



**NEW WATER MAIN, BRIDPORT ROAD,
POUNDBURY, DORCHESTER, DORSET
Archaeological Watching Brief**



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September 2003

**New Water Main, Bridport Road,
Poundbury, Dorchester, Dorset**

Archaeological Watching Brief, May 2003

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Appendix 1: Written Scheme of Investigation

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SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was maintained during laying of a water main along the northern side of Bridport Road on the western edge of Poundbury between SY67229040 to SY67359040. A 0.3 m thick flint gravel deposit was encountered beneath the modern road has been interpreted as the remnants of the Roman approach road to Dorchester from Exeter.

INTRODUCTION

This project, comprising an archaeological watching brief during the construction of a new water main, was commissioned by Wessex Water following advice from Steven Wallis, Senior Archaeologist, Dorset County Council.

The site lies on the northern side of Bridport Road on the present western edge of Poundbury on the western outskirts of Dorchester, at Ordnance Survey NGR SY67229040 – SY67359040. Bridport road runs along a roughly east–west trending chalk ridge at a height of about 100 m above Ordnance Datum.

The geology is mapped as Upper Chalk (Geological Survey of Great Britain 1:50,000 Sheet 328 *Dorchester Solid and Drift* 1981).

The groundworks comprised the excavation of a continuous pipe trench about 0.4 m wide and about 1.4 m deep was dug along the north side of the road.

The fieldwork was carried out between 16th–23rd May 2003 by Joanne Best and Peter Bellamy.

Terrain Archaeology would like to acknowledge the following for their help and cooperation during this project: Ron Davey (Wessex Water), Steve Wallis (Dorset County Council), and the groundwork contractors.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Bridport Road is assumed to be along the line of the Roman approach road into Dorchester from Exeter (RCHME 1970, 541). In 1774, the road was said to be “in perfection, high and broad, paved with flint and stone” (*ibid.*).

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

There was no Brief issued for this work, but, a specification was produced by Terrain Archaeology (Appendix 1).

The work was carried out in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Code of Conduct and *Standard and guidance for archaeological watching briefs*.

The pipe trench was 0.4 m wide and 1.4 m deep and was excavated by machine in lengths and then backfilled after laying the pipe. The first 90 m of the pipeline were observed archaeologically. Unfortunately, the remainder of the route was not observed (Figure 1).

The location of the trench was surveyed using taped measurements to the existing boundaries. All depths recorded were depths below present 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, Dorset County Museum.

RESULTS

A similar profile was exposed along the whole observed length of the pipeline (Table 1; Figure 2).

Context	Description	Finds	Interpretation	Depth
100	Tarmac	No finds	Modern road	0 m
101	Compact mid grey sand with frequent flint gravels.	No finds	Roman road gravels	0.30 – 0.45 m
102	Compact mid reddish-brown clay with frequent flint gravel and occasional flint nodules	No finds	Roman road gravels	0.45 – 0.60 m
103	mid-dark reddish brown clay with flints	No finds	Natural Clay-with-flints	0.60 – 1.40 m

Table 1: Summary of stratigraphic profile

Natural deposits

The natural chalk was intermittently visible at the base of trench. There was a rather irregular boundary between it and the overlying clay-with-flints (103). The clay-with-flints was about 0.6 m thick with fairly sparse flint nodules along most of its length.

Roman Road?

Overlying the natural deposits was a 0.15 m thick layer of compact reddish-brown clay (102) with frequent flint gravels about 25 mm across and with occasional flint nodules. This is overlain by another hard-packed 0.15 m thick layer of flint gravels in a grey sand matrix.

These flint gravel layers have been interpreted as possibly being part of the Roman road gravels. No dating evidence was recovered.

Modern deposits

The upper 0.3 m of the profile comprised the modern tarmac road makeup.

Finds

No finds were recovered from the observations.

CONCLUSIONS

A distinctive band of flint gravels was identified beneath the modern road surface, which may be the remnants of the Roman road. The similarity of this deposit along the length of the pipeline suggests that the road runs parallel or near parallel to the modern road.

PROJECT ARCHIVE

The archive (Terrain Archaeology Project No. 53128) 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.

REFERENCES

RCHME 1970

Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England 1970
An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in the County of Dorset 2 South East.

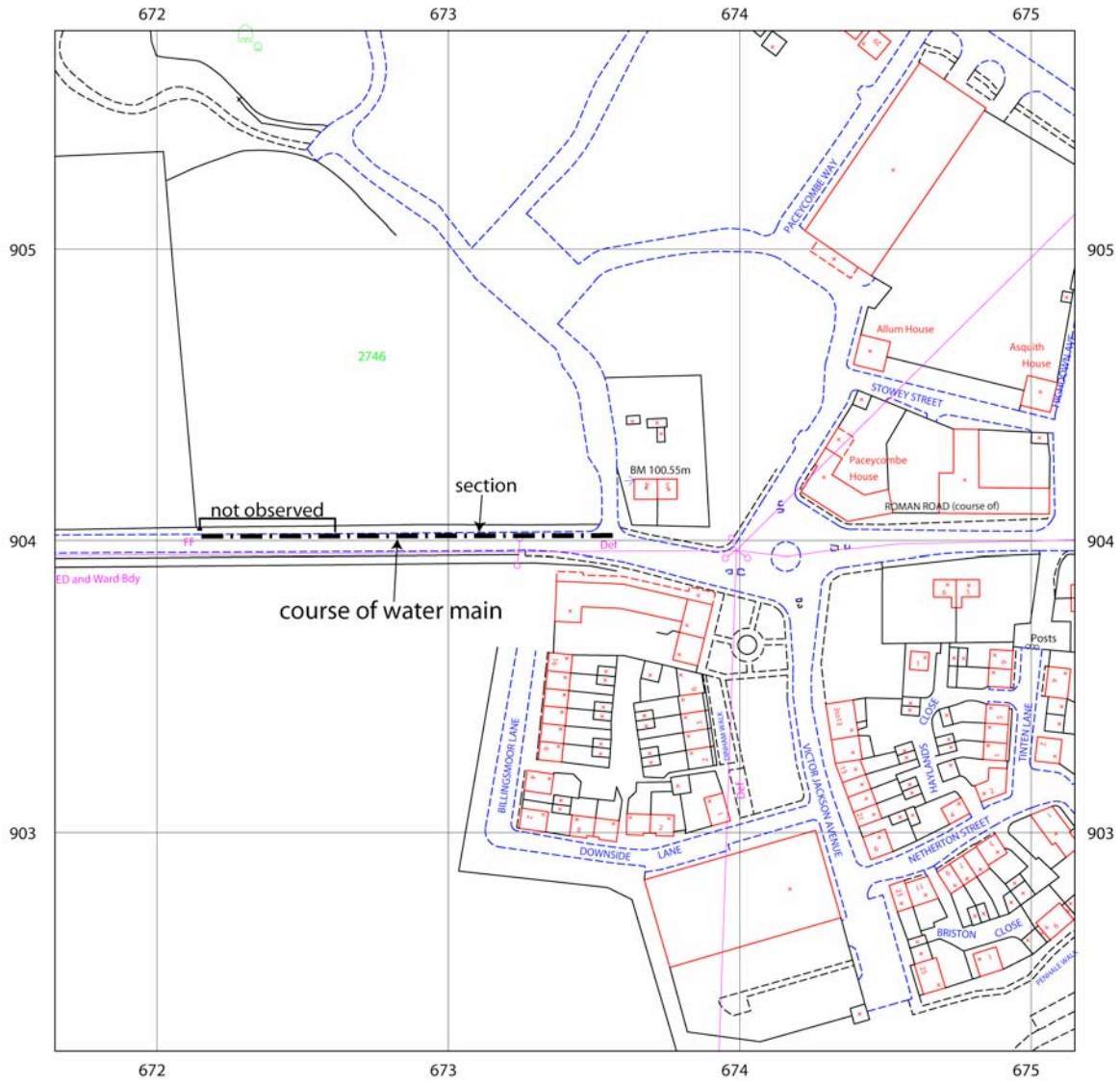


Figure 1: Location map

(Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Superplan Data Drawing No. 00004606, © Crown Copyright 2002 All Rights reserved)

Representative North-facing section of Pipe Trench

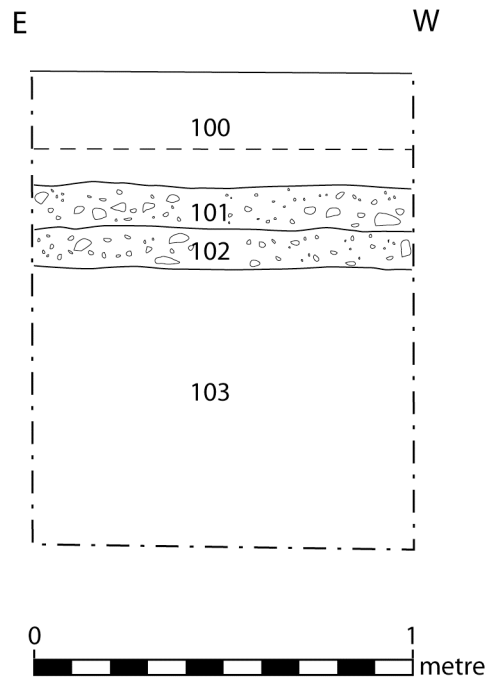


Figure 2: Representative section of pipe trench



Plate 1: General view along pipe trench from the west.



Plate 2: View of north-facing section of pipe trench.



Plate 3: Detail of south-facing section at 80 m from east end of pipeline.

APPENDIX 1: WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION