



Blythe Bridge Evaluation Trenches Phase 2 (Project Number 22-09) Interim Report

William Mitchell- Centre of Archaeology

Introduction

The Centre of Archaeology, Staffordshire University undertook an archaeological evaluation on land to the south- east of Blythe Bridge, adjacent to the A50 Blythe Bridge Bypass ahead of a redevelopment of the area NGR SJ 396575 340501). The archaeological evaluation consisted of 29 trenches (each around 50m x 2m) and was undertaken between 14th August and 12th September 2023.

This was phase 2b of the project. Previous historical and archaeological research work on the site includes an archaeological desk-based assessment prepared by Cgms Heritage in July 2017; a geophysical survey undertaken by SUMO Survey in September 2018, an archaeological evaluation and watching brief undertaken by the Centre of Archaeology in 2018 and 2019 and a further evaluation (phase 2a) undertaken by York Archaeology in December 2021.

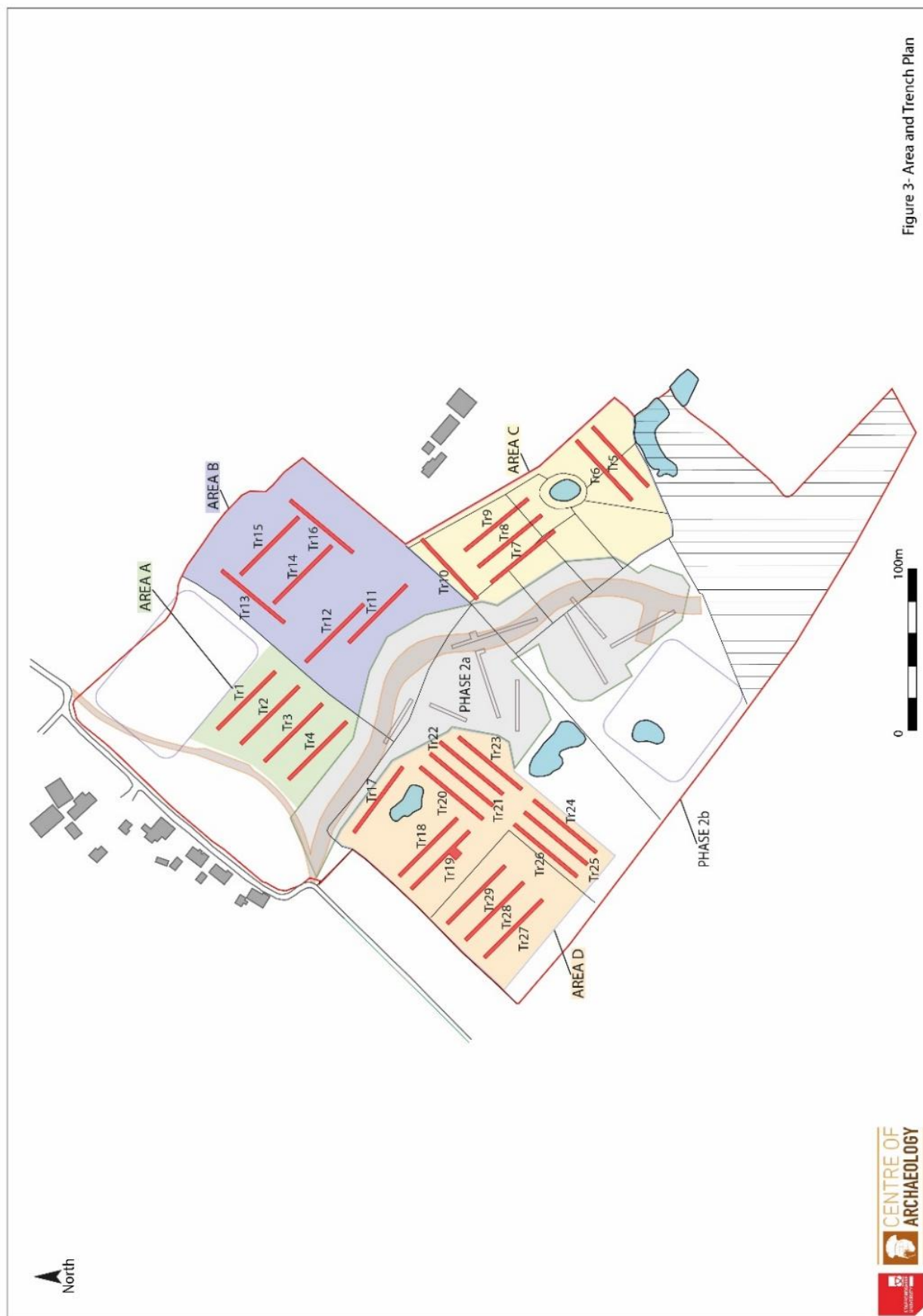


Figure 3- Area and Trench Plan

Results and Recommendations

The site was split into four main areas (Areas A to D). These areas were defined as such for simplicity due to the existing field boundaries. Areas A to C were located on higher ground which sloped from northeast to southwest to south. Area D was located to the south of the site closest to the A50.

Area A contained 4 trenches, Area B contained 6 trenches, Area C contained 6 trenches and Area D contained 1 trenches. Overall, 29 evaluation trenches were placed across the site each was around (50m x 1.8m).

These were located at strategic positions to provide representative coverage and the greatest sample of the area available for evaluation. It was not possible to evaluate an Area to the south east as this was partially previously excavated for a balancing pond and was also within an area of Newt reserve. Some of Area D was also taken up with existing ponds and associated vegetation, this therefore reduced the area of evaluation even further.

Areas A to C did primarily consisted of three main deposits- natural ground, subsoil and topsoil. The only features encountered across this area were field drains. Most of these field drains were simple ditches, others were either lined with ceramic pipes or bricks. Drainage of the area was necessary due to the topography and clay content of the natural ground.

Area D was significantly lower than the rest of the evaluation area. This topographic difference was also supported by differences in its buried deposits. Within Area D there was some in situ brickwork likely to have been related to either farm or industrial outbuildings. Much of this area was significantly lower than the rest of Area D and the rest of the site. There was evidence that the ground in the lower area had been built up as the overburden was very significant across much of this area. The working hypothesis is that the whole area was formerly quarried and then backfilled. This would not have occurred any earlier than the early 19th century as none of the very few finds were earlier than the 1800s. There is a smaller quarry in the immediate area which was 19th century in origin.

The finds assemblage recovered was of a limited nature. Very few finds were recovered from across the site none of which were earlier than the 1800s. The finds consisted of fragments of white ceramics- all were recovered from within the overburden or topsoil. None of the field drains had datable material within them.

No further work is recommended.



Representative trench- Area A



Representative trench- Area D

Timetable for submission

Tasks required for the production of the final report.

Task		When by
1.01	Stratigraphic analysis	Dec 23
1.02	Preparation of illustrations	Dec 23
1.03	Preparation of plates	Dec 23
1.04	Preparation of final phasing	Dec 23
1.05	Preparation of report trench descriptions and discussion	Jan 2024
1.06	Editing	Jan 2024
1.07	Preparation of final draft	Jan 2024
1.08	Submission of text and site archive	February 1st 2024