

Cleeve Abbey, Abbey Road, Washford, Watchet, Somerset

A programme of Archaeological Monitoring and Recording



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Cleeve Abbey, Abbey Road, Washford, Watchet, Somerset

A programme of Archaeological Monitoring and Recording

for

English Heritage

by



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Non-technical summary

Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording during groundworks relating to the construction of a new drain at Cleeve Abbey, Abbey Road, Washford, Watchet, Somerset, over one day in October 2014. The project was commissioned and funded by English Heritage (EH).

The monitoring programme was requested by EH in mitigation of the groundworks within the grounds of Cleeve Abbey, a medieval Cistercian abbey (Grade I Listed). The inner precinct and outer court, located on the east side of the River Washford, constitute a Scheduled Monument (Scheduled Monument no. 1014824). It was originally planned that the drain would extend into the Scheduled area however an alteration to the scheme resulted in the drain terminating immediately to the north. Nevertheless, it was considered that groundwork excavations had the potential to expose archaeological remains/deposits.

Despite this, no visible archaeological features or deposits of archaeological interest were encountered during groundwork excavations. Also, no finds were observed or collected during the monitoring programme.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording during groundworks relating to the construction of a new drain at Cleeve Abbey, Abbey Road, Washford, Watchet, Somerset (the 'Site'), over one day on 21 October 2014. The project was commissioned and funded by English Heritage (EH).
- 1.2 The monitoring programme was requested by EH in mitigation of the groundworks as the new drain was within the grounds of Cleeve Abbey, a Cistercian abbey (Grade I Listed), and it was considered that groundwork excavations had the potential to expose archaeological remains/deposits. The inner precinct and outer court, located on the east side of the River Washford, constitute a Scheduled Monument (Scheduled Monument no. 1014824). The new drain was to be excavated and installed between the Old Moat into the Washford River, and it was anticipated that it may cross into the Scheduled area. Any potential work in the Scheduled area was permitted under a Scheduled Monument Class Consent Order (SMCC 85584) signed by Ms Mel Barge, Inspector of Ancient Monuments, EH, on 23 June 2014.
- 1.3 The request followed advice by Central Government as set out in paragraph 141 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012) and under the terms of the *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 as Amended* (1983).
- 1.4 The programme of archaeological works comprised four elements. This began with the production of a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which set out the project strategy. This complied with section c of the SMCC which states that:

"No ground works for the new drainage trench shall take place until the applicant has confirmed in writing the commissioning of a programme of archaeological work during the development in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved by the Secretary of State advised by English Heritage."

The WSI was submitted to English Heritage on 15 August 2014 and was approved prior to the commencement of groundworks. Fieldwork comprised monitoring and recording during groundworks; post-excavation and report production; and archive deposition.

2. Site location and topography

- 2.1 The Site (centred on NGR ST 04691 40838) comprised a single pipeline trench located to the north of Cleeve Abbey, the north end abutting the Washford River and the south end terminating at the old moat along the northern extent of the Scheduled Monument area (**Figure 1**). The Site was located directly north of the village of Torre and approximately 0.3km south of the centre of Washford. The Site was largely situated on level ground at c. 38m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). Prior to the commencement of groundworks, the Site comprised a grassed field.

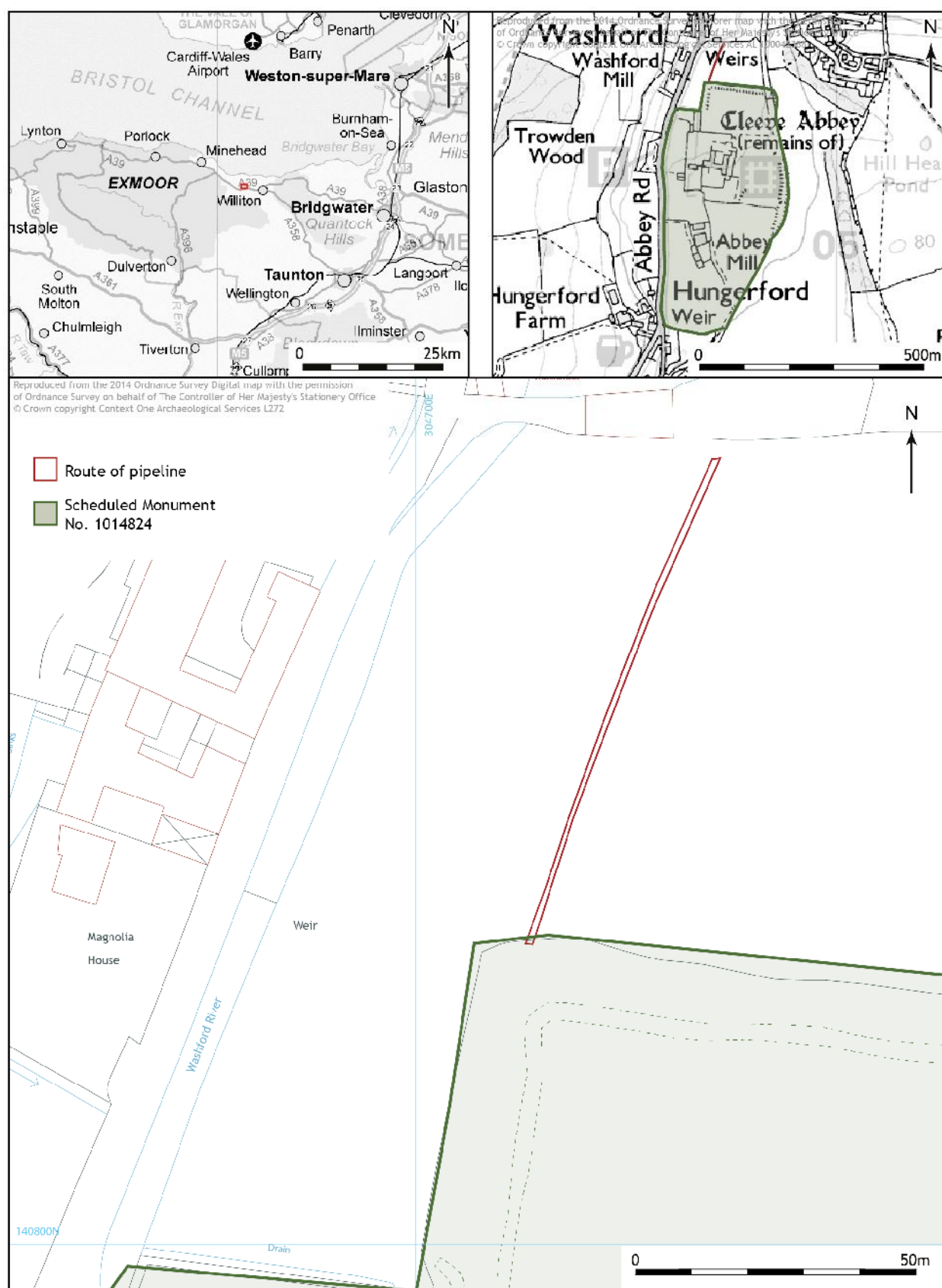


Figure 1. Site setting

3. Methodology

Groundworks methodology

- 3.1 In advance of the installation of the new drain, groundworks commenced with the machine excavation a single pipeline trench of c. 100m. A machine equipped with a 0.60m toothless bucket was used to excavate the trenches.

Archaeological methodology

- 3.2 The programme of archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the codes, standards and guidelines set out by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 1985, rev. 2012; 1990, rev. 2008; 1994, rev. 2008). Current Health and Safety legislation and guidelines were followed on site.
- 3.3 In the absence of archaeological remains, the deposit sequence across the Site was recorded using standard COAS *pro forma* recording sheets to illustrate the soil morphology.
- 3.4 A photographic record of the fieldwork comprised digital images in .jpg format. As a minimum, the record included photographs of the Site setting and development works.

4. Results

- 4.1 No visible features or deposits of archaeological interest were encountered during the monitoring programme.
- 4.2 Development excavations demonstrated a similar deposit sequence across the Site. This comprised dark reddish brown topsoil (100) above reddish brown subsoil (101) overlying alluvial deposits of grey silt (102) (**Plate 3**). A similar sequence was exposed along the entirety of the drainage trench, with the alluvial deposits deepening slightly as the trench approached the moat to the south of the Site.



Plate 1. Excavations of drainage trench (from SW; 1m scale)



Plate 2. View of drainage groundworks and deposit sequence (from NE; 1m scale)



Plate 3. Profile of deposit sequence (from SE: 1m and 0.5m scale)

5. The finds

- 5.1 No finds were recovered or observed during the development excavations.

6. Discussion

- 6.1 Despite the Site location within the grounds of the medieval Cistercian monastery of Cleeve Abbey, excavations of the drainage trench between the old moat and the Washford River did not reveal any evidence of archaeological activity and no dateable material was observed.

7. Archive

- 7.1 An ordered and integrated site archive has been prepared to comply with guidelines set out in *First Aid for Finds* (Watkinson and Neal 2001) and *Standards in the Museums Care of Archaeological Collections* (Museum and Galleries Commission 1992) / *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage 1991).

- 7.2 The project archive is currently held by COAS and consists of the following:

Item	Number	Format
Profile log sheet	1	Paper
Photographic register	1	Paper
Digital images	50	.JPG

- 7.3 The paper archive has been scanned as a single file in .PDF format and will form part of the physical Site archive to be deposited with Somerset County Museums Service.
- 7.4 Copies of this report will be deposited with the client/agent, with English Heritage and with Somerset Historic Environment Service where it will be included as part of the Somerset Historic Environment Record. A digital copy of the report will also be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service, via OASIS (On-line Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations - <http://oasis.ac.uk/england/>). The OASIS entry will also be completed to include details of the archive contents.

8. COAS acknowledgements

- 8.1 We would like to thank the following for their contribution to the successful completion of this project:

Mel Barge, Inspection of Ancient Monuments, English Heritage
 Andrew Wyngard, Technical Manager, B&CE, English Heritage

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