

Grafham Resilience Flow Trial, Northamptonshire

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



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Summary

During February 2012, the Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) monitored the groundworks associated with the construction of four offtakes along the pre-existing Grafham to Hannington water main within Northamptonshire. The work involved stripping an area of topsoil and the excavation of small trial pits to access the existing water main. The trial pits were located along previously disturbed ground associated with the original insertion of the water main and thus did not require monitoring. Offtake 7 yielded evidence of post-Medieval activity, but no other archaeological remains were encountered.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout February 2012, the CAU undertook a series of watching briefs during groundworks associated with the temporary construction of above-ground filter systems (offtakes) along the pre-existing Grafham to Hannington water main (Figures 1 and 2). The water main runs between the Grafham Water Treatment Works in Cambridgeshire (NGR 1554 6632) and the Hannington Reservoir in Northamptonshire (NGR 8264 7126). The archaeologically monitored work all took place in Northamptonshire.

The program of archaeological work was undertaken in accordance with a specification produced by the CAU (Tabor 2012), following a brief issued by Northamptonshire County Council Planning Services (2012). The groundworks were carried out by JN Bentley (principal contractor) on behalf of the client Anglian Water Services.

Site Background

The relevant topographical and geological information is provided in the results of each offtake strip. A full list of the relevant archaeological finds and sites within the vicinity of each offtake, as well as a detailed plan of the proposed groundworks is contained in previous documents (Mott MacDonald 2011, Tabor 2012). As no significant archaeological remains were found during the monitoring program, this information will not be reiterated in this document.

METHODOLOGY

Four offtakes were stripped using a 7 tonne tracked excavator fitted with a toothless bucket and monitored by an experienced archaeologist. The areas were planned at an appropriate scale (1:100) and all deposits were recorded using the CAU recording system (a modified version of the MoLAS system). General site photographs were taken and any section drawings were completed at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20.

RESULTS

Offtake 8/9

Offtake 8/9 was stripped on February 2nd 2012. The offtake was located at Twelve Oaks Farm, Rushden Road, Newton Bromswold, Northamptonshire NN10 0SP (centred approximately on SP 994 655) and was situated on Boulder Clay. An area measuring 30m² was stripped of topsoil using a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. The depth of topsoil was 0.08m on average. No archaeological features or material were seen in the topsoil strip.

Offtake 3/4

Offtake 3/4 was stripped on February 13th 2012. Located off Farndish Road, Irchester, Northamptonshire NN29 7BE (centred approximately on SP 926 652), at the base of a low-lying hill, the site was situated on superficial silts overlying Blisworth Limestone. A total area measuring approximately 236m² (14m by 14m and 10m by 4m) was stripped of topsoil using a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. The average topsoil depth was 0.26m. A thin deposit of colluvium was present at the northern end of the stripped area and was partially stripped, but not completely removed. No archaeological features or material were encountered.

Offtake 2

Offtake 2 was stripped on February 17th 2012. The offtake was located off Wollaston Road, Irchester, Northamptonshire NN29 7DH (centred on SP 918 651), approximately 700m east of Offtake 3/4. Despite the proximity to offtake 3/4, the underlying geology at Wollaston Road was Blisworth Clay. An area measuring 6m by 8m was stripped of topsoil using a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. The topsoil depth was 0.24m on average. A further area to be used as an access route measuring approximately 3m by 35m was also stripped of topsoil. No archaeological remains were found.

Offtake 7

Offtake 7 was stripped on February 24th 2012 and was located off Newton Road, Rushden, Northamptonshire NN10 0SY (centred on approximately SP 969 669). The underlying geology was Oxford Clay. Using a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a toothless bucket, an area measuring 7m by 7m was stripped of topsoil, and an adjoining access route measuring 48m by 2.6m was also stripped (a total of 173.8m²). The average depth of topsoil was approximately 0.27m.

An area of post-Medieval (probably 19th century) disturbance was partially exposed within the access route, immediately beneath the topsoil layer. The disturbance extended for approximately 20m along the access corridor, but was partially obscured by remnant topsoil and subsoil patches. Either side of this disturbance the natural

substrate was partially visible beneath a thin and patchy subsoil deposit. Two test pits excavated into the area implied the presence of several probable intercutting pit features, the edges of which were masked by a homogenous subsoil backfill. It is likely that this disturbance represents a series of localised quarry pits, presumably for the extraction of clay.

The backfill of the cut features comprised a firm, dark grey-brown clayey-silt with patches of re-deposited natural clay. The test pits also revealed that the depth of the activity varied considerably, but that in places it continued beyond a depth of 0.7m below the topsoil surface. Fragments of animal bone, white china and coke were present in the backfill, although a single abraded sherd of Roman pottery in the topsoil may allude to earlier activity in the vicinity.

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 the author. Jane Matthews was responsible for field survey and graphics. The project was managed by David Gibson.

REFERENCES

Mott MacDonald 2011. *Grafham Resilience Initial Archaeological Appraisal*.

Planning Services Northamptonshire County Council 2012. *Brief for a Programme Of Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording, Analysis and Publication Associated with the Grafham Resilience Scheme in Northamptonshire*. Northamptonshire County Council.

Tabor, J.L. 2012. *A Written Scheme of Investigation for a Programme of Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording, Analysis and Publication on Site Works for the Grafham Resilience Flow Trials*. Cambridge Archaeological Unit

APPENDIX 1: DESCRIPTIONS OF OFFTAKES

Offtake 8/9		
Description: The topsoil was a firm dark grey silty-clay, heavily disturbed by modern activity associated with the Grafham water main. The subsoil had been disturbed. No virgin ground was encountered. No archaeological remains were present.	Total Area Stripped (m²)	30
	Topsoil Min. Depth (m)	0.06
	Topsoil Max. Depth (m)	0.1
	Subsoil Exposed Y/N	N
	Subsoil Removed Y/N	N
	Archaeology Y/N	N

Offtake 3/4		
Description: The topsoil was a moderately soft mid-dark grey-brown clayey-silt. The exposed subsoil was a mid brown silt with occasional 'cornbrash' patches resulting from ground disturbance associated with the Grafham water main. No archaeological remains were present. *A thin lens of colluvial deposit was also present at the N end of the stripped area, and was partially stripped.	Total Area Stripped (m²)	236
	Topsoil Min. Depth (m)	0.22
	Topsoil Max. Depth (m)	0.30
	Subsoil Exposed Y/N	Y
	Subsoil Removed Y/N	N*
	Archaeology Y/N	N

Offtake 2		
Description: The topsoil was a firm mid grey-brown silty-clay. The underlying subsoil was a firm mid orangey-brown clay with occasional flecks of chalk, heavily disturbed by plough activity. The natural substrate was not exposed. No archaeological remains were present.	Total Area Stripped (m²)	153
	Topsoil Min. Depth (m)	0.20
	Topsoil Max. Depth (m)	0.28
	Subsoil Exposed Y/N	Y
	Subsoil Removed Y/N	N
	Archaeology Y/N	N

Offtake 7		
Description: The topsoil was a firm, dark grey-brown silty clay. The subsoil was a dark brown clay-silt. The natural substrate was a mid-pale, brown-yellow clay with chalk flecks. Post-Medieval activity was recorded along the access corridor. The extent of this activity was not exposed and the proposed work was not going to damage or disturb this activity.	Total Area Stripped (m²)	173.8
	Topsoil Min. Depth (m)	0.25
	Topsoil Max. Depth (m)	0.30
	Subsoil Exposed Y/N	Y
	Subsoil Removed Y/N	N
	Archaeology Y/N	Y

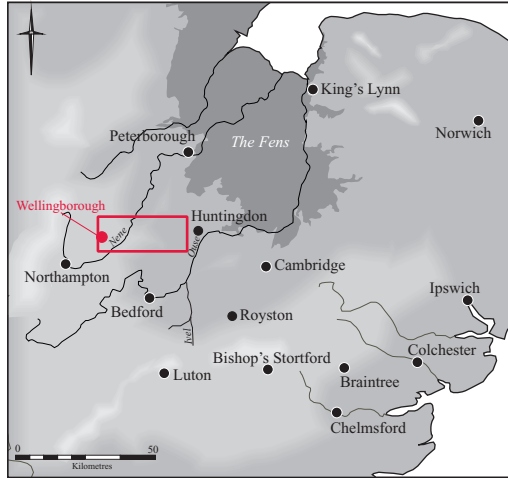
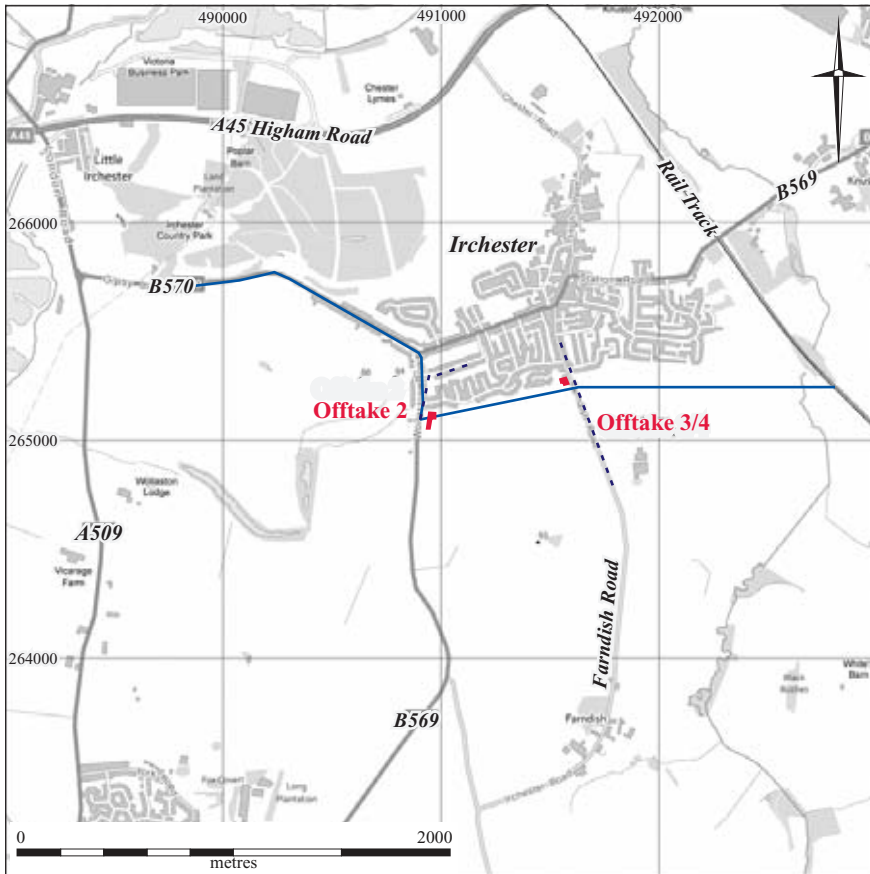


Figure 1. Location map

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- Monitored offtakes
- Offtake main
- - - Existing pipe route

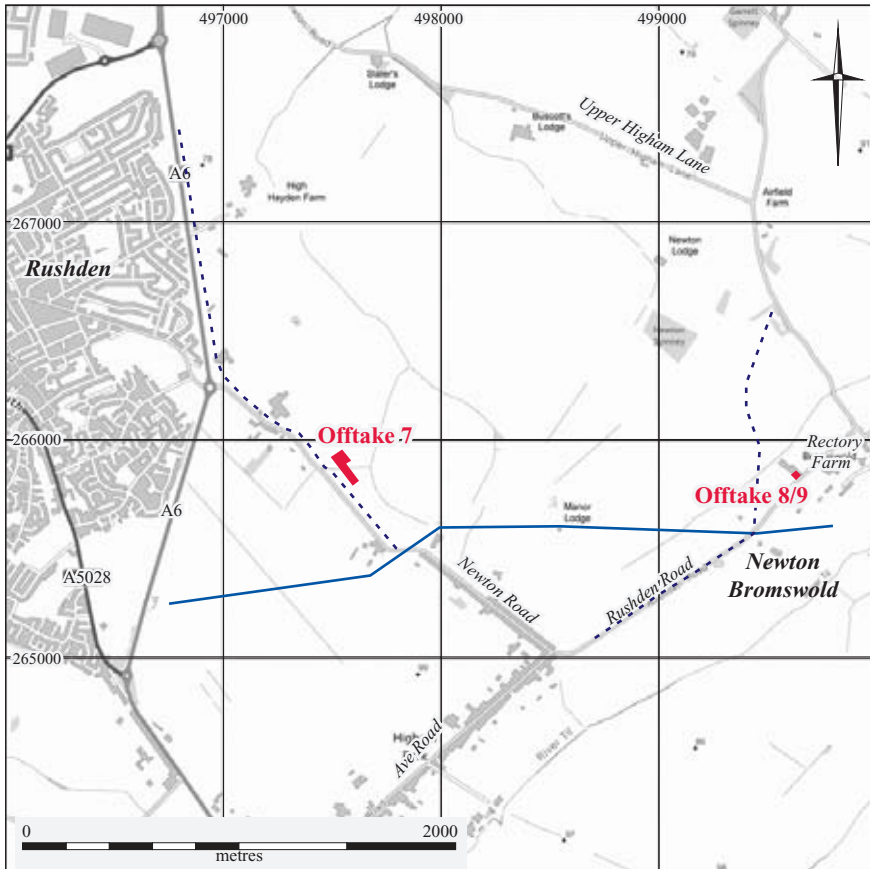


Figure 2. Trench plan.

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Project details

Project name	Grafham Resilience Flow Trial, Northamptonshire
Short description of the project	During February 2012, the Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) monitored the groundworks associated with the construction of four offtakes along the pre-existing Grafham to Hannington water main within Northamptonshire. The work involved stripping an area of topsoil and the excavation of small trial pits to access the existing water main. The trial pits were located along previously disturbed ground associated with the original insertion of the water main and thus did not require monitoring. Offtake 7 yielded evidence of post-Medieval activity, but no other archaeological remains were encountered.
Project dates	Start: 02-02-2012 End: 24-02-2012
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	GRS 12 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	ENN 105566 - HER event no.
Any associated project reference codes	ENN 105567 - HER event no.
Any associated project reference codes	ENN 105568 - HER event no.
Any associated project reference codes	ENN 105569 - HER event no.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 4 - Character Undetermined
Significant Finds	POTTERY Roman
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'

Prompt Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

Project location

Country	England
Site location	NORTHAMPTONSHIRE WELLINGBOROUGH IRCHESTER Offtake 3/4, Grafham Resilience Flow Trial, Northamptonshire
Site location	NORTHAMPTONSHIRE EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE RUSHDEN Offtake 7, Grafham Resilience Flow Trial, Northamptonshire
Site location	NORTHAMPTONSHIRE EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE NEWTON BROMSWOLD Offtake 8/9, Grafham Resilience Flow Trial, Northamptonshire
Site location	NORTHAMPTONSHIRE WELLINGBOROUGH IRCHESTER Offtake 2, Grafham Resilience Flow Trial, Northamptonshire
Postcode	NN29 7BE
Study area	352.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	SP 926 652 52.2767423250 -0.642591643255 52 16 36 N 000 38 33 W Point
Site coordinates	SP 969 669 52.2912807717 -0.579090356725 52 17 28 N 000 34 44 W Point
Site coordinates	SP 994 655 52.2782498432 -0.542856820940 52 16 41 N 000 32 34 W Point
Site coordinates	SP 918 652 52.2768766626 -0.654315194132 52 16 36 N 000 39 15 W Point

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	Shannon Hogan
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	'Spreadsheets','Survey','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
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Paper Contents 'Survey'
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