

Desk-Based Archaeological Assessment of
Cockpit House, No 34 Church Street, Prescott

Prepared for Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council

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Summary

This report is an archaeological desk-based assessment for a site in central Prescott at no 34 Church Street (Cockpit House), Prescott Knowsley L34 3LA, centred at NGR 346510 392800 (Figure 1), known as the study area.

Following national government policy (National Planning Policy Framework 2019, para 189) this assessment draws together the key topographical, archaeological historical, cartographical and other sources to determine the heritage significance and archaeological potential of the site.

Cockpit House summary

The site lies in the core of the well documented medieval and post-medieval town of Prescott. Archaeological, cartographic and historical sources from the area show that the site was occupied by a burgage plot which was first recorded in detail in the late 16th century but is clearly of earlier, medieval, origin. Proximity to the church and market place and the location between two of the early roads of the town (High Street and Eccleston Street) make this archaeologically and historically an important area of the town.

The most significant element of the site is the extant late 18th-century Cockpit House, built in c. 1776, with some later additions. This is a grade 2 listed building.

The development of the plot as it existed in 1592 can be seen in its subdivision into three in 1772 and the outline of the study area plot took shape at that time. The inventory of Henry Ashton dated 1668 identifies the cockpit as a structure external to the main house. A plan of 1772 probably shows the same structures, with the cockpit marked as a rectangular building with tiers of seating on two sides. This was located on what is now the High Street frontage. Documentary study shows that the current Cockpit House stands on the site of an earlier house belonging to Thomas Bromilow in 1772.

The site may retain surviving areas of archaeological deposits associated with the post-medieval and earlier occupation of the town. The current Cockpit House stands on a confined plot with little open space and, given the grade 2 status of the house, opportunities for archaeological investigation are likely to be very limited. However, any below ground disturbance or alteration of the current site has the potential to produce archaeological information and should be subject to archaeological monitoring.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background: Scope of the study

Cockpit House is set to be repaired, restored and converted to new use as part of the Prescott High Street Heritage Action Zone. The HSHAZ is jointly funded by Knowsley Council and Historic England. The current study was commissioned by Owen Barton of Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council to inform the future use of the site. It contains an archaeological desk-based assessment (DBA) of the study area within Prescott town centre. This DBA forms part of a wider suite of studies and surveys of the site that will inform its redevelopment.

1.2 Prescott High Street Heritage Action Zone

The Prescott High Street Heritage Action Zone has been awarded a grant for a four-year (2020-2024) heritage led regeneration programme to repair, restore and reuse old buildings within the Prescott town centre has built on the momentum generated by the Shakespeare North Playhouse development and Knowsley's forthcoming role as Liverpool's Borough of Culture status for 2022. The programme aims to bring back historic buildings in Prescott into use for leisure, retail and cultural activities (<https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/heritage-action-zones/prestcot/>)

The Action Zone focuses on Market Place but extends north to the east end of Derby Street.

The Action Zone follows on from the successful Prescott Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI), a five-year project, 'to repair, restore and re-use historic buildings and spaces in Prescott town centre'.

1.3 Cockpit House: the site

The site (Fig. 1) consists of the former bank building (formerly also Prescott Museum), now known as Cockpit House with its curtilage. It stands on the NE corner of Church Street with the main frontage on Church Street, but the side facing onto the High Street on the north. To the south-east the site backs onto the site of the new Shakespeare North Playhouse, currently under construction.

Cockpit House is a Grade 2 Listed Building. The centre of the site lies at approximately NGR 346510 392800.

2. Methodology

2.1 Standards and Aims

The report was prepared in line with the *Standard and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment* (Dec 2014), issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014a, revised 2017).

The DBA also follows the current Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service Guidance on Archaeological Desk-Based Assessments.

The aims of the assessment report follow those of the Standard and Guidance. The following considerations were relevant to the present case:

1. An assessment of the potential for heritage assets to survive within the areas of study

2. An assessment of the significance of the known or predicted heritage assets considering, in England, their archaeological, historic, architectural and artistic interests
3. Strategies for further evaluation whether or not intrusive, where the nature, extent or significance of the resource is not sufficiently well defined
4. Proposals for further archaeological investigation within a programme of research, whether undertaken in response to a threat or not (CIfA 2014a).

2.2 Sources

Sources studied include:

place-name evidence,
findspots of artefacts (the Portable Antiquities Scheme),
Merseyside Historic Environment Record,
Museum records,
published sources (see bibliography),
map evidence,
historic photographs,
historical accounts of the area in which the site is located,
oral evidence,
unpublished archaeological evidence in the possession of the writer, and observations made on a site visit.

Registers of local authority designations such as Conservation Areas (Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area), and Listed Buildings Register were consulted. Archaeological and historic environment databases were also searched for relevant material, notably the Portable Antiquities Scheme database (www.finds.org.uk) and Merseyside Historic Environment Record for information on the site and its wider setting. Aerial photographs were consulted, notably the set taken for the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England) now part of Historic England, as part of the regional flyers' programme by the writer between 1987 and 2003. Lancashire Archive, Bow Lane, Preston were consulted but the Archives contain large quantity of historic documents concerning Prescot for which the catalogue entry is not always specific enough to discount a link to the current site. Searching on a speculative basis is highly time-concluding and outside the scope of this report.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, access was not possible up to April 2021 to the Archive Resource for Knowsley (ARK) but the catalogue was searched online.

3. Planning background

3.1 Introduction

The present study was undertaken with a view to determining the likely archaeological potential of the site, in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (2019). The relevant paragraphs (paras. 187, 189) are cited in Appendix 1 (see below).

3.2 The current planning situation

The current desk-based assessment was not undertaken against a brief with specific development proposals in mind. It is understood it is to inform potential future use and development of the site. As such, the following discussion does not take into account particular planning scenarios.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Listed buildings

There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments in Knowsley Borough. Within the Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area there are 21 Listed Buildings, all of Grade 2, except the Grade 1 St Mary's Church.

Listed buildings include the Cockpit House building, recorded there as the former museum, at 34 Church Street.

Conservation Area

The site lies within the Prescott Town Centre Conservation area, designated by the local planning authority as one of the areas of special architectural or historic interest in Knowsley MBC's jurisdiction. The Conservation Area Character Appraisal notes that the definition of a Conservation area is 'an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' (PTCCA 2012, 6).

The Character Appraisal for the Prescott Town Centre Conservation Area identifies a number of 'focal buildings' in the town. The dominant one, both physically and in terms of its importance, is St Mary's Church, Grade 1 listed, on a prominent site with impressive early 17th-century architecture. The former Museum building (no 34 Church Street) is also listed as a 'focal' building.

4. Site Descriptions and Summary of Evidence

4.1 Previous work

Prescot has received considerable attention from archaeologists and historians from the late 1970s to mid 1990s due to its importance as one of only three medieval urban settlements in Merseyside (with Newton-le-Willows and Liverpool). A second wave of interest has been generated in the last five years in part stimulated by the development of the Shakespeare North Playhouse as well as the improvements to the townscape and buildings brought about by the Prescott Townscape Heritage Initiative, which was 'a five year project to repair, restore and re-use historic buildings and spaces in Prescott town centre' (<http://prescotthi.org.uk/>).

A number of archaeological interventions have taken place in Prescott since 1978. They include full-scale excavations south of Eccleston Street (McNeil 1983), and five locations in 1980-81 (Holgate 1983), and a test-pitting exercise in 1983-84 at 26 locations to characterise the below-ground archaeological deposits across the town (Philpott and Davey 1984). Further work has been undertaken in the Vicarage garden by National Museums Liverpool in 1993 and again in 1997, directed by the writer but unpublished (site archives in National Museums Liverpool regional archaeology collection). Excavations to the rear of the north side of Eccleston Street were undertaken by Ron Cowell and Gill Chitty in 1982 (Cowell and Chitty 1983). Other observations and watching briefs have been undertaken (see Merseyside Historic Environment Record (MHER)). Some of the earlier interventions are published in the *Journal of Merseyside Archaeological Society*, volume 5 (for 1982-3), which is dedicated to the archaeological work in Prescott to 1986.

The Shakespeare North Playhouse development on the adjacent site to Cockpit House, saw an archaeological evaluation by the writer in 2017 (Philpott 2017a) followed by a large-scale excavation by Salford University in 2018 (Miller *et al.* 2018).

The Prescott Townscape Heritage Initiative has also commissioned archaeological work at the Market Place, in advance of redevelopment, which also incorporated a successful public community archaeology project (Philpott 2017) and a commercial watching brief by the writer for the university of Liverpool (Philpott 2020). The recent work of resurfacing the street for the Prescott Eccleston Street Connectivity Works has been monitored for archaeological purposes by the writer, with the assistance of the archaeologist Carolanne King, for the University of Liverpool. This has produced a number of observations of archaeological deposits, including cellars of former properties on the south side of Eccleston Street, as well as sandstone and other drains, deposits of pottery manufacturing waste used as hardcore and the evidence of pits and gullies in the area of the street. Some deposits and structures appear to be 17th century in date, although most relate to 19th-century drainage works along this main street. One valuable observation has been the interior of the Flat Iron Building and its

adjacent property at nos 72-74 Eccleston Street where a mid 19th-century rubbish dump was built over by cottage wall, preserving a large dump of ceramics. Observation of the interior structural walls when the plaster was removed has shown the sequence of building of the two adjacent properties. Finally, Prescott Vicarage garden was investigated by test-pitting in October 2020 as part of the University of Liverpool's field school, directed by Professor Harold Mytum and Robert Philpott.

Previous excavation

No recorded excavation has been undertaken at no 34 Church Street. However, several archaeological excavations have been undertaken in the general area of Mill Street/Eccleston Street. The first was by Liverpool University's Rescue Archaeology Unit in December 1980-January 1981. The published report (Holgate 1983) contains sections and plans of the excavation, with a discussion of the finds, but no detailed report on the below-ground archaeology encountered during the excavation.

Holgate's published plans and sections show that his Site A lay on the northern side of Highfield Place, with its eastern margin on Mill Street (Holgate 1983, 12, fig. 4.1; Davey 1983, fig. 1.3, p. 3). Trench A was located towards the north-eastern part of Area A. The trench revealed a pair of parallel stone foundation walls (17, 5), aligned north-south 3.0m apart, which appear to represent cellar walls. An internal brick partition wall (6) subdivided the cellar into two. Each part of the cellar was accessed from steps (8, 9) leading down from the eastern wall (5). The cellars were not fully excavated. That to the west was examined to a depth of about 1.2m, the one to the east, to about 0.35m. A further stone foundation wall (7) ran eastward from wall 5 (Holgate 1983, Fig. 4.1). It is possible to match these walls up with structures shown on the west side of Mill Street on the 1848 OS 1:500 map. This appears to show that the cellars extended under the backyards, as well as the house (Philpott and Davey 1983, 43).

On the Shakespeare North Playhouse site immediately to the south-east of 34 Church Street, in January 2017 four test-pits were excavated and were monitored by the writer. Two of the test pits at the northern upslope end of the site showed a sequence of car park deposits laid directly on the truncated bedrock surface. A third, TP04, revealed a deep deposit of redeposited crushed sandstone. The fourth, TP05, produced a more complex sequence, which revealed a deep deposit of crushed sandstone, potentially within a cellar or hillside terrace, which had been cut by a pit or other negative feature, and subsequently sealed by redeposited material containing 17th-century pottery. The results of the trial excavations proved the site had high archaeological potential (Philpott 2016) were followed in December 2017 to January 2018 by large scale excavations by University of Salford Archaeology (Miller *et al.* 2018).

These revealed four main phases of activity (the following is taken from Miller *et al.* 2018, and potentially subject to modification).

Phase 1: Late medieval – mid-17th century

Phase 2: Mid-17th century – 18th century

Phase 3: 19th century – early 20th century

Phase 4: Modern

Phase 1

A dark brown silty clay horizon with late 16th and 17th century pottery and clay tobacco pipe was the earliest archaeological deposit encountered. The fragmentary remains of an L-shaped wall belonged to the same general phase.

Phase 2:

Several stone-built structures belonged to this phase, including the remains of one with parallel walls, and another stone structure interpreted as two rooms. A large quarry had removed a substantial amount of bedrock and was filled with quarrying waste, but also many pottery fragments of the 17th-18th centuries. Three pits were also identified.

Phase 3:

Two brick floors separated by a brick wall corresponded to a dwelling on maps of the later 19th and early 20th centuries. Other elements of properties in the area may have formed cellar walls. In the eastern part of the site there were brick foundations of several structures, most corresponding with structures on the OS mapping. A brick tank, and a brick cellar with stone flagged floors and containing a rock cut well were also discovered. Several 19th century surfaces were found in the eastern part of the site, including cobbled paths and internal floors.

Phase 4:

A single 20th-century wall foundation was identified, demolished in the late 20th century.

4.2 Archaeological studies

Prescot has the distinction of being one of only three medieval urban settlements in Merseyside and is the best documented town for the 16th century (Davey 1978).

A key historical study is the publication of the Prescott Court Leet and other records by F. A. Bailey in 1937 which transcribed and made accessible an important series of town documents, notably the highly detailed survey of the whole town carried out in 1592 by King's College Cambridge. The survey identifies by name the tenants of King's College, the size of the holding and the abutments, together with a record of any buildings including size in bays, and the presence of any outbuildings such as barns or kilns. Bailey correlated this survey with later surveys, including one of 1721, enabling the position of plots to be located with considerable accuracy on modern maps (Bailey 1937, opp. p. 48).

The Davey report, 1978

Subsequently the significance and archaeological potential of Bailey's work were recognised by Peter Davey. In 1978 Davey produced a report which sought to 'describe the heritage which survives above ground and that which may be present underground, so that evidence from the past can be used to shape the future of the towns (Davey 1978, 3; Figure 2). The report drew extensively on Bailey's work for the physical layout, correlating sites referred to in the 1592 survey with sites on the modern townscape of Prescot. In addition, Davey used the detailed Court Leet records published by Bailey (1937, 73-276) for the period 1510-1600 to identify further features of potential archaeological significance and to link these to specific plots recorded in the 1592 survey. Thus, the approximate location of pottery kilns, for instance, not mentioned in the survey can be identified through references to potters in the Court Leet.

Davey's work is of value in providing an assessment of the archaeological potential of the town centre. Inevitably modern development since 1978 has overtaken some of his land availability maps, and other changes have resulted in the loss of buildings or potential archaeological sites. However, his conclusions remain of key importance for the current study, as for any archaeological work within the town.

Davey divided the town into four zones to examine the below-ground archaeological potential as well as the survival of significant historic buildings, early stone walls and other features, which would now be termed heritage assets. Davey's Zone Four (Davey 1978, 12-13; Fig. 14) embraces the area between Kembles Street in the south and High Street in the north, and from Church Street in the west as far as Chapel Street and Cyprus Street in the east. He notes that as this area 'is the only part of the town to survive in anything like a complete form, its future is central to conservation and development policies for the town' (Davey 1978, 13). He recommended enlargement of the Conservation area to include this zone, listing a number of Georgian and Victorian buildings, detailed structural survey of early buildings, listing the best preserved sandstone walls and preserving the cobbled alleys and lanes as one of the best visual features within the town (Davey 1978, 13). He also observes that the plot boundaries in this part of the town preserve a very early settlement pattern,

and ‘demonstrate a remarkable degree of continuity’, noting that there are the same number of plots between nos 23 and 43 Eccleston Street in 1978 as in 1592 (Davey 1978, 13).

Cockpit House: Map Regression and Study

The map by F. A. Bailey which reconstructs Prescott at the time of the 1592 survey shows the plots with reasonable accuracy, though not all could be defined precisely. Bailey describes his method on the plan as ‘a reconstruction based principally on the surveys of 1592 and 1721, the court rolls, and the Ordnance Survey of 1848’ (1937, opp. p. 48), but notes in the key, boundaries of holdings (in some cases approximate only)’. In the area occupied by Cockpit House, the 1592 survey contains one plot, while seven others are present in the block defined by the modern High Street to the north, Mill Street to the east, Church Street to the south and east.

Plot no (Bailey 1937; Davey 1978)	Plot / building	1592 owner	1592 tenant	1721 owner	1978 site situation
58	2 burgages and 2 crofts	John Ogle, Gent.	Jn Dichfield and Robert Powhton, 1 rood	George Bradshaw	‘probably destroyed by construction of bus station’
59	cockpits				‘probably destroyed by construction of bus station’
60	Burgage, garden and orchard	Richard Simons	-	George Bradshaw	2-6 High St
61	horsemill				Derelict land south of High Street
84	Messuage and garden	Thomas Pike	James Taylor	John Bradburn	7-11 Eccleston Street
85	Burgage garden and way (to Mill Hill)	Thomas Fox		Isaac Greene	1-5 Eccleston Street
86	Kiln				1-5 Eccleston Street
87	Burgage and cottage	Robert Plumton		Thomas Wood	2-8 Church Street
88	Kiln				2-8 Church Street
89	Building	Wardens of school			8-10 Church Street
90	Burgage and garden	Wardens of school	Edward Scasbrick	Thomas Cobham	10-12 Church Street (Partly derelict)

Table 1: List of plots in 1592 survey with 1721 owner and 1978 location (after Davey 1978, 53-54).

The 1592 survey shows a range of plots (Davey 1978, 3; Fig. 2), some such as nos 87/88, and 58/59 are fairly substantial areas of land; others in the densely occupied parts of the town are much smaller, such as those along the Church Street frontage, facing the church, but outside the present curtilage. Cockpit House lies within one substantial plot, nos 58/59, which contains the cockpit to the rear. This is discussed in more detail below. As reconstructed by F. A. Bailey, the plot occupied by Cockpit House measured about 50m north-south by 20m east-west, extending much of the way along Church Street (Bailey 1937, opp. p. 48). We have no direct information on the location of buildings as they existed in 1592 within this large plot of 1000m². However, it is possible that later plans, notably that of 1772, record some of the structures.

Inventory of Henry Ashton 1668

There are two crucial sources for the cockpit. The first is the inventory taken in 1668 at the death of Henry Ashton, who then owned Cockpit House. Following usual practice, the appraiser of his inventory proceeded sequentially around the house and outbuildings, so we can follow his progress around part of the house interior, then the yard and its outbuildings, and finally returning to the house. He identifies the rooms and their contents, which consists almost entirely of furniture.

First, he deals with some of the rooms in the house: 'the chamber on [i.e. over] the parlor [*sic*], the little chamber, the parlor, 'the little entry', the lower chamber. He then turns his attention to what are clearly outbuildings: the stables, noting two troughs 'in the yard' and 'the cocke house'. He concludes by returning to the house for a further series of rooms so the sequence continues, 'in the house', in the cellar, in the buttery, in the little chamber at the higher end of the house, and finishes with 'in the chamber on the house'.

The route and descriptions are significant because the cock house was treated alongside the stables and yard, making it almost certain that the 'cocke house' stood outside apart from the main house as a separate building. Appropriately, the cock house was appraised alongside the accommodation for other livestock, the stables and the yard with its two 'swine troughs' for pigs, and presumably also stood physically close to them.

The contents of the cock house consisted of 24 cock pens. The cockfighting was organised in 'mains', a series of fights. These could last from two days to a week (a 'long main'). An indication of the scale of the contests is that a 'Welch main', for example, was fought between 14 pairs in a knock-out competition (Duggan 1998, 220, n. 94).

18th-century records for the site

The plot on which the Ashton's house, outbuildings and cockpit stood was held in 1721 by George Bradshaw by copyhold from the lords of the manor, King's College, Cambridge. However, by the time of the 1721 survey a new construction, called New House, had been built on the plot to accompany the original Cockpit House. The two houses, 'Cock pitt house' and New House, stood on a plot which abutted the street on the north and west (i.e. in modern terms, High Street and Church Street), to the east on the Mill Hill and south abutted the lands of Thomas Woods and Jonathan Case (further south on Church Street). The new house attracted a rent of 2s 2d, more than double that of Cock Pit House at 1s.

However, while the materials of the structures are not recorded, it is likely that Ashton's Cockpit House was stone or possibly timber-framed, while the New House built by 1721 may have been in the new, fashionable material brick. An indication that New House was part of a wider trend towards the intensification of buildings on the town plots is indicated by Richard Edge's map of 1743 (Fig. 3). This, the earliest historic map of Prescott currently known, shows the east and west frontages of Church Street as wholly built up with only one small gap on the western side. Edge shows five distinct structures on the eastern side of the street, and a row of three along the southern corner with High Street. The Edge map was drawn principally to illustrate the location and extent of coal deposits below the Prescott Hall estate, and appears to treat the town, which was distinct from the Hall estate, more schematically. However, as it appears to bear some similarity to the actual number of houses, it may be that Edge is more accurate in terms of depicting individual properties than their schematic appearance suggests.

The physical relationship and layout of the two buildings can be tentatively reconstructed from the surviving documents, notably the 1772 plan (Figures 4, 5).

The second important document for the location and configuration of the structures on the plot, including the cockpit, is a plan, which exists in two versions. The first in Lancashire Archives is entitled 'Ground Plan of the Cockpitt House & Lands in Prescott' (Lancashire Archives DDCS ACC9974 Box

1/179, undated). An identical plan provides a date of 1772 [copy from Owen Barton, unpublished report].

The two plans show the identical configuration and ownership of the buildings on the corner plot. The old plot on which the original Cockpitt House stood was at that point divided into three separate units, and was in 1772 purchased by Matthew Parr, John Parr and Thomas Bromilow. The former owner was Thomas Hatton.

The plans also provide information on the former use of the large plot. It is probable that the Cockpit House is the same as that in 1721, and also in 1668. It is possible that the New House recorded in 1721 may be included amongst the 'old buildings, part of the Cockpitt Land agreed to be purchased by John Parr' in 1772. Alternatively, John Parr already owned a house on the Church Street frontage in 1772, which lay outside the current agreement but is shown on the map. Another possibility is that the New House of 1721 is John Parr's house which did not form part of the Cockpit House lands in 1772. Further documentation will be necessary to prove the point.

Finally, the 'old smithy' lay to the south-east of the undivided plot but appears to have been demolished (or was intended to be) as the boundary line runs through the structure.

The 1772 plan shows the buildings which existed prior to the construction of the present building (formerly Museum and bank) in about c. 1774-6. They consisted of the following:

No 1	Cockpitt House &c agreed to be purchased by Mr Thomas Bromilow	
	Cockpitt house & Buildings	
No 1	The Land or backyard to go along with the Cockpitt Buildings &c purchased by Mr Thomas Bromilow	
No 2	This also and likewise this piece of Ground and Road or Gateway out of it into the Church St is to go along with the old buildings agreed to the purchased by John Parr	
No 2	The old buildings part of the Cockpitt Land agreed to be purchased by John Parr	
	The old Smithy and Piece of Ground part of the Cockpitt land agreed to be purchased by Matthew Parr	
	John Parr's own house no part of the Cockpitt Buildings	

Houses to S of the Bank (Cockpit House)

The 1848 map of Prescott (Figure 8) shows that the current site curtilage includes two additional buildings on the south side of Cockpit House. These are both three-storey houses shown on historic photographs of Church Street. The bank (Cockpit House) is shown on the extreme left of the photograph (Figure 17, while to the south (right on photograph) is a row of now-demolished three-storey brick houses. The building adjacent to the bank is not clearly visible but may have a ground floor shop window, with an entrance/front door to one side, with the middle storeys were lit by tall vertical sash windows and the upper by at least two smaller windows. The long chimney set in the northern gable wall of the house contains at least six flues and would have served fireplaces in the northern wall potentially on all three floors. A sandstone plinth may be visible. The possibility of a cellar is suggested by neighbouring houses to the south with small lights into cellars. This is a type of brick-built town house, part of a terrace, characteristic of the later 18th or early 19th century in Prescott.

The Cockpit House curtilage in 1848 contains the main house on the corner of the two streets, with what appears to be an open yard to the rear (south-east of the house).

The Bank/former Museum (currently Cockpit House)

One significant change was the construction, on the corner of High Street and Church Street, of a substantial new brick building in about 1774-6, on the land purchased in 1772 by Thomas Bromilow. The original reference for the date of 1776 recorded by Pollard and Pevsner is not recorded (2006, 543). This was opened as a branch of Parr's Banking Co. in 1869, and by the mid 20th century had become the National Westminster Bank.

Parr's Bank was a private bank established in Winwick Street, Warrington, in 1788 as Parr & Co by Joseph Parr, sugar refiner, Thomas Lyon, brewer and sugar refiner, and Walter Kerfoot, attorney <https://www.natwestgroup.com/heritage/companies/parrs-bank-ltd.html>; it was also known as Warrington Bank. The bank had various changes of name, Parr, Lyon & Greenall from 1825 to 1851 and Parr, Lyon & Co from 1855 to 1865. In 1865 the bank was reconstructed as a joint stock bank with limited liability, Parr's Banking Co Ltd. Branches were opened in St Helens (1839) and Runcorn (1853). The branch in Prescott was opened in 1869 by Parr's Banking Co. as a sub-branch to St Helens. In 1896 the company's name was shortened to Parr's Bank Ltd. In 1918 Parr's Bank Ltd amalgamated with [London County & Westminster Bank Ltd](https://www.natwestgroup.com/heritage/companies/parrs-bank-ltd.html) of London, to form London County Westminster & Parr's Bank Ltd. (information from <https://www.natwestgroup.com/heritage/companies/parrs-bank-ltd.html>; Sally Cholewa, Archivist, NatWest Group Archives, Edinburgh, pers. comm.). The NatWest Bank moved to a purpose-built building on Eccleston Street around 1980, which it occupied until about 2018.

In 1982, the building was opened by Knowsley Borough Council as Prescott Museum. The museum remained there until it moved location into the Prescott Centre in 2012.

Late 19th-late 20th century maps

The map sequence from 1848 onwards shows relatively little change. The main building, Cockpit House, occupies much of the plot, in the north-west corner, throughout up to the present day. The main changes are the demolition of the building immediately to the south on Church Street and its replacement by brick outbuildings before the mid 1960s as seen on Ordnance Survey maps.

The current building was recorded in the updated version of Pevsner's *The Buildings of England*, as follows: 'The Prescott Museum, is a conventionally handsome house of 1776. Five bays, the three middle breaking forward slightly under a pediment. Good brick. Pedimented doorcase. It contains a reconstructed watch-maker's workshop' (Pollard and Pevsner 2006, 543).

The architectural details of the current Cockpit House are not presented here in detail, as it is understood that the building will be studied separately. However, it is evident that the exterior has undergone some change in detail in the 20th century. Photographs up to the 1970s show the front door stood in the corner, on the northern end of Church Street, rather than the central position it now occupies (Figures 19, 21, 22). In addition the ground floor windows on High Street have seen considerable alteration. In about 1970s as the National Westminster Bank there were two elongated windows which by the 1980s were replaced with four tall sash windows, in the original style as seen on photographs of the early 20th century.

The Cockpit

The documentary evidence indicates that within or close to the current site from the earliest record the survey of 1592 was the 16th-century cockpit.

The adjacent house was known as Cockpitt House. The 1772 plan together with the undated copy in the Lancashire Archives (LA DDCS/ACC9974/BOX1/179; Figure 4) shows the cockpit and the house, along with the land belonging to Cockpit House.

As discussed above, the 1772 plan illustrates the location and layout of buildings and land newly purchased by John Parr, Matthew Parr and Thomas Bromilow. The plan is important as it is the only one so far known which shows the location and layout of the cockpit. This is shown as a long rectangular structure, with at the western end a series of four rectangles, receding in size, representing the tiered terraces, presumably for benches, which overlooked the rectangular pit. To the east the long rectangular structure shows no internal detail but may have been dedicated to the pens that are first recorded in Ashton's inventory of just over a century earlier. The 1772 plan thus provides valuable evidence for the physical form of the cockpit at Prescott, as a rectangular building with tiered seating on two sides.

Cockpits - Background

Organised cockfights were commonplace in the 16th to 18th centuries as one of a range of sports and entertainments, such as horse racing and hare coursing, which had a wide popular appeal. Gambling on the outcome was a sport which crossed social classes. Cockfighting attracted gamblers of high status and represented one amongst a variety of entertainments which drew visitors to the town in the Elizabethan and Jacobean period. The sport has not been intensively researched in Prescott and documentary references are scarce, so its role in the social life of the town is not fully understood. However, nearby Ormskirk, a town with many similarities to Prescott in origin, development and economic activity, has seen more in-depth study of the sport, and may provide an indication of the kind of activities which were present in early modern Prescott.

Cock-fighting was practised in Ormskirk from at least the early 17th century. Research by Mona Duggan has shown that Thomas Hesketh constructed a permanent structure over the cockpit in 1621 which, as in Prescott, gave the name Cockpit House to the adjacent house (Duggan 1998, 175-6), and in time the neighbouring road was known as Cockpit Lane. In his diary Nicholas Blundell records several visits to cockfights in Ormskirk in the first third of the 18th century (Tyrer 1968, 51, 87, 205), and others to Farnworth and Wigan. Duggan's research shows a pattern of patronage by the local gentry in the 18th century which declined later in the century due to changing attitudes to cruel blood sports, culminating in abolition in 1835.

The Earls of Derby were heavily involved in the sport from the 17th century, and given their proximity to Prescott may have been involved in the local contests. The Earls were enthusiastic breeders of fighting cocks, rearing up to 3000 birds a year, from mid 17th century. The scale of investment in breeding and the size of wagers on the birds made it difficult for local gentry to compete (Duggan 1998, 176-7). The Earl of Derby built a new cockpit off Stoneygate in Preston in 1790, and had cockpits in Chester and Newmarket where the competition and size of stake were more amenable (Duggan 1998, 177).

Elsewhere in England, they were often substantial buildings, frequently constructed by wealthy landowners in the grounds of grand houses. Such features occasionally survive to the present day. They often take a circular, square or octagonal form. An example of 17th-century date at Woolavington Lower Road, Woolavington Somerset is circular in plan, lacking windows and the only opening is a wide doorway, with an interior formerly galleried and flagstone floor (Listed Building Register; entry no 1060107). An example, constructed in 1811 at Bridgnorth, Shropshire, is square in plan (Listed Building Register; entry no 1167622). A late 17th-century cockpit which stood in the back yard of the Hawk and Buckle Inn at Denbigh consisted of a circular stone structure with thatched roof. It was originally equipped with tiered seating and a circular raised fighting stage on a stone base in the centre. (<http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/stfagans/buildings/cockpit/>)

A cockpit, unusually, had been constructed within an existing house by the 12th Earl of Derby at The Oaks, a large country house in Woodmansterne, Surrey. The cockpit was built into a room in the east wing. The floor was hinged and folded back to reveal bench seating on the underside and a square pit in the centre (Phillips and Williams 2011).

In 1772 the overall Prescott cockpit structure measured 25 by 18 feet with a cockpit 'arena' of 17 by 10 feet (measured from the scale on the plan). The dimensions of cockpits according to rules of the early

19th century, shortly before the sport was prohibited, stated that the cockpit should be 12 feet in diameter with a surrounding wall 18 inches high (Phillips and Williams 2011; citing Cox 1974, 123). However, other 19th-century accounts indicate larger pits were also used (Phillips and Williams 2011). The sport was prohibited by law in 1835. The construction of the present house on the site in c. 1776 suggests that the cockpit itself went out of use at that time. The construction of the new house is likely to have obliterated all traces of the cockpit.

Archaeological traces of the cockpit area might involve recognition of such features as a square walled structure, or through unusual finds assemblages, rich in snack foods (oysters and food waste), and evidence of high levels of consumption of alcohol. The latter may be difficult to distinguish from inns or public houses, but the physical form of the structure in conjunction with such assemblage might prove decisive. However, the potential for undisturbed ground within the 1592 burgrave plot is very limited and recovery of evidence for the cockpit would be subject to chance.

4.3 Summary of Evidence

Merseyside Historic Environment Record

The Merseyside Historic Environment Record (MHER) was consulted for the present study. A search of the MHER was undertaken by Dr Ben Croxford, the Historic Environment Record Officer for Merseyside, based at Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (1st Floor Merton House, Bootle L20 3DL), in May 2020. Dr Croxford provided a record of all MHER sites falling within a radius of 150m of a mid point between two sites under investigation in 2020, centred at 346560E 392700N, together with map data were supplied as Mapinfo files to the writer.

The key data from the Merseyside HER entry (edited for brevity) are as follows:

Administrative Areas

National Grid Reference

SJ 46514 92797 (point) - precise to 1 metre

Designations and Statuses

Description

Related Monuments - None Recorded

MME6348

No. 34 Church Street, Prescott. (1)

The building is shown on the OS town plan of 1848, but it is not labelled.

On the 1st edition 25" OS map of 1893 it is labelled 'Bank.'

The building was the home of the Prescott Museum between 1979 and 2012.

From the National Heritage List for England:

PRESCOT CHURCH STREET SJ 49 SE (north side) 6/27 No. 34 - (Prescot Museum)

G.V. II

Museum. Late C18. Brick with stone dressings and slate roof. 3 storeys, 5 bays, 3-bay centre breaks forward under pediment. Stone base, 1st floor sill band and top cornice and blocking course.

Windows have gauged brick flat arches and are sashed with glazing bars. Entrance has flat pilasters and pediment, 6-panel door. Left return to High Street of 4 bays, with later extension to rear with 3 ground-floor windows. Later extensions to right return. 2 stacks. Interior has reconstructed watchmakers' workshops.

Listing NGR: SJ4652292798 (2)

A house built in 1776. (3)

HOUSE (GEORGIAN to VICTORIAN - 1776 AD to 1893¹ AD?)

¹ The bank in fact opened here as a branch of Parr's in 1869 (S. Cholewa pers. comm.).

BANK (FINANCIAL) (VICTORIAN to LATE 20TH CENTURY - 1893 AD? to 1979 AD)

MUSEUM (LATE 20TH CENTURY to 21ST CENTURY - 1979 AD to 2012 AD)

BUILDING (21ST CENTURY - 2012 AD to 2050 AD)

Civil Parish PRESCOT

County MERSEYSIDE

Metropolitan Borough KNOWSLEY

Township PRESCOT

(1) Archive: Merseyside Sites and Monuments Record. 1977-2011. SMR F sheet. 4692-038

(2) Scheduling record: Historic England. 2011-19. The National Heritage List for England.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1075500>

Monograph: Pevsner, N. and Pollard, R. 2006. The Buildings of England - Lancashire: Liverpool and the South-West. 543

Portable Antiquities Scheme

There are no finds recorded within the centre of the town of Prescott on the Portable Antiquities Scheme website. This is unsurprising as the PAS website overwhelmingly records metal-detector finds, which are almost wholly derived from open land. The nearest find is a late 14th or very early 15th-century lead bulla of Pope Boniface IX from Whiston (PAS reference PUBLIC-CE1262).

4.4 Designated heritage assets

For completeness, the MHER search also identified the following negative statements regarding national or local heritage designations:

Areas of Archaeological Importance

Areas of Archaeological Importance, defined by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979) are areas within which prospective developers must serve notice allowing time and access for archaeological investigation to take place before development begins. There are no Areas of Archaeological Importance within Merseyside.

--*The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979)*, Chapter 46.

Registered Battlefields

Registered battlefields are known sites of pitched battles. There are no Registered Battlefields in Merseyside.

Locally Listed Heritage Assets

Local listing is a form of designation though of heritage assets identified as of local significance, not national. It is typically carried out by local government officers and adopted by the relevant council. There are no local lists in Merseyside.

Aerial Photography

Aerial photographs taken by the writer under the English Heritage regional flying programme between 1987 and 2003, for National Museums Liverpool (NML), have been searched. The views are useful for showing the extent of redevelopment within the town since the 1930s. A number of historic aerial photographs collected by the Prescott Heritage Hub are in the form of post-cards labelled 'Prescot from the Air' (Figures 15, 16). They are not dated but internal evidence suggests they were taken in the 1920s or 1930s, and show the current site with varying degrees of detail.

Borehole Data

The British Geological Survey holds some borehole data for the Prescott area. There are no boreholes listed online within the curtilage of the present site. The nearest are at the TSB, Eccleston Street (SJ49SE227, SJ49SE228), accessible online at <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>.

Borehole data from site survey on the Shakespeare North Playhouse development site by Geotechnical and Environmental Associates in 2007 reported fill material up to a depth of 3m ('Fluid 2014). A total of three cable percussion boreholes were sunk. The GEA report states 'The boreholes generally encountered a variable thickness of made ground which generally comprised demolition rubble, extending to depths of between 0.3m and 0.8 m, with a greater thickness of 3.6 m being encountered at a single location' (GEA 2007, iii). The latter was in the central southern part of the site (Borehole no 2, NGR not stated).

The bedrock is fine grained pale grey sandstone of the Westphalian lower coal measures series.

Site visit: Cockpit House, 34 Church Street, Prescott

A brief site visit was made on 28 May 2020 (Figures 22-24). The plot on which Cockpit House stands is confined but visible from the street. The interior of the building was not accessed. It is understood that this forms part of a separate study. The main house has a narrow concreted passage running south from the High Street to the east of the building. To the south, on Church Street, is a cluster of outbuildings, two attached to the main structure, a third separate. These have been constructed in brick to match the main house. The fabric of the ground floor frontages of the building to north and west shows some alteration from replacement of the windows, and shifting of the main entrance.

5. Summary of wider archaeological context

5.1 Prehistoric Period (before AD 43)

Despite numerous archaeological interventions in the town of Prescott since the late 1970s, there appear to be no recorded finds of prehistoric material, whether lithic, ceramic or other, from the town. The area is inaccessible to fieldwalking or conventional aerial reconnaissance for sites which show up as cropmarks, reducing the opportunities to recover prehistoric artefactual material or sites.

Traces of a Bronze Age settlement has been excavated close to St Chad's Kirkby (NML unpublished archive, site 44), and another at Brunt Boggart, Tarbock (Cowell and Philpott 2000).

Iron Age evidence is sparse in Knowsley Borough. A double-ditched enclosure at Brook House Farm, Halewood was partly excavated prior to the construction of the A5300 (Cowell and Philpott 2000).

5.2 Romano-British Period (AD 43-410)

Within Knowsley Borough, a cluster of Romano-British sites is known south of Prescott. Archaeological work in advance of the construction of the 4km stretch of the A5300 between Speke Boulevard and the M62 produced no fewer than three sites occupied in the Roman period (Cowell and Philpott 2000), suggesting a relatively high density of occupation during that period with now a total of nine sites located in Tarbock/Halewood area over 24 km sq.

The three A5300 sites comprised a probable rural settlement (probably a farmstead) at Brunt Boggart, Tarbock, an enclosed settlement at Ochre Brook, Tarbock, probably a farmstead, with copious evidence in the vicinity, and from the enclosure itself, of tile manufacture in the near vicinity (Swan and Philpott 2000), and an Iron Age enclosure beside the Ditton Brook at Brook House Farm Halewood which saw occupation in the Roman period, and early medieval activity. Another site, a small nucleated rural settlement, was identified at Court Farm, Halewood. Here an unenclosed

settlement was located when five sherds were found in fieldwalking. Subsequent excavation indicated a settlement which extended over a 1.5 ha, contained nearly 20 buildings, field ditches, plough furrows in the settlement area, and an unusual oval form of building of a type which had been found previously at Wilderspool. The pottery assemblage here suggested occupation lasted from 2nd to 4th century (Philpott 2008a).

In view of the recorded density of sites in the area south of Prescott during the Roman period, and in the light of the indifferent quality of the land for some of these settlements (e.g. Brook House Farm and Court Farm, both lie on flattish boulder clay topography, so are not well drained), the south-facing well-drained sandstone ridge on which the town of Prescott stands might reasonably be predicted to have been occupied in the Roman period, at least for agricultural settlements. However, only a single Romano-British pottery sherd is recorded from the town, which was found in the vicarage garden (Philpott 2008, 71).

The possibility of Roman exploitation of the mineral coal deposits should also be considered, since both the army and the rural population were acutely aware of coal outcrops which were extensively utilised across England in the Roman period (Dearne and Branigan 1995).

5.3 Early Medieval Period (AD 410-1066)

The north west in the 5th and 6th century was remote from Anglian and Saxon colonisation and probably remained in native possession under the large western British kingdoms (Chitty 1981, 15). Artefacts are extremely rare from this period and evidence of settlement is almost entirely derived from place-names. Place-names are one of the most compelling types of evidence for pre-conquest settlement in historic south-west Lancashire. These indicate that a substantial British population survived in the area in the post-Roman period. Place-names such as Brettargh and Walton point to a residual British population and a period of contact between the British population and the Anglian settlers (Wainwright 1942). North of the Mersey St Helens district has a concentration of British names such as Bryn, Ince, Makerfield, Wigan, Kenyon, and Penketh.

Eccleston near Prescott is an example of a class of place-names which combine Welsh *ecles* with Anglo-Saxon *-tun* and indicates the presence of a Celtic Christian community during the early Anglo-Saxon settlement of the area probably in the late 6th century (Thomas 1981, 264).

Place-names of Anglo-Saxon origin, dating to the 7th century onwards, are common in the region but archaeological evidence of settlements and finds of the early medieval period are sparse, and none is recorded within the immediate vicinity of the town. In historic south-west Lancashire individual finds are known from Hale (Philpott 1999), and an early 10th-century coin hoard at Little Crosby. Excavated evidence is rare but the Romano-British rural site at Court Farm, Halewood 4 miles south of Prescott saw later occupation during the Anglo-Saxon period. A ditch containing discarded wood stakes, one of which yielded a radiocarbon date of AD 855 cal, had cut through a substantial Romano-British rural settlement. A scatter of medieval pottery around Court Farm itself suggests that its first record in the post-medieval period masks an earlier foundation.

Stone sculpture is almost completely absent before the Viking age, and most early medieval stone sculpture which is invariably associated with churches is Anglo-Scandinavian in type. Stone sculpture appears at early parish churches such as Childwall and Walton on the Hill within Merseyside (Bailey 2010) but none has been recovered from Prescott. Early medieval log boats are recorded in south-west Lancashire at Martin Mere, and the river Mersey at Warrington (Hale and Coney 2005; McGrail and Switsur 1979).

The establishment of the parish system, and determination of parish boundaries, was taking place in Lancashire in the late Anglo-Saxon period (Crosby 1998, 30-31). Few churches are named in the Domesday Survey of 1086, but this is a consequence of the sparse detail in the compilation of the Lancashire area, rather than representing the true situation at the time. Some sites known as parish centres in the pre-conquest period from sculpture are not mentioned in Domesday.

5.4 Medieval Period (1066-1500)

Prescot is an early important settlement in the south-west Lancashire area. The church acted as a focal point of the developing medieval town, and there is strong circumstantial evidence for a pre-conquest foundation for the church.

The earliest documentary reference to Prescot occurs in 1178 as *Prestecota*, and in c. 1190 as *Prestecote*. Ekwall (1960, 373) interprets the name as 'Priests' cottage, parsonage' but notes that 'it is impossible always to decide whether the meaning of such names [i.e. with the OE *prēost* element] is 'village with a priest', 'parsonage' or 'place belonging to a priest or college of priests'. Another place-name Churchley occurs in the 13th century and remains in use as a fieldname until the 19th century (Davey 1978, 3). Davey attributes the origin of the settlement to a 'norman or pre-norman religious centre around which the later town grew up' (1978, 3). The market was in existence by 1322 and charters for a market survive from 1333 and 1458.

The church lies at the centre of a very large parish, extending over 36500 statute acres and containing 15 townships (Baines 1870, 241) and even though the place-name Prescot is first recorded as late as 1178, the name itself meaning 'manor or cottage of the rectory' (Ekwall 1922, 108) indicates an existing church at that date. In addition, the presence of a circular church-yard shown on early maps, the hilltop situation, presence of a holy well, and the neighbouring township name Eccleston (an early British place-name referring to a Christian community by the early 7th century AD; Ekwall 1960) all point to pre-conquest foundation for the site.

No borough charter survives, but the use in 16th-century documents of the term *burgage* for some town plots by 1537 argues for a borough charter, granting the preferential *burghal* status, and one granted by the lord of the manor rather than by the king (Bailey 1937, 317; Philpott 1988, 22-24). Documents record about 45 plots referred to as *burgages* in the 16th century. They are concentrated in the principal medieval streets, Kemble Street, High Street, Eccleston Street and Market Place (Philpott 1988, 22-24). A hint of a growing population comes in a letter of 1513 by the Provost of King's College Cambridge to Lord Derby, who complains of the 'abuse' of subdivision of holdings (Bailey 1937, 283).

Prescot was one of the most important towns in south Lancashire during the medieval and early post-medieval period. Furthermore, the town has seen a considerable amount of archaeological attention through excavation and evaluation (Davey 1978; see various papers in *Journal of the Merseyside Archaeological Society* volume 5 (for 1982-3)). Medieval pottery, including wasters, had been found during David Freke's excavations in the town on Derby Street in 1980-1 (Holgate 1983, 11-16). During the late 1980s a watching brief during construction of the large shopping centre in the town at Prescot had also produced some medieval pottery though it was not securely stratified. Some rescue work was undertaken by Liverpool Museum and an early post-medieval wall foundation with a deep foundation trench, was located on Kemble Street; the fill contained 16th-century pottery. More recently, work in the garden of Prescot Vicarage close to the early focal church site produced no medieval structural remains although the general soil layers did produce a small assemblage of late medieval pottery, along with a continuous run of later material. Given the foundation of the vicarage on a new site, probably open ground adjacent to the existing church, in the mid 15th century the earliest element of the finds assemblage should probably belong to this period (Philpott 2008b, 74).

5.5 Post-Medieval Period (1500-1750)

Davey asserts that the 1592 survey and other historic documentation mean that 'the topography of 16th century Prescot can claim to be the best known of any similar town in northern England' (1978, 3), with the proviso that, while most of the plot boundaries from 1592 can be located with some confidence on the modern landscape, the position of buildings and other features within the plot is not recorded.

A common theme in urban studies in the post-medieval period is the intensification of the use of space, whereby buildings are subdivided, extended and back plots are infilled. This process began in some towns in the North West region by the early 17th century but was well established in most English towns by the later 17th-18th century (McNeil 2007, 153). As elsewhere, in Prescott the infilling involved construction of small alleys and streets over the backplots of former burgages, with dense urban housing mixed with small scale industrial workshops (McNeil 2007, 154).

A programme of test-pitting in Prescott in 1983-4 produced evidence of landuse across the town, but no test pits were located within the present site (Davey and Philpott 1983).

One of the most prolific finds in Prescott, recorded from almost all archaeological interventions, is earthenware. Potters are documented in Prescott in the later 16th century and frequent references to clay pits in the Court Leet in the mid 16th century may be further evidence of pottery production, although digging clay for daub is also a possible use. Wasters from late medieval pottery production, possibly of 15th century date, were found at Nos 7-9 Derby Street, Prescott in 1980-81 (Holgate 1989, 11-16, fig.4.7, nos 37-53; Davey 1985, 104).

Structural evidence of the post-medieval period is present both as standing buildings, such as nos 21-23 Eccleston Street, (Cowell and Chitty 1983), or extant in the main streets such as timber-framed structure at no 30 Eccleston Street, with a date of 1614 (Davey 1978, 43; Listed Buildings register entry no 1075503).

Below-ground evidence comes from observations and minor excavations. Even small interventions have proved informative. Excavation of a small test pit by the writer under the floor of the late medieval vestry of St Mary's church produced a considerable depth of stratigraphy and medieval pottery in the sequence.

During road widening on the north side of Kemble Street in 1987 a small trench identified the stone footings of a house, upon which later brick footings had been set. Examination of the rock-cut foundation trench revealed pottery of the 16th century (including southern English Border Ware, and imported Saintonge ware), suggesting the structure was that recorded as surrendered in 1574 by Ralph Brookfield to John Webster and his son, on condition that the house was rebuilt (Bailey 1937, 185-6).

The town appears to experience a shift away from timber-framed construction in the 17th century, towards more durable stone. This was part of a nationwide shift away from timber-framed construction as the shortage of good quality building timber became evident. The contrast perhaps evident in the surviving structures along Eccleston Street, where there are timber-framed buildings of 16th- or early 17th-century date such as nos 21 and 23 Eccleston Street and the timber-framed house with gable end to the street at no 30, dated 1614 (although the Listed Building Register entry suggests this may have been inscribed in the 1920s²), which might be contrasted with a low cottage in local unfaced Carboniferous sandstone at the rear of no 33 Eccleston Street, probably of 17th century date (Davey 1978, 41), but not currently on the Register of Listed Buildings.

5.6 Industrial and Modern Periods (1750-1900)

The process of transformation of market towns into industrial centres was a gradual one, characterised by 'legacies from the past and continuing functions in the industrial period that distinguished them from the largest villages in their hinterlands' (McNeil and Newman 2007b, 171). They are marked by such features as market and borough charters, displayed in market places and trading, and the continuation of small-scale craft industries.

² This is incorrect; the date had already been observed by and recorded in volume 3 of the Victoria County History, published in 1907: 'The town contains a good number of eighteenth-century houses; and in Eccleston Street is a small timber house dated 1614, a pretty little building' (Farrer and Brownbill 1907).

The rapid rise in population during the 19th century, through industrialisation and immigration, was reflected in the physical growth of towns and creation of new housing and infrastructure to accommodate the growth in population (McNeil and Newman 2007b, 172). Archaeological investigation combined with topographical studies of 18th-to 20th-century workers' housing in Chester, Hungate in York, and in Manchester, have resulted in new insights into the material culture of urban environments during the transformative period of industrialisation and urbanisation (McNeil and Newman 2007b, 170-1).

The Merseyside Historic Characterisation Project completed in 2011 identified the central part of Prescott as the only 'commercial core' area in Knowsley Borough (MHCP 2011). This was defined as an area which 'comprises commercial establishments at the heart of the social landscape, forming the commercial core of urban centres (in this instance Prescott), and are often synonymous with historic settlement cores.' The commercial core extended over the whole of the current site. The attribution in the case of Prescott was in part the integrity of its medieval layout: 'It was felt that Prescott, being an old market town, comprised elements worthy of being labelled a commercial core. Furthermore, the layout of Prescott's commercial area was established during the medieval period, much of the plot layout and street pattern of medieval Prescott survives virtually intact.' (MHCP 2011, 179).

Three important industries in Prescott in the industrial period were coal mining, pottery manufacture and watch-making. Coal mining developed from the 16th century onwards and Prescott provided Liverpool with much of its coal until the construction of the Sankey Canal in the 1750s made more distant sources in the eastern part of the St Helens coalfield increasingly accessible and economical to transport (Barker and Harris 1959, 13-15). Bailey (1947) has discussed the origins of coal mining in the town, and although the earliest explicit reference to mining in the town occurs in a lease of the Hall estate in 1562 (Bailey 1937, 17), here, as elsewhere in the St Helens coalfield. Earlier exploitation may well have taken place. The Delves, an area west of the church, is a strong candidate for early coal digging, as the name suggests (Bailey 1947, 6). The exceptionally favourable terms under which copyholders held mineral rights to their land led to widespread digging for coal in the post-medieval period and some of the townspeople appear to have been dependent on coal for their livelihood. A letter from the vicar of Prescott in 1640 states that the people were very poor, many living by digging for coal in summer and begging in winter (Bailey 1947, 17).

Pottery manufacture is recorded in Prescott as early as the late 16th century, and while the industry appears to have declined in the 17th century, it was reinvigorated in the 18th century, with the development of increasingly efficient industrial methods. Baines records six potteries in the early 18th century, and by the mid 19th century Prescott still had three substantial pottery factories, which appear on the 1848 map (Davey 1983). One factory for whiteware is recorded in the 18th century (Davey 1983). Another was located in the backplot south of no 40 Eccleston Street and west of Aspinall Street by Robina McNeil, who discovered extensive evidence of a pottery factory, with clay bins, a sunning floor and large quantities of later 18th-century ceramics (McNeil 1983). Further evidence of the pottery works, including truncated remains of three pottery kilns of mid-late 18th century date, were discovered by the writer during the reduction of the ground level behind Eccleston Street for the construction of the Civic Centre and Town Centre Shopping Precinct (unpublished fieldwork, NML archive).

The use of hardcore derived from pottery manufacturing waste as a building material is attested in the 18th and 19th centuries. A row of four terraced cottages, constructed in 1830, at nos 44-50 Derby Street had foundations packed with pottery waste (Hollis 1983). Pottery waste of the 18th century was used for road construction in the High Street, Prescott, as hardcore for a yard surface north of High Street (Philpott 1983, 95), and in the Vicarage garden for a path (NMGM excavations 1997, Site 51). Pottery waste, including fragments of sugar mould at least one of which was stamped 'Ashcroft Prescott', were also used at Eccleston Hall, St Helens as hardcore in the 19th century. The recent monitoring of Eccleston Street for the Connectivity Works has revealed small deposits of 18th- and 19th-century pottery, and often accompanied by pottery waste, which indicate manufacture in the town. Such secondary use of pottery waste can provide important insights into the material

demonstrably produced in the town when the original site of the manufactory is destroyed or inaccessible to archaeology.

Watch-making was an important industry in Prescott in the 18th and 19th centuries. At first watchmaking developed through the established craft industry of metalworking, notably production of high-quality tools and in particular files. In the 18th century watchmaking was a craft or cottage industry, with watchmakers putting out work to craftsmen who worked in their own home workshops. A distinctive type of architecture developed to accommodate the industry, based in outriggers attached to the rear of dwellings, in which heavy metalworking was carried out on the ground floor and finer work in upper workshops lit by gallery windows. The industry declined rapidly through competition from overseas in the late 19th century and finally ended in 1952 with the closure of the last workshops. The legacy of watchmaking has now almost disappeared from the townscape with only a few remnants of much-altered workshops surviving in the town (MHCP 2011, 136).

Cellars in Prescott

A characteristic of some of the buildings along the frontage of main streets in Prescott is presence of cellars. A number of cellars have been identified and recorded in Eccleston Street. In 1988 a stone-walled cellar of no 28 Eccleston Street was observed in building work for the Town Centre Shopping Precinct. A pottery sherd from the cellar wall suggested a 16th- or 17th-century date, and the stone wall had been used as the foundation for a later brick wall. A number of former cellars were noted in the Eccleston Street Connectivity Works Prescott in 2019/20. At the western end of Eccleston Street, where the street frontage had been realigned further to the south to widen the street in the later 20th century, a series of cellar walls was found, forming the foundation walls of the building facades. Thus nos 16 and 18 Eccleston Street had brick-built front walls, and a brick partition wall within the cellar, while nos 30 and 32 had cellar walls constructed of small yellow Carboniferous sandstone blocks, unmortared, and probably of 17th-century date. On the north side of the same street, a number of foundation walls were exposed, so nos 29 and 25 were yellow Carboniferous sandstone while the intermediate building at 27 was in brick. Such buildings include a short section of sandstone wall, probably of 17th century date, visible in front of no 20 Eccleston Street, along with brick front walls.

In the archaeological investigations in the Market Place in 2018, parts of the upper fills and walls of two adjacent cellars were recorded. These had been infilled, as with the Eccleston Street examples, with the demolition rubble of the overlying building.

Two adjacent cellars were encountered in Trench A of the archaeological excavation at Highfield Place by Holgate. Holgate summarised his five excavations across the town as follows: 'Three sites examined the back of later medieval burgage plots; two, the front. Post-medieval cellar construction had destroyed all street front structures, but garden deposits containing medieval pottery (including wasters and daub at Site D) were recovered, as were quantities of post-medieval pottery produced in the town's 18th and 19th century potteries' (Holgate 1983, 11). Finds from Holgate's Site A contained only 18th- and 19th-century pottery, with two clay tobacco pipe fragments of 17th-century date, and the remainder largely 19th century (Holgate 1983, 20).

5.7 Late 18th to 19th-Century Industrial Housing

The archaeological potential of industrial / modern period cellared buildings and has not been fully realised in past decades. In the English Heritage-sponsored regional archaeological research framework for North West England, Newman and McNeil make a strong case for the investigation of cellars as a resource for 'revealing the history and lifestyles of the silent majority':

'There are many aspects of 19th and early 20th century urban life especially, which are insufficiently covered by the documentary record and are no longer recoverable through oral testimony. The documentary record of domestic life in particular is dominated by middle class, male – and often patriarchal – view-points. The views presented of the lives of the poor,

women, children and servants are biased and often highly politicised. Archaeological research is needed to shed light on children, servants, domestic-based workers, and the urban working class in general. Cellars are particularly fertile areas for investigation. In middle-class homes they were the engine room that powered the house. Servants operated out of them, undertaking food preparation and storage there and usually doing the laundry. Cellars sometimes housed the water supply and were the storage areas for fuel. They allowed access to the house for staff without entry through the front door. For artisans, cellars could be workshops, especially being used for weaving in east Lancashire, and for the poorest they formed domestic accommodation, though only in Manchester have such dwellings been archaeologically investigated. The archaeology of 'below stairs' would have much to offer as a contrast in lifestyles to the picture given in the documentary record of middle-class domestic life presented in histories of the 19th century domesticity, houses and households' (Newman and McNeil 2007, 144).

Newman and McNeil observe that the late 18th and 19th centuries saw much new urban house building for the working classes. During this period new house types developed within industrial towns and they became the classic conceptions of labouring class housing, including back-to-back and court housing. Newman and McNeil observe that 'very little of this type of housing now survives, as from the end of the 19th century and through to the 1960s it was swept away in so-called slum clearances'. Challenges to the concept of the dismissive term 'slum' have sought to reassert the distinctive character and historical importance of these once common forms of housing. They conclude that

'To challenge historical concepts of slums in the North West requires not only topographical analysis of the surviving fragments of pre-1840 working class urban development, but also the excavation of former areas of slum clearances. Most of these have been extensively redeveloped and the opportunity for meaningful archaeological results through excavation may have been lost, but there are a few examples where cleared areas have not been redeveloped, as for example in Padiham. The archaeological examination of these areas must be a priority for Industrial Age urban archaeological research (Newman and McNeil 2007, 145).

6. Potential Impacts

6.1 Implications of Development

Archaeological Potential

The building now called Cockpit House in stands on a confined plot which provides little open ground within which the cockpit or other archaeological deposits might survive.

The plan of 1772 shows the location of the cockpit adjacent to the road (High Street). It is very likely that construction of the major house now no 34 Church Street in 1774-6 will have largely or totally destroyed the remains of the cockpit,

The foundations of the earlier house on the plot known in the 18th century as Cockpit House may be preserved within the structure of the 1774-6 house. Foundations were often reused when rebuilding took place on the same footprint. This can be seen elsewhere in Prescott, for example in Eccleston Street and in Kemble Street, where later buildings, of the 18th or 19th century, stand on foundations of probable 17th century or earlier ones.

There are two significant impacts on the archaeological resource in the study area. Cellaring has clearly been a widespread though not universal phenomenon by the 19th century in the densely occupied and intensively used core of the town. This has removed the medieval and earlier post-

medieval deposits. Other houses may lack cellars, but in the current state of knowledge this is uncertain.

While the cellars may have removed earlier medieval and post-medieval archaeological deposits, they are increasingly being recognised as a valuable part of the archaeological resource in their own right (Newman and McNeil 2007). The walls and floors of cellars may also be earlier than the building standing over them. This too can be seen in Eccleston Street where 19th-century foundations at ground level stand over probable earlier cellars. The rationale is clear – reconstruction of a usable cellar was a considerable effort and expense which would be avoided unless the structure was either defective or too small.

6.2 Statement of Impact

At the time of writing no specific development proposals have been received, so it is not possible to assess the impact of development on the archaeological deposits which might survive within study area.

6.3 Mitigation

A major component of Davey's report in 1978 sought to identify a set of research priorities for the town. These focused on establishing the chronology and mechanisms of the town's origins and growth (1978, 150), and to determine whether it developed through planned or organic growth. Davey states 'archaeological investigation will be the only means of finding out what it was like to live in Prescott during first 4 or 5 hundred years of its occupation, and, in the later period, should provide valuable complementary evidence about the nature of the emerging industrial processes being developed (Davey 1978, 15). Davey's recommendations made over four decades ago remain valid today. Current regional research priorities (Brennand 2007) accord closely with Davey's research aims and priorities but expand the chronological framework to include the late 18th and 19th century workers' housing, including cellared buildings and so-called 'slum' areas.

Davey proposed a series of recommendations for archaeological work in different areas in the town. However, the restricted footprint of no 34 Church Street and lack of open land meant it did not feature within his proposals.

Cockpit House is a high-status merchant's house in the town. Although space is very restricted for below-ground intervention within the curtilage of the building, should there be any proposals to undertake development or work which requires below-ground disturbance within the Cockpit House curtilage, then the status of the house as an important heritage asset would require careful consideration within the terms of the local and national heritage policies (Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy Policy CS20; and NPPF 2019, para. 199) .

Knowsley Borough Council's archaeological advisors may wish to consider some or all of the following techniques and approaches to evaluate and investigate the potential heritage assets identified in the report above and to safeguard the heritage value of the town's archaeological assets through appropriate recording prior to their alteration or destruction. This would apply to below ground deposits as much as to the building itself.

This is in accordance with the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy (January 2016) Policy CS20: Managing the Borough's Historic Environment which states:

Para 9.20: 'Knowsley contains a number of important archaeological remains which are important historical assets. New development should take into account the need to preserve or record archaeological remains. Where evidence suggests that development could affect archaeological remains, the developer will be required to arrange investigations to assess their character, condition

and extent. In the event, that remains are identified as of specific importance, the developer may be required to design the development to enable preservation in-situ, or if appropriate arrange for the excavation, recording, analysis and reporting of the remains' (p. 156).

- Any below ground disturbance within the constricted curtilage of the site should be accompanied by archaeological investigation, to ensure that any surviving evidence for earlier structures and deposits on the site are fully investigated and recorded
- If any large-scale intervention is planned, then evaluation excavations might be appropriate to determine the character, extent and date of any surviving archaeological deposits within the study area; the evaluations will also enable the determination both vertically and horizontally of any truncation of deposits across the site.
- Identifying the location and depth of cellars and basements, and to devise an agreed strategy for the further investigation through evaluation of a selected sample of cellars following the North West regional research frameworks agenda and strategy (Newman and Brennand 2007). This will focus on identifying such features as cellar dwellings or industrial and craft uses.
- Investigation of urban housing through evaluation, identifying such physical features as internal layout and construction, intensification of occupation, industrial use, chronology and characterising different house types, and correlating with material culture and census and other historical data to build up a detailed picture of life in a small industrial town in Lancashire in the post-medieval period.
- Recovering cultural material from archaeological contexts associated with the structures and their occupants, with a view to establishing a chronological sequence, identifying such elements as social and economic change, and recovering evidence of the craft and industrial production of the town, in particular durable ceramic material from the town's manufactories.

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Maps

1743 Richard Edge 'A Mapp of Lands in Prescott and Whiston belonging to Mrs Bradshaw' (Prescot Museum)

1750 'A Map of Prescot Hall, surveyed by H? Higginson 1750' (Davey 1978, 58). This shows only the hall estate and does not cover the town.

c. 1780 Plan of land in Prescot the property of J Atherton esq. [Lancashire Archives description states: 'Shows land in the area now known as Eccleston Street and Warrington Road; shows a school, probably Prescot Grammar School, and what may be Prescot House. DDCS 26/24 and 26/26 may be related to this plan.'] Lancashire Archives DDX 301/9

1809 Piercy's plan of the townships of Prescot and Whiston, (Lancashire Archives DDCS /acc 11870/Box 6/3)

1834 Bowran's Plan of Prescot, 12 May 1834, (Lancashire Archives DDCS/acc11870/Box6/4)

1847 Tithe Award map, reproduced by Davey (1978, 64), (Lancashire Archives DRL/1 65)

1848 Ordnance Survey Town Plan 1:500

1850 Ordnance Survey Lancashire 107, six inch to mile, surveyed 1845-47

1869 Map produced for 'Prescot Local Board' (Davey 1978, 57)

1893 Ordnance Survey Lancashire CVII.7, 25 inch to mile, surveyed 1890-91

1908 Ordnance Survey Lancashire CVII.7, 25 inch to mile, revised 1906

1927 Ordnance Survey Lancashire CVII.7, 25 inch to mile, revised 1925

1939 Ordnance Survey Lancashire CVII.7, 25 inch to mile, revised 1937

1956 Ordnance Survey SJ49SE – A, surveyed pre-1930-1955

Other Reports

PTCCA 2012 *Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area character appraisal*, May 2012, prepared for Knowsley MBC by the Conservation Studio, Midhurst.

<http://archives.knowsley.gov.uk/prescot/gallery-of-prescot> Knowsley Archives, Prescot gallery of historical images

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Dr Ben Croxford of MEAS for supplying data from the Merseyside Historic Environment Record with admirable despatch;

Rosemary Tyler, for her generous advice and freely given documentation and photographs from her extensive research into the town of Prescot compiled over many years; her transcript of the inventory of Henry Ashton of Cockpit House (Appendix A3);

Owen Barton of Knowsley Borough Council for commissioning this work and for drawing my attention to a number of important historical sources

Appendix 1: Planning Documents

Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy January 2016

Policy CS20: Managing the Borough's Historic Environment

P 156

Para 9.20: 'Knowsley contains a number of important archaeological remains which are important historical assets. New development should take into account the need to preserve or record archaeological remains. Where evidence suggests that development could affect archaeological remains, the developer will be required to arrange investigations to assess their character, condition and extent. In the event, that remains are identified as of specific importance, the developer may be required to design the development to enable preservation in-situ, or if appropriate arrange for the excavation, recording, analysis and reporting of the remains. '

National Planning Policy Framework (updated 2019, pp. 55-56)

187. Local planning authorities should maintain or have access to a historic environment record. This should contain up-to-date evidence about the historic environment in their area and be used to:

- a) assess the significance of heritage assets and the contribution they make to their environment; and
- b) predict the likelihood that currently unidentified heritage assets, particularly sites of historic and archaeological interest, will be discovered in the future.

Proposals affecting heritage assets

189. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

Appendix 2: Listed Buildings

The Listed Building Register maintained by Historic England has the following entry for Church Street Prescott:

PRESCOT CHURCH STREET SJ 49 SE (north side) 6/27 No. 34 - (Prescot Museum)

G.V. II

Museum. Late C18. Brick with stone dressings and slate roof. 3 storeys, 5 bays, 3-bay centre breaks forward under pediment. Stone base, 1st floor sill band and top cornice and blocking course. Windows have gauged-brick flat arches and are sashed with glazing bars. Entrance has flat pilasters and pediment, 6-panel door. Left return to High Street of 4 bays, with later extension to rear with 3 ground-floor windows. Later extensions to right return. 2 stacks. Interior has reconstructed watchmakers' workshops.

Listing NGR: SJ4652292798

Selected Sources

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details

Prescot Town Centre Conservation Area Character Appraisal, May 2012, Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Huyton.

Appendix A3: Will of Henry Ashton of Whiston, October 1668

[Wills proved at Chester, Lancashire Archives, Preston: WCW/Henry Ashton/1668.]

Transcript made available by Rosemary Tyler.

The Inventory ctd.

Att the Cockepitt house in Prescot

In the chamber on the parlor	£	s	d
1 standinge bed	01	06	08
1 Table 1 forme 2 benches	01	10	00
1 trunke 1 chaire 1 stoole & 1 grate	<u>00</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>00</u>
	03	06	08
In the Little chamber			
2 bedswads & 2 little forms	<u>00</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>00</u>
In the parlor			
1 Table & wainscote about it with 1 forme & settles	01	13	04
1 standinge bed	01	06	08
2 chaires	<u>00</u>	<u>02</u>	<u>06</u>
	03	02	06
In the Little entry			
1 little Table with settles	<u>00</u>	<u>03</u>	<u>04</u>
In the Lower chamber			
1 Table 1 old chest	00	08	00
1 old cupboard 1 grate & 1 old chest	<u>00</u>	<u>06</u>	<u>08</u>
	00	14	08
In the stables			
1 racke 1 manger	<u>00</u>	<u>03</u>	<u>04</u>
In the Yard			
2 swine troughes	<u>00</u>	<u>03</u>	<u>04</u>
In the Cocke house			
24 cockpenns	<u>00</u>	<u>03</u>	<u>04</u>
In the house			
1 cupboard 1 forme 3 settles	00	13	04
1 grate	<u>00</u>	<u>08</u>	<u>00</u>
	01	01	04

In the Cellar	£	s	d
2 beare frames	<u>00</u>	<u>01</u>	<u>06</u>
In the buttery			
1 Table 2 benches	<u>00</u>	<u>05</u>	<u>00</u>
In the Little chamber Att the higher end of the house			
1 Table	<u>00</u>	<u>03</u>	<u>04</u>
In the chamber on the house			
1 Table 2 bed steads & 1 chest	<u>01</u>	<u>00</u>	<u>00</u>

Further information on Cockpit House appears in the 1721 Survey (copy courtesy of Rosemary Tyler)

2 That Geroge Bradshaw, Esq., holds by Copy of Court Roll, according to the Custome of the Said Mannor, Two Messuages, one Called the New house, in the occupation of James Brettargh, Esq., and the other of James Denton, and called the Cock pitt house, and the outhouseing, Gardens and Backsides thereunto severally belonging, Abutting North and West to the Street, South on the lands of Thomas Woods and Jonathan Case, Esq., East on the Mill Hill, under the yearely rent to the Lords of ye Mannor, for the New House of 2s 2d : and for the Cock pitt house of 1s.

Appendix A4: Photographs held by NatWest Group Archives, Edinburgh

WES/870/620	Photograph of Prescott branch of Parr's Bank Ltd	Photograph of the exterior. Photograph mount contained no information.	1900 – 1918
WES/1735/29	Copy architectural drawing of proposed alterations to Prescott branch of London County Westminster & Parr's Bank Ltd	Shows basement and ground floor plans with elevations to Church Street and High Street and section. Black and white.	1921
WES/870/765	Photograph of Prescott branch of Westminster Bank Ltd	Photograph of the exterior.	1923 – 1945
WES/870/1489	Photograph of Prescott branch of Westminster Bank Ltd	Photograph of the exterior. Photograph mount contained no information. Photograph annotated with: Cottages now demolished. An arrow indicates the cottages on the right of the building.	1923 – 1945
WES/873/838	Photographs of Prescott branch of Westminster Bank Ltd	2 photographs of the exterior: September 1947 (1), 2 June 1950 (1)	1947 – 1950
NWB/2/2278	Photographs of the exterior of Prescott branch of National Westminster Bank Ltd	Photographs of the exterior: 1978 (1); 1986 (1); 1990, colour (1).	1970 – 1989

List supplied by Sally Cholewa, Archivist, NatWest Group Archives, Edinburgh, 20 April 2021

Figures

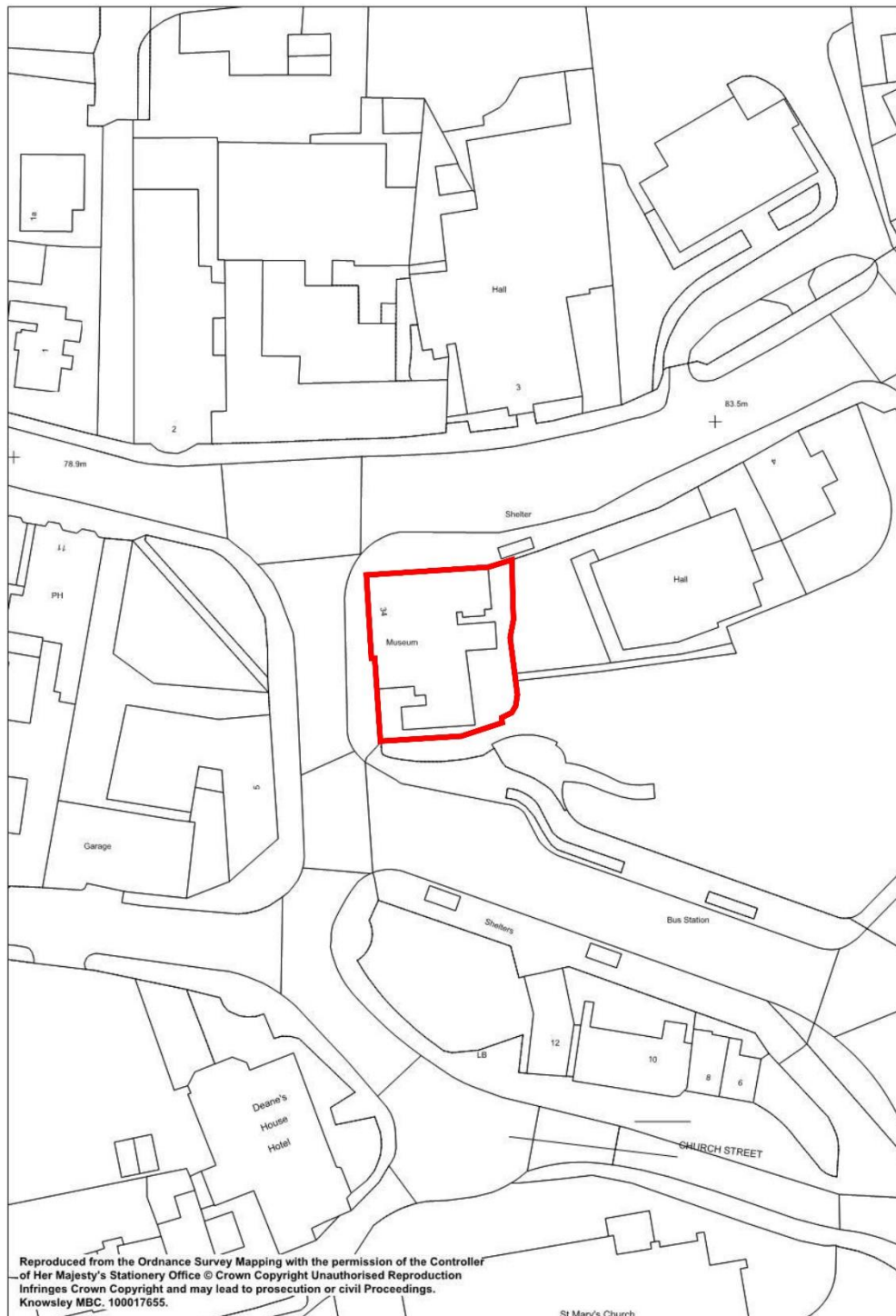


Figure 1: Location of Church Street, Prescott study area (map provided by Knowsley BC)

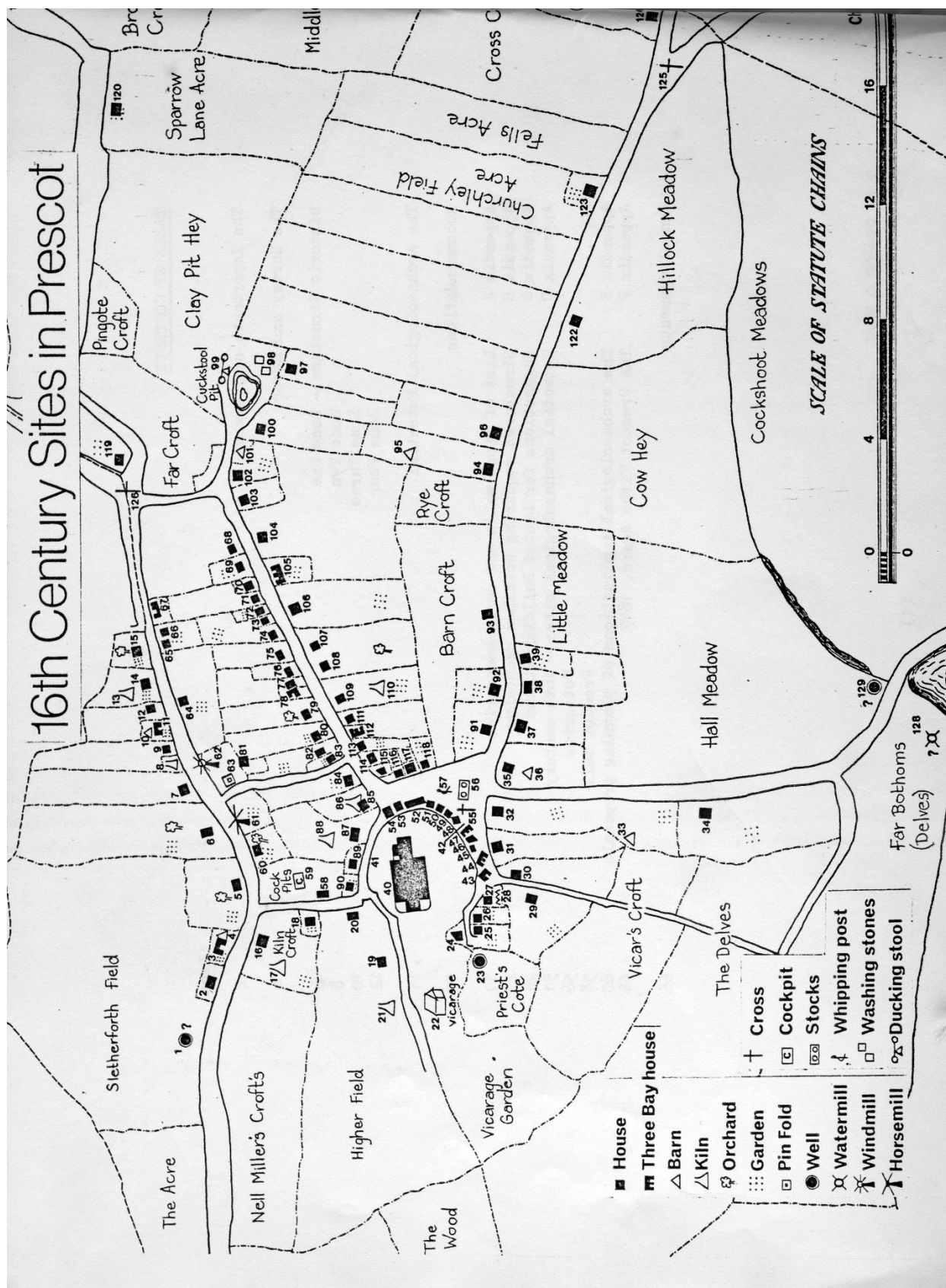


Figure 2: 16th-century sites in Prescott (after Davey 1978, 3; based on Bailey 1937, opp. p 48); Cockpit House is named after the cockpit seen at plot no 59



Figure 3: Detail of the Richard Edge map of Prescott, 1743, showing Church Street (top left) (courtesy of Prescott Museum)

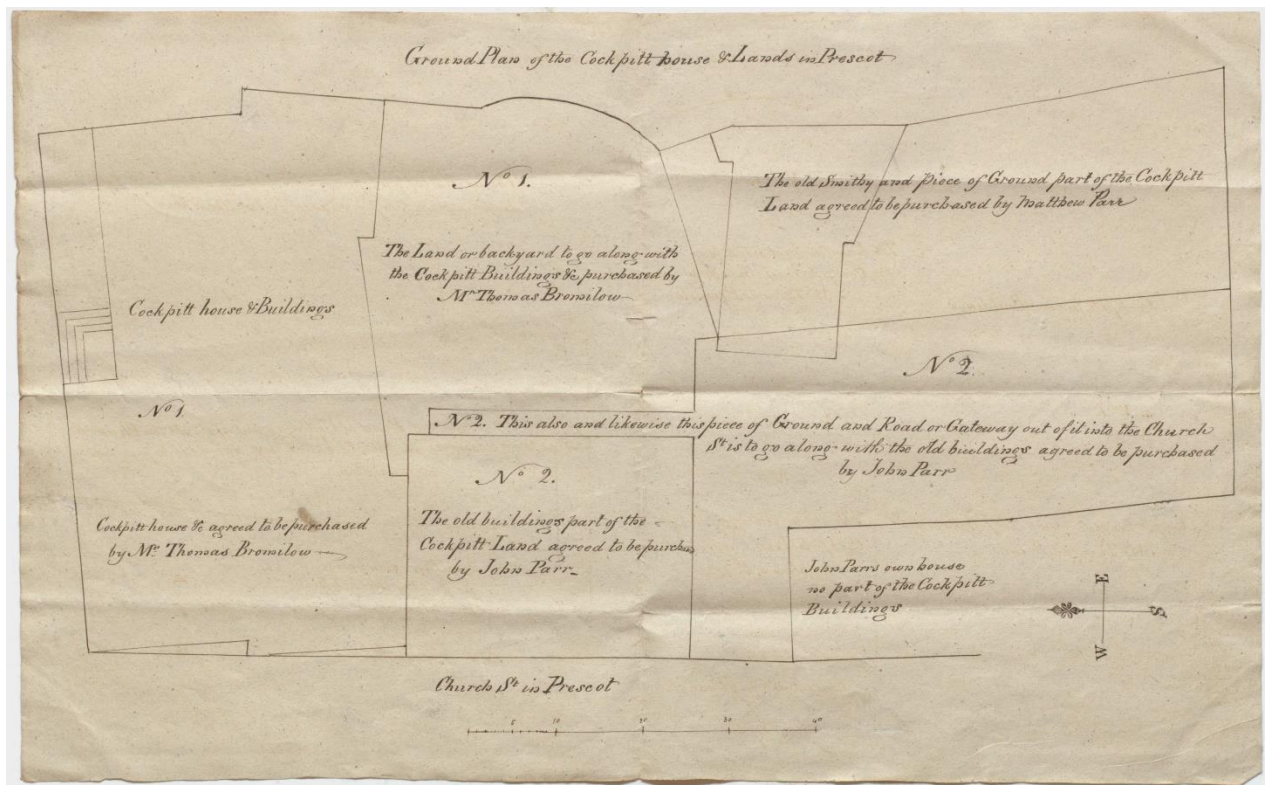


Figure 4: 'Ground Plan of the Cockpitt House & Lands in Prescott' (Lancashire Archives DDCS ACC9974 Box 1/179, undated but probably 1772)

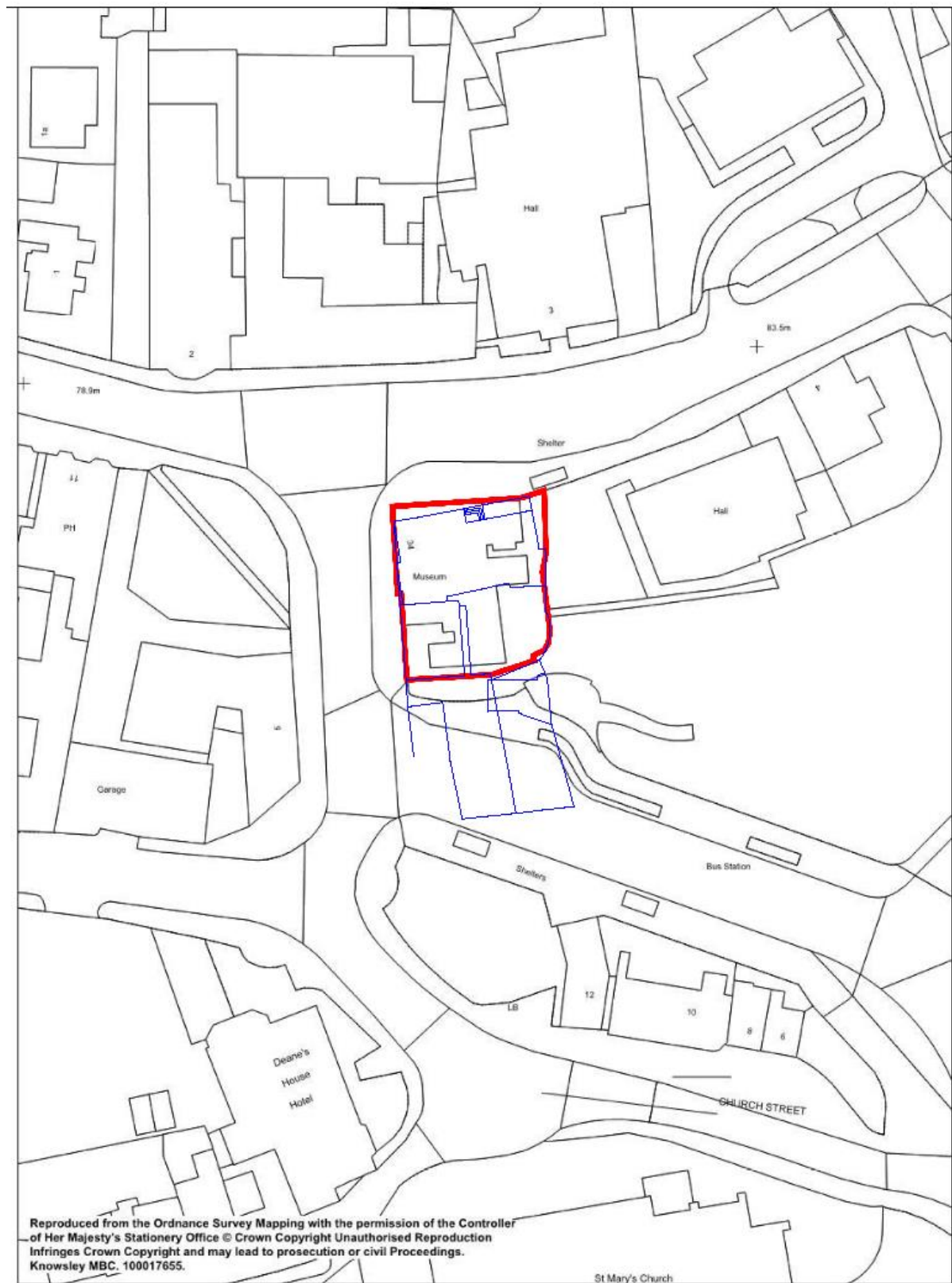


Figure 5: Church Street, Prescott 1772 plan of Cockpit House and Lands (in blue), on OS background map



Figure 6: R. Piercy's map 'Townships of Prescott and Whiston' (detail), 1809 courtesy of Rosemary Tyler, Prescott Historic Society Archives (original in Lancashire Archives DDCS/acc11870/Box6/3)



Figure 7: Bowran's 'Map of the Township of Prescott 1834 (detail) (courtesy of Rosemary Tyler, Prescott Historic Society Archives; original in Lancashire Archives)

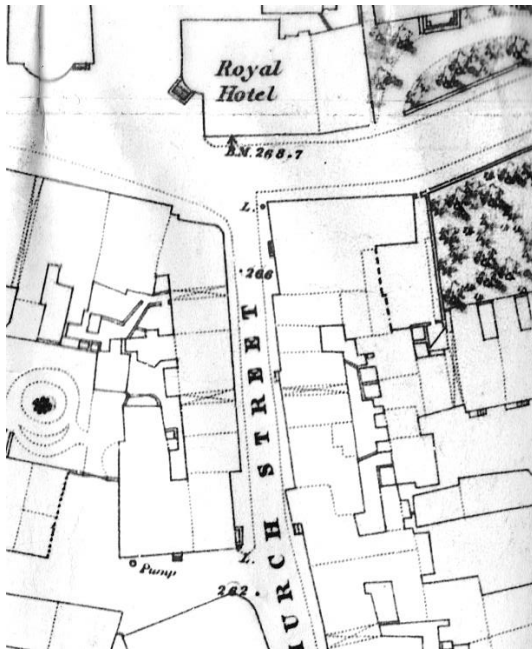


Figure 8: The study area on the 1848 OS map

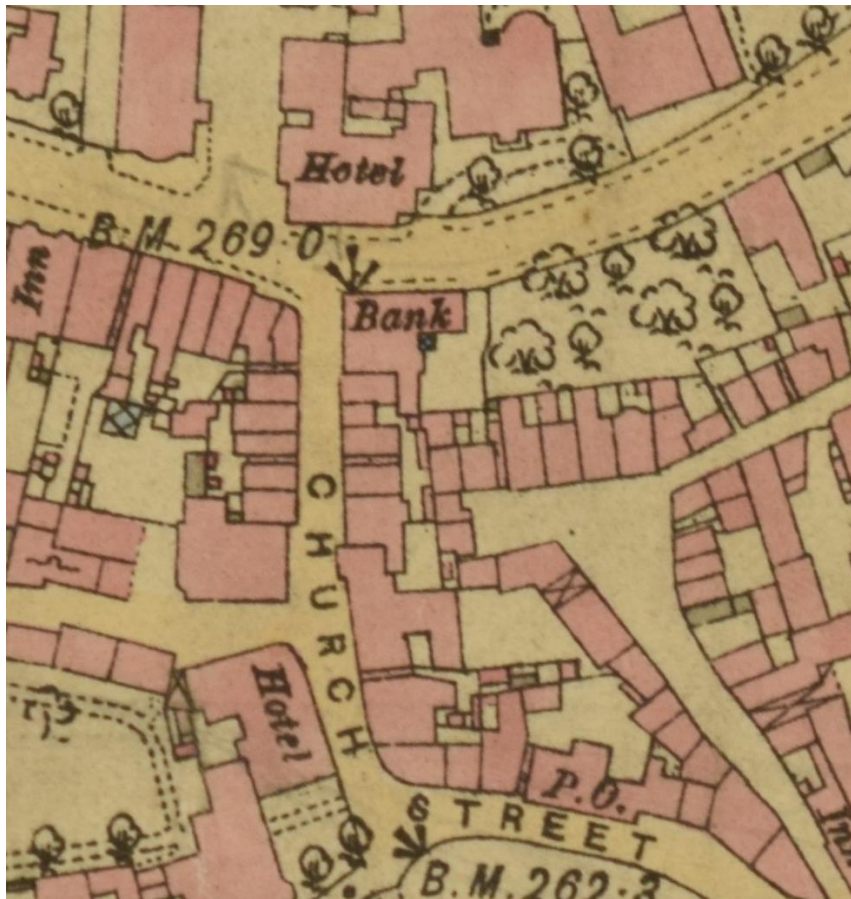


Figure 9: Detail of the 1893 OS map (courtesy Lancashire Archives)

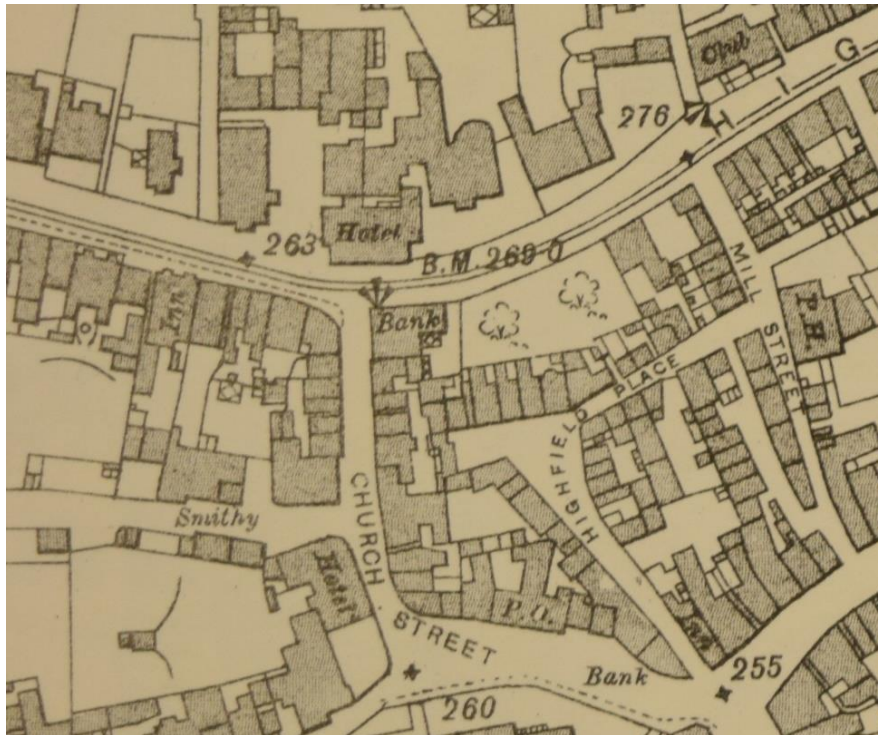


Figure 10: Detail from Ordnance Survey map of 1908 (courtesy of Lancashire Archives)



Figure 11: Detail from Ordnance Survey map of 1927 (courtesy of Lancashire Archives)



Figure 12: Detail from Ordnance Survey map of 1939, Cockpit House is shown as 'Bank' (courtesy of Lancashire Archives)

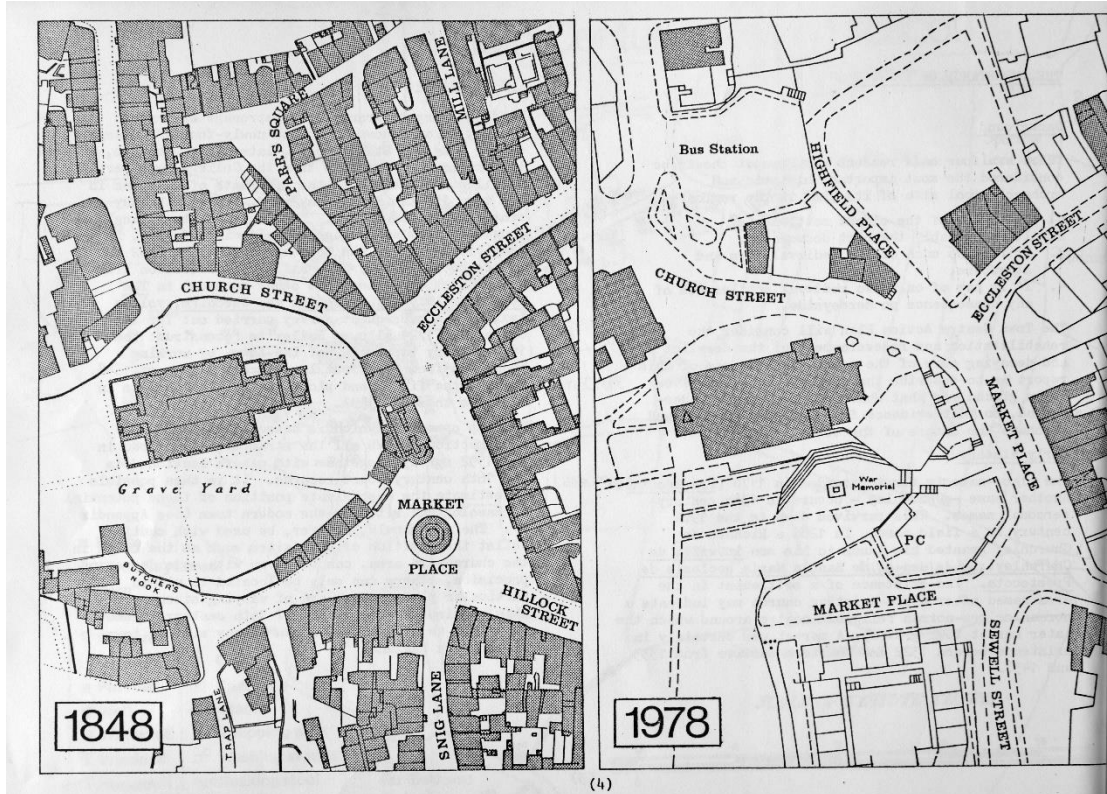


Figure 13: Loss of buildings in Prescott between 1848 and 1978; Cockpit House is the isolated northernmost surviving building north of the bus station (Davey 1978, 4)

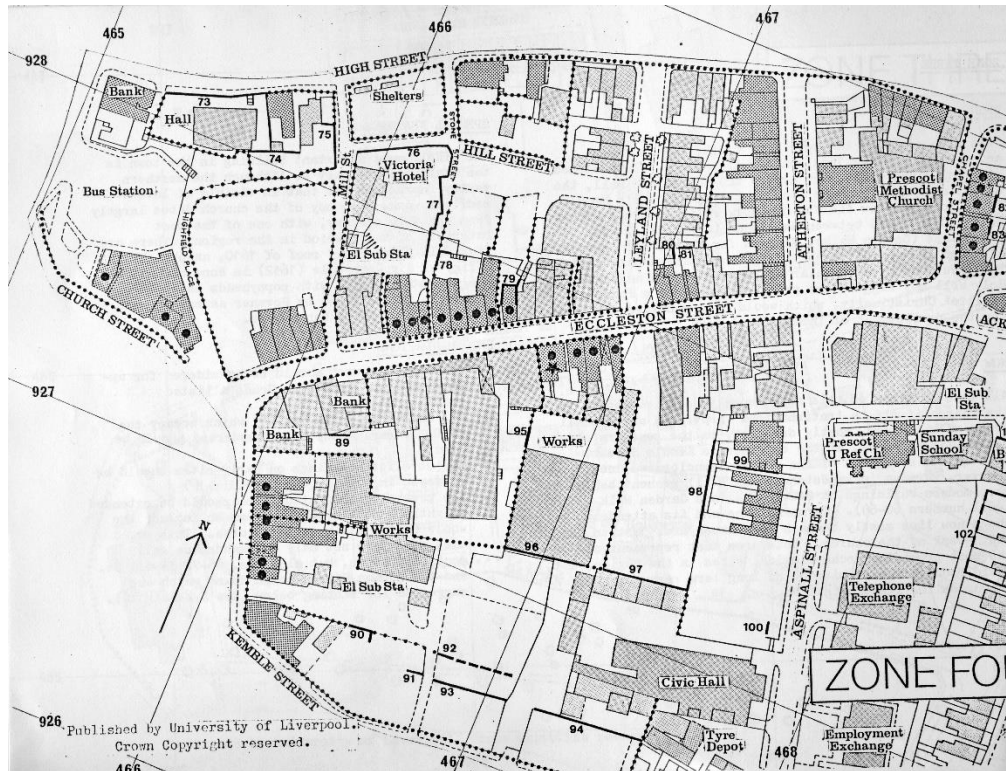


Figure 14: Prescott Zone Four; Cockpit House is mark as 'Bank' at the north-west extremity of the map (from Davey 1978, 12



Figure 15: Prescott from the Air; Cockpit House is just visible at the top centre of the frame (looking north-east, church in centre is RC Church in West Street; image courtesy of Rosemary Tyler, Prescott Historic Society Archives)



Figure 16: 'Prescot from the Air', looking north, St Mary's church is mid left; Cockpit House is visible immediately to the right of the church steeple (image courtesy of Rosemary Tyler, Prescott Historic Society Archives)



Figure 17: Church Street (south end), looking north-east; Cockpit House is just visible on the left edge of the frame, and to the south (right on photograph) a row of now-demolished three-storey brick houses. (image courtesy of Rosemary Tyler, Prescott Historic Society Archives).



Figure 18: Church Street, Prescott from the south, probably 1930s (Copyright Knowsley ARK)



Figure 19: Cockpit House when in use as the National Westminster Bank c. 1970 (courtesy of Knowsley ARK)

JOHN OGLE GENT. holds by copy two burgages with two crofts adjacent, called *Cock pitt howse*, in the tenure of John Dichfeild and Robert Powhton, containing by estimation one rood, abutting *E* on *Simons* and *Robert Plumtons yeard*, *W* on the lane leading to the church, *S* on the schoole howse, *N* on the way² leading from *Lirpoole* to the lord's mill; [George Bradshaw 1721.] 11, 12

Figure 20: Extract from Bailey (1937, 35), referring to 'Cock pitt house' in the 1592 survey



Figure 21: A horse-drawn carriage containing uniformed men of the local fire service travel down Derby Street, Prescott, and pass the Royal Hotel amid crowds gathered for an event, possibly a royal visit (courtesy of Knowsley archives: Ref No: PT295; Date of photo: early 1900s)



Figure 22: 34 Church Street (Cockpit House), from W in 2020 (DSC_0468)



Figure 23: 34 Church Street (Cockpit House), from NW (DSC_0473)



Figure 24: 34 Church Street (Cockpit House), from N (DSC_477)



Figure 25: Church Street – outbuildings south of no 34 Cockpit House, from W (DSC_0463) in May 2020