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118/120 Higher Lane
Rainford
St Helens

Archaeological Watching Brief

Report No. Y323/18

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SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by CFA Archaeology Ltd on land at 118/120 Higher Lane, Rainford, St. Helens, WA11 8AZ, during December 2017 as part of the erection of a bungalow. A series of peri-glacial seams were present within the natural clay and some shallow pits of 19th and 20th century date were identified.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) during December 2017 at Higher Lane, Rainford, St. Helens, WA11 8AZ (Fig.1, NGR SD 48232 00736). The work was commissioned by David Davies Estate Agent and was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) produced by CFA Archaeology (2017) and agreed with the archaeological planning officer for Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS).

1.1 Site Location and Description

The site is located within the residential town of Rainford, on the south-west side of Higher Lane, and is surrounded by other residential properties. The site itself comprised a rectangular parcel of land that contained a single dwelling to the south-west, which had already been demolished at the time of the watching brief with the site having been reduced and levelled in preparation for the erection of a new dwelling to the north-east of the site, at the road front.

The soils of the area are variable and are described as ‘slowly permeable, seasonally wet, slightly acidic but base-rich loamy clay soils’ (Landis 2018). The geology of the area consists of Pennine Lower Coal Measure Formations – interbedded grey mudstone, siltstone and pale grey sandstone; with superficial deposits of Devensian Till (BGS 2018).

1.2 Historical and Archaeological Background

Rainford was a regional centre for pottery, in the 16th and 17th centuries, and clay pipe production from the 17th to 20th centuries. The field to the south-east of 118 Higher Lane is recorded on the Rainford Tithe Map of 1841 as ‘Kiln Croft’, and roughly equates to the area currently occupied by 1 and 2 Massam Close, 122-126 Higher Lane, and part of 118 to the rear of 122 and 124 Higher Lane. Both 118 Higher Lane and Kiln Croft are recorded as being in the ownership of Thomas Winstanley. The reference to Kiln Croft may indicate that the proposed development site was being used for the production of either pottery or clay pipes, and therefore there it was determined that there was the potential for evidence of these industries to be impacted on by the development. The 1st edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map, the buildings on the site are labeled as ‘Barn Hey’, later ‘Pig Cote Fold’.

The demolished building that formerly occupied the site was recorded as a ‘non-designated 18th century heritage asset’ on the Merseyside Historic Environment Record (MME 7019). This building was visible on Yates’ map *The County Palatine of Lancaster* (1786).

1.3 Previous Archaeological Work

No known previous archaeological work has taken place at this site.

1.4 Project Aims

In general the project objectives were to:

- determine the form and function of any archaeological features encountered;
- determine the spatial arrangement of any archaeological features encountered;
- as far as practicable, recover dating evidence from the archaeological features;
- establish the sequence of any archaeological remains present on the site, and;
- produce a report which places any discovered archaeological remains in their local, regional or national context, as appropriate.

2. WORKING METHODS

2.1 Watching Brief

The footprint of the new dwelling was reduced to required level or to the first archaeological horizon, whichever was encountered, using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. On this site the reduced level was reached at 49.40m above Ordnance Datum (AOD). First archaeological horizon was only identified in the south corner; cut into the natural substrate at 49.75m AOD. On the discovery of features of potential archaeological interest, excavations were temporarily ceased and the archaeologist was allowed sufficient time to excavate and record the remains. All remains encountered were excavated by hand and recorded to an appropriate level in accordance with nationally recognised industry standards and guidance (CIfA 2014a).

2.2 Methodology

CFA Archaeology Ltd is a registered organisation (RO) with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). CFA Archaeology follows all relevant CIfA and Historic England Standards and Guidance (CIfA 2014a-b and EH 2008).

Linear features (ditches and gullies) were sample excavated at a minimum of 25% of their length. Intersections were investigated to establish relationships between features. Pits and post holes were sampled at a minimum of 50% where encountered.

Archaeological remains were recorded by means of photographs, drawings and written records conforming to CIfA standards (CIfA 2014a) and CFA's quality manuals. All features were planned and drawn at appropriate scales. The trenches, section lines and drawing points were surveyed using an industry standard Trimble GPS. The same equipment was used to establish levels above Ordnance Datum.

All finds were treated in accordance with relevant guidance (CIFA 2014b). Modern finds were recorded and then discarded.

2.3 Archiving

The project archive, comprising all CFA record sheets, plans and reports, will be deposited at a relevant museum within an agreed timescale. The archive will be ordered, indexed and conform to the requirements of that museum and to all relevant professional guidance (CIfA 2014c). An inventory of the primary archive is presented below.

Phase	File/Box No.	Description	Quantity
Evaluation	File no. 1	Context register sheets	1
		Context sheets	11
		Daily record sheets	1
		Digital photographic register sheets	1
		Drawing sheets	1
		Drawing register sheet	1

Table 2.1: Inventory of Primary Archive

A summary of the results of archaeological works will be submitted for inclusion in OASIS. The OASIS reference is cfaarcha1-305766.

3. RESULTS

A summary of all contexts from the evaluation forms Appendix 1. The following results should be read in conjunction with figures 1-2.

Topsoil on the site consisted of dark grey-brown, silty clay (001) and varied in depth across the area from 0.38-0.67m. Topsoil overlay the subsoil across most of the site and measured over 0.30m in thickness and consisted of blue-grey clay silt (002). Underlying the subsoil was a natural substrate that consisted of yellow-orange clay sand with occasional stone inclusions (000). Where the natural substrate was exposed in the south corner of site, this overlain directly by topsoil.

Towards the south corner of the dwelling footprint 2 pits were recorded, both cut into the natural clay. Pit 008 was sub-rectangular in shape measuring 0.97m in length, 0.74m in width and 0.14m in depth. It featured steep sides and a flat base. The pit was filled with blue-black sandy silt with abundant coal and manganese fragments (007). Pottery fragments dating to the 19th century were noted within the pit, similar to those found across the site, but was not retained.

To the south of Pit 008, 0.9m away, was a second pit (010). Pit 010 was sub-oval and orientated north-west to south-east. It may have consisted of two intercutting pits, though the waterlogged ground conditions and fill material did not allow for confirmation. The pit was 1.8m in length, 1.04m in width and 0.30m in depth and contained a single fill (009); loose, sandy silt with frequent small sub-angular stones. Pottery and glassware were recorded within the pit.

Sections (004 and 006) were excavated through what was confirmed as periglacial seams, the result of freeze-thaw weathering during glacial movement which splits the surface of the clay. In the uppermost infilling of 006 was a residual clay pipe stem.

A 20th century pit with steep sides measuring 0.62m in width and 0.30m in depth was recorded to the west of the 19th century pits.

Findings

Topsoil and Subsoil

The topsoil and subsoil contained a range of refuse from the late 19th century to modern day. This included, but was not exclusive of formal, vernacular tableware in the form of printed whiteware and earthenware. Of the earthenware, of particular note was the selection of, largely intact jam and marmalade jars from James Keiller and Son's Dundee Marmalade, Castell and Brown's Finest Range Orange Marmalade and W.P. Hartley's preserve jar. Hartley's jam jars are known to have been made in St. Helens, 6km south-east of Rainford.

Pits 008 and 010

Pits 008 and 010 contained frequent fragments of pottery, including flat ware, hollow ware and ceramic jars, and glass, including an eight-sided tall bottle. These were typical of formal, vernacular tableware of the 19th century. The fabrics mostly included printed whiteware and possible fragments of porcelain or bone china which were either plain or contained modest linear decoration. Some finer hollow ware with moulded leaves, over in gold leaf with flute rim was also noted.

4. DISCUSSION

The watching brief at 118/120 Higher Lane, Rainford, St. Helens, WA11 8AZ identified two pits of 19th century date as well as geological and modern activity. The archaeological horizon was only visible in the south corner of site, with the rest of the site was reduced to within the topsoil and subsoil horizons, and subject to flooding.

Pits 008 and 010 may exist in isolation or may be part of wider garden activity associated with the 19th century property that used to exist to the south-west of the site. The finds produced from the pits are certainly indicative of domestic, as opposed to industrial, refuse.

The diminishing elevation of the natural clay towards to the north-east may be associated with the body of water at the road front recorded on the 1st edition OS map. Therefore the earthenware identified in the topsoil and subsoil is likely to be part of nominal addition to the build up of material within this hollow. No features of any other date were identified on this site, and nothing specifically pertaining to pottery or clay pipe manufacturing was identified (except for a residual stem).

5. CONCLUSION

The watching brief undertaken on the proposed development site at the /120 Higher Lane, Rainford, St. Helens, WA11 8AZ identified two pits of 19th century date as well as geological and modern activity. These pits related to garden activity and a likely domestic refuse pit. No other features of earlier date, or relating to pottery and clay pipe manufacturing process were identified.

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APPENDIX 1

Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context	Type	Fill of	Length (m)	Width (m)	Max Depth (m)	Description
000	Natural	-	-	-	-	Firm, mid-light yellow orange clay with small-medium, sub-angular to sub-rounded silt and sandstones and veins of yellow-blue fine-coarse sand.
001	Topsoil	-	-	-	0.67	Moderately loose, dark grey brown clay soil with small to medium stones and gravels. Clear horizon, overlying subsoil. Contained 19th century to modern pottery and glassware including tableware, jam and preserve jars and Smirnoff bottles.
002	Subsoil	-	-	-	>0.3	Loose, fine, dark blue grey clay silt with gravel inclusions. Clear horizon underlying topsoil. Evidence of bioturbation 19th century to modern finds within.
003	Fill	004	-	0.59	>0.35	Friable, mid-light brown silty sand. Clear horizon. Natural, sterile infill of periglacial striation with some marbling and darker bioturbation.
004	Interface	-	-	0.59	>0.35	Part of a curvilinear network of periglacial striations, with very steep sides, base not identified. Resulting from the freeze-thaw action of glacial movement.
005	Fill	006	-	0.41	>0.4	Friable, mid-light brown, silty sand with very fine gravels, particularly near the interface with the natural clay. Clear horizon. Natural, sterile infill of periglacial striation with some marbling and darker bioturbation. Residual clay pipe found towards the top of the fill.
006	Interface	-	-	0.41	>0.4	Part of a curvilinear network of periglacial striations, with very steep sides, base not identified. Resulting from the freeze-thaw action of glacial movement.
007	Fill	008	0.97	0.74	0.14	Homogenous, gritty, loose, dark blue black, sandy silt with abundant fragments of coal and manganese. Very clear horizon. 19th century pottery and CBM.
008	Cut	-	0.97	0.74	0.14	Sub-rectangular pit, with steep sides and flat base, orientated north-west to south-east. Very clear cut into the natural.
009	Fill	009	1.8	1.04	0.3	Homogenous, gritty, loose, dark blue black, sandy silt with abundant fine to medium fragments of coal and manganese. Very clear horizon. 19th century pottery and glassware.
010	Cut	-	1.8	1.04	0.3	Irregular, sub-rectangular pit that pinched in the middle, possibly two intercutting pits, but excavation conditions did not allow confirmation of this. Steep side and concave base orientated east to west. Clear horizon cut into the natural.

FIGURES 1-3



Key:

- Site Boundary
- Limit of Excavation
- Limit of Exposed Natural
- Periglacial Seams
- Archaeological Feature
- Modern Feature
- Electricity Cable
- Piles



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Title:
Site Plan and Location

Project:
**118/120 Higher Lane, Rainford,
ST Helens, WA11 8AZ**

Client:
David Davies Estate Agent

Scale at A3:
1:100

Drawn by: MP	Checked: SW	Date: 11/01/2018
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Fig. 2 - Pre-excitation shot of site facing south-west



Fig. 3 - Post-excitation shot of site facing west

Project:
118/120 Higher Lane, Rainford, ST Helens, WA11 8AZ



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