

## SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENT NOTIFICATION

### RAM HILL COLLIERY AND DRAMWAY

### PARISH WESTERLEIGH

### NATIONAL MONUMENT NUMBER 28889

### DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The monument includes the above ground and buried remains of Ram Hill Colliery and dramway lying on high ground south of the railway line running south of Coalpit Heath.

The monument includes the shaft, gin house, boiler house, reservoir, engine house, coal bunkers, dramway and arch and lies partly within the garden of a private house, and partly in rough ground to the north. The stone-lined oval shaft lies in the central eastern part of the site and measures about 1.5m east-west by 2.25m north-south. The shaft is situated within the southern part of the gin house, which in turn is 17.5m long north-south with the circular horse gin being at the northern end measuring about 10m in diameter with walls standing to 0.7m high. To the east of the gin house, are the footings of a stone building standing between 0.5m and 1m high and measuring about 7m north-south by 9m east-west. This building is subdivided into a number of areas, and is thought to have been the engine house of the pit.

North of this is the unexcavated boiler house and reservoir.

Directly west of the horse gin, but at a lower level is the arch which forms the terminus of the dramway. The arch stands to approximately 2.4m high and is 3m wide and about 2m deep. It is blocked on its east side by stone walling. On the floor to the west of the arch are a number of stone sleeper blocks containing holes for the attachment of the rails of the dramway. The dramway cutting is approximately 10m wide, and is bordered on the south by a wall, thought to have formed part of the coal bunker or loading bay. This wall stands to between 1m and 1.5m high, and from here the coal was shovelled down onto the dram trucks. There were two dramways in operation side by side. The northern one ended at the arch, and the southern one was flanked by the coal bunkers or loading bays. From the arch, the dramway runs west for about 12m at which point it is blocked by rubble and trees, but continues beyond this unexcavated.

Ram Hill Colliery stands at the north end of the dramway which was built in 1828 to take coal from the East Bristol coalfield to Bristol and to the River Avon near Keynesham. The colliery was opened between 1830 and 1840 by the Coalpit Heath Colliery Company, and the shaft, which was sunk to a depth of 177m (580 feet), used for winding coal from the High, Hard and Holly Bush seams. The engine, thought to have been a horizontal one, was later added to supplement the horse gin, and worked through an adapted head frame above the pit. The outcrop, to the north of Coalpit Heath, was being worked from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, using atmospheric engines. Ram Hill was one of the second generation pits working the seam deeper down the anticline. The horse gin is thought to have had a conical roof, with either one or two horses winding the coal up and the men down the upcast shaft. The engine turned a

flywheel through a crank attached to a winding drum. Pump rods, linked to the beam, worked a stone-lined sump lined to a reservoir a few yards to the north. This was supplemented with rain water collected from the gin roof and fed through a covered channel. Coal was stored in stone-lined bunkers and fed into the drams through chutes or with a crane. It is alleged that the holding-down bolts for the crane still in situ. The site was partially excavated in 1985 by Avon Industrial Buildings Trust, and a resistivity survey was done by Mrs Bridget Hetzel in 2004.

The following features are excluded from the scheduling: the boundary fence and breeze block wall between the properties, wire and wooden fences, the stone boundary wall, the gate into the site, the no parking sign, spoil heaps and areas of tumble. The ground beneath all these features is, however, included.

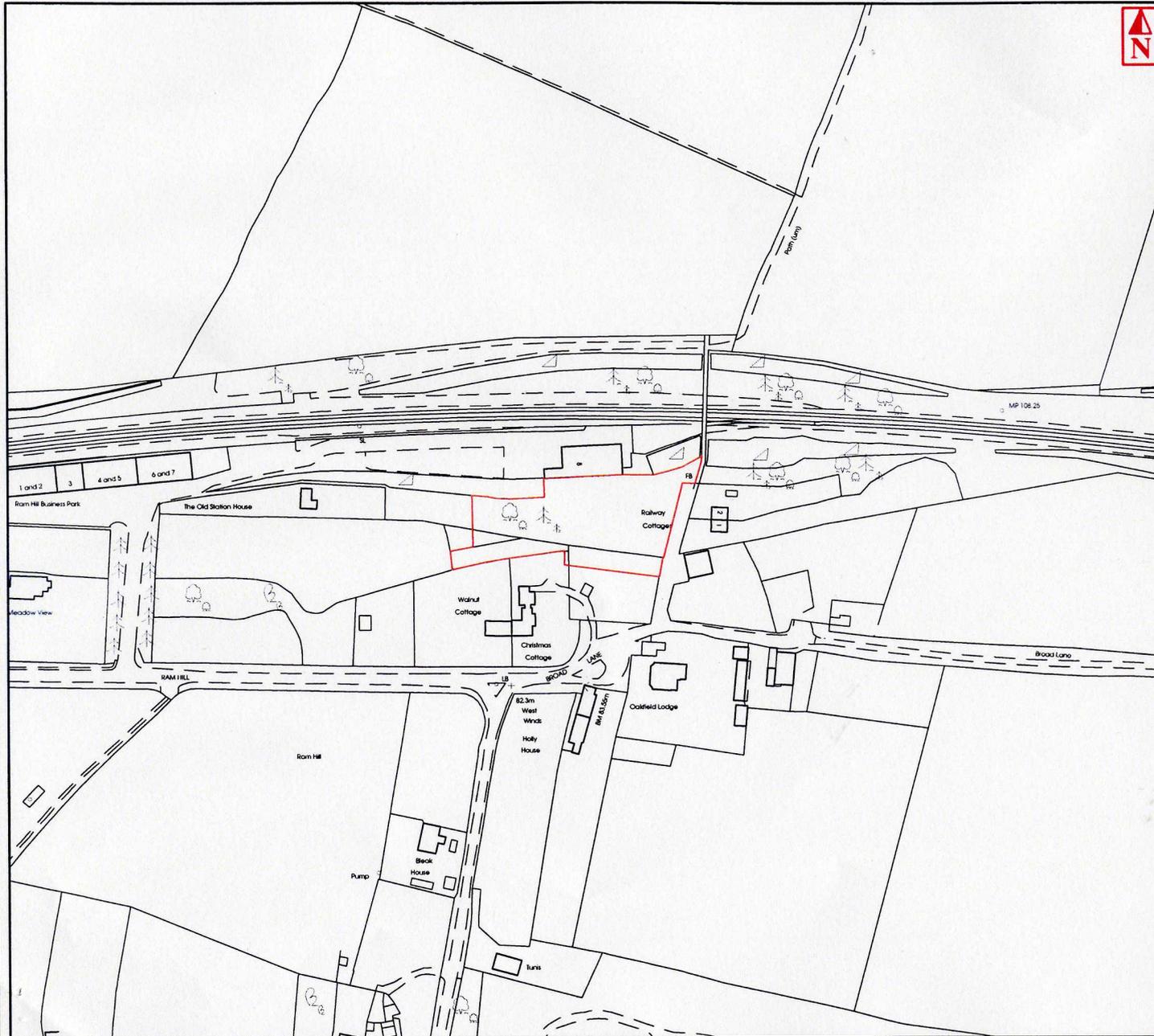
#### ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE

Coal has been mined in England since Roman times, and between 8,000 and 10,000 coal industry sites of all dates up to the collieries of post-war nationalisation is estimated to survive in England. Three hundred and four coal industry sites, representing approximately 3% of the estimated national archaeological resource for the industry have been identified as being of national importance. This selection, compiled and assessed through a comprehensive survey of the coal industry, is designed to represent the industry's chronological depth, technological breadth and regional diversity. The term 'nucleated' is used to describe coal mines that developed as a result of increased capital investment in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. They are a prominent type of field monument produced by coal mining and typically consist of a range of features grouped around the shafts of a mine. The simplest examples contain merely a shaft or adit with associated spoil heap. Later examples are characterised by developed pit head arrangements that may include remains of engine houses for pumping and/or winding from shafts, boiler houses, fan houses for ventilating mine workings, offices, workshops, pithead baths, and transport systems such as railways and canals. A number of later nucleated mines also retain the remains of screens where the coal was sized and graded. Coke ovens are frequently found on or near colliery sites. Coal occurs in significant deposits throughout large parts of England and this has given rise to a variety of coalfields extending from the north of England to the Kent coast. Each region has its own history of exploitation, and characteristic sites range from the small, compact collieries of north Somerset to the large, intensive units of the north east. A sample of the better preserved sites, illustrating the regional, chronological and technological range of nucleated coal mines, together with rare individual component features are considered to merit protection.

Although the site of Ram Hill Colliery and dramway has been practically excavated, it will contain archaeological information and environmental evidence relating to the colliery and the landscape in which it was constructed. Ram Hill was one of a number of collieries in the area, including Ram Engine mine about 200m to the west which was in operation in 1772, but is the only mining site on Coalpit Heath which survives without having been incorporated into private property. It survives largely intact because following its closure in 1860 it was acquired by the Great Western Railway in 1900, and from then until the present time it has remained undisturbed.

As a group, the features represented at Ram Hill are very rare and of clear national importance. They illustrate the technological development of a horse, and later steam winding, on the same site. The survival of the dramway, with its sleeper block in-situ, is also of major significance. Further along its length it is being preserved as an industrial archaeological pathway. A number of buildings and sites are being preserved on its route, and the dramway can be seen as a spinal pathway linking them together. Ram Hill, as the northern terminus, is thus of great strategic importance.

# Scheduled Monument



Number: SM28889

County/UA: SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE

District: SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Parish: WESTERLEIGH

Notes:  
For exclusions - see text record

For further information on this monument please contact English Heritage.

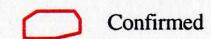
Monument Grid Reference: ST6790280271

Boundary captured at: 1:2500

Map scale: 1:2,500

Extract from OS sheet(s): ST68SE

Key:



Confirmed



Exclusion

Sheet 1 of 1

Print date: 14 February 2005

This map is reproduced from the OS map by English Heritage with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, ©Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.

Licence Number 100019088. ©English Heritage



ENGLISH HERITAGE

23 Savile Row, London W1S 2ET

Telephone 020 7973 3000 Fax 020 7973 3001

Name: Ram Hill Colliery and dramway