

# Rugeley Quarry Rugeley Staffordshire

*Archaeological Watching Brief*



for:  
Cemex

CA Project: CR1115  
CA Report: CR1115\_1

July 2022



# Rugeley Quarry Rugeley Staffordshire

## *Archaeological Watching Brief*

CA Project: CR1115  
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B	14 July 2022	Kinga Werner	Monica Fombellida	Final	County Archaeologist Comment	Steven Sheldon

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## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1 Site location plan (1:25,000)

Fig. 2 The site, showing area of observed groundwork (1:5,000)

Fig. 3 Photograph

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## SUMMARY

<b>Project name:</b>	Rugeley Quarry
<b>Location:</b>	Rugeley, Staffordshire
<b>NGR:</b>	401262 318891
<b>Type:</b>	Watching brief
<b>Date:</b>	06–10 June 2022
<b>Planning reference:</b>	CH00/0577, S400/18 and SCC/21/0026/EA-SUB
<b>Location of Archive:</b>	To be deposited with The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery and the Archaeology Data Service (ADS)

In June 2022, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with mineral extraction at Rugeley Quarry, Rugeley, Staffordshire.

No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed, and no artefactual material was recovered.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. In June 2022, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Rugeley Quarry, Rugeley, Staffordshire (centred at NGR: 401262 318891; Fig. 1). This watching brief was undertaken for Cemex.

1.2. Staffordshire County Council (SCC) has granted planning permission for mineral extraction on the site (planning ref: CH00/0577, S400/18 and SCC/21/0026/EA-SUB). Condition 3 of this planning permission required the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with an approved WSI (WYAS 2004).

1.3. The scope of this watching brief was defined by Shane Kelleher, County Archaeologist, Environment & Countryside, Staffordshire the archaeological advisor to SCC, who advised the following:

*'I do not wish to raise any archaeological/historic environment issues with the proposals to revise the phasing at the Rugeley Quarry site. I note that the applicant, in their suggested revised Condition 3, retains the requirement for the development taking place in accordance with the Written Scheme of Archaeological Investigation for Archaeological Watching Brief dated 2004. This is welcomed, and it is recommended that the applicant's appointed archaeological organisation undertakes an up-to-date Historic Environment Record (HER) search of the site to ensure that their work is informed by the LiDAR survey and associated analysis of the archaeology of the area which formed part of the Chase Through Time Project'*

1.4. The watching brief was undertaken in line with a previously approved WSI (WYAS 2004) and a subsequent Method Statement for Archaeological Watching Brief, produced by CA (CA 2022) and approved by Shane Kelleher. It also followed *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014; updated October 2020), *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) PPN 3: Archaeological Excavation* (Historic England 2015) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide* (Historic England 2015).

### The site

1.5. The site measures approximately 47ha in extent. It lies adjacent to the existing operational quarry which is located approximately 1.5km to the west of Rugeley,

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within Cannock Chase AONB. The majority of the site is currently covered by a coniferous plantation, managed by the Forestry Commission. The site lies at approximately 150m AOD, with localised minor undulations.

- 1.6. The underlying bedrock geology of the site is mapped as Chester Formation, sandstone and conglomerate, formed during the Triassic Period. This is overlain by Diamicton of the Quaternary Period (BGS 2022).

## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The overall site has been subject to Cultural Heritage Statement (OAA 1991) and a WSI (ASW 2004). The following is a summary of these documents supplemented by information obtained from the database of *The Chase Through Time* project (HE 2022).

- 2.2. No evidence of prehistoric activity is known in the immediate vicinity of the site; however, it is possible that sites may have been masked from aerial and/or field detection by forest cover. Prehistoric activity has been recorded in the wider area surrounding the site, specifically within Cannock Chase. This activity includes; flints of Late Mesolithic and Early Neolithic date, and earthworks which may represent settlement or burial sites. In addition, ploughed out barrows, burnt mounds and possible enclosures have been identified in the surrounding area (OAA 1991).

- 2.3. The site lies within Wolseley Park, which was created as a deer park at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Two extant deer-leaps (low sections of fence incorporated into the perimeter of the park designed to encourage deer into the park) were identified by OAA and are believed to be associated with the former park (*ibid.*).

- 2.4. Glassmaking within Wolseley Park is documented as early as the 15<sup>th</sup> century and prior to the previous quarrying operations at the site, an excavation was undertaken by Staffordshire's Archaeology Section at the site of a long-known forest glasshouse. The glasshouse lies within the current quarry area, although it is now obscured by a screen mound. The excavations revealed several pieces of large furnace debris, including sandstone blocks with fused glass adhering to the surface and evidence of glass working, including molten glass, glass and crucible fragments and tiles from a collapsed roof (*ibid.*).

- 2.5. Three large ponds, located immediately to the east of the site and on a tributary of the Stafford Brook, may have served an industrial function. It has been suggested

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that they may have been associated with ironworking and there is documentary evidence of this industry being undertaken in the vicinity of the development site. Alternatively, the ponds may have served an ornamental rather than an industrial function, possibly associated with nearby Wolseley Park House (*ibid.*).

- 2.6. Post-Medieval cultivation in the form of extant ridge and furrow (MST22976, MST22978) is recorded in several fields c. 700m to the east of the site, attesting the agricultural use of the land surrounding the site during this period.
- 2.7. Between 1885 and 1902, a racecourse was laid out within Wolseley Park to the east of South Street. The grass track of the racecourse was still visible during a field survey undertaken in 1991 (see below).
- 2.8. A field evaluation comprising magnetic survey was carried out on the site in 1991 by Oxford Archaeotechnics. This identified areas of small-scale burning activity, which may be related to bush/clearance fires and/or informal charcoal production. In addition, insubstantial bank and ditch fragments, which may represent parcel boundaries, drainage features and/or possibly traces of park boundaries, were also identified (ASW 2004).
- 2.9. Further ditches and associated banks (MST22839), and a trackway (MST22850) were recorded to the east of the site during the Cannock Chase lidar and photograph investigation programme. To the north of the site, further boundary banks (MST22848 and MST23082) were recorded at Buller's wood.
- 2.10. Earthwork remains of a series of banks representing rifle ranges and butts (MST12296) associated with First World War camps were recorded c.500m to the south-west of the site. First World War camps (including SK00017) are recorded c. 1.3km to the south-west of the site. Each camp could cater for twenty battalions each having their own parade ground, kitchens and bath house. The concrete bases of the camps were the only surviving features.



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### 3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1. The general objectives of the watching brief were:

- to monitor the development groundworks, and to identify, investigate and record any significant buried archaeological deposits/features thus revealed;
- at the conclusion of the project, to produce an integrated project archive and a report setting out the watching brief results and the archaeological conclusions that can be drawn from the recorded data.

### 4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. The watching brief comprised the observation by a competent archaeologist of all intrusive groundworks associated with the proposed development. These works comprised the removal of topsoil and subsoil, prior to mineral extraction.

4.2. Records were maintained in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*.

4.3. Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 2: The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites*. No deposits were identified that required sampling.

4.4. CA will make arrangements with The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery for the deposition of the project archive. A digital archive will also be prepared and deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). The archives (museum and digital) will be prepared and deposited in accordance with *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (ClfA 2014; updated October 2020).

4.5. A summary of information from this project, as set out in Appendix B, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

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## 5. RESULTS

- 5.1. This section provides an overview of the watching brief results. Detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are given in Appendix A.
- 5.2. The natural geological substrate, comprising mixed sands and gravels, was revealed at an average depth of 0.15m below present ground level (bpgl). This was overlain by thin layer of silty sand subsoil in the western part of site averaging 0.15m in thickness, which was in turn sealed by 0.05-0.15m of sandy loam topsoil.
- 5.3. No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed, and no artefactual material was recovered.

## 6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1. Despite the archaeological potential of the application area (see *Archaeological background*, above), the watching brief identified no archaeological remains within the area of observed groundworks.
- 6.2. The absence of archaeological deposits may indicate that archaeological features identified in the vicinity of the site did not extend into the excavated area. This corroborates the results of *The Chase Through Time Project* which identified no potential features within the excavated area (HE 2022).

## 7. CA PROJECT TEAM

- 7.1. Fieldwork was undertaken by Kinga Werner. This report was written by Kinga Werner. The report illustrations were prepared by Ryan Wilson. The project archive has been compiled by Kinga Werner and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Alex Thomson and Monica Fombellida.

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## 8. REFERENCES

- WYAS (Archaeological Services WYAS) 2004 *Rugeley Quarry, Rugeley, Staffordshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Watching Brief*
- BGS (British Geological Survey) 2022 *Geology of Britain Viewer*  
<https://www.bgs.ac.uk/map-viewers/geology-of-britain-viewer/> Accessed 8 June 2022
- CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2022 *Rugeley Quarry, Rugeley, Staffordshire: Method Statement for an Archaeological Watching Brief*
- HE (Historic England) 2022, *The Chase Through Time, Cannock Chase, Staffordshire* <https://historicengland.org.uk/research/current/discover-and-understand/landscapes/cannock-chase/> Accessed 28 June 2022
- OAA (Oxford Archaeological Associates) 1991 *Wolseley Park, Near Rugeley, Staffordshire: Proposed sand and gravel extraction, Environmental Assessment Cultural Heritage Statement*

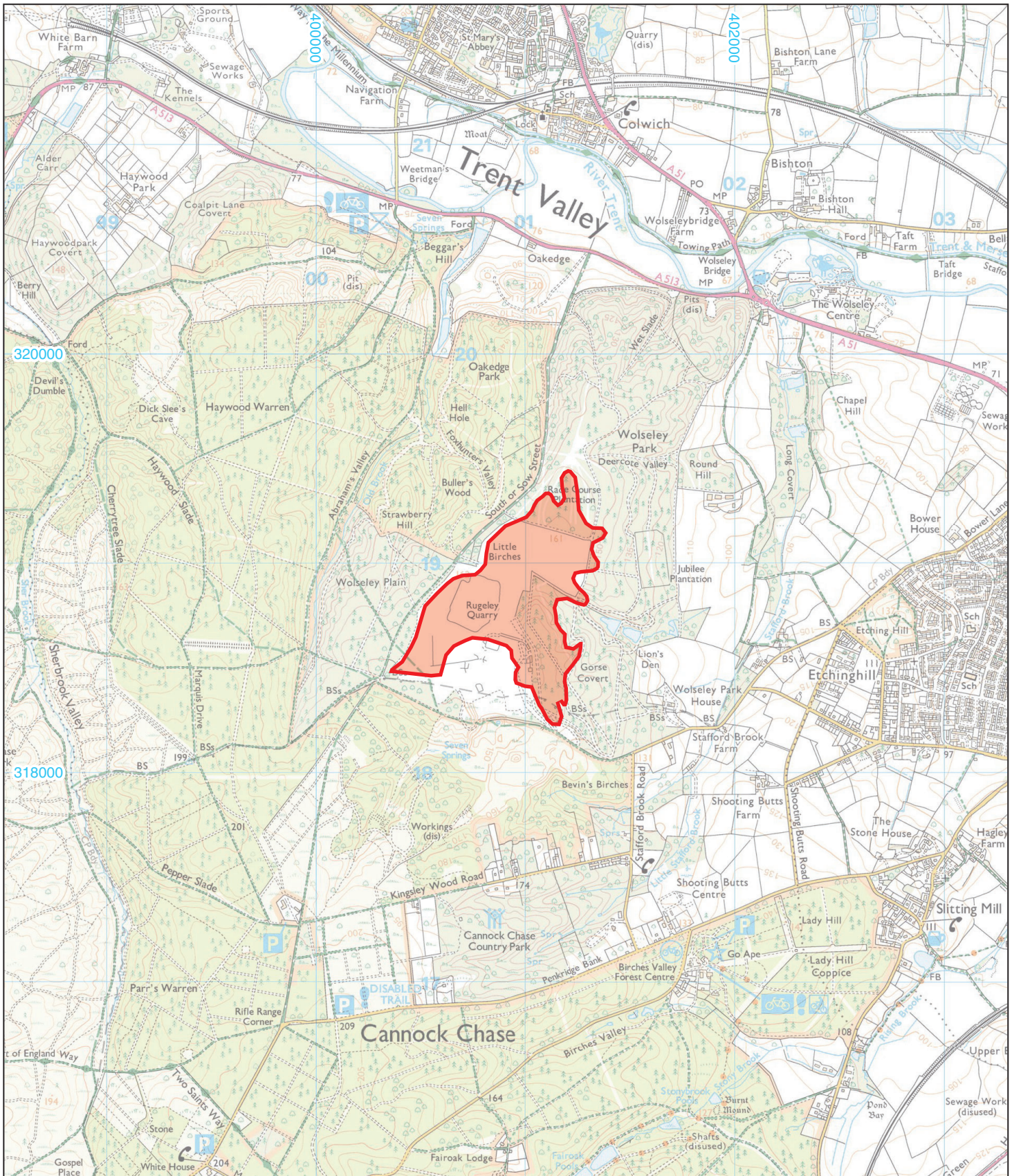
## APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Area	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Interpretation	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth/thickness (m)
1	1000	Layer		Topsoil	Dark greyish black sandy loam	270	120	0.05-0.15
1	1001	Layer		Subsoil	Mid pinkish grey silty sand with gravel	270	40	0.05- 0.20
1	1002	Layer		Natural Substrate	Gravel in mid greyish purple or brownish orange silty sand matrix	270	120	-

## APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Rugeley Quarry, Rugeley, Staffordshire	
Short description	In June 2022, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with mineral extraction at Rugeley Quarry, Rugeley, Staffordshire No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed, and no artefactual material was recovered.	
Project dates	06-10 June 2022	
Project type	Watching Brief	
Previous work	Cultural Heritage Statement (OAA 1991) WSI (ASW 2004)	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site location	Rugeley Quarry, Rugeley, Staffordshire	
Study area (m <sup>2</sup> /ha)	47ha	
Site co-ordinates	401262 318891	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project brief originator	N/A	
Project design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Alex Thomson and Monica Fombellida	
Project Supervisor	Kinga Werner	
<b>MONUMENT TYPE</b>	None	
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS</b>	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Paper	The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery	Trench recording form, photographic register
Digital	The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery	Digital photos
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Cotswold Archaeology 2022 <i>Rugeley Quarry, Rugeley, Staffordshire: Archaeological Watching Brief CA</i> typescript report <b>CR1115_1</b>		





 Site boundary



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Ordnance Survey 0100031673



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PROJECT TITLE

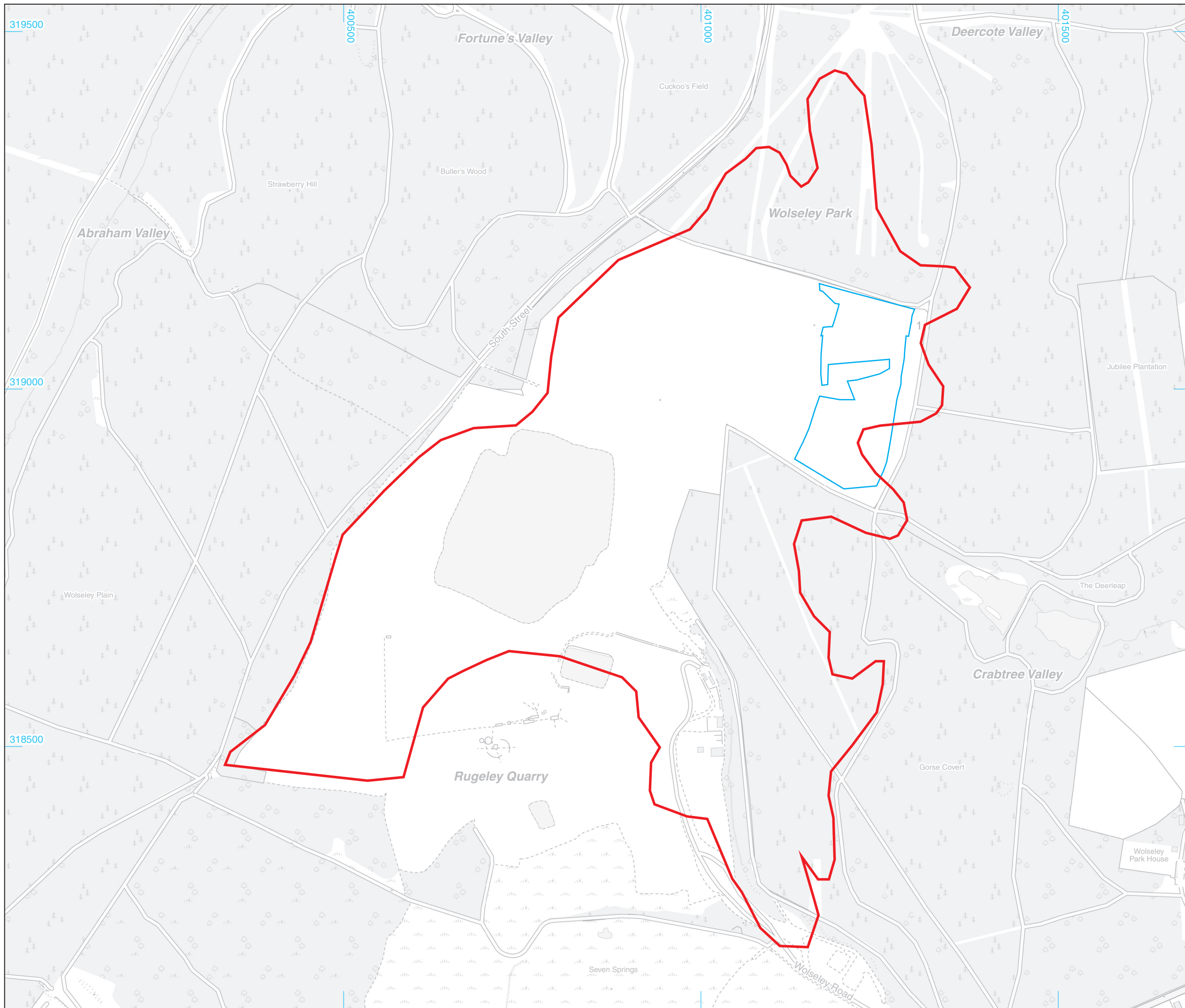
Rugeley Quarry, Rugeley, Staffordshire

FIGURE TITLE

Site location plan

DRAWN BY	RW	PROJECT NO.	CR115	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	30/06/2022	
APPROVED BY	MF	SCALE@A4	1:25,000	<b>1</b>





- Site boundary
- Watching brief area



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**PROJECT TITLE**  
 Rugeley Quarry, Rugeley, Staffordshire

**FIGURE TITLE**  
 The site showing area of observed groundworks

<b>DRAWN BY</b> RW	<b>PROJECT NO.</b> CR1115	<b>FIGURE NO.</b>
<b>CHECKED BY</b> DJB	<b>DATE</b> 30/06/2022	<b>2</b>
<b>APPROVED BY</b> MF	<b>SCALE@A3</b> 1:5000	



*Soil stripping of watching brief area, looking south-west*



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*PROJECT TITLE*

Rugeley Quarry, Rugeley, Staffordshire

*FIGURE TITLE*

**Photograph**

<i>DRAWN BY</i>	<b>RW</b>	<i>PROJECT NO.</i>	<b>CR1115</b>	<i>FIGURE NO.</i>
<i>CHECKED BY</i>	<b>DJB</b>	<i>DATE</i>	<b>30/06/2022</b>	<b>3</b>
<i>APPROVED BY</i>	<b>MF</b>	<i>SCALE@A4</i>	<b>NA</b>	



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