

Forston Contact Tank Protection, Charminster, Dorset.

An Archaeological Watching Brief.



CONTEXT ONE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES LTD

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Forston Contact Tank Protection, Charminster, Dorset.

An Archaeological Watching Brief

for

Wessex Water plc

by

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Non-technical summary

Context One Archaeological Services Ltd carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief at Forston WTW, Charminster, Dorset, over 10 days between the 3rd and the 14th of December 2007, during the groundworks for a new contact tank. This was preceded by the observation of five small geotechnical pits on the site of the proposed tank in June 2007. The project was commissioned and funded by Wessex Water plc.

The investigation was requested by Mr Steve Wallis (County Archaeologist, Dorset County Council), following a consultation request by Ms Katie Dunmore (Environmental Scientist, Wessex Water plc).

The watching brief has recovered evidence for settlement or other activity on the Site dating broadly to the Roman period. The centre of the Site is some 60m to the north of a probable Romano-British villa, and it seems reasonable to assume that the features recorded during the watching brief are associated with this building. The recovery of ceramic building material and limestone roof tile during the watching brief strengthens this association. The finds recovered from the Site also indicate activity from the late Iron Age, and this too accords with the evidence for earlier excavation of the villa site.

There are no indications as to the function of the excavated features and none of the finds suggest specific agricultural or industrial uses. In addition, the absence of any overall plan from previous excavation of the 'villa' building means that its location relative to the watching brief features can not be established. It is not possible to suggest, therefore, how the excavated features might be located relative to domestic and agricultural elements of the 'villa'.

All of the excavated features were buried beneath a significant depth of subsoil that has accumulated along the lower slopes and bottom of the river valley. The history and formation of this deposit is not known, but it may be a product of the intense medieval farming and settlement in the valley. One effect of this has been to blanket earlier 'sites' on the lower slopes making them difficult or impossible to detect through aerial photography.

1. Introduction

1.1. Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief at Forston WTW, Charminster, Dorset (centred on NGR SY 66690 94947) (hereafter referred to as the Site), over 10 days between the 3rd and the 14th of December 2007, during the groundworks for a new contact tank. This was preceded by the observation of five small geotechnical pits on the site of the proposed tank in June 2007. The project was commissioned and funded by Wessex Water plc.

1.2. The investigation was requested by Mr Steve Wallis (County Archaeologist, Dorset County Council), following a consultation request by Ms Katie Dunmore (Environmental Scientist, Wessex Water plc). In a letter from Mr Wallis (dated 1st November 2006), it was stated that:

"...a Roman building, almost certainly a villa, has been recorded in the field just to the south [of the proposed development area]. Roman villas were often the centres of extensive complexes of buildings and other activity...Hence, if the land is to be developed, I would advise that some form of archaeological mitigation was required, perhaps archaeological monitoring of topsoil stripping followed by excavation if necessary."

1.3. Given the recorded archaeological data for the environs, it was considered that archaeological features/deposits could be present on the Site, and that these would be damaged or destroyed by the development. However, as the nature or presence of such features/deposits had not been proven on the basis of currently available information, it was determined that a reasonable archaeological response would be to carry out a Watching Brief during all ground disturbance

1.4. At the request of Wessex Water, COAS issued a *Written Scheme of Investigation for An Archaeological Watching Brief: Forston Contact Tank Protection, Dorset* (COAS November 2007), which provided a strategy for the archaeological works. This was submitted to and approved by Mr Wallis prior to the commencement of the Watching Brief.

1.5. The request for the archaeological work follows advice given by Central Government as set out in *Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 (PPG1), General Policy and Principles*, 1997 and *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning* (PPG 16) issued by the DoE in 1990. The recommendation also conforms to Policies SA24 of the *West Dorset District Local Plan* (adopted 2006) and Policy CD17 of the *West Dorset District Local Plan* (adopted 1998).

1.6. This report summarises the topographical, geological, archaeological setting of the site, and presents the results of the excavation.

2. Definition and objectives of a Watching Brief

2.1. An Archaeological Watching Brief is defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) as:

"...a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. This will be within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological

deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report and ordered archive.” (IFA rev.1999).

2.2. The purpose of a Watching Brief is also defined by the IFA as:

“To allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works.

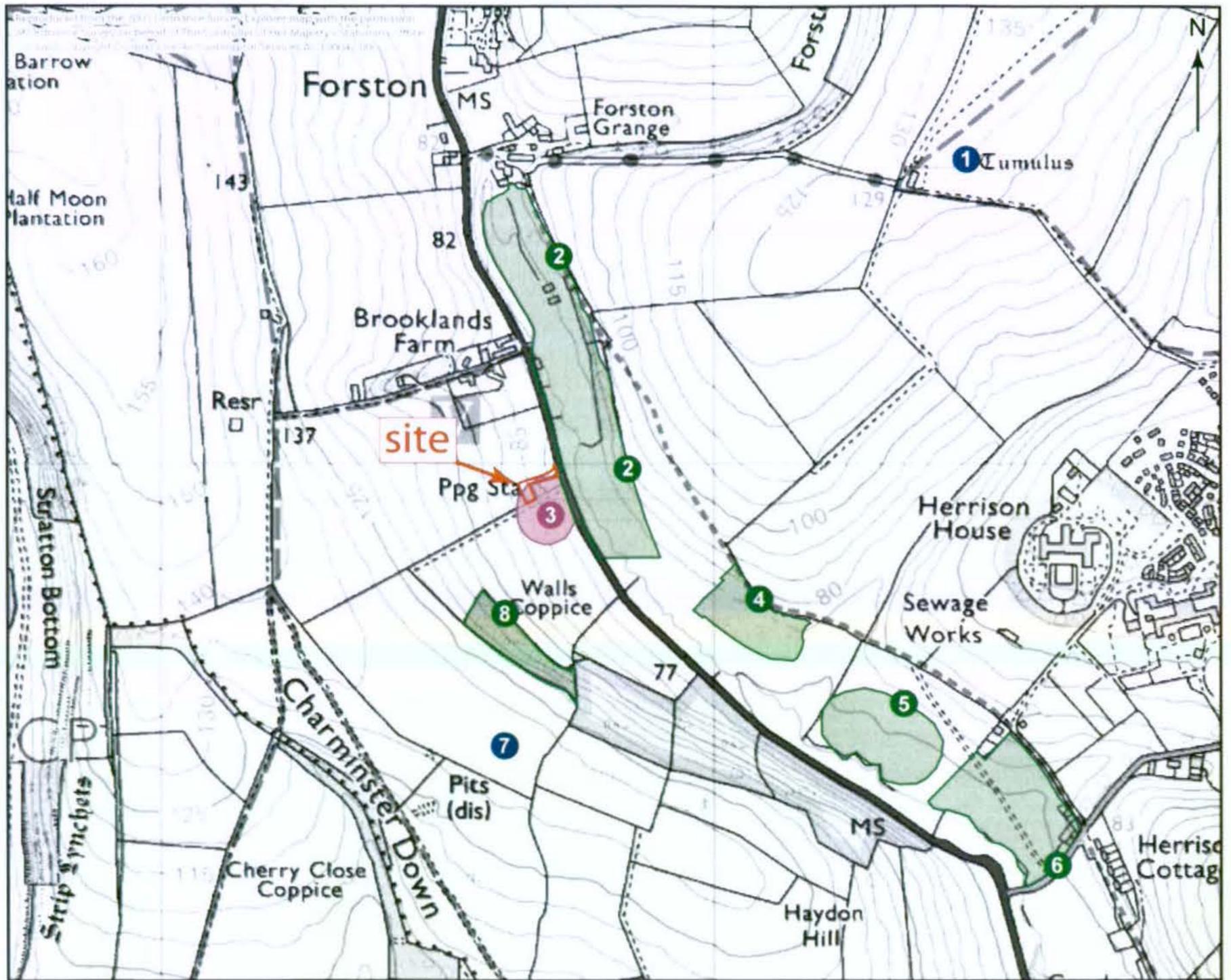
To provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the Watching Brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.” (IFA rev. 1999)

2.3. The results of a watching brief are used to:

- produce a record of the location, nature and date of any archaeological remains encountered on the Site;
- add to the knowledge about the previous history of activity on the current site and its surroundings; and
- Provide information to influence planning decisions in the area.

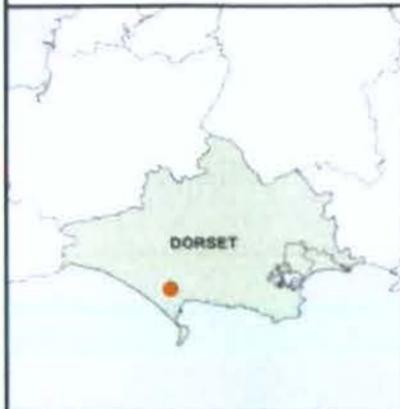
3. Site location, topography and geology

3.1. The Site (centred on NGR ST 06695 43390) is situated approximately 2.5 km north of Charminster on the west edge of the valley of the River Cerne (**Figure 1**). The valley side at this point faces north-east and rises from about 80m AOD on the valley floor to approximately 140m some 700m to the south-west. The Site is located close to the valley floor between 80m and 85m AOD. The underlying geology is chalk.



- | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|------------------------------|------------|
| 1. | DSMR 1028 33 | bowl barrow (SAM 458) | ● undated |
| 2. | DSMR 1028 22 A and 1028 028 B | settlement remains (extents) | ● Roman |
| 3. | DSMR 1028 29 | Roman villa | ● medieval |
| 4. | DSMR 1028 22 B | settlement remains (extents) | |
| 5. | DSMR 1028 23 | settlement remains (extents) | |
| 6. | DSMR 1028 24 | settlement remains (extents) | |
| 7. | DSMR 1028 31 | bowl barrow | |
| 8. | DSMR 1028 028 D | strip lynchets (extents) | |

0 1km



PROJECT TITLE
Forston Contact Tank Protection,
Forston, Dorset

FIGURE TITLE
Site setting and relevant SMR

SCALE
as shown

PROJECT CODE
COAS/WBF/07/FCD

FIGURE NO.
1

4. Archaeological background

- 4.1. The archaeological background for the Site has been drawn principally from secondary sources. This comprises records held by Dorset County Council as part of the Sites and Monuments Record and other published and unpublished secondary sources. The principal items and areas of interest are located on **Figure 1**, with other specific finds referred to in the text as appropriate. Full details of sites and monuments in the vicinity of the Site can be seen in **Appendix 2**.
- 4.2. As noted by the Senior Archaeologist at Dorset County Council when commenting on the proposed works, a substantial Roman building (DSMR Charminster No. 29), probably a villa, is located in the field immediately to the south of the Site. The precise location and extent of this structure - it is useful to think of it as a farm house with adjacent barns and possibly industrial buildings, perhaps around a farmyard - is not known¹, but structural remains were located within 50m of the Site boundary. Such complexes of buildings can easily occupy 1ha of land, so there was good reason to believe that important archaeological remains might be located within the area of the works.
- 4.3. Archaeological work in the 1890s first established the presence of the building and located a polychrome mosaic floor. Subsequent excavation, in 1960, did not relocate the mosaic but did find flint walls, a furnace flue, hypocaust tile and wall plaster all suggesting the presence of a villa. Associated finds indicated occupation of the building during the 2nd - 4th centuries AD. Iron Age pottery was also recovered suggesting that the villa may have been pre-dated by earlier occupation. An inhumation was also located during the later work.
- 4.4. The valley is also characterised by deserted medieval settlements (e.g. DSMR Charminster No. 22 A and B, No. 23 & No. 24)- which may be of Saxon origin - and their associated fields. The later are characterised by substantial strip lynchets organised in blocks, or furlongs (e.g. DSMR Charminster No. 28 D).

5. Methodology

Wessex Water Methodology

- 5.1. The initial phase of work (June 2007) consisted of the excavation of five small geotechnical test pits with a JCB fitted with a 0.5m toothless bucket (**Figure 2**). The pits measured 1.5m x 0.5m in plan and were excavated to a depth of between 1m and 2.5m below ground level.
- 5.2. A temporary 'L-shaped' construction compound was set out around the north and west side of the existing Water Treatment Works (WTW) at the commencement of the construction phase (December 2007) with dimensions of approximately 48m north-south x 88m east-west (**Figure 2**). This allowed for construction of the permanent works as well as temporary storage of material such as topsoil.

1 The details provided in the interim report on the excavation (PDNHAS 82, 86-87) are rather vague - the locations from which the offsets were measured are not given - and do not allow accurate location of the site. However, it does appear to be approximately 30m to the south-west of the position illustrated on the OS 1:2500 map.

- 5.3. Within this area, and on the west side of the WTW, an area of approximately 19m x 40m was stripped of topsoil to accommodate the new contact tank and part of the access road. The tank itself measures approximately 6.3m x 7.7m in plan and 4.3m high, with approximately half of the structure buried below ground. Following removal of topsoil, the underlying subsoil was also removed from part of this area to the surface of the chalk.
- 5.4. The access road is located along the north side of the WTW and required the removal of topsoil over an area of approximately 7.5m x 54m (Plate 1). Following topsoil stripping, a temporary track was constructed of scalplings/crushed stone over a geotextile membrane. This was to be removed on completion of the works and replaced with 'grasscrete'.

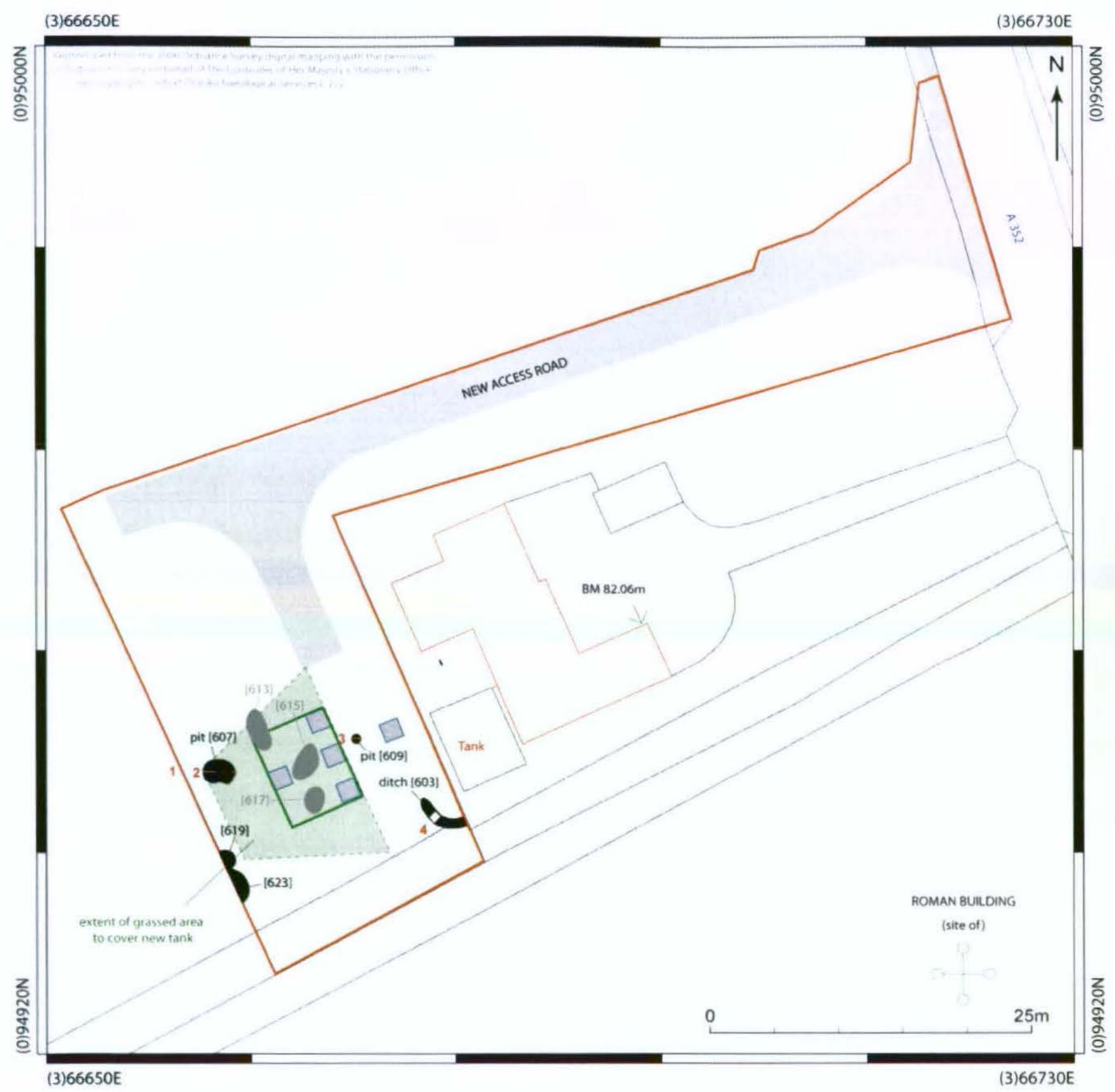


Plate 1. Initial stripping of plough soil for access road

Archaeological methodology

- 5.5. The programme of archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the agreed Written Scheme of Investigation (COAS November 2007). This included adherence to the terms of the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* published by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) in October, 1994 (rev. September, 1999). In addition, the work was undertaken in accordance with the *Code of Conduct* issued by the IFA in October 1997, and the *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology* (IFA 1990, rev. September, 2000). Current Health and Safety legislation and guidelines were followed on site.

- 5.6. The geotechnical test pits were monitored during excavation and the sections recorded on COAS pro-forma profile sheets (context numbers generated were in the sequence 100-599). Artefacts were recovered and bagged by context. A photographic record was also kept consisting of digital colour images in .JPG format.
- 5.7. During the main works, the machine removal of ploughsoil/topsoil and the underlying subsoil was carried out under archaeological supervision. All exposed areas were systematically scanned for features/deposits by walking in 'zig-zag' traverses across their width. The location of any archaeological features/deposits were initially recorded using a handheld GPS unit capable of better than 3m accuracy. The surface collection of cultural material (excluding modern bulk material) was also carried out during scanning operations and this was bagged according to field/land unit (Fields 1-12). Significant objects or concentrations of artefacts were bagged separately and their location recorded using a handheld GPS.
- 5.8. All deposits and archaeological features were sampled by manual excavation to establish stratigraphic relationships, recover sufficient artefacts to establish 'absolute' dates, determine feature/deposit morphology and character and to recover economic and palaeoenvironmental indicators. Features and deposits were recorded on dimensionally stable media at scales of 1:20 (plans) and 1:10 (sections). All features/deposits were recorded using standard COAS pro-forma recording sheets. Soil colours were recorded using a Munsell soil colour chart. A photographic record of the work was prepared and involved the use of digital images. The photographic record included shots of the excavated area, individual features, and working shots to illustrate the nature of the archaeological operation mounted. Artefacts collected from archaeological features/deposits were bagged using a combination of site code and context numbers. All finds from the Site were retained for processing in preparation for further analysis and archiving. Specialist reports of the artefact assemblage were compiled using both descriptive and tabular formats (Section 7).



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> site boundary initial geotechnical pits (<i>June 2007</i>) new concrete tank archaeological features (<i>see Fig. 3</i>) section drawing location (<i>see Fig. 3</i>) natural features (tree throws) 	<p>PROJECT TITLE Forston Contact Tank Protection, Forston, Dorset</p>		
	<p>FIGURE TITLE Detailed site setting showing area of development</p>		
SCALE	PROJECT CODE	FIGURE NO.	
as shown	COAS/WBF/07/FCD	2	

6. Results

- 6.1. The deposits and features encountered during fieldwork are listed and described in Appendix 1. In the text, context numbers for cuts appear in square brackets, e.g. [1004]; layer and fill numbers appear in standard brackets, e.g. (1002). Where a feature is discussed, it is referenced with its cut and associated fill numbers. Context numbers in the sequence 100 - 599 were generated during monitoring of the geotechnical test pits. All numbers greater than this refer to the main watching brief.

Test pits

- 6.2. The test pits established a uniform sequence of topsoil (0.25m thick) over subsoil (0.50m - 0.65m thick) over chalk. A layer (302)(402) of cobble sized flint gravel was noted in test pits 3 and 4 below the subsoil horizon (301)(401) and interpreted as a natural deposit. Artefacts of Roman date were recovered from several of the subsoil contexts.

Subsoil

- 6.3. A thick (0.40m) silty clay subsoil (601) was revealed on removal of the overlying topsoil (600) (**Plate 1**). It had an irregular boundary with the underlying natural and any features cut into the chalk. Artefacts recovered from this deposit include 5 sherds of Romano-British pottery and two conjoining fragments of *tegula* (Roman flanged roof tile).

Ditch [603]

- 6.4. Ditch [603](602) was located in the south-east corner of the main stripped area (**Figure 2**). It was curved in plan and shallow with a concave profile (**Figure 3**, plan and section 4). Fourteen sherds of local Romano-British coarse wares were recovered from its only fill as well as one fragment of Roman brick. The pottery included forms datable to the 2nd and the 3rd/4th centuries AD.

Pit [607]

- 6.5. Pit [607](606)(610)(611)(612) was sealed beneath subsoil layer (601). It was 2.5m in 'diameter' with a maximum depth of 1.05m (**Figure 2**; **Figure 3**, plan and section 2; front cover image). This feature was roughly 'kidney-shaped' in plan with an asymmetrical section - the west side was near vertical, whereas the east side was concave. Likewise, the west half of the base was flat but the east half was concave like the adjoining side. This suggests two inter-cutting features, or a re-cut of an original feature, but the fills clearly indicated only one sequence of deposition. Most of the base of this feature was covered by a dark yellow-brown chalky silt (611), which is considered unlikely to be a natural weathering product. No artefacts were recovered from this deposit and its origins are not known. Fill (610), a redeposited chalk with occasional angular flint fragments, partly covered (611) and may represent natural weathering of the sides. The great majority of the pit was filled by (606), a dark yellow-brown silty clay with frequent flint nodules. Forty-six sherds of broadly Roman date pottery were recovered from (606) including local Romano-British wares, (?)south Gaulish samian and 12 sherds from vessels of late Iron Age-early Roman date (**Table 1**). Four pieces of Roman roof tile (*tegula* and *imbrex*) were also recovered from fill (606) (**Table 2**). The condition of the pottery, as well as the wide range of dates that it represents (1st - 4th centuries AD), indicates that this is a mixed deposit derived from several other contexts of different dates and suggests deliberate back filling of this feature rather than natural infilling by weathering.

Pit [609]

- 6.6. Pit [609](608) was a small, shallow, circular pit located towards the middle of the stripped area (Figure 2; Figure 3, plan and section 3). Twenty-seven sherds of local Romano-British coarseware pottery was recovered from its only fill (608) - rim forms suggest a date in the 3rd/4th centuries AD. One fragment of Roman brick was also recovered from this feature.

Pits [619][620][623]

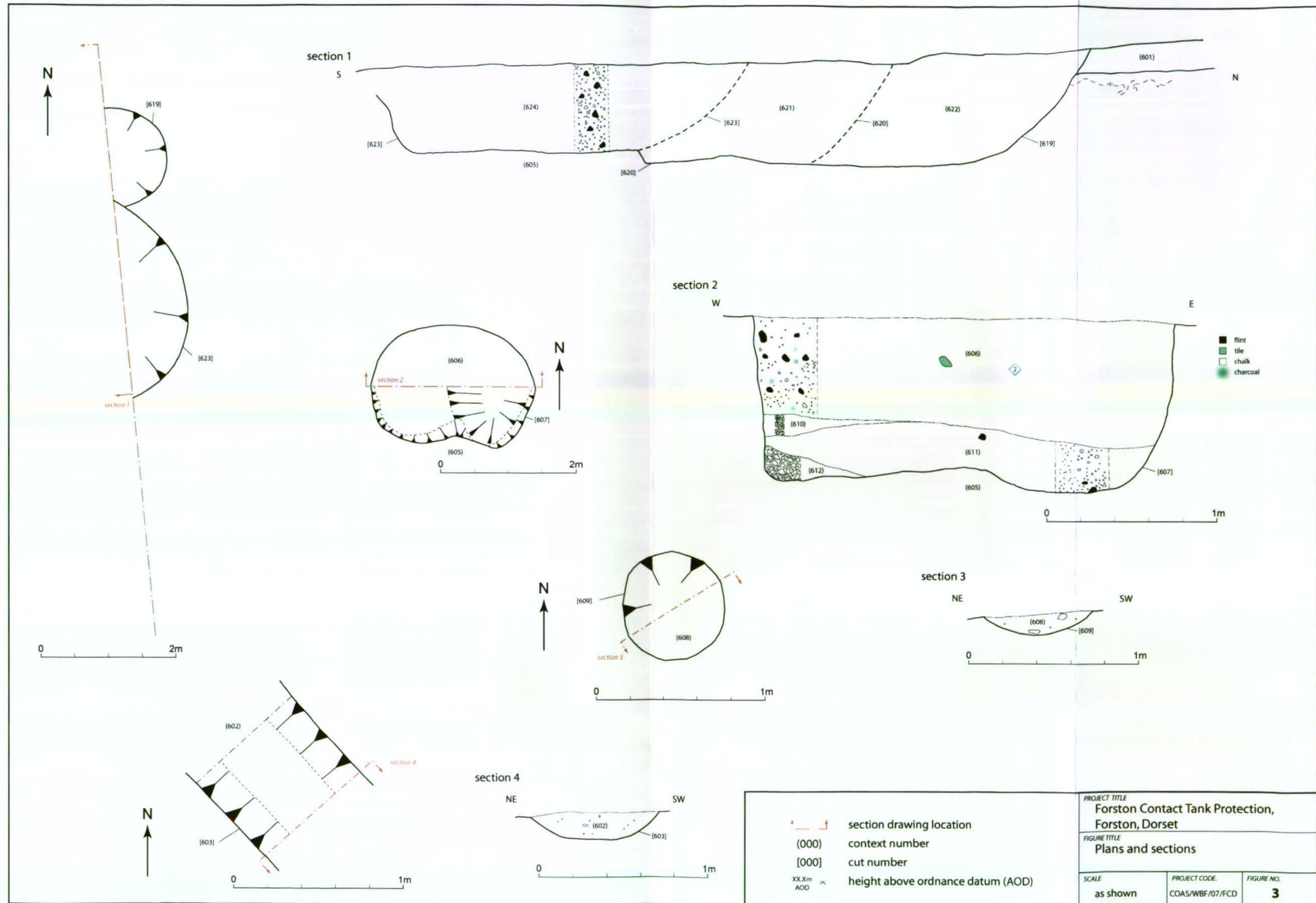
- 6.7. Three inter-cutting pits were excavated along the west edge of the site (Figure 2). The sequence of cutting, infilling and re-cutting indicated that pit [619](622) was the first to be cut and [623] (624) the last to be cut and infilled (Figure 3, plan and section 1). The pits were shallow and relatively wide with flat bases and concave sides. Three sherds of Romano-British pottery were recovered from fill (621) and six from (622).

Tree throws [613][615][617]

- 6.8. Three features (Figure 2) were identified as tree throws on the basis of their shape in plan and irregular profiles. Two of these - [613] and [615] - contained a small quantity of Romano-British pottery; a single fragment of Roman tile was also retrieved from [613](614) as well as a copper alloy coin of the mid 4th century AD from [615](616).

Environmental Assessment

- 8.1. Two bulk soil samples totalling 80 litres were collected from pit fills (606) and (608) with the aim of retrieving preserved organic remains such as charred plant macro fossils. Both samples were sub-sampled (10 litres each) and wet-sieved in a flotation tank using a tier of 250mm and 500mm micron sieves to collect any flots, and a 500mm mesh to collect heavy residues. These were allowed to air dry and then bagged. Neither of the sub-samples produced any macrofossils and there was no evidence of any small bone, artefacts or heavy archaeobotanical material in the residues. On this basis, no further processing of the remaining bulk samples was carried out and the deposits were discarded.



<p>↑ — ↑ section drawing location</p> <p>(000) context number</p> <p>[000] cut number</p> <p>XX.Xm AOD ≈ height above ordnance datum (AOD)</p>			<p>PROJECT TITLE Forston Contact Tank Protection, Forston, Dorset</p>	
			<p>FIGURE TITLE Plans and sections</p>	
SCALE	PROJECT CODE	FIGURE NO.		
as shown	COAS/WBF/07/FCD	3		

7. The Finds

- 7.1. With the exception of metalwork, finds recovered from the watching brief have been washed and marked (where possible) with a Dorset County Museum archive accession number identifying the site, followed by the context number. As appropriate, the finds have been quantified by number and weight per context and the information presented as tables: pottery in Table 1; ceramic building material in Table 2; other artefacts in Table 3 and animal bone in Table 4. A request will be made to the site owner(s) through Wessex Water plc to transfer the title of all finds recovered to Dorset County Museum.

The Pottery

By Rachel Hall

- 7.2. A small pottery assemblage (125 sherds, weighing 1658g) was recovered from the watching brief from 12 contexts (see Table 1). The assemblage ranges in date from Late Iron Age to Medieval period and ranges from moderate to fair condition.
- 7.3. The majority of the assemblage dates to the Roman-British period and comprises body sherds in coarse grey and oxidised sandy fabrics of an uncertain source. The assemblage can be paralleled with numerous other sites within the wider area (Woodward, Davies and Graham, 1993). A small number of vessel types were identified including jars (both necked and flared), drop-flanged bowls and dog-dishes. These date between the 1st and 4th centuries. Sherds of Black Burnished ware were also identified, with a moderate number from pits [607] and [609]. Other diagnostic sherds include a coarseware jar, with cordoning on the neck, also from pit [607]. This was associated with other everted jar rims and bead rims vessels suggesting an earlier date of Late Iron Age/Early Romano-British for this group.
- 7.4. A small assemblage of finewares was also identified. Two sherds of Samian (possible South Gaulish) were recovered from pit [607] and subsoil (604). The latter has a post-firing perforation, probably used as a repair. Two sherds of colour-coated ware were also recovered from subsoil (601) and treethrow [615]. These may be from the Oxfordshire region or another local variant. A single sherd of possible Mica-dusted ware was recovered from the subsoil (604). The finewares were in fair to poor condition. A single body sherd in a sandy fabric with a patchy glaze was recovered from subsoil (301), dating to the medieval period.

Ceramic building material

By Rachel Hall

- 7.5. A total of 22 fragments of Ceramic Building Material (CBM), weighing 4141g, were recovered from nine contexts (see Table 2). The majority of the assemblage comprises tile and brick fragments with a small amount of undiagnostic material and a single fragment of fired clay. The fragments were all oxidised with a calcareous (chalk) fabric and the condition of the assemblage ranges from moderate to fair.
- 7.6. Six brick fragments were recovered (these included fragments with at least one surface and corners) from ditch [603], subsoil (604) and pit [609]. No complete examples were identified. Of note is the fragment from (604), which may be part of a floor brick and an incomplete brick from pit [609], which was unfrogged, and therefore suggests an early date. Tegula fragments were recovered from subsoil layers (601), (604) and pit [607], along with an imbrex fragment. The remaining assemblage comprises tile and undiagnostic fragments, due to the lack of

surfaces. A single fragment of fired clay was also recovered from pit [607]. The dating of the assemblage is likely to be Romano-British, in association with the pottery recovered and the form/fabric of the assemblage.

References

Woodward, P.J., Davies, S.M., and Graham, A.H., 1993 "Excavations at the Old Methodist Chapel and Greyhound Yard, Dorchester, 1981-84" *Dorset Natural History Society Monologue*. 12

Webster, P.V., 1993 *Roman Samian Pottery in Britain, CBA Practical Handbook 13*

Special finds

By Kayt Matthews

Worked Flint

- 7.7. Twenty one pieces of flint weighing 398g were collected during the Watching Brief, all of which are heavily abraded. Only five artefacts in this assemblage retain evidence of striking/retouch. Two can be identified as possible blades, one (9g) from context (608), the second (3g) deriving from context (604). Neither of these retain any diagnostic characteristics and cannot be securely ascribed to a period of manufacture. The three remaining pieces of struck flint derive from context (602). However, only one retains any diagnostic characteristics and can be identified as a Late Bronze Age piercer.

Iron objects

- 7.8. A single iron nail (ON 2) of unknown date, weighing 2g was collected from context (501).

Copper Alloy (cu) objects

- 7.9. During the watching brief, two cu objects were collected. These can be identified as a coin (ON 3) from context (616). In fair condition, this can be identified as an AE4 (1g) of the Emperor Constantine, diameter 15mm, dated 347-348 AD. With a draped bust right on the obverse, and two victories ('D' between) on the reverse, facing each other, holding wreaths. The second can be identified as a semi-circular section of pierced flat cu sheet (weighing 3g) of unknown date and function.

References

Andrefsky Jr W 2005 *Lithics Macroscopic Approaches to Analysis* Cambridge University Press

Butler C. 2005 *Prehistoric Flintwork* Tempus Publishing Ltd

Miscellaneous finds (COAS)

- 7.10. A total of 11 other artefacts were recovered during the watching brief. The assemblage comprises nine stone tile fragments, a mussel shell and a fragment of mortar.
- 7.11. All the stone tiles are limestone, but of two different types. The smaller broken fragments from (604) are all 10-15mm thick and up to 200mm long, these are fairly smooth with no nail holes or obvious signs of being worked.

7.12. The remaining two stone tiles, both from (601), are made from a shelly limestone up to 360mm long by 270mm wide and up to 30mm thick. These have been worked to form a diamond shaped visible edge. A nail hole is present in one of them, the other has lost the end where a nail hole should be located. These tiles are Roman in style and are likely to derive from a re-building or demolition episode of the villa adjacent to the Site.

Context	Ware Type	No.	Wt. (g)	Description	Date
301	Sandy	1	4	Glazed, abraded body sherd	Med
402	Grey ware	1	3	Abraded body sherd	RB
501	Oxidised	1	6	Abraded body sherd	RB
501	BBW	1	34	Curved body sherd	RB
601	Grey ware	2	23	Abraded body sherds	RB
601	Colour-coated	1	16	Oxidised fabric and patchy slip, shoulder of vessel? Oxfordshire/local variant	RB
601	BBW	2	88	Necked jar rim (C1/2) and body sherd with burnished dec	RB
602	Grey ware	7	32	Abraded body sherds	RB
602	BBW	7	80	Dog dish rim (C2), flared jar rim (C3/4) & body sherds, lattice and burnished dec	RB
604	Oxidised	2	8	Abraded body sherds	RB
604	Samian	1	1	?South Gaulish with post-firing perforation	RB
604	Mica dusted	1	7	Oxidised fabric with mica dusting ?fineware	RB
604	Grey ware	5	28	Dog dish rim and body sherds, burnished dec	RB
604	BBW	5	71	Necked jar (C1/2), base and body sherds with lattice dec	RB
606	Samian	1	4	?south Gaulish bowl fragment	RB
606	Oxidised	2	15	Abraded body sherds	RB
606	BBW	31	440	x4 necked jar rims, x3 dog dish (C2), x2 drop flanged bowl, flared jar rim (C3/4), x3 base sheds (x1 pedestal) and body sherds with lattice and burnished dec	RB
608	Oxidised	2	1	Abraded body sherds	RB
608	BBW	25	362	Drop flange and flared rim jar (C3/4), shoulder, x2 base and abraded body sherds with lattice dec and burnishing	RB
614	Grey ware	2	22	Body sherds, sooting	RB
614	Colour-coated	1	11	Oxidised fabric, red patchy slip, ? Oxfordshire/local variant. Possible base sherd	RB
616	BBW	2	10	Body sherds, sooting	RB
616	Grey ware	1	9	Abraded body sherd	RB
621	Grey ware	3	93	One rim sherd from necked jar (C1/2), burnished dec.	RB
622	Oxidised	1	4	Abraded body sherd	RB
622	Grey ware	3	28	Abraded body sherds	RB
622	BBW	2	17	Base and body sherd, burnished with sooting	RB
*606	Sandy	12	241	x2 bowl (one with cordoning on the neck) and x3 everted jar rims, x2 beaded and body sherds. Burnished dec	LIRB
TOTAL		125	1658		

Table 1. Pottery quantified by context

Context	Type	No.	Wt. (g)	Description	Date
301	Undiagnostic	1	44	Calcareous tempered, undiagnostic fragment	Uncertain
402	Undiagnostic	1	5	Calcareous tempered, undiagnostic fragment	Uncertain
501	Tile	1	114	Calcareous tempered, tile fragment	RB
601	Tegula	2	1634	Calcareous tempered. Large tegula fragment (two conjoining frags)	RB
602	Brick	1	146	Calcareous tempered, incomplete brick fragment	RB
602	Undiagnostic	2	10	Calcareous tempered, undiagnostic fragments	Uncertain
604	Tegula	1	370	Calcareous tempered, tegula fragment	RB
604	Undiagnostic	3	29	Calcareous tempered, undiagnostic fragments	Uncertain
604	Brick	4	453	Calcareous tempered, brick fragments. (Possible floor bricks, one burnt)	RB
606	Tegula	3	342	Calcareous tempered, tegula fragments. One with ?opus signinum attached	RB
606	Imbrex	1	37	Calcareous tempered, incomplete imbrex fragment	RB
608	Brick	1	872	Sandy tempered. Incomplete brick measuring 5cm deep. Unfrogged	RB
614	Tile	1	85	Sandy tempered. Curved fragment ? imbrex	RB
606	Fired clay	1	10	Featureless fragment	
TOTAL		22	4141		

Table 2. Ceramic building material quantified by context

Context Number	No.	Weight	Period	Comments
Stone				
601	2	6000g	-	Limestone roof tiles
604	7	2319g	-	Limestone roof tile fragments
Shell				
606	1	2g	-	Mussel shell
Mortar				
604	1	231g	-	-
Copper Alloy				
616	1	1g	Roman	AE4 of Constans
Unstrat.	1	3g	-	Pierced semi-circular flat sheet
Iron				
501	1	2g	-	Nail
Flint				
604	1	3g	-	Blade
608	1	9g	-	Blade
602	2		-	Undiagnostic flakes
602	1		LBA	Piercer

Table 3. Other artefacts quantified by context

Animal bone

By Lorrain Higbee

- 7.13. Forty-one bone fragments were recovered from the site. Bone preservation is good and only one fragment was recorded with gnaw marks.
- 7.14. Identified species and elements are presented in Table 4. The species list includes cattle, sheep/goat and horse. Cattle bones are relative common in the small Iron Age and Romano-British pit assemblages. Unidentified fragments from all features and deposits, including those from medieval subsoil (301), are presented in the totals column.
- 7.15. Detailed information relating to individual specimens (e.g. epiphyseal fusion and tooth wear) and an appendix of measurements is available in the site archive. Measurements follow Von den Driesch (1976).

Element	LIA/RB pit [607]			RB pit [623] & subsoil (604)		Undated ditch [603]	Total
	cattle	sheep/goat	horse	cattle	sheep/goat	horse	
mandible	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
tooth	1	-	1	1	-	1	4
scapula	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
humerus	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
pelvis	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
tibia	1	1	-	1	-	-	3
metatarsal	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
phalanx 1	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
unidentified	-	-	-	-	-	-	28
Total	3	2	1	5	1	1	41

Table 4. Number of specimens identified to animal species (or NISP) by period, feature and element.

References

Von den Driesch, A., 1976. A Guide to the Measurement of Animal Bones from Archaeological Sites. *Peabody Museum Bulletin 1*. Cambridge Mass., Harvard University.

8. Discussion and conclusions

- 8.1. The watching brief has recovered evidence for settlement or other activity on the Site dating broadly to the Roman period. The centre of the Site is some 60m to the north of a probable Romano-British villa, and thus the features recorded during the watching brief would appear to be associated with this building. The recovery of ceramic building material and limestone roof tile during the watching brief strengthens this association. The artefacts recovered from the Site also indicate activity from the late Iron Age, and this too accords with the evidence for earlier excavation of the villa site.
- 8.2. There are no unequivocal indications as to the function of the excavated features and none of the finds suggest specific agricultural or industrial uses - although the size and curvilinear

plan of Ditch [603] does suggest a ring ditch, perhaps indicating the location of a round house. In addition, the absence of any overall plan from previous excavation of the villa building means that its location relative to the watching brief features can not be established. It is not possible to suggest, therefore, how the excavated features might be located relative to domestic and agricultural elements of the villa.

- 8.3. All of the excavated features were buried beneath a significant depth of subsoil that has accumulated along the lower slopes and bottom of the river valley. The history and formation of this deposit is not known, but it may be a product of the intense medieval farming and settlement in the valley. One effect of this has been to blanket earlier 'sites' on the lower slopes making them difficult or impossible to detect through aerial photography.

9. Archive

- 9.1. The site archive is currently held at the offices of Context One Archaeological Services Ltd and consists of monochrome photographs and digital images in .jpg format, drawn plans and sections of stable drawing film and the written paper record - including context sheets, COAS *pro-forma* profile log sheets and various registers. Arrangements will be made to deposit the archive with Dorset County Museum within 12 months following the submission of this report.

- 9.2. Copies of the Watching Brief report will be deposited with:

Wessex Water plc
Claverton Down Road
Claverton Down
Bath
BA2 7WW

Archaeology Service
Dorset County Council
County Hall
Colliton Park
Dorchester
DT1 1XJ

- 9.3. As part of our commitment to public archaeology, an e-report will be available to view online or download as an Adobe Acrobat™ file from the COAS website at www.contextone.co.uk/dorset.htm following entry onto the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) where it will become a publicly accessible document.

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10. COAS Acknowledgements

- 10.1. Context One Archaeological Services Ltd would like to thank Dr Richard Baker (Environmental Scientist, Wessex Water plc), for his kind assistance throughout the course of the investigation, and Mr Steve Wallis (County Archaeologist, Dorset County Council), for curatorial advice.

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Appendix 1. Context Summary

CONTEXT NO.	PERIOD	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	LENGTH	WIDTH/ DIAMETER	THICKNESS/ DEPTH	RELATIONSHIP
100	modern	Layer	Topsoil very dark brown (10YR 3/2) silty clay gravel with occasional angular flint (<0.02m).	0.60m	1.00m	2.00m	Above (101)
101	-	Layer	Subsoil dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/4) silty clay gravel with occasional angular flint (<0.02m).	0.60m	1.00m	0.55m	Below (100); above (102)
102	-	Layer	Natural white (8/1) chalk with moderate angular flint fragments (<0.30m).	0.60m	1.00m	1.10m	Below (102)
200	modern	Layer	Topsoil very dark brown (10YR 3/2) silty clay gravel with occasional angular flint (<0.02m).	0.60m	1.00m	2.00m	Above (201)
201	-	Layer	Subsoil dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/4) silty clay gravel with occasional angular flint (<0.02m).	0.60m	1.00m	0.55m	Below (200); above (202)
202	-	Layer	Natural white (8/1) chalk with moderate angular flint fragments (<0.30m).	0.60m	1.00m	1.10m	Below (201)
300	modern	Layer	Topsoil very dark brown (10YR 3/2) silty clay gravel with occasional angular flint (<0.02m).	0.60m	1.00m	2.00m	Above (301)
301	medieval	Layer	Subsoil dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/4) silty clay gravel with occasional angular flint (<0.02m).	0.60m	1.00m	0.55m	Below (300); above (302)
302	-	Layer	Natural white (8/1) chalk with moderate angular flint fragments (<0.30m).	0.60m	1.00m	1.10m	Below (301)
400	modern	Layer	Topsoil. Very dark brown (10YR 3/2) silty clay gravel with occasional angular flint (<0.02m).	0.60m	1.00m	2.00m	Above (401)
401	-	Layer	Subsoil. Dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/4) silty clay gravel with occasional angular flint (<0.02m).	0.60m	1.00m	0.55m	Below (400); above (402)
402	Romano- British	Layer	Natural. White (8/1) chalk with moderate angular flint fragments (<0.30m).	0.60m	1.00m	1.10m	Below (401)

CONTEXT NO.	PERIOD	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	LENGTH	WIDTH/ DIAMETER	THICKNESS/ DEPTH	RELATIONSHIP
500	Modern	Layer	Topsoil very dark brown (10YR 3/2) silty clay gravel with occasional angular flint (<0.02m).	0.60m	1.00m	2.00m	Above (501)
501	Romano- British	Layer	Subsoil. Dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/4) silty clay gravel with occasional angular flint (<0.02m).	0.60m	1.00m	0.55m	Below (500); above (502)
502	Unknown	Layer	Natural. White (8/1) chalk with moderate angular flint fragments (<0.30m).	0.60m	1.00m	1.10m	Below (502)
600	Modern	Layer	Topsoil. Very dark brown (10YR 3/2) silty clay gravel with occasional angular flint (<0.02m).	-	-	2.00m	Above (601)
601	Romano- British	Layer	Subsoil. Dark brown (10YR 3/3) silty clay gravel with occasional angular flint (<0.02m).	0.60m	1.00m	0.55m	Below (600)
602	Romano- British	Fill	Fill of ditch. Dark brown (10YR 3/3) silty clay gravel with occasional angular flint (<0.02m).	6.0m	0.75m	0.16m	Below (601); fill of [603]
603	Romano- British	Cut	Ditch. Linear with concave sides and a flat base.	6.0m	0.75m	0.16m	Filled by (602); cuts (605)
604	Romano- British	Layer	Subsoil. Dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/4) silty clay gravel with occasional angular flint <0.02m. (Same as 602)	-	-	0.24m	Same as (601)
605	Unknown	Layer	Natural. White (8/1) chalk with moderate angular flint fragments (<0.30m).	-	-	-	Below (601)
606	Romano- British	Fill	Fill of pit. Dark yellowish brown (10 YR 3/6) silty clay with angular - rounded flint fragments (<0.30m).	-	2.50m	0.65m	Below (601); above (610); fill of [607]
607	Romano- British	Cut	Pit. Circular with straight sides and an irregular base.	-	2.50m	0.65m	Filled by (606)(610) (611)(612); cuts (605)
608	Romano- British	Fill	Fill of pit. Dark brown (10 YR 4/3) silty clay with (2%) medium sized.	-	0.67m	0.13m	Below (601); fill of [609]
609	Romano- British	Cut	Pit. Circular with concave sides cut and a sloping base.	-	0.67m	0.13m	Filled by (608); cuts (605)
610	Romano- British	Fill	Fill of pit. White (8/1) chalk with moderate angular flint fragments (<0.20m).	-	0.91m	0.13m	Below (606); above (611); fill of [607]

CONTEXT NO.	PERIOD	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	LENGTH	WIDTH/ DIAMETER	THICKNESS/ DEPTH	RELATIONSHIP
611	Romano- British	Fill	Fill of pit. Yellowish brown (10YR 4/4) chalky silt with occasional chalk fragments.	-	2.5m	0.35m	Below (610); above (612); fill of [607]
612	Romano- British	Fill	Fill of pit. White (8/1) chalk with moderate angular flint fragments (<0.20m).	-	0.60m	0.15m	Below (611); fill of [607]
613	Romano- British	Cut	Treethrow. Sub-circular with concave sides and a sloping base	2.0m	1.20m	0.25m	Filled by (614)
614	Romano- British	Fill	Fill of treethrow. Dark brown (10 YR 4/3) silty clay with (20%) sub-angular to rounded flint fragments.	2.0m	1.20m	0.25m	Fill of [613]
615	Romano- British	Cut	Treethrow. sub-circular with concave sides and a sloping base	1.80m	1.20m	0.15m	Filled by (616)
616	Romano- British	Fill	Fill of treethrow. Dark brown (10 YR 4/3) silty clay with (20%) sub-angular to rounded flint fragments.	1.80m	1.20m	0.15m	Fill of [615]
617	Unknown	Cut	Treethrow. Sub-circular with concave sides and a sloping base.	2.0m	1.20m	0.20m	Filled by (618)
618	Unknown	Fill	Fill of treethrow. Dark brown (10 YR 4/3) silty clay with (20%) sub-angular to rounded flint fragments.	2.0m	1.20m	0.20m	Fill of [617]
619	Romano- British	Cut	Pit. Sub-circular with concave sides and a sloping base.	2.0m	0.70m+	1.25m	Filled by (622); cuts (605)
620	Romano- British	Cut	Pit. Sub-circular with concave sides and a sloping base.	3.00m	0.90m	1.20m	Cuts (622); filled by (621)
621	Romano- British	Fill	Fill of pit. Fill dark brown (10 YR 4/3) silty clay with (20%) sub-angular to rounded flint fragments.	3.00m	0.90m	1.20m	Cut by [624]; fill of [620]
622	Romano- British	Fill	Fill of pit. Fill dark brown (10 YR 4/3) silty clay with (20%) sub-angular to rounded flint fragments.	2.00m	0.70	1.25m	Cut by [620]; fill of [619]
623	Romano- British	Cut	Pit. Sub-circular with concave sides and a sloping base.	3.00m	-	0.90m	Filled by (624); cuts (621)
624	Romano- British	Fill	Fill of pit. Fill dark brown (10 YR 4/3) silty clay with (20%) sub-angular to rounded flint fragments.	3.00m	-	0.90m	Fill of [623]; below (601)

Appendix 2. Dorset Historic Environment Record report for archaeological sites and monuments within the environs of the Site.

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1028 22A+B

Site Name: Settlement Remains
Civil Parish: Charminster
Grid Ref: SY 667 953; SY 671 947

Details:

Settlement remains, originally two separate settlements but for long known as Pulston, lie on the east side of the R. Cerne, south of Forston. The settlements are one or perhaps two of the Cernes in Domesday Book. Five acres of earthworks are located around Pulston barn. To the north of the barn are at least four rectangular closes. Another 5 acres of earthworks lie 700 yards to the south east. The remains consist of eight parallel closes at right angles to the R. Cerne. Four of the closes have platforms cut into the upper ends; extensive areas of flint rubble perhaps indicating the sites of former houses. Large quantities of 12th - 15th century pottery have been collected from the site.

References:

1 RCHM, *Dorset*, iii (1970) 71, monument 22.

1028 23

Site Name: Settlement Remains
Civil Parish: Charminster
Grid Ref: SY 673 945

Details:

Settlement remains formerly existed ¼ mile southwest of Herrison House on the east side of the R. Cerne. They seem likely to have been one of the many Cernes recorded in Domesday. The remains are now completely destroyed.

References:

1 RCHM, *Dorset*, iii (1970) 71.

1028 24

Site Name: Settlement Remains
Civil Parish: Charminster
Grid Ref: SY 675 943

Details:

Settlement remains, formerly part of the hamlet of Herrison, lie on the east side of the R. Cerne at the mouth of a small tributary valley. The settlement is one of the Cernes in Domesday. The remains consist of four closes, 30 yards long and 20 yards wide, running northeast up the tributary valley. Low scarps and banks all around may be the remains of other closes. There are no certain building sites.

References:

1 RCHM, *Dorset*, iii (1970) 71.

1028 28A, B + C

Site Name: Cultivation Remains

Civil Parish: Charminster

Grid Ref: SY 677 964(A); SY 668 950(B); SY 686 933(C)

Details:

The open fields of Charminster lay north of the R. Frome and west of the R. Cerne. Some forty acres of fragmentary contour and cross-contour strip lynchets up to 250 yards long and with massive risers remain on Haydon Hill, organised in end-on and butting furlongs.

The open fields of Forston (28A) lie 700 yards north of Forston; they are arranged in two end-on furlong blocks. The open fields of Pulston were enclosed before 1770. Five contour strip lynchets of these fields (28B) lie on the valley side 300 yards south of Pulston Barn.

References:

1 RCHM, *Dorset*, iii (1970) 72.

1028 29

Site Name: Roman Villa in Walls Field

Civil Parish: Charminster

Grid Ref: SY 6672 9492

Details:

Site of a Roman villa in Walls Field. A tessellated pavement/mosaic was found in 1891. excavations in 1960 revealed a furnace flue, three flint steps and two fragments of wall. Two reused voussoirs, slate and clay roof tiles, hypocaust tiles, tesserae, painted wall plaster and a pieces of window glass all indicate a substantial structure. Near the building lay an inhumation burial. Iron Age pottery sherds were also recovered.

References:

1 RCHM, *Dorset*, iii (1970) 72.

1028 31

Site Name: Bowl Barrow on Charminster Down

Civil Parish: Charminster

Grid Ref: SY 6658 9450

Details:

Site of a bowl barrow; diameter about 66ft, height 2 ft.

References:

1 RCHM, *Dorset*, iii (1970) 73.