

PROJECT DESIGN & ASSESSMENT

Archaeological Watching Brief

GATEHOUSE EXTERNAL WORKS,
CHETHAM'S SCHOOL OF MUSIC,
LONG MILLGATE,
MANCHESTER

Client: Chetham's School of Music

Report No: 2024-06 (MA873)

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning background

This WSI relates to a proposal to relay about 200 square metres of gritstone setts beneath and around the late medieval Gatehouse, which forms the principal entrance to the School of Music and the Stoller Hall. The Gatehouse is Listed Grade I, and was built in about 1420, as the main access to the buildings which are now occupied by Chethams Library and the School of Music. It is also located within the Manchester Cathedral Conservation Area.

Listed building consent for the works has been granted by Manchester City Council, following an application by Buttress Architects, which included a Design & Access Statement, dated July 2023 (Kendall, 2023).

A condition of the Consent relates to an archaeological watching brief:

“No development works shall take place until the applicant or their agents or their successors in title has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority”.

This WSI was commissioned by Steve Kendall of Buttress Architects, on behalf of the School of Music, to define the proposed works, archiving and reporting.

1.2 Location

The site was located between Manchester Cathedral and Victoria Station, within the northernmost part of Manchester city centre (**Figure 1**). Late post-medieval development had obscured the original topographic setting of the site. The late medieval college buildings were originally located upon a distinct promontory, at *circa* 33m O.D., with the river Irwell to the west and the river Irk to the north. The Irwell is now confined between high embankment walls, and the Irk has long been culverted. The Gatehouse building was located at the north-eastern corner of the original late medieval college enclosure.

1.3 Geology

At depth, the site is underlain by the Bunter Sandstone of the of the Permo-Triassic period. This forms the promontory between the Irwell and the Irk, and outcrops of this sandstone have been noted wherever excavations and demolition has occurred across the site. This is intermittently overlain by late glacial flood gravels of the Devensian period, which have been encountered during utility service trench excavation, across the site ([Geology of Britain viewer | British Geological Survey \(BGS\)](#)).

1.4 History and Significance

The existing late medieval buildings at the site comprised a College of Priests, constructed in the early 1420s to serve the Collegiate Church (now the Cathedral). The site has ‘exceptional significance for historical value as a rare example of a medieval collegiate complex that survived the upheavals under Henry VIII to become a charitable institution founded by Humphrey Chetham’.

One of the foremost authorities on medieval buildings, Anthony Emery, has stated that the complex is the best surviving late medieval domestic building in the north-west of England (Emery, 1996).

1.5 Previous archaeological works

During early 2009, No.5 trial pits were hand excavated within the passage located against the east external wall of College House, just to the north of the Gatehouse. Two of these (Trial Pits 1 & 5) were within the area which will be affected by the proposed resurfacing works.

Within TP5, the setts were found to be bedded upon a layer of concrete, 0.15m thick. This sealed a 1.0m thick layer of brown sandy clay, with brick fragments, and sherds of Victorian pottery. Within the west face of the pit were four additional courses of the east gable wall of late medieval College House, which were ashlar faced and soot-stained, indicating that they were once exposed to the atmosphere. It was clear that ground levels had been substantially raised here, probably during construction of the nearby 1880 Mills & Murgatroyd Building.

Within TP1, which was located just to the south of the present bridge, brown sandy clay fills, like those in TP5, extended to a depth of 1.0m, and probing revealed that soft fills continued to a depth of 1.1m below this.

Although there were no trial pits near to the Gatehouse, it can be assumed that original natural ground levels rise towards the Gatehouse, given the location of the river Irk, on the north side of the Chetham's site.

2. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

A detailed watching brief is required to be undertaken during the groundworks below and peripheral to the Gatehouse. The required stages to achieve this are as follows:

- (1) Site attendance during main contract works.
- (2) Site-based recording and interpretation
- (3) Reporting and archive production
- (4) Archive deposition

Specifically, the watching brief provides an opportunity to provide further information regarding the immediate external area of the Gatehouse, and potentially to determine the levels of bedrock or natural soil on the periphery of the Chetham's site. This will add to the existing corpus of archaeological information which is presently held on the site.

3. METHOD STATEMENT

In line with the objectives and stages of the archaeological work stated above, the following work programme is submitted.

3.1 Watching Brief

The watching brief will be maintained wherever groundworks occur in association with the re-bedding of the existing setts. It is proposed to excavate an area of about 200 square metres to a depth of about 350mm, prior to relaying of the setts.

As the excavation work is undertaken, a watching brief will be maintained, with features being hand cleaned, planned and photographed. Small finds will be collected by context.

In the event that any archaeologically-significant features or deposits are encountered, a cessation of groundworks at that particular point, for a maximum duration of one-half day, will be requested in order to facilitate closer investigation and recording.

3.2 Drawn records

The drawn field records would be reproduced in AutoCAD 2023, then drawings produced in accordance with the guidance and drawing conventions outlined within English Heritage's *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (2016), and the relevant CIFA guidelines.

However, with regard to CAD layering conventions within the former guide, it is proposed to use **eight** CAD layers, as follows:

LAYER NAME	LAYER CONTENT	LINE TYPE	LINE THICKNES S
(1) BORDER	Drawing borders	Solid black	0.30mm
(2) TEXT	All text, scales, compass points	Solid black	0.20mm
(3) SECTION LINE	Section lines, trench edges	Dashed & dotted red	0.00mm
(4) ONCUT	Wall lines	Solid black	0.30mm
(5) BELOW CUT	Detail below or beyond cut line	Solid black	0.00mm
(6) ABOVE CUT	Detail above or in front of cut line	Dashed black	0.00mm

(7) FORMER CUT	Line of demolished or projected wall	Dashed black	0.30mm
(8) HATCH	Phasing cross- hatching	Solid black	0.00mm

3.3 Textual description of deposits and features

Detailed textual descriptions of all features and structures which are to be affected by the groundworks will be created. Features and layers will be described by context sheet, cross-referenced to both drawings and photographs.

3.4 Photographic record

A full photographic record will be undertaken. This will include overall photographs of the groundworks, and detailed photographs of any features revealed during excavation works. This will be undertaken in colour digital, using a Canon EOS1100D camera (effective 12.2 megapixels), using a Tamron SP 10-24mm wide angle lens, with physical scales included within photographs where appropriate.

3.5 Collection and disposal strategy

Artefacts and ecofacts – Finds will be collected and bagged according to context. Spoil heaps will be scanned by metal detector to recover any metalliferous objects. Every potentially significant artefact (and ecofact) will be bagged and located, both by context and by three dimensional co-ordinates (where significant, and where possible). Any C20 finds will be sampled only to establish context dating. Any immediate conservation needs for significant artefacts/ecofacts will follow guidelines supplied in *First Aid for Finds* and Brown (2011).

Any **scientific samples** will be bagged, labelled and stored appropriately as defined by Brown (2011).

If very significant paleoecological deposits are encountered, then the Historic England Scientific Officer may be consulted; and a visit may be arranged with the nominated consultant.

The finds collection will remain the property of the clients. The ultimate deposition or disposal of finds will be in accordance with their wishes.

4. POST-EXCAVATION, ARCHIVING AND REPORTING

4.1 Archive

The results of Stages 3.1 - 3.4 will form the basis of a fully integrated archive to professional standards, in accordance with current Historic England guidelines (Brown, 2011 and Lee, 2015).

The digital archive drawings will be presented in AutoCAD 2023, as dwg files. All drawings will be produced in AutoCAD, at A3 format. Each sheet will be fully titled. Drawing conventions for plans and sections will follow the general guidelines as issued by Historic England's *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to good recording practice* (2016) and *Understanding the Archaeology of Landscapes: A guide to good recording practice* (2007).

Digital photographic images will be titled, and will be included within the report as part of the watching brief record. These will also be provided digitally, in JPEG form, in excess of 10mp.

The textual archive will be provided both as a printed document and on a USB penstick in PDF and Word formats.

4.2 Reports

One bound and a digital copy report would be prepared for submission to the client. Each report would be in two sections; firstly the textual report at A4 format, and secondly the drawings and photographs, at A3/A4 format. These reports will present, summarise, and interpret the results of the programme detailed in Stages 3.1-3.3, and include appropriate illustrations, including copies of the plans, elevations, and section drawings, reduced to an appropriate scale (although drawings are field recorded at 1:10 or 1:20 scales, it may not be always appropriate to reproduce them at this scale). The report will summarise the history of the site, and include a full text recording the significance of the archaeological and architectural evidence. Recommendations will be produced to highlight future potential for any further recording or watching brief works.

Digital copies of the report (PDF/A format) will also be forwarded to the GMAAS HER; and a digital copy of the archive will be deposited with the ADS in York.

The report layout will be as follows:

Abstract Summary

- (1) Introduction, explaining background to work
- (2) Scope & methodology
- (3) Location, including geology, geomorphology, aspect & soils
- (4) Historical background of site.
- (5) Watching brief results, including structures, features and deposits.
- (6) Site interpretation.
- (7) Sources & bibliography
- (8) Index to photographic archive
- (9) Artefacts and ecofacts description.

Site location plan – 1:500 scale, partially derived from O.S. data

Plans, elevations, and cross sections for the structures/features.

Plates – digital photographs reproduced in colour, in excess of 1200 dpi.

5. OTHER MATTERS

5.1 Plant and other equipment

It is assumed that the main works contractor will supply by previous arrangement plant, other equipment, and materials, to facilitate the archaeological works.

5.2 Project monitoring

Any proposed changes to this project design will be agreed with the clients, as well as with GMAAS, prior to commencement of any fieldwork. A preliminary meeting could be arranged at the outset of the project, if necessary. Further meetings to review the progress of work could occur during the programme.

5.3 Project Timetable

The projected duration of archaeological works is uncertain, but would probably comprise initially several full days, during the groundworks. The reporting and archiving would amount to an equivalent period to the fieldwork days; i.e. for every day of site attendance, a day would be required for reporting & archiving.

5.4 Additional Recording

In the event that significant finds are made, or areas of significant archaeological deposits, arrangements will be made with the main contractor to allow unimpeded access to such locations for up to half-a-day, to facilitate cleaning and recording and recovery of artefact/ecofact evidence, or palaeoenvironmental material.

5.5 Health and Safety

Full regard will, of course, be given to all Health and Safety considerations. Matrix Archaeology fieldwork conforms to all the provisions of the SCAUM (Standing Conference of Unit Managers) Health and Safety manual. Risk assessments are undertaken as a matter of course for all projects.

5.6 Access

Matrix Archaeology staff and subcontractors should be provided with unrestricted access to the site for the full duration of the groundworks.

5.7 OASIS

A PDF copy of the report will be deposited on the OASIS website after the report has been deposited with the GMAAS HER.

5.8 Independence

Matrix Archaeology is a limited company, taking full employment responsibility for all of its employees and sub-contractors.

5.9 Professional Standards

Matrix Archaeology has always worked to adhere to the highest professional standards current within field archaeology, and will abide by the CIfA document *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (2014); and by the CIfA 'Code of Conduct'.

6. STAFFING

The fieldwork will be supervised by **Mark Fletcher, BSc, MAAIS** (Matrix Archaeology Director). He has worked as a professional archaeologist since 1985.

His former employment posts are as follows:

Supervisor and Project Officer with **Trust for Wessex Archaeology**, 1985-87; Project Manager with **Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit**, 1987-94; Senior Project Manager with **Lancaster University Archaeological Unit**, 1994-1997; Senior Managing Archaeologist with **West Yorkshire Archaeological Service**, 1997-2000. Set up **Matrix Archaeology** of Manchester as a commercial contracting and consulting body in March, 2000.

Any significant post-medieval pottery will be reported upon by **Leigh Dodd** of Earthworks Archaeology Services. Leigh has significant experience of small finds assessment and analysis across the county of Cheshire.

Any significant environmental sampling would be undertaken by **Dr Andy Howard** and **Dr David Smith**, of the Institute for Archaeology and Antiquity, of the University of Birmingham.

7. COSTINGS

7.1 Staff costs for watching brief per day £460.00 plus VAT

Staff costs for archiving & reporting per day £390.00 plus VAT

7.2 In the event that any specialist subcontractors become involved, such as a palaeoecologist or a dendrochronologist, then additional sums would be required, although it is not anticipated that a contingency sum of more than **£500.00 plus VAT** would be required.

7.3 Possible additional contingencies to be agreed with both the client and GMAAS beforehand.

SOURCES

Brennand M (ed) 2006 *The Archaeology of North West England: An Archaeological Research Framework for North West England: Volume 1 Resource Assessment*, CBA

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Brown D H 2011 *Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation*, IFA

CIfA 2014 *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief*

Emery A 1996 *Greater medieval houses of England and Wales: 1300-1500, Volume 1 Northern England*, CUP

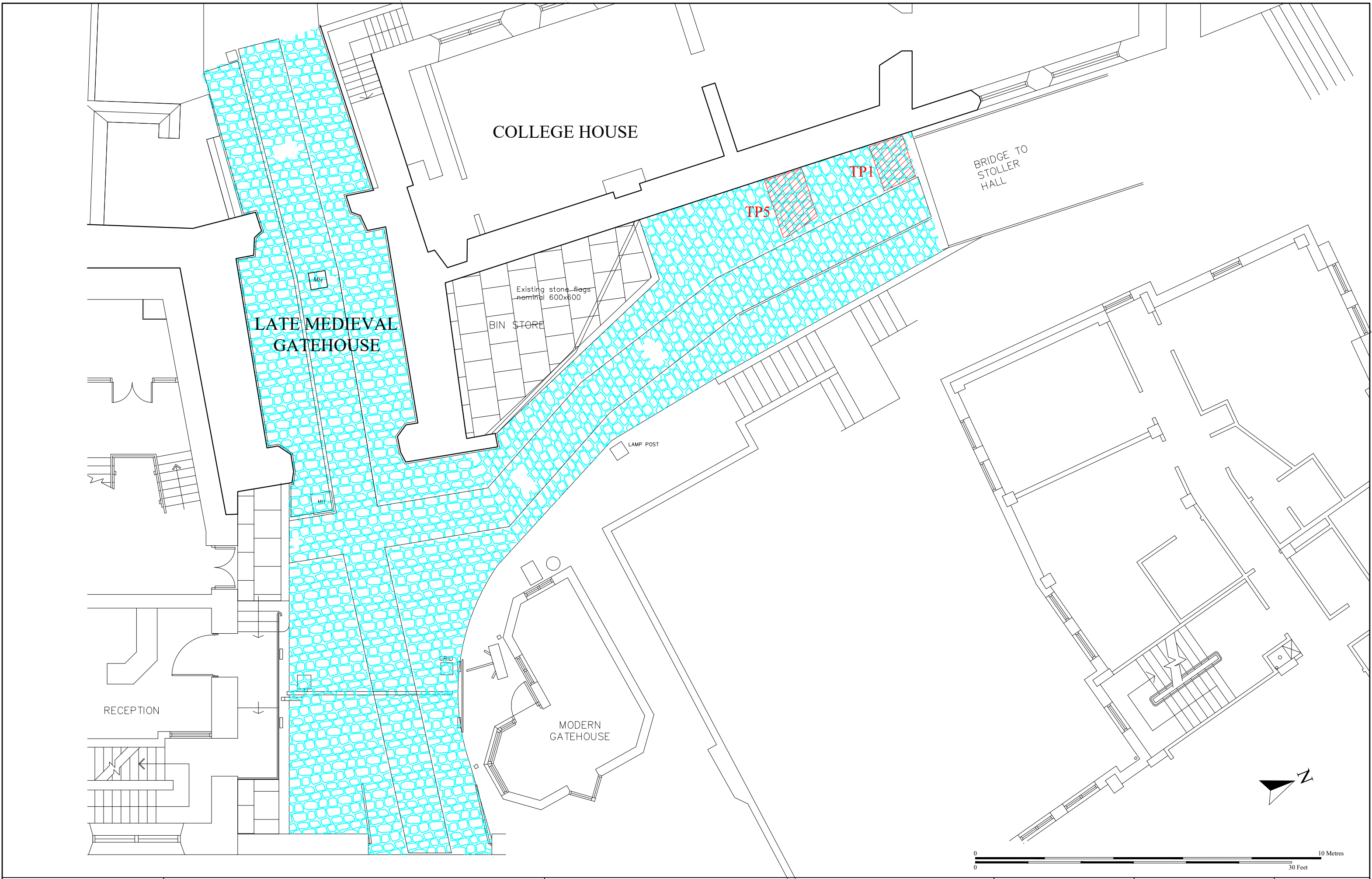
Hartwell C. and Barter M. 2006 *Historic Building Appraisal: The later buildings of the Chetham's School and Library site*, AHP Ltd.

Kendall, S 2023 *Chethams School of Music, Design & Access Statement*, Buttress Architects.

Lane R 2016 *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* Historic England

Lee E 2015 *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide* Historic England

<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>



Matrix Archaeology Ltd 29 Bare Avenue Morecambe Lancaster LA4 6BD matrixarch@btconnect.com	Site: GATEHOUSE EXTERNAL WORKS, CHETHAM'S SCHOOL OF MUSIC, LONG MILLGATE, MANCHESTER	Title: AREA OF PROPOSED WORKS ON ACCESS ROUTES	Date: June 2024	Field Recorder: M.F.	Sheet 1 of 1 Sheets
			Scale: As for scale bar	CAD Illustrator: M.F.	Figure 1