



**DURLSTON LAND-SLIP SEWER REINSTATEMENT,
SWANAGE, DORSET
Archaeological Observations**

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**Durlston Land-Slip Sewer Reinstatement, Swanage,
Dorset
Archaeological Observations, August – September 2001**

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Durlston Land-Slip Sewer Reinstatement, Swanage, Dorset

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SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was carried out during works to replace foul and storm water sewers on a new alignment to the south of the flats and chalets at Hill Crest, between Purbeck Heights and the pump house at Durlston Road. No archaeological features or deposits were observed other than the evidence of landscaping activity of probable 20th Century date.

INTRODUCTION

This project was commissioned by Wessex Water, following advice from Steven Wallis, Senior Archaeologist, Dorset County Council.

The C7599 Durlston land-slip sewer reinstatement works required the excavation of two trenches, for the replacement of foul water and storm water drains to the rear of "Hill Crest", Durlston Road, Swanage (Figure 1). The site is approximately centred on O.S. Grid ref. SZ0330678026.

The foul water sewer trench comprised an almost straight run of c. 120 m between existing manholes to the south of both nos. 1 & 2 Hill Crest and Purbeck Heights.

The storm water sewer was to be 2 m to the south of the foul sewer along its eastern part, with a new manhole adjacent to that at the western end of the foul sewer. From this point the trench dog-legged to the south for 45 m before returning to the west for some 60 m to terminate at the rear of the pump house.

The foul sewer trench was c. 0.45 m wide and approximately 1.20 m deep, while that for the storm water was c. 0.60 m wide and varied in depth from 1.20 m to approximately 3 m.

The site lies at a height of between c. 40 m and 50 m above Ordnance Datum, on the south-facing slope of an east-west aligned coombe in the bottom of which is a small, seasonally active watercourse that flows west to east. The underlying geology is mapped as Middle Purbeck Beds (Geological Survey of England and Wales Sheet 343 *Swanage* 1:50000 Solid & Drift).

The fieldwork was carried out between 13th August and 5th September 2001.

Terrain Archaeology would like to thank Bruce McAuslane of Wessex Water for his help during this project and would also like to acknowledge the help and cooperation of the contractors on site. The project was managed by Peter Bellamy and the fieldwork was carried out by Paul Pearce. Pottery identification was by Jo Draper.



ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The only recorded archaeology in the vicinity of the site are the eight inhumation burials of probable Roman date discovered in 1904 during construction work near the cliff edge at the end of Belle Vue Road (RCHME1970, 612).

The site appears to have been developed between 1887 and 1900, when the area was landscaped for gardens. The first houses on the upper reaches of the coombe were constructed between 1902 and 1926.

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 Terrain Archaeology's method statement T3060 (July 2001) and in accordance the Institute of Field Archaeology's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (1994, rev. 1999).

The open-cut trenches were excavated by tracked excavator equipped with a toothed bucket, directly from the existing turf, no easement being stripped prior to excavation of the trenches themselves.

The deeper parts were excavated using a portable box or a frame and sheets to prevent collapse of the trench sides.

All the groundworks were observed archaeologically during excavation, with additional recovery of artefactual material from the spoil where practical.

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

A small number of features associated with the 20th Century landscaping of the gardens were seen, and are noted in the archive.

No significant archaeological features or deposits of earlier periods were observed during the works.

A series of poorly defined undulations in the upper surface of the underlying clay were noted beneath the modern overburden towards the eastern end of the foul sewer trench. These occurred at intervals of 2.5 to 3 m, and were up to 0.75 m deep. There appeared to be a slightly greater proportion of stone within the depressions. No artefacts could be located within any of these features and it is uncertain whether these are of natural origin or man made.

A small number of artefacts were recovered from the trenches, none of which could be assigned to obvious archaeological deposits. The pottery recovered included one late medieval sherd, one 16th/17th century sherd and a number of sherds of post-medieval earthenwares. The only other noteworthy finds were two patinated flint scrapers with fine semi-abrupt retouch along the margins. No other worked flint was recognised. Modern material (including a lawnmower) was not recovered.

It is not certain if the finds recovered derive from in the immediate vicinity, as there is a possibility that the topsoil was imported to the site as part of the landscaping of the area.

CONCLUSIONS

All groundworks were observed and no significant archaeological features or deposits were revealed.

The Roman burials discovered at the end of Belle Vue Road in 1904 were situated on the crest of a pronounced ridge, of which the present site occupies the southern slopes. It is likely that the steepness of the slope and the presence of heavy clay subsoil close to the surface will have precluded intense activity until the recent past when the current episode of residential development commenced.

PROJECT ARCHIVE

The archive (Terrain Archaeology Project No. TA5083) 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.

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

- File 1:**
 - 1.1 Archive Index
 - 1.2 Specification T3060
 - 1.3 Report 5083.1
 - 1.4 Field Notes
 - 1.5 Photographic register
 - 1.6 Monochrome contact sheet
- File 2:**
 - 2.1 Monochrome negatives
 - 2.2 Colour transparencies
- Finds:** No Finds retained

REFERENCES

- RCHME 1970 = Royal Commission on Historical Monuments of England *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in the County of Dorset* 2 South-east.

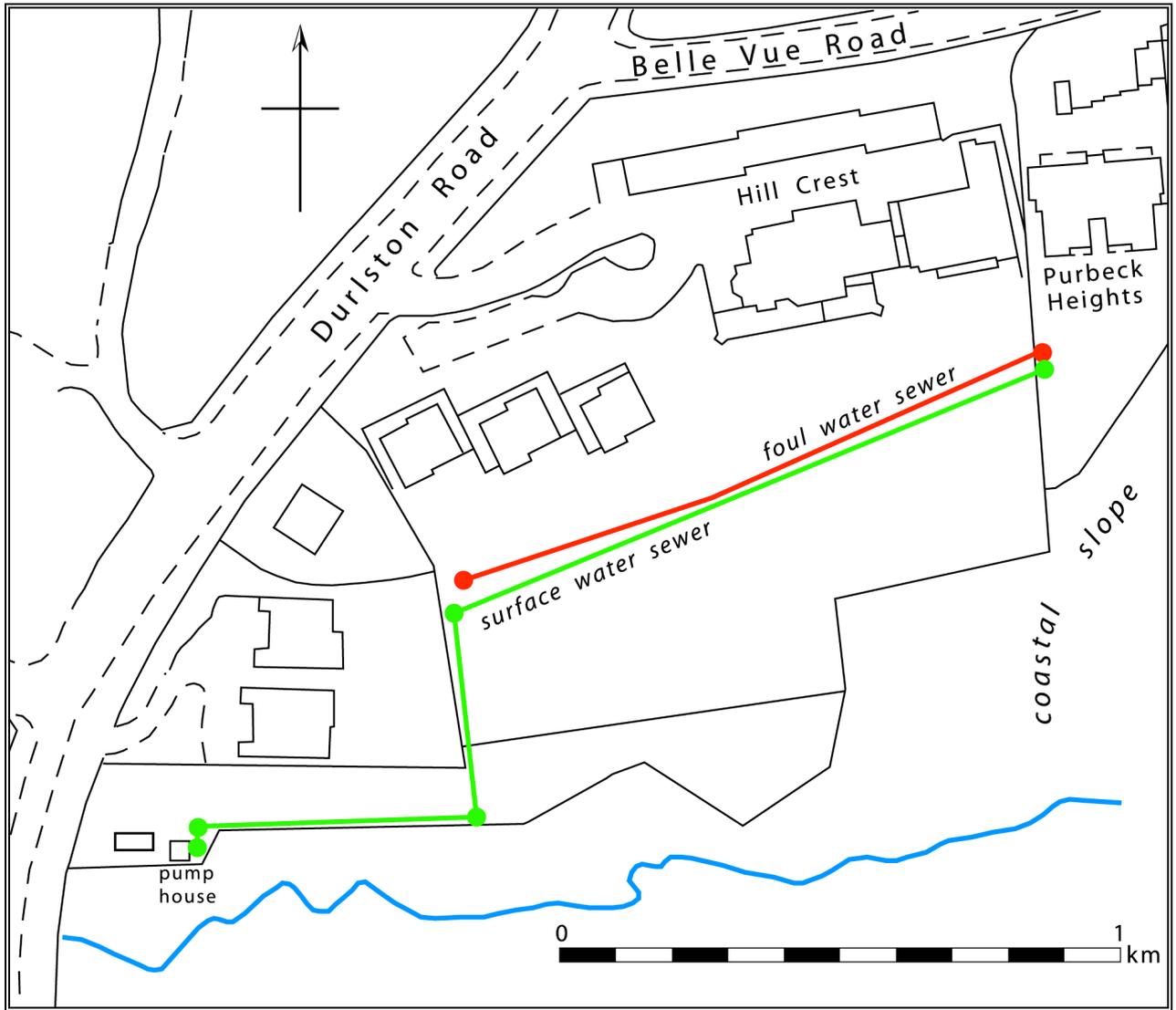


Figure 1: Location Map (from a plan supplied by Wessex Water)