



Paul Butler Associates

Planning, Development & Heritage Consultants

Towerhouse Systems Ltd

Land off Cringle Road

Archaeological Watching Brief

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Professional Planning, Development & Heritage Advisors since 1992.

Our professional staff are Members of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) or the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA)

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1. Introduction and Non-Technical Summary

- 1.1 Paul Butler Associates have been approached to carry out an archaeological watching brief on land at the eastern end of Cringle Road, Levenshulme during the construction of new housing on the site. The proposal is for the erection of up to 57 dwellings. It is a requirement of condition 5 of application ref 122042/00/2018 that:

No development shall take place until the applicant or their agents or successors in title has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works. The works are to be undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) submitted to and approved in writing by Manchester Planning Authority. The WSI shall cover the following:

- (a). A phased programme and methodology of investigation and recording to include: - an archaeological watching brief*
- (b). A programme for post investigation assessment to include: - production of a final report on the significance of the below-ground archaeological interest.*
- (c). Deposition of the final report with the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record.*
- (d). Dissemination of the results of the archaeological investigations commensurate with their significance.*
- (e). Provision for archive deposition of the report and records of the site investigation.*
- (f). Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the approved WSI.*

- 1.2 The investigations were undertaken in accordance with the WSI. A watching brief was carried out over 5 days between 7/7/22 and 11/5/23 on the eastern side of the site. The ground works undertaken revealed no archaeological deposits.

2. Site Location

- 2.1 The site is located at the eastern end of Cringle Road, and the southern end of Nelstrop Road North in Levenshulme, Manchester. The west and north the site is bounded by hedgerows, separating it from Highfield Country Park, as well as having hedgerows along some of Cringle Road and Nelstrop Road North. The site lies c. 500m to the west of the Houldsworth Conservation Area and the NGR is SJ 88420 93123.
- 2.2 Many entries on the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record lie close to the site, although none are on the site itself. Nelstrop Road North, which forms the eastern boundary of the site, is an entry in (HER No. 14217.1.0) being formerly known as Pink Bank Lane, possibly of Roman origin but certainly dates from at least 1322. The road is also the historic boundary between Levenshulme and Reddish. It was this area that the watching brief was focused on.

3. Aims and Objectives

3.1 The purpose of a watching brief, as stated by the ClfA is:

- To allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, their presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works.
- To provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard (ClfA 2020).

3.2 The results of a watching brief are used to produce a record of the location, nature and date of any archaeological remains encountered on the site. It also adds to the knowledge about the previous history of activity on the current site and its surroundings as well as providing information to influence future planning decisions in the area.

4. Methodology

- 4.1 The project was carried out in accordance with the recommendations of The Management of Archaeological Projects 2nd ed. 1991 and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct.
- 4.2 Photographs were taken using an Olympus E600 DSLR (10 Megapixel). Where possible and safe, a 1 or 2m scale was used in the photographs.
- 4.3 The groundworks associated with the development were carried out between 7th July 2022 to 11th May 2023. The attending archaeologist, Steven Price, attended for 5 days during excavation work over this period when foundations for houses were dug along the eastern side of the site (Figure 2).
- 4.4 The assessment was carried out in accordance with the guidelines laid out by the Institute for Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for Watching Briefs.

5. Historic Background

- 5.1 The current understanding of any activity in Manchester during the prehistoric period is very poor, and evidence for Greater Manchester is sparse and based on chance finds. This perhaps reflects the unfavourable geological conditions, as boulder clay predominates in the area, whereas evidence suggests that prehistoric communities preferred well drained sands. There is evidence of prehistoric activity around the Greater Manchester Region, although none close to the site. Some stray finds have been found close to the city centre, although these suggest a background level of prehistoric activity which has yet to have any defined foci (Gifford 2005). No prehistoric finds have been found on the site itself.
- 5.2 The Romans first built in Manchester in the first century AD, with a Roman fort established in the Castlefield area in 79AD (Taylor & Holder 2008; Fletcher 1989, 3). The original fort comprised a turf rampart with timber gates, and covered an area of c.2ha. A fort of this size could hold a 480 man infantry unit (Byrant et.al. 1986). They also established the settlement of “Aquae Arnemetiae” at Buxton around 78 AD and a road linking the two was also built. No Roman artefacts have been found on the site, although the line of the Roman Road is believed to pass c. 150m to the southwest of the site. Also, Nelstrop Road North has also been suggested to be of Roman origin (HER No. 14217.1.0), and forms the eastern site boundary.
- 5.3 There is very little archaeological evidence in the region as a whole that denotes the period between the end of the Roman occupation and the Norman Conquest. However, the name may derive from a person’s name (Leofwine) and the Norse “Holm”, meaning island (Ekwall 1922; Barlow 2016). First mention of the village of Lewynshulme is in the Assize Court record of 1240. Nelstrop Road North was named in a 1322 survey of Manchester as ‘le Pegfenegate’ or ‘Peytonyngate’, marking the boundary of Reddish between the ‘Muchelditch’ (HER No. 14217.1.0). The manor of Levenshulme was a dependency of Withington, and in 1319 was in the possession of Sir William de Baguley of Baguley in Cheshire. A settlement was made and it passed to his grandson William Legh of Baguley, whose

descendants continued to hold it down to the 17th century. The land was then sold to various owners and the manor ceased to exist (Farrer & Brownbill, 1911).

- 5.4 The area remained mossy moorland, with only 25 people paying rates in 1655. The turnpike act of 1724 created a cotton trade route which ran from Manchester to Stockport and saw an increase in the population, with a bleach works established in the area in the late 17th century. By 1774 the population had risen to 280, but by 1820 there were over 1000 people living in the area (Barlow 2016). The surrounding fields appear to be fairly regular and rectangular, suggesting that they were formed from organised statutory forms of enclosure and therefore demonstrate a late Post-Medieval origin. However, some of the boundaries are relatively curved and possibly suggest the redevelopment of a late medieval field system (Baker & Butlin 1973, 32; Adkins, Adkins & Leitch 2008, 305).
- 5.5 During the 18th century the area was predominantly agricultural and the tithe map for 1840 shows the site to have been one of many fields in the area owned by John Greaves Esquire, although occupied by Peter Woodruffe. The field is listed as “Big Meadow Wood and Marshes” and was 9 Acres, 1 Rod and 7 perches in size. The tithe map shows it as a large rectangular field, with marsh areas around the centre. Peter Woodruffe also occupied the “Dwelling House and Gardens” of Shore Fold Farm. He was still at the farm by the time of the 1851 census, which records him living as a “Farmer of 30 acres”, with his wife Mary and his 8 year old son Samuel. A labourer and house servant are also recorded. The 1846 OS map also shows a similar situation, but also shows a few trees scattered throughout the field.
- 5.6 The situation was similar in 1861, although by this time Peter Woodruffe had doubled the size of the farm to 61 acres and his son was also working with him. By the 1871 Census, Peter had died, leaving his wife and son to run the farm and by 1881 Samuel Smith had taken it over. He lived there with his wife Mary, his three daughters and his son, all of whom worked on the farm. This remained the situation in 1891, although Mary was no longer listed, suggesting that she had died. The 1894 OS map shows the site again, although the field had been expanded northwards to encompass two fields to the north (a marsh [336] and the pasture ‘little field’ [337] shown on the tithe map). A small pond is shown towards the centre of the field, at the north end of the current site boundary.

- 5.7 By the 1901 census, Samuel still operated the farm, although only one of his daughters remained, along with his son. He also had his 9 year old granddaughter living with him and 3 servants. The site remained unchanged until the late 1930's when the field was divided once again, along the line of the former boundary on the north side of the site.

6. Results

- 6.1 Plots 28 & 29 were the first to be dug (7/7/22). These comprised a series of foundations to a depth of c. 1.5m. The ground was found to be a yellow orange natural clay (03) at a depth of c. 150mm below the surface. Above this was a dark brown clayey loam subsoil (02) below the topsoil (01). These results were also found in plots 36 & 37 (19/8/22). Plots 38 & 39 were over the location of a former modern stables. Here, the modern building was cut into the clay and truncated the layers above with modern material.
- 6.2 Plots 38 & 39 were excavated at the northern end of the site (11/5/23). Here the stratigraphy of the site was slightly different to the rest. The natural clay (03) was much lower, found c. 1m below the surface. Above this was a pale yellow natural soft sand (07), c. 110mm in depth and above this lay a mid brown clayey sand (06), containing charcoal flecks and small stones, c. 160mm thick. This lay below a dark brown sandy clay (05) containing charcoal, small brick fragments and stones and was c. 160mm deep. Above this was a mottled yellow brown hard clay (04) containing stone and brick fragments and appeared to have been redeposited. This was c. 300mm deep and lay below the topsoil (01).

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The watching brief revealed no archaeological features or artefacts. Over the majority of the site the natural clay (03) lay close (c. 150mm) to the ground surface. To the north the natural clay was deeper (c.1m) and showed some natural sand (07). Above this, layer (06) may have been a former plough soil, although no artefacts were found. Above this was a former topsoil (05), which had been sealed by the redeposited clay of (04), likely laid to level the site.

8. Archive

- 8.1 The results of the survey form the basis of a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with ClfA Archives Selection Toolkit, Archaeological Archives Forum (2011) Archaeological Archives and current ClfA “standards and guidance for the creation, compilation, transportation and deposition of archaeological archive” (published October 2014). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project. The deposition of a properly ordered and indexed project archive in an appropriate repository is considered an essential and integral element of all archaeological projects by the ClfA in that organisation’s code of conduct.
- 8.2 All digital data created over the course of this project will be collected, stored, and selected for final deposition. Only final copies of any born digital data have been deposited in the final project archive. Deselected material includes duplicates and any non-final versions of data. In terms of photographic images, this includes blurred or light imbalanced images.
- 8.3 As the results revealed no archaeology, the archive will comprise a digital copy of the report only. This primary digital archive shall be deposited with the Archaeological Data Service (ADS). A digital copy of the report will also be sent to Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record and findings of the project uploaded to the OASIS database.

9. Copyright

- 9.1 Full copyright of this commissioned report and other project documents shall be retained by the author of the report under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

10. Bibliography

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Appendix 1: Maps

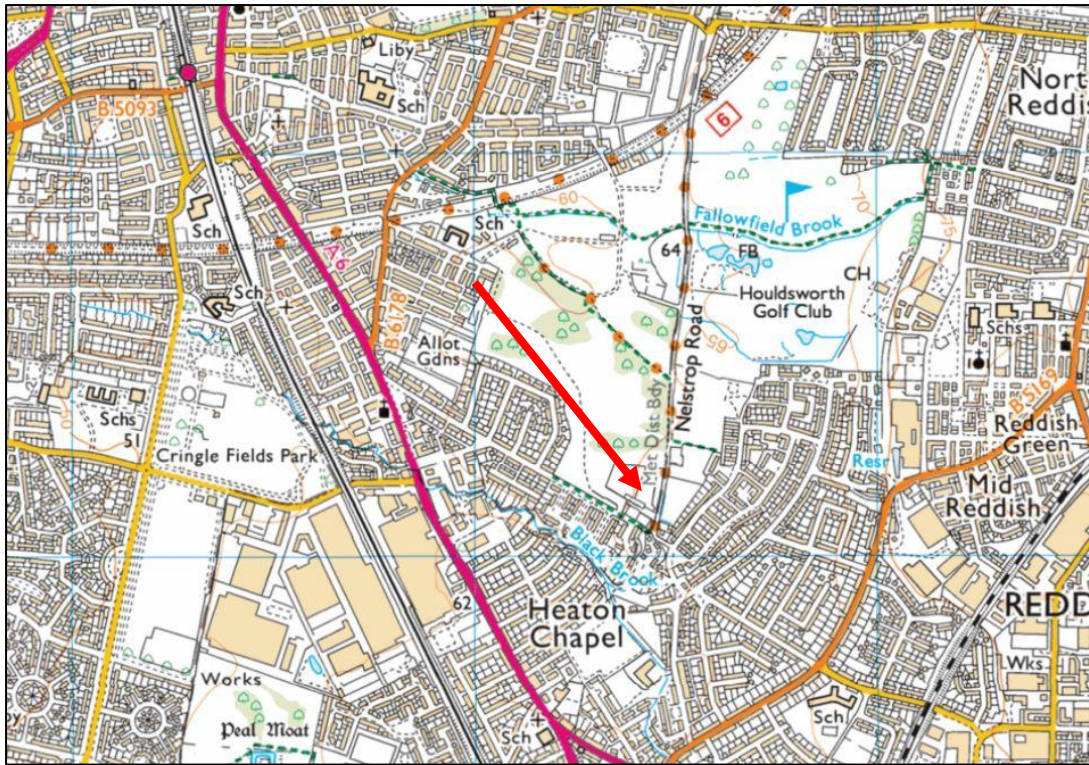


Figure 1: Location Plan



Figure 2: Site plan showing watching brief locations in red



Figure 3: 1841 Tithe map of Levenshulme

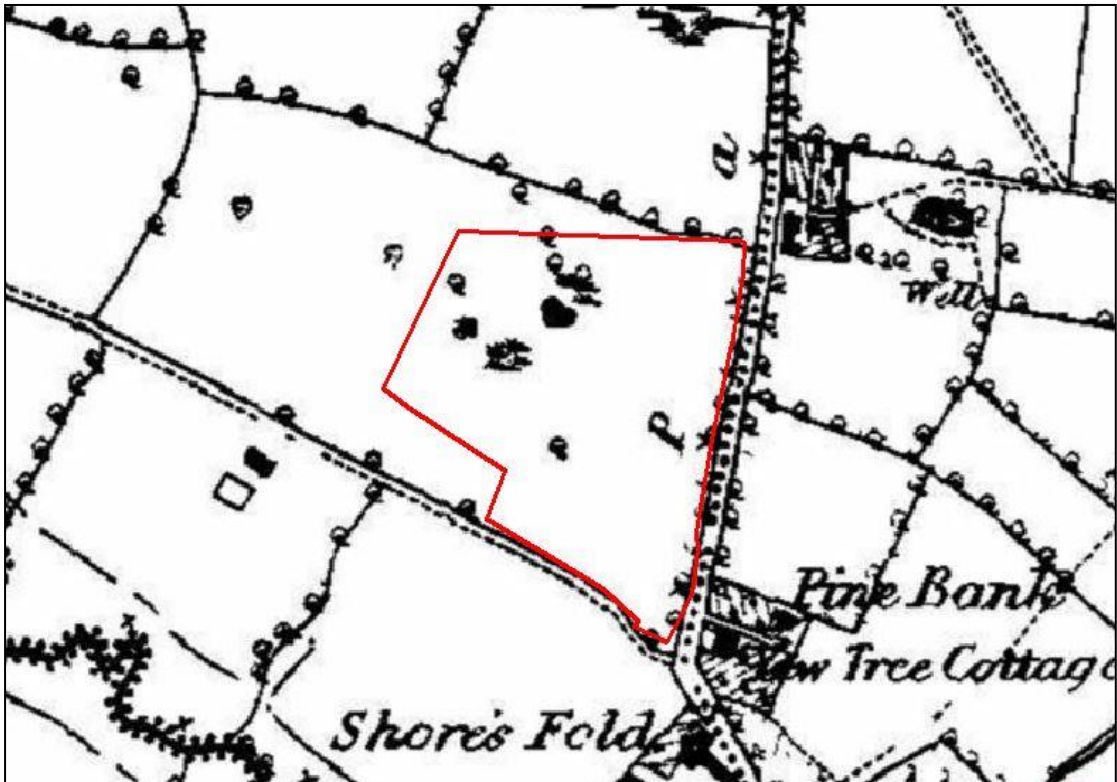


Figure 4: 1846 OS map Lancashire sheet 111

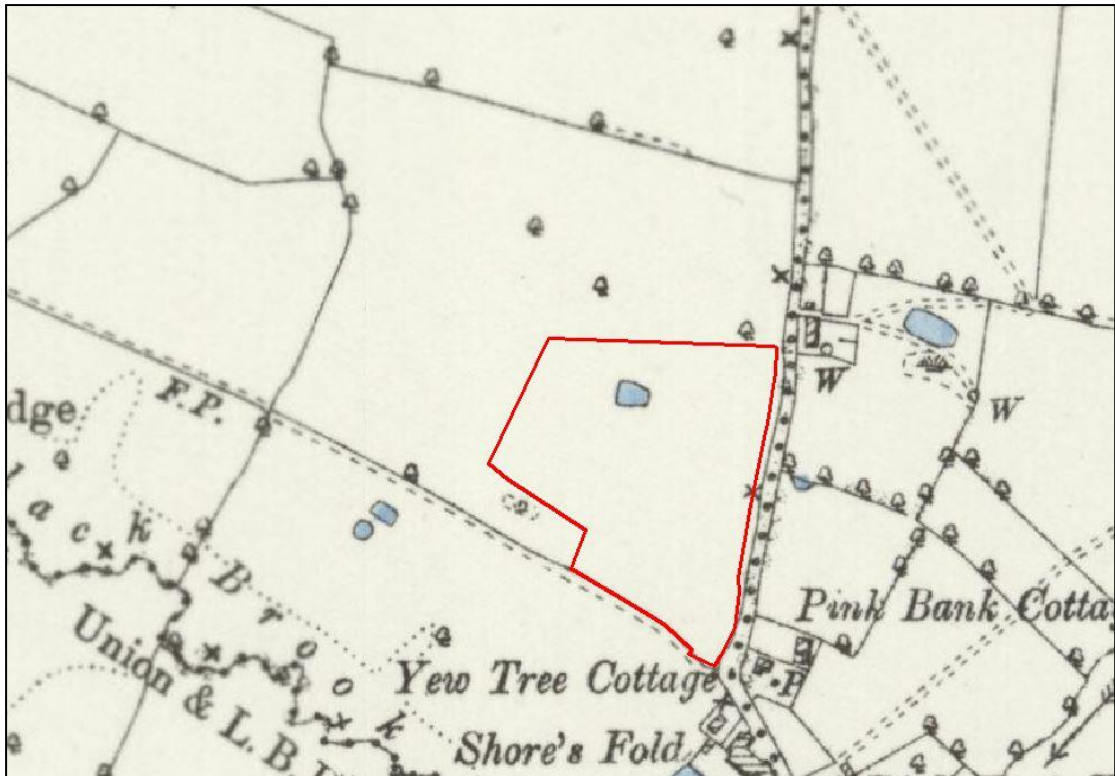


Figure 5: 1894 OS map Lancashire sheet 111

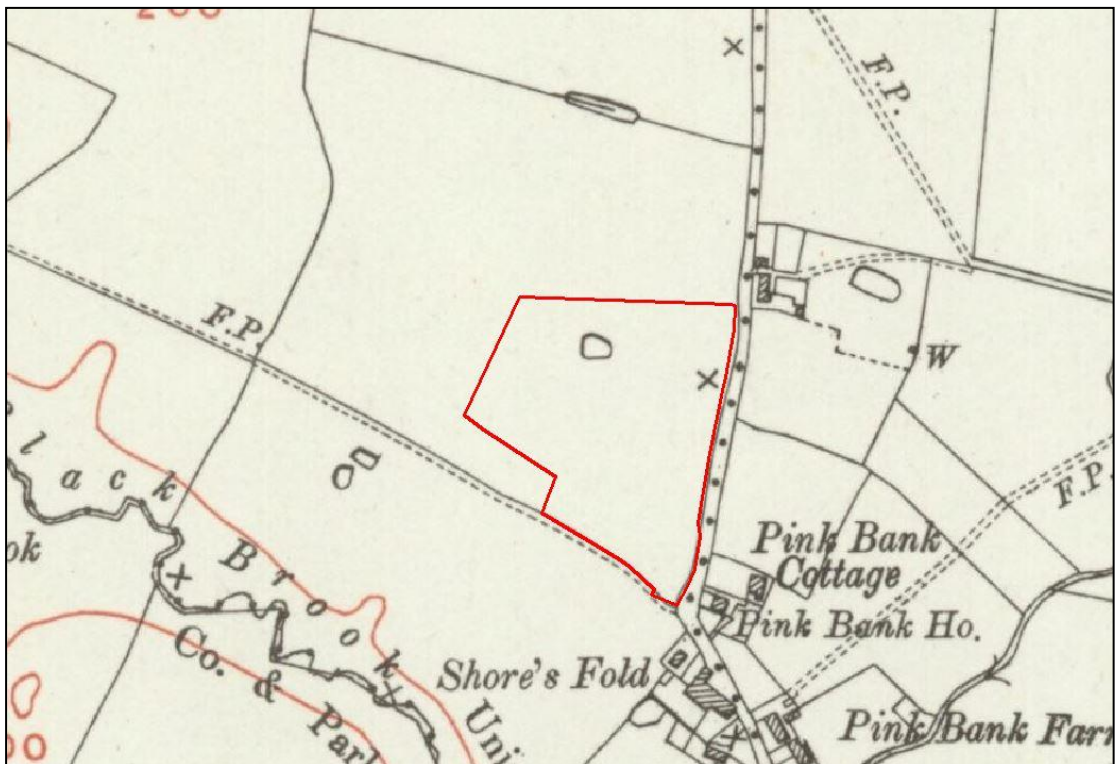


Figure 6: 1923 OS map Lancashire sheet 111

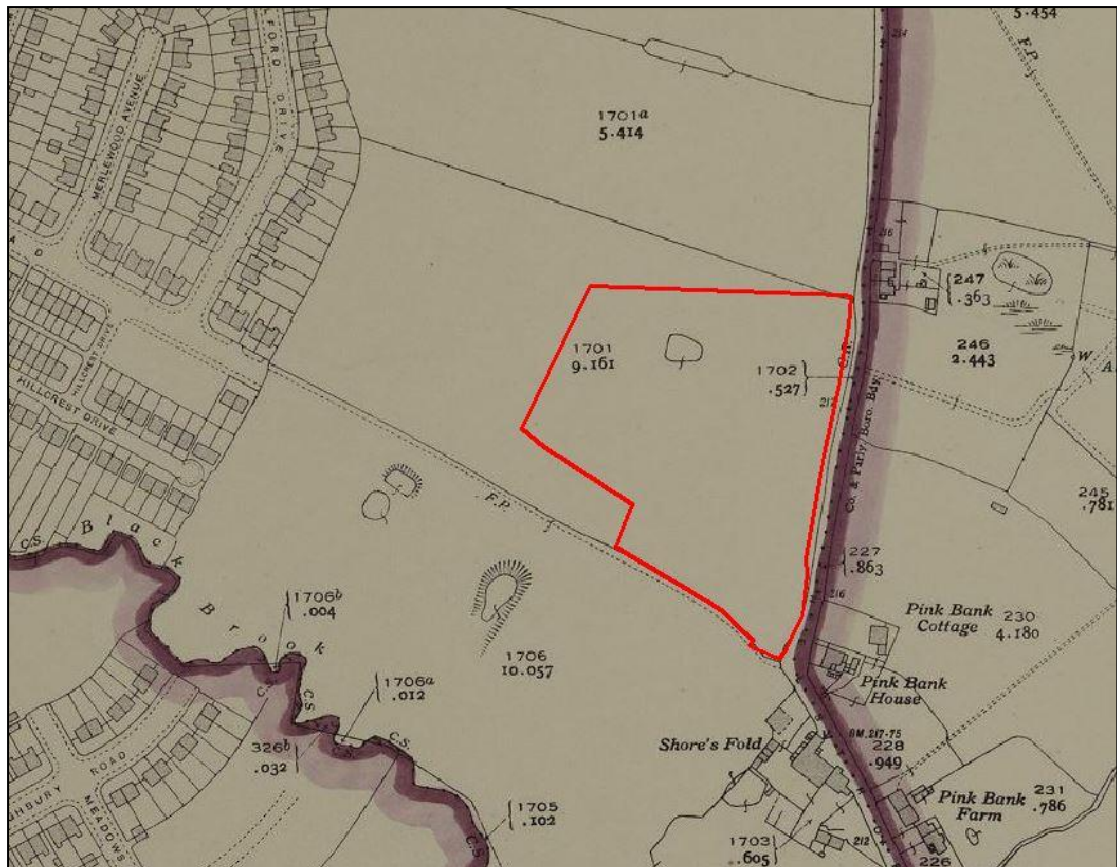


Figure 7: 1941 OS map Lancashire sheet 111.8

Appendix 2: Plates



Plate 1: Site prior to excavation



Plate 2: As above



Plate 3: Plots 28 & 29



Plate 4: Initial opening of above



Plate 5: Section showing clay (03) close to the ground surface



Plate 6: Working shot



Plate 7: Section



Plate 8: General shot



Plate 9: Excavation of plots 38 & 39



Plate 10: As above



Plate 11: Section detail showing modern material above clay (03)



Plate 12: Plots 36 & 37



Plate 13: Working shot



Plate 14: Section showing clay (03) close to surface



Plate 15: Working shot



Plate 16: Working shot



Plate 17: Section



Plate 18: Working shot



Plate 19: Plots 38 & 39 showing depth of clay (03)



Plate 20: South facing section



Plate 21: South facing section



Plate 22: West facing section



Plate 23: Base of west facing section