



making sense of heritage

Land off Warmingham Lane, Middlewich, Cheshire

Metal Detector Survey and Trial Trenching



Planning Reference: 12/ 0883C APP/R0660/A/12/2179343
Ref: 103400 .01
April 2014



**Land off Warmingham Lane,
Middlewich, Cheshire**

Metal Detector Survey

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April 2014

103400 .01



Quality Assurance

| | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------|---|-----------------|--------------------|--|
| Project Code | 103400 | Accession Code | TBC | Client Ref. | |
| Planning Application Ref. | 12/0883C | Ordnance Survey (OS) national grid reference (NGR) | NGR 37060 36410 | | |

| Version | Status* | Prepared by | Checked and Approved By | Approver's Signature | Date |
|----------------|---|--------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| v01 | E | <i>MT</i> | <i>RJO</i> | <i>Richard O'Neill</i> | 04.03.14 |
| File: | S:\PROJECTS\103400 (Warmingham Lane, Middlewich, Cheshire)\Report\Submitted | | | | |
| v01 | F | <i>MT</i> | <i>RJO</i> | <i>Richard O'Neill</i> | 11.03.14 |
| File: | S:\PROJECTS\103400 (Warmingham Lane, Middlewich, Cheshire)\Report\Submitted | | | | |
| v02 | F | <i>MT</i> | <i>RJO</i> | <i>Richard O'Neill</i> | 14.04.14 |
| File: | S:\PROJECTS\103400 (Warmingham Lane, Middlewich, Cheshire)\Report\Submitted | | | | |
| File: | | | | | |

* I = Internal Draft; E = External Draft; F = Final

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Land off Warmingham Lane, Middlewich, Cheshire

Metal Detector Survey

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Warmingham Lane, Middlewich, Cheshire

Metal Detector Survey

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd on behalf of Morris Homes to undertake archaeological monitoring of a metal detecting survey on land adjacent to Warmingham Lane, Middlewich centred on NGR 37060 36410. Planning permission (12/0883C) has been granted for erection up to 194 dwellings on the Site with condition 6 relating to archaeological investigation. Following preliminary discussions with Mark Leah (archaeological advisor to Cheshire East Council), an evaluation programme has been drawn up that allows for initial metal detecting survey.

A survey of two fields was carried out by a local group of metal detectorists supervised by Wessex Archaeology from the 17th to 20th March 2014. A total of 221 objects were recovered of which 216 were metal; approximately 67% of objects were recovered from Field 1, adjacent to Warmingham Lane, and 33% of objects were recovered from Field 2 to the north. Concentrations of artefacts, with no obvious focus, were observed in a strip adjacent to Warmingham Lane (Field 1) and in a similar sized strip in the north-west corner of the same field, north of an extant ditch/former boundary which extends into the field from the west.

The majority of objects have been identified, and confirmed as being of post-medieval, largely 19th or 20th century date. The items include coins and tokens, personal items, household equipment, military equipment, structural fixtures and fittings and items relating to transport and craft/industry. The earliest items include buckles, one of late 16th or early 17th century date, one of 17th century date; and three dated c.1690-1720. The earliest coins comprise one of William III (1695-1701), one of George II (1729–54) and two of George III (1760–1820).

A policy of very selective retention for long-term curation is proposed, focusing on items which pre-date the modern period, and less common items of intrinsic interest (a maximum of 20 objects). Deposition of the archive will be discussed with Mark Leah.



Land off Warmingham Lane, Middlewich, Cheshire

Metal Detector Survey

Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by Myk Flitcroft of CgMs Consulting Ltd. The survey was requested by Mark Leah, Development Control Archaeologist and archaeological advisor to the local planning authority Cheshire East Council.

The survey was carried out by Colin Sharratt, Trevor Brown, Robert Davies, Harry and Gordana Mitchel, Robert Steel and Mick Trow under the supervision of Martina Tenzer of Wessex Archaeology.

The report was compiled by Martina Tenzer with illustrations by Alex Sperr. Finds assessment was carried out Lorraine Mepham and Dr Nicholas Cooke.

The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Richard O'Neill.



Warmingham Lane, Middlewich, Cheshire

Metal Detector Survey

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd (hereafter 'the Client') to undertake archaeological monitoring of a metal detecting survey on land adjacent to Warmingham Lane, Middlewich centred on NGR 37060 36410 (hereafter 'the Site') (**Figure 1**).

1.1.2 Outline Planning Permission has been granted on appeal for residential development (Appeal ref APP/R0660/A/12/2179343; Cheshire East planning application ref 12/0883C) for erection of up to 194 dwellings. The consent includes a condition (Condition 6) relating to archaeological issues, which requires the submission and implementation of a programme of archaeological work. A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) required by the condition was submitted and approved by Mark Leah, prior to the commencement of fieldwork (CgMs 2014).

1.2 The Site

1.2.1 The development Site comprises an L-shape parcel of land comprising two agricultural fields, and approximately 7.37ha in total area. It is situated at the edge of the built-up area of Middlewich.

1.2.2 To the north-east the Site is bounded by pasture land and to the north-east, south and west by modern house estates. A former marl pit lies in the north-western portion of the Site. At the time of the metal detecting survey a spoil heap was present in the north-eastern portion of the northern field. To the north and west the site is bounded by residential houses and gardens.

1.2.3 The Site lies at 45.0 m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). Middlewich lies on a geological fault line (the King Street Fault) with Lower Keuper Saliferous Beds to the west, where the town lies on a drift geology of fluvio-glacial deposits, and Upper Keuper Saliferous Beds to the east where the underlying geology consist of river terrace deposits and the surrounding area Boulder Clay.

1.2.4 The overlying geology comprises generally brown earths with sandy gleys and alluvial gleys, best suited to grass.

1.2.5 Personal communication from the landowner and an online check of aerial images for the Site, indicates that the north-west area of Field 1 has previously been disturbed by the insertion of a water pipe (**Figure 1**), and Field 2 has previously been used as a campsite.



2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Summary

2.1.1 A desk-based assessment (CgMs 2011) established that the Site had a low/nil potential for any archaeological evidence of prehistoric, Saxon, medieval and Post-medieval date. However, there was moderate potential for sub-surface deposits from the Roman period to be present given the number of Roman sites and finds in the vicinity of Middlewich. Two Roman roads run south-west and south-east from known settlement in the core of Middlewich (2km north of the Site).

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims and objectives

3.1.1 The general objective of the work was to:

- *Undertake a systematic metal-detector survey of the site;*
- *Ensure the recording of archaeological assets discovered during the survey;*
- *Identify any requirements for further investigation measures that are appropriate, and implement such further measures;*
- *Place this record in its local context; and*
- *Make this record available.*

3.2 Fieldwork methodology

3.2.1 The survey was carried out in line with the agreed specification (CgMs 2014). The survey was carried out in 10m wide strips across the Site in order to ensure full coverage of the field, and under the supervision of a suitably qualified archaeologist.

3.2.2 The location of archaeological finds was recorded with a handheld GPS, with an accuracy of +/- 3m. Digital photographs were taken of work in progress.

3.2.3 With the exception of material obviously of modern date (mid-20th century plus) and metalwork clearly not of archaeological origin/interest (e.g. modern ordnance), all humanly-modified material, whether manufactured, fashioned or indirectly affected, was collected and retained.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Summary

4.1.1 A total of 221 objects were recovered, 67% per cent of which were recovered from Field 1, adjacent to Warmingham Lane, and 33% per cent of which were recovered from Field 2 to the north. Concentrations of artefacts, with no obvious focus, were observed in a strip adjacent to Warmingham Lane (Field 1) and in a similar sized strip in the north-west corner of the same field, north of an extant ditch/former boundary which extends into the

field from the west. Detailed find locations are recorded in the project archive.

4.2 Artefacts

- 4.2.1 Of the total of 221 finds recorded during the metal detecting survey, 216 are metal and comprise 2 silver, 100 copper alloy, 52 lead/lead alloy, 35 iron (including 2 ironworking slag), 23 other metal (e.g. aluminium) and 4 composite. There are also five non-metal objects (one pottery, one clay pipe, one leather, two natural ironstone), which are not discussed further here, nor included in tabulations.
- 4.2.2 In order to prepare this report, all objects were recorded by material type, with basic identifications, with further details (including dimensions) where appropriate.
- 4.2.3 **Table 1 (Appendix 1)** gives a breakdown of the assemblage by metal type and by object type. All of the objects are post-medieval/modern in date.

4.3 Functional Range

Coins and tokens

- 4.3.1 A total of 27 coins were recovered. Condition varies, one is just broadly dated as post-medieval, and one is too badly corroded even to be positively identified as a coin. Most of the identifiable coins are Victorian or later in date, mainly pennies and halfpennies, but also including a sixpence. Earlier coins comprise one of William III (1695-1701), one of George II (1729-54) and two of George III (1760-1820). One of the latter two is of interest as a copper alloy copy of a silver half crown. This bears the date mark for 1817 and would probably have been silvered in a deliberate attempt at forgery. It is likely to be broadly contemporary with the original.

Personal items

- 4.3.2 This category includes 13 buttons and nine buckles (another button is included under *Militaria*: see below). Most common amongst the buttons are plain disc types with rear attachments, generically post-medieval types although probably dating to the 18th century or later. Two disc buttons are decorated, one with a naval 'anchor & chain' motif (although unlikely to be of military origin, as this is a common motif), and the other with concentric rings; both these are likely to be of 20th century date. Two, possible three buttons are of hollow two-piece form, all undecorated.
- 4.3.3 The buckles include a variety of forms. The five most diagnostic (all in copper alloy) include one double-loop oval buckle with moulded decoration on the loops and on the ends of the strap bar, of late 16th or early 17th century date and possibly used as a spur buckle (Whitehead 1986, 63-5); one double-loop rectangular buckle with openwork decoration, of 17th century date (*ibid*, 80); and three rectangular or sub-rectangular shoe buckles dated c.1690-1720 (*ibid*, 101-2). The other three buckles, one copper alloy and two iron, all comprise simple rectangular frames, and are generically post-medieval; they could have been used either on belts or as strap fittings, e.g. on horse harness.

4.3.4 Also in this category is a commemorative medallion, possibly in pewter. This is large (some 40mm in diameter) and has seen some severe corrosion and damage. The obverse appears to depict a scene of an orator addressing a crowd, with the reverse bearing several lines of text. Unfortunately corrosion and damage is so bad that the text on the obverse and reverse cannot be read, and the medallion cannot be dated closely.

4.3.5 Other personal items comprise two watches (one incomplete pocket watch and one Timex wrist watch), two penknives, a finger ring (of cheap manufacture, probably aluminium), and a dog tag (for a dog named Patch).

Household equipment

4.3.6 Five objects were identified as weights, all lead. All are of different size and shape; ranging in size they comprise an irregular bun shape (23g); a disc with central perforation, possibly a spindlewhorl (31g, c. 1oz), a conical weight (48g); a flat piece, roughly square, with chamfered edges (79g); and a roughly triangular piece (212g). None of these weights is chronologically distinctive on morphological or other grounds. Only one of the weights (the perforated disc, approximately 1oz) appears to correspond to current units of weight.

4.3.7 Other items in this category include three items of cutlery: a complete teaspoon (stamped NICKEL SILVER SHEFFIELD ENGLAND); a fragment from a pewter spoon or fork with part of a cutler's mark (possibly that of James Deakin & Sons of Sheffield); and another handle fragment.

4.3.8 Most common amongst this category, however, are fragments of cast vessels (18 altogether). These include a handle, two tripod feet and an internally bevelled rim. The remaining 14 fragments are all of similar appearance; the vessel(s) is thick-walled, with a thickened, internally bevelled rim. It is conceivable that the fragments derive from a single object, most having been found in the same field. However, if this was simply domestic refuse it would be unusual for the vessel to be broken up into numerous fragments and perhaps more likely is that this is a collection of scrap for recycling (see also *Craft/Industry*, below).

Military equipment

4.3.9 Six spherical lead shot were recovered, in two distinct size ranges. Four are 13mm in diameter (weights 13-14g), while the other two are 18mm in diameter (weights 34-7g). These weights and dimensions cover the range of both musket and pistol or carbine shot. Attempts were made in 1630 and 1638 to standardise musket bores to take 12 bullets to the pound (i.e. a standard weight of 1.3oz [36.8g]), with carbines and pistols at 24 to the pound (0.7oz [18.9g]); the latter was later re-standardised to 28 bullets to the pound (0.6oz [16.2g]) (Courtney 1988, 3). The two larger balls certainly fit the standard size for musket shot. The smaller size (which would give around 35 to the pound) is below the standard for carbines and pistols, although variation across the country is known, probably due to local production; for example at Sandal Castle, Yorkshire, which showed a peak at 0.2oz (5.7g) for pistol shot (Credland 1983, 261).

4.3.10 One military uniform button was recovered (RAF insignia of crown above eagle), as well as two cap badges, one from the Military Police (reign of



George V, prior to 1946), and the second from the Cheshire Regiment (acorn surrounded by oak leaves).

Transport

- 4.3.11 The probable harness buckles have already been mentioned (see above, under Personal Items). The only other item in this category is a partial horseshoe.

Leisure

- 4.3.12 The only item in this category is a fragment from a toy gun, probably made of aluminium.

Craft/Industry

- 4.3.13 The possibility that some objects represent 'scrap' has been mentioned (see above, Household Equipment), and to these can be added 29 pieces of lead waste, including sheet offcuts and melted fragments. Two fragments of ironworking slag can also be included in this category. There is, of course, no firm dating for any of the lead waste or slag, nor are they necessarily all of the same date.

Structural fixtures and fittings

- 4.3.14 A number of objects could only be broadly defined as 'fittings', with an indeterminate function. Those which could be identified include two door knobs, a picture hook, a furniture corner bracket, and some gas ring components, probably from a cooker. Objects classified as 'mounts' are also largely functionally indeterminate. There are parts of two letters in aluminium, and a small oval plaque stamped COBRA 1949.
- 4.3.15 There are also three sets of chain links, two short lengths of copper alloy pipe, a bolt and a nail.

Miscellaneous

- 4.3.16 The remaining objects are classified as 'miscellaneous', and include copper alloy rings (diameters 32-9mm) of uncertain function; and various strip, bar, rod and sheet fragments of unknown original function.

4.4 Further recommendations

- 4.4.1 The majority of objects have been identified, and confirmed as being of post-medieval, largely 19th or 20th century date. The earliest items include buckles, one of late 16th or early 17th century date, one of 17th century date; and three dated c.1690-1720. The earliest coins comprise one of William III (1695-1701), one of George II (1729-54) and two of George III (1760-1820).
- 4.4.2 It is not considered that X-radiography would help in confirming or refining any of the identifications.
- 4.4.3 All finds have been recorded to an appropriate archive level, and no further analysis is warranted.



Storage and curation

- 4.4.4 A policy of very selective retention for long-term curation is proposed, focusing on items which pre-date the modern period, and less common items of intrinsic interest (a maximum of 20 objects).
- 4.4.5 Beyond X-radiography, other conservation treatments are likewise not warranted. The objects that are to be retained should be air-dried, gently brushed to remove loose soil, and packaged appropriately, with sufficient support and protection, and in a stable airtight environment (with drying agent).
- 4.4.6 Archiving will follow national guidelines (IfA 2009 and Brown 2011).



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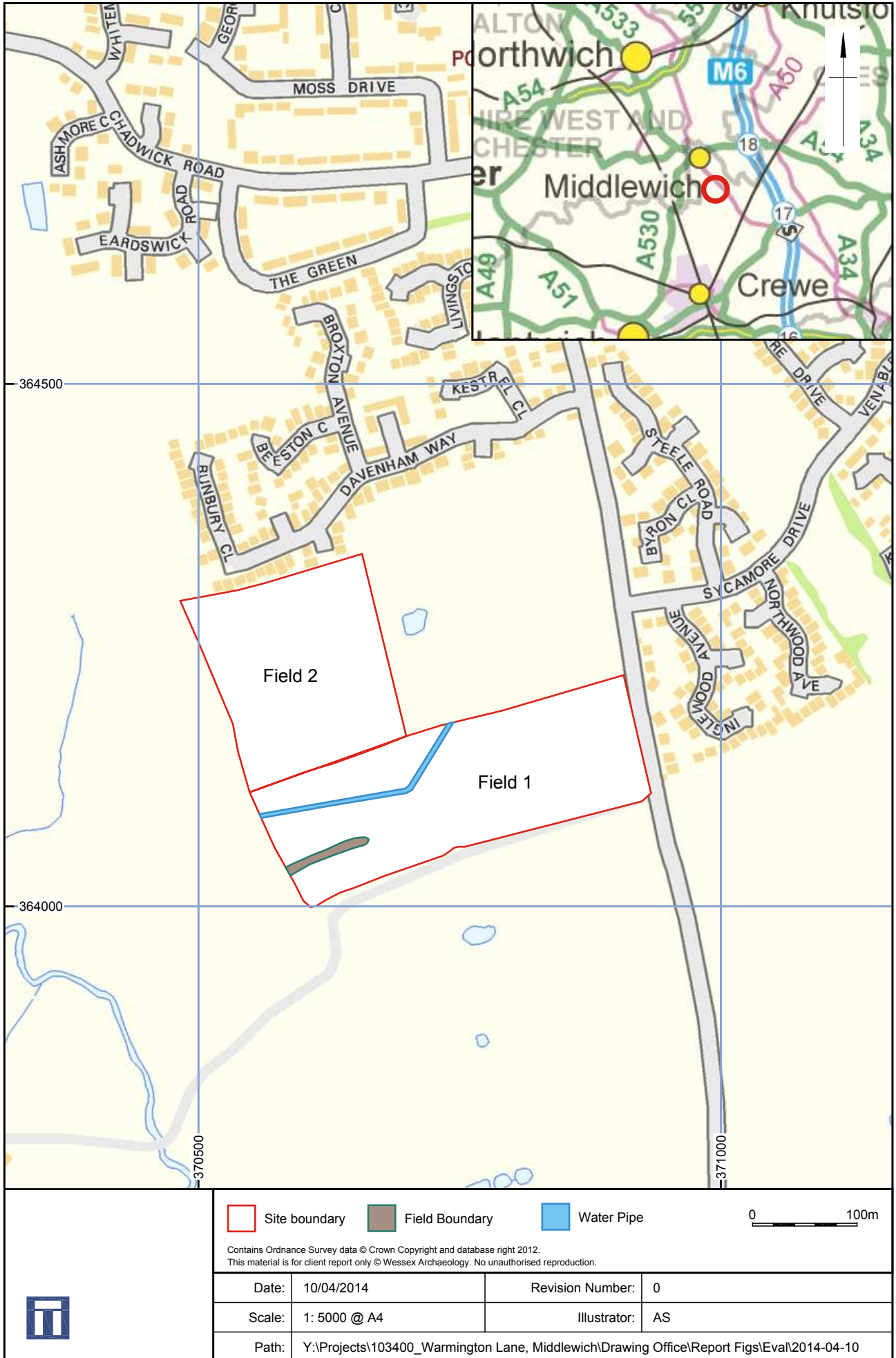
6 APPENDIX 1: TABLES

6.1 Table 1: Breakdown of assemblage by object type and function

| Function | Object Type | Copper Alloy | Iron | Lead/Lead Alloy | Misc. Metal | Silver | Composite | TOTAL |
|---------------------|-------------|--------------|------|-----------------|-------------|--------|-----------|-------|
| COINS & TOKENS | coin | 25 | | | | 2 | | 27 |
| | token | 1 | | | | | | 1 |
| CRAFT/INDUSTRY | offcut | | | 8 | | | | 8 |
| | slag | | 2 | | | | | 2 |
| | waste | | | 21 | | | | 21 |
| FIXTURES & FITTINGS | bolt | | | | 1 | | | 1 |
| | chain | | 3 | | | | | 3 |
| | fitting | 4 | 2 | 1 | 3 | | | 10 |
| | fixture | 2 | | | 1 | | 1 | 4 |
| | hook | 1 | | | | | | 1 |
| | mount | 3 | | | | 3 | | 6 |
| | nail | 1 | | | | | | 1 |
| | pipe | 2 | | | | | | 2 |
| HOUSEHOLD EQUIPMENT | cutlery | 2 | | 1 | | | | 3 |
| | vessel | 18 | | | | | | 18 |
| | weight | | | 5 | | | | 5 |
| LEISURE | toy gun | | | | 1 | | | 1 |
| MILITARIA | badge | 2 | | | | | | 2 |
| | bullet | | | 3 | | | | 3 |
| | shot | | | 6 | | | | 6 |
| PERSONAL ITEMS | buckle | 7 | 2 | | | | | 9 |
| | button | 13 | | | 1 | | | 14 |
| | dog tag | | | | 1 | | | 1 |
| | finger ring | | | | 1 | | | 1 |
| | knife | | | | | | 2 | 2 |
| | watch | 1 | | | | 1 | | 2 |
| TRANSPORT | horseshoe | | 1 | | | | | 1 |



| Function | Object Type | Copper Alloy | Iron | Lead/Lead Alloy | Misc. Metal | Silver | Composite | TOTAL |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|-----------------|-------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| MISCELLANEOUS | bar | | 3 | | | | | 3 |
| | bell | | | | 2 | | | 2 |
| | disc | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | 7 |
| | plate | 1 | 4 | 1 | | | | 6 |
| | ring | 2 | 3 | | | | | 5 |
| | rod | 1 | 2 | | | | | 3 |
| | sheet | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | | | 7 |
| | strip | 2 | | 3 | 1 | | | 6 |
| | tube | 1 | | | 1 | | | 2 |
| | unidentified | 5 | 10 | 1 | 2 | | 1 | 19 |
| | wire | 1 | | | | | | 1 |
| | TOTAL | 100 | 35 | 52 | 23 | 2 | 4 | 216 |



Site Location

Figure 1



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