



**ASTON STREET, WEM, SHROPSHIRE**

**Written Scheme of Investigation for  
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Prepared for:  
**Severn Trent Water**

by  
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	Figure 1. Plan and section showing proposed groundworks.	

## **ASTON STREET, WEM, SHROPSHIRE**

### **Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Watching Brief**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Project Background**

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology has been commissioned by Severn Trent Water to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the construction of a sewer mains at Aston Street, Wem (hereafter 'the Site'). The Site is centred on National Grid Reference SJ 516289.
- 1.1.2 The proposed development comprises the provision of a new foul water pipe and a surface water sewer pipe, both 60m in length to run parallel from NGR 351547, 328769) to (NGR 351502, 328722).
- 1.1.3 Shropshire County Council (SCC) have requested that a scheme of archaeological watching brief be undertaken during the excavation of the associated manholes (figure 1). This is in line with current government planning guidance (DCLG 2010).
- 1.1.4 This Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) sets out the manner in which Wessex Archaeology will implement the archaeological watching brief. This WSI has been prepared in accordance with current industry best practice and will be submitted to The Client and SCC for approval prior to the commencement of the watching brief programme.

### **1.2 The Site, location and geology.**

- 1.2.1 The site is centred on National Grid Reference SJ 516289. It is located 150m west of Aston Road and 200m East of Leek Street. 16km north of Shrewsbury, Shropshire, and 17km south of Whitchurch.
- 1.2.2 The site is currently occupied by a veterinarian as well as a footpath and a large concrete slab. The underlying geology is river terrace sand and gravels.

## **2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Introduction**

- 2.1.1 The following section summarises a scoping report of the historical and archaeological background of the site.

## **2.2 Chronology**

- 2.2.1 Where mentioned in the text, the main archaeological periods are broadly defined by the following date ranges:

## **2.3 Prehistoric and Romano-British (To 410 AD)**

- 2.3.1 There is no evidence of Prehistoric or Romano-British findspots or archaeological remains within or nearby the site.

## **2.4 Anglo-Saxon and Medieval (1499 AD – 410 AD)**

- 2.4.1 Wem may have its origins in the Anglo-Saxon period, its name possibly referring to a nearby marsh. The Domesday book lists the town as being held by William Pandulf on behalf of Earl Roger of Montgomery. It formed the centre of a Barony comprising 29 manors. Between 1135-1154 William Pandulf built a Motte and Bailey castle, located approximately 300m north-west of the site. In 1202 Wem became a market town following a grant from King John. By 1290 the castle was unoccupied and was finally destroyed in 1459 during the Wars of the Roses.

## **2.5 Post-medieval and Modern (1500 AD - Present)**

- 2.5.1 During the Civil War the town was occupied and fortified by parliamentary forces in 1643. Part of the towns defences included a rampart with palisade and an external ditch. In 1998 Marches Archaeology excavated a single trench 30m long by 2m wide and recorded a ditch identified as part of the defences 900m to the south-west of the Site. However an evaluation at 23 Aston Street by Shropshire County Council Archaeology Service in 2002 did not locate the defences, suggesting they are on a different alignment at this point to those suggested on the 1881 Ordnance Survey map. In March 2007 Birmingham Archaeology undertook an evaluation 200m to the south of the Site with the aim of locating the defences (Charles 2007). Three trial trenches were excavated, one of which found parallel ditches, which may have been part of defences. The secondary fill of one of these ditches contained pottery sherds dating from the late 17<sup>th</sup>/18 century. The second ditch was filled with a deposit indicative of rapid deliberate backfill which may have occurred at the end of the Civil War. In 1677 a large fire destroyed much of the timber buildings in the town. The railway and station immediately to the south-east of site were constructed in the 1850's.

## **3 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Aims**

- 3.1.1 The principal aim of the watching brief is to provide further information concerning the presence/absence, date, nature and extent of any buried archaeological remains that may survive and to investigate and record all archaeological features revealed during test pitting and groundworks.
- 3.1.2 The specific aims of the project are:
- to accurately record the location and stratigraphy of areas excavated during the main groundworks programme;

- to assess the state of survival of archaeological features and finds within the Site;
- to place any archaeology encountered within its local, regional and national significance.

### **3.2 Monitoring of Excavations/Groundworks**

- 3.2.1 It is proposed here that the programme for the archaeological watching brief will be carried out, subject to prior and adequate notification being given by the Client, on the commencement of test pitting and groundworks that may have an impact on archaeological features and deposits.
- 3.2.2 All works will be monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist from Wessex Archaeology. Any archaeological remains that may be revealed during the watching brief will be observed and recorded in accordance with current industry best practice (IfA 2008).
- 3.2.3 The watching brief is likely to comprise the monitoring of groundworks associated with excavations for 6 manholes (**Figure 1**) along with any related trenching. It is thought that groundworks will involve the reduction of previously undisturbed areas.
- 3.2.4 The Client will afford reasonable access in order that all archaeological features and deposits revealed during excavations and groundworks can be investigated and recorded.
- 3.2.5 All recording will be undertaken using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording system, supported by a photographic record. A sufficient sample of each feature type/deposit will be examined in order to establish the date, nature, extent and condition of the archaeological remains.
- 3.2.6 Areas under archaeological observation will be tied in to the Ordnance Survey.

### **3.3 Monitoring**

- 3.3.1 SCC will be allowed access to the Site to monitor the works if appropriate.

## **4 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLING**

### **4.1 Finds and environmental samples**

- 4.1.1 Finds will be treated in accordance with the relevant guidance (UKIC 1990; MGC 1991; IfA 2008) excepting where they are superseded by statements made below.
- 4.1.2 All artefacts from excavated contexts will be retained, except those from features or deposits of obviously modern date. No finds will, however, be discarded without the prior approval of SCC. In such circumstances, sufficient artefacts will be retained in order to elucidate the date and/or function of the feature or deposit.
- 4.1.3 All retained artefacts will, as a minimum, be washed, weighed, counted and identified. Any artefacts requiring conservation or specific storage conditions will be dealt with immediately in line with *First Aid for Finds* (Watkinson &

Neal 1998). Ironwork from stratified contexts will be X-rayed and stored in a stable environment along with other fragile and delicate material. The X-raying of objects and other conservation needs will be undertaken by the staff of an appropriately approved conservation centre.

- 4.1.4 Information will be obtained from SCC concerning conditions and arrangements for the deposition of finds. Arrangements for archive deposition will be made with the relevant museum.
- 4.1.5 Bulk environmental soil samples for plant macro fossils, small animal bones and other small artefacts will be taken from appropriate sealed and dateable archaeological contexts.
- 4.1.6 Bulk environmental soil samples will be processed by flotation and scanned to assess the environmental potential of deposits, but will not be fully analysed. The residues and sieved fractions will be recorded and retained with the project archive.

## **4.2 Treasure**

- 4.2.1 In the event of discovery of artefacts covered or potentially covered by The Treasure Act 1996 (and amendments), their excavation and removal will be undertaken following notification of the Client, Coroner and SCC.

## **5 POST-EXCAVATION AND REPORTING**

### **5.1 Watching brief report**

- 5.1.1 On completion of all archaeological monitoring, a watching brief report detailing the results of work will be produced and forwarded to the Client and SCC within four weeks of completion of all fieldwork.
- 5.1.2 A digital copy will be forwarded to the client minimum and hard copies will be supplied to the office of SCC. The watching brief report will be prepared in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' (2008) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*, except where superseded by statements below.
- 5.1.3 The report will comply with the requirements of SCC and in any case may include;
  - a non-technical summary;
  - plans and sections at an appropriate scale locating the Site, location of works, known archaeological structures and deposits and their extent;
  - tabulation of finds data by context and by material type;
  - a summary by category of the material types recovered;
  - a summary of the palaeo-environmental evidence recovered;
  - preliminary phasing of any archaeological structures, features and deposits encountered;
  - a consideration of the archaeological evidence from within the Site set in its broader landscape and historic setting.

5.1.4 The preparation of the report may involve the following elements:

- the conservation of appropriate material, including the X-raying of ironwork;
- the spot-dating of all pottery from excavated contexts. Spot-dating will be corroborated by scanning of other categories of material;
- a statement on each category of material, including reference to quantity, provenance, range and variety and condition;
- the selection and prioritisation of bulk soil samples taken for environmental and artefactual data in the light of preliminary phasing. Sieving, processing and scanning of selected soil samples will be undertaken and an assessment statement on charred food and plant remains;
- a statement of potential for each material category and for the data collection as a whole will be prepared, including specific questions that can be answered and the potential value of the data to local, regional and national investigation priorities;

5.1.5 A copy of the report will be sent to OASIS.

## 6 ARCHIVE

### 6.1 Preparation and Deposition

- 6.1.1 The complete project archive will be prepared in accordance with Wessex Archaeology's Guidelines for Archive Preparation and in accordance with *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage* (UKIC 1990). On completion of the project the archive will be deposited with the relevant museum or similar repository to be agreed with SCC. Such an arrangement will be confirmed prior to the commencement of fieldwork to ensure that the curator's requirements for archive preparation, storage and conservation have been fully met.

## 7 PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING

### 7.1 Personnel

- 7.1.1 The fieldwork will be directed and supervised by an experienced archaeologist from Wessex Archaeology's (Sheffield office) core staff, who will be on Site at all times for the length of monitoring. The overall responsibility for the conduct and management of the project will be held by one of Wessex Archaeology's (Sheffield office) project managers, who will visit the fieldwork as appropriate to monitor progress and to ensure that the scope of works is adhered to. The appointed project manager and experienced archaeologist will be involved in all phases of the project through to its completion. The following staff are proposed:

Richard O'Neill BA, MIfA	Senior Project Manager
Zac Nellist BSc, MA	Project Supervisor

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## STANDARDS

### 7.2 Quality and Code of Practice

- 7.2.1 Wessex Archaeology is a registered archaeological organisation with the Institute for Archaeologists.
- 7.2.2 Wessex Archaeology endorses the Code of Practice and the Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology of the Institute for Archaeologists.
- 7.2.3 All core staff would be of a standard approved by Wessex Archaeology, be employed in line with The Institute for Archaeologists Codes of Practice and be members of the Institute for Archaeologists or be appropriately qualified
- 7.2.4 Wessex Archaeology operates a *Project Management System*. All projects are undertaken under the direction of the Project Manager who is responsible to a Regional Manager, who ensures the maintenance of quality standards within the organisation. The Chief Executive has ultimate responsibility for all of the Trust's work.
- 7.2.5 All work will be carried out in line with current industry best practice (IfA 2008 and EH 1991).

## 8 INSURANCE AND HEALTH AND SAFETY

### 8.1 Policy and Risk Assessment

- 8.1.1 Health and safety considerations will be of paramount importance in conducting all fieldwork. Safe working practises will override archaeological considerations at all times.
- 8.1.2 All work will be carried out in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1992, and all other relevant Health and Safety legislation, regulations and codes of practice in force at the time.
- 8.1.3 Wessex Archaeology will supply a Risk Assessment to the Main Contractor before the commencement of any fieldwork. The Risk Assessment will have been read and understood by all staff attending the Site before any groundwork commences, and a copy will be kept on Site at all times. A copy of Wessex Archaeology Health and Safety Policy is available on request.
- 8.1.4 All Wessex Archaeology staff will comply with any requests by the Main Contractor concerning health and safety, including requirements to attend site induction prior to the commencement of fieldwork.
- 8.1.5 Wessex Archaeology has both public liability (£10,000,000) and professional indemnity insurance (£5,000,000).
- 8.1.6 Wessex Archaeology will ensure that all work is carried out to within the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1992, and in accordance with the SCAUM (Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers) health and safety manual *Health and Safety in Field Archaeology* (1997).



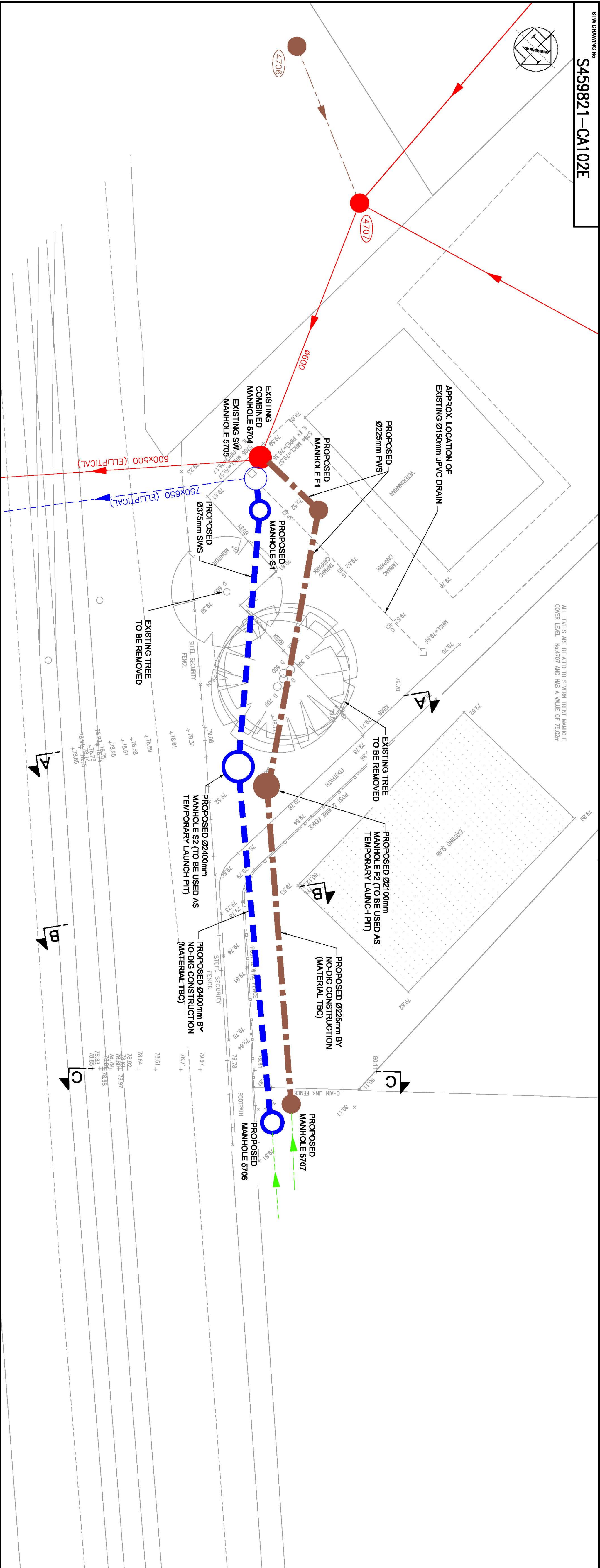
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## 9 KEY REFERENCES

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- United Kingdom Institute of Conservation (UKIC). 1990. Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage.
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## **10      FIGURES**





- ## NOTES
1. ALL THE LEVELS ARE IN METRES AND UNLESS STATED OTHERWISE.
  2. DO NOT SCALE ANY DOUBT CONSULT ENGINEER.
  3. THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH SERVICES FOR ADOPTION (9th EDITION) AND THE CURRENT SEVERN-TRENT ENGINEERING SPECIFICATION.
  4. THE TOPOGRAPHICAL AND SERVICES INFORMATION SHOWN ON THIS DRAWING HAS BEEN TAKEN FROM SURVEY STAKES (L&E SURVEYS LTD DRAWING 800-1, PLEASE REFER TO THIS DRAWING REGARDING THE ACCURACY OF THE INFORMATION PROVIDED).
- THERE IS NO WARRANTY GIVEN TO THE ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS OF THE ABOVE SERVICE INFORMATION.
5. LEVEL AND LOCATIONS OF SERVICES TO BE CONFIRMED ON SITE DURING CONSTRUCTION.
  6. FOR FOU WATER SEWER LONGITUDINAL SECTION DETAILS REFER TO DRAWING P101434-101.
  7. FOR CROSS SECTION DETAILS REFER TO DRAWING P101434-103.

PROPOSED SIV ALIGNMENT MAINTAINED LONG SECTION ADJUSTED TO SUIT	ASH	WM	RI	19.06
ISSUED FOR CONSTRUCTION	ASH	WM	RI	26.04
CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUE REVISED TO TRENCHLESS	ASH	WM	RI	04.02
GENERAL NOTES ADDED.	ASH	WM	RI	12.11
FIRST ISSUE	ASH	WM	RI	09.11
AMENDMENTS	BY	CHKD	APRD	DATE

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(PA45982)

**PROPOSED  
SURFACE WATER SEWER  
PLAN AND LONGITUDINAL  
SECTION**

STATUS			
FOR CONSTRUCTION			
DRAWN	CHECKED	APPROVED	
A.HART	W.MUSIWA	R.HARRIS	
DATE	DATE	DATE	
19.10.09	12.11.09	12.11.09	
DRAWING SCALE		ORIGINAL DRAWING SIZE	
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