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Hayfield Green Sewerage Growth, Auckley, Doncaster, South Yorkshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



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November 2014



Hayfield Green Sewerage Growth, Auckley, Doncaster, South Yorkshire

Archaeological Watching Brief

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Archaeological Watching Brief

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by NMCNomenca Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of a new sewage main line, linking an existing rising main at Hurst Lane, Auckley with a sewage treatment works situated to the south of Yorkshire Wildlife Park, Branton, Doncaster National Grid Reference (NGR) SK 464699, 399291 to SE 463634, 400855.

Due to the high archaeological potential of the scheme's surrounding landscape archaeological mitigation was requested during all groundworks by South Yorkshire Archaeology Service (hereafter 'SYAS'). The archaeological monitoring was undertaken in line with a brief prepared by SYAS on behalf of Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council (2014). This report details the results of the watching brief.

No archaeological features or artefacts were identified during the watching brief, despite careful examination of the excavated areas and the spoil. It is considered that the aims of the watching brief were achieved, with no archaeological features identified in either the topsoil strip or excavation of the pipe trench.

The archive is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Sheffield, under the project code **10612000**. It is recommended that the project archive be offered to an appropriate authority for long-term curation. An online OASIS form will be completed for the project at the time of deposition.



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Archaeological Watching Brief

Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by NMCNomenca Ltd, on behalf of Severn Trent Water Ltd and Wessex Archaeology is grateful to David Morris in this regard.

The fieldwork was carried out by Amy Farrington McCabe, Natasha Brett, David Loeb, Hannah Holbrook and Martyn Cooper. The report was prepared by Amy Farrington McCabe and Ellen Simmons with illustrations by Chris Breeden. Chris Swales managed the project on behalf of Wessex Archaeology.



Hayfield Green Sewerage Growth, Auckley, Doncaster, South Yorkshire

Archaeological Watching Brief

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by NMCNomenca Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of a new sewage main line, linking an existing rising main at Hurst Lane, Auckley with a sewage treatment works situated to the south of Yorkshire Wildlife Park, Branton, Doncaster National Grid Reference (NGR) SK 464699, 399291 to SE 463634, 400855 (hereafter 'the Scheme').
- 1.1.2 Due to the high archaeological potential of the Schemes surrounding landscape archaeological mitigation was requested during all groundworks by South Yorkshire Archaeology Service (hereafter 'SYAS'). The archaeological monitoring was undertaken in line with a brief prepared by SYAS on behalf of Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council (2014). This report details the results of the watching brief.

1.2 The Site

- 1.2.1 Approximately 2.km in length, the Scheme lies within the parishes of Cantley and Auckley approximately 6.3km southeast of Doncaster Town Centre (**Figure 1**). The Scheme leads from an existing sewage treatment works situated to the south of Yorkshire Wildlife Park, traversing to the southeast across pasture and arable land before crossing the canalised section of the River Torne and further arable land to the east of the river. At the centre of the Scheme it crosses the line of an active railway, continuing to traverse across pasture and arable enclosures before intersecting with Hayfield Lane and traversing to adjoin an existing rising main at Hurst Lane, Auckley.
- 1.2.2 The Scheme is bounded to the northeast and east by multiple deciduous tree plantations, with arable land bounding the Scheme to the south and southwest.
- 1.2.3 The Scheme is located on undulating ground, which slopes downwards from the north western extent from a height of 10m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) to 4m aOD at its intersection with the River Torne, before rising and falling between 11m and 8m across the centre of the Scheme. To the south of Hayfield Lane, the Scheme decreases in elevation to 6m aOD, finally rising to 10m at the eastern end of the Scheme at Hurst Lane.
- 1.2.4 The underlying geology is mapped as sandstone of the Nottingham Castle Sandstone Formation with superficial river terrace deposits of sand and gravel to the west of the River Torne, peat deposits along the river valley and deposits of head comprising clay, silt, sand and gravel to the east of the river (British Geological Survey Sheet 88 - Doncaster).



2 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Summary

2.1.1 The proposed development area lies in a wider area containing significant archaeological remains. The following information is summarised from online research and sources within Wessex's own library.

Prehistoric

2.1.2 Evidence for early prehistoric activity within the vicinity of the Scheme is represented by nearby find spots with Mesolithic lithic artefacts discovered on the banks of the River Torne, and multiple Neolithic hand axes recovered at Old Cantley, New Rossington, Rossington and Auckley.

2.1.3 Numerous later prehistoric archaeological remains have been identified within the Doncaster region, with substantial evidence for Iron Age and Romano-British occupation set in the immediate landscape surrounding the Scheme.

Romano-British

2.1.4 Examples of which include the Scheduled Roman potteries (List entry No: 1004787) situated approximately 500m south of the route, with the Scheduled Rossington Roman vexillation fortress (List entry No: 1004823) situated c.1.3km to the southwest of the centre of the Scheme.

2.1.5 To the south and south-east of the Scheduled monuments, cropmarks indicative of a possible Romano-British field system in conjunction with a Roman road are situated to the immediate north of the Great North Road, with cropmarks of square enclosures and a brickwork field pattern of a contemporary date to the south of Robin Hood airport.

2.1.6 Excavations 1.2km to the northwest at Cantley revealed multiple pottery kilns and evidence for iron smelting, with the monitoring of groundworks to the east of the Scheme revealing a large pit containing over 300 sherds of pottery.

Anglo-Saxon to Post-Medieval

2.1.7 The villages of Finningley, to the east of the Scheme, Auckley to the north and Rossington to the south, were likely to have been established during the Anglo-Saxon periods, with both names deriving from Old English. Finningley means 'Woodland clearing of the fendwellers', with Auckley meaning 'Alca's/Alha's (an Anglo-Saxon personal name) wood or clearing' and Rossington denoting 'a settlement at moor place', with all three appearing as well established settlements in the Domesday Survey of 1086. The name typology and Domesday estate descriptions suggest a well occupied lowlying landscape, with extensive tracts of woodland interspersed with meadow and ploughland.

2.1.8 Medieval and post-medieval occupation evidence surrounding the Scheme is largely concentrated to the south-west at Rossington comprising a medieval church and several farmsteads.

19th century to present day

2.1.9 The Schemes landscape on the 1854 Ordnance Survey Map, along with the village of Auckley to the east, is shown as being set within an expansive agricultural landscape, interspersed with small irregular shaped plantations. A water mill is demarcated to the north of the western end of the Scheme adjacent to Crow Pool Plantation, with the canalised section of the River Torne shown in conjunction with the central line of the former water course. The water mill to the north appears to have been demolished by the



1894 OS edition, with the construction of the Great Northern and Great Eastern Joint Railway across the centre of the Scheme occurring in the latter half of the 19th century.

- 2.1.10 The gradual loss of field boundaries and the expansion of surrounding settlements can be noted throughout the 19th and 20th century OS editions, with no significant developments occurring along the route of the Scheme during this time.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims and objectives

3.1.1 The aims of the archaeological watching were:

- *to identify any archaeological remains along the Scheme;*
- *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 Scheme works, and*
- *to produce an accurate and comprehensive record and report of any archaeological deposits disturbed by the Scheme works.*

3.2 Fieldwork

3.2.1 The archaeological monitoring was undertaken in line with a brief prepared by South Yorkshire Archaeology Service and with current industry best practice as outlined in guidelines issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2008).

3.1 Machine excavation

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

3.1.2 Topsoil or overburden was removed using a mechanical excavator working under the continuous direct supervision of a suitably experienced archaeologist. The topsoil was removed in a series of level spits down to the level of the upper archaeological horizon, with a 1m wide service trench excavated through the centre of the strip.

3.2 Recording

3.2.1 All trenches and deposits encountered were recorded in line with the SYAS Archaeological Monitoring brief (2014) using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording sheets and a continuous unique numbering system. High resolution digital images were taken as a record of the work undertaken.



4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The following is a summary of the information held in the project archive. The area monitored is shown on **Figure 1** and the complete stratigraphic sequence for each area is summarised in **Appendix 1**.

4.2 Watching brief results

Area A

4.2.1 Area A extended between Hurst Lane and Hayfield Lane, traversing across agricultural land. The topsoil strip was approximately 15m (with some variation along the length of the strip) in width, with the trench running through the centre of the strip, 0.5m in width and c. 1.2m in depth. Only three layers were encountered; topsoil (**101**), subsoil (**102**) and natural (**103**) (**Plates 1 & 2**). No archaeological features or finds were recovered.

Area B

4.2.2 Area B extended between Hayfield Lane and the River Torne, traversing agricultural land along the boundary of adjacent plantations before being interrupted by the route of a modern railway and continuing onwards to the east of the river. The topsoil strip was approximately 15m (with some variation along the length of the strip) in width, with the trench running through the centre of the strip, 0.5m in width and c. 1.2m in depth. Only three layers were encountered; topsoil (**201**), subsoil (**202**) and natural (**203**) (**Plates 3 & 4**). No archaeological features or finds were recovered.

Area C

4.2.3 Area C extended from the west of the River Torne following along agricultural field boundaries before adjoining the sewage works. No archaeological features or finds were recovered.

4.2.4 The topsoil strip was approximately 15m (with some variation along the length of the strip) in width, with the trench running through the centre of the strip, 0.5m in width and c. 1.2m in depth. Layers encountered comprised; topsoil (**301**), subsoil (**302**), modern dumping layers (**303 & 304**), varying sand and natural layers (**305, 306, 308 & 309**) with an extensive peat layer (**307**) observed close to the canalised route of the River Thorne (**Plates 5, 6 & 7**). No archaeological features or finds were recovered.

4.2.5 Bulk samples of peat layer **307** were taken for environmental analysis, the results of which are discussed below.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 One bulk sample of thirty litres in volume was taken from peat layer **307**, in order to evaluate the presence and preservation of palaeo-environmental remains. The sample was processed for the recovery and assessment of waterlogged plant macrofossils.

5.2 Waterlogged plant remains

5.2.1 The sample was processed for the recovery of waterlogged plant macrofossils broadly following the techniques outlined in Kenward et al (1980). A one litre sub-sample of soil was disaggregated in water, before being processed by gently washing material through a

stack of sieves of mesh size 1mm, 500µm and 250µm. Material from each sieve size fraction was stored in 70% dilute ethanol and distilled water in airtight glass jars and kept refrigerated, in accordance with English Heritage guidelines for the curation of waterlogged macroscopic and invertebrate remains (Robinson, 2008). A five litre sub-sample of soil was also retained and kept refrigerated for use in potential processing for invertebrate macrofossils and pollen, should this be deemed appropriate.

- 5.2.2 The samples were assessed in accordance with English Heritage guidelines for environmental archaeology assessments (Jones, 2011). The main aim of this assessment was to determine the concentration, diversity, state of preservation and suitability for use in radiocarbon dating, of any archaeobotanical material present within the samples. A further aim was to evaluate the potential of this material to provide evidence for the nature of the local environment.
- 5.2.3 A preliminary assessment of the samples was made by scanning under a low power binocular microscope (x7-x45) and recording the abundance of the main classes of material present. This data is recorded in Appendix 1. Preliminary identification of plant material was carried out by comparison with material in the reference collections at the Department of Archaeology, University of Sheffield and various reference works (e.g. Cappers et al, 2006). Plant nomenclature follows Stace (2010).
- 5.2.4 Sample 1 from peat layer context **307** consisted of fairly well humified organic material with a high proportion of herbaceous plant roots or stems and twig or wood fragments. A moderate density and low diversity of seeds preserved by anoxic waterlogging were also present.

5.3 Further potential - Waterlogged plant remains

- 5.3.1 The waterlogged plant macrofossil assemblage present in sample 1 from peat layer **307** includes seeds of bog-myrtle (*Myrica gale*) which is commonly associated with wet moorland, heathland, bog and fen environments and bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*) which is commonly associated with bogs and fens, growing in shallow water. The presence of these taxa along with seeds of sedges (*Carex* spp.) and rushes (*Juncus* spp.) suggests that the local environment was likely to have been a fairly wet bog or fen during the deposition of context **307**. Frequent waterlogged wood fragments and small twigs also suggest the presence of some form of woodland or scrub. Seeds of prickly sow thistle (*Sonchus asper*), which is commonly associated with waste ground or cultivated soils, suggest disturbance in the vicinity. However, as the seeds of this species are dispersed by wind and the density of the seeds is low, it is likely that any areas of disturbance were not in the near vicinity of the sampled deposit. **Appendix 2** details the result of this analysis.
- 5.3.2 No further analysis of the waterlogged plant macrofossil assemblage present in sample 1 would be recommended due to the relatively low density and low diversity of identifiable plant material. Processing of additional soil by paraffin flotation for the recovery of invertebrate macrofossils would however be likely to yield a rich invertebrate assemblage, which may provide more detailed evidence concerning the local environment than that available from the plant macrofossils. Pollen preservation is also likely to be good.
- 5.3.3 Material suitable for radiocarbon dating was present in the form of woody twigs which are particularly suitable for use in dating due to their short life.



6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1.1 Environmental analysis of a peat sample taken on Site indicates the presence of a former wetland landscape with little extensive cultivation occurring within the immediate area. No archaeological features or artefacts were identified during the watching brief, despite careful examination of the excavated areas and spoil.
- 6.1.2 It is considered that the aims of the watching brief were achieved, with no archaeological features identified in either the topsoil strip or excavation of the pipe trench.

7 STORAGE AND CURATION

7.1 Museum

- 7.1.1 The collecting museum for the area is the Doncaster Museum is currently not accepting archives. As such, the project archive will be held at Wessex Archaeology until a suitable authority can be identified for long-term curation. The final watching brief report will be deposited with SYAS in the meantime. An online OASIS form will be completed for the project at the time of deposition.

7.2 Preparation of archive

- 7.2.1 The complete Site archive, which will include paper records, photographic records, graphics and digital data will be prepared following nationally recommended guidelines (IfA 2009; Brown 2011; ADS 2013). All archive elements will be marked with the Site code and a full index will be prepared.

7.3 Security copy

- 7.3.1 In line with current best practice (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.

8 COPYRIGHT

- 8.1.1 This report, and the archive generally, may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (e.g. Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which we are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferrable by Wessex Archaeology. Users remain bound by the conditions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of the report.
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9.2 Online sources

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- Archaeology Data Service. Accessed 27/10/2014 at: <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/>



10 APPENDIX 1

10.1 Context data

Context	Description	Depth BGL (m)
Area A		Max Depth: 1.2m
101	Topsoil: Dark brown silty sand, moderately compact with well sorted subrounded mixed stone inclusions (<25%) c.40mm in size, frequent rooting and detritus	0- 0.3m
102	Subsoil: Light brown silty sand, moderately compact with subrounded degraded sandstone inclusions (<40%) c. 30-100mm in size	0.3-0.56m
103	Natural: Mid yellow sandstone	0.56m+
Area B		Max Depth: 1.2m
201	Topsoil: Dark brown silty sand, moderately compact with well sorted subrounded mixed stone inclusions (<25%) c.40mm in size, frequent rooting and detritus	0- 0.26m
202	Subsoil: Light brown silty sand, moderately compact with moderately sorted subrounded mixed stone inclusions (<15%) c. 30mm in size	0.26-0.4m
203	Natural: Mid yellowish brown silty sand, with infrequent ironstone inclusions (<20%)	0.4m+
Area C		Max Depth:0.70m
301	Topsoil: Dark brown silty sand, moderately compact with well sorted subrounded mixed stone inclusions (<25%) c.40mm in size, frequent rooting and detritus	0-0.2m
302	Subsoil: Light brown silty sand, moderately compact with moderately sorted subrounded mixed stone inclusions (<15%) c. 30mm in size	0.2- 0.35m
303	Layer: Modern dumping layer, gravel, modern ceramic building material, stone and plastic, extends for 8m across the entrance of field boundary to the west of the River Torne	0.2- 0.35m
304	Layer: Modern dumping layer, gravel, modern ceramic building material, stone and plastic, scrap metal extending from the sewage treatment works for approximately 30m	0.2-1m+
305	Layer: Mid yellow silty sand, with infrequent ironstone inclusions (<20%) extends for 20m west of the River Torne	0.35-1m+
306	Layer: Light orange sand, with evidence for bioturbation (dark brown to black organic inclusions)	0.35-1m
307	Layer: Peat, dark brown to black, extends for approximately 20m west of the River Torne	1m+
308	Natural: Yellowish grey sandy clay, with lensing of dark yellow and orange sand	1m+
309	Natural: Reddish orange sand with moderately sorted subrounded mixed ironstone inclusions (<15%)	1.5m+

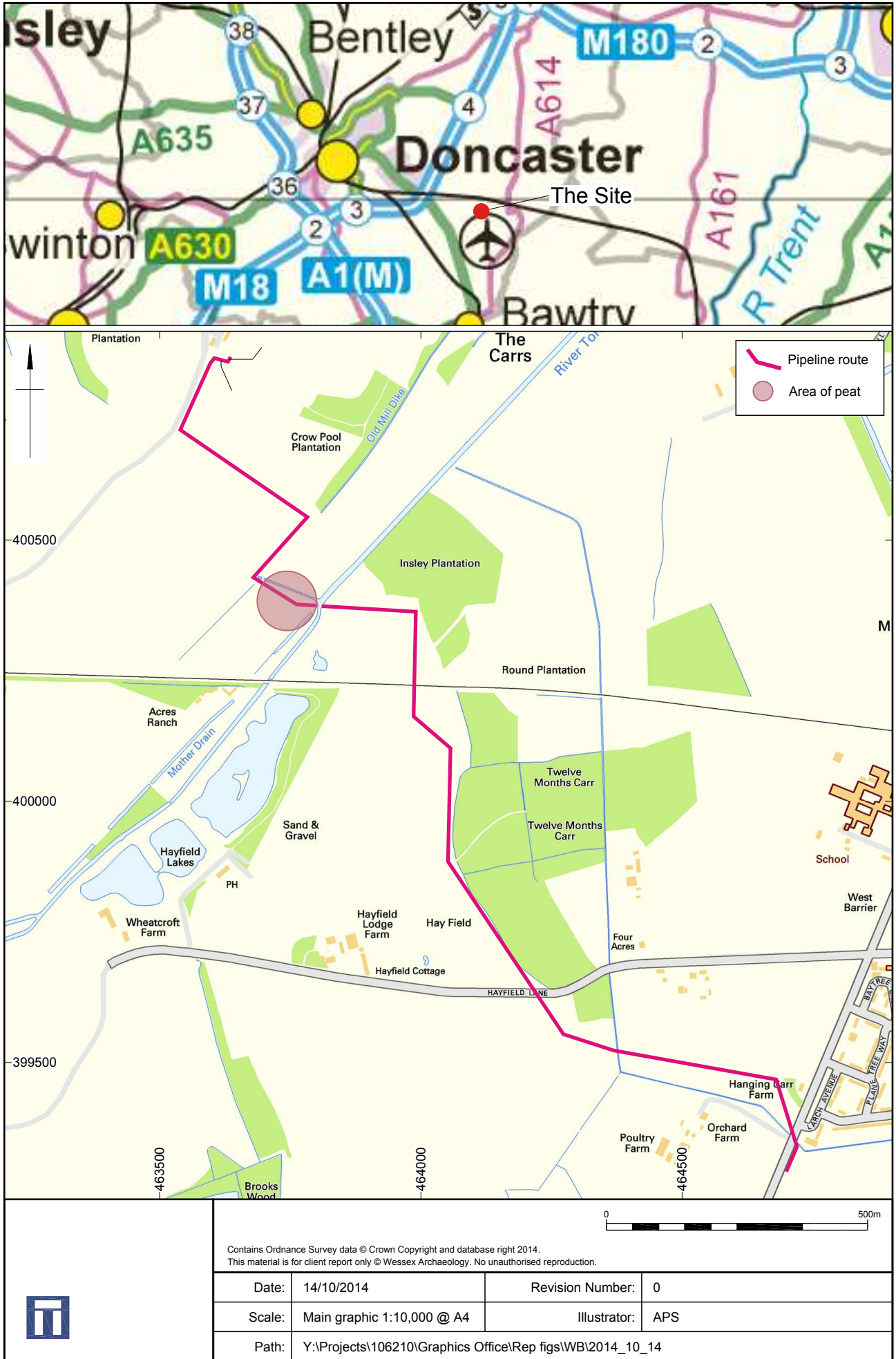


11 APPENDIX 2

11.1 Environmental Data

Waterlogged Plant Remains		
Phase		
Trench		Area C
Feature Type		Peat layer
Feature		n/a
Context		506
Sample		1
Volume (L)		1
<i>Myrica gale</i>	Bog -myrtle	+
<i>Menyanthes trifoliata</i>	Bogbean	++
<i>Sonchus asper</i>	Prickly sow-thistle	+
<i>Hydrocotyle vulgaris</i>	Marsh pennywort	++
<i>Juncus</i> spp.	Rush	+++
<i>Carex</i> spp. (ovoid)	Sedge	+++
<i>Carex</i> spp. (trigonous)	Sedge	++
Unidentified wild plant seed		+
Herbaceous plant roots / stems		++++
Moss		+
Twigs		++
Wood fragments		++++
Invertebrate remains		++++

Key: + = <25, ++ = 25-50, +++ = >50, +++++ >100



Site location showing pipeline route

Figure 1



Plate 1: Topsoil strip of **Area A**



Plate 2: Trench opening in **Area A**, showing **102 & 103**


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Plate 3: Topsoil strip of **Area B**



Plate 4: Trenching in **Area B**


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Plate 5: Topsoil strip of Area C



Plate 6: Peat deposit 307, Area C



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Plate 7: Made ground **304**

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