



ELTON HEAD FARM, ST HELENS, MERSEYSIDE

Archaeological Watching Brief



Oxford Archaeology North

March 2007

United Utilities

Issue No: 2006-7/630

OAN Job No: L9601

NGR: SJ 50267 91968

Document Title: ELTON HEAD FARM, ST HELENS, MERSEYSIDE

Document Type: Archaeological Watching Brief

Client Name: United Utilities

Issue Number: 2006-7/630

OA Job Number: L9601

National Grid Reference: SJ 50267 91968

Prepared by: Steve Clarke
Position: Assistant Supervisor
Date: March 2007

Checked by: Alison Plummer Signed.....
Position: Senior Project Manager
Date: March 2007

Approved by: Alan Lupton Signed.....
Position: Operations Manager
Date: March 2007

Oxford Archaeology North

Storey Institute
Meeting House Lane
Lancaster
LA1 1TF
t: (0044) 01524 848666
f: (0044) 01524 848606

w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk
e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk

© Oxford Archaeological Unit Ltd (2007)

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford
OX2 0EA
t: (0044) 01865 263800
f: (0044) 01865 793496

Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited is a Registered Charity No: 285627

Disclaimer:

This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and should not be relied upon or used for any other project without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and prior written authority of Oxford Archaeology being obtained. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than the purposes for which it was commissioned. Any person/party using or relying on the document for such other purposes agrees, and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Oxford Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the person/party by whom it was commissioned.

CONTENTS

SUMMARY	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	3
1. INTRODUCTION	4
1.1 Circumstances of Project.....	4
2. METHODOLOGY	5
2.1 Project Design	5
2.2 Watching Brief	5
2.3 Archive	5
3. BACKGROUND	6
3.1 Introduction	6
3.2 Location, Topography and Geology	6
3.3 Historical and Archaeological Background	6
4. RESULTS.....	9
4.1 Watching Brief	9
4.2 Finds	10
5. DISCUSSION.....	12
5.1 Synthesis	12
5.2 Recommendations	12
6. BIBLIOGRAPHY	13
6.1 Primary Sources	13
6.2 Secondary Sources	13
7. ILLUSTRATIONS	15
7.1 List of Figures	15
7.2 List of Plates.....	15
APPENDIX 1: PROJECT DESIGN.....	16
APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT LIST.....	17
APPENDIX 3: FINDS LIST	18

SUMMARY

Following a proposal by United Utilities to construct a surface water outfall pipeline at Elton Head, St Helens, Merseyside (SJ 50267 91968), a programme of archaeological investigation was recommended by the Merseyside Archaeological Service (MAS). This was to comprise a desk-based assessment (OA North 2006) and watching brief of the entire pipeline route. The watching brief was carried out in order to ascertain the presence or absence of any archaeological remains within the pipeline easement.

In total, only three of the five fields subject to the watching brief contained features of archaeological interest. A fragment of glazed sagger found in Field 1 suggests the presence of a kiln nearby. The stripping of Field 3 revealed a make-up layer associated with Elton Head Farm. This contained building material that possibly pre-dates the eighteenth century and suggests the presence of demolished buildings. The stripping of Field 5 revealed two ditches and a small pit, which contained no dating evidence.

No recommendations for further archaeological investigation were made, although it is recommended that the entire pottery assemblage be considered together with any further pottery groups that may be recovered from future excavations on the same site or in the general vicinity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) would like to thank United Utilities for commissioning the project.

Steve Clarke undertook the watching brief, and also compiled the report. Mark Tidmarsh produced the drawings and Sean McPhillips wrote the finds report. Alison Plummer managed the project, and also edited the report.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF PROJECT

- 1.1.1 Following a proposal by United Utilities to construct a new surface water outfall pipe near Elton Head Farm, St Helens, Merseyside a recommendation for an archaeological desk-based assessment and watching brief was made by the Merseyside Archaeological Service (MAS). OA North was commissioned to carry out the work, the watching brief element of which was undertaken during July 2006. This work followed on from the results of an earlier desk-based assessment (OA North 2006).
- 1.1.2 This document represents the results of the watching brief undertaken during the topsoil stripping phase of the pipeline works. This took place between Elton Head Road and the outfall stream (SJ 50267 91968).

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

- 2.1.1 OA North submitted a project design (*Appendix 1*) in response to a verbal brief issued by MAS. The project design was adhered to in full, and the work was consistent with the relevant standards and procedures of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, and generally accepted best practice.

2.2 WATCHING BRIEF

- 2.2.1 This programme of field observation accurately recorded the location, extent, and character of any surviving archaeological features and/or deposits exposed during the course of the topsoil strip within areas of open country. The work comprised the systematic examination of any subsoil horizons exposed during the course of the groundworks, and the accurate recording of all archaeological features and horizons, and any artefacts, identified during observation.
- 2.2.2 Recording was by means of OA North's standard context recording system, with watching brief records and supporting registers and indices. A full photographic record in colour transparency and monochrome formats was made. Section drawings and plans were made of relevant archaeological features at appropriate scales. These were located using taped measurements from existing boundaries and landmarks.

2.3 ARCHIVE

- 2.3.1 A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with the project design (*Appendix 1*), and in accordance with current IFA and English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage 1991). Arrangements for the paper and digital archive will be made with Liverpool Museums, National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside on completion of the project.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1.1 The background history has been taken from the desk-based assessment (OA North 2006) which was compiled primarily from secondary sources, and was intended to provide a suitable local archaeological context in which to view the results of the watching brief.

3.2 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 3.2.1 The proposed pipeline is located close to Sutton Heath and runs from Elton Head Road to the north to Rainhill in the south (Figs 1 to 2). The landscape is relatively low-lying at approximately 65m above sea level (Ordnance Survey 1983).
- 3.2.2 The area falls within the Lancashire Coal Measures, an area made up of a ‘*complex mosaic of degraded farmland, scattered urban centres, active mineral sites and derelict or reclaimed workings, and ‘flashes’’* (Countryside Commission 1998, 127). The influence of coal mining dominates much of the landscape, although pockets of agricultural land break up its generally industrialised form and make it extremely varied. The solid geology principally comprises coal measures, which are covered by glacial drift deposits (*op cit*, 128).

3.3 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.3.1 ***Prehistoric Period:*** there are no sites of immediate post-glacial date in the general area; such sites are extremely rare across the whole county and there are only a handful of confirmed examples (Cowell 1996, 20). These tend to be situated in caves and so are unlikely to be identified in a relatively low-lying area such as that surrounding St Helens. Nevertheless, sites of Mesolithic date are known from such locations, including some from the Merseyside area (*op cit*, 27). Excavations in the 1990s to the west of St Helens ahead of the construction of the A5300 identified areas of Late Mesolithic activity (Cowell and Philpott 2000), which suggests that there is probably more to be found.
- 3.3.2 Settlement sites of Neolithic and Bronze Age date are also rare and also tend to consist of little more than artefact scatters and shallow features, with some evident continuity in cultural material from the Mesolithic at the beginning of the Neolithic (Middleton 1996, 36). The later Neolithic and Bronze Age are more clearly represented by discoveries of larger artefacts such as axes, hammers, spearheads and arrowheads, as well as numerous ritual and burial monuments (*op cit*, 41-3). There are few such sites in the general areas of St Helens, however, although axe hammers of probable Bronze Age date have been discovered around the town (OA North 2004, 11). Sites that can be demonstrated to be of Iron Age date are even more difficult to identify, for although sites typical of the period, such as hillforts, are known in the district,

they have rarely been examined in any detail and are often not accurately dated (Haselgrove 1996, 61). Such sites are not common in the vicinity of St Helens, as they tend to be concentrated on higher ground, although the remains of smaller settlements have been discovered in lower-lying areas (Cowell and Philpott 2000, 172-4), some of which are likely to have been utilised into the Romano-British period. More recent work has begun to indicate the true extent of these types of site in lowland areas, and has demonstrated that many do indeed have their origins in the Iron Age, or even Bronze Age, and in some cases activity continued into the Romano-British period (Cowell 2005).

- 3.3.3 **Romano-British Period:** the area around St Helens was probably rural in character during the Romano-British period (as it was at the beginning of the post-medieval period). The extent of Roman activity is not clear, although it is likely that Roman military forces moved across the Mersey as part of the Northern phases of occupation in the AD 70s (Shotter 2004, 21). There are no known Roman military sites in the vicinity of the study area and find spots are infrequent. A permanent and important legionary fortress was established at an early date at Chester (*op cit*, 18-20) but it is unclear what influence, if any, this would have had on the area around St Helens.
- 3.3.4 **Early Medieval Period:** little is known about the area surrounding St Helens following the collapse of Roman administration. Any settlements that existed in this relatively isolated area would have probably remained in some form, although there is no direct evidence for what scale or type of activity there was in the area. It is likely that it would have come under the control of the Anglian kingdom of Northumbria during the early seventh century, although there was probably strong influence from the kingdom of Mercia to the south (Chitty and Lewis 2002, 171). Place-name evidence indicates a mix of influences including British, Anglian and Norse, suggesting a diverse population and changing political situation (*ibid*). Elton Head is thought to derive from the Old English meaning Ellan's tun or village (Ekwall 1922, 108-9).
- 3.3.5 **Late Medieval Period:** St Helens was situated within the medieval hundreds of Newton and Warrington, with Warrington containing Sutton township (which encompassed the study area). Sutton was within an area of forest jurisdiction and was controlled by the crown (*op cit*, 178). Much of the medieval layout of St Helens has been destroyed, however, by subsequent development, and even in rural areas mining and the re-organisation of field boundaries has had a similar effect (Chitty and Lewis 2002, 180). As St Helens itself is situated on the junction of several significant regional roads, it seems likely that a settlement of some kind existed here from an early date (Farrer and Brownbill 1907, 374; Fletcher 2002). The Elton Head estate probably held the majority of the study area.
- 3.3.6 **Post-Medieval Period:** during the post-medieval period St Helens and the surrounding landscape changed dramatically. Until the middle of the eighteenth century St Helens was still very rural, as evidenced by the Sutton Tithe Mapping of 1808 (Fig 3); most of its population were probably farmers, although there were a few craftsmen producing pottery, and there was limited

coal extraction (Barker 2002, 38). However, the potential profit in coal and the allied industrial processes that would develop from its extraction, led to the construction of the Sankey Brook Navigation, begun in 1755, Lancashire's first canal (*ibid*). The increased hunger for coal, as part of the salt production taking place to the south, prompted the construction of the canal, but it was the production of glass that promoted the growth of St Helens. Small-scale glass manufacture had been occurring in the region for some time, although it was the establishment of a number of larger companies at the end of the eighteenth century that caused massive growth in this particular industry and also the town (Krupa and Heawood 2002, 9). The production of glass continued to grow throughout the nineteenth century, with the large St Helens Crown Glass Company being established in 1826 (Parkin 2000, 13).

- 3.3.7 During the nineteenth century St Helens expanded rapidly, and became home to a number of industries, many associated with glass production, but also including metalworking (Rees 1991). The importance of the canal was soon superseded by the construction of the railways in the 1830s (Farrer and Brownbill 1907, 374; Townley and Peden 1999, 217). The intense industrialisation of the general area inevitably had a huge impact, and by the beginning of the twentieth century St Helens was suffering the affects of years of rapid building and pollution. It is evident that even in a relatively rural area, such as that around Elton Head, industry had an enormous effect on the landscape.
- 3.3.8 **Elton Head Farm:** the history of Elton Head Farm and the development of the surviving buildings has been well documented. There are references to Elton Head as early as the twelfth century (Farrer and Brownbill 1907, 359-60), but nothing positively indicated the existence of a building on the site until 1418 (Lewis and Warhurst 1987, 1). Initially, it was recorded as being held by the Le Norreis family, who took the name Eltonhead, and whose descendants held the site until the seventeenth century (Earwaker 1884; Rankin 1956, 35). There are records of a windmill being present on the site from at least the early fifteenth century (Lewis and Warhurst 1987, 1) and a dovecote in 1602 (Rylands 1880, 277-9). Subsequent inventories at the site also suggest that cheese was being made and that there was a brewery at the site during the later seventeenth century (Lewis and Warhurst 1987, 2). The estate was sold in 1684 to Thomas Roughley, although by 1710 it had passed to one of their creditors, Isaac Greene (*ibid*). It passed through Greene's daughter to Bamber Gascoyne; a datestone of 1786 marked 'BMG' probably relates to building work that he carried out (*ibid*). In 1824 it passed to the second Marquis of Salisbury, and was reportedly largely burnt down in 1872, although there is no apparent evidence for this within the present structure (*ibid*).

4. RESULTS

4.1 RESULTS

- 4.1.1 **Introduction:** in total, a 1.2km length of pipeline was subject to watching brief. The working easement varied in width between 10m and 12m (Fig 2). The route of the easement passed through a total of five fields, of which Field 1 was the most northerly and Field 5 was the most southerly. Fields 1 to 3 were under pasture and Fields 4 and 5 were arable.
- 4.1.2 **Field 1:** the topsoil, **100**, was friable mid-brown sandy-clay measuring 0.1m to 0.3m in depth. The removal of the topsoil revealed mid-brown moderately compact sandy-clay subsoil, **102**, flecked with coal and 10% inclusions of small- to medium-sized sub-angular sandstone. A large post-medieval field drain, **103**, measuring 2m in width, was aligned diagonally across the field in a north-west/south-easterly direction. The drain was filled with small- to medium-sized sub-angular sandstone and 5-10% inclusions of earthenware pottery sherds.
- 4.1.3 At the north end of the easement, and to its western side, a raised area of ground measuring 30m x 20m and 2m in height was stripped for the compound area. The topsoil (**100**) within this area measured 0.1m-0.2m in depth. The subsoil, **101**, was a mid-greyish brown compacted sandy-clay with 50% inclusions of small-to-medium sized sub-angular sandstone, gravel aggregates and building rubble. This raised area was level with the road and was probably used as a hard-standing.
- 4.1.4 **Field 2:** the easement was stripped to a width of 12m. It was aligned north/south and located approximately 10m to the east of a trackway, which was in turn located on top of a ridge built up approximately 2m higher than the field. The topsoil, **200**, similar to **100**, was stripped to reveal a slightly orangy brown firm sandy-clay with moderate inclusions of small-to-medium subangular sandstone with a moderate flecking of coal. No features of archaeological interest were observed.
- 4.1.5 **Field 3:** the easement was stripped to a width of 10m and was situated to the east of Elton Head Farm, approximately 20m from the site of the farm buildings. The topsoil, **300**, measured 0.2m-0.3m in depth and was dark brown friable sandy-clay with occasional small subrounded stone. The subsoil, **301**, was slightly orangy brown firm sandy-clay changing to a greyish brown loose sandy-clay. At the north end of the easement, on the western side, the ground sloped up towards the terminus of the ridge, along which the path described above was observed (*Section 4.1.4*). This slope proved to be a make-up layer, **302**, of redeposited topsoil, sandstone and building rubble (Plate 1).
- 4.1.6 **Field 4:** between Field 3 and Field 4 running east/west was a hedge-lined trackway, **402**, measuring 3.5m in width. The topsoil, **400**, was blackish-brown silty-sandy-clay and was stripped to a width of 10m. Beneath this the subsoil, **401**, was a compact mottled orangey red and yellowish grey, slightly

sandy-clay, within which shallow ploughmarks were observed running north-east/south-west. No further features of archaeological interest were revealed.

- 4.1.7 **Field 5:** the easement was widened to 13m and aligned north-east/south-west. The topsoil, **500**, was dark brown friable sandy-clay measuring 0.2m to 0.3m in depth. The subsoil, **501**, was similar to **401** with shallow ploughmarks running north/south. At the north end of the easement, 25m from the field boundary, a 2.8m wide ditch, **502**, (Plate 2), was revealed aligned north-west/south-east. The sloping sides ran at approximately 45 degrees to a depth of 0.5m to a flat base. The primary fill, **504**, was blackish-brown firm sandy-clay with occasional small-to-medium sized stones and sub-angular sandstone. A moderate amount of medium- to large-sized brick fragments were dispersed throughout the base of the ditch. The upper fill, **503**, comprised redeposited subsoil. At a distance of 39m south of the north boundary a ditch, **505**, (Plate 3), was observed running north/south. This ditch measured 0.7m in width with a depth of 0.2m. The sides and base were concave. The fill, **506**, was blackish-brown silty sandy-clay with occasional small stones. At a distance of 95m from the south end of the easement a pit, **507**, (Plate 4), was revealed, which measured 2.1m x 1.02m with a depth of 0.33m. The sides were steep with a sharp concave base. The fill, **508**, was a blackish friable silty sandy-clay with 30% inclusions of small sub-angular sandstone which appeared to be burnt.

4.2 FINDS

- 4.2.1 In total, 68 fragments of artefacts were recovered during the watching brief. Of these, 53 derived from pottery vessels making up 77% of the assemblage. The remainder of the material was represented by glass, clay tobacco pipe, slag and a small zinc alloy toy gun. The material (specifically the pottery) can be generally dated to the post-medieval period, in particular the 17th to 19th centuries, although a single sherd of medieval pottery and later 20th century material was present amongst the assemblage. Details of each category of finds are set out below. The material is summarised in *Appendix 3*.
- 4.2.2 All the material was collected from essentially disturbed deposits, that being derived from topsoil and a few subsoil deposits recovered from across four fields.
- 4.2.3 **Pottery:** a single sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from topsoil **500** in Field 5. It comprised a fine gritted partially reduced handle from a small jug or pitcher, that can be broadly dated to the 13th or 14th century (Ian Miller *pers comm*). The source of the pottery is unknown although it is possible it was made locally.
- 4.2.4 A large proportion of the pottery assemblage was made up with dark glazed red earthenware's and Blackwares, many of which had a purplish-red fabric similar to the type of ware produced in central Midlands from the 15th century known as Midlands Purple. Although brown-glazed coarsewares seemingly replaced Midland Purple sometime during the 16th century, vessel forms of Midland purple type continued to be produced in the ubiquitous glazed red earthenware fabric throughout the 17th to 19th centuries. This transition is

represented by the type of coarsewares recovered from topsoil deposits across most of the fields during the watching brief. It is probable that many of the red earthenware's were produced in Prescot or Rainford, which flourished as a production centre throughout the 18th century. Other pottery deriving from this period include Mottled Ware and brown manganese rich glaze and dark green buff wares. A source for these wares are unknown, although it is possible they were manufactured locally.

- 4.2.5 The remainder of the assemblage is dominated by 18th to mid 19th century tablewares, such as yellow-glazed red earthenware storage vessels, brown and unglazed stoneware jugs, with lesser amounts of 19th century English stoneware jars, glazed white earthenware transfer-printed ware plates and dishes, a Minton or Spode type figurine and a large glazed sagger fragment. The presence of the sagger recovered from the topsoil in Field 1, suggests the probable proximity of a kiln, although no other kiln furniture or waste material was identified.
- 4.2.6 **Glass:** two pieces of glass production waste was recovered from the topsoil in Field 5 that elucidates common 19th century glass-making processes in the area. One of the fragments (**500/13**) probably derived from a rod or cullet off-cut. The other piece (**500/12**) was coloured blue with visibly deteriorating surfaces, and resembled a fragment of blown glass waste.
- 4.2.7 **Other Material:** a single medium-bored plain tobacco pipe stem which dates to the 18th century, was recovered from the fill of a field drain **103**. The stem was recovered with similarly dated pottery, suggesting the drain was in use throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. Three coarse hand-made brick fragments collected from make-up layer **302**, were too small to ascribe a date with confidence.
- 4.2.8 **Conclusion:** the finds are of interest as a small post-medieval assemblage from rural Merseyside. It is recommended that the entire pottery assemblage be considered together with any further pottery groups that may be recovered from future excavations on the same site or in the vicinity. Since the majority of the finds were from unstratified deposits, however, their value is limited.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 SYNTHESIS

- 5.1.1 In general, the landscape associated with Elton Head Farm contains the remains of rural activity dating from the medieval period through to the industrial period. However, the effects of industrialisation and post-medieval urbanisation seem to have isolated the farm on all sides, with agriculture persisting in the limited area immediately surrounding Elton Head Farm.
- 5.1.2 The artefactual assemblage and the archaeological features observed during the course of the watching brief appear to represent agricultural activity dating to the post-medieval period, comprising two ditches (**502** and **505**), the pottery from which dates to the 18th - 19th centuries, and a field drain (**103**). The plough marks in Field 4 are not closely dateable, but are possibly of medieval or post-medieval date. The made-up ground associated with the extant Elton Head Farm contained building material that would appear to pre-date the eighteenth century, thus suggesting the presence of demolished buildings in the vicinity.
- 5.1.3 Whilst the archaeological features encountered are mostly consistent with agricultural activity, and the accompanying finds appear to represent domestic activity, the presence of the glazed sagger (*Section 4.2.5*) would suggest the presence of a small-scale kiln within the area.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.2.1 It is recommended that the entire pottery assemblage be considered together with any further pottery groups that may be recovered from any future archaeological interventions in the area. Due to the limited nature of the development there are no recommendations for further archaeological mitigation.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

6.1 PRIMARY SOURCES

LRO(P) DRL 1/77, 1843 *Apportionment of the Rent-Charge in Lieu of Tithes in the Township of Sutton in the Parish of Prescott in the County of Lancaster*

Ordnance Survey, 1983 *Soils of Northern England*, Soil Survey of England and Wales, sheet 1, 1:25000, Southampton

6.2 SECONDARY SOURCES

Barker, TC, 2002 *The Sankey Navigation, Lancashire's First Canal*, 3rd edn, no location

Chitty, G, and Lewis, J, 2002 St Helens Rural Fringes, *J Merseyside Archaeol Soc*, 11, 167-203

Countryside Commission, 1998 *Countryside Character, Volume 2: North West*, Cheltenham

Cowell, RW, 1996 The Upper Palaeolithic, in R Newman (ed), *The Archaeology of Lancashire: Present State and Future Priorities*, Lancaster, 19-34

Cowell, RW, 2005 Late Prehistoric Lowland Settlement in North West England, in M Nevell and N Redhead (eds), *Mellor: Living on the Edge*, Manchester Archaeological Monographs, 1, Manchester, 65-76

Cowell, RW, and Philpott, RA, 2000 *Prehistoric, Romano-British and Medieval Settlement in Lowland North West England: Archaeological Excavations Along the A5300 Road Corridor in Merseyside*, Liverpool

Earwaker, JP (ed), 1884 Lancashire and Cheshire Wills and Inventories at Chester, *Cheetham Soc*, n ser, 3

Ekwall, E, 1922 *The Place-Names of Lancashire*, Manchester

English Heritage, 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edn, London

Farrer, W, and Brownbill, J (eds), 1907 *The Victoria History of the County of Lancaster*, 3, London

Fletcher, M, 2002 *Black Gold and Hot Sand, A History of St Helens*, Lancaster

Haselgrove, C, 1996 The Iron Age, in R Newman (ed), *The Archaeology of Lancashire: Present State and Future Priorities*, Lancaster, 61-74

Krupa, M, and Heawood, R, 2002 *'The Hotties': Excavation and Building Survey at Pilkingtons' No 9 Tank House, St Helens, Merseyside*, Lancaster Imprints, 10, Lancaster

Lewis, J, and Warhurst, M, 1987 Elton Head Farm, Sutton: An Archaeological Survey, in G Chitty, A Coney, A Cooper, J Lewis, J Samuels and M Warhurst (eds), *Vernacular Buildings on the Lancashire Plain: Survey and Excavation*, North West Archaeological Trust, rep 2, Liverpool, 1-12

Middleton, R, 1996 The Neolithic and Bronze Age, in R Newman (ed), *The Archaeology of Lancashire: Present State and Future Priorities*, Lancaster, 35-60

OA North, 2004 *St Helens Central Station, St Helens: Desk-Based Assessment*, unpubl rep

OA North, 2006 *Elton Head Farm, St Helens Merseyside: Desk-Based Assessment*, unpubl rep

Parkin, RA, 2000 *The Window Glass Makers of St Helens*, Society of Glass Technology, Sheffield

Rankin, RG, 1956 The Eltonhead Family, *Trans Hist Soc Lancashire Cheshire*, **108**, 35-62

Rees, P, 1991 *A Guide to Merseyside's Industrial Past*, 2nd edn, Liverpool

Rylands, JP (ed), 1880 Lancashire Inquisitions, Stuart Period, Part 1, 1- 11 James I, *Record Soc Lancashire Cheshire*, **3**

Shotter, DCA, 2004 *Romans and Britons in North-West England*, 3rd edn, Lancaster

Townley, CHA, and Peden, JA, 1999 *Industrial Railways of St Helens, Widnes and Warrington, Part 1 – St Helens*, Cleveland

7. ILLUSTRATIONS

7.1 LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1: Location site
- Figure 2: Plan showing fields subject to watching brief
- Figure 3: Copy of Sutton Tithe Map (DRL 1/77 1808)
- Figure 4: Watching brief sections

7.2 LIST OF PLATES

- Plate 1: Northern end of Field 3 showing make-up layer **302** on the west side
- Plate 2: East-facing section of ditch **502**
- Plate 3: General shot of ditch **505**
- Plate 4: South-facing section of pit **507**

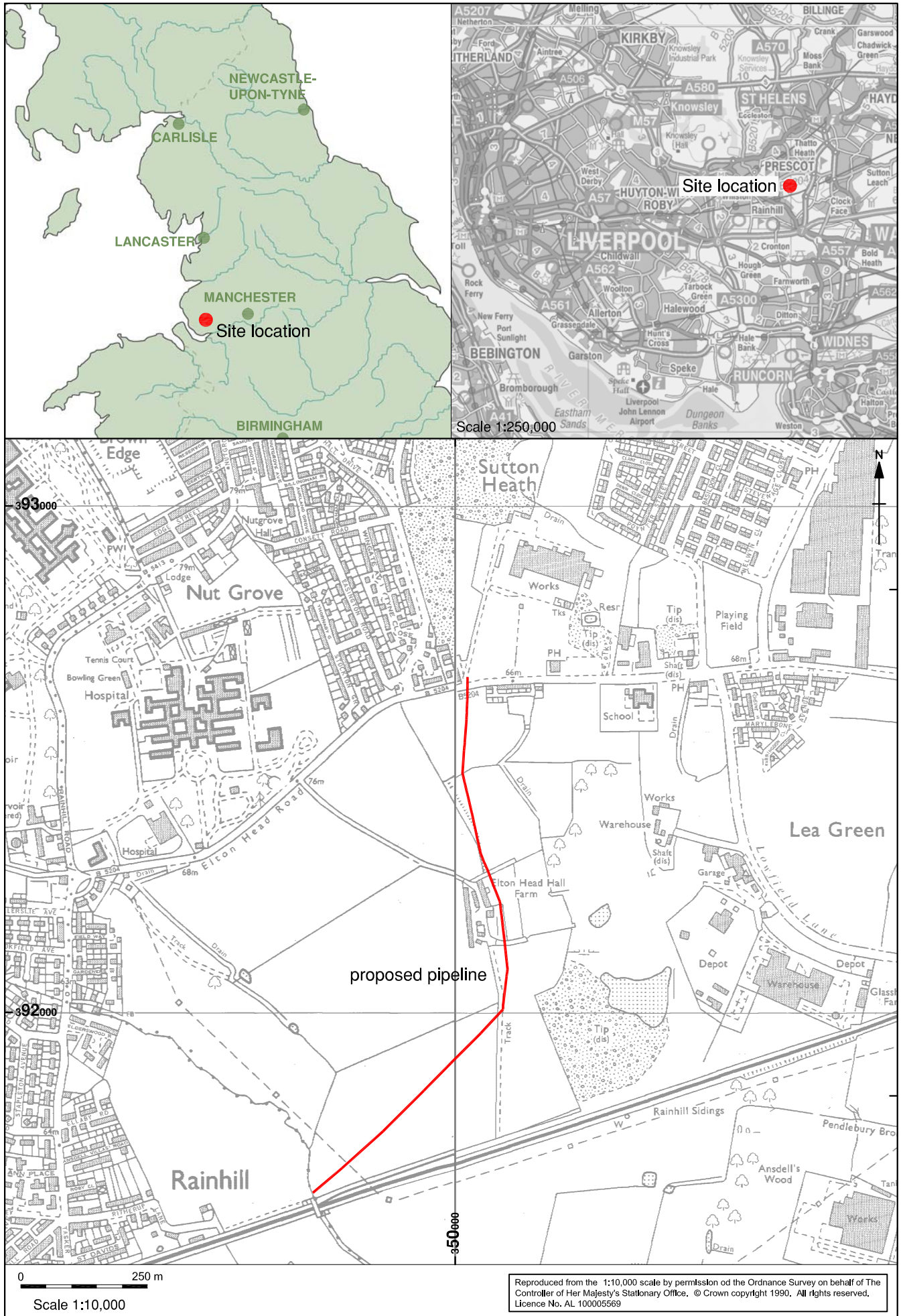


Figure 1: Site Location



Plate 1: Northern end of Field 3 showing make-up layer **302** on the west side



Plate 2: East-facing section of ditch **502**



Plate 3: General shot of ditch **505**



Plate 4: South-facing section of pit **507**



Figure 3: Copy of Sutton Tithe map (DRL 1/77 1808)

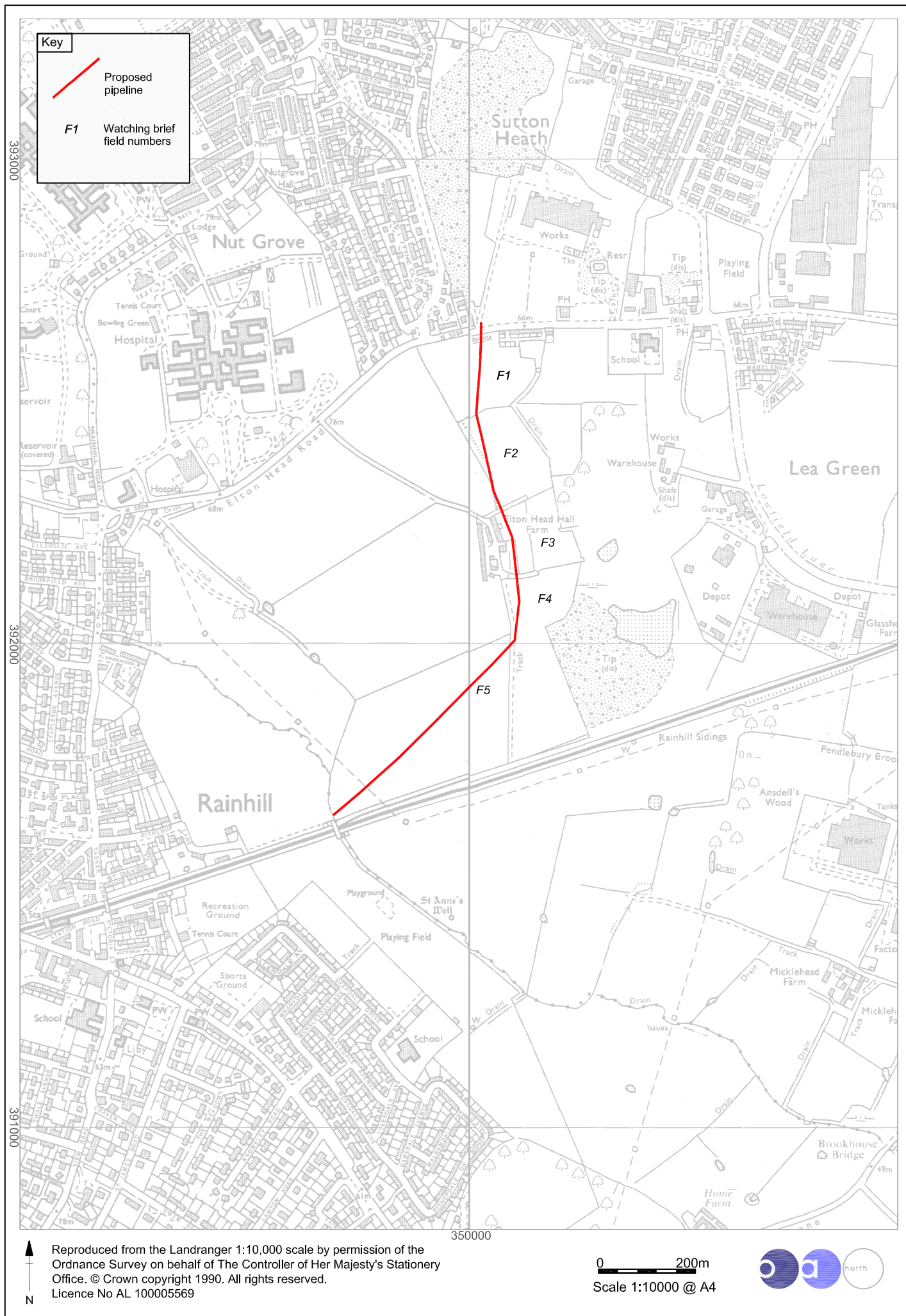






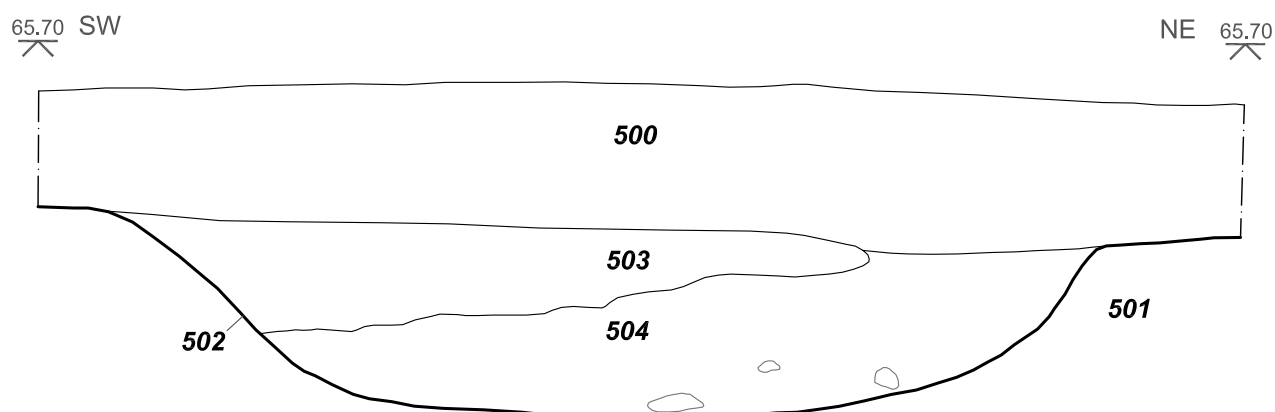
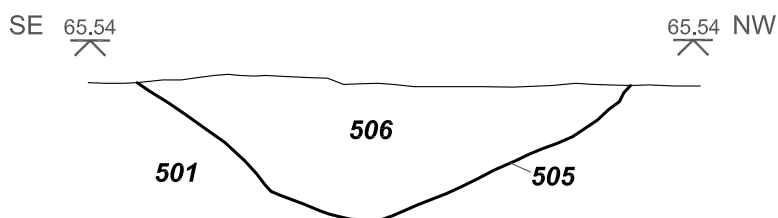


Figure 2: Location of fields subject to watching brief

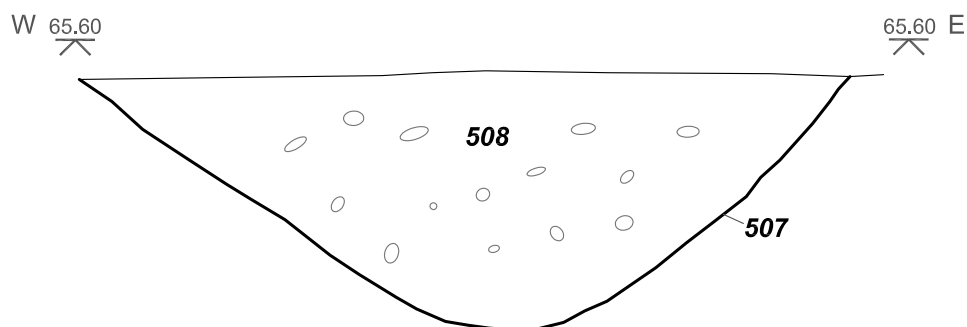
Key	
	cut
	edge of excavation
	edge of context
	uncertain edge
	context number
	stone



Section 1 : Ditch **502**, Field 5



Section 2 : Ditch **505**, Field 5



Section 3 : Ditch **507**, Field 5

0 0.25m
Scale 1:10 @ A4

Figure 4: Watching brief sections

APPENDIX 1: PROJECT DESIGN

**Oxford
Archaeology
North**

July 2004

**ELTON HEAD FARM, ST HELENS,
MERSEYSIDE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT AND WATCHING BRIEF
PROJECT DESIGN**

Proposals

The following project design is offered in response to a request by United Utilities for an archaeological desk-based assessment and watching brief in advance of a proposed surface water outfall pipeline at Elton Head farm, St Helens, Merseyside.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1 United Utilities (hereafter the 'Client') has requested that Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) submit proposals for an archaeological desk-based assessment and watching brief at Elton Head Farm, St Helens, Merseyside prior to a proposed surface water outfall pipeline.
- 1.1.2 The Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) for Merseyside shows there to be archaeological potential of the affected area relating to the prehistoric, post-medieval and later periods. Elton Head Farm (SMR no 5092-016) was subject to historical research and building survey in 1983/84, which showed there to have been a building on site from at least the fifteenth century.
- 1.1.3 Further archaeological evidence has been found in the fields to the west, north and south of Elton Head farm during a programme of fieldwalking in the 1980s, some due to the threat of opencast coal mining at the time. Later medieval pottery, nineteenth century domestic wares and likely struck flint (SMR no 5092-021) were found, to the west and south of the farm a scatter of later medieval pottery and glass was revealed (SMR no 5092-019), and various scatters of seventeenth to nineteenth century pottery sherds and flint (SMR nos 5092-015 and 5092-020).

1.2 OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY NORTH

- 1.2.1 OA North has extensive experience of desk-based assessments, as well as the evaluation and excavation of sites of all periods in this area, having undertaken a great number of small and large-scale projects during the past 24 years. These have taken place within the planning process, to fulfil the requirements of Clients and planning authorities, to very rigorous timetables.
- 1.2.2 OA North has the professional expertise and resources to undertake the project detailed below to a high level of quality and efficiency. OA North is an **Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) registered organisation, registration number 17**, and all its members of staff operate subject to the IFA Code of Conduct.

2 OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The following programme has been designed to provide an accurate archaeological assessment of the designated area within its broader context, together with an evaluation of the archaeological resource of the proposed development area. The required stages to achieve these ends are as follows:
- 2.2 **Desk-Based Assessment:** to provide a desk-based assessment of the site.
- 2.3 **Permanent Presence Watching Brief:** this will be undertaken during all topsoil stripping and ground disturbance associated with the proposed development.
- 2.4 **Report and Archive:** production of a report following the collation of data during section 2.2 and 2.3 above. A site archive will be produced to English Heritage guidelines (MAP 2) and in accordance with the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage* (UKIC 1990).

3 METHOD STATEMENT

3.1 DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

3.1.1 The following will be undertaken as appropriate, depending on the availability of source material. The level of such work will be dictated by the time scale of the project.

3.1.2 ***Documentary and Cartographic Material:*** this work will comprise a rapid desk-based survey of the existing resource. It will include an appraisal of the Merseyside Sites and Monuments Record, as well as appropriate sections of County histories, early maps, and such primary documentation (tithe and estate plans etc.) as may be reasonably available. Particular emphasis will be upon the early cartographic evidence which has the potential to inform the post-medieval occupation and land-use of the area. Any photographic material lodged in the County Sites and Monuments Record will also be studied. Published documentary sources will also be examined and assessed. The study will examine place and field name evidence for the site and its environs. This work will involve visits and or correspondence searches of the following repositories: Merseyside Sites and Monuments Record at the Liverpool Museum, and the OA North research archive.

3.1.3 ***Aerial Photography:*** a brief survey of the extant air photographic cover will be undertaken. Merseyside Sites and Monuments Record will be consulted for aerial photography and the study will entail liaison with the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments (England) (NMR), although, within the timescale available, it is unlikely that prints will be forthcoming from this body for inclusion in this report.

3.1.4 ***Physical Environment:*** a rapid desk-based compilation of geological (both solid and drift), pedological, topographical and palaeoenvironmental information will be undertaken. It will be based on published geological mapping and any local geological surveys in the possession of the County Council or the Client. This will not only set the archaeological features in context but also serves to provide predictive data, that will increase the efficiency of the field inspection.

3.2 WATCHING BRIEF

3.2.1 A programme of field observation will accurately record the location, extent, and character of any surviving archaeological features and/or deposits within the topsoil stripping activities in the course of the proposed development works. A systematic examination of any subsoil horizons exposed during the course of the groundworks, and the accurate recording of all archaeological features and horizons, and any artefacts, identified during observation.

3.2.2 During this phase of work, recording will comprise a full description and preliminary classification of features or materials revealed, and their accurate location (either on plan and/or section, and as grid co-ordinates where appropriate). Features will be planned accurately at appropriate scales and annotated on to a large-scale plan provided by the Client. A photographic record will be undertaken simultaneously.

- 3.2.3 A plan will be produced of the areas of groundworks showing the location and extent of the ground disturbance and one or more dimensioned sections will be produced.
- 3.2.4 Putative archaeological features and/or deposits identified by the machining process, together with the immediate vicinity of any such features, will be cleaned by hand, using either hoes, shovel scraping, and/or trowels depending on the subsoil conditions, and where appropriate sections will be studied and drawn. Any such features will be sample excavated (ie selected pits and postholes will normally only be half-sectioned, linear features will be subject to no more than a 10% sample, and extensive layers will, where possible, be sampled by partial rather than complete removal).
- 3.2.5 It is assumed that OA North will have the authority to stop the works for a sufficient time period to enable the recording of important deposits. It may also be necessary to call in additional archaeological support if a find of particular importance is identified or a high density of archaeology is discovered, but this would only be called into effect in agreement with the Client and the Merseyside Archaeological Officer and will require a variation to costing.
- 3.2.6 **Human Remains:** any human remains uncovered will be left *in situ*, covered and protected. No further investigation will continue beyond that required to establish the date and character of the burial. Merseyside Archaeological Service and the local Coroner will be informed immediately. If removal is essential the exhumation of any funerary remains will require the provision of a Home Office license, under section 25 of the Burial Act of 1857. An application will be made by OA North for the study area on discovery of any such remains and the removal will be carried out with due care and sensitivity under the environmental health regulations, and if appropriate, in compliance with the 'Disused Burial Grounds (Amendment) Act, 1981.
- 3.2.7 **Treatment of finds:** all finds will be exposed, lifted, cleaned, conserved, marked, bagged and boxed in accordance with the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (UKIC) *First Aid For Finds*, 1998 (new edition) and the recipient museum's guidelines.
- 3.2.8 **Treasure:** any gold and silver artefacts recovered during the course of the excavation will be removed to a safe place and reported to the local Coroner according to the procedures relating to the Treasure Act, 1996. Where removal cannot take place on the same working day as discovery, suitable security will be employed to protect the finds from theft.
- 3.2.9 All identified finds and artefacts will be retained, although certain classes of building material can sometimes be discarded after recording if an appropriate sample is retained on advice from the recipient museum's archive curator.
- 3.2.10 **Contingency plan:** in the event of significant archaeological features being encountered during the evaluation, discussions will take place with the Archaeological Officer, as to the extent of further works to be carried out, and in

agreement with the Client. All further works would be subject to a variation to this project design.

3.3 ARCHIVE/REPORT

- 3.3.1 **Archive:** the results of all archaeological work carried out will form the basis for a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition, 1991). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project. This archive will be provided in the English Heritage Centre for Archaeology format and a synthesis will be submitted to the SMR (the index to the archive and a copy of the report). Arrangements for deposition of the full site archive will be made with Liverpool Museum, National Museums & Galleries on Merseyside. The National Museums Liverpool (NML)'*Guidelines on the Deposition of Archaeological Archives*' will be consulted.
- 3.3.2 **Report:** one bound and one unbound copy of a written synthetic report will be submitted to the Client, and a further copy submitted to the Merseyside SMR within eight weeks of completion of the study. The report will include a copy of this project design, and indications of any agreed departure from that design. It will present, summarise, and interpret the results of the programme detailed above. The report will also include a complete bibliography of sources from which data has been derived.
- 3.3.3 This report will identify areas of defined archaeology. An assessment and statement of the actual and potential archaeological significance of the identified archaeology within the broader context of regional and national archaeological priorities will be made. Illustrative material will include a location map, section drawings, and plans.
- 3.3.4 Provision will be made for a summary report to be submitted to a suitable regional or national archaeological journal within one year of completion of fieldwork, if relevant results are obtained.
- 3.3.5 **Confidentiality:** all internal reports to the Client are designed as documents for the specific use of the Client, for the particular purpose as defined in the project brief and project design, and should be treated as such. They are not suitable for publication as academic documents or otherwise without amendment or revision.

4 OTHER MATTERS

- 4.1 **Project Monitoring:** Whilst the work is undertaken for the Client, the Archaeological Officer will be kept fully informed of the work. Any proposed changes to the project design will be agreed with the Archaeological Officer and the Client.
- 4.2 **Access:** OA North will consult with the Client regarding access to the site.
- 4.3 **Health and Safety:** OA North provides a Health and Safety Statement for all projects and maintains a Unit Safety policy. All site procedures are in accordance with the guidance set out in the Health and Safety Manual compiled by the Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers (1997). A written risk

assessment will be undertaken in advance of project commencement and copies will be made available on request to all interested parties.

- 4.4 **Reinstatement:** the areas excavated will be backfilled with the spoil for practical and health and safety reasons but no reinstatement of the area will be undertaken. This will be carried out by the Client prior to/during development.

- 4.5 **Public Access:** the site will be protected from public access by hoarding/fencing (erected by the Client).

5 WORK TIMETABLE

- 5.1 **Desk-based assessment:** this element is expected to take approximately five days to complete.

- 5.2 **Permanent Presence watching brief:** the duration of the project will be dependent upon the progress of the contractor.

- 5.3 **Report:** the Client report will be completed within approximately eight weeks following completion of the desk-based assessment.

6 STAFFING

- 6.1 The project will be under the direct management of **Alison Plummer BSc (Hons)** (OA North Senior Project Manager) to whom all correspondence should be addressed.

- 6.2 The watching brief will be undertaken by an OA North Project Supervisor. All OA North project supervisors have a great deal of experience in the undertaking of watching briefs.

7 INSURANCE

- 7.1 OA North has professional indemnity to a value of £2,000,000, employer's liability cover to a value of £10,000,000 and public liability to a value of £15,000,000. Written details of insurance cover can be provided if required.

APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT LIST

Context	Field	Type	Depth	Description
100	1	Topsoil	0.1m - 0.3m	Friable mid-brown sandy-clay
101	1	Subsoil		Mid-greyish brown compacted sandy-clay soil with 50% inclusions of small to medium sub-angular sandstone, gravel aggregates and building rubble
102	1	Subsoil		Mid-brown moderately compact sandy clay flecked with coal and 10% inclusions of small to medium sub-angular sandstone
200	2	Topsoil	0.1m - 0.3m	friable mid-brown sandy clay
201	2	Subsoil		Slightly orangey brown firm sandy clay subsoil, 201 , with moderate inclusions of small to medium sub-angular sandstone with moderate flecking of coal
300	3	Topsoil	0.2m - 0.3m	Dark brown friable sandy clay with occasional small sub-rounded stone
301	3	Subsoil		Slightly orangy brown firm sandy-clay changing to a greyish brown loose sandy-clay
302	3	Make-up layer		Redeposited topsoil, sandstone and building rubble.
400	4		0.2m - 0.3m	Blackish brown silty sandy-clay
401	4			Compact mottled orangey red and yellowish grey slightly sandy clay
402	4			Hedge lined trackway, 3.5m in width
500	5		0.2m - 0.3m	Dark brown friable sandy-clay
501	5	Subsoil		Compact mottled orangey red and yellowish grey slightly sandy-clay
502	5	Ditch	0.5m	2.8m wide, flat based ditch, aligned north-west/south-east
503	5	Fill		Redeposited subsoil
504	5	Fill of 502		Blackish brown firm sandy-clay
505	5	Ditch	0.2m	0.7m wide ditch running north/south
506	5	Fill of 505		Blackish brown silty sandy-clay with occasional small stones
507		Pit	0.33m	2.1m x 1.02m, steep sided with sharp concave base
508		Fill of 507	0.33m	Blackish friable silty sandy-clay with 30% inclusions of small sub-angular sandstone which appeared burnt

APPENDIX 3: FINDS LIST

Field	Context	Material	Quantity	Description	Date
1	100	Pottery	4	Dark glazed red earthenware; three have purple-red fabric (coarse and fine) with black glaze, handle in pale red fabric	17th-19th century
1	101	Pottery	10	Dark glazed red earthenware; five purple fabric, coarse storage jar and fineware bowl	17th/18th century
1	101	Pottery	3	Glazed white earthenware; sponge printed plate and bowl	19th century
1	101	Pottery	2	Stoneware; white jar, brown jug handle	18th/19th century
1	101	Pottery	1	Brown manganese speckled glazed red earthenware handle	18th/19th century
1	101	Pottery	1	Coarse buff gritty ware with degraded dark yellow-green glaze bowl, possible local product	18th century?
1	103	Pottery	1	Unglazed hard fired red ware	18th/19th century
1	103	Pottery	1	Glazed white earthenware	19th/20th century
1	103	Pottery	1	Dark glazed red earthenware (mid red and light red fabric) coarse storage jar and fineware bowl	17th-19th century
1	103	Ceramic	1	Sagger, glazed	19th century
1	103	Clay tobacco pipe	1	Medium bored stem	18th/19th century
3	300	Zinc alloy	1	Toy train	20th century
3	300	Pottery	3	Glazed white earthenware; relief-moulded bowl, figurine in the Minton or Spode style, hand-painted porcelain	19th/20th century
3	301	Pottery	7	Dark glazed red earthenware; four pale red fabric, pitcher spout, two purple large storage bowl	17th/18th century
3	301	Pottery	1	Mottled Ware	18th century
3	301	Pottery	1	Stoneware; Nottingham?	18th century
3	303	Pottery	1	Blackware; cup	17th/18th century
3	303	Pottery	1	Midland Purple; black glazed	17th century
3	303	Pottery	1	Glazed white earthenware; transfer printed wares, plate and dish	18th/19th century
3	303	Pottery	1	Stoneware jar	Late 19th century
3	303	Ceramic building material	3	Brick fragments; coarse red and orange	17th/18th century?
4	402	Pottery	1	Dark glazed red earthenware; coarse black glazed jar	Probably 19th century
4	402	Pottery	1	Glazed white earthenware; bone china bowl and saucer	19th/20th century

5	500	Glass	2	Blue waste, heavy dark red waste	19th century?
5	500	Pottery	5	Dark glazed red earthenware; black glazed, two purple-red fabric	17th-19th century
5	500	Pottery	1	Medieval; Partially reduced fine gritty jug handle	14th/15th century?
5	500	Pottery	1	Partially glazed (grey/white) unidentified stoneware base	?18th century
5	500	Pottery	1	Self-coloured yellow glaze earthenware	18th/19th century
5	500	Pottery	1	Dark green glazed soft buff ware	17th/18th century