



Land South of Thorley Drive Cheadle, Staffordshire

Archaeological Evaluation



Planning Ref: SMD/2016/0083
Accession Number: STKMG:2019.LH.46
Ref: 219600.3
April 2019



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Document Information


Document title Land South of Thorley Drive, Cheadle, Staffordshire
Document subtitle Archaeological Evaluation
Document reference 219600.3

Client name CgMs Heritage
Address Sherwood House
Sherwood Avenue
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Site location South of Thorley Drive, Cheadle
County Staffordshire
National grid reference (NGR) 401950,342810 (SK 0195 4281)
Statutory designations None
Planning authority Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
Planning reference SMD/2016/0083
Museum name Staffordshire Potteries Museum and Art Gallery
Museum accession code STKMG:2019.LH.46

WA project code 219600
Dates of fieldwork 03.04.2019 to 9.04.2019
Fieldwork directed by Simon Brown
Project management by John Winfer
Document compiled by Simon Brown
Graphics by Ian Atkins

Quality Assurance

Issue number & date	Status	Author	Approved by
1 30/04/2019	First external draught	SRB	



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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Heritage to undertake an archaeological evaluation of a 2.2 ha parcel of land located south of Thorley Drive, Cheadle, Staffordshire, centred on NGR SK 0195 4281 in order to discharge a condition imposed on the planning consent to develop the land for housing. The work follows on from a previous Heritage Environment Record search and geophysical survey.

The archaeological evaluation comprised the excavation of four 40 m x 1.8 m untargeted trenches and two 30 m x 1.8 m trenches positioned to test anomalies identified at the east of the site in an earlier geophysical survey (Headland Archaeology, 2019). These had been interpreted as quarry disturbance.

The evaluation found no significant archaeological features. The extent of quarrying identified in the geophysical survey was confirmed and pottery within the backfill identified this activity as being 19th or early 20th century.

The only other archaeological feature found on site was an animal burrow or gully that was undated.

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank CgMs Heritage, for commissioning the archaeological evaluation, in particular Myk Flitcroft. Wessex Archaeology is also grateful for the advice of Shane Kelleher, County Archaeologist, who monitored the project for Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.

The fieldwork was directed by Simon Brown, with the assistance of Owen Jenkins. This report was written by Simon Brown and edited by John Winfer. The project was managed by John Winfer on behalf of Wessex Archaeology.



Land south of Thorley Drive, Cheadle

Archaeological Evaluation

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project and planning background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Heritage to undertake an archaeological evaluation of a 2.2 ha parcel of land located south of Thorley Drive, Cheadle, Staffordshire, centred on NGR SK 0195 4281 (Fig. 1).

1.1.2 Outline planning permission has been granted by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council for residential development at the site (application reference SMD/2016/0083). The outline development is described as comprising up to 60 dwellings together with new access and associated works. Condition 11 of the planning application relates to archaeology and requires:

Prior to the development hereby permitted, a written scheme of archaeological investigation ('the Scheme') shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Scheme shall provide details of the programme of archaeological works to be carried out within the site, including post-excavation reporting and appropriate publication and interpretation. The development shall therefore be implemented in full in accordance with the approved scheme

1.1.3 All works were undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) which detailed the aims, methodologies and standards to be employed in order to undertake the evaluation (CgMs 2019). Shane Kelleher County Archaeologist approved the WSI, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority (LPA), prior to fieldwork commencing.

1.1.4 The evaluation comprising 6 trial trenches was undertaken from 03/04/2019 to 09/04/2019.

1.2 Scope of the report

1.2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a detailed description of the results of the evaluation, to interpret the results within a local, regional or wider archaeological context and assess whether the aims of the evaluation have been met.

1.2.2 The presented results will provide further information on the archaeological resource and facilitate an informed decision with regard to the requirement for, and methods of, any further archaeological mitigation.

1.3 Location, topography and geology

1.3.1 The development site is located on the eastern edge of Cheadle. It is bordered by Ashbourne Road to the east and Thorley Drive to the north; undeveloped agricultural land lies to the south and west.

1.3.2 The underlying surface geology of the site is recorded as mudstone, siltstone and sandstone of the Pennine Lower Coal Measures Formation (British Geological Survey online viewer).



- 1.3.3 Immediately east of the site, just beyond Ashbourne Road, the Woodhead Coal Seam is shown to outcrop and dips to the west under the site.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 No archaeological assessment or field evaluation of the site was required to inform decision-making on the outline planning application. In response to the LPA's consultation on the outline planning application, Staffordshire County Council Historic Environment Services (SCCHES) advised that the application site lay in an area of archaeological potential.

'The site is relatively low lying and is located close to two small brooks. This low-lying nature coupled with proximate water courses suggest the potential for later prehistoric occupation or other activities. Similar patterns have been identified on large and small water courses elsewhere in the county (i.e. the Rivers Trent, Tame and Doce and the Mere Brook) and includes ceremonial/burial activity as well as occupation and evidence for farming. A single Bronze Age palstave axe was recovered on a brook to the north of the site and whilst this should not be taken as definitive for widespread late prehistoric activity it does point to activity in the area.'

Bearing in mind the scale of the proposed scheme, its location in close association with the Cecilly Brook and potential from similar locations in Staffordshire it is considered that there remains potential for, in particular, late prehistoric remains to be encountered during groundwork associated with this scheme.'

(quote from SCCHES email consultation response to CgMs dated 11th March 2016)

2.2 Previous investigations related to the proposed development

- 2.2.1 The following is taken from the WSI for the site (CgMs 2019).

Geotechnical Investigations 2017-2018

- 2.2.2 Geotechnical site investigations undertaken in 2017-18 by Travis Baker Geo-Environmental in 2018 identified areas of made ground in the eastern part of the site, with disturbed 'Made Ground' within six of nineteen exploratory holes (boreholes and trial pits): LP05, LP07, LP09, TP07, TP09, TP10 - locations of exploratory holes indicated in Figure 2 of this WSI. The site investigation report describes the Made Ground as a disturbed mixture of mudstone, siltstone, clay and sand typical of colliery spoil materials, ranging in thickness from 1.85m to greater than 6.15. The report suggests this area of Made Ground is likely to have resulted from localised workings along the line of the Woodhead Coal seam outcrop.

Geophysical Survey 2019

- 2.2.3 Geophysical survey was undertaken in March 2019 by Headland Archaeology. The survey did not identify any anomalies of archaeological potential. The survey identified linear anomalies consistent with agricultural activity, discrete anomalies consistent with variation in the composition of the soils and a broad area of magnetic disturbance typical of modern tipping/infilling. This area of magnetic disturbance could be related to the infilling of shallow coal mining activity and would perhaps corroborate the results from the boreholes and trial pits in the same area. However, no anomalies could be confidently identified as providing direct evidence of coal mining (e.g. individual extraction pits / bell-pits).



2.3 Historic Environment Record (HER) Assets

- 2.3.1 An HER search of has been obtained from the Staffordshire HER for assets within a 1km radius of the proposed development area.
- 2.3.2 There were no assets recorded within the proposed development area however fields to the south (MST22032), northeast (MST5429) and west (MST5430) of the site are recorded as having contained evidence of ridge and furrow agriculture.
- 2.3.3 Approximately 200m to the south of the development earthworks (MST4142) are recorded as the possible remains of coal pits.
- 2.3.4 A middle bronze age palstave (MST16948) recovered during metal detecting in January 2008 is recorded 200m to the north of the site

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 General aims

- 3.1.1 The general aims of the evaluation, as stated in the WSI (CgMs 2019) and in compliance with the ClfA's *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014a), were:
- To provide information about the archaeological potential of the site; and
 - confirm the extent of quarried ground in the eastern part of the site;
 - determine the extent, location, date, character, significance and quality of any of the archaeological remains that were present;
 - assess the artefactual and environmental potential of any archaeological deposits encountered;
 - inform the formulation of further measures to mitigate impacts of the proposed development on surviving archaeological remains;
 - produce a site archive for deposition with an appropriate museum and to provide information for accession to the Staffordshire HER; and
 - to make available information about the archaeological resource within the site by reporting on the results of the evaluation.

4 METHODS

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the detailed methods set out within the WSI (CgMs 2019) and in general compliance with the standards outlined in ClfA guidance (ClfA 2014a). The methods employed are summarised below.

4.2 Fieldwork methods

General

- 4.2.1 The trench locations were set out using GPS, in the approximate positions proposed in the WSI, (Fig. 1).



- 4.2.2 Two trenches, measuring 30 m x 1.8 m, targeted anomalies identified during the previous geophysical survey that were considered to be quarrying activity. The remaining four trenches, each measuring 40 m x 1.8m, were designed to investigate a 2% sample of the remainder of the site. The trenches were excavated in level spits using a 180° excavator equipped with a toothless bucket, under the constant supervision and instruction of the monitoring archaeologist. Machine excavation proceeded until either the archaeological horizon or the natural geology was exposed. Trenches were left open for three days to allow time for any further archaeological features to weather out.
- 4.2.3 Where necessary, the base of the trench/surface of archaeological deposits were cleaned by hand. A sample of archaeological features and deposits identified was hand-excavated, sufficient to address the aims of the evaluation.
- 4.2.4 Spoil derived from both machine stripping and hand-excavated deposits was visually scanned for the purposes of finds retrieval. Where found, artefacts were collected and bagged by context. All artefacts from excavated contexts were retained, although those from features of modern date (19th century or later) were recorded on site and a small sample was retained.
- 4.2.5 Trenches completed to the satisfaction of the client and the County Archaeologist were backfilled using excavated materials in the order in which they were excavated, and left level on completion. No other reinstatement or surface treatment was undertaken.

Recording

- 4.2.6 All exposed archaeological deposits and features were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's pro forma recording system. A complete drawn record of excavated features and deposits was made including both plans and sections drawn to appropriate scales (generally 1:20 or 1:50 for plans and 1:10 for sections), and tied to the Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid. The Ordnance Datum (OD: Newlyn) heights of all principal features were calculated, and levels added to plans and section drawings.
- 4.2.7 A Leica GNSS connected to Leica's SmartNet service surveyed the location of archaeological features. All survey data is recorded in OS National Grid coordinates and heights above OD (Newlyn), as defined by OSGM15 and OSTN15, with a three-dimensional accuracy of at least 50 mm.
- 4.2.8 A full photographic record was made using 35mm monochrome prints and digital cameras equipped with an image sensor of not less than 10 megapixels. Digital images have been subject to managed quality control and curation processes, which has embedded appropriate metadata within the image and will ensure long term accessibility of the image set.

4.3 Artefactual and environmental strategies

- 4.3.1 Appropriate strategies for the recovery, processing and assessment of artefacts and environmental samples were in line with those detailed in the WSI (CgMs 2019). The treatment of artefacts and environmental remains was in general accordance with: Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials (ClfA 2014b) and Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation (English Heritage 2011).



4.4 Monitoring

- 4.4.1 Shane Kelleher, County Archaeologist, on behalf of the LPA, was kept informed of the fieldwork results during the evaluation by the client.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 Three of the six excavated trial trenches contained post medieval features and deposits, indicating archaeological remains from this period are present across the site, with a slight concentration in the eastern area (Fig. 1).

- 5.1.2 Following excavation, the features were seen to comprise a probable animal burrow and several areas of disturbance presumed to be caused by coal extraction from outcrops. The following section presents the results of the evaluation with archaeological features and deposits discussed by trench.

- 5.1.3 Detailed descriptions of individual contexts are provided in the trench summary tables (Appendix 1). Figure 1 shows all archaeological features recorded within the trenches.

5.2 Soil sequence and natural deposits

The natural geological substrate is predominantly clay and sand varying in colour between grey, red and yellow with various degrees of mottling and banding with some areas of mudstone and coal protruding. The subsoil overlaying the natural is slightly more consistent varying between yellowish brown and reddish-brown coloured silt sand combinations with some dark greyish black areas. The overlaying topsoil is the most consistent being predominantly dark greyish brown sandy silt.

5.3 Trench 1

- 5.3.1 Trench 1 (Plate 1) was located at the eastern end of the site running on an east - west alignment. No archaeology was identified within the trench.

5.4 Trench 2

- 5.4.1 Trench 2 (Plate 2) was located just to the west of the site entrance from Thorley Drive, on a northeast - southwest alignment. Immediately after excavation there was no visible sign of archaeology however after three days of weathering feature 2004 became apparent. Upon excavation 2004 was determined to be a probable animal burrow terminating within trench 2 containing fill 2005. Fill 2005 was a mid-yellowish sandy clay with coal inclusions in the lower third of the fill. Fill 2005 contained no archaeological components.

5.5 Trench 3

- 5.5.1 Trench 3 (Plate 3) contained no archaeological features.

5.6 Trench 4

- 5.6.1 Trench 4 (Plate 4) contained two distinct bands of disturbance. One contained a portion of plastic netting and the other proved to be geological outcropping.

5.7 Trench 5

- 5.7.1 Trench 5 (Plate 5) contained three archaeological features.



- 5.7.2 A 0.8m dia. circular pit 5005 was located towards the western end of the trench. The archaeological components of the fill included glass, clay pipe stem and transfer printed suggesting a late-19th or early-20th century date.
- 5.7.3 A 1.8m wide area of disturbance 5006 possibly associated with coal extraction was located at the eastern end of the trench, this was cut by a modern feature 5007 which was probably TP8 from the geotechnical evaluation. Transfer printed pottery within 5006 suggests a late 19th early 20th century date for the infilling of this feature

5.8 Trench 6

- 5.8.1 Trench 6 (Plate 6) contained a large area of disturbance possibly related to coal extraction. This area had been backfilled with material of late-19th or early-20th century origin and had been capped with a 0.3 m thick layer of mid reddish sandy clay (Plates 7 & 8).

6 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE

6.1 Modern Finds

- 6.1.1 Finds were recovered from four contexts in two of the trenches excavated (contexts 5004, 5008, 6003 and 6004), and comprise small quantities of pottery (one complete vessel plus 12 sherds), vessel glass (two complete vessels plus two fragments) and clay tobacco pipes (two stem fragments). The pottery and glass all date to the 19th or 20th Century, and the clay pipe stems are also likely to fall within this date range.
- 6.1.2 The pottery includes one complete and one partial straight-sided preserve jar, as well as plain and transfer-printed kitchen- and tablewares. The two complete glass bottles belong, respectively, to SCWS [Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society], Shieldhall [Glasgow], holding coffee and chicory essence; and Marston's brewery of Burton-on-Trent.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

7.1 General

- 7.1.1 Due to the nature of the deposits encountered in the trenches, no environmental samples were collected.

8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1.1 The archaeological evaluation met its aims and verified the extent and 19th to 20th century date of the disturbance on the east of the site. This results also correlate well with those of the geophysical survey (Figure 1).
- 8.1.2 The evaluation has proven that the exposed archaeological remains are of very low significance and have very little value in contributing to any published research aims

9 ARCHIVE STORAGE AND CURATION

9.1 Museum

- 9.1.1 The archive resulting from the evaluation is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Sheffield. Staffordshire Potteries Museum and Art Gallery has agreed in principle to accept the archive on completion of the project, under the accession code STKMG:2019.LH.46. Deposition of any finds with the museum will only be carried out with the full written agreement of the landowner to transfer title of all finds to the museum.



9.2 Preparation of the archive

- 9.2.1 The archive, which includes paper records, graphics, artefacts, ecofacts and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Staffordshire Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014c; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).
- 9.2.2 All archive elements are marked with the site code, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive currently comprises a file of paper records and A3/A4 graphics;

9.3 Selection policy

- 9.3.1 Wessex Archaeology follows national guidelines on selection and retention (SMA 1993; Brown 2011, section 4), with the aim of retaining only those finds with further research potential, or which fulfil other criteria within the Museum's collecting policy.
- 9.3.2 In this instance, given the small quantities of finds recovered, their relatively recent date and their nature (commonly occurring and well documented types with little or no further research potential), retention for long-term curation is not recommended, unless the Museum wishes to retain any of the complete ceramic or glass vessels for teaching/reference/display purposes.
- 9.3.3 The selection policy will be agreed with the museum and will be fully documented in the project archive.

9.4 Security copy

- 9.4.1 In line with current best practice (eg, Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.

9.5 OASIS

- 9.5.1 An OASIS online record (<http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main>) has been initiated (wessexar1-348022 (2)), with key fields and a .pdf version of the final report submitted. Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, copies of the OASIS record will be integrated into the relevant local and national records and published through the Archaeology Data Service ArchSearch catalogue.

10 COPYRIGHT

10.1 Archive and report copyright

- 10.1.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative/digital archive relating to the project will be retained by Wessex Archaeology under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved. The client will be licenced to use each report for the purposes that it was produced in relation to the project as described in the specification. The museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use conforms to the *Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003*. In some instances, certain regional museums may require absolute transfer of copyright, rather than a licence; this should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.



- 10.1.2 Information relating to the project will be deposited with the Historic Environment Record (HER) where it can be freely copied without reference to Wessex Archaeology for the purposes of archaeological research or development control within the planning process.

10.2 Third party data copyright

- 10.2.1 This document and the project archive may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (eg, Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which Wessex Archaeology are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferable by Wessex Archaeology. Users remain bound by the conditions of the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of such material.



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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Trench summaries

NGR coordinates and OD heights taken at centre of each trench; depth bgl = below ground level

Trench 1		40 m x 1.8 m		NGR 401770 342815	168.97m OD
Context	Interpretation	Fill of	Description		Depth bgl (m)
1001	Topsoil		Topsoil: Mid blackish brown silty sand		0.00–0.22
1002	Subsoil		Subsoil: Mid reddish brown silty sand with coal inclusions		0.22–0.43
1003	Natural		Natural: Light greyish yellow silty clay with bands of sand running across the trench		0.43

Trench 2		40 m x 1.8 m		NGR 401862 342839	175.28m OD
Context	Interpretation	Fill of	Description		Depth bgl (m)
2001	Topsoil		Topsoil: Mid blackish brown silty sand		0.00–0.24
2002	Subsoil		Subsoil: mid reddish brown silty sand small fragment of coal present within layer		0.24 – 0.44
2003	Natural		Natural: light reddish brown silty clay with geological bands of sand		0.44+
2004	Cut	f/w 2005	Cut of gully/animal burrow very irregular sides and base slightly linear in form		0.44-0.61
2005	Secondary fill	2004	Mid yellowish red sandy clay inclusions of coal		0.44- 0.61

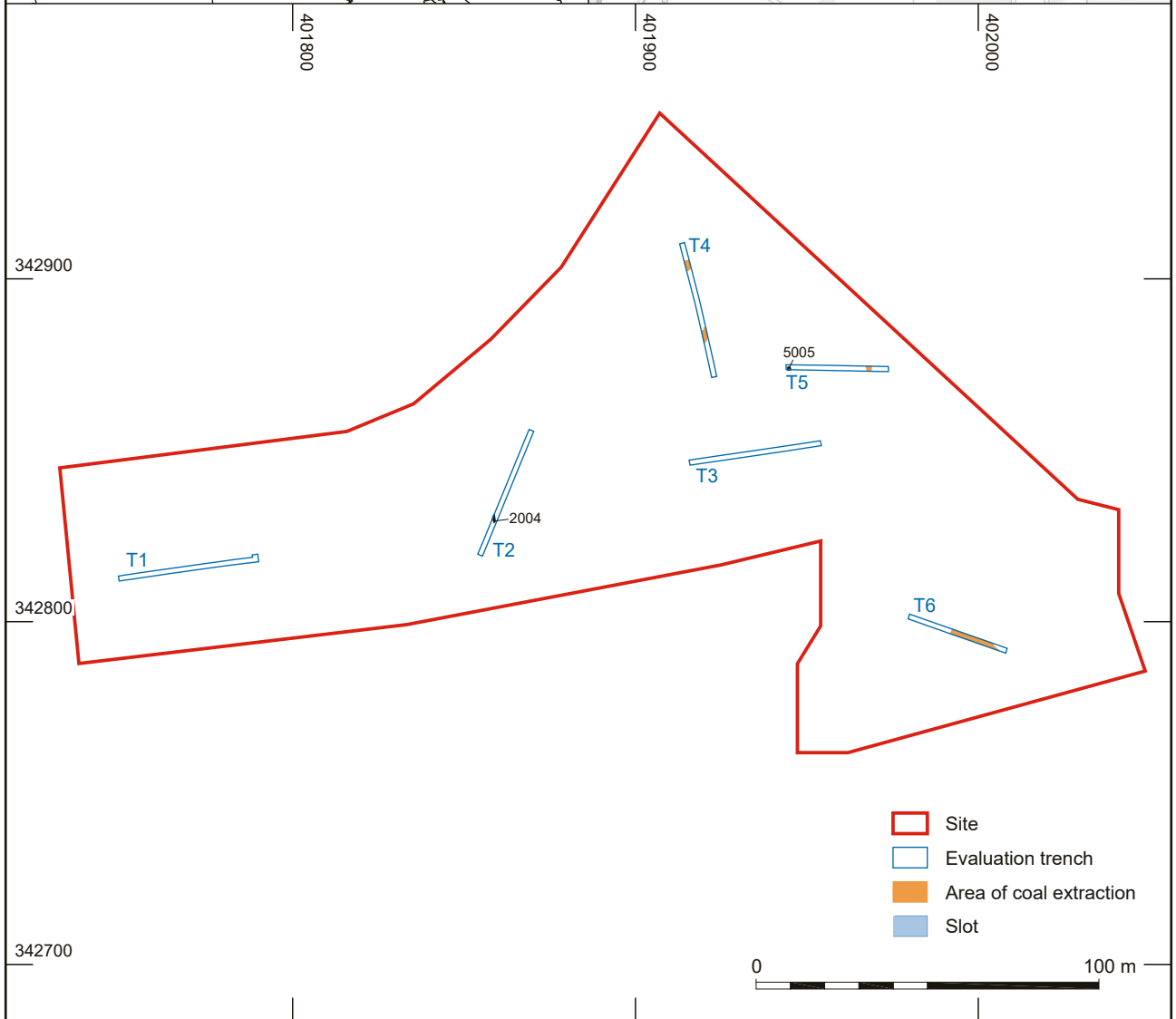
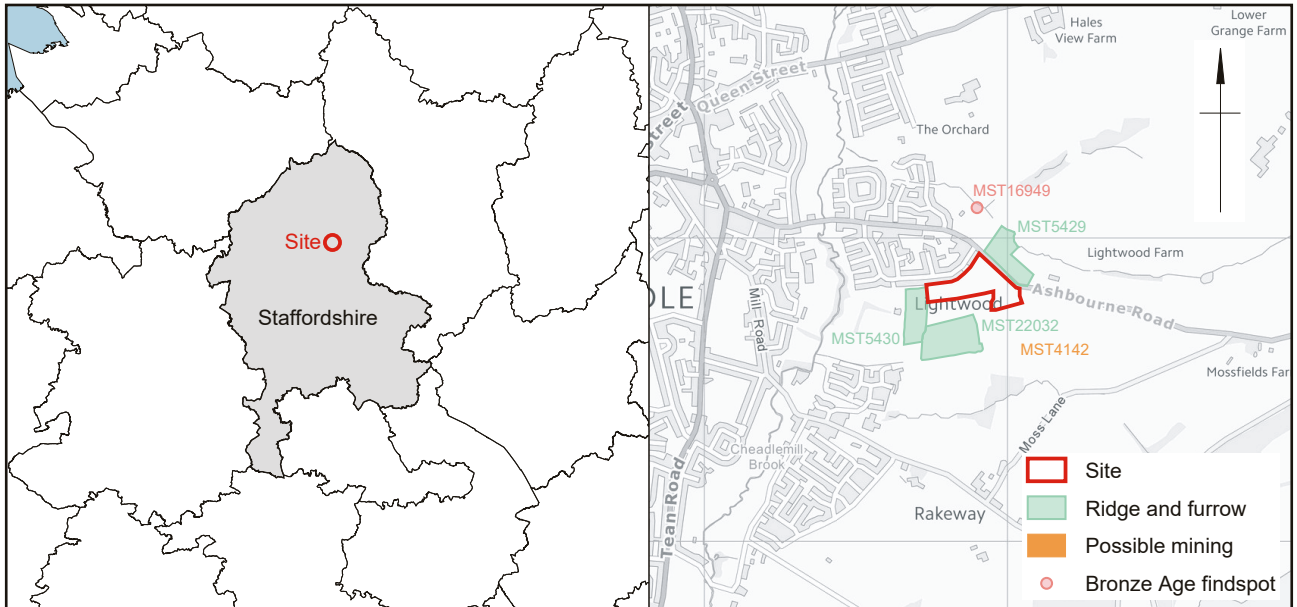
Trench 3		40 m x 1.8 m		NGR 401935 342849	175.47m OD
Context	Interpretation	Fill of	Description		Depth bgl (m)
3001	Topsoil		Topsoil: Mid blackish brown silty sand		0.00–0.24
3002	Subsoil		Subsoil: dark black silty sand large amount of coal present with bands of coal running through trench		0.24-0.46
3003	Natural		Natural: mixed alternating between yellow clay and coal in bands across trench		0.46+


Trench 4		40 m x 1.8 m		NGR 401918 342891	173.89m OD
Context	Interpretation	Fill of	Description		Depth bgl (m)
4001	Topsoil		Topsoil: Mid blackish brown silty sand inclusions of coal		0.00–0.32
4002	Natural		Natural: light yellow clay with bands of shale/coal running across the trench		0.32+

Trench 5		40 m x 1.8 m		NGR 401959 342874	174.92m OD
Context	Interpretation	Fill of	Description		Depth bgl (m)
5001	Topsoil		Topsoil: Mid blackish brown silty sand moderate amount of coal inclusions		0.00–0.22
5002	Subsoil		Subsoil: Dark greyish black ;sandysilt; very black from coal deposits		0.22-0.46
5003	Natural		Natural: light yellow clay with bands of coal running through very mixed		0.46+
5004	Fill	5005	Dark greyish brown silty sand with high ash content		0.0-0.94
5005	Cut		Cut of circular rubbish pit		0-0.94
5006	Cut	5008	Cut of possible coal extraction pit		0.46+
5007	Cut		Modern cut of geotechnical test pit		0.46+
5008	Fill	5006	Dark greyish brown mixed		0.46+



Trench 6	40 m x 1.8 m		NGR 401993 342796	176.74m OD
Context	Interpretation	Fill of	Description	Depth bgl (m)
6001	Topsoil		Topsoil: Greyish brown silty sand	0.00–0.24
6002	Redeposited		Capping layer of mid reddish clay	0.24- 0.68
6003	Tip layer		Dark greyish brown silty sand with ash content	0.68-0.92
6004	Layer		Dark greyish brown silty clay with ash content mottled with yellow clay and broken shale	0.92+



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Site location and trench locations showing HER data

Figure 1



Plate 1: Trench 1 looking west



Plate 2: Trench 2 looking north-east


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Plate 3: Trench 3 looking west



Plate 4: Trench 4 looking north


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Plate 5: Trench 5 looking east



Plate 6: Trench 6 looking east



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Plate 7: Trench 6 south-west facing section looking east



Plate 8: Trench 6 south-west facing section showing 6002 and 6003 looking north

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