



making sense of heritage

Hospital Lane, Prees Heath, Whitchurch, Shropshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Ref: 100740.03
June 2014



**Hospital Lane, Prees Heath, Whitchurch,
Shropshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

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Hospital Lane, Prees Heath, Whitchurch, Shropshire

Archaeological Watching Brief

Summary

Wessex Archaeology have been commissioned by Enterprise Managed Services now Amey Metering Limited, (hereafter 'the Client') to undertake an archaeological watching brief during mains renewal at Hospital Lane, Prees, Whitchurch, Shropshire (hereafter 'the Site').

The Site was located in and around Prees Heath near Whitchurch in Shropshire, centred on NGR 355597 338123. It crossed a variety of different land uses, including pasture, road verges and carriageway. The watching brief took place on various dates between 15th July 2013 and 2nd June 2014.

No features or deposits of archaeological significance were observed during the watching brief.

It is recommended that the project archive resulting from the excavation be deposited with Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery. The Museum has agreed in principle to accept the project archive on completion of the project (Entry No. E.00215), under an accession code to be confirmed.



Hospital Lane, Prees Heath, Whitchurch, Shropshire

Archaeological Watching Brief

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology is grateful to Enterprise Managed Services, now Amey Metering Limited, for commissioning the project. Fieldwork was undertaken by Rosalind Sampson, Ashley Tuck, Chris Hirst and Sam Fairhead.

The report was compiled by Sam Fairhead with illustrations by Chris Breeden. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Grace Corbett and Richard O'Neill.



Hospital Lane, Prees Heath, Whitchurch, Shropshire

Archaeological Watching Brief

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology were commissioned by Enterprise Managed Services, now Amey Metering Limited (hereafter 'the Client'), to undertake an archaeological watching brief during mains renewal at Hospital Lane, Prees, Whitchurch, Shropshire (hereafter 'the Site').
- 1.1.2 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared in accordance with current industry guidance (IfA 2008a and 2008b) and in accordance with IfA Codes of Conduct (2010), and was approved by the Client and the Shropshire County Council (SCC) Planning Archaeologist prior to fieldwork commencement.

1.2 The Site

- 1.2.1 The Site (**Figure 1**) was located in and around Prees Heath near Whitchurch in Shropshire, centred on NGR 355597 338123. It crossed a variety of different land uses, including pasture, road verges and carriageway.
- 1.2.2 The geology of the site comprised mudstone, siltstone, limestone and sandstone of the Lias group, overlain by glacial sands and gravels. (Source: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 Recorded heritage assets within a 1km Study Area around the Site were considered in order to provide a context for the discussion and interpretation of the known and potential historic resources surrounding the Site. The following is summarised from the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2014).

2.2 Prehistoric

- 2.2.1 Fragments of four late Bronze Age cremations were found in 1916 by a Captain of the RAMC near the demolished nurses' quarters at Prees Heath camp. This lies near Warren House, situated between the modern A41 and A49. One cremation was contained within an urn, two were enclosed with rough stones and the fourth was unenclosed.

2.3 Roman

- 2.3.1 A Roman Road running from Whitchurch to Stretton may pass either through or close to the Site. In places the road is 11m wide by 0.3m high and is visible following hedgerows

and as an agger. An excavation at the Raven Inn, Prees Heath in 1959 discovered a Roman Road, which may be part of the Whitchurch to Stretton road or may represent a second route.

2.4 Post-Medieval

2.4.1 The Site is located close to RAF Tillstock, a Second World War airfield which lies immediately south of the eastern part of the scheme. It is well preserved, with extant airfield, aircraft hangars, the site of a control tower and the site of a battle headquarters, and is currently used by a haulage firm and by light industry.

2.4.2 In addition to the Second World War remains, there was a First World War training camp at Prees Heath. Remains of tracks and concrete bases were visible on aerial photographs taken in 1940, and training trenches were dug.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims and objectives

3.1.1 The general aims of the project were:

- *to identify any archaeological remains within the Site;*
- *to accurately record the location and stratigraphy of areas excavated during groundworks;*
- *to record all archaeological remains disturbed by the groundworks;*
- *to determine the extent, condition, character, importance and date of any archaeological deposits encountered;*
- *to provide information that will enable the archaeological remains to be placed within their local, regional and national contexts;*
- *to integrate the results into the wider cultural and environmental context and with specific research aims;*
- *to recover artefacts disturbed by the Site works, and*
- *to produce an accurate and comprehensive record and report of any archaeological deposits disturbed by the Site works.*

3.2 Fieldwork methodology

3.2.1 Groundworks were monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist from Wessex Archaeology.

3.2.2 All excavation areas were scanned by the client using a CAT to check for uncharted services.

3.2.3 Topsoil or overburden was removed using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, working under the continuous direct supervision of a suitably experienced archaeologist. Topsoil was removed in a series of level spits down to the level of the upper archaeological horizon, or the level of the natural geology, whichever was reached first.



- 3.2.4 All trenches were recorded using Wessex Archaeology *pro forma* recording sheets and a continuous unique numbering system.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 A total of 20 trenches were excavated along the route of the mains renewal (**Figure 1**).

4.2 Summary

- 4.2.1 Trenches 1-4, were excavated in fields south of Tilstock Lane, immediately west of the railway. The stratigraphy consisted of a light grey sandy silt topsoil directly overlying a light brown silty sand natural. Topsoil typically existed to a depth of 0.4m below ground level (bgl) (**Plate 1**).
- 4.2.2 Trenches 5-9 were excavated through the surface of Tilstock Road. Stratigraphy consisted of a tarmac road surface overlying a concrete bedding layer and a pinkish-orange natural sand below this. The sand was typically encountered at 0.32m bgl (**Plate 2**).
- 4.2.3 Trenches 10-15 were excavated through the surface of Tilstock Lane to the north of Bridge Farm. The stratigraphy consisted of a tarmac road surface overlying a hardcore bedding layer. Below this the natural consisted of light brown sand and fine gravel, typically encountered at 0.9m bgl (**Plate 3**).
- 4.2.4 Trenches 16-20 were excavated in a north-south line crossing Hospital lane, east of the A41. The stratigraphy consisted of a dark grey silty sand topsoil directly overlying a mid orange sandy natural. The natural layers were typically encountered at 0.45m bgl (**Plate 4**).
- 4.2.5 No features or deposits of archaeological significance were revealed.

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Summary

- 5.1.1 A total of 20 trenches were excavated along the route of the mains renewal. No features or deposits of archaeological significance were revealed.

5.2 Conclusions

- 5.2.1 The watching brief has established that the mains renewal work has not impacted on significant archaeological remains.

6 STORAGE AND CURATION

6.1 Museum

- 6.1.1 It is recommended that the project archive resulting from the excavation be deposited with Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery. The Museum has agreed in principle to accept the

project archive on completion of the project (Entry No. E.00215), under an accession code to be confirmed. No finds were recovered.

6.2 Archive

- 6.2.1 The complete site archive, which will include paper records, photographic records, graphics, artefacts, ecofacts and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; IfA 2009; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).

6.3 Discard policy

- 6.3.1 Wessex Archaeology follows the guidelines set out in Selection, Retention and Dispersal (SMA 1993), which allows for the discard of selected artefact and ecofact categories which are not considered to warrant any future analysis. No artefacts were recovered during the investigations.
- 6.3.2 Wessex Archaeology follows nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1993; 1995; English Heritage 2011) for the discard of environmental remains and samples. None were recovered from the Site.

6.4 Security Copy

- 6.4.1 In line with current best practice (e.g. Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.



7 REFERENCES

7.1 Bibliography

Bibliographic references

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8 APPENDICES

8.1 Appendix 1: OASIS form

OASIS ID: wessexar1-202432

Project details

Project name Hospital Lane, Whitchurch, Shropshire
Short description of the project Archaeological watching brief on mains renewal work
Project dates Start: 15-07-2013 End: 02-06-2014
Previous/future work No / No
Any associated project reference codes 100740 - Sitecode
Type of project Field evaluation
Site status None
Current Land use Cultivated Land 4 - Character Undetermined
Monument type NONE None
Significant Finds NONE None
Methods & techniques "Visual Inspection"
Development type Pipelines/cables (e.g. gas, electric, telephone, TV cable, water, sewage, drainage etc.)
Position in the planning process Not known / Not recorded

Project location

Country England
Site location SHROPSHIRE NORTH SHROPSHIRE PREES Hospital Lane, Prees Heath, Whitchurch, Shropshire
Postcode SY13
Study area 1.00 Kilometres
Site coordinates SJ 55597 38123 52.9383475816 -2.66076827332 52 56 18 N 002 39 38 W
Point
Height OD / Depth Min: 97.10m Max: 97.68m

Project creators

Name of Organisation Wessex Archaeology
Project brief originator Wessex Archaeology
Project design originator Wessex Archaeology
Project director/manager R. O'Neill
Project supervisor Sam Fairhead
Type of sponsor/funding body Severn Trent Water
Name of sponsor/funding body Enterprise Managed Services, now Amey Metering Ltd

Project archives

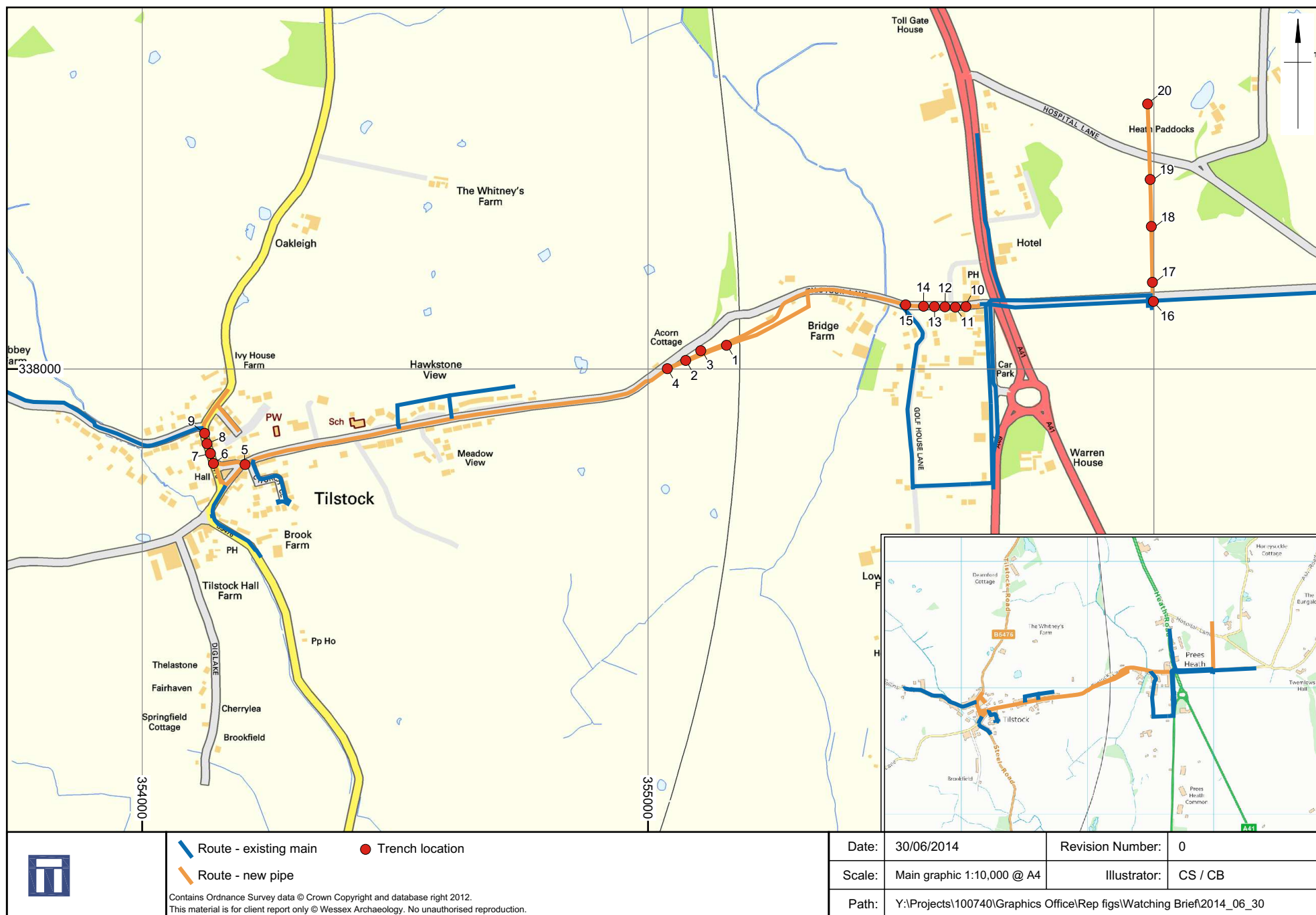
Physical Archive Exists? No
Digital Archive recipient Shrewsbury Museum
Digital Archive ID E.00215
Digital Contents "Stratigraphic"
Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient Shrewsbury Museum
Paper Archive ID E.00215
Paper Contents "Stratigraphic"
Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Diary", "Report"

Project bibliography 1



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Site location

Figure 1



Plate 1: North facing section, Trench 1



Plate 2: West facing section, Trench 7



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Plate 3: Trench 12 from the southwest



Plate 4: East facing section, Trench 18

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