



Archaeological Observation

For:

Amey plc

On behalf of:

Severn Trent Water

Concerning:

**AMP6 2nd Batch Mains Renewal
Langley to Broome
Near Acton Burnell
Shropshire**

June 2017



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Cover: View of pipeline trench to north of Scheduled Monument

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1 Executive Summary

Border Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by Amey plc on behalf of Severn Trent Water to undertake Archaeological Observation of groundworks relating to the AMP6 2nd Batch Mains Renewal: Langley to Broome pipeline scheme located at Langley Hall near Acton Burnell Shropshire.

The existing main within the road was abandoned and the pipe rerouted through the field to the north (fig. 2), a route selected to minimize impact on the Scheduled earthwork and buried remains of the late medieval to early post-medieval moated site of Langley Hall and Langley Chapel (NHLE no. 1015285). Service pipes and stop-taps were, however, replaced within the Scheduled Area (fig. 2).

No features or deposits of archaeological significance were present. The northern portion of the site, where the main bypassed the Scheduled Area, was steeply sloping, with heavily waterlogged conditions suggesting a catchment for water draining into the stream in the valley. A number of springs were clearly visible on the hillside. The field was under pasture and it seems likely that in the past, as now, it was not considered suitable for cultivation.

The small size of the Access Pits (APs) for service connections within the Scheduled Area reduced the opportunity to encounter archaeological features or deposits. Additionally, disturbance resulting from existing service installation was apparent in AP 2 (fig. 2). No other features were seen and no finds were present. The part of the Scheduled Area in which the work took place may have lain at a distance from the main focus of activity. However, the presence of only the existing road surface immediately above the natural deposits indicates that any archaeological deposits may have been removed during road construction.

The lack of archaeological features or deposits encountered demonstrates the effectiveness of the mitigation design.

2 Introduction

Border Archaeology Ltd (BA) was commissioned by Amey plc on behalf of Severn Trent Water to undertake Archaeological Observation of engineering groundworks works relating to the AMP6 2nd Batch Mains Renewal: Langley to Broome near Acton Burnell Shropshire (centred on NGR: SJ 53992 00280). The work involved renewal of a 180mm polyethylene (PE) watermain. Scheduled Monument Consent was issued by Historic England on 22nd February 2017 for open-cut works.

The works comprised decommissioning of an existing main within the road and its re-routing through the field to the N (figs. 1 & 2). Works in the field and the road took place concurrently.

Archaeological Observation was carried out between 1st March and 10th March 2017. A spot height was located in the road close to the service connections with a value of 144m AOD. The open-cut trench through the field to the N of the Scheduled Area (Trench 1) measured some 225m in length. The two Access Pits (AP 2 and AP 3) within the Scheduled Area measured 1.4m × 1.1m and 2.8m × 0.60m, respectively. AP 4 located outside the Scheduled Area was opened for directional drilling purposes. Additional work included clearance of the brook, where only modern silting deposits were present.

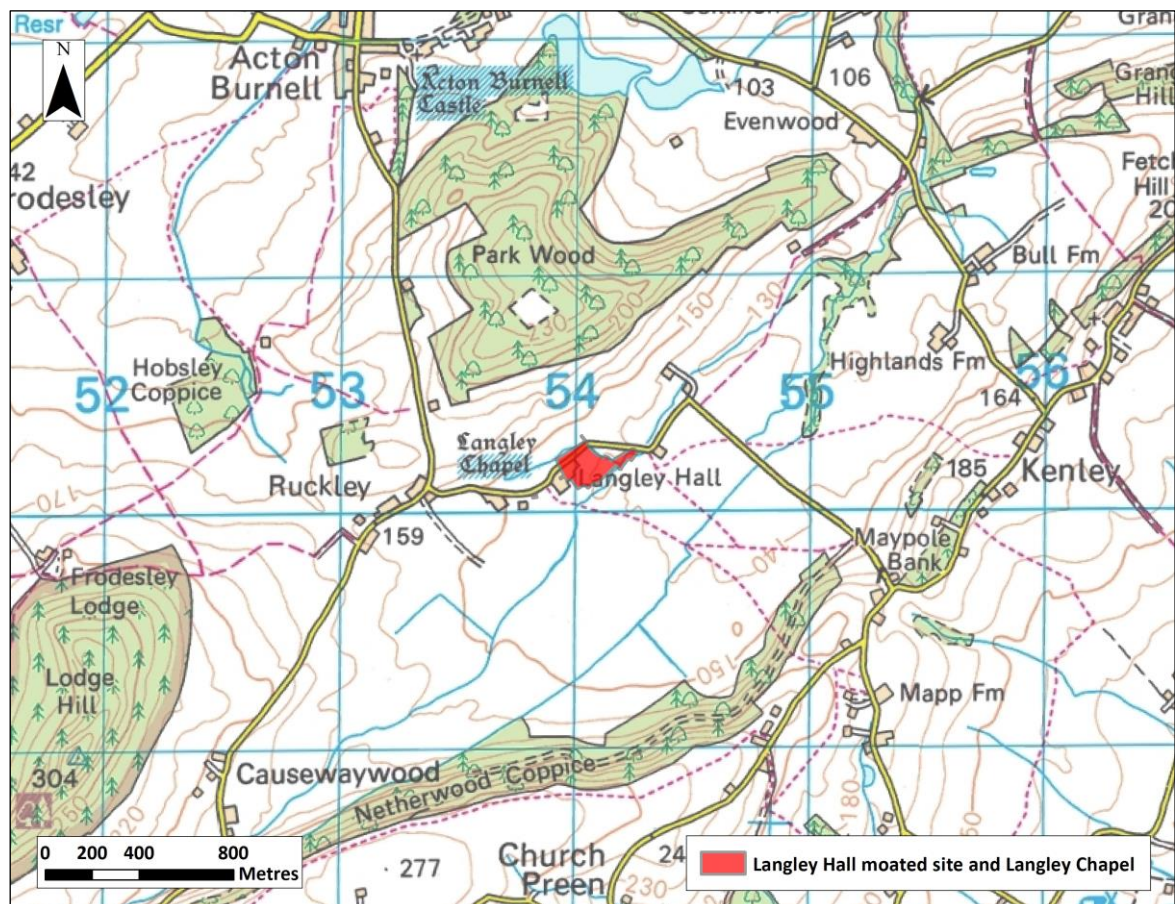


Fig. 1: Site location

2.1 Soils & Geology

The groundworks were located in an area of typical brown earths of the BARTON series (541I), composed of well-drained silty soils, with some fine silty soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging, overlying Silurian Siltstone (SSEW 1983).

3 Historical and Archaeological Background

Langley Hall represents one of the most substantial high-status moated site in Shropshire. The Scheduled Monument (NHLE No. 1015285) incorporates the earthwork and buried remains of the late medieval/early post-medieval site and comprises Langley Hall, fishponds, the site of two water mills and the standing remains of Langley Chapel. The Grade II* Listed detached gatehouse to the SW of the site of the Hall remains in use and is not included in the scheduling.

The site lies within in a NE/SW -aligned valley and comprises a square platform which originally had water on all sides. The moat on the NE side of the platform took the form of two substantial ponds, with additional ponds on the SE. The water supply to the moat also powered two mills, the sites of which are included in the Scheduled Area.

At the time of the Domesday Survey the manor of Langley was held by Roger of Shrewsbury. By 1212, it was in the ownership of William Burnell, a member of the family which gave its name to Acton Burnell.

Permission was granted to Richard Burnell in 1313 for the erection of a chapel at Langley, one of a large number of parochial chapels built between the 12th and the 17th centuries, either to provide a place of worship for parishioners residing some distance from the parish church or to promote the status of a household. By 1552, the chapel had its own priest and two bells.

Langley Chapel was one of the first buildings to be taken into care by the-then Office of Works in 1915. Constructed of dressed grey sandstone with a slate roof, the existing chapel is early post-medieval in date but incorporates earlier elements. One of the collar beams in the nave has the date '1601' engraved on it. The importance of the chapel in heritage terms can be attributed to the retention of fittings unchanged since it went out of use at the end of the 17th century, which exemplify arrangements within a 17th century Puritan chapel. The furniture is not thought to date from later than the first decade of the 17th century and includes a communion table, pulpit, reading desk and box pews.

4 Methodology

Archaeological Observation was carried out in accordance with *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014), *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (Lee 2015). BA adheres to the ClfA *Code of conduct* (2014).

Soil was removed down to natural geology using a back-acting excavator with toothless bucket. All excavation within the designated observation area was carried out by machine under archaeological supervision.

Full written and photographic records were made in accordance with BA's *Archaeological Field Recording Manual* (2017). The written record was compiled using standard numbered trench profile recording sheets. In the complete absence of archaeological features or deposits, the drawn record comprised sketch plan and sections.

A high-resolution digital photographic record was made and 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.

A small assemblage of seven sherds of later post-medieval and modern pottery was retained from material recovered from the topsoil during open-cut trenching to the N of the Scheduled Monument (*Appendix 1*).

No archaeological deposits were present. No deposits considered suitable for palaeoenvironmental sampling were identified.

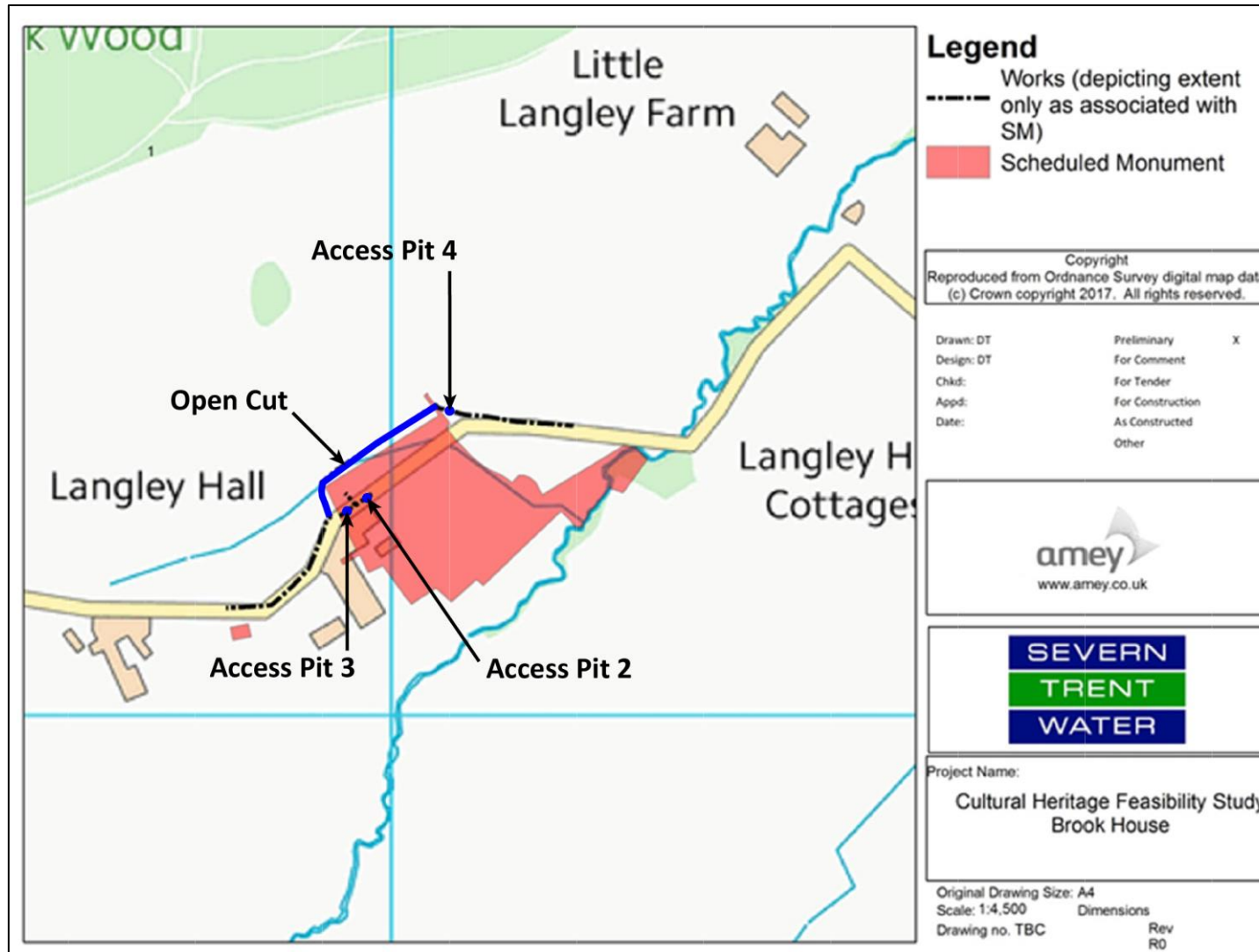


Fig. 2: Plan showing location of groundworks, based on plan produced by Amey.

5 Results

5.1 Open-Cut Trench (Trench 1)

The trench was located to the N of the Scheduled Area.

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	101	-	Deposit	Topsoil	Soft/friable dark greyish-brown silty clay; 0.20m thick; trench-wide. Overlying (102).	-	✓	-	-	-	Modern & post-medieval pottery
2	102	-	Deposit	Natural	Compact yellowish-grey marled clay; occasional substantial water-rolled stones; >0.80m thick, trench-wide. Underlying (101).	-	-	-	-	-	Deposit unchanged through length of dig

5.2 Access Pit 2

The pit - for a service connection - was located at the roadside, within the Scheduled Area.

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	201	-	Deposit	Existing road surface	Tarmac & stone aggregate; 0.20m thick. Overlying (202).	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	202	-	Deposit	Natural	Firm orange-brown clay, some staining from tarmac/stone above; >0.70m depth, pit-wide. Underlying (201), cut by [203].	-	-	-	-	-	-

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
3	203	-	Cut	Cut for existing service and connection	>1.10m wide × 0.40m deep. Cut (202), filled by (204).	-	-	-	-	-	Seen in side of AP only.
4	204	-	Fill	Existing service and backfill	Filled [203], sealed by (201).	-	-	-	-	-	-

5.3 Access Pit 3

The pit was excavated to locate the existing water main, within the Scheduled Area.

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	301	-	Deposit	Topsoil	Soft/friable mid reddish-brown silt; 0.20m deep, pit-wide Overlying (302).	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	302	-	Deposit	Subsoil	Soft reddish silt; occasional rounded stones; 0.40m deep; pit-wide. Underlying (301), overlying (303).	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	303	-	Deposit	Natural	Firm reddish-brown/reddish-yellow clay; occasional sandstone inclusions; >0.05m deep; pit-wide. Underlying (302).	-	-	-	-	-	-

5.4 Access Pit 4

This comprised an Access Pit for direct-drill immediately outside the NE limit of Scheduled Area.

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	401	-	Deposit	Topsoil	Soft/friable dark greyish-brown silt clay; 0.20m thick; pit-wide. Overlying (402).	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	402	-	Deposit	Natural	Compact yellowish-grey clay, reddish patches & gleying; >0.80m thick; pit-wide. Underlying (401).	-	-	-	-	-	-

6 Discussion

No features or deposits of archaeological significance were observed during work close to and within the Scheduled Monument. Where open-cut trenching took place to the N of the Scheduled Area (Trench 1), it was noticeable that the ground was semi-permanently waterlogged, presumably as a result of its position at the foot of a steep slope. The route taken lay outside the Scheduled Area and avoided any archaeological deposits and features.



Plate 1: Access Pit 3 under excavation within the Scheduled Area; view N

The two Access Pits within the Scheduled Area revealed no evidence of archaeological finds, features or deposits. These excavations were limited in extent and thus may not have encountered any deposits or features present in these areas. Disturbance caused during insertion of the existing service could be clearly seen in AP 2. However, in both AP 2 and AP 3 the lack of topsoil or subsoil deposits demonstrated that these were removed during road construction; it is possible, therefore, that archaeological deposits were truncated during this process. It could be seen that no cut features were present.

7 Copyright

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8 Bibliography

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9 Appendix 1: A Note on the Pottery

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9.1 Summary

A sample, totaling seven sherds, of the later post-medieval and modern pottery was retained from material recovered from the topsoil during open-cut trenching to the N of the Scheduled Monument. All sherds postdate the construction of Langley Hall and are contemporary with or postdate the 18th century farmhouse. They may have been deposited during attempts to cultivate the field to the N of the monument, although deposition with material used for ground consolidation at gateways cannot be ruled out for some of the sherds.



Plate 2: Sample of pottery from the site

Fabric	No. Sh.	Comments
CRM	2	Creamware – Mid-to-late C18 to early C19 or later
MMW	2	Whiteware – Machine-made, including one with traces of hand-painted design. C19 or later.
STCOA	2	Staffordshire Coarse Ware – Black internal glaze. Early-to-mid C18 or later
STSL	1	Staffordshire Slipware – Black slip with trailed white decoration. Dish or charger. C18 or later
Total	7	

Table 1: Summary of retained pottery

The pottery would appear to derive from standard domestic waste. The fragments of coarse-ware and the single sherd of slipware were almost certainly from Staffordshire. Creamware was at its most popular between c.1770

and the early part of the 19th century, although production continued beyond that date. No pottery of earlier date, such as might have been associated with the medieval-to-early post-medieval hall was seen during the course of the archaeological observation.

9.2 Recommendations

None of the pottery was recovered from secure contexts and all postdated the Scheduled Monument. It is not recommended that it be retained.

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