



ELTON HEAD FARM, ST HELENS, MERSEYSIDE

Archaeological Desk- Based Assessment



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SUMMARY

Following a proposal by United Utilities to construct a surface water outfall pipeline at Elton Head, St Helens, Merseyside (SJ 50267 91968), a programme of archaeological investigation was recommended by the Merseyside Archaeological Service (MAS). This was to comprise a desk-based assessment and watching brief of the entire pipeline route. The watching brief will be subject to a separate report.

The desk-based assessment examined an area of approximately 250m either side of the proposed pipeline route for sites of archaeological interest. In total, 18 were identified, the majority of which were already recorded in the Merseyside Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). All of the sites were post-medieval in date or contained elements that were, although a number of find spots made up of artefact scatters also included possible prehistoric flint artefacts and medieval pottery. In addition, Elton Head Farm, which has already been examined in some detail, is thought to be situated on a site with medieval origins.

The background history of the general area revealed that it was essentially a rural landscape until the late nineteenth century and the concomitant increased development of glass making in the area. There is little evidence for prehistoric or Romano-British activity in the immediate area, but place-name evidence suggests that many of the local settlements, including Elton Head Farm, probably have early medieval origins. In the late medieval period industrialisation based around coal mining and the production of glass began to change the landscape and during the post-medieval period the construction of railways and large industrial complexes altered it forever.

Of the 18 sites identified within the study area only seven were considered likely to be affected (Sites **6, 8, 9, 11, 16, 17, 18**). In addition to the watching brief already recommended by MAS, it was further recommended that a visual inspection and topographic survey be undertaken for Sites **17 and 18**.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) would like to thank United Utilities for commissioning the project. Thanks are also due to Mark Hart at the Merseyside Sites and Monument Record, the staff of the Lancashire County Record Office in Preston, the Liverpool Record Office and the National Monuments Record in Swindon, and Joanne Smith at the Lancashire County Council, for their assistance with this project.

The desk-based assessment was undertaken by Daniel Elsworth who also compiled the report, and Mark Tidmarsh produced the drawings. The project was managed by Alison Plummer, who also edited the report.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF PROJECT

- 1.1.1 Following a proposal by United Utilities to construct a new surface water outfall pipe near Elton Head Farm, St Helens, Merseyside a request for an archaeological desk-based assessment and watching brief was made by the Merseyside Archaeological Service (MAS). OA North was commissioned to carry out the work, the desk-based assessment of which was undertaken in November and December 2005.
- 1.1.2 The desk-based assessment comprised a search of both published and unpublished records held by the Merseyside Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) in Liverpool, the Liverpool Record Office in Liverpool, the Lancashire County Record Office in Preston, and the archives and library held at OA North. This report sets out the results of the desk-based assessment in the form of a short document, outlining the findings, followed by a statement of the archaeological potential and significance, and an assessment of the impact of the proposed development. The significance criteria detailed in PPG 16 (DoE 1990) was employed during the assessment.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

- 2.1.1 OA North submitted a project design (*Appendix 1*) in response to a verbal brief issued by MAS. The project design was adhered to in full, and the work was consistent with the relevant standards and procedures of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, and generally accepted best practice.

2.2 DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

- 2.2.1 A study area of approximately 250m either side of the proposed pipeline route was assessed through the examination of primary and secondary sources and based on an inspection of the Merseyside SMR. All of the sites of archaeological interest identified along the route of the pipeline were compiled into a gazetteer (*Section 4*) and a distribution map was produced (Fig 2). The results were analysed using the set of criteria used to assess the national importance of an ancient monument.
- 2.2.2 ***Sites and Monuments Record (SMR)***: this is a list of all the known sites of archaeological interest in the county, including Scheduled Monuments and details of Listed Buildings. It is the primary source of information for a study of this kind. In addition, copies of both primary and secondary sources were also available and these were consulted. This included material held at Manchester Central Library (MCL).
- 2.2.3 ***Liverpool Record Office (LRO)***: a number of primary sources relating to Elton Head Farm, in particular the deeds, were examined. In addition, secondary sources relating to various aspects of the local and general background were also examined.
- 2.2.4 ***Lancashire County Record Office, Preston (LRO(P))***: primary sources, in particular maps and plans of the area were examined. A number of secondary sources were also consulted.
- 2.2.5 ***National Monument Record (NMR)***: copies of aerial photographs covering the study area were obtained from the National Monuments Record.
- 2.2.6 ***Oxford Archaeology North***: OA North has an extensive archive of secondary sources relevant to the study area, as well as numerous unpublished client reports on work carried out both as OA North and in its former guise of Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU). These were consulted where necessary.
- 2.2.7 ***Lancaster City Library***: secondary sources relating to various aspects of the local and general background were examined.

2.3 ARCHIVE

- 2.3.1 A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with the project design (*Appendix 1*), and in accordance with current IFA and English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage 1991). Arrangements for the paper and digital archive will be made with Liverpool Museums, National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside on completion of the project.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1.1 The background history has been compiled primarily from secondary sources, and is intended to provide a suitable local archaeological context in which to view the results of the desk-based assessment. Where relevant original sources could be used they are included and, where possible, the background makes reference to specific sites included in the gazetteer.

3.2 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 3.2.1 The proposed pipeline is situated on the southern outskirts of St Helens, between Sutton Heath and Rainhill between Elton Head Road and the parish boundary between Rainhill and Sutton. The landscape is relatively low-lying, and at approximately 65m above sea level (Ordnance Survey 1985).
- 3.2.2 The area falls within the Lancashire Coal Measures, an area made up of a ‘*complex mosaic of degraded farmland, scattered urban centres, active mineral sites and derelict or reclaimed workings, and ‘flashes’’* (Countryside Commission 1998, 127). The influence of coal mining dominates much of the landscape, although pockets of agricultural land break up its generally industrialised form and make it extremely varied. The solid geology principally comprises coal measures, which are covered by glacial drift deposits (*op cit*, 128).

3.3 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.3.1 ***Prehistoric Period:*** there are no sites of immediate post-glacial date in the general area; such sites are extremely rare across the whole county and there are only a handful of confirmed examples (Cowell 1996, 20). These tend to be situated in caves and so are unlikely to be identified in a relatively low-lying area such as that surrounding St Helens. Nevertheless, sites of Mesolithic date are known from such locations, including some from the Merseyside area (*op cit*, 27). Excavations in the 1990s to the west of St Helens ahead of the construction of the A5300 identified areas of Late Mesolithic activity (Cowell and Philpott 2000), which suggests that there is probably more to be found.
- 3.3.2 Settlement sites of Neolithic and Bronze Age date are also rare and also tend to consist of little more than artefact scatters and shallow features, with some evident continuity in cultural material from the Mesolithic at the beginning of the Neolithic (Middleton 1996, 36). The later Neolithic and Bronze Age are more clearly represented by discoveries of larger artefacts such as axes, hammers, spearheads and arrowheads, as well as numerous ritual and burial monuments (*op cit*, 41-3). There are few such sites in the general areas of St Helens, however, although axe hammers of probable Bronze Age date have been discovered around the town (OA North 2004, 11). Sites that can be demonstrated to be of Iron Age date are even more difficult to identify, for

although sites typical of the period, such as hillforts, are known in the district, they have rarely been examined in any detail and are often not accurately dated (Haselgrove 1996, 61). Such sites are not common in the vicinity of St Helens, as they tend to be concentrated on higher ground, although the remains of smaller settlements have been discovered in lower-lying areas (Cowell and Philpott 2000, 172-4), some of which are likely to have been utilised into the Romano-British period. More recent work has begun to indicate the true extent of these types of site in lowland areas, and has demonstrated that many do indeed have their origins in the Iron Age, or even Bronze Age, and in some cases activity continued into the Romano-British period (Cowell 2005).

- 3.3.3 While there are no confirmed sites of prehistoric date within the study area a number of pieces of flint, some of which appear to be worked, which were recovered during field walking in the vicinity of Elton Head Farm may belong to this period (Sites **06** and **08**).
- 3.3.4 **Romano-British Period:** the area around St Helens was probably rural in character during the Romano-British period (as it was at the beginning of the post-medieval period). The extent of Roman activity is not clear, although it is likely that Roman military forces moved across the Mersey as part of the Northern phases of occupation (Shotter 2004, 21). There are no known Roman military sites in the vicinity of the study area and find spots are infrequent. A permanent and important legionary fortress was established at an early date at Chester (*op cit*, 18-20) but it is unclear what influence, if any, this would have had on the area around St Helens.
- 3.3.5 There are no known sites of Romano-British date within the study area.
- 3.3.6 **Early Medieval Period:** little is known about the area surrounding St Helens following the collapse of Roman administration. Any settlements that existed in this relatively isolated area would have probably remained in some form, although there is no direct evidence for what scale or type of activity there was in the area. It is likely that it would have come under the control of the Anglian kingdom of Northumbria during the early seventh century, although there was a strong influence from an conflict with the kingdom of Mercia to the south (Chitty and Lewis 2002, 171). Place-name evidence indicates a mix of influences including British, Anglian and Norse, suggesting a diverse population and changing political situation (*ibid*). Elton Head is thought to derive from the Old English meaning Ellan's tun or village (Ekwall 1922, 108-9).
- 3.3.7 There are no confirmed sites of Early medieval date within the study area, although it is conceivable that St Anne's well (Site **15**) may have its origins in this period.
- 3.3.8 **Late Medieval Period:** St Helens was situated within the medieval hundreds of Newton and Warrington, with Warrington containing Sutton township (which encompassed the study area). Sutton was within an area of forest jurisdiction and controlled by the crown (*op cit*, 178). Much of the medieval layout of St Helens has been destroyed, however, by subsequent development, and even in

rural areas mining and the re-organisation of field boundaries has had a similar effect (Chitty and Lewis 2002, 180). As St Helens itself is situated on the junction of several significant regional roads, it seems likely that a settlement of some kind existed here from an early date (Farrer and Brownbill 1907, 374; Fletcher 2002). The Elton Head estate probably held the majority of the study area, and more specific details of its development are presented below (*Section 3.3.12*).

3.3.9 There are five sites that comprise elements of medieval date. These being pottery sherds (Sites **06**, **08** and **11**), St Anne's Well (Site **15**) and Elton Head Farm (Site **16**).

3.3.10 **Post-Medieval Period:** during the post-medieval period St Helens and the surrounding landscape changed immeasurably. Until the middle of the eighteenth century St Helens was still very rural; most of its population were probably farmers, although there were a few craftsmen producing pottery, and there was limited coal extraction (Barker 2002, 38). However, the potential profit in coal and the allied industrial processes that would develop from its extraction, led to the construction of the Sankey Brook Navigation, begun in 1755, Lancashire's first canal (*ibid*). The increased need for coal as part of the salt production taking place to the south, initially spurred on the construction of the canal, but it was the production of glass that promoted the growth of St Helens. Small-scale glass manufacture had been occurring in the region for some time but it was the establishment of a number of larger companies at the end of the eighteenth century that caused massive growth in this particular industry and also the town (Krupa and Heawood 2002, 9). Baines described the situation thus:

'This place has within the last half century risen from the ranks of a small village to a neat and populous town. Its increase is owing to the various works established in the neighbourhood, and their establishment has arisen partly from the cheap and excellent coal which abounds in this parish' (1825, 547).

The production of glass continued to grow throughout the nineteenth century, with the large St Helens Crown Glass Company being established in 1826 (Parkin 2000, 13).

3.3.11 During the nineteenth century St Helens expanded rapidly, and became home to a number of industries, many associated with glass production, but also including metalworking (Rees 1991). The importance of the canal was soon superseded by the construction of the railways in the 1830s (Farrer and Brownbill 1907, 374; Townley and Peden 1999, 217). The intense industrialisation of the general area inevitably had a huge impact, and by the beginning of the twentieth century St Helens was suffering the affects of years of rapid building and pollution. The town was described in 1907 as: *'a forest of tall chimneys, shafts, kilns, and other weird erections on every hand, and the fumes of acids and the smoke of furnaces render the atmosphere almost unbearable to the stranger'* (Farrer and Brownbill 1907, 375). It is evident that even in a relatively rural area, such as that around Elton Head, industry had an enormous effect on the landscape (see *Section 3.4*).

- 3.3.12 All of the sites within the study area are at least partially post-medieval in date. Some belong entirely to the post-medieval period, and include a coal tip (Site **01**), reservoirs (Sites **02-03**), a railway (Site **04**) a glasshouse (Site **05**), a pumping station (Site **07**), pottery sherds and glass making waste (Sites **09-10**), a track (Site **17**), and buildings (Sites **12-14**). The remaining sites all have post-medieval components.
- 3.3.13 **Elton Head Farm:** the history of Elton Head Farm and the development of the surviving buildings has been well documented. There are references to Elton Head as early as the twelfth century (Farrer and Brownbill 1907, 359-60), but nothing to positively indicate the existence of a building on the site until 1418 (Lewis and Warhurst 1987, 1). Initially, it is recorded as being held by the le Norreis family, who took the name Eltonhead, and whose descendants held the site until the seventeenth century (Earwaker 1884; Rankin 1956, 35). There are records of a windmill being present on the site from at least the early fifteenth century (Lewis and Warhurst 1987, 1) and a dovecote in 1602 (Rylands 1880, 277-9). Subsequent inventories at the site also suggest that cheese was being made and that there was a brewery at the site during the later seventeenth century (Lewis and Warhurst 1987, 2). The estate was sold in 1684 to Thomas Roughley, although by 1710 it had passed to one of their creditors, Isaac Greene (*ibid*). It passed through his daughter to Bamber Gascoyne; a datestone of 1786 marked BMG probably relates to building work that he carried out (*ibid*). In 1824 it passed to the second Marquis of Salisbury, and was reportedly largely burnt down in 1872, although there is no apparent evidence for this within the present structure (*ibid*). Two collections of deeds for Elton Head Farm exist (LRO 920 SAL 678 1584-1748; LRO 920 SAL 679 1680-1742) although these add little information to the existing, published, studies of the site.

3.4 MAP REGRESSION ANALYSIS

- 3.4.1 **Yates 1786:** this is the earliest map of the area to show any particular detail. Elton Head Farm is clearly marked and named 'Elton Head' but there is no additional information that can be gained about the study area.
- 3.4.2 **Sutton Tithe Map 1808 (LRO(P) DRL 1/77) (Fig 3):** it is evident from this map that the original arrangement of the fields within the study area has been radically altered. At this date they are generally much smaller and more irregular in shape. There is a group of small fields immediately to the east of Elton Head Farm, and in some cases field names, listed in the apportionment (LRO(P) DRL 1/77 1843), indicate possible sites of archaeological interest such as a stable (Site **06**) and a dovecote (Site **09**).
- 3.4.3 **Ordnance Survey 1850:** the arrangement of the fields is the same at that depicted on the Tithe Map. No additional sites of archaeological interest were identified, although Glasshouse Farm (Site **05**) is named.
- 3.4.4 **Ordnance Survey 1892 and 1893 (Plates 1-2):** by this date the field systems within the study area have changed to their present arrangement. The railway to the east (Site **04**), connecting to Lea Green Colliery, has been constructed

by this date, but no other additional sites of archaeological interest were identified.

- 3.4.5 **Ordnance Survey 1907 and 1908:** the general arrangement of the fields has not changed by this date and there are no additional sites of archaeological interest, other than those previously recorded in the SMR (Sites **02-03**).
- 3.4.6 **Ordnance Survey 1927 (Plate 3):** the general arrangement of the fields is essentially the same as before, although an additional branch line has been added to Site **04**, leading towards Elton Head. Another has been added to the mainline railway to the south connecting to an area of coal tips (Site **01**).
- 3.4.7 **Ordnance Survey 1937 (Plate 4):** by this date the branch line from Site **04** has been removed and that leading to the coal tips to the south (Site **01**) has partially disappeared as the coal tip has increased in size.

3.5 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS

- 3.5.1 Copies of aerial photographs covering the study area were obtained from the NMR (English Heritage 1969; Environmental Advisory Service, 1975; 1979; RAF 1945; 1948; 1949; 1955; Ordnance Survey 1993). These were examined in order to identify additional sites of archaeological interest. A number of features were observed, but it is probable that most of these relate to the original arrangement of the fields. Two sites, a track (Site **17**) and an earthwork (Site **18**), were considered to be of archaeological significance and were added to the gazetteer (*Section 4*; Plates 5 and 6).

3.6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS

- 3.6.1 A number of the fields around Elton Head Farm were walked, after ploughing, as part of an assessment carried out in advance of open cast coal mining in 1987. This revealed several scatters of late medieval and post-medieval pottery and glass slag, as well as a small number of pieces of flint, some of which may have been worked (Sites **06**, **08** and **11**). In addition, the standing remains of Elton Head Farm (Site **16**) have been subject to a detailed investigation (Lewis and Warhurst 1984; 1987). On southern edge of the study area, the remains of St Anne's Well (Site **15**) have been subject to a brief investigation comprising limited excavation (Highcock 1983) and dowsing (Highcock 1997), and in addition field walking nearby has recovered medieval pottery (Davey 1980).

4. GAZETTEER OF SITES

Site number	01
Site name	Lea Green
NGR	SJ 50267 91968
Site type	Coal tips
Period	Post-medieval
SMR No	-
Statutory Designation	-
Sources	Ordnance Survey 1927; 1937
Description	A tip for Lea Green Colliery is shown on the Ordnance Survey maps of 1927 and 1937 (Plates 2 and 4). It initially developed around railway sidings from the London and North Western Railway Liverpool and Manchester Line that extended into this area.
Assessment	The site is outside of the proposed development area and is unlikely to be affected

Site number	02
Site name	Lea Green
NGR	SJ 5038 9199
Site type	Reservoir
Period	Post-medieval
SMR No	5091/11
Statutory Designation	-
Sources	SMR; Ordnance Survey 1908
Description	A reservoir <i>c</i> 250m west of Lowfield Lane, beside a disused colliery tip
Assessment	The site lies outside of the proposed development area and is unlikely to be affected

Site number	03
Site name	Lea Green
NGR	SJ 5036 9204
Site type	Reservoir
Period	Post-medieval
SMR No	5091/35
Statutory Designation	-
Sources	SMR; Ordnance Survey 1908
Description	A reservoir <i>c</i> 250m west of Lowfield Lane, beside a disused colliery tip
Assessment	The site lies outside of the proposed development area and is unlikely to be affected

Site number	04
Site name	Lea Green
NGR	SJ 50395 92317
Site type	Railway
Period	Post-medieval
SMR No	-
Statutory Designation	-
Sources	Ordnance Survey 1892; 1908
Description	A railway connecting to the Lea Green Colliery is shown on the Ordnance Survey maps between 1892 and 1908 (Plates 1 and 3)
Assessment	The site lies outside of the proposed development area and is unlikely to be affected

Site number	05
Site name	Glasshouse Farm
NGR	SJ 50401 92371
Site type	Farm/glasshouse
Period	Post-medieval
SMR No	5092/1 and 5092/18
Statutory Designation	-
Sources	SMR
Description	A farm known as Glasshouse Farm was situated on the site (Plate 1). The location of the glasshouse(s) has not been identified but a glassmaker is recorded at the site from the end of the seventeenth century. The farm buildings, which were thought to date to <i>c</i> 1700 were demolished in the 1970s.
Assessment	The site lies outside of the proposed development area and is unlikely to be affected

Site number	06
Site name	Elton Head Farm
NGR	SJ 5000 9230
Site type	Find spot
Period	Prehistoric (?) – post-medieval
SMR No	5092/21 and 5092/38
Statutory Designation	-
Sources	SMR; LRO(P) DRB 1/77 1808; 1843
Description	The Merseyside Archaeological Society walked this field in 1987 as part of a programme of survey prior to proposed open cast mining. Pottery ranging from the medieval to post-medieval periods and possible worked flint fragments were recovered, as was glass slag and pottery production waste. The field is named ‘Stable Croft’ on the Tithe Map, suggesting the presence of a stable nearby
Assessment	The site lies close to the proposed development area and may be affected

Site number	07
Site name	Rainhill
NGR	SJ 4929 9200
Site type	Pumping station
Period	Post-medieval
SMR No	4992/28
Statutory Designation	-
Sources	SMR; Ordnance Survey 1892; 1908
Description	A pumping station for the London and Manchester Plate Glass Co is shown on the Ordnance Survey maps of 1892 and 1908. It is positioned <i>c</i> 50m east of Rainhill Road, and north of Elderswood Road and the stream
Assessment	The site lies outside of the proposed development area and is unlikely to be affected

Site number	08
Site name	Elton Head Farm
NGR	SJ 5000 9210
Site type	Find spot
Period	Prehistoric – post-medieval
SMR No	5092/20, 5092/36 and 5092/37
Statutory Designation	-
Sources	SMR

Description	The area was subject to field walking in 1987 prior to proposed open cast coal mining. A small number of late medieval and post-medieval pottery fragments were found, as well as three fragments of flint, although it is unlikely that these are worked pieces
Assessment	The site lies close to the proposed development area and may be affected

Site number	09
Site name	Elton Head Farm
NGR	SJ 50095 92238
Site type	Find spot
Period	Post-medieval
SMR No	-
Statutory Designation	-
Sources	SMR notes; LRO(P) DRL 1/77 1808; 1843
Description	This area was walked as part of an assessment prior to proposed opencast coal mining but does not appear to have been given an SMR number. Post-medieval pottery sherds were discovered. The field is named 'Little Stable Croft' on the Tithe Map, suggesting there was a stable nearby
Assessment	The site lies within the proposed development area and will be affected

Site number	10
Site name	Elton Head Farm
NGR	SJ 50199 92116
Site type	Find spot
Period	Post-medieval
SMR No	5092/19
Statutory Designation	-
Sources	SMR
Description	This area was walked as part of an assessment prior to proposed opencast coal mining. Post-medieval glass slag and waste were discovered
Assessment	The site lies close to the proposed development area but is unlikely to be affected

Site number	11
Site name	Elton Head Farm
NGR	SJ 50103 92093
Site type	Find spot
Period	Medieval – post-medieval
SMR No	5092/19
Statutory Designation	-
Sources	SMR; LRO(P) DRL 1/77 1808; 1843
Description	This area was walked as part of an assessment prior to proposed opencast coal mining. A spread of late medieval and post-medieval pottery sherds and pipe fragments were found. The field is named 'Dove Cote Hey' on the Tithe Map, suggesting there was a dovecote nearby
Assessment	The site lies within the proposed development area and will be affected

Site number	12
Site name	Rainhill
NGR	SJ 4952 9161
Site type	Farm
Period	Post-medieval
SMR No	4991/26
Statutory	

Designation	-
Sources	SMR
Description	The site of Ritherup Farm, which is shown on the Rainhill Tithe map of 1843. There are references to 'Rytherop' from as early as 1341, and the site was connected to the Gascoyne family (who were also connected to Elton Head Farm) until 1857
Assessment	The site lies outside of the proposed development area and is unlikely to be affected

Site number	13
Site name	Rainhill
NGR	SJ 4948 9157
Site type	Building
Period	Post-medieval
SMR No	4991/20
Statutory Designation	-
Sources	SMR
Description	The Rainhill Tithe Map shows a house and garden in this location
Assessment	The site lies outside of the proposed development area and is unlikely to be affected

Site number	14
Site name	Rainhill
NGR	SJ 4953 9162
Site type	Field name
Period	Post-medieval
SMR No	4991/12
Statutory Designation	-
Sources	SMR
Description	A field named 'Barn Croft' is shown on the Rainhill Tithe Map
Assessment	The site lies outside of the proposed development area and is unlikely to be affected

Site number	15
Site name	St Anne's Well
NGR	SJ 4997 9142
Site type	Well
Period	Medieval – post-medieval
SMR No	4991/3 and 4991/31
Statutory Designation	Scheduled Monument No. 32602
Sources	SMR; MCL Owen MSS 1843; Taylor 1902; Rankin 1956; Davey 1980; Highcock 1997
Description	The monument includes a shallow well lined with stone blocks, beside the brook which separates the townships of Rainhill and Sutton St Helens. The well is a square basin measuring 1.75m wide and about 1.2m deep. It is constructed of dressed ashlar sandstone blocks with a level stone floor. Two steps lead down into the bottom of the well from the west side. The basin has been partly infilled with soil and only one course of stone is visible above ground. Water appears to have seeped in from below the flagged floor. The well had a reputation for healing diseases of the eye in the nineteenth century. There used to be a carved stone basin and stone conduit on the north side, which took water from the overflow of the well. These features are no longer evident. A stone figure representing a female figure carrying a pitcher carved in relief stood over this feature. This is probably medieval in date, judging by the sketch made by Owen in 1843. A burial ground was reported to have been next to the well, which was destroyed in the nineteenth century, and a chapel is thought to have stood nearby or over the well. According to Owen the chapel was pulled down and the stone used in the construction of a

stable at Elton Head (part of Site 16), but the stonework was cursed and the stable collapsed, killing the horses inside. It was subsequently re-used in the building of mill at Elton Head, but this too was cursed and two of the three millers died in accidents. According to Rankin the image of the female figure with a pitcher was present in the rear of an old barn at Elton Head. Field walking carried out nearby also recovered two sherds of pottery, which perhaps further adds to the presumed medieval date of origin of the site

Assessment The site lies outside of the proposed development area and is unlikely to be affected

Site number 16
Site name Elton Head Farm
NGR SJ 5007 9219
Site type Farm
Period Medieval – post-medieval
SMR No 5092/16
Statutory Designation -
Sources SMR; Farrer and Brownbill 1907; Rankin 1956; Lewis and Warhurst 1984; 1987
Description Elton Head Farm was surveyed in 1983-4 by students from the Institute of Extension Studies at the University of Liverpool. It comprised a group of buildings made up of a farmhouse, cow house, shelter shed, carriage house, paddy house, wash house, pay office, animal house and pigsties dating from the seventeenth century to the late twentieth (Plate 1). The site is thought to have been occupied since the twelfth century, although there is no written record of the building itself until 1418. The farm was recorded as including a windmill from as early as 1526 and a dovecote from 1611 and was occupied as the principal message of the Eltonhead family until the eighteenth century.

Assessment The site lies close to the proposed development area and may be affected

Site number 17
Site name Elton Head Farm
NGR SJ 50021 92396
Site type Track
Period Post-medieval
SMR No -
Statutory Designation -
Sources English Heritage 1969; Environmental Advisory Service 1975; 1979; Ordnance Survey 1993; RAF 1945; 1948; 1955
Description A track leading north between Elton Head Farm and Elton Head Road is visible in aerial photographs as a slight hollow way.
Assessment Part of the site lies within the proposed development area and will be affected

Site number 18
Site name Elton Head Road
NGR SJ 49995 92656
Site type Earthwork
Period Unknown
SMR No -
Statutory Designation -
Sources English Heritage 1969; Environmental Advisory Service 1979; Ordnance Survey 1993; RAF 1945; 1948; 1949; 1955
Description An earthwork is visible in aerial photographs. In plan it appears to form a sub-rectangular or oval feature with its north edge against the road, perhaps formed by old field boundaries or ditches (Plate 5), but in an oblique view (RAF 1949) it appears to be a low flat mound (Plate 6). It is not clear what its function or age is

but its relationship with the road suggests it might just be spoil dumped in the field along the edge of the road, perhaps associated with the rearrangement of field boundaries that took place in the late nineteenth century.

Assessment

The site lies close to the proposed development area and is likely to be affected

5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE REMAINS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

5.1.1 In total, 18 sites of archaeological interest were identified within the study area. Of these, 14 were previously recorded in the Merseyside SMR. The other four were identified through the examination of early maps. There is a single Scheduled Monument within the study area; St Anne's Well (Site **15**, Scheduled Monument No. 32602), although this is on the south-west edge and is very unlikely to be affected by the proposed development.

5.1.2 All of the sites identified within the study area are summarised by period in Table 1 below:

Period	No of sites	Sites
Neolithic	0	-
Bronze Age	0	-
Iron Age/ Romano-British	0	-
Roman	0	-
Medieval	(4)	Pottery find spots (Sites 06 and 08, 11), well (Site 15)
Post-medieval	17	Coal tip (Site 01), reservoirs (Sites 02-03), railway (Site 04), glasshouse (Site 05), pottery find spots (Site 06 and 08-11), pumping station (Site 07), farms (Sites 12 and 16), building (Site 13), field name (Site 14), well (Site 15), track (Site 17)
Unknown	(3)	Flint find spots (Sites 06 and 08), earthwork (Site 18)

Table 1: Number of sites by period (figures in brackets indicate those which potentially belong to several periods)

5.2 CRITERIA

5.2.1 There are a number of different methodologies used to assess the archaeological significance of sites; that to be used here is the 'Secretary of State's criteria for scheduling ancient monuments' which is included as Annex 4 of PPG 16 (DoE 1990). Those sites previously listed (*Section 4*, above) that were considered likely to be affected by the proposed development were each considered using the criteria, with the results below.

5.2.2 **Period:** there are only two sites containing possible prehistoric remains within the study area that are likely to be affected (Sites **06** and **08**). The uncertain nature of these makes their significance in relation to their period difficult to assess. Similarly, the find spots (Sites **06, 08, 09** and **11**) include material from

a variety of periods, the significance of which is not known. Elton Head Farm (Site 16) is perhaps the most significant for its period as it was the centre of an important local medieval and post-medieval land holding.

- 5.2.3 **Rarity:** none of the sites that are likely to be affected are particularly rare, although, once again, the uncertain nature of the find spots (Sites 06, 08, 09 and 11) makes this difficult to assess. Elton Head Farm, as the centre of a minor manor, is locally significant.
- 5.2.4 **Documentation:** only the remains of Elton Head Farm (Site 16) have any significant documentation, which ranges from the medieval period to the present day and is very extensive. It is, therefore, very significant locally and regionally.
- 5.2.5 **Group Value:** the find spots (Site 06, 08, 09 and 11) represent a number of periods and various types of activity and, therefore, have a high significance in this area. Elton Head Farm (Site 16) forms an interesting complex of buildings, originally including agricultural, domestic and minor industrial, and therefore, forms an important group in itself.
- 5.2.6 **Survival/Condition:** Elton Head Farm (Site 16) is thought to survive in a reasonable condition and is, therefore, of some significance. The associated track (Site 17) and earthwork to the north (Site 18) appear to survive in good condition and are of some significance on this account. Any remaining elements of the find spots (Site 06, 08, 09 and 11) are likely to be in a relatively poor condition and, therefore, have a reduced significance.
- 5.2.7 **Fragility/Vulnerability:** the standing buildings at Elton Head Farm (Site 16) are presumably, relatively stable, and therefore, not particularly fragile. The track (Site 17) and earthwork (Site 18) are probably quite fragile, and so more significant on this account. As the extent or meaning of the find spots (Site 06, 08, 09 and 11) is not known it is difficult to assess their fragility.
- 5.2.8 **Diversity:** the find spots (Site 06, 08, 09 and 11) represent relatively diverse sites on account of the various periods they represent and are, therefore, of some significance. Elton Head Farm (Site 16) is also a diverse structure, with medieval origins and extensive post-medieval standing buildings, and is, therefore, also significant in this respect.
- 5.2.9 **Potential:** all of the sites arguably have a high potential, particularly the find spots (Site 06, 08, 09 and 11), as the exact nature of these is unknown. Although the history and structure of Elton Head Farm (Site 16) has been examined in detail little is known about any associated below-ground remains, including elements that may be present in the adjoining fields. The uncertain nature of the earthwork (Site 18) means that this has an unknown amount of potential.

5.3 SIGNIFICANCE

- 5.3.1 In general, it is difficult to assess the significance of the find spots (Site 06, 08, 09 and 11), but it is their high potential that makes them important. They possibly represent several periods, and in at least two cases (Site 09 and 11) they are likely to be severely affected, so additional work is necessary. In contrast, the importance Elton Head Farm (Site 16) to the local area is

indisputable but it is very unlikely to be affected. The track (Site **17**) is arguably of little importance, but its relationship with Elton Head Farm would make it worthy of further examination. The earthwork (Site **18**) is of unknown date and function, and so its overall significance cannot accurately be assessed. Nevertheless, it is worthy of additional investigation.

6. IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 IMPACT

6.1.1 In total, seven sites were considered likely to be affected by the proposed development. Most of these comprise scatters of artefacts recovered during field walking, potentially ranging in date from the prehistoric period to the post-medieval period. The extent of these sites is unknown, but it is likely that similar artefacts are present across large parts of the study area.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.2.1 The assessment of significance, combined with the degree to which the sites are likely to be affected has been used to produce recommendations for further work, which are outlined in Table 2, below:

Site No	Type	Period	Impact	Recommendations
06	Find spot/field name	Prehistoric - Post-medieval	Minimal	Watching brief
08	Find spot	Prehistoric – post-medieval	Minimal	Watching brief
09	Find spot/field name	Post-medieval	Severe	Watching brief
11	Find spot/field name	Medieval – post-medieval	Severe	Watching Brief
16	Farm	Medieval – post-medieval	Minimal	Watching brief
17	Track	Post-medieval	Severe to part	Walkover/ Topographic survey/ watching brief
18	Earthwork	Unknown	Severe to part	Walkover/ Topographic survey/ watching brief

Table 2: Recommended further work

6.2.2 The presence of extensive scatters of both medieval and post-medieval artefacts within the study area, described as including both glass production waste (perhaps derived from the glasshouse at Glasshouse Farm (Site 05)) and pottery production waste (Site 06), indicates a great deal of medieval and post-medieval activity was taking place in the area around Elton Head Farm. It is probable, therefore, that additional remains of this type and date will be

present across other parts of the study area, and that the recommendation from MAS that a watching brief be maintained during topsoil stripping is entirely justifiable. The evidence of field names at Sites **06**, **09** and **11** also suggests that there are possible structures present at these sites, although this cannot be certain, and given the vague nature of the references no additional work is recommended apart from that listed above. A walkover survey and topographic survey is recommended for the two sites identified during aerial photography, these being sites **17** and **18**.

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8. ILLUSTRATIONS

8.1 FIGURES

Figure 1: Location map

Figure 2: Gazetteer sites plan

Figure 3: Copy of part of the Sutton Tithe Map (DRL 1/77 1808)

8.2 PLATES

Plate 1: Part of the Ordnance Survey map of 1893 showing the northern end of the study area, including Elton Head Farm (Site **16**), Glasshouse Farm (Site **05**), and adjacent railway (Site **04**)

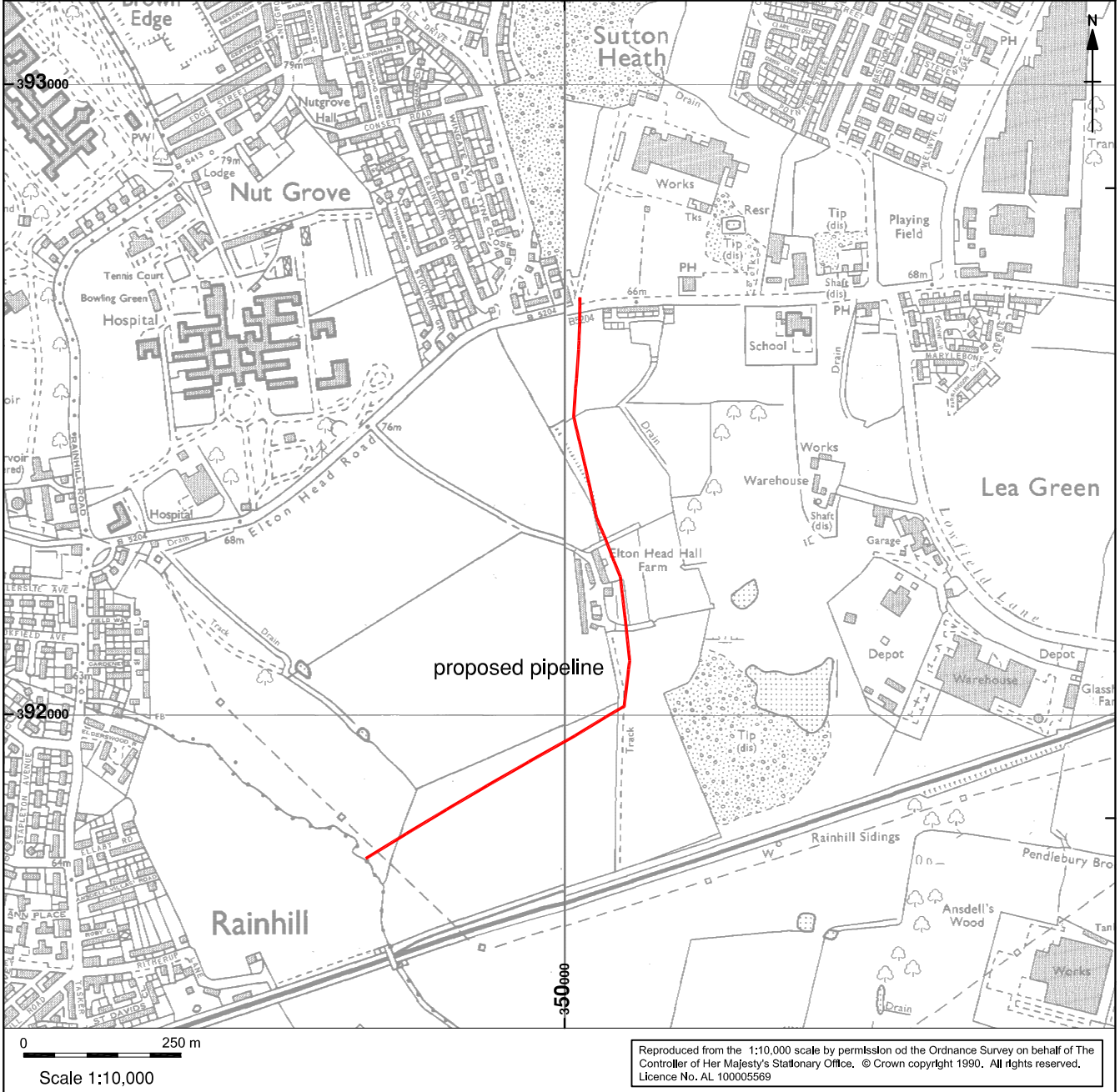
Plate 2: Part of the Ordnance Survey map of 1892 showing the southern end of the study area, prior to the development of Site **01**, and St Anne's Well (Site **15**)

Plate 3: Part of the Ordnance Survey map of 1927 showing the additional siding forming part of Site **04**

Plate 4: Part of the Ordnance Survey map of 1937 showing the expanded coal tips (Site **01**)

Plate 5: Aerial photograph showing Sites **17** and **18** (English Heritage 1969)

Plate 6: Aerial photograph showing an oblique view of Site **18** (RAF 1949), looking approximately north-east



filelocation*sitecode*invoicecode*sitename*illustratorinitials*00.00.06

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Figure 1: Site Location

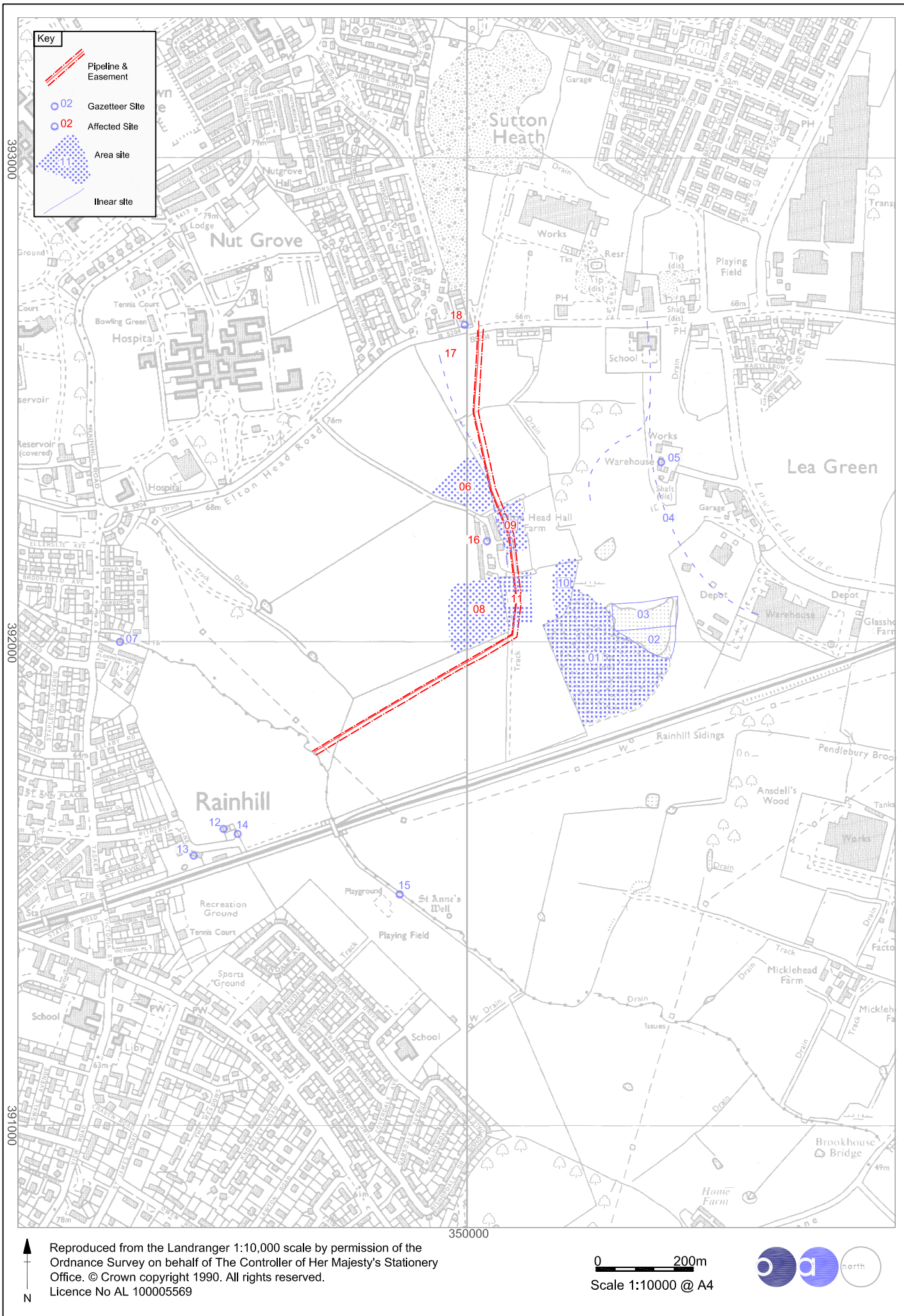


Figure 2: Gazetter sites plan

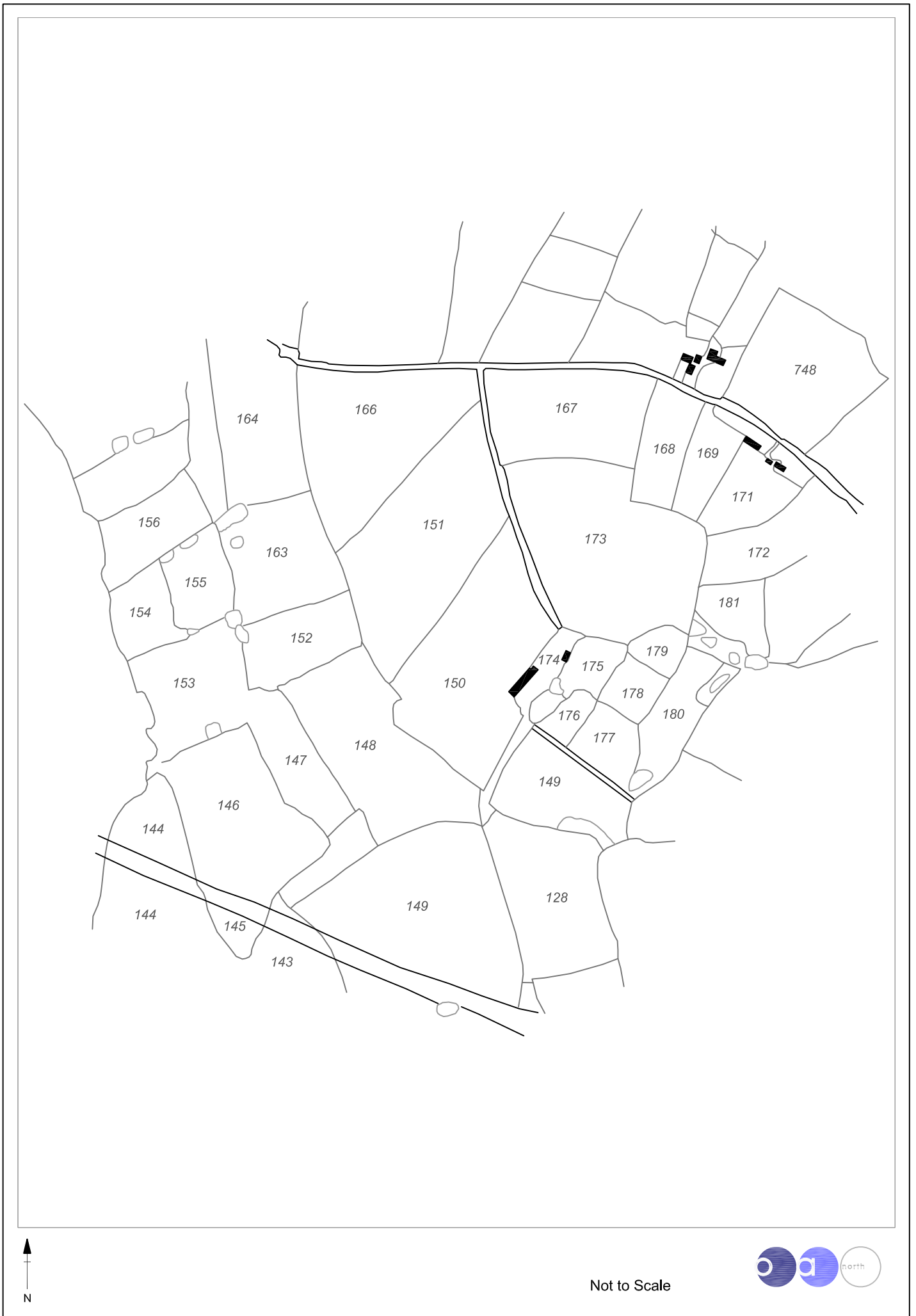


Figure 3: Copy of Sutton Tithe map (DRL 1/77 1808)

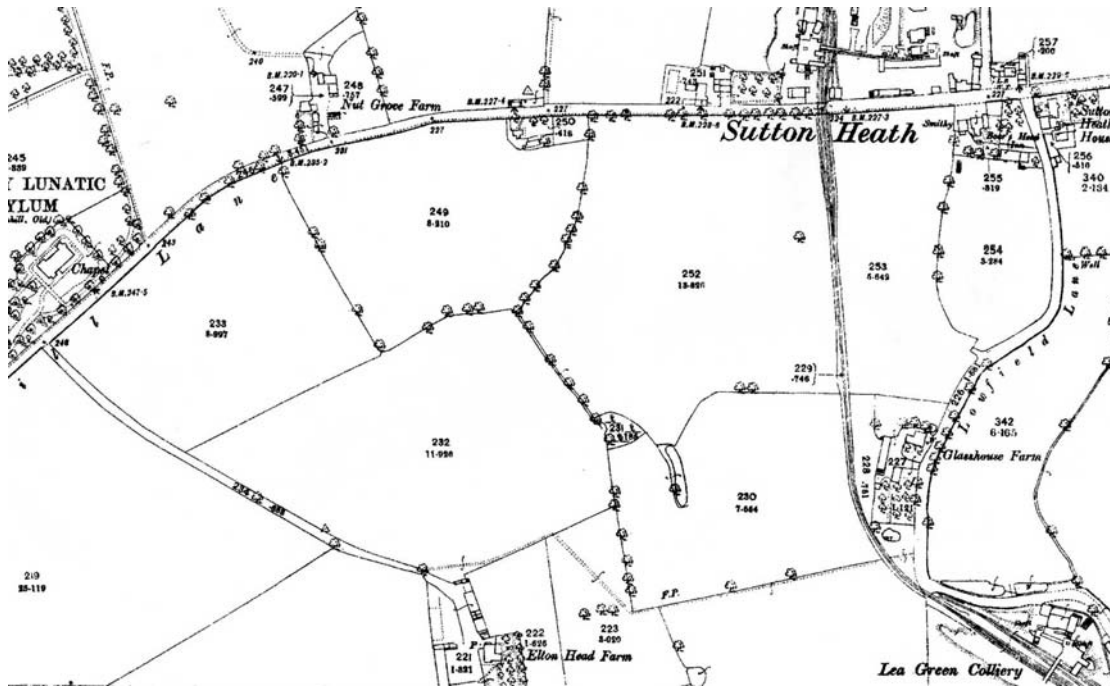


Plate 1: Part of the Ordnance Survey map of 1893 showing the northern end of the study area, including Elton Head Farm (Site 16), Glasshouse Farm (Site 05), and adjacent railway (Site 04)

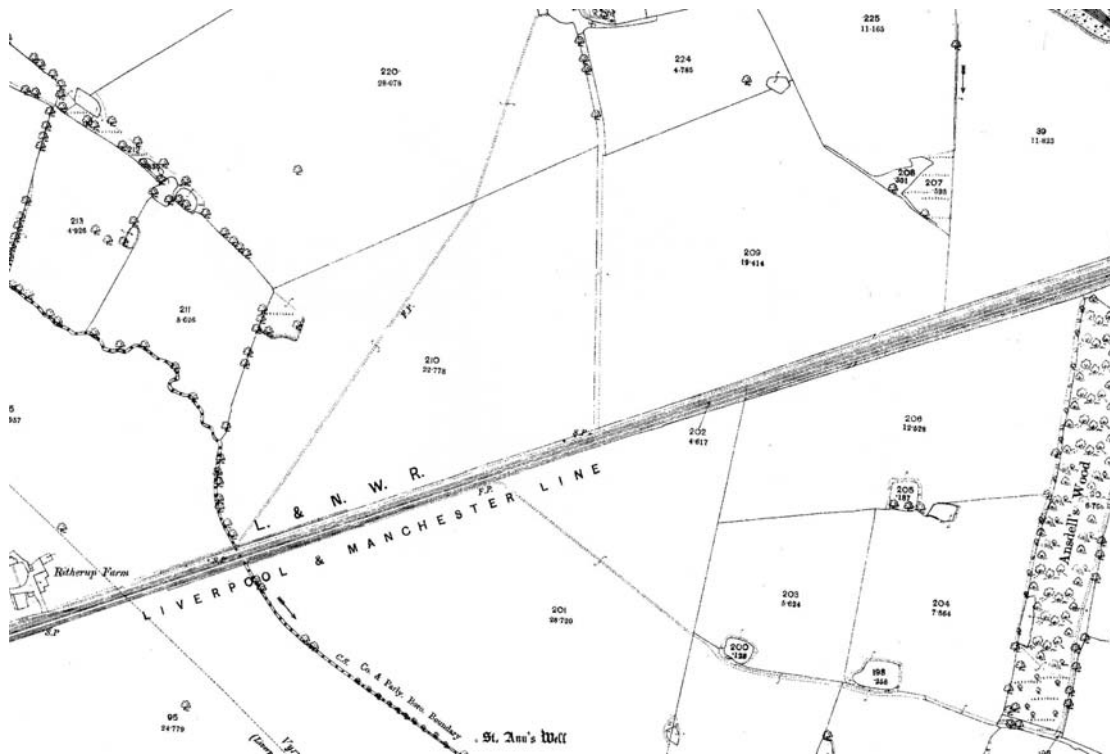


Plate 2: Part of the Ordnance Survey map of 1892 showing the southern end of the study area, prior to the development of Site 01, and St Anne's Well (Site 15)

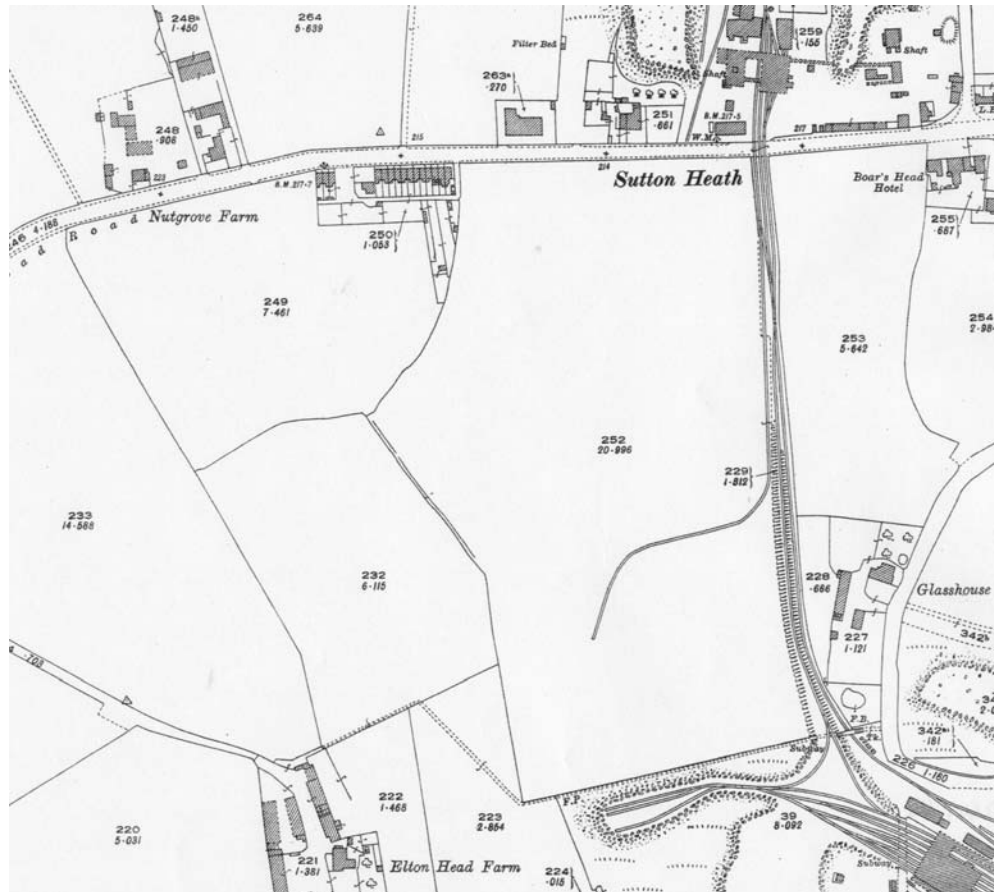


Plate 3: Part of the Ordnance Survey map of 1927 showing the additional siding forming part of Site 04

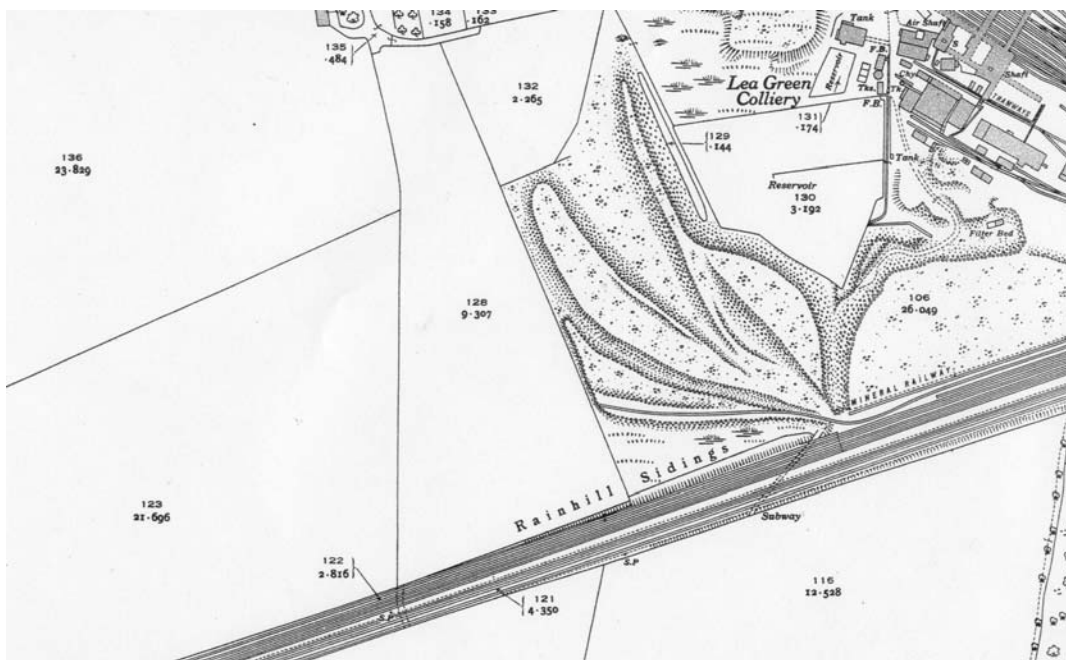


Plate 4: Part of the Ordnance Survey map of 1937 showing the expanded coal tips (Site 01)



Plate 5: Aerial photograph showing Sites **17** and **18** (English Heritage 1969)



Plate 6: Aerial photograph showing an oblique view of Site **18** (RAF 1949), looking approximately north-east

APPENDIX 1: PROJECT DESIGN

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1 United Utilities (hereafter the ‘Client’) has requested that Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) submit proposals for an archaeological desk-based assessment and watching brief at Elton Head Farm, St Helens, Merseyside prior to a proposed surface water outfall pipeline.
- 1.1.2 The Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) for Merseyside shows there to be archaeological potential of the affected area relating to the prehistoric, post-medieval and later periods. Elton Head Farm (SMR no 5092-016) was subject to historical research and building survey in 1983/84, which showed there to have been a building on site from at least the fifteenth century.
- 1.1.3 Further archaeological evidence has been found in the fields to the west, north and south of Elton Head farm during a programme of fieldwalking in the 1980s, some due to the threat of opencast coal mining at the time. Later medieval pottery, nineteenth century domestic wares and likely struck flint (SMR no 5092-021) were found, to the west and south of the farm a scatter of later medieval pottery and glass was revealed (SMR no 5092-019), and various scatters of seventeenth to nineteenth century pottery sherds and flint (SMR nos 5092-015 and 5092-020).

1.2 OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY NORTH

- 1.2.1 OA North has extensive experience of desk-based assessments, as well as the evaluation and excavation of sites of all periods in this area, having undertaken a great number of small and large-scale projects during the past 24 years. These have taken place within the planning process, to fulfil the requirements of Clients and planning authorities, to very rigorous timetables.
- 1.2.2 OA North has the professional expertise and resources to undertake the project detailed below to a high level of quality and efficiency. OA North is an **Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) registered organisation, registration number 17**, and all its members of staff operate subject to the IFA Code of Conduct.

2 OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The following programme has been designed to provide an accurate archaeological assessment of the designated area within its broader context, together with an evaluation of the archaeological resource of the proposed development area. The required stages to achieve these ends are as follows:
- 2.2 ***Desk-Based Assessment:*** to provide a desk-based assessment of the site.
- 2.3 ***Permanent Presence Watching Brief:*** this will be undertaken during all topsoil stripping and ground disturbance associated with the proposed development.
- 2.4 ***Report and Archive:*** production of a report following the collation of data during section 2.2 and 2.3 above. A site archive will be produced to English Heritage guidelines (MAP 2) and in accordance with the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage* (UKIC 1990).

3 METHOD STATEMENT

3.1 DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

3.1.1 The following will be undertaken as appropriate, depending on the availability of source material. The level of such work will be dictated by the time scale of the project.

3.1.2 **Documentary and Cartographic Material:** this work will comprise a rapid desk-based survey of the existing resource. It will include an appraisal of the Merseyside Sites and Monuments Record, as well as appropriate sections of County histories, early maps, and such primary documentation (tithe and estate plans etc.) as may be reasonably available. Particular emphasis will be upon the early cartographic evidence which has the potential to inform the post-medieval occupation and land-use of the area. Any photographic material lodged in the County Sites and Monuments Record will also be studied. Published documentary sources will also be examined and assessed. The study will examine place and field name evidence for the site and its environs. This work will involve visits and or correspondence searches of the following repositories: Merseyside Sites and Monuments Record at the Liverpool Museum, and the OA North research archive.

3.1.3 **Aerial Photography:** a brief survey of the extant air photographic cover will be undertaken. Merseyside Sites and Monuments Record will be consulted for aerial photography and the study will entail liaison with the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments (England) (NMR), although, within the timescale available, it is unlikely that prints will be forthcoming from this body for inclusion in this report.

3.1.4 **Physical Environment:** a rapid desk-based compilation of geological (both solid and drift), pedological, topographical and palaeoenvironmental information will be undertaken. It will be based on published geological mapping and any local geological surveys in the possession of the County Council or the Client. This will not only set the archaeological features in context but also serves to provide predictive data, that will increase the efficiency of the field inspection.

3.2 WATCHING BRIEF

3.2.1 A programme of field observation will accurately record the location, extent, and character of any surviving archaeological features and/or deposits within the topsoil stripping activities in the course of the proposed development works. A systematic examination of any subsoil horizons exposed during the course of the groundworks, and the accurate recording of all archaeological features and horizons, and any artefacts, identified during observation.

3.2.2 During this phase of work, recording will comprise a full description and preliminary classification of features or materials revealed, and their accurate location (either on plan and/or section, and as grid co-ordinates where appropriate). Features will be planned accurately at appropriate scales and annotated on to a large-scale plan provided by the Client. A photographic record will be undertaken simultaneously.

- 3.2.3 A plan will be produced of the areas of groundworks showing the location and extent of the ground disturbance and one or more dimensioned sections will be produced.
- 3.2.4 Putative archaeological features and/or deposits identified by the machining process, together with the immediate vicinity of any such features, will be cleaned by hand, using either hoes, shovel scraping, and/or trowels depending on the subsoil conditions, and where appropriate sections will be studied and drawn. Any such features will be sample excavated (ie selected pits and postholes will normally only be half-sectioned, linear features will be subject to no more than a 10% sample, and extensive layers will, where possible, be sampled by partial rather than complete removal).
- 3.2.5 It is assumed that OA North will have the authority to stop the works for a sufficient time period to enable the recording of important deposits. It may also be necessary to call in additional archaeological support if a find of particular importance is identified or a high density of archaeology is discovered, but this would only be called into effect in agreement with the Client and the Merseyside Archaeological Officer and will require a variation to costing.
- 3.2.6 **Human Remains:** any human remains uncovered will be left *in situ*, covered and protected. No further investigation will continue beyond that required to establish the date and character of the burial. Merseyside Archaeological Service and the local Coroner will be informed immediately. If removal is essential the exhumation of any funerary remains will require the provision of a Home Office license, under section 25 of the Burial Act of 1857. An application will be made by OA North for the study area on discovery of any such remains and the removal will be carried out with due care and sensitivity under the environmental health regulations, and if appropriate, in compliance with the 'Disused Burial Grounds (Amendment) Act, 1981.
- 3.2.7 **Treatment of finds:** all finds will be exposed, lifted, cleaned, conserved, marked, bagged and boxed in accordance with the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (UKIC) *First Aid For Finds*, 1998 (new edition) and the recipient museum's guidelines.
- 3.2.8 **Treasure:** any gold and silver artefacts recovered during the course of the excavation will be removed to a safe place and reported to the local Coroner according to the procedures relating to the Treasure Act, 1996. Where removal cannot take place on the same working day as discovery, suitable security will be employed to protect the finds from theft.
- 3.2.9 All identified finds and artefacts will be retained, although certain classes of building material can sometimes be discarded after recording if an appropriate sample is retained on advice from the recipient museum's archive curator.
- 3.2.10 **Contingency plan:** in the event of significant archaeological features being encountered during the evaluation, discussions will take place with the Archaeological Officer, as to the extent of further works to be carried out, and in

agreement with the Client. All further works would be subject to a variation to this project design.

3.3 ARCHIVE/REPORT

- 3.3.1 **Archive:** the results of all archaeological work carried out will form the basis for a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition, 1991). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project. This archive will be provided in the English Heritage Centre for Archaeology format and a synthesis will be submitted to the SMR (the index to the archive and a copy of the report). Arrangements for deposition of the full site archive will be made with Liverpool Museum, National Museums & Galleries on Merseyside. The National Museums Liverpool (NML)'*Guidelines on the Deposition of Archaeological Archives*' will be consulted.
- 3.3.2 **Report:** one bound and one unbound copy of a written synthetic report will be submitted to the Client, and a further copy submitted to the Merseyside SMR within eight weeks of completion of the study. The report will include a copy of this project design, and indications of any agreed departure from that design. It will present, summarise, and interpret the results of the programme detailed above. The report will also include a complete bibliography of sources from which data has been derived.
- 3.3.3 This report will identify areas of defined archaeology. An assessment and statement of the actual and potential archaeological significance of the identified archaeology within the broader context of regional and national archaeological priorities will be made. Illustrative material will include a location map, section drawings, and plans.
- 3.3.4 Provision will be made for a summary report to be submitted to a suitable regional or national archaeological journal within one year of completion of fieldwork, if relevant results are obtained.
- 3.3.5 **Confidentiality:** all internal reports to the Client are designed as documents for the specific use of the Client, for the particular purpose as defined in the project brief and project design, and should be treated as such. They are not suitable for publication as academic documents or otherwise without amendment or revision.

4 OTHER MATTERS

- 4.1 **Project Monitoring:** Whilst the work is undertaken for the Client, the Archaeological Officer will be kept fully informed of the work. Any proposed changes to the project design will be agreed with the Archaeological Officer and the Client.
- 4.2 **Access:** OA North will consult with the Client regarding access to the site.
- 4.3 **Health and Safety:** OA North provides a Health and Safety Statement for all projects and maintains a Unit Safety policy. All site procedures are in accordance with the guidance set out in the Health and Safety Manual compiled by the Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers (1997). A written risk

assessment will be undertaken in advance of project commencement and copies will be made available on request to all interested parties.

4.4 **Reinstatement:** the areas excavated will be backfilled with the spoil for practical and health and safety reasons but no reinstatement of the area will be undertaken. This will be carried out by the Client prior to/during development.

4.5 **Public Access:** the site will be protected from public access by hoarding/fencing (erected by the Client).

5 WORK TIMETABLE

5.1 **Desk-based assessment:** this element is expected to take approximately five days to complete.

5.2 **Permanent Presence watching brief:** the duration of the project will be dependent upon the progress of the contractor.

5.3 **Report:** the Client report will be completed within approximately eight weeks following completion of the desk-based assessment.

6 STAFFING

6.1 The project will be under the direct management of **Alison Plummer BSc (Hons)** (OA North Senior Project Manager) to whom all correspondence should be addressed.

6.2 The watching brief will be undertaken by an OA North Project Supervisor. All OA North project supervisors have a great deal of experience in the undertaking of watching briefs.

7 INSURANCE

7.1 OA North has professional indemnity to a value of £2,000,000, employer's liability cover to a value of £10,000,000 and public liability to a value of £15,000,000. Written details of insurance cover can be provided if required.