



# University of Leicester

## Archaeological Services

An archaeological watching brief  
at land adjacent to Mill View, 17, Forge  
Lane, Stretton, Burton-on-Trent,  
Staffordshire  
(NGR SK 26066 27148)

James Patrick



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**An archaeological watching brief at land adjacent to Mill View, 17,  
Forge Lane, Stretton, Burton- on-Trent, Staffordshire**

**(NGR SK 26066 27148)**

**James Patrick**

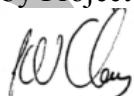
*For*

Mr A Hassall

Planning Application Ref: P/2014/01072

Checked by Project manager:

**Signed:**



**Date:** 29.02.2016

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## **An archaeological watching brief at land adjacent to Mill View, 17, Forge Lane, Stretton, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire. NGR SK 26066 27148)**

James Patrick

### **Summary**

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken to monitor the ground-works for the laying of services associated with the construction of a detached house at land adjacent to Mill View, 17, Forge Lane, Stretton, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire. The site is situated on a former 14th century Mill, and a later mid 18th Blade Mill. The watching brief was undertaken due to the potential of surviving archaeological remains associated with the different phases of the mills use. There was also some potential for prehistoric remains. The watching brief focused on the initial excavations for the laying of services. No evidence for archaeological remains or artefactual evidence was identified. The house development was to be constructed on a former swimming pool so any archaeological remains would have been destroyed. The site archive will be deposited with Staffordshire County Council Museums Service under the accession number 2016.LH10*

### **Introduction**

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) was commissioned by Mr. Adrian Hassall to carry out an archaeological watching brief during ground-works for the laying of services associated with a detached dwelling at Land adjacent to Mill View, 17, Forge Lane, Stretton, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire. (NGR SK 26066 27148)

This archaeological work is in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 12: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment (DCLG 2012).

The watching brief was required as a condition of the planning consent for a detached dwelling and separate garage issued by East Staffordshire District Council

The site is located on flat land on the site of a 13th/ 14th century Mill complex. This has been identified as a heritage asset (PRN 03727). The mill went into disuse in 1733, then served as a Blade Mill from 1755. Therefore surviving below ground archaeological deposits may be likely.

### **Location and Geology**

The site is situated at the north end of Forge Lane within an area known as Clay Mills. This is located on the north-east side of Stretton, now a suburb of Burton-on-Trent.

The site is bounded by a mill stream to the east which joins the river Dove to the north. The British Geological Survey website for the site indicates Glaciolacustrine deposits, mid Pleistocene- clay silt, & sand (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/opengeoscience/home.html>). The land lies at a height of around 50m OD. Access is along is reached off Church Road in Stretton then down to the end of Forge Lane.

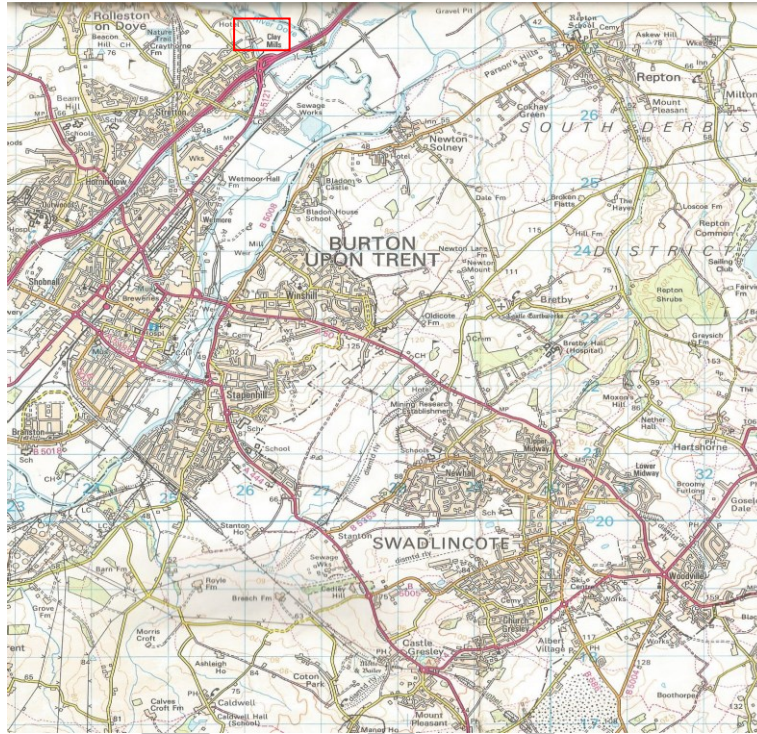


Figure 1: Site Location within Burton-on-Trent

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Figure 2: Location of site within Stretton Village

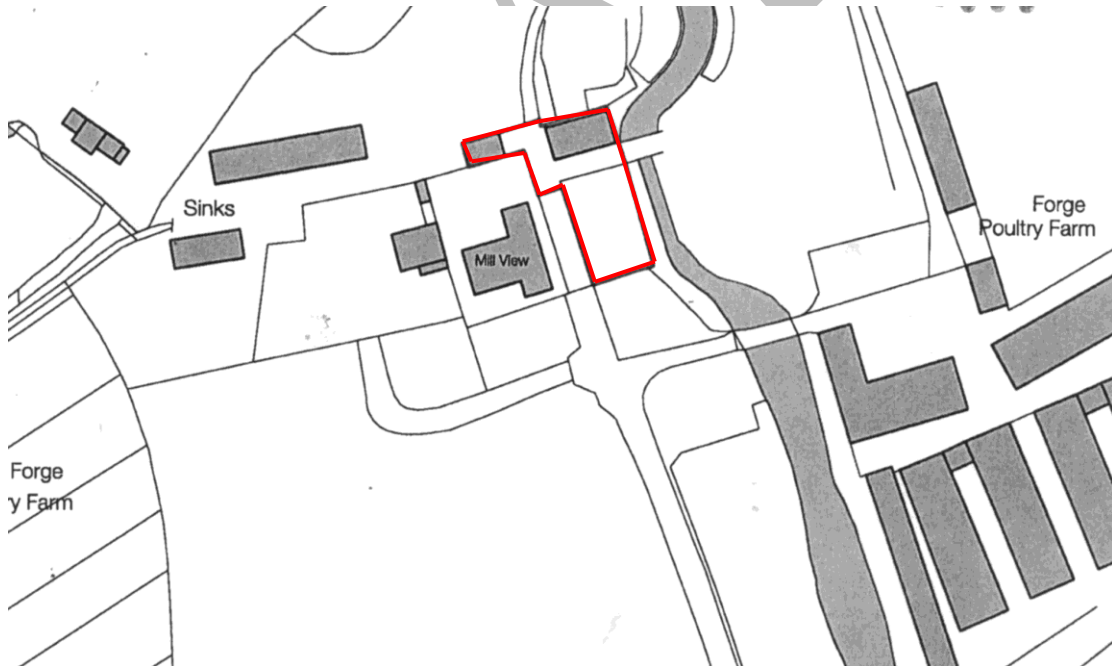


Figure 3: Location plan of proposed development



## Archaeological Background

Stretton has medieval origins first referred to in the Domesday Survey of 1086 as *Straet + tun* which means farmstead or village on a Roman Road in Old English. The site lies within a former mill complex which is identified as a heritage asset (PRN 03727) recorded on the Historic Environment Record (HER). According to documentary records milling operations in this area date from 13th/14th century when on the River Dove a weir was built to power a water mill in the area of Dove Cliffe. It was possible that medieval and/or post-medieval remains connected with the former mill would be identified during ground-works. As the site lies close to the river Dove and within the Trent Valley, prehistoric remains could also be present. A complex ceremonial and burial landscape dating from the late Neolithic and Bronze-age have been identified during aggregate extraction within the Trent valley over the last 30 years.

The present area is known as Clay Mills. According to records the site was referred to as Clay Mill in 1395 with its name changed from Cliff Mill as it was known in 1342. The buildings deteriorated after 1733 when milling activity ceased. The site was not re-used until 1755 when Thomas Thornwell used the site as a blade mill. The site continued as a forge until 1925. The site was then used for grinding material for the pottery industry by W. Podmore and Sons in 1928 until the 1940's.

## Archaeological Objectives

The programme of archaeological investigation was identified as having the potential to contribute to the following West Midlands research aims:

- *The Bronze Age* (Garwood 2011; Pearson 2011; English Heritage 2012). The study of local variation in Neolithic - Bronze Age funerary practices and associated ritual activity both nationally and in the East Midlands. The study of locational change in prehistoric land use and settlement in the West Midlands. Settlement and land use during the Neolithic and early Bronze Age.
- *The Medieval and Post-Medieval Periods* (Hunt 2011; Belford 2011). The study of mills and milling and their impact on the economy

The main objective of the archaeological watching brief was to determine and understand the nature, function and character of any significant archaeology on the site in its cultural and environmental setting.

The aims of the watching brief were:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground-works.
- To record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground-works.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.



## **Methodology**

All work followed the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Code of Conduct* (2014) and adhered to their *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (2014).

*A Design Specification for Archaeological Work* was produced by Staffordshire County Council (Dean 2012) which was addressed by a Written scheme of Investigation by ULAS (Clay 2015) prior to the archaeological work being undertaken.

The project involved the archaeological supervision of topsoil removal. This involved ground-works associated with the installation of service pipes to a depth of 0.45m to 0.80m. Also included in the ground-works was the excavation for a concrete lined water tank measuring seven by three metres. The total area of ground-works covered approximately 150m<sup>2</sup> although the excavations for services was less than that. A single detached dwelling was to be constructed directly to the north of the services but was to be constructed by way of piling. The dwelling is to be constructed on a former swimming pool and any archaeological remains in this area would have been destroyed by the swimming pools construction. The present garage is to be re-located. Supervised excavation for the services was undertaken using a tracked mini-digger fitted with a 0.60m toothless bucket.

## **Results**

The ground-works were monitored on the 25th of February 2016 by James Patrick of ULAS. An initial photographic survey was conducted of the area prior to the excavation for service trenches. The marked out site was not for the construction of the dwelling which was to be undertaken later. However the detached dwelling was to be constructed at the far north end of the site on the site of a former swimming pool by way of piling. It was deemed that any archaeological remains present would have been destroyed by the pools construction. Excavations for an east to west service pipe began at the far south end of the site running parallel to the present wall. Brick and concrete rubble was removed to the required depth of 0.80m and was observed to continue. Observation of the pipe trench section indicated that modern disturbance comprising bricks and concrete rubble to extended across the whole width east to west and continued north towards the old swimming pool (see Figure 6). The watching brief was continued during the excavation of a water tank approximately eight metres to the north. This measured seven by three metres and 1.20 metre deep. The tank footings observed indicated that the modern disturbance continued. The brick rubble and concrete was observed at the north end of the tank excavation 15 metres east of the pipe trench. Observation of all four sides indicated the whole area to be made up with brick rubble and concrete. This was observed to a depth of 1.20 meters and appeared to continue. No archaeological remains were encountered or any artefactual evidence recovered. In view of the clear evidence of modern disturbance throughout no further excavations were observed.



Figure 6: View of site prior to excavations. Former swimming pool in background. Looking north-west



Figure 7: Excavation of pipe trench showing brick and concrete rubble. Looking North.



Figure 8: Excavation of water tank showing brick and concrete rubble. 1.10m scale. Looking south.

## Conclusion

The archaeological watching brief to monitor the ground-works associated with the construction of a single dwelling on land adjacent to Mill View, 17, Forge Lane was not undertaken as development of the dwelling was not yet taking place. However as a former swimming pool formed the footprint of the dwelling, any archaeological remains would most likely have been destroyed. The initial work observed excavations for laying services connected with the new house which was to follow. The watching brief proved negative with only extensive brick and concrete rubble present within the service pipe trench and the water tank 15 metres further east. The extent of modern disturbance and presence of demolition rubble was extensive and any archaeological remains that may have been present, would have been disturbed by later factory development and the later demolition and levelling of the site. This will have included the former swimming pool, where the new dwelling is to be constructed, which would have been excavated into the demolition rubble.

It does appear likely that the W.Podmore and Sons factory which was the last building on the site dated from 1928. Observation of the bricks showed the brick maker to be a Edwin Glossop of Ambergate. Edwin Glossop's Ambergate brickworks was in production from 1925 until its takeover by the Butterley brick company in 1947. This evidence correlates with dates of construction for Podmore's works of circa 1928 with

new additions to the factory buildings as late as 1947. W. Podmore and Sons had their head office in Shelton, Stoke-on Trent and probably vacated the factory due to economic reasons and the more lucrative market in the Potteries. The date of demolition of the Clay Mills factory is unknown but possibly during the 1950's/1960's.

### **Acknowledgements**

The fieldwork was undertaken by Jamie Patrick of ULAS and the project was managed by Patrick Clay. ULAS would like to thank Adrian Hassall for commissioning the work, and Max of S & R Landscapes.

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*OASIS data entry*

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Project Name                     | Land adjacent to Mill View, 17, Forge Lane, Stretton, Burton-on-Trent |
| Project Type                     | Watching Brief  |
| Project Manager                  | Dr Patrick Clay   |
| Project Supervisor               | James Patrick   |
| Previous/Future work             | no  |
| Current Land Use                 | Waste ground/ lawn  |
| Development Type                 | Residential   |
| Reason for Investigation         | NPPF  |
| Position in the Planning Process | Planning condition  |
| Site Co ordinates                | Sk 26066 27148  |
| Start/end dates of field wor     | 25-02-2016-   |
| Archive Recipient                | Potteries Museum and Art Gallery                                      |
| Study Area                       | 150m <sup>2</sup>   |

**Archive**

The archive for this project consists of 1 watching brief forms and one sheet of digital photographs and will be deposited with Staffordshire County Council Museums Service under the accession number 2016.LH.10.

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