

PYE WAREHOUSE, FLEET SQUARE, LANCASTER, LANCASHIRE

Archaeological Watching Brief



Client:
Lancaster and District YMCA

NGR: SD 47598 61917

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Non-Technical Summary

A well and drains were discovered during construction work associated with the development of the YMCA building at the corner of New Road and Damside, Lancaster. These were recorded by Greenlane Archaeology in November 2009, and were assessed as probably being no earlier than the present mill building, constructed in 1881.

Acknowledgments

Greenlane Archaeology would like to thank The Lancaster and District YMCA and RP Tyson Construction for commissioning and supporting the project, with particular thanks to Daniel Causer at RP Tyson.

The watching brief was carried out by Sam Whitehead, who produced the report. The project was managed by Dan Elsworth, who edited the report together with Jo Dawson.

1 Introduction

1.1 **Circumstances of the project:** during construction work associated with the development of the YMCA building at the corner of New Road and Damside, Lancaster, a well and drains were discovered in the basement. Greenlane Archaeology was asked to record these features having previously carried out an archaeological recording of the building (Greenlane Archaeology 2008). This brief statement should be read in conjunction with the original building recording report, and essentially forms an addition to the description of the basement (see *Section 4.8.1* in the previous report).

1.2 **Summary of desk-based assessment results:** previous background historical research carried out during the building recording phase revealed that a building had occupied the site from at least 1778. A two storey warehouse on the site was purchased by James Bibby in 1865 who then constructed the current five storey building in 1881. It was constructed as a warehouse and was subsequently occupied by W and J Pye who also used it to mill grain to produce animal feed and flour.

2 Methodology

2.1 **Watching brief:** the site was visited on the 12 November 2009. Photographs in 35mm black and white print and colour slide were taken of the structures, along with digital images. A plan of the features was produced, based on the plan of the basement produced during the building recording (see Figure 2).

2.2 **Archive:** an archive of the project has been produced in accordance with current IFA and English Heritage guidelines (Brown 2007; English Heritage 1991). The paper and digital archive will be added to the archive of the original building recording project (Greenlane Archaeology 2008), currently deposited in the Lancashire Record Office in Preston. One copy of this statement will be deposited with the client and one with the client's agent, and one will be retained by Greenlane Archaeology. In addition, digital copies will be offered to the Conservation Officer at Lancaster City Council, the Lancashire Historic Environment Record, and the OASIS scheme, together with a record of the project details.

3 Results

3.1 **The well:** the shaft had an internal diameter of 0.80m, and the lining was constructed from a single skin of un-mortared, frogged red bricks that were otherwise unmarked (Plate 1 and Plate 2). The bricks were constructed within a metal cylindrical casing that was held by timber pegs around the exterior driven into the sandy subsoil. A narrow gauge iron pipe exited the top of the well on the north side; this appeared to have been introduced at a later date to act as an overflow pipe to prevent flooding.



Plate 1: Brick-lined well

Plate 2: Detail of bricks

3.2 **The drains:** there appeared to be two sets of drains under the building's concrete floor. System one comprised two curving brick lined channels extended northwards from the southern basement wall, converging at a sump from where water was transported in a ceramic drain pipe towards the north elevation. The second drain comprised another section of salt-glazed ceramic pipe that exited from under the floor of a recess in the west side of the south elevation, from where it ran eastwards and through into a small u-shaped brick sump where the pipe emptied. It was unclear where the water went after this, and it appeared to just soak into the ground. This second drain system was clearly slightly more recent than the brick channels, as it partly truncated their south-west arm. It seems likely that the first drain system relates to machinery that was formerly housed in the basement, and that the second was merely to do with draining the ground water. The bricks used to build the brick channels and drains were all un-frogged and un-marked.



Plate 3: Brick-lined channel and sump for ceramic pipe drain

Plate 4: Brick-lined channels from the east

4 Discussion

4.1 Unfrogged bricks generally pre-date frogged ones, and it is therefore likely that the well post-dates the drains; the earlier drain is thought to relate to machinery that was formerly housed in the basement. Therefore, the features recorded were not

deemed to pre-date the construction of the 1881 mill at the site, although it is possible that the brick-lined channels relate to the earlier two-storey building which was purchased in 1865 by James Bibby. As such the features are not deemed to be of great significance, and they will be largely preserved below the new floor level.

5. Bibliography

Brown, DH, 2007 *Archaeological Archives: A Guide to Best Practice in Creation, Compilation, Transfer, and Curation*, IFA, Reading

English Heritage, 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edn, London

Greenlane Archaeology, 2008 Pye Warehouse, Fleet Square, Lancaster, Lancashire: Archaeological Building Recording, unpubl rep

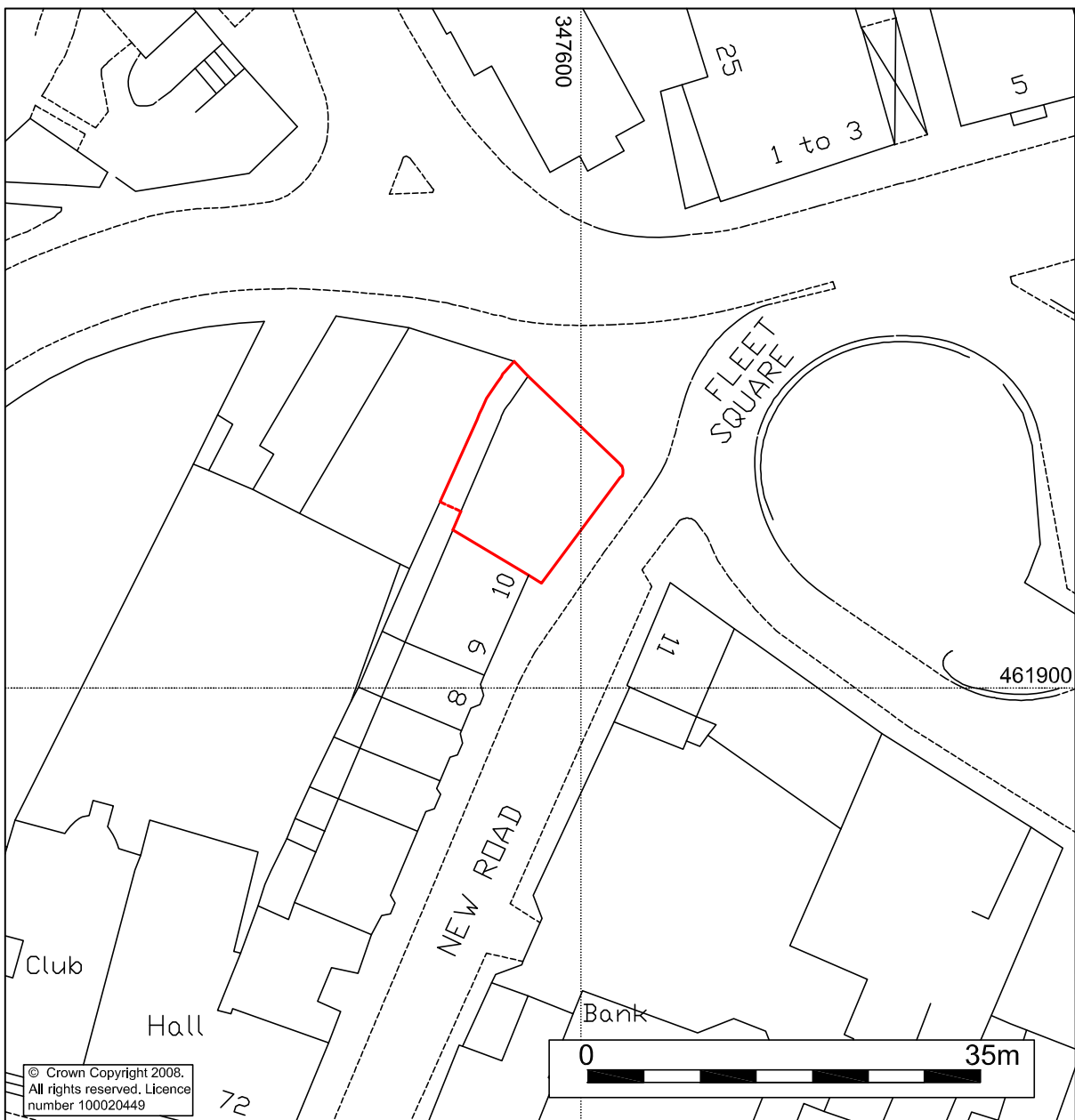
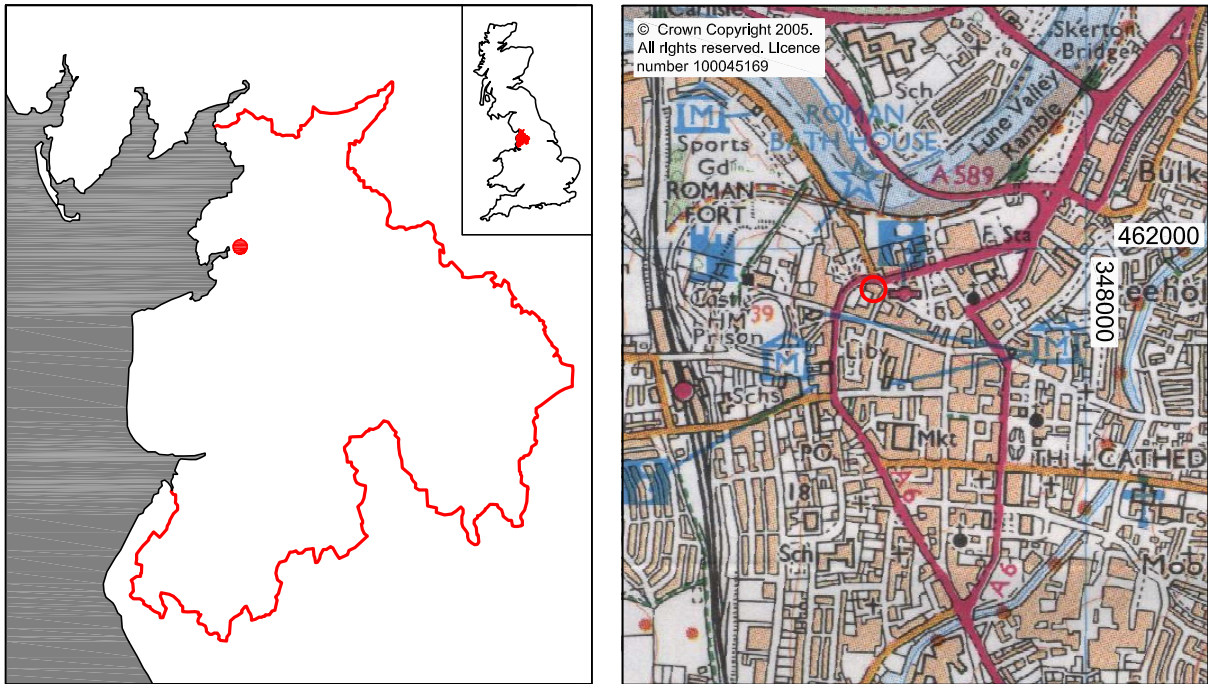


Figure 1: Site location

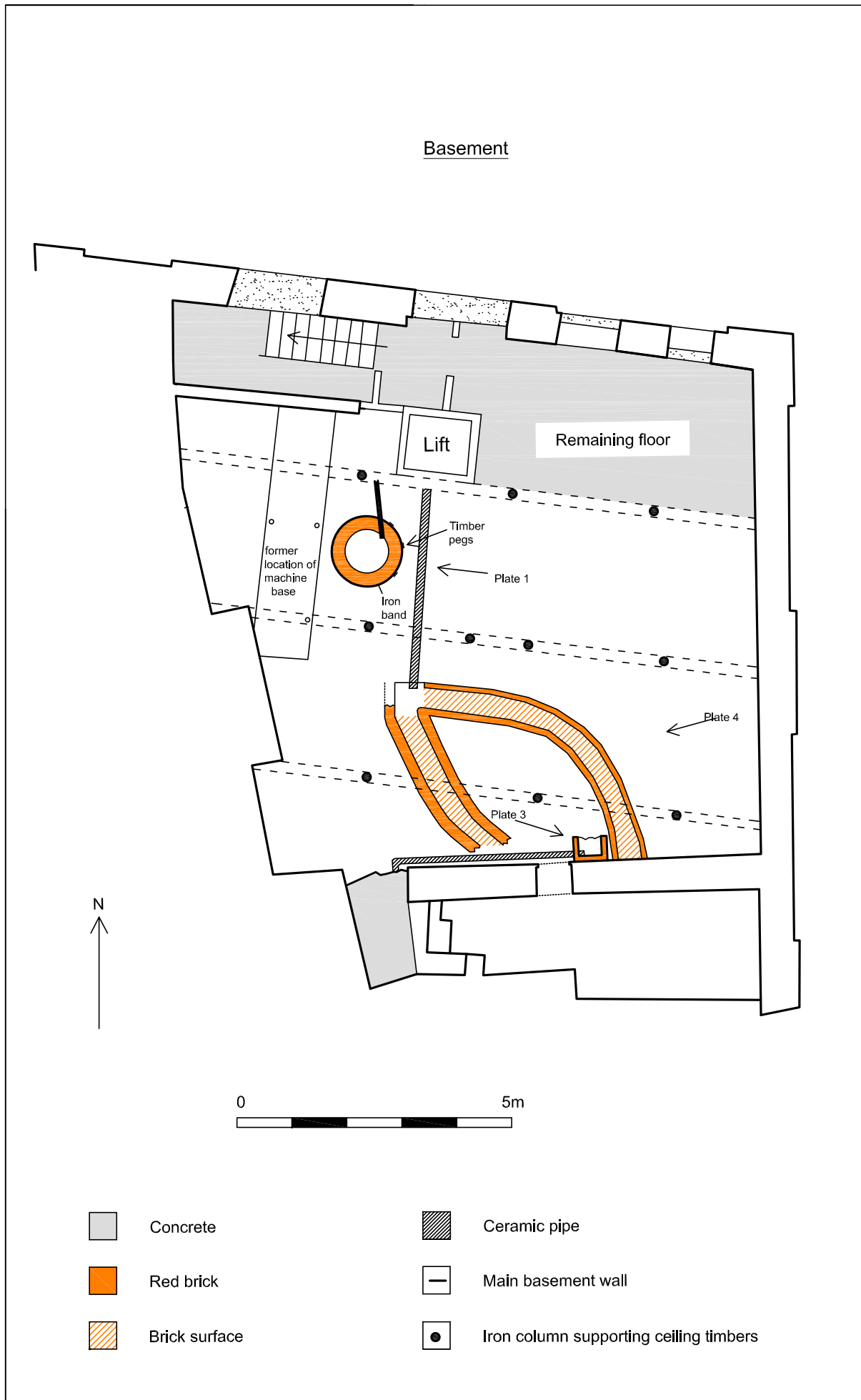


Figure 2: Features recorded