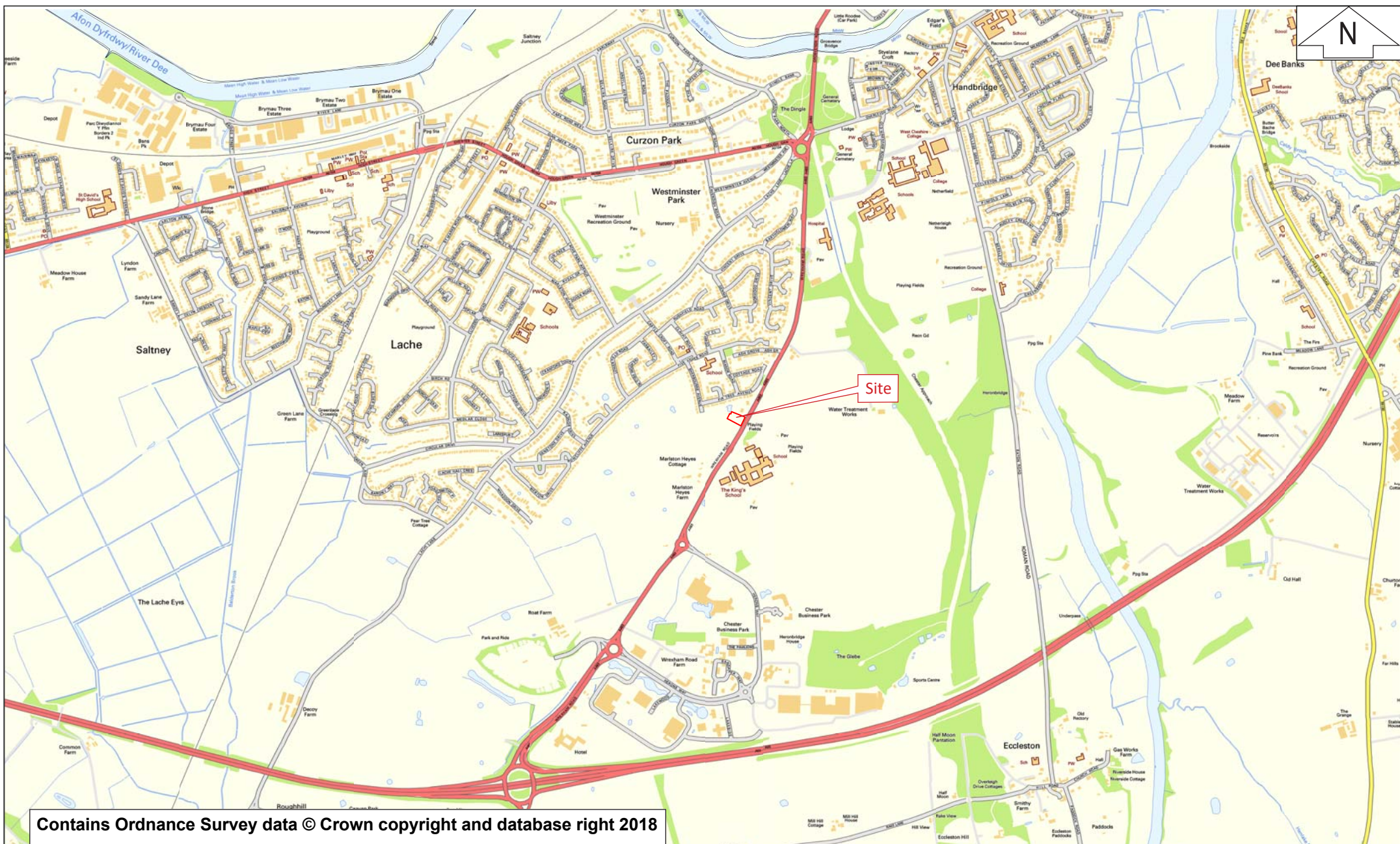


Figure 01: Location of the proposed development site at Wrexham Road, Chester.  
Scale 1:20,000 at A4.



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Figure 02: Location of the proposed development site at Wrexham Road, Chester.  
Scale 1:5,000 at A4.

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Figure 03: Location of the proposed development site at Wrexham Road, Chester.  
Scale 1:1,250 at A4.

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## **2.0 ARCHEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

No sites are currently recorded on the Cheshire Historic Environment Record from within the application boundary but the site lies on the outskirts of Chester and lies immediately to the north of the ancient boundary of Chester parish. In addition, the area around Chester is known to have been part of an organised, enclosed landscape in the Roman period and evidence for this has come from a number of recent developments in and around Chester. These include Saighton Camp, the Boughton Retail Centre, and the Chester Business Park in 2003. The latter is probably the most relevant in this instance as it lies closest to the application area and saw the excavation of numerous Roman field boundaries and an extensive area of settlement. It is entirely possible that similar remains are present within the application area.

### 3.0 WATCHING BRIEF - ARCHAEOLOGICAL AIMS

The archaeological watching brief shall be maintained:

1. During the excavation of foundation trenches and groundworks at the Site.

The ClfA maintains a standard for archaeological watching brief which states that:

*An archaeological watching brief will record the archaeological resource during development within a specified area using appropriate methods and practices. These will satisfy the stated aims of the project, and comply with the Code of conduct and other relevant by-laws of ClfA.*

An archaeological watching brief is defined by the ClfA as a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons (ClfA 2014). The watching brief will take place within a specified area within the Site where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed.

The ClfA further identifies the purpose of a watching brief as allowing, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works.

It is also important to note that a watching brief provides an opportunity, if needed, for a signal to be made to all interested parties, before the destruction of the archaeological materials, 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.

A watching brief is, therefore, not intended to reduce the requirement for excavation or preservation of known or inferred deposits, and it is intended to guide, not replace, any requirement for contingent excavation or preservation of possible deposits.

The aims of the watching brief are:

- To allow, within the resources available, the opportunity to gain information about and record the presence/absence, nature and date of archaeological remains on the Site affected by excavations and groundworks, the presence and nature of which could not be established with sufficient confidence in advance of works which may disturb them.
- To provide the facility to signal to the relevant authorities, before irreversible impact to remains that an archaeological and/or historic find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are inadequate to support their treatment to an adequate and satisfactory standard.

The specific objectives of the watching brief are:

- To observe and recover any artefacts of archaeological significance.
- To record the location, dimensions and nature of any deposits, features, structures or artefacts of archaeological significance.
- To recover samples of any deposits considered to have potential for analysis for palaeoenvironmental data should the opportunity arise.

## **4.0 METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Archaeological Watching Brief**

The methodology for the watching brief has been prepared with reference to the ClfA's document Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief (2014) and will be kept under constant review during the project, in order to see how far it is meeting the terms of the aims and objectives, and in order to adopt any new questions which may arise.

Curatorial monitoring of the archaeological work on behalf of the Council will be carried out by the Development Management Archaeologist and Team Leader at CAPAS. To facilitate the curatorial monitoring, the officer shall be provided with a minimum of two weeks' notice of the start of the archaeological work.

A suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist(s) from Aeon Archaeology will be commissioned for the maintenance of the watching brief. On arrival on site, the archaeologist(s) will report to the site manager and conform to the arrangements for notification of entering and leaving site. The archaeologist(s) will keep a record of the date, time and duration of all attendances at site, the names and numbers of archaeologists deployed and any actions taken. The archaeologist will be provided with a Health & Safety Induction by the construction contractor and wear a safety helmet, safety footwear and high visibility jacket/vest at all times.

If deposits and or artefacts are exposed during excavations for the development which require recording and recovery, it may be necessary to delay works whilst the proper investigation and recording takes place. Watching brief recording can often be undertaken without delay to groundworks, depending upon the specific circumstances and flexibility of all the staff on site.

Within the constraints of the terms of the watching brief work, the archaeologist will not cause unreasonable disruption to the maintenance of the work schedules of other contractors on site. In the event of archaeological discoveries the treatment of which (either arising from the volume/quantity of material and/or the complexity/importance of the material) is beyond the resources deployed the Client will be notified and a site meeting/telephone consultation arranged with the Development Management Archaeologist and Team Leader at CAPAS. The aim of the meeting will be to confirm 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 and identify measures which would be sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard prior to destruction of the material in question.

Any archaeological deposits, features and structures identified which can be investigated and recorded under the terms of the watching brief will be excavated manually in a controlled and stratigraphic manner sufficient to address the aims and objectives of the project – subject to the limitations on site access.

It may not be necessary to excavate the complete stratigraphic sequence to geologically lain deposits but the inter-relationships between archaeological deposits, features and structures will be investigated sufficient to address the aims and objectives of the project and the complete stratigraphic sequence to geologically lain deposits will be investigated where practicable.

The method of recording will follow the normal principles of stratigraphic excavation and the stratigraphy will be recorded in written descriptions even where no archaeological deposits have been identified. The archaeologist will record archaeological deposits using proformae recording forms and locate them on a large-scale site plan related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid and Datum references.

The groundworks excavations shall be undertaken using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket.

The drawn record will comprise plans at scale 1:20 and sections at scale 1:10; propriety electronic hardware and software to prepare site drawings may be used as appropriate.

The photographic record will be maintained throughout using a digital SLR camera (Canon 600D) set to maximum resolution (72 dpi) and all archaeological features will be recorded photographically with photographs taken in RAW format and later converted to TIFF format for long-term storage and JPEG format for presentation and inclusion in the archive. The standards for the digital archive will adhere to those set out in '*Digital Archiving: Appendix 6. Digital Archive Repository Requirements* (Archaeological Data Service, 2015).

The archive produced will be held at Aeon Archaeology under the project code **A0173.1**.



## **4.2 Watching brief report**

### **4.2.1 Post-excavation Assessment**

A report on the results of the watching brief, in accordance with the recommendations in *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment Project Manager's Guide* (Historic England 2015), and in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (2014) will be required to be produced upon conclusion of the archaeological fieldwork. The report will be completed within a maximum of two months of completion of work on site and may include examination and quantification leading to the identification of function, form, date, method of manufacture, material/fabric type, source, parallels, attributes and condition of artefacts; of the exploitation of wild or domesticated resources; the reconstruction of environments; and the nature of human populations.

Full analysis of the results of the project, including: dating and interpretation of excavated features; pottery and other finds analysis; analysis of industrial residues by an appropriate specialist or specialists; analysis of samples for environmental data (including pollen, plant macrofossils and beetles) by an appropriate specialist or specialists; radiocarbon dating; discussion of the results in their local, regional and national context, including relating the excavated features and palaeoenvironmental data to evidence from nearby sites, and discussion of the results in their local, regional and national context may be required.

The scope of post-excavation assessment will be subject to a specification for approval by the Development Management Archaeologist and Team Leader at CAPAS upon the conclusion of the fieldwork project and preliminary report.

### **4.2.2 Post-excavation Report**

Following completion of the stages outlined above, a report will be produced that will include:

- A non-technical summary.
- A table of contents.
- An introduction with acknowledgements, including a list of all those involved in the project and the location and description of the site.
- A statement of the project aims.
- An account of the project methodology undertaken, with an assessment of the same to include a statement on preservation bias and the means of data collection and sampling strategies.
- A factual summary of the history, development and use of the site.
- A statement setting out the nature, quantity and condition of the material archive (artefacts and ecofacts) including commentary on any bias observed due to collection and sampling strategies and commentary on long-term storage requirements.
- A statement setting out the nature and quantity of the documentary archive (notes, photographs, drawings, digital data).
- A general site plan indicating the position and size of the areas subject to watching brief and the locations of archaeological deposits identified and recorded during the works.
- Plans and sections at appropriate scales, augmented with appropriate photographs. All plans and sections will be related to the Ordnance Survey datum levels and to the National Grid.
- Other maps, plans, drawings, stratigraphic matrices and photographs as appropriate.

- Summary assessment reports on the artefact, bio-archaeological, dating and other assessments/analyses.
- A discussion of the location, extent, date, nature, condition, quality and significance of any archaeological deposits and finds identified during the project.
- A discussion of any research implications arising from the archaeological work.
- Notes on consultations with conservators and the nominated archive repository related to the immediate and long-term conservation and storage requirements for the data held in the site archive and recommendations of retention/discard of artefacts and ecofacts.
- A bibliography of sources consulted.
- Appendices to the report will include artefact catalogues, reports on assessments/analyses and an index to the project archive and a statement on its location/proposed repository.
- In addition the post-excavation report will summarise and draw together the findings of all of the phases of work.

Illustrations will include plans of the location of the study area and archaeological sites. Historical maps, when appropriate and if copyright permissions allow, will be included. Photographs of relevant sites and of the study area where appropriate will be included.

A draft copy of the report will be sent to the Development Management Archaeologist and Team Leader at CAPAS and to the client for comment and approval prior to production of the final report.

## **5.0 FURTHER ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS DESIGNS (FAWDs)**

The discovery of substantial archaeological remains and/or features during the archaeological works may result in the requirement for an extended programme of archaeological mitigation. This may require the submission of revised quotes to the client as well as a new specification which will be required to be approved by Development Management Archaeologist and Team Leader at CAPAS prior to implementation.

## **6.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES**

Relevant archaeological deposits will be sampled by taking bulk samples (a minimum of 10.0 litres and maximum of 30.0 litres) for flotation of charred plant remains. Bulk samples will be taken from waterlogged deposits for macroscopic plant remains. Other bulk samples, for example from middens, may be taken for small animal bones and small artefacts.

Bulk environmental samples will also be taken from any fills, deposits or structures which yield archaeological artefacts, charcoal flecks/ fragments, bone, or any other historic remains.

Advice and guidance regarding environmental samples and their suitability for radiocarbon dating, as well as the analysis of macrofossils (charcoal and wood), pollen, animal bones and molluscs will be obtained from Oxford Archaeology.

For guidance purposes the following volume criteria represent the minimum feature sampling requirements:

- 50% of each discrete feature (e.g. pits and postholes)
- 25% of the exposed areas of each linear feature and all terminals/intersections
- 50% of structural features (e.g. beamslots, ring-ditches)
- 50%-100% of domestic/industrial working features (e.g. hearths and ovens)

## **7.0 HUMAN REMAINS**

Any finds of human remains will be left *in-situ*, covered and protected, and both the coroner and the Development Management Archaeologist and Team Leader at CAPAS and the Inspector of Ancient Monuments at Historic England informed. If removal is necessary it will take place under appropriate regulations and with due regard for health and safety issues. In order to excavate human remains, a licence is required under Section 25 of the Burials Act 1857 for the removal of any body or remains of any body from any place of burial. This will be applied for should human remains need to be investigated or moved.

## **8.0 ARTEFACTS**

All artefacts and ecofacts will be retrieved for identification and recording and will be treated in accordance with ClfA 2008 Guidelines for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014).

All artefacts are the property of the landowner but it is recommended that finds are deposited with the rest of the project archive within an appropriate museum. Furthermore, the client agrees to granting access to all artefacts recovered by Aeon Archaeology for analysis, study and publication as

necessary. All finds would be treated according to advice provided within *First Aid for Finds* (Rescue 1999). Aeon Archaeology staff will undertake initial identification, but any additional advice would be sought from a wide range of consultants.

The recovery policy for archaeological finds will be kept under review throughout the archaeological works. Any changes in recovery priorities will be under guidance from an appropriate specialist and agreed with the Development Management Archaeologist and Team Leader at CAPAS. There will be a presumption against the disposal of archaeological finds regardless of their apparent age or condition.

All finds will be collected and processed including those found within spoil tips. Their location and height will be plotted; finds numbers attributed, bagged and labelled as well any preliminary identification taking place on site. Where specialist advice is required provision will be made to do so at the earliest possible convenience.

After processing, artefacts which are suitable will be cleaned and conserved in-house. Artefacts requiring specialist cleaning and conservation will be sent to the relevant specialist. All artefacts will then be sent to a specialist for analysis, the results of which will then be assessed to ascertain the potential of the finds assemblage to meet the research aims of the project. The value of the finds will also be assessed in terms of the wider educational and academic contributions.

Depending upon the material of the remains the following experts will be consulted regarding the conservation of waterlogged material:

- Organic material: Mr Phil Parkes, Cardiff Conservation Services (tel: +44(0)29 2087 5628)
- Non-organic material: Mr Phil Parkes, Cardiff Conservation Services (tel: +44(0)29 2087 5628)

Depending upon the material of the remains the following experts will be consulted regarding the conservation and analysis of artefacts:

- Bone: Nora Bermingham
- Glass: Hilary Cool, Barbican Research Associates.
- Metal artefacts: Phil Parkes, Cardiff Conservation Services, Cardiff.
- Slag, burnt clay, hammerscale: Dr. Tim Young, Geoarch, Cardiff.
- Stone artefacts: George Smith, Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, Bangor.
- Wood artefacts: Jane Foley, Foley Conservation, Builth Wells.
- Leather: Quita Mould, Barbican Research Associates.
- Environmental Material: Dr Mike Allen, Allen Environmental Archaeology.
- Numismatics: Peter Guest, Barbican Research Associates.
- Ceramics: Leigh Dodd

If well preserved materials are found it may be necessary to employ additional staff. Furthermore, it may be necessary to suspend work within a specific region of the site, or across the whole site, while conservation and excavation/recording takes place.



## 9.0 UNEXPECTED DISCOVERIES: TREASURE TROVE

Treasure Trove law has been amended by the Treasure Act 1996. The following are Treasure under the Act:

- *Objects other than coins* any object other than a coin provided that it contains at least 10% gold or silver and is at least 300 years old when found.
- *Coins* all coins from the same find provided they are at least 300 years old when found (if the coins contain less than 10% gold or silver there must be at least 10. Any object or coin is part of the same find as another object or coin, if it is found in the same place as, or had previously been left together with, the other object. Finds may have become scattered since they were originally deposited in the ground. Single coin finds of gold or silver are not classed as treasure under the 1996 Treasure Act.
- *Associated objects* any object whatever it is made of, that is found in the same place as, or that had previously been together with, another object that is treasure.
- *Objects that would have been treasure trove* any object that would previously have been treasure trove, but does not fall within the specific categories given above. These objects have to be made substantially of gold or silver, they have to be buried with the intention of recovery and their owner or his heirs cannot be traced.

The following types of finds are not treasure:

- Objects whose owners can be traced.
- Unworked natural objects, including human and animal remains, even if they are found in association with treasure.
- Objects from the foreshore which are not wreck.

All finds of treasure must be reported to the coroner for the district within fourteen days of discovery or identification of the items. Items declared Treasure Trove become the property of the Crown.

The British Museum will decide whether they or any other museum may wish to acquire the object. If no museum wishes to acquire the object, then the Secretary of State will be able to disclaim it. When this happens, the coroner will notify the occupier and landowner that he intends to return the object to the finder after 28 days unless he receives no objection. If the coroner receives an objection, the find will be retained until the dispute has been settled.

## 10.0 ARCHIVING

A draft copy of the report will be produced within two months of the completion of the fieldwork and sent to the Client and the Development Management Archaeologist and Team Leader at CAPAS for comment prior to finalisation of the report and dissemination. Bound copies of the report and an archive CD will be sent to the regional HER, and the Oasis online database for long term archiving. Furthermore, a summary of the project will be sent to relevant journal for publication if required.

## **11.0 PERSONNEL**

The work will be managed by Richard Cooke BA MA MCIfA, Archaeological Contractor and Consultant at Aeon Archaeology.

## **12.0 MONITORING AND LIAISON**

Regular liaison and site monitoring meetings will take place during all stages of work. The Natural and Development Management Archaeologist and Team Leader at CAPAS will be informed of the start date and of discreet subsequent stages.

## **13.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Aeon Archaeology has a Health and Safety Policy Statement which can be supplied upon request. Furthermore, site-specific Risk Assessments and Method Statements are compiled and distributed to every member of staff involved with the project prior to the commencement of works.

## **14.0 INSURANCE**

Liability Insurance – Insignia Underwriting Policy 347002

Employers' Liability: Limit of Indemnity £10m in any one occurrence

Public Liability: Limit of Indemnity £2m in any one occurrence

Legal Defence Costs (Health and Safety at Work Act): £250,000

The current period expires 07/09/18

Professional Indemnity Insurance – Insignia Underwriting Policy 347002

Limit of Indemnity £500,000 any one claim

The current period expires 07/09/18

