

COUNTRYSIDE PROPERTIES

PLOUGH HILL ROAD, NUNEATON

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION REPORT

JULY 2019



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wardell Armstrong LLP were commissioned by Countryside Properties to undertake an archaeological Excavation on land to the east of Plough Hill Road, Nuneaton, Warwickshire.

The Excavation was required to investigate, record and fully understand the known archaeological resource ahead of the redevelopment of the Site.

The strategy of the archaeological Excavation was designed based on the results of the previously conducted archaeological Evaluation, which identified an area in the southern extent of the Site which contained potentially significant archaeological remains and artefacts. Trenches 21 and 45 from the archaeological Evaluation recorded a potential ditch and several pits. An assemblage of Mesolithic flints was recovered from the topsoil and hillwash deposits of Trench 21. As such the archaeological Excavation sought to expand the area of investigation centred on these two trenches to fully record the archaeological resource.

The Excavation has shown that the southern extent of the Site is populated by a series of small to large isolated pits, the previously recorded potential ditch feature from Trench 21 of the Evaluation was revealed to be an elongated pit, corresponding with the feature type in this area.

During the removal of the overburden deposits in Area 21, an assemblage of 178 worked flints was collected, attesting to Mesolithic activity within the vicinity of the Site. Based on the topography of the Site and its immediate environs and given the retrieval of the flint from the upper stratigraphic deposits within Area 21 they are mostly likely redeposited from the brow of the hill to the northwest of Area 21, just beyond the boundary of the Site, having washed downhill and settled in natural shallow basins.

A single radiocarbon date was successful for a small pit recorded in Trench and Area 45, dating to the Bronze Age, which identifies a continuation of dispersed prehistoric activity, from Mesolithic and Bronze Age, between the slope and a near water source, the Bar Pool Brook; although a settlement has not yet been identified.

Palaeoenvironmental samples were taken from the pits during both the Evaluation and the Excavation, from which local wood resources can be established and have been identified as not being overly diverse. By combining the paleoenvironmental evaluation with the resources used for flint knapping, local flint types and river cobbles/gravels, we can establish that resources aren't being imported to the Site, given the archaeological evidence thus far, this is likely indicative of seasonal settlement, small-scale settlement or both.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Circumstances of the Project

- 1.1.1 Wardell Armstrong LLP (WA) were commissioned by Countryside Properties (hereafter referred to as 'the Client') to conduct an archaeological Excavation on land off Plough Hill Road, Nuneaton, Warwickshire (hereafter referred to as 'the Site'). The Excavations were centred on National Grid Reference: SP 32315 92595 (Drawing No. BM11621-002).
- 1.1.2 The results of the archaeological Excavation were required to further inform upon the archaeological resource and to fully record as mitigation against the potential impact upon it from the redevelopment of the Site, for which Outline planning permission has been granted (Planning Reference: P034600) by the Local Planning Authority, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council (NBBC).
- 1.1.3 Outline permission has been granted for a residential development of up to 300 dwellings, with open space, relocation of existing nursery access and associated works following the demolition of existing buildings.
- 1.1.4 An archaeological Excavation is defined as 'a programme of controlled, intrusive fieldwork with defined research objectives which examines, records and interprets archaeological deposits, features and structures and, as appropriate, retrieves artefacts, ecofacts and other remains within a specified area. The records made and objects gathered during the fieldwork are studied and the results of that study published in detail appropriate to the project design' (CIFA 2014a).
- 1.1.5 The project was prepared in consultation with John Robinson, Planning Archaeologist for NBBC. A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was then produced (WA 2018a) to provide a site-specific methodology based on the brief provided that was approved by John Robinson prior to commencement of the fieldwork. This is in line with government advice as set out in Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012).
- 1.1.6 In addition to the above, the archaeological Excavation conformed to the guidelines and standards laid down in the following documents:
 - Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Excavation, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists: Reading (CIFA 2014a);
 - Code of Approved Conduct for the Regulation of Arrangements in Field Archaeology, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists: Reading (CIFA 2014b);



- Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists: Reading (CIFA 2014c);
- Management of Archaeological Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE), Historic England: London (HE 2015); and
- WA Archaeology Excavation Manual, Wardell Armstrong: Birmingham (WA 2017a).



2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and Geological Context

- 2.1.1 The Site is located off the eastern side of Plough Hill Road, on the western edge of Nuneaton. The Bar Pool Brook flows through western Nuneaton and along part of the southern boundary of the Site.
- 2.1.2 The areas of Excavation, being rectangular in plan, equate to 1440m² and are located within the southern extent of the wider development Site which is approximately 13.5ha in size and is an irregular polygon in shape (Drawing BM11621-002). On commencement of the archaeological Excavation, the Site was a disused golfing range, overgrown with grasses and shrubs (Plates 1 & 2).
- 2.1.3 The overall Site is bounded by Plough Hill Road and field boundaries to the west, field boundaries and outlying properties to the north, a dismantled railway line (now woodland) to the east and Bar Pool Brook, field boundaries and outlying fields to the south. The two Areas of Excavation were undertaken along the slope and at its base.
- 2.1.4 The Site which comprises a southeast facing slope drops gradually from c.130m AOD to just below 120m AOD at the south-eastern tip of the Site.
- 2.1.5 The British Geological Survey (BGS) 1:50,000 records the geology within the Site as a sequence of narrow parallel strata of sandstone, mudstone and siltstone, belonging to the Halesowen Formation, Etruria Formation and Pennine Middle Coal Measures. The superficial geology is not recorded across the Site. (BGS 2019).
- 2.1.6 The Soil Survey of England and Wales (SSEW, 1983) identifies the soils of the Site as belonging to the Rivington 1 Association (541f) in the northern half of the Site and the Bardsey Association (713a) in the southern half of the Site. Within the north of the Site, the soils are described as well-drained, coarse loamy soils over sandstone. In the south of the Site, the soils are slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged loamy over clayey and fine silty soils over soft rock.

2.2 Archaeological and Historical Background

2.2.1 An archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (CgMs 2015) was produced on the known archaeological and historical background of the Site and its immediate vicinity, up to 1km in distance. It is not intended to repeat that information here and what follows is a brief overview of that document.



2.3 **Prehistoric**

- 2.3.1 There are numerous reports of scattered flint finds all around the Nuneaton area from Warwickshire HER, with frequent reports in the areas of Hartshill approximately 1.5km to the north east of Plough Hill Road, Attleborough approximately 5.6km to the east and Mancetter, approximately 2km to the northeast. However, despite the diverse number of sites where Mesolithic finds have been found, the ratified number of finds remains quite low as at each site there are only 2-5 pieces of flint or finds recovered (Graf, 2016).
- 2.3.2 As of yet, there are no entries dating from the Prehistoric period in the HER for the Site or within its immediate vicinity. As such, the Site was considered to have negligible potential for Prehistoric evidence.

2.4 Romano-British

- 2.4.1 A possible Roman camp, kilns and pottery sherds are recorded approximately 760m east of the Site at Camp Hill, underneath the present-day Church and former Camp Hill Hall (MWA10192). Roman pottery sherds were also found off Camp Hill Road, c.790m north-east of the Site in 1948 (MWA250).
- 2.4.2 Given the lack of significant Roman activity recorded in the HER within the search area, the Site was considered to have negligible potential for Roman evidence.

2.5 Early Medieval and Medieval

- 2.5.1 The origins of the place-name Nuneaton lie in the Saxon words 'ea' and 'tun'. 'Ea' is a Saxon word for water and 'tun' is a Saxon farm held by a large family (Veasey 2002;1). From this evidence, Nuneaton appears to have originated as a large farm by the water, probably the River Anker which lies approximately 3km to the northeast of the Site.
- 2.5.2 According to Domesday Survey (1086), in which Nuneaton is recorded as Etone, Harding held the village in 1066, although it had passed to Earl Aubrey by 1086 (Gover et al. 1936). This indicates that the settlement at Nuneaton was relatively well established by the late Anglo-Saxon period.
- 2.5.3 Early Medieval recorded for the search area within the HER consists of the settlement of Hartshill, the probable extent of which is located c.850m northeast of the Site, based on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map (HER 9517). The settlement is listed in Domesday which suggests that this area was also settled by the late Anglo-Saxon period.



- 2.5.4 The Site is, however, well removed from the historic core of either settlement and there are no records of any Early Medieval period remains from the 1km search area. Consequently, the Site was considered to have a low potential to contain any Early Medieval archaeological remains.
- 2.5.5 The Site would appear to have formed part of an open field system in the Medieval period. Ridge and furrow is recorded on land to the south of the Site but no earthworks have been identified within the limits of the Site. No potential furrows or premechanical ploughing features were recorded during the archaeological Evaluation, indicating that any former ridge and furrow on the Site, should it have been present, has been ploughed out or removed during the construction of the golf course and range.

2.6 Post-Medieval

- 2.6.1 By the middle of the 18th century, Nuneaton was expanding rapidly due to its position in the middle of the North Warwickshire coalfield. By the census of 1801, the population was 5,000, making it one of the largest towns in Warwickshire. Industries, including brick and tile works and textiles, also grew during the 19th century and by the time of the 1901 census, the population exceeded 25,000.
- 2.6.2 During the Second World War the town suffered considerable bombing due to the proximity of a munition's factory. This led to widespread post-war rebuilding and extensive suburbanization.

2.7 Historic Landscape Characterisation

2.7.1 The southern half of the Site, where the excavation is situated, was recorded as Designated Landscape: Golf Course (HWA3151). These fields are described as an early to late 20th century golf course and driving range. The land's archaeological potential was thought to be 'Medium', although severely dependent on previous land use.

2.8 Previous Archaeological Work

2.8.1 A gradiometer survey was undertaken (AOC 2015) over approximately 10ha of the overall development of the Site, which detected several anomalies that likely related to former agricultural practices. The results also identified several rectilinear and curvilinear anomalies that were of possible archaeological origin, but a detailed interpretation was very tentative, especially due to the weak patterning of those anomalies and high levels of magnetic 'noise' across the Site. Geophysical survey was not completed across the areas of Excavation.



- 2.8.2 The geophysical survey was followed by an archaeological Evaluation (WA 2018b) comprising fifty-nine trenches excavated across the overall Site which showed that no archaeological features or deposits were present in the north, west and eastern extents of the Site.
- 2.8.3 Trenching in the southern extent, specifically Trenches 21 and 45, identified remains which were of archaeological interest. Trench 21 produced an assemblage of twenty flint fragments including three blades and two cores, with the flint assemblage dating to the Mesolithic/early Neolithic periods. The abundance of flints recovered from the topsoil and subsoil deposits of Trench 21 indicated a high level of activity somewhere within the vicinity of the trench.
- 2.8.4 Trench 21 also contained what was interpreted as a north to south aligned ditch which was exposed for 4.30m within the trench and terminated at its northern extent with a rounded terminus. The potential ditch contained poorly preserved palaeoenvironmental remains and no artefactual material.
- 2.8.5 Trench 45 located to the southeast of Trench 21, exposed two pits, a large oval-shaped pit and to the east and a second smaller, circular pit in the centre of the trench. The latter of these pits contained charcoal fragments of alder/hornbeam/hazel wood which were recorded in abundance. A lack of artefactual material from the two pits of Trench 45 meant that they were undated but given the proximity to the potential enclosure ditch in Trench 21 and being positioned between the feature and a known water source, the pits were provisionally considered to be of prehistoric date.
- 2.8.6 The results of the Evaluation directly informed the mitigation strategy which was implemented for the production of this report.



3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1.1 The purpose of the archaeological Excavation was to investigate the known archaeological resource and gain a full understanding of its character, date, form and function.
- 3.1.2 The aims were drawn together primarily in reflection of the local and regional research frameworks (Watt 2011). These aims were re-assessed periodically and adapted both during the archaeological fieldwork and before undertaking full assessment in the post-excavation stage to maximise the potential of research questions that can be addressed by the archaeological resource.
- 3.1.3 The general aims of the programme of archaeological works were to:
 - Further identify, investigate and record archaeological remains present within the two defined and agreed areas of archaeological interest to further assess the archaeological potential of deposits present; and
 - Inform any potential requirement for further excavation, if necessary, and help to define the areas of archaeological interest within their wider landscape setting.
- 3.1.4 In addition to this, the following themes have been set in relation to the local regional research framework.

3.2 Research Aims 1 (RA1)

- Research Aim 1 (RA1): Establish the dates, chronology and character of the identified activity.
- Was it continuous or episodic?
- How extensive was the activity and how did that vary over time?
- When did it start and end?
- What can be discovered about the function of the activities present?

3.3 Research Aims 2 (RA2)

- Research Aim 2 (RA2): Determine the nature of patterning of activity within the excavated area.
- Is there intra-site variation in deposit, feature type and function?
- Does artefact and ecofact distribution match this patterning?



- Is there significance in the deposition, or lack of deposition, of artefactual/ ecofactual material?
- Are there any clear spatial delineations between different activities?
- How does the distribution of activity fit into the wider contemporary landscape?

3.4 Research Aims 3 (RA3)

- Research Aim 3 (RA3): Support analysis of the economic base and resource exploitation of the Site.
- What, if any, technological and craft processes were carried out?
- What categories of palaeoenvironmental material are present/absent and why?
- What was the source of the raw materials?
- Is there any evidence for trade relationships in the artefactual material or raw materials?
- How local or extensive were any such links?

3.5 Research Aims 4 (RA4)

- Research Aim 4 (RA4): Test the model of continuing prehistoric activity in the region.
- Does the Site have a specialist function within that model?
- How does this Site fit in with the known chronology of other sites in the region?

3.6 Research Aims 5 (RA5)

- Research Aim 5 (RA5): Test the current hypothesis regarding regional identities and variation through time.
- Are there any characteristics of the Site layout and/or artefactual assemblage which are thought 'characteristic' of a population?
- How do these relate to other sites within the region?

3.7 Research Aims 6 (RA6): General aims

- 3.7.1 In addition to the above the following general aims are to be undertaken:
 - Research Aim 6.1 (RA6.1): Determine the character, date, extent and distribution
 of all archaeological deposits and their potential significance;



- **Research Aim 6.2 (RA6.2):** Determine the Site evolution, stratigraphic relationship and phasing of all activities within the investigation area;
- Research Aim 6.3 (RA6.3): Gain a full understanding of all activities and their place within the wider landscape context;
- Research Aim 6.4 (RA6.4): Determine the levels of disturbance of any archaeological deposits through plough damage or any other agricultural/industrial practices;
- **Research Aim 6.5 (RA6.5):** Characterise the spatial distribution of different activities and relationships between them;
- Research Aim 6.6 (RA6.6): Ensure the adequate recording of any archaeological remains revealed to allow for the detailed study and reassessment of all contexts;
 and
- **Research Aim 6.7 (RA6.7):** Disseminate the results of the fieldwork through an appropriate level of reporting.



4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 General Methodology

- 4.1.1 In accordance with discussions held between WA and John Robinson, a scheme of archaeological Excavation was designed to satisfy the stated objectives of the project as set out under Section 3 above.
- 4.1.2 The results of the previous archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching revealed distinct areas of archaeological potential focused upon Trenches 21 and 45, in the southern extent of the Site. The investigation was undertaken by the excavation of two, 60m x 12m rectangular excavation areas, targeted upon the zones of archaeological potential (Drawing BM11621-017).
- 4.1.3 It was agreed that should significant archaeological features have continued beyond the area of investigation then the limits of excavation would have been expanded until either the edge of the development was reached or a blank buffer of 10m from any archaeological deposits was achieved. (The results from the two excavated areas meant that extension was not required).
- 4.1.4 In advance of any fieldwork WA requested that the Client demonstrated that all reasonable measures had been taken to identify any constraints and that they had provided all reasonable information regarding the presence of services, any ecological constraints, the presence of Public Rights of Way, any areas of potentially contaminated land and/or any other known risks to health and safety.
- 4.1.5 The Excavation areas were stripped using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket to maximise the chance for identification of any archaeological remains. Muck away from the excavation was undertaken by one 25th dumper to specific bund locations with routes monitored to ensure excessive rutting did not take place. When the ground became saturated or rutting became too deep excavation was ceased to allow for the excavator to stabilise the route to the spoil locations.
- 4.1.6 The mechanical strip was undertaken to the top of the first potentially significant archaeological horizon or the natural substrate, whichever was higher in each of the areas. This was determined by a suitably experienced archaeologist who monitored and controlled all works. Once exposed all plan and section surfaces were cleaned, inspected and potential features/deposits excavated to retrieve artefactual and ecofactual material, to determine their character, significance and date.



4.2 Flint Recovery

- 4.2.1 Prior to the submission of the WSI for the Excavation, the process of test-pitting across Area 21 was discussed with John Robinson. Given the known depth of stratigraphy (in excess of 1m) this was discarded as a formal means of mitigation; however on site conditions, and the recovery of flint from the upper deposits during the Evaluation, meant that test pitting, in the form of 65no., 0.50m² test pits, could be excavated on a random grid array, into topsoil only (up to 0.30m in depth), across the area after deturfing but before machine excavation (Drawing BM11621-023).
- 4.2.2 The remaining topsoil and subsoil deposits were then removed, in spits no greater than 50mm, by machine utilising a toothless ditching bucket, with each spit monitored and walked over by the lead archaeologist and one assistant to maximise the recovery of flint artefacts. Areas of increased flint recovery were identified and GPS'd in by irregular grid (Drawing BM11621-023).
- 4.2.3 The quantity of flints recovered by this methodology are as shown in Table 1, the flint analysis is recorded in section 6 of this report.

Table 1: Quantity of flints recovered by Grid/Test Pit

Grid	Test Pit	Qty. of flint pieces
1		10
2		4
3		11
4		22
5		8
6		5
7		9
8		1
9		3
10		2
	28	1
	37	1
	41	1
	42	1
	45	2
	50	1
_	57	2
	58	1
_	59	2
	62	1



4.2.4 The locations of the test pits and flint recovery grid squares were recorded by a Trimble CS3 GPS and related to the national grid. It should be noted that the spatial analysis does not lend interpretative value to the flint analysis in terms of anthropogenic distribution.

4.3 Investigation and Sampling Strategy

- 4.3.1 Archaeological features were sampled sufficiently to characterise, date them, understand their relationships and determine their significance. Features were sampled as follows:
 - All suspected early prehistoric features were 100% excavated;
 - Other discrete features (e.g. pits) of later prehistoric or late date were excavated to a 100% based on the potential for the recovery of ecofactual or datable assemblages;
 - Features of possible natural origin (e.g. variations in the geology) were excavated until a full characterisation of the feature type, profile, fill and any other characterisations had been demonstrated adequately;
 - Measures were taken to protect particularly significant, valuable or sensitive archaeological remains from exposure, accidental damage and/or theft.



4.4 Recording

- 4.4.1 Archaeological deposits and features were recorded according to accepted professional standards as set out in the WA Field Manuals (WA 2017a-d) and sufficient data was recorded to allow the preparation of this report, setting the results of the investigation into their archaeological context.
- 4.4.2 Archaeological contexts were assigned a unique identifier (context number) and recorded individually on WA pro-forma context sheets (Appendix 2). A further general record of the work, comprising a description and discussion of the archaeology was maintained as appropriate. Context sheets were primarily filled in by the archaeologist excavating the feature or deposit.
- 4.4.3 All features were recorded using a Trimble TSC3 GPS unit with sub-centimetre accuracy with each point recorded in relation to the OSGB36 geod. model and coded to an internal database to provide a dataset that records feature type, context number, associated drawing numbers and any other feature specific information that may be relevant. This plan provides a geo-referenced 3-dimensional plan of the Site, in addition, features that required more detailed illustration were undertaken in relation to a feature specific baseline (that was surveyed in using the GPS) and drawn at an appropriate scale on polyester based drafting film and labelled in relation to a site-specific drawing register.
- 4.4.4 Sections were drawn at an appropriate scale of 1:10 or 1:20. All detailed plans and sections have been accurately related to the National Grid.
- 4.4.5 A full film (silver halide) and digital photographic record of the work was kept. Specific shots were taken of sections of archaeological features, deposits or representations of the soil stratigraphic sequence, in addition wider general shots were taken to record the overall progress of the works.
- 4.4.6 The photographic record is regarded as part of and will be kept with the Site archive.

4.5 Finds recovery and processing

- 4.5.1 All artefacts recovered during the archaeological Excavation were suitably bagged, boxed and marked in accordance with the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation, Conservation Guidelines no.2 (UKIC 1990) and in accordance with the Warwickshire Museums Service.
- 4.5.2 On completion of the project modern material, unstratified remains and objects that have been assessed as having no obvious grounds for retention will be discarded after



a period of six months, unless there is a specific request to retain them (and subject to the collection policy of the relevant depository).

4.6 Palaeoenvironmental Sampling

4.6.1 The strategy and methodology for the sampling of deposits with palaeoenvironmental potential was undertaken in accordance with Historic England Centre for Archaeology Guidelines "Environmental Archaeology – A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation" (2011).

4.7 Archive Preparation and Deposition

- 4.7.1 WA will arrange for the deposition of the Site archive with Warwickshire Museums and all documents, artefacts and any other material associated with the project will be marked with the unique reference number issued by Warwickshire Museum on 25/06/2018; **T/1674**.
- 4.7.2 In addition, WA used an internal Site code during the course of the post-excavation works, which was placed on all documents, artefacts and any other items that are associated with the project. The internal Site code is **PHN-B**.
- 4.7.3 The Site archive will include all project records and cultural material produced by both the Evaluation and Excavation and will be prepared in accordance with Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage (Brown 2011), A Standard Guide to Best Practice for Archaeological Archiving in Europe (Perrin et al 2014) and guidance provided by Warwickshire Museum Service.

4.8 **Dissemination**

- 4.8.1 This project has been registered with the **O**nline **A**cces**S** to the **I**ndex of archaeological investigation**S** (OASIS) under reference Wardella2-343917 and a digital copy of the Archaeological Report will be made available upon its completion.
- 4.8.2 Three bound, paper copies of the report will be provided to the Warwickshire Historic Environment record on the understanding that it will be made available as a public document.
- 4.8.3 A summary account of the work will be submitted to the editor of West Midland Archaeology and, if required, to any relevant journals no later than March 31st of the year following completion of fieldwork.
- 4.8.4 It is recommended that, at minimum, a short note is provided to the local transactions, as an addition to the growing corpus of Mesolithic sites in the Nuneaton area.



5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION RESULTS

- 5.1.1 The archaeological Excavation was undertaken between 11th and 22nd of February 2019. The works were undertaken as specified in the Methodology (Section 4).
- 5.1.2 Results are detailed below by area, deposit numbers are given in **(parenthesis)** and cut numbers are given in **[square brackets]**. Not all context numbers are illustrated but all are contained within the archive (Appendix 2).
- 5.2 Pleistocene Deposits and Landforms
- 5.2.1 Whilst the British Geological Survey (BGS 2019) do not map any superficial deposits within the Site, Diamicton/Thrussington Till Member and undifferentiated head deposits are mapped to the west of the Site.
- 5.2.2 The Thrussington Till Member is defined as a component of the Wolston Glacigenic Formation, deposited during the Anglian Glaciation (Marine Isotope Stage 12, 478,000 424,000 years ago (Lisiecki and Raymo 2005) and is contemporary to the Risbury Glacigenic Formation and Moreton Member. The Thrussington Till Member is typically described as reddish-brown till with a significant component of Triassic quartzite and quartz clasts of essentially northern provenance. (McMillan *et al* 2011).
- 5.2.3 The head deposits are likely to be a combination of reworked bedrock and Pleistocene superficial material, including that of the Thrussington Till Member, transported downslope via solifluction and gelifluction with the later addition of Holocene colluvium.
- 5.2.4 Whilst the Thrussington Till Member and head deposits are not mapped within the Site, it is apparent that an element of this material has been transported beyond the mapped locations into the Site due to the presence of Triassic clasts in the upper weathered Etruria Formation.
- 5.2.5 In addition to the reworked/redeposited till, evidence for the presence of microscale landforms associated with the presence of permafrost/intensive frost action were also identified. These came in the form of micro-scale polygons (Plate 3) which are defined by van Everdingen (1998) as 'closed, multi-sided, roughly equidimensional patterned-ground features, less than 2m in diameter, usually caused by desiccation cracking of fine-grained soil materials. Some patterned ground features are not confined to permafrost regions, but they are best developed in regions of present or past intensive frost action.



5.3 **Area 21**

- 5.3.1 The stratigraphic sequence across Area 21 was variable due to sitting on a south-facing incline, the northern extent of the Area sits at an average elevation of 115m AOD whereas the southern extent sits at an average of 112.3m AOD (Plate 4).
- 5.3.2 In the northern extent of the area the 0.40m thick firm, mid greyish brown clayey silt topsoil (2100) overlaid a 0.45m thick, firm, light to mid brownish-yellow with greyish-blue veins clay (2101), interpreted as a hillwash layer. Hillwash (2101) sealed the firm, mid red with greyish-blue veins, sandy clay, natural substrate (2103). In the southern extent of Area 21 the hillwash deposit (2101) sealed a series of natural hillwash and aeolian layers including interdigitised bands of clays, sands and sand and gravels (Plate 5).
- 5.3.3 The natural substrate, **(2103)**, was cut by both natural and anthropogenic features.
- 5.3.4 The most significant feature recorded was an elongated pit feature [2106], 4.26m in length, 1m wide and up to 0.60m in depth, at the south-eastern extent of the pit, the base was cut by/includes a posthole, [2110]. The relationship between the pit and posthole is undefined but it is presumed they are of associated date due to the basal fill contained within both parts of the feature.
- 5.3.5 As recorded within the evaluation, pit [2106] contained three fills (Plate 6), an 80mm thick, firm, dark brownish-grey, silty clay with frequent sandstone and ironstone bedrock brash inclusions, (2107), this was overlain by a 0.22m thick, moderately firm, brownish-grey, sandy silt, (2108), which was sealed by a 0.35m thick, firm, orangey-brown, silty clay, (2109), which appears to have capped the pit with hillwash.
- 5.3.6 Pit **[2106]** was sampled to 50% during evaluation, with the remaining 50% sampled during excavation (Plate 7).
- 5.3.7 In the northern extent of the Area two areas of rooting, a suspected tree throw [2113] and tree bole [2111], were excavated until characterised and sampled with a view to gain any dating evidence. Neither sample yielded datable evidence with only comminuted charcoal being present.
- 5.3.8 Given the location of the two sections of tree rooting at the northern and therefore highest elevated extent of the Area, they are the closest features to a suspected area of Mesolithic activity and any dating evidence from these samples could have been indicative of tree clearing in this period, however they are of limited interpretative



value beyond their presence being noted for a typical loci of Mesolithic activity. Their location "up-slope" lends to zoning a potential area for the main settlement.

5.4 **Area 45**

- 5.4.1 The stratigraphic sequence across Area 45 was variable from east to west, caused by the natural undulating topography from the western half of the Area sitting within a shallow basin (Plate 8). The Area sits at an average of 111.50m AOD in the east and 110.50m AOD in the west.
- 5.4.2 A 0.42m thick, firm and friable, mid brown, silty clay topsoil, **(4500)**, overlaid a 0.35m thick, firm, light greyish-brown, sandy clay, subsoil, **(4501)**, this in turn sealed the varying natural substrate layers, including a firm mid-red sandy clay, a firm, light-yellow, clay, and a moderately loose, mid brownish-red, coarse sand with small gravels (Plate 9).
- 5.4.3 A large oval shaped pit (Plate 10) was recorded within the area during the Evaluation phase [4502], 2.55m in diameter, 0.39m deep and containing three fills; a 30mm thick basal fill of firm light grey clay (4505) either indicative of primary wash or a clay lining to the pit, overlain by a 0.18m thick, mid orangish-brown, sandy clay, (4504), which was, in-turn, sealed by a 0.26m thick mid greyish-brown sandy clay deposit (4503).
- 5.4.4 Pit **[4502]** was sampled to 60% during the evaluation phase and not further excavated during the excavation phase due to erosion from continual onsite flooding and cleaning (as can be seen in Plate 8).
- 5.4.5 To the east of pit [4502] a second smaller pit, [4506], was also recorded during the evaluation phase (Plates 11 & 12), circular in plan, measuring 1.01m in diameter and 0.16m deep, due to standing water within the area during excavation for the mitigation phase the level machined to was lower than that of the Evaluation trench, as such the base of [4506] was re-recorded as [4511]. Pit [4506] contained a 0.15m thick basal fill of firm, orange-brown, clayey sand (4509) which was 'tipped' or 'slighted' in from the northern edge of the pit, which was overlain by a 0.16m thick firm, dark brown, sandy clay with occasional charcoal and pebble inclusions, (4508), same as (4512). A 5I sample of (4512) was gathered and processed; charcoal fragments of alder/hornbeam/hazel wood were recorded in abundance. This sample contained charcoal suitable for radiocarbon dating which returned an early Bronze Age date of 1909 1855 BC (Appendix 1).



- 5.4.6 Fill **(4508)** was overlain by a 0.16m thick firm, light grey clay, **(4507)**. A 5l sample of **(4507)** was gathered and processed, charcoal fragments of alder/hornbeam/hazel wood were recorded in abundance.
- 5.4.7 In the southeast corner of the Area a shallow pit was exposed at 110.69m AOD. The circular pit [4517] was 1.80m in diameter, remaining to 30mm deep, with a single fill of soft, mid greyish / yellowish brown sandy silt with moderate sub-angular black grit (4518). It is likely that much of the feature has been lost due to flood erosion, with little more than staining remaining. Pit [4517] was 100% sampled (Plate 12), although no palaeoenvironmental remains were yielded.
- 5.4.8 A single linear drainage ditch was exposed across the eastern extent of Area 45. Extending north to south across the limit of excavation ditch **[4519]** cut from below turf-level through the topsoil and subsoil deposits, extending down slope to the brook.
- 5.4.9 Ditch [4519] was a maximum of 1.70m wide at the top, up to 0.45m in depth and >12m in length. With sharp breaks of slope and a shallow concave base, ditch [4519] contained a singular washed infill of soft, very dark grey, silty loam, (4516) which had been affected by bio-turbation (Plate 13).
- 5.4.10 A single piece of residual flint was recovered from fill **(4516)**, likely having washed in from the slope to the north.
- 5.4.11 No further archaeological features or deposits were exposed during the archaeological Excavation.



6 FINDS ASSESSMENT

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 A scatter of 178 pieces of worked flint within topsoil and hillwash deposits indicates that the south-facing slope was the site of a temporary camp in the Mesolithic, at which at least two knappers were making microliths. This activity probably took place sometime in the 8th to 5th millennium BC, in the Middle to later Mesolithic.
- 6.1.2 Analysis of the artefacts from the archaeological Evaluation and subsequent Excavation was undertaken by Rob Hedge, finds archaeologist of Worcestershire Archaeology, on behalf of WA.
- 6.1.3 During the archaeological Evaluation in 2018, 20 pieces of worked flint were recovered within topsoil and subsoil in Trench 21. They exhibited characteristics consistent with a Mesolithic date, though lacking diagnostic retouched pieces. Further fieldwork was designed to establish the extent of the scatter and recover any remaining artefacts.
- 6.1.4 The HER had no record of prehistoric activity within a 1km radius (WA 2018a). However, in the wider local area, there are a number of Mesolithic flint scatters within a 15km radius of Nuneaton. First highlighted by Saville (1981), who published results of Ron (Barry) Waite's extensive fieldwalking, most of these are located on the high ground (above 122m OD) to the west of Nuneaton. Close to Plough Hill Road are a number of sites on the ridge to the north-west of Nuneaton, including a scatter close to Oldbury Hillfort (Warwickshire HER ref 4598), one in Purley Park (ref 4592), and one at Spring Farm, Mancetter (ref 5009). The sites identified by Saville as case studies for what has become known as the 'Honey Hill'-type assemblage, typical of the Midlands Mesolithic, are located approximately 10km to the west (Over Whitacre Spring and Site 4) and to the south-west (Corley Rock) on the sandstone uplands of the east Warwickshire plateau. However, Mesolithic activity was not confined to the uplands; on the lower slopes to the south of Nuneaton, a scatter in the Bermuda area at around 100m OD (ref 5318) is also recorded.
- 6.1.5 The recent publication of the first radiocarbon dates from a stratified Honey Hill site at Asfordby (Cooper et al 2017) add weight to the hypothesis that these 'Midlands Mesolithic' assemblages represent a typologically distinctive Middle Mesolithic phase, intermediate between the earlier and later Mesolithic. Dates from Asfordby, clustered around the turn of the 8th millennium BC, reveal that this Middle Mesolithic emerged prior to the inundation of Doggerland and the pre-Boreal to Boreal transition, although its longevity is not yet clear.



6.2 **Aims**

6.2.1 The aims of the analysis were to:

- identify, date, and characterise phases of activity represented by the artefacts recovered; and
- quantify and analyse archaeologically significant assemblage.

6.3 **Method**

- 6.3.1 Worked flint from the evaluation stage was included within the analysis. All handretrieved finds were examined. They were identified and dated to period. A terminus
 post-quem date was produced for each stratified context. The date was used for
 determining the broad date of phases defined for the site. All information was
 recorded on a Microsoft Access database and Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. Charts
 were produced using Microsoft Excel.
- 6.3.2 Classification of worked flint follows conventions outlined in Ballin (2000), Inizan et al (1999), and Butler (2005); the material was catalogued according to type and dated where possible. Visible retouch, edge-damage, cortex, raw material characteristics and quality, burning, and breakage were noted. Complete flakes were measured for the purposes of length/breadth analysis.
- 6.3.3 Pottery fabrics are referenced to the fabric reference series maintained by Worcestershire Archaeology (Hurst and Rees 1992; accessible at www.worcestershireceramics.org), and to the local Warwickshire medieval and post-medieval type series (Soden and Ratkai 1998).

6.4 Results

- 6.4.1 The assemblage can be divided into two phases: material associated with prehistoric flintknapping, and post-medieval domestic debris incorporated into the soils through agricultural practices such as manuring. This analysis focuses on the former.
- 6.4.2 In order to establish whether the fieldwork strategy is likely to have encountered all of the concentrations of lithic material within the examined area, the formula developed by Sundstrom (1993) was applied: $p = \frac{2\sqrt{(a^2+b^2)/2}}{d}$, where p is the probability that all concentrations of material with a minimum elliptical area defined by axes a and b will be intersected by survey interventions (in this case test-pits) spaced distance d apart. The smallest concentration encountered was contained within an area approximately 2.5m by 2.5m. Test pits were spaced roughly 2.5 metres



apart. Using these dimensions, the probability that each concentration was encountered is $2 = \frac{2\sqrt{(2.5^2 + 2.5^2)/2}}{2.5}$, meaning that each concentration is likely to have been intersected more than once.

- 6.4.3 No significant pattern was observed in the distribution of the flint within the site. It appears, from an assessment of the topography, stratigraphy, and distribution, that the artefacts have travelled down-slope as a result of colluvial processes. They are, however, still in fresh condition with little abrasion or recent edge-damage, suggesting that they have not moved far from their point of deposition. No occupation-related features were observed within the works, although the presence of a tree-throw approximately 20m to the north of the limit of the scatter should be noted, as such features were frequently used as loci for temporary camps.
- 6.4.4 Small fragments of domestic refuse of post-medieval to modern date within the topsoil deposit are likely to represent a background scatter of material incorporated from nearby settlements into the local soils through agricultural activity such as manuring and refuse deposition from the former golf club.

6.5 **Prehistoric Quantification**

- 6.5.1 The prehistoric worked stone comprised 178 artefacts, weighing 701.5g. Debitage accounted for the majority (164 artefacts weighing 663.5g); there were also 14 retouched tools (38g) (Table 2). Debitage lacking attributes that indicate a specific date is recorded as 'prehistoric' in the table below. However, in the absence of any diagnostically later forms, all are consistent with a Mesolithic date.
- 6.5.2 Tools included an obliquely blunted point (Plate 15), a scalene microtriangle, an end scraper, a knife, a truncated piece, four notched pieces (Plate 16), and five retouched flakes. Unretouched blades and blade elements were classified as debitage. Other debitage included microburins (indicative of microlith production) (Plate 17), flakes, blades (flakes with a length:breadth ratio of at least 2:1), flake and blade cores (Plate 18), and core rejuvenation flakes including crested blades and a core tablet. Shattered pieces with no identifiable ventral face or bulb of percussion were classified as either chunks (>10mm) or chips (<10mm).



	Table 2: Quantification and classification of the worked stone												
Artefact	Artefact type	Flake	Qty	Weight	Period	Start	End						
class	Arteract type	Portion	Qty	weight	Periou	Date	Date						
	end scraper	whole	1	8.4	Mesolithic	-10,000	-4000						
	knife	whole	1	0.9	Mesolithic	-10,000	-4000						
	microtriangle	distal	1	0.2	Mesolithic	-10,000	-4000						
	notch	whole	1	2.6	Mesolithic	-10,000	-4000						
	Hoten	proximal	2	6.1	Mesolithic	-10,000	-4000						
Tool	notched blade	distal	1	1.3	Mesolithic	-10,000	-4000						
	obliquely blunted point	proximal	1	1.1	Mesolithic	-10,000	-4000						
	retouched flake	whole	3	11.8	Mesolithic	-10,000	-4000						
	retouched hake	proximal	2	5	Mesolithic	-10,000	-4000						
	truncated piece	proximal	1	0.6	Mesolithic	-10,000	-4000						
	Suk	ototal: tools	14	38									
		whole	13	19.9	Mesolithic	-10,000	-4000						
	blade	proximal	4	4.4	Mesolithic	-10,000	-4000						
	blade	medial	11	5.1	Mesolithic	-10,000	-4000						
		distal	7	11.5	Mesolithic	-10,000	-4000						
	microburin	proximal	4	6.7	Mesolithic	-10,000	-4000						
		whole	20	29.6	Mesolithic	-10,000	-4000						
		wildle	16	50.6	prehistoric	-10,000	43						
	flake	proximal	16	18.8	Mesolithic	-10,000	-4000						
Debitage		medial	1	0.9	Mesolithic	-10,000	-4000						
Debitage		distal	8	10.9	Mesolithic	-10,000	-4000						
	flake core	1	2	49.4	Mesolithic	-10,000	-4000						
	blade core		5	161.1	Mesolithic	-10,000	-4000						
	crested blade		2	28.1	Mesolithic	-10,000	-4000						
	core tablet		1	1.6	Mesolithic	-10,000	-4000						
	rejuvenation flake		4	20.9	Mesolithic	-10,000	-4000						
	chip		11	1.7	Mesolithic	-10,000	-4000						
	chunk		36	237.7	prehistoric	-10,000	43						
	quartz chunk		3	4.6	undated	•	•						
	Subtot	al: debitage	164	663.5									
	Ov	erall Total:	178	701.5									

6.5.3 Roughly a third of artefacts by number (accounting for almost two-thirds of the weight of the assemblage) were from primary or secondary stages in the reduction sequence, with cortex visible on the dorsal surface (Table 3). This proportion is relatively high, and it is notable that over a third of the finished tools have cortex on their dorsal surfaces. This is likely to reflect exploitation of relatively small nodules of flint from secondary sources such as river gravels and glacial deposits.



	Table 2: Numbers and proportions of artefacts by each stage in the reduction sequence																		
		Flake		Blade		Core		Chip		Chunk		Core rejuvenation		Microburin		Retouched tools		Totals	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Primary (100%	number	0	0%	0	0%	1	14%	0	0%	3	8%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4	2%
dorsal cortex)	weight (g)	0	0%	0	0%	34	16%	0	0%	38	17%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	72	11%
Secondary (1-	number	14	26%	8	23%	4	57%	0	0%	17	46%	2	29%	0	0%	5	36%	50	30%
99% dorsal cortex)	weight (g)	51	53%	17	42%	79	37%	0	0%	169	74%	28	56%	0	0%	12	32%	357	53%
Tertiary (no	number	39	74%	27	77%	2	29%	8	100%	17	46%	5	71%	4	100%	9	64%	111	67%
dorsal cortex)	weight (g)	46	47%	24	58%	98	47%	1	100%	20	9%	23	44%	7	100%	26	68%	244	36%



6.6 Raw Material

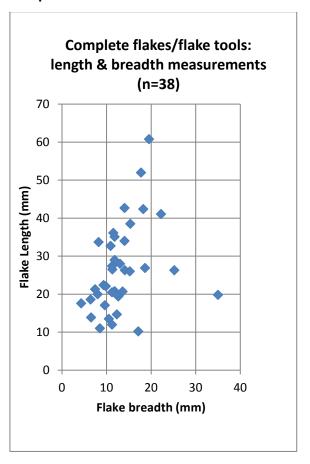
- 6.6.1 A variety of raw materials were observed: with the exception of three small chunks of white quartz, all artefacts were flint of various types and variable quality. Where present, cortex was generally thin and contused, suggesting that the raw material was being obtained from secondary sources such as river cobbles and glacial deposits. Saville (1981, 51) notes the presence of flint within local boulder clays and river gravels, which accounted for the raw material of the assemblages collected by Waite (see above).
- 6.6.2 A good-quality off-white to cream-coloured, fine-grained opaque flint may originate in the Yorkshire/Lincolnshire Wolds. Several of the tools, including the scalene microlith, are made from a fine light-grey translucent flint. Mid-grey translucent flint, often partly or fully corticated, was also used. Some shattered pieces attest to attempts to test nodules of poor-quality iron-stained pebble flint. A shift from good-quality primary sources to more variable local sources is often seen as a marker of the transition from the earlier to later Mesolithic (Pitts and Jacobi 1979, 174).

6.7 Characteristics and Dating

- 6.7.1 With relatively few retouched pieces, the assemblage is difficult to place within the typological frameworks for Mesolithic assemblages (eg Conneller et al 2016). The sole obliquely-blunted point is 36.1mm long and 11.5mm wide. This is relatively large, and typical of earlier Mesolithic examples. It does not have the basal retouch that typifies the 'Honey Hill' Midlands assemblages of the 8th millennium B.C. onwards including those described by Saville (1981) from the Nuneaton area. However, basal retouch was observed on one otherwise unmodified blade.
- 6.7.2 The assemblage does include a small scalene triangle, with a broken tip.

 These become more common from the

Figure 1: Scatterplot of length/breadth of complete flakes and flake tools





8th millennium BC and are a frequent component on Middle and later Mesolithic sites. 67% of the blade elements comprised proximal, medial and distal portions of snapped blades, with complete blades accounting for just 33%. This suggests activity centred around microlith production.

- 6.7.3 Pitts and Jacobi (1979, fig 4) have demonstrated that flake proportions can be a useful indicator of whether an assemblage belongs to earlier or later Mesolithic traditions, with flake debitage getting progressively broader over time when plotted in relation to length. 38 flakes proved suitable for measurement. The sample size is small, and the profile (Chart 1) is consistent with both early and later Mesolithic trends, though arguably showing more affinity with earlier assemblages.
- 6.7.4 Of the four proximal microburins, two were notched on the left-hand side (when viewed with butt end at top, cf. Saville's conventions), and two on the right (see Plate 17). The obliquely blunted point was retouched along the right lateral margin, but the scalene microlith was retouched along the left-hand side. Of the two notched blades, one was retouched on the left margin, and one on the right (see Plate 18). Within Saville's local assemblages, 86% of the microburins were notched on the left (1981, table 4), with similar proportions evident in the microliths and obliquely blunted points. This is broadly consistent with the national pattern: in Mesolithic assemblages, left-side-notched microburins and left-side-retouched microliths are invariably dominant (Clark 1933). Ballin (2017, 23) notes that variation from these proportions may reflect flexibility in response to raw material constraints, but overall the pattern mirrors the relative proportions of right- and left-handers in human populations: then, as now, roughly 90% of the population appear to have been right-handed.
- 6.7.5 Of the eight pieces in this assemblage that illustrate the knapper's choices (four microburins, two notched blades, one scalene, and one obliquely-blunted point), four show preference for left-side retouch (ie right-handed), and four for right-side retouch (ie left-handed). There are no particular qualities of the raw materials that suggest this preference was constrained by raw material. Although it is a small sample, these proportions suggest that this assemblage was produced by at least two knappers, of whom one was left-handed.

6.8 Post-medieval and Modern Finds

6.8.1 A small quantity of residual and abraded sherds of 17th and 18th century domestic pottery were recovered from the topsoil. These comprise typical local wares such as Midlands blackware (MB01 and MB02), mottled manganese ware (MANG), and comb-



decorated buff slipwares. Small quantities of 18th-century tin-glazed earthenwares and later 18th-century refined creamwares and basalt ware were noted. 19th century transfer-printed whiteware (MGW), white salt-glazed stoneware, and porcelain were present. Abraded clay tobacco pipe fragments of 17th to 19th century date were also recovered.

6.9 **Conclusions**

- 6.9.1 The assemblage derives from a temporary camp in the Mesolithic, probably located up-slope in the very near vicinity of the sampled area, at which at least two knappers were producing blades and segmenting them to make microliths and a range of retouched tools, including obliquely blunted points. One of the knappers was probably left-handed. With a relatively small sample and few diagnostic tools, it is difficult to arrive at a precise date. However, there are parallels with other Mesolithic assemblages in the area, which seem to reflect activity from the Middle Mesolithic c 8000 BC onwards.
- 6.9.2 It is noteworthy that the HER has no record of prehistoric activity within a 1km radius (WA 2018a). The discovery of worked flint on this site, therefore, represents the first evidence of activity of this date in this vicinity. Its discovery during a structured programme of archaeological work is significant because, as Myers (2007, 31) notes for the West Midlands 'most [Mesolithic] material has been collected unsystematically ... and in many areas collections of flintwork have not been analysed in any detail'.

6.10 Recommendations

- 6.10.1 It is recommended that the worked flint is a significant discovery and should be retained, but the remainder of the assemblage is unlikely to warrant retention. The final decision on retention rests with Warwickshire Museums.
- 6.10.2 It is recommended that, at minimum, a short note is provided to the local transactions, as an addition to the growing corpus of Mesolithic sites in the Nuneaton area.



7 PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 Four bulk environmental samples were taken during the archaeological Excavation. The samples were fully processed and totalled 162kg (113l) of sediments.
- 7.1.2 The results of the assessment of the environmental samples and ecofactual remains are in accordance with Campbell et al. (2011) and English Heritage (2008).
- 7.1.3 The environmental assessment was undertaken by Lynne F. Gardiner.

7.2 Methodology

- 7.2.1 The bulk environmental samples (see Table 3 for sampled context descriptions) were processed at Wardell Armstrong LLP. The colour, lithology, weight and volume of each sample was recorded using standard Wardell Armstrong pro forma recording sheets. cf. Table 4. The samples were processed with 500-micron retention and flotation meshes using the Siraf method of flotation (Williams 1973). Once dried, the residues from the retention mesh were sieved to 4mm and any artefacts and ecofacts (if present) removed from the larger fraction and forwarded to the finds department. The smaller fraction was scanned with a magnet for microslags such as hammerscales. This fraction was then examined for smaller artefacts such as beads. This fraction would also have been re-floated if significant charcoal presence had been noted.
- 7.2.2 The flot, along with any charcoal from the dried retent, were retained and scanned using a stereo microscope (up to x45 magnification). Any non-palaeobotanical finds were noted on the flot pro forma (data from pro-forma is presented in Table 5).
- 7.2.3 Once sorted, and any artefactual and ecofactual material was recovered (and retained), both the retent residues and the flots were discarded.

7.3 Results

- 7.3.1 Area 21: three samples were taken from this Area. Two were from the fill (2113) of a tree throw (<2> and <4>) and the other, <3>, from an upper fill (2109) of pit [2106]. All these samples presented clayey sediments. No artefactual material was observed and charcoal was yielded in <2> only.
- 7.3.2 Area 45: two samples were presented from this Area. The sediments were as observed in Area 21. No artefactual material was observed and less than 1g of charcoal was presented in <1> which was from fill (4512) of pit [4511].



7.4 **Discussion**

7.4.1 Overall these samples presented no scope for any discussion. The pH levels, although edging onto the slightly acidic range, would still have allowed for the recovery of charred plant material and bone if these materials had been present in the sediments.

7.5 Statement of potential and recommendations

- 7.5.1 The two charcoal-yielding samples have had charcoal recovered for submission for radiocarbon determination by SUERC Of the two samples one was successfully dated to 2206-2199 BC at a probability of 84.5-95.4% (Appendix 1).
- 7.5.2 The very small amounts of charcoal observed would not add anything meaningful to the palaeoenvironmental corpus for the area. Radiocarbon determination has been achieved and these can be discarded.

Table 3: Sampled Contexts									
С	<>	context description							
Trench 21									
2113	2	fill of tree throw							
2109	3	upper fill of pit [2106]							
2113	4	fill of tree throw							
Trench 45									
4512 1 fill of pit [4511]									
4518	5	fill of circular pit [4517							
Key: C=context, <>= sample number									



	Table 4: Sample Data													
С	<>	TQ	рН	СР	TP	MP	PW	PV	CS	TS	Components (sorting)	SW	SV	
Trench	n 21								•					
2113	2	4	5.22	dark greyish brown	plastic	clay	44	38	dark brown	loose	stone>1cm 5%: stone<1cm 10%: sand 85%	572	400	
2109	3	2	5.4	mid greyish red	plastic	sandy clay	19	12	pale yellowish brown	loose	stone>1cm 5%: stone<1cm 5%: sand 90%	536	400	
2113	4	3	5.34	mid greyish brown	plastic	sandy clay	38	29	pale greyish brown	loose	stone<1cm 5%: sand 95%	476	400	
Trench	า 45	·I	1	•		I .	ı	I	1	I		I .	I.	
4512	1	1	4.96	mid brownish grey	plastic	sandy clay	5	4	pale greyish brown	loose	stone>1cm 20%: stone<1cm 10%: sand 70%	1463	1200	
4518	5	4	5.72	mid brownish grey	soft	clayey sand	56 162	30 113	pale brown	loose	stone>1cm 20%: stone<1cm 40%: sand 40%	18878	13700	

Key: C= context, <>= sample number, TQ= number of tubs in sample, CP= colour of pre-processed sediment, TP= texture of pre-processed sediment, MP=matrix of pre-processed sediment, PW= weight (kg) of pre-processed sediment, PV= volume (I) of pre-processed sediment, CS= colour of dried retent residues, TS= texture of dried retent residues, SW= weight (g) of dried retent residues, SV= volume (ml) of dried retent residues



	Table 5: Flots and Finds Data													
С	<>	<>n	WF	VF	AMS?	Ch (F)	F) Ch (R) Components							
Trench	21													
2113	2	1	40	150	?	-	7	sand 80%: comminuted charcoal 20%						
2109	3	1	10	40	no	-	-	sand 50%: very fine rootlets 45%: comminuted charcoal 5%						
2113	4	1	13.2	70	no	-	-	very fine rootlets 90%: sand 9%: comminuted charcoal 1%						
Trench	45													
4512	1	1	3.2	20	3	0.32	<1	sand 40%: comminuted charcoal 10%: very fine rootlets 50%						
4518	5	1	22.5	70	no	-	-	sand 20%: very fine rootlets 80%]						

Key: C= context, <>= sample number, WF= weight (g) of flot, AMS?= presence of suitable material for radiocarbon dating whereby the ? denotes a possibility, Ch (F)= charcoal weight (g) from flot, Ch (R)= charcoal weight (g) from retention



8 SYNTHESIS

- 8.1.1 Wardell Armstrong LLP were commissioned by Countryside Properties to undertake an archaeological Excavation on land to the east of Plough Hill Road, Nuneaton, Warwickshire.
- 8.1.2 The Excavation was required to investigate, record and fully understand the known archaeological resource ahead of the redevelopment of the Site.
- 8.1.3 Previous archaeological work on the Site consisted of a Gradiometer survey (AOC 2015), which informed the locations for an archaeological Evaluation (WA 2018b), which identified remains of possible significant archaeology in Trenches 21 and 45.
- 8.1.4 Based on the results of the previously conducted work, archaeological Excavation was targeted on the known archaeological features, comprising two areas measuring 60m x 12m in plan.
- 8.1.5 Excavation of Area 21 recovered a large assemblage of Early to Middle Mesolithic flints from topsoil and subsoil deposits, indicating a high level of activity in the vicinity of the Area, likely up-slope to the north of the Site boundary.
- 8.1.6 Overall the excavations have revealed an indication of a Mesolithic settlement, with continued sporadic prehistoric activity into the early Bronze Age.
- 8.1.7 Although a main foci for settlement has not been established it can be assumed that the spatial distribution of any settlement would be at the brow of the hill, particularly due to the poorly draining nature of the soils, as experienced during the Excavation, and that ground saturation likely occurred in the natural shallow basins along and at the break of slope, making that area unattractive for full settlement.
- 8.1.8 However, activity was occurring close to the water source, with local wood resources identified and no traces of metals or ceramics, it is assumed that domestic activities such as cooking were undertaken near to the brook.
- 8.1.9 Evidence from the Site suggests the flint used in knapping came from at least two sources, suggestive of a mobile population with a short span of activity in the area or possibly seasonal occupation. Utilising local resources, such as river cobbles and gravels and not carrying/importing better quality resources. This is supported by the palaeoenvironmental assessment and an un-diverse range of woods being used from nearby.



- 8.1.10 The focus of prehistoric activity on the Site would be concentrated with settlement at the top of the natural slope and pitting, potential processing/domestic activity, at the base of the slope near the known water source.
- 8.1.11 The location of Mesolithic activity on higher ground close to a water source, with temporary or seasonal occupation, fits with the wider pattern of Mesolithic flint scatters in the West Midlands, including Corley Rocks and Whiteacre in north Warwickshire (Garwood 2011 & Myers 2007).
- 8.1.12 Moving into the Medieval period the Site formed part of an open field system, this agricultural use of the land continued into the post-Medieval period with updates to the drainage systems and mechanical plough scars identified during the Evaluation.
- 8.1.13 The known archaeological resource on Site has been fully recorded and characterised.
- 8.1.14 No further impact will occur from the redevelopment of the Site with the Areas of Excavation located within an area due to be built up for the development and landscaped with the installation of a single access path.
- 8.1.15 It is recommended that the worked flint is a significant discovery and should be retained, but the remainder of the assemblage does not warrant retention. It is also recommended that, at minimum, a short note is provided to the local transactions, as an addition to the growing corpus of Mesolithic sites in the Nuneaton area.



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Appendix 1 Radiocarbon Dating Certificate



Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre

Rankine Avenue, Scottish Enterprise Technology Park, East Kilbride, Glasgow G75 0QF, Scotland, UK Director: Professor F M Stuart Tel: +44 (0)1355 223332 Fax: +44 (0)1355 229898 www.glasgow.ac.uk/suerc



RADIOCARBON DATING CERTIFICATE 17 May 2019

Laboratory Code SUERC-86369 (GU51567)

Submitter Lynne Gardiner

Wardell Armstrong LLP

Marconi Road

Burgh Road Industrial Estate

Carlisle

Cumbria, CA2 7NA

Site Reference Plough Hill Road, Nuneaton

Context Reference fill of pit [4511] **Sample Reference** (4512) <1>

Material charcoal: Quercus sp.

δ¹³C relative to VPDB -26.1 %

Radiocarbon Age BP 3832 ± 27

N.B. The above ¹⁴C age is quoted in conventional years BP (before 1950 AD) and requires calibration to the calendar timescale. The error, expressed at the one sigma level of confidence, includes components from the counting statistics on the sample, modern reference standard and blank and the random machine error.

Samples with a SUERC coding are measured at the Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre AMS Laboratory and should be quoted as such in any reports within the scientific literature. The laboratory GU coding should also be given in parentheses after the SUERC code.

Detailed descriptions of the methods employed by the SUERC Radiocarbon Laboratory can be found in Dunbar et al. (2016) *Radiocarbon 58(1) pp.9-23*.

For any queries relating to this certificate, the laboratory can be contacted at suerc-c14lab@glasgow.ac.uk.

P. Nayonto

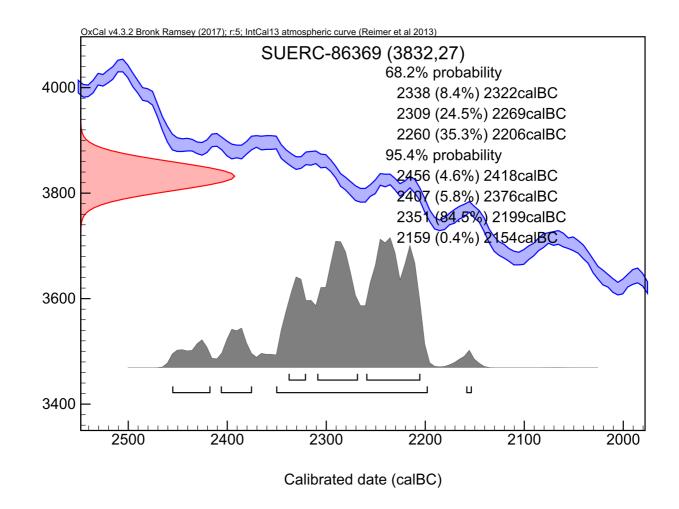
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Conventional age and calibration age ranges calculated by:

Checked and signed off by:







The radiocarbon age given overleaf is calibrated to the calendar timescale using the Oxford Radiocarbon Accelerator Unit calibration program OxCal 4.*

The above date ranges have been calibrated using the IntCal13 atmospheric calibration curve!

Please contact the laboratory if you wish to discuss this further.



Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre

Rankine Avenue, Scottish Enterprise Technology Park, East Kilbride, Glasgow G75 0QF, Scotland, UK Director: Professor F M Stuart Tel: +44 (0)1355 223332 Fax: +44 (0)1355 229898 www.glasgow.ac.uk/suerc



RADIOCARBON DATING CERTIFICATE 17 May 2019

Laboratory Code SUERC-86370 (GU51568)

Submitter Lynne Gardiner

Wardell Armstrong LLP

Marconi Road

Burgh Road Industrial Estate

Carlisle

Cumbria, CA2 7NA

Site Reference Plough Hill Road, Nuneaton

fill of tree throw **Context Reference**

Sample Reference (2113) < 2 >

Material charcoal: cf. Taxus baccata

δ¹³C relative to VPDB -21.2 %

Radiocarbon Age BP Background Result > 55000

N.B. The above sample yielded a result indistinguishable from our background samples and is consequently reported as a greater than age in conventional years BP (before 1950 AD).

Detailed descriptions of the methods employed by the SUERC Radiocarbon Laboratory can be found in Dunbar et al. (2016) *Radiocarbon 58(1) pp.9-23*.

For any queries relating to this certificate, the laboratory can be contacted at suerc-c14lab@glasgow.ac.uk.

Conventional age calculated by:

P. Nayomb Checked and signed off by:







Appendix 2 Context Summary



Area 21

Length: 60m Width: 12m Orientation: North – South
Minimum Depth: 0.33 m Maximum Depth: 1.20 m

Context Context			Dimensions	Interpretation
Number	Type	Description	Difficusions	interpretation
Humber	Турс	Compact light greyish-	0.40m thick	Topsoil
2100		brow clayey silt with	0.40III tillek	ТОРЗОП
	Layer	frequent rooting and		
		vegetation remains.		
		Firm light-yellow brown	0.75m thick	Hillwash subsoil
2101	Lavor	silty clay. No inclusions to	combined	HIIIWASII SUDSOII
2101	Layer	be recorded.		
			with (2100) 0.75m thick	Hillmade aubenil
2102	Layer			Hillwash subsoil
2102		mixed colluvial layer. No	combined	
		inclusions to be recorded.	with (2100)	Nista and substants
24.02	1	Compact orange brown		Natural substrate
2103	Layer	sandy clay. No inclusions		
		to be recorded.		N
24.04	1	Very compact mid brown		Natural substrate
2104	Layer	mottled reddish clay. No		
		inclusions to be recorded.		
24.05		Compact mid brown silty		Natural substrate
2105	Layer	clay; no inclusions to be		
		recorded.	4.20	
		North to south aligned	4.30m long	Cut of pit – unknown
2106	Cut	elongated pit with	1.00m wide	function.
		rounded ends and straight	0.40m deep	
		sides	0.40	D 1611 6 11
24.07	E-11	Firm, orange brown	0.10m thick	Basal fill of pit
2107	Fill	mottled with blueish-grey		
		silty clay	0.22	6 1 60 10 1
2108	Fill	Firm, mid-brownish-	0.32m thick	Secondary fill and lining of
		orange, silty clay	0.00 (1.1.	pit [2106]
2109	Fill	Firm, mid orangey-brown	0.32m thick	Sealed fill (2108)
		mottled with dark blue-		
		grey silty clay with pebbled		
		and flint flake inclusions.		
2110	Cut	Sub-oval cut with concave	0.44m long	Posthole in the southern
		sides, gradual top break of	0.17m deep [2106], but relations	end of lozenge-shaped pit
		slope and almost		[2106], but relationship is
		imperceptible base break		unclear.



Context	Context	Description	Dimensions	Interpretation
Number	Туре			
		of slope. Concave base,		
		roughly N-S orientation.		
	Cut	Sub-circular cut with	0.25m deep	Circular feature, cut of
		rounded corners, sharp	0.66m	possible pit.
2111		top break of slope, steep	diameter	
2111		sides, and gradual base		
		break of slope. Concave		
		base, E-W orientation.		
2112	Fill	Firm, light grey with	0.25m thick	Singular fill of pit [2111]
		patches of yellowy-orange	0.66m	
		silty clay with patches of	diameter	
		sand. Rare 1% manganese		
		inclusions, low		
		contamination of rooting.		

Area 45

Length: 60m Width: 12m Orientation: East – West

Minimum Depth: 0.27 m Maximum Depth: 1.05 m

Context	Context	Description	Dimensions	Interpretation
Number	Туре			
4500	Layer	Friable mid brown silty clay	0.42m thick	Topsoil
4501	Layer	Firm light greyish brown	0.35m thick	Subsoil
4301		sandy clay		
	Cut	Large oval shaped pit	2.55m long	Cut of pit
4502		recorded from the north-	1.40m wide	
4302		facing section of the	0.39 deep	
		trench.		
		Mid greyish-brown sandy	2.55m long	Top fill of pit [4502]
4503	Fill	clay with frequent small	1.4m wide	
		manganese nodules	0.26m thick	
4504	Fill	Firm mid orange brown sandy clay	2.55m long	Middle fill of pit [4502]
			1.4m wide	
			0.18m thick	
4505	Fill	Firm light grey clay	1.42m long	Basal fill of pit [4502]
			1.03m wide	
			0.3 thick	



Context Number	Context Type	Description	Dimensions	Interpretation
4506	Cut	Small circular pit located to east of pit [4502].	1.00m diameter 0.16 deep	Cut of pit
4507	Fill	Firm, light grey clay	0.16m thick	Fill of pit
4508	Fill	Firm dark brown sandy clay with frequent charcoal and small to medium pebbles	0.83m long 0.25m wide 0.16m thick	Burnt fill of [4506]
4509	Fill	Compact orange brown clayish sand with occasional small pebbles	0.74m long 0.47m wide 0.15 thick	Basal fill of [4506]
4510	Layer	Firm yellowish grey clay		Natural substrate
4511	Cut	Sub-circular cut with almost imperceptible top break of slope, straight sides, and gradual base break of slope. Undulating base.	0.46m long 0.39m wide 0.05m deep	Cut of possible pit
4512	Fill	Friable, mottled dark bluish grey with midorangey brown silty clay. 30% sub-angular 20-50mm stone inclusions.	0.46m long 0.38m wide 0.05m thick	Single fill of possible pit [4511]. Likely natural silting
4513	VOID	VOID	VOID	VOID
4514	VOID	VOID	VOID	VOID
4515	VOID	VOID	VOID	VOID
4516	Fill	Dark greyish black, soft loamy soil with rare <2% sub-angular, poorly sorted rocks. Low-medium rooting.	>12m long 1.70 wide 0.45m thick	Modern ditch fill with single flint present in western edge.
4517	Cut	Circular cut with rounded corners, v. gradual (almost flat) top break of slope and very gradual base break of slope. Smooth and shallow sides. Flat, slightly undulating base.	1.80m in diameter 0.3m deep	Cut of mid-size pit, extremely shallow due to being washed away by trench flooding and possible over-machining.
4518	Fill	Soft mid-greyish brown with yellowish hue sandy silt, with moderate small	1.80m in diameter 0.3m thick	Fill of pit [4517]. Deposit waterlogged due to trench



Context Number	Context Type	Description	Dimensions	Interpretation
		sub-angular black grit inclusions (40%).		flooding. Enviro sample number 5. No finds.
4519	Cut	Linear cut with sharp top break of slope on E side, gradual on W. Shallow sloping sides on W side, irregular on E side. Gradual base break of slope. Shallow concave base, N-S orientation.	>12m long 1.7m wide 0.45m deep	Cut of modern ditch.



Appendix 3
Plates



Plate No. 1 Title: Pre-excavation shot of Area 21, looking north



Picture Taken:

Plate No. 2 Title: Pre-excavation shot of Area 45, looking east



Client: Countryside Properties

Project: Archaeological Excavation, Plough Hill Road, Nuneaton



Plate No. 3 Title: Micro-scale polygons resulting from desiccation cracking of finegrained sediments each less than *c*1.00m in diameter



Picture Taken:

Plate No. 4 Title: Post-excavation shot of Area 21, facing northeast with 2 x 1m scales



Client: Countryside Properties

Project: Archaeological Excavation, Plough Hill Road, Nuneaton



Plate No. 5 Title: East-facing representative section of Area 21, with 1m scale



Picture Taken:

Plate No. 6 Title: South-west facing section of elongated pit [2106], with 1m scale



Client: Countryside Properties

Project: Archaeological Excavation, Plough Hill Road, Nuneaton



Plate No. 7 Title: Shot of 100% excavated pit [2106], facing southeast with 2m scale



Picture Taken:

Plate No. 8 Title: Post-excavation shot of Area 45, facing east with 2 x 1m scales



Client: Countryside Properties

Project: Archaeological Excavation, Plough Hill Road, Nuneaton



Plate No. 9 Title: South-facing representative section of Area 45, with 1m scale



Picture Taken:

Plate No. 10 Title: Oblique shot of pit [4502] post-excavation, looking southsoutheast with 2 x 1m scales

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Project: Archaeological Excavation, Plough Hill Road, Nuneaton



Plate No. 11 Title: West-facing section of pit [4506], with 1m scale



Picture Taken:

Plate No. 12 Title: West-facing section of remains of pit [4511] (same as [4506]), with 0.40m scale



Client: Countryside Properties

Project: Archaeological Excavation, Plough Hill Road, Nuneaton

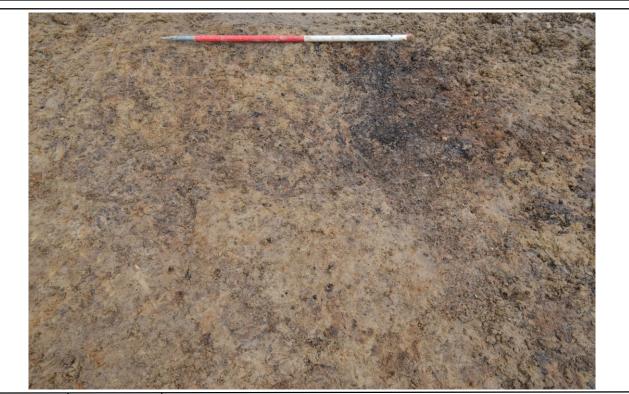
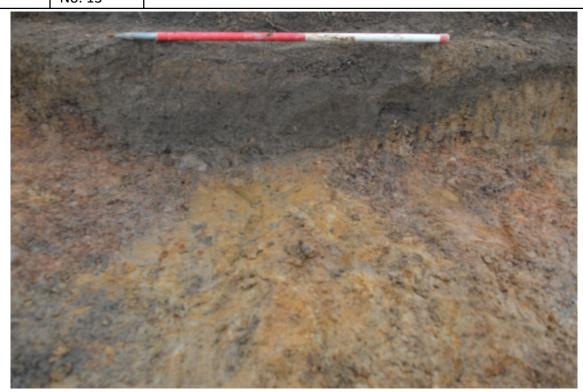


Plate No. 13 Title: Post-excavation shot of pit [4517], with 1m scale



Picture Taken:

Plate No. 14 Title: North-facing section of ditch [4519], with 1m scale



Client: Countryside Properties

Project: Archaeological Excavation, Plough Hill Road, Nuneaton



Plate No. 15 Title: L-R: Microlith, truncated piece, obliquely-blunted point, blade with basal retouch, with 80mm scale



Picture Taken:

Plate No. 16 Title: Notched blades and flakes, with 80mm scale



Client: Countryside Properties

Project: Archaeological Excavation, Plough Hill Road, Nuneaton



Plate No. 17 Title: L: 2 x left-hand side microburins, R: 2 x right-hand side microburins, with 80mm scale



Picture Taken:

Plate No. 18 Title: Top: blade and flake cores, Bottom: core rejuvenation debitage, with 80mm scale

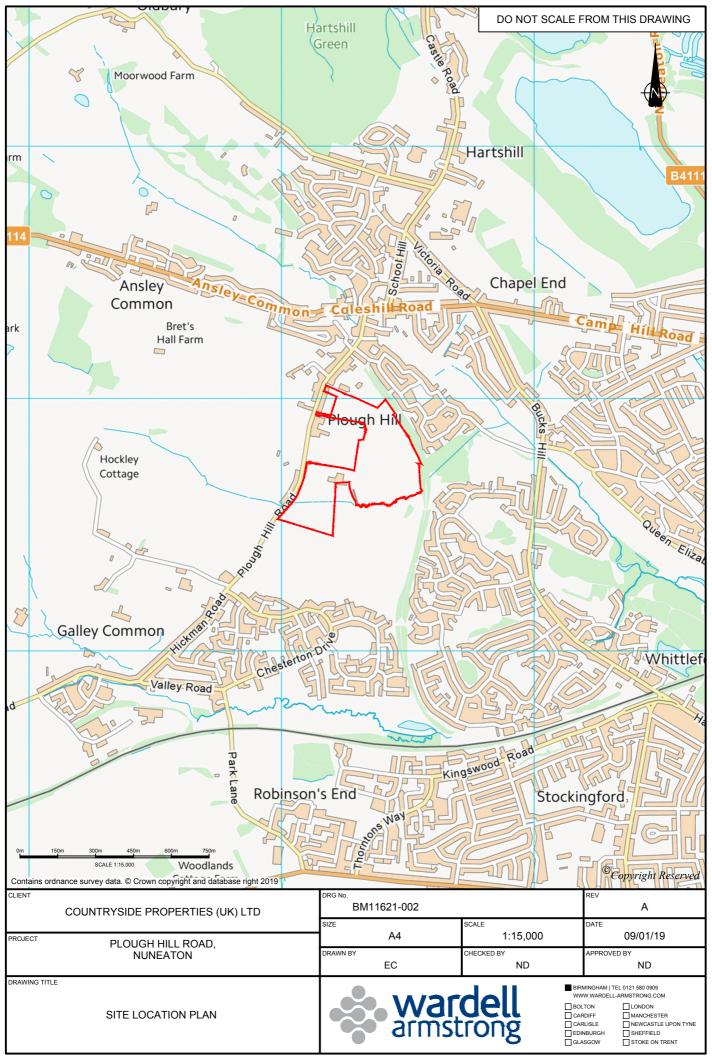
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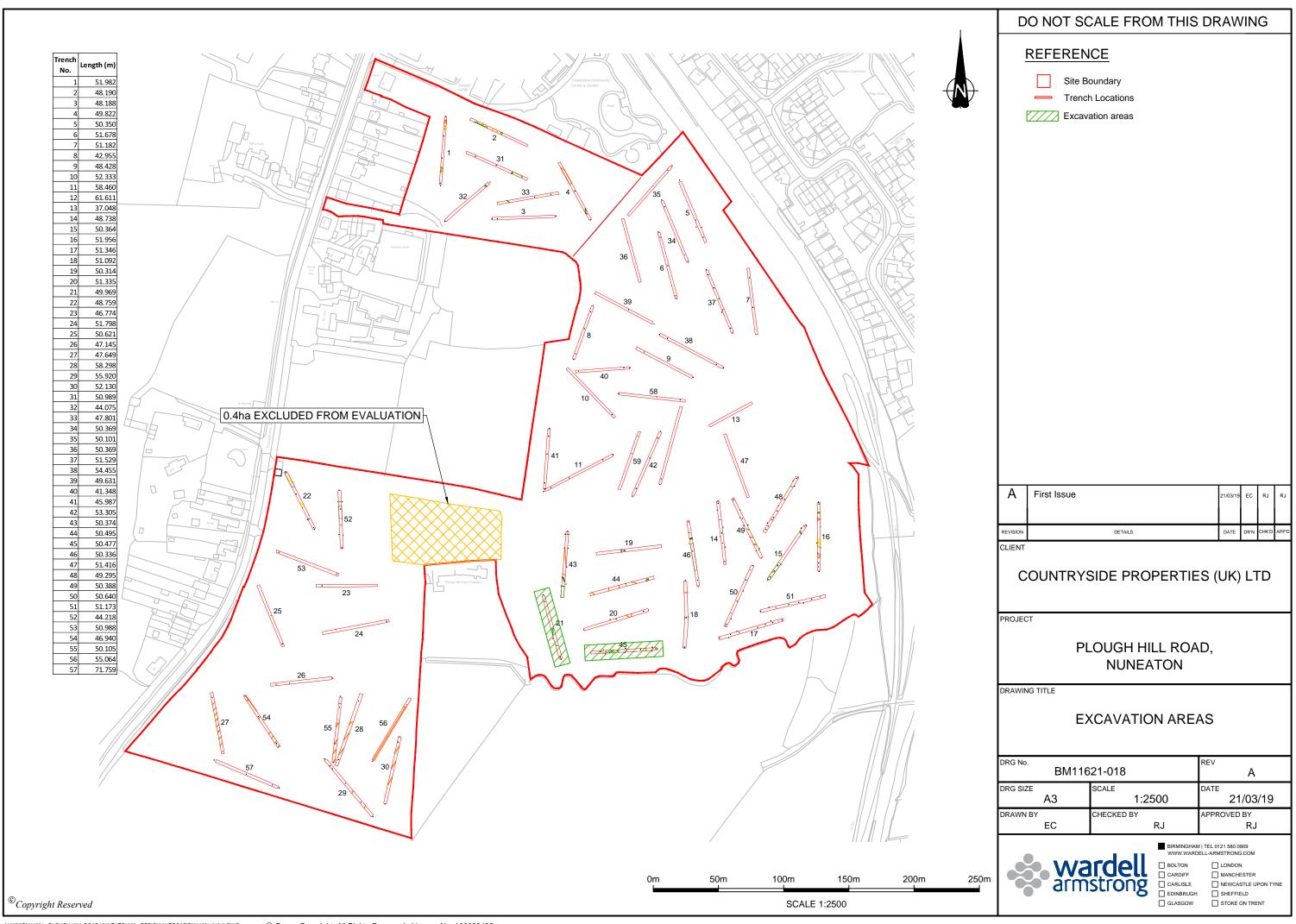
Client: Countryside Properties

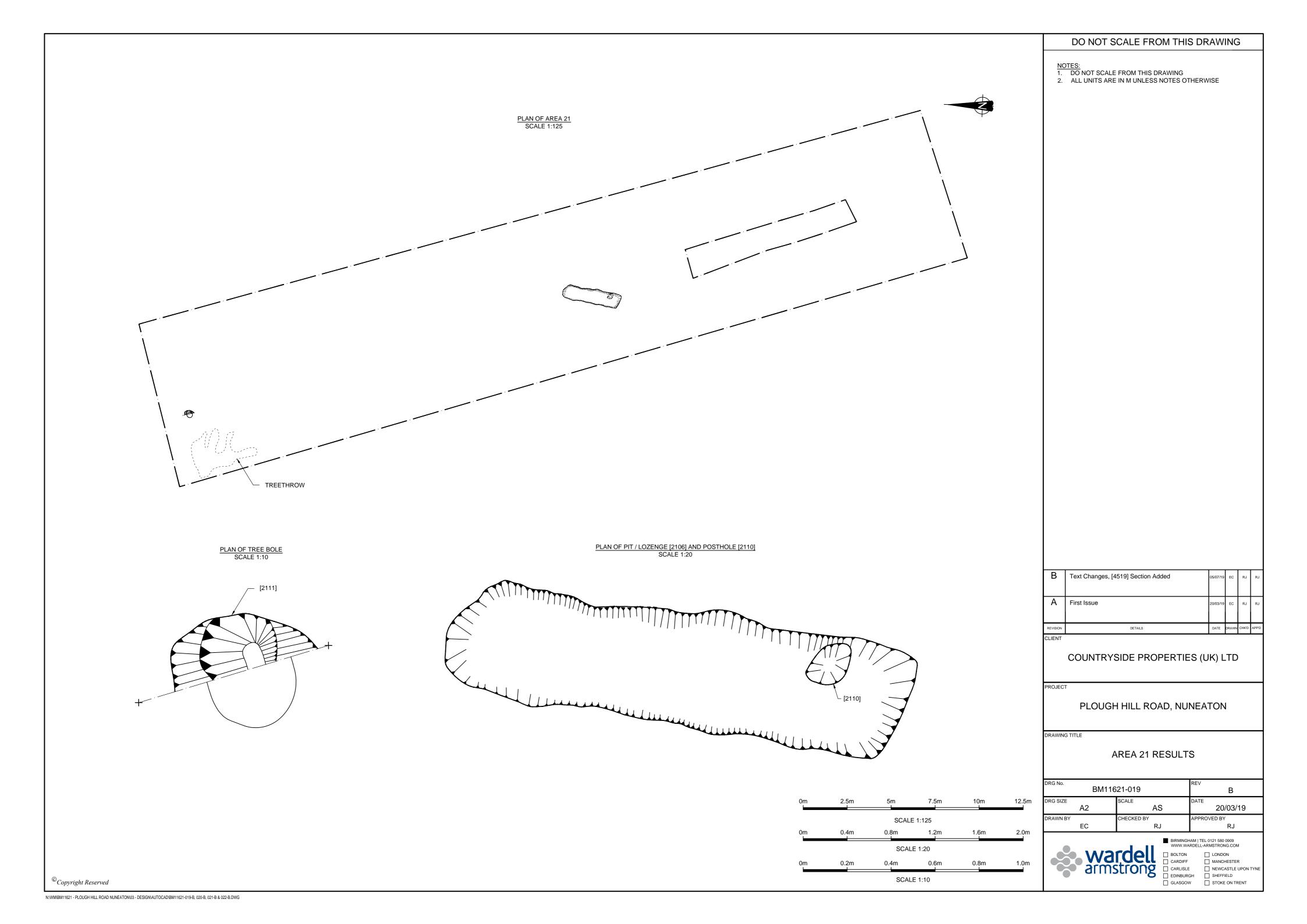
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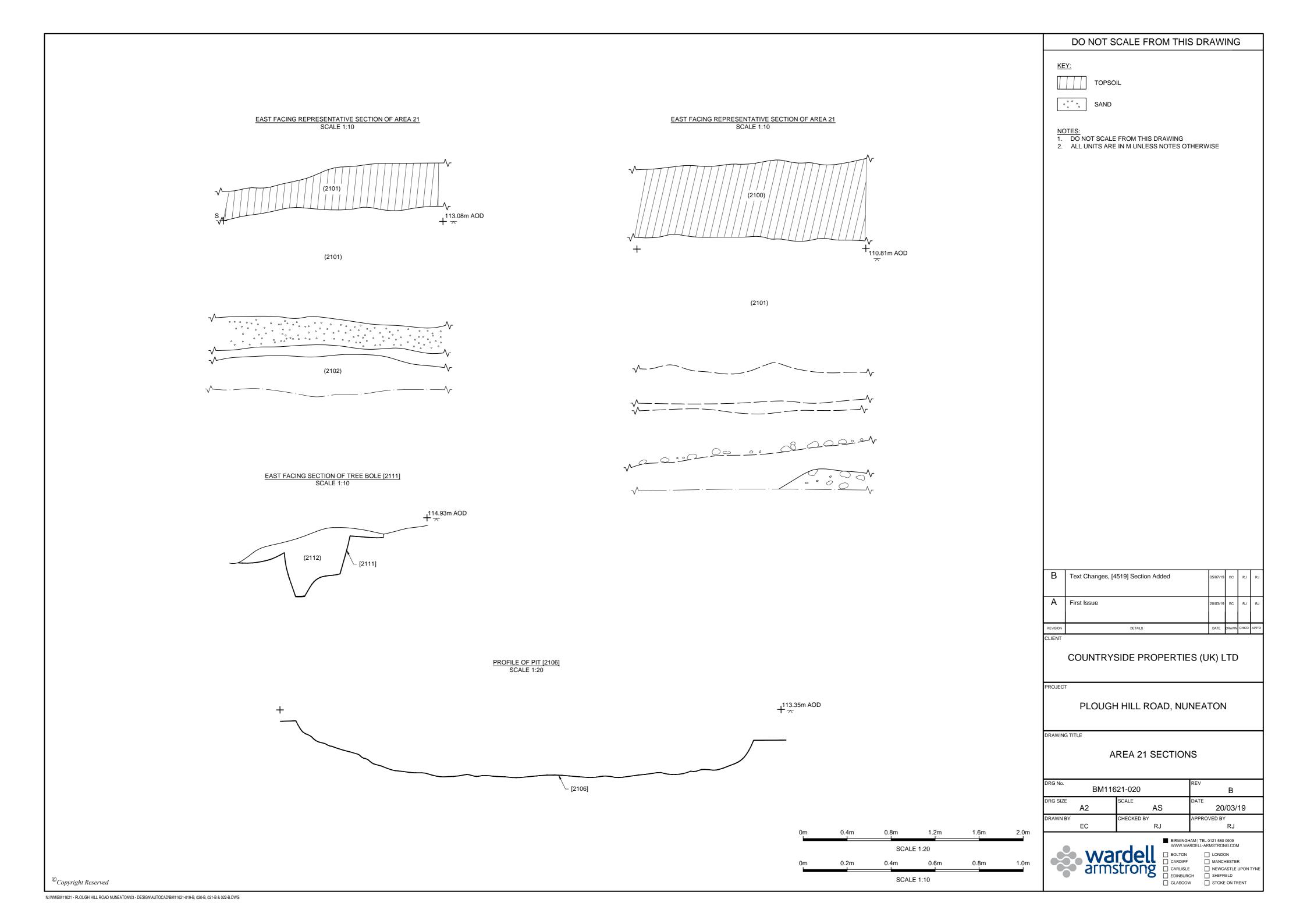


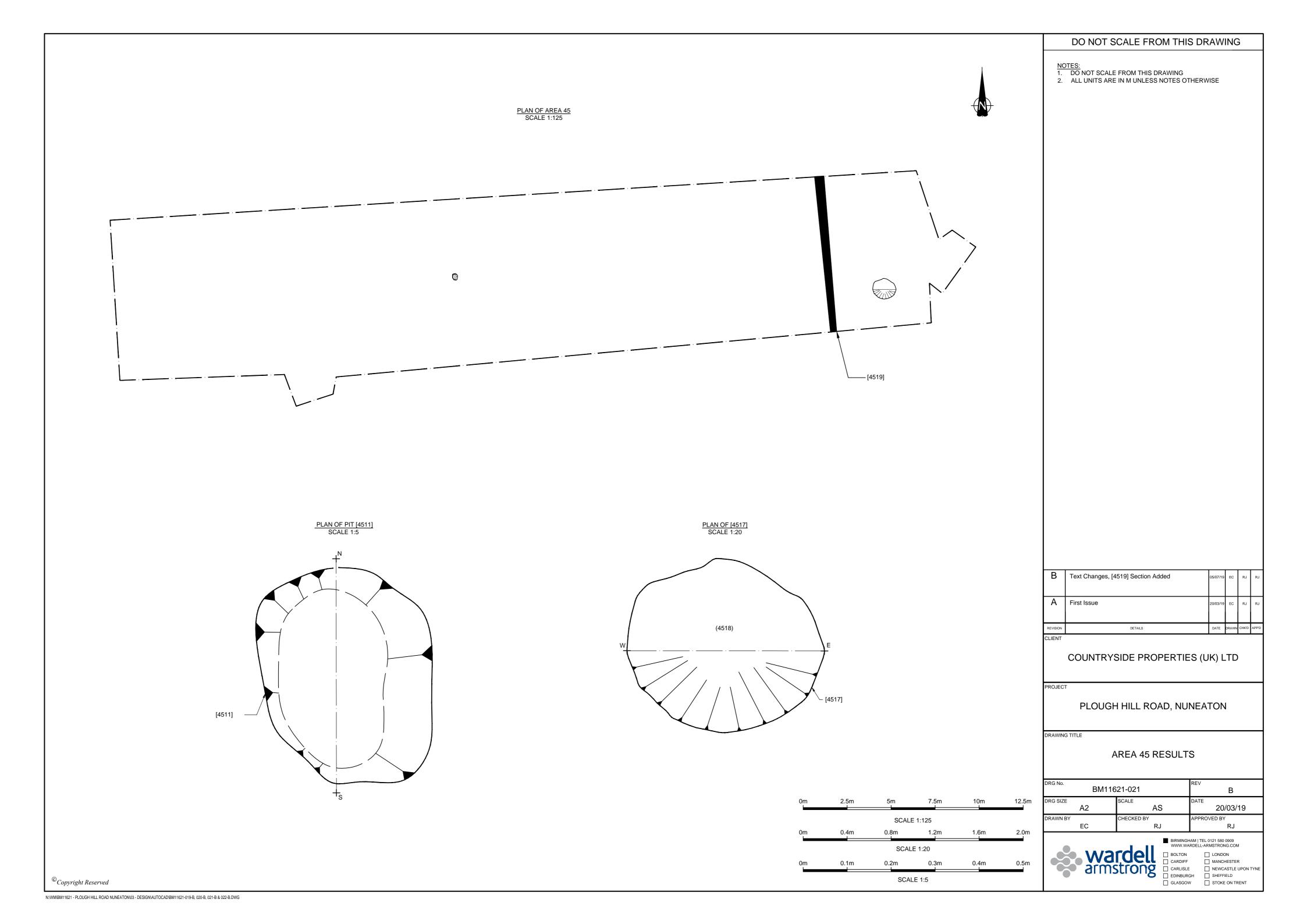
Appendix 4
Drawings

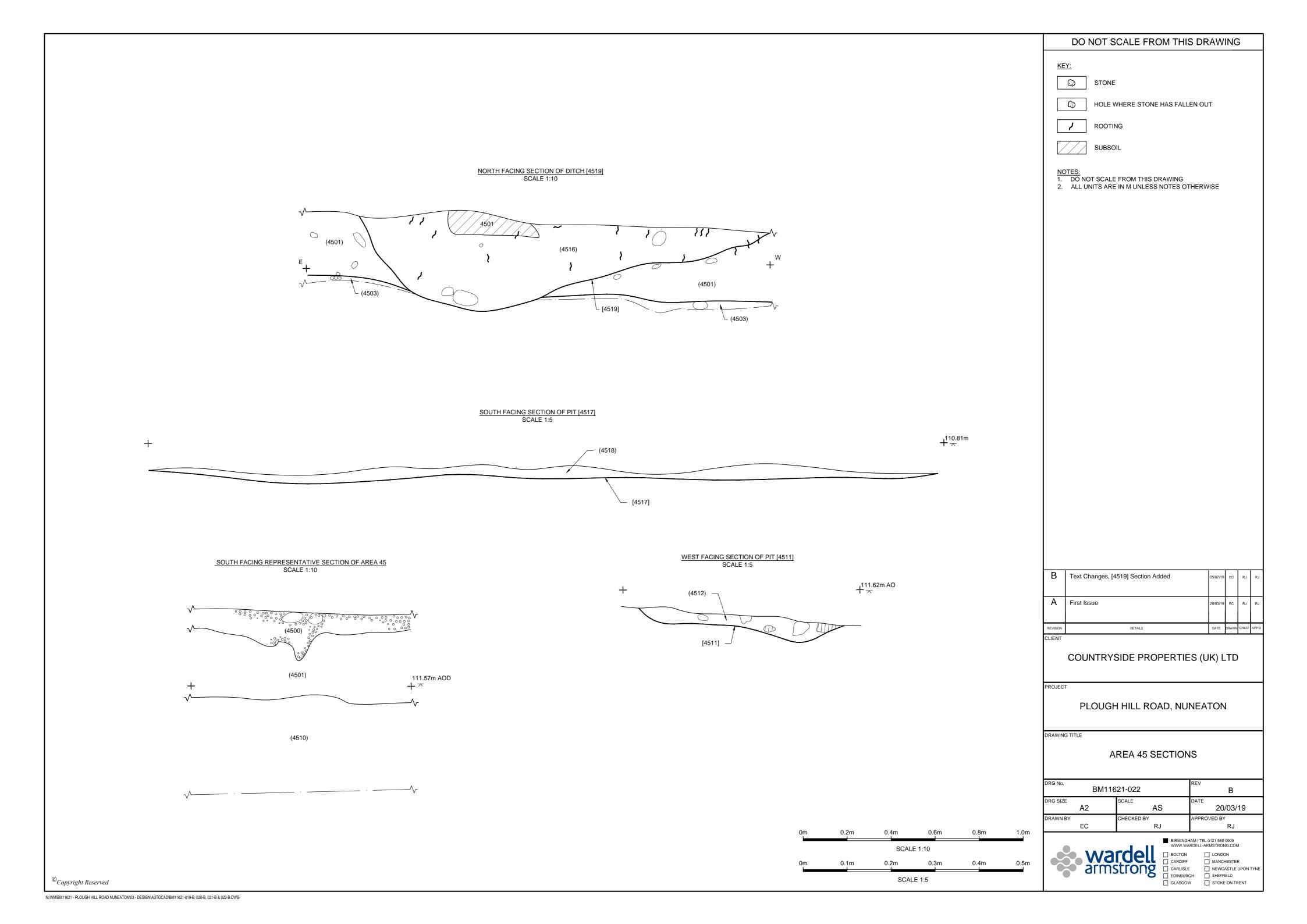


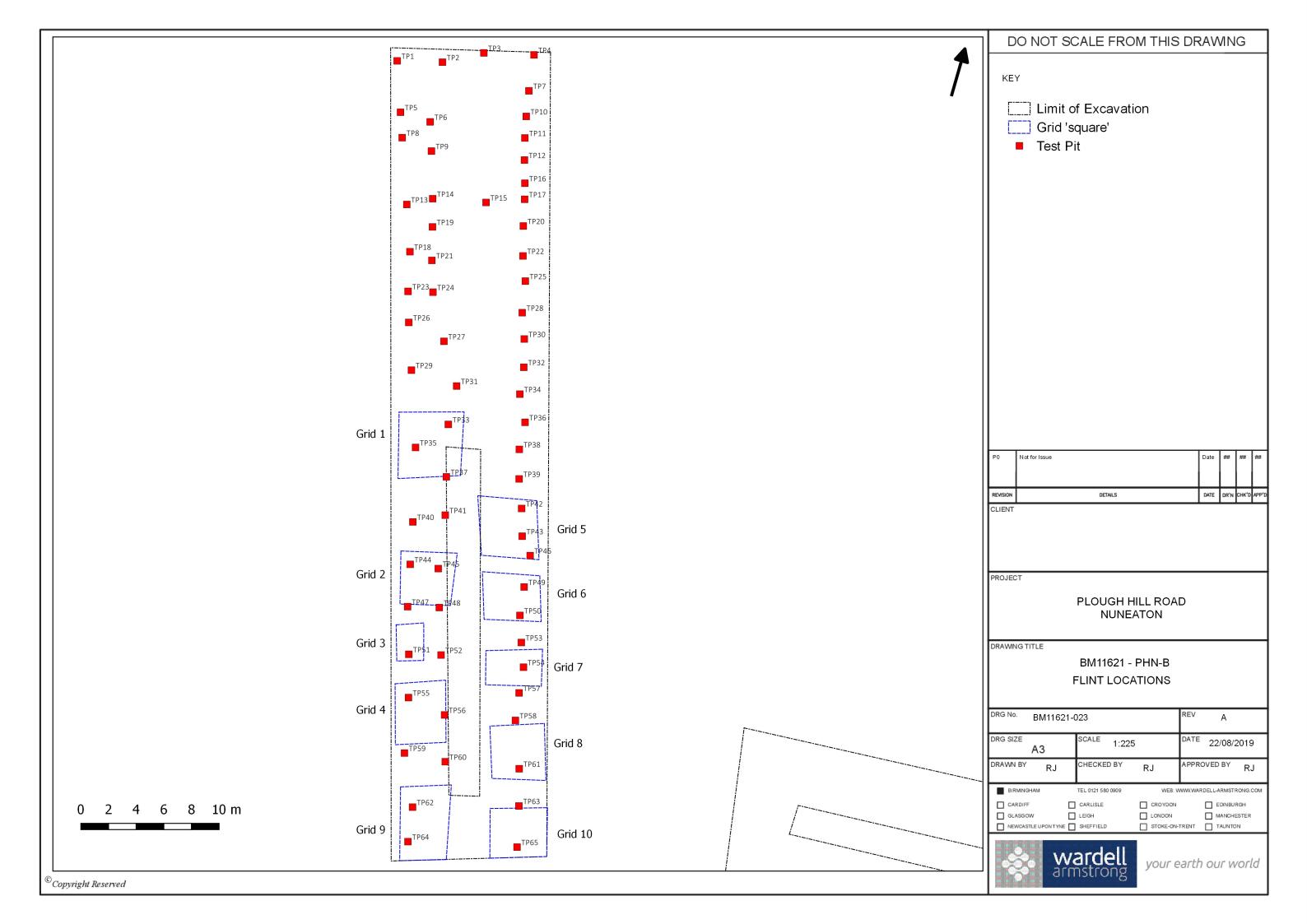












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