



Archaeological Excavation

Skelhorne Street Phase 2, Liverpool

Client: Nexus-Heritage

Technical Report: Graham Mottershead

Report No: 2017/35







Site Location: The study area lies beside Lime Street Station in Liverpool, bounded by

Skelhorne Street and Bolton Street

NGR: Centred on NGR 335070 390430

Project: Skelhorne Street Phase 2, Liverpool

Internal Ref: SA/2017/35

Prepared for: Nexus-Heritage

Document Type: Excavation Report

Version: Version 2.0

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Summary

In April 2017, Salford Archaeology was commissioned by Nexus-Heritage to carry out an archaeological excavation of a well and potential workers housing at Skelhorne Street and Bolton Street, Liverpool (centred on NGR 335075 390430). The excavation of the well was carried out on the 30th and 31st of March 2017, following an initial archaeological evaluation Salford Archaeology in January 2017.

During the evaluation the presence of ACMs within upper levelling layers meant that the northern end of the site could not be adequately evaluated. Following remediation of this area a trench was excavated across it by Nexus-Heritage during April 2017.

The well was machine stripped to its upper level after which it was hand excavated to a depth of c. 1.5m. Following this a 5m square box was excavated 1.5m into the bedrock allowing safe access to hand excavate a further 1.5m of the well.

The well was found to be 0.98m in diameter and 7m deep. Its tool marks were consistent with a 19th century feature, serving housing that was built in the early 19th century and appears on the 1848 OS mapping. The fill suggested that it was infilled during the early 20th century when the housing was demolished. The northern trench revealed that the ground reduction observed across the southern half of the site during the evaluation continued across the northern part of the site and no features or structures of archaeological significance remained within the area.

The results obtained during the excavations suggested that no further investigation was merited.



1. Introduction

1.1 Background

In April 2017, Salford Archaeology was commissioned by Nexus-Heritage to carry out an archaeological excavation of a well and potential workers housing at Skelhorne Street and Bolton Street, Liverpool (centred on NGR 335075 390430). The excavation followed an initial archaeological evaluation carried out by Salford Archaeology in January 2017.

A desk based assessment produced by Nexus-Heritage concluded that there was the possibility of archaeological remains surviving within the study area relating to an 18th century bath house, 18th century textile mill and early 19th century workers housing. A subsequent evaluation carried out by Salford Archaeology in January 2017, on behalf of Nexus-Heritage, recorded patchy remains of truncated structural remains and an 18th century rock cut well. The evaluation of the northern end of the side could not be concluded at this point due to the presence of ACMs within upper levels of ground levelling material.

Following the evaluation Nexus-Heritage produced a WSI for the excavation of the well. Subsequently Nexus-Heritage excavated a trench across the northern part of the site to investigate the possible workers housing.

1.2 The Setting

The study area lies within a car park at the intersection of Skelhorne Street and Hilbre Street, Liverpool (centred on NGR 335070 390430). It is bounded at the north by Skelhorne Street, at the south-west by Bolton Street and at the north-east by Hilbre Street. To the south-east is a University residential block fronting onto Hilbre Street and Copperas Hill (Figure 1).

The study area lies at a height of 24m AOD. The area originally comprised a hill slope descending from south-east to north and west. This slope has been cut away resulting in a level car park area with the ground adjacent to the south, south-east and east being considerably higher and held behind a concrete retaining wall. Bolton Street slopes down from south-east to north-west and the north-west end of the car park is raised by c. 1m.

The solid geology of the area comprises outcropping sandstone beds of the Triassic period. No drift geology was present within the study area, it being overlain with demolition levelling material and a tarmac car park surface.

1.3 Personnel

The well excavation was carried out by Mandy Burns and Sarah Mottershead. The excavation of the northern trench was undertaken by Anthony Martin of Nexus-Heritage. The report was written, compiled and illustrated by Graham Mottershead.



1.4 Monitoring

Doug Moir, Senior Planning Archaeologist, Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service, monitored the archaeological works.



2. Historical Background

2.1 Introduction

A desk based assessment was carried by the University of Manchester Archaeological Unit during 2002. The following historical background is summarised from that document.

2.2 Prehistoric and Roman

There is no evidence of Prehistoric activity within the study area.

A Roman coin dating 274-5AD (HER number MME 3508) was found at Bridport Street, approximately 200m to the north of the study area. No finds from the Roman period have been recovered from the study area itself.

2.3 *Medieval to c 1790*

The first document referring to Liverpool by name dates from the 1190s. Although it is not named in the Domesday Survey of 1086, it is thought to have been one of six berewicks or estates dependant on the on the manor of West Derby. The name Liverpool itself has an Old English derivation referring to the 'Pool', a tidal creek on the Mersey which in 1715 became the site of Liverpool's first docks. The development of Liverpool as an urban centre began in 1207 when King John made the place a borough. The medieval town was based on an H-shaped layout of streets on the promontory between the Mersey and the Pool.

To the east of the medieval town was a large scale area of uncultivated common land referred to as the Heath, of which the study area was part.

In 1643 Liverpool was captured by the Parliamentarians who constructed defences around the town, which are shown on a plan made after the Royalists recaptured it in May 1644.

When Prince Rupert's Royalist army besieged the town in 1644, he is reported to have set up his artillery on the high ground extending from the north of Townsend Mill to Copperas Hill and dug entrenchments on the lower ground for the protection of the besieging troops. The full extent of the Civil War earthworks is unknown, but it is possible they extended into the study area.

During the late 17th and early 18th century the town begins to expand significantly. James Chadwick's map of Liverpool of 1725 shows that from the medieval centre the built-up area of the town had expanded eastwards along Dale Street roughly as far as the junction with Byron Street. Other expansion in this direction occurred along Church Street and Hanover Street up to the point at which the two converged. The study area lies just off this



map, but the area of the former Heath lying between it and the encroaching town is shown divided into enclosed fields.

2.4 c 1790-c 1870

As is shown on Gore's map of 1790, building had taken place within the southern third of the new block between Bolton Street and Hill Street, with the remaining land between the new streets being depicted as vacant.

In 1795, however, Phillips' plan shows that the central third of the block between Bolton Street and Hill Street was also built upon, with the Bolton Street frontage of that third being occupied by 'baths'.

A description of the Bolton Street baths is given in Wallace's published account in which the 1795 plan was included:

These baths consist of a small brick building, connected with and supplied by the pumps of a cotton manufactory, the building is divided into two departments; in one of them is the gentlemen's bath, with has a small dressing room and a fireplace common to all; contiguous to this room are four divisions, in each of which is a small bath, lined with lead, these are called the private baths, and with difficulty will hold one person, these baths are ingeniously supplied with either hot, or cold water, in a few minutes by turning a cock, and emptied with equal facility, adjoining is a large public cold bath, covered by a skylight in the form of a dome or cupola. On the ladies side are also four private baths on the same principle as those already described, and a large public hot bath, there being no public cold baths for the ladies, unless they should be deposed to amuse themselves in that of the gentlemen.

These baths are constructed and filled on a simple principle, by means of a steam engine used for the cotton work, which speedily pumps sufficient water to fill the large cold bath, or supply the smaller, to which it is conveyed by subterraneous pipes, a large boiler is also fixed, which is always filled with warm water, and by means of cocks fixed in the small baths, fills them in a minute to any temperature the bather may require' (Wallace 1795, 175-6)

The baths were also described in Moss' 1796 guide to the town.

'in Bolton Street (dirty and unpaved) are very elegant fresh water Baths; cold, temperate and warm; for Ladies and Gentlemen distinctly. They are supplied from the well of the adjoining cotton manufactory, that is worked by a steam engine' (Moss 1796, 61-2).

Both Wallace and Moss describe the Bolton Street baths as adjacent to, and dependent upon, a steam-powered cotton mill which was supplied with water from a local well.



According to Picton, this mill was a sizable building, six-storeys high, and was purposely built as a cotton mill in around 1790 by Mr Pennington. In 1812 the factory was bought by the firm of Nuttall, Fisher and Dixon, Liverpool printers and publishers who operated from the building under the name of the Caxton Press. In January 1821 the factory was destroyed in a fire, and the firm moved to London. Picton adds that 'the site was ultimately covered with houses and cottages, not a vestige remaining to tell of its old appropriation'.

Cotton mills were rare in Liverpool, which operated primarily as a port rather than a centre of manufacture. In 1795 there were, according to Wallace, only three 'cotton manufactories' in the town, while in the following year Moss mentions 'several' cotton- spinning mills (Wallace 1795, 179; Moss 1796, 94).

The first map to show the properties of the study area in any details Horwood's map of Liverpool of 1803. In the centre of the block between Bolton Street and Hill Street are shown two large buildings, which are unnamed but can be identified as the baths and the mill. The bath building is shown as a rectangular range fronting Bolton Street with two narrow wings to the rear, one at each end, with a smaller projection placed centrally between them. Immediately to the rear of the baths, on Hill Street, the 1803 map shows a building which can be identified as the mill. It is shown as a rectangular block, the southern half having two small projecting wings to the rear. To the north of this block, rows of dwellings are also shown running at a right angle to Bolton Street, although in this area there was still some vacant ground.

Gage's map of 1836 shows that by this period the study area was mainly occupied by dwelling, which included houses on the site of the late 18th century Bolton Street baths and the cotton mill and printing works on Hill Street. Some of these houses were double-depth dwellings with small rear yards which allowed the luxury of a private privy. Such houses were to be found along the southern half of Bolton Street and Hill Street, where they occupied much of the site of the baths and the mill. There were also a number of one-up one-downs built as either back-to-backs or as blind-backs in single-depth rows. These were most common in the northern half of the block between Bolton Street and Hill Street. The one-up one-downs were accessed by the narrow thoroughfares named as 'places' and 'courts'. Most commonly the rows of one-up one-downs were built at a right angle to Bolton Street and Hill Street, so that they ran down the slope. In the southern half of the block between Bolton Street and Hill Street, the rows of Nuttall Court and Grove Court were constructed parallel to those streets, to the rear of the superior dwellings which occupied the main street frontages.

The 1848 OS 6" map shows a wine and spirit vault on the corner of Bolton Street and Skelhorne Street. Towards the south end of Bolton Street, the 1848 OS 6" map names one property as London House.

2.5 *c* 1870-*c* 1950

The present Lime Street station building was constructed in 1867. A consequence of this change was that Skelhorne Street, which originally ran on a straight line at a right angle to



Lime Street, was widened and to the east of Bolton Street was diverted to follow its present curving course on the south side of the station. This alteration to the line of Skelhorne Street in turn had an effect along the northern side of the study area, evident on the OS 1:2500 1st Edition of 1890.

To the west, demolition of one-up one-downs had also taken place along the new Skelhorne Street between Hilbre Street and Bolton Street, but in this case their site had been left as a large open yard providing access to some of the remaining houses. By 1890 the one-up one-downs which had formed Nuttall Street and Grove Court, in the southern half of the block between Hilbre Street and Bolton Street, had also been demolished. This site was left as a vacant space. In the block between Hilbre Street and Bolton Street, the vacant site of Nuttall Street and Grove Court was now largely infilled with a large U-shaped complex, accessed by a broad passageway from Bolton Street. To the south a new building had been erected with a frontage on Bolton Street.

2.6 Late 20th Century

The site appeared to be relatively stable during the period 1890 -1950, as shown on the Ordnance Survey 25 inch editions of 1908 (Lancashire CVI.14 revised 1906, published 1908) and 1924 (Lancashire CVI.14 revised 1924, published 1927). The 1946 edition of the 1:10,560 mapping (Lancashire CVI.SW Revised 1938, Published 1946) is at too small a scale to say anything in detail about the site, but it is depicted as fully developed with no open spaces.

OS mapping of the 1950s indicates further clearance and rebuilding in the study area. Part of this development can be attributed to wartime bombing. No buildings were standing on the frontage between Bolton Street and Hilbre Street; to the rear, on Bolton Street, a ruin is depicted on the south side of the electricity substation which is now named as such. Butting on to the substation and fronting Hilbre Street a garage is shown (No 34 & 36 Hilbre Street). To the north the double depth houses on Bolton Street and Hilbre Street are still shown, but the two properties at the northern end of Hilbre Street row were ruins. The space to the rear of the houses was now infilled with a wing of a large garage complex which on the north also crossed from Bolton Street to Hilbre Street. This building may have possibly pre-dated the war since in a directory of 1936, as well as a directory of 1955, Lime St Garages (L'pool) Ltd are listed under both streets.

The 1950s mapping also shows that the block between Bolton Street and Hilbre Street was mostly vacant with only a small range at the Hilbre Street side of the plot. Trade directories suggest that this was the Ribble Auto Services Ltd staff canteen. The rest of the plot was in use as a car park.

By 1970 the site area is shown as entirely occupied by a bus station. This is shown on photographs from 1966 and was a brick built depot with entrances on both Bolton Street



and Hilbre Street. The northern side comprised the two storey brick built offices of the Ribble Bus Station and had an entrance on Bolton Street.

By 2002 the northern half of the bus station had been demolished and was being used as a car park, while the southern part of the building had been converted into a night club. During the early 21st century the nightclub was demolished and the University residential block that currently occupies the southern side of the plot was constructed. The site area was partially tarmacced and in use as a car park.

2.7 Archaeological Background

An evaluation carried out by Salford Archaeology in January 2017, on behalf of Nexus-Heritage, recorded patchy remains of truncated structural remains and an 18th century rock cut well. The evaluation of the northern end of the side could not be concluded at this point due to the presence of asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) within upper levels of ground-levelling material.



3. Methodology

3.1 Excavation Methodology

The excavation of the well was carried out on 30th and 31st March 2017. Prior to the commencement of the excavation the ground in the excavation was cleared to allow access for Salford Archaeology staff. The well was exposed and the upper 1.5m excavated by hand. Following this hand excavation a 5m square box was mechanically excavated around the well to a depth of 1.5m into the bedrock. This allowed safe access for the hand excavation of a further 1.5m of the well, giving a total excavation depth of the upper 3m. The rest of the well was subsequently removed by machine.

The strip and plan area was investigated by Anthony Martin of Nexus-Heritage during a site visit in April 2017. This consisted of the mechanical excavation of a single trench across the northern part of the area (Figure 2).

3.2 Recording Methodology

The well was recorded using a combination of photography, sketch plans and sections and annotated contexts. Levels were established using an temporary benchmark height located on the site.

Photography of all relevant phases and features were undertaken in digital format using a digital SLR camera. General working photographs were taken during the archaeological works, to provide illustrative material covering the wider aspects of the archaeological work undertaken.

All fieldwork and recording of archaeological features, deposits and artefacts were carried out to acceptable archaeological standards. All archaeological works carried out by the CfAA are carried out to the standards set out in the Code of Conduct of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.



4. Excavation Results

4.1 Introduction

The excavation consisted of hand excavation of the upper 3m of the well, mechanical excavation of the lower part of the well, and the mechanical excavation of a single trench across the northern part of the study area. For the well excavation the context numbers assigned during the evaluation phase were maintained for consistency.

4.2 The Well

The upper 3m of the well were excavated by hand and the lower 4m by machine. It is worth noting that prior to hand excavation the depth of the well was tested by the main client using a drilling rig. During the drill investigation four artefacts were recovered from the infill material - three glass bottles and one stoneware jar. One of the glass bottles was marked WM H. Brown & Bro. Baltimore. This company imported and manufactured perfumes and medicines at No.25, South Sharp Street, Baltimore. The company appears to have been established in the mid-1850s and continued until at least 1923, probably ceasing to trade shortly thereafter.

The well 217 had been cut into the sandstone bedrock 218. It was c. 0.98m in diameter and was c. 7m deep. The cut into the sandstone was regular and showed frequent tool marks. It was filled with a relatively uniform mixed infilling deposit 216 which comprised mixed sand and clay with brick and stone fragments, ash, mortar and slate. Within this deposit were a number of large fragments of sandstone, probably broken masonry, presumably used to stabilise the fill material. Observed within this material were a number of fragments of ceramics and glass dating from c. 1840 to the early 20th century. The finds were mixed throughout with no preponderance of dates at any particular level, suggesting a homogenous backfill during the early 20th century. Much of the fill in the centre of the well had been heavily disturbed by the drilling rig used to initially test the depth. This resulted in the central fill consisting of a highly mixed slurry like deposit 220, comprising the well fill 216 mixed with the bentonite clay pellets poured down the drill test hole (Plates 1 and 2).





Plate 1: Excavated upper 1.5m of the well looking north-west



Plate 2: Lower excavated 1.5m depth (to 3m) of the well looking north-west



4.3 The Northern Strip and Plan Area

A trench was mechanically excavated across the northern strip and plan area following the remediation of the area to remove any potential ACMs from the upper fills.

Below the upper fills remediated of ACMs a floor surface was encountered, consisting of small square white, light blue and dark blue mosaic tiles (Plate 3).



Plate 3: Mosaic floor, looking north-east

Below this was 0.3m of mortar bedding with a 0.3m thick concrete slab below it set on 0.01m to 0.02m of ginger levelling sand. Beneath this levelling material natural yellow sandstone bedrock was observed. This appeared to have been truncated at the north-west side. No features of archaeological significance were observed (Plate 4).





Plate 4: Trench across the strip and plan area, looking north-east



5. Finds

5.1 Introduction

A small assemblage of artefacts was recovered from the excavation of the well. The assemblage was dominated by fragments of ceramic and glass vessels, which had a date range spanning the mid-19th to early 20th centuries. Other material classes recovered from the excavation were small in number, comprising a single fragment of a clay tobacco pipe and a single metal object. Other common material categories, such as animal bone and ceramic building materials, were absent from the assemblage. All of the finds were domestic in character.

5.2 The Pottery

A total of 51 fragments of pottery were recovered from the excavation, recovered from a single stratified context and an unstratified deposit, although all of a broadly contemporary date (Table 1). In general terms, the material was in reasonable condition, with little indication of abrasion, as may perhaps be anticipated given the provenance of the material from a well.

The pottery fragments represented a small range of common ceramic vessel fabrics in a range of kitchen and tableware forms. The most frequent type represented by sherd count was utilitarian dark-glazed earthenware vessels, which all had a hard, fine-grained reddish-orange fabric, and all probably derived from pancheons or large storage and cooking vessels that had been manufactured locally. Only a few diagnostic fragments such as rim and base sherds were present in this group, although this included a nearly complete lid of a small storage jar. Whilst none of the sherds were re-fitting, it is probable that several came from single vessels, and the total number of vessels represented need not necessarily be more than three or four.

Fragments of dark-glazed red earthenware is often difficult to date with precision as they were in widespread use for a protracted period, although those recovered from the excavation are consistent with a 19th- to early 20th-century date.

Several different types of tableware vessels were present in the assemblage, most of which are frequently recovered from 19th- and early 20th-century horizons. These included fragments of blue and white transfer-printed ware plates, white earthenware bowls and a 20th-century marmalade pot. Finer tablewares included a single fragment of lustre ware and a sherd of a pearl-glazed ironstone china cup, together with a large body sherd of a light blue glazed stoneware vase with white slip laurel decoration.

Amongst the group of stonewares was a largely complete Nottingham stoneware ink pot to which a 19th-century date may be attributed. A light brown English stoneware vessel was the only other stoneware in the group, represented by three sherds of a bottle neck, similarly of a 19th-century date.



Context	Count	Types	Date Range
216	30	Dark-glazed red earthenware kitchen wares (23 sherds), light brown English stoneware vessel (three adjoining neck sherds), one sherd of an under-glazed transfer-printed ware plate, and one sherd of a white earthenware bowl, one including a footring, and two fragments of a white earthenware jam jar base.	Mid-19 th to early 20 th centuries
U/S	21	Dark-glazed earthenware, Nottingham stoneware ink pot, a light blue glazed white stoneware vase, transfer-printed wares, white earthenware, pearl-glazed ironstone china, and a single fragment of lustre ware.	Mid-19 th to early 20 th centuries

Table 1: Outline catalogue of the pottery assemblage

5.3 The Glass

A total of 67 fragments of glass were recovered, with 18 different types of glass (Table 2). The assemblage comprised a mix of dates from c 1840 to the early 20th century. These came from a homogenous infill material and were mixed throughout.

Quantity	Туре	Date	Notes
6	Dark green bottle glass	c. 1840	
1	Aqua ink bottle	1860 -1900	8 sided, 2 piece mould, cracked off lip
9	Green bottle glass	c. 1850	1 neck with 'down- tooled' cork closure, 8 body fragments. Probably beer, all probably same vessel
5	Green bottle glass	1860 -1900	1 base, 4 body fragments. Mould made, probably wine, possibly all same vessel
5	Colourless clear window glass	20 th century	
1	Colourless clear glass	20th century	Wavy edged rim, decorative bowl



Quantity	Туре	Date	Notes
4	Colourless clear glass	Early 20 th century	Same vessel. Acidetched decoration, tableware or light fitting
17	Aqua bottle glass	1860 - 1900	Body fragments of aerated water bottle, embossed, possibly 'Codd' bottle
2	Aqua glass	1860 - 1900	Neck and base of same vessel, 2 piece mould, embossed '-er', applied lip, possible crown cap closure, mineral water
6	Colourless clear glass	20 th century	1 base, 5 body fragments. 'pin' embossed on base, mould made, carbonated drink bottle
1	Aqua glass	1860 - 1900	Bottle neck, applied 'down-tooled' lip, probable cork closure
3	Aqua glass	1860 -1900	Body fragments of same vessel, square or multi-sided household vessel
1	Colourless clear glass	20th century	grooves
2	Aqua glass	1860 - 1900	Base fragments of oval flask, household contents
1	Aqua glass	1850 - 1870	Bottle base with pontil scar. Oval bottle, household contents
1	Aqua glass	1850 - 1890	Almost complete oval flask, 3 piece mould, closure missing, household contents
1	Aqua Glass	1860 - 1890	Oval flask, 3 piece mould, cork closure, 'down-tooled' lip, household contents



Quantity	Туре	Date	Notes
1	Colourless clear glass	1890 - 1900	Small intact vessel, 2 piece mould, applied lip, cork or glass stopper closure, embossed 'Wm. H. Brown & Bro, Baltimore'. Perfume bottle

Table 2: Outline catalogue of the glass assemblage

5.4 Other Finds

Other finds in the assemblage included a single, short fragment of a clay tobacco pipe stem of an indeterminable date, and a corroded metal object that appeared to be part of a pocket watch.

5.5 Conclusion

The small finds assemblage recovered from the excavation is of very little archaeological interest, although it has provided a date range for the excavated well spanning the mid-19th to early 20th century. None of the individual items have any inherent value, and are not worthy of retention. It is recommended that the material is disposed with in an appropriate manner.



6. Discussion

6.1 The Well

The construction of the well, its tool marks and its fill were consistent with a 19th-century feature that was infilled during the mid- to early 20th century. Although the original evaluation suggested that the well was earlier and had been filled in when the 19th century housing was built, further excavation has now shown that it likely served the early 19th century housing and was filled in when those buildings were demolished during the early 20th century. There was no evidence to suggest that the well was any earlier than the early 19th century.

6.2The Northern Strip and Plan Area

The area appeared to have been stripped to bedrock and levelled prior to the construction of the 20th-century building. This ground reduction is consistent with that observed across the southern half of the site during the phase 1 evaluation. No earlier features of archaeological significance survive within this area.



7. Archive

The archive comprises digital drawings, survey data, digital photographs and finds. This archive will be deposited, on completion of the project, with Liverpool Museum, in accordance with their Guidelines for the Transfer of Archaeological Archives to the Museum of Liverpool (December 2015).

A copy of this report will be deposited with Nexus-Heritage. It is expected that Nexus-Heritage will carry out further dissemination of the report.



8. Acknowledgements

Salford Archaeology would like to thank Anthony Martin of Nexus-Heritage for commissioning the archaeological works, providing support and assistance throughout the project, and for providing information on the initial well borehole and on the excavation of the northern trench. Salford Archaeology would also like to thank Doug Moir for providing monitoring support and advice through MEAS. The on-site well excavation was conducted by Mandy Burns and Sarah Mottershead. This report was written, compiled and illustrated by Graham Mottershead.



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Photographs

Bolton Street, looking north - 1966



Copperas Hill, looking southwest - 1966

Copperas Hill. Looking northeast - 1966

Hilbre Street, looking north - 1966

Hotham Place, looking north - 1966

Skelhorne Street, showing Ribble Bus Station - 1966

Skelhorne Street, looking east - 1966

Skelhorne Street, looking west - 1978

Skelhorne Street - 1983

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Appendix 1: Figures

Figure 1: Site Location Map

Figure 2: Excavation Area Location Plan

Figure 3: Plan of the Well





