

5 & 6 The Crescent
Taunton
Somerset

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
MONITORING &
RECORDING

REPORT

April 2021



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Looking after the past, today...





5 & 6 The Crescent
Taunton
Somerset


for

C1 project code: C1/AMR/21/CTS

Peter James Design Limited

REPORT

Prepared by	Tara Fairclough
Date	26/04/21

Approved by	Cheryl Green
Signed	

Date	28/04/21
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Issue	01
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PROJECT DETAILS

Client project/scheme ref.	N/A
Planning Application ref.	38/20/0254/LB
Local Planning Authority	Somerset West and Taunton Council
Scheduled Monument Consent ref.	N/A
Historic Environment Record ref.	45007
Collecting Museum	South West Heritage Trust
Museum accession code	TTNCM 7/2021
OASIS reference	contexto1-413545

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Front cover image: view across the Site from the east-north-east. ©Context One Archaeological Services Ltd

Summary

Context One Heritage & Archaeology (C1) carried out archaeological monitoring and recording as a condition of granting Listed Building Consent for the change of use from office to 2 no. dwellings at nos. 5 & 6 The Crescent, Taunton, Somerset. The conversion will include the erection of a single-storey extension at the rear of both buildings, raised gardens and associated works. The project was commissioned by Peter James Design Limited.

Both nos. 5 & 6 form part of The Crescent, a uniform terrace of four-storey properties built in 1807 on a greenfield site. The 1840 Tithe map for Taunton represents the terrace with small frontages and long rear gardens and by the late 19th century, many of the properties had rear extensions including nos. 5 & 6. There is evidence that the extensions to both nos. 5 & 6 were removed in the late 1960s/early 1970s. The Crescent is also located a short distance from the medieval town and town defences. Despite this potential, monitoring of development excavations revealed no archaeological activity and no finds were recovered.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Context One Heritage & Archaeology (C1) carried out archaeological monitoring and recording as a condition (no. 5) of granting Listed Building Consent (planning reference: 38/20/0254/LB) for the change of use from offices to 2 no. dwellings at nos. 5 & 6 The Crescent, Taunton, Somerset (the 'Site') (**Figure 1**). Both buildings are Grade II* Listed (Historic England List Entry Number 1344699). The conversion will include the erection of a single-storey extension at the rear of both buildings, raised gardens and associated works. The investigation was carried out on 10 March 2021. The project was commissioned by Peter James Design Limited.

1.2 Consent was granted by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWTC) on 8 January 2021. Condition 5 states:

"Before the commencement of the development hereby permitted the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, shall have secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which has been submitted and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The WSI shall include details of the archaeological investigation, the recording of the heritage asset, the analysis of evidence recovered from the site and publication of the results. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: To ensure the preservation of archaeological remains.

Reason for pre-commencement: Any works on site have the potential to disturb archaeological interests"

1.3 The programme of archaeological works comprised four elements: the production of a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which sets out the project strategy (McConnell and Fairclough 2021); archaeological monitoring and recording during development groundworks; 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 paragraph 199 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) (DCLG 2019).

2. The Site

2.1 The Site (centred on NGR ST 22525 24367) covers c. 610 square metres and is located on the western side of the historic town of Taunton (**Figure 1**). Numbers 5 & 6 are centrally positioned along a terrace of eleven properties that form the northern end of The Crescent. There is a public car park at the rear of the properties to the east, and the offices of Somerset County Council are ranged down the western side of The Crescent. The Site is largely situated on level ground at an average height of c. 20m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The recorded geology is Mercia Mudstone Group - Mudstone and Halite-stone with superficial deposits noted as Colluvium - Diamicton (BGS 2021). The soils are characterised as slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage (CSAIS 2021).

2.2 A Heritage Impact Assessment was prepared for the proposal in 2020 (Robinson) and accompanied the Listed Building Consent application. As part of the assessment, the report examined the evolution of both buildings, and a brief summary of the key developments of the Site are mentioned here in order to provide a context for any possible remains associated with the buildings that might be encountered during development groundworks. In addition, the Somerset County Historic Environment Record (HER) has been separately consulted to identify whether any heritage assets are known to have existed on the Site or in the immediate environs to understand the nature of any additional archaeological potential.

2.3 Both Nos. 5 & 6 (the Site) form part of the Crescent, a uniform terrace of four-storey properties built in 1807 on a greenfield site (Robinson 2020, 3, 9). The 1840 Tithe map for Taunton represents the terrace with small frontages and long rear gardens; two of the properties (6 & 11) had coach houses at the far end of the garden (Robinson 2020, 10). However, by the late 19th century, many of the properties had half-width rear extensions including nos. 5 & 6, with no. 6 having an additional perpendicular extension which would have created an inner courtyard (Robinson 2020, 10). The 1901 Ordnance Survey map indicates that the inner courtyard of

no. 6 was glazed over by this time (Robinson 2020, 11). Map evidence show that the extensions to both nos. 5 & 6 were removed in the late 1960s/early 1970s.

- 2.4 The Crescent is located a short distance from the western side of the medieval town (HER ref. 44440) and town defences (HER ref. 44459), and in an area of the later town that is characterised by post-medieval and modern expansion. However, given the proximity to the early town, the potential to encounter peripheral activity could not be discounted although development groundworks were expected to be dominated by the residual below ground evidence relating to the former 19th century extensions.

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 may 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:

- characterise the nature of the former extensions where they exist;
- identify and characterise any earlier settlement activity.

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, updated October 2020) and in accordance with the *Somerset Archaeological Handbook* (2018). C1 adhered to the *Code of Conduct* of the CIfA (December 2014, revised 2019), and *Regulations for professional conduct* (CIfA, May 2019) at all times. The fieldwork methodology is summarised below.

- 4.2 C1 did not deem it necessary to request a site visit from a representative of the HES. However, monitoring by the HES will continue until the deposition of the Site archive.

- 4.2 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. The rear of both properties was largely laid to tarmac and it was agreed this could be removed without an archaeologist being present. In the event a footing trench for a dividing garden wall, an electric supply trench to a neighbouring property, and a foundation trench for the proposed wall enclosing the rear of the development (trench 1) were excavated without archaeological supervision. However, a profile was recorded of the foundation trench, which measured 15.00m long, 1.20m wide and 0.40m deep. Two stanchion pits for the raised garden supports (trenches 2 and 3) were subject to monitoring and recording, each measuring 0.80m wide, 1m long and up to 1m deep (**Figure 1**). All groundworks were carried out with a Takeuchi tracked 1.5 ton machine fitted with a 0.45m toothless grading bucket.

- 4.3 By default, core details of the deposit sequence across the Site 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 any variation of the deposit sequence. Spoil was examined for the retrieval of artefacts. A photographic record of the monitoring and recording was carried out and involved the sole use of digital images. The photographic record included working shots to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted.

5. Results

- 5.1 In accordance with standard archaeological practice, each deposit recorded during the investigation was given a unique context number and is shown in standard brackets, e.g. (100). Deposit colours were matched on Site against a Munsell soil colour chart and described against the relevant hue and reference, e.g. brownish yellow (10YR 3/1). Three profiles were logged during the monitoring of groundworks with details of the recorded deposits tabulated in **Appendix 1** and summarised below.

Profile 1

- 5.2 In Profile 1 the excavation of a foundation trench (trench 1) to accommodate the footings for the proposed rear wall to the property revealed tarmac and associated sub-base (100) overlying a dark reddish brown silty clay remnant garden soil (101), up to 0.15m thick with moderate sub-angular stones <0.05m and smaller gravels.

Profiles 2 and 3

- 5.3 Profiles 2 and 3 are representative samples taken of small trenches (trenches 2 and 3) excavated to coincide with stanchions to support the raised gardens. A similar deposit sequence was observed in both profiles and this comprised a sub-base layer associated with the removed tarmac (200) and (300) above the same dark reddish brown silty clay remnant garden soil (201) and (301) noted in profile 1, measuring 0.30m deep. This overlay a 0.35m thick dark reddish grey clayey deposit (202) and (302) with moderate angular and sub-angular stones <0.05m. The underlying natural deposit consisted of a mottled yellowish red and light grey clay with naturally occurring mudstones. A disused storm drain was observed running north-east to south-west across trench 2.

6. The finds

- 6.1 No finds were observed or recovered during archaeological monitoring, although fragments of modern brick, slate and clinker were observed within remnant garden soil deposits (101), (201) and (301).

7. Discussion and Conclusion

- 7.1 Despite the potential for the discovery of heritage assets relating to the medieval town and town defences as well as remains of former extensions to both the properties seen in historic map regression analysis, no archaeological evidence was observed during monitoring of groundwork excavations. It should be considered that the foundation trench for the new rear wall of the development was only 0.40m deep and therefore did not penetrate beneath garden soils. Yet the two small stanchion trenches exposed the underlying clayey deposit with stones above the natural geology and no archaeology was present, indicating low potential for the survival of remains.

8. Other considerations

- 8.1 The NPPF requires that an archaeological archive arising from development works is made publicly accessible (para. 199). 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 As no archaeological evidence was encountered, all relevant data has been incorporated into this assessment report and the paper/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 On this occasion, there is no physical archive to deposit.

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)
- the ADS, via OASIS (On-line Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations – <http://oasis.ac.uk/england/>)

Dissemination: publication

8.7 By default, a short entry will be prepared for publication in the summary section of the next county archaeological journal or equivalent periodical.

9. Bibliography

- | | |
|---|--|
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| Robinson, D., 2020 | <i>Heritage Impact Assessment. 5 & 6 The Crescent, Taunton, Somerset. TA1 4ED</i> . Unpublished Robinson + Ltd client report |
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Figure 1. Site setting



Figure 2. General view across site showing the excavated stanchion pits (no scale, from SE)

Appendix 1: Context summary

Profile 1							
Summary: Profile 1 was taken from Trench 1 excavated to accommodate the footings for the rear boundary wall. An area of mortar was observed relating to the construction of the northern boundary wall between nos. 5 and 4 The Crescent.					Dimensions: 15.00m long x 1.20m wide x 0.40m deep		
					Orientation: NNW-SSE		
Context no.	Type	Description	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Finds		
100	Layer	Tarmac and associated sub-base. Above (101).		0.25			
101	Layer	Remnant garden soil. Dark reddish brown (5YR 3/2) compacted silty clay with moderate sub-angular stones <0.05m and smaller gravelly stones with some fragments and flecks of mortar. Below (100).		>0.15	Fragments of modern CBM, slate and clinker		
Profile 2							
Summary: Profile 2 was taken from Trench 2 excavated to coincide with one of the stanchion pits required to support the raised gardens. A disused storm pipe was observed running NE-SW across this small trench.					Dimensions: 1.40m long x 0.80m wide x 1.00m deep		
					Orientation: ENE-WSW		
Context no.	Type	Description	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Finds (observed only)		
200	Layer	Sub-base associated with removed tarmac. Above (201).		0.20			
201	Layer	Remnant garden soil. Dark reddish brown (5YR 3/2) compacted silty clay with moderate sub-angular stones <0.05m and smaller gravelly stones. Above (202), below (200).		0.30	Fragments of clinker		
202	Layer	Clayey subsoil. Dark reddish grey (5YR 4/2) compacted silty clay with moderate angular and sub-angular stones <0.05m. Above (203), below (201)		0.35			
203	Layer	Natural clay and mudstones. Yellowish red with light grey mottles (5YR 5/6 & 5Y 7/1) compacted clay. Below (202).		>0.20			
Profile 3							
Summary: Profile 3 was taken from Trench 3 excavated to coincide with one of the stanchion pits required to support the raised gardens. The subsoil in this test pit was slightly stonier near the west end.					Dimensions: 1.40m long x 0.80m wide x 1.00m deep		
					Orientation: ENE-WSW		
Context no.	Type	Description	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Finds (observed only)		
300	Layer	Sub-base associated with removed tarmac. Above (301).		0.20			
301	Layer	Remnant garden soil. Dark reddish brown (5YR 3/2) compacted silty clay with moderate sub-angular stones <0.05m and smaller gravelly stones. Above (302), below (300).		0.30			
302	Layer	Clayey subsoil. Dark reddish grey (5YR 4/2) compacted silty clay with moderate angular and sub-angular stones <0.05m. Above (303), below (301)		0.35			
303	Layer	Natural clay and mudstones. Yellowish red with light grey mottles (5YR 5/6 & 5Y 7/1) compacted clay. Below (302).		>0.20			

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