

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF ENGINEERING IMPACT

PREYWATER ROAD

WOOKEY

SOMERSET

NGR: ST 51955 45815 – ST 51658 45490

JOB N^o: BA1244BWPRW



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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
INTRODUCTION	4
ASSESSMENT	7
MAP REGRESSION ANALYSIS	10
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY	14
CONCLUSION	14
REFERENCES	14

Report specification

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Executive Summary

This Archaeological Assessment was undertaken by Border Archaeology, in advance of Bristol Water engineering works, and was based on readily available sources of archaeological and historical information, concerning the route of a proposed mains renewal scheme extending through the village of Wookey, in close proximity to the site of the medieval palace belonging to the Bishops of Bath and Wells (now occupied by Court Farm).

- The potential for encountering evidence of prehistoric or Roman activity has been assessed as **Low**. No archaeological evidence for prehistoric or Roman occupation has been previously recorded in the immediate vicinity of the pipeline route.
- However, this Assessment has identified that there is **Moderate to High** potential for encountering significant evidence of archaeological features and deposits of medieval date along the route.
- The pipeline route runs adjacent to the site of the medieval palace of Wookey, an important residence of the bishops of Bath and Wells from the 13th century to the late 1540s. The majority of the site has been designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.
- Although the pipeline route runs well to the N and W of the moated enclosure containing the palace (the surviving fabric of which is incorporated into the existing farmhouse at Court Farm) and most of its outbuildings, **evidence of water management features which may have been associated with the medieval palace has been identified from historic mapping close to where the pipeline extends S along Prewater Road/Holmlea immediately to the W of the Scheduled Area of the Bishop's Palace.**
- It should be noted, however, that the previous engineering works in the road (relating to road construction/repair or the installation of services) may have caused significant impact upon extant archaeology.
- **Conclusion & Recommendation:** Border Archaeology has concluded that archaeological observation of groundworks is necessary to reflect the Moderate to High resource potential in this area, particularly in view of (1) the fact that Wookey is designated as an area of High archaeological potential (2) the proximity of the route to the Scheduled Area of the medieval Bishop's Palace at Wookey and (3) the type & nature of the engineering methodology. Subject to site programming, it is not intended that archaeological observation is necessarily a constant presence.

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

1. Introduction

The study area consists of a proposed mains renewal scheme extending through the centre of the village of Wookey (Somerset). The proposed scheme comprises 1/ a section of open-cut trenching, approximately 560m in length, extending W from the junction of High Street (south side) and Vicarage Road (NGR ST 51955 45815) along the High Street and then turning S to run along Preywater Road up the junction with Holmlea, just S of Preywater Bridge (NGR ST 51596 45640) and 2/ a section of directional drilling, about 240m in length, extending W from the cul-de-sac at Holmlea (NGR ST 51519 45596) to the junction with Preywater Road and then extending S to the junction with the B3139 Wells Road (NGR ST 51658 45490).

The village of Wookey is designated as a conservation area and an area of High archaeological potential. A section of the pipeline route runs immediately W of the site of the medieval Bishop's Palace of Wookey, designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM No. 27961).

This Archaeological Assessment is an evaluation of all readily available sources of archaeological, documentary and cartographic information, where applicable and appropriate, namely, those held by the relevant HER/SMR, record office, museum or other local authority funded repository together with archaeological or local history society publications and material held in national collections, where it can be established that obtaining such material is of key importance to the assessment process. A rapid survey of the available cartographic evidence has been undertaken as part of the assessment procedure to identify patterns of change and continuity in the historic landscape.

The specific sources consulted for this Assessment consisted of the following:

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 1772 including the Wookey tithe map of 1839 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 and the National Monuments Record.

Soils and Geology

The predominant soil type in this area consists of the stagnogleyic argillic brown earths of the WHIMPLE 1 series (572d) comprising reddish fine loamy over clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging, overlying drift over Permo-Triassic reddish mudstone.

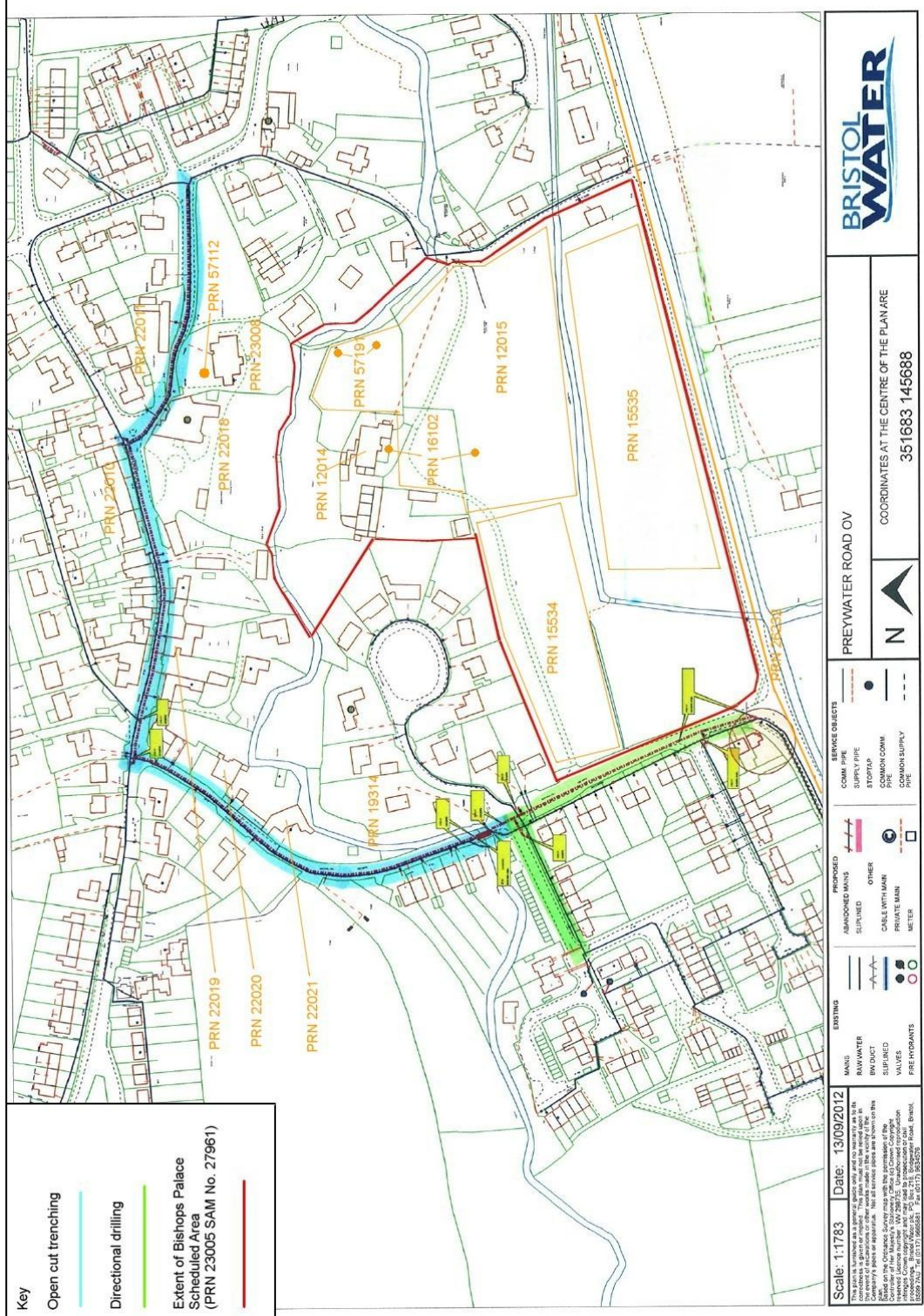


Fig.1: Plan showing the pipeline route and location of sites listed in the Somerset HER in the vicinity of the route

PRN	NGR	Description
12014	ST 5180 4571	Building Survey at Court Farm, Wookey (1997)
12015	ST 518 456	Geophysical Survey at Court Farm Wookey (1998)
15534	ST 517 456	Resistivity Survey at Court Farm, Wookey (2002)
15535	ST 518 456	Resistivity Survey to S of Court Farm Wookey (1995)
16012	ST 517 457	Evaluation at Court Farm, Wookey (2002)
19134	ST 5160 4570	Watching Brief at 14 Abbey Close, Wookey (1993)
22010	ST 5178 4585	Batch Cottage, High Street, Wookey (early 19 th c.) Grade II Listed
22011	ST 5188 4583	Church Farm (16 th c. and later) – Grade II Listed
22018	ST 5181 4581	Mellifont Abbey, former Rectory (13 th c., enlarged and rebuilt in 18 th c.) – Grade II* Listed
22019	ST 5169 4581	Yew Tree Farm House, High Street, Wookey (15 th c. and later) – Grade II Listed
22020	ST 5162 4579	No. 3 Preywater Road, Wookey (late 18 th -early 19 th c.) – Grade II Listed
22021	ST 5159 4575	No. 5 Preywater Road, Wookey (18 th c.) – Grade II Listed
23005	ST 517 457	Bishops Palace and Dovecote, Court Farm Wookey (13 th c and later) (SAM No. 27961)
23008	ST 5185 4579	St Matthew's Church and Churchyard Cross (13 th c. and later)
26232	ST 516 454	Turnpike road, Highbridge to Wells (18 th c.)
57112	ST 5184 4580	Watching Brief at St Matthew's Church, Wookey (1997)
57191	ST 5185 4572	Evaluation at Court Farm Wookey (1998)

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

2. Assessment

Prehistoric

No recorded evidence of prehistoric activity has been identified in the immediate vicinity of the pipeline route, based on a consultation of the Somerset Historic Environment Record. The nearest recorded site of prehistoric date is a crouched inhumation of probable late Neolithic/early Bronze Age date found in 1972 during the excavation of foundations for the extension to a property at Worth, approximately 800m SW of the pipeline route (PRN 23041; ST 509 451).

The potential for archaeological evidence of prehistoric date has been assessed as **Low**, based on the lack of recorded evidence for prehistoric activity specifically within the pipeline corridor.

Roman

No evidence of Roman activity has been identified within the immediate vicinity of the pipeline route. The nearest recorded site of Roman date is located about 500m N of the pipeline route, represented by finds of Roman pottery reportedly made during grave-digging at Wookey cemetery on Doctor's Hill (PRN 12992; ST 520 463).

The potential for archaeological evidence of Roman date has been assessed as **Low**, reflecting the lack of recorded evidence for Roman activity within the pipeline corridor.

Medieval

Evidence of medieval activity features prominently in the archaeological record for this area. The pipeline route extends through the centre of the village of Wookey, a settlement of Anglo-Saxon origin recorded as *Woky* (denoting 'a place at the trap or snare for animals') in a charter of Edward the Confessor dated 1065 confirming various estates belonging to the bishopric of Wells (Finberg, 1964, no. 542). The authenticity of the charter, which survives in a 14th-15th century copy, has been disputed although it probably represents an accurate record of the estates belonging to the bishopric at that date (Keynes, 1997).

The pipeline route runs immediately N and W of the site of the medieval Bishop's Palace at Wookey (PRN 23005), an important episcopal seat of the Bishops of Bath and Wells until the mid-16th century, located within and partially outside a large polygonal moated enclosure (about five acres in size) occupying a low-lying, marshy site in a loop of the River Axe.

The earliest reference to the palace occurs in 1224 when Bishop Jocelin of Wells (1206-42) was granted a license by Henry III to use oak trees from Cheddar forest for its repair, which suggests that there was already a building on the site by that date (Hasler, 1995, vii; Payne, 2002, 140). According to the early 14th century *Historia Minor* of Wells Cathedral, Bishop Jocelin built chapels with lodgings of note at Wells and Wookey ('capellas cum cameris de Wells et Woky notabiliter construxit') and it would appear that the earliest fabric of the surviving buildings at Wookey (incorporated into the existing farmhouse at Court Farm) dates from the early to mid-13th century (Hudson, 1880, 23).

Wookey appears to have been used occasionally as an episcopal residence during the 14th century, however it was much more frequently used during the 15th century and substantial repairs were made to the palace buildings by Bishop Bekynton in 1461-62, including the re-roofing of the hall in



lead at a cost of £24 15s 8½d (Hudson, 1880, 48-49). Wookey again declined in importance as a residence during the late 15th-early 16th century and was leased out to various persons before being sold by Bishop Barlow in October 1548 to Edward Duke of Somerset (Payne, 2002, 140). After Somerset's execution for treason in 1552, the manor of Wookey came into the hands of the Crown and was sold to William Dunche of London (Hudson, 1880, 62-65).

A survey of the manor of Wookey dated 1557 contains a detailed description of the former episcopal residence and outbuildings and indicates that new building work had taken place which may (in part) be represented by the construction of the present farmhouse (Hasler, 1995). The main gatehouse was located in the SE corner of the palace enclosure with another smaller entrance on the SW side. To the N of the gatehouse were several outbuildings including an ox-house, hay house, stable and pigsty while further to the W were a cow house and walled enclosure or 'base court'. Also recorded within the palace grounds were a garden behind the house, a barn, two bartons (paddocks), several fishponds and a dovecote. To the S of the moat, the 1557 records a large enclosure (four acres in size) containing apple trees called 'The Long Orchard' which can be identified with the existing rectangular meadow extending southwards to the Wells Road.

Somewhat surprisingly, the 1557 survey does not mention the existence of the moat known from later cartographic sources (including maps of Wookey dated 1772, 1829 and 1839) to have encircled the palace enclosure at Wookey. The moat has now largely been filled in although the southern arm was subsequently re-worked to form a leat while other stretches are clearly traceable as earthworks. The western edge extends through the 1960s housing development of Abbey Close and is visible as a break of slope in the gardens of Nos. 6 and 9 and as a hollow between two mounds on the road island in the middle of the close. A map of 1772 shows a linear watercourse extending W of the moat up to the roadway (present-day Prewater Road/Holmlea) and then turning N and heading along the road with another branch entering the field to the W.

Several programmes of archaeological work have been undertaken in the vicinity of the palace site, including a recent series of earthworks and geophysical surveys which have identified the line of the moat in several places and have also established much of the layout of the palace and its associated outbuildings (Payne, 2002, 145-149). Monitoring of excavations for a sewage pipe in 1971 revealed a substantial unmortared wall about 1.3m wide with foundations measuring 2m deep, in front of which was a ditch measuring about 10m in width. Another watching brief undertaken on the construction of a new dwelling at 14 Abbey Close in 1993 (PRN 19314) revealed a sequence of garden soils was identified underlain by clean clay and gravel with no significant archaeology identified.

In 1992-93, an earthwork survey of the Court Farm precinct was undertaken by the Wookey Local History Group which, together with documentary research, produced a fairly detailed plan of the palace and its outbuildings although interpretation proved difficult due to the extensive agricultural use of the site during the post-medieval period (Hasler & Luker, 1993). A subsequent geophysical survey of the Long Orchard to the S of the moated enclosure in 1995 produced no evidence of buried structural features associated with the palace (PRN 15535); however magnetometer and resistivity surveys undertaken in 1997 of a large portion of the close to the S and E of Court Farm (PRN 31730) revealed evidence of the moat to the E and SE of the farmhouse, which had evidently been filled in at a later date, together with evidence of a pathway or boundary wall running inside the line of the moat. A possible circular structure (about 10m diameter) identified N of the central southern stretch of the moat was suggested as the site of the dovecote recorded in the 1557 survey.

Another evaluation in 1998 to the E of Court Farmhouse (PRN 57191) identified the line of the moat and established its depth (2 metres) although no evidence for the primary cut was identified. In 2002, a resistivity survey undertaken to the SW of Court Farmhouse (PRN 15534) identified another section of the in-filled moat, with evidence for a possible building to the S (Payne 2002, 147-9). Further excavations in the same year adjacent to Court Farmhouse identified the line of the moat and structural remains interpreted as the Great Hall of the medieval Bishop's Palace, while possible medieval occupation layers were identified in a trench to the S of the farmhouse (PRN 16102)

The pipeline route also runs along the High Street immediately N of the churchyard of St Matthew's Church (PRN 23008; ST 5185 4579); the sub-circular form of the churchyard suggests a pre-Conquest date for its foundation although the earliest reference to the church occurs in a charter of Robert Bishop of Bath (c.1133-66). The earliest extant fabric dates to the 13th century and comprises the E end and N wall of the chancel and the N wall of the nave while extensive additions were made in the late 14th–early 15th century (including the tower, porch and chancel arch and the remainder of the nave) and the mid-16th century (Pevsner, 1958, 344). The churchyard contains the remains of an octagonal cross of late 13th century date and two Grade II listed tombs of 18th century date. A watching brief on drainage works in the churchyard revealed fragments of medieval carved stonework together with post medieval pottery (PRN 57112). Although the pipeline route runs immediately N of the northern boundary of the churchyard, there appears to be no evidence to indicate that this boundary has changed since the early 19th century; consequently the likelihood of encountering evidence of buried remains associated with the churchyard appears minimal.

Two listed buildings of medieval date have also been identified in close proximity to the pipeline route, namely Mellifont Abbey (PRN 22018), a Grade II* listed former rectory of late medieval origin with extensive mid to late 18th century additions in Gothic Revival style (Pevsner, 1958, 344), and, further to the W along the High Street, Yew Tree Farmhouse (PRN 22019), a 15th century open hall house with later post-medieval alterations.

The potential for archaeological evidence of medieval date to be identified in the vicinity of the route has been assessed as **Moderate to High**, particularly in view of the proximity of the pipeline route to the western edge of the site of the Bishop's Palace. It is unlikely that structural remains associated with the palace buildings, or evidence of the moat enclosing the site will be encountered in the immediate vicinity of the route. **However, there is evidence from historic maps of the area to suggest that water management features associated with the medieval palace might be identified, specifically in the vicinity of present-day Preywater Road/Holmlea.** Moreover the low-lying nature of the terrain indicates the potential for waterlogged deposits to survive in this area.

Post-Medieval

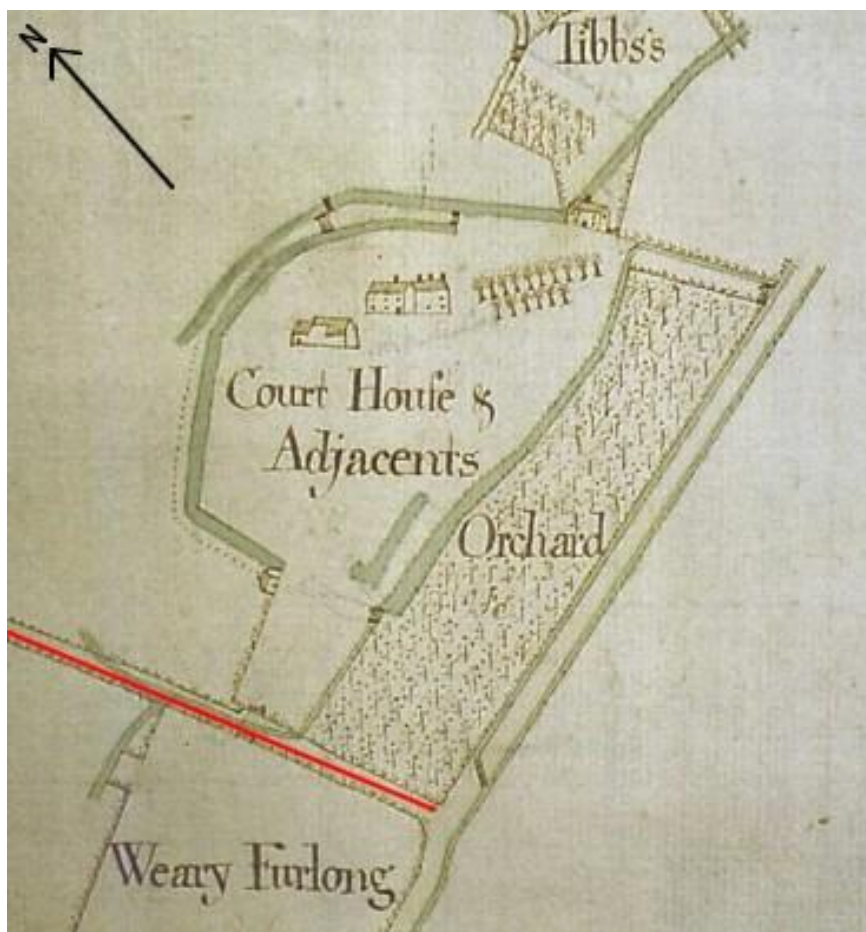
Evidence of post-medieval archaeology in the vicinity of the pipeline route is limited in scope. The present day B3139 (Wells Road) which marks the southern terminus of the pipeline route, follows the course of a late 18th century turnpike road from Highbridge to Wells (PRN 26232). Located approximately 70m WSW of the southern terminus of the route is the site of a mid-late 19th century corn mill marked on the OS 1st edition map and demolished by the late 1940s (PRN 12240; NGR ST 5157 4544). Other sites of post-medieval date recorded in the Somerset PRN in the immediate vicinity of the route consist of four Grade II listed buildings in the High Street and Preywater Road, ranging broadly in date from the 16th to 19th centuries. These include Church Farmhouse (High Street), a two storeyed house of 16th century date with 18th-19th century alterations (PRN 22011; ST 5188 4583), Batch Cottage, an early 19th century stone built cottage with possible earlier fabric (PRN

22010; ST 5178 4585) and two detached houses at Nos. 3 and 5 Preywater Road respectively dated to the late 18th/early 19th century and the mid to late 18th century (PRN 22020; 22021).

3. Map Regression Analysis

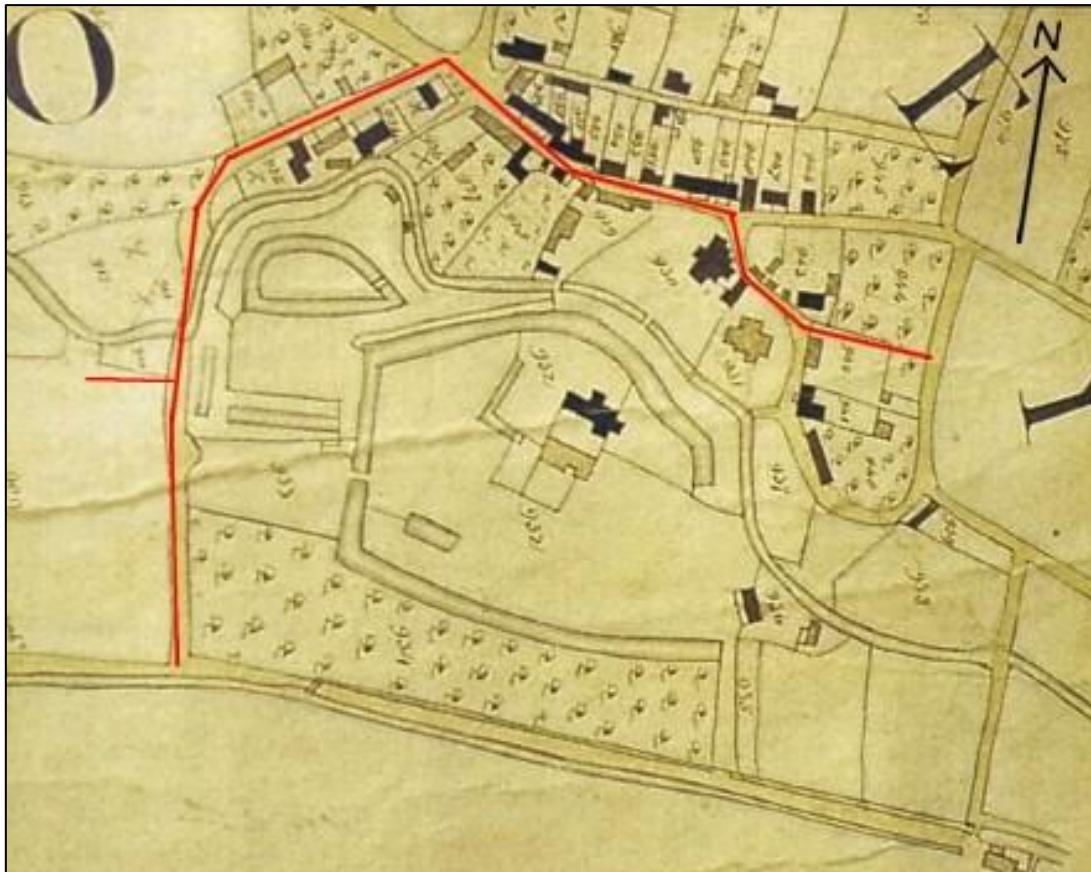
The earliest map consulted for the purposes of this Assessment was a plan of lands at Wookey belonging to Clement Tudway Esq. dated 1772 (SRO Ref. DD\TD/58/9) which depicts the site of the Bishop's Palace at Wookey (**Fig. 2**). The 1772 map shows the polygonal enclosure ('marked as Court House & Adjacent's') with the farmhouse and a gabled barn structure located in the NE corner of the enclosure and a gatehouse located in the SE corner. The moat surrounding the enclosure is shown as largely intact apart from a short section in the SW corner, which appears to have been in-filled, leading into a paddock or garden extending W up to the roadway. To the S of the moat lies a long rectangular enclosure marked as 'Orchard' which probably corresponds to the 'Long Orchard' recorded in the estate survey of 1557.

A narrow, E-W aligned watercourse is shown as extending from the SW corner of the moat up to the roadway (present-day Preywater Road/Holmlea) and then turning N and heading along the road with another branch entering the field to the W (Weary Furlong). The function of the watercourse is uncertain, it could represent a drainage ditch or it could possibly be associated with an unrecorded mill site located to the W of the road (although no evidence of this is visible on later maps).



*Fig. 2: Extract from an estate plan of Wookey dated 1772 showing Court House and outbuildings
(Reproduced by courtesy of Somerset Heritage Centre)*

A later map of Wookey village dated 1829 (SRO Ref. DD\TD/58/5/3) together with the tithe map of 1839 (SRO Ref. D\D/Rt/M/272) provide more detail on the topography of Court Farm and the village to the N and NW (**Figs. 3 & 4**). Of particular interest are the water features depicted to the W and NW of the moated enclosure, consisting of two linear pond features situated immediately E of the roadway, aligned N-S and E-W respectively, to the N of which is a small, roughly D-shaped, moated enclosure with a small entrance on the NE side. The linear pond features may be identifiable with fish ponds referred to in the 1557 survey but the function of the D-shaped enclosure is less clear; it could possibly represent an ornamental garden feature associated with the Bishop's Palace although this identification remains tentative.



*Fig. 3: Extract from a plan of Wookey dated 1829
(Reproduced by courtesy of Somerset Heritage Centre)*

Significantly, the linear watercourse shown on the 1772 map as extending W from the SW corner of the Bishop's Palace moated enclosure to the roadway and then turning N to head along the road towards Preywater Bridge is not shown on the 1829 or 1839 maps. Presumably the watercourse had been filled in at some time before 1829 although the section between the moated enclosure and the road is still traceable as a field boundary. To the N of the Bishop's Palace, the settlement pattern along Preywater Road and the High Street as shown on the 1829 and 1839 maps largely resembles its present appearance, with small cottages clustered along the N side of the High Street and larger detached properties on the S side of the High Street, including Yew Tree farmhouse (Plot No. 929) and Mellifont Abbey (Plot No. 930). The sub-circular churchyard enclosure (Plot No. 931) to the E of Mellifont Abbey as depicted on the 1829 and 1839 maps appears to resemble closely its current extent.

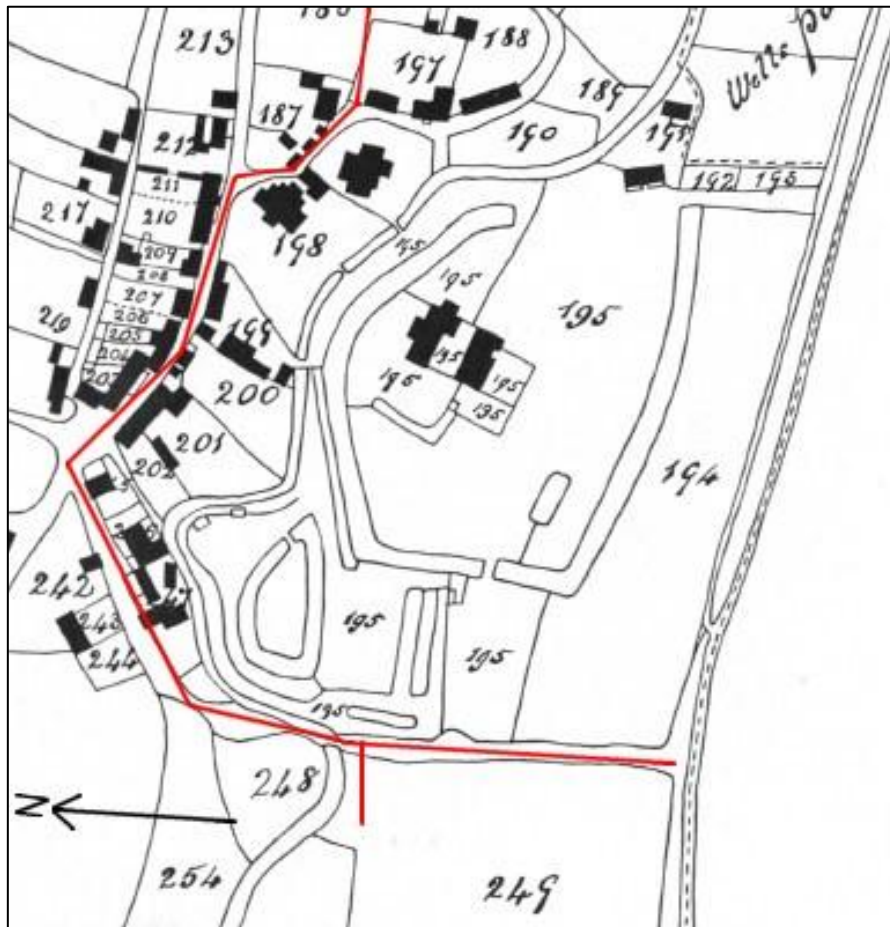


Fig. 4: Extract from the tithe map of Wookey parish dated 1839
 (Reproduced by courtesy of Somerset Heritage Centre)

The OS 1st and 2nd edition 25 inch maps dated 1886 and 1903 respectively (**Figs. 5 & 6**) show that there had been a certain degree of change to the road pattern immediately E of the churchyard, with the establishment of a new road leading E towards Vicarage Road, crossing through a former orchard to the S of Church Farm. However the extent of the churchyard and the pattern of settlement along High Street and Prewwater Road appear to have remained essentially intact.

Further to the S, however, the site of the Bishop's Palace had undergone extensive changes since the early 19th century. The majority of the moat surrounding the former palace enclosure (now Court Farm) had been in-filled apart from the southern arm of the moat, although the NW section of the moat is still depicted as a ditch feature. The linear pond features shown immediately W of the palace enclosure on the 1829 and 1839 maps are no longer depicted on the OS map of 1886. The small D-shaped moated enclosure to the NW is still traceable as a field on the 1886 and 1903 maps. Most of the surrounding moat appears to have been in-filled although the western and southern arms of the moat are still discernible. Little evidence of change to the study area is depicted on the OS 3rd edition map of 1930; however by 1960 a housing estate had been built on the W side of Prewwater Road/Holmlea while further housing development had occurred on the E side of Prewwater Road (Abbey Close) by 1969.

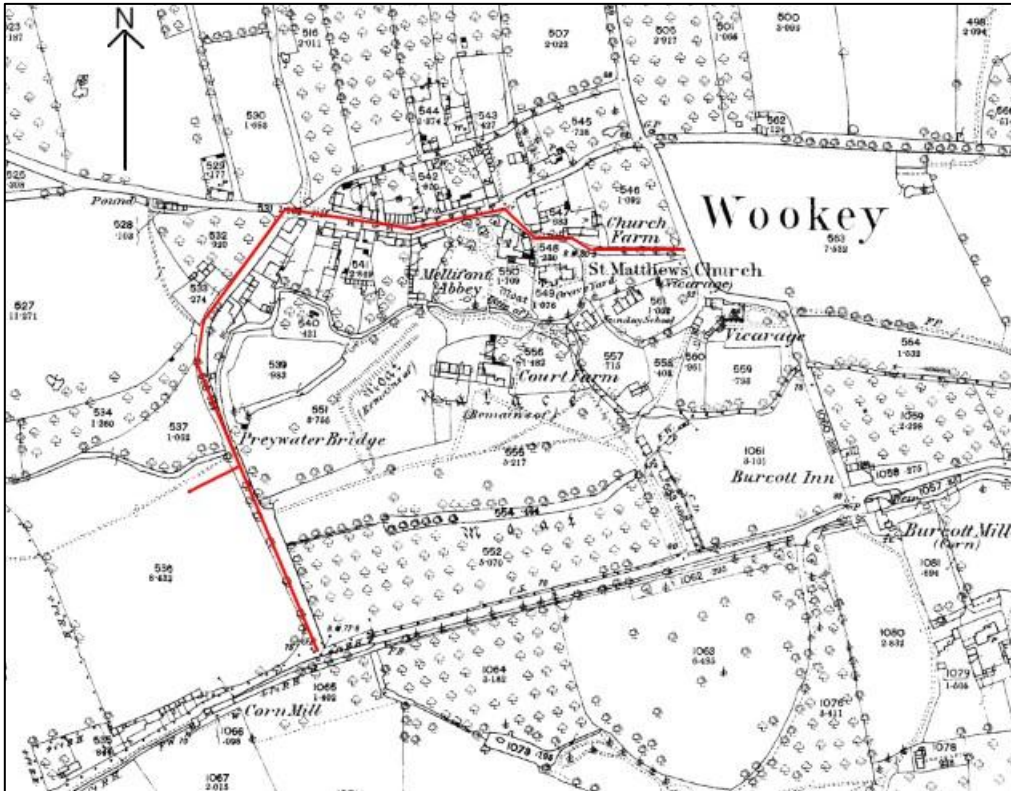


Fig. 5: Extract from the OS 1st edition 25 inch map of 1886
(Reproduced by courtesy of Somerset Heritage Centre)

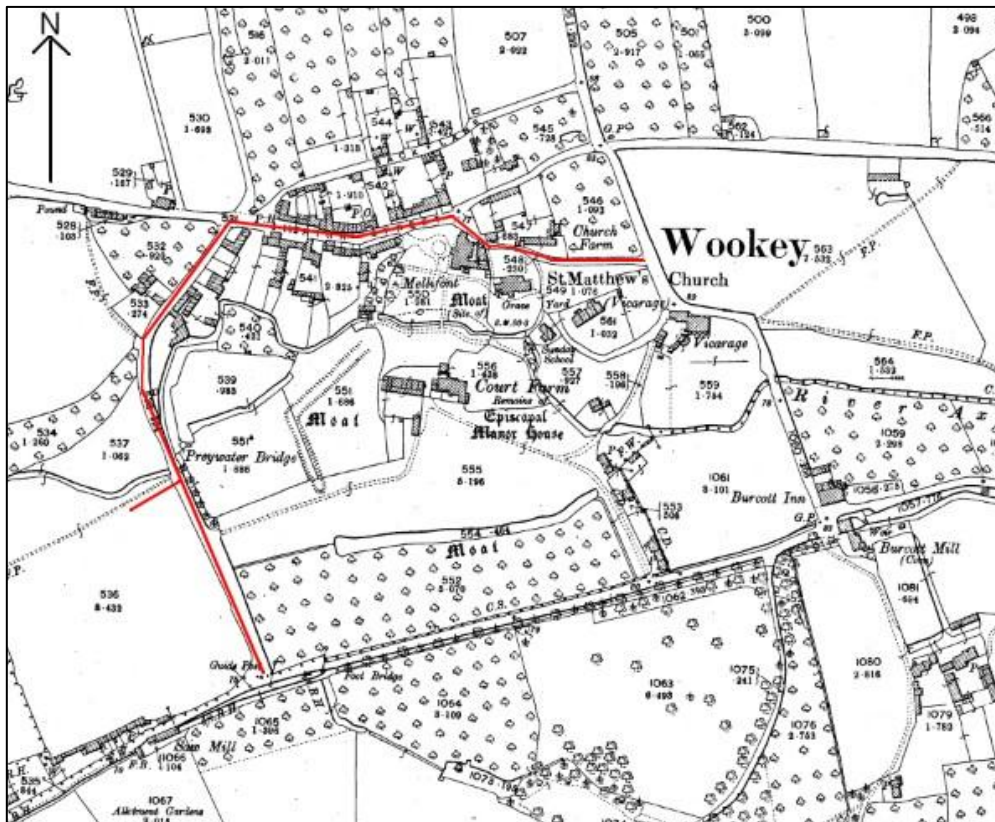


Fig. 6: Extract from the OS 2nd edition 25 inch map of 1903
(Reproduced by courtesy of Somerset Heritage Centre)

4. Aerial Photography

Aerial photographs relating to the study area were consulted including RAF vertical photos dated 1947, as well as several vertical and oblique aerial photos of the area (1999, 2001 and 2009). The RAF vertical photograph of 1947 shows that the southern arm of the moat had been partially in-filled and its alignment altered; it appears to run slightly S of the moat feature as shown on the OS 1st-3rd edition maps. However the field boundary running W from the SW corner of the moat to the road (which appears to represent the line of the former watercourse shown on the 1772 estate map) is still visible. The long rectangular enclosure to the S ('The Long Orchard') is still shown as heavily planted with trees. The D-shaped moated feature located to the NW of the palace enclosure and immediately E of Preywater Bridge is still visible on the 1947 aerial photo. More recent aerial photographs show that late 1960s housing development (in particular the construction of Abbey Close) had encroached upon the NW corner of the palace site, the D-shaped moated feature still visible in 1947 is no longer shown on recent photographs of the study area. The Long Orchard enclosure to the S of the palace site had also been largely cleared of trees by the late 1990s.

5. Conclusion

This appraisal of readily available sources of archaeological and historical information concerning the route of a proposed mains renewal scheme extending through the historic village of Wookey has reached the following conclusions:

The potential for encountering evidence of prehistoric or Roman activity has been assessed as **Low**. No archaeological evidence for prehistoric or Roman occupation has been previously recorded in the immediate vicinity of the pipeline route, while only limited evidence for prehistoric or Roman activity has been identified in the wider locality.

This Assessment has identified that there is **Moderate to High** potential for encountering significant evidence of archaeological features and deposits of medieval date along the route. The village of Wookey itself is of pre-Conquest origin and has been designated as an area of High archaeological sensitivity. The pipeline route runs to the N and W of the extensive site of the medieval palace of Wookey, an important residence of the bishops of Bath and Wells from the 13th century to the late 1540s. Although the pipeline route runs well to the N and W of the polygonal moated enclosure containing the palace and most of its outbuildings, evidence of water management features which may have been associated with the medieval palace has been identified from historic mapping (dating back to 1772), close to where the pipeline extends S along Preywater Road/Holmlea immediately to the W of the Scheduled Area of the Bishop's Palace.

6. References

Primary Sources

SRO D\D/Rt/A/272: Wookey tithe apportionment -1839

Secondary Sources

Somerset Historic Environment Record: HER Printout

National Monuments Record, Swindon: NMR Printout

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Holmes, T.S., 1880, *The History of the Parish and Manor of Wookey*, Bristol

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Cartography

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

DD\TD/58/9 - Plan of lands at Wookey belonging to C. Tudway (including Court House Farm)- 1772

Day and Masters' county map of Somerset - 1782

DD\TD/58/5/3 - Map of the Wookey estate - 1829

D\D/Rt/M/272 Wookey tithe map - 1839

OS 1st edition 25 inch map - 1886

OS 2nd edition 25 inch map - 1903

OS 3rd edition 25 inch map - 1930

OS provisional edition 6-inch map - 1960

OS 1:2500 map - 1969

Aerial Photography

Aerial photographs relating to the study area were consulted at Somerset Heritage Centre and the National Monuments Record including RAF vertical photos (1947) and vertical and oblique aerial photos of the area (1999, 2001, 2006, 2009).