



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

SEVERN VALLEY RAILWAY, STATION LANE,

BRIDGNORTH, SHROPSHIRE WV16 5DT

NGR SO 715 925

On behalf of

Severn Valley Railway

JANUARY 2017

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development site is located at Bridgnorth railway station (NGR SO 715 925). The railway station is located in a small valley on the west side of the Severn Valley. The Severn Valley at this point was formed 25,000 years ago when a lake located in the Upper Severn Valley drained to the south creating the present Ironbridge Gorge (Marshall 1989, 9). The main part of the site lies on a northeast facing slope. The site is located between 40m and 70m Above Ordnance Datum

The underlying geology around and under the site consists of two main rocks and superficial deposits in the valley base. On the upper slopes of the western site the underlying bedrock is part of the Alveley Member, a mixture of mudstone, siltstone and sandstone that were laid down some 307million to 309 million years ago in the Carboniferous Period (mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html). In the valley base and on the east side the underlying bedrock is Bridgnorth Sandstone Formation, which is sandstone that was laid down 271million to 299million years ago in the Permian Period. Overlying the bedrock in the base of the valley is the Power House Terrace Deposit, a mixture of sand and gravel that was laid out 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period. Boreholes carried out by the Severn Valley Railway indicate that the terrace on which the railway station and associated buildings are located is an area of made ground.

1.2 Planning Background

Shropshire Council has granted planning permission for erection of 2-storey building to include workshop/stores/office and staff facilities and 53-bed hostel accommodation; single storey cafe building; refurbishment of station building to include retail area; elevational alterations; removal of temporary buildings and provision of additional car parking and associated works (16/00156/FUL).

Condition 22 states: No development approved by this permission shall commence until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a phased programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI). This written scheme shall be approved in writing by the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of works.

Reason: The site is known to hold archaeological interest. This information is required prior to the commencement of the development as it relates to matters which need to be confirmed before the development proceeds in order to ensure a sustainable development.

Due to the archaeological and historical importance of the surrounding area the Archaeological Advisor to Shropshire Council (SC) agreed that the archaeological work associated with the single storey café building can be dealt with under an archaeological watching brief during ground works. This was in line with NPPF and Local Planning policies.

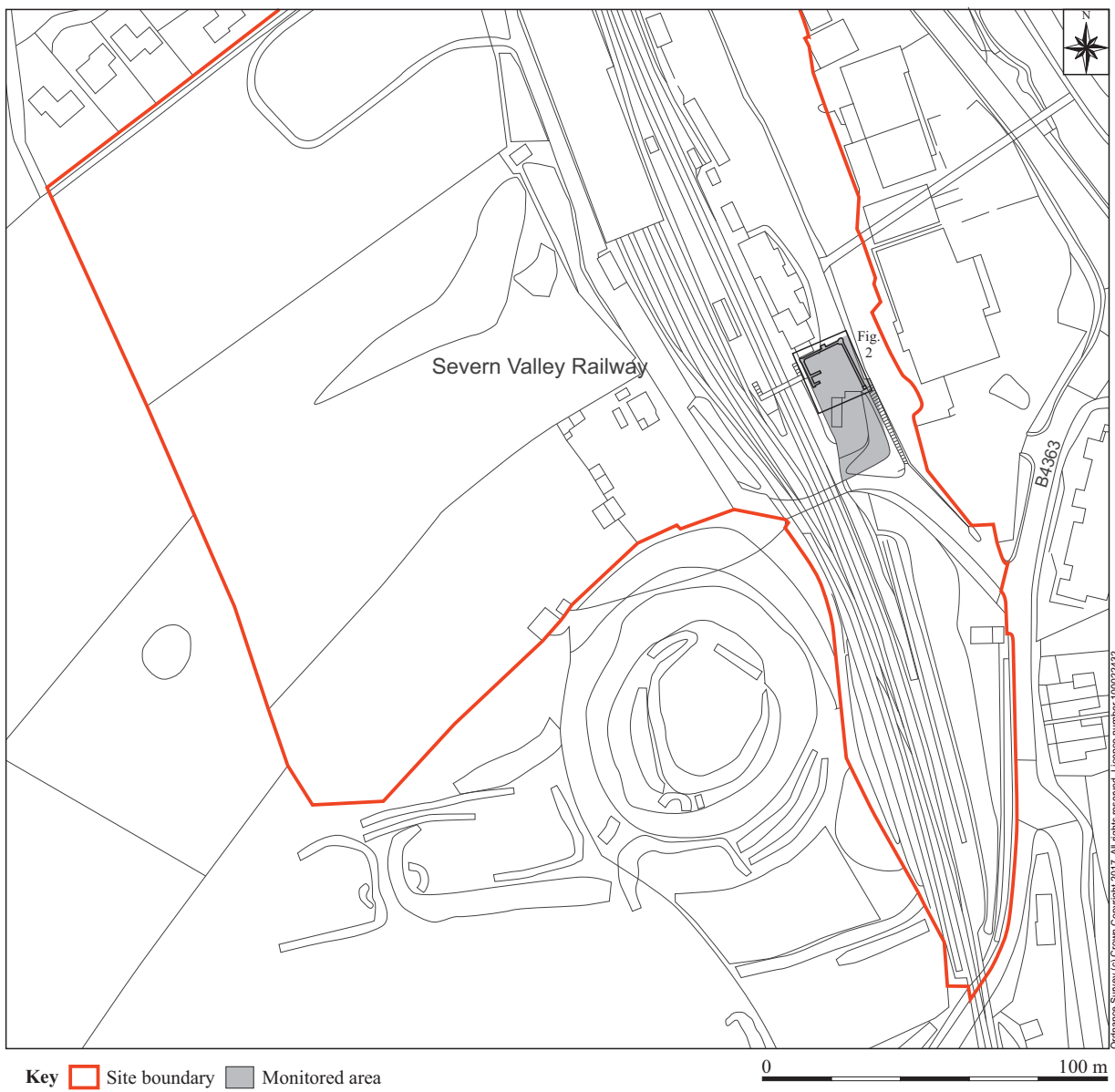
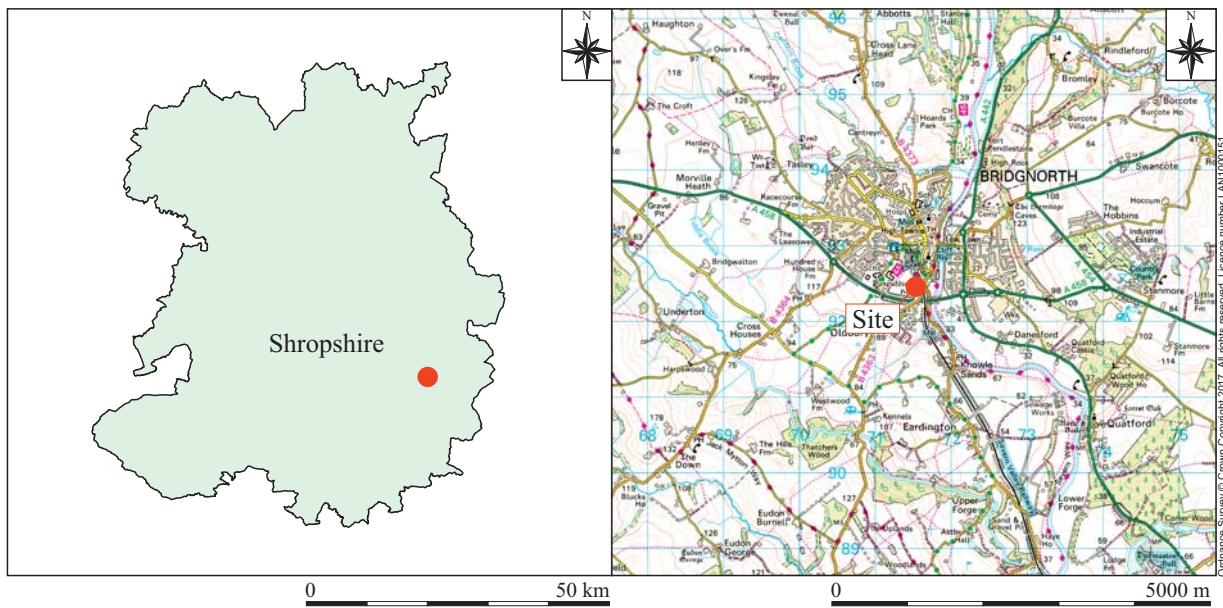


Figure 1: Site location

1.3 Archaeological Background

A Heritage Impact Assessment of the proposed development has been carried out (Yeates 2015). The Severn Valley Railway was constructed in the late 1850s and early 1860s. The 1st edition OS map of 1882 shows the south part of the proposed building footprint as being waste ground. By 1903 (2nd edition OS) the waste ground had been divided from the area to the north and contained a small rectangular outbuilding. On the 3rd edition OS map (1927) the division between the two parts has been moved further north. The outbuilding had a small extension on the southern side and a further building had been constructed in this enlarged area.

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 the date, nature and extent of any activity or occupation revealed in the development site.
- To establish the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes, in particular to the railway.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with the Archaeological Advisor, the archaeological advisor to Shropshire Council.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014).

3.2 Methodology

An archaeologist was to be present on site to control any groundwork that had the potential to reveal or disturb archaeological remains. This included continuous monitoring of service/drainage runs (Fig. 1).

No archaeological horizons were encountered. 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.

The resultant spoil from the works was visually scanned, especially for finds relating to Post-medieval and earlier periods.

The watching brief involved the monitoring the excavation of service trenches for drainage for the new building that keyed into the existing drains on site (Fig. 2). The first stage of work involved the excavation of a 0.6m wide, 15m long and 1m deep trench along the north-eastern extent of the development site connecting the existing manhole MH 3 to proposed manhole MH C (Fig. 2). The second stage of work involved the continuation of the trench to the southwest for 14m to link up MH C to MH B then to MH A (Fig. 2). A final stage of work involved the continuation of the trench to the southeast for 9m, together with two short offset trenches to the southwest (Fig. 2). The trench was 0.6m wide and 0.5m deep and only cut through the disturbed ground and did not reach the natural clay. After discussions with the developer it was decided that this phase of the watching brief was halted as the rest of the groundworks for the building would not impact below the depth of 0.5m and would only truncate the made ground.

4 RESULTS

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts, numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material, while numbers in bold indicate structural features.

The deposits encountered within the trench consisted of a 0.1m thick layer of tarmac from the former carpark overlying a 0.6m thick layer of heavily disturbed made ground (01). This layer was a dark grey silty clay with frequent stones and industrial waste that overlay the natural red clay (02). Along the western extent of the trench another layer of made ground was present underlying layer (01), this was a reddish brown silty sand (03). Various disused services were noted across the site that cut through the made ground. No archaeological horizons were present in any of the trenches.



Plate 1. Representative section 1

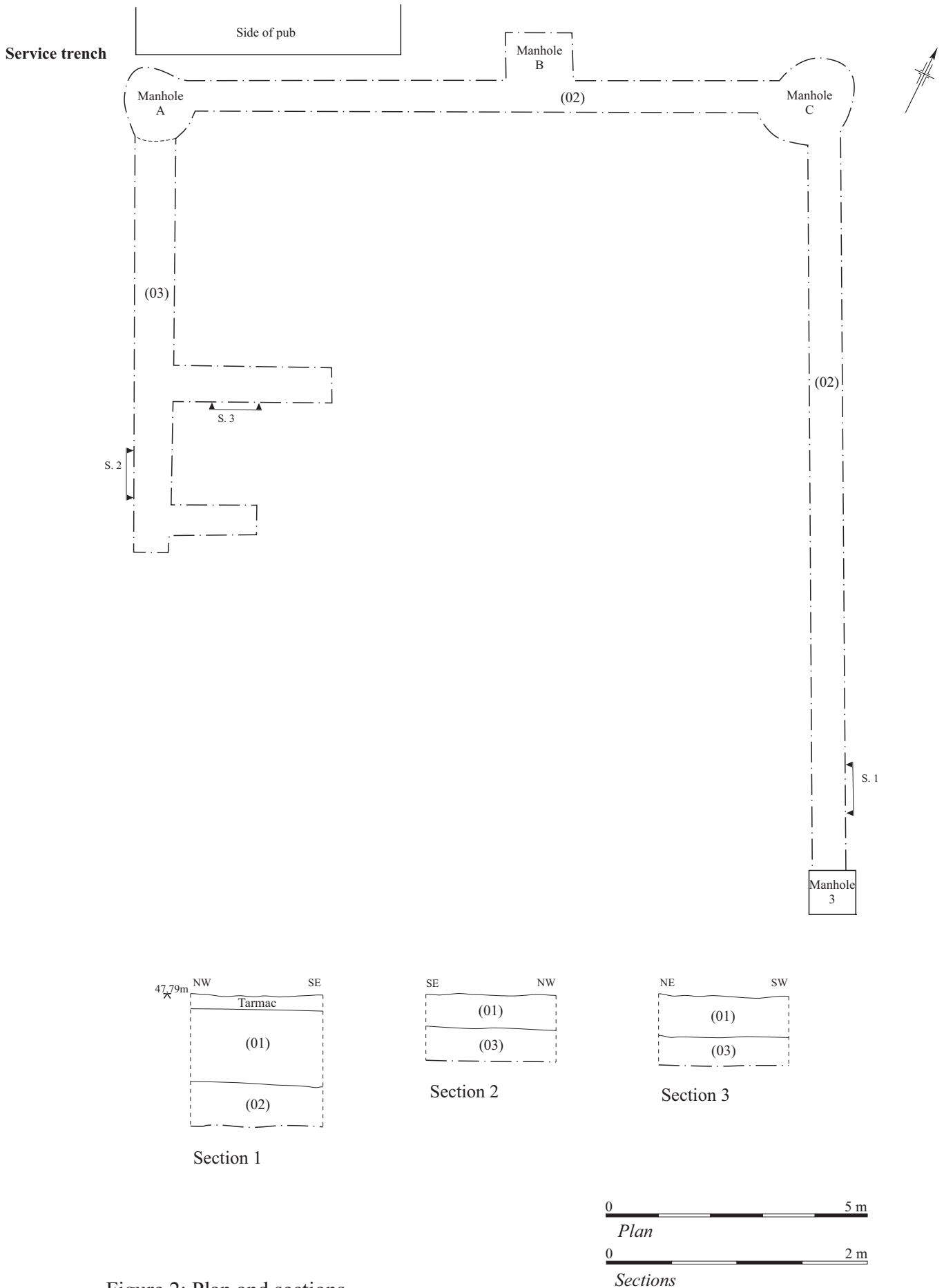


Figure 2: Plan and sections



Plate 2. Working shot of service trench



Plate 3. Representative section 2

5 FINDS

No finds were recovered from the site.

6 DISCUSSION

The site was devoid of any archaeological features and was heavily disturbed by modern services. The site was located on a steeply sloping eastern facing slope and due to the lack of any original topsoil and subsoil it is likely that the hillside had been terraced into to create level ground.

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 the appropriate museum in due course.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

JMHS, 2016 *Station Lane, Bridgnorth, Shropshire WV16 5DT Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording, Analysis and Publication of works Written Scheme of Investigation*. Unpublished client report.

Yeates, S, 2015 *Heritage Impact Assessment on Severn Valley Railway Station, Bridgnorth, Shropshire*. John Moore Heritage Services. Unpublished client report.