

**LAND ADJACENT TO THE OLD FORGE,
POWERSTOCK, DORSET
Archaeological Watching Brief**



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Land adjacent to the Old Forge, Powerstock, Dorset

Archaeological Watching Brief, April 2004

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SUMMARY

Archaeological observations and recording were carried out by Terrain Archaeology during the construction of a new dwelling on a plot of land immediately south of 'The Forge' in Powerstock (SY51759612). The site was on a garden terrace. No archaeological features were observed.

INTRODUCTION

Terrain Archaeology was commissioned Bernard Kingscott, Building Drawing Services, on behalf of his client, to undertake archaeological observations and recording during the construction of a new dwelling on land adjacent to the Old Forge, Powerstock, West Dorset as part of the conditions of planning consent for Planning Application No. 1/W/2000/0316 (a renewal of application No. 1/W/1995/0310).

The site lies within the village of Powerstock, about 60 m south of St Mary's Church, at Ordnance Survey NGR SY51759612. It lies about 40 m behind the frontage of the Eggardon Road, immediately to the south of the old forge (Figure 1). The site is part of a long narrow strip running east–west, bounded by stone walls. The general topography of the area slopes down to the south, but the site itself is terraced and is level and flat, though it falls away at the eastern end (Plates 1–3). At the eastern end of the site is a garage and the rest of the area is garden, with the new building constructed on the existing lawn. The underlying geology is mapped as Bridport and Yeovil Sands.

The new dwelling was situated immediately to the east of the present garage (Figure 3; Plate 1). The topsoil was stripped from the footprint of the building and the foundations constructed in continuous strip footings trenches,

The fieldwork was carried out on 21st April 2004 by Peter Bellamy.

Terrain Archaeology would like to acknowledge the following for their help and cooperation during this project: Bernard Kingscott, Robin Leaf, and the groundworkers on site.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The village of Powerstock is of some antiquity. It is mentioned in Domesday, when it was held by Hugh of Roger Arundel: Aethelmaer held it pre-Conquest. There was land for six ploughs though there were only 2½ ploughs in demesne and 2½ other ploughs. There were two mills and quantities of pasture, meadow and woodland are also mentioned (Williams and Martin 2002, 220).

St Mary's Church is of mid-12th century date, but substantially altered in the 14th and 15th century. It was restored in 1859. About 500 m southeast of the church is the 11th or 12th century motte and bailey Powerstock Castle, set on a promontory and separated from the village by a steep stream

valley. There are medieval strip lynchets on the slopes to the east and west of the village (RCHME 1952, 181–6).

The present village of Powerstock has a mixture of 17th–18th century stone cottages and 19th and 20th century houses (RCHME 1952, 185).

There was a cottage on the east end of the site, as shown on the 1902 Ordnance Survey 25-inch map (Figure 2). This was demolished at some time after 1931, on map evidence. The present garage may contain elements of this building.

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 carried out in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Code of Conduct and *Standard and guidance for archaeological watching briefs*, although there was no written brief produced for the archaeological works.

The groundworks comprised the stripping of the topsoil from the whole of the footprint of the house (an approximate area of maximum dimensions 13 m by 10 m), using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothed bucket, followed by the excavation of the footings trenches. The topsoil stripping was observed and as no trace of any archaeology was revealed, it was decided that it was not necessary to observe the excavation of the footings trenches.

The location of the topsoil strip was surveyed by taped measurements from existing boundaries. All depths recorded were below existing ground surface. All deposits exposed in the trenches were recorded using elements of Terrain Archaeology's 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 and the requirements of the receiving museum. The archive will be deposited with the Dorset County Museum.

RESULTS

The topsoil was a dark brown clay soil, which was 0.2 m thick on the northern side, gradually increasing to a depth of 0.5 m on the southern side. The only finds encountered within this layer were pottery and glass bottles and jars of late 19th and 20th century date. These were most common in the northwestern part of the stripped area. The topsoil overlay natural clay and stones. This was exposed across the whole of the stripped area except for a band about two metres wide along the southern edge. A sondage was dug by machine on the southern side, which demonstrated that the topsoil was slightly deeper in this area but lay directly on top of the natural.

The only feature encountered was a plastic drainpipe crossing the northern side of the stripped area (Figure 3).

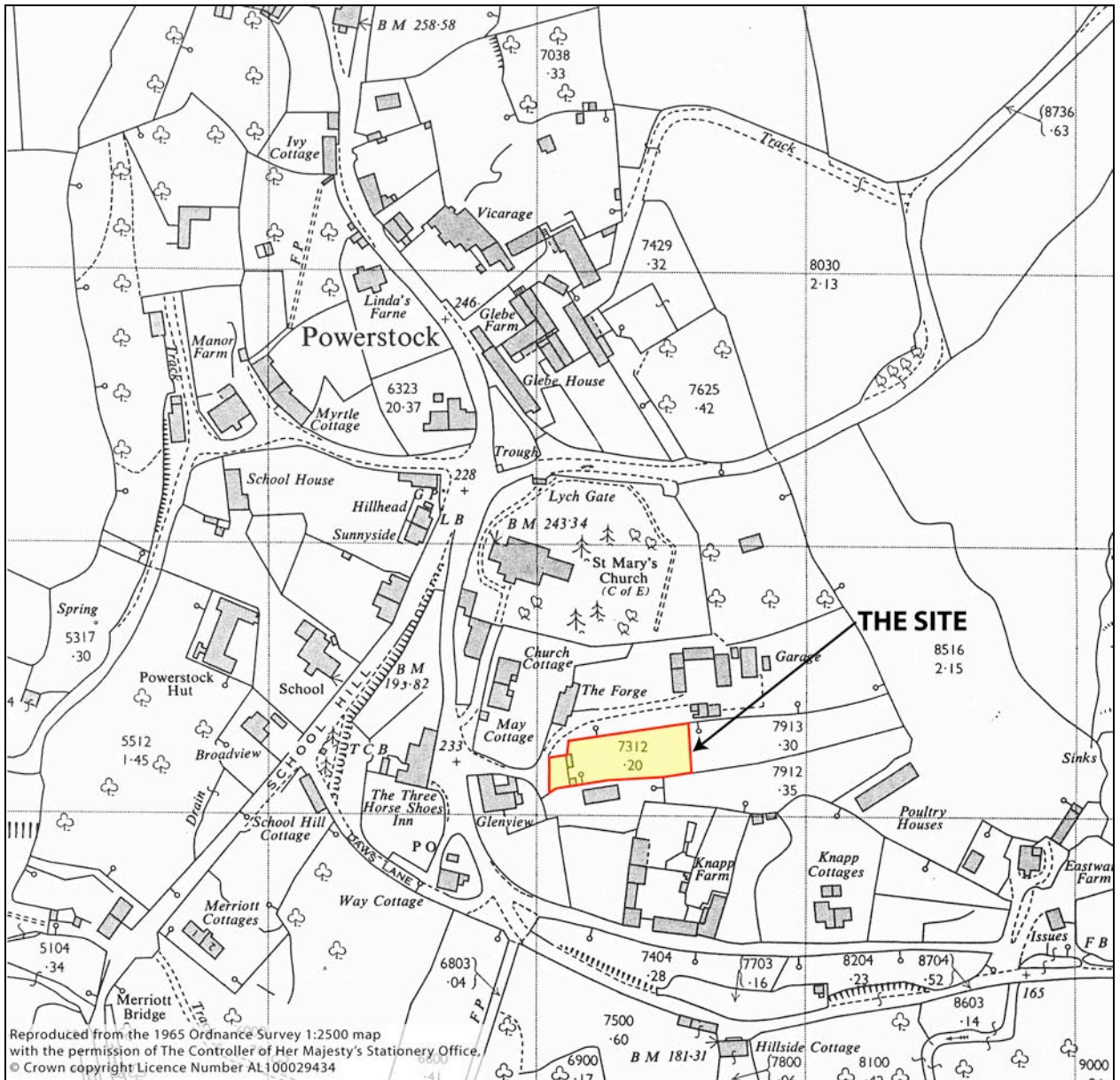


Figure 1: Location map

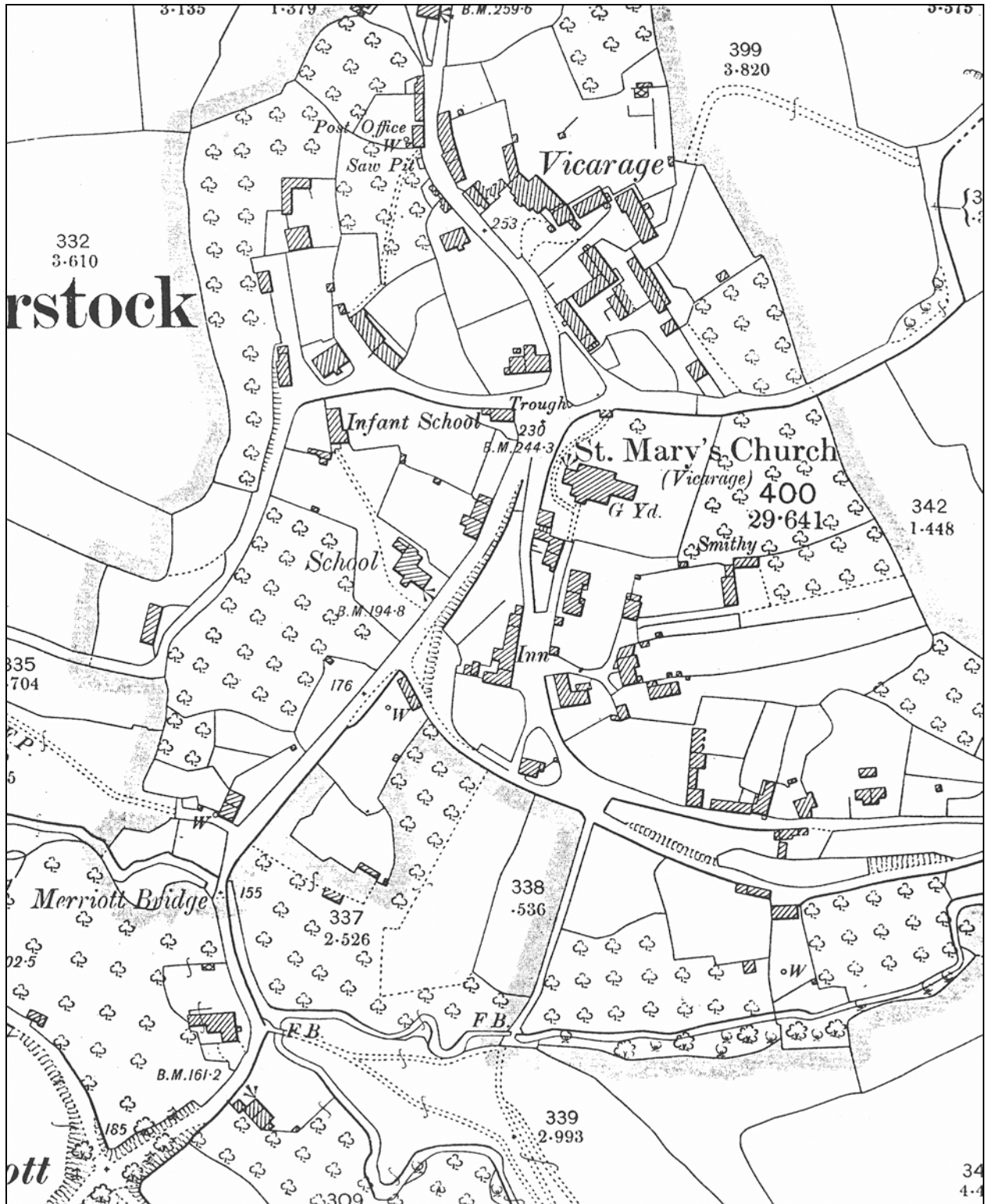


Figure 2: Extract from the 1902 Ordnance Survey map, showing the location of the former cottage.
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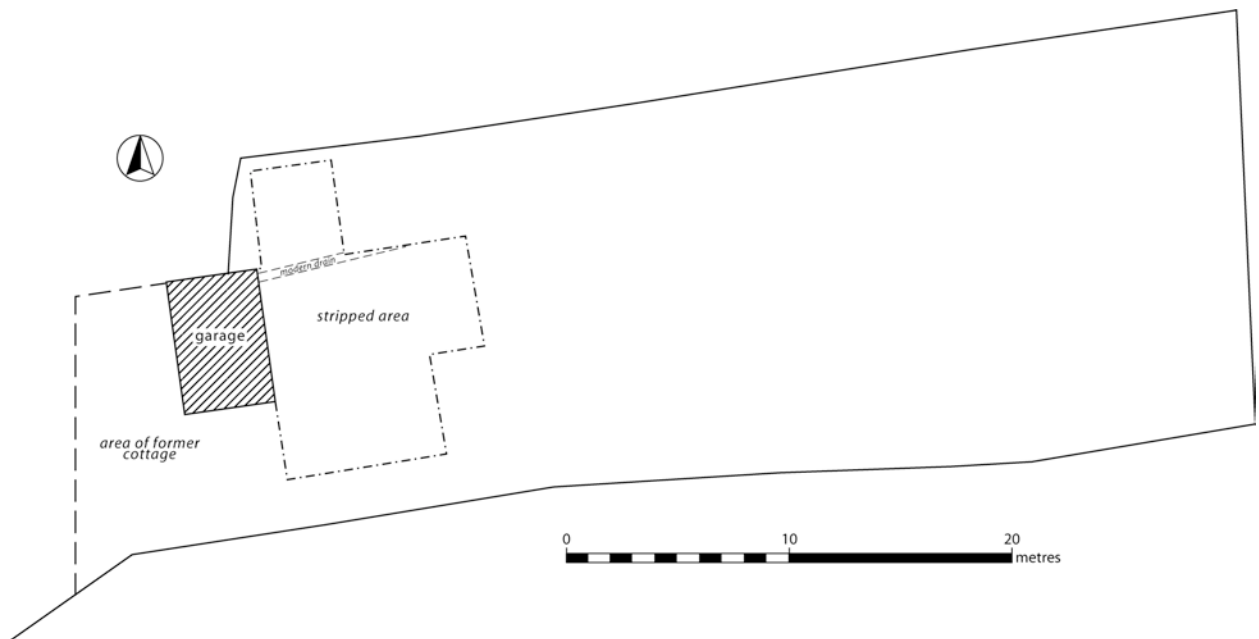


Figure 3: Plan of observations



Plate 1: General view of site from northeast.



Plate 2: Stripped area, looking southwest.



Plate 3: Stripped area, looking northeast.