

WATERLOO KILN, SWINTON

Archive Report:
Archaeological Monitoring (Watching Brief)



Prepared by

NETWORK ARCHAEOLOGY

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On behalf of

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

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Non-Technical Summary

Archaeological monitoring (watching brief) was commissioned by Soul Architects, on behalf of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, at the site of Waterloo Kiln, Swinton following a recommendation by Historic England. The monitoring took place during the reduction of exterior ground levels around the kiln, prior to the installation of new path surfacing.

The archaeological watching brief recorded several archaeological features including a brick working surface likely to be contemporary with the kiln, later brick and concrete surfaces, and a rectangular brick-lined pit. Together, these features give further insight into the working life and subsequent use of the kiln structure. Disturbance to the archaeology was kept to the absolute minimum required for the development, and the majority of the archaeological features will be preserved in-situ.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this Report

This archaeological monitoring report is designed to inform the relevant parties of the extent of archaeological remains recorded during the Archaeological Monitoring (watching brief) at Waterloo Kiln, Swinton.

1.2 Project Background

1.1.1 Purpose of monitoring

Archaeological monitoring was carried out at Waterloo Kiln during ground clearance and the reduction of existing ground level around the kiln, prior to the installation of a new visitor path. The monitoring was carried out to ensure that no *in-situ* archaeological deposits were disturbed or removed without being recorded.

The archaeological works were required in order to fulfil recommendations made by Historic England in regard to the scheme of repair works on the kiln. Historic England acted in an advisory capacity, and the conditions were not associated with any planning application or development.

1.1.2 Location, description, and natural environment

The site is an area of public access land containing Waterloo Kiln and is situated to the north of Blackamoor Road, Swinton, approximately 5.5km to the north of Rotherham town centre. The site lies 50m to the northwest of Strawberry Cottage and is surrounded by woodland and pasture. The single bottle kiln is one of the few surviving upstanding remains of a much larger pottery works.

The underlying geology comprises Pennine Lower Coal Measures formation mudstone, siltstone and sandstone sedimentary rock formed approximately 310 to 318 million years ago (BSG 2022). The soils on the site consist of slowly permeable seasonally wet acidic loams and clays (Soilscapes 2022).

1.3 Archaeological Background

Waterloo Kiln is located on the site of the Rockingham Pottery Works. The kiln is named after, and likely dates to, the Battle of Waterloo, which took place in June 1815. Waterloo Kiln is of brick construction and is classified as a bottle kiln (also known as an updraught kiln).

The Rockingham Pottery Works is an example of a fully integrated pottery, including extraction, processing of raw materials, production and transport (HE 2022a). The earliest evidence of a pottery works at Swinton comes from rents paid to the first Marquis of Rockingham for clay extraction and rent for a brickworks, tileyard, and pottery, and dates to 1745. The site passed through various hands until 1785-1806, when it was controlled by Leeds Pottery. It was taken over by John Brameld in the early nineteenth century and finally closed in 1842 (ibid). The kiln itself was converted into a dwelling following the closure of the pottery works. It was later used as a smallpox isolation hospital and is labelled as such on the 1901 Ordnance Survey 25" map. The site of the pottery works was acquired by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council in the 1950s and was opened to public access.

A small excavation on the site of the carpark was carried out in 1967 by Sheffield City Museum and identified surviving stratified deposits as well as Rockingham ware and kiln wasters. A 2019 excavation by ArchHeritage targeted three trenches over the main buildings of the pottery, uncovering structural remains and a large assemblage of pottery and wasters (ArchHeritage).

In 2022, Network Archaeology monitored the cleaning of the interior of the kiln. Following the cleaning, four infilled intrusions were identified in the brick floor. These potentially dated to the early 20th century, when the disused kiln was converted into a smallpox isolation hospital (Townend 2022).

2. Results

2.1 Overview

The archaeological watching brief comprised the monitoring of the reduction of existing ground level for a circa 2m radius around the kiln structure. The ground reduction was undertaken in order to create a level, safe access circular path around the kiln and the work was undertaken by the specialist contractor, Keystone Yorkshire Ltd, using a tracked mini-digger operating under archaeological supervision. Ground reductions were excavated to a maximum depth of 250mm and involved the clearance of vegetation and deposits of modern silt and detritus *100* that had accumulated around the kiln.

2.2 Floors *101* and *103*

Reduction of the overburden *100* revealed a layer of sandy silt *105* which contained brick rubble, mortar and clay lenses, stones, glass fragments and ash. Deposit *105* represented the formation level on the north-western, south-western and south-eastern sides of the kiln and was exposed over an area of 60m². No other features were identified in these areas.

On the north-eastern side of the kiln, deposit *105* formed the bedding layer for a fragment of brick floor *101*. Floor *101* butted the eastern side of the kiln and was formed of unfrogged red bricks measuring 240mm by 110mm by 70mm in size. The courses of brickwork forming the floor consisted of unbonded edge-laid stretchers, which were aligned approximately north-west to south-east. A 5.70m by 2.40m area of the floor was exposed during the groundworks, but it is clear that it extended to the north and east, beyond the limit of the current excavation. In general, the appearance of floor *101* was very similar to the brick floor found in association with a bottle kiln base during the 2019 community excavation of the pottery works (ArcHeritage 2019; contexts 303 and 305, figs 7 and 8). For this reason, it is interpreted as a working or yard surface contemporary with the operation of the kiln.

A second fragment of brick flooring *103* was located to the south of floor *101*. Floor *103* consisted of machine moulded, frogged red bricks measuring 230mm by 110mm by 90mm in size. No makers' stamps were evident on the bricks, which were bonded with a compact grey cement mortar. The floor was 2.90m long and 1.90m wide and the bricks appeared to have been laid randomly, with no obvious pattern of coursing. Both the materials and manner of construction indicated that floor *103* was of a later build than floor *101*. It may therefore represent a repair to the earlier floor or perhaps post-use consolidation of the kiln.

2.3 Pit 108

Both floors *101* and *103* were truncated by a 2.50m wide, 2.90m long rectangular pit cut **108**. Pit **108** contained a brick lining *106* on its northern, eastern and southern sides, with the western side of the cut abutting the kiln wall. Brick lining *106* consisted of moulded, frogged red bricks measuring 240mm by 110mm by 80mm. None of the bricks had a makers' stamp. The bricks were laid in alternate courses of headers and stretchers, and although the pit was not excavated, it was at least two courses of brickwork deep. The brickwork was bonded by a compact cement mortar.

The interior of brick-lined pit **108/106** was filled by a silty sand deposit *107*. This deposit contained ash, brick fragments, glass, clinker and slag. It was very 'industrial' in nature and appears to have been waste material sourced on the site which had been subsequently used as infill.

The function of the pit itself is somewhat unclear; it was clearly of a later build than the kiln and is therefore unlikely to have been directly associated with pottery production. However, it may have been associated with the later conversion of the kiln into a smallpox isolation hospital, perhaps representing a manhole associated with services provision to the structure. In this regard, it is important to note that the pit was situated adjacent to the blocked-up eastern doorway of the kiln, which itself is thought to be a later insertion into the structure.

2.4 Surfaces 102 and 104

Pit fill 107 was capped by a 0.15m deep layer of modern concrete 102. This feature is likely to be associated with the post-use consolidation of the kiln.

Situated to the south, and partially sealing floor 103, was a 3.60m wide, 5.0m long fragment of concrete surfacing 104. This surface infilled the area between the north-eastern circumference of the kiln and the position of a rectangular building located on the southern side of the kiln, which is shown on the 1892 Ordnance Survey map as being part of the isolation hospital. It is possible that 104 seals and consolidates an earlier floor surface at this location.

2.5 Discussion

The groundworks monitoring at Waterloo Kiln uncovered several features of archaeological interest. These were clustered on the eastern side of the kiln, where the existing ground level was highest and where there appears to have been less disturbance. In contrast, the existing ground level on the southern and western sides of the kiln was appreciably lower and some ground clearance or reduction may have occurred here in the past.

Part of a brick working surface or floor 101 was identified on the eastern side of the kiln. This appeared to be contemporary with the working life of the kiln and extended further to the east and north, beyond the limit of the current groundworks.

The other features identified included a later fragment of floor 103, a brick-lined pit 108 and two concrete surfaces 102 and 104. None of these features appeared to relate to the working life of the kiln and it is likely that they relate to the conversion of the kiln into an isolation hospital, or to later post-use consolidation of the structure.

3. Conclusion

The archaeological watching brief encountered several archaeological features which together give further insight into the working life and subsequent use of the kiln structure. Disturbance to the archaeology was kept to the absolute minimum required for the development and the majority of the exposed features will be preserved *in-situ*.

4. Archive

The project archive and a copy of this report will be deposited with the Clifton Park Museum, Rotherham, S65 2AA.

Archive Quantification:

Archive component	Count
Context registers	1
Context sheets	9
Drawing sheets	1
Digital colour photographs	63
Photographic registers	1
Specialist reports	1

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6. Plates



Plate 1: Layer 105, facing south.



Plate 2: Floor 101, facing north-west.



Plate 3: Floor 101, facing south-east.



Plate 4: Brick floor 103, looking west



Plate 5: Pit 108 showing brick lining 106, facing north.



Plate 6: Pit 108 showing brick lining 106, facing south.



Plate 7: Concrete layer 102, facing west.



Plate 8: Concrete layer 108, facing west.

Appendix 1

Context listing

Context No	Type	Earlier than	Later than	Description
100	Layer	-	102, 104	Modern topsoil and vegetation layer
101	Masonry	108	105	Brick floor to east of kiln exterior
102	Layer	100	107	Concrete surface capping deposit 107
103	Masonry	108, 104	105	Brick floor to east of kiln exterior
104	Layer	100	103	Concrete surface
105	Layer	101, 103	NFE	Sandy silt layer. Forms formation level of path excavation.
106	Masonry	107	108	Brick lining of pit 108
107	Fill	102	106	Deposit infilling 106
108	Cut	106	101, 103	Rectangular pit cut

Appendix 2

Finds Assessment

Assessment of the Post-Roman Pottery/Ceramics and Non-ceramic Artefacts Recovered from Archaeological Monitoring of Groundworks at the Waterloo Kiln, Swinton, South Yorkshire – WKS 16

Johanna Gray

Introduction

Twelve sherds of pottery from eight vessels weighing a total of 109g, four pieces of ceramic kiln furniture weighing a total of 121g, two fragments of glass weighing a total of 16g and three pieces of industrial waste weighing a total of 71g were recovered from archaeological monitoring of groundworks in association with the creation of a new path to access the kiln and presented for assessment. The pottery and ceramic assemblage dates from the late 18th to early 20th century.

Methodology

Twelve sherds of pottery from eight vessels weighing a total of 109g, four pieces of ceramic kiln furniture weighing a total of 121g, two fragments of glass weighing a total of 16g and three pieces of industrial waste weighing a total of 71g were recovered from archaeological monitoring of groundworks in association with the creation of a new path to access the kiln and presented for assessment. The pottery and ceramic assemblage dates from the late 18th to early 20th century

Condition

The assemblage contains early modern pottery, ceramic kiln furniture, fragments of glass and industrial waste. The pottery is in a fairly fresh condition but shows evidence of being burnt and has a thin film of ash adhering to its surfaces.

The kiln furniture is clearly associated with the kiln, facilitating the placement and spacing of pottery for firing. The burnt pottery may also suggest an association with the kiln; however, the burning is more likely caused by disposal of the pottery (when broken) into a hearth or with hot ashes onto a midden.

Site summary and assessment

Context 105: Four pieces of kiln furniture (Photograph 1) and two fragments of glass were recovered from this layer, which was the reduced ground level around the kiln.



Photograph 1: Kiln Furniture

KF 1 is a fragment of a spacer bar with a white earthenware body and a cream glaze. It has four sides, two of which have been trimmed to create a taper at one end. Bars of this sort were multi-purpose in their function when spacing pottery for firing in the kiln.

KF2 is a fragment of a 'pin' end, with a cream glaze, and is hexagonal in section. The pin was placed in the wall of the saggar and was designed specifically to facilitate the placing of flatware for 'glost' firing. The pin shows evidence of repeated use, with its fabric being near vitrified.

KF3 is hand-rolled in white clay. It tapers to a rounded point and shows evidence of burning. Fragments of this type of kiln furniture, known as rods, have been previously discovered on this site (Chris Cumberpatch - pers. comm.) and were probably used to assist with the placing of wares in the kiln. This type of kiln furniture is probably earlier in date than the other three pieces.

KF4 is a complete spacer bar, triangular in section, formed by extrusion and is 45mm in length. There are semi-circular cut outs at the apices at one end of the bar. Like KF1, the bar probably had multiple uses within the firing process.

The kiln furniture dates from the 1770s onwards and will have been used in the firing of pottery at the kiln.

Two fragments of glass were recovered with the kiln furniture. One fragment is olive in colour and is curved, suggesting it came from a bottle. Bottles of this colour usually contained beer, stout, or porter and date to the 19th century.

The second fragment is from a small, transparent glass bottle with a screw cap lid. The lid has corroded into place. This type of bottle was manufactured in the early 20th century and was used to contain foodstuffs, such as sauces or cod liver oil.

Context 107 is the infill deposit of a brick-lined rectangular pit on the eastern side of the kiln, which truncated part of the original exterior floor of the kiln.

Ten sherds from pearlware vessels were recovered from this deposit, along with three pieces of industrial waste. Of the pearlware sherds, four have blue transfer-printed decoration. All the sherds have a fine ash deposit on either the interior or exterior surfaces and over the broken edges.

Of note are the five pearlware sherds from the same dish with a wide-flange rim.



Photograph 2: Pearlware dish sherd

The dish has a green transfer-printed border around the edge with a floral design around the flange in a repeating pattern (Photograph 2). The rim is scalloped with moulded floral decoration. There is a fine ash deposit on the underside of the dish.

The other two pottery fragments recovered from the pit are from brown stoneware and English stoneware cylindrical jars. Both sherds showed signs of burning.

The brown stoneware jar was probably produced in either a Nottinghamshire or Derbyshire kiln during the early to mid-19th century. The English stoneware jar is of the type used for preserves and conserves. Jars like these performed a utilitarian function and were ubiquitous in the late 19th and early 20th century.

The burning on the pearlware and stoneware sherds suggests an association with the kiln but is more likely to have been caused by disposal of the broken pottery vessels into the hearth / ash midden, which was a widespread practice before the introduction of refuse collection in the late 19th or early 20th century.

The three fragments of industrial waste are non-magnetic, with a dense, 'glassy' core. The outer layer is rough and vesicular. The industrial waste fragments are a product of combustion with iron-rich coal. Coal was used to fire the kilns in the 18th and 19th centuries, so its presence on site is to be expected.

The presence of industrial waste fragments on this site is predictable and confirms evidence of habitation and of industrial production.

Recommendations

All the kiln furniture recovered shows signs of use and is evidence of the manufacture of the pottery on site. Kiln furniture is not particularly well researched, and this small assemblage should be retained to further our understanding of the manufacturing processes at that time.

The five pearlware sherds from the same dish, with a wide-flange rim and green transfer decoration, should be retained as no exact parallel for this vessel has been identified. The remaining sherds of pearlware and the stoneware recovered from the brick-lined rectangular pit date from the 1830s onwards and are likely to be associated with the habitation on site after the pottery works closed in the 1840s. No further work is required on these pottery sherds and this material may be discarded.

No further work is required on the glass and industrial waste fragments, and the material may be discarded.

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Context	Code Name	Form	Sherd N*	Vessel N*	Weight (g)	Part	Fabric	Description	Date Range	Recommendation	Reason
105	KFURN	Spacer	1	1	1		Fine; cream	Flake; originally square with end cut to create taper; unusual; 32mm+ in length; cream glaze	1770-1847	Retain	There are many gaps in our knowledge of kiln furniture forms and their use.
105	KFURN	Rod	1	1	5		Fine; white	Hand formed; roll of white clay with tapered, rounded end; 35mm+ in length; evidence of burning	1770-1847	Retain	There are many gaps in our knowledge of kiln furniture forms and their use.
105	KFURN	Pin	1	1	1		Fine; cream	Hexagonal form; 20mm+ in length; cream glaze; burnt with ash deposit adhering to external surface; associated with glost firing	1770-1847	Retain	There are many gaps in our knowledge of kiln furniture forms and their use.
105	KFURN	Spacer	1	1	5		Fine; white	Triangular with a scooped cut at the apices at one end; both ends cut; 20mm in length; evidence of burning	1770-1847	Retain	There are many gaps in our knowledge of kiln furniture forms and their use.
107	PEARL	Dish	1	1	4	Rim		Square with rounded edges and curved rim; dark blue transfer print on internal surface - scroll with foliate and floral design; burnt	1770-1900	Discard	

Context	Code Name	Form	Sherd N*	Vessel N*	Weight (g)	Part	Fabric	Description	Date Range	Recommendation	Reason
								with ash deposit adhering to external surface			
107	PEARL	Open	1	1	2	Base		Blue transfer print on internal surface; burnt exterior surface including over the broken edge	1770-1900	Discard	
107	PEARL	Open	1	1	1	Base		Blue transfer print on internal surface; concretions over the broken edge	1770-1900	Discard	
107	PEARL	Dish	1	1	3	Body		Dark-blue transfer print on internal surface - landscape scene; burnt exterior surface including over the broken edge	1770-1900	Discard	
107	PEARL	Small plate	1	1	1	Base		Low footring; burnt interior surface	1770-1900	Discard	
107	PEARL	Plate or Dish	5	1	47	Rim/Body		Wide flange rim with scalloped edge and moulded floral decoration; green transfer print on internal surface - floral repeating pattern on the flange and decorative border; (good quality); burnt external surface including over broken edge	1770-1900	Retain	Very fine moulded and transfer printed decoration; possibly Brameld in style; no parallel found

Context	Code Name	Form	Sherd N*	Vessel N*	Weight (g)	Part	Fabric	Description	Date Range	Recommendation	Reason
107	BS	Cylindrical jar	1	1	12	Body	Buff	Brown external surface; white deposit over internal surface with ash deposit on internal surface; burnt over the broken edge	1680-1850	Discard	
107	ENGS	Cylindrical jar	1	1	39	Rim	Grey	Conserve jar; vertical, narrow incised grooves on external surface; groove below neck; burnt internal surface including over broken edge	1743-2000	Discard	
			16	12	121						

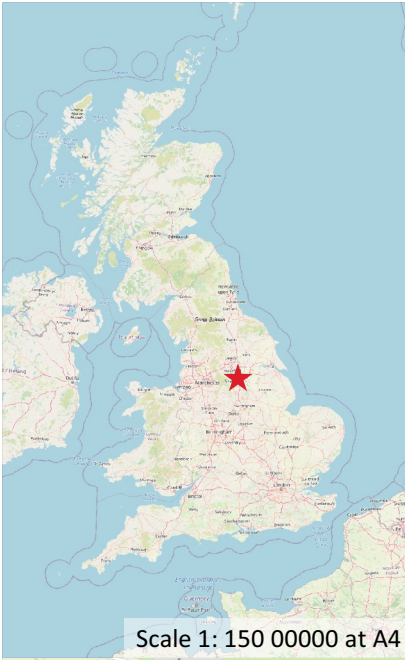
Table 1: Ceramic finds catalogue.

Context	Material	Fragment N*	Weight (g)	Part	Description	Date	Recommendation
105	Glass	1	3	Body	Fragment of olive-coloured glass; probably from beer or ale bottle	Late 19th to early 20th C	Discard
105	Glass	1	13	Rim	Rim and neck fragment of small, clear glass bottle; metal top corroded into place; burnt	Early 20th C	Discard
107	Industrial waste	3	71	N/A	Non-magnetic; dense, 'glassy' core with a rough, vesicular outer layer; probably a product of combustion with iron-rich coal from firing of kiln	Late 18th to early-mid 19th C	Discard

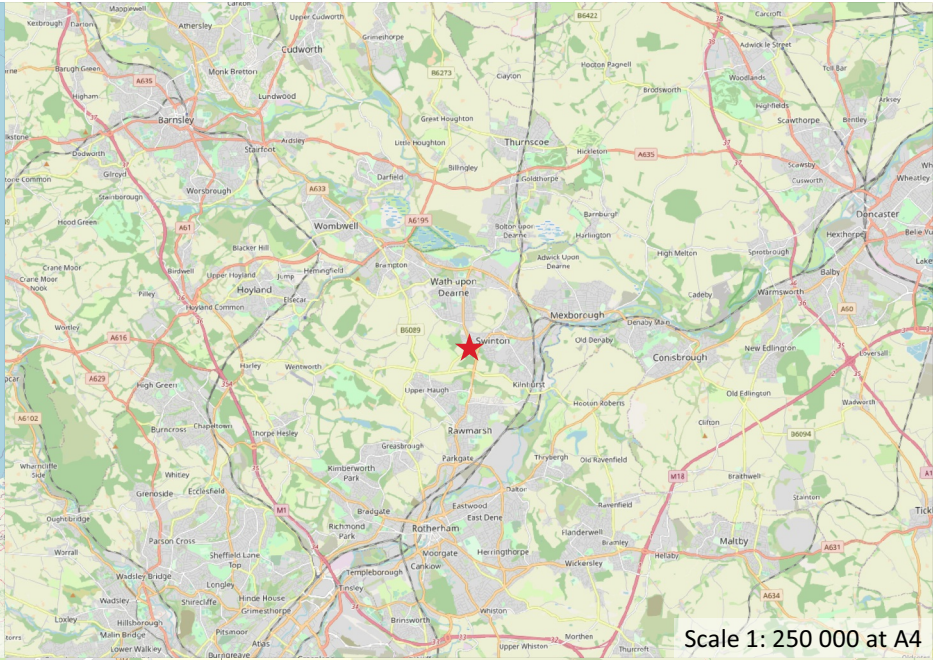
Table 2: Non-ceramic finds catalogue.

Appendix 3

Figures



Scale 1: 150 000 at A4



Scale 1: 250 000 at A4



Scale 1: 10 000 at A4

★ Site location

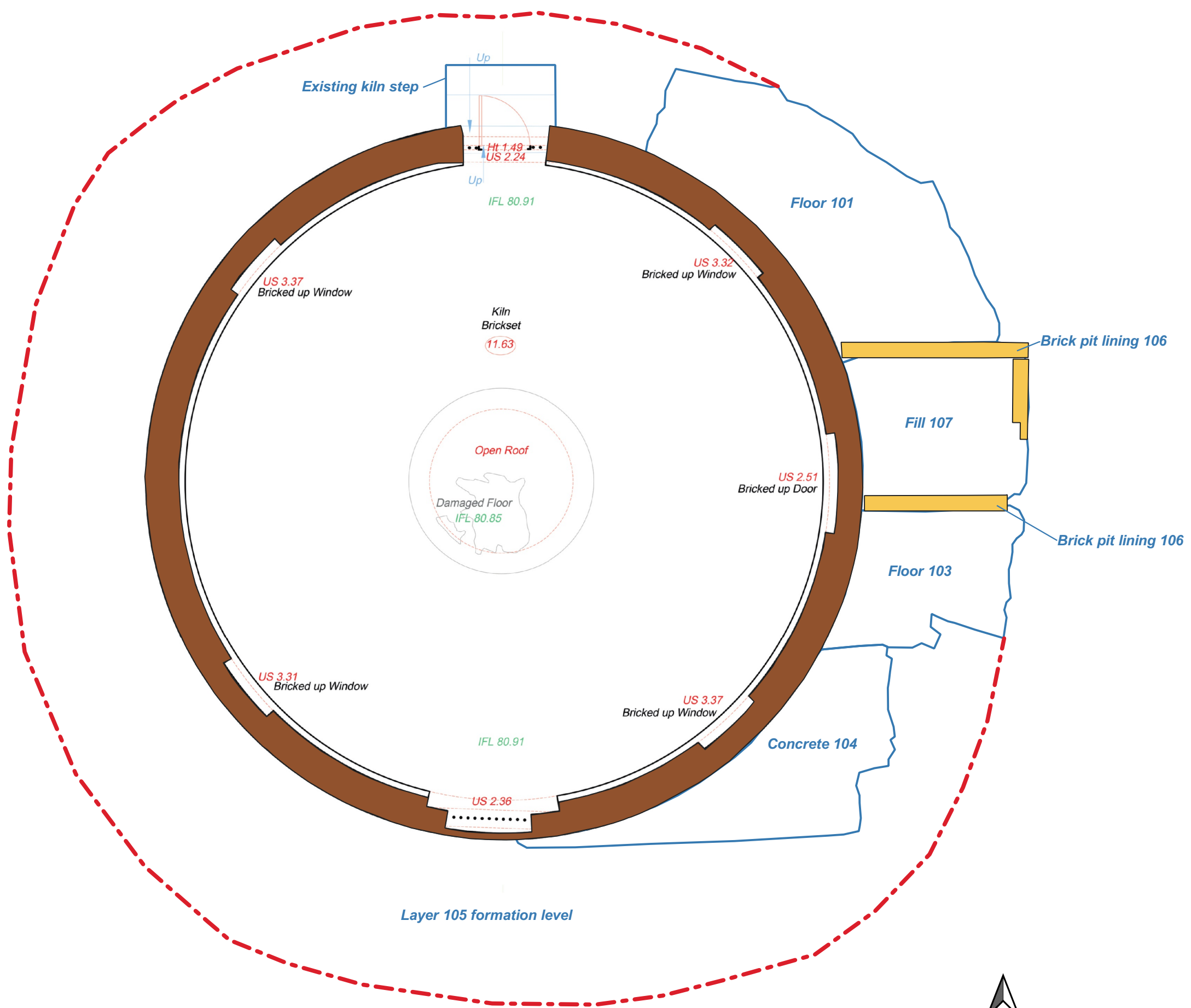
□ Site location

(Contains Ordnance Survey data
@ crown copyright 2010)

1.0	02/14/22	First Issue	HT	PT	TQ
Ver	Date	Description	Drn	Chk	App
					○○○○○

Waterloo Kiln, Swinton

Figure 1 Site location



- - - LOE
- Brickwork
- Kiln structure
- results

(Contains Ordnance Survey data @ crown copyright 2010)

Ver	Date	Description	Drn	Chk	App
1.00	05/10/24	First Draft	BD	NC	MW

Waterloo Kiln, Swinton
 Figure 2 Monitoring area results
 Scale 1:60

