

Combwich Sewage Treatment Works Combwich Somerset

Archaeological Watching Brief



for
Wessex Water

CA Project: 880123
CA Report: 16430

July 2016



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SUMMARY

Project Name: Combwich Sewage Treatment Works
Location: Combwich, Somerset
NGR: Between ST 26185 42184 and ST 26923 39232
Type: Watching brief
Date: 4–6 July 2016
Location of Archive: To be deposited with the Museum of Somerset
Site Code: CST 16

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during the excavation of a series of geotechnical trial holes along the proposed route of a new rising main between Combwich Sewage Treatment Works and Cannington Sewage Treatment Works, Somerset.

No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during the groundworks and no artefactual material was recovered.



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In July 2016, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of a series of geotechnical trial holes along the proposed route of a new rising between Combwich Sewage Treatment Works (centred at NGR: ST 26185 42184) and Cannington Sewage Treatment Works (centred at NGR: ST 26923 39232), Somerset. This work was commissioned by Wessex Water. The watching brief was requested by South West Heritage Trust (SWHT).
- 1.2 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CA (2016) and approved by SWHT. The watching brief was also carried out in accordance with *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (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

- 1.3 The monitored trial holes were excavated along a route measuring c. 3.5km in length (Fig. 1). This route runs roughly north from the Cannington Sewage Treatment Works through agricultural land, before turning north-east to the River Parret. The route then runs north-westwards alongside the riverbank to the Combwich Sewage Treatment Works. The southern (Cannington) end of the route lies at c. 10m AOD; this drops to around 4m AOD where the northern half of the route runs alongside the River Parret.
- 1.4 The underlying geology of the northern half of the route and the majority of the southern half is mapped as Langport Member, Blue Lias Formation and Charmouth Formation mudstones, overlain by Tidal Flat deposits of clay, silt and sand. The southern half of the route features Mercia Mudstone and Otter Sandstone Formation geology, the latter of which is overlain by alluvial clays, silts, sands and gravels (BGS 2016). The solid geology was exposed in TH1 and TH3 only, where it comprised sandstone. Alluvial/tidal flat deposits were recorded in all six trial holes.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 An online search of the Somerset Historic Environment Record (SCC 2016) was undertaken during the composition of this section; numbers in parenthesis are SHER references.

Iron Age (700 BC–AD 43) and Roman (AD 43–AD 410)

- 2.2 Recent archaeological works undertaken in advance of the proposed Cannington Flood Alleviation Scheme (CA, forthcoming) have recorded Iron Age and Roman remains, including a ring ditch and a probable Roman 'ladder' settlement, as well as a number of former enclosures, field boundaries and pits. A concentration of Roman features, including three human burials, was recorded at the eastern end of the Flood Alleviation Scheme works, which lies c. 0.25km north-west of the Cannington Sewage Treatment Works.
- 2.3 Archaeological investigations undertaken in advance of water main replacement works to the immediate south of the Cannington Sewage Treatment Works recorded a concentration of ditches and postholes of Iron Age or Roman date (28161).
- 2.4 Aerial photographs show the cropmarks of conjoined sub-rectangular and triangular enclosures (15852) in the field to the immediate west of the Cannington Sewage Treatment Works. These enclosures may be related to the Iron Age and Roman features discussed above.
- 2.5 The remains of Iron Age and Roman settlement activity have also been recorded to the immediate south of Combwich (10306), some 0.3km south-west of the Combwich Sewage Treatment Works. These remains included human skeletons, pits and cobbled hut floors. It has been suggested that these remains represent the southern edge of a Roman settlement which is now mainly underneath the modern village.

Medieval (1066–1539) and post-medieval (1540–1800)

- 2.6 The remnants of historic field systems have been recorded in the area between Cannington and Combwich, including medieval/early post-medieval ridge and furrow

earthworks (e.g. 11142). These earthworks were visible on mid 20th-century aerial photographs, but have since been ploughed out.

- 2.7 Medieval/post-medieval floodbanks are visible as earthworks on aerial photographs (e.g. 11139 and 27753) following the original course of Cannington Brook and along the banks of the River Parrett. Most of these earthworks have now been ploughed out, although some sections remain extant.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objectives of the archaeological watching brief were to:

- monitor groundworks, and to identify, investigate and record any significant buried archaeological deposits thus revealed; and
- to produce an integrated project archive and a report setting out the project results 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 2016). An archaeologist monitored the excavation of seven geotechnical trial holes (Fig. 2). The number of trial holes was reduced from the 20 provisionally specified in the WSI.
- 4.2 Records were maintained in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.3 The project archive is currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. CA will make arrangements with the Museum of Somerset for the deposition of the archive.
- 4.4 A summary of information from this project, as set out within Appendix B, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

5. RESULTS

- 5.1 The trial holes measured 4m to 5m in length and 0.6m to 1m in width. They were excavated to 3m to 3.2m in depth with the exception of TH5, which was excavated to 1.8m in depth.
- 5.2 The sandstone geology was exposed in TH1 and TH3 at depths of 1.1m to 1.45m below the present ground surface. The sandstone was sealed by 0.8m to 1.25m of clayey alluvial deposits, which were covered in turn by the topsoil.
- 5.3 The solid geology was not exposed in the remainder of the trial holes, which contained clayey alluvial/tidal flat deposits to depth; these deposits were overlain by the topsoil.
- 5.4 No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks and, despite visual scanning of spoil, no artefactual material was recovered.

6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1 The watching brief identified no archaeological remains or deposits. While this may indicate that the Iron Age and Roman activity recorded in the area (see Section 2) did not extend as far as the monitored trial holes, it is unlikely that any such remains would have been exposed by the very limited groundworks.

7. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Christina Tappley, who also wrote this report. The report illustrations were prepared by Sam O'Leary. The project archive has been compiled and prepared for deposition by Jessica Cook. The project was managed for CA by Derek Evans.



8. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2016 *Geology of Britain Viewer* <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>
Accessed 24 May 2016

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2016 *Combwich Sewage Treatment Works, Combwich, Somerset: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

SCC (Somerset County Council) 2016 *Somerset Historic Environment Record* <http://webapp1.somerset.gov.uk/her> Accessed 24 May 2016

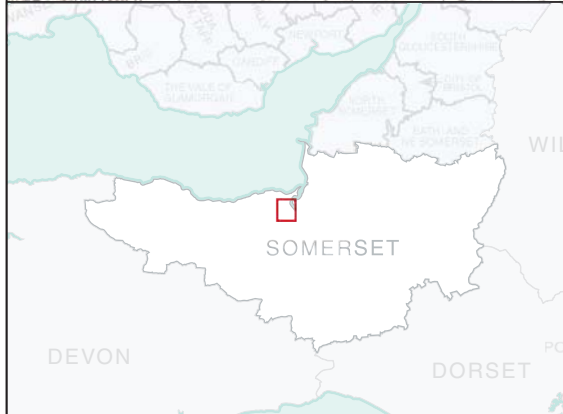
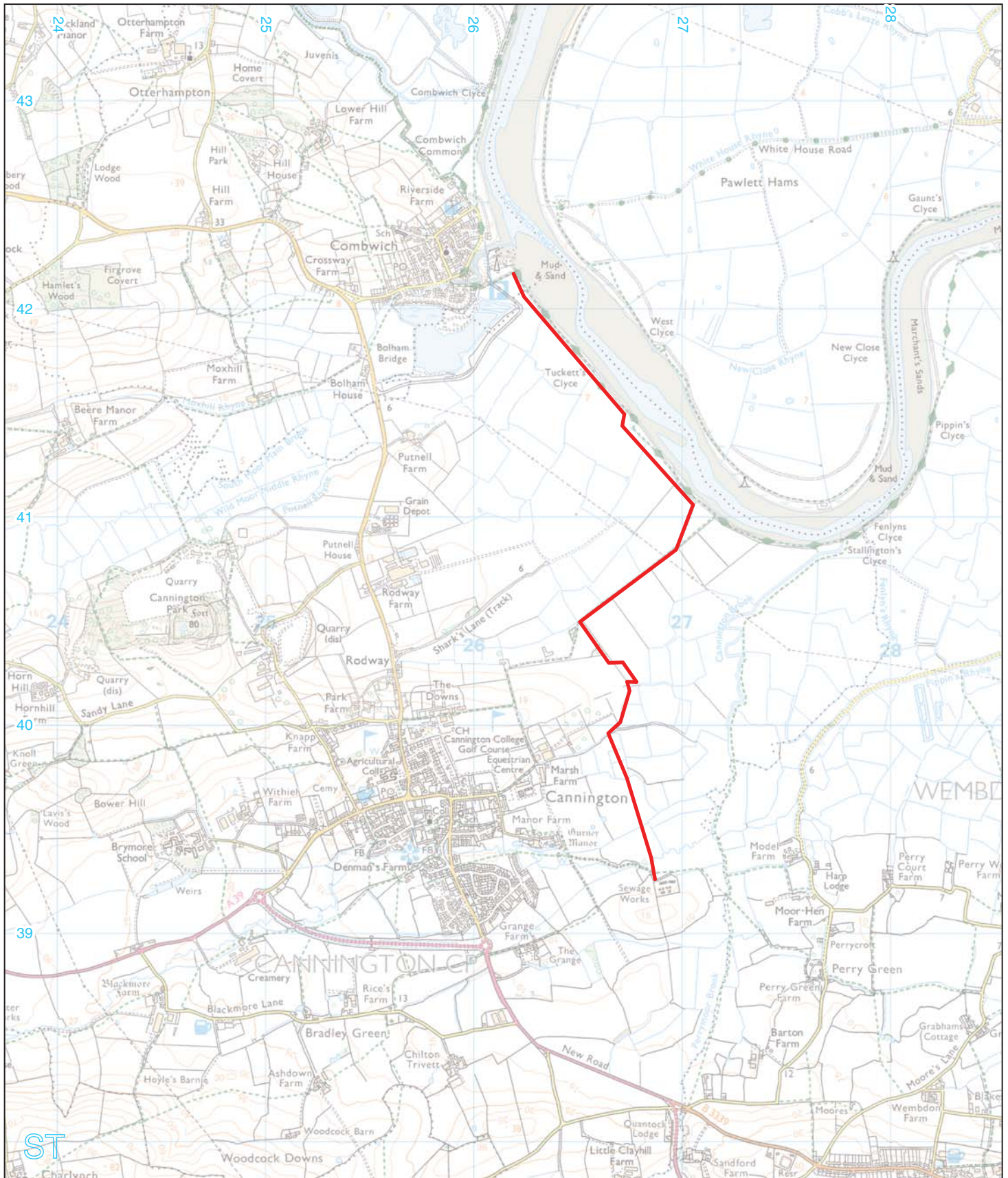


APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No.	Context No.	Context interpretation	Description	Thickness (m)
1	100	Topsoil	Red brownish clayey silt	0.3
1	101	Alluvium	Red brownish sandy clay	0.6
1	102	Alluvium	Grey blue sandy clay	0.2
1	103	Geology	Sandstone	>1.1m
2	200	Topsoil	Medium brown clayey silt	0.2
2	201	Alluvium	Silver grey silty sandy clay	0.6
2	202	Alluvium	Red brown clay	>2.2
2	203	Alluvium	Grey blue clay lens within 202	0.2
3	300	Topsoil	Dark brown clayey silt	0.2
3	301	Alluvium	Light brown silty clay	0.15
3	302	Alluvium	Medium red brownish clay with blue patches	0.15
3	303	Alluvium	Medium beige silty clay	0.95
3	304	Geology	Sandstone	>1.55
4	400	Topsoil	Medium grey-brown sandy clayey silt	0.2
4	401	Alluvium	Grey mottled sandy clay	0.6
4	402	Alluvium	Light grey blue clay	>0.5
5	500	Topsoil	Light grey silty clay	0.2
5	501	Alluvium	Light grey brown silty clay	>1.6
6	600	Topsoil	Light grey clayey silt	0.2
6	601	Alluvium	Light grey brown silty clay	1.8
6	602	Alluvium	Light grey clay	0.8
6	603	Alluvium	Light blue clay	>0.3
7	700	Topsoil	Light grey sandy clayey silt	0.3
7	701	Alluvium	Light grey pinkish clay	0.6
7	702	Alluvium	Green-blue clay	0.3
7	703	Alluvium	Red brown clay with gravel inclusions	0.2
7	704	Alluvium	Red brown clay	>1.8

APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Combwich Sewage Treatment Works, Combwich, Somerset: Archaeological Watching Brief	
Short description	<p>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during the excavation of a series of geotechnical trial holes along the proposed route of a new rising main between Combwich Sewage Treatment Works and Cannington Sewage Treatment Works, Somerset.</p> <p>No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during the groundworks and no artefactual material was recovered.</p>	
Project dates	4–6 July 2016	
Project type	Watching brief	
Previous work	None	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Combwich Sewage Treatment Works, Combwich, Somerset	
Study area (M ² /ha)	N/A	
Site co-ordinates	Between ST 26185 42184 and ST 26923 39232	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	N/A	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Derek Evans	
Project Supervisor	Christina Tapply	
MONUMENT TYPE	None	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	N/A	N/A
Paper	The Museum of Somerset	Site recording forms
Digital	The Museum of Somerset	Digital photos
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Cotswold Archaeology 2016 <i>Combwich Sewage Treatment Works, Combwich, Somerset: Archaeological Watching Brief</i> CA typescript report 16430		



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PROJECT TITLE

**Combwich Sewage Treatment Works,
Combwich, Somerset**

FIGURE TITLE

Site location plan

0 1km

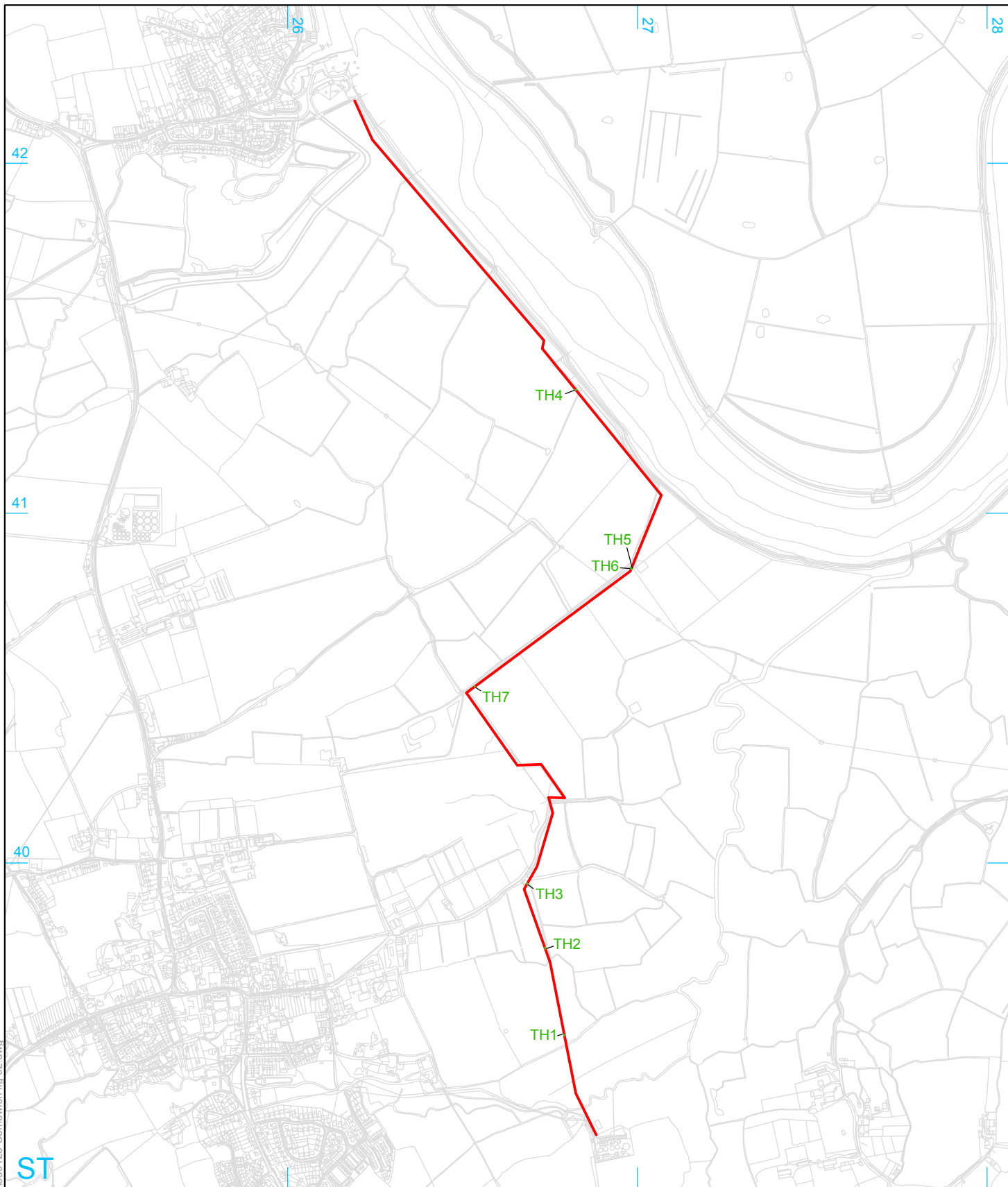
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APPROVED BY DE

PROJECT NO. 880123
DATE 22/07/2016
SCALE@A4 1:25,000

FIGURE NO.

1



- proposed rising main
- trial hole location



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PROJECT TITLE

**Combwich Sewage Treatment Works,
Combwich, Somerset**

FIGURE TITLE

Trial hole location plan

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 DATE 22/07/2016
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FIGURE NO.
2

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