Archaeological Watching Brief Report

ST MARTIN'S WAY

For Cheshire West and Chester Council

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L~P:ARCHÆOLOGY

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Client:	Cheshire West and Chester Council
Local Authority:	Cheshire West and Chester Council
NGR:	340303,366458
Planning App:	10/11464/FUL
Author(s):	B Poole
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Site Code:	CHE/SMW 10

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Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was carried out during groundwork at St Martin's Way, Chester. The watching brief was implemented because of the existence of known archaeological remains on the site, following results from an evaluation carried out by L - P: Archaeology in September 2010. The work was carried out by Blair Poole and Claire Statter of L - P: Archaeology. This report has been prepared by Blair Poole of L - P: Archaeology on behalf of Cheshire West and Chester Council.

The site has been shown to be the location of 1st to 4th century Roman barracks. Previous archaeological work on the site has shown that it was not developed until the 19th century. At this time terraced buildings were built off Princess Street and St Martin's Way. In the 20th century a Masonic Lodge was built at the northeastern end of the site, followed by a Mission Hall and bowling green, and finally a clinical centre .

The objectives of the Watching Brief were to monitor groundwork to ensure that excavations did not penetrate known archaeological deposits and to record any archaeological finds, features or deposits not previously identified on the site.

The deposits encountered in the bowling green and Masonic Lodge areas matched those identified during previous evaluation work. The deposits were all post Medieval in date relating to the construction of the Masonic Lodge and bowling green. Earlier deposits were encountered outside of the footprint for the Masonic Lodge, however these were also shown to be post Medieval in date.

1. Introduction

- 1.1.This report details the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at St Martin's Way, Chester for Cheshire West and Chester Council. The local authority is Cheshire West and Chester.
- 1.2. The fieldwork was carried out by Blair Poole and Claire Statter of L P : Archaeology between 25th October to 15th December. This report was written by Blair Poole of L P : Archaeology.
- 1.3. The site is located in at St Martin's Way, Chester (FIGURE 1). The National Grid Reference is 340303,366458.
- 1.4. The site code allocated by Chester West and Chester Council is CHE/SMW 10.
- **1.5.**The groundworks were carried out in accordance with a method statement prepared by E. McDonald of Morgan.

2. Site Background

2.1.PLANNING

- 2.1.1. Planning consent has been granted for the construction of a temporary ground level arena, public park area and coach drop off area. The application reference is 10/11464/FUL.
- **2.1.2.** The site lies within an Area of Archaeological Importance and within the Chester City Conservation Area.
- **2.1.3.** The local planning authority is Cheshire West and Chester Council who take advice from the City Archaeologist, Mike Morris.
- **2.1.4.** When considering an application, the local authority is bound by local policy ENV 32 regarding archaeology and planning. As such, the following condition was attached to the development:

Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority, prior to commencement of development the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, shall secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which shall first have been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The work shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved scheme.

2.1.5. This document seeks to satisfy the condition by describing the results of the watching brief and clarifying the status and location of the project archive.

2.2.GEOLOGY

- **2.2.1.** The British Geological Survey for the site records the superficial (drift) deposits as clay, silt and sand and the solid deposits as undifferentiated sandstone and conglomerate (BGS SHEET 109).
- **2.2.2.** The natural geology on the site was not seen during the monitoring due to the shallow nature of the groundworks.

2.3.TOPOGRAPHY

- **2.3.1.** The site is located within the centre of Chester within the City Walls(FIGURE 1).
- 2.3.2. The site is bound by Hunter Street to the north, Hunter's Walk to the east, Princess Street to the south and St Martin's Way to the west (FIGURE 2).
- 2.3.3. The site slopes from the east at 28.52mOD to 23.23mOD to the west.
- **2.3.4.** The site is currently vacant and has been cleared of all vegetation.

2.4.ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

- **2.4.1.** A detailed archaeological and historical background was written by L P: Archaeology as part of an archaeological evaluation carried out in September 2010. For this background information please refer to STATTER & POOLE 2010.
- 2.4.2. The site has been shown to be the location of 1st to 4th century Roman barracks. Previous archaeological work on the site has shown that it was not developed until the 19th century. At this time terraced buildings were built off Princess Street and St Martin's Way. In the 20th century a Masonic Lodge was built at the northeastern end of the site, followed by a Mission Hall and bowling green, and finally a clinical centre .

3. Aims and Objectives

3.1.The aims of the archaeological watching brief were to monitor groundworks to ensure that archaeologically sensitive deposits were not penetrated and to record the character, date, type, state of preservation, and extent of any archaeological remains on site exposed or disturbed during groundworks.

4. Methodology

- **4.1.** A drawing showing the zones of archaeological potential was submitted following the archaeological evaluation undertaken by L P: Archaeology. This drawing (FIGURE 3) outlined the areas in which the presence of archaeology was most likely. As such each area was subject to differing levels of monitoring.
- **4.2.**The methodology for this project was agreed between Mike Morris, City Archaeologist, and L P: Archaeology prior to site works commencing.
- **4.3.**The client's groundwork contractor, using appropriate sized plant and method, undertook all groundworks. A suitably qualified archaeologist was present to monitor all agreed groundworks.
- **4.4.**The Museum of London Archaeological Site Manual (SPENCE 1994), was used as a guide for the recording system.
- 4.5. Context sheets included all relevant descriptions and stratigraphic relationships.
- **4.6.**A site location plan was annotated showing investigation areas and the development site in relation to the surrounding locality.
- **4.7.**The extent of archaeological deposits was recorded in plan and section. Sections containing significant deposits were drawn at 1:20.
- **4.8.**An full photographic record was compiled including black and white prints and colour slide (on 35mm film) as well as digital media.
- **4.9.** A register of all photographs taken was kept in standardised form.

5. Results

- **5.1.**The archaeological monitoring was carried out in discrete areas, defined by the agreed method statement (MCDONALD 2010). These areas are outlined on **FIGURE 3**.
- **5.2.**Results are given below sub divided by distinct area. Not all context numbers referred to in the text are illustrated, but all are in the archive. Deposit numbers are given in (parentheses) and cut numbers are given in [square brackets]. All levels are given as metres OD.

5.3.TOPSOIL STRIP

5.3.1. The initial topsoil stripping across the entire site area was monitored at the outset of the project (PLATE 1). This phase of monitoring confirmed the results of the previous evaluation carried out in September 2010 (STATTER & POOLE 2010). The topsoil strip revealed that a 0.2m thick layer of topsoil (1) overlay a 0.05m thick spread of loose yellow sand (2). This in turn overlay a 0.1m thick layer of loose black clinker material. Deposits (2) and (3) were previously identified as make up for a 20th century bowling green that covered most of the eastern half of the site.



Plate 1 - Site area following topsoil strip, looking north

5.3.2. Bounding the eastern perimeter and extending 12m onto the site area was a deep deposit of loose rubble (7). This will be discussed in more detail in Area 2, below.

5.4.AREA1

5.4.1. Area 1 was located along the northern boundary of the site aligned parallel to Hunter Street (FIGURE 3). A trench was excavated measuring 1.6m north south by 45m east west (PLATE 2). This trench was a shallow excavation designated as a planting area along the street front. The trench was excavated 0.3m below the topsoil strip to a depth of 25mOD at its western extent.



Plate 2 - Area 1, looking south. 1m scale

- 5.4.2. As stated above, the upper deposits were identified as a 0.2m of topsoil (1) overlying 0.05m of yellow sand (2) which in turn overlay 0.1m on black clinker (3).
- 5.4.3. Underlying the black clinker was a 0.12m thick layer of soft brown sand (4). This sealed a second layer of black clinker (5), which measured .01m thick. Within the lower clinker layer (5) was a clay land drain <u>9</u> which ran parallel to Hunter street. The cut [8] for the land drain was ephemeral at best and it is thought that the drain was laid at the same time the clinker was deposited.
- 5.4.4. These deposits (2) to (5) and the land drain all form the make up for the 20th century bowling green. The deposits would have been easy to level, creating a good playing surface, and would have good drainage properties.
- 5.4.5. To the northeastern end of Area 1 several sections of fencing were removed bounding Hunter Street. This exposed, but did not cut into, the deposits underlying the road (FIGURE 4). This revealed that the post Medieval and

Roman deposits extended beyond the site boundary and continued under the Hunter Street to the North.



Plate 3 - Hunter Street section, looking north. 1m scale

- 5.4.6. The pavement surface serving Hunter Street is made up of concrete slabs, <u>22</u> (PLATE 3). These measure approximately 0.3 by 0.4m in plan and 0.06m thick. At the eastern extent of Area 1 <u>22</u> could be seen to overlay the topsoil identified on the site (1). Underlying the paving slabs was a 0.35m thick make up layer of soft light brown silt loam (21). This contained 20th century metal and glass fragments and clearly forms a base for the pavement.
- **5.4.7.** Below (21) was a 0.15m thick deposit of mid brown sandy silt (15). This silt was identified during the evaluation carried out on the site in September 2010 (STATTER & POOLE 2010) and is thought to be a Post Medieval levelling layer. The deposit contained charcoal flecks and sandstone fragments as well as root activity. This may have formed a surface for a short period of time as evidenced by darker staining at the upper transition of the deposit and the volume of decomposed grass root activity.
- 5.4.8. Sealed by (15) were two distinct deposits (16) and (17). The upper deposit (16) measured 0.2m thick and comprised a firm light brown sandy silt. As with (15) this was also investigated during the September evaluation and finds from that phase of work dated the deposit to the post Medieval period, likely 18th century garden activity.

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5.4.9. Underlying (16) at 26.29mOD at its eastern extent was a firm light brown sandy silt layer (17). This deposit sloped to the west but kept approximately 0.66m below ground level. No finds were recovered from this deposit, however it was identified during the September evaluation and finds recovered from that phase of work dated the deposit to the Roman period. Finds recovered were fell within a 1st to 3rd century AD date range.

5.5.AREA 2

5.5.1. Area 2 was located to the eastern end of the site, located over the line of a new coach drop off point (FIGURE 5). The area measured 8m by 40m in plan and was excavated to a maximum depth of 26mOD, 1.2m below ground level (PLATE 4).



Plate 4 - Area 2, looking south. 1m scale

- **5.5.2.** The coach drop off area was located over the footprint of a 20th century Masonic Lodge. The majority of Area 2 comprised a loose rubble fill (7). This was identified during the September evaluation as cellar fill of the Masonic Lodge, which was demolished in the early 21st century (STATTER & POOLE 2010).
- **5.5.3.** A 2m by 2m test pit within the rubble area confirmed it as cellar fill, which extended 1.7m below ground level. The rubble is thought to be the construction material of a Masonic Lodge that occupied the area from 1914. As noted above this was demolished in the early 21st century and it appears that the resulting waste was deposited in the cellar area in order to level the site.

The cellar floor had been broken up during this process which has resulted in the rubble sealing a firm light brown sandy silt (16) at 25.2mOD.



Plate 5 - Cellar wall and fill (7), looking east.

- **5.5.4.** The eastern edge of Area 1 was defined by the astern wall footing for the masonic lodge (PLATE 5). This was a brick structure, aligned north south, with cream plaster covering.
- 5.5.5. The north and south walls of the Masonic Lodge were also identified during the archaeological monitoring (FIGURE 5). The north wall of the Masonic Lodge was located 2.5m to the south of hunter Street and was oriented east west.



Plate 6 - Wall <u>24</u>, looking east. 1m scale

- **5.5.6.** The wall was three courses wide of orange brick (240 x 110 x 80mm) and extended beyond the east and west sections of Area 2 (PLATE 6). To the south of $\underline{24}$ the cellar fill (7) was identified. [23], The cut for $\underline{24}$, could be seen to the north of the wall. This cut (16) the firm light brown sandy silt previously identified as a post Medieval deposit (5.4.8.).
- **5.5.7.** At the southern end of the Masonic Lodge two walls were uncovered <u>25</u> and <u>26</u> (FIGURE 6). These represented the original south wall of the Masonic Lodge <u>25</u> and a later 20^{th} century extension foundation <u>26</u>.



Plate 7 - Walls 25 and 26, looking east. 1m scale

- 5.5.8. Wall <u>25</u> ran parallel to <u>24</u>, its northern counterpart and followed the same construction method and materials. The was was three courses wide of orange brick (240 x 110 x 80mm) and extended beyond the east and west sections of Area 2 (PLATE 7). The wall was located 2.9m to the north of Princess Street (FIGURE 5). To the north of <u>25</u> the cellar fill (7) was recorded. To the south of the wall a 0.3m thick make up layer (27) was identified. This was clearly a late 20th century layer containing modern re-enforced concrete fragments and rubble. This deposit had been truncated by Princess Street to the south.
- **5.5.9.** The cut [29] for wall <u>25</u> could be seen along its southern face. This clearly cut the post Medieval deposit (16).
- 5.5.10.A wide concrete footing <u>26</u> was located 1.5m to the south of <u>25</u> (PLATE 7). This footing measured 0.4m wide and extended beyond the east and west

perimeters of Area 2 (FIGURE 5). It is thought that represents the footings for a late 20th century extension to the Masonic Lodge. The cut, [30], for the footing cut the post medieval deposit (16) and was sealed by (27) the 20th century make up layer (FIGURE 6).

5.6.AREA 3

- 5.6.1. Area 3 was located along the southern boundary of the site, 1m to the north of Princess Street (FIGURE 3). The excavations in this area were for a 30m by 0.6m service trench, which extended 0.6m below ground level. Due to the shallow nature of the excavations the trench was restricted to late 20th century deposits. The upper 0.1m was made up of topsoil (1), which sealed the late 20th century rubble deposit (27).
- **5.6.2.** No pre 20th century archaeological deposits were encountered during the excavation for Area 3.

5.7.AREA 4

5.7.1. Area 4 comprised two trial trenches to determine the suitability for service trenches to the south of the site (FIGURE 3). These trenches measured 1.5m by 1.5m in plan and were excavated to a maximum depth of 25.6mOD, 0.5m below ground level (FIGURE 7).



Plate 8 - Area 1, Trench 2, looking east

5.7.2. Following the topsoil strip a layer of sand had been deposited in this area of

the site to raise and level it. This sand can be seen in PLATE 8.

- **5.7.3.** Below the topsoil (1) at a depth of 26mOD the post Medieval firm light brown sandy silt (16) was uncovered (FIGURE 7). This shows that the later post medieval and 20th century make up seen on the eastern half of the site does not extend to the south and western areas of the site. As the western and southern areas were to be built up, rather than excavated, the stratigraphy of these areas were not revealed beyond the two small trial trenches.
- **5.7.4.** Deposit (16) measured 0.3m thick and produced a single ceramic find, a 17th century Staffordshire ware sherd.
- **5.7.5.** Sealed by (16) was a loose red silty clay fill (18) which contained fragments of sandstone, charcoal and exclusively Roman ceramic sherds. Only 0.1m of the deposit was excavated. This Roman deposit was also encountered during the September evaluation, which also only recovered finds from the 1st to 3rd century AD.
- **5.7.6.** At the transition of (16) and (18) a single sherd of green glazed Medieval ceramic was recovered.
- 5.7.7. Due to the shallow nature of the archaeological deposits, identified at a depth of 0.4m below ground level, the area was deemed unsuitable for service trenches.

6. Finds

6.1.All finds discussed in the results section above were briefly assessed and spot dated on site. This information was used during the production of this report as prior to post excavation assessment the finds were lost to fire.

7. Discussion and Conclusions

- 7.1. The groundworks for the redevelopment of Land off St Martin's Way, Chester, underwent a phase of archaeological monitoring between October and December 2010. The site underwent redevelopment to turn a vacant lot to a grassed and planted park space.
- **7.2.**Examination of the available data indicates that the site does not contain any scheduled ancient monuments or listed buildings.
- **7.3.**Previous evaluation work carried out in September 2010 identified highly significant archaeological remains (STATTER & POOLE 2010). The site contains the remains of a Roman barrack block associated with the fortress of *Deva* from the 1st century. It is thought that following the Roman occupation the site was not developed until the 19th century. This allowed the deposition of protective deposits over the barracks during the Medieval and Early Post Medieval periods.
- **7.4.**The watching brief was divided into four areas. Area 1 was located off Hunter Street to the north of the site. Area 2 was located to the eastern end of the site. Area 3 was located at the southeastern end of the site and Area 4 was located to the south western end of the site.
- **7.5.**The results of the archaeological evaluation were confirmed by the archaeological watching brief. A full site matrix can be found in **FIGURE 8**.
- **7.6.** A thin 20th century topsoil covers the site, below which approximately 0.4 to 0.5m of 20th century make up covers the eastern half of the site. This was identified in Areas 1 to 3. Below the 20th century make up a 0.3m post Medieval deposit covers the site in all four areas. This deposit was identified between 26.0 and 26.4mOD and was also identified below the footprint of the 20th century Masonic Lodge footprint in Area 2.
- 7.7.Below the post Medieval deposit Roman strata was identified in the form of a silty loam soil.
- **7.8.**In Area 2 the footprint of the 20th century Masonic Lodge was uncovered, excluding the western wall. This could be seen to have been backfilled with the demolition debris of the Lodge building.

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7.9.In the southern area, Area 4, the 20th century deposits were not seen to be present.Below the topsoil the 0.3m thick post Medieval deposit was identified sealing Roman strata at a depth of 25.7mOD.

8. Finds and Archive

- **8.1.**Due to fire damage the site notes, printed photographs, negatives and all finds have been destroyed.
- **8.2.**The archive consists of:
 - 1 x Archaeological Evaluation Report (STATTER & POOLE 2010)
 - 1 x Archaeological Watching Brief Report (POOLE 2011)
 - 1 x Photographic Register
 - 1 x CD containing digital images of three site films totalling 85 images
- **8.3.**There is no resultant finds archive.
- **8.4.** The archive is to be deposited at the Grosvenor Museum, Chester.

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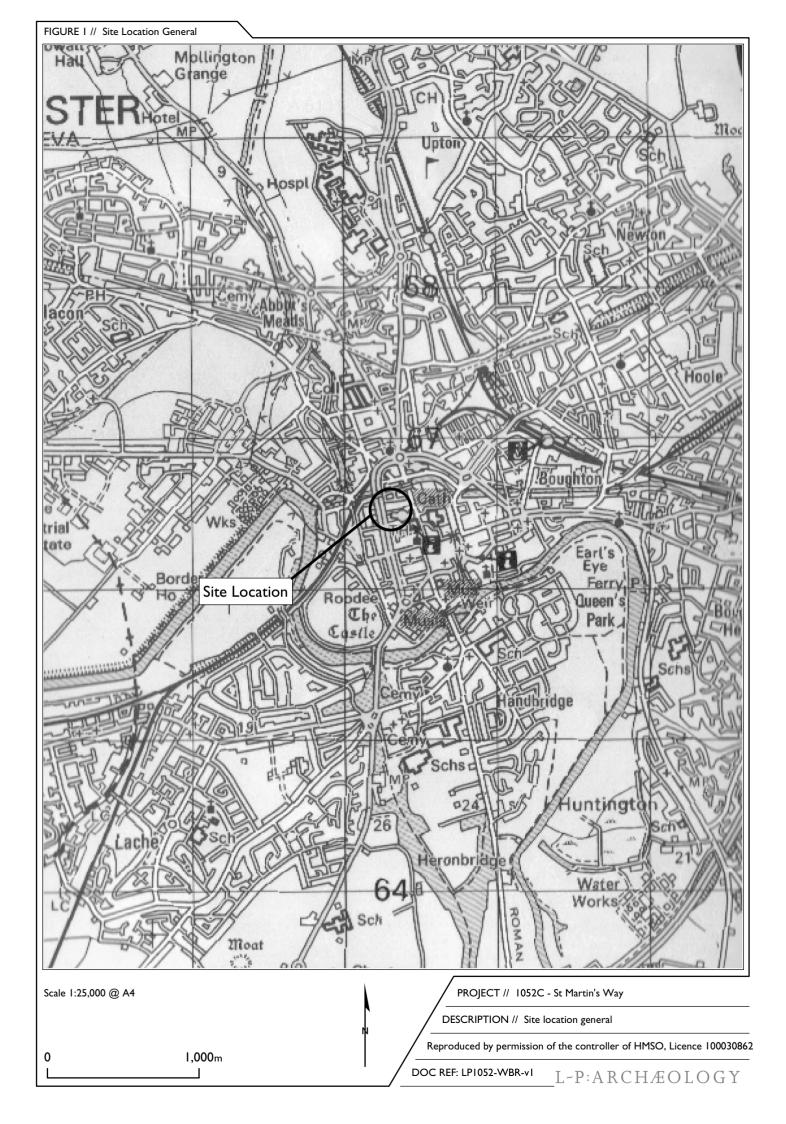
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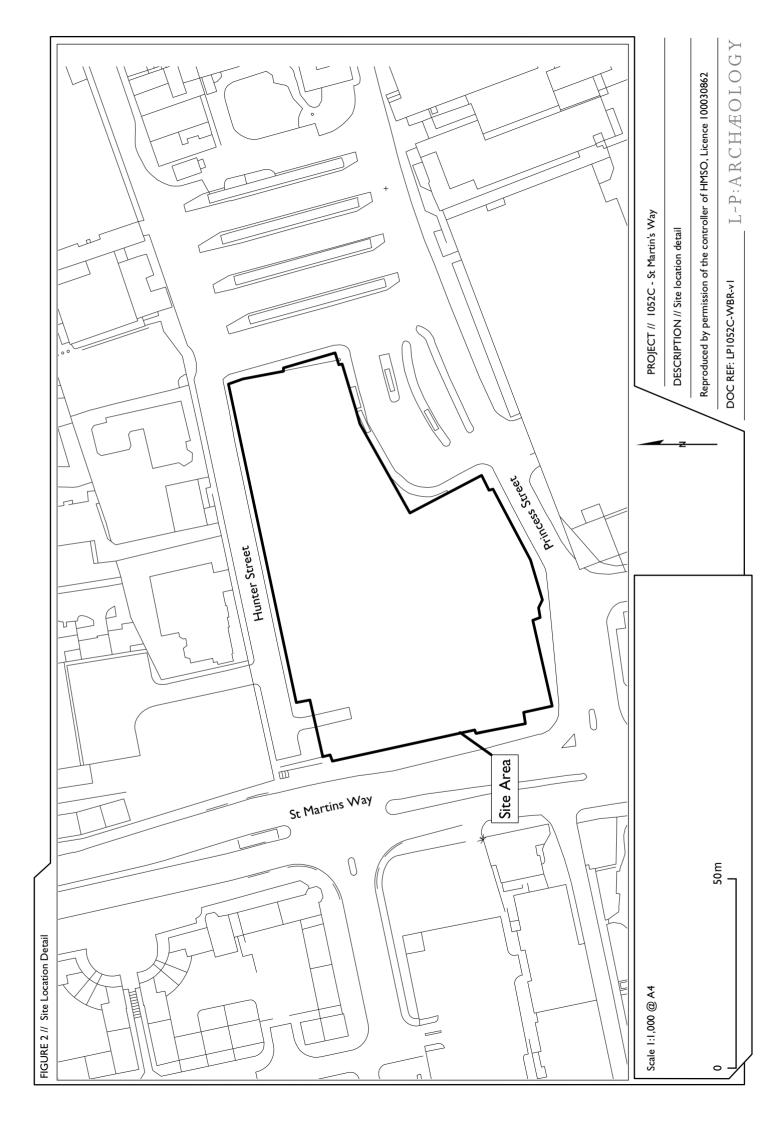
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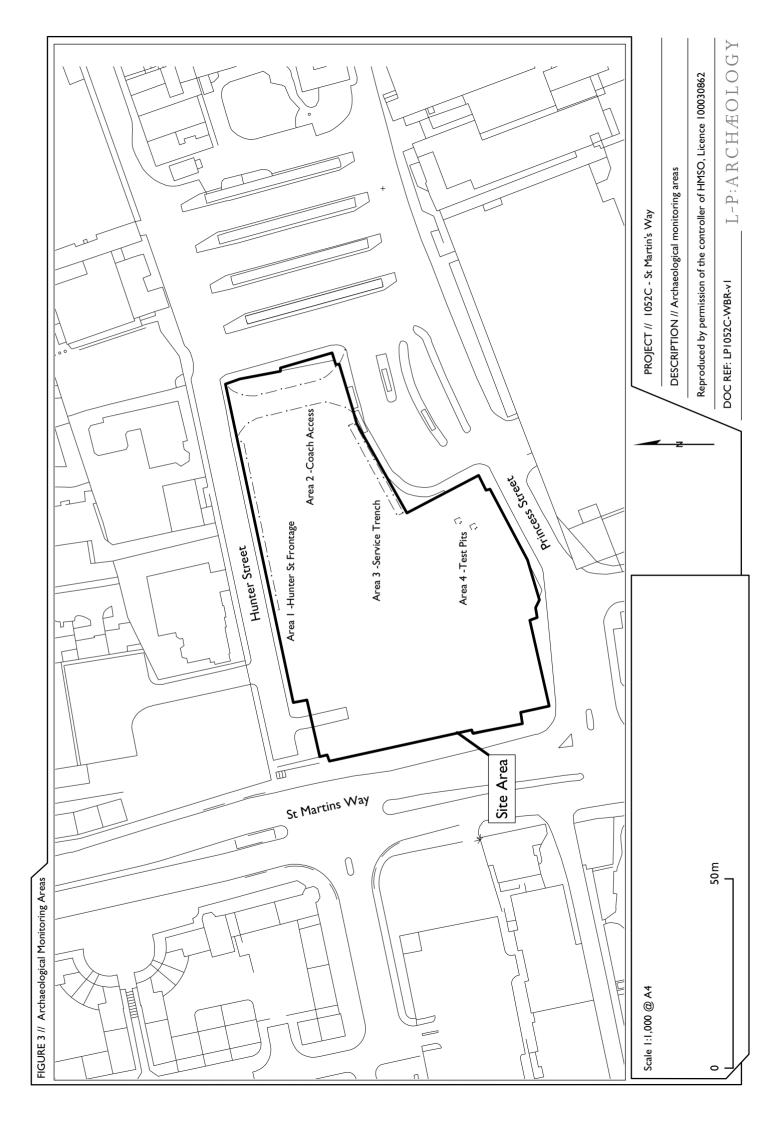
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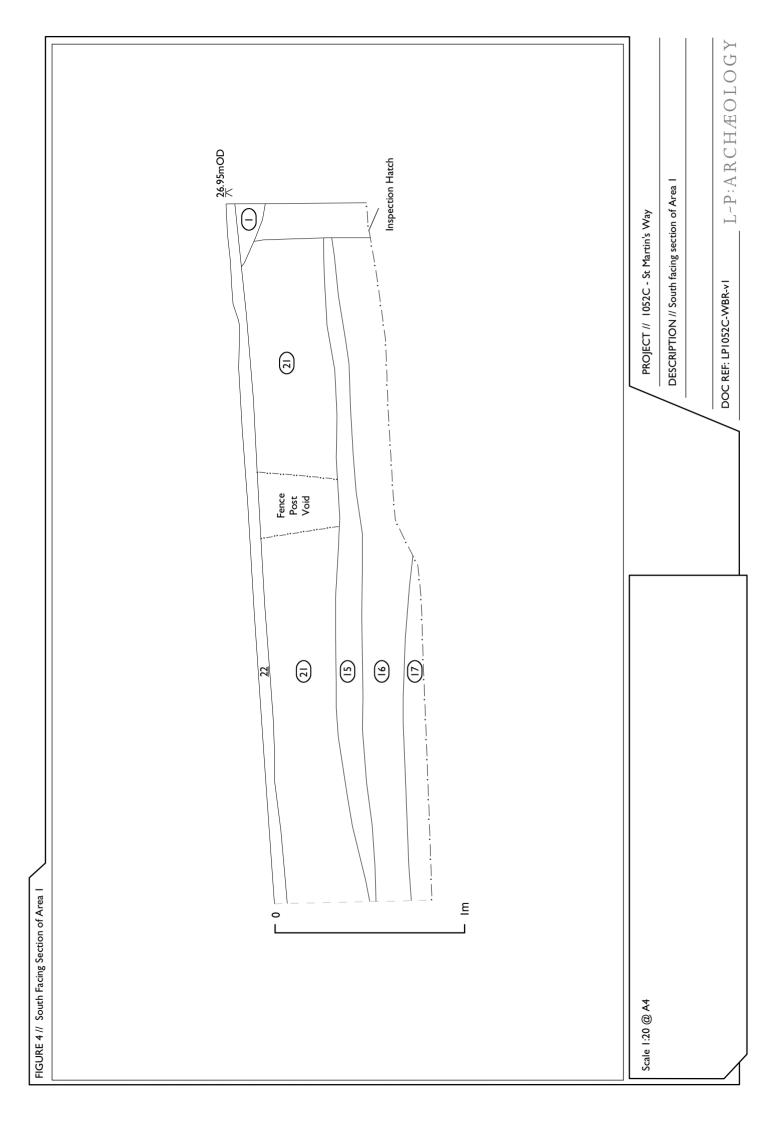
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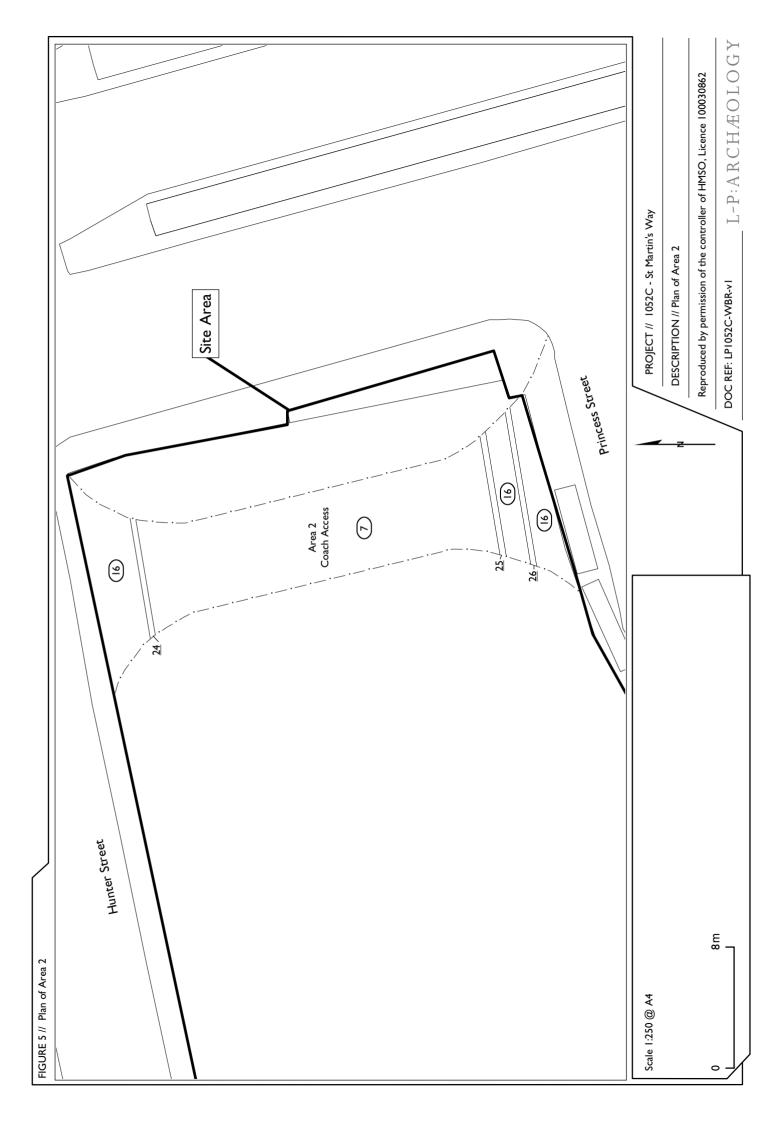
FIGURES

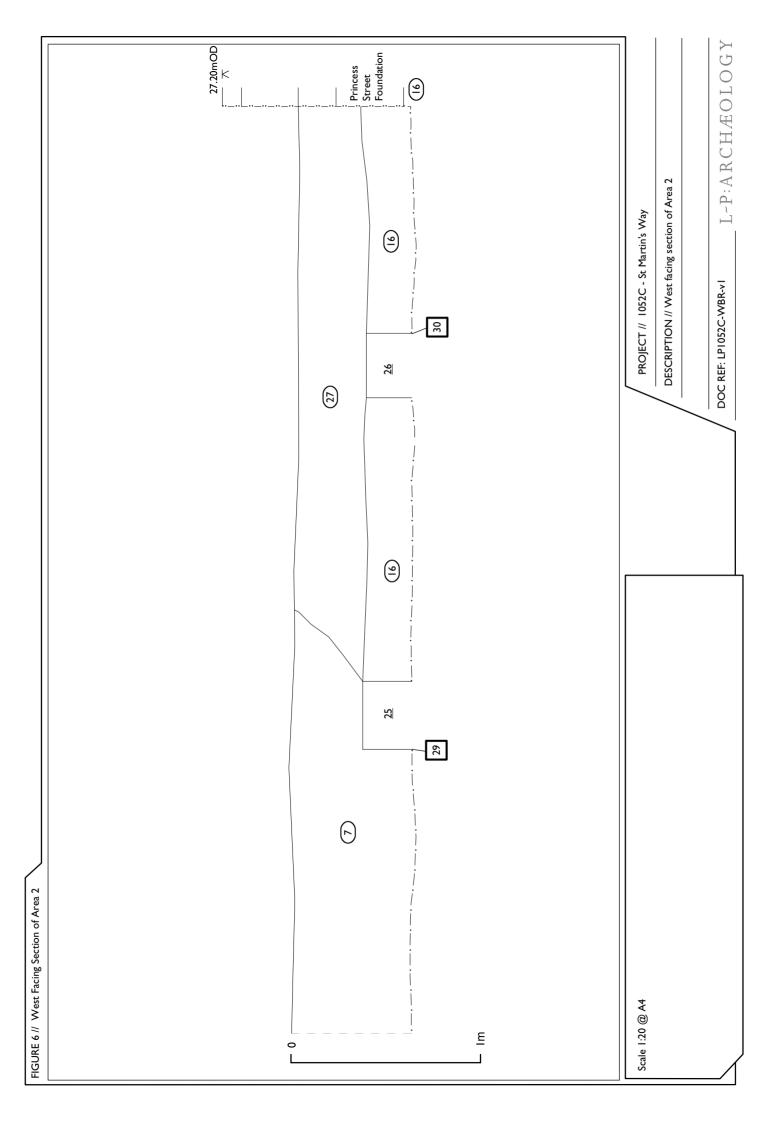


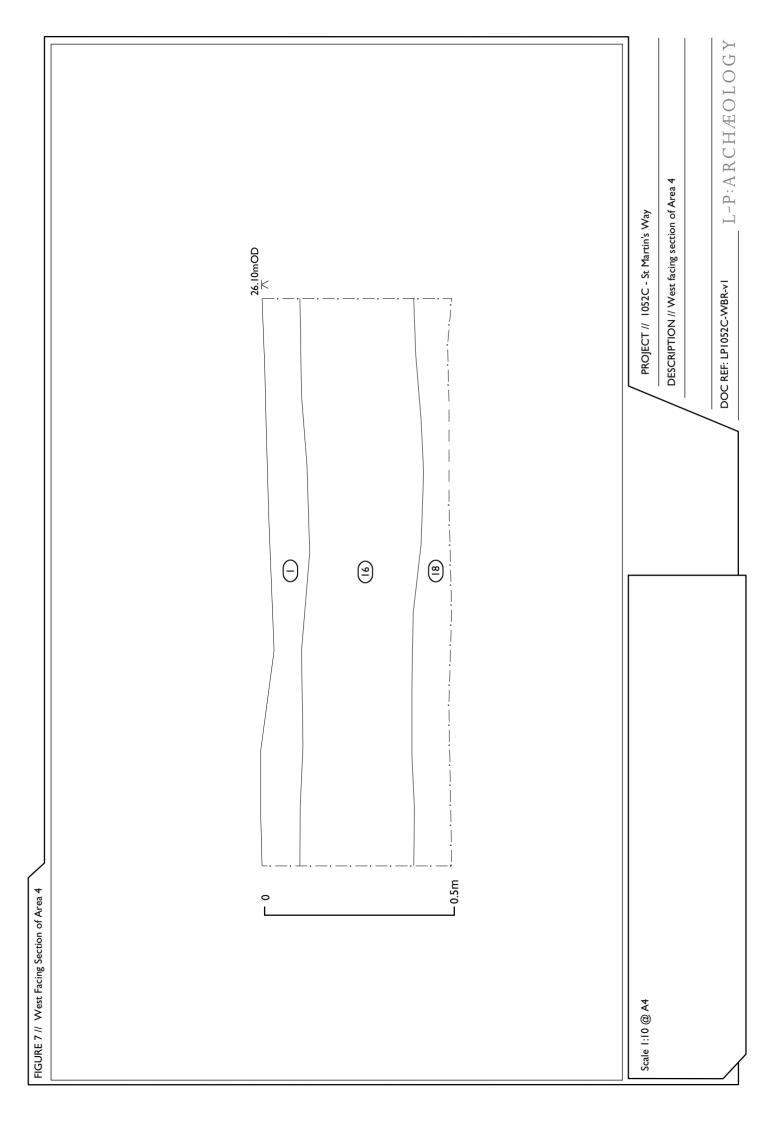


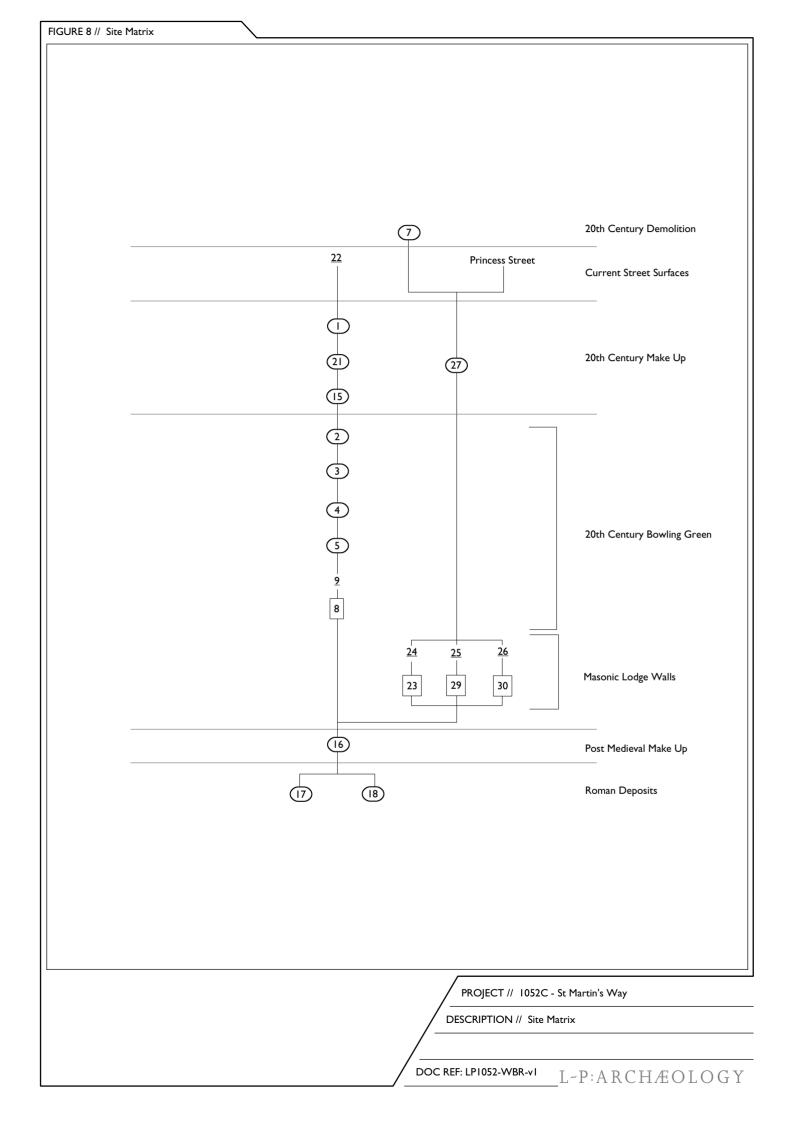












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Project details

-	
Project name	St Martin's Way
Short description of the project	Archaeological watching brief at land off St Martin's Way, Chester
Project dates	Start: 10-10-2010 End: 16-02-2011
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	CHE/SMW 10 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	chegm.2010.27 - Museum accession ID
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)
Site status	Conservation Area
Current Land use	Other 13 - Waste ground
Monument type	WALL Modern
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	CHESHIRE CHESTER CHESTER St Martin's Way
Postcode	CH1 2HH
Study area	5459.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	SJ 340303 366458 52.9228505960 -2.981362478620 52 55 22 N 002 58 52 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 26.00m Max: 27.00m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	L - P : Archaeology
Name of Organisation Project brief originator	
-	L - P : Archaeology

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Cheshire West and Chester Council

Cheshire West and Chester Council

Project director/manager Project supervisor Type of sponsor/funding body Name of sponsor/funding body

Project archives

Floject archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Grosvenor Museum
Digital Contents	'none'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography'
Paper Archive recipient	Grosvenor Museum
Paper Contents	'none'
Paper Media available	'Report'
Project bibliography 1	
	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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