



**PROOS ROOFING SUPPLIES, RIGLER ROAD,
HAMWORTHY, POOLE
Archaeological Observations**



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Proos Roofing Supplies, Rigler Road, Hamworthy, Poole Archaeological Observations, September 2001

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SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was carried out during works on the east side of Rigler Road, Hamworthy. Two large parallel ditches oriented NE/SW, were revealed. These are thought to belong to the defences of a Roman fort — part of a possible Roman military supply base on the peninsula, servicing the legionary fortress at Lake Farm near Wimborne. The ditches were filled in by the early 2nd century AD. The scarcity of finds suggests that this was not a densely occupied part of the peninsula during the Roman period.

No evidence of the Civil War fort thought to lie in the Rigler Road area was discovered.

INTRODUCTION

This project was commissioned by Rhinus Ltd, through their agent Stephen Williams of Goodyear & Williams. Following an archaeological desk-based assessment of the site by Terrain Archaeology (2001), an archaeological watching brief was requested by Poole Borough Council, the local planning authority, as part of the planning condition for the development. This request, following advice from Keith Jarvis, Borough of Poole Planning Archaeologist, is in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (Archaeology and Planning).

The proposed development consists of the extension of the buildings to the north and to the west of the present buildings (Figure 1), Parts of the new construction will be carried on the existing foundations and the rest will be on concrete pad and strip footings.

The site lies on the east side of Rigler Road to the north of Blandford Road on the northern side of the Hamworthy peninsula. The topography is flat and low-lying at about 3.2 m above OD. The underlying geology is mapped as Poole Formation deposits of the Bracklesham Group overlain by drift deposits (British Geological Survey 1:50000 Sheet 329 *Bournemouth* 1991). The Site probably lies on Second level River Terrace deposits of flint gravel, often very sandy, with Oakdale clay and sand deposits underneath.

The fieldwork was carried out between 7th – 13th September 2001.

Terrain Archaeology would like to thank Stephen Williams of Goodyear & Williams and Simon Gregory of Sibbett Gregory for their help in setting up this project. The archaeological recording was made immeasurably easier by the interest and cooperation of the groundwork contractors, Launder Construction. The project has benefited from the help, advice and information provided by Keith Jarvis, the Borough of Poole planning archaeologist. The fieldwork was carried out by Peter Bellamy. Pottery identification was by Jo Draper FSA.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The archaeological setting of the site has been set out in detail in the desk-based assessment (Terrain Archaeology 2001a) and will not be repeated here except in summary.

Significant finds of late Iron Age and Roman archaeology have been found on the Hamworthy peninsula. Lower Hamworthy has been proposed as the site of a Late Iron Age port and as a supply base for the Roman military. There is a Roman road from Hamworthy, leading to the legionary fortress at Lake Farm, near Wimborne, which probably passes just to the south of the site (Figure 1). The defences of a probable Roman military fort or similar structure have been found at Shapwick Road (Terrain Archaeology 2001b) about 250 m to the south of the site.

It is known that a fort was constructed in Hamworthy during the Civil War (Bayley 1910), but its precise location is not known, H. P. Smith (1951, 142) reports that some large blocks of shaped stone were found in the garden of one of the houses in the Rigler Avenue (sic) area, which he believed belonged to the Civil War fort.

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 T3058) and approved by the Borough of Poole Planning Archaeologist and also in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (1994, rev. 1999).

The groundworks to the north of the existing buildings were numbered Trench 1 and those to the south of the boiler room were numbered Trench 2.

The position of the footings trenches and any archaeological 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

Trench 1

Trench 1 lay to the north of the existing buildings. It comprised a single strip footings trench 0.8 m wide which ran for 9 m north from an existing concrete pad to the north of the boiler room, then 24.7 m east, parallel to the existing building, before returning to meet the north wall of the building (Figure 2). It was dug to an average depth of 1.2 m. Much of the western part of this trench was disturbed by recent activity.

Natural deposits

Natural sand and gravel (102), varying in colour from pale yellow to orange, was encountered between about 0.9–1.1 m below present ground levels across most of the area of the trench.

Ditch 107

The upper fills of a large feature (107), about 8.1 m wide and oriented SW/NE was exposed in the northern part of the trench (Figure 2; Plate 1). This feature was not excavated but investigation of the edges showed that it had fairly steeply sloping sides cut into the natural sand. A number of different fills were noted in plan. In the central part of this ditch was a dark greyish brown sandy silt layer with occasional charcoal flecks and some fragments of briquetage (103). To the west, and probably underlying 103 was a layer of mid brown sandy silt (105) with charcoal flecks, pottery, briquetage, and fired clay fragments. On the western edge of the ditch was a layer of grey sandy silt (106). On the eastern edge was a layer of brownish grey sandy silt (104), which appeared to be underlying context 103.

Ditch 109

In the southeast corner of the trench, the sloping edge of another cut (109), oriented SW/NE, was discovered (Figure 2). Only a very small part of the edge of this feature was exposed as it was partially disturbed by later services (Plate 2). This feature was cut into the natural sand and was filled with dark grey brown sandy silt (108). No finds were recovered.

Later deposits

Sealing both ditches 107 and 109 and lying directly on top of the natural sand was an extensive layer of dark brown sandy silt (101), which survived up to 0.6 m thick below the recent disturbance (101). Occasional fragments of briquetage were noted in this layer, which probably represents agricultural soil build-up subsequent to the Roman period.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was a 0.8 m wide footings trench running for 13 m south from the southwest corner of the boiler room, then running eastwards for 9.7 m, before returning northwards to join the southeast corner of the boiler room.

Natural deposits

Orange to yellow natural sand and gravel (202) was encountered between about 0.7–1.0 m below present ground levels across most of the area of the trench.

Ditch 206

A ditch roughly 7.7 m wide and oriented SW/NE was found running across Trench 2 (Figure 2). It was on the same line as ditch 107 and is assumed to be part of the same feature. Only the upper surface of this ditch was exposed on the east and west sides of the trench, but it was excavated to a depth of 0.8 m along the south side (Plate 3). The base of the ditch was not reached. The full details of the exposed stratigraphy were difficult to identify, as there was fairly heavy diesel contamination.

This ditch had steeply sloping sides and was filled with a series of sandy layers with sandy silts above (Figure 3). On the eastern edge was a thin layer of dark grey sand (212) and on the western side was a series of thin layers dipping down into the centre of the ditch. The lowest

layer was a fairly clean grey sand (211) with a 0.15 m thick layer of grey brown sand (210) above, then a 0.1 m thick very dark brown, almost black, sand layer (209) and a 0.3 m thick layer of brownish grey sand (208) above. These layers and layer 212 were covered by a grey sand (207), which spread across the whole width of the ditch. Above this was a 0.35 m thick layer of brown sandy silt (203/205) with occasional charcoal flecks. The uppermost ditch fill was a 0.55 m thick layer of dark brown sandy silt (204) with moderate charcoal flecks. A small quantity of Romano-British pottery (including one early 2nd century sherd) and briquetage was recovered from the upper fills (203, 204). The lower fills were devoid of artefacts.

Later deposits

Sealing ditch 206 and lying directly on top of the natural sand was an extensive layer of dark brown sandy silt (201), which survived up to 0.6 m thick below the recent disturbance (201). This layer probably represents agricultural soil build-up subsequent to the Roman period.

Finds

Only a very small quantity of finds was recovered. The total finds assemblage is presented in Table 1.

Context	Pottery		Briquetage		Fired clay		Slag	
	No.	Wt (g)	No.	Wt (g)	No.	Wt (g)	No.	Wt (g)
105	1	2	2	11	2	6		
107	3	18	4	33				
203	2	33	1	4				
204	3	9					1	4
<i>total</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>62</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>48</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>4</i>

Table 1: Total finds assemblage by context and material type

Pottery

Nine sherds (62 g) of coarse pottery were recovered from the watching brief. The assemblage consists largely of eroded body sherds of Black-burnished ware, impossible to date closely within the Romano-British period. One sherd may possibly date to the Late Iron Age.

Two sherds (both from context 203) are from identifiable vessels — a straight-sided dish (undatable) and a bowl with an everted rim and slight lid-seating. These bowls change form rapidly over time, and this one correlates well with Greyhound Yard type 59 (Woodward *et al.* 1993), dated to the earlier 2nd century both at Greyhound Yard, Dorchester and at the Bath House site, Dorchester. The example from Rigler Road seems to be plain; they are known with excised lines externally.

Other Finds

A total of seven sherds of briquetage were recovered from the observations. The pieces are too small to be certain of the form of the containers but they come from fairly thin vessels with wall thicknesses between 6–10 mm.

The baked or fired clay recovered comprised small unidentifiable fragments, probably fragments of clay lining of hearths or kilns.

A single small piece of fuel ash slag was recovered from ditch fill 204.

CONCLUSIONS

The observations have produced evidence for two parallel ditches oriented NE/SW and spaced 10 m apart. The western ditch (107/206) was 8.1 m wide and over 0.8 m deep. Too little of the eastern ditch was exposed to be certain of its dimensions but it is assumed to be on a similar scale and that both form part of the same feature. The only dating evidence comes from the uppermost ditch fills, indicating that the ditches were filled up by the early 2nd century AD.

These ditches are thought to be part of the defences of a Roman fort or similar. This interpretation is based largely on a comparison with discoveries at Shapwick Road, Hamworthy, about 250 m to the south of the present site. Here, two parallel 8 m wide ditches, spaced 10 m apart, have been discovered (Terrain Archaeology 2001b). These ditches ran for a distance of over 110 m in a NW/SE direction, i.e. at 90° to the Rigler Road ditches. Both ditches at Shapwick Road were about 2 m deep and were filled with clean sands with sandy silt tertiary fills above. The material recovered suggested a date of AD43–65, perhaps being finally filled up by the end of the 1st century AD or the beginning of the 2nd century AD. The striking similarity between the ditches on both sites suggests that they are elements of the same structure.

The scale of these features indicates that they are likely to be part of some defensive structure and the dating evidence from Shapwick Road strongly suggests that it belongs to the Roman invasion period. The Shapwick Road evidence has fixed the location of the southern side of this structure and the importance of the Rigler Road discoveries is that it has fixed the position of the western side, thus confirming that it was not a linear feature but was either square or rectangular. The location of the eastern and northern sides are unknown at present, though observations by Terrain Archaeology during the digging of a gas pipe trench along Blandford road in September 2001 noted an anomaly in the area of 28 Blandford Road, which may indicate the course of the eastern side of the ditch. A proposed reconstruction of the defensive circuit is shown in Figure 4 with sides 270 m long, enclosing an area of about 7.3 hectares. There has been virtually no excavation within the interior to enable a proper examination of its internal features and arrangement, so its interpretation as a fort must still remain tentative. The small quantity of finds present on the Rigler Road site suggests that there was not any intensive activity within this part of the enclosure.

The fort is part of a possible Roman military supply base on the peninsula, servicing the legionary fortress at Lake Farm near Wimborne. The port itself probably lay near the end of the peninsula, most likely in the area of former embayment marked on the early maps of the Hamworthy peninsula. The port was linked to the fortress at Lake Farm by a Roman road. The fortress at Lake Farm appears to have been occupied between AD43–65 and the Hamworthy fort appears to have been in use for exactly the same period.

All the archaeology identified on the site could be dated to the Roman period. There was no trace of the 17th century Civil War fort; in fact, there was no evidence for any activity on the site between the Roman period and the 20th century development of Rigler Road. It is perhaps not surprising that the Civil War fort was not discovered, as the evidence for the fort in this location is rather circumstantial and perhaps not very reliable. Also, it does not seem to be the most likely position for a fort on the Hamworthy peninsula.

PROJECT ARCHIVE

The archive (Terrain Archaeology Project No. TA5085) will be deposited with Poole Museums Service, 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 Specifications and Correspondence
 - 1.3 Archaeological Assessment report 5080.1
 - 1.4 Written Scheme of Investigation T3058
 - 1.5 Watching Brief Report 5085.1
 - 1.6 Trench Record
 - 1.7 Context Record
 - 1.8 Context Finds Record
 - 1.9 Drawing Register
 - 1.10 Drawings
 - 1.11 Photographic Register
 - 1.12 Monochrome contact sheet
- File 2:**
- 2.1 Monochrome negatives
 - 2.2 Colour transparencies

REFERENCES

- Bayley, A. R., 1910 *The Civil War in Dorset 1642-1660*.
- Smith, H. P., 1951 *History of the Borough and County of the Town of Poole, 2, County Corporate Status*, Poole.
- Terrain Archaeology 2001a Rigler Road, Hamworthy, Poole: Preliminary Archaeological Assessment. Terrain Archaeology report no. 5080.1. unpublished.
- Terrain Archaeology 2001b Shapwick Road, Hamworthy, Poole: Interim report on archaeological excavation and observations during phase 2 drainage works. Terrain Archaeology report no. 5050.4. unpublished.
- Woodward, P. J., Davies, S. M., and Graham, A. H., 1993 *Excavations at Greyhound Yard, Dorchester 1981–4* Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society Monograph No. 12.

Appendix 1: List of all contexts

Context	Filled with / Fill of	Description	Interpretation
100	--	Mixed layer of dark brown loam, flint gravels, concrete, hoggin, etc	Modern disturbance
101	-	Friable mid to dark brown sandy silt with 10% flint gravels. Occasional briquetage fragments.	Agricultural soil build-up
102	--	Fairly hard orange to pale yellow sand with 10–20% flint gravel. Variable in colour and gravel content.	Natural sands and gravels
103	107	Friable dark grey brown sandy silt with 5% small flint gravel, sparse flint nodules, and occasional charcoal flecks. Contains briquetage and baked clay fragments.	Upper fill of ditch 107 (not excavated)
104	107	Friable brownish grey sandy silt with 15% flint gravel and occasional charcoal flecks.	Fill in eastern side of ditch 107 (not excavated)
105	107	Friable mid brown sandy silt with 10% flint gravel and nodules, and moderate charcoal flecks. Contains pottery, briquetage and baked clay fragments.	Fill in western side of ditch 107 (not excavated)
106	107	Friable grey sandy silt with 20% flint gravel.	Fill in western edge of ditch 107 (not excavated)
Ditch 107	103 – 106	Linear ditch, oriented NE/SW. Upper edges of cut are fairly steeply sloping.	Outer ditch of Roman fort. (same as 206). Not excavated.
108	109	Friable dark grey brown sandy silt with 10% flint gravels.	Fill of ditch 109 (not excavated)
Ditch 109	108	Linear ditch oriented NE/SW. Not excavated.	Inner ditch of Roman fort.
200	--	Mixed layer of dark brown loam, flint gravels, concrete, etc	Modern disturbance
201	--	Friable mid to dark brown sandy silt with 10% flint gravels.	Agricultural soils
202	-	Fairly hard orange to pale yellow sand with 10–20% flint gravel.	Natural sands and gravels
203	206	Fairly compact brown sandy silt with 20% flint gravel, and occasional charcoal flecks. Contains pottery and baked clay fragments	Tertiary fill on west side of ditch 206
204	206	Fairly compact dark brown sandy silt with 20% flint gravel, and moderate charcoal flecks.	Upper fill of ditch 206
205	206	Fairly compact brown sandy silt with 20% flint gravel and occasional charcoal flecks.	Tertiary fill on east side of ditch 206
Ditch 206	203–205, 207–213	Linear ditch oriented NE/SW with steeply sloping sides. Not fully excavated.	Outer ditch of Roman fort. (same as 107)
207	206	Friable grey sand with 10% flint gravels.	Tertiary fill in ditch 206
208	206	Friable brownish grey sand with 10% flint gravel.	Fill on west side of ditch 206
209	206	Friable very dark brown to black sand.	Fill on west side of ditch 206
210	206	Friable grey brown sand with 10% flint gravel.	Fill on west side of ditch 206
211	206	Friable grey sand with 10% flint gravel	Secondary fill on west side of ditch 206
212	206	Friable dark grey sand with 10% flint gravel	Secondary fill on east side of ditch 206
213	206	Fairly compact brown sandy silt with 20% flint gravel and occasional charcoal flecks.	Tertiary fill of ditch 206, probably the same as 205