

BW131: Land Adjacent to Park Cottages, Winterborne Tomson, Dorset

An Archaeological Watching Brief



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For

Wessex Water Plc

By



Brickfield Offices, Maperton, Wincanton, Somerset. BA9 8EG.
T: 01963 824696
F: 07092 259858
E: mail@contextone.co.uk
W: www.contextone.co.uk

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COAS Team:

Project Director: Richard McConnell

Fieldwork Manager: Stuart Milby

Project Officer: Daniel Brace

Fieldwork: Samantha Worrall

Post-Excavation Coordinator: Tara Fairclough

Report: Richard Tabor

Graphics: Tara Fairclough

October 2012

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Non-technical Summary

Context One Archaeological Services Ltd conducted an Archaeological Watching Brief on land adjacent to Park Cottages, Winterbourne Tomson, Dorset (from SY 88316 97346 to SY 88973 97254) during the replacement of a water main pipeline over three days in September and October 2012. The investigation was commissioned and funded by Wessex Water plc.

The archaeological work was requested as the pipeline crossed an area of earthworks associated with the Medieval village of Winterborne Tomson. Despite the survival of medieval earthworks at the west end of the pipeline route no features or other archaeological deposits were encountered. Where previously undisturbed ground was exposed to the east, the apparent lack of deposits may reflect the limits of land-use on a flood plain.

No portable artefacts were recovered or observed.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out an archaeological watching brief on land adjacent to Park Cottages, Winterbourne Tomson, Dorset (from SY 88316 97346 to SY 88973 97254; hereafter referred to as the Site) during the replacement of a water main pipeline over three days between 17th September and 9th October 2012. The investigation was commissioned and funded by Wessex Water plc under a Term of Agreement contract with COAS.
- 1.2 The watching brief was requested by Ms Rebecca Howell (Environmental Scientist, Wessex Water plc) following a consultation with Mr Steve Wallis (Senior Archaeologist, Dorset County Council) as a precursor to conducting groundworks on the Site. In an email dated 11th September 2012, Mr Wallis stated that:
- ‘... the pipe crosses an area of earthworks associated with the Medieval village of Winterborne Tomson. I would think it likely that below-ground remains extend as far as the site of the proposed compound and also that excavation of the pits might disturb other remains if they extend outside the area disturbed when the pipe was constructed.’*
- 1.3 Mr Wallis therefore recommended that there should be archaeological monitoring of the stripping of the topsoil in the compound area and during the excavation of pits.
- 1.4 At the request of Mr Wallis, COAS issued a *Methodology for a Programme of Archaeological Works* (Milby 2012), which was approved as an appropriate strategy. The request for the archaeological work follows advice given by Central Government as set out in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012). Mr Wallis was kept fully informed during the project. It was not deemed necessary to make a monitoring visit to the Site.
- 1.5 This report summarises the topographical and geological setting of the site, and presents the results of the Watching Brief.

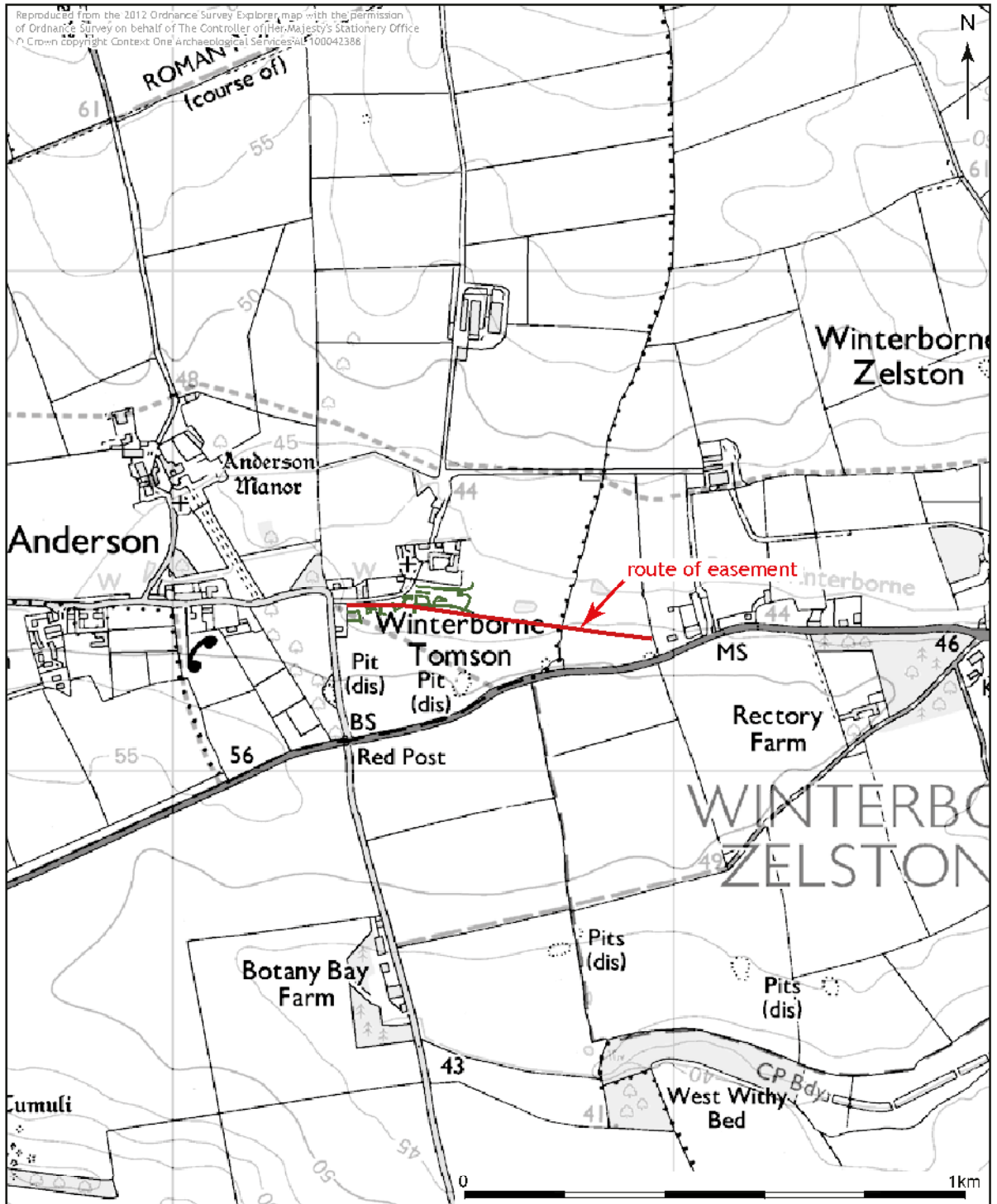
2. Site Location, Topography and Geology

- 2.1 Winterborne Tomson is a small village in Dorset situated c. 4km north-east of Bere Regis and c. 9km south of Blandford Forum. The route of the pipeline extended from the Deserted Medieval Village (**Figure 1**), adjacent to Park Cottages (SY 88316 97346), across near level ground at c. 46m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), along the south side of the River Winterborne valley bottom to Wahnfried (SY 88973 97254).
- 2.2 The west end of the Site was on Quaternary River Terrace Deposits of sand and gravel, giving way to Head clay, silt, sand and gravel. The underlying geology comprised Cretaceous sedimentary chalk (Portsdown Chalk Formation; BGS 2012). The soils were moderately fertile loams and clays with naturally high groundwater characteristic of floodplains (NSRI 2012).

3. Methodology

Wessex Water Methodology

- 3.1 At the west end of the route the compound was constructed by laying terram and covering it with gravel, obviating the need for stripping of the topsoil, so that potentially harmful impact was limited to the insertion of six posts. The main body of the construction work comprised the excavation of nine c. 2m x 3m entry/exit pits for the insertion of a new pipe within an existing mains pipeline which was replaced by pipe-bursting technique over a distance of c. 750m (**Figure 2**).



	MDO3504 deserted medieval settlement	PROJECT TITLE BW131: Land Adjacent to Park Cottages, Winterborne Tomson, Dorset	
		FIGURE TITLE Site setting showing relevant archaeological background	
SCALE as shown		PROJECT CODE C1/WBF/12/PBR	FIGURE NO. 1

Archaeological Methodology

- 3.2 The programme of 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) at all times during the course of the investigation. Current Health and Safety legislation and guidelines were followed on site.
- 3.3 The machine excavation of the reception pits along the route of the pipeline was carried out under archaeological supervision.
- 3.4 In the absence of archaeological features/deposits, representative profile sections of the deposit sequence across the Site are recorded using standard COAS *pro forma* profile sheets. These include a graduated graphical representation of a profile section showing the stratigraphical sequence which is 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 are recorded is based entirely on any variation of the deposit sequence.
- 3.5 A photographic record of the fieldwork comprised digital images in .jpg format. As a minimum, the record included shots of each profile section, the site setting and development works.
- 3.6 The reception pit profiles were located using a handheld GPS unit capable of accuracy within <5-10m in conjunction with site plans provided by Wessex Water plc.

4. Results

- 4.1 The weather was dry and sunny throughout the investigation.
- 4.2 The deposits and features encountered during fieldwork are listed and described in **Appendix 1**. In the text, context numbers for layers and fills appear in standard brackets, e.g. (102). The first part of each number is that of the reception pit. No archaeological features or deposits were identified.

Soil Sequence and Geology

- 4.3 At the west end of the pipeline route two of the reception pits (RP) entirely comprised backfill (100) and (200) (**Plate 1**) over which turf had formed. At the extreme west end a true sandy loam with rare subrounded gravel inclusions topsoil (900) had formed to a depth of c. 0.20m directly over river terrace gravel set in sand (901).
- 4.4 In the central pipeline section, RP3 was also made up of backfill but in RPs 4 and 5 the true soil sequence of c. 0.20m of topsoil (400) and (500) over Quaternary river terrace gravel deposits (401), (501) and (502) (**Plate 2**) were exposed. A similar sequence was exposed in RP8 at the extreme east end of the pipeline (**Plate 3**). Two pits in the middle section, RPs 6 and 7 were backfilled without observation but the level ground (**Plate 4**) where they were excavated suggested that the soil sequence would not have differed from that of RPs 4 and 5.

5. Discussion

- 5.1 No features or other archaeological deposits were encountered despite the survival of medieval earthworks at the west end of the pipeline route. In the main this may be attributed to the care taken by the construction workers to dig within the existing trench. The lack of deposits may reflect the limits of land-use on a flood plain where previously undisturbed ground was exposed to the east of the earthworks. No portable artefacts were recovered or observed.

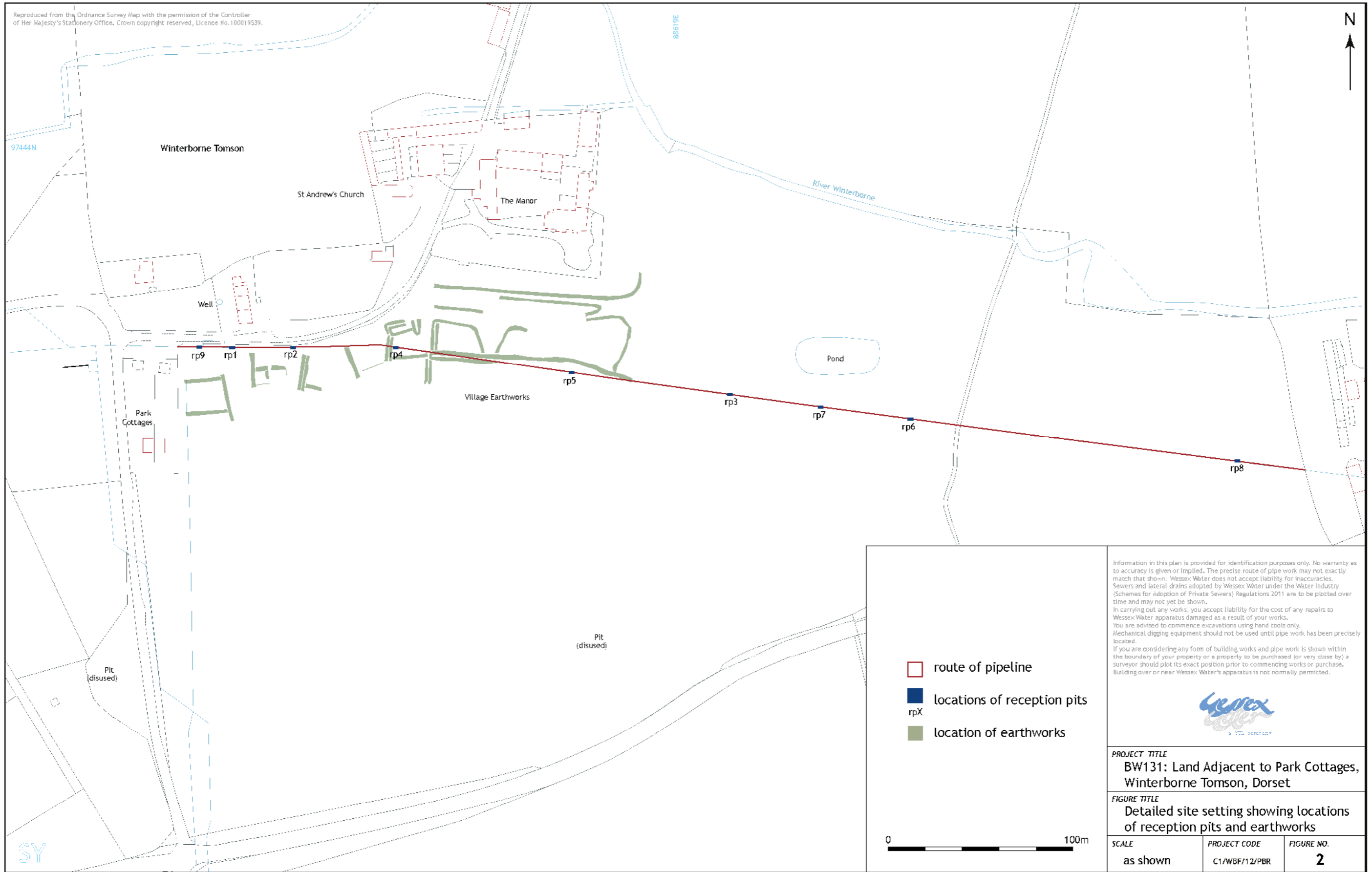




Plate 1. Reception pit 2 (from E; 1m scale)



Plate 2. Reception pit 5 (from NE; 1m scale)



Plate 3. Reception pit 8 (from S; 1m scale)



Plate 4. Reception pits 6 and 7 (from ESE; no scale)

6. Archive

- 6.1 The site archive is currently held at the offices of Context One Archaeological Services Ltd and consists of the written paper record of three day record sheets, nine COAS *pro forma* profile log sheets and related registers, 34 digital images in .jpg format, and two sketch plans of the pipeline route. The archive will be prepared to comply with guidelines set out in *Environmental Standards for the Permanent Storage of Excavated Material from Archaeological Sites* (UKIC 1984, Conservation Guidelines 3)/ *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage* (UKIC 1990)/ *Standards in the Museums Care of Archaeological Collections* (Museum and Galleries Commission 1992)/ *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage 1991). Arrangements will be made to deposit the archive with Dorset County 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 Road
Claverton Down
Bath
BA2 7WW

Dorset County Museum
High West Street
Dorchester
Dorset
DT1 1XA

7. COAS Acknowledgements

- 7.1 Context One Archaeological Services Ltd would like to thank Ms Rebecca Howell (Environmental Scientist, Wessex Water plc), for her assistance throughout the course of the investigation and Mr Steve Wallis (Senior Archaeologist, Dorset County Council) for curatorial advice.

8. Bibliography

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|--|---|
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National Soil Resources Institute (NSRI)

<http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/> Cranfield
University (accessed: 17th October 2012)

Appendix 1. Context Summary

CONTEXT NO.	PERIOD	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	EARLIER THAN	CONTEMP. WITH	LATER THAN	LENGTH	WIDTH/ DIAMETER	THICKNESS/ DEPTH
100	Modern	Fill	Pipe trench backfill/topsoil. Dark brown, soft, sandy loam including frequent small rounded flint fragments						0.60m exc
200	Modern	Fill	Pipe trench backfill/topsoil. Mottled mid-brown orange sandy loam and gravel including frequent subrounded and subangular flint fragments						0.90m exc
300	Modern	Layer	Topsoil. Mid brown sandy loam including mixed with frequent subrounded, medium flint nodules			301			0.10m
301	Modern	Fill	Pipe trench backfill. Mid brown sandy loam including frequent small rounded flint fragments	300					0.75m exc
400	Modern	Layer	Topsoil. Mid grey brown, firm, sandy loam including rare subrounded gravels			401			<0.20m
401	Geology	Layer	Natural. Dark red brown sand including <60% subrounded gravels	400					0.90m exc
500	Modern	Layer	Topsoil. Mid grey brown, firm, sandy loam including rare subrounded gravels			501			<0.20m
501	Geology	Layer	Natural. Dark red brown sand including <60% subrounded gravels	500		502			<0.65m
502	Geology	Layer	Natural. Dark brown (c. 90%) subrounded gravels set in sand	501					<0.20m exc
600			Pit backfilled prior to observation						
700			Pit backfilled prior to observation						
800	Modern	Layer	Topsoil. Mid grey brown, firm, sandy loam including rare subrounded gravels			801			<0.20m
801	Geology	Layer	Natural. Dark red brown sand including <60% subrounded gravels	800					<0.90m exc
900	Modern	Layer	Topsoil. Mid grey brown, firm, sandy loam including rare subrounded gravels			901			<0.20m
901	Geology	Layer	Natural. Dark red brown sand including <60% subrounded gravels	900					<0.90m exc