

B0408 Fovant Elimination of Stand Alone Source, Broad Chalke, Wiltshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief



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for

Wessex water plc

by



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Salisbury & South Wiltshire Museum: C1/WBF/12/BCW

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Non-technical Summary

Context One Archaeological Services Ltd carried out an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of five test pits in advance of the elimination of a stand alone source at Broad Chalke, Wiltshire (from NGR SU 03741 25946 to SU 04178 25651) in July 2012. The project was commissioned and funded by Wessex Water plc under a Term Agreement with Context One.

The Site passes along the east side of the Broad Chalke Conservation Area, to the south of which there are recorded archaeological remains from the prehistoric to medieval periods.

Evidence of three parallel, and narrow, linear features appeared at the base of one test pit. These were not excavated and it is not known whether they were archaeological.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out an archaeological watching brief during of five test pits in advance of the elimination of a stand alone source at Broad Chalke, Wiltshire (from NGR SU 03741 25946 to SU 04178 25651; hereafter referred to as the Site) on 25th July 2012. The project was commissioned and funded by Wessex Water plc under a Term Agreement with Context One.
- 1.2 The level and scope of archaeological works was suggested by Ms Clare King (Assistant County Archaeologist, Wiltshire County Archaeology Service (WCAS)), following a consultation request by Ms Victoria Plummer (Environmental Scientist, Wessex Water). It was noted that the proposed pipeline passes along and overlaps with the east border of the Broad Chalke Conservation Area. Extensive prehistoric, Romano-British and medieval archaeology is known to the south of the village although none is recorded in the immediate vicinity of the Site, which lies to the north (WC 2012).
- 1.3 Given the recorded archaeological and historical data for the environs, it was considered that archaeological features/deposits could be present on the Site, and that these could be damaged or destroyed by development. However, as the nature or presence of such features/deposits was unproven on the basis of currently available information, it was determined that a reasonable archaeological response would be to carry out a watching brief during the excavation of test pits along the route of the proposed development.
- 1.4 The work was commissioned as a matter of urgency. In this instance, it was not deemed necessary for Ms King to carry out a site monitoring visit.
- 1.5 The request for the archaeological work follows advice given by Central Government as set out in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

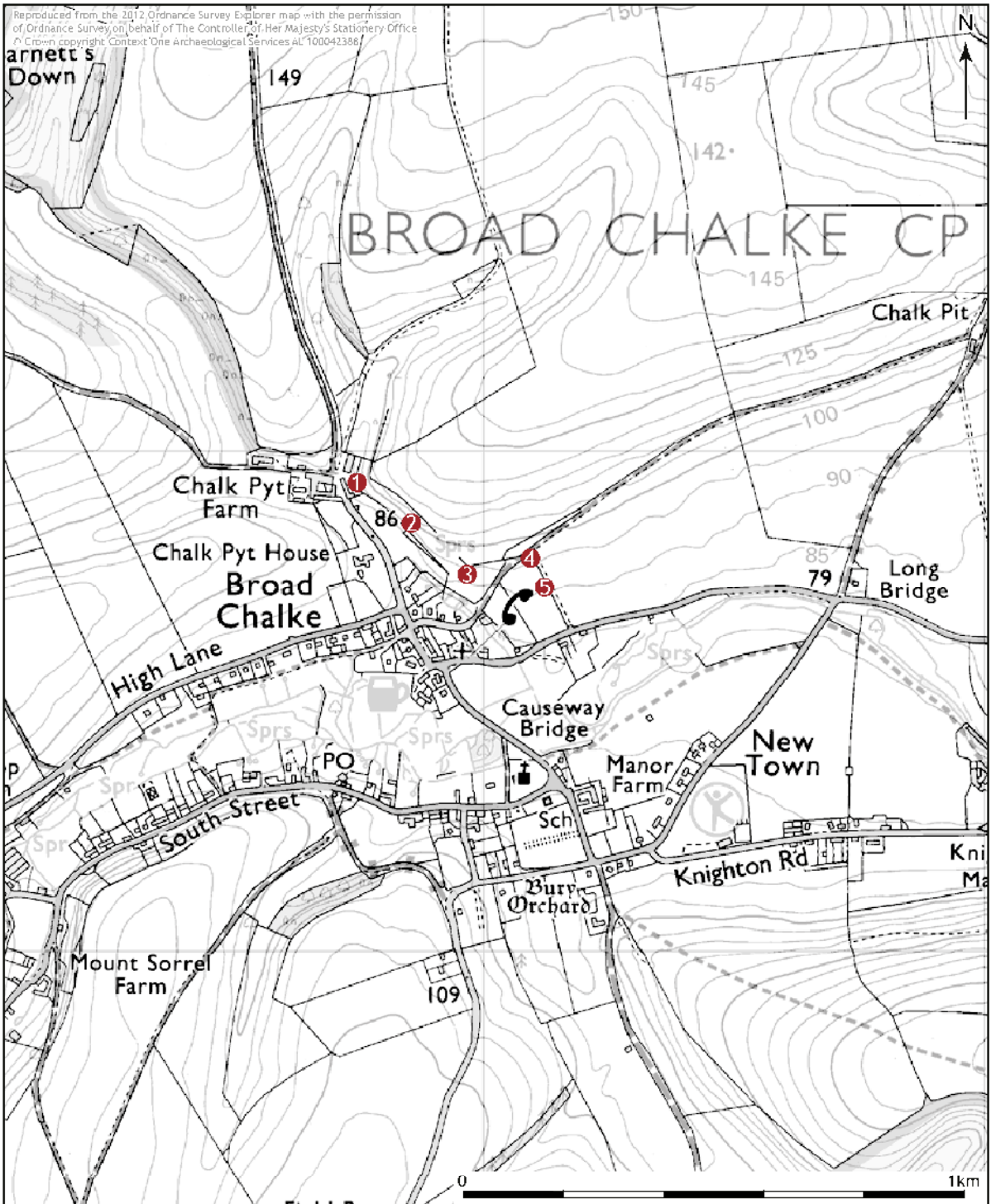
2. Site Location, Topography and Geology

- 2.1 The village of Broad Chalke, Wiltshire, straddles the valley bottom of the River Ebbles, c. 11km west south west of Salisbury (**Figure 1**). The Site comprised the ca. 600m length of the proposed pipe route around the north east of the village, originating c. 200m east of the settlement core at ca. 84m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), reaching a high point of c. 96m aOD approximately 250m north of the core. The pipeline followed the course of a roughly-laid agricultural track, in the lea of a hedge dividing arable and pasture fields.
- 2.2 The village is situated in a valley on a Zig Zag Chalk Formation of Cretaceous sedimentary chalk (BGS 2012). The soils vary from moderately fertile, flood plain loamy clays with naturally high groundwater, close to the valley bottom, to highly fertile, free-draining, slightly acid, base-rich soils on the lower valley sides (NSRI 2012).

3. Methodology

Wessex Water Methodology

- 3.1 The scheme comprised machine stripping of an area for the new ducting between two boreholes and an associated access track. A 360 degree tracked machine fitted with a toothless grading bucket removed the overburden from five test pits (**Figure 2**), varying in surface area from c. 0.60m x c. 3m to c. 2m x c. 2m, to the depth effected by the groundworks or into the upper geological surface to ensure identification of any archaeological features.



PROJECT TITLE		
B0408: Fovant Elimination of Stand Alone Source, Broad Chalke, Wiltshire		
FIGURE TITLE		
Site setting showing locations of test pits		
SCALE	PROJECT CODE	FIGURE NO.
as shown	C1/AWBF/12/BCW	1

Archaeological Methodology

- 3.2 In the absence of archaeological features/deposits, representative profile sections were recorded in each test pit using standard COAS *pro forma* profile sheets. These include a graduated graphical representation of a profile section showing the stratigraphical sequence which was annotated to define the depths of each observed deposit. The sheets also include summary context forms in order that the character of each layer is summarised. There are also entry fields for the profile location, photographic reference and core details of any artefacts. The frequency with which profile sections were recorded was based entirely on any variation of the deposit sequence.
- 3.3 A photographic record of the fieldwork comprised digital images. As a minimum, the record included shots of each profile section, the site setting and development works.
- 3.4 The archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the codes, standards and guidelines set out by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 1985, rev. 2010; 1990, rev. 2008; 1994, rev. 2008) and Wiltshire County Council (WCC 1995) at all times during the course of the investigation. Current Health and Safety legislation and guidelines were followed on site.

4. Results

- 4.1 The deposits encountered during fieldwork are described below. Individual test pits are referred to as TP, followed by their numbers, e.g. TP1. Context numbers for layers appear in standard brackets, e.g. (102). No archaeological features or deposits were identified during fieldwork but during the post excavation review of the photographic record in TP5 three contexts were identified as the fills of possible gullies.

Soil sequence

- 4.2 The topsoil, (100) to (500), in all the test pits was a humic loam including sparse gritty to small angular flints and other stones. In TPs 1 and 4 c. 0.30m deep topsoil lay directly over natural chalk, (101) and (401) (**Plate 1**). In the remaining test pits the topsoil varied in depth from 0.18m to 0.30m and covered a 0.15m to 0.20m deep lightish grey silty loam, (202), (302) and (502), illustrating the extent to which ploughing has penetrated the natural chalk, ((201), (301) and (501)) (**Plate 2**).
- 4.3 In TP5 the machine excavation exposed three stripes of pinkish red silty clay including sparse gritty to small lumps of chalk, (503) to (505), apparently filling linear cuts into the natural chalk (501) (**Plate 3**) and sealed by the cultivation interface layer (502). The archaeologist on site interpreted the fills as ploughmarks due to their proximity to each other and their apparently common orientation. However, the distinct difference in colours between (502) and the three stripes renders it extremely unlikely that they are ploughmarks.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 In test pits lacking an intermediate mixed horizon between topsoil and natural there may have been a relative lack of recent ploughing. It is notable that both TPs 1 and 4 were very close to boundaries and may have been shielded from the worst effects of modern cultivation. In these conditions any archaeological deposits should survive well.
- 5.2 In the remaining test pits the cultivation interface layer was of a depth which would imply significant truncation or erasure of cut features and surface deposits, although the lower parts of more substantial features are likely to survive. This appears to be substantiated by the three possible fills of undated linear cuts identified in TP5.
- 5.3 No finds were collected or observed during the course of the investigation but despite this it is likely that the lower portions of deeply cut archaeological features may survive.



Plate 1. Test pit 4 (from N; 1m scale)



Plate 2. Test pit 3 (from N; 1m scale)



Plate 3. Test pit 5 (from NE; 1m scale)

6. Archive

- 6.1 The Site archive is currently held at the offices of Context One Archaeological Services Ltd and consists of 16 digital images in .jpg format, including five *pro forma* profile sheets, one day record sheet, and a photograph register. No scaled drawings were necessary. The archive will be prepared to comply with guidelines and standards set out by the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (UKIC 1984; Walker 1991), the Museum and Galleries Commission (Paine 1992) and English Heritage (Andrews 1991). Arrangements will be made to deposit the archive with Salisbury & South Wiltshire Museum within 12 months following the submission of this report.
- 6.2 Copies of the watching brief report will be deposited with:

Wessex Water plc
Claverton Down
Bath
BA2 7WW

Salisbury & South Wiltshire Museum
The Kings House
65 The Close
Salisbury
SP1 2EN

7. COAS Acknowledgements

- 7.1 Context One Archaeological Services Ltd would like to thank Ms Victoria Plummer (Environmental Scientist, Wessex Water) and Ms Clare King (Assistant County Archaeologist, WCAS) for their assistance during the course of the project.

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