

**NEW CAR PORT, 9 NORTH STREET, CHARMINSTER,
DORSET**

Archaeological Observations and Recording



Report No. 53258/3/1

October 2007

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DORSET**
Archaeological Observations and Recording, August 2007

Prepared for:

Clarke Renovations
Cedar Lodge
Ullswater Crescent
Weymouth
Dorset
DT3 5HE

Report written by:

Steven Tatler and Peter S Bellamy

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SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Terrain Archaeology in August 2007 during the groundworks associated with the erection of a new carport at the rear of 9 North Street, Charminster, Dorset (SY678927). No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

INTRODUCTION

Terrain Archaeology was commissioned by Kevin Clarke of Clarke Renovations to undertake a programme of archaeological observations and recording during groundworks associated with the erection of a Carport at the rear of 9 North Street, Charminster, Dorset (Planning Application No. 1/E/07/000268).

Archaeological Observations and Recording, also known as an archaeological watching brief, is defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists as “a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons, within a specified area or site where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed.”

The site is situated at the rear of 9 North Street, Charminster on land that was previously a garden and small allotment centred on NGR SY678927 (Figure 1). It lies on land sloping moderately to the east at a height of about 65 m above Ordnance Datum.

The fieldwork was carried out between the 22nd and 24th August 2007 by Steven Tatler.

Terrain Archaeology would like to acknowledge the help and cooperation of the following during this project: Kevin Clarke (Clarke Renovations), Steve Wallis (Senior Archaeologist, Dorset County Council) and the groundworkers.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The origins of Charminster are as a Minster church probably established at some time about the end of the 7th century AD (Hall 2000). Nothing of this Saxon church is now visible. The Parish Church of St Mary contains some fabric from an 11th century cruciform church and the remainder of the church is of 15th and 16th century date (RCHME 1970, 60-63). The form of the present churchyard shows that the original Minster churchyard was much larger and extended further south and west of its present boundaries (Hall 2000). A watching brief by *Terrain Archaeology* at 1 West Hill revealed a number of burials in the area to the west of the existing churchyard (Bellamy 2001). The present site lies beyond the limits of the early churchyard to the west.

The Saxon and medieval settlement of Charminster probably developed around the focus of the church and probably along the line of West Hill, East Hill and North Street. There has been very little archaeological investigation of Charminster, so the form of the earlier settlement is not well understood. Not far from the site, the remains of a 12th/13th century building fronting on to the south side of West Hill were found during an archaeological evaluation by *AC archaeology* (Valentin 1997; 1998).

The site lies in the eastern end of the backlands of the properties fronting North Street, in the area between North Street and West Hill. The 1889 25-inch Ordnance Survey map shows the area of the site as crossing the boundary between two properties on North Street, with what appear to be green houses or out houses at the northern end. The 1902 Ordnance Survey map is similar position, but there has been some demolition and rebuilding of the buildings close to the frontage. The building on the North Street frontage is shown as a Public House. The 1929 25-inch Ordnance Survey map shows that the majority of the property boundaries adjacent to the site have been removed to create a larger garden. There was some landscaping evident on the site, probably as a result of its use as a pub garden. The site was more recently used as an allotment.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

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

The archaeological works aimed to observe and record all the *in situ* archaeological deposits and features revealed during the groundworks to an appropriate professional standard.

METHODS

The work was undertaken in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Code of Conduct and Standard and guidance for archaeological watching briefs* (1994, as revised).

The observations of the groundworks were intensive, as defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists, with a suitably qualified archaeologist present during all sensitive ground disturbance.

Observations were made during the stripping of topsoil and terracing into the slope of the area of the carport and associated paving.

All features and deposits, exposed during the works, were recorded using components of the Terrain Archaeology recording system of complementary written, drawn and photographic records

The records have been compiled in a stable, cross-referenced and fully indexed archive in accordance with current UKIC guidelines.

RESULTS

Natural Deposits

The underlying natural (101) consisted of a compact pale yellowish-brown silty clay with abundant flint pieces and patches of degraded chalk, possibly representing a colluvial deposit overlying the chalk bedrock. The natural deposits were only observed in the western half of the site, where it was terraced into the slope. Up to 0.9 m of this deposit was removed along the western side of the site.

Garden Soils

Overlying the whole of the site was a friable dark brown silty loam topsoil (100), up to 0.7 m thick, with occasional flint pieces and fragments of modern domestic rubbish including glass, pottery, brick, tile, slate and mortar. The remains of small structures associated with the garden's previous use as an allotment were observed and probably represented sheds, cold frames etc. In the eastern half of the site, the garden soil was only partially removed during levelling.

Finds

No finds were retained from this watching brief.

CONCLUSIONS

No significant archaeological deposits were identified during this watching brief. The overlying garden soil was not completely removed from the eastern half of the site, potentially masking archaeological features and deposits. However, the location of the site on a slope in the backlands between North Street and West Hill suggests that the site may never have been developed and was always used as a garden from the medieval period onwards.

REFERENCES

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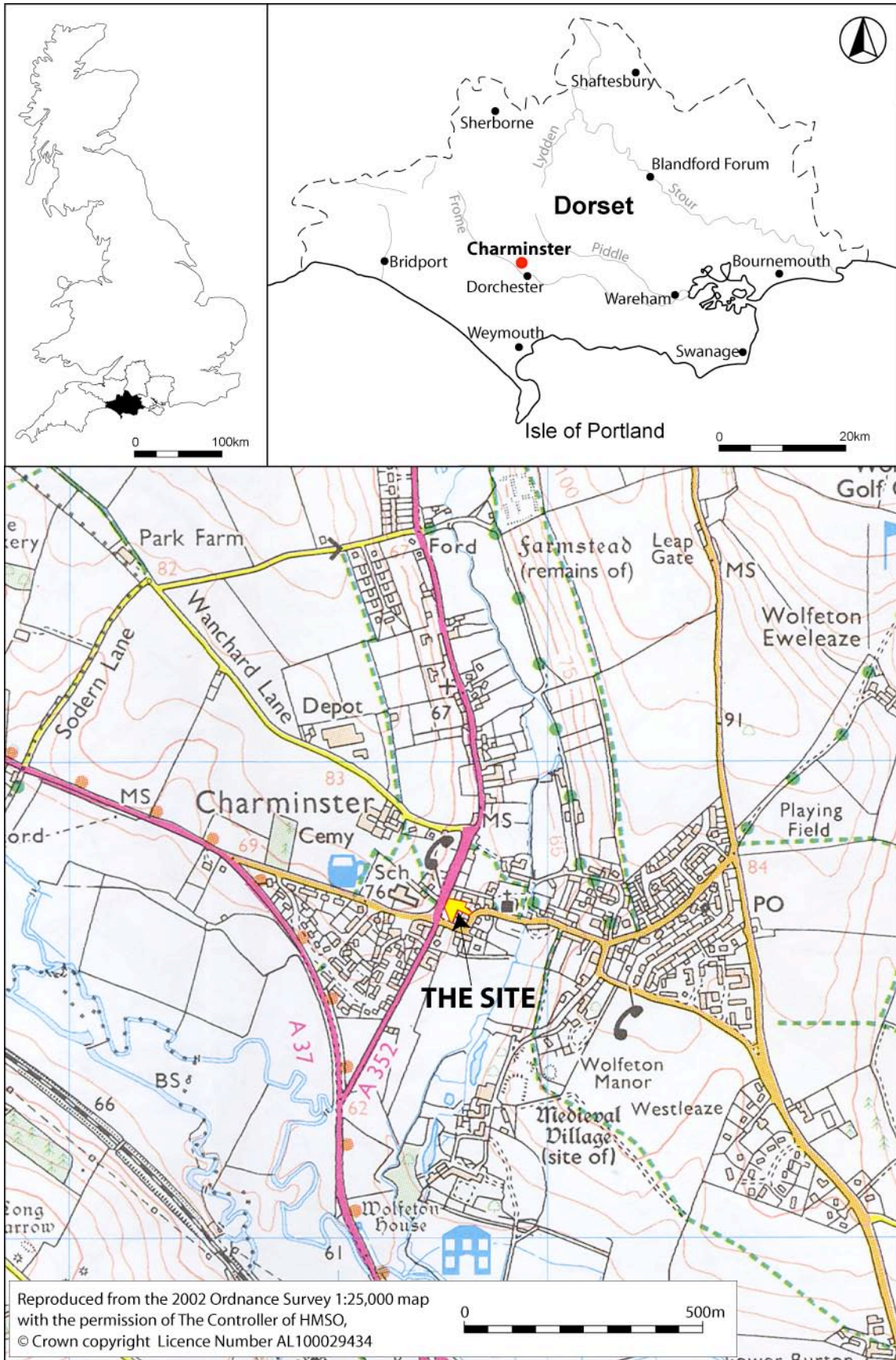


Figure 1: Site location map

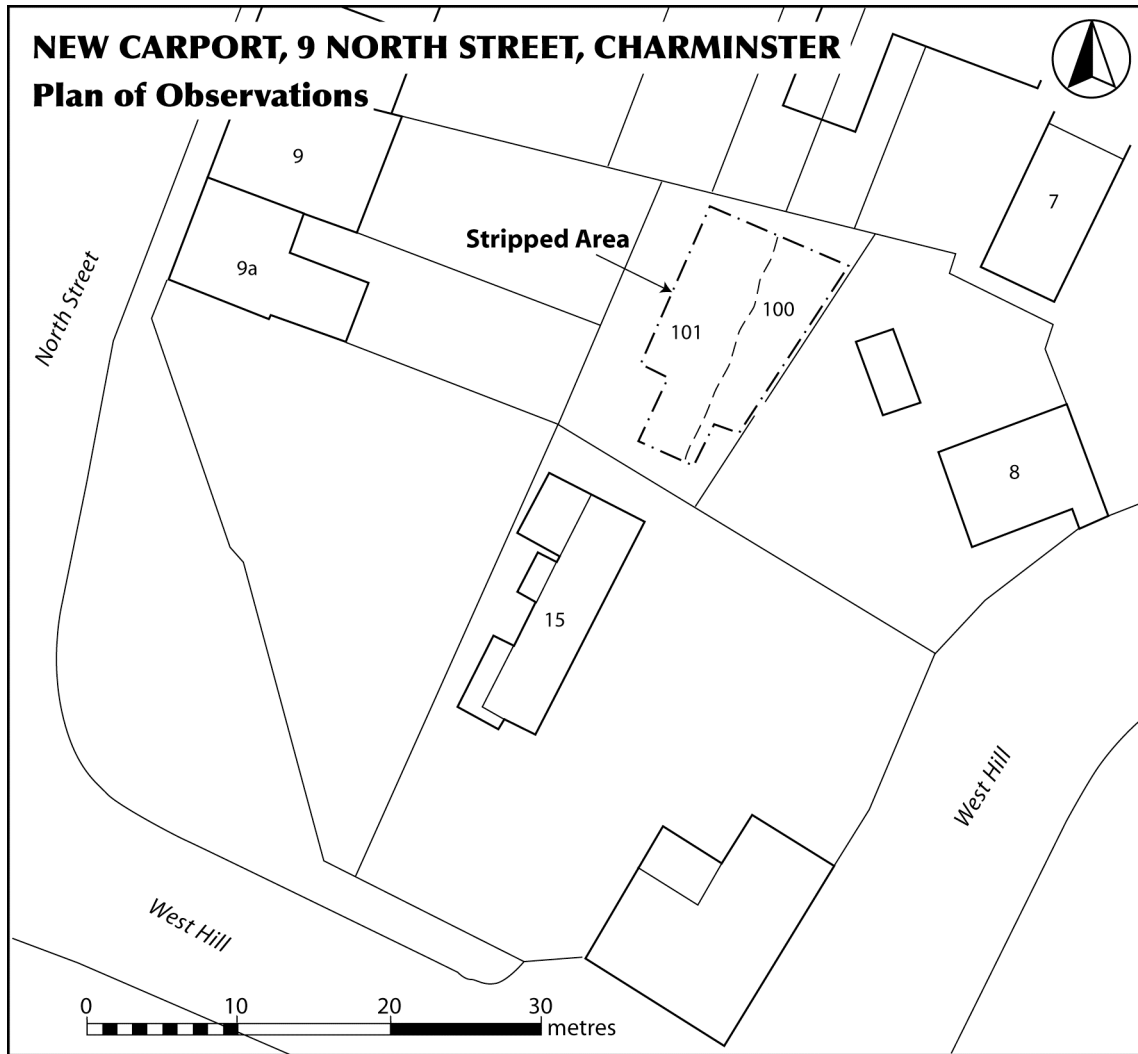


Figure 2: Plan showing area of topsoil stripping



Plate 1: Northern end of site after topsoil stripping and levelling.



Plate 2: Southern end of site after topsoil stripping and levelling.