

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT WHITWELL QUARRY, NORTH EASTERN EXTENSION, WHITWELL, DERBYSHIRE



Produced for Tarmac

Prepared by Richard Parker

Report Number: 177/2018

TPA Project Code: WHQ10

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Summary

- Trent & Peak Archaeology was commissioned by Tarmac to undertake an archaeological watching brief during topsoil removal prior to quarrying of Magnesian Limestone from the North-East extension of Whitwell Quarry. The site encompassed two narrow stripes of pastoral land around the edges of the 2004 extension.
- The quarry is located on the Permian Magnesian Limestone escarpment of north-east Derbyshire, immediately adjacent to the deep gorge of Creswell Crags. Caves and rock shelters flanking this gorge have yielded extensive evidence of Palaeolithic and later activity. In view of the international importance of the neighbouring site, topsoil and subsoil stripping were monitored continuously, with particular focus upon locating traces of prehistoric open-air sites and caves, other subterranean features and loess deposits that might preserve Pleistocene archaeological or environmental remains.
- A suspected long mound was thought to be located within this phase of quarrying however it appeared to have been removed during the previous phase. The suspected mound had been previously investigated and found to natural in origin (UMAU 2000).
- No archaeological features, finds or loessic deposits were encountered during the course of the watching brief.

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Acknowledgments

Thanks are extended to Dannika Bannon (Tarmac, Quarry Manager) for commissioning the work and to Simon Wormley (Tarmac, Assistant Quarry Manager) and his colleagues for their assistance on site. The project was supervised by Richard Parker (Trent & Peak) and managed by Ed Taylor (Trent & Peak). Fieldwork was monitored on behalf of Derbyshire County Council by the County Archaeologist Steve Baker.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Between the 4th & 5th October 2018, Trent & Peak Archaeology conducted an archaeological watching brief on behalf of Tarmac in advance of Limestone extraction at Whitwell Quarry, near Whitwell, Derbyshire.
- 1.2 This North-East extension occupies the edges of the 2004 extension and incorporates two narrow stripes of land totalling approximately 2.7ha. The main strip is centred on SK 5331 7560 and the smaller strip is centred on SK 5313 7578. The quarry falls within the radius of the World Heritage site of Creswell Crags and has the potential for subterranean features preserving Pleistocene and early Holocene environmental and archaeological remains of national significance (Collcutt 1995).
- 1.3 The project was supervised by Richard Parker under the management of Ed Taylor of Trent & Peak Archaeology. All fieldwork and reporting was conducted in accordance with the approved written scheme of investigation (MJCA 2017).

2 Background

Topography and Land-Use

- 2.1 Much of the main quarry area has been excavated and partially backfilled with quarry waste; kiln dust from the adjacent dolomite kiln and colliery spoil (Josephs, A, 2017). Located on the edge of the 2004 north-east excavation, this current phase incorporating a narrow strip of land is likely to be the limit of extent of the quarry in this direction.

Geology

- 2.2 The Geological survey of Great Britain (England and Wales) identifies the underlying geology as Permian Lower Magnesian Limestone. Observations made during machine excavation of the previous phase highlighted the potential for the accumulation of colluvial deposits, which can mask underlying archaeological features and Pleistocene loessic deposits with significant environmental potential. The latter are most likely to survive in small pockets, where protected from later erosion, and particular efforts were made to establish whether such material survived within the quarried area (e.g. against stone edges in the bedrock).

Archaeology

- 2.3 The area is best known archaeologically for the wealth of Palaeolithic remains that have been retrieved from caves and rock shelters flanking the limestone gorge at Creswell Crags close to the southern boundary of the quarry. No archaeological evidence has been obtained for Palaeolithic activity within the various phases and extensions of the quarry however low density scatters of prehistoric (Neolithic and Bronze Age flint-work indicates at probable later activity in the area. A suspected long mound, situated on the south-western edge of the current phase of North Eastern extension was investigated and found to be natural in origin (MJCA 2017).
- 2.4 Crop-marks were identified in the south eastern extension, which have been interpreted as later prehistoric/Romano-British settlement features.
- 2.5 Further activity noted in the area includes the deposition of medieval and post-medieval pottery which may be the result of habitation activity or simply have resulted from manuring practices in antiquity.

- 2.6 Post-medieval activity includes possible lime kiln activity and rig and furrow ploughing in some areas.

3 Aims and Methodology

Aims

- 3.1 The main aim of this watching brief was to preserve by record any archaeological and associated palaeoenvironmental remains that may be present. Primarily for this site these will include artefact scatters, cut features and natural features such as fissures or hollows which may contain artefacts or palaeoenvironmental remains within deposits of windblown loess.

Methodology

- 3.2 Topsoil and subsoil removal was conducted using a 360° excavator with a toothless bucket. The soil was removed in east-west strips with dumper trucks positioned to the side of the excavator and always on the un-stripped surface (Topsoil). The area stripped was systematically inspected after stripping to maximise artefact retrieval. All areas were photographed and located using a GPS (Leica Viva).

4 Results

- 4.3 Monitoring of Areas 01 & 02 over a two day period revealed a simple sequence of deposits across the site. This consisted of topsoil (0001) a friable mid brown silty clay loam 200mm in depth which overlay in places 50mm of a purple red clay; directly below these contexts lay solid Magnesium Limestone bedrock.
- 4.4 No archaeological features, finds or loessic deposits were observed during the course of the watching brief.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 Continuous observation of the groundwork revealed no archaeological features or finds; on the basis of this watching brief and the lack of evidence retrieved, we can say that it was unlikely this part of the landscape was utilised. However this largely negative observation is significant in itself; Whitwell quarry is located adjacent to the internationally significant World Heritage site of Creswell Crags, and even negative results can help refine our knowledge and understanding of areas utilised during the Palaeolithic period.

6 References

Collcutt, S.N. 1995. *Proposed Extension to Whitwell Quarry, Derbyshire. Evaluation of the Palaeolithic Interest. Scoping Report.* Oxford: Oxford Archaeological Associates

Josephs, A, 2017. *Written Scheme of Archaeological Investigation for Whitwell Quarry.* MJCA

Parker, R & Knight, D, 2013. *An Archaeological Watching Brief at Whitwell Quarry Southern Extension, Whitwell, Derbyshire.* Trent & Peak Archaeology.

UMAU 2000, Whitwell Quarry: *An Archaeological Evaluation of a Suspected Long Mound.* University of Manchester Archaeological Unit. Unpublished client report.

Appendix 1: Plates



Plate 01. Pre topsoil/subsoil strip of Area 01 looking north-west.



Plate 02. Pre topsoil/subsoil strip of Area 01 looking south-east



Plate 3. Pre topsoil/subsoil strip of southern end of Area 01 in area of immature woodland, looking south



Plate 4. Area 01 after topsoil/subsoil strip looking south-east



Plate 5. Area 01 after topsoil/subsoil strip looking north-west



Plate 6. Southern end of area 2 in wooded area after topsoil/subsoil strip



Plate 7. Pre topsoil/subsoil removal Area 02 looking north-west

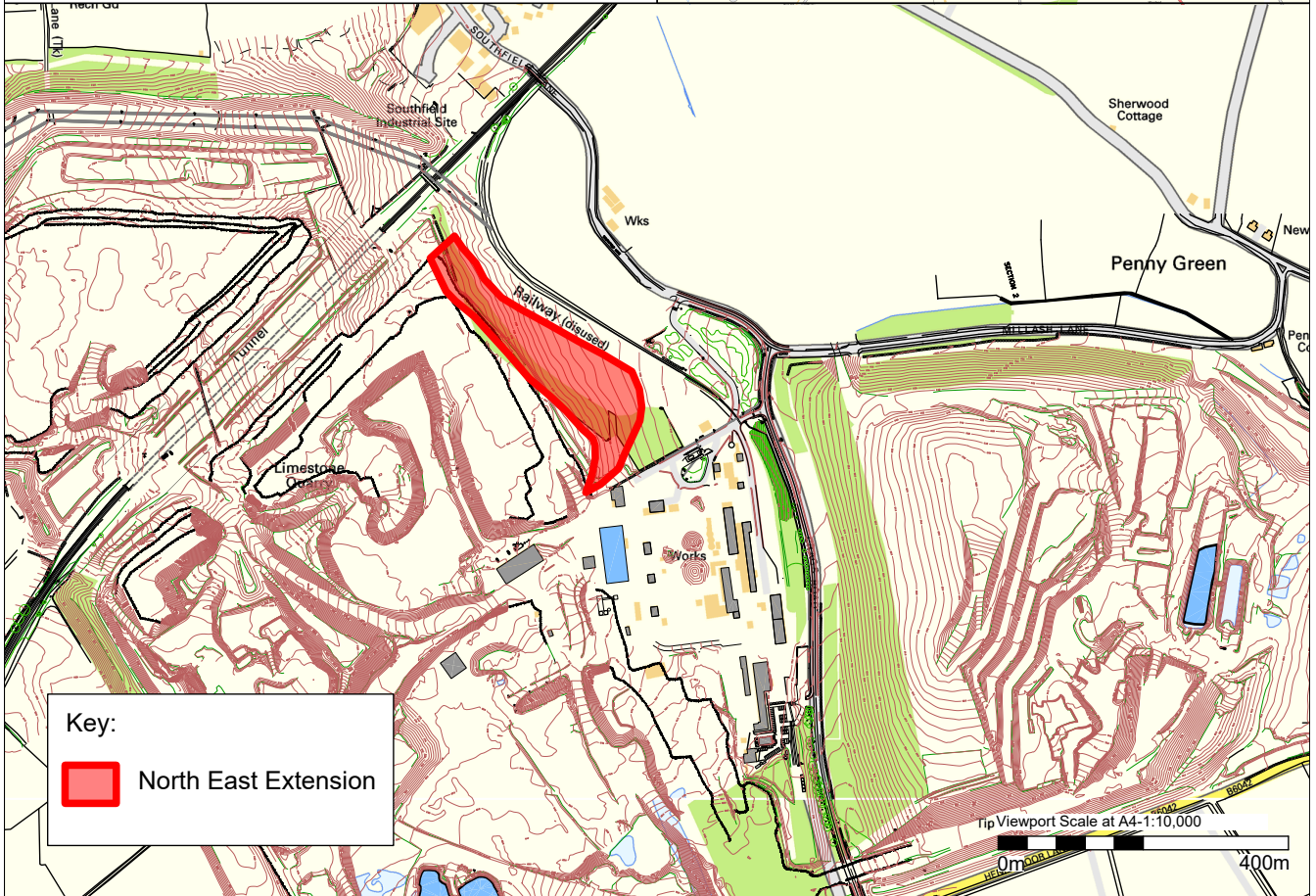
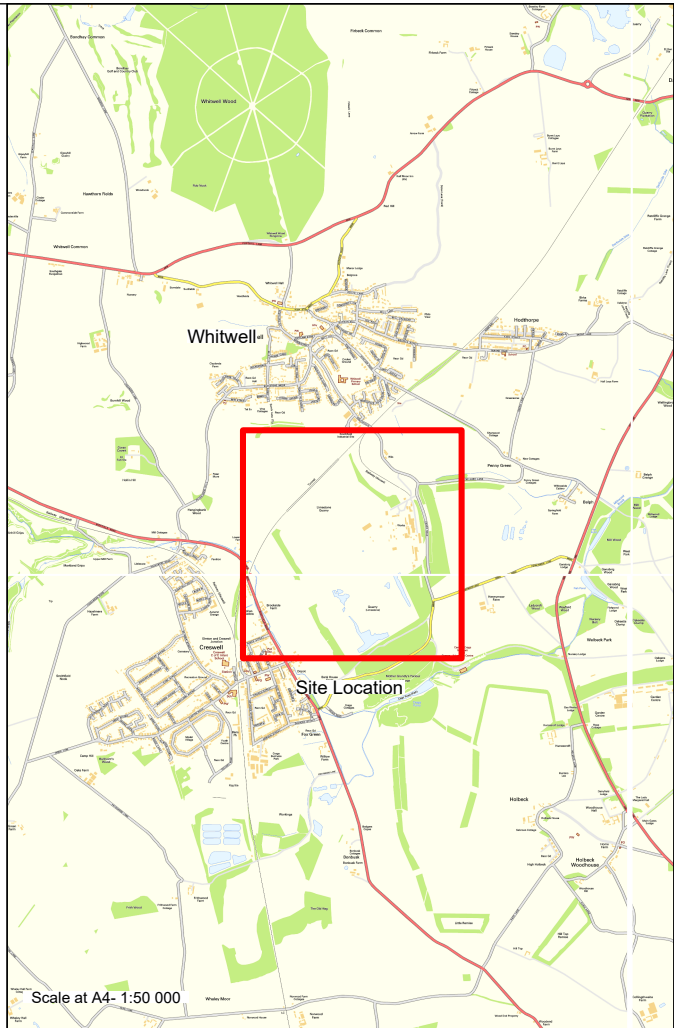


Plate 7. Area 02 after topsoil/subsoil removal looking north-west



Plate 8. Area 02 after topsoil/subsoil strip looking south-east

Appendix 2: Figures



Appendix 3: OASIS Data Collection Form

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

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OASIS ID: trentpea1-332577

Project details

Project name	Whitwell Quarry, North East Extension, Whitwell, Derbyshire
Short description of the project	Trent and Peak Archaeology was commissioned by Tarmac to undertake an archaeological watching brief during topsoil removal prior to quarrying of Magnesian Limestone from the North-East extension of Whitwell Quarry. The site encompassed two narrow stripes of pastoral land around the edges of the 2004 extension. The quarry is located on the Permian Magnesian Limestone escarpment of north-east Derbyshire, immediately adjacent to the deep gorge of Creswell Crags. Caves and rock shelters flanking this gorge have yielded extensive evidence of Palaeolithic and later activity. In view of the international importance of the neighbouring site, topsoil and subsoil stripping were monitored continuously, with particular focus upon locating traces of prehistoric open-air sites and caves, other subterranean features and loess deposits that might preserve Pleistocene archaeological or environmental remains. A suspected long mound was thought to be located within this phase of quarrying however it appeared to have been removed during the previous phase. The suspected mound had been previously investigated and found to natural in origin (UMAU 2000). No archaeological features, finds or loess deposits were encountered during the course of the watching brief.
Project dates	Start: 04-10-2018 End: 05-10-2018
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	WHQ10 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 3 - Operations to a depth more than 0.25m
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

Project location

Country	England
Site location	DERBYSHIRE BOLSOVER WHITWELL WHITWELL QUARRY
Postcode	S80 3LH
Study area	2.7 Hectares
Site coordinates	SK 453310 375600 52.933208785471 -1.325501740234 52 55 59 N 001 19 31 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 84m Max: 84m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Trent and Peak Archaeology
Project brief originator	Trent and Peak Archaeology
Project design originator	Edmund Taylor
Project director/manager	Edmund Taylor
Project supervisor	Richard Parker
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Trent and Peak Archaeology
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Survey"
Paper Archive recipient	Trent and Peak Archaeology
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Drawing", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section", "Survey", "Unpublished Text"

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