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MOSSBAND FARM QUARRY, NEWARTHILL, NORTH LANARKSHIRE

Results of an Archaeological Watching Brief

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PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET

<i>Client</i>	BENHAR DEVELOPMENTS LTD
<i>National Grid Reference</i>	NS 7950 6125
<i>Address</i>	MOSSBAND FARM
<i>Parish</i>	SHOTTS
<i>Council</i>	NORTH LANARKSHIRE
<i>Planning Application No</i>	N/A
<i>NMRS No</i>	N/A
<i>Oasis No</i>	N/A
<i>SMR No</i>	N/A
<i>HB/SAM No</i>	N/A
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<i>Fieldwork</i>	AUGUST 2009
<i>Report</i>	AUGUST 2009

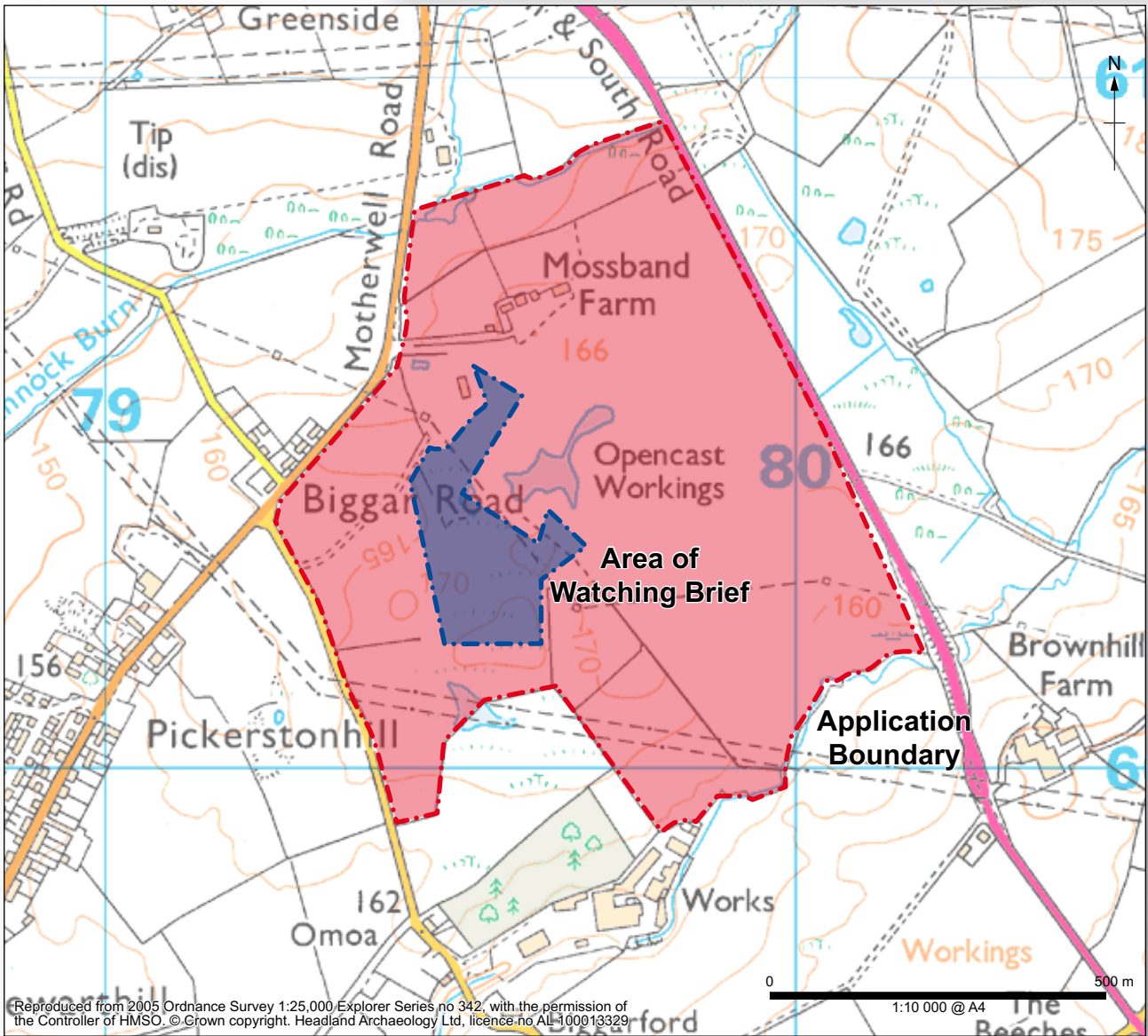
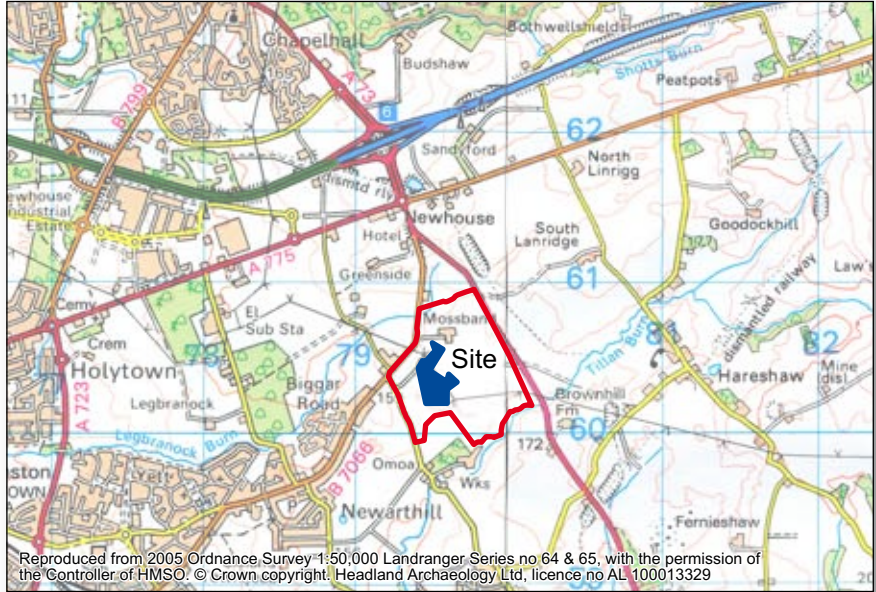
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Illus 1
Area of watching brief showing location of Mossband Farm

MOSSBAND FARM QUARRY, NEWARTHILL, NORTH LANARKSHIRE

Results of an Archaeological Watching Brief

by Kevin Paton

An archaeological watching brief was conducted as part of the archaeological mitigation works for Mossband Farm Quarry. This watching brief was concerned with a parcel of land that was believed to be undisturbed by previous quarrying activity on site. Despite initial interpretations, the site appears to have been excavated previously and subsequently backfilled with 20th century waste material, such as crushed brick and ash.

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Mossband Farm Quarry, Newarthill, North Lanarkshire. The mitigation work was commissioned by Benhar Developments Ltd in order to meet an archaeological planning condition set by North Lanarkshire Council.

The site comprises an area surrounding a derelict former quarry to the south of Mossband Farm (Illus 1, centred on NGR NS 7950 6125). The site has been designated as a brown field site since quarrying ceased and the site abandoned. The proposed works will reinstate the quarry and allow it to extend in order to make further extractions of coal, fireclay and rock.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

A desk-based assessment and walkover survey were carried out for inclusion in the Environmental Statement that was prepared in advance of the planning application. The majority of the site has already been quarried, rendering much of it archaeologically sterile. However, the periphery of the application area shows some evidence for possible archaeological remains in the form of crop marks evident on aerial photographs. Whilst these may be naturally occurring, they may also be evidence for human activity on the site which might predate the place name of Mossband; a name that can be traced back using map evidence to 1654. Mossband Farm itself is also of local cultural heritage importance.

METHODOLOGY

The watching brief was intended to ensure that any archaeologically significant deposits threatened by quarrying operations were appropriately recorded. To this end, all ground disturbance was to be monitored by an on-site archaeologist, and topsoil stripping was to take place using a toothless ditching bucket. Anything of archaeological significance revealed during the works was to be recorded in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (Roberts, 2009).

The removal of vegetation and underlying deposits over the area thought to be undisturbed took place without archaeological monitoring. An on site pre-strip meeting took place but no notification was given to Headland



Illus 2

General shot of clay and ash deposits



Illus 3

Shot of section showing brown clay on top of natural clay in quarried area

Archaeology of material removed to create a bund on the boundary. Three visits were made after the area was stripped to record, as far as practicable, the deposits.

RESULTS

Topsoil was removed to varying depths with no evidence of any natural soils being present. Under a thin layer of vegetation, large amounts of modern dumped material were revealed across the entire site. No features of archaeological interest were encountered.

The dumped deposits consisted firstly of a re-deposited orange/brown clay, with inclusions of crushed brick and modern ceramics, which appears directly under a thin layer of vegetation. This clay deposit covered a coarse black ash within the monitored area (Illus 2), as well as covering the natural dark grey clay within the quarried area to the east (Illus 3). The black ash deposit also contained modern ceramics, crushed brick, slag, metal objects and a large quantity of whole and broken glass bottles. These deposits were excavated to depths in excess of 1.2 m in places with no natural subsoil being encountered (Illus 4).



Illus 4

General shot showing depth of ash deposits

CONCLUSION

Despite initial evidence that this area within the quarry may not have been disturbed, excavations have shown that this is not the case. Deposits of modern dumped material in excess of 1.2 m have been revealed. Furthermore, from map evidence (Illus 5) it can be seen that the edge of the quarry, shown by dotted and shaded areas, would have extended beyond the area that was monitored. Linked to the old railway line, the maps show that the old quarry edge would have extended further south and west of the extraction boundary for the proposed works.

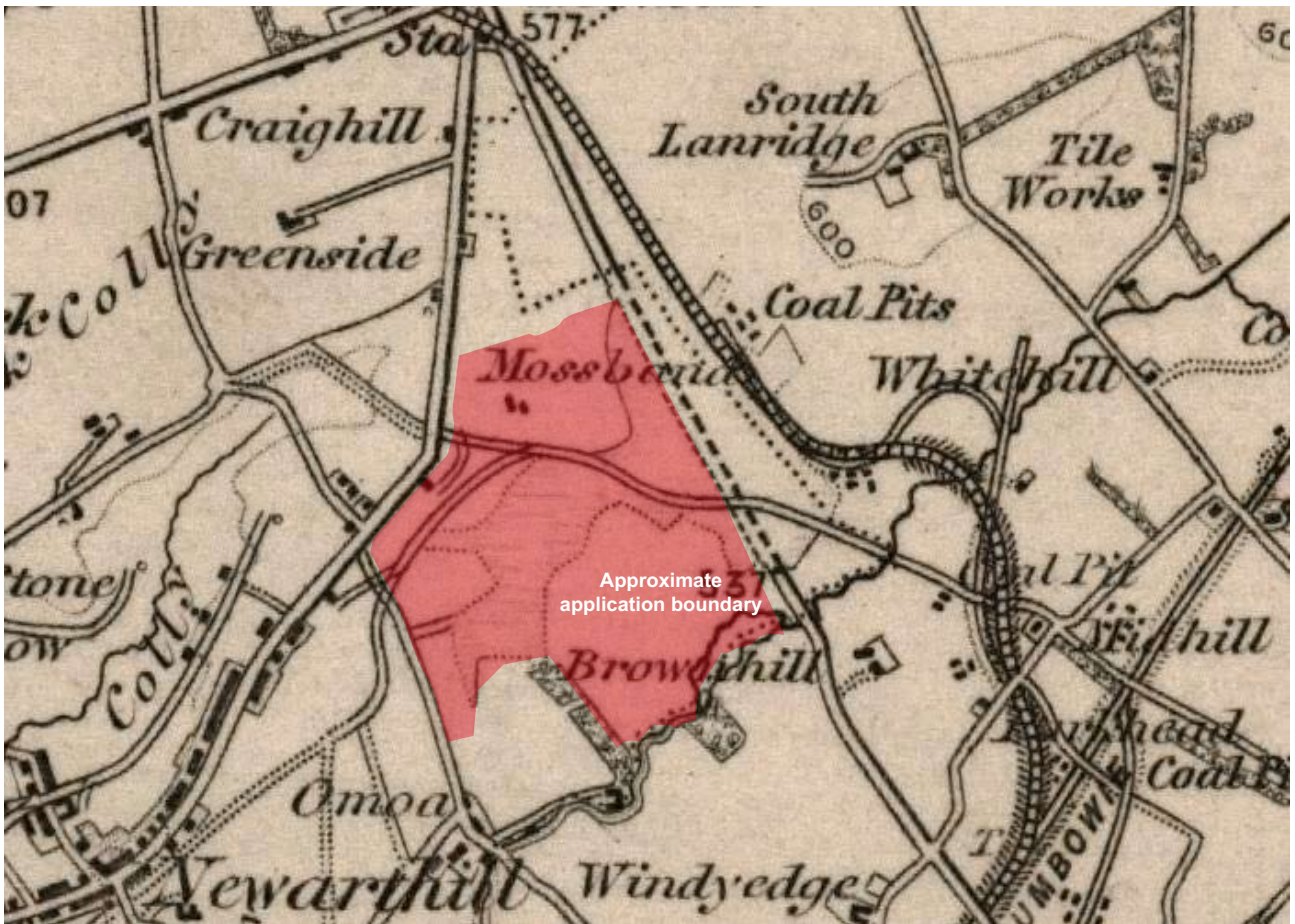
Therefore, the crop marks noted in the Environmental Statement (McAleese 2008), and especially site 10, were either out with the extraction boundary, or were possible creations from the backfilling of the site.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- McAleese, Stuart (2008) 'Mossband Farm Quarry; Environmental Statement'
- Roberts, Mark (2009) 'Mossband Farm Quarry, Newarthill, North Lanarkshire; Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief'

CARTOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

- 1890 Ordnance Survey First Edition, Sheet 31
- 1926 Ordnance Survey Third Edition, Sheet 73
- 2005 Ordnance Survey Landranger Series No 64 & 65



Illus 5

1890 First Edition Ordnance Survey map showing edge of quarry recorded in the past

APPENDIX 1

Photo Register

Digital photos taken between 10/07/2009 and 14/08/2009.

Photo No	Direction facing	Description
1	W	General Shot
2	-	General Shot
3	-	General Shot
4	-	General Shot of Compound
5	W	General Shot
6	W	General shot of orange clay subsoil
7	-	Evidence of field drains within clay
8	-	Evidence of field drains within clay
9	W	Section through deposits within quarry
10	NW	Bund on top of stripped area
11	-	Evidence of field drains within clay
12	N	Depth of clay
13	-	Coarse ash coming through clay
14	N	Clay on top of coarse ash
15	-	Bottles in spoil heap
16	-	Bottles in spoil heap
17	NW	Very thin topsoil layer on to orange clay
18	-	Evidence of field drains within clay
19	-	Coarse ash coming through clay
20	-	Coarse ash coming through clay
21	NW	Coarse ash under clay - approx 300mm
22	NW	Coarse ash under clay - approx 300mm
23	N	Coarse ash under clay - approx 300mm
24	-	Bottles in spoil heap
25	-	Bottles in spoil heap
26	-	Bottles in spoil heap
27	W	Depth of clay
28	N	Coarse ash coming through clay
29	SW	Coarse ash directly under vegetation
30	-	Make up of ashy layer showing crushed brick and glass
31	SE	Make up of ashy layer showing crushed brick and glass
32	S	General shot of site
33	S	General shot of site
34	SW	General shot of site
35	S	General shot of site
36	SE	General shot of site
