

Cannington Bends Somerset

Archaeological Watching Brief



for
Royal HaskoningDHV

on behalf of
The Environment Agency

CA Project: 880209
CA Report: 18046

January 2018



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Fig. 4 (in text) View of the bank earthwork, facing south-west



SUMMARY

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Project Name: | Cannington Bends, Somerset |
| Location: | Chilton Trinity, Somerset |
| NGR: | 330660 140150 |
| Type: | Watching Brief |
| Date: | 1 July 2017 |
| Planning Reference: | Sedgemoor District Council 20/17/00003 |
| Location of Archive: | To be deposited with the Somerset County Museum Service |
| Site Code: | CANN16 |

In July 2017, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief at Cannington Bends, near Bridgwater, Somerset.

The watching brief was targeted on an area where development groundworks impacted a presumed medieval or post-medieval flood defence bank.

The monitored groundworks removed topsoil only. The base of the topsoil was not reached and no underlying deposits were exposed. The works demonstrated that the upper 0.3m of the bank earthwork is composed of modern topsoil. No archaeological features or deposits were recorded.



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In July 2017, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Cannington Bends, near Bridgwater, Somerset (centred at NGR: 330660 140150; Fig. 1). This watching brief was undertaken for Royal HaskoningDHV, on behalf of the Environment Agency.
- 1.2 Sedgemoor District Council granted planning permission (ref: 20/17/00003) to upgrade and realign 1.7km of existing flood defences along the River Parrett, north of Chilton Trinity, including the watching brief site.
- 1.3 The watching brief was carried out in line 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

- 1.4 The watching brief site is located to the north of Bridgwater and north-east of Chilton Trinity, on the western bank of a meander in the River Parrett. The landscape is flat and consists of pastoral land, bounded by hedgerows and drainage ditches. A shallow earth embankment runs along the edge of the river.
- 1.5 The underlying geology of the site is mapped as mudstone and Hailite-stone of the Mercia Mudstone Group, overlain by clay, silt and sand tidal flat deposits (BGS 2018).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The proposed development site has been the previous subject of a desk-based assessment (Royal HaskoningDHV 2016) an earthwork survey (Royal HaskoningDHV 2017) and a geophysical survey (Stratascan 2016). The following text is summarised from these sources.
- 2.2 A medieval or post-medieval earthwork bank, interpreted as a flood defence, runs through the watching brief site. This bank was largely levelled by ploughing prior to

the end of the 20th century, although the earthwork survey recorded a surviving bank earthwork, albeit at a low level and not immediately perceptible to the naked eye.

- 2.3 A series of rectangular earthwork platforms, ditches and raised droveways indicative of an extensive abandoned settlement was identified in the area from aerial photographs taken in 1947, 1971 and 1981. These earthworks had largely been ploughed away by 2016, although the field containing the watching brief site still features some extant earthworks, including two sub-circular depressions that could be associated with the putative deserted settlement.
- 2.4 Two post-medieval oyster beds have been recorded previously in the vicinity of the watching brief site. These were rectangular pits that measured between 12m and 24m in length and 4m in width. The pits may also have served as extraction sites for the flood defences. The pits were destroyed by coastal erosion prior to 1958.
- 2.5 The geophysical survey identified no features of probable archaeological origin, although some linear anomalies within the southern part of the field may relate to the deserted settlement.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The aim of the archaeological watching brief was to ensure that any archaeological remains/deposits impacted by the proposed development were subject to preservation by record to a level commensurate with their significance.
- 3.2 A specific aim of the archaeological watching brief was to examine the possible medieval/post-medieval flood defence earthwork in order to ascertain its date and purpose.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The watching brief comprised the observation by a competent archaeologist of all intrusive groundworks at the site.



- 4.2 Non-archaeologically significant deposits were removed by the groundworks contractors under archaeological supervision. Where mechanical excavators were used, these were equipped with toothless buckets.
- 4.3 Written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA *Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.4 CA will make arrangements with the Somerset County Museum Service for the deposition of the site archive.
- 4.5 A summary of information from this project, as set out in Appendix B, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

5. RESULTS

- 5.1 Between 0.15m and 0.3m of topsoil was stripped from the site. The topsoil was thickest at the location of the earthwork. The base of the topsoil was not reached and no other deposits were exposed. No archaeological features or deposits were recorded.



Fig. 2: General view of monitored area, facing north



Fig. 3: Oblique profile view of the bank earthwork, facing north-east



Fig. 4: View of the bank earthwork, facing south-west



6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1 The monitored groundworks removed topsoil only. The base of the topsoil was not reached and no underlying deposits were exposed. The works demonstrated that the upper 0.3m of the bank earthwork is composed of modern topsoil. No archaeological features or deposits were recorded.

7. CA PROJECT TEAM

- 7.1 The watching brief fieldwork was undertaken by Clive Meaton. This report was written by Paul Clarke. The report illustrations were prepared by Esther Escudero. The project was managed for CA by Derek Evans.

8. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2017 *Geology of Britain Viewer*

<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>

Accessed 23 January 2018

Royal HaskoningDHV 2016 *Cannington Bends, Somerset: Archaeological Desk Based Assessment*

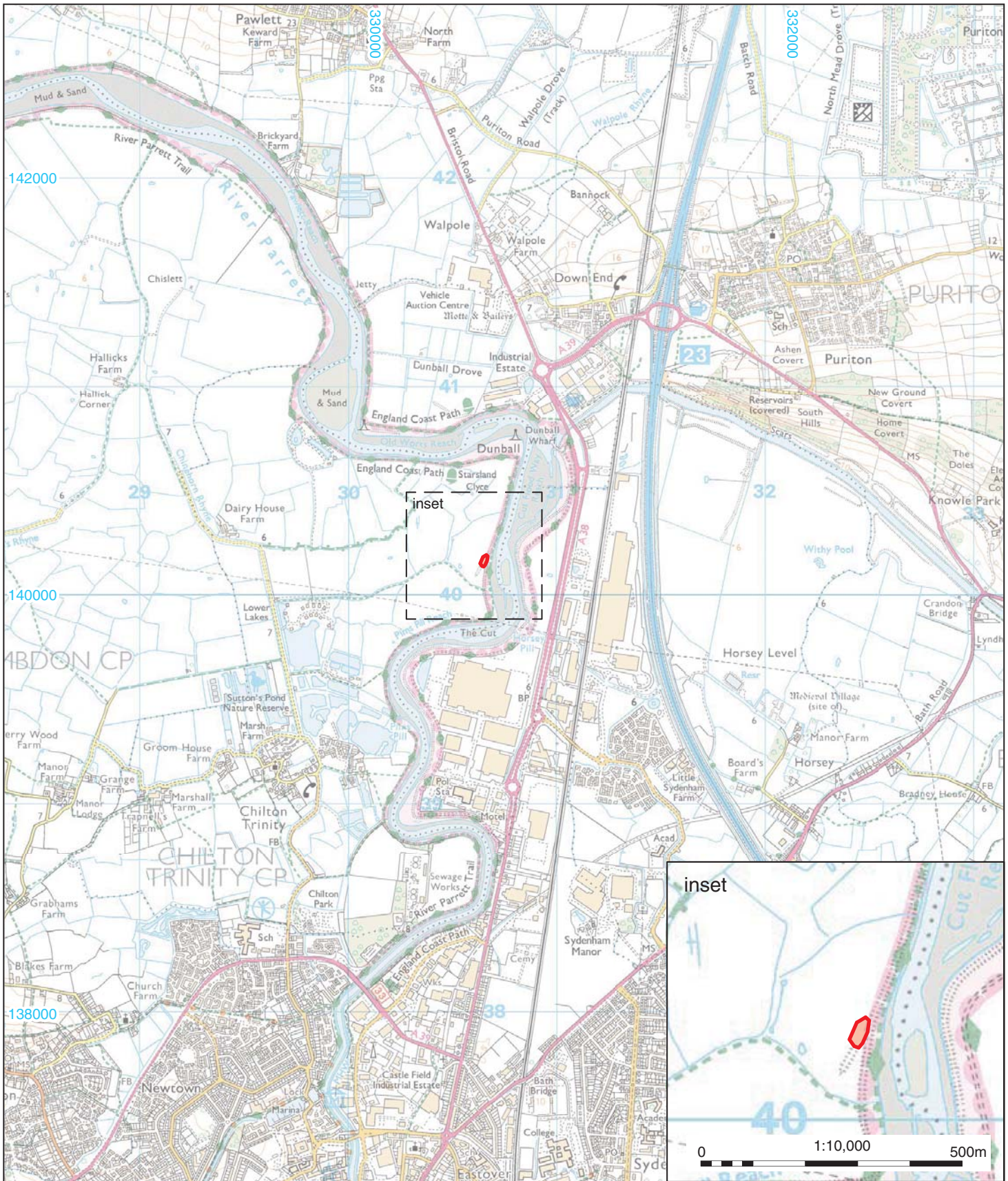
Royal HaskoningDHV 2017 *Cannington Bends, Somerset: Topographic Earthwork Survey*

Stratascan 2016 *Geophysical Survey report: Cannington Bends, Somerset*



APPENDIX A: OASIS REPORT FORM

| PROJECT DETAILS | | |
|--|---|--|
| Project name | Cannington Bends, Somerset | |
| Short description | <p>In July 2017, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief at Cannington Bends, near Bridgwater, Somerset.</p> <p>The watching brief was targeted on an area where development groundworks impacted a medieval or post-medieval flood defence bank.</p> <p>The monitored groundworks removed topsoil only. The base of the topsoil was not reached and no underlying deposits were exposed. The works demonstrated that the upper 0.3m of the bank earthwork is composed of modern topsoil. No archaeological features or deposits were recorded.</p> | |
| Project dates | 1 July 2017 | |
| Project type | Watching brief | |
| Previous work | None | |
| Future work | Unknown | |
| PROJECT LOCATION | | |
| Site location | Nr. Chilton Trinity, Somerset | |
| Study area (m ² /ha) | <500m ² | |
| Site co-ordinates | 330660 140150 | |
| PROJECT CREATORS | | |
| Name of organisation | Cotswold Archaeology | |
| Project brief originator | Royal HaskoningDHV | |
| Project design (WSI) originator | Cotswold Archaeology | |
| Project Manager | Derek Evans | |
| Project Supervisor | Clive Meaton | |
| MONUMENT TYPE | Earthwork | |
| SIGNIFICANT FINDS | None | |
| PROJECT ARCHIVES | | |
| | Intended final location of archive | Content |
| Physical | N/A | N/A |
| Paper | Somerset County Museum Service | Trench sheets; context sheets; registers |
| Digital | Somerset County Museum Service | Born-digital data and scans of site paper record |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | | |
| Cotswold Archaeology 2017 <i>Cannington Bends, Somerset: Archaeological Watching Brief</i> CA Report 18046 | | |



 Monitored groundworks

0  1km

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Cotswold Archaeology Ltd 100002109



Cotswold Archaeology
 Andover 01264 347630
 Cirencester 01285 771022
 Exeter 01392 826185
 Milton Keynes 01908 564660
 www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
 enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE
Canninton Bends, Somerset

FIGURE TITLE
Site location plan

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|-------------|-----|-------------|---------------------|------------|
| DRAWN BY | EE | PROJECT NO. | 880209 | FIGURE NO. |
| CHECKED BY | DJB | DATE | 16/11/2017 | |
| APPROVED BY | DE | SCALE@A4 | 1:25,000 / 1:10,000 | 1 |

Andover Office

Stanley House
Walworth Road
Andover
Hampshire
SP10 5LH

t: 01264 347630

Cirencester Office

Building 11
Kemble Enterprise Park
Cirencester
Gloucestershire
GL7 6BQ

t: 01285 771022

Exeter Office

Unit 53
Basepoint Business Centre
Yeoford Way
Marsh Barton Trading Estate
Exeter
EX2 8LB

t: 01392 826185

Milton Keynes Office

Unit 8 - The IO Centre
Fingle Drive
Stonebridge
Milton Keynes
Buckinghamshire
MK13 0AT

t: 01908 564660

e: enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

