

64 CASTERBRIDGE ROAD, DORCHESTER, DORSET
Archaeological Recording



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64 Casterbridge Road, Dorchester, Dorset
Archaeological Observations, February 2002

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SUMMARY

Archaeological observations were carried out during the construction of an extension to an existing bungalow at 64 Casterbridge Road, Dorchester (SY70778992) that lies adjacent to Mount Pleasant henge and Conquer Barrow. No archaeological features other than a modern soakaway were observed during the groundworks.

INTRODUCTION

This project was commissioned by Mr K. G. Greening as part of the planning condition for the construction of an extension to an existing bungalow at 64 Casterbridge Road, Dorchester. This requirement by West Dorset District Council, the local planning authority, was following advice from Steven Wallis, Senior Archaeologist, Dorset County Council. This is in line with Planning and Policy Guidance Note 16 (Archaeology and Planning).

The development comprises the demolition of the existing garage, then the construction of a new extension off the eastern and northern sides of the existing bungalow.

The site lies on the eastern edges of Dorchester at Ordnance Survey NGR SY 70778992. It is situated on the northern side of a ridge overlooking the Frome valley, at a height of 76 m OD. The site slopes down towards the north. The site is occupied by the existing house and garden of 64 Casterbridge Road (Figure 1). The underlying geology is mapped as Upper Chalk (Geological Survey of Great Britain 1: 50,000 Sheet 328 *Dorchester* 1981).

The fieldwork was carried out between 4th–6th February 2002.

Terrain Archaeology would like to acknowledge the help and cooperation of Mr K. G. Greening. The fieldwork was undertaken by Peter Bellamy and Paul Pearce.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The area surrounding the site is extremely rich in prehistoric remains. The eastern boundary to the garden is on the line of the bank of a large Late Neolithic henge monument, Mount Pleasant (Wainwright 1979). The site lies adjacent to Conquer Barrow, a large mound, which probably has its origins in the Late Neolithic as a possible viewing platform for the henge (Barrett 1994) and later is incorporated into a Bronze Age linear round barrow cemetery running along the crest of the ridge (Davies *et al.* in press). About 300 m to the west are the remains of the Middle Neolithic pit enclosure, known as Flagstones (Smith *et al.* 1997).

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The objective of the archaeological observations is to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on the site.

The archaeological works aimed to observe and record all the in situ archaeological deposits and features revealed during the groundworks to an appropriate professional standard.

METHODOLOGY

The observations were carried out in compliance with the specification prepared by Terrain Archaeology (Document T3072) and in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (1994, rev. 1999).

The position of the footings trenches has been taken from plans provided by the client. Any features exposed were located using taped measurements from the existing buildings. All depths have been recorded as below present ground levels.

All archaeological deposits and features exposed during the works were recorded using components of the Terrain Archaeology recording system of complementary written, drawn and photographic records.

The records have been compiled in a stable, cross-referenced and fully indexed archive in accordance with current UKIC guidelines and the requirements of the receiving museum, Dorset County Museum.

RESULTS

The area of the new extension was covered by a layer of garden soil that gradually increased in thickness towards the southeast and the tail of Conquer Barrow. A sparse scatter of worked flint was noted in this topsoil but no diagnostic material was recognised. This worked flint was not collected.

The garden soil was removed from the area of the extension, and then the footings trenches were excavated by machine down to a depth of about 0.9 m into the chalk. A roughly circular pit about 1.0 m across and 0.7 m deep was found close to the northern boundary of the site. It was filled with modern brick and tile rubble capped by orange flint gravel. This is likely to be a soakaway associated with the original construction of the bungalow.

No archaeological features were visible in the rest of the cleared area, although this was not scraped cleanly down onto the top of the underlying chalk bedrock.

CONCLUSIONS

No archaeological features other than a modern soakaway were discovered. Solid bedrock chalk was clearly visible in all footings trenches.

PROJECT ARCHIVE

The archive (Terrain Archaeology Project No. TA5102) will be deposited with Dorset County Museum, which has agreed in principle to accept the archive, subject to fulfilment of the Museum's requirements of the preparation of archaeological archives. A copy of the microfilmed archive will be deposited with the National Monuments Record.

REFERENCES

- Barrett, J. C., 1994 *Fragments from Antiquity. An archaeology of social life in Britain, 2900–1200 BC*. Oxford.



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- Smith, R. J. C., Healy, F., Allen, M. J., Morris, E. L., Barnes, I. and Woodward, P. J., 1997 *Excavations along the route of the Dorchester By-Pass, Dorset, 1986–8*. Wessex Archaeology Report 11.

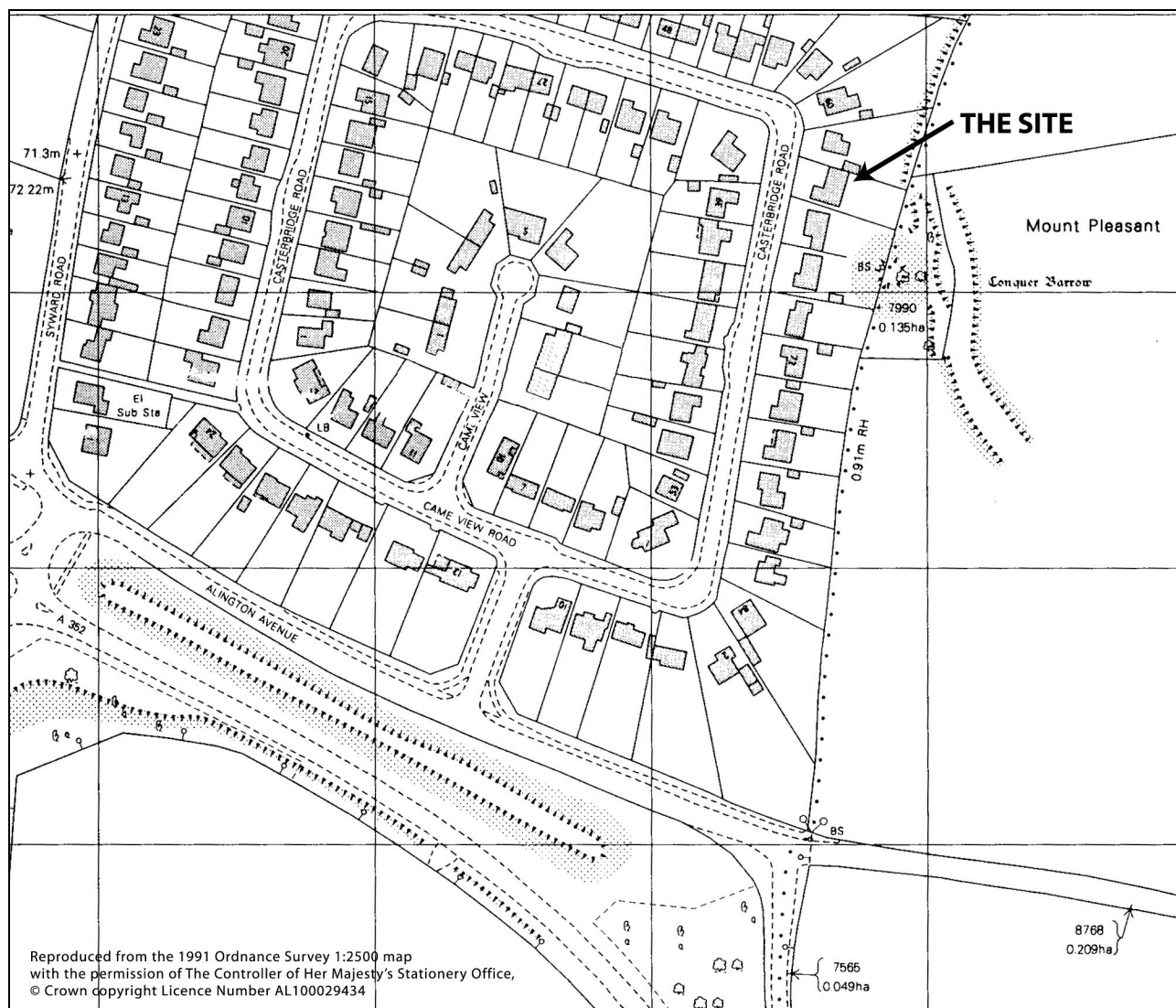


Figure 1: Location Map

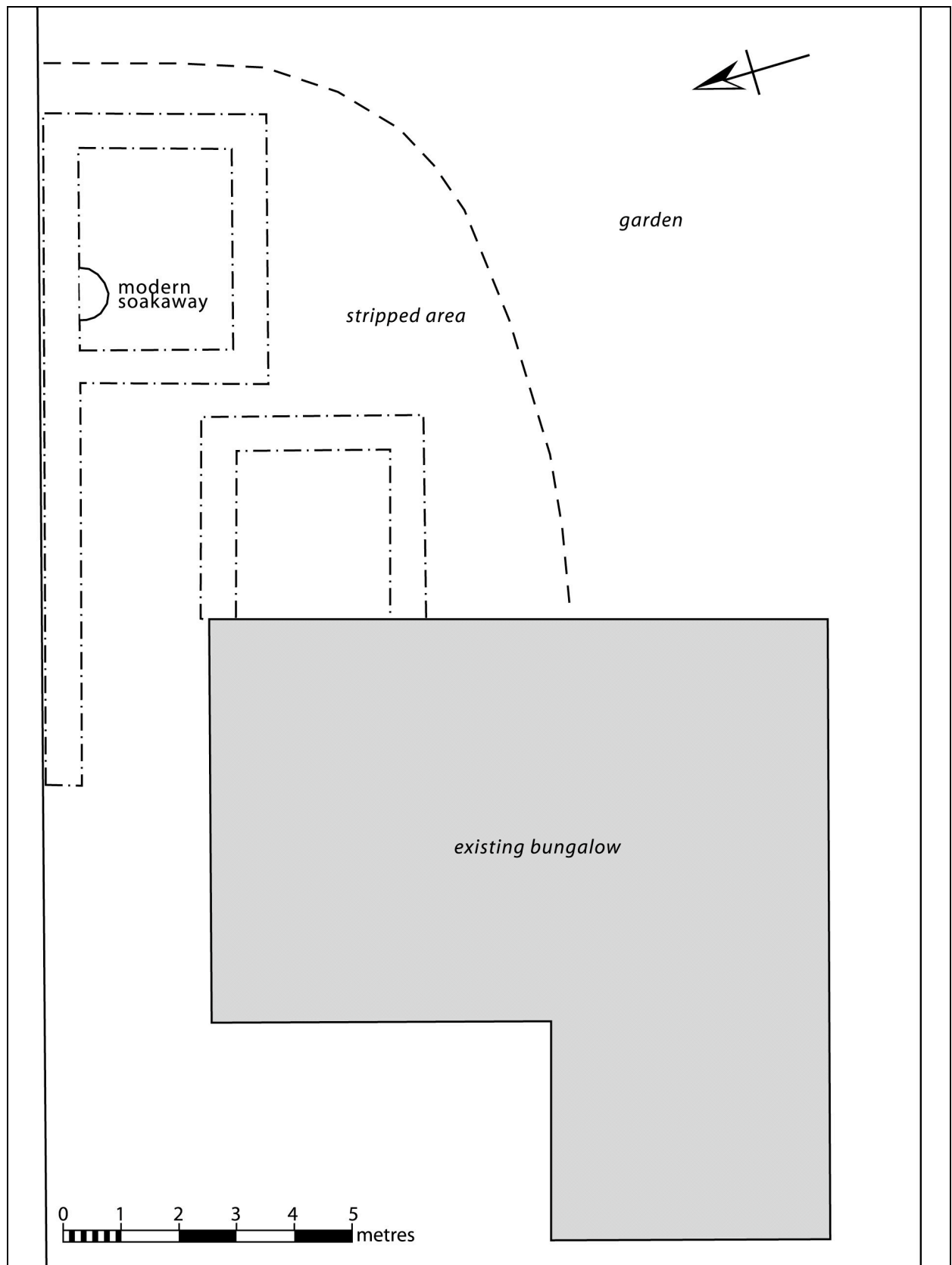


Figure 2: Plan of footings trenches and observations



Plate 1: General view of site from east



Plate 2: Footings trench in east part of site



Plate 3: Footings trench against rear of bungalow