



Land to Rear of 1-3 Weymouth Avenue, Dorchester, Dorset

Archaeological Field Evaluation



Report No. 53441/2/1

July 2015

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Project Report Summary Page

Project Details			
OASIS Reference	terraina1-217416		
Project Title	Land to rear of 1-3 Weymouth Avenue, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 1QR		
Short Description of Project	<p>Terrain Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation of a plot of land to the rear of 1-3 Weymouth Avenue, Dorchester, Dorset. A single trench 7.5 m long was excavated, investigating a sample of approximately 2.6% of the site. The trench revealed a thick layer of medieval and later agricultural soil below late nineteenth and twentieth century deposits.</p> <p>No archaeological features were exposed. However, the site lies just outside the Roman town defences of Dorchester, in an area where Roman burials have been found previously and the potential for isolated Roman burials on the site still remains.</p>		
Project Dates	Start: 08-07-2015	End: 08-07-2015	
Previous/Future Work	No/Not known		
Project Code	53441		
Monument Type and Period	None		
Significant Finds	None		
Project Location			
County/District/Parish	Dorset/ West Dorset/ Dorchester		
Site Address	Land to the rear of 1-3 Weymouth Avenue, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 1QR		
Site Coordinates	SY 6919 9025		
Site Area	c. 304 m ²		
Height OD	c. 65 m		
Project Creators			
Organisation	Terrain Archaeology		
Project Brief Originator	None		
Project Design Originator	Terrain Archaeology		
Project Supervisor	Mike Trevarthen		
Project Manager	Peter Bellamy		
Sponsor or Funding Body	Developer		
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, diary, photographs, plans, report

Land to Rear of 1-3 Weymouth Avenue, Dorchester, Dorset

Archaeological Evaluation, July 2015

1. Introduction

1.1 Project introduction

Terrain Archaeology was commissioned by Gary Ward to undertake an Archaeological Field Evaluation of a plot of land to the rear of 1-3 Weymouth Avenue, Dorchester, in support of an application for planning consent (Application No. WD/D/15/000534) for a single coachhouse-style dwelling with associated access, parking and amenity space.

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) definition of Archaeological Field Evaluation is "*a limited programme of non-intrusive and/or intrusive fieldwork which determines the presence or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater. If such archaeological remains are present field evaluation defines their character, extent, quality and preservation, and enables an assessment of their significance in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate.*" (CIfA 2014a).

The purpose of Archaeological Field Evaluation as set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists is as follows:

"The purpose of field evaluation is to gain information about the archaeological resource within a given area or site (including its presence or absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality), in order to make an assessment of its merit in the appropriate context, leading to one or more of the following:

- *The formulation of a strategy to ensure the recording, preservation or management of the resource*
- *The formulation of a strategy to mitigate a threat to the archaeological resource*
- *The formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigation within a programme of research)"* (CIfA 2014a).

The fieldwork was carried out on the 8th July 2015 by Peter Bellamy and Mike Trevarthen.

Terrain Archaeology wishes to acknowledge the assistance and cooperation of Gary Ward and Kev. The project was 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 for the scheme of works was issued by, or on behalf of West Dorset District Council, but the proposed programme was discussed with Steve Wallis, Senior Archaeologist (Advice and Management, Dorset County Council, prior to commencing the fieldwork. Steve Wallis advised the Local Planning Authority in an email dated 18 June 2015, that "*The application's Heritage Statement has picked out some of the significant archaeological and historic features of the area, but I must emphasise that the location of the proposed development lies just outside the Roman town of Dorchester (close to its defences and the south gate), in an area where Roman burials in particular are to be expected. Cemeteries usually flanked the roads running out of a Roman town, and Weymouth Avenue follows the line of the Roman road to the coast, beside which Roman burials have been found at a number of locations.*

Based on this evidence, I advise that West Dorset District Council should request the applicant to carry out an archaeological evaluation of the proposed development, before determination, in order for an informed planning decision to be made." (<http://wam.westdorset-dc.gov.uk/WAM/doc/Planning.pdf?extension=.pdf&contentType=application/pdf&id=1219555>).

1.3 Site Location

The site lies to the rear of 1-3 Weymouth Avenue, Dorchester at SY 6919 9025. The plot was carved from the original back gardens of 1 and 3 Weymouth Avenue and was formerly used as a car park, with access from Prince of Wales Road. The site has a tarmac surface and is approximately level, but lies above the plots to the east and above the level of Prince of Wales Road. It lies about 65 m above Ordnance Datum.

1.4 Geology

The geology is mapped as the Portsdown Chalk Formation (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

1.5 Archaeological and Historical Background

The site lies in an area rich in prehistoric remains. It is about 220 m NNE of the Neolithic Henge Monument at Maumbury Rings and about 230 m SW of the Neolithic Timber Monument found under Dorchester (Bradley 1976; Woodward *et al.* 1993). No prehistoric remains have been recorded in the immediate vicinity of the site, which is likely to have been in an agricultural landscape of fields and isolated farmsteads in the later Bronze Age and Iron Age.

The site lies to the south of the Roman town of *Durnovaria*, about 25 m south of the Roman town defences. The modern Weymouth Avenue marks the course of the Roman road to the Roman port at Radipole (RCHME 1970). A number of Roman burials have been discovered outside the Roman town along the side of the Roman road. Two earlier Roman burials were found beneath the Roman town defences at Southfield House, together with a ditched enclosure (Davies and Thompson 1987). Some later Roman burials dug into the counterscarp bank of the Roman town defences were also found on this same site. Along the line of the Roman road, Roman burials have been found at Mentone Lodge (RCHME 1970, 580), on the market site (Hudson 2001; McMahon 2000; RCHME 1970, 580) and further south on the Police Station site (RCHME 1970, 580). The east flanking ditch of the Roman road has been recorded at 5-7 Weymouth Avenue (De Rosa 2008), the Stationmaster's House (Bellamy 1989; Pearce 1986) and the Police Station (Whelan 2001).

In the medieval period the area of the site was within the open strip fields of the Manor of Fordington, until they were enclosed in 1874.

During the Civil War, Maumbury Rings was hastily converted into a fort to defend Dorchester. Running from Maumbury towards the town was a sunken 'covered way' excavated to provide shelter for troops moving between the town and the fort (Bradley 1976). Its course has been traced across the site of the station and brewery (Harding 2004; Pearce 1986) and although its course closer to Dorchester is not known, it is assumed to head towards the end of South Street, in which case, it would pass very close to the site.

In the late 1870s and 1880s a series of large suburban villas were built along Weymouth Avenue and Prince of Wales Road. Eldridge Pope's Brewery was constructed in the 1880s, next to the railway line, which reached Dorchester in 1847. The site remained as part of the back gardens of 1 and 3 Weymouth Avenue, until the late 1970s or early 1980s when it was converted into a car park with access from Prince of Wales Road, presumably as part of the conversion of the houses into a local authority care home. It was known as Douglas Jackman House and was closed in 2013.

1.6 Previous Archaeological fieldwork

There have been no previous archaeological investigations on the site, but there have been a number of fieldwork episodes in the immediately surrounding area. The closest investigation to the site was a watching brief during the construction of the Health Centre at 5-7 Weymouth Avenue undertaken by Wessex Archaeology in 2008 (De Rosa 2008). Traces of the Roman roadside ditch were exposed, but otherwise the site was largely destroyed by the cellars of the late nineteenth century houses demolished to make way for the health centre.

To the north of the site at Southfield House, Wessex Archaeology carried out an evaluation in 1987, which revealed some early Roman features, Roman burials, and part of the Roman town defences (Davies and Thompson 1987).

1.7 Aims and Objectives

The aim of the field evaluation is to understand, record and make available information on the archaeological resource existing on the site, specifically on the form of the postulated circular monument on the site.

Its objectives were:

- To record all the in situ archaeological deposits and features revealed to an appropriate professional standard.
- To provide sufficient data to assess the significance of the heritage assets and potential heritage assets on the site
- To provide sufficient data to enable an informed planning decision to be taken on the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the heritage assets on the site.
- To present the results in a report to the appropriate standard.

1.8 Proposed Development

The construction of a single house is proposed at the southern end of the site, with the remainder comprising gardens and parking areas.

1.9 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 July 2015 (Terrain Archaeology document no. 3441/0/1). All archaeological works were carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (ClfA 2014a).

The evaluation comprised intrusive investigation in the form of trial trenching. One trench (Trench 1, Figures 2-3; Plates 1-2), measuring 7.5 m by 1.0-1.5 m, was mechanically excavated using a tracked excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket.

All archaeological deposits and features exposed during the works were recorded and excavation of archaeological deposits and features was limited to resolving questions relating to their date, nature, extent and condition. All deposits revealed, irrespective of their apparent archaeological significance, were recorded using components of the Terrain Archaeology recording system of complementary written, drawn and photographic records. These have been compiled in a stable, cross-referenced and fully indexed archive in accordance with current guidelines (AAF 2007; ClfA 2014b) and the requirements of the receiving museum. A photographic record of the work was maintained in digital format, and includes aspects of its setting, conduct and technical detail.

1.10 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 53441.

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 *terrains1-217416*. A digital copy of this report will be uploaded for inclusion in the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) online 'grey literature' library.

A brief report of the project will be published by Terrain Archaeology in the *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society*.

2. Results

2.1 Introduction

The evaluation trench was excavated diagonally across the footprint of the proposed house (Figure 2). The size of the trench was smaller than proposed in the WSI (Terrain Archaeology 2015) to allow for access and to leave a safe distance to the boundary walls given the depth of the trench. The features and deposits revealed in Trench 1 are described in detail in Appendix 1.

2.2 Distribution of the Revealed Archaeological Resource

No archaeological features were discovered. The whole area of the trench was covered by agricultural soils with late nineteenth and twentieth century deposits above.

2.3 Natural Deposits

The natural chalk bedrock (113) was exposed at a depth of 1.5 m across the whole of the trench. The upper surface was broken up into chalk lumps in a matrix of clay. A number of solution features were present in the top of the chalk. The most prominent (111) was investigated and shown to be a natural solution feature (Figure 3; Plate 1).

2.4 Archaeological Features

No archaeological features were found within the evaluation trench.

2.5 Agricultural Soils

Overlying the natural chalk was a 0.65 m thick deposit of agricultural soil (109, 110). The lower part of this deposit (110) was distinguished by a concentration of natural flint nodules. The deposit above (109) was homogeneous and contained material dating from the Roman to the Post-medieval period. It represents the gradual development of arable agricultural soil as part of the open strip fields of Fordington from the medieval period until the enclosure in 1874 and the selling off of this plot for suburban house development.

2.6 Nineteenth Century Deposits

Overlying the agricultural soil (109) was a series of dumps of soil, building debris and chalk (105, 106, 107, 108), forming a 0.4-0.6 m thick levelling layer (Figure 3). This is most likely to be related to the construction of the houses along Weymouth Avenue and the landscaping of the gardens behind in the late nineteenth century.

2.7 Modern Deposits

The upper part of the trench, above the late nineteenth century deposits, represents activity associated with the creation of the car park to the rear of 1 and 3 Weymouth Avenue in the late 1970s or early 1980s. Two phases can be identified. The first phase comprises a tarmac surface and sub-base (102, 103) in the eastern half of the trench and garden soil (104) in the western half. Subsequently the car park was enlarged and a second tarmac surface (100) was laid across the top of the earlier tarmac and garden soil.

3. Finds

3.1 Finds Assemblage

The finds recovered from the evaluation are presented below in Table 1. No systematic sampling for finds was undertaken. They have not been analysed in detail, as all appear to be residual.

Context	Roman Pottery	Medieval Pottery	Post-medieval pottery	Clay tobacco pipe	Ceramic building material	Glass	Flint	Animal bone
104	--	--	1/11g	--	2/109g	--	--	1/21g
109	2/7g	2/2g	4/21g	2/2g	2/113g	2/4g	2/27g	13/42g
110	--	--	--	--	--	--	1/3g	--
Total	2/7g	2/2g	5/32g	2/2g	4/222g	2/4g	3/30g	14/63g

Table 1: Quantification of finds by context (count/weight in grams)

3.2 Pottery

A total of nine sherds of pottery (41g) were collected. Almost all are small abraded sherds and include two Roman Black Burnished Ware sherds, two medieval coarseware sherds, three post-medieval coarseware sherds and two nineteenth century industrial whiteware sherds.

3.3 Other Finds

Two small fragments of clay tobacco pipe stem were recovered from context 109.

Four fragments of ceramic building material were recovered — one brick and one roof tile fragment each from contexts 104 and 109.

Two small sherds of glass vessel or small bottle were recovered from context 109. The sherds were too small to confidently determine the form and date of the glass vessel/bottle.

Three flakes of struck flint (30g) came from agricultural soils 109 and 110). None are diagnostic and all are edge damaged and patinated and are probably residual in this context.

In addition, to the finds listed above, some small fragments of coal, slate and burnt flint were noted from context 109.

3.4 Faunal Remains

Fourteen pieces of animal bone (63g) were found in the agricultural soil 109 and garden soil 104. These bones were highly fragmented and in poor condition, but probably derive from common domestic species (cow, sheep, domestic fowl).

4. Assessment

4.1 Sample

Evaluation Trench 1 evaluated a total area of about 8 m², which represents an approximate 2.6% sample of the site and about 10% of the footprint of the proposed house. Experiments on the effectiveness of differing sample strategies on large scale rural archaeological sites have indicated a trial trenching sample of between 5%-10% of the area is broadly effective in evaluating Roman and medieval remains with a relatively high degree of confidence, but is less effective at picking up and understanding prehistoric and Saxon archaeology (Hey & Lacey, 2001).

4.2 Heritage Asset Resource of the Site

Trench 1 did not reveal any archaeological features, but showed there was a deep agricultural soil associated with the medieval and later open fields, with no disturbance of the underlying chalk surface. Given the history of the site there appears to be a low probability for deep modern disturbance. There remains a potential for intact archaeological features to be present on the site beyond the area of the trench. The baseline archaeological data for this area suggests that the most likely heritage assets to exist on the site are Roman burials, which occur in some density along both sides of Weymouth Avenue (see Section 1.5 above). No burials were found on the adjacent medical centre site (though much of this area was disturbed) (De Rosa 2008) and none were found in the evaluation trench on the present site. This suggests that there wasn't a cemetery in this area, though the presence of isolated burials cannot be discounted.

4.3 Significance

4.3.1 Definition of Significance

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines significance as: *The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.*

Value of Heritage Asset	Factors for assessing the value of archaeological assets
Very High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Heritage Sites (including nominated sites). Assets of acknowledged international importance. Assets that can contribute significantly to acknowledged international research objectives.
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheduled Monuments (including proposed sites). Undesignated assets of schedulable quality and importance. Assets that can contribute significantly to acknowledged national research objectives.
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designated or undesignated assets that contribute to regional research objectives.
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designated and undesignated assets of local importance. Assets compromised by poor preservation and/or poor survival of contextual associations. Assets of limited value, but with potential to contribute to local research objectives.
Negligible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assets with very little or no surviving archaeological interest.
Unknown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The importance of the resource has not been ascertained.

Table 2: Scale of Heritage Asset Value

In the case of the heritage assets related to this current development proposal, the interest is primarily archaeological. The value of the heritage assets has been assessed with reference to the guidance given by the Highways Agency in 2007 in *The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Volume 11, Section 3, Part 2: Cultural Heritage (Highways Agency document 208/07)*, which is the most suitable and widely-acknowledged detailed assessment methodology for assessing the impact on and value of heritage assets. The scale of heritage asset values is set out in Table 2, which is based on Highways Agency document 208/07, Annex 5, Table 5.1.

4.3.2 Heritage Asset Significance

No heritage assets were exposed by the evaluation. However, there remains a potential for isolated Roman burials to be present in the area. The investigation of any burials present on the site have the potential to feed into the research aims of the South West Archaeological Research Framework (Webster 2007), in particular Research Aim 58: *Widen our understanding of Roman burial traditions*. Roman burials, if present on the site, would be assessed as Medium, according to the criteria set out in Table 2.

4.4 Potential impact of the proposed development

The policy on the impact of development on the significance heritage assets is set out in paragraphs 132 and 133 of the *National Planning Policy Framework*. The Planning Practice Guidance to the NPPF makes it clear that it is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that should be assessed. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset, or development within its setting. The NPPF Practice Guidance describes the degree of harm to the significance of heritage assets in terms of 'substantial harm', 'less than substantial harm' and 'no harm'.

4.4.1 Direct Impacts on Potential Heritage Assets

The form of the foundations of the proposed building has not yet been determined, so the impact cannot be assessed. However, it can be noted that if the foundations do not penetrate below about 1.5 m below current ground levels, then there will be no direct impact on any potential heritage assets on the site.

4.4.2 Scale of Impact of the Development Proposals on Potential Heritage Assets

The scale of impact of the development on any potential heritage assets on the site cannot be determined at current levels of information.

4.5 Suggested mitigation of the proposed development impacts

The evaluation has not demonstrated the presence of archaeological features, but the potential for isolated Roman burials on the site still remains. If the development does not penetrate below the level of the top of the chalk (1.5 m below present ground level), then there will be no direct impact on any potential archaeological remains. If the groundworks penetrate into the chalk, then it is recommended that this is observed by a suitably qualified archaeologist to record any Roman burials or other archaeological features that are encountered on the site.

5. References

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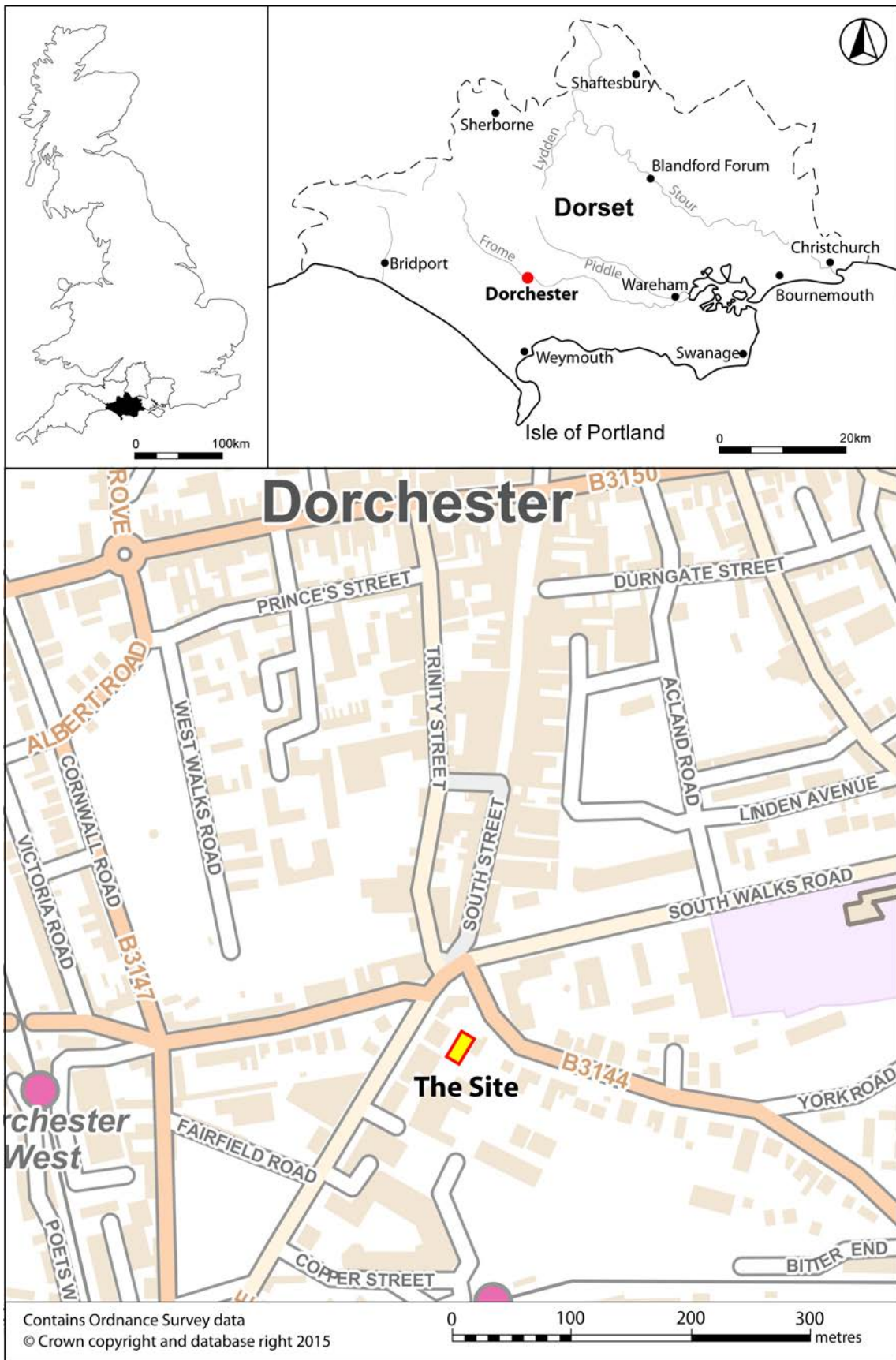


Figure 1: Site Location.

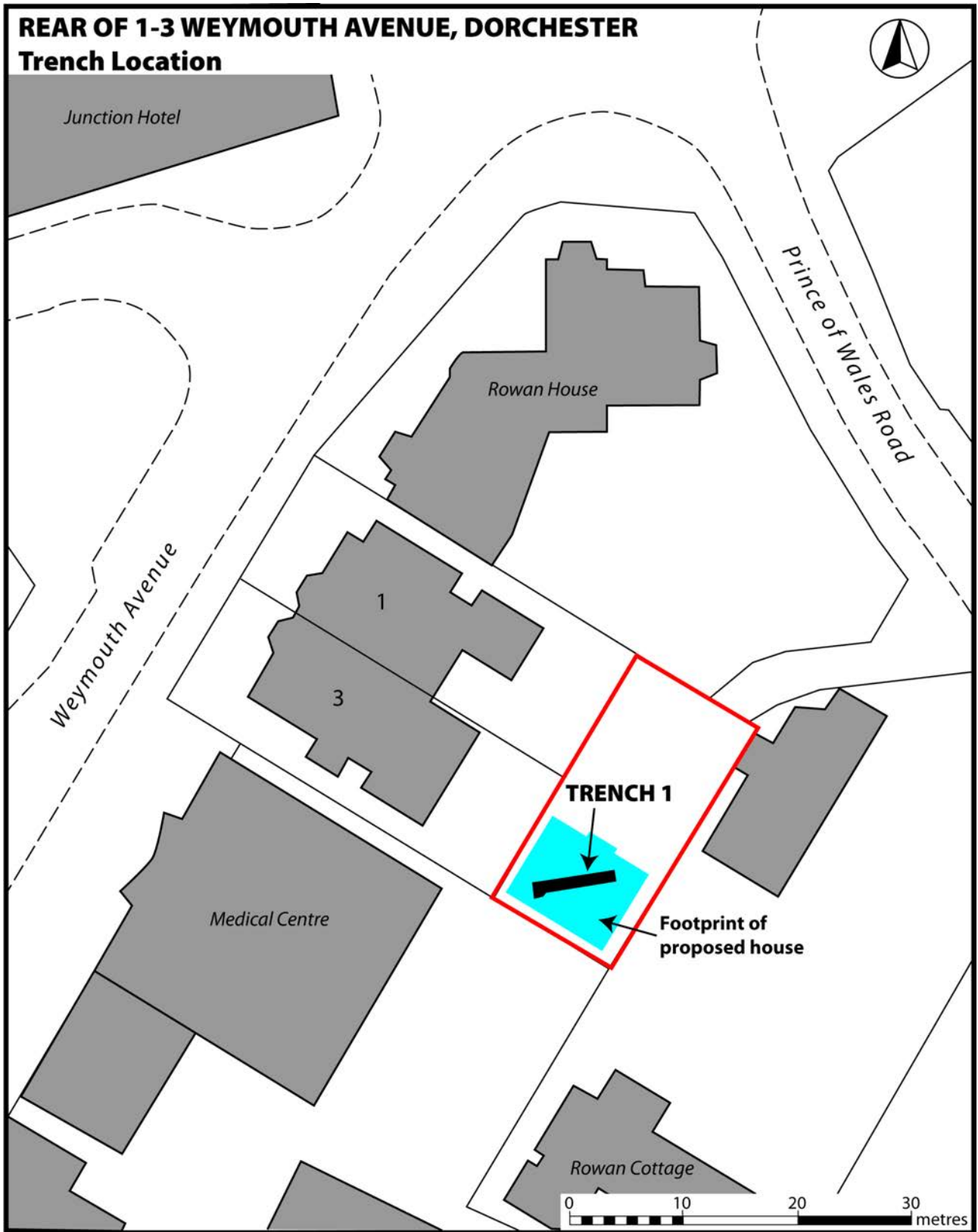


Figure 2: Trench Location Plan

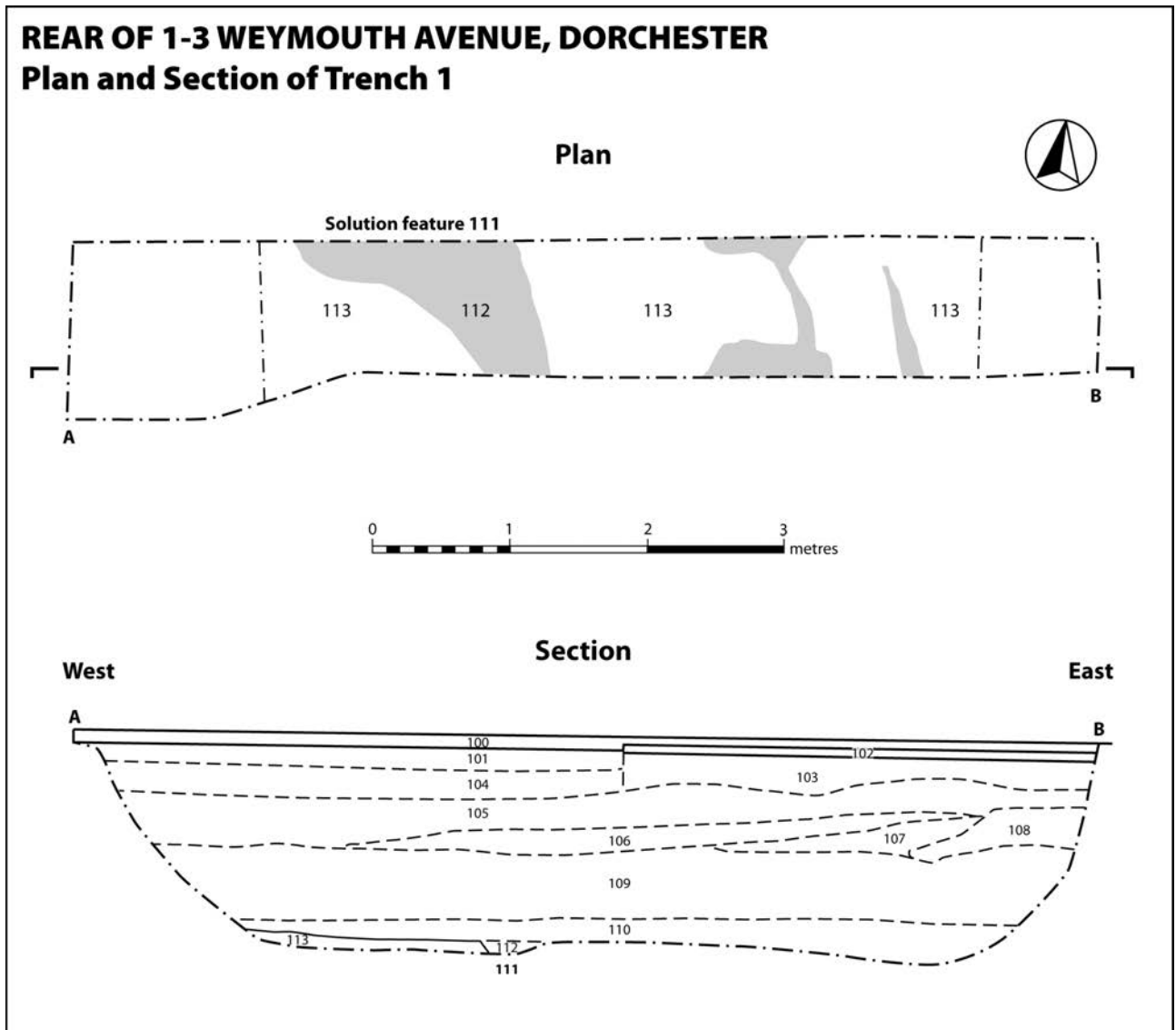


Figure 3: Plan and section of Trench 1.



Plate 1: Trench 1 viewed from west. 2m scales.



Plate 2: South section of Trench 1. 2m scale.

Appendix 1: Trench Summary

Trench 1

Length: 7.5 m; Width 1.0-1.5 m; maximum depth 1.65 m.

Context	Description and Interpretation	Depth (m) below ground level
100	Upper tarmac surface: modern tarmac surface forming car park for former care home. It sits on 101 and 102.	0.00 – 0.10m
101	Crushed stone sub-base for tarmac 100: Crushed limestone aggregate ('Type 1') beneath tarmac 100 in western half of trench.	0.10– 0.23m
102	Lower tarmac surface: Only found in eastern half of the trench above 103. It is covered by tarmac 100. The remains of an earlier, smaller car park.	0.07 – 0.12m
103	Orange hogging sub-base for tarmac 102: Orange pebbly sandy aggregate immediately beneath tarmac 102 in eastern half of trench.	0.12-0.40m
104	Garden Soil: Firm dark greyish-brown clay loam soil with occasional coal, mortar, brick, tile, limestone and animal bone. Former garden soil prior to enlargement of car park.	0.23 – 0.50m
105	Soil levelling layer: A series of mixed dumped soils, mainly dark-mid grey brown clay loam with chalk flecks and tips of degraded mortar and building rubble, with mortar, slate, and occasional patches of larger limestone pieces.	0.50 – 0.85m
106	Chalk deposit: Redeposited chalk layer of very frequent chalk lumps (up to 100 mm) in a dark greyish-brown clay matrix. It occurred mainly in south part of the trench and petered out to east and west.	0.55 – 0.85m
107	Dumped soil deposit: dark greyish brown silty clay loam with common ash and clinker, slate fragments and burnt and unburnt limestone pieces.	0.55 – 0.85m
108	Dump of building waste: Loose pale yellowish brown deposit of mixed chalk, limestone and mortar fragments.	0.50 – 0.90m
109	Agricultural soil: Firm dark greyish-brown silty clay with sparse chalk flecks and small stone.	0.75 – 1.35m
110	Subsoil: Dark reddish brown silty clay with moderate brecciated and nodular flint and sparse chalk flecks.	1.35 – 1.50m
111	Natural solution feature: Irregular tapering feature only partially within trench. Possibly a solution hollow or tree throw.	1.50+ m
112	Fill of natural solution feature 111: Firm dark reddish brown clay with moderate flint and sparse chalk flecks.	1.50+ m
113	Natural Chalk: weathered natural chalk, containing solution 'feature' 111.	1.50+ m