

## An Archaeological Watching Brief at Hollings Hill Quarry, Northumberland



Hollings Hill Quarry

**ARS Ltd Report 2011/64**  
July 2011

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

*In May 2011 Archaeological Research Services Ltd were commissioned by Tarmac Northern Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the removal of topsoil, prior to mineral extraction at Hollings Hill Quarry, Northumberland.*

*After the removal of soil bunds which occupied the area, the topsoil was removed down to the natural clay level. The depth of the topsoil ranged between 1.2m in the south-east of the site, to 0.40m in the north-west.*

*There were no archaeological features or deposits observed, and the lack of features within the area of excavation may suggest that the area has seen disturbance in the past, prior to the nearby quarrying activity, and deposition of the soil bunds.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Location and Scope of Work

1.1.1. In May 2011 Archaeological Research Services Ltd were commissioned by Tarmac Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the removal of topsoil, prior to mineral extraction at Hollings Hill Quarry, Northumberland (Fig. 1). A desk based assessment and cultural heritage statement has been produced for this site (Amat 2009) which provides a full assessment of the cultural heritage potential and significance of the site and its surrounding area.

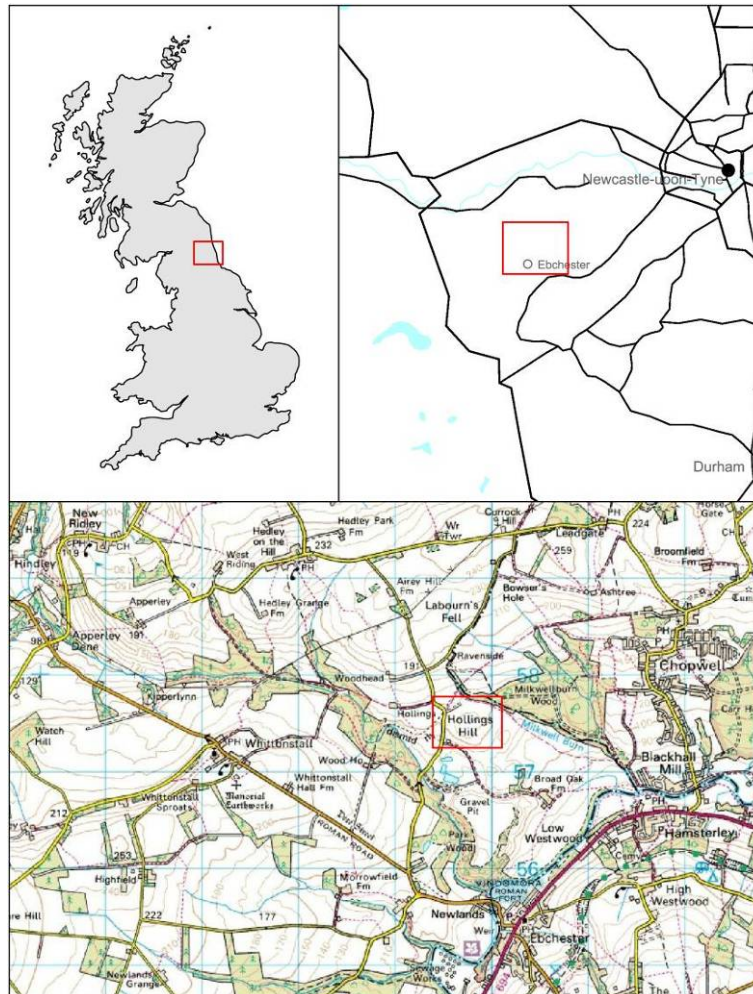


Fig. 1 Location of site.

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1.1.2. The site is centred at NZ 098 575 and lies to the north of the River Derwent. The site sits on land at approximately 130m AOD.

### 1.2. Geology and soils

1.2.1. The solid geology of the area consists of Westphalian Coal Measures and the drift geology is made up of undifferentiated glacial drift derived from sub-glacial

deposits comprising sand and gravels (British Geological Survey 2007 and personal inspection).

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

- 2.1. An archaeological watching brief was undertaken to establish whether any archaeological features would be impacted upon by the groundworks, and to assess the depth and condition of any features present. The groundworks involved the excavation of soils using a mechanical digger, down to the natural clay substratum (Fig. 2).

## **3. RESULTS**

- 3.1. After the removal of the spoil bunds which occupied the site, the light brown (10yr 6/8) sandy topsoil was removed down to the natural dark brown (10yr 3/2) clay (Figs 2-4). The depth of topsoil differed greatly over the site, possibly due to past quarrying activity. The depth of topsoil to the south-east of the area ranged between 0.50m and 1.20m deep. To the north-west the topsoil became shallower as the land gradually rose, with depths between 0.40m and 0.60m.
- 3.2. No archaeological or historical features were found in the area.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

- 4.1. The lack of features within the area of excavation may suggest that the area has seen disturbance in the past, prior to the nearby quarrying activity and deposition of the soil bunds.

## **5. PUBLICITY, CONFIDENTIALITY AND COPYRIGHT**

- 5.1. Any publicity will be handled by the client.
- 5.2. Archaeological Research Services Ltd will retain the copyright of all documentary and photographic material under the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act (1988).

## **6. STATEMENT OF INDEMNITY**

- 6.1. All statements and opinions contained within this report arising from the works undertaken are offered in good faith and compiled according to professional standards. No responsibility can be accepted by the author/s of the report for any errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by any third party, or for loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in any such report(s), howsoever such facts and opinions may have been derived.

## **7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 7.1. Archaeological Research Services Ltd would like to thank Tarmac Northern for commissioning this work, particularly Ed Dixon at Hollings Hill, and to the various organisations consulted and supplying information as part of this study.

## **8. REFERENCES**

Amat, D. 2009. *An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment for Hollings Hill Quarry, Northumberland*

### **Websites**

British Geological Survey  
Keys to the Past

<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/index.htm>  
<http://www.keystothepast.info/>



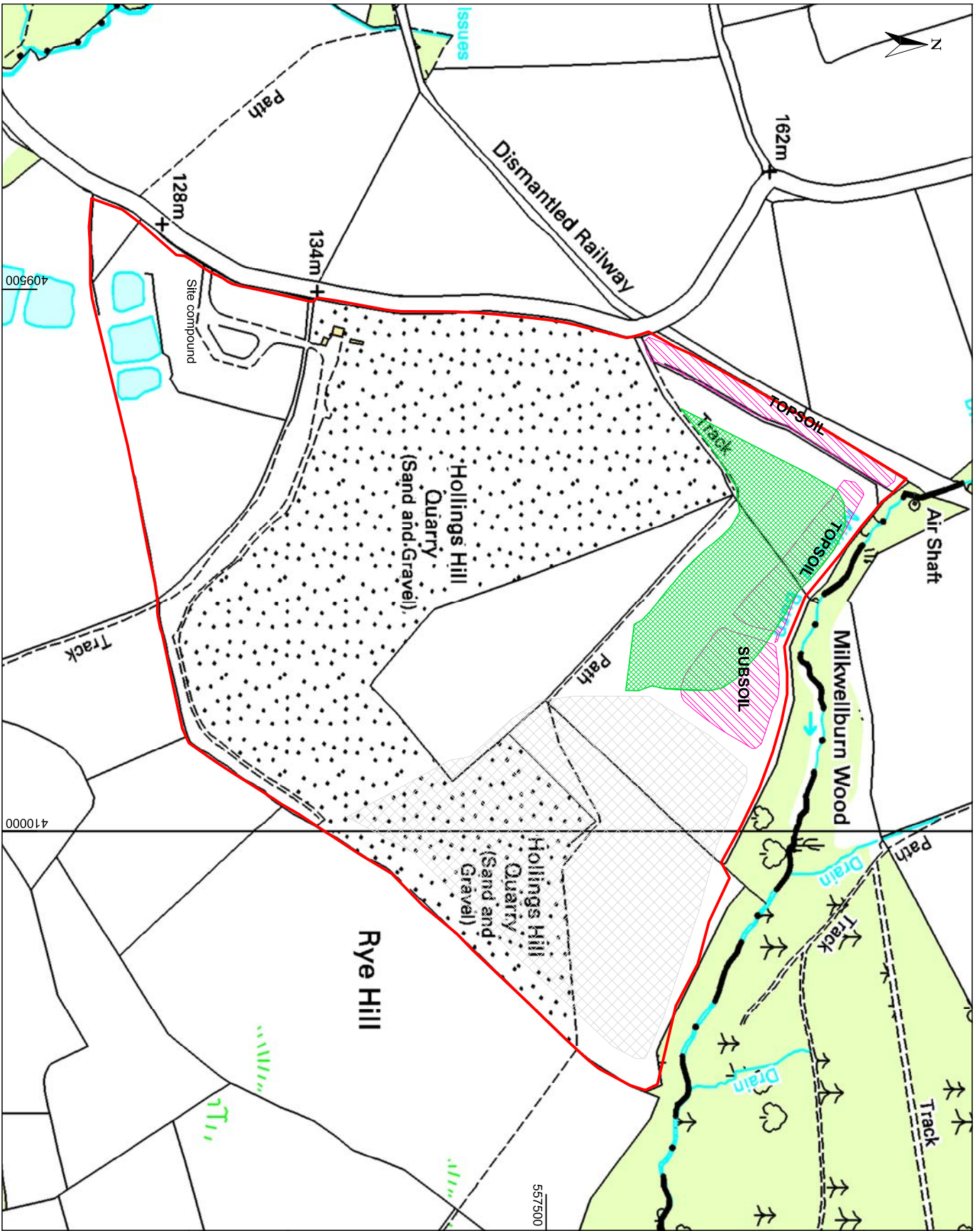



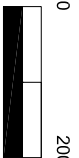


Figure 2: Hollings Hill Quarry showing areas of extraction

Key:

-  Area of bunds
-  Area of extraction
-  Approximate area of previous extraction and landfill

0 200m



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Figure 3. Soil removal



Figure 4. Removal of soil bund