Mapperton House, Mapperton, Beaminster, Dorset

Archaeological Recording of Contractor's Test Pits

Report No. 53460/3/1

November 2016

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Project Report Summary Page

Project Details			
OASIS Reference	terraina1-269907		
Project Title	Contractor's Test Pits, Mapperton House		
Short Description of Project	Terrain Archaeology carried out archaeological observations and recording during the excavation of a series of five test pits to test ground conditions for the construction of a proposed new biomass heating system. A garden wall was found in one test pit and a deposit of alluvium in two other pits, possibly indicating the presence of a former pond.		
Project Dates	Start: 25-11-2016	End: 25-11-2016	
Previous/Future Work	No/Yes		
Project Code	53460		
Monument Type and Period	Wall (Post-medieval)		
Significant Finds	None		
Project Location			
County/District/ Parish	Dorset/ West Dorset/ Mapperton		
Site Address	Mapperton House, Mapperton, Beaminster DT8 3NR		
Site Coordinates	SY 503 996		
Site Area	12 m^2		
Height OD	*c.* 125 m		
Project Creators			
Organisation	Terrain Archaeology		
Project Brief Originator	None		
Project Design Originator	Terrain Archaeology		
Project Supervisor	Peter Bellamy		
Project Manager	Peter Bellamy		
Sponsor or Funding Body	Landowner		
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

Mapperton House, Mapperton, Beaminster, Dorset

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1. Introduction

1.1 Project introduction

A planning application (WD/D/16/002340) for a new biomass heating system for Mapperton has been submitted to West Dorset District Council and is currently under consideration. As part of the design of this heating system a series of test pits were excavated along the approximate proposed route of the pipework to test the suitability of the ground conditions for drilling. Terrain Archaeology was commissioned by the Mapperton Estate to observe these test pits. This information will be fed into the proposals for an archaeological scheme of works for the project.

A heritage statement for the project has been prepared by James Weir, Historic Building Consultant (Weir 2016).

The fieldwork was carried out on the 25th November 2016 by Peter Bellamy.

1.2 Brief

No written brief for the works was produced by or on behalf of the Client.

1.3 Site Location

Mapperton is located approximately 3km southeast of Beaminster (Figure 1). It comprises an estate of c. 2,000 acres, with 54 acres of parkland around the main house. The property is accessed via an axial avenue (North Avenue), which leads due south of Loscombe Road for a distance of 170 metres. The house is centred on Ordnance Survey Grid Reference SY 5035 9967. Mapperton House is located on a plateau on the west side of a steep valley which runs down in a roughly southerly direction. The terraced formal gardens are laid out within this valley. The surrounding area is predominantly a wooded and pastoral agricultural landscape.

1.4 Geology

The solid geology over the main area of the site is mapped as ooidal limestone of the Inferior Oolite Group. To the east and south the geology is mapped as sandstone of the Bridport Sand Formation. To the north is calcareous mudstone of the Fullers Earth Formation (http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk /geologyofbritain/home.html).

1.5 Archaeological and Historical Background

The historical background has been set out in detail in a Heritage Statement prepared by James Weir (2016) and will not be repeated here, except in summary form.

Mapperton appears to have its origins in a Saxon settlement and is recorded in the Domesday survey. The location of this settlement and the subsequent medieval settlement is not known, but it is generally understood that the village of Mapperton was located in the vicinity of the present house and church and was depopulated by the plague of 1666 and the tenements were pulled down. Weir (2016) suggests that the medieval village was located in the field west of Mapperton House, where a number of indistinct cropmarks can be identified. However, recent recording of two test pits at the eastern edge of this field have not revealed any archaeological deposits or features, so the location of the village must remain in doubt. There are extensive remains of medieval cultivation in the form of strip lynchets along the steeper valleys (RCHME 1952, 156).

Mapperton House appears to be the site of the medieval manor, which was held by the Brett family until the late 14th century when it passed to the Morgans through marriage. Robert Morgan (d. 1567) remodelled the house in the mid-16th century, possibly demolishing the earlier manor house (Hutchins 1863, 159). By the early 17th century, the Mapperton was acquired by Richard Brodrepp (or Broadripp) who had married Mary Morgan. The grandson of Richard Brodrepp, another Richard (*c.* 1639-1706), set about making improvements to the house and estate and he may have been responsible for clearing the village site, or what was left of it. The last of the Brodrepps was another Richard (d. 1774), who remodelled the north wing with a new central stair hall and classical façade at some time in the mid-18th century. After the death of the last Richard Brodrepp, the property passed to the Compton family by marriage. Throughout most of the Compton ownership, the property was tenanted.

The estate was sold in 1919 to Mrs Ethel Labouchère (1860-1955), who is credited with the creation of the current formal gardens in the Arts and Crafts style between 1919 and 1927. In the 19th century, the gardens at Mapperton are thought to have consisted of 'the walled forecourt, north lawn, an arrangement of pergolas and trellises in the valley to the east of the house and a kitchen garden beyond.' Little is known about the layout of the wider park from any period before the 19th century, although it is likely to have comprised arable and agricultural lands, as opposed to the extensive and contrived 'Brownian' landscapes of other country seats. Similarly, the extent of formal gardens in the vicinity of the house, which would most likely have predated the mid-18th century, is not known at all.

After Mrs Labouchère's death in 1955, the estate was purchased by Victor Montagu, Viscount Hinchingbrooke (1916-62) and 10th Earl of Sandwich (1962-1964), from whom the property descended in 1995 to John Montagu, 11th Earl of Sandwich (b. 1943), the current owner.

1.6 Previous Archaeological fieldwork

No previous archaeolgical fieldwork is recorded on the site.

1.7 Aims and Objectives

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

Its objectives were:

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

1.8 Groundworks

Five test pits were excavated by machine in the locations shown on Figure 2 in order to test the geology to assess its suitability for drilling for the proposed biomass heating pipes. The test pits were backfilled after recording. Test Pits 1 and 2 were in the area south of the house, Test Pit 3 in the car park area and Test Pits 4 and 5 in the field west of the house. These test pits were of varying sizes and depths as indicated in Appendix 1.

1.9 Methods

All archaeological works were undertaken in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (CIfA 2014a).

All test pits were observed as they were being dug by machine, All deposits revealed during the groundworks, 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 (Brown 2011; CIfA 2014b) and the requirements of the receiving museum. The photographic record of the work was maintained in digital format, and included 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 53460.

A 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 *terraina1-269907*. 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

All test pits, other than Test Pit 2, did not contain any archaeological features or significant archaeological deposits. The features and deposits revealed in Test Pits 1–5 are described in detail in Appendix 1.

2.2 Natural Deposits

2.2.1 Alluvium?

Both Test Pits 3 and 4 revealed deposits of mid reddish-brown silty clay (121, 131) between about 0.75–1.0 m thick, immediately below the topsoil, which has been interpreted as an alluvial deposit. A single animal bone and sparse charcoal flecks were noted within this deposit in Test Pit 3.

2.2.2 Geology

The geology was variable across the site. In Test Pits 1–4 a layer of solid limestone bedrock was encountered at a depth of between 0.85 m (in Test Pit 1) and 1.2 m (in Test Pits 2–4). Overlying this in Test Pit 1 was a stony sand layer (101). In Test Pits 2 and 3, the bedrock was overlain by a stony clay layer (114, 122). In Test Pit 5, the natural comprised stiff clay (142).

2.3 Archaeological Features

Test Pit 2 was dug along a linear ridge running roughly north-south to the south of the church (Figure 2). The remains of a mortared stone wall (113), 0.46 m wide and surviving about 0.45 m high, was discovered running along this ridge (Figures 2–3; Plates **). It was faced with squared rubble stone on a basal spreader course of more tabular stone. The east face of the wall was not exposed. The buried garden soil layers 111 and 112 butted against this wall, which was covered by the present garden soil 110. The wall was founded directly upon a natural layer of clay and stone (114).

2.4 Agricultural and Garden Soils

The overburden in all test pits was a layer of soil and turf. This was a roughly 0.25 m thick layer of brown/ reddish-brown silty clay (100, 110, 120, 130, 140). In Test Pit 2 this topsoil layer sealed the remains of Wall 113 and a thin layer of charcoal and clinker (111), which sealed a lower buried garden soil layer (112).

3. Finds

3.1 Finds Assemblage

No finds were retained from the observations. Some nineteenth or twentieth century bottle glass and corrugated iron was noted in garden soil context 110 in Test Pit 2. A single cattle bone was found in alluvial deposit 121 in Test Pit 3.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

4.1 Discussion

The test pits revealed very little new archaeological information and relatively few finds were noted. The only feature exposed was Wall 113 in Test Pit 2. This wall appears to be similar in build to a wall running south from the east end of the South Stables. Its course can be traced by the existence of a linear ridge in the ground, which runs from a stone outbuilding to the north down to the entrance drive into Garden Cottage. The west face of Wall 113 lines up with the west face of the outbuilding and with what appears to be a gate stop in the churchyard wall. It is likely that this wall is a former garden wall, delimiting a small close between the church and Garden Cottage. It is shown on the 1841 Tithe Map and on the 1889 and 1903 25-inch Ordnance Survey maps. In 1903, there is a small garden building constructed on its east side. The date of demolition of this wall is uncertain. There is no scar of this wall in the present outbuilding, which is first shown on the 1963 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map, so may have been demolished prior to this date.

In the southwest part of the site in Test Pits 3 and 4 was a silty clay deposit up to one metre thick. This may be an alluvial (or perhaps colluvial) deposit. It is notable that it was found in the area close to the existing long pond area. This pond is shown on the 1841 Tithe map as a long rectangular pond and this may be the formalisation of an earlier more natural pond in this area that once may have continued into the area of the present car park.

No archaeological finds or features were found in the field west of the house, suggesting that the former medieval village may not be in this area as has been tentatively suggested (Weir 2016). However, the size of the area exposed is not large enough to be able to make any conclusive interpretations.

4.2 Conclusions

The observation of the test pits has revealed a low level of buried archaeology across the area, though it must be noted that the area exposed was very limited. The results tentatively suggest that the location of the former medieval village was not in the eastern margins of the field west of the house. The garden wall exposed in Trench 2 was in existence in the first half of the nineteenth century, based on map evidence and may be much older.

The results suggest that the construction of the new biomass heating system is unlikely to disturb a significant amount of archaeology.

5. References

Brown, D. H.,	2011	*Archaeological Archives. A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation*. Second Edition, September 2011. Archaeological Archives Forum.
ClfA,	2014a	*Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief. December 2014. Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.*
ClfA,	2014b	*Standard and Guidance for the Creation, Preparation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives*. December 2014. Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.
Hutchins, J.,	1863	*The History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset,* volume II, 3rd edn.
RCHME	1952	*An Inventory of Historical Monuments in the County of Dorset. Volume One, West. London; HMSO.*
Weir, J.,	2016	Heritage Statement (Rev A), Mapperton Estate, Mapperton, Dorset DT8 3NR, November 2016. Unpublished client report by James Weir, Historic Buildings Consultant, November 2016.

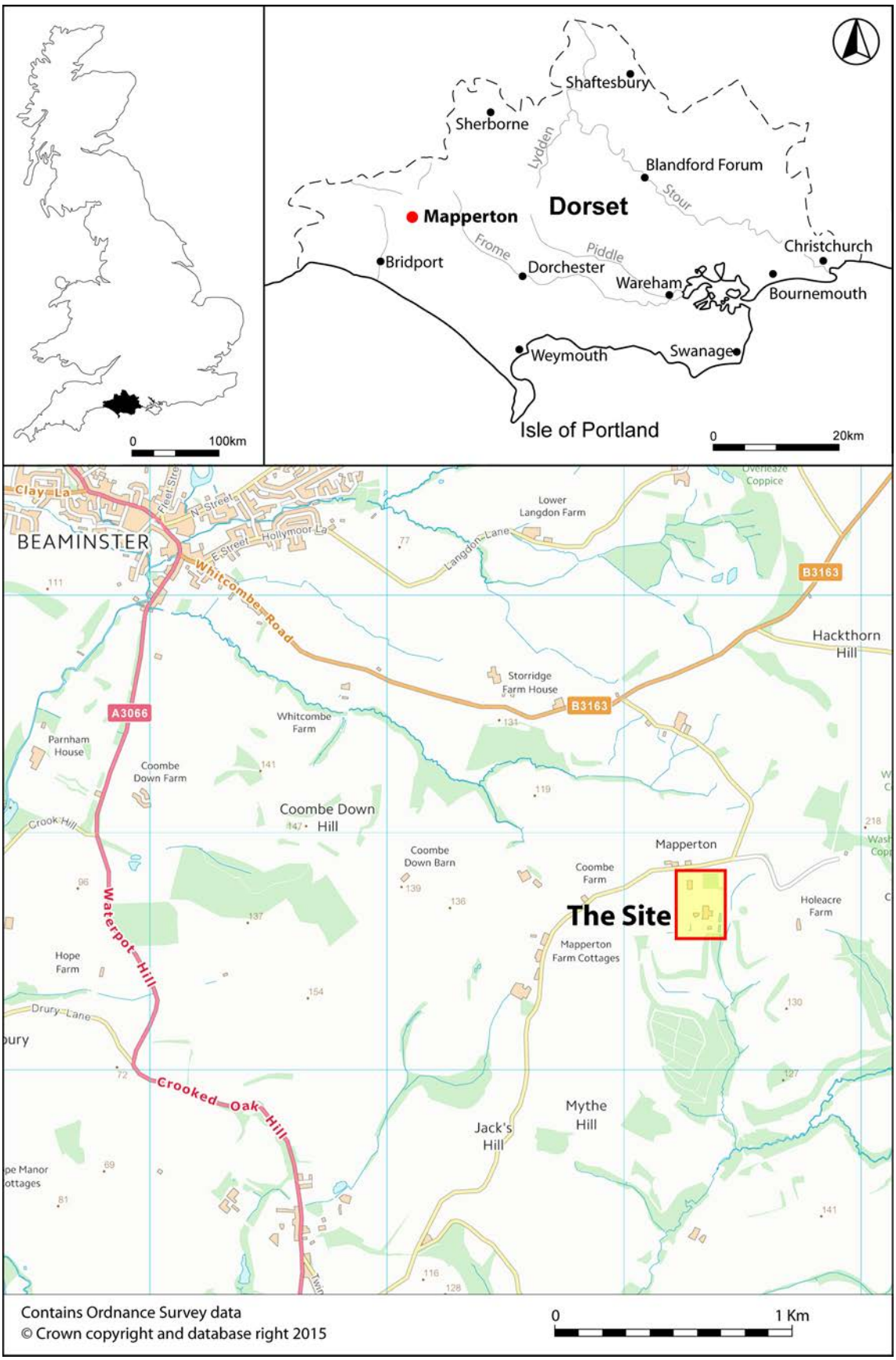

Figure 1: Site Location.

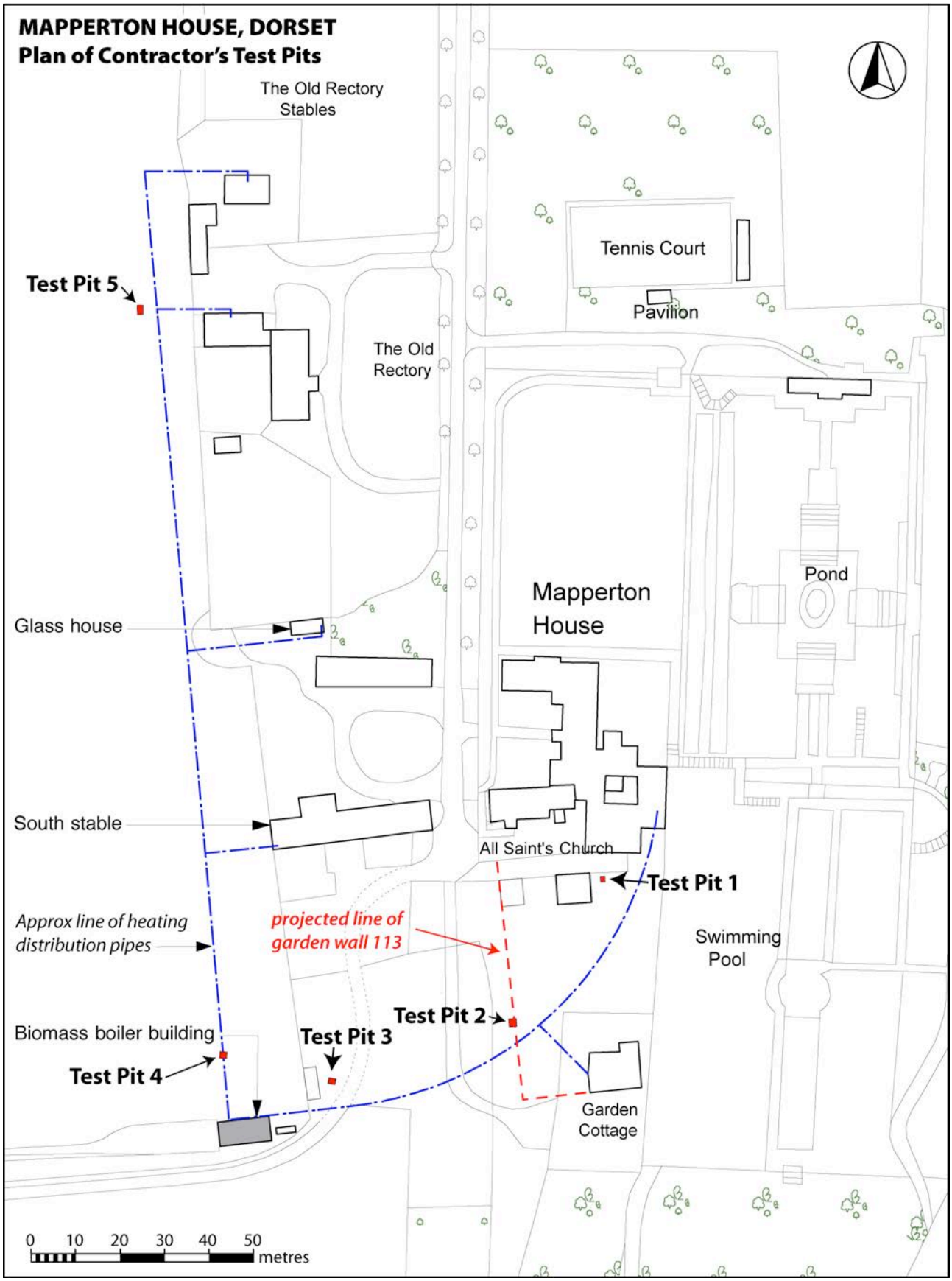

Figure 2: Test Pit Location Plan

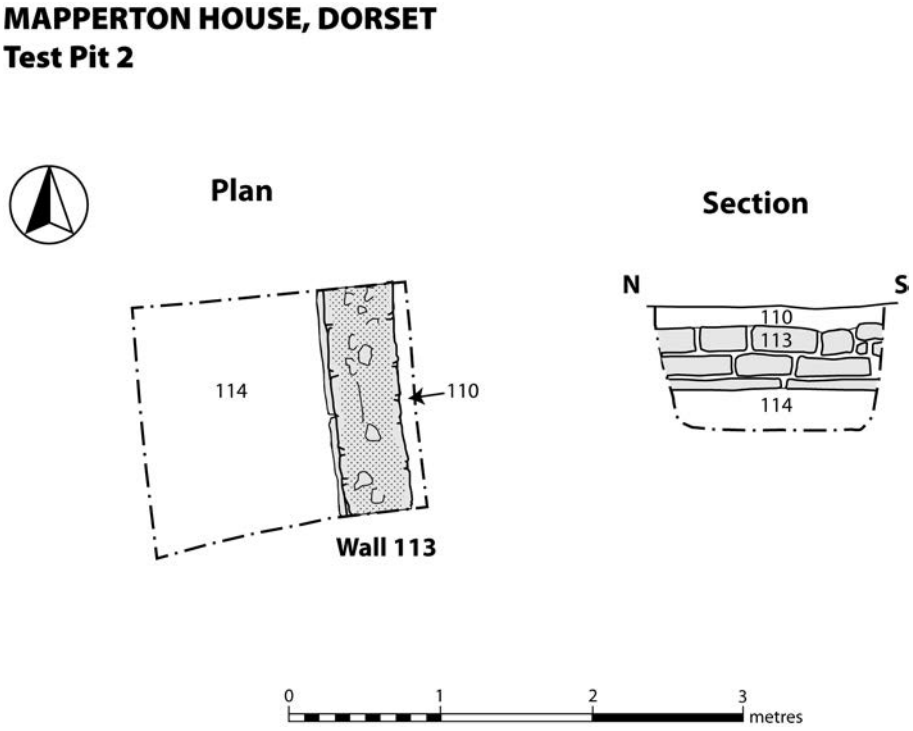

Figure 3: Plan and Section of Test Pit 2

Plate 1: Test Pit 1 viewed from south.1m scales.

Plate 2: West elevation of Wall 113 in Test Pit 2. 1m scale.

Plate 3: Test Pit 2 viewed from south showing alignment of Wall 113. 1m scale.

Plate 4: Location of Test Pit 3 viewed from south.

Plate 5: Test Pit 3 after excavation, viewed from south. 1m scales.

Plate 6: Location of Test Pit 5, viewed from south.

Plate 7: Test Pit 5 after excavation, viewed from south. 1m scales.

Plate 8: Test Pit 6, viewed from west. 1m scales.

Plate 9: Test Pit 6 after excavation, viewed from west. 1m scales.

Appendix 1: Test Pit Summary

Test Pit 1

Length: 1.3 m; Width 1.0 m; maximum depth 0.85 m.

Context	Description and Interpretation	Depth (m) below ground level
100	**Topsoil**: Dark brown silty clay with occasional small stone.	0.00 – 0.26m
101	**Natural Sand and Stone**: Compact dark yellow slightly clayey sand with frequent stone rubble 100–300mm across.	0.26– 0.85m
102	**Bedrock**: Irregularly flat limestone bedrock	0.85m +

Test Pit 2

Length: 1.7 m; Width 1.8 m; maximum depth 0.75 m.

Context	Description and Interpretation	Depth (m) below ground level
110	**Topsoil**: Friable dark greyish-brown silty loam with occasional small stone and modern glass, and metal objects.	0.00 – 0.20m
111	**Garden Build-up Layer**: Black/very dark brown clay with frequent charcoal and clinker. Butted Wall 113.	0.20 – 0.25m
112	**Buried Topsoil**: Dark reddish-brown silty clay. Butted Wall 113.	0.25 – 0.50m
113	**Garden Wall:** Stone wall of squared limestone rubble stone with lime mortar bonding. Two courses survive, constructed on a thin stone spreader course set on layer 114.	0.10 – 0.55 m
114	**Natural Clay and Stone**: Compact reddish-brown clay with frequent stone rubble 100–300mm across.	0.50– 0.75m
115	**Bedrock**: Irregularly flat limestone bedrock	0.75m +

Test Pit 3

Length: 1.6 m; Width 1.3 m; maximum depth 1.2 m.

Context	Description and Interpretation	Depth (m) below ground level
120	**Topsoil**: Dark reddish-brown silty loam with frequent stone rubble up to 250mm across, moderate charcoal flecks.	0.00 – 0.25m
121	**Alluvium?**: Mid reddish-brown silty clay with occasional small stone 50–100mm across and sparse charcoal flecks. A single cattle bone also recovered.	0.25– 1.02m
122	**Natural**: Reddish-brown clay with frequent stone up to 250mm.	1.02– 1.22m
123	**Bedrock**: Irregularly flat limestone bedrock	1.22m +

Test Pit 4

Length: 1.6 m; Width 1.5 m; maximum depth 1.25 m.

Context	Description and Interpretation	Depth (m) below ground level
130	**Topsoil**: Mid-dark reddish-brown silty clay.	0.00 – 0.25m
131	**Alluvium?**: Mid reddish-brown silty clay becoming more clayey with depth, with occasional small stone 50–100mm across.	0.25– 1.20m
132	**Bedrock**: Irregularly flat limestone bedrock	1.20m +

Test Pit 5

Length: 2.1 m; Width 1.3 m; maximum depth 1.4 m.

Context	Description and Interpretation	Depth (m) below ground level
140	**Topsoil**: Mid-dark reddish-brown silty clay.	0.00 – 0.25m
142	**Natural Clay**: Mottled grey and brown stiff clay with thin layer of broken flint/chert fragments in upper part.	0.25m +