Brecon to Tirley Gas Pipeline
Plot 271
Fine Street, Peterchurch
Herefordshire

Archaeological Watching Brief

for
PPS Pipeline Systems

on behalf of
National Grid

CA Project: 4977
CA Report: 15151

February 2016
Brecon to Tirley Pipeline Project
Plot 271
Fine Street, Peterchurch
Herefordshire

Archaeological Watching Brief

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CA Report: 15151

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<td>A</td>
<td>29 February 2016</td>
<td>Tom Weavill</td>
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SUMMARY

Project Name: Brecon to Tirley Gas Pipeline, Plot 271
Location: Fine Street, Peterchurch, Herefordshire
NGR: SO 3336 3968
Type: Watching Brief
Date: 17-25 March 2015
Location of Archive: To be deposited with Hereford Museum Resource & Learning Centre
Site Code: FEL 14

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the installation of remediation drainage at Plot 271 associated with the Brecon to Tirley high pressure gas main, Fine Street, Peterchurch, Herefordshire.

Two undated ditches were identified during the groundworks which were sealed by a post-Roman alluvial layer dated during previous excavations. They are most likely associated with archaeological remains previously excavated to the east within Plot 271 which range from Mesolithic to post-Roman in date. No artefacts were recovered.
1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In March 2015 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for PPS Pipeline Systems on behalf of National Grid at Plot 271 associated with the Brecon to Tirley high pressure gas main, Fine Street, Peterchurch, Herefordshire (centred on NGR: SO 3336 3968; Fig. 1).

1.2 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2015) and approved by the LPA acting on the advice of Julian Cotton, Archaeological Advisor, Herefordshire Council. The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2014), the *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage 1991), the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager’s Guide* (English Heritage 2006). It was monitored by Julian Cotton.

1.3 Site 271 is located approximately 150m east of Fine Street and 1.5km north-west of Peterchurch, Herefordshire and lies at 129m AOD. It comprises an area of agricultural land within the floodplain of the River Dore, which runs along the northern boundary of the site.

1.4 The underlying solid geology of the area is mapped as Raglan Mudstone Formation overlain by superficial deposits of Devensian Till and Alluvium (BGS 2014).

2. **ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

2.1 An *Archaeology and Heritage Survey* for the pipeline route suggested there were no known archaeological remains within the site, but did note that worked flint and Roman pottery had previously been recovered in the immediate vicinity (CA 2006). A subsequent geophysical survey revealed several anomalies (Bartlett-Clark Consultancy 2007), on which three evaluation trenches were targeted. All of the trenches revealed archaeological features, including ditches and pits containing Roman pottery and prehistoric lithics (Network Archaeology 2013).

2.2 Prior to the fieldwork reported on here, archaeological excavation was undertaken in advance of the pipeline construction within a 7m wide strip along the centre line of the pipe trench, with an adjoining “arm” to the north-east also being excavated to
evaluate the nature of a projected enclosure. Throughout the remainder of the plot, it was agreed that the overlying alluvial silts, averaging 0.3m in thickness, would provide sufficient protection for the archaeological features to be preserved in-situ (Network Archaeology 2013).

2.3 The earliest features identified during the pipeline construction works included a number of probable pits or postholes, two pits/ditch termini, and a possible occupation layer. All appeared to be prehistoric, and were primarily dated by the recovered lithics. A Roman enclosure bounded by three concentric ditches was also identified, with associated features including a metalled surface and a cow burial. The range of recovered artefacts was indicative of domestic occupation (Network Archaeology 2013).

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 The objectives of the archaeological works were:

- to monitor groundworks, and to identify, investigate and record all significant buried archaeological deposits revealed on the site during the course of the development groundworks; and
- at the conclusion of the project, to produce an integrated archive for the project work and a report setting out the results of the project and the archaeological conclusions that can be drawn from the recorded data.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2015). An archaeologist was present during intrusive groundworks comprising the excavation of a trench 269m in length. The western 139m of the trench, which ran parallel to and crossed the gas main, measured a minimum of 1m in width. Thereafter the remainder of the trench measured 0.3m wide (Fig. 2). The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.1m becoming shallower to the south-east.

4.2 Where archaeological deposits were encountered written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual.
4.3 The archive from the watching brief is currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble and will be deposited with Hereford Museum Resource and Learning Centre. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix B will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

5. RESULTS (FIGS 2-7)

5.1 The natural geological substrate, 103, consisting of pinkish grey clay sand, was only revealed within the western 114m of the trench and was found at an average depth of 1m below present ground level (bpgl). It was cut by two narrow undated ditches: ditch 105, running on a north-west/south-east alignment, and ditch 107 running on an east-west alignment. Ditch 105 was filled by sandy clay 104 and ditch 107 was filled by clay sand 106. The ditch fills were sealed by a brownish red silty clay alluvium, 102, with an average thickness of 0.6m. This alluvial deposit was itself sealed by a 0.2m-thick subsoil, 101 and a 0.2m-thick topsoil, 100.

6. DISCUSSION

6.1 The fills of ditches 105 and 107, although undated, were sealed by alluvial layer 102 which previous works have identified as a post-Roman layer probably laid down during a prolonged period of disuse at the site (Network Archaeology 2013). As such a Roman or earlier date seems likely for the ditches.

6.2 Ditch 107 may form a continuation of a narrow east-west aligned ditch observed during previous works (Fig 2) which was identified as being within the Roman phase of activity (4th century) but later than the three concentric enclosure ditches. Ditch 107 may represent a later expansion of activity to the west after the enclose ditches fell out of use.

7. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Tom Weavill who also wrote the report. The illustrations were prepared by Leo Heatley. The archive has been compiled by Tom Weavill and prepared for deposition by Hazel O’Neill. The project was managed for CA by Cliff Bateman
8. REFERENCES

Bartlett-Clark Consultancy 2007 *Felindre to Tirley Gas Pipeline: Report on Archaeogeophysical Surveys*

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2014 [http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html](http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html) viewed 16th June 2014

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2006 *Felindre to Tirley Gas Pipeline: Archaeology and Heritage Survey*. CA typescript report **05140**

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2015 *Brecon to Tirley Gas Pipeline Project, Plot 271, Fine Street, Peterchurch, Herefordshire: Written Scheme of Investigation*

Network Archaeology 2013 *Brecon to Tirley Gas Pipeline and Tirley Feeder Connector; Analysis of the Archaeological Record*

APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

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<th>Context No.</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Fill of</th>
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<th>Description</th>
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<td>104</td>
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APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

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Brecon to Tirley Gas Pipeline (Plot 271)
Fine Street, Peterchurch, Herefordshire

Site location plan

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observed groundworks
archaeological feature
previous investigation (Network Archaeology 2009)
archaeological feature (Network Archaeology 2009)
5   Drainage trench showing ditch 105, facing north-west
6 General shot of western end of drainage trench, facing north-west
General shot showing excavation of south-eastern part of drainage trench