FEOLIN, GREENSIDE, RIBCHESTER, Lancashire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Oxford Archaeology North
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Mr Diarmuid Beary

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SUMMARY

In response to a planning application, submitted to Ribble Valley Borough Council (Planning Application Number 3/3/1104P) by Mr Diarmuid Beary for the construction of a two-storey extension and conservatory at the domestic dwelling ‘Feolin’, Greenside, Ribchester, Lancashire (NGR SD 65090 35287; Fig 1), Lancashire County Archaeology Service (LCAS) recommended an archaeological investigation. The site lies within the village of Ribchester, in an area designated as a Scheduled Monument (LSM 55), as it is known to be within the vicus or civilian settlement to the north of the Roman fort.

The first stage of investigation was the excavation of two test pits, in order to assess the nature, survival and extent of any archaeological deposits that may be impacted upon by the proposed extension. This was carried out by Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) in March 2004, and in situ Roman deposits were identified (OA North 2004). Consequently, it was recommended by LCAS that an archaeological watching brief be required to mitigate the effects of the development. The groundworks associated with the building of the extension, including the foundations, service trenches and any further earth moving activities, were required to be undertaken under archaeological supervision.

The watching brief was undertaken in June 2005, observing a general reduction in ground level and excavation of the strip foundations for the new building by machine excavator, together with the manual excavation for a new manhole and work to uncover buried services.

A widespread post-medieval dump deposit, 2, was revealed to a considerable depth (maximum 1.1m) across the whole of the site. At its northern end, this overlay an undated cobbled layer, 6, thought to have been laid to consolidate the then existing wet surface. Beneath this was a layer of probable Roman dumping, 4. The southern end of the site revealed possible river-lain deposits, 9, and two further dump deposits, deposit 8 overlying deposit 7. Beneath deposit 7, an organic-rich layer, 10, was also revealed.

No discrete features were revealed in the course of the work beyond the possible cobbled surface, and the stratigraphy identified correlated with that exposed under the more favourable conditions of the evaluation test pits (ibid). The results confirmed the nature of the stratigraphy as comprising a number of widespread dump deposits, albeit with a number of recent truncations. From the finds it would appear that the deposits can be closely dated to between the first and second centuries AD, although there was activity in the later post-medieval period. The lack of later Roman material might suggest abandonment of this part of the settlement at or shortly after the end of the second century AD.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Oxford Archaeology North would like to thank Mr and Mrs Beary for commissioning and funding the work and for their encouragement during the fieldwork. Thanks are also offered to David Speak who undertook the excavation of the foundation trenches.

The fieldwork and report writing were undertaken by Paul Clark. The Roman finds were examined by Sean McPhillips, the post-medieval finds by Jo Dawson, under the auspices of Chris Howard-Davis, and the bones by Stephen Rowland. The drawings were produced by Emma Carter. The report was edited by Emily Mercer and Alan Lupton. The project was managed by Emily Mercer.
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

1.1.1 Planning consent was given for the construction of a two-storey extension and conservatory (Planning Application Number 3/3/1104P) at the domestic dwelling ‘Feolin’, Greenside, Ribchester, Lancashire (NGR SD 65090 35287; Fig 1). The site lies within the village of Ribchester, in an area designated as a Scheduled Monument (LSM 55), as it is known to be within the vicus or civilian settlement to the north of the Roman fort (Fig 2). Therefore, as a condition of the planning consent, an archaeological watching brief during the associated groundworks was requested by Lancashire County Archaeology Service (LCAS). This was in response to the findings of an archaeological evaluation undertaken on the site as part of the first stage of archaeological investigation in March 2004, when Roman deposits were revealed (OA North 2004). Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) were commissioned to undertake the fieldwork in June 2005.

1.2 SITE LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

1.2.1 The small town of Ribchester in central Lancashire lies on the northern bank of the River Ribble, approximately mid-way between the central Pennine uplands and the Irish Sea, and to the north-east of Preston (Fig 1). The site is located on the northern side of Ribchester. It comprises a small area of land along the western side of the house, used until recently as a drive, and measures approximately 12m north/south by 3m east/west.

1.2.2 The Roman fort at Ribchester lies on the south-western edge of the town and is protected as a Scheduled Monument; much of the town, including the site in question, lies within the scheduled area (Fig 2). The north-western defences of the fort lie less than 200m to the south of the site, and the exposed remains of the Roman bathhouse are situated approximately 100m to the south.

1.2.3 The solid geology around Ribchester is dominated by the ‘Sabden Shales’ formation, previously part of the Millstone Grit Group, but now belonging to the Arnbergian and Chokierian episodes of the Namurian phase of the Upper Carboniferous (Aitkenhead et al 1992). This formation is predominantly argillaceous, although north-east of Ribchester it contains a high proportion of siltstone and sandstone (Bridge 1989, 11-15). The solid geology is masked by boulder clay deposits up to 0.5m thick. The till exposed at the surface is typically a reddish-brown sandy-clay with grey mottling, and beds of clay, sands and gravels, and Triassic and Ordovician rock fragments (ibid).

1.2.4 Ribchester, and consequently the Roman fort, stand on deposits of a Second Terrace of the Ribble, which rises to c3-4m above the floodplain (op cit, 17). This terrace formation is being actively eroded by riverine action, and as a result one third of the area of the fort has been lost to such fluvial processes.
Soils of the Second Terrace comprise 0.60-0.80m of unmottled sandy-loams overlying slightly mottled sandy-clay loams.

1.3 **HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

1.3.1 **Introduction:** below is a brief summary of the historical and archaeological background of the environs of the site and the town of Ribchester. It is intended only to provide a context for the findings of the watching brief, and a detailed account is beyond this scope of works. Figure 2 shows the numerous archaeological interventions that have taken place in the town, relative to the fort.

1.3.2 **Prehistoric Period:** little is known of prehistoric activity in Ribchester, although Bronze Age activity was recorded by Olivier and Turner (1987) who excavated a circular ditch enclosing an arc of five cremation burials in collared urns to the north of the site. Soil analysis has indicated some agricultural disturbance on the banks of the river Ribble during the Bronze Age, but also implied that the site had been abandoned some hundreds of years before the arrival of the Romans in the early AD 70s (Buxton and Howard Davis 2000). The nearby hillfort of Portfield Camp, near Blackburn, appears to have been established during the Late Bronze Age, continuing in use throughout the Iron Age, and was possibly re-fortified at the time of the Roman invasion (Beswick and Cooks 1986). Although there is increasing evidence for Iron Age activity in the south of the county (Nevell 1999), only very occasional finds of Iron Age date have been made in central or northern Lancashire and the county is noted for this, as yet little discussed or fully explained, anomaly (Haselgrove 1996).

1.3.3 **Roman Period:** the presence of extensive Roman remains at Ribchester is well known and its identification as *Bremetenacum* is secure, based on a third century dedication to Apollo Magonus (*RIB* 583) from the town (Rivet and Smith 1981, 277). The site was strategically well-placed at the western end of one of the few major trans-Pennine routes and at its intersection with a major north-south road, as well as at, or close to, a crossing point of the River Ribble, more or less at the point where it becomes navigable. The road south (Margary 1973, 370) led to Manchester and on to Chester, while that to the north passed along the Lune/Eden corridor, and on northwards to Carlisle and Hadrian's Wall. The Roman road eastwards ran over the Pennines to the fort at Elslack and then on to Aldborough and York. To the west it ran along the northern side of the Ribble Valley, connecting Ribchester with the enigmatic industrial site at Walton-le-Dale and the fort at Dowbridge, Kirkham (*ibid*). Both the fort and the settlement, which have been well known from the sixteenth century onwards (Edwards 2000), lie largely beneath the church and glebe lands of St Wilfrid. Extra-mural settlement has been proven as far as 500m to the north of the fort, and evidence from other parts of the town indicate that it is unwise to assume any area in the vicinity of the fort, even if partially damaged, has little or no archaeological value (Buxton and Howard Davis 2000).
1.3.4 Since the mid-sixteenth century, antiquarian writers have commented on the richness of the site and there have been numerous chance finds from the town, including the well known Ribchester Helmet, a second century cavalry parade helmet now in the British Museum. In the last two centuries, numerous excavators have opened trenches in both the fort and the extramural settlement, establishing the existence of a long, detailed, and well-preserved archaeological sequence which spans the entire period of the Roman occupation. Unfortunately, as is common, a great deal of information from the earlier work has been lost. These smaller excavations have been most coherently summarised by Edwards and Webster (1985; 1987a; 1987b; 1988), in their consideration of the township during the Roman occupation. The majority of the excavations undertaken in Ribchester in recent years have, however, been in response to threats to archaeology from development, and have been concentrated to the north and east of the fort. These excavations have been summarised recently in Buxton and Howard-Davis (2000).

1.3.5 The fort and settlement at Ribchester lay within the western territory of the Brigantes. The fort positioned on significant route crossing suggests that the garrison must have fulfilled something of a policing function (ibid), and it is likely that it would have overseen river traffic to and from the West Coast. As the frontier moved north during the first and second centuries AD, the fort would have dominated the hinterland between the settled and ‘Romanised’ region around Chester, and ‘the Wall’ frontier zone (ibid). Evidence from the recent excavations (1989-1990; Fig 2) suggests a timber fort was established in the early AD 70s, during the governorship of Petulius Cerialis (AD 71-73/74), and modified c AD 82-86. Subsequent demolition of this fort, and its rebuilding in stone, probably occurred around AD 125-135, possibly as a result of activity in the area of Hadrian’s Wall (ibid). Roman occupation of Ribchester is known to have continued into the third century AD. The identity of the Ribchester garrisons is uncertain for the first two centuries AD, although Legion VI and Legion XX are attested epigraphically (ibid). Later, the fort was garrisoned by a numerus equitatum Sarmatorum (soldiers from what is now modern Hungary) who may have been settled at or around the fort after discharge and hence the name of the settlement, Bremetenacum Veteranorum.

1.3.6 Post-Roman Period: the circumstances of Ribchester in the early post-Roman period are uncertain. Whitaker (1823) suggested the town was abandoned, and then later inhabited by ‘... a few Saxon settlers of uncertain period’. A number of items are recorded by antiquarians as coming from Ribchester, and a small collection of objects in the Ribchester Museum also suggests that there was post-Roman occupation. Complete abandonment of the site on the withdrawal of Rome from Britain would appear increasingly unlikely in face of the growing body of evidence from sites such as Birdoswald on Hadrian’s Wall (Wilmott 1997), for continuity of occupation from the Roman to the early medieval period.

1.3.7 The church of St Wilfrid, within the walls of the fort, was reputedly built in c AD 596 (Baines 1870, 2) and a church certainly stood on the site before Domesday (Farrer and Brownbill 1912). The settlement is listed in the
Domesday Survey as Ribelcastre (Hinde 1985, 154), although it was possibly very small scale at that time. It may well have undergone ‘sweeping desolation’ as a result of the rebellions of 1069-70 (ibid), a fate which appears to have befallen the community again around 1320 ‘by the great incursion of the Scots’ (Whitaker 1823). From c1150, there may have been a manor house situated to the north-west of the church, although this was abandoned by c1450, when the lord moved to Dutton (Farrer And Brownbill 1912, 45-51). Ribchester was never designated as a borough, and was never given the right to have a market.

1.3.8 During the seventeenth century, flax spinning and linen weaving were the main occupations in Ribchester, although a lawsuit of 1634 referred to the poverty of the town citing the remoteness from the road system and the lack of a market as the main causes (Neil 2003).

1.3.9 It seems unlikely that there was much significant change in the layout or status of Ribchester until the Industrial Revolution of the mid-eighteenth century. During this period, technical improvements allowed hand-loom cotton weaving from home to become commonplace along with related industries such as bobbin making. Two cotton mills were built on the outskirts of the settlement, which affected the layout and economic focus of the town. Corry (1825) noted that in 1821 Ribchester had 300 houses, 303 families, and was inhabited by 1760 persons.

1.3.10 Archaeological Interventions: during the last two centuries, there have been a large number of archaeological investigations of the Ribchester civilian settlement. The majority of these have been undertaken in recent years in response to development, and consequently, concentrated around the north and east of the fort (Fig 2). Although much of this investigative work has been confined to small trenches, and therefore fragmentary, it has provided an insight into the spread of Roman activity within the town.

1.3.11 Of the numerous previous excavations, those completed under the auspices of the Ribble Archaeological Society in 1968-9 are of particular interest (Fig 2). This programme of archaeological investigation revealed a complex sequence of Roman timber buildings, many of which were replete with ‘industrial hearths’ (Edwards and Webster 1987a, 13-28). The excavated remains represent four distinct phases of activity all dated to the first two centuries AD (op cit, 13). The main occupation of the area, however, seems to occur during the late first and early second centuries, and was represented by a succession of timber buildings with intervening alleyways. These were aligned north/south across the southern part of the excavated area (op cit, 15).

1.3.12 The excavations revealed the layout of this part of the settlement to have been revamped during the mid-second century and a series of wooden buildings and road surfaces were constructed. Several of these buildings contained hearths, which appear to have been used for iron smithing. Interestingly, the excavations did not produce any pottery that was later than c AD 200, even from unstratified material.
1.3.13 The results of the 1968-9 work was augmented by a series of emergency excavations and watching briefs that were conducted during the construction of a new sewerage scheme in 1976 (Olivier 1987).

1.3.14 In 1979, planning approval was granted for the construction of a Sheltered Housing Scheme at the western end of Parsonage Avenue (Fig 2). This provided an opportunity to examine the edge of the known extramural settlement associated with the fort (Olivier and Turner 1987). The subsequent excavation again revealed the remains of timber buildings and evidence of industrial activity, although it provided insufficient evidence to firmly characterise the nature of Roman occupation in this part of the civilian settlement (op cit, 76).

1.3.15 More specifically, however, are the results from the excavation of two evaluation test pits at Feolin, as the first phase of archaeological investigation in 2004 (OA North 2004). Test Pit 2 identified in situ Roman deposits at a depth of 0.65m below the modern ground surface. These comprised a sequence of five dump layers which produced a wealth of Roman artefacts dated to the second to third century AD. This was suggestive of nearby occupation, and included sherds of pottery, a fragment of glass from a storage vessel, and butchered animal bones. Structural evidence in the vicinity of the site was suggested by the presence of pieces of brick and daub, some with wattle impressions, probably derived from a nearby demolished building.
2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

2.1.1 Following a request from Mr Diarmuid Beary (the client), and subsequent to the outcome of the first stage of the archaeological investigation (ibid), a project design (Appendix I) was submitted for a permanent presence watching brief. Following approval of the proposals by LCAS, the work was undertaken in June 2005. All work undertaken complied with the project design and was consistent with the relevant standards and procedures of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, and generally accepted best practice.

2.2 METHODOLOGY

2.2.1 A programme of field observation accurately recorded the location, extent, and character of any surviving archaeological features and deposits within the proposed ground disturbance. This work comprised observation during the excavation for these works, including building foundations and service trenches and any other earth moving activities, the systematic examination of any subsoil horizons exposed during the course of the groundworks, and the accurate recording of all archaeological features and horizons, and any artefacts, identified during observation.

2.2.2 Putative archaeological features and deposits identified by the machining process, together with the immediate vicinity of any such features, were cleaned by hand, using either hoe, shovel scraping, and/or trowel depending on the subsoil conditions, and where appropriate sections were studied and drawn. Extensive layers were, where possible, sampled by partial rather than complete removal.

2.2.3 During this phase of work, recording comprised a full description and preliminary classification of features and materials revealed, and their accurate location (on plan and/or section). Features were planned accurately at appropriate scales and annotated on to a large-scale plan from the previous phase of work. A photographic record was undertaken simultaneously.

2.2.4 A plan was produced of the areas of groundworks showing the location and extent of the ground disturbance and one or more dimensioned sections were produced.

2.3 ARCHIVE

2.2.2 The results of all archaeological work carried out will form the basis for a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage 1991) and the Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage (UKIC 1990). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project. The deposition of a properly ordered and
indexed project archive in an appropriate repository is considered an essential and integral element of all archaeological projects by the IFA in that organisation's code of conduct.
3. RESULTS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1 Prior to the commencement of the construction work, the area of the extension previously comprised a garage to the north, and a tarmac drive to the south. To the east of the garage was a flagstone patio. Following the demolition of the garage, the work under archaeological supervision initially comprised a general reduction in ground level of between 0.4m and 0.5m (Plate 1, Fig 3). This excavation was undertaken using a tracked mini digger equipped with a bucket c 0.9m wide. The strip foundations were then excavated, again by machine (Plate 2), whilst work to uncover known buried services was undertaken manually, together with the manual excavation of a new manhole (Plate 4). The visibility of the excavations was impeded by the narrowness and depth of the trenches and the need to rapidly shore the exposed trench edges (Plates 2 and 4).

3.2 RESULTS

3.2.1 The uppermost layers encountered during excavation comprised the garage floor, the flagged surface of the patio and the tarmac surface of the drive. Removal of these revealed a variety of make-up layers and foundations, all ultimately overlying post-medieval dump deposit 2 (Fig 3). This layer was present across the whole site after the initial ground reduction and comprised dark grey sandy-silt, to a maximum depth of 1.1m. This layer was only removed in the areas of deeper excavation, comprising the excavation for the foundations and the new manhole. Across the northern half of the site, this layer was shown to overly a patchy layer of cobbles, 6, which had a maximum thickness of 0.1m. The nature of the excavation was such that it remains uncertain whether this layer represented a genuine cobbled surface or a deliberate attempt to level the ground. This layer overlay a light yellowish-brown sandy-silt, 3, containing a significant proportion of fired clay, possibly daub. This layer had a maximum thickness of 0.1m and overlay a deposit of dark grey sandy-silt, 4, containing pot and slag. This in turn overlay a deposit of light grey sandy-clay, 5, which was at least 0.2m thick and may represent the natural geology, although given the nature of the excavation this remains unproven. The hand excavation of a further trench down to present service pipes revealed only a deposit of black sandy-silt, very similar in nature to dump deposit 2. It seems most likely that this represents the original backfill of the service trenches.

3.2.2 The southern half of the site exhibited a somewhat different stratigraphy, as the clay deposit, 5, appeared to disappear roughly 8m to the south of the northern extent foundation trenches, approximately in the area of the previous Test Pit 1. It was replaced by well-rounded cobbles and sands, 9, to a depth of at least 1.9m below ground surface. It seems likely that this represents river deposits. Further south, the excavation to a depth of 1.1m below ground surface revealed, at the base of the trench, a layer of dark grey sandy-clay, 7,
which was overlain by the widespread dump deposit 2. It seems likely, therefore, that 7 represents an in situ dump deposit.

3.2.3 The excavation of the strip foundation running broadly south-east from the southern corner of the dwelling, Feolin, revealed similar stratigraphy to the strip foundations further west, with deposit 2, overlying a deposit that appeared almost identical to deposit 7. This in turn overlay light yellowish-grey sandy-clay, possibly representing the natural geology. To the east of this foundation, a trench for a column was excavated (Fig 3), revealing dump deposit 2, to a maximum depth of 0.8m, overlying a light greyish-yellow sandy-silt deposit, 8, 0.25m thick. A very small trial hole was excavated by hand at the base of this trench, showing two further layers beneath deposit 8. The uppermost of these, which was 0.25m thick, again appeared very similar to deposit 7, and may well represent the same layer. This overlay an organic-rich layer, 10, containing frequent fragments of twigs.

3.3 THE FINDS

3.3.1 Introduction: a total of 90 artefacts and ecofacts were recovered during the watching brief, most of which were fragments of pottery. Ceramic building material, clay tobacco pipe, copper alloy, iron, slag, animal bone, and possible human bone were also retrieved. Dumps layers 2, 4, and 7 produced small quantities of finds, but many fragments were also retrieved from unstratified (U/S) deposits (Table 1, below). The pottery and other finds are discussed below, and a full catalogue is presented in Appendix 3.

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Table 1: Type of finds by context

3.3.2 Roman pottery: 45 sherds of Roman pottery were retrieved from dump layers 2, 4 and 7, and from unstratified deposits. The pottery was in good condition with few sherds showing surface deterioration. Many of the fragments bore unabraded breaks that suggest the pottery had not moved far from its original
place of deposition. The assemblage included sherds of samian, mortaria, amphora, and coarsewares, including Black Burnished ware category 1.

3.3.3 A total of 10 sherds of samian ware were recovered from the site, eight of which were collected from dump layers 2, 4 and 7. Two of the sherds from layer 7, derived from the La Graufesenque kilns in South Gaul, which was exporting samian from the late first and early second centuries AD. The rest of the samian was sourced to the Lezoux production centre in Central Gaul, the main export period being from c AD 120 until the early third century. The vessel forms present suggest that the bulk of the material reached the site in the mid to late second century. The identifiable vessels include a campanulate cup (form Dr 27; Webster 1996, 38) probably of first century date, fragments of straight-sided cup (form Dr 33), fragments of two hemispherical bowls (form Dr 37) with stag relief (form 37; Webster 1996, 47-8) and two fragments of form Dr 38. One of the decorated vessels (Dr 37) is probably attributable to the potter Cinnamus, working in the second half of the second century AD.

3.3.4 One fragment of cream slipped ‘Raetian’-type mortaria with quartz and red and grey trituration grits, was recovered from an unstratified layer. The material has close similarities to the type of mortaria produced in Wilderspool during the second century.

3.3.5 In total, four unstratified fragments of South Spanish amphora were collected. Three of the sherds derived from a single olive oil carrying vessel of Dressel 20 type (type 281, Buxton and Howard-Davis 2000), which can be ascribed a broad date of the first to third century AD. In addition, a thumb-pressed decorated rim that had a fine-textured cream fabric, derived from a fish sauce vessel (Peacock and Williams, Class 18). This type of amphora ceased production in the early second century AD.

3.3.6 The coarsewares were dominated by 22 fragments of soft orange oxidised ware representing 30% of the total Roman assemblage. The sherds were recovered from dump 7 and unstratified deposits. Some of the sherds (12) bore a degraded white slip and resembled Wilderspool products dated to the early to mid second century, including a small flagon. The rest of the oxidised wares were probable local products including the rim of a small bowl. Recent evidence from Walton-le-Dale, a few kilometres south-west of Ribchester, suggests that Wilderspool-type fabrics and vessel forms were being produced there in the second century AD and later, possibly providing a likely source for much of the Wilderspool-type pottery found at Ribchester (Buxton and Howard-Davis 2000). A single pinkish-buff sherd that had been overfired, possibly derived from a Severn Valley type vessel, although the sherd was too small to identify a form. The rest of the assemblage included four pale white/buff ware flagon sherds of late first/early second century AD date and two Black Burnished Ware Category 1 (BB1) jars from dump 4, dating probably to the mid-second century AD.

3.3.7 Although the assemblage is small, it is typical of Ribchester, provided in the main by the vast military contracts which supplied the Roman army from the second century AD, including the Wilderspool production site near St Helens,
and Black Burnished ware category 1, which at this time was produced in Dorset. The samian forms and the relatively large amounts of oxidised wares, suggest a date range from the late first to late second centuries AD.

3.3.8 **Post-medieval pottery:** twenty-four fragments of post-medieval pottery were recovered, although only one of these was from a stratified deposit, dump layer 2, which also produced four fragments of Roman pottery. It was also the earliest of the post-medieval assemblage, being a brown-glazed light pinkish-orange earthenware cup (?) base, dated approximately to the eighteenth century.

3.3.9 The tableware had a date ranging from the late eighteenth century to the twentieth century, and comprised white earthenware decorated with commonly-used transfer-printed patterns (‘Willow’, ‘Broseley’, and ‘Asiatic Pheasants’), relief-moulded and blue-painted shell edge, and brown transfer-printed sheet (?) pattern. The rims of an undecorated white mug, a blue-lined bone china saucer, and a brown-glazed buff-coloured earthenware tea pot (?) were also recovered. The kitchenware was mainly black-glazed red earthenware, but also included brown-glazed red earthenware and brown-glazed stoneware. The vessels represented comprised pancheons, jars, and indeterminate hollow-ware. Parts of a possible ink bottle and flower pot were also recovered.

3.3.10 **Ceramic building material:** a total of four broken roof tile fragments recovered from dump 4 were identified as Roman imbrex. A single piece of incidentally fired clay or daub that was recovered from an unstratified deposit, could also be Roman in origin.

3.3.11 A single post-medieval building material fragment was also recovered. It was the rim of a red earthenware ridge tile or drain pipe recovered from unstratified deposits, and was dated broadly to the eighteenth to twentieth century.

3.3.12 **Clay tobacco pipe:** a single clay tobacco pipe stem fragment was recovered from unstratified deposits. It was plain with no diagnostic features, and was dated broadly to the eighteenth to early twentieth century.

3.3.13 **Copper alloy, iron, and slag:** amongst the metalwork were a lump of iron smithing slag and a single thin-walled unidentifiable piece of copper alloy collected from dump 4. The iron comprised two heavily corroded nails recovered from dump 2, which may be of Roman origin.

3.3.14 **Animal and possible human bone:** fragments of cow tibia sawn into joints and a sawn large mammal rib fragment were recovered from unstratified deposits, as were a pig molar and a fragment of large mammal pelvis. These were not closely datable in themselves, and are likely to represent food remains from the post-medieval period. Two further bones were interpreted as food remains - a cow astragalus and a medium mammal rib fragment, which were recovered from dump layer 4, dated to the Roman period by the pottery recovered from it. This layer also produced a small fragment of possible human tibia, although its identification remains tentative.
3.3.15 **Conclusion:** the finds correlate with the assemblage recovered in the previous test pitting evaluation (OA North 2004). Those recovered from dump deposits 4 and 7 seem to indicate that these deposits were Roman in date. Although the assemblage is small, it contains material that can be closely dated between the first and second centuries AD, although the presence of some post-medieval pottery might suggest an element of residuality. The lack of later Roman material might suggest abandonment of this part of the settlement at or shortly after the end of the second century AD. However, in the previous evaluation on site (*ibid*) a small component of the pottery finds were thought to possibly date to the third century AD, although this was tentative.

3.3.16 The presence of the iron slag from dump 2, suggests proximity to a hearth area, such as that interpreted as an area for iron smithing during the 1968 excavations to the west of the site (see 1.3.12 above and Fig 2). The presence of a single fragment of post-medieval pottery may have been intrusive within dump deposit 2, although on-site observations suggested that this deposit dated to the post-medieval and not to the Roman period.
4. CONCLUSION

4.1 DISCUSSION

4.1.1 The observations undertaken during the course of the groundworks revealed a widespread post-medieval dump deposit, 2, to considerable depth (maximum 1.1m) across the whole of the site. At the northern end of the site, this overlay an undated possible cobbled surface, 6, which itself overlay a layer of dumping, 3. This in turn overlay a layer, 4, of probable Roman dumping. The southern end of the site revealed possible river-lain deposits, 9, as well as two further dump deposits, 7 and 8. An organic-rich layer, 10, was also revealed.

4.1.2 No discrete features were revealed in the course of the work, apart from the possible cobbled surface, 6, although the of the groundworks limited its identification as a surface or the deliberate dumping of a number of cobbles, perhaps in an area of damp and soft ground. The silty layers identified beneath the cobbles, however, both appeared to represent dumps of material, rather than a genuine foundation or make-up layer for such a cobbled surface. Therefore, it was concluded that the cobbles were laid to consolidate the damp deposits beneath.

4.1.3 The stratigraphy identified in the course of the groundworks clearly correlated with that exposed under the more favourable conditions of the evaluation test pits (OA North 2004), although with less definition. The cobbled layer, 6, appears to correlate with layer 7 from the evaluation (ibid), which was dated to Roman period. The daub-rich layer 3, immediately beneath the cobbles, can also be equated with layer 9 in the evaluation, which had been dated to the second or third century AD (ibid). Finally, the organic-rich layer 10 can be tentatively identified with layer 10 identified in the evaluation, which provided environmental evidence that the ground in the area had been very wet (ibid).

4.1.4 The finds assemblage has added significant dating evidence to the area within the extramural settlement. Although a large part of the pottery assemblage was unstratified, the Roman material was closely dated to no later than the late second century AD, with some tentatively dated pottery evidence from the third century AD recovered from the evaluation in 2004 (ibid). The assemblage is domestic in nature and is a mix of low and high status.
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6. ILLUSTRATIONS

6.1 FIGURES

Figure 1: Location Map

Figure 2: Detailed location plan of site and previous excavations relative to the Roman fort

Figure 3: Plan of groundworks

6.2 PLATES

Plate 1: South-east-facing view of ground level reduction in progress

Plate 2: South-facing view of foundation trench being excavated

Plate 3: South-west-facing view of section exposed in foundation trench, showing layers 2-5

Plate 4: South-west-facing view of manhole cover and existing service pipes
Figure 2: Detailed location plan of site and previous excavations relative to the Roman fort
Plate 1: South-east-facing view of ground level reduction in progress

Plate 2: South-facing view of foundation trench being excavated
Plate 3: South-west-facing view of section exposed in foundation trench, showing layers 2-5
Plate 4: South-west-facing view of manhole cover and existing service pipes
APPENDIX 1: PROJECT DESIGN

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

1.1.1 Mr Diarmuid Beary (hereafter the Client) has requested Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) submit proposals to undertake an archaeological watching brief of the groundworks for a proposed extension and conservatory at the domestic dwelling ‘Feolin’ Greenside, Ribchester (NGR SD 65090 35287). This is in response to two evaluation pits undertaken in March 2004 by OA North (OA North forthcoming) as part of the planning condition imposed by Ribble Valley Borough Council (Planning Application Number 3/03/1104P). One of the two pits located stratified Roman remains to a depth of at least 1.65m. As a result Lancashire County Archaeology Service have advised that a watching brief is the most appropriate course of action.

1.1.2 The village of Ribchester is an area of very high archaeological potential and is regarded as being of national importance. The site at ‘Feolin’ is known to stand within the vicus or civilian settlement area, of which much has been protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

1.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

1.2.1 The Ribchester area has been settled since prehistoric times and is the site of Bremetennacum, a Roman fort and associated external settlement dating from the first century AD. The fort lies on the south-west edge of the town, and is protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument; hence much of the town, including the site in question, lies within the setting of that monument. Both the fort and the settlement, which have been well known from the sixteenth century onwards, lie largely beneath the church and glebe lands of the church of St Wilfrid, with extra mural settlement proven as far as 500m to the north of the fort. There have been both numerous chance finds (including the well-known Ribchester Helmet, now in the British Museum), and excavations within the fort and extra mural settlement.

1.2.2 Remains of the fort and settlement are exposed to view within the town and more extensive archaeological deposits are present below the surface. The fort and settlement have been recognised as of national importance.

1.2.3 The fort and settlement at Ribchester lie within the western territory of the Brigantes. The site is strategically well placed at the crossing of a major trans-Pennine route with an important north-south road. The location of Ribchester, at a crossing of the Ribble, may also have allowed it to oversee river traffic to and from the West Coast.

1.2.4 As the frontier moved north during the first and second centuries AD, the fort would have dominated the hinterland between the settled and “Romanised” region around Chester, and “the Wall” frontier zone. Evidence from the recent excavations (1989-90) suggests a timber fort was established in the early AD 70’s, and modified cAD 82-86. Subsequent demolition of this fort, and its rebuilding in stone, probably occurred around AD 125-135, possibly as a result of activity in the area of Hadrian’s Wall, with the Roman occupation of Ribchester known to have continued into the third century AD.

1.2.5 The north-east corner tower of the stone fort, which was uncovered in the garden of 2 Church Street by Mr J Ridge and the Time Team (Channel 4 1994). Similarly, the bathhouse was discovered by labourers in 1837, and is now open to the public. Excavations in 1927 and 1966-68 revealed a hypercausted room, stone walls, furnaces, and a tiled floor, while excavations in 1977-78 uncovered further features associated with the bath house and a proceeding structure on the same site. A broad second century AD date has been given to these structures and their associated activity, although it is likely that both the bath complex and the general area may have remained in use during the third century.
1.3 **OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY NORTH**

1.3.1 Oxford Archaeology North has considerable experience of excavation of sites of all periods, having undertaken a great number of small and large scale projects throughout Northern England during the past 23 years. Evaluations, assessments, watching briefs and excavations have taken place within the planning process, to fulfil the requirements of clients and planning authorities, to very rigorous timetables. OA North has undertaken numerous excavations and watching briefs in Ribchester (particularly in its former guise as Lancaster University Archaeological Unit). The excavations from 1980, 1989-1990 have been published (Buxton and Howard-Davis 2000).

1.3.2 OA North has the professional expertise and resources to undertake the project detailed below to a high level of quality and efficiency. OA North is an Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) registered organisation, registration number 17, and all its members of staff operate subject to the IFA Code of Conduct.

2. **OBJECTIVES**

2.1 The following programme has been designed to provide for accurate recording of any archaeological deposits that are disturbed by ground works for the proposed development.

2.2 **Watching brief:** a watching brief, during associated ground disturbance, will determine the quality, extent and importance of any archaeological remains on the site across the whole of the proposed development area.

2.3 **Report and Archive:** a report will be produced for the client within eight weeks of completion of the fieldwork. A site archive will be produced to English Heritage guidelines (MAP 2) and in accordance with the Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage (UKIC 1990).

3 **METHOD STATEMENT**

3.1 **WATCHING BRIEF**

3.1.1 **Methodology:** a programme of field observation will accurately record the location, extent, and character of any surviving archaeological features and/or deposits within the proposed ground disturbance. This work will comprise observation during the excavation for these works, including building foundations and service trenches and any other earth moving activities, the systematic examination of any subsoil horizons exposed during the course of the groundworks, and the accurate recording of all archaeological features and horizons, and any artefacts, identified during observation.

3.1.2 Putative archaeological features and/or deposits identified by the machining process, together with the immediate vicinity of any such features, will be cleaned by hand, using either hoes, shovel scraping, and/or trowels depending on the subsoil conditions, and where appropriate sections will be studied and drawn. Any such features will be sample excavated (i.e. selected pits and postholes will normally only be half-sectioned, linear features will be subject to no more than a 10% sample, and extensive layers will, where possible, be sampled by partial rather than complete removal).

3.1.3 During this phase of work, recording will comprise a full description and preliminary classification of features or materials revealed, and their accurate location (either on plan and/or section, and as grid co-ordinates where appropriate). Features will be planned accurately at appropriate scales and annotated on to a large-scale plan provided by the Client. A photographic record will be undertaken simultaneously.

3.1.4 A plan will be produced of the areas of groundworks showing the location and extent of the ground disturbance and one or more dimensioned sections will be produced.
3.1.5 **Contingency Plan:** in the event of significant archaeological features being encountered during the watching brief, discussions will take place with LCAS as to the extent of further works to be carried out. All further works would be subject to a variation to this project design. In the event of environmental/organic deposits being present on site, it would be necessary to discuss and agree a programme of palaeoenvironmental sampling and or dating with the LCAS Archaeologist.

3.2 **Health and Safety**

3.2.1 OA North provides a Health and Safety Statement for all projects and maintains a Unit Safety policy. All site procedures are in accordance with the guidance set out in the Health and Safety Manual compiled by the Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers (1997). OA North will liaise with the client to ensure all health and safety regulations are met. A risk assessment will be completed in advance of any on-site works.

3.3 **Archive/Report**

3.4.1 Archive: the results of all archaeological work carried out will form the basis for a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (Management of Archaeological Projects, 2nd edition, 1991) and the Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage (UKIC 1990). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project. The deposition of a properly ordered and indexed project archive in an appropriate repository is considered an essential and integral element of all archaeological projects by the IFA in that organisation’s code of conduct.

3.4.2 Report: one bound and one unbound copy of a written synthetic report will be submitted to the client, and a copy submitted to the County Archaeological Officer and to the Lancashire SMR as a paper copy and digital copy on CD within eight weeks of completion of fieldwork. The report will include a copy of this project design, and indications of any agreed departure from that design. It will present, summarise, and interpret the results of the programme detailed above.

3.4.3 Confidentiality: all internal reports to the client are designed as documents for the specific use of the Client, for the particular purpose as defined in the project brief and project design, and should be treated as such. They are not suitable for publication as academic documents or otherwise without amendment or revision.

4 **Project Monitoring**

4.1 Monitoring of this project will be undertaken through the auspices of the LCAS Archaeologist, who will be informed of the start and end dates of the work.

5 **Work Timetable**

5.1 The duration of the archaeological presence for the watching brief is as yet unknown, being dictated by the schedule of works.

5.2 The client report will be completed within eight weeks following completion of the fieldwork.

6 **Staffing**

6.1 The project will be under the direct management of **Emily Mercer BA (Hons) MSc AIFA** (OA North Senior Project Manager) to whom all correspondence should be addressed.

6.2 The watching brief will be supervised by either an OA North project officer or supervisor experienced in this type of project. Due to scheduling requirements it is not possible to provide these details at the present time. All OA North project officers and supervisors are experienced field archaeologists capable of carrying out projects of all sizes.
7 INSURANCE

7.1 OA North has a professional indemnity cover to a value of £2,000,000; proof of which can be supplied as required.

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### APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT LIST

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<td>Modern overburden/surfacing</td>
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<td>Dump layer</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Dump layer</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>?Natural Clay Deposit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Deposit of cobbles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Dump layer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Light grey sandy-silt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Probable river gravels</td>
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<td>Organic-rich layer</td>
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### APPENDIX 3: FINDS CATALOGUE

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<th>Material</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Ceramic</td>
<td>Clay tobacco pipe stem fragment, medium bore</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>Cow tibia, sawn into joints</td>
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<td>White earthenware ‘Willow’ transfer-printed plate rim</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Ceramic</td>
<td>White earthenware ‘Broseley’ transfer-printed mug (?) rim (straight-sided, with handle terminal)</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Ceramic</td>
<td>White earthenware ‘Asiatic Pheasants’ transfer-printed plate rim</td>
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<td>Ceramic</td>
<td>White earthenware relief-moulded and blue painted shell edge plate rim</td>
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<td>White earthenware mug rim</td>
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<td>Ceramic</td>
<td>White earthenware fluted hollow-ware vessel with brown leafy transfer-printed sheet (?) pattern</td>
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<td>Bone china saucer rim with parallel enamelled blue lines</td>
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<td>Black-glazed red earthenware body fragments</td>
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<td>Ceramic</td>
<td>Black-glazed red earthenware jar rim</td>
<td>Late seventeenth - early twentieth century</td>
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<td>Ceramic</td>
<td>Brown-glazed grey stoneware ink (?) bottle shoulder (cylindrical bottle with carination at shoulder and concave neck)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Brown-glazed buff-coloured stoneware cylindrical storage jar fragment</td>
<td>Nineteenth - twentieth century</td>
</tr>
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<td>Brown-glazed red earthenware coarseware vessel fragment</td>
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<td>Black-glazed red earthenware globular (?) smallish vessel fragment</td>
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<td>Unglazed red earthenware flower pot (?) fragment (large vessel)</td>
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<td>Black-glazed red earthenware strap handle fragment from medium-sized vessel</td>
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<td>Ctxt</td>
<td>Qty</td>
<td>Material</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Date range</td>
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<tr>
<td>U/S</td>
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<td>Ceramic</td>
<td>Lustrous brown-glazed buff-coloured earthenware tea pot (?) rim, with lip for lid to rest on</td>
<td>Eighteenth - nineteenth century?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U/S</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ceramic</td>
<td>Red earthenware ridge tile or drain pipe fragment, semi-circular in cross-section</td>
<td>Eighteenth - twentieth century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U/S</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Ceramic</td>
<td>Central Gaul (Lezoux) samian form Dr 37 (2), Wilderspool mortaria (1), white slipped oxidised wares of Wilderspool type (8), oxidised and partially reduced wares of probable regionally local types (9), buff ware flagon (2), fish amphora</td>
<td>Late first-mid second century AD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U/S</td>
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<td>Ceramic</td>
<td>Building material; daub and sand-cast roof tile</td>
<td>Roman</td>
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<tr>
<td>U/S</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ceramic</td>
<td>Amphora; complete rim in a yellowish/red micaceous fabric. Type 281, Dressel 20 (Peacock and Williams 1986)</td>
<td>First-third century AD</td>
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<td>Iron</td>
<td>Heavily corroded nail</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ceramic</td>
<td>Fine brown-glazed light pinkish-orange earthenware hollow-ware vessel base, from a cup or similar vessel</td>
<td>Eighteenth century?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ceramic</td>
<td>South Gaul samian form Dr 27 (1), Central Gaulish samian (1), pinkish-buff oxidised ware and hard oxidised upright rim of unknown source</td>
<td>Late first- ?early second century AD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Iron</td>
<td>Coffin nail</td>
<td>Roman</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>Cow astragalus, right hand side</td>
<td>Not closely dateable, but Roman by association</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>Human (?) tibia fragment</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>Medium mammal (sheep?) rib fragment</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ceramic</td>
<td>Building material; imbrex (3), daub</td>
<td>Roman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Ceramic</td>
<td>Buff ware (3), white slipped redware of Wilderspool type (2), Black Burnished Ware 1 (2), Central Gaul samian forms Dr 33, 38 (4)</td>
<td>Mid-late second century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Copper alloy</td>
<td>Rim fragment, vessel?</td>
<td>Not closely dateable, but Roman by association</td>
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<td>Slag</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>South Gaul samian (1), Wilderspool white slipped red ware (7)</td>
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