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Report Specification:

Compilation:

Elizabeth Govier BA MA

Artwork:

Elizabeth Govier BA MA

Editing:

George Children MA MCIfA

Final Edit & Approval:

Neil Shurety Dip. MG M Inst M

Report Ref:

BA1551UFS

Grid Reference:

NGR: SJ 52830 14064

OS Licence No: 100055758

Date:

April 2016

Cover: View east showing the site and extant Sewage Pumping Station

General Enquiries: E: ask@borderarchaeology.com | T: 01568 610101 **Border Archaeology Regional Offices Bristol** Milton Keynes Trelawney House Surrey Street, Luminous House, 300 South Row, Bristol, BS2 8PS Milton Keynes, MK9 2FR T:0117 387 8921 T: 01908 933765 Leeds Newport No 1 Leeds, 26 Whitehall Road, Merlin House, No1 Langstone Business Park, Leeds, LS12 1BE Newport, NP18 2HJ T: 0113 3570390 T: 01633 415339 Leominster (Administration) Winchester Chapel Walk, Burgess Street, Basepoint Business Centre, Winnal Valley Road, Leominster, HR6 8DE Winchester, SO23 0LD T: 01568 610101 T: 01962 832777 London 23 Hanover Square, London, W1S 1JB T: 020 3714 9345









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1 Executive Summary

Border Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by Amey on behalf of Severn Trent Water to undertake a programme of archaeological observation during engineering groundworks for a Sewage Pumping Station (SPS) adjacent to the existing SPS north of the village of Uffington Shropshire (NGR: SJ 52830 14064).

The scheme comprised demolition of the existing control building structure and construction of a new template pumping station, including wet wall, inlet chamber, valve chamber and flowmeter chamber and new site access.

The area was formerly rough grassland used as pasture. The deposits encountered appeared chiefly to be associated with modern re-landscaping of the area.

The southern edge of the site was bounded by the former Shrewsbury Canal and, whilst the cut of the canal bed was not revealed during the groundworks as it lies further to the south, beyond the limit of excavation, frequent building debris, farmyard waste and domestic rubbish was encountered in the topsoil and subsoil, predominately concentrated along the southern and eastern edge of the site, correlating with the canal alignment.

These inclusions are interpreted as evidence of 20^{th} -century in-filling of the disused canal, together with localised dumping of material.

No significant archaeological deposits, features or finds were encountered.



2 Introduction

Border Archaeology Ltd (BAL) was instructed by Amey on behalf of Severn Trent Water (STW) to undertake a programme of Archaeological Observation (AO) during engineering groundworks for a Sewage Pumping Station (SPS) (hereafter referred to as the site or the scheme) adjacent to the existing SPS N of the village of Uffington Shropshire (NGR: SJ 52830 14064) (*fig.* 1).

The scheme involved demolition of the existing control building structure and construction of a new template pumping station to include wet wall, inlet chamber, valve chamber & flowmeter chamber and new site access.

AO was carried out of the topsoil strip (c. 34 × 32m); the removal of approximately 18m of hedgerow and low bank adjacent to Church Road, towards the N corner of the site (in preparation for the new site access); excavation of a 'T-shape' area of hard-standing (NE/SW c. 34 × 4m, NW/SE c.15 × 4m); and a circular shaft (c. 5m diameter) (fig. 2).

The work was undertaken in response to a Brief specifying AO issued by Shropshire Historic Environment Service and was conducted in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (Ref: A4S/00781/Rev2).

Copies of this report will be provided to Amey.

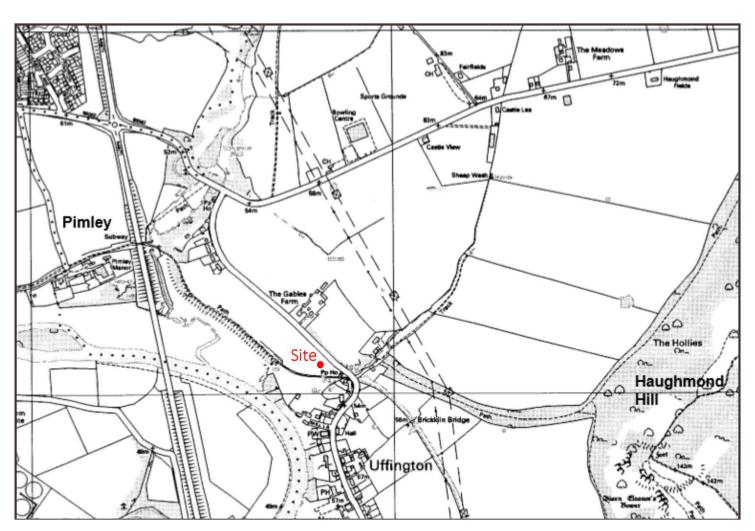


Fig. 1: Site location plan (1:10 000 scale)

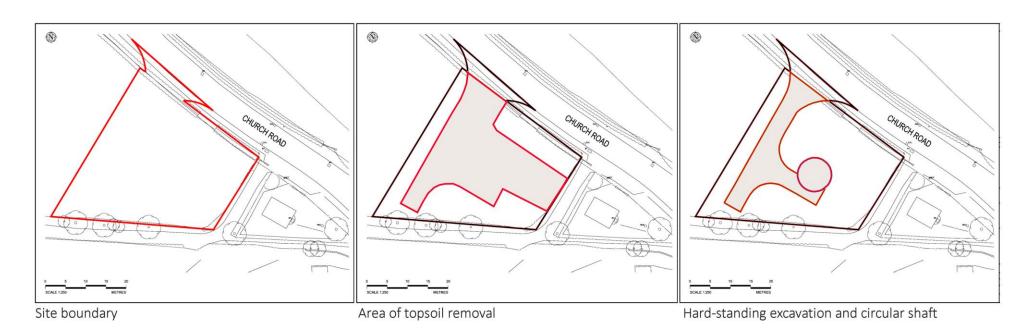


Fig. 2: Site plan showing scope of scheme and area of archaeological observation (supplied to Border Archaeology Ltd by Amey for information)



3 Site Description

3.1 Topography

Uffington is located immediately E of Shrewsbury on a river terrace on the E bank of the River Severn at the foot of Haughmond Hill, a prominent local landmark rising to 153m AOD. A meander of the Severn is located 186m SW of the site, with broadleaved woodland 120m to the E. The area was formerly rough grassland used as pasture.

The site itself lies directly W of the existing pumping station at a height of 55.35m AOD and forms a rough triangle measuring 30m (E/W) \times 20m (N/S) (fig. 2). A NE/SW-aligned tarmac footpath separates the existing and proposed SPS and joins an E/W footway following the route of the former canal. The site is bounded on the NE by Church Road; housing was under construction to the NW at the time of archaeological monitoring (Plate 1).



Plate 1: General view W showing the site prior to groundworks commencing

3.2 Geology

The local environment was previously dominated by rivers, with the underlying geology comprising sedimentary bedrock of the Salop Formation; mudstone, sandstone and conglomerate. The superficial deposits are River Terrace Deposits, 3; sand and gravel formed in the Quaternary Period. These rocks were formed from rivers



depositing mainly sand and gravel detrital material in channels to form river terrace deposits, with fine silt and clay from overbank floods forming floodplain alluvium, and some bogs depositing peat (British Geological Survey 2015).

The soils are typical brown earths of the WICK 1 series (541r) and typical alluvial gley soils of the CONWAY series (811b). The WICK 1 soils are composed of deep well drained coarse loamy and sandy soils, locally over gravel, overlying glaciofluvial or river terrace drift; whilst the CONWAY soils are composed of deep stoneless fine silty and clayey soils variably affected by groundwater overlying river alluvium (SSEW 1983).

4 Historical and Archaeological Background

4.1 Prehistoric

A Bronze Age palstave (HER No. 02663) was found in 1979 at the foot of Haughmond Hill, *c*.1km NE of Uffington. Additionally, two Bronze Age flint 'thumbnail scrapers' (HER No. 04431) were recovered from the plough-soil on the line of the A5/A49 Shrewsbury Bypass in 1990, *c*.0.5km S of the village.

Two cropmark enclosures, possibly marking the sites of Iron Age/Romano-British farmsteads, lie 0.75km to the N (HER No. 02491) and 1km to the SE (HER No. 00120) of the village.

A 'slight' univallate Iron Age hillfort (HER No. 00135) stands on the western flank of Haughmond Hill, approximately 800m SE of the site (NGR: SJ 53749 13795), and forms part of a Scheduled area which also includes an 18th -century folly and a Second World War spigot mortar emplacement (SAM No. 1021282).

The presence of the hillfort in relatively close proximity to the site suggested some potential for encountering prehistoric activity within the wider landscape. However, no such evidence was revealed during groundworks.

4.2 Roman

Construction of the A5/A49 Shrewsbury Bypass revealed a Romano-British roadside settlement, Roman marching camp and Romano-British field system and enclosure (EHER No. 4737; HER No. 4742).

A Roman temporary marching camp (HER No. 00124) of legionary size lies below Haughmond Hill, against a bend of the river and about 0.5km S of Uffington. A Roman gold coin of Tiberius was also discovered near Haughmond 200m NE of the site (HER No. 00119).

4.3 Medieval

The Domesday survey of 1086 records that Uffington (*Ofitone*) was held by Genust and Aelfeva as two manors within Wrockwardine Hundred (Thorn & Thorn 1986).



The Scheduled Grade I Listed Haughmond Abbey (SAM No. 1021364; LB No. 1052157; HER No. 00116) is located 1.72km NE of the site (NGR: SJ 54179 15119). The ruined Augustinian monastery, exhibiting an unconventional layout dictated by the presence of the adjacent escarpment of Haughmond Hill, dates from the late 11th century and was one of the Order's higher status and more prosperous foundations.

Excavation has revealed the first church building of *c*. 1140 to have been considerably smaller than its successor. Extensive earthworks to the N represent medieval and later phases of activity, represented initially by ridge and furrow cultivation, with evidence of a second phase subsequently establishing a degree of separation between the area to the N and the monastic precinct to the S. Elements of the abbey's water management system survive as earthworks and other features within the wood on the E side of the precinct.

A medieval/post-medieval fish weir (HER 04016) is located approximately 400m NW of Bridge Farm and 500m S of the site.

4.4 Post Medieval

Several Grade II listed buildings and two early 19th -century farmsteads, Tower Farm (HER 27767) and Manor Farm (HER 27768), are located to the S of the site.

The surrounding landscape contains further features from the 18th and 19th centuries. The late 18th century landscape park and carriage drives associated with Sundorne House lie *c*.100m to the NE of the site (HER 07706 and HER 08282). The associated carriage drives pass through the precinct of Haughmond Abbey.

The Shrewsbury Canal was engineered by Thomas Telford and opened in 1797 (*fig. 3*). Wharves were built to either side of the study area at Sundorne and at Uffington. The London, Midland and Scottish Railway (LMS) eventually took over the canal in 1922 and the basin in Shrewsbury was closed. The LMS finally abandoned the canal network in 1944, when they obtained an Act of Abandonment; however, an active restoration programme is ongoing.

A watching brief was undertaken in 2000 for the provision of a water pipe within the field occupied by the site, although located *c*.326m to the NW. The bed of the canal (HER 03410) was encountered and was found largely disturbed due to activity from the late 20th century (Hannaford 2000). The pipe trench also crossed the line of a post-medieval (and possible medieval) mill 'leat', or watercourse, that ran parallel to the canal (*fig. 3*). The canal respected the line of the mill leat at this point, crossing the leat at Pimley Manor by means of an aqued uct, since destroyed during construction of the A5/A49 Shrewsbury Bypass in 1989-91 (Hannaford 1996, 11).

It was during this watching brief that two gravel pits were also encountered; the field-name map based on the 1777 survey shows the field through which the pipe-trench passed before it cut across the mill leat and the Shrewsbury Canal was known as 'Gravelly Furlong'. These pits were present on the 1881 1st edition OS plan and were decommissioned by 1976 (Hannaford 2000).

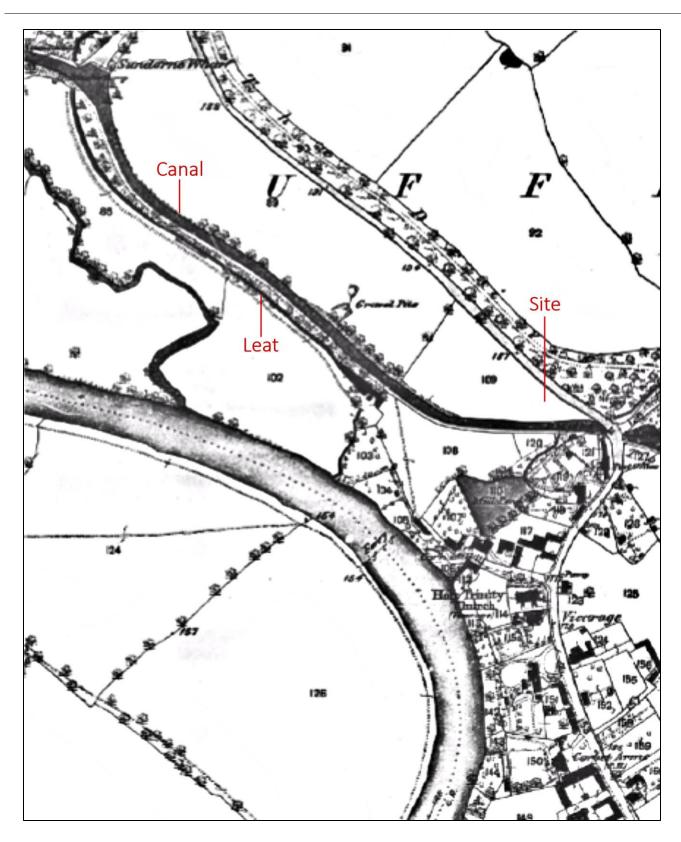


Fig. 3: Map showing the location of the site, canal and the mill leat. Annotated extract from the OS 25" 1st edition (1881), not to scale.



5 Methodology

The programme of archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the agreed Written Scheme of Investigation (Ref no: A4S/00781/Rev2). Archaeological procedures conformed to *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (CIfA 2014). Border Archaeology adheres to the CIfA *Code of conduct* (2014).

5.1 Archaeological Observation

All works potentially affecting archaeological remains were carried out under archaeological supervision and the presence/absence of archaeological features was noted and recorded to a satisfactory and proper standard, consistent with CIfA guidance (2014).

5.2 Recording

Full written, graphic and photographic records were made in accordance with BA's *Archaeological Field Recording Manual* (2014). Records included:

- A completed standard context record sheet for each stratigraphic unit
- Plans of excavated areas showing: the extent of the area (tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid and located on a 1:2500 plan), the extent of all stratigraphic units and appropriate detail within stratigraphic units
- A high-resolution digital photographic record of all stratigraphic units including a representative
 photographic record of the progress of the archaeological work. An appropriate scale was included
 in each photograph and all photographic records were indexed and cross-referenced to written
 site records. Details concerning subject and direction of view were maintained in a photographic
 register, indexed by frame number.

5.3 Excavation

Any archaeological deposits identified as appropriate for further investigation were examined according to criteria set out in *Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation* (CIfA 2014).



6 Results

The topsoil strip attained a depth of 0.20–0.24m below ground level (*Plate 3*). The topsoil (001) consisted of a make-up layer of firm, very dark brown clayey loam containing frequent modern building debris and household rubbish throughout.

Immediately beneath the topsoil and running NW–SE through the centre of the site was a modern service, which cut an underlying subsoil deposit (002) consisting of firm, mid-orange-brown clayey loam containing moderate building debris, located chiefly at the southern and eastern extent of the site.

Beneath the subsoil (002) was a superficial geological deposit of mid-yellow orange silty sand (003), which was encountered at an average depth of *c*.54.95m OD below ground level.

No truncations by archaeological features were present.

The finds recovered from the topsoil and subsoil deposits are discussed in the Appendix.

Plates 3–5 demonstrate the works observed during the groundworks phase of the scheme. Plate 3 shows the topsoil strip in progress. Plate 4 shows the excavation of the 'T-shape' hard-standing area *c*.0.40m below ground level; the machine horizon was at the subsoil (002) to natural (003) interface. Plate 5 shows the *c*.5m diameter circular shaft, with concrete rings installed. Here the machine horizon was within the superficial geological deposit (003).



Plate 2: Annotated photograph of the ESE- facing section of the hard-standing excavation





Plate 3: Topsoil strip



Plate 4: Completed 'T-shape' hard-standing excavation





Plate 5: View W showing insertion of concrete rings within the circular shaft

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		Туре	Interpretation							
Item	Context No.			Discussion	Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	Dating
1	(001)	Layer	Make-up layer	Firm very dark brown clayey loam; frequent modern building debris & household rubbish, moderate small—medium angular & sub-rounded stone & moderate fine gravels + patches of imported small angular stone. Extending length & width of excavation area, depth 0.20m—0.24m.		✓	√	√		Modern
2	(002)	Layer	Subsoil	Firm mid-orange-brown clayey loam; moderate building debris (predominately at S & E end of site), moderate small—medium angular & subrounded stone & gravel inclusions. Extending length & width of excavation area, average depth 0.16m.		✓	√			Modern
3	(003)	Layer	Natural	Firm mid-yellow-orange silty sand; moderate small–medium angular & sub-rounded stone and moderate gravel inclusions.						

Table 1: Context descriptions



7 Discussion

The machine horizon for the topsoil strip remained within the topsoil (001) at the southern and eastern ends of the site; however, towards the northern and western extents, this horizon was onto subsoil (002). For the hard-standing area, the machine horizon was predominately onto the subsoil—natural (003) interface. No archaeological deposits or features of any significance were encountered during the topsoil strip, the subsequent 'T-shaped' hard-standing strip or during the excavation of the circular shaft for the insertion of concrete rings.

The cut of the canal bed was not revealed during the groundworks, as this lies further S, beyond the limit of excavation; however, the spread of material within the topsoil and subsoil, presumed to be associated with the 20th -century backfilling event of the canal, was encountered. The frequent building debris, farmyard waste and domestic rubbish encountered in topsoil (001) and within the subsoil (002) was found to be predominately concentrated along the southern and eastern edge of the site, consistent with the alignment of the canal.

There was also evidence of 'fly-tipping', probably encouraged by the backfilling of the canal. It seems likely that the land would have been re-landscaped after this backfilling event to level the field for pasture.



8 Appendix 1: Finds

The pottery sherds recovered during the groundworks phase of development were largely post-medieval in date, together with several late post-medieval/modern fragments (see Appendix 8.1 below). The animal bone recovered appears to be a fragmented cattle femoral head; sawn striations were noted at the neck of the femur, which were probably post-medieval or modern in date.

Two ferrous (Fe) artefacts were recovered: a bent, heavily corroded nail (110mm in length), circular in profile and with a flat circular head; and a straight, heavily corroded tapering Fe rod (length 108mm) with a circular profile (*Plates 6-7; Table 2*).



Plate 6: Assemblage of finds from the topsoil and subsoil





Plate 7: Fragmented femoral head of cow, showing saw-marks

Context	Feature	ure Pottery		Animal Bone		Fe		Comments
No:	Туре	No:	(g)	No:	(g)	No:	(g)	
001	Topsoil	8	126	5	202	2	76	Glazed pottery, Fe bent nail and (?)latch pin?
002	Subsoil	2	35	3	40			Glazed pottery
Total		10	161	8	242	2	76	

Table 2: Finds concordance



8.1 Pottery Assessment

K H Crooks Border Archaeology Ltd

Nine sherds of pottery were recovered from the topsoil and subsoil. All of the pottery was thought to have been deposited in the 20th century, during and after the backfilling of the Shrewsbury canal, which ran to the S of the site. The pottery was examined by eye and the results are summarised below (*Table 1*).

No. Sherds	Fabric	Comments
1	TPW	Brown transfer. Probably a dish. C19 or later
3	MMW	Three sherds including handle probably of a jug with cracked glaze and rim of saucer or plate.
2	STCOA	Coarse ware. 1 × black internal and external glaze. Other sherd had surfaces broken away. Early to mid-C18 or later
1	RCOAR	Probably local red coarse ware. Internal and external black glaze. C18 or later
1	TGI	Tin-glazed ware. C17 or C18. Most likely at the later end of this range
1	MMW	Machine-made ware; blue glaze. C19 or C20
9		Total

Table 3: The pottery from the site

8.1.1 Discussion

All of the pottery was recovered from either the topsoil or subsoil and dated to the post-medieval or modem periods. The earliest pottery from the site may have dated to the 18th century, while later material is likely to be of 19th or 20th century date.

The earliest pottery was almost certainly a sherd of tin-glazed ware. Although this pottery was produced from the 17th century, this was a plain utilitarian sherd and was likely to be of 18th -century date.

Also probably of 18th -century date were the two sherds of Staffordshire coarse ware and a further sherd of a coarse red ware, probably of local manufacture. All three are likely to date to the early to mid-18th century or later, although such wares were produced and used into the 19th century. Pottery of this type would normally be for kitchen use or dairying, rather than table ware.

The single sherd of transfer-printed ware (TPW) had a brown transfer. The earliest transfers were blue as originally only cobalt transfers were able to with stand the high firing temperatures required. Technical advances in the 1820s enabled other colours to be used, meaning that a 19^{th} -century or later date would be appropriate for this sherd. Three sherds of machine made white ware (MMW) were probably intended for kitchen use and are likely to date to the later part of the 19^{th} or the 20^{th} centuries.



8.1.2 Conclusions and recommendations

Although thought to date from the backfilling of the canal in the 20th century, four out of the nine sherds of pottery were potentially of earlier date. While this may represent the lifespan of the vessels, it is equally possible, particularly in the case of the Staffordshire and red coarse wares, that the pottery derived from bulk deposits moved from elsewhere to fill the feature.

The late date and the insecure contexts from which the material was recovered mean that no further work on this material is considered necessary.



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Report Title		Report Ref				
Archaeological Observation Severn Trent Water concert Sewage Pumping Station at Shropshire	ning construction of a	BA1551UFS				
Report written by	Elizabeth Govier BA MA					
Reported edited by	George Children MA MCIfA					
Issue No.	Status	Date	Approved for issue			
1	Final	April 2016	Neil Shurety Dip.MG M Inst M			