

# **Proposed New Electricity Supply at the Parish Church of St Nicholas, Bathampton, Bath & North East Somerset: Written Scheme of Investigation**

<b>Site Code:</b>	BSN 25	<b>Bath Museums acc. no.</b>	BATRM2025.6
<b>NGR:</b>	ST 7774 6652 (centre)	<b>BaNES HER:</b>	71409

**Version 1, prepared by James Brigers of Prospect Archaeology, June 2025**

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**Written Scheme of Investigation to Cover Archaeological Mitigation during the Installation of New Electricity Supply at the Parish Church of St Nicholas, Bathampton, Bath & North East Somerset**

James Brigers, BA June 2025 on behalf of the Parochial Church Council of St Nicholas

**NGR: ST 7774 6652**

**BaNES HER: 71409**

**BaNES Council ref: N/A**

**Bath Museums acc. no. BATRM2025.6**

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Context of the Project**

1.1.1 Faculty consent has been granted to allow the installation of a new 3 phase power supply to the parish church of St Nicholas which would require the laying of new cabling within trenching through the churchyard over an approximate 70m length. The consent is conditional on the implementation of a programme of archaeological work.

1.1.2 This WSI conforms to the requirements of Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (Historic England 2015) and details the proposed monitoring methodology in accordance with guidance outlined in:-

- *Standard for archaeological monitoring and recording* (2023, ClfA)
- *Universal guidance for archaeological monitoring and recording* (2023, ClfA)
- *Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct* (2022, ClfA).
- *Preserving Archaeological Remains: Decision-taking for Sites under Development* (2016, Historic England)
- *Environmental Archaeology. A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (2011, Historic England)
- *Somerset Archaeological Handbook* (2017, South West Heritage Trust)

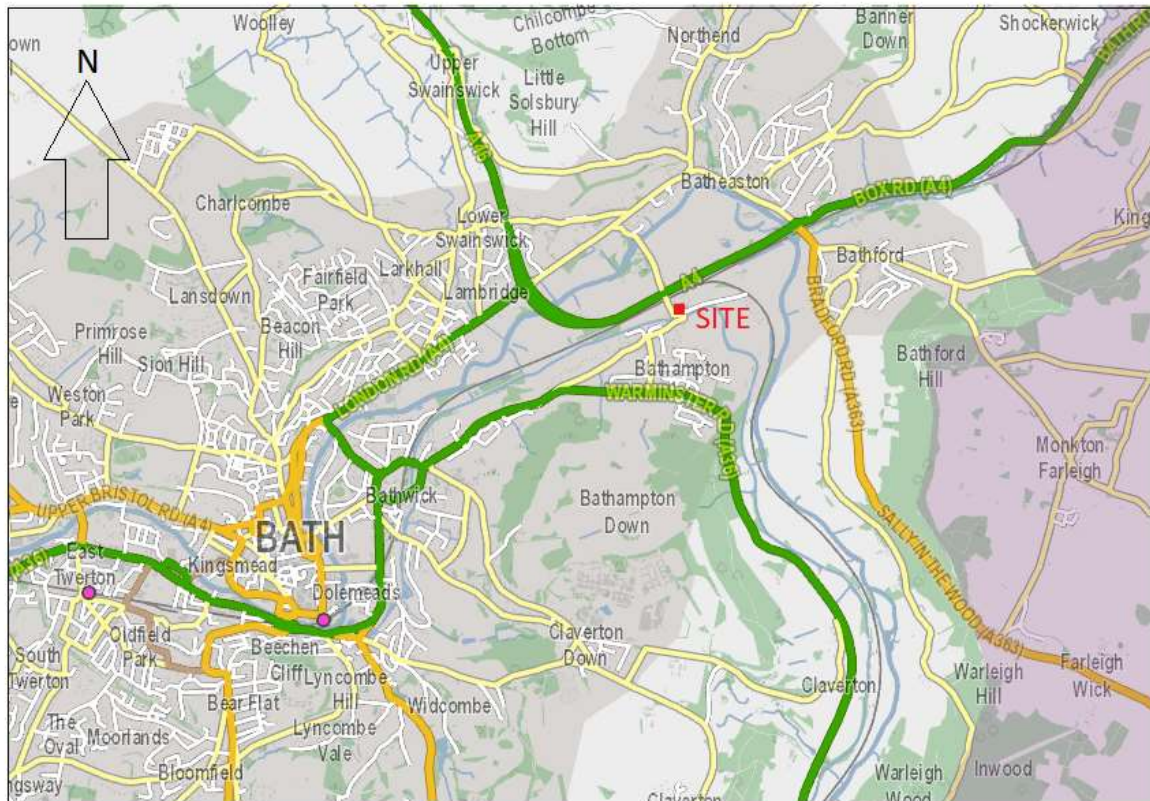


Fig. 1: Church of St Nicholas, Bathampton. Location of the Site



## 2.0 BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Location & Geology (fig. 1)

2.1.1 The site lies at the above grid reference and occupies an approximately square plot of land containing the churchyard of the church of St Nicholas which itself stands to the north. The site occupies level terrain at an elevation of approximately 33m above Ordnance Datum bounded to the west and south by Mill Lane at the north eastern edge of the settlement of Bathampton to the east of the city of Bath in Bath & North East Somerset.

2.1.2 The underlying geology in the area of the site consists of mudstone, shale and limestone of the Charmouth Mudstone Formation<sup>1</sup>

### 2.2 Historical & Archaeological Context

2.2.1 It seems probable that the valley of the River Avon provided resources that were attractive to human populations from at least the Mesolithic and flint implements of the period have been recovered from colluvial deposits to the north of the modern settlements<sup>2</sup>. Ample evidence for the presence settled later prehistoric populations has been revealed locally, not least the Iron Age hillforts of Batheaston Camp to the south of the village<sup>3</sup> and Little Solsbury to the north<sup>4</sup> and further remains suggestive of occupation of the period has been identified during the construction of the bypass to the north of the site.

2.2.2 During the Roman period the economic and militarily significant road, the Fosse Way<sup>5</sup> was constructed through the valley and one possible route, or a possible branch, has been postulated immediately to the south east of the site itself. The area of the modern settlement would have been within the zone of the commercially and culturally significant town of Aquae Sullis (modern Bath) just a few kilometres down-stream and the west and it can be assumed that the area was well populated at this time as evidenced by numerous finds of Romano-British artefacts and the presence of an extensive field system of the period surrounding Bathampton Camp to the south<sup>6</sup>.

2.2.3 The modern settlement of Bathampton has probable origins during the Saxon period and is identifiable with the manor of *Hamton* mentioned in 956 CE<sup>7</sup>. Prior to the conquest the manor of Bathampton was held by the church of St Peter in Bath (Bath Abbey) and sub tenanted by two thanes. It was retained by the church following the Norman Conquest and

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<sup>1</sup> British Geological Survey digital mapping

<sup>2</sup> BaNES HER 64998

<sup>3</sup> " 61445

<sup>4</sup> " 61428

<sup>5</sup> " 63320

<sup>6</sup> " 61423

<sup>7</sup> " 63997

in 1086 was held of the institution by Hugh the Interpreter and an Englishman named Colgrim<sup>8</sup>.

2.2.4 In 1553 the manor was acquired by William Crouch and later descended through the Popham and Hungerford families before being Purchased by Richard Holder in 1701. Holder's son Charles sold the estate to Ralph Allen in 1731.

2.2.5 The church of St Nicholas<sup>9</sup> itself most likely has its origins at least as early as the 13<sup>th</sup> century and some potentially early medieval fabric survives in the chancel and west tower but much was extensively re-built in the perpendicular style in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, including the majority of the tower. Following his acquisition of the estate in 1731, Ralph Allen commissioned Richard Jones to rebuild the nave and south aisle in gothic style but this work was obliterated by later extensive restorations in 1858 and 1882 although a family chapel added to the south side of the nave by Allen was retained (now the Australia Chapel). The building is listed Grade II\* (no. 1320551). The churchyard contains 10 memorials considered to be of sufficient merit to be protected by Grade II listing.

2.2.6 The churchyard boundary has been extended southwards on two know occasions, firstly in 1904 and in 1931 it was taken to Mill Lane frontage.

2.2.6 Recent archaeological work within the church or churchyard is limited to a watching brief in 1993 during the construction of an extension to the north east of the church<sup>10</sup>. The groundworks revealed 55 graves, 29 of which were walled and all dating from the period c1813-1879. The trenching will pass through an area that contained a 19<sup>th</sup> century school room as indicated on the Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> edition mapping<sup>11</sup>. The building appears to have been removed by c1902 and its site incorporated into the churchyard with extension of this in 1904.

### 3.0 OBJECTIVES

#### 3.1 Overview

3.1.1 The proposal site lies within an area identified as possessing high archaeological potential and the proposed development may impact remains which may provide evidence to inform on the origins and chronological development of the medieval church of St Nicholas and possibly those associated with earlier activity on the site.

3.1.2 As part of the construction works some destruction of archaeological material is probable. It is therefore necessary to record such remains as encountered through the

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<sup>8</sup> Phillimore, 7,11

<sup>9</sup> BaNES HER 61439

<sup>10</sup> " 67882

<sup>11</sup> " 69645

implementation of an ongoing watching brief in order to satisfy the terms of the Faculty Consent and to advance out understanding of the archaeology and its significance (as per para 218 of NPPF) and as agreed with South West Heritage Trust.

### **3.2 Research Design**

3.2.1 The objectives of this investigation will be to: 1. Ascertain the presence/absence, function, date and chronology of archaeological deposits; 2. To assess the remains in a context of local, regional and national significance; 3. To recover environmental information likely to provide information on the economy and local environment of the area; 4. In the case of significant remains, to allow an informed mitigation strategy to be formulated.

3.2.2 Dependent on the presence/absence of archaeological remains, the works may contribute to research aims on a regional scale as outlined by the South West Archaeological Research Framework (SWARF)<sup>12</sup>, in particular Aim 33 *‘Widen our understanding of the origins of villages’*

3.2.3 The results of the watching brief may be of immediate benefit to improving the understanding of the form and chronological development of the settlement of the church of St Nicholas and the wider settlement of Bathampton.

## **4.0 METHOD STATEMENT**

### **4.1 Standards**

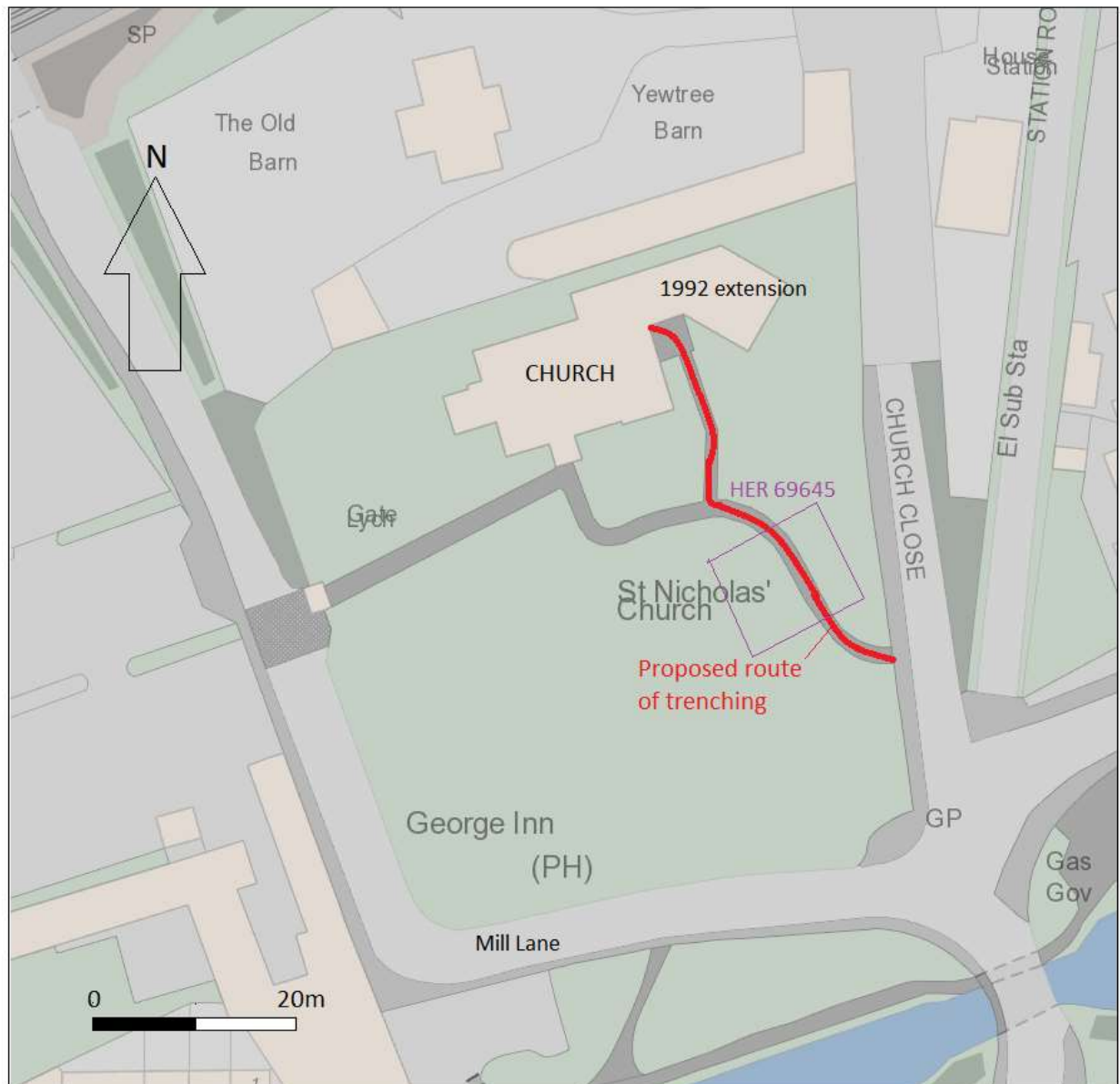
4.1.1 The work will be carried out in accordance with standards and guidelines set out in paragraph 1.1.2.

### **4.2 Background Research**

4.2.1 A full assessment has been made of information relating to the site and its surroundings as available on the BaNES HER including consultation of the published report on the 1992/3 watching brief; historic mapping available on Bristol City Council’s *Know Your Place* site has also been the subject of study as has current and past satellite imagery available on Google Earth.

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<sup>12</sup> Webster, CJ (ed) 2008 ‘The Archaeology of South West England: South West Archaeological Research Framework, Resource Assessment & Agenda’, Somerset County Council



**Fig. 2: Church of St Nicholas, Bathampton. Plan of the Site showing Proposed Route of Trenching in Relation to Known Heritage Assets.**

### 4.3 Event, Accession Numbers & Site Code

4.3.1 A museum accession number has been obtained from The Roman Baths Museum, Bath (BATRM2025.6) and an HER event number has been obtained from South West Heritage Trust (71409) and agreement reached to permit the deposition of the investigation archive and artefacts at the museum. The accession number will be combined with the contractor's site code and will appear on all aspects of the archive generated by the investigation (BSN 25).

#### 4.4 Works: Pre-Commencement

4.4.1 Appropriate communications will be undertaken with stakeholders prior to works commencing. South West Heritage Trust, as principal monitor, will be informed prior to the commencement on site.

4.4.2 The contractor's role will be to provide an experienced archaeologist to undertake a watching brief of the excavation works. These excavation works will be programmed over a condensed period, with the archaeologist being present during those times.

#### 4.5 Proposed Works & Mitigation (fig. 2)

4.5.1 **Trenching:** It is expected that the trenching to accommodate the new cable will be excavated to a depth of 0.60m (to be confirmed) and will follow a route, approximately 70m in length for the most part following the line of the existing path from the eastern boundary to the church. It is expected that this will be achieved through the use of a machine fitted with a toothless bucket with a width of 0.30m.

*Mitigation: Watching Brief*

#### 4.6 Watching Brief Procedures & Methodology

4.6.1 The archaeological contractor will provide the relevant officer from South West Heritage Trust with adequate notice of work commencing on the site. Provision will be made to safely accommodate monitoring of the project by personnel from that body and any other interested parties.

4.6.2 Only suitably qualified, trained and experienced persons will monitor all groundworks associated with the development.

4.6.3 Where areas of the site are to be stripped of modern surfaces or overburden the archaeologist will monitor the excavations and provide direction regarding the exposure of archaeological deposits.

4.6.4 The archaeologist will monitor all excavations and these will be accomplished through the use of a machine fitted with a toothless bucket; If possible archaeological remains are encountered machine excavation will be paused to allow further investigation.

4.6.5 The archaeologist will inspect the surfaces revealed. Any archaeological structures or features revealed will be recorded in plan and section as appropriate. As a standard, at least one long section of each excavated trench will be photographed with an appropriate scale in place, to be supplemented by detailed shots to illustrate the stratigraphic sequence. In areas of low stratigraphic complexity the written and photographic record of each context will be supplemented by a measured sketch. Where a more detailed record is required a detailed drawing will be produced at an appropriate scale (usually 1:10 or 1:20) and the location of each drawing will be accurately marked on the overall site plan at a scale of

1:200 or 1:500. The main contractor will allow the archaeologist reasonable time and resources to undertake any inspection or recording required.

4.6.6 In the event of particularly significant discoveries SWHT will be informed and a site meeting be arranged between the consultant, SWHT officers and the applicant to determine the appropriate mitigation.

4.6.7 Artefacts will be collected as work progresses. Where possible these will be assigned to particular contexts and bagged and labelled accordingly with the site's unique code. . The retention strategy for artefacts will be devised through agreement between all stakeholders (landowner, specialists, collections curators and Historic England) Provision will be made for the conservation and safe storage of all artefacts. Metal objects of archaeological provenance to be retained within the archive will be X-rayed in accordance with HE guidelines<sup>13</sup>.

4.6.8 'Small finds' not derived from closed feature contexts will be given a unique number and their location recorded to three dimensions.

4.6.9 Should any finds identified as treasure or potential treasure, including precious metals, groups of coins or any 'significant object' be exposed as designated in The Treasure (Designation) (Amendment) Order, 2023 this will immediately be reported to the relevant Finds Liaison Officer. Any such finds that cannot be removed to the PAS on the same day as discovery will be stored for safety in the secure storage facility of the contractor until such a time as they can be transferred.

4.6.10 Particular attention will be paid to the discreet recovery of disarticulated human bone from the top soil contexts likely to be disturbed by the trenching. This material will be bagged and stored in a suitable location away from public view pending assessment of the fieldwork results prior to being returned to the church authorities for appropriate re-burial. Treatment of all human remains will carried out in accordance with current guidance for the treatment of human remains in England<sup>14</sup>.

4.6.11 Provision within the project budget will be made for the sampling of the fills of cut features impacted by works associated with the proposal. Such samples may be for the purpose of scientific dating or, if for general environmental analysis, larger quantities of material may be retained (between 40 & 60 litres) for processing and analysis by suitably equipped and qualified specialists. The sampling strategy will be conducted in accordance with Historic England guidance<sup>15</sup> and refined through consultation with a qualified specialist to be provided by Geoflo Ltd (Corton Denham, Somerset).

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<sup>13</sup> Historic England, 2006 'Guidelines on the X-Radiography of Archaeological Metalwork'

<sup>14</sup> Advisory Panel on the Archaeology of Burials in England, 2017 'Guidance for Best Practice for the Treatment of Human Remains Excavated from Archaeological Sites in England'

<sup>15</sup> Historic England (Campbell, G; Moffett, L & Straker, V), 2011 'Environmental Archaeology', pp. 5-14

4.6.12 All structures, deposits and finds are to be recorded according to accepted professional standards. All recording points used should be accurately tied into the National Grid and located on to the 1:1250 map of the area. Plans indicating the location of all archaeological features are to be drawn at an appropriate scale, located on the site plan and levelled with respect to OD, or surrounding permanent ground levels or street level. An overall site plan is to be maintained at a suitable scale, usually 1:200 or 1:500. All plans are to accurately tied in to the site grid by triangulation from existing permanent features and through the use of a hand-held GPS device. All plans and sections are to be drawn on polyester based drafting film and clearly labelled.

4.6.13 All archaeological contexts are to be recorded individually on context record sheets. A further, more general, record of the work comprising a description and discussion of the archaeology is to be maintained as appropriate.

4.6.14 An adequate photographic record of the excavation will be prepared. This will include photographs illustrating the principal features and finds discovered, in detail and in context. The photographic record will also include working shots to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted. All photographs of archaeological detail will feature an appropriately-sized scale. The photographic record will consist of digital images of a size of no fewer than 18 megapixels.

4.6.15 The site archive, to include all project records and cultural material produced by the project, is to be prepared in accordance with *Standard & Guidance for the Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives (CiFA 1014/2020b)* and Brown 2011<sup>16</sup> On completion of the project any artefacts will be retained by the archaeological contractor until ultimate deposition at Somerset Heritage Centre. The digital archive will be uploaded to the Archaeological Data Service; provision has been made within the project budget to satisfy the long term storage fees of both organisations.

## **4.7 Post Works Assessment & Dissemination**

4.7.1 Following completion of the works a report will be produced of the findings. All post excavation work will follow the formula laid out in Historic England's *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (2015).

4.7.2 All artefact, faunal and environmental assessments will be conducted by suitably qualified external specialists. The expected classes of finds and relevant consultants are: prehistoric/Roman ceramics (Rachel Hall); medieval/post medieval ceramics (John Allen); faunal remains (Lorrain Higby); environmental analysis (Ellen Simmons). Should other classes of material occur advice will be sought from persons with relevant specialist knowledge.

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<sup>16</sup> Brown, DH, 2011 'Archaeological Archives: a Guide to Best Practice in Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Curation', Revised; Archaeological Archives Forum

4.7.3 The report will include scale drawings and any specialist reports. A copy of the report will be submitted to SWHT for inclusion on the BaNES HER.

4.7.4 It is envisaged that any significant results may form an original article in the *Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological & Natural History Society*.

#### **4.8 Archive Deposition**

4.8.1 Ownership of finds rests with the landowners (the applicant). However, the contractor will seek the transfer of title of ownership to The Roman Baths Museum, Bath, in which case the destination of the artefacts and archive would be to that facility. It is understood that a box fee will be payable to the recipient museum and it has been agreed that the cost of this will be met by the client/applicant. The project manager will ensure the guidance for deposition relevant to that museum will be followed.

#### **4.9 Public Engagement**

4.9.1 It is not expected that any results from the investigation will warrant public access.

### **5.0 RESOURCES & PROGRAMMING**

#### **5.1 Staffing**

5.1.1 All staff employed by the contractor are professional archaeologists and will have a minimum of three months experience.

5.1.2 The field team will consist of an experienced field archaeologist; additional suitably experienced personnel will join the team as required.

5.1.3 Post excavation finds work will be coordinated by the project director and conform to the practices and standards described in the ClfA *Standards and Guidance for the Collection, Documentation, Conservation and Research of Archaeological Materials* (2014).

#### **5.2 Timetable**

5.2.1 Duration of the excavation work will differ according to the stage of the groundworks and the nature of these activities. Work on site is expected to commence in summer of 2025.

5.2.2 Any interim report deemed necessary will be produced within two weeks of the completion of the fieldwork.

5.2.3 Post excavation assessment and reporting is partly dependent on the availability of specialists, but the contractor aims to produce the report within six weeks of completion of fieldwork.

### **5.3 Health & Safety**

5.3.1 The contractor adheres to health and safety legislation. The contractor conducts its health and safety procedures on site in line with the *FAME Manual of Health and Safety in Field Archaeology* (2010).

5.3.2 Before work on site commences, a Safety Method Plan will be drawn up, which will include a full risk assessment. Any Safety, Health and Environmental rules in force for the project will be strictly adhered to.

5.3.3 Before beginning work on site, all staff will take part in a project briefing, so they are made aware of specific site hazards and appropriate mitigation required. All archaeological personnel will be made fully aware of the archaeology specifications and any other safety related documentation or requirements.

5.3.4 No staff will enter an area under machine excavation without alerting the machine driver. The archaeologists will remain alert at all times in proximity to machines.

5.3.5 Deep features will be excavated according to safe working methods detailed in the FAME Manual (2010), where open excavation may persist to a depth of no more than 1m and thereafter stepping or shoring would become necessary to complete the excavation. A depth of 1m should be considered a maximum rough guide only, as actual depth will be determined by soil cohesion and prevailing ground conditions. An auger may be used to determine depth of deposits to ensure safe working conditions, though its use will be inhibited by stone deposits.

5.3.6 The contractor will provide suitable accommodation to provide shelter for staff in poor weather and during breaks. Hand washing and toilet facilities will be provided.

### **5.4 Budget**

5.4.1 An adequate budget will be agreed with the client to cover the cost of the watching brief, post excavation and reporting.

### **5.5 External Monitoring**

5.5.1 The on-site watching brief will be monitored by officers of South West Heritage Trust.

5.5.2 Any changes to the specifications that the Project Manager may wish to make after approval by SWHT will be communicated directly for approval.

5.5.3 SWHT will be kept informed about developments during the fieldwork and post excavation process.

**5.6 Insurance**

The contractor carries Public Liability insurance through AXA with maximum cover of £5 million. Copies of the insurance certificates are available on request.

**5.7 Copyright & Title**

5.7.1 Ownership of archives and artefacts remains with the landowner with an aim, on conclusion of the post excavation and reporting, to transfer title to the recipient museum (Roman Baths Museum, Bath). Copyright of reports completed during and subsequent will remain with the contractor.