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Manchester Road, Astley, M29 7BS.
January 2015
V 1.1

Archaeological Evaluation
Project Code: A0051.1
Report no. 0054

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Archaeological Evaluation

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Project Code: A0051.1
Date: 20/01/2015
Client: Nexus Heritage
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1.0 NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Aeon Archaeology was commissioned by Nexus Heritage to carry out a programme of archaeological evaluation of a proposed residential development located on approximately 3.96 ha of land at Manchester Road, Astley as part of a condition of outline planning permission.

It was proposed that twenty-five archaeological trenches be located across the site although only seventeen trenches were excavated due to an entire lack of any archaeological remains or artefacts, with the exception of a single sherd of unstratified post-medieval black-ware ceramic, which was noted and then discarded.

No further assessment or mitigatory measures are proposed and it is recommended that the archaeological condition be discharged.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Aeon Archaeology was commissioned by Nexus Heritage to carry out a programme of archaeological evaluation of a proposed residential development located on approximately 3.96 ha of land at Manchester Road, Astley (**NGR: SD 69718 00131**). The archaeological evaluation was undertaken as part of a phase of works addressing material considerations of outline planning permission for the construction of 97 low-rise residential dwellings with associated driveways, gardens, estate roads, public open space, and service infrastructure (**Planning ref: A/13/77899/OUT**).

Wigan Council considers the site of potential archaeological interest and wishes to secure the satisfactory removal of the archaeological remains and/or recording of the subsequent findings, as required by Policy CP11 of the Wigan Local Plan Core Strategy. A condition relevant to archaeology has therefore, been applied to the permission for the development by Wigan Council.

Condition 14:
No development shall take place within the site until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

A written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (ref: 3211.RO1A) (appendix I) was undertaken by Nexus Heritage in November 2014 which outlined the principle aims of the evaluation and the methods by which they would be met. This included the trench array as reproduced in figure 2.

An archaeological assessment (ref: 3211.RO2A) (appendix II) was undertaken by Nexus Heritage in January 2015 and provided to Aeon Archaeology. The assessment collated valuable data on the local evidence for prehistoric archaeological sites located in topographically similar situations to the Site and also detailed the initiatives from the North West England Regional Research Strategy which the Site may be able to address. The assessment was adequate for the purposes intended and a review of the data suggested that there was no requirement to reposition, re-orientate or re-size any of the evaluation trenches and the trench array as presented in the WSI.

The aim of this programme of archaeological evaluation was to establish the archaeological significance of the site, to assess the impact of the development proposals on surviving monuments or remains, and to help inform future decision making, design solutions and potential mitigation strategies. This report includes an assessment of the potential for further investigative work if required, and where relevant give recommendations for an appropriate mitigation strategy.

The evaluation consisted of the archaeological excavation of 20 trenches measuring 10.0m by 2.0m (trenches 2-7, 9, 10, 12-20, 22, 24 and 25) and 5 trenches measuring 5.0m by 2.0m (trenches 1, 8, 11, 21, and 23), to evaluate the potential of the site to have preserved unknown buried archaeological remains (figures 1 and 2). The trench array had been predetermined but latitude was given to reposition the trenches if buried utilities or physical constraints made their position untenable.

This report conforms to the guidelines specified in the *CIFA Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* (Chartered Institute For Archaeologists, 1994, rev. 2001 & 2008).

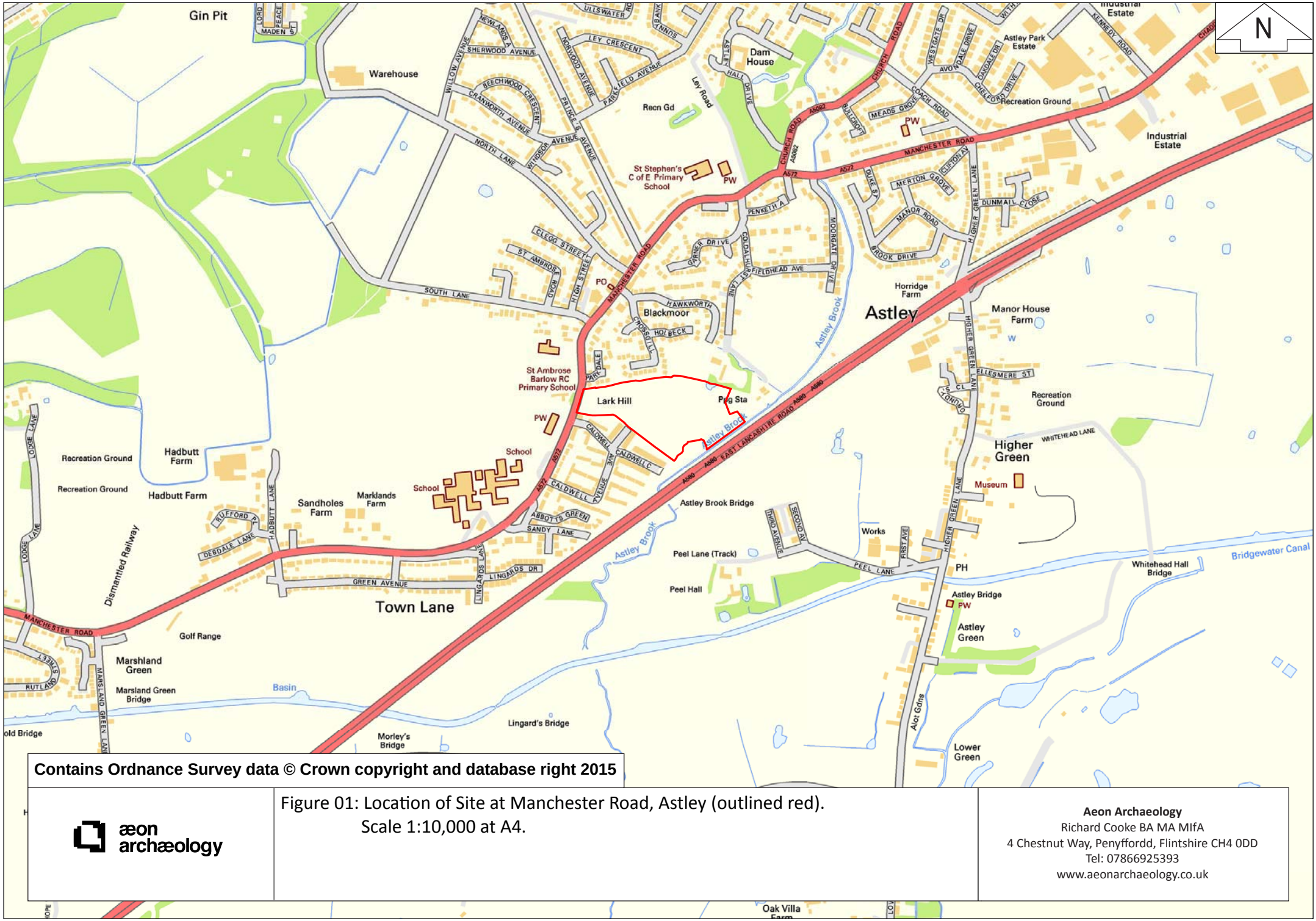

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Figure 01: Location of Site at Manchester Road, Astley (outlined red).
Scale 1:10,000 at A4.

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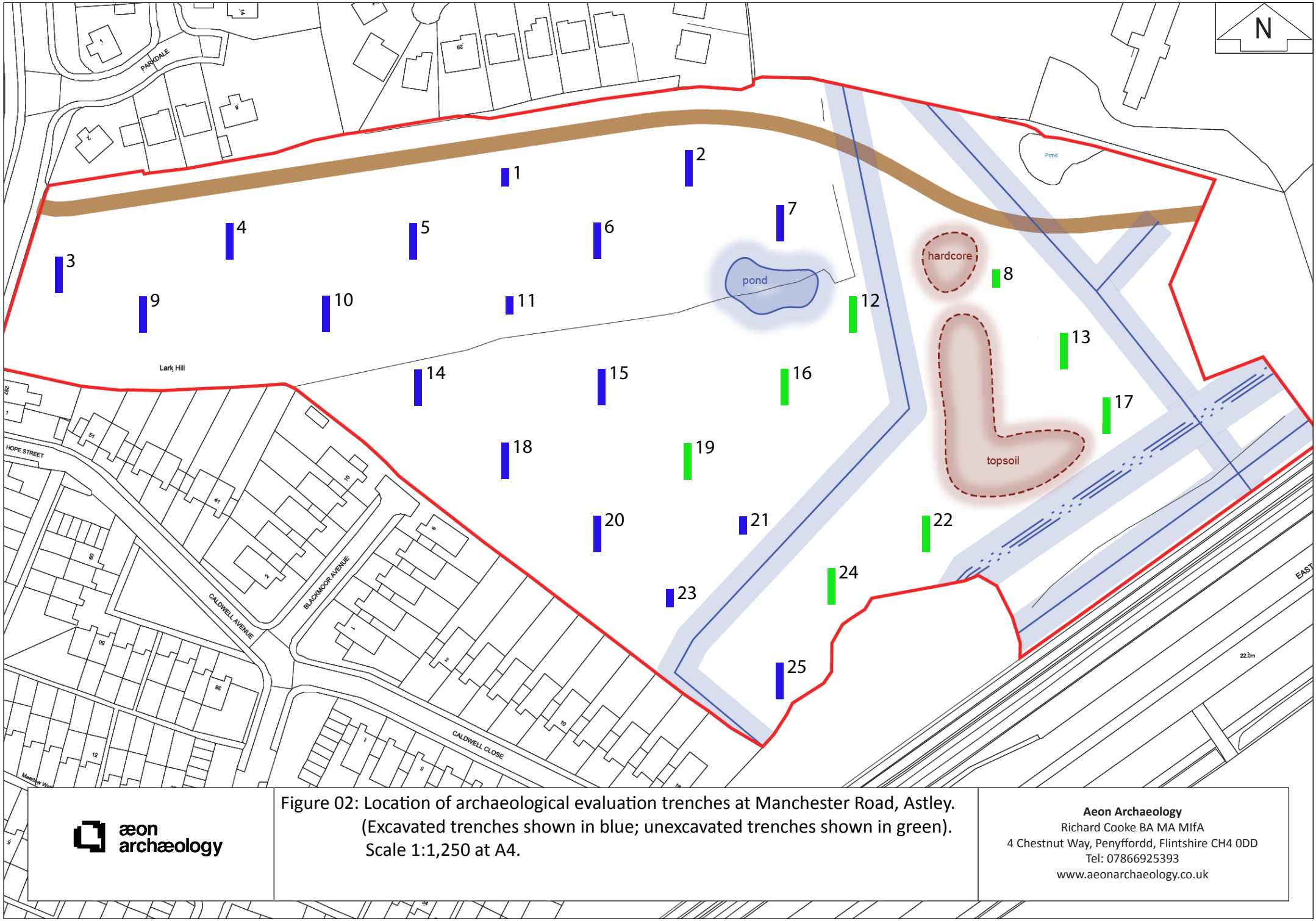

Figure 02: Location of archaeological evaluation trenches at Manchester Road, Astley. (Excavated trenches shown in blue; unexcavated trenches shown in green). Scale 1:1,250 at A4.

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3.0 PROJECT AIMS

The aim of the evaluation works was to characterise the known, or potential, archaeological remains uncovered during the excavation of the archaeological evaluation trenches.

The broad aims of the archaeological evaluation trenches were:

- To determine, as far as is reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains on the site, the integrity of which may be threatened by development at the site.

- To establish the nature and extent of existing disturbance and intrusion to sub-surface deposits and, where the data allows, assess the degree of archaeological survival of buried deposits of archaeological significance.

- To enable the owners to establish a schedule for archaeological risks.

- To report on the work and determine the need, if any, for further archaeological mitigation. This may consist of attempts to preserve significant remains in situ or, if this is not possible, more extensive excavation work and reporting. Less sensitive remains may require a watching brief. Any such further work may be secured by condition.

The detailed objectives of the archaeological evaluation trenches were:

- Insofar as possible within methodological constraints, to explain any temporal, spatial or functional relationships between the structures/remains identified, and any relationships between these and the archaeological and historic elements of the wider landscape.

- Where the data allows, identify the research implications of the site with reference to the regional research agenda and recent work in Greater Manchester.

An Archaeological Statement of Compliance (appendix III) was written by Aeon Archaeology and submitted to Nexus Heritage and the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service in December 2014. This formed the basis of a method statement submitted for the work. The archaeological evaluation trenching was undertaken in accordance with this document.

The management of this project has followed the procedures laid out in the standard professional guidance *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 1991), *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment Project Manager's Guide* (English Heritage 2006), and in the *CIFA Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* (Chartered Institute For Archaeologists, 1994, rev. 2001 & 2008). Five stages are specified:

Phase 1: project planning
Phase 2: fieldwork
Phase 3: assessment of potential for analysis and revised project design
Phase 4: analysis and report preparation
Phase 5: dissemination

The current document reports on the phase 4 analysis and states the means to be used to disseminate the results. The purpose of this phase is to carry out the analysis identified in phase 3 (the assessment of potential phase), to amalgamate the results of the specialist studies, if required, with the detailed site narrative and provide both specific and overall interpretations. The site is to be set in its landscape

context so that its full character and importance can be understood. All the information is to be presented in a report that will be held by the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record and the OASIS database so that it can be accessible to the public and future researchers. This phase of work also includes archiving the material and documentary records from the project.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

Before the evaluation trenching commenced an agreed programme of excavation timing, siting, duration, surface re-instatement and health and safety protection measures were agreed with the Client (Nexus Heritage) and the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service.

The trial trench locations had been predetermined however upon attending site it was found that trench 3 needed to be relocated approximately 10.0m southeast of its originally intended location due to the presence of perimeter security panels. No other trenches were relocated during the evaluation works.

4.1 Evaluation trenches

The evaluation trenching array was designed to investigate areas that may contain archaeological features. There was latitude on the location of each trench and slight repositioning to take account of buried services and other constraints was acknowledged as a possibility within the WSI.

A JCB with toothless ditching bucket was used to open the trenches under constant archaeological supervision. Topsoil and overburden were to be removed by machine in spits down to archaeological deposits or natural sub-soils, whichever were encountered first. All uncovered archaeological features were to be excavated by hand.

A written record of the deposits and all identified features in each evaluation trench was completed via Aeon Archaeology pro-formas. All subsurface remains were to be recorded photographically, with detailed notations. The photographic record was completed using a digital SLR camera (Canon Eos 550D) set to maximum resolution.

Contingency provision was made for the following:

- Additional excavation of up to 100% of any given feature should the excavated sample prove to be insufficient to provide information on the character and date of the feature.

- Expansion of trench limits, to clarify the extent of features equivalent to an additional 20% of the core area.

The archaeological works were surveyed with respect to the nearest Ordnance Survey datum point and with reference to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. The trenches and archaeological features within them were accurately located on a site plan prepared at the most appropriate and largest scale. All excavations were backfilled with the material excavated and upon departure the site was left in a safe and tidy condition.

4.2 Data Collection from Site Records

A database of the site photographs was produced to enable active long-term curation of the photographs and easy searching. The site records were checked and cross-referenced and photographs were cross-referenced to contexts. These records were used to write the site narrative and the field drawings and survey data were used to produce an outline plan of the site.

All paper field records were scanned to provide a backup digital copy. The photographs were organised and precisely cross-referenced to the digital photographic record so that the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record (HER) can curate them in their active digital storage facility.

4.3 Artefact Methodology

All artefacts were to be collected and processed including those found within spoil tips. Finds numbers would be attributed and they would be bagged and labelled as well any preliminary identification taking place on site. After processing, all artefacts would be cleaned and examined in-house at Aeon Archaeology. If required artefacts would be sent to a relevant specialist for conservation and analysis.

The recovery policy for archaeological finds was kept under review throughout the evaluation trenching. Any changes in recovery priorities would be made under guidance from an appropriate specialist and agreed with Nexus Heritage and the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service. There was a presumption against the disposal of archaeological finds regardless of their apparent age or condition.

4.4 Environmental Samples Methodology

The sampling strategy and requirement for bulk soil samples was related to the perceived character, interpretational importance and chronological significance of the strata under investigation. This ensured that only significant features would be sampled. The aim of the sampling strategy was to recover carbonised macroscopic plant remains, small artefacts particularly knapping debris and evidence for metalworking.

Advice and guidance regarding environmental samples and their suitability for radiocarbon dating, as well as the analysis of macrofossils (charcoal and wood), pollen, animal bones and molluscs would be obtained from Oxford Archaeology if required.

4.5 Report and dissemination

A full archive including plans, photographs and written material resulting from the project was prepared. All plans, photographs and descriptions were labelled, and cross-referenced. A single sherd of unstratified post-medieval black-ware ceramic was noted and discarded and thus the project archive is entirely in digital and paper format.

Upon approval from the client copies of the report will be sent to the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record, the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service, and the OASIS online database.

5.0 HISTORY OF THE SITE

The following summary provides a concise outline of the broad archaeological and historic context and is based on information provided in a letter from the Senior Planning Archaeologist of Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service to the case officer at Wigan Council, dated 11th April 2013.

The Site appears to have been under an agricultural regime from at least the early-mid 18th century. The sequence of historic Ordnance Survey maps from 1849 to 2012 indicates that the Site has remained open, undeveloped land for the last 165 years and that most noteworthy occurrence during that time was the construction of the east Lancashire Road (A580) in 1934. The early maps from the 17th and 18th centuries provide no detail specific to the Site, but confirm the density of settlements in the area to the south of Bolton and east of Wigan. The Ordnance Survey (OS) map of 1894 shows the Site divided into three fields. This general arrangement is maintained, as shown in the OS map from 1908 which also confirms that a Smallpox Hospital has been constructed immediately to the northeast of the Site.

By the publication of the 1938 OS map the south–eastern boundary of the Site is defined by the east Lancashire Road. The OS map of 1955 shows that a field boundary within the Site had been removed and the Site is now characterised as two fields. The 1909 and 2012 OS maps of the Site confirm no further changes at the Site, but in 1989 a Pumping Station is recorded immediately to the east of the Site. The topographical aspect of the Site, on a finger of elevated and drier ground between Tyldesley Moss and Worsely Moss/ Chat Moss, would have been attractive for settlement and agricultural production during the prehistoric and early historic periods. The medieval villages of Higher Green and Astley were located on the raised ground and at Nook Farm, south of Astley, a Mesolithic (11500 – 6000 BC) community left a scatter of worked flint tools. The site at Nook Farm lies on a sandy 'island' which would have been slightly elevated above the level of the mire. The site yielded several hundred flint fragments – tools and debitage. Other archaeological sites with settlement evidence that can be favourably compared to Nook Farm include the Iron Age/Romano-British enclosure at Great Woolden Hall and the late Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze Age and Late Iron Age/Romano-British site at Port Salford the characteristics of which may hint at the types of artefacts an features that may be present at the Astley Road site and provide site-types against which any chronologically comparable archaeological features at Astley Road could be contrasted.

Recent evidence from Barton, Salford, on a topographically similar site demonstrates that sites such as these were favoured for occupation and exploitation from the Mesolithic period though to the Roman period.

6.0 QUANTIFICATION OF RESULTS

6.1 The Documentary Archive

The following documentary records were created during the archaeological evaluation trenching:

Trench sheets	17
Digital photographs	67

6.2 Environmental Samples

No environmental samples were taken as part of the evaluation trenching as no suitable deposits or fills were encountered.

6.3 Artefacts

No artefacts were recovered aside from a single sherd of unstratified post-medieval black-ware ceramic which was noted and discarded.

7.0 RESULTS OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION TRENCHES

The evaluation trenches were designed to evaluate and characterise the known, or potential, archaeological remains. Each trench is described and discussed separately. The location of the trenches can be found on figure 2.

It was originally intended that twenty trenches measuring 10.0m by 2.0m and five trenches measuring 5.0m by 2.0m would be excavated as part of the evaluation works. However, upon conclusion of a site meeting with Aeon Archaeology, Nexus Heritage, and the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service on 15th January 2015 it was agreed that the results of the trenches excavated to date provided enough evidence for the potential of the site to have preserved buried remains, and as such trenches 8, 12, 13, 16, 17, 19, 22 and 24 were not excavated.

Trench 01 (Plates 1 and 2, figure 2)

Trench 01 was located towards the north of the northernmost field and centred on NGR SD 69640 00174. The trench measured 5.0m in length by 2.0m in width orientated north to south. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.47m on to the natural glacial substrata horizon.

The trench was excavated through a 0.17m deep reasonably soft dark grey-brown silt-clay topsoil which overlaid a 0.23m deep firm dark grey-brown silt-clay subsoil. This lay above a >0.07m deep firm light brown-yellow glacial clay with infrequent small sub-rounded cobble inclusions.

The trench did not produce any archaeological features or artefacts.

Trench 02 (Plates 3 and 4, figure 2)

Trench 02 was located towards the northeast of the northernmost field and centred on NGR SD 69690 00176. The trench measured 10.0m in length by 2.0m in width orientated north to south. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.4m on to the natural glacial substrata horizon.

The trench was excavated through a 0.12m deep reasonably soft dark grey-brown silt-clay topsoil which overlaid a 0.2m deep firm dark grey-brown silt-clay subsoil. This lay above a >0.08m deep firm light brown-yellow glacial clay with infrequent small sub-rounded cobble inclusions. A ceramic field drain was located towards the southern end of the trench orientated northwest to southeast.

The trench did not produce any archaeological features or artefacts.

Trench 03 (Plates 5 and 6, figure 2)

Trench 03 was located towards the northwest of the northernmost field and centred on NGR SD 69515 00156. The trench measured 10.0m in length by 2.0m in width orientated north to south. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.45m on to the natural glacial substrata horizon.

The trench was excavated through a 0.2m deep reasonably soft dark red-brown silt-clay topsoil which overlaid a 0.2m deep firm mid red-brown silt-clay subsoil. This lay above a >0.05m deep firm light brown-yellow glacial clay with infrequent small sub-rounded cobble inclusions.

The trench did not produce any archaeological features or artefacts.

Plate 01: Trench 1, from the north. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 02: West facing section of trench 1, from the west. Scale 0.5m.

Plate 03: Trench 2, from the north. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 04: East facing section of trench 2, from the east. Scale 0.5m.

Plate 05: Trench 3, from the north. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 06: East facing section of trench 3, from the east. Scale 0.5m.

Trench 04 (Plates 7 and 8, figure 2)

Trench 04 was located towards the northwest of the northernmost field and centred on NGR SD 69565 00156. The trench measured 10.0m in length by 2.0m in width orientated north to south. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.4m on to the natural glacial substrata horizon.

The trench was excavated through a 0.2m deep reasonably soft dark red-brown silt-clay topsoil which overlaid a 0.2m deep firm mid red-brown silt-clay subsoil. This lay above a firm light brown-yellow glacial clay with infrequent small sub-rounded cobble inclusions. A ceramic field drain was located towards the southern end of the trench orientated northwest to southeast.

The trench did not produce any archaeological features or artefacts.

Trench 05 (Plates 9 and 10, figure 2)

Trench 05 was located towards the northwest of the northernmost field and centred on NGR SD 69615 00156. The trench measured 10.0m in length by 2.0m in width orientated north to south. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.4m on to the natural glacial substrata horizon.

The trench was excavated through a 0.2m deep reasonably soft dark red-brown silt-clay topsoil which overlaid a 0.2m deep firm mid red-brown silt-clay subsoil. This lay above a firm light brown-yellow glacial clay with infrequent small sub-rounded cobble inclusions.

The trench did not produce any archaeological features or artefacts.

Trench 06 (Plates 11 and 12, figure 2)

Trench 06 was located towards the north of the northernmost field and centred on NGR SD 69665 00155. The trench measured 10.0m in length by 2.0m in width orientated north to south. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.45m on to the natural glacial substrata horizon.

The trench was excavated through a 0.2m deep reasonably soft dark grey-brown silt-clay topsoil which overlaid a 0.14m deep firm dark red-brown silt-clay subsoil. This lay above a >0.1m firm light brown-yellow glacial clay with infrequent small sub-rounded cobble inclusions.

The trench did not produce any archaeological features or artefacts.

Trench 07 (Plates 13 and 14, figure 2)

Trench 07 was located towards the northeast of the northernmost field and centred on NGR SD 69715 00161. The trench measured 10.0m in length by 2.0m in width orientated north to south. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.39m on to the natural glacial substrata horizon.

The trench was excavated through a 0.14m deep reasonably soft dark grey-brown silt-clay topsoil which overlaid a 0.15m deep firm dark red-brown silt-clay subsoil. This lay above a >0.1m firm mid brown-red glacial clay with infrequent small sub-rounded cobble inclusions.

The trench did not produce any archaeological features or artefacts.

Trench 08

Unexcavated.

Plate 07: Trench 4, from the north. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 08: East facing section of trench 4, from the east. Scale 0.5m.

Plate 09: Trench 5, from the north. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 10: East facing section of trench 5, from the east. Scale 0.5m.

Plate 11: Trench 6, from the north. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 12: East facing section of trench 6, from the east. Scale 0.5m.

Plate 13: Trench 7, from the north. Scale 1.0m.

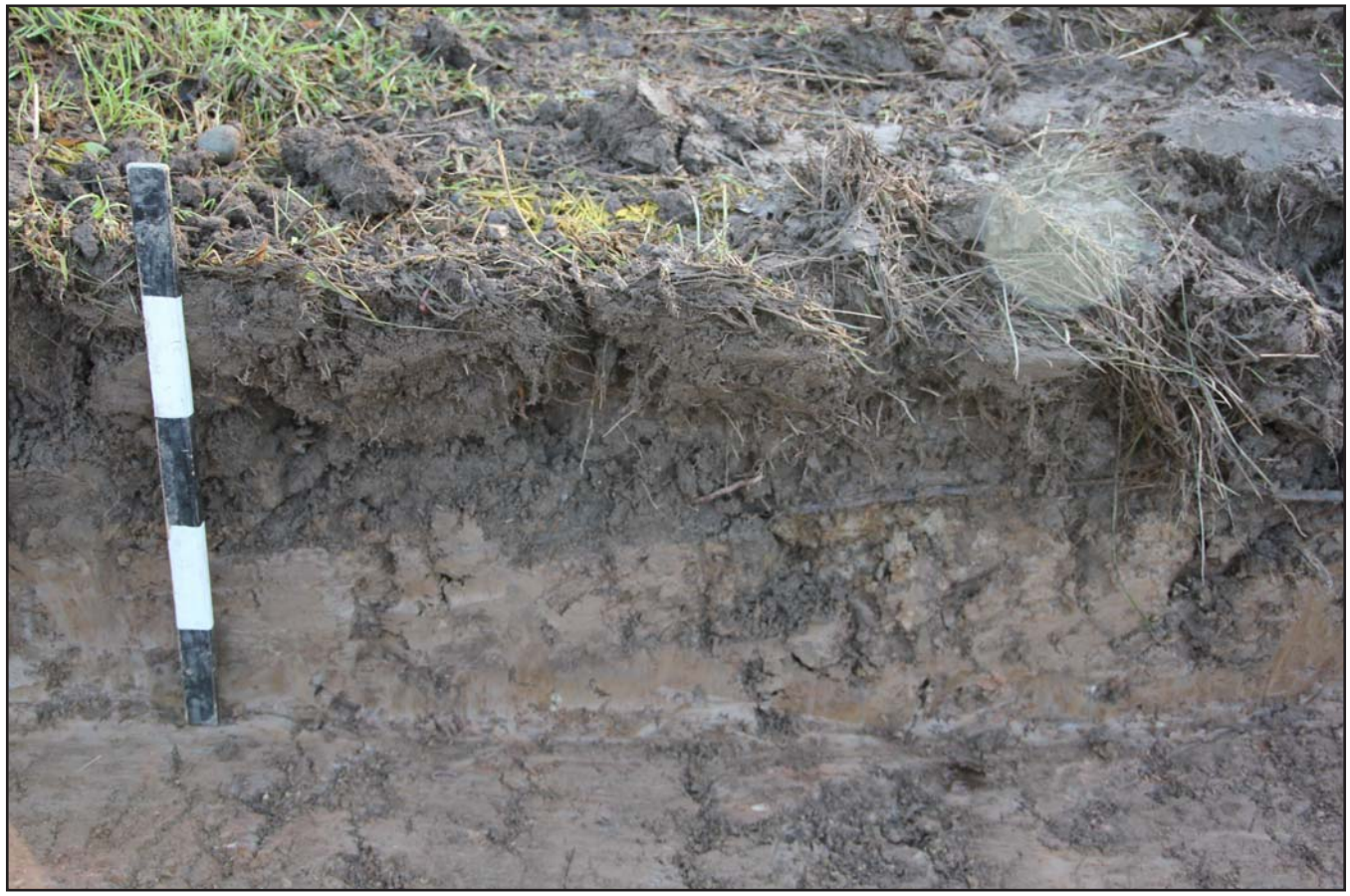

Plate 14: West facing section of trench 7, from the west. Scale 0.5m.

Trench 09 (Plates 15 and 16, figure 2)

Trench 09 was located towards the northwest of the northernmost field and centred on NGR SD 69541 00136. The trench measured 10.0m in length by 2.0m in width orientated north to south. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.45m on to the natural glacial substrata horizon.

The trench was excavated through a 0.2m deep reasonably soft dark red-brown silt-clay topsoil which overlaid a 0.2m deep firm mid red-brown silt-clay subsoil. This lay above a >0.05m deep firm light brown-yellow glacial clay with infrequent small sub-rounded cobble inclusions.

The trench did not produce any archaeological features or artefacts.

Trench 10 (Plates 17 and 18, figure 2)

Trench 10 was located towards the northwest of the northernmost field and centred on NGR SD 69591 00136. The trench measured 10.0m in length by 2.0m in width orientated north to south. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.37m on to the natural glacial substrata horizon.

The trench was excavated through a 0.16m deep reasonably soft dark grey-brown silt-clay topsoil which overlaid a 0.2m deep firm dark grey-brown silt-clay subsoil. This lay above a >0.01m deep firm light brown-yellow glacial clay with infrequent small sub-rounded cobble inclusions.

The trench did not produce any archaeological features or artefacts.

Trench 11 (Plates 19 and 20, figure 2)

Trench 11 was located towards the south of the northernmost field and centred on NGR SD 69642 00138. The trench measured 5.0m in length by 2.0m in width orientated north to south. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.38m on to the natural glacial substrata horizon.

The trench was excavated through a 0.12m deep reasonably soft dark grey-brown silt-clay topsoil which overlaid a 0.2m deep firm dark grey-brown silt-clay subsoil. This lay above a >0.08m deep firm light brown-yellow glacial clay with infrequent small sub-rounded cobble inclusions.

The trench did not produce any archaeological features although a single sherd of post-medieval black-ware was found within the topsoil horizon.

Trench 12

Unexcavated.

Trench 13

Unexcavated.

Plate 15: Trench 9, from the north. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 16: East facing section of trench 9, from the East. Scale 0.5m.

Plate 17: Trench 10, from the north. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 18: West facing section of trench 10, from the west. Scale 0.5m.

Plate 19: Trench 11, from the north. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 20: East facing section of trench 11, from the east. Scale 0.5m.

Trench 14 (Plates 21 and 22, figure 2)

Trench 14 was located towards the northwest of the southernmost field and centred on NGR SD 69616 00115. The trench measured 10.0m in length by 2.0m in width orientated north to south. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.4m on to the natural glacial substrata horizon.

The trench was excavated through a 0.12m deep reasonably soft dark grey-brown silt-clay topsoil which overlaid a 0.2m deep firm dark grey-brown silt-clay subsoil. This lay above a >0.08m deep firm light brown-yellow glacial clay with infrequent small sub-rounded cobble inclusions. A ceramic field drain was located towards the southern end of the trench orientated northwest to southeast.

The trench did not produce any archaeological features or artefacts.

Trench 15 (Plates 23 and 24, figure 2)

Trench 15 was located towards the north of the southernmost field and centred on NGR SD 69667 00115. The trench measured 10.0m in length by 2.0m in width orientated north to south. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.34m on to the natural glacial substrata horizon.

The trench was excavated through a 0.1m deep reasonably soft dark grey-brown silt-clay topsoil which overlaid a 0.2m deep firm dark red-brown silt-clay subsoil. This lay above a >0.04m firm light brown-yellow glacial clay with infrequent small sub-rounded cobble inclusions. A ceramic field drain was located towards the centre of the trench orientated northwest to southeast.

The trench did not produce any archaeological features or artefacts.

Trench 16

Unexcavated.

Trench 17

Unexcavated.

Trench 18 (Plates 25 and 26, figure 2)

Trench 18 was located towards the west of the southernmost field and centred on NGR SD 69640 00095. The trench measured 10.0m in length by 2.0m in width orientated north to south. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.42m on to the natural glacial substrata horizon.

The trench was excavated through a 0.13m deep reasonably soft dark grey-brown silt-clay topsoil which overlaid a 0.2m deep firm dark grey-brown silt-clay subsoil. This lay above a >0.09m firm light brown-yellow glacial clay with infrequent small sub-rounded cobble inclusions. Ceramic field drains was located towards the north and south ends of the trench orientated northwest to southeast.

The trench did not produce any archaeological features or artefacts.

Trench 19

Unexcavated.

Plate 21: Trench 14, from the north. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 22: East facing section of trench 14, from the east. Scale 0.5m.

Plate 23: Trench 15, from the north. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 24: West facing section of trench 15, from the west. Scale 0.5m.

Plate 25: Trench 18, from the north. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 26: East facing section of trench 18, from the east. Scale 0.5m.

Trench 20 (Plates 27 and 28, figure 2)

Trench 20 was located towards the south of the southernmost field and centred on NGR SD 69666 00075. The trench measured 10.0m in length by 2.0m in width orientated north to south. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.32m on to the natural glacial substrata horizon.

The trench was excavated through a 0.12m deep reasonably soft dark grey-brown silt-clay topsoil which overlaid a 0.13m deep firm dark red-brown silt-clay subsoil. This lay above a >0.07m firm light brown-yellow glacial clay with infrequent small sub-rounded cobble inclusions. A stone and red-brick French drain and a ceramic field drain were located towards the north end of the trench orientated northwest to southeast.

The trench did not produce any archaeological features or artefacts.

Trench 21 (Plates 29 and 30, figure 2)

Trench 21 was located towards the south of the southernmost field and centred on NGR SD 69706 00077. The trench measured 5.0m in length by 2.0m in width orientated north to south. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.32m on to the natural glacial substrata horizon.

The trench was excavated through a 0.12m deep reasonably soft dark grey-brown silt-clay topsoil which overlaid a 0.13m deep firm dark red-brown silt-clay subsoil. This lay above a >0.07m firm light brown-yellow glacial clay with infrequent small sub-rounded cobble inclusions.

The trench did not produce any archaeological features or artefacts.

Trench 22

Unexcavated.

Trench 23 (Plates 31 and 32, figure 2)

Trench 23 was located towards the south of the southernmost field and centred on NGR SD 69686 00057. The trench measured 5.0m in length by 2.0m in width orientated north to south. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.39m on to the natural glacial substrata horizon.

The trench was excavated through a 0.16m deep reasonably soft dark grey-brown silt-clay topsoil which overlaid a 0.14m deep firm dark red-brown silt-clay subsoil. This lay above a >0.09m firm light brown-yellow glacial clay with infrequent small sub-rounded cobble inclusions. A ceramic field drain was located towards the centre of the trench orientated northwest to southeast.

The trench did not produce any archaeological features or artefacts.

Trench 24

Unexcavated.

Plate 27: Trench 20, from the north. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 28: East facing section of trench 20, from the east. Scale 0.5m.

Plate 29: Trench 21, from the north. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 30: East facing section of trench 21, from the east. Scale 0.5m.

Plate 31: Trench 23, from the north. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 32: East facing section of trench 23, from the east. Scale 0.5m.

Trench 25 (Plates 33 and 34, figure 2)

Trench 25 was located towards the southeast of the southernmost field and centred on NGR SD 69716 00034. The trench measured 10.0m in length by 2.0m in width orientated north to south. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.31m on to the natural glacial substrata horizon.

The trench was excavated through a 0.12m deep reasonably soft dark grey-brown silt-clay topsoil which overlaid a 0.12m deep firm dark red-brown silt-clay subsoil. This lay above a >0.07m firm light brown-yellow glacial clay with infrequent small sub-rounded cobble inclusions. A stone and red-brick French drain and a ceramic field drain were located towards the south end of the trench orientated northwest to southeast.

The trench did not produce any archaeological features or artefacts.

Plate 33: Trench 25, from the south. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 34: East facing section of trench 25, from the east. Scale 0.5m.

8.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The phase of archaeological evaluation trenching at Manchester Road, Astley did not produce any archaeological features aside from post-medieval field drains and no artefacts aside from a single sherd of post-medieval black-ware ceramic which was noted and discarded. Archaeologically the results of the evaluation can be seen as being disappointing as the phase of works was unable to contribute to the local historical narrative or the wider regional research agenda.

The lack of any archaeological remains can be attributed to the fact that the glacial substrata is of firm clay which would have undoubtedly meant that the site would have been waterlogged prior to improvement in the Post-medieval era, and thus not conducive to early habitation despite the relatively flat topography. Moreover, the lack of any silts, sands or peat deposits within the trenches suggests that the area did not form the wider basin of a stream catchment or wetland which were often utilised as hunting grounds within the prehistoric period.

It is therefore considered that the site has low potential for the preservation of buried archaeological remains and as such it is recommended that the archaeological condition (condition 14) be discharged with no requirement for further archaeological assessment or mitigatory measures.

9.0 SOURCES

OS Maps

OS 1:10 000 Series sheet SD 60 NE, SD 60 SE, SD 60 SW, SD 60 NW, SD 70 NE, SD 70 SE, SD 70 SW, SD70 NW, SJ 69 NE, SJ 69 SE, SJ 69 SW, SJ 69 NW, SJ 79 NE, SJ 79 SE, SJ 79 SW, and SJ 79 NW.

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APPENDIX I – WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

NEXUS
HERITAGE

Land at Manchester Road, Astley (A/13/77899/OUT)

Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment and Evaluation

Document No: 3211.R01a

November 2014

Nexus Heritage Controlled Document – Commercial-in-Confidence

Document Number	3211.R01a	
Document Status	Final	
Prepared by:	Anthony Martin	Date: 06.11.14
Checked by:	Gerry Wait	Date: 07.11.14
Approved by:	Gerry Wait	Date: 07.11.14

Revision Record		
Revision No.	Date	Details
a	19.11.14	Amendments following review of first draft by J. Gould at Rowland Homes Ltd.

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CONTENTS:

INTRODUCTION

Outline planning permission has been secured for a residential development on land at Manchester Road, Astley (A/13/77899) – hereafter the Site. The development includes 97 low rise residential dwellings with associated driveways, gardens, estate roads, Public Open Space and service infrastructure. Development levels are not yet confirmed; however the minimum floor level that has been set as part of a Planning Consent is 19.80m AOD and 21.34m AOD in the north and western sectors of the site.

A proposed development layout is presented as Appendix A, Drawing 10-123-003.

Wigan Council considers the site is of potential archaeological interest and wishes to secure the satisfactory removal of the archaeological remains and/or recording of the subsequent findings, as required by Policy CP11 of the Wigan Local Plan Core Strategy. A condition relevant to archaeology has therefore, been applied to the permission for the development by Wigan Council.

Condition: 14

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

This document provides details of a programme of archaeological work proposed for the Site in response to the spirit and intent of Condition No. 14.

Discussions have been held with the Development Control Archaeologist at Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS) (Mr. A. Myers), to discuss the aims of the archaeological works, and the methods to be employed, in order to ensure that the archaeological works meet the expectations of Wigan Council.

Nexus Heritage is appointed as the Archaeological Consultant for this project and has prepared this document, which acts as a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for a programme of archaeological works. This WSI is designed to comply with the spirit and intent of the *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*, 2012 and Policy CP11 of the Wigan Local Plan Core Strategy to achieve an investigation of archaeological remains, and to record and advance understanding of their significance before they are impacted upon by construction works. The results of the investigative works will be reported and submitted to the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record (GMHER). If merited the results of the archaeological works would be published in a local or national journal, as appropriate. The records generated during the fieldwork (paper, photographic and digital) will be offered to a local museum or other public depository willing to receive them.

This document is offered for consideration to Wigan Council and its archaeological advisor (Mr. A. Myers) for verification with reference to the Condition applied to the planning consent and the relevant provisions in *NPPF*.

LOCATION AND SITE INFORMATION

The Site extends over *c.* 3.96ha and is located of Manchetser Road, Astley (Figure 1), centred, approximately at SD 69718 00131.

The Site is bounded to the south east by the East Lancashire Road, to the north and west by residential properties, and to the north and east by a field, and a pumping station. The Site is open land, laid to rough pasture and contains a hedgerow and dry ditch separating the Site into two fields. The Site contains a number of small ditches and a pond. There appears to be a slight declivity acorss the Site, from west to east, with the eastern portion *c.* 4m lower than the western edge. In addtion, the surface undulates markedly across the Site.

It is undertsood that the Site may contain sub-surface infrastructure laid by United Utilities related to a fomer plant and that United Utilities will be constructing a pumping station in the north east corner of the Site. United Utilities records for the Site indicate that there is a number of active and disused sewers and pipes extending across the southern and eastern portions of the Site.

The British Geological Survey (BGS) map for the site indicates that the drift geology of the SIte is classified as Devensian Till, comprising glacial clays within the central and western portions of the Site and Alluvium towards the eastern boundary. The solid geology is classified as Worsley Delph Sandstone and South Manchester Marls Formation (Mudstone).

An intrusive Ground Investigation was undetraken at the Site in April 2014 (E3P 2014) in the form of 36 trial pits, 12 window samples and two cable percissive borelonles. In summary the Ground Investgation did not encouter any Made Ground and the near surface condtions were charcterised as topsoil with an average thickness of 0.28m overlying firm to stiff medium strength gravelly sandy Clay to a maximum proven depth of 14.00m bgl. In certain isolated areas the Site was found to be underlain by pockets of sand and gravel, predominantly in the central and northern portions of the site, and generally measured between 1.40 and 2.00m bgl.

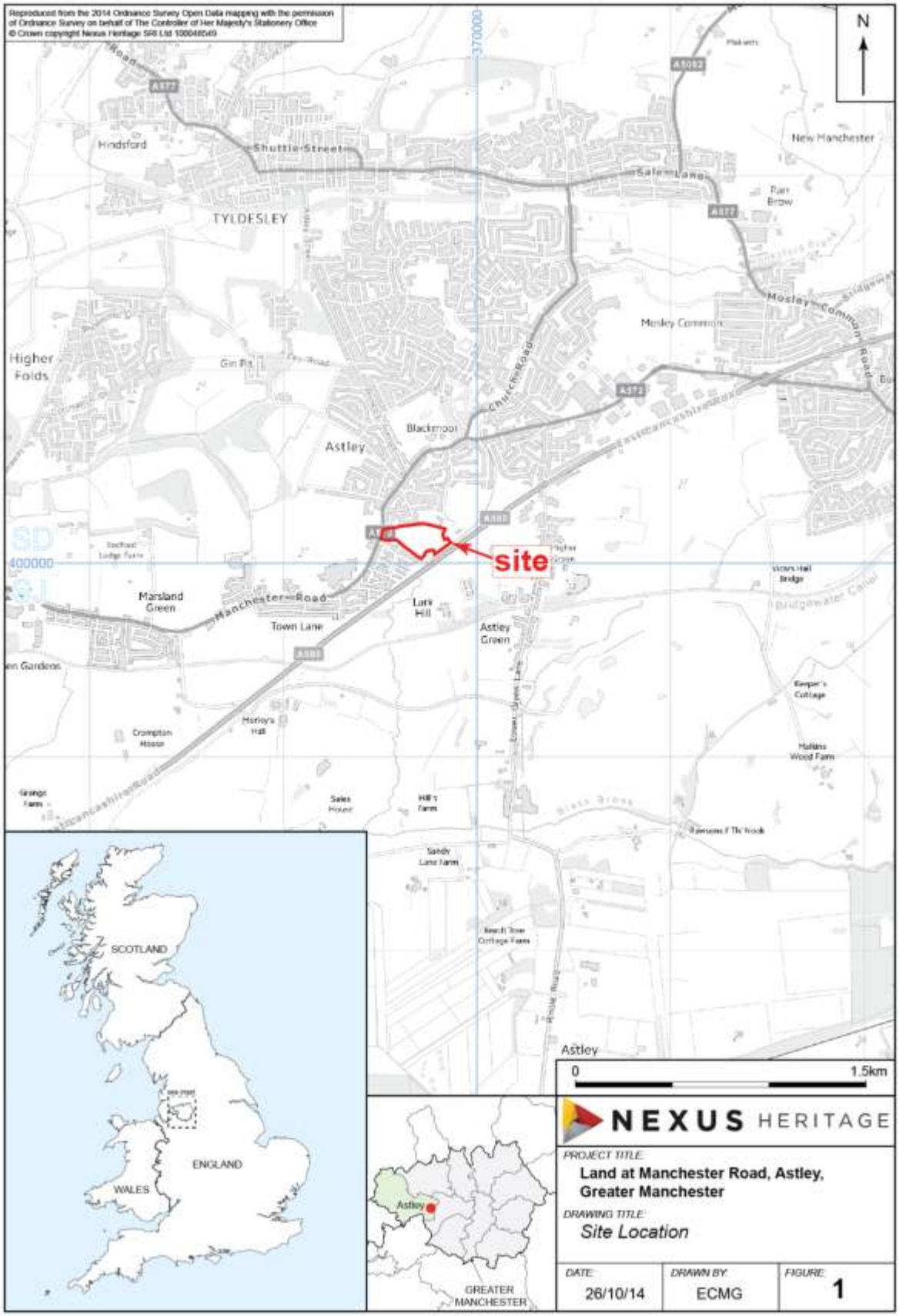

Fig. 1: Site Location Map (reproduced from Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO © Crown Copyright Nexus Heritage-SRI Licence No. 100048549)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The planning application was not accompanied by a heritage statement or archaeological assessment but the following summary provides a concise outline of the broad archaeological and historic context and is based on information provided in a letter from the Senior Planning Archaeologist of GMAAS to the case officer at Wigan Council, dated 11th April 2013.

The Site appears to have been under an agricultural regime from at least the early-mid 18th century. The sequence of historic Ordnance Survey maps from 1849 to 2012 (Figs 2 - 9) indicates that the Site has remained open, undeveloped land for the last 165 years and that most noteworthy occurrence during that time was the construction of the east Lancashire Road (A580) in 1934. The early maps from the 17th and 18th centuries (Figs. 2 and 3) provide no detail specific to the Site, but confirm the density of settlements in the area to the south of Bolton and east of Wigan. The Ordnance Survey (OS) map of 1894 (Fig. 4) shows the Site divided into three fields. This general arrangement is maintained, as shown in the OS map from 1908 (Fig. 5) which also confirms that a Smallpox Hospital has been constructed immediately to the north-east of the Site. By the publication of the 1938 OS map (Fig. 6) the south–eastern boundary of the Site is defined by the east Lancashire Road. The OS map of 1955 (Fig. 7) shows that a field boundary within the Site had been removed and the Site is now characterised as two fields. The 1909 and 2012 OS maps of the Site (Figs. 8 and 9) confirm no further changes at the Site, but in 1989 a Pumping Station is recorded immediately to the east of the Site.

The topographical aspect of the Site, on a finger of elevated and drier ground between Tyldesley Moss and Worsely Moss/ Chat Moss, would have been attractive for settlement and agricultural production during the prehistoric and early historic periods. The medieval villages of Higher Green and Astley were located on the raised ground and at Nook Farm, south of Astley, a Mesolithic (11500 – 6000 BC) community left a scatter of worked flint tools. The site at Nook Farm lies on a sandy 'island' which would have been slightly elevated above the level of the mire. The site yielded several hundred flint fragments – tools and debitage.

Recent evidence from Barton, Salford, on a topographically similar site demonstrates that sites such as these were favoured for occupation and exploitation from the Mesolithic period though to the Roman period.

Fig. 2: Saxton Map. 1610

Fig. 3: Morden Map, 1701

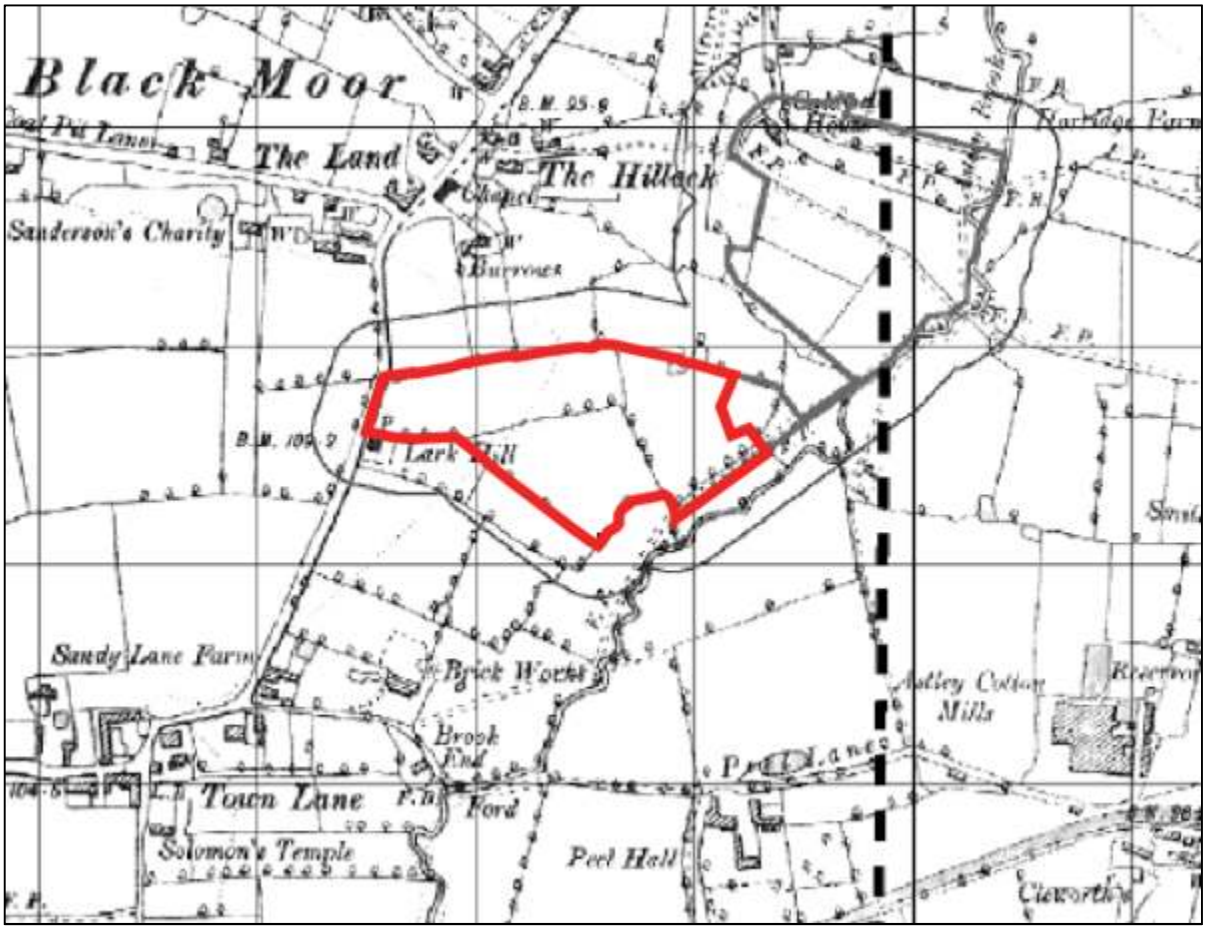

Fig.4: Ordnance Survey Map, 1894

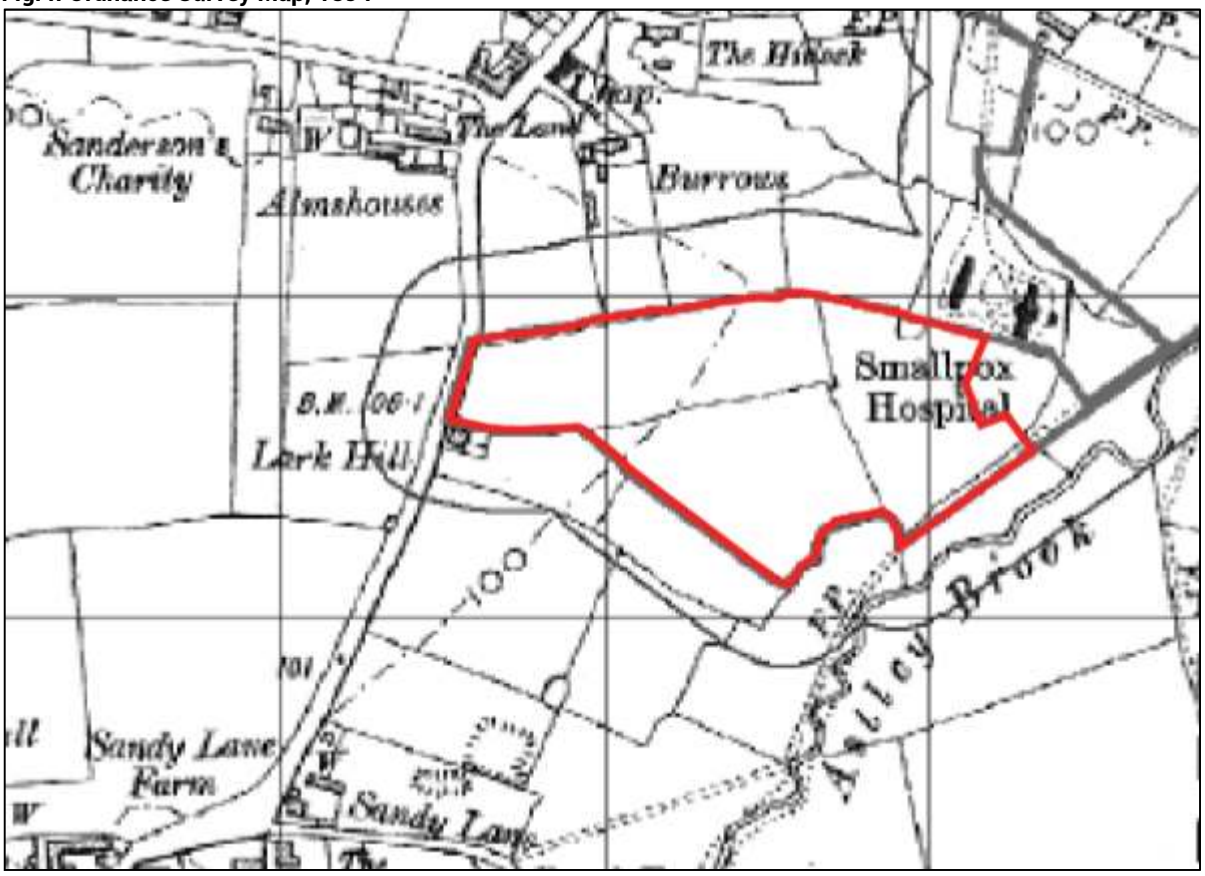

Fig. 5: Ordnance Survey Map, 1908

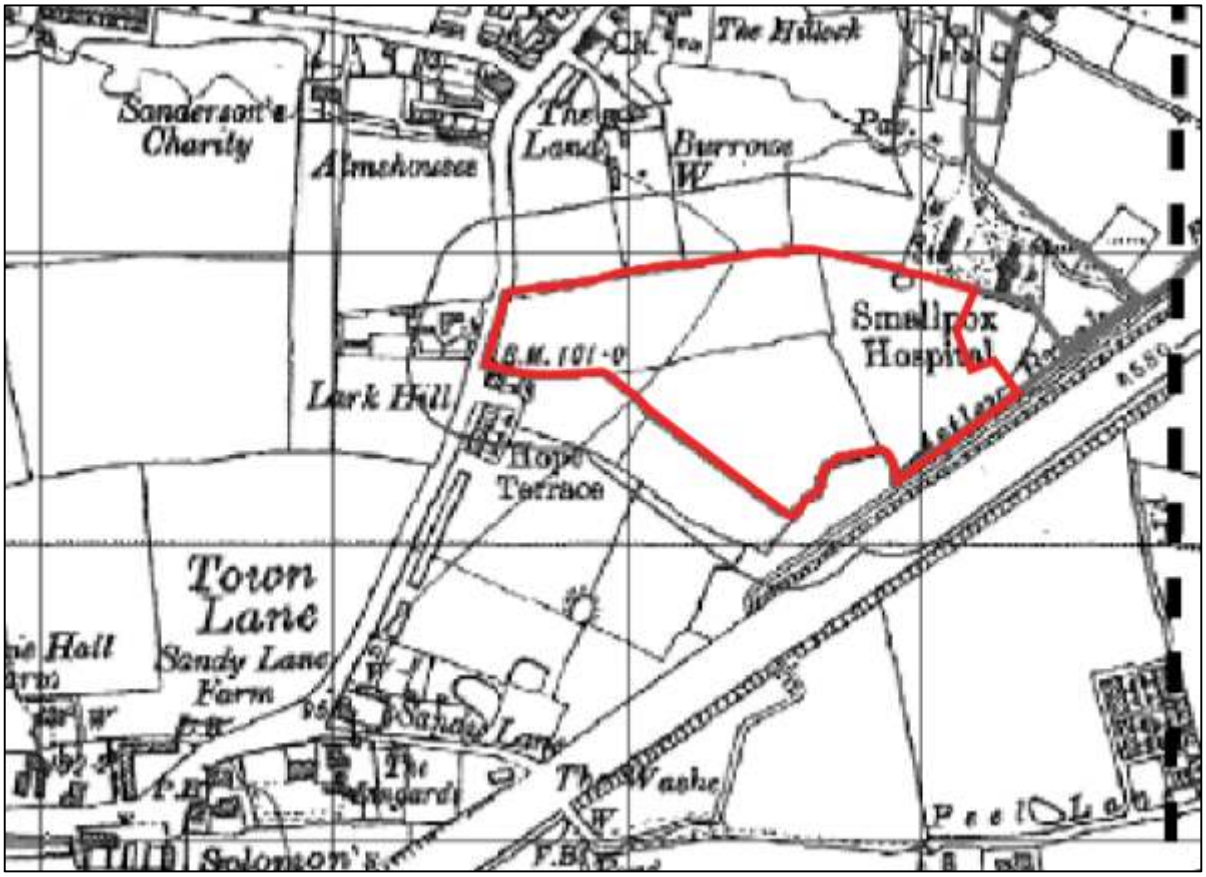

Figure 6: Ordnance Survey Map, 1938

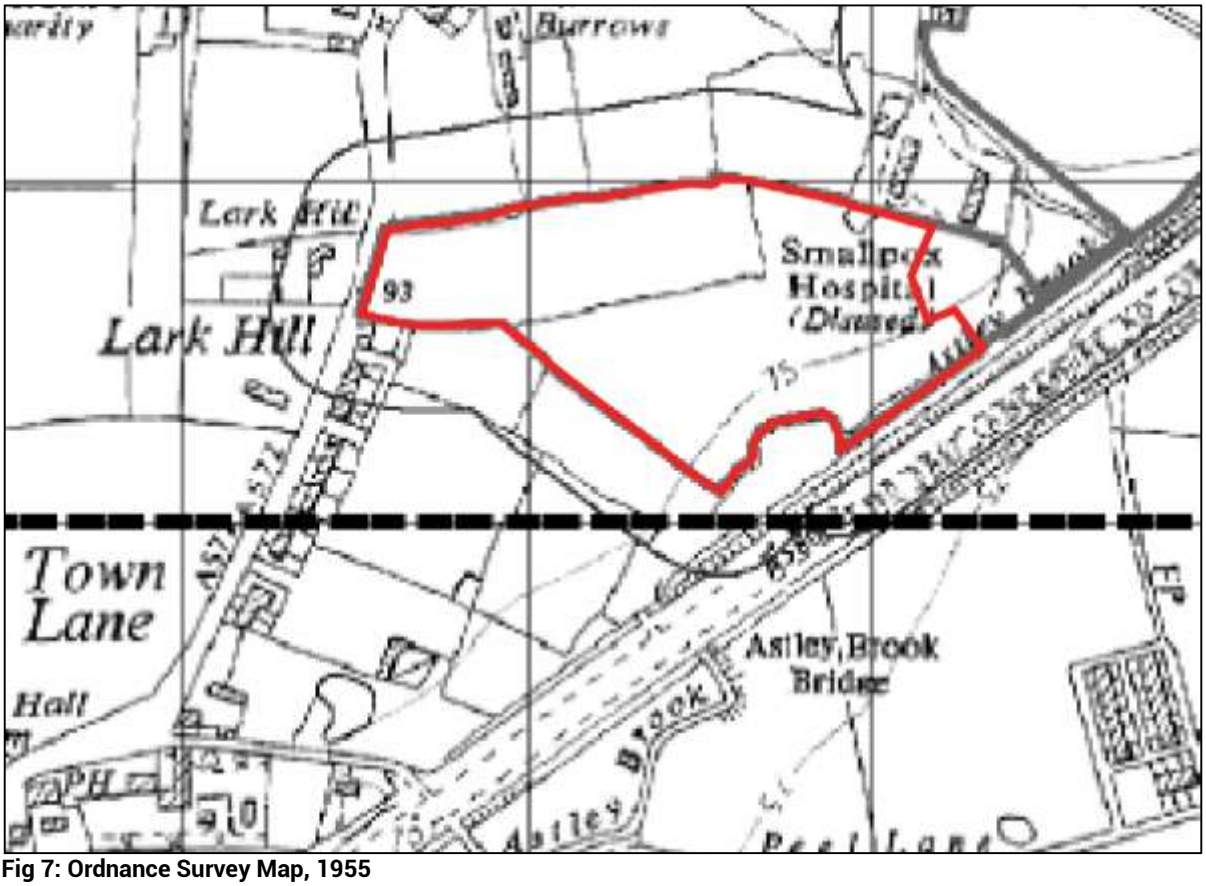

Fig 7: Ordnance Survey Map, 1955

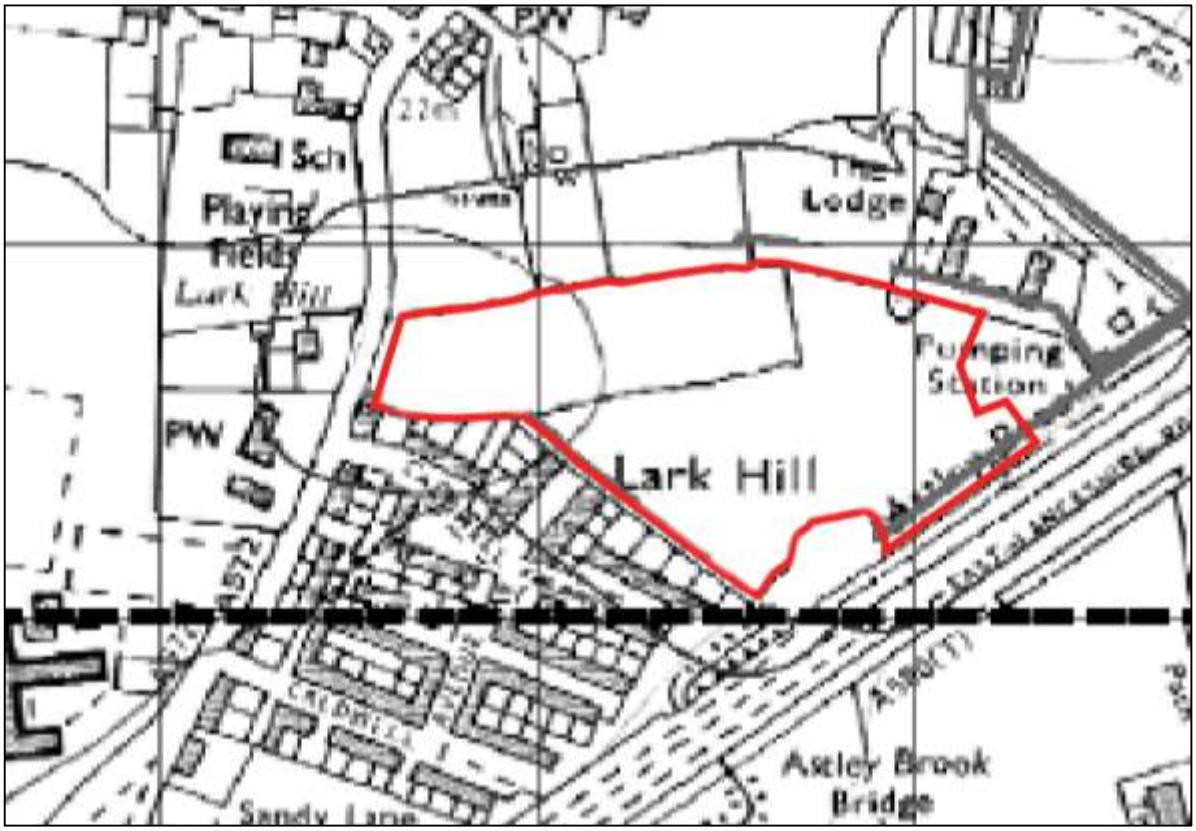

Fig. 8: Ordnance Survey Map, 1989

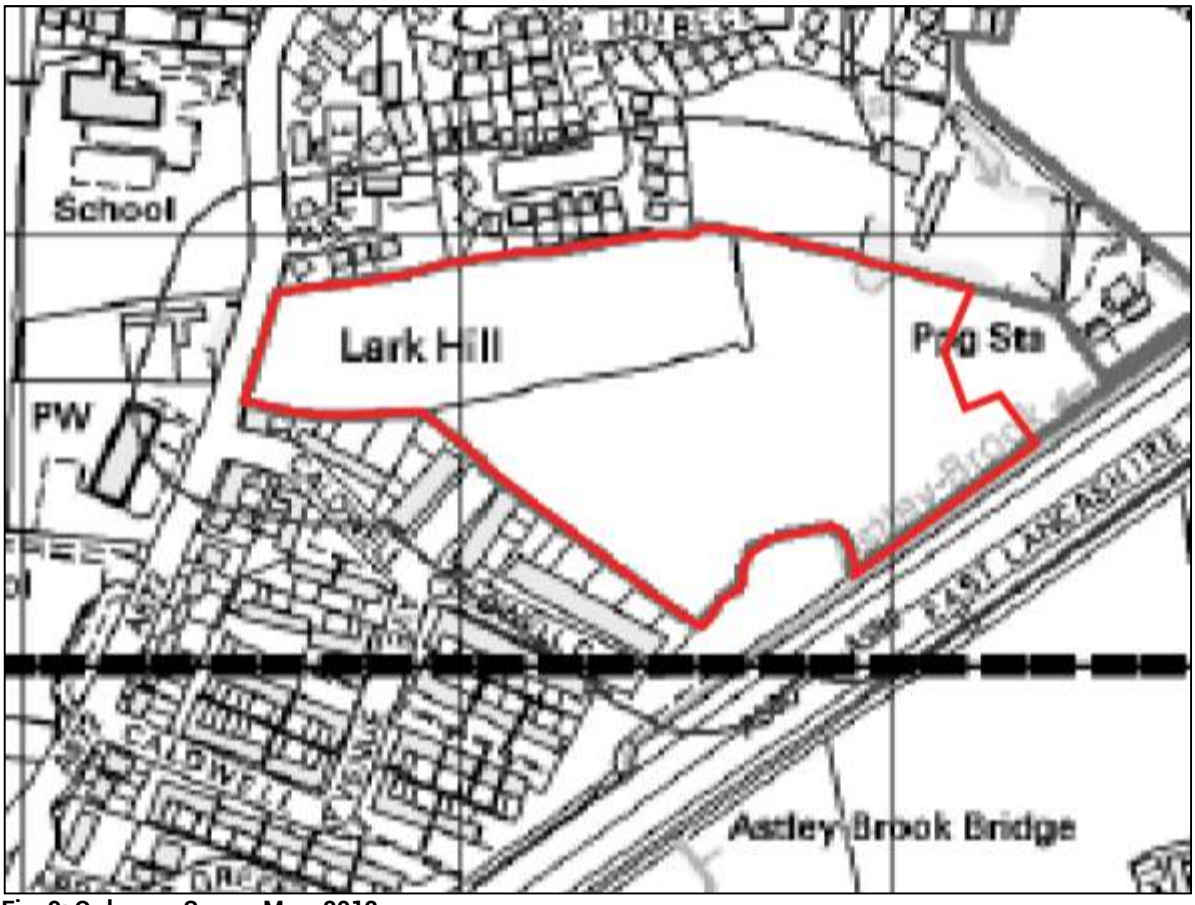

Fig. 9: Ordnance Survey Map, 2012

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF APPOINTMENT AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Nexus Heritage acts as Archaeological Consultant to the Client. The desk-based assessment will be undertaken by Nexus Heritage and the trial trench evaluation will be undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced archaeological organisation, contracted to Nexus Heritage.

Nexus Heritage and Stratascan operate in accordance with:

- The Institute for Archaeologist's *Code of Conduct* (2012 edition).
- The Institute for Archaeologist's *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology* (2008 edition).
- The Institute for Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment* (2012 edition).
- The Institute for Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* (2012 edition).
- The European Association of Archaeologists *Principles of Conduct for Archaeologists Involved in Contract Archaeological Work (1998).*
- The Institute for Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for the Collection, Documentation, Conservation and Research of Archaeological Materials* (2008 edition).
- The Institute for Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for the Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives* (2009 edition)

DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

The aim of the assessment is, insofar as practicable by desk-based research, to:

- Identify all known and potential archaeological assets on the Assessment Site that may be affected by the proposed development and evaluate their significance;
- Outline any likely effects of the development and the archaeological assets, likely to be affected, assessing the nature of the impacts;
- Recommend future investigatory and/or mitigatory actions

All designated and non-designated archaeological assets, both on the Assessment Site and within approximately 500m of the Assessment Site boundary (the Assessment Area) will be identified. The archaeological sites in the wider Assessment Area will be identified and considered in order that the potential archaeology of the Assessment Site can be placed in the broader context of the known archaeological assets in the Astley area.

The baseline conditions will be established from a range of sources, which include (but will not necessarily be restricted to:

- GMHER
- The Wigan Archive Service (WAS)
- The Local History section of the Leigh Library.
- Other available published and unpublished material and data from web-based sources such as British History Online, Heritage Gateway, Pastscape and the National Heritage List for England.

The overall objective of the archaeological assessment is to provide contextual information for a programme of trial trench evaluation (see below) and to inform the need for and scope of any further evaluative archaeological attendances and/or mitigation attendances relative to spirit and intent of Condition No. 14 of the planning permission.

The results of the desk-based assessment will be complemented by a further element of work – a walk-over survey in order to examine the ground surface for evidence of archaeological features and previous impacts to the land which may have compromised, disturbed or removed archaeological assets.

The assessment will be undertaken with reference to a research design which reflects the ambitions of the North-West England Regional Research Agenda, specifically relating the prehistoric periods (Hodgson and Brennand 2007).

The Senior Planning Archaeologist of GMAAS has confirmed informally (by telephone) that this methodological approach is adequate.

After the completion of the desk-based assessment a report will be prepared. The report will, as appropriate, contain the following:

- A non-technical summary
- A table of contents
- An introduction with acknowledgements, including a list of all those involved in the project and the location and description of the site
- A statement of the project aims and objectives
- An account of the project methodology undertaken, with an assessment of the same
- A factual summary of the history, development and use of the site

- A summary description of the assessment results including any archaeologically significant features/deposits identified within the proposed development site.
- A discussion of the location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition, and significance of any archaeological deposits/features uncovered, together with a discussion of their relationship with known archaeological features and/or historic buildings in the vicinity
- A site location plan and general site plan
- Other maps, plans, drawings, and photographs as appropriate
- Conclusions and Recommendations
- Sources

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION TRENCHING

The rationale underpinning the evaluative archaeological works at the Site involves the recovery of archaeological information from the excavation of 450m^2 of archaeological trial trenches each to be a minimum of 2.00m wide in a trench array as shown on Figure 10. The broad characteristics of the number, size, orientation and distribution of the trenches are considered to be appropriate. However, the number, size, orientation and distribution of the trenches may change in the light of information revealed during the desk-based assessment and the precise location may be altered so as to avoid the creation of abnormal foundation conditions. The trench array has been designed to determine feature presence/absence, with a contingent trenching facility designed for site characterisation should features be present, the characteristics of which are insufficiently resolved within the core trenching provision. Contingent trenching will be optional, upon the discovery of archaeological artefacts, deposits, features or structures the characteristics of which can only be sufficiently determined upon further spatial investigation. The contingent excavation of trenches is limited to a further 455m^2 of trench (equivalent to 1.5% of the available area) or addtional depth to cater for alluvial cover.

There are a number of non-archaeological constraints at the Site which have influenced the design of the tasks within this Written Scheme of Investigation. A number of pipes and sewers (active and disused) extend across the Site (Fig. 10) and given the cut-and-cover works necessary to install this infrastructure, and the attendant impact on the sub-surface deposits, there is unlikely to be any surviving archaeological resource in the locations of these buried services. In addition any archaeological works need to provide a working easement of 5m around all ides of these buried surfaces. Also, United Utilities has recently undertaken some work (utility upgrading) at the Site, which included an access track from Manchester Road to the working compound. This track required a soil strip followed by the laying of a stone surface for vehicles to track over. No trial trenching is proposed for the length of the access track. A pile of topsoil and a pile of hardcore/other debris are present on the Site.

Groundwater is present at the Site at *c.* 1.40 to 2.00m bgl and localised pumping or de-watering may be required in order to expose the deposits which may contain archaeological evidence. The control of water during the excavation works will be the responsibility of the appointed archaeological contractor.

site boundary
united utilities trackway to pumping station
known sewers
proposed evaluation trench
NEXUS HERITAGE
Land at Manchester Road, Astley, Greater Manchester
Site Plan showing known sewers, access trackway and proposed evaluation trenches
15/11/14
EDMG
10
N
0
50 m

The evaluation trenches will be opened using a mechanical excavator equipped with a wide toothless blade under the constant direction of an archaeologist and any topsoil and vegetation cover removed in spits of no more than 0.3m in thickness. After the trenches have been opened, excavation should be by hand. Surfaces should be cleaned and prepared as appropriate in order to allow visual inspection for the presence/absence of archaeological remains, deposits, features and structures.Upon exposure of the first horizon exhibiting archaeological artefacts, deposits, features or structures the use of the mechanical excavator will cease. Under no circumstances should the mechanical excavator be used to excavate archaeological deposits features or structures, unless extraordinary circumstances apply associated with large-scale homogenous and/or modern deposits in which case dispensation may be provided to permit selective and controlled excavation with a mechanical excavator. After the trenches have been opened, excavation should be by hand. Surfaces should be cleaned and prepared as appropriate in order to allow visual inspection and recording. All trenches will conform to the stated dimensions at their base (subject to the presence of sub-surface services and any other insurmountable obstructions) shoring/stepping will be employed as appropriate.

The following volume criteria represent the minimum feature sampling requirements:

- 50% of each discrete feature (e.g. pits and postholes)
- 25% (or at least 1 metre) of the exposed areas of each liner/ring feature and all terminals/intersections
- 50% of structural features (e.g. beamslots, ring-ditches)
- 50%-100% of domestic/industrial working features (e.g. hearths and ovens)
- Surviving structural elements such as walls will be exposed and cleaned

The archaeological works will be surveyed with respect to the nearest Ordnance Survey datum point and to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. The trenches, and any artefacts deposits, features and structures within them will be accurately located on a site plan prepared at an appropriate scale.

Archaeological artefacts, deposits, features and structures will be excavated manually using best-practice techniques and in a controlled and stratigraphic manner sufficient to address the aims and objectives of the project. An appropriate level of sample excavation in order to determine and demonstrate the presence/absence of archaeological remains and their state of preservation adequate to provide a site-wide deposit model to inform the targeted area excavation and recording will be undertaken. With this in mind it may not be necessary to excavate the complete stratigraphic sequence to geologically lain deposits but the inter-relationships between archaeological artefacts, deposits, features and structures will be investigated sufficiently and the complete stratigraphic sequence to geologically lain deposits should be investigated where practicable. The cessation of excavation in any trench prior to the establishment of the level at which geologically lain material survives may be agreed with the Development Control Archaeologist during the course of the field work.

The method of recording will adopt best-practice techniques and the stratigraphy of each trench will be recorded in written descriptions even where no archaeological deposits have been identified. The drawn record will comprise plans of the site at an appropriate scale, e.g. trench plans at scale 1:20 and sections at scale 1:10. Electronic hardware and software may be used to prepare site drawings as appropriate.

In the Compliance Statement the tendering organisations should specify the volume criteria which represent the minimum adequate feature sampling strategy:

Contingency provision would be made for additional excavation of specific features should the excavated sample prove to be insufficient to provide information on the character and date of the feature.

The aims, objectives and expectation of a palaeoenvironmental strategy will parallel the over-arching goals for the project (English Heritage, 2011). The sampling and assessment strategy will address the project goals especially questions regarding the agrarian economy of the prehistoric era. Should appropriate deposits be represent addressing such questions would be attempted by recovering a sufficient sample of cereal remains such that the activities on the site can be further interpreted and compared with other similar sites in the region. Also, could the distribution and range of palaeoenvironmental remains on the site be used to identify and highlight differences in use across the site, focusing on divisions between domestic and other activities?

If any identified features or deposits are appropriate for environmental sampling a strategy and methodology will be developed. Preparation for, taking of, processing of and assessment of environmental samples will be in accordance with current best practice. Should a range of features represent multiple feature types, areas within the Site and stratigraphic/chronological phases be present a sample will be selected on a judgmental basis. The criteria for selection will be that deposits are datable, well sealed and with little intrusive or residual material.

Any buried soils or well-sealed deposits with concentrations of carbonised material present will be intensively sampled taking a known proportion of the deposit. Spot samples will be taken where concentrations of environmental remains are located. Waterlogged remains, if present, will be sampled for pollen, plant macrofossils, insect remains and radiocarbon dating provided that they are uncontaminated. If buried soils are encountered sampling for micromophological/phosphate analysis by taking monoliths with sub-samples for soil chemistry composition will be considered.

Reservoirs of palaeo-environmental data, including alluvial sequences and palaeo-channels, which may be of intrinsic interest, should be identified and sampled on site subject to health and safety considerations and where contamination does not prohibit retrieval.

All collected samples will be labelled with context and sequential sample numbers. Appropriate contexts will be bulk sampled (50 litres or the whole context depending on size) for the recovery of carbonised plant remains and insects.

Recovery of small animal bones, bird bone and large molluscs will normally be achieved through processing other bulk samples although other samples may be taken specifically to sample particularly rich deposits.

Wet sieving with flotation will be carried out using a sieving tank with a 0.5mm mesh and a 0.3mm flotation sieve. The small size mesh will be used initially as flotation of plant remains may be incomplete and some may remain in the residue. The residue > 0.5mm from the tank will be separated into coarse fractions of over 4mm and fine fractions of > 0.5-4mm. The coarse fractions will be sorted for finds. The fine fractions and flots will be evaluated and prioritised; only those with remains apparent will be sorted. The prioritised flots will not be sorted until the analysis stage when phasing information is available. Flots will be scanned and plant remains from selected contexts will be identified and further sampling, sieving and sorting targeted towards higher potential deposits.

Recommendations for discard/further analysis (including the sub-sampling volumes) will be made in accordance with the English Heritage guidance (2012) and *Geoarchaeology – Using Earth Sciences to Understand the Archaeological Record* (2007). It is expected that the

scientific sampling strategies will evolve subject to the requirements of the project's aims and objectives but in the first instance the prospective archaeological contractors are required to devise an environmental and scientific sampling regime in consultation with the English Heritage Regional Science Advisor (L. Moffett) in accordance with the latest guidelines and provide details of the proposed regime in its Compliance Statement (Watt, 2011). The proposed environmental and scientific sampling regime will form part of the compliance statement and will need to be agreed with Nexus Heritage, the Planning Archaeologist and the English Heritage Regional Science Advisor in advance of implementation. Any deviation from the sampling procedures outlined in the above guidance documents will be discussed and agreed with Nexus Heritage and the Planning Archaeologist in advance of implementation.

Human remains, if encountered, will be left *in situ* and protected. Nexus Heritage will notify the Client and the appropriate authorities of the presence of human remains at the earliest opportunity. If removal is necessary and mandated by the relevant regulatory authorities the remains would be excavated archaeologically in accordance with the English Heritage document *Guidance for Best Practice for the Treatment of Human Remains Excavated from Christian Burial Grounds in England* (2005) and any conditions imposed by the Ministry of Justice and/or the Local Planning Authority Environmental Heath Directorate. Any assessment and reporting work on recovered human remains would be undertaken in accordance with the

The photographic record will meet the requirements of the designated local archive repository, whether 35mm film-based or digital in origin or both media. It is understood that the minimum requirement for photographic media for archival purposes in Greater Manchester is conventional 35mm monochrome (silver halide) negatives and prints.

Soil excavated from the trenches will be scanned for ferrous and non-ferrous metal artefacts using a metal detector capable of making the necessary discrimination and operated by an experienced metal detector user under constant supervision. The metal detector operative will waive all rights to rewards for objects discovered that could otherwise be payable under the *Treasure Act* (1996).

Contingency is allowed for the recovery and processing of sufficient C^{14} and/or archaeo-magnetic samples in order to fulfil the aims and objectives of the project. The prospective archaeological contractors should supply unit rates for C^{14} and/or archaeo-magnetic dates. In the event that discoveries during excavation warrant refinement of the overall C^{14} dating strategy a sampling strategy should be agreed with a suitably qualified and experienced dating specialist. The archaeomagnetic dating strategy will follow English Heritage's 2006 *Archaeomagnetic Dating Guidelines on producing and interpreting archaeomagnetic dates*.

The Client will be responsible for securing information on known services within the excavation areas and providing such information to Nexus Heritage who will take all reasonable precautions to avoid damage to such services.

In the event of significant archaeological discoveries the treatment of which (either arising from the volume/quantity of material and/or the complexity/importance of the material) is beyond the reasonable expectations arising from a duly diligent approach to the evaluative approach detailed here or which would constitute remains for which preservation *in situ* should be considered, Nexus Heritage will notify the Client and arrange a site meeting with representative of Manchester City Council. Any such remains should be protected from deterioration.

An archaeological risk schedule and strategy for the use of the contingent response will be provided. These responses may be deployed, when appropriate, to provide for excavation and recording and for the cleaning, processing, conservation of artefacts/ecofacts, and the identification analysis, cataloguing and archiving of those artefacts/ecofacts which may need

to be recovered either to meet the objectives of the project and/or for the safety and security of the archaeological resource.

The Client or the Client's Agent will be responsible for securing information on known services within the excavation areas and providing such information to Nexus Heritage. Nexus Heritage take all reasonable precautions to avoid damage to such services.

The Client or the Client's Agent will be responsible for securing the site during the evaluation works and fencing off the working easements associated with the works. Nexus Heritage will be responsible for maintaining and locking any fencing/gates etc around the archaeological excavations within the site in accordance with health and safety provisions. Any damage to or breakage of the fencing/security provisions will be reported to the Client/Client's Agent as soon as possible after discovery.

At or towards the conclusion of the archaeological evaluations a site meeting will be convened at which the works can be inspected with a view to confirming completion of the evaluative archaeological excavations and compliance with the approved archaeological strategy. Upon such confirmation the trenches can be handed over to the Client or Client's Agent for treatment in accordance with the ongoing obligations of this document.

At the conclusion of the fieldwork, a brief summary of the results will be prepared. This summary will be prepared after the retained artefacts have been cleaned, identified, labelled, assessed and dated. The artefacts will be packed and stored in appropriate materials and conditions to ensure that no deterioration occurs. All artefact/ecofact processing/storage will be carried out in accordance with UKIC (United Kingdom Institute for Conservation) guidelines and should accord with the Institute for Archaeologists document *Guidelines on Finds Work*. Soil or other samples recovered will be processed as appropriate by a qualified and experienced bio-archaeological scientist. Where the need for dating of individual contexts/features arises, material suitable for dating will be identified as well as the most appropriate chronometric techniques(s).

After the completion of the evaluative archaeological fieldwork a report will be prepared. The report will, as appropriate, contain the following:

- A non-technical summary
- A table of contents
- An introduction with acknowledgements, including a list of all those involved in the project and the location and description of the site
- A statement of the project aims and objectives
- An account of the project methodology undertaken, with an assessment of the same
- A factual summary of the history, development and use of the site
- A summary description of the investigation results including any archaeologically significant features/deposits identified within the proposed development site. A brief description of the stratigraphy of each trench will be given, even where no archaeological features or deposits are identified
- A discussion of the location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition, and significance of any archaeological deposits/features uncovered, together with a discussion of their relationship with known archaeological features and/or historic buildings in the vicinity
- A general site plan indicating the position and size of the trenches and the locations of archaeological deposits identified and recorded during the watching brief

- Trench plans at appropriate scales. Each trench in which archaeological remains were discovered will be presented in the report with at least one plan (scale 1:50 or 1:20) and section (scale 1:20 or 1:10) as well as appropriate photographs. All plans and sections will be related to the Ordnance Survey datum levels and to the National Grid
- Other maps, plans, drawings, stratigraphic matrices and photographs as appropriate
- Summary assessment reports on the artefact, bio-archaeological, dating and other assessments/analyses
- Appendices to the report will include artefact catalogues, reports on assessments/analyses and an index to the project archive, a statement on its location/proposed repository and an OASIS report.

One digital .PDF copy of a draft version of the report will be made available by Nexus Heritage to the Client for comment within three weeks of the completion of the fieldwork. Nexus Heritage will forward the draft report to the Senior Planning Archaeologist for review. Nexus Heritage will take into account any observations on the content of the draft report made by Nexus Heritage the Client and the Senior Planning Archaeologist during preparation of the final version of the report.

Should the delivery of the report depend on the incorporation of reports arising from specialist and/or laboratory work then a revised timetable for delivery of the draft report may be agreed upon conclusion of the fieldwork stage.

REPORTING

The desk-based assessment and trial trench evaluation reports will be incorporated into a single document upon their finalisation and the conclusions and recommendations will be used by Nexus Heritage and the Client in discussions with the Senior Planning Archaeologist to determine the need for and scope of any archaeological mitigation works (such as watching brief) to ensure adequate treatment of archaeological remains under the provisions of Condition No. 14 of the planning permission.

Report copies in the appropriate numbers, formats and media (e.g. digital .PDF/A format generated using Adobe Acrobat) of the final report will be prepared and submitted the Client, Wigan Council, the archive repository, the NMR, and the GMHER.

As part of a commitment to reducing carbon emissions, one digital .PDF copy (PDF/A format generated using Adobe Acrobat) of the final report will be prepared and submitted to the Client, Wigan Council and the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record. Paper copies are available upon request at cost.

One hard copy of the report will be provided to the archive repository, the NMR and the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record.

COPYRIGHT

CONFIDENTIALITY

Nexus Heritage and its subcontractors will treat as confidential all information obtained directly or indirectly from the Client in connection with the archaeological works and will not, without the prior consent of the Client, disclose any information relating to the project or publicise the project in any way. Nexus Heritage will manage, on behalf of the clients, all matters pertaining to publicity arising from the archaeological works and for any public education/outreach events or matters, as appropriate.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Nexus Heritage responsible for obtaining all relevant certification regarding Health and Safety prior to any site works. Nexus Heritage and its subcontractors will adhere to all relevant health and safety legislation and be guided by, *inter alia*, the *Health and Safety at Work Act* (1974), *Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations* (2002), *Construction Design and Management (CDM) Regulations* (2007), *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations* (1999), the *Work at Height Regulations* (2005), the *Confined Spaces Regulations* (1997) and the *Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations* (2002).

While carrying out the archaeological works Nexus Heritage and its subcontractors will operate in accordance with all applicable Health and Safety Legislation.

Nexus Heritage and its subcontractors will provide its staff and site visitors with all necessary protective clothing and equipment.

Where contaminated material is present in the surface or sub-surface deposits at the site appropriate measures will be taken by Nexus Heritage and its subcontractors will to ensure the health and safety of its staff which may come into contact with contaminants. In case of encountering contaminated soil, Nexus Heritage will inform the Client immediately.

In the event of encountering contaminated material, it may be necessary for Nexus Heritage to produce a revised method statement. Nexus Heritage will forward the revised method statement to the Client, Wigan Council, and the GMAAS for reference.

Nexus Heritage will submit a Health and Safety Plan (including a Risk Assessment) to the Client before site works commence.

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ARCHIVE

The anticipated recipient organisation for the project archive is Wigan Archives.

Nexus Heritage will conform to the arrangements for archive preparation and submission prior to commencing the works and provide copies of the relevant correspondence and accession number to the GMHER.

Nexus Heritage will maintain the archive until the period of report preparation is complete.

The archive is to be prepared, compiled and presented by Nexus Heritage for long term storage according to the format requirements of the recipient organisation and as set out relevant standards including

- The Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for the Collection, Documentation, Conservation and Research of Archaeological Materials* (2008 edition).
- The Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for the Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives* (2008 edition)

Nexus Heritage will be responsible for the security of the project archive. An indexed project archive will be prepared. The project archive will comprise all primary written documents, maps, plans and plots, unprocessed raw data and photographs.

Any artefacts or other items identified and/or recovered during the archaeological works remain the property of the land owner. Nexus Heritage will, however, request deposition of the artefact archive along with the remainder of the archive by means of an agreement to transfer legal title to the artefacts from the landowner to the archive repository.

MONITORING

The Client, or an agent of the Client will monitor the works for the client's benefit and the Development Control Archaeologist will act on behalf of Wigan Council. A minimum of two week's notice of the commencement of the archaeological evaluation will be given by Nexus to the Development Control Archaeologist so that arrangements for monitoring can be made.

Reasonable access to the site works will be provided by Nexus Heritage and its subcontractors and the Construction Contractor to representatives of the Client, Wigan Council and the GMAAS in order to monitor the works. A site tour and opportunity to scrutinise site records will be provided to the monitors.

Nexus Heritage will ensure that any significant results recovered during the archaeological investigations are brought to the attention of the Client who will notify the relevant organisations/authorities as soon as is practicably possible, and certainly within 24 hours.

Any monitoring visits or communications will be documented by Nexus Heritage and copied to the Client.

Consultations between the Nexus Heritage, the Client and and the Senior Planning Archaeologist will be convened periodically during the project. The purpose of these consultations is to advise the monitors on the manner in which the objectives of the project have been addressed and secure agreement that the milestone elements of the project have been concluded to the satisfaction of the Client and Wigan Council. A series of consultations are suggested in the table below with potential outcomes.

Milestone	Purpose of Consultation	Participants	Format	Outcome
Draft of WSI	To discuss draft WSI, areas of excavation, tender process, timetable, etc.	Nexus Heritage / Client / Senior Planning Archaeologist	Telephone/e-mail/	Authorisation of WSI and issue of final WSI. Authorisation to begin assessment and evaluation. Confirmation that the pre-commencement obligations of the condition have been addressed.
Archaeological desk-based assessment	To review results	Nexus Heritage Client Senior Planning Archaeologist	Telephone/e-mail	Finalisation of trench numbers, sizes, orientations and locations. Commencement of evaluation.
At half-way point of evaluation trench excavations	To confirm compliance with WSI	Nexus Heritage Client Senior Planning Archaeologist	Site meeting	Continuation of archaeological investigations
Upon completion of archaeological evaluation trench excavations	To review results	Nexus Heritage Client Senior Planning Archaeologist	Site meeting	Confirmation of completion of archaeological excavations and compliance with the WSI. Authorisation to commence reporting.
Production of the draft evaluation Report.	To review results of data assessment and to authorise continuation to next stage	Nexus Heritage Client Senior Planning Archaeologist	Telephone/e-mail	Authorisation to commence production of final report
Production of final evaluation report	To review results	Nexus Heritage Client Senior Planning Archaeologist	Telephone/e-mail	Confirmation of completion of reporting in compliance with the WSI.
Submission of project archive	To confirm that all tasks have been completed with reference to the WSI and to formally close the project	Nexus Heritage Client Senior Planning Archaeologist	Telephone/e-mail	Submitted archive
Discussion	To determine need for and scope of archaeological mitigation works	Nexus Heritage Client Senior Planning Archaeologist	Nexus Heritage Client Senior Planning Archaeologist	Conclusion of project and discharge of Condition No.14 or mobilisation for mitigation works.

RESOURCES AND PROGRAMMING

The archaeological works will be undertaken by a team of demonstrable competence and the names, qualifications and experience of the Competent Persons, relevant to a successful completion of the works, are provided below.

The project will be managed by Anthony Martin, a Director of Nexus Heritage with over 25 years' experience in the heritage and archaeology sector. He is a Member of the Institute for Archaeologists (Mem. No. 1091) and has a BA (Hons) in History and an MA in Scientific Methods in Archaeology.

Kate Churchill will undertake the desk-based assessment. Kate has BA (Hons) English Literature and History and an MA in Landscape Archaeology. She has over 10 years' experience as an archaeology and heritage consultant and is an Associate Member of the Institute for Archaeologists (Mem. No. 5058). Kate is proficient in research of sites and landscapes, including environmental impact assessments, desk-based assessments and conservation plans. She has excavated sites from all chronological periods and is a competent field archaeologist.

Nexus Heritage is a Registered Organisation with the Institute for Archaeologists.

The evaluation will be carried out by a field team with relevant experience and qualifications and will be drawn from one of the regional archaeological contractors routinely working in the greater Manchester area. The field team will not be deployed until confirmed as appropriate by the Senior Planning Archaeologist.

Nexus Heritage will provide target dates for the start and completion of the site works and the submission of reports, publications and archival material.

It is understood that should any archaeological remains be located, the undertaking of development works beyond any area designated for further archaeological investigations pursuant to the relevant Condition is acceptable, thereby allowing timely both development attendances and archaeological attendances to take place concurrently.

COMMUNICATION PATHS

Anthony Martin is identified as the Project Manager on behalf of Nexus Heritage. He is to be the main point of contact between the Client, and representatives of Wigan Council. In Anthony's absence contact should be made with Gerry Wait of Nexus Heritage (gerry.wait@nexus-heritage.com, telephone 07500 527110) or Kate Churchill of Nexus Heritage (kate.pagesmith@nexus-heritage.com, telephone 07733 005812) or Keith Ray of Nexus Heritage (keith.ray@nexus-heritage.com, telephone 07879 401350).

Any questions or requests for clarification arising from examination of this document are to be submitted in writing to Nexus Heritage.

SOURCES

English Heritage, 2011, *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation (second edition)*

E3P, 2104 *Phase I and Phase II Geoenvironmental Site Investigation – Coldhurst Farm, Coldhurst Lane, Astley, Wigan, M29 7BS* Unpublished report, ref. 10-123 r1

Hodgson, J. and Brennand, M., 2007, The Prehistoric Period Research Agenda in Brennand, M. (ed) 2007 *Research and Archaeology in North West England - An Archaeological Research Framework for North West England.* Volume 2 - Research Agenda and Strategy, published as Archaeology North West Volume 9 (Issue 19, for 2007), by The Association for Local Government Archaeological Officers North West and English Heritage with The Council for British Archaeology North West

Institute of Field Archaeologists, 2008, *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Evaluation*, Institute of Field Archaeologists: UK

APPENDIX II – ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

NEXUS
HERITAGE

Land at Manchester Road, Astley (A/13/77899/OUT)

Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment

Document No: 3211.R02a

January 2015

Nexus Heritage Controlled Document – Commercial-in-Confidence

Document Number	3211.R02a	
Document Status	**Final**	
Prepared by:	Anthony Martin	Date: 05.01.15
Checked by:	Gerry Wait	Date: 06.01.15
Approved by:	Gerry Wait	Date: 06.01.15

Revision Record		
Revision No.	Date	Details
a	08.01.15	Correction of minor typographical errors (x2) after client review and insertion of Drawing R075/1/Rev_D

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CONTENTS:

INTRODUCTION

Outline planning permission has been secured for a residential development on land at Manchester Road, Astley (A/13/77899) – hereafter the Site. The development includes 97 low rise residential dwellings with associated driveways, gardens, estate roads, Public Open Space and service infrastructure. Development levels are not yet confirmed; however the minimum floor level that has been set as part of a Planning Consent is 19.80m AOD and 21.34m AOD in the north and western sectors of the site.

Wigan Council considers the site is of potential archaeological interest and wishes to secure the satisfactory removal of the archaeological remains and/or recording of the subsequent findings, as required by Policy CP11 of the Wigan Local Plan Core Strategy. A condition relevant to archaeology has therefore, been applied to the permission for the development by Wigan Council.

Condition: 14

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

This document constitutes a desk-based assessment of the archaeological potential of the site with respect to the programme of archaeological work proposed for the Site in response to the spirit and intent of Condition No. 14 and is formatted in line with the a Written Scheme of Investigation (Nexus Heritage 2014) which has been verified by the Development Control Archaeologist at Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS) (Dr. A. Myers), on behalf of Wigan Council.

Nexus Heritage is appointed as the Archaeological Consultant for this project and has prepared this document, which complies with the spirit and intent of the *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*, 2012, Policy CP11 of the Wigan Local Plan Core Strategy and the Institute for Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment* (2012 edition).

This document is offered for consideration to Wigan Council and its archaeological advisor (Dr. A. Myers) for verification with reference to the Condition applied to the planning consent and the relevant provisions in *NPPF*.

LOCATION AND SITE INFORMATION

The Site extends over *c.* 3.96ha and is located off Manchetser Road, Astley (Figure 1), centred, approximately at SD 69718 00131.

The Site is bounded to the south east by the East Lancashire Road, to the north and west by residential properties, and to the north and east by a field, and a pumping station. The Site is open land, laid to rough pasture and contains a hedgerow and dry ditch separating the Site into two fields. The Site contains a number of small ditches and a pond. There appears to be a slight declivity acorss the Site, from west to east, with the eastern portion *c.* 4m lower than the western edge. In addtion, the surface undulates markedly across the Site.

It is understood that the Site may contain sub-surface infrastructure laid by United Utilities related to a fomer plant and that United Utilities will be constructing a pumping station in the north east corner of the Site. United Utilities records for the Site indicate that there is a number of active and disused sewers and pipes extending across the southern and eastern portions of the Site.

The British Geological Survey (BGS) map for the site indicates that the drift geology of the SIte is classified as Devensian Till, comprising glacial clays within the central and western portions of the Site and Alluvium towards the eastern boundary. The solid geology is classified as Worsley Delph Sandstone and South Manchester Marls Formation (Mudstone).

An intrusive Ground Investigation was undetraken at the Site in April 2014 (E3P 2014) in the form of 36 trial pits, 12 window samples and two cable percissive borelonles. In summary the Ground Investgation did not encouter any Made Ground and the near surface condtions were charcterised as topsoil with an average thickness of 0.28m overlying firm to stiff medium strength gravelly sandy Clay to a maximum proven depth of 14.00m bgl. In certain isolated areas the Site was found to be underlain by pockets of sand and gravel, predominantly in the central and northern portions of the site, and generally measured between 1.40 and 2.00m bgl.

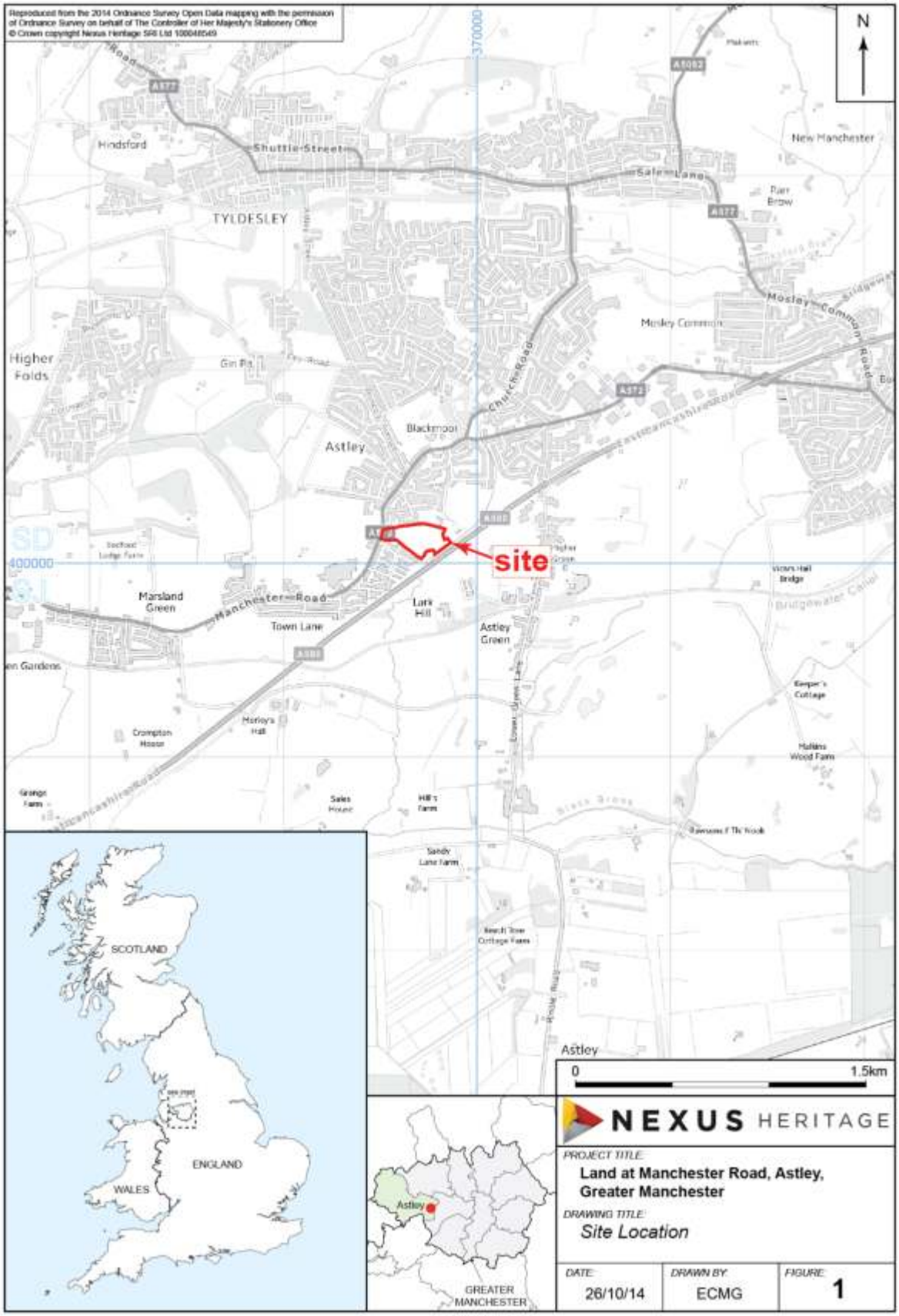

Fig. 1: Site Location Map (reproduced from Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO © Crown Copyright Nexus Heritage-SRI Licence No. 100048549)

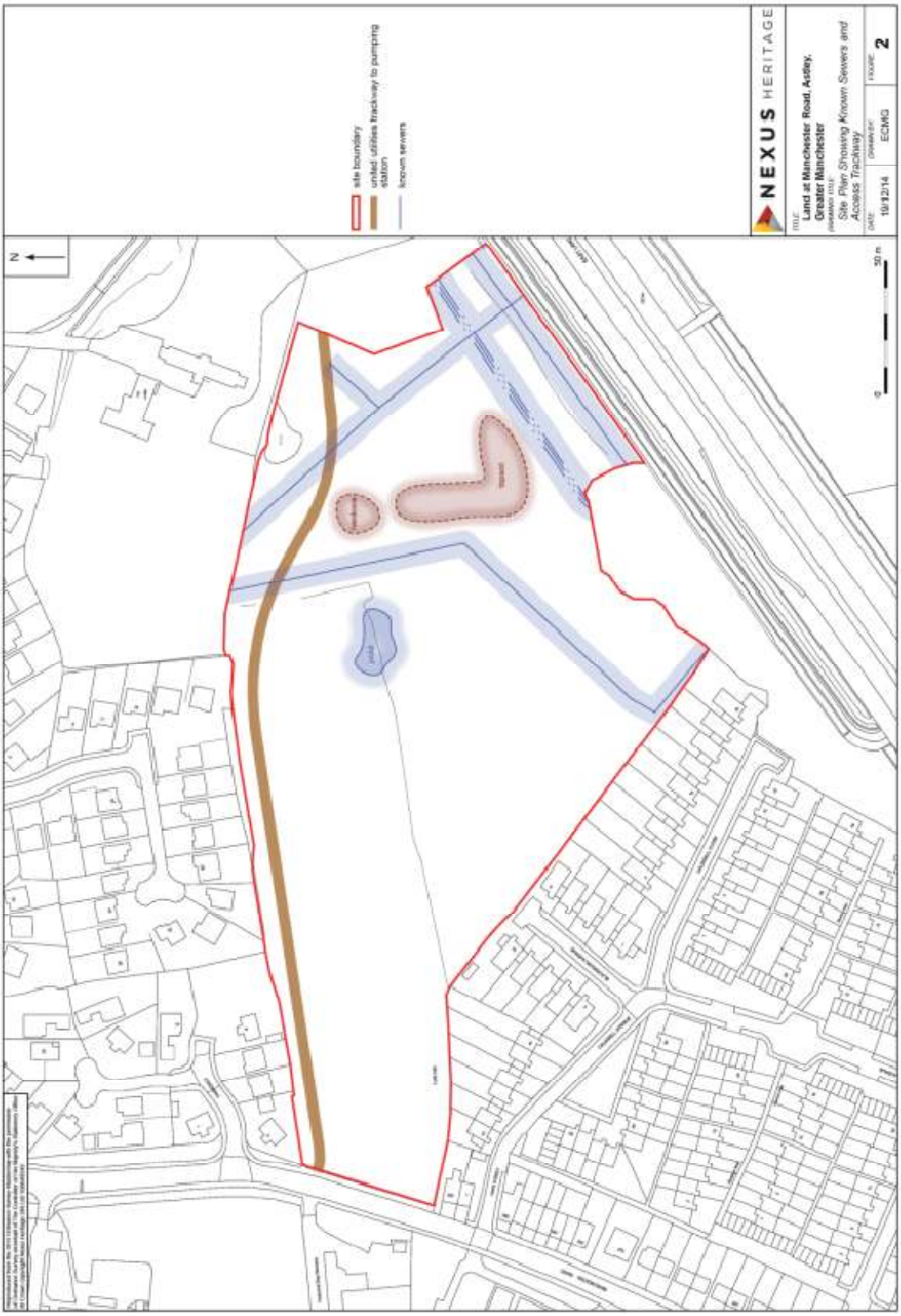

Fig. 2: Site Plan (reproduced from Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO © Crown Copyright Nexus Heritage-SRI Licence No. 100048549)

METHODOLOGY

The aim of the desk-based assessment is, insofar as practicable by desk-based research, to:

- Identify all known and potential archaeological assets on the Assessment Site that may be affected by the proposed development and evaluate their significance;
- Outline any likely effects of the development and the archaeological assets, likely to be affected, assessing the nature of the impacts;
- Recommend future investigatory and/or mitigatory actions

All designated and non-designated archaeological assets, both on the Assessment Site and within approximately 5km of the Assessment Site boundary (the Assessment Area) will be identified. The archaeological sites in the wider Assessment Area will be identified and considered in order that the potential archaeology of the Assessment Site can be placed in the broader context of the known archaeological assets in the Astley area.

The baseline conditions will be established from a range of sources, which include (but will not necessarily be restricted to:

- GMHER
- The Wigan Archive Service (WAS)
- The Local History section of the Leigh Library.
- Other available published and unpublished material and data from web-based sources such as British History Online, Heritage Gateway, Pastscape and the National Heritage List for England.

The overall objective of the archaeological assessment is to provide contextual information for a programme of trial trench evaluation and to inform the need for and scope of any further evaluative archaeological attendances and/or mitigation attendances relative to spirit and intent of Condition No. 14 of the planning permission.

The results of the desk-based assessment have been complemented by a further element of work – a walk-over survey in order to examine the ground surface for evidence of archaeological features and previous impacts to the land which may have compromised, disturbed or removed archaeological assets.

The assessment has been undertaken with reference to a research design which reflects the ambitions of the North-West England Regional Research Agenda, specifically relating the prehistoric periods (Hodgson and Brennand 2007).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This Site has the subject of no known previous archaeological investigations, and the main archaeological interest at the Site derives from the Site's topographical aspect, on a finger of elevated and drier ground between Tyldesley Moss and Worsely Moss/Chat Moss. Such a landscape would have been attractive for settlement and agricultural production during the prehistoric and early historic periods. With this in mind the assessment will focus mainly on the known prehistoric/early first millennium AD archaeological sites in the vicinity, which act as potential comparison sites for the archaeological resource which may survive at the Site.

The following section is a summary of the archaeological evidence found within a 5,000m radius of the Site; this wider area is referred to as the 'Assessment Area'. The evidence has been compiled from the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record (GMHER), the National Heritage List and other documentary and cartographic sources. The data collected is considered to provide a good indication of the character, distribution and survival of prehistoric and Romano-British archaeological assets within and in the vicinity of the Site and also of any potential archaeology on the Site. The various records of archaeological assets are illustrated in Fig. 3.

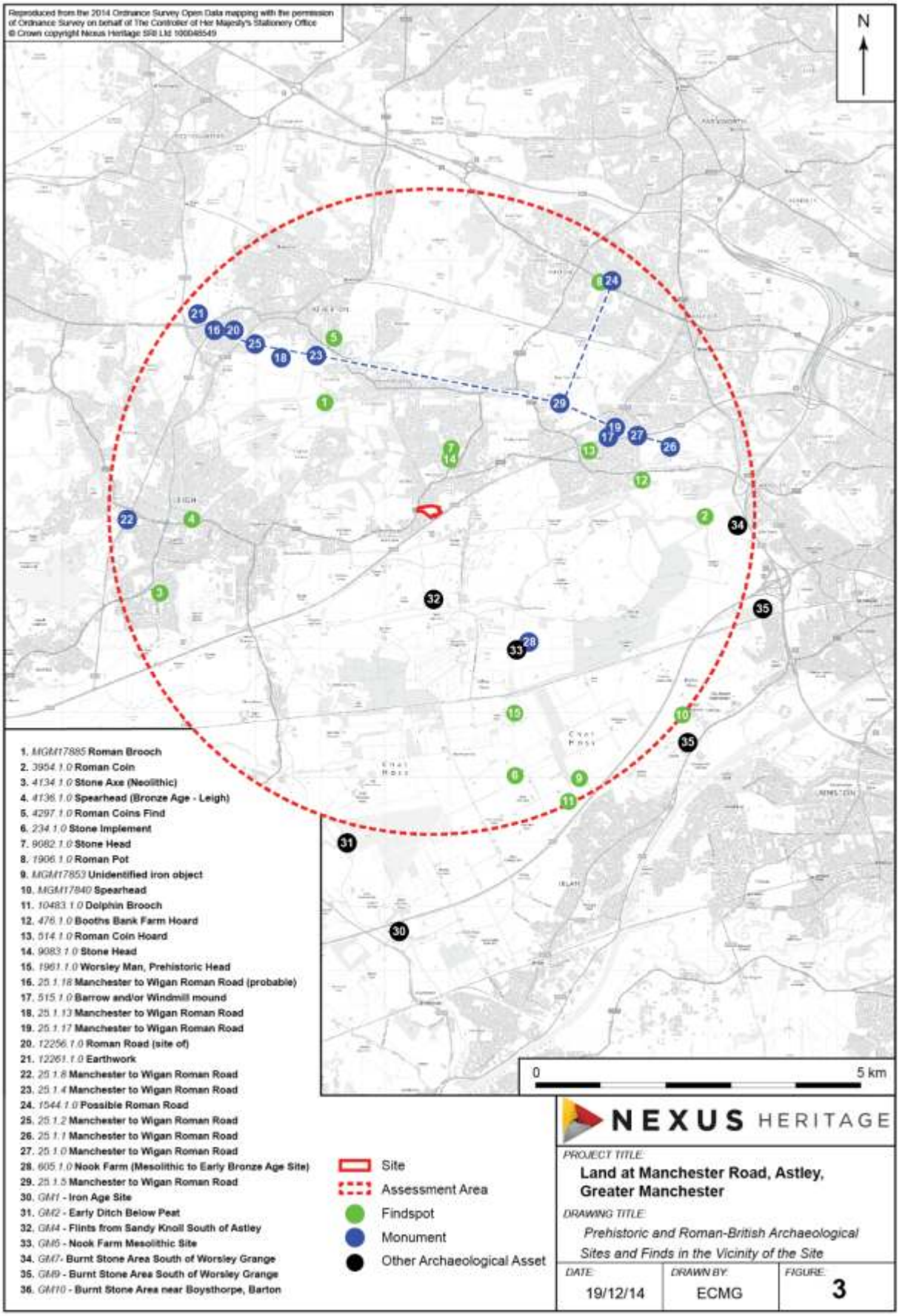

Fig. 3: Prehistoric and Romano-British Sites (reproduced from Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO © Crown Copyright Nexus Heritage-SRI Licence No. 100048549)

Prehistoric Period: Palaeolithic (500,000 - 12,000 BC), Mesolithic (12,000 – 4,000 BC) and Neolithic (4,000 – 1,800 BC), Bronze Age (1,800 - 600 BC), Iron Age (600 - 43 AD)

There are no records of finds or archaeological sites from the prehistoric era within the Site.

In the wider Assessment Area, the evidence for prehistoric activity has been growing gradually as sites are identified and characterised through both research based prospection and through archaeological programmes prompted by the planning process. Common themes in the identification of settlement sites from the prehistoric period include location on well-drained sands and gravels and proximity to a water course.

In terms of isolated finds and observations there are records of undated items which may be prehistoric such as a sword-like iron object (GMHER MGM17853) a human head (GMHER 1961.1.0) flints (GM4) and areas of burnt stone (GM7, GM9 and GM10). More securely indentified items include Neolithic stone axes (GMHER 234.1.0 and 4134.1.0), a Bronze Age spearhead (GMHER MGM 17840), a carved stone head possibly dating to the Iron Age (GMHER 9082.1.0). Candidate sites for features within the landscape dating to the prehistoric period include a suspected Bronze Aga barrow between Ellenbrook and Boothtown (GMHER 515.1.0), but this could equally well be the site of a windmill, and an 'early ditch', discovered below the peat at Little Woolden (GM5).

With respect to more intensive and reliable investigation of archaeological sites there are several well-recorded examples in the area. A particularly well-reported site is that a Nook Farm (Scaife 1995) which during 1995 yielded several hundred Mesolithic flints and a Neolithic/Early Bronze Age leaf-shaped flint arrowhead (GMHER 605.1.0). The site occupied a low, sandy mound originally covered in peat, on the northern edge of Chat Moss. The site is likely to have been a seasonal encampment for exploiting local resources and demonstrates the presence of prehistoric communities in the area. An example of an Iron Age site on a belt of well-drained dandy soil close to Chat Moss and overlooking a watercourse is that of Great Woolden Hall (Neville 1989). Discovered as a cropmark of bivallate promontory enclosure in 1986, it was subjected to archaeological excavation and the outer ditches and inferior circular structures were investigated and yielded flints and prehistoric pottery sherds. An interpretation of the pottery suggests that the site was occupied form the third century BC into the Roman period.

A more recent investigation in Salford (Nash and Noble 2012) took the form of a trial trench evaluation during the A57 realignment for Port Salford. This work identified archaeological deposits indicative of prehistoric activity – such as pits, postholes, gullies – suggesting structural remains and long-term occupation. The finds assemblages from this work suggest that the area was a focus of activity during the late Mesolithic-Neolithic and during the Late Iron Age/Romano-British period. Based on the topographic suitability of the area it is likely that the area was continuously visited or occupied throughout the prehistoric period through to the early part of the first millennium AD and forms a multi-phase prehistoric occupation site. This evaluation identified pits, gullies and a ditch with several fire-cracked pebbles.

On the basis of this result further archaeological investigations were undertaken (Thompson forthcoming). The strip-map-and record exercise produced archaeological evidence for five periods of activity – Late Mesolithic, Early Bronze Age, Roman, the late medieval and post-medieval periods. The evidence for late Mesolithic and Late Neolithic/early Bronze Age activity is fragmentary and disturbed, the material, in the form of flint microliths, a flint blade flint wasters and thermally altered stones, coming from residual contexts.

The key artefactual discovery from the two earliest phases of activity was an open stone mould for making a solid metal (probably bronze) object. The form and size of this object suggest an

early Bronze Age date. Bronze Age moulds are rare in the UK and the Port of Salford open mould is currently a unique find in North West England and an object of regional importance.

The late Iron Age and Roman period evidence included glass beads, a shale knife handle and considerable quantities of Romano-British pottery sherds. The site is covered in a network of section gullies and ditches that run at right-angles to each-other which is suggestive of a rectilinear field pattern with a possible trackway at the western end of the site. Within these small enclosures were a number of oval and rectangular ditched features, no more than a few metres across. There were also two curving shallow gullies which may be the plough-damaged remains of hut circles, in the middle of the site and at the eastern end, the latter possibly retaining a porch to the entrance. The largest feature was a dumb-bell shaped curvilinear enclosure at the western end of the site. This may be two successive round-huts each *c.* 5m across. Based on the ceramic assemblage the date range for the Roman occupation would appear to be late first century to third century.

This archaeological site indicates that the Port Salford promontory was an area of resource interest for the local communities during the prehistoric era. The site adds to the known early sites in the area; and can be compared to the Nook Farm evidence.

Roman Period (43- 410 AD)

There are no confirmed archaeological artefacts from the Roman period recorded within the Site. However, in the wider landscape there exist the routes of the Roman road network including the confirmed locations of several stretches of the Manchester to Wigan road (GMHER 25.1.0, 25.1.1, 25.1.2, 25.1.4, 25.1.5, 25.1.8, 25.1.13, 25.1.17, 25.1.18, and 12256.1.0). An earthwork (GMHER 12261.1.0) possibly related to suspected Roman military fornications at Gibfield Park, Wigan which overlooks the route of the Roman road is perhaps not surprising in the light of the requirements of road construction. In addition a further possible Roman road pavement at Little Hulton was observed in the late 1870s when the railway was being laid. (GMHER 1544.1.0). The observations of the road network are complimented by the discovery of various artefacts such as brooches, coins, statuary, and pottery dating to the Roman period (GMHER MGM 17885, 3954.1.0, 4297.1.0, 1906.1.0, 10483.1.0, 476.1.0, 9083.1.0 and 514.1.0).

Saxon/Early Medieval Period (410 - 1066 AD)

There are no confirmed archaeological remains from the Saxon/early medieval period recorded in the Site and as the potential for any remains of this period to be represented on the Site is low no further assessment of this period has been undertaken.

Medieval Period (1066 - 1485 AD)

There are no confirmed archaeological remains from the medieval period recorded in the Site and as the potential for any remains of this period to be represented on the Site is low no further assessment of this period has been undertaken.

Post Medieval Period (1486 – Present – including map regression exercise)

The Site appears to have been under an agricultural regime from at least the early-mid 18th century. The sequence of historic Ordnance Survey maps from 1894 to 2012 (Figs. 7 - 12) indicates that the Site has remained open, undeveloped land for the last 165 years and that most noteworthy occurrence during that time was the construction of the east Lancashire Road (A580) in 1934. The early maps from the 17th and 18th centuries (Figs. 4 and 5) provide no detail specific to the Site, but confirm the density of settlements in the area to the south of Bolton and east of Wigan. The Ordnance Survey (OS) map of 1894 (Fig. 6) shows the Site divided into three fields. This general arrangement is maintained, as shown in the OS map from 1908 (Fig. 7) which also confirms that a Smallpox Hospital has been constructed immediately to the north-

east of the Site. By the publication of the 1938 OS map (Fig. 8) the south–eastern boundary of the Site is defined by the east Lancashire Road. The OS map of 1955 (Fig. 9) shows that a field boundary within the Site had been removed and the Site is now characterised as two fields. The 1909 and 2012 OS maps of the Site (Figs. 10 and 11) confirm no further changes at the Site, but in 1989 a Pumping Station is recorded immediately to the east of the Site.

Fig. 4: Saxton Map. 1610

Fig. 5: Morden Map, 1701

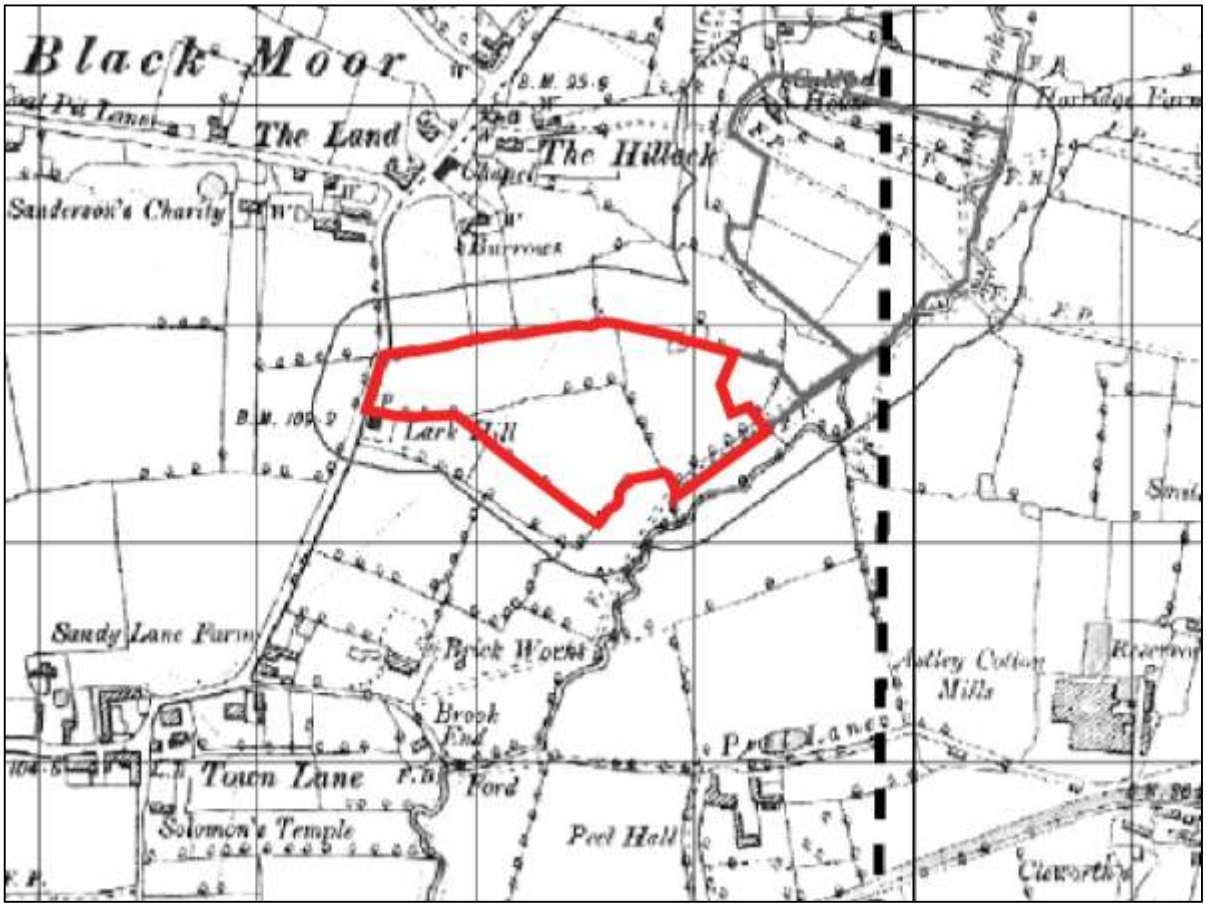

Fig.6: Ordnance Survey Map, 1894

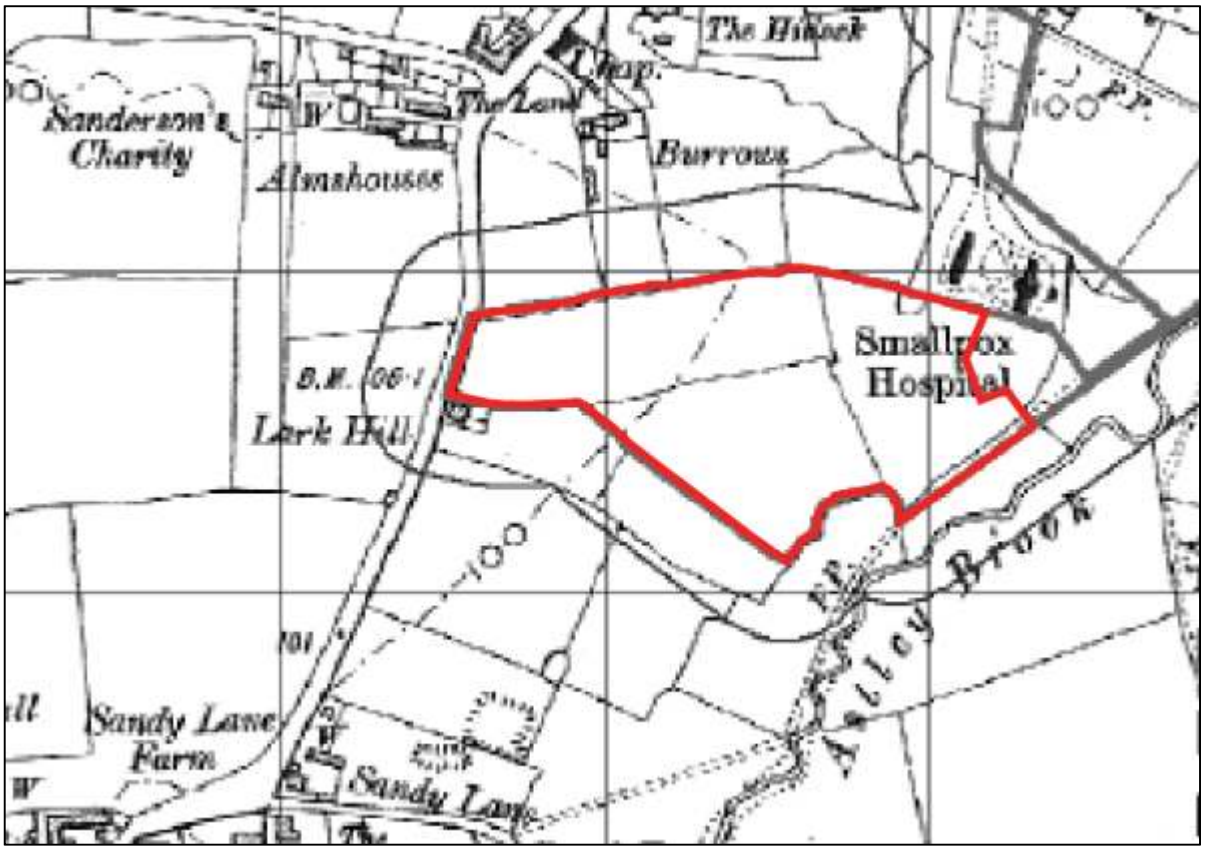

Fig. 7: Ordnance Survey Map, 1908

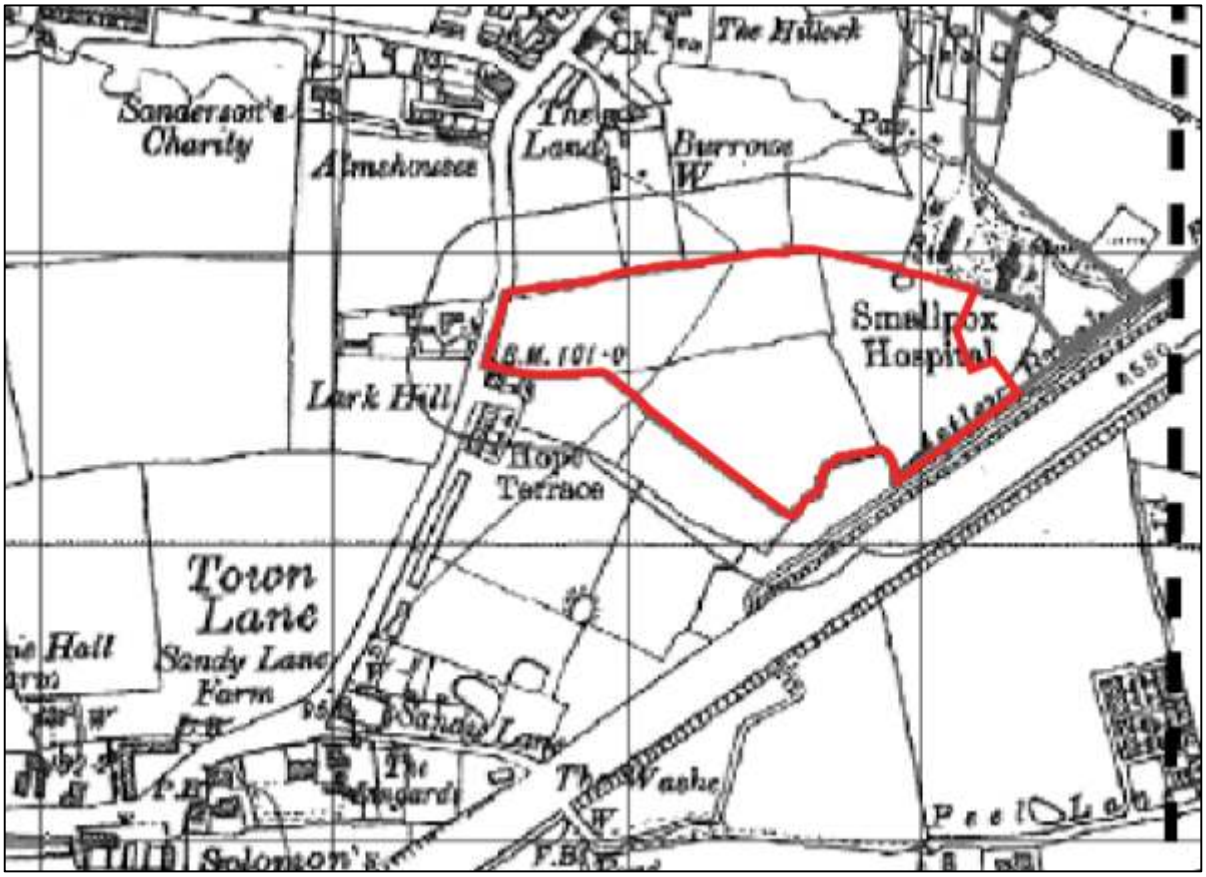

Figure 8: Ordnance Survey Map, 1938

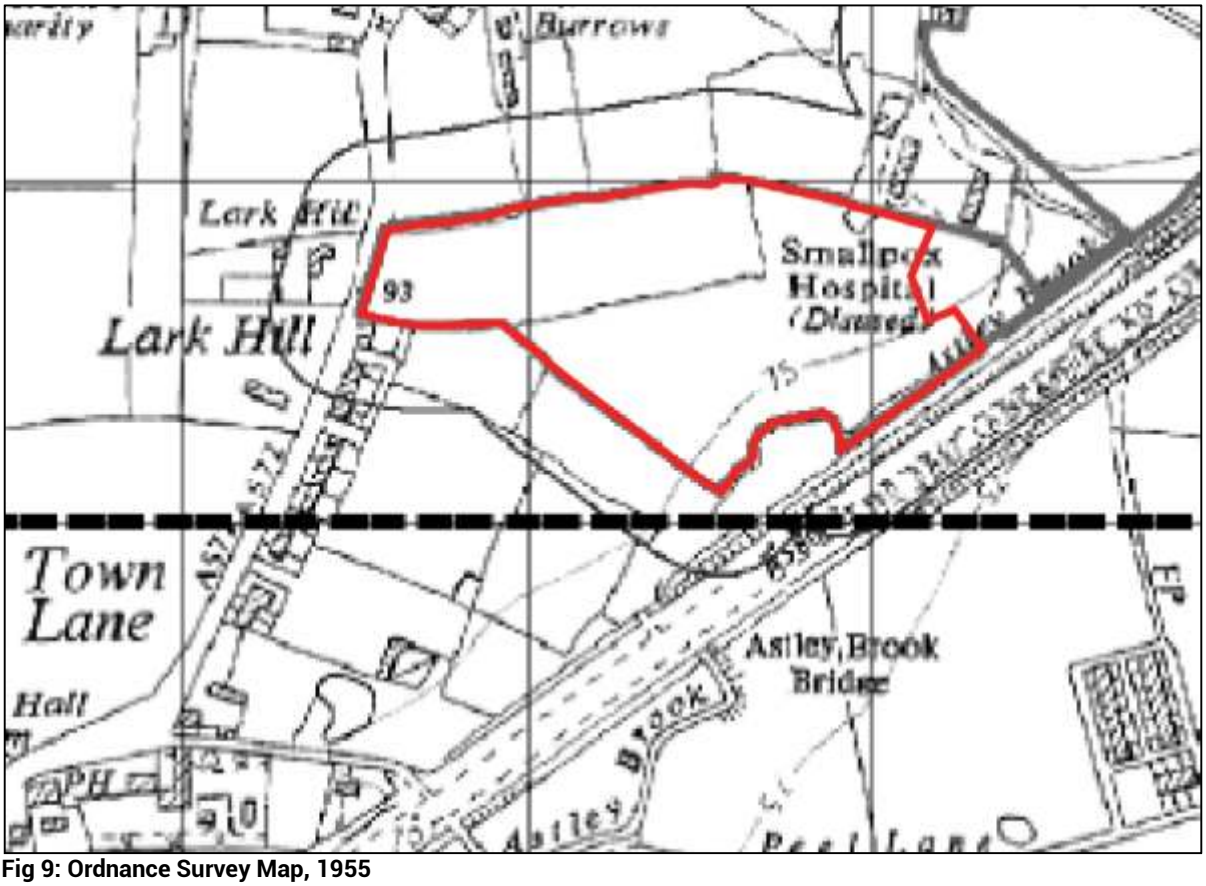

Fig 9: Ordnance Survey Map, 1955

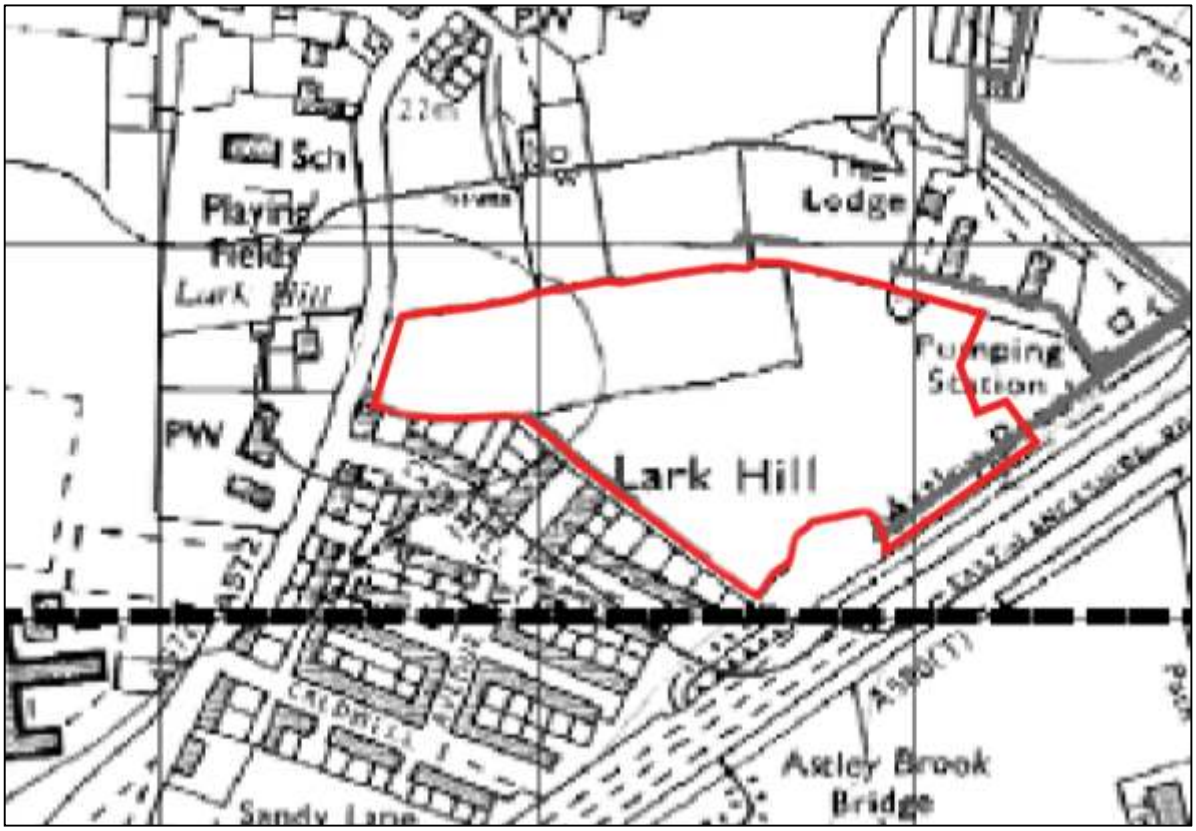

Fig.10: Ordnance Survey Map, 1989

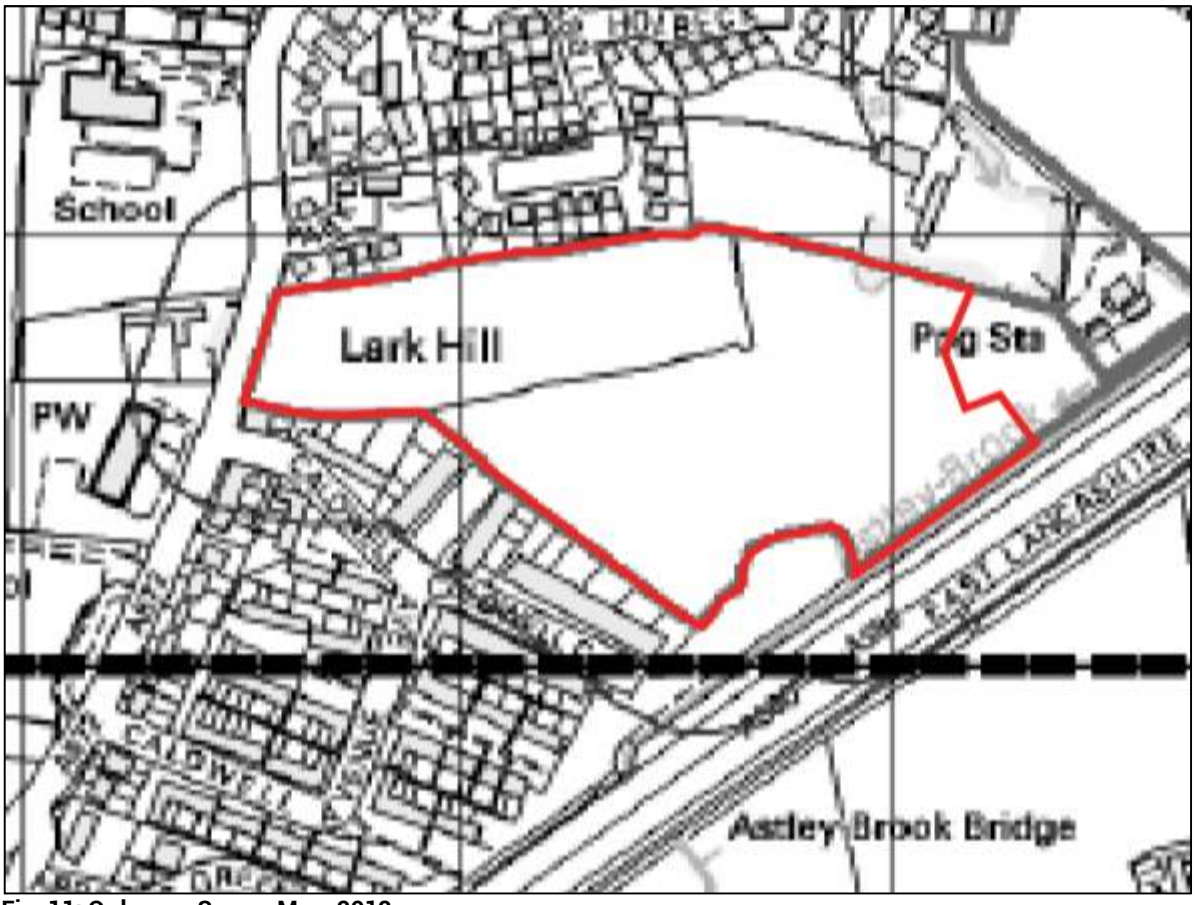

Fig. 11: Ordnance Survey Map, 2012

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND POTENTIAL IMPACTS TO THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

The residential development on the Site includes 97 low rise residential dwellings with associated driveways, gardens, estate roads, Public Open Space and service infrastructure. The general arrangement of the new buildings, vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation routes, and landscaping can be seen on Fig. 13 showing the proposed development layout (Drawing R075/1/Rev_D.).

The assessment of the archaeology of the Site has been undertaken in the knowledge of the uncertainties that arise when trying to assess a resource that is not wholly known and is often poorly understood. It should be noted that the assessment is based on information held in source repositories and published data. Neither of these represents exhaustive and comprehensive sources of information on the presence/absence of archaeological features. However, from the data available it is possible to attempt to predict the potential archaeological resource, to determine the potential for as yet unknown or unrecorded archaeological sites and identify areas within the Site where activities are likely to have compromised archaeological survival. These factors have been taken into consideration during this preparation of this assessment. This information has in turn been considered against the pre-existing impacts to the Site which may have compromised the survival of any archaeological remains.

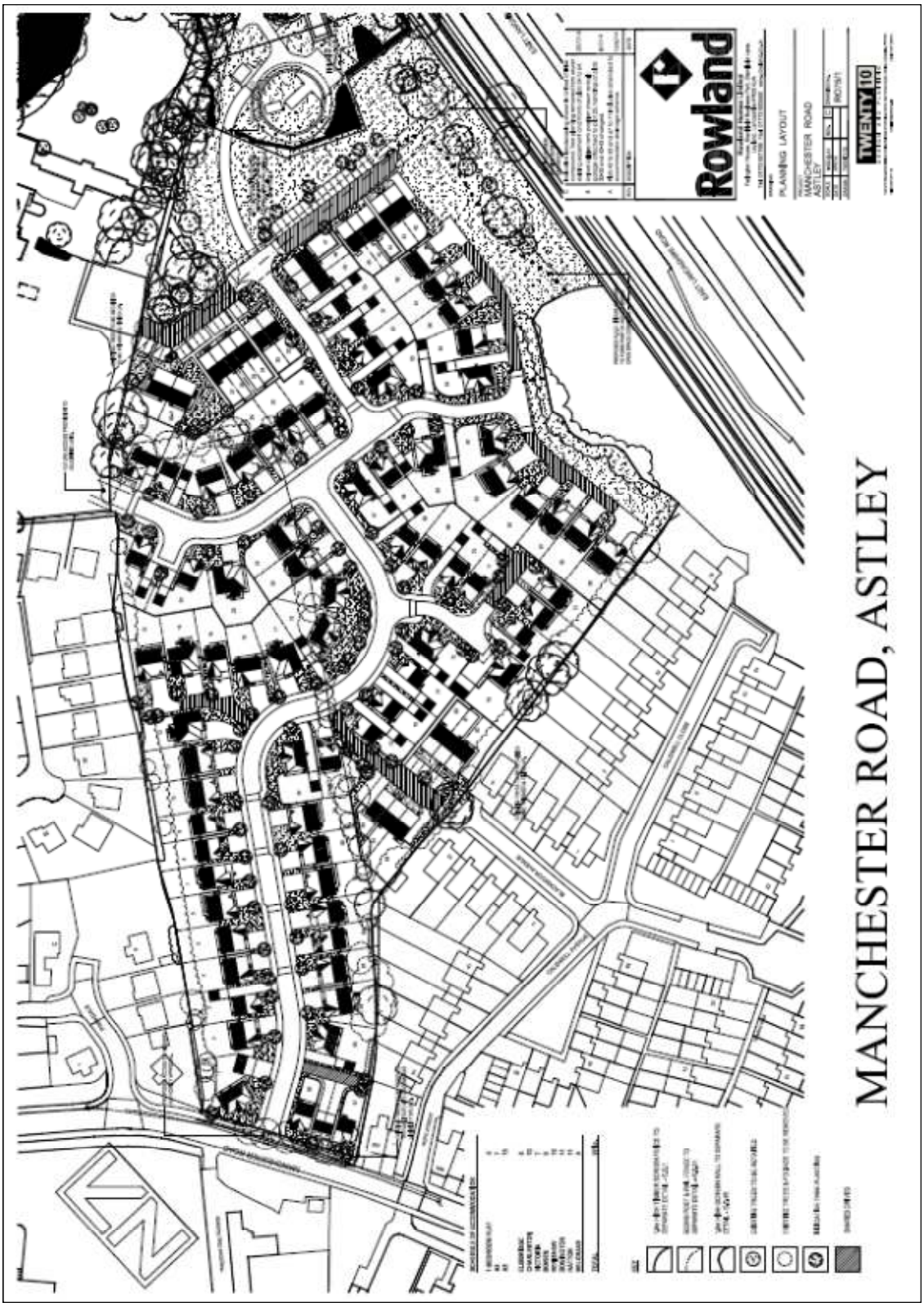

Figure 13: Proposed Development Layout

Potential for Archaeological Remains to be Present

The Site contains no known archaeological remains. The potential for as yet unknown archaeological remains to be present at the Site has been estimated as moderate based on topographic aspect and the results of decades of investigations and research into the incidence and distribution of prehistoric and Romano-British land-use, exploitation, and settlement. However, the level of preservation of any archaeological remains at the Site is likely to be variable.

With respect to pre-existing impacts which may have disturbed or destroyed hitherto unknown or unrecorded archaeological remains at the Site, there are indicators that minor impacts arsing from ploughing century may have taken place within the Site. Of more significance will be the landscaping/levelling and drainage which may have variously, but potentially seriously, impacted upon sub-surface deposits.

The impact on any archaeological remains would arise from pre-construction activities – such as ground preparation/improvement. Construction activities with the potential to impact upon archaeological remains include excavations for the foundations of buildings, excavations for services such as drains and sewers and excavations in order to lay the sub-grade as a base for roads, paths and circulation areas.

In the light of the potential impact a programme of archaeolgcial works is in hand, and this assessment represents the first stage of those works. The site has the potential to address several initiatives suggested in the archaeological research agenda for north-west England (Hodgson and Brennand 2007) including (but not necessarily limited to):

- obtaining material for absolute dating (in order to develop an absolute chronological framework for different types of monuments),
- the adoption of a flexible approach to sampling strategies with regard to the percentage of each feature excavated
- implementing of techniques for site-specific palaeoecological and other environmental sampling
  allowing time (where feasible) during evaluation exercises for stripped surfaces to weather to assist in identification of archaeological features
- identification of well-preserved Mesolithic contexts for production of secure radiocarbon dates.
- retrieving Mesolithic lithic assemblages from secure contexts

CONCLUSIONS

There are no registered World Heritage Sites, Archaeological Areas, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens or Registered Battlefields wholly or partly within the Site. There are no known undesignated archaeological assets within the Site.

The archaeological potential for the Site is identified is moderate for the Prehistoric and Romano-British periods, but this is based on available information, rather than an absolute value derived from adequate, site-specific data and so trial trenching remains a valid approach to the archaeological potential.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the balance of evidence, the archaeological interest at the Site is realistically limited to a moderate potential for as yet unknown remains of the Prehistoric and Romano-British periods

This Assessment enables an informed, sustainable and responsible approach to the forthcoming trial trench evaluation at the Site and the results of this assessment will be used by the archaeological contractor undertaking the evaluation to address the aims and objectives within an informed strategy and refine the approach as appropriate. On the basis of this assessment there is no requirement to change the proposed array of trenches as detailed in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Nexus Heritage 2014).

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APPENDIX III – STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

aeon archaeology

Statement of Compliance for Archaeological Evaluation Trenching.

Manchester Road, Astley, M29 7BS.
8th December 2014
V 1.2

Tender Code: T0074.1
NGR: SD 69718 00131
Client: Nexus Heritage

aeon archaeology

Manchester Road, Astley, M29 7BS.
8th December 2014
V 1.2

Statement of Compliance

Aeon Archaeology
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CH4 0DD

info@aeonarchaeology.co.uk
Tel: 07866925393

REGISTERED IfA ORGANISATION

Tender Code: T0074.1
NGR: SD 69718 00131
Client: Nexus Heritage

1. PROJECT SUMMARY

Aeon Archaeology has been asked by Nexus Heritage to provide a cost and statement of compliance for carrying out a phase of evaluation trial trenching of a proposed residential development located on approximately 3.96ha of land at Manchester Road, Astley (**NGR: SD 69718 00131**). The archaeological work is to be undertaken as part of addressing material considerations of outline planning permission for the construction of 97 low-rise residential dwellings with associated driveways, gardens, estate roads, Public Open Space, and service infrastructure (Planning ref: A/13/77899/OUT).

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been prepared for this project by Nexus Heritage (3211_RO1A) and this statement of compliance document outlines the methods to be utilised so that the aims of the WSI are met.

An archaeological assessment has been undertaken by Nexus Heritage and provided to Aeon Archaeology. The assessment has collated valuable data on the local evidence for prehistoric archaeological sites located in topographically similar situations to the Site and has also detailed the initiatives from the North West England Regional Research Strategy which the Site may be able to address. The assessment is adequate for the purposes intended and a review of the data suggests that there is no requirements to reposition, re-orientate or re-size any of the evaluation trenches and the trench array as presented in the WSI will be adopted, subject to some minor micro-siting to avoid the creation of abnormal foundation conditions within the footprints of house plots.

This statement of compliance will conform to the guidelines specified in *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* (Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1994, rev. 2001, 2008).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The planning application was not accompanied by a heritage statement or archaeological assessment but the following summary provides a concise outline of the broad archaeological and historic context and is based on information provided in a letter from the Senior Planning Archaeologist of GMAAS to the case officer at Wigan Council, dated 11th April 2013.

The Site appears to have been under an agricultural regime from at least the early-mid 18th century. The sequence of historic Ordnance Survey maps from 1849 to 2012 indicates that the Site has remained open, undeveloped land for the last 165 years and that most noteworthy occurrence during that time was the construction of the east Lancashire Road (A580) in 1934. The early maps from the 17th and 18th centuries provide no detail specific to the Site, but confirm the density of settlements in the area to the south of Bolton and east of Wigan. The Ordnance Survey (OS) map of 1894 shows the Site divided into three fields. This general arrangement is maintained, as shown in the OS map from 1908 which also confirms that a Smallpox Hospital has been constructed immediately to the northeast of the Site.

By the publication of the 1938 OS map the south–eastern boundary of the Site is defined by the east Lancashire Road. The OS map of 1955 shows that a field boundary within the Site had been removed and the Site is now characterised as two fields. The 1909 and 2012 OS maps of the Site confirm no further changes at the Site, but in 1989 a Pumping Station is recorded immediately to the east of the Site. The topographical aspect of the Site, on a finger of elevated and drier ground between Tyldesley Moss and Worsely Moss/ Chat Moss, would have been attractive for settlement and agricultural production during the prehistoric and early historic periods. The medieval villages of Higher Green and Astley were located on the raised ground and at Nook Farm, south of Astley, a Mesolithic (11500 – 6000 BC) community left a scatter of worked flint tools. The site at Nook Farm lies on a sandy

'island' which would have been slightly elevated above the level of the mire. The site yielded several hundred flint fragments – tools and debitage. Other archaeological sites with settlement evidence that can be favourably compared to Nook Farm include the Iron Age/Romano-British enclosure at Great Woolden Hall and the late Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze Age and Late Iron Age/Romano-British site at Port Salford the characteristics of which may hint at the types of artefacts an features that may be present at the Astley Road site and provide site-types against which any chronologically comparable archaeological features at Astley Road could be contrasted.

Recent evidence from Barton, Salford, on a topographically similar site demonstrates that sites such as these were favoured for occupation and exploitation from the Mesolithic period though to the Roman period.

3. EVALUATION TRENCHING

3.1 Archaeological Trenches

Before trenching commences an agreed programme of excavation timing, siting, duration, surface re-instatement and health and safety protection measures will be agreed with the client and the Greater Manchester County Archaeologist.

The number and size of the trenches will be agreed with the Planning Archaeologist but it is proposed that the excavation of 450m^2 of archaeological trial trenches each to a minimum of 2.0m in width be excavated in accordance with the WSI produced by Nexus Heritage. There is latitude on the location of each evaluation trench and repositioning to take account of buried services and other physical constraints if encountered.

3.2 Specific Methodology

If archaeological deposits are identified they will be manually cleaned, excavated and recorded to determine extent, function, date and relationship to adjacent features.

Contingency provision will be made for the following:

- additional excavation of up to 100-% of any given feature should the excavated sample prove to be insufficient to provide information on the character and date of the feature.

- Expansion of evaluation trench limits, to clarify the extent of features equivalent to an additional 20% of the core trench area.

The archaeological works will be surveyed with respect to the nearest Ordnance Survey datum point and with reference to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. The pits, deposits, features and structures within them will be accurately located on a site plan prepared at most appropriate and largest scale.

A written record of the trench content and all identified features will be completed via Aeon Archaeology pro-formas.

Any subsurface remains will be recorded photographically, with detailed notations, measured drawings, and a measured survey. The photographic record will be maintained, using a digital SLR camera set to maximum resolution.

Photographic identification boards will also be used.

All trenches will be opened with a JCB excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket.

To prevent any potential health and safety risk to the public and staff the trenches will require cordoning with mesh or harris fencing.

All excavations will be backfilled with the material excavated and upon departure Aeon Archaeology will leave the site in a safe and tidy condition.

Aeon Archaeology will not be held responsible for delays and subsequent costs incurred through the onset of adverse weather. If such conditions occur additional costs may be incurred.

3.3 Evaluation Aims

The broad aims of the evaluation trenching are understood to be:

- To determine, as far as is reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains on the site, the integrity of which may be threatened by development at the site.

- To establish the nature and extent of existing disturbance and intrusion to sub-surface deposits and, where the data allows, assess the degree of archaeological survival of buried deposits of archaeological significance.

- To enable the owners to establish a schedule for archaeological risks.

- The report on the work will assist in determining the need, if any, for further archaeological mitigation. This may consist of attempts to preserve significant remains in situ or, if this is not possible, more extensive excavation work and reporting. Less sensitive remains may require a watching brief. Any such further work may be secured by condition.

The detailed objectives of the archaeological evaluation trenches are understood to be:

- Insofar as possible within methodological constraints, to explain any temporal, spatial or functional relationships between the structures/remains identified, and any relationships between these and the archaeological and historic elements of the wider landscape.

- Where the data allows, identify the research implications of the site with reference to the regional research agenda and recent work in Greater Manchester.

NB. If significant archaeological activity is identified within any trench (e.g. extensive and/or complex features/artefacts/deposits), cf. para. 4.0.

3.4 Post-excavation Report

A post-excavation report of the evaluation, in accordance with the recommendations in *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 1991), *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment Project Manager's Guide* (English Heritage 2006), and in the Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological evaluation* (1994 rev. 2001 and 2008) will be required to be produced upon conclusion of the archaeological fieldwork. The post-excavation report will be completed within a maximum of six months of completion of work on site and may include examination and quantification leading to the identification of function, form, date, method of manufacture, material/fabric type, source, parallels, attributes and condition of artefacts; of the exploitation of wild or domesticated resources; the reconstruction of environments; and the nature of human populations.

Full analysis of the results of the project, including: dating and interpretation of excavated features; pottery and other finds analysis; analysis of industrial residues by an appropriate specialist or specialists; analysis of samples for environmental data (including pollen, plant macrofossils and beetles) by an appropriate specialist or specialists; radiocarbon dating; discussion of the results in their local, regional and national context, including relating the excavated features and palaeoenvironmental data to evidence from nearby sites, and discussion of the results in their local, regional and national context may be required.

The cost quoted does not include examination of, conservation of or archiving of finds discovered during the archaeological programme, nor of any radiocarbon dates required, nor of examination of palaeoenvironmental samples. Contingency costs are provided for these at the end of the document.

The project will be monitored by the Greater Manchester County Archaeologist.

4. FURTHER ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS

The identification of significant archaeological features during the evaluation stage may necessitate further archaeological works. This will require the submission of new cost estimates to the client and may be subject to a separate method statement, to be agreed with the Greater Manchester County Archaeologist prior to implementation.

This document does not include a methodology or cost for examination of, conservation of, or archiving of finds discovered during the evaluation, nor of any radiocarbon dates required, nor of examination of palaeoenvironmental samples associated with any peat deposits. The need for these will be identified in the post-fieldwork programme (if required), and a new method statement will be issued for approval by the Greater Manchester County Archaeologist and Nexus Heritage.

5. ARCHIVING

A full archive including plans, photographs, written material and any other material resulting from the project will be prepared. All plans, photographs and descriptions will be labelled and cross-referenced, and lodged in an appropriate place (to be decided in consultation with the regional Historic Environment Record) within six months of the completion of the project. The report will also be lodged with the online OASIS database.

6. PERSONNEL AND TIMING

The work will be managed and undertaken by Richard Cooke BA MA MIfA, Archaeological Contractor and Consultant at Aeon Archaeology and another suitably qualified archaeologist (tbc). Full details of personnel involved, with *curricula vitae,* can be supplied upon request.

If commissioned Aeon Archaeology could undertake the evaluation trial trenches the week commencing 12th January 2015.

7. MONITORING

Monitoring visits can be arranged during the course of the project with Nexus Heritage and the Greater Manchester County Archaeologist.

8. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Aeon Archaeology has a Health and Safety Policy Statement which can be supplied upon request. Furthermore, site-specific Risk Assessments and Method Statements are compiled and distributed to every member of staff involved with the project prior to the commencement of works.

9. INSURANCE

Liability Insurance – Towergate Insurance Policy 000467

Employers' Liability: Limit of Indemnity £10m in any one occurrence
Public Liability: Limit of Indemnity £2m in any one occurrence
Legal Defence Costs (Health and Safety at Work Act): £250,000

The current period expires 30/09/15

Professional Indemnity Insurance – Towergate Insurance Policy 2011025521290
Limit of Indemnity £500,000 any one claim

The current period expires 30/09/15