

Archaeological Watching Brief Report for

BLUECOAT SCHOOL CHESTER

For Chester Municipal Charities/Read Construction

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L~P:ARCHÆOLOGY

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BLUECOAT SCHOOL CHESTER

Client: Chester Municipal Charities/Read Construction

Local Authority: Cheshire West and Chester Council

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Planning App: 13/03980/FUL

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Abstract

This report contains the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out in the front courtyard of the Bluecoat School, Chester (NGR 340365,366711), between the 23rd May and 12th September 2014 on behalf of Chester Municipal Charities and Read Construction.

Historic research indicates that the site lies to the immediate north of the Roman fortress of Deva in an area of potential civilian settlement. It is thought that the site has been used since at least the Roman period. However, it is in the 12th century that the earliest records identify development on the site, with the construction of the hospital of St Johns around 1190. The hospital had its own graveyard and chapel from the 13th century. The hospital was demolished during the Civil War in the 17th century, although it was rebuilt as a school, which operated into the 18th century.

The results of the excavation shows that there was activity on the site prior to the 12th century hospital development, where a cobbled surface has been shown to pre date the hospital, and that the hospital were burying individuals both inside the structure as well as within the rear courtyard.

Following the demolition of the hospital in 1644 as part of the defensive works for the city, it appears that the land was left vacant for a period of around 70 years, when the land was granted to the corporation of Chester for the purposes of erecting a school. The Bluecoat School was built between 1714 and 1717 and has occupied the site since that time. Evidence of refurbishment of the building is seen in a dump of architectural material.

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1. Introduction and Scope of Study

- 1.1. An archaeological watching brief was carried out on groundworks for a new access ramp and foundation excavations for a new dwarf wall within the front courtyard of the Bluecoat School, Chester. Due to the presence of significant archaeological features mitigation excavation was carried out in order to fully record the impacted features. The archaeological work was carried out in order to fulfil a planning condition relating to application 13/03980/FUL.
- 1.2. The site is located 400m to the north of the city centre, to the west of Upper Northgate Street, Chester, CH1 4EH. The site is located at NGR 340377,366703 (FIGURE 1).
- 1.3. Fieldwork was carried out by Blair Poole, Matthew Jones, Heidi Archer, George Lacey and Pascal Eloy of L – P : Archaeology between 23rd April and 12th September 2014. The fieldwork was commissioned by Chester Municipal Charities. Groundworks were carried out by Read Construction.
- 1.4. The local authority is Cheshire West and Chester Council, who take archaeological advice from Cheshire Archaeological Planning Advisory Service (APAS).
- 1.5. The site lies to the immediate north of Chester City Walls, within the Area of Archaeological Importance and within the Chester City Conservation Area.
- 1.6. Archaeological works comprised the archaeological monitoring of hand excavation of deposits beneath the courtyard's paved surface to previously agreed depths and the subsequent archaeological excavation and recording of buried archaeological deposits and features.
- 1.7. The work was carried out in accordance with Cheshire County Council's revised General Conditions for Archaeological Contractors and Consultants (CHESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL 2003) in conjunction with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief (CHARTERED INSTITUTE FOR ARCHAEOLOGISTS 2014).

2. Planning Background

2.1. Planning Permission has been granted for the installation of a new access ramp in the front courtyard of the Bluecoat School, Chester (13/03980/FUL).

2.2. 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.

2.3. 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.

2.4. In considering any planning application for development the Local Planning Authority is Cheshire West and Chester Council, who work within the policies laid out in the Chester District Local Plan.

2.5. A condition has been attached to planning consent for the works (13/03980/FUL);

No development shall take place within the area 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.

Reason: The site is in an area of archaeological significance or an Area of Archaeological Potential, and in accordance with the provisions of NPPF section 12 para 141

2.6. The archaeological advisor to the local planning authority is Mark Leah of APAS.

2.7. The site lies within both Chester City Conservation Area and Chester's Area of Archaeological Importance.

2.8. The site lies within the Zone of Primary Archaeological Character (considered to have the highest potential for significant heritage assets and the highest sensitivity to

change) in the Chester Archaeological Plan. At a more detailed level it lies within Character Zone 30 (Garden Lane) of the Chester Archaeological Characterisation. Both the Archaeological Plan and the Archaeological Characterisation are part of the Chester Urban Archaeological Database Project (CHESHIRE WEST AND CHESTER COUNCIL 2013), which was funded by English Heritage. The Plan was produced in 2013 and was endorsed by the Cheshire West and Chester Local Development Framework Panel as a key Evidence Base Document supporting the preparation of the Local Plan.

2.9. Zone 30 has been characterised as an area of multi phase settlement with archaeological deposits encountered as high as 0.2m below ground level. Of note within the zone characterisation is the statement that:

The Hospital was founded in the late 12th century providing medical care to the poor and included amongst other structures a chapel, almshouse and the hospital itself. It became an almshouse following the dissolution of the religious houses in 1539 and survived until the Civil War when it was razed during the siege of Chester, along with much of this area. The hospital was later rebuilt in the 18th and 19th centuries and has been used as an almshouse and a school. The present building, although not old, is on the site of the medieval hospital and occupies a key element of the urban morphology of the city.

2.10. The site is not scheduled, however both the almshouses in the courtyard and the Bluecoat School are listed buildings, Grades II and II* respectively (469944 & 469945).

3. Geology and Topography

3.1. GEOLOGY

- 3.1.1. Previous archaeological work on the site identified the natural drift deposit as pink-brown silty sand (POOLE & STATTER 2009).
- 3.1.2. The solid geology of the area is known from previous excavation work on the site to be sandstone bedrock and pebble beds of the Sherwood Sandstone Group (POOLE & STATTER 2009).

3.2. TOPOGRAPHY

- 3.2.1. The site is located 400m to the north of Chester city centre at an elevation of approximately 36mOD (FIGURE 2). Chester City Walls lie 45m to the south of the site. The site excavation area measures 43m².
- 3.2.2. Canal Street bounds the site to the north, with residential properties to the west. To the south of the site is a steep sandstone rock face leading down to the Canal. Northgate Street lies to the east.
- 3.2.3. The site is located in an area of courtyard which is used to access the main entrance and passage to the almshouses situated to the rear of the building.

4. Archaeological and Historical Background

4.1. The following section should not be considered a complete history of Chester, it is intended as a brief summary of the development of the site in order to place any results within the context of the site's history.

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

Table 1 - Timescales used in this report

4.2. PREHISTORIC

4.3. There is very little evidence for early Prehistoric activity in Chester. Evidence for Mesolithic activity in Chester comes from the recovery of a Horsham point type flint tool at the amphitheatre (MATTHEWS 2001) 500m to the south east of the site.

4.4. There is little evidence for Neolithic activity in the area, however a Neolithic axe has been recovered from Chester. It is thought that this axe head was discovered during excavations on Hunter Street, 500m to the south of the site (POOLE & STATTER 2009).

4.5. Plough marks dating to the Iron Age were identified during excavations at Abbey Green 150m to the south east of the site. Iron Age ceramics and flint tools were also recorded along with the plough marks (MCPEAKE ET AL 1980).

ROMAN

- 4.6. The legionary fortress of Deva, associated with the XX legion, was founded at Chester to serve as a military centre for north-west England and is thought to have been completed around AD79 (CROSBY 1996).
- 4.7. The site lies directly to the north of the city walls and the Northgate originally built by the Romans. One of the main routes out of Chester during the Roman period was north through the Northgate along current Parkgate Road. This route is the Cheshire-Wirral road as described by Margary (1957). This route would have been used extensively during the Roman period by both the army and civilians with the movement of troops and supplies into and out of the city.
- 4.8. Excavations on the site in 2005 revealed the potential for a subsidiary Roman road running along a northwest southeast axis across the site. This may be a smaller domestic route used as access to the Dee from the fort.
- 4.9. Approximately 150m to the south of the site, on the southern side of the city wall, lie the barrack buildings for the fortress. Each barrack block housed one century of men and had a separate house for the centurion in command (CARRINGTON 1994).
- 4.10. The Roman cook houses are thought to be located to the immediate southeast of the site, butting the southern face of the City Walls.
- 4.11. This evidence therefore shows a huge amount of activity within the city walls throughout the Roman period. However, it is unclear as to what was happening outside the walls in this area during the Roman period (WARD & STRICKLAND 1987). As a route way ran adjacent to the site it can be assumed that this area was utilised during this period although it was not directly occupied by buildings (CROSBY 1996).

EARLY MEDIEVAL

- 4.12. This period saw a movement of settlement and activity towards the River Dee, to the south of the city, mainly along Lower Bridge Street. However a small area of intense Saxon occupation is recorded to the east of the Northgate, at the site of the Roman cook houses (CARRINGTON 1994).
- 4.13. In the late 7th Century St Werberg founded a religious house on the site of the current St. John's Church, located 500m to the southeast of the site. This religious

house was later to become the first Cathedral in Chester. It was later replaced by the building of a new cathedral, on the site of the present one, in AD907 (SMALLEY 1996).

4.14. It is unclear as to what was taking place on the site area during this period as the documentary evidence indicates the Saxon settlement concentrated along Lower Bridge Street (CARRINGTON 1994). However, it is thought that there was some settlement activity near the Northgate, within the City Walls, close to the site.

MEDIEVAL

4.15. The town plan of this time followed that inherited from the Roman fortress via the Saxon burgh (CARRINGTON 1994). There is evidence for some settlement within the city walls close to the Northgate during this period (CARRINGTON 1994).

4.16. The Earl of Chester, Ranulph III, founded a hospital for the poor in Chester in the early 1190s. The earl's grant made for the Virgin and All Saints, however the hospital changed its dedication to St John the Baptist (LEWIS & THACKER 2003). This hospital was located at the current Blue Coat School on the eastern boundary of the site (LAUGHTON 2008).

4.17. It is thought that by c.1200 St John's hospital had its own burial ground and a chapel was added in 1241 (LAUGHTON 2008). The hospital was required to house as many sick and poor patients as possible, however 13 of its beds had to be reserved for the poor townspeople (IBID). With the addition of a chapel the hospital could undertake its own burials.

4.18. Previous archaeological work undertaken by L – P : Archaeology within the rear courtyard uncovered three burials at a depth of approximately 0.3m below the current ground level. All three burials had been truncated by services, meaning that only the lower sections of each remained in tact. Skeletal assessment indicates that these showed signs of osteoarthritis and as such could relate to the hospital activity on the site between the 13th and 17th centuries. The lack of any coffin material could indicate that these were poor burials.

POST MEDIEVAL

4.19. The earliest cartographic evidence for the site comes from Braun & Hogenberg's plan of the city dated 1581 (FIGURE 3). The site is clearly depicted as having timber

framed buildings fronting Upper Northgate Street and what is now Canal Street. These buildings may well represent the hospital, which survived into the 17th century. It is thought that its role of housing the poor saved it from being closed during the dissolution in the mid 16th century (LEWIS & THACKER 2003).

- 4.20. Speed's map of Chester, 1610, also shows structures on the site, however these do not extend as far down Canal Street as on the earlier map (FIGURE 4).
- 4.21. During the Civil War, in the 17th century, King Charles was aware of the importance of Chester and the need to protect it. As such defensive works were undertaken in the area and hospital was razed as an additional defensive move. In February 1644 the buildings and surrounding wall were demolished to prevent them giving cover to the Parliamentarians during the siege of Chester (LEWIS & THACKER 2003).
- 4.22. Following the war Oliver Cromwell granted the site of St John's Hospital to the corporation of Chester and the revenues collected were to be used to rebuild the hospital. It took many years for the rebuilding to take place, however Bishop Nicholas Stratford established the first charitable school in Chester at the site of the Blue Coat Hospital. The buildings are thought to have been erected during 1714 and 1717.
- 4.23. The school was erected in order to provide education for boys between the ages of nine and 14 (WRIGHT 1920). The alms houses to the rear were constructed as successors to the Medieval hospital (LANGTREE & COMYNS 2001). It is thought that the original building was L-shaped with the main section facing Northgate Street housing the school room and accommodation and the southern wing housing the chapel. In 1733 the north wing was added (IBID).
- 4.24. Lavaux's map of 1745 clearly depicts the Bluecoat building in its recognisable plan, as seen into the 21st century (FIGURE 5). The area to the rear of the school building is shown as an orchard at this time.
- 4.25. This development can be seen on Stockdale's plan of the city dated 1796 (FIGURE 6), which also depicts a row of terraced buildings to the west of the courtyard area. The site development area is shown as gardens. This layout is repeated on Neele's map of 1809 as well as Batenham's map of 1821, the 1847 Tithe map (FIGURE 7), and Thomas map of 1853.

- 4.26. The central section of the school was enlarged in 1854 and a new façade was erected. It was during this remodelling that the 'Blue Coat' statue was added above the door to the central passage leading to the alms houses. The clock above this statue was added in 1855 (LANGTREE & COMYNS 2001).
- 4.27. It is also in 1854 that the Almshouses were rebuilt in their current format by Morris and Hobson for Trustees of Hospital of St John Baptist.
- 4.28. By the first edition Ordnance Survey map dated 1872 the almshouses can be clearly seen in their C-shaped format. The site development area ceases to be depicted as a garden by the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map and the courtyard area is shown as a homogeneous unit.
- 4.29. By the second edition Ordnance Survey map of 1888 (FIGURE 8) a further building had been constructed along the southern wing of the alms houses. This small building was a changing rooms for the boys of the school and the layout of the courtyard continues in this format on the 1911, 1958 and 1977 Ordnance Survey maps (FIGURE 9).
- 4.30. During the late 20th century the cloakroom to the southeast corner of the courtyard was demolished. This building was replaced in 2005 by another almshouse.
- 4.31. Excavation was undertaken by L – P : Archaeology in 2009 in advance of construction work on a new almshouse in the northeast corner of the rear courtyard (POOLE & STATTER 2009). This work revealed a total sequence of seven phases of activity on the site dating from the Roman period to recent 21st century activity.
- 4.32. The Roman activity was limited to the 1st to 2nd centuries and was made up of two cultivation layers and a small pit. Later features included a 16th century post hole and 17th to 18th century domestic waste pits.
- 4.33. The later phases of activity, from the 18th century onwards, are characterised by thick make up deposits and remodelling of the walls fronting onto Canal Street and forming the narrow alley between the courtyard and the Bluecoat building.

5. Methodology

- 5.1. A detailed methodology was submitted within the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), which was agreed by the advisor to the local planning authority prior to works commencing. A summary of the site methodology can be found below. The intended methodology was adhered to at all times during the groundworks as there were no obstacles or constraints which impeded the implementation of the WSI. Therefore the methodological approach to addressing the aims and objectives was satisfactory and the highest confidence can be placed in the data recovered and the report.
- 5.2. The existing block paved surface and overburden of recent origin was removed by the ground works contractor by hand under archaeological monitoring. Following the surface removal all excavation was undertaken by hand to agreed depths across the site.
- 5.3. All features were recorded stratigraphically and levels recorded as metres Ordnance Datum (mOD) from a known benchmark on the Northgate (31.96mOD).
- 5.4. Examination, excavation and cleaning of all archaeological deposits was carried out by hand using appropriate tools. All archaeological deposits were recorded both in plan and section.
- 5.5. All finds, artefacts, industrial and faunal remains were collected.
- 5.6. All features were recorded stratigraphically. Features were recorded archaeologically, both in plan and section. Detailed plans were drawn at an appropriate scale, 1:10 or 1:20.
- 5.7. The written recording system used followed the Museum of London Archaeological Site Manual. Context sheets included all relevant stratigraphic relationships.
- 5.8. An adequate 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.
- 5.9. The standards laid out by English Heritage and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists were adhered to at all times as well as all relevant local standards.

6. Results

- 6.1. An archaeological watching brief was carried out within the courtyard to the front of the Bluecoat School during groundworks for a new access ramp. Due to the presence of significant archaeology a phase of mitigation excavation was carried out to expose and record the features (FIGURE 10).
- 6.2. This section will outline the results of the archaeological works. The results will give a detailed account of the stratigraphic sequence and discuss the archaeology present. Deposits are shown in (parenthesis), cuts are shown in [square brackets].
- 6.3. The site area was covered in York stone slabs (21) to the north and, measuring between 0.4m by 0.4m in plan to 0.7m by 0.4m, all measuring approximately 0.05m thick. To the south of the courtyard was crazy paving. Both York stone slabs and crazy paving had been laid over a 0.05m to 0.08m thick bedding sand (22). At the entrance to site a stone kerbstone (23) marked the edge of the courtyard. This sat atop a 0.06m to 0.1m thick rough concrete base (24).



Plate 1 - Excavation area, looking south.

- 6.4. Once the bedding sand had been removed a series of sandstone walls, a burial, and 20th century services were exposed (PLATE 1). It is due to the walls and burial that archaeological excavation commenced. Although a Ministry of Justice licence was granted to excavate the burials, this was not enacted as they could be left protected *in situ*.
- 6.5. Underlying the sand bedding was a 0.3m thick layer of mid brown silt loam and

sandstone rubble (01). In some areas to the west of the excavation are this sat directly below the slabs at 0.06m below ground level (BGL). This deposit produced a high quantity of finds ranging from Roman ceramic building material to 17th to 18th century ceramic and clay tobacco pipe. A single pipe bowl was present, which dates to between 1690 and 1714 (RUTTER & DAVEY 1980).

- 6.6. This deposit was identified across the site, however where it was divided by sandstone walls it was also given context numbers (11) and (18). Further excavation proved these all to be the same context, although these numbers will still appear in the site archive.
- 6.7. It is likely that this deposit dates to the 18th century and represents modification of the land prior to the erection of the Bluecoat School. A more detailed description of this appears at the end of this section.
- 6.8. Cut into this deposit were two service trenches, [08] and [16]. Service trench [08] was aligned east west and contained two large, sheathed, electricity cables feeding the school building. The cut measured 0.6m wide and extended to a depth of 0.4m into deposit (01). The backfill of the service trench, a dark brown silt loam (09), contained a high quantity of finds including Roman amphora and Samian Ware, Medieval green glaze through to 17th to 18th century ceramics and clay pipe. This service trench truncated a burial identified at the northwestern extent of the courtyard excavation area cut into context (12) (FIGURE 11). This will be discussed in detail below (6.14.), however a large number of human bone was recovered from the service backfill (09).
- 6.9. An osteoarchaeological report (APPENDIX 3) noted that at least two adult females, with evidence for a juvenile present as disarticulated remains within the backfill. These remains showed no signs of disease or injury and the location of the burial, within what would have been the hospital, suggest that these may be the disturbed burials of nuns who were based at the hospital (6.15.).
- 6.10. Service trench [16] also contained electrical services and was capped by electrical service tiles (PLATE 2). This also ran east west and was located along the northern section of the excavated area. The cut measured 0.2m wide and was not excavated. Where tiles were missing a soft, mid brown, silt backfill (10) was exposed. No finds

were recovered from this fill.



Plate 2 - Service trenches [08] and [16].

6.10.1. Both services are clearly 20th century in date and cut into the made ground (01). Also cut into (01) was a discrete dump of mortar and architectural fragments (14). This measured 1.4m east west and was present across the excavated area (FIGURE 12), measuring 0.2m thick at its deepest point. Finds from this deposit included 17th to 18th century ceramics and it is thought that this relates to dumping of architectural material in 1854 when the façade of the Bluecoat School was replaced.



Plate 3 - South facing section showing (01), (02) and (12) with burial (15).

6.11. Below (01) was a 0.25m thick deposit of mid brown silt loam (02) (FIGURE 12).

This was present across the site and represents a layer of made ground dating to the 17th to 18th century. Finds from this deposit included Roman CBM, 17th to 18th century ceramics and clay tobacco pipe of a similar date. This deposit was encountered at 30.85mOD, around 0.15m BGL at its highest point (PLATE 3).

- 6.12. It is known that the original hospital that occupied the site was demolished in 1644 on the orders of the king to allow better defences of Chester during the Civil War. It is likely that (02) represents a build up of material following this time. Both (02) and (01) could be seen to be build up and made ground to level and prepare the site for the construction of the Bluecoat School between 1714 and 1717.
- 6.13. Below (02) was a 0.12m thick deposit of mid to dark brown silt loam (12). This deposit produced no finds, however it has been dated due to its relationships with features cut into it.
- 6.14. At the northwest corner of the excavated area a burial was identified (15) (PLATE 3). This had been truncated to the north by service trench [16] and to the south by service trench [08] (FIGURE 11). This meant that only a small element of the burial remained, containing two fragmented long bones and rib. The spine was visible in the section of service trench [08]. The burial was not excavated as it lay below the level of impact of the development and as such was covered for protection and left *in situ*.
- 6.15. The burial lay east west and was identified at a shallow depth, 0.4m BGL, at 30.60mOD, and was sealed by deposit (02). The cut was not visible, however an indistinct discolouration was seen to the south of the bones, which may relate to a cut. No finds were recovered from the burial, however due to its stratigraphic relationship, below (02) and above (12) it is thought that this burial will relate to the period in which the site operated as a hospital, between the 1190s and 1644. The location of the burial, inside what would have been the hospital, and its orientation suggests that this individual may have been one of the nuns who operated the hospital.
- 6.16. It should be noted that other burials have been recovered from the site during previous works in the rear courtyard. As with this burial these others were also shallow, between 0.3m and 0.4m below the courtyard surface. The other burials were

also female, however they showed signs of disease and arthritis, which suggests that these were patients of the hospital. Burials are known to have been undertaken on the site since around 1200. As such the burial has been given a wide date range of 13th to 17th century.

6.17. Also cut into (12) and overlain by (02) were a series of sandstone walls: (04), (06), (17), and (20). As the walls were truncated by the 20th century service [08] it is clear that multiple numbers were assigned to single features. As such (04) and (20) will only be referred to as (04) and (06) and (17) will only be referred to as (06) (PLATE 4).



Plate 4 - Walls (04) and (06), looking south.

6.18. Wall (04) ran north south across the site and comprised large sandstone block construction two courses high (FIGURE 13). The construction was ashlar in nature with no mortar and varying block size between 0.3m by 0.3m to 0.6m by 0.4m in size.

6.19. The cut for (04), [05], measured 0.4m wide with vertical sides and a flat base, with sharp corners. It is thought that these form the foundations for the late 12th to early 13th century hospital building which were demolished to ground level in the 17th century.

6.20. Wall (04) ran from the southern section of the excavation area into the northern section, truncated by services trenches [08] and [16] (PLATE 5).



Plate 5 - Walls (04) and (06) facing east.

- 6.21. Wall (06) ran east west from wall (04) for 1.2m before turning north and crossing service trench [08] and heading into the northern section of the excavated area (FIGURE 11). It should be noted that only the northern side of the excavation area was excavated below the upper surface of the sandstone walls as this was the location for a new dwarf wall. The bulk of the excavation area did not require excavation below the upper level of the walls as this was the maximum depth of impact for the access ramp.
- 6.22. This was of a similar construction to (04) of large varying size sandstone blocks in ashlar bond, with no mortar. The cut for (06), [07], cut into (12) and also had vertical sides with a flat base. Deposit (02) overlay the walls, suggesting that, as with (04), these represent the original 12th - 13th century hospital walls that were demolished in the 17th century.
- 6.23. Based on the dating of the sandstone walls to the late 12th to 13th century deposit (12), which the walls are cut into, must pre date the hospital and therefore may represent an *in situ* Medieval deposit. Unfortunately no finds were recovered from the deposit to confirm this.
- 6.24. Sealed by (12) was a cobbled surface (13) (FIGURE 11). This was encountered at the maximum depth of impact and as such was not excavated. As it was sealed by (12) this is thought to be an *in situ* Medieval surface, likely a track or yard surface. Due to the constraints of the project only an area 0.6m north-south by 4m east-west was exposed, in the area the new dwarf wall was to be erected.

6.25. The cobbles were encountered at 0.4m BGL, at 30.6mOD and were firmly set into their matrix and had clearly been well compacted over time. No finds were recovered from this feature.



Plate 6 - Walls (04) and (06) with cobbled surface (13), looking west.

6.26.SUMMARY CHRONOLOGY

- 6.26.1. Based on the stratigraphy present, historic research, and clear dating evidence a chronology for the site deposits and features has been outlined below.
- 6.26.2. Cobbled surface (13) is thought to be a pre-12th century yard surface or trackway, which was sealed in some time prior to 1190 by deposit (02). Identified at a maximum level of 30.6mOD.
- 6.26.3. Walls (04) and (06) form the foundations for the Hospital of St Johns dating from 1190, which was occupied into the mid 17th century. Identified at a maximum level of 30.92mOD
- 6.26.4. Burial (15) is thought to be associated with the lifespan of the hospital and as such dates to between the 13th and 17th centuries. Identified at a maximum level of 30.6mOD.
- 6.26.5. In 1644 the hospital was demolished as part of the civil war defences, where walls (04) and (06) were truncated. Between 1644 and 1714 the land was vacant prior to the Bluecoat School being erected. Deposits (01) and (02) relate to this 70 year period. Identified at a maximum level of 30.94mOD
- 6.26.6. The frontage of the Bluecoat School was rebuilt in 1854. Deposit (14) is thought to represent the architectural waste from this event. Identified at a maximum level of 30.92mOD.
- 6.26.7. All other deposits are modern.

7. Finds & Archive

7.1. The following section will discuss the finds recovered from the site by material. Each material will be discussed by context. A full, detailed, osteoarchaeological assessment can be found in APPENDIX 3 of this document.

7.2. CLAY TOBACCO PIPE

Context (01)

7.2.1. Context (01) was a 0.3m thick mixed silt deposit that was present across the site. This deposit contained 60 fragments of clay tobacco pipe with a total weight of 184g.

7.2.2. The finds are listed in the table below, and represent late Post Medieval activity. Present within the assemblage were 59 small stem fragments of 17th to 18th century form and a single undecorated bowl. This has been dated to between 1690 and 1715.

MATERIAL	FORM	DIMENSIONS	DECORATION/NOTES	DATE
Clay tobacco Pipe	Bowl	17mm diameter	Undecorated	1690-1715
Clay Tobacco Pipe	Stems	N/A	59 stem fragments weighing a total of 176g	17 th - 18 th C

Table 2- Clay Tobacco Pipe Finds (01)

Context (02)

7.2.3. Context (02) was a 0.25m thick silt loam deposit that was present across the site. This deposit contained 31 fragments of clay tobacco pipe stem with a total weight of 103g.

7.2.4. The finds are listed in the table below, and represent late Post Medieval activity dating to the 17th to 18th century.

MATERIAL	FORM	DIMENSIONS	DECORATION/NOTES	DATE
Clay Tobacco Pipe	Stems	N/A	31 stem fragments weighing a total of 103g	17 th - 18 th C

Table 3- Clay Tobacco Pipe Finds (02)

7.3.CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL

Context (01)

7.3.1. A total of three pieces of CBM were recovered from (01), these included two fragments of Roman tile, dating to the 1st to 3rd century and a fragment of Post Medieval brick, thought to be late Post Medieval in date, 17th to 18th century in date.

MATERIAL	FORM	SIZE (MM) BTL	DECORATION/NOTES	DATE
CBM	Tile	70 x 40 x 21	None	1 st - 3 rd C
CBM	Tile	110 x 70 x 28	None	1 st - 3 rd C
CBM	Brick	90 x 35 x 32	None	17 th - 18 th C

Table 4- CBM Finds (01)

Context (02)

7.3.2. A total of five fragments of CBM were recovered from (02), which included four fragments of Roman tile, dating to the 1st to 3rd century and a single fragment of Post Medieval brick, thought to be late Post Medieval in date, 17th to 18th century in date.

MATERIAL	FORM	SIZE (MM) BTL	DECORATION/NOTES	DATE
CBM	Tile	110 x 60 x 25	None	1 st - 3 rd C
CBM	Tile	115 x 85 x 28	None	1 st - 3 rd C
CBM	Tile	32 x 20 x 22	None	1 st - 3 rd C
CBM	Tile	22 x 23 x 25	None	1 st - 3 rd C
CBM	Brick	18 x 21 x 11	None	17 th - 18 th C

Table 5- CBM Finds (02)

Context (11)

7.3.1. A total of eight fragments of CBM were recovered from context (11). This deposit has been confirmed as the same as context (01). The multiple numbers assigned relates to the methodology employed on site. This deposit included three fragments of Roman tile, dating to the 1st to 3rd century and five fragments of Post Medieval brick, thought to be late Post Medieval in date, 17th to 18th century in date.

7.3.2. The Roman fragments were very degraded and fragmented.

MATERIAL	FORM	SIZE (MM) BTL	DECORATION/NOTES	DATE
CBM	Tile	37 x 30 x 22	None	1 st - 3 rd C
CBM	Tile	25 x 15 x 10	None	1 st - 3 rd C
CBM	Tile	60 x 45 x 15	None	1 st - 3 rd C
CBM	Brick	25 x 35 x 11	None	17 th - 18 th C
CBM	Brick	35 x 25 x 10	None	17 th - 18 th C
CBM	Brick	25 x 15 x 15	None	17 th - 18 th C
CBM	Brick	85 x 60 x 10	None	17 th - 18 th C
CBM	Brick	60 x 40 x 11	None	17 th - 18 th C

Table 6- CBM Finds (11)

7.4. CERAMIC

Context (01)

7.4.1. The mixed silt deposit (01) produced a total of 31 sherds of ceramic, weighing a total of 1.32kg. The ceramic assemblage was mixed in date and form including Roman, 1st to 3rd century, through to 18th century black glazed slipware (Buckley Ware).

7.4.2. The assemblage represents domestic activity with high quality Cistercian ware and decorated Staffordshire Ware vessels alongside everyday kitchen wares.

MATERIAL	FORM	DECORATION/NOTES	DATE
Ceramic	Amphora handle	Badly degraded, buff coloured, amphora handle	1 st - 3 rd C
Ceramic	Base sherd	Holt fabric, heat discoloured, base sherd	1 st - 3 rd C
Ceramic	Body sherd	Holt fabric vessel body sherd	1 st - 3 rd C
Ceramic	Base sherd	Cistercian Ware cup base	16 th - 17 th C
Ceramic	Body sherd	15 Cistercian Ware body Sherds	16 th - 17 th C
Ceramic	Handle fragment	Cistercian Ware handle fragment	16 th - 17 th C
Ceramic	Body sherd	Reverse Cistercian Ware body sherd	16 th - 17 th C
Ceramic	Body sherd	Two Staffordshire Ware body sherds, brown glaze with yellow design	17 th - 18 th C
Ceramic	Rim sherd	Buckley slipware rim sherd	17 th - 18 th C
Ceramic	Body sherd	Buckley slipware body sherds	17 th - 18 th C
Ceramic	Base sherd	Brown slipware body sherd	17 th - 18 th C
Ceramic	Base sherd	Bung holes cistern base, brown glaze interior	17 th - 18 th C

Table 7- Ceramic Finds (01)

Context (02)

7.4.3. Deposit (02) produced a total of 41 sherds of ceramic, weighing a total of 1.12kg. The ceramic assemblage was mixed in date and form including Roman, 1st to 3rd century, through to 18th century Yellow Ware sherds.

7.4.4. The assemblage represents.

MATERIAL	FORM	DECORATION/NOTES	DATE
Ceramic	Base sherd	Black Burnished Ware	1 st - 3 rd C
Ceramic	Body sherd	Green glaze body sherd	13 th - 14 th C
Ceramic	Rim sherd	Four sherds of pipkin cooking pot	15 th - 16 th C
Ceramic	Base sherd	Cistercian Ware base sherd	16 th - 17 th C
Ceramic	Body sherd	Twenty one sherds of Cistercian Ware	16 th - 17 th C
Ceramic	Rim sherds	Two rims sherds of Cistercian Ware vessels	16 th - 17 th C
Ceramic	Body sherd	Sugar mould body sherd	17 th C
Ceramic	Body sherds	Five sherds of Staffordshire Ware vessels	17 th - 18 th C
Ceramic	Body sherd	Three Brown slipware body sherds	17 th - 18 th C
Ceramic	Body sherds	Two yellow Ware body sherds	18 th C

Table 8- Ceramic Finds (02)

Context (09)

7.4.1. Context (09) is the backfill of a 20th century service trench. However, the material appears to be redeposited material from contexts (010 and (02). The finds recovered from (09) are similar in nature to (01) and (02), although there was a greater presence of Roman ceramics. A total of 19 sherds were recovered with a total weight of 1.02kg.

MATERIAL	FORM	DECORATION/NOTES	DATE
Ceramic	Tegula	Fragment of Tegula	1 st - 3 rd C
Ceramic	Tile	Fragment of tile	1 st - 3 rd C
Ceramic	Body sherd	Samian Ware body sherd with horizontal striped decoration	1 st - 3 rd C
Ceramic	Body sherd	Rusticated, buff coloured, body sherd	2 nd - 3 rd C
Ceramic	Body sherd	Four Holt fabric body sherds	1 st - 3 rd C
Ceramic	Body sherd	Green glaze body sherd	13 th - 14 th C
Ceramic	Base sherd	Three base sherds from Cistercian Ware cups	16 th - 17 th C
Ceramic	Body sherd	Two Cistercian Ware body sherds	16 th - 17 th C
Ceramic	Rim sherd	Staffordshire Ware rim sherd, yellow glaze with brown decoration	17 th - 18 th C
Ceramic	Base sherd	Three base sherds of Buckley Ware	17 th - 18 th C

Table 9- Ceramic Finds (09)

Context (14)

7.4.1. Context (14) represents a dump of material, which had been cut into the upper surface of context (01). This deposit comprised large quantities of fragmented mortar. Two ceramic finds were recovered from the deposit. These date to the 17th to 19th century and are brown slipware and black slipware (Buckley Ware). It is likely that this deposit is a 19th century dump of architectural material from the construction of a new frontage to the Bluecoat School in 1854.

MATERIAL	FORM	DECORATION/NOTES	DATE
Ceramic	Body sherd	Brown slipware body sherd	17 th - 18 th C
Ceramic	Body sherd	Buckley Ware body sherd	18 th - 19 th C

Table 10- Ceramic Finds (14)

7.5.SUMMARY

7.5.1. Five deposits produced finds as part of this assemblage: (01), (02), (09), (11), and (14). Contexts (01) and (11) are the same deposit, separated by Wall 04, and as such were given distinct numbers on site.

7.5.2. Deposit (09) is the fill of a service trench, which contained redeposited material from (01) and (02). As such it had a similar collection of material as seen in (01) (02). This is known to be a 20th century feature as it relates to electrical services.

7.5.3. Context (14) is a dump of architectural material and likely dates to the mid 19th century, when the frontage of the bluecoat School was rebuilt.

7.5.4. Deposits (01)/(11) and (02) contain mainly finds dating to the 16th to 18th centuries. This material includes clay pipe of 17th to 19th century date, with a close date range of 1690-1715 from a bowl. Demolition of the building occurred in 1644 during civil war. It is thought that the site was left vacant until around 1714, when construction works began on the school building. The finds suggest that (01) (02) represent build up and levelling of the site after the Civil War, prior to the erection of the Bluecoat School. Ceramic finds also support this, mainly 17th to 18th century in date with some intrusive Roman

wares. The material is thought to be a combination of build up and imported soils to level the land prior to construction. This means that the finds may not represent only on site activity, but also dumped material from the surrounding area.

7.6.ARCHIVE

7.6.1. The document archive consists of:

- ◇ 1 x Drawing Register
- ◇ 8 x Drawing Film
- ◇ 1 x Photographic Register
- ◇ 37 x Black and white photographs and respective negatives
- ◇ 1 x Context Register
- ◇ 23 x Context sheets

7.6.1. The finds archive consists of:

- ◇ 2 x box artefacts as described in Table 1, above (all materials).
- ◇ The archive is to be deposited with the Cheshire West and Chester Museum Service.

8. Summary and Conclusions

- 8.1. This report outlines the result of the archaeological watching brief and mitigation excavation carried out at the Blue Coat School, Upper Northgate Street, Chester, CH1 4EE. The work was carried out in response to a planning condition (13/03980/FUL). Planning permission has been granted for the installation of a new ramp to the front courtyard and general refurbishment of the existing building.
- 8.2. The work comprised the hand excavation of a discrete area in the front courtyard, leading to the access passage to the rear of the building, and small scale footing excavations in front of the building for a new dwarf wall.
- 8.3. The archaeological fieldwork was carried out between 23rd April and 12th September 2014 within the front courtyard to the east of Bluecoat School, Chester. The fieldwork was carried out on behalf of Chester Municipal Charities and Read Construction by L – P : Archaeology.
- 8.4. Research shows that the site has a long history, spanning from the Roman to Post Medieval period. During the Roman period Chester had an established Roman legionary fortress, situated to the immediate south of the site. The site area is thought to have fallen within the *canabae*, or civilian settlement surrounding the fortress. A Roman road runs north-south to the immediate east of the site and a smaller trackway, thought to be Roman in date, has been identified within the rear courtyard of the building.
- 8.5. The Earl of Chester founded a hospital for the poor on the site around 1190, under the dedication of the Virgin and All Saints. This was changed to St John the Baptist shortly thereafter. By the turn of the 13th century the hospital was burying its dead and by 1241 a chapel had been added to the site.
- 8.6. By the 16th century cartographic evidence shows timber framed buildings occupying the site, thought to represent the hospital buildings. These were demolished in 1644 on orders from the King as part of the civil war defences.
- 8.7. Following the war the site was granted to the corporation of Chester and the hospital was rebuilt between 1714 and 1717.
- 8.8. Further maps, dating from 1745 onwards, show the Bluecoat building in its current

recognisable plan. In 1854 the central section of the school was enlarged and a new façade erected. It was during this remodelling that the 'Blue Coat' statue was added above the door to the central passage leading to the alms houses constructed. The front courtyard appears to retain its 18th century layout.

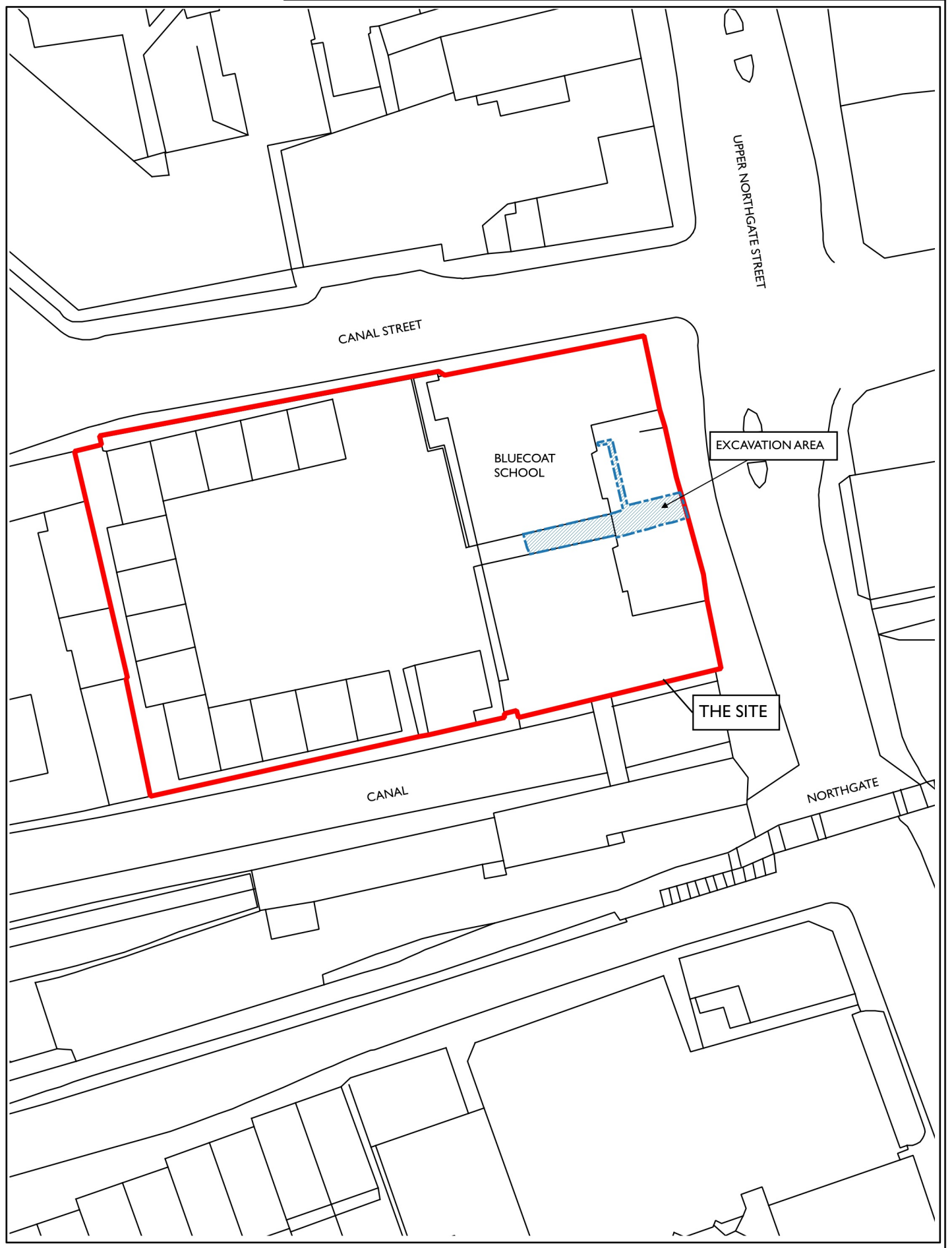
- 8.9. The excavations revealed a sequence of deposits dating from the Medieval period onwards and uncovered evidence of burials on the site. The earliest deposit was a cobbled surface thought to pre-date the 12th century hospital. A secure date was not gained for the cobbles, although they are thought to be Medieval based on the form of the material above them. It should be noted that to the east of the cobbled surface lies the Roman road leading north from the fortress of Deva. It has been suggested that the cobbles may relate to a rough adjacent Roman track or agger from a subsidiary road. However, no Roman finds were recovered from the cobbles or from the deposit overlying them.
- 8.10. Sealing the cobbled surface was a 0.12m thick deposit thought to be a Medieval build up of material, also pre-dating the 12th century. Cut into this deposit were a series of sandstone walls, which have been interpreted as the foundation for the Medieval hospital of the Virgin and All Saints (later St John's). Historically these have been dated to the 1190s. The walls are thought to form the eastern frontage and an internal division. The quality of sandstone suggests that hospital may have had a timber framed upper section. The cut for the foundation layer for the walls only penetrates 0.1m into the lower deposit.
- 8.11. Associated with the walls, also cut into the lower deposit, was a burial aligned east-west. This was left *in situ* and not excavated as it was not to be disturbed as part of the development. However, the burial had been truncated by previous electrical services to the northeast and southwest. The service trench sections revealed the spine and long bones of the burial in section, giving an orientation and view of the burial. As the hospital is known to have carried out burials from the 13th century through to the 17th century the burial has been dated to this phase of occupation.
- 8.12. A large quantity of human bone material was recovered from the backfill of the electrical service trench to the southwest of the burial. An osteoarchaeological assessment of the bones revealed that these were adult females showing no obvious

sign of disease or trauma. As such it is thought that the burials in this area may relate to the staff that operated the hospital, likely nuns at this time. In the rear courtyard of the building previous archaeological excavation revealed a series of female burials, which all showed signs of osteoarthritis and disease. Therefore the burial to the rear, within what would have been an enclosed courtyard are thought to have been patients, with the burials inside the structure, identified as part of these investigations, were reserved for staff.

- 8.13. The building was demolished in the 17th century as part of the civil war defences and the land left vacant until the early 18th century. Sealing in the walls and burial were a series of two deposits which date to this period, between 1644 and 1714. Finds recovered from these deposits support the date range given.
- 8.14. Cut into the upper 18th century deposit was a dump of architectural material. This is thought to date to the refacing of the bluecoat school in 1854.
- 8.15. Modern services were identified below the york stone and crazy paved upper surface.
- 8.16. The results of the excavation gives an important insight into the lifespan and activity of the hospital and the historic activity on the site. It can be seen that there was activity on the site prior to the 12th century hospital development and that the hospital were burying individuals both inside the structure as well as within the rear courtyard.
- 8.17. Following the demolition of the hospital in the civil war it appears that the land was left vacant, possibly used for cultivation based on the deposit form, for a period of around 70 years. The Bluecoat School was built between 1714 and 1717 and has occupied the site since that time. Evidence of refurbishment of the building is seen in a dump of architectural material.
- 8.18. The physical material recovered from the site closely matches the historic research carried out on the site.

FIGURES

FIGURE 2 // Site Location Detail



0 10 m



PROJECT // 1556C - Bluecoat complex

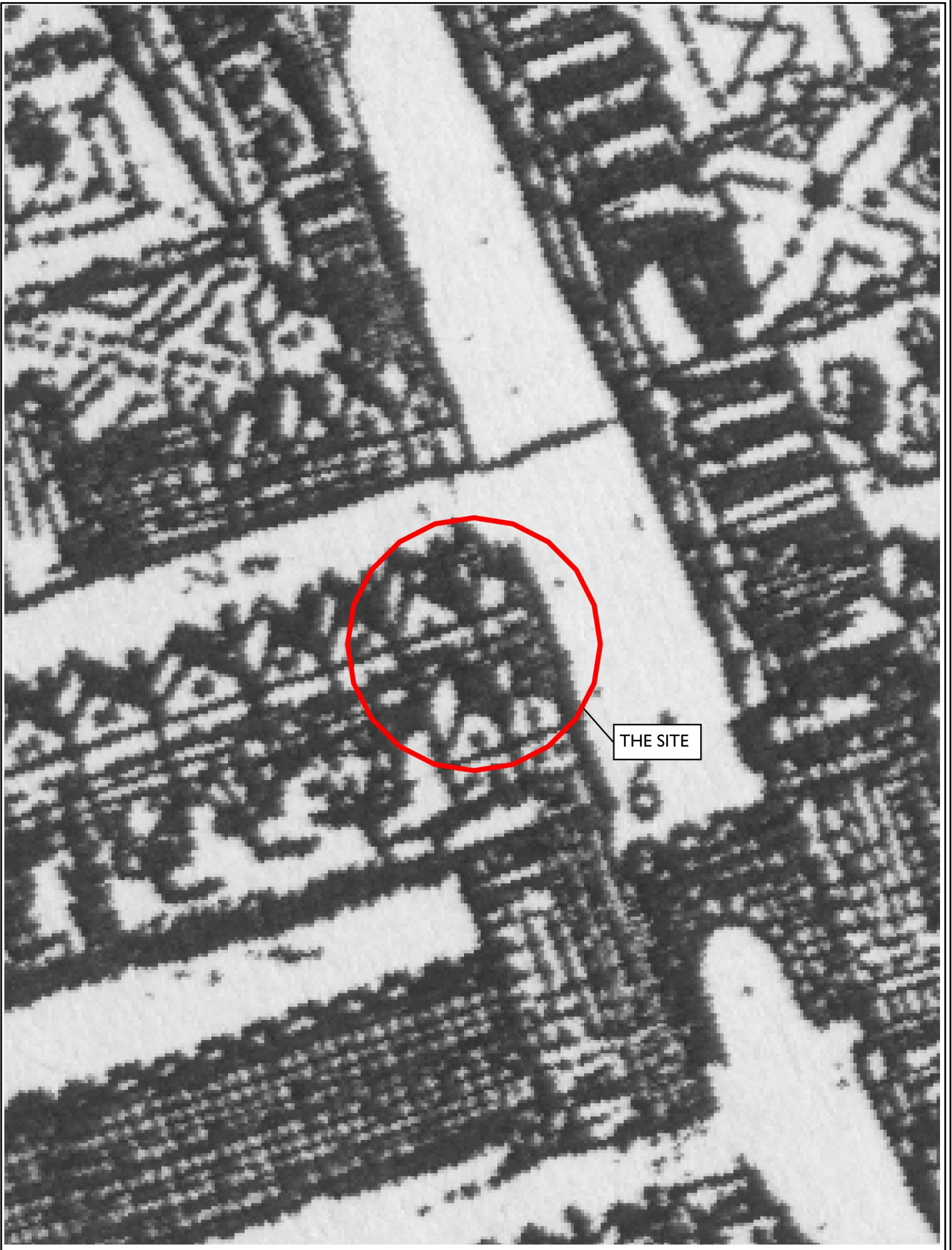
DESCRIPTION // Site Location Detail

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DOC REF: LPI 1556C-AMR-v1

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FIGURE 3 // Braun & Hogenberg 1581



THE SITE

0 50 m



PROJECT // 1556C - Bluecoat complex

DESCRIPTION // Braun & Hogenberg's Map of 1581

DOC REF: LPI556C-AMR-v1

L-P: ARCHAEOLOGY

FIGURE 4 // Speed 1610



THE SITE

0 50 m



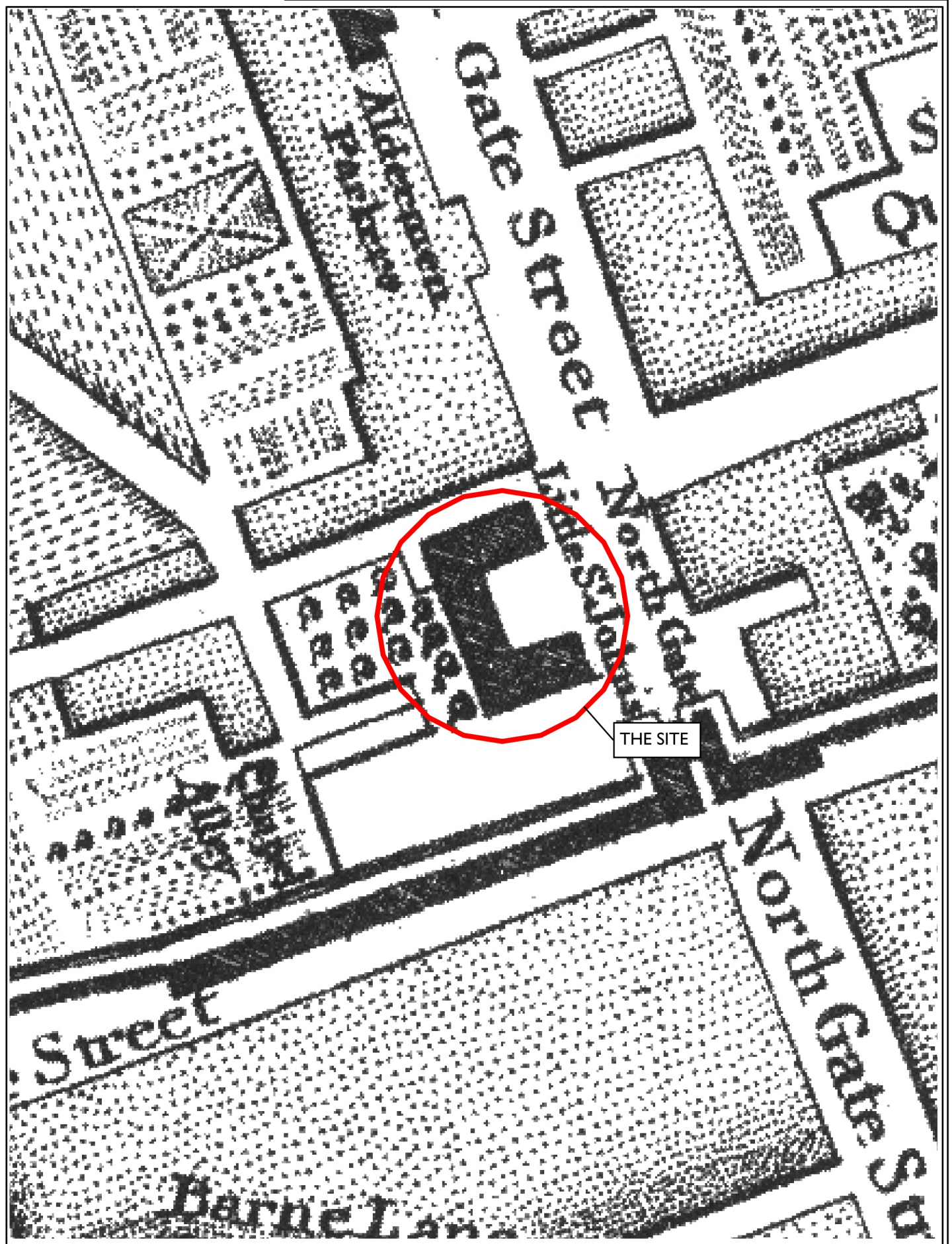
PROJECT // 1556C - Bluecoat complex

DESCRIPTION // Speed's Map of 1610

DOC REF: LPI556C-AMR-v1

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FIGURE 5 // Lavaux 1745



0 50 m



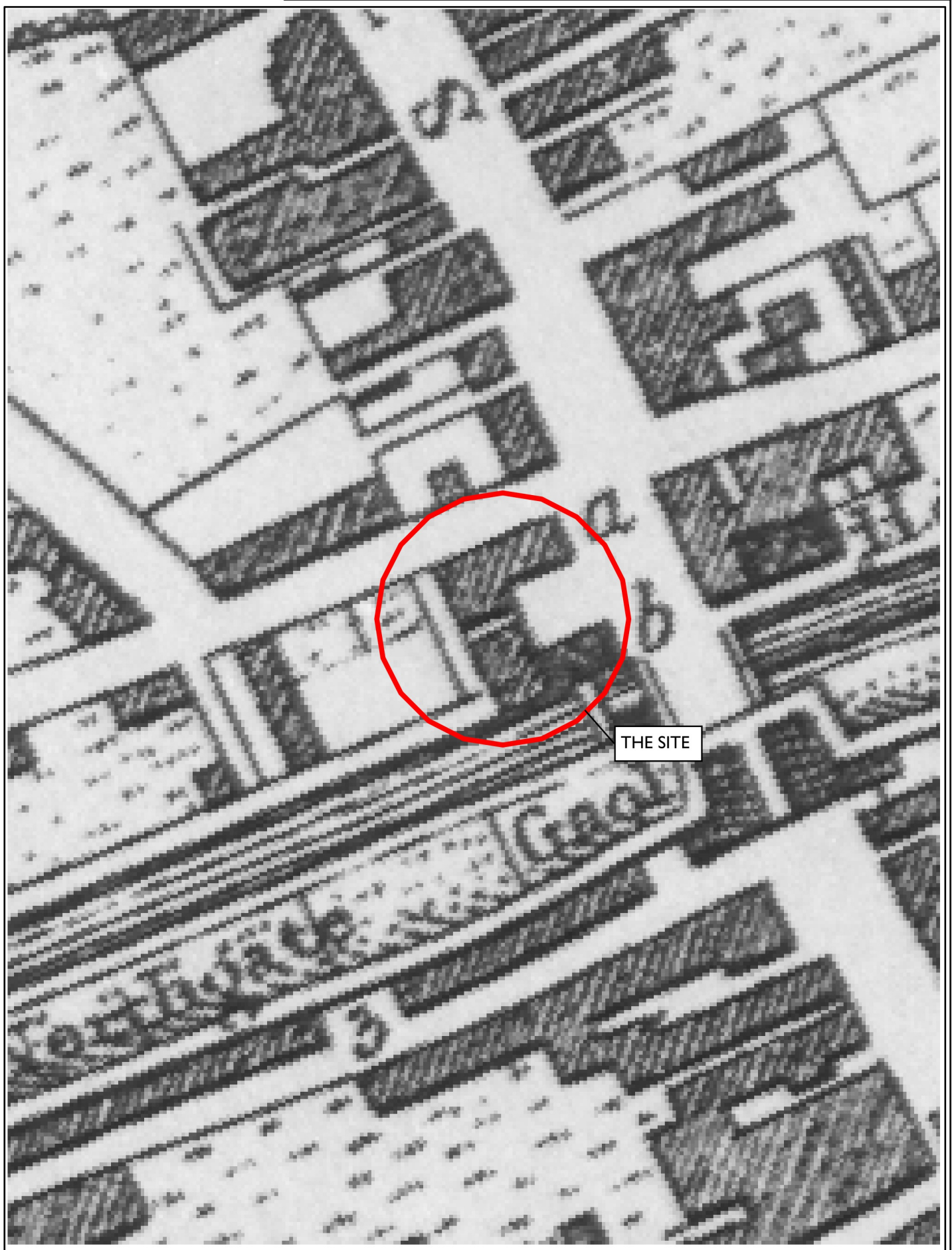
PROJECT // 1556C - Bluecoat complex

DESCRIPTION // Lavaux's Map of 1745

DOC REF: LPI556C-AMR-v1

L-P:ARCHAEOLOGY

FIGURE 6 // Stockdale 1796



THE SITE

0 50 m



PROJECT // 1556C - Bluecoat complex

DESCRIPTION // Stockdale's Map of 1796

DOC REF: LPI556C-AMR-v1

L-P:ARCHAEOLOGY

FIGURE 7 // Tithe Map 1847



0 50 m



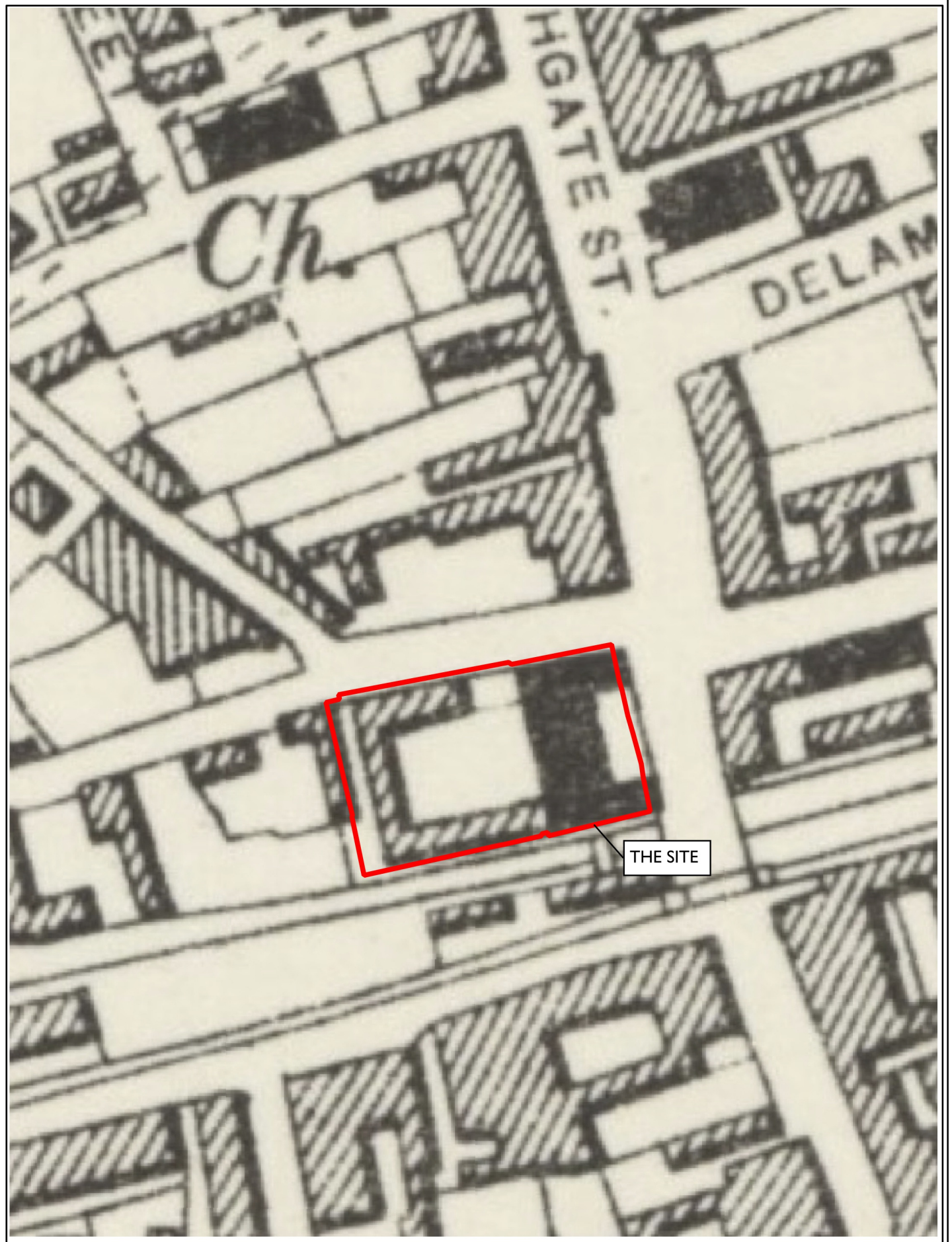
PROJECT // 1556C - Bluecoat complex

DESCRIPTION // Tithe Map of 1847

DOC REF: LPI556C-AMR-v1

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FIGURE 8 // Ordnance Survey 1888



0 50 m



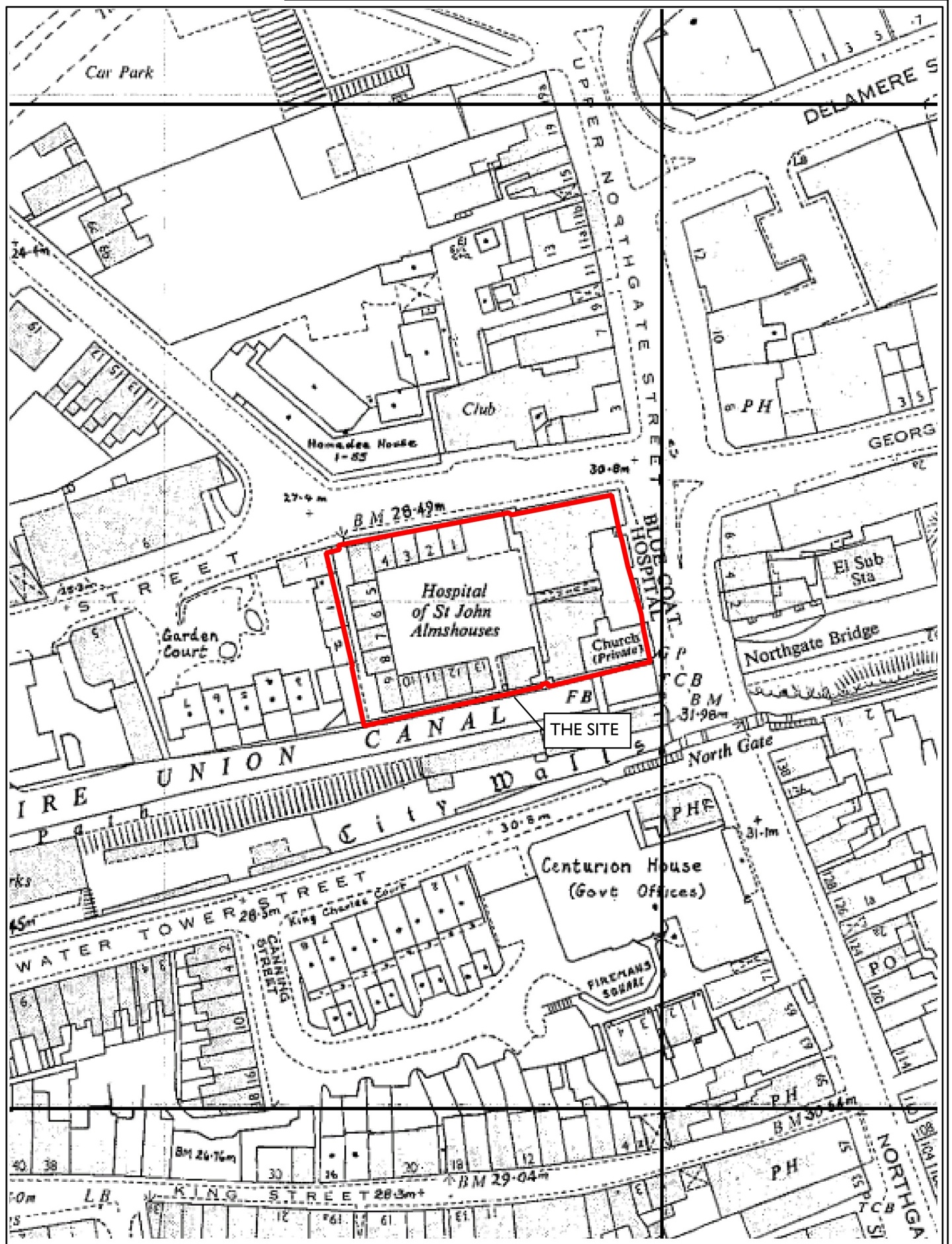
PROJECT // 1556C - Bluecoat complex

DESCRIPTION // Ordnance Survey Map of Chester, 1888

DOC REF: LPI556C-AMR-v1

L-P:ARCHAEOLOGY

FIGURE 9 // Orndance Survey 1977



PROJECT // 1556C - Bluecoat complex

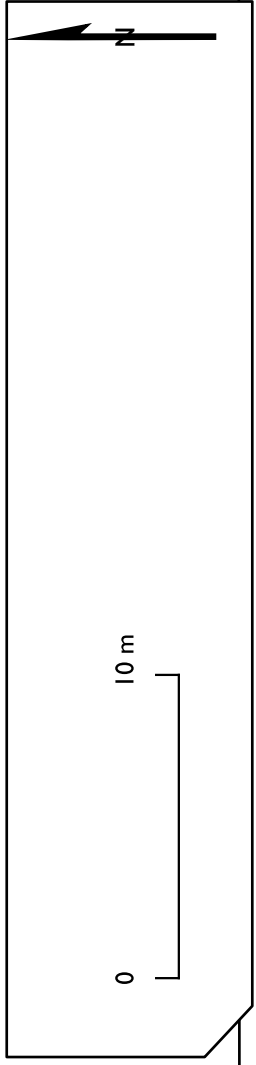
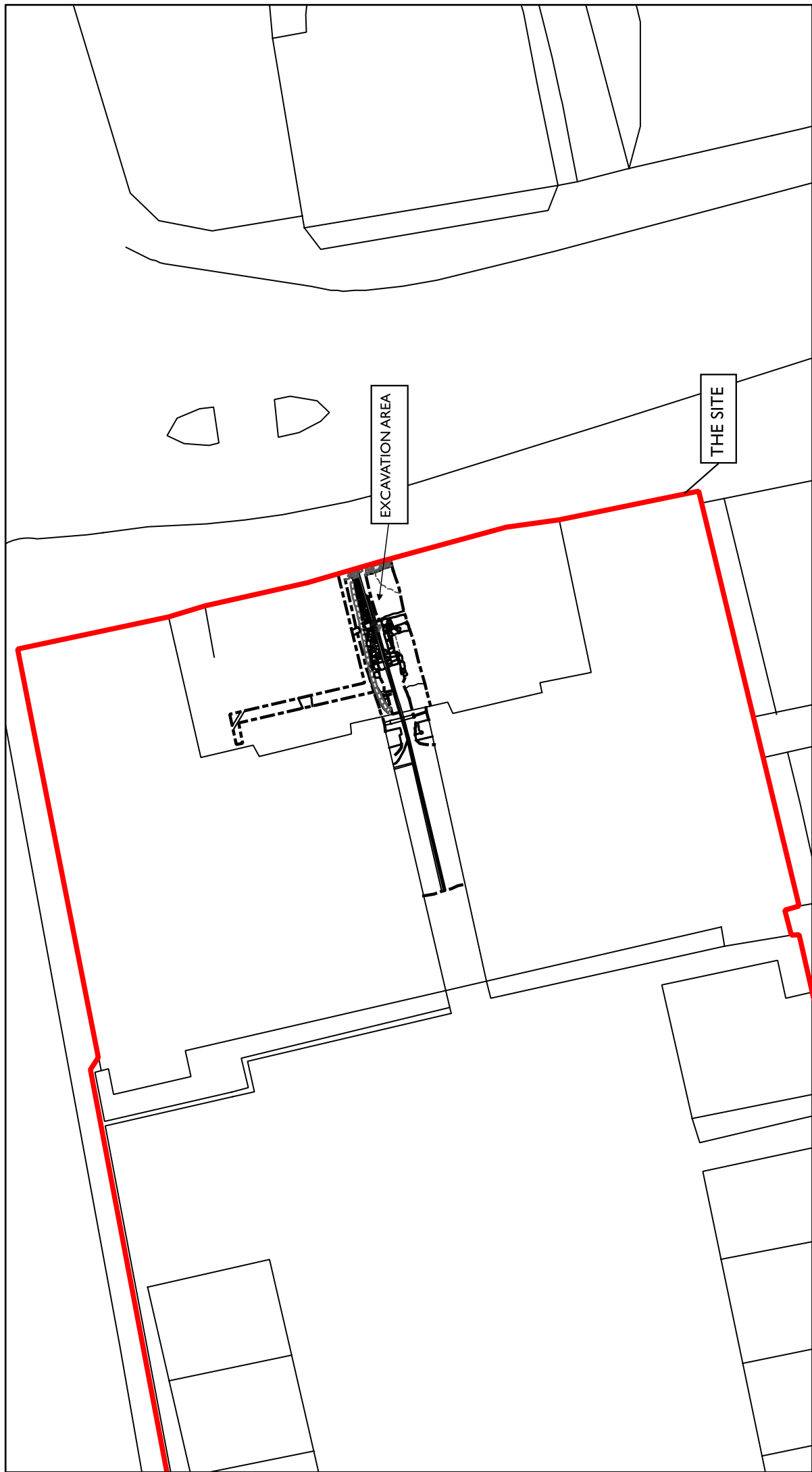
DESCRIPTION // Ordnance Survey Map of Chester, 1977

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FIGURE 10 // Plan of Excavation Area



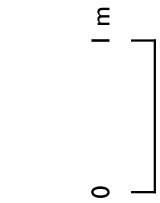
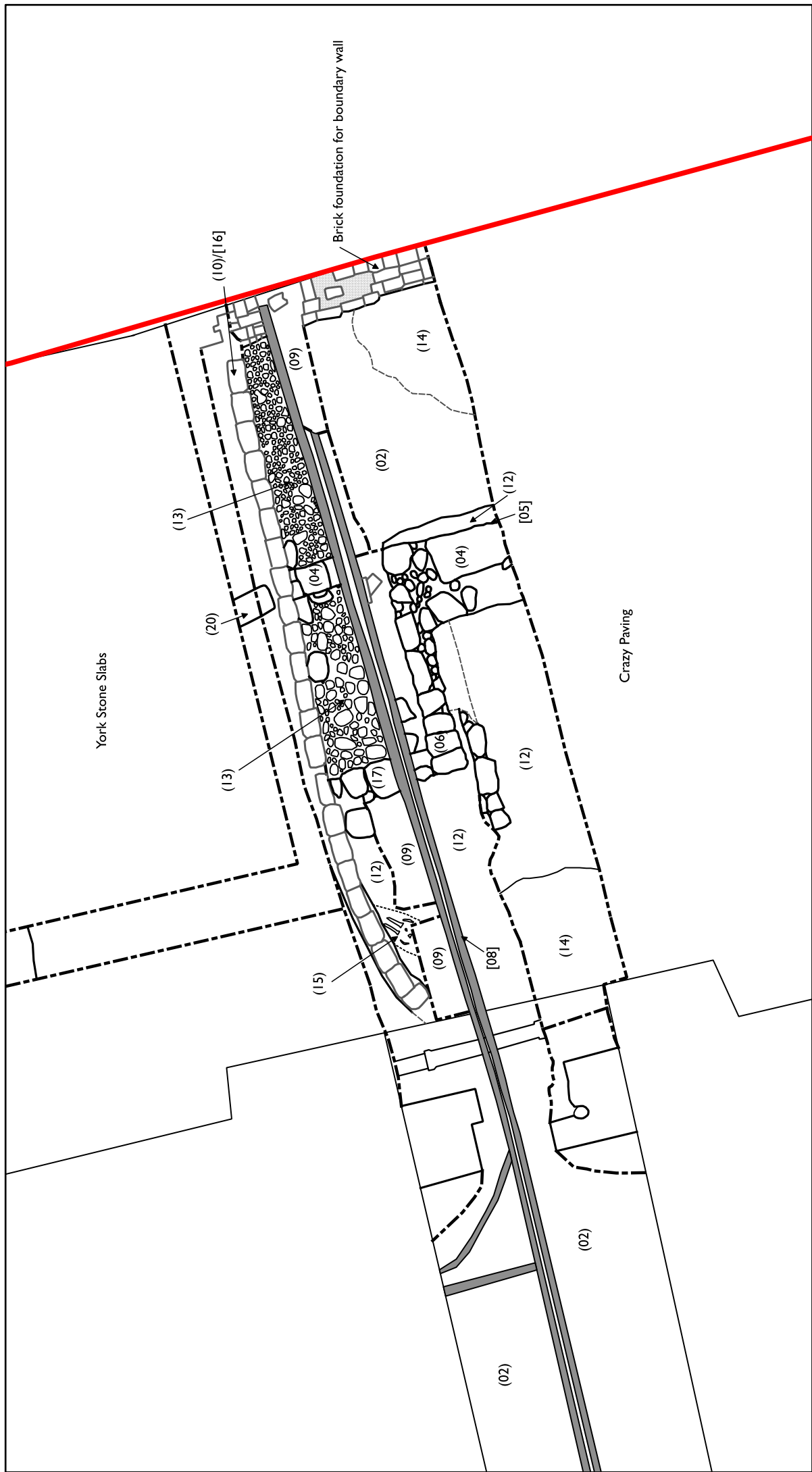
PROJECT // 1556C - Bluecoat complex

DESCRIPTION // Plan of Excavation Area

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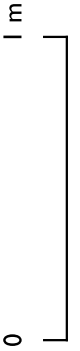
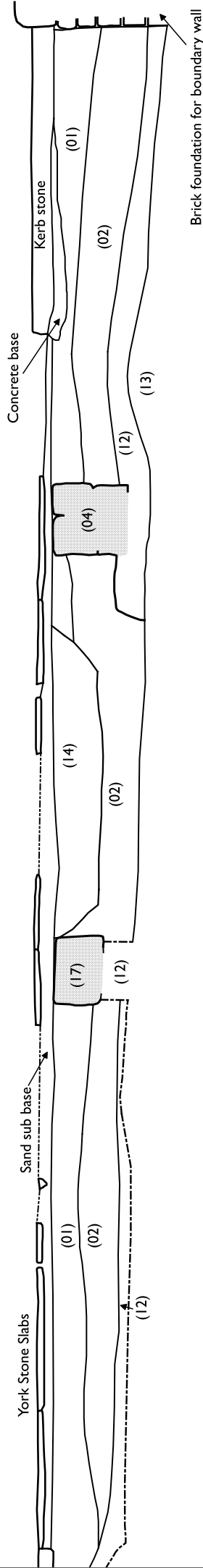
L-P:ARCHÆOLOGY

FIGURE 11 // Detail of Sandstone Features



PROJECT // 1556C - Bluecoat complex
DESCRIPTION // Detail of Sandstone Features
DOC REF: LP1556C-AMR-v1

FIGURE 12 // South Facing Section



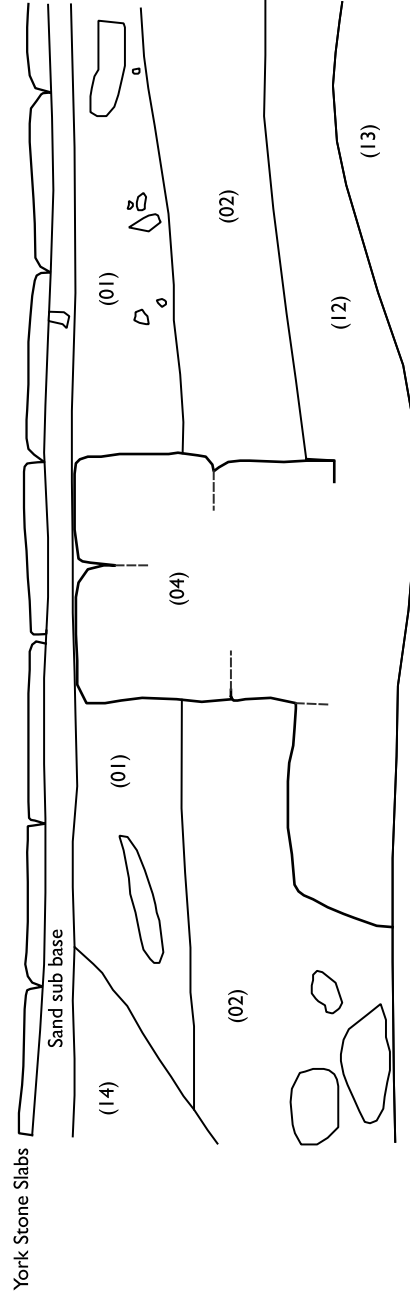
PROJECT // 1556C - Bluecoat complex

DESCRIPTION // South Facing Section

DOC REF: LP1556C-AMR-v1

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FIGURE 13 // South Facing Section Detail



0 | m

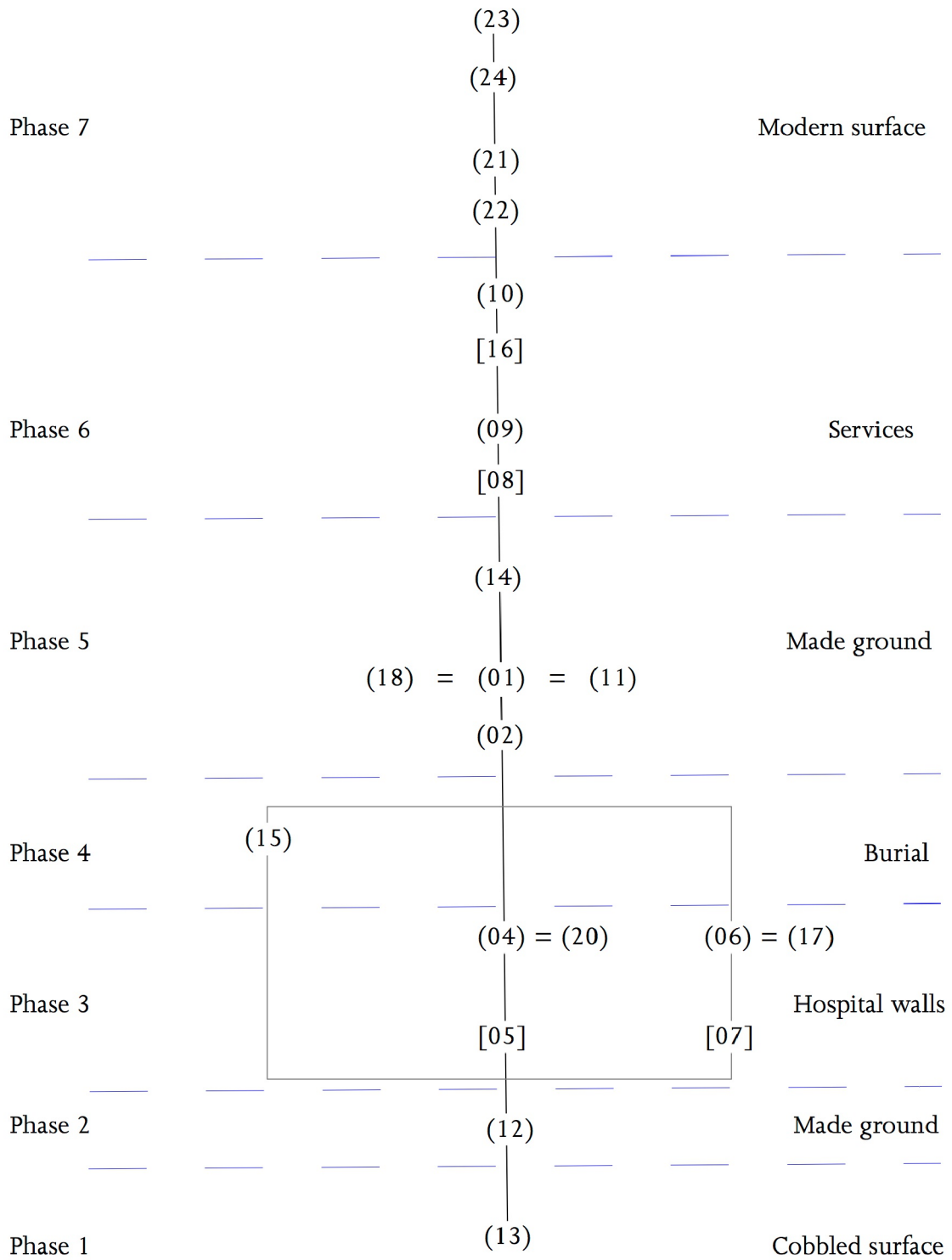
PROJECT // 1556C - Bluecoat complex

DESCRIPTION // South Facing Section Detail

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FIGURE 14 // Site Matrix



PROJECT // 1556C - Bluecoat complex

DESCRIPTION // Site Matrix

DOC REF: LPI556C-AMR-v1

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APPENDIX I

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CONTEXT SUMMARY

APPENDIX 2

The following table gives a breakdown of the context recorded on site.

A site matrix can be seen in **FIGURE 14**.

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	THICKNESS	SIGNIFICANT FINDS	DATE RANGE
(01)/(11)/(18)	Made Ground	0.3m	Clay tobacco pipe bowl dated 1690 to 1715 Roman & Post Medieval CBM Cistercian and Staffordshire Ware	17 th - 18 th C
(02)	Made Ground	0.25m	Clay tobacco pipe dated to the 17 th to 18 th C Roman & Post Medieval CBM Cistercian Ware and Sugar mould	17 th - 18 th C
(04)/(20)	Sandstone Wall	0.15m exposed	None	13 th - 17 th C
(06)/(17)	Sandstone Wall	0.15m exposed	None	13 th - 17 th C
(09)	Electrical Service	0.4m	Roman, Medieval & Post Medieval ceramics	20 th C
(10)	Electrical Service	Not excavated	N/A	20 th C
(12)	Made Ground	0.12m	N/A	Pre 13 th C
(13)	Cobbled Surface	Not excavated	N/A	Pre 13 th C
(14)	Mortar Spread	0.2m	Buckley Ware and brown glazed ware	18 th - 19 th C
(15)	Burial	Not excavated	No dating evidence	13 th - 17 th C
(21)	York Stone Paving	0.05m	N/A	20 th C
(23)	Stone Kerb	0.1m	N/A	20 th C
(24)	Concrete base	0.08m	N/A	20 th C

Table 11 - Context Summary

Cuts have not been represented on this table, however they have been discussed within the text above.

Context (19) was removed from the register as it was initially assigned as a sandstone wall, which on excavation was formally identified as sandstone rubble within context (02).

Context (03) was not issued.

The following table gives a breakdown regarding the depths of archaeological deposits. The depths given represent the highest level which the deposits occur at.

A site matrix can be seen in **FIGURE 14**.

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	DEPTH TO TOP OF ARCHAEOLOGY		DATE
(14)	Dump of material	0.08m BGL	30.92mOD	19 th C
(01)/(11)	Made Ground	0.06m BGL	30.94mOD	17 th - 18 th C
(02)	Made Ground	0.15m BGL	30.85mOD	17 th - 18 th C
(15)	Burial	0.40m BGL	30.60mOD	13 th - 17 th C
(04)/(20)	Wall	0.08m BGL	30.92mOD	13 th - 17 th C
(06)/(17)	Wall	0.08m BGL	30.92mOD	13 th - 17 th C
(12)	Made Ground	0.40m BGL	30.6mOD	Pre 13 th C
(13)	Cobbled Surface	0.40m BGL	30.6mOD	Pre 13 th C

Table 12- Depths of Archaeology

OSTEOARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

APPENDIX 3

Osteoarchaeological Assessment from Bluecoat School, Chester. *HD Archer, 2015.*

INFORMATION

The following report is an examination of bone found during an excavation at the Bluecoat School, Chester.

The purpose of this examination is twofold. The first being to identify the species of the material found (separated into human and animal) and the second is to establish a biological profile for any human remains present. This will be done by determining age, sex, ancestry and any other characteristic features.

The assemblage comprised a total of 529 bones in the following proportions: 168 animal bones plus three loose teeth; 240 human bones plus four loose teeth and 121 unidentifiable fragments.

For a comprehensive list of bones present see APPENDIX A below.

TECHNICAL NOTES

EXAMINATION METHODS EMPLOYED

The majority of the examination consisted of observing the remains and identifying elements which were present or absent, noting any non-metric traits or unique identifiers and observing any pathological conditions. For establishing age and stature a variety of regression formulas were employed.

To establish the age-at-death epiphyseal fusion of the long bones was observed and compared to known rates of fusion. Data was taken from Flecker's diagrams (1942), which have been updated by Webb and Suchey (1985). Dental wear was examined, and compared to Brothwell's charts. In this case no juveniles were recovered so eruption charts were not employed as an ageing technique.

For stature, the long bones were measured and put into a regression formula established by Trotter and Gleser (1970). Due to the fragmentary nature of the assemblage the stature information came a single complete femur. It should be noted that whilst this provided an estimation, the accuracy of this test would be increased by being able to use multiple skeletal elements. The formula is noted as being the most accurate for stature estimation (STEWART 1979) and can be adapted for the type of remains present. The maximum length was measured and entered in to the regression formula, giving the projected stature for the individual remains.

Results

Animal bone

A total of 168 bones and three individual teeth were recovered, summarised in the table below.

Context	No. of bones
(1)	26
(2)	14
(9)	115
(11)	13

The assemblage was dominated by *Ovis aries* (sheep), *Bos Taurus* (cattle) and *Sus scrofa* (domestic pig) comprising c80% of the total. Also present were a number of small bird bones. The three loose teeth found were from a cow, as were an additional three teeth found still in the correct anatomical position within the mandible. The majority of the bones excavated were fragmentary and the absence of neat edges suggests the breaking was part of a taphonomic process and not a product of the butchery industry. Only one definite cut mark was observed on a small fragment of long bone (species unknown) but it is not clear was to whether this was an accidental nick made during the excavation process.

A variety of skeletal elements were well represented in the assemblage, suggesting they were part of a wider general collection of refuse. There was no evidence of a dominance of skulls and/or feet bones which may have indicated primary butchery waste.

HUMAN BONE

A total of 240 identifiable human bones were recovered with an addition four individual teeth, summarised by context below.

Context	No. of bones
(1)	6
(2)	6
(9)	228

As shown from above the majority of the bones (both animal and human) were recovered from context (9), the backfill of electrical services. In general, the bones were in a fragmentary condition, with many elements being broken beyond identification or absent completely. A number of the bones from (9) are thought to be a result of the disturbance of the burial identified in context (15), which the cut for (9) truncated.

MINIMUM NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS

Due to extensive disturbance only small sections of two sets of articulated remains was recovered. Approximately 8 thoracic and lumbar vertebrae were visible in section, in situ. An almost complete articulated foot was also recovered and its location suggests it was from a separate individual. Additionally, two complete mandibles were excavated from context (9) giving a minimum of two individuals. Several fragments of a human skull were also recovered, but due to disturbance it is unclear as to whether this belongs to the first or second individual. From the overall position of how the bones were located and the skeletal elements present, a total estimate of 2-3 individuals is proposed.

AGE-AT-DEATH

The age at death was determined through a close examination of the fusion of several skeletal elements. Human bones have a known rate of growth and fusion and as such the skeletal remains were compared to this known rate. For further confirmation dental eruption and wear was also analysed as this is a strong indicator of age once the skeleton has finished its main growth phase. The process of fusion happens at a variable, but known and predictable rate, beginning in childhood and ending, generally, in early adulthood. One of the latest bones in which epiphyseal fusion occurs is the clavicle. For the great majority of cases growth has been completed by the age of 28, at which point changes to the bone and skeletal structure become degenerative.

For both sets of remains all epiphyses (where present due to taphonomic processes) were completely fused and the epiphyseal lines had been obliterated.

An additional single fragment of unfused femoral or humeral head was recovered, although this is likely to be an intrusive piece from another set of unexcavated remains, or a single anomalous bone.

Mandible 1-

Consists of both left and right mandible, with only a fragment of the left mandibular ramus being absent. Although all teeth are absent it is evident that adult dentition had been present ante-mortem, with the exception of the left 2nd molar where there some degree of alveolar bone growth can be seen. From the number of tooth sockets present this individual was an adult and had their secondary dentition but an age cannot be given from this evidence alone.

Mandible 2-

Smaller in size than above. The teeth present are consistent with being mostly adult dentition with wear, and a small number of anomalies. From right to left: M2, M1, PM2 absent, PM1, an unerupted canine, I2, damaged socket for I1 and the same for left I1. Similarly, pre-molar 2 is absent on the left side of the mandible. There is extensive wear to both first molars, little to the present incisor and

almost no wear to both second molars. This suggests a minimum age of approximately 40 and more probably the individual was between the ages of 45 and 55 at time of death.

SEX

The main areas which were taken into consideration were the pelvis, mandible, mastoid process and supraorbital ridge on the cranium. The long bones present were relatively small and thin with no overly pronounced muscle attachments.

A left and right ilium were recovered in addition to a right ischium. A wide angle of greater sciatic notch was observed, in addition to considerable flaring of the iliac crest.

On both mandibles the overall size and shape was relatively small and gracile, with no flaring of the gonial angle. The supraorbital ridges on both skulls were thin and prominent.

Overall the human remains display characteristics of gracility, and this, combined with the prominent facial features and broad greater sciatic notch indicate the remains are female.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

In order to estimate stature of one set of remains the length of a single femur was taken, measuring in at 430mm. This bone was chosen as it was the only long bone which had both epiphyses present. This figure was then put into Trotter's regression model (see technical notes). Measurements are taken only from the bones where both proximal and distal epiphyses are present so as such the total number of measurements taken was greatly reduced due to the overall condition of the remains. The result showed the following:

White Female (femur measurement) = 160.31 ± 3.72 cm.

From this, it can be stated that when living, the female would have stood between 156.6 and 164cm tall (5' 1" – 5' 4").

As no epiphyseal lines were observed on the long bones the individuals would not have gone through any more skeletal development with the exception of degenerative changes.

OTHER OBSERVATIONS AND INDIVIDUATING FEATURES

Noteworthy here is the apparent discrepancy in the condition of the remains. Taking the first individual, the remains display little staining and are robust when handled. No localised staining on any of the bones were observed. The second set of remains is less robust, with extensive pitting and black spotted staining observed on all surfaces. In places some layers of lamellar bone had flaked off revealing cleaner bone beneath.

All sets of remains were recovered in very close proximity, so as a result several hypotheses need to be addressed. Firstly, the stained set of remains may have been subject to a secondary burial, with the

primary stage being under a different set of environmental conditions. Secondly, it is possible that there is a difference in the age of remains and they have become commingled as a result of more modern taphonomic processes.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

With the exception of the unusual dentition in the second mandible, discussed above, no bone pathologies were observed. There were no signs of ante- or peri-mortem trauma which could contribute to the cause of death and no signs of chronic infection were observed on any of the bones. Due to the extensive disturbance of the area to the front of the building from more recent laying of cables it may not be possible to conclusively determine in what condition remains were originally deposited.

CONCLUSION

Two distinctive sets of human remains, with the slight possibility of some commingling from a third, were recovered in close proximity to each other within the grounds of the hospital. The sexes of both skeletons are female and both were fully grown adults. With the exception of one anomalous unfused epiphyses no evidence of juveniles was observed. Modern taphonomic processes, including 20th century service works, has resulted in extensive disturbance to both sets of remains.

Dating evidence from the site suggest that these pre-date the civil war demolition of the site and as such may represent Medieval burials associated with St Johns Hospital between the late 12th and early 17th centuries.

Appendix A

Human bone material by context:

CONTEXT (1)

1 x Thoracic vertebra
1 x Fragment of humeral/femoral head
1 x Fragment of zygomatic
1 x Talus
1 x L Calcaneus
1 x R Calcaneus
2 x Unidentifiable fragments

CONTEXT (2)

4 x Metatarsals
1 x Rib
1 x Fragment of skull
3 x Unidentifiable fragments

CONTEXT (9)

2 x R Mandible
2 x L Mandible
1 x Mandible fragment
1 x R Mandibular ramus
1 x R Maxilla
3 x Maxilla fragments
2 x L Temporal
2 x Occipital
38 x Skull fragments
1 x L Zygomatic
1 x R Zygomatic
1 x Zygomatic fragment
6 x unidentifiable vertebrae fragments
8 x Cervical and Thoracic vertebrae fragments
26 x Lumbar and Thoracic vertebrae fragments
2 x Thoracic vertebrae
2 x proximal end of R Radius
1 x distal end of R Radius
1 x proximal end of L Radius
1 x proximal end and metaphysis of Radius
1 x L Humerus
1 x R Humerus
1 x distal epiphysis of L Humerus
1 x distal epiphysis of R Humerus
1 x Humeral head
1 x L Ulna
1 x proximal epiphysis of L Ulna
1 x R Ulna
1 x Ulna fragment
1 x Lunate
1 x Hamate
1 x hand bone fragment

1 x L 1st Metacarpal
1 x R 1st Metacarpal
1 x L 4th Metacarpal
4 x Metacarpals
1 x 2nd Intermediate hand phalange
1 x 5th Intermediate hand phalange
2 x Intermediate hand phalanges
9 x Hand phalange fragments
1 x L Clavicle
1 x R Clavicle
2 x Clavicle fragments
3 x Scapula fragments
1 x 1st Rib
1 x L Rib
40 x Rib fragments
4 x Sacrum fragments
1 x Coccyx fragment
1 x L Ilium
1 x R Ilium (missing Iliac crest)
1 x R Iscium
1 x metaphysis and proximal end of L Femur
1 x metaphysis and proximal end of R Femur
1 x distal epiphysis of Femur
1 x Femoral head fragment
1 x L Patella
1 x L Tibia
1 x distal end of R Tibia
1 x Tibia? fragment
1 x Fibula
4 x Fibula fragments
1 x L Talus
1 x R Talus
1 x R Cuboid
1 x L Cuboid
1 x L? Intermediate Cuneiform
1 x L 1st Metatarsal
1 x R 1st Metatarsal
1 x L 3rd Metatarsal
1 x R 5th Metatarsal
1 x L 5th Metatarsal
3 x Metatarsal fragment
1 x L 1st proximal foot phalange
1 x R 1st proximal foot phalange
1 x foot phalange
2 x Metacarpal/tarsal fragments
3 x Unidentifiable long bone fragments
110 (Approx) x Unidentifiable flakes and fragments

OASIS FORM

APPENDIX 4

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

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OASIS ID: lparchae1-215070

Project details

Project name	Bluecoat School Front Access Ramp
Short description of the project	Excavations to the front (east) of the Bluecoat School, Chester, for a new access ramp.
Project dates	Start: 23-05-2014 End: 23-01-2915
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	CHE/UNS 14 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	LP1556C - 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	WALL Medieval
Monument type	BURIAL Medieval
Significant Finds	AMPHORA HANDLE Roman
Significant Finds	VESSEL Post Medieval
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

Project location

Country	England
Site location	CHESHIRE CHESTER CHESTER Bluecoat School
Postcode	CH1 4EH
Study area	43.00 Square metres

Site coordinates SJ 340377 366703 52.9230717363 -2.98125739371 52 55 23 N 002 58 52 W
Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 30.00m Max: 31.00m

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 Matt Jones

Type of sponsor/funding body Developer

Name of sponsor/funding body Chester Municipal Charities/Read Construction

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Cheshire Museum Service

Physical Archive ID LP1556C

Physical Contents "Animal Bones","Ceramics","Glass","Human Bones"

Digital Archive recipient Cheshire Museum Service

Digital Archive ID LP1556C

Digital Contents "Human Bones"

Digital Media available "GIS","Text","Images raster / digital photography","Spreadsheets","Survey"

Paper Archive recipient Cheshire Museum Service

Paper Archive ID LP1556C

Paper Contents "Human Bones"

Paper Media available "Context sheet","Drawing","Matrices","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section","Survey "

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

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Entered by b Poole (chester@lparchaeology.com)

Entered on 22 June 2015

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