Manchester Digital Campus

Government Property Agency

Site Culvert Investigation – Planning Condition no. 12

This note has been produced in relation to planning condition no. 12:

Save for site set up (including erection of hoardings, siting of cabins and securing of the site, and vegetation clearance), prior to the commencement of the Enabling Works phase, a strategy and programme for the investigations of the culvert at the site shall be submitted for approval in writing by the City Council, as Local Planning Authority. This shall include:

- A masterplan showing proposed layout and the culvert route as determined from site investigation.

- Pre-construction culvert condition survey and culvert routing survey.

- Details of any culvert remediation if required, and embedded design to protect the culvert and proposed development.

- Details of how the culvert can be accessed and maintained for the lifetime of the development.

- Any works within or adjacent to the culverted watercourse that would affect it would require prior consent from the City Council as Local Planning Authority.

The approved details shall be implemented as part of the Enabling Works.

In order to discharge this planning condition, the Government Property Agency (GPA) has organised extensive drainage surveys to seek to identify the position of Shooters Brook within the former Central Retail Park. This included lifting all drainage covers within and around the site, including on adjoining properties and highways, and undertaking drainage surveys to seek to trace back to Shooters Brook. A range of survey techniques were employed by the specialist contractors, including remote monitored cameras and drone surveys. These surveys allowed the position and condition of the 900 mm drain which crosses to the rear of the site parallel to the school boundary and the 1500mm drain which dog legs across the Phase 2 site area to both be confirmed. However, despite the extensive drainage investigations, it has not been possible to establish the position of Shooters Brook within the site.



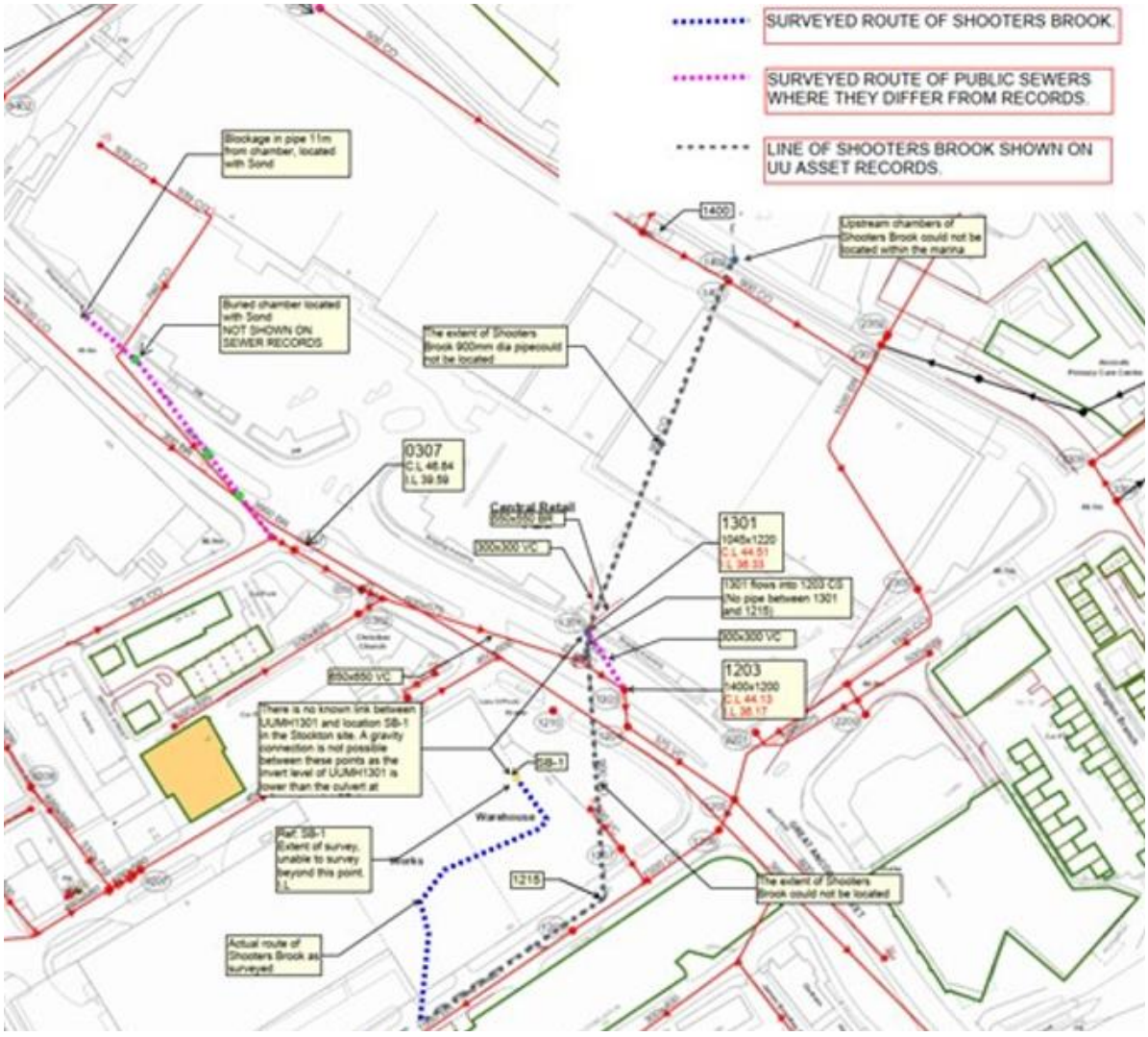
Plan no. 1 – Phasing Plan – Phase 1 is the site of Manchester Digital Campus

The depth of the culvert from historic records (over 8 metres below ground level) means that a ground penetrating radar survey is not feasible in this case so this option has also been discounted.

Historic maps have been studied and show potential routes for the culvert, but none of these cross the site of Manchester Digital Campus (the Phase 1 land as defined in the SRF), but instead sit either within the Phase 2 land or possibly cross park of the proposed new park. Plan no. 2 below is an extract from United Utilities records and shows the line of Shooters Brook crossing the site in black dots and with this alignment the culvert sits mainly in the Phase 2 land and only just clips the corner of north east corner of the new park.

The closest known position of Shooters Brook is in Store Street and drainage surveys by the GPA and United Utilities have been undertaken to try trace it from Store Street across Great Ancoats Street and into the site, but these have all been unsuccessful. The flow of water within the Culvert in Store Street is very low, which may suggest that it no longer extends beyond Great Ancoats Street. The United Utilities survey also highlighted concerns over the state of repair of the culvert in Store Street.

During the course of the investigations undertaken by the GPA, various contractors have suggested that Shooters Brook was destroyed to the north of Great Ancoats Street during the course of the construction of the Urban Splash scheme to the north of the marina when concrete was inadvertently poured into it. However, it has not been possible to substantiate whether this is the case.



Plan no. 2 - Plan taken from United Utilities records show the drain and manhole positions and the possible alignment of Shooters Brook within the Ancoats site. Based on this plan the majority of the Shooters Brook would sit in the Phase 2 land, but the Culvert would clip the northeast corner of the new park.

The drainage surveys which have been undertaken have been shared with United Utilities and there has been extensive engagement with both United Utilities and Manchester City Council as landowner. It has been agreed by all parties that the Government Property Agency has exhausted the drainage investigations open to it to establish the position and condition of the culvert within the former Central Retail Park. United Utilities has decided to undertake additional investigations of its own, because it benefits from additional powers (it can break open bricked up sections within its drains) and can utilise specialist surveying techniques. The additional surveys undertaken by United Utilities have not to date been able to confirm whether the culvert still remains within the Ancoats site and have also highlighted some concerns around the condition of the culvert in Store Street. It should be noted that the culvert is not a United Utilities asset. United Utilities has suggested that the Council has the responsibility for the culvert, but this is strongly disputed by the Council and it appears that the culvert is subject to riparian rights.

Conclusions

Based on the drainage investigations completed and historical mapping, it is safe to assume that the route of Shooters Brook culvert does not pass through the Phase 1 land on which Manchester Digital Campus will be developed. On this basis the proposed building operations within the campus will not adversely impact the culvert.

There is a possibility that the culvert passes under part of the proposed new park area (the northeast corner) based on historic maps, but the building operations within the park area (breaking out the concrete surfaces and building up the ground levels for new landscaping) should not have an adverse impact on the culvert, given the depth of the culvert below the ground surface. The civil engineers at WSP have considered the proposed building operations and consider the risk of damaging the culvert is very low and this view has also been confirmed by PP O'Connor an experienced contractor specialising in civil engineering and ground works. With the majority of the culvert sitting under the Phase 2 land, it will be protected during the course of the current proposed works by the concrete and hard surfaces that remain from its former use as a retail park.

On the basis of the above, the GPA believes it has done everything it can to discharge planning condition 12 and the original objective of the condition to protect the culvert within the site will not be compromised by the planned works.