

Bourton-on-the-Water Sewage Treatment Works Bourton-on-the-Water, Gloucestershire. Phase 2

Archaeological Watching Brief

Ref: 272871.3 November 2023

wessexarchaeology



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Unit 9 City Business Park Easton Road Bristol BS5 0SP

www.wessexarch.co.uk

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Document Information

Document title	Bourton-on-the-Water Sewage Treatment Works, Bourton-on-the- Water, Gloucestershire. Phase 2
Document subtitle	Archaeological Watching Brief
Document reference	272871.3
Commissioned by	Morrison Water Services Ltd
Address	Abel Smith House Gunnels Wood Road Stevenage Hertfordshire SG1 2ST
Site location	Bourton-on-the-Water Sewage Works, Rissington Road, Bourton- on-the-Water
County	Gloucestershire
National grid reference (NGR)	418126 219984 (SP 18126 19984) to 417548 219848 (SP 17548 19848)
Planning authority	Cotswold District Council
Museum name	Corinium Museum
OASIS Id	wessexar1-520542
WA project name	Bourton on the Water Phase 2 WB
WA project code	272871
Dates of fieldwork	30.10.2023-1.11.23
Fieldwork directed by	Josh Bower
Project management by	Will Smith
Document compiled by	Ray Holt
Contributions from	Will Smith (background information)
Graphics by	Nancy Dixon
Document edited by	Will Smith

Quality Assurance

Issue	Date	Author	Approved by
1	15/11/2023	RH	ws



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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Morrison Water Services Ltd, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of 7 Trial Pits at Bourton-on-the-Water Sewage Treatment Works and Rissington Road, Bourton-on-the-Water, Gloucestershire, GL52 2PD, located at NGR 418205 219998 and 417939 219782.

Due to challenging ground conditions, only three of the Trial Pits (TP 5, 6 & 7) were excavated and the remaining four Test Pits (TP 1. 2, 3 & 4) were replaced with boreholes which were not monitored.

The watching brief comprised the observation of all mechanical and hand excavations within the investigation area. The watching brief identified no archaeological features although an undated made ground deposit was revealed in one of the monitored Trial Pits. In addition to the made ground, natural alluvial deposits were encountered in two of the Trial Pits.

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Morrison Water Services Ltd, for commissioning the archaeological watching brief, in particular Andrew Simpson and Isa Al-Qarani. Wessex Archaeology is also grateful for the advice of Team Leader for Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service, who monitored the project for Cotswold District Council.

Bourton-on-the-Water Sewage Treatment Works Bourton-on-the-Water, Gloucestershire Phase 2

Archaeological Watching Brief

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 **Project background**

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Morrison Water Services Ltd, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of 7 Trial Pits at Bourton-on-the-Water Sewage Treatment Works and Rissington Road, Bourton-on-the-Water, Glucestershire, GL52 2PD, located at NGR 418205 219998 and 417939 219782 (Fig. 1).
- 1.1.2 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which detailed the aims, methodologies, and standards to be employed (Wessex Archaeology 2023). The Team Leader for Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service approved the WSI, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority (LPA), prior to fieldwork commencing. The watching brief was undertaken from 30 October 1 November 2023.

1.2 Scope of report

1.2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the results of the watching brief, to interpret the results within their local or regional context (or otherwise), and to assess their potential to address the aims outlined in the WSI, thereby making available information about the archaeological resource (a preservation by record).

1.3 Location, topography and geology

- 1.3.1 The watching brief was located agricultural land between the villages of Bourton-on-the-Water and Little Rissington in the Cotswolds area of Gloucestershire. The northern part of the Site is bounded by Bourton-on-the Water Sewage Works to the north and Rissington Road to the south. The southern part of the site is located on agricultural land immediately south of the gardens of properties on Rissington Road and is bounded by a small access track and further fields.
- 1.3.2 Existing ground levels range between approximately 125 m OD at Rissington Bridge and 130 m OD adjacent to Bourton-on-the-Water Sewage Works. During the Phase 1 works existing ground levels were recorded as 124 m OD at Trial Pit 1 and 126 m OD at Trial Pit 2.
- 1.3.3 The underlying geology is mapped as Jurassic Mudstone of the Charmouth Mudstone Formation. Within the floodplain of the River Dikler, the solid geology is overlain by Quaternary alluvium (British Geological Survey 2022). Excavations at Bourton-on-the-Water Sewage Works and elsewhere within the Dikler and Windrush valleys have shown that Pleistocene river terrace deposits exist beneath the mapped alluvium.



2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The archaeological and historical background is drawn from Know Your Place (2022) and other online resources. A summary of the results is presented below, with relevant entry numbers from the Gloucestershire Historic Environment Record (GHER) and the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) included. Additional sources of information are referenced, as appropriate.

2.2 **Previous investigations related to the development**

Watching Brief (2022)

2.2.1 Wessex Archaeology undertook a watching brief during test pitting at the Site in 2022. No archaeological features or deposits were exposed during the watching brief. The stratigraphic sequence revealed layers of alluvium beneath the topsoil, with a peat deposit and river terrace gravels exposed within Trial Pit 1. Blue grey clay was observed in Trial Pit 2 which was possibly the top of the natural geology or an earlier alluvial deposit (Wessex Archaeology 2022).

2.3 Archaeological and historical context

Lower Palaeolithic (970,000 – 300,000 BC)

2.3.1 In 1963, a Middle Acheulian cleaver (GHER 2558) was found Santhill gravel pit, close to the east bank of the River Windrush, 0.7 km to the south of the site.

Upper Palaeolithic (40,000 – 10,000 BC)

- 2.3.2 In 1973, a mammoth tusk (GHER 41161) was recovered during the construction of the Bourton-on-the-Water Sewage Treatment Works. The tusk was found in river terrace deposits, 1.88–3.66 m below ground level. A radiocarbon date obtained from the tusk produced a date of cal. 39,098–35,277 BC.
- 2.3.3 A series of mammoth remains (GHER 41159) have also been found within Burn Barn Quarries (now lakes), 0.4–1 km to the north-west of the site. These remains were recovered between 1920 and 1970, but the exact locations of the findspots are unknown.
- 2.3.4 Palaeolithic faunal remains have also been found in similar geological contexts 2 km downstream. These remains, which comprised three red deer and three horse bones, were found next to the River Windrush, in gravel deposits 1.6 m below ground level (Cotswold Archaeological Trust 1992, 23, fig. 4).

Neolithic and Bronze Age (4000 – 800 BC)

2.3.5 Neolithic remains, comprising a causewayed enclosure and finds of late Neolithic / Early Bronze Age pottery and worked flint, have been recorded within Salmondsbury Camp scheduled monument (NHLE 1017340), 1 km to the north-west of the site (Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust 2006; Historic England 2022).

Iron Age and Romano-British (800 BC – AD 410)

2.3.6 During the Iron Age, the settlement at Salmondsbury Camp developed into a 23 ha multivallate fortified oppida, which was occupied from the 1st century BC to the 4th century AD. The eastern ramparts of the settlement were located 0.7 km to the north-west of the site (Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust 2006; Historic England 2022). Features inside the oppida comprise roundhouses, pits (some containing burials), palisades, wells, and hearths. Pottery indicates occupation continued into at least the early 2nd century AD before a

possible period of abandonment, followed by re-occupation in the 3rd-4th century (Allen et al. 2018a).

- 2.3.7 The Fosse Way, a Roman road, is situated 2.3 km to the north-west of the site, and Romano-British roadside occupation has been recorded in several locations within Bourtonon-the-Water. Excavations at 38 Rissington Road, 1.2 km to the north-west of the site, identified a series of ditches, along with two stone features/deposits of unknown function and a small number of shallow pits, all dated 2nd–3rd century AD (Allen et al. 2018b).
- 2.3.8 Excavations within a broad area of interlocking enclosures and ring ditches at Santhill, have identified a further area of Romano-British and possibly Iron Age occupation (GHER 357; NHLE 1003433), 0.4 km to the south of the site.

Anglo-Saxon and medieval (AD 410 – 1500)

- 2.3.9 Although there is no evidence for Anglo-Saxon occupation within Salmondsbury Camp, several burials have been found dug into the ramparts and two small cemeteries have also been discovered, one close to the northern rampart and the second close to the south-east corner of the enclosure. It is also clear that the camp retained considerable significance for the local community, as it is recorded as Sulmonnes Burg in a charter of Offa of Mercia dated AD 779, and the courts of the Liberty or Hundred of Salmonsbury traditionally assembled at the northern entrance to the enclosure throughout the medieval period (Historic England 2022a).
- 2.3.10 The Domesday Survey of AD 1086, records Bortune (Bourton-on-the-Water) as a settlement of 26 households held by Evesham Abbey (Williams and Martin 2002, 465). By the 11th century, the parish church of St Lawrence had been constructed at the north-western end of Bourton-on-the-Water, and by the 12th-century, the village had assumed its current orientation alongside the River Windrush (Eldrington 1965).
- 2.3.11 Risendune (Little Rissington) is listed in the Domesday Book as a settlement of ten households, with eight slaves and two mills, all held by the Norman nobleman Robert d'Oilly (Williams and Martin 2002, 465). Rissington Mill (NHLE 1090278), which is located 0.3 km to the north of the site, is probably built on the site of a late Anglo-Saxon/medieval mill (Historic England 2022b). Earthworks of a possible deserted medieval village (GHER 2555) have been noted 0.5 km to the east of the site, close to St Peter's Church. The isolated position of St Peter's Church, and the uneven ground south and south-west of it, suggest that the village of Little Rissington has shifted south.

Post-medieval and Modern (1500–present)

- 2.3.12 By the post-medieval period, Bourton-on-the-Water had developed into a large and prosperous village, and between 1654 and 1911 five bridges were constructed over the Windrush, earning the village the appellation 'Venice of the Cotswolds' (Cotswolds.info 2022).
- 2.3.13 The 1885 OS map (surv. 1881–4) depicts the site as undeveloped agricultural land with field boundaries that are still extant. Since then, the only notable change in the immediate vicinity of the site is the construction of Bourton-on-the-Water Sewage Treatment Works in 1973, and the gradual expansion of Bourton-on-the-Water along the Rissington Road frontage from the mid-20th century onwards.



Undated

- 2.3.14 Archaeological evaluation at the Bourton Vale Sports and Social Club, 0.8 km to the northwest of the site, revealed ten postholes, five pits and a possible ditch terminus, all of which were undated (Cotswold Archaeological Trust 1998, 6–8, fig. 2).
- 2.3.15 A series of cropmarks at Santhill, 0.4 km to the south-west of the site (GHER 357, 4492, 7180; NHLE 1003433), have been interpreted as possible Bronze Age or Romano-British round barrows, or Iron Age/Romano-British roundhouses.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Aims

- 3.1.1 The aims of the watching brief, as stated in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2023) and as defined in the CIfA *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2014a), were to:
 - allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of the development or other works;
 - provide an opportunity, if needed, 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 itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard; and
 - guide, not replace, any requirement for contingent excavation or preservation of possible deposits.

3.2 Objectives

- 3.2.1 In order to achieve the above aims, the objectives of the watching brief, also defined in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2023), were to:
 - determine the presence or absence of archaeological features, deposits, structures, artefacts or ecofacts within the specified works area;
 - record and establish, within the constraints of the works, the extent, character, date, condition and quality of any surviving archaeological remains (a preservation by record);
 - place any identified archaeological remains within a wider historical and archaeological context in order to assess their significance; and
 - make available information about the archaeological resource on the site by preparing a report on the results of the watching brief.

4 METHODS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the detailed methodology set out within the approved WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2023) and in general compliance with the standards outlined in CIfA guidance (CIfA 2014a). The methods employed are summarised below.



4.2 Fieldwork methods

General

- 4.2.1 The initial scope of the watching brief had been to monitor the excavation of 7 Trial Pits, located to the south of Rissington Road, Bourton-on-the-Water, and on land to the north of Rissington Road and south-west of Bourton-on-the-Water Sewage Treatment Works. However, due to challenging ground conditions, only three of the Trial Pits (TP 5, 6 & 7) were excavated and the remaining four Test Pits (TP 1. 2, 3 & 4) were replaced with boreholes which were not monitored.
- 4.2.2 The watching archaeologist monitored all hand and mechanical excavations within the specified Trial Pit locations. Due to main contractor Health and Safety concerns, no entry to the Trial Pits was permitted and the uncleaned sections and deposits were recorded from the trench edges.
- 4.2.3 Spoil from machine stripping and hand-excavated archaeological deposits was visually scanned for the purposes of finds retrieval. No artefacts were recovered during the course of the watching brief.

Recording

- 4.2.4 All exposed archaeological deposits and features were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's pro forma recording system. A complete record of excavated features and deposits was made, including plans and sections drawn to appropriate scales (generally 1:20 or 1:50 for plans and 1:10 for sections) and tied to the Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid.
- 4.2.5 A Leica GNSS connected to Leica's SmartNet service surveyed the location of archaeological features. All survey data is recorded in OS National Grid coordinates and heights above OD (Newlyn), as defined by OSTN15and OSGM15, with a three-dimensional accuracy of at least 50 mm.
- 4.2.6 A full photographic record was made using digital cameras equipped with an image sensor of not less than 10 megapixels. Digital images have been subject to managed quality control and curation processes, which has embedded appropriate metadata within the image and will ensure long term accessibility of the image set.

4.3 Finds and environmental strategies

4.3.1 Strategies for the recovery, processing and assessment of finds and environmental samples were in line with those detailed in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2023). The treatment of artefacts and environmental remains was in general accordance with: *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014b), *Environmental Archaeology. A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation* (English Heritage 2011) and ClfA's *Toolkit for Specialist Reporting* (Type 1: Description).

4.4 Monitoring

4.4.1 The Team Leader for Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service monitored the watching brief on behalf of the LPA. Any variations to the WSI, if required to better address the project aims, were agreed in advance with the client and the Team Leader for Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service.



5 STRATIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The following section summarises the results of the archaeological monitoring of three Trial Pits (TP 5, 6 & 7) to the south-west of Bourton-on-the-Water Sewage Treatment Works (Figure 1).
- 5.1.2 Due to challenging ground conditions, only three of the Trial Pits (TP 5, 6 & 7) were excavated and the remaining four Trial Pits (TP 1. 2, 3 & 4) were replaced with boreholes which were not monitored.
- 5.1.3 No archaeological features were revealed, however a made ground deposit was encountered in Trial Pit 5. No datable artefacts were recovered to give an indication of date of the made ground.
- 5.1.4 A differing sequence of soil and natural alluvial deposits were encountered in each the individual Trial Pits.
- **5.2 Trial Pit 5** (Figures 2 & 3)
- 5.2.1 Trial Pit 5 was hand excavated, measured 1 m in length, 0.45 m in width and 1.05 m in depth. The stratigraphically earliest deposit 502 consisted of mid yellow brown, fine to coarse subangular gravel made ground. The made ground measured in excess of 0.97 m in depth and no datable artefacts were recovered to give an indication of date.
- 5.2.2 The made ground was sealed by a dark brown bioturbated loam topsoil 501, measuring 0.12 m in thickness.

5.3 Trial Pit 6 (Figures 2 & 4)

- 5.3.1 Trial Pit 6 was hand excavated, measured 1.68 m in length, 0.87 m in width and 0.72 m in depth. A natural alluvium deposit 603 was encountered at 0.31 m below ground level (bgl) which measured in excess of 0.41 m in thickness, continuing beyond the limit of excavation at 0.71 m bgl.
- 5.3.2 The alluvium was overlain by a 0.15 m thick subsoil 602, consisting dark grey silty clay with rare chalk inclusions. A bioturbated dark grey loam topsoil 601 0.16 m in thickness, sealed the subsoil.

5.4 Trial Pit 7 (Figures 2 & 5)

- 5.4.1 Trial Pit 7 was machine excavated, measured 4.01 m in length, 0.5 m in width and 1.28 m in depth. The stratigraphically earliest deposit 704 consisted of mid grey fractured mudstone containing angular cobbles, measured in excess of 0.41 m in thickness and continued beyond the limit of excavation at 1.28 m bgl.
- 5.4.2 The mudstone was overlain by a 0.55 m thick layer 703 of mid brownish yellow clay alluvium. The alluvium was sealed by mid brown silty clay subsoil 702 measuring 0.18 m in thickness and a bioturbated brown loam topsoil 701 that measured 0.14 m in depth.



6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Summary

6.1.1 The watching brief identified no archaeological features although an undated made ground deposit was revealed in one of the monitored Trial Pits. These monitoring works included locating sewerage pipes for upgrade as (AECOM 2022:7). Although information on the purpose of specific pits was not relayed to the site archaeologist, it is conceivable that this made ground deposit represents the backfill of a modern service trench over a length of sewer main and is not archaeologically significant. In addition to the made ground, undisturbed natural alluvial deposits were encountered in two of the Trial Pits.

6.2 Discussion

6.2.1 It was not possible to confirm whether the made ground revealed in Trial Pit 5 represented a stratified archaeological layer, or a more recent deposit, but there does not appear to be similar layers in the other monitored Trial Pits suggesting it has a limited geographical extent. Excavation of the remaining test pits demonstrated there is still limited archaeological potential outside of areas of recent disturbance.

7 ARCHIVE STORAGE AND CURATION

7.1 Museum

7.1.1 The archive resulting from the watching brief is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Bristol. Corinium Museum has agreed in principle to accept the archive on completion of the project. Deposition of any finds with the museum will only be carried out with the full written agreement of the landowner to transfer title of all finds to the museum.

7.2 **Preparation of the archive**

Physical archive

- 7.2.1 The physical archive, which includes paper records and graphics, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Corinium Museum, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (Brown 2011; ClfA 2014c; SMA 1995).
- 7.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the **site/accession code**, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive currently comprises the following:
 - 1 files/document cases of paper records

Digital archive

7.2.3 The digital archive generated by the project, which comprises born-digital data (e.g., site records, survey data, databases and spreadsheets, photographs and reports), will be deposited with a Trusted Digital Repository, in this instance the Archaeology Data Service (ADS), to ensure its long-term curation. Digital data will be prepared following ADS guidelines (ADS 2013 and online guidance) and accompanied by metadata.

7.3 Selection strategy

7.3.1 It is widely accepted that not all the records and materials (artefacts and ecofacts) collected or created during the course of an archaeological project require preservation in perpetuity. These records and materials will be subject to selection in order to establish what will be retained for long-term curation, with the aim of ensuring that all elements selected to be

retained are appropriate to establish the significance of the project and support future research, outreach, engagement, display and learning activities, i.e., the retained archive should fulfil the requirements of both future researchers and the receiving Museum.

- 7.3.2 The selection strategy, which details the project-specific selection process, is underpinned by national guidelines on selection and retention (Brown 2011, section 4) and generic selection policies (SMA 1993; Wessex Archaeology's internal selection policy) and follows ClfA's *Toolkit for Selecting Archaeological Archives*. It should be agreed by all stakeholders (Wessex Archaeology's internal specialists, external specialists, local authority, museum) and fully documented in the project archive.
- 7.3.3 In this instance, given the absence of finds recovery, the selection process has been deferred until after the fieldwork stage was completed. Project-specific proposals for selection are presented below. These proposals are based on recommendations by Wessex Archaeology's internal specialists and will be updated in line with any further comment by other stakeholders (museum, local authority). The selection strategy will be fully documented in the project archive.
- 7.3.4 Given the very limited results of the fieldwork, it is considered that the site conforms to the definition of a 'sterile project' (i.e., one that produces nothing of evidential value), according to the *CIfA Toolkit for Selecting Archaeological Archives* (archaeological archives from sterile projects). It is therefore recommended that only selected digital data are deposited with ADS, an approach commensurate with the scale and significance of the project. Deposition will involve the uploading of the site report via OASIS only.

7.4 Security copy

7.4.1 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.

7.5 OASIS

7.5.1 An OASIS (online access to the index of archaeological investigations) record (http://oasis.ac.uk) has been initiated, with key fields completed (Appendix 1). A.pdf version of the final report will be submitted following approval by the Team Leader for Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service on behalf of the LPA. Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, copies of the OASIS record will be integrated into the relevant local and national records and published through the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) ArchSearch catalogue.

8 COPYRIGHT

8.1 Archive and report copyright

8.1.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative/digital archive relating to the project will be retained by Wessex Archaeology under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved. The client will be licenced to use each report for the purposes that it was produced in relation to the project as described in the specification. The museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use conforms to the *Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003*.



8.1.2 Information relating to the project will be deposited with the Historic Environment Record (HER) where it can be freely copied without reference to Wessex Archaeology for the purposes of archaeological research or development control within the planning process.

8.2 Third party data copyright

8.2.1 This document and the project archive 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 Wessex Archaeology are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferable 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 such material.

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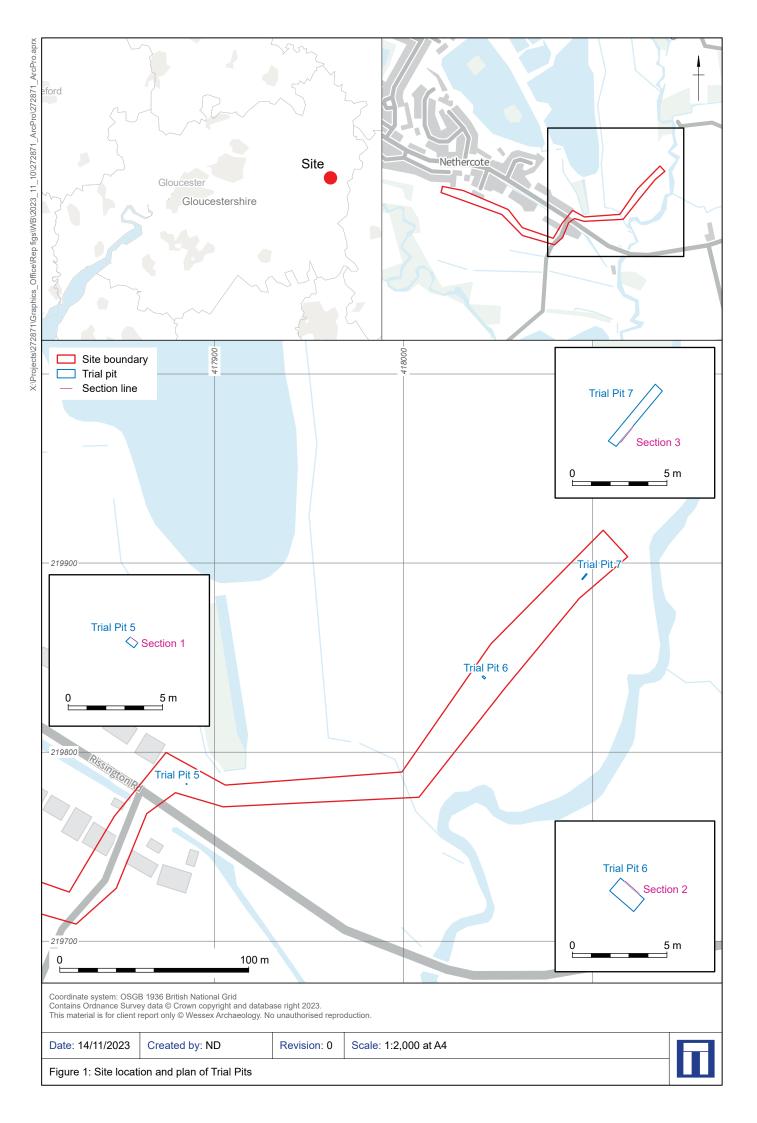
APPENDICES

Appendix 1 OASIS summary

OASIS Summary for wessexar1-520542

OASIS ID (UID)	wessexar1-520542
Project Name	Bourton-on-the-Water Sewage Treatment Works, Bourton-on-the- Water, Gloucestershire. Phase 2. Archaeological Watching Brief
Sitename	Bourton-on-the-Water Sewage Treatment Works, Bourton-on-the- Water, Gloucestershire.
Sitecode	272871
Project Identifier(s)	272871
Activity type	Watching Brief
Planning Id	
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Pre application
Organisation Responsible for work	Wessex Archaeology
Project Dates	30-Oct-2023 - 01-Nov-2023
Location	Bourton-on-the-Water Sewage Treatment Works, Bourton-on-the- Water, Gloucestershire. NGR : SP 18126 19984 LL : 51.878131440338194, -1.738094987558019 12 Fig : 418126,219984
Administrative Areas	
Authinistrative Areas	Country : England
	County/Local Authority : Gloucestershire
	Local Authority District : Cotswold
	Parish : Little Rissington
Project Methodology	Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Morrison Water Services Ltd, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of 7 Trial Pits at Bourton-on-the-Water Sewage Treatment Works and Rissington Road, Bourton-on-the-Water, Gloucestershire, GL52 2PD, located at NGR 418205 219998 and 417939 219782.
	Due to challenging ground conditions, only three of the Trial Pits (TP 5, 6 & 7) were excavated and the remaining four Test Pits (TP 1. 2, 3 & 4) were replaced with boreholes which were not monitored.
Project Results	The watching brief comprised the observation of all mechanical and hand excavations within the investigation area. The watching brief identified no archaeological features although an undated made ground deposit was revealed in one of the monitored Trial Pits. In addition to the made ground, natural alluvial deposits were encountered in two of the Trial Pits.
Keywords	
Funder	Water company Morrison Water Services Ltd
HER	Gloucestershire HER - noRev - LITE
Person Responsible for work	
HER Identifiers	
Archives	Digital Archive - to be deposited with Archaeology Data Service
	Archive;

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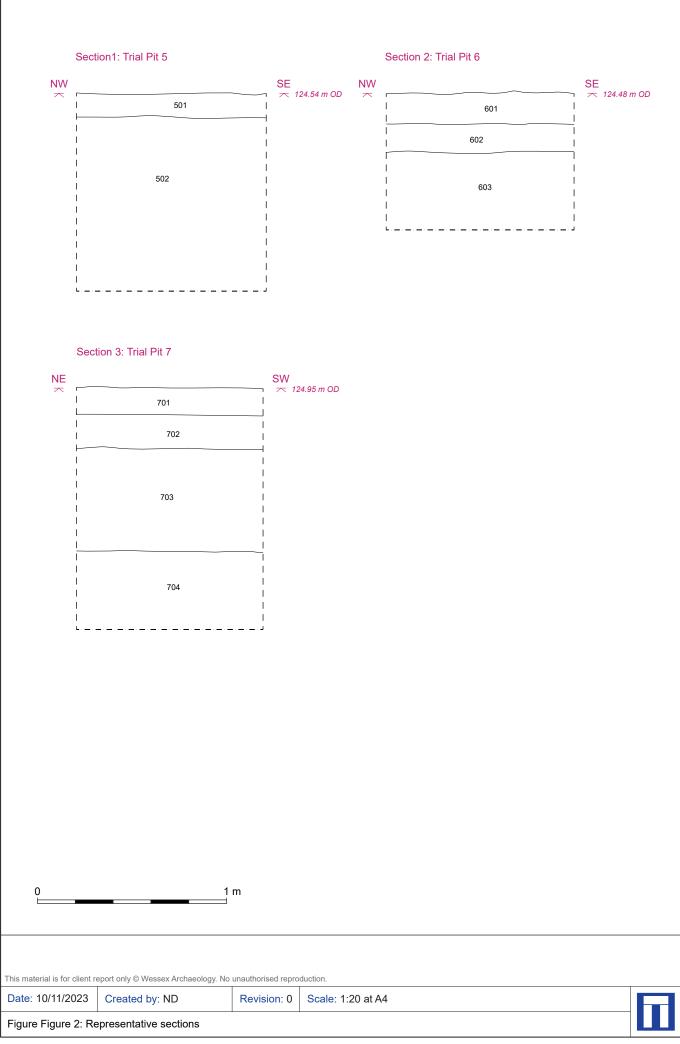




Figure 3: Trial Pit 5, looking northwest, 1 m scale



Figure 4: Trial Pit 6, looking northwest, 1 m scale

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Figure 5: Trial Pit 7, looking northeast, 1 m scale

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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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