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DESK BASED ASSESSMENTS ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY TOPOGRAPHICAL AND LANDSCAPE SURVEY HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



**TAYLOR WIMPEY (WEST MIDLANDS)** 

LAND NORTH OF NAPTON ROAD STOCKTON WARWICKSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

**AUGUST 2016** 





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### Land North of Napton Road, Stockton, Warwickshire

#### **Archaeological Evaluation**

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# SUMMARY

Wardell Armstrong Archaeology (WAA) was commissioned by Taylor Wimpey (West Midlands) to undertake an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching of land south of Napton Road, Stockton, Warwickshire. The evaluation was required to investigate the impact upon the archaeological resource from the construction of a new domestic housing estate, attenuation pond, pump station, access roads and associated services for which outline planning permission has been granted by Stratford-upon-Avon District Council. The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) produced in response to advice given by Wardell Armstrong Archaeology acting as the archaeological planning advisor on behalf of Anthony Young, Senior Planner, Stratford on Avon District Council.

Six trenches were excavated across the proposed development area. Archaeological features were encountered and recorded in Trench 1 at the north end of the site. These comprised two ditches and a tree throw which were all demonstrated to be stratigraphically modern in date. Several fragments of highly abraded redeposited Romano-British pottery were also recovered suggesting early domestic activities within the local landscape although no direct evidence of this was seen during the investigations. The other five trenches were devoid of archaeological features or deposits.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Wardell Armstrong Archaeology (WAA) thanks Jane Humby, Design and Planning Executive at Taylor Wimpey (West Midlands) for commissioning the project. Also, WAA thank Anthony Young, Senior Planner at Stratford on Avon District Council for their assistance.

Wardell Armstrong Archaeology also thanks French Contractors Limited plant hire company, for their help during this project.

The evaluation was supervised by Ben Moore who also wrote the report, he was assisted by Eleonora Montanari, Beverley Hardwick and Bethany Hardcastle. The figures were produced by Adrian Bailey and finds assessment was by Megan Stoakley. The project was managed by Jonathan Webster who also edited this report and was responsible for the overall quality of the project.



# 1 INTRODUCTION

# **1.1 Project Circumstances and Planning Background**

- 1.1.1 In June and July 2016, Wardell Armstrong Archaeology (WAA) undertook an archaeological evaluation of land north of Napton Road, Stockton, Warwickshire (NGR: SP 43961 64002). It was commissioned by Taylor Wimpey (West Midlands) who intend to construct a domestic housing estate, attenuation pond, pump station, access roads and associated services for which outline planning permission has been granted by Stratford upon Avon District Council (planning reference: 14/03205/OUT).
- 1.1.2 The outline planning permission by Stratford on Avon District Council, dated 19<sup>th</sup>
  August 2015 stated that;

'No development shall take place within the site until a programme of archaeological work has been implemented in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect historic assets beneath the site in accordance with policy EF 11A of the Stratford on Avon District Local Plan Review 1996-2011.'

1.1.3 The proposed development area contained an unknown potential of archaeology at the time of the investigation although it was believed that medieval ridge and furrow may have been present based on aerial images (Prospect Archaeology 2014).

# 1.2 Project Documentation

- 1.2.1 The project conforms to advice provided by Wardell Armstrong to Anthony Young, Senior Planner at Stratford on Avon District Council (Email: 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2016). A WSI (WAA 2016) was then produced to provide a specific methodology based on the brief for a programme of archaeological trial trench evaluation. This was approved by Anthony Young, Senior Planner prior to the fieldwork taking place. This is in line with government advice as set out in Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012).
- 1.2.2 This report outlines the work undertaken on site, the subsequent programme of post-fieldwork analysis, and the results of this scheme of archaeological evaluation.



# 2 METHODOLOGY

# 2.1 Standards and guidance

- 2.1.1 The archaeological evaluation was undertaken following the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation (CIFA 2014a), and in accordance with the WAA fieldwork manual (2012).
- 2.1.2 The fieldwork programme was followed by an assessment of the data as set out in the Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation (CIFA 2014a) and the Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials (CIFA 2014b).

## 2.2 Documentary Research

2.2.1 A cultural heritage assessment was undertaken by Prospect Archaeology (2014) which stated that probable medieval ridge and furrow cultivation are believed to cross the site although this was not confirmed as the site was so overgrown that no onsite walk over was conducted.

### 2.3 The Field Evaluation

- 2.3.1 The evaluation comprised the excavation of six trenches measuring 30m in length by 1.60m in width across the proposed development area. The trenches were located in a random grid array in order to cover a 4% representative sample of the proposed development and:
  - to establish the presence/absence, nature, extent and state of preservation of archaeological remains and to record these where they were observed;
  - to establish the character of those features in terms of cuts, soil matrices and interfaces;
  - to assess the impact of the application on the archaeological site;
  - to recover artefactual material, especially that useful for dating purposes;
  - to recover palaeoenvironmental material where it survives in order to understand site and landscape formation processes.



- 2.3.2 Deposits considered not to be significant were removed by a 180° wheeled mechanical excavator with a toothless ditching bucket, under close archaeological supervision. The trial trenches were subsequently cleaned by hand.
- 2.3.3 On completion the evaluation trenches were reinstated by replacing the excavated material.
- 2.3.4 A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with the project specification, and the Archaeological Archives Forum recommendations (Brown 2011). The archive will be deposited with Warwick museum, with copies of the report sent to the Warwickshire County Council HER, available upon request. The archive can be accessed under the unique project identifier WAA2016 NRS-A; CP11773.
- 2.3.5 Wardell Armstrong Archaeology supports the Online AccesS to the Index of Archaeological InvestigationS (OASIS) project. This project aims to provide an on-line index and access to the extensive and expanding body of grey literature, created as a result of developer-funded archaeological work. As a result, details of the results of this project will be made available by WAA as a part of this national project. The OASIS reference for the project is: **wardela2-259222**.

# 3 BACKGROUND

# 3.1 Location and Geological Context

- 3.1.1 The site is located at the south-east end of the village of Stockton on the north side of Napton Road. Domestic housing bounds the site to the west and Stockton football club limits the east. Large fields lie to the north and north-east with a former quarry, now a lake, roughly 200m to the north-east. The centre of Leamington Spa lies approximately 14km to the east.
- 3.1.2 The site lies at roughly c.95m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum) dropping to the southeast to a height of 93m AOD. The area of investigation currently comprises an overgrown former allotment, it measures roughly c.1.5ha in size and is roughly rectangular in shape.
- 3.1.3 The underlying solid geology in the southern part of the site is mapped as a combination of interbedded mudstone and limestone associated with the Rugby Limestone Member formed in shallow lime rich seas around 190 to 200 million years ago during the Jurassic Period. The northern part of the area of investigation is mapped as mudstones associated with the Charmouth Mudstone Formation that is



slightly younger in date having been deposited between approximately 183 and 197 million years ago under the same environmental conditions within the Jurassic Period. No superficial deposits are mapped as being present across the site (BGS 2016).

# 3.2 Historical and Archaeological Background

- 3.2.1 The development area has been subjected to several previous phases of work including a cultural heritage assessment undertaken by Prospect Archaeology (2014). It is not intended to reproduce the full content of this assessment here and what follows is a general overview of this study.
- 3.2.2 There are no records of early prehistoric activity in the development area.
- 3.2.3 Evidence of prehistoric activity is restricted to the Iron Age and consists of a ditch and pit group to the west of Stockton and cropmarks. To the south, a series of cropmarks are thought to be of a late prehistoric or Iron Age date and include a banjo enclosure and two parallel ditches (MWA7253).
- 3.2.4 Archaeological evaluation in School Lane, 100m south west of the site revealed evidence of a Romano-British settlement, the extent and focus were not established (EWA9318). The features consisted of five ditches containing assemblages of 1st-4th century pottery and an undated pit or posthole. A coin hoard was also found at Stockton, but information on this find is scant.
- 3.2.5 The settlement of Stocton (sic) is first recorded in 1272. At the eastern end of the village is a moated site (MWA941) and the village church (MWA942) which are thought to be earlier. Further medieval evidence was found at School Lane, and included a building (EWA9318) and two gullies (MWA13132). To the south west of the development area in Glebe Close, medieval pottery (MWA7248) and ridge and furrow (EWA887) were recorded, ridge and furrow is also evident in the wider landscape surrounding the village. It has also been postulated that ridge and furrow was present in the northern part of the site aligned east to west based on aerial images (Prospect Archaeology 2014).
- 3.2.6 Post medieval evidence consists of quarrying activity at Nelson's Quarry (MWA7152) with further evidence of aggregate extraction to the north and northeast. Further evidence of industrial activity in the area includes a brickworks and its associated clay pit (MWA7147) to the west of the development area and a blacksmiths shop in the High Street (MWA7034). Windmills (MWA943, MWA944), a



villa (**MWA8597**) and pleasure gardens (**EWA6670**) are recorded at the northwestern end of the village.

3.2.7 A geophysical survey was undertaken over the northern quarter of the proposed development by Wardell Armstrong Archaeology (Railton 2016). A number of geophysical anomalies were detected, all of which were interpreted as modern features including at least one service pipe. No definite archaeological features were detected during the survey although several were investigated by the archaeological evaluation by trail trenching.

# 4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION RESULTS

### 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The evaluation was undertaken between the 27th June and 8<sup>th</sup> July 2016, with six trenches excavated across the site (Figure 2). The trenches were placed in a random grid array to investigate a representative 4% sample of the proposed development area as well as several of the anomalies revealed during the previous geophysical survey. It should be noted that several had to be moved due to the presence of services. All the trenches excavated were 30m long and 1.60m wide.

### 4.2 Results

- 4.2.1 **Trench 1:** Trench 1 was located towards the north-eastern boundary of the proposed development. The trench was aligned north-east to south-west. It was excavated through 0.30m of dark-greyish brown silty clay topsoil **(100)** that sealed 0.20m of mid-greyish brown silty clay subsoil **(101)** containing post-medieval/modern artefactual remains such as plastics that were not retained. This sat atop a mid-yellowish brown clay natural substrate **(102)** that was revealed at a maximum depth of 0.63m below the current ground surface at 93.74m AOD.
- 4.2.2 Three features were recorded within the trench, all were demonstrated to truncate both the natural substrate and subsoil. A north-west to south-east aligned ditch **[104]** ran across the trench measuring at least 5.15m in length (Plates 1 and 2), it was broadly u-shaped in profile and measured 0.97m wide by 0.28m in depth. The ditch contained two fills, the primary fill comprising a greyish blue clay **(105)**, the lack of clear lamination or inclusions suggest that this deposit represented a period of naturally deposited still water stagnation that was sealed by a period of natural silting up, represented by a deposit of mid-greyish brown silty clay **(109)**. Although no finds were recovered from this feature it was stratigraphically demonstrated to



be modern in date and is believed to have been a former drainage ditch associated with the former allotment.

- 4.2.3 Thirteen metres further south-west, a second gully or ditch **[106]** was investigated running north-west to south-east across the trench (Plate 3). This ditch had a similar profile to ditch **[104]** and was measured 0.97m wide by 0.34m deep. It also contained two fills: a primary fill of redeposited reddish brown clay **(107)**, probably the result of slumping from the ditch sides, and a secondary fill of mid-greyish brown silty clay **(108)** representing a phase of silting over time. This contained several sherds of highly abraded Romano-British pottery which were clearly redeposited in this modern feature. The similarity in profile and size to ditch **[104]** further northeast suggested that these features may have been remnants of the known ridge and furrow although their stratigraphic relationship suggests that this is unlikely and there were associated with the former allotment instead.
- 4.2.4 An irregular feature **(103)** was investigated 3.50m from the south-western end of the trench. Its shape, undercutting sides and dark silty fill indicated that this was the remains of a tree root (Plate 4). As with the features above, this feature was noted to truncate the modern subsoil, likewise, the fill contained a several fragments of highly abraded Romano-British pottery sherds. This feature bore several of the hallmarks of a tree throw with associate rooting and stratigraphically it is believed to have been associated with the former allotment.
- 4.2.5 **Trench 2:** Trench 2 was located 21m south of Trench 1 and was aligned north-west to south-east. The trench was excavated through 0.28m of topsoil **(200)**, this sealed 0.25m of mid-olive brown silty clay subsoil **(201)** that in turn covered a reddish brown clay natural substrate **(202)** revealed at a maximum of 92.90m AOD. A land drain was observed running north-south across the south-eastern end of the trench but no archaeological features or deposits were encountered (Plate 5).
- 4.2.6 **Trench 3:** Trench 3 was located 44m south of Trench 2, and ran north-east to southwest along the eastern boundary of the proposed development (Plate 6). It was excavated through an average of 0.25m of topsoil (**300**) and 0.30m of reddish brown silty clay subsoil (**301**) onto yellowish brown clay substrate (**302**) at a maximum depth of 91.24m AOD at the north-eastern end of the trench. No archaeological features or deposits were observed.
- 4.2.7 **Trench 4:** Trench 4 was located 29m south-west of Trench 3 and was aligned north-west to south-east (Plate 7). It was excavated through 0.15m of topsoil **(400)**, that



overlay 0.30m of mid-greyish brown silty clay subsoil **(401)** which in turn sealed a yellowish brown clay natural substrate a maximum of 0.69m below current ground level at 91.58m AOD. Three north-south aligned land drains ran across the trench but no archaeologically significant features were encountered.

- 4.2.8 **Trench 5:** Trench 5 ran south-west from the south-eastern end of Trench 4. It was excavated through 0.20m of topsoil **(500)** that covered 0.20m of mid-greyish brown subsoil **(501)** which descended onto a light-greyish brown clay substrate at a maximum depth of 91.50m AOD. No archaeological features were noted but a north-south aligned land drain ran across the north-eastern end of the trench (Plate 8).
- 4.2.9 **Trench 6:** Trench 6 was located 36.50m south-west of Trench 5, towards the southern boundary of the proposed development and was aligned north-west to south-east (Plate 9). It was excavated through 0.32m of modern metal and plastic debris mixed with topsoil (600) and 0.20m of mid-reddish brown subsoil (601) onto light-greyish brown clay substrate (602), a maximum depth of 0.73m below current ground level at 92.05m AOD. Three north-east to south-west aligned land drains crossed the trench but no archaeologically significant features or deposits were encountered.

# 4.3 Archaeological Finds Assessment

- 4.3.1 A total of 23 artefacts, weighing 251g, were recovered from two deposits during archaeological investigations on land south of Napton Road, Stockton, Warwickshire (Table 1).
- 4.3.2 All finds were dealt with according to the recommendations made by Watkinson & Neal (1998) and to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIFA) Standard & Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials (2014b).
- 4.3.3 All artefacts have been boxed according to material type and conforming to the deposition guidelines recommended by Brown (2011), EAC (2014) and Warwickshire Museum.
- 4.3.4 The material archive has been assessed for its local, regional and national potential and further work has been recommended on the potential for the material archive to contribute to the relevant research frameworks.
- 4.3.5 The finds assessment was compiled by Megan Stoakley with contributions from Don O'Meara.



# 4.3.6 Quantification of finds by context is visible in Table 1.

Context	Material	Qty	Wgt (g)	Date	Comments
103	Animal Bone	1	26	RB	Large mammal bone
					2 x CO RE, 1 x BB1, 1 x late RB shell-tempered fabric -
103	Ceramic	4	60	RB	accretions on surface (LRSH)
					4 X CO RE, 2 x v. abraded SVW OX?, 4 x Wilderspool
108	Ceramic	18	165	RB	mortaria?
TOTAL		23	251		

# Table 1: Quantification of Bulk Finds by Context

- 4.3.7 **Roman Ceramics:** A total of 22 sherds of Roman pottery, weighing 225g, were recovered from two deposits (Tables 1 & 2).
- 4.3.8 The sherds were examined by eye and were sorted into the appropriate fabric groups using references from Tomber & Dore (1998) and the online Roman Potsherd Atlas (RPA online 2016). Some cross-sections of the pottery sherds were subjected to microscopic examination using a 30 x 21mm hand lens.
- 4.3.9 The overall condition of the pottery is poor in the main, with abrasion and postdepositional damage evident on virtually all of the sherds. There is no evidence of surface slips / painted decoration and only one small greyware rim sherd from (103) displays evidence of decoration, although this is very abraded.

Context	Fabric	Qty	Wgt (g)	Date	Notes
103	CO RE	2	22	C2-C4	Rim sherd, base sherd
103	DOR BB1	1	33	EC2+	Body sherd, very abraded
103	LRSH	1	6	C3-C4	Carbonised accretion evident on one surface
108	CO RE	4	93	C2-C4	Misc. body sherds
108	SVW OX?	2	2	C2-C4	Very abraded, thin sherds
108	WIL RS	4	40	C2	Very abraded
108	CO OX?	8	29	C2-C4	Very abraded, sand-tempered, undiagnostic body sherds
TOTAL		22	225		

Table 2: Quantification of Roman Fabrics

Key:

CO RE: locally produced greyware CO OX: locally produced oxidised ware LRSH: Late Roman shell-tempered ware SVW OX: Severn Valley ware WIL RS: Wilderspool red-slipped mortaria DOR BB1: Dorset Black-burnished ware

4.3.10 Fabric groups include locally produced greyware (CO RE) and oxidised ware (CO OX) as well as four sherds of possible Wilderspool mortaria (WIL RS) and Black-burnished



ware (DOR BB1). Sherds of potentially Severn Valley ware (SVW OX 1/2) and late Roman shell-tempered ware were also recovered (LRSH). The former would have originated from the Gloucestershire area while the latter may have been manufactured in the Midlands.

- 4.3.11 Vessel types for these fabrics would include cooking jars (DOR BB1, CO OX, CO RE), mixing / grinding bowls (WIL RS), flanged jars / plain dishes (LRSH) and carinated bowls / beakers (SVW OX). The assemblage likely comprises plainer vessel forms; as such, the sherds are too abraded and small to further discern vessel types.
- 4.3.12 A single sherd of shell-tempered ware recovered from context (**103**) has carbonised accretions on one surface. Further analysis of the accretions is not necessary, as it would not contribute any further understanding to the nature / function of the pottery assemblage.
- 4.3.13 This small assemblage comprises a domestic, utilitarian assemblage made up of largely locally produced coarsewares. The assemblage spans the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries although a date of 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries may be more appropriate.
- 4.3.14 No further analysis of the assemblage is necessary.
- 4.3.15 Animal Bone: A fragment of animal bone, weighing 26g, was recovered from deposit (103) (Table 1). Abrasion is evident on the cortical bone surface and the fragment is in moderate to good condition.
- 4.3.16 The fragment comprises a partial limb bone from a large mammal (*Pers. Comm.* O'Meara 2016).
- 4.3.17 No further analysis is necessary.
- 4.3.18 **Statement of Potential:** The small assemblage is of local archaeological interest; although it should be noted that all artefactual material was redeposited in nature. Whilst it does not help date the features seen during this investigation it does provide evidence for domestic Roman activity in the local environs.
- 4.3.19 The finds were retained with the archive.

# 5 CONCLUSION

5.1.1 The archaeological evaluation by trial trenching revealed that no features predating the modern period were revealed, although the presence of redeposited artefactual domestic material from the Romano-British period hints at activity in the vicinity of the site.



- 5.1.2 The two ditches revealed in Trench 1 were initially interpreted as being associated with the proposed ridge and furrow although this interpretation has been rejected due to their late date and no evidence was revealed of ridge and furrow being present despite the same being clearly visible to the immediate north of the study area boundary.
- 5.1.3 The presence of the former allotments caused a high level of mixing of the soils overlying the natural substrate and while this could be argued to suggest that earlier activity has been removed. However, the lack of features truncating the natural geology along with a lack of a mixed natural substrate interface would suggest this is not the case. Rather it is believed that artefactual material was moved by plough or manuring at a time predating the allotment following by further redeposition during the constant turning over of the soils by successive generations of allotment owners.
- 5.1.4 The archaeological potential of the site is considered low and no further work is recommended.



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# **APPENDIX 1: TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS**

#### Trench 1

Context Number	Context Type	Description	Height/Depth
100	Topsoil	Compact dark greyish brown silty clay	0.30m
101	Subsoil	Compact mid-greyish brown clay	0.20m
102	Natural Substrate	Compact mid-yellowish brown clay, with occasional pebbles	N/A
103	Tree root?	Hard mid greyish clay	0.53m
[104]	Cut	Cut of ditch	0.28m
105	Deposit	Primary fill of ditch [104]. Hard mottled greyish blue and yellow silty clay, with rare pebbles and charcoal	0.16m
[106]	Cut	Cut of ditch/gully	0.34
107	Deposit	Primary fill of ditch/gully [106]. Compacted mid-reddish brown silty clay with occasional pebbles	0.15m
108	Deposit	Secondary fill of ditch/gully [106]. Hard mid-greyish brown clay, with pebbles and charcoal flecks	0.19m
109	Deposit	Secondary fill of ditch [104]. Compacted mid-greyish brown silty	0.13m

# Trench 2

Length: 30m	Width: 1.50m	Orientation: NW – SE
Min. Depth: 0.53m	Max. Depth: 0.80m	

Context Number	Context Type	Description	Height/Depth
200	Topsoil	Compact dark greyish brown silty clay	0.28m
201	Subsoil	Compact mid-olive brown silty clay	0.25m
202	Natural Substrate	Compact mid-reddish brown clay, with occasional pebbles	N/A

clay



# Trench 3

Length: 30m

Context

Width: 1.50m

Orientation: NE – SW

Min. Depth: 0.73m

Max. Depth: 1.10m

Context Type	Description	Height/Depth

Number	Context Type	Description	
300	Topsoil	Compact dark greyish brown silty clay	0.25m
301	Subsoil	Compact mid-reddish brown silty clay, with occasional pebbles	0.30m
302	Natural Substrate	Hard light yellowish brown clay	N/A

# Trench 4

Length: 30m	Width: 1.50m	Orientation: NW – SE
Min. Depth: 0.44m	Max. Depth: 0.69m	

Context Number	Context Type	Description	Height/Depth
400	Topsoil	Compact dark greyish brown silty clay	0.15m
401	Subsoil	Compact mid-greyish brown clay	0.30m
402	Natural Substrate	Hard mid-yellowish brown clay, with occasional pebbles	N/A

# Trench 5

Length: 30mWidth: 1.50mOrientation: NE - SWMin. Depth: 0.43mMax. Depth: 0.70m

Context Number	Context Type	Description	Height/Depth
500	Topsoil	Compact dark greyish brown silty clay	0.20m
501	Subsoil	Compact mid-greyish brown silty clay	0.20m
502	Natural Substrate	Compact mid-reddish brown clay, with occasional pebbles	N/A



# Trench 6

Length: 30m

Width: 1.50m

Orientation: NE – SE

Min. Depth: 0.40m

Max. Depth: 0.73m

Context Number	Context Type	Description	Height/Depth
600	Topsoil	Compact mid-brownish grey silty clay	0.32m
601	Subsoil	Compacted mid-reddish brown silty clay with sand, occasional modern debris and pebbles	0.20m
602	Natural Substrate	Compact light greyish clay with sandy patches	N/A



# **APPENDIX 2: PLATES**



Plate 1: South-east facing section of ditch [104]



Plate 2: North-west facing section of ditch [104]





Plate 3: South-east facing section of ditch [106]



Plate 4: North-west facing section of tree throw (103)





Plate 5: Trench 2, facing north-west



Plate 6: Trench 3, facing north-east





Plate 7: Trench 4, facing south-east



Plate 8: Trench 5, facing north-east





Plate 9: Trench 6, facing south-east



# **APPENDIX 3: FIGURES**

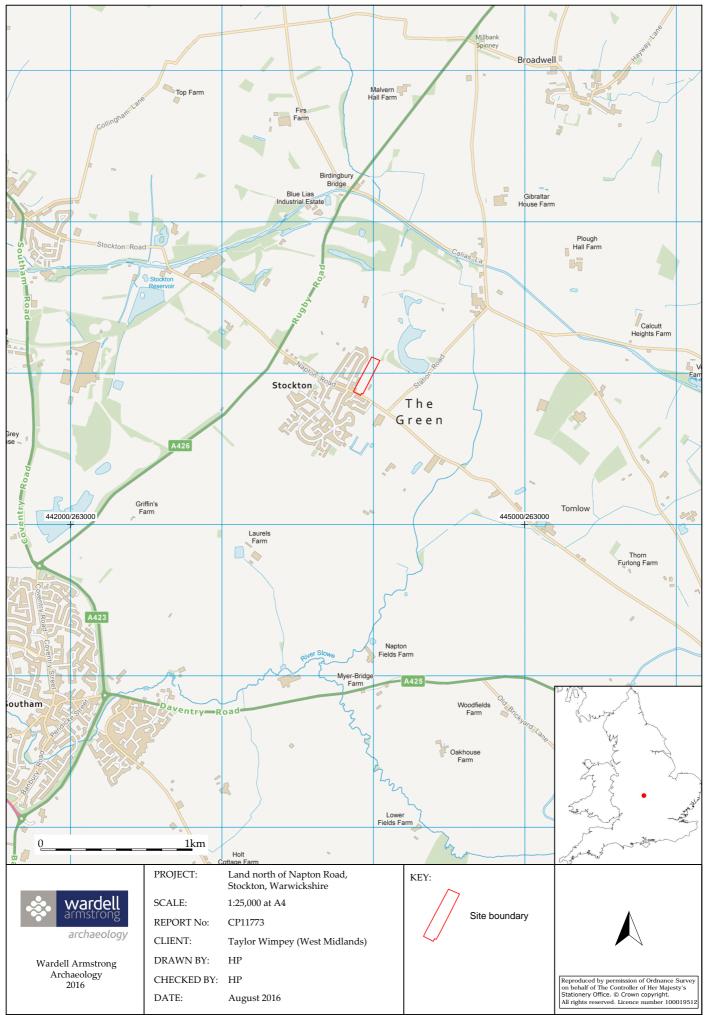


Figure 1: Site location.

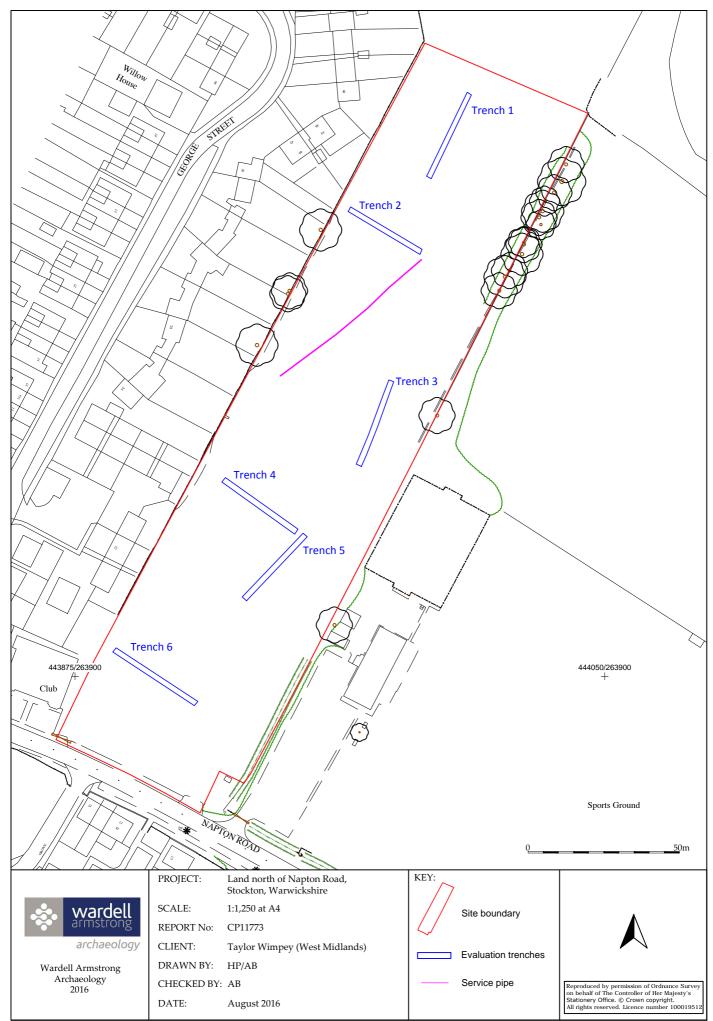


Figure 2: Location of evaluation trenches.

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