

Aller SPS Rising Main
Replacement
Aller
Somerset

Archaeological Monitoring and
Recording Report

March 2017

Aller SPS Rising Main Replacement Aller, Somerset


for

COAS project code: C1/AMR/17/ACS

Wessex Water plc

REPORT

Prepared by	Clare Randall, Archaeological Officer
Date	23/03/17

Approved by	Cheryl Green, Post-excavation Manager
Signed	
Date	28/03/17

Issue	01
-------	----

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DETAILS

Client project/scheme ref.	CJ122
Planning Application ref.	N/A
Local Planning Authority	South West Heritage Trust (SWHT)
Scheduled Monument Consent ref.	N/A
Historic Environment Record ref.	37337
Collecting Museum	Somerset County Museum
Museum accession code	TTNCM 7/2017
OASIS reference	contexto1-275915

C1 STAFF

Director, Historic Environment Consultant	Richard McConnell BA (Hons), PCIfA
Fieldwork Manager, Osteoarchaeologist	Stuart Milby BSc (Hons), MSc, PCIfA
Post-excavation Manager, Historic Buildings Archaeologist, Stone Specialist	Cheryl Green FSA, BA Hons, PhD, MCIfA
Illustrator, Project co-ordination, Historic Buildings Archaeologist	Tara Fairclough BA (Hons), PCIfA
Archaeological Officer, Animal bone Specialist, Archivist	Clare Randall FSA, BA (Hons), BSc (Hons), MSc, PhD, MCIfA
Senior Field Archaeologist	Peter Fairclough BA (Hons)

DISCLAIMER

This report is produced solely for the benefit of an individual client and for the proposed uses stated in the report, and should not be relied upon for other purposes or by other parties unless specifically agreed by us in writing. The different elements of the report are designed to be integral to each other and therefore do not necessarily stand alone. Opinions and information provided in this report are on the basis of COAS using reasonable skill and care, however no investigative method can eliminate the possibility of obtaining partially imprecise, incomplete or less than fully representative information. This document is limited to the scope and limits agreed with the client under our appointment. Any investigative work undertaken as part of the commission will have been subject to limitations imposed by such factors as timescales, budgets, seasonal variations and weather conditions.

COPYRIGHT

COAS shall retain the copyright of any commissioned reports or other projected documents, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved, excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client and the HET for the use of such documents by them in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the project design/specification. This licence will be extended to those conducting bona fide research as long as it does not breach client confidentiality.

Summary

Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out archaeological monitoring and recording during groundworks related to the construction of a replacement sewer main at Aller Sewage Pumping Station (SPS), Aller, Somerset (the 'Site'). The project was commissioned by Wessex Water plc under a Term Agreement with COAS.

There have been several archaeological investigations in Aller including watching briefs and evaluations. Most notably, archaeological works in 2016 uncovered Iron Age defences on the side of the former island of Aller to the south-west of the Site. Aerial photographs also suggest the presence of a prehistoric ring ditch with internal pits in the vicinity.

Despite the location of the Site on a spur of land between the former island and the 'mainland', no archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were observed. The deposits seen were all of recent origin overlying natural and naturally derived alluvial deposits. This would seem to confirm that the edge of the raised area of the island of Aller is further to the south-west.

Contents

Summary.....	1
1. Introduction.....	2
2. The Site.....	2
3. Archaeological aims and research objectives.....	3
4. Methodology.....	3
5. Results.....	4
6. The finds.....	4
7. Discussion and Conclusion.....	4
8. The Archive.....	4
9. Bibliography.....	5
Appendix 1: Context summary.....	9

Figures

Figure 1. Site setting showing route of sewer replacement and profile locations.....	6
--	---

Plates

Plate 1. Profile 1 (facing E; 1m scale).....	7
Plate 2. Profile 2 (facing W; 1m scale).....	7
Plate 3. Profile 2 (facing W; 1m scale).....	8
Plate 4. Profile 2 (facing S; 1m scale).....	8

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out archaeological monitoring and recording during groundworks related to the construction of a replacement sewer main at Aller Sewage Pumping Station (SPS), Aller, Somerset (the 'Site') (**Figure 1**). The project was commissioned by Wessex Water plc under a Term Agreement with COAS.
- 1.2 The monitoring and recording was requested by SWHT following a consultation request from Mr Liam Ridley (Environmental Scientist, Wessex Water) on 17 January 2017. In response to that enquiry, Ms Tanya James (Historic Environment Officer), SWHT stated:

"I think the best approach would be to monitor the entire open cut section at the northwest end. These works are situated on a spur of land, which forms the closest point between the 'mainland' to the former island of Aller. It therefore has the greatest archaeological potential particularly as Iron Age defences were found on the corresponding side of the former island during archaeological investigations last year."
- 1.3 In a follow-up consultation dated 8 February Ms James stated:

"Given the 'type' of archaeology that may be present, I think it will be best to monitor the topsoil strip and pipe trench."
- 1.4 The programme of archaeological works comprised four elements: the production of a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which set out the project strategy; archaeological monitoring and recording; post-excavation and report production (this document); and archive preparation and deposition.
- 1.5 The requirement follows advice by Central Government as set out in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) (DCLG 2012).

2. The Site

- 2.1 The Site comprised a compound (NGR ST 39894 29254) and c. 600m pipeline easement (from NGR ST 39874 29270 to NGR ST 40234 28994), c. 220m of which was open cut with the remaining 380m being directionally drilled. The Site compound was within the existing pumping station, which lies in the centre of Aller c. 75m to the north-west of The Old Pound Inn (**Figure 1**). Two thirds of the pipeline passed through fields to the south-west of the existing settlement, to the rear of properties fronting High Street. The remainder of the pipeline passed along Church Path before bearing north toward the existing pumping station.
- 2.2 The Site is on the edge of the Somerset Levels near the eastern boundary of the parish of Aller, c. 2.5km north-west of Langport and c. 2.3km south-east of Othery. It is bounded to the north, east and west by residential housing, including houses fronting High Street and Church Path. To the south, the Site borders the low-lying wetlands of the Somerset Levels. The majority of the pipeline lay to the south of the properties on High Street and mostly ran along level ground at an average height of c. 8.6m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The recorded geology for the Site is alluvial clay, silt, sand and gravel overlying Mercia Mudstone and Halite-Stone on sedimentary bedrock (BGS 2017), with slightly acid loamy clayey soils with impeded drainage in the northern part and loamy clayey floodplain soils with a high water-table in the south (CSAIS 2017).
- 2.3 Later prehistoric remains have been identified in the area to the north of Aller church (to the south-west of the Site). Iron Age defensive features were recently investigated on the side of the island of Aller (no HER number) and aerial photographs show a ring ditch with clear internal pits (HER no. 55327) in the field north of Aller Court Farm. Kings Aller was founded in the Saxon Period, some time before AD 878, the year in which the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records the baptism of Guthrum, King of the Danes taking place at Aller Church (Ellison 1983). The earliest architectural features in the current church date to the 12th century however, given Guthrum's baptism is said to have taken place considerably earlier than this, it is likely that an earlier church existed. Aller was sustained as a manor, being held by Ulward in 1066, and is noted as being passed to Ralph de Limsey by 1086. As of today, a total of seven historic buildings are known within Aller, all Grade 2 Listed (*ibid*). These include the Manor House of Aller Court, which is believed to date to the 14th century, and several

smaller out buildings of similar date (such as the manorial chapel) that exist within the grounds of the Manor. Unlike the smaller out buildings, the main farmhouse of Aller Court was mostly demolished and rebuilt in the 19th century (*ibid*). Topographically, Aller is split into two areas of settlement; the earlier Saxon settlement, where the church and Manor House are located; and the current main village which exists at the foot of Aller Hill. As drainage of the surrounding wetland improved, the nucleus of the village moved toward the foot of the hill thus separating the village from the church. It is possible that the mounded earthworks to the north of the church denote the area of the earliest Saxon settlement (*ibid*).

3. Archaeological aims and research objectives

3.1 The principal aims of the archaeological monitoring were to:

- identify, investigate and record all significant buried archaeological deposits revealed on the site during groundworks;
- determine the character of the archaeological remains, where present;
- recover environmental information, which may provide further information relating to the local historic environment of the area;
- provide sufficient information to enable further mitigation strategies to be determined, where appropriate

3.2 The research objectives were to:

- determine whether there is any evidence specifically relating to the former island of Aller
- where possible, identify any geological indicators that might determine the extents of the former island of Aller
- establish any evidence relating to the medieval manor associated with Aller Court and the early medieval church

4. Methodology

Wessex Water Methodology

- 4.1 Groundworks comprised the machine excavation of c. 220m of open cut trenching (**Figure 1**). This was mostly situated within areas of hard standing which was either cut through (the access road to the SPS) or removed (the access road to the Willard's farm). The field to the south of Church Path was topsoil stripped because it was being landscaped.
- 4.2 The pipeline trench was excavated using two 360-degree tracked machines. A 1.5 ton slew fitted with a 0.5m wide toothless grading bucket was used to excavate the pipeline trench within the access road to the sewage pumping station, as well as the section along Church Path. An 8 ton slew fitted with a 0.6m wide toothless grading bucket was used to excavate the pipe trench within the access road to Willard's Farm.
- 4.3 The pipeline ran south from the existing pumping station for c. 50m before turning west along Church Path for c. 62m. The remainder of the pipeline ran for c. 88m south before heading c. 388m south-east.

Archaeological Methodology

- 4.4 All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching briefs* issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) (December 2014) and in accordance with the *Somerset County Council Heritage Service Archaeological Handbook* (2011). COAS adhered to the *Code of Conduct* of the CIfA (1985, rev. 2000, 2014), and *Regulations for Professional Conduct* (CIfA, 2014, rev. 2015) at all times. The fieldwork methodology is summarised below.
- 4.5 COAS gave notification of the commencement of the works to the HET, but it was not necessary for a representative to visit the Site and monitor archaeological fieldwork.

- 4.6 Prior to the commencement of Site works, the excavation methodology was agreed between those responsible for carrying out the groundworks (Aqua Management) and COAS to ensure that all parties were aware of the monitoring requirements.
- 4.7 An archaeologist was on Site to monitor all specified groundworks with the aim of identifying and recording any archaeological features/deposits present.
- 4.8 By default, core details of the deposit sequence across the Site were recorded using COAS *pro-forma* profile forms in digital format using iPad mini tablets. The frequency with which profiles were recorded were based entirely on variation of the deposit sequence. Spoil was examined for the retrieval of artefacts.
- 4.9 Soil colours were logged using a Munsell soil colour chart. A photographic record of the monitoring and recording was carried out, and involved the sole use of digital images. The photographic record also included working shots to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted. Context numbers are expressed in standard terms e.g. (7-100), with the prefix relating to the identity of the recorder.

5. Results

- 5.1 Four profiles were recorded along the length of the pipeline, and details of the contexts are provided in **Appendix 1**. Along the pipeline length only modern and natural deposits were noted. No archaeological features or deposits were observed.
- 5.2 In Profile 1 (**Plate 1**) the topsoil (7-100) comprised a reddish grey sandy silt measuring 0.20m deep. This overlay a redeposited layer of reddish grey silty gravel (7-101), 0.40m deep. Under this was a redeposited natural red clay with occasional angular gravels (7-102), at least 0.60m deep. Profile 2 (**Plate 2**) was through a 0.40m thick layer of tarmac/hogging of brown mixed gravel concrete (7-200). Under this was alluvial red silty clay with occasional limestone fragments, which included occasional charcoal and shell (7-201), and was 0.50m deep. This was over a natural deposit of red clay with occasional limestone fragments (7-202), at least 1.0m deep. Profile 3 (**Plate 3**), was also covered with similar concrete (7-300), 0.40m thick, over similar red silty clay (7-301), 0.50m deep. This was over red clay with occasional lias fragments (7-302), and which exceeded 1.0m deep. In Profile 4 (**Plate 4**) the uppermost layer was a grey road make up with frequent angular stone fragments (7-400), which was 0.50m deep and over red clay natural (7-401) which was at least 0.50m deep.

6. The finds

- 6.1 No archaeological finds were noted or collected.

7. Discussion and Conclusion

- 7.1 The route of the pipeline was located to the north-east of the former island of Aller, where Iron Age defences have recently been found, and a prehistoric ring ditch with internal pits has been identified from aerial photographs. This suggested potential for the discovery of later prehistoric features or deposits on the edge of the higher ground, however no archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were observed despite excavation to some depth. The deposits seen were all of recent origin overlying natural and naturally derived alluvial deposits. This would seem to confirm that the edge of the raised area of the island of Aller does not extend this far south.

8. The Archive

- 8.1 The NPPF requires that an archaeological archive arising from development works is made publicly accessible (para. 141). The archive comprises two parts: the paper/digital archive including site records and images; and the artefact/ecofact assemblage. In this case no artefacts were observed or recovered/retained.

- 8.2 As no archaeological evidence was encountered, all relevant data has been incorporated into this report and the paper/digital archive will be stored on the COAS cloud storage server or discarded.
- 8.3 A copy of this report will be provided to the client/agent and to the HET so that it can be included as part of the county Historic Environment Record. A digital copy of the report will also be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS), via OASIS (On-line Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations).

9. Bibliography

- | | |
|---|---|
| British Geological Survey (BGS), 2017 | http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html? ,
accessed on 10 February 2017 |
| Cranfield Soils and Agrifood Institute:
Soilscapes (CSAIS), 2017 | http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/#
accessed on 23 March 2017 |
| Chartered Institute of Field Archaeologists
(CIfA), December 2014 | <i>Code of Conduct</i> . Reading: CIfA |
| Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
(CIfA), December 2014 (rev. 2015) | <i>Regulations for professional conduct</i> . Reading: CIfA |
| Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
(CIfA), December 2014 | <i>Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief</i> .
Reading: CIfA |
| Department for Communities and Local
Government (DCLG) 2012 | <i>National Planning Policy Framework</i> , London: Her Majesty's
Stationery Office |
| English Heritage, 1991 | <i>Management of Archaeological Projects</i> . English Heritage |
| Ellison, A., 1983 | <i>Medieval Villages in South-East Somerset</i> . Western
Archaeological Trust. Bristol |
| Historic England, 2015 | <i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment:
The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide</i> . Historic England |
| Membery, S., Brunning, R., Croft, R.,
Payne, N. and Webster, C., 2011 | <i>Somerset County Council Heritage Service Archaeological
Handbook</i> . Somerset County Council |

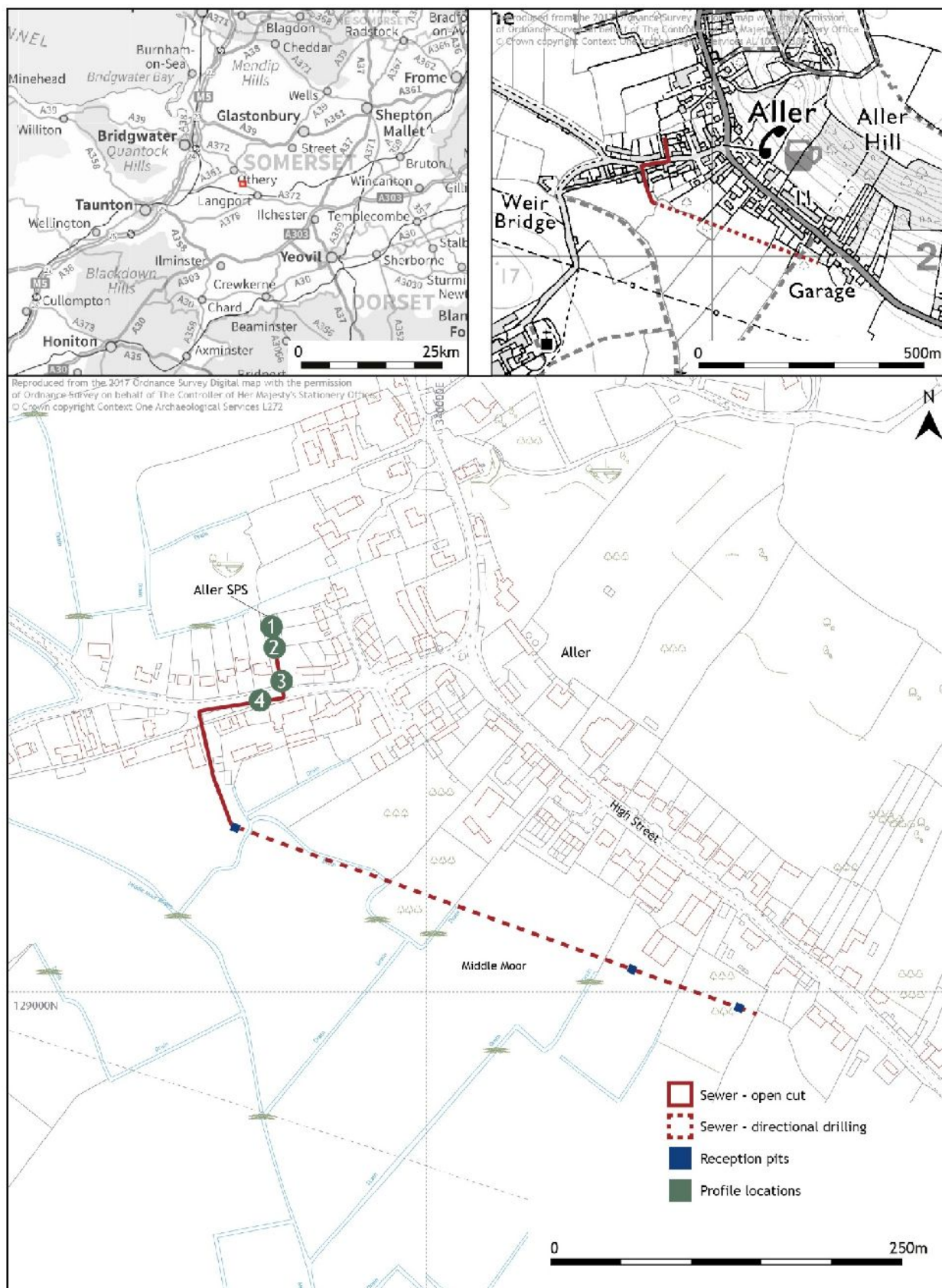


Figure 1. Site setting showing route of sewer replacement and profile locations



Plate 1. Profile 1 (facing E; 1m scale)



Plate 2. Profile 2 (facing W; 1m scale)



Plate 3. Profile 2 (facing W; 1m scale)



Plate 4. Profile 2 (facing S; 1m scale)

Appendix 1: Context summary

CONTEXT NO.	PERIOD	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	EARLIER THAN	CONTEMP. WITH	LATER THAN	LENGTH	WIDTH/DIAMETER	THICKNESS/DEPTH (m)
Profile 1									
7-100	Modern	Layer	Topsoil 7.5R 5/1 Compacted reddish grey sandy silt with frequent angular to rounded sandstone fragments <0.10m	NA		(7-101)	2.00	1.50	0.20
7-101	Modern	Layer	Redeposited topsoil 7.5R 3/1 Soft dark reddish grey silty gravel with frequent angular gravels <0.10m	(7-100)		(7-102)	2.00	1.50	0.40
7-102	Modern	Layer	Redeposited natural clay 7.5R Firm red clay with occasional angular gravel <0.10m	(7-101)		NA	2.00	1.50	0.60
Profile 2									
(7-200)	Modern	Layer	Tarmac 7.5YR 5/2 Compacted brown mixed gravel concrete	NA		(7-201)	30.00	0.50	0.40
(7-201)	Geological	Layer	Alluvial clay 2.5YR 5/6 Compacted red silty clay with occasional limestone fragments <0.05 with occasional charcoal and shell	(7-200)		(7-202)	30.00	0.50	0.50
(7-202)	Geological	Layer	Redeposited natural clay 2.5 YR 4/6 Compacted red clay with occasional limestone fragments <0.10m	(7-201)		NA	30.00	0.50	1.00
Profile 3									
(7-300)	Modern	Layer	Tarmac/Hogging 7.5 YR 5/2 Compacted brown mixed gravel concrete	NA		(7-301)	30.00	0.55	0.40
(7-301)	Geological	Layer	Alluvial clay 2.5 YR 5/6 Compacted red silty clay with occasional limestone fragments <0.05 with occasional charcoal and shell	(7-300)		(7-302)	30.00	0.55	0.50
(7-302)	Geological	Layer	Redeposited clay 2.5 YR 4/6 Compacted red clay with occasional lias fragments <0.20m	(7-301)		NA	30.00	0.55	1.00
Profile 4									
(7-400)	Modern	Layer	Road makeup 10 YR 6/1 Compacted grey road make up with frequent angular stone fragments <0.20	NA		(7-401)	1.00	0.50	0.50
(7-401)	Geological	Layer	Natural Clay 2/5 YR 5/6 Soft red clay	(7-400)		NA	1.00	0.50	0.50

Brickfield Offices : Maperton : Wincanton : Somerset : BA9 8EG
1 Emperor Way : Exeter Business Park : Exeter : Devon : EX1 3QS
T: 01963 824696 : E: mail@contextone.co.uk

Registered in England Number 6005800 : VAT Registered Number 834 1916 29

