

CFCH/01



# CATHEDRAL RESTAURANT, HEREFORD CATHEDRAL

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

commissioned by Robert Kilgour Architects Ltd  
on behalf of Dean and Chapter, Hereford Cathedral

September 2017



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project info

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## PROJECT SUMMARY

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd carried out an archaeological evaluation within the Cathedral Restaurant at Hereford Cathedral. Beneath the current stone floor surface were make-up deposits which included a possible, earlier but poorly preserved stone floor surface. These deposits continued to a total depth of 0.29m. From this level there are clear indications of preserved, stratified archaeological deposits.

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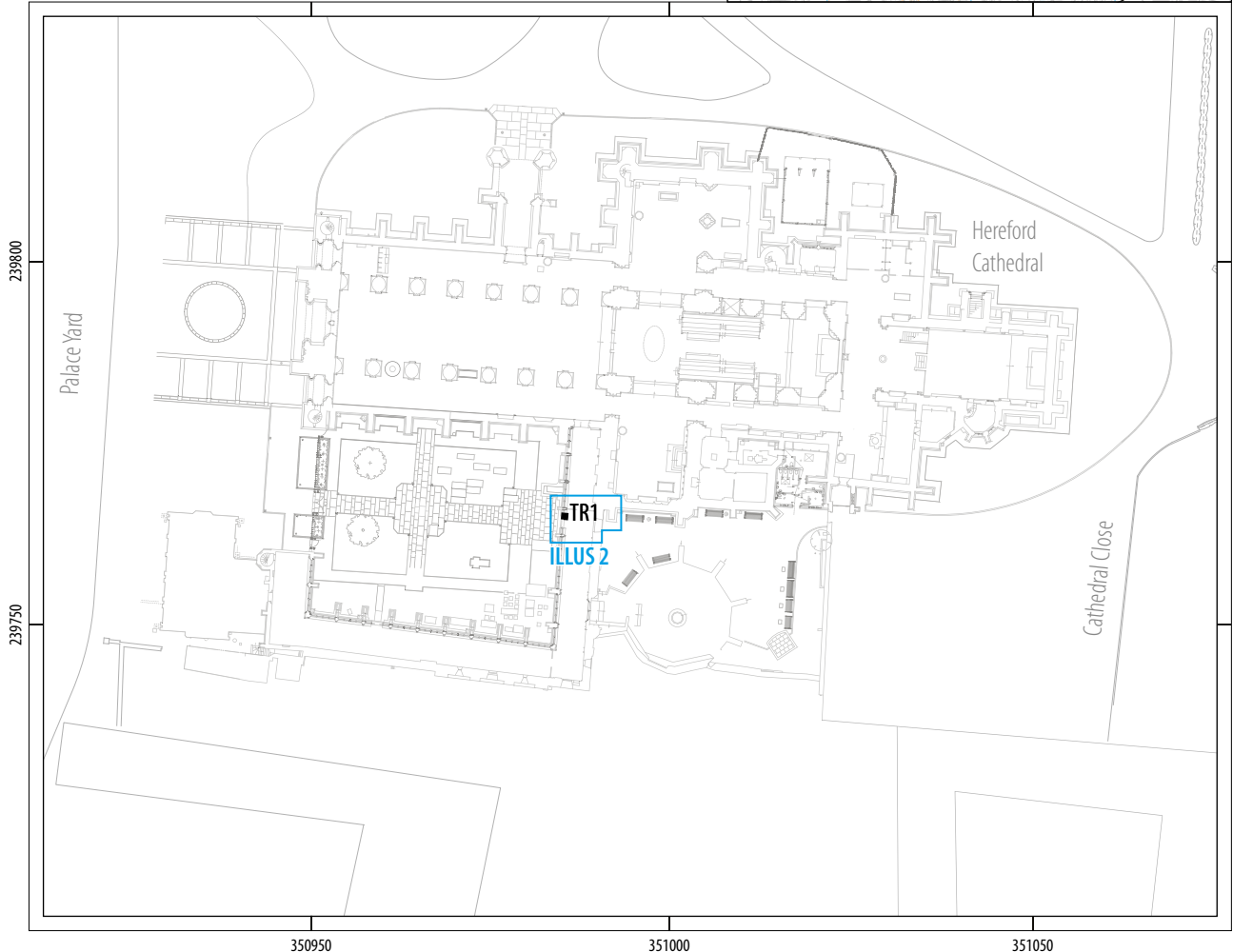
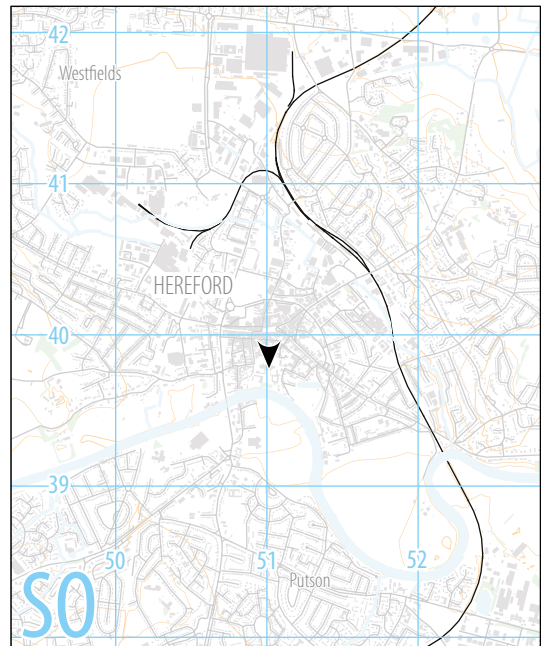
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CFCH/01

Cathedral Restaurant  
Hereford Cathedral  
Herefordshire

0 200km  
1:10,000,000 @ A4

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0 20m  
1:1,000 @ A4

KEY  
— trench location

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ILLUS 1 Site location



# CATHEDRAL RESTAURANT, HEREFORD CATHEDRAL

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Headland Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by The Dean and Chapter, Hereford Cathedral, to undertake a programme of archaeological works in connection with improvements to the Cathedral Restaurant, situated in the east cloister of the Lady Arbour / Bishop's Cloister, Hereford Cathedral. The archaeological work was undertaken in order to evaluate the potential impact on any surviving archaeological deposits of laying a new floor surface within the confines of the Cathedral Restaurant.

#### 1.1 PLANNING BACKGROUND

The Dean and Chapter, Hereford Cathedral, was granted permission to carry out improvement works in the Cathedral Restaurant by the Cathedral's own independent Fabric Advisory Committee and the Cathedrals Fabric Commission (England) under the auspices of the 1990 Cathedrals Measure and its subsequent amendments. Due to the significance of the site and its importance to the understanding of the development of Hereford, an archaeological evaluation was commissioned in order to understand the potential impact of the proposed works.

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Headland Archaeology (Kimber 2016) on behalf of The Dean and Chapter, Hereford Cathedral, setting out the proposed strategy for archaeological evaluation. This report details the results of the subsequent fieldwork.

#### 1.2 SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is located within the east cloister of the Lady Arbour / Bishop's Cloister of the Cathedral Church of St Mary & St Ethelbert, Hereford, Herefordshire, NGR: SO 50985 39760 (Illus 1 and 2). It lies at a height of c.60m OD and is underlain by Raglan Mudstone Formation. The excavation area was located by the west door to the exterior quad at the north end of the restaurant.

#### 1.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

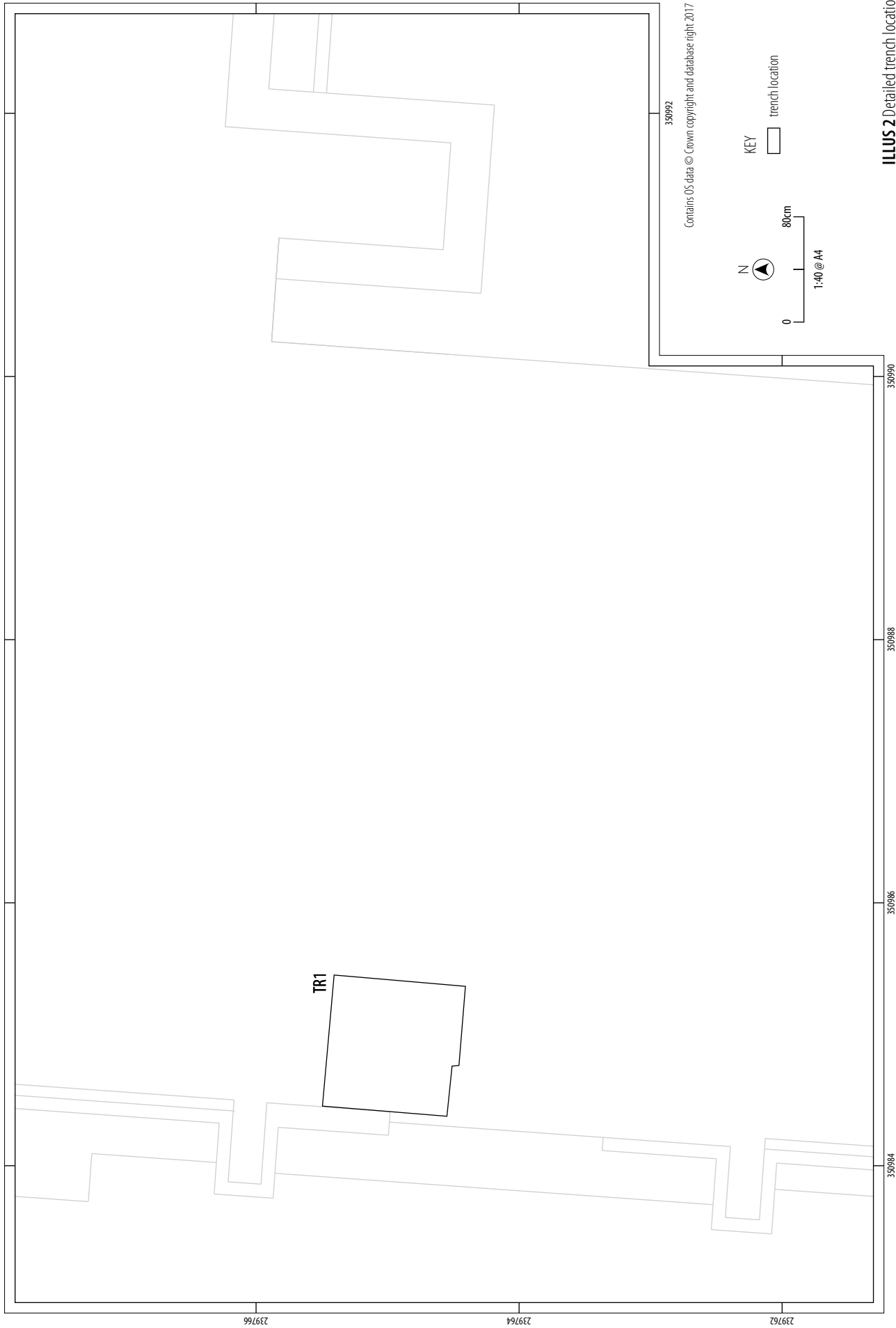
Hereford traditionally became the centre of a new diocese around 676 AD but little is known of the Saxon church or its claustral buildings. It is possible that the early wooden church was rebuilt in stone as early as the 9th century or, more probably, during the episcopacy of Bishop Aethelstan (1012 – 56). This church was burnt during a Welsh raid in 1055 but the extent of the damage is unclear and it may not have been completely destroyed.

No new Norman church appears to have been built until the episcopacy of Reynelm (1107 – 15), described as fundator ecclesie in his obituary; much of the early-12th century church survives despite later changes and additions to it, and both the nave and south aisle have late 11th century origins, though the latter had been radically rebuilt in the early 14th century.

The Lady Arbour, or Bishop's Cloister, is a slightly irregular rectangle on the south side of the nave of the cathedral. It has alleys or cloisters on the east and south sides that were built early in the 15th century. There was a western cloister, but this was demolished in 1760 to make way for a Georgian-style building called the Music Room. This building was also demolished, to be replaced in 1897 by the Dean Leigh Library.

The irregular shape of the cloister is because the eastern part of the south wall of the south alley was built against the north wall of Chapel of SS Katherine and Mary Magdalene. This remarkable two-storied building, which was unique in this country, was built by Robert of Lorraine, in the latter part of the 11th century and is often referred to as the Losinga Chapel. Observations made during works to install new services in the south alley in 1996 noted an archaeological feature 0.25m below ground level (Shoesmith 1996).

The eastern cloister may well have started its life in the 12th century or earlier as a corridor or pentise connecting the cathedral with the



bishop's palace as a processional way, and eventually providing an undercover link to the 14th century Chapter house. On the outside face of the east wall, in the Chapter House Yard, there is a flat buttress of typical Norman form, demonstrating that this wall is much earlier than the cloister of which it now part. However, it is aligned with the present cathedral rather than being at right angles to the south alley of the Bishop's Cloister and the 11th century chapel, so it should be associated with the former.

The current layout of the east cloister is such that the cathedral shop occupies the north end. A doorway then separates it from the Cathedral Restaurant which occupies a larger space in the south end.

## 2 OBJECTIVES

The general purpose of the investigation was to evaluate the impact of the proposal on the archaeological resource through the acquisition of a full archaeological record and an interpretation of that record.

The archaeological investigations were carried out in order to:

- › assess the extent, layout, structure and date of features and deposits of archaeological interest – specifically whether or not burials are present immediately beneath the floor.
- › place, where possible, the identified features within their local and regional context.

The resulting archive will be organised and deposited with Hereford Cathedral to facilitate access for future research and interpretation for public benefit.

## 3 METHOD

The stone floor surface had been removed by Hereford Cathedral's stone mason prior to the excavation. Excavation was undertaken by hand between the 10th and 11th of January 2017. The work was undertaken as specified in the WSI. The trench measured 1.08m by 0.92m in plan, and was excavated to a depth of 0.30m in order to assess the potential impact of the proposed floor replacement. The excavated area was closely examined for any features and the spoil was screened for dateable material. Spoil from the excavation was stockpiled in bags during the excavation.

An overall site plan was recorded digitally using a Total Station using standard Headland Archaeology methodology. The site plan was accurately linked to the National Grid.

Detailed recording of features and sections was undertaken on permatrace. Plans were drawn at a scale of 1:10, and sections at a scale of 1:20.

All contexts were given unique identifying numbers starting at 001. Recording was undertaken on Headland Archaeology pro forma record sheets and a diary record was kept of the excavation.

A photographic record using a digital camera was created. The photographs record archaeological features encountered and the progress of the excavation.

Disarticulated human remains were collected and recorded by context and stored within the Cathedral Office.

The trench was backfilled and the stone floor reinstated by the Cathedral's stone mason following the completion of the excavation.

Working practices followed the CIFA code of conduct (2014a) and all recording was in line with CIFA Standards and Guidance for conducting archaeological excavations (2014b) and the Headland manual.

## 4 RESULTS

A full description of the excavated deposits is included in Appendix 1.

Underneath the stone floor flags (001), a levelling deposit of sandy silt (002) which contained oyster shell, coal, clay pipe fragments and possible human disarticulated bone fragments was excavated. The depth of this deposit varied from 0.05m in the northwest corner, where it overlaid the interior foundation of the west wall of the cloister (010), up to 0.16m away from the foundation and to the east.

Immediately below the current floor and levelling deposit, a fragmented stone slab (003), measuring 0.93m x 0.48m and aligned NE-SW was encountered. The slab did not display evidence of tooling for edges or facing; it was elliptical in shape, and was 0.05m thick. Occasional fragments of similar stone were observed at the same level. Collectively these stones may represent the remains of an earlier floor surface (Illus 3). These stones were underlain by a levelling deposit of silty clay (004), with frequent stone inclusions and occasional disarticulated bone fragments which may be from disturbed burials in lower deposits.

No in situ burials were encountered, but a small number of disarticulated human bones were collected from contexts (002), and (004) and were retained for later reburial by cathedral staff.

At 0.29/0.30m below ground level (the agreed limit of excavation for this evaluation) a sandy clay deposit (007) was recorded at the east side of the trench, measuring 0.82m north to south and 0.40m east to west. This deposit was cut by N-S aligned linear feature [005] on its west side, and by N-S aligned linear feature [008] on its east side (Illus 4 and 5).

Only a portion of linear feature [005] was visible as it continued to the north and south beyond the extents of the test pit; it is filled by deposit (006), a sandy clay with rare charcoal inclusions, and runs nearly parallel with the existing cloister walls.

Only a portion of linear feature [008] was visible as it continued to the north and south beyond the extents of the test pit; it is filled by deposit (009), a sandy clay.



**ILLUS 3** Fragment of possible old stone floor surface looking north **ILLUS 4** Post-excavation of Test Pit, showing cuts [005] centre, and [008] on right, looking north  
**ILLUS 5** South facing section showing current and previous floor leveling deposits

As deposit (007), and linear features [005] and [008] with their associated fill deposits were exposed at the limit of excavation for this evaluation, they remain unexcavated, but are recorded in a plan drawing and by photograph.

## 5 DISCUSSION

The test pit is located in the east cloister of the Bishop's cloister on the south side of Hereford Cathedral. The cloisters each have varied uses documented throughout their history. The east cloister is thought to have had a long standing function as an access from the Bishop's palace through to the cathedral. It was later used as an access to the Chapter house vestibule, and more recently has sited the Cathedral Restaurant, and was for a time the access route to the Mappa Mundi display.

The current floor surface (001), and its associated levelling deposit (002), reach a depth of 0.16m. The inclusion of clay pipe fragments within the deposit indicates a post-medieval date for its deposition.

Below this it seems likely that the remains of an earlier stone floor may survive in a poor state of preservation. This floor (003), along with its associated levelling deposit (004), reach a depth of 0.29–0.30m. The level of this possible previous floor is at, or just below, the level of the stepped out foundation of the west wall of the east cloister (Illus 5). This raises the possibility that this well faced masonry was at least partially visible when this floor was in use.

None of the current flooring was observed to have any visible tooling indicating memorial engraving, however it is noted that some are of a similar size and material to grave stones making up the paved area of the Chapter House yard immediately to the east. There remains a possibility that grave stones may form part of the current, or previous floor surface and care should be taken to identify these during any future works.

Cut linear features [005], and [008] were exposed at 0.30m below current ground level and represent earlier, and probably undisturbed archaeology. In the limited area of this evaluation excavation, and given that the features remain unexcavated, no

definitive purpose can be assigned to them. Given their location adjacent to the cloister walls, and their placement more generally within a cathedral complex, it is possible that they represent cuts for wall foundations, or grave cuts. The depth at which these features and deposits were exposed matches closely with observations made during a watching brief for the cutting of a services trench in the south cloister during 1996; where a cut feature was recorded as 0.25m below current ground level (Shoesmith 1996). This may indicate a continuity of dates for laying of the current, and possibly the previous floor surfaces. As such it may also suggest the general depth at which undisturbed archaeological deposits survive within these two cloisters more generally.

Abraded, disarticulated bone fragments were recovered from both floor levelling deposits. It is likely that these are from disturbed graves in the nearby vicinity, possibly from the area now occupied by the cloister. At no point during the excavation were articulated human remains encountered.

The area excavated during this project was only c. 1m<sup>2</sup>, and was located at the junction of three doorways (and partially over the west door entrance) of the east cloister. As such any interpretations made of the findings within it cannot necessarily be representative of the area occupied by the restaurant as a whole as the area is both very small, and being placed in such a heavily used area might reasonably have been subject to more disturbance through repairs and modification than areas of lesser footfall.

## 6 CONCLUSION

The archaeological evaluation has succeeded in assessing the depth of deposits within the test pit excavated. A possible earlier floor surface has been observed and recorded, which sits above earlier cut features. It has not been possible to date these lower deposits due to reaching the prescribed depth as set out in the WSI. No in situ human burials were evident within the test pit, although disturbed, disarticulated (probable) human remains were present throughout the depth of the excavation.

Although deposits of archaeological significance were not positively identified above the limit of excavation during evaluation, it is possible that these levels are not consistent across the area. Given that the excavated depth appears to be at the interface between

disturbed and in situ deposits, archaeological monitoring during any proposed excavation works would be a prudent measure, due to the archaeological sensitivity of the site and the continued potential for the presence of human remains.

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## 8 APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1 CONTEXT REGISTER

| TR1     | L (M)   | W (M) | MIN. D (M) | MAX. D (M) |
|---------|---|-------|------------|------------|
|         | 1.08  | 0.92  | —          | 0.30       |
| CONTEXT | DESCRIPTION                                       |       |            | DBGL (M)   |
| 001     | Stone slabs                                       |       |            | 0—0.08     |
| 002     | Levelling deposit for stone slabs (001)           |       |            | 0.05—0.16  |
| 003     | Possible earlier stone surface                    |       |            | 0.12—0.17  |
| 004     | Levelling deposit for earlier floor surface (003) |       |            | 0.15—0.30  |
| 005     | Cut of linear feature                             |       |            | 0.29       |
| 006     | Fill of [005]                                     |       |            | 0.29—0.30+ |
| 007     | Deposit   |       |            | 0.30       |
| 008     | Cut of linear feature                             |       |            | 0.29       |
| 009     | Fill of [008]                                     |       |            | 0.29—0.30+ |
| 010     | Foundation for wall                               |       |            | 0.07—0.20  |
| SUMMARY |   |       |            |            |

c 1m<sup>2</sup> Test Pit. Levelling deposit for current floor contained clay pipe fragments, coal, oyster shell and possible human bone fragments. Evidence for earlier floor surface and associated levelling deposit containing fragments of possible human bone. Two unexcavated linear feature cuts and fills at 0.29m BGL.





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