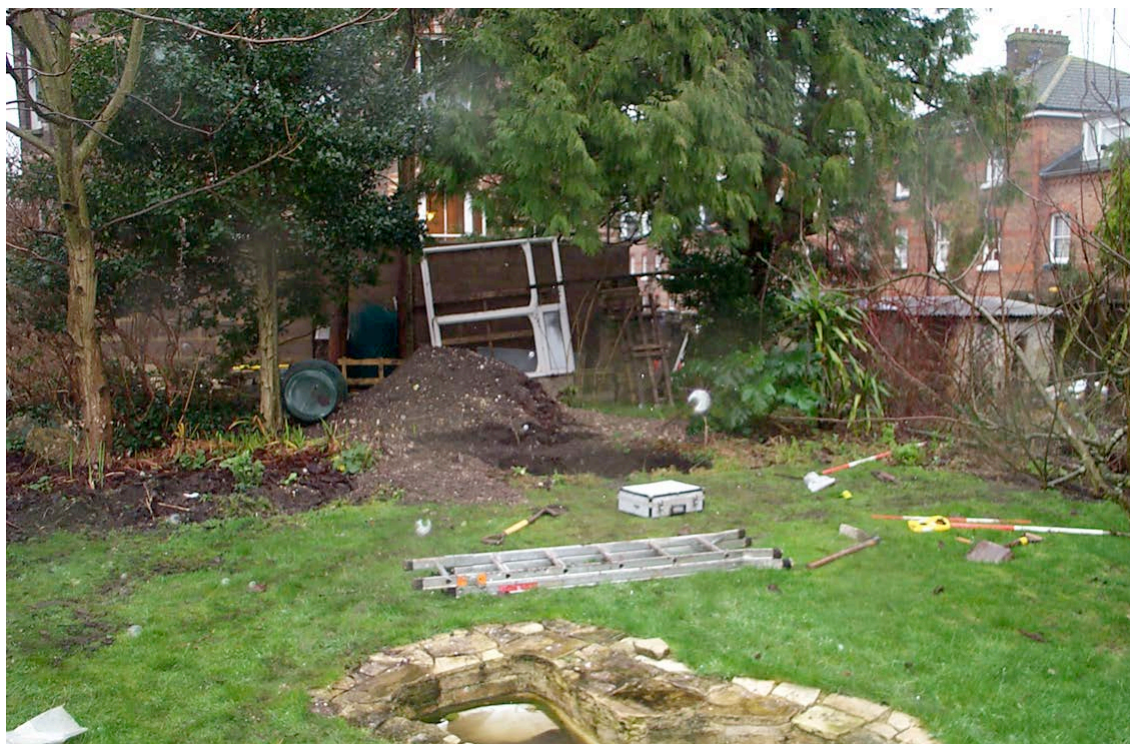




**2 LINDEN AVENUE, DORCHESTER, DORSET**  
**Archaeological Evaluation**



**Report No. 53145.1**

**February 2004**

# 2 Linden Avenue, Dorchester, Dorset Archaeological Evaluation, February 2004

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## **2 Linden Avenue, Dorchester, Dorset Archaeological Evaluation, February 2004**

### **SUMMARY**

*Terrain Archaeology carried out an evaluation in the garden of 2 Linden Avenue, Dorchester (NGR 69519049) in February 2004, on behalf of Winslade & Watton Construction Ltd. This site lies in the southeast corner of the Roman town. Four small engineering test pits in the northern part of the garden were cleaned and recorded and a further two machine-trenches were excavated in the southern part of the site.*

*Across the site, overlying the natural chalk, was a layer of garden soil representing the earlier garden prior to the construction of the present house in the 1960s. Over this were levelling layers of construction debris and soil, part of the landscaping for the present garden. Two pits filled with builder's debris were found in the northwest part of the site.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

This project was commissioned by Winslade & Watton Construction Ltd, prior to submitting a planning application for the redevelopment of the site. The archaeological evaluation was commissioned following advice from Steven Wallis, Senior Archaeologist, Dorset County Council.

An archaeological evaluation is a limited programme of intrusive fieldwork which determines the presence or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts within a specified area or site. If such archaeological remains are present, field evaluation defines their character, extent, quality and preservation, and enables an assessment of their worth in a local, regional, national or international context, as appropriate.

The site, comprising a detached house and garage set within a large garden, is situated on the northern side of Linden Avenue, at Ordnance Survey NGR SY69519049 (Figure 1). The site is bounded by Wollaston Road to the north and by houses and gardens to the east and west. The general topography of the area slopes down gently to the east and more steeply to the north. However, the site itself is relatively flat and lies at a height of about 64 m above OD and is significantly higher than the ground to the west and north. The underlying geology is Upper Chalk.

The fieldwork was carried out on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2004 by Peter Bellamy, Rod Brook and Rebecca Montague.

Terrain Archaeology would like to acknowledge Gary Watton and his machine operator, Steven Wallis, Senior Archaeologist, Dorset County Council, and Jo Draper for their help and cooperation during this project.

### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The site lies in the southeast part of the Roman town, some 70 m north of the southern boundary and c. 100 m west of the eastern boundary. To date, no finds other than at the ramparts themselves have been found in this corner of the town, suggesting it was not a focus of activity in the Roman period (RCHME 1970; Woodward *et al.* 1993, figure 1C). The nearest finds are

building remains and two mosaic pavements at the junction of All Saint's Road and Icen way, some 50 metres to the northeast of the site.

In the medieval period the site was within East Walls, the open field system between the burgage plots lining the east side of South Street and the south side of Durne Lane (now Durngate Street), and the ramparts to the south and east (Draper 2001, figure 35). These fields were enclosed in 1596 and became little pasture closes (*ibid.* 27-8).

Speed's map of 1610 and Hutchins' map of 1772 (*ibid.* figures 47 and 59) show the area as gardens, fields or paddocks.

By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the area of the site had become part of the extensive grounds of Wollaston House, built in 1786 (RCHME 1970, 118). It seems the pattern of use for the site, of garden/agricultural activity continued: a map of 1810 (DRO:OE1) shows the site in the open grounds of Wollaston House, as do maps of 1835 (Drinkwater, in Morris and Draper 1995, figure 2) and 1848 (DRO:D4OE/7). This latter map indicates that by 1848, Wollaston House had been transferred to the Corporation (*contra* Lloyd (1968, 215) and Morris and Draper (1995, 8), who cite 1858 and 1855 respectively for the sale). The villas of Linden Avenue and the south end of Icen Way were built soon after, "set in leafy surroundings, essentially suburban – the first piece of real suburban development in Dorchester, yet still within the lines of the ramparts" (Lloyd 1968, 215).

The present-day brick-built garage/workshop on the site is shown on the 1886 Ordnance Survey map: it is at the eastern end of the large grounds of No 4 Linden Avenue and was probably the coach house for this house. The site remained a garden until the present house was built in 1960s.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The objective of the archaeological works was to evaluate the archaeological potential of the site, that is, to appraise the nature, extent, level of preservation, and importance of any archaeological deposits.

The evaluation aimed to record all the *in situ* archaeological deposits and features revealed during the works in order to provide sufficient data to assess the archaeological significance of the site.

## METHODS

The archaeological works were undertaken in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation*. Although there was no written brief issued for the evaluation, the scope of the works was set out in a letter from Steven Wallis (dated 28th January 2004, ref 1041-2/AM).

The evaluation comprised four engineering test pits (trenches 1, 4, 5 and 6) and two trenches excavated under archaeological supervision (trenches 2 and 3) in the garden to the west of the house and garage/workshop at No 2 Linden Avenue (Figure 2). All were machine-excavated using a tracked mini-digger with a 1 m wide toothless grading bucket.

The four engineering test pits were located in the northern part of the garden, near to the Wollaston Road boundary, and were positioned in flowerbeds avoiding the central lawn area. Two of these trenches (4 and 5) were in a lower terraced bed bounded to the south by a breeze block revetment wall. These four engineering trenches were excavated without archaeological supervision, into the top of the chalk natural. Trench 1 was in the north eastern part of the garden (Figure 2) and measured 1.90 m by 1.10 m and was dug to a maximum depth of 1.15 m. Trench 4 was in the northwestern part of the garden, and measured 2.30 m by 1 m and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.40 m. Trench 5 was to the east of trench 4, and measured 2 m by 1 m, and

was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.90 m. Trench 6 lay to the south of trench 4, and measured 1.94 m by 1.20 m and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.40 m.

These four trenches had been open for some time before the archaeological evaluation was commissioned. Three of these trenches were hand cleaned, with sections cut back and the base of the trenches cleaned. Trench 5 was recut by machine for health and safety reasons – the material through which it was cut was very loose unconsolidated chalk rubble, and a low breeze block revetment wall immediately to the south appeared to be near to collapse.

Two trenches were excavated on the southern edge of the lawn under archaeological supervision. The location of the trenches was to a large extent determined by the presence of many large mature shrubs along the Linden Avenue frontage. Trench 2 (Figure 2) measured 3m by 1m, and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.35 m. Trench 3 lay to the west of trench 2, and measured 2.60 m by 1m, and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.95 m. These two trenches were cleared of overburden down on to the top of the natural chalk.

All archaeological deposits and features exposed during the works were cleaned by hand, then planned and recorded. 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.

After the completion of the archaeological fieldwork, three of the trenches (trenches 1, 2 and 3) were backfilled with the excavated material. The other three were left open with the agreement of the contractor, Gary Watton, and were to be backfilled at a later date without the involvement of Terrain Archaeology.

The records have been compiled in a stable, cross-referenced and fully indexed archive in accordance with current UKIC guidelines and the requirements of the receiving museum, Dorset County Museum.

## **RESULTS**

### **Introduction**

The stratigraphic sequence and any features encountered are described below for each individual trench. The same basic sequence could be recognised in each trench, namely a buried garden soil immediately overlying the chalk bedrock, which was sealed by later garden soil deposits. A representative section of each trench is presented in Figure 3 and photographs of all trenches in Plates 3–8.

### **Trench 1**

#### *Natural deposits*

The decayed top of the natural chalk (105) was encountered at a depth of 0.95 m below ground level (63.40 m above OD).

#### *Earlier garden deposits*

The natural chalk was directly overlain by a 0.18 m thick layer of loose dark brown silty clay loam (104) with few inclusions. No finds were recovered from this layer.

A posthole (106) was partially exposed in the base of the trench. The exposed part was semicircular in plan (measuring 0.16 m wide and 0.14 m long), and was probably originally oval in shape. It was cut into the chalk natural to a depth of 10 cm below the chalk surface. It is not known from what level the posthole was originally cut. The fill of the posthole (107) was a loose dark greyish-brown silty clay loam that contained a single large fragment of Roman roof tile, which is residual in this context. This posthole is probably the remains of a fence post or other garden feature

#### *Later garden deposits*

Overlying soil layer 104 was a very thin loose layer of light brown mortar and sandy grit (103), some 0.04 m thick. This may represent a spread of construction debris following the construction of the present house in the 1960s. This was sealed by a 0.45 m thick layer of medium brown sandy clay loam (102) with frequent small chalk fragments and contained a range of modern artefacts including glass, clinker, brick and tile and pottery. None of these artefacts was retained. The upper layer in the sequence was a dark brown silty clay loam topsoil (101).

## **Trench 2**

### *Natural deposits*

The upper surface of the well-bedded natural chalk (204) appeared to slope down slightly from the west to the east, from 1.10 m below present ground level (63.69 m above OD) at the western end of the trench to 1.25 m below ground level at the eastern end (63.55 m above OD). In the western end of the trench was a thin deposit of eroded chalk natural in a clay matrix (203) about 0.15 m thick.

### *Earlier garden deposits*

Overlying the natural chalk was a thick layer of a very dark brown silty clay loam (202), with occasional small chalk fragments and peagrit. The upper surface of this layer is horizontal; its maximum thickness (to the east) is 0.60 m and its minimum thickness (to the west) is 0.20 m.

### *Later garden deposits*

Garden soil layer 202 was overlain by a thick layer of dumped angular chalk rubble with frequent fragments of modern bricks and tile (201), between 0.25 m and 0.35 m thick. It is likely to be associated with the construction of the present house in the 1960s. It is probably equivalent to dump layer 302 in trench 3. Above this was a 0.4 m thick layer of dark brown silty clay loam garden soil (200).

## **Trench 3**

### *Natural deposits*

The natural chalk (306) had a very degraded and weathered level upper surface, occurring at around 0.80 m below present ground surface (between 63.83 m and 63.88 m above OD).

### *Earlier garden deposits*

The natural chalk 306 was cut by a shallow linear feature (304) aligned north–south. It was 0.55 m wide with gently sloping sides and a shallow dished base, cut about 0.15 m deep into the chalk. It was traced for a distance of about 0.75 m across the trench before it petered out to the north. It was filled with dark greyish-brown silty clay loam (305) with few inclusions. The fill of this feature was identical to the overlying garden soil (303). No dating evidence was recovered, but its form and fill suggest that it is an ephemeral cultivation feature.

Feature 304 was apparently sealed by a 0.50 m thick layer of dark greyish-brown silty clay loam (303) with few inclusions. This was interpreted as a buried garden soil, similar to that found in the other trenches. No dating evidence was recovered.

#### *Later garden deposits*

Overlying soil layer 303 was a thin band of angular chalk fragments and mortar debris (302), which was about 0.1 m thick in the eastern end of the trench and gradually petered out towards the central part. It was similar to the layer of construction debris 201 in Trench 2 and is probably a continuation of this deposit. It was sealed by a layer of very dark greyish-brown silty clay loam with occasional chalk fragments (301), between 0.25–0.32 m thick, which forms the present garden soil.

### **Trench 4**

#### *Natural deposits*

The slightly degraded bedded chalk natural (404) was encountered at about 1.25 m below present ground surface (between 62.85 m and 62.90 m above OD).

#### *Earlier garden deposits*

Directly overlying the natural chalk was a 0.2 m thick layer of dark humic and slightly gritty loam with small chalk fragments (403), which has been interpreted as a buried garden soil. No finds were recovered from this layer.

#### *Later garden deposits*

Overlying layer 403 was a 0.6 m thick layer of dark greyish-brown silty clay loam (404) with moderate small chalk pieces and some thin lenses of chalk.

This soil layer was cut by an almost vertically sided feature (405) with a flat bottom, of which only a part of the northern edge was exposed in the eastern and western baulks of the trench (Plate 6). It was over 1.4 m long and 0.7 m wide and was 0.65 m deep. It was filled with a 0.35 m thick layer of chalk rubble with yellow builder's sand and crushed limestone and brick fragments (402) at the bottom and over this a 0.3 m thick layer of brown silty clay loam with abundant demolition rubble (401) with a thin band of building gravel on top. This feature appears to be a pit backfilled with construction debris.

Pit 405 and soil layer 404 were sealed by a very dark brown silty clay loam (400) about 0.5 m thick. A number of flint nodules and some modern brick and tile fragments were noted in this layer.

### **Trench 5**

It was not possible to record trench 5 in as much detail as the other trenches due to health and safety considerations. The trench was cleaned out by machine, and a measured sketch section was drawn from the side of the trench rather than from within it.

#### *Natural deposits*

Natural chalk (502) was encountered at a depth of 0.75 m below ground level (63.11 m above OD).

### *Earlier garden deposits*

Immediately above the natural chalk was a 0.3 m thick layer of dark brown silty clay loam (503) with occasional small chalk fragments. This is probably part of the same buried garden soil seen in the other trenches.

### *Later garden deposits*

Overlying layer 503 was a 0.3 m thick layer of dark greyish-brown silty clay loam (504) with moderate small chalk pieces and some thin lenses of chalk.

Soil layers 503 and 504 were cut by a feature (505) with a very steeply sloping side and flat bottom, which was visible in the east and west baulks of the trench. The base of this feature lay immediately on top of the natural chalk. It was filled by a 0.55 m thick layer of loose redeposited chalk and silty loam in alternating bands (501), tipping down from west to east at an angle of approximately 45°. No finds were recovered. This pit is very similar to pit 405 in Trench 4.

Soil layer 504 and pit 505 were sealed by a 0.2 m thick layer of very dark brown silty clay loam (500).

## **Trench 6**

### *Natural deposits*

Natural chalk (606) was encountered at a depth of about 1.25 m below present ground surface (at around 63.15 m above OD). It was fairly loose and weathered.

### *Earlier garden deposits*

The natural chalk was sealed by a 0.3 m thick layer of greyish-brown silty clay loam (603), similar to the buried garden soil exposed in most of the other trenches. A single feature was also found in this trench, cut into the natural chalk. This was a linear feature (604), aligned roughly NNW–SSE, 0.60 m wide and 0.10 m deep, with a flat bottom and sloping sides (Figure 3). It was filled with loose dark greyish-brown clay loam with frequent chalk fragments (605). It is not clear from what level this feature was cut as the top surface of fill 605 was level with the surface of the natural chalk, suggesting that it was a shallow (presumably truncated) ditch with a single fill. However, the overlying layer 603 was much stonier in the area above the feature, suggesting there may have been two fills and it was cut from a higher level. The finds include two abraded sherds of Roman pottery which are likely to be residual in this context. This feature is probably post-medieval in date and is likely to be of garden origin.

### *Later garden deposits*

Overlying garden soil layer 603 and was a 0.7 m thick layer of dark greyish-brown silty clay loam (602) with moderate small chalk pieces and thin horizontal lenses of small chalk fragments. Fragments of brick and tile and clinker were noted throughout this layer. It was sealed by a 0.30 m thick layer of dark brown silty clay loam (601), which forms the present garden soil.

## **Finds**

Only a small quantity of finds was retained from the evaluation trenches (Table 1). Most of these came from cleaning and very few were found in secure stratigraphic contexts. Almost all of the finds are abraded and are residual.

In addition to the material described below, a relatively small quantity of post-medieval finds was noted in the upper layers of all the trenches. This material was not collected.



Trench	Context	Context description	Copper Alloy	Pottery		Glass		Ceramic Building material		Stone Building Material		Limestone frags		Animal bone		shell	
			No.	No.	Wt (g)	No.	Wt (g)	No.	Wt (g)	No.	Wt (g)	No.	Wt (g)	No.	Wt (g)	No.	
1	100	Clearance		3	32	2	23										
1	107	Posthole 106 fill						1	93								
3	302	Layer		1	33			1	11								
6	600	Clearance	1			3	108	5	118	1	1	2	62	2	6	2	
6	605	Linear 604 fill		2	15			8	54	5	12	1	49	5	11	1	
<i>total</i>			<i>1</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>131</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>276</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>111</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>3</i>	

Table 1: All finds by context

*Copper Alloy:* A single copper alloy disc was recovered from context 600.

*Pottery:* Six sherds of pottery were recovered and were identified by Jo Draper. These included two very abraded fragments of Roman coarsewares (including one storage jar) from context 605 and a fragment of a New Forest vessel from context 100. The remaining sherds were of 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century date and included a small fragment of a mid 19<sup>th</sup> century lavatory.

*Glass:* Three sherds of bottle glass were recovered and two small fragments of glass cullet (from context 600). A wine bottle base from context 600 is of an 18<sup>th</sup> century type.

*Building Materials:* 15 fragments of brick and tile were recovered. Most of this appeared to be brick fragments of local hand-made bricks of post-medieval date. A single fragment of glazed brick was recovered from context 600. In addition, six small fragments of roofing slate were recovered.

*Animal bone and shell:* A very small quantity of fragmentary animal bone was recovered. This included two fragments of burnt bone (from contexts 600 and 605). Three oyster shell fragments were recovered.

## DISCUSSION

The evaluation trenches have sampled most of the area of the proposed development. Therefore, the results of the evaluation can reasonably be taken as being representative of the whole of the proposed development site.

A similar sequence was identified in all of the evaluation trenches, indicating there was little variation in the deposits across the site. The natural chalk was exposed in the base of all the trenches. At the western end of the trench it dipped down towards the north from 63.85 m above OD in Trench 3 to 62.90 m above OD in Trench 4, following the general trend of the surrounding topography. The fall was not so steep in the western part of the site. There was a slight fall in the level of the chalk from west to east at the southern end of the site but in the north the fall was in the opposite direction (from east to west), against the grain of the surrounding topography, suggesting there had been some terracing or landscaping affecting the top of the chalk in the northern part of the site. Nevertheless, overall there does not seem to have been a great deal of disturbance to the chalk across the site.

A small number of features were found cut into the chalk but these all appear to be relatively insignificant and of recent origin, probably the result of gardening during the post-medieval period.

Overlying the natural chalk across almost the whole of the site was a layer of buried soil about 0.3 m thick. Although no dating evidence was recovered, the nature of this layer suggests that it is a relatively recent garden soil and is probably the remnants of the garden belonging to 4 Linden Avenue prior to the selling off of the plot and the construction of the present house in the 1960s.

The levels of this garden soil accord well with the surviving part of the grounds of 4 Linden Avenue, which are lower than the present day levels of the site.

Above the original garden soil were a series of levelling layers of chalk rubble, builder's sand and mortar debris, and soil, deposited to create a relatively flat garden, which now sits higher than the surrounding ground to the west and north. The building debris within these levelling deposits suggests that this landscaping took place following the construction of the present house in the 1960s.

No trace of any Roman or prehistoric features or deposits was found on the site — any early deposits are likely to have been destroyed by the agricultural and gardening activity during the medieval and post-medieval periods. Roman finds were extremely sparse suggesting that this part of the Roman town was not intensively occupied. The small quantities of later finds are consistent with the medieval and post-medieval use of this area as fields and gardens.

In conclusion, no significant archaeological features and deposits were encountered during the evaluation. The nature of the deposits revealed, together with the documentary evidence for the site, suggests that there are unlikely to be any significant archaeological features or deposits across the rest of the site.

## PROJECT ARCHIVE

The archive (Terrain Archaeology Project No. 53145) will be deposited with Dorset County Museum, which has agreed in principle to accept the archive, subject to fulfilment of the Museum's requirements of the preparation of archaeological archives. A copy of the microfilmed archive will be deposited with the National Monuments Record.

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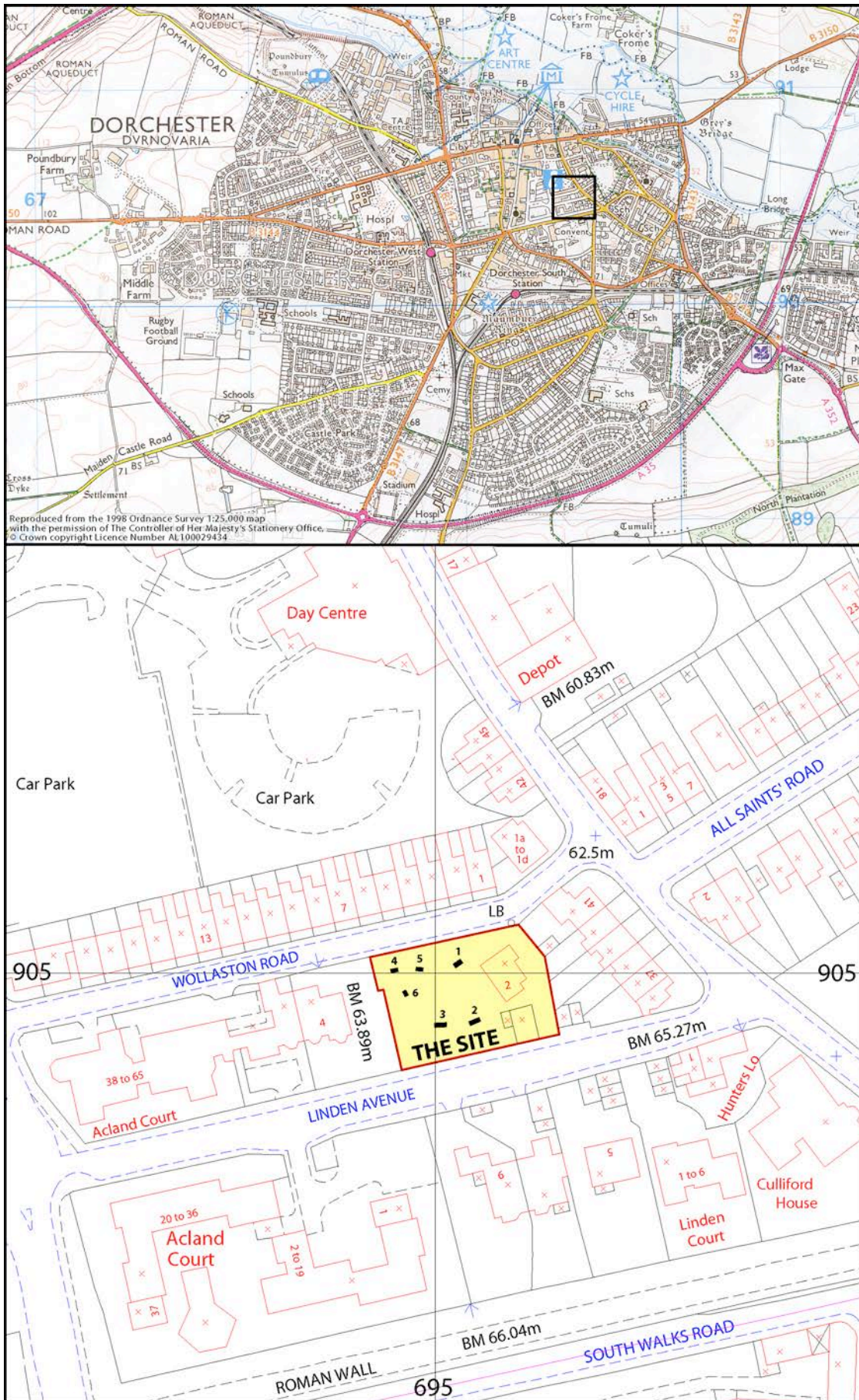


Figure 1: Location Map (OS Superplan Data Drawing No. 00006444, © Crown copyright 2004. All Rights reserved)

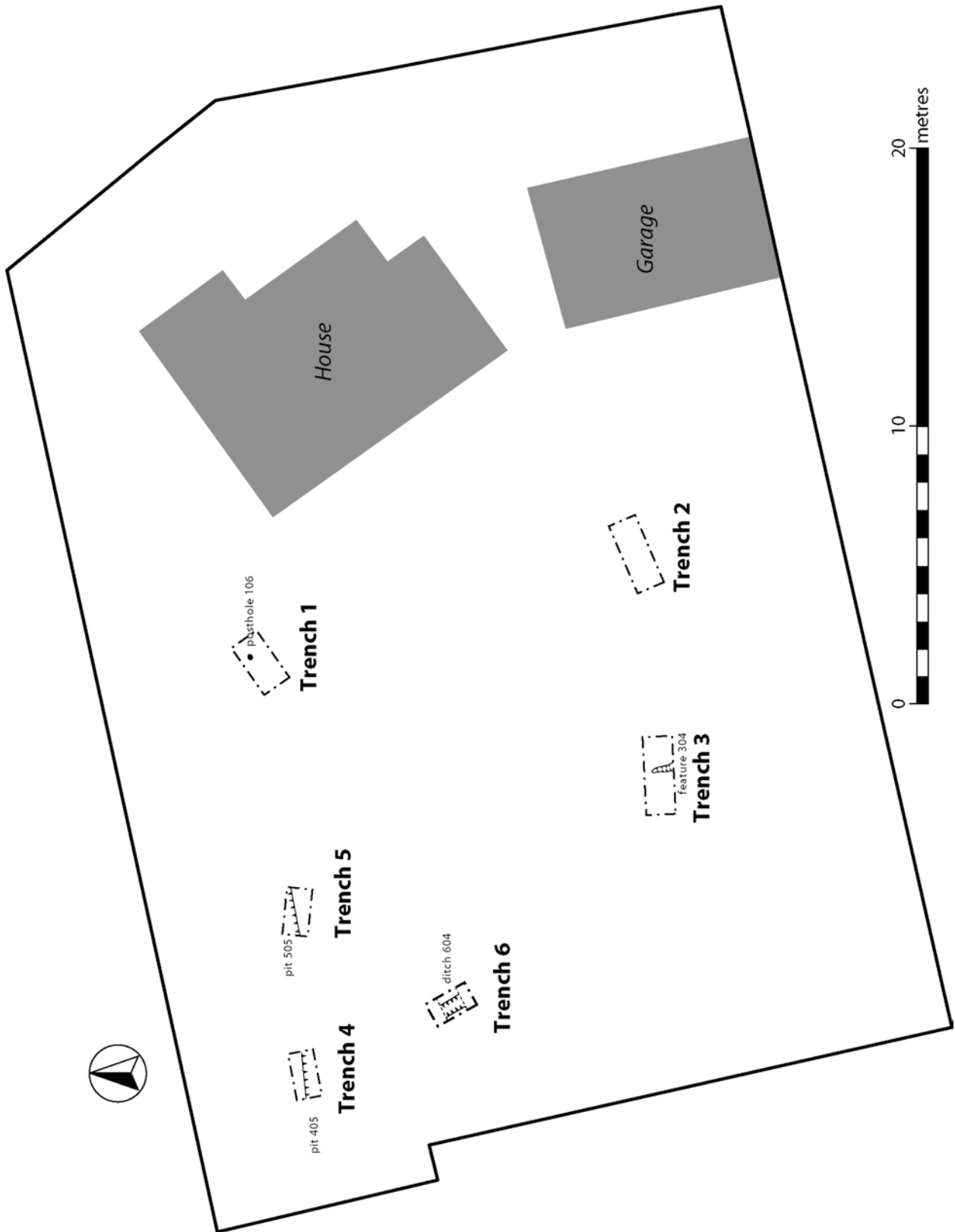


Figure 2: Trench location plan

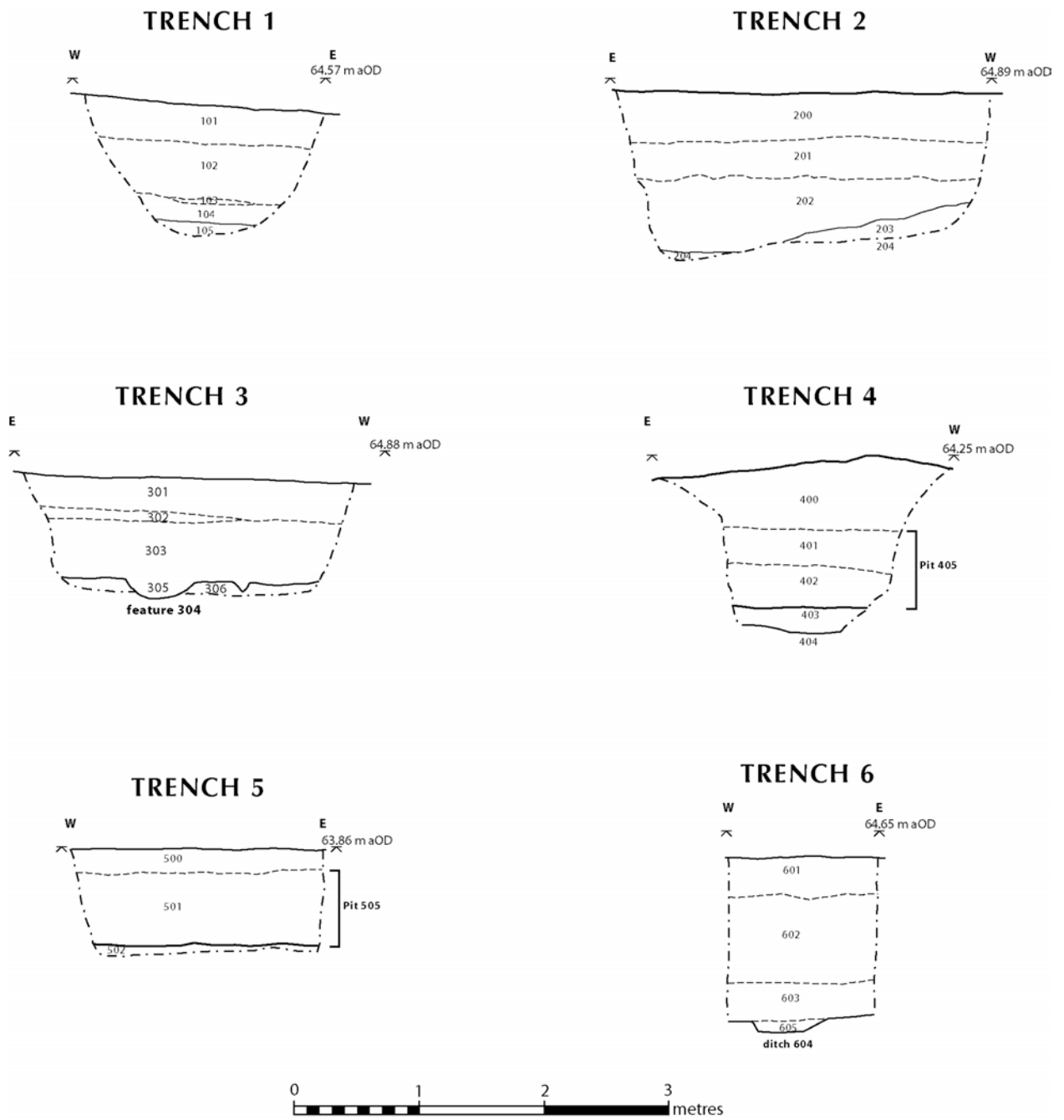


Figure 3: Sections of Trenches 1–6



*Plate 1: General view of southern side of the site, viewed from northwest.*



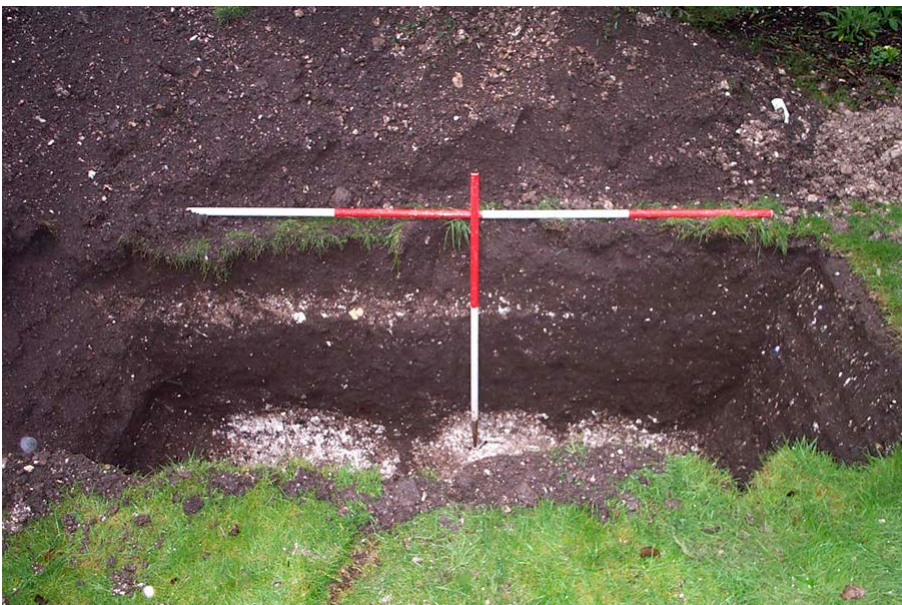
*Plate 2: General view of northern end of the site, viewed from east.*



*Plate 3: Trench 1  
viewed from south.*



*Plate 4: Trench 2  
viewed from north.*



*Plate 5: Trench 3  
viewed from north.*



*Plate 6: Trench 4  
viewed from east.*



*Plate 7: Trench 5  
viewed from south.*





*Plate 8: Trench 6  
viewed from south.*