

# Westbury Wastewater Outfall Pipeline, Slag Lane, Westbury, Wiltshire:

Results of an archaeological monitoring

NGR ST 8701952526 to 8702953499

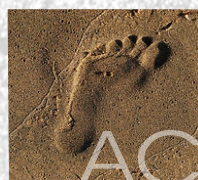
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On behalf of:  
Wessex Water

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archaeology

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# WESTBURY WASTEWATER OUTFALL PIPELINE, SLAG LANE, WESTBURY, WILTSHIRE

NGR: ST 8701952526 to 8702953499

## RESULTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING

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### Summary

*Archaeological monitoring was undertaken during groundworks, associated with the construction of a new wastewater outfall pipeline, adjoining the Westbury Sewage Treatment Works, Slag lane, Westbury, Wiltshire. No archaeological features were found during the monitoring. Several later post-mediaeval pottery sherds were recovered from the topsoil and subsoil, during the archaeological investigation.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document sets out the results of archaeological monitoring during groundworks from Shallow Wagon Lane in the north, joining Westbury Sewage Works in the south. The works involved the topsoil strip of a working easement, following the western side of Bitham Brook and an associated compound to the west in Slag Lane. The site location, including the route of the main supply and the areas of monitoring, are shown on Fig. 1.
- 1.2 The archaeological monitoring was undertaken by AC archaeology Ltd. between May and July 2019 and was commissioned by the Wessex Water in consultation with the Wiltshire Council Assistant County Archaeologist (WCACA).

### 2. SITE LOCATION, LAND USE AND GEOLOGY

- 2.1 The new wastewater outfall pipeline bisects pasture and arable fields. These fields partly form the western floodplain of Bitham Brook and an unnamed stream, which continues south from Blenches Mill Farm (NGR: ST 8733953088). The southern end of the route ceases to follow the stream and runs across a low-lying field to join Westbury Sewage Works.
- 2.2 The pipeline route is broadly level, lying between 48m and 52m above Ordnance Datum (OD).
- 2.3 The geology along the northern part of the pipeline route is recorded as Oxford Clay Formation and dates to the Jurassic Period. A thin band of Alluvium crosses the Oxford Clay that formed in the Quaternary Period. The southern part of the pipeline is formed by a thin band of Westbury Ironstone Member and Kimmeridge Clay Formation deposits of Jurassic date (BGS 2019).

### **3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 3.1** The pipeline route runs close to some non-designated heritage assets, that are either undated or agricultural in nature. The location of several Historic Environment Record revealed one designated heritage asset (DHA) and ten non-designated heritage assets within the pipeline route. A further three non-designated heritage assets are within the route of the pipeline easement. Sites referred to below are shown on Fig. 1,
- 3.2** The earliest non-designated heritage asset relates to an evaluation in 2013 at Blenches Mill Farm, 300m west of the pipeline easement and north of the main sewage treatment works. The evaluation identified several prehistoric ditches and pits (1). A geophysical survey in 2003 identified a ring ditch of potential prehistoric character c.100m west of the southern part of the pipeline (2). A single sherd of Roman pottery was found 3.20m west of the easement (3).
- 3.3** Four ditches (4) were located beneath ridge and furrow to the west of the easement, during an evaluation in 2000. The ditches may have been part of an earlier field system of pre-medieval date. Further ridge and furrow (5) of potential medieval date was found in the area of the easement, during an evaluation in 2002. A medieval settlement was identified from aerial photographs north of the northern extent of the easement (6). A probable post-medieval water meadow was found, east of the easement during an evaluation in 2003 and corroborated by aerial photography (7).
- 3.4** Near the central part of the easement is Blenches Mill a Grade 2 Listed Building at Blenches Mill Farm (8 & 9). These red brick buildings consisted of a water grist mill built in c. 1835 with associated estate building and stable. A 19th century farm (9) known as Home Farm (Heywood Farm) lies to the north-west of Blenches Mill and east of the pipeline route.
- 3.5** An evaluation in 2003 identified an undated pit and two ditches c.750m to the east of the pipeline (11 & 12). Two geophysical surveys undertaken as part of the Glenmore Link, Westbury Bypass in 2004 identified a series of curvilinear anomalies, 600m west of the site (13 & 15). Further undated ditches were recorded in the same survey c. 120m west of the pipeline (14) near the location of a possible ring ditch (2).

### **4. AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

- 4.1** The aims of the archaeological monitoring were:
- To establish the presence/absence, extent, date, nature, function and phasing of the archaeological remains present to make a full and detailed archaeological record.
  - To recover dateable ecofactual and environmental information.
  - To contribute to archaeological research framework questions.
  - To produce a report on the results of the mitigation works.

## 5. FIELD METHODOLOGY

- 5.1 The site investigation was undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation approved by the WCACA (Trott 2019). The route of the pipeline, access tracks and compound areas were subject to topsoil stripping, undertaken by the main contractor and monitored by the site archaeologist. Attendance by the archaeologist was comprehensive (i.e. present during all ground disturbance). Monitoring continued until the natural geology was exposed or the full depth of the excavation was reached, with no further possibility of archaeological remains being exposed.
- 5.2 An easement, 15m wide, was stripped of topsoil using a mechanical excavator with a toothless bucket. The soil was subsequently stored in a bund to one side of the easement. The subsoil was then removed to expose natural geology, during the excavation of the pipe trench.
- 5.3 Site observations were recorded using the standard AC archaeology *pro-forma* recording system, comprising written and graphic records in accordance with AC archaeology's General Site Recording Manual, Version 2. A comprehensive photographic record was also made a selection is included in this report.
- 5.4 The archive has been prepared using the unique site code ACW1199.

## 6. RESULTS

- 6.1 The route covered a length of approximately 3km. Parts of the easement had been disturbed by numerous water mains and electrical services. Modern refuse and building rubble was used as made ground in the easement for a length of c.100m (Fig. 1). The deposits encountered are summarised in Table 1.

**Table 1: Deposits encountered during site investigation**

Context Number	Description	Thickness (mm)	Interpretation
100	Dark brown, soft silty clay	200	Topsoil
101	Brown, firm silty clay	200	Subsoil / ploughsoil
102	Very dark grey, firm silty clay	120	Soil / waterlogged organic layer
103	Greenish grey, dark grey, dark greyish brown, light yellowish brown, firm sandy and silty clay	1m >	Substratum or natural geology

### Pipe Trench Excavation

- 6.2 Following the removal of topsoil, the subsoil was exposed along the full length of the easement, apart from the area that had made ground where it was sealed by this event. During



the excavation of the pipe trench the subsoil was removed, exposing natural geology. The pipe trench was c. 1.7m wide and between 1.1m and 2.7m deep.

- 6.3** Most of the pipeline lay within the floodplain of Bitham Brook and the unnamed stream to the south. The natural geology **(103)** consisted of silty clay and alluvial deposits, with a layer of peat appearing intermittently at c. 1.5m deep. During the excavation of the pipe trench a substantial deposit of made ground was encountered, parallel to Home Farm (Fig. 1). The made ground was c.100m long and 2m deep consisting of modern refuse, building rubble, and tarmac.

## **7. FINDS ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1** Five fragments of post-medieval pottery were recovered from the archaeological monitoring. These have a combined weight of 46 grams and are all relatively unabraded. The assemblage has been recovered from the topsoil **(100)** and subsoil **(101)**, overall, the entire assemblage possesses a date range likely to extend from the later 17th century into the mid-18th century.
- 7.2** The sherds are all internally glazed body sherds from semi-closed type vessels apart from a single panchion sherd. It is impossible to narrow the aforementioned date range further, without elements of rim or base sherds providing evidence for forms present. In terms of fabric, all sherds are broadly consistent with locally manufactured examples recorded in nearby Trowbridge excavations (Mephams, 1993) as coarse earthen red wares. The majority of the assemblage derives from pink/buff wares comparable to products of the Donyatt and Wanstrow industries (Kevin Trott, Pers, Comms).

## **8. CONCLUSIONS**

- 8.1** The proximity of fifteen heritage assets surrounding the route of the pipeline revealed activity from the prehistoric period to the post-medieval period that consisted of settlement activity and agricultural land management. The potential for continued activity relating to the heritage assets was high, although the watching brief demonstrated the absence of any archaeological features within the pipeline route. The post-medieval pottery recovered from the easement indicates that domestic refuse from the manuring of the fields was undertaken close to the adjacent waterway.

## **9. REFERENCES**

Mephams, L. 1993. Post-medieval pottery. In A.H. Graham & S.M. Davies. *Excavations in Trowbridge, Wiltshire, 1977 and 1986-1988*. Wessex Archaeology Report No. 2.

Trott, K. 2019. *Archaeological Monitoring along the Westbury SWT Ammonia Tightening and Growth Outfall*. Doc. Ref. ACW1199/1/2

## SELECTED PHOTOGRAPHIC PLATES



**Plate 1: Pre-existing water pipe within trench section**

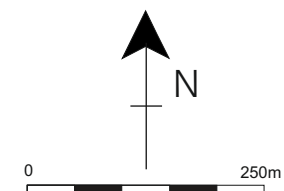
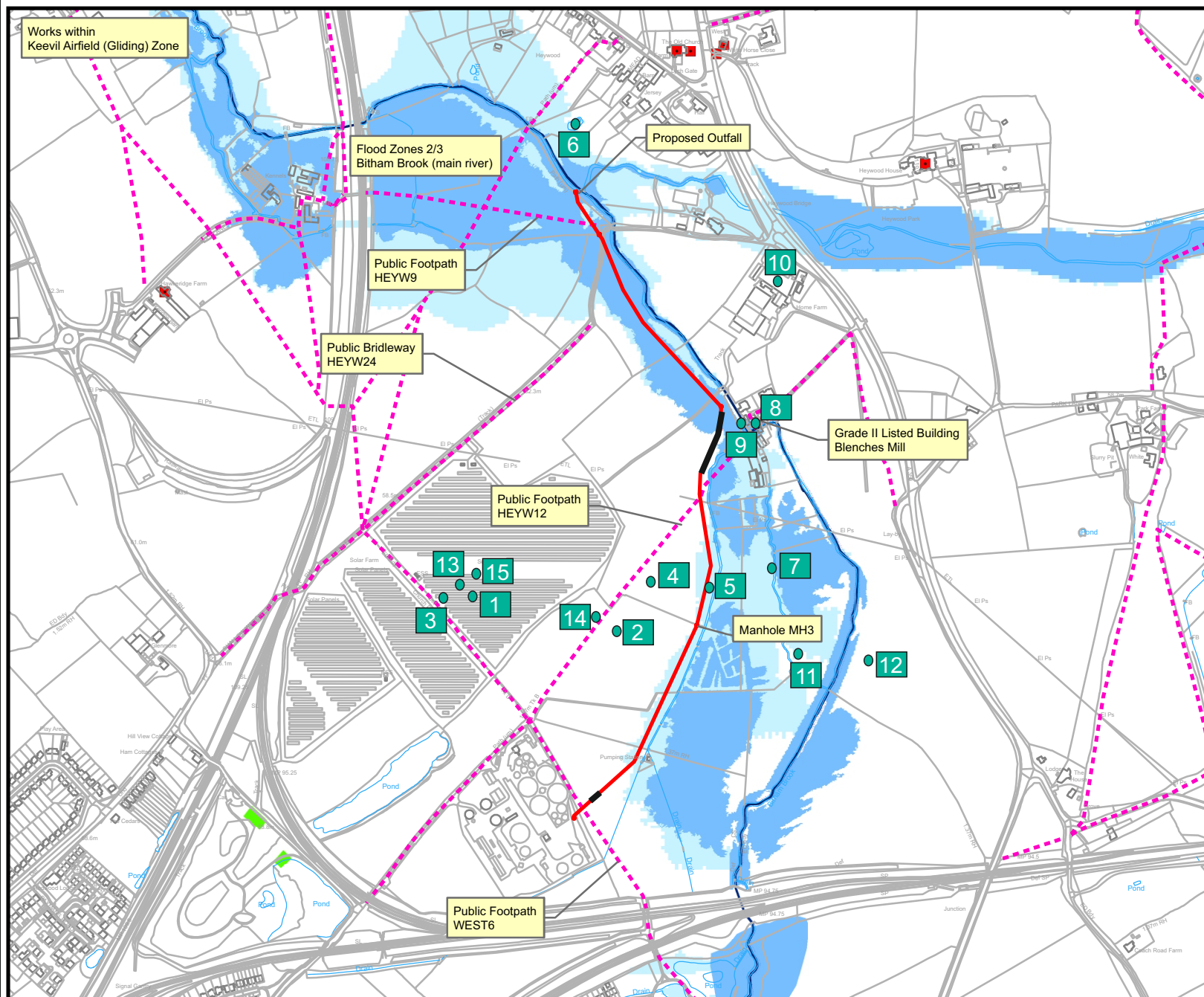


**Plate 2: Modern deposits (made ground) within pipe trench**



**Plate 3: Layer (102) with natural geology (103) below**





**Legend**

- Proposed Outfall Route
- - - Public Rights of Way
- / Listed Building
- Main Rivers
- Heritage Assets
- Made Ground



PROJECT  
Westbury Outfall Pipeline

TITLE

Fig. 1: Location and heritage assets



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