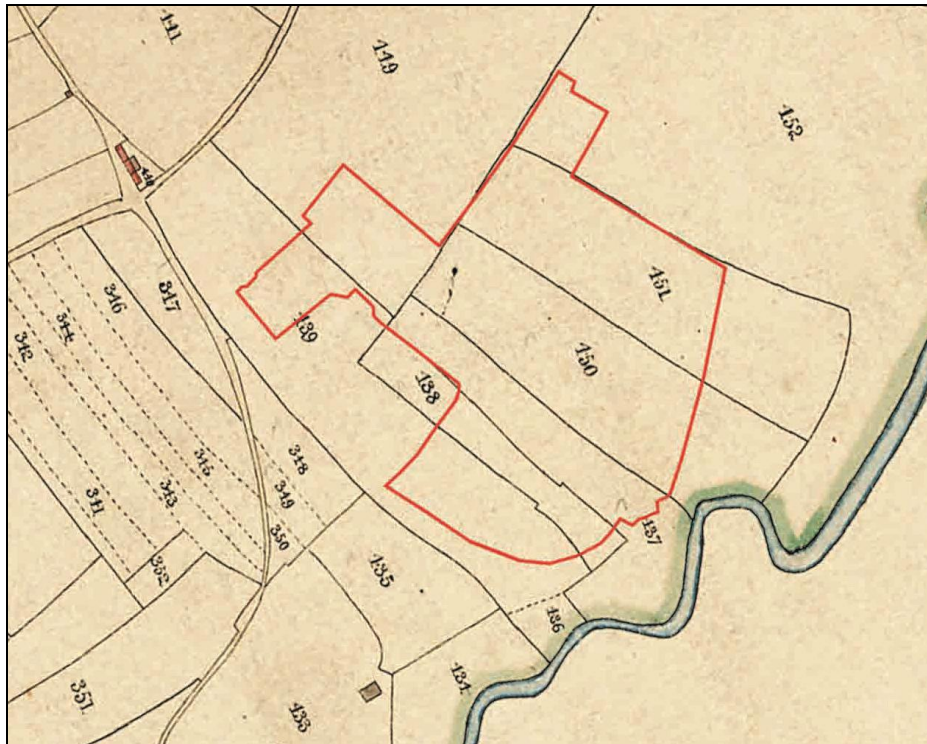


LAND at CAXTON ROAD FROME SOMERSET

Results of
A Desk-Based Assessment



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Land at Caxton Road Frome Somerset

Results of a Desk-Based Assessment

For

Andrew K Penna
of
AP Planning

By



SWARCH project reference: FCR12
OS Map copying Licence No: 100044808
National Grid Reference: 378310,147375
Project Director: Colin Humphreys
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December 2012

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Summary

South West Archaeology Limited was asked to undertake a desk-based assessment of an area of land off Caxton Road on the southern fringe of Frome in Somerset. The documentary and cartographic evidence shows that the site was agricultural in character until the early part of the 20th century, although the surrounding area grew increasingly industrial in nature throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. The development of the printing works on the site in the 1930s has probably affected the survival of potential archaeological deposits but evidence may still be found for the former agricultural landscape or the earlier 20th century buildings on the site.

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Acknowledgements

Thanks for assistance are due to:

Andrew Penna
The staff of the Somerset Records Office

1.0 Introduction

Location: Land at Caxton Road
Parish: Frome
District: Mendip
County: Somerset

1.1 Project Background

South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) were commissioned by Mr Andrew Penna of AP Planning (the Client) to undertake a desk-based assessment on land off Caxton Road, Frome, Somerset, to place the development area into its historic and archaeological context and to support an Outline Planning Application for the redevelopment.

1.2 Location, Topography and Geology

The site is located on the southern fringe of Frome, above the river of the same name. The site lies to the south-west of the railway station on a former industrial site. The underlying geology is Mudstone of the Forest Marble Formation formed in the Jurassic Period.

1.3 Methodology

The desk-based assessment was undertaken by Colin Humphreys and Emily Wapshott in accordance with *IfA Standards and Guidance for archaeological Desk-based Assessment*. This work consisted of map regression based on the Ordnance Survey maps and the Frome tithe map and Apportionment and included an examination of records held by the Somerset Historic Environment Record (HER) and any other relevant information accessed through web-based sources.

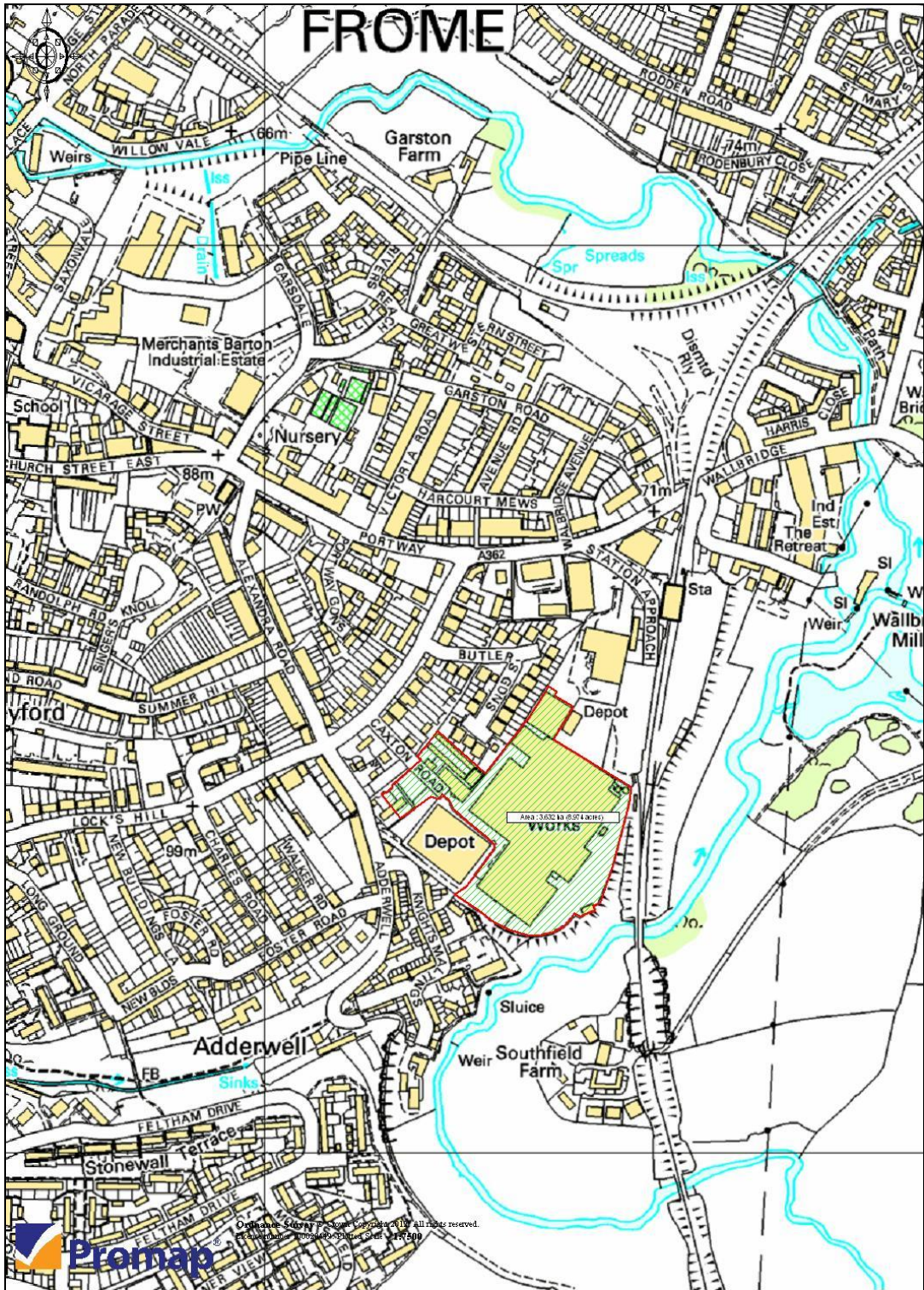


Figure 1: Site location (the site is outlined in red).

2.0 The Results of the Desk-Based Assessment

2.1 Archaeological Background

A study of the Historic Environment Record (HER) (Appendix 1) for the location at Caxton Road shows that there are a number of event records for this area (Figure 2), including the printing works itself (HER no: 23543), detailed as '*Adderwell Printing Works*', on the Ordnance Survey 6" map, appearing by 1930. The railway station (HER no: 57036) and railway line (HER no: 56985) are also both recorded, as is the adjacent malthouse (HER no: 23535), all dating to the mid or late 19th century. To the south lies the site of Providence Mill, formerly St John's Mills (HER no: 23531) which is recorded as dating to the early 19th century (documented on the tithe map) with a number of independent early mill structures, under separate tenure, being combined into a larger site by the later 19th century under a single owner.

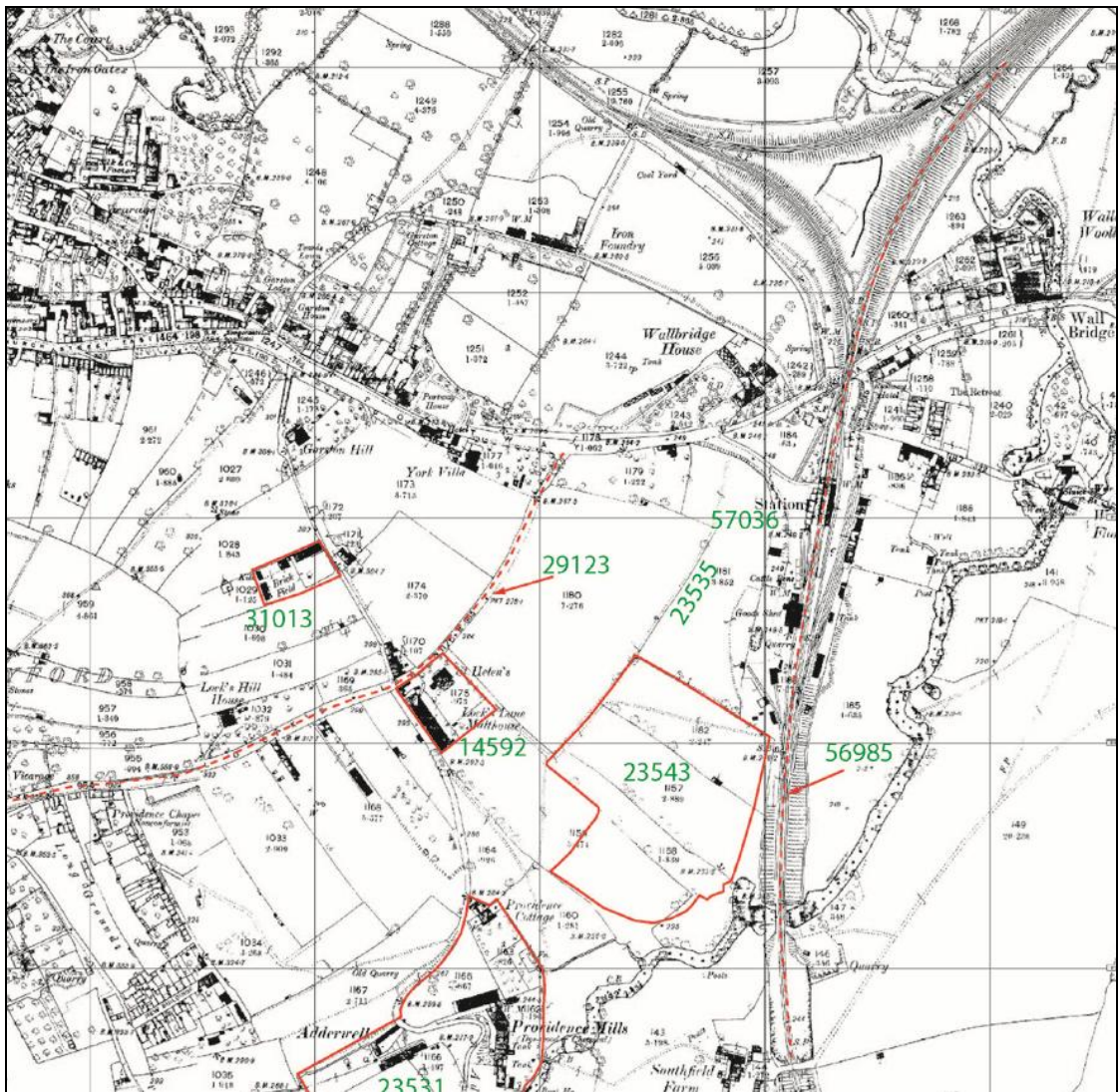


Figure 2: Relevant HER entries overlaid onto the 1888-1889 Ordnance Survey map (for illustration only).

To the north runs the former 18th century turnpike road ‘Lock’s Lane’ (HER no: 29123), which later becomes ‘Locks Hill Road’. Adjacent to this is Lock’s Lane Malthouse (HER no: 14592), a 19th century structure within a sub-square enclosure at the crossroads with Adderwell Lane. Further north to the west of Adderwell Lane is a further 19th century semi-industrial site called ‘Brick Field’ (HER no: 31013), which formerly contained a kiln and yard.

Interestingly, these records almost universally refer to historic, rather than archaeological sites. These are mostly semi-industrial/transport/manufacturing sites dating from the 19th century, with the exception of the 18th century turnpike. No earlier archaeological sites have been recorded and there is no record of any relevant archaeological work having been undertaken in the immediate area. There is also no relevant aerial photography, as the printing works had already been constructed by the 1930s and the earliest series of photographs date from the 1940s. Several of the historic 19th century sites recorded on the HER were demolished by the time of the 1960s Ordnance Survey mapping; their presence indicated only by existing road names or the historic maps themselves.

2.2 The Cartographic Record

2.2.1 The Frome Parish Tithe Map of 1840

The tithe map (Figure 3), the earliest cartographic record available to this study, shows the printing works/factory site to be agricultural fields in the early 19th century, probably a mixture pasture or meadow beside the river and some arable (436, 437, 438, 450, 451 and 452), with the river as the parish boundary. The fields are split into long narrow plots, representative of the former open strip-field system of the medieval period, which had probably been enclosed by individual agreement. Most of the fields have different freehold and leasehold owners although many are held as part of the Estate of the Marquess of Bath, or under the Rectorial Glebe which he also owned. The Marquess at this time was John Alexander Thynne, 4th Marquess of Bath (1831-1896).

A similar pattern of open strip-fields can be seen to the west running away from Locks Lane and Adderwell Lane; some of the fields retain an element of their open character, with separate strips ownership clearly marked by dotted lines (see parcel numbers 340-350). The fields by the road, directly to the north of the site (439 and 449) were probably both former open strip-fields, cultivated for arable, the ownership of which has been consolidated and the fields enclosed in the late 18th century. Field 449 is particularly large with regular straight boundaries. The long boundary between 449 and the meadows below may represent the break of slope down to the river valley. Within field 449 there is a small non-domestic building at the eastern end built into a dog-leg in the field boundary; this is likely to be an agricultural building. We can see from the apportionment that 449 is part of the Rectorial glebe; the field may therefore have been enclosed at a much earlier date. Field 452 which is the largest on the site, south by the river, is also Rectorial glebe land, confirming that these fields have either been consolidated far earlier due to their church associations. Field 439 again to the north, running from the river up to the road (including the small south addition numbered 436, by the river) is also church land, this of the Vicarial Glebe; owned by the Rev. Charles Philliott. Fields 437, 438, 450 and 451 are particularly narrow and are alternatively arable and pasture, showing the mix of land use within the site area. To the south of the site, adjacent to Adderwell Lane within 433 are several buildings, presumably the early mills referred to by the HER records, which developed into Providence Mills and then St John’s Mills.



Figure 3: Detail from the Frome tithe map of 1840. The proposed development site is outlined in red.

2.2.2 The Tithe Apportionment

Below are the details recorded on the Apportionment for the relevant plots and holdings in the vicinity of the Caxton Road site.

No.	Details
436	Landowner Rev Charles Philliott, held under the Vicarial Glebe Occupier Mary Batt Name At Adderwell Landuse Meadow, laid to pasture.
437	Landowner held by John Rossiter, under leasehold of the Marquess of Bath Occupier William Wilkins Name At Adderwell Landuse Meadow, laid to pasture.

- | | | |
|-----|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 438 | Landowner | held by Charles Bailey, under leasehold of the Marquess of Bath |
| | Occupier | John Carpenter |
| | Name | At Adderwell |
| | Landuse | Cultivated land, arable. |
| | | |
| 439 | Landowner | Rev Charles Philliott, held under the Vicarial Glebe |
| | Occupier | Mary Batt |
| | Name | At Adderwell |
| | Landuse | Meadow, laid to pasture. |
| | | |
| 449 | Landowner | Marquess of Bath, held under the Rectorial Glebe |
| | Occupier | Edward Howell |
| | Name | Upper Hewish |
| | Landuse | Cultivated land, arable. |
| | | |
| 450 | Landowner | Elizabeth Olive |
| | Occupier | John Nicholls |
| | Name | At Hewish |
| | Landuse | Cultivated land, arable. |
| | | |
| 451 | Landowner | held by Martha Brownjohn, under leasehold of the Marquess of Bath |
| | Occupier | Thomas <i>Briale?</i> |
| | Name | Adjoining Hewish |
| | Landuse | Meadow, laid to pasture. |
| | | |
| 452 | Landowner | Marquess of Bath, held under the Rectorial Glebe |
| | Occupier | Edward Howell |
| | Name | Lower Hewish |
| | Landuse | Cultivated land, arable. |
| | | |
| 453 | Landowner | held by John Brideman, under leasehold of the Marquess of Bath |
| | Occupier | James Knight |
| | Name | Hewish Close |
| | Landuse | Meadow, laid to pasture. |

2.2.3 The 1888-1889 Ordnance Survey Map

The late 19th century mapping (Figure 4) shows the printing works/factory site remaining as agricultural fields to the south-west of the railway station (HER no: 57036) and cut at their south-east corner by the railway line itself (HER no: 56985). The station was part of the Wiltshire, Somerset and Dorset Railway, built in the mid 19th century (1850s). To the south-west is the large mill complex, now called Providence Mills (HER no: 23531) which has extended and developed from the buildings marked on the tithe map. The field arrangement and morphology has not changed, with the narrow linear plots running between Locks Lane and the river Frome (fields marked 1157; 1158; 1159; 1182). The detail on this OS map is more informative than the simpler tithe map; these fields represent a relict landscape of medieval open strip-fields on the edge of the settlement, the field boundaries having slight curvilinear profiles and are marked as hedgebanks with mature trees (Figure 4).

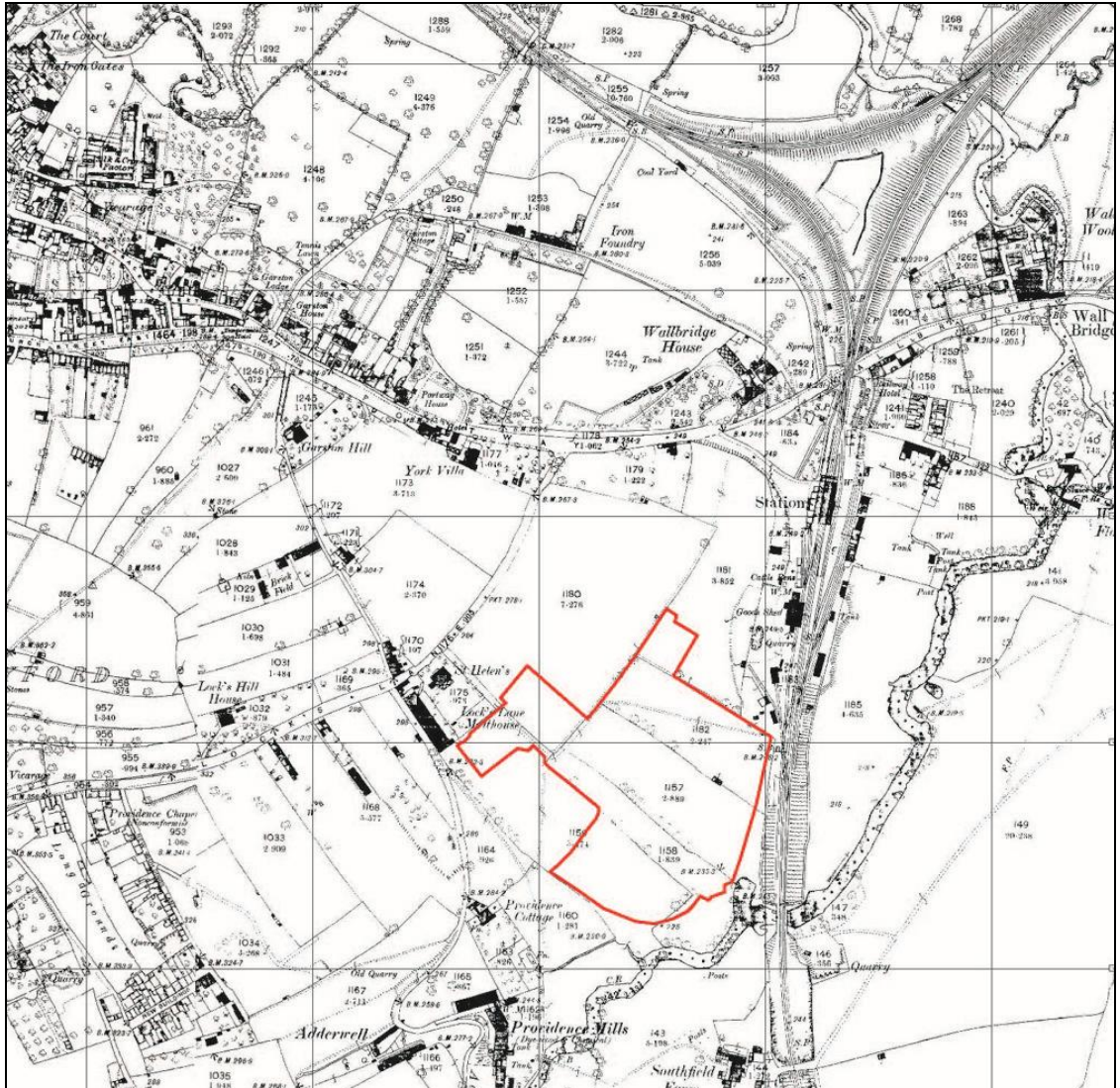


Figure 4: Detail from the 1888-1889 Ordnance Survey map, drawn at 1:2,500, reproduced here at 50%. The proposed development site is outlined in red.

The pattern of long narrow fields running back from Locks Lane south towards the river continues to the west and the pattern continues to the north with narrow fields running back west from Adderwell Lane. Within the fields, noted on the tithe map in the 1840s as still being comprised of open strips, there has been noticeable change; one or two strips have been combined and enclosed by banks and boundaries to create separate plots.

There is one small building marked on the site, within field 1182 (no.451 on the tithe map), against the hedge. This is probably a small animal shed or shelter and was not present, or is not noted, on the tithe map. The field is also crossed by a path which runs down the side of the adjacent field (1181) and links the Station/Wallbridge House area with the Lock's Lane Malthouse (HER no: 14592); part of this neighbouring field is also now incorporated into the factory site. To the north-east of the site, Locks Lane Malthouse buildings have been erected within a sub-square enclosure at the crossroads of Adderwell Lane and Locks Lane. Within the enclosure is a further building marked as St Helens, which may be a 19th century 'villa', similar in size and footprint to several along the larger Portway road.

Locks Lane is an eighteenth century turnpike road (HER no: 29123) which was run from 1757 by the Frome Turnpike Trust and only became a main road in 1880; which explains the lack of

19th century development, apart from scattered dwellings and some semi-industrial sites. The site probably retained its semi-rural/edge-of-settlement character due to a lack of traffic along the main transecting route. Portway road which runs to the north can already be seen to exhibit dense ribbon development stretching from the centre of the town to the railway station.

2.2.4 The 1903-1904 Ordnance Survey Map

There are marked changes to the surrounding area by the early 20th century mapping (Figure 5), but the four main fields that comprise the site remain. These are now marked 118, 115, 114, with the field below Lock's Malthouse (now called Lock's Hill Malthouse) now having a small division at its southern end and marked 113 and 112. The building within field 1182 (tithe no.451; now 118) appears to have been extended, creating a longer range against the hedgebank which may still be agricultural in function.

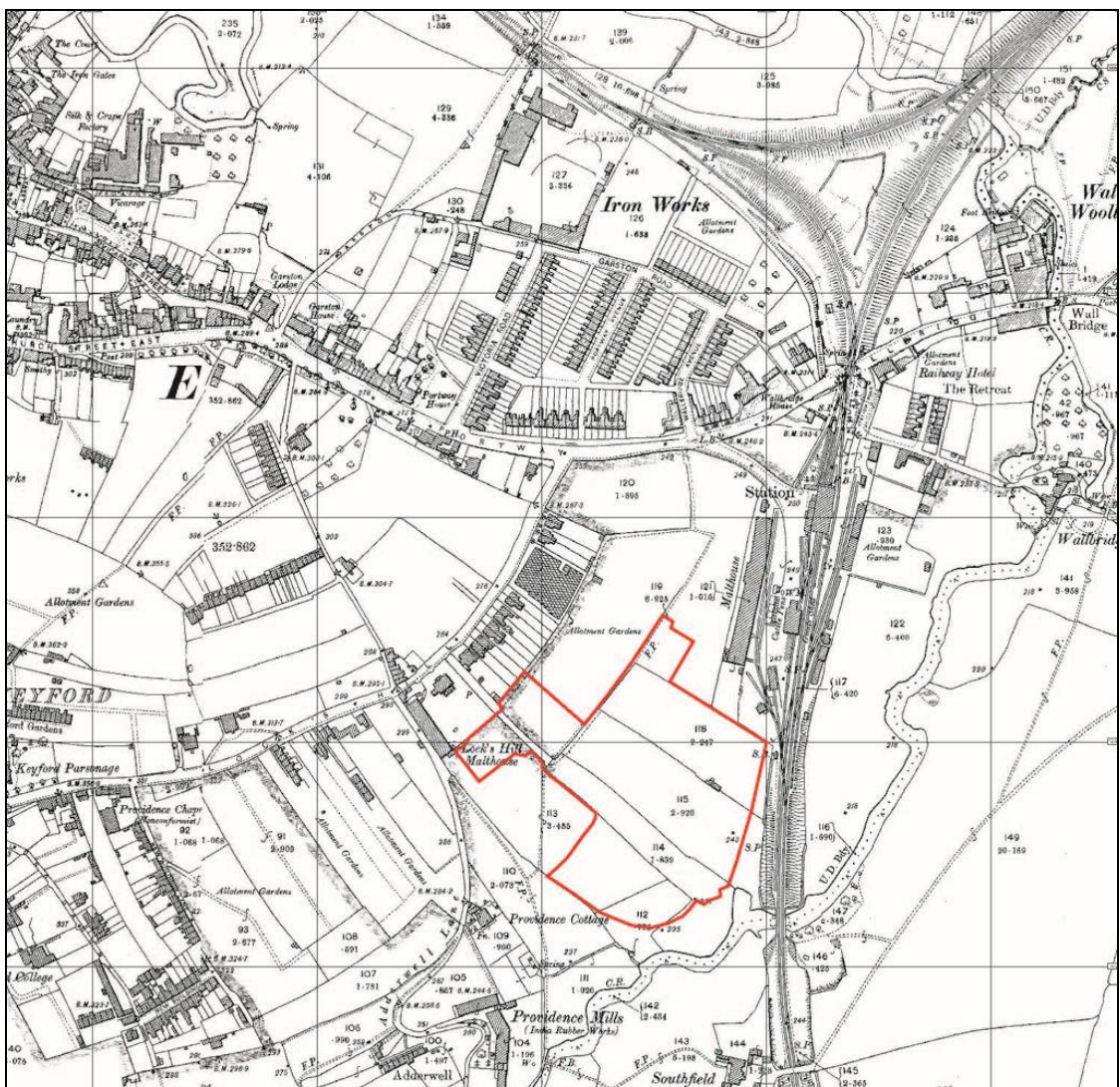


Figure 5: Detail from the 1903-1904 OS map, drawn at 1:2,500, reproduced here at 50%. The proposed development site is outlined in red.

A significant change is the appearance of a large building in field 119 to the north-east adjacent to the station (marked 1181 in 1888 and 452 on the tithe map). This building is marked 'malthouse' (HER no: 23535) and is therefore a continuation of the trend in this location, with the earlier Lock's Malthouse to the north-west. The development of such a large building may be connected to the expansion of the railway network in the early 20th century. The cattle sheds and goods pens remain unchanged within the wider station compound.

A further significant alteration is to the large regular enclosure (marked 1180 on the 1888 map and 449 on the tithe) which has been divided into two distinct areas, with a row of newly built houses running parallel to the road and with gardens behind. The row of houses is divided by one large square building at the centre, possibly a public building of some sort or business premises, and to the south the rest of the field has been turned into allotment gardens. This 'ribbon' development is commonly found along roads and has obviously developed since Lock's Lane switched from a turnpike in the 1880s to a main route to the railway station. To the south-west of the site the large mill building (Providence Mill) has now been converted into an 'India rubber works'.

2.2.5 The 1930 Ordnance Survey Map

The most significant developments within the proposed Caxton Road site were undertaken during the first three decades of the 20th century, with the development of the printing works factory. By the time of the production of the 1930s map (Figure 6) the fields 118, 115 and 114 have been taken up entirely by the modern factory building, with fields 113 and 112 to the south-west, converted into further allotment gardens. The factory is marked as the 'Adderwell Printing Works' (HER no: 23543) and comprises one large main building with a range of smaller buildings to the north-east. Some landscaping work was also undertaken, possibly to level the site, banking and terracing can be seen below the new factory building to the south, close to the river. A small track or access road has been pushed through between Locks Malthouse and the new houses along the road, providing a direct link to the printing works. It is interesting to note however that the factory site respects the earlier field boundaries; the boundary between 119 & 118 and 114 & 112/113 are maintained as the edges of the modern semi-industrial site.

Below, to the south-west, the Providence Mill building is now named St John's Mills, but is still an India rubber works. The cottage to the north of the mill is now marked as Adderwell House and may have been sold away from the mill complex. Locks Hill Malthouse appears unchanged and the house adjacent (formerly called St Helens) also survives. The allotment gardens to the north of the main site have been further divided, with buildings to the north within an area still marked as 'allotment gardens' and to the north a large building has been built within an area marked as 'nursery', presumably a plant nursery. The rest of the field (119) divided by the malthouse building (formerly 1181) is also now marked as 'allotment gardens'.

As a general trend development spread from the town centre, along Portway to the station and to the north, with an Iron Works erected, a Woollen Mill and a Flour Mill, as well as along Adderwell Lane, which was been widened and re-named Alexandra Road and where closes of houses were built along new side roads and cul-de-sacs, obliterating the last of the relict field pattern.

It may very well be the case that the street name - Caxton Road - came into being during this period. In the absence of any additional corroborative evidence, it seems appropriate that a road leading to a print works could be named for *William Caxton* (b. c.1415~22; d. c.1492), credited with being the first English printer of books.

2.2.6 The 1967-1968 Ordnance Survey Map (Epoch 5)

The years between the production of the 1930 map and that of 1967-1968 (Figure 7) were dominated by development, with the fields running to the west of the site along both Locks Hill Road and Alexandra Road entirely covered with new mid-century roads and housing. 'Brick field' (HER no: 31013), with its kiln and yard off Adderwell Lane (now Alexandra Road) was covered with modern development. North of Locks Hill the character of the development was largely residential, whereas the south side of the road down to the river retained the areas of mixed use character with housing, allotments and with semi-industrial buildings, such as the printing works, timber yard and station yard.

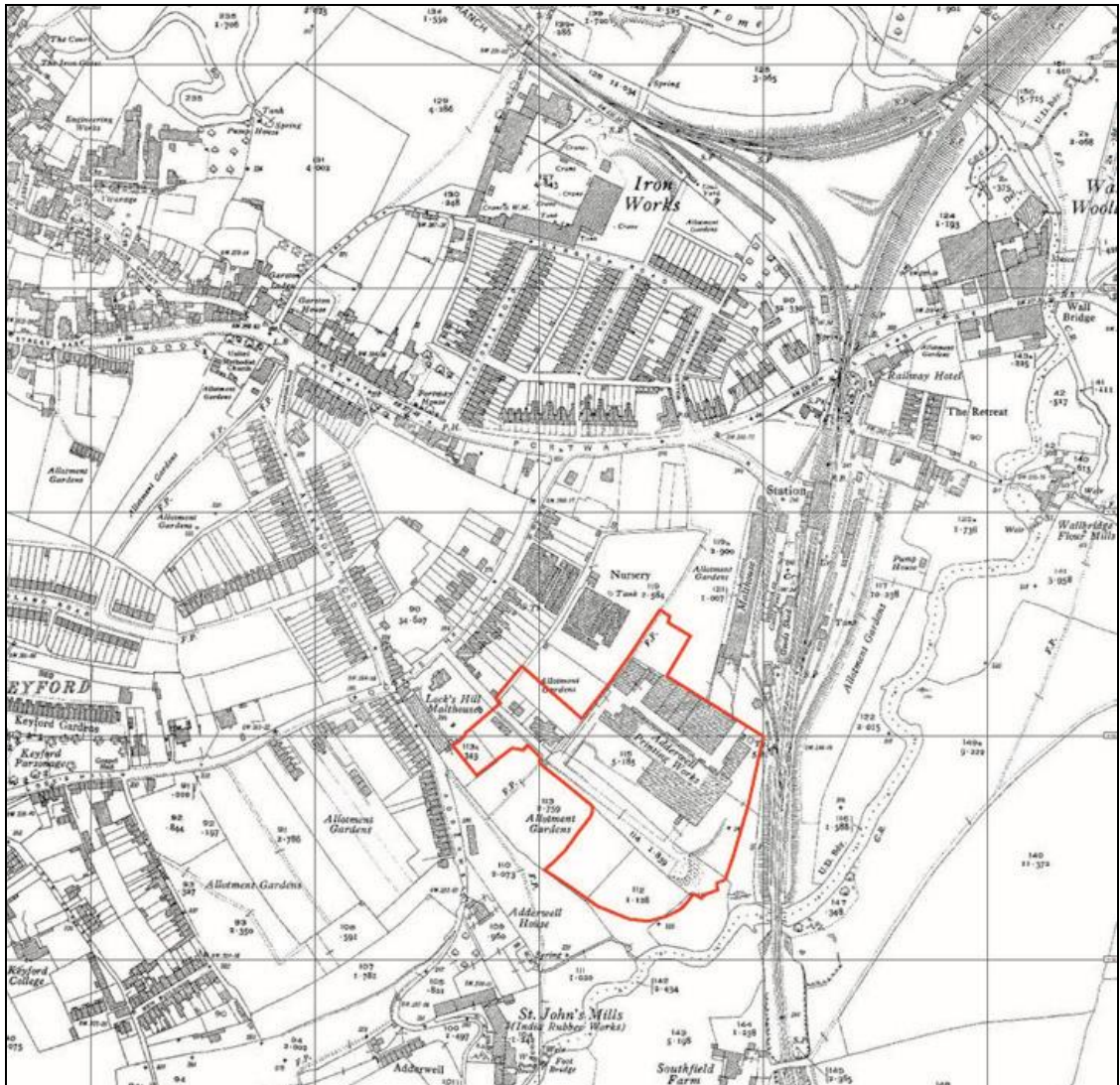


Figure 6: Detail from the 1930 OS map, drawn at 1:2,500, reproduced here at 50%. The proposed development site is outlined in red.

The large Iron works was superseded by further housing development beyond the Portway road, with a coal/freight yard utilising the buildings beside the tracks. The plant nursery set up in the field to the north behind the row of houses was moved to the north side of Locks Lane (now Locks Hill Road). Lock's Malthouse was demolished or had fallen out of use, although the enclosure in which it was situated survived and the small building marked previously as 'St

Helens' is still standing. Field 113 below the malthouse was further divided, with more houses built to the north, adjacent to the former malthouse, and the rest remaining as allotment gardens, with field 112 now containing a new building associated with the printing works. The mill buildings to the south-west were converted to a timber yard. The large malthouse seemingly associated with the station yard/railway still stands to the north-east of the site.

The factory site itself has undergone significant change since the 1930s; the main factory building and detached range have been joined and both extended, the main building having doubled in size, being extended to the north and west. As mentioned above, another building was constructed to the south-west, with further additional outbuildings. The track linking the site to Locks Hill Road was widened and adopted; now marked as 'Caxton Hill'. Within the adjacent allotment gardens at the entrance to the factory further development, possibly rows of garages, has been undertaken and the map appears to show a bank has been created between the allotment gardens to the west and the factory, shielding the houses and allotments from views of the factory. The site has undergone further landscaping and terracing below the buildings but despite the extension of the buildings the site appears to continue to respect the field boundary to the east, between 118 and 119 and that to the west, between 114 and 112/113.

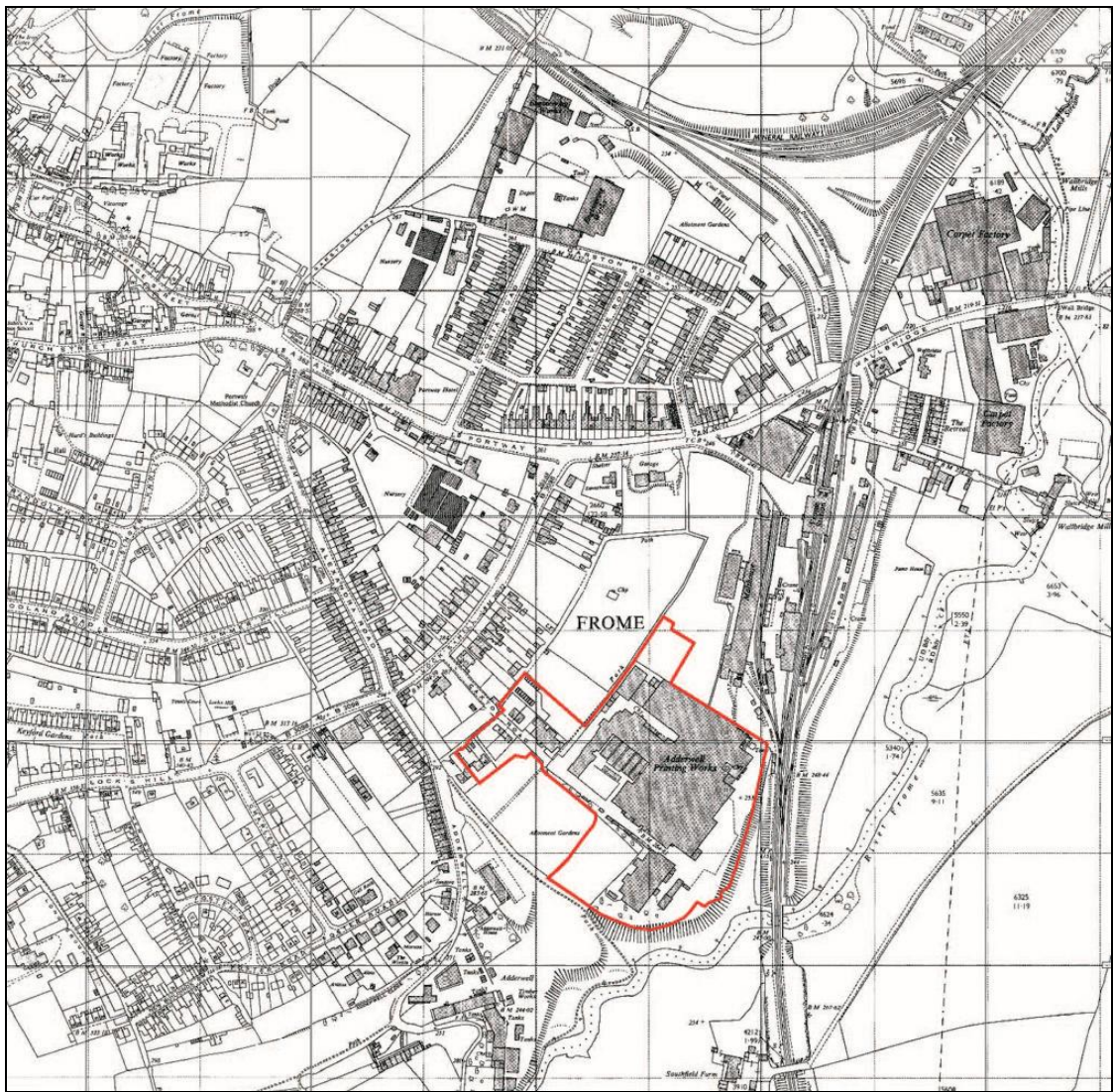


Figure 7: Detail from the 1967-1968 OS map (Epoch 5), drawn at 1:2,500, reproduced here at 50%. The proposed development site is outlined in red.

3.0 Conclusions

3.1 Conclusions

The picture we can build from the records of the Caxton Road site and its immediate surroundings, suggests a story of the slow development, throughout the 19th century, of the belt of countryside which surrounded Frome's urban centre. This was a predominantly agricultural landscape, defined by a field pattern which followed the medieval open strip-field layout, running between Frome and Keyford to the south, with long narrow plots running away from the various roads. We know much of the site was part of the Glebe lands and the estate of the Marquess of Bath, and it may be that the inclusion of this landscape within the larger estate delayed its development. The land was farmed by estate tenants, later sold to individuals and then to developers in the later 19th and early 20th centuries.

In the late 18th century and early 19th century the area was universally agricultural. The immediate area around the print works factory site developed some cross-over agricultural/manufacturing processes in the early to mid 19th century however, illustrated by the construction of several mills and a malthouse conveniently positioned on the edge of the town, near the river, along a turnpike road developed in the 1750s. The arrival of the railway in the 1850s, which cut through the valley to the west of the river, immediately below the site would have changed the character of the wider area, with further development of semi-industrial and storage/production buildings around the station building and its associated freight yards. More immediately for those farming the fields on the site, their access to the river was now cut off in some fields and others were cut in half, with a further section of land on the other side of the tracks.

The development of the area intensified when the turnpike road was converted to a main public road in the 1880s, improving access to the area and increasing traffic along the route. Ribbon development, displaying mixed use, began in the late 19th century and was already established by the 1903-1904 mapping along the south side of the road, where housing, allotments and a plant nursery (possibly serving a business in the town?) were constructed. This growth out into the countryside followed the large population booms of the 19th century and the growth of industry and commerce which created the middle classes who wished to move away from the crowded town centres to new modern houses built on the outskirts, with their own gardens.

To the south and west of the town the 19th century development, clearly visible between the production of the tithe map and the 1888/1889 mapping, remained within the long narrow plots of the relict field system, suggesting a pattern of individual ownership and development for occupation. An example of this trend becoming more commercial in the early 20th century is clear immediately to the north of the factory site, where the large regular enclosure parallel to the road (1180/119) was developed first into houses and allotments by 1903/1904, largely retaining the boundaries of the original field. Again this suggests the purchase and limited development of individual plots of land before the wholesale purchase and development of wider areas, which had occurred by the time of the 1960s mapping. A further example to the north is the development of the 'Brick Field' plot, the kiln and industrial buildings being replaced by a row of houses running along the north side of the plot, with narrow gardens running south to a small private road running along the south side of the plot off the newly named Alexandra Road (formerly the upper part of Adderwell Lane).

3.2 Archaeological Potential

When considering the archaeological potential of the site from the documents consulted, we can suggest that evidence of former field boundaries or the agricultural use of the land, such as evidence of ploughing, may be uncovered. There is also some potential for small finds and topsoil finds that would be common within intensively farmed landscapes on the edge of a settlement.

Given the relatively early date at which an essentially agricultural landscape was developed, no evidence has emerged for earlier occupation of the site, or indeed anything else of archaeological significance. The survival of buried archaeology cannot be ruled out, but the construction of the factory and the considerable landscaping and re-development of the site throughout the 20th century does make the survival of any buried remains less likely. Towards the river, ground levels have been raised and any buried remains here would be at a significant depth and potentially unaffected by any previous development or future works.

The most immediate concern for any future development would be the extant standing structures. The mapping indicates the original factory was considerably extended after 1930, and it is possible elements of the 1920s/1930s buildings may still survive within the core of the current complex.

4.0 Bibliography & References

Published Sources:

British Geological Survey 2012: Geology of Britain Viewer.
<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>

Institute of Field Archaeologists 1994 (Revised 2001 & 2008): *Standard and Guidance for archaeological Desk-based Assessment*.

Institute of Field Archaeologists. 2001 (Revised 2008): *Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials*.

Appendix 1

Relevant HER Entries for the site

HER No: 23543

Site Name: Printing works, Adderwell

Civil Parish: Frome

Grid Ref: ST 783 473 (ST 74 NE)

Details:

"Adderwell printing works" printed on OS 6" map.

References:

- 1 Map - Ordnance Survey 1932 6" sheet 43NE
- 2 Description - Warren, D. Somerset's Industrial Heritage: A Guide and Gazetteer. (1996), 10. Somerset Industrial Archaeology Society survey no 8.

HER No: 23535

Site Name: Malthouse, Frome

Civil Parish: Frome

Grid Ref: ST 783 475 (ST 74 NE)

Details:

"Malthouse" printed on OS 6" map. Very large, stone built, c1860. An impressive example of premises built especially to take advantage of the new railway. Externally, little modified, apart from some infilling of windows which has not benefited the architectural effect.

References:

- 1 Map - Ordnance Survey 1932 6" sheet 43NE
- 2 Map - Ordnance Survey Archaeology Division 1961 6" ST74NE (SCC Planning Department)
- 3 Detailed records - Ordnance Survey Archaeology Division 1978 ST74NE21 (SCC Planning Department)
- 4 Mention - Hudson, K 1965 "Industrial Archaeology of Southern England", 165
- 5 Description - Warren, D. Somerset's Industrial Heritage: A Guide and Gazetteer. (1996), 10. Somerset Industrial Archaeology Society survey no 8.

HER No: 14592

Site Name: Lock's Hill Malthouse, Lock's Hill, Frome

Civil Parish: Frome

Grid Ref: ST 7812 4744 (ST 74 NE)

Details:

'Lock's Hill Malthouse' shown on Ordnance Survey map of c1904. Building extant and noted as 'Lydgate House' on recent map, presumably converted to a private dwelling.

References:

- 1 Map - Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map, second edition (c.1904)
- 2 Map - Ordnance Survey Landline Information (2006)

HER No: 29123

Site Name: Eighteenth century turnpike road, Frome: The Butts to Portway, via Keyford

Civil Parish: Frome

Grid Ref: ST 7822 4765 (ST 74 NE) ST 7711 4718 (ST 74 NE)

Details:

This road, which did not become a Main Road in 1880, was turnpiked under the Frome Trust in 1757. Over the last 30 years it has been widened and improved in various parts.

References:

- 1 Detailed records - Bentley, JB and Murless, BJ. Somerset Roads: The Legacy of the Turnpikes. Phase 2 -

Eastern Somerset. (1987), Route FR7.

HER No: 57036

Site Name: Frome Station

Civil Parish: Frome

Comprises: PRN 26559 Frome Station (Main building), Portway, Frome

Grid Ref: ST 7844 4752 (ST 74 NE)

Details:

Frome Station at the end of the line from Westbury (PRN 569878)

References:

- 1 Verbal communication - Chris Webster (6/10/1999)
- 2 Description - Warren, D. Somerset's Industrial Heritage: A Guide and Gazetteer. (1996), 9. Somerset Industrial Archaeology Society survey no 8.

HER No: 56985

Site Name: Frome to Yeovil railway

Civil Parish: Frome, Selwood, Trudoxhill, Witham Friary, Ansford, Brewham, Bruton, Castle Cary, Marston Magna, Pitcombe, Queen Camel, Sparkford, Yeovil

Comprises: PRN 15189 Military railway siding, Castle Cary Station, Ansford

PRN 18378 Marston Magna Station

PRN 18387 Sparkford Station

PRN 18388 Strap Lane Halt

PRN 18399 Witham Station

PRN 27550 Signal Box at NGR ST 743 407, Witham Friary

Grid Ref: ST 7845 4765 (ST 74 NE) ST 770 426 (ST 74 SE) ST 743 408 (ST 74 SW) ST 710 370 (ST 73 NW) ST 695 352 (ST 63 NE) ST 667 338 (ST 63 SE) ST 632 334 (ST 63 SW) ST 611 280 (ST 62 NW) ST 601 230 (ST 62 SW) ST 592 202 (ST 52 SE) ST 581 171 (ST 51 NE) ST 570 163 (ST 51 NE)

Details:

The Wiltshire, Somerset and Dorset Railway extended their line (PRN 56987) from Frome through Bruton and Castle Cary leaving the county at ST592202 and re-entering at ST581171 to Yeovil Pen Mill in 1856 where it joined the Bristol and Exeter branch from Taunton (PRN 56978).

References:

- 1 Description - Hunt, TJ and Sellman, RR 'Aspects of Somerset History' (1973)47-50

HER No: 23531

Site Name: St John's mills and Providence mill, Adderwell

Civil Parish: Frome

Grid Ref: ST 781 471 (ST 74 NE)

Details:

"St John's Mills" printed on OS 6" map. A freehold clothing factory with a waterwheel supplied by a pond from a stream and a 4hp steam engine was advertised for sale in 1810. Machinery included a gig mill connected by a shaft to the engine, a 36" scribbling engine, three 30" scribblers and corders, two 70-spindle and one 50-spindle billies, two 80-spindle and one 70 spindle jennies, a 30-skein reel and a tucker. This can be identified with a mill at Bellis Hole, owned by William Rossiter and occupied by Samuel Saviour. Rossiter also owned another mill just below, also supplied by a pond, occupied by James Rawlings. In 1816 it contained an 8hp steam engine calculated to drive gigs and shearing frames. The owner of the mills, William Rossiter, was himself a clothier and had probably acquired them in order to occupy these himself. The firm of William and John Rossiter was in business at Keyford, no doubt using the Adderwell

drills, until at least 1848 when it was noticed that they had stopped working. By 1853 the upper mill had been converted into houses and sold - the lower one still belonged to William Rossiter, but was probably not working. The main part of the upper mill still stands, now visibly a later Georgian house of two storeys with attics in a mansard roof above. The remains of the pond can still be seen behind the house. The lower site became a dyewood and chemical works, known as Providence Mills, later in the C19, and the two large stone buildings and chimney shaft appear to date from that time. The former Cuprinol Works at Adderwell, Frome occupy a site which has been in industrial use since at least 1814, at which date a millpond, leat and industrial buildings are shown on Cruse's map. The same buildings, with an additional small dwelling, appear on the tithe map of 1840. This map does not show the millpond but appears to have omitted all ponds as part of the cartographer's selection process. The buildings shown on the 1814 and 1840 maps seem to have been demolished and replaced by the buildings we now see by 1886. At least one of the present mill buildings was built by 1857, evidenced by a date stone. By 1886 the major historic buildings we see today were in operation, further development occurring between 1905 and 1930.

The area was called Bellis's Hole or Bellows Hole historically. This may suggest an iron-working industry, as bellows were required to heat metal-working furnaces. Cruse's survey of 1814 lists the plot as Factory, Ponds and Garden at Bellis's Hole, owner William Rossiter, occupier John Rawlings. Rawlings may have been using the factory for cloth production or as part of the related card-making industry. If the latter, then metal-working was part of the process, as cards were set with wire teeth for combing wool. The trade directory of 1861 lists the site as James Holroyd, drysalter and manufacturing chemist, Providence Mill. By 1875 the directory lists James Holroyd and Son, Dyewood and chemical manufacturers, Providence Mills. In 1905 it was marked by Ordnance Survey as Providence Mills India Rubber Works. In 1930 it was St John's Mills India Rubber Works. Most recently it has operated as Cuprinol chemical works, products included preservative treatments for wood. The works closed in 2002, and the site is to be redeveloped.

The buildings have been subject to a rapid assessment with snapshot views but not surveyed and systematically photographically recorded. In parts of the works the presence of chemical containers retaining traces of chemicals, and damp patches on the floors beneath them, presumably also chemical in nature, means that health and safety issues may make survey difficult. The works buildings are good examples of the local vernacular style and materials adapted to industrial purposes. The masonry is characteristic of Frome: Forest Marble coursed rough walling with Oolitic freestone dressings. Development can be seen in the fabric of the northern building, which has been extended to the west. An interesting feature is the raised walkway used by the workers to enter the northern building at first floor level from outside the site to the south. The bridge is missing, but the path remains on the high bank. This workers' entrance may have been created with the aim of keeping the employees out of the sight of people in the genteel villa on the hillside to the north. Window and doorway treatments are simple, some with arches, some without. Some original doors and windows remain, others have been replaced. The floors have been strengthened and resurfaced in some areas, replaced in others, though some areas of original timber flooring survive. Most stairways have been replaced, but at least one flight of steep timber stairs is original. A small number of the Victorian cast iron internal pillars survive. The only remaining Victorian gear in the two main buildings comprises a single iron bracket and a small pulley wheel, in separate areas of the southern building. There are good iron gates and gateposts at the western entrance. The chimney was not examined at close quarters, and there may be features of interest at its base. It is an attractive and interesting feature of brick with freestone dressings. It is not merely functional in character, but was designed with to be aesthetically appealing.

There may be archaeological remains of the former mill pond and earlier mill buildings beneath the existing surface features. The lost mill buildings are certainly early 19 century in date, and may be earlier. The lost mill may have been used for cloth-working or for iron-working.

References:

- 1 Map - Ordnance Survey 1932 6" sheet 43NE
- 2 Description - Rogers, K 1976 "Wiltshire and Somerset Woollen Mills", 201
- 3 Description - Stokes, P The former Cuprinol Works, Adderwell, Frome Mendip District Council (2002) in HER files.

HER No: 31013

Site Name: Nineteenth-century brickyard site, Summer Hill, Frome

Civil Parish: Frome

Grid Ref: ST 779 475 (ST 74 NE)

Details:

A 'Brick Field' and 'Kiln' is shown on the 1886 1:500 Ordnance Survey map to the W of 'Cliff's Buildings'. The area is now occupied by a continuation of the terrace now forming the N side of Summer Hill and has been since the 1903 Ordnance Survey map. As these are in stone, the bricks appear to have been made for elsewhere. At the time of the Tithe map the site was owned by the Elizabeth Cliff Trustees and occupied by James Yeoman and others.

References:

- 1 Correspondence - Murless, BJ [Brian], Somerset Industrial Archaeology Society, email to Somerset County Council Historic Environment Record. (5/8/2011) Location: Verbal, electronic or direct entry, no source retained.
- 2 Map - Ordnance Survey 1:500 County Series (Somerset) First Edition map Sheet: 43.3.1 (1886) Frome.

Location: Local Studies collection at Somerset Heritage Centre.

3 Map - Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 County Series (Somerset) Second Edition map Sheet: 43NE (1904)

4 Historical reference - Frome Selwood tithe map. (c.1840) Available at Somerset Heritage Centre (digital image, fiche and originals). Reference: D/D/Rt/M/244



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