

**BROWNS LANE,
TAMWORTH,
LICHFIELD.**

NGR: SK 213 057

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

June 2017
Report No. 1201



ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANCY, MANAGEMENT & FIELD SERVICES

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North Facing Shot During Pond Strip 6/4/16

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Quality Assurance

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Author: Tracy Michaels BSc, ACIfA

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Approved: R.King BA, MCIfA

QA Checked: D. King BA, MCIfA

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Archaeology

For the purposes of this project archaeology is taken to mean the study of past human societies through their material remains from prehistoric times through to the modern era. No rigid upper date limit has been set, but AD 1900 is used as a general cut off point.

Medieval

The period between the Norman Conquest (AD 1066) and *c.* AD 1500.

Natural

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site.

NGR

National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

OD

Ordnance Datum; used to express a given height above sea level.

OS

Ordnance Survey.

Post-Medieval

Refers to the period from *c.* AD 1500 to AD 1900.

Prehistoric

In Britain this term is generally used for any of the traditionally defined periods such as Palaeolithic (*c.* 480,000-12,000 BC), Mesolithic (*c.* 12,000-4000 BC), Neolithic (*c.* 4,000-2,500), Bronze Age (*c.* 2500-600 BC) and Iron Age (*c.* 800 BC – AD 43).

Romano-British

Term used to describe the fusion of indigenous late Iron Age traditions with the invasive Roman culture. Traditionally dated between AD 43 and AD 410.

Saxon

Term used to describe the period between the end of Roman Britain *c.* AD 410 and the Norman Conquest (AD 1066).

SUMMARY

Between March 2016 and April 2017 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological monitoring during groundworks for a residential development on a parcel of land northeast of Browns Lane, Tamworth.

The watching brief was carried out during initial drainage and road construction works and subsequently after large-scale soil stripping and excavation of house foundations. Following the first phase of work, principally in the west of the site, and in the absence of any significant finds or features being observed, it was agreed that only works in the east required monitoring. Some large areas were subsequently observed shortly after they had been stripped of topsoil and again no significant archaeology was apparent. A small number of house foundations were also monitored.

Given ongoing site constraints, it was agreed that trial trenches would be excavated where possible in areas which had yet to be monitored. Three trenches were excavated. As no archaeological remains were present within these evaluation trenches, the rest of the development was allowed to proceed without any further archaeological monitoring.

Artefactual evidence was sparse and was restricted to a single late Post-medieval/Modern pottery sherd and a few small fragments of undiagnostic CBM, which were present within the subsoil near the western edge of the site.

With the exception of three land drains within the northeastern area of the site. No further finds, features or deposits of archaeological origin were present within any of the monitored areas.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Between March 2016 and April 2017 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological monitoring during the groundworks for a residential development on a parcel of land northeast of Browns Lane, Tamworth (NGR: SK 213 057). The work was commissioned by BSA Heritage on behalf of Taylor Wimpey PLC.
- 1.2 The project was undertaken in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2016). The WSI was produced in accordance with the archaeological requirements issued by the archaeological advisor to Lichfield District Council at Staffordshire County Council as well as the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2008).
- 1.3 This document presents the findings of the archaeological monitoring.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Planning permission (**REF: 14/00018/OUTM**) was granted for residential and related development on a parcel of land to the northeast of Browns Lane, Tamworth.
- 2.2 A desk based assessment and geophysical survey had previously been completed for the site and a wider proposed development area (see below). Neither had identified high archaeological potential or any likely significant features in an area which appeared to have been cultivated since the Medieval period.
- 2.3 Given low archaeological potential, the archaeological advisor to Lichfield District Council at Staffordshire County Council advised that mitigation be limited to a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording be undertaken during the associated groundworks.
- 2.4 The site is located on the northern outskirts of Tamworth and to the southeast of Wigginton. The site occupies a north east facing hillside divided by a north-south aligned dry valley.
- 2.5 The underlying geology is *Mercia Mudstone Group - Mudstone. Sedimentary Bedrock*, with no superficial deposits recorded (BGS – online viewer).
- 2.6 Assessment of the archaeological potential of the site has been informed by past desk-based assessment and geophysical survey summarized by Tyler Grange's 2013 Heritage Statement (Tyler Grange 2013). A number of tumuli, which were identified in antiquity approximately 700m to the northwest of the study area, have been interpreted in the Staffordshire HER as possible Prehistoric barrow/burial mounds.
 - 2.6.1 There is no recorded evidence of later Prehistoric or Roman activity within the wider study area. However, the settlements of Wigginton and Tamworth were recorded by

the Domesday Survey of 1086 and ridge and furrow has been observed through aerial photographs across the study area.

- 2.6.2 A geophysical survey was completed across the site and land to its north in 2005 by Archaeological Services WYAS. Scanning was followed by detailed survey blocks, with two located within the current site area. Neither identified anomalies which suggested sub-surface remains. Vestiges of ridge and furrow were evident in some survey areas to the north.
- 2.7 The site therefore had limited potential for archaeological remains, predominately dating to the Prehistoric and Medieval period. This did not prejudice the works against evidence relating to other periods.

3 AIMS

- 3.1 The aims of the archaeological watching brief recording were to make a complete record of all features of archaeological interest that were exposed during groundworks associated with the development, including during the installation of services. The fieldwork would therefore establish, as far as practicable, a record of any archaeologically significant activities that had taken place within the site.
- 3.2 These aims were achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:
- i) to define and identify the nature of archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible;
 - ii) to attempt to characterise the nature and preservation of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning and extent of features present on the site;
 - iii) to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence which would attempt to determine the complexity of the horizontal and vertical stratigraphy present, and to recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples;
 - iv) to recover palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 All initial intrusive groundworks were monitored and recorded in order to identify any archaeological finds, features or deposits. Groundworks were carried out under the supervision of the archaeologist, with all excavations undertaken using a mechanical excavator using a toothless bucket (as appropriate to the ground conditions).
- 4.2 Following an almost complete absence of observed finds or features in the west of the site, it was agreed that subsequent construction works in that area did not require

monitoring. Communication of works was less straightforward in early 2017 and areas had already been stripped when the archaeologist visited site. However, areas had been stripped to close to the top of natural and upon archaeological inspection there was no indication of any sub-surface features or associated material. Monitoring of the excavation of foundations was also negative.

- 4.3 Given constraints due to construction activity and stored soils and materials on site, it was agreed that trial trenches would be opened where possible and in areas which had not been monitored previously or where the exact depth of natural was unclear. On Figure 2 are recorded the trench locations, areas where excavation down to the natural substrates was observed (marked in red) or areas which were topsoil stripped only (marked in green).
- 4.4 All excavation and recording work was undertaken in accordance with the WSI and the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual.

5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- 5.1 The stratigraphy across the site was fairly uniform. The natural deposits consisted of a red/orange sand, with pebble and gravel inclusions, occasional inclusions of mudstone were also present in the southern half of the site. This was sealed by a grey brown silty clay subsoil, which was between 0.1 to 0.4m thick. This was in turn sealed by a brown clay silt topsoil up to 0.4m thick.
- 5.2 However, there appeared to be a degree of Modern disturbance in the central area of the site. Excavations within the area of Plot 164 did not contain any traces of subsoil, with the topsoil directly sealing the natural deposits and within the excavations between plots 87 and 113, the original topsoil appeared to have been removed and a Modern black humic clay silt was present instead. However, the subsoil in this area appeared undisturbed. There was some degree of variation in the heights across the site, with the natural deposits present at 81.16m OD in the south and then sloping down to 77.24m OD in the north.
- 5.3 Artefactual evidence was restricted to a single sherd of late Post-medieval/Modern pottery, which was present in the subsoil during the excavations within Plot 4. However, there was no evidence of this being associated with an archaeological feature or deposit and so its position was noted and then it was discarded. Also, within the excavations for a new sewer within the eastern road area close to Plot 16, a few small fragments of undiagnostic CBM were noted within the subsoil.
- 5.4 During the excavation of the pond within the northwest area of the site, three land drains were identified on a northwest-southeast and northeast-southwest alignment.

- 5.5 In order to mitigate the need for further watching brief during the remainder of the works, it was decided that a number of test trenches would be excavated within the areas that had been stripped prior to the arrival of the archaeologist. These areas were first visually investigated in order to identify any exposed archaeological finds, features or deposits prior to the trenching, which would then help to clarify the results of the visual walk over. The location of these trenches are marked on Figure 2.
- 5.5.1 **Trench 1** was orientated northeast-southwest, was 20m long and 1m wide. The trench was excavated to a depth of 0.6m into clean natural substrates and demonstrated that the recent ground reduction in this area had not been subsequently masked by any redeposited material. No top or subsoil was present within the evaluated area.
- 5.5.2 **Trench 2** was orientated approximately east-west, was 4m long and 1m wide. The trench was excavated to a depth of 0.2m into clean natural substrates and demonstrated that the recent ground reduction in this area had not been subsequently masked by any redeposited material. No top or subsoil was present within the evaluated area.
- 5.5.3 **Trench 3** was orientated east northeast-west southwest, was 30m long and 1m wide. The trench was excavated to a depth of 0.4m, into clean natural substrates and demonstrated that the recent ground reduction in this area had not been subsequently masked by any redeposited material. No top or subsoil was present within the evaluated area.
- 5.6 No further finds, features or deposits of archaeological origin were present within any of the monitored areas.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Artefactual evidence was sparse and was restricted to a single late Post-medieval/Modern pottery sherd and a few small fragments of undiagnostic CBM, which were present within the subsoil near the western edge of the site.
- 6.2 With the exception of three land drains within the northeastern area of the site, no further finds, features or deposits of archaeological origin were present within any of the monitored areas.

7 REFERENCES

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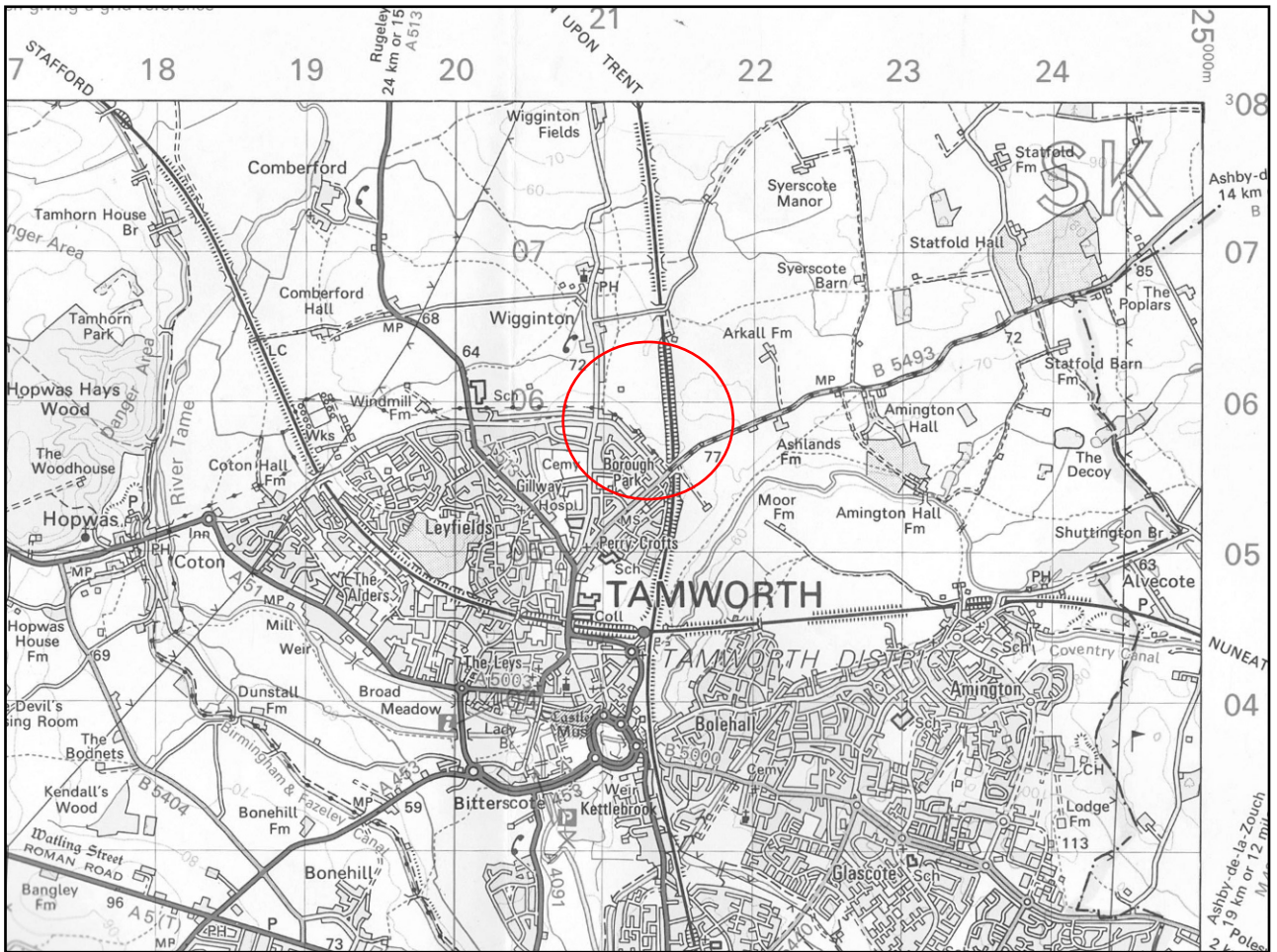
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8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Accession Code:

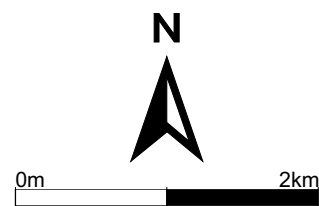


FIGURE 1: Site Location

residential development at land off browns lane, tamworth

Notes:



STEEL PALGADE 1.8M HIGH
TRESPASS PROOF FENCE TO BE
PROVIDED ALONGSIDE RAILWAY
BOUNDARY

- ORDER OF BUILD
- SHOW HOME
- SALES CAR PARK
- COMPOUND
- COMPOUND CAR PARK
- MATERIALS
- ROADS & SEWERS

Site: Browns Lane

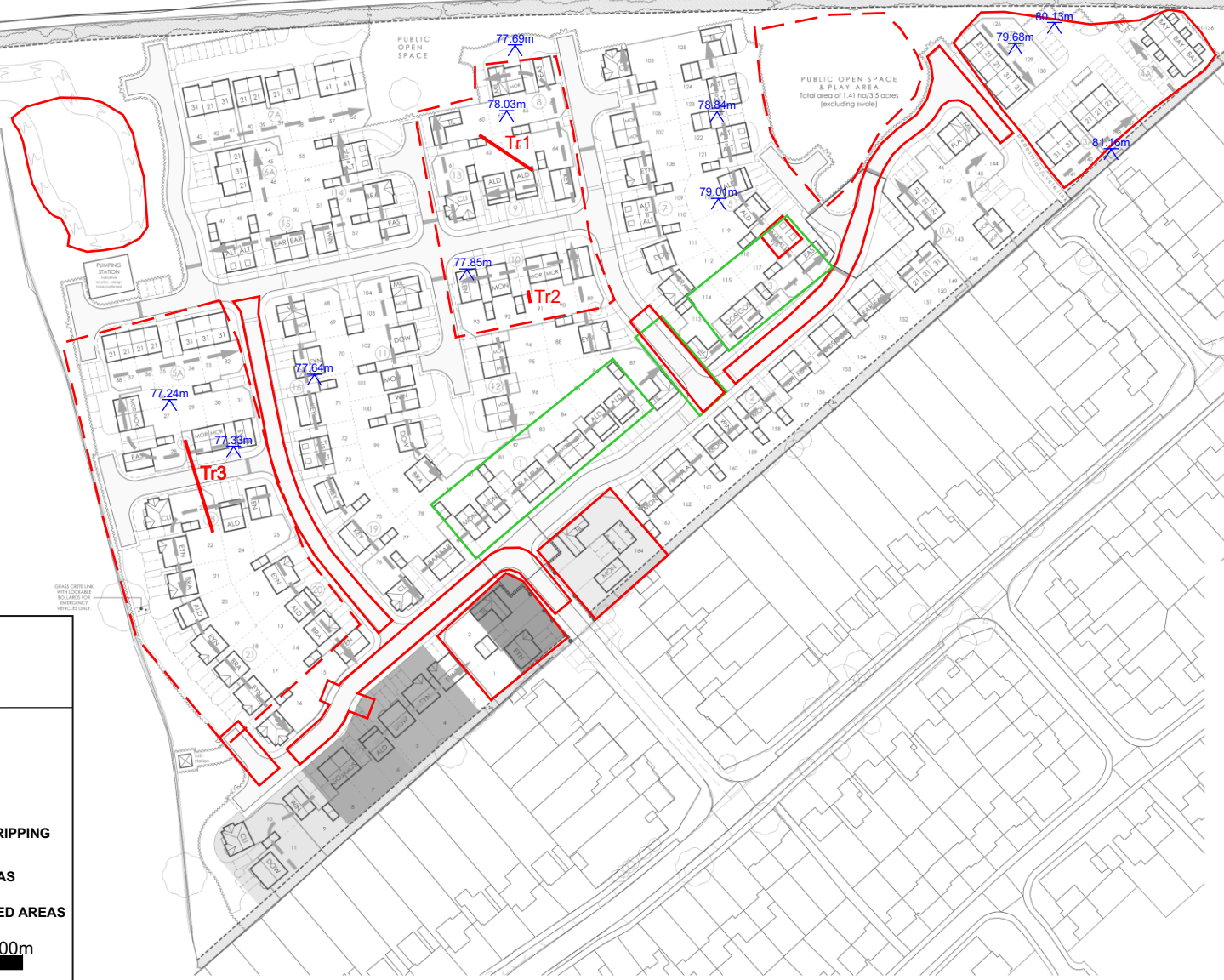
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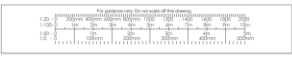


- AREAS OBSERVED AFTER STRIPPING
 - MONITORED EXCAVATED AREAS
 - MONITORED TOPSOIL STRIPPED AREAS
- 0m 100m

FIGURE 2: Site Plan



Rev. A Updated to Planning Layout Rev. L 01/12/15
Revisions:



Taylor Wimpey

Taylor Wimpey North Midlands
Chase House, Park Plaza, Heath Hayes, Cannock, Staffordshire WS12 2DD

T 01543 496700
F 01543 496761
www.taylorwimpey.co.uk

Project: residential development at land off browns lane, tamworth

Drawing: LPE layout Scale: 1:2000

Drawn: rdw Project no: 2917 LPE-01 Rev. A
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LPE layout