



Programme of Archaeological Monitoring and Recording Report  
Hallatrow Business Park, Wells Road, Hallatrow, Bristol, BS39 6EX

14 May 2021

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Business Park, Wells Road, Hallatrow, Bristol, BS39 6EX

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Client: David Hitchings

Planning authority: Bath and North East Somerset Council (BANES)

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## Summary

This document sets out the results of a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording in conjunction with permission to erect a new warehouse at Hallatrow Business Park, Wells Road, Hallatrow, BS39 6EX (the Project Site). The fieldwork was carried out on the 19<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

Permission was granted for a third warehouse measuring 1400 sq. m, in January 2018 (BANES Planning Reference 18/00307/FUL). The need for archaeological investigation was advised by the then County Archaeologist, Richard Sermon in a consultee response dated 1st May 2018, in which it was stated that the land lies close to the site of a Roman burial, south of the business park.

A walkover survey of the site revealed that the development area had been reduced by c. 2.5 m from the ground level noted on agricultural land to the south. The results of the excavation confirmed this, revealing > 2 m of natural geological deposits, with all traces of the topsoil and subsoil having been removed.

The evidence suggests that the Project Site is likely to be located within an area of Romano British activity, however the ground reduction has resulted in the truncation of the land to such an extent that there is little potential for significant archaeological deposits to survive.

The reduction of the Project Site may be the result of an extraction of natural materials, or simply as a result of levelling the land for development in the 1950s / early 1960s.

The results of the programme of work were negative and no further monitoring is considered necessary in line with the permitted development.

## Acknowledgements

*HPS would like to thank David Hitchings, Hallatrow Business Park Ltd for commissioning the project, and Rebecca Morgan (Stokes Morgan) and Terena Sage (Business Parks) for their help with arranging the programme of monitoring. HPS are also grateful to Steve Membery, South West Heritage Trust Senior Historic Environment Officer, for his help and advice throughout.*



# 1. Introduction

## Project Background

- 1.1. This document sets out the results of a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording in conjunction with permission to erect a new warehouse at Hallatrow Business Park, Wells Road, Hallatrow, BS39 6EX (hereafter referred to as the Project Site).
- 1.2. Permission was granted for a third warehouse measuring 1400 sq m, in January 2018 (BANES Planning Reference 18/00307/FUL). The need for archaeological investigation was advised by the then County Archaeologist, Richard Sermon in a consultee response dated 1<sup>st</sup> May 2018, in which it was stated that the land lies close to the site of a Roman burial, south of the business park.
- 1.3. A programme of monitoring and recording was required in order to satisfy Condition 7 of the planning consent, which states the following-
  - 1.3.1. *"No development shall commence, except archaeological investigation work, until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The programme of archaeological work should provide a controlled watching brief during ground works on the site, with provision for excavation of any significant deposits or features encountered, and shall be carried out by a competent person(s) and completed in accordance with the approved written scheme of investigation."*
  - 1.3.2. *Reason: The site is within an area of significant archaeological interest and the Council will wish to examine and record items of interest discovered in accordance with Policy HE1 of the Bath & North East Somerset Placemaking Plan. This is a condition precedent because archaeological remains and features may be damaged by the initial development works."*
- 1.4. This project was completed under reference HPS-391/21.



Figure 1 Detailed location of the Project Site centred on ST 63037 56746. Source Know Your Place.

## The Project Site

- 1.5. The Project Site is located within a rural setting, 200 m to the west of the Somerset hamlet of Hallatrow and 11 km southwest of Bath. The site comprises two large former MAFF warehouses, accessed south off the A39, with the A37 to the west.
- 1.6. Geologically the Project Site is defined by Mercia Mudstone Group - Mudstone and Halite-stone, a sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 201 to 252 million years ago in the Triassic Period. No superficial deposits are recorded.
- 1.7. The site is recorded at approximately 105 m aOD. Land to the northeast slopes towards the Cam Brook c. 600 m from the development area.

## 2. Archaeological & Historic Background

- 2.1. This information is derived from the Bath & North East Somerset Historic Environment Record (Know Your Place), the National Mapping Programme, Portable Antiquities Scheme and designated heritage assets from the National Heritage List for England (NHLE).



- 2.2. In 1839 the tithe map of High Littleton recorded that the Project Site formed part of plot 334. The land was listed as pasture within the ownership of the British Politician, William Gore Langton and occupied by John Blinman. Turnpike Cottage (later known as White Cross Cottage) was erected by the Bath Turnpike Trust in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the northwest of the plot.
- 2.3. Land bordering the site to the south (plot 333) is named 'Chasehills' in the High Littleton tithe apportionment. This is interpreted as a variation of 'Chesshills'. The name generally refers to land with an abundance of stones, possibly heaped and sometimes denoting ruins. In this instance, the site is the reputed location of Roman stone coffins identified by amateur archaeologist John Skinner in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (Page 1906).
- 2.4. The North Somerset Bristol to Radstock Railway line was opened in 1870, c. 230 m east of the site.
- 2.5. There was no change recorded across the Project Site until post WWII. By 1961 two large warehouses had been constructed to the northeast and east of the plot. The stores are recorded as former MAFF<sup>1</sup> buildings, designed to hold emergency rations during the Cold War years. The structures were all decommissioned by 1995 and the buildings on site were granted permission for commercial reuse in 1996 (Leedale 2005).
- 2.6. Between 2003 and 2009 land to the west of Warehouse 2 was extended and used as a compound. This area forms the current Project Site boundary.

### Summary

- 2.7. Records suggesting the location of Roman coffins in the field to the south combined with a place name indicative of settlement activity, raises the potential for Romano British archaeology within the area.

## 3. Aims and Objectives

- 3.1. The aims of the Monitoring and Recording, as defined in the CIfA' Standard and guidance for an archaeological Watching Brief (CIfA 2020) were:

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food



- *To allow for the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be ascertained in advance of the development;*
- *To provide the opportunity, if required, 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 are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard; and*
- *To inform a mitigation strategy allowing for a programme of recording appropriate to the significance of such deposits.*

3.2. The objectives of the Monitoring and Recording were:

- *To determine the presence or absence of archaeological features, deposits, structures, artefacts or ecofacts within the Project Site.*
- *To establish and record the extent, character, date, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological remains, to an appropriate level and within the constraints of the Project Site.*
- *To place identified archaeological remains within the wider historical and archaeological context in order to establish their significance; and*
- *To prepare an archaeological report detailing the results of the programme of Monitoring and Recording.*

## 4. Methodology

4.1. The programme of monitoring and recording focussed on a single area of excavation to the south of the Project Site. Due to the results it was agreed with Steve Membery (Senior Historic Environment Officer for South West Heritage Trust), to cease monitoring.

4.2. All spoil was visually examined and scanned with a metal detector for the purposes of finds retrieval.

### Service location and other constraints

4.3. There were no constraints in relation to below/above-ground services or ecological and environmental matters.





## Recording

4.4. A full photographic record was made using digital cameras equipped with an image sensor of not less than 10 megapixels.

## 5. Results

5.1. A single pit was excavated to the south of the site, measuring 1.2 m in width x 2.2 m in length, excavated into a steep bank to a depth of 2.5 m.

5.2. A walkover survey of the site revealed that the development area had been reduced by c. 2.5 m from the ground level noted on agricultural land to the south. The results of the excavation confirmed this, revealing > 2 m of natural geological deposits, with all traces of the topsoil and subsoil having been removed.

5.3. The depth of the natural deposits are considered to be beyond the archaeological horizon and monitoring has ceased.

## 6. Conclusion

6.1. The evidence suggests that the Project Site is likely to be located within an area of Romano British activity, however the ground reduction has resulted in the truncation of the land to such an extent that there is little potential for significant archaeological deposits to survive.

6.2. The reduction of the Project Site may be the result of an extraction of natural materials, or simply as a result of levelling the land for development in the 1950s / early 1960s.

6.3. The results of the programme of work were negative and no further monitoring is considered necessary in line with the permitted development.



## 7. Oasis

- 7.1. An OASIS online record has been created with key fields completed. The record will be completed at the end of the project. Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, copies of the OASIS record will be integrated into the relevant records.

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## 10. Appendices

### *Appendix 1 Site Photographs*



*Photo 1 West facing view of area of excavation, showing truncated natural deposits (scales 1 x 2 m & 1 x 1 m).*



*Photo 2 South facing view of the Project Site showing the extent of ground reduction. Scale 1 x 2 m.*





*Photo 3 South facing view of the Project Site, looking towards agricultural land around Whitecross Farm.*



## Appendix 2 Site Plan



Figure 2 Site plan reproduced from a planning document provided by Nicholas Minchin Architects. Area of excavation outlined in red (centred on ST 63059 56719).



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