

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION,
INVESTIGATION, RECORDING, ANALYSIS AND
PUBLICATION OF WORKS**

AT

THE FORMER WORLD WAR I NATIONAL FILLING

FACTORY, BANBURY

NGR SP 247592 440419

On behalf of

Assured Asset Energy Ltd

AUGUST 2015

REPORT FOR Assured Asset Energy Ltd
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Summary

Between the 8th and the 10th of December 2014, John Moore Heritage Services carried out archaeological observation, investigation and recording during the laying of an 11kv electricity cable adjacent the M40 (NGR SP4769840342 centred). The site is part of a Scheduled Ancient Monument (The remains of a Former World War I National Filling Factory, Banbury, HA 1409811).

Remains of three structures were found.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development site was located on land to the east of the M40, south of the Overthorpe Road bridge over the M40, east of Banbury (NGR SP4769840342). The site lay at a height of approximately 90m OD. The underlying geology was the Charmouth Mudstone Formation.

Standing, buried and earthwork remains of Unit No.1 of the WWI National Filling Factory, Banbury were present on the wider site.

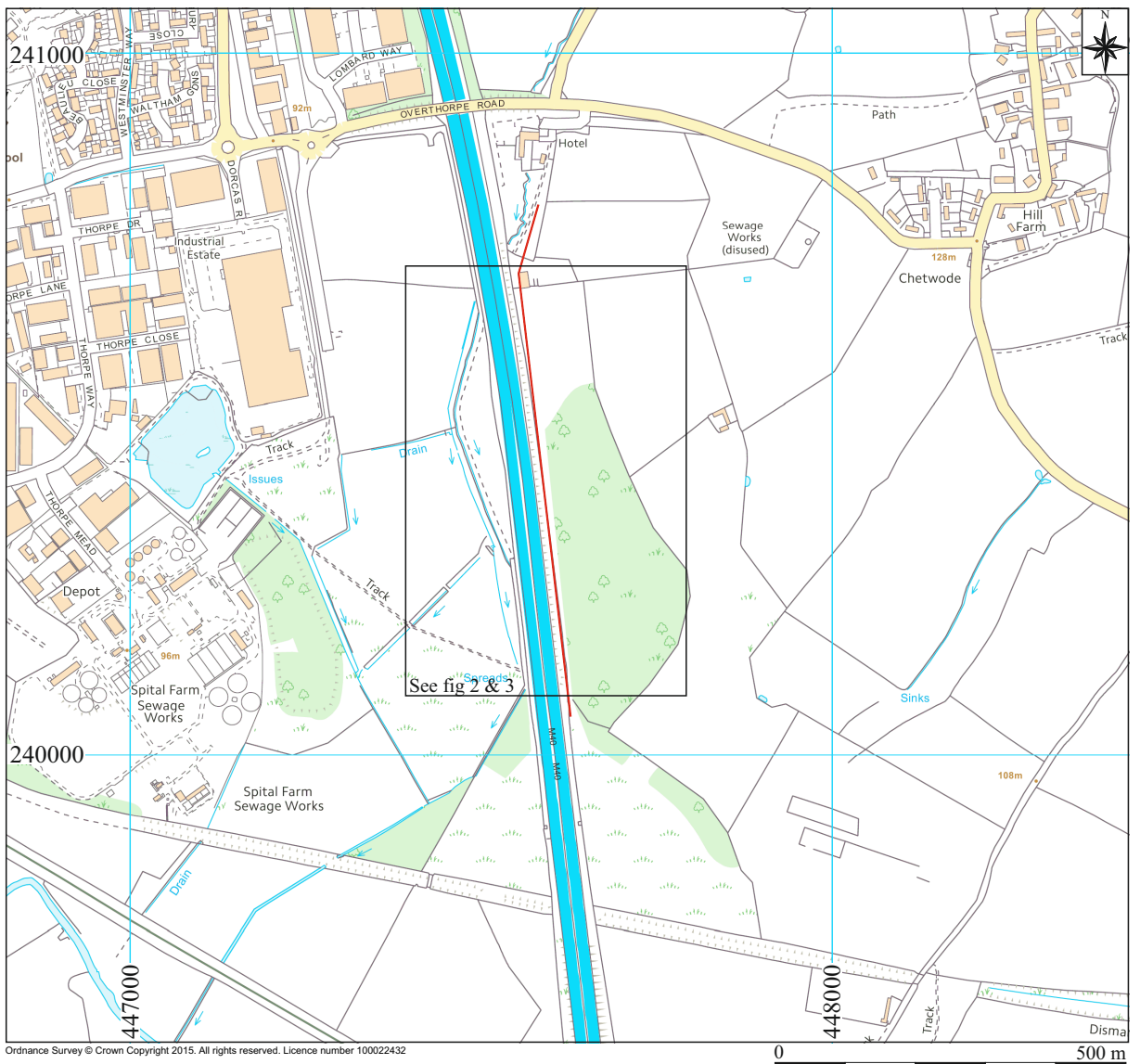
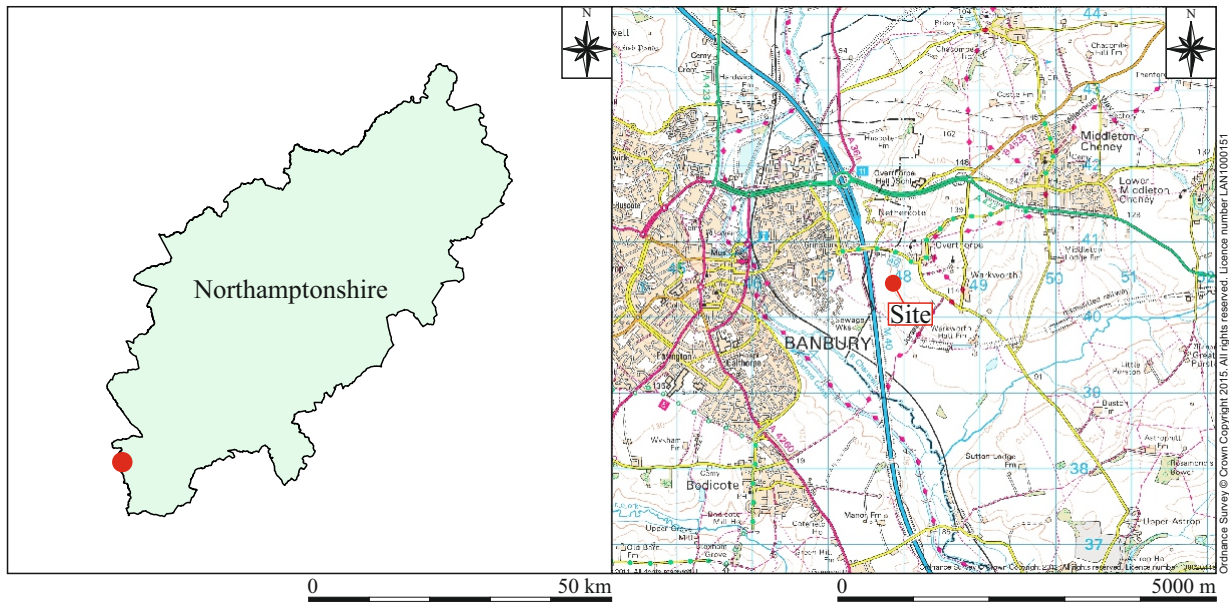
1.2 Planning Background

The consent has the following conditions:

(i) The works to which this consent relates shall be carried out to the satisfaction of the Secretary of State, who will be advised by English Heritage. At least 4 weeks' notice (or such shorter period as may be mutually agreed) in writing of the commencement of work shall be given to Ben Robinson (English Heritage, 44 Derngate, Northampton NN1 1UH) in order that an English Heritage representative can inspect and advise on the works and their effect in compliance with this consent.

(ii) No ground works/ building works shall take place until the applicant has confirmed in writing the commissioning of a programme of archaeological work before and/or during the development in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved by the Secretary of State advised by English Heritage.

(iii) All those involved in the implementation of the works granted by this consent must be informed by the owner, occupier and/or developer that the land is designated as a scheduled monument under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended); the extent of the scheduled monument as set out in both the scheduled monument description and map; and that the implications of this designation include the requirement to obtain Scheduled Monument Consent for any works to a scheduled monument from the Secretary of State prior to them being undertaken.



Key — Monitored trench

Figure 1: Site location

(iv) Equipment and machinery shall not be used or operated in the scheduled area in conditions or in a manner likely to result in damage to the monument/ground disturbance other than that which is expressly authorised in this consent.

(v) A report on the archaeological recording shall be sent to the Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record and to Ben Robinson at English Heritage within 3 months of the completion of the works (or such other period as may be mutually agreed).

(vi) The archaeological contractor shall complete and submit an entry on OASIS (On-line Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations - <http://oasis.ac.uk/england/>) prior to project completion, and shall deposit any digital project report with the Archaeology Data Service, via the OASIS form, upon completion.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The site of the Filling Factory at Banbury (Unit no. 1) survives as a series of well defined earthwork, standing and buried remains, and is currently used as rough grazing for cattle. The monument has been truncated by the M40 motorway, which has obliterated elements on the extreme western side of Unit no.1.

The No.1 Unit lies to the east of the motorway with approximately 75% of the site surviving as earthworks. This part of the site was arranged in an elongated rectangular plan which was subdivided into a number of small compartments, each of which housed a group of four melt houses and two filling sheds. In operation, cleaned shells were brought to the northern end of the group and explosives into the eastern side; the two were then brought together in the filling sheds at the centre of the group before the filled shells were moved eastwards to the storage magazines on the extreme east of the complex. The buildings in the factory were generally timber-framed and weather-boarded or covered in uralite (brown asbestos sheeting), set on brick foundations or concrete slabs. Larger buildings, generally stores with roof widths of no more than 12m, were spanned by Belfast trusses. To the east, the site is defined by the earthworks of a standard gauge railway line that served the picric acid stores, filled shell magazines, and to the north the exploder store.

The buildings used in the filling process (within the danger zone) were all surrounded by earthwork traverses; the ends of which were revetted by double brick walls infilled with a concrete core. The earthwork traverses survive up to a height of around 4m, with the standing remains of the gable revetments surviving to a similar height. Linking the buildings are the earthwork remains of the factory's internal narrow gauge tramway. Where the line passed through earthwork traverses they are lined with brick and concrete portals. Numerous examples of the portals are visible around the site. It is clear from the height of these, particularly in the northern half of the site, that there is a build up of debris and the original ground level is possibly in places up to 2m below the current ground level. There is also documented evidence of rubbish dumping in the 1920/30s at the extreme northern end of the site, which may help to explain this. Around the edge of the filling units are the earthwork remains of standard gauge sidings. Between the picric acid stores and the lines of the tramways

are the well-preserved remains of medieval ridge and furrow. More also survive to the west between the melt houses and the motorway

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

To make a record of significant archaeological remains revealed during the course of any operations that may disturb or destroy archaeological remains.

In particular:

To attempt to establish if remains of melt houses or filling sheds exist in the area.

To establish the damage caused by the construction of the M40 motorway.

To attempt to recover any artefacts associated with the factory's use.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Dr Ben Robinson (English Heritage) the archaeological advisors to Mr Mark Horgan (the applicant). Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate and possible.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (1994) as it was at the time.

3.2 Methodology

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was also produced.

An archaeologist was present on site to control any groundwork that had the potential to reveal or disturb archaeological remains. Provision had been made to increase team size depending on the extent of remains located.

The area of the trench was scanned with a metal detector prior and during excavation, the spoil was also be scanned for artefacts.

All archaeological deposits and features revealed were cleaned by hand and recorded in plan before being excavated and recorded at an appropriate level. Any archaeological features or other remains i.e. concentrations of artefacts, were recorded by written, drawn and photographic record. Where the archaeological features

exposed during the groundworks, but otherwise would remain unaffected they were recorded only by plan, written description and photographically with any surface finds collected.

An experienced archaeological Project Officer (Steve Leech) undertook the archaeological site work under the overall direction of D Gilbert MifA.

4 RESULTS (Figure 2)

The work consisted of monitoring a 360 degree tracked mechanical excavator excavating a service trench through the SAM area. The trench was 0.80m wide, 1m deep and 700m in length. The trench followed the eastern fence-line of the M40, situated 3.5m to the east, and was orientated north / south.

It was evident throughout the trench that most of the ground was disturbed / truncated by ground-works which had taken place during the construction of the M40 motorway, to a depth of 0.8m – 1m.

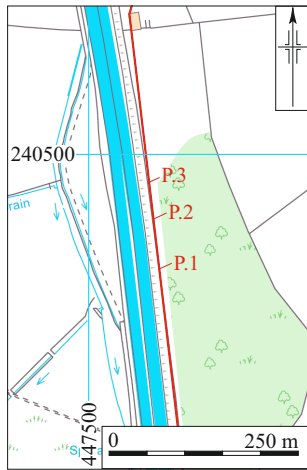
Representative sections of 1 metre length were recorded along the length of the service trench; Section 1 at the southern end of the trench, Sections 2, 3 and 4 where remains of the factory were encountered, and Section 5 at the northern end of the trench (Fig. 3).

Section 1, located at 0m – 1m from south end of trench shows layer (100), the topsoil, a dark grey silty clay with frequent stones 0.05m thick. It was overlying (101), the hard-standing, utilised as a haul road during the construction of the M40, comprising orange - yellow limestone gravel and stone, 0.3m thick, which lay on a sheet of terram. Beneath this was layer (102), disturbed ground, an orange - brown and grey mixture of redeposited natural clays which contained various modern inclusions (plastic and concrete). No natural clays were seen along this stretch of the trench (Section not shown).

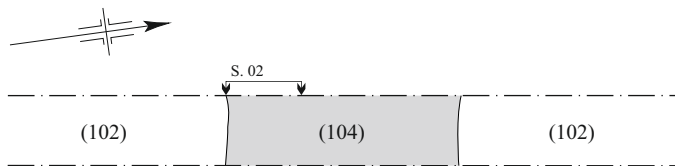
Section 2, located at NGR SP 247598 440350 shows layers (100), topsoil, 0.05m thick overlying (101), hard-standing on terram sheet. Layer (101) was 0.45m thick overlying (102), disturbed ground which was 0.3m thick. This overlay an in-situ slab of concrete 104, with an exposed length of 3m (Fig. 2, Plan A, Section 2).

Section 3, located at NGR SP 247592 440419 had layer (100), topsoil 0.1m thick overlying (101), hard-standing on terram sheet 0.3m thick overlying (102), disturbed ground 0.5m thick. This overlay a brick wall foundation 105, which was orientated NE / SW and consisted of a two course thick wall, with the bricks laid end to end, 0.22m wide and 0.9m long (Fig. 2, Plan B, Section 3).

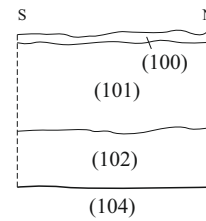
Section 4, located at NGR SP247583 440470 had layer (100), topsoil 0-1m thick overlying (101), hard-standing on terram sheet 0.4m thick overlying (107). Layer (107) was a thin cinder and charcoal deposit which contained metals, residue lumps of chemicals, glass and pottery, 0.1m to 0.3m thick and 35m long. This overlay layer (102), disturbed ground 0.1m thick that overlay an in-situ slab of concrete 106, with an exposed length of 2m (Fig. 2, Plan C, Section 4).



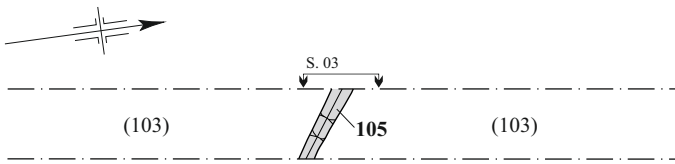
Key plan



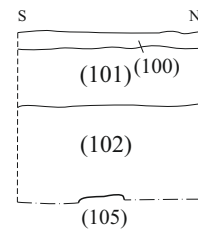
Trench plan A



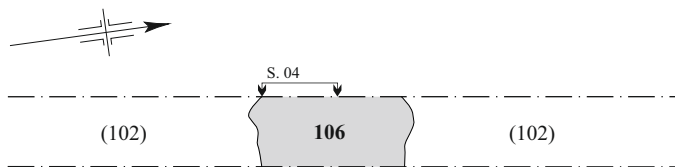
Section 02



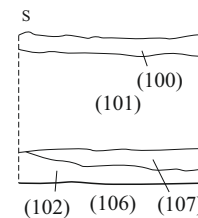
Trench plan B



Section 03



Trench plan C



Section 04

Key:  Archaeological features

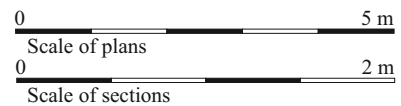


Figure 2: Location plan of A, B and C with sections 2-4

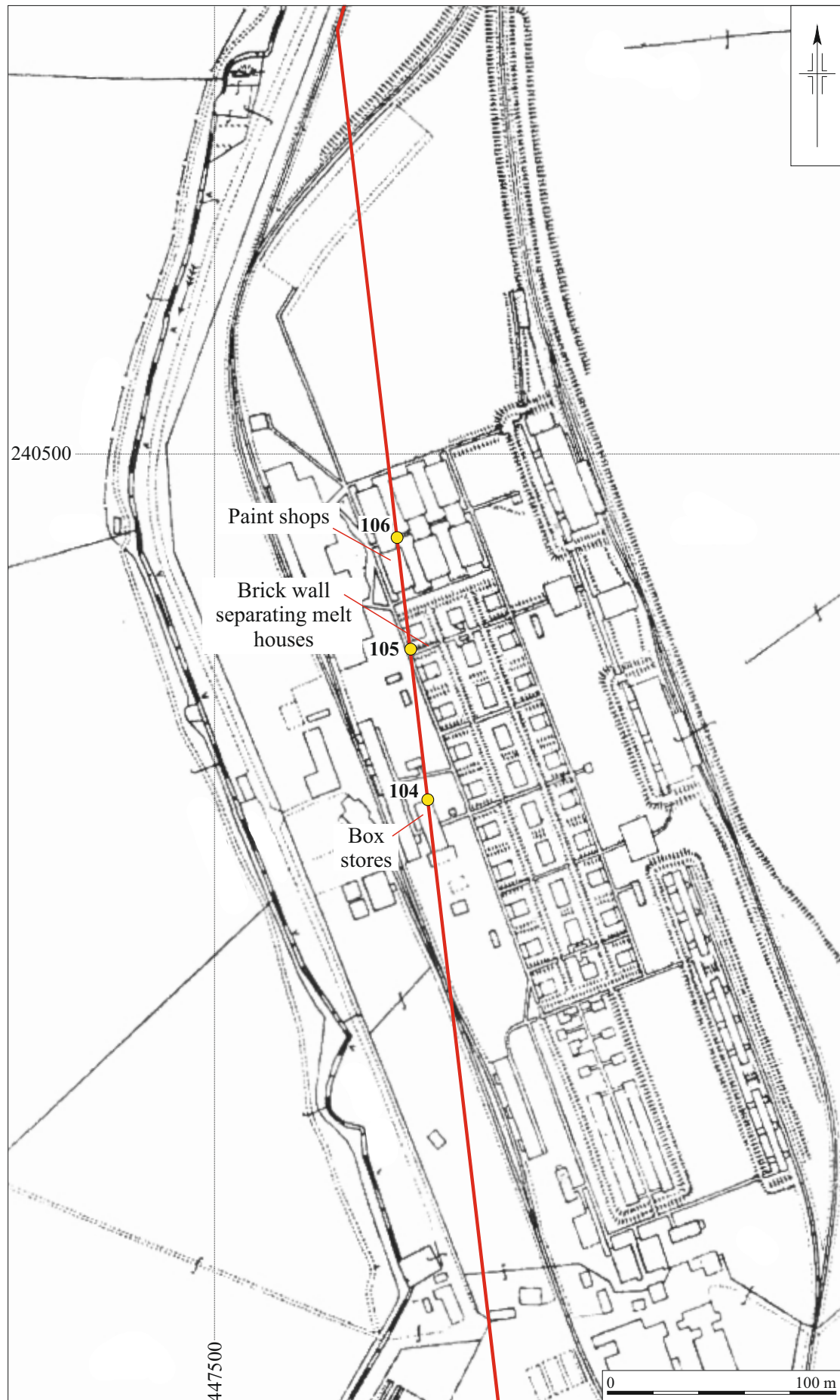


Figure 3: 1922 OS map with position of structures 104-106

Section 5, located at 699m – 700m, the northern extent of the trench, had layer (100), topsoil, 0.15m thick overlying (101), hard-standing on terram sheet 0.5m thick overlying (102) disturbed ground, 0.35m thick overlying the natural clay (Section not shown).

5 FINDS

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 4 sherds with a total weight of 82g. They were all modern, mass-produced earthenwares, fabric F1000 of the Northamptonshire County type-series. They all occurred in context 107, and include a fragment of a mug stamped “Northern Aluminium Company Banbury”, dating it to 1931 – 1960.

Also recovered were one glass jar, two glass bottles and a complete square ashtray, with a ‘Black and White’ scotch whisky design on the top, all dating to the 20th century.

None of this material has been retained.

6 DISCUSSION (see Figures 2 and 3)

The watching brief established that most of the ground was disturbed / truncated by ground-works which had taken place during the construction of the M40 motorway, to a depth of 0.8m to 1m. However limited remains of the filling factory were identified along the route of the trench. The trench location when overlain on the 1922 Ordnance Survey map of the filling factory shows that the remains of three structures (104, 105, and 106) that were present in the trench match with various buildings and walls seen on the map.

Concrete base 104, located at NGR SP 247598 440350, may have formed part of the foundation of a small rectangular building orientated NW-SE that was a store for boxes.

Brick wall foundation 105, located at NGR SP 247592 440419, may correspond with the NE-SW wall separating the most northerly melt houses, or a wall foundation for one of the melt houses.

Concrete base 106, located at NGR SP247583 440470, may have formed part of the foundations for the paint shops.

Overlying these remains of the filling factory was disturbed ground layer (102) that was visible throughout the trench and (107), a redeposited layer of industrial waste, disturbed by the construction of the M40. Sealing these layers was a sheet of terram and the haul road used during the works for the M40.

7 ARCHIVE

Archive Contents

The archive consists of the following:

Paper record

The project brief
Written scheme of investigation
The project report
The primary site record

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to a suitable repository when one is available.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cocroft, Wayne D, 2000 *Dangerous Energy The archaeology of gunpowder and military explosives manufacture*. English Heritage

Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1994 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

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