

**LAND AT 5 SION HILL
LANSDOWN
BATH**

NGR: ST 7429 6599

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



August 2014

Report No. 991

Quality Assurance

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SUMMARY

Between 15th and 23rd July 2014 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief on land at 5 Sion Hill, Lansdown, Bath (NGR: ST 7429 6599) during the demolition of an existing house and construction of a new residential building and subterranean garage.

The archaeological monitoring revealed evidence for disturbance and/or truncation of natural deposits within the site.

No archaeological finds or features were identified during the course of the watching brief.

GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Archaeology

For the purpose of this project archaeology is taken to mean the study of past human societies through their material remains from Prehistoric times to the Modern era. No rigid upper date limit has been set, but AD 1900 is used as a general cut-off point.

CBM

Ceramic building material.

Medieval

The period between the Norman Conquest (AD 1066) and *c.* AD 1500.

Natural

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site.

NGR

National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

OD

Ordnance datum; used to express a given height above sea-level.

OS

Ordnance Survey.

Post-medieval

The period from *c.* AD 1500 onwards.

Prehistoric

The period prior to the Roman invasion of AD 43. Traditionally sub divided into; Palaeolithic – *c.* 500,000 BC to *c.* 12,000 BC; Mesolithic – *c.* 12,000 BC to *c.* 4,500 BC; Neolithic – *c.* 4,500 BC to *c.* 2,000 BC; Bronze Age – *c.* 2,000 BC to *c.* 800 BC; Iron Age – *c.* 800 BC to AD 43.

Romano-British

Term used to define the fusion of indigenous Iron Age traditions with invasive Roman culture. Traditionally dated AD 43 to *c.* AD 410.

Saxon

The period between AD 410 and AD 1066.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Between 15th and 23rd July 2014 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief on land at 5 Sion Hill, Lansdown, Bath (NGR: ST 7429 6599). The work was commissioned by Nick and Katie Smith.
- 1.2 The watching brief was undertaken in line with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), which was prepared in accordance with NPPF12 (*National Planning Policy Framework 2012*) and the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*, issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (2011).
- 1.3 This document presents the findings of the archaeological watching brief and it complies with the specification set out in MoRPHE (English Heritage, 2006).

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Planning permission (**Planning Ref: 14/01347/FUL**) has been granted for the demolition of an existing house at 5 Sion Hill and the construction of a new residential building with an associate subterranean garage.
- 2.2 The site is located within a residential area, to the south of Sion Hill, west of Cavendish Road and immediately north of High Common.
- 2.3 The underlying geology comprises *Bridport Sand Formation* – sandstone (BGS on-line viewer).
- 2.4 The site is located within the World Heritage Site of Bath (ref: 1000103) in an area of recognised archaeological potential for Iron Age, Roman and Medieval activity. A Romano-British settlement (MBN30144) is known from the area and Medieval ridge-and-furrow (MBN30145) has also been identified.
- 2.5 The study area therefore contained the potential for archaeological remains, predominately dating to the Roman and Medieval periods. This did not prejudice the watching brief against the recovery of data relating to other periods.

3 AIMS

- 3.1 The aims of the archaeological watching brief were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature, extent, preservation and potential of any surviving archaeological remains; as well as to make recommendations for management of the resource, including further archaeological works if necessary.

3.2 These aims were to be achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:

i) to define and identify the nature of archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible;

ii) to attempt to characterise the nature and preservation of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning and extent of features present on the site;

iii) to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence which would attempt to determine the complexity of the horizontal and vertical stratigraphy present, and to recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples;

iv) to determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may be present.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 The monitored groundworks were undertaken by a 360° mechanical tracked excavator, fitted with a toothless grading bucket where appropriate. All monitored excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision.

4.2 The monitored works comprised an area of mechanical reduction and an area of topsoil strip, both of which were located at the south of the site. The groundworks associated with the construction of the new house were not monitored as these were situated at the north of the site, in an area of known previous disturbance. All amendments to the on-site monitoring levels were agreed with the archaeological representative of Bath and North East Somerset Council.

4.3 Spoil tips were scanned for finds.

4.4 Any significant archaeological deposits and/or features within the study area were manually cleaned, investigated and recorded in accordance with the WSI.

4.5 All excavation and recording work was undertaken in accordance with the WSI and the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual.

5 RESULTS

5.1 The extent of monitored groundworks is shown in Figure 2 and comprised an area subject to mechanical reduction and an area subject to a topsoil strip.

5.2 Mechanical reduction: natural orange beige plastic clay was present at a depth of 1.7m below Modern ground. The natural was overlaid by a brown silty clay

(102), up to 1.5m thick, which contained frequent CBM, metal, chinaware pottery and glass fragments. Layer (102) was subsequently sealed by a light brown friable sandy silt topsoil (101), up to 0.2m thick, which contained fragments of CBM, as well as chinaware pottery.

- 5.3 Topsoil strip: the top of deposit (102) was revealed across the entire area at approximately 0.20m – 0.30m below Modern ground. No deeper excavation was undertaken in this area. Layer (102) was overlaid by topsoil (101), up to 0.30m thick.

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 No archaeological finds, deposits or features were revealed during the course of the monitored groundworks. The lack of intact subsoils beneath Modern layer (102) indicated that the natural substrates are likely to have previously been reduced or disturbed and, therefore, any archaeological deposits are unlikely to have survived within the area of the monitored works.
- 6.2 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology, but will be deposited within 12 months with the appropriate museum. A short note will be submitted for publication in the relevant journal and an OASIS form will also be submitted to ADS.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

English Heritage. 2006. *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)*. Swindon.

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8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS


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Site Code: SHB14
Accession Code:

N

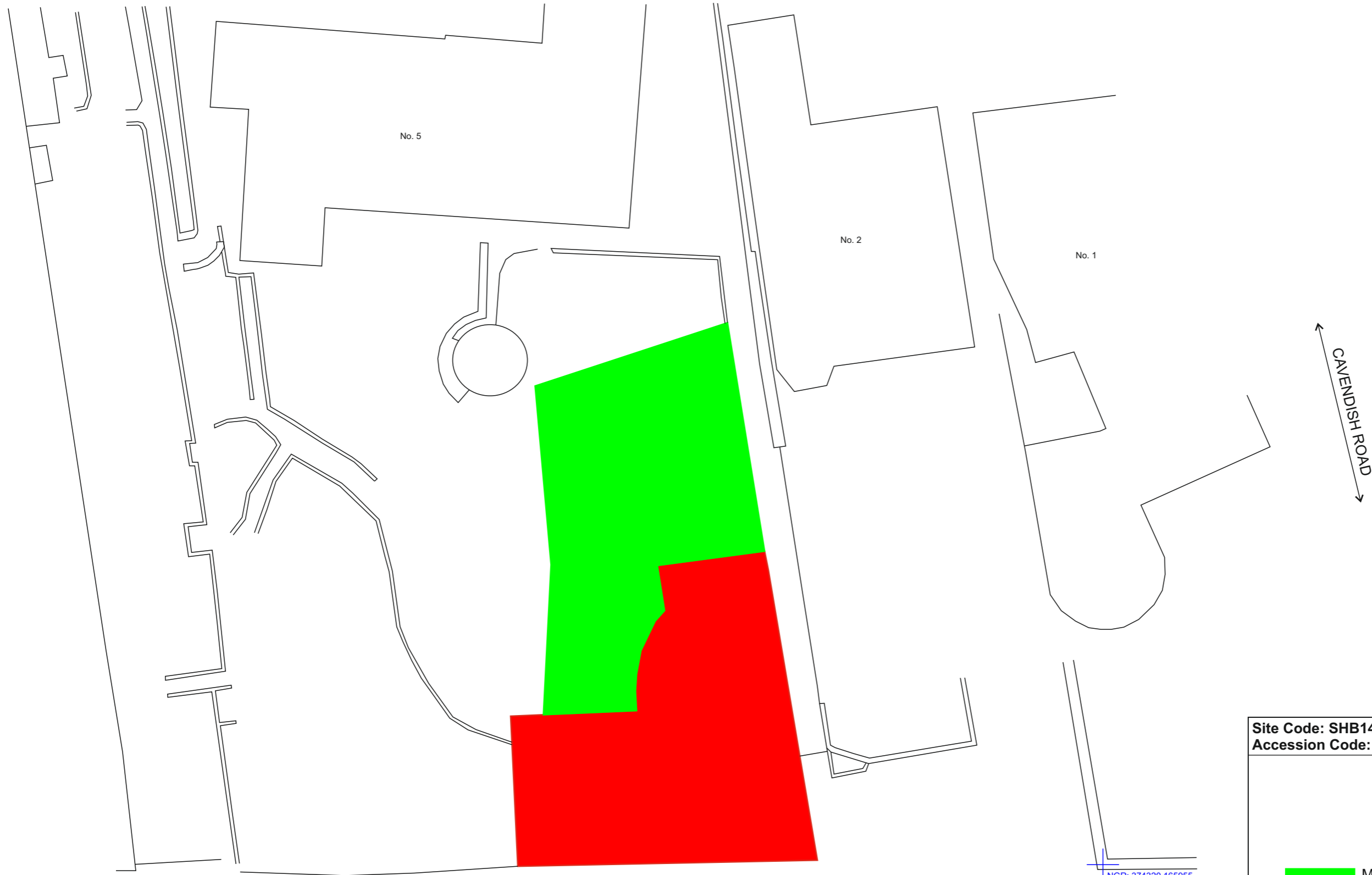


0m 2km

1:50,000

FIGURE 1: Site Location

← SION HILL →



NGR: 374320.165955

Site Code: SHB14
Accession Code:

N

█ Mechanical topsoil strip
█ Mechanical reduction

0m 10m
1:200 @ A3

FIGURE 2: Site Plan