

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:
LAND AT BERNHARDS GARDEN CENTRE
BILTON ROAD
RUGBY
WARWICKSHIRE**

on behalf of Miller Homes



Nigel Wilson

December 2007

ASC: 630/RBR/2

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Site Data

<i>ASC site code:</i>	RBR	<i>Project no:</i>	630
<i>County:</i>	Warwickshire		
<i>District:</i>	Rugby		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Bilton		
<i>Parish:</i>	Bilton		
<i>NGR:</i>	SP 48949 74586		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	1.83 ha		
<i>Present land use:</i>	Brownfield (former garden centre)		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Residential development		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	R07/1138/MAJP		
<i>Client:</i>	Miller Homes 3620 Parkside Birmingham Business Park Solihull B37 7YG		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Philip Brown		
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Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Nigel Wilson	<i>Date:</i>	17 th December 2007
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<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
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<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
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Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

During November 2007, an evaluation was undertaken on the site of Bernhards Garden Centre, Bilton Road, Rugby. The work was required in advance of residential redevelopment of the site. It was considered possible that evidence for brick making would be found on the site. Though no evidence for brick making was revealed in the evaluation it is highly likely that several of the brick buildings which had been used by the garden centre would originally have been associated with the brickworks. However as these buildings were demolished their precise date and function remain unclear. From the sections exposed where demolition work had taken place it was clear that much of the site had been significantly truncated. It was not clear if this truncation took place during the lifetime of the brickworks or later. A number of modern features were identified in the trenches, including a field boundary ditch which was filled in during the 1930's, a series of four shallow north south orientated trenches and several service runs.

1 Introduction

1.1 In November 2007 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC)* carried out an evaluation at the former Bernhards Garden Centre, Bilton Road, Rugby (NGR 448949 274586; Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by *Miller Homes Ltd*, and was carried out according to a brief (Warwickshire Museum, 2004) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *Rugby Borough Council*, by their archaeological advisor (AA), Warwickshire Museum Service (WMS), and a project design prepared by ASC (Fell 2007). The relevant planning application reference is R07/1138/MAJP.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This evaluation was required under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16)*, in response to proposals for the construction of flats.

1.3 *Location and Description*

The site is situated south-west of Rugby town centre, on the north side of Bilton Road (SP 48949 74586; Fig.1). The site is roughly rectangular and occupies an area of c.1.83 ha. It is bounded to the south by Sow Brook and by residential development to the north.

1.4 *Geology & Topography*

The site is in an urban area and the soils have not been mapped in detail. If they survive they are likely to comprise the *Arrow Association*, namely permeable coarse loamy soils over glaciofluvial drift (Soil Survey 1983, 543). The site slopes from north to south and has been significantly terraced. It lies at an elevation of c. 94m AOD.

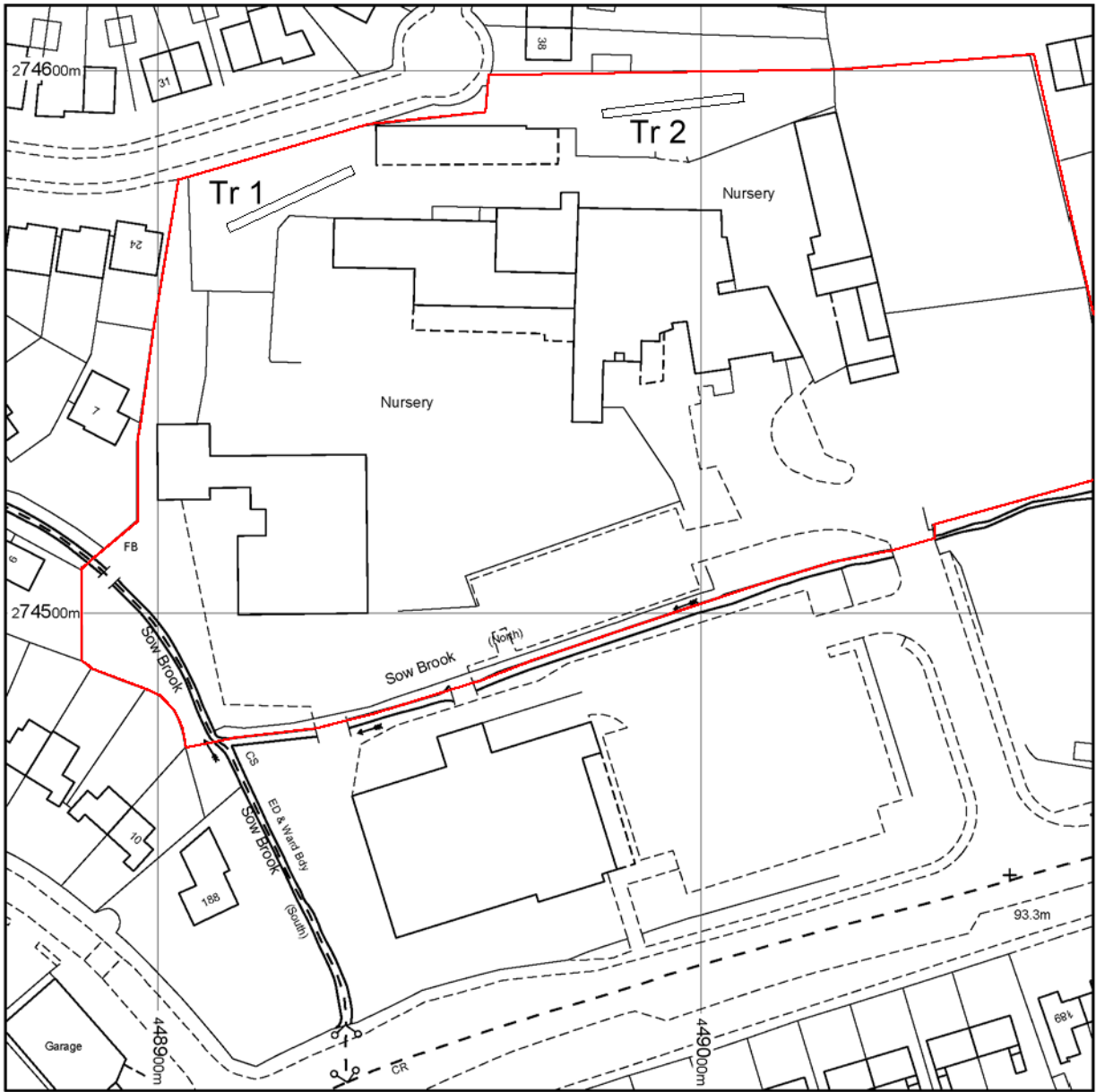


Figure 2: Site plan and trench locations (*scale 1:1250*)

2 Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

As described in the brief (Section 3), the aim of the evaluation was:

- To gather sufficient information to establish presence/absence, character, extent, state of preservation and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of the proposed development.

2.2 Standards

The work conformed to the project design, to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000) and *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

2.3 Methods

The work was carried out according to the brief (Section 4 and 6), which required:

- Preparation of a project design, to include consideration of any available maps (printed and manuscript), sites and monuments data and other relevant background material
- A walkover survey of the site, with a view to informing the strategy to be adopted and identification of any constraints
- Excavation of two 25m trial trenches as indicated in the *brief*.
- Specialist reports (if appropriate)
- Preparation of a report (this document) and ordered archive

2.4 Constraints

No constraints were placed on the evaluation and the methods described in the project design were followed.

3 Archaeological & Historical Background

- 3.1 Bilton is an area of considerable archaeological and historical interest. The site has the potential to reveal remains of a variety of periods but the focus of interest lies in the post-medieval period.
- 3.2 Little is known of the prehistoric periods in the area, but a Bronze Age dagger (SMR (Sites and Monuments Record) no. 3335) has been found c.800m north of the site. The area was away from the main settlements of the Roman period, but a major road, now known as *Watling Street*, ran 7km west of the site.
- 3.3 The village of Bilton may have originated during the Saxon period, although there is little evidence for this period in the area. It was included in the Domesday survey (1086) where it is referred to as *Beltone* and *Bentone* (Morris 1976). The place name Bilton may mean 'place or area where henbane (OE *beolone*) grew' (Eckwall E 1978, 43).
- 3.4 Little is known of the early history and layout of the village, which was situated south of the site and may have been centred on the church of St Mark. Two fishponds (SMR 3633 and 6850), which were situated close to the church, may have formed part of the manor.
- 3.5 The area developed during the medieval period and the site probably comprised open land away from the village centre. The parish was enclosed in 1656 (Pugh 1951, 30). The first readily available detailed map of the area is the Tithe map of Bilton, compiled in 1840 (Fig. 3). This shows the site as an open area, part of land parcel 89. The accompanying schedule indicates that this was owned by *William Bennett* and was a meadow. The adjacent field to the north was also owned by William Bennett and is referred to as *Brick-Kiln Close*. It contained brick kilns and sheds. These are shown on the tithe map, to the north of the site.
- 3.6 The brick manufacturing business developed during the 19th century and is shown on the 1888 edition Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 4). The site is situated adjacent to the southern side of the brick works, which comprised a number of buildings and extraction pits. Kilns are shown on the south side of the brickworks, close to the northern boundary of the present site. Other buildings relating to the brickworks and an access road are shown within the development area close to the northern boundary. These buildings continue to be depicted on Ordnance Survey maps until at least the 1939 edition (Fig. 8).
- 3.7 Production of bricks was an important industry in the area. Another brickworks was situated c.500m southwest of the site (SMR 3635) and a number are known elsewhere in north Warwickshire. Little detailed archaeological and historical work has been carried out on post-medieval brickworks. An example has been excavated at Atherstone (Scott 1979), but brick working is under represented in the archaeological and historical literature.
- 3.8 Little is known of the history of the Bilton brickworks, but the 1905 edition Ordnance Survey map shows the site as disused with two main groups of buildings and

extraction pits to the north. The area is referred to as *Park Farm* on the 1925 edition map and the present site remained as open land to the south.

- 3.9 The site developed during the mid 20th century and is shown on the 1939 Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 7), with much of the central area of the site and land to the north being occupied by trees, possibly an orchard. A glass house is also shown in the northern part of the site.
- 3.10 A housing estate now occupies the site of the brickworks and was probably constructed during the second half of the 20th century. The site itself was until recently occupied by a nursery and contained a variety of low rise buildings and glass houses, which have now been demolished.

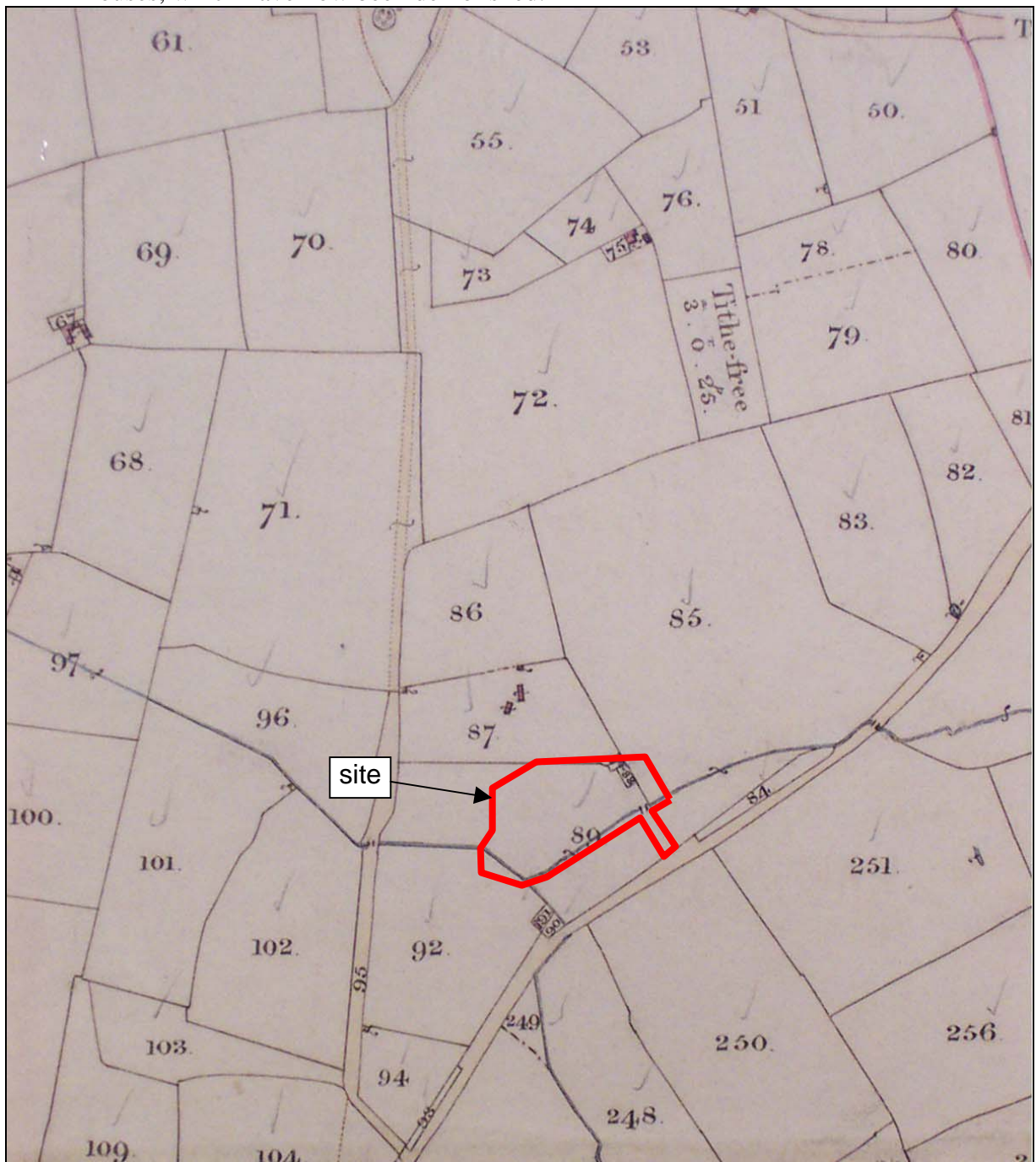


Figure 3: Extract from the Tithe Map of Bilton (1840)

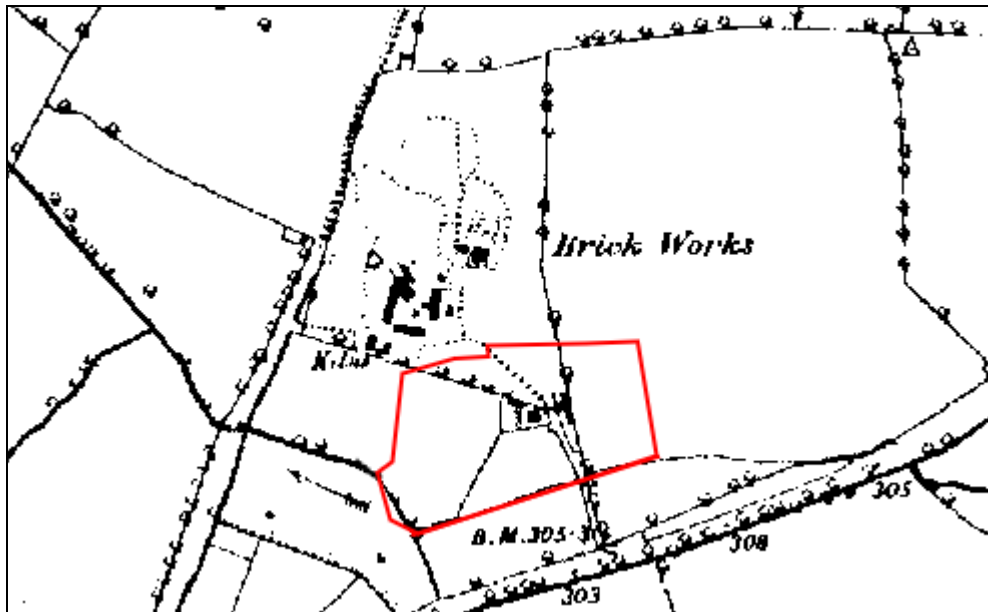


Figure 4: Extract from the 1888 1:10560 Ordnance Survey map (not to scale)

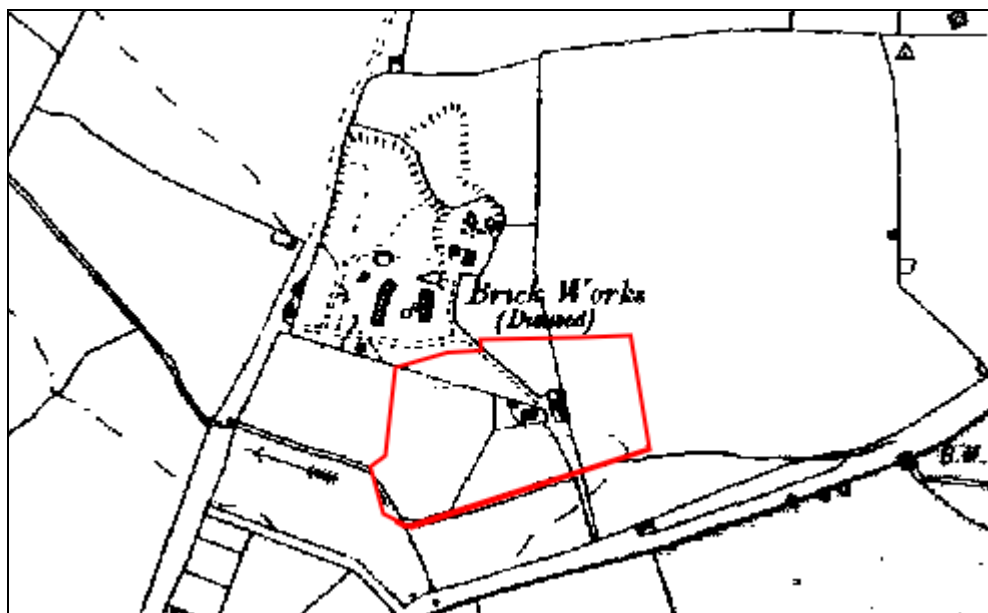


Figure 5: Extract from the 1905:10560 Ordnance Survey map (not to scale)

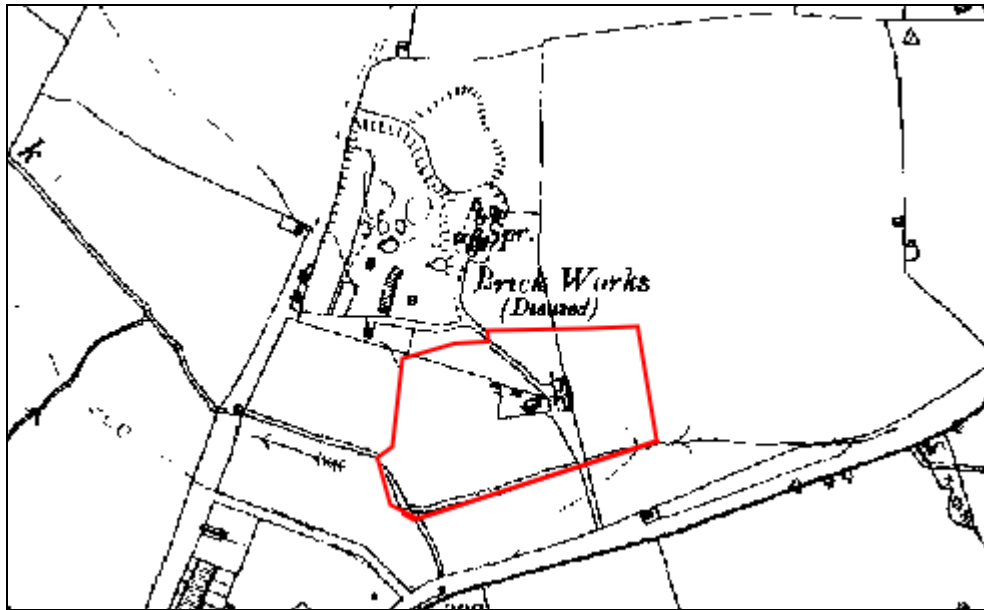


Figure 6: Extract from the 1919 1:10560 Ordnance Survey map (not to scale)

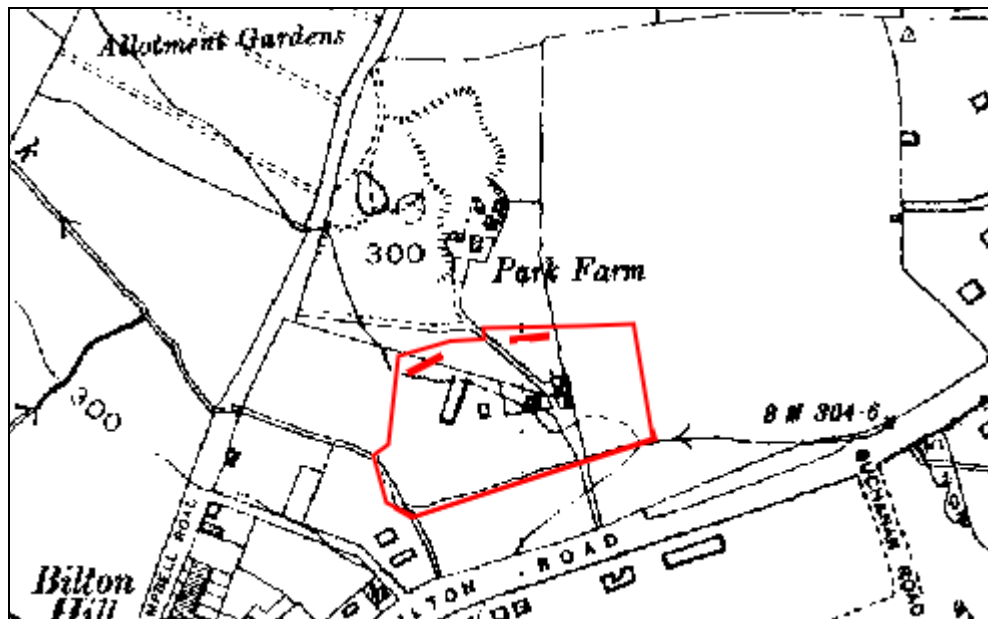


Figure 7: Extract from the 1938 1:10560 Ordnance Survey map (not to scale)



Figure 8: Extract from the 1939 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map (not to scale)

4 Results

General

The site comprised a roughly rectangular area. Examination of exposed sections where demolition works had taken place clearly demonstrated that most of the site had been terraced to form a level plot either for the brickworks or the garden centre. Two 25m trenches were excavated along the northern edge of the site using a 180° excavator fitted with a 1.6m toothless ditching bucket. This area was targeted for two reasons; firstly, it is the area nearest to the known brick production area to the north, and secondly, it was the least disturbed part of the site.

The upper deposits in both trenches comprised modern surfaces and associated rubble makeup deposits comprising of broken bricks and concrete. The natural comprised yellowish brown sandy clay.

Detailed information regarding the trial trenches and their contents appears in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Figs. 7 & 9: Plates 1)

Location: North-western side of site

Description: The only feature of significance in this trench was a 3.7m wide ditch which was orientated NW – SE. Prior to the ditch being filled a sectional clay drain was placed in its base, probably indicating that the ditch was filled in deliberately. The only other feature observed in this trench was a modern water pipe which had been cut into the natural towards the SW end of the trench.

Trench 2 (Fig. 9: Plates 2)

Location: Northern side of site

Description: No features other than modern were identified in this trench. However of some interest there were four N - S orientated vertical sided trenches [204] - [210] towards the western end of the trench. These features were sealed by the upper rubble makeup layer. No clear function could be attributed to these trenches but modern porcelain (late C19th/ 20th) was recovered from the fill of trenches [210] and [206]. The only other features identified in this trench were three sectional clay pipe drains and an electricity cable.

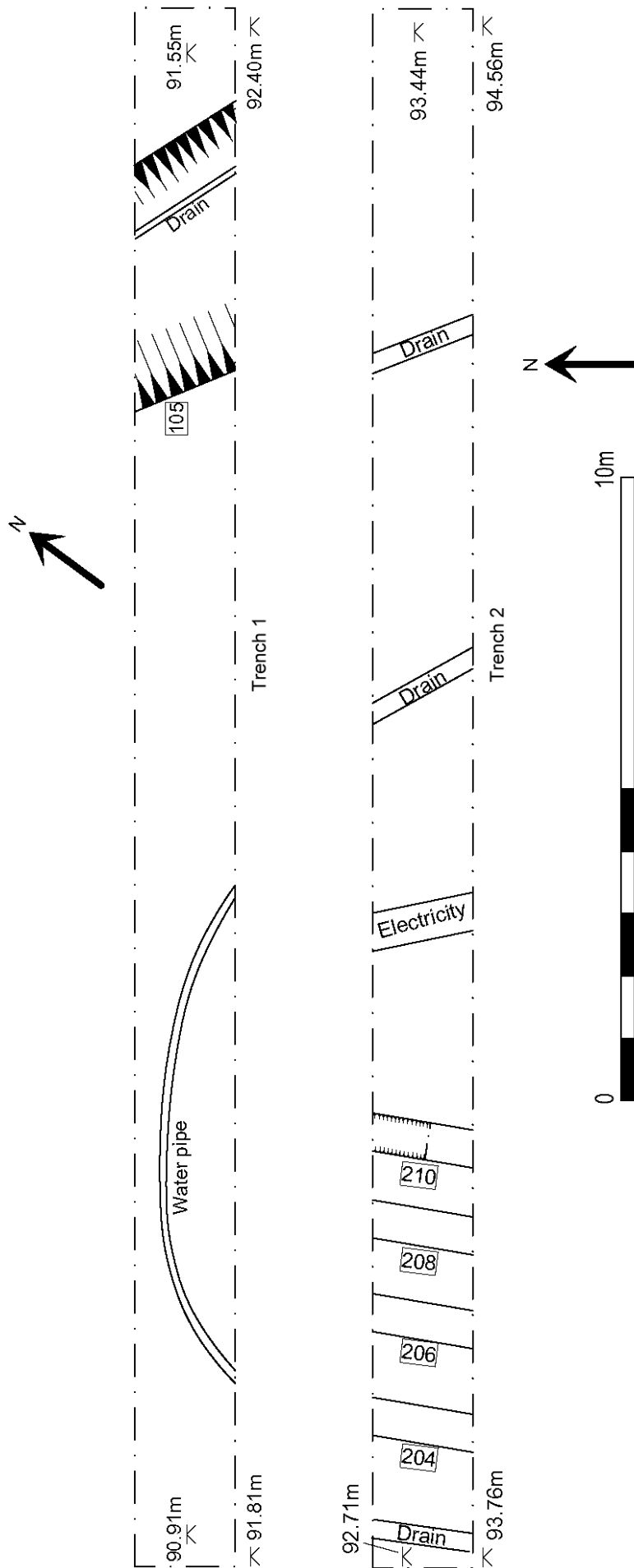


Figure 9: Trench plans (scale 1:100)



Plate 1: Clay fill of boundary ditch [105]



Plate 2: Trench [208] unexcavated



Plate 3: The possible old brickworks buildings

Conclusions

- 5.1 The historical research associated with this project has demonstrated that by 1888 several buildings presumably associated with the brickworks were present within the proposed development area. A track leading to Bilton Road also passed over the proposed development area. No detailed consideration was given to the standing buildings before they were demolished as a first phase of the sites current redevelopment work. However, it is likely that the garden centre utilised the old brick-built buildings for their offices and warehousing (Plate 3).
- 5.2 From the cartographic evidence it is clear that the ditch exposed in Trench 1 was a field boundary which was filled in sometime during the 1930's, as the boundary is shown on the 1938 map but has disappeared on the 1939 map where a new wood is shown, possibly a small orchard. The four parallel trenches identified in Trench 2 remain an enigma but it would seem likely that they post date the closure of the brickworks.
- 5.3 In conclusion, this evaluation has been able to determine that the site of the former Bernhards Garden Centre is highly disturbed, with significant truncation of the natural deposits. This truncation is most likely to have take place some time after 1939, probably when the site was developed for the garden centre. However it is possible that an early occupancy of the site prior to the garden centre may have been responsible for the demolition of the buildings associated with the brickworks and levelling of the site. From the results of the historical research and the observations made during the evaluation the site it can be assessed that the site has a low potential for archaeological remains of the brickworks or earlier occupation surviving to any great extent.
- 5.4 *Confidence Rating*

The evaluation was undertaken in good weather conditions and each soil horizon encountered was clearly defined, the results of the evaluation can therefore be given a high confidence rating.

6. Acknowledgements

ASC is grateful to Phillip Brown of *Miller Homes* for commissioning the company to carry out the evaluation at Bilton Road. We would also like to thank Anna Stocks at Warwickshire County Museum Service who prepared the brief and monitored the evaluation. The project was managed by David Fell BA MA MIFA and the field work was carried out by Jenny Richards and Nigel Wilson. The report was edited by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Clients site plans
5. Site records
6. List of photographs
7. B/W prints & negatives
8. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Warwickshire Museum Service.

8. References

Standards & Specifications

EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects, 2nd edition*. English Heritage (London).

Fell D. 2007 *Land at Bernhards Garden Centre Bilton Road, Rugby. Project Design for Archaeological Evaluation*. ASC Ltd (unpublished ref: 630/RBR/01).

IFA 2000a Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.

IFA 2001 Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings, Finds)*.

Warwickshire Museum Service 2004 *Brief for Archaeological Field Evaluation*. Warwickshire County Council (unpublished).

Secondary Sources

Eckwall E 1978 *English Place Names* Oxford University Press.


Morris J 1976 *The Domesday Book. Warwickshire*. History from the Sources. Penguin.


Pugh R B (ed) 1951 *The Victoria History of the County of Warwickshire*.

Scott K 1979 'Brick Making in North Warwickshire' in *Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society Transactions* **89**, 137-144.

Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).

Appendix 1: Trench Summary Tables

Trench 1						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	25.0	Width	1.6	Depth	1.00
	Levels					
	Trench top SW		91.81m OD			
	Trench base SW		90.91m OD			
	Trench base NE		91.50m OD			
	Trench top NE		92.40m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	SW	448913 274571	*NE	448936 274582		
	Orientation		SW-NE			
Reason for Trench		Evaluation of potentially undisturbed NW corner of site				
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)	
100	Layer	Modern debris	>1600	100	0-100	
101	Layer	Tarmac surface	>1600	50	100-150	
102	Layer	Makeup of bricks and concrete	>1600	150	150-300	
103	Layer	Loamy soil	>1600	100	300-400	
104	Natural	Mid orange brown sandy clay silt	>1600	n/a	>400	
105	Fill	Fill of 106, mid blue grey clay	4000	700	300-1000	
106	Cut	Modern in-filled field ditch with a sectional clay pipe land drain in the base.	4000	700	300-1000	

Trench 2						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	25.0	Width	1.6	Depth	
	Levels					
	Trench top E		94.56m OD			
	Trench base E		93.44m OD			
	Trench base W		92.71m OD			
	Trench top W		93.76m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	E	449008 274595	W	448982 274592		
	Orientation		E-W			
Reason for Trench		Evaluation of potentially undisturbed northern part of site				

Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Max Width (mm)	Max Thckn (mm)	Depth BGL (mm)
200	Layer	Makeup material, brick and stone in dark soil matrix	>1.6	350	0-350
201	Layer	Yellowish orange clay moderate charcoal fleck and small brick fragments.	>1.6	400	350-700
202	Natural	Orange clay	>1.6	n/a	>700
203	Slot	N-S orientated slot cut from base of (200)	500	>400	>700
204	Fill	Fill of 203, mixed orange and blue grey clay	500	>400	>700
205	Slot	N-S orientated slot cut from base of (200)	500	>400	>700
206	Fill	Fill of 205, mixed orange and blue grey clay. Modern glazed tile and porcelain	500	>400	>700
207	Slot	N-S orientated slot cut from base of (200)	500	>400	>700
208	Fill	Fill of 207, mixed orange and blue grey clay	500	>400	>700
209	Slot	N-S orientated slot cut from base of (200)	500	>400	>700
210	Fill	Fill of 209, mixed orange and blue grey clay. Modern glazed tile	500	>400	>700
211	Cut	Cut for service trench running along the full length of the northern side of the trench.	n/a	400	350-750
212	Fill	Fill of 211 mixed material sealed by layer 200	n/a	400	350-750

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: Bernhards Garden Centre, Bilton Road, Rugby			SITE NO/CODE: 630/RBR
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1	✓	✓	Overview of the site
2	✓	✓	Overview of the site
3	✓	✓	Section Trench 2 slot
4	✓	✓	Section Trench 2 service trench
5	✓	✓	Section Trench 2 service trench
6	✓	✓	Section Trench 1 ditch
7	✓	✓	Trench 1
8	✓	✓	Trench 1
9	✓	✓	Trench 2
10	✓	✓	Trench 2

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Former Bernhards Garden Centre		
Short Description:	<p><i>During November 2007, an evaluation was undertaken on the site of Bernhards Garden Centre, Bilton Road, Rugby. The work was required in advance of residential redevelopment of the site. It was considered possible that evidence for brick making would be found on the site. Though no evidence for brick making was revealed in the evaluation it is highly likely that several of the brick buildings which had been used by the garden centre would originally have been associated with the brickworks. However as these buildings were demolished their precise date and function remain unclear. From the sections exposed where demolition work had taken place it was clear that much of the site had been significantly truncated. It was not clear if this truncation took place during the lifetime of the brickworks or later. A number of modern features were identified in the trenches, including a field boundary ditch which was filled in during the 1930's, a series of four shallow north south orientated trenches and several service runs.</i></p>		
Project Type: (indicate all that apply)	Trial Trenching		
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	none	Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	n/a
Current land use:	Vacant brownfield	Future work: (yes / no / unknown)	no
Monument type:	Field boundary	Monument period:	Modern
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	n/a		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Warwickshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	SP 49000 74500
Site address: (with postcode if known)	Bernhards Garden Centre, Bilton Road, Rugby CV22 7DY		
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	1.83 ha	Height OD: (metres)	93.00m
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	Warwickshire Museum Service	Project design originator:	ASC Ltd
Project Manager:	David Fell BA MA MIFA	Director/Supervisor:	Jenny Richards
Sponsor / funding body:	Miller Homes		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	20/11/2007	End date:	20/11/2007

PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	N/a		
Paper:	Warwickshire Museum Services	Trench record sheets, Project Design, Unpublished report B&W negatives and prints	
Digital:	Warwickshire Museum Services	CD containing Digital images CAD drawings and digital copy of the report	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Archaeological Evaluation, Land at Bernhards Garden Centre, Bilton Road, Rugby, Warwickshire		
Serial title & volume:	ASC client report: 630/RBR/2		
Author(s):	Nigel Wilson		
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