

BW121: Yatesbury (Res) Distribution Site, Main Road, Cherhill, Calne, Wiltshire

A Programme of Archaeological Monitoring and Recording



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A Programme of Archaeological Monitoring and Recording

for

Wessex Water Plc

by



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Non-technical Summary

Context One Archaeological Services Ltd carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording during groundworks relating to Yatesbury (Res) Distribution Site, Main Road, Cherhill, Calne (NGR SU 05470 69833 to SU 05585 70113). The project was commissioned and funded by Wessex Water plc and took place over six days in January 2013.

The archaeological work was requested by Ms Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger (County Archaeologist, Wiltshire County Archaeology Service), following a consultation request from Ms Rebecca Howell (Environmental Scientist, Wessex Water).

Monitoring revealed that the plateau has been severely truncated by cultivation so that it is difficult to judge whether in the past there had been archaeological features or deposits associated with the barrow or other nearby earthworks. Conversely, the colluvial bi-product of intensive ploughing has formed a deep protective seal over the scarp, obscuring any deposits which may survive below the depth of development groundworks.

1. Introduction

1.1 Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording during groundworks relating to Yatesbury (Res) Distribution Site, Main Road, Cherhill, Calne (NGR SU 05470 69833 to SU 05585 70113; hereafter referred to as the Site). The project was commissioned and funded by Wessex Water plc under a Term Agreement contract with COAS and took place over six days from 2nd to 24th January 2013.

1.2 The archaeological works were requested by Ms Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger (County Archaeologist, Wiltshire County Archaeology Service (WCAS)), following a consultation request from Ms Rebecca Howell (Environmental Scientist, Wessex Water). In a consultation email dated 20 August 2012 Ms Pomeroy-Kellinger stated that:

“We do have archaeological concerns about this one as there are known archaeological features in the vicinity. I would advise that an archaeological watching brief will be required during the open cut trenching.”

1.3 It was therefore 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 or deposits had not been proven on the basis of currently available information, it was determined that a reasonable archaeological response would be to carry out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording during all ground disturbance associated with the development.

1.4 The principal objective of the archaeological work was to observe, investigate, excavate and preserve by record any surviving below-ground archaeological artefacts and deposits across the area affected by the proposed development.

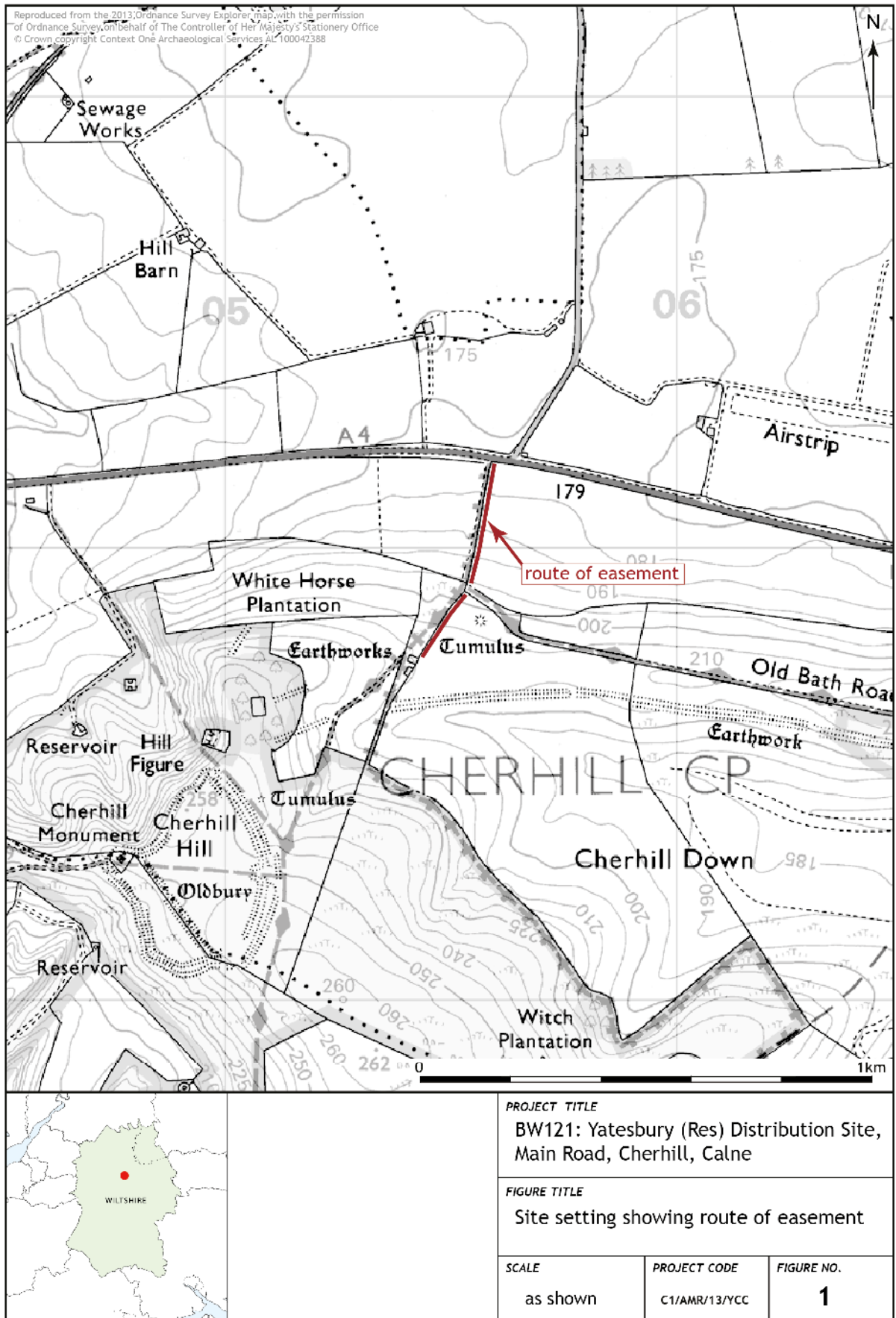
1.5 The request for the archaeological work follows advice given by Central Government as set out in paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012) and the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2012).

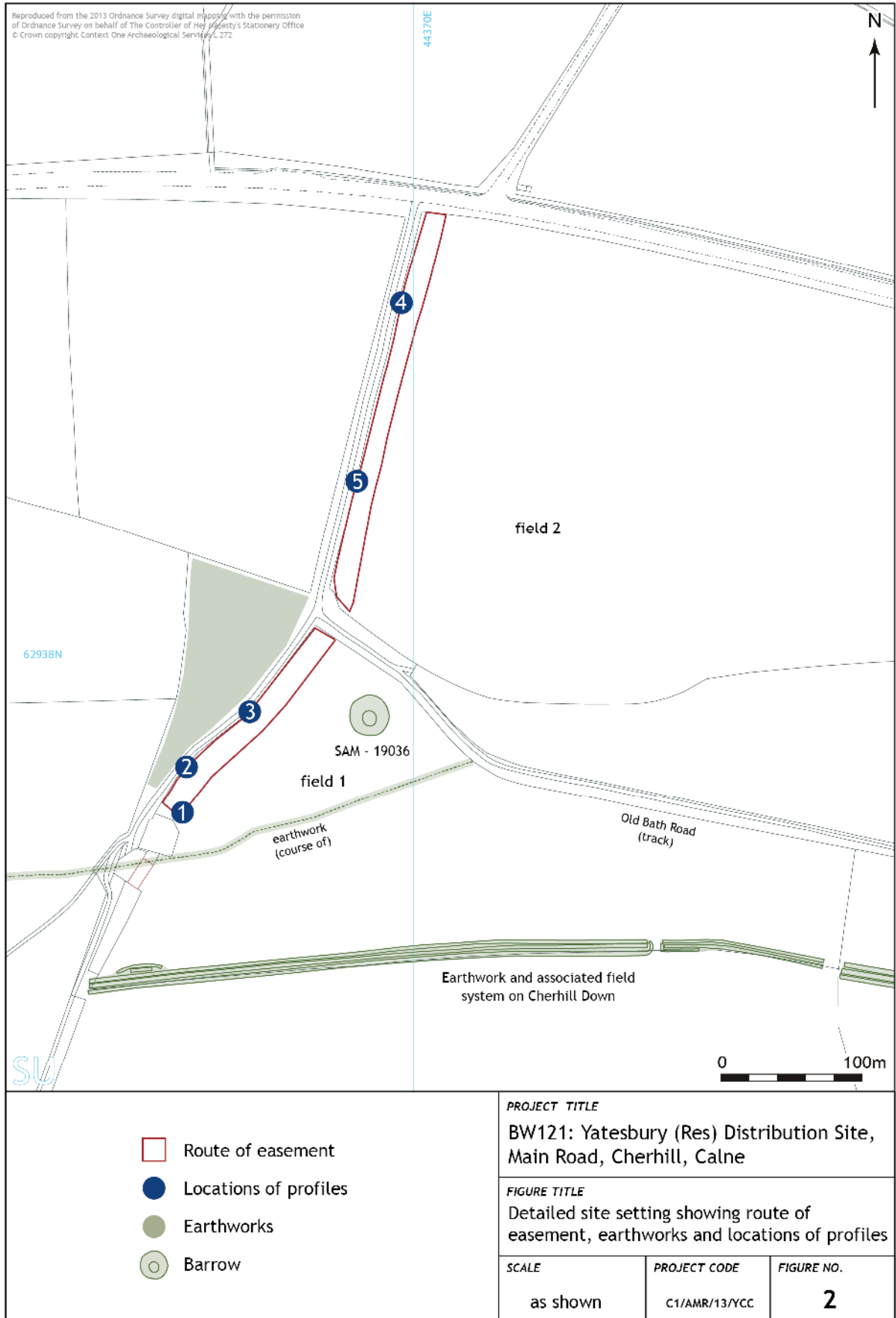
1.6 At the request of Ms Pomeroy-Kellinger, COAS issued a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (COAS 2012), which provided a strategy for the archaeological works. This was submitted to and approved by Ms Pomeroy-Kellinger prior to the commencement of the programme of monitoring and recording. Ms Pomeroy-Kellinger was kept fully informed during the project. It was not deemed necessary to make a monitoring visit to the Site.

1.7 This report summarises the topographical, geological, archaeological setting of the site, and presents the results of the watching brief.

2. Site Location, Topography and Geology

2.1 The Site, comprising the route of the pipeline from the reservoir (NGR SU 05470 69833 to SU 05585 70113), lies c. 5km east of Calne, in north Wiltshire (**Figure 1**). It is c. 1.8km east of Cherhill and c. 2.15km south west of Yatesbury, after which it is named. The reservoir is set below the plateau above a north-facing scarp over which the pipeline descends, falling from c. 210m above Ordnance Survey datum (aOD) to 178m aOD over a distance of c. 480m. The north west of the plateau is bisected by dry combes but the course of the pipeline follows a relatively even gradient through two fields bounded on the east side by a track.





- 2.2 The underlying Cretaceous sedimentary geology consists of Holywell Nodular Chalk Formation and undifferentiated New Pit Chalk Formation (BGS 2013). The free-draining, moderately fertile, lime-rich soils are characteristic of those over chalk (NSRI 2013), tending to be shallow on the plateaux with an associated downslope formation of colluvium.

3. Archaeological Background

- 3.1 The archaeological background for the Site has been drawn exclusively from online secondary sources (EH 2013) and is treated briefly here. It lies less than 4km west of the World Heritage site of Avebury and is within a landscape rich in prehistoric earthworks and cropmarks. The Iron Age hillfort of Oldbury Castle is c. 540m south-west of the reservoir and c. 150 to its north-west the easement passed within 32m of a Bronze Age bowl barrow (Scheduled Ancient Monument reference 19036; Plate 1). A triangular zone of undated earthworks lies immediately to the west of this section of the track (Figure 2).

4. Methodology

Wessex Water Methodology

- 4.1 The existing water main was located in the access track (Figure 2, immediately west of the easement), where it was vulnerable to damage by rutting. The object of the scheme was to relocate c. 310m of 6" main to enable secure passage to the reservoir.
- 4.2 A 360 degree tracked machine fitted with a toothless grading bucket removed the topsoil to form a c. 15m wide easement immediately east of the track. Where the route of the new main crossed a public right of way, directional drilling was applied. A similar machine was used to facilitate directional drilling.

Archaeological Methodology

- 4.3 The programme of archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the codes, standards and guidelines set out by Wiltshire County Council (WCC 1995) and the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 1985, rev. 2012; 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.
- 4.4 The machine removal of the ploughsoil and topsoil along the route of the pipeline was carried out under the supervision of COAS field staff. The excavation of the pipe trench was also supervised due to the archaeological sensitivity of the surrounding area. For the purposes of archaeological recording, all areas exposed through development excavations were systematically scanned for features or deposits by walking in 'zig-zag' traverses across their width.
- 4.5 The character of topsoil and ploughsoil deposits within each field were also recorded using standard COAS *pro forma* recording sheets. In the absence of archaeological features and deposits, representative profile sections of the deposit sequence across the Site were recorded using standard COAS *pro forma* profile sheets. These include a graduated graphical representation of a profile section showing the stratigraphical sequence. This 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.
- 4.6 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.



Plate 1. Looking along the easement approaching the barrow (from N)



Plate 2. Plough-scarring at the head of the scarp (from S)



Plate 3. Profile 3 (from E; 1m scale)

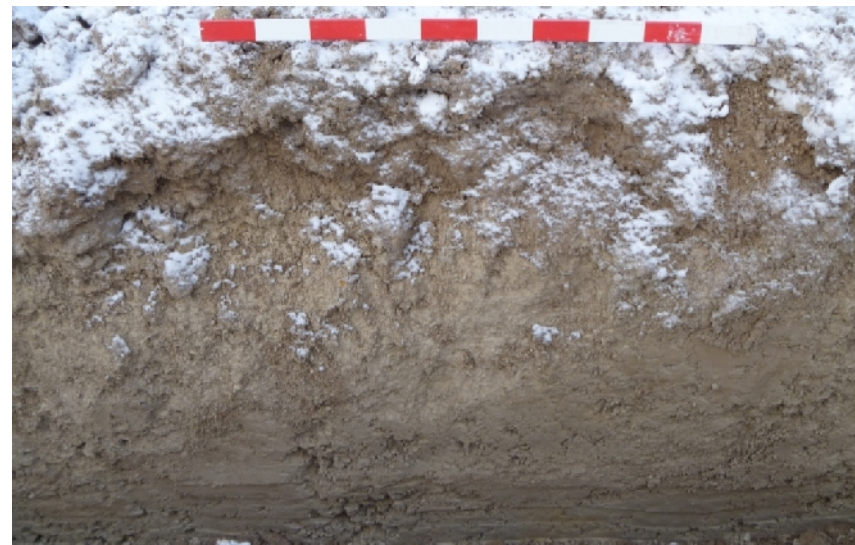


Plate 4. Profile 4 (from E; 1m scale)

5. Results

5.1 The weather was mostly dry with sunny intervals apart from an episode of heavy snow.

5.2 In the text, context numbers for soil layers appear in standard brackets, e.g. (102).

Soil Sequence and Geology

5.3 The soil sequence was of two types, varying according to the topographical location. The topsoil was of a slightly reddish, darkish mid-brown silty loam throughout ((101), (201), (301), (401) and (501)), the depth varying from 0.20m to 0.25m. On the plateau and immediately below the head of the scarp it lay directly over periglacially fractured chalk ((102), (202), (302), (402)) (**Plates 2 and 3**) but further downslope a pale, brownish grey, soft, silty colluvium (402) (**Plates 1 and 4**) had formed over the chalk to a depth greater than that of the excavation of c. 1m.

5.4 Repeated parallel linears scored into the chalk were clearly the results of subsoil ploughing and were recorded in digital photographs (**Plate 2**). No archaeologically significant features were identified nor were any finds observed or recovered.

6. Discussion

6.1 The archaeological work revealed that the plateau has been severely truncated by cultivation so that it is impossible to judge whether in the past there had been archaeological features or deposits associated with the barrow or other nearby earthworks. Conversely, the colluvial bi-product of intensive ploughing has formed a deep protective seal over the scarp, obscuring any deposits which may survive there.

7. Archive

7.1 The site archive is currently held at the offices of Context One Archaeological Services Ltd and consists of the written paper record of two day record sheets, two sketches of the route, two COAS *pro forma* profile log sheets, related registers and 55 digital images in .jpg format. The archive will be prepared to comply with the appropriate current national guidelines (UKIC 1984, 1990; MGC 1992; EH 1991). Arrangements will be made to deposit the archive with Wiltshire Heritage Museum within 12 months following the submission of this report.

7.2 Copies of the Archaeological Monitoring and Recording report will be deposited with:

Wessex Water plc
Claverton Down Road
Claverton Down
Bath
BA2 7WW

Wiltshire Archaeology Service
Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre
Cocklebury Road
Chippenham
Wiltshire
SN15 3QN

8. COAS Acknowledgements

8.1 Context One Archaeological Services Ltd would like to thank Ms Rebecca Howell (Environmental Scientist, Wessex Water), for her kind assistance throughout the course of the investigation and Ms Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger (County Archaeologist, WCAS) for curatorial advice.

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