

Land off Clays Lane, Branston, Staffordshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



EXPERTISE WHERE YOU NEED IT

Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 1858

AUGUST 2018



*Working for
Warwickshire*

Project: Clays Lane, Branston, Staffs
Commissioned by: CgMs Heritage
Site Code: SBC18
Planning Reference: P/2014/01460
Planning Authority: East Staffordshire District Council
National Grid Reference: SK 2270 2130
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SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation, comprising four 50m x 1.8m trial trenches, was carried out on behalf of CgMs Heritage. Geological natural sand and gravel was exposed in all trenches but no significant archaeological deposits or finds were recorded.

A large pit in Trench 1 contained a considerable number of broken beer bottles from a local Burton on Trent brewery and probably dated to the early 20th century. Trench 2 contained a small area of modern disturbance which contained an oil hose and a few fragments of brick and concrete.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Planning permission has been granted for residential development on land off Clays Lane, Branston (Planning Ref: P/2014/01460). It was a requirement of planning permission that a programme of trial trenching be carried prior to the development, in line with a Written Scheme of Investigation carried out by CgMs Heritage (Gillard 2017) on behalf of the developer.
- 1.2 Archaeology Warwickshire were commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation in accordance with the approved WSI, which took place on the 25th July 2018. This report presents the results of that work.
- 1.3 From the initial 12 trenches, the scope of the works was reduced to four trenches as geotechnical and other supporting data became available which established that no archaeological deposits survived in the southern and eastern parts of the site due to landfill or other disturbance. As a result an amended WSI was approved by the Planning Archaeologist for the trenches on the unaffected western part of the site.
- 1.4 This work was carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Standard and guidance for field evaluation (2014).

2 SITE LOCATION *(after Gillard 2017)*

- 2.1 The site is located in the south-west of Branston and comprises c.2.5 hectares of land centred at National Grid Reference SK 2270 2130 (Fig 1). The site is bounded to the east by the railway line, to the south by Main Street, to the west by Clays Lane and to the north by rear property boundaries.

- 2.2 The British Geological Survey (BGS) 1:50,000 records the geology within the site as mudstone belonging to the Mercia Mudstone Group Formation. Superficial deposits are sand and gravel from the Holme Pierrepont Sand and Gravel Member Formation.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND *(after Gillard 2017)*

- 3.1 No designated heritage assets are recorded within the application area although several undesignated assets lie in close proximity.
- 3.2 Within 500m of the site there are five entries of archaeological activity recorded on Heritage Gateway;
- a possible Prehistoric enclosure identified from aerial photographs, c.340m north-west of the site;
 - a Bronze Age socketed palstave (MST6117), found c.420m north-west of the site;
 - the upstanding remains of Ryknild Street, c.50m and 116m west of the site and a ploughed-down section of the agger to Ryknild Street Roman road (MST21060), c.180m north of the site;
 - a possible Roman quernstone found c.170m west of the site (MST3432); and a series of linear features identified as possible Medieval trackways on aerial photographs c.150m north of the site (MST21056).

4 AIMS AND METHODS

4.1 The aims of the archaeological trial trenching are as follows:

- To determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any archaeological remains within the development site;
- To assess the artefactual and environmental potential of the archaeological deposits encountered;
- To assess the impact of previous land use on the site;
- To inform formulation of any further measures to mitigate impacts of the proposed development on surviving archaeological remains;
- To produce a site archive for deposition with an appropriate museum and to provide information for accession to the Staffordshire HER.

4.2 Following consultation with the Staffordshire Historic Environment Advisor a revised trench layout was agreed. The four trenches were opened up by a 360° excavator fitted with a 1.80m wide toothless ditching bucket.

4.3 Topsoil and other plough soils were removed under the supervision of an experienced archaeologist until either the top of archaeological remains or geological natural was reached.

5 RESULTS

Geological Natural

- 5.1 The geological natural across the site was dark yellowish brown sand and gravel (102, 202, 302 and 402) which was exposed at a depth of 0.4-0.5m below the current ground surface.

Deposit Sequence

- 5.2 Where not disturbed by anthropogenic activity, the gravel substrate was directly overlain by a simple sequence of gravel derived plough soils or subsoil (101, 201 etc), overlaid by topsoil (100, 200 etc).

Cut Features

- 5.3 Archaeological features were only encountered in Trenches 1 and 2. In Trench 1, pit 103, contained early 20th century broken beer bottles (104). In Trench 2, pit 203 contained an oil hose from a large vehicle as well as fragments of concrete and brick (204).

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 No significant archaeological deposits or finds were recorded on the site.
- 6.2 Pit 103 contained a number of broken beer bottles from a local brewery (Photo 2) as well as the brass plug that would have surrounded the tap on a beer barrel, also marked with the same brewer's name. This brewery, James Eadie and Co Ltd was founded in 1854 and was acquired by Bass Radcliffe and Gretton in 1933 (*information from Wikipedia*). The bottles are trade-marked with a cross symbol, which ought to date them to after 1893, when the company was registered. The cross symbol on the front of the bottle most likely is a reference to the brewery being located on Cross Street in Burton.
- 6.3 Modern disturbance encountered in Trench 2 was likely to be associated with the use of the site for several decades by a haulage firm.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeology Warwickshire would like to thank Simon Mortimer of CgMs Heritage for commissioning the work and Debbie Taylor from Staffordshire County Council for monitoring the work.

REFERENCES

Gillard, A, 2017 Written Scheme of Investigation for Trial Trenching: Land off Clays Lane, Branston, Staffordshire, CgMs Heritage.



1: Trench 1, looking north, with pit 103 in foreground



2: Beer bottles and barrel plug from pit 103



3: Trench 2, looking north, with pit 203 in foreground



4: Trench 3 looking north



5: Trench 4, looking west

APPENDICES

A List of contexts

Trench	Context	Description	Depth (m)	Comment
1	100	Dark grey sandy loam	0.15	Topsoil
1	101	Firm grey silty sand	0.30	Subsoil/old ploughsoil
1	102	Dark yellowish brown sand and gravel		Geological natural
1	103	Large pit	0.6	Pit
1	104	Greyish brown silty sand, firm, containing occasional brick fragments and numerous beer bottles	0.6	Pit fill (of 103), circa early 20th century
2	200	Dark grey sandy loam	0.20	Topsoil
2	201	Firm grey silty sand	0.30	Subsoil/old ploughsoil
2	202	Dark yellowish brown sand and gravel		Geological natural
2	203	Irregular backfilled pit	Unex.	Modern disturbance
2	204	Very dark greyish brown silty sand, firm. Containing brick, concrete and an oil hose	Unex.	Modern disturbance fill, circa late 20th century
3	300	Dark grey sandy loam	0.15	Topsoil
3	301	Firm grey silty sand	0.25	Subsoil/old ploughsoil
3	302	Dark yellowish brown sand and gravel		Geological natural
4	400	Dark grey sandy loam	0.15	Topsoil
4	401	Firm grey silty sand	0.25	Subsoil/old ploughsoil
4	402	Dark yellowish brown sand and gravel		Geological natural

B List of finds (not retained)

Context	Type	Quantity	Comment
104	Beer bottles	9	8 x JAMES EADIE LTD, BURTON ON TRENT, 1 x W. SEVERN & Co Ltd, DERBY
104	Copper alloy barrel plug	1	Marked JAMES EADIE BURTON ON TRENT

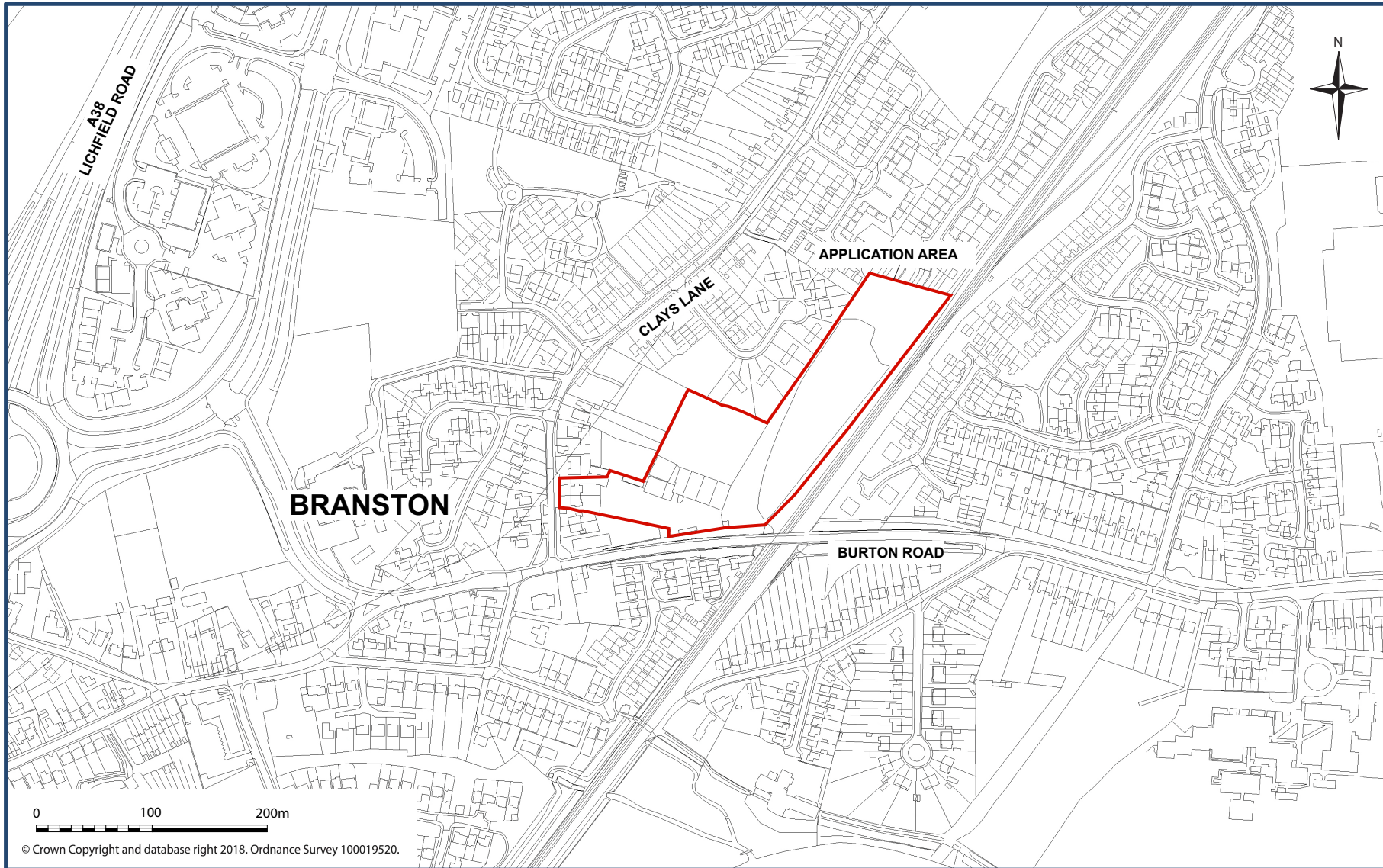


Fig 1: Location of application area

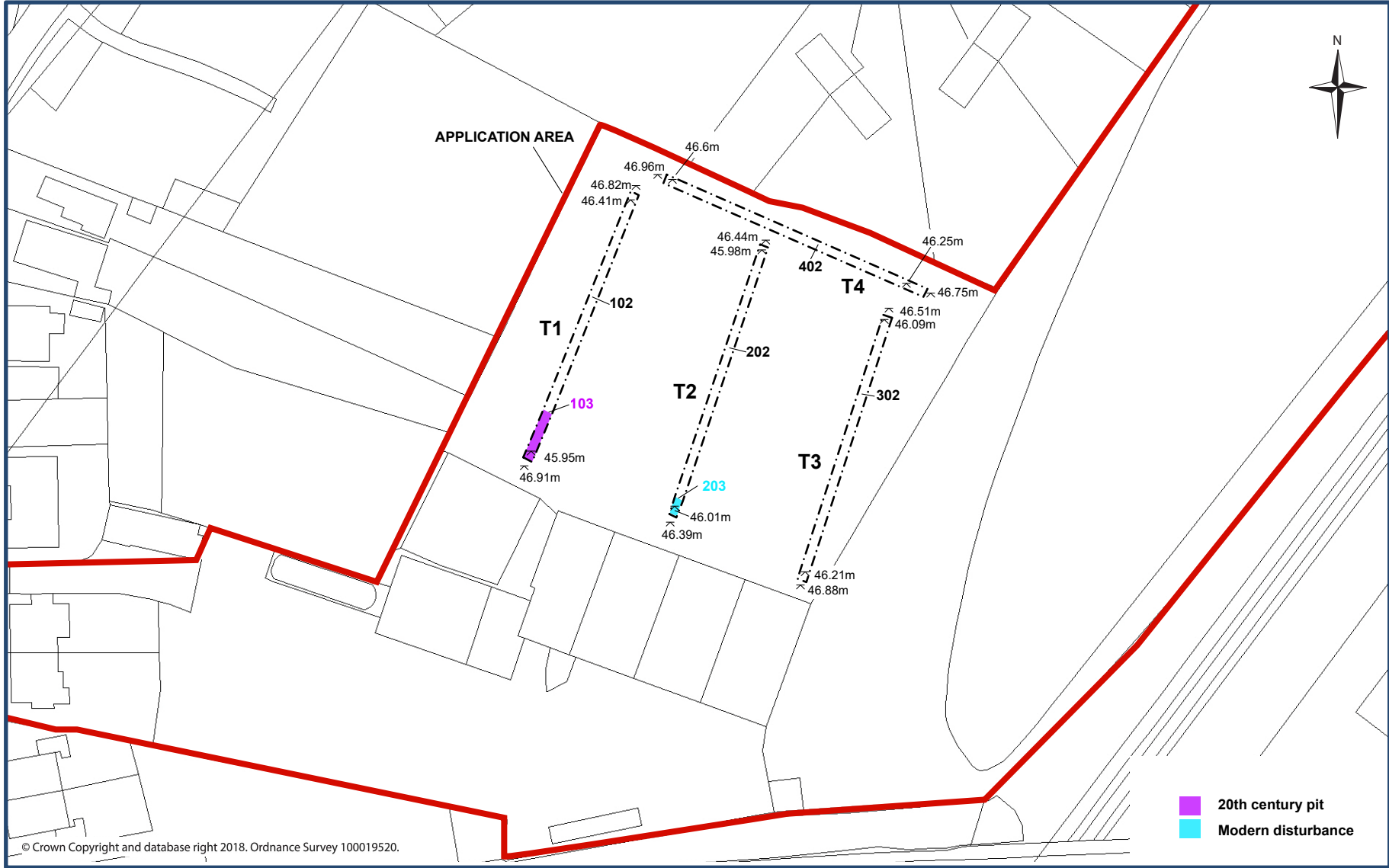


Fig 2: Location of excavated trenches