

Land North of Puriton, Somerset

Archaeological Evaluation Report



Museum Accession Code TTNCM:47/2011

Heritage PRN no. 30384

Planning Application no. 42/10/00030

Ref: 78170.01

June 2011

Land North of Puriton, Somerset

Archaeological Evaluation Fieldwork Report

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Planning App. Ref. 42/10/00030

*Land at the west of BAE Systems ROF site, Woolavington Rd, Puriton, Bridgwater:
Installation of Photovoltaic Solar Park and associated equipment*

Project Metadata

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|----------------------------|---|------------------------|---------------|---------------------|-----|
| Planning App Ref: | 42/10/00030 | NGR: | 332470 142360 | | |
| Planning App Title: | LAND AT THE WEST OF BAE SYSTEMS ROF SITE, WOOLAVINGTON ROAD, PURITON, BRIDGWATER: INSTALLATION OF PHOTOVOLTAIC SOLAR PARK AND ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT | | | | |
| Site Code: | 78170 | Accession Code: | TTNCM:47/2011 | Client Code: | n/a |

Quality Assurance

| Version | Status* | Prepared by | Approved By | Approver's Signature | Date |
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* I = Internal Draft; E = External Draft; F = Final

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Contents

| | |
|---|----------|
| Summary..... | ii |
| Acknowledgements..... | iii |
| | |
| 1 INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1.1 Project Background..... | 1 |
| 1.2 Scope of Works..... | 1 |
| | |
| 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND | 1 |
| | |
| 3 PROJECT OBJECTIVES | 2 |
| | |
| 4 RESULTS | 2 |
| 4.1 Introduction..... | 2 |
| 4.2 Archaeology..... | 2 |
| 4.3 Archive..... | 2 |
| | |
| 5 BIBLIOGRAPHY | 3 |
| | |
| 6 APPENDICES | 4 |
| 6.1 Appendix 1: Trench profiles..... | 4 |

Figure list

Figure 1: Site location plan

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by BNRG Puriton Ltd, through their archaeological consultant Archaeology & Planning Solutions, to carry out an archaeological evaluation at the southern end of a 13ha plot situated to the north of Puriton, near Bridgwater, Somerset (centred on OS NGR 332470 142360).

The Local Planning Authority (LPA) had determined that an archaeological evaluation was required in support of the Client's planning application (Planning App. No. 42/10/00030) for the Site.

No archaeological remains were recorded in the four evaluation trenches excavated.

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by BNRG Puriton Ltd to carry out an archaeological evaluation of land to the north of Puriton village, and their assistance throughout is gratefully acknowledged. In particular, Wessex Archaeology would like to specifically highlight Tom Brinicombe (Gunsko Communications Ltd) for his co-ordinating role on behalf of the client, Alan Thomas (Archaeological Consultant; Archaeology & Planning Solutions), Nick Tyrell (Planning Advisor; Alder King) and Landmark Practice (Designer) for the support and assistance they have shown during the project. Wessex Archaeology would also like to acknowledge the co-operation shown by the farmer Duncan Darling.

The written scheme of investigation for this project was prepared by Wessex Archaeology, and approved by Steven Membery, Senior Historic Environment Officer for Somerset County Council, who also monitored the fieldwork; his collaborative role, knowledge and advice was greatly appreciated.

The fieldwork was carried out by Oliver Good, assisted by Neil Fitzpatrick and Lorrain Higbee, and the project managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Andrew Crockett. This report was compiled by Oliver Good and Andrew Crockett, and the illustrations prepared by S E James.

Land North of Puriton, Somerset

Archaeological Evaluation Fieldwork Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by BNRG Puriton Ltd (the **Client**), through their archaeological consultant Archaeology & Planning Solutions (the **Consultant**), to carry out an archaeological evaluation of 13ha of land situated to the north of Puriton, near Bridgwater, Somerset (the **Site** - centred on OS NGR 332470 142360; **Figure 1 inset**).
- 1.1.2 The Local Planning Authority (LPA) had determined that an archaeological evaluation was required in support of the Client's planning application (Planning App. No. 42/10/00030) for the Site.

1.2 Scope of Works

- 1.2.1 The scope of works comprised the evaluation of four machine-excavated evaluation trenches, each 30m in length. The trenches were arranged in a regular array within the southernmost extent of the Site (**Figure 1**), as determined on the basis of the results from a previous desk-based assessment (DBA) prepared by the Consultant (APS 2011).
- 1.2.2 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Wessex Archaeology, which set out the proposed archaeological works, in accordance with tender specification issued. This was approved by Stephen Membery (the **Curator**), Senior Historic Environment Officer for Somerset County Council, and archaeological advisor to the LPA.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 The archaeological background to the Site has been considered in detail as part of the DBA (*op cit*) and will not be repeated here. In summary, with the exception of Listed Buildings that will be unaffected by the proposal, there are no designated heritage assets either within the Site footprint, or up to 1km from the Site boundary.
- 2.1.2 The Site does, however, contain numerous relict watercourses identified from aerial photographs within and around the Site, indicative of the former tidal flat and grassland environment present in the area prior to enclosure.
- 2.1.3 Other known remains in the vicinity include Mesolithic worked flint recovered to the west, areas of raised ground within the former semi-flooded landscape where prehistoric and later activity has been identified (included an Iron Age and later land surface also to the west), and Iron Age/ Romano-British settlement evidence to both the west and south-west.

2.1.4 Critical to the perceived archaeological potential of the Site is a known earthwork site of probable medieval date identified during a pipeline archaeological watching brief to the south of the Site. It is possible that these remains, including raised field boundary banks, ditches, post-holes and a trackway, extend near or even across the southern extent of the Site.

2.1.5 Post-medieval and modern remains in the vicinity include: the Bristol to Exeter railway and a brick and tile work to the west; a former quarry to the south; the adjacent Bridgwater Royal Ordnance Factory grounds immediately to the east; WWII pillboxes to the west; and a former Congregational Church school to the south.

3 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

3.1.1 The general objectives of the archaeological evaluation were defined as follows:

- *To identify the presence of archaeological remains;*
- *To aid in the early identification of significant archaeological constraints, thereby reducing the risk of unforeseen discoveries during construction; and*
- *To identify areas for additional archaeological mitigation as necessary.*

3.1.2 All works were undertaken in accordance with the relevant Institute for Archaeologists' (IfA) Standard and Guidance, the IfA Code of Conduct, and other current and relevant best practice and standards and guidance.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The project WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2011) contains details of the methods employed, and will not be repeated here. All works were monitored by, and completed to the satisfaction of, the Curator prior to back-filling.

4.2 Archaeology

4.2.1 No archaeological remains were recorded in any of the excavated trenches (**Figure 1**) during the course of the evaluation. Summary trench profiles and stratigraphic sequences encountered are presented below (**Appendix 1**).

4.3 Archive

4.3.1 The project archive has been prepared to the standards set out in *Management of Archaeological Projects*, Appendix 3 (EH 1991) and in accordance with procedures outlined in *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections* (MGC 1992) and the requirements of the recipient museum (Taunton: Museum Accession code TTNCM:48/2011). The written archive is on clean, stable materials, and is suitable for photocopying. The materials used are of the standard recommended in *Guidelines for the Preparation of Evaluation Archives for Long-term Storage* (Walker 1990).

5 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archaeology & Planning Solution [APS], 2011, *Land North of Puriton, Somerset – Archaeological Assessment (Version 2)*, unpublished client report no. APS 11/264a

English Heritage [EH], 1991, *Management of Archaeological Projects*

Museum and Galleries Commission [MGC], 1992, *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections*

Walker, K, 1990, *Guidelines for the Preparation of Evaluation Archives for Long-term Storage*

Wessex Archaeology, 2011, *Land North of Puriton, Somerset – Archaeological Evaluation Written Scheme of Investigation*, unpublished client report no. T14793.01

6 APPENDICES

6.1 Appendix 1: Trench profiles

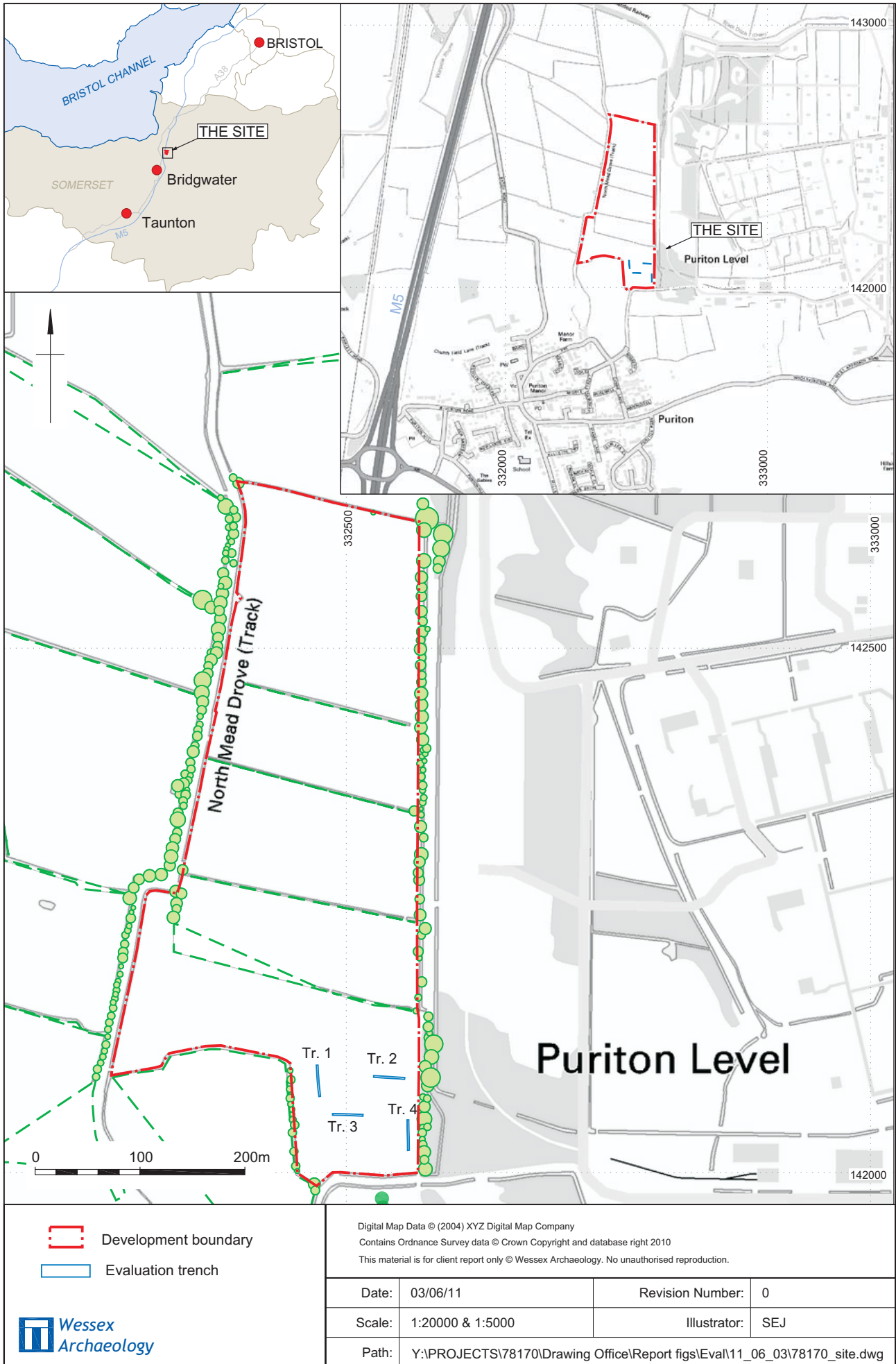
NGR = national grid reference; MaOD = metres above Ordnance Datum (Newlyn); BGL = below ground level

| Trench 1 | NGR co-ords: South: 332474.661 142072.629 North: 332472.263 142102.461 | MaOD: 5.556m |
|-------------------|--|-----------------|
| Dimensions | 30m by 1.5m; 0.56m maximum depth | |
| Context Number | Description | Depth BGL (m) |
| 101 | Topsoil: Dark greyish brown silty clay loam, quite compact with common rooting (fine) and rare sub angular stone inclusions (>0.03m) | 0 – 0.12 |
| 102 | Subsoil: Mid brownish grey silty clay, very compact, moderate rooting (fine). Diffuse horizon with the Natural. | 0.12 – 0.34 |
| 103 | Natural: Mid grey with brown mottles silty clay, very compact. | 0.34+ |

| Trench 2 | NGR co-ords: West: 332526.072 142091.764 East: 332555.684 142089.805 | MaOD: 5.634m |
|--------------------|--|-----------------|
| Dimensions: | 30m by 1.5m; 0.75m maximum depth | |
| Context Number | Description | Depth BGL (m) |
| 201 | Topsoil: Dark greyish brown silty clay loam, quite compact with common rooting (fine) and rare sub angular stone inclusions (>0.03m) | 0 – 0.10 |
| 202 | Subsoil: Mid brownish grey silty clay, very compact, moderate rooting (fine). Diffuse horizon with the Natural. | 0.10 – 0.37 |
| 203 | Natural: Mid grey with brown mottles silty clay, very compact. | 0.37+ |

| Trench 3 | NGR co-ords: West: 332486.912 142055.533 East: 332515.941 142054.520 | MaOD: 5.565m |
|--------------------|---|-----------------|
| Dimensions: | 30m by 1.5m; 0.40m maximum depth | |
| Context Number | Description | Depth BGL (m) |
| 301 | Topsoil: Dark greyish brown silty clay loam, quite compact with common rooting (fine) and very rare sub angular stone inclusions (>0.03m) | 0 – 0.10 |
| 302 | Subsoil: Mid brownish grey silty clay, very compact, moderate rooting (fine). Diffuse horizon with the Natural. | 0.10 – 0.30 |
| 303 | Natural: Mid grey with brown mottles silty clay, very compact. | 0.30+ |

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|------------------------|
| Trench 4 | NGR co-ords: South: 332559.256 142021.246 North: 332558.820 142050.304 | MaOD: 5.583m |
| Dimensions: | 29m by 1.5m; 0.45m maximum depth | |
| Context Number | Description | Depth BGL (m) |
| 401 | Topsoil: Dark greyish brown silty clay loam, quite compact with common rooting (fine) and very rare sub angular stone inclusions (>0.03m) | 0 – 0.10 |
| 402 | Subsoil: Mid brownish grey silty clay, very compact, moderate rooting (fine). Diffuse horizon with the Natural. | 0.10 – 0.33 |
| 403 | Natural: Mid grey with brown mottles silty clay, very compact. | 0.33+ |



Site location plan

Figure 1



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