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Archaeological Observation

For

Amey plc

On behalf of

Severn Trent Water

Concerning

Water Main Installation (Welshpool A6W11321-01151) Coed-y-Dinas Welshpool Powys

September 2017

REPORT SPECIFICATION

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Contents:

1 Non-Technical Summary

Border Archaeology Ltd was instructed by Amey plc on behalf of Severn Trent Water to undertake archaeological observation of engineering groundworks near Coed-y-Dinas Welshpool Powys for the installation of a new water main. Observation was carried out of approximately 900m of open-cut trenching.

The line of the new main crossed an area of high potential for encountering remains of prehistoric ritual and funerary activity close to Coed-y-Dinas Round Barrow (Whitehouse Bridge Barrow) and Sarn-y-bryn-caled Pit Circle/Ring Ditch. Observation commenced close to Llyn Coed-y-Dinas. The northern extent of the observation was at Sawmill Cottages.

No archaeological finds or features were observed during the course of the work. The more southerly part of the route showed evidence for recent disturbance, possibly the result of quarrying in advance of the A458 upgrade or from construction of either the A483 or the Coed-y-Dinas Garden Centre.

Further to the north, natural deposits including bedrock at a shallow depth were present. Whilst it may be the case that the very shallow topsoil precluded occupation in this area, it is also possible that any activity was of a dispersed nature that could well have been missed by the pipeline route.

2 Introduction

Border Archaeology Ltd (BA) was instructed by Amey plc on behalf of Severn Trent Water to undertake archaeological observation (watching brief) of approximately 900m of open-cut trenching during engineering groundworks relating to the installation of a 1km section of 250mm diameter rising main to transfer flows between Coed-y-Dinas and Welshpool (Ref. Welshpool A6W11321-01151).

The groundworks comprised direct-drilling and open-cut trenching across agricultural land, the open-cut section running from approximately NGR: SJ 22030 05216 to SJ 22238 06001 (*fig. 1*).

The route of the pipeline was planned to avoid Coed-y-Dinas Round Barrow (Whitehouse Bridge Barrow), a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) (MG281; NPRN 17001/306956) (NGR: SJ 22356 05960). This monument was clearly marked on contractors' plans and cordoned-off to prevent accidental damage resulting either from the engineering works or vehicle/plant movements.

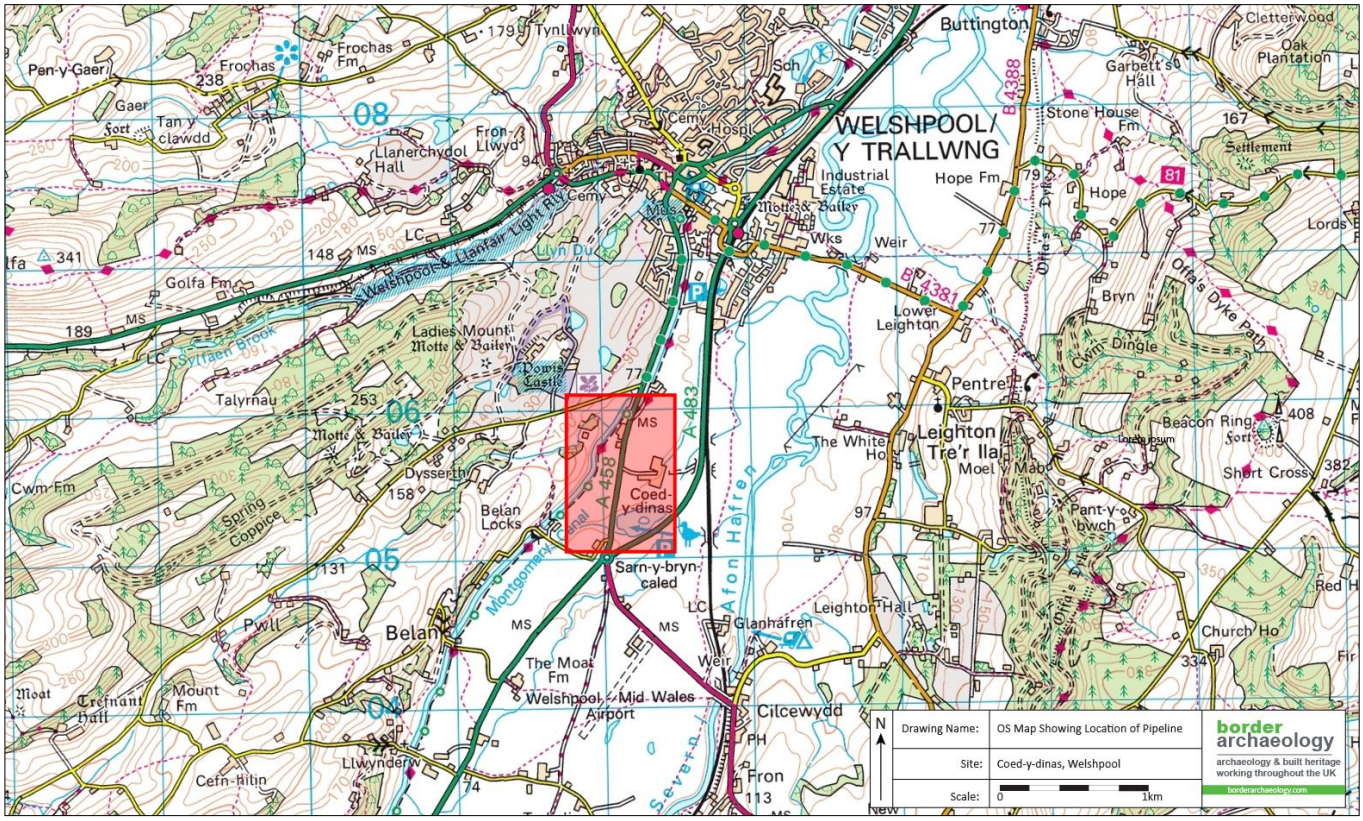

Fig. 1: Site location

2.1 Site Description

The line of the main ran from the Llyn Coed-y-Dinas Nature Reserve to a point located to the N of Sawmill Cottages, where the main crossed the road (using direct-drilling).

2.1.1 Soils and Geology

The local soils consisted largely typical brown earths of the Denbigh 1 series (541j) composed of well-drained fine loamy and fine silty soils overlying Palaeozoic slaty mudstone and siltstone.

3 Historical and Archaeological Background

The area has a high potential for prehistoric ritual and funerary archaeology dating mainly to the late Neolithic and early Bronze Age. Coed-y-Dinas Round Barrow SAM (Whitehouse Bridge Barrow) (MG281; NPRN 17001/306956) measures some 25m in diameter and survives to a height of *c*. 0.5m. It occupies a slight hollow in the river terrace. No features or deposits of Palaeolithic or Mesolithic date have been identified in the vicinity.

Observation commenced close to Sarn-y-bryn-caled Pit Circle/Ring Ditch (NPRN: 307114) (NGR: SJ 219 049), a circular setting of 20 post-pits with a diameter of about 17m, with some disturbance at the centre. The site was excavated in 1990 prior to construction works for the Welshpool Relief Road and has therefore been de-scheduled. A cursus some 380m long and 12m wide and three ring ditches lie *c*. 150m to the W (MG167; NPRN: 275942) (NGR: SJ 2168 0483). Charcoal recovered during excavated has suggested a date of 3800 BC. Cropmarks of a further pair of parallel ditches (NPRN: 417167) lie NE of the site.

Slightly to the W, at Limekiln Cottages, is an enclosure of Roman date (NPRN 85513). Nearby Powis Castle was constructed in the late 13th century by Gruffydd ap Gwynwynwyn, afterwards Baron de la Pole. It was sold to the Herbert family in 1587 and extensive improvements were carried out during the 1670s and 1680s with further work taking place at the beginning of the 20th century. It was bequeathed to the National Trust in 1952.

4 Methodology

The programme of archaeological work was carried out in accordance with practices set out in *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (CI*f*A 2014) and *Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (CI*f*A 2014). BA adheres to the CI*f*A *Code of conduct* (2014) and to *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide* (Lee 2015).

The open-cut section of pipeline trenching was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.2m by machine and toothless bucket. Direct-drilling access pits were excavated under watching brief conditions. An archaeologist was present during all groundworks potentially affecting archaeological remains.

Topsoil and subsoil were routinely checked during groundworks to collect and record any significant finds. In the absence of archaeological deposits, sketch sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20 on BA's *pro forma* profile recording sheet and an annotated plan of the scheme of works produced (*fig. 2*). A high-resolution digital

photographic record was made of stratigraphic units, together with a representative record of the progress of the archaeological work. Photographs contained appropriate scales and were indexed and cross-referenced to written site records. Details of subject and direction of view were recorded onto a photographic register, indexed by frame number.

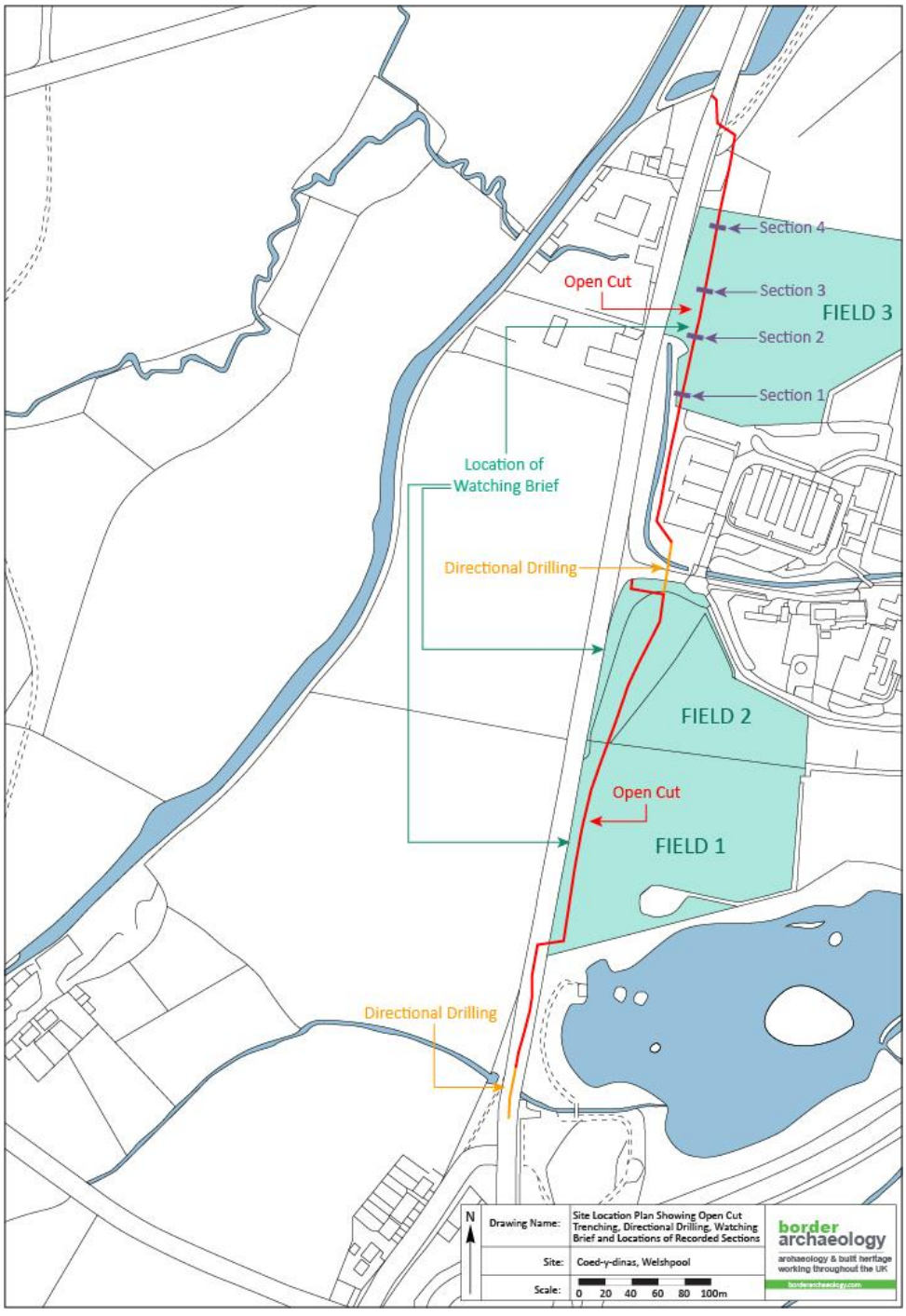

Fig. 2: Route of main

5 Results

5.1 Field 1

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	601		Deposit	Topsoil	Moderately compacted mid-to-dark brown silt clay; moderate organic content, no obvious inclusions; 0.2m thick trench-wide. Overlying (602).	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	602		Deposit	Subsoil	Moderately compacted light brown silty clay; frequent small stones; 0.45m thick trench-wide. Underlying (601). Overlying (603).	-	-	-	-	-	Possible glacial deposit
3	603		Deposit	Natural	Well-compacted mid-pinkish-brown silty clay; frequent small stones (to W), larger stones & gravel (to E), hard yellow stone & clay beneath; >0.4m thick trench-wide. Underlying (602).	-	-	-	-	-	-

5.2 Field 2

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	701		Deposit	Topsoil	Moderately compacted mid-yellowish-brown sandy clay; 0.2m thick trench-wide; Overlying (702).	-	-	-	-	-	-

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
2	702		Deposit	Subsoil/re-deposition	Moderately compacted mid-greyish-yellow silty clay; frequent stones, tarmac fragments & twine; > 0.9m thick trench-wide. Underlying (701).	-	-	-	-	-	Tarmac & twine to full depth of excavation

5.3 Field 3

5.3.1 Section 1

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	101		Deposit	Topsoil	Moderately compacted mid-yellowish-brown sandy clay; 0.2m thick trench-wide. Overlying (102).	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	102		Deposit	Subsoil	Moderately compacted mid-yellowish-grey stone w. yellow clay patches; 0.5m thick trench-wide. Underlying (101). Overlying (103).	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	103		Deposit	Natural	Well-compacted mixed mid-yellow & grey clay; frequent angular stone; >0.4m thick trench-wide. Underlying (102).						-

5.3.2 Section 2

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	201		Deposit	Topsoil	Moderately compacted mid-yellowish-/greyish-brown silty clay; 0.2m thick trench-wide. Overlying (202).	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	202		Deposit	Natural	Moderately compacted mid-yellowish-grey stony gravel w. yellow clay patches. Underlying (201).	-	-	-	-	-	-

5.3.3 Section 3

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	301		Deposit	Topsoil	Moderately compacted mid yellowish-/greyish-brown silty clay; 0.2m thick trench-wide. Overlying (302).	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	302		Deposit	Subsoil	Moderately compacted mixed mid-grey silty clay & mid-yellowish-grey silty clay; small angular stones; 0.2m deep trench-wide. Underlying (301). Overlying (303).	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	303		Deposit	Natural	Well-compacted mid-yellowish-grey gravel/stone w. patches of clay; occasional water rolled cobbles; >0.9m thick trench-wide. Underlying (302).	-	-	-	-	-	-

5.3.4 Section 4

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	401		Deposit	Topsoil	Moderately compacted mid-yellowish-/greyish-brown silt clay; 0.3m thick trench-wide. Overlying (402).	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	402		Deposit	Natural	Well-compacted mid brown & mid-yellowish-brown stony clay; > 1m thick trench-wide. Underlying (401).	-	-	-	-	-	-

5.3.5 Section 5

Item	Context No.	Matrix Phase	Type	Interpretation	Discussion	Finds					Comments
						Small Find	Pot	Bone	Misc.	Sample No.	
1	501		Deposit	Existing carpark surface	Compressed stone & *terram*; 0.3m thick trench-wide. Overlying (502).	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	502		Deposit	Natural	Yellow grey stone w. clay patches; 0.5m thick trench-wide. Underlying (501). Overlying (503).	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	503		Deposit	Natural	Well-compacted mottled yellowish-grey clay; angular stone; >0.4m thick trench-wide. Underlying (502).	-	-	-	-	-	-

6 Discussion

No finds or features of archaeological significance were encountered during the course of the work, despite the line of the main passing through a prehistoric landscape of known archaeological potential.

The route was designed to avoid the Coed-y-Dinas Round Barrow SAM (Whitehouse Bridge Barrow), which was clearly marked to avoid accidental damage.

In Field 2 (*fig. 2*) disturbance to the full depth of the excavation had taken place. This was clearly of recent date, with fragments of tarmac and twine present. The field may have been reclaimed quarry, with quarrying further to the S forming the Llyn Coed-y-Dinas Nature Reserve. On this part of the route, any archaeological features or deposits would therefore have been destroyed.

Plate 1: View W of Section 3

Further to the N, the trench ran through extremely compact rock and gravel (*Plate 1*). The shallow depth of topsoil and the presence of bedrock immediately beneath might have made the area unsuitable for occupation.

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