

Archaeological Watching Brief
of land to the north of
**THE STREET (A368),
COMPTON MARTIN,
BATH & NORTH-EAST SOMERSET.**
for
Mr M. J. Weaver



Report No. 2162/2010



Bristol and Region Archaeological Services



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Archaeological Watching Brief
of land to the north of
THE STREET (A368),
COMPTON MARTIN,
BATH & NORTH-EAST SOMERSET.

Centred on
N.G.R. ST 5498 5713

Client: Mr M. J. Weaver

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<i>Date Issued:</i>	7 May 2010 

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Abbreviations

AD	Anno Domini	Km	Kilometre
aOD	Above Ordnance Datum	m	Metre
BaRAS	Bristol & Region Archaeological Services	NGR	National Grid Reference
BC	Before Christ	NMR	National Monuments Record
c.	Circa	OS	Ordnance Survey
HER	Historic Environment Record		

NOTE

Notwithstanding that Bristol and Region Archaeological Services have taken reasonable care to produce a comprehensive summary of the known and recorded archaeological evidence, no responsibility can be accepted for any omissions of fact or opinion, however caused.

May, 2010.

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SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was carried out during groundwork associated with the construction of a new agricultural storage building, a new access track and tree planting to form screening on farmland on the north side of The Street (A368) on the eastern edge of the village of Compton Martin in northern Somerset.

No features or deposits of archaeological significance were observed during the programme of intrusive groundwork.

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS) were commissioned by Mr M. J. Weaver, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundwork associated with the construction of a new agricultural storage building, a new access track and tree planting on farmland to the north of The Street (A368) on the eastern edge of the village of Compton Martin, northern Somerset (**Fig. 1; Cover**).
- 1.2 The watching brief was commissioned to comply with a condition of the planning consent (Planning Reference 09/01253/AGRA) granted by the local planning authority (Bath & North East Somerset Council) and in accordance with a *Written Scheme of Investigation* prepared by Tim Longman (Project Officer) of Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (Longman 2009).
- 1.3 The fieldwork was undertaken during two site visits on Tuesday 9th and Wednesday 10th March 2010 under the supervision of Tim Longman (Project Officer, BaRAS) who also compiled this report.
- 1.4 The project archive will be deposited with the Roman Baths Museum, Bath under the Accession Number BATRM 2009.20 and a copy of the report will be available to the National Monuments Record (NMR) in Swindon, which is maintained by English Heritage. The project has been entered in the Bath & North East Somerset Council Historic Environment Record (HER) and has also been allocated the following OASIS ID:bristola1-61677.

2. THE SITE

- 2.1 The site (centred on NGR ST 5498 5713) is situated on farmland (land parcel 9812) on the north side of The Street (A368), approximately 0.5km east of the centre of the village of Compton Martin, which lies approximately 17.5km south of Bristol city centre, 23km south-west of Bath city centre and 25km east of Weston-super-Mare town centre.
- 2.2 The study area (**Fig. 2**), which is not located within a Conservation Area, comprises three pasture fields the most southerly of which (former parcels 482/483) is bounded south by The Street (A368). Land parcel 9812 covers an area of some 6 hectares (15 acres). Site access from the main road is via a wide, gated vehicular entrance. The field boundaries within the study area are all composed of mature hedges, some with accompanying drainage ditches. The study area includes a detached two-storey dwelling (currently under construction) located in the south-west corner, which is set-back from The Street. The site is bounded south-west by Swan Croft (detached house and garden), and west and north by farmland. The site is bounded along its entire eastern boundary by a ditch and bank, surmounted by a mature hedge, on the line of a Roman road (SMR 5173), which also forms part of the parish boundary with West Harptree.
- 2.3 The topography of the site is that it slopes downhill from the south-west to the north-east towards Chew Valley Lake (which lies about 1km north-east of the study area), with a ground level of between 113m and 117m aOD next to The Street, then with a gradual fall to about 82m aOD near the northern end of the site.
- 2.4 The geology of the study area comprises white lias and blue lias (Lower Lias) of the Jurassic period (British Geological Survey 1962).

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The site is situated in the historic parish of Compton Martin, which formed part of the hundred of Chewton in the county of Somerset. Chewton hundred is not yet covered in the *Victoria History of the Counties of England*, but an early account of the hundred is given by the Revd. John Collinson (1791). However, this largely dwells on the descent of the ownership of the Manor of Compton Martin and provides little information upon the origins of the village itself.
- 3.2 There have been no modern historical studies of Compton Martin and no known amateur research of any relevance to the development of the village has been published. Comparatively little is known of prehistoric activity within the area and the Bath & North East Somerset Council HER records only one Romano-British site in the vicinity, the nearby Roman road (HER 5173).
- 3.3 At the time of the Domesday Survey of 1086 the manor of Compton Martin was one of several, including Blagdon and Chew Stoke, held by the Norman lord Serlo de Burcy. The respective entry in the Domesday volume for the county of Somerset (Morris 1980) reads:

'LAND OF SERLO DE BURCY

COMPTON (Martin). Everwacer held it before 1066; it paid tax for 5 hides. Land for 5 ploughs. In lordship 2 ploughs; 2 slaves; 2 hides & 3 virgates. 5 villagers, 6 cottagers and 5 smallholders with 4 ploughs & 1 hide & 3 virgates. Meadow 15 acres; pasture 1 league in length and 2 furlongs wide; woodland 11 furlongs long and 9 furlongs wide. 6 cattle; 7 pigs; 17 sheep; 9 goats. Value formerly 100s; now £4.'

- 3.4 Cartographic sources are limited, the earliest map or plan to show the site being the Parish Tithe Map of 1840 (SRO D/D/Rt 341). This indicates that the study area was then occupied by four fields.
- 3.5 There is no indication that the site has been subject to any prior archaeological investigation.

4. AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork complied with the methodology contained within the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (Longman 2009). The fieldwork also followed the *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1999, revised 2008) and *Management of Archaeological Projects* (MAP II) issued by English Heritage (EH 1991). The aim of the watching brief was to record any archaeological features or deposits revealed during the course of intrusive groundwork.
- 4.2 The watching brief involved monitoring a topsoil strip of the route of the new access track followed by observing ground reduction work across the area of the footprint of the proposed new agricultural building (**Fig. 3**).

5. RESULTS

- 5.1 All groundwork was carried out using a 180° JCB digger and a 360° mechanical slew excavator utilising toothed buckets and toothless grading buckets.
- 5.2 The site visits, in early March, initially involved monitoring mechanical ground reduction work (**Plate 1**) across the site of the proposed single-storey agricultural building. Up to 1.5m of dark brown topsoil, reddish brown clay subsoil and stiff natural blue/grey lias clay, which sealed the underlying lias bedrock, was mechanically removed across the building footprint.
- 5.3 The topsoil strip along the route of the access track (**Plates 2 & 3**) commenced later the same day. Beneath up to 0.3m of topsoil was the reddish brown clay subsoil.
- 5.4 All excavation work took place within the eastern half of the site, close to the line of the Roman road (HER 5173), but no features or deposits of archaeological significance were observed and no artefacts pre-dating the modern period were recovered during intrusive groundwork at the site.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The watching brief identified no archaeological remains within the areas affected by the intrusive groundwork.

7. PROJECT TEAM

- 7.1 The fieldwork was undertaken by Tim Longman MIfA (Project Officer, BaRAS) who also produced this report. The illustrations were prepared and the report compiled by Ann Linge (Design & Production Officer, BaRAS). The project was managed by Bruce Williams MIfA (Manager, BaRAS).

8. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES CONSULTED

Published Material

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| Morris, J., 1980 | <i>Domesday Book: A Survey of the Counties of England, volume 8 Somerset, edited by C. & F. Thorn</i> |

Unpublished Material

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| Longman, T., 2009 | <i>Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Watching Brief on Land Parcel 9812, The Street, Compton Martin, Somerset</i> (BaRAS Report; privately circulated report) |
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9. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Bristol and Region Archaeological Services would like to thank Mr. Mike Weaver (Weaver Demolition Limited) and his site staff for their assistance and co-operation. Thanks also to Richard Sermon (Archaeological Officer, Bath & North East Somerset Council) for his advice and to Victoria Griffin (Case Planning Officer, Bath & North East Somerset Council).

APPENDIX 1: Policy Statement

This report is the result of work carried out in the light of national and local authority policies.

NATIONAL POLICIES

Statutory protection for archaeology is enshrined in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979), amended by the National Heritage Act, 1983. Nationally important sites are listed in the Schedule of Ancient Monuments (SAM). Scheduled Monument consent is required for any work that would affect a SAM.

GOVERNMENT POLICY GUIDANCE

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (1994) and Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning (1990) have been replaced (23 March 2010) by Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (2010) which sets out the Government's national policies on conservation of the historic environment. Those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are called heritage assets.

Of particular relevance within the Planning Policy Statement are:

Policy HE6: Information Requirements for Applications for Consent Affecting Heritage Assets

HE6.1 Local planning authorities should require an applicant to provide a description of the significance of the heritage assets affected and the contribution of their setting to that significance. The level of detail should be proportionate to the importance of the heritage asset and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on the significance of the heritage asset. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets themselves should have been assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary given the application's impact. Where an application site includes, or is considered to have the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where desk-based research is insufficient to properly assess the interest, a field evaluation.

Policy HE9: Additional Policy Principles Guiding the Consideration of Applications for Consent Relating to Designated Heritage Assets

HE9.1 There should be a presumption in favour of the conservation of designated heritage assets and the more significant the designated heritage asset, the greater the presumption in favour of its conservation should be. Once lost, heritage assets cannot be replaced and their loss has a cultural, environmental, economic and social impact. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Loss affecting any designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, including scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I or II* listed buildings and grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

Policy HE12: Policy Principles Guiding the Recording of Information Related to Heritage Assets

HE12.3 Where the loss of the whole or a material part of a heritage asset's significance is justified, local planning authorities should require the developer to record and advance understanding of the significance of the heritage asset before it is lost, using planning conditions or obligations as appropriate. The extent of the requirement should be proportionate to the nature and level of the asset's significance. Developers should publish this evidence and deposit copies of the reports with the relevant historic environment record. Local planning authorities should require any archive generated to be deposited with a local museum or other public depository willing to receive it. Local planning authorities should impose planning conditions or obligations to ensure such work is carried out in a timely manner and that the completion of the exercise is properly secured.

Bath & North East Somerset Local Plan including waste and minerals policies Revised Deposit Draft 2003 as approved for used for Development Control purposes contains the following policies:

Policy BH.11 – Development which would adversely affect Scheduled Ancient Monuments or any other sites of national importance, and their settings and does not preserve such sites in situ will not be permitted.

Policy BH.12 – Development which would harm important archaeological remains or their settings outside the scope of Policy BH.11 will not be permitted unless the adverse impact of the development proposal on the remains can be mitigated.

Policy BH.13 – Development which adversely affects significant archaeological remains within Bath will not be permitted unless the preservation in situ of these remains can be achieved through a detailed design and construction scheme.

A draft <http://www.bristol-city.gov.uk/ccm/content/Environment-Planning/Planning/planning-policy-documents/planning-policy-documents.en?page=2 - internalSection2> Supplementary Planning Guidance, (SPG) '*Archaeology in Bath & North-East Somerset*' has recently (2004) been prepared. Its principal purpose when adopted is to supplement Policies BH.11, BH.12 & BH.13 of the existing and emerging Bath & North East Somerset Local Plan and should be read in conjunction with these.



Fig.1 Site location plan



Fig.2 Plan showing study area

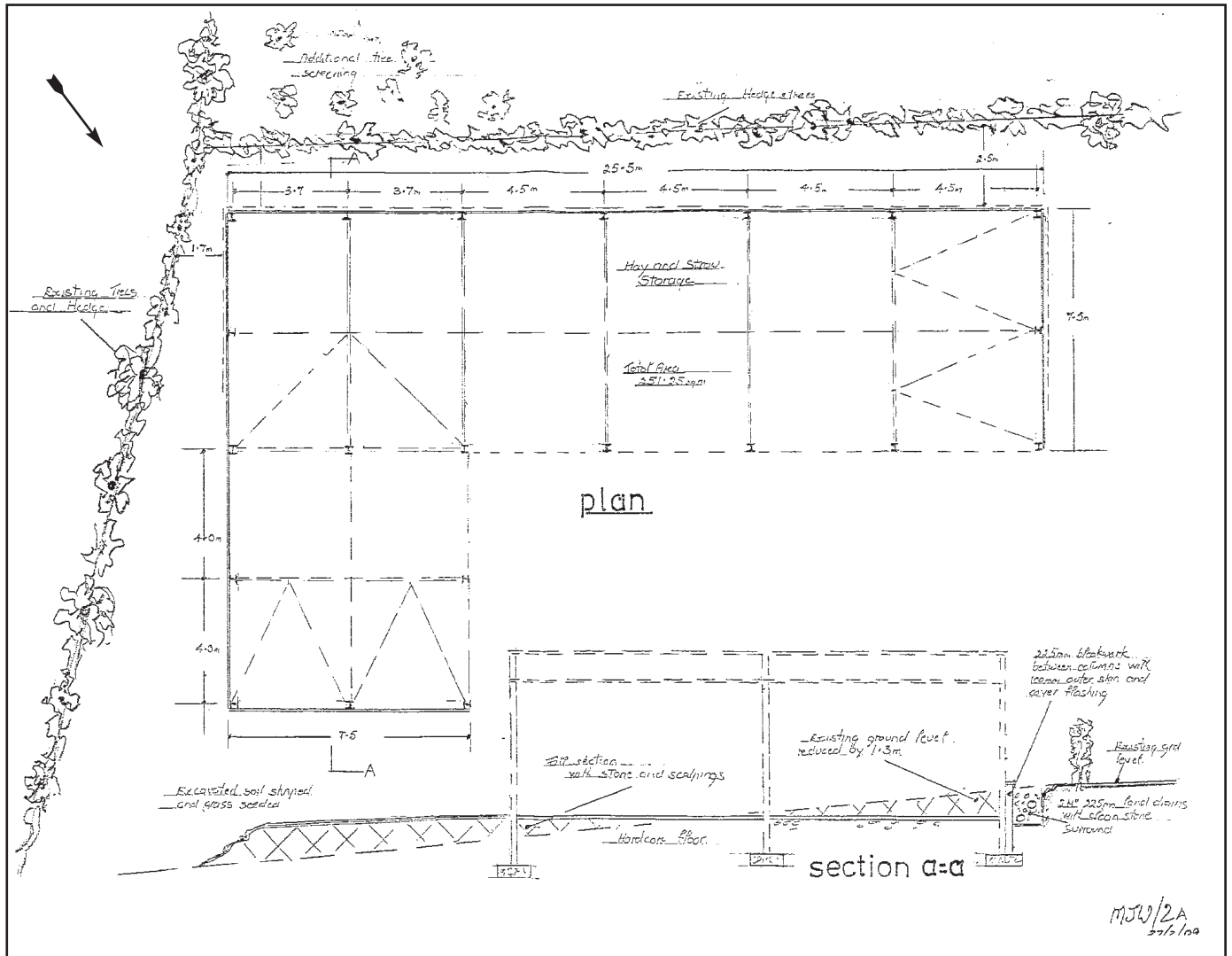


Fig.3 Plan and section of new agricultural building



Plate 1
Ground reduction work in progress, looking east, on the site of the proposed agricultural building



Plate 2
A view (looking west) of the topsoil strip on the route of the proposed access track. The hedge (left) forms northern boundary of field 482/483



Plate 3
Looking north along the line of the proposed access track. To the right (east) is the bank (agger) of the Roman road