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## 53 DOWBRIDGE, KIRKHAM, LANCASHIRE: ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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### 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A planning application was made by Mr S Threlfall for the construction of an extension to the rear of 53 Dowbridge (SD 434 318), in Kirkham, Lancashire (Fig 1; Plate 1). As this property lies in the vicinity of a Roman Fort, Lancashire County Archaeology Service (LCAS) advised the local planning authority that a condition of development should be that any intrusive ground works associated with this construction would be subject to an archaeological watching brief. These requirements were conveyed in a verbal brief by Doug Moir of LCAS and Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) was subsequently commissioned by Mr Threlfall to undertake those works necessary to release the planning condition.



*Plate 1: the rear of 53 Dowbridge prior to groundworks*

### 2 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 The watching brief was undertaken by Alastair Vannan, in accordance with OA North standards (which in turn meet those of English Heritage and the Institute of Field Archaeologists) on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2009. The groundworks undertaken on this date consisted of the excavation of a continuous trench, defining an irregularly-shaped building footprint, and some superficial scraping of the ground surface (Figure 2; Plate 2). The trench was approximately 0.7m deep by 0.7m wide, and about 20m in overall length, and was excavated by a 1.5-tonne excavator with a toothed bucket. The excavation

of the foundation trenches in the area of a former conservatory, which had been situated adjacent to the rear wall of the property, were not undertaken at this time and, in verbal consultation with LCAS, were not deemed necessary for a watching brief due to the extent of the previous ground disturbances.



*Plate 2: the rear of 53 Dowbridge following the excavation of the foundation trench*

### **3 RESULTS**

- 3.1 In the eastern-most, L-shaped, part of the trench, the sequence of deposits consisted of a thin layer of gravel overlying a 0.4m thick band of topsoil, or imported garden soil, which overlay a 0.3m thick band of orange/brown sandy silt subsoil (Plate 3). The subsoil overlay mottled orange and grey sandy clay that formed the natural drift geology. The western part of the trench was U-shaped and revealed a similar depositional sequence, although the subsoil in this area was overlain by a 0.4m-thick layer of mixed soil and builder's rubble.
- 3.2 No finds or features of archaeological significance were encountered within any of the trenches, or within the areas subject to mechanised scraping.





*Plate 3: part of the side of the foundation trench, facing north-east*