



Land to the South of 44C-62 Weston Street, Portland, Dorset

Observations and Recording, March 2014



Report No. 53402/3/1

June 2014

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Client: Imago Developments, The Barn, Orchard Cottages, Tarrant Monkton, Blandford Forum, DT11 5RX

Agent:

Report Author: Mike Trevarthen

With Contributions by:

Illustrations: Mike Trevarthen

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Project Report Summary Page

Project Details			
OASIS Reference	terraina1-177128		
Project Title	Land south of 44C-62 Weston Street, Portland, Dorset		
Short Description of Project	Terrain Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological observations and recording during groundworks associated with the redevelopment of a parcel of land to the south of house numbers 44C-62 Weston Street, Portland, Dorset. The observations confirmed that the development as a whole overlay deep stone-quarry-infill deposits of 20th century date, associated with reclamation of part of the former Suckthumb Quarry.		
Project Dates	Start: 25-03-2014	End: 25-03-2014	
Previous/Future Work	No/No		
Project Code	53402		
Monument Type and Period	Stone Quarry (Modern)		
Significant Finds	None		
Project Location			
County/District/Parish	Dorset/ Weymouth & Portland Borough Council/ Portland		
Site Address	South of 44C-62 Weston Street, Portland, Dorset, DT5 2DQ		
Site Coordinates	SY 6874 7090		
Site Area	c. 15 m ²		
Height OD	c. 63.5-65 m aOD		
Project Creators			
Organisation	Terrain Archaeology		
Project Brief Originator			
Project Design Originator	Terrain Archaeology		
Project Supervisor	Mike Trevarthen		
Project Manager	Peter Bellamy		
Sponsor or Funding Body	Client		
Project Archive			
Archive Type	Physical	Digital	Paper
Location/Accession No	No physical archive.	Terrain Archaeology offices, pending deposition with Dorset County Museum.	Terrain Archaeology offices, pending deposition with Dorset County Museum.
Contents		Digital photography	context sheets, miscellaneous records, photographs, plans, report

Land south of 44C-62 Weston Street, Portland

Archaeological Observations and Recording, March 2014

1. Introduction

1.1 Project introduction

Terrain Archaeology was commissioned by Imago Developments to undertake a programme of archaeological observations and recording during groundworks for the redevelopment of land south of 44C-62 Weston Street, Portland, Dorset (Figure 1). This redevelopment comprised the erection of a terrace of five new timber dwellings with associated infrastructure and car parking.

This work was carried out in fulfilment of condition 17 of the grant of planning consent for the scheme by Weymouth & Portland Borough Council (Application number WP/13/00195/FUL) which states: *“The development shall not commence until the applicant has made arrangements for archaeological observations and recording to take place during the development. These arrangements shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority at least one month before any work commences on the development site. Reason: The area is of potential archaeological interest and it is important that any archaeological features and finds are properly recorded, in accordance with Part 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.”*

‘Archaeological observations and recording’, also more colloquially known as an archaeological watching brief, is defined by the Institute for 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 2008). Its purposes are: *“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 “ and “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.”*

Fieldwork was carried out on the 25 March 2014 by Mike Trevarthen.

Terrain Archaeology wishes to acknowledge the cooperation and assistance of the site’s developer, Imago Developments, and in particular Mr Nick Jenkins. The project was managed for Terrain Archaeology by Peter Bellamy and monitored on behalf of the local planning authority by Steve Wallis, Senior Archaeologist (Advice and Management), Dorset County Council.

1.2 Brief

No written brief was issued by, or on behalf of, the Local Planning Authority.

1.3 Curatorial monitoring

No monitoring visit was carried out by, or on behalf of, the local planning authority’s archaeological advisor during the archaeological works.

1.4 Site Location and Topography

The site lies on the west side of Weston Street, behind Nos. 44-62, at Ordnance Survey NGR SY 68740 70903. It is an approximately trapezoidal shaped plot with an estimated area of 0.17 hectares. The topography of the immediate

site area is approximately level, between 63.5 m and 65 m above OD. Immediately south of the plot, a steep drop marks the southern edge of 20th century quarry infilling.

1.5 Geology

Bedrock geology is mapped as Lulworth Formation limestone. No superficial deposits are recorded (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

1.6 Archaeological and Historical Background

Portland has a long history of human exploitation with archaeological evidence remaining from the Mesolithic period onwards. The earliest archaeological records for the area of the site indicate the possible existence of a Bronze Age round barrow, which was destroyed by quarrying in 1905 and about 100-200 urned cremation burials were found (RCHME 1970, 450).

In the medieval and post-medieval period, the agricultural land was divided into a series of strip fields or lawns (RCHME 1970, 258-9). The evidence is unclear whether the site was within one of the open fields, but by 1864 the area had been enclosed into a series of small rectangular fields (Ordnance Survey 25 inch map 1864).

Much of the area surrounding the site has been affected by stone quarrying. Historic map evidence suggests that the site itself was part of Suckthumb Quarry and most, if not all, of the development area had been quarried by 1929 (Ordnance Survey 25 inch map, 1929). By the 1970s, the quarry had been partially infilled and the site had become a farmyard (OS 1:2500 maps, 1969-73).

1.7 Previous Archaeological fieldwork

There has been no previous fieldwork on or immediately adjacent to the site.

1.8 Aims and Objectives

The aim of the archaeological programme was to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on the site.

Its objectives were:

- To observe and record the all the *in situ* archaeological deposits and features revealed during the groundworks to an appropriate archaeological standard.
- To present the results in a report to the appropriate standard.

1.9 Groundworks

The foundations for the new houses were piled, with ground beams excavated by machine to approximately 850 mm below ground level. Three soakaway pits were excavated by machine in the positions shown on Figure 2.

1.10 Methods

The methodology, scope, aims and objectives of the works was set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by Terrain Archaeology in October 2013 (Terrain Archaeology document no. 3402/0/1) and approved prior to commencement of work by the local planning authority's archaeological advisor.

All archaeological works were carried out in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (IfA 2008).

The observations and recording were defined as *intensive*, and a qualified, experienced archaeologist was present on-site during all sensitive groundworks.

All excavation was carried out using a 7 tonne tracked excavator fitted with a toothed ditching bucket.

All features and deposits were recorded using components of Terrain Archaeology's system of complementary written, drawn and photographic records, regardless of their perceived date and archaeological significance. These

records have been compiled in a stable, cross-referenced and fully indexed archive in accordance with current guidelines (AAF 2007) and the requirements of the receiving museum. A photographic record of the works was maintained in digital format, and includes aspects of their setting, conduct and technical detail.

1.11 Archive and Dissemination

The project archive, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and appropriate background documentation, is currently stored by Terrain Archaeology under the project code 53402. In due course, and assuming appropriate transfer of title from the landowner, the archive will be accessioned for long-term curation and storage by the Dorset County Museum, Dorchester. Deposition of the archive will place it in the public domain.

A paper copy of this report will be lodged with Dorset County Council's Historic Environment Record (HER). The HER is a publicly funded and accessible resource, and deposition of the report will place it, and the project results, in the public domain.

A digital summary of the archive will be placed with the OASIS project (www.oasis.ac.uk) under the reference code *terrains1-177128*. A digital copy of this report will be uploaded for inclusion in the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) online 'grey literature' library.

A brief summary report of the project and its key findings will be published by Terrain Archaeology in the *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society*. No additional publication is anticipated.

2. Results

2.1 Introduction

The WSI specified that the excavation of the ground beams for the new houses and the associated soakaways and drainage were to be undertaken under archaeological supervision (Terrain Archaeology 2013, 9.1). However the mechanical excavation of the pile-head pits and ground beams was not notified to Terrain Archaeology and consequently was not observed. However, photographs supplied by the developer confirm that this stage of works was entirely contained within 20th century quarry infill deposits. The mechanical excavation of the three soakaway pits was monitored archaeologically, as these lay at points close to the suspected edge of quarrying activity and to confirm whether the pile-head pits and ring beams had been excavated through quarry backfill.

2.2 Natural Deposits

No natural deposits were seen. All three soakaway pits were dug through redeposited quarry infill. No natural deposits were visible in the photographs taken by the developer during the excavation of the pile caps and ring beam trenches.

2.3 Soakaway Pit 1

The following stratigraphic sequence was exposed in Soakaway 1:

Depth below ground level	Description
0.00 – 0.15m	Puddled yellow-grey clay, stone fragments and modern debris – presumably formed during recent construction works.
0.15-0.45m	Redeposited topsoil: Dark grey-brown semi-plastic clay loam with frequent stone fragments and other modern debris
0.45 – 2.20m+	Unsorted dumped quarry waste, comprising pale yellow-grey silty clay and random tabular limestone ranging from fine fragments up to blocks 1.5m long and 0.3m thick.

2.4 Soakaway Pit 2

The following stratigraphic sequence was exposed in Soakaway 2:

Depth below ground level	Description
0.00 – 2.40m	Single deposit of dumped random oriented limestone quarry waste, comprising moderately poorly sorted pale yellow-grey silty clay and tabular limestone ranging from fine fragments up to c0.5m. Deposit firmer and more cohesive than seen in soakaway pits 1 and 3.

2.5 Soakaway Pit 3

The following stratigraphic sequence was exposed in Soakaway 2:

Depth below ground level	Description
0.00 – 0.40m	Mixed clay and rubble quarry waste with fragments of concrete and other modern debris (including a compact disk). Possibly a recent levelling deposit associated with the redevelopment programme?
0.40 – 1.00m	Mixed redeposited fill including brown clay-loam, quarry waste, modern brick (London Brick Company), precast concrete fragments, cast iron pipe, plastic etc.
1.00 – 2.40m+	Dumped quarry waste comprising random tabular limestone ranging from small fragments to blocks in excess of 1m, dark humic soil and decayed wood, modern brick and broken pre-cast concrete.

3. Finds

3.1 Finds Assemblage

No significant finds were identified. No material was retained.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

4.1 Conclusions

The observations and recording programme has demonstrated that the full below-ground impacts of the redevelopment scheme have been absorbed by modern infill deposits within part of the former Suckthumb stone quarry. No undisturbed ground or archaeological remains were present.

5. References

AAF,	2007	<i>Archaeological Archives. A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation.</i> Archaeological Archives Forum.
[DCLG] Department for Communities & Local Government	2010	National Planning Policy Framework. DCLG, Crown Copyright.
IfA,	2008a	<i>Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief.</i> (Revised Edition). Institute for Archaeologists.
IfA	2008b	<i>Code of approved practice for the regulation of contractual arrangements in archaeology</i> (Revised Edition), Institute for Archaeologists.
IfA,	2009	<i>Standard and guidance for the creation, preparation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives.</i> Institute for Archaeologists.
[RCHME] Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England)	1970	<i>An Inventory of Historical Monuments in the County of Dorset, Volume 2: South East, Part 3.</i> London, HMSO.
Terrain Archaeology	2013	Land to South of 44C-62: Weston Street, Portland Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Observations and Recording. Terrain Archaeology Document No. 3402/0/1 October 2013.

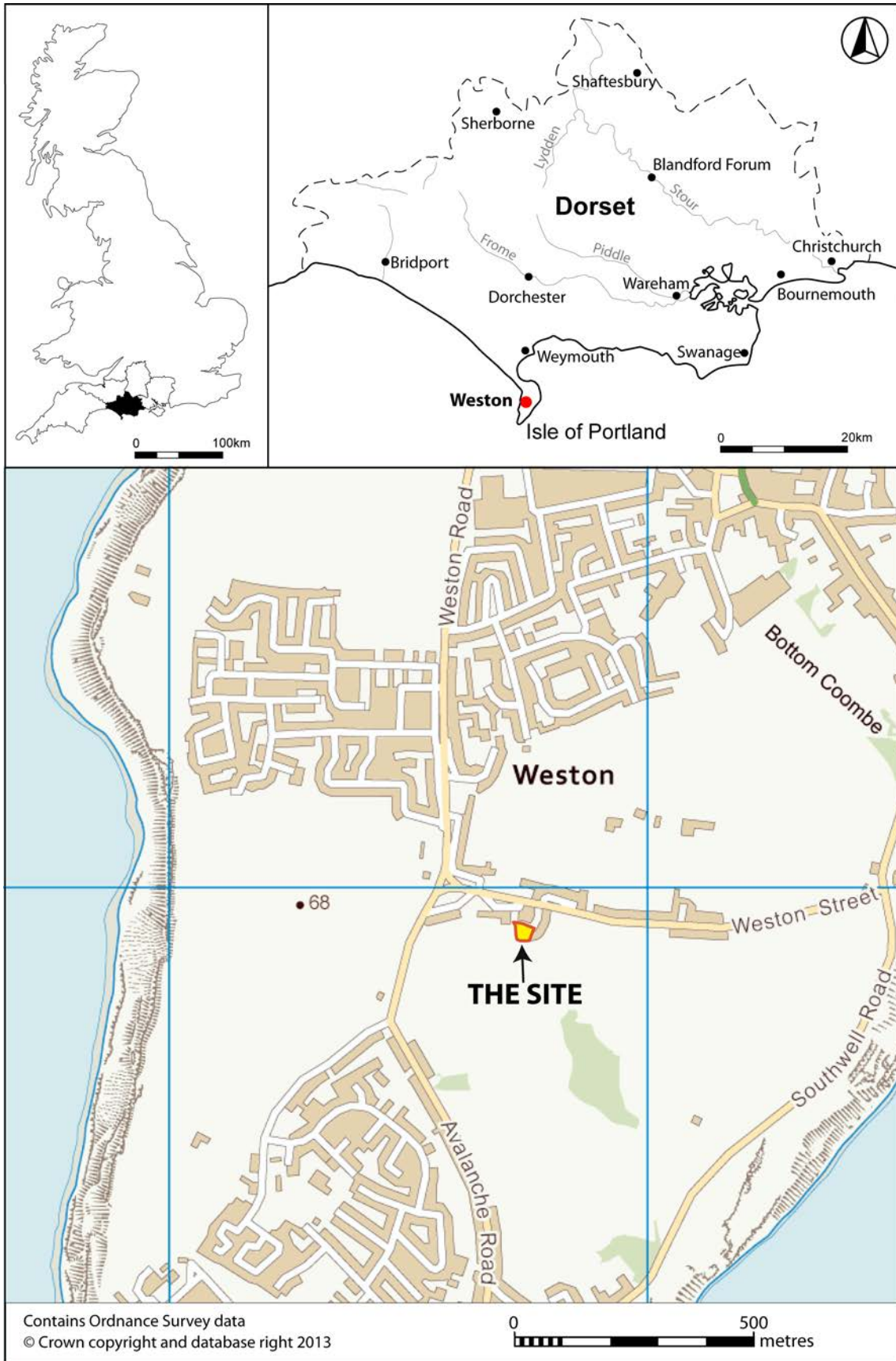


Figure 1 Location map.

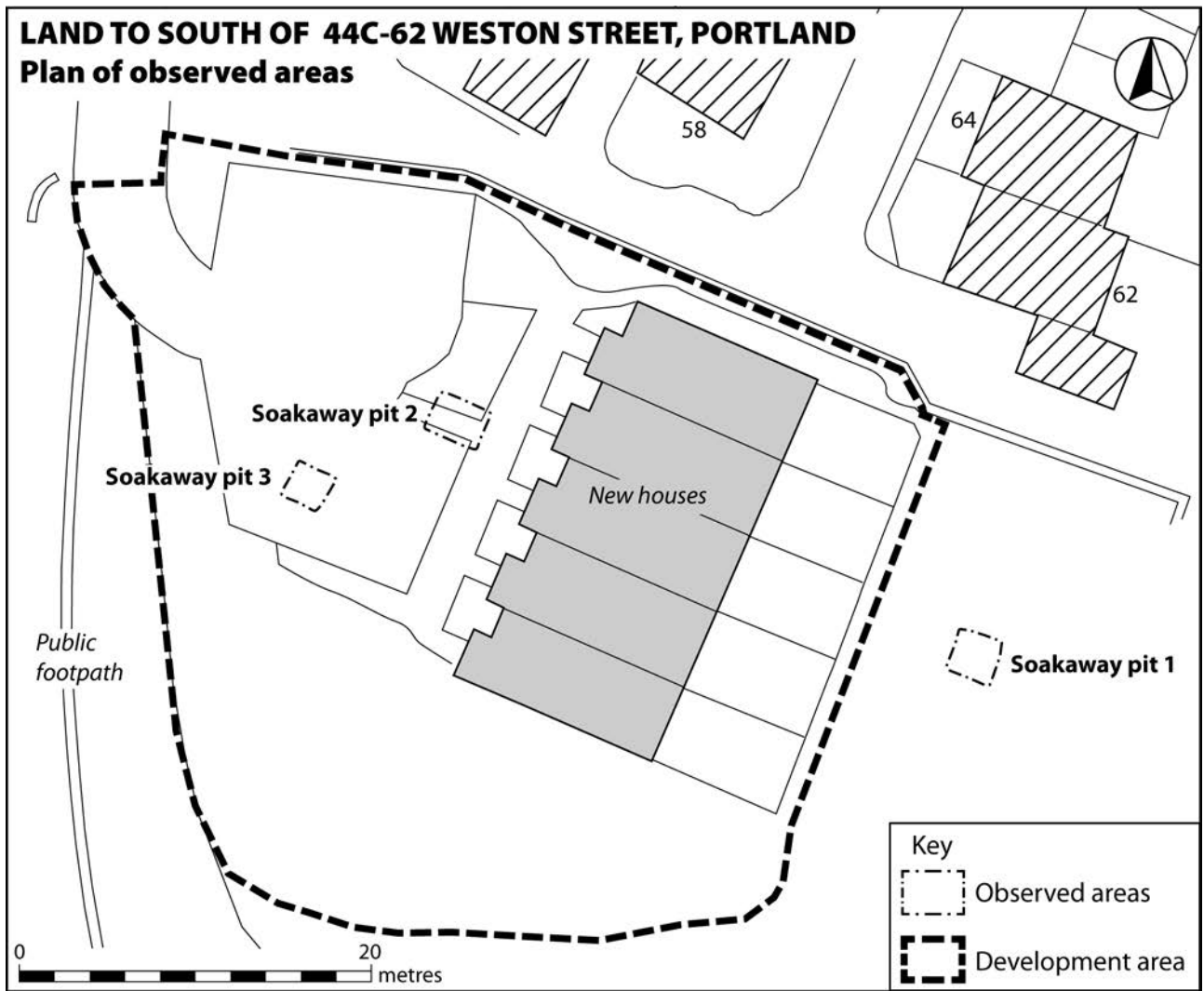


Figure 2: Plan of Observations.



Plate 1: Overview of development site. View from east.



Plate 2: Overview of development. View from south west.



Plate 3: Excavation of soakaway pit 1 in progress. View from north.



Plate 4: Soakaway pit 2, viewed from east. 1m scale.



Plate 5: Soakaway pit 3, viewed from east. 1m scale.