

# CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

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**Wilsontown Opencast Coal Scheme,  
by Forth, South Lanarkshire:**

**Archaeological Evaluation  
of Areas 15 to 19**

**Report No. 1487**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 General**

- 1.1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) in March and April 2008 at Wilsontown Opencast Coal Scheme, Wilsontown, Forth, South Lanarkshire (NGR NS 960 544). The work was commissioned by Hall Construction Ltd in advance of a phased opencast coal mining operation.
- 1.1.2 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced by CFA and approved by West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS). The WSI is a revision of an earlier Outline Strategy sent by CFA to WoSAS. It is based upon the results of a cultural heritage study conducted in November 2007 and presented as part of an Environmental Statement.

### **1.2 Background**

- 1.2.1 Planning permission has been granted by South Lanarkshire Council for opencast coal mining operations to be carried out near Wilsontown subject to a condition requiring an archaeological strategy for monitoring and recording. The terms of the planning consent were originally issued to Patrick Gillooly Ltd, but remain in place now that mining operations have been taken over by Hall Construction Ltd.
- 1.2.2 An earlier study carried out by CFA (Cressey 1998) identified thirty sites (1–30) of cultural heritage interest within and in close proximity to the development area. The majority of the sites within the development area are thought to relate to post-improvement agriculture and earlier mine workings.
- 1.2.3 The area in which mining operations will be carried out is divided into thirty-three areas (A1–A33). This program of works targeted areas A15–A19 (Fig. 1). Areas A1–A14 have already been evaluated by CFA, in February 2004 (Mitchell 2004) and in October 2006 (White 2006). Areas A20–A33 will form a later phase of the archaeological monitoring, the results of which will form a separate report.
- 1.2.4 Site **23**, the remains of the Lawhead Branchline Mineral Railway (NMRS No. NS95SE 56.0), identified during the 1998 study, lay within the area targeted by this phase of archaeological monitoring. The Lawhead Branchline Mineral Railway appears on the Second Edition (1897) Ordnance Survey map.

### **1.3 Objectives**

- 1.3.1 The objectives of this phase of archaeological work were:
- to record a series of mining and related landscape features by trial trenching evaluation;
  - to evaluate the archaeological potential of the area as a whole by a programme of trial trenching.

## **2. METHODS STATEMENT**

- 2.1 CFA Archaeology Ltd follows the Institute of Field Archaeologists Code of Conduct, Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations.
- 2.2 It was agreed with WoSAS that trial trenching would assess a minimum of 5% of the development area. This consisted of 2726m<sup>2</sup> within areas A15–A19 (5% of 54,528m<sup>2</sup>). However, due to a combination of deep peat, large spoil heaps, flooded areas and a haul road up to 43m wide that had already been constructed within the area, the area available for trial trenching was reduced. Consequently, twenty-one trenches covering 2100m<sup>2</sup> were evaluated. Site **23**, identified in the earlier survey (Cressey, 1998), was targeted in order to assess its extent and condition. Other trenches were placed with the aim of locating any other buried archaeological remains.
- 2.3 The removal of topsoil was conducted by a 360° tracked excavator, equipped with a smooth-bladed ditching bucket, under close archaeological supervision to reveal the subsoil surface or the surface of the first significant archaeological level. Any further excavation required to fulfil the objectives of the evaluation was carried out by hand. Where possible and within safe working limits, the natural subsoil surface was exposed in all trenches.
- 2.4 All excavation and on-site recording was carried out according to standard CFA procedures, principally by drawing, photography and by completing standard CFA record forms. The stratigraphy was recorded whether or not archaeological features were encountered.
- 2.5 The location of all trenches was recorded using industry standard total station surveying equipment. Trenches were backfilled on completion.

### 3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

- 3.1 Twenty-one trenches were excavated across the areas available for evaluation (2100m<sup>2</sup>). The majority of trenches did not encounter any remains of archaeological significance, other than the occasional red clay pipe field drain. A brief summary of all the trenches excavated is contained in Appendix 1.
- 3.2 The topsoil across the evaluation area varied considerably. The drier improved ground generally in the south of A15–A19 largely consisted of mid grey silt with a depth of 0.2m–0.3m (Trenches 4–16) and 0.35–0.4m (Trenches 2–3). The wetter ground in the north-west comprised peat with a depth of up to 3m in Trench 1 and up to 0.8m in Trenches 19, 20 and 21. In Trench 17 and 18 the depth of topsoil was 0.45m–0.5m.
- 3.3 The following text contains information only on Trench 1 as it was the only trench that contained any archaeological remains. Numbers in bold refer to context numbers, a full list of which can be found in Appendix 2.
- 3.4 Trench 1 was located across the Lawhead Branchline Mineral Railway (Site **23**) which ran through the evaluation area. Below 0.4m of topsoil, peat (**101**) here was up to c.3m deep, which overlay a fine-grained, bluish-grey natural silty clay (**105**). The remains of the railway embankment were recorded as having an overall width of c.13m north to south and a maximum height of 0.52m, with the deposits laid directly onto the peat.
- 3.5 The embankment was made up of a loosely compacted, dark grey, gritty coal and ash-rich sand (**103**). On the south side of the embankment a deposit of loose red blaes was recorded (**102**). On the north side of the embankment small lenses of sticky grey silty clay (**104**) were identified just below the surface of the embankment. There were no remains of tracks or sleepers.
- 3.6 No datable artefacts were retrieved from the embankment deposits, but cartographic evidence suggests that this railway line was constructed some time between 1864 and 1897 and went out of use some time between 1911 and 1941 (White 2006).

## **4. CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 An archaeological evaluation was carried out at Wilsontown Opencast Coal Scheme within extraction areas A15–A19 (Fig. 1). This evaluation represents part of a phased programme of archaeological monitoring and recording that forms part of the Planning Consent issued by South Lanarkshire Council. Twenty-one trenches covering 2100m<sup>2</sup> were excavated.
- 4.2 The remains of the Lawhead Branchline Mineral Railway (23) were uncovered in Trench 1 and the embankment was revealed to have been laid directly on to the natural peat.
- 4.3 No other features or deposits of archaeological significance were recorded.
- 4.4 The project archive, comprising all CFA record sheets, maps and reports will be deposited with the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS) and copies of the report will be lodged with the South Lanarkshire Sites and Monuments Record.
- 4.5 A summary statement of the results of this evaluation will be submitted for publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*.

## **5. REFERENCES**

### **5.1 Documentary**

Cressey, M, 1998, *Wilsontown Prospective Opencast Coal Site, South Lanarkshire: Archaeological Appraisal*. CFA Report No 296

Cressey, M, 1998, *Wilsontown Prospective Opencast Coal Site, South Lanarkshire: Archaeological Appraisal*. CFA Report No 401

Mitchell, S, 2004, *Wilsontown Opencast Coal Scheme (Phase 1), Archaeological Evaluation*. CFA Report No 892

White, R. 2006. *Wilsontown Opencast Coal Scheme (Phase 2), Forth, South Lanarkshire, Archaeological Evaluation*. CFA Report No. 1249

### **5.2 Cartographic**

Ordnance Survey 25" Second Edition, 1897, *Lanarkshire Sheet XX.2*.

## APPENDIX 1: Trench Descriptions

Trench no.	Dimensions (m)	Size (m <sup>2</sup> )	Topsoil depth (m)	Features
1	50 x 2	100	0.4	Railway Embankment
2	50 x 2	100	0.38	No archaeological remains
3	50 x 2	100	0.35	No archaeological remains
4	50 x 2	100	0.21	No archaeological remains
5	50 x 2	100	0.24	No archaeological remains
6	50 x2	100	0.23	No archaeological remains
7	50 x 2	100	0.25	No archaeological remains
8	50 x 2	100	0.26	No archaeological remains
9	50 x 2	100	0.24	No archaeological remains
10	50x 2	100	0.25	No archaeological remains
11	50 x 2	100	0.24	No archaeological remains
12	50 x 2	100	0.23	No archaeological remains
13	50 x 2	100	0.26	No archaeological remains
14	50 x 2	100	0.28	No archaeological remains
15	50 x 2	100	0.27	No archaeological remains
16	50 x 2	100	0.28	No archaeological remains
17	50 x 2	100	0.5	No archaeological remains
18	50 x 2	100	0.45	No archaeological remains
19	50 x 2	100	0.8	No archaeological remains
20	50 x 2	100	0.4	No archaeological remains
21	50 x 2	100	0.52	No archaeological remains

## APPENDIX 2: Context Register

Context No.	Trench	Description
100	1	Topsoil
101	1	Peat deposit below topsoil, c. 3m deep
102	1	Loose red blaes at S side of railway embankment
103	1	Loosely compacted dark grey, gritty, coal- and ash-rich sand
104	1	Small lenses of sticky grey silty clay identified just below the surface of the railway embankment
105	1	Fine-grained bluish grey natural silty clay

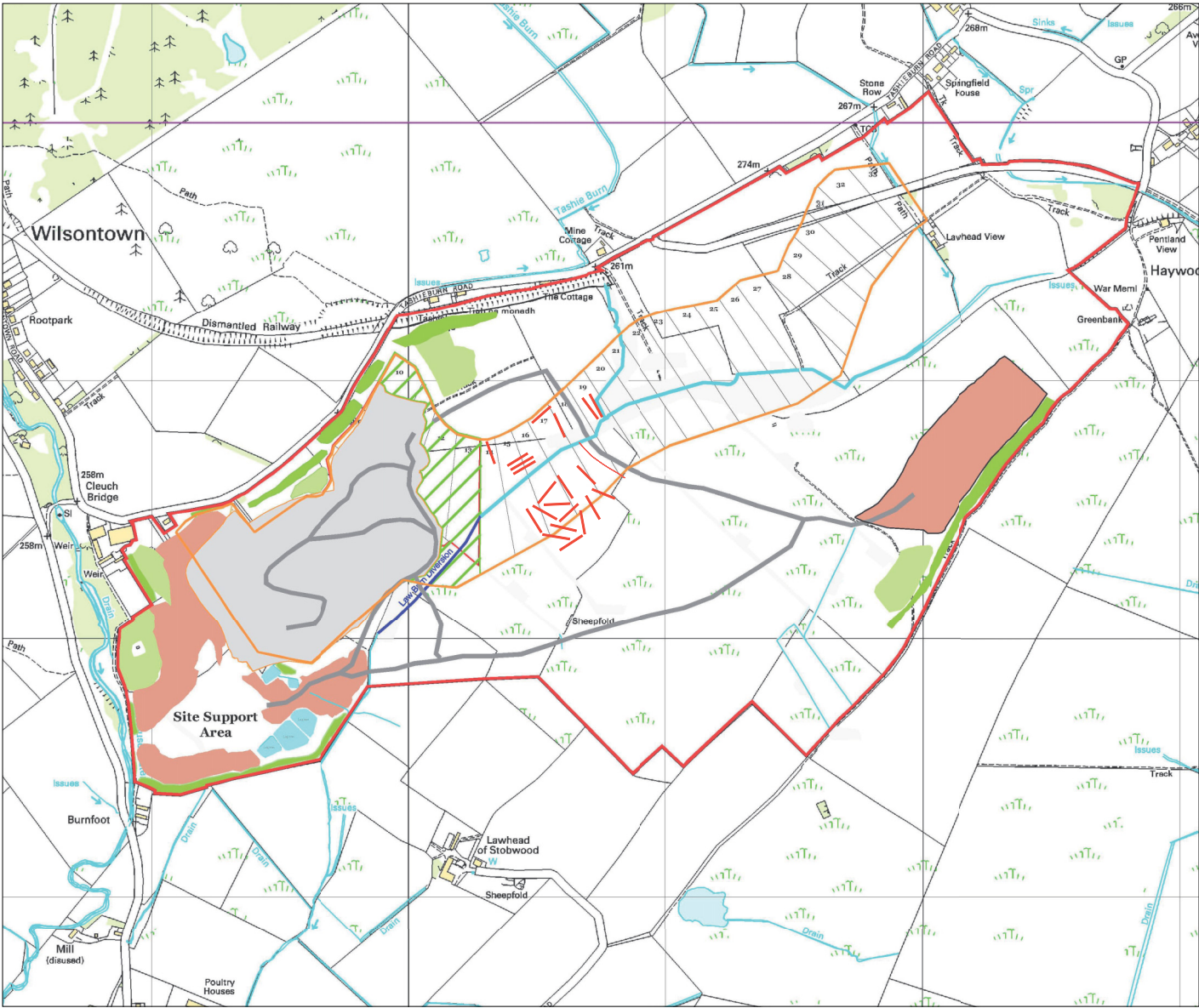
### APPENDIX 3: Photographic Register

Shot No.	Description	Taken From	Conditions	Digital Shot No.
<b>Film 1</b>				
1	Registration shot	-	-	-
2-3	Trench 1 – general shot	S	Heavy Rain	1
4-5	Trench 1 - oblique E facing section of railway embankment	SE	Heavy Rain	2
6-7	Trench 2 – general shot	E	Heavy Rain	3
8-9	Trench 3 – general shot	N	Heavy Rain	4
10-11	Trench 4 – general shot	S	Heavy Rain	5
12-13	Trench 5 – general shot	W	Heavy Rain	6
14-15	Trench 6 – general shot	SE	Heavy Rain	7
<b>Film 2</b>				
1	Registration shot	-	-	-
2-3	Trench 7 – general shot	SE	Overcast	8
4-5	Trench 8 – general shot	SW	Overcast	9
6-7	Trench 9 – general shot	E	Overcast	10
8-9	Trench 10 – general shot	SW	Overcast	11
10-11	Trench 11 – general shot	S	Bright	12
12-13	Trench 12 – general shot	SE	Overcast	13
14-15	Trench 13 – general shot	S	Overcast	14
16-17	Trench 14 – general shot	S	Overcast	15
18-19	General shot of site	N	Bright	16
20-21	General shot of site	NW	Bright	17
22-23	General shot of site	NE	Bright	18
24-25	Trench 15 – general shot	SE	Bright	19
26-27	Trench 16 – general shot	S	Bright	20
28-29	Trench 17 – general shot	N	Bright	21
30-31	Trench 18 – general shot	N	Bright	22
32-33	Trench 19 – general shot	SW	Bright	23
34-35	Trench 20 – general shot	SW	Bright	24
36	Trench 21 – general shot	SW	Bright	25



## APPENDIX 4: Discovery & Excavation in Scotland Entry

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	South Lanarkshire
<b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>	Wilsontown Open Cast Coal Scheme
<b>PROJECT CODE:</b>	WOCO2
<b>PARISH:</b>	Carnwath
<b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Ross White
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>	CFA Archaeology Ltd
<b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>	Archaeological Evaluation
<b>NMRS NO(S):</b>	NS95SE 56.0
<b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>	Lawhead Branchline Mineral Railway
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>	None
<b>NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)</b>	NS 960 544
<b>START DATE (this season)</b>	March 2008
<b>END DATE (this season)</b>	April 2008
<b>PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)</b>	Cressey M (1996), Wilsontown (Carnwath parish), Evaluation <i>DES 1996</i> Mitchell S (2004), Wilsontown Opencast Coal Scheme, Forth, <i>DES 2004</i>
<b>MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:</b> (May include information from other fields)	An archaeological evaluation was carried out by CFA Archaeology Ltd in April 2008 advance of an extension to Wilsontown Open Cast Coal Scheme. Twenty-one trial trenches covering 2100m <sup>2</sup> were excavated. One of the trenches recorded a section across the Lawhead Branchline Mineral Railway. The embankment was found to be 13m wide and survive to a height of 0.52m. It was laid directly onto the underlying peat and was made up of a dark grey, gritty, coal and ash-rich sand. No other features or deposits of archaeological significance were found.
<b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:</b>	None
<b>CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:</b>	N/A
<b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:</b>	Hall Construction Ltd
<b>ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	The Old Engine House, Eskmills Park, Musselburgh, EH21 7PQ
<b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>	cfa@cfa-archaeology.co.uk
<b>ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)</b>	National Monuments Record of Scotland South Lanarkshire Council Sites and Monuments Record



- |                       |                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Site Boundary         | Overburden Storage  |
| Limit of Excavation   | Subsoil Storage     |
| Working Void          | Topsoil Storage     |
| Backfill              | Lagoons             |
| Haul Road             | Advanced Soil Strip |
| Watercourse Diversion | Trench Location     |

Scale: 1: 12500

Fig. No: 1 Revision: 0 Client: Hall Construction Ltd

Title: Location map

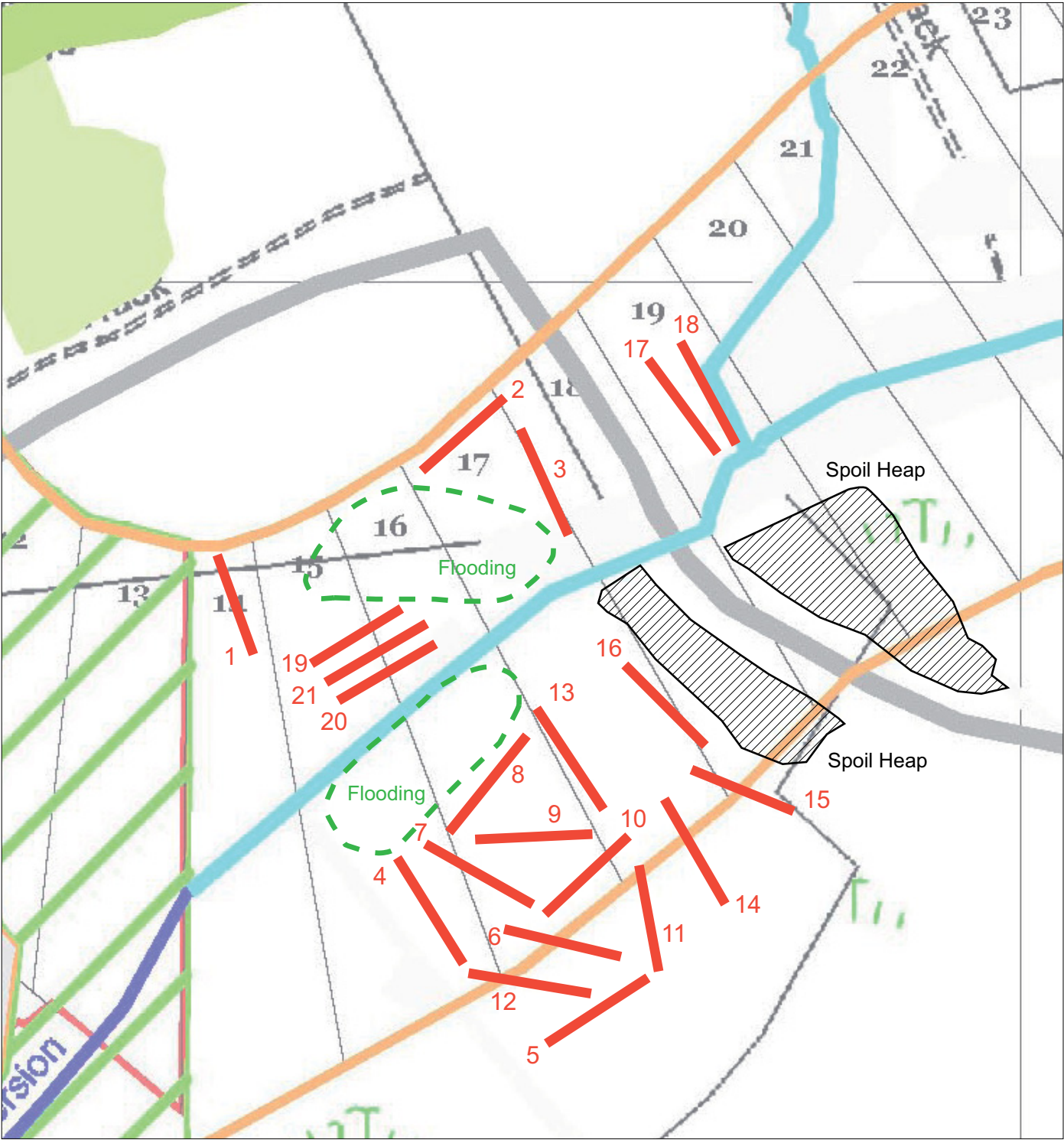
Project: Wilsontown OCCS



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Drawn by: KC

Page No:



Site Boundary	Overburden Storage
Limit of Excavation	Subsoil Storage
Spoil Heap	Topsoil Storage
Flooding	Lagoons
Haul Road	Advanced Soil Strip
Watercourse Diversion	Trench Location

Scale: 1: 250

Fig. No: 2	Revision: 0	Client: Hall Construction Ltd
Title: Trench Location Plan		
Project: Wilsontown OCCS		



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