



HANDLEY DOWN, SIXPENNY HANDLEY, DORSET
Archaeological Evaluation

Prepared on behalf of:

Vodafone Ltd

Through their agents:

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January 2001

Handley Down, Sixpenny Handley, Dorset

Archaeological Evaluation, January 2001

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Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on Handley Down, immediately adjacent to the north side of Handley Cross roundabout (SU0114216687). This was undertaken in advance of determination of planning permission for a mobile phone mast and base station. A single 5 m long machine trench was excavated. No archaeological deposits or features were encountered.

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** This project was commissioned by Vodafone Ltd, through their agents W S Atkins. Vodafone are seeking planning permission (Application 3/00/1045) for the erection of a radio mast. East Dorset District Council, the Local Planning Authority, have requested an archaeological evaluation, following advice from Steven Wallis, Senior Archaeologist, Dorset County Council, in order that the archaeological impact of the proposed works is assessed prior to determination of planning permission. This is in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (Archaeology and Planning).
- 1.2** The proposed development comprises a concrete base slab, about 8.9 m by 3.1 m across, supporting a radio mast and antennae with equipment cabin and ancillaries, surrounded by a 0.5 m wide gravel path, screened by a hedge. The power duct is to be set in a 300 mm wide and 900 mm deep trench, running southwestwards along the edge of the field and alongside the concrete farmtrack beyond (Figure 1).
- 1.3** The site (NGR SU0114216687) lies on the northern side of the Handley Cross roundabout, on the north slopes of Handley Hill, part of the chalk downland of Handley Down (Figure 1). The site is situated adjacent to the field boundary of an arable field, about 13 m from the field gate (Figure 1). The site lies at a height of about 105 m above Ordnance Datum. The solid geology is Upper Chalk (Geological Survey of England and Wales Sheet 314 *Ringwood* 1:50000 Drift 1976).
- 1.4** The fieldwork was carried out on 15th January 2001.
- 1.5** Terrain Archaeology would like to acknowledge the help and cooperation of James Shaw of W S Atkins in setting up this project and would like to thank the landowner for allowing access to the land. Terrain Archaeology is also grateful to Steve Wallis of the Dorset County Council Archaeology Service and Claire Pinder of the Dorset County Sites and Monuments Record. The fieldwork was undertaken by Rod Brook and Rebecca Montague. This report was compiled by Rebecca Montague and Peter Bellamy.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site lies within Cranborne Chase in an area rich in archaeological remains and one which has played an important part in the history of Archaeology. General Pitt Rivers pioneered many early fieldwork techniques during the 19th century, excavating sites in this area. It also formed part of a major study of the prehistoric landscape undertaken by John Barrett, Richard Bradley and Martin Green (1991) during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Martin Green has continued to discover and excavate some remarkable prehistoric sites in the vicinity (Green 2000).
- 2.2 The site is about 1 km to the west of the large Neolithic monument known as the Dorset Cursus and 600 m south of Wor Barrow, an early Neolithic long barrow excavated by Pitt Rivers and lies close to the Bronze Age barrow cemeteries of Oakley Down and Handley Hill (RCHME 1975). The nearest round barrow is about 200 m to the southwest, adjacent to Handley Cross roundabout (and can just be seen in the southwest corner of Figure 1). The Ackling Dyke Roman road from Old Sarum to Badbury Rings runs 600 m east of the site.
- 2.3 During the construction of the Handley Cross roundabout in 1976, a number of interesting features were observed (Keen 1976, 60). In the southwest quadrant, a V-shaped boundary ditch was revealed, running N-S. No dating evidence was recovered from this feature. Close by, but apparently not related to it, were two small pits filled with ashy soil. One of these pits contained a large sherd of Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age Beaker pottery and it was suggested by the excavator, L. Groube, that these might have been Beaker cremation pits.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objective of the archaeological works is to evaluate the archaeological potential of the site, that is, to appraise the nature, extent, level of preservation, and importance of any archaeological deposits.
- 3.2 The evaluation will comprise a single trench located and excavated commensurate with the aims of the evaluation.
- 3.3 The evaluation will aim to record all the *in situ* archaeological deposits and features revealed during the works in order to provide sufficient data to assess the archaeological significance of the site.

- 3.4 The results of the evaluation may be used to formulate a strategy for the preservation or management of any archaeological remains; and/or formulate an appropriate response or mitigation strategy to planning applications or other proposals which may affect adversely any such archaeological remains, or enhance them; and/or formulate a proposal for further archaeological investigation within a programme of research.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The observations were carried out in compliance with the specification prepared by Terrain Archaeology and approved by Dorset County Council's Archaeologist and in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeology's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (1994, rev. 1999).
- 4.2 The specification states that the evaluation will comprise the excavation of a single machine trench 5 m long and 1.5 m wide in the area of the proposed base slab (Figure 2).
- 4.3 The trench was located by taped measurements taken from plans provided by the client.
- 4.4 The groundworks consisted of the excavation of the trench by mechanical excavator (a wheeled JCB fitted with a toothless grading bucket) down to the top of the natural deposits. The base and sides of the trench were cleaned by hand and all deposits and features recorded using Terrain Archaeology's recording system of complementary written, drawn and photographic records.
- 4.5 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.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Trench 1

- 5.1.1. The following stratigraphic sequence was exposed: -

<i>depth</i>	<i>description</i>	<i>context numbers</i>
0 – 0.29 m	ploughsoil	101
>0.29 m	Natural chalk	102

- 5.1.2. The natural bedrock encountered was a weathered off-white chalk (102).
- 5.1.3. Three modern ploughmarks cut the chalk. Two (both c.7m long) were parallel to the edge of field and the trench (i.e., aligned NE-SW); the third, exposed for a length of c. 5m, curved out from under the western baulk, and probably represents the turning circle of the tractor. All were filled with material identical to ploughsoil 101. These modern features were not excavated, nor were they given separate context numbers.
- 5.1.4. The ploughsoil 101 was a loose and friable slightly reddish brown silty clay loam. It contained moderate quantities of weathered chalk fragments <0.04 m and chalk peagrit, and occasional flint fragments <0.10 m. The ploughsoil was deeper at the southern (upslope) end of the trench, varying between 0.20 m and 0.29 m in depth.
- 5.1.5. No finds were recovered.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The archaeological works have evaluated approximately 15% of the proposed area of development within the field. This compares well with the normal 2% sample usually applied to evaluations of this type. The size of the evaluation trench was sufficiently large to be able to recognise any discrete archaeological features that may have occurred within it. The course of the power duct beyond the limits of the field, where it runs alongside the concrete track, has not been evaluated.
- 6.2 No archaeology was encountered during the evaluation. The thinness of the ploughsoil and the presence of modern ploughmarks indicate that there may have been severe erosion of the chalk bedrock. This may have removed any shallow features, but it is likely that larger archaeological features, such as pits, would survive albeit truncated.
- 6.3 The lack of archaeological features and the very sparse occurrences of worked flint on the field surface surrounding the site suggest there was no significant past activity which has left any trace in the archaeological record, in the immediate environs of the evaluation trench, despite the fact that the site lies within a rich archaeological landscape.

7. PROJECT ARCHIVE

- 7.1 The archive (TA5072) will be deposited with the 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 microfiched archive will be deposited with the National Monuments Record.

7.2 The indexed and cross-referenced project archive consists of: –

- | | | |
|----------------|-----|--|
| File 1: | 1.1 | Written Scheme of Investigation T3048 |
| | 1.2 | Report 5072.1 |
| | 1.3 | Trench record |
| | 1.4 | Drawing register |
| | 1.5 | Photographic register and monochrome contact sheet |
| File 2: | 2.1 | Monochrome negatives |
| | 2.2 | Colour transparencies |
| File 3: | | Drawings |

8. REFERENCES

- Barrett, J. C., Bradley, R. and Green, M., 1991 *Landscape, Monuments and Society: The prehistory of Cranborne Chase*, Cambridge University Press.
- Green, M., 2000 *A Landscape Revealed: 10,000 years on a Chalkland Farm*. Tempus.
- Keen, L. J. (comp), 1976 'Dorset Archaeology in 1976' *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeology Society* **98**, 54-62.
- RCHME 1975 = Royal Commission on Historical Monuments of England *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in the County of Dorset*, **5**, East Dorset

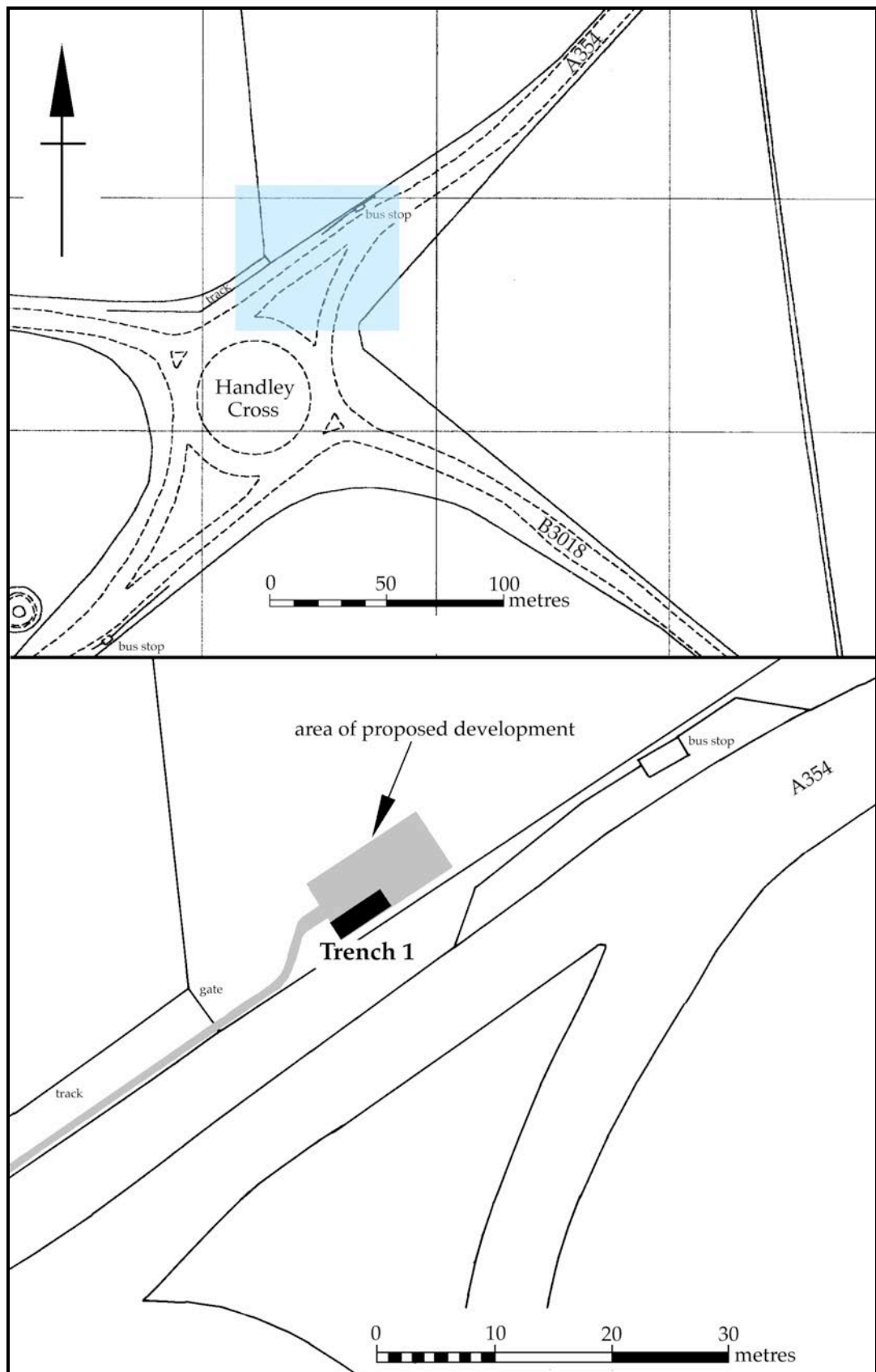


Figure 1: Location map (based on plans provided by the client)

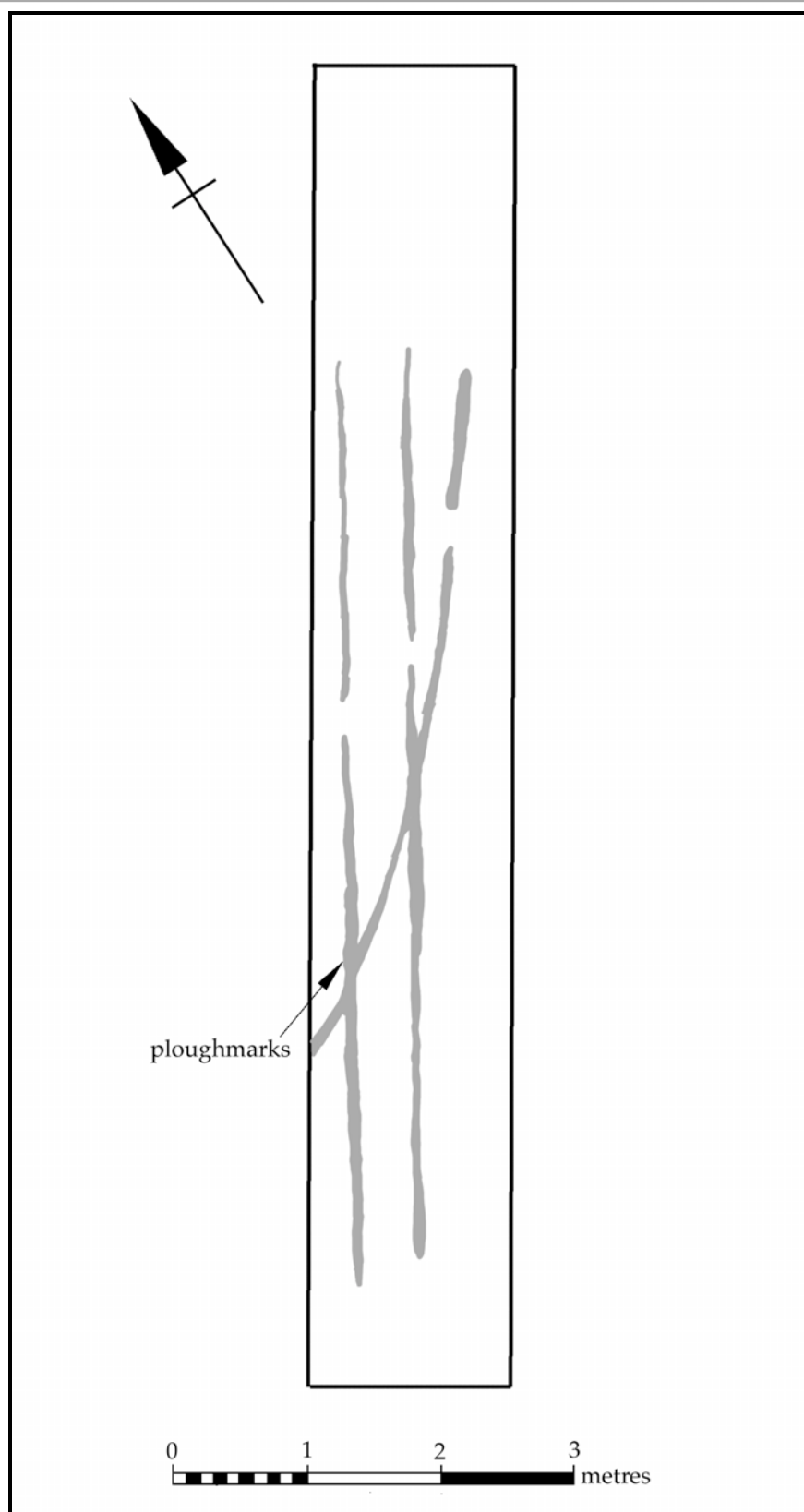


Figure 2: Plan of Trench 1