

Somervale Road, Radstock, Bath and North East Somerset.

An Archaeological Watching Brief.



CONTEXT ONE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES LTD

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Somervale Road, Radstock, Bath and North East Somerset.

An Archaeological Watching Brief

for Wessex Water plc

by



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Non-technical summary

Context One Archaeological Services Limited (COAS) carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief during the groundworks for a new replacement gravity sewer near Somervale Road, Radstock, Bath and North East Somerset (centred on NGR ST 68476 54831), over four days between the 25th and the 31st of August 2005. The project was commissioned and funded by Wessex Water plc.

The investigation was requested by Ms Charlotte Matthews (Consultant Archaeologist, Bath and North East Somerset Council) following consultation with Mr Mark Weller (Environmental Services Team) at Wessex Water plc. In an e-mail dated 17 August 2005 from Ms Matthews to Mr Weller it was stated;

“There are no known archaeological sites recorded along the proposed route. However, I understand that although this is a replacement scheme, the trench will not reuse the old trench but will cut previously undisturbed ground. In any location, there is always the potential for previously unknown archaeological remains....”

It was considered by Ms Matthews that archaeological features/deposits would be present on the site and that these would be damaged or destroyed by the development. So it was determined that a reasonable archaeological response would be to carry out a watching brief during all ground disturbance associated with the development.

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 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).

Monitoring of the twelve pre-development trial pits, topsoil/subsoil stripping, and excavation of the pipe trench for the replacement gravity sewer revealed no visible archaeological features or significant deposits. Overall, a simple sequence of topsoils, sub-soils and natural clays were observed with a layer of stones in pit 9. This was probably a natural deposit of Lias limestone, whilst post-medieval garden soils were recorded in two profiles (1400 and 1500). A small assemblage of artefacts were recovered from the topsoil/ploughsoil and the buried garden soils, consisting predominantly of pottery sherds, with several fragments of animal bone, 1 shard of glass, 1 clay tobacco pipe, 1 CBM fragment and 1 ferrous object. This probably represents an assemblage spanning the post-medieval and modern periods.

1. Introduction and Planning Background

1.1. Context One Archaeological Services Limited (COAS) carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief during the groundworks associated with the construction of a replacement gravity sewer near Somervale Road, Radstock, Bath and North East Somerset (centred on NGR ST 68476 54831), over four days between the 25th and 31st of August 2005. The project was commissioned and funded by Wessex Water plc.

1.2. The investigation was requested by Ms Charlotte Matthews (Consultant Archaeologist, Bath and North East Somerset Council) following consultation with Mr Mark Weller (Environmental Services Team) at Wessex Water plc. In an e-mail dated the 17th of August 2005 from Ms Matthews to Mr Weller it was stated;

“There are no known archaeological sites recorded along the proposed route. However, I understand that although this is a replacement scheme, the trench will not reuse the old trench but will cut previously undisturbed ground. In any location, there is always the potential for previously unknown archaeological remains....”

1.3. Although there is no recorded archaeological data for the environs, it was considered that archaeological features/deposits could be present on the site and that these could 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 associated with the development.

1.4. 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 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).

1.5. 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:

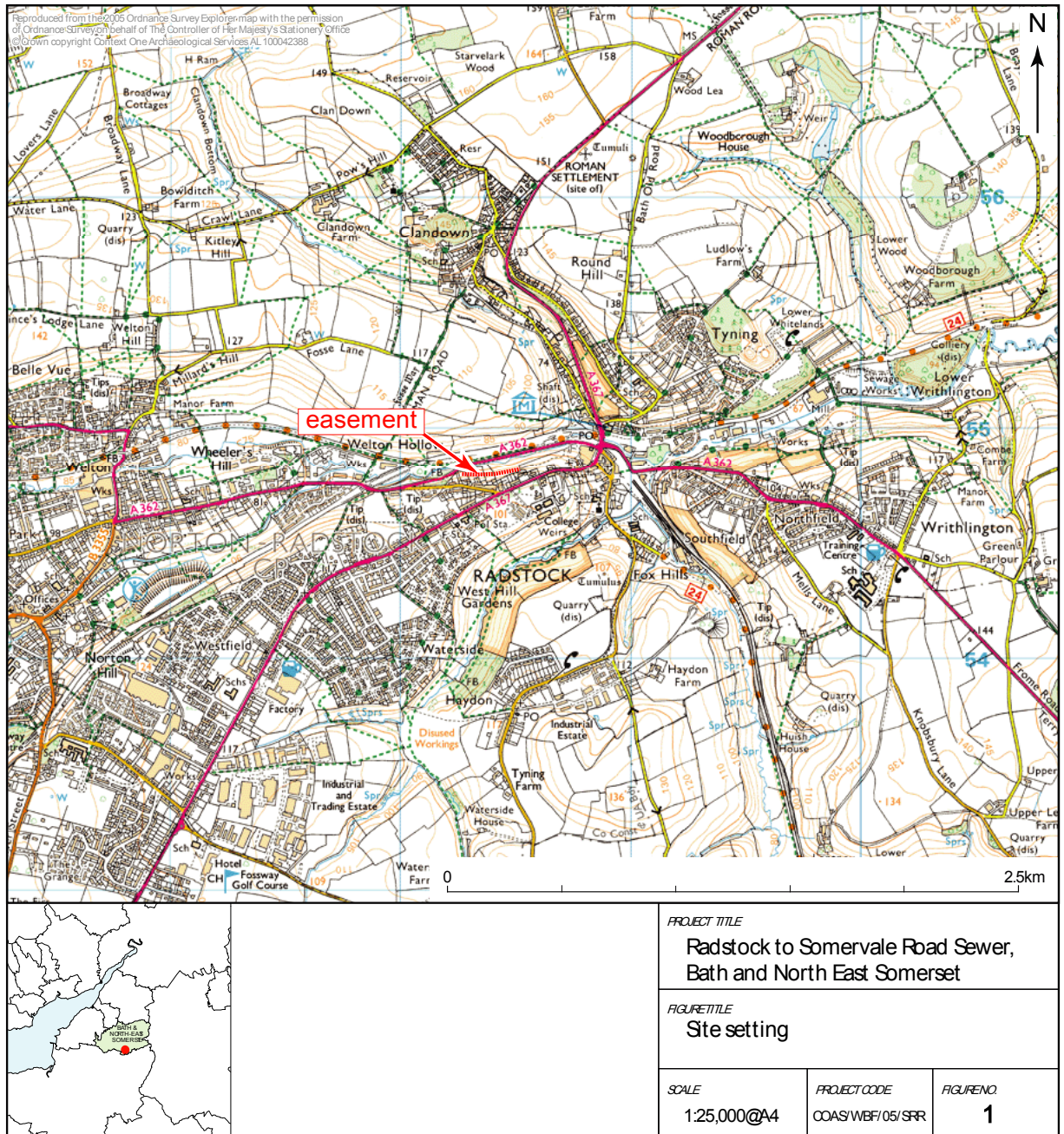
- *“To allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, their presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works.*
- *To provide an opportunity, if 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;
- provide information to influence future planning decisions in the area.

3. Topography and geology

3.1. Radstock is located *c.* 16 km to the south-west of Bath and within the district of Bath and North East Somerset (**Figure 1**). The *c.* 250m length of replacement gravity sewer (centred on NGR ST 68476 54831) is specifically located close to the disused railway line through Norton Radstock. The pipeline runs east to west through pasture situated between Somervale Road and the River Somer to the north, and the rear gardens of properties fronting onto Welton Road and Wells Road to the south. The development site occupies ground *c.* 90m above Ordnance Datum (AOD), which slopes down northwards to the River Somer. According to the British Geological Survey (UK South Sheet, 1:625000, 4th edition, 2001), the underlying geology at the western end of the scheme consists of Triassic Mudstones (including “Keuper Marl”, Dolomitic Conglomerate and Rhaetic) of the Permian and Triassic, passing into Lower Lias of the Lower Jurassic to the east. The development area is characterised by lime-rich loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage (Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC), 2007).



4. Archaeological and historical setting

- 4.1. The archaeological and historical background for the development site and environs has largely been drawn from secondary sources. This comprised a data search of archaeological records held by Bath and North East Somerset Council as part of the county Sites and Monuments Record (SMR); review of key texts that primarily included 'Avon Extensive Urban Survey Archaeological Assessment - Norton-Radstock' by E La Trobe-Bateman (1999).
- 4.2. According to the Sites and Monuments Record there are no known archaeological sites recorded along the pipeline route. However, several prehistoric sites, including a possible

Bronze Age cemetery, a rare late Bronze Age sword and several Iron Age features, are located within the Radstock parish to the south of the development area (La Trobe-Bateman 1999, 3). The route of the Fosse Way Roman road (SMR 1153 to 5977), which runs from Seaton in Devon to the Humber, is situated c. 300m to the west of the scheme. Parts of the road remain undisturbed as the road has been diverted in several places to avoid steep sections (*ibid.*, 9). Little is known about Radstock until the Domesday Survey of AD 1086 when it was recorded as a farmstead by the Fosse Way (*ibid.*). By the medieval period a manor existed and was thought to be on the site of the post-medieval manor near the medieval church of St. Nicholas. A 13th century charter for a village fair indicates that the settlement was nucleated (*ibid.*). The settlement underwent significant changes in the 18th century as a result of coal mining, particularly following the construction of the Somersetshire Coal Canal in the late 18th century. This was replaced by a tramway in 1814, to the extent that by the second half of the 19th century, Norton-Radstock became the centre of Somerset mining (*ibid.*, 4). At this time the railway was built (*ibid.*), which ran parallel and to the north of the pipeline route. Although the mining industry declined in the 1930's, Radstock was united with Midsomer Norton to create the new Urban District of Norton-Radstock, and has seen accelerated growth in the 20th century as a large residential area serving Bath and Bristol (*ibid.*, 5). Indeed, domestic properties are present to the south of the development works, although there are two Listed Buildings dating to the post-medieval period (*ibid.*, 29).

- 4.3. There are no records of any previous systematic archaeological investigations on the development site.

5. Methodology

Wessex Water methodology

- 5.1. Twelve pre-development trial pits were excavated along the proposed pipeline route and monitored for archaeological evidence (**Figure 2**). Six trial pits (7-12) were excavated by hand (c. 0.50m wide and between 1.25m and 1.50m deep) and a further six (1-6) by a machine equipped with a toothed bucket (c. 0.50m x 1.20m to 0.70 x 2.20m wide and between 0.60m and 2.40m deep).
- 5.2. The total length of the pipeline under archaeological observation was c. 250m. An easement c. 10m wide was machine excavated in order to provide a working surface and facilitate access (**Figure 2**). To create the easement a machine equipped with a toothless bucket removed the topsoil to a maximum depth of c. 0.20m. A second machine equipped with a 0.50m wide toothed bucket was then used to excavate the new trench for the replacement gravity sewer to a maximum depth of 1.60m, and a maximum width of 0.50m.

Archaeological methodology

- 5.3. 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) (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.

Pre-development trial pits

- 5.4. An archaeologist was present on site to monitor the excavation of all trial pits for the purpose of identifying and recording any archaeological features/deposits present. The locations of each trial pit were recorded using a handheld GPS and representative sections were recorded using COAS *pro-forma* profile log sheets to illustrate the principal stratigraphic and physical characteristics of the deposits encountered (**Figure 2**). Soil colours were recorded using a Munsell colour chart.

Easement stripping

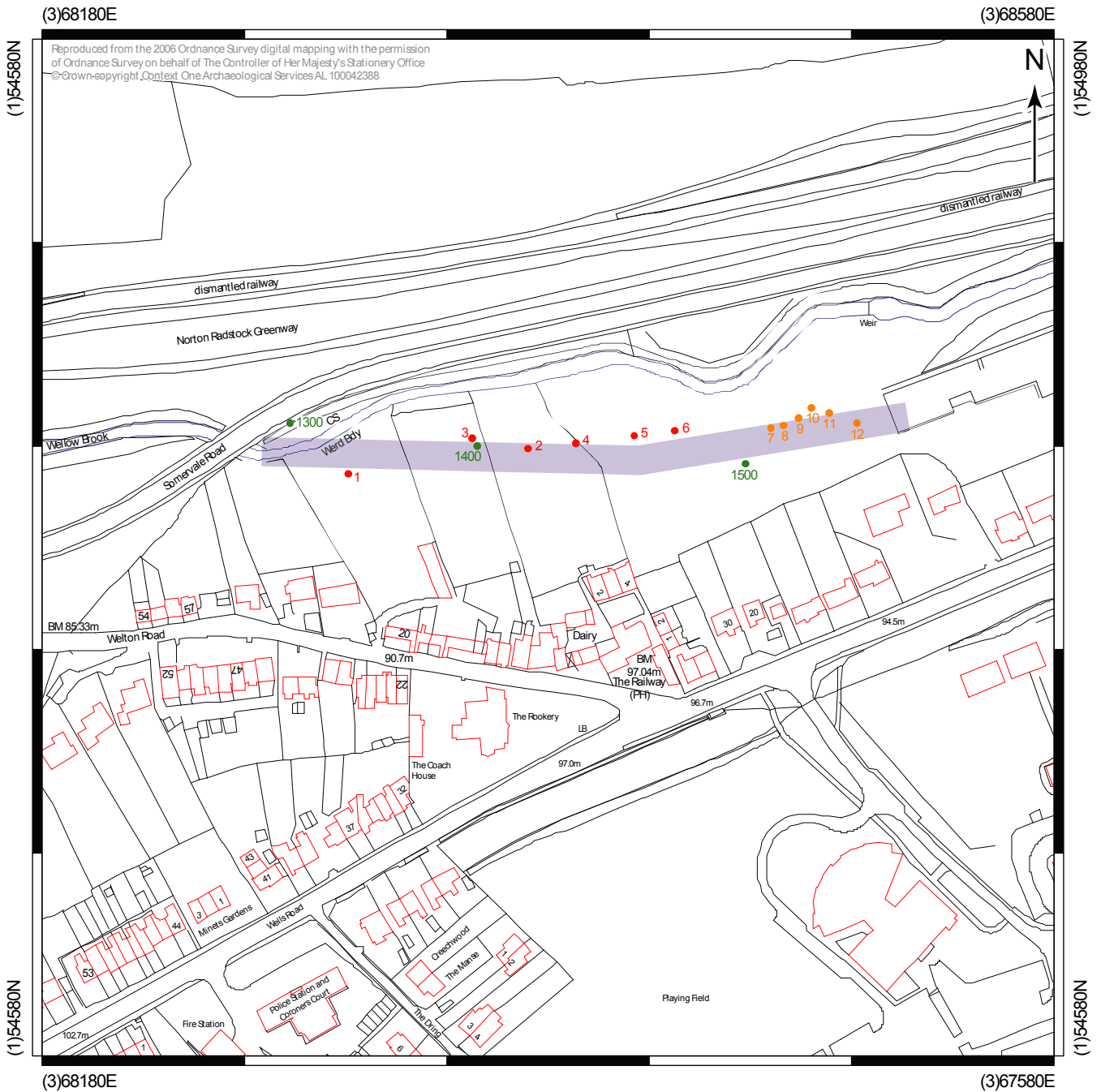
- 5.5. The mechanical removal of the topsoil/ ploughsoil along the route of the pipeline (between NGR ST 68284 54801 to 68520 54818) was carried out under archaeological supervision.
- 5.6. For the purposes of archaeological recording, all areas exposed through development excavations were systematically scanned for features/deposits by walking in 'zig-zag' traverses across their width.
- 5.7. The surface collection of cultural material (excluding modern bulk material) was carried out during these scanning operations, and bagged according to location.

Trenching

- 5.8. Where undisturbed deposits were not reached during the topsoil/ploughsoil stripping 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 (**Figure 2**).
- 5.9. An archaeologist was present on site to monitor all major groundworks relating to the development for the purpose of identifying and recording any archaeological features/deposits present.
- 5.10. A written record was maintained of archaeological features/deposits and finds encountered using standard COAS *pro-forma* recording sheets.
- 5.11. A photographic record of the watching brief was undertaken involving the use of digital images and included working shots to illustrate the general nature of the archaeological operation mounted.
- 5.12. Artefacts collected from archaeological features/deposits were bagged using a combination of site code and context numbers. Bulk finds such as post-medieval and modern brick and tile were not collected although location, type and frequency were recorded.
- 5.13. All finds from the site have been retained for processing and conservation where necessary, in preparation for further analysis and archiving. A specialist report of the artefact assemblage was compiled using both descriptive and tabular formats (see section 7.)

6. Results

- 6.1. Most of the twelve pre-development pits and profiles of the pipe trench revealed a simple stratigraphical sequence of modern topsoil, sub-soil and natural clay. Trial pit 9 revealed a layer of stones (903) overlying stoney clay (904) between the sub-soil (902) (which yielded several fragments of animal bone) and the natural clay (906), which had the appearance of having been deliberately laid down or redeposited (**Figure 2**). However, this could simply have been a deposit of natural Lias limestone as the pit is located in the approximate location of the geological interface between the Triassic Mudstones and the Lower Lias. Profiles 1300 and 1400 recorded buried garden soils (1302) and (1401) that contained 19th and 20th century material above the natural clay. Otherwise, no visible archaeological features were encountered, and no significant concentrations or distributions of artefacts were identified during the monitoring of the trial trenches, topsoil/ploughsoil stripping or the pipe trenching. However, any smaller or ephemeral archaeological remains/deposits were unlikely to have been detected as the topsoil/ploughsoil was systematically removed in order to provide an operations surface and not necessarily to produce a clean horizon that was more conducive to close visual inspection.
- 6.2. An assemblage of 36 artefacts (see section 7.) was recovered from the 12 pre-development trial pits, and the topsoil/ploughsoil from the easement, trenches and spoil heaps.
- 6.3. Given that no visible archaeological features were identified and only a modest number of artefacts were recovered, it was agreed with Ms Charlotte Matthews (Consultant Archaeologist, Bath and North East Somerset Council) that no further phases of archaeological intervention would be required.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> route of easement ● x hand excavated test pit ● x machine excavated test pit ● xxxx profile location 	<p><i>PROJECT TITLE</i> Radstock to Somervale Road Sewer, Bath and North East Somerset</p>		
	<p><i>FIGURE TITLE</i> Detailed site location showing test pits and profiles</p>		
<p>0 200m</p>	<p><i>SCALE</i> 1:2500@A4</p>	<p><i>PROJECT CODE</i> COAS/WBF/05/SRR</p>	<p><i>FIGURE NO.</i> 2</p>

7. The finds

- 7.1. Finds recovered from the watching brief were washed and marked, where possible, with an archive accession code issued by the Roman Baths Museum and Pump Room identifying the site (BATRM 2007.12), followed by the context number. The finds were separated into artefact types and quantified by context number, quantity and weight in grams. This data is presented as a table (**Table 1**). Bulk finds such as post-medieval and modern brick/tile and slate were noted on the profile log/context sheets, but not collected. A request has been made to the site owner(s) through Wessex Water plc to transfer the title of all finds recovered to the Roman Baths Museum and Pump Room.
- 7.2. A total of 36 artefacts were recovered during the watching brief. The assemblage comprises 26 sherds of pottery, 6 fragments of animal bone, 1 shard of glass, 1 fragment of clay tobacco pipe, 1 fragment of wall tile and 1 iron object. None of this material is particularly chronologically distinctive, and is likely to represent an assemblage spanning the post-medieval and modern periods.
- 7.3. **Pottery**
In total, 26 sherds of pottery were recovered; the majority collected from context (1600) and all dating from the 19th and 20th centuries. The majority of the assemblage (sixteen sherds; 124g) from context (1600) consists of refined whitewares, one of which is a fragment of an eggcup. In addition there are four sherds (101g) of glazed stoneware from context (1600), two of which are fragments of a marmalade pot. Also present were two sherds of redware (12g), one of which is glazed and derives from context (1302). The remaining assemblage consists of two sherds (15g) from contexts (1300) and (1401) and two sherds (9g) from context (1600), all of transfer printed whitewares.
- 7.4. **Ceramic Building Material (CBM)**
A single (40g) unstratified fragment of modern glazed wall tile was recovered from context (1600).
- 7.5. **Animal bone**
Of the six (210g) animal bone fragments collected, the majority derive from context (902), and comprise three fragments (31g) of sheep/goat vertebra, and two incisors (5g) from a sheep/goat. The remaining unstratified piece of bone (169g) can be described as an unidentified fragment from a horse/cow, exhibiting butchery marks and is likely to derive from domestic refuse.
- 7.6. **Glass**
One unstratified rim (41g) from a modern clear glass bottle was recovered from context (1600).
- 7.8. **Clay tobacco pipe**
The single fragment (4g) of unstratified clay tobacco pipe stem collected from context (1600) has no makers mark.
- 7.9. **Ferrous**
One iron object (54g) measuring 83mm by 35mm, was recovered from context (1302); this is possibly a blade or part of an agricultural implement, and is of unknown date.

Context no.	Pottery		Tile		Animal bone		Metal		Glass		Clay pipe	
	no.	wgt (g)	no.	wgt (g)	no.	wgt (g)	no.	wgt (g)	no.	wgt (g)	no.	wgt (g)
902	-	-	-	-	5	37	-	-	-	-	-	-
1300	1	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1302	1	7	-	-	-	-	1	54	-	-	-	-
1401	1	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1600	23	240	1	40	1	173	-	-	1	41	1	4
Totals	26	262	1	40	6	210	1	54	1	41	1	4

Table 1. Finds by context

8. Discussion and conclusions

8.1. Monitoring of the twelve pre-development trial pits, topsoil/subsoil stripping, and excavation of the pipe trench for the replacement gravity sewer revealed no visible archaeological features or significant deposits. Overall, a simple sequence of topsoils, sub-soils and natural clays were observed with a layer of stones in pit 9. This was probably a natural deposit of Lias limestone, whilst post-medieval garden soils were recorded in two profiles (1400 and 1500). A small assemblage of artefacts were recovered from the topsoil/ploughsoil and the buried garden soils, consisting predominantly of pottery sherds, with several fragments of animal bone, 1 shard of glass, 1 clay tobacco pipe, 1 CBM fragment and 1 ferrous object. This probably represents an assemblage spanning the post-medieval and modern periods.

9. Archive

9.1. The site archive is currently held at the offices of Context One Archaeological Services Limited, and consists of 32 digital images in .jpg format and 15 COAS *pro-forma* profile log sheets. 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 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 Limited would like to thank Mr Mark Weller (Environmental Services Team at Wessex Water plc), for his kind assistance throughout the course of the investigation; Mr Richard Sermon (Archaeological Officer, Bath and North East Somerset Council) for providing SMR information and Ms Charlotte Matthews (Consultant Archaeologist, Bath and North East Somerset Council), for curatorial advice.

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| Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC), 2007 | http://www.magic.gov.uk |