

5 Church Cottages  
Williton  
Somerset

Archaeological Monitoring and  
Recording report

September 2017




5 Church Cottages  
Williton  
Somerset

for

**C1 project code: C1/AMR/17/CCW**

**Ecologia Environmental Solutions Limited**

#### REPORT

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Date	12/09/17
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Date	15/09/17
Issue	01

#### PROJECT DETAILS

Client project/scheme ref.	N/A
Planning Application ref.	N/A
Local Planning Authority	N/A
Historic England List no.	1174710
Historic Environment Record ref.	37664
Collecting Museum	SWHT
Museum accession code	TTNCM 64/2017
OASIS reference	contexto1-292280

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## Summary

*Context One Heritage & Archaeology (C1) carried out archaeological monitoring and recording during remedial works following an oil leak at 5 Church Cottages, Williton, Somerset. The project was commissioned by Ecologia Environmental Solutions Limited.*

*The cottage is Grade II Listed with 16th or 17th century origins, and is in an area with buildings of a similar period. As such, the works had the potential to inform understanding of occupation in the area during this period or prior to it.*

*Deposits within the cottage were restricted to modern floor layers and part of the natural subsoil, although a very small area was observed. The excavation of the exterior pipe trench revealed an earlier, probably modern, garden path. The only finds observed were of modern origin and typical of those seen in a garden soil.*

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Context One Heritage & Archaeology (C1) carried out archaeological monitoring and recording during remedial works following an oil leak at 5 Church Cottages, Williton, Somerset (the 'Site'), during August 2017 (**Figure 1**). The project was commissioned by Ecologia Environmental Solutions Limited.
- 1.2 The monitoring and recording was requested by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), West Somerset Council on the advice of the county Historic Environment Service (HES), South West Heritage Trust (SWHT), as the property is located within an area of archaeological interest.
- 1.3 The programme of archaeological work comprised three elements: archaeological monitoring and recording; post-excavation and report production (this document); and archive preparation and deposition.
- 1.4 The requirement follows advice by Central Government as set out in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) (DCLG 2012).

## 2. The Site

- 2.1 The Site comprises a cottage (centred on NGR ST 307530 140730) located on the south-western edge of Williton, immediately south-west of St Peter's Church (**Figure 1**). The property is bounded to the south by gardens, and to the north it faces onto the churchyard. It occupies the west end of a terrace, and covers an area of c. 20 square metres. The Site is largely situated on level ground at an average height of c. 34m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The recorded geology for the Site is Otter Sandstone Formation – Sandstone with drift geology of River Terrace Deposits (undifferentiated) - Sand and Gravel (BGS 2017).
- 2.2 The county Historic Environment Record (HER) shows that a number of heritage assets have been recorded within the vicinity of the Site. The property itself is a Grade II Listed building (HE List No. 1174710; HER No. 30910) along with Nos 1 and 4 Church Cottages. It originally comprised the church house and cottage, with a 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century origin. Constructed of red sandstone random rubble, with a thatched roof, it was altered during the 20<sup>th</sup> century into three cottages. The adjacent dwellings, 2 and 3 Church Cottages are also Grade II Listed (HE List No. 1057480; HER No. 30911), of similar construction, and represent a pair of 17<sup>th</sup> century cottages.
- 2.3 The Church of St Peter, immediately to the north is Grade II\* Listed (HE List No 1174922). It originated as a medieval chapel which was rebuilt in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. There is a Grade II\* Listed churchyard cross (HE List No 1057462; HER No 30970) of 13<sup>th</sup> century date 15 metres to the north of the north aisle door of the church. Williton itself had its origins in the Late Saxon period and developed as a medieval town (HER No 32635). There are a number of post-medieval buildings and sites associated with the current layout of Williton to the south and east of the Site. Archaeological investigations have been carried out c. 200m to the north-west of the Site. Geophysical survey (HER No 32209) identified possible ditched features but evaluation did not locate any archaeological features (HER No 32263).

## 3. Archaeological aims and research objectives

- 3.1 The principal aims of the archaeological monitoring were to:
  - identify, investigate and record all significant buried archaeological deposits revealed on the site during groundworks;
  - determine the character of the archaeological remains, where present;
  - recover environmental information, which might provide further information relating to the local historic environment of the area;
  - provide sufficient information to enable further mitigation strategies to be determined, where appropriate

3.2 The research objectives were to:

- determine whether there is any evidence specifically relating to the origins of the Church House or any earlier structure in the area.

#### 4. Methodology

- 4.1 All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) (December 2014) and in accordance with the *Somerset County Council Heritage Service Archaeological Handbook* (2011). C1 adhered to the *Code of Conduct* of the CIfA (1985, rev. 2000, 2014), and *Regulations for Professional Conduct* (CIfA, 2014, rev. 2015) at all times. The fieldwork methodology is summarised below.
- 4.2 C1 gave notification of the commencement of the works to the HES; a visit from a HES representative was not deemed necessary.
- 4.3 Prior to the commencement of Site works, the excavation methodology was agreed between those responsible for carrying out the groundworks and C1 to ensure that all parties were aware of the monitoring requirements.
- 4.4 The groundworks comprised the excavation of soil in the ground floor of the property to remove material contaminated with oil, and the excavation of an exterior trench for a new ventilation pipe. An archaeologist was on Site to monitor this operation with the aim of identifying and recording any archaeological features/deposits/finds present.
- 4.5 Core details of the deposit sequence were recorded on C1 *pro-forma* profile forms in digital format using iPad mini tablets. The frequency with which profiles were recorded was based on variation of the deposit sequence. Spoil was examined for the retrieval of artefacts. No archaeological features or deposits were seen and no manual excavation was required. A photographic record was carried out, and involved the sole use of digital images. This included photographs illustrating in both detail, and general context, the monitoring programme. The photographic record also included working shots to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted.

#### 5. Results

- 5.1 The internal excavations were focused on the area of, and around, the boiler cupboard (**Figure 2**). No archaeological features or deposits were noted. The work revealed a series of modern floor deposits (**Plate 1 & 2**), which comprised a concrete screed (0.07m thick) over a pink foam high density insulation (0.05m thick), polystyrene (0.02m thick), a further layer of concrete (0.06m thick), and a blue plastic membrane which overlay a bedding of sand on modern gravelly hardcore (0.30m thick). This was concentrated in the boiler cupboard and corner. A natural deposit (100) was revealed towards the middle of the room. This comprised a friable dark reddish brown (2.5YR 3/3) sandy clay with occasional sub-rounded stones >0.03m. This was 0.30m thick, and the colour may have been affected by the fuel oil contamination.
- 5.2 The exterior pipe trench (**Plate 3**) cut through the present gravel path of small angular stones which was 0.03m thick. This path overlay a possible older stone path (200), 0.10m thick, of firm dark reddish brown (2.5YR 3/4) silty clay with frequent angular and sub-angular stones <0.10m. This was over a 0.10m thick layer of dark reddish brown (2.5YR 3/4) silty clay with moderate sub-angular gravel fragments <0.04m (201). This may represent the bedding layer for context (200). Underlying this was a clean natural of friable reddish brown (2.5YR 4/4) clay with very occasional sub-rounded gravel fragments <0.02m (202). By comparison, the garden soil was a soft dark reddish brown (5YR 2.5/2) sandy silty clay with occasional sub-angular gravel fragments <0.02m.

## 6. The finds

- 6.1 Some modern pottery was observed in the exterior pipe trench. Similar material was noted in the soils around the rest of the garden. They were most likely associated with general post-medieval refuse and composting, and were not retained.

## 7. Discussion and Conclusion

- 7.1 No archaeological features or deposits were noted either within the building or outside, although an earlier layer of the modern path was identified. Within the building only modern layers of the floor were seen, although part of the natural subsoil was also observed. There were no features relating to the construction of the building, and no evidence of earlier structures or deposits in the area. However, only a very small area was observed, and the excavation adjacent to the walls was not necessarily deep enough to reveal any features which could elucidate the construction of the building. The excavation of the exterior pipe trench revealed an earlier, probably modern garden path. The only finds observed were of modern origin and typical of those seen in a garden soil.
- 7.2 Whilst the building has 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century origins, and is in an area containing buildings of a similar period, no evidence was seen which could further inform understanding of occupation during this period or prior to it.

## 8. Archive

- 8.1 The NPPF requires that an archaeological archive arising from development works is made publicly accessible (para. 141). The archive comprises two parts: the paper/digital archive including site records and images; and the artefact/ecofact assemblage.

### Paper/digital archive

- 8.2 Where archaeological features/deposits are recorded, the archive generated from this usually comprises site records, drawings and photographs either in paper format or born-digital data. Within three months of the conclusion of a project this is normally transferred into the care of a Trusted Digital Repository such as the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) as scanned paper records or native born-digital data. The digital archive will be compiled in accordance with the standards and requirements of the ADS, as set out on their website.
- 8.3 In this case no archaeological evidence was encountered, and all relevant data has been incorporated into this report, and the digital archive will be stored on the C1 cloud storage server or discarded.

### Physical archive

- 8.4 The artefact/ecofact assemblage is the legal property of the landowner (excluding any items that fall under The Treasure Act 1996). However, it is usual practice for the landowner to transfer ownership of this assemblage to a receiving institution (usually a museum) once it has been fully assessed and/or analysed. Receiving institutions store the assemblage and make it publicly accessible. Alternatively, the landowner can choose to keep the assemblage but arrangements must be made to ensure its long-term curation and public accessibility in accordance with NPPF.
- 8.5 In this case, no finds were collected or retained.

### Dissemination: report

- 8.6 Copies of the report will be submitted to the following:
- client and/or agent
  - the HES so that it can be included as part of the county Historic Environment Record (HER) and
  - the ADS, via OASIS (On-line Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations – <http://oasis.ac.uk/england/>)

**Dissemination: publication**

- 8.7 A short entry will be prepared for publication in the summary section of the next county archaeological journal (*Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society*).

**9. Bibliography**

- |                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
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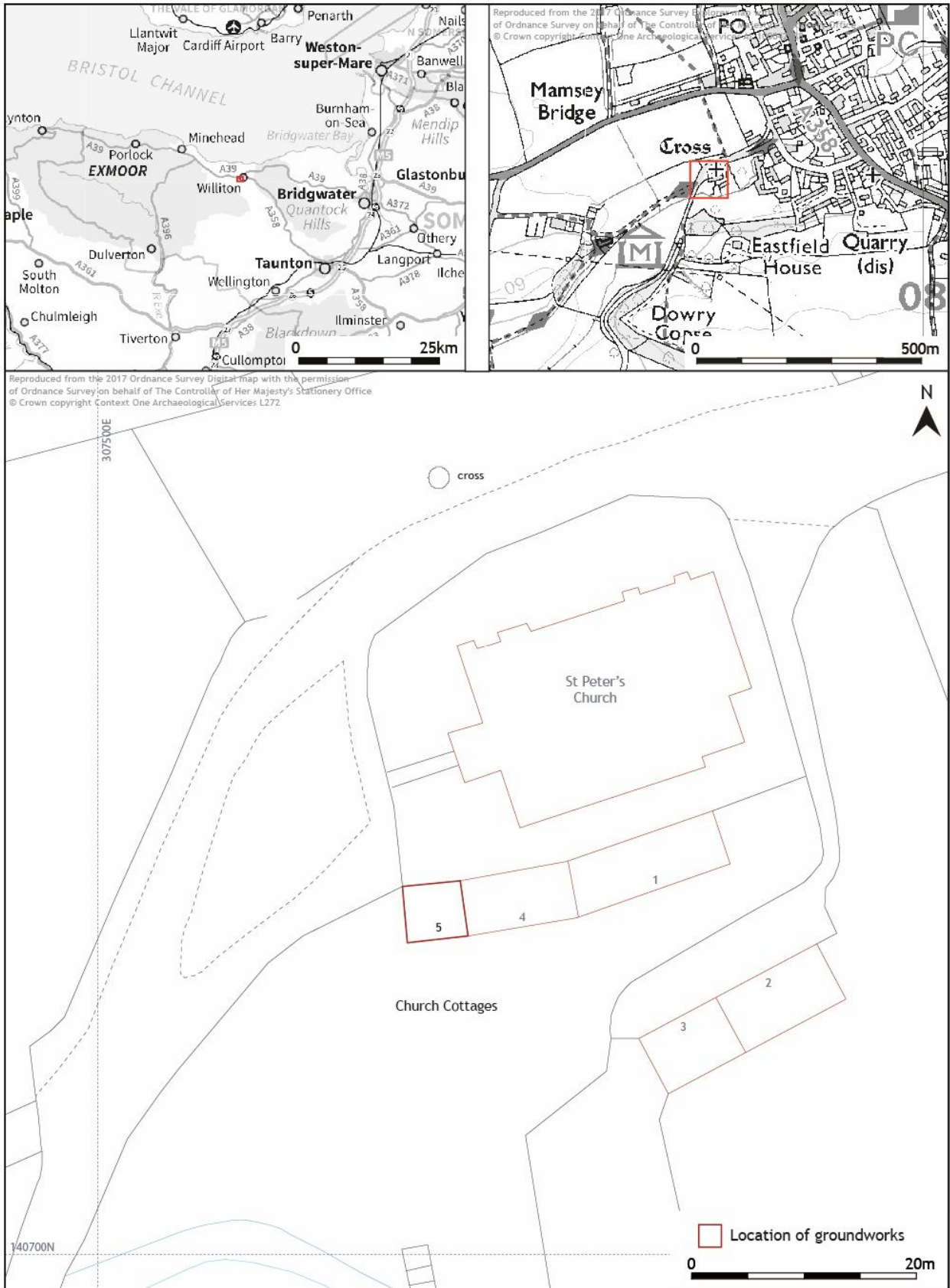


Figure 1. Site setting



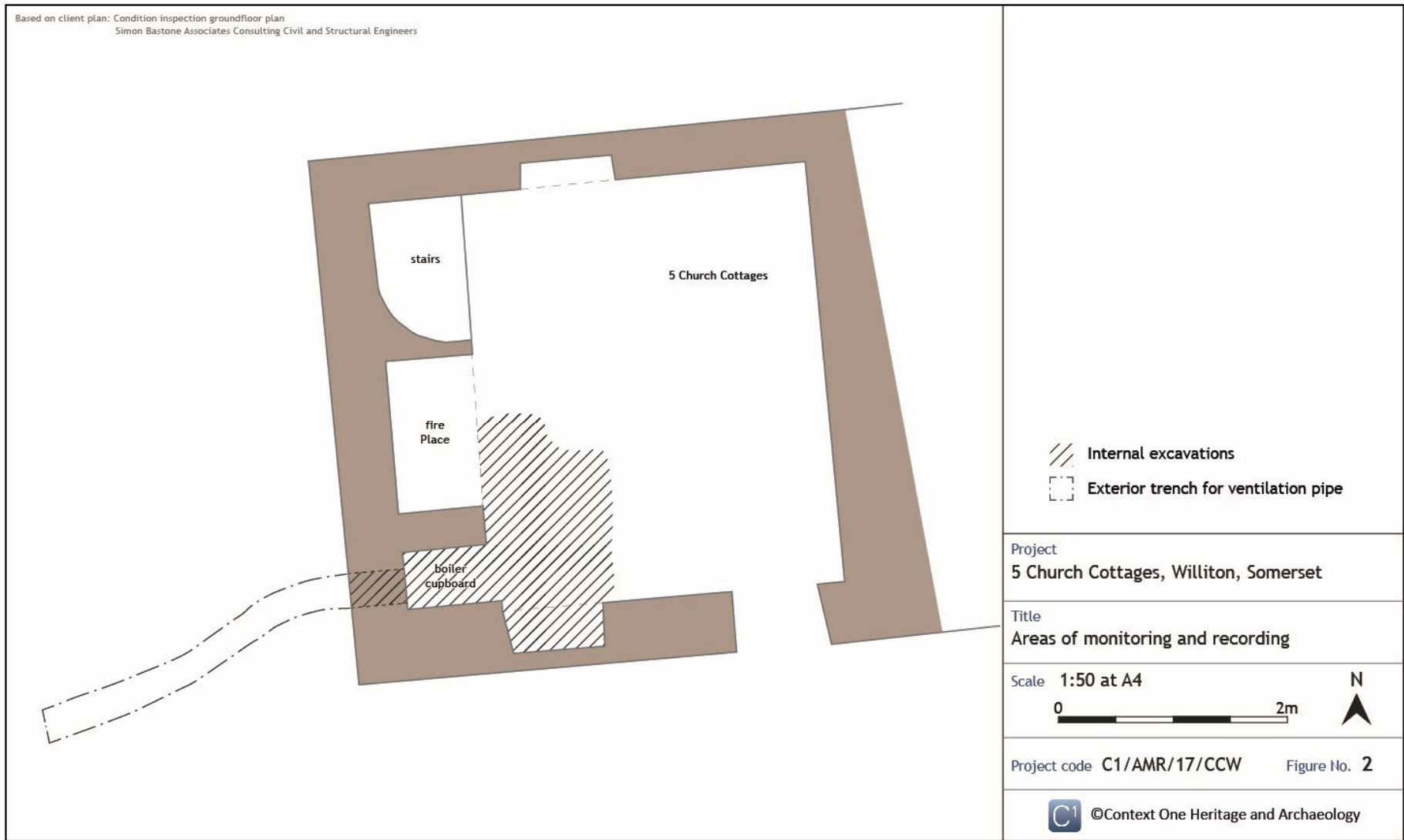


Figure 2. Areas of monitoring and recording



Plate 1. Interior works (facing SW; 0.50m scale)



Plate 2. Boiler cupboard area (facing W)



Plate 3. Exterior pipe trench (facing S; 0.50m scale)

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