Archaeological evaluation at Sydney Gardens, Bath

Worcestershire Archaeology

for RPS Consulting

January 2020

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SYDNEY GARDENS, BATH, BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

Archaeological evaluation report

Worcestershire Archaeology
Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service
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SITE INFORMATION

Site name:	Sydney Gardens, Bath
Local planning authority:	Bath and North East Somerset
Central NGR:	ST 75805 65327
Commissioning client:	RPS Consulting
Client project reference:	JAC25645
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APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF PROJECT ARCHIVE

Archaeological evaluation at Sydney Gardens, Bath, Bath and North East Somerset

By Tim Cornah

With contributions by C Jane Evans

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Sydney Gardens, Bath, Bath and North East Somerset (NGR ST 75805 65327) by Worcestershire Archaeology. It was commissioned by RPS Consulting on behalf of Bath and North East Somerset Council

Sydney Gardens are situated in Bathwick, a residential area to the north-east of the city centre of Bath. They are the only surviving eighteenth century pleasure gardens in the country and are included in the Historic England Register of Parks and Gardens. The Gardens are crossed by the Kennet and Avon Canal and Great Western Railway and there are a number of individually listed structures within the Gardens which are also within the Bath World Heritage Site and the designated Bath City Centre Conservation Area.

The Roman Road from Bathwick to Poole Harbour aligns largely with the line of the current Pulteney Road / Darlington Street, directly adjacent to the south-west of Sydney Gardens. The east of the site is part of an area identified in the HER as a Roman cemetery postulated to be present in this area due to the frequency of coffin finds.

A grant has been approved for improvements to the gardens for which planning permission was granted, subject to conditions including a programme of archaeological works. An Archaeological Management Plan has been produced which sets out various stages of archaeological mitigation of which this exercise forms a part.

Three test pits were hand-excavated in the area of a former tennis court, primarily to interrogate previously identified geophysical anomalies. The clearest of these related to a trackway or “ride” around the former pleasure gardens as laid out in the 1790s.

A packed stone surface in one test pit is thought likely to be remains of the ride and the origin of the geophysical anomaly. In another test pit, a collapsed stone structure was recorded overlying a greenish clay-silt deposit from which Roman pottery was recovered. Roman pottery was also recovered from a layer of soil overlying the stones.

Report

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

Archaeological test pitting was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in December 2019 at Sydney Gardens, Bath, Bath and North East Somerset (NGR ST 75805 65327). The project was commissioned by RPS Consulting on behalf of Bath and North East Somerset Council.

The test pitting comprised of three hand excavated pits within the area of a former tennis court on the western side of the gardens. They were undertaken ahead of improvements to the Gardens following a successful heritage Lottery Fund bid. Planning permission was granted for the works, which are described as follows:-

Works at Sydney Gardens Public Park including erection of cafe kiosk with accessible toilets following demolition of existing Bowls Pavilion. Restoration of Listed Ladies and Gents toilets to be used for park related uses and events. Relocation of listed ladies' toilets. Conservation works to the grade 2 listed Loggia and Minerva's Temple. Conversion of Bothy and modern toilets to community / park related activity use. Consolidation of the lower half of the derelict structure in the current depot area and associated site wide repairs and landscape works.

Permission was granted subject to conditions including Condition 4 which requires an archaeological evaluation to be undertaken.

An Archaeological Management Plan was produced by RPS Consulting (2019) which sets out a methodology for archaeological works including an evaluation element to which this project conforms. The watching brief also conforms to the industry guidelines and standards set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists in the *Standard and guidance: for archaeological field evaluation (CIfA 2014).*

1.2 Site location, topography and geology

Sydney Gardens are situated in Bathwick, a residential area to the north-east of the city centre of Bath. The Site is underlain by Charmouth Mudstone Formation while superficial River Terrace Deposits, Sand and Gravel are present in the western part of the site. No superficial geology is recorded for the eastern half of the Site.

The area of the of the former tennis court is flat, with the appearance of having been cut into the pre-existing topography on the northern, eastern and southern sides.

2 Archaeological and historical background

An archaeological and historical background to the site is presented in the Archaeological Management Plan (RPS Consulting 2019). The section below is a summarised from this report.

There are three artefacts of Neolithic (61463) to Bronze Age dates (61464 and 61465) are mapped approximately 290 m to the south-east of Sydney Gardens, but no exact provenance is known for any of these.

A series of trial trenches were dug in the grounds of three buildings proposed for redevelopment approximately 200m to the north-west of Sydney Gardens in July 2009 (65369). The evaluation revealed stratified early Roman deposits in all three trenches dug beneath post-medieval made ground deposits. A smaller amount of late Iron Age pottery suggests earlier occupation.

The Roman Road Bathwick to Poole Harbour (60189) aligns largely with the line of the later Pultney Road / Darlington Street directly adjacent to the south-west of Sydney Gardens.

The east of the Site is part of an area identified in the HER as a Roman cemetery (61413 – “Sydney Gardens and Bathwick Roman Cemetery”), postulated to be present in this area due to the frequency of coffin finds. The principal areas for burial were to the north, east and west of the city, notably Sydney Gardens, Bathwick, Sion Hill, Julian Road and Locksbrook. This cemetery is likely part of the larger "Bathwick Roman Cemetery" (62029).

In 1861 a stone coffin was found at Sydney Gardens, with a cover, square at both ends, containing the skeleton of a female about 50 years old (66468). In addition, two Roman stone coffins were also found here in 1864 (66467). There is also a reference to two Roman stone coffins found in 1866, one of which contained a head of a horse. It is not clear whether this source is referring to the same finds or to two additional coffins. They are recorded as having been discovered in a pit of gravel, around 3 m deep.

Later, in 1914, whilst digging for gravel close to the tennis courts a Roman stone coffin was found at Sydney Gardens (66469). The coffin was Oolite and only broken bones were visible. It was sent to the Bath Museum.

The “Bathwick Roman Cemetery” (62029) does not lie along a known road, but a sufficient number of burials and tombstones have been discovered over the years to provide circumstantial evidence that a road did exist and to justify classifying the group as a cemetery. They stretch in a south easterly direction from the vicinity of the present Cleveland Bridge, further evidence for there having been a river crossing at about this point in the Roman period and for the position of the putative early fort.

The Medieval village of Bathwick is noted on 1727 survey of Bathwick Manor (60534), and is identified in the Avon Historic Landscape Characterisation Survey. The Medieval settlement of Bathwick (Wica) is first mentioned in Domesday. The Bathwick Parish Church (60533), known to have existed in the Medieval village of Bathwick is shown on the 1727 survey of Bathwick Manor at the north end of the village. The centre of the village seems to have close to the river, near to St John's Church. Elements of the village seem to have survived the redesigning of the area in the eighteenth century, but were eventually demolished in the early nineteenth century.

It seems likely that Sydney Gardens was mostly in agricultural use until it was leased as ground for Pleasure Gardens in 1794. Mapping of 1795 and 1808 shows the layout of the gardens, though the area of the test pitted within this project was outside the gardens, within the “ride”, a carriage track around its exterior.

A geophysical survey of the tennis court area (SUMO 2019) identified some anomalies including a possible structure at the northern limit, though without obvious form.

3 Project aims

The aims of the test pits was to observe and record archaeological deposits, and to determine their extent, state of preservation, date and type, as far as reasonably possible.

Specifically the project aimed to test a potential structure identified on the geophysical survey.

4 Project methodology

An Archaeological Management Plan was prepared by RPS Consulting. Fieldwork was undertaken on 16th and 17th December 2019.

Three broadly 1m square test pits were hand excavated. The location of the pits are indicated in Figure 2.

The test pits were located in order to investigate the origin of a geophysical anomaly. A single trench was originally intended but, due to the presence of services, it was agreed with RPS Consulting and the Curator that three hand dug test pits should be substituted.

Excavation of the pits was undertaken by hand. Clean surfaces were inspected and selected deposits were excavated to retrieve artefactual material and environmental samples, as well as to determine their nature. Deposits were recorded according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012) and trench and feature locations were surveyed using a differential GPS with an accuracy limit set at <0.04m. On completion of the excavation, trenches were reinstated by replacing the excavated material.

All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced. Analysis was undertaken through a combination of structural and artefactual evidence, allied to the information derived from other sources.

The project archive is currently held at the offices of Worcestershire Archaeology. Subject to the agreement of the landowner it is anticipated that it will be deposited at an appropriate Museum.

5 Archaeological results

5.1 Introduction

The features recorded in the test pits are shown in Figures 1 to 3 and Plate 1 to Plate 4.

5.2 Test pit descriptions

5.2.1 Test Pit 1

The features of the test pit were overlain by topsoil and made ground deposits (100-101) to a depth of 0.40m, see table below for descriptions. Below these were six horizontally laid layers (102-107), of which (102, 104 and 107) appeared to be compacted laid surfaces made of small stone within a small amount of bonding matrix, probably concrete. Layers (103, 105 and 106) did not shown any obvious sign of having been compacted on their upper side, so were probably bedding layers below the surfaces. The surfaces were consistent with a track or road, no dateable evidence was recovered from within them.

Test Pit 1 deposit descriptions table

Length: 1m Width: 1m Depth: 0.65m

Context	Interpretation	Max depth (m)	Depth from ground surface (m)	Description and comments
100	Topsoil	0.25m	0.00-0.20m	Dark greyish friable clayey silt
101	Made ground layer	0.26m	0.20-0.40m	Moderately compact mid greyish brown clayey silt
102	Metalled surface layer	0.10m	0.34-0.43m	Compacted yellow white stone within a concrete? matrix
103	Bedding layer	0.13m	0.42-0.55m	Compact yellow white stone layer
104	Metalled surface layer	0.10m	0.45-0.55m	Compact grey stone surface
105	Layer	0.05m	0.55-0.60m	Loose dark greyish black fine silt
106	Layer	0.05m	0.60-0.65m	Compacted dark grey black stone and clinker layer
107	Metalled surface	unknown	0.65m	Compacted layer of orangey gravels. Limit of excavation

5.2.2 Test Pit 2

As with Test Pit 1, the top layers consisted of turf and topsoil, with two made ground layers below this (200, 201 and 202). These contained modern material, suggesting that they were 19th to 20th century in date and likely to relate to the construction of the tennis court.

Below (202) was a layer of possible former plough soil (203). This contained some charcoal and material culture, including pottery of Roman date. This sealed a layer of limestone pieces (204) which were individually up to 0.20m in length and mostly laid fairly flat. The layer had the appearance of rubble rather than a laid surface. Some, though not all, of the stones were of a pinkish colour which suggested that they had been heat affected.

Below the stone layer was deposit (205) which consisted of a greenish brown clay silt and contained some material of Roman date. The greenish hue of this deposit may be indicative of cess material, possibly suggesting a domestic context. The deposit was not excavated.

Test Pit 2 deposit descriptions table

Length: 1m Width: 1m Depth:

Context	Interpretation	Max depth (m)	Depth from ground surface (m)	Description and comments
200	Turf and topsoil	0.14m	0.00-0.14m	Dark grey brown clayey silt with frequent rooting
201	Made ground deposit	0.34m	0.14-0.48m	Mixed mid yellowish grey brown silty clay with frequent rooting, limestone fragments and modern material
202	Made ground deposit	0.15m	0.48-0.63m	Yellow grey sandy clay with fairly-high lime content
203	Possible former plough soil layer	0.28m	0.63-0.91m	Dark greyish brown clayey silt with occasional small sub-angular stones, charcoal and Roman pottery
204	Rubble stone spread, collapsed structure?	0.09m	0.82-0.91m	Layer of limestone rubble, with stones up to 0.20m in length, some pink through heat affection
205	Layer. Possibly a domestic layer?	unknown	0.91m	Mid greenish brown clayey silt with some charcoal and pottery. Limit of excavation

5.2.3 Test Pit 3

The test pit was sealed with a layer of turf and topsoil (300), immediately exposing (306) the fill of modern service cut [307], though it was not initially recognised as such. [307] cut a modern made ground deposit (301), which in turn sealed (302), the fill of a further modern service cut [303]. (302) contained residual material of both Roman and medieval date.

Service cut [303] truncated deposit (304), which is likely to have been a former plough soil as also seen within Test Pit 2. This in turn sealed a soft yellow orange silty clay deposit (305) which may have been a natural deposit, though contained some darker inclusions so this interpretation was unlikely.

Test Pit 3 deposit descriptions table

Length: 1.24m Width: 1m Depth: 0.90m

Context	Interpretation	Max depth (m)	Depth from ground surface (m)	Description and comments
300	Turf and topsoil	0.24m	0.00-0.24m	Dark grey brown clayey silt with frequent rooting
301	Made ground deposit	0.28m	0.24-0.52m	Dark grey black crushed tarmac and clinker
302	Fill of 303	0.40m	0.50-0.90m	Mid orangey brown silty clay with occasional limestone pebbles and 19th c and later material culture
303	Modern service cut	0.40m	0.50-0.90m	E-W aligned cut for likely 20th century service cut
304	Possible former plough soil layer	0.42m	0.48-0.90m	Dark greyish brown clayey silt with occasional small sub-angular stones, probably the same as 203
305	Possible natural	Unknown	0.90m	Soft yellow orange silty clay. Possibly the natural substrate. Not excavated.
306	Fill of 307	0.65m	0.24-0.90m	Soft and loose light grey clinker material
307	Modern service cut	0.65m	0.24-0.90m	NE-SW aligned modern service cut. Cuts 301.

6 Artefactual evidence

By C Jane Evans

6.1 Introduction

The artefact report conforms to standards and guidance issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014), as well as further guidance on pottery analysis, archive creation and museum deposition created by various pottery study groups (PCRG/SGRP/MPRG 2016), the Archaeological Archives Forum (AAF 2011), and the Society of Museum Archaeologists (SMA 1993).

6.2 Aims

Analysis was guided by the aims defined in the Archaeological Management Plan, i.e. to assess the overall presence and survival of the main kinds of artefactual evidence, and their condition, given the nature of the deposits encountered.

6.3 Methodology

6.3.1 Recovery policy

Artefacts were recovered according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012), and with reference to the Archaeological Management Plan (2.32). All artefacts collected in the field were recovered by hand; no finds from environmental samples are included.

6.3.2 Method of analysis

All finds were examined. They were identified, quantified and dated to period. A *terminus post quem* date was produced for each stratified context (Table 3). This date was used for determining the broad date of phases defined for the site. All information was recorded on a Microsoft Access 2007 database, with tables generated using Microsoft Excel.

The pottery was examined by eye and recorded with reference to the fabric reference series maintained by Worcestershire Archaeology and published online (WAAS 2017). Where possible, fabrics are cross referenced with the National Roman Fabric Reference Series (Tomber and Dore 1998 and fabrics described from previous excavations in Bath (Bidwell and Croom 1999, 67-79; Brown, 34-49). However, the main focus was on dating and characterising the assemblage rather than undertaking detailed fabric identification.

6.3.3 Discard policy

Artefacts from topsoil and subsoil and unstratified contexts will normally be noted but not retained, unless they are of intrinsic interest (e.g. worked flint or flint debitage, featured pottery sherds, and other potential 'registered artefacts'). Large assemblages of post-medieval or modern material, unless there is some special reason to retain (such as local production), may be noted and not retained, or, if appropriate, a representative sample will be retained. Discard of finds from post-medieval and earlier deposits will only be instituted with reference to museum collection policy and/or with agreement of the local museum.

6.4 Results

The assemblage is summarised in Tables 1-3. Finds were recovered from all three test pits, from eight stratified contexts. The artefacts are summarised by context, with associated dating, in Table 3. The finds ranged in date from the Roman period to the post-medieval and modern periods and included pottery, ceramic building material, glass, flower pot fragments. The assemblage was too small to draw any meaningful conclusions about site formation, using pottery as an index of artefact condition. The Roman pottery had an average sherd weight of *c*10g but was quite abraded, suggesting it may have been residual, particularly earlier fabrics such as the samian (Table 2). There was no evidence for prehistoric activity, as the single flint recovered was unworked.

period	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight(g)
Roman	ceramic	earthenware	pot	1	5
	ceramic	earthenware	pot	14	147
	ceramic	fired clay	tegula	1	212
medieval	ceramic	earthenware	pot	1	20
post-medieval	ceramic	earthenware	pot	2	11
	ceramic	fired clay	clay pipe	4	11
	glass	green	fragment	2	37
post-medieval/modern	ceramic	fired clay	brick	2	314
	ceramic	earthenware	flower pot	8	108
	ceramic	fired clay	clay pipe	2	3

	ceramic	fired clay	roof tile	2	131
	ceramic	fired clay	sewage pipe	6	720
	metal	iron	nail	1	102
	stone	slate	roof tile?	1	18
modern	ceramic	earthenware	pot	3	7
	glass	green	bottle	3	76
	glass	green	fragment	1	1
	organic	cork	stopper	1	5
	organic	shell	button	1	3
	plastic		object	1	3
undated	bone	animal bone	fragment	8	79
	metal	iron	fragment	1	60
	organic	shell	oyster shell	1	40
	stone	flint	unworked fragment	1	6

Table 1: Quantification of site assemblage

Broad period	Fabric common name (NRFRC code)	Worcestershire fabric code	count	weight(g)	average weight
Romano-British	Severn Valley ware	12	1	6	6
	Fine sandy grey ware	14	3	32	11
	Coarse sandy grey ware	15	3	37	12
	Black-burnished ware, type 1 (DOR BB1)	22	4	54	14
	Central Gaulish samian ware	43.2	3	19	6
	New Forest ware (NFO CC)	115	1	4	4
Medieval	Miscellaneous medieval wares	99	1	20	20
Post-medieval	Tin-glazed ware	82	2	11	6
	Creamware	84	1	3	3
Modern	Modern china	85	2	4	2

total	21	190	9

Table 2: Quantification of the pottery by fabric

context	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight(g)	start date	end date	Context *tpq*
101	bone	animal bone	fragment	1	3			1900-2000
	ceramic	earthenware	flower pot	2	22	1700	1970	
	ceramic	earthenware	pot	1	2	1800	2000	
	ceramic	fired clay	clay pipe	2	3			
	glass	green	fragment	1	1	1900	2000	
	metal	iron	fragment	1	60			
	plastic		object	1	3	1900	2000	
201	bone	animal bone	fragment	2	6			1850-2000
	ceramic	earthenware	flower pot	4	52	1700	1970	
	ceramic	earthenware	pot	1	8	1590	1730	
	ceramic	fired clay	brick	2	314	1600	1900	
	ceramic	fired clay	roof tile	2	131	1400	1799	
	ceramic	fired clay	sewer pipe	6	720	1850	2000	
	glass	green	fragment	2	37	1750	1900	
	metal	iron	nail	1	102	1700	2000	
202	bone	animal bone	fragment	1	5			120-410+
	ceramic	earthenware	pot	1	6	43	410+	
	ceramic	earthenware	pot	1	17	120	410+	
	stone	slate	roof tile?	1	18			
203	bone	animal bone	fragment	2	5			270-340
	ceramic	earthenware	pot	1	26	43	410+	
	ceramic	earthenware	pot	1	25	120	199	
	ceramic	earthenware	pot	3	19	100	199	
	ceramic	earthenware	pot	1	4	270	340	

	organic	shell	oyster shell	1	40			
204	ceramic	fired clay	tegula	1	212	160	260	160-260
205	bone	animal bone	fragment	1	51			43-410+
	ceramic	earthenware	pot	3	32	43	410+	
	ceramic	earthenware	pot	1	5	43	410+	
	stone	flint	unworked fragment	1	6			
301	ceramic	earthenware	flower pot	1	25	1700	1970	1820-2000
	ceramic	earthenware	pot	1	2	1800	2000	
	glass	green	bottle	3	76	1820	1900	
	organic	cork	stopper	1	5	1800	2000	
	organic	shell	button	1	3	1800	1950	
302	bone	animal bone	fragment	1	9			1760-1970
	ceramic	earthenware	flower pot	1	9	1700	1970	
	ceramic	earthenware	pot	1	6	43	410+	
	ceramic	earthenware	pot	2	12	120	410+	
	ceramic	earthenware	pot	1	3	1590	1730	
	ceramic	earthenware	pot	1	3	1760	1790	
	ceramic	earthenware	pot	1	20	12th	14th	
	ceramic	fired clay	clay pipe	4	11	1600	1700	

Table 3: Finds dating by context

6.4.1 Summary of artefacts by period

Roman

Most of the Roman finds came from Test Pit 2 (Table 3). Roman pottery was recovered from fills 202, 203 and 204. Where the pottery could be more reliably dated, it indicated activity from the 2nd century continuing into the 3rd and perhaps later. Fabrics included Central Gaulish samian dating to the 2nd century; a decorated body sherd, from a Drag 29 or Drag 37 bowl, and a rim, possibly from a cup, (Webster 1996, 67 Oswald and Price form LV, 13); both from fill 203. Sherds of South-East Dorset Black-burnished ware were recovered from fills 202 and 203. The former, from a bowl or jar, was not closely datable but indicated a tpq of c AD 120. The latter was from a jar with acute cross-hatch burnished decoration, indicating a 2nd century date. The only other diagnostic sherd also came from fill 203: the rim from a beaker with a fluted rim, similar to New Forest ware form type 27 (Fulford 1975, fig 12.1-3), dated to c AD 270-340. The other Roman sherds from Test Pit 2 were undiagnostic, but included a fine oxidised ware, similar to a Severn Valley ware fabric, and a range of fine and coarse grey wares. Test pit 2 also produced a fragment of tegula, from fill 204. The tegula had a cutaway

similar to Warry's type C (Warry 2006, 63, fig 3.13), suggesting a date for production between 160-260. Given that all finds from fill 203, a possible former plough soil, date to the Roman period, it seems likely that the fragments of oyster shell and animal bone are contemporary. The dating of associated finds in fill 202, a made ground deposit, is less certain; this contained a fragment of slate roof tile which is likely to be post-medieval or later, though is not in itself datable.

Three Roman sherds were recovered from Test Pit 3: a very fragmentary rim from a BB1 jar and an undiagnostic body sherd in a coarse sandy grey ware. Both came from a modern service cut (303, fill 302) and are associated with a variety of post-Roman finds.

Medieval

A single sherd from the base of a medieval cooking pot was recovered from the modern service cut in Test Pit 3 (303, fill 302). This dates broadly to the 12th-14th centuries.

Post-medieval and modern

A range of post-medieval and modern finds was recovered from all three test pits. The post-medieval finds are of interest given the history of the pleasure gardens. Some finds most likely pre-date the pleasure gardens, all from Test Pit 3. These include a sherd of tin-glazed ware, dating to c AD 1590-1730, and fragments of clay pipe, including a small bowl dating to c AD 1600-1700. Fragments of flower pot were recovered from all test pits. These could not be closely dated but are wheel-made rather than machine-made, indicating a broad date between c 1700-1970, They could potentially be associated with the pleasure gardens.

Post-medieval and modern pottery included creamware and modern china, hand-painted and willow pattern. Other finds included bottle glass, a shell button, fragments of brick and brown-glazed sewer pipe, a nail and a corroded iron strip.

6.5 Significance

The finds reflect the known history of the site. More Roman material was recovered from Test Pit 2 than the other test pits, but there is no clear focus of Roman activity. While the single sherd of medieval cooking pot hints at the presence of the nearby medieval village of Bathwick, the paucity of medieval pottery is more consistent with this having been agricultural land. Some of the finds may relate to the use of the pleasure gardens. Should further work be undertaken on the site it might be interesting to study any flower pots and other garden items in more detail, to see if these could be tied into the design and use of the gardens. Other finds, lost buttons and other items, might also contribute to the story of the site and the people who frequented it. From this perspective the finds are certainly of local interest.

6.6 Recommendations

6.6.1 Further analysis

Should further work be undertaken on the site, the stratified Roman and post-medieval finds could be included in any more detailed analysis undertaken.

6.6.2 Discard/retention

Any potential discard needs to be discussed with the receiving museum. This could include modern finds and finds from topsoil and subsoil.

7 Environmental evidence

Environmental sampling was undertaken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). In the event no deposits were identified which were considered to be suitable for environmental analysis.

8 Discussion and conclusion

The archaeological background to the site and area suggested a high potential for the survival of features of the Romano-British period, particularly in the form of burials as a stone sarcophagus is recorded as having been found within the site of the tennis courts. Historic maps depict this area of the gardens as part of the "ride" around the gardens which were created largely from farmland in the late 18th century. A geophysical survey of the site suggested the potential for a structure at the northern extent of the area, which was particularly targeted during this project.

The potential structures identified within the geophysical survey appear to have derived from a packed stone surface in Test Pit 1 which was re-laid at least twice. These small gauge stones were within a likely concrete or hydraulic lime based matrix, and their durable nature suggesting they were part of a track or road surface. It is therefore highly likely that these were part of the "ride" as created around the park in the 1790s.

A comparison of the heights of the earliest of the stone surface within Test Pit 1 with the suggested former plough soil deposits in Test Pits 2 and 3 is indicative. The height of the surface was 25.24m AOD and the top of the former plough soil deposits was at heights of 24.80 and 24.93m AOD respectively. This suggests the ride was constructed over the former plough soil without any significant truncation at this point, though was later truncated during construction of the tennis court.

Test Pit 2 indicated the presence of well-preserved stratified features of the Roman period below the former plough soil. This was potentially in the form of a collapsed structure with a domestic deposit below, though these interpretations must be tentative given the limited scope of the test pits. Test Pit 3 was mainly characterised by modern service cuts and landscaping in the form of made ground, the latter of which was evident within all test pits.

In conclusion, whilst no evidence of the Roman burial ground was present within the test pits, they did demonstrate the presence of broadly contemporary features and deposits sealed below a former plough soil. The probable surface of the "ride" as created around the gardens in the 1790s was also present.

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved. Conditions were suitable in the test pits to identify the presence or absence of archaeological features. It is considered that the nature, density and distribution of archaeological features provides an accurate characterisation of the development site within that area.

9 Project personnel

The fieldwork was led by Tim Cornah, ACIfA, assisted by Elspeth Iliff, ACIfA.

The project was managed by Tom Rogers, MCIfA. The report was produced and collated by Tim Cornah. Specialist contributions and individual sections of the report are attributed to the relevant authors throughout the text.

10 Acknowledgements

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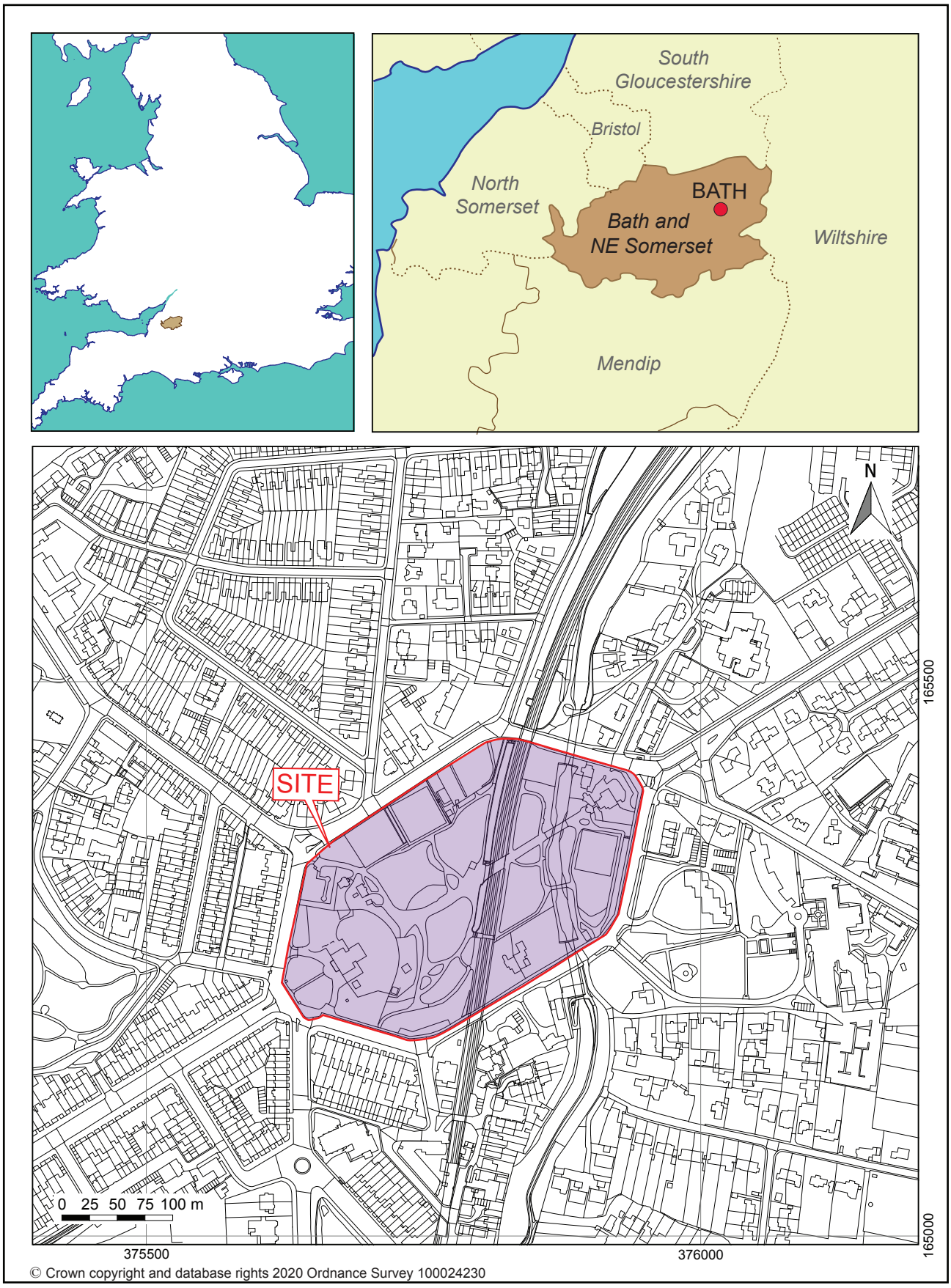
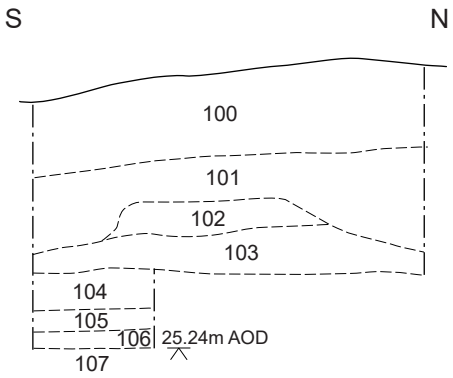
Figures



Location of the site *Figure 1*

Trench location plan *Figure 2*

TEST PIT 1 SECTION



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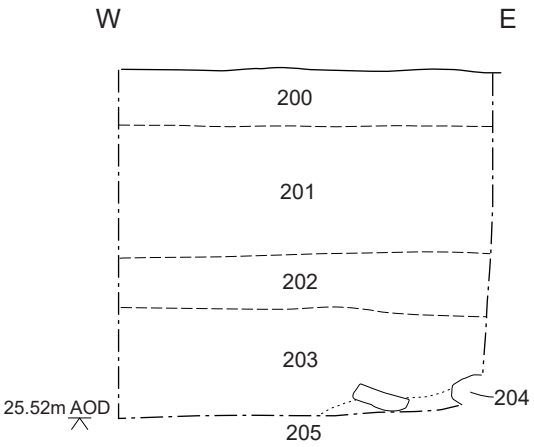
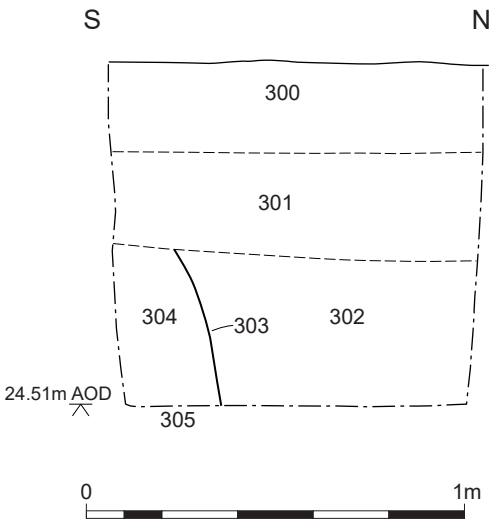


TEST PIT 3 SECTION



Sections *Figure 3*

Plates

Plate 1 The site, looking south-west

Plate 2 Test pit 1, looking west, scale 1m and 0.4m

Plate 3 Test pit 2, looking north, scale 1m

Plate 4 Test pit 3, scale 1m, looking west

Appendix 1: Summary of project archive

TYPE	DETAILS*
Artefacts and Environmental	Ceramics, other
Paper	Context sheet, Diary (Field progress form), Drawing, Photograph, Plan, Report, Section, Survey
Digital	Database, GIS, Images raster/digital photography, Survey, Text

**OASIS terminology*