

# LUTTERWORTH SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS LEICESTERSHIRE

## A Report on an Archaeological Watching Brief

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**  
**AT LUTTERWORTH SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS**  
**LEICESTERSHIRE**

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## Summary

- Trent & Peak Archaeology was contracted by Severn Trent Water to conduct an archaeological watching brief on intrusive ground works associated with the construction of a new sewage treatment plant at Lutterworth, Leicestershire.
- All intrusive groundworks were monitored during the course of the watching brief and all recording carried out in line with the T&PA recording manual.
- Below the topsoil a layer of made ground probably to be associated with previous construction work on the site overlies the natural clays. A modern field boundary was recorded in the south west edge of the site.
- There were no archaeological features or remains revealed as a result of the groundworks.
- There were no archaeologically significant finds recorded as a result of the groundworks.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Trent & Peak Archaeology was contracted by Severn Trent Water to conduct a watching brief on the extension and construction of new sewage beds and associated plant for the Lutterworth sewage treatment works at SP531 829 (see Fig 1). Earlier geophysical survey and evaluation highlighted that the area had been subject to significant disturbance and dumping of material onto the site by the earlier construction on the adjacent treatment works. The work was conducted over a period of 8 visits starting on the 20<sup>th</sup> March continuing to 29<sup>th</sup> March 2006 in a series of visits timed to correspond with phases of site stripping or post stripping inspections.

1.2 During the monitoring of the topsoil strip within the compound and extended treatment works the area was divided into two areas (Areas 01 and 02), with a third area (Area 03), added outside of the compound to monitor the excavation of a new land-drain trench, excavated as part of the enabling works.

## **2 TOPOLOGY AND GEOLOGY**

2.1 Located to the southwest of Lutterworth, c.200m to the south of Moorbarrows Farm and c.200-250m to the north of Cotesbach village the superficial geology is of boulder clay, Oadby member Diamicton, which overlies the bedrock, Blue lias formation of interbedded mudstone and limestone, (BGS Geology Viewer). The site sits upon the steep sloped northern side of the Swift Valley with fairly large open fields given over to mainly arable agriculture, with cereals planted on and adjacent to the site.

## **3 METHODOLOGY**

3.1 These works were conducted in accordance with the 'Specification for archaeological watching brief at Lutterworth STW, Leicestershire' (Kinsley 2005), An area of 50m by 81m, forming Area 01 and 49m by c.46m (Area 02), was stripped of topsoil for topsoil storage and ahead of the main excavation works (see Fig 2).

3.2 The northern-most part of the site was not stripped and the topsoil removed from the southern part of Area 01 was stored directly upon the field surface. A depth of subsoil was removed from the central part of Area 01 for the construction of the plant machinery and sewage beds and arrangements were made to watch this phase of excavation.

3.3 Area 01 comprised the southern permanent works part of the site and Area 02 the remaining northern temporary compound. Where topsoil was removed each area was inspected and photographed with detailed notes and drawings made. Finds were allocated a three letter code, e.g. AAA and their locations marked on either the site plan or section

drawings. Pro-forma watching brief and context sheets were used to record features, deposits and fills.

#### **4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

4.1 Only a brief précis of the archaeological background of the site will be given here as deals with it is dealt with more fully in a desk-based assessment by Kinsley (2005). This identified that the site lay within an area of some significance in the prehistoric period and that a number of cropmarks were identified near the site including one indicative of a possible barrow just 500m to the south-east of Moorbarns Farm and c300m from the site.

4.2 Numerous finds of Mesolithic to medieval date have been found in the surrounding landscape, as well as a number of cropmarks indicating possible enclosures, trackways and burial sites in the near vicinity indicative of archaeological discoveries being made (Kinsley 2005).

4.3 Finds of *opus signinum* 500m north-east of the site indicate a Roman building in the vicinity whilst pottery and brooches of Anglo-Saxon date found nearby are of types indicative of Anglo-Saxon burials.

4.4 Earlier field evaluation upon the site showed that there was a depth of redeposited glacial boulder clays and silts across much of the site containing modern bricks and other building debris up to 1.20m deep and more generally around 0.80m deep. The only archaeological feature was a single undated ditch terminus in the northern part of the site in Trench 1 where there that was found elsewhere on the site (Parker and Hurford 2005).

#### **5 RESULTS**

##### **Area 01** Contexts 0001, 0002, 0003, 0004, 0005

5.1 Is the site for the permanent works and deeper excavations and comprises a total area of 4070sq metres. The topsoil (0001) was a brown clay loam, with a few inclusions of sub-rounded stones. During the topsoil strip there were a number of 20<sup>th</sup> century finds observed, mostly modern bricks, which were not retained. The underlying mixed silty clay (0002) was a made-up ground containing fairly frequent modern bricks, pieces of plastic, concrete, wood planks and boards (see Plates 2 and 3). The made up ground 0002 was an amalgam of yellow glacial boulder clays, grey colluvial silts and brown clay loam topsoil mixed together in a levelling out episode across the whole of Area 01 and much of Area 02. This material was likely to have been derived from the construction of the original sewage works in the 1970s.

5.1.2 The excavation of the deeper central area for the plant equipment for the new treatment works in Area 01 showed that there had also been considerable prior disturbance of the site, perhaps as part of landscaping for the earlier treatment works (plate 6). At a depth of

between 1m and 1.3m relative to the ground surface the boulder clay natural, 0003, was encountered. Intervening between this and 0002 was a disturbed c.0.04m thick lens of dark brown organic silts (0004). This layer appears to have been badly disturbed by the 1970s stripping and subsequent dumping of mixed clays and rubble and only survived intermittently. A single fragment of non diagnostic but probably post medieval tile was recovered at this depth at the interface between the heavily disturbed mixed clays and the natural although not in association with the silts. The only visible feature was in the very southern portion of Area 01 a ditch of a former boundary that cut layer 0002. This boundary ran in a slight arc east-west in the southwest corner of the site and was c.1.3m wide and filled with a rust mottled greyish brown silt (0005).

## **Area 02 Contexts 0001, 0002**

5.2. Area 02 covers 2,254 sq metres and approximately half of this was stripped for the site of a temporary compound. The remainder of the area was used to store topsoil. This was deposited directly onto the existing ground surface without any ground disturbance.

5.2.1 Only the topsoil, 0001, was removed from Area 02 exposing a continuation of 0002 as recorded in Area 01.

5.2.3 There were no archaeological deposits or artefacts uncovered as a result of the groundworks in Area 02. The underlying strata as reported in Parker and Hurford (2005) was not uncovered during this process and therefore no further observations on it can be made as a result of the groundworks covered in this report.

## **6 CONCLUSIONS**

6.1 The new sewage treatment works extensions have been sited upon an area that has been extensively disturbed and probably landscaped, to an earlier phase of construction in the 1970s. The level of disturbance in Area 01 and the southern part of Area 02 varies from 0.80m to more than 1.20m. The surrounding topography suggests that to achieve this level of disturbance a depth of at least 1m of topsoil subsoil and natural was removed, probably for a works compound similar in nature to that in Area 02 and eventually landscaped as part of an agreement with the landowner, such as was agreed as part of the current works.

6.2 The old Sewage Treatment works are sunken into the valley side, suggesting that a significant amount of up-cast material was displaced probably to the west onto the area of the new works. It is possible that the location was chosen due to a natural dish in the valley side useful for hiding the location of the works and that the stripping and subsequent landscaping

of the site was, as described above, to make the surrounding landscape more usable to agriculture after the completion of the works.

#### REFERENCES

Kinsley, G. 2005 *Specification for archaeological watching-brief at Lutterworth STW, Leicestershire* NUCL Unpublished document

Parker, D. and Hurford, M. *An archaeological evaluation at Lutterworth Sewage Works, Lutterworth, Leicestershire* ULAS Unpublished report

BGS Geology Viewer: <http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer>, 2011.





Appendix 1. Summary Context List

Context	Area	Thickness	Description
0001	01,02	264mm	Brown clay loam with infrequent sub rounded stones, topsoil.
0002	01,02	557mm	Made up ground with yellow clays, grey silts and topsoil with modern bricks pieces of plastic, concrete, wood
0003	01	685mm observed	Natural, yellow chalky clay, Oadby member diamicton
0004	01	40mm	Intermittent lens of dark brown organic silt at boundary of 0002 and 0003.
0005	01	Not recorded	Fill of boundary ditch, rust mottled greyish brown silt







Lutterworth Sewage Works Site Plan

topsoil storage  
bunds

Area 02

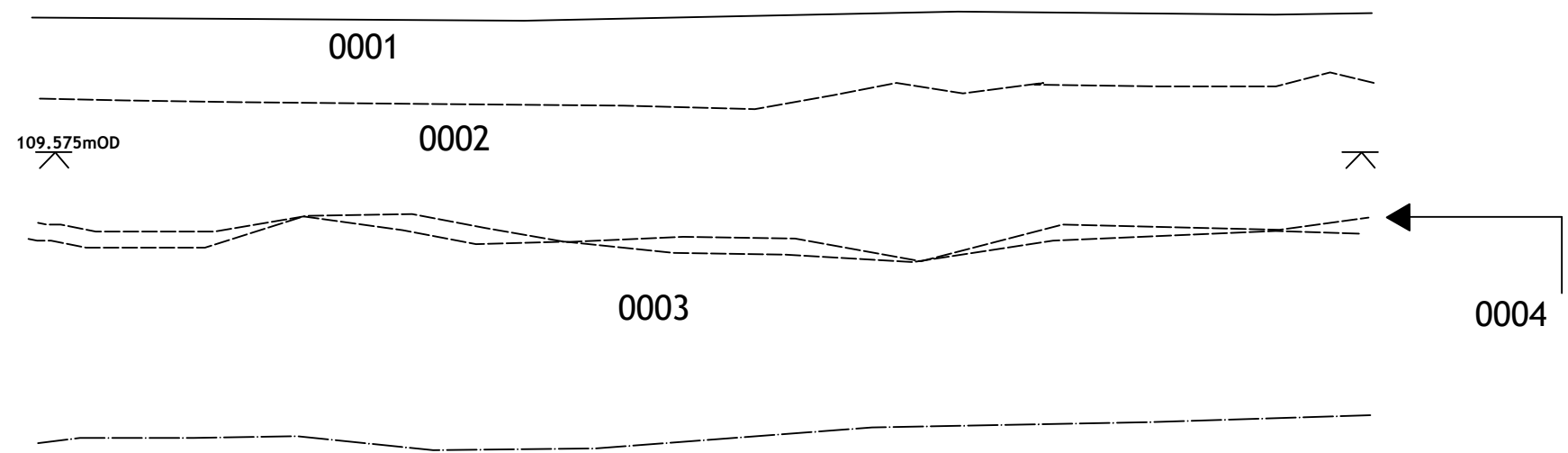
Area 01

modern field boundary

Scale 0 20 40m

S

N



- 0001 Topsoil, mid brown clayey loam
- 0002 Subsoil, made ground, mixed clay, silt and topsoil with modern rubble
- 0003 Natural, yellow clay
- 0004 Lens of grey silt, only partially surviving

**PLATES**



**Plate 1** View of Area 02 prior to stripping. Looking north east.



**Plate 2** North east corner of Area 01 after topsoil stripping showing brick rubble in the subsoil, 0002. Looking east.



**Plate 3** Area 01 looking north north east towards the final part of the topsoil strip in Area 02.



**Plate 4** Northern extent of Area 01 showing the continuation of 0002. Looking north.



**Plate 5** In the northern most part of Area 02 the mixed clayey context of 0002. Topsoil bunds are in the background. Looking north



**Plate 6** Area 02 depth of overburden (0002) shown overlying the boulder clay natural and clearly demonstrates the depth of made ground.