



ST PAUL'S SQUARE, Liverpool

Archaeological Watching Brief



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CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.....	2
2. METHODOLOGY.....	3
3. RESULTS.....	4
4. DISCUSSION.....	5
5. BIBLIOGRAPHY	6
6. ILLUSTRATIONS	7
5.1 Figures.....	7
5.2 Plates	7
APPENDIX 1. SPECIFICATION	8

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 ***Circumstances of the Project:*** as part of the Liverpool New Central Business District, English Cities Fund are redeveloping an area of land at St Paul's Square, Liverpool (SJ 3390 9066) (Fig 1). Following a desk-based assessment by John Samuels Archaeological Consultants (JSAC 2001), Merseyside Archaeological Service (MAS) decided that the site lay within an area of archaeological interest and, to further inform the planning process, requested that a programme of archaeological investigation be undertaken at the site. Accordingly, JSAC issued a specification for an evaluation and a watching brief (*Appendix 1*). Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) undertook the evaluation in May 2005, revealing parts of the foundations of the demolished eighteenth century St Paul's church (OA North 2005). A fuller historical background to the site can be found in that document.
- 1.2 In November 2005 OA North were commissioned by JSAC to undertake an intermittent archaeological watching brief to the west of the evaluation area (Fig 2), within an area (Area A) known to have been occupied by nineteenth century buildings and cellars. The aim of the watching brief was to identify and record any islands of archaeology between the cellars, surviving under yards, lanes and alleyways; this report briefly outlines the results. Unmonitored groundworks were also undertaken in Area B, to the south of Area A.
- 1.3 ***Location, Topography and Geology:*** the site is located 750m to the north of the centre of Liverpool, within the commercial district and, until recently, was part of a 1.3ha municipal carpark. The site was formerly occupied by nineteenth and twentieth century buildings. The Area A measures 50m by 20m enclosed within concrete piles and is level at 21m aOD. The solid geology of Liverpool consists of drift deposits of Boulder Clay overlying Pebble Beds and Upper Mottled Sandstone (Philpott 1999).

2. METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 Area A was excavated, under intermittent archaeological supervision, to a depth of 3.5m by a mechanical excavator using a toothed ditching bucket. Area B was excavated by similar machinery, to a depth of *c* 0.4m. Due to health and safety concerns and in compliance with the procedures of the on-site contractors, Shepherds, the watching brief was maintained from a safe distance. Results were recorded on *pro-forma* sheets, and a monochrome and colour slide photographic record was maintained.
- 2.2 **Archive:** a full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with current UKIC (1990) and English Heritage guidelines (1991). The paper and digital archive will be deposited with the Merseyside Record Office.

3. RESULTS

- 3.1 **Area A:** Area A was covered by a thin concrete layer that probably relates to its recent use as a municipal car park. The concrete overlay at least 2m of made ground which mostly comprised demolition material such as bricks and concrete. The natural geology, beneath this made ground, consisted of greyish-brown sandy-clay. The water table was reached at a depth of *c* 2m, further reducing already poor visibility conditions.
- 3.2 A brick structure located in the south-east part of the watching brief area, consisted of an east/west aligned wall made of factory-made frogged bricks with 'Orrell' etched into them. The structure measured *c* 0.8m wide by 3m long but, due to access limitations, the exact dimensions are not known.
- 3.3 Beneath the made ground at a depth of 2m, an east/west aligned brick-built arched culvert was located in the southern part of the watching brief area. This culvert measured *c* 0.8m in width and ran the length of the watching brief area; it was still active and, when fractured, flooded the site.
- 3.4 **Area B:** of particular interest was a small iron muzzle-loading cannon, which appeared to be associated with an iron stand and a pair of chains (Plate 1). Unfortunately, this rather unexpected find was made in the absence of an archaeological presence and its exact location of origin within Area B is uncertain. It would appear to have derived from a deposit of demolition debris-rich made ground revealed by the shallow groundworks within Area B, analogous to those deposits observed in Area A. The gun, identified as a cannonade (M Hart *pers comm*), measured *c* 1.3m in length and had a bore of *c* 150mm. Such guns were made from the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries, including by the Fawcett Company Ironworks at the Phoenix Foundry in Liverpool (*ibid*). The iron stand is thought to have been for the cannon, but may not have been its original mounting, which, for a naval piece, is much more likely to have been a low wooden carriage.

4. DISCUSSION

- 4.1 No significant archaeological features were seen during the watching brief and the area would appear to have been heavily disturbed. This disturbance is likely to relate to the complete demolition of above- and below-ground elements of structures seen on cartographic sources of the area from the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth centuries (JSAC 2003). Such thorough demolition, producing the observed thick layer of made-ground, probably relates to 1930s slum clearances. Although no dating evidence was found, the culvert is likely to be nineteenth century in date, while the wall is probably twentieth century, as it does not relate to any structures shown on nineteenth century maps of the area (JSAC 2003). Although natural geology was exposed, the identification of surviving archaeological remains was hindered by the method of excavation, the restricted access and by deep flooding. However, the deep truncation of the natural geology means that the potential for archaeological remains is limited. Although the cannon could be identified and quite closely dated, it is uncertain how it reached its final context of deposition; despite this, it is an interesting artefact of Liverpool's maritime and armaments manufacturing heritage.

5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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6. ILLUSTRATIONS

6.1 FIGURES

Figure 1: Location Map

Figure 2: Watching Brief Location Plan

6.2 PLATES

Plate 1: The cannon found during groundworks in Area B, with the iron stand in the background



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0 5000
 metres

Figure 1: Location Map

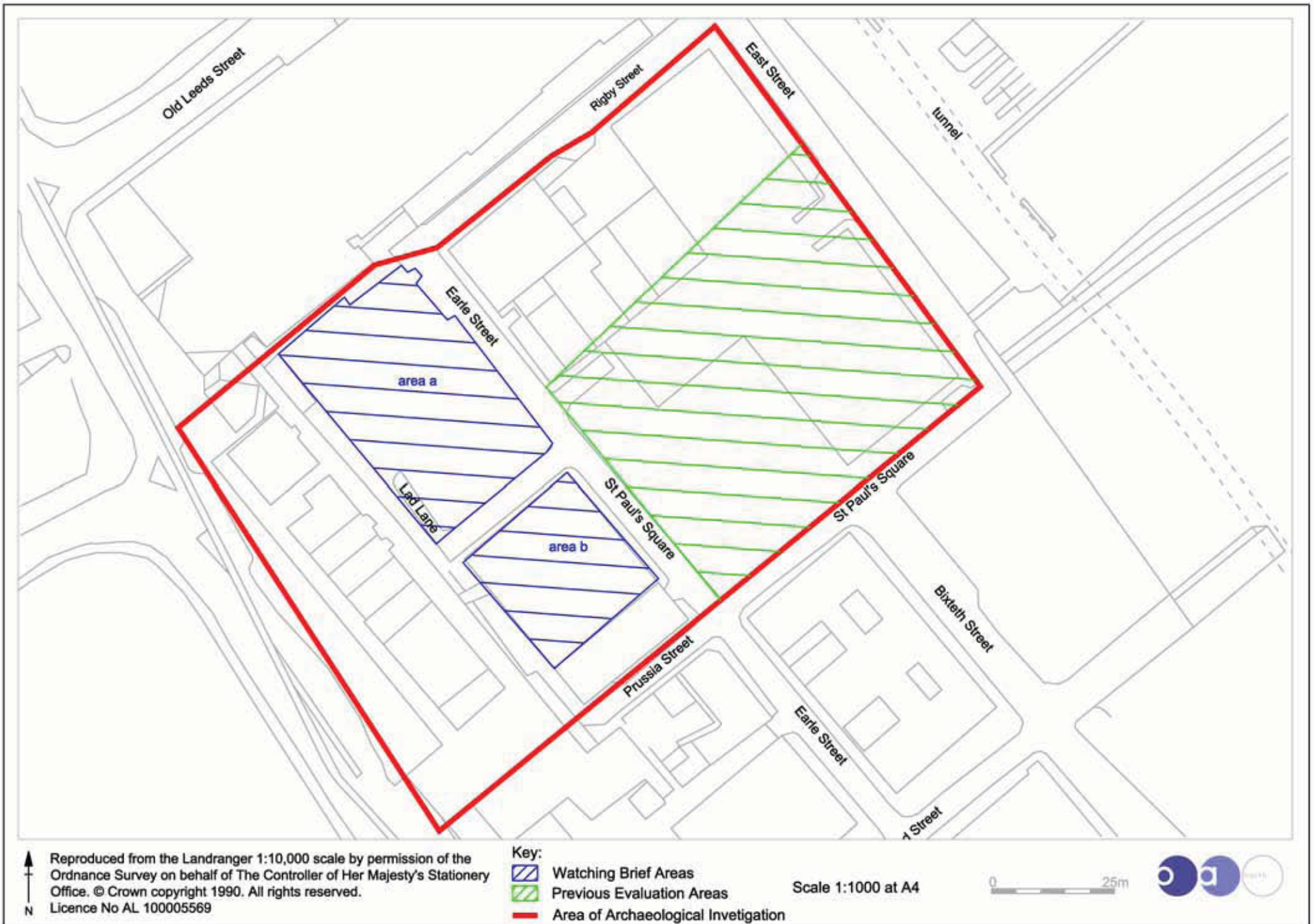


Figure 2: Watching Brief Location Plan