

9. 2001

The fieldwork in 2001 started on 14th March 2001 and took four days. The purpose of this archaeological recording project (NS SMR Event 46188) in the form of a watching brief was to observe the geotechnical trial trenches and environmental trial pits being opened up by Intégrale Consulting of Nailsea. In the Archaeological Watching Brief report²⁹, from which the information recorded in this section has been taken, they are described as ‘Geo Trenches’ (GT/ -) and ‘Test Pits’ (TP/ -) respectively. This work was on behalf of White Green Young Environmental as the proposed supermarket development was moving to final design stages. Four “Geo Trenches “ were proposed. In the event, No. 2 was not opened. Eleven “Test Pits” were opened.

The trenches/pits were excavated in the order in which they are described below, and were immediately back-filled and levelled after recording. In each case there were modern hard surfaces of concrete, tarmac and scalping, either separately or in combination, forming the upper layer(s). These have not been described. The modern surface level in metres AOD is quoted after each trench identifier. As in 1999, these ground level heights AOD were provided by courtesy of Intégrale Consulting, as was the location plan in the report.

TP 6/01 – 32m: At 200mm depth was the start of “300mm of undifferentiated glassworking waste overlying undisturbed a dark orange natural clay substrate. A short section of sandstone masonry was exposed at the extreme southern end of the cutting. The wall as formed of tabular sandstone rubble bonded with coarse lime mortar and possibly curved. The wall was preserved to a height of 350mm and lay above a 50mm thick layer of loose dark industrial waste.” It would appear that this might correspond with the easternmost outer wall of the “wing” to the east of the brick kiln, to the north of the Old House Cone, on both the 1830s and 1870 plans.

TP 7/01 – 31.5m: The description here is not entirely clear, but natural clay substrate started at c. 30.75m AOD. It appears that over this was “c.200mm of mixed clean clay and rubble, the latter possibly reflecting a buried land surface.” Over this again was a 430mm thick deposit consisting “mainly of mixed industrial and glass waste and brick fragments.” This pit was positioned in what is shown as open space on both original plans.

TP 3/01 – 32.7m: “c. 650mm of stratified archaeological deposits including at least five units of interbedded industrial waste and demolition rubble” started at a depth of 250mm. “The northern face of a roughly faced rubble wall was exposed in the south-western end of the cutting. Natural stony marl was reached at c. 31.75m AOD.” There is no wall shown in this position on either of the original plans, but see the discussion on the 1995 report (above), where a wall was found on this alignment, corresponding with a line on both the 1840 and 1844 tithe maps.

TP 1/01 - 30.8m: At a depth of 400mm was a layer of “up to 800mm of highly mixed industrial waste, redeposited marl and rubble over a sloping surface of weathered natural marl at a depth of between 29.6m – 29.1m AOD.” This would appear to relate to the old quarry, as the long axis of this pit is perpendicular to, and bisected by, the northeastern edge of the quarry as shown on the 1830s plan.

TP 2/01 – 32m: A modern concrete inspection pit “appeared to have destroyed all archaeological deposits” in the northern third of the trench. The natural undisturbed clay substrata lay at c. 30.6m AOD and there were “at least four archaeological contexts” in “700 – 800mm of dark industrial soil and waste” overlying “a deposit of mixed rubble and clay” over

²⁹ Young, AC, 2001: *Site of the former Nailsea Glassworking Complex, Nailsea, North Somerset: Archaeological monitoring of geotechnical work*. AAU, Bristol

the natural. At c. 31m “A sandstone wall was exposed in cross section in the southern facing elevation of the cutting.” It was “formed of sandstone rubble bonded with coarse lime mortar and overlay 80mm of dark industrial soil. A pale soil layer exposed in section adjacent and to the southwest possibly represented part of a contemporary earth floor.” This would be the position in which one might expect to find the internal wall between {28} and {29} towards its eastern end, with the putative floor being that of {28}. Both {28} and {29} are described as “Brick Rooms” on the 1870 schedule, and the space is given over to “Pot Rooms & with a store in the same” on the 1830s plan, which shows no sub-divisions in this part.

TP 4/01 – 31.6m: This again contained c. 550mm of stratified dark industrial soil and demolition rubble underlain by a thin layer of clean clay with rubble, “possibly a remnant of a buried land surface that lay above undisturbed clay substrata at c. 30.8m AOD.” It would appear that this pit had just missed picking up structural features. It was either just outside a “Calcining house and Flattening Kilns” of the 1830s or just inside {72} “3 Storey Building. Cutting packing and assorting rooms.”

TP 9/01 – 31.4m: This was cut “through the floor of the former Managers House” [*sic*], Offices {1} fronting the High Street. Top of the natural was at c. 30.4m AOD with no significant archaeological features found. About 300mm of loose industrial waste including clinker and thin rods of glassworking waste overlay the natural. The pit appears to overlie a small, unidentified building on the east side of a yard on the 1830s plan, but the site was presumably completely cleared when the offices were built, sometime between 1844 and 1870.

TP 8/01 – 32.7m: This was in the area of the former car valeting shed. The sandy clay substratum was exposed at c. 31.3m AOD, overlain by up to 1.3m of very loose modern made ground. “A tip line exposed in the west facing section suggested the trench may have been cut through an archaeological cut feature.” This may have been part of the Old House Cone ancillary buildings to the north-west of the cone. The ground plan seems to have changed slightly by 1870, so a structure may have been totally demolished and the ground made up.

TP 10/01 – 32.0m: “The natural sandy substratum was revealed at c. 30m AOD” There were no archaeological features, the overlying fill being “highly mixed and unstable modern ground.....” Comparison with the original plans shows that this pit must have missed structures at each end by a very small margin, being laid transversely across what appears to have been an outside access-way on the north-east east side of the Old House Cone.

TP 11/01 – 31.9m: “The natural substratum of clean reddish-brown sandy clay was exposed at c. 31.2m AOD.” “Several distinct” [but not described] “archaeological units were visible within” the overlying “400mm of mixed dark soil and brick rubble with lime mortar fragments...” This pit lay within {28} – see the comments on this area in the section on TP 2/01 above.

TP 5/01 – 31.5m: “The natural substratum was not reached in the pit” which contained “in excess of 3m of highly unstable modern made ground” under 150mm of concrete. “the material appeared to reflect the fill of the former quarry, but did not seem to contain significant amounts of industrial residues.”

GT 1/01 – 31.8 to 31.9m: This trench, c. 15m long, was aligned a few degrees clockwise from north-south. The findings in this trench were consistent with the 1870 plan {31} “Pot Arch”, and the “later wall” found in the northern end of the trench could well be that going west-east from the easternmost corner of the former main garage building. What is not explained is “A well made stone culvert.....c. 10m from the southern end of the trench, aligned approximately NW to SE.” It “was formed of flat sandstone rubble bonded with grey lime mortar and covered

with larger flat stones to form a squared central channel measuring c. 225mm x 200mm.” The direction of fall, if any, is not quoted, but it may have been a drainage channel from the building on the 1830s plan containing a “Room for breaking kelp”. Also, without more specific information no explanation can be offered for “A broad U-shaped cut feature....c. 2m from the southern end of the trench.”, other than that it might represent a robbed-out wall.

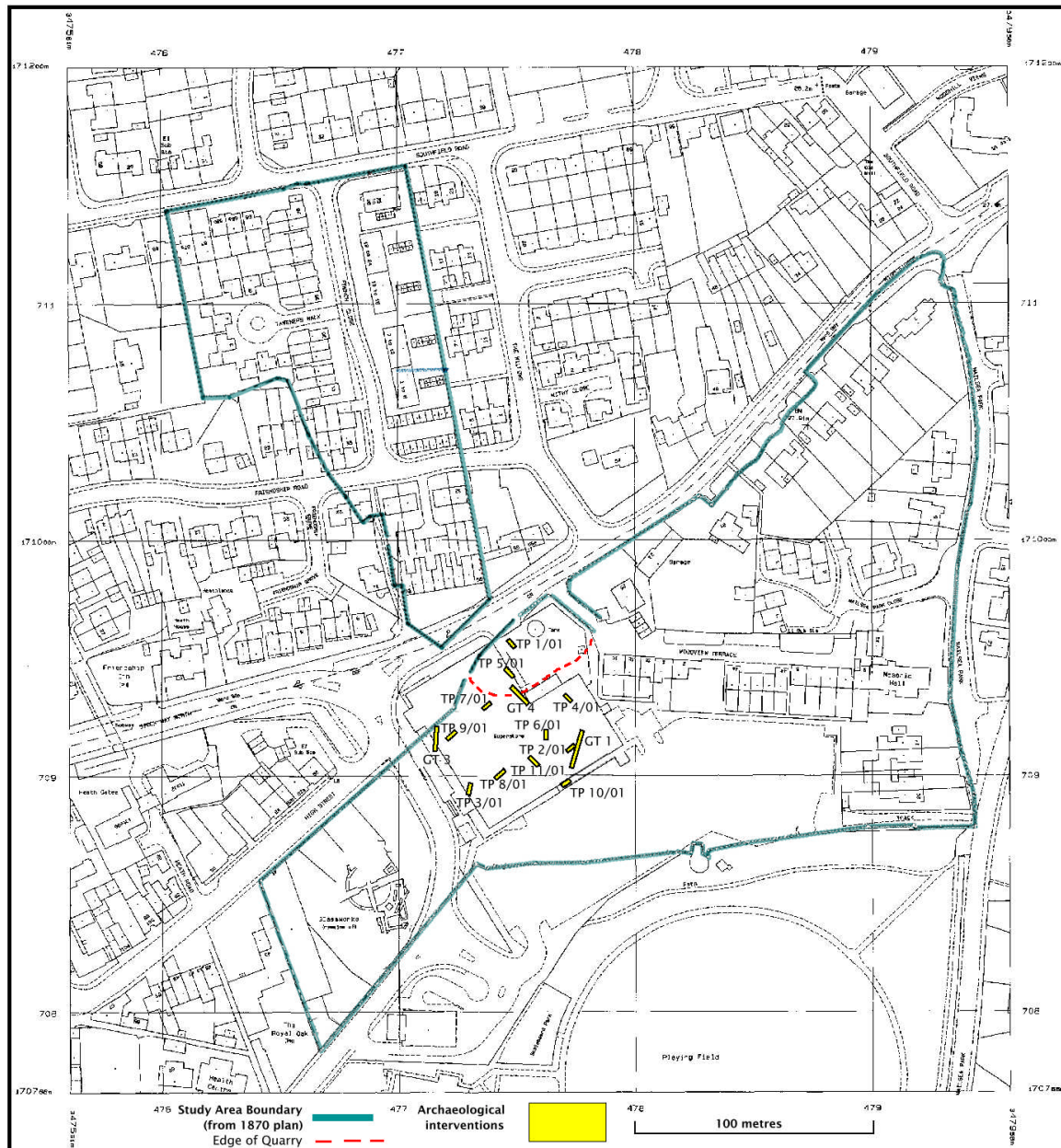


Figure 2.41: 2001 investigations on site-centred map.

GT 3/01 – 31.3m to 32.15m: No structural remains were revealed in this trench, which was taken deeper than c. 29.8m AOD, the level of the top of the weathered clay substratum. Under 400mm of hard cover lay up to 1m of loose industrial and glass working waste, being “particularly rich in thin rod-shaped glass fragments. This in turn overlay up to 1m of yellowish-brown clay containing sparse chunks of blue cullet glass.”

GT 4/01 – 31.5m: No archaeology was recorded in this trench, which overlay the edge of the former quarry.