

Lincoln Square, Manchester

Summary of Archaeological Watching Brief Works

21st October 2021

The Lincoln Square WB was split into several phases. The first phase took place from 29-04-21 to 05-05-21, the second phase took place from between 16-06-21 and 22-06-21 and a third phase took place from 30-6-21 to 7-7-21. The site was split into three areas, the western end of Brazennose St (Area A), the southern side of the eastern end of Brazennose St (Area B) and the eastern side of Lincoln Square (Area C). A fourth area (Mulberry St) was also excavated.

All brick structures described below were of a similar construction of handmade bricks and lime mortar, unless otherwise stated.

Area A

The paving was removed, and the ground level was reduced by 45cm to allow for new paving and associated bedding layers. This reduction saw the removal of all the previous bedding layers and came down onto a brown layer made up of rubble and crushed bricks. This was truncated by various service trenches and manholes.

At 20m from the west end of Area A (Deansgate end), a brick feature was found. It consisted of a 25cm wide brick wall that measured 2.5m in length and ran parallel with the street. It was made from handmade bricks (23x7x11cm) and lime mortar. The wall turned southwards towards the current building (Centurion House) and was truncated at 35cm from the building. The main length of the wall was 75cm away from the building. Halfway along the length was a patch of black ash mortar which could be evidence of a repair or reuse of older bricks. At the eastern end at right angles to the wall was what looked like a drainage channel, with the short section of wall forming the west edge. It had a brick base and the east edge was made from 2 courses of bricks laid at a slope. The internal width of the channel was 28cm and the external width was 50cm. The drain feature's total remaining length was 1.8m. The southern end of the channel was truncated by the current building's foundations at a distance of 35cm.



Drain feature in Area A

Iron pipes were found in Brazennose St (green structure on map) The N-S one was 2.5cm in diameter and the E-W one was 10cm in diameter. The wider pipe was truncated by the narrower one. The narrow pipe disappears into the S side.



Iron pipes found in Area A

Area B

Again, the ground was reduced by 45cm from the current paving with the levelling layers removed. These bedding layers were again 45cm thick and the ground surface was similar to that in Area A, crushed rubble cut through by services. Area B also had trees along it that were to be retained.

There was a small area of sets with a kerb line in front of the first bay of the covered pavement of Heron House on the south side of Brazennose Street. The kerb was 2m away from the current building, indicating that the road has once been narrower. The sets were stone and laid in bitumen. The remaining area of sets was 230x80cm in an east-west alignment.

Several other patches of setts were revealed along Brazennose St near the NE corner of Lincoln Square. These varied in size due to truncation by modern services and trees. One particular area of setts was larger than the surrounding ones with dimensions of 1.3m wide by 2.5m long. Another area slightly to the north of the large area still had the kerbstones intact. The kerb was approximately 1.2m from the current buildings on the north side of Brazennose St.



One of the patches of setts from along Brazennose St with kerbstones.

A brick structure was found that was 20cm away from the current building, in the centre of the first bay of the covered pavement. It consisted of handmade bricks and lime mortar with a maximum of 2 courses surviving. It appeared to be a double skin wall around a brick surface.



Brick surface bounded by a wall

At the west end of the surface was an area of black silty material around 10cm thick and staining the surface black. The wall had a width of 25cm, and the outer dimensions of the structure were 165cm long by 57cm wide. There was mainly one course remaining with 3 bricks left from the second course. The structure was laid on sand and the foundation trench

was packed with clay. This appears to be located in front of what was No 44 Brazennose St on the 1850s OS map.

While excavating a pit for a drainage gully, a doorstep and brick wall were found at a depth of 1.3m. 2 courses of bricks and one stone step. The depth and position in the middle of Mulberry St/Brazennose St junction may suggest they predate the current layout of the streets. (purple square on accompanying sketch)



Close up of doorstep

At the NE corner of Lincoln Square, a small area of brickwork was revealed. It formed an L shape and was at least 5 courses high. It is presumed that this is a single wall build round a corner, but it is impossible to determine due to modern services having been installed directly on to the E-W line of bricks. It looks to be the NE corner of No 34 Brazennose St as depicted on the 1850s OS map. This was later found to run intermittently along the full length of the Brazennose St edge of Lincoln Square, partly under green Virgin Media conduits.



E-W wall with render, dividing wall and plumbing

A stone capped drain was found on N side of brick corner/extension of E-W wall. On the E side of the stone cap was a vertical ceramic soil pipe, possibly a privy.



Stone capped drain and soil pipe (W at top)

There were visible protrusions on the N side, possibly fire places, coal chutes and/or cellar lights.

The possible coal chute was built from 3 courses of brick surrounding a black deposit. The structure was 80cm in length.



E-W wall, possible coal chute on left of green Virgin conduits

At a distance of 4.4m from the NE corner was a stone set into the E-W wall. This looked to be a continuation of the corner along Brazennose St and appeared to be the north facing buildings fronting Brazennose St on the 1850s mapping. This section of wall was 2.96m in length including the stone. It had a varying width with a max of 36cm. It varied between two and three bricks wide. The wall and stone were not quite aligned with the original brick corner. This part of the wall at least 6 courses high and render was still remaining in parts. The maximum height was 50cm and the maximum length of this section was 4m. This is a probable continuation of N facing Brazennose St damaged and truncated by modern services. A dividing wall abutted the E-W wall to the south and extended for 1.1m, width 24cm. This N-S wall was truncated by a tree ring. In the corner on the east side of the dividing wall was an old waterpipe, presumably part of the plumbing within the house.

The E-W wall may have been complete at depth, but the excavation limit did not allow for this to be established



Dividing wall and plumbing

A pair of vault roofs were found on the N side of Brazennose St. The total length of the structure remaining was 9.05m. The eastern vault roof was 0.9m wide and the western one was 1.1m wide. The central junction box measured 96cm x 25cm. (This may be the remains of what Wilm was talking about with the listed junction box) The electricity cable was wrapped in oiled linen and the junction box covered with bitumen.

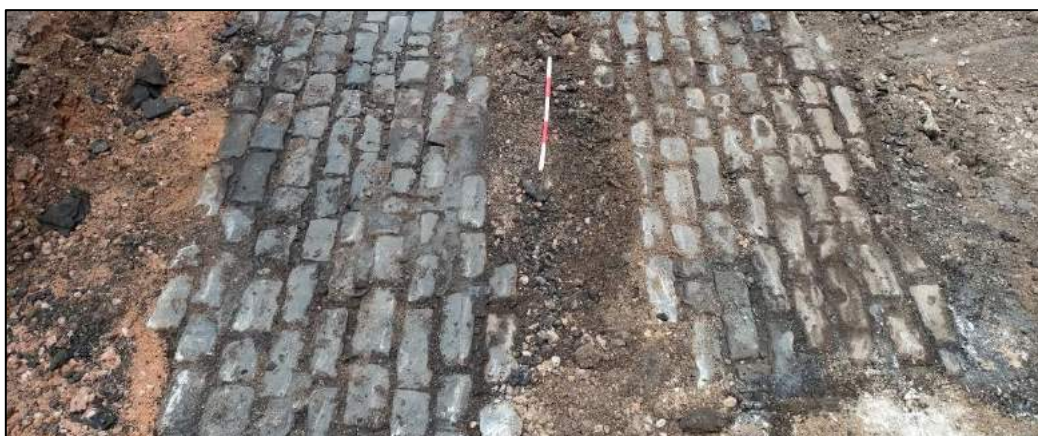


Brazennose St vaults looking N

The central part of Lincoln Square seems to have been remediated at some point. Very compact rubble cut by modern service trenches. There are landscaping remains around redundant tree rings.

Area C

At the south east corner of Lincoln Square, in front of what is currently a branch of Toni & Guy, there was another area of setts. These were in a N-S alignment and had been truncated down the centre. The southern extent was still covered by the current modern paving slabs. The two areas extended north for 2m where they were truncated by modern concrete kerb stones. Each area was around 60cm wide with a 30cm gap in between.



Setts in front of Toni & Guy

Immediately to the north of the cobbles area was a cellar with two arched alcoves built into the east wall in an E-W orientation. The arches were approximately 1.5m wide (The cellar was not fully excavated so can only estimate the width), and 1.3m in depth. The height of the arches was estimated to be around 1.1m. The cellar was constructed using hand made bricks and lime mortar, and the back wall of the alcoves was painted with a pale blue lime wash.



Cellar vault roof looking NE



Inside arch showing limewash looking E



The 2 arches fully revealed. The brick floor is visible at the bottom centre.



Dividing wall between the two arches removed.

As the cellar was to be packed, the arch rooves were broken through and it could be seen that the dividing wall and roof structure was not keyed into the east wall of the cellar. Above the arches were a 2m long iron pipe (dia 20cm) and a ceramic pipe abutting it at either end. Alongside the iron pipe on the east side was another iron pipe that had been halved lengthways to form a U shaped channel. The ceramic ware at the south end of the cellar seemed to link up with a possible toilet as there was a broken vertical soil pipe visible in the ground and a broken toilet base was found in the cellar fill. The pipes were set into very compact rubble so could be of a later date than the cellar construction. The upper layers of the arch roof seem to have been removed and the rubble and pipes laid with only one course of arch roof below. This theory also fits with the fact that a N-S dividing wall visible at the north end of the cellar survives to a higher level than that of the pipes.



Cast iron pipe (bottom) and half pipe (top)

At the south end of the cellar was a truncated E-W dividing wall 1.1m from the south wall visible in the east facing section. This extended beyond the limit of the excavated part of the cellar. The visible part of the south wall and the east wall up to the arches were painted with a pale green lime wash.



Pale green limewash in SE corner

The cellar seemed to continue west beyond a truncated N-S dividing wall at the north end, but it was not established how far due to a line of trees subject to a preservation order preventing further excavation. An empty concrete tree ring was visible in the east facing section.



North end of the cellar showing N-S dividing wall.



Dividing wall at S end of cellars looking W.

The cellar's excavated width was 1.1m and the length was 5.2m. A pit was dug through the cellar fill to establish the floor level, which was found to be 2.35m below the finished ground level. The north wall did not appear to be lime washed, but only the top two courses were visible.

The cellar, alcoves and setts in this part of the site appear to be the remains of No 35 Queen St as depicted in the 1850s OS map. It seems that the setts were part of a covered alley between No 35 and No 37 that led to a back yard and the arched alcoves were built under the alley. The yard may have contained a privy block at the entrance to the alley. All the buildings on Queen St and Brazennose St appear to be cellared at the time of this map.

Close to the vaulted cellars in Area C, on the other side of the northern wall was another cellar vault running perpendicular to the original ones. These were not dug out but as they were of the same construction, it can be assumed that they were the same depth and with a brick floor.



Vault found running in a N-S direction to the north of the excavated cellar.

Setts were found on Mulberry St. covering a large area, width 3.65m, length 23.2m with kerb stones on both sides and truncated along full length down the middle. Setts begin 2.6m from N end of Veenoo building.



Flattened setts in the centre of the road and rounded ones at the sides

On the western side of Lincoln Square, four planters were dug out to a depth of 1m. Planter 1 (on map) contained a layered fill of varying grades of gravel and crushed brick. Along the western edge of the planter was a handmade brick wall surviving to a height of 7 courses in places. The wall ran for 3.4m from the SW corner of the planter and then turned east for 50cm, turned N for 2.5m before turning W and disappearing into the section. The hollow created by the turning wall was filled with concrete and may represent a cellar light. At 1.26m to the N of the wall was another short wall of a similar construction protruding from the section in an easterly direction. This may be a fireplace cheek.



N-S wall in Planter 1 with possible cellar light on the right.



Possible fireplace cheek.

Along the southern edge of the planter, the N-S wall turned east and ran for 50cm before being truncated by a Virgin Media cable. In the SW corner embedded in the N-S section of the wall was a yellow sandstone block with a black sooty material on the facing side. This may represent a coal chute as the wall above it was very rubble like as if a fill.



Stone block in SW corner of planter 1

At the easternmost extent of the planter was a brick drainage channel, visible for 80cm. The channel was brick walled to a depth of 15cm and had no base. The mud in the bottom of the channel had a white substance coating it. The channel was capped with bricks.



Drain channel prior to lifting the caps.

Planter 4 (on map) had a wall running along its northernmost edge that had 6 courses visible.



Wall in Planter 4 looking N

Planters 2 and 3 contained no archaeological features of note.

On the northern side of Queen St next to the car park was a brick drain that was around 2m deep and ran towards Deansgate. It was blocked by concrete.

The walls of the drain were 24cm wide and the north side had yellow sandstone caps. The width of the drain channel was 45cm.



Northern side of large drain next to carpark wall showing sandstone caps

Outside the vicarage belonging to the Hidden Gem church on Mulberry St, in front of the door, a cellar drop was found under the existing paving. This was a cast iron square cover set into a large stone slab.



Cellar drop outside the vicarage.

Conclusion

All intrusive were monitored by a member of Salford Archaeology staff. Remains were observed relating to 19th century structures identified on the 1851 and 1891 mapping but no remains of particular archaeological significance were observed. No further monitoring is required and the report will be now produced.

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