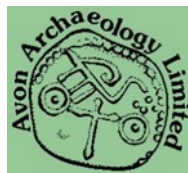


**Leigh Farm, Church Road  
Abbots Leigh  
North Somerset**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**  
Planning Reference P22/P/0060/FUL

**Written Scheme of Investigation**  
September 2023

**Avon Archaeology Limited**



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Document Title	Leigh Farm, 16 Church Road, Abbots Leigh, North Somerset
Document Subtitle	WSI for an Archaeological Watching Brief
Client Name	Dunstan Marris
Site Address	Leigh Farm, 16 Church Road, Abbots Leigh, North Somerset, BS8 3QP
National Grid Reference	ST 54345 73806
Local Planning Authority	North Somerset
Planning Reference	22/P/0060/FUL
Museum Name	Somerset Museums Service
Museum Accession	To be applied for
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## **1 Introduction**

**1.1** Avon Archaeology Limited has been appointed by Dunstan Marris to carry out a programme of Archaeological Monitoring (Watching Brief) during the excavation of foundations, and other related sub-surface groundworks, following the partial demolition of the existing building at Leigh Farm, 16 Church Road, Abbots Leigh. The work is being carried out under a planning permission granted by North Somerset Council, under its reference 22/P/0060/FUL. The ultimate object of the work is to provide 2 additional dwellings and alterations to the existing dwelling to create an eco-community. The local authority Decision Letter relating to this permission was issued on 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2023, and the requirement for archaeological monitoring is outlined in Condition 13 of that document.

**1.2** This Written Scheme of Investigation has been produced to set out a methodology for the Archaeological Monitoring element of the project, which must be agreed by the planning department prior to the groundwork's associated with the development commencing. The results of the monitoring will be presented in a final report.

**1.3** The work will be conducted in accordance with the relevant guidelines for archaeological watching brief as issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. Specifically in this case, the overarching guidance is provided by the *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*, the last substantive revision of which came in June 2020. The project will also be undertaken in accordance with the guidelines for archaeological projects set out in MoRPHE (2015).

**1.4** Health and Safety will take priority over all archaeological matters, and fieldwork will be undertaken in accordance with the Health and Safety Policy of Avon Archaeology Limited, produced in collaboration with AAL's health and safety advisors Acorn Health and Safety Ltd (AAL 2019), and in accordance with the guidelines set out by FAME (The Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers). A project specific Health & Safety risk assessment will be produced by Avon Archaeology Limited prior to the commencement of fieldwork.



**1.5** North Somerset Council will be notified of the project commencement date before work begins on site. Avon Archaeology Ltd will ensure that ground excavations, are, if required, available for inspection by the council's Archaeological Officer prior to backfilling.

## **2 National and Local Planning Policies**

**2.1 National Planning Policies.** The current national legislative and planning policy system identifies, through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), last substantively updated in July 2021. It states that applicants should consider the potential impact of development upon 'heritage assets'. This term includes: designated heritage assets which possess a statutory designation (for example listed buildings and conservation areas); and non-designated heritage assets, typically compiled by Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) and incorporated into a Local List or recorded on the Historic Environment Record.

**2.2** Where any development may affect certain designated heritage assets, there is a legislative framework to ensure proposed works are developed and considered with due regard to their impact on the historic environment. This extends from primary legislation under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The relevant legislation in this case extends from section 66 of the 1990 Act which states that special regard must be given by the decision maker, in the exercise of planning functions, to the desirability of preserving or enhancing listed buildings and their setting. The meaning and effect of these duties have been considered by the courts in recent cases.

**2.3** The detail of such cases need not concern us here but the essential outcome of various litigations was that a succession of courts agreed that Parliament's intention in enacting section 66(1) was that decision makers should give '*considerable importance and weight*' to the desirability of preserving (i.e. keeping from harm) the setting of listed buildings. Section 69(1) of the Act requires LPAs to 'determine areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' and to designate



them as conservation areas. Section 69(2) requires LPAs to review and, where necessary, amend those areas 'from time to time'. For development within a conservation area section 72 of the Act requires the decision maker to pay

*'special attention [...] to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area'.*

The duty to give special attention is considered commensurate with that under section 66(1) to give special regard, meaning that the decision maker must give considerable importance and weight to any such harm in the planning balance. However, as the site is not located within a Conservation Area, section 72 is not relevant for present purposes.

**2.4** The *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*, was last substantively revised in July 2021, and is the principal document that sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It defines a heritage asset as a: 'building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest'. This includes both designated and non-designated heritage assets. Section 16: *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment* relates to the conservation of heritage assets in the production of local plans and decision taking. It emphasises that heritage assets are

*'an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance'.*

**2.5** For proposals that have the potential to affect the significance of a heritage asset, paragraph 189 requires applicants to identify and describe the significance of any heritage assets that may be affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail provided should be proportionate to the significance of the heritage assets affected. This is supported by paragraph 190, which requires LPAs to take this assessment into account when considering applications.



**2.6** Under '*Considering potential impacts*' the NPPF emphasises that '*great weight*' should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets, irrespective of whether any potential impact equates to total loss, substantial harm or less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage assets. Paragraph 195 states that where a development will result in substantial harm to, or total loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset, permission should be refused, unless this harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits, or a number of criteria are met. Where less than substantial harm is identified paragraph 196 requires this harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposed development. Paragraph 197 states that where an application will affect the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, a balanced judgement is required, having regard to the scale of harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

**2.7** Paragraph 200 of the NPPF notes that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. It also states that proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to, or better reveal the significance of, the asset should be treated favourably.

**2.8** The *Planning Practice Guidance* (PPG) has been adopted in order to aid the application of the NPPF. It reiterates that conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle. Key elements of the guidance relate to assessing harm. It states that substantial harm is a high bar that may not arise in many cases and that while the level of harm will be at the discretion of the decision maker, generally substantial harm is a high test that will only arise where a development seriously affects a key element of an asset's special interest. It is the degree of harm, rather than the scale of development, that is to be assessed.

**2.9** Conservation Principles outlines Historic England's approach to the sustainable management of the historic environment. While primarily intended





to ensure consistency in Historic England's own advice and guidance, the document is recommended to LPAs to ensure that all decisions about change affecting the historic environment are informed and sustainable. The guidance describes a range of heritage values which enables the significance of assets to be established systematically, with the four main heritage values being: evidential value; historical value; aesthetic value; and communal value.

**2.10** The PPS5 Practice Guide was withdrawn in March 2015 and replaced with three Good Practice Advice in Planning Notes (GPAs) published by Historic England. *GPA1: The Historic Environment in Local Plans* provides guidance to local planning authorities to help them make well informed and effective local plans. *GPA2: Managing Significance in Decision-Making* includes technical advice on the repair and restoration of historic buildings and alterations to heritage assets to guide local planning authorities, owners, practitioners and other interested parties. *GPA 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets* replaces guidance published in 2011. These are complemented by the Historic England Advice Notes in Planning which include *HEA1: Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* (February 2016), *HEA2: Making Changes to Heritage Assets* (February 2016), *HEA3: The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans* (October 2015), and *HEA4: Tall Buildings* (December 2015).

**2.11 Local Planning Policies.** Specifically for North Somerset, that local authority's policies on heritage and the historic environment are laid out in its *Core Strategy*, dated January 2017. Section CS5 outlines the formal basis which underpins the local authority's Historic Environment guidance. The underlying principles are laid out in Paras. 3.81-3.90 (pages 40-42). The policy summary states that:

The council will conserve the historic environment of North Somerset, having regard to the significance of heritage assets such as conservation areas, listed buildings, buildings of local significance, scheduled monuments, other archaeological sites, registered and other historic parks and gardens.



Particular attention will be given to aspects of the historic environment which contribute to the distinctive character of North Somerset, such as the Victorian townscapes and sea- fronts in Weston and Clevedon<sup>1</sup>.

**2.12** As of March 2020 North Somerset Council has been reviewing its Development Plan, with a view to complete this process by 2023. North Somerset council does not currently produce a Supplementary Planning Document dealing explicitly with archaeology, although there is a *Landscape Character Assessment*, giving an overview of the historic landscape evolution of the entire local authority area, which was produced for it recently (Wardell Armstrong 2018).

### **3 Site Location, Geology and Topography**

**3.1** The site comprises a former farmhouse and current family home called Leigh Farm, together with gardens and outbuildings, situated on the eastern side of Church Road, Abbots Leigh. Church Road itself, Manor Road, and the ridge along which they run, form the spine of the linear historic core of Abbots Leigh. The village lies some 4.5km to the west/north-west of Bristol City Centre. The site is bounded to the north-west by Church Road and the rear boundaries of properties fronting the road; to the north and south by residential properties and fields behind them; and to the east by open fields. The ground slopes from west to east, between heights of approximately 100m aOD adjacent to Church Road, and 93m aOD at the south-east corner of the site (**Figures 1 and 2**). The centre of the site is given by OS ST 54345 73806.

**2.2** The underlying bedrock geology of the site is split into three bands which follow the southwest/north-east alignment of the ridge surmounted by Church Lane. The central/main area of the site sits on bedrock of the Shirehampton Formation, comprised of limestone, argillaceous rocks and subordinate sandstone, interbedded. This is a sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 347 to 359 million years ago in the Carboniferous Period, within a local environment previously dominated by shallow carbonate seas. In the western part of the site

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-07/core%20strategy.pdf>

Figure 1

### Site Location Map Grid Lines at 1000m Intervals



The Site

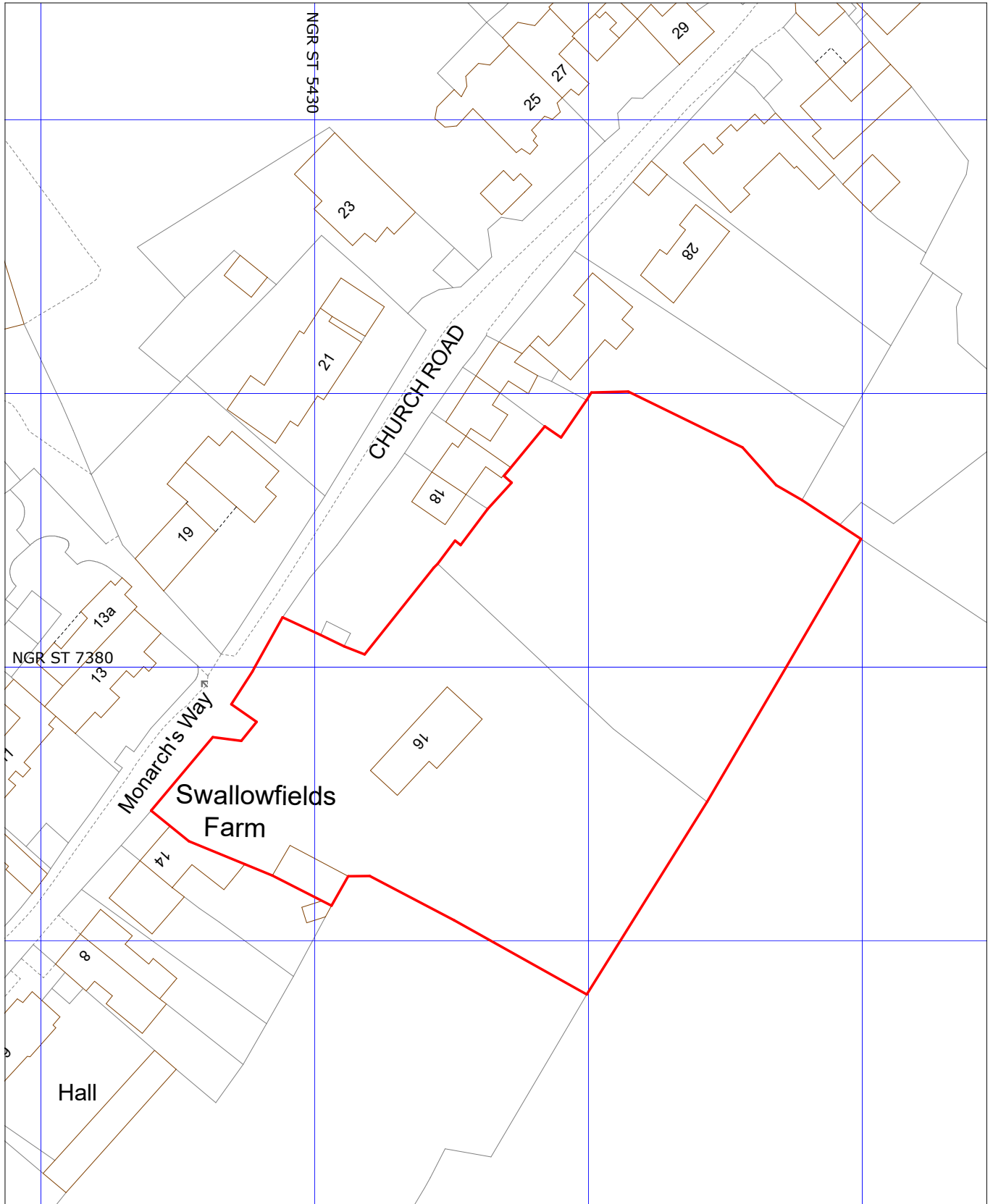
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Figure 2

Site Plan Showing Red Line Boundary



— Site Boundary

0 50m



the bedrock is mapped as Upper Old Red Sandstone, conglomerate, another sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 359 to 383 million years ago in the Devonian Period, within a local environment previously dominated by rivers. The eastern band comprises bedrock of the Avon Group, in the form of limestone. Again, this is a sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 347 to 359 million years ago in the Carboniferous Period, within a local environment previously dominated by shallow carbonate seas (BGS GeoIndex).

## **4 Archaeological and Historical Background**

**4.1** This element will not be dealt with in detail here, as a full Heritage Statement and Historic Building Assessment were produced for this site in 2021, and are among the formal planning documents on the local authority's online planning portal (BBHC 2021a and 2021b). Salient points from these documents will be given below.

**4.2** The historic building survey identified that the main farmhouse was constructed in three broad periods, the earliest of which is likely to date to the late 16th century. Significant alterations were made in the eighteenth and twentieth centuries.

**4.3** The site lies close to a ridge, along which is laid out the historic core of the village, which has at least early medieval origins. Finds of Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age artefacts have been reported within 1km of the application site, and there is evidence for settlement of probable late Iron Age and Roman date associated with a Roman Road which runs approximately 525m to the west of the application site. Historic maps also show a number of post-medieval agricultural outbuildings within the application site which have since been demolished, but whose foundations may remain, and a possible earlier alignment of Church Road to the north of the house.



## **5 Aims and Objectives**

**5.1** The aims of the watching brief, as defined in the *CiFA Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (CiFA 2020a) are:

- To allow for the preservation by record of any archaeological deposits, the presences and nature of which could not be ascertained in advance of the development;
- To provide the opportunity of required, 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 are not sufficient to support a satisfactory and proper standard; and
- To inform a mitigation strategy allowing for a programme of recording to the significance of such deposits.

**5.2** The objectives of the Watching Brief are:

- To determine the presence or absence of archaeological features, deposits, structures, artefacts or ecofacts within the Project Site.
- To establish and record the extent, character, date, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological remains, to an appropriate level and within the constraints of the Project Site;
- To place identified archaeological remains within the wider historical and archaeological context in order to establish their significance; and
- To prepare an archaeological report detailing the results of the watching brief.

## **6. Methodology**

**6.1** The Archaeological Watching Brief is required to monitor all intrusive ground works that will be undertaken within the development area. All ground works will be monitored by a qualified and experienced archaeologist.



**6.2** It is a requirement that unless completely unavoidable, the contractor should use a *toothless grading bucket* for all excavation work undertaken under the conditions of the archaeological monitoring.

**6.3** Where archaeological features are identified *the supervising archaeologist will have the authority temporarily to suspend ground works for such reasonable time as to enable finds to be recovered and an appropriate level of recording to be undertaken*. It is perfectly possible that any such work may require interruption to the progress of ground works on at least a part of the site.

**6.4** Avon Archaeology Limited will inform the Archaeological Officer for North Somerset Council of the start date of the archaeological monitoring. Access will be arranged for site visits in order to inspect progress on site if necessary.

## **Recording**

**6.5** All archaeological deposits and features will be recorded using the Avon Archaeology Limited pro forma recording system. A complete drawn record of excavated archaeological features and deposits will be made, including plans and sections drawn to appropriate scales (usually 1:20 or 1:50 for plans and 1:10 for sections), and tied to the Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid. The Ordnance Datum heights of all features will be calculated, and the levels added to the drawings.

**6.6** A full photographic record will be made using digital cameras equipped with an image sensor of not less than 10 megapixels.

## **Survey**

**6.7** A survey of all archaeological features will be carried out using a GPS. All survey data will be recorded in OS National Grid coordinates and heights above Ordnance Datum. In the event that it is not possible to use the survey equipment,



archaeological features will be located using client plans or features that appear on OS mapping. This will be achieved using handheld measuring tapes and the basic principles of triangulation.

## **Contingency Measures**

**6.8** In the event that significant archaeological deposits are discovered, contact with the client and the council's Archaeological Officer will be made to review any additional project requirements that are not outlined in this document.

**6.9** A contingency fund has been earmarked for possible use to undertake additional work, including specialist studies and/or treatment of archaeological finds recovered during the course of post excavation assessment and project reporting.

## **Finds**

**6.10** All artefacts and ecofacts will be recovered, identified by stratigraphic unit, catalogued and prepared for long term storage after analysis, if appropriate. Provision is made in the form of a contingency to undertake appropriate analysis and reporting of significant artefacts if such finds are located during the site work.

**6.11** Artefacts from features of modern date (19th-century or later) may be recorded on site but not retained.

**6.12** Where appropriate, soil samples may be taken and sieved to aid finds recovery. Any finds requiring conservation or specific storage conditions will be dealt with immediately in line with First Aid for Finds (Watkinson and Neal 1998).

## **Environmental Sampling**





**6.13** All sampling will be undertaken by Avon Archaeology Limited and in line with the principles outlined in Historic England's guidance (English Heritage 2011 and Historic England 2015).

**6.14** Bulk environmental soil samples taken for the recovery of plant macrofossils, wood charcoal, small animal bones and other small artefacts, will be taken as appropriate from well-sealed and dateable contexts or features. In general, features directly associated with particular activities (e.g. pits, latrines, cesspits, hearths, ovens, kilns, and corn driers) will be prioritised for sampling over features such as ditches or postholes, which are likely to contain reworked and residual material.

**6.15** If waterlogged or mineralised deposits are encountered, an environmental sampling strategy will be devised and agreed with the County Archaeologist, as appropriate. Specialist guidance will be provided by Hayley McParland, Historic England's Science Advisor for the South West, with site visits undertaken if required.

**6.16** Samples will be of an appropriate size – typically 40 litres for the recovery of environmental evidence from dry contexts and 10 litres from waterlogged deposits. Following specialist advice, other sampling methods such as monolith, Kubiena or contiguous small bulk (column) samples may be employed to enable investigation of deposits with regard to microfossils (e.g. pollen, diatoms) and macrofossils (e.g. molluscs, insects).

### **Human Remains**

**6.17** Any human remains discovered (articulated or disarticulated, cremated or unburnt) will in the first instance be left in situ, covered and protected. The need for excavation, removal and/or sampling will be determined following discussion with the client and the council's Archaeological Officer. If deemed appropriate, the remains will be fully recorded, excavated and removed from the site in compliance with the terms of a Ministry of Justice licence, which will be obtained by Avon Archaeology Limited.



**6.18** Any excavation and post-excavation processing of human remains will be undertaken in line with current guidance documents (Mitchell and Brickley 2017). The project will also adhere to the principles and guidance of Historic England as they relate specifically to osteology in archaeological projects (Mays *et al*, 2018). Please note that appropriate specialist guidance may be provided by Dr Heidi Dawson-Hobbis (Winchester University), with site visits undertaken if required. The final deposition of human remains, following analysis, will be in accordance with the terms of the Ministry of Justice licence.

## **Treasure**

**6.19** Avon Archaeology Limited will immediately notify the client and the Archaeological Officer for North Somerset Council of the discovery of any material covered, or potentially covered, by the Treasure Act 1996 (as amended by The Coroners and Justice Act 2009). All information required by the Treasure Act (i.e., finder, location, material, date, associated items etc.) will be reported to the Coroner within 14 days.

## **7 Personnel**

**7.1** The project will be managed by Kevin Potter, BA, MCIfA. The site team is yet to be confirmed, although it is likely that for most if not all of the time, only a single staff member will be required on site.

The following key specialist studies will be earmarked to the project for post excavation specialist reporting where necessary.

- Roman pottery and finds – Dr Jane Timby (independent specialist)
- Medieval and post-medieval ceramics – Dr A Gutierrez (independent specialist)
- Faunal remains – Lorrain Higbee (Wessex Archaeology Limited)
- Environmental Archaeology - Quest (Reading University)
- Small Finds – Sarah Newns and/or Dr Jane Timby (independent specialist)
- Human Remains – Dr Heidi Dawson-Hobbis (University of Winchester) and Joss Davis, MA (AAL)
- Archaeometallurgy - Dr Tim Young, GeoArch (independent specialist)



- Prehistoric Lithics – Dr Kath Walker (Visiting Fellow, University of Bournemouth)

## **8 Post-Excavation Reporting**

**8.1** Following the completion of the fieldwork and assessment of data recovered, the results will be presented in a fully illustrated report. A draft report will be produced and forwarded to the client and the North Somerset Archaeological Officer for review. The Final Report will be issued upon settlement of all outstanding invoices.

**8.2** The report will contain the following as a minimum:

- A frontispiece detailing the site name, grid reference, report author(s), project dates, project title and reference number and planning application number;
- A non-technical summary;
- Historic Background, including reference to relevant archival material;
- Archaeological Background, summarised from the existing Desk-Based Assessment
- The aims and methodology of the archaeological monitoring project;
- The results of the, including any Post-Excavation assessment;
- An interpretation of the results;
- Supporting scaled plans and illustrations;
- Archive preparation and deposition arrangements;
- References

**8.3** The final copy of the report will be submitted to the Historic Environment Record and deposited with the Archaeological Data Service, along with surveyed data in shapefile format. Digital geospatial data will be submitted to North Somerset Council along with the project report. It is anticipated that this will be in a CAD format and will include all survey data.



## **Publication**

**8.4** If appropriate, a publication of findings will be made in a suitable medium at an appropriate detail, depending on the results of the project. As a minimum, a note will be submitted to the relevant local journal.

## **9 Preparation and deposition of the archive**

**9.1** On completion of the programme of work, every effort will be made to persuade the legal owner of any finds recovered to transfer their ownership to the receiving museum, in line with a written agreement. This excludes human remains and any objects covered by the Treasure Act 1996 (as amended by the Coroners and Justice Act 2009).

**9.2** The complete project archive, which will include paper records, photographic records, graphics, and digital data, will be prepared, compiled and presented in accordance with nationally recommended guidelines (Brown 2011; ADS 2013; CIfA 2020b).

**9.3** Arrangements will be made with the Museum of Somerset for the deposition of the documentary and material archive for storage and public access at an appropriate local museum. An Archive Accession Number will be requested for the site in due course. The archive will usually be deposited within one year of the completion of the project.

**9.4** An OASIS record for the project has been created with key fields completed (ref. 519093). The record will be completed at the end of the project. Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, copies of the OASIS record will be integrated into the relevant local and national records and published through the Archaeology Data Service ArchSearch catalogue. Avon Archaeology Ltd will ensure the deposition of the digital archive with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) within a reasonable period of time.

**9.5** Until final deposition, any archive will be stored securely at the offices of the Avon Archaeology Limited.



## **10 Health and Safety**

**10.1** Health and Safety will take priority over all archaeological matters and fieldwork will be undertaken in accordance with the Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers' guidelines. Project specific Health and Safety Risk Assessment and Safe Working documents will be prepared in advance of attendance on site in accordance with Avon Archaeology Ltd Health and Safety Policy, which has been drafted in collaboration with Acorn Health and Safety Ltd. All members of staff are qualified and registered with the Construction Skills Certification Scheme.

## **11 GDPR Compliance**

**11.1** We may process the information that we collect from clients and third parties such as landowners, for the legitimate purposes of our business:

- Artefacts provenance (that is, to record the history of an object); and
- To keep a record of our professional services on projects.

**11.2** This information may be collected from contract documents, including tender information; and during a project, from information requested by telephone, email or in person, in relation to artefacts. The information includes an individual's or company's name, address, email address and telephone number.

**11.3** We do not sell any data that we process. Nor do we use it for marketing or for any purpose other than those stated above. To fulfil our professional obligations, we store data in our project archives. In the case of any artefacts collected, the local collecting museum is permitted to both store the artefacts and store, process and use the names and addresses of clients and landowners referenced in the archive. Data not passed to a museum is stored in our project archives which will be maintained for as long as Avon Archaeology Limited is in operation. Museums may hold data in connection with collections in perpetuity (i.e. forever). Such processing by a museum is strictly for the purpose of



collections provenance. The personal data may be used by the museum to contact the client or third party regarding the archive.

**11.4** When you enter into a contract with us, or when data is requested, you will be asked to confirm that you agree to the processing of your personal information. You may withdraw your consent at any time by contacting us using the details at the end of this policy. Where you wish to withdraw your consent for us to share your details with a third party museum please make this known to us and we will contact that third party on your behalf.



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