

An Archaeological Watching Brief at Crane Road, Kimberworth, Rotherham.



Foundation trenching of Plots 45-48 at Crane Road,
Kimberworth, Rotherham.

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Contents

Executive Summary.....	1
1. Introduction.....	2
1.1. Location and Scope of Work.....	2
1.2. Geology and preservation.....	2
1.3. Background.....	3
2. Methodology.....	3
3. Results.....	3
4. Conclusion.....	6
5. Publicity, confidentiality and copyright.....	7
6. Statement of indemnity.....	7
7. Acknowledgements.....	7
8. References.....	8

List of Figures

1.	Site location.....	2
2.	Fig. 2: North facing section of an eastern foundation trench within plots 45-48, showing maximum depth of ground reduction.....	4
3.	Natural ground to the limit of excavation. Facing west.....	5
4.	Made ground deposit at the northern extent of the trenches.....	6

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In April 2008 Archaeological Research Services Ltd were commissioned by Barratt Homes Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Crane Road, Kimberworth, Rotherham. This was to be undertaken during the course of groundworks for a new housing development. Due to economic factors aspects of the development were placed on hold and only re-activated during the course of September and October 2009. This report relates to a further phase of groundworks which were undertaken on the 18th and 19th of February 2010 during the excavation of foundation trenches for plots 45-48 in the south-east corner of the site.

The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation as part of a negative condition attached to planning permission for residential developments. South Yorkshire Archaeology Service (SYAS) required an archaeologist to be on site to observe all groundworks and to ensure preservation by record of any archaeological deposits discovered.

This watching brief identified two areas of natural ground which underlay a cover of imported topsoil, while excavation at the northern limit of these groundworks revealed a deposit of made ground which had been observed on previous watching briefs within the northern extent of the development site.

No archaeological features or artefacts of particular significance were identified during the site monitoring

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In April 2008 Archaeological Research Services Ltd were commissioned by Barratt Homes Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Crane Road, Kimberworth (Fig. 1). After initial phases of development the scheme was temporarily put on hold due to prevailing economic factors and re-activated during the course of September and October 2009 when foundation trenches pertinent to plot 9 through to 12 were excavated. This report relates to a further stage of the development during the creation of a block of foundation trenches pertinent to plot 45 through to 48 (Planning Reference RB 2007/1383).



Fig. 1: Site location

1.1.2 The site is centred at NGR SK 40599569 and is located on the north side of Kimberworth. Nearby are the Iron Age hillforts at Wincobank and Caesar's Camp at Scholes Coppice. Kimberworth is also on the projected route of the 'Roman Ridge' defensive dyke running to Mexborough.

1.2 Geology

1.2.1 Close to the southern extent of the site and running parallel to crane Road there is a geological boundary. The foremost bedrock geology of the site lies to the north of this boundary and consists of Carboniferous Pennine lower coal measures of mudstone, siltstone and sandstone, while to the south lies sandstone bedrock of Parkgate rock (BGS 2010).

1.3 Background

- 1.3.1 An archaeological Desk-Based Assessment was prepared in May 2005 by ARCUS which demonstrated that the area had archaeological potential. The site was under woodland until the early 20th century and, although this does not correspond to known ancient woodland, it was possible that features associated with past woodland management of the medieval Kimberworth Deer Park had survived.
- 1.3.2 Furthermore, although the early 20th century Hudson's Rough Drift mine did not extend into the application area, part of the features associated with it (the fan drift) were originally located in the northern part of the site.
- 1.3.3 The survey undertaken by ARS Ltd on January/February 2008 sought to map and to record any surviving remains of the mining activity in the area. Unfortunately the advanced state of ground working on site at the time of the survey caused an irreversible change in the ground topography, which included the blockage and consequent destruction of the mentioned fan drift.

2. METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 The specification required that a watching brief be carried out to observe any groundworks taking place for the proposed development in order to identify any potential archaeological remains. This involved an archaeologist from Archaeological Research Services Ltd monitoring and supervising the reduction in ground level and excavation of foundation trenches and service trenches on the site.
- 2.2 All ground reduction work and the excavation of foundation trenches was undertaken by a 360° excavator machine under continuous archaeological supervision.

3. RESULTS

- 3.1 The area under observation pertinent to plots 45-48 was situated in the south-east corner of the site, which is a high point of the site at approximately 80m OD, from where the ground gently drops towards the northern boundary at 74m OD. The excavation of foundation trenches in preparation for the construction of plots 45 through 48 were initiated under archaeological supervision on the 18th & 19th of February 2010
- 3.1.1 Commencing 5.5m from the southern site boundary a block of foundation trenches were orientated north to south within an area measuring 23m x 11m. The southern half of the above was an area of the site which still retained a topsoil cover; this was removed prior to trench excavation. For approximately 12m northwards the ground was of a level state, from this point to the northern extent of the trenches there was a drop in ground level of 1.1m; this was accentuated by prior removal of surface cover. .
- 3.1.2 The trenches were excavated to a width of 0.9m and at the southern extent were excavated to a maximum depth of 2m. Stepping down within two north-south

running trenches reduced the depth to a minimum of 1m at the northern extent (Fig 2).



Fig. 2: North facing section of an eastern foundation trench within plots 45-48, showing maximum depth of ground reduction.

- 3.1.3 There were four main deposits encountered, the uppermost of these deposits survived on a level plateau in the south- east corner of the site and extended over the southern half of the area of excavation, an area of the site which still retained a topsoil cover. The deposit consisted of dark brown silty clay imported topsoil which included modern debris and was observed at a maximum depth of 0.3m; this cover was removed prior to foundation trench excavation.
- 3.1.4 Underlying the topsoil was a shallow lens of natural greyish brown mudstone in a friable and laminated condition with occasional inclusions of irregular shaped sandstone. With a maximum depth of 0.3m this deposit was disturbed by a considerable amount of roots from previously removed trees and bushes within this location and from a couple of underground dormant electric cables, which probable relate to the former workings men's club situated on the site.

- 3.1.5 The mudstone layer overlay a sterile deposit of yellow brown compacted sandy clay whose depth extended to the limit of excavation throughout the trenches (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3: Natural ground to the limit of excavation. Facing west, Scale 2m

- 3.1.6 Approximately 3m from the northern extent of the foundation trench block the land gently sloped downhill to the north, this followed the direction of current ground levels within the adjoining woodland to the east. At this point made ground was encountered on a line running east to west directly overlaying natural yellow brown clay. As the natural ground fell away to the north the made ground increased in depth to 0.7m at the northern extent of the trench block, an indication of deliberate raising of ground level. The deposit of made ground observed consisted of medium greyish brown silty clay with frogged red brick and stone fragments and other debris of a 19th-20th-century date (Fig. 4). This probably coincides with the made ground deposits uncovered in previous

watching briefs on foundation trench excavation within the northern extent of the site (as featured in Lopez 2008, Tinsley 2009).



Fig. 4:. Made ground deposit at the northern extent of the trench block.

- 3.1.7 No further deposits or finds of an archaeological nature were observed.
- 3.2 All other plots that have undergone ground reduction are covered in earlier project reports (Lopez 2008 & Tinsley 2009).
4. **CONCLUSION**
- 4.1 Groundworks in the vicinity of plot 45 to 48 failed to encounter any archaeological deposits of any real significance and no evidence of the presence of the previous mining, or any other industry, was observed

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 all those involved in this project, in particular the ground workers of Barratt Homes Ltd.

8. REFERENCES

Lopez, E. 2008 *An Archaeological Watching Brief at Crane Road, Kimberworth, Rotherham*, Archaeological Research Services Ltd unpublished client report 2008/44 on behalf of Barrett Homes.

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