

CPAT Report No 1015

South Arclid, Arclid Quarry, Near Sandbach, Cheshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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Arclid Quarry, Near Sandbach, Cheshire**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

N W Jones
November 2009

Report for Archibald Bathgate Group Ltd

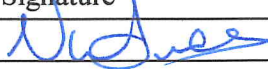

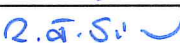
The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust
7a Church Street, Welshpool, Powys, SY21 7DL
tel (01938) 553670, fax (01938) 552179
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CPAT Report Record

Report and status

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In October 2009 the Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) was invited by Sloane Mead, on behalf of Bathgate Silica Sand Ltd, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the removal of topsoil over an area of around 0.5ha along the north-eastern boundary of the existing extraction limit at Arclid Quarry, near Sandbach in Cheshire (Fig. 1). The watching brief was required as a condition of the existing planning permission for the extraction of silica sand at South Arclid.
- 1.2 Arclid Quarry has been the subject of three archaeological assessments within the existing planning boundary in connection with applications for the determination of new working conditions and a previous extension to the quarry workings (Jones 2000a, 2000b, 2006 and 2009). These assessments identified a number of cultural heritage assets, but none is located within the area of the watching brief.

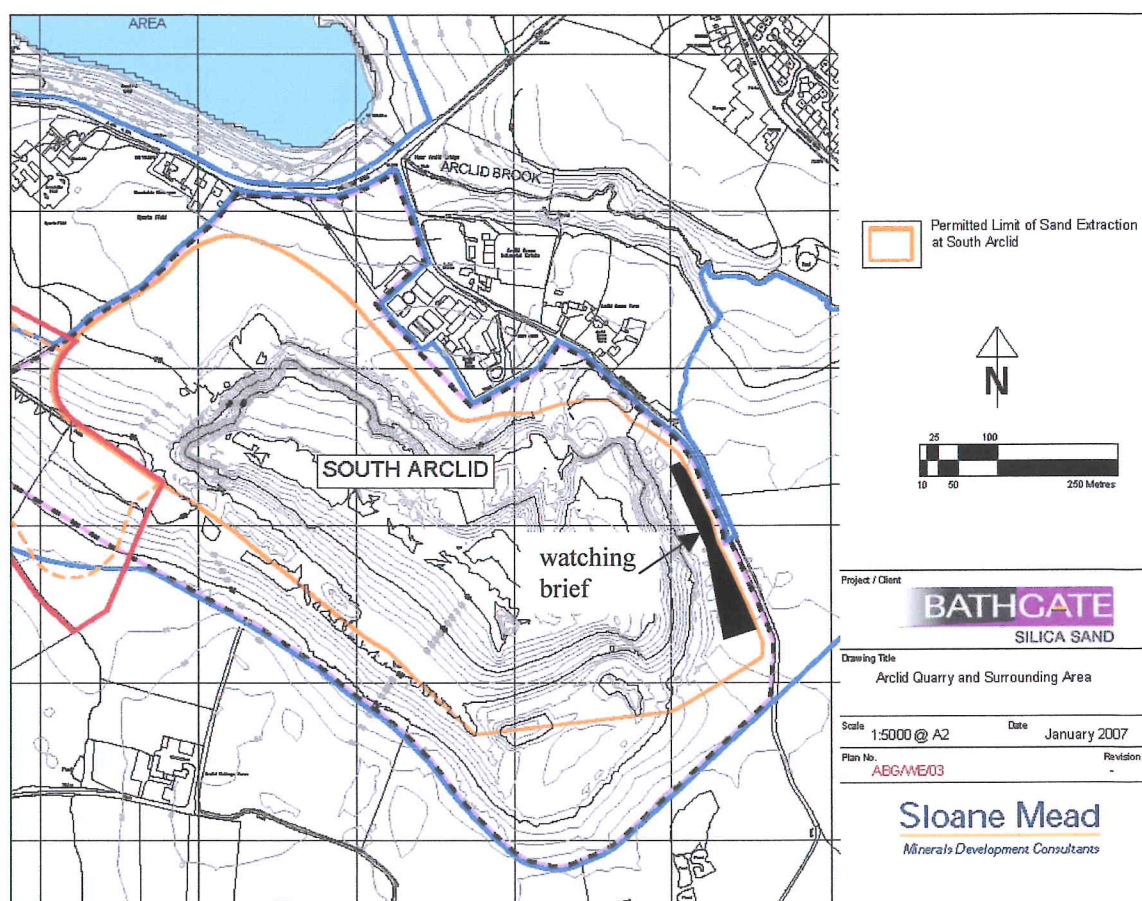


Fig. 1 Plan of South Arclid showing location of watching brief

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 Arclid Quarry lies 2.5km north-east of Sandbach, 8.5km west of Congleton and 5km south of Holmes Chapel (Fig. 1). The A534 Congleton to Sandbach road splits the Quarry and crosses the M6 Motorway at Junction 17, some 300m west of the Quarry boundary. The A5022 joins the A534 some 200 metres to the west of the Quarry boundary. The Quarry is situated within Congleton District in the County of Cheshire.
- 2.2 That part of the Quarry lying to the south of the A543 Congleton to Sandbach road is known as South Arclid, and is located in a mainly rural area, which is crossed by a number of important road lines.
- 2.3 South Arclid is the current, active, sand extraction area, although the recent Western Extension and a small area in the north-west has not yet been worked and still comprises agricultural land. The far south-eastern portion of South Arclid is currently being worked in conjunction with the western area. The quarry void at South Arclid lies approximately 1km from the processing plant at North Arclid and is linked to it by two parallel underground pipelines.

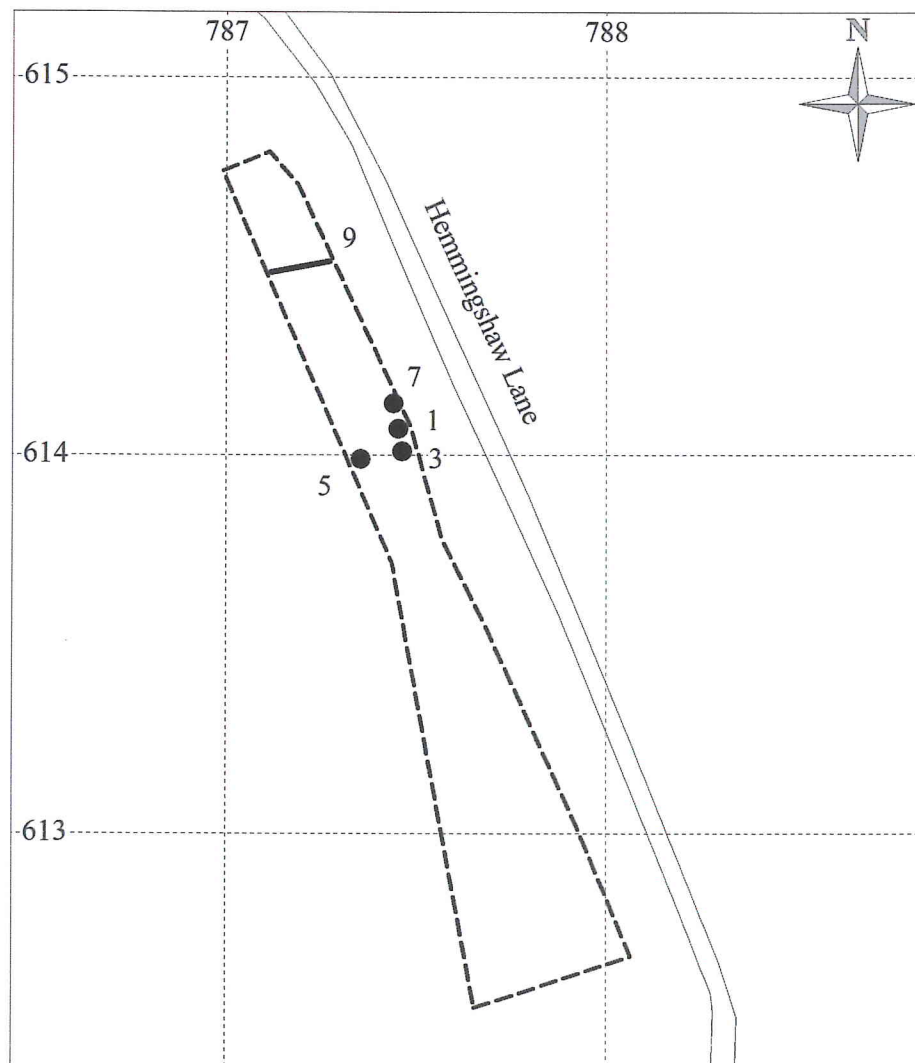


Fig. 2 Plan of stripped area showing location of archaeological features

3 WATCHING BRIEF

- 3.1 The watching brief was conducted during the removal of topsoil over a period of seven days between 19 and 28 October 2009, with an additional half day on site on 29 October to complete the excavation and recording of those features which had been revealed. A total of five archaeological features were identified, with no stratigraphical relationship between them, or any obvious spatial association (Fig. 2). A written, drawn and photographic record was maintained, a summary of which is provided in Appendix 1. All features were located using a hand-held global positioning system (GPS).

Possible boundary ditch

- 3.2 A linear ditch (9) was identified at the northern end of the stripped area, aligned roughly east/west (SJ 78715 61450). A 10m-length of the ditch was visible within the stripped area, extending beyond the limits of topsoiling at either end.
- 3.3 A section excavated through the ditch revealed two contemporary features, a ditch around 1m wide and 0.63 deep with a shallower gully along the southern side, the overall width of the features together being 1.8m. One sherd of unglazed, late medieval or post-medieval pottery was recovered from the fill, along with a sherd of glazed 18th- or 19th-century pottery. The form of the feature suggests that it was a former field boundary and it may be that the shallow gully resulted from the removal of a hedgerow.



Fig. 3 boundary ditch 9 viewed from the east

Pits

- 3.4 Three small, shallow pits were revealed cutting into the natural subsoil. Context 1 (SJ 78746 61407) measured 0.55m east/west by 0.4m north/south, and was up to 0.23m deep. This was filled by a yellowish grey sandy silt which yielded no artefactual evidence.



Fig. 4 Pit 1 viewed from the W

- 3.5 A second small pit was identified nearby (3) (SJ 78747 61401), measuring 0.33m east/west by 0.26m north/south and up to 0.2m deep. No artefacts were recovered from the fill, which was composed of a yellowish grey sandy silt.



Fig. 5 Pit 3 viewed from the S.

- 3.6 The third pit (5) (SJ 78736 61399) was rather irregular, measuring 1.1m north-east/south-west by 0.5m north-west/south-east and up to 0.23m deep. The fill was similar to the other pits and again produced no artefacts.

Fig. 6 Pit 5 viewed from the south-west



- Gully**
- 3.7 An unusual horseshoe-shaped gully (7) was identified along the eastern edge of the stripped area (SJ 78749 61413), extending beyond the limits of excavation. The curving gullies were butt-ended on the western side and merged towards the east, its eastern extremity extending for around 3.5m east/west with a distance of up to 1.75m between them.

Fig. 7 General view of gully 7 from the east



- 3.8 Two sections were excavated across the feature, revealing it to be 0.65m to 0.75m wide and around 0.25m deep. The gully was filled by a light yellowish grey sandy silt, which produced no artefactual evidence.

Fig. 8 Excavated section through the northern gully, viewed from the east



4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The watching brief maintained close archaeological supervision during the removal of topsoil in an area along the north-eastern site of the existing area of permitted extraction. A number of archaeological features were revealed and subject to appropriate investigation and recording. These included a probable boundary ditch, three small pits and an unusual feature defined by two curving gullies.
- 4.2 With the exception of the boundary ditch, which is likely to be post-medieval in date, the remaining features were undated, although the lack of artefacts might suggest an earlier date. There was no evidence to suggest the function of the small pits, nor the curving gullies.

5 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- 5.1 The writer would like to thank the following for their assistance: Ian Davies, for undertaking the watching brief; Malcolm Sloane, of Sloane Mead; Mr D Robinson, the Quarry Manager at Arclid.

6 REFERENCES

- Jones, NW, 2000a. *Application for the Determination of New Conditions - South Arclid, Arclid Quarry, Near Sandbach, Cheshire: archaeological assessment*. CPAT Report No. 362.
- Jones, NW, 2000b. *Application to Extend silica Sand Workings - South Arclid, Arclid Quarry, Near Sandbach, Cheshire: archaeological assessment*. CPAT Report No. 363.
- Jones, NW, 2006. *Planning Application for Minor Western Extension to Silica Sand Workings at South Arclid, Arclid Quarry, Near Sandbach, Cheshire: Archaeological Assessment*. CPAT Report No. 823.
- Jones, NW, 2009. *Planning Application for a South Eastern Extension to Silica Sand Workings at South Arclid, Arclid Quarry, Near Sandbach, Cheshire: Archaeological Assessment*. CPAT Report No. 958.

Cartographic sources

18th century map of Arclid. Area of Arclid Hall Farm. CCRO DDX 139
Tithe Survey of Sandbach Parish CCRO EDT 351/2a
Tithe Survey of Arclid Parish CCRO EDT 18/2
Ordnance Survey Surveyor's Drawings, Sheet 80 SE, 1841, scale 2" = 1 mile
Ordnance Survey 1st edition 25", surveyed 1874, Cheshire 50
Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 25", revised 1896-7, published 1898, Cheshire 50.6 and 50.7
Ordnance Survey 1st edition 6", surveyed 1874, Cheshire 50 NE and NW
Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 6", revised 1896-7, published 1898, Cheshire 50 NE and NW
Ordnance Survey Provisional edition revised 1907-8 with additions 1938, Cheshire 50 NE and NW

APPENDIX 1**PROJECT ARCHIVE****Site records**

10 context record forms

8 watching brief daily visit forms

3 A4 site drawings

1 A3 site drawing

33 digital photographs, CPAT film 2978

Photographic register

Finds

2 sherds of post-medieval pottery from ditch 9

Context	Drawing	Type	Comment
1	3	Pit	Small, shallow pit
2	3	Fill	Fill of pit 1
3	3	Pit	Small, shallow pit
4	3	Fill	Fill of pit 2
5	3	Pit	Small, shallow pit
6	3	Fill	Fill of pit 3
7	4	Gully	Horseshoe-shaped gully
8	4	Fill	Fill of gully 7
9	1;2	Ditch	Linear ?boundary ditch
10	1;2	Fill	Fill of ditch 9

Dwg	Size	Scale	Comment
1	A4	1:10	Section of Ditch 9
2	A3	1:50; 1:20	Plan of ditch 9
3	A4	1:20	Plan and section of pits 1, 3 and 5
4	A4	1:20	Plan and sections of gully 7