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# High Street Bath Bath and North East Somerset

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Ref: 87220.01  
June 2013



**Highway Improvements (Drainage and pavement),  
High Street, Bath,  
Bath & North East Somerset**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**Prepared for:**

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**June 2013**

**Report Ref 87220.01**



## Quality Assurance

<b>Project Code</b>	87220	<b>Accession Code</b>	Museum Accession Code BATRM:2012.40	<b>Client Ref.</b>	
<b>Planning Application Ref.</b>	N/A	<b>Ordnance Survey (OS) national grid reference (NGR)</b>	375104 164839		

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\* I = Internal Draft; E = External Draft; F = Final

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# Highway Improvements (Drainage and pavement), High Street, Bath, Bath & North East Somerset

## Archaeological Watching Brief

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# **Highway Improvements (Drainage and pavement), High Street, Bath, Bath & North East Somerset**

## **Archaeological Watching Brief**

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# **Highway Improvements (Drainage and pavement), High Street, Bath, Bath & North East Somerset**

## **Archaeological Watching Brief**

### **Summary**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by David Reynolds on behalf of Bath and North East Somerset County Council to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of a trench for a replacement drainage pipe along the High Street, Bath, Bath & North East Somerset (NGR 375104 164839).

The archaeological works consisted of monitoring the excavation of a pipe trench running from the pavement north of the Abbey to the pavement north of the National Westminster Bank and were part of a wider highway improvement. The watching brief was carried out intermittently between 24<sup>th</sup> September 2012 and 4<sup>th</sup> March 2013.

No archaeological deposits were encountered during the course of the works. The majority of the pipe route was through made ground deposits, with a substantial level of disturbance. A dark greyish brown cassy silty clay was discovered at a depth of 1.20m within part of the trench however this was also likely to be within made ground. The cellar for the National Westminster Bank was encountered within the northern part of the pipe trench and was encountered at a depth of between 0.67m and 2m.

No evidence was encountered for any evidence for the 17<sup>th</sup> century Guildhall building within the pipe trench.



# **Highway Improvements (Drainage and pavement), High Street, Bath, Bath & North East Somerset**

## **Archaeological Watching Brief**

### **Acknowledgements**

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank David Reynolds of the Development & Major Projects Department, Bath & North East Somerset Council for commissioning this work and Simon Waterfield (North Midland Construction) for his assistance on site during the course of the works and to Derek Rowe (Building Surveyor for Bath & North East Somerset Council), who supplied plans and information on existing cellars.

The fieldwork was undertaken by 10 pages, Darryl Freer and Neil Fitzpatrick. The report was compiled by Simon Flaherty and Andy Manning. The report Illustrations were prepared by Ken Lymer and the project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Andy Manning.



# Highway Improvements (Drainage and pavement), High Street, Bath, Bath & North East Somerset

## Archaeological Watching Brief

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by David Reynolds of the Development & Major Projects Department of Bath & North East Somerset Council to undertake an emergency archaeological watching brief during the excavation for a drainage pipe on the High Street, Bath, Bath and North East Somerset centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 375104 164839 (**Figure 1**), hereafter referred to as 'the Site'.
- 1.1.2 The archaeological works were associated with a planned programme of highways improvement along Bath High Street. These works comprised of the replacement of existing pavements, additional lighting and the excavation of new drainage, both within the southern end of Bath High Street and the northern area adjacent to Bath Abbey.
- 1.1.3 The works were classified as permitted development and were not subject to the normal the planning process. In addition, the works were located within areas which were likely to have been considerably disturbed by previous roadside construction, maintenance, services and an underlying pattern of existing vaults and cellars within Bath High Street.
- 1.1.4 However, recent archaeological discoveries had been made in the immediate area and also given the proximity of the works to Bath Abbey and the former site of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century Guildhall, it was been decided to undertaken an archaeological watching brief during the deeper project impacts. This was intended to ensure that any archaeological remains would be recorded.
- 1.1.5 With much of the works, including the pavement replacement and new lighting, comprising shallow impacts with no possibility of encountering archaeological deposits, the main focus of the watching brief was the excavation of an intermittent pipe trench from a point just to the north of the Abbey and then running northwards up the High Street, terminating in front of the National Westminster bank (**Figure 1**).
- 1.1.6 The main phase of fieldwork (comprising of five separate site visits) was undertaken intermittently between 24<sup>th</sup> September 2012 and 4<sup>th</sup> March 2013.

#### 1.2 The Site

- 1.2.1 The City of Bath is situated at the southern edge of the Cotswolds. The River Avon meanders through the city approximately from west to north east. The site is located on the north-west side of the river. The site comprises of the Pavement and road running from the north of the Abbey running north to the pavement outside of the National Westminster Bank.





- 1.2.2 The underlying solid geology is made up of River Terrace Deposits of sand and gravel overlying Mudstone. The surface topography of the site is generally level at between 26 to 27m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

## 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Background

- 2.1.1 Bath has been assigned 36 different archaeological zones by the County Council and the site is located within the city centre which is Zone 1 this is described as “The Roman and medieval settlement overlaid by later Georgian development and largely confined within the City walls. The archaeological resource is mixed and complex with evidence of human settlement and activity associated with the hot springs and the rise of urbanism. Key sites include the Roman Baths and temple, Bath Abbey, the medieval street layout and some significant Georgian grand gestures” (Banes 2004).
- 2.1.2 The High Street and corresponding Cheap Street form part of the old city lay out and are shown on maps in the medieval period and date as far back as the late Saxon period. The High Street is on a north to south alignment and connects to the Northgate of the Roman defensive wall that was still in use in the medieval period (Cunliffe 1986).
- 2.1.3 The majority of the proposed improvements were at a relatively shallow depth and within areas already subject to considerable modern disturbance. However, recent work during a basement refitting of a shop at the corner of Cheap Street and the High Street, immediately adjacent to the Site, Roman *in situ* stratified deposits were found at a depth of approximately 2m below the current ground surface (Richard Sermon *per comm.*). Given the likely deepest depth of the improvements was approximately 1.5m to 2m, there was the potential to uncover further archaeological deposits.
- 2.1.4 In addition, the current Guildhall located on the High Street was built between 1775 and 1778. However an earlier Stuart Guildhall is thought to have been located within the current High Street and potentially within the route of the proposed excavations (**Figure 1**). It is unclear whether the Stuart Guildhall erected in 1625 overlaid an earlier Tudor structure. The Guildhall went through modifications throughout its existence; however by 1760 the structure was described as ruinous and by 1777, the council had transferred to the new building and the old Guildhall was demolished (HoBRG, 1992).

## 3 METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Aims and objectives

- 3.1.1 The aim of the archaeological watching brief was to establish within the constraints of the sampling strategy the presence or absence, location extent date and character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains within the site, with particular reference

- *To the Roman and medieval remains within the area*
- *The previous Guildhall building that was located within the Site*

### 3.2 Fieldwork methodology

- 3.2.1 All fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the guidance and standards outlined in the institute for Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief (as amended 2008).



- 3.2.2 Works comprised archaeological monitoring by a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist of made ground/topsoil during groundworks. The watching brief was maintained throughout initial stripping until it was clear that the potential for archaeological remains to be exposed had been exhausted or until the trench was fully excavated to its necessary depth. Where practicable and without causing unreasonable delay to the works programme, excavations were halted whilst investigations were carried out by Wessex Archaeology staff.
- 3.2.3 The fieldwork consisted of monitoring the excavation of an intermittent trench associated with the installation of new services. The service trench was excavated by a 4 tonne 360° tracked excavator employing a toothless ditching bucket under the constant supervision of a suitably qualified archaeologist. The trench measured approximately 0.60m wide and ranged in depth from 0.68m to 2.15m and ran for approximately 64m.
- 3.2.4 Recording was undertaken using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* record sheets. Representative soil profile sections of the trench were recorded drawn at a scale of 1:10. A total of forty-nine digital images were taken of ground work operations during the watching brief.

## 4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

### 4.1 Results

- 4.1.1 Below surmises the stratigraphic sequence of the three parts of the watching brief:
- 4.1.2 The north-west to southeast aligned part of the pipe trench at the southern edge of the Site just north of the Abbey (referred to as **Trench 1**) (**Figure 1, Plate 1**). **Trench 1** consisted of the current ground surface of Tarmac (**101**) overlying a 0.10m layer of concrete (**102**). The concrete in turn sealed a modern hard standing layer (**103**, 0.27m thick) consisting of gravel held with an iron mesh. This mesh sealed a grey sandy gravel levelling layer that was 0.40m thick which sealed a layer of made ground (**105**) that ran to the bottom of the trench to a depth of 2.15m bgl (below ground level). This was a dark brown grey silty clay layer containing Cotswold stone building rubble, a lead water pipe and concrete inclusions.
- 4.1.3 The pipe trench turned to run north to south and this section for 40m (referred to as **Trench 2**) (**Figure 1**). **Trench 2** consisted of the current ground surface level of tarmac (**201**) being 0.20m thick. This in turn overlay a concrete slab (**202**) which was 0.40m thick. The concrete slab sealed a layer of made ground/demolition rubble (**203**) that was 0.60m thick. This sealed a very dark greyish brown silty clay layer (**204**), 0.40m thick, with a total depth for Trench 2 of 1.20m bgl.
- 4.1.4 The final northern stretch of the pipe trench (referred to as **Trench 3**) ran northwards along the High Street for a length of 16.80m and terminating in front of the National Westminster Bank (**Figure 1, Plates 2 & 3**). The sequential deposits of Trench 3 consisted of a 0.16m thick layer of tarmac (**301**) forming the current ground surface. This overlay a layer of concrete (**302**) that was 0.34m thick. This sealed a mid brown black silty sandy clay made ground layer (**303**) that contained brick, concrete and stone and varied in thickness from 0.49m-0.69m. This deposit sealed a further made ground layer (**304**) that was amid grey black green silty layer with no inclusions and measured between 0.30 and 0.80m in thickness, with a total maximum depth for **Trench 3** of 2m bgl.
- 4.1.5 Upon excavation, the made ground deposit **304** sealed the top of a stone and concrete built cellar that belongs to the National Westminster Bank. The cellar was encountered at



a depth of between 0.67m to 2m bgl and would have truncated any archaeological deposits.

- 4.1.6 No archaeological features or deposits were observed during the course of this watching brief.

## **5 FINDS**

### **5.1 Finds**

- 5.1.1 The only finds recovered from the Site came from a single context (made ground deposit **105**), and comprised animal bone (3 fragments), clay tobacco pipe stem (1 fragment), pottery (6 sherds), window glass (3 fragments) and concrete (1 fragment).
- 5.1.2 All of the datable material is post-medieval; the pottery wares comprise coarse redware and modern refined whitewares. These finds have not been retained.

## **6 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE**

### **6.1 Environmental samples**

- 6.1.1 No features or deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified.

## **7 CONCLUSIONS**

### **7.1 Introduction**

- 7.1.1 The archaeological watching brief along the High Street did not reveal any archaeological features, deposits or finds predating the post-medieval period and specifically, no evidence was found for deep *in-situ* stratified archaeological deposits or any remains of the former Guildhouse.
- 7.1.2 The line of the new proposed service appears to have been heavily truncated to its full depth (in some places up to 2.15m bgl) by later building and activity relating to cellar, services and road construction.

## **8 STORAGE AND CURATION**

### **8.1 Preparation and Deposition**

- 8.1.1 The complete project archive will be prepared in accordance with Wessex Archaeology's Guidelines for Archive Preparation and in accordance with *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage (UKIC 1990)*. On completion of the project, the archive will be deposited with Bath Museum under Accession number BATRM: 2012.40 (Wessex Archaeology project code 87220).

### **8.2 Archive**

- 8.2.1 The Watching Brief project archive, consists of:
- One A4 file containing the paper records and drawings.
  - Digital data (Site photographs, survey data, word and PDF files)
- 8.2.2 The project archive is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology (WA) in Salisbury under the Site Code **87720**.



### **8.3 Copyright**

- 8.3.1 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.

### **8.4 Security Copy**

- 8.4.1 In line with current best practice, on completion of the project a security copy of the paper records will be prepared, in the form of microfilm. The master jackets and one diazo copy of the microfilm will be submitted to the National Monuments Record Centre (Swindon); a second diazo copy will be deposited with the paper records at Bath Museum under Accession number BATRM:2012.40 (Wessex Archaeology project code 87220) and a third diazo copy will be retained by Wessex Archaeology.

## **9 REFERENCES**

### **9.1 Bibliography**

BaNES, 2004, Archaeology in the City of Bath: Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Cunliffe, B, 1986, *The City of Bath*, Alan Sutton Publishing, Gloucester

History of Bath Research Group, (HoBRG) 1992, *The Stuart Guildhall, Bath*, newsletter No.17



## Appendix 1: Trench Tables

Trench 1	Dimensions: 7m x 0.60m x 2.15m (max)		
	Height: 26.17m aOD		
Context	Category	Description	Depth
101	Layer	.Tarmac current ground surface	0.07m
102	Layer	Concrete	0.07m-0.17m
103	Layer	Hard standing layer pale brown gravel within an iron mesh	0-0.44m
104	Layer	Grey Sandy gravel with occasional slabs. Levelling Layer	0.44m-0.84m
105	Layer	Mostly dark grey brown with patches of grey silty sandy clay made ground layer it contained worked Cotswold stone building rubble a lead water pipe and concrete.	0.84m-2.15m

Trench 2	Dimensions: c.40m x 0.60m x 1.60m		
	Height: 26.40m aOD		
Context	Category	Description	Depth
201	Layer	Tarmac current road surface	0-0.20m
202	Layer	Concrete slab underlying current road surface	0.20m-0.60m
203	Layer	Made ground/demolition rubble	0.60m-1.20m
204	Layer	Very dark greyish brown cassy silty clay	1.20m-1.60m

Trench 3	Dimensions: 16.80m x 0.66m x 2m		
	Height: 26.80 aOD		
Context	Category	Description	Depth
301	Layer	Tarmac- current road surface	0-0.16m
302	Layer	Concrete. Layer underlying tarmac broken up in places.	0.16m-0.50m
303	Layer	Made ground. Mid brown black silty sandy clay with brick, stone and concrete inclusions. Brick <110mm sub angular, poorly sorted, occasional. Concrete <110mm sub angular, poorly sorted common. Stone <80mm sub angular common poorly sorted.	0.50m-1.20m
304	Layer	Mid grey black green silty clay. No inclusions. Made ground.	1.20m-2m
305	Building	Top of cellar for Natwest Bank. Made from Cotswold? Stone although the stones were not fully exposed and appeared to be concreted they measured 0.21m x 0.15m x 0.15m. Once at this depth the digging stopped. The cellar appeared to be vaulted and the depth at which it was located varied between 0.67m – 2m (bgl). This ran the length of the trench and all other layers must be made ground.	0.67m-2m.



## Appendix 2: Oasis Summary

**OASIS ID: wessexar1-152339**

### Project details

Project name	The High Street, Bath
Short description of the project	Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by David Reynolds on behalf of Bath and North East Somerset County Council to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of a trench for a replacement drainage pipe along the High Street, Bath, Bath and North East Somerset (NGR 375104 164839). The archaeological works consisted of monitoring the excavation of a pipe trench running from the pavement north of the Abbey to the pavement north of the National Westminster Bank and were part of a wider highway improvement. No archaeological deposits were encountered during the course of the works. The majority of the pipe route was though made ground deposits, with a substantial level of disturbance. A dark greyish brown cassy silty clay was discovered at a depth of 1.20m within part of the trench however this was also likely to be within made ground. The cellar for the National Westminster Bank was encountered within the northern part of the pipe trench and was encountered at a depth of between 0.67m and 2m.
Project dates	Start: 24-09-2012 End: 04-03-2013
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	87220 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	BATRM:2012.40 - Museum accession ID
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)
Current Land use	Other 3 - Built over
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Voluntary/self-interest

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET BATH High Street, Bath
Postcode	BA1 5AH



Study area 100.00 Square metres  
Site coordinates ST 751 648 51 -2 51 22 52 N 002 21 28 W Point  
Height OD / Depth Min: 25.00m Max: 27.00m

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### Project creators

Name of Organisation Wessex Archaeology  
Project brief originator City/Nat. Park/District/Borough archaeologist  
Project design originator not undertaken  
Project director/manager A Manning  
Project supervisor Darryl Freer  
Type of sponsor/funding body City Council  
Name of sponsor/funding body Bath and North-east Somerset Council

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### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No  
Digital Archive recipient Bath and North East Somerset  
Digital Archive ID BATRM:2012.40  
Digital Contents "none"  
Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography", "Survey", "Text"  
Paper Archive recipient Bath and North East Somerset  
Paper Archive ID BATRM:2012.40  
Paper Contents "none"  
Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Notebook - Excavation", "Research", "General Notes", "Report", "Section"

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### Project bibliography 1

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Entered on 6 June 2013





Site and trench location

Figure 1



Plate 1: North-west facing section of Trench 1



Plate 2: West facing section of Trench 3

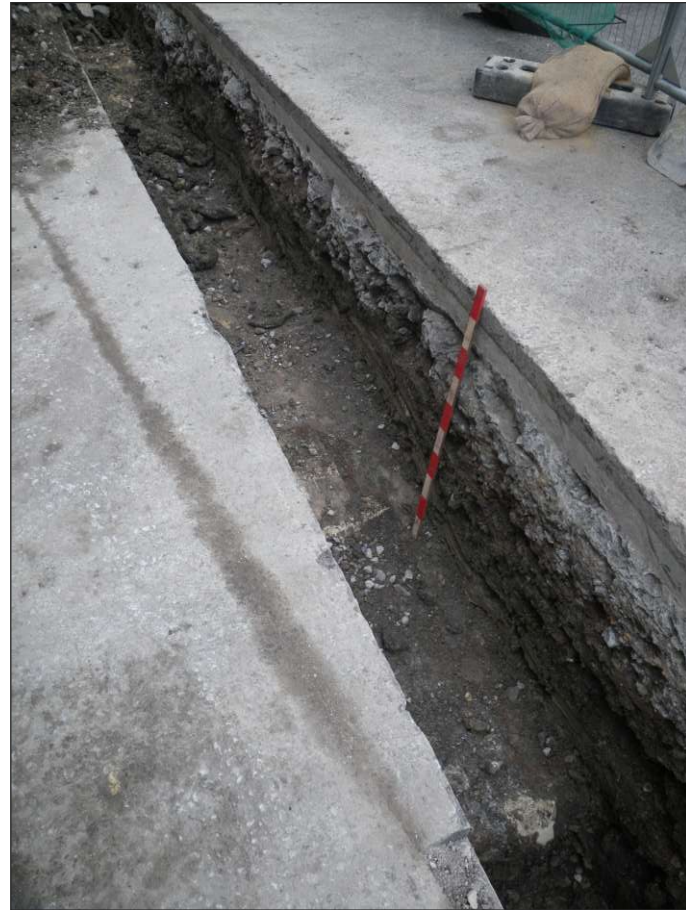


Plate 3: Oblique view from south-west of National Westminster Bank Cellar 305



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