

CFA Archaeology Ltd

archaeological consultants

Advice on Archaeology & Planning

Environmental Impact Assessment

Field Evaluation & Excavation

Finds / Environmental Analysis

Geophysical Survey

Historic Building Recording

Site & Landscape Survey

Interpretation, Design & Display

Milton Keynes Museum, Milton Keynes:

Archaeological Evaluation

Report No. MK065/16

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This document has been prepared in accordance with CFA Archaeology Ltd standard operating procedures.

Milton Keynes Museum, Milton Keynes: Archaeological Evaluation Report No. MK065/16

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1. SUMMARY

CFA Archaeology Ltd carried out an archaeological evaluation for Willmott Dixon Construction Limited (centred on SP 81930 40290). The Site is located to the west of the Milton Keynes Museum, and consists of a flat area covered and modern dumped material intended for the construction of a single storey exhibition building for the museum. The area of the evaluation measured approximately 0.5ha in extent. One 30 m and two 15 m trenches were excavated. No archaeological features were detected.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1. General

This document presents the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) 26th of September on the development site (the Site) on land west of the Milton Keynes Museum. The work was commissioned by Willmott Dixon Construction Limited.

2.2. Planning Background

Planning permission was granted on January 10th 2016 (ref: 15/02953/MKCOD3) for a single storey exhibition building, containing two exhibition areas, arrival space, reception space and WC facilities with associated car parking and landscaping. Permission is subject to a pre-commencement condition which states

Prior to the commencement of the development an archaeological field evaluation comprising trial trenching shall be completed. The archaeological evaluation shall be detailed in a Written Scheme of Investigation submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. On completion of the archaeological field evaluation a further Written Scheme of Investigation for a programme of archaeological mitigation in respect of any identified areas of significant buried archaeological remains shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing.

The work was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) dated September 16th 2015 covering this programme of works produced by Prospect Archaeology and approved by Milton Keynes County Council's Planning Archaeologist.

2.3. Background

The proposed development site is approximately 0.5ha in area and is located to the west of the Milton Keynes Museum (Fig. 1). The site is located on Boulder Clay at approximately 90m aOD and gently descends to the west. The land within the proposed development site comprises a grassed area and footpaths centred on NGR SP 81930 40290. To the north-west, west and south the Site is surrounded by trees and dense vegetation (Fig. 2, 3). To the north-east is the neighbouring Transportation Hall, built about twenty years ago (Fig. 4). The architect stated that the Site had been cleared for development when the Transportation Hall was built.

2.4. Archaeological Background

Given the negative results of the evaluation no detailed HER search has been undertaken but a precis of information gathered is presented.

The Site is located in an area surrounded by archaeological finds, among others:

- A plethora of prehistoric material – flint tools, pottery, ditches and gullies dated from Neolithic to Iron Age, including Neolithic settlement has been found within 500m at Stacey Bushes in square 52 in 1975.
- Struck flints assemblage have been found in squares 10 and 13, composed of flakes, barbed and tanged arrowhead and prismatic knife.
- A large Iron Age house/hut circle and a Roman villa nearby.

2.5. Objectives

The aims of the evaluation were to determine the ‘location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development’. Additionally the aims were to:

- To investigate the evidence for and origins of the different phases of land use and enclosure within the area, including any evidence for pre-Roman, Roman, Saxon, medieval and postmedieval activity;
- To place the results of the investigation within the wider landscape context and contribute to an understanding of the pattern of land use;
- Using the spectrum of environmental techniques appropriate for this aspect of investigation, an attempt will be made to model the landscape and its transformation brought about by the settlement’s inhabitants and due to natural events.

Research objectives were to be re-evaluated during the course of the project to reflect the nature and significance of findings, and were to be informed by and will follow the regional research framework (Hey and Hind, Solent-Thames Research Framework for the Historic Environment Resource Assessments and Research Agendas).

3. WORKING METHODS

3.1. General

CFA Archaeology Ltd follows the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct, Standards and Guidance.

3.2. Trenching

The sample was formed of one 30m trench and two 15m long trenches each 2.2m wide. All machining was undertaken using a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision (Fig. 1).

3.3 Excavation and Recording Strategy

The topsoil was removed by a mechanical excavator, fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision, to reveal archaeological remains or, where these were absent, the natural substrate. A patch of the light orange boulder clay was investigated to determine its nature; it was not archaeological.

The character, composition and general depositional sequence of the site stratification were recorded on pro-forma sheets, with a unique context number being allocated to each distinct deposit.

A full photographic record comprising digital images was made. General shots were taken to place the site in context and supplemented by shots of each excavated trench.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

4.1. General

The locations of all trenches are shown in Fig. 1 and a summary of all trenches is contained in Appendix 1. Illustrations and photos referred to in the text can be found at the back of the report. An overview of the trenches is presented below, following by general description of the trenches.

No archaeological features were detected in these trenches

4.2. Trench Descriptions

No archaeological features were found in the excavated trenches and no finds were recovered. Topsoil deposits consisted mostly of recently made ground – a mix of modern dumped materials (Fig. 5). The Site had less dumped material to the south (Fig. 6).

A mixed layer which can be interpreted as old cultivation soil underlying the turf topsoil was registered only in the south-easternmost trench 02 (Fig. 6).

Natural geology was the same across the site and consisted of light grey boulder clay with white speckles of limestone with pockets of light orange sand-clay sediments with pebble gravel (Fig. 7).

Trench 01 was particularly affected by the relatively recent activity (Fig. 5). The modern dump layer, which included plastic bottles and road pins, was one metre deep and overlay the boulder clay directly. This was a result of the ground preparation works during the construction of the nearby Transportation Hall (Fig 4). The dumped material was not so deep in Trenches 2 and 3.

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The evaluation has not revealed any archaeological remains. However it is unknown whether any archaeological remains were affected during the site clearance during the construction of the neighbouring Transportation Hall. Given the slight layer of cultivation soil in Trench 02 this may be unlikely and that only topsoil was affected in the past.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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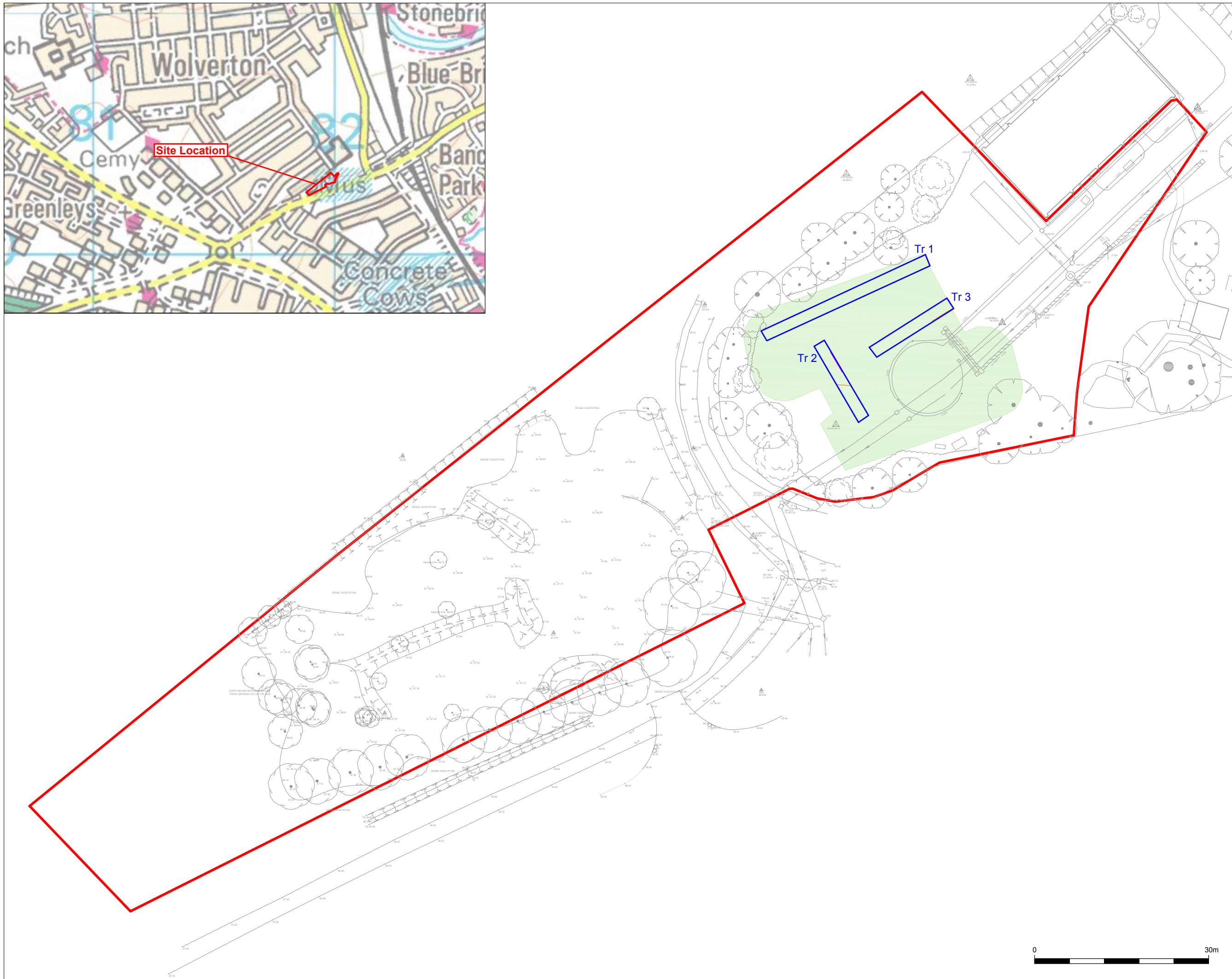
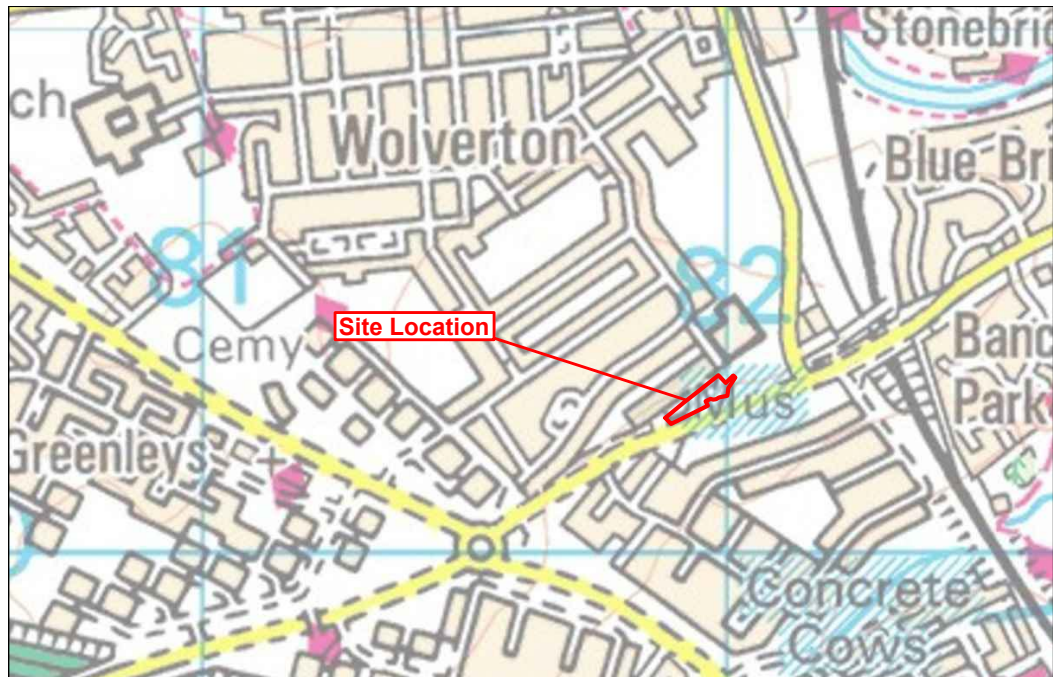
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APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARY

Trench 01		Trench Size 30 x 2.2m
Trench depth 0.4-0.7m	Topsoil depth 0.3-0.45m	Subsoil depth -
<i>No archaeology.</i>		
Trench 02		Trench Size 15 x 2.2m
Trench depth 0.6-0.7m	Topsoil depth 0.2m	Subsoil depth 0.1-0.2m
<i>No archaeology.</i>		
Trench 03		Trench Size 16.1 x 2.2m
Trench depth 0.45-0.6m	Topsoil depth 0.4-0.45m	Subsoil depth -
<i>No archaeology.</i>		



Key:

- Site Boundary
- Trench Outline
- Planned new gallery building
- Modern Service
- Field Drain



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Title:
 Site and trench location

Project:
 Milton Keynes Museum, Milton Keynes: Archaeological Evaluation

Client:
 Prospect Archaeology

Scale at A3:
 1:600

Drawn by: MP	Checked: SW	Date: 28/09/2016
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Fig. 2 - Overview of the site, taken from SE



Fig. 3 - Overview of the site, taken from NE

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Fig. 4 - Location of Trench 1, taken from SW;
Transportation Hall visible in the background



Fig. 5 - General shot of Trench 1, taken from NE

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Fig. 6 - General shot of Trench 2, taken from NW



Fig. 7 - General shot of Trench 3, taken from NE

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