

# Sewer Replacement, Yetminster, Dorset.

An Archaeological Watching Brief.



**CONTEXT ONE**  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES LTD

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# Sewer Replacement, Yetminster, Dorset.

## An Archaeological Watching Brief

for

Wessex Water plc

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**National Grid Reference:** ST 59724 11006 to ST 59223 11299 via ST 59217 11144

**Wessex Water scheme reference:** C9130

**Dorset County Museum Accession Number:** COAS/WBF/06/YSD

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## **Non-technical summary**

*Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief during groundworks for a sewer replacement at Yetminster, Dorset (NGR ST 59724 11006 to ST 59223 11299 via ST 59217 11144), over seven days between the 17<sup>th</sup> of May and the 6<sup>th</sup> of June 2006. The project was commissioned and funded by Wessex Water plc.*

*The investigation was advised by Mr Steve Wallis (Senior Archaeologist, Dorset County Council), following a consultation request by Ms Katherine McElwe (Environmental Scientist, Wessex Water plc).*

*Monitoring of development excavations revealed only one archaeological feature comprising a possible post-medieval/modern collapsed field drain located in the compound area at Folly Farm. An area of presumed medieval ridge and furrow orientated north-east to south-west was observed as a slight earthwork towards the centre of the scheme, just outside the northern boundary of some possible medieval burgage plots/fields fronting the High Street.*

*A small assemblage of 18 artefacts was recovered from the residual topsoil/ploughsoil left by the creation of the easement. This consisted of two ?prehistoric struck flints and 16 pottery sherds spanning the medieval, post-medieval and modern periods. Trenching for the pipeline revealed a simple sequence of topsoil/ploughsoil, overlying natural alluvial sediments.*

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief during groundworks for a sewer replacement at Yetminster, Dorset (NGR ST 59724 11006 to ST 59223 11299 via ST 59217 11144) (hereafter referred to as the Site), over seven days between the 17<sup>th</sup> of May and the 6<sup>th</sup> of June 2006. The project was commissioned and funded by Wessex Water plc.
- 1.2. The investigation was advised by Mr Steve Wallis (Senior Archaeologist, Dorset County Council), following a consultation request by Ms Katherine McElwee (Environmental Scientist, Wessex Water plc).
- 1.3. The Site is situated c. 340m to the north-east of the historic core of Yetminster. The request for the investigation was made as the route of the pipeline crosses an area near the northern edge of possible medieval burgrave plots. These plots may have once belonged to properties located on the north side of the High Street.
- 1.4. Given the potential to encounter medieval remains/deposits, it was considered that archaeological features/deposits could be present on the Site, and that these would be damaged or destroyed by the development. However, as the nature or presence of such features/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 Watching Brief during all ground disturbance associated with the development.
- 1.5. The request for the archaeological work follows advice given by Central Government as set out in *Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 (PPG1), General Policy and Principles*, 1997 and *Planning Policy Guidance: Note 16 (PPG16)* issued by the DoE in 1990. The recommendation also conforms to Environment Policy G of the *Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan* (adopted July 2004), and Policy SA24 of the *West Dorset District Local Plan* (adopted 2006).
- 1.6. This report summarises the topographical, geological, archaeological and historical setting of the site, and presents the results of the Watching Brief.

## 2. Definition and objectives of a Watching Brief

- 2.1. An Archaeological Watching Brief is defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) as:

*"...a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. This will be within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report and ordered archive." (IFA rev.1999).*

- 2.2. The purpose of a Watching Brief is similarly defined by the IFA and is:

- *"To allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, their presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works."*

- *To provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the Watching Brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.” (IFA rev.1999)*

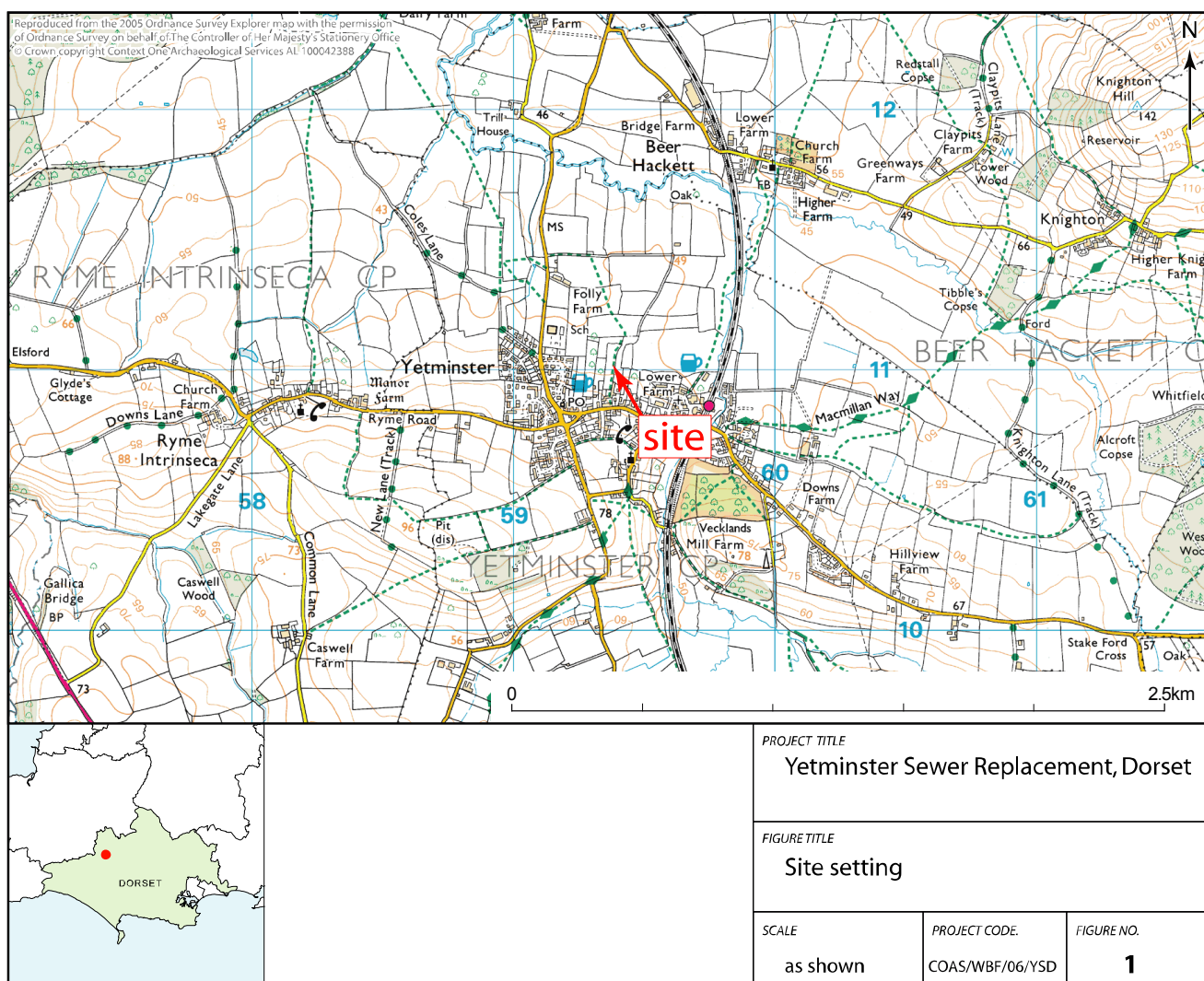
2.3. The results of a Watching Brief are used to:

- produce a record of the location, nature and date of any archaeological remains encountered on the Site;
- add to the knowledge about the previous history of activity on the current site and its surroundings; and
- provide information to influence future planning decisions in the area.

### 3. Topography and geology

3.1. Yetminster is situated *c.* 8km south-west of Sherborne and *c.* 27km north-north-west of Dorchester in north-west Dorset (**Figure 1**). The Site (NGR ST 59724 11006 to ST 59223 11299 via ST 59217 11144) is located to the north of the village, *c.* 300m from the village centre (**Figure 2**). The Site occupies roughly level ground *c.* 50m above Ordnance Datum (AOD). According to the British Geological Survey (2001), the underlying geology is of Middle Jurassic Great Oolite and Cornbrash, and Upper Jurassic Oxford Clay and Kellaways Beds. The soils in this area are characterised by slightly acid, freely draining loam and lime rich soils, over chalk or limestone, and seasonably wet, slightly acid, base-rich, loamy clay with impeded drainage (Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC), 2006).





## 4. Archaeological Background

- 4.1. The archaeological background for the Site has largely been drawn from secondary sources. This comprised a data search of archaeological records held by Dorset County Council as part of the Historic Environment Record (HER). Secondary sources studied include '*Domesday Book - Dorset*' (Morris 1983), and '*The Buildings of England - Dorset*' (Newman and Pevsner 2002).
- 4.2. The Dorset HER records just two archaeological events within 350m of the Site. A post-medieval milestone (**HER no. 1 138 043**) with the following engraving: *Sherborne 5 Yetminster ½*, is located to the north of the pipeline route. Also, an 18<sup>th</sup> century summerhouse (**HER no. 1 138 038**) is located to the south of the pipeline route in the garden of the Alcove, a mid 20<sup>th</sup> century house.
- 4.3. The Domesday Survey of 1086 records that Yetminster was held by the Bishop of Salisbury which had 25 villagers, 25 smallholders and a mill, with William holding 6 hides of this land from the bishop, including a mill (Morris 1983, 2-3).

- 4.4. The pipeline route crosses an area near the northern edge of a series of possible medieval burgrave plots. These plots may have once belonged to properties located on the north side of the High Street in the village. Most of the buildings located along the street today are Listed, and predominantly date to the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Newman and Pevsner 2002, 504-5).

## 5. Methodology

### Wessex Water methodology

- 5.1. The total length of the pipeline under archaeological observation was c. 750m. An easement c. 10m wide was machine excavated in order to provide a working surface and facilitate access. To create the easement a machine equipped with a toothless bucket removed the topsoil to a maximum depth of c. 0.20m. A machine equipped with a 0.50m wide bucket was used to excavate the trench for the replacement sewer to a maximum depth of 2m and a maximum width of 2m.
- 5.2. Towards the eastern end, the pipeline was required to cross a hedge/field boundary. To achieve this, directional drilling was used to tunnel under the ground. This required the machine excavation of two 4m x 4m entry and exit pits to a depth of c. 2m, on either side of the hedge/ field boundary. This excavation was monitored for archaeological evidence.

### Archaeological methodology

- 5.3. The programme of archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* published by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) in October, 1994 (rev. September, 1999). COAS adhered to the *Code of Conduct* issued by the IFA in October, 1997, and *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology* (1990, rev. September, 2000), at all times during the course of the investigation. The current Health and Safety legislation and guidelines were followed on site.

### Easement stripping

- 5.4. The machine removal of the ploughsoil/topsoil along the route of the pipeline (NGR ST 59724 11006 to ST 59223 11299 via ST 59217 11144) was carried out under archaeological supervision.
- 5.5. For the purposes of archaeological recording, all areas exposed through development excavations were systematically scanned for features/deposits by walking in 'zig-zag' traverses across their width. The location of any archaeological features/deposits were initially recorded using a handheld GPS unit capable of <3m accuracy and cordoned off to permit later examination.
- 5.6. The surface collection of cultural material (excluding modern bulk material) was also carried out during scanning operations and these were bagged according to field/land unit. Significant objects or concentrations of artefacts were bagged separately and their location recorded using a handheld GPS. The character of topsoil/ploughsoil deposits within each field/land unit were also recorded using standard COAS *pro-forma* recording sheets. Soil colours were recorded using a Munsell soil colour chart.

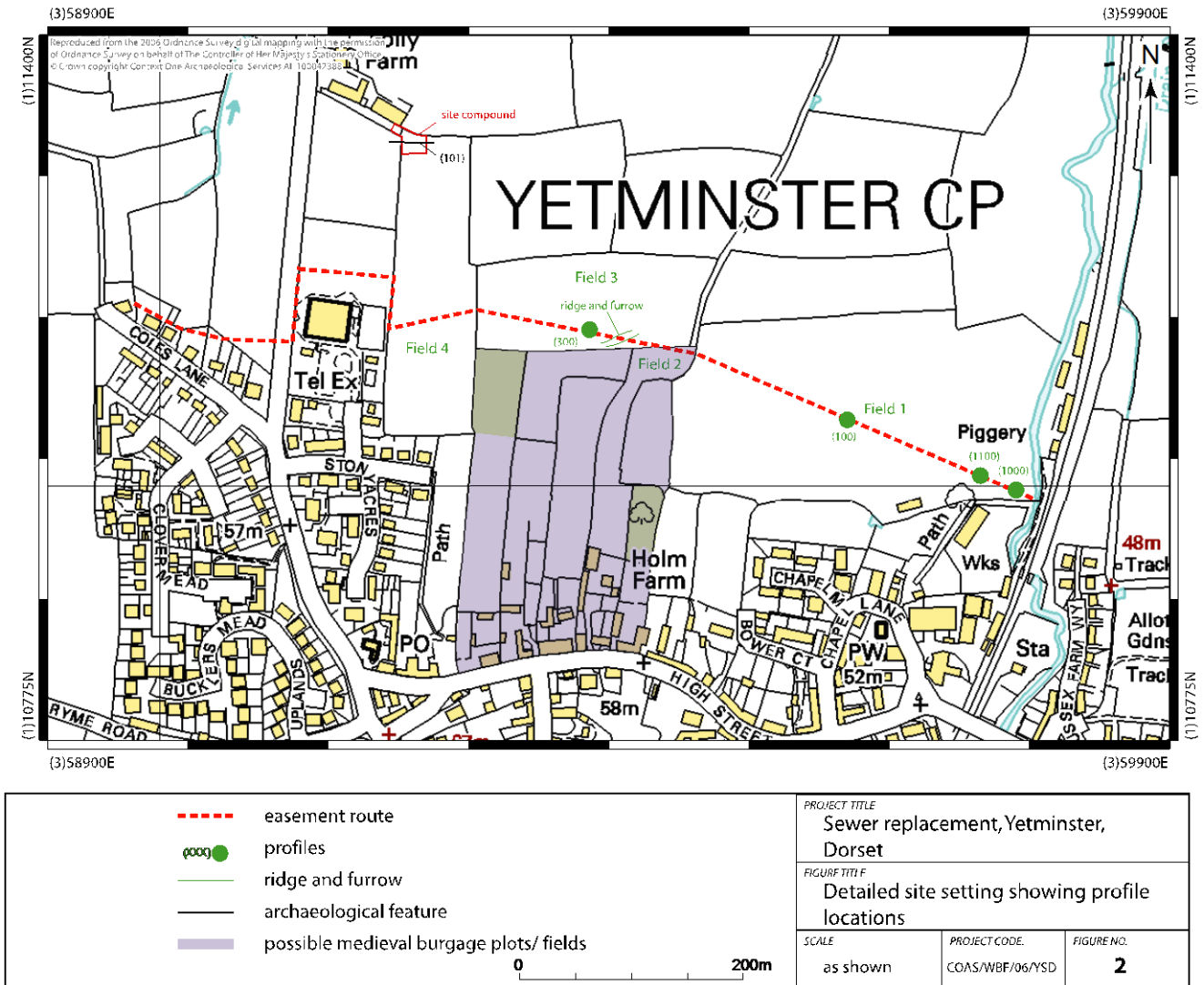


### Trenching

- 5.7. Where undisturbed deposits were not reached during the topsoil stripping of the easement it was necessary to monitor the trenching to ensure that any archaeological features were suitably recorded. At appropriate intervals along the pipe trench, profile sections were recorded using COAS *pro-forma* profile log sheets to illustrate the principal stratigraphic and physical characteristics of the deposits encountered (see **Appendix 1**).
- 5.8. A photographic record of the Watching Brief was prepared involving the use of monochrome photographs and digital images. This included photographs illustrating features identified and working shots to illustrate the general nature of the archaeological operation mounted.
- 5.9. Artefacts collected from archaeological features/deposits were bagged using a combination of the site code and context numbers. Bulk finds such as post-medieval and modern brick and tile were not collected although location, type and frequency were recorded.
- 5.10. All finds from the site were retained for processing and conservation where necessary, in preparation for further analysis and archiving. A specialist report of the artefact assemblage was compiled utilising both descriptive and tabular formats (see section 7.)

## 6. Results

- 6.1. A modern field drain was the only archaeological feature exposed during the course of the watching brief. This was located near the Site compound and measured at least 20m in length and 0.30m wide and orientated east to west. Although this was not excavated, observations showed this to comprise a narrow line of medium sized sub-angular stones (101) below the topsoil (400) incorporating a few bricks and tiles mostly set on edge (see **Figure 2**). In addition, a small area of presumed ridge and furrow was observed towards the centre of the scheme (see **Figure 2**). Furthermore, no significant concentrations or distribution of artefacts were identified.
- 6.2. Two profiles (1100 and 1101) of the general deposit sequence were recorded in the pipe trenches and showed that all the sediments beneath the topsoil/ploughsoil appeared to comprise natural river alluvium (see **Figure 2** for locations).
- 6.3. Nevertheless, an assemblage of 18 artefacts (see section 7.) was recovered from the residual topsoil throughout the easement. The majority of the assemblage consists of pottery, with some struck flint, clay pipe and iron.
- 6.4. Given that no visible archaeological features were identified and only a modest number of artefacts were recovered, it was agreed with Mr Steve Wallis (Senior Archaeologist, Dorset County Council) that no further phases of archaeological intervention were required.



## 7. The finds

- 7.1. A total of eighteen artefacts were recovered from the Watching Brief. With the exception of metalwork, finds recovered from the Watching Brief were washed and marked, where possible, with a code issued by COAS identifying the site (COAS/WBF/06/YSD), followed by the context number.
- 7.2. The finds were separated into artefact types and quantified by context number, quantity and weight in grams. This data is presented in a tabulated format (**Table 1**). Bulk finds such as post-medieval and modern brick/tile and slate were noted on the profile log sheets, but not collected. A request has been made to the site owner(s) through Wessex Water plc to transfer the title of all finds recovered to Dorset County Museum.

## Flint

- 7.3. Two flints (9g) were recovered from the watching brief. These consist of one flint flake and one flint fragment. Flint flake (**Find no. 1**) shows a striking platform, a prominent bulb of percussion and bulbscar on the proximal end. The prominent bulb indicates the use of a hard

hammer. Ripples radiate from the point of impact on the ventral side. The dorsal side is multifaceted and displays some cortex. No obvious signs of secondary working were observed. The flint fragment (**Find no. 2**) appears to have a diffuse bulb of percussion. Fissure marks can be seen emanating from a bulbscar on the ventral side coupled with very faint ripples. Cortex can be seen on the dorsal side. There were no obvious signs of secondary working. Both flints are probably of prehistoric date but lack enough diagnostic attributes to assign them to a specific period.

### Pottery

- 7.4. A total of fourteen sherds of pottery weighing 334g were recovered from the watching brief and all derive exclusively from the topsoil/ploughsoil (100), (300) and (400). Four sherds (279g) from (300) consisted of a white earthenware, up to 1 cm thick. These fragments probably represent utilitarian and domestic usage. Also present were four sherds (26g) of transfer printed whitewares collected from (100) and (400) and two sherds (6g) of refined whitewares from (300) and (400). The rest of the assemblage is represented by three sherds (8g) of 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> century dark green glazed sandywares from (300) and (400) and one sherd (15g) of coarse, pale green glazed earthenware from (400). Apart from the medieval coarsewares, this material spans the post-medieval and modern periods and probably originates through the manuring of domestic refuse onto the fields.

### References

Shopland, N. 2005, *Archaeological finds, a guide to identification*, Tempus publishing Ltd.

Laing, L. 2003, *Pottery in Britain 4000BC to AD 1900*, Greenlight Publishing.

Context no.	Find no.	Pottery		Metal		Clay pipe		Flint	
		no.	wgt (g)	no.	wgt (g)	no.	wgt (g)	no.	wgt (g)
100	-	2	4	-	-	-	-		
300	-	5	283	-	-	-	-		
300	6	1	3	-	-	-	-		
400	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	5
400	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4
400	-	3	24	-	-	1	3		
400	3	1	2	-	-	-	-		
400	4	1	3	-	-	-	-		
400	5	-	-	1	75	-	-		
400	7	1	15	-	-	-	-		
<b>Totals</b>		<b>14</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>

**Table 1.** Finds by context

## 8. Discussion and conclusions

- 8.1. Monitoring of development excavations revealed only one archaeological feature comprising a possible post-medieval/modern collapsed field drain located in the compound area at Folly Farm. An area of presumed medieval ridge and furrow orientated north-east to south-west was observed as a slight earthwork towards the centre of the scheme, just outside the northern boundary of some possible medieval burgrave plots/fields fronting the High Street.
- 8.2. A small assemblage of 18 artefacts was recovered from the residual topsoil/ploughsoil left by the creation of the easement. This consisted of two ?prehistoric struck flints and 16 pottery sherds spanning the medieval, post-medieval and modern periods. Trenching for the pipeline revealed a simple sequence of topsoil/ploughsoil, overlying natural alluvial sediments.

## 9. Archive

- 9.1. The site archive is currently held at the offices of Context One Archaeological Services Ltd and consists of 2 monochrome photographs and 14 digital images in .jpg format, 2 *field summary* sheets, 4 COAS *pro-forma* field walking record sheets, 4 COAS *pro-forma* profile log sheets, 1 COAS *pro-forma* context record sheet, 2 sketch plans, fieldwork notes and a photographic register. Arrangements will be made to deposit the archive with the relevant receiving authority within 12 months following the submission of this report.

- 9.2. Copies of the Watching Brief report will be deposited with:

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

**Archaeology Service**  
Dorset County Council  
County Hall  
Colliton Park  
Dorchester  
DT1 1XJ

- 9.3. As part of our commitment to public archaeology, an e-report will be available to view online or download as an Adobe Acrobat™ file from the COAS website at [www.contextone.co.uk/dorset.htm](http://www.contextone.co.uk/dorset.htm) following entry onto the Dorset Historic Environment Record where it will become a publicly accessible document.

## 10. COAS acknowledgements

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

## 11. Bibliography

<b>Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Councils, 2004</b>	<i>Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan</i> (adopted July 2004)
<b>British Geological Survey, 2001</b>	Geological Map of Great Britain 1:625,000 (England & Wales south sheet) 4 <sup>th</sup> Edition: Solid Geology
<b>Department of the Environment, 1990</b>	<i>Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning</i> , London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office
<b>Department of the Environment, 1997</b>	<i>Planning Policy Guidance Note 1: General Policy and Principles</i> , London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office
<b>Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA), 1985 (rev. 2000)</b>	<i>Code of Conduct</i> , Reading: IFA
<b>Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA), 1990 (rev. 2000)</b>	<i>Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology</i> , Reading: IFA
<b>Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA), 1994 rev. 1999</b>	<i>Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief</i>
<b>Morris, J (ed)., 1983</b>	<i>Domesday Book - Dorset</i> , Phillimore, Chichester
<b>Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC), 2006</b>	<a href="http://www.magic.gov.uk">http://www.magic.gov.uk</a>
<b>Newman, J. and Pevsner, N. 2002</b>	<i>The Buildings of England – Dorset</i> , Yale University Press, Yale and London
<b>West Dorset District Council, 1998</b>	<i>West Dorset District Local Plan</i> (adopted 1998)

## Appendix 1. Context Summary

Context no.	Type	Description	Dimensions			Stratigraphical relationships
			Length	Width/Diameter	Thickness/Depth	
Field 1						
F100	Layer	Dark olive brown (2.5Y 3/3) silty clay. Contained very rare small rounded stones<1%, and modern brick, bone, glass, metal, slate, tile and wood.	-	-	0.25m	-
Field 2						
F200	Layer	Dark yellowish brown (10YR 3/4) clay. Contained occasional gravel, and modern brick, slate and tile.	-	-	0.20m	Covers (201)
Field 3						
F300	Layer	Dark olive brown (2.5Y 3/3) soft silty clay. Contained very rare small rounded stones<1%. Contained modern brick, bone and wood.	-	-	0.10m	Same as (100)
Field 4						
F400	Layer	Dark olive brown (2.5Y 3/3) silty clay. Contained very rare small rounded stones<1%. Contained modern brick, bone, glass, slate, tile and wood.	-	-	0.30m	Same as (100)
Profile 100						
100	Layer	Dark yellowish brown (10YR 3/4) firm to soft silt clay. Contained occasional angular gravel <0.05m.	-	-	0.20m	-
Profile 300						
300	Layer	Light brown (7.5YR 6/4) compact silt clay. Contained occasional angular gravel, brick and slate.	-	-	0.20m	-
Profile 1000						
1000	Layer	Brown (7.5YR 4.2) soft silt clay. Contained occasional angular gravel <0.1m and 20 <sup>th</sup> century rubbish.	-	-	0.10m	Above (1001)
1001	Layer	Yellowish brown (10YR 5/6) soft silt sand. Contained occasional angular gravel <0.1m, occasional corn brash <0.01m. Clay natural or alluvial sediment.	-	-	1.90m+	Below (1000)
Profile 1100						
1100	Layer	21 <sup>st</sup> century rubbish.	-	-	0.25m	Above (1101)



Context no.	Type	Description	Dimensions			Stratigraphical relationships
			Length	Width/Diameter	Thickness/Depth	
1101	Layer	Light olive brown (2.5Y 4/3) compact gravelly clay. Contained occasional coarse angular gravel <0.05m. Alluvial sediment.	-	-	0.25m	Above (1102); below (1100)
1102	Layer	Brown (10YR 5/3) compact silt clay. Contained moderate coarse angular gravel <0.05m. Alluvial sediment.	-	-	0.70m	Above (1103); below (1101)
1103	Layer	Light greenish grey (Gley2 7/1) firm silt clay. Alluvial sediment.	-	-	0.20m	Above (1104); below (1102)
1104	Layer	Dark bluish grey (Gley 2 4/1) firm silt clay. Contained occasional shells <0.05m. Very fine-grained silt. River bed?	-	-	0.50m+	Below (1103)
<b>Contexts</b>						
101	Structure	Medium sized sub-angular stone with a few bricks and tiles mostly set on edge in the cut, forming a structure at least 20m in length and 0.30m wide. Probably a stone lined or filled drain.	-	-	0.30m	Covered by (400)