

HIGHFIELD FARM, PALTERTON, DERBYSHIRE

Archaeological Evaluation
Prepared for: **DJ Atkinson Construction Ltd**

SLR Ref: 403.07728.00002
Version No: 1
October 2020



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DRAWINGS

Drawing 1: Trial Trench Plan

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Non-Technical Summary

SLR was commissioned by DJ Atkinson Construction Ltd to conduct an archaeological evaluation of their development site at Highfield Farm, Palterton, Derbyshire.

Seven trial trenches were excavated, and no archaeologically significant cut features, artefacts or deposits were identified.

It is proposed that development may now proceed without further archaeological fieldwork on the project, and that further archaeological work should be limited to the completion of an on-line record incorporating this report.

1.2 Introduction

DJ Atkinson Construction Limited instructed SLR to conduct the programme of archaeological evaluation described in this report at Highfield Farm, Palterton (hereinafter referred to as 'the Site'; planning reference 16/00410/OUT).

The purpose of the work was to determine the extent and nature of any archaeological remains on the Site. It was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by Field Archaeology Specialists¹, with trench layouts subsequently modified due to site constraints, by agreement with Derbyshire County Council's Archaeologist (the 'planning archaeologist')².

The fieldwork was conducted on 05/10/20 and 7/10/20, and consisted of the machine excavation of seven trial trenches, the recording of the deposit sequence within the trenches, the creation of a drawn and photographic record and a survey of their locations, dimensions and elevations.

With the agreement of the planning archaeologist an eighth planned trench was not excavated due to the lack of remains in the seven completed trenches³.

¹ Field Archaeology Specialists (undated): *Written Scheme of Investigation-- Archaeological Evaluation - Highfield Farm, Palterton*

² E-mail to SLR dated 7/10/20

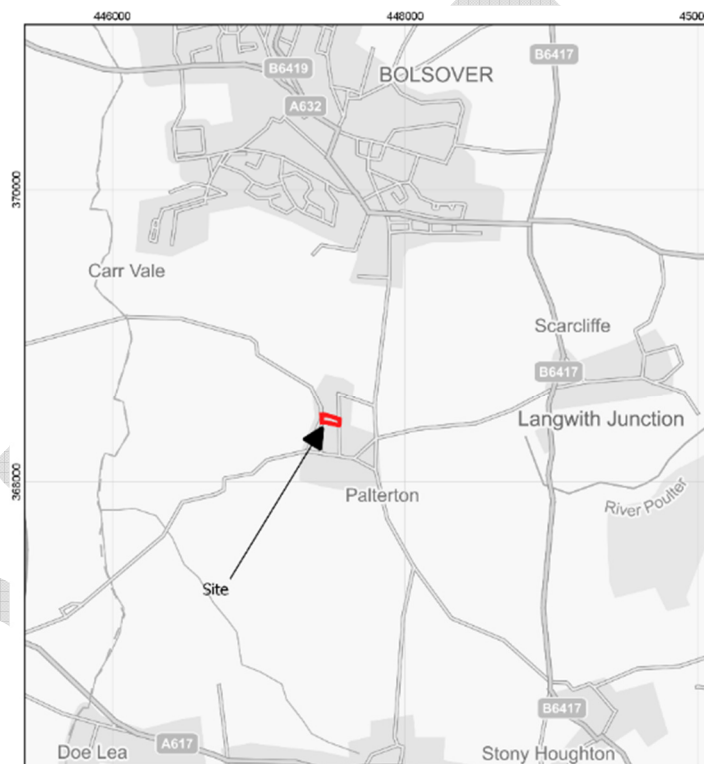
³ E-mail to SLR dated 19/10/20

2.0 Site location and background

2.1 Site Location

The Site is centred at NGR: SK 4748 3684 at an elevation of c.179m AOD (Figure 1). It occupies a rectangular area of 0.58 ha located in the village of Paltrerton Derbyshire, bounded to the west by the north/south length of Main Street and to the east by Back Lane. At the time of excavation it contained a house, associated large farm buildings under demolition, and open areas. The village is located on the very western edge of the Cadeby Formation ('Dolostone') plateau, with a broad view westward over the Doe Lea Valley towards the Peak District.

Figure 1
Site Location



2.2 Archaeological and Historical Background

An archaeological desk-based appraisal (DBA) of the Site has been provided by Field Archaeology Specialists⁴. FAS determined that while there were no assets of historical or archaeological significance known on the Site, its position within the medieval village of Paltrerton meant there was potential for buried archaeology of a medieval or earlier date to be present on the Site, despite being built over with agricultural buildings since before the later 19th Century.

The Dolostone ridge, and other high points around the Doe Lea Valley and north-east Derbyshire have produced significant evidence of prehistoric and Romano-British settlement. 2km north of Paltrerton in

⁴ FAS 2016: *Archaeological Desk-Based Appraisal, Highfields Farm, Paltrerton, Derbyshire*

Bolsover, a Roman-British agricultural settlement has been excavated by SLR Consulting Ltd⁵. 8km to the west, a large Iron Age and Romano-British site was excavated by Trent and Peak Archaeology from 2017-2018⁶. There was therefore evidence of multiple settlements on higher ground in this area and period, which could have been repeated on the Site at Highfield Farm.

Paltrton is a conservation area and was subject to an Appraisal⁷ in April 2018. The settlement is recorded in Domesday Book (DBA page 5); there was and is no church but a chapel was constructed at Rock Corner in the 12th century and a chantry chapel in the mid-12th century (Appraisal, page 10). The chapels seem to have been located at the south end of the historic village core. The Appraisal notes the village form as being medieval in origin, with Main Street (north/south section) and Back Lane enclosing narrow plots orientated east/west (Figure 2). No buildings from the medieval or early post-medieval eras still stand today. Paltrton Hall is situated in the plot abutting the Site to the south. It is a large early C18th building and the oldest standing structure in the village, but the use of the term 'hall' suggests that it overlies the village's medieval hall. The village was, according to the Local Area Appraisal, heavily affected by the Black Death in 1348-9 and then struck again by pestilence in 1362, resulting in a 25-year desertion followed by re-settlement. It remained a small farming settlement until the present day. The older buildings on the Site are constructed in the local Dolostone, as are other earlier buildings in the village.

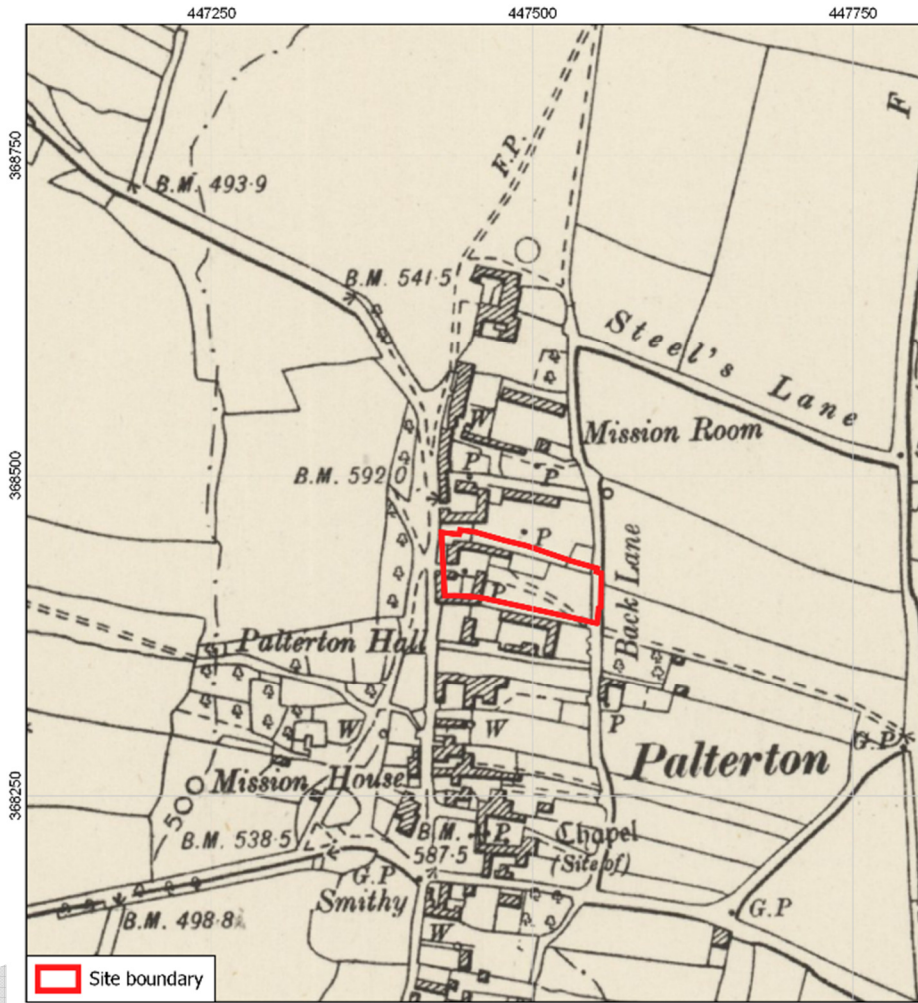
Until the late 19th/early 20th Century the plots fronting the southern part of Main Street were mostly very narrow suggesting a medieval origin, while to the north, including the Site the plots were wider, suggesting amalgamation of similar plots (Figure 2).

⁵ SLR 2019: *Sherwood Lodge, Bolsover, Assessment Report on Archaeological Mitigation*

⁶ TPA 2019: *Archaeological Excavations at Hanging Banks, Wingerworth, Derbyshire*

⁷ Paltrton Conservation Area Appraisal April 2018, Bolsover District Council

Figure 2
Historic Map



3.0 General Arrangements for Fieldwork

3.1 Quality Assurance

All archaeologists deployed to work on the project were suitably qualified to complete the tasks required. All archaeological work adhered to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation* (2014). SLR is a CIfA Registered Organisation, an audited status which ensures that good practice is followed.

The evaluation was carried out in accordance with FAS's *Written Scheme of Investigation* ('WSI') for the project, with trench locations modified with the agreement of the planning archaeologist, due to site constraints .

3.2 Project Aims

3.2.1 Aims

The WSI prepared by FAS set out the aims of the evaluation as follows⁸:

"As detailed in the Bolsover Historic Environment SPD (paragraph 5.23), Paltrerton is a settlement with significant potential for medieval archaeology. The Derby and Derbyshire Development Control Archaeologist has advised that, in line with NPPF (DCLG 2012) a field evaluation will be necessary to provide sufficient information to properly assess the archaeological impact of a planning application, and to inform proportionate and quantifiable mitigation requirements.

The aim of the evaluation is therefore to characterise and model the presence, character and depth of archaeological deposits across the whole of the development site, to assess the significance of any remains present and to inform the design of an appropriate mitigation strategy."

3.3 Monitoring and Key Personnel

The Planning Archaeologist was:

Steve Baker
Archaeologist
Derbyshire County Council
County Hall
Matlock
DE4 3AG
Tel: 07795 255837
Steve.Baker@derbyshire.gov.uk

The archaeological consultant was:

Gavin Kinsley, Principal Archaeologist
SLR Consulting Limited
2nd and 3rd Floors, 15 Middle Pavement, Nottingham, NG1 7DX
Tel: 07796 050308
gkinsley@slrconsulting.com

⁸ FAS 2020: *Highfield Farm, Paltrerton, Archaeological Evaluation-WSI* p.3

Fieldwork was conducted by:

Harry Towers, SLR (Project Archaeologist) using plant supplied by the Client.

Reporting was provided by:

- Harry Towers (author); and
- Gavin Kinsley (editor).

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4.0 Methodology

4.1 Excavation of Trenches

Following modification of the original layout set out in the WSI due to site constraints, eight trial trenches were identified for excavation as shown in Drawing 1. In the event Trench 07 was omitted due to the lack of finds in the other trenches.

Mechanical excavation of the trial trenches was carried out under continuous archaeological control using a machine fitted with a back-acting toothless bucket; the trenches were excavated through recent deposits, or (in the case of trench 08) progressively through soil horizons, to expose the surface of the natural Cadeby Formation (Dolostone) bedrock. No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were found.

4.2 Recording

The trenches were recorded in photographs and as written descriptions of deposit thicknesses below surface, along with 1:20 scale representative sections. The precise location of the excavated trenches, areas, spot heights on the excavated surface and baselines were recorded using a survey grade GPS⁹.

⁹Leica GS08+ Rover providing 3D accuracy + 1.5cm

5.0 Results

5.1 Overview

No archaeologically-significant features or deposits were found during the course of the evaluation.

The trenches were mechanically excavated to expose natural deposits beneath the topsoil: the Cadeby Formation Dolostone. This bedrock can in places weather to form clayey 'pockets' within the otherwise solid rock, while wider areas of surface rock can weather to stoney silts and clays. This weathered surface was, on this site, around 100mm thick above the typical tabular bedrock. Only one weathered clay pocket was observed, in Trench 05.

The excavated surface at the trench floor levels was 179.46m AOD at its highest point (Trench 04), while in Trench 03 it was 177.97m. AOD.

The base of an apparent brown earth soil survived in Trench 08, but in all the other trenches modern overburden directly overlay the Dolostone. In Trenches 05, 04 and 06, some weathered limestone remained in situ but in Trenches 01 and 03 the made ground sat directly on tabular limestone.

Figure 3 shows the high level of the dolostone at the highest part of site (<0.2m BGL).

Figure 3
Dolostone in Trench 02



Figure 4
Loose infill above Dolostone in Trench 01



Figure 5
Deposit Sequence in Trench 03



Figure 6 shows the modern made ground above weathered limestone, with the tabular limestone forming the trench floor.

Figure 6
Deposit Sequence in Trench 06



Figure 7
Deposit Sequence Trench 08



5.2 Trenches

Table 1
Summary of deposit sequence in Trenches

Trench	Deposits and depths of deposit bases below surface	General description	Photographs
01	Tarmac (0100), -0.1m Type 1 (0101), -0.2m Loose made ground (0102) 0.2-0.4m Natural (dolostone)	Trench oriented N/S, natural dolostone sloping away under loose infill to east. Wall to west of trench built on top of tabular limestone	Plan shots 3670-3678, rep sec 3679-3880
02	Tarmac (0200), -0.20m Made ground (0201), -0.20m Dolostone (0202), -0.40m	E/W trench in yard, natural overburden removed and replaced with tarmac	Plan shots 3682-3686, rep sec 3687-3688
03	Tarmac (0300), -0.20m Made ground -0.70m Natural (dolostone)	E/W oriented trench, made ground above tabular limestone	Plan shots 3701-3704, rep sec 3705-3706
04	Tarmac and brick (0400) -0.20m Natural-dolostone	N/S oriented trench, no features, tabular limestone directly below surface	Plan shots 3696-3698, rep sec 3699-3700
05	Mixed made ground (0500) -0.25m Natural-weathered dolostone	E/W oriented trench, no features	Plan shots 3689-3693 rep sec 3694-3695
06	Mixed rubble made ground (0600)-0.15m Mixed clay made ground (0601) -0.30m Natural (0601)-dolostone	E/W oriented trench, no features. Intermittent grey clay, but this appears to be redeposited as it contains brick inclusions.	Plan shots 3715-3720, rep sec 3721-3723
07	Not excavated		
08	Stony soil (0800) -0.10m Made ground (0801) -0.50m Brown earth soil (0802) -0.90m Natural dolostone	NE/SW oriented trench. Surviving brown earth soil under made ground with occasional small charcoal inclusions	Plan shots 3707-3711, rep sec 3712-3714

Figure 8
South-Facing View of Trench 01, East Facing View of Trench 02, West Facing View of Trench 03



Figure 9
South Facing View of Trench 04, West Facing View of Trench 05, East facing View of Trench 06



Figure 10
North-East Facing View of Trench 08



5.3 Investigated Areas

5.3.1 Trench 01

The wall to the west of Trench 01 was investigated to determine whether it was cut into the limestone. As shown in Figure 11, it was built up on top of the tabular limestone, which proved to be very shallow at that point.

Figure 11
Wall in Tr 01



5.3.2 Trench 05

A possible feature was investigated in Trench 05, though cleaning revealed it to be a thin spread of darker silt (possibly a small area of surviving soil) above the bedrock, and not an archaeological feature.

Figure 12
Investigated Area Trench 05



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6.0 Conclusions

6.1 Archaeological Potential

No archaeologically significant features or other remains were identified, and apart from an apparent buried topsoil over the base of a brown-earth soil profile to the very east of the Site near Back Lane, no pre-modern strata were identified above bedrock.

The survival of the soil profile only at the eastern end of the Site, with the modern material directly overlying Dolostone in other areas, indicates that the Site surface level has been reduced for building in the western and central areas. This has involved topsoil removal as a minimum, but in some trenches truncation of the bedrock has also taken place, possibly in the mid-19th Century as Highfields Farm was built up but more probably during the construction of the large sheds in the centre and eastern ends of the Site.

The western trenches found modern overburden lying directly on tabular Dolostone, again indicating significant truncation. Trench 02 was positioned to identify the wall of a building mapped in 1877 and 1897 (DBA plates 2 and 3; the eastern range of this building still stands), but no trace was found and there were surface indications of terracing into the rock.

It seems quite possible that the central and eastern parts of the site were only cultivated in the medieval period, and that any medieval occupation lay at the western end on Main Street, prior to its removal within and around the trenched areas in more recent building work.

The north-west corner of the site has not been investigated as the existing house will be retained and the garden at the frontage will not be built on. This remains an area of archaeological potential.

6.2 Further archaeological work

Further archaeological work on the scheme will be limited to completion of the project's online OASIS record incorporating this report.

DRAWING

DRAFT

07728.00002_Trench_Layout_A3



LEGEND

- TRIAL TRENCH
- + ELEVATION (AOD)
- DRAWING BASELINE

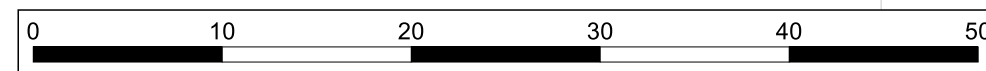
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2nd and 3rd FLOORS
15 MIDDLE PAVEMENT
NOTTINGHAM
NG1 7DX
T: +44 (0) 115 964 7280
www.slrconsulting.com

PALTERTON, DERBYSHIRE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION
TRIAL TRENCH LAYOUT
DRAWING 01

Scale 1:400 @A3 Date OCTOBER 2020



Base survey: client-supplied

EUROPEAN OFFICES

United Kingdom

AYLESBURY

T: +44 (0)1844 337380

BELFAST

T: +44 (0)28 9073 2493

BRADFORD-ON-AVON

T: +44 (0)1225 309400

BRISTOL

T: +44 (0)117 906 4280

CAMBRIDGE

T: + 44 (0)1223 813805

CARDIFF

T: +44 (0)29 2049 1010

CHELMSFORD

T: +44 (0)1245 392170

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T: + 44 (0)1392 490152

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T: +44 (0)141 353 5037

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T: +44 (0)113 258 0650

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T: +44 (0)1622 609242

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T: +44 (0)161 872 7564

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T: +44 (0)191 261 1966

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T: +44 (0)114 245 5153

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T: +44 (0)1786 239900

WORCESTER

T: +44 (0)1905 751310

Ireland

DUBLIN

T: + 353 (0)1 296 4667

France

GRENOBLE

T: +33 (0)4 76 70 93 41