

Darley Abbey, Derby

Asbestos in Soil Supervision of Archaeological



CLIENT: DARLEY COMMUNITY ENERGY
LOCATION: DARLEY ABBEY, DERBY
PROJECT VALUE: £10,000
DURATION: 1 WEEK
SERVICES PROVIDED: PROVISION OF HEALTH AND SAFETY DOCUMENTS INCLUDING ASBESTOS PLAN OF WORKS, SUPERVISION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS, AMBIENT AIR MONITORING, PLACEMENT OF GEOTEXTILE BARRIER AND COVER LAYER.

Darley Community Energy approached VertaseFLI after asbestos-contaminated soil was identified during a site investigation, creating substantial cost implications and the potential to delay the project. Working within all relevant legislation, VertaseFLI collaborated with the group to develop a cost-effective and compliant approach that enabled the works to progress safely.

Our team advised on additional testing requirements and provided comprehensive Health and Safety guidance both prior to and throughout the works. VertaseFLI specialists remained on site to deliver asbestos supervision, supporting and reassuring the project and archaeological teams during excavation activities.

Upon completion, the site was restored to its original level and handed back to the community group for final landscaping, including the application of grass seed.



VertaseFLI Role:

Darley Community Energy is installing an Archimedes screw turbine in the River Derwent to provide hydroelectric power to the local area. The site, currently a public park, forms part of the world's first mechanised factory and sits within the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site.

During early site investigation works, asbestos-containing soils were identified, leading Derby Community Energy to contact VertaseFLI. The discovery rendered the project initially unviable, as the client had been advised that all excavated soils would need to be removed from site.

VertaseFLI provided specialist guidance on the additional testing required and developed a methodology, including an Asbestos Plan of Works. This gave both the client and regulatory authorities confidence that the project could progress safely alongside the required archaeological works.

Works Included:

- Health and Safety advice prior to and throughout the works
- Ambient air monitoring before and during excavation
- Misting of soils with water to minimise dust emissions
- On-site asbestos supervision throughout archaeological activities to ensure worker safety
- Installation of a geotextile layer between Made Ground and subsoil/topsoil to create a clear visual break layer

Outcome:

VertaseFLI's involvement enabled the project to move forward, avoiding the need for full off-site removal of excavated soils—an approach that would have halted the scheme entirely.

Given that the works took place within a public park, it was critical that activities were carried out outside school holidays and that the working area remained securely isolated. VertaseFLI's asbestos team provided ongoing support and reassurance to York Archaeology throughout the project.

As limited clean topsoil and subsoil were recovered during excavation, additional topsoil was imported to ensure adequate clean cover above the geotextile layer.

The project was completed within the agreed timeframe and budget. VertaseFLI's expertise ensured the scheme could continue, bringing the community group closer to realising the installation of the specialist hydroelectric turbine in the River Derwent.

The client commented that VertaseFLI's knowledge, support, and responsiveness were key factors in enabling the project to progress.



SITE SETUP INCLUDING FENCING AND CLEAR SIGNAGE



EXCAVATION OF DEEP HISTORIC PIT



MACHINE BASE FROM FORMER MILL LOCATED DURING THE WORK



ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS PROGRESSING



ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS PROGRESSING



TOPSOIL SPREADING PRIOR TO GRASS SEEDING AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE PROJECT