

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at Shirley Mill
Farm, Shirley, Derbyshire.**



ARS Ltd Report 2009/11

February 2009

Planning Application no.

08/00557/FUL

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Executive Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Archaeological Research Services Ltd for Linda Reeves the owner of the property Shirley Mill Farm. The watching brief was requested by the Development Control Archaeologist for Derbyshire County Council during work to create a surface for a manège which involved a surface strip, excavation for drainage and fence posts.

The watching brief required the presence of a representative from Archaeological Research Services Ltd during all ground work which included the removal of topsoil and excavation of drainage trenches and post holes.

No significant archaeological discoveries were made during the watching brief.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The archaeological watching brief at Shirley Mill Farm, Shirley, Derbyshire was undertaken by Jessika Shakarian of Archaeological Research Services Ltd from the 18th to the 20th of February 2009. The watching brief was required by the Derbyshire Development Control Archaeologist as part of the planning application for the development. A corn mill had been present at this site since the Medieval Period and was operational until just after the Second World War. Given the long history of occupation at Shirley Mill Farm it is possible that archaeological remains of earlier mill structures may still survive.

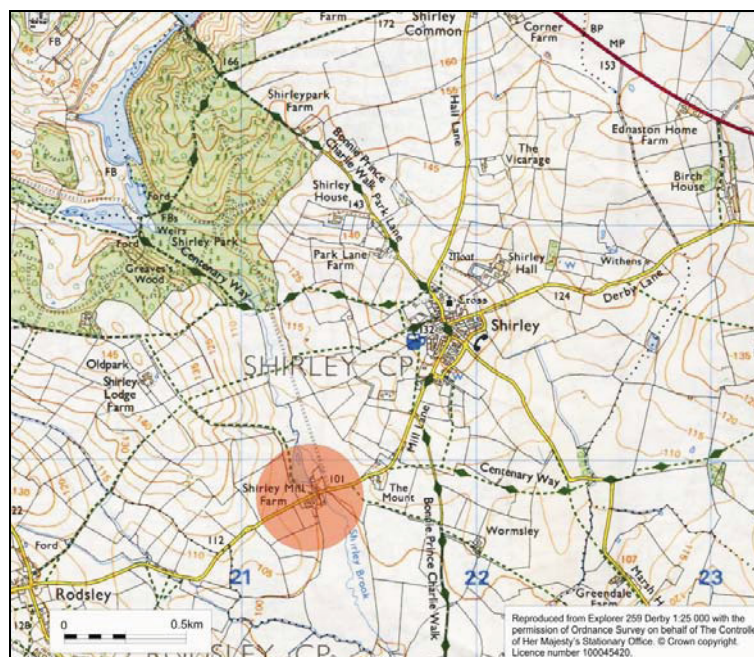


Fig. 1. Location of archaeological watching brief at Shirley Mill Farm, Derbyshire.

2. Location and Geology

- 2.1 Shirley Mill Farm is located on Mill Lane approximately 1km south west of the village of Shirley (SK21324094). The mill used to be powered by the water from the Shirley Brook.
- 2.2 The site geology is alluvium over siltstone of the Tarporley Siltstone Formation (Aitkinhead, N. 2002).

3. Background

- 3.1 The development area is on the site of Shirley Mill which is listed in the Derbyshire HER (25410). The corn mill was first mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 as being worth two shillings (Gifford 1999, 96). The red brick mill was built in 1800 and replaced the earlier one. This mill operated a breastshot wheel with a diameter of 15ft which drove four pairs of stones (*Ibid*). The mill also had a kiln for drying grain. A fatal accident before the Second World War

meant that the wheel was removed and the mill subsequently fell in to disuse (*Ibid*). It was demolished after the war leaving only the present mill house and water channels (*Ibid*).

4. Aims of the Project

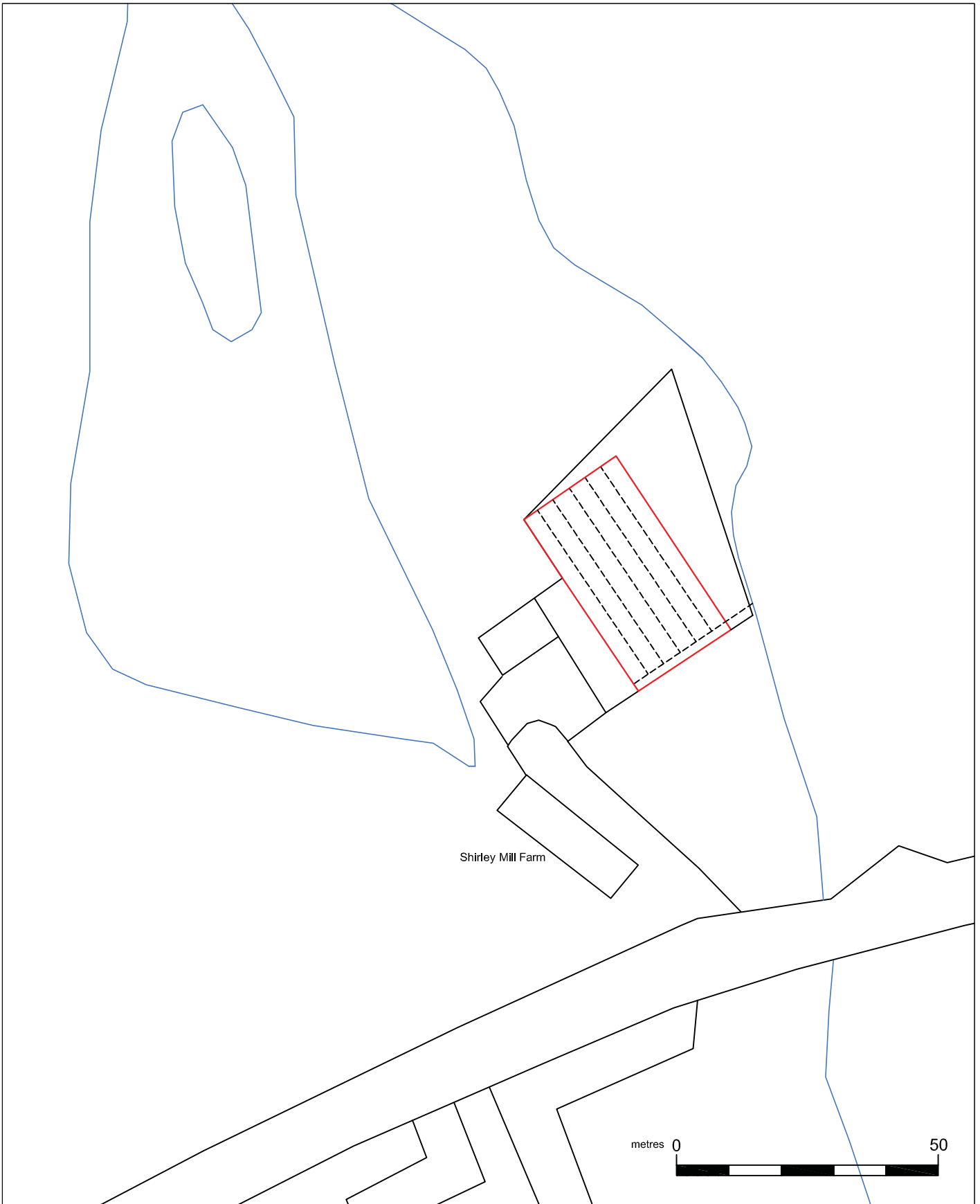
- 4.1 The project was an archaeological watching brief as stipulated by the local planning authority. The aims were as follows:
- To observe all groundworks for the presence of archaeology.
 - To alert all interested parties to the possible destruction of archaeological features.
 - To fully record and excavate any archaeological features encountered.

5. Method Statement

- 5.1 The watching brief was maintained by a representative of Archaeological Research Services Ltd over the topsoil removal down to the first significant archaeological or natural horizon. The soil was removed in shallow spits by a mechanical digger with a toothless bucket 2m wide.
- 5.2 Any apparent features were to be sectioned, photographed, recorded and then fully-excavated. Feature plans were to be made at 1:20 scale and sections at 1:10 scale. All the contexts were recorded on *pro-forma* sheets, and a context register, along with a plan and photographic register, were produced for inclusion in the archive.

6. Stratigraphic Report

- 6.1 The development area measured approximately 20m by 40m and was located in a field adjacent to the farm outbuildings and a small brook. The area was stripped in phases, with drainage trenches being excavated and backfilled alongside the strip (Figs. 3 and 4).
- 6.2 The dark brown, organic topsoil (001) was found across the site and was between 0.15m and 0.3m deep. The field had previously been used as storage for farm equipment and then a paddock for the horses. This meant that the topsoil was heavily disturbed and contained modern waste items. Upon the removal of the topsoil, a natural subsoil (002) was revealed overlying the natural sand and gravel (003). The silty sandy clay subsoil was orangey brown with frequent rounded pebble inclusions which was between 0.15m to 0.25m deep. The top of the subsoil had been disturbed by farm activity in some places but overall the deposit was unaffected.
- 6.3 The drainage trenches were excavated into the subsoil (002) and the natural sand and gravel (003) below. The trenches measured 0.5m in width and 0.3 - 0.5m in depth.
- 6.4 No archaeological remains were encountered during any of the ground work.



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Figure 2
 Plan of Shriely Mill Farm showing
 the development area

Key:
 ——— Development area
 - - - - - Drains

Site Code: SHIRL 09
 Drawing Ref:
 Date: 23-02-09
 Drawn: JS
 Scale: 1:1000

Notes:

Copyright/Licensing:
 This drawing
 © A.R.S. Ltd
 Ordnance Survey data if applicable
 © Crown Copyright, all rights reserved
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 No. 100045420



Fig. 3 View of the site being stripped with the farmhouse through the trees.



Fig. 4 View of a drainage trench being backfilled.

- 6.2 The development avoided a small, brick built building believed to be related to the old village water supply (Fig. 5). The remains of a similar building, demolished prior to the start of the current work, were located in the northern corner of the site (Fig. 6). Large cast pipes were revealed running across the site linking these two 20th century buildings. The pipes were removed during the strip along with the remains of the demolished building.



Fig. 5 View of the brick built building.



Fig. 6 View of the demolished brick built building.

- 6.3 Wooden posts for a new fence line were erected around the development site. The post holes were hand dug around the edge of the site within the stripped area (Fig. 7). They were excavated into the subsoil (002) and natural gravel (003). No archaeological remains were encountered during these works.



Fig. 7 Excavation of fence posts.

7. Conclusions

- 8.1 There were no archaeological features, deposits, buried land surfaces or small finds revealed during the ground works for this project.

8. Publicity, Confidentiality and Copyright

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

9. Statement of Indemnity

- 9.1 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.

10. Acknowledgements

- 10.1 ARS Ltd would like to thank all those involved with the smooth running of the pipeline project, especially Linda Reeves and the contractors from Mark Harrison's.

11. References

Aitkenhead, N. 2002. *The Pennines and adjacent areas*. British Geological Society, Nottingham.

Gifford, A. 1999. *Derbyshire watermills: Corn Mills*. Midland Wind & Water Mills Group.

APPENDIX I – CONTEXT REGISTER

Context Number	Location	Description
001	Across the site	Topsoil found across the site existing to a depth between 0.15m to 0.3m. Dark brown organic clayey silt which contained modern debris.
002	Across the site	Natural subsoil layer below the topsoil (001) which existed to a depth of 0.15m to 0.25m deep. The deposit was a silty sandy clay that was medium brown/yellow with 60% rounded pebble inclusions.
003	Across the site	Natural sand and gravel found below subsoil (003) found to exist 0.4m to 0.5m below modern ground surface. Light brown to yellow in colour and had 80% rounded pebble inclusions.

**APPENDIX II – OASIS FORM AND ARCHIVE TRANSFER
CONFIRMATION**

Notification Form – Archive Transfer

Derby Museum & Art Gallery

Notification of Fieldwork/ Transference of Archaeological Archive

Field Unit: Archaeological Research Services Ltd..

Anticipated Start Date: 18th March 2009 Anticipated Deposition Date: Unknown.

Type of Fieldwork (*please circle*): evaluation/ trenching/ **watching brief**/ field walking/ excavation

Site Manager: Jessika Shakarian. English Heritage Code: Not relevant

Site Name: Shirley Mill Farm, Derbyshire Civil Parish: Shirley

Unit Reference Code: ARS 5/50

Type of Site Expected (*please circle*) Prehistoric/ Roman/ Medieval/ **Post-Medieval**

Quantity of Material Expected (boxes) : <**10**/ <20/ <30/ <40/ <50/ >50

Conservation Problems Anticipated: NO

Waterlogged Material Anticipated: NO

To be Completed by the Museum on Notification

Site Accession Number: **DBYMU 2008-360**

Signed:.....

Labels despatched:.....Date: 04-03-09

To be Completed by the Field Unit on Transference of Archive

Archive for Site Transferred (see attached sheets)

Number of Boxes.....Signed:.....

Date:.....

Landowner(s):.....

Address(es):.....

.....

.....

Consent Request Letter Sent (date):.....Consent Received: YES/ NO

Developer (Contact name and address):.....

.....

.....

The excavating unit must also send a copy of this form to Derbyshire Archaeological Services for addition to the SMR at the time of deposit.

To be Completed by the Museum on Receipt of Archive

Archive received in Satisfactory Form

Signed:.....	Date:.....
Notes - Field Unit	Notes - Museum

APPENDIX III – DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL BRIEF