



West Hoathly Brickworks Phase 2 (Part 10) Sharpthorne West Sussex

Archaeological Watching Brief



for Ibstock Brick Limited

CA Project: 2151 CA Report: 15687

August 2015



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SUMMARY

Project Name: West Hoathly Brickworks Phase 2 (Part 10)

Location: Sharpthorne, West Sussex

NGR: TQ 3763 3286

Type: Watching Brief

Date: 17 to 19 August 2015

Planning Reference: HO/36/98

Location of Archive: To be deposited with East Grinstead Museum

Site Code: WHS 15

A programme of archaeological recording was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology as part of the latest phase of works associated with the extension of the clay quarry at West Hoathly Brickworks, Sharpthorne, West Sussex. The work formed part of the Phase 2 (Part 10) Extraction and followed on from archaeological work undertaken during the Phase 2 (Parts 1–9) Extraction.

Fifty minepits were identified, similar to those identified previously on the site and likely have been the result of medieval iron ore extraction. In addition to this a north-west/south east aligned ditch was identified which may be contemporary with the medieval mining activity. An extant clay extraction (marl) pit was also identified.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In August 2015 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for Ibstock Brick Ltd at West Hoathly Brickworks, Sharpthorne, West Sussex (centred on NGR: TQ 3763 3286; Fig. 1). The programme of archaeological recording formed part of ongoing archaeological work required to fulfil a condition attached to planning consent for an extension to the clay quarry attached to the brickworks (planning ref.: HO/36/98). The objective of the watching brief was to record all archaeological remains exposed during the development.
- 1.2 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a *brief* for archaeological recording prepared by Mr John Mills, Archaeologist for West Sussex County Council Economic and Environmental Policy Service (WSCCEEPS), the archaeological advisor to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), and with a subsequent detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2003) and approved by the LPA acting on the advice of Mr Mills. The fieldwork also followed Standard and guidance: Archaeological watching brief (ClfA 2014), the Recommended Standard Conditions for Archaeological Fieldwork, Recording and Post-Excavation Work (Development Control), Version 2b issued by WSCCEEPS and the Management of Archaeological Projects 2 (English Heritage 1991), the Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide (EH 2006). It was monitored by John Mills.

The site

1.3 The current works comprise the Phase 2 (Part 10) Extraction area (approximately 0.45ha in area) and follow on from the Phase 1 (CA 2001b) and Phase 2 (Parts 1–9) Extraction areas reported on previously and located immediately to the west of the current works (CA 2004a, 2004b, 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2010, 2012, 2013 and 2014). Additionally a watching brief was carried out in 2011 by CA during ground reduction for clay extraction of the Phase 2, Part 6 area previously stripped; no further archaeological remains were encountered in this area. The site lies at approximately 140m AOD and comprises an area of former pasture which occupies a gentle north-facing slope and part of the eastern area of Mare Pit Wood (Fig. 2). The majority of the current phase of works was located within Mare pit wood, following tree clearance works.

1.4 The underlying geology of the area is mapped as Wadhurst Clay Formation Mudstone and Ironstone overlying Ashdown Beds Sandstones (BGS 2010). A yellow clay substrate was exposed during the groundworks.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Introduction

2.1 The general background to the archaeological works at the quarry has been outlined elsewhere (e.g. CAT 1999a) and it is not intended to fully repeat that information here. The results of the previous programmes of archaeological recording (Phase 1 and Phase 2 (Parts 1 to 9); Fig. 2) are summarised below.

Prehistoric

2.2 Three flint flakes and a scraper were identified during the Phase 1 Extraction (CAT 2001b), a flint fabricator, an unutilised flake were identified during the Phase 2 (Part 4) Extraction (CA 2007a) and sixteen fragments of flint blades, cores and debitage during the Phase 2 (Part 7) Extraction (CA 2012). All were unstratified and date to the Late Neolithic to Early Bronze Age. A single flint flake of probable Early Neolithic or Mesolithic date was recovered from the topsoil during Phase 2 (Part 6) Extraction (CA 2010) and sixteen fragments of flint blades, cores and debitage were recovered from the subsoil during the Phase 3 (Part 7) Extraction broadly dated to the prehistoric period.

Medieval

- 2.3 An evaluation prior to the Phase 1 Extraction identified several undated features including a stone-filled ditch, a posthole and a pit containing burnt material (CAT 1999b). The ditch was fully exposed during a subsequent programme of archaeological recording, along with a number of pits and postholes to its east (CAT 2001b). Medieval pottery, dateable to the 11th to 14th centuries, was recovered from these features. They also contained iron slag, burnt sandstone and fired clay likely to have derived from the walls of a charcoal-fired furnace, although no *in situ* furnace structures were identified (ibid.).
- 2.4 Within the Phase 2 Extraction area, visible earthworks within Mare Pit Wood were archaeologically surveyed (CAT 2000 and CAT 2001a) and an archaeological evaluation was undertaken within the northern part of the wood (CAT 2000). This

work showed that the earthworks are likely to have been the remains of infilled iron minepits and associated spoil heaps. These are presumed to be medieval on the basis of evidence obtained during the excavation of similar minepits within the quarry in the 1980s (Worssam and Swift 1987).

2.5 A large number of these pits were exposed during the Phase 2 (Parts 4 to 9) Extraction works, with the northernmost extent of the pits following the 140m contour (CA 2007a, 2007b, 2010, 2012, 2013 and 2014; Fig. 3). Beyond the wood, the foundations of a timber building were present, along with several pits (CA 2007a). These features were associated with a small amount of medieval pottery and had been backfilled with iron-processing waste likely to have derived from iron furnaces. At least one iron-smelting furnace pit, apparently partially protected by a shelter or windbreak, was exposed within the Phase 2 (Part 5) Extraction area (CA 2007b). Other slag-filled pits and postholes were present close to the furnace pit. A single hearth pit was revealed during Phase 2 (Part 6) Extraction groundworks (CA 2010) and two further possible hearth pits were identified during Phase 2 (Part 7) Extraction groundworks (CA 2012) all containing charcoal rich fills. It remains to be seen if these features represent an outlier of iron ore processing activity associated with the timber building or to as yet unexposed activity to the east.

Post-medieval

- 2.6 The evaluation and survey identified substantial post-medieval clay extraction (marl) pits and associated trackways and drainage channels within Mare Pit Wood. These, as well as additional marl pits, were exposed during the Phase 2 (Parts 1, 4, 8 and 9) Extraction (CA 2004a, CA 2007a, 2013 and 2014; Fig. 3).
- 2.7 During Phase 2 (Part 6) Extraction groundworks (CA 2010) a north-east/south-west aligned ditch thought to be a post-medieval/modern field boundary was revealed which extended into the Phase 2 (Part 7) Extraction area and, along with a shallow parallel ditch only observed within the Phase 2 (Part 7) Extraction area, formed the a north-east/south-west aligned trackway thought to have been used in the transportation of extracted clay away from the marl pits (CA 2012). Additional partially extant ditches were also revealed within the Phase 2 (Parts 8 and 9) Extraction areas, again, most likely relating to post-medieval/modern field boundaries (CA 2013 and 2014).

- 2.8 A pit containing charcoal and iron smelting slag was also identified during the Phase 2 (Part 1) Extraction. Although the pit remained undated, the slag was dated on typological grounds to the early post-medieval period (CA 2004a).
- 2.9 A dumping deposit along the edge of the marl pit to the south was observed. The deposit appeared to be extending eastward beyond the limit of excavation for Phase 2 (Part 6) (CA 2010; Fig. 3).

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objectives of the archaeological works were:
 - to monitor groundworks, and to identify, investigate and record all significant buried archaeological deposits revealed on the site during the course of the development groundworks;
 - at the conclusion of the project, to produce an integrated archive for the project work and a report setting out the results of the project and the archaeological conclusions that can be drawn from the recorded data.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The 2015 fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2003). An archaeologist was present during intrusive groundworks, comprising the removal of the topsoil and subsoil using a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless bucket across an 'L-shaped' area measuring a total of 288m in length and a maximum of 30m in width (Fig. 2).
- 4.2 Where archaeological deposits were encountered written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.3 The archive and artefacts from the evaluation are currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble and will be deposited with East Grinstead Museum. A summary of information from this project set out within Appendix B will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

5. RESULTS (FIGS 3-7)

5.1 The natural geological substrate, 1102, consisting of yellow clay was revealed throughout the site at an average depth of 0.3m below present ground level.

Medieval

- A total fifty minepits, all filled with a blue-grey redeposited natural clay, were revealed during groundworks, measuring between approximately 2m and 8m in diameter (Figs 3, 6 and 7). The minepits were concentrated within the western part of the extraction area and formed a continuation of the pits identified within the Phase 2 (Parts 4 to 9) Extraction groundworks. Although no dateable material was recovered from the features assigned to the medieval period, they have been so dated on the basis of their similarity to medieval features investigated elsewhere nearby (Worssam and Swift 1987). In accordance with the agreed WSI, all remained unexcavated due to their anticipated depth. Due to the similarity between all the minepits and their fills a single context number was issued each to the cuts 1104 and the fills, 1103.
- 5.3 A north-west/south-east aligned ditch, 1107, was identified within the north-western part of the extraction area measuring approximately 9m in length (Figs 3 and 4). It's fill, 1106, comprised sterile blue-grey redeposited natural. Despite not producing any artefacts ditch 1107 has been tentatively dated to the medieval period due to the similarity in its fill to that of the medieval minepits 1104. Because of this similarity a stratigraphic relationship between the features could not be established.

Post-medieval

An extant clay extraction (marl) pit, 1105, was identified in the north-western of the Phase 2 (Part 10) Extraction area, within Mare Pit Wood. Marl pit 1105 appeared to cut through the fill of at least one of the medieval minepits (Fig 5).

8. DISCUSSION

- 8.1 The fifty infilled minepits revealed during the groundworks show a continuation of probable medieval iron ore extraction activity along and above the 140m contour line recorded throughout the Phase 2 Extraction areas (see section 2.5 above).
- 8.2 The potentially medieval ditch 1107 may be contemporary with the mining activity on the site. Its blue-grey clay fill most likely originates from the up-cast from the excavation the surrounding minepits through layers of blue clay located lower down within the natural substrate (Fig 7)
- 3.3 The extant clay extraction (marl) pit 1105 is further evidence of the later use of the landscape for clay extraction originally identified by the earthwork survey (CAT 2000). However, this pit, and those encountered within Phase 2 parts 8 and 9 (CA 2013 and 2014), are significantly smaller than those identified within the earthwork survey and may represent less intensive clay extraction within the area, either due to the distance from the main area of clay extraction activity to the west or are result of later opportunistic clay extraction.

9. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Tom Weavill who also wrote the report. The illustrations were prepared by Leo Heatley. The archive has been compiled by Tom Weavill, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Mark Collard.

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APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Context No.	Туре	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	Length (m)	Width/ Diameter (m)	Depth/ thickness (m)	Spot- date
1100	Layer		Topsoil	Light greyish-brown silty clay	>288	>30	0.20	
1101	Layer		Subsoil	Patchy deposits of mid brown silty clay	>288	>30	0.10	
1102	Layer		Natural substrate	Yellow clay				
1103	Fill	1104	Fill of minepits	Mid blue redeposited clay natural, unexcavated		2 to 8		
1104	Cut		Minepits	Sub-circular in plan, unexcavated		2 to 8		
1105	Cut		Marl pit	Sub-oval, partially exposed within extraction area	>19	22	3	
1106	Fill		Ditch fill	Greyish-blue clay	9 (1.5 exc)	0.72	0.16	
1107	Cut		Ditch	Straight U-shaped ditch	0.5	0.5	0.45	

APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

Project Name	West Hoathly Brickworks Phase 2 (Part 10), Sharpthorne, West Sussex			
Short description	A programme of archaeological recording was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology as part of the latest phase of works associated with the extension of the clay quarry at West Hoathly Brickworks, Sharpthorne, West Sussex. The work formed part of the Phase 2 (Part 10) Extraction and followed on from archaeological work undertaken during the Phase 2 (Parts 1–9) Extraction.			
	Fifty minepits were identified, similar on the site and likely have been th extraction. In addition to this an north was identified which may be cont mining activity. An extant clay exidentified.	e result of medieval iron ore -west/south east aligned ditch emporary with the medieval		
Project dates	17-19 August 2015			
Project type	Watching brief			
Previous work	Ongoing programme of archaeological recording by Cotswold Archaeology			
Future work	Unknown			
PROJECT LOCATION				
Site Location	West Hoathly Brickworks, Sharpthorne, West Sussex.			
Study area (M²/ha)	0.45ha			
Site co-ordinates (8 Fig Grid Reference)	TQ 3763 3286			
PROJECT CREATORS				
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology			
Project Brief originator	West Sussex County Council Economic and Environmental Policy Service			
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology			
Project Manager	Mark Collard			
Project Supervisor	Tom Weavill			
MONUMENT TYPE	None			
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None			
PROJECT ARCHIVES	Intended final location of archive	Content		
Physical	N/A	N/A		
Paper	East Grinstead Museum	Context sheets, trench sheet, photo register, permatrace drawing		
Digital	East Grinstead Museum	Digital photos		
BIBLIOGRAPHY		· ·		

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2015 West Hoathly Brickworks Phase 2 (Part 10), Sharpthorne, West Sussex: Archaeological Watching Brief. CA typescript report **15687**



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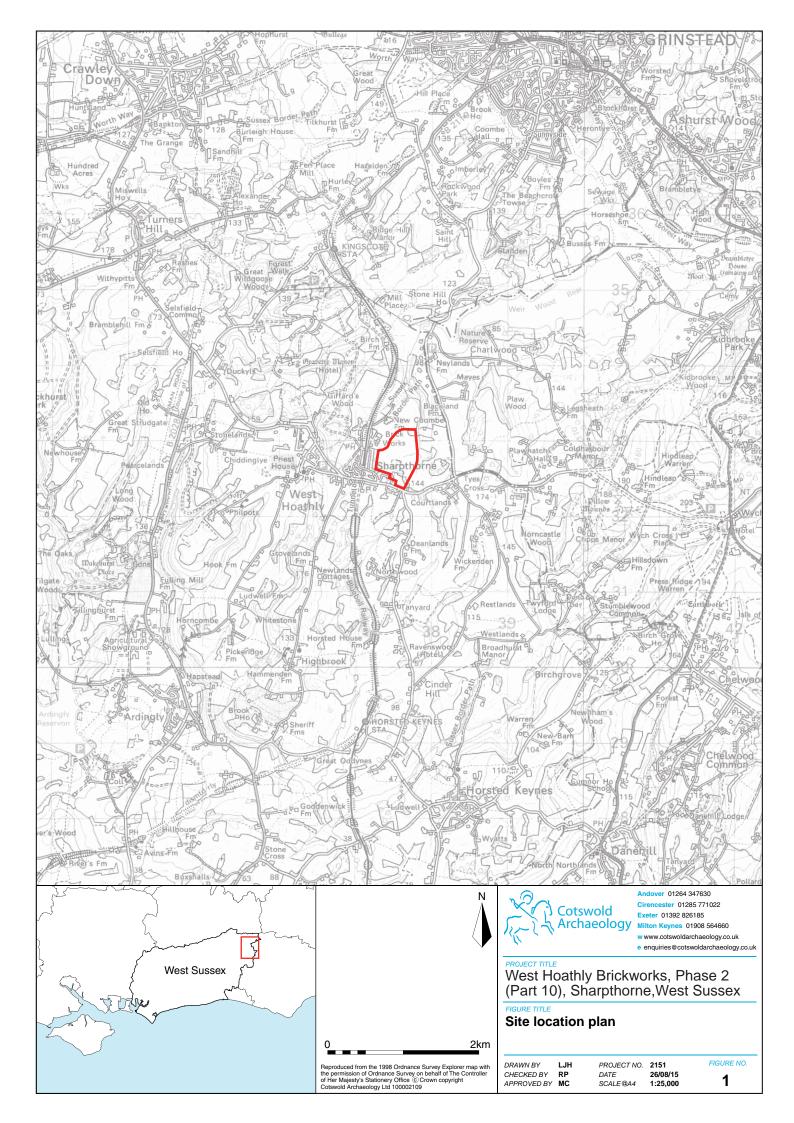
t: 01392 826185

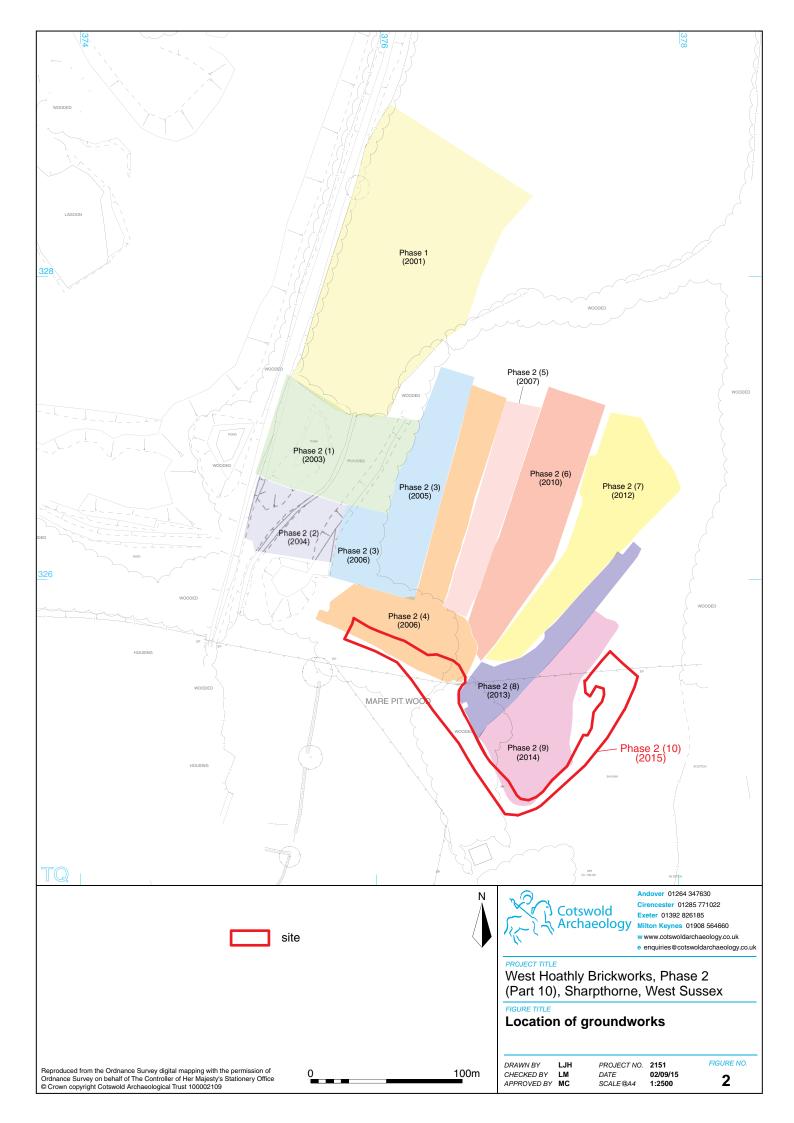
Milton Keynes Office

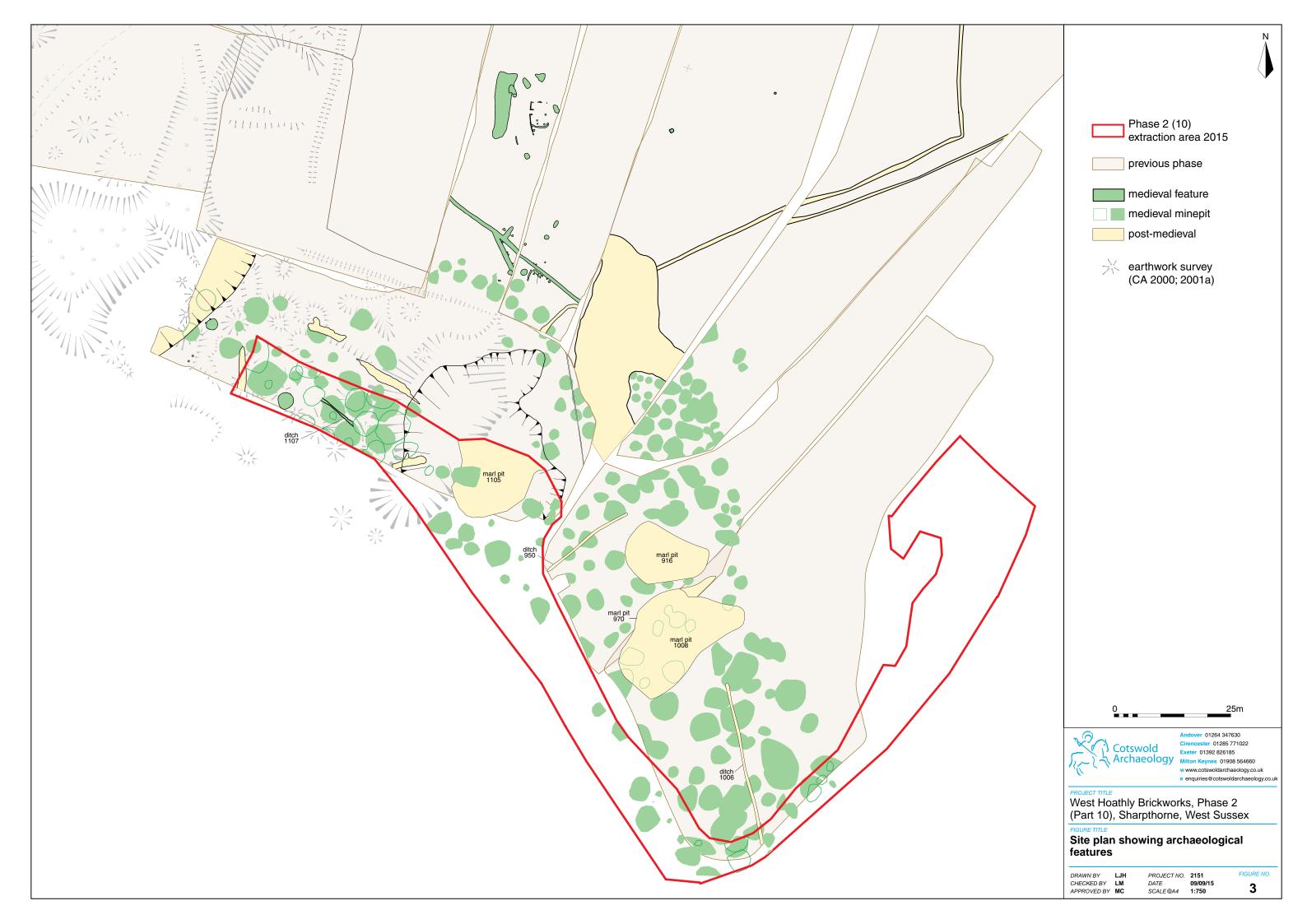
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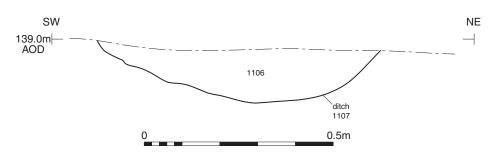






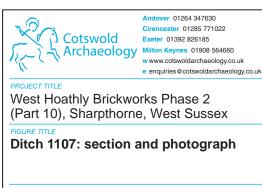


Section AA





Ditch [1107] looking north-west (0.4m scale)



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1 FIGURE N 18/15 **4**





5 Marl pit [1105] truncating mine pit, looking north-west



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FIGURE TITLE

Photograph

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FIGURE NO.

5





Examples of infilled Mine Pits, looking south-west (1m scale)



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PROJECT TITLE

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FIGURE TITLE

Photographs

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FIGURE NO.





Eroded Mine pits in quarry face, looking west 7



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FIGURE NO.

7

West Hoathly Brickworks, Phase 2 (Part 10), Sharpthorne, West Sussex

FIGURE TITLE Photograph

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