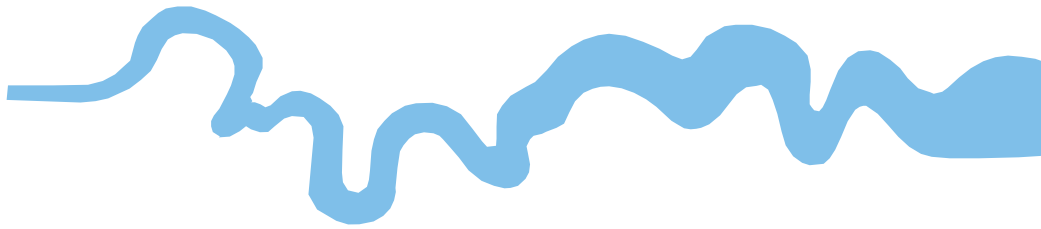


T V A S



NORTH MIDLANDS

**Dale Gap Farm, Barrow Hill,
Rocester, Staffordshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Helen Daniel

Site Code: DGR18/78

(SK 1126 4080)

Dale Gap Farm, Barrow Hill, Rocester, Staffordshire

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
for Mr G. Cotterill**

by Helen Daniel

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code DGR 18/78

April 2019

Summary

Site name: Dale Gap Far, Barrow Hill, Rocester, Staffordshire

Grid reference: SK 1126 4080

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 29th March and 1st April 2019

Project coordinator: Dr Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Helen Daniel

Site code: DGR 18/78

Area of site: 401.81 sq m

Summary of results: The watching brief was carried out as intended and monitored all surface stripping and landscape works associated with the redevelopment. However, no finds or features of archaeological interest were identified during the course of the fieldwork.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at TVAS North Midlands, Stoke-on-Trent and will be deposited with the Potteries Museum, Stoke-on-Trent or Archaeology Data Service in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 11.04.19 Steve Preston✓ 11.04.19
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Dale Gap Farm, Barrow Hill, Rocester, Staffordshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Helen Daniel

Report 18/78a

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Dale Gap Farm, Barrow Hill, Rocester, Staffordshire (SK 1126 4080) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr G. Cotterill of Dale Gap Farm Barrow Hill, Rocester Staffordshire.

Planning consent (P/2016/00301) has been granted by East Staffordshire Borough Council for the conversion of the existing agricultural barns into two dwellings. The consent is subject to a condition (3) which requires a programme of archaeological work to be implemented. This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and Staffordshire County Council's policies on archaeology. In this case, further to the building recording that was carried out on the redundant agricultural buildings (Davey 2018), it was determined that this investigation would take the form of an archaeological watching brief during construction.

The field investigation was carried out to a written scheme of investigation approved by Mr Shane Kelleher, Staffordshire County Archaeologist (TVAS 2019). The fieldwork was undertaken by Helen Daniel on 29th March and 1st April 2019 and the site code is DGR 18/78. The archive is presently held at TVAS North Midlands, Stoke-on-Trent and will be deposited with The Potteries Museum, Stoke-on-Trent or Archaeology Data Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

Dale Gap Farm is situated to the north of the village of Rocester, on Barrow Hill which forms a prominent spur between the River Churnet to the west and the River Dove to the east. It is located on the western side of the B5030 road in an area of farmland. To the south-west is Barrowhill Hall care home. The site lies at approximately 140m above Ordnance Datum and the underlying geology is recorded as glacial sand and gravel above boulder clay (till) (BGS 2019).

Historical background

A map of Ashbourne from 1836 mentions Dale Gap but does not appear to show the farm buildings, though this could be due to the small scale of the map. Neither is the farm shown on the Rocester Tithe map of 1850, however the farm appears to be located within a detached part of the parish of Denstone in Alton and along with its immediate surroundings is therefore not illustrated. No tithe map for Denstone in Alton could be located in either the Staffordshire record office or the National Archives.

The map on which the farm first appears is the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1881. It shows three barns as present and arranged in a 'U' formation. There is no discernible change to the layout on the revised map of 1900 and the only addition to the 1992 version is a new barn, erected to the south of the farmyard. The smaller scale maps from the 1950's also appear to show no alterations. The next available large scale map is from 1975 and shows extensive additions to the northern side of the barns, an extension to the eastern barn, the demolition of a barn on the southern side and a large new building to the west. No further changes are recorded up to 1994. Between then and the present day, the northernmost building constructed during the 1950-1970's extensions have been demolished. Prior to the building recording survey in May 2018, the remaining extensions on the northern side of the complex had also been demolished (Davey 2018).

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its direct position over the projected defensive line of a Roman marching camp. It is not certain whether the earthwork is a fort, a camp or some kind of signal station. Bearing in mind the proximity to the proven fort site in Rocester and the unprotected nature of that fort's northern flank, on balance this enclosure is perhaps more likely to be a signal station (Wardle 2002).

The site's proximity to the River Dove, c.400m due east of Dale Gap Farm, may also indicate the potential for the presence of later prehistoric activity as is found on watercourses elsewhere in Staffordshire. A number of findspots are also noted nearby, most notably 1st century Samian ware and coins found during an excavation of a small mound to the north of the fort by J. F. Lucas c.1870 (VCH 1908). In addition, an archaeological evaluation opened two trenches on the site of a proposed new farmyard building, recording Roman finds and an undated NW-SE linear which was present in both (Krakowicz 2000).

Methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits prior to any impact caused by the ground works within the area of development. This involved the archaeological monitoring of all areas of intrusive ground works, in this case surface stripping of concrete hard-standing and associated landscaping works. More specific aims were to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived, to determine if archaeological deposits of any period were present and to identify, sufficiently record and understand any archaeological evidence which may be encountered during the works.

Results

The area of the site that required a watching brief consisted of two separate areas of concrete hard-standing (north and west yards) and a connecting driveway (Fig 2). The northern yard and the driveway were stripped of approximately 0.22m of concrete along with 0.05m of a mixed deposit of brick rubble and hardcore which looked like modern made ground. The average depth of this area was 0.26m and the natural substrate was not reached at any place (Fig 3, Pl. 1).

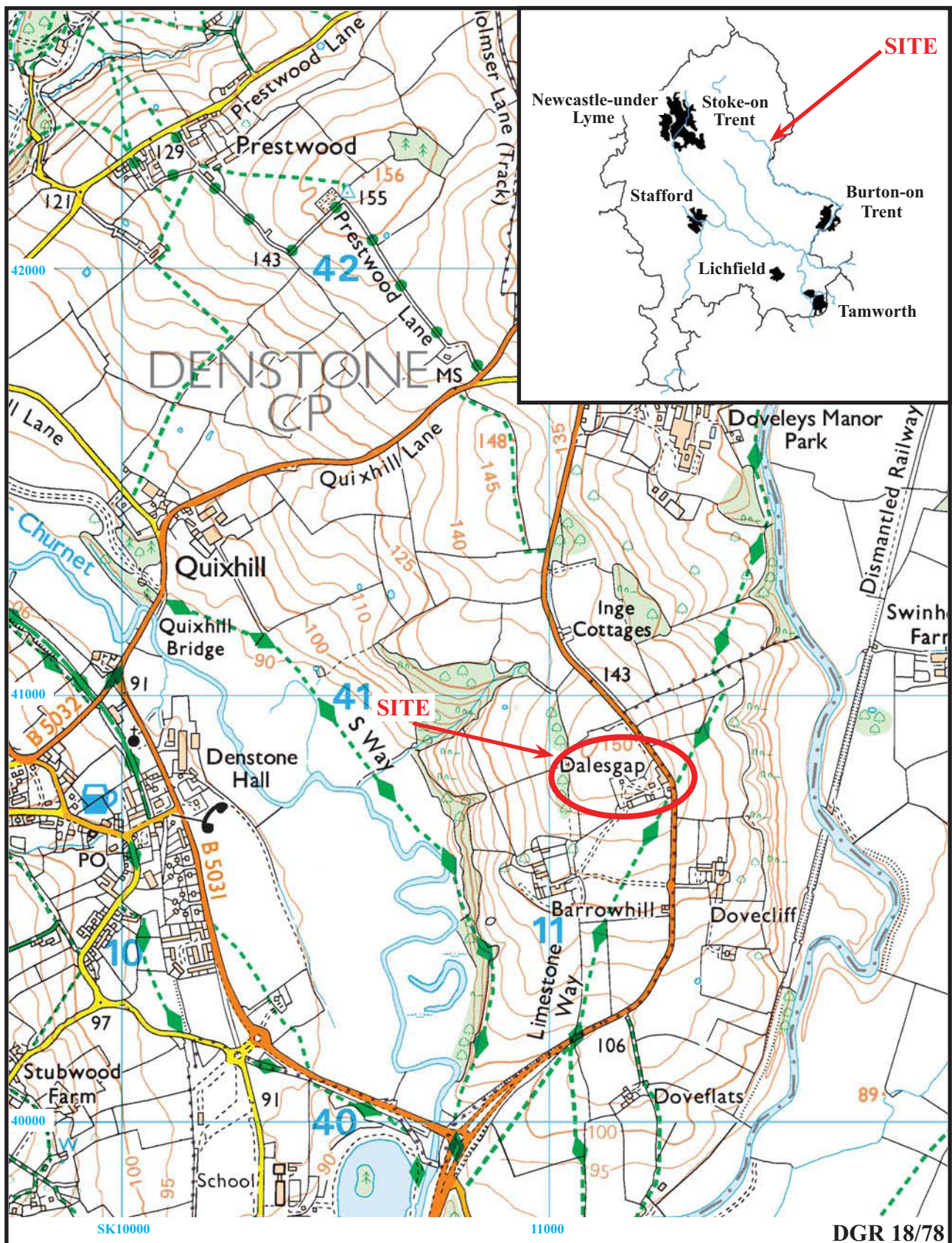
The western yard was initially stripped of approximately 0.18m of concrete along with 0.32m of a mixed deposit of sand and brick rubble which again looked like modern made ground. These deposits were overlying the natural geology of orange/brown sand and gravel with bands of red boulder clay. The average depth of this area was 0.54m (Fig 3, Pl. 2). No archaeological features or finds were identified in any of the areas during the watching brief.

Conclusion

The watching brief was carried out as intended in the project specification. Firstly, it monitored an area to the north of the buildings along with the pathway connecting it, where concrete hard-standing was stripped away but the area was too shallow to reveal any horizons of archaeological interest. This was followed by the monitoring of an area to the west of the buildings, where concrete hard-standing and made ground were removed down to the level of the natural substrate. These were monitored for finds and features of archaeological interest; however none were identified during the course of this fieldwork.

References

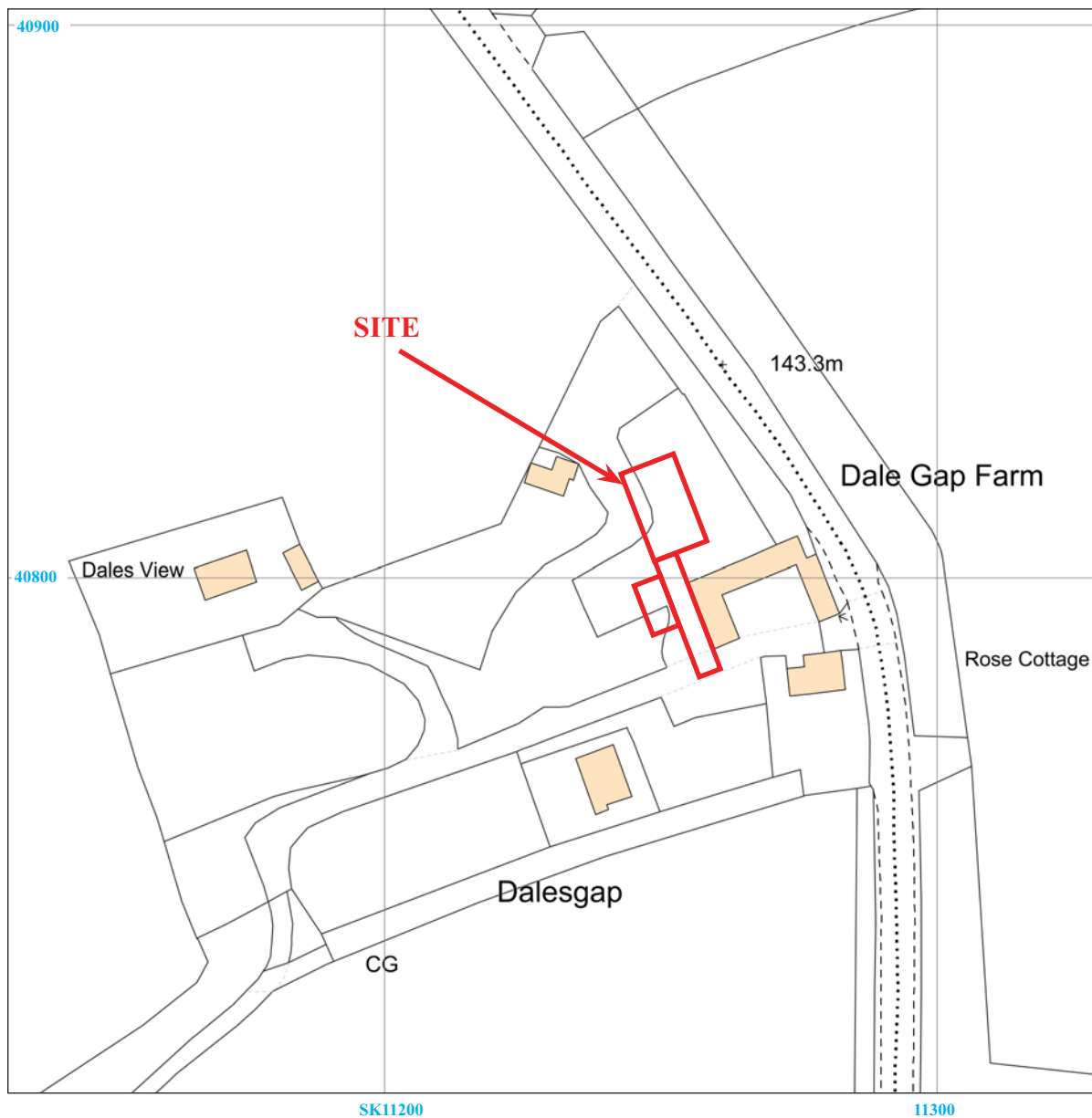
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Archaeological Watching Brief**
Figure 1. Location of site within Rocester and Staffordshire.

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DGR 18/78

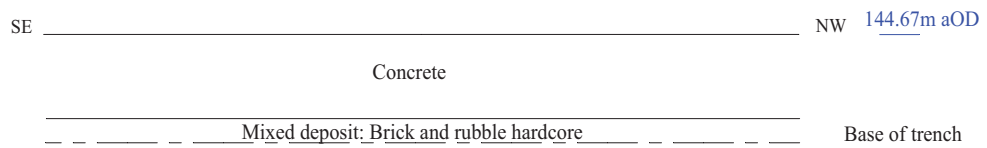


**Dale Gap Farm, Rocester,
Staffordshire, 2019**
Archaeological Watching Brief
Figure 2. Detailed location of site off B5030 Ashbourne Rd.

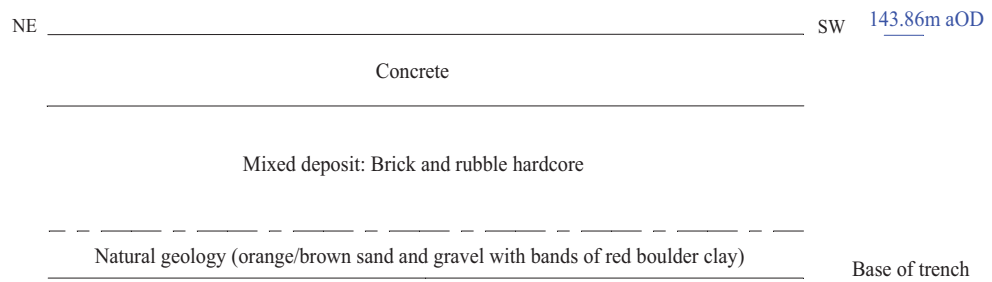
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North Yard and Driveway



West Yard



Concrete

**Dale Gap Farm, Rocester,
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Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 3. Representative sections.





Plate 1. North Yard, looking north, Scales: 1m and 1m.



Plate 2. West Yard and driveway, looking east, Scales: 1m and 1m.

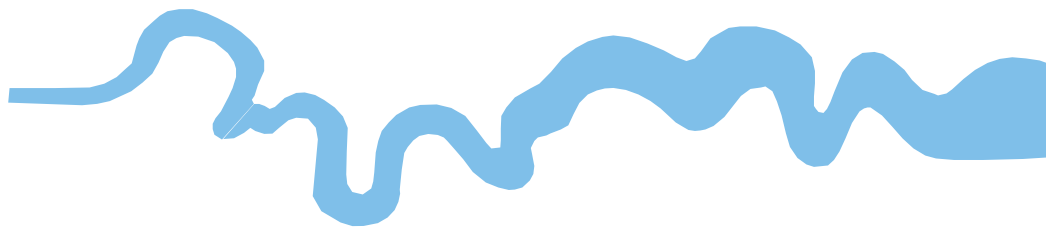
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**Dale Gap Farm, Rocester,
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Plates 1 and 2.**



TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late -----	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle -----	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early -----	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC
↓	↓



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