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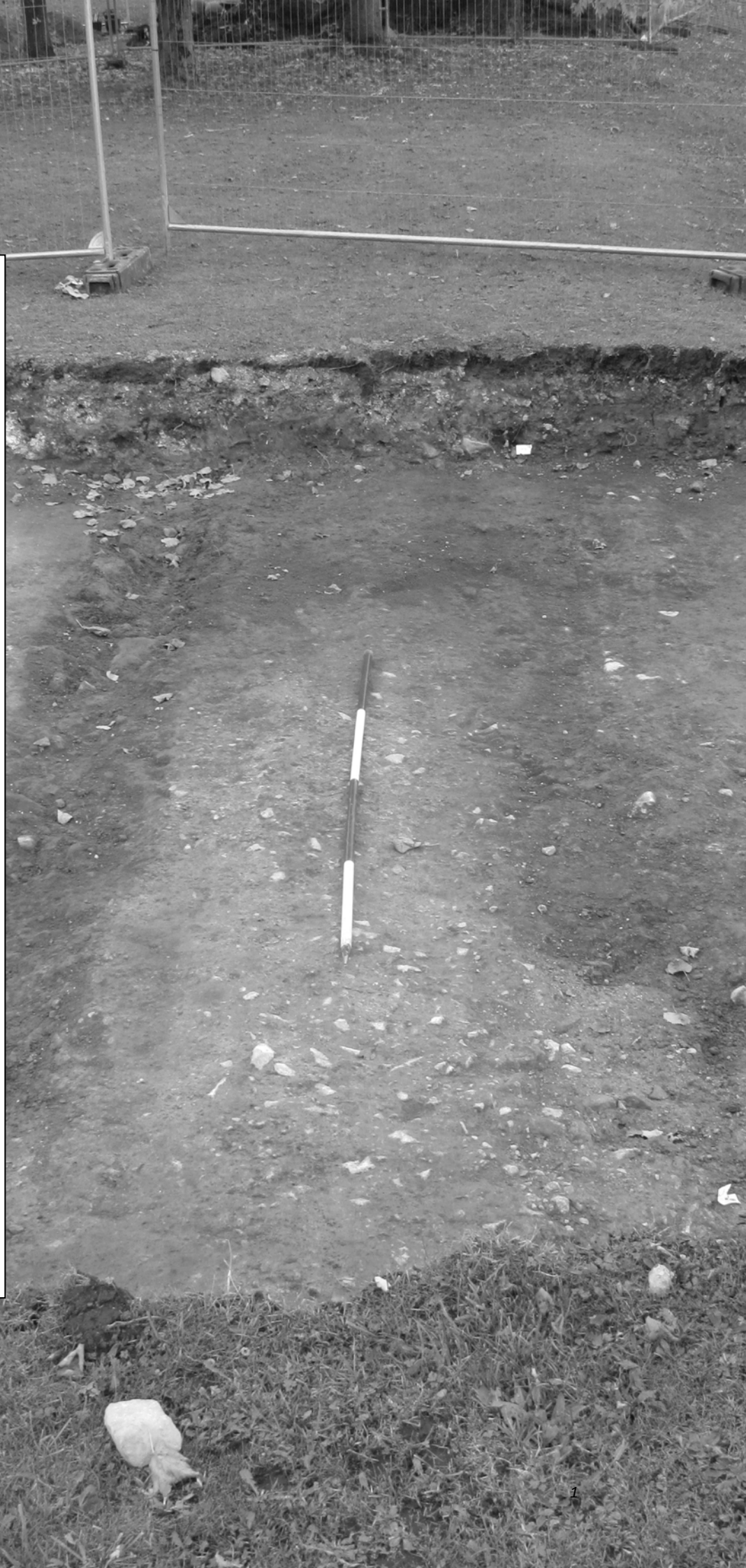
**Archaeological  
Excavation**

Peak Forest Tramway,  
Marple.

**Client:** Revealing  
Oldknows Legacy

**Technical Report:**  
Sarah Cattell

**Report No:** SA/2016/55



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**Author:** Sarah Cattell.  
**Position:** Project Officer  
**Date:** November 2016

Signed:  .....

**Approved by:** Adam J Thompson BA hons, MA, MifA  
**Position:** Director of Archaeology  
**Date:** November 2016

Signed:  .....

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**Contact:** Salford Archaeology, University of Salford, Peel Building,  
The Crescent, Salford, M5 4WU.

Telephone: 0161 295 2545      Email: s.j.cattell1@salford.ac.uk

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# Summary

Salford archaeology (SA) was commissioned by the Revealing Oldknows Legacy project to undertake a community archaeological excavation on Marple Recreation Ground, Marple, Stockport. The purpose of the excavation was to uncover, record and interpret the remains of a section of the Peak Forest Canal Tramway linking the upper and lower levels of the Peak Forest Canal in Marple. This work included mapping and understanding the extent, function, phasing and relative significance of the buried remains. The aim of the works was to raise awareness of and engage the community in the discovery and preservation of their local heritage.

Following the granting of Parliamentary consent in July 1793 a committee was formed to oversee construction of a canal between the limestone quarries at Dove Holes and the Stockport branch of the Ashton Canal. The new scheme was intended to supply limestone and processed lime to the markets of Stockport, Manchester and beyond. Between the canal terminus at Bugsworth and the junction with the Ashton Canal at Dukinfield, the plan from the outset was to build the canal as an upper and lower level, linked by a flight of locks at Marple. In November 1797 faced with a shortfall in funds, the committee decided to suspend work on the locks and to build instead a horse-drawn tramway linking the two levels. The lower level opened along with the tramway in the spring or summer of 1800. Such was the volume of traffic that in October of that year the committee agreed to the resumption of work on the locks and, in the meantime, had the tramway increased from one track to two. Traditionally the opening of the full length of the canal has been dated to 1804, but recent research argues for a date in late 1805 (Arrowsmith 2015).

The community excavation took place in October 2015 and involved the opening of two evaluation trenches along the curving earthwork which crosses the northern side of Marple Recreation Ground. Both trenches revealed the existence of compacted stone surfaces crossed by north-south orientated channels in roughly the same arrangement as specified for the Peak Forest Canal tramway rails and sleepers. In addition, a section of wall foundations and potential drainage channel associated with the tramway boundary were uncovered. The excavation provided an opportunity to compare the physical remains of the tramway with the specifications laid out by its engineer, Benjamin Outram.

All works on site were carried out by local volunteers under the supervision of Salford Archaeology staff with over 30 adults and 200 school children taking part during the excavation and a further 200 visitors to the open day.



# 1. Introduction

## *Background*

Salford archaeology (SA) was commissioned by the Revealing Oldknows Legacy project to undertake a community archaeological excavation on Marple Recreation Ground, Marple, Stockport.

The purpose of the excavation was to uncover, record and interpret the remains of a section of the Peak Forest Canal Tramway linking the upper and lower levels of the Peak Forest Canal in Marple. This work includes mapping and understanding the extent, function, phasing and relative significance of the buried remains. The aim of the works was to raise awareness of and engage the community in the discovery and preservation of their local heritage.

The project's programme of excavation and presentation focuses on the tramway remains in Year 1 and the Lime kilns and their surroundings in Year 2. The current report represents the results of the Year 1 excavations on the site of the tramway.

## *Location, topography & current land use*

The site lies across Marple Recreation Ground, Marple, Stockport, SK6 7DW (SJ 962884) at a height of roughly 153m AOD. It is located approximately 400m east of the B6101 (Strines Road), 1km south-east of Marple town centre and 615m north of the Roman Lakes Leisure Park. The site is bounded on the west by bottoms mill road, on the south by Lakes Road and by farmland to the north and west (**Fig. 1**).

The geological bedrock for the Mellor Mill site is described by the British geological survey on-line search facility as; rough rock – Sandstone known locally as Woodhead Hill rock, overlain by superficial deposits of Devensian till - Diamicton (<https://www.bgs.ac.uk>).

## *Personnel*

The project was conducted by professional archaeologists from SA. On-site excavations were conducted by Sarah Cattell, Kirsty Whittall, Simon Hinchliffe and Mandy Burns. The report was compiled, written and illustrated by Sarah Cattell, Racheal Reader and Mandy Burns. The project was managed by Adam Thompson.

## Monitoring

Norman Redhead, the Heritage Management Director (Archaeology) for Greater Manchester Archaeology Advisory Service, (GMAAS) monitored the archaeological works throughout.



**Figure 1:** Location map of Clayton Hall and its wider environs. (Reproduced by permission, OS Licence Number 100050261).

## 2. Historical Background

### Historical Background

#### *Prehistoric & Romano-British*

No finds of the prehistoric and Roman periods are known from within the study area. The nearest such sites are the Bronze Age burial mound at Shaw Cairn and the Iron Age/Romano British hillfort surrounding St Thomas' Church, both Mellor.

#### *Medieval*

During the medieval period the township of Marple was a largely rural community and remained so until the 18<sup>th</sup> century. No medieval finds have been made within the study area but a large aisled hall is known to have existed in Mellor on the site of the Iron Age hillfort. During the post medieval period the agricultural economy of Marple and Mellor was supplemented by the cottage industry of handloom weaving which lay the foundation for the town's expansion during the Industrial Revolution.

#### *Post Medieval*

An archaeological desk based assessment on Marple Lime Kilns was undertaken by Dr Peter Arrowsmith in October 2015. The DBA successfully outlines the historical background for the Post Medieval period in great detail. In order to avoid repetition, the historical background provided here is an extract from that report.

In 1792 Parliament authorised the construction of a canal linking Manchester with the coal-producing areas of Ashton and Oldham. A further Act in March 1793 allowed the Ashton Canal Company to build a branch to Stockport, and by May of that year the company planned to seek Parliamentary consent for a link with the Derbyshire limestone quarries. However, because of the Ashton Canal Company's existing commitments, in July 1793 a new company was formed to pursue the Derbyshire scheme. Nearly half of its shareholders had previously invested in the Ashton Canal. Oldknow had not been involved in the earlier navigation but was the largest shareholder in the Peak Forest Canal, the construction of which was authorised by Parliament in March 1794 (**Fig. 2**). In August of that year Samuel Oldknow was elected to the Peak Forest Canal committee and remained a member until his death. During this period, he became the committee's most active member, regularly attending meetings and frequently sitting as chairman.

The Peak Forest Canal was built primarily to transport limestone from the quarries at Dove Holes near Buxton. Burnt lime, produced by heating limestone in a kiln, had a range of uses and by the late 18th century was in increasing demand. Spread on fields



and slaked by rainwater, it improved soil quality, neutralizing acidity and helping to break up heavy clays. Lime was also used in the building industry and textile finishing trades.

Between the canal terminus at Bugsworth and the junction with the Ashton Canal at Dukinfield, the plan from the outset was to build the canal as an upper and lower level, linked by a flight of locks at Marple. The Peak Forest tramway and the upper level of the canal, from Bugsworth to Marple, were formally opened on 31 August 1796. In November 1797 faced with a shortfall in funds, the committee decided to suspend work on the locks and to build instead a horse-drawn tramway linking the two levels. The lower level, which included the Grand Aqueduct over the River Goyt, opened along with the tramway in the spring or summer of 1800. Such was the volume of traffic that in October of that year the committee agreed to the resumption of work on the locks and, in the meantime, had the tramway increased from one track to two. Traditionally the opening of the full length of the canal has been dated to 1804, but recent research argues for a date in late 1805 (Arrowsmith 2015). Even then, further work was required on the locks in the following months and the tramway was not taken up until 1807.



**Figure 2.** Plan on lease by Samuel Oldknow and Richard Arkwright to the Peak Forest Canal Company of land used for the canal, 7 July 1818 (CRT PKF274/33423).

Like the original tramway system which led from the limestone quarries to the start of the canal at Bugsworth, the Marple tramway was constructed during the period when Benjamin Outram was the canal's engineer. The contemporary term for both lines was a 'railway', but the name Peak Forest Tramway is now perhaps more commonly used for the system between the quarries and Bugsworth, and by extension the term tramway is also used here for the line at Marple. Outram was an important figure in the early development of railways. His manifesto for their construction was set out in



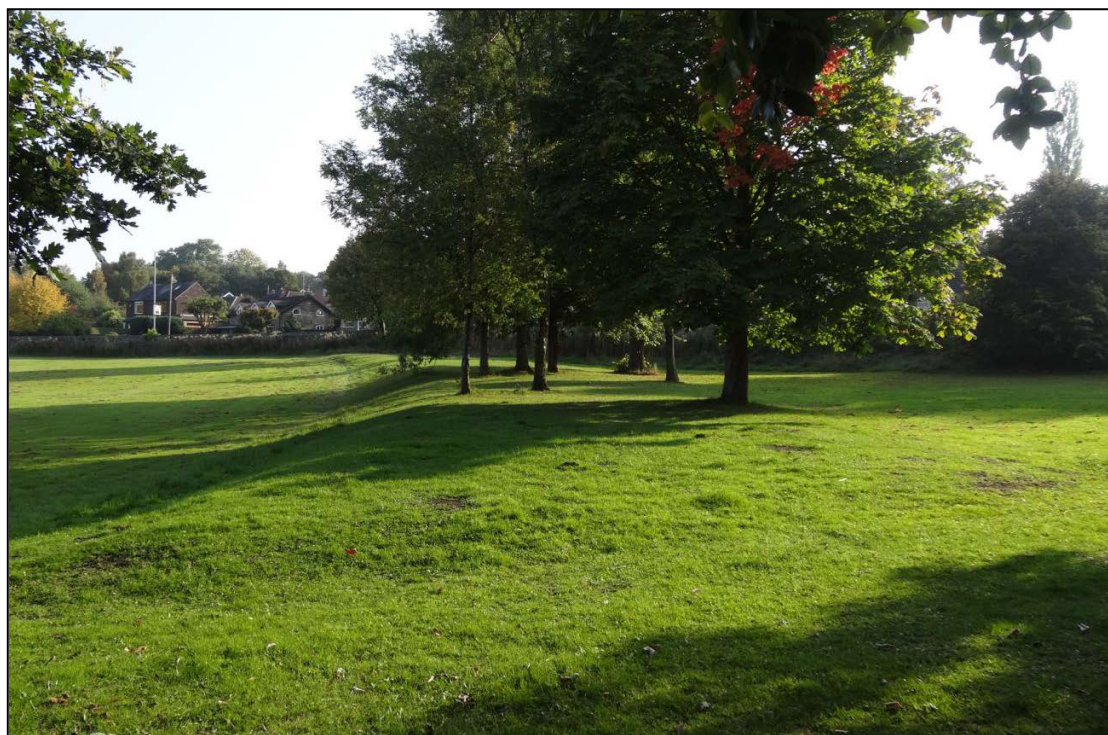
his *Minutes to be Observed on the Construction of Rail-ways*, published in 1801. It is believed to be based on his work for the Peak Forest Canal.

Samuel Oldknow was able to capitalise on his knowledge of the Peak Forest Canal route by building the Marple lime kilns on the canal in Marple. These were opened in 1797 by and operated for very nearly a century before their closure in 1896. The kilns were the centrepiece of a lime works which also included loading sheds, stables, private canal arms and a tramway, and of which John Farey wrote in his early 19th-century account of Derbyshire ‘the structure and arrangements of these Lime-works are the most complete that I have seen’. They were built on land which formed part of Oldknow’s extensive estate in Mellor and Marple created from 1787 to 1792 by the acquisition of several neighbouring properties, some through purchase, some through exchange.

Following the closure of the tramway in 1808 the land was used for agriculture until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when it was made into a public recreation ground. For a short time during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century the tramway line was also preserved as a road.

### **Archaeological Background**

No previous archaeological works have been undertaken on the site.



**Figure 2.** Earthwork Showing the line of the tramway as it crosses Marple Recreation Ground. Looking south (Arrowsmith 2015)

# 3. Methodology

## *Excavation Strategy*

The aim of the archaeological excavation was to expose record and interpret the remains of the Peak Forest Tramway. This work was required in order to raise awareness in the local community of the presence of the Lime Kilns and their associated archaeological remains and promote the investigation and preservation of those remains by local people.

The project's programme of excavation and presentation will focus on two main areas of interest; the tramway remains and the Lime Kilns and their surrounding land.

Excavations proceeded using a mechanical excavator to remove topsoil and overburden with all archaeological features below excavated by hand.

## *Excavation methodology*

All archaeological features (stratigraphical layers, cuts, fills, structures) were evaluated by hand tools and recorded in plan at 1:20 or in section at 1:10 using standard single context recording methods with photographs taken as appropriate.

Removal of modern overburden (topsoil and subsoil) was conducted using a mechanical excavator with a toothless ditching bucket under the supervision of a professional archaeologist acting as a banksman. Removed overburden was stored on a mounded spoil heaps located at an appropriate distance away from the main open areas of excavation within the fenced edges of the site.

Machine excavation continued in two areas along the length of the extant earthwork which crosses the recreation ground. Machine excavation remained cautious, with preference for surviving information and hand excavation where possible once interfaces were encountered.

During the machine excavation and until the programme of archaeological works were complete, the open area excavation and spoil heaps were surrounded by Herras fencing, located not less than two metres away from the edges of either.

Following machine excavation all areas were cleaned using appropriate hand tools and archaeological features recorded by photography and scaled plan.

During the machine excavation and planning phase Mr Norman Redhead of the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS) was consulted at regular intervals.

### ***Recording methodology***

A unique text-number site code was created prior to the commencement of the programme of works.

Separate contexts were recorded individually on pro-forma context sheets. Plans and sections were recorded on drawing sheets at an appropriate scale of 1:10, 1:20, or 1:50, depending on the complexity of the data and features encountered. All drawings were individually identified and cross referenced, contexts enumerated and principal layers and features annotated with OD level information.

A 'site location plan' indicating the site north and based on the current ordnance survey 1:1250 map (reproduced with the permission of the controller of HMSO) was prepared. The location of the OS bench marks used and the site TBM will also be indicated. The OD height of all principal strata and features was calculated and indicated on the appropriate plans and sections.

Photography of all relevant phases and features was undertaken with digital formats. General working photographs were taken during the duration of the archaeological works, to provide illustrative material covering the wider aspects of the archaeological work undertaken and to contribute to the creation of the heritage park. A copy of the digital photographs will be made available to the curatorial body, GMAAS with the production of the technical archaeological report.

All finds were recorded by context. Significant "small finds" located within three dimensions to the nearest 10mm and bagged and labelled separately, numbered and a simple description made so that they can be identified within the assemblage.



## 4. Archaeological Descriptions

Both trenches were excavated along the length of the earthwork crossing the north-western corner of Marple Recreation ground. Contexts (001) and (002) were identified in both trenches and represented the turf/topsoil and a grey-brown loamy subsoil respectively.

### Trench 1



**Figure 3** General view of Trench 1. Looking east.

This was the most southerly of the trenches excavated and measured 6.30m x 10.20m orientated east-west. Following the removal of the turf and topsoil a heavily compacted light red-brown demolition deposit (003) was revealed which had frequent inclusions of stone and brick fragments. This in turn overlay (008) a dark pinkish-grey silty clay which was also heavily compacted and had occasional inclusions of small stone fragments. Both of these compacted deposits were found to overlie all the features in Trench 1.

The eastern half of the trench was dominated by deposit (006) a compacted surface with frequent inclusions of stone fragments in a light red-brown sandy silt which extended 5.60m from the eastern trench edge with an area of black staining to the





**Figure 4.** Channels (005) and (007) with surface (006) surrounding. Looking north.

South (**Fig. 4**). Two north-south orientated channels were revealed to be cutting this layer, (005) to the east and (007) to the west lying 2.20m apart. Both channels extended beyond the trench edges to the north and south and were approximately 0.10m deep filled by (008). Channel (005) measured 0.15m wide and (007) measured 0.30m wide. Slot 6 was excavated at the southern end of these channels to investigate the composition of the stone bedding layer (**Fig. 5**). Directly below (006) lay a grey-brown gritty silt deposit (023) with a very high volume of angular stone and brick fragments and a large lens of white mortar on the eastern side of the slot. This deposit overlay a grey clay (015) which had very few inclusions of small sub-rounded pebbles.



**Figure 5.** Slot 6.  
Looking south.

A third channel (013) was identified along the western edge of (006) which was almost identical to (005) and (007). This feature also ran north-south beyond the trench edges and measured 0.25m wide and 0.10m deep (**Fig. 6**). A fourth channel (014) was found to lie 2.00m west of (013) which was also 0.25m wide and 0.10m deep although it's western side was more ephemeral in nature. Both of these westerly channels had a higher concentration of larger (>0.05m) angular stones along their edges and bases with three large stones (>0.20m) in the northern part of (014). A second compacted stone surface (024) was identified to lie between (013) and (014). This was comprised of frequent inclusions of stone fragments (>0.05m) and occasional brick fragments in a dark grey-brown sandy silt. Although compacted, this surface had a considerably more coarse finish than (006) to the east.



**Figure 6.** Western end of Trench 1 showing channels (013), (014), deposits (012), (024) and wall (004). Looking north.

Immediately to the west of (014) lay a narrow band of a bright red-brown deposit (012) which was almost entirely composed of crushed brick. This deposit extended beyond both the north and south trench edges and measured 0.90m wide. No inclusions or finds were identified from this material. A short section of stone walling (004) was revealed to extend 1.60m from the northern trench edge and lay against (012) (**Fig. 7**). The wall measured 0.60m wide and was constructed from two courses of rough cut stone blocks excavated to a height of 0.10m. Three slots (Slots 3, 4 and 5) were excavated to the south of the wall to investigate if the wall continued along the same alignment. No evidence of the wall was found in any of the slots. All three were cut through deposit (010)



**Figure 7.** Wall (004) and crushed brick deposit (012). Looking east.



## **Trench 2**

This trench was excavated further north along the earthwork crossing the recreation ground to ascertain if the remains of the tramway continued in this direction. The trench measured 3m x 9m and was orientated east west. Following the removal of the turf and topsoil the demolition deposit (003) was again encountered overlying the features within the trench (**Fig. 8**).



**Figure 8.** General view of Trench 2. Looking east.



At the eastern end of the trench a compacted layer of dark grey-brown silty clay (020) with frequent small inclusions of stone and brick fragments (<0.05m) was revealed which was cut by two uneven channels (016) and (017) (**Fig. 9**). These were similar in size and form to (005) and (007) in Trench 1 but slightly shallower in depth at only 0.15m. Both channels were orientated north-south extending beyond the trench edges in both directions and lay 1.10m apart. Deposit (020) also lay to the west of (017) and extended 1.10m westwards before being truncated by a third channel (018) which was almost identical to (017).



**Figure 9.** Eastern end of Trench 2 showing channels (016) and (017) and surface (020). Looking north.



**Figure 10.** Western end of Trench 2 showing channel (018) and deposits (021), (025) and (019). Looking west.



A second compacted stone surface (021) was identified to the west of (018) which was comprised of a dark black-brown silty clay with frequent inclusions of angular stone fragments (<0.10m) and two large stone blocks (0.30m-0.40m) (**Fig. 10**). This surface was similar in appearance to (024) in Trench 1, albeit slightly more disturbed due to the root action of the surrounding trees. Surface (021) measured 2.25m in width before being cut along the western side by a fourth channel (022). This channel was considerably shallower than (018) and had an ephemeral western edge resulting in its identification primarily in section (**Fig. 11**).



**Figure 11.** Deposits (025) and (019) with channel (022) visible in the north facing section. Looking south.

Channel (022) lay directly against a compact, mixed deposit of crushed brick and stone fragments in a pinkish-red sandy clay (025). Two slots (7 & 8) were excavated across this material along the northern and southern edges of the trench to ascertain the depth and nature of the deposit. Both were excavated to a depth of 0.45m, beyond which the material appeared to continue with a greater concentration of stone fragments at the lower levels. This, in turn, lay against an almost identical deposit of crushed brick (019), also similar to (012) in Trench 1. This deposit had occasional larger (<0.10m) fragments of brick and stone with a lens of later-20<sup>th</sup> century concrete in the far south-western corner of the trench resulting from landscaping works on the recreation ground.

## 5. Archaeological Results

The excavation of both trenches was designed to investigate to what extent the remains of the tramway existed within the earthwork which crosses Marple Recreation Ground. Both trenches were able to expose cross sections of not only the original tramway line but also the second line added in late 1800.

### *Trench 1*

Benjamin Outram's original 1798 specification for the tramway required a 6yd (5.48m) wide corridor with a 4yd (3.65m) wide stone bedding on which to support the sleepers for the cast iron rails which were laid in two lines, one to support each rail with a gauge of 4ft 2in (1.23m) (Arrowsmith, 2015). In addition to the lines themselves the tramway was fenced on both sides which included a 'substantial wall' on the west, although the fence to the east was not described. This wall also formed one side of a drain which ran alongside the tramway to carry excess water between the upper and lower canal levels (Arrowsmith, 2015). In August 1800 a pathway was constructed for the 'gangers' who were in charge of supervising each gang of waggons, to walk alongside the track, which may have necessitated an alteration to the eastern boundary of the tramway. Following the decision to halt work on the locks in mid-1800 the traffic on the tramway increased, requiring a second line to be constructed, most probably on the eastern side of the original line, which opened in 1803.

Evidence was found in Trench 1 of all the major structures and alterations to the tramway as outlined above. The earlier line was represented by the two westernmost linear channels (013) and (014) which lay 2.00m apart and showed considerable evidence of disturbance which is likely to have been caused by the removal of the stone sleepers. The material between these channels was also indicative of the stone bedding described above as it was comprised of successive layers of hardcore with a compacted metallised surface. To the west of the line, the purpose of the degraded brick feature (012) is difficult to ascertain, however its position between wall (004) and the original line does offer the possibility that it may have been related to the drain mentioned in the specification. Had the drain been brick lined the constant abrasion of the water over the six years of the tramways use, coupled with decay throughout the period since the lines were closed may well have caused the degradation of the material seen in this feature. Alternatively this material may have been used to fill the drain as part of the tramway decommissioning works in 1807.

Wall (004) is almost certainly the remains of the 'substantial wall' referred to by Outram although it is unclear as to why the wall does not continue southwards across the trench. The lack of foundations in the slots excavated further south along the

expected line of the wall would suggest that either the wall has been comprehensively robbed in this area or a deliberate opening was constructed in the wall to act as an access point to the lines, although there is no documentary evidence for this.

The material immediately east of channel (013) was a more refined surface than that identified between the westernmost tramway lines and is more suitable for use as the August 1800 ganger's path. The continuation of this surface eastward between and beyond channels (005) and (007) suggests that the path was repurposed and extended to form the stone bedding for the second line started in the October of the same year. The second line itself is represented by the channels crossing this surface which again lay 2.00m apart and are likely to have been created by the removal of the stone sleepers during the 1807 decommissioning of the tramway. The continuation of surface (006) to the east of the second line suggests that this line also had a ganger's path. No evidence of the tramway's eastern boundary was identified within the trench.

## ***Trench 2***

This trench was located further north along the earthwork crossing Marple Recreation Ground to assess the continuation of the tramway. Although evidence of both lines was uncovered in this trench they were not as clearly defined as in Trench 1. The easternmost line was represented by channels (016) and (017) which were very similar in form to those identified in Trench 1. They were however considerably closer together, lying only 1.30m apart although this may be due to Outram's policy of reducing the gauge of the lines to increase the stability of the trams around bends and curves (Arrowsmith, 2015).

The stone bedding contexts in this trench were both identified with the later, easternmost surface represented by (020) and the earlier more coarse surface represented by (021). The differences in colour and consistency between these and the corresponding deposits in Trench 1 are likely to be due to the natural increase in the water content of the soil surrounding the nearby trees.

The action of the surrounding trees may also have contributed to the disturbance witnessed at the western end of this trench. Although channel (018) is likely to be the location of the eastern track of the earlier line, the western track of this line could not easily be identified. It is possible that this feature may have been located immediately to the west of deposit (021) where rut (022) was revealed. This would mean that the gauge on this line had not been reduced on the curved section of the track like it appears to have been on the later eastern line.

The other major difference between the corresponding features in Trenches 1 and 2 was the increase in the area covered by the crushed brick deposit (019) in Trench 2. In this trench the feature was comprised of much larger brick and stone fragments with a greater proportion of mixing with the surrounding soils, particularly in the west of the

deposit. This is almost certainly due to the dismantling of the tramway and the removal of the stone sleepers from the westernmost line resulting in the mingling of materials associated with the stone bedding and drain.



## 6. Discussion

The excavation of the site of the Peak Forest Canal Tramway is enabling the rediscovery of not only the form of the tramway itself but also the growth and development of industrialised Marple and its links with Samuel Oldknow. When Oldknow began buying up the land in Marple and Mellor that the canal, tramway and lime kilns were eventually to occupy, the surrounding landscape was largely dominated by farming with farmhouses and other agricultural buildings as the most common structures in the area. By the time the lime kilns closed in 1896 Marple had become a fully industrialised town producing cotton, coal and lime which was carried on new roads and canals linking it with markets across the country and beyond.

The Peak Forest Canal was constructed at a time of industrial expansion across the North West in particular. Not only was the textile industry flourishing but also a range of satellite industries on which the manufacturers relied. The most significant of these were the coal producing companies who supplied everything from domestic housing to machinery manufacturers to the textile producers themselves. The demand for these raw materials vastly increased in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century, making schemes such as the Ashton Canal Company, an essential part of the economic growth of the Greater Manchester area. Once the infrastructure for the supply of these vital commodities was in place, it could be expanded on and adapted for a range of other materials and the model replicated elsewhere. It was this which enabled and encouraged the creation of the Peak Forest Canal Company.

Although the original purpose of the canal was to supply the Manchester markets with limestone from the quarries at Dove Holes, it quickly became an important supply route not only for the raw material but also processed lime as well as other products that utilised the direct links to the town centres of Stockport, Ashton, Oldham, Hyde and Manchester. Following the opening of the canal and the promotion of schemes to encourage trade, a number of lime kilns were constructed along its length between Bugsworth and Hyde (Hodgkins 1977). The ready supply of limestone that the canal afforded not only serviced the larger commercial kilns but also encouraged the setting up of localised field kilns close to the canal route (Arrowsmith 2015). This opened up a wider market for the both the limestone and processed lime and made the canal indispensable for the success of the farms and businesses that were supplied by it. As a part of the earliest configuration of the canal supply system, the Marple tramway was an essential part of this and enabled the canal company to offer an unbroken supply during the construction of Marple locks despite the financial issues associated with that work.

The recent excavation has enabled the existing tramway to be studied with reference to Outrams documented specifications for the line itself and his 'Minutes to be

observed on the construction of Rail-ways’ (Arrowsmith 2015). Despite being constructed 3 years apart, the two lines identified during the excavation both follow the same construction technique of two layers of stone bedding, both 6 inches in depth, to accommodate stone sleepers and form a path for both men and horses. The distinction between the stones used for the bedding layers on the earlier line and later gangers path/second line does indicate a change in the supply of materials for the tramway, but this is likely to result from procurement issues rather than any changes to the specifications.

The stone sleepers were specified to be *‘of stone in all places where it can be obtained in blocks of sufficient size’* and between 8 and 12 inches thick with a flat base and top to support the cast iron rails (Arrowsmith 2015). This, coupled with the fixing method of an oak plug driven into a hole in the centre of each sleeper, required that the stones themselves be of good quality and well cut. It is therefore unsurprising that none of these sleepers were found during the excavation as they would have been able to be reused, either as sleepers again or in construction or for industrial uses. Following the dismantling of the tramway by James Meadows in 1807, he was authorised to *‘dispose of any part of the said Railway not exceeding one half thereof on the best terms he can obtain for same’*, and in 1808 Samuel Oldknow was also able to acquire some of the materials that were removed. This suggests that much of the stone and iron from the tramway remained in use reasonably close by, probably on Oldknow’s own section of tramway at the Lime Kilns or for his Hyde Bank estate in Romiley (Arrowsmith 2015).

The extant stone bedding and remains of the boundary wall were the only parts of the tramway not to be removed, although historic mapping may indicate the reason for this. The earliest plan of the area is a lease plan of Oldknow’s and Arkwright’s land used for the Peak Forest Canal which post-dated the dismantling of the tramway by 11 years. Along with the township plan of 1821 these were the only maps to show the line of the tramway as an operational road linking the turnpike road (Strines Road) with what is now Oldknow Road. This indicates that the stone bedding was deemed suitable to retain as a road surface, despite the damage caused by the removal of the tramway sleepers. By the 1840s the tithe map shows that the line of the tramway had been preserved as a field boundary but the road had gone, although it may have continued as a track along the field boundary. It is possible that this short lived road may have been one of several built by Oldknow in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries as part of his efforts to transform Marple and Mellor into fully connected industrial communities (Atkinson 2015). He was keen to improve transport links not only to and from Marple to benefit his business interests but also develop new roads within the township for the use of those who lived and worked there.

Since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when even the field boundary which followed its line was lost, the Peak Forest Canal tramway has largely been a forgotten part of the history of Marple. Although its period of use was relatively short as a ‘stop-gap’ during the

construction of the locks, it had an integral part to play in the early functioning of the Peak Forest Canal, enabling loads to be carried the full length of the canal from the outset. This in turn made it possible for local businesses, such as Oldknow's lime kilns, to develop their trade quickly through the efficient links to the markets of Manchester, Stockport and beyond that the canal, and tramway, offered. It was not, however, just the businesses of Marple that were to benefit from the opportunities offered by this new transport system, the town continued to grow in size and wealth throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a result of the industry and employment brought by the canal. The importance of the fact that the tramway enabled the canal to operate fully from such an early point in the town's development cannot be underestimated.

## 7. Archive

The archive comprises archaeological photographs, drawings and research notes as well as a large collection of ceramic, metal and glass finds. This archive is currently held by Salford Archaeology and a copy of this report will be forwarded to the client following the publication of the site report.

A copy of this report will be deposited with the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record held by the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service.



## 8. Acknowledgements

Salford archaeology would like to thank Fiona Turpin, Bob Humphrey-Taylor and Pamela Pearson of the Revealing Oldknows Legacy Project for commissioning the archaeological works and Norman Redhead for providing monitoring support and advice through GMAAS.

The on-site excavations were conducted by Sarah Cattell, Kirsty Whittall and Simon Hinchliffe. This report was written and illustrated by Sarah Cattell and Stuart Harris

## 9. Sources

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**Atkinson H**, 2015. *Samuel Oldknow, A New Perspective*. Marple History Society.

**Hodgkins D J**, 1978, 'Samuel Oldknow and Peak Forest Canal', *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal* 97 (for 1977), 27-35.

### Online sources.

British geological survey: <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/>

### Mapping.

Plan of the Township of Marple in the County of Chester, c 1821 (CRO D 4693/1).

Plan of the Township of Marple in the Parish of Stockport in the County of Chester, 1850 (CRO EDT 262/2).

OS 6in to 1 mile Derbyshire sheets V.NW & V.SW, surveyed 1871-9, published 1882.

OS 1:2500 Derbyshire sheet V.9 Second Edition 1898, revised 1896.

OS 1:2500 Cheshire sheet XX.2, Edition of 1909, surveyed 1907.

OS 1:2500 Cheshire sheet XX.2, Revision of 1934, revised 1934-5.

OS 1:2500 SJ 9688-9788 & SJ 9688-9788, revised 1969, published 1972.

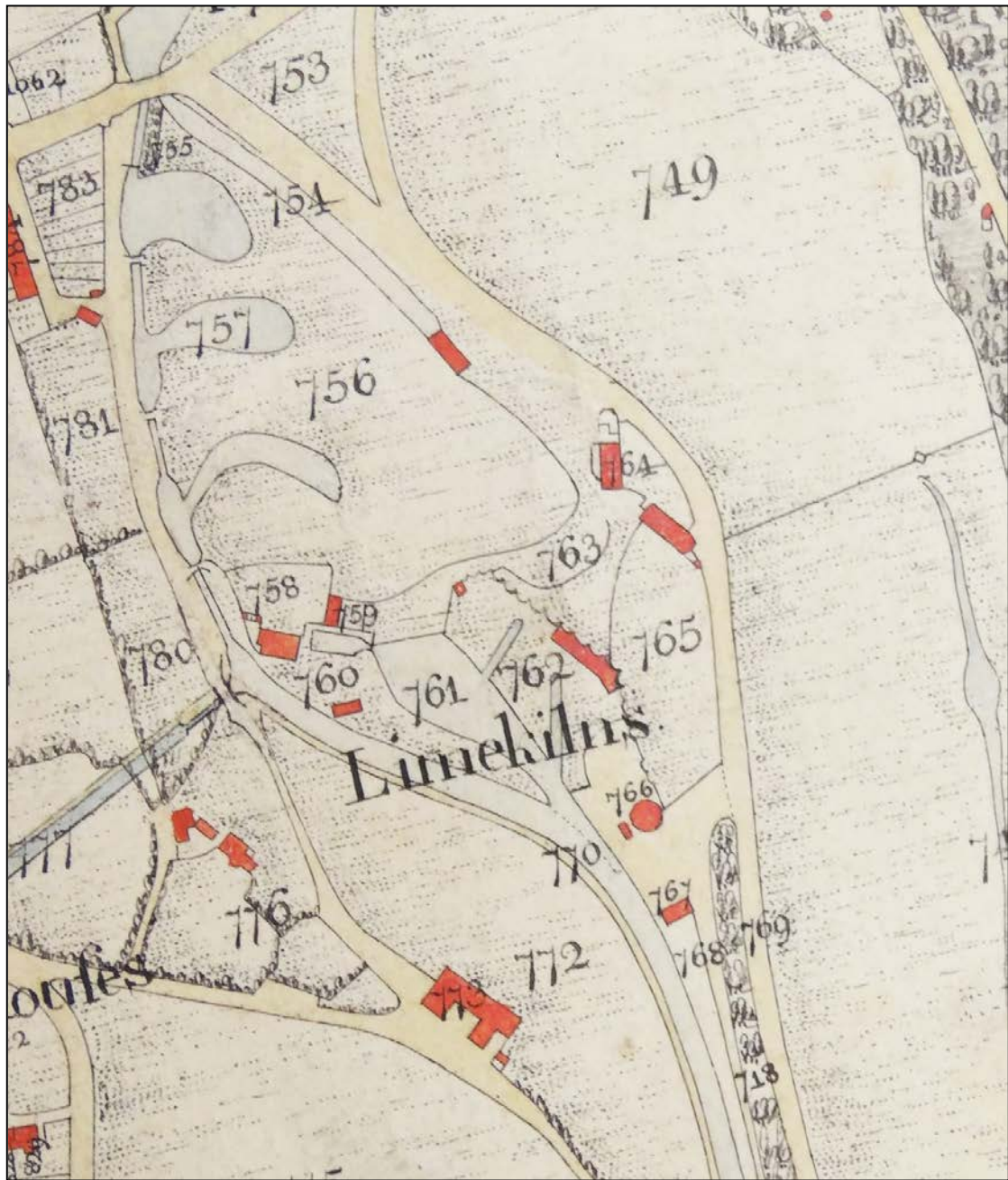
OS 1:10,000 SJ 98 NE, published 2006.

**OS licence no:** 100050261.

# Appendix 1: Figures



**Figure 12.** Plan on lease by Samuel Oldknow and Richard Arkwright to the Peak Forest Canal Company of land used for the canal, 7 July 1818 (CRT PKF274/33423 Arrowsmith 2015).

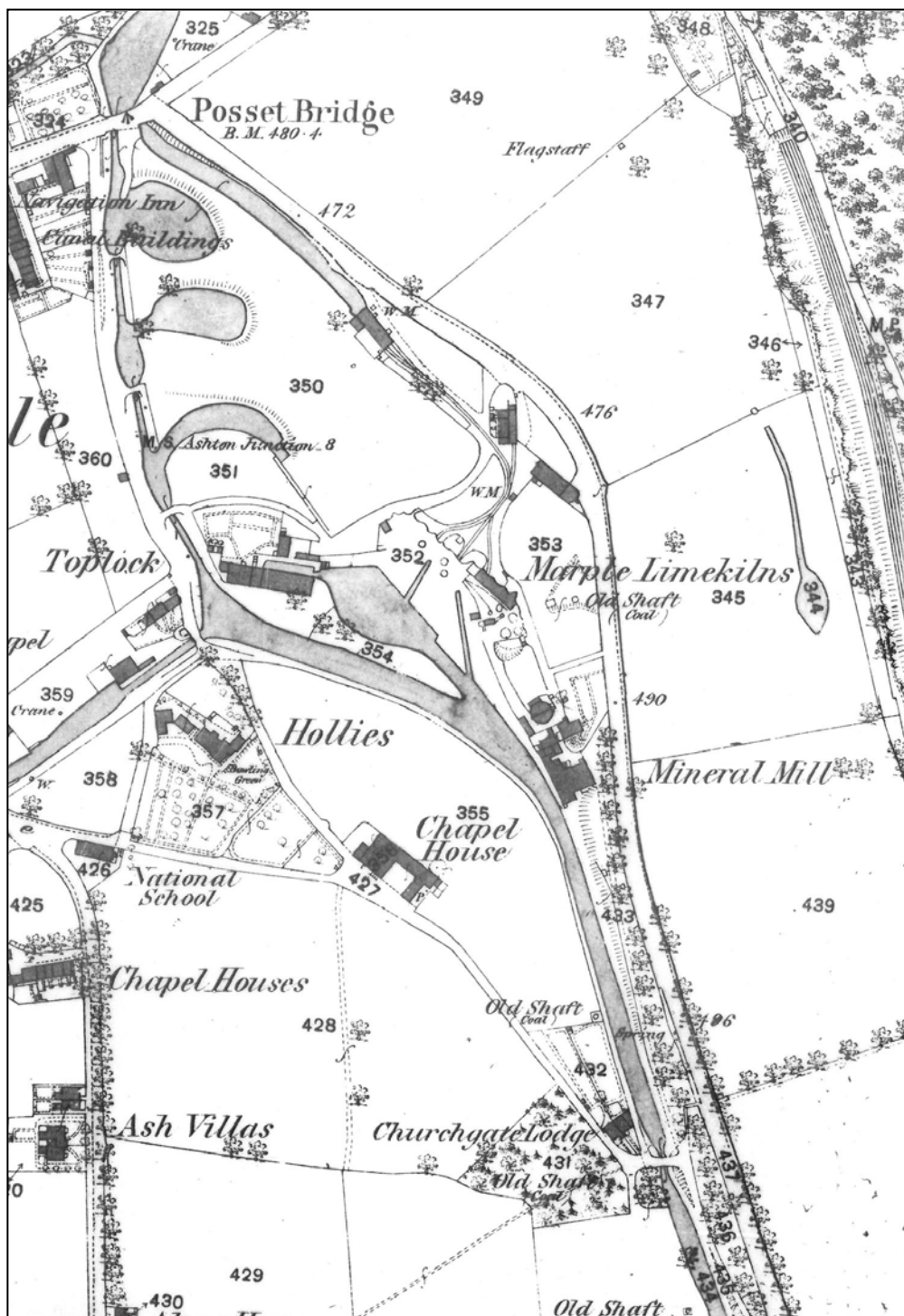


**Figure 13.** Lime kilns and vicinity on the Plan of the Township of Marple in the County of Chester, c 1821 (CRO D 4693/1). Reproduced with the permission of Cheshire Archives and Local Studies.

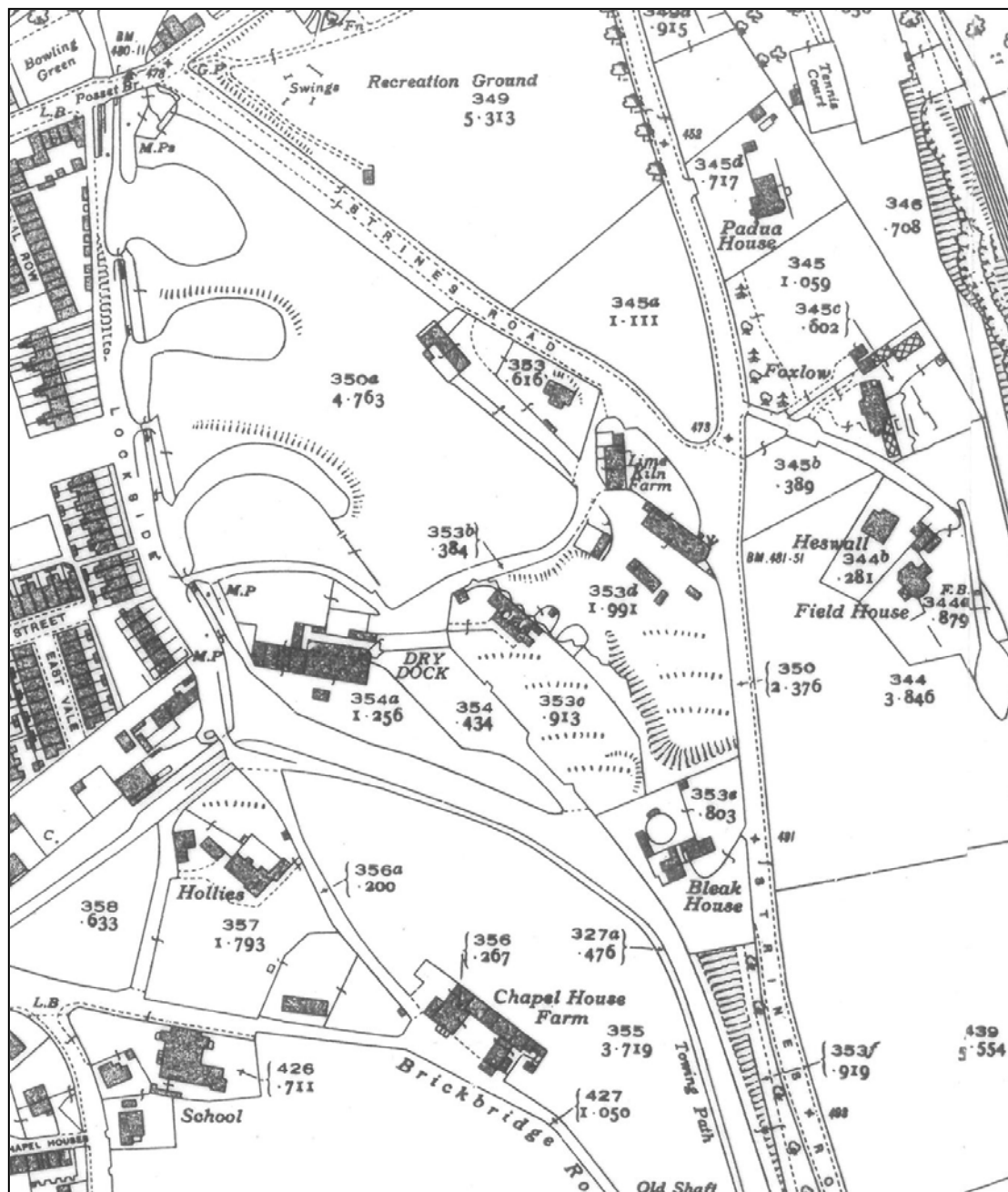




**Figure 14.** Detail of the Marple tithe map (CRO EDT 262/2). Reproduced with the permission of Cheshire Archives and Local Studies.



**Figure 15.** Detail of OS 1:2500 Cheshire sheet XX.2, surveyed 1872.



**Figure. 16.** Detail of OS 1:2500 Cheshire sheet XX.2, Revision of 1934, revised 1934-5.



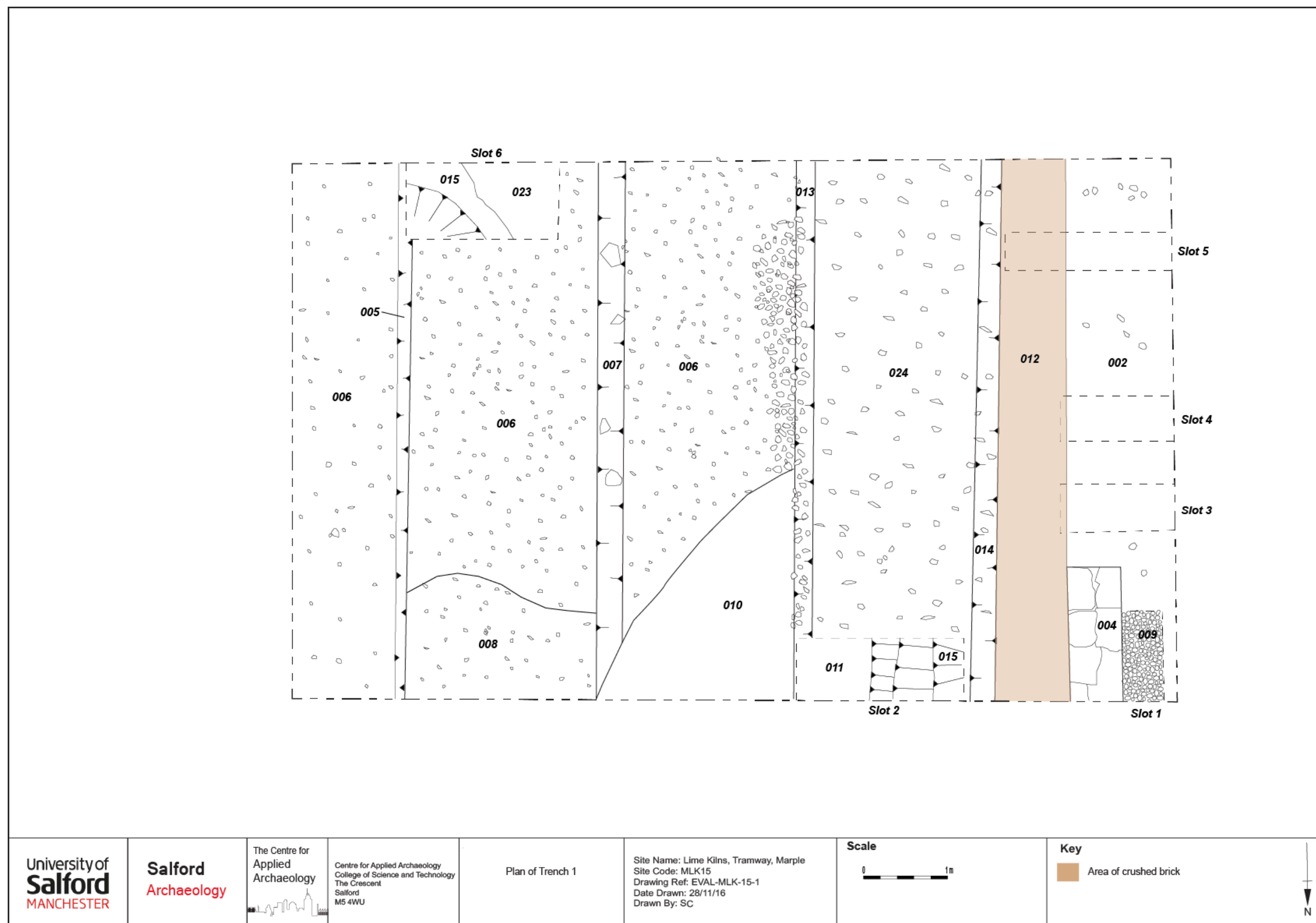


**Figure 17.** Examples of *in situ* tramway sleepers at Bugsworth Basin.

**Figure 18.** Examples of tramway rails from Bugsworth Basin section of the Peak Forest Canal Tramway.







**Figure 19.** Plan of Trench 1.

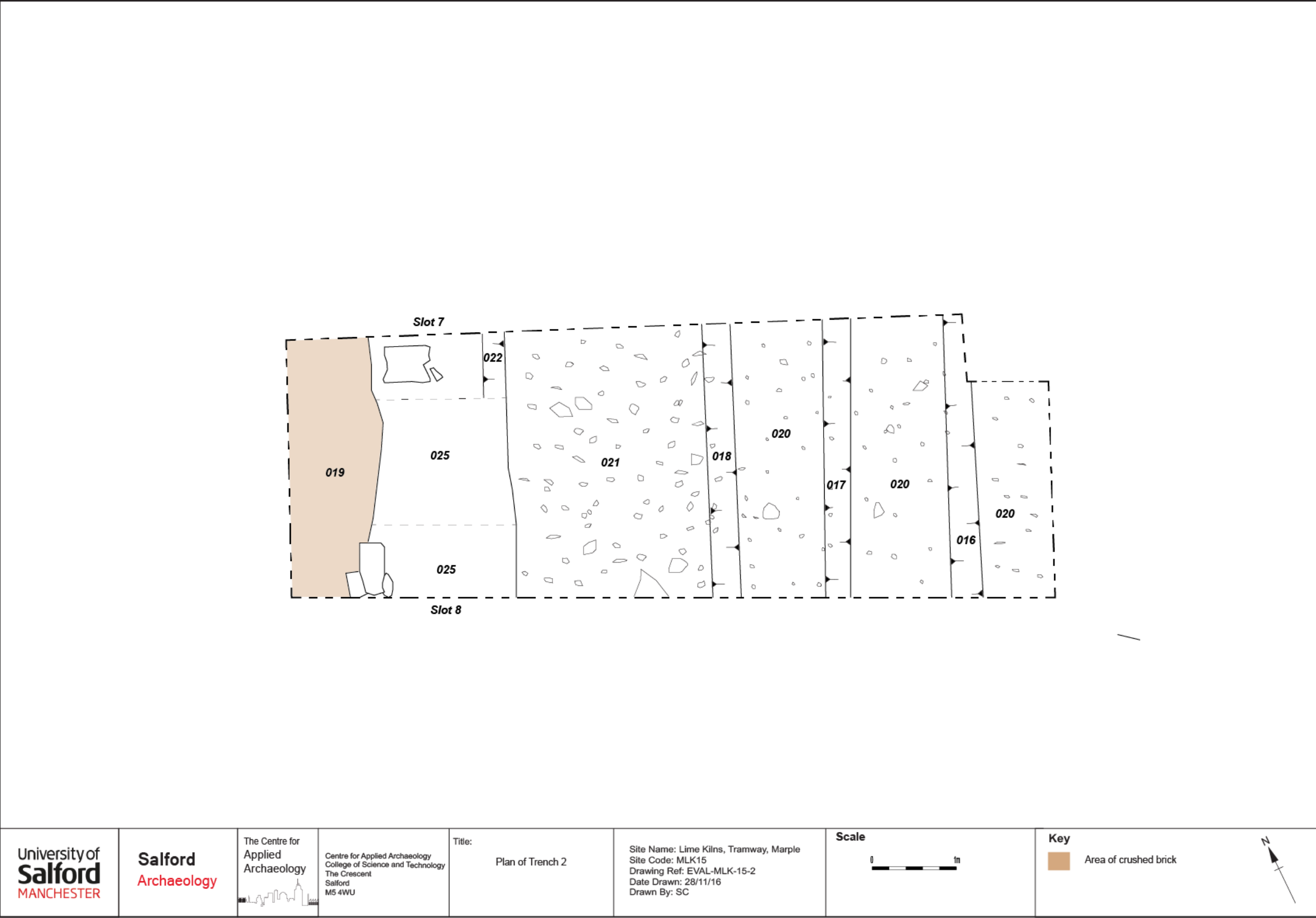
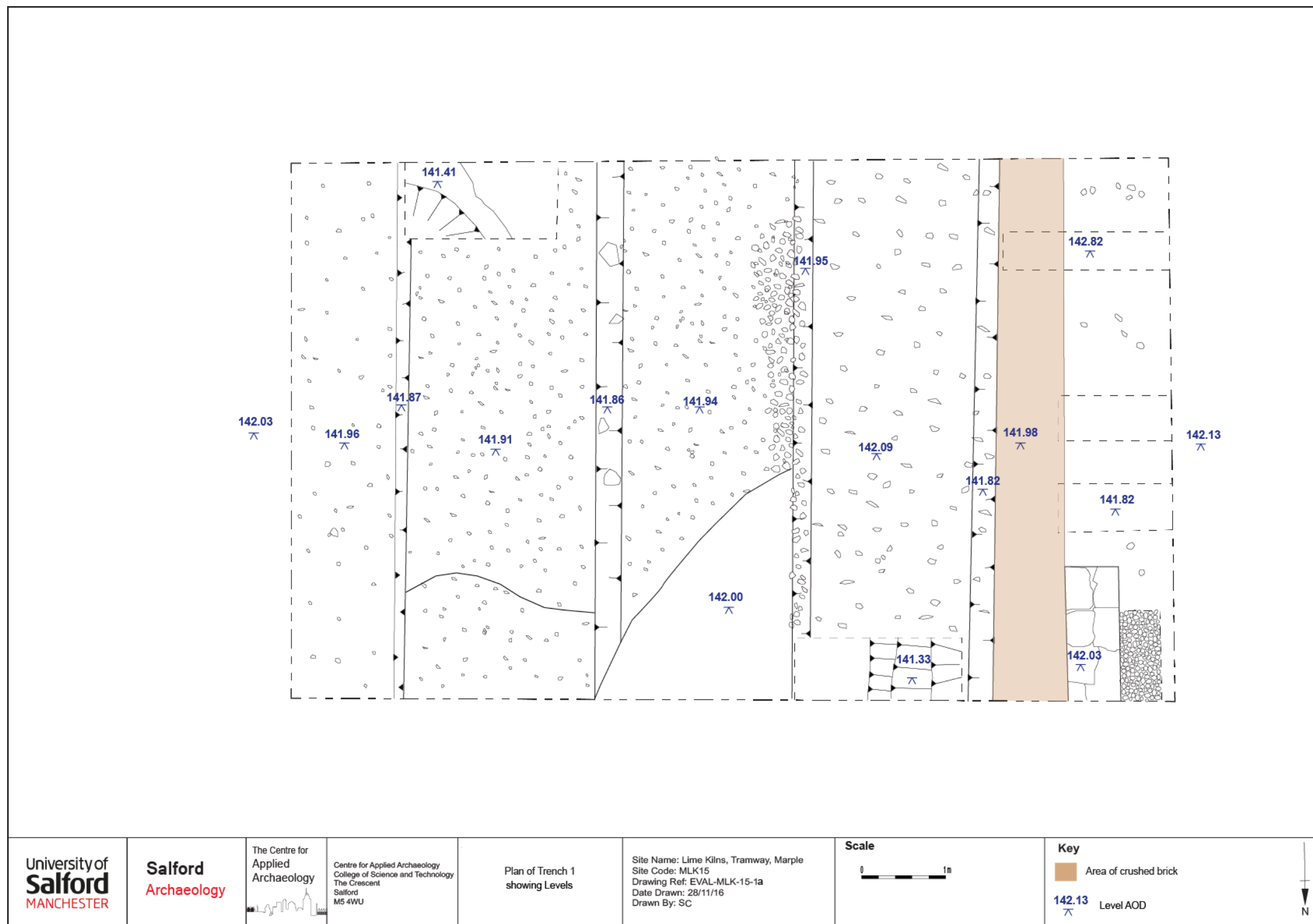
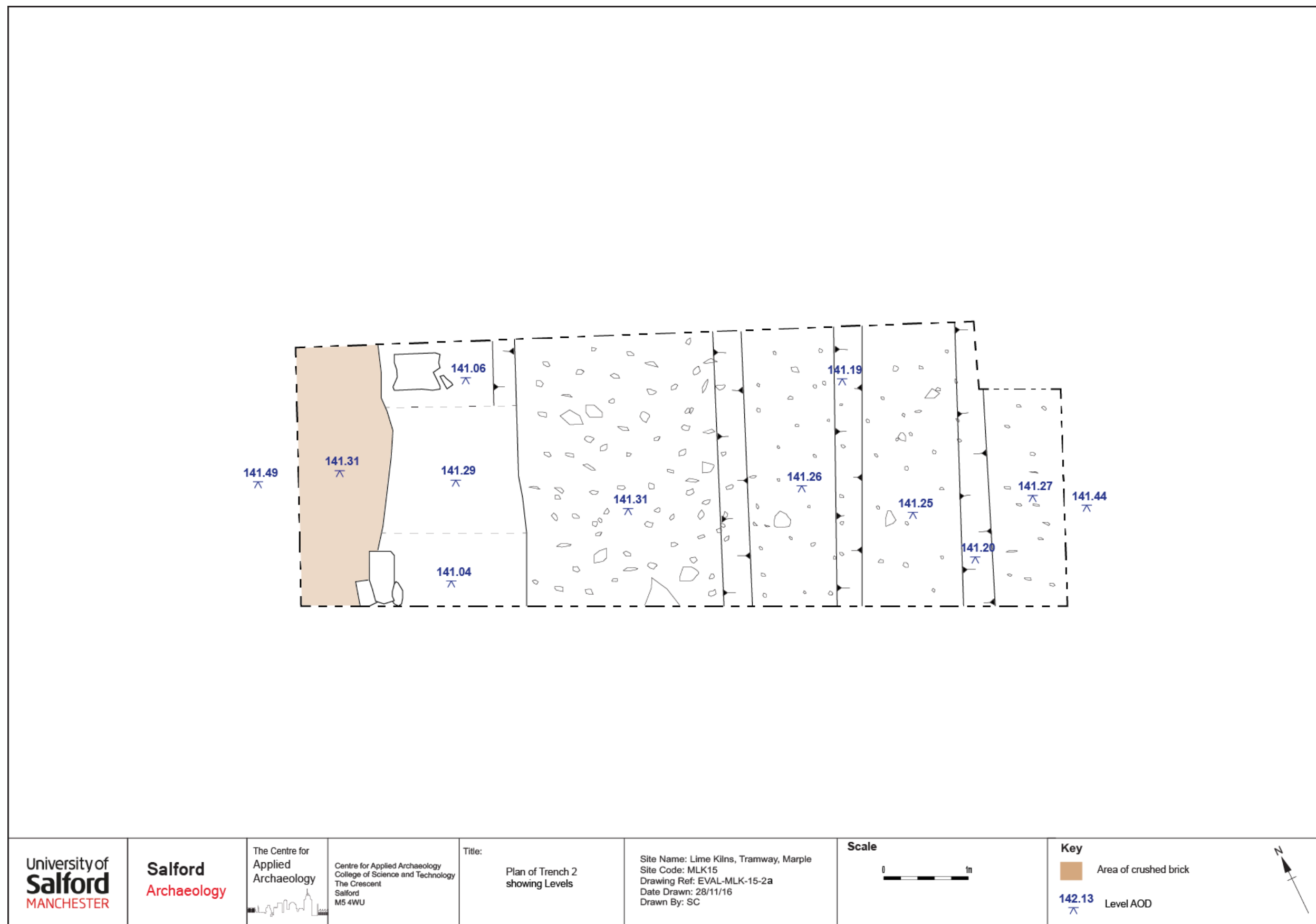


Figure 20. Plan of Trench 2.



**Figure 21.** Plan of Trench 1, showing levels.



**Figure 22.** Plan of Trench 1 showing levels.



## Appendix 2: Context List

Context Number	Trench	Description
(001)	All	Turf & topsoil .c.0.20m thick
(002)	All	Subsoil mid grey brown frequent inclusions of small angular stones .c.0.10m & fragments of white lime
(003)	1	Demolition layer light red/ brown frequent inclusions of stone brick frags & lime. Highly compacted
(004)	1	Stone wall on south east corner of T1 irregular stones dressed eat faces, rubble core. Runs north to south, truncated to south
(005)	1	Linear channel c.0.20m wide and 0.15m deep. Possibly robbed out remains of easternmost rail line very uneven frequent fragments of sandstone. Runs north to south
(006)	1	Compacted hard core surface between (005) & (007) frequent fragments of limestone. Black staining to outer edges, also lies either side of the tracks
(007)	1	Linear channel c.0.30m wide and 0.15m deep. Possible robbed out remains of base of west side of earlier tramway line. 3 large .c.0.40m sandstone blocks in situ, runs north to south
(008)	1	Heavily compacted material rich in red sandstone fragments, lies over (006) but very similar to it possibly same purpose but 2 <sup>nd</sup> layer repair
(009)	1	Layer of pebbles/ cobbles to the west of (004) randomly laid with large spaces between them, all sub rounded .c.0,10m
(010)	1	Light pinkish grey compact silty clay, with occasional inclusions of very small stone & brick very similar to mortar in appearance & consistency. Lies over (011)
(011)	1	Layer of cobbles below (010) sub rounded .c.0.10m, larger on south side of trench
(012)	1	Compact layer of crushed brick in west side of trench. Very occasional fragments of brick
(013)	1	Linear channel c.0.20m wide and 0.15m deep. Possible remains of west tramway east side channel for sleepers. Loose stone within.
(014)	1	Linear channel c.0.25m wide and 0.15m deep. Possible remains of west tramway. West side of channel more

		ephemeral
(015)	1	Lowest deposit in slot 2, grey clay with very few inclusions of small (<0.05m) stones.
(016)	2	Linear channel c.0.35m wide and 0.15m deep. Possibly robbed out remains of easternmost rail line very uneven frequent fragments of sandstone. Runs north to south. Same as (005) in T1
(017)	2	Linear channel c.0.30m wide and 0.15m deep. Possibly robbed out remains of western rail of easternmost line. Very uneven frequent fragments of sandstone. Runs north to south. Same as (007) in T1
(018)	2	Linear channel c.0.25m wide and 0.15m deep. Possible remains of west tramway eastern rail. Same as (013) in T1. Lies further from western rail than in T1 (2m).
(019)	2	Linear channel c.0.25m wide and 0.15m deep. Possible remains of west tramway. West side of channel more ephemeral. Same as (012) in T1
(020)	2	Compacted stone surface in a dark grey-brown silty clay with frequent small inclusions of stone and brick fragments (<0.05m). Cut by (016), (017) & (018). Similar to (006) in T1
(021)		Compacted stone surface in a dark black-brown silty clay with frequent inclusions of angular stone fragments (<0.10m) and two large stone blocks (0.30m-0.40m). Cut by (018) and (022).
(022)	2	Channel cutting western side of (021). Identified in north facing section of Slot 7. Similar in size and shape to (018). Possibly part of earlier western tramway line.
(023)	1	Grey-brown gritty silt deposit with a very high volume of angular stone and brick fragments and a large lens of white mortar on the eastern side of Slot 6
(024)	1	Compacted stone surface between (013) & (014). Frequent inclusions of stone fragments (>0.05m) and occasional brick fragments in a dark grey-brown sandy silt. More coarse than (006).
(025)	1	Compact, mixed deposit of crushed brick & angular stone in a pinkish-red sandy clay. >0.45m deep. Almost identical to (019) but with more stone fragments.