



# Golden Lion, Church Street, Rainford, St Helens, Merseyside

## Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample Report

March 2020

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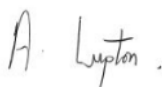




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# Golden Lion, Church Street, Rainford, St Helens, Merseyside

## *Archaeological Excavation Report*

*Written by Becky Wegiel*

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## Summary

Oxford Archaeology (OA) North was commissioned by Crow Archaeology on behalf of Inventive Design Associates Limited (the Client) and JWPC Limited (the Client's agent) to undertake a strip, map and sample exercise on land to the rear of the Golden Lion, Church Street, Rainford, St Helens, Merseyside (NGR SD 47778 00731). The work was to be undertaken as part of improvement works to the pub, including the creation of a new carpark on rough pasture behind the building. The work was undertaken over a week in January 2020.

The site had good potential for post-medieval remains, due to the presence of substantial dumps of waste ceramics, from nearby kilns, utilised in the levelling of tennis courts, 100m to the south of the site. The location of the kiln that produced the wasters is currently unknown, and there was potential that remains could have been found in the strip. Cropmarks were also observed to the south of the site, running in the general direction of the strip.

The strip, map and sample revealed negative results, there was no evidence of any ceramic wasters or the remains of a kiln. The topsoil did contain post-medieval ceramics, glass and clay tobacco pipe, all dating to the late nineteenth or twentieth centuries. This assemblage is suggestive of night soiling, due to its more domestic nature, unlike the assemblage recovered from the nearby tennis courts. Due to the negative results of the fieldwork, no further archaeological work is recommended.

## Acknowledgements

Oxford Archaeology (OA) North would like to thank Dr Rachael Townend of Crow Archaeology for commissioning this project on behalf of Inventive Design Associates Limited and JWPC Ltd. Thanks are also extended to Vicky Nash, Archaeological Advisor, who monitored the work on behalf of Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service.

The project was managed for OA North by Paul Dunn. The fieldwork was directed by Becky Wegiel, who was supported by Helen Stocks and Maranda Wareham.



## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Scope of work**

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) North was commissioned by Crow Archaeology, on behalf of Inventive Design Associates Limited and (the Client) and JWPC Limited (the Client's agent), to undertake an archaeological strip, map and sample on land to the rear of the Golden Lion, Church Street, Rainford (NGR SD 47778 00731; Fig 1). The proposed development related to improvement work to the Grade II Public House, The Golden Lion, comprising various alterations to the pub, together with landscaping, access improvements and the provision of a new car park. The archaeological work was undertaken on an area of rough pasture at the rear of the building, formerly the village bowling green.
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken as a condition of Planning Permission (planning ref. P/2019/0706/FUL). A brief was set by Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS) outlining the Local Authority's requirements for the necessary work to inform the planning process. A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced by Crow Archaeology detailing the methods by which OA North would implement the requirements of the brief. The fieldwork was undertaken in five days, between 13<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

### **1.2 Location, topography and geology**

- 1.2.1 The site lies to the south-western edge of the village of Rainford, which lies 5 miles north of St Helens. The area of proposed development consists of rough pasture, and was known to be formerly the site of the village bowling green.
- 1.2.2 The solid geology of the immediate areas is characterised as Mudstone of the Pennine Lower Coal Measures Formation. The overlying drift geology is Diamicton comprising a mixture of clay, sand, gravel (BGS 2020), which form soils that are classified as slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soils (Cranfield 2020).
- 1.2.3 No records of previous geological or geotechnical investigation within the site boundary are known.

### **1.3 Archaeological and historical background**

- 1.3.1 There has been no desk-based assessment completed for the site, and no known archaeological works have been undertaken within the site boundary. The archaeological and historical background of the site reproduced here is based on research from available historic maps and other documentary evidence as outlined in the WSI (Crow Archaeology 2020).
- 1.3.2 Readily available research by a local history organisation ([www.rainfordhistory.co.uk](http://www.rainfordhistory.co.uk)) indicates that the present building, built in 1769 by John and Susanna Brain as a grand residence, is the second property to hold the Golden Lion name. The original Golden Lion was removed to make way for the present All Saints Church in 1878 and the business transferred to the current building at around that time. There is some

conjecture that the Brains' never occupied the house as John reportedly died in October 1774 at which time the house was already in use as a school.

- 1.3.3 The house appears to have remained in use as a school, until 1876 when James Birchill took the lease and transferred his licence from the original Golden Lion, and his butcher's shop along with it, to the current premises.
- 1.3.4 Historic Ordnance Survey mapping indicates that the site of the proposed works was the village bowling green at the rear of the 'new' Golden Lion from c.1890s. It is last marked as such in the OS 1:2500 map of 1960 but is recorded as being in use in the Rainford I & II Conservation Area Appraisal of 2008. Subsequent historic mapping, dating to between 1893 and 1960, shows little change within the grounds of the pub. The outbuildings established in the 1890s continue in use with minor additions coming and going over time. The largest of the outbuildings, which borders the Site, is referred to as a 'Pavilion' in the maps of 1960 and 1965.
- 1.3.5 The land to the rear of the pub comprising the site is rarely detailed in the available mapping, with both boundaries and labelling being inconsistently applied over time.
- 1.3.6 The consultation response from MEAS indicated a potential for material relating to historic local ceramic production to be located within the site boundary. Additional archaeological interest in the site stems from the deposits of post-medieval pottery found to the west of Church Road: MME6685, a waster found to the rear of the Golden Lion, and MME6683, large dumps of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century pottery wasters found less than 100m to the south at the Tennis Courts.
- 1.3.7 There have been archaeological excavations undertaken in the vicinity of the site, the first, an excavation undertaken in 1978 by a group of extra-mural students from Liverpool University, close to Rainford Church, identified a dump of material, containing a large quantity of clay tobacco pipes, of the period 1640-1660 (Davey 1991). Another investigation conducted by the same group of students from Liverpool University and the Liverpool University Rescue Archaeology Unit prior to the construction of a spectator's stand for Rainford Tennis Club; these excavations recovered evidence of further pottery production, replaced by the existing church in 1878 (*ibid*).
- 1.3.8 Available aerial photographs show substantial cropmarks in the area immediately around the tennis courts. These cropmark features appear to trend toward the site.

## 2 EXCAVATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The general aims of the Strip, Map and Sample were:

- i. to record the nature of the main stratigraphic units encountered during the course of the intrusive mitigation outlined;
- ii. to identify, investigate and record all significant buried archaeological deposits and features revealed on the site;
- iii. to identify and record features or deposits peculiar to the topographical location of site. Such features or deposits may include, but are not limited to waterside structures or deposits, features of the local Roman land-use and the extent and use of the topographic dry land extending toward the south of the site;
- iv. at the conclusion of the project, to produce an archive for the project work and a report setting out the results of the project and the archaeological conclusions that may be drawn from the recorded data;
- v. to provide relevant information on the design of subsequent mitigation strategies for other areas of the wider site.

### 2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 The project methodology, set out in the WSI (*Appendix A*), was adhered to in full, and was fully compliant with current guidelines and industry best practice (CIfA 2014a: 2014b: 2014c: Historic England 2015). The area was set-out by the OA North surveyor, based upon coordinates provided by the client. Once set-out, service checks were carried out by the Project Officer, prior to commencement of the excavation. Topsoil and subsoil were removed by mechanical excavation, fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under constant archaeological supervision, to the required formation level of the development.

2.2.2 All information identified during the site works was recorded stratigraphically, using a system adapted from that used by the former English Heritage Centre for Archaeology, with an accompanying pictorial record (plans, sections, and digital photographs). Primary records were available for inspection at all times.

2.2.3 Results of all field investigations were recorded on *pro forma* context sheets. The site archive includes a photographic record, and accurate large-scale plans and sections at appropriate scales (1:50, 1:20, 1:10).

2.2.4 A full professional archive was compiled in accordance with the WSI, and with current professional guidelines (CIfA 2014c; Historic England 2015). The archive will be deposited with National Museums Liverpool.

## 3 RESULTS

### 3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

3.1.1 The results of the excavation are presented below, and include a stratigraphic description of the archaeological remains. Details of all contexts are included in *Appendix A*.

### 3.2 General soils and ground conditions

3.2.1 The natural geology of sand (**102**) was overlain by a sandy subsoil (**101**), which in turn, was overlain by topsoil (**100**), approximately 0.4m thick. Ground conditions throughout the excavation were generally good, and the site remained dry throughout.

### 3.3 Results

3.3.1 The sandy natural geology, **102**, was identified as orange yellow sand, with few inclusions and was only exposed in small areas. Natural geology **102** was overlain by subsoil deposit **101**, identified as a mid to light orange brown sand silt, approximately 0.05 to 0.1m thick. Subsoil **101** was sealed by topsoil **100**, identified as a dark brown sandy loam, up to 0.4m thick. At the westernmost end of the area a substantial amount of domestic debris was identified within topsoil **101**, mostly likely derived from night soiling. No further archaeology remains were observed.



*Plate 1: Stripped area looking north-east*

### 3.4 Finds and environmental summary

3.4.1 A large quantity of domestic debris was encountered within topsoil **100**, likely relating to night soiling. A representative sample of the material was retained and comprised 55 sherds of ceramic vessels, predominantly blue and white transfer-printed wares, cream wares, red earthenwares (Plate 2); 28 fragments of clay tobacco pipe, including bowls, some of which are decorated, and stems (Plate 3); four fragments of ceramic building material, likely fragments of bricks; four small fragments of clear window glass; and three small fragments of leather. There is nothing exceptional in this material and it all dates to the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.



*Plate 2: Representative sample of ceramic finds (scale 0.05m)*



*Plate 3: Representative sample of clay tobacco pipe finds (scale 0.05m)*

3.4.2 No environmental samples were taken during the works as no suitable deposits were encountered.

## 4 DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Reliability of field investigation

4.1.1 In general, the reliability of the archaeological strip, map and sample was good, with differing deposits being clearly visible. The weather remained generally favourable throughout.

### 4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 The programme of archaeological works succeeded in achieving the aims set out in the WSI (Crow Archaeology 2020). The area to be stripped was done so under constant archaeological supervision, although the required formation level of the development was generally within the topsoil, which has meant that potential archaeological remains may be undisturbed.

4.2.2 The land to the rear of the Golden Lion had much potential for the survival of archaeological remains, cropmarks observed to the south appeared to continue towards the site, and large dumps of post-medieval pottery were used as levelling beneath the tennis courts less than 100m to the south. It was also possible that the bowling green, which had formerly occupied the site, had similarly been levelled in this manner, and excavation could reveal the location of a kiln. However, there was no evidence that there had been any buildings or structures situated on the site. The only archaeological remains, in the form of domestic debris recovered from topsoil **100** suggest that the area had always been garden or agricultural land, with evidence of domestic debris in potential night soil.

## APPENDIX A CONTEXT INVENTORY

Strip, Map and Sample Area						
General description					Orientation	E/W
An approximately east/west aligned rectangular area, 30 by 15m was stripped to the rear of the Golden Lion public house. No archaeological features were identified.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	15
					Max depth (m)	0.4
Context No	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
<b>100</b>	Layer	-	0.4	Dark brown sandy loam	Post-medieval and modern ceramics, clay tobacco pipe, ceramic building material, glass and leather	Modern
<b>101</b>	Layer	-	0.05	Mid to light orange brown sand silt	-	Modern
<b>102</b>	Layer	-	-	Orange yellow sand	-	Modern

## APPENDIX B      BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## APPENDIX C

## SITE SUMMARY DETAILS / OASIS REPORT FORM

<b>Site name:</b>	Golden Lion, Church Street, Rainford, St Helens, Merseyside
<b>Site code:</b>	GLR19
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SD 47778 00731
<b>Type:</b>	Strip, Map and Sample
<b>Date and duration:</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> – 17 <sup>th</sup> January 2020, 5 days
<b>Area of Site</b>	450m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Location of archive:</b>	The archive is currently held at OA North, Mill 3, Moor Lane Mills, Moor Lane, Lancaster, LA1 1QD, and will be deposited with National Museums Liverpool in due course.
<b>Summary of Results:</b>	An area approximately 450m <sup>2</sup> to the rear of the Golden Lion public house, Church Street, Rainford, St Helens, Merseyside, was stripped of topsoil and subsoil in preparation for the construction of a new car parking area. No archaeological features were identified during the stripping of the site, with the only archaeological remains being post-medieval and modern finds recovered from the topsoil, indicative of night soiling.

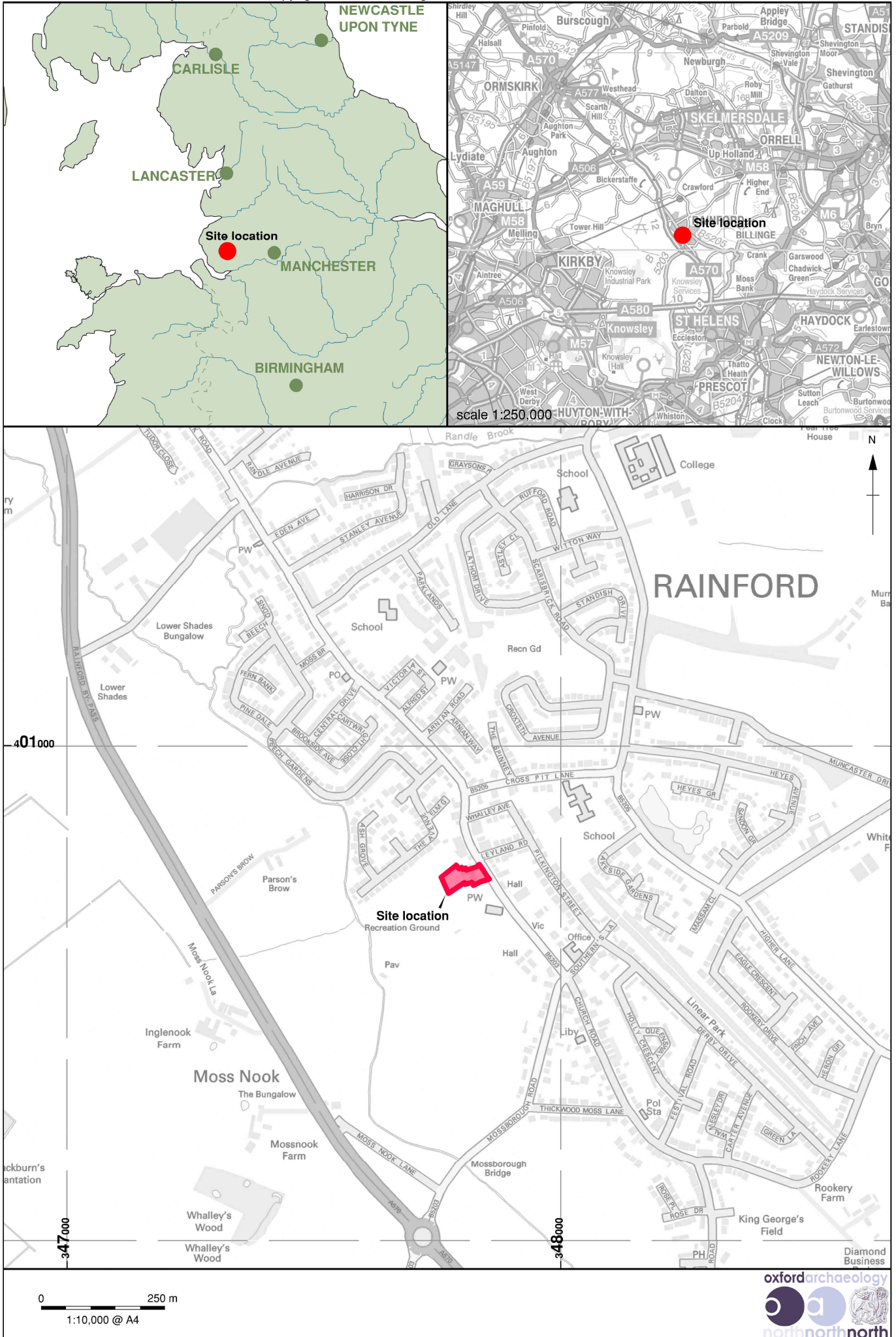


Figure 1: Site location



Figure 2: Strip map and sample area



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