

**Archaeological Field
Evaluation**

On behalf of

John Needham Associates

Concerning

Land N of Granary Steps
Bridgnorth
Shropshire

August 2016



Report Specification:

Compilation:

Joe France BSc

Artwork:

Holly Litherland BA

Editing:

George Children MA MCI/fA

Final Edit & Approval:

Neil Shurety Dip. M G M Inst M

Report Ref:

BA1605GSB

Grid Reference:

NGR: SO 71819 93346

OS Licence No:

100055758

Date:

August 2016

Cover: View looking N across the site at Granary Steps, Bridgnorth

General Enquiries: E: ask@borderarchaeology.com | T: [01568 610101](tel:01568610101)

Border Archaeology Regional Offices

Bristol

Trelawney House, Surrey Street,
Bristol, BS2 8PS
T: 0117 3878920

Leeds

No 1 Leeds, 26 Whitehall Road,
Leeds, LS12 1BE
T: 0113 3570390

Leominster (Administration)

Chapel Walk, Burgess Street,
Leominster, HR6 8DE
T: 01568 610101

London

23 Hanover Square, London, W1S 1JB
T: 020 3714 9345

Milton Keynes

Luminous House, 300 South Row,
Milton Keynes, MK9 2FR
T: 01908 933765

Newport

Merlin House, No1 Langstone Business Park,
Newport, NP18 2HJ
T: 01633 415339

Winchester

Basepoint Business Centre, Winnal Valley Road,
Winchester, SO23 0LD
T: 01962 832777

Bristol | Leeds | Leominster | London | Milton Keynes | Newport | Winchester

Contents:

1	Executive Summary.....	2
2	Introduction	3
	2.1 Soils & Geology	4
3	Historical and Archaeological Background	4
4	Methodology.....	4
	4.1 Recording	5
5	Results and Discussion	7
	5.1 TP 1.....	7
	5.2 TP 2.....	8
	5.3 Test Pit 3.....	9
6	Conclusion.....	10
7	Copyright.....	10
8	Bibliography	10

1 Executive Summary

Border Archaeology Ltd (BA) was instructed by John Needham Associates Broad Street Ludlow Shropshire to undertake a limited programme of archaeological field evaluation with respect to the proposed construction of a single four-bed dwelling with garage and car lift on land to the north of Granary Steps (NGR: SO 71819 93346) (Planning Ref. 15/05277/FUL).

The limited extent of the work reflects substantial Health & Safety and access constraints associated with this site. Three small test pits, each measuring 1.00m × 1.00m, were excavated by hand to assess the survival of any archaeological features, structures or deposits present. Each pit was excavated to the natural geology or to a working depth not exceeding c. 1.00m.

Each pit contained materials in both topsoil and subsoil associated with structural clearance; however, no distinct archaeological deposits were present.

With the exception of Pit 1, which reached bedrock, the pits did not exceed the depth of subsoil and clearance waste due to Health & Safety restrictions. It is likely this material was associated either with the clearance of the land in the late 1940s (when Rock House, the post-medieval house formerly occupying the site, was demolished) or with activity relating to construction of the Severn Valley Railway tunnel in 1862, which runs directly beneath the site.

2 Introduction

Border Archaeology Ltd (BA) was instructed by John Needham Associates Broad Street Ludlow Shropshire to undertake a limited programme of archaeological field evaluation with respect to the proposed construction of a single four-bed dwelling with garage and car lift on land to the N of Granary Steps (NGR: SO 71819 93346) (Planning Ref. 15/05277/FUL).

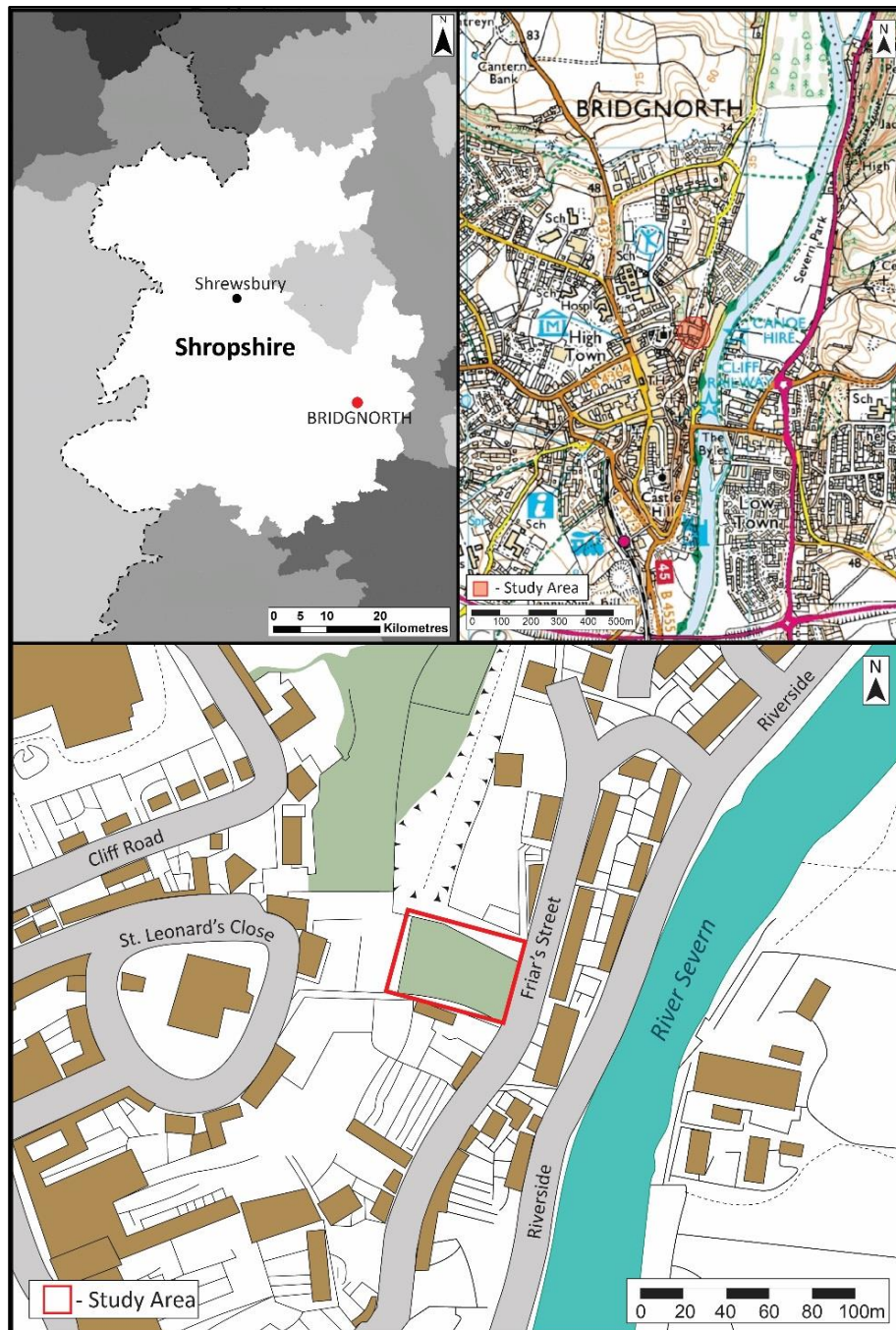


Fig. 1: Plan showing site location

Based upon the results of BA's previous Desk-Based Assessment (BA 2106) submitted in January 2016, Shropshire County Council (SCC) recommended that, in view of the significant Health & Safety and access constraints associated with this site, with no possibility in practical terms of getting suitable machinery onto site, initial evaluation should comprise three hand-excavated Test Pits (TPs).

2.1 Soils & Geology

The Soil Survey of England and Wales (SSEW 1983) defines classifies the site as 551a BRIDGNORTH Permo-Triassic and Carboniferous reddish sandstone. This underlies well drained sandy and coarse loamy soils, defined as brown sands. On the E border of the site, closer to the river, the soils change to 561a WHARFE river alluvium, consisting of deep stoneless fine loamy brown alluvial soils.

3 Historical and Archaeological Background

A detailed discussion of sources relating to the archaeological and historical background to the proposed development has been previously undertaken by BA (BA 2016).

4 Methodology

The programme of archaeological work was carried out in accordance with BA's *Archaeological Field Recording Manual* (2014) and with advice contained within *Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014) and *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation*, with specific reference to paragraphs 2ii (hand-excavated test pits) and 3.3.9 (Health and Safety regulations and requirements) (ClfA 2014, 11, 12).

BA is additionally cognizant of the research themes and priorities detailed within *The Archaeology of the West Midlands: A Framework for Research* (Watt 2011) and where possible within the limited scope of the work it was aimed to address these.

The limited extent of the work reflects the substantial Health & Safety considerations and access constraints associated with this site.

Three small TPs, each measuring 1.00m × 1.00m, were thus excavated by hand to assess the survival, extent, quality, condition and significance of any archaeological remains (*fig. 2*). Each pit was excavated to natural geology or to a working depth not exceeding 1.00m. TP 1 was opened in the approximate centre of the footprint of the proposed dwelling (NGR: SO 71808 93342) (53.93 AOD), TP 2 to the N (NGR: SO 71808 93347) (53.93 AOD) and TP 3 was opened to the SW of TP1 (NGR: SO 71805 93341) (54.976AOD) (*fig. 2*).

Additionally, any deposits identified as offering potential for palaeoenvironmental assessment were to be sampled using 10-litre sample buckets and processed; however, no suitable deposits were encountered.

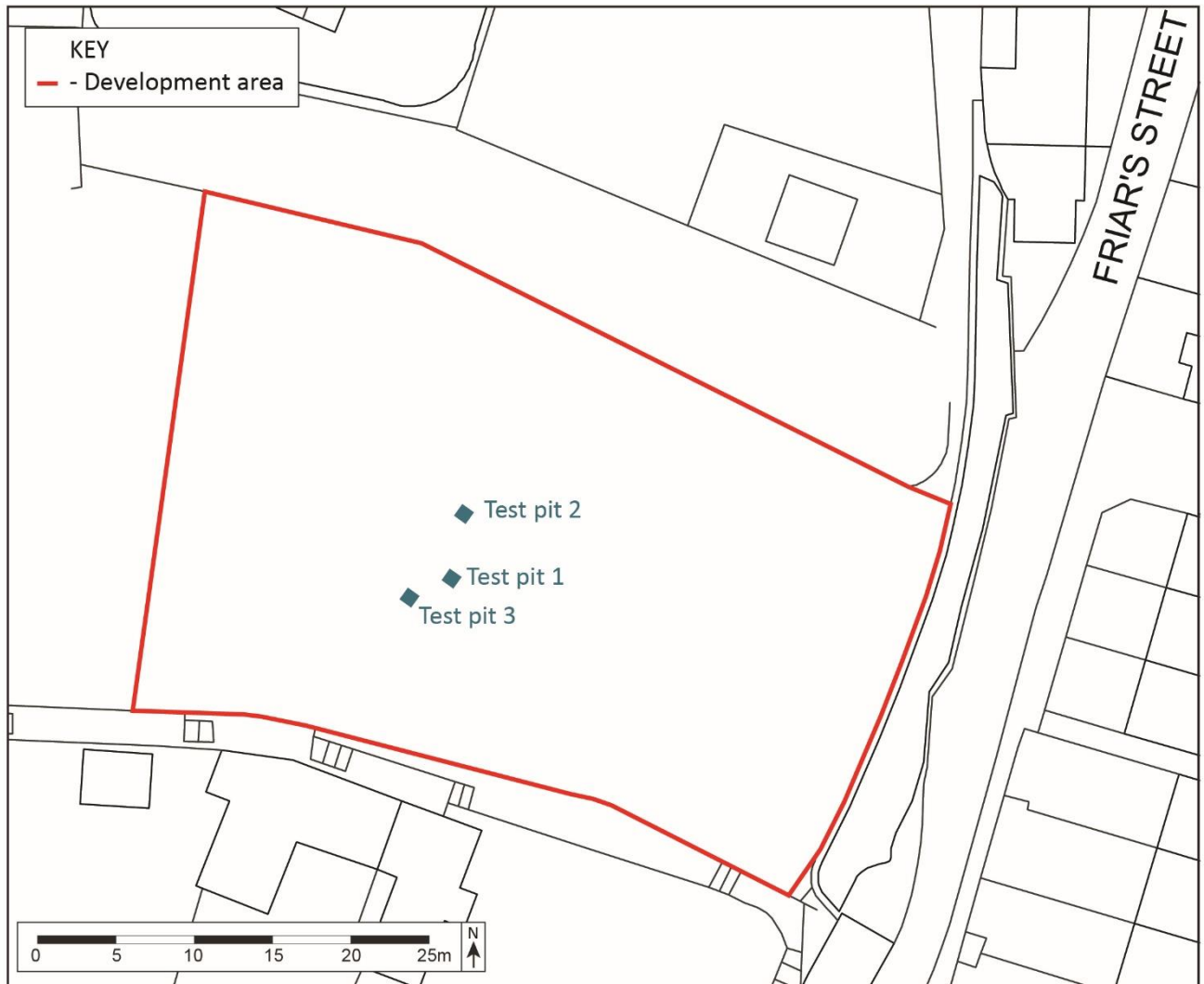


Fig. 2: Plan showing location of Test Pits

4.1 Recording

Full written, graphic and photographic records were made in accordance with BA's *Archaeological Field Recording Manual* (2014) and included:

- A standard numbered context record for each stratigraphic unit encountered.
- Location plans showing excavation areas drawn at an appropriate scale and tied into Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid data.

- A high-resolution digital photographic record. Each photograph contains an appropriate scale and board. Photographs were indexed and cross-referenced to written site records with details of subject and direction of view recorded in a photographic register and on, indexed by frame number.
- TP plans and sections on gridded, archive-stable polyester film at a scale of 1:10. All drawings were numbered and listed in a drawing register, these drawing numbers being cross-referenced to written site records.

5 Results and Discussion

5.1 TP 1

Item	Context No.	Date	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds				
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.
001	1001	Modern	Layer	Topsoil	Loose dark greyish-brown fine silty sand; occasional sub-rounded stones; heavy root disturbance; 0.48m deep.	-	✓	✓	✓	-
002	1002	C19 or later	Layer	Subsoil	Loose mid reddish-brown silty sand; 0.57m deep.	-	✓	✓	✓	-

The TP was situated within the proposed boundary for the dwelling (*Plate 1; fig. 2*). The pit was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.13m, whereupon the red sandstone bedrock was encountered. The topsoil was heavily affected by rooting and contained a great deal of waste material, including CBM, glass, wood and ferrous items, which were not retained. The subsoil likewise contained a mixture of 19th -and 20th -century ceramics and glass. It is likely this is material was deposited during land clearance in the late 1940s (associated with the demolition of Rock House, the late 18th/19th -century residence formerly occupying the site) or the construction of the Severn Valley Railway tunnel in 1862.



Plate 1: N-facing section of TP 1

5.2 TP 2

Item	Context No.	Date	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds				
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.
003	2001	Modern	Layer	Topsoil	Loose dark greyish-brown fine silty sand; occasional sub-rounded stones; heavy root disturbance; 0.62m deep.	-	✓	✓	✓	-
004	2002	C19 or later	Layer	Subsoil	Loose mid reddish-brown silty sand; >0.45m deep.	-	✓	✓	✓	-

The TP was situated N of TP 1 within the approximate boundary of the proposed dwelling (*Plate 2; fig. 2*). The pit was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.03m, whereupon excavation ceased due to Health and Safety constraints. Rooting and waste material, including CBM, glass, wood and ferrous items (noted but not retained), were present throughout the topsoil. The subsoil likewise contained a mixture of 19th- and 20th-century ceramics and glass. It is likely this is material was deposited during late 1940s site clearance activity or 19th-century railway construction.



Plate. 2: N-facing section TP 2

5.3 Test Pit 3

Item	Context No.	Date	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds				
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.
005	3001	Modern	Layer	Topsoil	Loose dark greyish-brown fine silty sand; occasional sub-rounded stones; heavy root disturbance; 0.41 deep.	-	✓	✓	✓	-
006	3002	C19 or later	Layer	Subsoil	Loose mid reddish-brown silty sand; >0.32m deep.	-	✓	✓	✓	-
007	3003	C19 or later	Layer	Redeposited clearance material	Very firm but poorly consolidated sandstone rubble & brick in a silty sand matrix; > 0.43m deep.	-	✓	✓	✓	-

TP 3 was situated SW of TP 1, within the approximate boundary of the proposed dwelling (*Plate 3; fig. 2*). The pit was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.00m. The topsoil was heavily rooted, with frequent evidence of waste material, including CBM, glass, wood and ferrous items, which were noted but not retained. The subsoil similarly comprised a mixed deposit of soil and 19th -and 20th -century ceramics and glass. Unlike the previous two pits, the subsoil was seen to seal a layer of redeposited clearance material (3003). It was formed of sandstone rubble and CBM in a silty sand matrix and is appears likely that this material, and the finds from the top- and subsoils were deposited during the land clearance in the late 1940s (associated with the demolition of Rock House) or construction of the Severn Valley Railway tunnel in 1862.



Plate 3: N-facing Section TP 3

6 Conclusion

Although the overall archaeological potential of the site has been assessed as high, with specific potential identified for revealing evidence of medieval and post-medieval occupation, (BA 2016, 1), the evaluation did not reveal any deposits, features or finds of archaeological significance.

The relatively small scale of the work, which was constrained in its extent by substantial access and Health and Safety considerations, reduced the opportunity for the discovery of isolated features or finds and limited investigation of any evidence for late 17th -century or earlier medieval occupation, the potential for which was noted in BA's previous Desk-Based Assessment (BA 2016, 1)

All three pits showed evidence for a substantial phase of land clearance activity which probably relates to the destruction of Rock House, which is documented as having been demolished for sanitary reasons in 1948, although it is possible that it could also relate to landscaping activity which appears to have occurred to the N of the site, associated with the construction of the Severn Valley Railway tunnel (which runs beneath the site) during the mid-19th century.

The results from TP 3 suggest that clearance and landscaping activity may have affected any potential deeper deposits, as the waste material is seen to exist at a depth of at least 0.48-0.72m.

7 Copyright

Border Archaeology Ltd shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports, tender documents or other project documents, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, with all rights reserved, excepting that it hereby provides a licence to the client and the Council for the use of the report by the client and the Council in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the Project Specification to use the documentation for their statutory functions and to provide copies of it to third parties as an incidental to such functions.

8 Bibliography

1884 1:500 Ordnance Survey Town Plan of Bridgnorth

Border Archaeology Ltd, 2014, *Archaeological Field Recording Manual*

Border Archaeology, 2016, *Desk-Based Assessment: Land N of Granary Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire*, BA Report Ref: BA1605GSB

CIfA, 2014, *Code of conduct*

CIfA, 2014, *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials*

Lee, E., 2015, *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide*, Historic England

Slater, T.R., 1988, *Medieval Composite Towns in England: the evidence from Bridgnorth, Shropshire*, University of Birmingham School of Geography Working Paper Series **41**

(SSEW) Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983, *Soil Survey of England and Wales*, Silsoe

Watt S., 2011, *The Archaeology of the West Midlands: A Framework for Research*

Report Title		Report Ref	
Archaeological Field Evaluation of Land N of Granary Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire		BA1605GSB	
Report written by	Joe France BSc		
Reported edited by	George Children MA MCI fA		
Issue No.	Status	Date	Approved for issue
1	Final	August 2016	Neil Shurety Dip. M G M Inst M