

ASH MANOR, ASH MAGNA, SHROPSHIRE

Archaeological Evaluation
Prepared for: Shingler Group

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CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Planning background	1
1.2 Location, topography and geology.....	1
1.3 Archaeological and historical background	2
2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCHING.....	4
2.1 Aims and objectives	4
2.1.1 Aims.....	4
2.1.2 Objectives	4
3.0 DETAILED METHODOLOGY.....	5
3.1 Trial Trenching and archaeological investigation	5
3.2 Fieldwork recording	5
4.0 RESULTS.....	6
4.1 General site description	6
4.2 Trench 1	9
4.3 Trench 2	9
4.4 Trench 3	12
4.5 Discussion and Conclusions	12

DOCUMENT REFERENCES

FIGURES

Figure 1 Site location	1
Figure 2 Proposed development at north side of Ash Road, Ash Magna	2
Figure 3 1888 Location plan	3
Figure 4 Site plan showing location of trenches against proposed development	4
Figure 5 General view of site from north	5
Figure 6 General view of West end of site and Trench 1	6
Figure 7 General view of East end of site	7

Figure 8 Trench 1 descending into old quarry feature from West (top) and from East (below)	8
Figure 9 Trench 1 features investigated: plan, sections and photos of 103 and 105	9
Figure 10 Trench 2 features investigated: plan, section, photo and location.....	10
Figure 11 Trench 3 looking East across the site	12

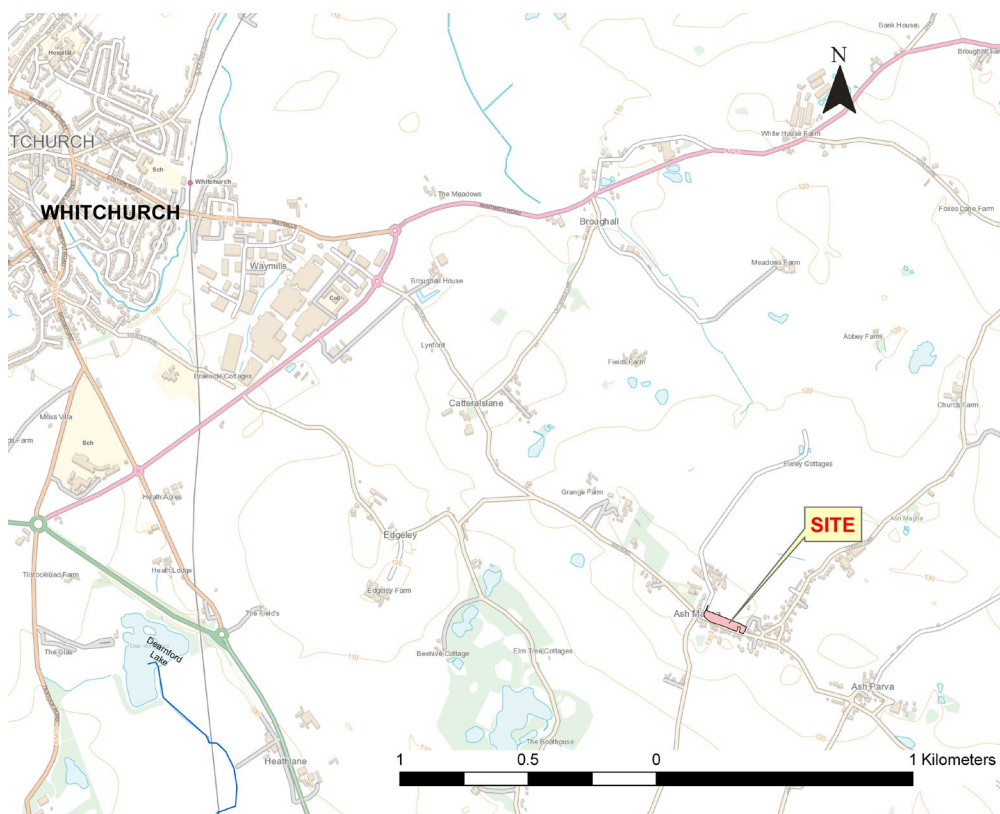
1.0 Introduction

1.1 Planning background

SLR Consulting were commissioned by Shingler Group (the Client) to undertake a programme of site investigation in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation¹ to mitigate the potential impacts of a new residential housing scheme on land north of Ash Road, Ash Magna (planning ref: 14/03484/OUT) (Figure 1).

The extent of permitted new development is shown on **Figure 2**.

Figure 1
Site location



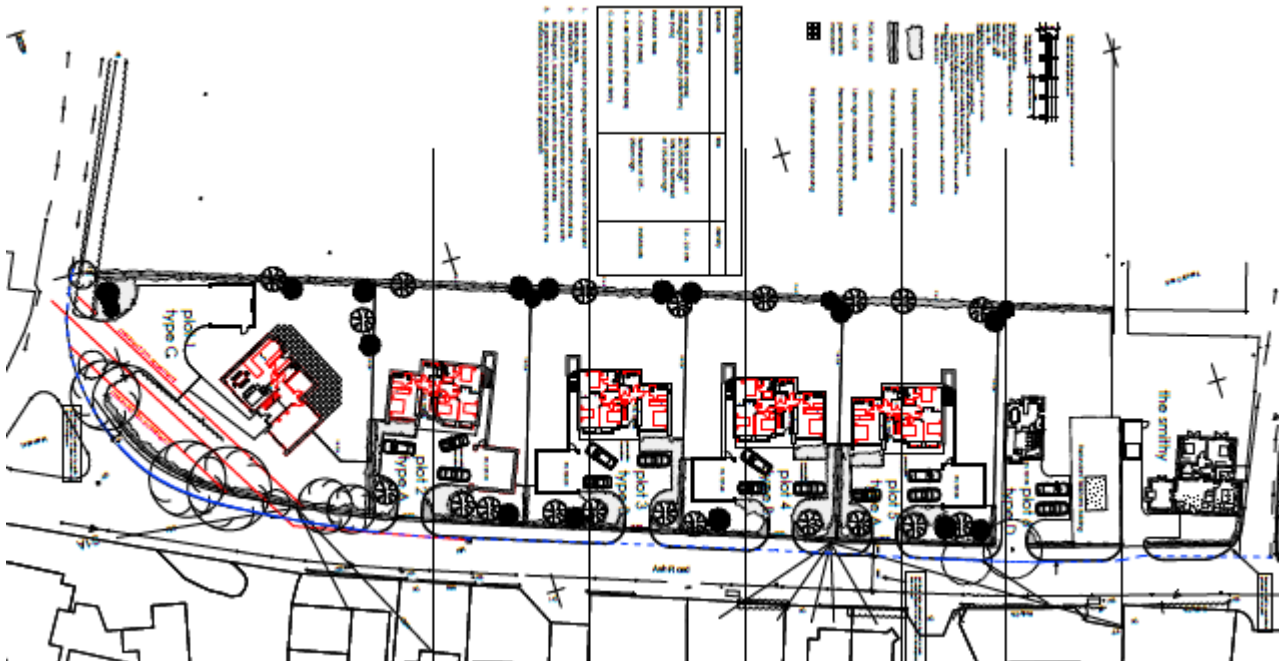
1.2 Location, topography and geology

The site is located north of the road from Whitchurch - Ightfield as it runs through Ash Magna (central point at approximately NGR 357070,339724 (SJ570397)) (Figure 1) as it follows a glacial ridge at around 130m AOD. The nearest post code is SY13 4DL. The site currently consists of a rectangular field of rough land c.0.4ha in extent

The hard geology beneath the site comprises mudstone, and superficial deposits are of glaciofluvial origin, consisting of sands and gravels above glacial till.

¹ SLR Consulting August 2018 *Ash Manor, Ash Magna, Shropshire Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation*

Figure 2
Proposed development at north side of Ash Road, Ash Magna



1.3 Archaeological and historical background

The site lies within the historic core of a small village in North Shropshire, south of Ash Hall, incorporating the old smithy and land to the west of it **Figure 3**. Ash Road runs along the southern boundary and may be the continuation of a much earlier routeway of prehistoric origin, although the Roman road from *Pennocrucium* (Water Eaton) to *Mediolanum* (Whitchurch) has been suggested to run through the fields further south (Waddelove & Waddelove 2004², p.96). As such the site is sensitive as it has a reasonably high potential for medieval remains, and the possibility of some remains from other periods as well. Investigation of these archaeological deposits could help increase our understanding of how medieval villages developed and shrunk dependent upon changing socio-economic conditions.

The Shropshire History online website has relatively few entries for Ash Magna. Yewtree Cottage and the Grade II listed building Nos 7,8 And 9 (Pimhill Cottage), are in close proximity to the eastern end of the development site, while to the north-west lies the Grade II* 18th century Ash Hall. Slightly further west lies Ash grove and stables, a 17th century Grade II listed building. The nearest archaeological investigation was c.700m to the east in 1992 at Grove Farm, Ash Parva, when the foundations for the original 16th century Grade II listed building were recorded.

² Waddelove A. and Waddelove E. 2004 (2006) The Roman Road from *Pennocrucium* (Water Eaton) to *Mediolanum* (Whitchurch): Its role in the early conquest Transactions of the *Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society* Volume 79, 89-105

Figure 3
1888 Location plan



2.0 Archaeological trial trenching

2.1 Aims and objectives

2.1.1 Aims

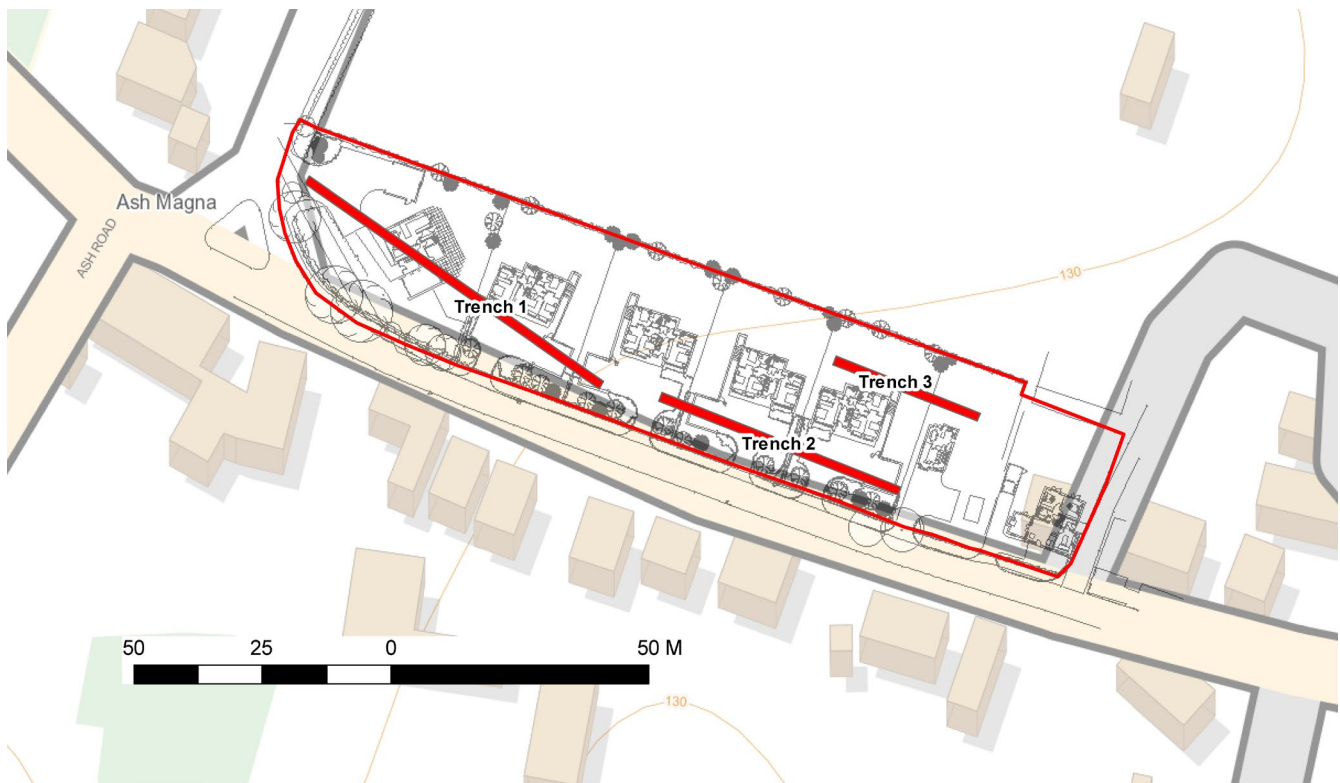
- to investigate and record the extent of archaeological remains within the development envelope
- to assess the evidence and design a mitigation strategy proportional to the heritage significance of the remains

2.1.2 Objectives

A trial trench approach **Figure 4** was adopted with the following objectives:

- to investigate sub-surface deposits;
- to establish the general deposit sequence on the site;
- to establish the extent, nature and date of any man-made archaeological features or remains which may be present on the site;
- to undertake post-excavation analysis of the records, artefacts and samples recovered during the work to produce a report for submission to the local planning authority; and
- to deposit an archive of site records, reports and artefacts with an appropriate body

Figure 4
Site plan showing location of trenches against proposed development



3.0 Detailed methodology

3.1 Trial Trenching and archaeological investigation

Three trenches were excavated using a mechanical excavator with a 1.8m wide toothless ditching bucket to carefully remove the topsoil to the top of archaeological remains or undisturbed natural deposits. This work was carried out under the direction of experienced archaeologists.

Where man-made features were identified the trench was manually cleaned at that level to expose them. These were then recorded and excavated in order to achieve the project aims.

3.2 Fieldwork recording

After removal of the topsoil with a mechanical excavator using a toothless ditching bucket, the trench surface was inspected and manually cleaned to identify potential archaeological remains cut into the natural geology. Cut features were recorded in plan and a section cut across each one. Archaeological deposits were recorded using a pro-forma recording system, and fully cross-referenced.

The photographic record comprised high-resolution digital images with a supporting index. The drawn record comprised plans of the site at a suitable scale, with 1:20 for detail of features, and profiles and sections. The location of remains were recorded using hand-measured offsets or a hand-held GPS to enable an overall site plan of remains at the site to be produced.

On completion of the evaluation Shropshire Council's Archaeological Advisor confirmed that this fieldwork stage has been satisfactorily accomplished.

Figure 5
General view of site from north



4.0 Results

4.1 General site description

Trial trenching was undertaken on 20th September 2018 in very poor weather conditions. Heavy rainfall and poor visibility made the investigation and recording difficult, but the evaluation was successfully completed. General views of the site are provided in Figures 6 – 8 which demonstrate the topography, with higher ground to the north. A depression in the central southern part of the site is likely to be an old quarry (Figure 8).

Three trenches were excavated with lengths of 70m, 50m and 30m. They all ran parallel to the road, in an approximately east – west orientation. They had been located to investigate whether potential house plots ran back from the road frontage, such as ditch boundaries or wall footings.

Figure 6
General view of West end of site and Trench 1



Figure 7
General view of East end of site



Figure 8
Trench 1 descending into old quarry feature from West (top) and from East (below)

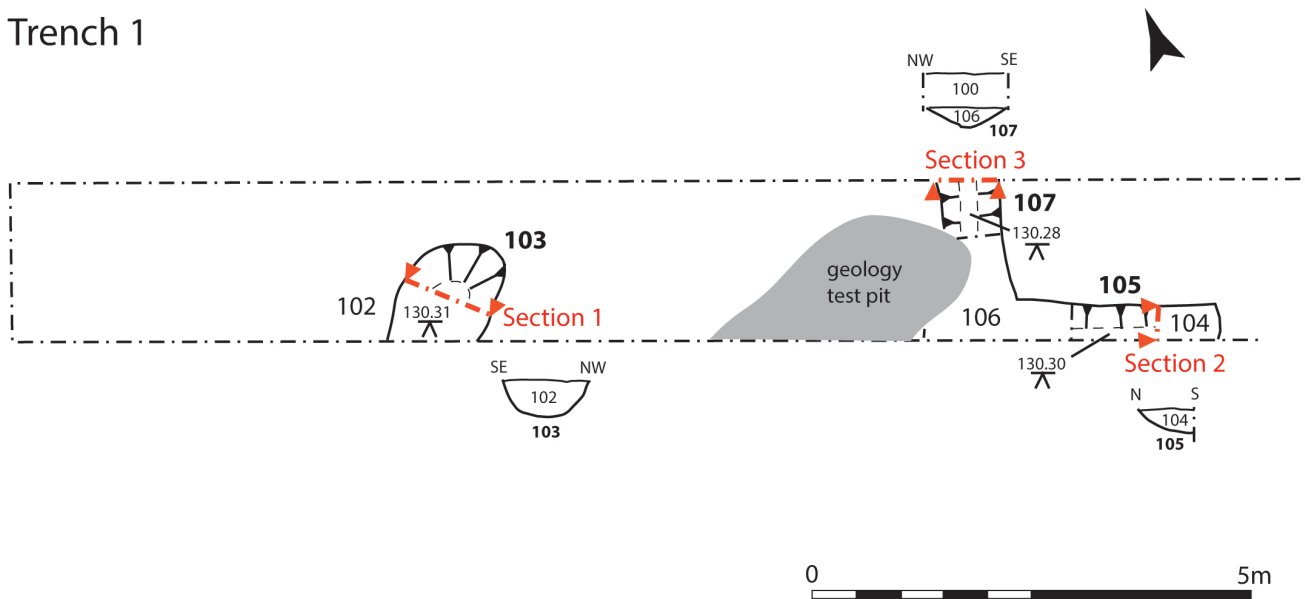


4.2 Trench 1

Trench 1 was 70m long and oriented west-north-west – east-south-east. The topsoil was 400mm deep above a subsoil that was orange brown sand and gravel. A test pit was excavated to ensure natural geology had been identified. Three features were identified cut into the subsoil. A pit (103) was 0.46m deep and filled with dark brown sandy silt (102), and two gullies c.0.25m deep (105 and 107) filled with a similar deposit (Figure 9). The only artefactual evidence consisted of brick and a piece of post-medieval white glazed pottery.

Figure 9
Trench 1 features investigated: plan, sections and photos of 103 and 105

Trench 1

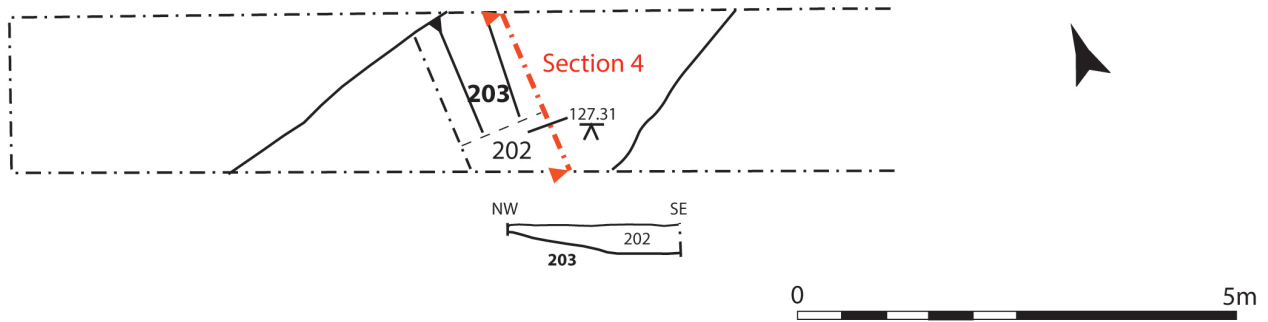


4.3 Trench 2

Trench 2 was 50m long and ran parallel to the road (approximately east – west). One ditch feature was identified (203) which was 2.75m wide by 0.25m deep (Figure 10) and was filled with dark brown sandy silt with brick fragments.

Figure 10
Trench 2 features investigated: plan, section, photo and location

Trench 2





4.4 Trench 3

Trench 3 was 30m long and was oriented approximately east – west (Figure 11). There were no cut features identified within this trench.

Figure 11
Trench 3 looking East across the site



4.5 Discussion and Conclusions

The cut features that were identified during trial trenching consisted of a pit, two gullies and a ditch in Trenches 1 and 2, as well as a probable sand quarry in the central southern part of the site. The fills within the features suggested relatively recent topsoil-type infill, and the artefactual evidence from one pot sherd and brick fragments suggested a post-medieval and probably relatively recent (19th century) date. No evidence for any earlier remains was found.

Appendix 1

Recorded Features and Fills

Context No	Type	Fill of	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Interpretation
100	Deposit	N/A	Trench	Trench	0.4	Dark brown sandy silt	Topsoil
101	Deposit	N/A	Trench	Trench	N/A	Orange brown sand, gravelly in places	Natural Subsoil
102	Fill	103	1.2+	1	0.46	Dark brown sandy silt	Fill of pit
103	Cut	N/A	1.2+	1	0.46	Unclear shape in plan as continued beyond trench, steep sloping sides and rounded base	Cut of pit
104	Fill	105	3.5+	Unknown	0.28	Dark brown sandy silt	Fill of gully
105	Cut	N/A	3.5+	Unknown	0.28	Linear, gradual sloping sides, rounded base	Cut of gully
106	Fill	107	2+	0.85	0.25	Dark brown sandy silt	Fill of gully
107	Cut	N/A	2+	0.85	0.25	Linear, gradual sloping sides, rounded base	Cut of gully
200	Deposit	N/A	Trench	Trench	0.4	Dark brown sandy silt	Topsoil
201	Deposit	N/A	Trench	Trench	N/A	Orange brown sand, gravelly in places	Natural Subsoil
202	Fill	203	2+	2.75	0.35	Dark brown sandy silt	Fill of ditch
203	Cut	N/A	2+	2.75	0.35	Linear, gradual sloping sides, rounded base	Cut of ditch
300	Deposit	N/A	Trench	Trench	0.4	Dark brown sandy silt	Topsoil
301	Deposit	N/A	Trench	Trench	N/A	Orange brown sand, gravelly in places	Natural Subsoil

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