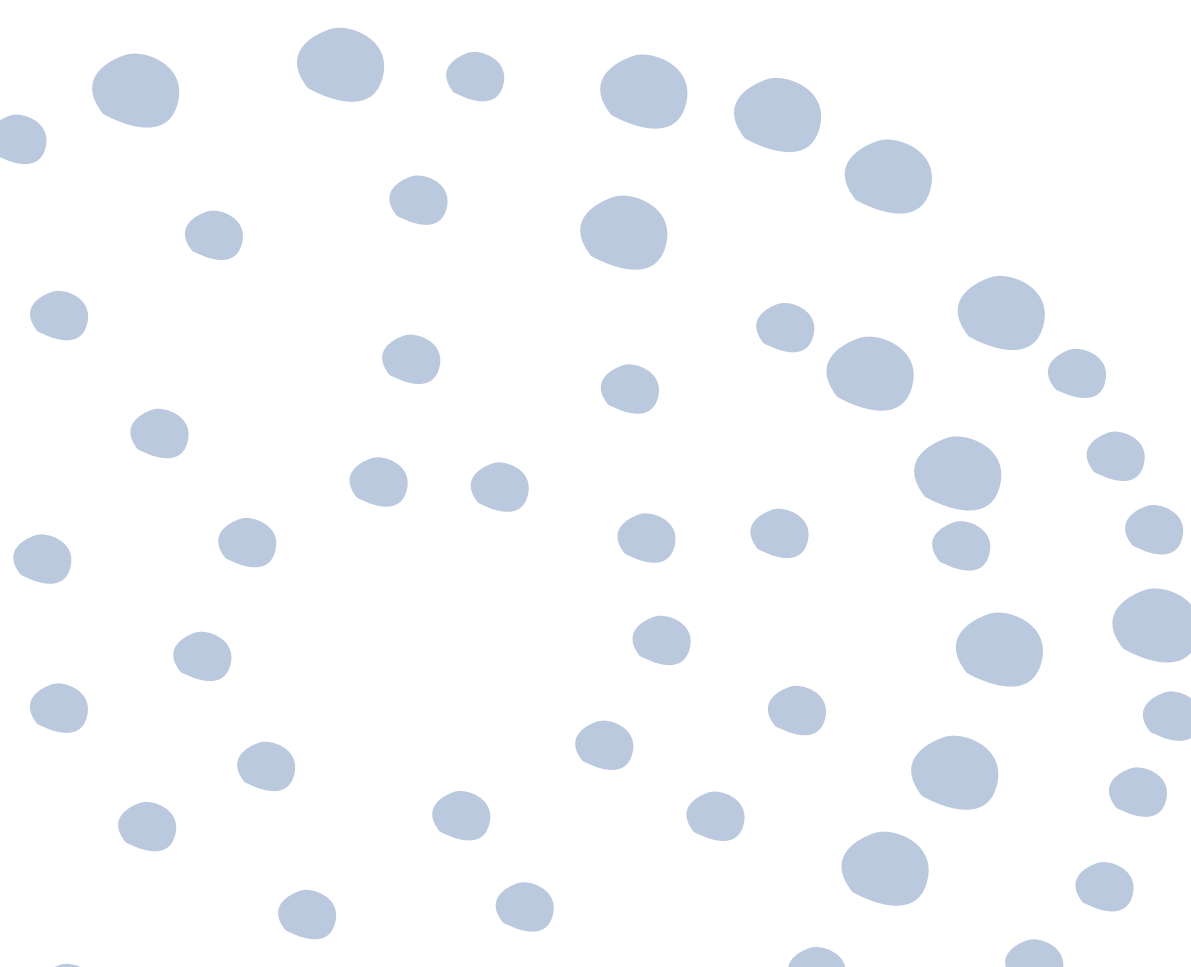


birmingham archaeology



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

Milton Street, Chester
Archaeological Watching Brief
2008



MILTON STREET, CHESTER

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SUMMARY

Site Name: Milton Street, Chester
NGR: SJ409667
Type: Watching brief
Date of fieldwork: 22nd July 2008
Client: Watkin Jones

In July 2008 an archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Birmingham Archaeology at Milton Street, Chester on behalf of Watkin Jones and Sons Ltd during the removal of the slab and of foundations of an existing building on the site, as part of the ground works for the development.

No archaeological features, structures, deposits or horizons were identified during the course of the groundworks. As excavation was only carried out to the depth of the building foundations, it could be that archaeological deposits exist at a greater depth.

MILTON STREET, CHESTER: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF, 2008.

1 INTRODUCTION

In July 2008 Birmingham Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief at Milton Street, Chester (hereafter referred to as the study area). The work was commissioned on behalf of Watkin Jones and Sons Ltd in advance of a proposed residential/retail development.

This report outlines the results of the archaeological monitoring, which was carried out in accordance with guidelines produced by Mike Morris, which was approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to implementation, in accordance with guidelines laid down in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (DoE 1990). The project conformed to the Institute of Field Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (IFA 1999)

2 LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

The site is located on the corner of Milton Street and Charles Street, and is centred on NGR SJ409667 (Fig. 1), and is approximately 0.086 hectares in size.

The underlying geology in the area consists of red sandstone. The present character of the site is a partially demolished building, marked on maps as a depot, with a yard. Situated on both Charles Street (to the east) and Milton Street (to the south), to the west is a modern residential development, and to the north is a larger depot.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The principle aim of the watching brief was to record any archaeological features, structures, deposits, or horizons exposed during intrusive groundworks across the site.

More specific aims were to:

- Establish the level of survival of archaeological remains in the area to be affected by the foundations of the modern building.

4 METHODOLOGY

Groundworks comprised the removal of the slab and foundations of the previously existing building. This was monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist and complemented with the salvage recording of any archaeological deposits and features revealed during works.

All stratigraphic sequences were recorded, even where no archaeology was present. A comprehensive written record was maintained using a continuous numbered context system on *pro-forma* context and feature cards. Photographs supplemented written records and scale plans and sections.

The full site archive includes all artefactual remains recovered from the site. The site archive will be prepared according to guidelines set down in Appendix 3 of the Management of Archaeology Projects (English Heritage, 1991), the Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage (Walker 1990) and Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological collections (Museum and Art Galleries Commission, 1992). The paper archive will be deposited with the appropriate repository subject to permission from the landowner.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Chester can trace its origins back to Roman times, established in 70 AD as a bulwark against the fierce Celtic tribes in the west. The Romans called this settlement Dewa (pronounced Deva). When the Romans withdrew in the 5th century, the incoming Angles and Saxons settled and changed the name to Chester. Like the Romans, they used the town as a bulwark against the Celts in the west whom they called 'Welsh'.

Medieval Chester became the largest port in the north-west of England, but backed the wrong side during the Civil War and was besieged for 18 months by Oliver Cromwell's parliamentary forces in 1645-46 for its Royalist stance.

The study area lies approximately 300 meters northwest of the Roman walls; it is not on the alignment of any major roads leading out of the town. It has a medium to low likelihood of having Roman stratigraphic deposits. No previous archaeological investigation has been carried out on the site.

6 RESULTS

Foundations of a 20th-century depot building, consisting of a 0.60m wide by 0.40m deep poured concrete base with cast concrete blocks 0.45m x 0.21m x 0.15m, bonded with a cream gritty mortar. The foundations were approximately 1m deep.

Possible natural sub soil layer (103), dark-grey sandy silty clay was recorded at a depth of 0.62m below the ground surface. It contained building rubble, and a few sherds of post medieval pottery. Above this deposit was (102), mid-brown sandy silt mottled with dark yellow clay sand levelling layer 0.18m below the ground surface. A grey gravel (101) hardcore layer covered this 0.08m below a layer of tarmac (100).

Fifteen fragments of pottery were recovered from context 103. The assemblage was composed of two fragments of stoneware, four fragments of whiteware, a fragment of creamware and eight fragments of transfer-printed pottery. All of the pot dated to the mid-to-late 19th century.

7 CONCLUSION

The removal of the modern building foundations did not reveal any features or deposits of archaeological significance. This is most likely because the foundations did not cut through them, archaeological deposits could potentially exist beneath the badly disturbed subsoil deposit (103).

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project was commissioned by Watkin Jones and Sons Ltd. Thanks also go to Mike Morris, who monitored the project on behalf of Chester County Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Samantha Hepburn. Samantha Hepburn produced the written report and Erica Macey-Bracken commented on the pottery. The report was illustrated by N. Dodd, and edited by Chris Hewitson who managed the project for Birmingham Archaeology.

9 REFERENCES

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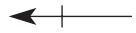
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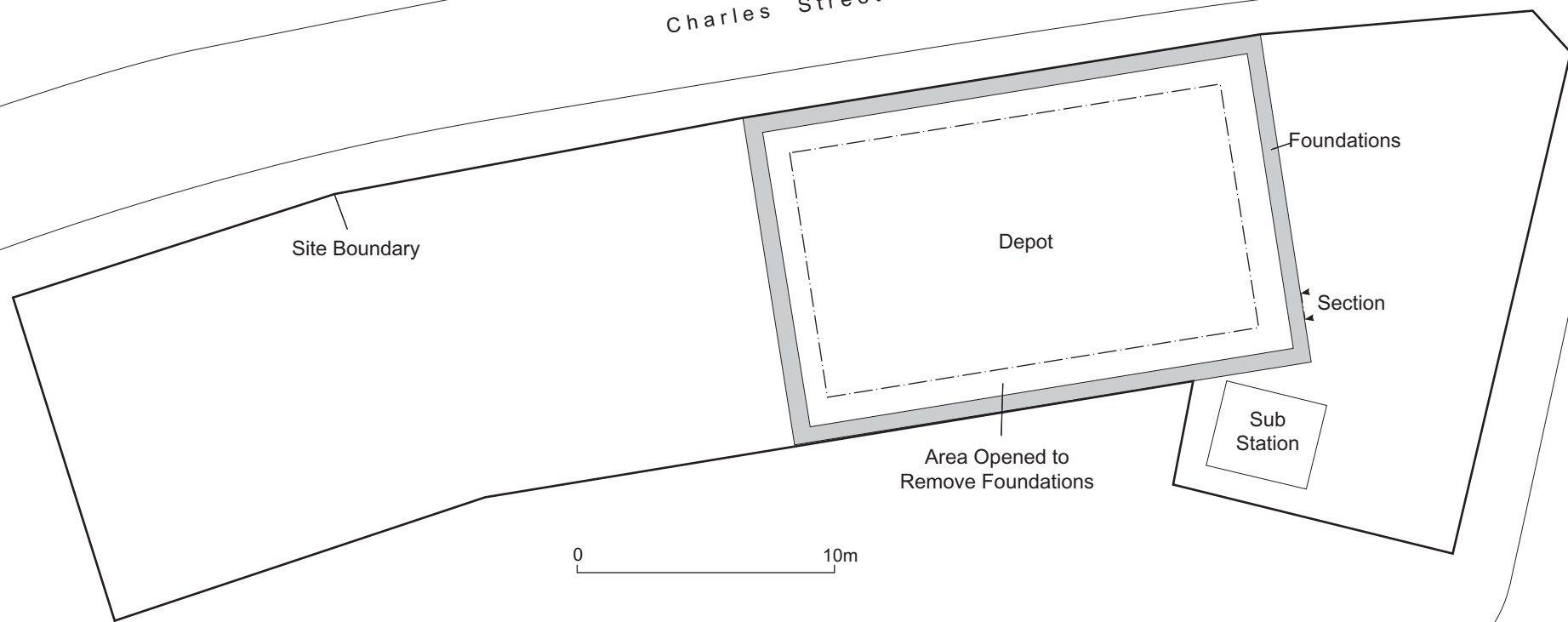
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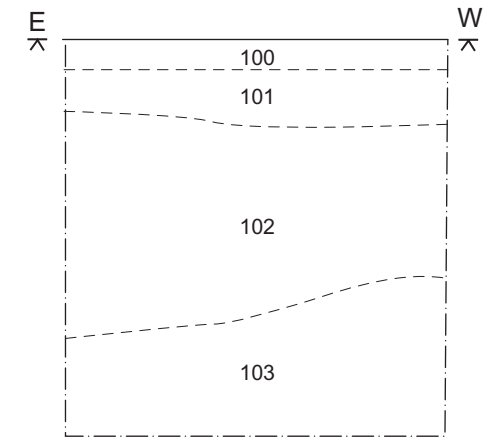
Figure 1: Site Location



Charles Street



0 10m



0 1m



Plate 1



Plate 2