



Brent Knoll Reservoir Somerset

Archaeological Watching Brief Report





**BRENT KNOLL RESERVOIR,
SOMERSET**

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Prepared for:
Bristol Water plc
PO Box 218
Bridgwater Road
Bristol
BS99 7AU

by:
Wessex Archaeology
Portway House
Old Sarum Park
Salisbury
Wiltshire
SP4 6EB

Report Reference: 79330.03



November 2011

DISCLAIMER

THE MATERIAL CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT WAS DESIGNED AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF A REPORT TO AN INDIVIDUAL CLIENT AND WAS PREPARED SOLELY FOR THE BENEFIT OF THAT CLIENT. THE MATERIAL CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT DOES NOT NECESSARILY STAND ON ITS OWN AND IS NOT INTENDED TO NOR SHOULD IT BE RELIED UPON BY ANY THIRD PARTY. TO THE FULLEST EXTENT PERMITTED BY LAW WESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY WILL NOT BE LIABLE BY REASON OF BREACH OF CONTRACT NEGLIGENCE OR OTHERWISE FOR ANY LOSS OR DAMAGE (WHETHER DIRECT INDIRECT OR CONSEQUENTIAL) OCCASIONED TO ANY PERSON ACTING OR OMITTING TO ACT OR REFRAINING FROM ACTING IN RELIANCE UPON THE MATERIAL CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT ARISING FROM OR CONNECTED WITH ANY ERROR OR OMISSION IN THE MATERIAL CONTAINED IN THE REPORT. LOSS OR DAMAGE AS REFERRED TO ABOVE SHALL BE DEEMED TO INCLUDE, BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO, ANY LOSS OF PROFITS OR ANTICIPATED PROFITS DAMAGE TO REPUTATION OR GOODWILL LOSS OF BUSINESS OR ANTICIPATED BUSINESS DAMAGES COSTS EXPENSES INCURRED OR PAYABLE TO ANY THIRD PARTY (IN ALL CASES WHETHER DIRECT INDIRECT OR CONSEQUENTIAL) OR ANY OTHER DIRECT INDIRECT OR CONSEQUENTIAL LOSS OR DAMAGE

QUALITY ASSURANCE

SITE CODE	79330	ACCESSION CODE		CLIENT CODE	
PLANNING APPLICATION REF.	07/11/00015	NGR	333250 151700		

VERSION	STATUS*	PREPARED BY	APPROVED BY	APPROVER'S SIGNATURE	DATE	FILE
01	E	JS	SF		10.11.2011	X:\PROJECTS\79330\REPORT\79330_V01.DOC
02	I	SF	RAC		11/11/11	X:\PROJECTS\79330\REPORT\79330_V02.DOC

* I= INTERNAL DRAFT E= EXTERNAL DRAFT F= FINAL

BRENT KNOLL RESERVOIR SOMERSET

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Contents

Summary	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Project Background	1
1.2 Site location and geology	1
1.3 Archaeological Background.....	2
2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	2
3 METHODOLOGY	2
3.1 Introduction.....	2
3.2 Health and Safety.....	2
3.3 Fieldwork	3
4 RESULTS	3
4.1 Introduction.....	3
4.2 Areas 1 and 2	3
4.3 Area 3	4
5 DISCUSSION.....	4
6 ARCHIVE.....	4
7 COPYRIGHT	4
8 REFERENCES	6
APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT SUMMARY TABLES	7
APPENDIX 2: OASIS REPORT	7

List of Figures

Figure 1	Site location plan
Plate 1	General working view of Area 1, view from west
Plate 2	North facing representative section of Area 1
Plate 3	South facing representative section of Area 2
Plate 4	General view of Area 3 after topsoil removal, view from north
Plate 5	South facing representative section of Area 3 showing made ground and natural geology
Front Cover	General view of the Site
Back Cover	Brent Knoll hillfort

**BRENT KNOLL RESERVOIR
SOMERSET****Archaeological Watching Brief Report****Summary**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Bristol Water plc to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the proposed extension to the existing Brent Knoll reservoir (hereafter, 'the Site'), centred on National Grid Reference 333250 151700.

The watching brief was undertaken within three areas and comprised the topsoil removal within **Areas 1** and **2** and the topsoil strip, followed by excavation of the new reservoir within **Area 3**.

Although the Site is situated in the vicinity of Brent Knoll hillfort, no archaeological features, finds or deposits were observed during the fieldwork.

Across the majority of **Areas 1** and **2**, the topsoil strip was insufficient to expose the underlying geology. Within **Area 3**, modern made ground layers were recorded to overlie natural geology. A possible former horizontal truncation of the natural deposit within the area, which might have removed archaeological deposits, was indicated during the investigation.

The fieldwork was undertaken between 27th October 2011 and 4th November 2011.

**BRENT KNOLL RESERVOIR
SOMERSET****Archaeological Watching Brief Report****Acknowledgements**

This watching brief work was commissioned by Bristol Water plc and Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Gareth Lloyd in this regard. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Graham Marsland of Dyer and Butler (Principal Contractor) and the construction team of Axmister Excavators for their assistance during the fieldwork.

The fieldwork was conducted by Julia Sulikowska, who also compiled this report. The figures were prepared by Ken Lymer. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Sue Farr.

**BRENT KNOLL RESERVOIR
SOMERSET****Archaeological Watching Brief Report****1 INTRODUCTION****1.1 Project Background**

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Bristol Water plc (the Client) to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the proposed extension to the existing Brent Knoll reservoir (hereafter, 'the Site'), centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 333250 151700 (**Figure 1**).

1.1.2 A planning application (Ref. 07/11/00015) was submitted to Sedgemoor District Council for the construction of a covered storage reservoir and associated external works at the existing reservoir site.

1.1.3 The Site lies in close proximity to Brent Knoll Iron Age hillfort, a Scheduled Monument (SM Number 24001), and the Senior Historic Environment Officer (HEO) at Somerset County Council (SCC) advised an archaeological watching brief should be maintained during the initial groundworks.

1.1.4 Condition 7 of the planning consent stated:

*No development shall take place within the area indicated (this would be the area of archaeological interest) until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the local planning authority.
Reason: To safeguard the Nation's heritage*

1.1.5 A *Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI)*, setting out the methodologies and standards to be implemented during the watching brief, was prepared by Wessex Archaeology in advance of the fieldwork (Wessex Archaeology 2011). In format and content it conformed with current best practice and to the guidance outlined in *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE, English Heritage 2006)* and the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (IfA 2008)*.

1.1.6 The WSI was submitted to and approved by the HEO at SCC prior to any works commencing. In addition, all works were carried out in accordance with the SCC Heritage Service Archaeological Handbook (SCC 2011).

1.1.7 The fieldwork was undertaken between 27th October 2011 and 4th November 2011.

1.2 Site location and geology

1.2.1 The Site is located in Sedgemoor District, to the west of Brent Knoll hillfort (**Figure 1**) and includes Bristol Water's operational reservoir site and two

adjacent fields. The Site is bounded to the north, south and west by open pasture fields and to the east by an existing access track.

- 1.2.2 The existing reservoir comprises two service reservoirs and associated underground pipework/apparatus and is used to store water for supply to the Brent Knoll area. The adjacent fields form part of Manor Farm and are primarily used for grazing horses. The Site is accessed from Hill Lane via a private access track through Manor Farm.
- 1.2.3 The underlying geology of the Site comprises Jurassic Upper Lias (Geological Survey of Great Britain (England & Wales) 1:50,000 sheet 279).

1.3 Archaeological Background

- 1.3.1 A rapid search of the Somerset Historic Environment Record identified several archaeological features in close proximity to the Site, but none within the Site itself.
- 1.3.2 Brent Knoll hillfort and an associated field system are recorded to the east of the Site. The hillfort is defended by a bank and outer ditch with a counterscarp bank and a second bank on the north-east side of the monument. Although the interior of the fort has been extensively quarried, excavations in the late 18th and early 19th century recorded a substantial building of probable Romano-British date.
- 1.3.3 To the north-east of the Site a deserted farm site is recorded. Low earthworks forming a fragmentary complex of sub-rectangular enclosures have been recorded and further features have been transcribed from aerial photography.
- 1.3.4 Immediately to the north of the access track to the Site, a former windmill is recorded on the tithe map.

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.1.1 The aim of the watching brief was to provide further information concerning the presence/absence, date, nature and extent of any buried archaeological remains and to investigate and record these within the proposed development areas.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (Wessex Archaeology 2011), the standards outlined in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Briefs* (2008) and in accordance with the SCC Heritage Service Archaeological Handbook (SCC 2011).

3.2 Health and Safety

- 3.2.1 The work was undertaken in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1992. A health and safety Risk Assessment was produced by Wessex Archaeology prior to the commencement of the watching brief.

3.3 Fieldwork

3.3.1 The watching brief was undertaken in three areas (**Figure 1**):

- **Area 1**: temporary dumper access track;
- **Area 2**: soil storage area; and
- **Area 3**: new reservoir.

3.3.2 The machine excavation was undertaken using a 360° mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless bucket.

3.3.3 Within **Areas 1** (measuring approximately 80m x 9m) and **2** (approximately 250m x 26m), the groundworks associated with the topsoil removal were undertaken under intermittent archaeological supervision, due to limited potential for archaeological features to be exposed during the strip.

3.3.4 Within **Area 3** (approximately 30m x 40m) the groundworks, which comprised the topsoil removal and subsequent excavation of the new reservoir, were undertaken under continuous archaeological supervision until such time that it was apparent that the potential for archaeological remains to be exposed has been exhausted. The excavated material was also inspected for finds.

3.3.5 The archaeological features and deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording system, without causing unreasonable delay to the groundworks programme. A digital photographic record was maintained throughout the fieldwork, illustrating both the detail and the general context of the Site as a whole.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This section includes information on the natural deposits encountered and any archaeological features and deposits recorded during the watching brief. Details of the excavated contexts and features are retained in the project archive and a detailed summary of the deposits encountered is included in **Appendix 1**.

4.2 Areas 1 and 2

4.2.1 The stratigraphic sequence within **Areas 1** and **2** comprised topsoil overlying possible natural deposits (**Plates 1-3**).

4.2.2 Topsoil was characterised by a mid greyish brown clay loam, on average c. 0.3m deep. In areas where topsoil was completely removed, it was observed to overlie a pale greyish yellow clay deposit with sparse limestone blocks, which was interpreted as natural geology.

4.2.3 No archaeological features were observed in the limited areas where the underlying geology was exposed. No finds, with the exception of sporadic modern material (not retained) were observed in the topsoil.

4.3 Area 3

- 4.3.1 The stratigraphic sequence within **Area 3** comprised topsoil overlying layers of made ground and natural deposits.
- 4.3.2 A mid greyish brown clay loam topsoil, which was on average 0.3m deep, overlay a modern made ground deposit (**Plate 4**). The made ground layer comprised material redeposited from previous reservoir excavations and was characterised by pale grey clay with common limestone inclusions and modern debris. It overlay a thin layer of gravel/hardcore, which was sealing the natural deposit comprising pale greyish yellow clay with sparse limestone inclusions (**Plate 5**).
- 4.3.3 The presence of hardcore indicates that **Area 3** was likely used as a compound or working area during the former reservoir construction works. The hardcore lay immediately over the natural deposit and therefore the area must have been subject to previous topsoil removal, which, possibly, included a certain degree of horizontal truncation of the natural geology. However, it was not possible to establish the level of that truncation during these excavation works.
- 4.3.4 No archaeological features, finds or deposits were observed during the watching brief.

5 DISCUSSION

- 5.1.1 Although the Site is situated in the vicinity of Brent Knoll hillfort, no archaeological features, finds or deposits were observed during the fieldwork.
- 5.1.2 Across the majority of **Areas 1** and **2**, the topsoil strip was insufficient to expose the underlying geology. Within **Area 3**, modern made ground layers were recorded to overlie natural geology. A possible former horizontal truncation of the natural deposit within the area, which might have removed archaeological deposits, was suggested during the investigation.

6 ARCHIVE

- 6.1.1 The project archive was prepared in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Appendix 3 of *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991) and in accordance with the *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage* (Walker 1990). The excavated material and archive, including plans, photographs and written records, are currently held at the Wessex Archaeology offices under the project code 79330. It is intended that the archive should ultimately be deposited with Somerset County Museum.
- 6.1.2 Details of the Site have been submitted online to the OASIS (Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations) database (**Appendix 2**).

7 COPYRIGHT

- 7.1.1 This report may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (e.g. Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which we are able to provide for limited

reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferrable by Wessex Archaeology. You are reminded that you remain bound by the conditions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of the report.

8 REFERENCES

- IfA 2008: *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*.
Institute for Archaeologists
- Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales) 1980: Weston-
super-Mare, Solid and Drift, sheet 279, 1:50,000
- SCC 2011: *Heritage Service Archaeological Handbook*,
<http://www1.somerset.gov.uk/archives/hes/downloads/SomersetHandbook0311.pdf>
- Walker, K. 1990: *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-Term Storage*, UKIC Archaeology Section
- Wessex Archaeology 2011: *Brent Knoll Reservoir, Somerset. Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*, client report ref. 79330.01

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT SUMMARY TABLES

Area 1	Dimensions: c.80m x c.9m x 0.35m (max.) deep		
	Location: Temporary dumper access track		
Context	Category	Description	Depth (m)
100	Layer	Topsoil: mid greyish brown clay loam	0 – 0.33
101	Layer	Natural geology: pale greyish yellow clay with sparse to common limestone cobbles	0.33+
No archaeological components			

Area 2	Dimensions: c.250m x c.26m x 0.30m (max.) deep		
	Location: Soil storage area		
Context	Category	Description	Depth (m)
200	Layer	Topsoil: mid greyish brown clay loam	0 – 0.25
201	Layer	Natural geology: pale greyish yellow clay with sparse limestone inclusions	0.33+
No archaeological components			

Area 3	Dimensions: c.40m x c.30m x 1.0m deep		
	Location: Reservoir		
Context	Category	Description	Depth (m)
300	Layer	Topsoil: mid greyish brown clay loam	0 – 0.30
301	Layer	Made ground: redeposited natural deposit comprising pale to mid grey clay with common limestone inclusions and modern debris (brick, rubber, concrete)	0.30 – 0.80
302	Layer	Made ground: a thin layer of gravel and hardcore	0.80 – 0.87
303	Layer	Natural geology: pale greyish yellow clay with sparse limestone/mudstone cobbles	0.87+
No archaeological components			

APPENDIX 2: OASIS REPORT
OASIS ID - wessexar1-113497
Versions

View	Version	Completed by	Email	Date
View 1	1	Sue Farr	s.farr@wessexarch.co.uk	10 November 2011
View 2	2	Sue Farr	s.farr@wessexarch.co.uk	10 November 2011

Completed sections in current version

Details	Location	Creators	Archive	Publications
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	1/1

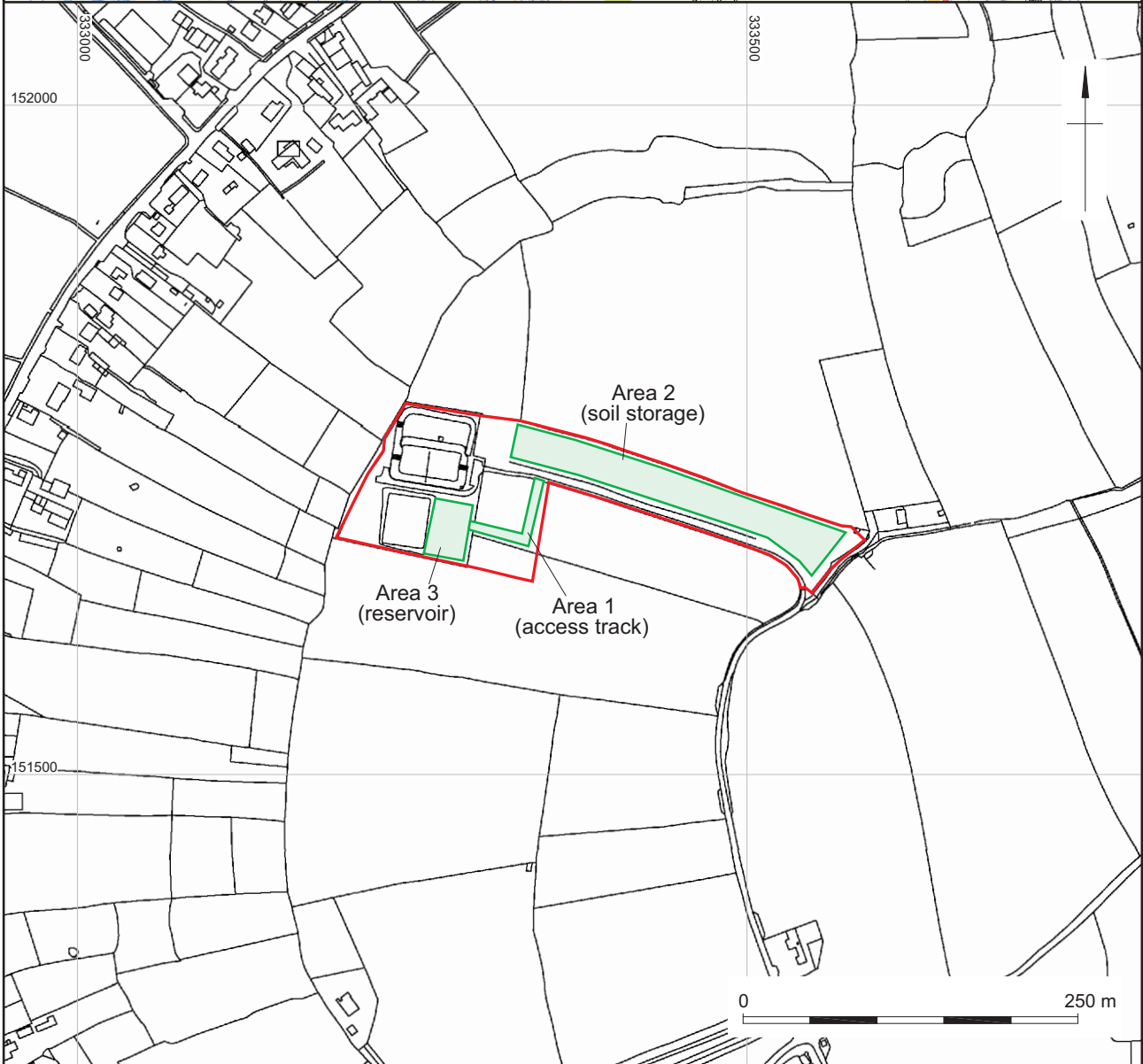
Validated sections in current version

Details	Location	Creators	Archive	Publications
---------	----------	----------	---------	--------------

No No No No 0/1

File submission and form progress

Grey literature report submitted?	No	Grey literature report filename/s
Images submitted?	No	Image filename/s
Boundary file submitted?	No	Boundary filename
HER signed off?		NMR signed off?



 	Contains Ordnance Survey open data © Crown Copyright and database right 2011. Additional survey data supplied by the Client. This material is for client report only © Wessex Archaeology. No unauthorised reproduction.			
	Date:	09/11/11	Revision Number:	0
	Scale:	1:25,000 & 1:5000	Illustrator:	KL
	Path:	Y:\PROJECTS\79330\Drawing Office\Report Figs\wb11_11\79330_wb.dwg		

Site location plan

Figure 1



Plate 1: General working view of Area 1, view from west



Plate 2: North facing representative section of Area 1



Plate 3: South facing representative section of Area 2



Plate 4: General view of Area 3 after topsoil removal, view from north



Plate 5: South facing representative section of Area 3 showing made ground and natural geology



WESSEX ARCHAEOLOGY LIMITED.

Registered Head Office: Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 6EB.

Tel: 01722 326867 Fax: 01722 337562 info@wessexarch.co.uk

Regional offices in **Edinburgh, Rochester and Sheffield**

For more information visit www.wessexarch.co.uk

