ArcHeritage

STATION ROAD, STAINFORTH,

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

EVALUATION REPORT (REVISED)

by Michael McCoy

REPORT NUMBER 2010/19

ArcHeritage

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Abbreviations

AOD Above Ordnance Datum

SYAS South Yorkshire Archaeology Service

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

In February 2010, ArcHeritage was commissioned by Highbank Homes to undertake an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on a site at Station Road, Stainforth, South Yorkshire (SE 64331 10840). The evaluation was required as a condition of planning consent for proposed development at the site. The scope of works consisted of six evaluation trenches randomly located across the proposed development area. No archaeological remains were encountered within any of the trenches. Trenching revealed that the site had previously been stripped of topsoil, subsoil and any sand and/or gravel overlying the underlying clay natural, with ground levels subsequently reinstated by industrial dumping. Given the nature of this activity, apparent in all but one trench across the site, it is unlikely that any archaeological remains, with the possible exception of negative features cut very deep into the underlying natural, might be preserved under these conditions.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on a site at Stainforth, South Yorkshire. The evaluation was required by South Yorkshire Archaeology Services (SYAS) as a condition of planning consent on an application for development at the site (Planning Application ref 09/01989/FULM). A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared for the work (ArcHeritage 2010), in response to a Brief supplied by SYAS. The work was carried out in accordance with the Brief, the agreed WSI, and according to the principles of the Institute for Archaeology (IfA) Code of Conduct.

ArcHeritage were commissioned by Highbank Homes to undertake the evaluation and fieldwork was carried out between 19/2/2010 and 26/2/2010. There were no restrictions regards access to the site, but the location of the site did preclude leaving site machinery onsite overnight. Ground conditions, in particular the earthen banks bounding the north and west of the site, necessitated amending some trench locations and the excavation one of the trenches designated in the agreed WSI (Trench 1) was cancelled following a site visit and consultation with SYAS.

2. METHODOLOGY

All fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the methodology outlined in sections 6 and 7 of the WSI (ArcHeritage 2010). This was based on a brief issued by SYAS, IFA guidelines (2008), health and safety regulations (SCAUM 2007) and current industry best practice.

The proposed scope of the evaluation comprised the excavation of seven evaluation trenches distributed across the site in a herringbone pattern in order to:

- determine the extent, condition, character, importance and date of any archaeological remains present within the bounds of the site;
- provide information that will enable any remains to be placed within their local, regional, and national context and for an assessment of the significance of any archaeology of the proposal area to be made;
- provide information to enable the local authority to determine any requirement for further archaeological mitigation on the site.

Following consultation with SYAS the excavation of Trench 1 was abandoned due to ground conditions and existing live services. The remaining trenches (Trenches 2-7) were excavated to a finished base area measuring *c.*3m x 20m (Figure 2). All trenches were opened using a machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket and monitored at all times by an experienced archaeologist. Machining ceased at the top of the first archaeological horizon or at undisturbed natural where no archaeology was encountered.

The location of each excavated trench was plotted using an EDM total station by measurement to permanent local features shown on published Ordnance Survey maps. All measurements are accurate to +/-10cm, and the trenches are locatable on a 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map to ensure that the trenches can be independently located in the event that further work is required.

Following excavation and recording, the trenches were scheduled to be backfilled and compressed as far as possible with a mechanical excavator. Further consolidation of backfill within trenches excavated deeper than 0.9m was managed and supervised by the client.

3. LOCATION, GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The area of investigation lies towards the southern edge of Stainforth, on land formerly occupied by the Waverley Club, at SE 64331 10840. The site is bounded on the north by an earthen bank separating the site from open grassland, on the east by the alley behind the frontage along Station Road, on the south by a caravan park, and on the west by an earthen bank and road which follows the line of a field boundary appearing on the 1854 OS map of the area.

The underlying geology is Triassic Sherwood Sandstone overlain by sands and gravels, with alluvial deposits lying to the east of the town's central north-south road. The Stainforth area

is within the Humberhead Levels where the land is generally low-lying and the site sits just below the 5m contour, with ground rising slightly toward the west.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The only entries in the Sites and Monuments Record within 1km of the site are the cropmarks of an Iron Age/Romano-British field system and cropmarks of Romano-British field boundaries and enclosures. Prior to large-scale 17th-century drainage works, the land around Stainforth was described as desolate and marshy with pockets of woodland and Stainforth would have been a fen-edge settlement.

The area being evaluated has not been subjected to any previous archaeological investigation and lies within a triangular field which appears to have retained its shape from the early 19th-century Enclosure plan until the present, with no evidence for development other than the Waverley Club, located on the east edge of the site, which was opened in 1928.

The nearest recorded archaeological investigation was an evaluation by auger survey and trial trenching carried out on land at Hatfield Main Colliery, *c.*1km from the present site. Of the 17 trenches excavated during that evaluation, 13 were devoid of archaeological features and the remains of a ditch and bank relating to a field boundary shown on the Enclosure map were identified in the other four trenches.

A full summary of the archaeology and history of the Stainforth area is available in the WSI (ArcHeritage 2010, Appendix 1) and in the Assessment Report for the evaluation at Hatfield Main Colliery (NAA 2002).

5. RESULTS

5.1 TRENCH 2

Located *c.*2m south of the earthen bank bounding the northern limit of the site, Trench 2 was aligned east-west, measured *c.*3m x 20m at its base and was stepped once due to the depth of made ground removed during mechanical excavation (Figure 2). Ground cover prior to excavation was scrub and bramble. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered in Trench 2. Immediately beneath the minimal humic layer and undeveloped A horizon covering the area of Trench 2, *c.*1.6m of industrial dumping (2000) overlay clay natural encountered at *c.*2.34mAOD.

5.2 TRENCH 3

Located *c.*14m west of the metal fence bounding the northeast corner of the site, Trench 3 was aligned north-south, measured *c.*3m x 20m at its base and was stepped once during mechanical excavation based on the results from Trench 2 (Figure 2). Ground cover prior to excavation was scrub and grass. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered in Trench 3. Immediately beneath the minimal humic layer and undeveloped A horizon covering the area of Trench 3, *c.*0.95m of industrial dumping (3000) overlay clayey-sand natural encountered at *c.*3.56mAOD.

5.3 TRENCH 4

Located *c.*22m south of Trench 2 near the centre of the proposed development site, Trench 4 was aligned north-south, measured *c.*3m x 20m at its base and was stepped once due to the depth of made ground removed during mechanical excavation (Figure 2). Ground cover prior to excavation was scrub and bramble. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered in Trench 4. Immediately beneath the minimal humic layer and undeveloped A horizon covering the area of Trench 4, *c.*1.5m of industrial dumping (4000) overlay clay natural encountered at *c.*2.66mAOD.

5.4 TRENCH 5

Located *c.*12m south of Trench 3 and immediately north of the location of the former Waverley Club, Trench 5 was aligned east-west, measured *c.*3m x 20m at its base and was stepped once due to the depth of made ground removed during mechanical excavation (Figure 2). Ground cover prior to excavation was a tarmac surface. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered in Trench 5. Immediately beneath the tarmac and associated hardcore substrate covering the area of Trench 5, *c.*1.0m of industrial dumping (5000) overlay sandy-clay natural encountered at *c.*3.28mAOD.

5.5 TRENCH 6

Located *c.*18m south of Trench 5 and immediately west of the location of the former Waverley Club, Trench 6 was aligned north-south and measured *c.*3m x 20m at its base (Figure 2). Ground cover prior to excavation was a degraded tarmac surface. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered in Trench 6. Immediately beneath the tarmac and associated hardcore substrate covering the area of Trench 6, *c.*0.5m of industrial dumping (6000) overlay sandy-gravel and clay natural encountered at *c.*3.34mAOD.

5.6 TRENCH 7

Located *c.*7.5m south of Trench 6 in the south corner of the site, Trench 7 was aligned east-west and measured *c.*3m x 20m at its base (Figure 2). Ground cover prior to excavation was

a degraded tarmac surface. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered in Trench 7. Immediately beneath the tarmac and associated hardcore substrate covering the area of Trench 7, *c.*0.3-0.5m of industrial dumping (6000) overlay sandy-clay natural encountered at *c.*3.97mAOD.

5.7 DISCUSSION

The dumped industrial material present in all trenches opened during this evaluation comprised thick and often mixed lenses of coal, clinker, ash, cinders and glass. Between 0.3-1.6m of this deposit was encountered beneath minimal humic layers and undeveloped A horizons in Trenches 2-4 and underlying the tarmac and hardcore substrate in Trenches 5-7. The depth made ground was greatest in northwest of the site (Trenches 2 and 4) and the made ground in Trenches 5-7 showed evidence for disturbance, likely related to the construction of the Waverley Club and associated tarmac surfaces across the south and east of the site. The levels of made ground recorded in Trenches 2-7 correspond with the levels of made ground recorded by Eastwood & Partners during the excavation of seven trial pits in 2008.

The relative homogeneity of the deposit across the site and lack of any discernable depositional or formation sequence indicates the material was likely imported wholesale, with the finished made ground levels the result of a single rapid depositional event. Undeveloped soil horizons and 20th-century tarmac surfaces overlying the deposit, and the predominance of late 19th- to early 20th-century material within the deposit, primarily intact bottles and teapots, situate the deposition of this material in the early 20th century, prior to the opening of the Waverley Club in 1928.

Underlying the industrial made ground, sandy-clay natural was encountered in all but one trench, and recorded in all seven trial pits excavated by Eastwood & Partners. The upper horizon of the natural varied between 2.66 to 3.97mAOD with a clear boundary between the industrial made ground and underlying clay. Given the lack of any evidence for buried soils under the industrial made ground, the undulating nature of the upper surface of the clay natural within a predominantly flat landscape, and the depth of industrial material making up the current ground level, it is probable that the entire site has been stripped of topsoil, subsoil and any sand or gravel previously overlying the highest clay horizon exposed in each trench. There is evidence for historic sand and gravel extraction within 200m of the current site and it seems likely that this site was similarly exploited for sand and gravel with ground levels subsequently reinstated with industrial tipping.

The current topography of the site is relatively level, lying between 3.8-4.8 mAOD, *c.*0.3-1.5m above the undulating clay natural. Taking into account the landscape history of the surrounding area and the modern landscape of adjacent areas, it is likely that this is a reasonable representation of the historic topography and ground levels post-17th-century drainage and prior to any sand/gravel extraction and subsequent reinstatement via industrial dumping. **Given the depth of the sand and gravel extraction activity apparent in all but one trench across the site, it is unlikely that any archaeological remains, with the possible exception of negative features cut very deep into the underlying natural, might be preserved under these conditions.**

6. LIST OF SOURCES

Hatfield Enclosure Map 1825 [archive ref A152/6 PR27/83/6th card]

OS maps from 1854 to present

South Yorkshire SMR entries 01253/01 and 02895/01

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Research and author	M. McCoy
Illustrations	M. Abbott
Editor	R. May

8. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX 1: LIST OF CONTEXTS

Trench no.	Context no.	Description
2	2000	Loose dumped industrial spoil material with frequent inclusions of coal, clinker, cinders and glass in a brown clay-silt matrix. Directly overlies yellow clay natural. Material is late 19th-/early 20th-century in date.
3	3000	Loose dumped industrial spoil material with frequent inclusions of coal, clinker, cinders and glass (including intact bottles) in a brown clay-silt matrix, with some deposits of clean orange sand included. Directly overlies yellow clay natural, surface of which was stained with leached contaminant. Material is late 19th-/early 20th-century in date.
4	4000	Loose dumped industrial spoil material with frequent inclusions of coal, clinker, cinders and glass in a brown clay-silt matrix. Directly overlies yellow clay natural. Material is late 19th-/early 20th-century in date.
5	5000	Loose dumped industrial spoil material with frequent inclusions of coal, clinker, cinders and glass in a brown clay-silt matrix. Upper layer is tarmac surface (10cm) over a 15-20cm thick hardcore levelling layer sealing the dumped material, which directly overlies green sandy clay natural.
6	6000	Loose dumped industrial spoil material with frequent inclusions of coal, clinker, cinders and glass in a brown clay-silt matrix. Upper layer is tarmac surface (10cm) over a 15-20cm thick hardcore levelling layer sealing the dumped material, which directly overlies natural. Natural consists of interface between mid-orange sand and gravel to mid-yellow brown clay.
7	7000	Shallow dump (30-40cm thick) of industrial spoil material with frequent inclusions of coal, clinker, cinders and glass in a brown clay-silt matrix. Upper layer is tarmac surface (10cm) over a 15-20cm thick hardcore levelling layer sealing the dumped material, which directly overlies natural. Tipping lenses visible at east end. Natural consists of yellow orange sandy clay.

APPENDIX 2: INDEX TO ARCHIVE

Item	Number of sheets
Site attendance register	1
Context sheets	6
Levels register	2
Photographic register	1
Drawing register	1
Original drawings	3
B/W photos (contact sheet & negatives)	1 film, 25 photos
Digital photos	1 CD
Written Scheme of Investigation	1
Risk assessment	1
Evaluation report	1

FIGURES

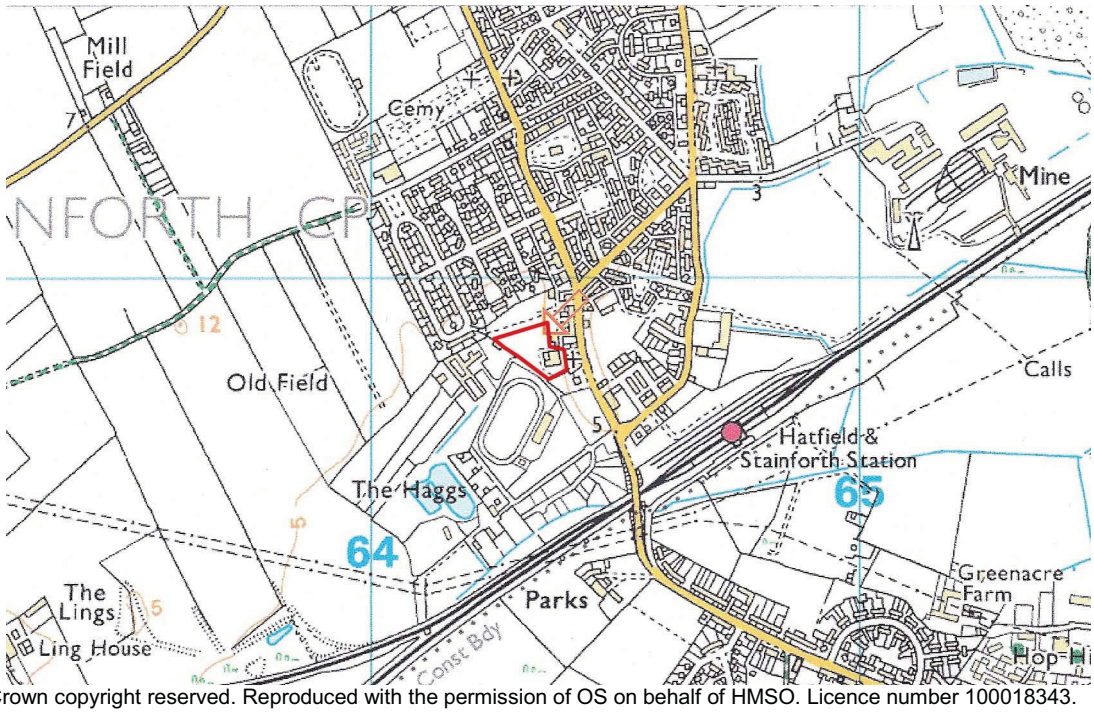

Figure 1 *Site location*

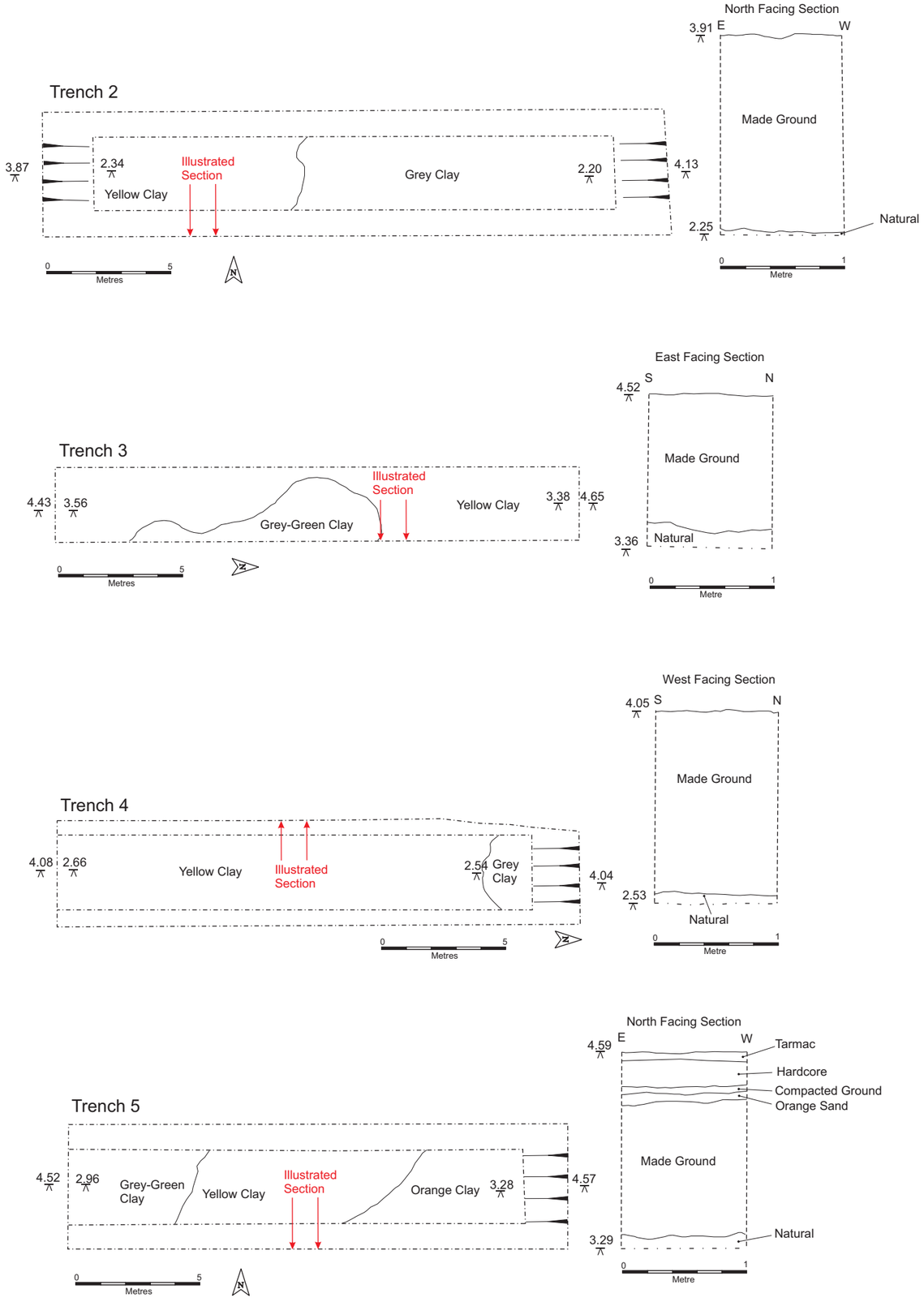

Figure 2 Trench plans, sections and location

PLATES

Plate 1: Working shot of Trench 3 showing sandy-clay natural; viewed facing north; 1m scale

Plate 2: Trench 3 west facing section; 1m scale

Plate 3: Trench 6 showing gravel and clay natural; viewed facing north; 1m scale

Plate 4: Trench 6 showing gravel and clay natural; viewed facing north; 1m scale