

Archaeological Mitigation Report for

THE GROVES CHESTER

For Dwr Cymru/Costain

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L-P:ARCHÆOLOGY

Archaeological Mitigation Report for

THE GROVES CHESTER

Client: Dwr Cymru/Costain

Local Authority: Cheshire West and Chester Council

NGR: 340766,365864

Planning App: 08/02033 FUL

Author(s): B Poole

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Site Code: CHE/GVS 09

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Abstract

Archaeological mitigation was carried out during groundworks at The Groves, Chester. The work was implemented due to the potential for archaeological remains on the site, previously identified during an archaeological watching brief. The work was carried out by L - P : Archaeology. This report has been prepared by Blair Poole of L – P : Archaeology on behalf of Dwr Cymru.

The objectives of the mitigation were to identify and record any archaeological features or deposits which may remain in situ.

The site is located on a level area of land on the north bank of the River Dee. The level of the site has been raised using imported 19th century make-up deposits to form a promenade along the river. There is no evidence for earlier activity on the site.

Below the 20th century surface was approximately 2m of backfill directly overlying the alluvial Dee silt. The backfill was dated to the 19th century through the ceramic assemblage. Building material dating to the 18th century was also present within this backfill. The quality of some of the material indicate that this may have been from a high status dwelling demolished in the early to mid 19th century.

1. Introduction

1.1.This report details the results of an archaeological mitigation carried out at The Groves for Dwr Cymru. The local authority is Cheshire West and Chester Council.

1.2.The fieldwork was carried out by Blair Poole of L – P : Archaeology between 19th January and 22nd March 2010. This report was written by Blair Poole of L - P : Archaeology.

1.3.The site is located at The Groves, Chester, CH1 1SD (FIGURE 1). The NGR is 340766,365864

1.4.The site code allocated by Chester Archaeology is CHE/GVS 09.

1.5.This report should be read in conjunction with the report on the earlier archaeological watching brief carried out in 2008 (POOLE 2008A).

2. Site Background

2.1.PLANNING

- 2.1.1. Planning consent has been granted for upgrading works to Chester's water services. The application reference is 08/02033 FUL.
- 2.1.2. The site is located within the Chester City conservation area and within the Area of Archaeological Importance for Chester.
- 2.1.3. The Local Planning Authority is Cheshire West and Chester Council who take advice from Chester Archaeology.
- 2.1.4. When considering an application, Cheshire West and Chester Council is bound by the policy frameworks provided by Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG 16), and the policies within the Local Plan, ENV 31, ENV 32, ENV 33 and ENV 34. As such, the following condition was attached to the development.

Condition 5

No development shall take place within the application site area until full details of a programme of archaeological work (including machine removal of modern deposits under archaeological direction, followed by hand excavation of the affected earlier features) has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The archaeological works shall be undertaken/allowed to be undertaken wholly in accordance with the agreed project design.

- 2.1.5. Dwr Cymru and Cheshire West and Chester Council have agreed the methodology for these works in POOLE 2008B. The specification for works was based on advice provided by Chester Archaeology.
- 2.1.6. This document seeks to satisfy the condition by describing the results of the mitigation and clarifying the status and location of the project archive.

2.2.GEOLOGY

- 2.2.1. The underlying solid geology has been recorded around the site area as pebble beds and Lower Mottled Sandstone of the Sherwood Sandstone Group (BRITISH GEOLOGICAL SURVEY MAP 109).
- 2.2.2. Previous groundworks on the site, carried out in 2008, revealed deep 19th and

20th century make-up deposits to a depth of 3.8mOD, 2.3m below the current ground level. These make-up deposits sealed alluvial silts associated with the River Dee.

2.3.TOPOGRAPHY

2.3.1. The site is located 600m to the southeast of Chester city centre on the north bank of the River Dee at the base of a steep slope leading from Grosvenor Park (FIGURE 1).

2.3.2. The site is situated along The Groves, a single track road and landscaped promenade running alongside the River Dee at an elevation of approximately 6mOD. To the north of the site is Grosvenor Park. The Boat House public house is located to the east of the site, with Grosvenor Rowing Club boathouse to the northwest of the site (FIGURE 2). The southern boundary of the site is marked by the river.

2.4.SITE CONDITIONS

2.4.1. The site is currently used as a paved promenade along the north bank of the River Dee. The site area had been raised up in the 19th century to form a walkway along the river side.

2.5.ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

2.5.1. The archaeology and history section below has been taken from POOLE 2008.

Prehistoric

2.5.2. Although there is no evidence of Prehistoric activity on the site, artefacts and features identified at the amphitheatre site and Grosvenor Park suggests the area could have been used at this time.

Roman

2.5.3. The fortress of Deva was established around 79AD, occupied by the Twentieth Legion. The fortress was located 400m to the west of the site, however the canabae, or civilian settlement, may have extended closer (CARRINGTON 1994, 37 & MASON 2002, 55). As the site lies along the banks of the River Dee it is possible

that the site area was used sporadically during the Roman period for fishing. No evidence for Roman activity has previously been recovered from the site area.

Early Medieval

- 2.5.4. There is no evidence for any Early Medieval activity on the site, however St John's Church, 200m to the northwest of the site, stands at the location of a 7th century religious institution (MASON 2007, 12).

Medieval

- 2.5.5. It is likely Medieval Chester was based within the Roman area, Lower Bridge Street and the Castle area (CARRINGTON 1994). The site area lies outside of this and no Medieval remains have been recorded on the site or in the immediate vicinity (CARRINGTON 1994, 65). As this section of the Dee is thought to represent the ancient watercourse it is possible that evidence of activity from this date may survive in the river silts.

Post Medieval

- 2.5.6. From the end of the Medieval period Chester continued to grow, and by the 16th century the settlement area spread out towards Boughton to the east. Early cartographic evidence, from the 16th century onwards, shows the site as being unoccupied river bank. This continues until the 18th century when it is thought that The Groves were originally landscaped by Charles Coughton in 1725, originally designed as a tree lined promenade for people to walk by the river (BOUGHTON 1997, 118). This tree lined avenue can be seen on Lavaux's map of Chester dated 1745 (FIGURE 3) through to Cole's map of 1851.
- 2.5.7. By the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of the area dated 1874 the Boat House, built in early the 1850s, can be seen, however the area to the north of the site is shown as open land. The 1899 edition Ordnance Survey map shows the site layout as it currently exists (FIGURE 3). The site layout remains unchanged from the 1899 edition on the 1911, 1954 and 1961 edition Ordnance Survey maps (FIGURE 4). The road to the north was resurfaced with tarmac in the late 20th century with the site area surfaced with granite sets.

3. Aims and Objectives

3.1. The general aims of the archaeological mitigation were to preserve by record any archaeological features uncovered during groundworks.

3.2. The specific aims of the archaeological mitigation, as defined by the advisor to Cheshire West and Chester Council were:

- ◆ Investigate and record archaeological deposits, artefacts and features identified during ground works
- ◆ Monitor for the presence of potential waterlogged remains such as early boat timbers or quay structures

4. Methodology

- 4.1. For a full description of the archaeological methodology please refer to section 6 of the agreed specification of works (POOLE 2008B).
- 4.2. Dwr Cymru's groundworks contractor, Dawnus, used a 13 tonne tracked excavator with a 1.5m wide trenching bucket. The upper make up deposits were excavated to a depth of 1.6m below the current ground level. Sheet piles were then inserted around the perimeter of the excavation area and all further groundwork, to a depth of 3.2m below ground level, was carried out within this safety barrier.
- 4.3. Once the agreed depth of machine removal had been reached, at the top of the alluvial silt, the exposed deposit was investigated by hand and assessed. As no features were identified, after approval was gained from the advisor to the Local Authority, machine excavation continued. This was carried out in shallow intervals to carefully monitor the deposit for buried remains, features or artefacts.

5. Results

- 5.1. This section will detail the results of the archaeological excavation carried out on the site. Deposit numbers are given in (parentheses) and cut numbers are given in [square brackets]. All levels in this report are stated in metres above Ordnance Datum (mOD), the benchmark used for the levels was located on the south gates of Grosvenor Park.
- 5.2. The excavation was located 11m to the west of The Boat House public house and measured 8.5m by 5.5m in plan along an east-west alignment and was excavated to a maximum depth of 2.9mOD (FIGURE 5).
- 5.3. The uppermost context, (100), the granite set surface, and its sub base of fine yellow sand (101) and grey aggregate (102) were removed prior to site attendance. These deposits were noted outside the excavation area and during the previous watching brief on the site (POOLE 2008A). The granite sets measured 0.2m by 0.2m by 0.2m and were laid in a regular pattern without mortar. The sub base, (101) and (102), measured 0.2m thick.
- 5.4. Underlying (102) was a 0.5m thick deposit of loose yellow sand and silt (103). This deposit contained 20th century ceramic and metal debris. Below (103) was a 0.71m thick make-up deposit (106) of loose dark brown silt. This contained rubble fragments as well as 19th and 20th century ceramic, metal and plastic.
- 5.5. Deposit (107) was located below (106) and was made up of a dark brown silt and clay measuring 0.9m deep. Within (107) were 19th century ceramic and metal fragments and brick rubble. At the base of (107) a series of three timber fragments were identified. These were approximately 1m by 0.3m by 0.3m in size and pressed into the lower alluvial deposit (109). It is thought that these timbers, from their form, were parts of a demolished 18th century building and were not *in situ*. Deposits (103), (106) and (107) can all be seen to be post 19th century make-up deposits associated with the development of The Groves as a public promenade. The base of these deposits was identified at 3.6mOD.
- 5.6. Sealed by these make-up deposits was (109) which was made up of fine laminated alluvial silt. This deposit extended beyond the base of the excavation area at a depth

of 2.9mOD. It is clear that this lowest deposit relates to the natural activity of the River Dee and is indicative of flooding and tidal activity.

5.7. The southern boundary of the excavation area was the 20th century river wall (105), described in detail in the previous watching brief report (POOLE 2008A).



Plate 1 - View of excavated area at maximum depth, looking west

5.8. FINDS

5.8.1. No finds were collected from the site.

6. Discussion and Conclusions

- 6.1. The archaeological mitigation was carried out on the site by L – P : Archaeology on behalf of Dwr Cymru between January and March 2010.
- 6.2. The results of the mitigation indicate that underlying the 20th century granite sets and associated sub base there is a series of three 19th century make-up deposits. These all appear to be contemporary deposits of imported material used to raise and level the area to form a promenade for public access along the north bank of the River Dee. This is likely a consolidation of the earlier 18th century tree-lined avenue, which is recorded as falling into decline during the 19th century.
- 6.3. The make-up material included potential 18th century building material and it is thought that this relates to the demolition of a high quality structure in the vicinity.
- 6.4. The make-up deposits extended to a depth of 2.9mOD, 3.2m below the current ground level and sealed in the natural alluvial silts of the river.
- 6.5. No archaeological finds or features were present on site.

7. Archive

7.1. The paper archive consists of:

- ◆ 1 x Drawing Register
- ◆ 7 x Drawing Film
- ◆ 2 x Photographic Register
- ◆ 2 x Black and white photographs and negatives
- ◆ 1 x Context Register
- ◆ 20 x Context sheets

7.2. There is no finds archive.

7.3. The archive is to be deposited at the Grosvenor Museum, Chester. The archive has been given accession number 2008.112.

8. Sources Consulted

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CARTOGRAPHIC

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- Hughes, 1643, Map of Chester
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- 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
- Gresty, 1870, Map of Chester
- Ordnance Survey, 1874, 25" Scale map of Chester
- Ordnance Survey, 1899, 25" Scale map of Chester
- Ordnance Survey, 1911, 1:10,000 Scale map of Chester
- Ordnance Survey, 1954, 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

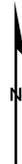
FIGURES

FIGURE I // Site Location General



Scale 1:25,000 @ A4

0 1,000m



PROJECT // 0755C - The Groves, Chester

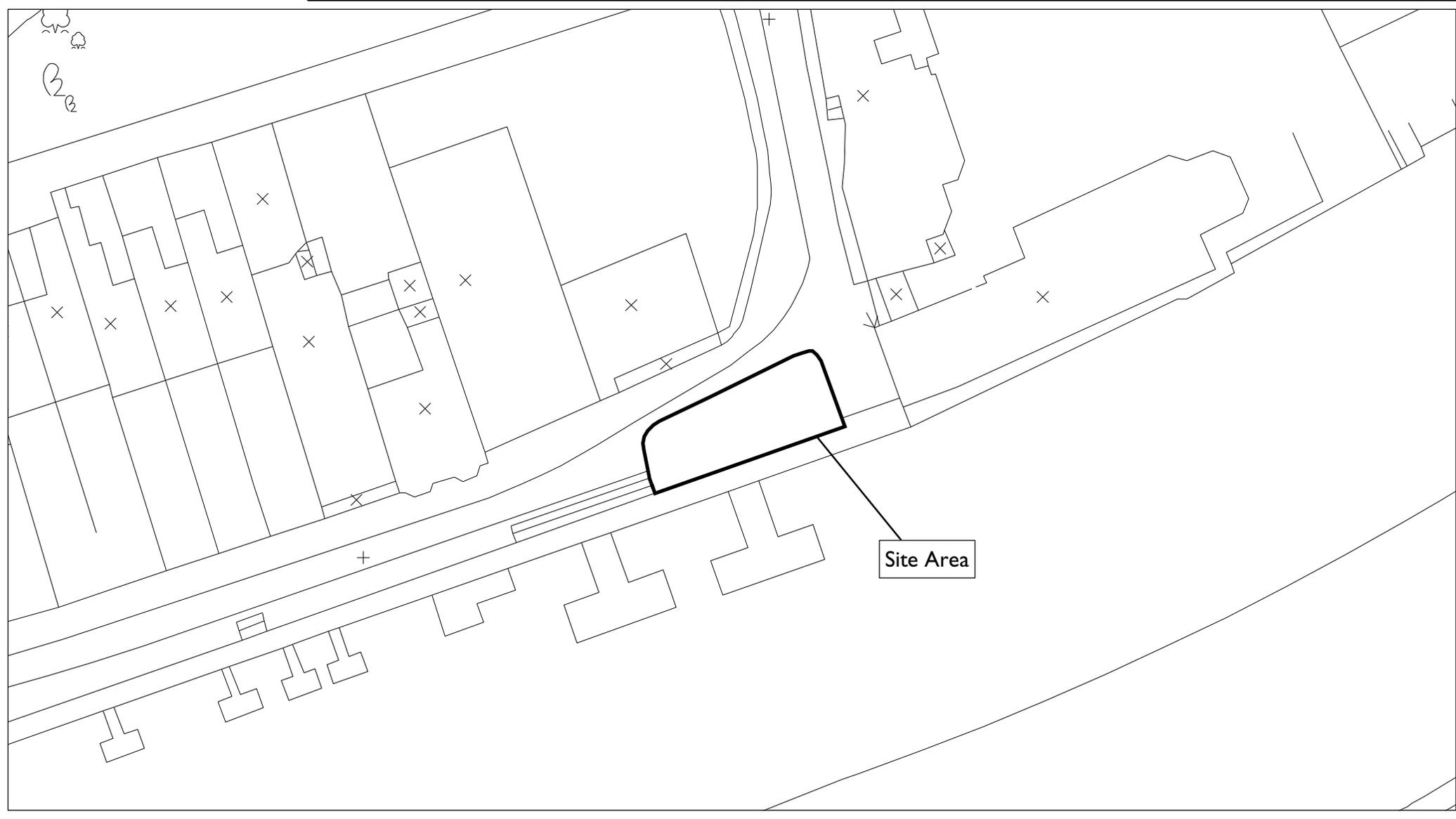
DESCRIPTION // Site Location General

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FIGURE 2 // Site Location Detailed



Scale 1:1,500 @ A4

0 10m



PROJECT // 0755C - The Groves, Chester

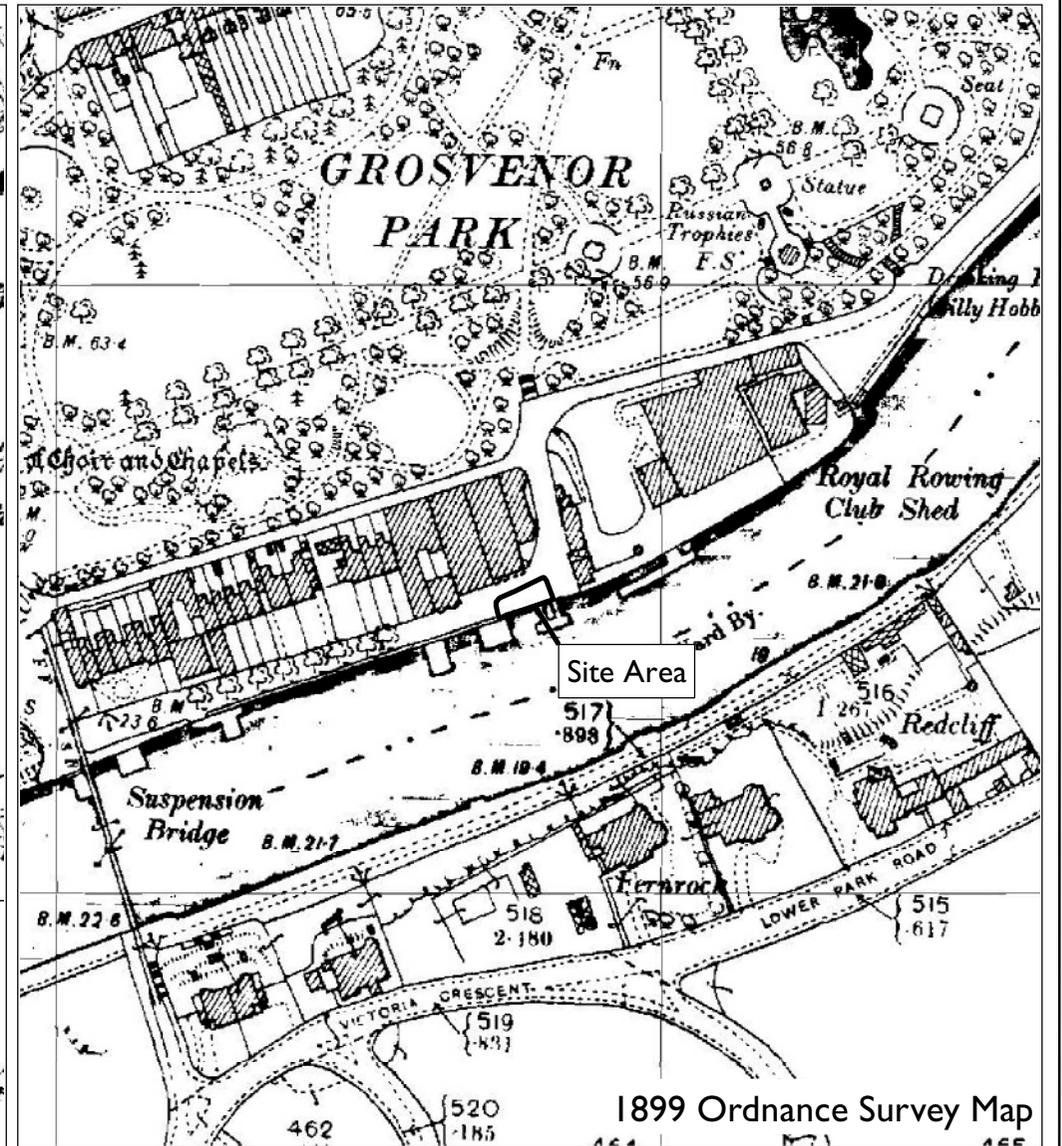
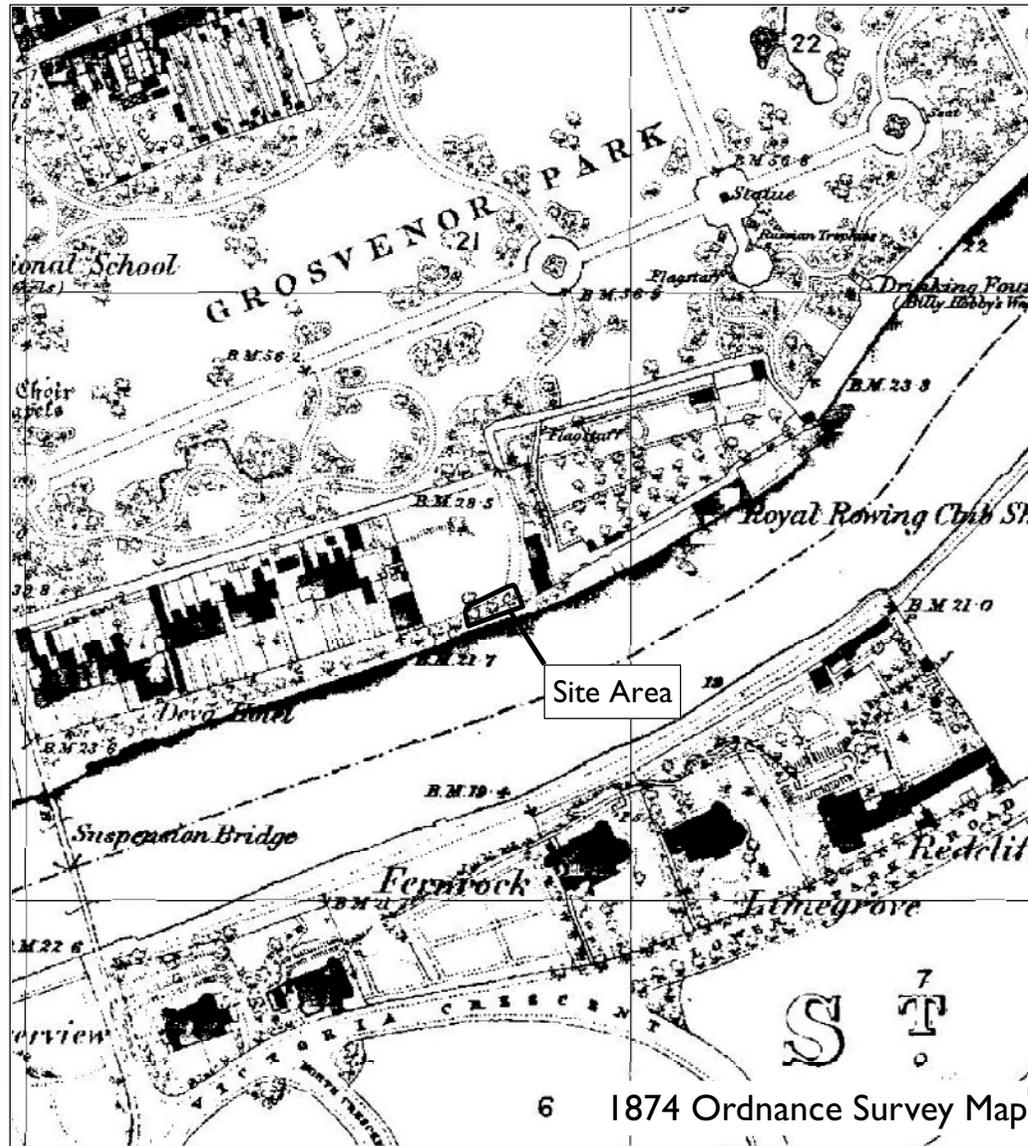
DESCRIPTION // Site Location Detailed

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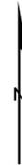
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FIGURE 3 // 1874 and 1899 OS Maps



Scale 1:2,500 @ A4

0 100m



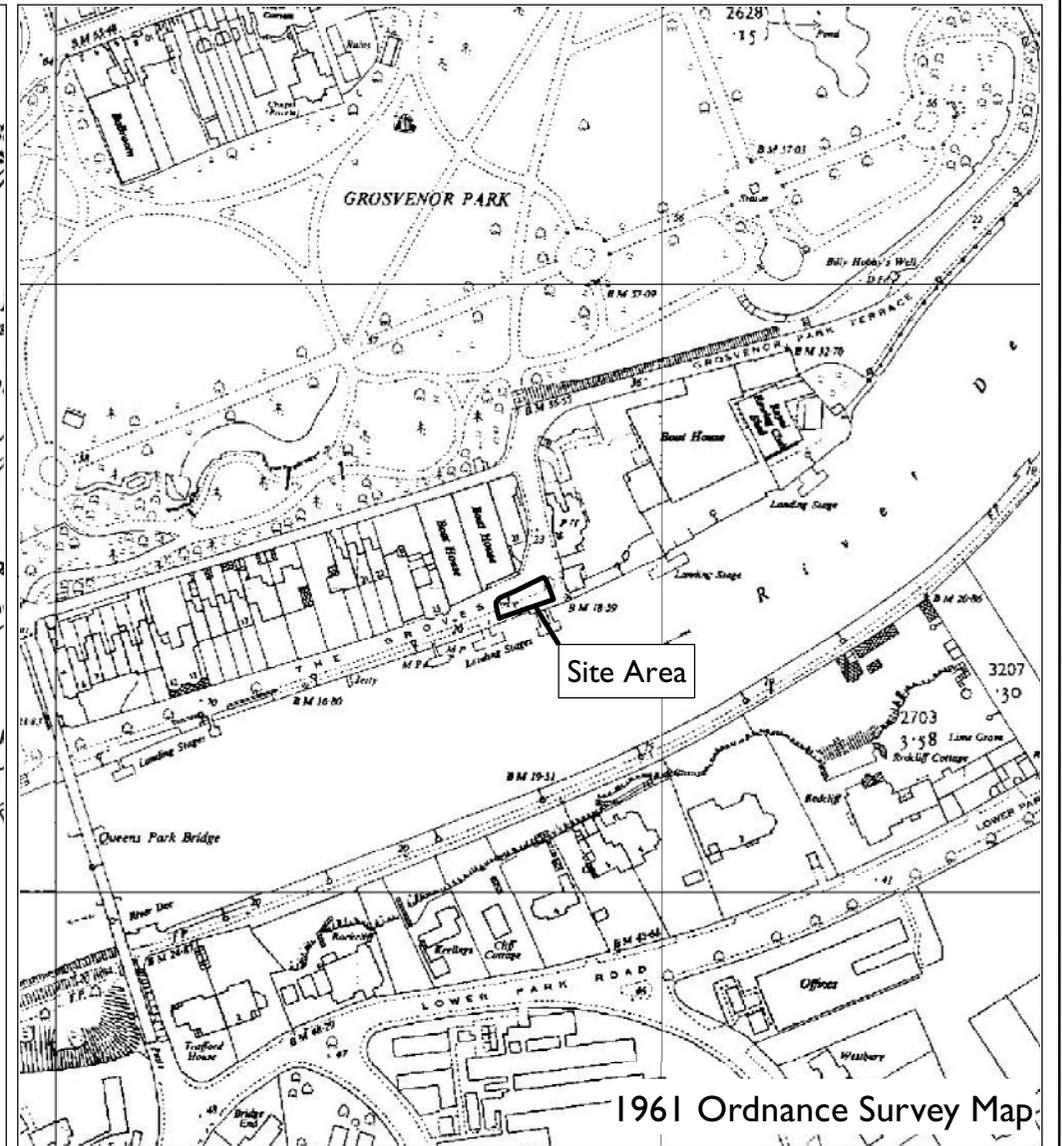
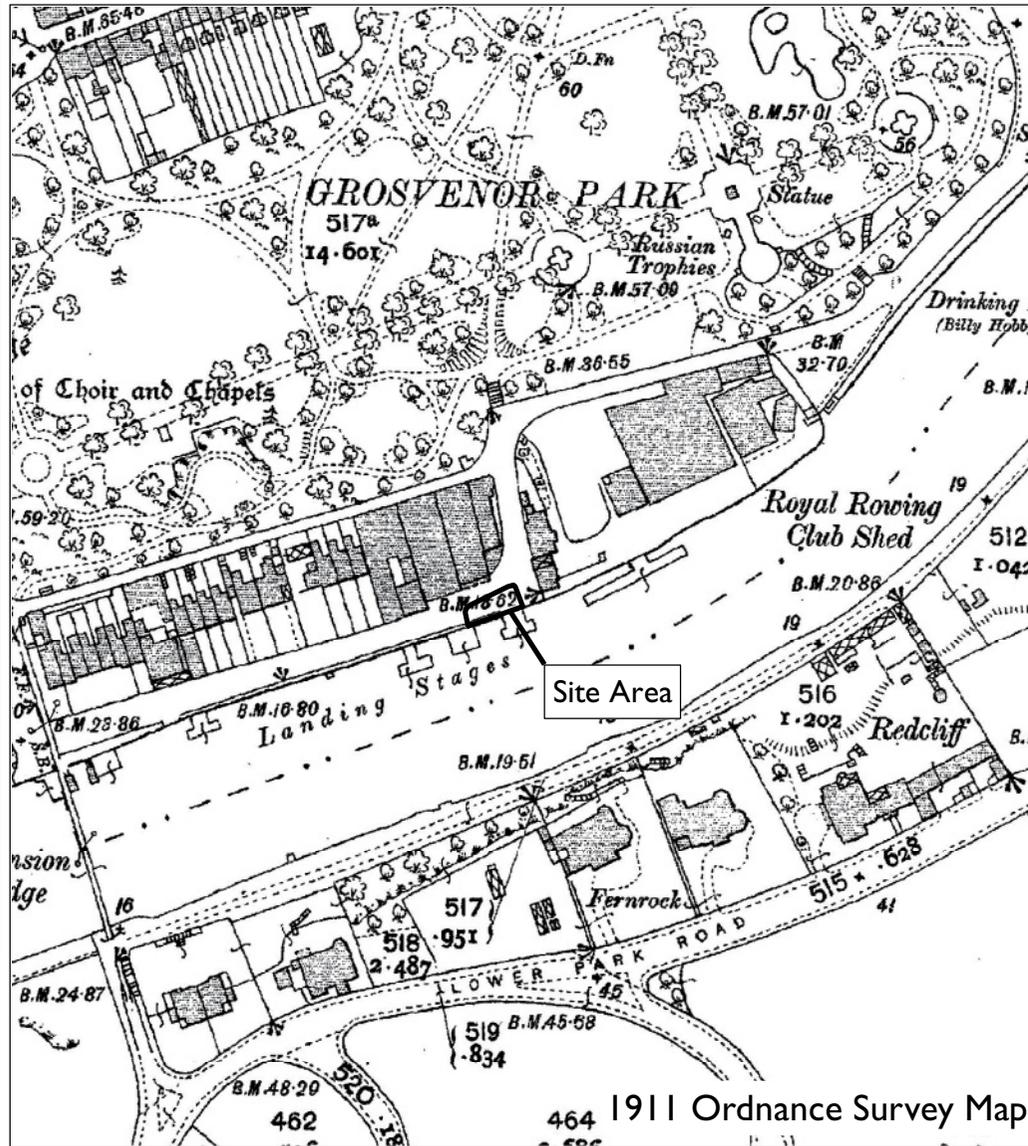
PROJECT // 0755C - The Groves, Chester

DESCRIPTION // 1874 and 1899 Ordnance Survey Map

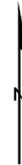
DOC REF: LP0755C-AMR-v1

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FIGURE 4 // 1911 and 1961 OS Maps



Scale 1:2,500 @ A4



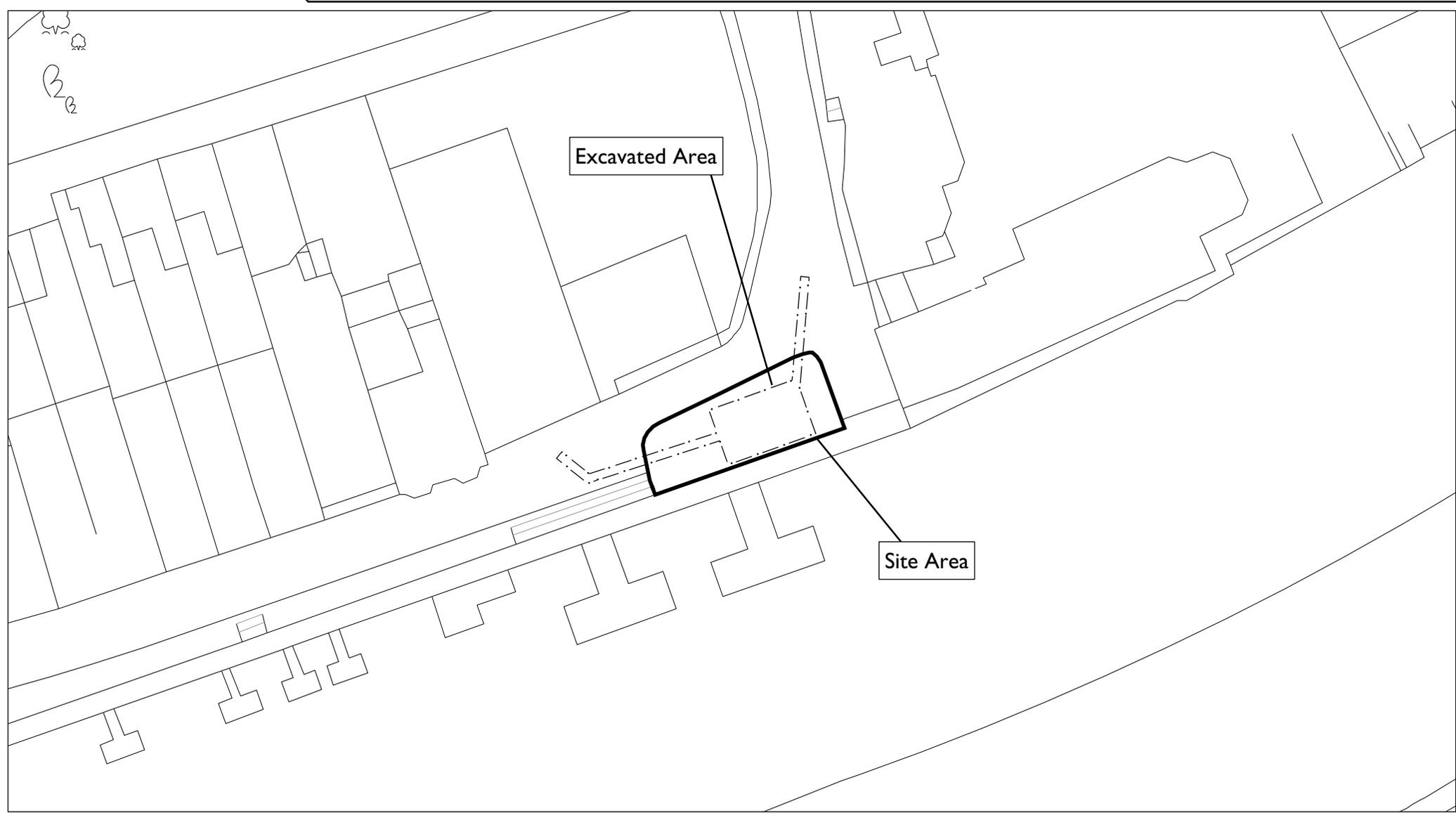
PROJECT // 0755C - The Groves, Chester

DESCRIPTION // 1911 and 1961 Ordnance Survey Map

DOC REF: LP0755C-AMR-v1

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FIGURE 5 // Limit of Excavation



Scale 1:1,500 @ A4

0 10m



PROJECT // 0755C - The Groves, Chester

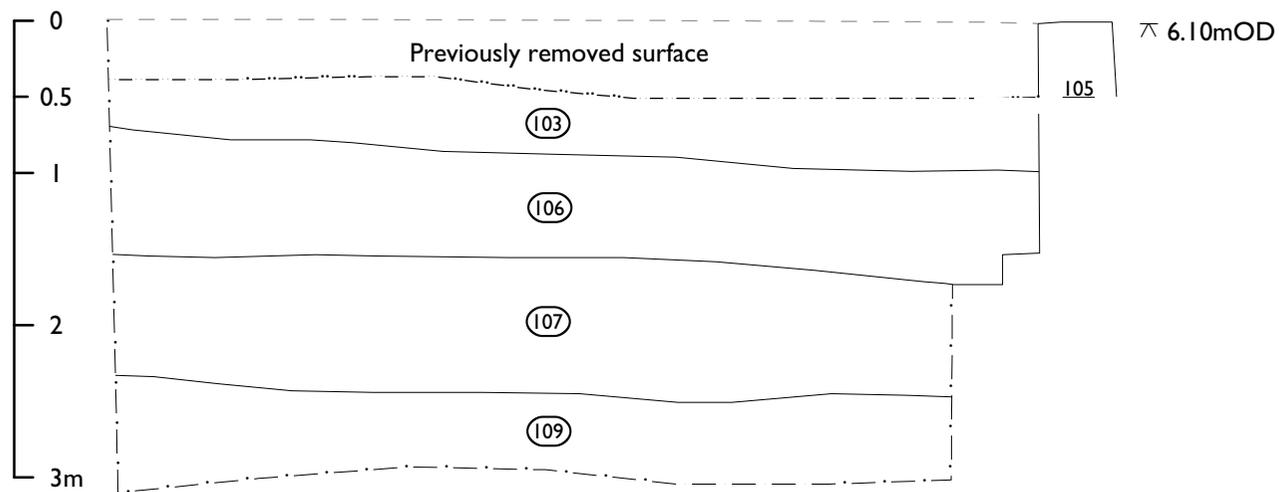
DESCRIPTION // Limit of Excavation

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FIGURE 6 // West Facing Section



Scale 1:50 @ A4

PROJECT // 0755C - The Groves, Chester

DESCRIPTION // West Facing Section of Excavation Area

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OASIS FORM

APPENDIX I

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

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OASIS ID: lparchae1-74947

Project details

Project name	The Groves
Short description of the project	Archaeological mitigation at The Groves, Chester
Project dates	Start: 01-12-2009 End: 26-03-2010
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	CHE/GVS 09 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	CHEGM2008.112 - Museum accession ID
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)
Site status	Conservation Area
Current Land use	Transport and Utilities 2 - Other transport infrastructure
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	'Full excavation'
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

Project location

Country	England
Site location	CHESHIRE CHESTER CHESTER The Groves
Postcode	CH1 1SD
Study area	420.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	SJ 340766 365864 52.9223223375 -2.980661766280 52 55 20 N 002 58 50 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 2.90m Max: 6.10m

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	Claire Statter
Type of sponsor/funding body	Water Authority/Company
Name of sponsor/funding body	Dwr Cymru

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive Exists?	No
Paper Archive recipient	Grosvenor Museum
Paper Archive ID	CHEGM 2008.112
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 Mitigation Report for The Groves, Chester
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Other bibliographic details	LP0755C-AMR-v1.2
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Entered by	B Poole (b.poole@lparchaeology.com)
Entered on	26 March 2010

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