

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

CHESTER HERITAGE SIGNS

For Imagemakers

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L~P:ARCHÆOLOGY

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

CHESTER HERITAGE SIGNS

Client: Imagemakers

Local Authority: Cheshire West and Chester Council

NGR: 340321,365750 / 340774,366111 / 340804,365967

Planning App: 12/05619/ADV

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Site Code: CHE/GRR 13 & CHE/SL 13

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Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was carried out on excavations for the installation of new signs at three locations in Chester. The first sign was located overlooking the Little Roodee car park. The second sign was located within the northern area of the Roman Gardens. The third sign was located at the southern entrance to the Roman Gardens at the Groves.

The groundworks was carried out by Imagemakers under archaeological monitoring conditions between 25th March and 3rd April 2013. Groundworks were monitored by Blair Poole and Matthew Jones of L – P : Archaeology on behalf of Imagemakers.

The results of the archaeological monitoring at the Little Roodee car park revealed surviving fabric relating the City Walls southwestern extent. The form of the sandstone walls suggest they date to a Post Medieval phase of the repair or replacement of the walls. All excavated deposits within this area were clearly 19th century in date or later.

Within the northern area of the Roman gardens and at the southern extent, by the Groves, only modern deposits were encountered.

1. Introduction

1.1. This report details the results of an archaeological Watching Brief carried out on excavations for new signs at the Little Roodee car park, Roman Gardens and the Groves, Chester, for Imagemakers. The local authority is Cheshire West and Chester Council (FIGURE 1).

1.2. These three areas were excavated by Imagemakers and were monitored by L – P : Archaeology in order to satisfy requirements laid out by the City Archaeologist.

1.3. The fieldwork was undertaken between 25th March and 3rd April 2013 and was monitored by Blair Poole and Matthew Jones of L – P : Archaeology.

1.4. Excavation area 1, at the Little Roodee car park, was located at NGR 340321,365750. Excavation area 2, in the Roman Gardens, was located at NGR 340804,365967. Excavation area 3, at the Groves, was located at NGR 340805,365971 (FIGURE 2).

2. Site Background

2.1.PLANNING

2.1.1. Planning consent has been granted for new signage at a number of locations around Chester. Three of these signs are located in archaeologically sensitive areas and as such archaeological monitoring of excavations for these signs has been requested. This report contains the results of the archaeological monitoring on new signs at the Little Roodee car park, Roman Gardens and the Groves (12/05619/ADV).

2.1.2. The Local Planning Authority is Cheshire West and Chester, with Mike Morris being the City Archaeologist. The sites lie within Chester's Area of Archaeological Importance.

2.2.GEOLOGY

2.2.1. The British Geological Survey GeoIndex shows the site to be located on bedrock of undifferentiated Triassic sandstone and conglomerate. The superficial deposit on the site is alluvial silts and sand and boulder clay.

2.3.TOPOGRAPHY

2.3.1. The Little Roodee car park is located 600m southwest of the centre of Chester on an area of land at approximately 18mOD overlooking the river Dee. The Roman Gardens are located approximately 300m to the southeast of the city centre, just outside the city walls. The area slopes from the north, at an elevation of approximately 19mOD, towards the Groves at the south. The Groves site lies at approximately 7mOD.

2.3.2. All three sites are located on public footpaths.

2.4.AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

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

3. Methodology

- 3.1. The trench was excavated using hand tools by Imagemakers. The excavations were monitored by Blair Poole and Matthew Jones of L – P : Archaeology.
- 3.2. All deposits were recorded stratigraphically.
- 3.3. A site code was allocated to the site by the Cheshire Historic Environment Team. This code was used to label all elements of the documentary archive. The written recording system used followed the Museum of London Archaeological Site Manual. Context sheets included all relevant stratigraphic relationships. Detailed plans were drawn at an appropriate scale, 1:10 or 1:20.
- 3.4. A photographic record was made of all significant archaeological remains in both plan and section. This included black and white prints and digital images. A register of all photographs taken was kept on standardised forms.
- 3.5. No environmental samples were collected.
- 3.6. 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.

4. Results

4.1. The results below have been divided by location. This section gives an account of the stratigraphic sequence and archaeology present in each. Deposits are shown in (parenthesis).

4.2. AREA 1 - LITTLE ROODEE CAR PARK SIGN

4.2.1. Excavations for a new three sided sign were undertaken at the northwestern corner of the Castle car park, overlooking the Little Roodee car park on 3rd April 2013. The excavated area measured 1.2m north south by 0.6m east west (FIGURE 3), and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.78m below ground level.

4.2.2. The upper deposit comprised a york stone and concrete slab surface, 100 (FIGURE 4). This measured 0.06m thick and overlay a 0.02m thick layer of sand, which in turn overlay a 0.09m thick layer of dark brown silt and gravel (101). Below (101) was a 0.15m thick deposit of loose yellow orange sand and rubble (103). This overlay a 0.2m thick deposit of loose dark brown silt (104). Below (104) was a loose dark brown silty deposit (105) containing stone fragments and 18th to 19th century glass and ceramic sherds. Deposit (105) was not fully excavated as it extended beyond the base of the excavation.

4.2.3. The lower deposit (105) could be seen to be backfill over the foundations for the sandstone perimeter wall, 106, of the Castle compound. It is known that this perimeter wall was constructed in the early 19th century as part of the designs Thomas Harrison submitted for the Castle compound. As such, it is clear that all deposits encountered within the excavated area must post date the construction of the perimeter wall and therefore date to the 19th century onwards.

4.2.4. In the western section of the excavated area the sandstone City Wall, 107, was identified (PLATE 1). This extended beyond the base of the trench and comprised ashlar construction, faced, large sandstone blocks. The blocks forming the upper most course measured 0.35m by 0.15m each, whereas the blocks forming the lower two exposed courses measured between 0.6m by 0.3m each. The northern extent of the wall appears to have been disturbed in

the 19th century when the castle compound wall was constructed.



Plate 1 - East facing section of Area 1, 1m scale

4.3.AREA 2 - ROMAN GARDENS SIGN

4.3.1. The excavation of a small area within the Roman gardens Chester was carried out on the 25th of March 2013. The excavation involved the de-turfing (by hand) of an area approximately 3m by 3m to a depth of 0.3m (PLATE 2).



Plate 2 - Area 2 excavation, looking west, 1m scale

4.3.2. The de-turfing was carried out by the contractors under supervision of an archaeologist. Within this area two post holes measuring 0.3m by 0.3m were excavated to a depth of 0.8m below ground level (PLATE 3).



Plate 3 - Area 2 - Excavation, looking west, 1m scale

- 4.3.3. The uppermost deposit (01) comprised turf and top soil, measuring 0.38m to 0.43m thick. This contained modern metal and glass inclusions and can be seen to represent the modern garden soil.
- 4.3.4. Below (01), seen only in the 0.3m by 0.3m foundation holes a loose brown silt clay with small gravels, (02) was identified. This deposit continued beyond the base of excavation at 0.8m below ground level.
- 4.3.5. A large quantity of clay tobacco pipe stems and bowls were recovered from (02). These will be catalogued and studied to be published in the Society of Pipe Studies group letter later in 2013. It is clear that this assemblage relates to clay pipe production located in the vicinity of the site.

4.4. THE GROVES SIGN

- 4.4.1. The excavation of two post holes was conducted at the southern extent of the Roman gardens adjacent to the river Dee, along the Groves, on 25th March 2013. The post holes measured approximately 0.25m x 0.25m (PLATE 4) and were excavated to a depth of 0.8m below ground level. Both post holes were excavated by hand. The work was carried out by the contractors staff under the supervision of an archaeologist.



Plate 4 - Area 3 excavation in plan. 1m scale

- 4.4.2. The cobbled surface (03) of the garden entrance formed the upper context. These measured 0.14m by 0.14m in plan by 0.15m thick. Below the cobbles was a loose brown yellow sand (04), 0.10m thick. This sealed a loose brown clay (05) with small gravel inclusions, measuring 0.15m thick.
- 4.4.3. Below (05) was a silty brown red clay (06), which extended beyond the base of the excavation at 0.8m below ground level.
- 4.4.4. A total of two artefacts were recovered from this excavation area. A 'Vimto' drinks can was recovered from context (05). The can had an early 1990s sell by date, indicating that this area had been disturbed in the late 20th century.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

- 5.1. An archaeological watching brief was carried out on excavation for new signs at three locations in Chester. The first was located overlooking the Little Roodee car park. The second was located within the northern area of the Roman gardens. The third was excavated at the southern extent of the Roman gardens, at the Groves.
- 5.2. The archaeological monitoring was carried out by Blair Poole and Matthew Jones of L – P : Archaeology on behalf of Imagemakers, between 25th March and 3rd April 2013.
- 5.3. The results of the archaeological monitoring at the Little Roodee car park revealed surviving, *in situ*, fabric relating to the City Walls southwestern extent. The form of the sandstone walls identified suggest they date to a Post Medieval phase of repair or replacement of the walls. All excavated deposits within this area were clearly 19th century or later.
- 5.4. Within the northern area of the Roman gardens and at the southern extent, by the Groves, only modern deposits were encountered.

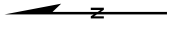
FIGURES

FIGURE I // Site Location General



Scale 1:15,000 @ A4

0 500m



PROJECT // LP1523C - Chester Heritage Signs

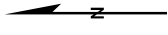
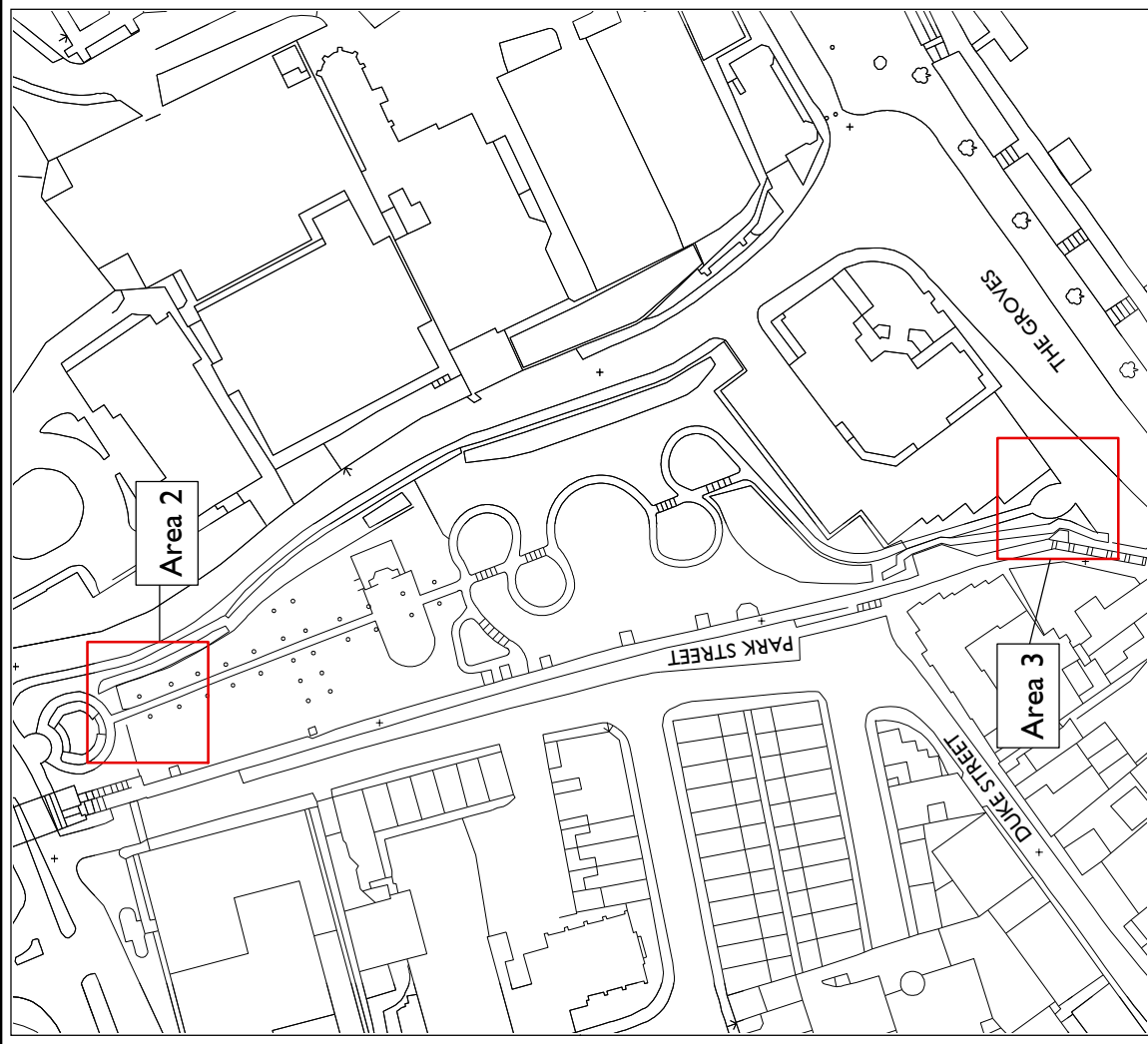
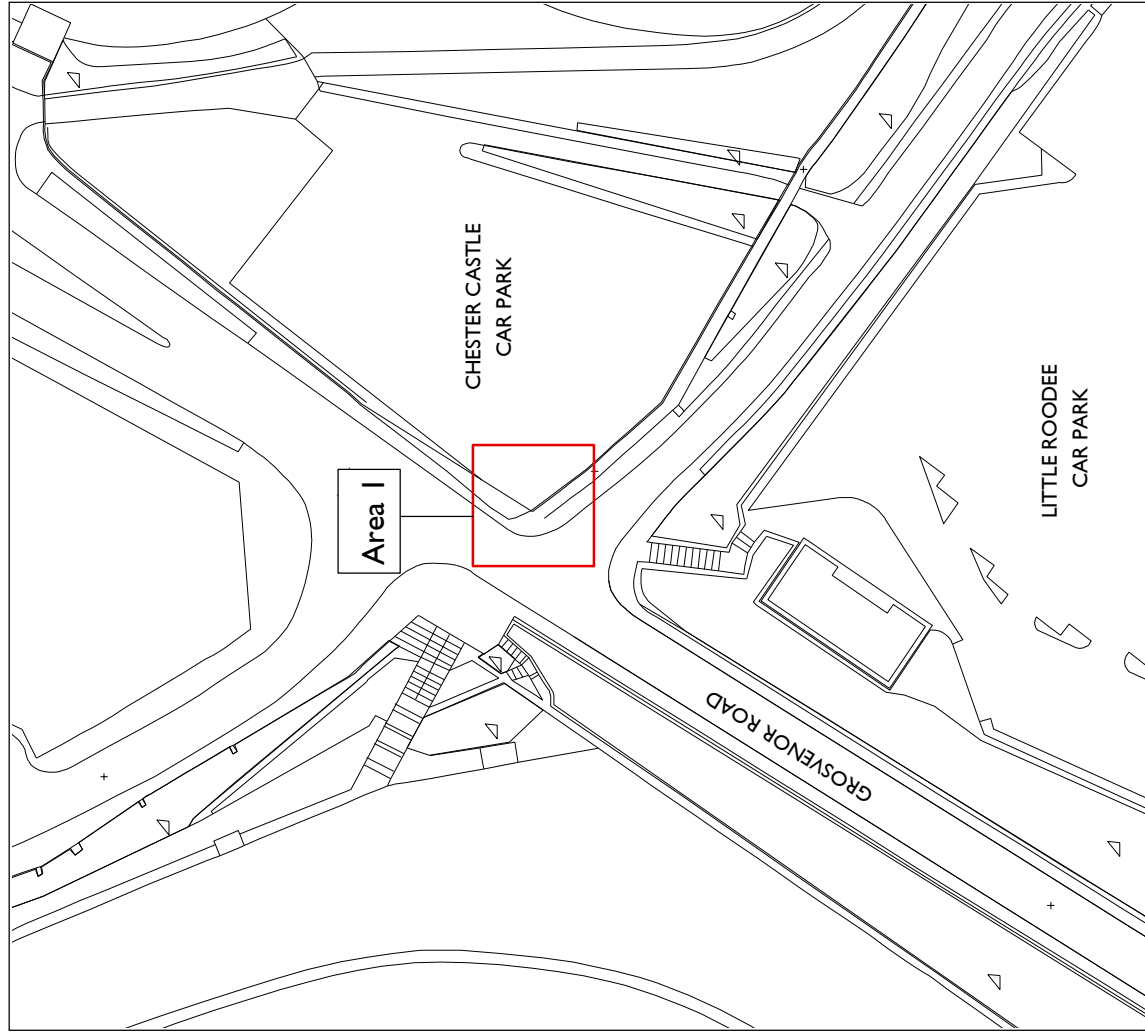
DESCRIPTION // Site Location General

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FIGURE 2 // Site Location Detail



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DESCRIPTION // Site Location Detail

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Scale 1:1,250 @ A4

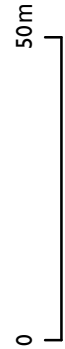
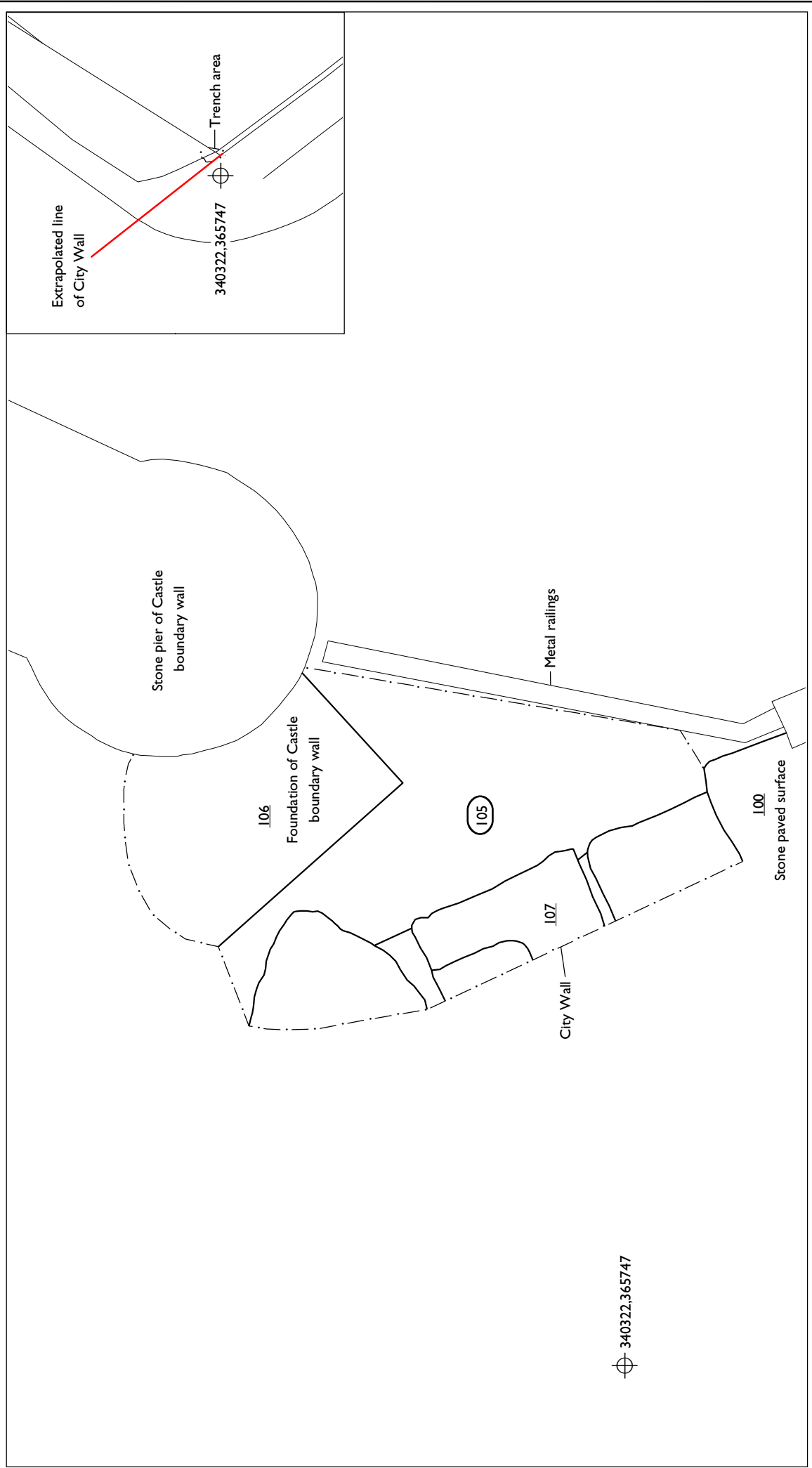


FIGURE 3 // Plan of Area 1 Excavation



Scale 1:10 @ A4

0 0.5m

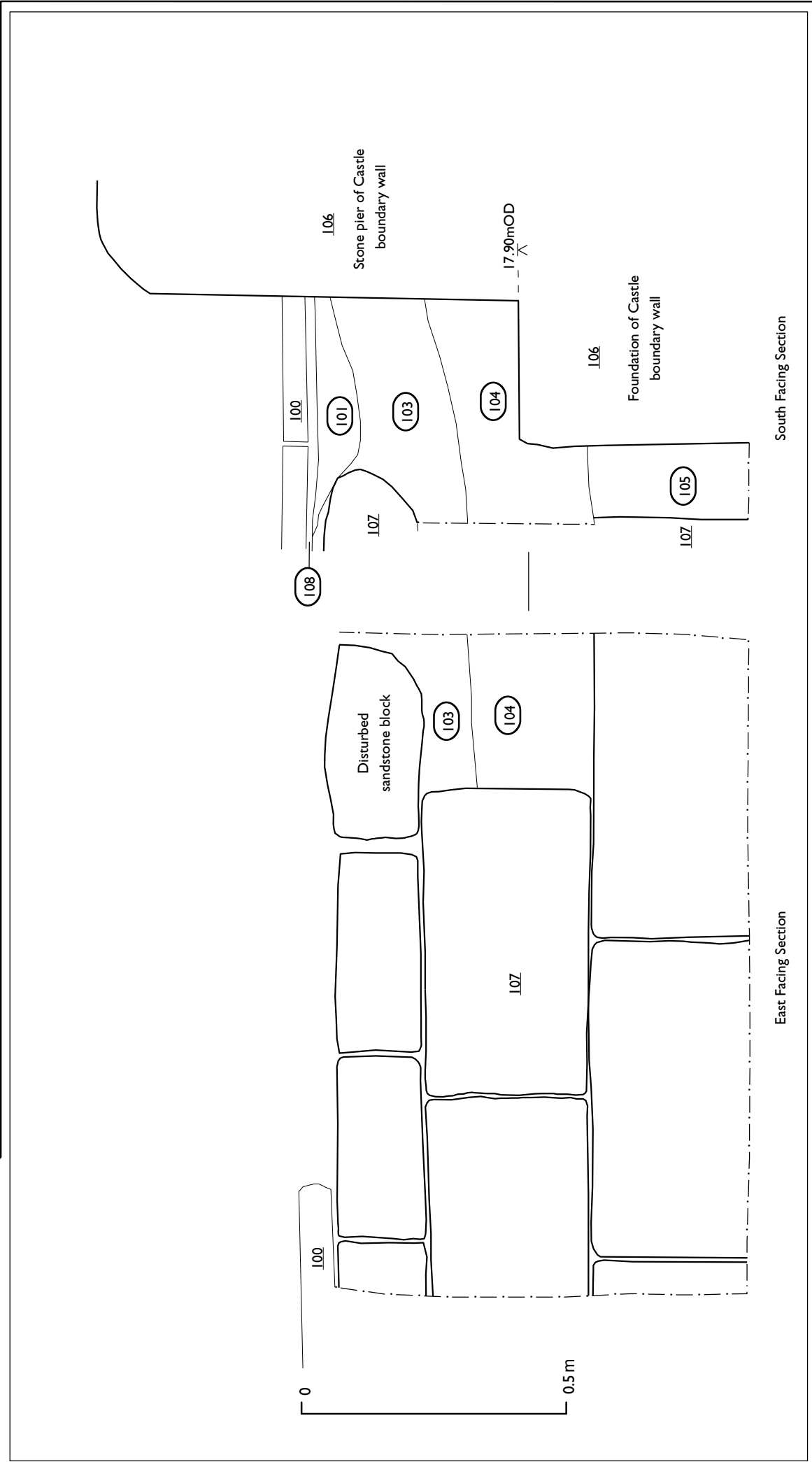
PROJECT // LP1523C - Chester Heritage Signs

DESCRIPTION // Plan of Area 1 Excavation

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FIGURE 4 // Area 1 Sections



Scale 1:10 @ A4

PROJECT // LPI523C - Chester Heritage Signs
DESCRIPTION // Area 1 East and South Facing Sections

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APPENDIX I

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OASIS ID: lparchae1-152519

Project details

Project name	Chester Heritage Signs
Short description of the project	Archaeological monitoring on excavations for new information signs at three locations around Chester.
Project dates	Start: 25-03-2013 End: 10-06-2013
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	CHE/GRR 13 - Sitecode
Type of project	Research project
Site status	Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)
Current Land use	Other 14 - Recreational usage
Monument type	WALL Post Medieval
Significant Finds	CLAY PIPE Medieval
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Conservation/ restoration

Project location

Country	England
Site location	CHESHIRE CHESTER CHESTER Chester Roman Gardens and Little Roodee Car Park
Postcode	CH1 1DF
Study area	3.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	SJ 340321 365750 52 -2 52 55 19 N 002 58 52 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 7.00m Max: 20.00m

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	Landowner
Name of sponsor/funding body	Cheshire West and Chester Council

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Grosvenor Museum
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"GIS","Images vector"
Paper Archive recipient	Grosvenor Museum
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Diary","Drawing","Map","Matrices","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological Watching Brief Report, Chester Heritage Signs
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Description	Report on the results of the archaeological monitoring on excavations for new heritage information signs in Chester.

Entered by B Poole (Chester@lparchaeology.com)

Entered on 10 June 2013

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