

Archaeological Watching Brief
at
**HOLCOMBE GREEN, WESTON,
BATH, B&NES**
for
Somer Community Housing Trust



Report No. 2186/2010



Bristol and Region Archaeological Services



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Archaeological Watching Brief
at
**HOLCOMBE GREEN, WESTON,
BATH, B&NES**

Centred on
N.G.R. ST 7290 6670

Client: Somer Community Housing Trust
Agent: Lovell Partnerships Limited

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<i>Date Issued:</i>	1 October 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.

October, 2010.

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SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was carried out during groundworks associated with construction of 44 residential properties and associated services at the present Nos. 15-54 Holcombe Green, Upper Weston, Bath (application number 08/04139/FUL) for Somer Community Housing Trust.

The groundworks revealed a simple sequence of deposits of topsoil overlying subsoil and subsequently, archaeologically sterile natural clays, except in a few areas where the original ground surface had been buried below made-ground deposits and new topsoil had been layed/accumulated. A number of modern service trenches were also monitored.

No features or deposits of archaeological significance were observed during the intrusive groundworks and no archaeologically significant artefacts were recovered.

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS) were commissioned by Mr William Jewsbury of Lovell Partnerships Limited to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of 44 residential properties with associated services at Holcombe Green, Weston.
- 1.2 The watching brief was commissioned to comply with a condition of B&NES County Council planning consent (application number 08/04139/FUL) and in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS 2009).
- 1.3 The fieldwork was undertaken between March 18 and September 2, 2010 initially under the supervision of Simon Roper and later, Raymond K. Ducker, whom also compiled this report.
- 1.4 The project archive will be deposited with the Roman Baths Museum & Pump House under the Accession Number BATRM 2010.23, a copy of the report will be made available to the National Monuments Record maintained by English Heritage and the project will also be entered in the Bath and North East Somerset Historic Environment Record. The project has been entered in the OASIS Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations as: bristola1-74408.

2. THE SITE

- 2.1 The site (centred on NGR ST 7290 6670) lies on part of the south side and around the east end of Holcombe Green, just north of the centre of Weston village. The study area comprises approximately 0.725 hectares of ground divided into three unequal parcels.
- 2.2 The geology of the study area comprises White and Blue Lias (mainly limestone) and Liassic clay (British Geological Survey 1962).
- 2.3 The site lies within the boundary of the Bath World Heritage Site, but is not in a conservation area. There are no listed buildings adjoining or affected by the site and no Scheduled Ancient Monuments exist in the immediate vicinity.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Prior to the present project the study area formed part of an archaeological desk-based assessment (BaRAS 2008). The full historical and archaeological background to the site is contained within this document. Relevant details are summarised below:
- 3.2 The village of Weston is conjectured to lie on the route of a Roman Road. The settlement was a Saxon Manor documented as such from the 7th century. During the medieval period it was part of the Bath Abbey Estate. The evidence examined suggests that the assessment area comprised agricultural land during the medieval and post-medieval periods. Prior to the construction of Holcombe Green in the late 1940s the site belonged to a branch of the Leir family who have been prominent local landowners since the 17th century.
- 3.3 The report concludes that it is possible that features or deposits of archaeological interest are present within the burial environment of the assessment area. Features dating from the Romano-British and medieval periods have been located in the vicinity of Holcombe Green (BaRAS 2008).
- 3.4 Other than the desk-based assessment, no previous archaeological assessment has been carried out on the site or within close proximity to the site.
- 3.5 Evidence for Romano-British activity has been found in the vicinity with traces of occupation being found 60m to the south at Brookfield Park (B&NES SMR MBN 1674). In addition, medieval pottery sherds and a length of wall were found 150m to the south-east of the site in the area of Purlewent Drive in 1909.
- 3.6 Although Weston now forms the north-western part of the City of Bath, for most of its history it was a village in a rural parish more than 2kms from the city. During the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries however, the edges of urban Bath moved ever closer. In the late 1940s the area was developed for council housing of pre-fabricated reinforced concrete construction.

4. AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork complied with the methodology contained within the Written Scheme of Investigation (BaRAS 2009) and also followed the *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (1999). The aim of the watching brief was to record any archaeological features or deposits revealed during the course of intrusive groundworks.
- 4.2 The watching brief involved the monitoring of the mechanical excavation of reduced level Platforms and strip foundations for houses and the excavation of trenches for site services and a site boundary wall.

5. RESULTS

- 5.1 All groundworks were carried out using a 360° mechanical excavator using a toothless grading bucket. Groundworks monitored comprised excavation of reduced level platforms, standard strip foundations and trenches for site services.

Site Service Trenches

Service Trench 200 S1 to S4 (Fig. 2, Plates 1 and 2)

- 5.2 At least 50% of the excavation of this trench was monitored archaeologically. The trench, which was stepped, was up to 5m wide at the surface and up to 2.55m deep. A simple sequence of stratigraphy comprising topsoil (contexts 101/1002), subsoil (102/1004) and several different types of natural clay (103/1004, 104 & 105/1000) was recorded.
- 5.3 At the north end of the trench around manhole S1 a slightly different sequence was recorded. Up to 500mm of topsoil (101) sealed the fill of two modern cuts (cut/fills 121 and 122) containing drainage pipes to which the new services were to be joined. These pipe trenches were cut into an extensive deposit of yellowish-brown clay (120) to approximately 900mm maximum depth.
- 5.4 At the south end of the trench there was a layer of made-ground material below the topsoil (1002) and over the subsoil (1001) which comprised black sandy silt containing modern domestic rubbish including bottles (1003).

Manhole Chamber F3 (Fig. 2)

- 5.5 This manhole and some of the associated adjacent pipe trench were monitored but the surrounding stratigraphy comprised simply topsoil (106) immediately over archaeologically sterile yellowish-brown (116) and steel grey (119) natural clays. Further services in the vicinity were wholly excavated into natural clay, the thin topsoil having been heavily disturbed by groundworks prior to removal.

Reduced Level Excavation

House Block 15 - 18 Platform (Fig. 2)

- 5.6 This reduced-level platform was excavated to an average depth of 600mm and a maximum depth, on the north side, of 700mm. A thin topsoil (106) sealed a deposit of modern made-ground (107). At the base of excavation was archaeologically sterile clay (109) containing a number of unexcavated linear cuts for modern services. Later the platform was widened to the north and the depth of excavation increased to 1.10m in this area.

House Block 19 - 22 Platform (Fig. 2, Plate 3)

- 5.7 This platform was excavated to a maximum depth of 1m. A thin topsoil (106) sealed a made-ground deposit (107) that decreased in depth from 900mm. Below this were deposits of buried topsoil (108) subsoil (109) and natural clays (contexts 110, 111 & 112).

House Block 29 - 34 (Fig. 2, Plate 4)

- 5.8 This block was excavated to a maximum of approximately 1.4m wholly into deposits of archaeologically sterile yellow-brown (124) and steel grey clays (125). No features, deposits, or finds of archaeological significance were observed during this work.

House Block 35 - 40 Platform (Fig. 2)

- 5.9 This platform was excavated to a maximum depth of 1m. A thin topsoil, less than 100mm thick (101) sealed an equally thin subsoil (102) above the uppermost deposits of archaeologically sterile clay (contexts 103 & 104).

House Block 41 - 44 Platform (Fig. 2, Plate 7)

- 5.10 The footings for this block were excavated to a maximum depth of 2.01m. Exposed deposits comprised 250mm of disturbed topsoil (131) over 840mm of yellow/brown clay (132) over steel grey alluvial clay (133) which was excavated to a maximum depth of 920mm.

Foundation Trenches,

House Block 7 – 10 Fig. 2, Plate 5)

- 5.11 The footings for this block were excavated to between 1.50 and 2m deep. The uppermost 300mm comprised modern pile-mat material (126) below which was up to 550mm of mixed made-ground material (127) on the north side of the platform and a buried topsoil (128) on the south side of the platform. Below the made-ground material were archaeologically sterile deposits of greyish green (130) and yellow/brown (129) clay.

Boundary Wall Footings (Fig. 2, Plate 6)

- 5.12 A length of foundation trench for a boundary wall along the west and south sides of the central parcel of land was monitored during part of the excavation. The trench was up to 2.10m deep and exposed in section a simple sequence of deposits. A very modern dump of redeposited topsoil and rubble (123) formed the uppermost deposit after which were modern topsoil (118), redeposited clay (117), a thin buried topsoil (114) and a subsoil (115). At the base of the trench were deposits of yellow/yellowish-brown clay (116) and blue/steel grey possibly alluvial clay (119).
- 5.13 No features or deposits of archaeological significance were observed and no artefacts predating the modern period were recovered during intrusive groundworks at the site.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 During the watching brief recorded deposits comprised topsoil sealing subsoil and subsequent archaeologically sterile clays. A similar sequence but with topsoil and made-ground deposits sealed the original ground surface.
- 6.2 The watching brief identified no archaeological remains within the area of the intrusive groundworks. This may indicate that structural remains related to the Romano-British or medieval sites and find-spots, specifically those at Brookfield Park and Perwent Drive, did not extend into the application area or that they may have been truncated by previous development.

7. PROJECT TEAM

- 7.1 The fieldwork was undertaken initially by Simon Roper but later by R. K. Ducker who also produced this report. The illustrations were prepared and the report compiled by Ann Linge. The archive was compiled and prepared for deposition by R. K. Ducker. The project was managed by Bruce Williams.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES CONSULTED

Published Works

IFA 1999 *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*
(Institute of Field Archaeologists)

Maps

British Geological Survey 1:63,360 Bristol District, *Geological Survey of England and Wales, Solid and Drift* 1962

Unpublished Material

BaRAS 2008 *Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment of land at Holcombe Green, Weston, Bath* (unpublished client report by A King)

BaRAS 2009 *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Watching Brief at Holcombe Green, Upper Weston, Bath* (unpublished client report by J Bryant)

9. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

BaRAS would like to thank Mr Lewis Coulson and William Jewsbury of Lovell Partnerships Limited for their assistance and co-operation during the watching brief.

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.

LOCAL POLICY

Bath & North East Somerset Local Plan including waste and minerals policies Revised Deposit Draft 2003 as approved for use 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.

APPENDIX 2: Context Descriptions

Context No.	Description
100	Unstratified finds number
101	Topsoil in area of Service Trench 200. Mid-dark brown, clayey silt averages 200mm thick but reaches up to 500mm thick
102	Subsoil in area of Service Trench 200. Soft – firm, pale brown, clayey silt, up to 200mm thick
103	Strong-brown natural clay in Service Trench 200. Firm, strong brown clay. Up to 500mm thick
104	Olive, greenish grey clay in Service Trench 200. Stiff olive green/grey clay. Up to 1.20m thick in section of drainage trench (S1 – S4)
105	Steel grey plastic clay in Service Trench 200. Plastic clay up to 500mm thick
106	Topsoil in the area of new house platform, Block 19-22. Mid-dark brown clayey silt. Soft, mid-dark brown clayey silt on Plot 19-22 up to 200mm thick
107	Mixed made-ground deposit below (106). Redeposited yellow/brown clay with abundant inclusions of demolition rubble, including Oolitic Limestone, brick and ceramic roof Tile. Up to 1m thick
108	Original topsoil buried by (107). Mid-dark brown clayey silt < 100mm thick
109	Subsoil deposit of pale brown clayey silt. Patchy < 100mm thick
110	Yellow/brown natural clay below deposits (109) and (111) exposed in plan only
111	Greyish-green clay interbedded with deposits (110) and (112) exposed in plan only
112	Strong brown clay interbedded with deposits (110) and (111) exposed in plan only
113	Modern service pipe trench cut and fill
114	Topsoil in boundary wall trench, mid – dark brown, firm clayey silt, up to 100mm thick
115	Subsoil below (114) firm strong brown silty clay up to 200mm thick
116	Natural yellow/brown clay below (115) firm – stiff, yellow brown clay excavated to 1.10 depth
117	Made-ground deposit of mixed topsoil and yellow/brown clay
118	Topsoil, below redeposited material (123). Mid – dark brown, soft clayey silt, less than 75mm thick
119	Stiff greyish-green clay in boundary wall foundations, up to 700mm thick
120	Stiff yellow/brown clay in Service Trench 200 area, excavated to 1.10m depth
121	Modern drainpipe cut and fill. Approximately 1.1m wide x 600mm deep
122	Modern drainpipe cut and fill. Approximately 900mm deep x 500mm wide
123	Modern redeposited topsoil – same as 118, up to 500mm thick
124	Yellow-brown clay excavated from platform for flats 29 – 34, up to 700mm thick
125	Steel grey clay excavated from platform for flats 29 – 34, approximately 300mm of this deposit removed
126	Modern pile-mat material, House Block 7 – 10 up to 300mm thick
127	Made-ground layer below (126). Redeposited yellow/brown clay w/ abundant inclusions of demolition rubble, including Oolitic Limestone, brick and ceramic roof tile. House Block 7 - 10
128	Buried topsoil deposit, mid-dark brown clayey silt up to 200mm thick. House Block 7 - 10
129	Stiff yellow/brown clay excavated in footings for House Block 7 – 10, excavated to approximately 600mm depth
130	Stiff greyish-green clay deposit at base of foundation trenches in House Block 7 – 10. Excavated to approximately 600mm depth
131	Disturbed modern topsoil, mid-dark brown, clayey silt averages 250mm thick. As recorded in House Block 41 - 44
132	Stiff, archaeologically sterile yellow/yellowish-brown clay excavated to 840mm deep in House Block 41 - 44
133	Dark greyish blue, stiff, archaeologically sterile, alluvial clay excavated to a maximum of 920mm deep. Separated from Context 132 above by a seam of limestone
1000	Dark greyish blue/steel grey stiff, archaeologically sterile, alluvial clay recorded in initial excavations in Service trench 200, same as 105
1001	Light brown sandy clay subsoil in Service trench 200, same as 102
1002	Topsoil in area of Service Trench 200. Mid-dark brown, clayey silt averages 200mm thick but reaches up to 500mm thick. Same as 101
1003	Black sandy silt made-ground deposit with abundant rubbish inclusions including whole bottles
1004	Strong-brown natural clay in Service Trench 200. Firm, strong brown clay. Up to 500mm thick. Same as 103
200	Service Trench number for excavations between manholes S1 & S4

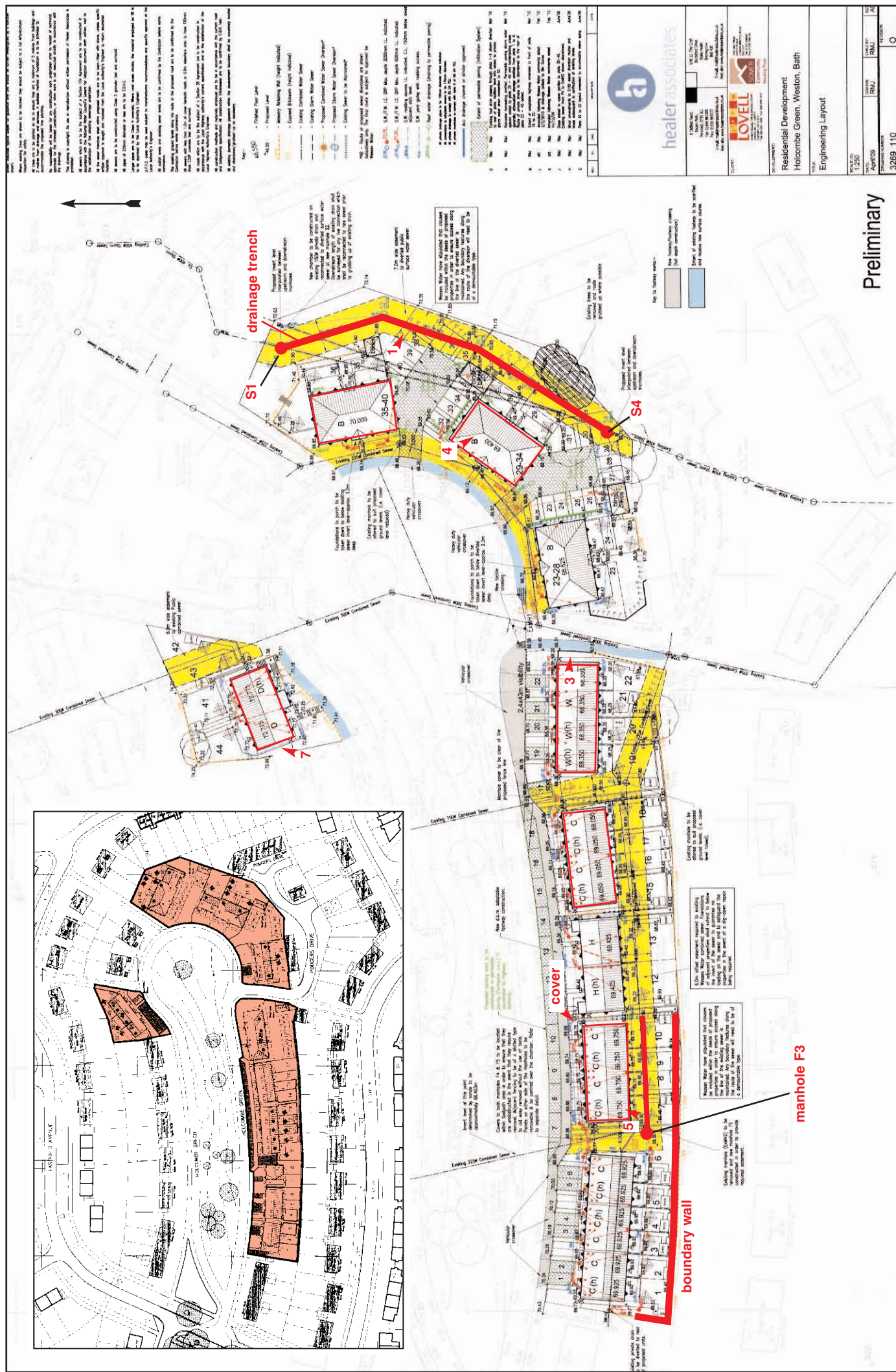


Fig.2 Plan showing study area in detail, and areas of archaeological monitoring, not to scale



Plate 1
Drainage pipe trench
between manholes S2
and S3, looking north-
east



Plate 2
Excavation to connect
new drainage pipe with
existing services and
install manhole access
chambers, looking north-
north-east, scale 1m



Plate 3
Excavation of reduced
level platform for House
Block 19-22, looking
east, scale 1m



Plate 4
Completed platform
for Housing Block 29-
34, scale 1m, looking
SE



Plate 5
Foundation trench for
Housing Block 7-10,
looking NNE



Plate 6
Foundation trench for
boundary wall adjacent to
Houses 1-22, looking W,
scale 1m



Plate 7
Excavation of footings
for Housing Block 41-
44, scale 1m, looking
N