

Flood Alleviation Works Moreton-in-Marsh Gloucestershire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION AND RECORDING



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Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 1719

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*Working for
Warwickshire*

Project: Moreton-in-Marsh Flood Alleviation

Commissioned by: Laurence King on behalf of Cotswold District Council

Project Report No. 1719

Site Code: GMM16

Planning Reference: 15/04454/FUL

National Grid References: SP 2005 3194 to SP 1990 3132
SP 2135 3097 to SP 2152 3016

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SUMMARY

A programme of observation and recording was carried out over a 1540m length of soil stripping associated with groundworks for a flood alleviation scheme to the south of Moreton-in-Marsh. Over the majority of the site, the stripping involved the removal of topsoil and a portion of the subsoil so the geological natural was not exposed. Prominent ridge and furrow was noted in the northern field of the western stripped area, which is likely to be medieval or post-medieval in date.

No finds were recorded during the work. This could suggest that the areas stripped have historically been pasture, possibly water meadows, and not subject to manuring, which is the usual process by which material such as pottery and tile is incorporated into the ploughzone.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Cotswold District Council for a programme of flood alleviation works north of the Stow Brook, and between the Stow Brook to the River Evenlode, to the south of Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire (Ref. 15/04454/FUL).
- 1.2 The proposed flood alleviation works lie within an area of archaeological potential. A condition of planning permission therefore required the applicant to secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work to be carried out in conjunction with the groundworks programme.
- 1.3 A programme of fieldwork, consisting of the archaeological observation of topsoil stripping, was commissioned from Archaeology Warwickshire and carried out between December 2016 and March 2017. This report presents the results of that work. The project archive will be stored with Archaeology Warwickshire under Site Code GMM14, until deposition with Corinium Museum, Cirencester.

2 SITE LOCATION

- 2.1 The flood alleviation work is located on two stripped areas, which run between national grid references SP 2005 3194 to SP 1990 3132 for the western easement and between SP 2125 3097 to SP 2152 3016 for the eastern easement, in the parish of Moreton-in-Marsh, to the south of the town itself. These proposed flood alleviation works cover a length of approximately 1500m.

- 2.2 The underlying geology of the area is Charmouth Mudstone formation overlaid by Moreton Member in the western area of flood alleviation and Charmouth Mudstone overlaid by alluvial clay, silt, sand and gravel in the eastern area (British Geological Survey 2016).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Prehistoric and Roman

- 3.1 The earliest evidence for human activity in the area is a possible Bronze Age round barrow which lies close to the line of the proposed eastern flood alleviation (HER 38910). There is considerable evidence for probable later prehistoric to Roman activity in the area, although much of this has been derived from aerial photographs, rather than through excavation (HER 2742, 2743, 4500, 4501, 12656). Some of these records relate to sites close to the eastern flood alleviation area. The Fosse Way Roman road runs close to the western area of flood alleviation (HER 6491). Some further archaeological sites are shown on aerial photographs and although their date is recorded as 'unknown', may also be of later prehistoric or Roman date (see table below).

Medieval

- 3.2 Moreton-in-Marsh has its origins in the 8th century (HER 15387) and the medieval town was laid out in the 13th century (HER 15388). There is evidence for medieval ridge and furrow agriculture and medieval field systems in the surrounding fields and water meadows (HER 4006, 15389, 34198, 38917). Coldicote deserted medieval village also lies to the east (HER 9671). Some of the undated enclosures etc recorded on aerial photographs may be of medieval date (see table below).

Post-medieval

- 3.3 A large number of the houses in the search area are Listed Buildings dating from the 17th-19th centuries. These are included in the table below but not shown on plan. The eastern flood alleviation area is immediately adjacent to the Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton railway, which dates to 1853 (HER 15488).

World War II

- 3.4 A number of Second World War temporary camps and military installations exist in the area (HER 27434, 38878, 38882, 38887).

Archaeological work

3.5 A number of archaeological watching briefs, evaluations and desk-based assessments have taken place within the search area. These have been largely negative or produced evidence for post-medieval or undated features.

HER information from the search area (Listed Buildings etc not shown on Fig 1)

HER no	Description	Date
2726	St David's well, holy well	
2742	Probable settlement shown as cropmarks	Iron Age to Roman
2743	Probable settlement shown as cropmarks	Iron Age to Roman
4006	Water meadow system associated with ridge and furrow	Medieval to PM
4500	Three to four small enclosures	Iron Age to Roman
4501	Linear cropmarks and enclosures	Iron Age to Roman
6491	The Fosse Way	Roman
7237	Hunting spearhead find	12th-16thC
8211	St David's Church	16thC, largely rebuilt
9671	Coldicote deserted medieval village	Medieval
11053	Long cross halfpenny of Henry III	13thC
12655	Two small curvilinear enclosures	Unknown
12656	Rectilinear enclosures and field boundaries	Iron Age to Roman
12958	Linen Factory, Church Street	1824
15387	The early medieval settlement of Moreton-in-Marsh	8thC onwards
15388	Medieval new town of Moreton-in-Marsh	13thC
15389	Excavation of three phases of medieval field system	11th-13thC
15488	Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton Railway	1853
15534	Church Street letterbox	Early 20thC
18197	No 1 Bourton Road Listed Building	c.1840
18198	Nos 2 and 3 Bourton Road Listed Buildings	c.1840
18199	Upperfields Farmhouse Listed Building	Late 17thC
18200	Nos 3 and 5 Church Street, Listed Buildings	Early-mid 19thC
18201	Rhymes Cottage Listed Building	Early 19thC
18202	No 11 Church Street and railings, Listed Building	Early 19thC
18203	No 12 Church Street Listed Building	18thC
18204	Nos 13 and 14 Church Street Listed Buildings	Early 19thC

18205	The Old Parsonage Listed Building	Early 19thC
18206	Little Paddock, Church House, Listed Building	Early 18thC
18207	Church House and railings, Listed Building	Early 19thC
18208	St David's House Listed Building	Early 18thC
18909	Lilac Cottage Listed Building	Early 18thC
18213	Redesdale Hall (Town Hall) Listed Building	1887
18214	University farmhouse Listed Building	1678
18215	Brynmore and Forge Cottage Listed Building	Late 17th/early 18thC
18216	The Little Window Listed Building	Early 19thC
18217	The Bookshop and Swan public house Listed Buildings	Mid 19thC
18218	The Old Bank Listed Building	c.1840
18219	Premises of TV Hill and Son, Listed Building	Mid 18thC
18220	Market House Restaurant Listed Building	Late 18thC
18221	Trevone Listed Building	Late 18thC
18222	Redesdale Arms Hotel Listed Building	Late 18thc
18223	Nos 7 and 8 High Street Listed Buildings	17thC
18224	The Pharmacy and Windsor House Listed Buildings	Early 19thC
18239	Manor House Hotel Listed Building	1658
18240	Creswyke House and The Windrush Listed Buildings	Mid 18thC
18241	Queen's Head House and Old Shop Antiques Listed Building	Mid 19thC
18242	The Steps and premises of Home and Sons Listed Building	Mid 18thC
18243	The Cotswold Restaurant, Sunnyside and White Hart Royal Hotel Listed Buildings	1828
18244	The White Hart Hotel Listed Building	16thC-17thC
18260	Langate Listed Building	19thC
18276	Lemington House and boundary wall Listed Building	17thC
18264	The Cottage Listed Building	c.1700
18285	Smithy recorded on First Edition map	Late 19thC
18449	Negative Watching Brief undertaken at Oakdene, Church Street	
19677	Negative Evaluation at St David's School	
20813	Watching brief at Smith's Cottage, post-19thC	

	landscaping recorded	
21004	DBA and evaluation at Pool Garage, stone drain found	19thC
21859	Archaeological evaluation at the Gospel Hall, plough scar recorded.	
22301	Archaeological evaluation at Treone, post-medieval stone culvert recorded	
27136	Negative evaluation at Caerphilly, Stow Road	
27434	World War II military installation mapped from 1947 APs	WWII
27435	Earthworks of possible medieval or later sheepfold	Med to PM
27574	Negative archaeological evaluation on land at Church Street	
27584	Archaeological watching brief recorded a post-medieval ditch and undated wall footing	
28717	Negative watching brief at the Redesdale Arms	
30874	Negative watching brief at Manor House Hotel	
32793	Negative watching brief at St David's Church Centre	
33542	Desk-based assessment	
33877	Desk-based assessment	
34116	Negative watching brief at Tesco Express	
34198	Magnetometer survey revealed area of ridge and furrow and a former field boundary and other agricultural anomalies	
34199	Archaeological evaluation recorded a series of furrows	
38878	Second World War military depot	WWII
38882	Second World War temporary military camp	WWII
38887	Second World War temporary military camp	WWII
38893	Nine small clay pits	Post-medieval
38897	Five to six curvilinear enclosures	Unknown
38898	Eleven small curvilinear enclosures	Unknown
38904	Enclosures visible as cropmarks	Iron Age to Roman
38905	Two small curvilinear enclosures	Unknown
38906	Settlement visible as cropmarks	Iron Age to Roman
38910	Possible barrow	Bronze Age
38911	Curvilinear enclosure visible as a cropmark	Iron Age to Roman

38915	Water meadows	Med to PM
38917	Drainage ditches visible as earthworks	Med to PM
38918	Rectilinear enclosures, field boundaries and hollow way	Med to PM
41783	Geophysical survey identified the sites of bonfires, possible ridge and furrow and a linear anomaly	
41784	Geophysical survey recorded a linear anomaly, evaluation found this to be a ditch with a land drain in it	
41802	Turnpike road from Bourton on the Hill to Chipping Norton	Post-medieval
42908	Evaluation by 11 trial trenches recorded undated stone-built structure, ridge and furrow ploughing a dump of material in a pond, field boundaries and a possible pit or posthole.	
42909	Remains of a small stone-built structure revealed during evaluation (evaluation 42908)	undated
42910	Remains of an undated track recorded during evaluation	undated
42911	Possible pond site recorded during evaluation	undated
42912	Possible tree pit of unknown date recorded during evaluation	undated
42913	Post-medieval field boundary recorded during evaluation	Post-medieval
42914	Findspot of flint during evaluation	
42915	Pot or posthole recorded during evaluation	undated
43724	Desk-based assessment	
44517	Desk-based assessment	
44518	Geophysical survey identified a number of anomalies of possible archaeological origin	
44730	Archaeological evaluation of 10 trial trenches revealed few features of archaeological significance	
45135	Coach House Listed Building	Early 19thC
45137	Altar Tomb to Henry Goodear Busby Byds, Listed	1821
45138	Line of four table tombs, Listed	Early to mid 19thC
45139	Anne Purser tomb, Listed	1858
45140	Table tomb, Listed	c.1800
45147	Annexe to Manor House Hotel, Listed	Mid 18thC

4 AIMS AND METHODS

- 4.1 The main aim of the work was to record any archaeological remains disturbed by the flood alleviation groundworks, to collate the records in an archaeological archive and present the significant aspects of the archive in a report for dissemination.
- 4.2 The secondary aim was to form an understanding of the remains recorded in terms of their character and date, and to place the evidence in its local and regional context.
- 4.3 The objective of the work was a record of excavation of the topsoil and any other soils stripped.
- 4.4 The work undertaken involved the examination of early map evidence as well as records of archaeological remains in the area and local historical journals and other publications.
- 4.5 An experienced archaeologist was made available for each day of ground disturbance when notified by the client, in accordance with WSI and planning condition.

5 RESULTS

- 5.1 Work took place in December 2016 and January and March 2017. The first part of the work took place during very wet weather. Stripping was carried out using large tracked excavators (14T and 21T machines).
- 5.2 The first phase of works was to the east of the Fosse Way, on the western side of the railway embankment to allow water to discharge into the River Evenlode. This was a straight line of stripping c.850m in length, measuring 10m wide and 0.30-0.40m deep.
- 5.3 Geological natural (olive yellow clay 3) was exposed in a small area near the woods at the southern end of the stripped area. It was overlain by 0.15m of yellowish brown clay loam which contained occasional small pebbles (2). The overlying topsoil was brown clay loam with frequent small to medium pebbles, 0.15-0.25m thick (1). No finds were recovered. Stripping was hampered by wet weather, particularly during December.
- 5.3 The second phase took place in the western area, north of the Stow Brook. This followed the side of field boundaries, from an existing flood relief ditch, south to the Stow Brook. Here the stripping covered an area c.690m long and 10m wide, widening to 15m in the southern 40m. Geological natural was not exposed in this phase of works and the lowest layer recorded was yellowish brown clay loam with occasional fragments of limestone (5 – up to 0.12m depth exposed). The topsoil was brown clay loam 0.15-0.30m thick (4). No finds were recovered.
- 5.4 The only archaeology noted was the prominent ridge and furrow visible in the northern field where stripping started for the western flood alleviation route. This has a double headland in the south of the field. The ridge and furrow is visible on aerial photographs and LiDAR.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The groundworks observed consisted of the stripping of topsoil and subsoil in two 10m wide easements to the south of Moreton-in-Marsh. Of the c.1540m total length, only in one small area the southern part of the eastern strip was geological natural exposed, and no archaeological features were recorded cut into it.

- 6.2 No pottery or other finds were recorded in either length stripped. The paucity of finds suggests that the land has not been historically subject to frequent manuring, although the land is currently under cultivation rather than pasture. Much of the Midlands medieval ridge and furrow was ploughed out during the second half of the 20th-century following intensification of agriculture during and after World War II.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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APPENDIX

A List of contexts

Context	Description	Depth (m)	Comment
1	Brown clay loam	0.15-0.25	Topsoil
2	Yellowish brown clay loam	0.15	Subsoil
3	Olive yellow clay		Natural
4	Brown clay loam	0.15-0.30	Topsoil
5	Yellowish brown clay loam	Up to 0.12	Subsoil
6	Natural		Not exposed



1. Stripping in area by railway embankment, looking north



2. Waterlogged stripped area, middle of embankment strip, looking south



3. Stripped area at south end of embankment, looking north



4. Western strip area, northern end, looking south



5. Prominent ridge and furrow in field at northern end of western stripped area



6. Stripped area, looking south by field boundary



7. Southern end of western strip, looking south

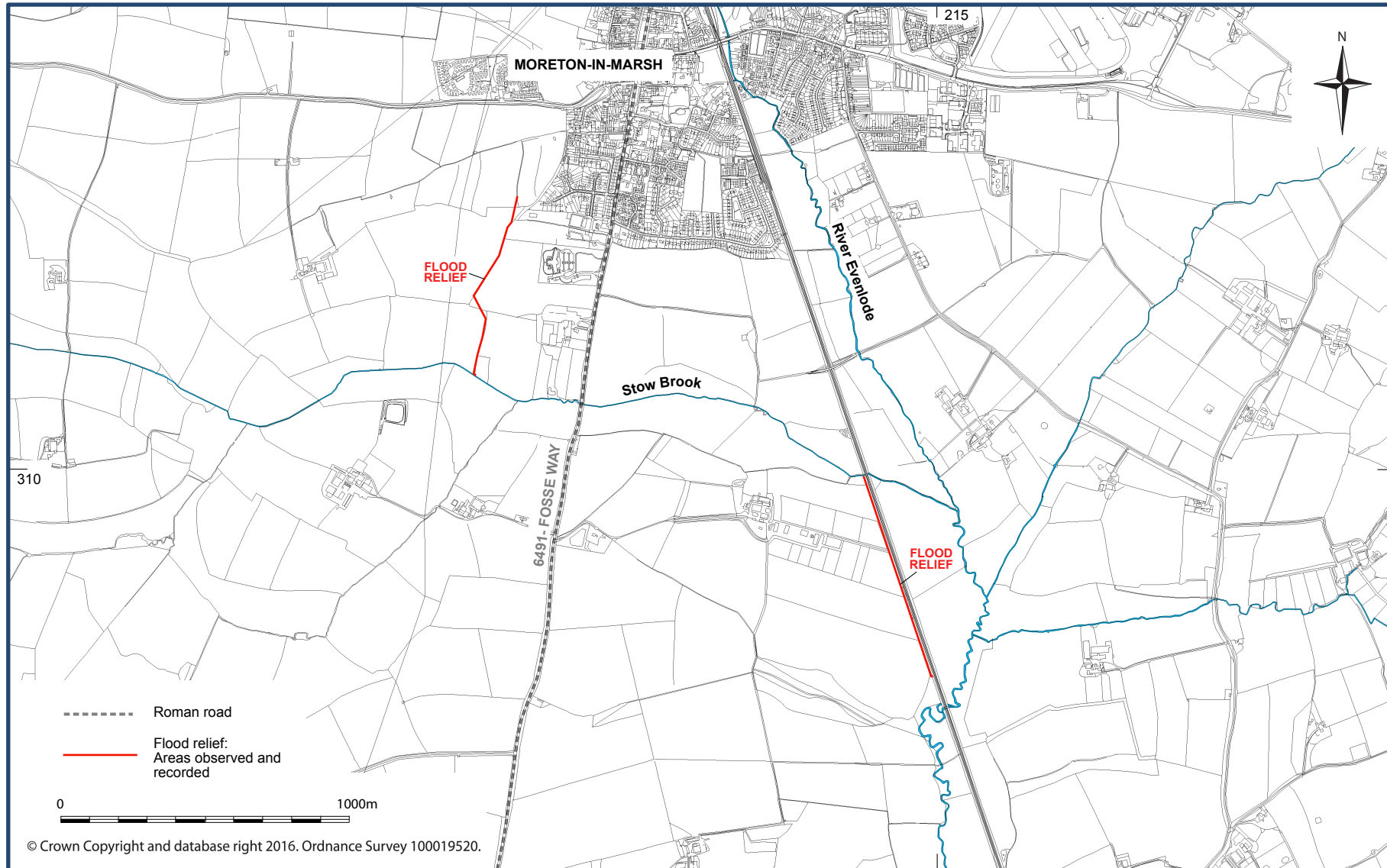


Fig 2: Location of areas observed and recorded