



Nothe Fort, Barrack Road, Weymouth, Dorset

Archaeological Observations and Recording during Alterations to the North Terrace Earthworks



Report No. 53485/3/1

April 2019

Page left intentionally blank

Nothe Fort, Barrack Road, Weymouth, Dorset

Archaeological Observations and Recording during Drainage Works
on the North Terrace, January 2021

Report No. 53547/3/1

January 2021

Client: Weymouth Civic Society

Agent:

Scheduled Monument: Nothe Fort, tramway and searchlight battery at The Nothe (National Heritage List Entry No: 1020063)

Report Author: Peter Bellamy BSc (Hons) MCIfA

Illustrations: Peter Bellamy BSc (Hons) MCIfA

Document Quality Control

Version	Status	Prepared By	Approved By	Date
1	Report 53547/3/1	P Bellamy		13/01/2021
2				
3				

DISCLAIMER

Terrain Archaeology and the individual authors of this report have made every effort during its preparation to provide as complete and accurate an assessment as possible within the terms of the Written Scheme of Investigation. All statements and opinions presented in this document are offered in good faith. Terrain Archaeology cannot accept responsibility or liability for errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by any third party, or accept liability for any future loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in this document.

COPYRIGHT

Terrain Archaeology retains full copyright of this report and its images, excepting any data held under third party copyright and presented under license, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved; excepting that Terrain Archaeology grants exclusive license to the client for the use of the aforesaid report and images by the client in all matters directly relating to the project. License is also granted to the client, their agents and Dorset Council's Historic Environment Record and Historic Environment Advisor to use the documentary archive for educational, public and research purposes, provided that Terrain Archaeology is duly acknowledged as its author. This license agreement excludes commercial use of the report, report images or archive by the client or any third party. The authors of any specialist contributions or images within the report or the archive shall retain intellectual copyright of their work, and may make use of said work for educational or research purposes for further publication.

Table of Contents

Part 1: Introduction

1.1	Project Introduction	1
1.2	Brief	1
1.3	Site Location	1
1.4	Geology.....	1
1.5	Archaeological and Historical Background.....	1
1.6	Previous Archaeological Fieldwork.....	2
1.7	Aims and Objectives.....	2
1.8	Groundworks	2
1.9	Methods.....	2
1.10	Archive and Dissemination.....	2

Part 2: Results

2.1	Introduction.....	2
2.2	Natural Deposits.....	3
2.3	Earthen Defences	3
2.4	Drain Trench.....	3

Part 3: Finds

3.1	Finds assemblage	3
-----	------------------------	---

Part 4: Discussion and Conclusions

4.1	Discussion.....	3
4.2	Conclusions	3

Part 5: References	3
---------------------------------	---

Figures

1	Site Location	4
2	Plan of Drainage Repairs on the North Terrace	5

Plates

1	View westwards from the upper slope of the north terrace, with the excavated drain trench just beyond the metal fence.....	6
2	View of the emptied existing drain trench, looking east	6
3	Detail of clay layers in east end of new drain trench, looking west.....	6

Appendix 1: Context Summary	7
--	---

Project Report Summary Page

Project Details			
OASIS Reference	terraina1-412434		
Project Title	Nothe Fort North Terrace Drainage Repairs, Weymouth		
Short Description of Project	Terrain Archaeology carried out archaeological observations and recording during essential repairs to an existing foul drain on the north side of the Nothe Fort, Weymouth. The groundworks consisted mainly of the excavation of the existing drain trench to expose the pipe, with a short length of new drain trench to the west, which exposed a small part of the clays that form the earthen defences added to the north side of the fort in 1913.		
Project Dates	Start: 12-01-2021	End: 13-01-2021	
Previous/Future Work	No/No		
Project Code	53547		
Monument Type and Period	Coastal Battery (Post medieval), Coastal Battery (Modern)		
Significant Finds	None		
Project Location			
County/District/Parish	Dorset/ Weymouth and Portland/ Weymouth		
Site Address	Nothe Fort, Barrack Road, Weymouth, DT4 8UF		
Site Coordinates	SY 6866 7877		
Site Area	8.85 m ²		
Height OD			
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	Weymouth Civic Society		
Project Archive			
Archive Type	Physical	Digital	Paper
Location/Accession No	No physical archive	No digital archive	No paper archive
Contents			

Nothe Fort, Barrack Road, Weymouth, Dorset

Archaeological Observations and Recording during Drainage Works on the North Terrace, January 2021

1. Introduction

1.1 Project introduction

Terrain Archaeology was commissioned by Weymouth Civic Society to carry out archaeological observations and recording during essential drainage repair works on the north terrace of Nothe Fort. The north terrace forms part of the *Nothe Fort, tramway and searchlight battery at The Nothe* Scheduled Ancient Monument (National Heritage List Entry No: 1020063). The works were carried out under Class 5 Scheduled Monument Consent.

The fieldwork was carried out between the 12th – 13th January 2021 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

Nothe Fort lies on a rocky promontory between Weymouth and Portland Harbour. Specifically the site lies on the sloping earthen ground in front of a terrace along the north side of the fort centred on SY 6866 7877 (Figures 1 and 2).

1.4 Geology

The solid geology is mapped as mudstone of the Nothe Clay Member and Sandstone of the Nothe Grit Member. No Superficial Deposits are recorded (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

1.5 Archaeological and Historical Background

Nothe Fort was built to guard the northern side of Portland Harbour. Construction was begun in 1860 and was completed in 1872 after undergoing a series of changes in design. The fort has a demi-lune plan and was built of Portland stone with massive external walls and a series of twenty-two casemates at the upper courtyard level, with twelve original gun ports set above a continuous circuit of magazines and stores. By 1890, Nothe Fort had lost its strategic importance due to the rapid pace of technological developments and the presence of other defences around Portland Harbour. Consequently, during the 1890s, it was converted into an infantry barracks and was used intermittently throughout the first half of the 20th century. The original 12.5-inch rifled-muzzle-loading (RML) guns were replaced by three 6-inch breech-loading (BL) guns mounted on the ramparts. In 1913 earthen banks were installed on the north east corner of the fort to provide additional protection against explosive shells. These banks covered eight of the original gun ports. The fort was manned in 1914-16 and also between 1929-56. In 1939 anti-aircraft emplacement was built with a Bofors gun mounted on the north west parapet and an observation post on the south west corner. After World War II, a new searchlight post was constructed on the northern side in 1946. New searchlights were installed in 1947 new radar equipment in 1953.

In 1956 all of the Coastal Defence sites were declared redundant and the fort was used to house naval stores and degaussing equipment. In 1961 the fort was sold to Weymouth and Melcombe Regis Borough Council. However, it was left unoccupied and started to fall into a state of dereliction. In the late 1970s work started to clear and consolidate the site and the fort was opened to the public in 1980. Since this date there has been a continuing effort to restore and improve the site by the Weymouth Civic Society and a team of volunteers.

1.6 Previous Archaeological fieldwork

A watching brief was carried out by Terrain Archaeology in March 2019 during works forming a new terrace on the north side of the fort adjacent to the present works. This exposed further parts of the stone wall of the fort and exposed part of the earthwork defences built against this wall (Terrain Archaeology 2019).

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

The groundworks consisted of the excavation of an existing foul drain running along the north side of the fort to expose and replace the existing plastic drain. A new manhole was formed at the east end of this drain, adjacent to the path. Another manhole was formed immediately in front of the searchlight housing. To the west a new drain trench was dug to reroute the drain (Figure 2). The drain trench was dug by hand and was about 0.3 m wide and up to 0.85 m deep.

1.9 Methods

The observation and recording of the groundworks was undertaken to the standards of the Chartered Institute of Archaeologists (CIfA 2014), with an archaeologist in intermittent attendance during the groundworks.

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. 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

1.10.1 Paper Archive

No paper archive will be retained beyond the end of the project.

1.10.2 Artefacts

No artefacts or other materials were retained from the site.

1.10.3 Report

A copy of this report will be lodged with Dorset 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 *terrains1-412434*. A digital copy of this report will be uploaded for inclusion in the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) online 'grey literature' library.

2. Results

2.1 Introduction

The full length of the drain trench was observed, but the eastern part was along the line of an existing drain (Figure 2). The deposits revealed are described in Appendix 1.

2.2 Natural Deposits

No natural deposits were exposed during the works.

2.3 Earthen Defences

The western 7.5 m length of the drain trench was dug through the earthen slope on the northern edge of the fort (Figure 2). This revealed a dark greyish-brown clay topsoil (100) 0.2 m thick overlying a 0.3 m thick layer of fairly soft friable mid grey clay (102), which overlay a deposit of firm reddish-brown clay with moderate small stone (103) over 0.2 m thick that continued below the base of the trench.

2.4 Drain Trench

The eastern 19 m of the drain trench was dug along an existing foul sewer, which revealed a backfill of mixed reddish-brown and greyish-brown silty clay (101) over the plastic pipe. The backfill was sealed by a 0.15 m thick topsoil (100).

3. Finds

3.1 Finds Assemblage

A single sherd of a twentieth century mug was recovered from the spoil dug out of the existing drain trench to the east of the searchlight. A number of clay tiles stamped 'electricity' were also recovered from the earlier drain trench backfill (101). No finds were retained after the end of the fieldwork.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

4.1 Discussion

The drain repairs were mainly dug along the line of an existing late twentieth century foul drain. This had been inserted into the edge of the earthen slope above the external perimeter wall of the fort. This earthen slope is probably part of the earthwork defences added to the north side of the fort in 1913. Only a small part of the clay of the earthwork defences was exposed.

4.2 Conclusions

The drainage works disturbed very little of archaeological significance, other than a restricted part of the 1913 earthen defences added to the fort.

5. References

- | | | |
|----------------------|------|---|
| ClfA, | 2014 | <i>Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief. December 2014. Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.</i> |
| Terrain Archaeology, | 2019 | Nothe Fort, Barrack Road, Weymouth, Dorset: Archaeological Observations and Recording during Alterations to the North Terrace Earthworks, March 2019. Terrain Archaeology Report No. 53485/3/1, April 2019. |

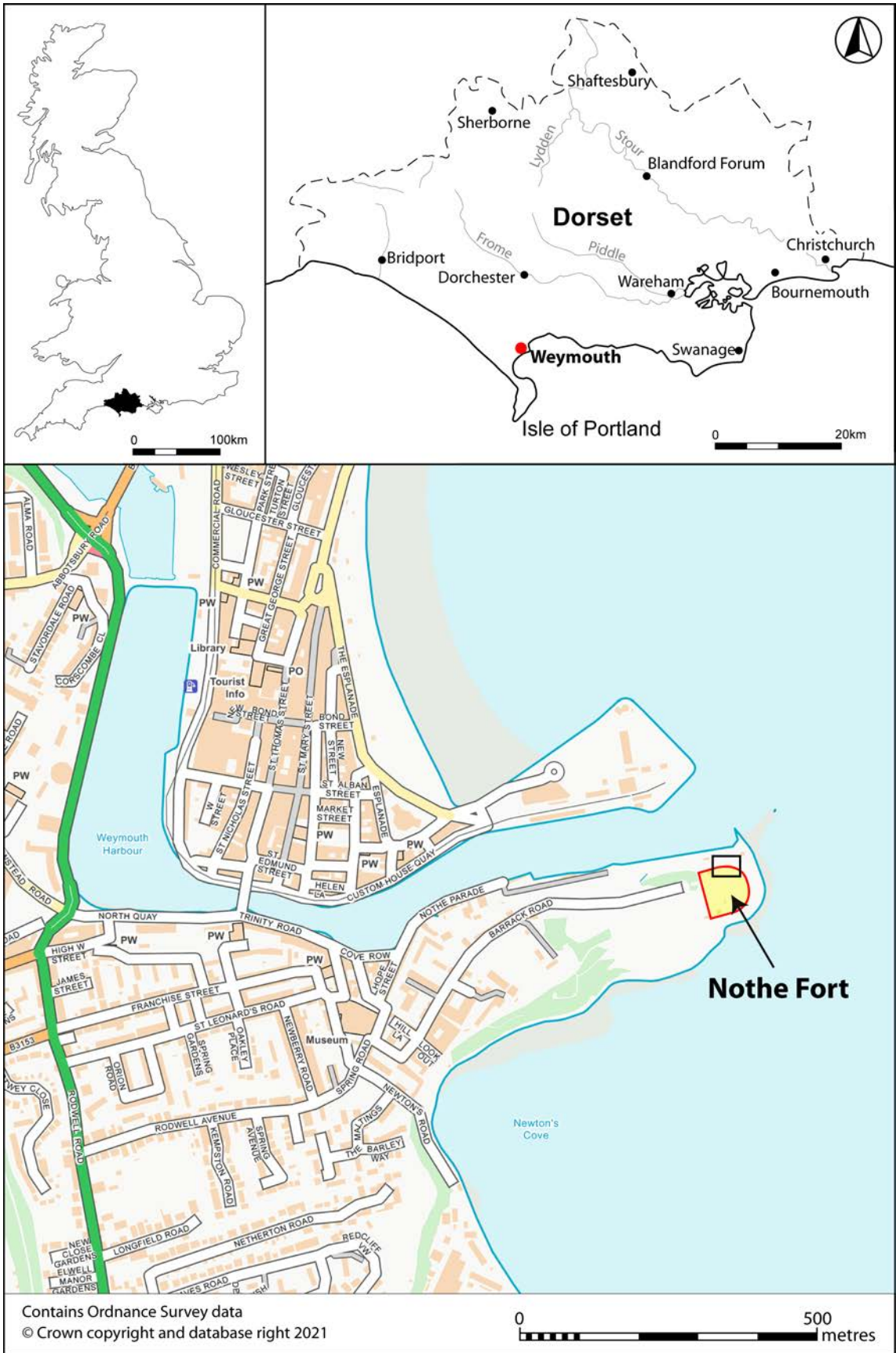


Figure 1: Site Location.

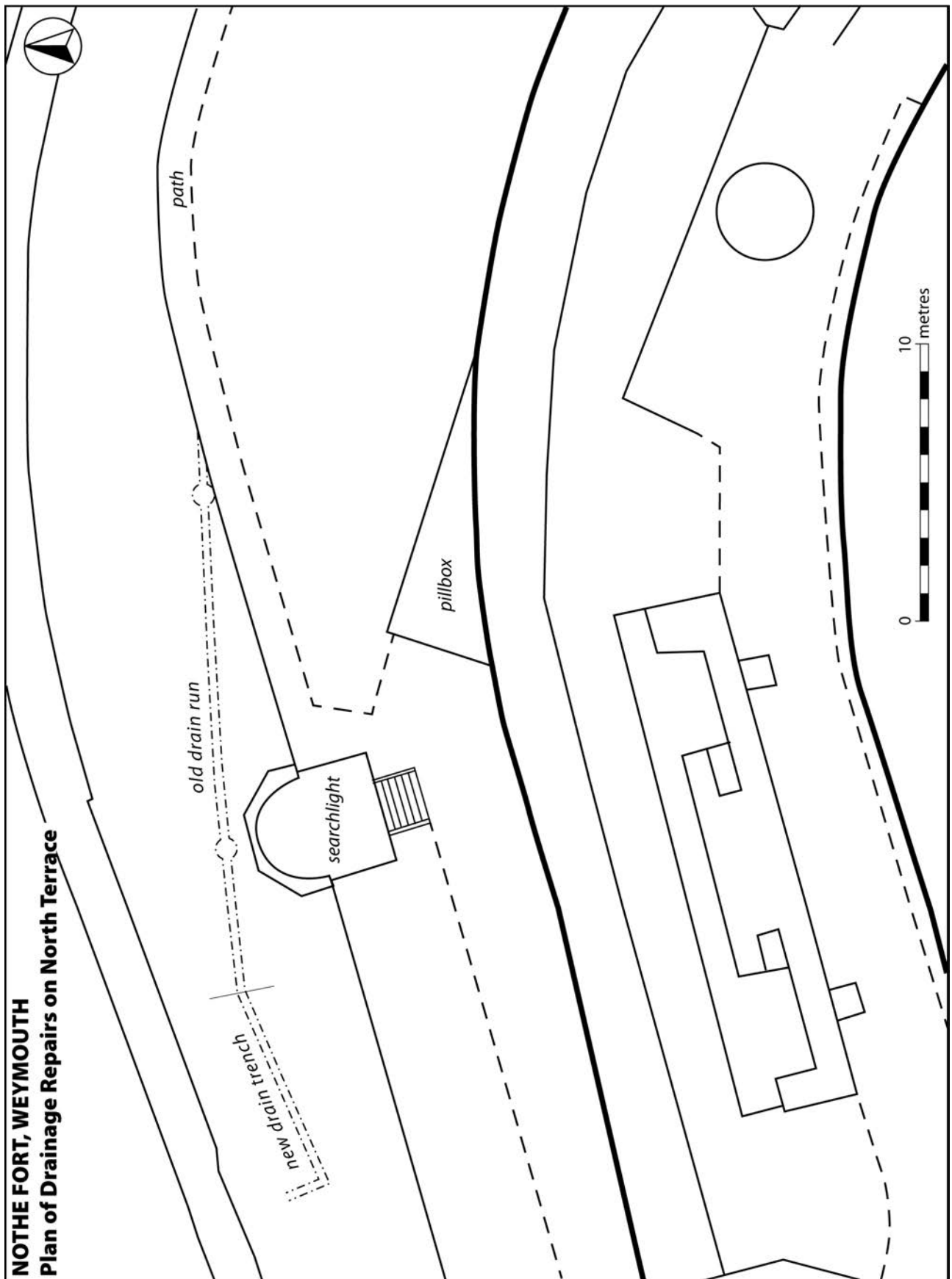


Figure 2: Plan of Drainage Repairs on the North Terrace.



Plate 1: View westwards from the upper slope of the north terrace, with the excavated drain trench just beyond the metal fence.



Plate 2: View of the emptied existing drain trench, looking east. 1m scale.



Plate 3: Detail of clay layers in east end of new drain trench, looking west. 1m scale.

Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context	Description and Interpretation	Depth (m) below ground level
100	Turf and Topsoil: Dark greyish-brown clay loam with occasional small pebbles.	0.00 – 0.15m
101	Drain Trench Backfill: Mixed reddish-brown and greyish-brown silty clay.	0.10 – 0.70m +
102	Fort Earthwork Make-up: Soft mid grey clay. Below 100.	0.20 – 0.50m
103	Fort Earthwork Make-up: Firm reddish-brown clay with moderate small stone and patches of dark grey clay. Below 102.	0.50m +