



**17 HENRIETTA ROAD, BATHWICK, BATH,
BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET**

Archaeological Observations and Recording



Report No. 53251/3/1

January 2008

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NORTH EAST SOMERSET**
Archaeological Observations and Recording
May and October 2007

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17 HENRIETTA ROAD, BATHWICK, BATH, BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET Archaeological Observations & Recording, May and October 2007

SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Terrain Archaeology in May and October 2007 during the groundworks associated with the erection of a new extension at 17 Henrietta Road, Bathwick, Bath. Soil deposits up to 1.2 m in depth were encountered. No Roman features were found, but a Roman soil layer, containing stone rubble possibly derived from a Roman structure, was identified. The later deposits were agricultural and garden soils reflecting the later history of the site as fields and gardens until the construction of the present house in 1927.

INTRODUCTION

Terrain Archaeology was commissioned by Ian Thompson Associates Ltd, on behalf of his clients Mr & Mrs E W Hodson, to undertake a programme of archaeological observations and recording during groundworks associated with the erection of a new extension at 17 Henrietta Road Bath (Planning Application No. 07/00584/FUL).

Condition 4 of the granting of planning permission states “No development work shall take place within the site until the applicants, their agents or successors in title, have secured the implementation of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The programme of archaeological work should provide a controlled watching brief during works on the site, with provision for excavation of any significant deposits or features encountered.”

Archaeological Observations and Recording, also known as an archaeological watching brief, is defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists as “a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons, within a specified area or site where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed.”

The site is situated on the east side of Henrietta Road in the suburb of Bathwick, centred on NGR ST754654 (Figures 1 & 2). It lies on flat land at a height of about 21.6 m above Ordnance Datum.

The fieldwork was carried out on 10th May and 16th and 23rd October 2007 by Steven Tatler.

Terrain Archaeology would like to acknowledge the help and cooperation of the following during this project: Ian Thompson, Mr and Mrs Hodson, the groundworkers, Richard Sermon & Sarah McLean (Bath & North East Somerset Council) and Susan Fox (Roman Baths Museum).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Site lies within Bath Archaeological Character Area Zone 14 ‘Bathwick’ (as summarised in the Bath and North East Somerset *Archaeology in the City of Bath Supplementary Planning Guidance*), which comprises 2nd and 3rd terrace gravels, partially sealed by alluvial floodplain deposits.

The site lies about 600 m northeast of the walled area of *Aqua Sulis*. Bathwick may have been a significant Roman settlement, perhaps with an early Roman fort at what may have been a major early crossing point of the River Avon, lying on the opposite bank from the Roman settlement along Walcot Street. There has been little formal archaeological excavation in Bathwick, but numerous chance discoveries and observations of Roman material, including fragments of buildings, have been made during the 19th and 20th centuries. Roman burials are also common, perhaps forming part of a cemetery along a postulated road running to the crossing point of the Avon. The closest recent archaeological investigation to the site was at 13 Henrietta Road, undertaken by Bath Archaeological Trust in 2000, which revealed two Roman ditches as well as Roman and later finds (Bell and Moffat 2000).

The medieval village of Bathwick lay opposite Cleveland Bridge to the northwest of the present site. The medieval church was on the site of the Church of St John the Baptist and was demolished in the early 19th century.

The historic map evidence shows that in the 18th century the site lay within or immediately outside a close behind the Bathwick Street frontage. The 1808 Harcourt Masters map shows that by the early 19th century the site lay within a garden. Henrietta Road was constructed c. 1830. The late 19th and early 20th century Ordnance Survey maps clearly show that the site lay within a large garden on the corner of Bathwick Street and Henrietta Road.

The house was built in 1927.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The objective of the archaeological observations was to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on the site.

The archaeological works aimed to observe and record all the *in situ* archaeological deposits and features revealed during the groundworks to an appropriate professional standard.

METHODS

The archaeological programme of works was undertaken in line with the written scheme of investigation produced by Terrain Archaeology (Terrain Archaeology document 3251/0/1, May 2007) and approved by Bath and North East Somerset Council. It was undertaken in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Code of Conduct and Standard and guidance for archaeological watching briefs* (1994, as revised).

The observations of the groundworks were intensive, as defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists, with a suitably qualified archaeologist present during all sensitive ground disturbance. Observations were made during the hand excavation of four trial pits and during the excavation by small mechanical digger of the footings trench for the new extension.

All features and deposits, exposed during the works, were recorded using components of the Terrain Archaeology recording system of complementary written, drawn and photographic records

The records, and any materials recovered, have been compiled in a stable, cross-referenced and fully indexed archive in accordance with current UKIC guidelines. The archive will be deposited with the Roman Baths Museum (Accession No. BATRM 2007.21).

RESULTS

Introduction

Initial observations were made in May 2007 during the excavation of four test pits to check ground conditions (Figure 3). Test Pit 1 was excavated against the south wall of the existing house and measured 0.9 m long by 0.9 m wide and up to 1.0 m deep. It contained a brick-built rainwater drain and revealed a concrete footing or possible underpinning for the south wall of the house (Plate 1). Test Pit 2 was excavated in the back garden near to the proposed east wall of the extension and measured 0.9 m long by 0.9 m wide and up to 1.4 m deep. It was excavated through a sequence of soils into the underlying natural sands (Plate 2). Test Pit 3 was excavated against the middle of the east wall of the existing house and measured 1.0 m long by 0.5 m wide and up to 1.1 m deep (Plate 3). It revealed a similar sequence of soils to Test Pit 2 and exposed part of the loose rubble footings for the back wall of the house. Test Pit 4 was excavated at the southern end of the east wall in the corner between the existing house and the garage. It measured 1.0 m long by 0.5 m wide and up to 0.4 m deep. It was not fully excavated due to the presence of a foul drain (Plate 4).

Final observations were made in October 2007 during the excavation of the footings trench for the extension (Plates 5–10). This trench (Trench 5) was up to 0.6 m wide and 1.5 m deep and was excavated through a sequence of garden soils into the underlying natural sands. Observations were also made during the excavation of a trench (Trench 6) to uncover a manhole and associated foul drains to the east of the footings trench. This trench contained the backfill associated with the manhole and drains and was excavated down on to the underlying natural sands.

A similar sequence of deposits was observed across the whole site and is described below.

Depth below surface (m)	Description	Context Nos.
0-0.25 m	Modern deposits	11, 12, 13, 21, 22, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 41, 42, 43, 44, 51, 52, 61, 62
0.25-1.15 m	Garden soils	23, 24, 34, 54, 53
0.9-1.2 m	Buried soil	14, 37, 55
1.15 m +	Natural sands and gravels	25, 56, 63

Table 1: Stratigraphic Sequence

Natural Deposits

The underlying natural deposit, observed at a depth of 1.2 m below ground level, consisted of a pale yellowish-brown silty sand with very occasional limestone pieces and lenses of coarse sand and small gravel. It was exposed in Test Pit 2 (context 25), Trench 5 (context 56) and Trench 6 (context 63).

Buried Soil

Immediately above the natural sands in Test Pits 1 and 3 and in Trench 5 was a dark brown sandy silt soil layer (14, 55) up to 0.2 m thick, containing occasional pieces of limestone. In the western half of Trench 5 and in Test Pits 1 and 3, this deposit contained frequent large pieces of limestone rubble (Figure 3). A single sherd of Roman greyware pottery was recovered from this layer. Some Iron Age pottery was recovered from the base of Test Pit 2, which probably was also derived from this soil layer (see below).

Garden Soils

Overlying the buried soil was a deposit of dark brown clayey loam, up to 0.5 m thick, containing frequent small pieces of limestone, brick and charcoal. This was found in Test Pits 2 and 3 and Trench 5 (24, 34, 54). It probably represents agricultural and garden soil development. Some Late Iron Age and post-medieval pottery was recovered from this soil layer. In Test Pit 2, the garden soils were recorded immediately above the natural. However, the Iron Age pottery was found in the lowest part of this layer and it is likely that the buried soil layer found in the adjacent Trench 5, as described above, continued into this test pit but was not recognised due to the small size and great depth of Test Pit 2.

Above this was a layer of mid brown silty loam (23, 53), up to 0.2 m thick, containing lenses of cinders, ash, charcoal and crushed brick. This possibly represents levelling of the site or simply aspects of its use as a garden/ allotment prior to the construction of the present house.

Modern Deposits

Across most of the site, a deposit associated with the construction of the present house was encountered (12, 22, 33, 52). This consisted of a dark brown silty loam, up to 0.25 m thick, containing patches of limestone, brick and chalk rubble with pieces of mortar and concrete.

Finds

The only finds recovered were pottery ranging in date from the Late Iron Age to the post-medieval period (Table 2).

Context	Iron Age pottery		Roman pottery		Post-medieval pottery	
	No.	Wt. (g)	No.	Wt. (g)	No.	Wt. (g)
13					1	4
24	13	25				
54					3	36
55			1	29		
<i>Total</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>40</i>

Table 2: Pottery assemblage

Iron Age: Thirteen small abraded sherds of coarseware of Late Iron Age date were recovered from context 24 in Test Pit 2. Most were of a fine sandy fabric with fine- and medium-quartz temper. One small bead rim sherd and two conjoining sherds from a vessel with a rounded shoulder were present. A single sherd with a coarse rock temper was also noted.

Roman: One body sherd of fine micaceous greyware was recovered from context 55 in Trench 5.

Post-medieval: Four sherds of post-medieval earthenware pottery of 19th century date were recovered from the modern deposits in Test Pit 1 (context 13) and the garden soils in Trench 5 (context 54).

CONCLUSIONS

No Roman features were exposed during this watching brief, but a probable Roman soil layer was identified. This contained significant quantities of limestone rubble towards the western part of the site. This rubble may have been derived from a nearby Roman structure, although no identifiable building fragments were identified. Late Iron Age and Roman finds were associated with this soil.

Above the Roman layer, the deposits and finds reflected the medieval and post-medieval history of the site as part of fields and gardens until the construction of the present house in 1927.

REFERENCES

- Bell, R. and Moffat, B. 2000 '13 Henrietta Road, Bathwick, Bath. Archaeological Evaluation Report' Bath Archaeological Trust unpublished client report, November 2000.

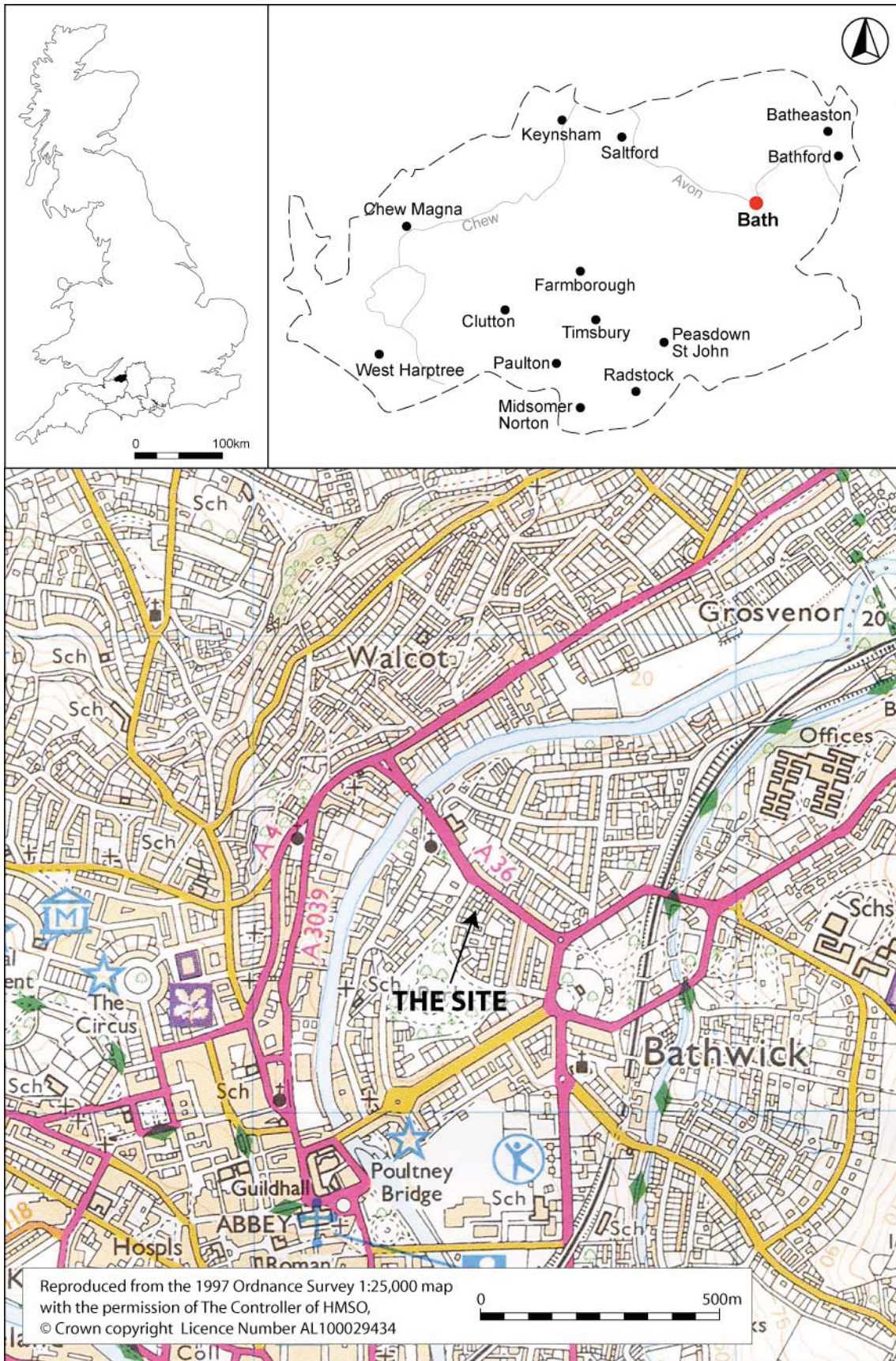


Figure 1: Location map



Location Plan Scale 1:1250

Figure 2: Location plan of 17 Henrietta Road (from a plan provided by Ian Thomson Associates Ltd)

17 HENRIETTA ROAD, BATHWICK, BATH Plan of Observations

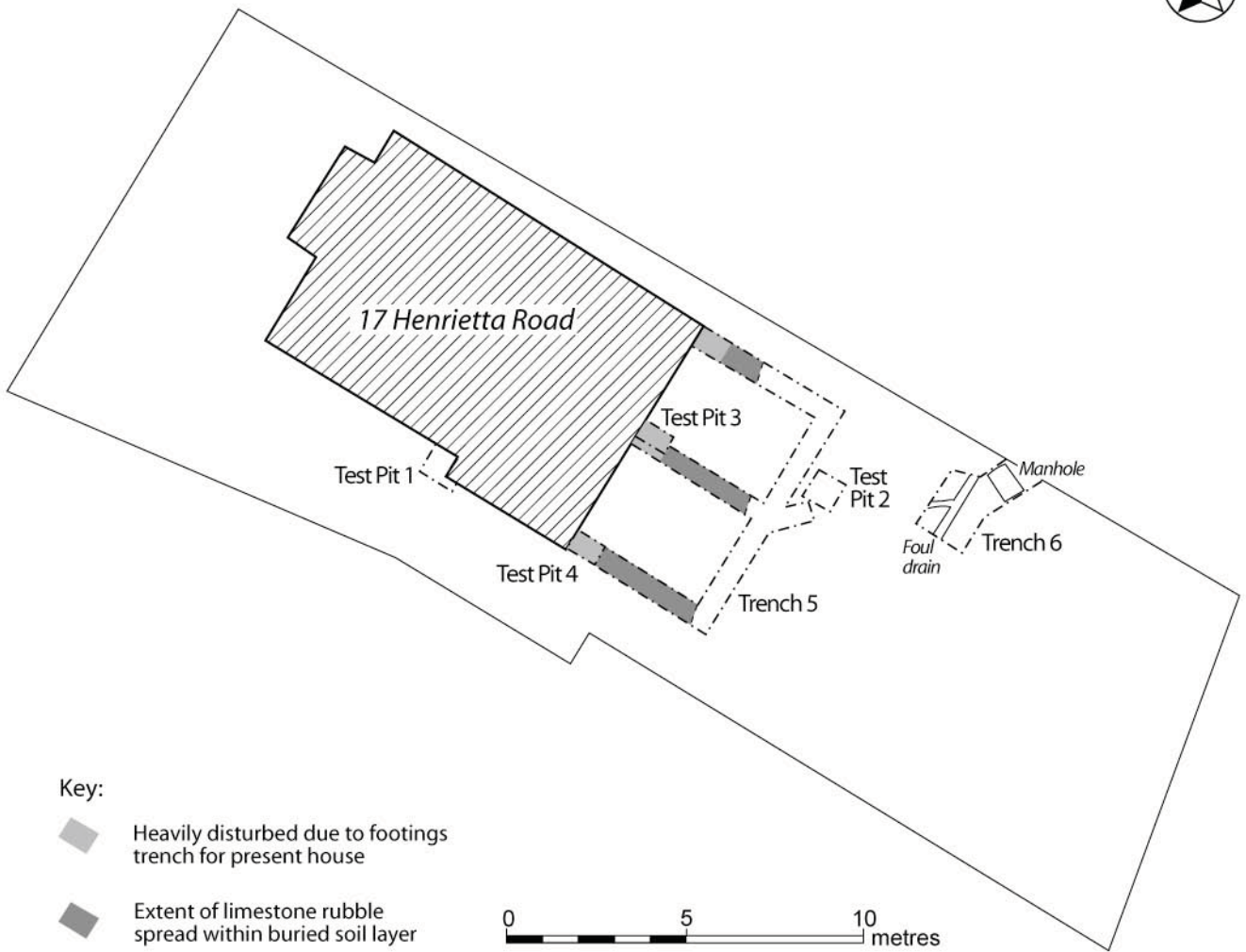


Figure 3: Trench location plan



Plate 1: Test Pit 1 – east-facing section.



Plate 2: Test Pit 2 – north-facing section.



Plate 3: Test Pit 3 – north-facing section.



Plate 4: Test Pit 4 – east-facing section.



Plate 5: Trench 5 - Northern arm of footings trench.



Plate 6: Trench 5 – Middle arm of footings trench.



Plate 7: Trench 5 – South arm of footings trench.



Plate 8: Trench 5 – East arm of footings trench.



Plate 9: Trench 5 – West facing section detail from east arm of footings trench.



Plate 10: Trench 5 – West end of north arm of footings trench.