



Land off Linglongs Road, Whaley Bridge, High Peaks – WA116251

Archaeological Evaluation Summary

Introduction

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs on behalf of Barratt Homes to undertake archaeological evaluation on land off Linglongs Road, Whaley Bridge, High Peaks. High Peak Borough Council has granted Barratt Homes outline planning consent (HPK/2014/0119) for residential development, the area proposed for this development is centred on grid reference SK 0067 8047 and covers an area of approximately six hectares (CgMs 2017).

Previous archaeological work done on the site includes a desk based assessment (CgMs 2013), geophysical survey (GSB 2013), and an initial scheme of archaeological evaluation comprising 12 50 m by 2 m trenches (Wessex Archaeology 2017). The desk based assessment highlighted the low archaeological potential of the site but it has also been indicated that the supposed line of the Manchester to Buxton Roman road likely crosses the north-eastern edge of the site.

A further two archaeological trenches (Trenches 1 and 2) were excavated in July 2017 in line with an agreed Written Scheme of Investigation (CgMs 2017). The aim of the trenching was to identify the location, extent and character of any archaeological remains or deposits underlying or adjacent to the existing trackway which runs north-south through the centre of the site, including any relating to the Buxton to Manchester Roman road. Both Trenches 1 and 2 were aligned east to west and measured 10 m in length and 2 m in width.

The underlying geology of the Site comprises mudstone, siltstone and sandstone of the Pennine Lower Coal Measures formation, formed approximately 312 to 313 million years ago in the Carboniferous Period, overlain by superficial Devensian Till deposits formed up to 2 million years ago during the Quaternary Period (British Geological Survey). The site slopes downhill from south-west to north-east, descending from approximately 225 m to approximately 200 m above Ordnance Survey Datum (aOD) (CgMs 2017).

General stratigraphy

Topsoil and subsoil overlay natural geology (sterile sandy clay) in both Trenches 1 and 2, at 0.36 m and 0.54 m below ground level (bgl) respectively.

Trench 1

Trench 1 was located in the central northern area of the site. Only one archaeological feature was identified, a ditch, most likely for drainage, measuring 0.5 m in width and 0.45 m in depth. The ditch continued beyond the limits of excavation to the north and south and was clearly cut through the

subsoil. A modern service pipe was also identified which correlated to a pipe indicated on the modern service plans.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was located to the south of Trench 1 across the trackway which ran north to south through the trench. The trackway was found to be composed of several layers forming an embankment up to 1.3 m in height and 3.6 m across, mostly clay deposits with an agglomeration of small to medium angular stones seen in the upper level overlying some occasional larger stone fragments. To the east a hedgerow or tree line may also have run alongside this side of the track causing some disturbance in the upper levels in this area and the leaching of material below. Redeposited natural appeared to have been dumped against the embankment on this side. To the west the deposits making up the embankment were disturbed by modern services.

Excavation beneath the presumed base of the embankment, on its eastern side, revealed only a change in the colour of the natural geology at this point. No dating material was recovered from the embankment, however a 40 l environmental sample was taken from what was thought to be the earliest deposit in the hope that this might provide some further information relating to its origin.

Discussion

The ditch seen in Trench 1 is not visible on available historic mapping for the site (1845 Tithe map or Ordnance Survey 1885 onwards), however, it was cut through the subsoil and therefore is presumed to be of more recent (medieval/post-medieval?) origin.

The track in Trench 2 appeared to be formed of an embankment of clay deposits topped with a agglomeration of angular stone. The morphology of the embankment is not dissimilar to those seen in the *agger* of Roman roads elsewhere, with the layers potentially representing the initial foundation, surfacing and subsequent usage and maintenance. However, it was unfortunate that either side of the embankment was disturbed, to the west by modern services and to the east by the leaching of material from a tree or hedgerow above. No change in the geology of the area is apparent on geological mapping in this area which suggests that the embankment is anthropomorphic rather than geological in origin. A geoarchaeologist will be consulted as part of the post-excavation reporting of the trenching.

Photos



Trench 1 showing section through the north to south running ditch



Trench 2 showing the section through the trackway