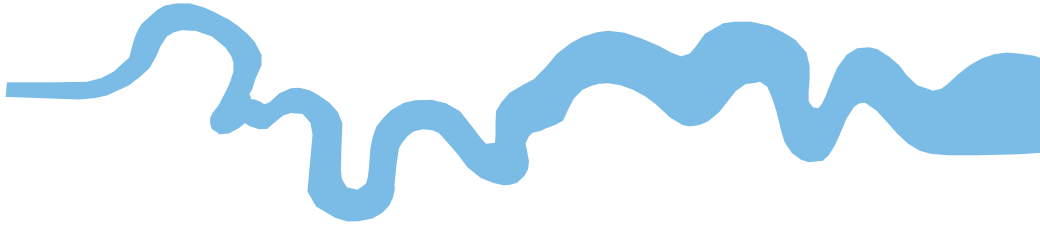


T V A S



SOUTH WEST

**Police Station, Bath Hill, Keynsham,
Bath and North East Somerset**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Nicholas Dawson

Site Code: OPS20/75

(ST 6579 6832)

**Police Station, Bath Hill, Keynsham,
Bath and North East Somerset**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Armour Heritage Limited

by Nicholas Dawson

TVAS South West

Site Code OPS 20/75

January 2021

Summary

Site name: Police Station, Bath Hill, Keynsham, Bath and North East Somerset

Grid reference: ST 6579 6832

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 17th November to 15th December 2020

Project manager: Agata Socha-Paszkiwicz

Site supervisor: Nicholas Dawson

Site code: OPS 20/75

Area of site: 0.43ha

Summary of results: The watching brief monitored ground works in relation to nine new houses on the site of the old police station. Works revealed several footings and walls relating to the Victorian police station. They also showed the area to have been terraced, truncating the top of natural geology and reducing the chance for survival of archaeology. No other features or finds of archaeological interest were identified.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at TVAS South West, Taunton and will be deposited with the South West Heritage Trust or Archaeology Data Service in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 21.01.21
	Steve Preston✓ 21.01.21

Old Police Station, Bath Hill, Keynsham, Bath and North East Somerset An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Nicholas Dawson

Report 20/75

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at the former Police Station, Bath Hill, Keynsham, Bath and North East Somerset, BS31 1HJ (ST 6579 6832) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Sue Farr of Amour Heritage Limited, Greystone Cottage, Trudoxhill, Frome, BA11 5DP.

Planning permission (19/05541/FUL) has been granted by Bath and North East Somerset Council for the demolition of remaining buildings of the former police station and the construction of nine dwellings and associated work. The consent is subject to a condition which requires the implementation of an archaeological watching brief to be maintained during all groundwork.

This is in accordance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2019) and the Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Steve Membury, Senior Historic Environment Officer for Somerset. The fieldwork was undertaken by Nicholas Dawson between 17th November and 15th December 2020 and the site code is OPS 20/75. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Taunton and will be deposited with the South West Heritage Trust in due course.

Location, topography, and geology

The site is located within the town of Keynsham, just west of the centre (Fig. 1), some 500m south of the River Avon. Keynsham is located between Bristol, to the north-west and Bath, to the south-east. The site sits near the top of Bath Hill on a terraced area. It is bounded to the west by Bath Hill road, to the south by the Talbot Inn and a single dwelling. To the north and east are residential estates. The site itself is divided into two with the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses and its car park separating the western area A from the eastern area B. The site lies on geology mapped as Blue Lias Formation, with no recorded superficial deposits (BSG 1997). The site lies at a height of approximately 23m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) at its western end rising to 25m aOD at the eastern end.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site was highlighted in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Farr 2020). In summary the site lies within an area of several find spots of varying date though for the most part Roman and later. Evidence of earlier activity consists of Mesolithic flintwork, a Palaeolithic hand axe and a possible prehistoric ditch located c1km to the north-west at Durley Hill. A Roman road is believed to pass to the west of Keynsham through the known Roman villa and settlement at Somerdale 0.8km to the north-west. A second villa was also found at Durley Hill. The earliest documented evidence of Keynsham is in Æthelweard's Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (AD975–983) where it is referred to as *Cægineshamme* and then in Domesday Book (1086) as *Cainesham*. The Medieval Keynsham Abbey lies just 460m to the north of site. An evaluation at No.80 Bath Hill revealed Post-Medieval buildings, drains and pits. The western half of the site was the location of the Victorian police station which has been demolished. In the eastern half of site some modern ancillary buildings belonging to the police station are to be demolished as part of the development.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any identified archaeological deposits which may be affected by the groundworks. This involved examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks, overburden removal and ground reduction. Any archaeological deposits identified were to be hand cleaned, excavated, and fully recorded.

Results

Area A

In the western part of site a trench 25m long and 5.6m wide was observed to a depth of 2m (Pl. 1). Its orientation was northwest to south-east, parallel to the Bath Hill road. The trench revealed a stratigraphy of 0.3m of levelling gravels (51, 52) for the former carpark. Beneath this was natural clays and dug into the natural were five wall footings (58-62) and three sunken walls (54-6) that formed part of a basement or cellar (Pl. 2) with a stone slab floor (57). This sunken room was backfilled with a mix of rubble and soil (53) from which several Victorian bricks were recovered (not retained). All but one wall (55) and one footing (62) lay parallel on a north-east to south-west orientation and all were connected at the south-west end by footings (62) which with wall (55) ran on a north-west to south-east orientation. The footings were constructed of dressed stone and bonded with mortar, with a width of 0.65m and survived to a height of 0.7m. The walls were constructed of the same

materials and at the same width, but they stood at 1.53m high. The floor of the basement/cellar was of stone slabs that sat on top of the natural lias bedrock at a depth of 1.82m.

Area B

In the eastern half of site, two stages of groundwork were observed. The first was a 3.6m by 4m pit excavated to a depth of 2.35m (Pl. 3). Situated on the very southern edge of site (Fig. 2) the pit was partially on a grass bank and partially within the demolished buildings. The stratigraphy revealed that under the grass bank there was 0.85m of topsoil (50) at its deepest sitting on top of the natural clay. The topsoil and 0.4m of the top of the natural was truncated by 0.71m of mixed soils and demolition debris (64).

Next to be observed was a 15m long 0.8m wide service trench aligned north to south through the centre of area B (Pl. 4). The trench revealed a stratigraphy of 0.5m to 0.6m of mixed soils and demolition debris (64) above natural clay geology.

Conclusion

Works observed in area A revealed a number of walls, footings and a basement/cellar belonging to a single structure which almost certainly can be attributed to the long demolished Victorian police station. Given that this structure covers most of area A and that the ground has been terraced for its construction, chances of archaeological features surviving in this area were minimal.

In area B the works observed also suggested that any archaeology that the natural geology has been heavily truncated by terracing and then further by construction and subsequent demolition of the police station's ancillary structures, with equally minimal chance of any archaeological survival here.

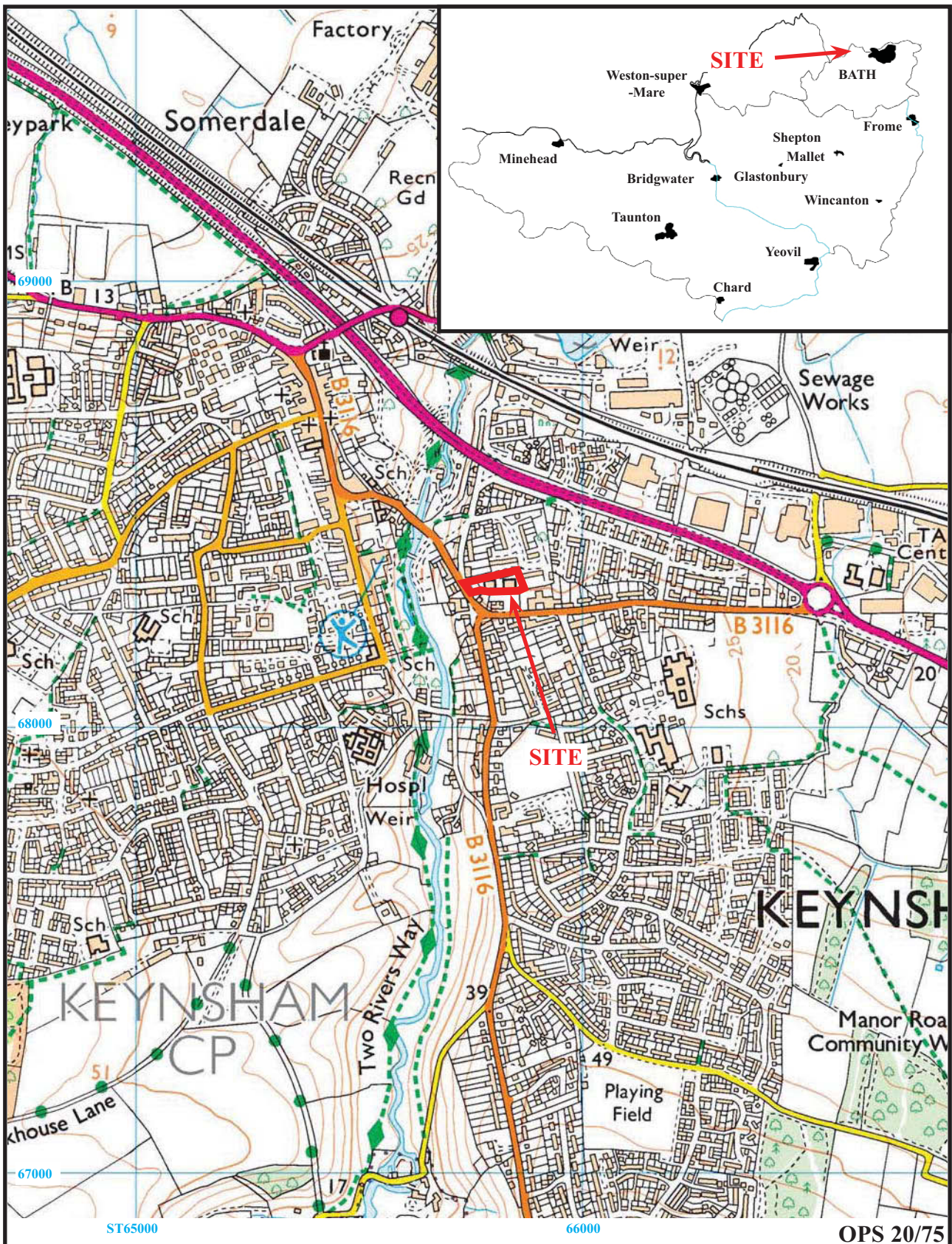
Given that this was the case in both areas of site it was agreed with Steve Membery, Senior Historic Environment Officer for Somerset that the remainder of the watching brief would not be required.

References

- BGS, 2011, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 265, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
Farr, S, 2020, 'Police Station, Bath Hill, Keynsham, BS31 1HJ Bath & North East Somerset: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief', Armour Heritage, Frome
NPPF, 2019, *National Planning Policy Framework* (revised), Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Govt, London

APPENDIX 1: Feature details

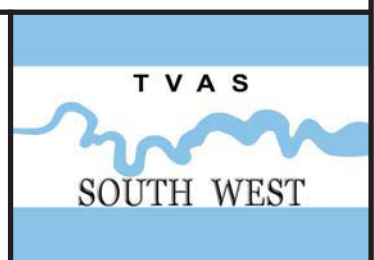
<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
	50	Topsoil		
	51	Gravel surface	Modern	
	52	Levelling gravel	Modern	
	53	Rubble fill of basement/cellar	Modern	
1	54	Basement/cellar wall	Victorian	Documentary
1	55	Basement/cellar wall	Victorian	Documentary
1	56	Basement/cellar wall	Victorian	Documentary
1	57	Basement/cellar floor	Victorian	Documentary
1	58	Footings	Victorian	Documentary
1	59	Footings	Victorian	Documentary
1	60	Footings	Victorian	Documentary
1	61	Footings	Victorian	Documentary
1	62	Footings	Victorian	Documentary
2	63	Utility trench	Modern	
3	64	Soil and demolition mix	Modern	



**Police Station, Bath Hill, Keynsham,
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Figure 1. Location of site within Keynsham and Bath and North East Somerset.

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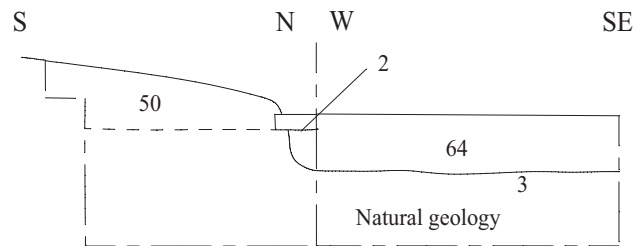
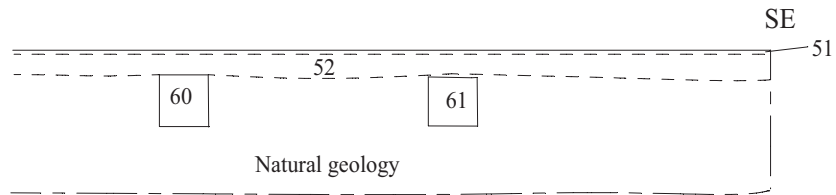
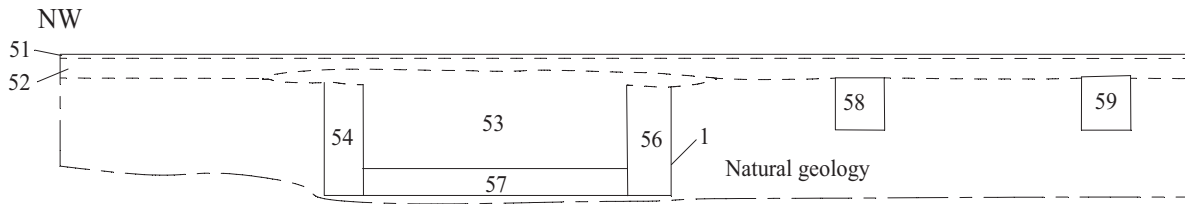




**Police Station, Bath Hill, Keynsham,
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Figure 2. Site plan.





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Figure 3. Sections.

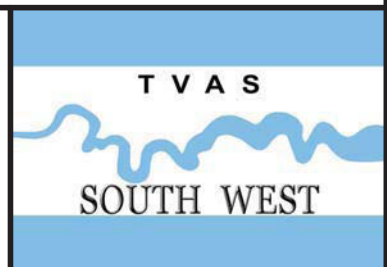




Plate 1. Trench area A, looking North.



Plate 2. Basement/cellar (54, 56, 57), looking North East, Scale: 2m.



Plate 3. Pit, area B, looking North West, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 4. Utility trench, looking South, Scale: 2m.

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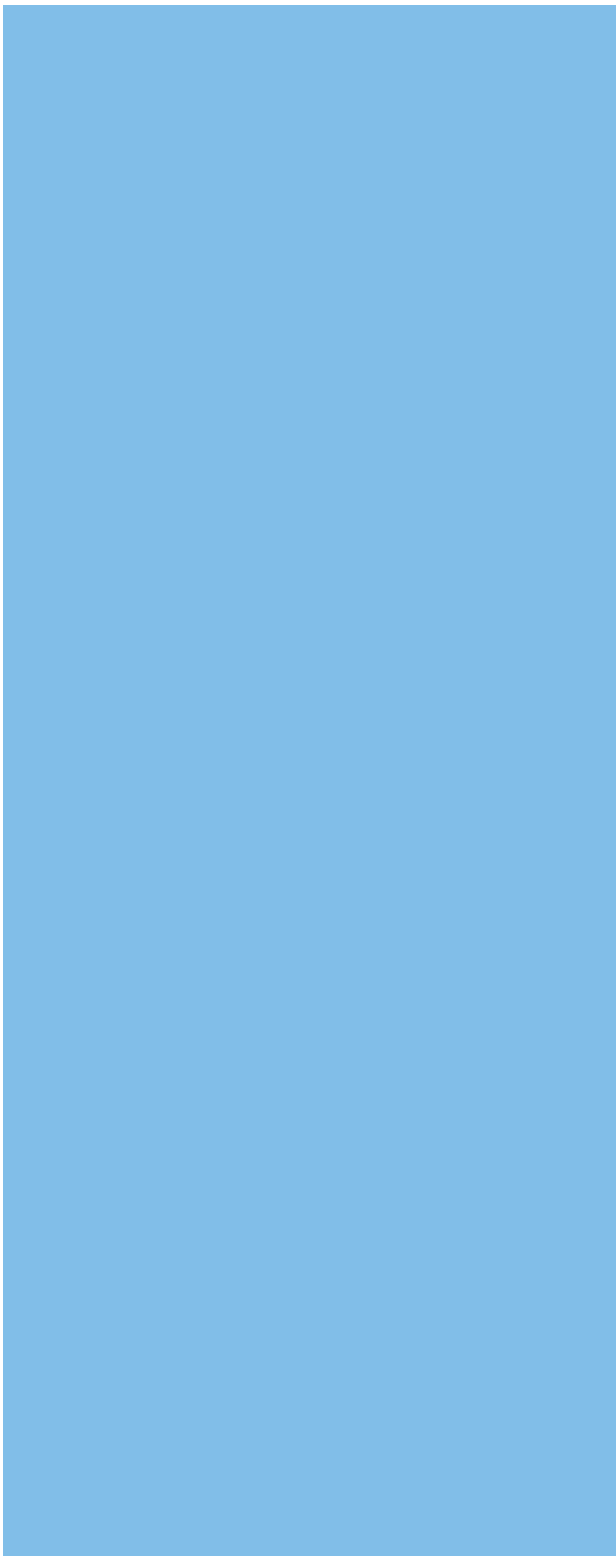
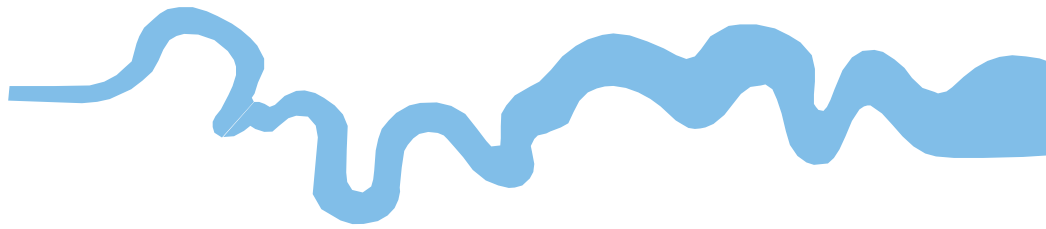
**Police Station, Bath Hill, Keynsham,
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Archaeological Watching Brief
Plates 1 to 4.**



TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43 AD 0 BC
Iron Age _____	750 BC
Bronze Age: Late _____	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle _____	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early _____	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC





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