

Asda PFS Bridgewater Somerset

Archaeological Watching Brief



for
RPS Planning and
Development

on behalf of
Asda Stores Ltd

CA Project: 5651
CA Report: 16207

June 2016



Asda PFS Bridgewater Somerset

Archaeological Watching Brief

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CA Report: 16207



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A	13 June 2016	Jonathan Orellana	Laurent Coleman	Internal review		Laurent Coleman

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SUMMARY

Project Name:	Asda PFS
Location:	Bridgewater, Somerset
NGR:	ST 30094 37219
Type:	Watching Brief
Date:	26 February- 8 April 2016
Planning Reference:	Sedgemoor District Council Ref. 08/14/00083
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with Somerset Heritage Centre
Site Code:	ASDA 16

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the construction of a Petrol Filling Station (PFS) at Asda, Bridgewater, Somerset.

A post-medieval boundary ditch and series of modern structures, probably associated with a workshop, were identified in the south-eastern part of the site.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Between February and April 2016 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for RPS Planning and Development, on behalf of Asda Stores Ltd at Asda PFS, Bridgwater, Somerset (centred on NGR: ST 30094 37219; Fig. 1). The watching brief was undertaken to fulfil a condition (no. 14) attached to planning consent for the construction of a petrol filling station (Sedgemoor District Council (SDC) Planning ref: 08/14/00083).

1.2 The *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) was produced by CA (2015) and approved by Steven Membery, Senior Historic Environment Officer, South West Heritage Trust (SWHT), the archaeological advisor to SDC. The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and guidance: Archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014). It was monitored by Bob Croft, including a site visit on 26 February 2016.

The site

1.3 The site is approximately 2500m² in extent and is located within a triangle-shaped parcel of land defined by East Quay (to the west), Carvers Road (to the east) and Watsons Road (to the south). The River Parrett is located immediately to the west of East Quay and the Asda superstore is immediately to the east of the site. The site lies at approximately 7m AOD.

1.4 The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as Mercia Mudstone Group - Mudstone and Halite-stone of the Triassic Period with overlying superficial deposits of Tidal Flat Deposits- Clay, Silt and Sand (BGS 2015). The natural substrate comprising bluish grey clay was identified towards the northern part of the site.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The site has been the subject of a *Heritage Statement* (RPS 2014), which is summarised here.

2.2 Bridgwater occupies the lowest crossing point of the River Parrett and is known to have been settled for c.1000 years. For much of the medieval period Bridgwater was a major port; however its influence waned in the post-medieval and modern periods as Bristol gained influence.

- 2.3 The site was thought to be located immediately outside the boundary of the medieval town, however Bridgewater is known to have had extra mural settlement and industrial activity, and it was considered possible that such activity extended into the site. The medieval town ditch around Bridgewater has not been located but it is thought that it may be located underneath Watsons Lane (immediately to the south of the site).
- 2.4 Late 19th and early 20th century mapping indicates that the site was used for small scale industrial activity, such as timber yards and coal yards and stables, along with some dwellings on the eastern side of the site fronting onto what is now Carvers Road. The site was subsequently cleared in the 1960s and redeveloped as a two-storey health centre and car park in the 1970s.
- 2.5 An archaeological evaluation of land immediately to the east of the site ahead of construction of the Asda superstore recorded no archaeological features or deposits pre-dating the modern era (Archaeological Investigations Ltd 2003).

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objectives of the archaeological works were:
- to monitor groundworks, and to identify, investigate and record all significant buried archaeological deposits revealed on the site during the course of the development groundworks;
 - at the conclusion of the project, to produce an integrated archive for the project work and a report setting out the results of the project and the archaeological conclusions that can be drawn from the recorded data.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2015). An archaeologist was present during intrusive groundworks (Fig. 2) comprising the



investigation of pile locations (Trenches 2-5) and the locations of new tanks (Trenches 1 & 6).

- 4.2 Where archaeological deposits were encountered written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.3 The archive and artefacts from the watching brief are currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the artefacts will be deposited with Somerset Heritage Centre, along with the site archive. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix A, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

5. RESULTS (FIGS 2-5)

- 5.1 This section provides an overview of the watching brief results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts, finds and bricks are to be found in Appendices B, C and D respectively.
- 5.2 The natural geological substrate consisting of bluish grey clay was revealed in the northern-most trench (T6) at an average depth of 1.8m below present ground level (bpgl). This was overlain by an alluvium deposit identified across the site that averaged 0.55m in thickness, which was in turn sealed by modern levelling deposits. No archaeological features or deposits were identified in Trenches 2-6.
- 5.3 A north/south aligned ditch, 107, was identified towards the southern edge of the site (Trench 1) cutting through alluvial layer 115. The ditch had steep sides and a concave base and measured 3.2m in width and 1.2m in depth (Fig. 5). Ditch 107 contained eight fills, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114 and 116. Pottery of post-medieval date was recovered from the fills 108, 109, 112 and 116 of ditch 107. The northern extent of the ditch could not be determined due to the identification of later structural remains (see below).
- 5.4 The corner of a building, 103, and a brick surface, 104, were also identified within the northern part of Trench 1. Wall 103 comprised irregular courses of red bricks bonded with limestone mortar. Brick surface 104 was observed overlying the latest

fill of ditch 107. The stratigraphic relationship between wall 103 and brick surface 104 was could not be identified due to modern truncation. However, they appeared to be broadly contemporary.

6. THE FINDS

6.1 Artefactual material recovered from the watching brief is listed in Appendix B and discussed further below.

Pottery

6.2 A total of eight sherds of pottery, weighing 841g, was recorded from six deposits (Appendix B). The material dates from the late post-medieval to early modern period, spanning the 18th and 19th centuries.

6.3 The majority of the assemblage (six sherds, 698g) comprises sherds in a clear lead glazed red earthenware fabric which probably dates to the 18th or 19th centuries. All in this fabric were recovered from ditch 107 (fills 108, 109, 112 and 116) and the sherds from fills 108 and 109 are of the same vessel (a large bowl or platter). The remaining two sherds of pottery derive from small Pearlware bowls each with transfer printed designs. The Pearlware vessels are dateable to the later 18th or 19th centuries.

Other finds

6.4 Two fragments of ceramic building material (CBM) were recorded from two deposits. One fragment of pan tile, dateable to the post-medieval period was recorded from ditch 107 (fill 108). One fragment of a Creamware blue/white decorative tile, probably dating to the 18th or early 19th centuries, was recorded from ditch 107 (fill 116). The reverse bears a painted mark, consisting of the numerals 13 and a crescent moon.

6.5 A total of 18 fragments (55g) of clay tobacco pipe were recorded from four deposits. These consisted of 19 stem fragments and seven bowl fragments. The six bowl fragments from ditch 107 (fill 109) are too fragmentary to assign to Oswald type, however the bowl from ditch 107 (fill 108) matches Oswald Type 22, which can be dated to c. 1730-80. Clay tobacco pipes more generally were in use from the late-16th to late-19th centuries.



- 6.6 One fragment of a green glass bottle, comprising the base and lower body, was recorded from ditch 107 (fill 113). The bottle is octagonal, blown in a mould and it dates to the 19th century. It features four vertical grooves on one face, probably indicating that it stored poisons or other chemist products.

Brick and mortar

- 6.7 Hand specimen visual analysis of the texture, colour and inclusion content of five whole bricks and associated mortar from the building, 103, and flooring, 104, within Trench 1 have identified 5 fabrics (4 fabrics and 1 sub-type) (Appendices C and D). Yellow mottled Clay from the Alluvial/Estuarine deposits of the River Parrett are used to a greater (Type 2 and Type 3) or lesser degree (Type 1; 4a; 4b) in all of the bricks. With the addition of red Keuper Clay from the underlying Permo-Triassic bedrock accounting for gradation of brick colour from yellow (little input) to red (higher proportion)
- 6.8 The walling, 103, is represented by low density machine made fired- bricks, representing either a red low calcareous fabric (1) or the high calcareous (2) variant. These are all machine made, fired and bonded in a dark grey-black sandy gravelly mortar typical of the late 19th to early 20th century.
- 6.9 The flooring pavers, 104–106, on the other hand are denser sun-dried (cracked) forms which on first appearance (irregular, thin) would suggest that they were much earlier. However, it seems more likely that these in fact are either contemporary or slightly pre-date (1820s-1900) the wall footings as sun-dried shrunken Bath-bricks were widely manufactured from the 1820s onwards in Bridgewater.

7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1 The north/south aligned ditch seems to be a boundary of post-medieval date according to the dating evidence recovered from its fills.
- 7.2 The structural features identified towards the southern edge of Trench 1, comprising the corner of a building and two surfaces, lie in the area of a dry dock and quay on the east bank of the River Parrett depicted on the 18th-century map of Bridgewater (Gathercole 2002). The construction methodology is entirely consistent with workshops and/or small-scale industrial activity.

8. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Dan Sausins, Paolo Guarino and Jonathan Orellana. The report was written by Jonathan Orellana. The finds report was written by Katie Marsden and the brick and mortar report was written by Kevin Hayward. The illustrations were prepared by Sam O'Leary. The archive has been compiled and prepared for deposition by Jessica Cook. The project was managed for CA by Laurent Coleman.

9. REFERENCES

British Geological Survey (1984) 1:50,000 Geological Map 295 (Taunton)

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APPENDIX A: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Asda PFS, Bridgewater, Somerset	
Short description	<p>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the construction of a petrol filling station at Asda PFS, Bridgewater, Somerset.</p> <p>A post-medieval boundary ditch and series of modern structures, probably associated with a workshop, were identified in the southern part of the site.</p>	
Project dates	26 February 2016 - 8 April 2016	
Project type	Archaeological Watching Brief	
Previous work	Heritage Statement (RPS 2014)	
Future work		
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Asda PFS, Bridgewater, Somerset	
Study area (M ²)	2500m ²	
Site co-ordinates	ST 30094 37219	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	N/A	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Laurent Coleman	
Project Supervisor	Dan Sausins	
MONUMENT TYPE		
	None	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS		
	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	Somerset Heritage Centre	Ceramics
Paper	Somerset Heritage Centre	Trench form, photo registers
Digital	Somerset Heritage Centre	Survey data, digital photos
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
<p>CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2016 <i>Asda PFS, Bridgewater, Somerset: Archaeological Watching Brief</i>. CA typescript report 16207</p>		

APPENDIX B: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth/thickness (m)	Spot-date
1	100	layer		Concrete				0.2	
1	101	layer		Levelling deposit	Fine orange gravel			0.1	
1	102	layer		Made ground	Mid brown silty clay with modern materials			0.3	
1	103	structure		Footings	Irregular course of red bricks		0.54	0.32	
1	104	structure		Surface	Regular course	2.9	2.1	0.1	
1	105	structure		Surface	Smoothed brick surface	1	1.1		
1	106	structure		Surface	Brick rubble and cobble surface	1.7	0.55		
1	107	Cut		Ditch	N/S aligned, step sides, concave base		3.2	1.2	
1	108	fill	107	Fill of ditch	Dark black grey silty clay				C18-19
1	109	fill	107	Fill of ditch	Dark black charcoal lens with orange mottling				C18-19
1	110	fill	107	Fill of ditch	Mid grey silt with brick rubble				
1	111	fill	107	Fill of ditch	Dark brown silty clay				
1	112	fill	107	Fill of ditch	Dark grey silty clay				LC18-C19
1	113	fill	107	Fill of ditch	Dark grey brown clay				LC18-C19
1	114	fill	107	Fill of ditch	Mid grey silty clay				
1	115	layer		Alluvium	Mid light grey clay			>0.5	
1	116	fill	107	Fill of ditch	Dark black clay silt				C18-19
2	200	layer		Concrete				0.2	
2	201	layer		Levelling deposit	Fine orange gravel			0.1	
2	202	layer		Made ground	Mid brown silty clay with modern materials			0.4	
2	203	layer		Reworked soil	Dark black clay with brick rubble			0.4	
2	204	layer		Alluvium	Mid grey clay			>0.5	
3	300	layer		Concrete				0.2	
3	301	layer		Levelling deposit	Fine orange gravel			0.1	
3	302	layer		Made ground	Mid brown silty clay with modern materials			0.4	
3	303	layer		Reworked soil	Dark black clay with brick rubble			0.4	
3	304	layer		Alluvium	Mid grey clay			>0.5	
4	400	layer		Concrete				0.2	
4	401	layer		Levelling deposit	Fine orange gravel			0.1	
4	402	layer		Made ground	Mid brown silty clay with modern materials			0.4	
4	403	layer		Reworked soil	Dark black clay with brick rubble			0.4	
4	404	layer		Alluvium	Mid grey clay			>0.5	
5	500	layer		Concrete				0.2	
5	501	layer		Levelling deposit	Fine orange gravel			0.1	
5	502	layer		Made ground	Mid brown silty clay with modern materials			0.3	
5	503	layer		Reworked soil	Dark black clay with brick rubble			0.4	
5	504	layer		Alluvium	Mid grey clay				
6	600	layer		Made ground	Dark blackish grey sandy clay			0.65	
6	601	layer		Alluvium	Dark grey silty clay			0.55	
6	602	layer		natural substrate	Firm bluish grey clay				

APPENDIX C: THE FINDS

Table 1: finds concordance

Context	Class	Description	Ct.	Wt.(g)	Spot-date
108	post-medieval-modern pottery	glazed earthenware	1	169	C18-19
	coal		1	10	
	clay tobacco pipe	bowl and stem	1	9	
	CBM	pan tile	1	351	
109	post-medieval-modern pottery	glazed earthenware	1	43	C18-19
	clay tobacco pipe		7	16	
110	clay tobacco pipe	stems	2	8	
112	post-medieval-modern pottery	glazed earthenware	1	66	LC18-C19
	clay tobacco pipe	stems	8	22	
113	post-medieval-modern pottery	pearl ware	1	89	LC18-C19
		glazed earthenware	1	45	
	industrial waste		1	1	
	modern glass	bottle	1	71	
114	post-medieval-modern pottery	Pearl ware	1	54	
116	post-medieval-modern pottery	glazed earthenware	2	375	C18-19
	CBM	tin glazed tile	1	122	

APPENDIX C: BRICK AND MORTAR

INTRODUCTION

A small group of 5 mainly whole bricks and associated mortar (10903g) were retained from the corner of a structure together and associated floor surfaces of Trench 1 from the Asda PFS Bridgewater Somerset Archaeological Watching Brief (ASDA16) NGR ST 30094 37219. These were assessed macroscopically in order to:

Provide a brief overview of the condition fabrics, form and dimensions of the bricks and ascertain whether any of these relate to the types of bricks described in the burgeoning 18th–early 20th century brick and tile industry at Bridgewater, including the alluvial “Bath Bricks” (Ussher 1908, 95-97; Edmonds & Williams 1985,68) and Red marls of the Permo-Trias Mercia Mudstone group.

Ascertain whether certain bricks and associated mortar recipes are diagnostic of a particular historical period and can therefore be used as reliable dating indicators for the workshop as set out in the brief (Orellana 2016)

Production of a catalogue (Brick and Mortar Catalogue Bridgewater.doc) which accompanies this document

METHODOLOGY

One box of 4 whole brick and one part brick samples were weighed (Satorius AG Gottingen Electronic Scales) and analysed using a hand lens (Gowland x10) during April 2016. Each sample underwent further visual analysis using a long armed (Leica L2) binocular microscope to determine the basic brick ingredients, whilst the texture, angularity, sorting and colour of the brick were assessed with the aid of a Munsell Colour Chart (Munsell Color Group1975). The mortar recipe (where present) that was attached to the brick was described in a similar way.

Consultation of the local geological memoir (Ussher 1908; Edmonds & Williams 1985) and associated 1:50,000 map (BGS Sheet 295 - Taunton) provided background to the local geology from this part of Somerset as well as the types of bricks being produced in Bridgewater around the turn of the century.

GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The underlying geology of this part of Somerset is dominated by Permo-Triassic red marls and silts of the Mercia Mudstone Group (formerly the (Upper) Keuper Marls. No outcrops are exposed in the Bridgewater area as the alluvial clays (up to 10m thick) of the River Parrett mask the underlying bedrock (Edmonds & Williams 1985, 42). A sequence of red cuboidally splitting fine marls and fine siltstones from the Permo-Triassic are only revealed in boreholes e.g. NGR 3082 3635 (Edmonds & Williams 1985, 42). Both the alluvium and underlying Keuper Marls had been used as clay for the very large 19th century brick and tile industry in Bridgewater. The alluvial clays were sun dried into small Bath-bricks and widely exposed. These were manufactured annually in quantities as large as 24 million examples (Edmonds & Williams 1985, 68). The Keuper Marls on the other hand were mainly manufactured as an additive or mixture to the alluvial clays as these often contracted (Ussher 1908, 96).

RESULTS

Construction Bricks

Two fabrics where firing has obliterated much of the primary mudstone fabric were identified at ASDA16.

FABRIC TYPE 1 (1875-1950)

Abundant small white-cream calcareous inclusions "speckled" set in a pale red-brown 5YR 7/3 to yellow-brown – fawn coloured matrix with occasional coal fleck.

Identified in a machine-made (well-fired) unfrosted brick, with sharp arises from the footings of the structure in Trench 1 [103], this low density, open textured brick has a fine consistent moulding sand all over, with scrape marks on the underside of the brick. This and the fact that it is bonded with a dark grey-black (5Y 3/1) coalified, concretionary low density mortar is indicative of a late 19th to early 20th century manufacture. Machine made pressed bricks are only produced in any quantity in the final quarter of the 19th century, whilst concretionary fine and gravel mortars, many of which were patented in the early 19th century only become to be widely used in the later Victorian period when the demand for robust, often waterproof recipes became necessary in industrial/commercial properties.

FABRIC TYPE 2 (1875-1950)

A cream-yellow 2.5Y 8/2 coloured fabric. Containing small quantities of red-brown silt, slightly more quartz rich than other example from 103, and small hollows of dissolved calcite ill-defined possible shell.

A second machine-made (well-fired) unfrosted brick, with sharp arises was identified from the footings of the structure 103 in Trench 1. This too was a low-density, open textured brick fine consistent moulding sand and scrape marks on the underside and had the same dark grey-black coalified, concretionary low density mortar is indicative of a late 19th to early 20th century manufacture.

The difference lies in its cream-yellow colour, indicative of high calcareous content and probably derived from the alluvial or estuarine clays with abundant shelly debris of the Parrett. Similar, albeit much darker yellow bricks were dug from the Medway estuary for use in London at this time. Red fabric Type 1 which only contains speckled calcareous inclusions is likely to have had additives of red mud and silt from the underlying Mercia Mudstone Group.

Flooring Bricks

Three brick fabrics, without mortar, used in the flooring surfaces 104, 105 and 106 of the workshop building from Trench 1 have an entirely different origin. These were all hand moulded bricks, manufactured from alluvial clays of the River Parrett and dried in the sun. Collectively termed "Bath-bricks" s with varying proportions or inclusions of the underlying red Keuper Marl (Mercia Mudstone Group). They are much denser (and more resistant) than the construction bricks and as such present a durable resistant surface suitable for an industrial workshop. They were central to the industrial production and supply of bricks from Bridgewater from 1820s onwards. (Ussher 1908).

FABRIC TYPE 3 (1820s-1920)

Denser busy mottled maroon-cream yellow 5YR 7/4 earthy fabric. Fresh surface pale cream surface pitted with numerous small (probable fluvial) gastropod and bivalve shells) and occasional ovoid 8-10mm pink muddy to silty rock inclusions.

The irregular size and shape of this brick from the brick surface 104, as well as its shallow depth (45mm) would suggest that the bricks could be early post medieval or medieval as with the estuarine bricks from Essex (Ryan 1996). However there are two reasons why the bricks from Bridgewater are in fact much later (Victorian). First is the fact that their sun dried manufacture (typical of Bath-bricks from the 1820s onwards) creates a rather crinkly, cracked appearance. Second both this as well as the two examples from 105 to 106 are flooring bricks termed pavers that tended to be manufactured/shaped as flatter elements.

This most yellow of the Bath-bricks – contains the highest proportion of shelly inclusions, with only small additives of red mudstone and siltstone from the Keuper Marl.

FABRIC TYPE 4a (1820s-1920)

Earthy mottled orange-maroon 5YR 6/8 to cream yellow fabric. Fresh surface contains less shell than 104 and more silty rock inclusions. And one large white calcite inclusion 10mm.

A slightly thicker (68mm) brick from floor surface 105 this too is sun-dried as it has extensive mud cracking. The difference between it and 104 lies in the much greater proportion of Keuper Marl additive (red marl) inclusions. Slag on the underside suggest that the floor was associated with iron manufacture or some other related industrial process.

FABRIC TYPE 4b (1820s-1920)

Earthy orange-maroon 5YR 6/6 fabric. Fresh surface contains less shell than [105] and more red silty and some grey-brown sandy rock inclusions large white calcite inclusion 10mm

Merely a colour variant of type 4a, part of thick (70mm) possibly reused paving brick identified from a brick and cobble paved surface 106 is a third example of a sun-dried brick. A darker orange fabric, its colour reflects a much higher additive of Keuper Marl clay. As with 105 the underside of the brick had slag which again suggested that the floor was associated with iron manufacture or some other related industrial process involving high temperatures.

APPENDIX D: BRICK AND MORTAR CATALOGUE

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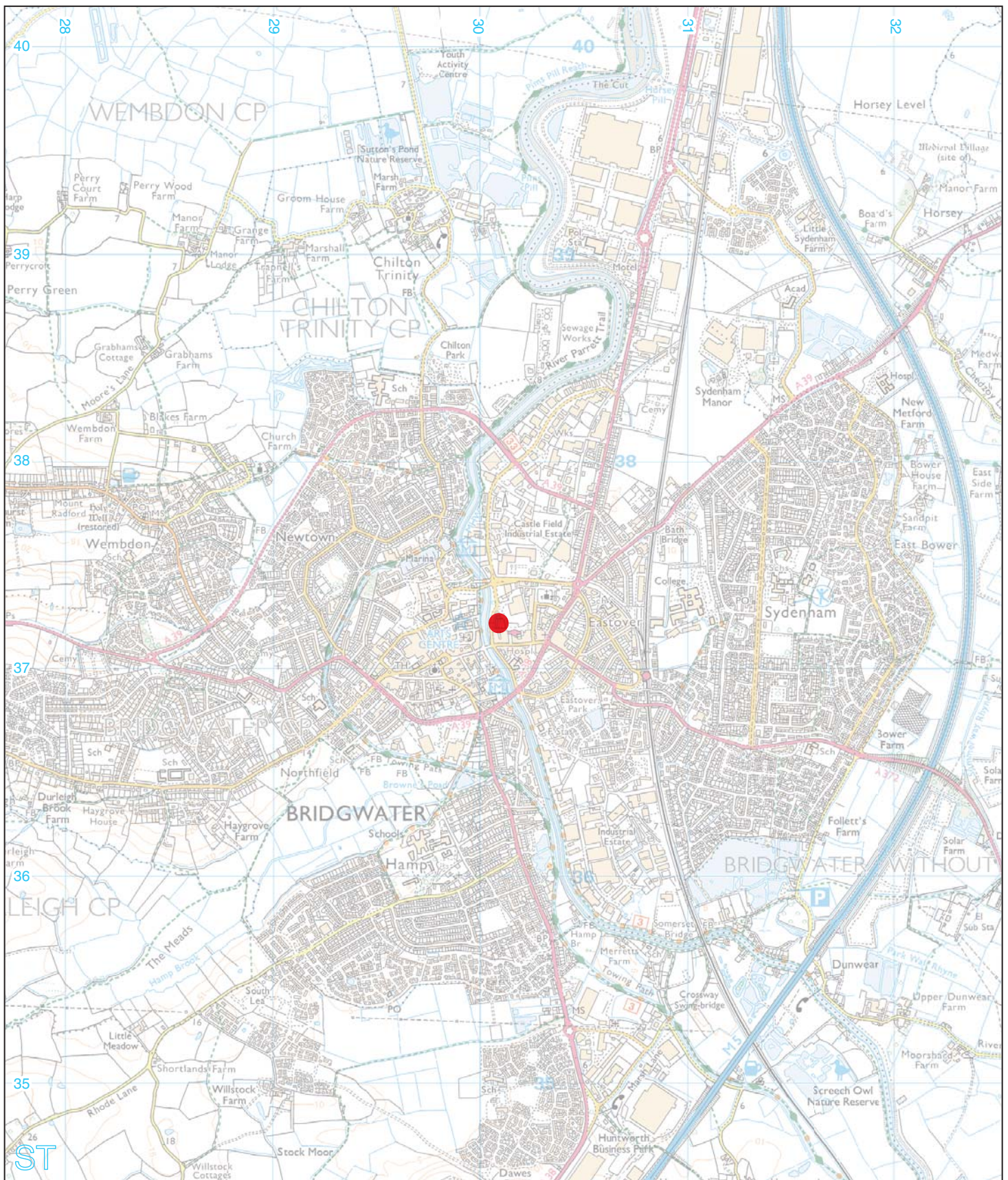
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PROJECT TITLE
 Asda PFS, Bridgwater, Somerset

FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan



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DRAWN BY	SO	PROJECT NO.	5651	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	AO	DATE	21/04/2016	
APPROVED BY	LEEC	SCALE@A4	1:25,000	1

37250

30075

30100

30125

37225








37200



EAST QUAY

CARRIERS ROAD

WATSONS LANE

-  site boundary
-  observed groundworks
-  excavated intervention
-  base of feature
-  archaeological feature
-  structural feature
-  modern

0 10m

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PROJECT TITLE
Asda PFS, Bridgwater, Somerset

FIGURE TITLE
The site showing location of observed groundworks and archaeological features

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CHECKED BY	AO	DATE	21/04/2016	2
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ST



3



4

3 General view of the structures looking south (scale 1m)

4 Wall 103 and surface 104 looking south-east



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Photographs

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3 & 4



5

5 Ditch 107, looking south (scale 1m)



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PROJECT TITLE

Asda PFS, Bridgwater, Somerset

FIGURE TITLE

Photograph

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FIGURE NO.

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