WYAS Archaeological Services

Land off Woodward Court
Mirfield
West Yorkshire

Archaeological Evaluation

Report no. Interim
May 2015

Client: BWB Consulting Ltd

REGISTERED CIfA ORGANISATION

West Yorkshire Joint Services

Land off Woodward Court
Mirfield
West Yorkshire

Archaeological Evaluation

Summary

The trial trench evaluation confirmed the results of the geophysical survey and identified archaeological features in the north-western part of the site. The archaeological remains initially appear to relate to a double ditches features and potential early post-medieval mining activity

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Services

Report Information

Client:	BWB Consulting Ltd
Address:	Whitehall Waterfront, 2 Riverside Way, Leeds, LS1 4EH
Report Type:	Archaeological Evaluation
Location:	Woodward Court Mirfield
County:	West Yorkshire
Grid Reference:	SE 209 210
Period(s) of activity represented:	Prehistoric / Romano-British? Post-medieval
Report Number:	Interim
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Site Code:	BRI18
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Project Management:	David Williams BA MCIfA
Fieldwork supervisor:	Paul Bracken
Report:	Nidia Lisic, Paul Bracken
Illustrations:	Site Staff

Authorisation for distribution: ----------

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Nepshaw Lane South, Morley, Leeds LS27 7JQ
Telephone: 0113 535 0163.
Email: admin@aswyas.com

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1 Trench summary

1 Introduction

Archaeological Services WYAS (ASWYAS) was commissioned by BWB Consulting Ltd (BWB) to undertake archaeological trial trenching on land at Woodward Court, Mirfield (Fig. 1). This phase of archaeological investigation follows an initial geophysical survey (PSI 2018). The work was carried out in June 2018 and was undertaken in line with the National Planning Policy Framework and in accordance with a Specification (reproduced in Appendix 1) produced by BWB and approved by West Yorkshire Archaeological Advisory Service (WYAAS).

Site location and topography and land use

The proposed development site covers an area of approximately 4.5 ha and is located on land off Woodwart Court, on the north-eastern limit of Mirfield, centred at SE 209 210. The Site is bounded to the southwest and southeast by existing housing, to the northwest by Crossley Fields Junior & Infants School and a path to the northeast.

The Site is situated on slightly sloping ground at approximately 96m aOD in the northwest to 86m aOD in the southeast. The entire area is currently grassed with mature hedges along all sides.

Soils and geology

The geology of the site comprises Falhouse Rock Sandstone formed approximately 318 to 319 million years ago in the Carboniferous Period. No superficial deposits are present (BGS 2018). No soils are recorded in this area as it lies in an un-surveyed urban area. (SSEW 1983).

2 Archaeological and Historical Background

The following historical background has been taken from the Specification. There is only sporadic evidence for prehistoric activity in the Mirfield area. An earthwork was described by the Reverend J. Ismay in the mid-18th century, located at Knowl, within the Mirfield township. In 1819, this was described as comprising a circular bank and surrounding ditch, with entrances on two sides. It has been suggested that this monument was a henge, although Pobjoy described it as a Decursorium, or Tilt Yard, for weapons practice. The site has now been levelled and built over.

There is no clear evidence for any Roman period activity within Mirfield.

It is probable that there was a settlement at Mirfield during the Anglo-Saxon period. A late Anglo-Saxon carving, probably used as a funerary monument, is housed in the Church of St Mary, and it has been suggested that there was an earlier Saxon chapel in the area. It has also been suggested that the Norman motte, known as Castle Hall Hill, situated next to the Church, may have been the site of an Anglo-Saxon fortification. Indeed evidence of an earlier possible ringwork has been identified within the profile of the motte.

The motte and bailey castle, the extant remnants of the medieval church and the rectory represent the most notable medieval landmarks in Mirfield. The motte and bailey castle is likely to have been constructed between 1086 and 1159.

Mirfield remained a rural settlement until the onset of the industrial revolution in the mid-19th century and the rapid development of new industries and mining. Most if not all of the industrial and commercial buildings within Mirfield date from the 1800s and a large proportion of the residential buildings.

In February 2018 Phase Site Investigations were commissioned to undertake a geophysical survey of the site. Identified by the survey were a number of enclosures and a possible trackway. Also evident are two possible circular features one of which may be associated with the larger enclosure within the north western part of the site.

There are a number of anomalies identified by the survey which relate to modern material/ objects, agricultural activity and geological/pedological variations. Some of the other anomalies recorded are of uncertain origin but these may relate to the archaeological features, agricultural activity, natural features/ variations or modern material

3 Aims and Objectives

The aim of the archaeological trial trenching was to target remains of archaeological and possible archaeological nature within agreed excavation areas (Fig. 2). The general objectives were to:

- to determine the nature, depth, extent, significance and date of any archaeological features;
- to determine the likely range, quality and quantity of artefactual and environmental evidence present;
- to investigate, sample and record archaeological features, structures and deposits according to the methodology detailed in the Specification (Appendix 1);
- to preserve by record the archaeological remains that will be impacted by the proposed development;
- to confirm and enhance the results of the geophysical survey; and
- to recover all artefacts and, where appropriate, palaeo-environmental samples from deposits of potential significance.

The specific objectives were:

- to determine the potential for medieval archaeological features and/ or deposits to occur within the southern extent of the site;
- to verify the results of the geophysical survey; and

- to inform the scope for further works as appropriate.

4 Methodology

All excavations were undertaken in line with the CIfA guidelines Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (2014) and in compliance with Historic England's MoRPHE PPN3: Archaeological Excavation (2008). ASWYAS' (2011) own methodologies were also adhered to.

All trenches were set out and the limits resurveyed using a Trimble VRS differential GPS accurate to +/-0.01cm. The trenches were opened in a controlled manner using a tracked 360 degree excavator using a flat-bladed ditching bucket under direct archaeological supervision. All topsoil deposits were removed in level spits (not more than 0.20m) with the topsoil and subsoil being separated to allow for re-instating in reverse order. Machining stopped at the first archaeological horizon or natural deposits, whichever was encountered first. All excavations of archaeological deposits were undertaken manually with the stripped surface being cleaned and investigated for archaeological remains.

All trenches were accurately recorded in plan using GPS. Feature sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20. All plans and sections include spot heights that relate to Ordnance Datum in metres.

The site archive contains all the information gathered during the investigations. The archive is currently held at ASWYAS in a stable and secure location, but will deposited at a suitable repository in due course.

5 Results

A total of 18 trenches were excavated. All features were sealed by topsoil and subsoil. The topsoil (001) was a dark greyish-brown silty deposit. The subsoil (002) was mid reddish-brown sandy silt. The natural geology (000) was encountered in every trench and comprised a light yellowish-brown sand and degraded sandstone bedrock. Further excavation was undertaken into the areas of suspected mine working which exposed disturbance to a depth up to 4m. These appeared to have been backfilled with a mixed soil deposit. Same fragment of animal bone were recovered during the excavations.

A summary of the results is present in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Trench summary

Trench No.	Topsoil Depth	Subsoil Depth	Comments
1	0.3m – 0.25m	0.2m	2 small charcoal rich pits containing burnt bone and a large circular mining feature

Trench No.	Topsoil Depth	Subsoil Depth	Comments
2	0.25m	0.1m	Small irregular pit and evidence of coal mining activity judged to be recent enough to be of little archaeological significance
3	0.3m	0.3m – 0.1m	Coal mining activity and evidence of plough furrows
4	0.3m	0.2m – 0.1m	Evidence of plough furrows
5	0.25m	0.25m	One linear field boundary, likely post medieval and a small number of plough furrows.
6	0.4m – 0.3m	0.1m	One linear field boundary and a small number of plough furrows.
7	0.25m – 0.4m	0.25m – 0.1m	One double ditch feature, and a linear ditch feature, both likely previous field boundaries.
8	0.3m – 0.25m	0.1m – 0.25m	One linear ditch feature, likely previous field boundary. Evidence of plough furrows also present.
9	0.15m – 0.3m	0.1m – 0.2m	One ditch feature, probable field boundary and a small number of plough furrows.
10	0.3m – 0.35m	0.1m – 0.2m	Evidence of plough furrows
11	0.3m	0.2m – 0.1m	Two linear features, likely field boundaries. Evidence of plough furrows
12	0.2m – 0.3m	0.2m – 0.25m	Large double ditch feature, one possibly re-cut. Likely field boundaries. Small pit containing burnt material.
13	0.3m – 0.35m	0.4m – 0.05m	Large coal mining feature, some evidence of furrowing. No features of archaeological significance.
14	0.35m – 0.25m	0.15 – 0.1m	Small pit containing heated stone and charcoal
15	0.3m	0.2m	Coal mining activity. No evidence for any features of archaeological significance.
16	0.25m – 0.3m	0.3m – 0.1m	Coal mining activity. Corner of an enclosure ditch, likely a field boundary.
17	0.35m	0.15m – 0.4m	Coal mining activity. No features of archaeological significance.
18	0.25m – 0.35m	0.1m – 0.2m	Negative trench

6 Environmental Record

Environmental samples were taken from deposits across the site. The soil samples will be processed and examined for carbonised plant macrofossils and charcoal. In addition, any charred material recovered the sample retents will also be analysed for identifiable remains. The environmental samples will be processed by ASWYAS but the flots and any organic remains from the retents will be examined by a suitable specialist.

7 Discussion and Conclusions

The archaeological evaluation confirmed the results of the geophysical survey and identified the remains of a number of linear features which appear to relate to old field boundaries (Plates 1 – 3). It should be noted that the field boundary identified in Trench 11 (022) (Plate 2) appears to be present on Ordnance Survey maps until as recently as 1914 (NLS 2018). Coal mining activity was noted in Trenches 1, 2, 3, 13, 15, 16 and 17 (Plate 4) but judged to be of little archaeological significance. Two features which presented evidence of *in situ* burning were identified: (034) in Trench 14 and (015) in Trench 12, neither of which contained any finds. Two more small pits containing burnt bone were established in Trench 1: (046) and (048). Both were found to be very shallow (0.08m and 0.12m respectively) and it has been assumed that the bones are animal remains.

In areas where there were no geophysical survey anomalies, the trenching confirmed that no archaeological activity was present or that only recent plough activity was noted.

No features identified during this evaluation provide any evidence to conclude that the land has ever been used for anything other than farming or coal mining.

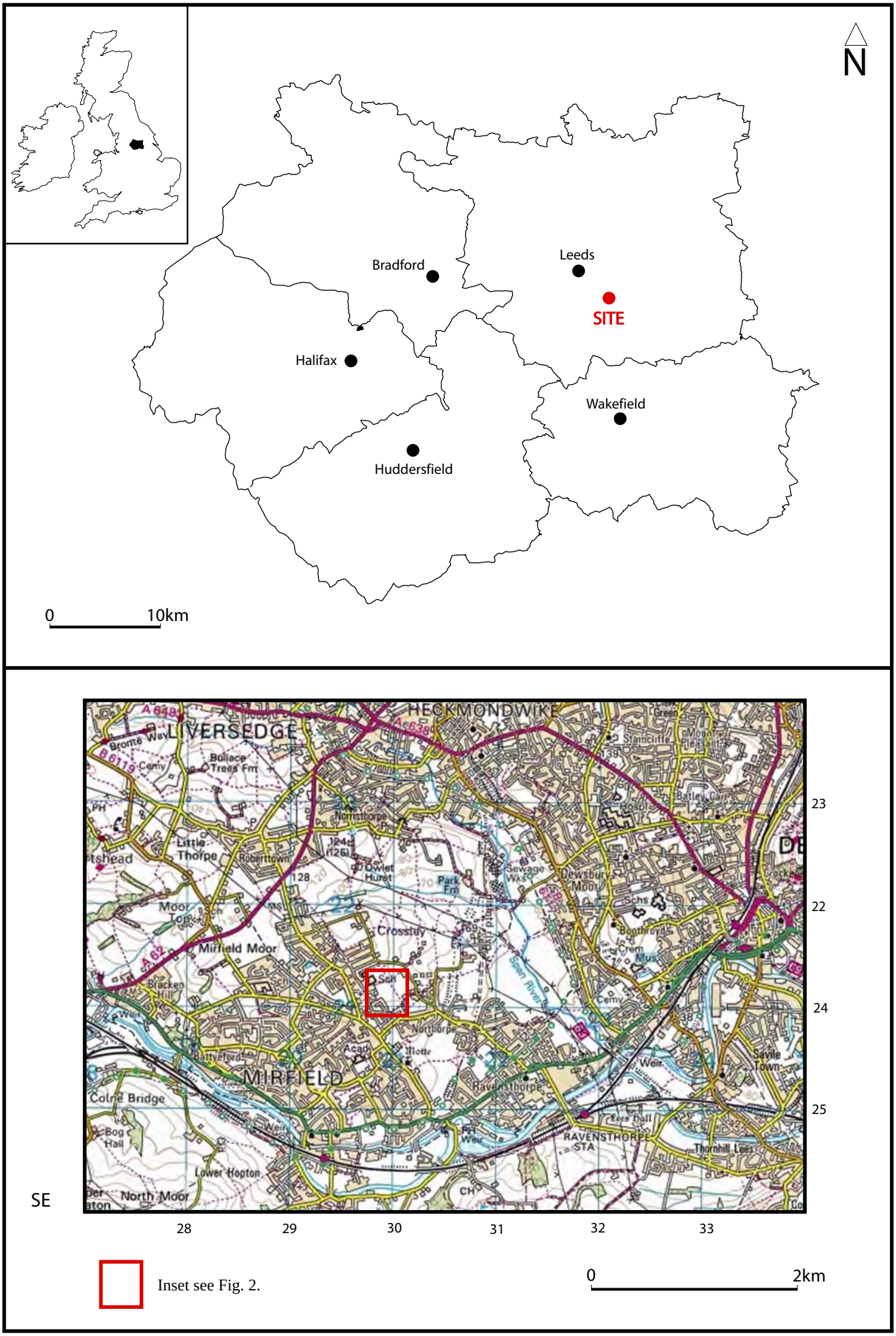

Fig. 1. Site location

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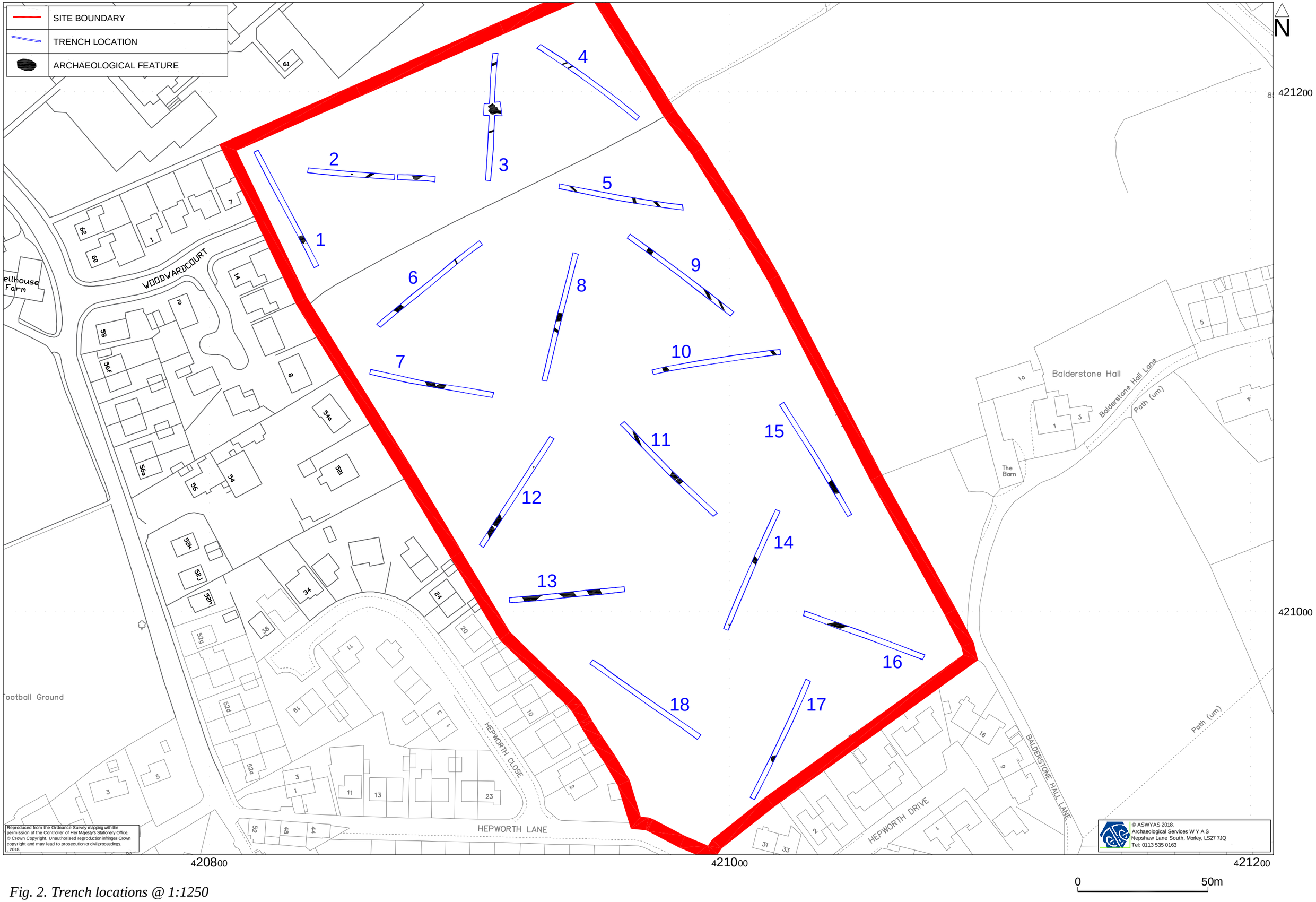

Fig. 2. Trench locations @ 1:1250

Plates



Plate 1: Features 032, 029 and 027: Trench 7.



Plate 2: Feature 022: Field boundary: Trench 11.



Plate 3: Features 009, 012 and 018: Trench 12



Plate 4: Machine excavated mine activity: Trench 16

Appendix 1: Specification

Appendix 2: Trench Tables

Trench 1		
General Description	**Orientation**	NW-SE
Trench contained large coal and stone deposit towards SE extent (possible backfilled mining shaft), three furrows oriented E-W and two small pits.	**Average Depth (m)**	0.45
	Width (m)	2.00
	Length (m)	50.00

Contexts

Context No	Type	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description
000	Layer	-	-	-	Natural
001	Layer	-	-	0.28	Topsoil
002	Layer	-	-	0.20	Subsoil
046	Cut	0.31	0.29	0.08	Pit
047	Fill of 046	0.35	0.29	0.08	Dark greyish black clayey silt with inclusions of charcoal and burnt bone
048	Cut	0.38	0.35	0.12	Sub-circular pit
049	Fill of 048	0.38	0.35	0.12	Dark greyish black clayey silt with inclusions of charcoal and burnt bone

Trench 2					
General Description				**Orientation**	E-W
Trench contained natural coal outcrop observed towards E extent of trench, one furrow oriented N-S and one pit observed towards W extent of trench.				**Average Depth (m)**	0.45
				Width (m)	2.00
				Length (m)	50.00
Contexts					
Context No	**Type**	**Length (m)**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**Description**
000	Layer	-	-	-	Natural
001	Layer	-	-	0.25	Topsoil
002	Layer	-	-	0.10	Subsoil
044	Cut	0.59	0.35	0.18	Oval, U-shaped pit with irregular base
045	Fill of 044	0.59	0.35	0.18	Mid to dark brown loose silt with frequent stones

Trench 3					
General Description				**Orientation**	NE-SW
Trench contained two furrows oriented E-W and a large coal outcrop towards trench centre. No archaeology present.				**Average Depth (m)**	0.53
				Width (m)	2.00
				Length (m)	50.00
Contexts					
Context No	**Type**	**Length (m)**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**Description**
000	Layer	-	-	-	Natural
001	Layer	-	-	0.30	Topsoil
002	Layer	-	-	0.20	Subsoil

Trench 4					
General Description				**Orientation**	NW-SE
Trench contained four furrows oriented E-W. No archaeology present.				**Average Depth (m)**	0.45
				Width (m)	2.00
				Length (m)	50.00
Contexts					
Context No	**Type**	**Length (m)**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**Description**
000	Layer	-	-	-	Natural
001	Layer	-	-	0.30	Topsoil
002	Layer	-	-	0.15	Subsoil

Trench 5					
General Description				**Orientation**	E-W
Trench contained, three furrows and one ditch aligned N-S.				**Average Depth (m)**	0.40
				Width (m)	2.00
				Length (m)	50.00
Contexts					
Context No	**Type**	**Length (m)**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**Description**
000	Layer	-	-	-	Natural
001	Layer	-	-	0.25	Topsoil
002	Layer	-	-	0.25	Subsoil
003	Cut	1.00 (exc.)	1.38	0.18	Liner, U-shaped ditch
004	Fill of 003	1.00 (exc.)	1.38	0.18	Mid brown loose sandy silt with frequent large to medium stone inclusions

Trench 6					
General Description				**Orientation**	NE-SW
Trench contained furrows and one ditch aligned NW-SE.				**Average Depth (m)**	0.40
				Width (m)	2.00
				Length (m)	50.00
Contexts					
Context No	**Type**	**Length (m)**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**Description**
000	Layer	-	-	-	Natural
001	Layer	-	-	0.35	Topsoil
002	Layer	-	-	0.10	Subsoil
025	Cut	1.00 (exc.)	2.60	0.50	Linear, U-shaped ditch
026	Fill of 025	1.00 (exc.)	2.60	0.50	Mid to dark brown loose silt with frequent stone inclusions

Trench 7					
General Description				**Orientation**	E-W
Trench contained three furrows oriented N-S, two linear ditches aligned NW-SE and a linear ditch aligned NE-SW.				**Average Depth (m)**	0.43
				Width (m)	2.00
				Length (m)	50.00
Contexts					
Context No	**Type**	**Length (m)**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**Description**
000	Layer	-	-	-	Natural
001	Layer	-	-	0.33	Topsoil
002	Layer	-	-	0.18	Subsoil
027	Cut	0.85 (exc.)	1.10	0.75	Liner, V-shaped ditch
028	Fill of 027	0.85 (exc.)	1.10	0.75	Dark yellow-brown loose sandy silt with frequent limestone pebbles
029	Cut	1.30 (exc.)	2.14	0.55	Liner, U-shaped ditch

030	Fill of 029	1.30 (exc.)	1.86	0.36	Mid yellow-brown friable silty sand with frequent limestone fragments
031	Fill of 029	1.30 (exc.)	1.36	0.30	Mid yellow-brown friable sandy silt with occasional limestone fragments
032	Cut	1.30	3.10	0.80	Linear, V-shaped ditch,
033	Fill of 032	1.30	3.10	0.80	Dark yellow-brown loose sandy silt with moderate limestone gravels

Trench 8		
General Description	**Orientation**	NE-SW
Trench contained four furrows oriented N-S, one linear ditch aligned E-W, one narrow possible ditch feature aligned NW-SE (probably a furrow)	**Average Depth (m)**	0.38
	Width (m)	2.00
	Length (m)	50.00

Contexts

Context No	Type	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description
000	Layer	-	-	-	Natural
001	Layer	-	-	0.28	Topsoil
002	Layer	-	-	0.18	Subsoil
005	Cut	1.00 (exc)	0.90	0.20	Linear, U-shaped, (probably furrow)
006	Fill of 005	1.00 (exc)	0.90	0.20	Mid brown loose silt with frequent stones
007	Cut	1.00 (exc)	2.96	0.44	Linear, U-shaped ditch
008	Fill of 007	1.00 (exc)	2.96	0.44	Mid to dark brown loose silt with frequent stones

Trench 9		
General Description	**Orientation**	NW-SE
Trench contained two or three furrows oriented N-S and one linear ditch, possibly a field boundary.	**Average Depth (m)**	0.56
	Width (m)	2.00
	Length (m)	50.00

Contexts

Context No	Type	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description
000	Layer	-	-	-	Natural
001	Layer	-	-	0.23	Topsoil
002	Layer	-	-	0.15	Subsoil
036	Cut	0.80 (exc.)	2.74	0.72	Linear, V-shaped ditch
037	Fill of 036	0.80 (exc.)	2.74	0.66	Dark yellow brown friable silty sand with frequent limestone fragments
038	Fill of 036	0.80 (exc.)	0.35	0.09	Mid yellow-brown loose sandy silt with moderate large limestone fragments

Trench 10		
General Description	**Orientation**	E-W
Trench contained six furrows oriented N-S. No archaeology present.	**Average Depth (m)**	0.50
	Width (m)	2.00
	Length (m)	50.00

Contexts

Context No	Type	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description
000	Layer	-	-	-	Natural
001	Layer	-	-	0.33	Topsoil
002	Layer	-	-	0.15	Subsoil

Trench 11		
General Description	**Orientation**	NE-SW
Trench contained two possible furrows oriented N-S and three parallel linear ditches aligned E-W.	**Average Depth (m)**	0.45
	Width (m)	2.00
	Length (m)	50.00

Contexts

Context No	Type	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description
000	Layer	-	-	-	Natural
001	Layer	-	-	0.30	Topsoil
002	Layer	-	-	0.15	Subsoil
022	Cut	1.00 (exc.)	2.04	0.58	Linear, V-shaped ditch
024	Fill of 022	1.00 (exc.)	2.04	0.58	Dark yellow-brown loose sandy silt with frequent limestone fragments
039	Cut	1.00 (exc.)	0.60	0.42	Linear, U-shaped ditch
040	Cut	0.80 (exc.)	2.56	0.42	Linear, U-shaped ditch
041	Fill of 039	1.00 (exc.)	0.60	0.42	Mid yellow-brown friable sandy silt with occasional gravels and pebbles
042	Fill of 040	0.80 (exc.)	2.56	0.42	Dark yellow-brown loose sandy silt with occasional stones

Trench 12		
General Description	**Orientation**	NE-SW
Trench contained one furrow oriented N-S, four parallel ditches aligned SE-NW and one pit.	**Average Depth (m)**	0.45
	Width (m)	2.00
	Length (m)	50.00

Contexts

Context No	Type	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description
000	Layer	-	-	-	Natural
001	Layer	-	-	0.25	Topsoil
002	Layer	-	-	0.23	Subsoil
009	Cut	1.30 (exc.)	2.34	0.44	Linear, U-shaped ditch
010	Fill of 009	1.30 (exc.)	0.50	0.20	Mid yellow-brown loose silty sand with rare stones
011	Fill of 009	1.30 (exc.)	2.18	0.40	Mid red-brown friable sandy silt with occasional limestone gravels and pebbles
012	Cut	1.25 (exc.)	1.86	0.40	Linear, U-shaped ditch
013	Fill of 012	1.25 (exc.)	1.86	0.40	Mid red-brown friable sandy silt with frequent limestone cobbles
014	Tree throw	1.60	1.50	0.55	Irregular shape in plan and section, full of preserved wood and root
015	Cut	0.55	0.60	0.22	Circular, flat based u-shaped small pit, sharp break at the top, steep straight sides, sharp break at the flat base
016	Fill of 015	0.55	0.55	0.21	Black loose silt with frequent charcoal and burnt wood
017	Fill of 015	0.55	0.45	0.07	Dark brown loose sandy silt with occasional limestone pebbles
018	Cut	1.55	0.96	0.58	Linear, V-shaped ditch,
019	Fill of 018	1.55	0.96	0.58	Mid red-brown friable sandy silt with frequent limestone cobbles

Trench 13					
General Description				**Orientation**	E-W
Trench contained approximately five furrows oriented N-S and large natural coal outcrop observed towards W extent of trench. No archaeology present.				**Average Depth (m)**	0.50
				Width (m)	2.00
				Length (m)	50.00
Contexts					
Context No	**Type**	**Length (m)**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**Description**
000	Layer	-	-	-	Natural
001	Layer	-	-	0.33	Topsoil
002	Layer	-	-	0.23	Subsoil

Trench 14					
General Description				**Orientation**	NE-SW
Trench contained one furrow oriented N-S and one pit at the SW extent of the trench				**Average Depth (m)**	0.43
				Width (m)	2.00
				Length (m)	50.00
Contexts					
Context No	**Type**	**Length (m)**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**Description**
000	Layer	-	-	-	Natural
001	Layer	-	-	0.30	Topsoil
002	Layer	-	-	0.13	Subsoil
034	Cut	0.93	0.66	0.32	Sub-circular concave pit
035	Fill of 034	0.93	0.66	0.32	Mid red-brown friable silty clay with frequent stone and occasional charcoal

Trench 15					
General Description				**Orientation**	NW-SE
Trench contained natural coal outcrop observed towards SE trench extent. No archaeology present.				**Average Depth (m)**	0.55
				Width (m)	2.00
				Length (m)	50.00
Contexts					
Context No	**Type**	**Length (m)**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**Description**
000	Layer	-	-	-	Natural
001	Layer	-	-	0.30	Topsoil
002	Layer	-	-	0.20	Subsoil

Trench 16					
General Description				**Orientation**	NW-SE
Trench contained probably backfilled mining shaft and enclosure ditch.				**Average Depth (m)**	0.48
				Width (m)	2.00
				Length (m)	50.00
Contexts					
Context No	**Type**	**Length (m)**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**Description**
000	Layer	-	-	-	Natural
001	Layer	-	-	0.27	Topsoil
002	Layer	-	-	0.20	Subsoil
020	Cut	1.10	2.10	0.57	Linear, U-shaped ditch
021	Fill od 020	1.10	2.10	0.57	Mid yellow-brown friable silty clay with frequent stone inclusions

Trench 17					
General Description				**Orientation**	NE-SW
Trench contained one large coal outcrop towards SW extent of trench, possibly backfilled mining shaft. No archaeology present.				**Average Depth (m)**	0.65
				Width (m)	2.00
				Length (m)	50.00
Contexts					
Context No	**Type**	**Length (m)**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**Description**
000	Layer	-	-	-	Natural
001	Layer	-	-	0.23	Topsoil
002	Layer	-	-	0.27	Subsoil

Trench 18					
General Description				**Orientation**	NW-SE
No archaeology present.				**Average Depth (m)**	0.45
				Width (m)	2.00
				Length (m)	50.00
Contexts					
Context No	**Type**	**Length (m)**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**Description**
000	Layer	-	-	-	Natural
001	Layer	-	-	0.30	Topsoil
002	Layer	-	-	0.15	Subsoil

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