

Sewage Pumping Station Kington Worcestershire



Archaeological Watching Brief

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February 2014

**Client: North Midland
Construction Plc**

Issue No: 1
Fieldwork Reference No: WSM 49642
NGR: SO 9858 5577



Client Name: North Midland Construction PLC
Client Ref No:
Document Title: Sewage Pumping Station, Kington, Worcestershire
Document Type: Archaeological Watching Brief Report
Issue/Version Number: 1
Grid Reference: SO 9858 5577
Planning Reference: CC/12/0089
Invoice Code: KINGLNWB
OA Job Number: 5703
Site Code: WSM49642
Receiving Museum: Worcestershire Museums
Museum Accession No: WSM49642
Event No:

Issue	Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by	Signature
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Document File Location: Projects on Server 1k\Kington, Kington Lane, Worcestershire\WB Report
Graphics File Location: Servergo:/oaupubs1_lthruQ*KINGLNWB
Illustrated by: Marcus Dylewski

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Sewage Pumping Station, Kington, Worcestershire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Summary

Between August 2013 and January 2014, Oxford Archaeology undertook a watching brief during the construction of a new sewage pumping station on land off Kington Lane, near Kington, Worcestershire (NGR: SO 9858 5577).

A modern agricultural soil and turf layer overlying an undated ploughsoil horizon was recorded during the watching brief. No evidence for any other activity, either in the form of archaeological features or of residual finds, was encountered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by North Midland Construction PLC to undertake a controlled watching brief at the site of a proposed sewage pumping station at Kington Lane, Kington, Worcestershire (SO 9858 5577).
- 1.1.2 A planning application (ref: CC/12/0089) was submitted to the Local Planning Authority for the works. A brief was set by Mike Glyde of Worcestershire County Council detailing the Local Authority's requirements for work which would be necessary to discharge the advised planning condition (Worcestershire County Council 2013).
- 1.1.3 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was submitted to, and approved by, Mike Glyde showing how it would implement those requirements (Oxford Archaeology 2013).
- 1.1.4 All work was undertaken in accordance with the '*Standards and guidelines for Archaeological Projects in Worcestershire*' (revised 2010), the Institute for Archaeologists '*Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*' (revised 2008), and local and national planning policies.

1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The village of Kington is situated approximately 13km east of Worcester. The site lies to the west of Kington village, immediately to the south of Kington Lane (Fig. 1).
- 1.2.2 The area of the works was located on a gentle west-facing slope within farmland, running down to a small valley containing an open watercourse which discharges into the Piddle Brook to the north.
- 1.2.3 The site lies on the mudstone of the Blue Lias and Charmouth Mudstone formations. Alluvium and sands and gravels of the Wasperton Sand and Gravel Member have also been recorded in the area (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 As part of the investigation a search of the Historic Environment Record (HER) was conducted covered a circle of 1km radius centred on the site (Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service 2013). This assessment included HER data, available historic maps, aerial photographs and archive material. An extract from this assessment is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 *Within the search area eight listed buildings and three unlisted historic buildings are recorded.*



- 1.3.3 *The majority of these buildings date to the 17th or 18th Century, aside from the church which was built in the 13th Century. An English Heritage project to identify the Historic Farmsteads of Worcestershire also recorded 11 farmsteads and two out farms within the search area, mostly from the 19th Century.*
- 1.3.4 *The search area sits within a rolling lowland topography of brown soils over soft mudstone and lias clay, utilised for mixed farming and nucleated settlement with isolated farms. The historic field pattern is one of small to medium scale planned fields/parliamentary enclosure which changes around Kington to show the remnants of enclosed strip fields.*
- 1.3.5 *The majority of the archaeological fieldwork within the search area comprises salvage recording along water pipe works surrounding Flyford Flavell (approximately 1km to the south). This work identified a number of field parcels containing ridge and furrow, and this reflects the majority of the archaeology recorded within the search area. Earthwork preservation is good throughout the area with a large amount of features pertaining to the shrunken medieval village of Kington being located in the fields to the north of the current village (400m to the north-east). Archaeological evidence for Roman activity within the search area includes the conjectural route of the Bromsgrove to south east Roman road and the bridge crossing the Piddle Brook known locally as "the Roman Bridge". No Prehistoric archaeology is recorded within the search area however cropmark enclosures are recorded near Abberton to the South.*

Potential

- 1.3.6 The area has an unknown archaeological potential as defined in the Historic Environment Character Assessment for South Worcestershire (Worcestershire County Council 2010). This states: *'The survival of below ground deposits is generally unknown, but there are indications of prehistoric and Roman settlement. Potential for the survival of waterlogged deposits close to the Whitsun and Piddle Brooks'* (ref: HECZ102).

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The general aims of the investigation, as set out in the WSI, were:
- To identify and record the presence/absence, extent, condition, quality and date of all archaeological remains in the areas affected by the works;
 - To make available the results of the investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The watching brief was conducted as a series of site visits during those operations which had the potential to impact upon archaeological deposits. These operations included topsoil stripping and ground reduction during the construction of the sewage pumping station, access track and works compound (Fig. 2).
- 2.2.2 The construction of an associated pipeline was not subject to monitoring.
- 2.2.3 The excavations were carried out using a tracked excavator fitted with a toothless bucket.
- 2.2.4 All spoil generated by both the machine and hand excavations was examined for the presence of archaeological artefacts.



- 2.2.5 During this work, any features and deposits observed were issued with unique context numbers, and context recording was in accordance with established OA practices (OA, 1991). Bulk finds were collected by context. Black-and-white negative photographs and a digital photographic record was taken of all excavations, general settings and archaeological sections.
- 2.2.6 Site plans showing the location of any excavations and any recorded sections were maintained. Section drawings of features and sample sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 The work was undertaken in two phases. In the first phase the area of the access track and works compound was stripped. During the second phase of work the foundations for the new pumping station itself were excavated (Fig. 2).
- 3.1.2 Each phase of work is described separately below followed by an overall discussion and conclusion.

Phase 1: The Works Compound and Access Track

- 3.1.3 The works compound and access track extended from the southern edge of Kington Lane and comprised a roughly triangular area measuring 15m east-west and 25m north-south. During this operation the ground level was reduced between 0.30m and 0.35m in depth.
- 3.1.4 Exposed within the base of the excavations was the underlying natural geology, a pale yellow-brown sandy clay (104) containing occasional small weathered fragments of stone.
- 3.1.5 Overlying this was a layer of grey-brown silty clay (101), between 0.2m and 0.28m in depth, containing charcoal flecks.
- 3.1.6 Above layer 101 was a layer of dark grey-brown clayey loam topsoil and turf (100), 0.1m - 0.15m deep, containing charcoal flecks and occasional abraded fragments of brick, sherds of post-medieval pottery and clay pipe stem.
- 3.1.7 The stratigraphy remained constant throughout the area of the strip. No significant archaeology was observed.

Phase 2: The Pumping Station

- 3.1.8 The excavation of a launch pit for a below ground boring machine (3.2m by 3.2m), an area of hard standing for vehicular access and the foundation plinth for the pumping station itself (approximately 25m by 12m) were monitored during this phase of works.
- 3.1.9 The natural sandy clay, 104, was recorded at a depth of 0.42m below the current ground level (Fig. 3, Sections 100 and 101 and Plates 1 and 2)). This deposit was in excess of 0.6m in depth, with the incidence of weathered stone increasing with depth.
- 3.1.10 Above the natural clay was a layer of grey-brown silty clay (103), 0.22m deep. It contained charcoal flecks. Overlying this deposit was a layer of dark grey-brown clayey loam topsoil and turf (102), 0.2m deep. This contained charcoal flecks and fragments of earthenware pottery.



3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 All artefacts recovered were collected from the present day layer topsoil and turf, layers 100 and 102. These included a fragment of clay pipe stem, sherds of creamware pottery, including transfer printed (“willow pattern”) ware and glazed earthenware. All the material is of 19th- or early 20th-century date.

3.3 Environmental remains

- 3.3.1 No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were encountered during the course of the watching brief.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The pale yellow-brown sandy clay (104) exposed within the bases of all the excavations is the upper part of the underlying natural geology of the area.
- 4.1.2 Overlying the natural clay was a layer of silty clay (101 and 103). The presence of charcoal flecks within this layer suggests that it represents a worked soil or former ploughsoil horizon. Although not dated, it is thought likely that this relates to agricultural activity in the medieval or post-medieval period. There was, however, no surviving evidence of ridge and furrow agriculture.
- 4.1.3 The modern topsoil and turf horizon (100 and 102) contained charcoal flecks together with sherds of pottery and clay pipe, indicating that, although it is currently under pasture, the field has been cultivated or ploughed in the past. The dating evidence recovered suggests that this activity dates to the 19th- or early 20th-century.
- 4.1.4 No evidence for any other activity, either in the form of archaeological features or of residual finds, was encountered during the course of the watching brief.

**APPENDIX A. ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY**

Context	Type	Depth	Comments	Finds	Date
100	Layer	0.15m – 0.22m	Present day topsoil and turf	Clay pipe, pottery	C19th -C20th
101	Layer	0.2m – 0.25m	Earlier ploughsoil horizon	-	-
102	Layer	0.15m – 0.2m	Present day topsoil and turf	Clay pipe, pottery	C19th -C20th
103	Layer	0.22m – 0.25m	Earlier ploughsoil horizon	-	-
104	Layer	> 0.6m	Natural sandy clay	-	-



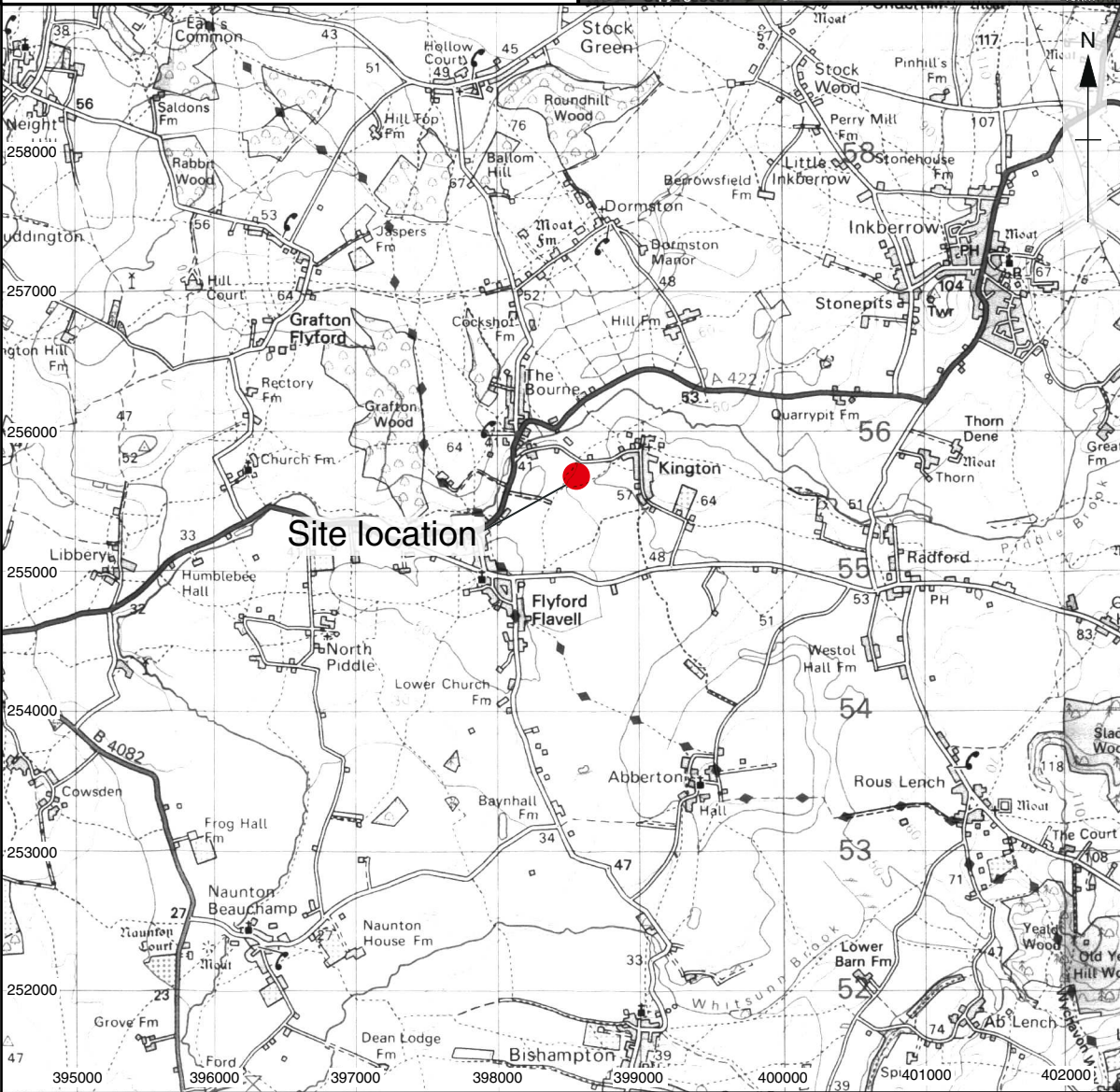
APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

- IFA, 2008 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs.*
- Oxford Archaeology,
2013 *Sewerage Pumping Station, Kington, Worcestershire: Written Scheme of Investigation*
- Worcestershire Archive
and Archaeology
Service, 2013 *Historic Environment Record Search: Kington Lane, Kington, Worcestershire WSM49642*
- Worcestershire County
Council, 2010 *Historic Environment Assessment for the South Worcestershire Joint Core Strategy Area*
- Worcestershire County
Council, 2013 *Requirements for a Programme of Archaeological Work at Kington Lane, Kington Village, Worcestershire*



APPENDIX C. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name:	Sewage Pumping Station, Kington, Worcestershire
Site code:	WSM49642
Grid reference:	SO 9858 5577
Type of watching brief:	Machine stripping of topsoil and subsoil in advance of the construction of a sewage pumping station.
Date and duration of project:	Between August 2013 and January 2014, four site visits
Area of site:	Approximately 1000m ²
Summary of results:	<p>Between August 2013 and January 2014 Oxford Archaeology undertook a watching brief during the construction of a new sewage pumping station on land off Kington Lane, near Kington, Worcestershire (NGR: SO 9858 5577).</p> <p>A modern agricultural soil and turf layer overlying an undated ploughsoil horizon was recorded during the watching brief. No evidence of any earlier activity or significant archaeology was present.</p>
Location of archive:	The archive is currently held at Janus House and will be deposited with Worcestershire Museums in due course, under the Accession No WSM49642.



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Figure 1: Site location

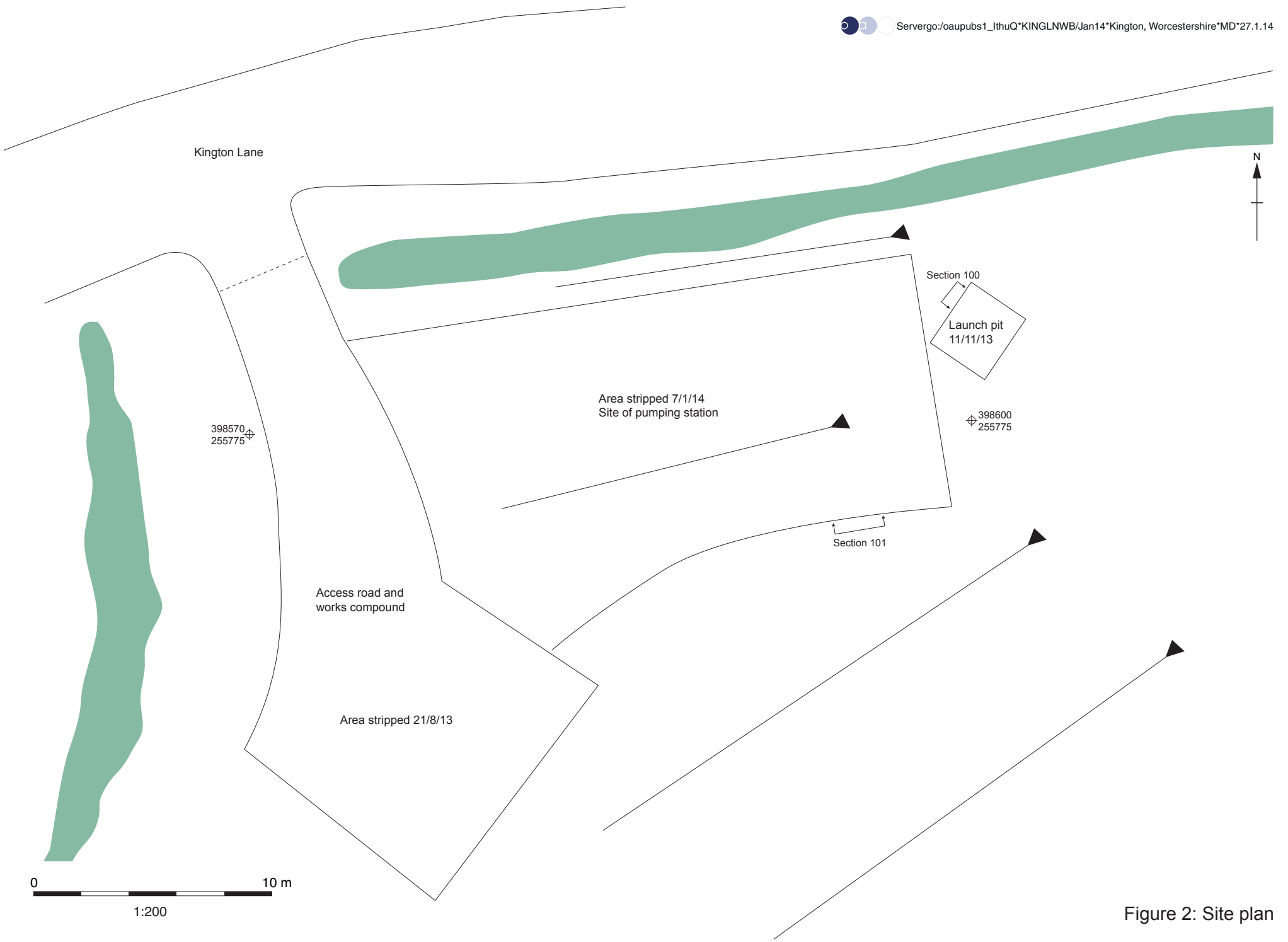


Figure 2: Site plan

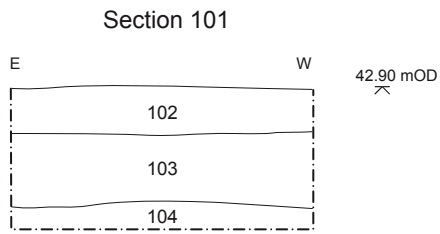
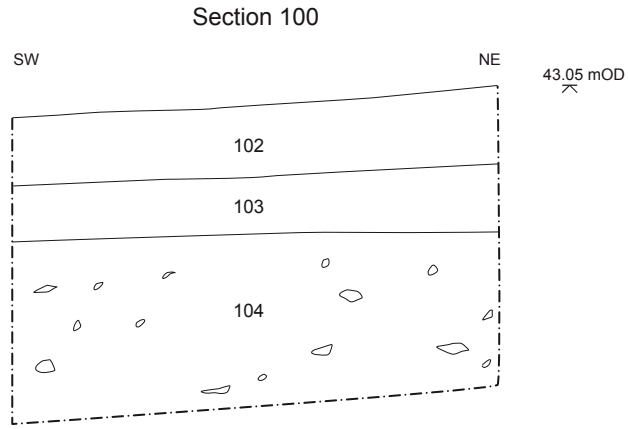


Figure 3: Sections



Plate 1: Section 100

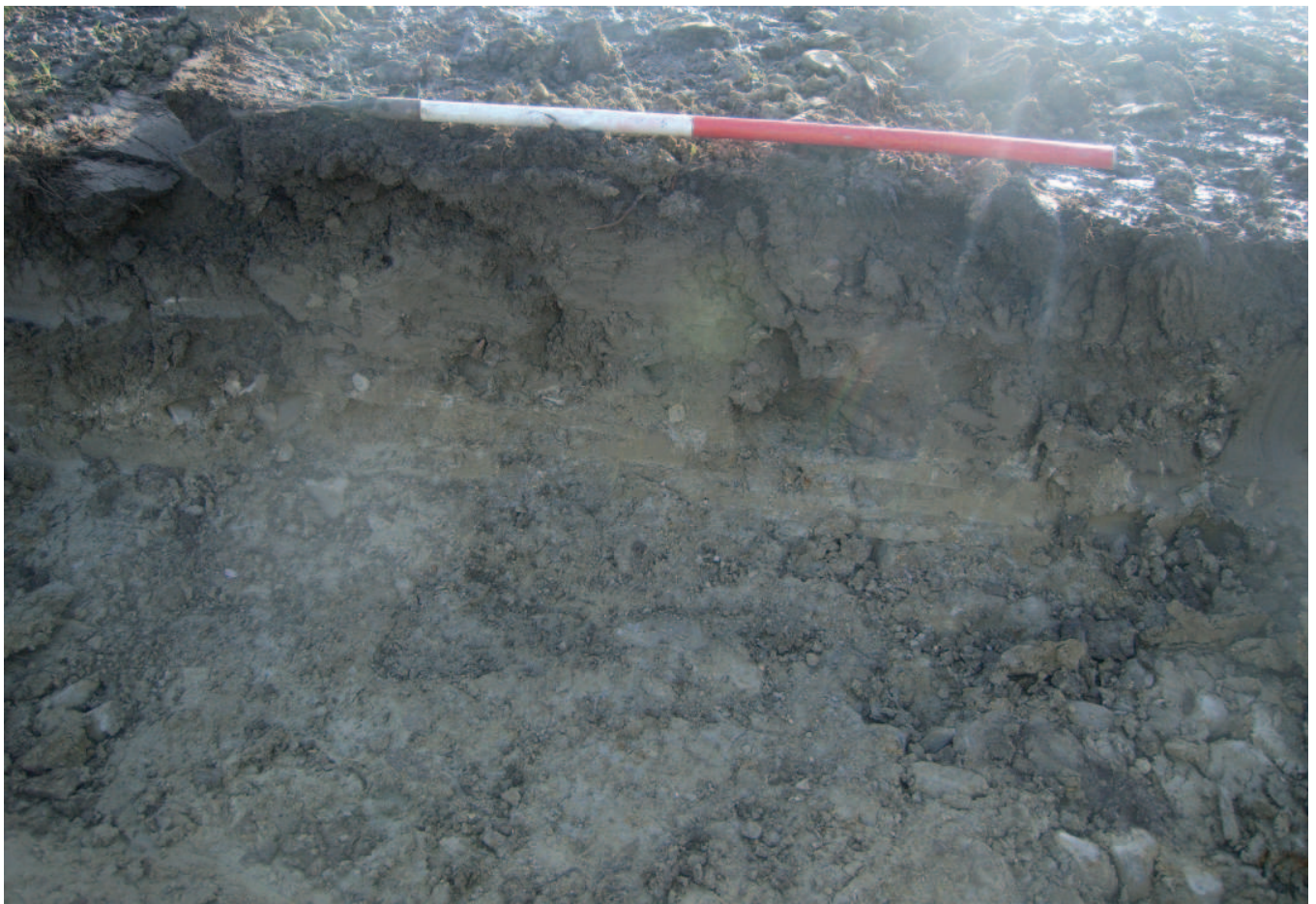


Plate 2: Section 101



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