

Archaeological Watching Brief Report for land at

CHESTER CATHEDRAL

For Chester Cathedral

Blair Poole MSc MifA

L~P:ARCHÆOLOGY

Archaeological Watching Brief Report for land at

CHESTER CATHEDRAL

Client:	Chester Cathedral
Local Authority:	Cheshire West and Chester Council
NGR:	340785,366075
Planning App:	12/02354/FUL
Author(s):	B Poole
Doc Ref:	LPI 340C-AWB-v1.2
Date:	February 13
Site Code:	CHE/116 NGS 12 & CHE/ABS 12

L-P:ARCHÆOLOGY

A trading name of L – P : Heritage LLP

33 Lower Bridge Street | Chester | Cheshire | CH1 1RS | +44 [0]1244 313100 | chester@lparchaeology.com

www.lparchaeology.com

Abstract

This document outlines the results of the archaeological monitoring for new traffic control elements at Chester Cathedral. The work was undertaken in order to investigate and record any archaeological deposits or features encountered during groundworks.

Two site areas were monitored as part of the work. One to the rear of 116 Northgate Street, the second within the Gateway to Abbey Square.

Archaeological monitoring was carried out by Blair Poole and George Lacey of L – P : Archaeology on behalf of Chester Cathedral. Groundworks were undertaken by Maxiflow between september 2012 and January 2013.

Historic research shows that the site lies in an area of activity since the Roman period, with Medieval ecclesiastic development and subsequent Post Medieval development for commercial and ecclesiastic buildings.

Within the northern car park over 1.5m of backfill dating from 20th century demolition and levelling of the site was encountered. The material appears to be demolition rubble from 18th to 19th century properties that previously occupied the area.

Within the Abbey Square Gateway, over 1.5m of backfill material covering a 19th century culvert were encountered. Within the northern section of the trench a sandstone structure was identified at 1.2m below ground level. This structure is thought to be a potential Medieval precursor gateway to the standing 14th century gateway.

At the southwestern corner of the site the foundations for the standing 14th century gateway were uncovered. The nature of the foundations suggest that the 14th century surface level must have been at a similar level to the current surface level at 29m AOD.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract

Table of Figures

Table of Plates

Table of Tables

Table of Appendices

1. Introduction

2. Site Background

3. Geology & Topography

4. Archaeological & Historic Background

5. Methodology

6. Results

7. Summary & Conclusions

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1 - Site Location General

Figure 2 - Site Areas

Figure 3 - 1581 & 1610 Maps

Figure 4 - 1796 & 1805 Maps

Figure 5 - 1817 & 1821 Maps

Figure 6 - 1874 & 1899 Ordnance Survey Maps

Figure 7 - 1911 & 1977 Ordnance Survey Maps

Figure 8 - Trench Locations

Figure 9 - Car Park Section Drawings

Figure 10 - Rising Bollard Section Drawings

Figure 11 - Sandstone Structure 206

Figure 12 - Gateway Foundations 304

TABLE OF PLATES

Plate 1 - Trench 1, looking west, 1 m scale

Plate 2 - Trench 3, looking north

Plate 3 - Trench 4, looking east, 1 m scale

Plate 4 - Sandstone 206, within Trench 4, 1 m scale

Plate 5 - Trench 5, looking south, 1 m scale

Plate 6 - Sandstone foundations 304, 1 m scale

TABLE OF TABLES

Table 1 - Timescales used in this report

TABLE OF APPENDICES

Appendix I – OASIS Form

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document describes the results of archaeological monitoring of excavations for new rising bollards and associated services for Chester Cathedral. The archaeological monitoring was undertaken in order to record any archaeological deposits or features uncovered during groundworks.
- 1.2. Following advice from the Cathedral Archaeologist, Simon Ward, and the City Archaeologist, Mike Morris, archaeological monitoring was requested on the groundworks.
- 1.3. The site is located within Chester Cathedral's quarter, in Chester city centre at NGR 340785,366075 (FIGURE 1).
- 1.4. Archaeological monitoring was carried out by Blair Poole and George Lacey of L – P : Archaeology between 3rd September 2012 and 9th January 2013. Groundwork was carried out on behalf of Chester Cathedral by Maxiflow.
- 1.5. The fieldwork comprised the monitoring of hand excavation for two foundation pits for rising bollards, two service trenches and a foundation pit for a standing control unit.
- 1.6. As the work was carried out at two distinct locations within the cathedral complex site codes CHE/116 NGS 12 and CHE/ABS 12 were assigned to the site by the Grosvenor Museum. The first code refers to excavations within a car park to the north of the complex, the second code refers to excavations at Abbey Square Gateway (FIGURE 2).

2. Site Background

2.1. In March 2012 the Department for Communities and Local Government issued the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT 2012). This document sets out planning policies on the conservation of the historic environment and replaces all previous Planning Policy Guidance, specifically PPS5. Section 12 of the NPPF sets out planning policies on the conservation of the historic environment.

2.2. Paragraph 128 of the NPPF indicates planning decisions should be made based on the significance of Heritage Assets. These are defined as buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions.

2.3. In considering any planning application for development the Local Planning Authority is Cheshire West and Chester Council. However, this authority has only recently been formed and it does not yet have an agreed planning framework. As such Cheshire West and Chester revert to earlier plans, in this case the Chester District Local Plan.

2.4. A condition has been attached to planning consent for the works (12/02354/FUL);

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

2.5. Advice was sought from the Cathedral Archaeologist regarding works that fall outside of the Local Authority planning remit.

2.6. The site lies within the city's Area of Archaeological Importance and within the Chester City Conservation Area. The site occupies an area of known Roman and Medieval activity with later Medieval and Post Medieval development.

2.7. AIMS

2.7.1. The aims of the archaeological watching brief were to monitor groundworks to record the character, date, type, state of preservation, and extent of any archaeological remains on site exposed or disturbed during groundworks.

2.7.2. The standards laid out by English Heritage and the Institute for Archaeologists were adhered to at all times as well as all relevant local standards.

2.8.GEOLOGY & TOPOGRAPHY

Geology

2.8.1. The British Geological Survey GeoIndex for the site records the superficial (drift) deposits as Boulder clay and sand, and the solid deposits as Triassic sandstone.

Topography

2.8.2. The site is located in the northeast quarter of Chester city centre, in an ecclesiastic complex containing Medieval structures relating to the Cathedral, as well as Post Medieval residential and commercial buildings.

2.8.3. The car park excavation was carried out to the north of the Cathedral within a small car park situated to the east of Northgate Street. The site slopes from Northgate Street at approximately 28m AOD, to around 26m AOD at the car park surface level.

2.8.4. The Abbey Square Gateway excavation was undertaken within the standing 14th century arched gateway to Abbey Square, leading to the heart of the Cathedral quarter. To the west lies the Town Hall and entrance to the Forum building. The site is relatively level at this point at approximately 29m AOD.

3. Archaeological & Historic Background

PERIOD	FROM	TO
PREHISTORIC		
PALAEOLITHIC	450,000	12,000 BC
MESOLITHIC	12,000	4,000 BC
NEOLITHIC	4,000	1,800 BC
BRONZE AGE	1,800	600 BC
IRON AGE	600	43 AD
HISTORIC		
ROMAN	43	410 AD
EARLY MEDIEVAL	410	1066 AD
MEDIEVAL	1066	1485 AD
POST MEDIEVAL	1485	1900
MODERN	1901	PRESENT

Table 1- Timescales used in this report

3.1.1. Due to the quantity and nature of the known archaeology and history within the Cathedral area of central Chester, the Chester Cathedral Quarter Conservation Management Plan (2009) and recent desk based assessment carried out by L – P : Archaeology (PACK 2012) have been summarised for this historic background.

3.2. PREHISTORIC

3.2.1. There have been a number of finds in the Cathedral area which testify to its use during the prehistoric period. A Neolithic stone axe found near Abbey Square in 1888 and five worked flints found during the excavations on Deanery Field in the 1920s and '30s, are the earliest signs of activity from the area.

3.2.2. Finds of residual Late Bronze Age and Iron Age pottery in the Roman ramparts were made during excavations in the garden of no. 1 Abbey Green. Striations in the sandstone bedrock, indicating pre-Roman cultivation, were also recorded during this excavation (HODGSON AND BRENNAND 2006, 50; MCPEAKE *ET AL* 1980). This site is of particular importance, as the cultivation of the land indicates that an associated settlement is likely to have been located nearby, possibly in the

area now defined by the Cathedral Quarter. These chance finds of prehistoric artefacts and archaeological features show that there was activity in this area from the Neolithic period onwards, and that there may have been an Iron Age settlement in the vicinity.

3.3.ROMAN

- 3.3.1. The modern city centre of Chester overlies the Roman legionary fortress, with numerous archaeological remains having been recorded across the city, including at the Cathedral Quarter.
- 3.3.2. The fortress at Chester is thought to have been completed in *c* AD 79-80 and was located on the highest navigable point on the river Dee, constructed according to a typical 'playing-card' pattern: rectangular in outline, with a gateway in each side, providing access to the major streets (CHESTER CATHEDRAL 2009; CROSBY 1996, 22).
- 3.3.3. The Cathedral Quarter now occupies what was approximately the north-east quarter of the fortress, divided into four east/west aligned *insulae*, or building plots. Barrack blocks have been located in the northern *insula*, unidentified buildings in the two central *insulae* and the *praetorium* in the southern *insula*, the north-east corner of which is approximately beneath St Werburgh's Row (MASON 2000, 13-16).
- 3.3.4. After AD 100 the fortress appears to have been extensively reconstructed in stone (MASON 2000, 80). This work was halted by redeployment of *vexillations* (detachments from the legion) to the north in *c* AD 120, and further construction phases within the fortress in the second century appear to correspond to episodes when the legion returned to Chester (PHILPOTT 2006, 65).
- 3.3.5. Evidence from the various excavations that have taken place within the fortress at Chester indicates that there was some demolition of barracks at the end of the third century AD, possibly indicating that parts of the fortress were not being used by this time. However, repairs to some of the major buildings, including the *principia*, the building to its north and the elliptical building, have been noted during the fourth century indicating the continued use of

these buildings (MASON 2001, 210; MCPEAKE *ET AL* 1980; FRERE 1987, 223; PHILPOTT 2006, 67).

- 3.3.6. Coins of Theodosius I (AD 379-95) and Arcadius (AD 395-408) have been found both in and outside the fortress, indicating continued activity at this time. After this date coins are absent, perhaps indicating *c* AD 400 as the end of the garrison in Chester, although fifth-century coins are very rare in Britain (MASON 2001, 210; MCPEAKE *ET AL* 1980; FRERE 1987, 223; PHILPOTT 2006, 67). Whatever the date of withdrawal of troops, the formal Roman administration in the North West had ended by the early fifth century.
- 3.3.7. Excavations in the garden of no. 1 Abbey Green and Deanery Field were carried out between 1922-6, 1933-5 and 1975-7 (MCPEAKE *ET AL* 1980; NEWSTEAD 1924; NEWSTEAD 1928A; NEWSTEAD 1928B; NEWSTEAD AND DROOP 1935; NEWSTEAD AND DROOP 1936). These have revealed much about the layout of the Roman fortress.
- 3.3.8. The natural ground surface in this area slopes downwards from north to south and from west to east. Roman activity appears to have accentuated this slope, with the site characterised by three distinct east/west-aligned areas: the turf ramparts north of the north fortress wall; the *intervallum* road; and the northern part of the northernmost east/west-aligned *insula*.
- 3.3.9. The fortress rampart was constructed of turf and rubble, fronted by a sandstone wall, sections of which are incorporated into the medieval city wall forming the northern and eastern boundaries of the quarter (WARD 1994, 69).
- 3.3.10. Interval towers were placed periodically along the fortress wall and angle towers at each corner. The remains of the first tower to the east of the north gate were discovered and excavated in the 1930s, and the remains of the tower between this and the north-east angle tower was subsequently identified and recorded (NEWSTEAD AND DROOP 1935; NEWSTEAD AND DROOP 1936). The rampart was *c* 6m wide and rampart buildings were constructed against its inside face. Elements of two of these buildings, a western building and an eastern building that appear to have been demolished in the second century, were uncovered in the excavations. The western building seemingly became buried in an extension to the rampart, and the eastern one was replaced with a row of bread ovens set

into the rampart extension (MCPEAKE *ET AL* 1980; WARD 1994, 69).

3.3.11. South of this area, the *via sagularis*, or *intervallum* road, comprised a series of surfaces *c* 7.5m wide. The north side was marked by a pavement, higher than the road, and adjacent to the rampart buildings. The south side was marked by a drain, later replaced with a ditch (WARD 1994, 70). South of this road, the excavations revealed the northern ends of three north/south aligned barracks, located within the northernmost *insula*, which were identified as the centurions' part of the barracks. These buildings are likely to have been timber-framed, set on low stone wall foundations (*ibid*).

3.3.12. The excavations carried out across the Cathedral quarter indicate Roman archaeological survival at approximately 1m below the current ground level.

3.4. EARLY MEDIEVAL

3.4.1. Activity during the immediate post-Roman and pre-Conquest period can be divided into four main episodes: the fifth to the seventh centuries when Chester was mostly part of Powys; the period of Mercian rule up to the Scandinavian incursions at the end of the ninth century; the foundation of the *burh* in 907, to the Viking raid in 980; and the less prosperous period following the raid, until the Norman Conquest (WARD 1994, 116).

3.4.2. Archaeological evidence of activity prior to the establishment of the *burh* is mainly that of soil accumulation as a result of agricultural activity. This would suggest that there was an associated settlement, which appears to have mostly comprised occupation within the Roman ruins, both inside of the former fortress and in the extramural areas of the former *vicus*, rather than development of new sites (*OP CIT*, 118). The exceptions to this were, perhaps, the sites identified for ecclesiastical or commercial use, which were cleared of Roman buildings earlier in the Saxon period (*OP CIT*, 16).

3.4.3. It was not until the tenth century, on the foundation of the *burh*, that the majority of ruined Roman buildings began to be robbed of stone and cleared away for new developments. An increase in structural remains and finds is identified in the archaeological record for this period. This probably reflects an increase in population, as well as wider ranging trade links as a result of the

foundation of the *burh*, although there is not yet enough evidence to establish how quickly this occurred (*OP CIT*, 16 AND 118). The economic decline at the end of the tenth century is also difficult to identify, but is notable in the archaeological record as a lack of activity following the initial construction of buildings (*OP CIT*, 118).

- 3.4.4. St Werburgh's Church: the first church to have been built on the site of the current Cathedral is thought to have been founded in c 660 by the Mercian king, Wulfhere (657-75), and dedicated to St Peter and St Paul.
- 3.4.5. Little of this earlier Saxon church is known, although excavations in the cathedral nave in 1996 suggested that there was more than one structural phase, with four groups of masonry from the Saxon and Norman periods identified (*OP CIT*, 2 AND 4).
- 3.4.6. Evidence for low-density post-Roman occupation, probably dating from after the establishment of the *burh* in the early tenth century, has been found concentrated in the *intervallum* area, including the former road to the south of the ramparts. This would have been the clearest area, free of demolished or ruined Roman buildings and therefore easiest to build on (WARD 1994, 69-70 AND 118). The then upstanding ruins of the barracks to the south of the road would have been a good source of building stone and, consequently, were heavily robbed during this period (*OP CIT*, 71).
- 3.4.7. Most of the Anglo-Saxon buildings identified during excavations were of timber construction, but features including a possible corn-drying kiln, the lining of a pit and a possible drain had all utilised stone likely to have been robbed from nearby (*OP CIT*, 72 AND 76).
- 3.4.8. A road surface, possibly an addition to the *burh* defences, was also identified across this area, mostly lying to the north of the *via sagularis* and overlying parts of the Roman rampart-back buildings. At the western end of the excavations, the road appeared heavily rutted, suggesting that it had been used by wheeled traffic, and repairs were evident in other areas (*OP CIT*, 74 AND 122). The excavations also revealed a timber building and hearths, a pit complex, and evidence for some industrial use of this area, including possible antler-working

and black-smithing (*OP CIT*, 13, 69, 75, 77 AND 79-80; WARD 1994-5, 37).

3.4.9. It is not known if this area was part of church property held by St Werburgh's at this time. The nature of the finds are not conclusively secular or ecclesiastical, but the quantity of the finds suggest that the centre of the associated occupation was not St Werburgh's, but lay perhaps to the west, close to Northgate Street, which is thought to have been established by the eleventh century (WARD 1994, 83-4 AND 122).

3.4.10. The study sites lie close to the Abbey Green excavations where Saxon deposits were recorded.

3.5. MEDIEVAL

3.5.1. The establishment of Benedictine monasticism in Chester was undertaken by the first Norman Earl of Chester, Hugh Lupus. Work on the Benedictine abbey of St Werburgh, located on the former Saxon minster of St Werburgh, may have begun as early as the late 1080s (LEWIS AND THACKER 2005, 185; THACKER 2000, 24-5). In 1092, Anselm, the abbot of Le Bec, came to Chester to witness the foundation charter of the monastic community under Richard of Bec (LEWIS AND THACKER 2005, 185; GEM 2000, 31-2; THACKER 2000, 24-5).

3.5.2. Construction of the new abbey church and claustral buildings was carried out in the Romanesque (Norman) style. The earliest surviving structure of the cathedral, the north transept, dates from the late eleventh century, as does the north wall of the nave aisle, and the lower parts of the north-west tower (CHESTER CATHEDRAL 2009; LEWIS AND THACKER 2005, 185).

3.5.3. Excavations have shown that the remains of the Roman fortress and Saxon activity were generally overlain by Medieval development and cultivation deposits. Therefore, whilst urban development was gradually progressing elsewhere in the city, the position of the monastic precinct appeared to have resulted in this area becoming more rural in character (WARD 1994-5, 37; WARD 1994, 83-4).

3.5.4. The Romanesque church was finished in c 1220, with Abbot Hugh Grylle (1208-26) being responsible for a large part of the final stages of this

construction.

3.5.5. Between 1225-1250, the Chapter House was rebuilt in the new Gothic style, which had replaced the earlier Romanesque tradition. As a result, the other church buildings constructed during the eleventh and twelfth centuries were considered out-dated and it was decided to rebuild these also in the new Gothic style. The whole church was, therefore, gradually dismantled and rebuilt from east to west, starting with the Lady Chapel in c 1260.

3.5.6. It is known that there had been some form of controlled entrance to the quarter, typical of monastic quarters, before the 14th century. However, in the 14th century the cathedral was granted permission to create the stone arched gateway that stands today. This replaced an earlier structure, however the form and size of that precursor is not known.

3.6. POST MEDIEVAL

3.6.1. The study site is recorded as falling within the cathedral quarter on both Braun and Hogenberg's map of 1581 and Speed's map of 1610 (FIGURE 3). This layout is repeated on Hughes Map of 1643, Hollar's Map of 1653, as well as Stockdale's Map of 1796 and Cole's Map of 1805 (FIGURE 4). By the 18th century map the development of Northgate Street can be seen with a greater, and more substantial, cluster of structures leading back from the street frontage towards Abbey Green.

3.6.2. Neele's Map of 1817 and Bateman's Map of 1821 (FIGURE 5) show the development of the site area in detail, with terraced buildings leading back from Northgate Street onto the area that is now used as a car park.

3.6.3. The 1874 Ordnance Survey (OS) map (FIGURE 6) also shows buildings extending into what is now the entrance to the car park area. The growth of these buildings can be seen on the 1899 and 1911 OS maps (FIGURES 6 & 7).

3.6.4. At some point in the late 20th century the buildings to the rear of Northgate Street were demolished and a the car park was formed. This is shown on the 1977 OS map (FIGURE 7).

3.6.5. Historic research of trade directories show that 116 Northgate Street, the property fronting onto Northgate Street closest to the excavations, was used as a chemist from the 19th century though to the late 20th century.

4. Methodology

- 4.1. At the car park excavation site (FIGURE 8) a single rising bollard foundation pit (Trench 1) 1.5m by 1.5m in plan was excavated by hand to a depth of 1.5m below ground level. A 0.6m by 0.4m pit was excavated for a control post (Trench 2) and a 0.4m wide trench was excavated for associated services (Trench 3).
- 4.2. At the Abbey Square Gateway excavation site a single 1.5m by 1.5m foundation pit (Trench 4) was excavated to a depth of 1.55m below ground level. A 0.4m wide service trench, which terminated at the location of a control post foundation (Trench 5), was also excavated (FIGURE 8).
- 4.3. All excavation was undertaken by hand using appropriate tools and were archaeologically monitored by a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist.
- 4.4. Examination and cleaning of all archaeological deposits was carried out by hand using appropriate tools. All archaeological deposits were examined and recorded both in plan and section.
- 4.5. A detailed drawn record was made of deposits and features at appropriate scales of 1:10 or 1:20. A full photographic record was also made using 35mm colour slide and black and white film with a 12M pixel digital SLR backup of each image.
- 4.6. The written record comprised pro forma recording sheets for all deposits and features, a full register of contexts, drawings and photographs, as well as all levels taken from known bench marks.

5. Results

5.1. This section will outline the results of the archaeological monitoring of the trial pits. Deposits are shown in (parenthesis), cuts are shown in [square brackets], and structures are underlined.

5.2. TRENCH 1

5.2.1. Trench 1 was located 14m to the east of the rear wall of 116 Northgate Street and measured 1.5m by 1.5m in plan. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.5m below ground level (FIGURE 9).

5.2.2. The uppermost deposit identified was the tarmac surface for the car park (100), which measured 0.03 to 0.05m thick. This overlay a 0.08m thick sand and gravel sub base (101), which had been severely compacted. Below (101) was deposit (102) a 0.2m thick layer of brick rubble and mortar (PLATE 1).



Plate 1 - Trench 1, looking west. 1m scale

5.2.3. Cut into (102) at the northeastern edge of Trench 1 was a late 20th century service trench [110]. The service trench had vertical sides and a flat base and measured 0.9m deep by 0.6m wide. Within [110] was a loose fill material of stone, rubble and aggregate (109), surrounding a metal pipe 0.3m in diameter.

5.2.4. Underlying (102) was a 0.04m thick lens of loose dark brown silt (103). This contained no finds and sealed a layer of brick rubble and mortar (104), which measured 0.18m thick. A 0.12m thick layer of lime mortar, silt and rubble

(105) was identified below (104).

5.2.5. All of the above deposits, (101) to (105), were compact in nature and contained no artefacts.

5.2.6. Underlying (105) was a 0.35m thick deposit of loose mid brown silt loam (106), this deposit produced the largest quantity of finds from the site including metal casement window latches, 18th to 19th and 20th century ceramic finds, lead roof flashing, clay tobacco pipe stems and kitchen faunal waste comprising oyster shell, sheep tibia and bovine rib. Of note was the glass assemblage. This contained mainly blue and coloured or ribbed bottles from the 19th century onwards. Historic records show that 116 Northgate Street was used as a chemist for a long period and these bottle forms were usually used for medicine, poison and cosmetics. Cartographic research shows that a structure occupied the area of Trench 1 in the late 19th century. As such it is likely that this material is waste from the demolition works and levelling of the car park in the 20th century.

5.2.7. Sealed by (106) was a 0.3m thick deposit of loose rubble and silt (107). This deposit contained 18th to 19th century ceramic sherds, clay tobacco pipe stems and a carved bone handle, possibly from a pipe cleaner.

5.2.8. Deposit (108) was a 0.05m lens of black silt and rubble directly below (107). This produced a single sherd of 18th to 19th century black glaze ceramic.

5.2.9. At the base of the trench, underlying (108) was a brick and sandstone rubble fill (111), which extended beyond the base of the trench at 1.5m below ground level. No finds were recovered from (111), however the form of the material suggests that this is still 18th to 19th century material.

5.2.10. It is thought that the location of Trench 1 fell within an earlier cellared area from a demolished building and that the material forming the deposits encountered was from the demolition of structures to the rear of Northgate Street, cleared in the 20th century to make way for the car park.

5.3. TRENCHES 2 & 3

5.3.1. Trench 2 was a discrete foundation pit 0.6m by 0.4m in plan for a standing

control unit (FIGURE 8). This was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.4m below ground level. Trench 3 formed the 0.4m wide electrical service trench for the standing control unit, excavated to 0.6m below ground level.

- 5.3.2. Trench 2 was excavated within a small planted area to the side of the road and as such a single deposit (112) was identified within the trench. This was a loose dark brown humic loam, which contained root matter and 20th century metal and plastic finds.



Plate 2 - Trench 3, looking north

- 5.3.3. Below the tarmac surface of the car park (100) a single deposit was encountered within Trench 3 (PLATE 2). This was the brick and mortar fill (102) seen in Trench 1.

5.4. TRENCH 4

- 5.4.1. Trench 4 was located centrally to the Abbey Square Gateway 1.2m from the west entrance (FIGURE 8). The trench measured 1.5m by 1.5m in plan and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.55m below ground level (FIGURE 10).
- 5.4.2. The surface of the gateway was of cobbles, 200, between two stone trackways running east west. The trench was sited between the trackways within the cobbled area (PLATE 3). Below the cobbles was a 0.15m thick layer of compact crushed sandstone (201). This in turn overlay a 0.12m thick layer of concrete (202). These form the base of the gateway surface, thought to have been installed in the 20th century to allow heavy traffic movement.



Plate 3 - Trench 4, looking east, 1m scale

- 5.4.3. Below (202) was a 0.3m thick layer of grey angular gravel (203). This appears to be a fill surrounding services associated with an inspection hatch located 0.2m to the east of Trench 4.
- 5.4.4. A mid brown, friable, silt loam (204) was sealed by (203). This measured 0.5m thick and contained a 0.3m diameter metal service pipe, which could be seen to feed into the inspection hatch noted above. The pipe was only picked up in the northern section of Trench 4, however the fill spread across the entire trench.
- 5.4.5. A 0.05m lens of white lime mortar (205) could be seen across the trench below (204). This is a distinct spread and appears to be a discrete dump of material. Sealed by (205) was a 0.35m thick layer of mid brown compact silt (207). This produced no finds, however is thought to be 19th century or later in date. This is because at the base of the trench at 1.55m below ground level, sealed by (207) was a layer of concrete, 208.
- 5.4.6. It is known that a 19th century brick culvert is located within the gateway, running east west. This is thought to be situated over 2m below ground level. It is likely that the concrete encountered at the base of the trench is a capping layer, added over the brick culvert in the later 19th or early 20th century to strengthen it. All the deposits identified above 208 are therefore late 19th to 20th century in date.

5.4.7. Although there has been a significant amount of disturbance for services in this area a sandstone structure, 206, was identified in the northern section of the trench (PLATE 4).



Plate 4 - Sandstone 206, within Trench 4. 1m scale

5.4.8. The structure is located 1.2m below ground level, at 27.99m AOD and is formed of a series of large sandstone blocks in ashlar construction running east west (FIGURE 11). The blocks have been squared off, although do not appear to be fully faced in appearance. This may indicate that these were footings of a substantial structure. Each block measures approximately 0.5m by 0.3m by 0.3m.

5.4.9. The concrete at the base of the trench, 208, can be seen to respect the sandstone, indicating the sandstone predates the insertion of the concrete capping.

5.4.10. No dating evidence was recovered from the sandstone feature and as such no accurate date can be given for it. However, the location of the stonework, off centre to the standing gateway, suggests that this may represent the precursor to the 14th century gate. It is known that the standing gate replaced an earlier structure and it is possible that this sandstone feature represents *in situ* remains of the Medieval entrance to the cathedral complex. It has also been suggested, that due to the depth of the feature it may also represent a hitherto unknown Roman structure.

5.5.TRENCH 5

- 5.5.1. Trench 5 was located along the southern edge of the Abbey Square Gateway (FIGURE 8) and was excavated in order to install a standing control unit and associated services. The trench measured 0.4m wide and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.4m below ground level.
- 5.5.2. The uppermost deposit identified was the cobbled surface of the gateway, 200. Below this was a loose mid brown silt loam (305), which extended beyond the base of the trench. From the eastern extent, forming the bulk of the excavation, this was the only deposit encountered. However, at the western extent of the trench, where the control unit was to be situated, the foundations of the 14th century gateway were identified (FIGURE 12).
- 5.5.3. These footings comprised stepped sandstone blocks, 303 & 304, which extended from the arch base into the entrance.
- 5.5.4. Directly below the extant archway, 301, was a course of large sandstone blocks, 303. These measured 0.75m long by 0.35m high, the width was not visible as they extended back into the section (PLATE 5).



Plate 5 - Trench 5, looking south, 1m scale

- 5.5.5. These footings were of ashlar construction and of roughly finished blocks. This suggests that these were designed as foundations for the arch, which shows that the 14th century floor level of the gateway must have been approximately at its current level of 29.145m AOD.

5.5.6. Below 303 a second course of foundations, 304 was identified at the base of the trench (PLATE 6). This lower course was more substantial in nature, however only the upper surface was exposed as it formed the lowest point of the excavation depth. The sandstone forming 304 measured 0.9m wide and extended 0.6m from the standing gateway, 0.45m from the edge of excavation (FIGURE 12).



Plate 6 - Sandstone foundations 304, 1m scale

5.5.7. Previous excavation work in Abbey Square shows that historically the land fell from a high point at the north, to a lower area to the south. This is seen today by the sunken nature of some of the buildings at the southeast of Abbey Square and sunken car park. It is thought that the square was raised and levelled in the Post Medieval period to bring it in line with the buildings to the north and with Northgate Street to the west.

5.5.8. At the eastern extent of Trench 5, where it entered a small sandstone structure at the southeastern corner of the gateway, a void became apparent. This was not excavated as it fell outside of the excavation area, however a brief investigation where a ranging pole was inserted into the void, showed it to be at least 0.7m deep. At this point the pole was blocked by the rubble backfill of the void. The proximity of this to the sunken car park suggests that the area at the southeast of the gateway was raised substantially in the past.

6. Summary & Conclusions

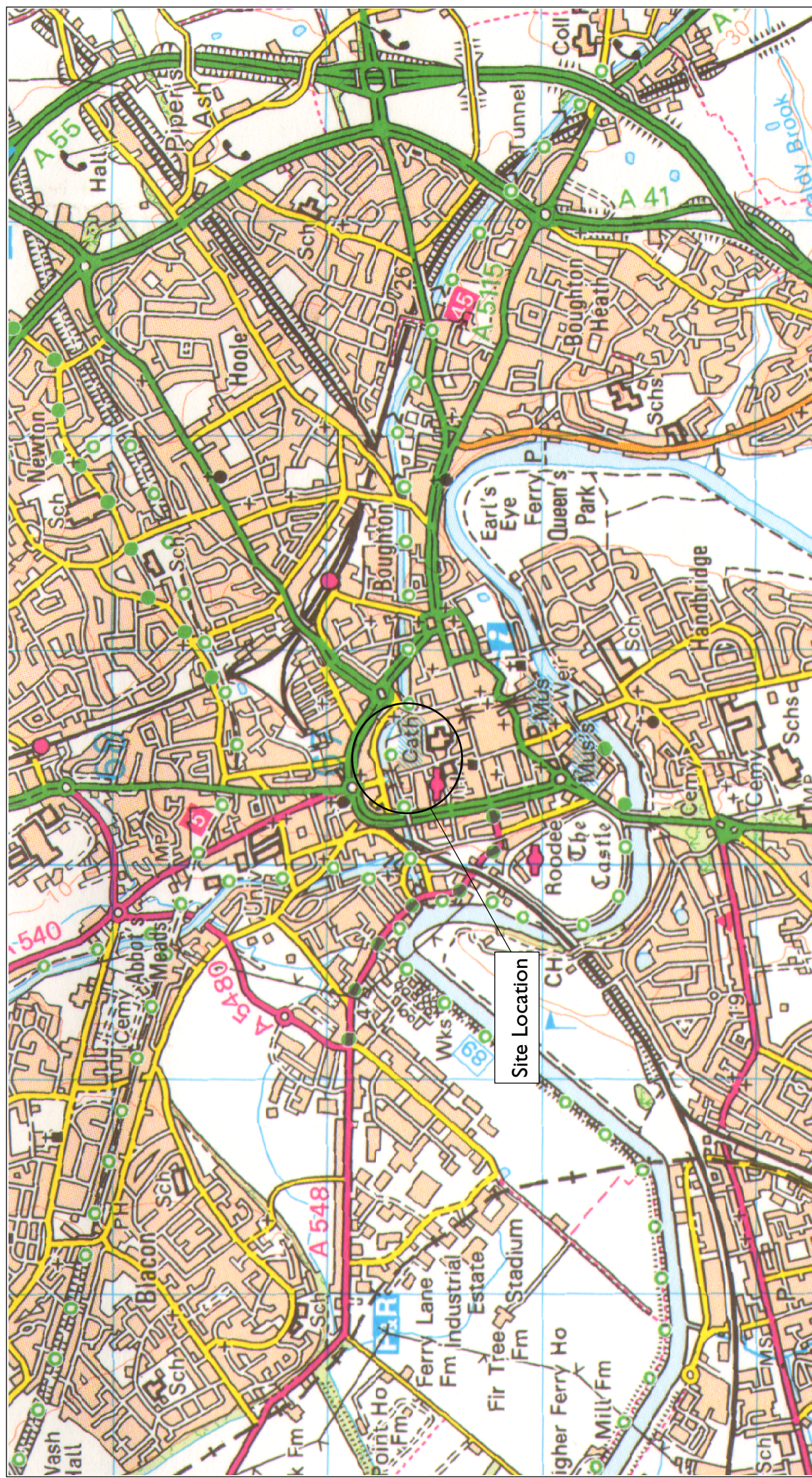
- 6.1. This document outlines the results of the archaeological monitoring for new traffic control at Chester Cathedral. The work was undertaken to investigate and record any archaeological deposits or features encountered during groundworks.
- 6.2. The works were carried out in two distinct areas. The northern area was located off 116 Northgate street in a small car park to the rear of the commercial properties. The southern area was located within the Abbey Square Gateway, off Northgate Street.
- 6.3. Archaeological monitoring was carried out by Blair Poole and George Lacey of L – P : Archaeology on behalf of Chester Cathedral. Groundworks were undertaken by Maxiflow between September 2012 and January 2013.
- 6.4. Historic research shows that the site lies in an area of activity since the Roman period. However, from the Medieval period much of the site area was used as part of the Cathedral quarter. The southern area has not been developed since the 14th century, however it is known that a brick culvert was installed in the 19th century. The northern area was developed in the Post Medieval period, initially with commercial premises, then in the 20th century converted to a small car park.
- 6.5. Trench 1, within the car park area, showed over 1.5m of backfill dating from 20th century demolition and levelling of the site. The material appears to be demolition rubble from 18th to 19th century properties that previously occupied the area. The presence of medicine, poison and cosmetic bottles support historic research that indicate the property fronting onto Northgate Street was used as a chemist from at least the mid 19th century.
- 6.6. Trench 4, within the Abbey Square Gateway, showed over 1.5m of backfill material over a 19th century culvert. However, within the northern section of the trench a sandstone structure was identified at 1.2m below ground level. This structure is of large sandstone blocks in ashlar construction and is thought to be a potential Medieval precursor gateway to the standing 14th century gateway. It should be noted that as no finds were recovered from the structure a secure date can not be assigned to the structure. It has also been suggested that it may represent *in situ* roman remains.

6.7. Within the western extent of Trench 5 the foundations for the standing 14th century gateway were uncovered. These are formed by large stepped sandstone footings that extend up to 0.6m from the gateway.

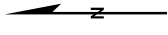
6.8. The nature of the foundation suggest that the 14th century surface level must have been at a similar level to the current surface level at 29m AOD.

FIGURES

FIGURE 1 // Site Location General



Scale 1:25,000 @ A4



PROJECT // 1340C - Abbey Square

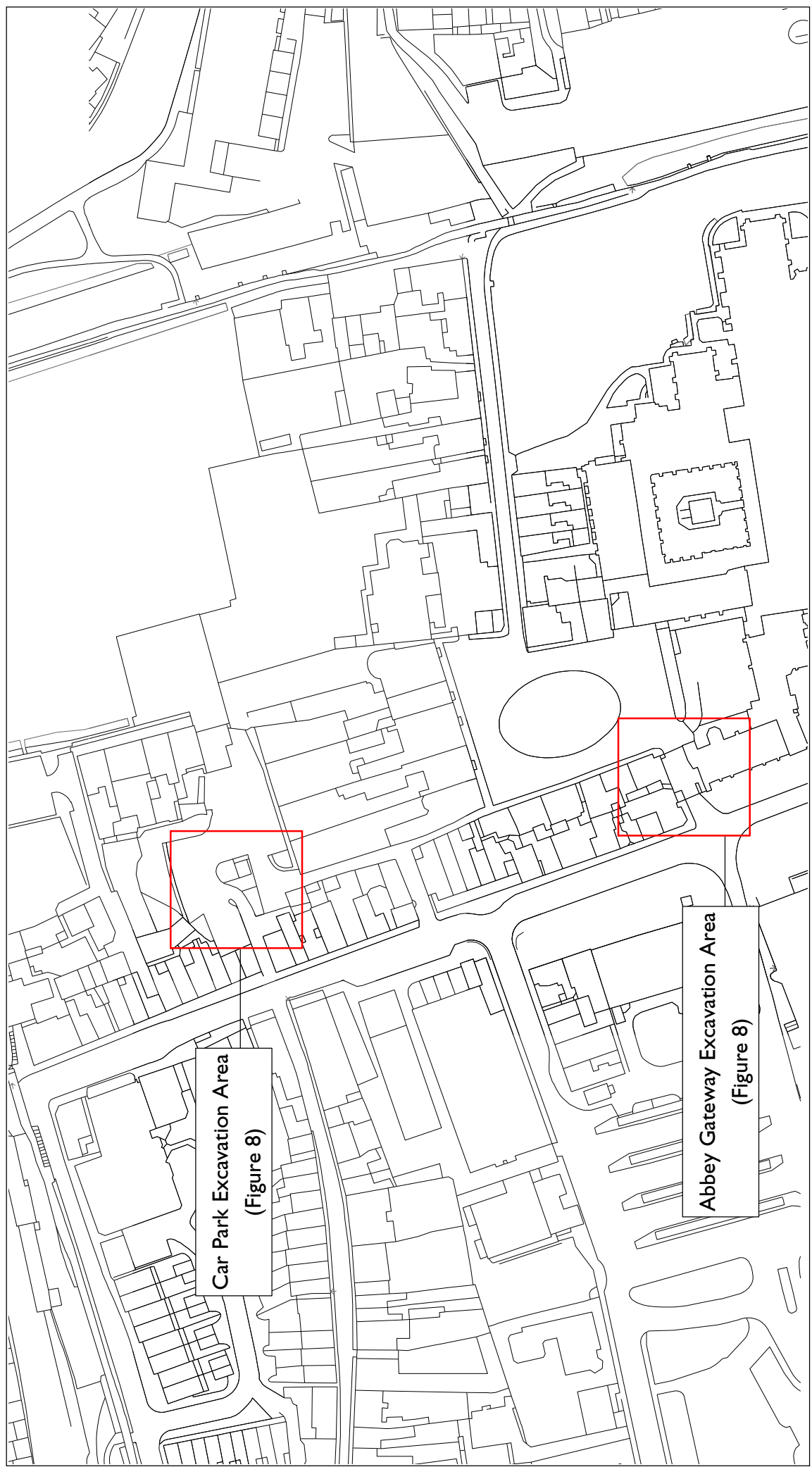
DESCRIPTION // Site Location General

Reproduced by permission of the controller of HMSO, Licence 100030862

DOC REF: LP1340C-AWB-v1

L-P: ARCHAEOLOGY

FIGURE 2 // Site Areas



PROJECT // 1340C - Abbey Square

DESCRIPTION // Site Areas

Reproduced by permission of the controller of HMSO, Licence 100030862

DOC REF: LP1340C-AWB-v1

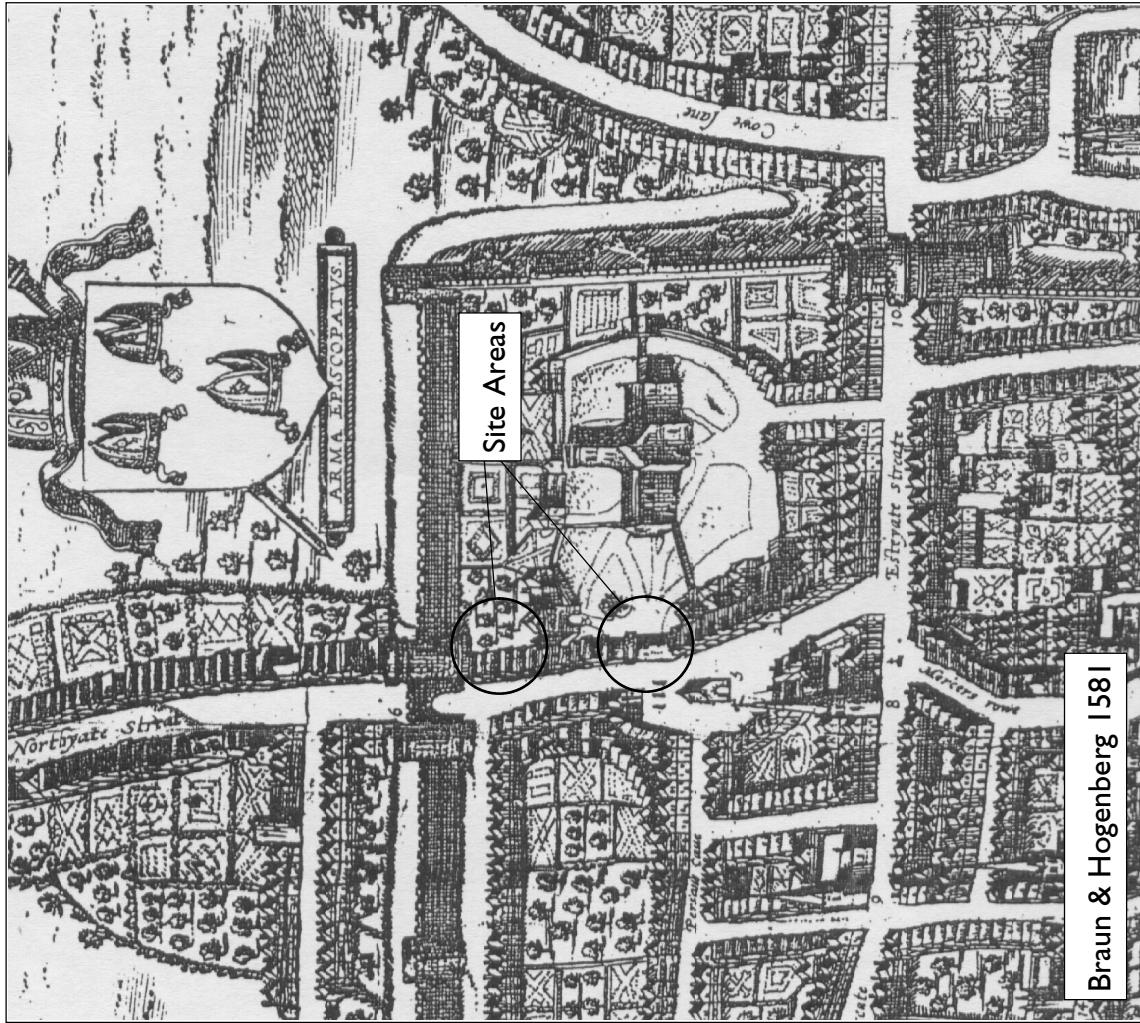
L-P:ARCHAEOLOGY

Scale 1:1,500 @ A4

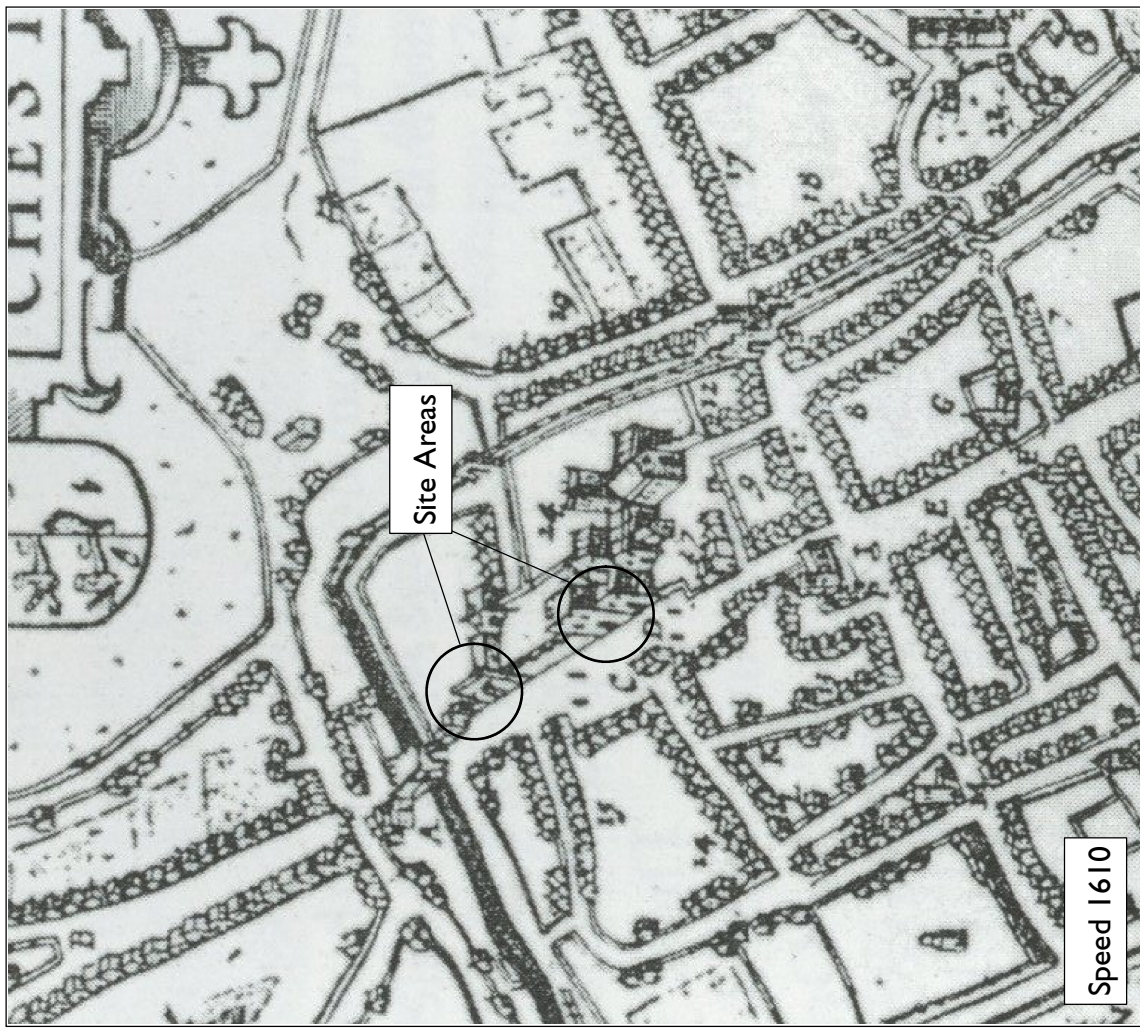
0 100m

N

FIGURE 3 // 1581 & 1610 Maps



Not to scale. For illustration only.



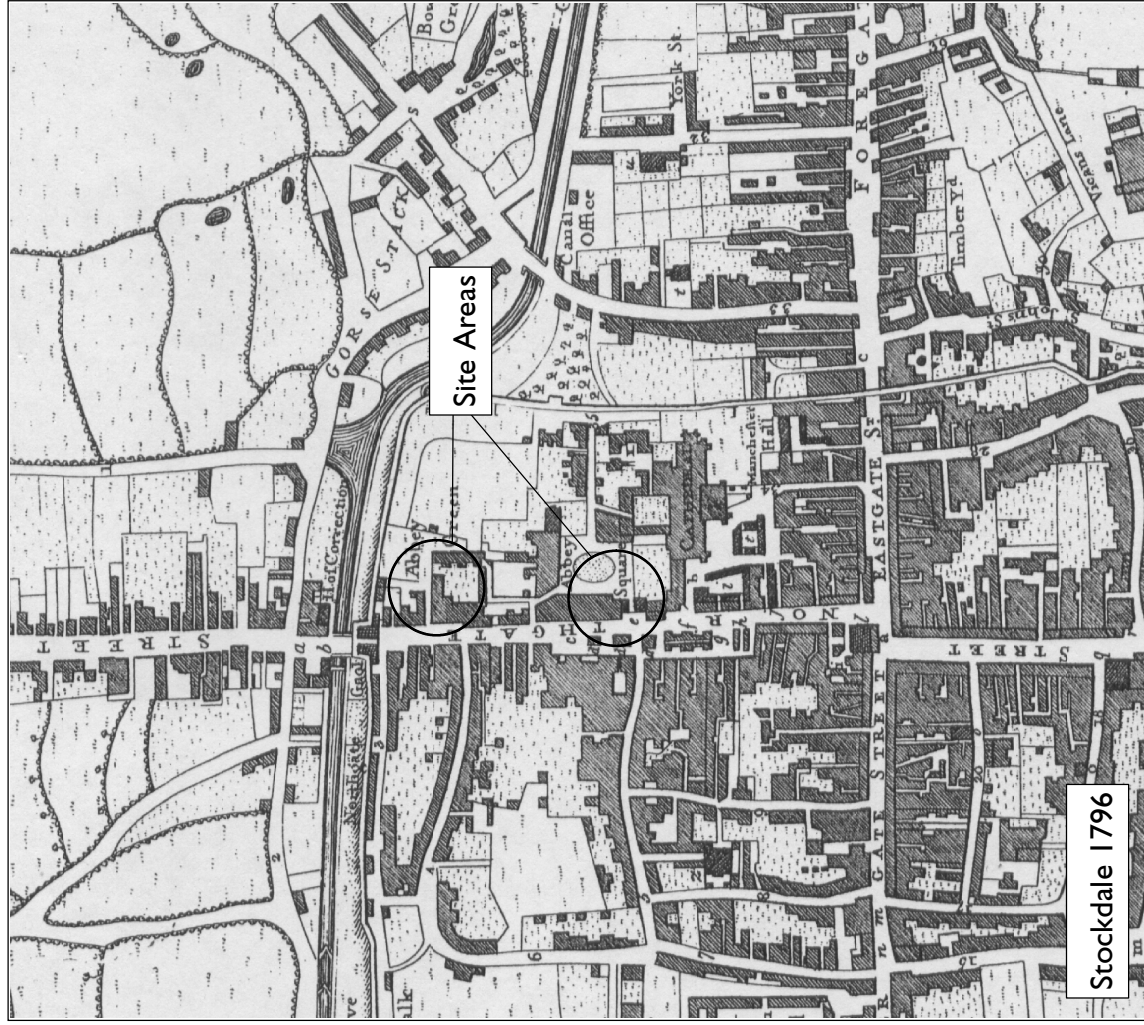
PROJECT // 1340C - Abbey Square

DESCRIPTION // 1581 & 1610 Maps

DOC REF: LP1340C-AWB-v1

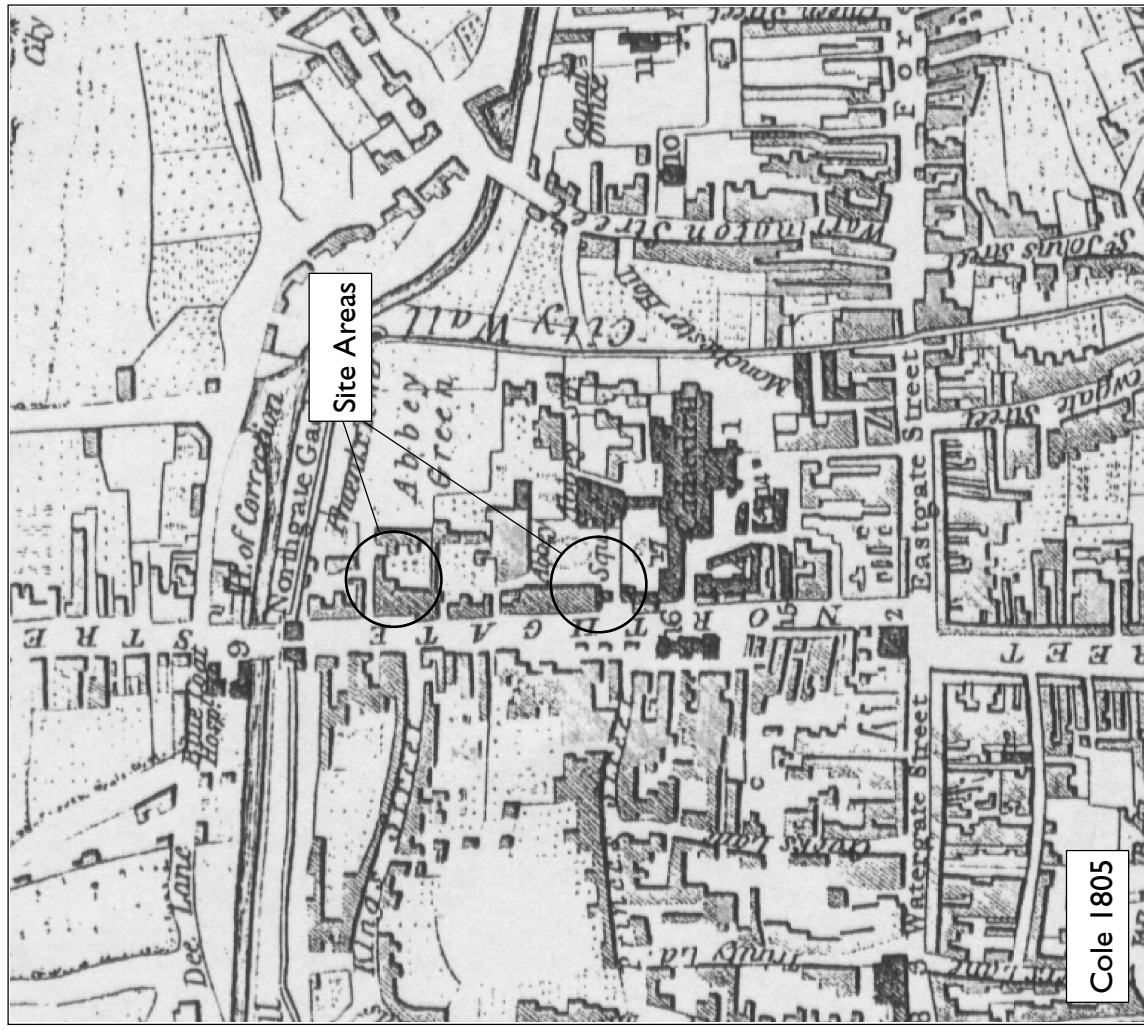
L-P: ARCHAEOLOGY

FIGURE 4 // 1796 & 1805 Maps



Stockdale 1796

Not to scale. For illustration only.



Cole 1805

PROJECT // 1340C - Abbey Square

DESCRIPTION // 1796 & 1805 Maps

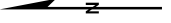
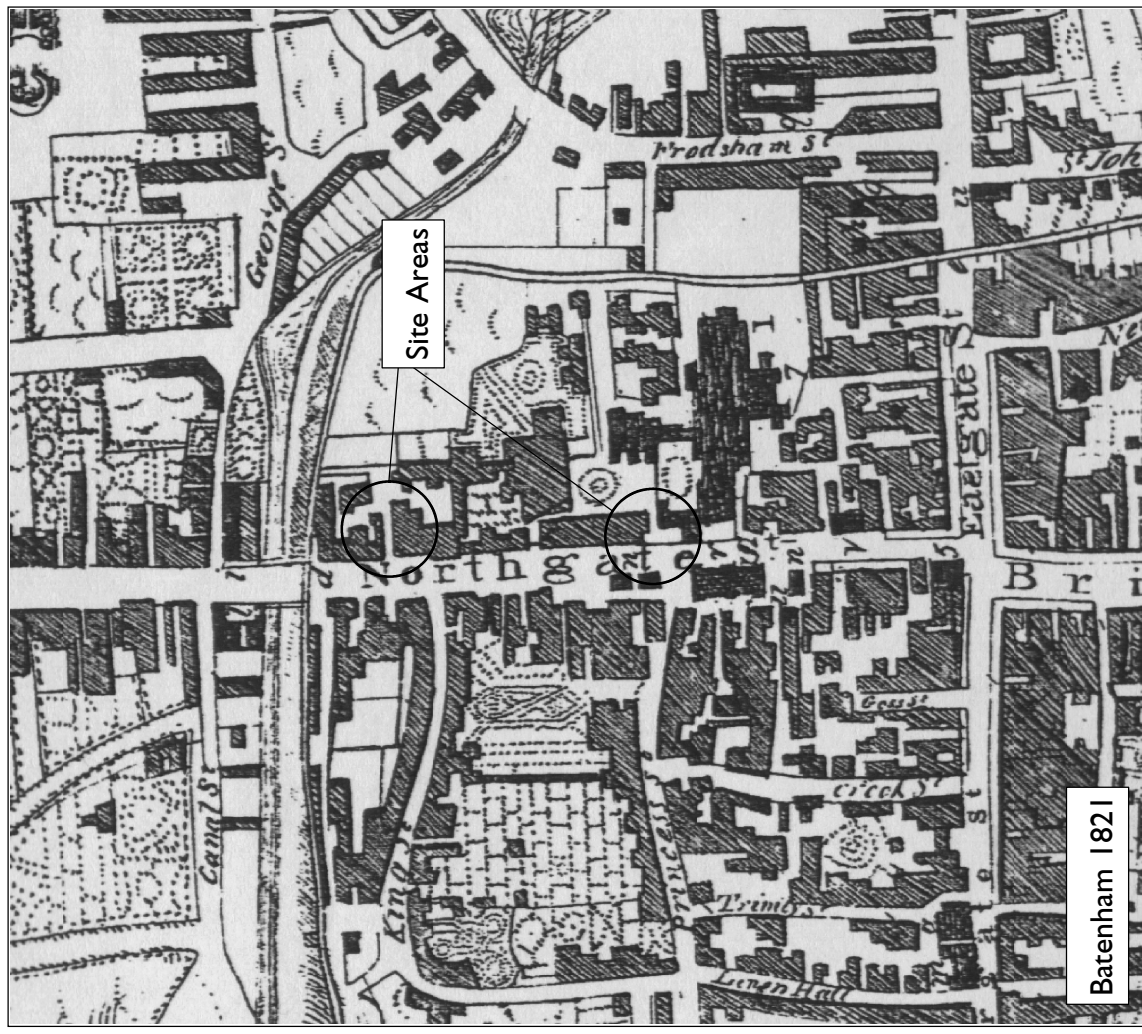
DOC REF: LP1340C-AWB-v1

L-P: ARCHAEOLOGY

FIGURE 5 // 1817 & 1821 Maps



Not to scale. For illustration only.



PROJECT // 1340C - Abbey Square

DESCRIPTION // 1817 & 1821 Maps

DOC REF: LP1340C-AWB-v1

L-P: ARCHAEOLOGY

FIGURE 6 // 1874 & 1899 OS Maps



Scale 1:1,500 @ A4



PROJECT // 1340C - Abbey Square

DESCRIPTION // 1874 & 1899 Ordnance Survey Maps

DOC REF: LP1340C-AWB-v1

L-P: ARCHAEOLOGY

FIGURE 7 // 1911 & 1977 OS Maps



Scale 1:1,500 @ A4



PROJECT // 1340C - Abbey Square

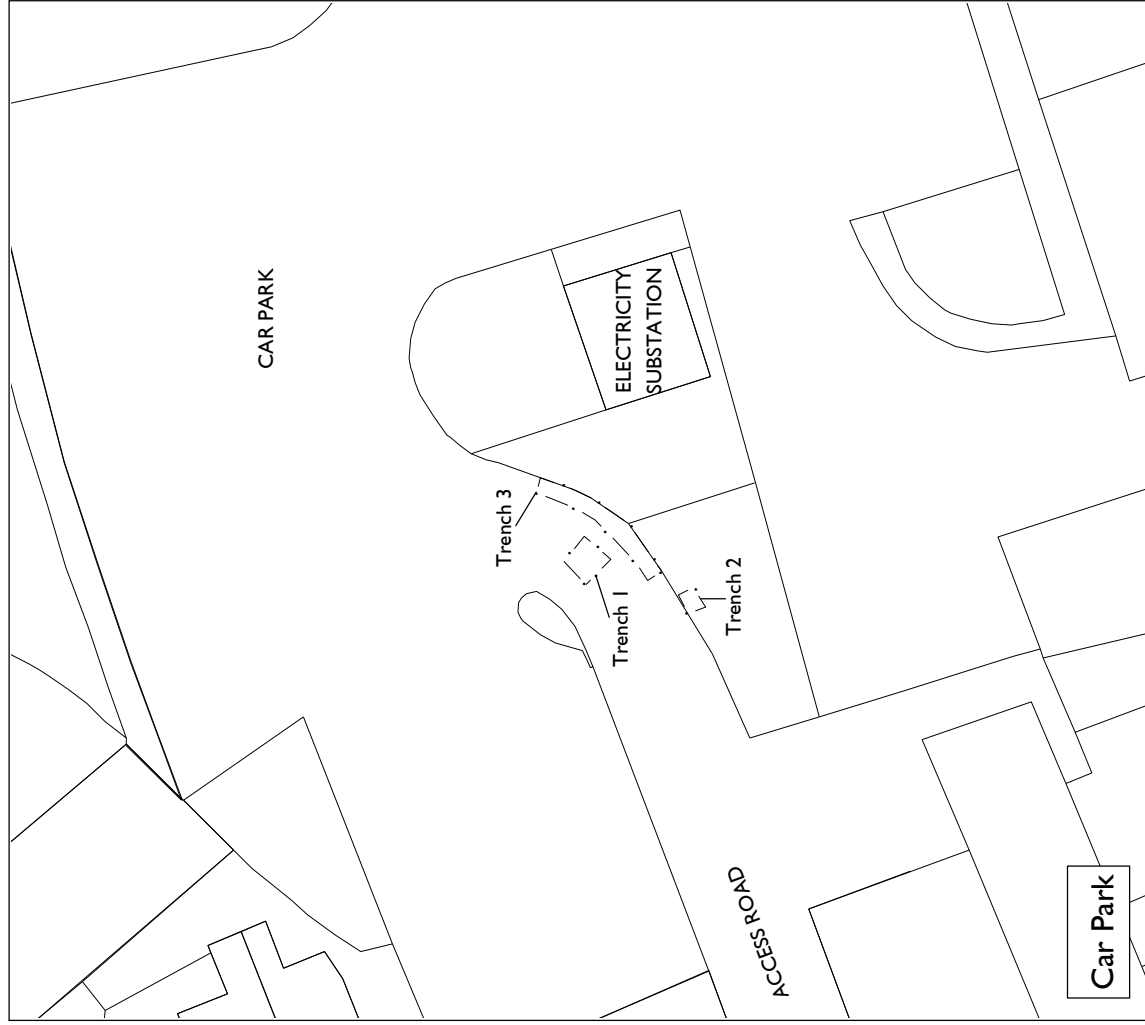
DESCRIPTION // 1911 & 1977 Ordnance Survey Maps

Reproduced by permission of the controller of HMSO, Licence 100030862

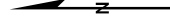
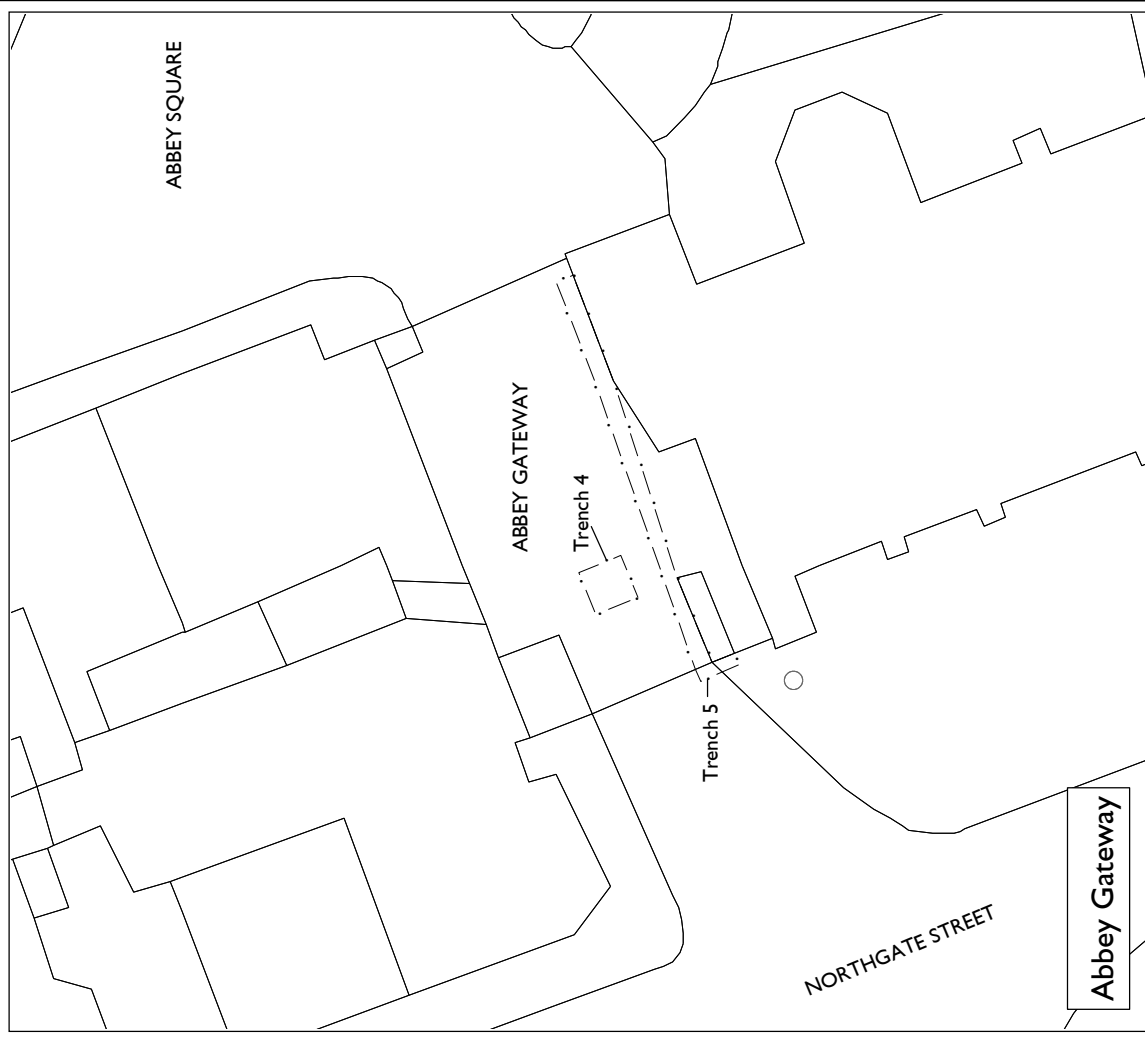
DOC REF: LP1340C-AWB-v1

L-P: ARCHAEOLOGY

FIGURE 8 // Trench Locations



Scale 1:250 @ A4



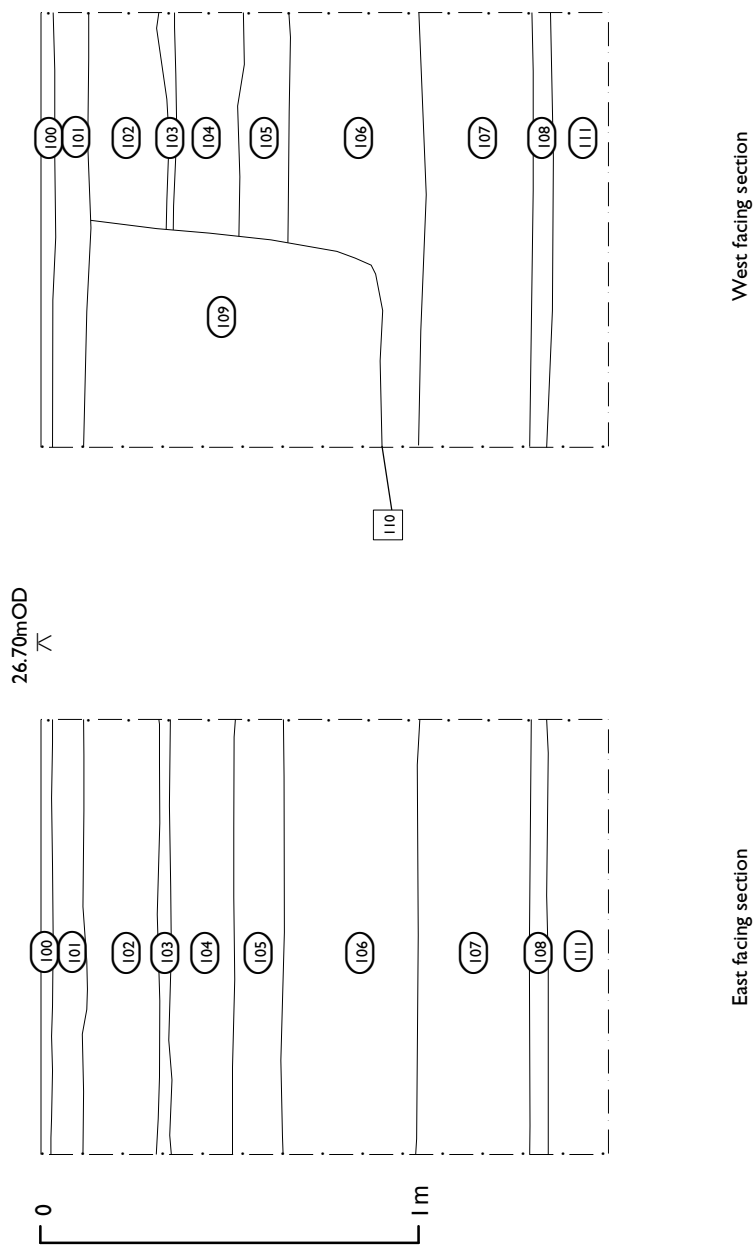
PROJECT // I340C - Abbey Square

DESCRIPTION // Trench Locations

DOC REF: LP1340C-AWB-v1

L-P:ARCHÆOLOGY

FIGURE 9 // Car Park Section Drawings



Scale 1:20 @ A4

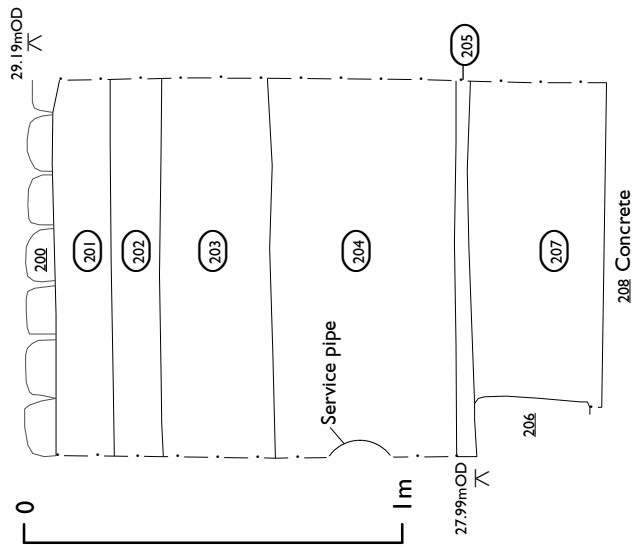
PROJECT // 1340C - Abbey Square

DESCRIPTION // Car Park Section Drawings

DOC REF: LP1340C-AWB-v1

L-P:ARCHAEOLOGY

FIGURE 10 // Rising Bollard Section Drawing



Scale 1:20 @ A4

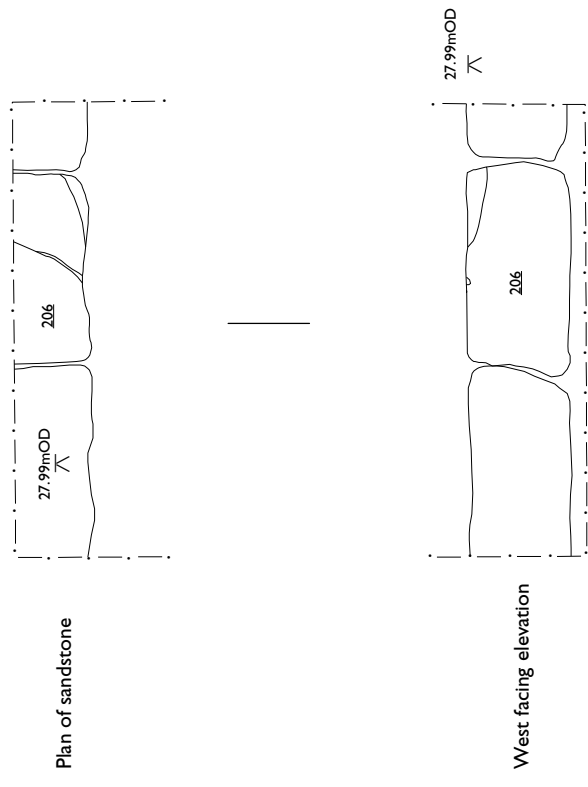
PROJECT // 1340C - Abbey Square

DESCRIPTION // Rising Bollard Section Drawing

DOC REF: LP1340C-AWB-v1

L-P:ARCHÆOLOGY

FIGURE 11 // Sandstone Structure 206



Scale 1:20 @ A4

0 1 m

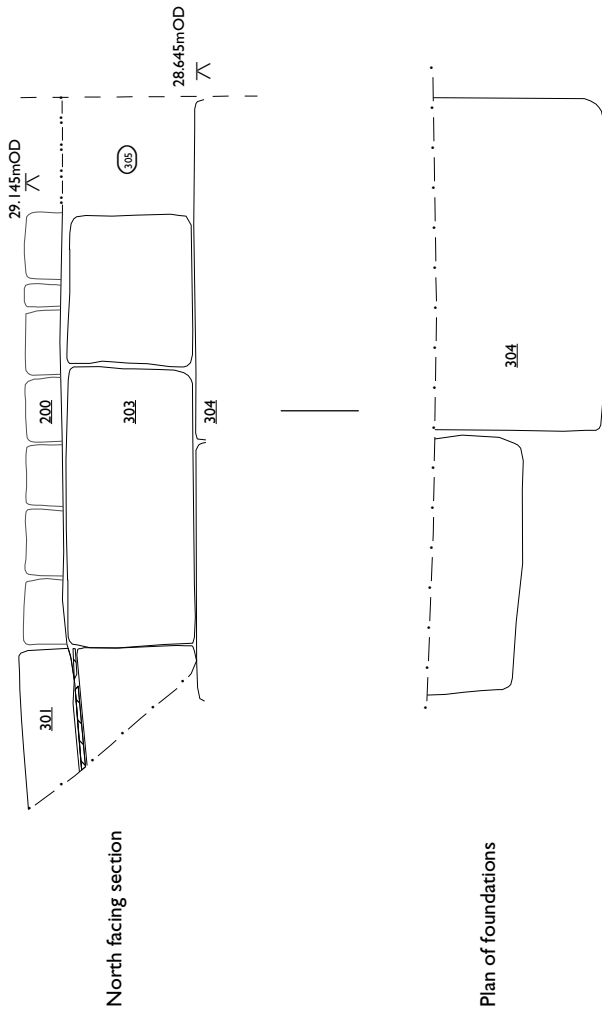
PROJECT // 1340C - Abbey Square

DESCRIPTION // Sandstone Structure 206

DOC REF: LP1340C-AWB-v1

L-P:ARCHÆOLOGY

FIGURE 12 // Gateway Foundations 304



Scale 1:20 @ A4

0 1 m

PROJECT // 1340C - Abbey Square

DESCRIPTION // Gateway Foundations 304

DOC REF: LP1340C-AWB-v1

L-P:ARCHÆOLOGY

SOURCES CONSULTED

BIBLIOGRAPHIC

- OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT. 2009. *Chester Cathedral Quarter Conservation Management Plan*, unpublished archive report for OAU
- GENERAL SYNOD OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, 2012. *Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England Procedural and Guidance Note 10: A guide to good management*
- CROSBY, A, 1996 *A History of Cheshire*, Chichester
- DROOP, JP, AND NEWSTEAD, R, 1931. 'Excavations in the Deanery Field, Chester', *Liverpool Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology*, **18**, 6-18
- FRERE, S, 1987. *Britannia. A History of Roman Britain*, London
- GEM, R, 2000. 'Romanesque architecture in Chester Cathedral 1075 to 1117', in *Medieval Archaeology, Art and Architecture at Chester*, *Trans Brit Archaeol Assoc* **22**, 31-44
- HODGSON, J, AND BRENNAND, M, 2006. 'The Prehistoric Period Resource Assessment', in M BRENNAND (ED) *The Archaeology of North West England, an Archaeological Research Framework for North West England: Volume 1, Resource Assessment*, *Archaeology North West* **8**, Manchester, 23-58
- LEWIS, CP, AND THACKER, AT, (EDS) 2005. *A History of the County of Chester, Vol 5 Part 2 The City of Chester: Culture, Buildings, Institutions*, London
- MCPEAKE, JC, BULMER, M, AND RUTTER, JA, 1980. 'Excavations in the garden of No. 1 Abbey Green, Chester, 1975-77: Interim Report', in *J Chester Archaeol Soc* **63**, 15-38
- MASON, DJP, 2000. *Excavations at Chester. The Elliptical Building: An Image of the Roman World?*, Chester
- MASON, DJP, 2001. *Roman Chester. City of the Eagles*, Stroud
- NEWSTEAD, R, 1924. 'Report on the Excavations on the site of the Roman Camp, at the Deanery Field, Chester', *Liverpool Annals of Archaeol and Anthropol*, **11**, 59-86
- NEWSTEAD, R, 1928A. 'Deanery Field, Site VII', *J Chester Archaeol Soc* **27**, 144-145
- NEWSTEAD, R, 1928B. 'Report on the Excavations on the site of the Roman Fortress, at the Deanery Field, Chester, (No. 2)', *Liverpool Annals of Archaeol and Anthropol*, **15**, 3-32
- NEWSTEAD, R, AND DROOP, JP, 1935. 'The Roman Fortress at Chester: a Newly-Discovered Turret and Rampart Building', *Liverpool Annals of Archaeol and Anthropol*, **22**, 19-30
- NEWSTEAD, R, AND DROOP, JP, 1936. 'Excavations in the Deanery Field and Abbey Green, 1935', *Liverpool Annals of Archaeol and Anthropol*, **23**, 3-50
- PACK, K. 2012. *Desk Based assessment for Deanery Field, Chester*, unpublished archive report for L – P : Archaeology
- PHILPOTT, R, 2006. 'The Romano-British Period Resource Assessment', in M BRENNAND (ED) *The Archaeology of North West England, an Archaeological Research Framework for North West England: Volume 1, Resource Assessment*, *Archaeology North West* **8**, Manchester, 59-90
- RUTTER, JA, 1977. 'Chester Deanery Field', in DAVEY, PJ (ED), *Medieval Pottery from Excavations*

THACKER, A, 2000. 'The Early Medieval City and its Buildings, in Medieval Archaeology, and Architecture at Chester', *Trans Brit Archaeol Assoc* **22**, 16-30

WARD, SW, 1987. *Excavations at Chester, the Civil War Siegeworks 1642-6*. Chester

WARD, SW, 1994. *Excavations at Chester. Saxon occupation within the Roman fortress, sites excavated 1971-1981*, Chester

Cartographic

BATEMAN, 1821. *Plan of the City of Chester*

BRAUN, G, AND HOGENBURG, F, 1581. *Map of Chester*

COLE, 1805. *Chester*

GRETTY, 1870. *Plan of the City of Chester*

HOLLAR, 1653. *The Ground-Plott of Chester*

HUGHES, 1643. *Plan of the fortifications of the City of Chester*

NEELE, SJ, 1817. *Plan of Chester*

ORDNANCE SURVEY, 1874. 50" to 1 mile, Sheets 38.11

ORDNANCE SURVEY 2ND EDITION, 1899. 25" to 1 mile, Sheet 38.11

ORDNANCE SURVEY, 1911. 25" to 1 mile, Sheet 38.11

ORDNANCE SURVEY, 1977. 1:2500, Plan SJ 4066 and SJ 4166

SPEED, J, 1610. *Map of Chester*

STOCKDALE, 1796. *Chester*

THOMAS, T, 1853. *Plan of the City and Liberties of Chester*

OASIS FORM

APPENDIX I

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

[List of Projects](#) | [Manage Projects](#) | [Search Projects](#) | [New project](#) | [Change your details](#) | [HER coverage](#) | [Change country](#) | [Log out](#)

Printable version

OASIS ID: Iparchae1-143429

Project details

Project name	Chester Cathedral
Short description of the project	Archaeological watching brief at Chester cathedral for new traffic control measures.
Project dates	Start: 01-09-2012 End: 11-02-2013
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	CHE/116 NGS 12 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	CHE/ABS 12 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)
Site status	Conservation Area
Current Land use	Other 3 - Built over
Monument type	WALL Medieval
Monument type	WALL Medieval
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS

Project location

Country	England
Site location	CHESHIRE CHESTER CHESTER Chester Cathedral
Postcode	CH1 2HU
Study area	4.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	SJ 340785 366075 52 -2 52 55 21 N 002 58 50 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 26.00m Max: 30.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	L - P : Archaeology
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	L - P : Archaeology
Project director/manager	Blair Poole
Project supervisor	George Lacey
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Chester Cathedral

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive Exists?	No
Paper Archive recipient	Cheshire Museum Service
Paper Archive ID	CHE/ 116 NGS 12
Paper Contents	"Animal Bones","Ceramics","Glass","Metal","Worked bone"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Drawing","Map","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological Watching Brief Report for Chester Cathedral
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Poole, B.
Other bibliographic details	LP1430C-AWB-v1.1
Date	2013
Issuer or publisher	L - P : Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Chester
Description	Results of archaeological monitoring at Chester cathedral for new traffic control measures.
Entered by	Blair Poole (b.poole@lparchaeology.com)
Entered on	11 February 2013

OASIS:

Please e-mail English Heritage for OASIS help and advice

© ADS 1996-2012 Created by [Jo Gilham](#) and [Jen Mitcham](#), email Last modified Wednesday 9 May 2012

Cite only: <http://www.oasis.ac.uk/form/print.cfm> for this page