

B0421: Chip Lane DMA, High Street, Taunton, Somerset

A Phased Program of Archaeological Monitoring and Recording



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for

Wessex Water Plc

by



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Non-technical summary

Context One Archaeological Services (COAS) carried out a phased program of archaeological monitoring and recording during the mains rehabilitation at the Chip Lane DMA, High Street, Taunton, Somerset (the 'Site'), over 69 days between September 2012 and August 2013 and a final phase over 4 days in June 2014. The project was commissioned and funded by Wessex Water Plc under a Term Agreement with COAS.

The monitoring programme was requested by Mr Steven Membery (Senior Historic Environment Record Officer, Somerset County Council) following a consultation request by Ms Ruth Hall (Senior Environmental Scientist, Wessex Water plc) on the potential archaeological impact of the scheme. Mr Membery recommended the monitoring programme on the basis that the scheme lies within an area of High Archaeological Potential crossing the Saxon and medieval core of Taunton.

During Phases 1 and 3 no archaeological features or deposits were encountered along the course of the pipeline route. In the main this may be attributed to the care taken by the construction workers to dig within the existing pipe trench. No portable artefacts were recovered or observed.

The results of phase 2 were broadly similar to phase 1 with the exception of two small archaeological discoveries which contribute towards the corpus of evidence relating to the medieval Augustinian priory of St Peter and St Paul. A small section of medieval walling located to the north of the lay cemetery and to the west of the priory church is likely to relate to a boundary or structure within the inner sanctum of the priory. Disturbed human remains to the east of the priory church may be associated with the canons' cemetery, although the latter has never been located by excavation. Future work, including the synthesis and publication of COAS 2005 priory excavations may provide better contextualisation for the evidence.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out a phased program of archaeological monitoring and recording associated with mains rehabilitation at the Chip Lane DMA, High Street, Taunton, Somerset (the 'Site'). The programme was carried out in two phases over 69 days between 17 September 2012 and 12 August 2013, followed by a third phase carried out over 4 days between 3 June and 6 June 2014. The project was commissioned and funded by Wessex Water Plc under a Term Agreement with COAS.
- 1.2 The monitoring programme was requested by Mr Steven Membery (Senior Historic Environment Record Officer, Somerset County Council) following a consultation request by Ms Ruth Hall (Senior Environmental Scientist, Wessex Water plc) on the potential archaeological impact of the scheme. Mr Membery recommended the monitoring programme on the basis that the scheme lies within an area of High Archaeological Potential as defined in policy EN23 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan and crosses the Saxon and medieval cores of the town (Gathercole 2002).
- 1.3 The requirement followed advice by Central Government as set out in paragraph 141 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).
- 1.4 The programme of archaeological works comprised four elements: the production of a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which set out the project strategy; monitoring and recording during development groundworks; post-excavation and report production; and archive deposition. The WSI for the first phase of works was approved by Mr Membery prior to the commencement of any Site works. Addendums to the WSI were submitted to and approved by Mr Membery prior to the second phase of works proceeding. The third phase of works was carried out during monitoring and recording within the scheduled area of Taunton Castle (B0421: Castle Green/Castle Bow, Taunton, Somerset) as part of the same mains rehabilitation. Ms Tanya James (Historic Environment Record Officer, Somerset County Council) requested that the results of phase 3 be added to this report as an addendum.

2. Site location and topography

- 2.1 The Site incorporates several streets within the centre of Taunton, the County Town and administrative centre of Somerset (**Figure 1**). During phase 1, the mains rehabilitation ran along the High Street (ST 22710 24209 to ST 22689 24464), c. 170m east of County Hall and c. 170m south-west of Taunton Castle (**Figure 2**). Phase 2 was more extensive (**Figure 2**). In the area to the east and west of the north end of High Street the scheme extended along Bath Place, East Street, East Reach, Park Street and The Crescent. To the north of the town centre, the scheme ran from North Street into St James Street, continuing into Priory Avenue (to the south of the County Cricket Ground) and partially extending into the adjoining streets of St Augustine Street and Winchester Street. The scheme also included Lower Middle Street and Middle Street to the south of St James Street. In phase 3 the scheme covered the west end of Tower Street and the junction between Tower Street and Corporation Street. The ground was fairly level at c. 23-24m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) at the southern end of the scheme and c. 15-20m at the northern end of the scheme.
- 2.2 Taunton is set on Triassic Sedimentary Mudstone (Mercia Mudstone Group; BGS 2013) under slightly acid, loamy clay soils with impaired drainage and of moderate to high fertility (NSRI 2013).

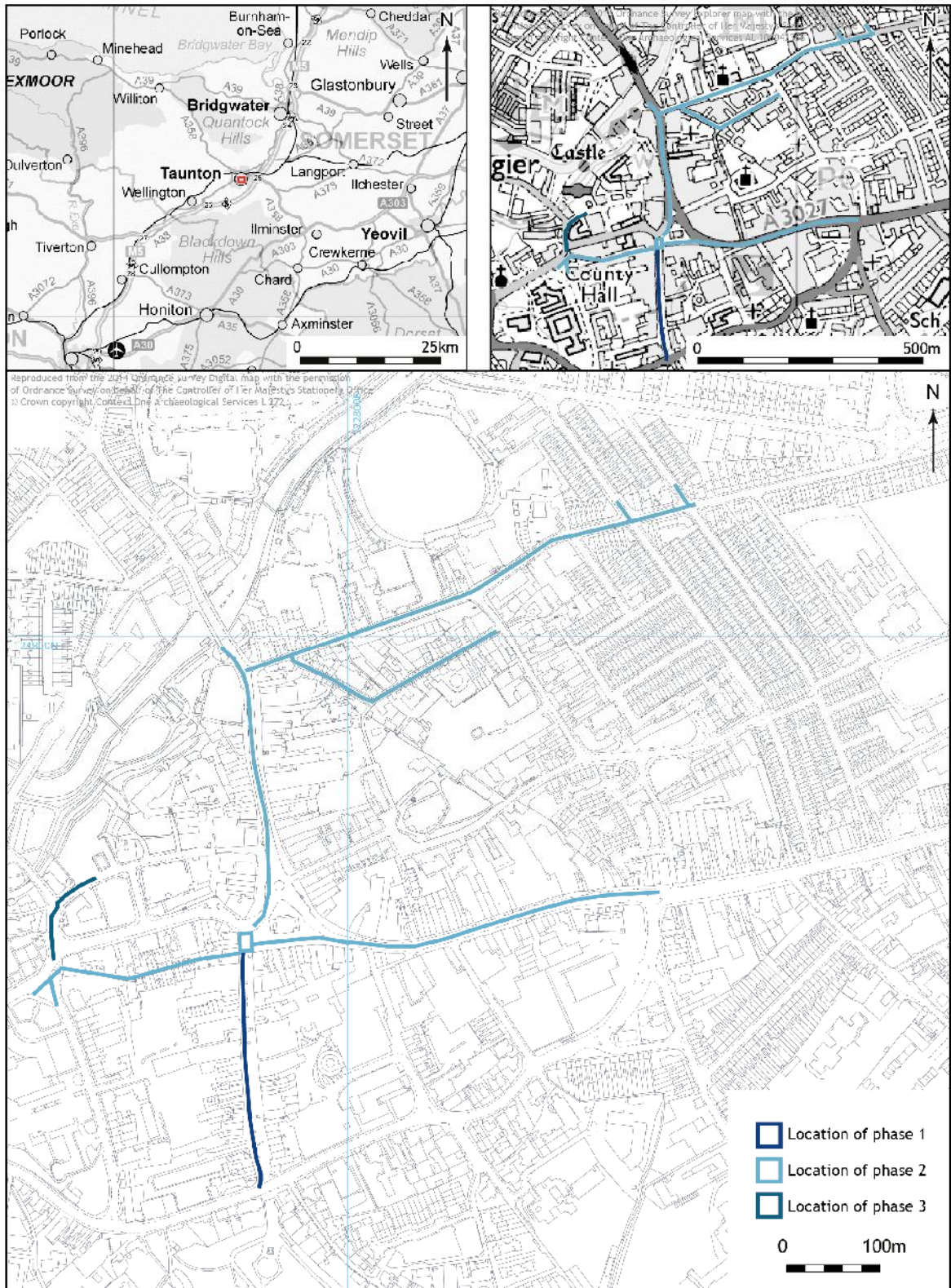


Figure 1. Site setting

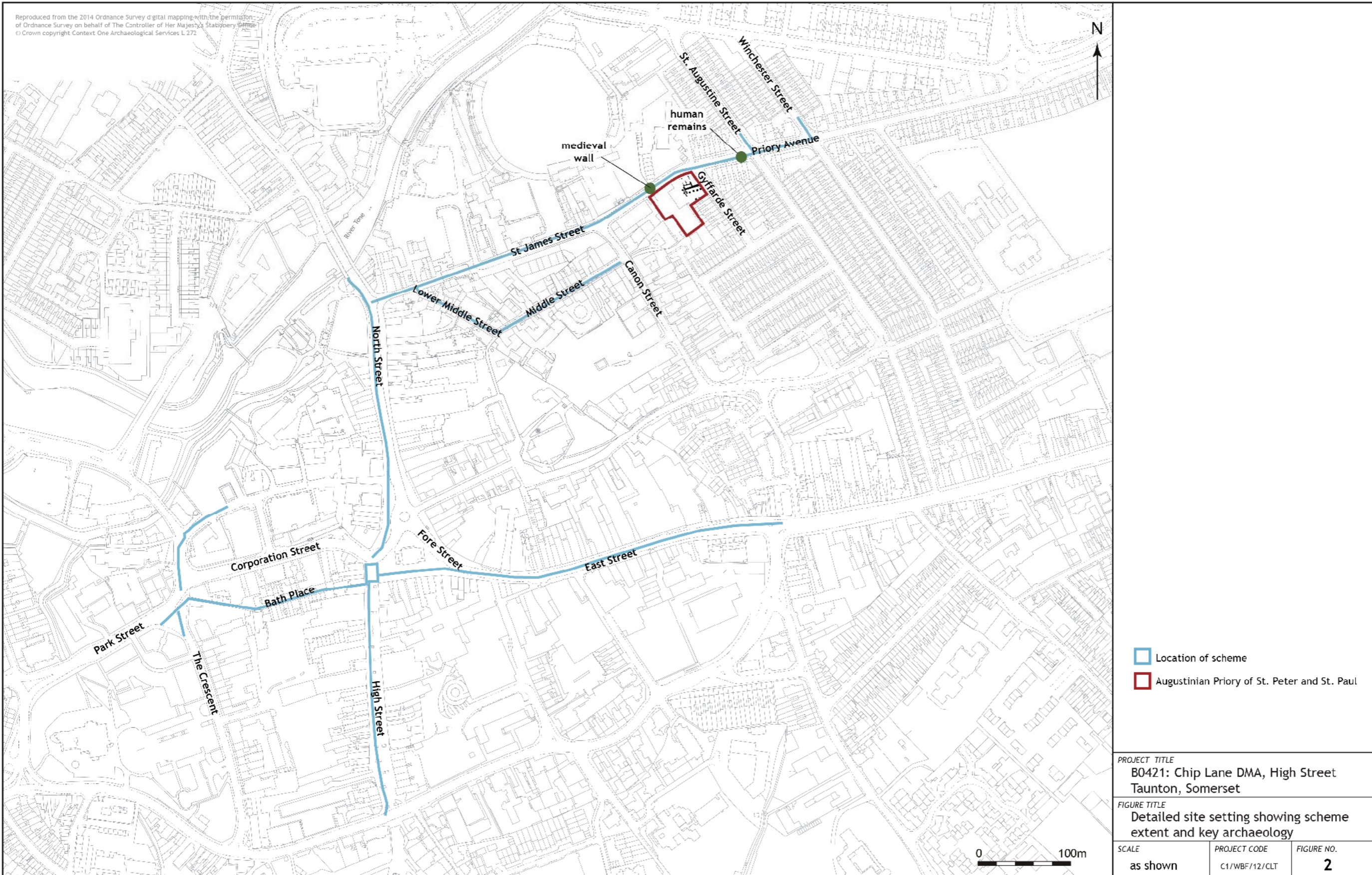


Figure 2. Detailed site setting

3. Methodology

Development groundworks methodology

Phase 1

- 3.1 The groundworks comprised open-cut excavation of existing service trenches measuring approximately 12m x 0.5m x 1m (east side of new main) and 3m x 0.5m x 1m (left/west side). Launch pits of approximately 3m x 1m x 1m were excavated to enable sliplining, the process of inserting new plastic pipes within existing metal pipes. In this instance a 125mm diameter plastic pipe was inserted into a 22cm metal pipe. The excavations were carried out using a 360 degree tracked machine fitted with a 0.40m wide toothed bucket.

Phase 2

- 3.2 As for phase 1, the groundworks for phase 2 involved sliplining launch pits and open-cut trenching along the highways and pavements. A series of approximately 100 launch pits were excavated varying considerably in size, though typically in the region of 1.0-2.0m squared and approximately 1.0m deep. The excavation methodology was identical to phase 1.

Phase 3

- 3.3 Three pits were excavated in phase 3, comprising a standard-sized pit at the junction of Tower Street and Corporation Street, while the two pits in Tower Street were longer. The excavation methodology was identical to phases 1 and 2.

Excavation methodology

- 3.4 The programme of archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the *Heritage Service Archaeological Handbook* issued by Somerset County Council in 2011, and the codes, standards and guidelines set out by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 1985, rev. 2012; 1990, rev. 2008; 1994, rev. 2008). Current Health and Safety legislation and guidelines were followed on site.
- 3.5 All archaeological features/deposits encountered were cordoned off to permit investigation and recording where preservation *in situ* was not considered possible. All archaeological remains were sampled by manual excavation to establish stratigraphic relationships, recover sufficient artefacts to establish 'absolute' dates, determine feature/deposit morphology and character, and to recover any palaeoenvironmental indicators.
- 3.6 All features and deposits were drawn on dimensionally stable media at scales of 1:20 (plans) and 1:10 (sections) including representative sections and plans of the trenches. All features/deposits were recorded using standard COAS *pro-forma* recording sheets. Stratigraphic relationships were recorded using a "Harris-Winchester matrix" diagram. Soil colours were logged using a Munsell soil colour chart.
- 3.7 During phase 1 the location, extent and altitude of archaeological features and deposits were measured using tapes and offsets from nearby buildings. In phase 2 these were mapped relative to the National Grid and Ordnance Datum using a TopCon GRS-1 Global Positioning System receiving real-time calibrations to produce accuracies of 1-2cm.
- 3.8 In addition to the recording outlined in section 3.5, profile sections of the deposit sequence across the Site were recorded using standard COAS *pro forma* profile sheets. Each profile was recorded as a graphical representation accompanied by a brief description. Photographs including a suitable scale were also taken and the location recorded. Any dateable material found within a deposit was also noted. The frequency with which profile sections were recorded was based entirely on any variation of the deposit sequence.
- 3.9 All deposits were recorded as individual contexts and ascribed a unique number. Contexts referenced in this report are presented in standard terms, e.g. (100), (203).
- 3.10 Bulk finds from all periods and/or mass produced post-medieval artefacts encountered during archaeological monitoring were noted but not collected as they are considered to be surplus to future research needs.

- 3.11 A photographic record of the fieldwork comprised digital images in .jpg format and monochrome prints. As a minimum, the record included photographs of each profile section, the site setting and development works.
- 3.12 All human remains uncovered during the works were left *in situ* until the appropriate Ministry of Justice (MoJ) licence was obtained under Section 25 of the Burial Act 1857 (Licence Number: **13-0020**; File Number: **OPR/072/96**; Date of issue: **18 February 2013**). The attached conditions were complied with and the physical security of the human remains secured by backfilling immediately following recording.

4. Results

Phase 1

- 4.1 No visible features or deposits of archaeological interest were encountered during phase 1 of the archaeological watching brief.
- 4.2 The ground surface (100) to (900) throughout was of brick cobbles (**Plates 1, 2 and 4**) which in all trenches and pits overlay a compacted fill constituting a make-up levelling bed (101) to (901). The exception to this was an intermediate zone created by root mass disturbance, for instance (301). Much disturbance was also caused by the proliferation of service pipes (**Plates 1 and 2**).
- 4.3 The launch pits followed the route of the existing pipeline along the west side of High Street (**Plates 3 and 4**) with branching trenches extending eastwards at the north end of the street (**Figure 2, Plate 2**). Natural clay (102), (202), (303), (702) (Plate 5) and (902) was identified only tentatively.

Phase 2

- 4.4 The modern tarmac road surface was present in all pits overlying a mixed grey stony road make-up deposit. In most pits this was underlain by a mixed red or grey coarse gravel backfill deposit from the previous pipe trench excavations. Natural clay (2203) (2404) was only identified within pits 22 and 24. A disturbed modern brick wall (9600) and stone slab surface (9604) were recorded in pit 96 at the junction of Corporation Street and Fore Street however the remains had been disturbed by the previous pipe trench.
- 4.5 Part of a wall (109) was recorded in pit 13 immediately to the north of the 2005 excavations carried out by COAS on the site of the Augustinian priory of St Peter and St Paul at the west end of Priory Avenue (**Figure 2; Plate 7 & 8**). The excavations exposed part of the claustral range, church and lay cemetery to the west of the church. The wall was aligned east to west, measured approximately 0.5m wide and 0.4m in height and was visible for a length of 2.29m. Constructed of 5-6 courses of squared coursed light grey stones measuring between 0.04m x 0.06m x 0.05m and 0.08m x 0.31m x 0.20m plus rare flint fragments, the mortar joints measured between 0.01m and 0.04m wide and were filled with soft yellow mortar. Although the upper courses had been removed by previous disturbance, the length was sufficient to establish that the wall shares the same orientation as the excavated remains of the priory church.
- 4.6 Human remains were observed in 4 pits (TPs 8, 9, 10 & 11) at the west end of Priory Avenue, c. 50m to the east of COAS's priory excavations (**Plate 6**) (see section 5).
- 4.7 Pit 1 located at the junction between St James Street and Priory Avenue uncovered two buried soil horizons (105) (107) divided by a thin slatey shell surface (106); these deposits were located between 0.5m and 1.2m below the modern ground surface. Two glazed pottery sherds within layer (105) suggest a 15th to 17th century date although the pottery may be redeposited.



Plate 1. Pit 1 (from SW; no scale)



Plate 2. Trench 2 (from E; no scale)



Plate 3. Central area, Pit 6 in foreground (from NNE; no scale)



Plate 4. South of High Street, Pit 8 foreground (from N)



Plate 5. Pit 7 (from E; no scale)



Plate 6. Redeposited human bone and iron nail in Pit 10 (from W; 0.2m scale)



Plate 7. Priory wall (109) oblique in Pit 13 (from SE)



Plate 8. Priory wall (109) in Pit 13 (from S; 1m scale)



Plate 9. General works along East Reach, Pit 71 in foreground (from E)



Plate 10. Profile 301 (from W; 1m scales)

Phase 3 (addendum)

- 4.8 At the junction of Tower Street and Corporation Street, pit 301 recorded a layer of disturbed natural comprising red silt clay (3011) with frequent small <0.05m stones (**Plate 10**). This was beneath the modern road make-up (3010) and had been disturbed by the water main. Within Tower Street, pits 300 and 302 revealed only modern deposits.

5. The finds

- 5.1 The post-medieval finds noted in the modern deposits comprised post-medieval tobacco clay pipe, glass, animal bone, printed ceramics and a bottle.

- 5.2 Within pit 1 a single sherd of brown-glazed pottery and a sherd of dark green-glazed pottery were recorded from context (105). A single small sherd of green-glazed pottery with dark-green incised decoration was noted within the modern backfill (108) of a previous pipe trench.

Human remains, by Stuart Milby

- 5.3 All remains were hard tissue and all were disarticulated; disturbance caused by previous utility and road works over the last 100-150 years is the most likely cause of the disarticulation. Following their assessment all remains were returned to their respective trial pits and re-interred below the impact level of the groundworks. The table below lists the remains observed.

Trial Pit	Skeletal Element	Number
8	Proximal end of tibia (right side)	1
8	Proximal end of humerus (right side, unfused)	1
8	Humerus fragments	5
9	Humerus fragments (right side)	3
9	humeral head (damaged)	1
10	Mandible (fragment)	1
10	Distal end of ulnar (right)	1
10	Lumbar vertebrae	3
10	Femur (fragment)	2
10	Humerus (fragment)	1
10	Humeral head (right)	1
10	Humeral head (left)	1
10	Pelvis fragments	12
10	Cranium fragments	8
11	Proximal end of femur (right side)	1
11	Femoral head (right side, damaged)	1
11	Femur (fragment)	2
11	Ilium (fragment)	1
11	Occipital bone (damaged)	1
11	Foramen magnum (damaged)	1
11	Cranium (fragments)	15
11	Proximal end of thoracic rib	1

- 5.4 All bone was assessed unwashed and conditions in the trial pits were fair to poor. Preservation of the bone was fair but damage caused by previous groundworks was heavy. The estimated minimum number of individuals based on individual skeletal element (White, Black and Folkens 2011) is 14; this number is certainly plausible, given the proximity of the site to the known 12th century Augustinian priory cemetery.

6. Discussion

Phases 1 and 3

- 6.1 No features or other archaeological deposits were encountered within the pits excavated along the course of the pipeline route. In the main this may be attributed to the care taken by the construction workers to dig within the existing pipe trench. No portable artefacts were recovered or observed.

Phase 2

- 6.2 The groundworks relating to phase 2 were either confined to existing pipe trenches or did not penetrate beyond the modern make-up and levelling layers that lie beneath the road surfaces and pavements. In addition, modern structural remains were recorded at the junction of Fore Street and Corporation Street although these had been disturbed by the previous pipe trench. In several instances the modern make-up layers were found to directly overlay the natural clay although a single buried post-medieval soil horizon was also identified. Two sherds of glazed early post-medieval pottery were recovered from this deposit and together with a sherd of green-glazed medieval pottery from a modern context represent the only finds collected during the archaeological works. Bulk post-medieval finds from modern deposits were noted but not collected.

- 6.3 Significant archaeological features or deposits were confined to the medieval period and almost certainly relate to the Augustinian priory of St Peter and St Paul. A small section of walling uncovered to the north of the lay cemetery shares the same orientation as the partially excavated remains of the priory church to the east. The modern street pattern is orientated differently and together with the construction of the wall a medieval date seems likely. If the alignment of the wall is projected eastwards it would run immediately north of the priory church. The 2005 priory excavations undertaken by COAS suggested that a ditch may have formed the northern boundary of the cemetery; if correct, this would indicate that the wall relates to another boundary wall albeit associated with the inner sanctum of the priory.
- 6.4 The discovery of disturbed human remains within the previous pipe trench near the junction of Priory Avenue and St Augustine Street are also likely to relate to the priory. Although the canons' cemetery has not been identified by excavation these were commonly cited to the east of the church, corresponding with the location of the remains. Their current disordered state is indicative of having been disturbed and hastily returned to the original mains pipe trench in modern times.
- 6.5 In conclusion, the two small archaeological discoveries made during the course of the archaeological monitoring and recording programme make a small contribution to the corpus of evidence relating to the Augustinian priory of St Peter and St Paul. Future work, including the synthesis and publication of the priory excavations (COAS forthcoming), may provide better contextualisation for the evidence. The discoveries will be included as a fieldwork summary in the annual Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological & Natural History Society and will be submitted in 2014.

7. Archive

- 7.1 The project archive is currently held by COAS and consists of the following:

Item	Number	Format
Profile record sheets	80	Paper
Day record sheets	47	Paper
Site sketch plans	10	Paper
Photographic registers	26	Paper
Graphics registers	2	Paper
Levels summary	2	Paper
Context record sheet	3	Paper
Masonry record sheet	8	Paper
Skeleton record sheet	1	Paper
A3 scale drawings	3	Permatrace
Digital images	449	.JPG

- 7.2 The paper archive has been scanned as a single file in .PDF format and will form part of the physical Site archive to be deposited with Somerset County Museum.
- 7.3 Copies of this report will be deposited with the client/agent and included as part of the Somerset Historic Environment Record.

8. COAS acknowledgements

- 8.1 We would like to thank the following for their contribution to the successful completion of this project:

Mr Steven Membery, Senior Historic Environment Officer, Somerset County Council
 Ms Tanya James, Historic Environment Officer, Somerset County Council
 Ms Ruth Hall, Senior Environmental Scientist, Wessex Water plc.

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