

ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION

**GEO-ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING PITS
KINGSPAN INSULATION LTD
SHOBDON AIRFIELD
PEMBRIDGE
HEREFORDSHIRE**

*Centred on NGR: SO 39113 60006
Job No. BA1223KISA*



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CONTENTS

1. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY	3
2. INTRODUCTION	4
3. BRIEF HISTORICAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND	5
4. GEOLOGY	5
5. METHODOLOGY	5
6. RESULTS	7
7. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS	9
8. COPYRIGHT	9
9. BIBLIOGRAPHY	10

Cover: View north-northeast from the site towards Kingspan Insulation



1. Non-Technical Summary

Border Archaeology was instructed by E & J Solutions Ltd to undertake Archaeological Observation of geo-environmental engineering test-pits which were opened on part of the Shobdon Airfield site adjacent to Kingspan Insulation prior to the installation of a proposed Anaerobic Digester.

All pits were excavated by machine to the required geo-environmental engineering depth. No structures or features relating to the airfield's use during the Second World War or to earlier periods were revealed, all pits being devoid of archaeological deposits.

2. Introduction

Border Archaeology was instructed by Bill Stokes Esq of E & J Solutions Ltd (*fig.1*) to carry out a programme of archaeological observation of geo-environmental engineering test-pits (*Plates 1-4*) located on land at Shobdon Airfield (centred on NGR: SO 39113 60006) adjacent to Kingspan Insulation Ltd Pembridge Leominster Herefordshire HR6 9LA and relating to the installation of a proposed Anaerobic Digester.

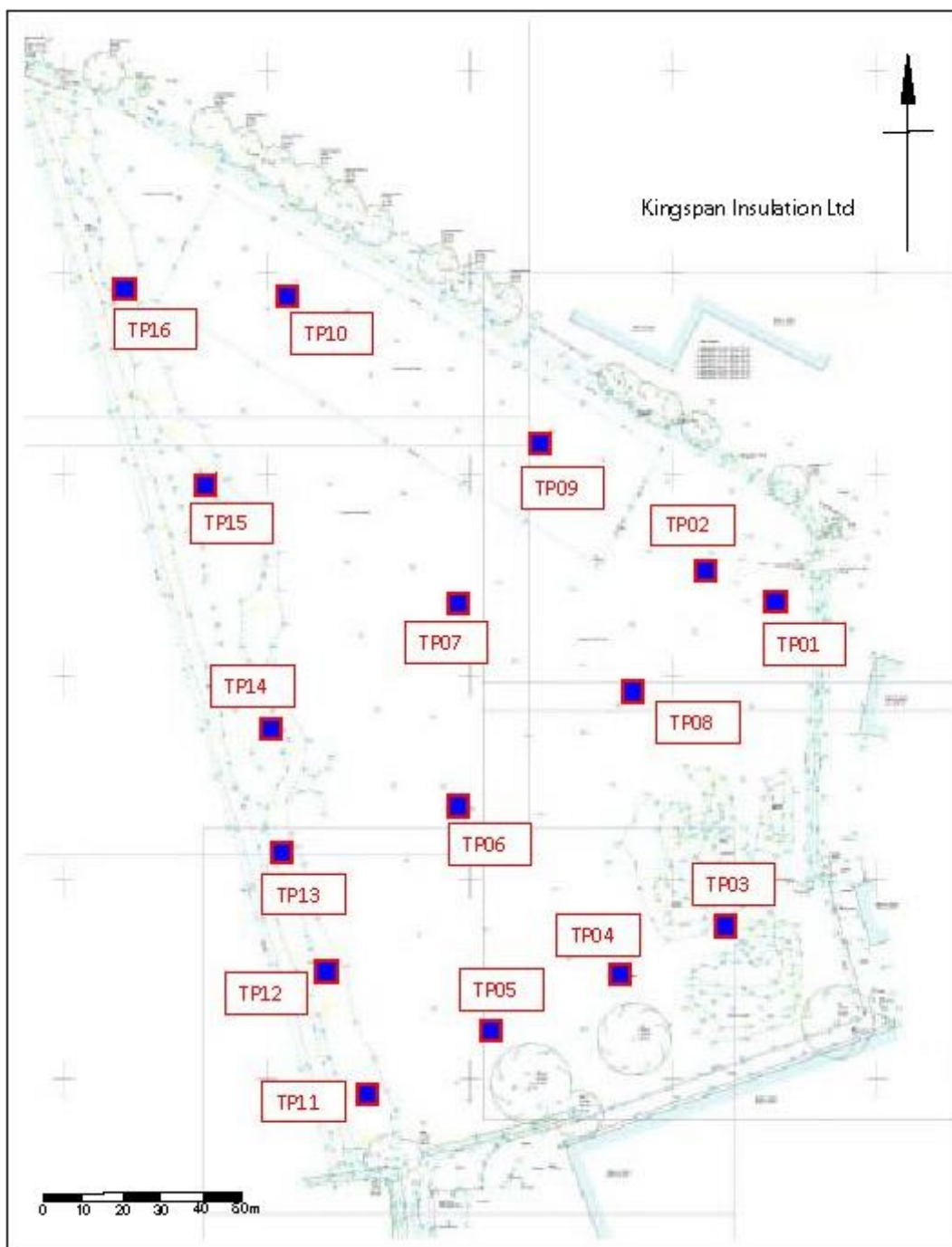


Fig 1: Plan showing locations of geo-environmental test-pits



The observation was carried out on March 26th 2013. The pits were machine-excavated to test for the presence of contamination prior to development.

Copies of this report will be submitted to Mr Stokes, to Julian Cotton Esq, Archaeological Advisor, Herefordshire Council and to the Herefordshire Historic Environment Record (HER).

3. Brief Historical & Archaeological Background

The site is located on the airfield industrial estate between Pembridge and Shobdon Herefordshire (SO 390 599) and previously formed part of the No 5 Glider Training School, which opened in July 1942 to commence a programme of wartime glider pilot training (SMR No 12531) (NGR: SO 3964 6065).

The site also lies within the vicinity of the Rowe Ditch, an early medieval feature (SMR No 356) (SO NGR: 379 599) that runs N-S approximately 1km to the W.

Remains of the original wartime huts survive elsewhere on the airfield site and it was anticipated that any remains in this area might be affected by the ground-works; however, no structural evidence was revealed. It would appear that the former airfield buildings in this part of the site were demolished during the post-war period and the site returned to agricultural use.

4. Geology

The site is located in an area of typical argillic brown earths of the Rowton series (571A) and typical alluvial gley soils of the CONWAY series (811b). The former consist of well-drained fine silty and fine loamy soils, locally over gravel, overlying glacio-fluvial or river terrace gravel and till, while the latter soils are deep stone-less fine silty and clayey soils variably affected by groundwater over river alluvium (SSEW 1983).

5. Methodology

Archaeological observation was carried out in accordance with *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IfA 2008). Border Archaeology adheres to the *IfA Code of conduct* (2012) and *Code of approved practice for the regulation of contractual arrangements in field archaeology* (2008) and to Herefordshire Archaeology's *Standards for Archaeological Projects in Herefordshire* (Issue 1) (Herefordshire Council, 2004). Border Archaeology is cognisant of Herefordshire Council's *Archaeology & Development Supplementary Planning Document* (2010).

All pits were excavated by machine and toothless bucket to an appropriate geo-environmental engineering depth.



5.1 Recording

Full written, graphic and photographic records were made in accordance with Border Archaeology's *Field Recording Manual* (2012). Records include:

- A pro-forma context record for each stratigraphic unit
- A plan showing locations of test-pits has been produced based upon the plan submitted to Border Archaeology by James Woodier Senior Geo-Environmental Engineer Environmental Management Solutions Ltd.
- A photographic record was compiled using a high-resolution digital camera showing deposits revealed in each of the pits in addition to a representative photographic record of the progress of the archaeological work. Included in each photograph was an appropriate scale and all photographic records were indexed and cross-referenced to written site records. Details concerning subject and direction of view are contained in a photographic register, indexed by frame number.

5.2 Recovery of finds

No finds were recovered during the course of the observation.

5.3 Sampling levels

No deposits revealed were considered suitable for sampling.

6. Results

The pits varied marginally in size dependent upon geo-environmental engineering criteria; however, they all lay within the range 1.8m × 0.6m × 1.8m to 2.3m × 0.6m × 0.65m (*Plates 1-4*).

All pits were excavated down to natural gravels and consistently revealed a sequence of deposits comprising approximately 0.35m of topsoil underlain by a firm/plastic mid yellowish-brown silty clay subsoil overlying mid grey gravel composed of frequent small and medium rounded stones.

No archaeological deposits were identified during the course of the ground-works.



Plate 1: View W of TP03 showing section through deposits



Plate 2: View W of TP04



Plate 3: View S of TP14



Plate 4: View W of TP09

7. Discussion of Results

The test-pit excavations revealed no evidence relating to the Second World War structures which survive elsewhere on the airfield site and which were presumed to survive within the study area. It would thus appear that the wartime buildings formerly occupying this part of the site were removed in their entirety during the post-war period and the site returned to agricultural use.

8. Copyright

Border Archaeology shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports, tender documents or other project documents, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, with all rights reserved, excepting that it hereby provides a licence to the client and the Council for the use of the report by the client and the Council in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the Project Specification to use the documentation for their



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