Raw Water Main, Monkton Combe, Bath & North-East Somerset.

An Archaeological Watching Brief.

CONTEXT ONE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES LTD

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An Archaeological Watching Brief
for
Wessex Water plc

by

CONTEXT ONE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES LTD

Brickfield Offices, Maperton, Wincanton, Somerset. BA9 8EG
T: 01963 824696
F: 07092 259858
E: mail@contextone.co.uk
W: www.contextone.co.uk

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Fieldwork team: Peter Fairclough and Kayt Matthews

Report: Stuart Milby
Research: Stuart Milby
Graphics: Elizabeth Gardner

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Cover image: Working shot water main pipe trench excavations. © Context One Archaeological Services 2007

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Non-technical summary

Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief during groundworks for a raw water main at Monkton Combe, Bath & North-East Somerset (centred on NGR ST 76239 61285), over nine days between the 15th of February and the 14th of March 2006. The project was commissioned and funded by Wessex Water plc.

The investigation was advised by Mr Richard Sermon (Archaeological Officer, Bath and North East Somerset Council) following a consultation request by Mr Simon Hazel (Environmental Scientist, Wessex Water plc).

Groundwork excavations generally revealed a sequence of topsoil and colluvium overlying natural lime-rich, loamy clay sediments. A buried soil horizon was recorded on one section of the pipeline and incorporated a single sherd of 19th century pottery.

The foundations of the Somerset and Dorset Joint Railway Line were exposed in the eastern extent of the easement and comprised clinker and stone chippings. The railway line was closed to the public in 1966 (S&DJR, 2005).

No archaeological features/deposits were observed within the easement or the pipe trench and no further artefacts were recovered.

1. Introduction

1.1. Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief during groundworks on a raw water main at Monkton Combe, Bath & North-East Somerset (centred on NGR ST 76239 61285) (hereafter referred to as the Site), over nine days between the 15th of February and the 14th of March 2006. The project was commissioned and funded by Wessex Water plc.

1.2. The investigation was advised by Mr Richard Sermon (Archaeological Officer, Bath and North East Somerset Council) following a consultation request by Mr Simon Hazel (Environmental Scientist, Wessex Water plc).

1.3. The Site is situated just 250m east of Midford Castle on the edge of the Midford Castle Estate, and the Bath & North-East Somerset Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) records 3 archaeological events within the immediate area.

1.4. It was considered that further archaeological features/deposits could be present on the Site, and that these would be damaged or destroyed by the development. However, as the nature or presence of such features/deposits had not been proven on the basis of currently available information, it was determined that a reasonable archaeological response would be to carry out a watching brief during all ground disturbance.

1.5. The request for the archaeological work follows advice given by Central Government as set out in *Planning Policy Guidance Note 1* (PPG1), *General Policy and Principles*, 1997 and *Planning Policy Guidance: Note 16* (PPG16) issued by the DoE in 1990. The recommendation also follows guidance set out in *Archaeology in Bath and North East Somerset: Supplementary Planning guidance* (adopted 2004). In addition, the recommendation conforms to Policy 19 of the *Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Joint Replacement Structure Plan* (adopted September 2002), and Policy BH.12 of the *Bath & North East Somerset Local Plan Revised Deposit* (adopted December 2002).

1.6. This report summarises the topographical, geological, archaeological and historical setting of the site, and presents the results of the Watching Brief.

2. Definition and objectives of a Watching Brief

2.1. An Archaeological Watching Brief is defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) as:

> *"…a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. This will be within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report and ordered archive."* (IFA rev.1999).

2.2. The purpose of a Watching Brief is similarly defined by the IFA and is:

- *"To allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, their presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works.*

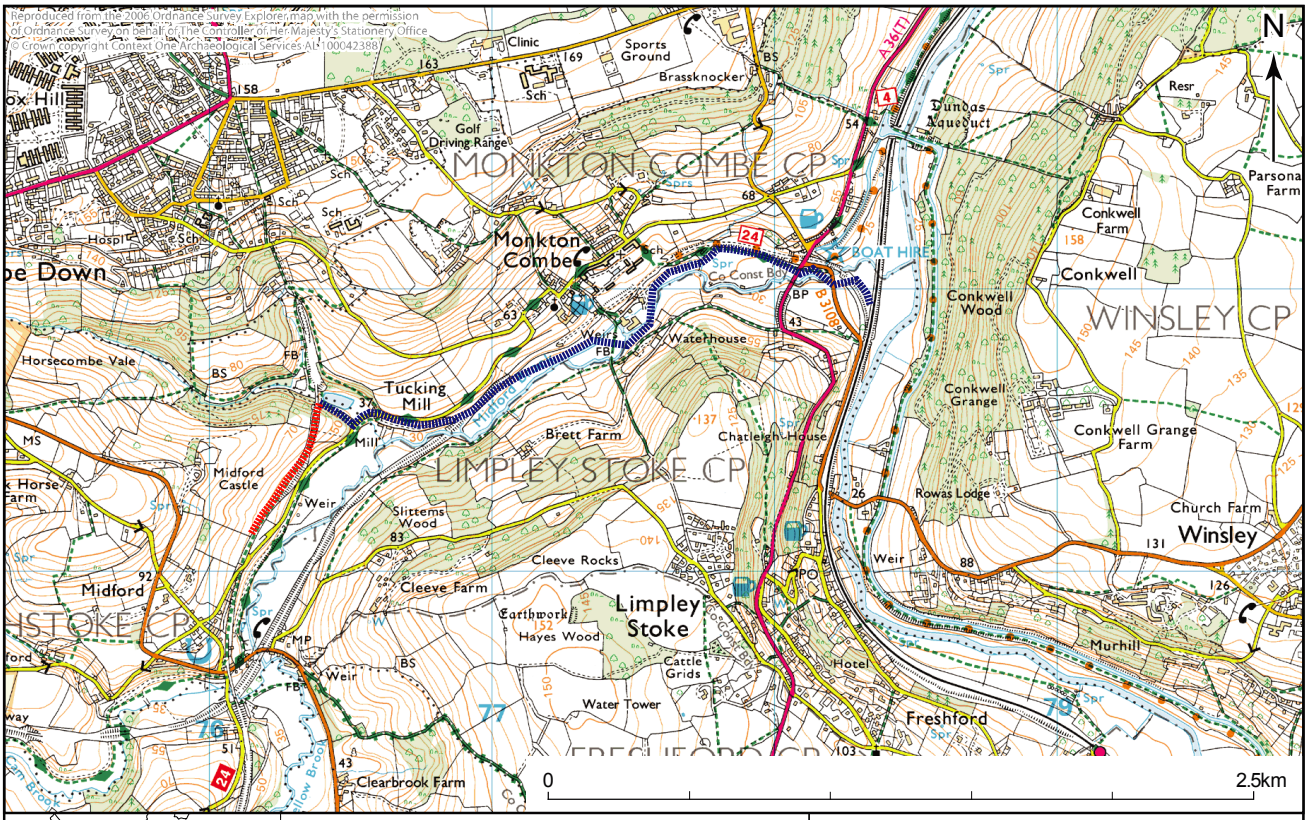
- *To provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard."* (IFA rev.1999)

2.3. The results of a Watching Brief are used to:

- produce a record of the location, nature and date of any archaeological remains encountered on the Site;
- add to the knowledge about the previous history of activity on the current site and its surroundings; and
- provide information to influence future planning decisions in the area.

3. Topography and geology

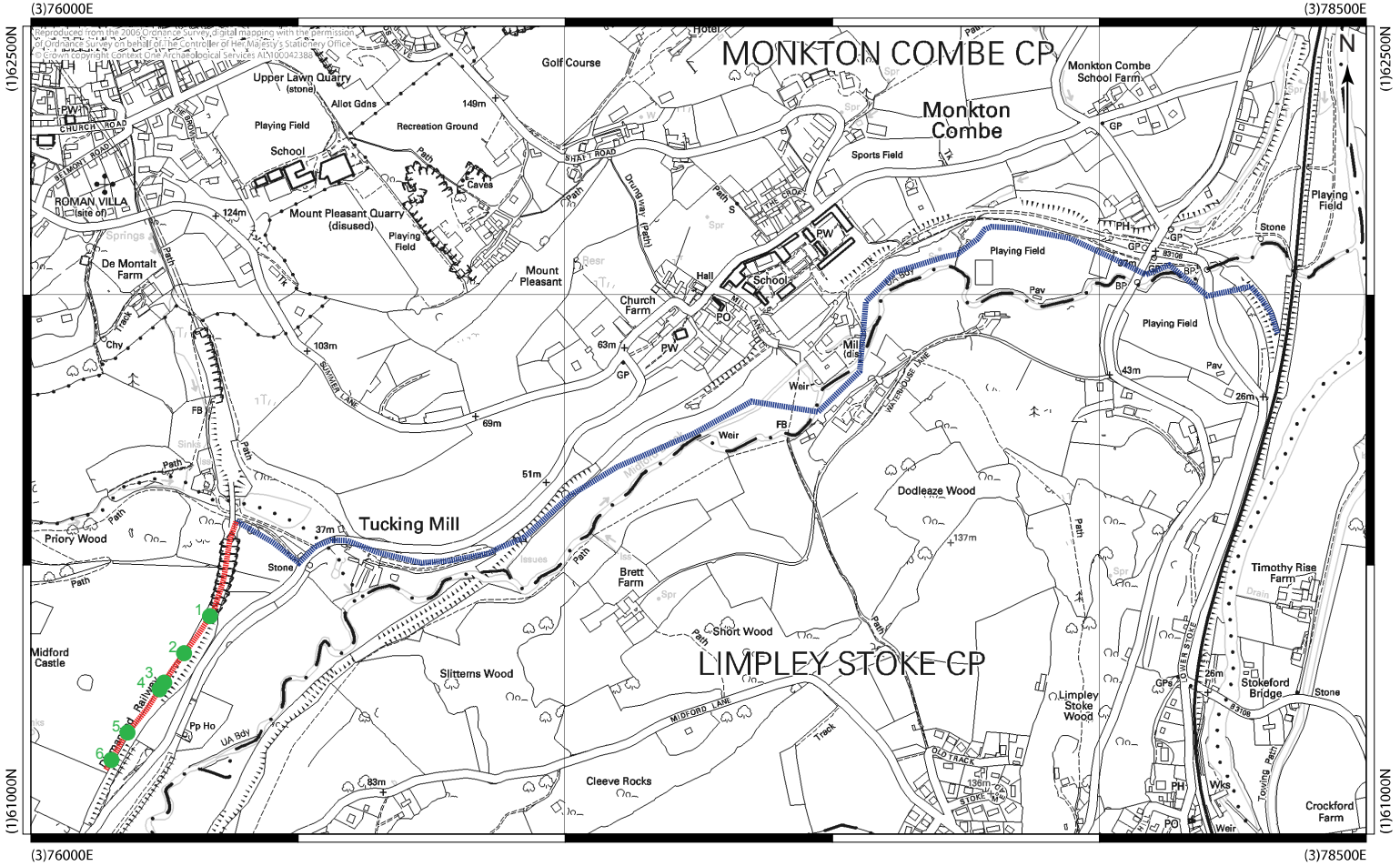
3.1. Monkton Combe is situated *c.*3km south-east of Bath city centre, in Bath & North-East Somerset. The Site (centred on NGR ST 76239 61285) is situated *c.*1.3km to the south-south-west of Monkton Combe, at the eastern extent of Combe Down (**Figure 1**). The Site occupies the northern slope of a small river valley, *c.*60m above Ordnance Datum (AOD) and *c.*250m south-east of Midford Castle (**Figure 2**). According to the British Geological Survey (2001), the underlying geology is of Mesozoic, Middle Jurassic Great Oolite, Cornbrash and Oxford Clay and Kellaways Beds. The soils in this area are characterised by lime-rich, loamy clay with impeded drainage over classic 'chalky boulder clay' (Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC), 2006).



monitored pipe trench

pipe trench

PROJECT TITLE Monkton Combe water main, Bath & North East Somerset		
FIGURE TITLE Site location plan		
SCALE as shown	*PROJECT CODE.* COAS/WBF/06/MCB	*FIGURE NO.* 1



PROJECT TITLE: Monkton Combe water main, Bath & North East Somerset		
FIGURE TITLE: Detailed site setting showing profile locations		
SCALE: as shown	PROJECT CODE: COAS/WBF/06/MCB	FIGURE NO.: 2

4. Archaeological Background

4.1. The archaeological background of the Site has largely been drawn from secondary sources. This comprised a data search of archaeological records held by Bath & North East Somerset Council as part of the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). A summary of this information is displayed below in **Table 1**.

SMR No.	Description	NGR	Distance/Direction from Site
Post-medieval (AD1547 – 1800)			
BN2341 – MBN2341	**Mill.** Tuckingmill built *c.*1812. Now a dwelling.	ST 76500 61500	*c.*190m NE
BN3426 – MBN3426	**Tramway.** Line of 1813 railway/tramway. Removed 1819.	ST 76400 61700	*c.*280m N
BN6205 – MBN6205	**Tunnel.** Stone built, associated with Canal BN6204 – MBN6204. Entrance now walled up.	ST 76500 61500	*c.*190m NE

Table 1. Summary of archaeological events within 300m of the Site.

5. Methodology

Wessex Water methodology

5.1. The total length of the pipeline laid down was *c.*3km, the majority of which was cut within the boundary of an old railway line and therefore on previously disturbed ground. The total length of pipeline under archaeological observation was *c.*300m, and was cut through previously undisturbed ground. An easement *c.* 10m wide was machine excavated in order to provide a working surface and facilitate access. To create the easement a machine equipped with a toothless bucket removed the overburden to a maximum depth of *c.* 0.50m. A machine equipped with a 1.60m wide bucket was used to excavate the trench for the new raw water supply main to a maximum depth of 1.50m and a maximum width of 1.60m.

Archaeological methodology

5.2. The programme of archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* published by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) in October, 1994 (rev. September, 1999). COAS adhered to the *Code of Conduct* issued by the IFA in October, 1997, and *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology* (1990, rev. September, 2000), at all times during the course of the investigation. The current Health and Safety legislation and guidelines were followed on site.

Easement stripping

5.3. The machine removal of the overburden along the route of the easement was carried out under archaeological supervision.

5.4. For the purposes of archaeological recording, all areas exposed through these excavations were systematically scanned for features/deposits by walking in 'zig-zag' traverses across their width. The character of deposits within each field/land unit was recorded using standard COAS *pro-forma* recording sheets.

Trenching

5.5. Where undisturbed deposits were not reached during the easement strip of the easement it was necessary to monitor the trenching to ensure that any archaeological features were suitably recorded. At appropriate intervals along the pipe trench, profile sections were recorded using COAS *pro-forma* profile log sheets, to illustrate the principal stratigraphic and physical characteristics of the deposits encountered (see **Appendix 1**).

5.6. A photographic record of the Watching Brief was prepared involving the use of digital images. This included working shots to illustrate the general nature of the archaeological operation mounted.

5.7. Artefacts collected were bagged using a combination of the site code and context numbers.

5.8. All finds from the site were retained for processing and conservation where necessary, in preparation for further analysis and archiving.

6. Results

6.1. No visible archaeological remains or deposits were exposed in any of the areas of soil stripping or during pipe trenching.

6.2. The only profile to reveal anything other than a sequence of topsoil or colluvium overlying natural sediments was Profile 6, which revealed the levelling layers of the former Somerset and Dorset Joint Railway, situated to the east of the pipeline.

6.3. A single sherd of 19th century pottery was recovered in Profile 2 from a layer of buried topsoil (104).

7. The finds

7.1. A single sherd of 19th century, blue and white transfer print pottery (21g) was recovered from context (104) (Profile 2).

7.2. A request has been made to the Roman Baths Museum and Pump Room to receive this, which will be marked with an archive accession number issued by the Museum, identifying the site, followed by the context number.

8. Discussion and conclusions

8.1. Groundwork excavations generally revealed a sequence of topsoil and colluvium overlying natural lime-rich, loamy clay sediments. A buried soil horizon was recorded on one section of the pipeline and incorporated a single sherd of 19th century pottery.

8.2. The foundations of the Somerset and Dorset Joint Railway Line were exposed in the eastern extent of the easement and comprised clinker and stone chippings. The railway line was closed to the public in 1966 (S&DJR, 2005).

8.3. No archaeological features/deposits were observed within the easement or the pipe trench and no further artefacts were recovered.

9. Archive

9.1. The Site archive is currently held at the offices of Context One Archaeological Services Ltd and consists of 30 digital images in .jpg format, 6 COAS *pro-forma* profile log sheets and a photographic register. Arrangements will be made to deposit the archive with the Roman Baths Museum and Pump Room within 12 months following the submission of this report.

9.2. Copies of the watching brief report will be deposited with:

Wessex Water plc
Claverton Down Road
Claverton Down
Bath
BA2 7WW

Planning Services
Bath & North East Somerset Council
Trimbridge House
Trim Street
Bath
BA1 2DP

9.3. As part of our commitment to public archaeology, an e-report will be available to view online or download as an Adobe Acrobat™ file from the COAS website at **www.contextone.co.uk/bath_&_ne_somerset.htm** following entry onto the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) where it will become a publicly accessible document.

10. COAS acknowledgements

10.1. Context One Archaeological Services Ltd would like to thank Mr Simon Hazel (Environmental Scientist, Wessex Water plc), for his assistance throughout the course of the investigation, and Mr Richard Sermon (Archaeological Officer, Bath and North East Somerset Council), for curatorial advice.

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The Somerset and Dorset Joint Railway After Closure (S&DJR), 2005 *http://www.nevard.com*

Appendix 1. Context Summary

Context no.	Type	Description	Dimensions			Stratigraphical relationships
			Length	Width/Diameter	Thickness/Depth	
Profile 1						
100	Layer	**Topsoil.** Soft clay. Contains occasional angular cornbrash.	-	-	0.10m	Covers (101)
101	Layer	**Natural.**	-	-	0.10m+	Covered by (100)
Profile 2						
102	Layer	**Topsoil.** Contains occasional angular cornbrash.	-	-	0.10m	Covers (103); Same as (100)
103	Layer	**Colluvium.** Clay with moderate angular cornbrash **.**	-	-	0.10m	Covers (104); covered by (102)
104	Layer	**Buried topsoil.** Contains occasional angular cornbrash and 19th century, blue and white pottery.	-	-	0.10m	Covers (105); covered by (103)
105	Layer	**Natural.** Sandy clay with calcareous deposits and cornbrash.	-	-	0.10m+	Covered by (104)
Profile 3						
106	Layer	**Natural.** Calcareous sand/gravel mix.	-	-	0.50m+	Same as (105)
Profile 4						
107	Layer	**Natural.** Calcareous sand/gravel mix.	-	-	0.50m+	Same as (105)
Profile 5						
108	Layer	**Natural.** Calcareous sand/gravel mix.	-	-	0.50m+	Same as (105)
Profile 6						
109	Layer	**Clinker.** Contains frequent angular stone chippings.	-	-	0.20m	Covers (110)
110	Layer	**Makeup.** Levelling layer for railway.	-	-	0.10m	Covers (111); covered by (109)
111	Layer	**Makeup.** Levelling layer for railway.	-	-	0.05m	Covers (112); covered by (110)
112	Layer	**Bedrock.** Brash, sandy limestone.	-	-	0.25m+	Covered by (111)