

Archaeological Watching Brief Report for Land at

**27A DUKE STREET
CHESTER**

For TR Design Services

Dan Garner BA FSA MifA

Archaeological Watching Brief Report for Land at

27A DUKE STREET CHESTER

Client: TR Design Services

Local Authority: Cheshire West and Chester Council

NGR: 340718 365957

Planning App: 13/01983/FUL

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Date: February 14

Site Code: CHE/27 DS 13

A trading name of the L – P : Heritage LLP

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Abstract

A programme of Archaeological Monitoring was carried out at 27a Duke Street, Chester, during groundworks associated with a kitchen extension and associated services. The fieldwork was carried out between the 15th and 16th October 2013 by Dan Garner of L – P : Archaeology on behalf of TR Design Services.

Historic research places the site close to the main thoroughfare running south from the southern gate of the Roman legionary fortress; which probably led via a crossing of the River Dee to what became Handbridge on the southern bank.

A trench 4.5m long, 0.6m wide and between 0.55 and 0.85m deep was hand excavated at the rear of the building known as 'The Bungalow' in order to provide footings for a new kitchen extension. Associated with this was a reduced level excavation to install below floor insulation to the new kitchen block. The deposits and features encountered related to post-medieval and Roman periods of activity on the site.

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1. Introduction and Scope of Study

- 1.1. This document considers works to install a single storey rear extension, car port, and associated services at The Bungalow, 27a Duke Street, Chester CH1 1RP. The site is centred at National Grid Reference 340718, 365957 and lies to the south of Chester City centre at an elevation of approximately 20mOD (FIGURE 1).
- 1.2. A phase of Archaeological Monitoring was undertaken on works carried out by contractors appointed by TR Design Services.
- 1.3. The site lies within the Area of Archaeological Importance for Chester.
- 1.4. The archaeological works were carried out with approval from Cheshire West and Chester Historic Environment Team (CWaC HET).
- 1.5. This document records the results of the Archaeological Monitoring carried out between the 15th and 16th August 2013.
- 1.6. Archaeological works on the site comprised monitoring of hand excavated trenches.
- 1.7. The principle aim of the watching brief was to determine the presence or absence of archaeological deposits.

2. Geology & Topography

2.1.GEOLOGY

2.1.1. The underlying geology was boulder clay overlying sandstone bedrock.

2.2.TOPOGRAPHY

2.2.1. The site lies to the south of Chester City centre at an elevation of approximately 20 mOD (FIGURE 2).

2.2.2. To the west of the site is Lower Bridge Street. To the south and east are the Chester city walls.

2.2.3. The site comprises yard areas to the east and north of the building known as The Bungalow (FIGURE 9).

3. Archaeological & Historic Background

TIMESCALES USED IN THIS REPORT:

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	PRESENT

3.1. It is not the aim of this section to present a complete history of Chester from earliest times, nor is it the intention of this report to examine every artefact found in the local area. Rather, the aim is to review readily available sources, both published and unpublished, to determine a basic historic development of the site.

3.2. Examination of data from cartographic records and various published and unpublished sources suggests that the site lies to the southeast of the Roman fortress of *Deva* and within the later Medieval walls.

3.3. PREHISTORIC

3.3.1. There is a growing body of evidence to suggest that there was settlement activity from several Prehistoric periods within the Chester area.

3.3.2. Finds from Chester include a Horsham point type flint tool dating to the Mesolithic period from the site of Chester Amphitheatre, 100m to the northeast of the site. Further work at the Amphitheatre site between 2004-6 recovered an assemblage of over 100 flint artefacts of mesolithic type and a possible pit containing charred hazelnut shell.

- 3.3.3. Within Chester there is also some evidence of Iron Age settlement. These comprise plough marks identified during excavations at Abbey Green in the 1970's, 1km north of the site (MCPEAKE ET AL 1980, 15). Associated with the plough marks were Iron Age ceramic sherds and flint tools.
- 3.3.4. Recent excavations at Chester Amphitheatre, 100m to the northeast of the site, have also uncovered evidence of Iron Age timber structures, Cheshire VCP and an iron spearhead which imply settlement activity; although the extent of this activity is uncertain (GARNER 2007).
- 3.3.5. Throughout the prehistoric period the area of Chester where the site is located was on the northern bank of the river Dee.

3.4.ROMAN

- 3.4.1. The site lies 100m to the south of the Roman fortress of *Deva*, occupied first by *Legio II Adiutrix* and then by *Legion XX Valeria Victrix*. The fort occupied the northwest section of the modern city and is thought to have had an extensive *Canabae*, or surrounding civilian settlement (CARRINGTON 1994, 24).
- 3.4.2. A Roman road ran from the southern gate of the legionary fortress south following the line of Lower Bridge Street, down to the bridge across the river and on in to Handbridge (MASON 2007).
- 3.4.3. In the Roman period, in the area to the south of the fortress defences, buildings seem to have been largely confined to the area south of a line represented by present day Castle Street and St Olave's Lane, which may themselves perpetuate the line of a Roman road (MASON 2007).
- 3.4.4. There was some industrial activity including small scale lead working to the north of St Olave's Lane, while the discovery of a number of cremation burials shows that other parts of the land lying east of the road down to the bridge were used as a cemetery in the earlier years (MASON 2007).
- 3.4.5. There is evidence for a number of quite substantial buildings, most probably residences, occupying sites along the edge of the plateau, to the south of Duke Street, but these have yet to be explored in any detail. The cliff face south of the fortress facilitated quarrying of the local sandstone and evidence of Roman

quarrying operations has been found at various locations in this area (MASON 2007).

3.4.6. West of Lower Bridge Street, on the south side of Castle Street, excavations in 1976 identified the remains of a courtyarded building that was built of timber and has been interpreted as a *mansio* (roadside inn). This primary timber building was apparently destroyed by fire and immediately rebuilt in timber towards the end of the first century. The *mansio* was then rebuilt in stone during the first half of the second century and by the third century the rooms in the south wing were equipped with concrete floors and coloured wall paintings. The *mansio* was again destroyed by fire towards the end of the third century; debris from the burnt building was deposited in one of the wells on the site and this included human remains from at least one young man in his early 20s. The building was again rebuilt and stayed in use until c.AD 350 when it was demolished and the site vacated (MASON 2007).

3.5. EARLY MEDIEVAL

3.5.1. Following the battle of Chester in AD 616 Æthelfrith of Northumbria, after defeating Brochwel and his Welsh army, established a Saxon presence in the area (CARRINGTON 1994, 52). During the mid 7th century Chester fell under the control of the Mercian king Penda (CARRINGTON 1994, 52).

3.5.2. In AD 907 Æthelflaed of Mercia established a new Saxon 'burh' at Chester which extended and strengthened the surviving Roman walls of the fortress to protect the city against the Danes, who occupied it for a short time until Alfred seized it and laid waste to the surrounding land to drive them out (HARDING 2002, 21).

3.5.3. The Old Dee Bridge is adjacent to an area of intensive Saxon activity around Lower Bridge Street, associated with the leather industry (MASON 2007, 130). According to Mason the leather industry, especially to the south of Lower Bridge Street, was significant in scale and lay the seeds of Chester's main industry which continued into the 18th century.

3.6.MEDIEVAL

- 3.6.1. Lower Bridge Street ran south from below the churches of St Bridget's and St Michael's to the Bridgegate and the river. Below St Michael's church lanes developed eastwards such as Pepper Street, St Olave's Lane and Claverton Lane (modern day Duke Street). Millers, fishers, skimmers and parchment-makers were based near the river whilst men involved with palatinate administration lived in or near Castle Lane. In particular, glovers skimmers and leather dressers congregated in Lower bridge Street, which had already been a focus for leather crafts in the 11th century. A skinner occupied a garden on the south side of St Olave's lane in the late 1420s (LAUGHTON, 2008).
- 3.6.2. On the east side of lower Bridge Street next to St Olave's church stood the grand residence of Richard the Engineer, master mason from 1272 until his death in 1315. His son sold the property to the Praers/Pares family and it was from there that the chamberlain Robert Parys fled with the seals of the palatinate and the principality in August 1399, in an attempt to join Richard II in Wales (LAUGHTON, 2008).
- 3.6.3. In Lucian's day the harbour lay to the south of the city, approached via Ship lane and Shipgate. Although the harbour later moved to the western side of Chester the river remained an influential feature, powering the corn and malt mills which stood just to the west of the Dee Bridge, and attracting glovers and other light leather workers. The postern in the city wall to the east of Bridgegate known as Capelgate ('the horses gate') gave access to the river bank where horses were watered, launderesses worked, and waterleaders drew buckets of water to supply the townspeople (LAUGHTON, 2008).

3.7.POST MEDIEVAL

- 3.7.1. The development of the area is well-documented through the sequence of maps of the city dating from 1580 into the 20th century.
- 3.7.2. Braun and Hogenberg's map of Chester dated 1581 shows the area to be occupied by houses along the street frontage with formal gardens to the rear.
- 3.7.3. Hughes concentrates on the area of Chester within the walls and shows the

main buildings within the city. His 1643 plan records the line of Duke Street and the location of St Olave's church; but no other detail is shown (FIGURE 4).

- 3.7.4. Stockdale's map of Chester dated 1796 follows the earlier plans of the area. The City Walls continue to follow the earlier alignment as does Duke Street. The map shows enough detail to suggest the general layout of the area to be occupied by houses along the street frontage with some open ground occupied by possible orchards or gardens to the rear .
- 3.7.5. John McGahey's aerial view of Chester from the east c.1855 shows a lot of the detail regarding the appearance and layout of properties fronting on to Duke Street.
- 3.7.6. The 1874 Ordnance Survey map gives the first detailed depiction of the site area. The Dee Mills (flour) are recorded. The 1899 OS map records the same layout. Dee Mills are recorded as closing around 1895, although they did operate again for a short time in 1902, when it finally closed for good.
- 3.7.7. The 1910 edition Ordnance Survey map, 1938 Ordnance Survey edition and 1960 edition Ordnance Survey map record little change to the immediate site area. This layout has continued through to the present day.

4. Methodology

- 4.1. This section will address the methodology employed during the archaeological monitoring on the site.
- 4.2. Groundworks were carried out by hand excavation. The foundation trench for the kitchen extension consisted of a north-south trench which extended for 3.5m north of the rear wall to 'The Bungalow' before turning 90 degrees to the west for another meter. The foundation trench was 0.6m wide and 0.55m deep; the southern most meter was stepped down to an excavated depth of 0.85m in order to reach the base of the footing to the existing rear wall of 'The Bungalow'. The western end of the new foundation trench terminated at the junction with a pre-existing brick foundation to former outbuildings. Within the footprint of the new kitchen extension the ground surface was graded down by approximately 0.1m in order to allow for the installation of underfloor insulation, damp proof membrane etc.
- 4.3. A suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist monitored all groundworks.
- 4.4. All features were recorded stratigraphically and levels were recorded in metres beneath ground level (mBGL).
- 4.5. Examination and cleaning of all archaeological deposits was carried out by hand using appropriate hand tools. All archaeological deposits were examined and recorded both in plan and section.
- 4.6. A full photographic record was taken using 35mm black and white, 35mm colour slide and digital media. A photographic index was completed on site.
- 4.7. All features were drawn to scale, using appropriate scale for each feature. Plans were drawn at 1:50 or 1:20 and section at 1:10.
- 4.8. A Harris Matrix was compiled for the site.

5. Results

5.1. This section will examine the results of the Archaeological Watching Brief carried out at The Bungalow, 27a Duke Street, Chester CH1 1RP between the 15th and 16nd August 2013 (FIGURES 1 & 2).

5.2. In this report context numbers are indicated by brackets, with round brackets indicating fills and deposits (1) and square brackets indicating cut features [2]. Structures are indicated by underlined numbers, 3.

5.3. Levels are indicated in metres Below Ground Level (BGL) unless accompanied by an mOD symbol.

5.4. The foundation trench to the new kitchen extension was located on the western side of the yard at the rear of 'The Bungalow' (FIGURES 3 & 4). The trench measured a total of 4.5m in length and 0.6m in width (PLATE 1).



Plate 1 - View of the new foundation trench at the rear of 'the Bungalow' Looking south-east.

5.5. Across the whole area of the foundation trench the initial context recorded was a concrete surface measuring 0.1m in depth across the trench (1). This concrete made up the surface of the modern yard.

5.6. Below (1) lay (2) a 0.16m thick deposit of light grey limestone hardcore. This covered the whole trench and was thought to be a 20th century construction layer associated with the modern yard (PLATE 2).

5.7. Sealed by hardcore (2) lay (3) a 0.32m thick deposit of light yellow/brown, silt-sand containing red brick fragments <5%. This deposit was compact and appeared to be levelling material for the yard construction.

5.8. A linear trench [7] was cut in to deposit (3) on an east-west alignment measuring 0.6m by 0.75m by 0.32m. Trench [7] contained two 4 inch diameter ceramic sewer pipes that had been encased in concrete.



Plate 2 - Southwest facing section through deposits (1) to (3) and sewer trench (7).

5.9. Deposit (3) had been laid against the northern (rear) wall footing of 'The Bungalow' and covered a lead water pipe which had been laid on an east-west alignment parallel to the wall foundation (PLATE 3).



Plate 3 - Southwest facing section through deposits (1) to (3) showing the lead pipe and brick wall footing sealed by deposit (3) and sewer pipe trench (7).

5.10. Beneath deposit (3) was a stiff light red/brown clay which was interpreted as the natural subsoil. The implication was that much of the yard area had been levelled to the top of natural subsoil during a previous phase of construction work sometime during the 20th century.



Plate 4 - Remains of brick outbuilding walls and deposit (5) looking south.

5.11. In the north-west corner of the new kitchen extension a series of brick walls associated with a former outbuilding were uncovered (PLATE 4). These walls formed a pair of small square rooms approximately 1.2m by 1.2m in size; which are likely to represent an external toilet and wash room. The southern room had no surviving floor surface and upper most deposit consisted of a dark grey/brown silt-clay (6) which produced post-medieval pottery. Beneath deposit (6) was a mixed layer of light yellow/brown silt-clay (5) which was largely left *in situ* (PLATE 5); although, some Roman pottery was recovered during cleaning.



Plate 5 - View of possible Roman deposit (5) . Looking southwest.

6. Finds

6.1. POTTERY

- 6.1.1. A total of 3 sherds of post-medieval pottery weighing 86 grams were recovered from the watching brief. All of this material was recovered from silt deposit (6) within the walls of the former brick outbuilding.
- 6.1.2. The post-medieval pottery sherds included a base sherd from a blackware jar or drinking vessel weighing 66 grams; a rim sherd from a press-moulded slipware dish with red and white combed slip decoration weighing 8 grams; and a base sherd from an unglazed red earthenware jar (possibly a plant pot) weighing 17 grams. The material is probably of 18th century date.
- 6.1.3. A total of 7 sherds of Roman pottery weighing 60 grams were recovered from the watching brief. All of this material was recovered from silt deposits (6) and (5) within the walls of the former brick outbuilding.
- 6.1.4. The 2 sherds of Roman pottery from deposit (6) were considered to be residual and included the rim sherd to a medium mouthed jar in a HOL OX fabric and a body sherd with an external white slip in a HOL WS fabric. Both sherds were products of the Legionary works at Holt and date c. AD 90/100 – 130.
- 6.1.5. The 5 sherds of Roman pottery from deposit (5) were considered to be from an *in situ* Roman context. These included 3 joining sherds (a base and 2 body sherds) to a greyware jar weighing 30 grams; a body sherd in a HOL OX fabric weighing 2 grams; and a body sherd in a GAL AM 1 fabric weighing 7 grams. All of the sherds were probably products of the Legionary works at Holt and date c. AD 90/100 – 130; with the exception of the sherd in a GAL AM 1 fabric which is derived from a wine amphora which would have been imported from Southern Gaul during the 2nd/3rd century.

6.2. CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL

- 6.2.1. A total of 11 fragments of Roman CBM weighing 1.194 kilograms were recovered from the watching brief. These included 5 fragments of Roman CBM weighing 675 grams from deposit (6); 3 fragments were derived from *tegulae*

and 2 fragments were indeterminate. Six fragments of Roman CBM weighing 519 grams were recovered from deposit (5); 3 fragments were derived from *tegulae* and 3 fragments were indeterminate. Two fragments of CBM from deposit (5) were covered in traces of lime mortar and may have been derived from an *opus signinum* floor.

6.2.2. A single fragment of *opus signinum* weighing 322 grams was recovered from deposit (5). Together with the two mortar covered tile fragments described above, it is possible that this material indicates the presence of a Roman building with an *opus signinum* floor somewhere in the vicinity of the 27 Duke Street site.

6.3. ANIMAL BONE

6.3.1. A total of 4 fragments of animal bone were recovered from the watching brief. All of this material was recovered from deposits (5) and (6).

6.3.2. One fragment from deposit (5) represents the distal end of a fowl humerus.

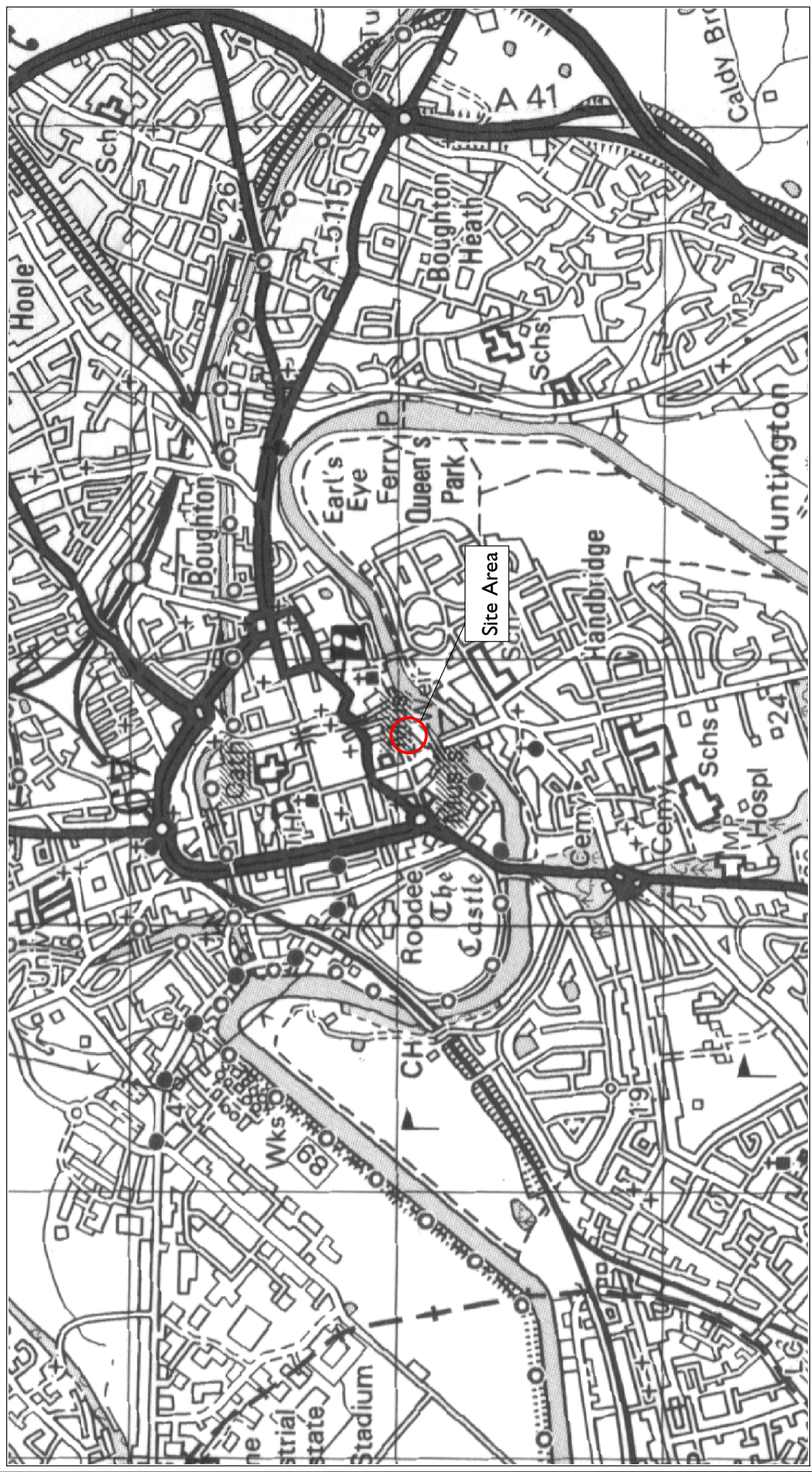
6.3.3. Three fragments were recovered from deposit (6). These included part of the iliac crest (pelvis) and a fragment of rib from a sheep/goat sized mammal; and a rib from a 'chicken-sized' bird.

7. Summary & Conclusions

- 7.1. The watching brief monitored works to install a single storey rear extension, car port, and associated services at The Bungalow, 27a Duke Street, Chester CH1 1RP. The site is centred at National Grid Reference 340718, 365957 and lies to the south of Chester City centre at an elevation of approximately 20mOD.
- 7.2. Fieldwork was carried out by Dan Garner of L – P : Archaeology between the 15th and 16th August 2013.
- 7.3. Whilst it appeared that much of the yard area to the rear of 27a Duke Street had been graded down to the top of natural sub-soil on an earlier occasion, a small area of intact archaeology was identified in the northwest corner of the site. The preservation of this pocket of archaeology is likely to have been the result of the presence of a brick outbuilding in this location.
- 7.4. The investigation identified the presence of deposits and artefacts dating to the post-medieval and Roman periods. These deposits were not investigated during the watching brief as they were to be preserved *in situ* beneath the floor of the new kitchen extension. As a result, their character and function remains uncertain; although the presence of ceramic building material in the Roman deposit may suggest that it represents a demolition deposit or make-up layer.
- 7.5. Artefacts from the watching brief were recovered during manual cleaning of the *in situ* deposits and included pottery, animal bone and ceramic building material of post-medieval and Roman date.

FIGURES

FIGURE I // Site Location General



Scale 1:20,000 @ A4



PROJECT // 1555C - 27A Duke Street, Chester

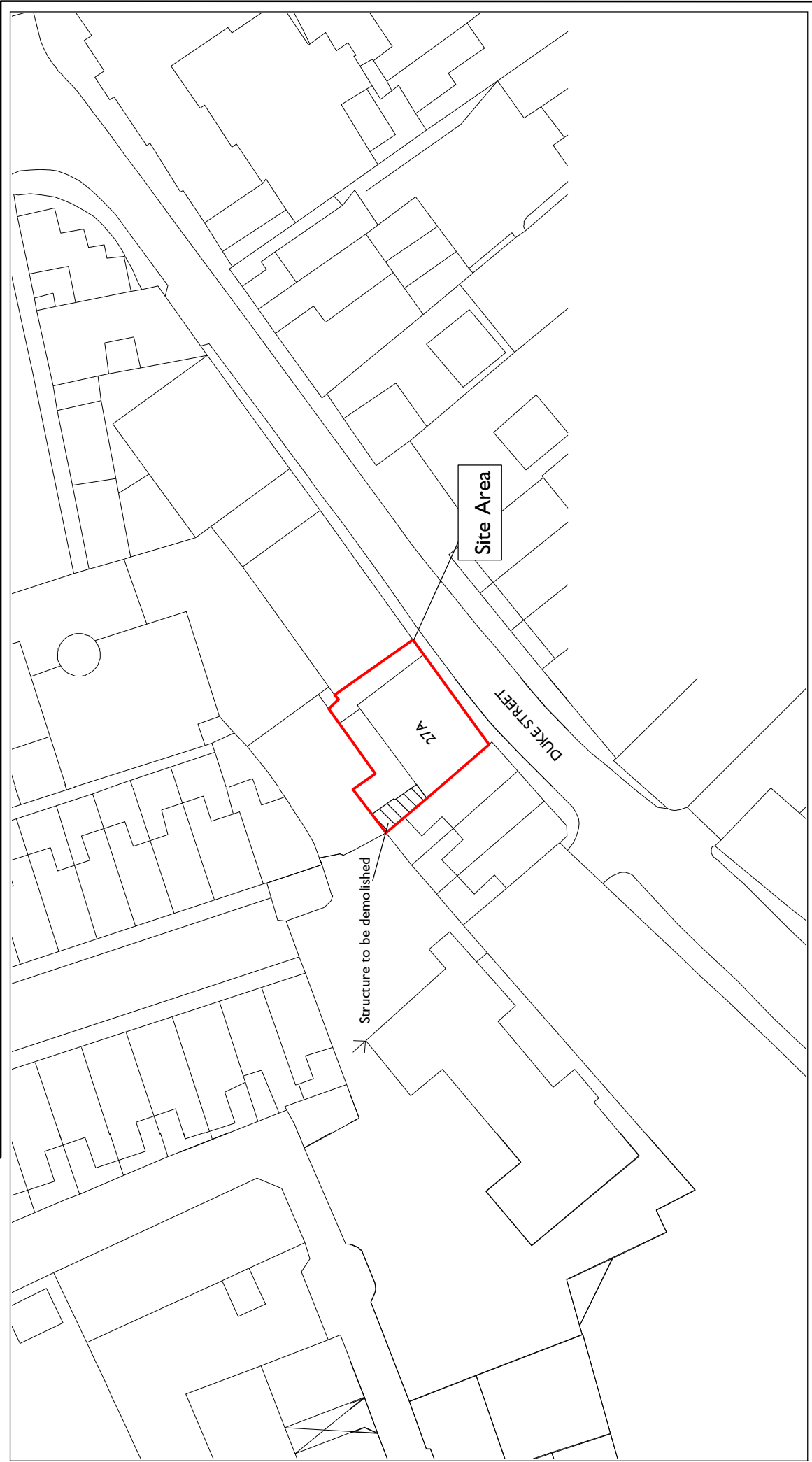
DESCRIPTION // Site Location General

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DOC REF: LP1555C-AWB-v1

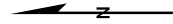
L-P: ARCHAEOLOGY

FIGURE 2 // Site Location Detail



Scale 1:500 @ A4

0 20m



PROJECT // 1555C - 27A Duke Street, Chester

DESCRIPTION // Site Location Detail

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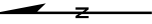
DOC REF: LP1555C-AWB-v1

L-P:ARCHAEOLOGY

FIGURE 3 // Site Plan



Scale 1:100 @ A4



PROJECT // 1555C - 27A Duke Street, Chester

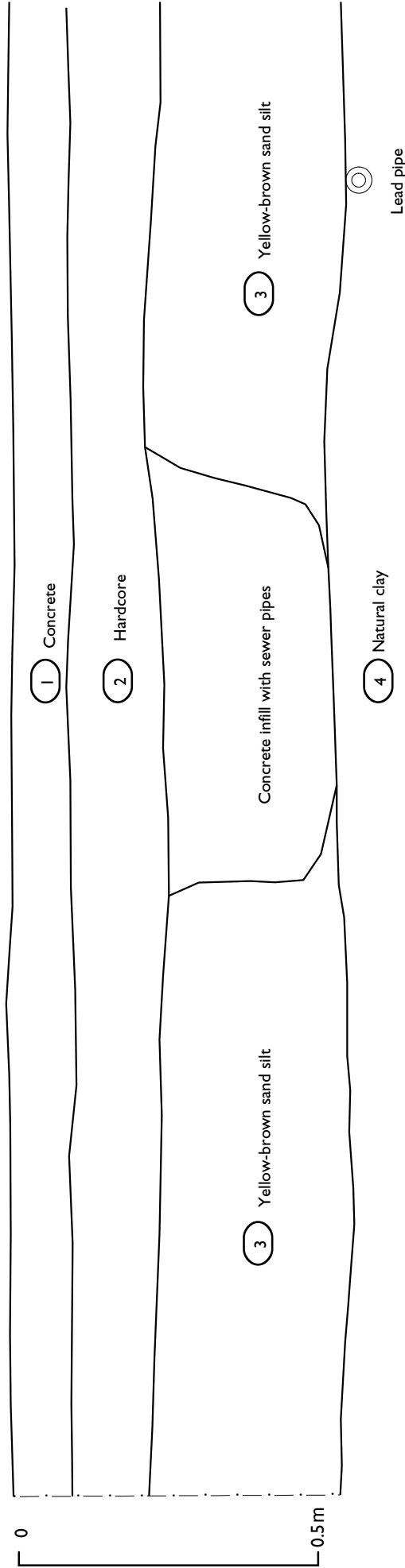
DESCRIPTION // Site Plan

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L-P:ARCHAEOLOGY

FIGURE 4 // West Facing Section of Footings



Scale 1:10 @ A4

PROJECT // 1555C - 27A Duke Street, Chester

DESCRIPTION // West Facing Section of Footings

DOC REF: LPI555C-AWB-v1

L-P:ARCHÆOLOGY

SOURCES CONSULTED

APPENDIX I

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CARTOGRAPHIC

BRAUN & HOGENBERG, 1581, Map of Chester

SPEEDE, 1610. Map of Chester

HUGHES, 1643, Map of Chester

LAVAUX, 1745, Map of Chester

STOCKDALE, 1796, Map of Chester

COLE, 1805, Map of Chester

NEELE, 1817, Map of Chester

BATENHAM, 1821, Map of Chester

COLE, 1836, Map of Chester

TITHE MAP, 1841, St Peter's Parish

THOMAS, 1853, Map of Chester

GRETTY, 1870, Map of Chester

ORDNANCE SURVEY, 1874, 25” Scale map of Chester

ORDNANCE SURVEY, 1899, 25” Scale map of Chester

ORDNANCE SURVEY, 1910, Scale map of Chester

ORDNANCE SURVEY, 1938, 1:10,000 Scale map of Chester

ORDNANCE SURVEY, 1961, 1:10,000 Scale map of Chester

ORDNANCE SURVEY, 2006, 1:5000 Scale map of Chester

OASIS FORM

APPENDIX 2

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

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Printable version

OASIS ID: lparchae1-172591

Project details

Project name	27A Duke Street, Chester
Short description of the project	Archaeological monitoring at 27A Duke Street, Chester
Project dates	Start: 15-08-2013 End: 25-02-2014
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	CHE/27 DS 13 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

Project location

Country	England
Site location	CHESHIRE CHESTER CHESTER 27A Duke Street
Postcode	CH1 1RS
Study area	100.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	SJ 340718 365957 52.9224053457 -2.98073504776 52 55 20 N 002 58 50 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 18.00m Max: 20.00m

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	Dan Garner
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	TR Design Services

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive Exists?	No
Paper Archive recipient	Cheshire Museum Service
Paper Archive ID	CHE/27 DS 13
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Drawing", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological Watching Brief Report for Land at 27A Duke Street Chester
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Please e-mail English Heritage for OASIS help and advice

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