Archaeological Watching Brief Report for

ST ANDREWS CHURCH CHESTER

For Project Architecture and Management

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L~P:ARCHÆOLOGY

Archaeological Watching Brief Report for

ST ANDREW'S CHURCH CHESTER

Client:	Project Architecture and Management
Local Authority:	Cheshire West and Chester Council
NGR:	340691,366158
Planning App:	12/03422/FUL
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Abstract

The site of St Andrews Church, Chester, has been granted permission for change of use, refurbishment and renovation. This document outlines the results of archaeological monitoring on groundworks undertaken at the site.

Archaeological monitoring of two new service trenches, aligned east west from Newgate Street to the church, was undertaken by Blair Poole of L - P: Archaeology between 15^{th} March and 7^{th} May 2013. The work was commissioned by Project Architecture and Management.

Historic research shows that the site lies in an area of activity since the Roman period, lying close to the Roman defensive walls and interval tower. The line of Newgate Street is thought to be Medieval in date, potentially 10th century, with buildings occupying the frontage from at least the 14th century, until the 19th century when St Andrew's church was constructed. The excavated trenches extended measured 0.75m deep and contained two deposits. Both late 19th century in date associated with the demolition of buildings fronting onto Newgate Street and the raising of the ground level to create a sloped access to the church.

Set back 4m from the street frontage a small remnant of demolished wall, comprising sandstone and brick, was identified. This was only visible in the northern section and appears to relate to the demolition, in the 19th century, of a late Post Medieval structure. The finds recovered from the site included a mix of Roman, Medieval and Post Medieval ceramics, which supports the historic research indicating that the site lay within an area of Roman, Medieval and Post Medieval activity.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1.This document describes the results of archaeological monitoring of groundworks associated with the redevelopment of St Andrew's United Reform Church, Newgate Street, Chester. Planning permission has been granted for the site for conversion of the church into a restaurant and bar.
- **1.2.**Following advice from Mike Morris, City Archaeologist, the associated groundworks for this redevelopment required archaeological monitoring as a condition of planning consent.
- 1.3. The site is located along the western side of Newgate Street, Chester, CH1 1DQ, at national grid reference (SJ) 340691,366158 (FIGURE 1).
- 1.4.Monitoring was carried out by Blair Poole of L P: Archaeology on behalf of Project Architecture and Management between 15^{th} March and 7^{th} May 2013.
- **1.5.** Works were carried out in accordance with an agreed specification of works (POOLE 2013).

2. Site Background

2.1.PLANNING

- **2.1.1.** 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.
- **2.1.2.** 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.
- **2.1.3.** In considering any planning application for development the Local Planning Authority is Cheshire West and Chester Council, who are bound by the policies within the Chester District Local Plan.
- **2.1.4.** A condition, no 11, has been attached to planning consent for the works (12/03422/FUL);

No development shall take place within the area indicated on plan ref: 570-PL05 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.

- **2.1.5.** The site lies within the city's Area of Archaeological Importance to the north of a known Roman road and to the immediate west of a Medieval road and Roman defensive wall.
- **2.1.6.** The church is a grade II Listed Building (1376325) dating to the 19th century, which lies within the Chester City Conservation Area.

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3. Geology & Topography

3.1.GEOLOGY

- **3.1.1.** The British Geological Survey GeoIndex for the site records the superficial (drift) deposits as Boulder clay and sand, with solid deposits of Triassic sandstone.
- **3.1.2.** Natural deposits were not encountered during the groundworks.

3.2.TOPOGRAPHY

- **3.2.1.** The site lies approximately 250m to the southeast of Chester city centre, in an area of commercial properties.
- **3.2.2.** To the north of the site lies the multi storey car park for the Grosvenor shopping centre. To the west and south of the site are commercial properties. The main building is set back from Newgate Street, which marks the eastern boundary of the site. Newgate Street is characterised by commercial properties and restaurants.
- **3.2.3.** The site slopes from a low point at Newgate street, 20.35mOD, to a level platform in front of the church at 22.24mOD (FIGURE 2).
- **3.2.4.** The building occupying the site is a 19th century church of yellow sandstone, originally a Presbyterian Church, more recently a United reform Church.

4. Archaeological & Historic Background

4.1.The following section gives a brief guide to the historic development of the site and is not intended as a full history of Chester.

PREHISTORIC

4.2.There is no record of finds from the Prehistoric period being recovered from the site or from Newgate Street. However, excavations at Chester Amphitheatre, 100m southeast of the site, uncovered Mesolithic flint implements and evidence of Iron Age settlement (GARNER & WILMOTT 2007).

ROMAN

- **4.3.**The site is situated within the walled Roman fortress, 50m from the eastern wall and 5m to the north of the location of the now demolished south wall (FIGURE 3). Excavations in 1955 on the site of 32 to 36 Newgate Street, an area to the immediate south of the site, uncovered evidence of a Roman road running east west extending under the location of the current church, as well as evidence of an interval tower and turf ramparts (THOMPSON & TOBIAS 1957). These are thought to date to the 1st to 2nd centuries.
- **4.4.** Previous archaeological work on the site has also revealed *in situ* Roman deposits. A soil layer dating to the 2^{nd} to 3^{rd} century could be seen to be sealing an earlier, 1^{st} to 2^{nd} century, deposit (MASON 2001).
- **4.5.**Numerous other Roman finds of significance have been recovered from Newgate Street, in the area surrounding the site. Roman ceramics, coins, a lamp and a stone alter with a gladiatorial scene have all been recovered (CARRINGTON 1994).
- **4.6.**Excavations 100m to the north of the site, carried out in the 1960s, uncovered the extensive remains of Roman barrack blocks, gymnasium and a bath house dating to the 1st to 3rd century (MASON 2001).

MEDIEVAL

4.7.The alignment of Newgate Street can be seen to follow a typical Early Medieval format and is thought to lead form the entrance to the city to St Werburgh's (LAUGHTON 2008). Newgate Street aligns with St Werburgh Street bisected by Eastgate

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Street and later Post Medieval development. It has been suggested that Newgate Street has 10th century origins, which is probable given its location, alignment and form (MASON 2007).

- **4.8.**The street was firmly established, as Fleshmonger's Lane, by the 13th century. Where the le Prudemercer and Brickhill families are recorded as having property (LEWIS & THACKER 2005). Fleshmonger is a term that can be attributed to several occupations, butchers, pimps, or slave traders. In this case it is likely that it refers to butchers as Fleshmonger's Lane is recorded in the 13th and 14th centuries as having retail properties along it, although mainly trading cloth.
- **4.9.**Medieval structural elements were uncovered along Newgate Street dating from the 14th to 15th centuries during excavations in 2001 (GARNER 2008). This revealed 14th to 15th century pits and gardens, thought to form the rear plots of the properties fronting onto Newgate Street.
- **4.10.** It is also thought that there would have been priests houses along this street leading between the two major ecclesiastic institutions, St John's and St Werburgh's (WARD 2009). These would have been high quality sandstone structures. Based on the historic research indicating the potential for priest's houses and upper echelon families owning property along this street it is likely that the properties were of high status.
- **4.11.**Excavations to the north of the site uncovered a Medieval cess pit. Also to the north of the site, below a Post Medieval sandstone cellar, in tact Medieval deposits were identified dating to the 13th century. A Medieval robber trench was recorded during excavations to the south of the site in 1955 (THOMPSON & TOBIAS 1957).

POST MEDIEVAL

- **4.12.**Excavations in 2001 in the area revealed extensive Post Medieval activity relating to the rear gardens off Newgate Street (GARNER 2008). This activity dated from the 15^{th} century through to the 18^{th} century.
- **4.13.**Braun and Hogenberg's map, a 16th century detailed cartographic record of Chester, shows the site area, off Newgate Street, as being occupied by a cluster of houses. The nature of this cluster suggests that this may be the location of the priests houses that belonged to St John's. The properties enclose a series of gardens to the west of

Newgate Street. This layout is repeated on Speed's map of 1610 and Hollar's map of 1653.

- **4.14.**Alexander Lavaux's map of 1745 clearly labels Fleshmonger's Lane (Newgate Street), with properties along the street frontage. By the 18th century the street contained high quality town houses, such as 15 to 25 Newgate Street. This can be seen on Lavaux's map as Andrew Kenrick's townhouse, which is shown to highlight the location of important individuals and their main properties.
- **4.15.**Hunter's map of 1794 and Stockdale's map of 1796 show the street frontage occupied by properties, with gardens to the rear. This is also the case on Cole's map of 1805, Neele's map of 1809, Batenham's map of 1821, and Woods map of 1833.
- **4.16.**The 1841 Tithe map for St Michael's Parish, including St John's, St Peter's and St Olaf's shows the site as having properties fronting onto Newgate Street. There is no information on the apportionment for the site, which could suggest that the land was held by the church at this time.
- **4.17.**Thomas's map of 1853 also shows the site as having buildings fronting onto Newgate Street with gardens to the rear.



Plate 1 - ST Andrews Church, looking west

4.18.The church occupying the site (PLATE 1) was built in 1860 by JW and J Hay, with areas rebuilt by Kelly and Edwards in 1884. Originally built as a Presbyterian church it was later converted to a United Reform church. The church is shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1871. There have been no significant changes to the site since this date.

5. Aims and Methodology

5.1.AIMS

5.1.1. The general aims of the watching brief were:

- 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.

5.2.METHODOLOGY

- **5.2.1.** A full, detailed, methodology was agreed as part of a written scheme of investigation (POOLE 2013) submitted to Mike Morris, the City Archaeologist.
- **5.2.2.** Where open excavations were present, these were recorded by the site archaeologist. All subsequent excavation was undertaken using appropriately sized plant under close monitoring conditions.
- **5.2.3.** Examination and cleaning of all archaeological deposits was by hand using appropriate tools. All deposits exposed were examined and recorded in section.
- **5.2.4.** An full photographic record was made of the works, including photographs of sections, to illustrate in both detail and general context the principal features and deposits.
- **5.2.5.** All works will be carried out in accordance with the code of approved practice as set out by the Institute for Archaeologists (IFA 2012). Accordingly the project team will abide by the IfA's code of approved practice and GLAAS guidance paper.

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6. Results

6.1.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 <u>underlined</u>.

6.2.SERVICE TRENCH 1

- 6.2.1. Service trench 1 was located along the southern perimeter of the site, measuring 25m long by 0.6m wide (FIGURE 4). The trench was excavated to a depth of 0.65m below ground level.
- **6.2.2.** The eastern 19m of the trench, forming the bulk of the excavated area revealed a series of late Post Medieval layers. These are assumed to relate to the removal of the buildings that previously occupied the street frontage, until 1860.
- 6.2.3. The uppermost deposit was a 0.3m thick layer of loose dark brown sand (100) with rubble inclusions (PLATE 2). Below this was a 0.05m thick lens of mortar and sand (101), which overlay a deposit of loose dark brown silt and rubble (102). Deposit (102) extended beyond the base of the trench at 0.65m below ground level (FIGURE 5).



Plate 2 - Service trench 1, looking southeast, 1m scale

6.2.4. A 20th century brick boundary wall <u>103</u>, 0.3m high, was located 5.5m to the east of the church frontage (FIGURE 4). At this point the trench was deepened to allow the service run to pass below the wall foundations. The wall comprised

eight courses of red brick, three of which were above ground level, which sat atop a 0.2m thick foundation of concrete, <u>104</u> (FIGURE 6).

6.2.5. The wall was cut into deposit (100) and penetrated though to (102) to a depth of 0.7m below ground level. In this area the trench extended to a depth of 0.85m below ground level. Deposit (102) extended beyond the base of the trench in this area.



Plate 3 - North facing section, 1m scale

6.2.6. At the western end of the trench the foundations for St Andrews church were exposed (FIGURES 6 & 7). Below the yellow sandstone ashlar blockwork <u>106</u>, that forms the facade of the church, was a thin layer of slate (PLATE 3), dividing the yellow sandstone form the red sandstone footings <u>105</u> (FIGURES 6 & 7).



Plate 4 - Footings of St Andrews, looking west, 1m scale

- 6.2.7. The footings were more uneven and roughly faced, comprising regular courses of ashlar blockwork (PLATE 4). The bottom of the footings were not exposed as the base of the trench was established at 0.65m below ground level. Deposit (102) overlay footings <u>105</u>, showing that the deposits encountered during the works all post date 1860, when the church was constructed.
- **6.2.8.** The material uncovered suggests that the ground level was raised to form a ramp leading to the church entrance in the 1860s. As such no deposits predating this period were encountered.

6.3.SERVICE TRENCH 2

- **6.3.1.** Service trench 2 was located 0.5m to the north of service trench 1 and measured 24m east west by 0.4m wide. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.75m below ground level.
- 6.3.2. Th uppermost deposit encountered was a 0.3m thick layer of loose dark brown sand and rubble (100). Below this was a deposit of loose dark brown silt (102), also with rubble inclusions. This extended beyond the base of the trench at 0.75m below ground level.
- **6.3.3.** In the northern section of the trench, 4m from the eastern boundary of the site, evidence of a demolished wall, <u>107</u>, was identified. A rough mass of sandstone and brick, 0.3m wide, sealed by (100) was recorded. This extended beyond the base of the trench. This mass was overlain by (102) and it is

thought that this represents part of a demolished structure that once fronted onto Newgate Street. A date for the wall was not determined as the excavation only revealed the southern most edge of the demolished wall and as such it was not fully excavated (PLATE 5). No finds were recovered from this structure.



Plate 5 - Service trench 2, looking north, 1m scale

6.3.4. Both deposits (100) and (102) are clearly Post Medieval layers relating to the development of the site from the mid to late 19th century. It is likely that the site was cleared of the previous structures fronting onto Newgate street and the land was raised to form a ramp leading from the street level up to the entrance to the church, which lies on higher ground.

6.4.FINDS

- **6.4.1.** Deposit (100) contained a mix of finds including 2 sherds of Buckley ware, the neck of a salt glazed vessel, two fragments of clay tobacco pipe stems and a sherd of Samian ware.
- **6.4.2.** Deposit (102) also contained a mix of finds, including 1 sherd of Staffordshire ware, three fragments of clay tobacco pipe stems, 1 sherd of green glazed Medieval ceramic, two sherds of Holt fabric coarse Roman ceramics and 1 sherd of Samian ware.

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7. Summary & Conclusions

- **7.1.**This document outlines the results of the archaeological monitoring on groundworks at St Andrew's Church, Chester. The site has been granted planning permission for change of use, refurbishment and renovation works.
- 7.2. The archaeological monitoring was undertaken by Blair Poole, of L P: Archaeology between 15^{th} March and 7^{th} May 2013, on behalf of Project Architecture and Management.
- 7.3. The site is locate to the west of Newgate Street, Chester, NGR 340691,366158.
- 7.4.Historic research shows that the site lies in an area of activity since the Roman period, lying close to the Roman defensive walls to the east and south. Newgate Street is thought to be Medieval in date, formed as an access route between the two major ecclesiastic establishments of the time, St John's and St Werburgh's.
- **7.5.**It is thought that buildings occupied the frontage of Newgate street from at least the 14th century, until the 19th century, when St Andrew's church was constructed. The church is set back from the street front, with a slope leading up from street level, to the church entrance.
- **7.6.**The archaeological monitoring was limited to two new service trenches that were excavated running east west from Newgate Street to the church. The trenches extended to a maximum depth of 0.75m below ground level. Two main deposits were identified within the both trenches. Both deposits were late 19th century in date and can be seen to be associated with the demolition of buildings fronting onto Newgate Street and the raising of the ground level to create a sloped access to the church, which was constructed in 1860.
- 7.7.Set back 4m from the street frontage a small area of demolished wall, comprising sandstone and brick, was identified. This was only visible in the northernmost section and appears to relate to the demolition, in the 19th century, of a late Post Medieval structure.
- **7.8.**Finds from the excavated deposits included a mix of Roman, Medieval and Post Medieval ceramics, which supports the historic research indicating that the site lay within an area of Roman, Medieval and Post Medieval activity.

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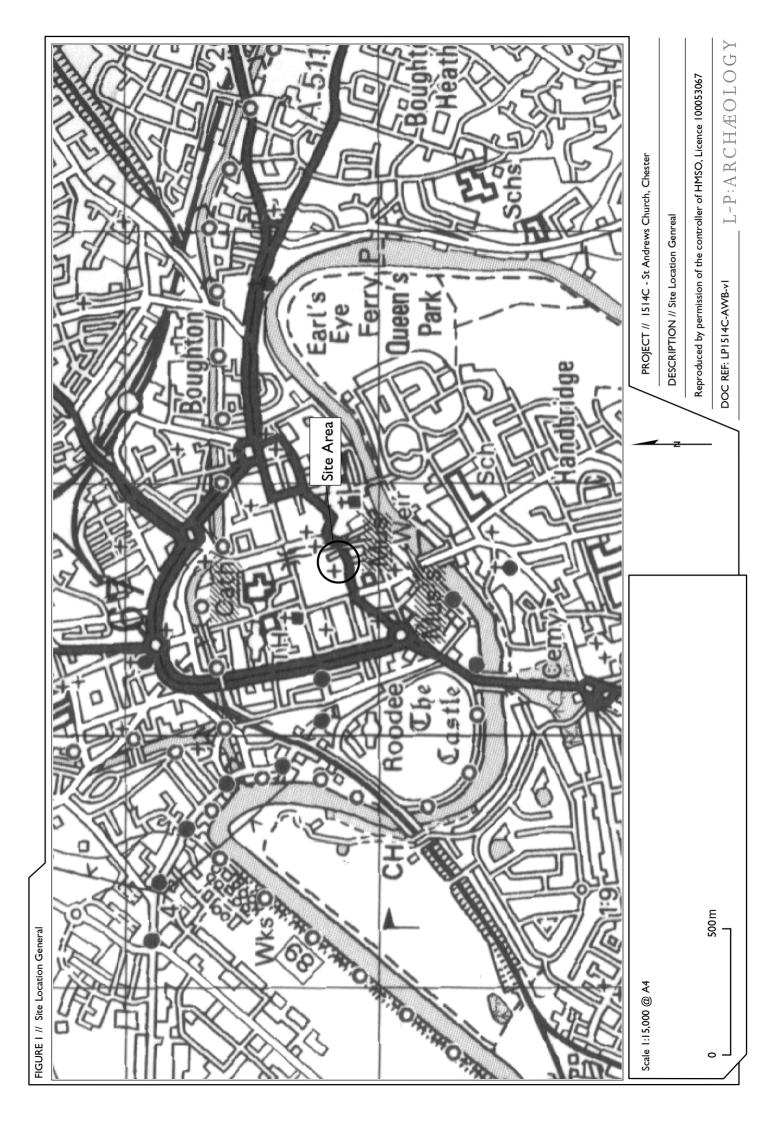
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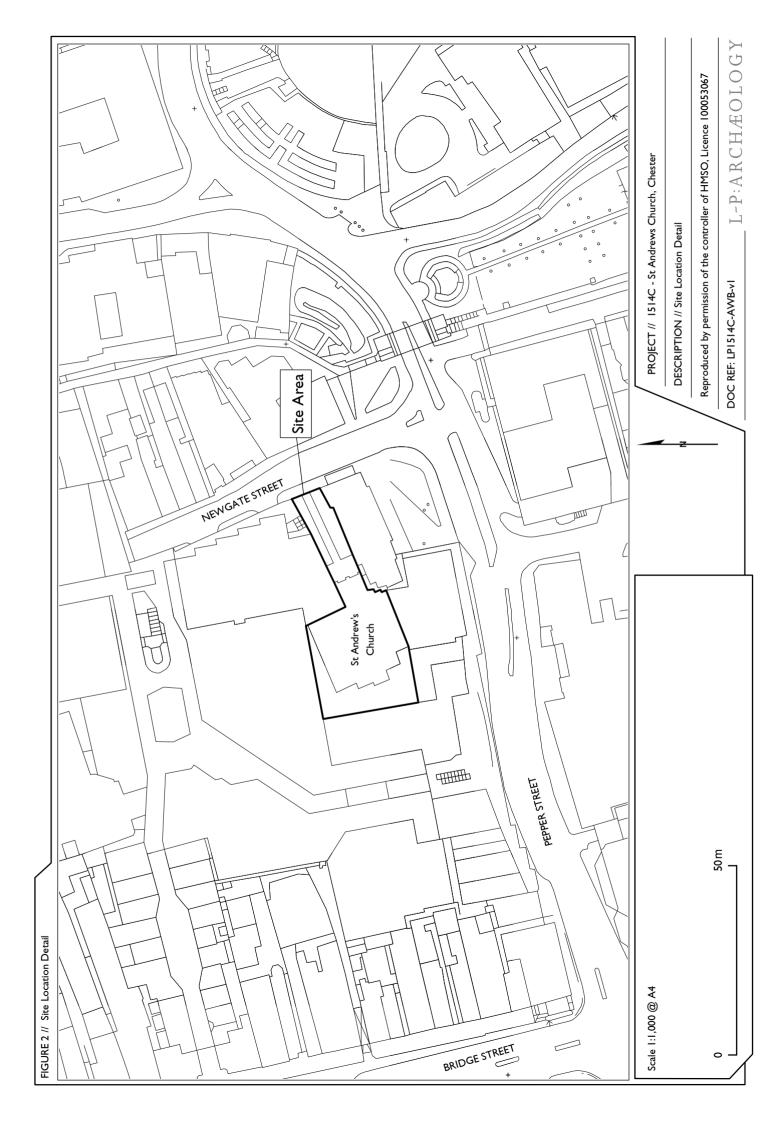
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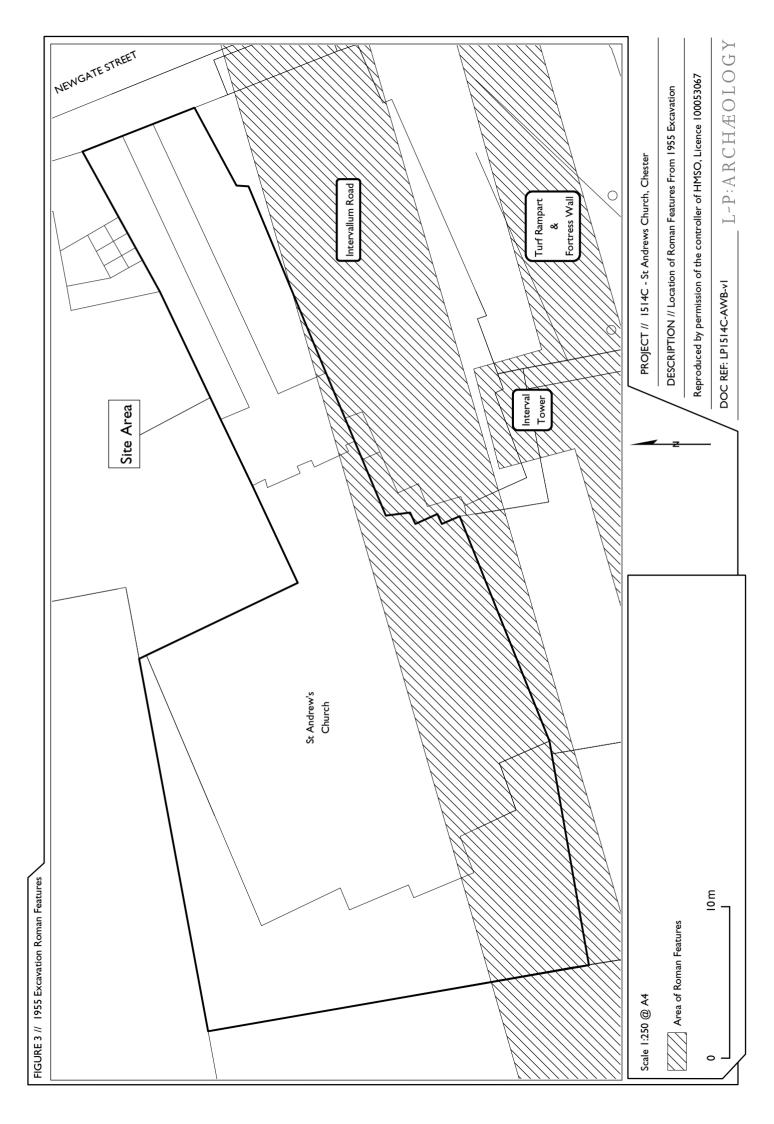
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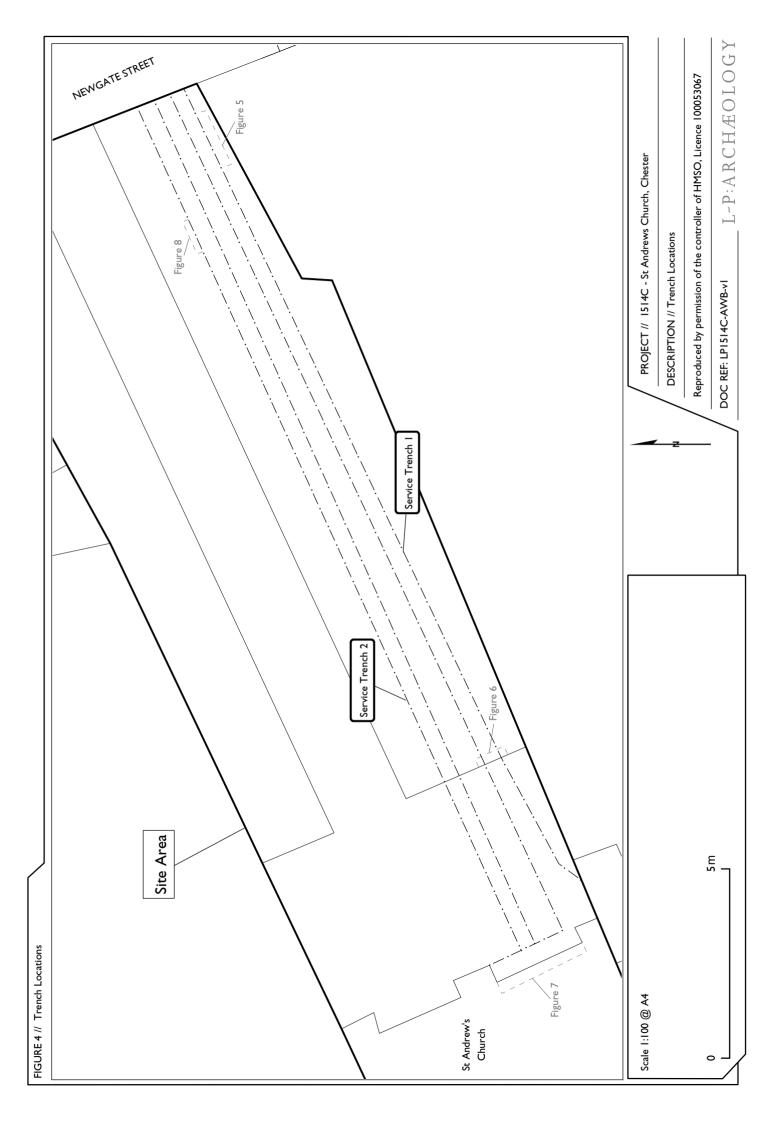
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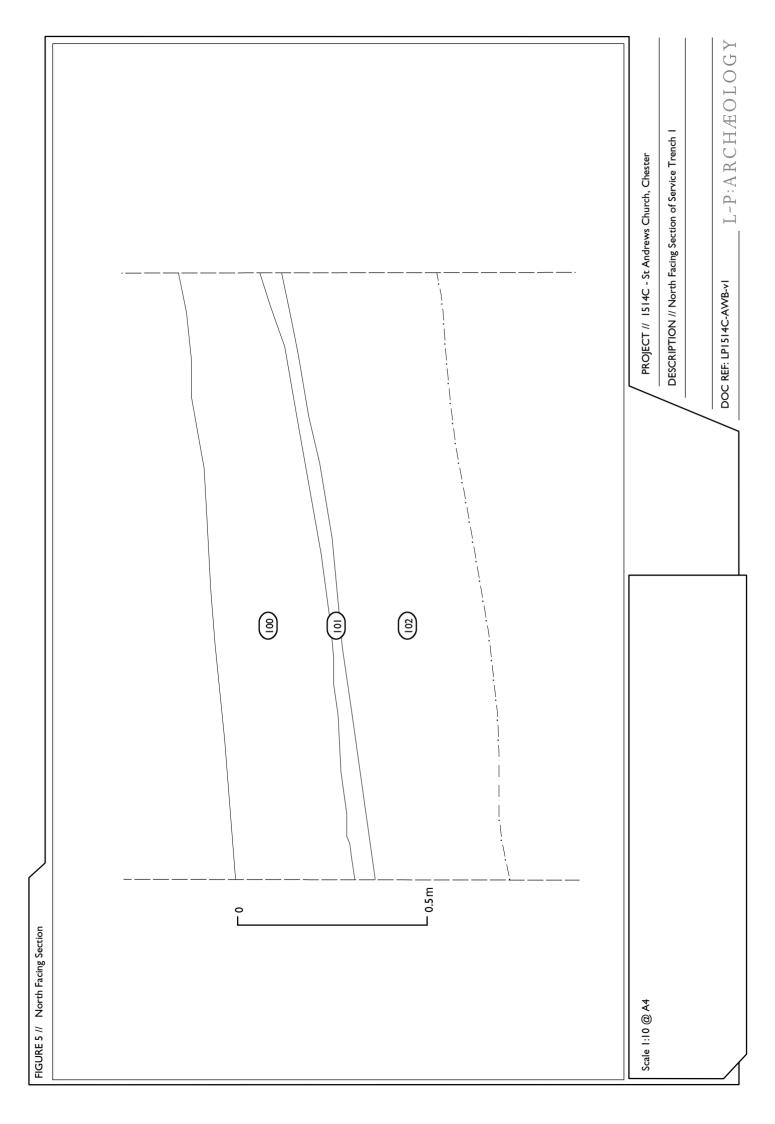
FIGURES

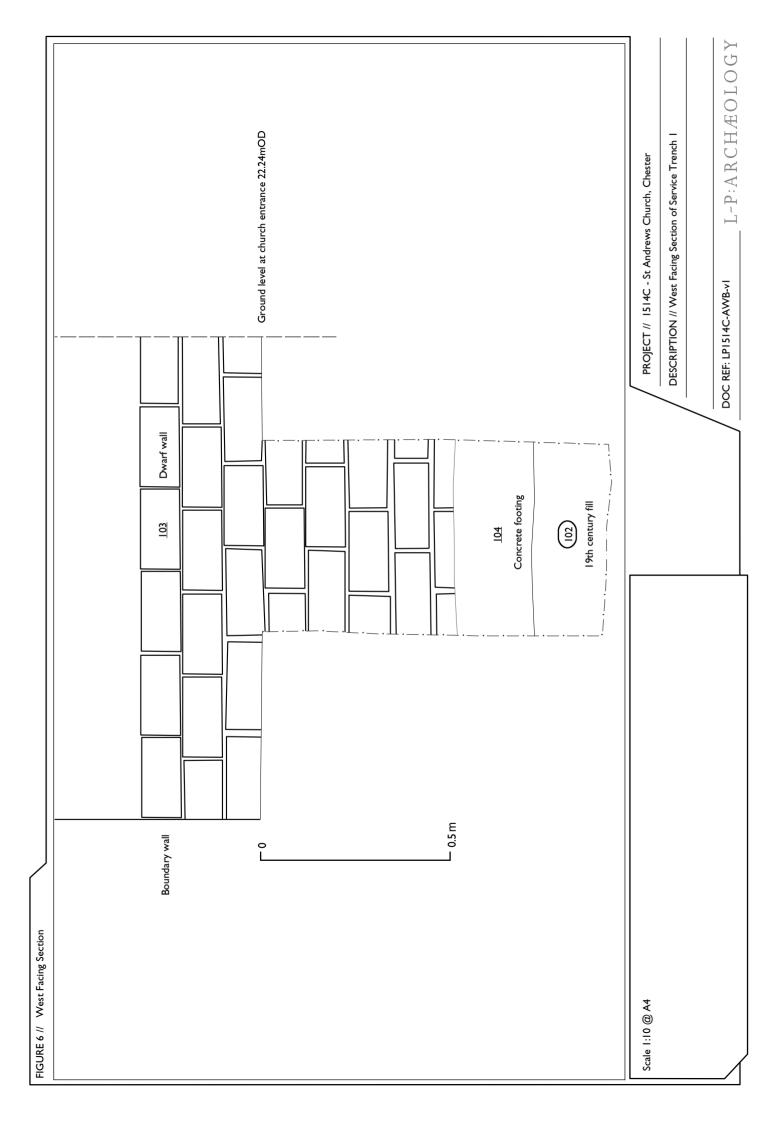


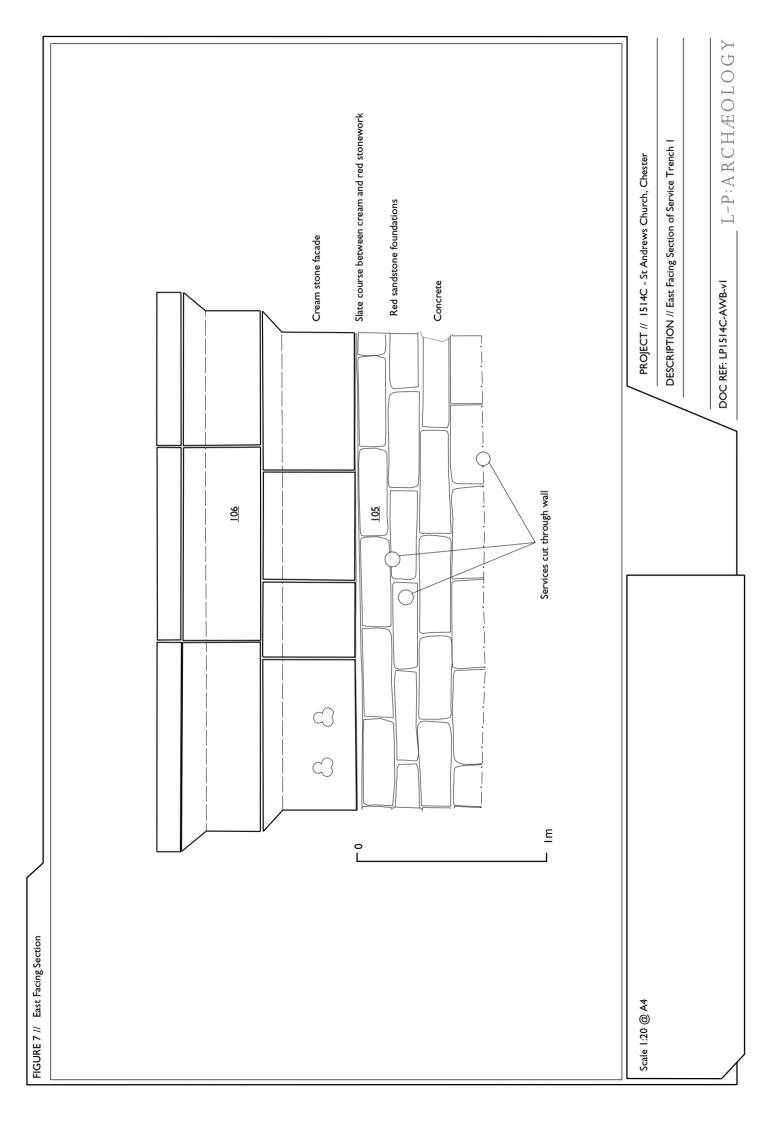


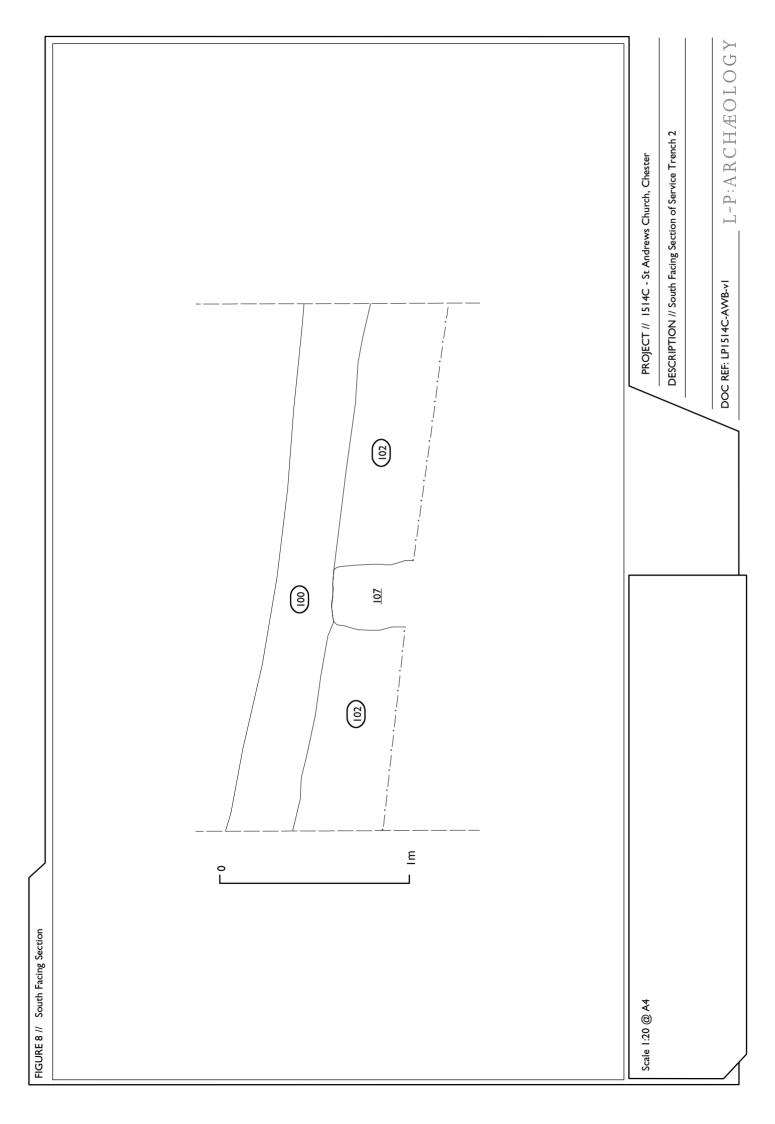












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Project details

Project name	St Andrew's Church
Short description of the project	Watching brief on new service trenches during refurbishment of St Andrew's Church, Chester.
Project dates	Start: 15-03-2013 End: 23-05-2013
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	LP1514C - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)
Site status	Conservation Area
Current Land use	Other 2 - In use as a building
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	CERAMIC VESSELS Roman
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS
Monument type Significant Finds Investigation type	NONE None CERAMIC VESSELS Roman "Watching Brief"

Project location

Country	England
Site location	CHESHIRE CHESTER CHESTER St Andrew's Church
Postcode	CH1 1DE
Study area	500.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	SJ 340691 366158 52 -2 52 55 21 N 002 58 50 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 20.00m Max: 22.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	L - P : Archaeology
Project brief originator	Local Planning Authority (with/without advice from County/District Archaeologist)

Project design originator	L - P : Archaeology
Project director/manager	Blair Poole
Project supervisor	Blair Poole
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Project Architecture and Management

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Grosvenor Museum
Physical Contents	"Ceramics"
Digital Archive Exists?	No
Paper Archive recipient	Grosvenor Museum
Paper Contents	"Ceramics"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Drawing","Report","Section"

Project bibliography 1

	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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