

**LYMPHAM FTS
SOMERSET**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
WATCHING BRIEF
REPORT**

Prepared for:

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Cover	Area of compound during groundworks
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Appendix 1	Context Summary

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Wessex Water to undertake an archaeological watching brief on the construction of a new First Time Sewer in Lympsham, Somerset. The watching brief comprised two areas which were to be formed as construction compounds, centred on National Grid Ref 335555 154280.

Groundworks were undertaken in April and September 2004, when an area measuring approximately 0.4ha was topsoil stripped in advance of formation of a site compound.

No archaeological features were observed within the exposed subsoil and subsequent excavation of services trenches revealed red-brown and grey clays to a depth of at least 2m below the subsoil.

A small assemblage of medieval and post-medieval material was recovered from the removed topsoil, although this is likely to be the result of manuring rather than an indicator of buried archaeological features.

Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by Wessex Water and the assistance and co-operation of John Harcombe is recognised. Thanks is also due to Steven Membury of Somerset County Council.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Jon Martin and Gail Wakeham. The illustrations were prepared by Linda Coleman. This report was compiled by Rob Armour Chelu who also managed the project on behalf of Wessex Archaeology.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Wessex Water (the Client) to undertake an archaeological watching brief during selected groundworks associated with the construction of a new First Time Sewer (FTS) in Lympsham, Somerset (hereafter, 'the Site').

1.1.2 The watching brief was maintained via three site visits undertaken in April and September 2004 whilst compound construction and subsequent trench excavation was underway, and in accordance with advice from Steven Membery, Development Control Archaeologist to Somerset County Council.

1.1 The Site

1.1.3 The site comprised an area to the north of Church Lane, Lympsham, known as Church Field, centred on NGR 335555 154280.

1.2 Planning Background

1.1.4 Wessex Water, on advice from Somerset County Council, agreed to incorporate archaeological monitoring as part of their groundworks on this scheme.

2 GEOLOGICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Geology

1.1.5 The Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales, Solid and Drift Edition 1:50,000, Sheet 295) shows the underlying solid geology to comprise strata of the Mercia Mudstone Group, overlain by localised terrace and alluvial deposits.

2.2 Topography

1.1.6 The pipeline and compound area were situated within the village of Lympsham, in an area of low lying levels, at an elevation of c. 6m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Introduction

- 1.1.7 A rapid study of the proposed pipeline route via the online Somerset Historic Environment Record (HER) identified three sites of archaeological significance in the vicinity of the site.

3.2 Prehistoric

- 1.1.8 A polished stone axe was recovered from a private garden some 200m to the south east of the site. No further remains of prehistoric, or indeed pre-medieval origin are recorded

3.3 Medieval

- 1.1.9 The medieval church of St Christopher lies to the south of the Site. The earliest reference to a Rector at Lymphsham was made in 1274 when Edward I appointed Bartholomew de England to the post. The church underwent extensive refurbishment in 1820 and again in 1909. Shallow excavations at the base of the tower in 1996 revealed no evidence for earlier archaeological remains or burials.

3.4 Other Remains

- 1.1.10 Substantial ditches forming a large rectangular enclosure lie some 100m north-west of the Site. A number of ditches are recorded as extending from this enclosure, suggesting this may be part of an undated field system.

4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 1.1.11 The objective of the watching brief was to establish, within the constraints of the agreed strategy, the presence or absence, location, extent, date, character, condition and depth of any surviving remains which may be affected by the proposed development.
- 1.1.12 In particular the watching brief sought to clarify the impact upon the archaeological resource of any groundworks necessary for the new construction and to ensure their preservation by record.

5 WATCHING BRIEF METHODOLOGY

- 1.1.13 A full time professional member of Wessex Archaeology's staff visited the Site during topsoil stripping and subsequent service trench excavation associated with the construction of the compound
- 1.1.14 The area of the watching brief was machine excavated to, but not beyond, the topsoil layer. A digital photographic and written record was maintained during the groundworks.

1.1.15 A covering of ‘Terram’ and hardcore was subsequently laid over the stripped area to form the compound hard standing. Subsequent excavation in this area was undertaken for the installation of services.

6 RESULTS

1.1.16 The area subject to the watching brief comprised Church Field to the north of the church, measuring approximately 0.4ha, which was machine stripped of topsoil (**101**) in advance of formation of the compound hard standing.

1.1.17 No archaeological layers or features were evident within the area, although the depth to which the stripping was undertaken may not have been sufficient to reveal features masked by the lower red-brown clay-rich subsoil (**102**).

1.1.18 Subsequent excavation of service trenches and parts of the pipe trench (to depths of up to two metres) revealed a heavy natural red-brown clay (**103**), graduating to grey with depth. No archaeological features or disturbance of any kind was observed in the exposed section.

7 FINDS

1.1.19 A small finds assemblage was recovered from the excavated topsoil. These finds were returned to Wessex Archaeology’s Salisbury office and rapidly assessed. A tabulated description of the finds is presented in Table 1, below.

Table 1: Finds

Context No.	Material	No.	Wt. (g)	Comments
101	Animal Bone	11	117	
101	CBM	1	17	Post-medieval roof tile
101	Glass	2	35	Bottle and green glass 'chipping'
101	Pottery	3	59	1 medieval coarseware; 1 late medieval/early post-medieval fine sandy (dish); 1 post-medieval redware

7.1.2 Given the unstratified nature of the finds, no further work has been undertaken on them. They have, however, been retained and will form part of the Project Archive.

8 DISCUSSION

1.1.20 The watching brief demonstrated that, although the topsoil in the watching brief area contained low levels of medieval and post-medieval material, no features were present on the Site which cut the underlying subsoil.

1.1.21 This does not preclude the possibility that features of medieval, or indeed other dates, were present at lower levels. It is likely, however, that given the

quantities and abrasion of the ceramics, that these finds were the result of manuring of the fields in antiquity.

9 PROJECT ARCHIVE

- 1.1.22 The project archive, consisting of an A4 ringbinder and a collection of black and white and colour photographs is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology at Old Sarum, Salisbury, Wiltshire under the project code 55790. In due course the paper archive will be deposited with Somerset Museum Services.

Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context			
No.	Type	Description	Depth
101	<i>Layer</i>	Topsoil: Dark red-brown silty clay loam with occasional sub-angular stone.	0-0.28m
102	<i>Layer</i>	Subsoil: Reddish brown silty clay with rare sub-angular stone.	0.28m-0.38m
103	<i>Layer</i>	Natural red & grey clays – top 10-20cm weathered. Occasional stone fragments.	0.38m+