

The Pitsford Resilience Scheme, Wilby, Northamptonshire

Archaeological scheme of observation, investigation,
recording, analysis and publication



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**THE PITSFORD RESILIENCE SCHEME, WILBY,
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

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recording, analysis and publication**

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Summary

An archaeological scheme of observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication was undertaken by Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) at the Wilby Valve site in April 2012. The investigation was undertaken during groundworks prior to the construction of an access road and booster pumping station as part of the Pitsford Resilience Scheme.

Archaeological features encountered during the investigation were limited to the remains of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation in the south and east of the development site. A small assemblage of artefacts was recovered from topsoil and upper subsoil layers and largely comprises post-medieval material although one abraded sherd of 13th-15th century pottery, which may be broadly contemporary with the ridge and furrow cultivation, was recovered. No evidence of later prehistoric activity associated with the possible settlement to the south and east of the development site was recorded.

INTRODUCTION

An archaeological scheme of observation, investigation, recording, analysis and publication was undertaken by Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) at the Wilby Valve site in April 2012. The investigation was undertaken during groundworks prior to the construction of an access road and booster pumping station as part of the Pitsford Resilience Scheme. The Wilby Valve site (SP 875 667) is located to the north-east of Wilby village, c.2km to the south-west of Wellingborough, Northamptonshire (Figure 1). The development area comprised 0.43ha of rough pasture.

The investigation was carried out on behalf of Mott MacDonald Ltd. for Anglian Water Services. Work was undertaken in accordance with a specification produced by the CAU (Gibson 2012) in response to a brief issued by Planning Services Northamptonshire County Council (2012).

Geology and Topography

The underlying geology of the site is Whitby Mudstone (BGS GeoIndex accessed May 2012). The site is situated adjacent to the A5128 Northampton Road at a height of c.65m AOD. The site lies in an area of rough pasture on the outskirts of Wellingborough; part of the site is an existing Anglian Water compound.

Archaeological Background

The development site lies in an area of known later prehistoric activity. Cropmark evidence of potentially later prehistoric occupation is recorded 160m to the east of the site, while possible prehistoric activity has also been recorded to the south-east. The site is located in a field containing extant ridge and furrow dating to the medieval period.

Part of the site is today occupied by an Anglian Water compound and it seems likely that earlier pipeline routes associated with the compound have disturbed any archaeological remains present, including the ridge and furrow earthworks.

Methodology

Topsoil was removed using a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a toothless bucket operating under the supervision of an experienced archaeologist. The site was located using an advanced Global Positioning System (GPS) with Ordnance Datum (OD) heights obtained. Archaeological features - comprising entirely of ridge and furrow - were recorded using a combination of GPS and hand drawn plans.

RESULTS

Over the majority of the development site (see Figure 2) the silty clay soils (comprising topsoil *c.* 0.1m thick and an underlying subsoil deposit) were stripped to a maximum depth of *c.* 0.15m below the ground surface. Finds recovered from the topsoil included post-medieval pottery and glass, iron nails, animal bone, clay pipe stem fragments and an iron horseshoe.

In only one area, measuring *c.*5m by *c.*25m, was soil stripped down to natural undisturbed clay subsoil; a depth of 0.3m below the ground surface. No archaeological features were encountered in this area.

The only archaeological features encountered during the investigation were ridge and furrow, which survived as extant features in the east of the development area and across much of the field to the east and south-east. Ridge and furrow did not survive in the north-west of the development area where previous works associated with the Anglian Water pipeline appear to have caused disturbance, and was not observed in the south-west due to the location of the contractor's spoil heap. Furrows were generally spaced 4-6m apart and orientated north-west to south-east. A single sherd of abraded 13th-15th century pottery (C. Cessford pers comm) was recovered from the infill of one of the furrows.

DISCUSSION

Archaeological features encountered during the investigation were limited to the remains of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation in the south and east of the development site that survive as extant earthworks across much of the area. In the north/north-west of the site the ridge and furrow appears to have been disturbed by works associated with the existing Anglian Water compound. All of the artefacts recovered during groundworks derive from topsoil and upper subsoil layers and the assemblage largely comprises post-medieval material although one abraded sherd of 13th-15th century pottery, which may be broadly contemporary with the ridge and furrow cultivation, was recovered. No evidence of later prehistoric activity potentially associated with the possible settlement to the south and east of the development site was recorded.

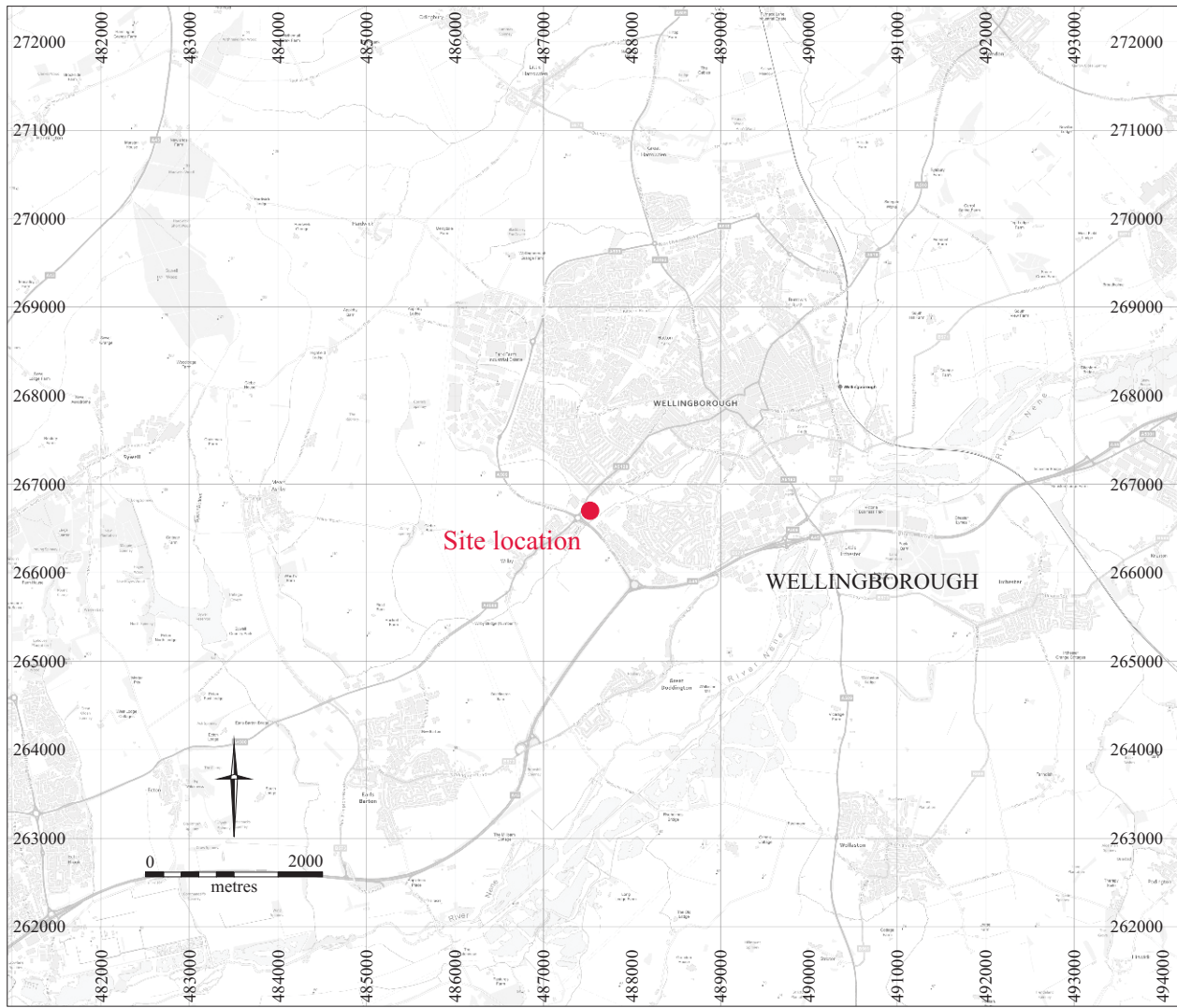
Acknowledgements

The work was commissioned by Maurice Hopper of Mott MacDonald Ltd. for Anglian Water Services. The project was monitored by Lesley Ann Mather of Northamptonshire County Council. Archaeological monitoring and excavation was undertaken by Emma Rees and Simon Timberlake. Jane Matthews was responsible for field survey and graphics. The project was managed by David Gibson.

REFERENCES

Gibson, D. 2012. *A Written Scheme of Investigation for a Programme of Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording Analysis and Publication of the Construction of the Booster Pumping Station at Land off Northampton Road, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire*. Cambridge Archaeological Unit.

Planning Services Northamptonshire County Council 2012. *Brief for a Programme of Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording Analysis and Publication of the Construction of the Booster Pumping Station at Land off Northampton Road, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire*. Northamptonshire County Council.



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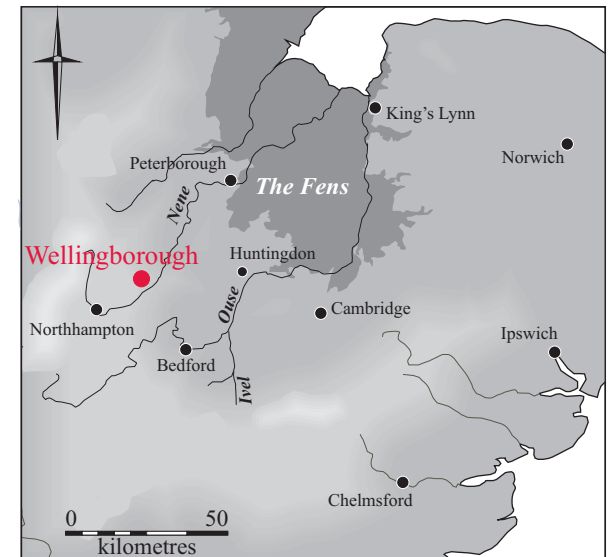


Figure 1. Location map

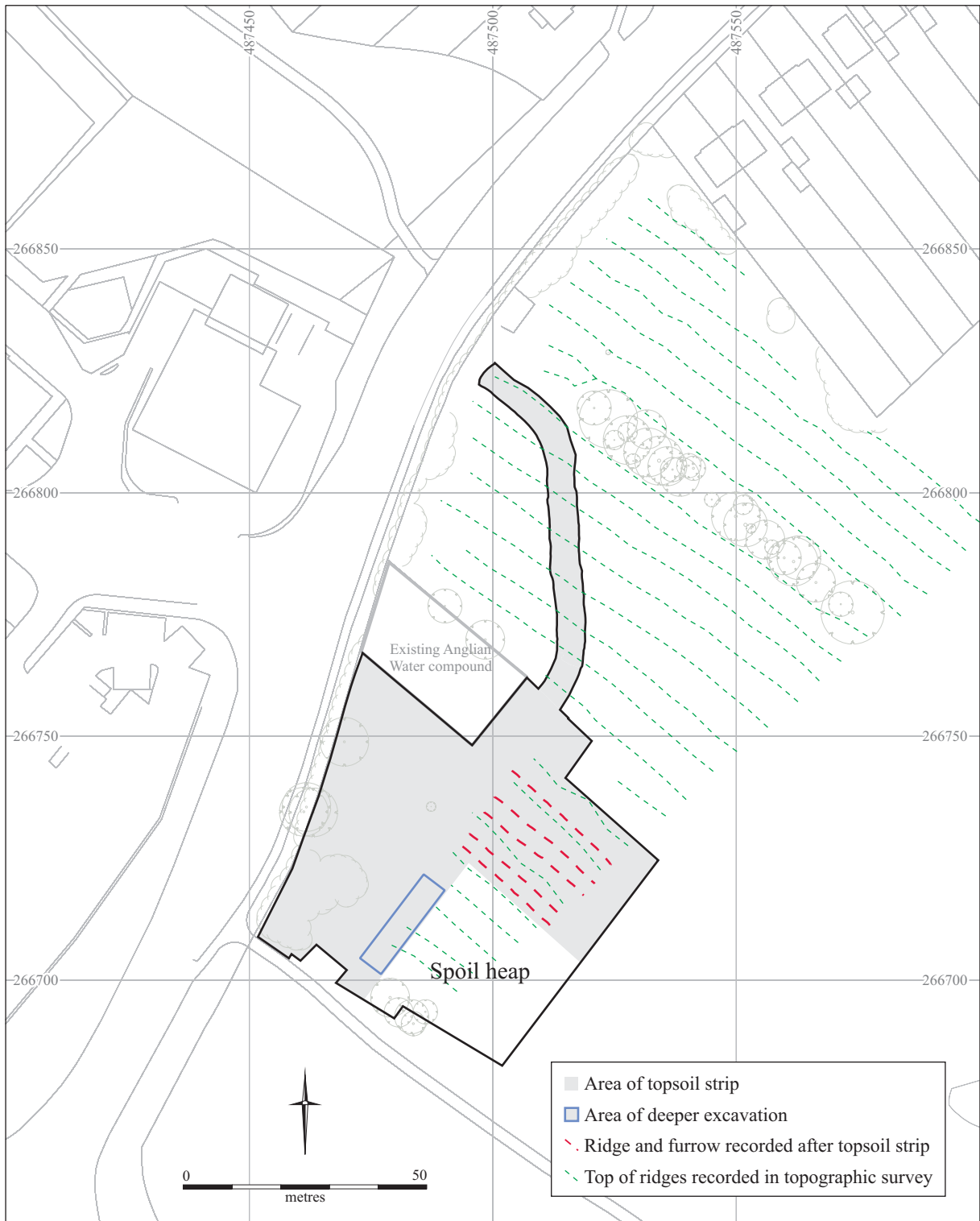


Figure 2. Site plan

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Project details

Project name	THE PITSFORD RESILIENCE SCHEME, WILBY, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
Short description of the project	An archaeological Strip, Map and Sample investigation was undertaken by Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) at the Wilby Valve site in April 2012. The investigation was undertaken during groundworks prior to the construction of an access road and booster pumping station as part of the Pitsford Resilience Scheme. Archaeological features encountered during the investigation were limited to the remains of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation in the south and east of the development site. A small assemblage of artefacts was recovered from topsoil and upper subsoil layers and largely comprises post-medieval material although one abraded sherd of 13th-15th century pottery, which may be broadly contemporary with the ridge and furrow cultivation, was recovered. No evidence of later prehistoric activity associated with the possible settlement to the south and east of the development site was recorded.
Project dates	Start: 16-09-1012 End: 19-09-2012
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	GRS 12 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	ENN 105565 - HER event no.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Grassland Heathland 5 - Character undetermined
Monument type	RIDGE AND FURROW Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

Project location

Country	England
Site location	NORTHAMPTONSHIRE WELLINGBOROUGH WILBY Wilby Valve Site, Wilby, Northamptonshire
Postcode	NN8 3G2
Site coordinates	SP 875 667 52.2910623011 -0.716941350281 52 17 27 N 000 43 00 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 60.00m Max: 65.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	David Gibson
Project director/manager	David Gibson
Project supervisor	Emma Rees
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Anglian Water Services

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Digital Archive ID	GRS 12
Digital Contents	'Survey'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography','Survey','Text'
Paper Archive ID	GRS 12
Paper Contents	'Survey'
Paper Media available	'Plan','Report','Survey ','Unpublished Text'

Project bibliography 1

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