

Stapleton Road, Bristol.

An Archaeological Watching Brief.



CONTEXT ONE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES LTD

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Stapleton Road, Bristol.

An Archaeological Watching Brief for Wessex Water plc

by



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Non-technical summary

Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief during groundworks to install a new access shaft for a pipe diversion to the existing sewer pipeline at Stapleton Road, Bristol (centred on NGR ST 60216 73688), over four days between the 12th June and 17th July 2007. The project was commissioned and funded by Wessex Water plc.

The investigation was advised by Mr Bob Jones (City Archaeologist, Bristol City Council), following a consultation request by Ms Victoria Plummer (Environmental Scientist, Wessex Water plc).

Groundworks for a new shaft on an existing sewer pipeline at Stapleton Road, Bristol revealed a sequence of modern road surfaces and a layer of post-medieval/modern ground laid directly onto natural sand. No evidence of archaeological remains/deposits was encountered and no artefacts were recovered during the course of the watching brief.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief during groundworks to install a new access shaft for a pipe diversion to the existing sewer pipeline at Stapleton Road, Bristol (centred on NGR ST 60216 73688) (hereafter referred to as the Site), over four days between the 12th June and 17th July 2007. The project was commissioned and funded by Wessex Water plc.
- 1.2. The investigation was requested by Mr Bob Jones (City Archaeologist, Bristol City Council), following a consultation request by Ms Victoria Plummer (Environmental Scientist, Wessex Water plc).
- 1.3. The Site is situated c. 2km north-east of the historic core of Bristol. The County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) records 12 archaeological events within a 200m radius of the Site. These include evidence of farming activity within the medieval Royal Manor at Barton (**BSMR 22229**), the location of two standing stones (**BSMR 1383**, **BSMR 20470**, **BSMR 20609** and **BSMR 20610**) and the post-medieval origins of the nearby 'The Waggon and Horses' public house (**BSMR 22414**, **BSMR 22458** and **BSMR 22459**).
- 1.4. Given the recorded archaeological data for the environs, it was considered that 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. At the request of Mr Jones, (City Archaeologist, Bristol City Council), COAS issued a *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief: Stapleton Road, Bristol* (June 2007) which provided a strategy for the archaeological works. This was submitted to and approved by Mr Jones prior to the commencement of the Watching Brief.
- 1.6. 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: Archaeology and Planning (PPG16)* issued by the DoE in 1990. The recommendation also conforms to Policy B22 of *the Bristol Local Plan* (adopted December 1997).
- 1.7. 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:

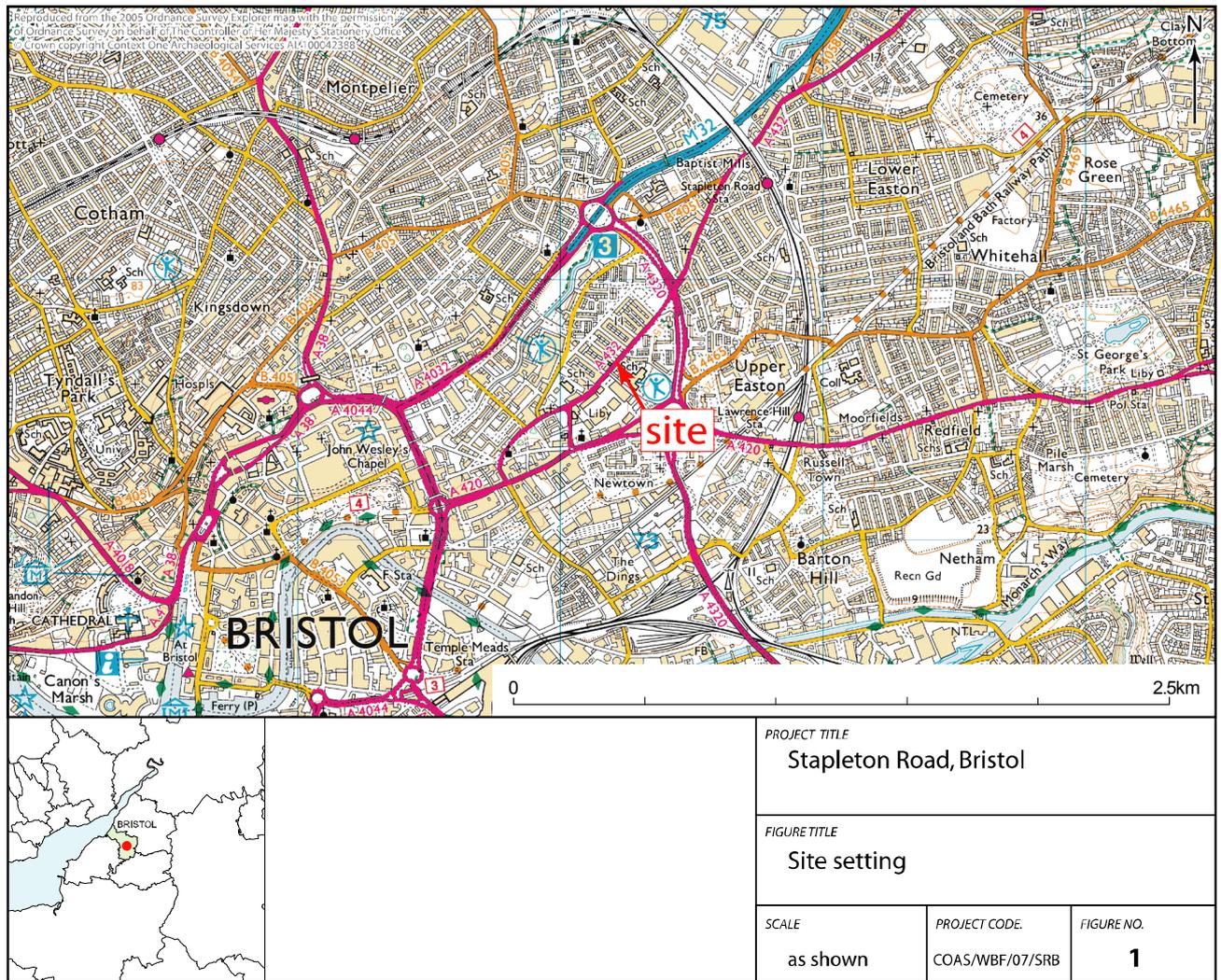
- *“To allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, their presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works.*
- *To provide an opportunity, if 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, significance, importance 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. The Site (centred on NGR ST 60216 73688) is situated c. 2.1km east-north-east of Bristol city centre (**Figure 1**). The Site occupies roughly level ground c. 17m above Ordnance Datum (AOD). According to the British Geological Survey (2001), the underlying geology is Jurassic, Lower Lias; Dinantian, Lower Carboniferous; and Devonian, Upper Old Red Sandstone. The soils in this area are characterised by slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage (Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC), 2006).



4. Archaeological Background

- 4.1. The archaeological background for the Site has been drawn from secondary sources. This comprised a data search of archaeological records within a c. 200m radius of the Site, held by Bristol City Council as part of the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). The relevant archaeological events are discussed below.
- 4.2. Evidence gathered from an archaeological desk-based assessment relating to Suga's Bar public house (**BSMR 22229**), c. 180m west-north-west of the Site identified the area as once having been a farmstead belonging to the medieval Royal Manor at Barton.
- 4.3. The Waggon and Horses public house (**BSMR 22414** and **BSMR 22458**), previously called 'The London Waggon' was built prior to 1800 but with no record of previous development at the site has been found. Close to **BSMR 22229**, c. 190m west-north-west of the Site, a post-medieval backfilled well (**BSMR 22488**) was discovered during the course of an archaeological watching brief.

- 4.4. A malthouse (**BSMR 22461**) known to have been in existence by 1854, but which was demolished in the 20th century once stood parallel to Stapleton Road, only c. 20m south of the Site. An armoury (**BSMR 5803**) which was in existence by 1828 and consisted of one long rectangular and four small square buildings was also recorded c. 180m north-north-east of the Site.
- 4.5. Interestingly four observations of two large standing stones (**BSMR 1383**, **BSMR 20470**, **BSMR 20609** and **BSMR 20610**) located c. 140m and c. 160m north-east of the Site were documented in the 19th century and early 20th century. However both stones have since disappeared and it is not known what period these might have been attributed.

5. Methodology

Wessex Water methodology

- 5.1. A machine equipped with 0.50m wide toothed bucket was used to excavate two Test Pits which measured 3.2m long x 0.5m wide x 1.0m deep, in order to locate existing services. A trench for the pipe diversion was then excavated by a machine equipped with a 1.5m wide bucket that measured 3.0m long x 1.5m wide x c. 5m deep.

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.

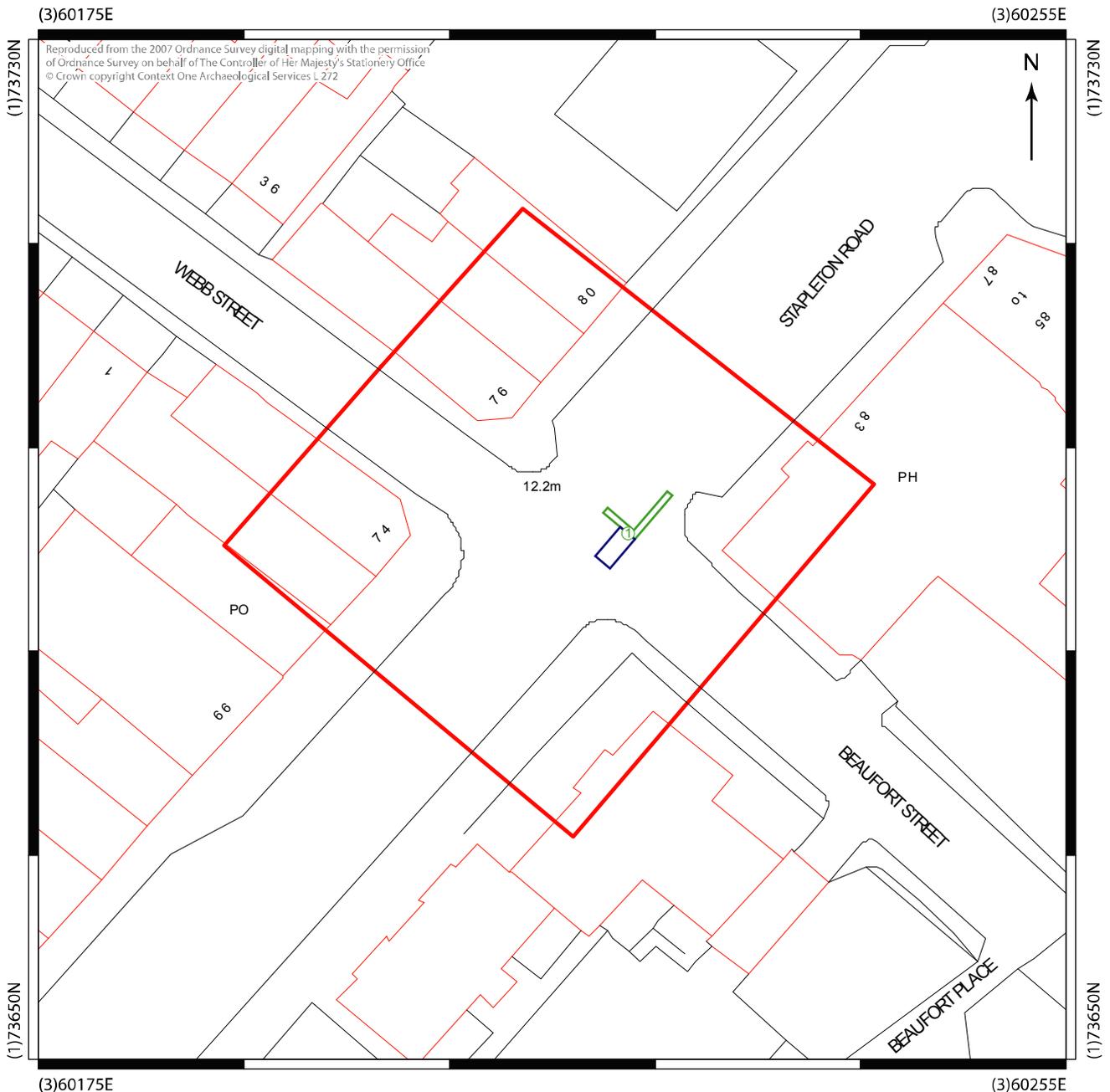
Trenching

- 5.3. In the absence of archaeological deposits a profile (Profile 1) was recorded at the point where the Test Pit and pipe trench met (see **Figure 2**). A COAS *pro-forma* profile log sheet was used to record and illustrate the principal stratigraphic and physical characteristics of the deposits encountered (see **Appendix 1**).
- 5.4. The groundworks for the pipe trench were only observed to a depth of c. 1.2m as natural sediments were encountered at a depth of 0.8m.
- 5.5. A photographic record of the Watching Brief was prepared involving the use of monochrome photographs and digital images. This included photographs illustrating features identified and working shots to illustrate the general nature of the archaeological operation mounted.

6. Results

- 6.1. Grondwork excavations revealed a tarmac road surface (100) 0.1m thick overlying a concrete road base (101) 0.3m thick. Directly underlying the road deposits was a modern/post-medieval layer (102) 0.4m thick of black (5YR 2.5/1) compact silty sand, with sparse (10%) angular small stones and rare fragments of slag, ash and pot. Underneath this layer (102) lay

the natural sediment (103) of compact red sand (2.5YR 4/6) comprising sparse (10%) angular small stones.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> site boundary pipe diversion trench test pit ⊗ profile location 	<p>PROJECT TITLE</p> <p>Stapleton Road, Bristol</p>		
	<p>FIGURE TITLE</p> <p>Detailed site setting showing location of pipe diversion trench and profile</p>		
	<p>SCALE</p> <p>as shown</p>	<p>PROJECT CODE.</p> <p>COAS/WBF/07/SBR</p>	<p>FIGURE NO.</p> <p>2</p>

7. The finds

- 7.1. No finds were recorded during the course of the Watching Brief.

8. Discussion and conclusions

- 8.1. Groundworks for a new shaft on an existing sewer pipeline at Stapleton Road, Bristol revealed a sequence of modern road surfaces and a layer of post-medieval/modern ground laid directly onto natural sand. No evidence of archaeological remains/deposits was encountered and no artefacts were recovered during the course of the watching brief.

9. Archive

- 9.1. The site archive is currently held at the offices of Context One Archaeological Services Ltd and consists of 5 monochrome photographs and 8 digital images in .jpg format, a COAS *pro-forma* profile log sheet and a photographic register. Arrangements will be made to deposit the archive with Bristol City Museums and Art Gallery 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

City Centre Projects and Urban Design Team
Department of Environment, Transport and Leisure
Planning Services
Brunel House
St George's Road
Bristol
BS1 5UY

- 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/bristol.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 Ms Victoria Plummer (Environmental Scientist, Wessex Water plc.), for her kind assistance throughout the course of the investigation, and Mr Bob Jones (City Archaeologist, Bristol City Council), for curatorial advice.

11. Bibliography

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