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River Avon Restoration Plan, Daslett Farm Hatches

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Ref: 101460.02
November 2013



**River Avon Restoration Plan
Daslett Farm Hatches
Teffont
Wiltshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

Prepared for:

Environment Agency
Rivers House
Sunrise Business Park
Higher Shaftesbury Road
BLANDFORD
Dorset
DT11 8ST

Prepared by:

Wessex Archaeology
Portway House
Old Sarum Park
SALISBURY
Wiltshire
SP4 6EB

www.wessexarch.co.uk


November 2013

101460.02



Quality Assurance

Project Code	101460	Accession Code		Client Ref.	
Planning Application Ref.	N/A	Ordnance Survey (OS) national grid reference (NGR)	398648, 129988		

Version	Status*	Prepared by	Checked and Approved By	Approver's Signature	Date
v01	E	RAD	MJR		12/11/13
File:	X:\PROJECTS\101460\REP dft1.doc				
File:					
File:					
File:					

* I= Internal Draft; E= External Draft; F= Final

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River Avon Restoration Plan Daslett Farm Hatches Teffont Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief

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Scale 1m



River Avon Restoration Plan Daslett Farm Hatches Teffont Wiltshire

Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by the Environment Agency to undertake an archaeological watching brief and recording during development at Daslett Farm Hatches, Teffont, Wiltshire. The work is part of the River Avon Restoration Plan which is a strategic plan for the Hampshire Avon catchment area that aims to restore degraded river habitats throughout the catchment, to achieve targets under Habitats Directive and Water Framework Directive legislation. As part of this plan, construction works are planned on various reaches on the Avon and Nadder in the first year of a five year programme of works. Works on the reaches have been appraised and designed by Black & Veatch in collaboration with local landowners and fishing clubs.
- 1.1.2 The works this year, on the River Nadder at Daslett Farm Hatches, aim to help improve the physical structure of the river channel and to remove the need to operate the main hatches to maintain water levels upstream. In addition to these works, and at the request of the landowner, the works will also include the restoration of an old water meadow ditch and the excavation of an associated part-buried structure.
- 1.1.3 Following consultation with the Wiltshire County Council Assistant Archaeologist (WCCAA), the structure had been identified as being of potential historic interest and possibly related to flood management. It was therefore deemed appropriate that an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during excavation to record and photograph it along with any associated artefacts. In the absence of a detailed method statement a written scheme of Investigation (WSI) (Wessex Archaeology 2013) was submitted and approved prior to the fieldwork.
- 1.1.4 All works were carried out in accordance with the IfA's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (2012), excepting where they are superseded by statements made below.

1.2 Site location and description

- 1.2.1 The Site is situated within a narrow pasture field at c.79m aOD in the parish of Teffont, approximately 15km to the west of Salisbury, Wiltshire and centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 398648, 129988 (**Figure 1**). The Site is located approximately 35m to the north-west of the River Nadder. The West of England Main Line crosses the river approximately 40 to the south-east of the Site.



1.2.2 The Site lies in the upper catchment of the River Nadder and is located within the River Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the River Avon System Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Remnant water meadow drains are visible within the field which have largely silted up over the years. In addition a large stone sluice is situated c.165m to the north.

1.2.3 The Site is underlain by a mixture of alluvium and Middle Purbeck marl and limestone deposits (Geological Survey of Great Britain 1:50,000 map, sheet 298), which were laid down during the Jurassic period.

1.3 Historical Background

1.3.1 From consultation with the WCCAA, the buried hatch structure had been identified as being of potential historic interest due to its association with water meadows along the River Nadder. The water meadows, associated earthworks and structures are recorded on the Wiltshire Council Historic Environment Record (HER) as of post-medieval date (WHER Ref: ST93SE527).

1.3.2 The Victoria County History records that the open fields, commons, and meadow of the former parish of Teffont Evias had been inclosed and allotted before 1692. In 1692 the demesne farm contained c.362 acres and included 38 acres sown with cinquefoil. Of the copyhold land 153 acres were arable and pasture, 40 acres were dry meadows, 21 acres were water meadows. The water meadows north of the River Nadder are recorded as last being floated c.1950 (VCH 1987).

1.3.3 The evidence therefore suggests that water meadow systems were in existence in the parish during the late 17th century, and these would have been maintained in some form up until the middle of the 20th century. A historic map regression of Ordnance Survey maps (not reproduced) has revealed that in 1887 a drain is depicted in the same field as the remnant structure, although the structure itself does not appear on historic mapping dating between 1887 and 1979.

2 AIMS

1.1.1 The aims of the watching brief were to:

- to determine or confirm the approximate extent of the remnant structure;
- to determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of the remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence;
- to record the structure by means of measured and drawn record;
- to determine the condition and state of preservation of the remains;
- to prepare a report on the results of the watching brief.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Watching Brief

3.1.1 Due to the unknown nature and fragility of the feature, and the fact that most of it lay buried under turf it was decided, on-site, to excavate under archaeological supervision. Excavation of the overlying turf was carried out using a small mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. To ascertain the extent of the feature, two trenches were dug on the north and south sides. Hand digging was used to clarify the structure when it became apparent that some of the stones were misplaced, particularly on the north side.



- 3.1.2 It was also the intention to determine if the structure was related to the water/flood management of the meadow by assessing if any fixtures/fittings could be indentified. After initial assessment of the south side and of the top section, it became apparent that it was not a water management feature but, a stone built culvert with collapsed stone capping effectively forming a small bridge.
- 3.1.3 An on-site telephone conversation with the WCCAA clarified the finding and a flexible approach was agreed to recording. The estate owner and Environment Agency representative were very keen on the preservation and reinstatement of the feature and so minimum intervention was carried out. Sufficient hand cleaning was undertaken to establish its construction and materials and to establish a cross profile. The culvert was silted up inside but a section of this material was removed so that the side walls could be recorded and dimensions taken with GPS. No artefacts were recovered from the culvert silt.
- 3.1.4 The culvert was digitally surveyed using GPS and was digitally photographed for record purposes.

4 RESULTS

- 4.1.1 The culvert was positioned along the line of the silted up ditch, visible as a slight depression on both sides of the culvert, and on a north-south axis (**Plate 1**). It was constructed from limestone known locally as Teffont rag stone. The British Geological Survey of Great Britain (BGS-on-line) describes the local geology as either the Lulworth Formation or the Durlston Formation. Both are described as sandstone and (subequal/subordinate) Limestone, interbedded. These are sedimentary Bedrock formed in the Cretaceous and Jurassic periods 140 to 151 million BP.
- 4.1.2 This distinctive stone has been widely used in the area for building and can be seen in many houses and buildings locally.
- 4.1.3 The basic design of the culvert was formed by two stone walls with large capping stones on top. From the analysis on site, it appears that the stones were not set in any mortar; rather they were earth fast or set in clay. Unfortunately, most of the capping stones had been broken and were pressed into the culvert channel. A single example remained in-situ which gave a good impression of how the culvert was constructed.
- 4.1.4 The side walls were made of three courses of limestone blocks varying in thickness and laid horizontally (**Plates 2-3**). Some larger blocks appear to have been incorporated, especially at the two ends. The single surviving capping stone was located at the south end of the culvert and was irregular in plan, not squared or tooled. The base of the culvert channel was lined with a single layer of small pieces of limestone. This extended slightly beyond the length of the culvert and is thought to prevent water from under-mining the side walls.
- 4.1.5 A full profile was recorded at the south end (**Plate 4**). From the top of the capping stone to the base of the culvert measured 0.54m. The width of the culvert channel was also 0.54m and the recorded length of the culvert measured 3.67m. It is possible that the culvert originally extended slightly further south as large stones were found to the south-east end of the culvert.
- 4.1.6 To the west and east sides of the capping stones were deposits of broken small pieces of limestone forming metalled surface approaches (**Plate 5**). These deposits are thought to have been placed to protect the flanks of the capping stones and to not erode the sides of the ditch.



5 DISCUSSION

- 5.1.1 The culvert clearly appears to be associated with the adjacent drainage ditch, although the appearance, form and construction of the structure does not indicate a possible date at to when it was constructed. The Victoria County History records that the open fields, commons, and meadow of the former parish of Teffont Evias had been inclosed and allotted before 1692. In 1692 the demesne farm contained c.362 acres and included 38 acres sown with cinquefoil. Of the copyhold land 153 acres were arable and pasture, 40 acres were dry meadows, 21 acres were water meadows (VCH 1987). The evidence therefore suggests that water meadow systems were in existence in the parish from at least the late 17th century, and these would have been maintained in some form up until the middle of the 20th century.
- 5.1.2 Available Ordnance Survey mapping dating from 1887 shows part of the drainage ditch, although not the section where the culvert is located suggesting that this part had silted up and gone out of use by this time. Later editions of the Ordnance Survey map from 1901 and 1925 do not show the drainage ditch suggesting that it had disappeared/silted up by this time, although a small section to the north is shown in 1939, suggesting that the ditch may have been partially reinstated by this date. The 1979 Ordnance Survey map shows most of the drainage ditch to the north had been reinstated, although not in the area of the culvert. It is not know when this partial reinstatement of the drainage ditch took place, although the water meadows north of the River Nadder are recorded as last being floated c.1950 (VCH 1987).
- 5.1.3 It is possible that the line of the Salisbury and Yeovil railway has had a localised impact on this part of the River Nadder and its associated patterns of drainage. The railway passes over the Nadder and the river has a distinct kink to the west where the bridge is located. It is possible that the course of the river was slightly adapted in this location to alleviate the undermining of the bridge abutments. If this is the case, then the careful management of the surrounding drains would have been altered at the same time as the railway. The railway was constructed in 1859-60 so the local landscape and drainage arrangement may have differed prior to this date.
- 5.1.4 The ditch connected with another east-west aligned ditch running along the southern boundary of the field which was responsible for draining water away from the higher ground to the west. This water could not be discharged east into the River Nadder as it would affect the bridge abutments of the railway bridge. It was therefore channelled north into 'our' ditch and into the river below the sluice to the north. The location of the large sluice may also be related to the railway as it would be able to slow down the flow of the river, thereby further protecting the bridge.
- 5.1.5 It is therefore likely that the culvert is at least contemporary with the north-south drainage ditch and if the drainage ditch is related to the management of the railway then it would be at least mid 19th century in date.

6 REFERENCES

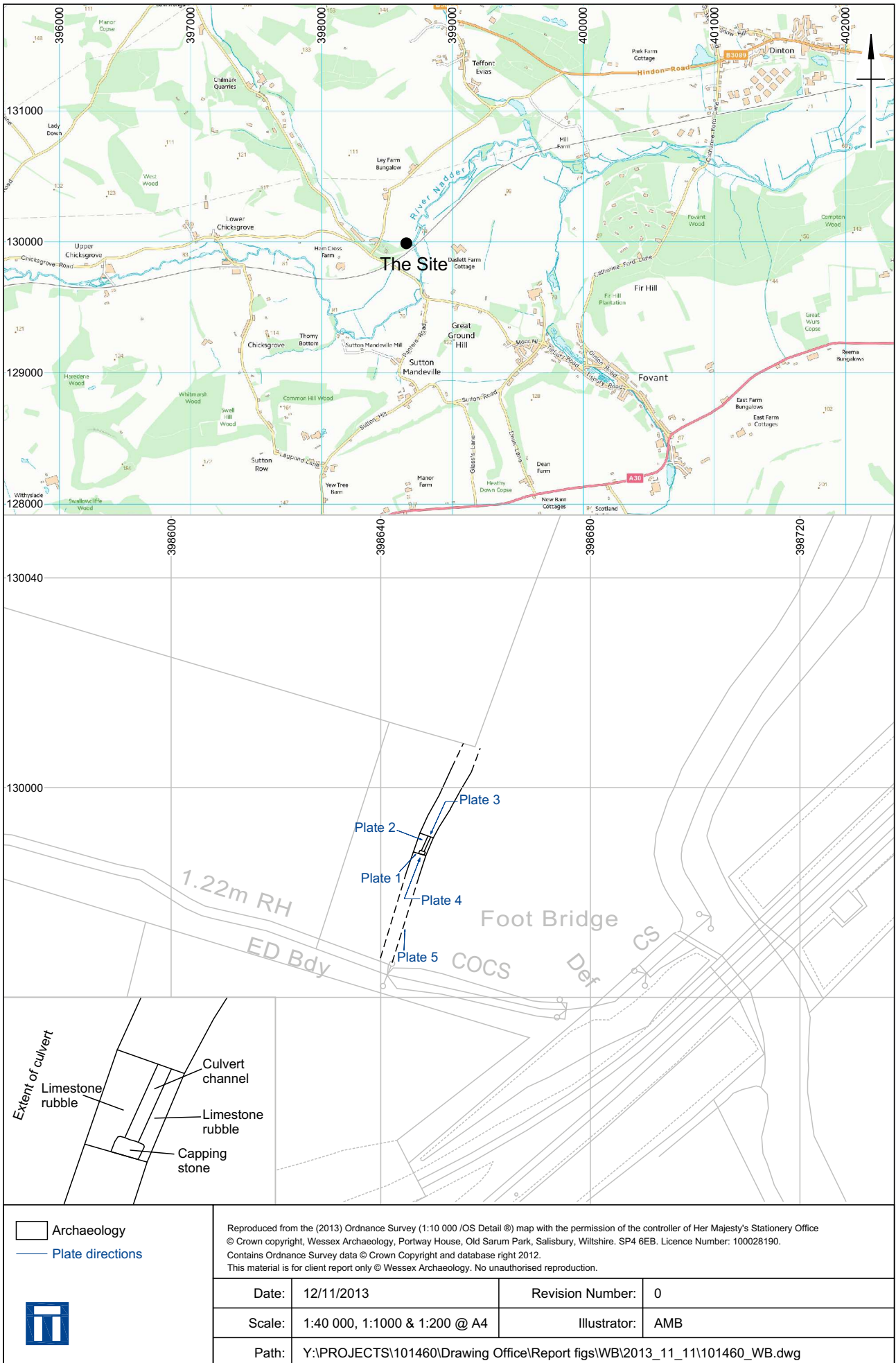
6.1 Bibliography

VCH 1987, 'Parishes: Teffont Evias', *A History of the County of Wiltshire: Volume 13: South-west Wiltshire: Chalke and Dunworth hundreds*, pp. 185-195.

6.2 On-line resources

<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/>

<http://www.magic.gov.uk>



Site location showing direction and number of plates

Figure 1



Plate 1: Showing location of culvert in relation to shallow drainage ditch



Plate 2: Detail of culvert wall construction. Scale 1m


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Plate 3: Detail of excavated culvert with capping stones missing. Scale 1m



Plate 4: Detail showing culvert profile at south end. Scale 1m



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Plate 5: Wide angle view from south showing culvert in relation to silted up drainage ditch. Scale 1m

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Project details

Project name	River Avon Restoration Plan, Daslett Farm Hatches
Short description of the project	Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by the Environment Agency to undertake an archaeological watching brief and recording during development at Daslett Farm Hatches, Teffont, Wiltshire. The work is part of the River Avon Restoration Plan which is a strategic plan for the Hampshire Avon catchment area. The works on the River Nadder at Daslett Farm Hatches, aim to help improve the physical structure of the river channel and to remove the need to operate the main hatches to maintain water levels upstream. In addition to these works, and at the request of the landowner, the works will also include the restoration of an old water meadow ditch and the excavation of an associated part-buried structure. Following consultation with the Wiltshire County Council Assistant Archaeologist, the structure had been identified as being of potential historic interest and possibly related to flood management. It was therefore deemed appropriate that an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during excavation to record and photograph it along with any associated artefacts.
Project dates	Start: 01-10-2013 End: 10-10-2013
Previous/future work	Not known / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	101460 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Site of Special Scientific Importance (SSSI)
Site status (other)	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 1 - Minimal cultivation
Monument type	CULVERT Post Medieval
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Voluntary/self-interest

Project location

Country	England
Site location	WILTSHIRE SALISBURY TEFFONT Daslett Farm
Postcode	SP3 5LU
Study area	10.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	ST 98648 29988 51.0686882551 -2.01929795891 51 04 07 N 002 01 09 W Point
Lat/Long Datum	Unknown
Height OD / Depth	Min: 79.00m Max: 81.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Wessex Archaeology
Project brief originator	with advice from County Archaeologist
Project design originator	Wessex Archaeology
Project director/manager	Matt Rous
Project supervisor	Bob Davis
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Environment Agency

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive Exists?	No
Paper Archive Exists?	No

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	River Avon Restoration Plan, Daslett Farm Hatches, Teffont, Wiltshire
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Davis, B.
Other bibliographic details	report number 101460.02
Date	2013
Issuer or publisher	Wessex Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Wessex Archaeology - Salisbury
Description	A4 bound client report
Entered by	Matt Rous (m.rous@wessexarch.co.uk)
Entered on	30 October 2014

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Wessex Archaeology Ltd registered office Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 6EB
Tel: 01722 326867 Fax: 01722 337562 info@wessexarch.co.uk www.wessexarch.co.uk



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