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**FINAL REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT  
HOLDITCH COLLIERY, NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME,  
STAFFORDSHIRE**

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AND PARTNERS**

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## 1. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

- 1.1 An archaeological evaluation of a proposed area of reclamation at Holditch Colliery, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire was undertaken by Gifford and Partners Ltd on behalf of Staffordshire Engineering Consultants. The evaluation was undertaken at the request of the County Development Officer, Planning and Development Department, Staffordshire County Council and in accordance with a Brief prepared by Igneous County Council.
- 1.2 Two trenches were archaeologically excavated in the north-eastern corner of the proposed area of reclamation.
- 1.3 In Trench 1 there were a number of features identified as archaeologically significant. The latest feature was a post-Medieval field boundary situated at one end of the trench cutting a relict post-Medieval ploughsoil which covered the entire trench. Situated at right angles to the line of the trench were six furrows or tracks filled with redeposited demolition debris.
- 1.4 Four sizable pits were recorded in Trench 1. Two square-cut pits and irregular pits, one of which was obscured by the haulk in Trench 1 were excavated but no function could be determined. However they were filled with a mix of red clay and sandstone chunks, forming a demolition layer, in association with Romano-British ceramic sherds.
- 1.5 There were no features of archaeological significance identified in Trench 2.
- 1.6 The results of the evaluation identified the presence of Roman-British features in the south-east of the site associated with a demolition layer from structures in the vicinity, probably the structure identified in the 1960s (Charlton 1962, 120) and later determined to be a bathhouse (Rogers 1995, 130).

## 2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Gifford and Partners would like to thank the following for their support and assistance during this project: Mr D J Grain of Staffordshire Engineering Consultants and Bob Meeson, County Development Officer, Planning and Development Staffordshire County Council.

The Gifford staff involved in the project were:

T J Strickland	-	Director of Archaeology
A Thompson	-	Associate
G Watts	-	Archaeologist
J Perkins	-	Archaeologist
G Reaney	-	Preparation of report drawings
M Griffiths	-	Site Assistant
J Young	-	Site Assistant

## 3. INTRODUCTION

### 3.1 Reasons for the Project

3.1.1 The Staffordshire Engineering Consultancy are proposing the reclamation and development of an area situated in the north-east of the Holditch Colliery site. The area of development is located close to the Romano-British settlement at Chesterton, wherein a wide range of archaeological features have been recognised during a series of excavations (Gifford Report no. 6768.02 (1995) and Charlton 1961,1962). The north-eastern end of the site has undergone least disturbance during the activities of the last 200 years and is also the closest part of the Holditch Colliery site to the known area of Roman remains.

3.1.2 In view of extensive Roman archaeological remains close to the proposed development site an evaluation of the site was required prior to planning application.

### 3.2 Objectives

3.2.1 To determine the presence/absence, extent, nature, and date of significant pre-industrial archaeological features within the proposed development area.

3.2.2 To assess the archaeological implications of the proposed development.

3.2.3 To incorporate the results of the evaluation with earlier Gifford work on the Romano-British site in the area and to expand our understanding of the history and development of human activity on the site and its environs.

### 3.3 Methodology

- 3.3.1 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the Brief (Appendix A) and Project Design (Appendix B), which was agreed with the Planning Archaeologist, Staffordshire County Council prior to the commencement of the evaluation.
- 3.3.2 Two evaluation trenches measuring 15m x 2m were excavated to the level of underlying natural and were located as shown in Figure 2. The evaluation trenches were mechanically stripped of topsoil under archaeological supervision by a JCB excavator equipped with a smooth, toothless ditching bucket.
- 3.3.3 Sample sections were excavated stratigraphically by hand through any potential significant archaeological features identified within the trenches.
- 3.3.4 Written, drawn and photographic records were made as appropriate of potentially significant archaeological features in accordance with the Gifford recording system based on that produced by English Heritage.
- 3.3.5 A levelling survey of the evaluation works was undertaken using a EDM and was related to the nearest Ordnance Survey datum point.

### 3.4 Timetable

The evaluation field-work was carried out during 4-6 September 1996.

### 3.5 The Archive

- 3.5.1 On completion of the archive and with full written consent from the client the archive will be deposited at the City Museum and Art Gallery, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent and copies of the report will be found at the Staffordshire Sites and Monuments Record and the National Monuments Record, Swindon.
- 3.5.2 The archive will comprise:-
- Introduction to the archive
  - Index to the archive
  - A copy of the final Evaluation Report
  - Context records (38)
  - Drawing index
  - Drawing record
  - Photographic index
  - Photographic record
  - Artefact record sheets

- Artefacts

## 4. BACKGROUND

### 4.1 Location and Topography

The proposed area of development is situated on the crown of a low hill, overlooking a valley in which Ashfield Brook ran, prior to recent development (Figure 1). The geology comprises coal measures.

### 4.2 Archaeological/Historical Background

- 4.2.1 Holditch Colliery is situated 1.95m south-east of a presumed Roman fort site at Chesterton. A Roman road, King Street, is thought to extend north-west from Chesterton to Middlewich and Wilderspool near Warrington. The road south from the fort is thought to extend south-east through the Holditch area (Margary, 1971, 130).
- 4.2.2 Archaeological works in the Holditch area were initiated in the 1960s by Professor Charlton of the Department of Classics, University College of North Staffordshire. Charlton instigated an intensive examination of the Holditch area by trial pit excavation and was able to obtain some idea of the extent and function of the Romano-British settlement. The main features included a substantial metalled road perpendicular to the presumed line of the Chesterton-Derby road, a furnace which suggests an industrial element to the settlement and finally the foundations of a substantial stone structure, presently believed to have been a bath-house (Rogers 1995, 32).
- 4.2.3 In 1994 an archaeological excavation by Gifford and Partners was undertaken at Spencroft Road (NGR: SJ 840484). The excavation revealed two phases of Romano-British occupation. The first phase comprised a metalled trackway, which extended south-west to north-west across the site and was lined with traces of timber framed structures, cobbled surfaces and pits. Ceramic evidence dated this phase of activity to the late-first and mid-second century AD. IN the second phase the structures of the first phase were abandoned and a large timber building with fenced enclosures was constructed to the north of the metalled track. This phase did not continue beyond the end of the second century (Rogers 1995, 1).
- 4.2.4 The results of the 1957-62 and 1994 excavations revealed that the Romano-British settlement at Holditch developed during the late-first century AD. At its height the settlement extended over an area of at least 18 acres and had two main functions of industry and recreation with some military associations. The

settlement appears to have contracted in the mid-second century AD, possibly as a result of a reduction in military activities in the area. Thereafter the settlement functioned as an industrial centre (Rogers 1995, 2).



## 5. RESULTS

### 5.1 Trench 1

- 5.1.1 The area of Trench 1 was completely covered by a layer of tarmacadam which comprised the surface of a car park (context 1). Immediately underlying this surface was a layer of hard-core, c. 100-120mm thick (context 8) and a light red shale, c. 220mm thick (context 2). In order to level out the gradual slope of the hill there were two imported layers underlying the road surface which consisted of a dark grey plastic silty-clay c. 300mm thick (context 9) and a black plastic silty-clay (context 3), associated with modern artefacts.
- 5.1.2 Situated directly beneath the modern levelling layers was a layer of dark brown silty-clay c. 350mm in thickness (context 5) which included a number of Roman artefacts redeposited by plough action. This deposit is a former post-Medieval ploughsoil which covers the site of Trench 1, sloping gently away northwards.
- 5.1.3 Situated in the southern end of Trench 1 was a 2m wide linear feature running east-west across the trench. It was roughly hewn with a U-shaped profile and a concave base (context 4, Figure 5). The ditch was excavated to a depth of 1.2m. The lower fill (context 23) consisted of a mottled greeny-light brown deposit with a cess-like quality and immediately underlay context 10, a silty dark yellowish-brown fill situated in the upper part of the ditch and interpreted as redeposited subsoil. The ditch cuts through the overlying relict ploughsoil (context 5) and although no definite date or function was established for the ditch during the evaluation, the absence of artefacts pre-dating the post-Medieval period and its stratigraphic relationship with the relict ploughsoil, suggests a recent date for its origin..
- 5.1.4 Extending east-west across the trench were six irregular linear features established in pairs along the length of the trench (contexts 11,13,15,17,35 and 36). They consisted of shallow U-shaped cuts with uneven bases, roughly parallel sides and widths varying from 220mm to 330mm. The linear features were filled with sub-angular sandstone blocks set in a matrix of soil similar in nature to the overlying ploughsoil (contexts 12,14,16,18,36 and 38). This suggests that the sandstone was deposited through plough action and that the features predate the above ploughsoil (context 5). These features can be interpreted as furrow marks scarring the subsoil, however the paired grouping of the features is more typical of thoroughfare ruts. To the west and set at 90 degrees to two of these linear features was an additional rut/furrow feature (context 24). A relationship between the east-west linear feature and this north-south linear feature was not established, although it is clear that the direction of the track/ploughing action was altered during later agricultural activity.

- 5.1.5 The investigation of Trench 1 also revealed the survival of four pits each varying in size and shape. Situated towards the centre of the western baulk was an irregularly-shaped pit with uneven base and sides, of unknown function (context 19). The pit contained a single fill (context 20) which comprised a dark brown silty-clay with occasional sandstone fragments. A quantity of Romano-British ceramics were recovered from the pit.
- 5.1.6 Two large square-cut pits were located at the northern end of Trench 1 (contexts 26 and 29), one of which was partially obscured by the eastern baulk (context 29). Due to reasons of health and safety context 26 was partially excavated to a depth of 0.45m (below the base of Trench 1) at which point its base had not been located. The vertically-sided pit was filled by two deposits. The upper consisted of a red-brown silty-clay containing occasional sandstone chunks and a large quantity of Romano-British ceramics (context 27). The lower fill comprised a compact red clay of unknown depth associated with sandstone fragments and two sherds of Black Burnished ware (context 28).
- 5.1.7 Although partially obscured by the eastern trench haulk and a step in the side of Trench 1, context 29 resembled a cut for a straight-sided feature comprised a dark brown silty-clay containing fragments of leather and an iron nail (context 30). Although unexcavated the upper fill of the feature and the nature of the cut visible clearly establishes context 29 as a second square-cut pit, probably Romano-British in date, but of unknown function.
- 5.1.8 Situated at the centre of the western haulk of Trench 1 was an irregularly-shaped pit c. 450mm in depth and 430mm wide (context 21). It had a single fill of dark brown silty-clay (context 22) with inclusions of sandstone fragments, gritstone and brick found in association with Romano-British ceramic sherds, but of unknown function.

## 5.2 Trench 2 (Figures 2,6 and 7)

- 5.2.1 The area of Trench 2 was covered by a deposit of shale in a matrix of pale brown sand, 0.24m thick (context 31) which overlay a modern levelling layer of a red compact clay containing stone chunks, brick fragments and coal flecks (context 32). These layers are associated with the modern coal works and the adjacent car park.
- 5.2.2 Underlying contexts 31 and 32 was a 150mm-200mm thick deposit of a very dark brown mottled silty-clay with few inclusions, which probably comprised the working surface of the area prior to its use as a car park by the National Coal Board. A sondage through context 33 was removed by machine revealed a layer of red compact clay (context 34) which had no inclusions and was believed to be naturally occurring geological subsoil.

Trench 2  
Deposits labelled  
390-440m

## 6. FINDS ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 The finds recovered from the evaluation at Holditch Colliery, Newcastle-under-Lyme have been examined by Gifford and Partners. All finds retrieved from the sample excavation were collected for analysis, in particular to obtain a date for the deposit from which they were recovered.
- 6.2 All of the finds (except for the iron nails) have been cleaned, marked and bagged by material category and context.
- 6.3 The enclosed Bulk Finds Record sheet (Appendix C) summarises the categories of finds materials found within each context, together with the type of deposit from which they were recovered (site category) and provisional date for the formation of the context. The abbreviations on the Bulk Finds Record sheet include:

Ce	-	Ceramic
Gl	-	Glass
Fe	-	Iron
Sl	-	Slag
BM	-	Building Material
L	-	Leather

In this assessment the finds are discussed by material category, with an assessment of the level of preservation and dating potential of each category. The finds present few conservation implications provided they are stored in a stable, dry environment with low humidity conditions.

### 6.4 Glass

A fragment of nineteenth-twentieth century greenish-clear window glass was recovered from a pit fill in Trench 1 (context 28). The glass fragment is well-preserved with no indications of devitrification and is clearly derived from the recent demolition of modern Coal Board buildings on the site.

### 6.5 Iron

- 6.5.1 Eight iron nails were retrieved from a modern levelling layer (context 5) and a pit fill (context 27) in Trench 1. The nails retrieved from the pit fill were badly damaged and encrusted but remained identifiable. A heavy iron hook, broken into three parts was retrieved from a ditch fill (context 14). It is circular in section with a continuous diameter of 150mm narrowing slightly towards the point. A hook this size would have been used for industrial or agricultural purposes.

- 6.5.2 All iron objects are heavily encrusted with corrosion products, but the preservation level would appear to be good.
- 6.5.3 The objects appear to be post-Medieval/modern in date associated with the post-Medieval agricultural phase which preceded the present industrial coal mining works and the works themselves.

## 6.6 Slag

Fragments of metalworking residue (slag) were recovered from Trench 1, context 27. With a total weight of 225g the slag cannot be regarded as evidence of any former metalworking activity within the evaluation site- although some activity is probable in the vicinity.

## 6.7 Ceramic

- 6.7.1 The Ceramic Record sheet in Appendix C fully records the range and quantity of ceramic material recovered. All of the ceramic fabrics represented are well-preserved, although much of the assemblage comprises small abraded sherds. The fabrics would appear to be mainly of local/regional origin, but also include Black Burnished Ware produced in Dorset. All the sherds recovered originate from domestic vessels - jugs, plates, cups and storage vessels.
- 6.7.2 The Roman wares comprise the largest component of the ceramic assemblage and include black-on-brown coarse ware, amphorae, mortaria, orange-ware, greyware and Black Burnished ware. The wares are typical of domestic rubbish deposition dating from the Roman period.
- 6.7.3 However, two sherds of nineteenth century porcelaineous ware and glazed earthenware were found in the upper levelling layers (context 3) of Trench 1. These sherds clearly are of deposits of domestic refuse.

## 6.8 Leather

- 6.8.1 A small fragment of leather was recovered from the fill of a pit (context 30). On excavation the leather fragment was found to be quite strong with little evidence of delamination. Immediate stabilisation was achieved by recreating the stable equilibrium of the burial environment by immersion in water under refrigerated conditions.
- 6.8.2 The leather fragment is so small that it cannot be wholly determined as to the function or nature of the piece. However on the basis of the pits stratigraphic

relationship with contexts 19, 21 and 26 the pit can be provisionally dated to the Roman period.

## **6.9 Building Material**

6.9.1 Four large pieces of slightly curved roofing tiles were recovered from context 27 and on closer examination and on the basis of association with Roman ceramics are Roman in date. The presence of roofing tiles in association with possible sandstone construction material, further substantiates the presence of a demolished structure situated near to the evaluation trench.

6.9.2 The tile sherds were only slightly abraded but relatively well-preserved and, there are no conservation implications.

## **6.10 Summary**

The finds recovered from the evaluation are typical of the Roman period and clearly represent domestic debris deposition. The small assemblage of finds confirms the dating of the deposits from which the finds were deposited. There is no potential for further study of the finds.

## 7. DISCUSSION

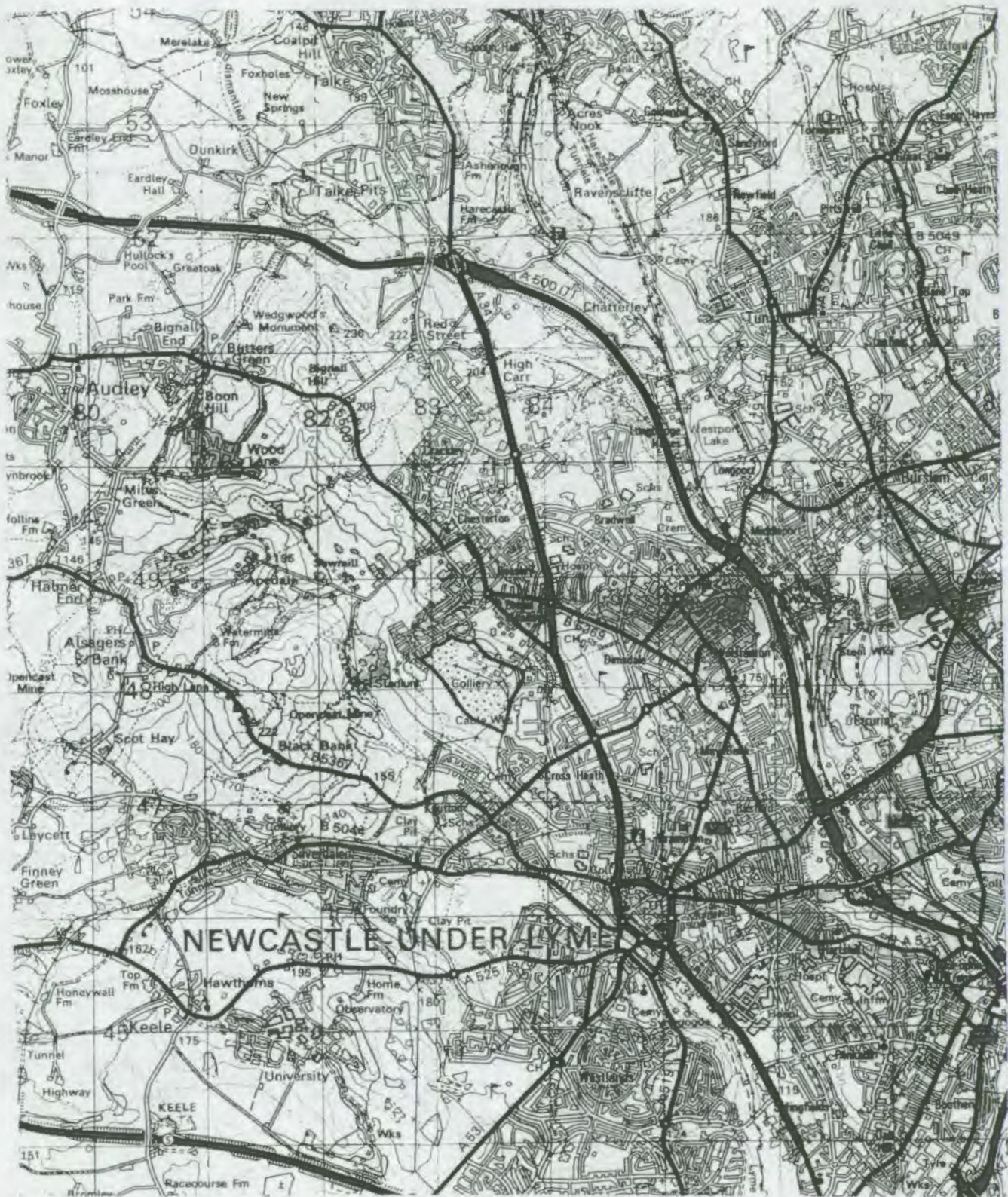
- 7.1 The survival of the Romano-British pits within the area of development suggests a connection with adjacent Romano-British occupation previously attested through excavations undertaken during the last thirty years. The high content of sandstone in the pit fills and the redeposited sandstone in the vicinity was deposited across the area. The presence of a sizable structure nearby may possibly be identified as the 'bathhouse' located in the 1960s and situated to the east of the evaluation site (Rogers 1995, 130).
- 7.2 The ploughsoil located directly above the ruts/furrows coincides with the post-Medieval ploughsoil located during the excavation undertaken at Spencroft Road by Gifford and Partners in 1995. The soil survived to a depth of 100mm-300mm underneath the modern overburden and covered the entire site of the excavation. The ploughsoil can be tentatively dated to the post-Medieval period through association (Rogers 1995,30).
- 7.3 The discovery of Romano-British features on the south-eastern boundary of the Holditch settlement contributes to our understanding of the extent and development of the settlement complex. The extent of the settlement within the area up to now has been relatively unknown due to the large-scale disturbance of the area by open cast mining. However this evaluation has demonstrated the presence of Romano-British features at this location, the furthest known extent towards the south-east.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The are of proposed development has an archaeological significance. The results from Trench 1 have provided further evidence for the presence and extent of Romano-British archaeological remains at Holditch. The evidence has also added to the weight of the argument for Chesterton/Holditch being identified as the site of Mediolanum referred to in the Antonine Itinerary.
- 8.2 Assuming that the proposed sub-surface disturbance in the area of Trench 1 can be avoided and that the associated absence of archaeological remains in Trench 2 is accepted Gifford believe that there may be no further requirement for additional site evaluation works.

## 9. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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*Lyme.* (Report No. 6768.03), Gifford and  
Partners Ltd. Unpublished.



**KEY**

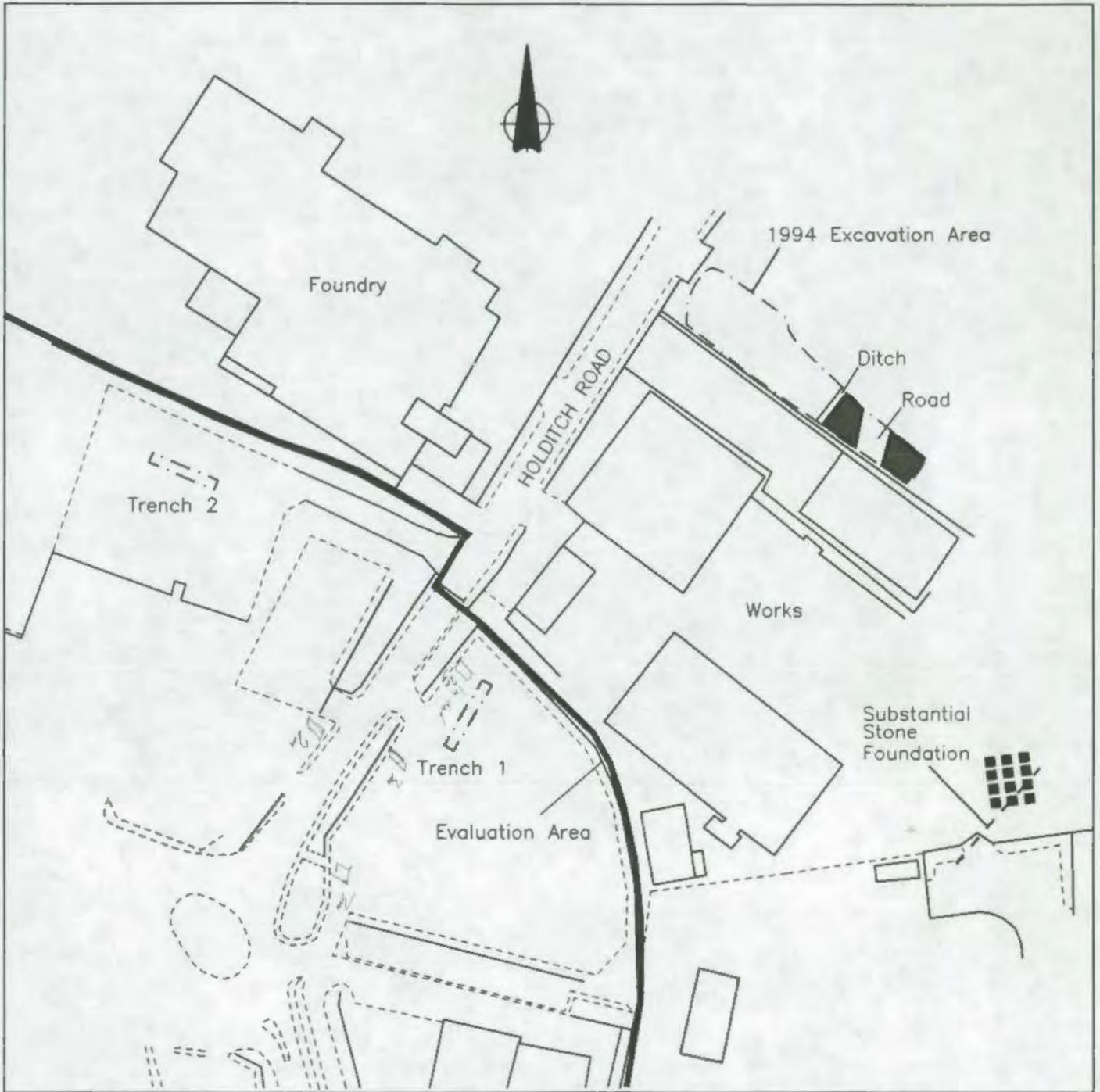
————— Area of Reclamation

Project	B0037 HOLDITCH	Drawn	Checked	Approved
		G.C.R.	<i>JP</i>	<i>AT</i>
Title	FIGURE 1 LOCATION PLAN OF AREA OF RECLAMATION	Date	30.10.96	
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		Drawing no.	B0037 : 6D	
			Rev.	

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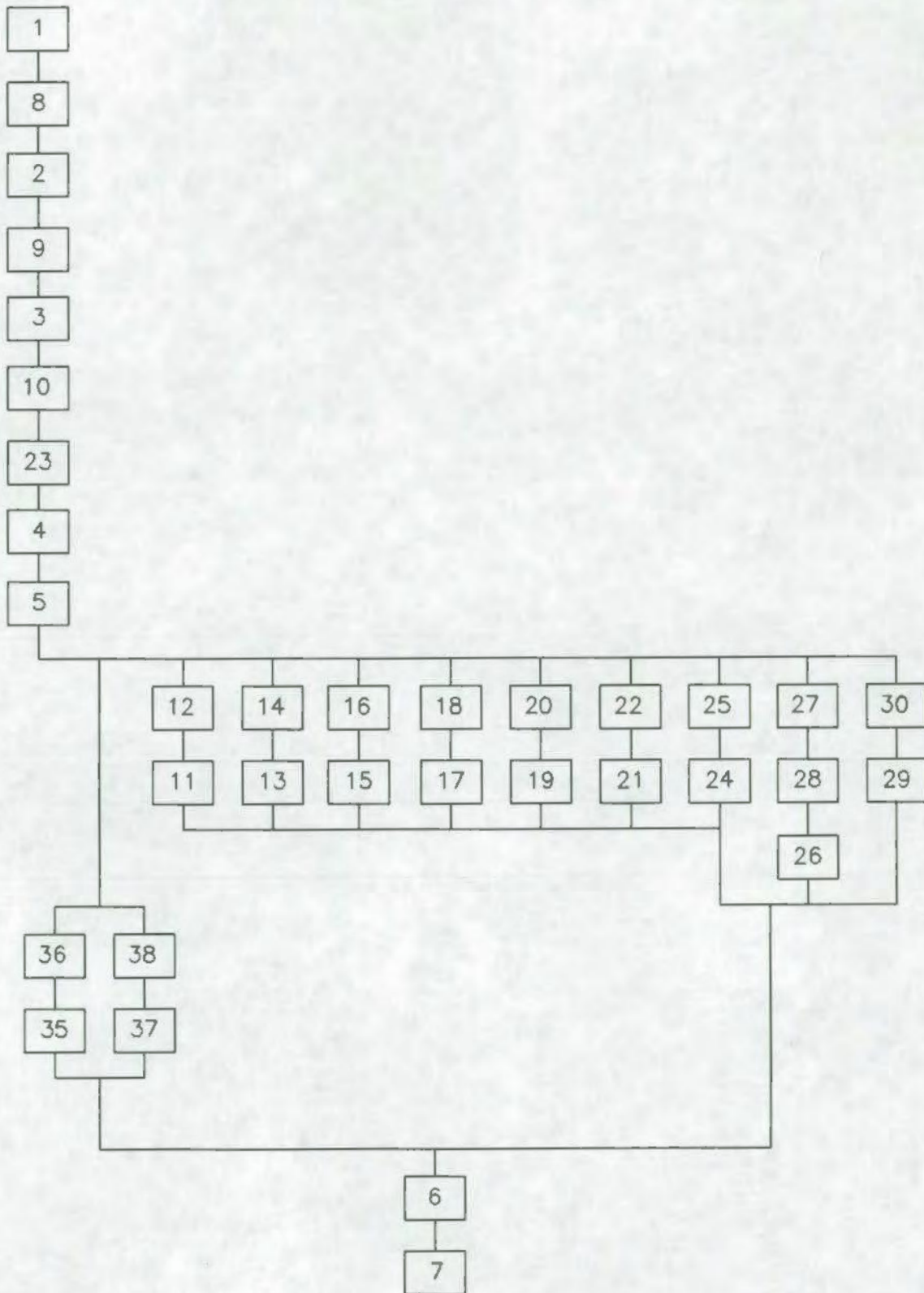






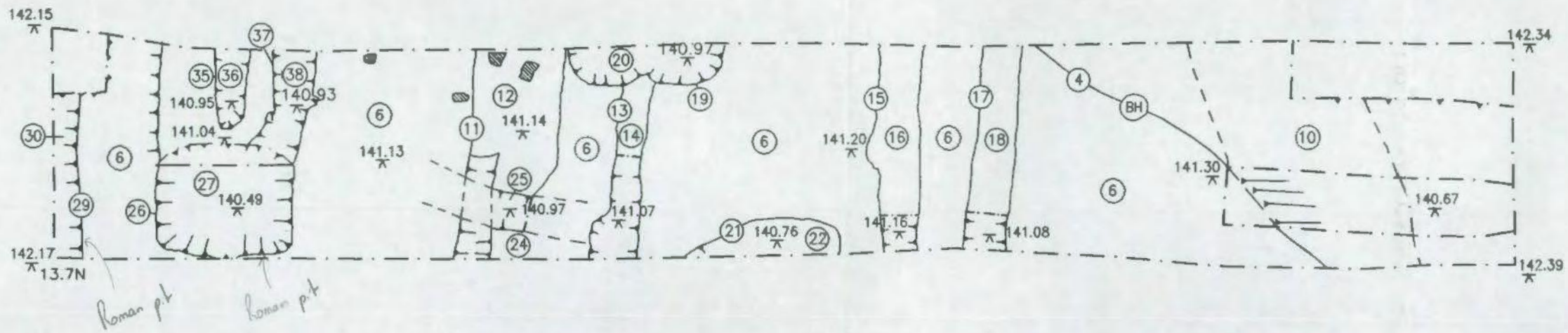
Project	B0037 HOLDITCH	Drawn	Checked	Approved	<b>GIFFORD AND PARTNERS</b>  Archaeology
		G.C.R.	<i>JP</i>	<i>AT</i>	
Title	FIGURE 2 TRENCH LOCATION PLAN	Date	29.10.96		
		Scale	1:1250		
		Drawing no.	B0037 : 7D		
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Project	B0037 HOLDITCH	Drawn	Checked	Approved	<b>GIFFORD AND PARTNERS</b>  Archaeology
		G.C.R.	<i>JP</i>	<i>AT</i>	
Title	FIGURE 3 STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX OF TRENCH 1	Date	30.10.96		
		Scale	N/A		
		Drawing no.	B0037 : 8D		Rev.

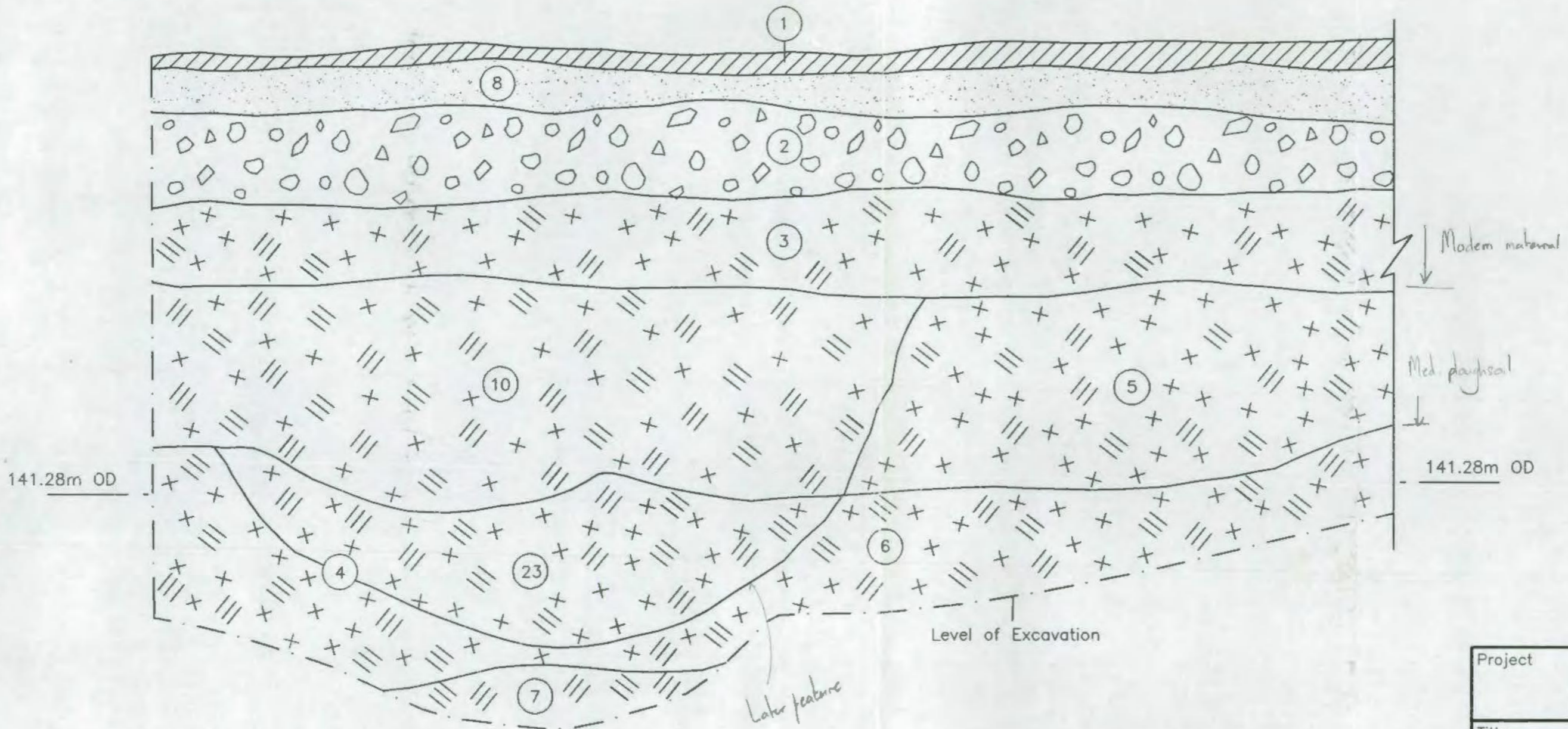









**KEY**

---	EDGE OF EXCAVATION
⊞	STONE
BH	BORE HOLE

Project		B0037 HOLDITCH	
Title		FIGURE 4 TRENCH 1 PLAN	
Drawn	Checked	Approved	
G.C.R.	JP	AT	
Date		25.6.96	
Scale		1:50	
Drawing no.		B0037 : 9D	
		Rev.	
<b>GIFFORD AND PARTNERS Archaeology</b>			



**KEY**

-  Tarmacadam
-  Sand
-  Silt
-  Clay
-  Hardcore

Project **B0037**  
**HOLDITCH**

Title **FIGURE 5**  
**SECTION THROUGH CONTEXT 4**

Drawn G.C.R.	Checked JP	Approved AT
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Date **30.10.96**

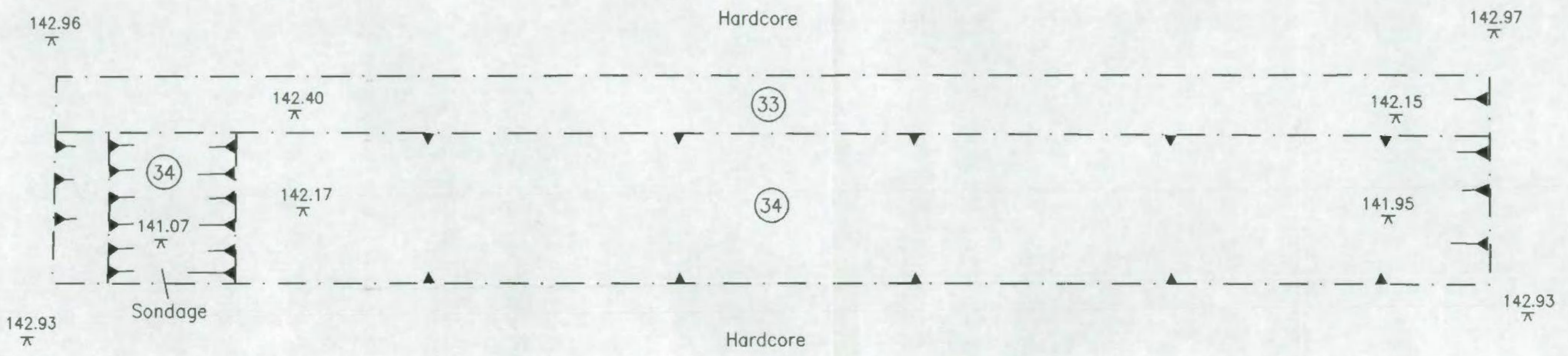
Scale **1:10**

Drawing no. <b>B0037 : 10D</b>	Rev.
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Project	B0037 HOLDITCH	Drawn	Checked	Approved	<b>GIFFORD AND PARTNERS</b>  Archaeology
		G.C.R.	<i>JP</i>	<i>AT</i>	
Title	FIGURE 6 STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX OF TRENCH 2	Date	30.10.96		
		Scale	N/A		
		Drawing no.	B0037 : 11D	Rev.	



**KEY**  
 ———— EDGE OF EXCAVATION  
 Hardcore = (31)

Project		
B0037 HOLDITCH		
Title		
FIGURE 7 TRENCH 2 PLAN		
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G.C.R.	JP	AT
Date 25.9.96		
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Drawing no.		Rev.
B0037 : 12D		
<b>GIFFORD AND PARTNERS</b> Archaeology		

## APPENDICES

**APPENDIX A**  
**The Brief**



**HOLDITCH COLLIERY SITE**  
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE EVALUATION**  
**DRAFT BRIEF AND SCHEDULE**

**Introduction**

In the light of an archaeological desk-top assessment it is apparent that a proposed development of the above site might carry archaeological implications. A Roman settlement has long been recognized at Holditch near Newcastle-under-Lyme though its full extent is uncertain. The area has been subject to considerable modern disturbance caused by industrial development. Nevertheless, archaeological remains have been excavated in the immediate vicinity by Gifford and Partners in the recent past.

Prior to the determination of any planning application for development it is necessary to understand whether or not the proposed works would carry any archaeological implications and therefore a site evaluation is required to be undertaken in two separate stages. The purpose of this document is to set out the brief and schedule for the first stage - the evaluation of the site of the former Holditch Colliery.

**Brief**

An archaeological site evaluation shall be undertaken in accordance with the schedule set out below.

The primary objective will be to determine the potential for the survival of archaeological remains, particularly of Romano-British date, within the former colliery site. However, the specific questions to be addressed are as follows:

1. Does any pre-industrial archaeological evidence remain on the site?
2. If there is potential for the survival of pre-modern archaeological deposits what are their date, character and quality, and how vulnerable would they be to the proposed development?
3. If no pre-modern archaeological remains are identified, is this because there is a surviving pre-industrial ground horizon which was not subject to Romano-British or other settlement activity, or has all potential to address this question been destroyed?

**Location of the site**

See enclosed desk-top assessment.

## Archaeological background

See enclosed desk-top assessment.

### Schedule of work

#### *Objectives*

To address the questions set out in the above brief and submit a written site evaluation report.

#### *Documentation*

No documentary searches are required for this evaluation: see enclosed desk-top assessment.

#### *Geophysical survey*

No geophysical survey is required.

#### *Excavation*

In the light of the desk-top assessment the most practical way of establishing whether or not any Romano-British or other sensitive archaeological deposits extend into the proposed development site would be to excavate two trenches at the locations identified in figure 5 of the enclosed report. Each trench shall be not less than 15m long by 2m wide and shall be excavated down to the underlying natural deposits or to a maximum depth of 1.5 - 2m with any appropriate support and conform with CDM Regulations 1994.

## Working method

The upper deposits may be removed by mechanical excavator provided that it is operated only under the supervision of an appropriately qualified archaeologist. Machine excavation shall cease at any archaeological horizon which might be encountered and thereafter excavations shall be carried out by hand. However, in the absence of sensitive archaeological deposits within the parameters described above, the total excavation may be carried out by machine.

If encountered, the uppermost archaeological horizon shall be cleaned by hand and any identified features shall be recorded in plan. Negative features shall be sectioned by hand to enable their date/period, nature, extent and condition to be recorded and described.

If the uppermost archaeological deposit(s) is/are of limited conservation interest or potential it/they shall be sequentially removed by hand excavation and recorded to an appropriate standard.

Sondages may be excavated with a view to testing the depth, character, dating and interpretation of deposits.

If appropriate, environmental sampling shall be undertaken, and a report upon the samples shall be included in the evaluation report.

#### Method of recording

All deposits, whether archaeologically significant or not, shall be recorded in section and, as necessary in plan, at an appropriate scale, and shall be photographed. The site records shall be made in accordance with acknowledged standards as defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists. The site archive will include plans and sections at an appropriate scale, a photographic record, and full stratigraphic records on recording forms/context sheets. If the information is stored electronically a hard copy shall be supplied in addition to any disc.

The record of any archaeological features encountered shall be sufficiently detailed to facilitate consideration of the need for preservation in situ, or to evaluate the strategy and costs of any appropriate level of further excavation and recording.

An appropriate finds recording system shall be employed: finds recording and conservation shall be undertaken by a suitably qualified person.

#### Post-excavation work

The post-excavation work shall be carried out immediately on completion of site investigations.

The site archive shall be prepared in accordance with established guidelines.

#### Deposition of archive and finds

The finds and archive shall be deposited at an appropriate museum, such as the City Museum Art Gallery at Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent. It will be the responsibility of the contractor to agree terms of deposition with the museum, and any financial implications should be taken into account when preparing tenders.

#### The evaluation report

The written and illustrated evaluation report shall be completed not more than eight weeks after the date when works are completed on site. The report shall be copied to:

- a. The client
- b. The County Sites and Monuments Record
- c. The National Monuments Record (Swindon).

#### Monitoring

Sufficient notice shall be given to the Director of Planning and Economic Development of Staffordshire County Council to ensure that an archaeologist from that department can monitor the fieldwork.

One site meeting shall take place during the course of the site evaluation. In addition to the archaeological curator, representatives of the client shall be afforded an opportunity to attend. The meeting shall take place at such time that the results of the evaluation are likely to be apparent and prior to the backfilling of the trenches.

### **Conditions**

The appointed contractor shall indemnify the client against any proceedings in respect of personal injury or death of any person arising out of the agreed works unless due to any act, omission or neglect of the client.

The appointed contractor shall maintain, and ensure that any sub-contractor maintains, an appropriate level of insurance, which will comply with the *Employers Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969* and any statutory orders made thereunder or any amendment or re-enactment thereof.

The appointed contractor shall take all reasonable measures to ensure that only persons authorised by the terms of the contract to enter the area of the excavations shall be allowed to do so, save with the express authority of the client.

The appointed contractor shall locate and mark all the existing services on site prior to any excavation work, particularly the existing 300mm diameter mine drainage (METHANE GAS). A plan No. OR1338/ROO/11 showing the existing services on site is enclosed.

The appointed contractor shall agree with the client or his representative the exact locations of the proposed trenches prior to any excavation work.

Copyright in all documentation arising out of the site evaluation shall remain vested in the archaeological contractor.

### **Supplementary**

For a final draft of this document, or of a contract, the client should specify or include additional clauses regarding:  
arrangements for back-filling (loose or compacted, and with what material)  
payment  
Delays  
agreed terms for withdrawal by either side.

An appropriate clause should be included, requiring the contractor to follow acknowledged site safety standards and regulations. The contractor can be asked to supply a copy of the health and safety policy.

It would be helpful to the appointed contractor to supply the names, addresses and telephone numbers of the following:

the client  
The County Sites and Monuments Record  
any site agents or others involved in site management.

**APPENDIX B**  
**The Project Design**

## **PART B: PROJECT DESIGN**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This tender has been prepared by Gifford and Partners Ltd on behalf of the Client, Staffordshire Engineering Consultants. The Project Design is written in accordance with the Draft Brief and Schedule for Archaeological Site Evaluation at Holditch Colliery Site, Newcastle-Under-Lyme, prepared by the Department of Planning and Economic Development, Staffordshire County Council (hereafter referred to as 'the Planning Archaeologist'). The Draft Brief is reproduced in Appendix A.
- 1.2 This Project Design is formatted according to the recommended model detailed in the English Heritage document *Management of Archaeological Projects* Second Edition (1991).

### **2. DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA AND THE EVALUATION SITE**

- 2.1 The proposed evaluation site lies at National Grid Reference: SJ 83804820, on the north-western edge of Newcastle-Under-Lyme. The A34(T) runs to the east of the site and extensive residential areas lie to the north and south. To the west the land is more open and rural in nature.
- 2.2 The site lies close to the Roman settlement at Chesterton, 1km north-west of Holditch, which focused on the Ashfield Brook. This site extended over at least 18 hectares although the south-western, south-eastern and north-eastern boundaries of the settlement remain unknown. Within the settlement, a range of features have been recognised during a series of excavations. These features include a substantial metalled road, lesser thoroughfares, building foundations, boundary ditch and evidence of metalworking. The most recent excavations were undertaken in 1994 by Gifford and Partners (Gifford Report no 6768.02).
- 2.3 The Holditch Colliery site has been subject to extensive ground disturbance and settling tanks and slurry pits are located on the southern and western areas of the site. The north-eastern area of the site has been less subject to disturbance and is the portion of the site which lies closest to the known area of Roman remains.

### **3. REASON FOR PROJECT**

- 3.1 In view of the extensive archaeological remains close to the proposed site, which is demonstrated in a desk-top assessment of the site (prepared by Staffordshire County Council), it is apparent that proposed development on the site may carry archaeological implications.

- 3.2 In view of a planning application for development of the site an evaluation is required to further the understanding of the presence and nature of any archaeology on the site, prior to the determination of the planning application.
- 3.3 The proposed development works involve extensive landscaping of the site.

#### 4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 The general aim of the archaeological work is to identify human activity in relation to the site of proposed development and so further understand the history and development of human activity on the site and its environs. Gifford will incorporate the results of this work with that from earlier Gifford work on the Romano-British site in the area.
- 4.2 The specific aim is to evaluate the presence, extent, nature, date and survival of archaeological remains on the site, particularly in relation to those of Romano-British date.
- 4.3 The objectives of the archaeological work include determination of:
- the presence and survival of pre-industrial archaeological evidence and their date, character and quality.
  - the potential impact on pre-industrial remains posed by the proposed development.
  - whether the absence of pre-modern archaeological remains is a true reflection of the lack of pre-modern activity or occupation of the site or whether it is due to later disturbance which has destroyed the archaeological evidence.

#### 5. METHOD STATEMENT

- 5.1 Two trenches will be excavated in the eastern portion of the site, each measuring 15m x 2m and will be excavated to the level of underlying natural (deposits undisturbed by human activity) or to a depth of 1.5 - 2m.
- 5.2 The sides of the trenches will be shored from a depth of at least 1.2m below current ground level.
- 5.3 Excavation will be undertaken using a machine equipped with a toothless ditching bucket. The machine will be used only to remove surface levels and clearly disturbed or recent deposits. All remaining deposits will be excavated stratigraphically by hand.



- 5.4 All the existing services on the site which lie within or in the vicinity of the evaluation trenches will be marked, prior to the excavation, particularly the existing 300mm diameter mine drainage (Methane Gas). The supplied plan No OR1338/R00/11 will be used for this purpose.
- 5.5 The exact location of the trenches will be agreed with the Client and Planning Archaeologist prior to the excavation work.
- 5.6 Deposits/features revealed will be investigated by the excavation of partial cross-sections in order to allow their nature, extent, condition and date to be described and understood, but no deposit or feature will be entirely removed at this stage.
- 5.7 Sufficient sample sections will be excavated in order to allow an assessment of the extent and depth of archaeologically significant deposits and features across the site to be made.
- 5.8 All archaeological deposits revealed during the hand-cleaning and sample-section excavation will be recorded using the Gifford and Partners system based on that developed by English Heritage, Central Archaeology Service. *Proformae* examples of context, finds and sample recording forms are given in Appendix B.
- 5.9 A levelling survey related to the nearest Ordnance Survey datum point will be completed covering the evaluation works.
- 5.10 Deposits will be sampled for environmental evidence where appropriate. Palaeoenvironmental samples will be collected from any deposits considered suitable and as agreed with the Planning Archaeologist.
- 5.11 The photographic record will comprise 35mm format colour slides and colour /monochrome prints with a supporting index (Appendix B).
- 5.12 The drawn record will comprise plans of the site at a suitable scale, trench plans at scale 1:20 and sections at scale 1:10.
- 5.13 Artefacts and ecofacts will be collected and recorded stratigraphically. All artefacts will be labelled, packed and stored in appropriate materials and conditions to ensure that no deterioration occurs. All artefact and ecofact processing and storage will be carried out in accordance with United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (Archaeology Section) guidelines and shall accord with relevant Institute of Field Archaeologists *Guidelines on Finds Work*.
- 5.14 Gifford and Partners will be responsible for the safety and security of the archaeological excavation works. Fencing will be erected and maintained as required by the Client.

5.15 The two trenches excavated will be backfilled using the excavated material. No other reinstatement is included in this Project Design.

## 6. ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT

6.1 Immediately upon completion of the site work, an assessment of the site archive will be undertaken to include all written, drawn and photographic records, artefacts and ecofacts/samples.

6.2 A site matrix will be compiled with a summary account of the context record.

6.3 Artefacts will be assessed to provide dating, social, economic and technological information. Special or unusual features will be highlighted and reference made to other material recovered from the immediate environs of the evaluation site.

6.4 The requirements for artefact conservation will be considered and discussed with a specialist conservator.

6.5 The suitability of deposits identified during the evaluation for palaeoenvironmental analysis will be assessed and with the agreement of the Planning Archaeologist, samples requiring analysis will be forwarded to a specialist sub-contractor.

6.6 Samples taken for radiocarbon dating will be forwarded to a specialist sub-contractor.

## 7. REPORT

7.1 Two fully illustrated reports will be submitted to the Client within eight weeks of the completion of the on-site works. One copy will be forwarded to the Sites and Monuments Record for Staffordshire, one to the National Monuments Record (Swindon), and one will form part of the project archive.

7.2 The report will contain the following:-

- a non-technical summary.
- a table of contents.
- an introduction.
- a statement of the project aims.
- an account of the project methodology with assessment of the same.

- a summary of the geological, topographical, archaeological and historical background of the evaluation area.
- a description of the evaluation results including all archaeologically significant features or deposits or potential features or deposits identified within the evaluation site.
- a discussion of the location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any archaeological deposits or features uncovered together with a discussion of their relationship with known archaeology in the vicinity.
- a discussion of the research implications arising from the evaluation work.
- relevant plans and sections at suitable scales relating to the sample excavation and cross-referenced with the written text.
- other maps, plans, drawings and photographs as appropriate.
- a full bibliography of sources consulted.
- an index to the project archive and a statement of its location and proposed repository.
- recommendations for mitigating measures (such as design modification or further archaeological investigation) in order to minimise the effect of the proposed development on areas of archaeological potential, will be presented (under separate cover if required).

7.3 Appendices to the report will contain the following:-

- a copy of the agreed Project Design
- an indication of any departure from the agreed Project Design with justification of the same.

7.4 A draft version of the report will be made available to the Client and the Planning Archaeologist for comment before the final report is issued.

7.5 With the agreement of the Client, and if appropriate, a summary report on the evaluation will be submitted to a suitable local journal such as *West Midlands Archaeology*.

## 8. ARCHIVE

- 8.1 The project archive will be submitted to the Museum and Art Gallery, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent and will consist of all original records, artefacts, ecofacts/samples, and all documentation that relates to the evaluation. Copies of the Brief and Project Design and any relevant correspondence will be included.
- 8.2 The archive will be prepared according to the *Management of Archaeological Projects*, English Heritage, Second Edition, (1991). The records therefore will be fully ordered and indexed. A summary of the contents will be prepared and deposited with the archive.
- 8.3 The archive will comply with the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (Archaeology Section) *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-Term Storage* (1990) and with the requirements of the Museum and Art Gallery, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent.
- 8.4 The archive will be deposited within six months of the completion of the evaluation with the agreement of the Client/landowner(s).
- 8.5 Gifford and Partners will ensure that written consent from the landowner(s) is obtained before archive deposition.
- 8.6 A synopsis of the archive will be lodged with Staffordshire Sites and Monuments Record.
- 8.7 Reproducible elements of the archive will be security-copied on microfiche and submitted to the National Monuments Record (Swindon).

## 9. CONFIDENTIALITY, PUBLICITY, SECURITY AND ACCESS

- 9.1 Gifford and Partners will treat as confidential all information obtained directly or indirectly from the Client in connection with the project. Gifford will not, without the prior written consent of the Client, disclose any information relating to the project or publicise the project in any way.
- 9.2 Gifford will be responsible for adequate safety precautions on site including fencing if required.
- 9.3 Gifford will be responsible for the security of excavated material and records relating to the evaluation prior to submission of the archive to the final repository.

- 9.4 Gifford will take all reasonable measures to restrict access to the evaluation site to the Client and their nominated representatives.
- 9.5 Gifford will conform to the Client's arrangements for notification of entering and leaving the site.

## 10. COPYRIGHT

Gifford and Partners will retain full copyright of any commissioned reports, tender documents or other project documents, under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act of 1988* with all rights reserved; excepting that Gifford and Partners hereby provide an exclusive licence to the Client for the use of such documents by the Client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in this Project Design.

## 11. HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 11.1 Gifford and Partners operate in accordance with the health and safety procedures as set out in:-
- the *Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)*.
  - the Construction Design and Management (CDM) Regulations (1995).
  - the Standing Conference of Archaeology Unit Managers *Health and Safety Manual (1991)*.
  - the Council for British Archaeology Handbook no. 6, *Safety in Archaeological Fieldwork (1989)*.
  - the Gifford *Health and Safety Handbook*.
- 11.2 In accordance with recent CDM legislation Gifford and Partners will prepare a Risk Assessment prior to the commencement of the evaluation.
- 11.3 All necessary protective clothing and equipment will be used. The archaeologists on site will wear hard hats at all times. Ear defenders and eye goggles will be used, as required, when machinery is in operation.
- 11.4 A First-Aid kit and Accident Book will be kept on site at all times, with a list of contact names/addresses and telephone numbers of the nearest doctors/hospital as part of the site *Health and Safety File*.

## 12. PROJECT MONITORING

12.1 Gifford and Partners understand that the project will be monitored by the Client, Newcastle-Under-Lyme Borough Council and the Planning Archaeologist. Sufficient notice will be given to the Director of Planning and Economic Development of Staffordshire County Council to ensure that an archaeologist from that department can monitor the fieldwork.

12.2 Gifford propose to arrange the following meetings to ensure the smooth progress of the project:

- a preliminary consultation between Gifford and the monitors to agree the Project Design, conditions of contract and other preliminaries such as location of evaluation trenches.
- site meetings between Gifford and the monitors during the evaluation as appropriate.
- a site meeting between Gifford and the monitors on completion of the evaluation in order to identify areas to be archaeologically excavated. This will take place prior to the backfilling of the trenches.

12.3 Gifford understand that report and archive preparation may also be subject to monitoring and will ensure all records are available upon request as far as is reasonably practicable.

12.4 Gifford will minute all monitoring consultations and distribute minutes accordingly.

12.5 Gifford will provide the Client with progress reports as required during the evaluation.

## 13. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Gifford and Partners will manage the project in accordance with the Gifford quality management system which is third party accredited by Lloyd's Quality Assurance to BS 5750, Part 1, ISO 9001.

## 14. RESOURCES AND PROGRAMMING

### 14.1 Staff

Project Director: T J Strickland MA FSA MIFA  
(Project direction)

Associate Archaeologist: A Thompson BA Diploma in Post Excavation Studies  
(Project management, artefact analysis and report; editing of evaluation report)

Archaeologist: I Rogers BA/A Martin BA PIFA  
(Attendance at monitoring meetings with Client and Planning Archaeologist; supervision of site staff; preparation of evaluation report text)

Archaeologist: J Perkins MA PIFA  
(Excavation and recording works)

Archaeology Technician: G Reaney  
(Preparation of report illustrations)

Archaeology Technician: L Morris  
(Preparation of project archive)

Specialist Sub-Contractor: Hereford and Worcester Archaeology Unit  
(Palaeoenvironmental analysis and report)

## 15. THE GIFFORD ORGANISATION

### 15.1 Gifford and Partners Limited

- 15.1.1 Gifford and Partners, originally formed in the 1950s, employs approximately 3000 people. The Partnership, a member of the Association of Consulting Engineers, is totally independent and unlimited in liability, except by the provisions of the Professional Indemnity Insurance level, which is in accordance with current Government requirements.
- 15.1.2 The Partnership practices from offices in Chester, York, Southampton and London and operates a quality management system, which is third party accredited by Lloyd's Quality Assurance to BS 5750 Part 1, ISO 9001.
- 15.1.3 The Practice is multidisciplinary offering services in civil, structural and building services engineering, as well as a complete archaeology service.

### 15.2 The Gifford Archaeology Service

- 15.2.1 The Archaeology Service of Gifford and Partners Limited offers a wide range of skills and experience having been involved in projects throughout Britain and abroad. In addition the expertise and facilities of the well-established engineering company are fully available whenever appropriate. The Archaeology Service offers a comprehensive service ranging from consultation, advice and negotiation on behalf of clients, through survey and assessment exercises, representation at public enquiries to the completion of full-scale fieldwork and post-excavation projects. The team have many years experience in the design and management of feasibility and environmental assessment projects, together with extensive experience of working closely with the construction industry. They are keenly aware that speed of response, efficiency and professionalism are of paramount importance.
- 15.2.2 The Archaeology Service has carried out a wide range of work for clients involving data appraisal, field evaluation and liaising with specialist sub-contractors. Reports can include the identification and assessment of archaeological implications and mitigatory measures, as required by the Client. The unique combination of disciplines within Gifford and Partners Limited allows the company to bring combined engineering and archaeological expertise to bear on the formulation of mitigation strategies.
- 15.2.3 The Archaeology team also know from past experience the vital necessity of close co-ordination with other members of the project team in order to ensure the timely success of a project.



**APPENDIX C**  
**The Ceramic and Bulk Finds Record Sheets**



