



Elan Homes

Dale Hall, Liverpool

Archaeological Strip, Map and Record Investigation

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JULY 2018

RSK



RSK GENERAL NOTES

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Author	<u>Sarah – Jayne Harris</u>	Technical reviewer	<u>Andy Towle</u>
			
Signature	_____	Signature	_____
Date:	<u>04.07.18</u>	Date:	<u>04.07.18</u>
	_____		_____
Project manager	<u>Andy Towle</u>	Quality reviewer [optional]	_____
Signature	_____	Signature	_____
Date:	_____	Date:	_____

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Where field investigations have been carried out, these have been restricted to a level of detail required to achieve the stated objectives of the work.

This work has been undertaken in accordance with the quality management system of RSK ENVIRONMENT Ltd.

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

RSK was commissioned by Elan Homes to undertake an archaeological strip, map and record investigation in advance of redevelopment of the land for residential development at Dale Hall, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, L18 8DQ (NGR 338756 386904).

Planning permission had been granted to redevelop the land for residential use with the understanding that Condition 7 (archaeological works) would be implemented in advance of development ground works (Planning reference 17F/2601, discharge application reference 18DIS/0699).

Based on information gained from a desk-based assessment, it was agreed with the local authority's archaeological advisor that a strip, map and record investigation of three areas within the site boundary should be undertaken with a view to extending the excavations in the event of significant archaeological remains being encountered.

The investigations exposed limited evidence for archaeological remains within the development area.

Three small undated cut features were identified in Trench A, previously considered to be the area of greatest potential.

Trench B contained no features of archaeological interest.

Trench C revealed small 20th Century building, which is thought to be a shelter or store.

No further archaeological works was considered necessary in association with the development by the local planning authority archaeological advisor.

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document is an archaeological strip, map and record report to present the results of intrusive fieldwork carried out in advance of redevelopment of the land for residential use at Dale Hall, Liverpool L18 8DQ; centred on NGR 338756 386904. This report has been prepared by RSK Environment Ltd ('RSK') on behalf of Elan Homes (the Client).



Figure 1. Site Location

The strip, map and record investigation was carried out in response to a planning condition attached to planning permission to redevelop the site for residential use (*Planning reference 17F/2601, discharge application reference 18DIS/0699*):

Condition 7

Prior to the commencement of development, a written scheme of investigation for archaeological work shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details to the satisfaction of the local planning authority before the development is occupied/brought into use.

- 1.2 This report has been prepared to confirm the findings of the investigations and help secure discharge of the planning condition.

2 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site comprised an irregular plot of land 3.5 ha in size, centred on NGR 338756 386904 within the Mossley Hill area of South Liverpool. The site was bounded to the north by Elmswood Road and to the east by Mossley Hill Road. The western and south west boundaries were abutted by the gardens of properties on Rosemont Road, while the southern boundary adjoined parkland associated with Sudley House art gallery and museum.
- 2.2 The application site was surrounded on its north, east and south by a high sandstone-built perimeter wall, and was accessed from the north via an entrance on Elmswood Road. The western boundary comprised a mix of brick walls and wire mesh fencing.
- 2.3 The application site contained a number of buildings, dominated by the mid-20th century Dale Hall (university accommodation), Riversley Cottage (the warden's lodge) and a separate annexe to the south west. The halls of residence were inaccessible since they had been badly damaged by a recent fire. Entrances were secured behind heras fencing and windows and doorways boarded up. In addition there was an older cottage in the eastern corner of the site (High Pastures Cottage, also fire-damaged) and tennis courts in the southern corner, with an adjacent windowless building containing squash courts. The intervening space was grassed and surrounded by dense stands of mature deciduous trees which restricted views into and out of the application site. An area of hard standing was located near the site entrance at Elmswood Road for car parking.
- 2.4 The topography of the site is gently sloping, from around 58 m AOD in the east down to 50 m AOD in the west. Accordingly, the halls of residence buildings and the tennis courts were slightly terraced into the slope to the east, with gentle landscaping across the campus to accommodate this. At a wider scale the application site is located near to the crest of Mossley Hill, a position which affords views to the north east towards Allerton and Woolton, and west/south west towards the River Mersey, Wirral and Welsh mountains beyond.
- 2.5 The local geology comprises Triassic sandstone bedrock of the Chester Pebble Beds formation. No superficial geology is recorded at this location in the British Geological Survey data. In the surrounding area to the east and north the superficial geology comprises Devensian till (boulder clay); while to the north-west and west Shirdley Hill sand predominates.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 It was the aim of the archaeological works to secure discharge of planning condition 7 on behalf of the client.

Condition 7

Prior to the commencement of development, a written scheme of investigation for archaeological work shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details to the satisfaction of the local planning authority before the development is occupied/brought into use.

3.2 This was to be achieved by establishing the character and significance of any archaeological remains at the site, to inform whether or not any additional archaeological fieldwork (or other mitigation measures) would be necessary in advance of the redevelopment of the site.

3.3 The specific objectives of the strip, map and sample investigation were to:

- Undertake a programme of archaeological investigation targeted on three areas of the development identified as having archaeological potential;
- Establish the presence/absence, character and preservation state of any archaeological remains;
- Make a competent record of the location and character of any such remains;
- Recover any archaeologically significant artefacts;
- Recover samples of any material which has potential for the survival of palaeoenvironmental or dating evidence from secure archaeological contexts;
- Prepare a report on the findings and material recovered, and their significance;
- Provide an assessment of whether or not any further mitigation works are necessary;
- Create and deposit in a suitable repository a permanent descriptive and interpretive written and drawn archive.

3.4 The archaeological planning advisor to Liverpool City Council agreed the scope of work required to discharge the planning condition, specified in the Written Scheme of Investigation (RSK 2018).

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The excavations were undertaken in accordance with the local authority-approved written scheme of investigation. The methodologies for the stage of strip, map and recording reported on here are not described in detail below.
- 4.2 The site was subject to a monitoring visit by the local authority archaeological planning advisor (Doug Moir) to inspect the excavations and confirm the works were being executed to the required standard.

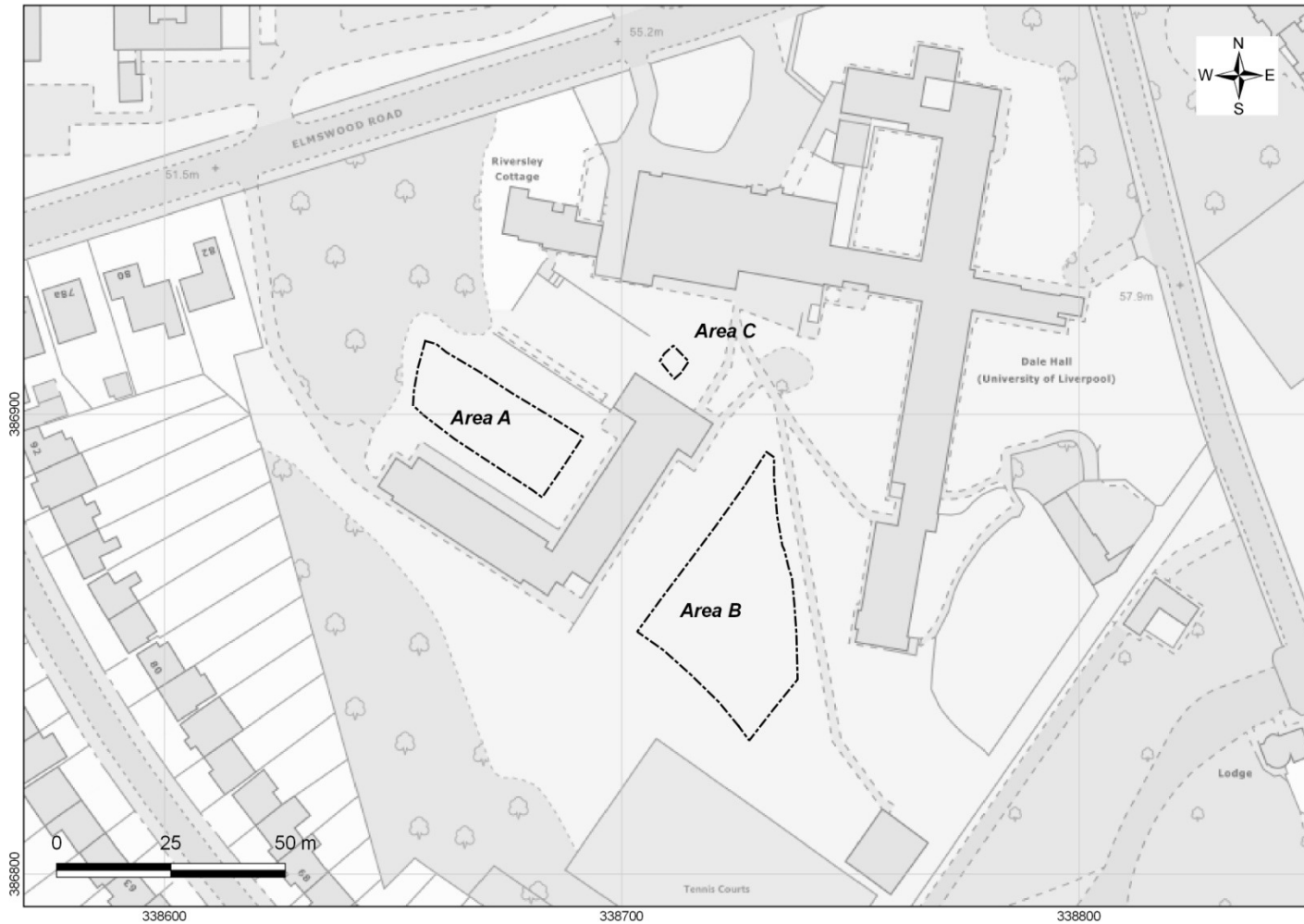


Figure 2: Trench locations (Ordnance Survey licence number 100014807).

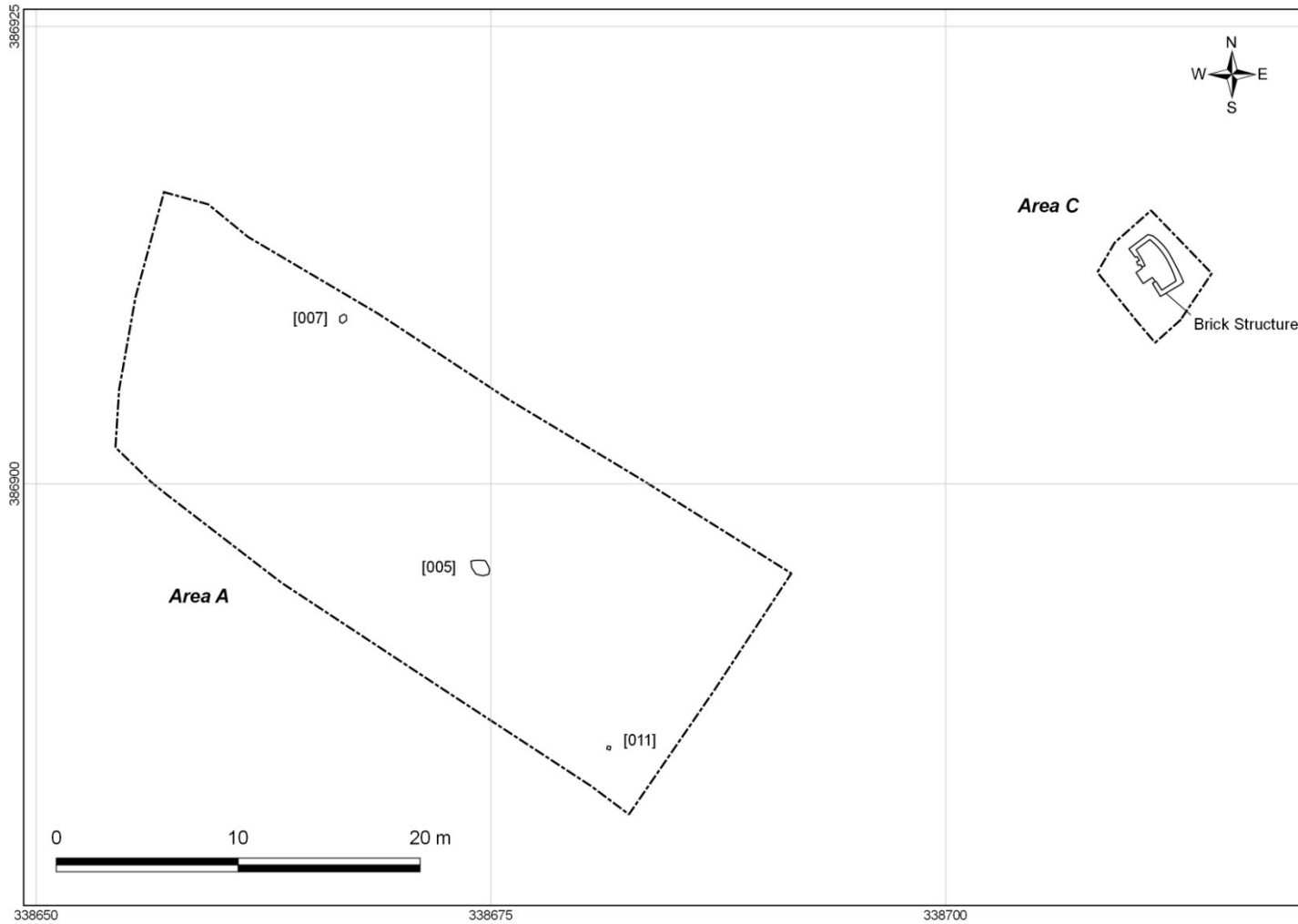


Figure 3

5 RESULTS

- 5.1 The site works were undertaken between 16th April and 27th April 2018.
- 5.2 The excavations identified only limited archaeological remains (three undated discrete shallow cut features and the truncated foundations of a 20th Century building).

Trench Descriptions

Trench A

- 5.3 Trench A was located within an area of lawn towards the western limit of the site. This trench was 40m x 15 m and excavated to a maximum depth of 0.80m. It was targeted at an undisturbed area close to a low mound tentatively interpreted as a prehistoric burial mound.
- 5.4 The underlying natural geology was sandstone bedrock of the Chester Pebble Beds formation, the “natural” exposed within the trench consisted of orange sand and gravels overlying the bedrock. The natural drift geology varied across the excavation area, with localised concentrations of gravel within the sand.
- 5.5 Three cut features were identified in Trench A.



Figure 4. General view of Trench A, during excavation.

- 5.6 Cut [005] was a small pit or post-hole, this measured c. 0.72m x 1.16m in plan and was 0.45 m deep, there was also evidence of tool (possibly a spade) marks within the sides and base of the cut visible after the removal of its fill (006). This was a 'U'-shaped cut within undulating sides and base, orientated east-west, the northern side was at around a 45° angle, whereas the southern side was steep and almost vertical.
- 5.7 This feature contained one fill (006) a mid greyish brown silty sand fill with orange/brown flecks, a small fragment of animal bone was found within the fill, although it was not large enough to determine the species; it also contained angular and sub-angular sandstone fragments.



Figure 5. Pit (or post hole) [005] partially excavated. Visible is the fill (006). Looking west. Scales are 0.30m (horizontal) and 0.40m (vertical), split into 0.10m sections.

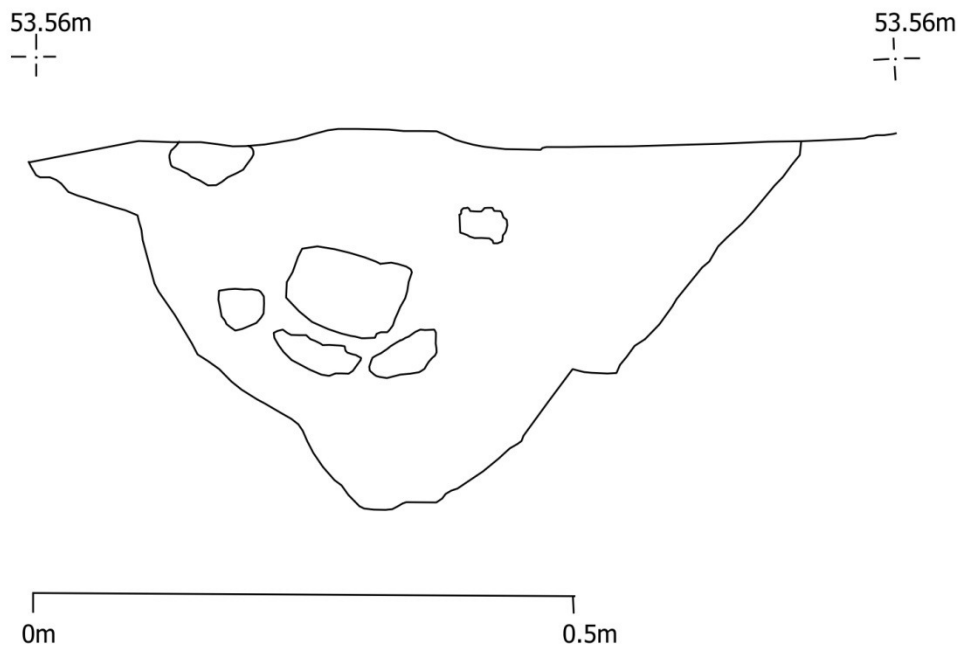


Figure 6. Section across [005].



Figure 7. Feature [005] fully excavated. Scale is 1.00m split into 0.50m sections.



Figure 8. Feature [005], close up detail of possible shovel marks. Scale is 0.30m split into 0.10m sections.

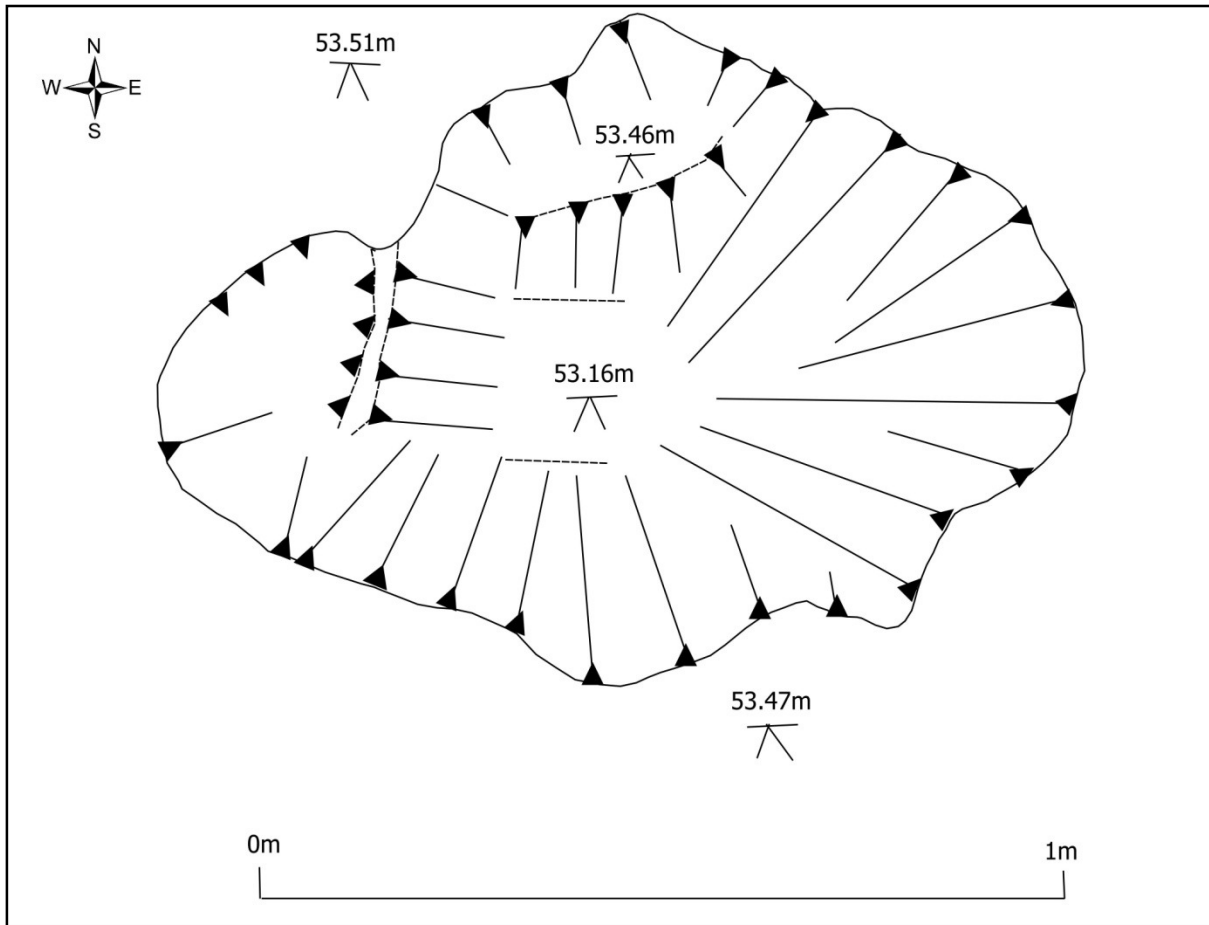


Figure 9. Plan of excavated feature [005].



Figure 10. Post hole [007]. Looking north. Scale is 0.30m split into 0.10m sections.

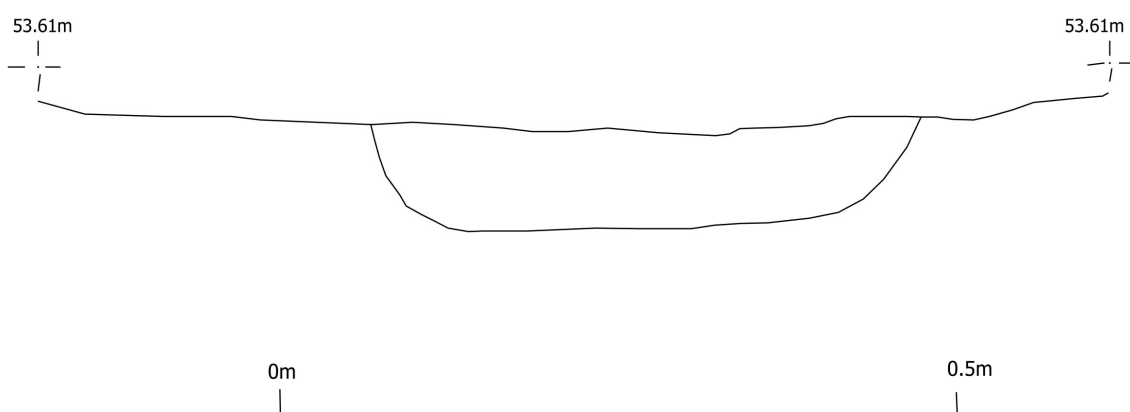


Figure 11. Section across post hole [007].

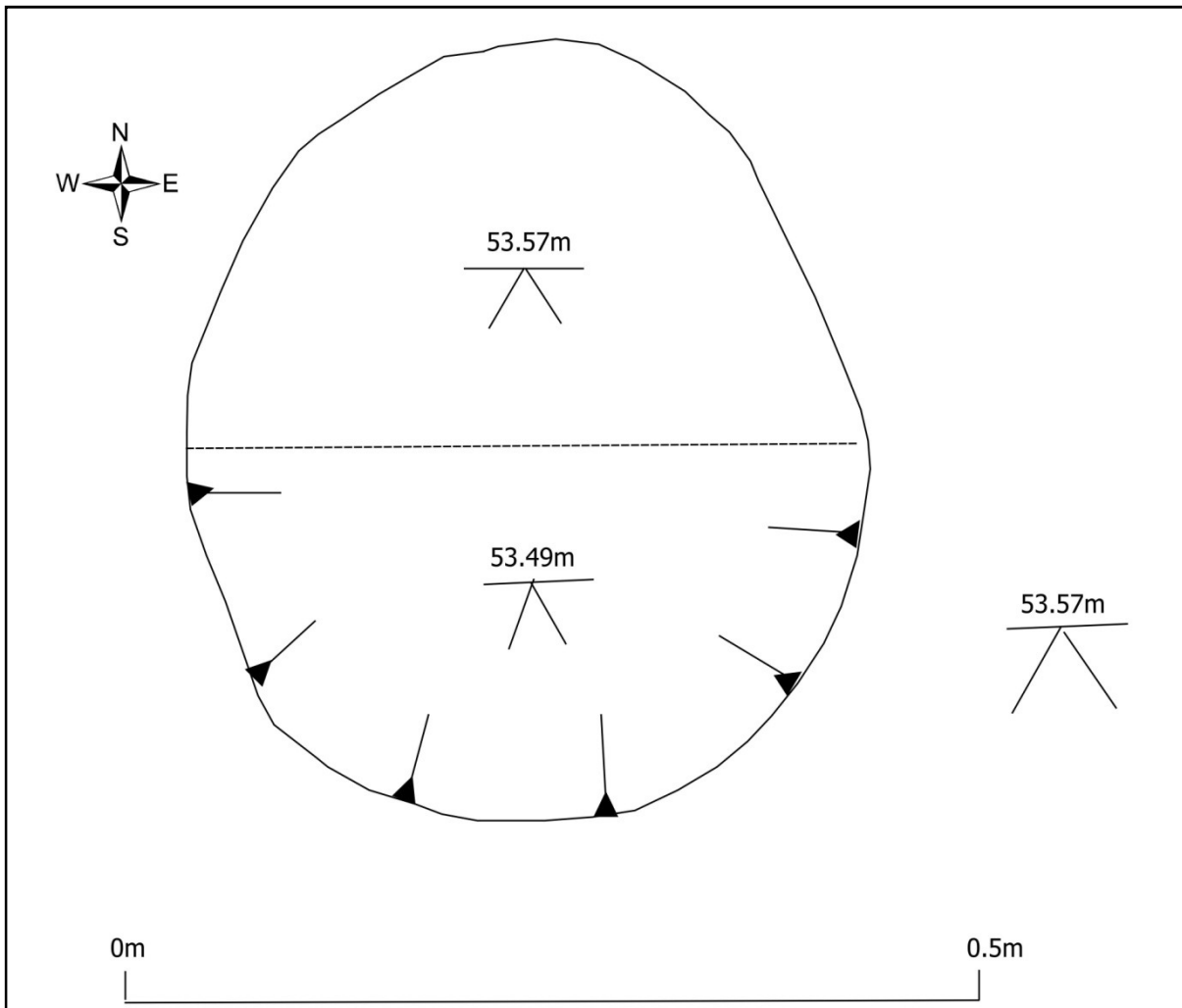


Figure 12. Post hole [007]

- 5.8 Cut [007] (Figures 10-12) was a shallow post hole located close to the north western limit of the trench to the north-west of [005]. It measured c.0.40 in diameter and was 0.07 m deep; it has a flat base, with steep straight sides, and contained one fill (008), a light to medium grey silt. There were no artefacts in the fill.
- 5.9 Cut [011] was located in the south-east corner of the trench. This small oval feature was sectioned and interpreted as a small post hole. It was c.0.30 m wide, and 0.25m long; it contained one fill (012), a dark grey/brown silt which contained fragments of charcoal.



Figure 13. Post hole [011]. Looking west. Scale is 0.30m split into 0.10m sections.

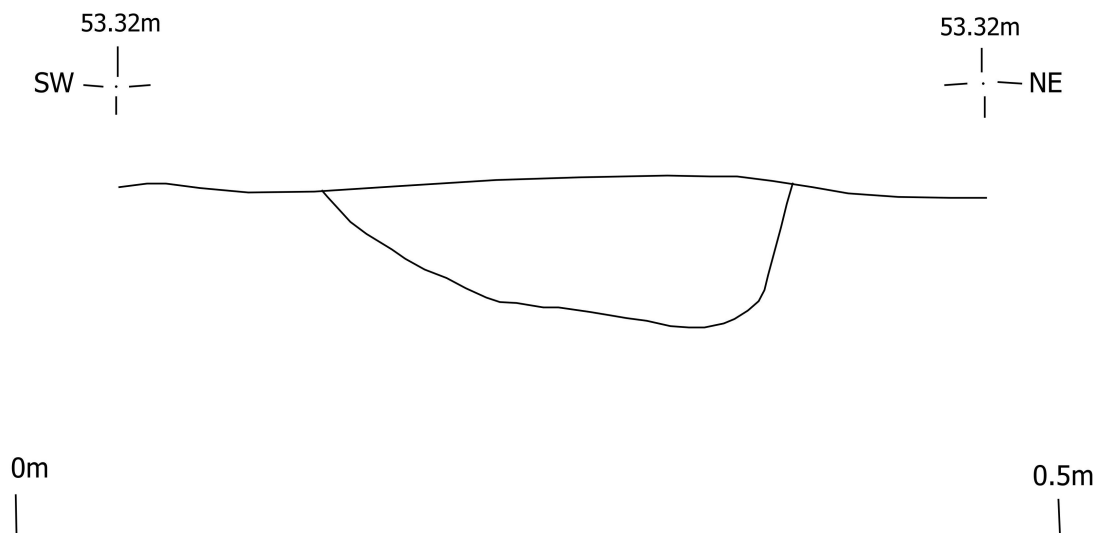


Figure 14. Section of post hole [011].

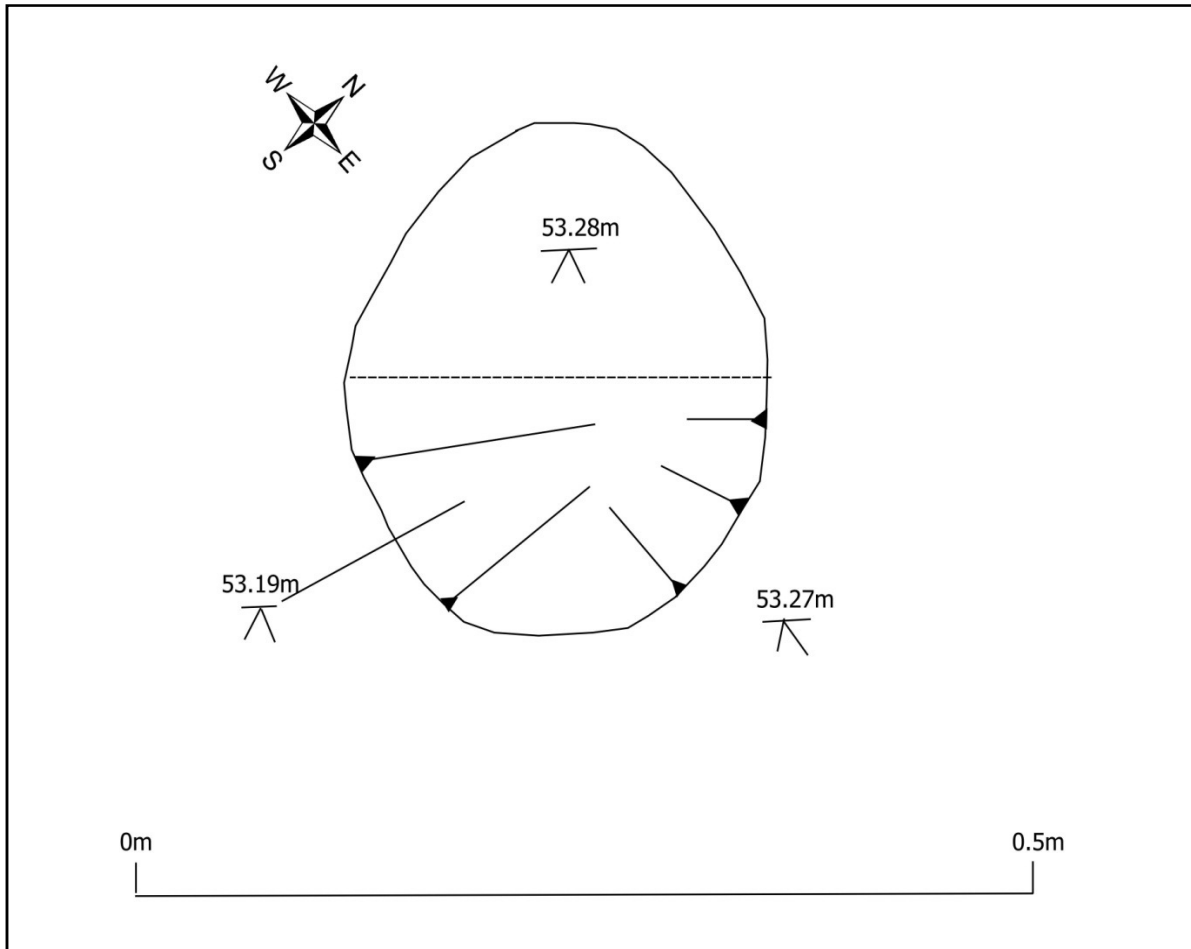


Figure 15. Post hole [011] a small oval feature in the south-east corner of Area A.

5.10 There was limited evidence of modern disturbance across Trench A in the form of a service trench for a sewer. This was identified as linear cut features backfilled with re-deposited natural and modern brick debris, connecting inspection chambers within the trench and beyond the trench boundary. This was not excavated.

5.11 Topsoil. The topsoil was between 0.20m and 0.4 – 0.8m deep. It consisted of a dark grey/blackish silty sand.

Trench B

5.12 Trench B was located in an open green space at the heart of the halls of residence. This area was considered to be undisturbed land. This trench was 47.5m x 34.2m at its widest point and excavated to a maximum depth of 0.5m. It was excavated to investigate the potential presence of archaeological remains. (Figures 16 & 17).

5.13 The underlying natural geology was solid sandstone bedrock (of the Chester Pebble Beds formation). There was no overlying deposit of weathered sandstone, gravel or

subsoil. The bedding planes in the bedrock were at a steep angle, making the machine stripping of this trench a challenge.

- 5.14 There were no archaeological remains or features located within this area.
- 5.15 A single modern feature was identified- a sewer located within a rock-cut trench accessed via inspection chambers. This was not excavated.
- 5.16 The topsoil was around 0.45m in depth and a dark grey silty sand.



Figure 16. Trench B, looking north.



Figure 17. Trench B looking west.

Trench C

- 5.17 Trench C was located to the north of Trench B. This trench was 5.3m x 4.6m and excavated to a maximum depth of 0.5m. This trench was targeted at a feature visible in the 1954 Ordnance Survey mapping of the site, labelled as “shelter” and thought to be a possible WWII air raid shelter.
- 5.18 The underlying natural bedrock was sandstone, partially exposed within the trench.
- 5.19 The targeted structure was present as depicted in the historic mapping. It consisted of small brick-built single cell building with an access on the western side. The structure measured 3.35m x 1.60m. The walls and floor were built directly onto the upper surface of the underlying natural sandstone bedrock. The structure was heavily truncated with only one to two courses of brick work surviving. The walls were two-bricks’ width wide. The northern wall was curved (see Figure 18-20).
- 5.20 The interior was surfaced with a combination of grey brick pavers (013) with a patterned surface and stone slabs (014). The pavers had been moulded to appear like small tiles, that were two units wide and three long (Figures 19 & 20). The threshold was marked by a broken stone slab.
- 5.21 The building was shallow, with its floor surface located at 55.45m AOD, only 0.3m below the adjacent ground surface. It was interpreted as a small shelter or store: whilst an air raid shelter might be expected to be more deeply buried, the presence of bedrock may have inhibited the excavations of the foundations. Anderson shelters were typically largely above ground. Post-war clearance of the site ahead of construction of the halls of residence would have removed the superstructure.

5.22 The topsoil was dark grey/blackish, with very little inclusions, a measured between 0.30 – 0.40m in depth across this area.

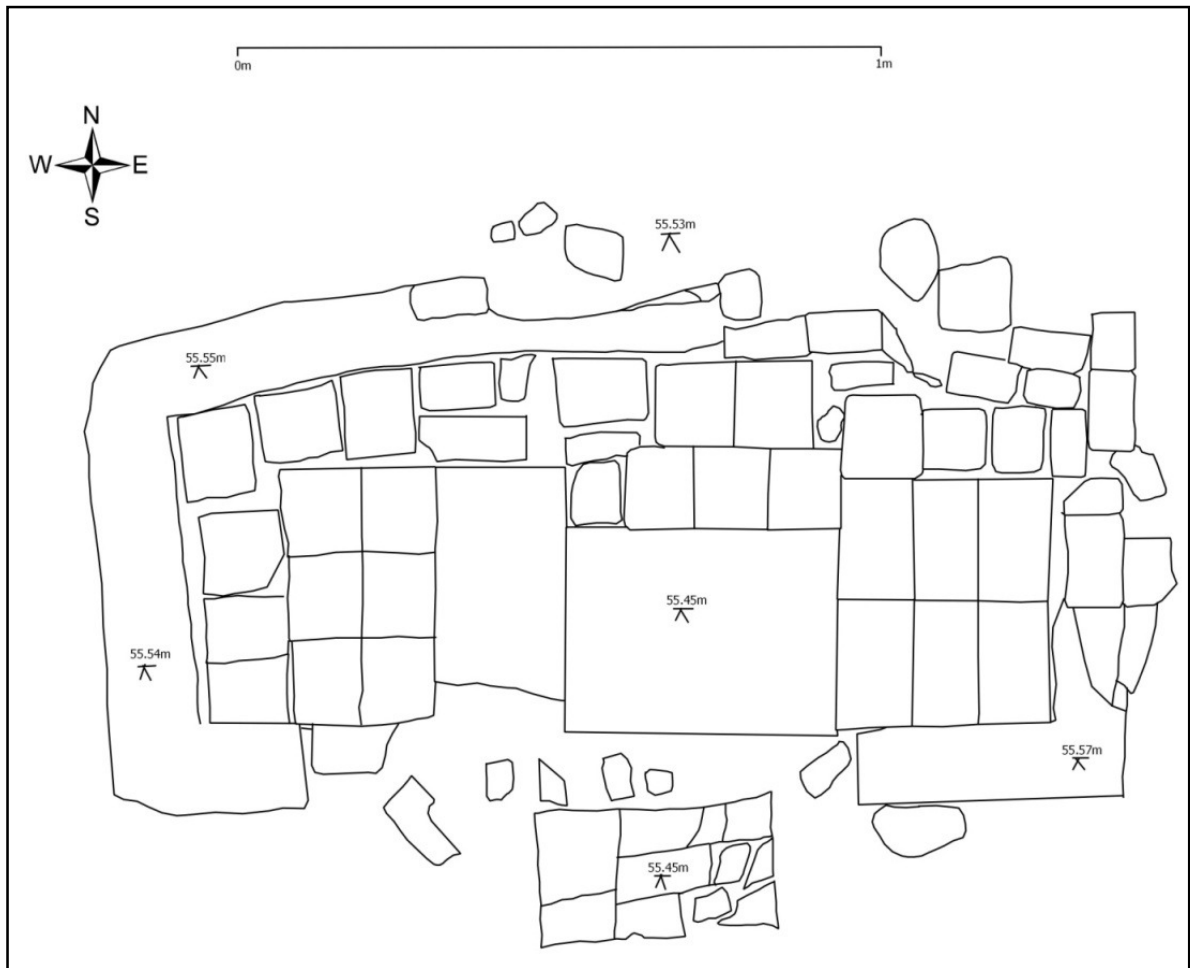


Figure 18. Shelter within Trench C.



Figure 19. Shelter in Trench C. Looking north. Scale is two, 1.00m ranging rods, split into 0.50m sections.



Figure 20. Trench C, looking south, scale is a 2.00m ranging rod, split into 0.50m sections.

6 DISCUSSION

Archaeological Remains

Trench A

- 6.1 The area of greatest archaeological potential was located within Trench A. A is noted in the DBA (RSK 2017) directly to the west of the Trench was a low mound surmounted by mature trees, containing a number of large un-worked sandstone fragments.



Figure 21. Large un-worked stone fragments, red arrow shows this. The scales used are two, 1.00m ranging rods, split into 0.50m sections.

- 6.2 There is evidence from the 1841 Garston Tithe Map that this feature, indicated as a cluster of trees, predates the development of housing on the site and therefore may be of an older date. It is not possible to establish for certain whether or not this is a Neolithic passage grave (or “long barrow”) since the proposed development will not impact the mound. There was therefore no justification for excavating the mound or disturbing the protected trees located upon it. There was a potential for associated features to be arranged around the mound, such as secondary burials or evidence for contemporary settlement. However, there was no concentration of cut features arranged around or focused towards the mound. Despite an extensive open area excavation adjacent to the mound, three small discrete cut features did not represent compelling evidence for the presence of prehistoric activity at the site. Nor did it suggest that further archaeological excavations in this area of development impact were likely to generate any additional coherent archaeological data. With the agreement of the local planning authority’s archaeological advisor, no further archaeological works were considered necessary in this area.

Trench B

- 6.3 There were no features of archaeological interest located within this large open area excavation.

Trench C

- 6.4 The building uncovered in Trench C was consistent with the structure depicted on the post-war ordnance survey mapping. This was interpreted as the heavily truncated remains of an air raid shelter or small store.

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The archaeological mitigation works were successfully undertaken at the former Dale Hall, Liverpool, during a two weeks period in April 2018, in accordance with the methodology described in the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (RSK, 2018).
- 7.2 The excavations represented an effective evaluation of the site and produced only limited evidence for archaeological remains- three undated cut features which could not be associated with each other or the nearby tree-covered mound.
- 7.3 The works were monitored by the local planning authority archaeologist and considered sufficient to facilitate discharge of condition 7 of consent to redevelop the site.

8 PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION

Archive Deposition

- 8.1 The archive consists of 3 trench summary sheets, 53 photographs, a register, a context register with 11 records, and 3 sheets of plans and section drawings, the DBA, WSI and this report. A single soil sample, fragment of animal bone and charcoal sample were recovered. No artefacts were recovered during the works.
- 8.2 The archive of paperwork and reports will be prepared for submission to National Museums Liverpool within 12 months of the completion of the site works and an OASIS report completed.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 9.1 RSK is grateful for the assistance of Irena Konstantinova (Elan Homes) and Doug Moir (Planning Archaeologist for Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service) in the execution and monitoring of the mitigation works.
- 9.2 The project was managed by Andy Towle (RSK)
- 9.3 Thomas Dew, Andy Towle, Mark Adams and Sarah – Jayne Harris (RSK) undertook the fieldwork.
- 9.4 Surveying was undertaken by Richard Hodgson (RSK)
- 9.5 This report has been prepared by Sarah – Jayne Harris and Rowena Henderson (RSK).

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