



# Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

## **WATCHING BRIEF: TOWN SQUARE/HIGH STREET MARKET HARBOROUGH LEICESTERSHIRE SEWAGE IMPROVEMENTS**

*on behalf of Anglian Water Services Ltd*



**Nigel Wilson HND AIFA**

**May 2005**

**ASC: 621/MHS/02**

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## Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	MHS	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	621
<i>County:</i>	Leicestershire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Market Harborough		
<i>District:</i>	Harborough		
<i>NGR:</i>	SP 738 872		
<i>Present use:</i>	Town centre/ Car park/ Memorial Gardens		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Sewage improvement works		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	n/a		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	n/a		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	December 2004 – April 2005		
<i>Client:</i>	Anglian Water Services C/O Atkins Water 280 Aztec West Park Avenue Almondsbury Bristol BS32 4SY		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Bill Irvine		
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## Internal Quality Check

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# CONTENTS

Summary ..... 4

1. Introduction ..... 4

2. Aims & Methods ..... 9

3. Archaeological & Historical Background ..... 10

4. Results. .... 12

5. Conclusions ..... 15

6. Acknowledgements ..... 16

7. Archive ..... 16

8. References ..... 17

## Appendices:

1. Monitoring Sheets ..... 18

## Figures:

1. General location ..... 3

2. Site plan ..... 6

3. Detail plan of the trench across the Commons Car Park..... 7

4. Detail plan of the trench leading southwards from th High Street ..... 8

5. Extract from the 1889 Ordnance Survey Map..... 11

6.

## Plates:

*Cover:* View across the Commons car park

1. Typical profile through the Commons car park ..... 13

2. The succession of 20<sup>th</sup> century High Stret surface and 19<sup>th</sup> century drain ..... 13

3. Typical profile seen between the High Stret and the Gardens of Remembrance ..... 14

4. The cut feature beside the river in the Gardens of Remembrance ..... 14

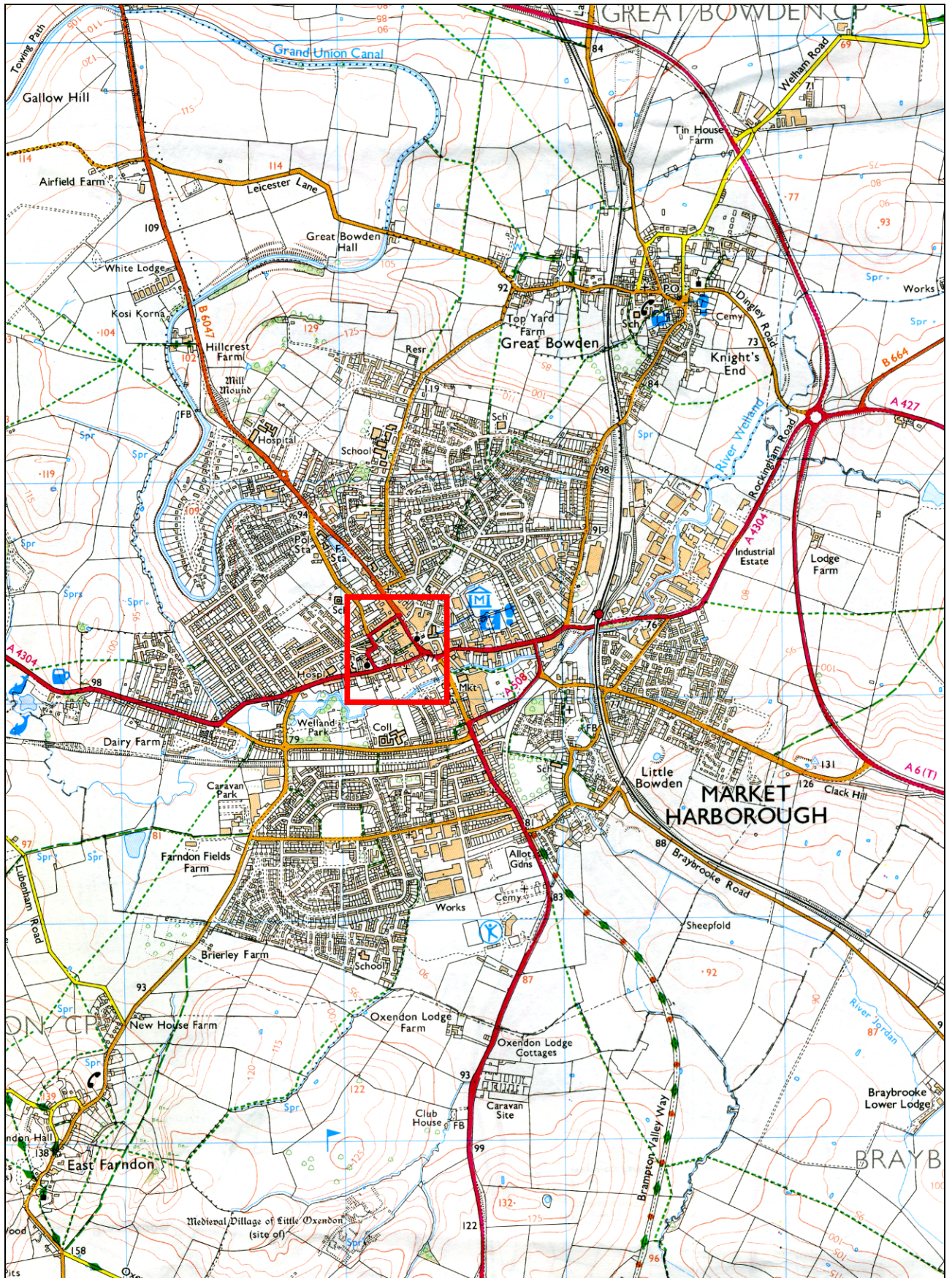


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

## Summary

*Between December 2004 and April 2005 a watching brief was undertaken during sewage improvement works comprising of two trenches located in the Town Square and the Commons car park areas of Market Harborough, Leicestershire.*

*Being in the centre of a historic market town it was considered possible that medieval and later remains could be exposed during the construction works. The top 1.0m of the trench across the car park comprised makeup material including modern brick and china. This makeup sat upon the natural clay. No evidence for earlier activity was seen in this area and it seems likely that it was not developed until relatively recently. Running across the High Street a series of earlier tarred surfaces were identified in the trench. The lowest of these surfaces was about 0.6m below the current surface thus clearly demonstrating that the level of the High Street has been raised considerably during the past 100 years. Below the lowest modern surface a narrow brick lined drain was covered with planks laid lengthways along it. At a similar level to the drain a 19<sup>th</sup> century leather shoe was observed but not kept due to its poor condition. No features earlier than the 19<sup>th</sup> century were observed during the watching brief.*

## 1 Introduction

1.1 Between December 2004 and April 2005 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC)* carried out a watching brief at Town Square and the Commons Car Park Market Harborough (NGR SP 738 872: Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by *Atkins Water* acting on behalf of *Anglian Water Services*, and was carried out according to a project design prepared by ASC (Fell 2004), and a brief (Clark 2004) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *Harborough District Council*, by their archaeological advisor (AA), *Leicestershire County Council*.

### 1.2 *Planning Background*

The watching brief was required because *Anglian Water Services* were constructing an improved sewerage scheme in the centre of Market Harborough and the works had the potential to damage or destroy significant archaeological remains.

### 1.3 *Location*

The site is located in Market Harborough, Leicestershire (Fig. 1). It is situated in the town centre and is centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference SP 734 872 (Fig. 2).

### 1.4 *Description*

Two areas of works were observed (Fig. 2):

- A new reinforced concrete overflow chamber was built over an existing sewer in Coventry Road at the entrance to The Commons car park. From this point a trench was excavated southwards for a new gravity sewer overflow pipe running c.140m to the south to attenuation tanks at the west end of the car park.

- A new sewer was constructed from an existing manhole adjacent to 28-32 High Street, across Town Square, through the Garden of Remembrance to the bank of the river Welland

### 1.5 *Geology & Topography*

As the site lies in an urban area the natural soils have not been mapped but it is likely that they would have been of the *Fladbury I Association*, namely river alluvium comprising stoneless clay (Soil Survey 1983, 812b). The alluvium is derived from the river Welland. This flows from west to east on the south side of the town centre and eventually drains into The Wash.



Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:5000)

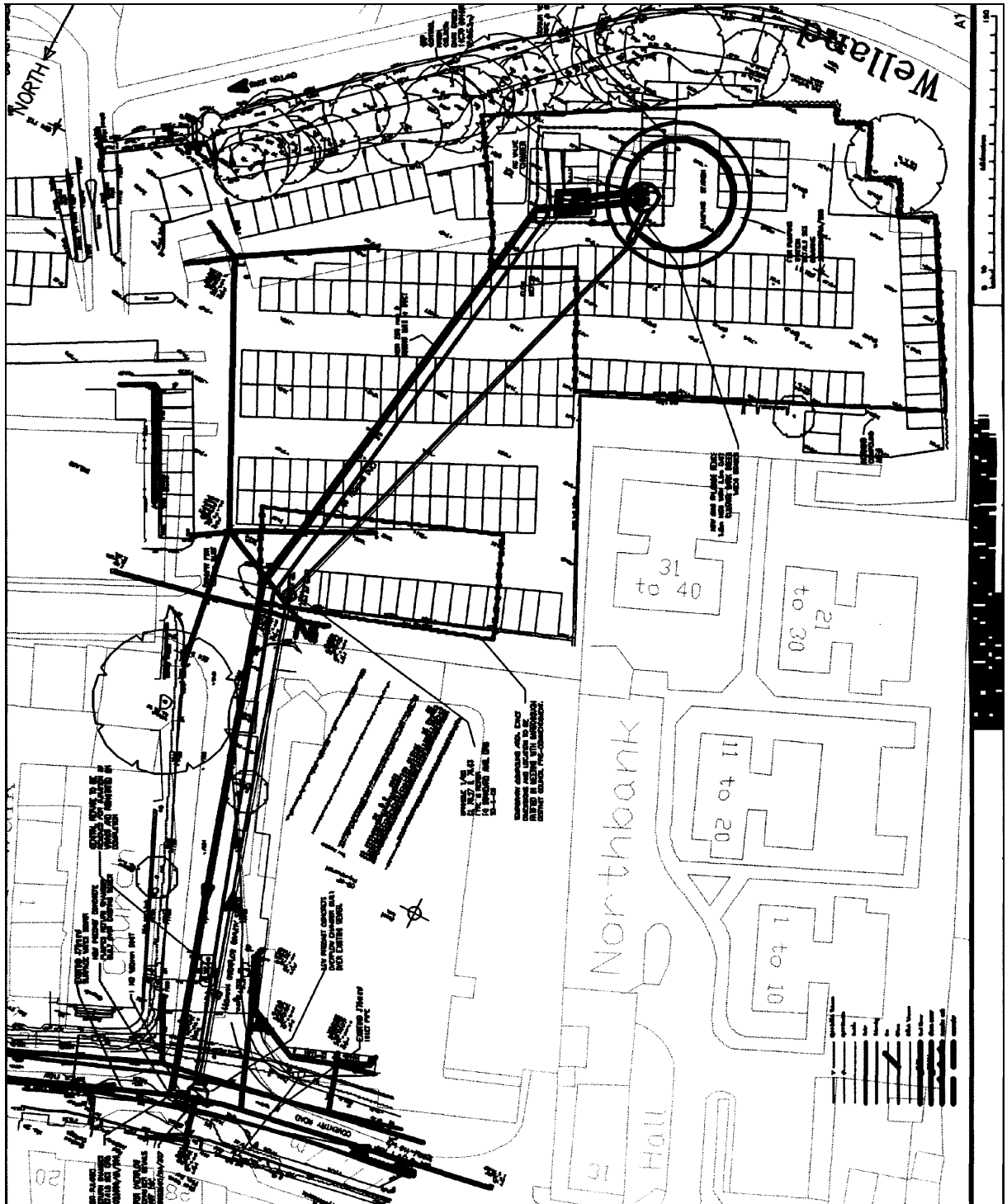


Figure 3: Detail plan of the trench across the Commons car park area (not to scale)



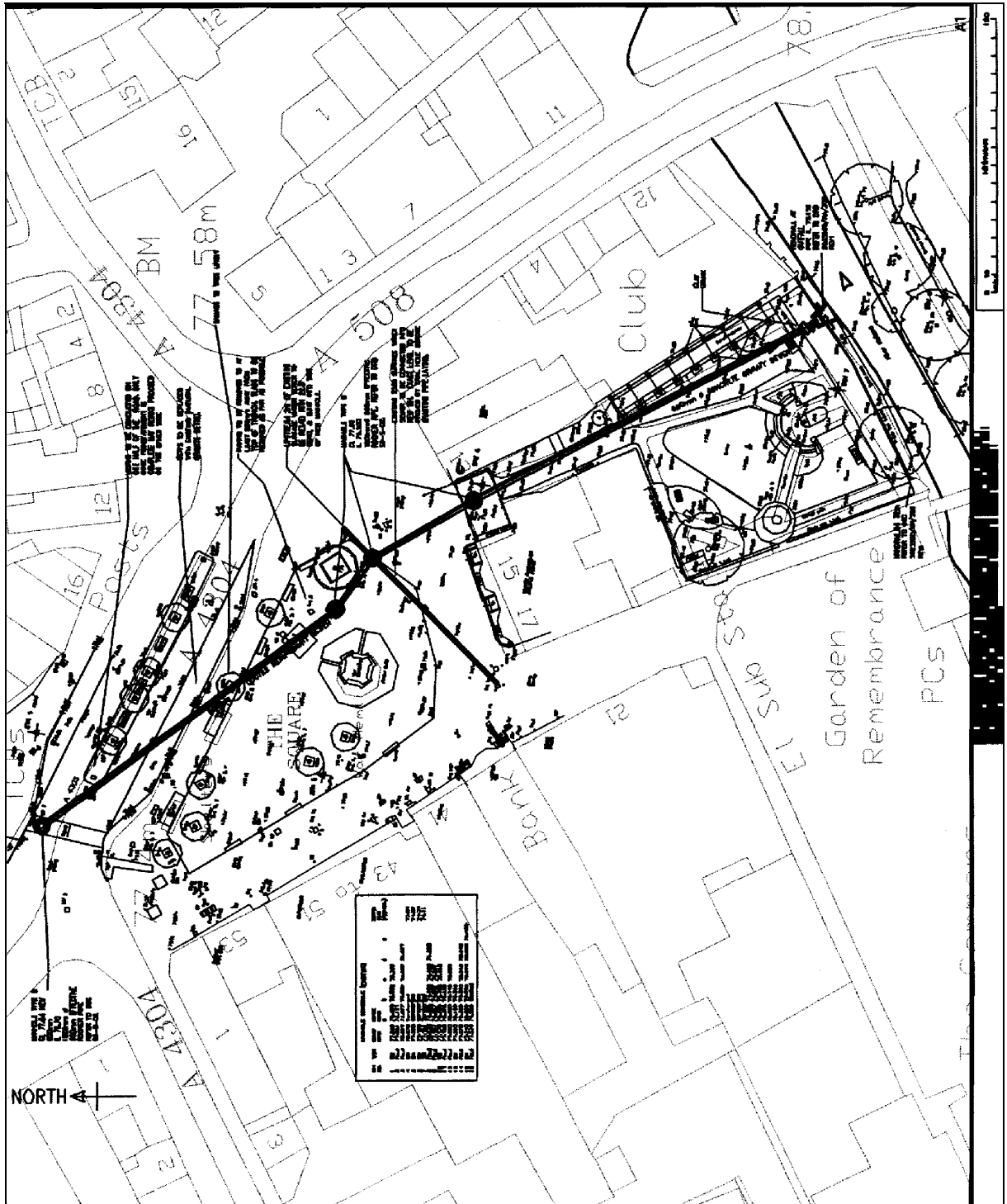


Figure 4: Detail plan of the trench leading southwards from the High Street (not to scale)

## 2 Aims & Methods

### 2.1 Aims

As described in the brief, the aims of the watching brief were:

- to consider the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains which are liable to be threatened by the works
- to produce an accurate and full record of the archaeology present, such that a permanent record will be made and the results presented in such a way that they may be re-examined and interpreted in the future.

### 2.2 Standards

The work conformed to the project design, to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000) and *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001), current guidelines for archaeological work in Leicestershire (LCC 1997) and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

### 2.3 Methods

The work was carried out according to the brief (Section 9.1), which required:

- An archaeological watching brief, involving monitoring by an experienced archaeologist of groundworks
- Provision for the archaeologist/s to record and excavate any archaeological features that were present
- A programme of post-fieldwork analysis, archiving and publication.

### 2.4 Constraints

All areas of the both pipelines were observed and no significant constraints were imposed on the observations.

### 3 Archaeological & Historical Background

Market Harborough is an area of considerable archaeological and historical importance. Little is currently known of the area where the works are to take place, but the area has the potential to reveal evidence of a variety of periods.

The town is situated in the valley of the river Welland. A wide range of archaeological sites of the prehistoric and Roman periods are known from the river valley, but little is known of these periods within the town centre

The name *Harborough* is first mentioned in the Pipe Roll for 1176-7 and the settlement probably developed as a planned town adjacent to the existing settlement of Great Bowden. The town paid 3 marks to have a market in 1202-3 but no grant of the market is known. The settlement was centred on a wide main Street (High Street and Town Square) with a river crossing to the south. A bridge was in existence by 1228.

Evidence of the early period of the town's development has been recorded in a number of areas adjacent to the site of the works, including School Lane where early medieval pottery (St Neots Ware) has been recorded. Further medieval archaeological remains have been recorded at the Peacock Hotel, to the east of the Town Square. A number of medieval buildings are also present in the area, notably 6 High Street, which is a medieval hall house.

The town developed during the later medieval and post-medieval periods due to its position as a crossing point on the river Welland. The present course of the river through the town centre is artificial and the river formerly ran immediately south of St Mary's Road. The river cut a new course to the south during the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the old course was in existence as a backwater in 1776.

A six-arched bridge had been built over the river by 1675 and this was replaced by new structure with three stone arches in 1814. The present concrete structure was built in 1957.

A number of coaching inns were constructed on the High Street following the turnpiking of the Northampton to Leicester road during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The economy developed further following the opening of the canal, on the north side of the town, in 1809 and the railway in 1850.

The core of the town retains much of its medieval form and the layout is illustrated on the 1889 Ordnance Survey Map (Fig. 5). The present Square at the south end of the High Street was formerly known as the *Sheep Market* and is labelled on the map.



## 4 Results

4.1 As described in Section 1 the watching brief comprised observations on two sewer pipe trenches (Fig 2).

### 4.2 *Commons car park area (Fig 3)*

This trench commenced at the junction with Coventry Road and ran southwards between the Coop store to the west and the access road to the Commons car park. On reaching the southern extent of the Coop it turned SW and headed directly across the car park to the new attenuation tanks. The trench was *c.*1.0m wide and up to 4.0m in depth. Below the modern surface there was *c.*1.0m of relatively recently deposited material (Plate 1). This material contained a high percentage of red machine made bricks (222x106x78mm). Below this layer the natural undisturbed yellow clay was observed to the base of the trench. This profile extended throughout the sewer trenches length and the large pit cut for the tanks at the western end of the car park. No material other than 19<sup>th</sup> century or later was observed during the cutting of this trench.

### 4.3 *High Street and Gardens of Remembrance (Fig: 4)*

This trench commenced at a manhole adjacent to 28-32 High Street and crossed the Town Square in southerly direction. On leaving the square the trench followed a narrow alleyway leading to the Garden of Remembrance where it continued its southerly course to the edge of the river. Through the Town Square the trench was *c.*1.0m wide and 1.3m deep. Below the modern surface a series of earlier surfaces were observed (Plate 2). The lowest tarmac surface was 0.6m below the modern surface. This seems a surprising build-up of level on the main street of a town in less than one hundred years.

Below the lowest identifiable surface further 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century dump materials were observed to a depth of *c.*1.2m below the current street level. A brick drain with a wooden cover ran from W to E across the trench: the top of the wood was *c.*0.9m below the modern surface. A highly decomposed leather shoe was also observed at this level but not retained due to its poor condition. Below 1.2m to the base of the trench the natural blue clay was exposed.

From where the trench entered the alleyway to its termination by the river the profiles observed in the trench sections were consistent, comprising of *c.*2m of modern re-deposited material including brick and slate overlying the natural clay. The southern extent of a shallow N - S brick footing was just clipped by the trench (Plate 3).

Immediately to the north of the river a small circular cut feature was exposed. This feature had been cut through the made ground and was *c.*1.0m in diameter. A pipe led off this feature to the river (Plate 4). No evidence survived to indicate that the sides of this feature had been lined. The north bank of the river had been reinforced by the construction of a brick revetment wall.



**Plate 1:** Typical profile through the Commons car park



**Plate 2:** The succession of 20<sup>th</sup> century High Street surfaces and 19<sup>th</sup> century drain



**Plate 3:** Typical profile seen between the High Street and the Gardens of Remembrance



**Plate 4:** The cut feature beside the river in the Gardens of Remembrance

## 5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The two trenches observed during the watching brief have demonstrated that much of the land close to the river in Market Harborough has been raised during the past 150 years. The first edition 6" Ordnance Survey map of 1889 shows the area now occupied by the Commons car park as open land leading down to the river. It is therefore likely that this land was not developed due to the high risk of flooding. When it was eventually developed during the 20<sup>th</sup> century the area was raised by c.1m, presumably to help alleviate the risk from flooding.
- 5.2 The earlier road surfaces seen in the trench crossing the High Street shows that the ground in this area has also been raised considerably since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Historically this part of the High Street comprised a large open space known as the Sheep Market. By 1889 this area was bounded by buildings on all sides except to the north. To the south of the southern houses the land was undeveloped down to the river. Sometime prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century at least one brick lined drain was constructed across the Sheep Market.
- 5.3 When the trench was opened through the Gardens of Remembrance the contractors suggested that the circular feature exposed next to the river may have been a well. However this seems unlikely as the river would have contaminated the water in the well, consequently the water could just as easily have been drawn straight from the river without having to dig a well. It is more likely that this feature was excavated for drainage purposes, during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- 5.4 Though no pre 19<sup>th</sup> century features were observed during the watching brief it is possible that further construction work along the High Street could disturb evidence of 19<sup>th</sup> century and earlier occupation.



## 6. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to Atkins Water for commissioning the watching brief on behalf of Anglian Water. We would also like to thank Chris Webb of AMEC for his onsite co-operation and all the other contractors involved in the project. Richard Clark, senior planning archaeologist of *Leicestershire County Council* acted as curatorial monitor.

The watching brief was under the overall management of Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA who also edited the report. The fieldwork was undertaken for *ASC Ltd* by David Fell, Dr Jonathan Hunn and Nigel Wilson,

## 7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Clients site plans
5. Site Monitoring Sheets
6. List of photographs/slides
7. Colour slides
8. B/W prints & negatives
9. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Leicestershire Museum, accession number X.A10.2006.

## 8. References

### *Standards & Specifications*

- Clark R 2004 *Brief for Archaeological Watching Brief at the Town Square, High Street & the Commons Car Park, Coventry Road, Market Harborough*. Leicestershire County Council
- EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. English Heritage (London).
- EH 2002 *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-Excavation*. English Heritage (London).
- Fell 2004 *Town Square/High Street Market Harborough Leicestershire Sewerage Improvements*. Project Design for Archaeological Watching Brief. ASC Ltd (Ref 621/MHS/01)
- IFA 2000a Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.
- IFA 2000b Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology*.
- IFA 2001 Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings, Finds)*.
- LCC 1997 *Guidelines & Procedures for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire & Rutland*. Leicestershire County Council Museums, Arts & Records Service, ref: OG/ARC/AG/11/08/97.

### *Secondary Sources*

- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpندن).

# Appendix 1: Monitoring Sheets



**A.S.C. LTD**

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project: Town Square, Market Harborough		Project No/Code: <b>621/MHS</b>		Sheet: <b>1 of 7</b>		
		Date of visit: 15/12/2004				
Client/Developer Anglian Water Services/ Atkins Water						
Site Contact: Chris Webb (AMEC)				Phone: 07973 37499		
<b>Duration of Visit (inc. travel):</b>		Start: 11:30		Finish: 14:30		
Completed by: JRH						
<b>Development Type:</b>						
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify):
<b>Site &amp; weather conditions:</b> Dull, overcast but dry (cold)						
<b>Observations:</b> Saw the deep concrete lined hole (20m deep) would not have been able to see this visibly.						
Saw north end of the trench with the junction with Coventry Street, some shoring. It was about 4m deep and 6m in length (photos taken) appeared to be cut into natural ground. No evidence for artefacts man made features. 1.2m of dark soil overlay natural blue clay						
<b>Comments:</b> Probably worth a visit towards the end of the week						
CW helpful and friendly						

For sketch plan, use reverse

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD**

Project: Town Square, Market Harborough		Project No/Code: <b>621/MHS</b>		Sheet: <b>2 of 7</b>		
		Date of visit: 17/12/2004				
Client/Developer Anglian Water Services/ Atkins Water						
Site Contact: Chris Webb (AMEC)			Phone: 07973 37499			
<b>Duration of Visit (inc. travel):</b>		Start: 14:00		Finish: 16:30		
Completed by: DF						
<b>Development Type:</b>						
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify):
<b>Site &amp; weather conditions:</b> Dull						
<b>Observations:</b> Continued monitoring the trench adjacent to Coventry Street. An additional 5m approximately excavated sections show only modern layers- makeup for road surfaces etc. 19 <sup>th</sup> century brick wall in west section Trench cut into natural clay No archaeological remain other than the brick wall						
<b>Comments:</b> Agree with Chris Webb that another visit will be made on 20 <sup>th</sup> or 21 <sup>st</sup>						

For sketch plan, use reverse

©ASC, 2004



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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD**

Project: Town Square, Market Harborough		Project No/Code: <b>621/MHS</b>		Sheet: <b>3 of 7</b>		
		Date of visit: 10/01/2005				
Client/Developer Anglian Water Services/ Atkins Water						
Site Contact: Chris Webb (AMEC)			Phone: 07973 37499			
<b>Duration of Visit (inc. travel):</b>		Start: 10:55		Finish: 14:05		
Completed by: NJW						
<b>Development Type:</b>						
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify):
<b>Site &amp; weather conditions:</b> Overcast dry/ damp						
<b>Observations:</b> In memorial gardens						
NW – SE trench 2.5m wide 6.5m from building.						
550mm dark topsoil removed onto pale yellow sand frequent fragments of brick depth of this deposit unknown as only the topsoil removed.						
Well close the river. No finds about 1.0m diameter not lined cut through disturbed ground to level of the river about 1.6 – 1.8m						
Brick revetment forms river bank						
Also observed small trench outside the coop. Shored up nothing to see except disturbed soil in first 0.75m						
<b>Comments:</b> Chris will let us know when they are opening further areas.						

For sketch plan, use reverse

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD**

Project: Town Square, Market Harborough		Project No/Code: <b>621/MHS</b>		Sheet: <b>4 of 7</b>		
		Date of visit: 12/01/2005				
Client/Developer Anglian Water Services/ Atkins Water						
Site Contact: Chris Webb (AMEC)			Phone: 07973 37499			
<b>Duration of Visit (inc. travel):</b>		Start: 11:30		Finish: 15:00		
Completed by: DF						
<b>Development Type:</b>						
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify):
<b>Site &amp; weather conditions:</b> Dull and overcast						
<b>Observations:</b> Bones are not human and comprise long bones of cow, horse and a small assemblage of smaller bones- possibly sheep. They were about 2m down but not from a sealed context (not retained) Excavation of the trench continues to north through the gardens Trench is c. 2.45m deep. At 2m below the surface natural undisturbed clay is reached. All upper deposits above natural comprise mixed re-deposited material loose dark greyish brown silty clay						
<b>Comments:</b> Responding to a phone call from Chris Web, who reported finding bones in the Memorial Gardens trench						

For sketch plan, use reverse

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD**

Project: Town Square Market Harborough		Project No/Code: <b>621/MHS</b>		Sheet: <b>5 of 7</b>		
		Date of visit: 14/01/2005				
Client/Developer Anglian Water Services/ Atkins Water						
Site Contact: Chris Webb (AMEC)			Phone: 07973 37499			
<b>Duration of Visit (inc. travel):</b>		Start: 14:40		Finish: 17:00		
Completed by: DF						
<b>Development Type:</b>						
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify):
<b>Site &amp; weather conditions:</b> Overcast						
<b>Observations:</b> Trench reached 23m north of the river						
Disturbed/ re-deposited soils continue various lenses tip lines etc visible in the sections. Several clay pipe stems visible in the sections (not retained)						
North east trench edge follows an obviously modern wall line Probably 19/ 20 <sup>th</sup> century and not archaeologically significant						
<b>Comments:</b> Further visit required next week						

For sketch plan, use reverse

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD**

Project: Town Square, Market Harborough		Project No/Code: <b>621/MHS</b>		Sheet: <b>6 of 7</b>		
		Date of visit: 19/01/2005				
Client/Developer Anglian Water Services/ Atkins Water						
Site Contact: Chris Webb (AMEC)			Phone: 07973 37499			
<b>Duration of Visit (inc. travel):</b>		Start: 13:30		Finish: 16:30		
Completed by: NJW						
<b>Development Type:</b>						
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify):
<b>Site &amp; weather conditions:</b> Dry and bright						
<b>Observations:</b> Trench 1.3m deep. Various earlier surfaces seen in the section. Lowest tarred surface 0.6m below the modern level. Blue clay at 1.3m. Brick drain\ culvert at 0.9m covered by a wood plank runs NE – SW across the trench. Also decomposing leather shoe. Most likely 19 <sup>th</sup> century.						
Work continues in the Memorial gardens. More of the same.						
<b>Comments:</b> Work on the High Street at junction with Coventry Road. Chris Webb will let us know when we need to come again.						

For sketch plan, use reverse

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD**

Project: Town Square Market Harborough		Project No/Code: <b>621/MHS</b>		Sheet: <b>7 of 7</b>		
		Date of visit: 05/04/2005				
Client/Developer Anglian Water Services/ Atkins Water						
Site Contact: Chris Webb (AMEC)				Phone: 07973 37499		
<b>Duration of Visit (inc. travel):</b>		Start: 13:00		Finish: 16:00		
Completed by: NJW						
<b>Development Type:</b>						
Footings	Services	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify):
<b>Site &amp; weather conditions:</b> Dry and overcast, some sunny patches						
<b>Observations:</b> Working in car park by the river. Trench open to a depth of about c.2.5m Tarmac surface 50mm, then brick hardcore to a depth of 0.8m (modern red machine made bricks 222 x 106 x 78mm) Below 0.8m yellow and grey clays to base of trench						
<b>Comments:</b> Chris Webb was not on site but I suspect no further visits required on this area will phone and check.						

For sketch plan, use reverse

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