ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF ENGINEERING IMPACT

POUND LANE

OAKHILL

SOMERSET

NGR: ST 63534 47294 - ST 62535 49017

JOB Nº: BA1235BWPLO









CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
Introduction	3
Assessment	7
Map Regression Analysis	9
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY	13
Conclusion	13
Refrerences	14

Report specification

Report compilation: Stephen Priestley MA Editing: George Children MA MIfA Approved: Neil Shurety Dip. MG. M.Inst.M





Executive Summary

This Archaeological Assessment was undertaken by Border Archaeology in response to a request from Bristol Water in advance of engineering works, based on readily available sources of archaeological and historical information, concerning the route of a proposed mains renewal scheme extending between the villages of Oakhill and Gurney Slade (Somerset).

This Assessment has concluded that the route has **Moderate** potential for revealing significant archaeological remains in specific areas.

Evidence for prehistoric ritual/funerary activity has been identified towards the N end of the pipeline route, represented by a recumbent standing stone situated NW of Rookery Farm (approximately 10-15m W of the N end of the route) and two possible barrow sites located to the W and SW of Rookery Farm. The potential for encountering evidence of prehistoric activity has been assessed as **Low** to **Moderate** as the route will not impact on any of these recorded sites; **however**, **the potential exists for unrecorded evidence of prehistoric activity to be identified where the pipeline route extends through fields at the N end of the route near Rookery Farm.**

The potential for encountering evidence of medieval occupation in the vicinity of the pipeline route has been assessed as Moderate, with specific reference to a section of the pipeline route extending through fields to the NW of Bath Road at Oakhill village, which runs in close proximity to the earthworks of a shrunken settlement of medieval or early post-medieval (16th-17th c.) date. Although aerial photographic evidence suggests that the extant earthworks are located chiefly in the field immediately to the W of the pipeline route, the full extent of the settlement has not been determined; the possibility remains that evidence of archaeological deposits and features relating to medieval/early post-medieval settlement might be encountered along this specific section of the route, extending to the NW of Bath Road.

Conclusion and Recommendations: <u>Border Archaeology has concluded that the majority of the scheme as outlined does not warrant archaeological observation of groundworks except in the following locations:</u>

1/ A section of the route extending for approximately 300m through fields to the NW of Rookery Farm adjacent to the lane to Gurney Slade (NGR ST 6268 4875- ST 6253 4901), in close proximity to a possible prehistoric standing stone situated adjacent to the lane at NGR ST 6253 4897.

2/ A section of the route extending for approximately 150m through fields to the NW of Bath Road from NGR ST 6360 4743 to NGR ST 6352 4755, in close proximity to the earthworks of a possible medieval or early post-medieval settlement.

A copy of this Appraisal will be supplied to Bristol Water and remitted to Somerset County Council for their approval.

1. Introduction

The proposed mains renewal scheme extends between the villages of Oakhill and Gurney Slade, to the N of the town of Shepton Mallet (Somerset). The route of the scheme extends for a total distance of approximately 2.1km from the junction of High Street and Bath Road (A367) in the centre of Oakhill village (NGR ST 63534 47294) extending along the Bath Road before turning sharply NW





and extending through pasture fields up to the junction of Zion Hill and Pound Lane (NGR ST 63367 47850), from where it runs NW along or parallel to the course of the lane to Gurney Slade, its northern terminus located approximately 350m NW of Rookery Farm at NGR ST 62535 49017. The southern section of the route, extending from ST 63534 47294 to ST 63367 47850, is located within the designated conservation area of Oakhill. The proposed engineering methodology consists of directional drill through the fields (necessitating the excavation of access pits measuring approximately $4m \times 2m$) but a short section along Bath Road may be open-cut requiring a trench approximately 1m wide and 1.2m deep.

An assessment of the archaeological resource in the vicinity of the pipeline route has been carried out with reference to readily available sources of historical and archaeological information and consisted of the following elements:

Evaluation and study of archaeological databases

A search was made of the Somerset Historic Environment Record (HER) for any sites of archaeological or historic interest within a 200m corridor (100m on either side of the pipeline route).

Evaluation and study of primary sources

Primary documentary sources relating to the study area, where deemed necessary, were consulted at Somerset Heritage Centre in Taunton.

Evaluation and study of secondary sources

Secondary sources relating to the study area were consulted using the collections held at the Somerset Heritage Centre, including relevant articles in the *Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society*, as well as published and unpublished reports relating to archaeological work in the vicinity of the study area.

Evaluation and study of cartographic and other pictorial evidence

Historic maps dating back to 1782, including the 1840 tithe maps and apportionments for Ashwick and Shepton Mallet parishes and Ordnance Survey 1st-4th edition 6 inch and 25 inch maps, were consulted at Somerset Heritage Centre. Aerial photographic records, including vertical and oblique photos ranging from the late 1940s to the present day, were consulted at Somerset Heritage Centre.

Soils and Geology

Two predominant soil types have been identified in the vicinity of the route (SSEW, 1983), consisting of the following:

1/ In the central and southern parts of the study area, the predominant soil type consists of typical palaeo-argillic brown earths of the NORDRACH (581a) series, comprising well drained fine silty over clayey soils; the underlying geology comprising Aeolian silty drift over Carboniferous limestone.

2/ Towards the N end of the pipeline route, the predominant soil type consists of the brown rankers of the CRWBIN (313c) series, comprising very shallow and shallow well drained loamy soils over limestone, often on steep slopes, with limestone pavement and other rock exposures common. The underlying geology consists of Carboniferous limestone.





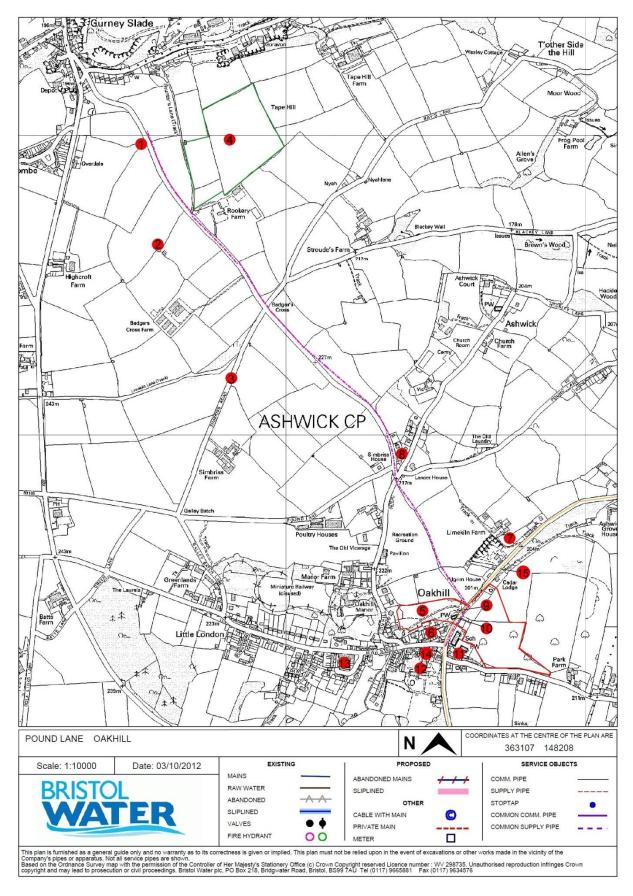


Fig. 1: Plan showing route and location of sites listed in the Somerset HER in the vicinity of the pipeline corridor





Site No.	PRN	NGR	Description
1	22519	ST 6253 4897	Standing Stone S of Gurney Slade (Prehistoric?)
2	15035	ST 6257 4864	Possible barrow W of Rookery Farm (Bronze Age?)
3	12199	ST 6278 4814	Possible barrow mound S of Rookery Farm (Bronze Age?)
4	12210	ST 629 489 (centre)	Field system on Tape Hill (Medieval/early post- medieval) Approximate extent of field system indicated by green line
5	23070	ST 637 473 (centre)	Earthworks of shrunken settlement (Medieval/early post-medieval) Approximate extent of field system indicated by red line.
6	20221	ST 6349 4733	Coombe House (late 18 th c. with 19 th c additions) Grade II listed
7	23076	ST 6370 4768	Limekiln site, Lime Kiln Farm Oakhill (Post- medieval)
8	20227	ST 6336 4790	Pound Cottages (built c.1750) Grade II listed
9	20299	ST 6357 4741	Oakhill Lodge, W side of Bath Road, Oakhill (built c.1820) Grade II listed
10	20232	ST 6355 4739	Oakhill Wesleyan Chapel, W side of Bath Road Grade II listed
11	18065	ST 6358 4729	All Saints Church, Oakhill (built 1861)
12	20256	ST 6346 4720	Pondsmead (built 1874) Grade II listed
13	23081	ST 6320 4725-ST 6338 4725	Brewery and Malthouses, Oakhill (c.18 th -20 th c.)
14	28935	ST 6346 4726	Watching brief at Pondsmead House (1999). 18 th c. boundary walls revealed during construction of extension to house
15	29151	ST 6660 5247 - ST 6301 4658	Late 18 th c. turnpike road (Bath Road) at Oakhill

Table 1: Gazetteer of sites listed in HER in the vicinity of the pipeline corridor





2. Assessment

Prehistoric

Possible evidence for prehistoric ritual/funerary activity has been identified in the immediate vicinity of the pipeline corridor (defined as 100m on either side of the route). A large block of weathered stone (approximate dimensions 1m × 0.9m ×0.5m) located within a hedge approximately 10-15m W of the northern terminus of the route has been identified as a standing stone or boundary marker of possible prehistoric date (PRN 22519; NGR ST 6253 4897). Located at NGR ST 6257 4864, approximately 100m SW of the pipeline route, are the remains of a low oval mound, 70m in circumference and 0.4m high, interpreted as a probable ploughed-out barrow (PRN 15035; Powesland, 1997). Another low mound (also standing 0.4m in height) has been recorded on Simbriss Road, approximately 130m SW of the route at NGR ST 6278 4814 (PRN 12199); it is possible that this could also represent a barrow site, although this identification remains uncertain.

The potential for encountering evidence of prehistoric activity has been assessed as **Low** to **Moderate**; this assessment reflects the fact that the route will not impact on the recorded sites of prehistoric date within the pipeline corridor, although the presence of these sites indicates the possibility that further, unrecorded evidence of prehistoric ritual/funerary might be encountered in the vicinity of the route (specifically where it extends through fields).

Roman

No recorded evidence for Roman occupation has been identified in the immediate vicinity of the pipeline corridor, although there is evidence of Roman activity in the wider landscape traversed by the pipeline route, indicated by the remains of the Roman road known as the Fosse Way, the course of which runs to the E of Oakhill village, approximately 400m SE of the pipeline route. Several finds of Roman coins and Cu alloy objects (including brooches and a key) of late 1st-early 4th century date have been made in the vicinity of Oakhill; however, their precise locations have not been recorded. The potential for archaeological evidence of Roman date has been assessed as **Low**, based on the lack of recorded evidence for Roman activity specifically within the pipeline corridor.

Medieval

The origins of settlement within the study area probably date back to the medieval period. The entirety of the study area lies within the southern part of the parish of Ashwick, the earliest reference to which occurs in a charter of King Edward the Confessor (dated 1061) granting land at Ashwick to Wulfwold, abbot of Bath (Finberg, 1964, no. 533). The description of the bounds of the estate in the charter suggest that it was probably coterminous with the boundaries of the parish of Ashwick, covering an extensive area including the hamlets of Benter, Gurney Slade, Neighbourne, Nettlebridge and Oakhill. The manor of Ashwick remained in the hands of Bath Priory until its dissolution in 1539, after which it was sold by the Crown to one Thomas Horner. By the late 16th century the manor had been acquired by the Fortescue family, who held it until the 19th century (Collinson, 1791, II, 449)

The hamlet at Oakhill appears to have originated during the medieval period as a group of small farmsteads lying directly on the boundary between the parishes of Ashwick (to the N) and Shepton Mallet (to the S). The earliest documented reference to Oakhill itself occurs in a deed of 1568 relating to the sale of a property called 'Billing's tenement' in 'Ocle' (DRO Ref. 1262M/TSO/156);





however, there are documentary references to specific properties within the village dating back to the mid-14th century (although these are variously described as lying within Shepton Mallet or Ashwick, rather than Oakhill specifically).

The southernmost section of the pipeline route appears to run in very close proximity to a series of earthworks extending to the NW of Bath Road in the centre of Oakhill village, which have been identified as the remains of a shrunken settlement (PRN 23070; NGR ST 637 473). The date, extent and function of these earthworks remain unclear (they appear to extend across both sides of Bath Road to the N and E of the village centre) and they have yet to be accurately surveyed; no indication of settlement activity is shown in this area on the Ashwick tithe map (1840), which suggests that these features could be of medieval or early post-medieval date.

Towards the northern end of the pipeline route, a section of the pipeline route runs through fields to the W of Rookery Farm, in close proximity to the S and W edges of a field system consisting of the ploughed-down remains of a series of relict field boundaries, interpreted as the remains of strip fields (presumably of medieval or early post-medieval date) overlaid by later 18th-19th century field boundaries (PRN 12210; NGR ST 629 489).

The potential for encountering evidence of medieval settlement activity has been assessed as **Moderate**; a section of the route extending through fields to the W of Bath Road runs less than 10m NE of an area of earthworks recorded as the remains of a shrunken village, possibly of medieval or early post-medieval date. As the full extent of these earthworks has not been ascertained, the possibility that evidence of archaeological features or deposits associated with this 'shrunken village' might be encountered along this specific stretch of the route cannot be discounted.

Post-Medieval (c.1700 to present)

The settlement at Oakhill appears to have grown steadily during the 17th and early 18th century, its growth being closely associated with the development of the local woollen cloth industry and stone-quarrying activity in the area. However, it was the establishment of the Oakhill Brewery in 1767 which significantly influenced the transformation of Oakhill into a thriving industrial settlement during the late 18th and 19th centuries, focused on the brewery site in the centre of the village.

A number of archaeological sites and listed buildings of later post-medieval date (18th and 19th century) are recorded in the vicinity of the pipeline corridor. Situated approximately 10m SW of the southern terminus of the route, at the junction of High Street and Bath Road, in the centre of Oakhill village, is the extensive site of the Oakhill Brewery and Malthouses (PRN 23081), which were established by John Billingsley in 1767 and which remained in operation until the late 20th century, although the brewery buildings were partially rebuilt after a fire in 1925 and again in 1959-60.

The surviving components of the brewery complex comprise the malthouses of early 19th century date with extensive later alterations (about 120m WSW of the southern terminus of the route) and the late 19th century mansion and grounds of Pondsmead House (PRN 20256), built in 1874 for Frederick Spencer, then owner of the brewery (approximately 40m SW of the route). Archaeological observation of groundworks relating to the building of an extension to Pondsmead House (then a nursing home) in 1999 identified a series of 18th century walls probably relating to boundaries and small buildings shown on the Shepton Mallet tithe map of 1840, which were probably removed when the house was built in the late 19th century (PRN 28935). A subsequent watching brief undertaken in 2007 to the W of the house during groundworks associated with the erection of new dwellings revealed no features or deposits of archaeological interest (PRN 24580).





Immediately E of the junction of High Street and Bath Road is the churchyard of All Saints Church, Oakhill, built in 1861 (PRN 18065; NGR ST 6358 4729). The pipeline route continues NE along Bath Road (A367) which was turnpiked in 1780 by the Shepton Mallet Turnpike Trust with alterations being made to the road until the late 20th century (PRN 29151). Immediately W of the section of the route following Bath Road, two Grade II listed buildings are recorded, namely Oakhill Lodge, built c.1820 (PRN 20299; NGR ST 6357 4741) the Oakhill Methodist Chapel and adjacent entrance gate piers (PRN 20232; NGR ST 6355 4739), built in 1825. Further to the NW, at the junction of Zion Hill and Pound Lane, the route passes immediately W of Pound Cottages, a pair of two-storey, rubble stone cottages of mid-18th century date, also Grade II listed (PRN 20227; NGR ST 6336 4790).

The potential for encountering evidence of archaeological features and deposits of post-medieval date on the route has been assessed as **Low**. The pipeline route lies well to the N of the Oakhill brewery complex and the other relevant HER entries recorded in the immediate vicinity of the route chiefly relate to listed buildings which will not be affected by the proposed works. The section of the route along the Bath Road follows the line of an 18th century turnpike road; however, it is unlikely that evidence of the original road construction will be identified, due to disturbance by later road construction works.

3. Map Regression Analysis

Day and Masters' county map of 1782 provides useful information about the pattern of roads between Oakhill and Gurney Slade, although it does not show settlement features or field boundaries in particular detail. Of particular interest is the fact that the course of the road leading N from Oakhill towards Gurney Slade is only shown as extending as far as the junction with Pound Lane and the lane to Ashwick village; presumably this route already existed as a footpath or track but was not formalised as a metalled roadway until the early 19th century.

An Ordnance Survey drawing of Shepton Mallet and the surrounding district (at a scale of 2 inches to the mile) dated 1811 (*fig. 2*) provides somewhat more detailed information about the growth of settlement at Oakhill and the pattern of roads and trackways in the surrounding area. Between 1782 and 1811, there appears to have been a marked increase of settlement density at Oakhill, with properties shown extending W along both sides of the High Street from the junction with Bath Road and to the N of the High Street along Zion Hill. Further to the N, the OS drawing of 1811 is the earliest map to depict the continuation of the road heading NW towards Gurney Slade from the junction of Pound Lane (running E-W), Zion Hill and the lane leading NE to Ashwick village. Both this map and the 1840 tithe map show the road as broadening out considerably at the point where these roads converge, suggesting that this may formerly have been a place of some local importance (possibly the site of a local livestock fair or meeting place).

Further to the NW, the OS drawing depicts another point where the lane to Gurney Slade broadens out at 'Baltzers Cross' (present-day Badgers Cross), where several lanes converge from Simbriss Farm to the SW and from Ashwick and 'T'other side of the Hill' to the E and NE, respectively. The origins of the place-name 'Baltzers or Badgers Cross' are unclear; the place-name element 'Badger' could represent an Old English personal name 'Bæcge' or it could be derived from the OE 'bæce' denoting a stream or valley (Mills, 2003).

The earliest map to show in detail the pattern of settlement and field boundaries across the entirety of the study area is the Ashwick tithe map of 1840 (*fig, 3*). The tithe map shows the course of Bath Road (the present A367) on what appears to be its present alignment; the Wesleyan Chapel and adjacent lodge on the NW side of the road are both depicted. The pipeline route extends NW from





Bath Road through what was originally a large triangular close of land (Plot No. 219), then under pasture. Plot 219 formed the eastern part of what appears to have been a single enclosure lying immediately N of the village centre, which had subsequently been divided into three closes of land, all under pasture (the other two plots being marked as Nos. 220 and 223).

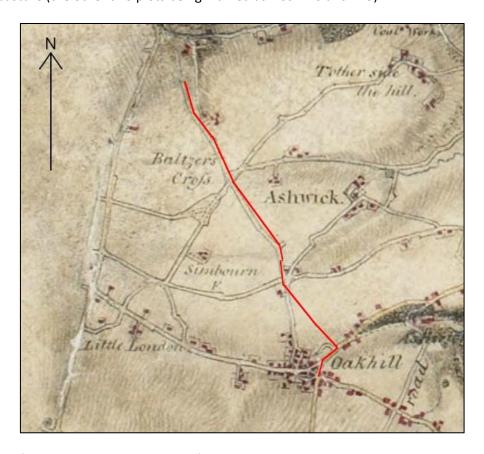


Fig. 2: Extract from the OS surveyors drawing of Shepton Mallet and district dated 1811 showing the study area (Reproduced by courtesy of Somerset Heritage Centre)

Continuing NW, the pipeline route runs along the western edge of two pasture fields (Plot No. 225 'Ten Acres' and Plot No. 226 'Pound Close') before exiting onto Zion Hill immediately S of the intersection with Pound Lane (running E-W) and the lanes running NE to Ashwick village and NW to Gurney Slade. At this point, the pipeline route runs in very close proximity to a rectangular enclosure marked as 'Ashwick Pound' (Plot No. 227), which presumably served as the livestock pound for the parish of Ashwick and its several hamlets.

The route then runs NW along the lane towards Gurney Slade, which is shown on the tithe map as closely resembling its modern alignment, passing immediately W of a pair of cottages (Plot Nos. 230 and 231, 'Pound Cottages'). The route extends along the western edge of a pasture field to the N of the two cottages (Plot No. 232 'Moon Croft Close'), crossing a trackway (first shown on the OS drawing of 1811) leading NE from the lane into the fields lying to the W of Ashwick village.

The pipeline route continues NW, parallel to the course of the lane, within two elongated field enclosures (Plot Nos. 237 and 250) both of which were under arable, before briefly re-joining the lane to Gurney Slade at Badgers Cross. From Badgers Cross, the route extends along the eastern edge of the lane towards Rookery Farm, crossing through a narrow elongated arable field (Plot No. 251 'Batches') and a larger arable field marked as 'Yonder Boasters' before re-joining the lane to





Gurney Slade and running to the W of Rookery Farm (then known as 'Bassets Farm'). The pipeline route then runs parallel and to the E of the lane to Gurney Slade, along the edge of two pasture enclosures marked as 'Grummets' (Plot Nos. 283 and 290).

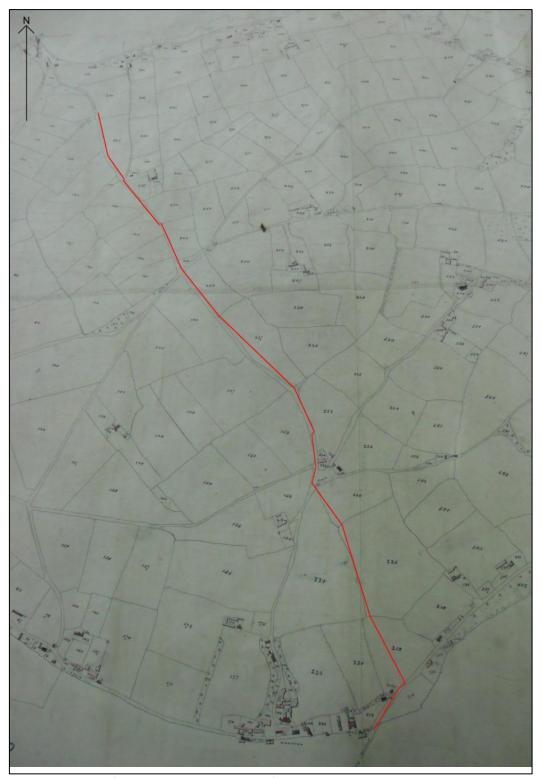


Fig. 3: Extract from the Ashwick tithe map of 1840 with the pipeline route superimposed (Reproduced by courtesy of Somerset Heritage Centre)





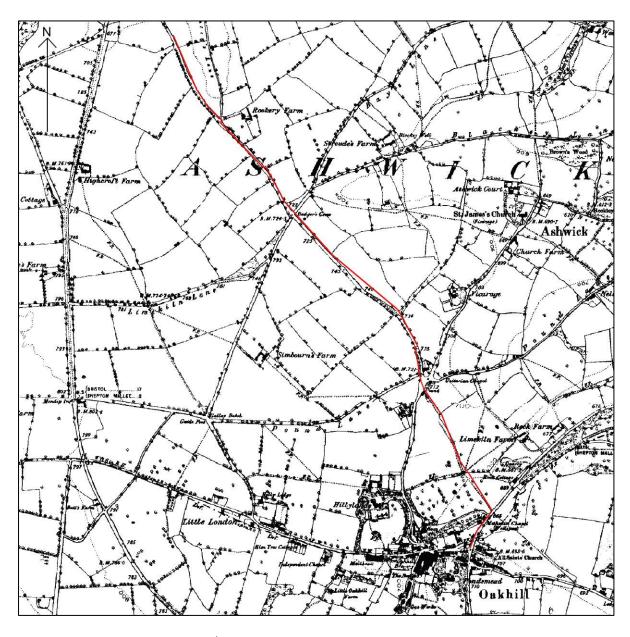


Fig.4 Extract from the OS 1st edition 6 inch map of 1888 with the pipeline route superimposed (Reproduced by courtesy of Somerset Heritage Centre)

The OS 1st edition 6 inch map of 1888 (*fig. 4*) shows that the landscape traversed by the proposed route had changed little since the 1840s, apart from some limited alteration of field boundaries in the fields immediately NW of Bath Road. Consultation of the OS 2nd and 3rd edition 6 inch maps dated 1904 and 1930, respectively, show little evidence of significant change to the fieldscape and settlement pattern in the vicinity of the proposed route since the late 19th century.

Later Ordnance Survey maps of the area dated 1960 and 1972, respectively, show a limited degree of ribbon settlement growth at Oakhill, extending along Bath Road and Zion Hill, as well as some further alteration of field boundaries in the fields immediately NW of Bath Road; however, little significant landscape change appears to have occurred along the remainder of the route since the late 19th century.





4. Aerial Photography

Aerial photographs relating to the study area were consulted, including RAF vertical photos dated 1946, an oblique aerial photo of the area dated 1967 (CUCAP), as well as several vertical and oblique aerial photos of the area (1992, 1999, 2001, 2004, 2006 and 2009). The earthworks of the presumed shrunken settlement lying immediately to the NW of the Bath Road at Oakhill (PRN 23070) are not easily visible due to tree cover along the southern edge of the fields containing these features.

A series of linear banks and depressions (possibly relating to relict field boundaries or house platforms) within this area of wooded pasture is visible on a Cambridge University oblique photo taken in 1967; based on this photograph, it would appear that the earthworks lie in the field immediately to the W of the pipeline route, although the full extent, date and function of these features has yet to be determined.

No other features of archaeological interest were identified in the immediate locality of the pipeline route.

5. Conclusion

This assessment of readily available sources of archaeological and historical information concerning the route of a proposed pipeline extending from Oakhill to Gurney Slade has reached the following conclusions:

1/Possible evidence for prehistoric ritual/funerary activity has been identified in the immediate vicinity of the route, represented by a recumbent standing stone located close to the N terminus of the route and two possible barrow sites identified towards the N end of the route.

- 2/ However, it should be emphasized that none of these features will be impacted by the pipeline route, although there remains **Low** to **Moderate** potential for encountering further unrecorded evidence of prehistoric activity, specifically in those areas where the pipeline extends through fields.
- 3/ Although evidence of Roman occupation has been identified in the wider vicinity of the study area, no archaeological sites or find-spots of Roman date have been recorded in the immediate vicinity of the pipeline corridor and consequently the potential for encountering archaeological evidence of Roman activity has been assessed as **Low**.
- 4/ The potential for encountering evidence of medieval occupation in the vicinity of the pipeline route has been assessed as Moderate, with specific reference to a section of the pipeline route extending through fields to the NW of Bath Road at Oakhill village, which runs in close proximity to the earthworks of a shrunken settlement of medieval or early post medieval (16th-17th c.) date.

Although aerial photographic evidence suggests that the extant earthworks are located chiefly in the field to the W of the pipeline route, the full extent of the earthworks has not been determined; consequently, the possibility remains that evidence of archaeological deposits and features relating to medieval/early post-medieval settlement might be encountered along this specific section of the route.





6. References

Primary Sources

SRO D\D/Rt/A/312: Ashwick tithe apportionment -1840

SRO D\D/Rt/A/313 Tithe map for the parish of Shepton Mallet - 1841

Secondary Sources

Somerset Historic Environment Record: HER Printout

National Monuments Record, Swindon: NMR Printout

Collinson, J., 1791, The History and Antiquities of Somerset, 3 vols., Bath

Finberg, H.P.R., 1964, The Early Charters of Wessex, Leicester

Mills, A.D., 2003, Oxford Dictionary of British Place Names, Oxford

Morris, J. (ed.), 1980, Domesday Book - Somerset, Chichester

Phelps, W, 1836, History and Antiquities of Somersetshire, London

Powesland, I., 1997, Heathland and Holloways – A landscape survey of East Mendip near Maesbury, Somerset, unpublished MA dissertation, University of Bristol

Thorn C. & Thorn, F., 1980, Domesday Book: Somerset, Chichester

Cartography

(All historic maps were obtained from Somerset Heritage Centre unless otherwise stated)

Day and Masters' county map of Somerset - 1782

OS surveyor's drawing of Shepton Mallet and district- 1811

SRO D\D/Rt/M/312 Ashwick tithe map - 1840

SRO D\D/Rt/M/313 Tithe map for the parish of Shepton Mallet - 1841

OS 1st edition 25 inch map - 1886

OS 1st Edition 6 inch map - 1888

OS 2nd Edition 6 inch map – 1904

OS 3rd edition 6 inch map - 1930

OS provisional edition 6 inch map - 1960





OS 1:10000 map - 1972

Aerial Photography

Aerial photographs relating to the study area were consulted at Somerset Heritage Centre and the National Monuments Record including RAF vertical photos (1946) and vertical and oblique aerial photos of the area (1967, 1992, 1999, 2001, 2004, 2006, 2009).