

BUTTS LANE RODNEY STOKE SOMERSET

Results of a Desk-Based Appraisal



South West Archaeology Ltd. report no. 160704



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Butts Lane, Rodney Stoke, Somerset Results of a Desk-Based Appraisal

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Work undertaken by SWARCH for Judith Coles
of Salmon Planning

Summary

This report presents the results of a desk-based appraisal undertaken on land at Butts Lane, Rodney Stoke, Somerset. This work was undertaken by South West Archaeology Ltd. on behalf of Judith Coles of Salmon Planning in order to identify historic land-use and to inform future use of the site.

Limited archaeological works have taken place in the immediate vicinity of the site, although field walking on the site itself and an adjacent field suggest the presence of a Roman settlement, likely given the presence of building slate and tiles, a villa site. The recovered assemblage also included a not insignificant amount of Neolithic worked flints, demonstrating occupation on and in the vicinity of the site from Prehistory.

The presence of a suspected Roman villa on the site suggests that it is likely to be of at least regional importance, and recommendations for further archaeological work would include geophysical survey at a minimum, with the potential for evaluation trenching dependant on the results of this survey and the proposals. The archaeological potential for the site is deemed to be high.



July 2016

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Location:	Butts Lane
Parish:	Rodney Stoke
County:	Somerset
NGR:	Centred on ST 48203 50126
Planning no.	Pre-planning
SWARCH ref.	RSB16

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

This report presents the results of a desk-based appraisal carried out by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) at Butts Lane, Rodney Stoke, Somerset (Figure 1). The work was commissioned by Judith Coles of Salmon Planning (the Agent) on behalf of John Counsell (the Client) in order to identify the potential for historical or archaeological remains that might be affected by any future use of the site.

1.2 TOPOGRAPHICAL AND GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Rodney Stoke is located approximately 7km north-west of the city of Wells, in the parish of Rodney Stoke, Somerset. The site is situated to the north-west of the main urban settlement area of Rodney Stoke, at the junction of Butts Lane and Brangay Lane, to the east of the Cheddar Valley and Yatton Railway, at an altitude of c.25m AOD. To the east of the site lies the A371, Wells Road, with Manor Farm located to the south and Brangay Farm to the north.

The soils of this area are the very shallow and shallow well drained loamy soils of the Crwbin Association bordering the reddish fine loamy clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging of the Whimple 1 Association (SSEW 1983). These overlie the Mudstone and Halite-stone of the Mercia Mudstone Formation (BGS 2016).

1.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The site is located to the north-west of the main settlement of Rodney Stoke, to the North of Manor Farm and parish Church of St. Leonard. Rodney Stoke, 'Stoches' at the time of the Domesday Book, a name meaning 'stockade' or 'secondary settlement'. It was renamed 'Stokegifford' before inheriting the name 'Rodney Stoke' sometime after the late 13th century when the manor was under the ownership of the Rodney family. It remained under their lineage until 1657. The village is today populated by around 1350 people.

1.4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The Historic Landscape Characterisation for Somerset records the area as *recently enclosed land* (18th-21st century). These areas have some potential for prehistoric and Roman archaeological sites and remains, but are typically limited in terms of medieval archaeology. This is apparent within the area around the site, as numerous Neolithic flint artefacts, including the cutting edge of an axe, have been recovered from the adjacent field, indicating that the area has seen occupation since Prehistory. Within the boundary of the site itself is a probable Romano-British settlement and potential villa, identified during a fieldwalking survey. However no geophysical survey or excavation has been carried out, so the exact location, extent and survival of the buried

archaeology is unknown. The site itself does not contain any known archaeological sites post-dating the Roman period, though the village has Medieval origins, including the Church of St. Leonard.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

This work was undertaken in accordance with best practice. The desk-based assessment follows the guidance as outlined in: *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment* (ClfA 2014) and *Understanding Place: historic area assessments in a planning and development context* (English Heritage 2012).

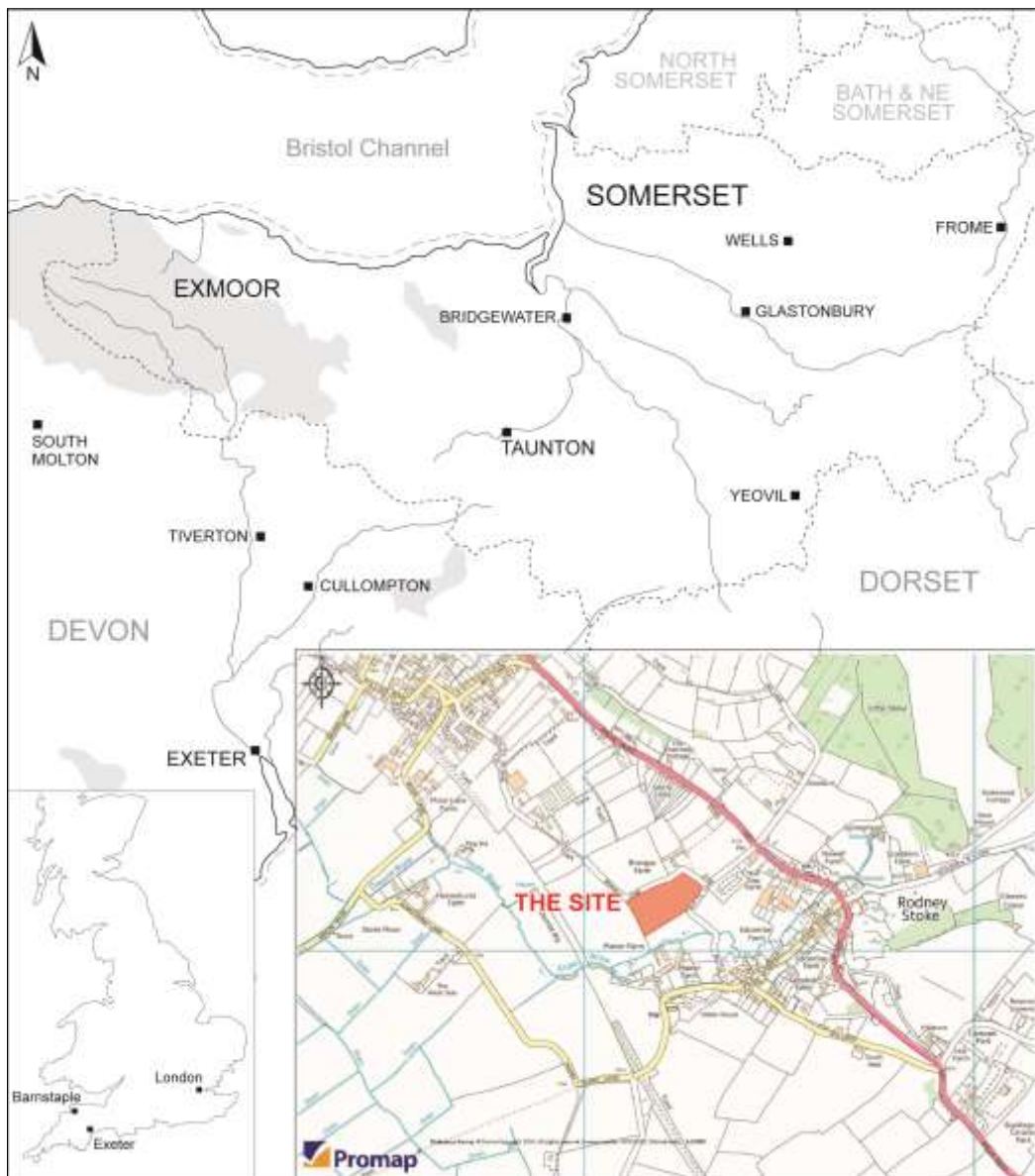


FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION (THE SITE IS INDICATED).

2.0 DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT AND CARTOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

2.1 DOCUMENTARY HISTORY

The village of Rodney Stoke, in the *hundred* of Winterstoke first appears in the Domesday Book of 1086 as *Stoches*, part of the lands of the Bishop of Coutances and held by Ælfgeat (Williams and Martin 1992). The term '*stoches*' is derived from the *Old English* meaning a 'secondary settlement', 'outlying farmstead' (Watts 2010) or a 'stockaded settlement' (Robinson 1992). In 1243 it was known as *Stokes Giffard*, referring to its ownership by the Giffard family; prior to Richard de Rodene acquiring the manor by marriage and the settlement being re-named *Rodney Stoke* by 1303 (Watts 2010). The village is nestled at the foot of the Mendip Hills, approximately 1.5km south-east of Draycott and comprises an area of 2720 acres.

The Giffords were Saxon nobility who until the late 13th century, were Lords of the manor (Robinson 1992). The last of the Gifford family married Sir Richard de Rodene in the late 13th century and it was after this that the name was changed to Rodney Stoke. The manor passed in descent through the Rodney family alongside the manors of Saltford and Backwell. The family were notable, Sir John Rodney being present with Henry VII at the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520. He was succeeded by Sir Edward Rodney, who was a Member of Parliament for Wells and was an active Royalist member during the disturbances caused in the city by the Civil War. In 1642 he was captured by Cromwell's forces and eventually taken to London. He died in 1657. The only surviving son of Edward, Sir George, passed away before his father, with whom ended the Rodney dynasty. (St. Leonards, Rodney Stoke: 2016)

The 12th century Grade I Listed parish church of St. Leonard is located within the village, and contains the Rodney Chapel which houses monuments and memorials to the Rodney family from 1478 through to 1659. Rodney Stoke is one of nine Thankful Villages in Somerset, which suffered no fatalities during the First World War. A plaque giving thanks can be seen on the church today.

2.2 CARTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

2.2.1 THE C.1775 INCLOSED LAND MAP

The earliest useful map is the 1775 Inclosed Land Map (Figure 2). It depicts the fieldscape in some detail, though the layout is representative rather than accurate. It shows a landscape of Post-Medieval enclosure with regular fields and straight boundaries, the elements of the earlier Medieval system can be seen in the presence of gently curving boundaries, particularly around the village itself. The map identifies the various land ownerships and tenancies, and shows the proposal site as being divided into two occupancies. The buildings of Manor Farm are depicted as five discrete buildings associated with individual plots of land under different ownerships or occupancies judging by the colours. The proposal site comprised was divided into two separate enclosures at this time.



FIGURE 2: EXTRACT FROM THE c.1775 INCLOSED LAND MAP THE APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF THE SITE IS INDICATED IN RED (SHC D/P/ROD.S).

2.2.2 THE 1840 RODNEY STOKE TITHE MAP

The tithe map (Figure 3) gives a more detailed interpretation of the landscape surrounding the site. It shows that whilst much of the fieldscape has remained constant, there has been field boundary alteration. The boundary dividing the proposal site had been removed, it now forming part of a single, larger field; *West Close*, including the former field to the south, and with a plot of land, *Nettle Garden*, at its south-west corner. To the south there has been further boundary alteration to the fields surrounding Manor Farm, alongside an increase in number of farm buildings, which are now shown as a mix of both domestic and non-domestic structures. The accompanying apportionment (see Table 1), shows that much of the surrounding landscape was owned by The Duke of Buckingham, with the site itself leased to John Grimsteed and recorded as under pasture. The area surrounding Manor Farm was predominantly used as orchards, at this time. The line of the (at this time) proposed railway has been annotated onto the tithe map, splitting fields immediately to the west of the proposal site.



FIGURE 3: EXTRACT FROM THE 1840 TITHE MAP. THE LOCATION OF THE SITE IS OUTLINED IN RED (SHC D/P/ROD.S C/3339).

Landowner(s)	Occupier(s)	Plot Number	Name and Description of Land	State of Cultivation	
Duke of Buckingham	John Caseley	54	Orchard by Butts Lane	Orchard	
	Edward Taylor	59	Ox Pen and Orchard	Orchard	
	Richard Attwood	340	Bulbrooks	Meadow	
	Edward Taylor	341	Bulbrooks	Arable	
	James Grimsteed		342	West Ground	Pasture
			343	Orchard	Orchard
			344	Cottage & Garden	
			345	Outhouses and Yards	Orchard
			346	Ox Pen and Yards	Orchard
			347	House Garden	Orchard
			350	Mount Orchard & Barn	Orchard
			351	Wagon House and Yard	
			352	Nettle Garden	Arable
			353	West Close	Pasture
			Joshua Caseley	349	Garden
		Thomas Hicks	354	West Ground	Pasture
		Thomas Reeves	357	Glebe Orchard	Orchard
		Robert Attwood	358	Little Field	Arable
			359	Little Field	Arable
			360	Little Field	Pasture
	Richard Attwood	362	Crofs Close	Meadow	
		366	Stoke Field	Meadow	
		372	Mennhedge	Arable	
	John Bilbie	364	Gooseland & Cuckoo	Meadow	
Duke of Buckingham and Robert Atwood	Robert Atwood	361	The Sugar Loaf Inn		
		376	Bulbrooks 100 Acres	Orchard	
Duke of Buckingham and James Hicks	Thomas Hicks	363	Crofs Close	Meadow	
John Bilbie	Himself	370	Long Close	Meadow	
		371	Mennhedge	Arable	
John Caseley	Himself	338	Bulbrooks		
		368	Little Mead	Meadow	
		369	Nettle Bed Orchard	Orchard	

		493	Cuckoo One	Orchard
Thomas Reeves	Himself	355	House and Premises	
		356	Barnses Paddock	Orchard
John Star	Himself	339	Bulbrooks	Meadow
TobyTaylor	Himself	365	Gallens Green	Orchard
John Taylor	Himself	367	New Tyning Little Bed Orchard	Orchard
Reverend Daniell Tremlett	Himself	508	Mennhedge	Arable
William Wickes	Himself	55	House & Orchard	Orchard
		56		
		60		

TABLE 1: AN EXTRACT OF APPORTIONMENTS TRANSCRIBED FROM THE TITHE APPORTIONMENTS C1840. THE FIELDS WITHIN THE SITE BOUNDARY ARE HIGHLIGHTED (SHC 137).

2.2.3 THE FIRST EDITION ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP OF 1884

By the First Edition Ordnance Survey (OS) in 1884 there had been limited development, the most significant change being the creation of the Cheddar Valley and Yatton railway to the west, which had resulted in the division of several of the fields to the west. There is further field boundary loss, particularly to the east, though also to the north; whilst there has been limited development within the village of Rodney Stoke. Manor Farm has continued to expand with several new buildings and a fish-pond now shown to the south-west of the proposal site. In terms of land-use, much of the state of cultivation appears not to have changed since the 1840s, though the amount of orchard appears to have increased slightly. The proposal site does not appear to have altered, although a footpath leading to Manor Farm is depicted to the west.

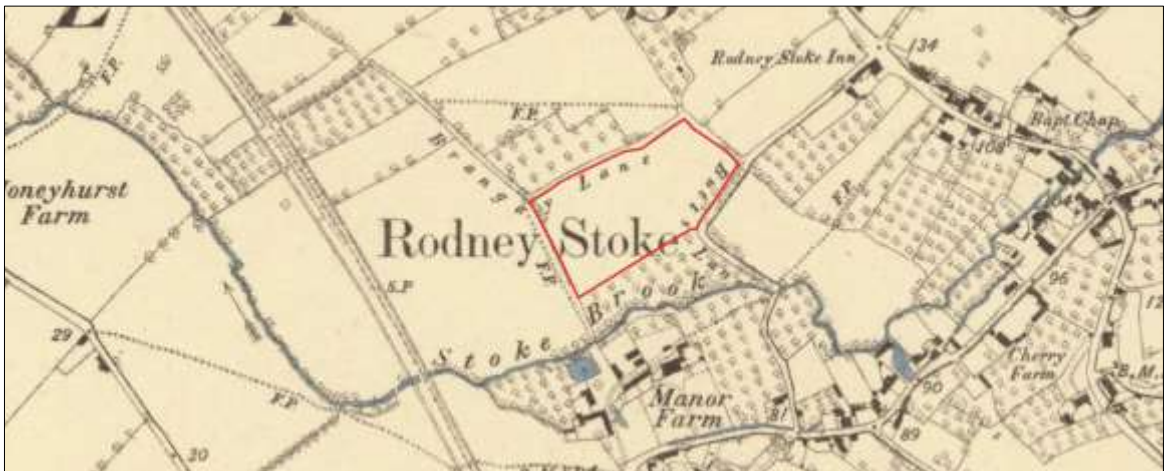


FIGURE 4: EXTRACT FROM THE 1884 FIRST EDITION OS MAP (SHC) (THE LOCATION OF THE SITE IS INDICATED IN RED).

2.2.4 THE SECOND EDITION OS MAP OF 1904

The Second Edition OS map shows that there had been very few changes by 1904, with only very limited field boundary removal and only limited development within the village of Rodney Stoke. The proposal site appears to remain the same.

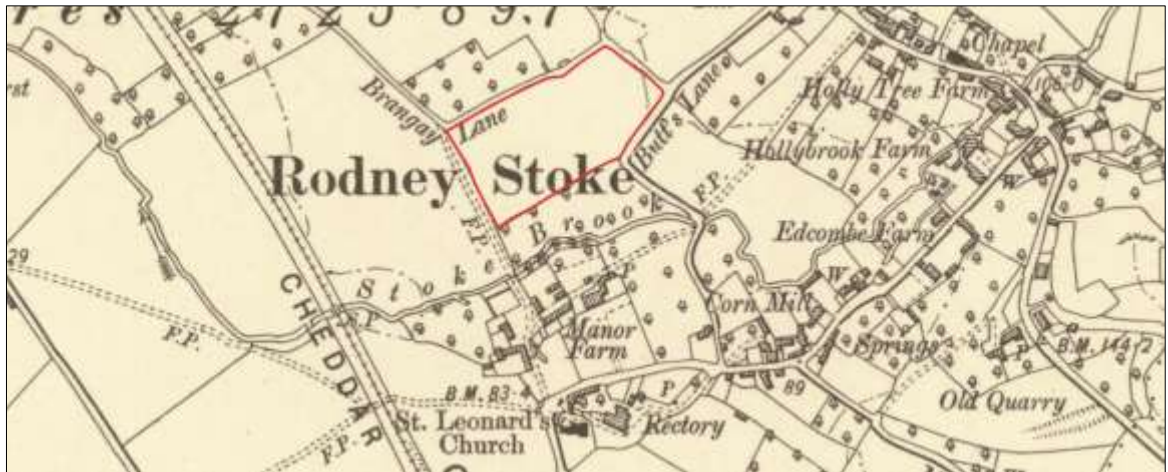


FIGURE 5: EXTRACT FROM THE 1904 SECOND EDITION OS MAP (SHC) (THE LOCATION OF THE SITE IS INDICATED IN RED).

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 BASELINE DATA

Due to a lack of modern development near the site and the surrounding area, little commercial archaeological studies have taken place, though archaeological monitoring of a pipeline to the west of the site identified sites of multiple periods. Fieldwalking within the proposal site and an adjacent field has revealed finds dating to the Roman-British period (see paragraph 3.1.2) whilst the village contains multiple findspots and sites of archaeological note, all of which are accurately listed in the Somerset Historic Environment Record. (see Figure 6 and Table 2).

3.1.1 PREHISTORIC 4000BC - AD43

The evidence for Prehistoric activity in the immediate area, although not plentiful, is present. This comprises a number of findspots identified during fieldwalking, and includes: the cutting edge of a Neolithic greenstone axe, two Neolithic scrapers and around 30 un-diagnostic flints, recovered from the field adjacent (west) to the proposed development site.

3.1.2 ROMANO-BRITISH AD43 - AD410

Directly within the boundary of the proposed development is a suspected Romano-British settlement. Fieldwalking when the field was freshly ploughed uncovered over 100 shreds of Romano-British Pottery, mostly of Congresbury type grey- and black-burnished wares. Large quantities of pennant stone tile suggest the presence of a substantial building. Further pottery was discovered as far as 500m away and although the site has never been excavated, it has been interpreted as a villa site. Varied pottery wares including Samian Oxford and Severn Valley fabrics were also found at Honeyhurst Lane and although it is thought they were present due to manure scattering, it does indicate a Romano-British presence in proximity to Rodney Stoke.

3.1.3 MEDIEVAL AD1066 - AD1540

The church of St. Leonard dates to the 13th-14th centuries and is a Grade I Listed Building. It, and an unidentified monument in the churchyard, are the only two known notable Medieval sites within the area, though field-name evidence suggests that there may have been a Medieval deer-park to the south-west of the site, and a hollow-way identified on aerial photographs may date from this period.

3.1.4 POST-MEDIEVAL AND MODERN AD1540 - PRESENT

Manor Farmhouse is a Grade II listed building and was built in the 18th century. Although the field of proposed development belongs to the farm, the farmhouse would be minimally affected by any development. The former Cheddar Valley and Yatton Railway, built in 1858 (closed in 1963) provided a link from Yatton to Wells, running to the west of the proposed development site, and survives as a series of earthworks.

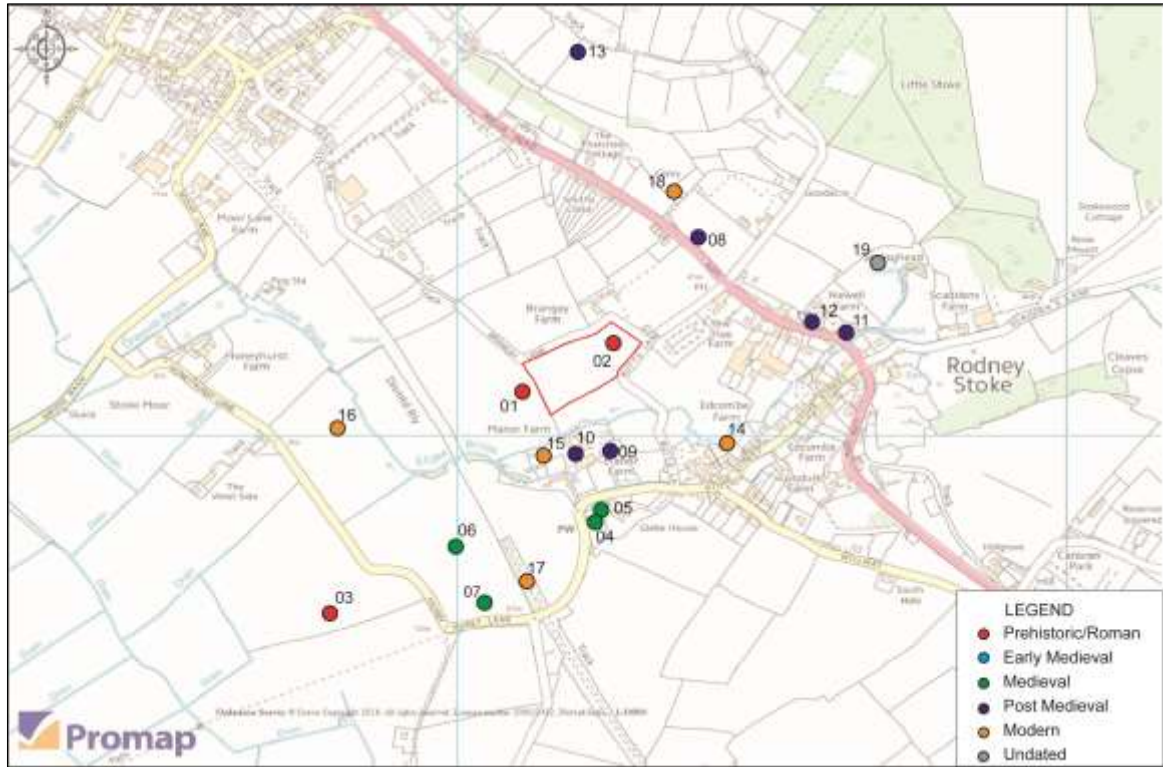


FIGURE 6: HERITAGE ASSETS PLOTTED ON A MAP (SOURCE: SOMERSET HER). SITE IS INDICATED IN RED.

Map No.	HER No.	Name	Record Type	Description
01	15166	Neolithic axe and flint finds, north of Manor Farm, Rodney Stoke	Find Spot	The cutting edge of a Neolithic polished greenstone axe was found at SR 4810 5012 during fieldwalking, apparently of Group I, together with c. 30 flints, mainly undiagnostic flakes, but including two scrapers of Neolithic character. A wide scatter of largely damaged flint tools and a large number of small, flake cores.
02	57174	Roman Settlement, Butts Lane, Rodney Stoke	Settlement	Over 100 sherds of freshly broken Romano-British pottery, mostly Congresbury type grey wares and black burnished wares were recovered from a newly ploughed field. There were also quantities of pennant stone tile suggesting a substantial building. Further Roman pottery was recovered from fields up to 500m away and a few iron-age sherds suggest earlier occupation. Listed as a villa site.
03	57175	Roman pottery finds, Honeyhurst Lane, Rodney Stoke	Find Spot	A small but varied quantity of Romano-British pottery including Samian Oxford, Severn Valley and Congresbury fabrics was recovered from a ploughed field. There were no obvious concentrations and it probably represents manuring.
04	24292 LB I No. 268105	Church of St. Leonard and churchyard, Rodney Stoke	Church	13 th -14 th century, altered in the 15 th century, now mainly perpendicular. Graveyard in use since medieval times. On the south wall of the nave is an oak board memorial to E J Pearce who was killed in 1940. The church was restored in 1879. The east window was installed and chancel ceiling painted in 1886.
05	21938 LB II* No. 1058593	Unidentified monument in churchyard, about 4m south of south chapel, Church of St. Leonard, Stoke Street (South side), Rodney Stoke	Monument	Chest tomb, 15 th century. Dressed stone. Oblong chest on moulded plinth; north side with 3 quatrefoil panels, each panel enclosing a blank shield, fourth panel with monogram; east and west ends with further carving; slab top with deep cavetto moulding around its edge, series of blank shields in relief. Possibly to a member of the Rodney family.

06	24296	Deer park site, Rodney Stoke	Park	Field names to the west of the church are 'park' 1977.
07	25741	Hollow way, South of Rodney Stoke	Hollow Way	A distinct hollow way is visible on 1946 aerial photographs. This is the previous course of Honeyhurst Lane which was diverted when the railway was built. The land was examined where crossed by a pipeline and the surface was composed of compacted limestone cobbling with distinct rutting. No dateable material was recovered.
08	26233	18 th century Turnpike road, Cheddar to Wells	Road	A turnpike road of the Wells, Highbridge and Cheddar Trust. The road starts at the junction at ST450545, and follows the modern A371 through Cheddar. At Rodney Stoke, the turnpike ran along the lane north, via ST488499, to rejoin the main road at ST489497. The road terminated at the south east corner of St. Cuthbert's churchyard.
09	21933 LB II No. 268103	Manor Farmhouse, Stoke Street (North side), Rodney Stoke	Building	Farmhouse. Late 18 th century. Roughcast, slate roof, coped verges, 20 th century brick stacks. Plain symmetrical front; 3 storeys, 3 bays, sash windows with glazing bars, tripartite to outer bays, plain stone architraves. Central door opening, 6-panelled door, oblong fanlight, radiating glazing bars. Stair-Turret at rear.
10	21934 LB II No. 268104	Outbuilding to W of Manor Farmhouse, Stoke Street (North side) Rodney Stoke	Building	This building clearly enclosed part of the W wall of the outer court to the manor house, which stood to the NE. The precise function of this building is uncertain. N Pevsner (The Buildings of England: North Somerset and Bristol, 1958) suggests a summerhouse. Although there is no evidence for heating, it is possible that the upper room was used for meetings of the manorial court, for the accommodation of servants or guests: Collinson (History and Antiquities of Somerset, 1791) states that Maurice Rodney (who held the manor in the late C16) was "one of those good-minded hospitable gentry who benefited their neighbourhood by residence at their country house .. and was the first that gave liveries to his men in the reign of Queen Elizabeth".
11	18324	Pound, Wells Road, Rodney Stoke	Pound	Pound shown on Ordnance Survey map of c.1904. Structure still apparent on modern OS map.
12	18325	Baptist Chapel, Wells Road, Rodney Stoke	Baptist Chapel	'Baptist Chapel' shown on Ordnance Survey map of 1904. Now shown as 'Chapel Cottage', presumably a private dwelling.
13	19210	Dewpond, north of Wells Road, Rodney Stoke	Dewpond, Pond	A probable Post Medieval dewpond is visible as an earthwork on aerial photographs to the north of Wells Road, Rodney Stoke, centred at ST 4820 5068. The pond is sub-oval in form and measures 10m east to west by 8m north to south. The northern side of the pond is defined by a section of bank measuring 2m in width by 10m in length. The pond is located in the corner of a field, 36m from the conjunction of the field boundaries at the corner. A possible channel defined by a bank extends from ST 4820 5068 to ST 4822 5069. It may have been a feeder drain connected the pond to the field boundary, or be a partial field boundary. Dew ponds were constructed in areas where there was little running water and were principally filled by rainfall to provide water for livestock. The dewpond may have been constructed at the same time as the Post Medieval field boundaries, or the field walls may have been aligned on a pre-existing dewpond.
14	24302	Corn mill, Rodney Stoke	Documentary Evidence	'Corn mill' and 'Mill way' printed on OS 6" map. The site is indicated on the 1886 OS map as a 'Corn Mill' but was demolished c. 1960s and replaced by the house

				'Mill Haven'. There was a mill in Rodney Stoke in 1085, but it is not known if they are the same mill.
15	24278	Fishpond site, Manor Farm, Rodney Stoke	Documentary Evidence	The fishpond, shown on OS 25" map, has now been in filled.
16	28912	Watching brief (1998), pipeline, Rodney Stoke	Pipeline	700m of pipeline easement were monitored along the foot of the Mendip Hills. These revealed a peat filled channel associated with a stone-filled pit. A scatter of Roman and post medieval pottery and building material was recovered but it is believed that this was the result of manuring. At the east end a hollow way represented the course of Honeyhurst Lane before being moved when the railway was constructed. To the east of this, a structure visible on 1946 aerial photography was partly recorded. A scatter of prehistoric flint was also recovered from the East field.
17	12963	Cheddar Valley and Yatton Railway, Yatton to Wells	Railway	The Bristol and Exeter Railway obtained an act in 1864 for a branch line to Wells. This enters Somerset to the N of Axbridge. Work started in broad gauge in 1867 and reached Cheddar in 1869 and Wells in 1870. It was converted to standard gauge in 1874. The line was extended to join the East Somerset Line at Priory Road Station in 1878.
18	18323	Cemetery, Wells Road, Rodney Stoke	Cemetery	'Burial Ground' shown on OS map of c.1904. Still named as 'Cemetery' on modern map.
19	25865	Field System, Rodney Stoke	Field System	Apparent cultivation furrows, trackway and linear marks visible on aerial photograph.

TABLE 2: TABLE OF NEARBY HERITAGE ASSETS. MAP NUMBERS CORRESPOND WITH THE NUMBERS IN FIGURE 6 (SOURCE: SOMERSET HER).

3.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

The proposed development site is located to the north of Manor Farm and does not fall under the restrictions of the Mendip Conservation areas. The Somerset HER identifies that it was once the site of a Romano-British settlement, possibly a villa site, and in close proximity to possible Neolithic settlement activity. Later agricultural use of the site is linked to it being part of the lands of Manor Farm.

Within the proposed development site is a Romano-British settlement, likely a villa site, which has been identified by the substantial amount of pottery recovered during a fieldwalking survey. There is also the possibility of Prehistoric activity on the site due to its proximity to a Neolithic flint scatter. It would therefore be recommended that walkover and geophysical surveys be carried out, as a minimum, to understand the scale and extent of these. The potential of buried archaeology within the site is *high*.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The desk-based assessment has identified that there is a strong likelihood for the presence of archaeological deposits and potentially structures to exist buried on the site. There is artefactual evidence of Prehistoric activity in close proximity to the site, hinting at the possibility of features relating to this period. Further artefactual evidence indicates the presence of significant Romano-British settlement, most likely a high status building such as a villa, being located within the boundary of the development site. In the surrounding landscape, however, any evidence for these periods would appear to have been largely masked by Post-Medieval enclosure and activity.

There has been limited archaeological work carried out in and around Rodney Stoke, a result of limited modern development of the area. Post-medieval agricultural activity is likely to have caused some truncation of any archaeological deposits, the extent of this is at present unknown. The field appears to have been used primarily as pasture, so there is unlikely to be any significant build-up of post-medieval soils, unlike in some of the surrounding orchards.

Given the strong suspicion of the presence of a potentially regionally-important Romano-British villa on the site, and the site's proximity to a Neolithic flint scatter, it is deemed that the archaeological potential for site is *high*. Recommendation would therefore be for there to be, at a minimum, further assessment through walkover and geophysical surveys, with the provision for evaluation trenching and potential further works depending on the results of these initial surveys.

5.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY & REFERENCES

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<http://www.stleonardsrodneystoke.org/>

St. Leonards Church, Rodney Stoke 2016: *Rodney Family Monuments*

<http://www.stleonardsrodneystoke.org/>

Somerset Heritage Centre (South West Heritage Centre):

Inclosed Land Map c.1775 SHC D/P/rod.s

Rodney Stoke Tithe Map c.1840 SHC D/P/rod.s

Rodney Stoke Tithe Apportionment

Ordnance Survey First Edition map, published 1884

Ordnance Survey Second Edition map, revised 1902, published 1904



The Old Dairy
Hacche Lane Business Park
Pathfields Business Park
South Molton
Devon
EX36 3LH

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Email: mail@swarch.net