

# Castle Way Taunton Somerset

## *Archaeological Evaluation*



*for*  
Pegasus Group and  
Harlequin Group Ltd

*on behalf of*  
Openreach

CA Project: 880144  
CA Report: 16498

October 2016



Castle Way  
Taunton  
Somerset

Archaeological Evaluation

CA Project: 880144  
CA Report: 16498



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C	10 November 2016	Simon Sworn	Derek Evans	Client review (2)	Revisions to paras. 4.1, 5.2 & 5.5 in line with client comments	John Dillon

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## SUMMARY

<b>Project Name:</b>	Castle Way
<b>Location:</b>	Taunton, Somerset
<b>NGR:</b>	ST 22567 24528
<b>Type:</b>	Evaluation
<b>Date:</b>	5 September 2016
<b>Location of Archive:</b>	To be deposited with the Somerset Museums Service
<b>Site Code:</b>	CWTS 16

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in September 2016 at Castle Way, Taunton, Somerset. The site is within the bounds of Taunton Castle Scheduled Monument. A single trench was excavated.

The evaluation recorded a pit and a grave at a depth of 0.6m below the present ground level. This indicates that the site is within the bounds of a Saxon cemetery which pre-dated Taunton Castle and which is known from previous archaeological works in the area.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In September 2016, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for Pegasus Group and Harlequin Group Ltd, on behalf of Openreach, at Castle Way, Taunton, Somerset (centred on NGR: ST 22567 24528; Fig. 1).
- 1.2 Castle Way lies within part of a Scheduled Monument (National Heritage List Ref. 1013541: Shell keep castle, part of the associated outer bailey, ninth century cemetery and a Civil War siegework at Taunton Castle). A Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) application has been made for the installation of two DSLAM/PCP119 cabinets at the site. The new PCP119 cabinet has already been installed, along with an associated (and immediately adjacent) manhole containing the plastic ducting which will be used to run future cables into the PCP119 cabinet. This evaluation was requested by Mel Barge (Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Historic England) in order to inform an archaeological assessment of the impact of the new cabinets and ducting on the Scheduled Monument. The evaluation was undertaken as a Class 7 Consent under the existing SMC application.
- 1.3 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by CA (2016) and approved by Hugh Beamish (Assistant Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Historic England). The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014), *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) PPN 3: Archaeological Excavation* (Historic England 2015) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (Historic England 2015).

### **The site**

- 1.4 Castle Way is a short, north-north-west/south-south-east aligned thoroughfare in the centre of Taunton. The evaluation trench was excavated across the width of the pavement on the western side of Castle Way, adjacent to the newly-installed PCP119 cabinet (Fig. 2).
- 1.5 The solid geology of the site is mapped as Mercia Mudstone Group of the Triassic Period, overlain by alluvial clays, silts, sands and gravels (BGS 2016).

## **2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Castle Way lies within part of a Scheduled Monument (National Heritage List ref. 1013541: Shell keep castle, part of the associated outer bailey, ninth century cemetery and a Civil War siegework at Taunton Castle). The following section is summarised from the details included in the National Heritage List entry.
- 2.2 Taunton had a Minster from at least AD 904. The exact location of this church building is unknown, but it is thought to have stood within the area of the later outer bailey (see below). Previous archaeological investigations at Castle Green, which lies to the immediate north-east of Castle Way, have recorded burials dating to the 9th–11th centuries and it is likely that these lay within the Minster cemetery (Somerset Historic Environment Record Refs. PRN 44397 and PRN 44407).
- 2.3 The existing fabric of the castle dates from the 13th century, although it is thought to have developed from an earlier motte and bailey castle. The castle site was defined by an external moat, which enclosed two areas: an inner ward to the north and a larger outer bailey to the immediate south. Castle Way is within the area of the former outer bailey.
- 2.4 The outer bailey is known from historical sources to have accommodated storage facilities and various auxiliary buildings, including apartments and chambers, barns, a cowshed, a chapel, stables, a dairy, a dovecote, a press and a store for surplus building materials. The area of the outer bailey is now extensively built over; however, the foundations and lower levels of internal structures, together with other features such as pits and postholes and the outer ditch, are likely to survive as buried deposits.

## **3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- 3.1 The objective of the evaluation was to provide more information about the nature and significance of the archaeological resource within the site, in order to inform an archaeological assessment of the impact of the new cabinets and ducting on the Scheduled Monument.



## 4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The evaluation comprised the excavation of a single trench across the width of the pavement, immediately adjacent to the newly-installed PCP119 manhole (Fig. 2). The trench measured approximately 2.6m by 2.4m in plan. It was not possible to excavate the trench immediately adjacent to the PCP119 cabinet itself (as specified in the WSI (CA 2016)) due to the presence of this manhole. The small area to the immediate west of the manhole (between the manhole and the adjacent building) was not excavated due to constricted space; it is anticipated that most of this area would have been disturbed by the construction cut for the building and the continuation of the ceramic drains recorded in the western side of the trench (see Section 5, below).
- 4.2 Modern overburden was removed from the trench using a mechanical excavator. All machining was conducted under constant archaeological monitoring and ceased when the first significant archaeological horizon was revealed. Where archaeological deposits were encountered, they were investigated and recorded by hand in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.3 Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 2: The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites*. No deposits were identified that required sampling. All recovered artefacts were processed in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 3: Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation*.
- 4.4 The project archive is currently held by CA. The artefacts (subject to the agreement of the legal landowner) and the archive will be deposited with the Somerset Museums Service. A summary of information from this project, as set out in Appendix C, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

## 5. RESULTS

- 5.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results. Detailed summaries of the recorded contexts and finds are to be found in Appendix A and Section 6, respectively. Figures 3 and 4 present a plan, section and photographs of the trench and the recorded features.

- 5.2 The natural mudstone substrate was exposed in the trench at a depth 0.6m below present ground level and was cut by possible sub-oval pit 108 (unexcavated). Possible pit 108 was truncated by north/south aligned grave 106, which contained the remnants of a human burial. As per the WSI (CA 2046), this burial was not excavated but was cleaned and recorded in plan and left *in situ*. The bones had been disturbed (apparently in antiquity) and the majority were absent; however, the right ulna and radius were present (and appeared to be articulated), as well as a fragment of the cranium and the proximal end of the right femur.
- 5.3 The grave was sealed by 0.15m of reddish brown clayey sand 102, which may represent buried topsoil. Four sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from this deposit.
- 5.4 Layer 102 was sealed by a 0.35m-thick layer of redeposited natural mudstone 101. Due to the limited area of investigation, it was unclear if layer 101 derived from the upcast of an adjacent feature or from deliberate efforts to raise the ground level in this location. This layer was undated artefactually.
- 5.5 The layers described above had been disturbed by a ceramic storm drain, an electric cable and the new PCP119 manhole. The manhole also cut down through layers 101 and 102 to truncate the northern end of grave 106. The manhole was opened and was observed to extend well below the base of the evaluation trench; it had had therefore been excavated through the layers and the grave and into the natural substrate.
- 5.6 The trench was sealed by the existing pavement and associated make-up layers.

## 6. THE FINDS

- 6.1 The artefactual material recovered during the evaluation is summarised below; further details are given in Appendix B.

### **Pottery**

- 6.2 Four body sherds (43g), representative of parts of two vessels, were recorded from buried soil layer 102. The condition is good; the surfaces are unabraded and three



sherds preserve an external carbonaceous residue suggestive of use as a cooking vessel. All sherds occur in the same unglazed coarseware fabric. The primary inclusion of this fabric is well-rounded quartz and there are lesser quantities of ironstone and angular chert. As such, the fabric compares with the chert-tempered wares common to the Somerset and East Devon areas and likely produced in the Blackdown Hills of south Somerset. Broad dating across the 12th to 14th centuries is suggested on this basis.

## 7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1 The evaluation recorded a pit and a grave at a depth of 0.6m below the present ground level. This indicates that the site is within the bounds of a Saxon cemetery which pre-dated the castle and which is known from previous archaeological works in the area (see *Archaeological background*, above). The burial had been partially truncated by the manhole associated with the new PCP119 box.

## 8. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Simon Sworn. The report was written by Simon Sworn. The finds report was written by Jacky Somerville. The illustrations were prepared by Lorna Grey. The archive has been compiled and prepared for deposition by Jessica Cook. The project was managed for CA by Derek Evans.

## 9. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2016 *Geology of Britain Viewer* <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>  
Accessed 26 August 2016

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2016 *Castle Way, Taunton, Somerset: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*



## APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

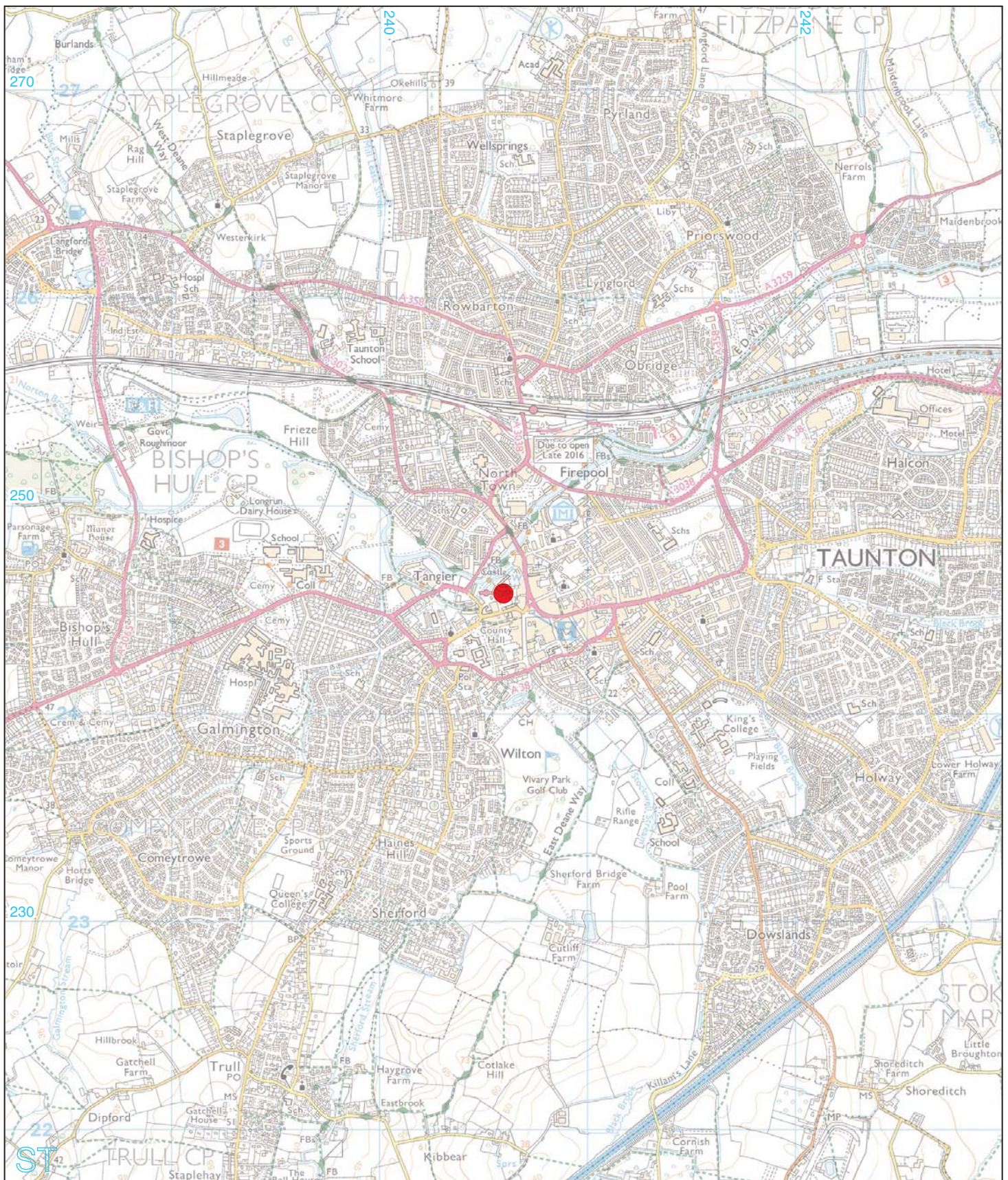
Trench no.	Context	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Context description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth/thickness (m)	Spot date
1	100	Layer		Modern pavement	Concrete paving slabs and tarmac surface on a sand bedding			0.12	
1	101	Deposit		Redeposited natural	Compact brownish red mudstone with occasional sub-angular stones and charcoal flecks			0.35	
1	102	Layer		Buried soil horizon	Loose reddish brown clayey sand with frequent small sub-rounded pebbles and occasional charcoal flecks			0.15	Medieval
1	103	Deposit		Natural	Compact reddish brown mudstone				
1	104	Fill	106	Grave fill	Loose mid red brown clayey sand with occasional charcoal flecks and disarticulated human bone				
1	105	Burial	106	Human burial	North/south aligned, extended, supine. Lower part truncated. Heavily disturbed. Cranium, R ulna, R radius and R femur head visible				
1	106	Cut		Grave cut	Heavily truncated north/south cut with steep sides. Not fully excavated	>1.5	>0.6	>0.1	
1	107	Fill	108	Pit	Loose mid reddish brown silty sand with occasional charcoal and sub-rounded stones	0.58	0.5	U	
1	108	Cut		Pit	Truncated ovoid pit, extended north/south	0.58	0.5	U	
1	109	Fill	109	Construction backfill	Loose brick and rubble deposit				
1	110	Cut		Modern construction cut	North/south aligned construction cut for building to west. Steep sides, not fully excavated	>2.4	>0.52	>0.3	

**APPENDIX B: THE FINDS**

<b>Context</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Ct.</b>	<b>Wt.(g)</b>	<b>Spot-date</b>
102	Pottery	Ch	6	43	C12-C14

## APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project Name	Castle Way, Taunton, Somerset: archaeological evaluation	
Short description	<p>An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in September 2016 at Castle Way, Taunton, Somerset. A single trench was excavated.</p> <p>The evaluation recorded a pit and a grave at a depth of 0.6m below the present ground level. This indicates that the site is within the bounds of a Saxon cemetery which pre-dated the castle and which is known from previous archaeological works in the area.</p>	
Project dates	5 September 2016	
Project type	Field evaluation	
Previous work	None	
Future work	Unknown	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
Site Location	Castle Way, Taunton, Somerset	
Study area (M <sup>2</sup> /ha)	6.24m <sup>2</sup>	
Site co-ordinates	ST 22567 24528	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	Historic England	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Derek Evans	
Project Supervisor	Simon Sworn	
<b>MONUMENT TYPE</b>		
	None	
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS</b>		
	None	
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVES</b>		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	Somerset Museums Service	Ceramics
Paper	Somerset Museums Service	Trench record sheets, survey sheets, site drawings
Digital	Somerset Museums Service	Database, digital photos
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
Cotswold Archaeology 2016 <i>Castle Way, Taunton, Somerset: Archaeological Evaluation</i> CA typescript report <b>16498</b>		



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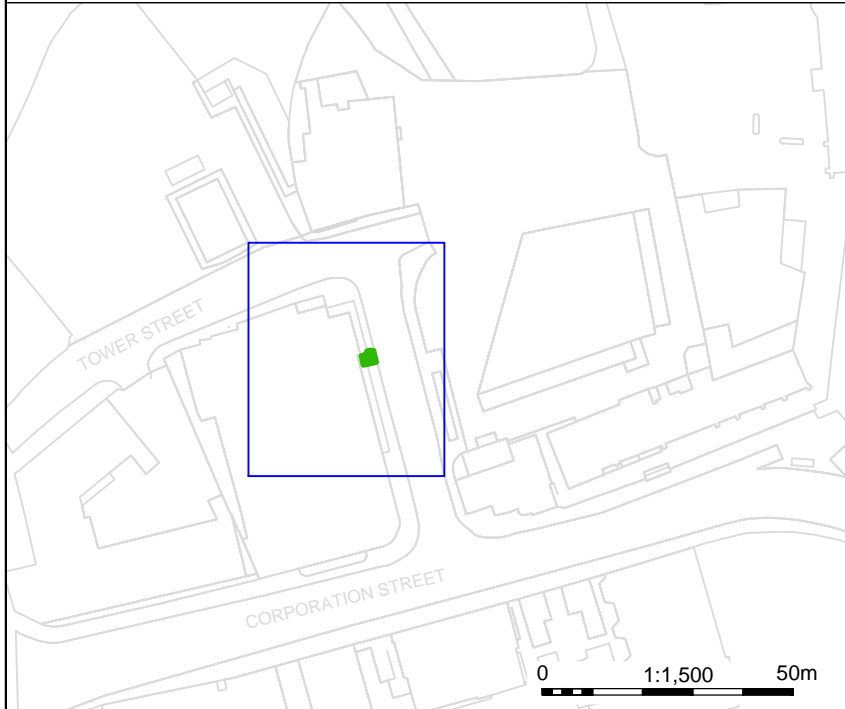
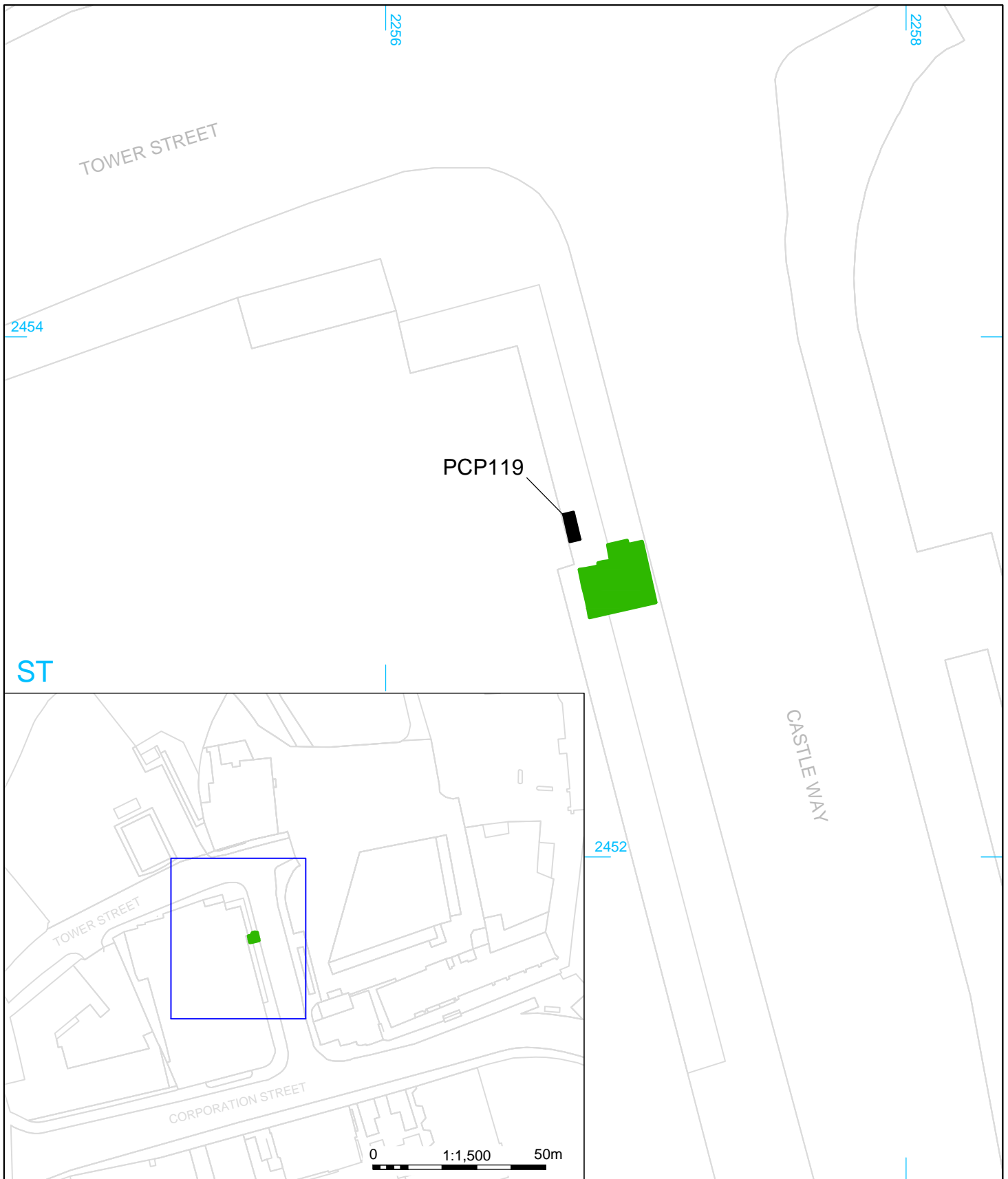
**PROJECT TITLE**  
 Castle Way, Taunton, Somerset

**FIGURE TITLE**  
 Site location plan

0 1km

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<b>DRAWN BY</b>	LG	<b>PROJECT NO.</b>	88 144	<b>FIGURE NO.</b>
<b>CHECKED BY</b>	LM	<b>DATE</b>	15- 9-2 16	
<b>APPROVED BY</b>	DE	<b>SCALE</b>	@A4 1:25	<b>1</b>



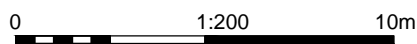
- site boundary
- excavation area

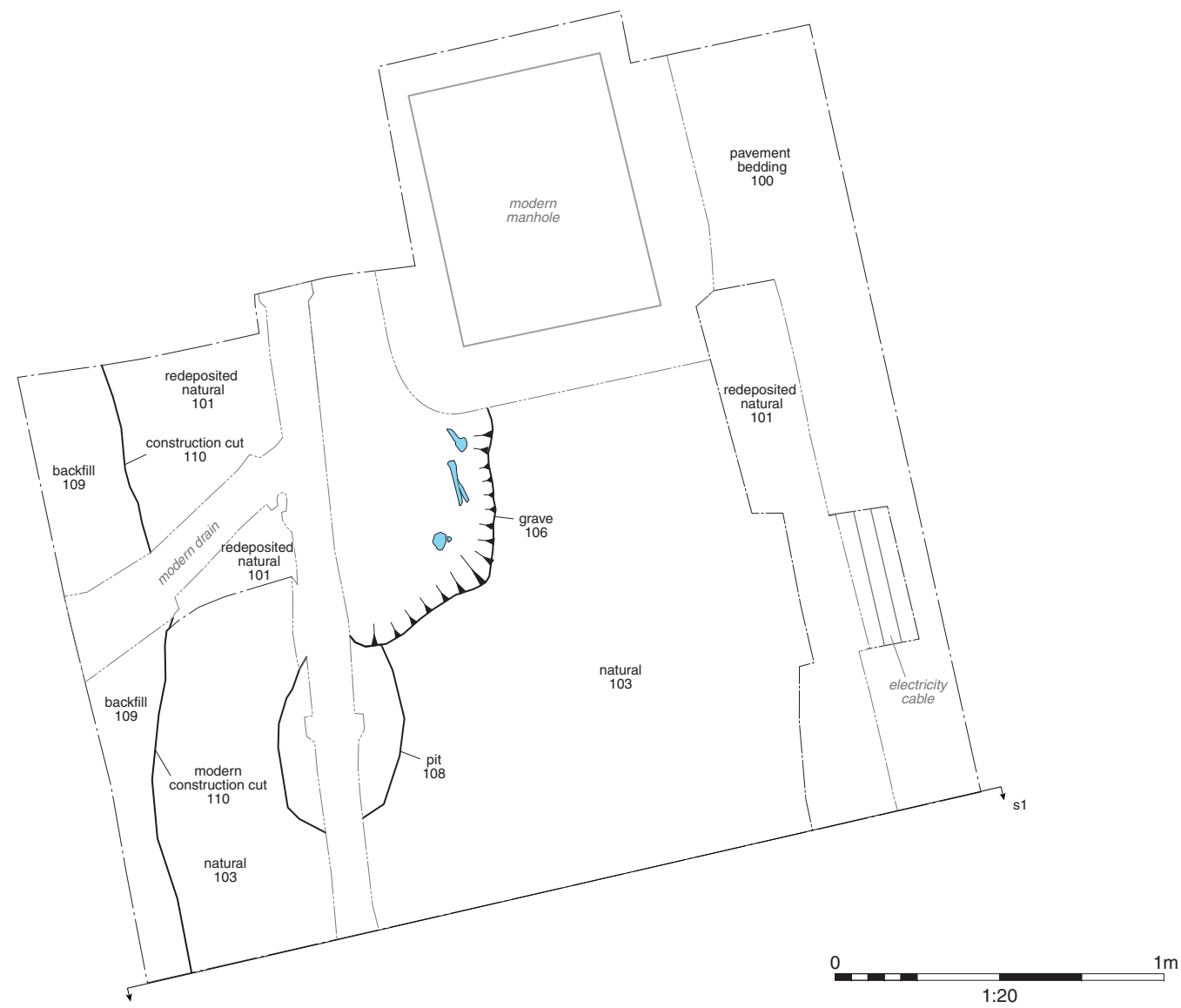


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**PROJECT TITLE**  
 Castle Way, Taunton, Somerset

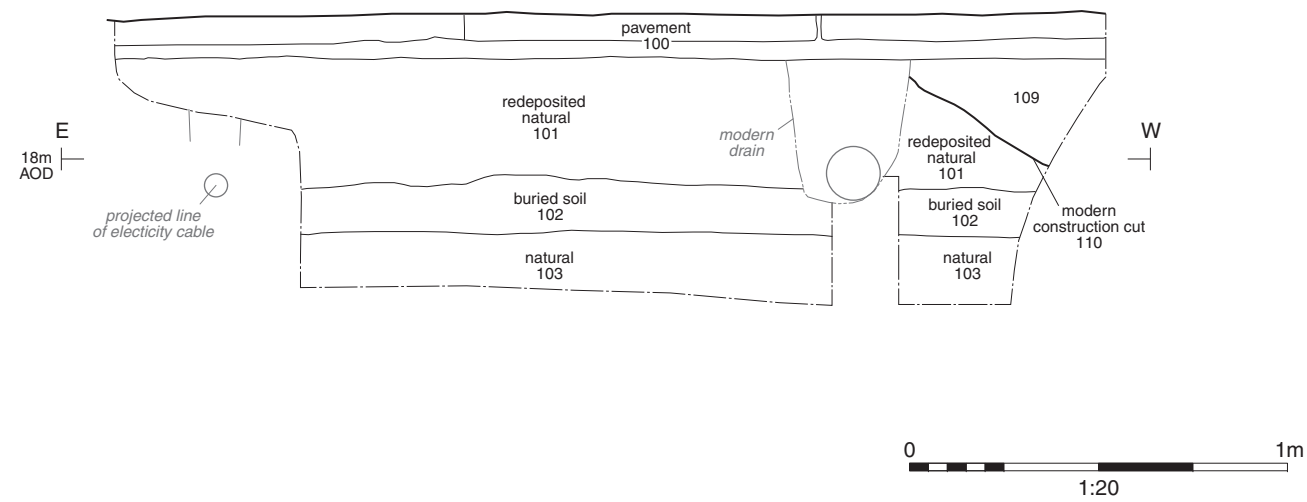
**FIGURE TITLE**  
 Trench location plan





 human remains

Section 1




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PROJECT TITLE  
 Castle Way, Taunton, Somerset

FIGURE TITLE  
 Plan and section


DRAWN BY	LG	PROJECT NO.	88 144	FIGURE NO.
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APPROVED BY	DE	SCALE@A3	1:2	



General view of the trench, showing location of the installed green new PCP119 cabinet against the Mecca Bingo building, looking north-west



Excavated trench showing grave cut 106 with heavily disturbed burial 105. Newly installed PCP119 cabinet ducting manhole is visible to the top of the photograph. Also showing ceramic storm drains to the left and the electric cable to the right. Looking north (0.5m scale)

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<i>PROJECT TITLE</i>			
<b>Castle Way, Taunton, Somerset</b>			
<i>FIGURE TITLE</i>			
<b>Photographs</b>			
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<i>CHECKED BY</i>	<b>LM</b>	<i>DATE</i> <b>15- 9-2 16</b>	<b>4</b>
<i>APPROVED BY</i>	<b>DE</b>	<i>SCALE@A4</i> <b>N/A</b>	



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