

**WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION TO PROVIDE FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL MITIGATION
DURING DEVELOPMENT AT COLLUM FARM, KEWSTOKE, NORTH SOMERSET**

James Brigers BA May 2023) (T/A Prospect Archaeology (Somerset))

**NGR: ST 3533 6585 (north site)
ST 3544 6568 (south site)**

**LAT: 51.387946; LONG: -2.9307854
LAT: 51.386459; LONG: -2.9290903**

North Somerset Council planning refs: 22/P/0767; 22/P/2505; 22/P/1362

OASIS ref: Prospect1516005

North Somerset museums acc. no. WESTM:2023.17

1.0 Project Overview (fig. 2)

1.1 Planning permission has been granted by North Somerset Council to allow the formation of four storage lagoons in pairs centred at the above grid references and the creation of a haul road running west from the site to access Collum Lane at ST 3498 6540. The permission has been subject to three separate planning applications each of which permitted conditional on the implementation of a programme of archaeological investigation.

2.0 Location (fig. 1)

2.1 The site is contained within a single agricultural enclosure of roughly triangular plan at the above grid reference approximately 49,850m² in area on level, low-lying land (approx. 6m above Ordnance Datum) to the east of Collum Lane and Collum Farm and bounded to the north east by the Banwell River within the civil parish of Kewstoke in North Somerset. The underlying geology in the area of the site consists of an extensive drift deposit of estuarine alluvial clay¹.

3.0 Historical & Archaeological Context

3.1 The site sites within the North Somerset Levels, an extensive area of low-lying land formed of alluvial clay deposited during a sequence of marine transgressions prior to deliberate attempts at drainage and reclamation for use as agricultural land initially during the Romano-British period through the establishment of coastal defences and a network of drainage channels, some of which remain visible on aerial photography. In certain locations the drainage appears to have been sufficiently successful to allow permanent settlement during the latter part of the period. In the locality of the site the Banwell River may well have remained navigable to some extent and the remains of what was probably a Roman boat were discovered during the construction of a water main within the area of the site in 1974² The defences and drainage system appear to have failed through reduced maintenance at the end the end of the period and the land returned to an environment of frequent inundation leading to the deposition of further alluvial sediment.

¹ British Geological Survey, digital map data

² North Somerset HER MNS174



Fig. 1: Collum Farm, Kewstoke. Location of the Site



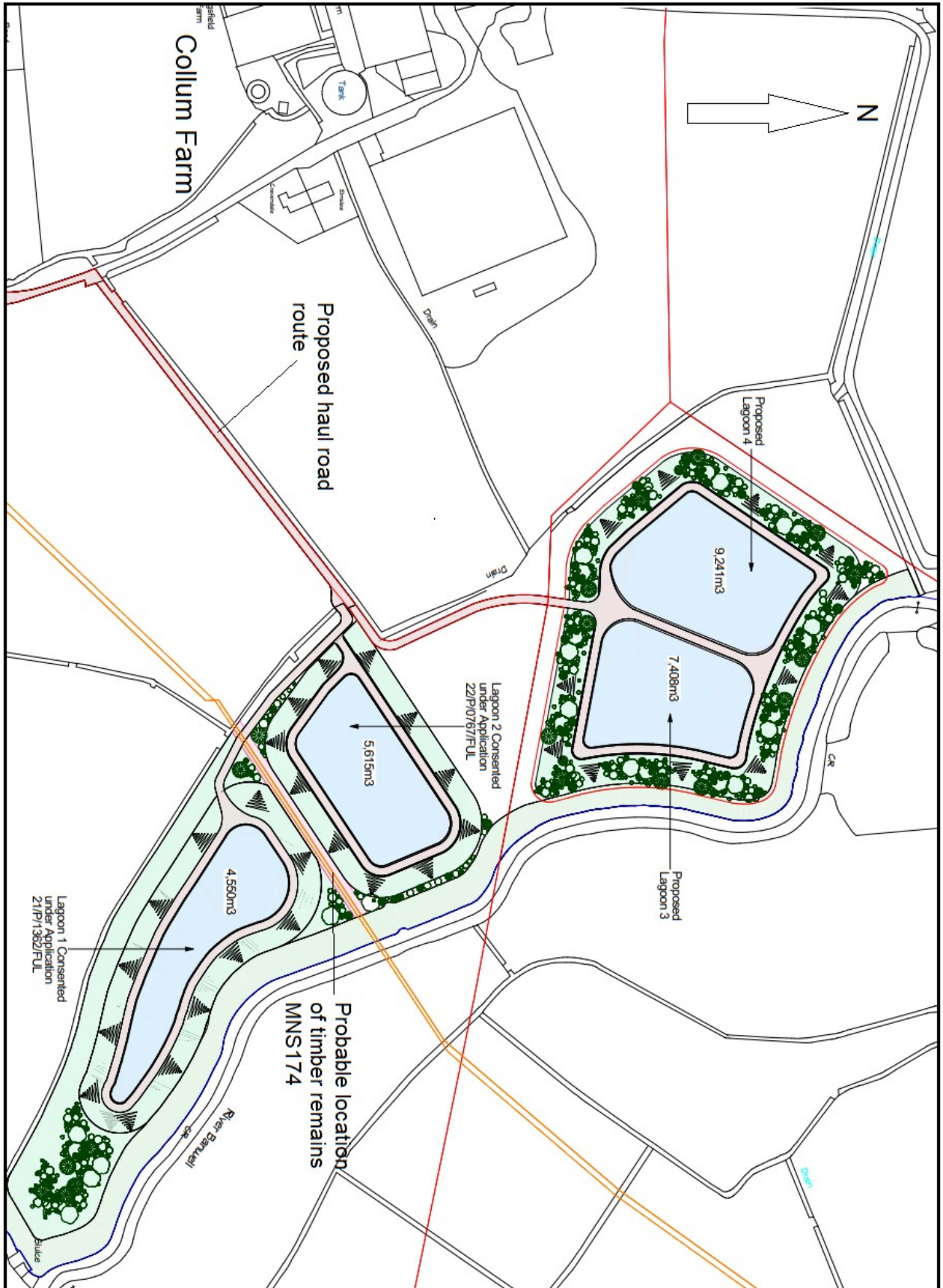


Fig. 2: Collum Farm, Kewstoke. Plan of the Site as Proposed

3.2 During the medieval period the area was once more the subject of concerted efforts of drainage predominantly through the sponsorship of the local monastic houses and once again the area land became economically productive and limited settlement possible. The majority of the pattern of boundaries within the site and the course and form of the Banwell River originate during this later period of management.

3.3 The settlement of Kewstoke would seem to have Saxon origins at the centre of a small agricultural estate. This was held by Edric prior to the Conquest but was granted to Gilbert son of Thorold by the time of Domesday in 1086. The early settlement most probably developed through the medieval period concentrated around the parish church of St Paul on the 'dry' land at the base of the northern slope of Milton Hill, to the south west of the site. Throughout its early development to the majority of the land to the north of this was largely unproductive marsh but following drainage from the 13th century onwards, the quantity of economically viable land increased and settlement became possible in the form of scattered farmsteads, most of which probably of post medieval origin. Collum Farm itself probably falls into this category and is shown to be in existence on the Kewstoke tithe map of 1840³.

3.4 A geophysical survey was conducted in the south eastern part of the site in support of the planning application in this area. The results of this were largely negative although linear features were detected that probably represent the remains of former field boundaries⁴.

4.0 Archaeological Mitigation

4.1 Excavations for the proposed lagoons will impact a large area of deposits with demonstrated potential to contain significant remains of Romano-British and possibly prehistoric date. The results of the 2022 geophysical survey proved largely negative but the method employed would not have detected buried timber structures or isolated artefacts and it may be assumed that such potentially significant remains may exist within the site and the scope of the proposed excavations. In addition the deposits are likely to contain well preserved palaeoenvironmental material, analysis of which could prove an important resource to aid in the understanding of former vegetation cover and land use in the area.

4.1 Consequently the proposed works are to take place in an area of high archaeological potential. In order to satisfy the archaeological condition imposed by North Somerset Council it is required that an archaeological watching brief will be conducted during all excavations associated with the development. This mitigation format has been agreed as suitable with North Somerset Council and is in accordance with North Somerset Council policy and guidance presented in *NPPF*.

4.2 Due to the potential significance of archaeological material contained within the site, monitoring of excavations will initially be *comprehensive* with the archaeologist being present on site during all groundworks. Should it be established during initial observations in each area of the site that there is little potential for preservation of significant remains or if levels of disturbance preclude the survival of meaningful remains the monitoring will be reduced to *intermittent* with monitoring visits by the archaeologist designed to coincide with excavations to allow a record to be maintained of exposures

³ Know Your Place

⁴ Sumo Ltd, March 2022 'Land at Collum Farm, Kewstoke, North Somerset', report no. 06566

of material. The main contractor will be fully appraised of the work and methodology agreed within this written scheme of investigation and be advised to contact the archaeologist a minimum of two weeks prior to intrusive works commencing to agree a time for the work to take place.

4.3 The objectives of the archaeological watching brief are to contribute to the knowledge of the area of the site through the recording of any archaeological remains exposed as a result of activities associated with the proposed development, to allow preservation by record of any such remains that will be otherwise destroyed by the construction process and to enable the recovery of preserved timber structures and artefacts and palaeoenvironmental samples under controlled conditions. Particular attention will be made to the character, condition, date and significance of deposits, features and structures. The results will be assessed with reference to the South West Archaeological Research Framework⁵ and, if suitable, be applied to advance specific research aims identified within that publication.

5.0 Process & Methodology

5.1 Watching Brief

5.1.1 The archaeological contractor will provide the relevant officer from North Somerset Council Historic Environment Service with adequate notice (usually 2 weeks unless a shorter period has been agreed) of work commencing on the site. Provision will be made to safely accommodate monitoring of the project by personnel from those bodies. Monitoring by NSC HES will continue until the archive is submitted.

5.1.2 All works will be undertaken within the terms of guidance provided by the Institute for Archaeology for the implementation of archaeological watching brief⁶.

5.1.3 Only suitably qualified, trained and experienced persons will monitor all groundworks associated with the development. The archaeologist will remain in supervision throughout the process of excavation of the foundations for the new extension to the north west of BG7 and the reduction to accommodate the new concrete slab within the footprint (see fig. 2, above for extent). In addition, the excavation any new service runs would also be the subject of archaeological monitoring.

5.1.4 Where machine excavation is employed this should be undertaken with a toothless bucket, working in a single direction where possible. If possible archaeological remains are encountered machine excavation will cease to allow further investigation. Exposed surfaces will then be cleaned and inspected by the archaeologist and recorded in appropriate detail.

5.1.5 Spoil heaps will be inspected regularly to allow the recovery of artefacts and scanned with a metal detector to retrieve metal finds.

5.1.6 In the event of particularly significant discoveries the relevant NSC HES officer will be informed and a site meeting be arranged between the consultant, NSC HES and the applicant to determine the appropriate mitigation.

⁵ Webster, CJ (ed), 2008 'The Archaeology of South West England', Somerset County Council

⁶ ClfA, 'Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief', pub. 2014; updated 2020

5.1.7 Artefacts will be collected as work progresses. Where possible these will be assigned to particular contexts and bagged and labelled accordingly with the site's unique code. Unstratified post-medieval material will be noted and discarded on site unless it retains extra-contextual significance. Provision will be made for the conservation and safe storage of finds of importance requiring such treatment.

5.1.8 Should any finds identified as treasure or potential treasure, including precious metals, groups of coins or prehistoric metalwork, be exposed, these will be removed to a safe place and reported to the local coroner according to the procedures relating to the Treasure Act 1996 Code of Practice (2nd Revision). Where removal cannot be effected on the same working day as the discovery suitable security measures will be taken to protect the finds from theft.

5.1.9 All structures, deposits and finds are to be excavated and recorded according to accepted professional standards.

5.1.10 Provision within the project budget will be made for the sampling of the fills of cut features impacted by works associated with the proposal. Such samples may be for the purpose of scientific dating or, if for general environmental analysis, larger quantities of material may be retained (between 40 & 60 litres) for processing and analysis by suitably equipped and qualified specialists. The sampling strategy will be conducted in accordance with Historic England guidance⁷ and refined through consultation with a qualified specialist to be provided by Geoflo Ltd (Corton Denham, Somerset).

5.1.11 All recording points used should be accurately tied into the National Grid and located on the 1:1250 map of the area.

5.1.12 Plans indicating the location of all archaeological features are to be drawn at an appropriate scale, located on the site plan and levelled with respect to OD, or surrounding permanent ground levels or street level. An overall site plan is to be maintained at a scale of 1:200.

5.1.13 All plans are to accurately tied in to the site grid. All plans and sections are to be drawn on polyester based drafting film and clearly labelled. The drawings produced during the fieldwork process will be referenced to a catalogue which will accompany them into the site archive.

5.1.14 All archaeological contexts are to be recorded individually on context record sheets. A further, more general, record of the work comprising a description and discussion of the archaeology is to be maintained as appropriate.

5.1.15 All artefacts recovered during the investigation are the property of the landowner. They are to be suitably packaged, boxed and marked in accordance with the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation, Conservation Guidelines and on completion of the archaeological post-excavation programme the landowner will arrange for them to be deposited at Weston Mueum. If sufficient storage space is not available at that facility the artefacts will be retained by the applicant or the contractor until space has been created and NSC HES will be kept informed of any changes.

⁷ Historic England (Campbell, G; Moffett, L & Straker, V), 2011 'Environmental Archaeology', pp. 5-14

5.1.16 The site archive, to include all project records and cultural material produced by the project, is to be prepared in accordance with *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage (UKIC 1990)*.

5.1.17 An adequate photographic record of the excavation will be prepared. This will include photographs illustrating the principal features and finds discovered, in detail and in context. The photographic record will also include working shots to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted. All photographs of archaeological detail will feature an appropriately-sized scale. All photographs will be in digital format and will form part of the site archive to be deposited at the conclusion of the post excavation programme.

5.1.18 Given the expected character of the deposits present on the site, in particular their anaerobic attributes, it is considered possible that preserved timber artefacts and or structures will be present within the scope of the excavations. If such remains are encountered work will be suspended in the immediate vicinity of the location and adequate time and resources provided to allow record of the material in situ and their safe removal. Such remains are likely to require conservation and further specialised analysis and in this event advice will be sought from Dr Richard Brunning at South West Heritage Trust.

5.1.18 The archaeologist will comply with site health and safety policy as provided by the principal contractor. The archaeological contractor will provide a method statement and risk assessment for the main contractor's records and reference if requested.

6.0 Post Excavation Assessment, Analysis and Project Designs for further work

6.1 Where excavations reveal archaeological, artefactual or palaeoenvironmental deposits that have potential for yielding important information about the site or its environs, through specialist assessment and analysis, this assessment work will be undertaken and reported on in a separate formal Post-Excavation Assessment and Project Design. This document may also fulfil the role of an interim report if a substantial publication delay is expected.

6.2 On completion of the watching brief assessment of the site records will be undertaken as a result of which a programme of post-excavation work will be defined and a full report on the findings will be produced within 3 months of completion of the fieldwork. If no archaeological remains are encountered, a brief summary report of the work undertaken and the depths of the made ground recorded. The summary will also include a scale plan of the location of areas observed during the investigation.

6.3 During the post excavation process specialists will be consulted for the production of reports in respect of the artefact assemblage. The expected classes of finds and relevant consultants are: prehistoric/Roman ceramics (Rachel Hall); medieval/post medieval ceramics (John Allen); faunal remains (Lorrain Higby). Should other classes of material occur advice will be sought from persons with relevant specialist knowledge.

6.4 The final report (if required) will contain a minimum of the following.

a) figures:

- i) a site location plan tied into the Ordnance Survey at 1:1250 (or similar);
- ii) a trench/groundworks location plan at 1:100 or 1:200 showing the layout of archaeological features as related to the development site;
- b) an account of the background and circumstances to the work including a description of the development proposals and planning history, the nature of potential impacts arising from the proposals, any known existing disturbances on the site, background archaeological potential of the area of the site and constraints on the fieldwork.
- c) a description and interpretation of the archaeology of the site, together with an summary list of features containing information on stratigraphic relationships. This should include description of areas of disturbance, non-archaeological deposits and changes in geological subsoil where appropriate. The report will include a consideration of the effects of the development on the archaeological remains and highlight any areas of increased sensitivity within the development site which may have potential to be considered during future development.
- d) a catalogue and discussion of the finds by category. The level of detail will depend on the assessment of all stratified pottery and other datable material will be studied to some degree.
- e) a brief summary report which is to be submitted for inclusion in the appropriate annual Journal

6.5 An online OASIS (Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations) form will be completed in respect of the archaeological work and will include a digital version of the report. The report or HER entry will include the OASIS ID number as shown at the top of this document.

6.6 The digital archive generated by the project will be uploaded to the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) to ensure long-term preservation within 6 months of the completion of the project unless agreed in writing with NSC archaeologist.

7.0 Consultant Details, Qualifications & Experience:

James Brigers (T/A Prospect Archaeology), Tel : 07977902454
'Xavier',
Nethermoor Road
Middlezoy email: jamesbrigers@prospectarchaeology.co.uk
Bridgwater TA7 OPG