

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

ODDFELLOWS HALL CHESTER

For Lister Carter Associates Ltd

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L~P:ARCHÆOLOGY

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Client: Lister Carter Associates Ltd

Local Authority: Cheshire West and Chester

NGR: 340523,366025

Planning App: 09/11037/FUL

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Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was carried out during groundworks to the rear of Oddfellows Hall, Chester.

A substantial 15th century sandstone wall was revealed along the south side of the site which may have formed the north wall of a structure in the area of Heritage Court and formed the boundary of a plot fronting Lower Bridge Street. In the centre of the site were several 13th/14th century rubbish pits which are now preserved in situ below the development.

In 1676 Oddfellows Hall replaced the Medieval development on the site. In the northern part of the site was evidence for two previous walls dating from the 16th and 18th centuries, which suggest that the boundary of the Hall garden moved northwards.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report details the results of an archaeological Watching Brief carried out at Oddfellows Hall, for Lister Carter Associates Ltd. The local authority is Cheshire West and Chester (CWAC).
- 1.2. The fieldwork was carried out by Matthew Williams and Blair Poole of L – P : Archaeology between 28th September to the 4th October 2011.
- 1.3. The site is located in at 20 Lower Bridge Street, Chester, CH1 1RS (FIGURE 1). The NGR is 340523,366025.
- 1.4. The site code allocated by Chester Archaeology is CHE/20LBS11.
- 1.5. The work was carried out in accordance with the specification prepared by Matthew Williams of L – P : Archaeology. The OASIS report is given in Appendix 1.

2. Site Background

2.1.PLANNING

- 2.1.1. Planning consent has been granted for an hotel extension to the rear of the existing building. The application reference is 09/11037/FUL.
- 2.1.2. The site lies within Chester City Walls, the Area of Archaeological Importance and within the Chester City Conservation Area.
- 2.1.3. Lister Carter Associates Ltd and CWAC have agreed the methodology for these works in the Specification for Archaeological Watching Brief at Oddfellows Hall (L – P : Archaeology doc. ref LP1249M-SAW-v1.0).
- 2.1.4. This document seeks to satisfy the condition by describing the results of the watching brief and clarifying the status and location of the project archive.

2.2.GEOLOGY

- 2.2.1. Excavations on the site revealed that the solid geology is made up of sandstone of the Sherwood Sandstone Group. The superficial deposits overlying the bedrock were identified as red sand.

2.3.TOPOGRAPHY

- 2.3.1. The site is located within the city of Chester, south of the Roman fortress but within the medieval walls.
- 2.3.2. The site is bounded by brick walls onto yards to the north, east and west and Heritage Court to the south.
- 2.3.3. The site is relatively flat, laying at c. 22m OD on an area of land artificially raised up above the surrounding street levels.

2.4.ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

- 2.4.1. The site is 65m south west of the South Gate of the Roman fortress. During the Roman period the area between the fortress and modern Castle street was devoid of development so that the security of the defences was not compromised (MASON: 2001,101) although some cremations and evidence for

small scale metal working have been discovered north of St Olave's Street on the opposite side of Lower Bridge Street. Major early Roman development in the form of the Mansio and other buildings begins south of Castle Street (MASON: 2001,108).

- 2.4.2. Excavations at 26-42 Lower Bridge Street, 20m south of the site (also within the Roman 'undeveloped' zone) revealed evidence for ploughing and subsequent abandonment during the Early Medieval period. Several small sunken floored buildings were then constructed around AD850 which were replaced by large timber structures surrounded by a patchy surface of sandstone brash. These are thought to be part of the planned formation of the *burgh* in AD907. The buildings appear to have been dismantled and abandoned at the end of the tenth century (MASON: 1985,2). A tanning industry was established on the site which continued until 1100 after which the site silted over. Several pits were subsequently cut into the silt, which produced mainly Chester wares, some pre-1250 pottery and 13th or 14th pottery though the latter may be residual (MASON: 1985, 30).
- 2.4.3. By the thirteenth century the City walls had been extended and the site was enclosed within the city. Braun and Hogenberg's map of 1581 (FIGURE 2) and Speede's map of 1610 show that the site was within an area of houses and gardens. The houses on Braun's map are shown as half-timbered jettied structures which front onto Bridge Street to the east, Castle Street to the south, Bunce Lane to the west and White Friars Lane to the north.
- 2.4.4. Lavaux's map of 1745 (FIGURE 2) shows the site in the rear garden of Oddfellows Hall, which was built in 1676 to replace an existing town house (ENGLISH HERITAGE 2012).
- 2.4.5. The 1871 Town Plan of Chester shows Oddfellows Hall as Bridge House School (not reproduced). The site is shown as a garden behind the main building, and has an oval garden feature in the centre. The 1899 and 1913 Ordnance Survey maps show the same layout in less detail (not reproduced).
- 2.4.6. The 1938 Ordnance Survey map shows the garden has been developed and four small courtyards formed. However, post WWII maps show the area open

once again (not reproduced).

2.4.7. An archaeological evaluation carried out in 2009 revealed homogenous dark brown silt deposits 1.5m thick, which were interpreted as make up for the garden of Oddfellows Hall on the late 17th century. Below this was a thin buried soil layer, which overlay natural red sand and bedrock. No features were identified (POOLE AND STATTER 2009).

2.5.SITE CONDITIONS

2.5.1. Prior to development the site was a car park with a concrete surface and small stub wall at the south edge. Cabling from the adjacent electricity substation runs into the northeast corner of the site.

3. Aims and Objectives

3.1. The general aims of the watching brief are:

- ◆ To determine the presence or absence of archaeological deposits or remains.
- ◆ To record the character, date, location and preservation of any archaeological remains on the site.
- ◆ To record the nature and extent of any previous damage to archaeological remains on the site.

4. Methodology

4.1. For a full description of the archaeological methodology please refer to the Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by L – P : Archaeology (LP1249M-WSI-v1.0).

4.2. The site overburden was stripped using a toothless bucket to the required construction level, which was approximately 100-200mm below the archaeological horizon.

4.3. Exposed features were sampled where time allowed. The majority of the site would not be impacted and therefore most of the deposits were left in situ.

4.4. Impact was confined to several pile caps that were to be excavated after the site strip. Four of these were observed prior to infill.

4.5. The remains of a sandstone wall were found along the south edge of the site in the area of the proposed southern groundbeam. The pile cap and beam layout was altered to allow preservation in situ of this feature. The wall was fully exposed, recorded and covered in a breathable membrane before development continued.

5. Watching Brief Strip

- 5.1.1. A plan of the site is shown in Figure 3 and sections are shown in Figure 4. Deposits are given in round brackets and cut numbers in square brackets. A site matrix is given in Appendix 2.

5.2. MEDIEVAL LAYERS AND WALL

- 5.2.1. The earliest deposit on the site was a mid brown silt (9) which extended across most of the site. It contained Roman and Medieval pottery and one Post Medieval pottery sherd. The Post Medieval pottery was probably intrusive as this layer was directly below the mixed overburden and was exposed by machine. Overlying (9) in the southeastern part of the site was a grey clay silt layer (46), which appeared to be a build up of occupation debris and rubbish. It contained pottery dated to the mid 13th to 14th century.
- 5.2.2. Cut into (46) was sandstone wall (35). It measured 0.75m wide and 8.25m long east west and continued into the eastern limit of excavation. It survived to a maximum of three courses with a height of 0.40m. The majority of the wall consisted of two courses of undressed, roughly hewn sandstone fragments laid flat which are interpreted as the foundation courses. The third course consisted of three dressed blocks at the west end of the wall forming a southern face. These were each about 0.40m long, 0.25m wide and 0.20m thick. Mid orange clean clay had been used as a bonding material in patches throughout the wall.
- 5.2.3. A small patch of dirty compact chalk (49) was noted in the narrow excavation on the south side of (35), it overlay the foundation course and was level with the base of the faced upper course. It may be the remains of a packed chalk floor although there was no associated dating evidence and it was overlain by modern backfill. If this does represent a floor it suggests that the interior of the building is to the south of the site and the untreated trampled surface is to the north.



Plate 1 - Chalk deposit (49) looking east. 1m scale.

- 5.2.4. There was a gap of 1.10m at 4.70m from the west end. Both the gap in the wall and the west terminus appeared ragged and broken with no evidence of corners or wall returns and therefore it was impossible to determine whether the gap was a doorway or whether the structure enclosed land to the north or the south.
- 5.2.5. Butting up to the wall and overlying (46) was a spread of dark green grey clay silt (45) containing mid 13th to 15th century pottery. This covered a large area of the southern part of the site and is interpreted as an occupation or trample layer. It was sampled as <1>.
- 5.2.6. A pile of sandstone (34) on the north side of the wall appeared to be a section of collapsed wall which overlay (45). This suggests that (45) is contemporary with the use (or at least pre-collapse) of wall (35). This infers a 13th to 15th century date for the wall.
- 5.2.7. These deposits represent a sequence of buried soil (9) overlain by a 13th/14th century cess/refuse layer (46). This was cut by the sandstone wall (35) by the 15th century and a further layer of cess/refuse (45) built up against the structure. The wall collapsed by the end of the 15th century.



Plate 2 - Northern part of site, looking NW, showing (9) cut by various features.



Plate 3 - Wall (35), looking SW

5.3.MEDIEVAL RUBBISH PITS

- 5.3.1. In the north east of the site were two relatively small pits, [21] and [40], filled with very dark grey silt and frequent charcoal inclusions. These appear to be rubbish/ash pits although cleaning and some minor investigation did not produce any pottery.
- 5.3.2. In the centre of the site were four large pits [23], [25], [27] and [44], and one smaller pit [19]. The fills were all very similar, being dark grey clay or clay silt with moderate charcoal inclusions. No artefacts were recovered from cleaning these features or the partial excavation of [23] and [27].
- 5.3.3. [25] was truncated by [13], which contained dark grey clay silt (12) and pottery dated to the 14th to 16th century. [13] was a steep sided sub-circular pit measuring 0.75m across and 0.50m deep (FIGURE 3). It truncated a small area of scorched earth to the south.
- 5.3.4. All these pits form a group of rubbish pits dating to the late Medieval period filled with grey clay silt and charcoal fills. Some may be earlier, for example [25] and [27] are stratigraphically earlier than [13], although the similarity of the pits suggests a broadly similar date.

5.4.POST MEDIEVAL WALL CUTS

- 5.4.1. This group comprised linear cut [11] and potential linear terminus [17]. Both follow the same alignment east to west in the north of the site and [11] cut rubbish pit [13]. A section through [11] was excavated to the base but [17] was only partially excavated which confirmed the upper fill and side profile.
- 5.4.2. Both [11] and [17] had steep sides and sandstone rubble upper fills, (10) and (16) respectively. The primary fill of [11] was a thin dark grey clay (30), similar to the fills of the rubbish pit groups, and contained pottery dating to the 13th to 14th century. This deposit may have fallen into [11] when it cut through pit [13] and cannot be taken as reliable dating evidence. The secondary fill of [11] was another thin dark grey clay silt (14) containing pottery dating to the 17th century. This deposit may be trample and the pottery suggests a more likely date for the original excavation of the feature. The upper fill (10)

contained pottery dating to the 17/18th century. These appear to be robbed out walls or garden features dating to the early period of Oddfellows Hall which was built in 1676.

5.5. NORTHERN BOUNDARY [8]

5.5.1. Running east west just inside the northern site boundary was a ditch [8] with four fills. The basal fill was a dark brown grey friable silt (6) which contained a coin dated 1632-4. Overlying (6) was a similar fill (5) with frequent fragments of mortar or plaster. This was overlain by another grey clay silt fill (4) and the uppermost fill was a dark brown grey silt. The vertical sides, flat base and plaster inclusions in (5) suggest [8] is a robbed out wall. It is unclear whether the coin dates to the excavation of the original foundation or the subsequent robbing.

5.6. 19TH/20TH CENTURY DEPOSITS

5.6.1. In the south of the site was a small area of rounded dark grey cobbles (15) on a sand base (31). The location of these near the top of the sequence suggest that they are relatively late. Such cobbled surfaces are typical of tenement housing of the 19th and early 20th centuries and they are probably a part of the infilling and courtyard formation that occurred between 1911 and 1938. There was no clear kerb to the cobbles.

5.6.2. Three pits [29], [38] and [48] were identified as modern from finds within the fills. Finds included modern bottle glass and clinker.

5.7. 20TH CENTURY/OVERBURDEN

5.7.1. The cobbles and the rest of the site to the north and west was sealed by an 0.80m thick dark grey clay silt (1) which contained various fragments of unabraded pottery, including Roman and Medieval pieces. The base of this deposit and the deposit below (2) clearly subside into an early ditch along the north edge of the site.

5.7.2. Sealing the main archaeological horizon was a layer of mid brown sand silt (2) with moderate inclusions including flint and stone pebbles, CBM fragments and pottery sherds. This represents the interface between the well preserved

archaeological deposits below and the disturbed garden soil above.

5.8.UNDATED

5.8.1. One pit could not be associated with either group and remains undated. This was oval pit [50] near the centre of the site. It was not excavated but minor investigation at the edge of the feature suggested it was shallow. It contained two large sandstone fragments and sandstone rubble.

6. Pile cap monitoring

- 6.1. The excavation of four of the pile caps was observed. The location of the caps is given in Figure 5. The pile caps are numbered 3, 4, 5 and 7 according to the original design plans.
- 6.2. Pile cap 3 was on the west edge of the site and measured c. 1.5m square and 0.40m deep. It cut into (9) and no lower deposits or further features were noted.
- 6.3. Pile cap 4 was on the west edge of the site and measured 2m N-S by 1.5m E-W and 0.40m deep. It also cut into (9) and no features were recorded in the cap. At the north end of the cap red sandstone bedrock deposits were recorded at the base of the cap at c. 20.75m OD.
- 6.4. Pile cap 5 was on the west edge of the site at the base of the step in the north. It measured 2m N-S by 1.5m E-W and 0.40m deep. The cap cut into (9) and also truncated [11]. No further features were noted.
- 6.5. Pile cap 7 was in the centre of the site. It measured 2m N-S, 1.5m E-W and 0.40m deep. It truncated [25] and [27] and showed that [27] was 0.25m deep and [25] was more than 0.40m deep. No further features or finds were recovered.

7. Pottery by Julie Edwards

7.1.INTRODUCTION

7.1.1. Sixty sherds, 1897 g, of medieval and post-medieval pottery and three pieces of ceramic building material were retrieved during the watching brief by L-P:Archaeology on the building work at the rear of 11 Bridge Street, Chester (Oddfellows Hall). Pottery from modern overburden context (1)/(33) was not collected. Five pieces of Roman pottery were also found including two pieces of amphora and a fragment of samian ware. This report describes and discusses the post-Roman ceramics.

7.2.METHODOLOGY

7.2.1. The pottery has been identified and recorded in accordance with the minimum standards of the Medieval Pottery Research Group (MPRG 2001). All the pottery has been quantified by sherd count and weight according to ware type and where possible form within context groups; any particular features of form, decoration or peculiarities of ware have also been noted. The terms used to identify the wares are those common ware names used in the Cheshire West and Chester Historic Environment Team ceramic reference collection supplemented by post-medieval terms recommended by the Potteries Museum during an English Heritage sponsored training course in 1999. This report describes and discusses the ceramic assemblage; details of each sherd are recorded separately in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.

7.3.CONDITION

7.3.1. The assemblage is fragmentary and no complete or reconstructable vessels were retrieved, neither could any vessels be partially reassembled, most vessels are represented by single sherds. The fragments vary in condition; in general the medieval sherds are slightly more abraded than the post-medieval and the Roman sherds are more abraded than the medieval. The glazed post-medieval sherds survive with their glazes in a glossy condition. Sherd size overall is small but some larger fragments survive, most notably remains of a dish in context (2) which represents about 20% of the vessel and weighs 505 g. Five pieces are

burnt: two joining sherds from a yellow ware jar in (14), a blackware in (3) and medieval wares in (45) and (46). Deposits of cess were found on some sherds and some are sooted suggesting they are probably from vessels used for cooking or heating food or drink.

7.3.2. Almost half of a medieval floor tile survives with a very worn surface; two pieces of medieval roof tile are abraded.

7.4.RANGE

7.4.1. The bulk of the post-medieval wares range in date from the sixteenth to early eighteenth century there is only one later sherd a nineteenth century factory slipware (blue banded) from (28). Apart from a tin-glazed ware lid, probably from a posset pot, the pottery, where a source can be identified, has been made in the Midlands or North West of Britain or North Wales and there are no Continental imports. The tin-glazed ware may have been made in London or possibly Bristol or the Low Countries. The lack of Continental imports is perhaps unusual for the period represented but could be due to the relatively small size of the assemblage or its provenance. Blackwares predominate amongst the post-medieval wares with smaller amounts of slipwares and yellow wares, which reflects the basic range of seventeenth century wares found in Chester (see Edwards 2008) although one might also have expected mottled wares to be present. The small size and fragmentary condition of the assemblage limits any conclusions that may be made due to absence of wares.

7.4.2. Similarly the medieval wares consist of wares commonly found in Chester - 13th-14th century Cheshire made red/grey wares, pink/white firing wares similar to those known to have been made in North East Wales and late medieval Ewloe-type wares. No medieval Continental imports are present.

Ware	Sherd count	Weight (g)
Banded ware	1	2
Blackware	12	551
Cistercian-type ware	2	41
Pink/white ware	6	157
Ewloe-type ware	1	103
Red/grey ware	22	359
Reduced ware-medieval	2	7
Slipware	5	73
TGW	1	25
Unglazed redware-flowerpot	1	31
Unglazed earthenware	1	27
Unidentified (Ewloe-type?)	1	505
Yellow ware	4	9

Table 1- Ceramic finds

7.5.DESCRPTION BY FEATURE

CONTEXT (2)

7.5.1. The five pieces of pottery (578 g) from this layer are mixed in date and consist of fragments of two Cistercian-type ware cups, a trailed slipware dish, a tin-glazed ware lid, an undecorated dish in a Ewloe-type ware fabric and part of the rim of a thirteenth/fourteenth century Cheshire red/grey ware jug. Whilst the Cistercian-type wares are from the sixteenth century the tin-glazed ware is mid-late seventeenth century in date. The latter has an undecorated plain white glaze and is part of a dome-shaped lid; the size suggests it is from a posset pot. The slipware dish is also of similar date and possibly continuing into the eighteenth century. The undecorated dish is unusual, it has the fabric of a late medieval Ewloe-type ware but a similar rim form to the slipware dish; it is perhaps an early post-medieval product of the north-east Wales potteries.

FILLS OF THE LINEAR CUT/ROBBED WALL [8]

7.5.2. Only one context, (3). from the fills of the potential robbed out wall [8] contained pottery. Five sherds were retrieved - three blackwares (74 g) and two medieval sherds (33 g). The blackware sherds do not have any features that would provide a definite form identification however one sherd is probably

from a large storage jar. This fragment has prominent throwing lines on the interior and within these a pale brown deposit has been preserved. The deposit may be the remains of urine, the shape of the fragment does not suggest a chamberpot but urine was used in a variety of trades and crafts in the past and this sherd may be from a large storage jar. A smashed but complete reconstructable jar from excavations at 25 Bridge Street had a similar deposit over the entire interior (Edwards 2008 204-205) prompting the suggestion that it had been used to store urine. One blackware fragment appears to have been burnt.

7.5.3. One of the medieval sherds is an abraded Cheshire-type red/grey firing ware with an external reduced green glaze; the piece is from a vessel made in the thirteenth or early fourteenth century. The other fragment is a pink/white ware and a type produced in the Ewloe/Buckley area of North Wales in the fourteenth – fifteenth century; the fragment has a clear glaze with copper green flecks. The surface appears to have been decorated with wavy combed lines which is not a particularly common feature of these wares.

7.5.4. A single fragment (297 g) of a medieval floor tile was also found in this context; it has a line impressed quatrefoil design which is recorded as no. 2/81 in the Chester stamp series and Cheshire county medieval floor tile census (see Rutter 1990). The upper surface of the tile has been worn almost smooth and only elements of the design survive.

7.6. RUBBISH PITS AND LINEAR FEATURE

PIT (29)

7.6.1. A single sherd of a post-medieval factory made slipware came from the only fill of this pit (28). The fragment has a blue banded slip decoration. Such wares were being produced in the mid-late nineteenth century (see Goodwin and Barker 2009 for examples).

LINEAR FEATURE [11]

7.6.2. The three fills of feature [11], (10), (14) and (30), contained a total of 18 sherds (429 g), the largest assemblage from a single feature on the site. There appears to be a broad chronological progression between the upper two

contexts which contain post-medieval pottery and context (30); however the underlying pit [13] contains pottery of fourteenth/fifteenth century date and the medieval pottery from (30) is therefore likely to be residual.

- 7.6.3. The uppermost fill (10) contains fragments of blackwares representing drinking vessels and jars, the latter probably serving a storage function. One small fragment has a fine pale brown/yellowish deposit on the interior which may be from use, perhaps as a chamberpot. The fabrics are comparable to those found in seventeenth and early eighteenth century deposits at 25 Bridge St, Chester (Edwards 2008). A terminus post quem for the deposit is provided by a slipware cup or small bowl with combed and feathered decoration of late seventeenth or early eighteenth century style.
- 7.6.4. Four fragments of seventeenth century yellow wares were found in the middle fill, (14), in addition to a rim fragment from an unglazed earthenware dish or large jar and a small (2g) fragment of medieval roof tile. Two of the yellow ware fragments join to form part of the rim of a small jar; this type of form is usually referred to as a drug jar or ointment pot but could have held any substance that was only needed in small quantities e.g. herbs, pigments. Unlike other sherds from the feature these two pieces have been burnt. The unglazed fragment is made from a Coal Measure clay; utilitarian wares, including sugar moulds, in similar fabrics have been found in seventeenth century contexts in Chester.
- 7.6.5. The fragment of roof tile is made from a pink/white firing Coal Measure clay, ridge tiles are commonly found with this clay fabric in Chester and the surrounding area. At 25 Bridge St such tiles were not found before the late medieval Phase V (Edwards 2008, 158) although how long roof furniture was in use before finding its way into deposits is unclear.
- 7.6.6. Only medieval pottery was found in the bottom most fill (30): two joining fragments of a thirteenth/fourteenth century Cheshire red/grey ware, the rim of a reduced grey jar and an oxidised red fragment which is too abraded to identify as either pottery or building material. The jar fragment is sooted on the exterior and is probably from a cooking vessel; it is similar to wares found in

the infilled city ditch at 5-7 Foregate St (unpublished). This fragment also has the remains of a cess deposit.

Context	Ware	Form	Sherd count	Weight (g)
10	Blackware	jar	1	64
10	Blackware	jar	1	40
10	Blackware		1	6
10	Blackware	jar	2	141
10	Blackware	jar	1	54
10	Slipware-combed	bowl	2	32
10	Blackware	cup	1	6
14	Yellow ware	jar-small	2	5
14	Yellow ware		2	4
14	Unglazed earthenware	jar?	1	27
30	Pottery?		1	7
30	Red/grey ware		2	7
30	Reduced ware	jar	1	36

Table 2- Pottery from linear feature [11]

PIT [13]

7.6.7. The fill (12) contained two (139 g) fragments of pottery and part of a ridge tile (115 g). One is part of the base of a fourteenth/fifteenth century pink/white ware jar, possibly a cooking vessel which is sooted on the underside of a base. The other is a rim sherd from a large later medieval Ewloe-type ware jar. A thumbled cordon runs around the neck of the piece which is a common feature on storage jars and cisterns in this ware. Both fragments are from wares commonly in use in Chester during the later medieval period.

7.6.8. The ridge tile is very abraded and is in the same type of fabric as the fragment in feature [11].

DEPOSITS ASSOCIATED WITH WALL (35)

7.6.9. The dark silt deposit (46) underlying (45) contained two abraded sherds of Cheshire red/grey wares of thirteenth or fourteenth century date. One appears to have been burnt, both have traces of a cess deposit.

7.6.10. Eight sherds (144 g) were found in context (45) abutting the wall and underlying the wall collapse (34), six of these have traces of a cess deposit on their surfaces. Four (101 g) are sherds from the same pink/white ware jug. The

jug appears to have been round bodied in form and has a clear glaze giving a yellow appearance, the vessel is decorated with stripes of red slip which appear brown under the glaze; pink/white wares appear to come into use sometime in the fourteenth century. The remaining sherds (43 g) are thirteenth/fourteenth century Cheshire red/grey wares similar in condition to the two fragments in (46).

BURIED SOIL LAYER (9)

7.6.11. Fifteen sherds, (341 g) were found in (9). Two pieces are post-medieval, an unglazed red earthenware flower pot fragment (31 g) which may range in date from the late eighteenth –first half of the twentieth century and part of the lower body and base of a seventeenth/eighteenth century blackware jar; the latter has a fine pale brown deposit on the interior which may be a result of containing urine. The remaining sherds are from thirteenth/fourteenth century Cheshire red/grey ware jugs and jars as well as two fragments of reduced grey wares. Glaze where present is a reduced pale green or an oxidised yellow/orange. One piece has an incised parallel line decoration. Three have traces of burning or sooting, one a burnt deposit and sooting on the interior whilst the others have soot on the exterior.

7.6.12. This layer underlies the cut features on the site, the presence of the post-medieval sherds is therefore problematic and consideration needs to be made as to whether they reflect the true sequence of deposition or are intrusive to the deposit.

7.7. DISCUSSION

7.7.1. The assemblages from the various features on the site are too fragmentary and small to be able to draw any conclusions regarding activities that may have taken place on or close to the site in the past. The fragmentary nature of the pottery and ceramic building material indicates that they are not in their place of original deposition and the mixed surface condition suggests they are perhaps derived from a variety of primary deposits. Whilst some sherds show signs of having been in contact with fire during cooking or heating food, others are burnt in such a way to suggest accidental or deliberate burning in a house fire or to dispose of rubbish. The cess deposits would have been acquired

post-deposition most likely from being thrown away or being used to backfill cess pits however the potential urine residues on some sherds would have been built up during the life time of the vessel as a functional object.

7.7.2. Whilst the vessels represented are types that would have fulfilled domestic functions, it cannot be ruled out that some may have fulfilled a craft or industrial storage or heating function. Two of the blackware jar fragments displaying probable urine residues are perhaps not chamberpots and may have been used for storage.

7.8.FURTHER WORK

7.8.1. Other than illustration of the sherds indicated in the pottery record no further work is envisaged on the assemblage however it should be retained to provide comparative material for any future excavations in this area of the city where medieval occupation is not fully understood.

8. Non-ceramic finds

CONTEXT	MATERIAL	FORM
3	Bone	Fragment of longbone
6	Coin	King Charles I shilling 1632-34
9	Fe	Concreted oblong obj 45mm
9	Bone	1 frag of bird rib; 1 proximal end of small stock animal ulna. Both degraded from cooking
30	Bone	Bird longbone degraded ?cooked
45	Bone	V degraded frag of stock animal tibia ?cooking
45	Fe	Square broken nail 35mm with large sub round head 28mm
45	Fe	Very concreted oblong object 45mm
46	Fe	concreted iron oblong obj 35mm
Unstrat	Bone	Lower pig jaw, sheep/pig

Table 3- Non-ceramic finds

- 8.1. The bones all come from food animals and indicate kitchen waste deposits. If there had been tanning on the site there would have been a higher occurrence of bovine horn-cores and possibly forelegs.
- 8.2. The coin is a silver King Charles I shilling with oval shield with arms and 'C' 'R' to sides, dating to 1632-4. The other metal objects were generally unidentifiable apart from the nails, which are considered residual and not indicative of any particular activity.

9. Environmental Sampling by Birmingham University

9.1. INTRODUCTION

9.1.1. A single sample of 15L was collected from context (45). The deposit was described as 'dry' at the point of sampling and therefore was not expected to generate waterlogged environmental remains, however, there was potential for this sample to produce either charred or mineralised remains. The pottery from the deposit is Medieval in date (mid 13th–14th century). In total, this sample represents <5% of the actual deposit excavated.

9.1.2. Assessment of the sample was undertaken in order to determine:

- ◆ if charred or mineralised plant macrofossils were present.
- ◆ if there was evidence for either cess material or industrial debris.
- ◆ if either the charred plant remains or charcoal from the assemblage is of interpretable value.

9.2. METHOD

9.2.1. The sample was processed by bucket flotation with the flot retained over a 0.3mm geological sieve and the resulting residue rinsed over a 0.5mm geological sieve. One large, angular cobble (ca. 10 – 15 cm²) was noted during processing, but the remainder of the 'matrix' was fine gravels.

9.2.2. The entire flot and a 300ml sub-sample of the resulting heavy residue were rapidly scanned under a low-power MEIJI EMZ500 binocular microscope at magnifications between x10 – x15 for this assessment. The semi-quantification of charred plant remains (including charcoal) for the assessment should be viewed as a subjective approximation (key at base of Tables 1–2. Nomenclature for the plant remains follows Stace (2010) for indigenous species and Zohary and Hopf (2000) for cultivated species. The traditional binomial system for the cereals is maintained here, following Zohary and Hopf (2000: P. 28, TABLE 3 AND P. 65, TABLE 5).

9.2.3. Charcoal identifications were made on the transverse section without attempting to create fresh breaks using low-power magnification up to x45.

Although this method is adequate for the identification of oak charcoal, identification of other taxa is less secure, since it normally requires high-power magnification and examination of cell patterns from all three planes (transverse, tangential and radial) of a charcoal fragment (e.g. GALE AND CUTLER 2000: 4–15; HATHER 2000: 13–14). As a result, identifications other than oak (*Quercus* sp.) presented here should be treated as provisional. Comparative material was not consulted for plant macrofossils (including charcoal) during this assessment and, therefore, all identifications presented here should be viewed as provisional.

9.3.RESULTS

9.3.1. The tables in Appendix 3 present a summary of the artefacts and ecofacts observed in the flot and heavy residue sub-sample from Sample 1, Context 45 at Oddfellows Hall, Chester. The flot produced abundant charred plant remains, the majority of which were small (<4mm) to minute (<2mm) fragments of charcoal, most of which is too small to be securely identified. A few larger fragments of charcoal were clearly ash (*Fraxinus excelsior* L.) or oak (*Quercus* spp.). A modest assemblage of charred plant remains, dominated by cereal grain was recovered from the flot. Charred indeterminate wheat (*Triticum* spp.), possible rye (*Secale cereale* L.) and hulled barley (*Hordeum* spp.) grains often were noted. Indeterminate oat/ brome grass (*Avena* spp./ *Bromus* spp.) and indeterminate cultivated/ wild oat (*Avena* spp.) caryopses also were observed relatively frequently. One cultivated oat (*Avena sativa* L.) floret base was observed, as well as a single sedge (*Carex* sp.) fruit. Two indeterminate oat/ brome grass caryopses and two indeterminate wheat grains were extracted for potential AMS radiocarbon determination.

9.3.2. A 300 ml heavy residue sub-sample produced small quantities of mammal bone (both large and small mammal) and fish bone, the vast majority of which was not diagnostic. Non-diagnostic body sherds of pottery also were recovered. Seven identifiable charred plant macrofossils (cereal grains, indeterminate oat/ brome grass caryopses, hazel (*Corylus avellana* L.) nutshell fragments and one possible spike-rush (cf. *Eleocharis* spp.) fruit also were noted in the heavy residue sub-sample. Charcoal recovered from the heavy residue sub-sample

was primarily <2mm and largely unidentifiable.

- 9.3.3. No obviously mineralised plant macrofossils (or other remains) were observed from this deposit. Mineralisation requires a specific set of circumstances for calcium phosphate replacement of organic matter (see GREEN 1979); however, the classic indicators for cess (abundant waterlogged or mineralised fruit stones and other plant remains, fish bone, fly puparia, etc. see D. Smith forthcoming 2012) were not observed.

9.4.POTENTIAL

- 9.4.1. The charred plant remains (excluding charcoal) recovered from sample 1 form a moderate archaeobotanical assemblage of charred grain, with small numbers of accompanying weed seeds, cereal chaff and hazel nutshells. This is not a major assemblage, nevertheless, the recovery of charred plant macrofossils of 13th–14th century date are relatively limited in Chester and, therefore, it is borderline whether this modest assemblage is taken to full analysis. Several deposits of this date produced similarly modest charred plant remains from 25 Bridge Street in Chester (CARROT ET AL. 2004) and Hall (op cit., 8) determined that these grain-dominated assemblages did not add any significant insight and were “consistent with the generally limited archaeological evidence for the medieval period [of Chester] overall.” As a result it may be preferable to retain the heavy residue and flot for inclusion in analysis with any further, more significant sampling programme from this area of Chester.

- 9.4.2. The charcoal recovered in the flot and heavy residue from sample 1 is primarily small-sized and unlikely to be securely identifiable, as most fragments preserve less than one full growth-ring. In addition, of those fragments where identification was possible only two taxa (ash and oak) were represented.

9.5.RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.5.1. Because the flot and heavy residue have produced a modest archaeobotanical assemblage, it is recommended that these should be retained for possible incorporation with any further archaeobotanical samples of similar date from this area of Chester.

9.5.2. It is clear that charred plant remains are preserved in these fill deposits at Oddfellows Hall, Chester and therefore it is recommended that the sampling size is increased to the 40L of sediment recommended by English Heritage (CAMPBELL ET AL. 2011, 12) and that sampling of such features is more intensively carried out in any future archaeological interventions at this site.

10. Discussion and Conclusions

- 10.1. An intensive watching brief was carried out to the rear of Oddfellows Hall in Chester, an area which was outside the City walls in the Roman and Early Medieval periods but within the walls when they were extended south and west in the Medieval period.
- 10.2. Excavations 20m to the south of the site revealed Anglo-Saxon cellared dwellings and early Medieval tanning pits, followed by several pits containing 13th and 14th century pottery. The switch from tanning, a smelly process which was often carried out away from city centres, to rubbish pits may suggest a mid Medieval rather than early Medieval extension of the walls. A series of rubbish pits at the Oddfellows site were also dated to the 13th/14th century and represent the same activity of domestic refuse disposal in the rear of plots fronting onto Lower Bridge Street.
- 10.3. A substantial sandstone wall runs along the south side of the site and was dated by associated pottery to the 15th century by associated pottery. A small area of chalk on the south side of the wall, and the presence of contemporary rubbish pits to the north, suggest that the building extended southwards, under Heritage Court, rather than into the site.
- 10.4. Two features backfilled with sandstone rubble may be the remains of the original northern boundary of the garden of Oddfellows Hall. 1.7m to the north was a clear robbed out wall and the current boundary is a further 1.5m north again. It appears that the northern site boundary has moved northwards twice since the Hall was built.
- 10.5. The stripped area revealed the surface of various features on the site and there are certainly some substantial Medieval rubbish pits preserved below the development. The evaluation and watching brief did not indicate any significant Roman or early Medieval deposits.

11. Archive

11.1. The paper archive consists of:

- ◆ 1 x Drawing Register
- ◆ 4 x Drawing Film
- ◆ 1 x Photographic Register
- ◆ 55 x Black and white photographs and negatives
- ◆ 1 x Context Register
- ◆ 49 x Context sheets

11.2. The finds archive consists of:

- ◆ 1 x box artefacts as described in Section 6 (all materials).

11.3. The archive is to be deposited at the Grovesnor Museum, Chester.

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CARTOGRAPHIC AND PICTORIAL

- 1581 BRAUN AND HOGENBURG
1610 SPEEDE
1745 LAVAUX
1871 TOWN PLAN – CHESTER
1899 ORDNANCE SURVEY – CHESTER
1913 ORDNANCE SURVEY- CHESTER
1938 ORDNANCE SURVEY- CHESTER
1954 ORDNANCE SURVEY- CHESTER

ELECTRONIC

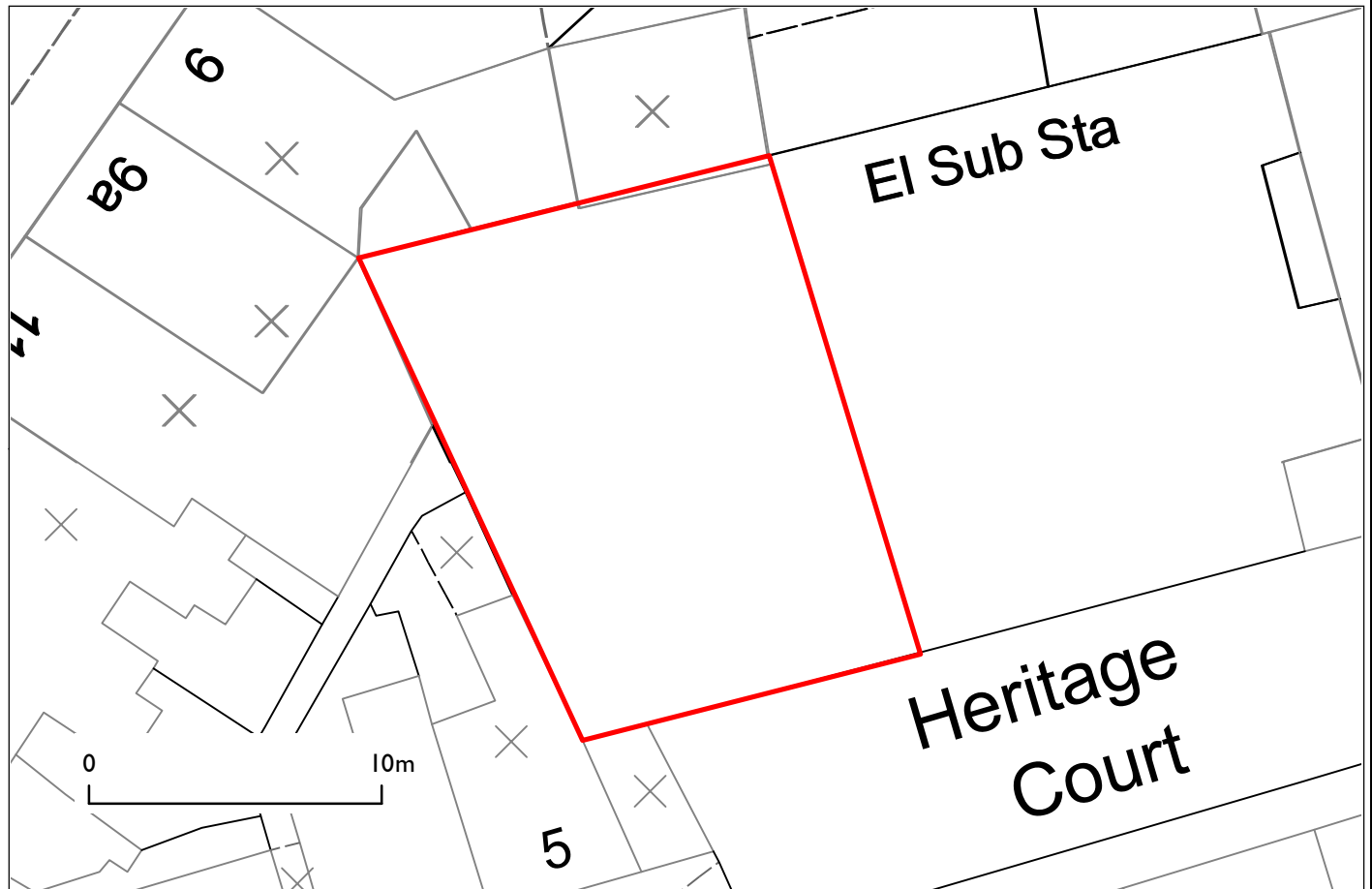
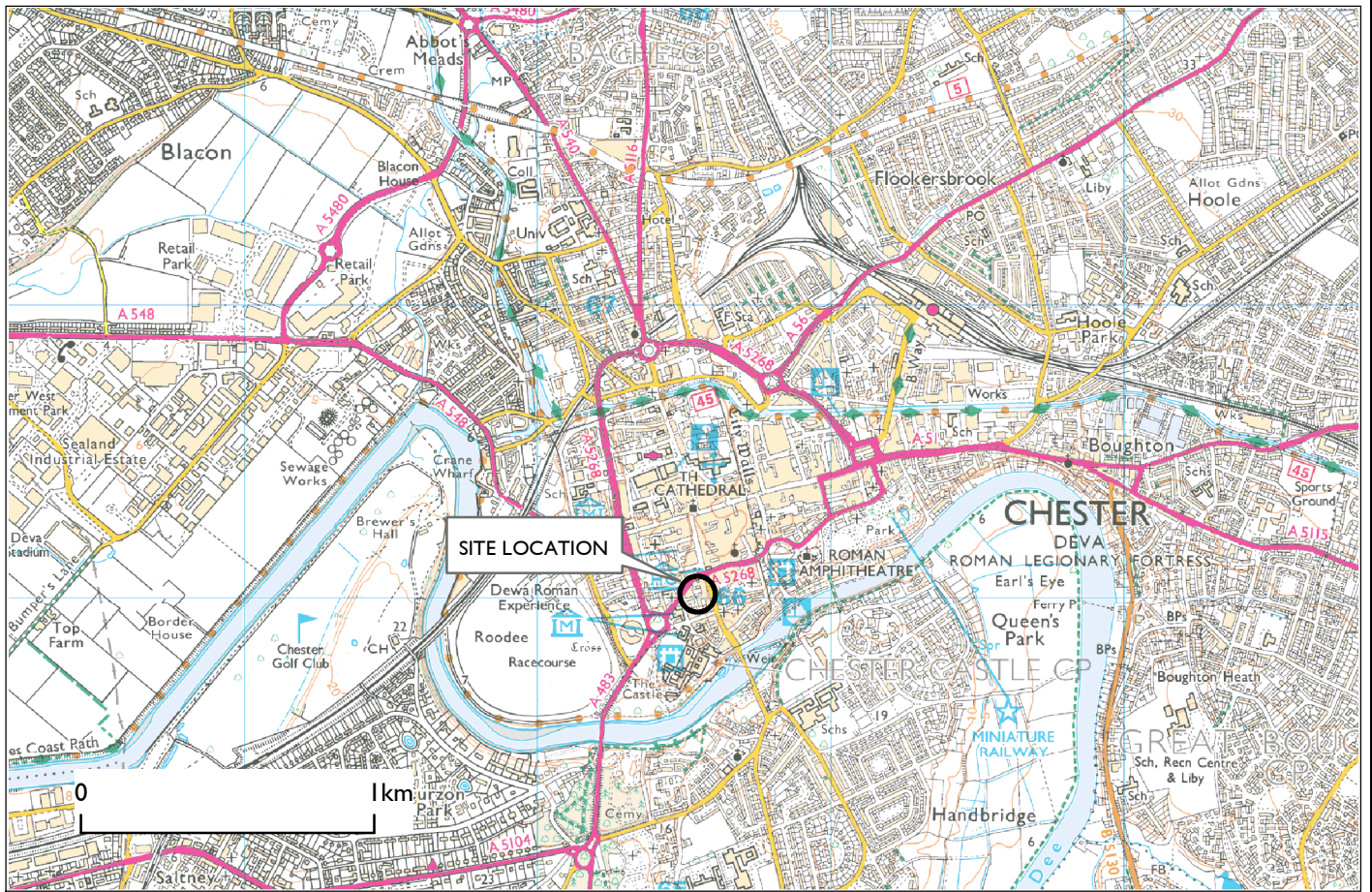
<http://list.english-heritage.org.uk> accessed 21/02/2012

STATUTORY AND GUIDANCE

STANDARD AND GUIDANCE FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF Institute for Archaeologists 2008

FIGURES

FIGURE I // Site location



TOP: General location 1:25,000 @ A4

BOTTOM: Detailed location 1:250 @ A4



PROJECT // Oddfellows Hall

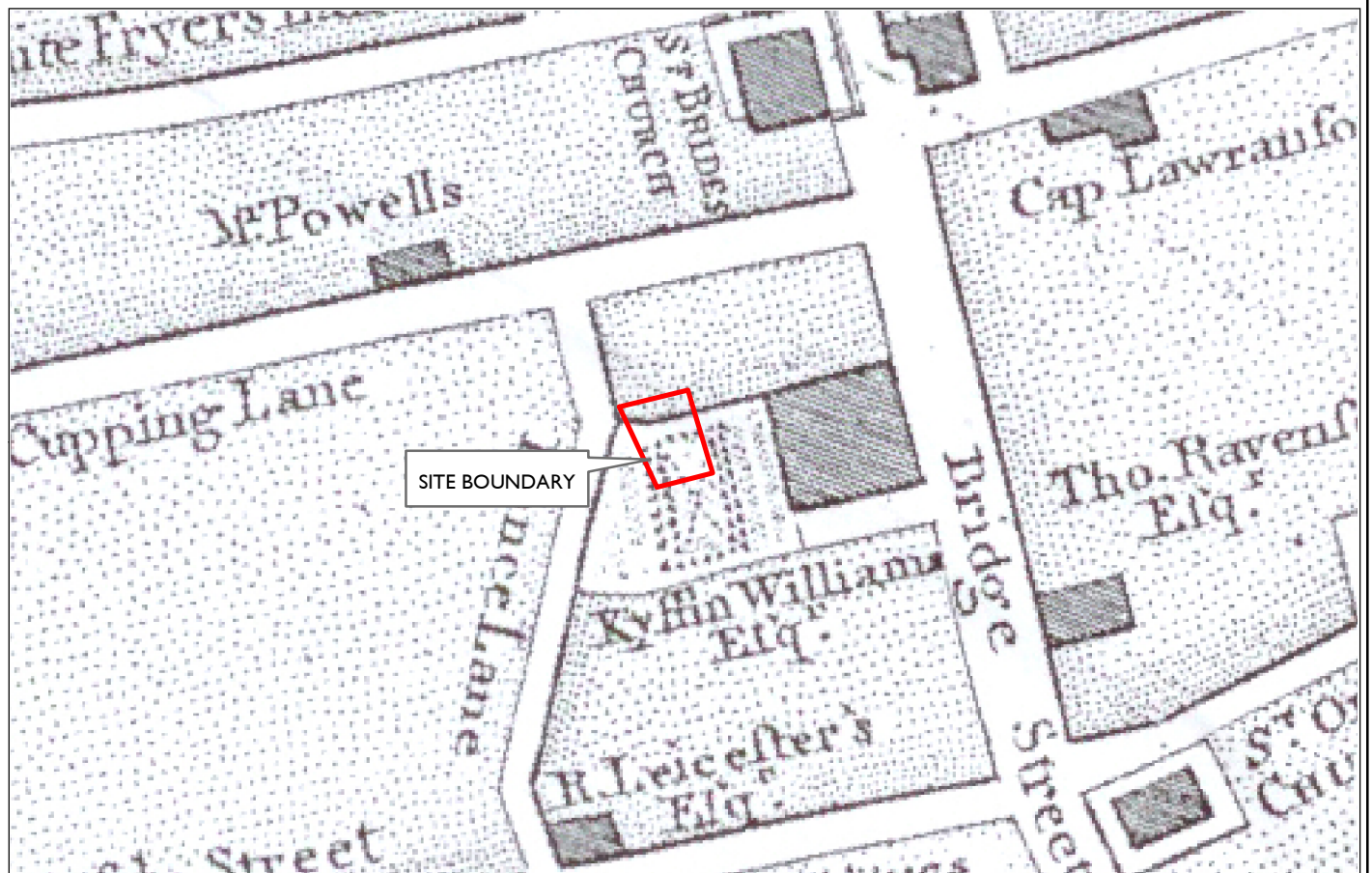
DESCRIPTION // Site location

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DOC REF: LPI 249M-WBR-v1

L-P:ARCHÆOLOGY

FIGURE 2 // Historic maps



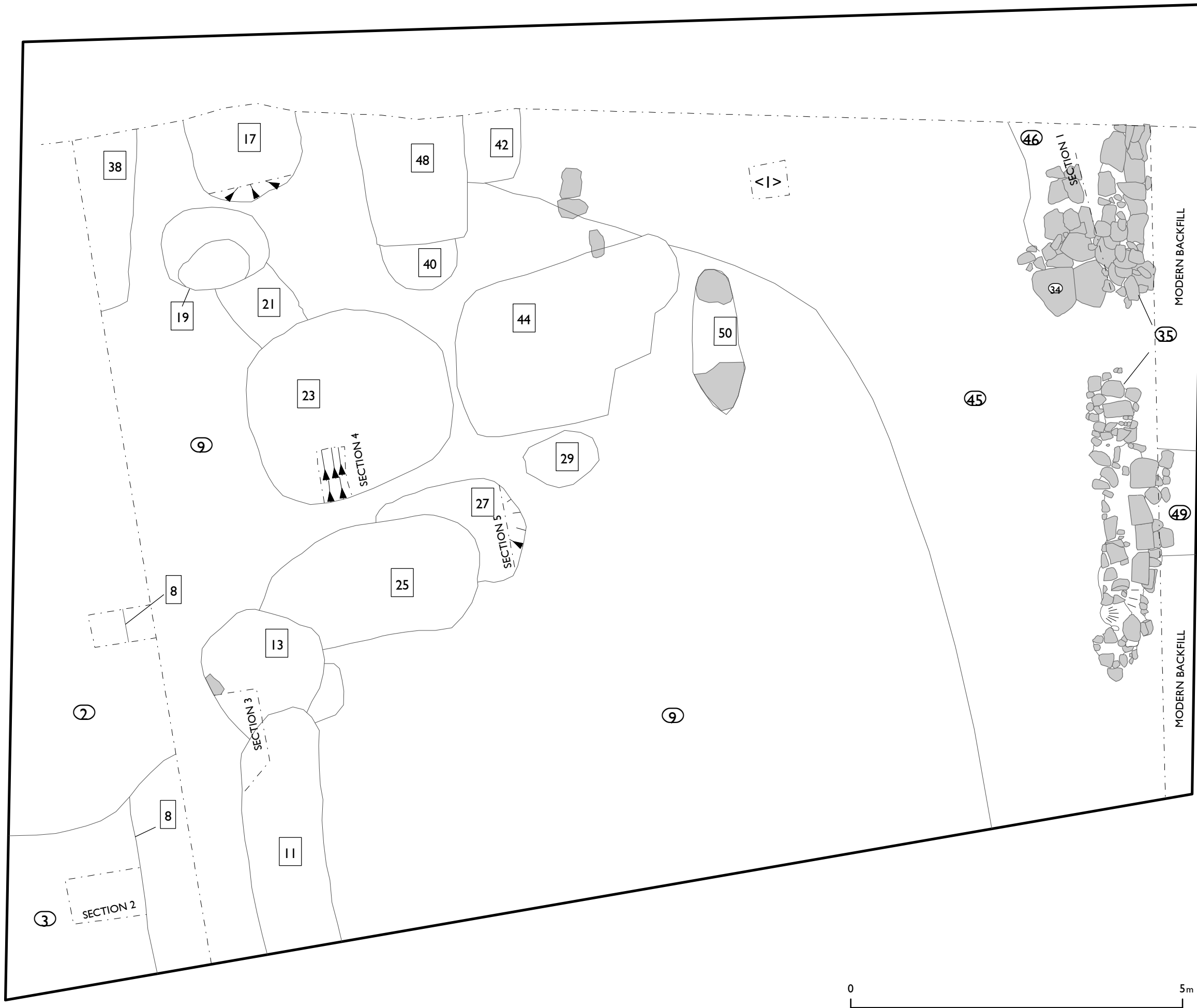
Top: Braun and Hogenburg 1581

Bottom: Lavaux 1745

PROJECT // Oddfellows

DESCRIPTION // Historic maps

Figure 3 // Site plan

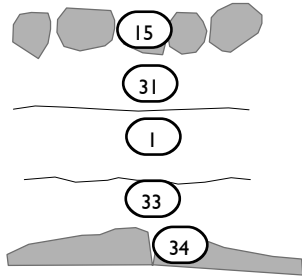


PROJECT // 1249C - Oddfellows Hall
DESCRIPTION // Site plan

DOC REF: LPI249C-WBR-v1

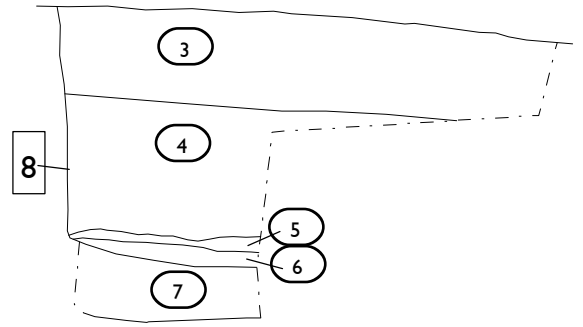
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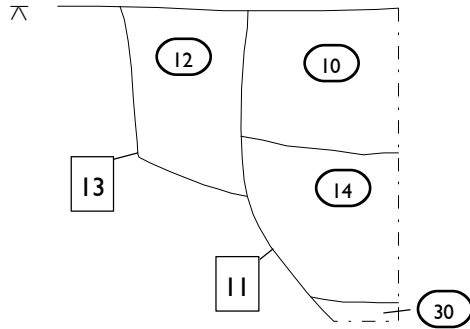
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West facing

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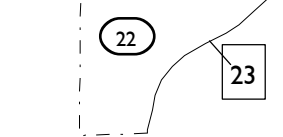
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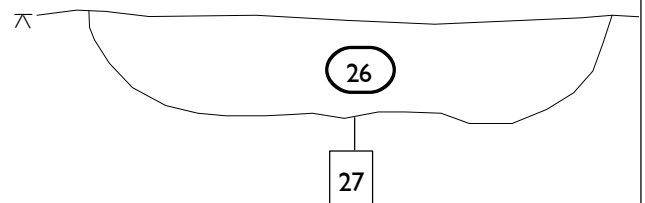
SECTION 4
North facing

21.15
^



SECTION 5
North facing

21.15
^

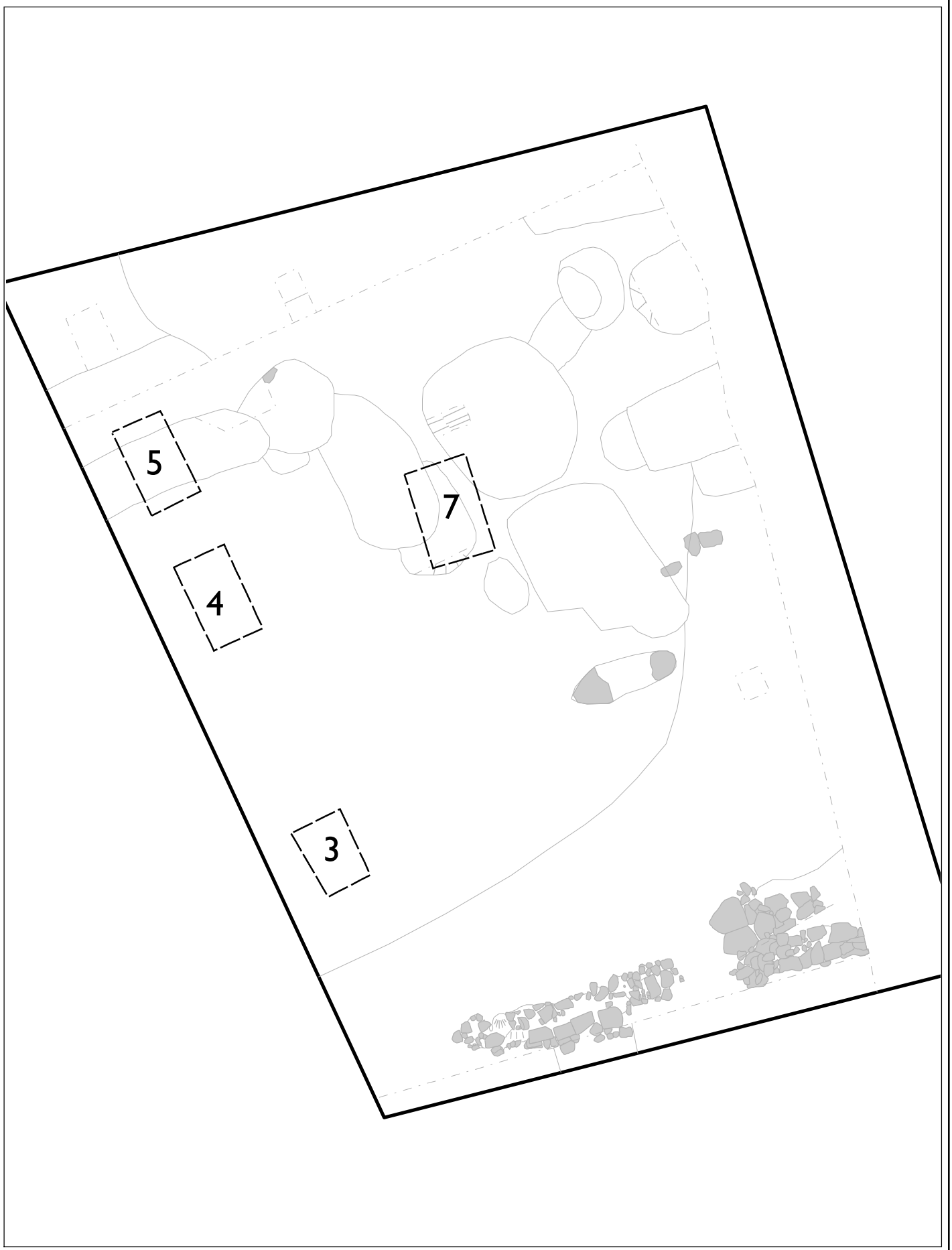


Sections at 1:20 @ A4

PROJECT // Oddfellows

DESCRIPTION // Section drawings

FIGURE 4 // Pile locations



1:100 @ A4

0 5m



PROJECT // Oddfellows

DESCRIPTION // Pile locations

DOC REF: LPI 249-WBR-v1

L-P:ARCHÆOLOGY

OASIS FORM

APPENDIX I

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

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Printable version

OASIS ID: Iparchae1-125789

Project details

Project name	Oddfellows Hall
Short description of the project	Watching brief to the rear of Oddfellows Hall
Project dates	Start: 28-09-2011 End: 04-10-2011
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	CHE/20LBS09 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Conservation Area
Current Land use	Other 3 - Built over
Monument type	WALL Medieval
Monument type	PIT Medieval
Monument type	BOUNDARY Post Medieval
Significant Finds	CERAMIC Medieval
Significant Finds	COIN Post Medieval
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS

Project location

Country	England
Site location	CHESHIRE CHESTER CHESTER Oddfellows Hall
Postcode	CH1 1RS
Study area	230.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	SJ 405 660 53.1874732515 -2.890557000170 53 11 14 N 002 53 26 W Point
Lat/Long Datum	Unknown
Height OD / Depth	Min: 21.00m Max: 22.00m

Entered by
Entered on

Matthew Williams (m.williams@lparchaeology.com)
14 May 2012

OASIS:

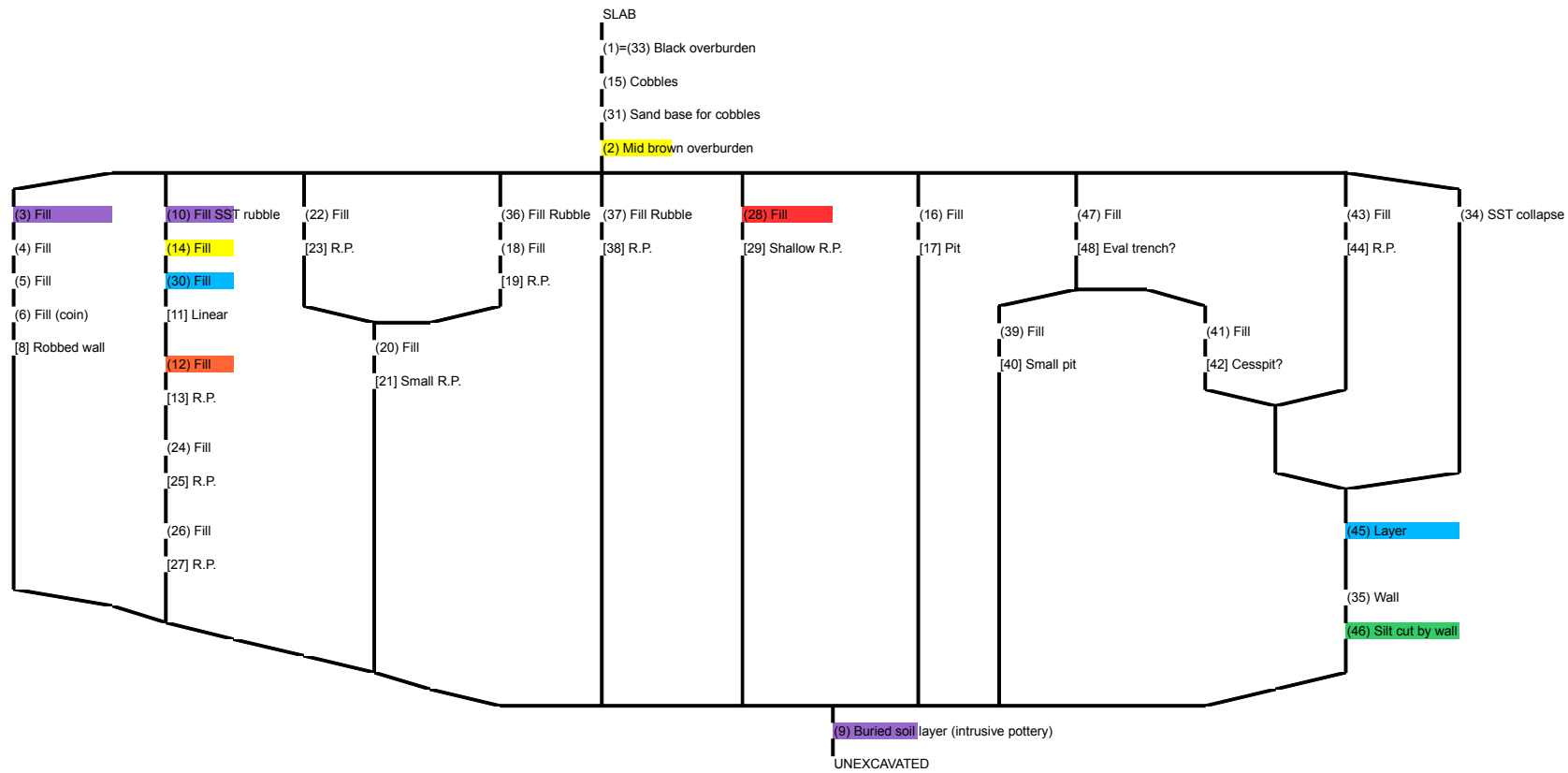
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MATRIX

APPENDIX 2



- Pottery dating key
- 19/20th
 - 17/18th
 - 17th
 - 14/15th
 - 13/14th
 - 13th or earlier

ENVIRONMENTAL TABLES

APPENDIX 3

Table 1: Assessment results for the flot from Sample 1, Context 45 from Oddfellows Hall, Chester

Sample No	Context No	Feature Type	Phase	Floated Volume (L.)	Flot Vol. (ml)	Grain	Chaff	Weeds	Other Charred	Bone	Charcoal	Mollusc	Comments on CPR	CPR Potential	Full Analysis CPR	Charcoal Potential	Full Analysis Charcoal
1	45	Cesspit/ Rubbish pit	Medieval (13/14th C)	15 L	195 ml	+++	+	+	+	-	+++	+	<p>Modern rootlets were noted. Charred indeterminate wheat (<i>Triticum</i> spp.), possible rye (<i>Secale cereale</i> L.), hulled barley (<i>Hordeum</i> spp.) grains were noted. Charred, indeterminate oat/ brome grass (<i>Avena</i> spp./ <i>Bromus</i> spp.) and indeterminate oat (<i>Avena</i> spp.) caryopses were also recovered. One charred cultivated oat (<i>Avena sativa</i> L.) floret base was noted and one sedge (<i>Carex</i> spp.) seed was also observed. A few highly vitreous white nodules (2-4 mm in size) were observed, but are most likely fuel ash, rather than industrial debris.</p> <p>Charcoal was primarily small-sized (<2mm) and those larger fragments available often preserved less than the two growth rings required to support secure identification. Those larger fragments scanned were either from oak (<i>Quercus</i> spp.) or ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> L.).</p> <p>75% of the flot was scanned. 2 x <i>Avena Bromus</i> & 2 x <i>Triticum</i> spp. extracted for potential 14C if desired. Stored in glass tubes.</p>	GOOD	Yes	Poor	No

Key: + = <5 items, ++ = 5 - 25 items, +++ = 25 - 100 items, ++++ = 100 - 300 items, +++++ > 300 items.
(NB The semi-quantitative scale used for the flot is not the same as that for the heavy residue).

Table 2: Assessment results of a 300ml sub-sample of the heavy residue from Sample 1, Context 45 at Oddfellows Hall, Chester

MATERIAL SORTED		SCORE:	SORTING NOTES:
Site code: CHE-PAS11			Sample vol: 15 L A 300ml sub-sample of a ca. 2.5L
Sample No.	Context No.	Sorter (initials) KMS	Heavy Residue was rapidly scanned
1	45	Date 3 October 2012	Under x10 magnification
Mammal bone		++	All non-diagnostic
Micro-mammal bone (e.g. mouse size)		+	
Bird bone		-	
Fish bone		+	? eel
Amphibian bone		-	
Burnt animal bone		-	
Undifferentiated bone		-	
Human bone		-	
Cremated bone		-	
Charred plant remains		++	Cereal grain, hazel nutshell fragments, one possible spike rush (cf. <i>Eleocharis</i> spp.) type. Est. 7 items.
Mineralised plant remains		-	
Other plant remains		-	
Snail		-	
Marine shell		-	
Egg shell		-	
Insect		-	
Coprolite/ faecal matter		-	
Burnt flint		-	
Worked flint		-	
Flint debitage		-	
Pottery		++	All non-diagnostic body sherds
Burnt clay		-	
Daub		-	
CBM		-	
Mortar		-	
Glass		+	One <2mm fragment – most likely modern.
Fe (iron)		-	
Cu (copper alloy)		-	
Pb (lead)		-	
Slag		-	
Clinker		-	
Coal		-	
Hammerscale		-	
Unidentified magnetic material		-	
Angular cobble		-	One ca. 15 cm ²
Gravels		+++++	Abundant – 4-2mm & 2-0.5 mm
Sub-sample	Sorted	300 ml	
	Discarded	No – retained (see below)	
Retained residues		Sorted 300ml sub-sample	Retained and all items recorded above extracted. CPR retained in glass tubes for its protection.
		Unsorted ca. 2.2 L Heavy residue	Retained in entirety.
		Recommendations	Retain & sort for CPR when sample taken to full analysis.

Key: + = <5 items, ++ = 5 – 25 items, +++ = 25– 100 items, ++++ = 100–300 items and +++++ = >300 items