



Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological observation, investigation, recording
and analysis on the Barford Road mains
replacement at Wilden, Bedford Borough



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QUALITY CONTROL

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		Oasis No. 151582	
Project title	Archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis on the Barford Road mains replacement at Wilden, Bedford Borough, February-March 2013		
Short description	Archaeological attendance was undertaken during the replacement of a rising main by Anglian Water, to the south of Wilden, Bedford Borough. A number of undated ditches and gullies were located at the south end of the pipeline on the west side of Barford Road. The features are thought to relate to two large areas of cropmarks to either side of the road.		
Project type	Watching brief		
Site Status	None		
Previous work	None		
Current land use	Arable fields		
Future work	None		
Monument type and period	Undated ditches, gullies and pit		
Significant finds	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Bedford Borough		
Site address	Barford Road, Wilden		
Post code			
OS co-ordinates	NGR TL 11151 53398 to TL 10247 55238		
Area (sq m/ha)	c2.1km pipe trench		
Height aOD	c40-62m above Ordnance Datum		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology		
Project brief originator	Geoff Saunders, Bedford Borough Council		
Project Design originator	Jim Brown, Northamptonshire Archaeology		
Director/Supervisors	Chris Jones & James Ladocha, Northamptonshire Archaeology		
Project Manager	Jim Brown, Northamptonshire Archaeology		
Sponsor or funding body	Anglian Water Services		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	04/02/2013		
End date	28/03/2013		
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Contents	
Physical	Bedford Museum BEDFM 2013.06	None	
Paper		Site records (1 small archive box)	
Digital		Client report PDF	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)		
Title	Archaeological observation, investigation, recording and analysis on the Barford Road mains replacement at Wilden, Bedford Borough, February-March 2013		
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION, INVESTIGATION, RECORDING AND
ANALYSIS ON THE BARFORD ROAD MAINS REPLACEMENT AT
WILDEN, BEDFORD BOROUGH**

February-March 2013

Abstract

Archaeological attendance was undertaken during the replacement of a rising main by Anglian Water, to the south of Wilden, Bedford Borough. A number of undated ditches and gullies were located at the south end of the pipeline on the west side of Barford Road. The features are thought to relate to two large areas of cropmarks to either side of the road.

1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) was commissioned by Anglian Water Services to provide archaeological attendance during the Barford Road Mains Replacement, between February and March 2013 (Fig 1: NGR TL 11151 53398 to TL 10247 55238). The focus for investigation was along the full 2.1km extent of the pipe trench on both the east and west sides of Barford Road, to the south of the village of Wilden.

The work was conducted in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation that was prepared by NA to meet the requirements of a planning brief issued by Bedford Borough Council (Saunders 2012; Brown 2013). The brief was issued in compliance with the current *National Planning Policy Framework*, paragraph 141, with regard to archaeology (CLG 2012), and replaced *PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment* (CLG 2010). All work was conducted in accordance with recognised professional standards (IfA 2008a; EH 2008).

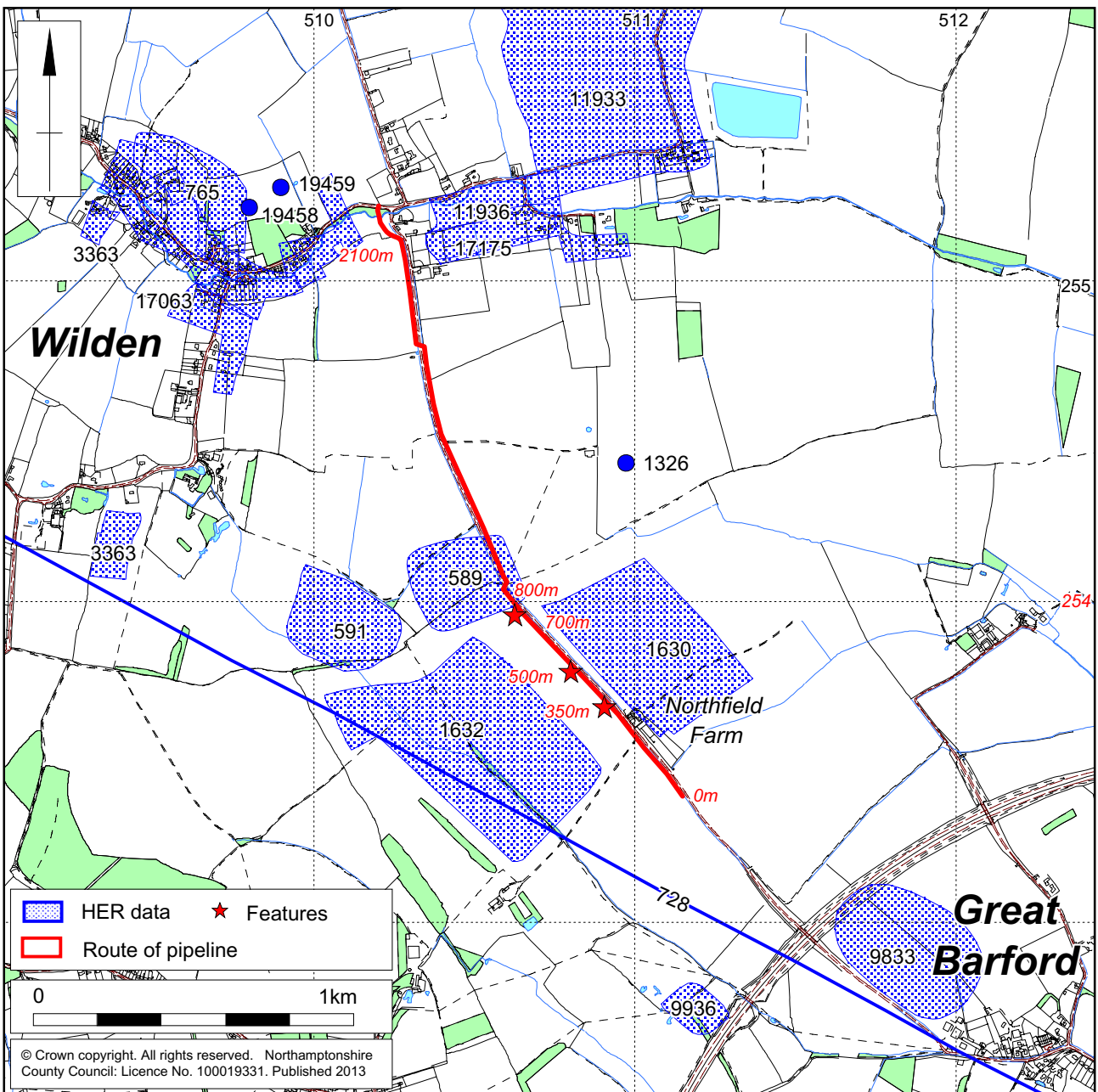
2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

A search of data held in the Historic Environment Record, detailing known sites, find spots and events within 500m of the pipeline, was requested and the results used to inform the watching brief fieldwork. The location of these heritage assets are shown on Figure 1 and Table 1. The list specifically excludes standing buildings, which are concentrated within the village of Wilden and relate to post-medieval settlement. Some of the older village buildings may have 16th-century origins, and are built upon timber frames, but most have received significant alterations during the intervening years and are likely to be of the 18th-19th centuries.

The route of the pipeline is situated within a rich archaeological landscape containing indications of past activity, mainly in the form of cropmarks.

An area of cropmarks where Romano-British pottery has previously been recovered (HER1630) is located on the east side of Barford Road to the north of Northfield Farm. There are further areas of undated cropmarks showing linear features and a possible rectilinear enclosure on aerial photographs taken in 1971 and 1996, which also lie on or close to the route (HER589; 591; 1632).

In addition Wilden is a shrunken medieval settlement that once included the wider extent of Church End and East End, together with closes and the surrounding open fields (HER3363; 9936; 17063; 17175).



Scale 1:20,000

Site location and Historic Environment Record data Fig 1

Table 1: Inventory of Historic Environment Record data

Period	HER Ref.	Event or monument
undated	589	cropmarks, south-west of Hill Farm
	591	cropmarks, south-east of Sevick End Farm
	1632	cropmarks, North of Creakers
Roman	728	road, unproven, Viatores 225
	1630	cropmarks and pottery, Northfield Farm
	9833	cropmarks and occupation features, found during gas pipeline development
	765	settlement earthworks, north of Church End
medieval	1326	tithe barn, demolished
	3363	ridge and furrow cultivation
	9936	closes and ponds shown on 1854 enclosure map
	17063	deserted settlement site, Church End
	17175	deserted settlement site, East End
	19458	coin, 15th century
	19459	coin, mid-14th century
post-medieval	11933	windmill, demolished
	11936	dovecote, demolished

3 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The route of the mains replacement was situated to the south of the village of Wilden, Bedford Borough, on the east and west sides of the Barford Road. The route began at chainage 0m at its southern end to the south of Northfield Farm at 51m above Ordnance Datum. The pipeline route climbed gradually to the north to its highest point around chainage 900m, at 62m above Ordnance Datum. The slope then fell away towards the village of Wilden, ending at chainage 2100m on Wilden High Street at 40m above Ordnance Datum. The whole of the pipeline route passed through arable fields.

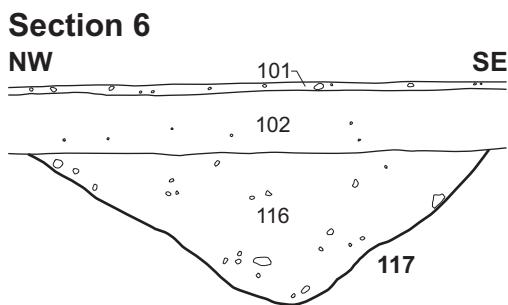
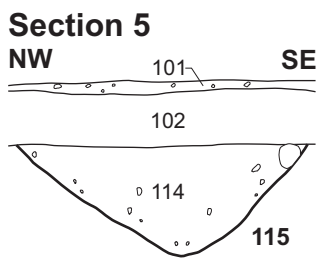
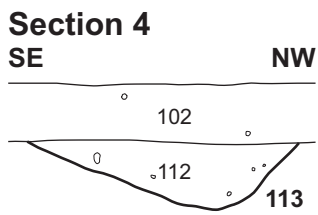
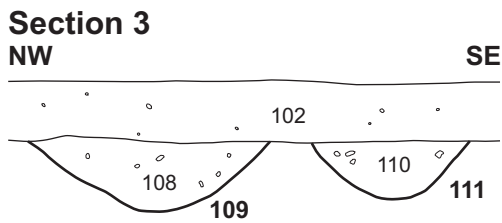
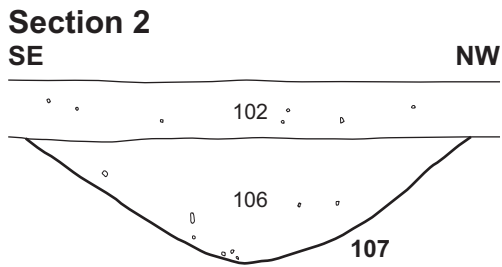
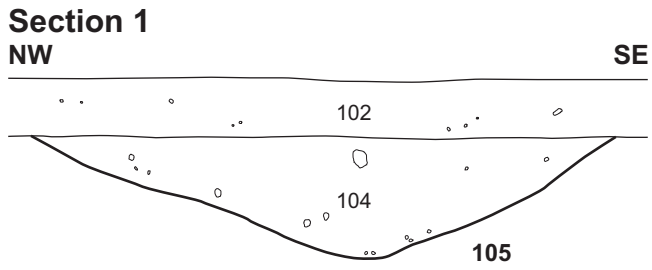
The geology of the area is typically of clays of the Oadby Member of the Wolston Formation (BGS Sheet 203, 2010). The soils are of Evesham 3 Association and comprise slowly permeable calcareous clay and fine loam that form over Jurassic and Cretaceous clay beds (LAT 1983).

4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the fieldwork was to provide detailed monitoring, recording and sample excavation during all groundworks associated with the mains replacement.

The aims of the investigation were to:

- establish the date, nature character, condition, significance and quality of any activity or occupation encountered,
- recover artefacts to assist in the interpretation of features and deposits,
- provide liaison with the curatorial authority in the event of a significant discovery requiring more detailed archaeological work.



5 WATCHING BRIEF METHODOLOGY

At the north and south ends of the pipeline route, chainages 0-850m and 1700-2100m, the pipeline the trench was situated on the west side of the road. The middle section of the route, chainages 850-1700m, was located on the east side of the road. Where the pipe crossed the road directional drilling was utilised.

Two stages of mechanical excavation were undertaken during the replacement of the present main. The topsoil and subsoil were removed under continuous archaeological supervision along a 7-10m wide easement for the whole 2.1km length of the pipeline. Following archaeological examination the pipe trench was then cut, 0.60m wide by 1.00m deep.

The site location, area and extent was recorded in relation to the Ordnance Survey using engineering plans and fixed boundaries.

Digital photographs form the basis of the photographic record accompanied by *pro forma* watching brief record sheets that contain notes and observations recorded during attendance (NA 2011). All photographs and paper archive records have been compiled in accordance with recognised museum practise (Walker 1990; MGC 1992; IfA 2008b). The archive will be deposited with Bedford Museum under accession code BEDFM 2013.06 in accordance with their deposition requirements (BM 2010).

6 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Seven ditches were observed crossing the pipe trench during mechanical excavation, all of which were in the southern extent of the site on the west side of Barford Road (Figs 1-2). All of the ditches exhibited very similar fill constituents which may be an indication that their origins were of a similar source, given their close proximity. The majority of features were located within the area of chainage 700-800m. Ditch 115 was located near chainage 500m and ditch 117 was located near chainage 350m. None of the features produced finds or correspond with mapped post-medieval boundaries, and they are therefore undated.

Table 2: Undated features identified within the pipe trench

Fill / Feature	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Section (Fig 2)	Description
104 / ditch 105	1.92	0.40	S.1	firm dark yellowish-brown silty clay with occasional limestone and gravel inclusions gradual sloping sides at 30°, with a narrow rounded base
106 / ditch 107	1.46	0.42	S.2	firm dark yellowish-brown silty clay with few limestone and gravel inclusions sharp sloping sides at 45°, with a rounded base
108 / gully 109	0.81	0.23	S.3	firm dark yellowish-brown silty clay with greyish-brown patches, few charcoal flecks and burnt clay inclusions fairly sharp sloping sides at 45°, with a broad rounded base
110 / gully 111	0.51	0.19	S.3	firm dark yellowish-brown silty clay with greyish-brown patches, few charcoal pieces and mixed gravel inclusions sharp 45° sloping sides, with a broad rounded U-shaped base

Fill / Feature	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Section (Fig 2)	Description
112 / gully 113	0.89	0.21	S.4	firm dark yellowish-brown and greyish-brown mottled silty clay with few charcoal gradually sloping sides, asymmetrical, 30-45° angle of slope, with narrow rounded base
114 / ditch 115	0.97	0.35	S.5	firm dark yellowish-brown silty clay with mixed gravel inclusions steep 45-50° sloping sides, with a narrow V-shaped base
116 / ditch 117	1.53	0.51	S.6	firm dark yellowish-brown silty clay with orange mottles, gravel inclusions and occasional charcoal pieces steep, slightly uneven 45-50° sloping sides, with a narrow rounded base, with some erosion of upper edges

The subsoil and topsoil were fairly consistent along the route of the pipeline. Subsoil comprised firm mid-greyish-brown silty clay with infrequent chalk and gravel pebbles up to 0.12m thick. Topsoil comprised firm dark greyish-brown silty clay loam up to 0.25m thick. Both soils have been heavily turned through long term arable farming.

7 CONCLUSION

A small concentration of undated ditches crossed the easement of the pipeline corridor at its southern extent. The features lay directly between two major distributions of known cropmarks (HER1360; 1362). These cropmarks are thought to relate to Romano-British field systems and it is highly likely that the two areas are joined by a lower level distribution of field boundaries that are not visible on the aerial photographic sources. Although the lack of finds meant that dating could not be corroborated, previous pottery finds near to Northfield Farm suggest the Roman provenance.

The watching brief has provided a valuable addition to the corpus of knowledge for the area. Whilst the discoveries were limited in scope, they add weight to the argument that the buried archaeological landscape in this area is more extensive than can currently be mapped from the air and suggests that future work in the south of the parish should continue to be monitored closely for further evidence of Roman and other remains.

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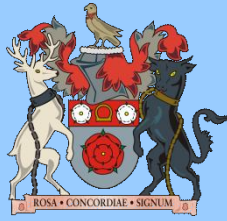
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