

# BG298: Little Orchard, Greinton, Somerset.

A programme 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 Ltd (COAS) carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording on land at Little Orchard, Greinton, Somerset, over 5 days between 6 and 12 May 2015. The project was commissioned by Wessex Water plc as part of a term agreement with Context One Archaeological Services Ltd.*

*The monitoring programme was advised by Ms Tanya James (Historic Environment Officer, Somerset County Council) following a consultation request by Ms Ruth Hall (Environmental Scientist, Wessex Water plc) on the potential archaeological impact of the scheme. The Site was within an Area of High Archaeological Potential relating to both the Roman and medieval periods.*

*Despite this, no visible archaeological features or deposits of archaeological interest were encountered during development excavations. Although some post-medieval and modern brick, tile and pot sherds were noted these were deemed to be of limited research value and were not collected.*

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording on land at Little Orchard, Greinton, Somerset (the 'Site'), over 5 days between 6 and 12 May 2015. The project was commissioned by Wessex Water plc under a term agreement with Context One Archaeological Services Ltd.
- 1.2 The monitoring programme was advised by Ms Tanya James (Historic Environment Officer, Somerset County Council) following a consultation request by Ms Ruth Hall (Environmental Scientist, Wessex Water plc) on the potential archaeological impact of upgrading a section of water main.
- 1.3 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 was approved by Ms James on 5 May 2015 prior to the commencement of any Site works.
- 1.4 The requirement followed advice by Central Government as set out in paragraph 141 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

## 2. Site location and topography

- 2.1 The Site (between NGR ST 41167 36240 and ST 41434 36266) comprised 250 meters of easement and open cut trenching and was located in fields to the immediate south of the village of Greinton (**Figure 1**). Extending across three small fields and under one trackway, the pipeline route was mainly on level ground, the nature of the soils within each field varying sharply due to differing land usage in the past. The two exterior fields within the scheme had been heavily ploughed for arable farming while the central field was used for dog training and agility. The Site was located on broadly level ground at c. 17m aOD.

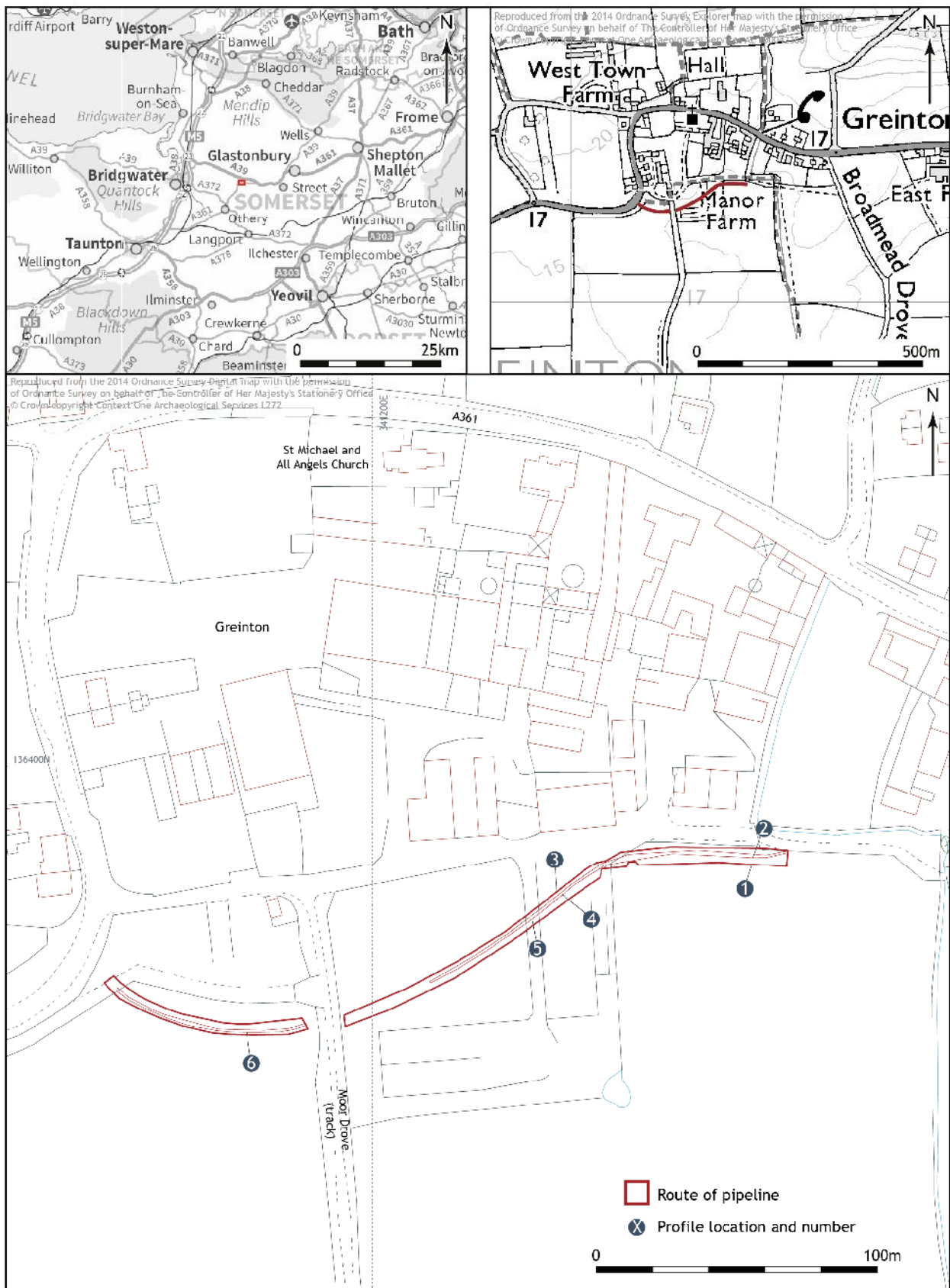


Figure 1. Site setting

### 3. Methodology

#### Development groundworks methodology

- 3.1 Topsoil was removed during a standard easement strip (c. 5.50 m wide) before an open cut pipe trench was excavated to a depth of c. 1.0m deep and c. 0.6m wide. This was carried out with a JCB or 360 tracked type machine fitted with a 0.6m wide toothless grading bucket.

#### Archaeological methodology

- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 In the absence of archaeological remains, profile sections of the deposit sequence across the Site were recorded using standard COAS *pro forma* profile sheets to illustrate the soil morphology. Each profile was recorded as a graphical representation accompanied by a brief description. A photograph including a suitable scale was also taken and the location recorded (see **Figure 1**). Any dateable material found within a deposit was also noted. The frequency with which profile sections were recorded was based entirely on variations in the deposit sequence.
- 3.4 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).
- 3.5 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.

### 4. Results

- 4.1 No visible features or deposits of archaeological interest were encountered during the monitoring programme.
- 4.2 The easement strip revealed that the area had been heavily disturbed by previous services and ploughing and therefore potential archaeological features were difficult to distinguish. This is illustrated in **Plate 1**, where the trench cut for a sewer was visible running parallel to the southern edge of the easement strip. The general stratigraphic sequence as illustrated in Profile 1 comprised a shallow topsoil overlying a relatively deep subsoil and a heavy red clay natural with gley-coloured stony deposits (**Plate 2**). Towards the centre of the scheme, Profile 3 revealed a sequence of mixed made ground, slightly raised and covered with building rubble, producing a very thin topsoil layer (which has not been subject to ploughing), overlying freely draining subsoil over heavy natural clay (**Plate 3**). To the west, Profile 6 displayed a similar stratigraphy to Profile 1 with the exception of a deeper topsoil layer (**Plate 4**).



Plate 1. Plan shot (from E; 1m scales)



Plate 2. Profile 1 (from N; 1m scales)



Plate 3. Profile 3 (from N; 1m scales)



Plate 4. Profile 6 (from N; 1m scales)

## 5. The finds

- 5.1 Although some post-medieval tile, brick and potsherds were noted, these finds were deemed to be of limited research value and therefore were not collected. This material was thought to be residual material from the nearby village of Greinton.

## 6. Discussion

- 6.1 Despite the potential for significant medieval and possible Romano-British occupation of the Site, no archaeological features of any kind were found during development groundworks. The Site had already been significantly disturbed in the modern period, with a large number of modern services lying within sections of the pipe trench. This suggests that any archaeology which may have been present would most likely have been previously disturbed by these excavations. In particular, the western and eastern areas of the pipeline scheme had been subject to heavy arable agricultural use and both contained a deep plough soil that may have disturbed any potential archaeological deposits.

## 7. Archive

- 7.1 An ordered and integrated site archive has been prepared to comply with guidelines set out in *Standards in the Museums Care of Archaeological Collections* (Museum and Galleries Commission 1992) / *Management of Archaeological Projects in the Historic Environment* (English Heritage 2006).

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

Item	Number	Format
Profile record sheets	7	Paper
Digital images	36	.JPG

- 7.3 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.
- 7.4 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:



Ruth Hall, Environmental Scientist, Wessex Water plc  
Tanya James, Historic Environment Officer, Somerset County Council

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