



Barrington Court, Barrington, Ilminster, South Somerset

Archaeological Observations and Recording during Car Park Works

Report No. 53524/3/1

November 2021



Barrington Court, Barrington, Ilminster, South Somerset

Archaeological Observations and Recording during Car Park Works, June – September 2021

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Client: The National Trust

Agent: Portus and Whitton Landscape Architects, 58 Ashcroft Road, Cirencester, GL7 1QX

Report Author: Peter Bellamy BSc (Hons) MClfA

Illustrations: Peter Bellamy BSc (Hons) MClfA

Document Version History

Version	Status	Prepared By	Approved By	Date
1	Report 53524/3/1	P Bellamy		30/11/2021
2				
3				

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Table of Contents

Part 1: Introduction

1.1	Project Introduction.....	1
1.2	Brief.....	1
1.3	Site Location.....	1
1.4	Geology.....	2
1.5	Archaeological and Historical Background.....	2
1.6	Previous Archaeological Fieldwork.....	3
1.7	Aims and Objectives.....	3
1.8	Groundworks.....	4
1.9	Methods.....	4
1.10	Archive and Dissemination.....	4

Part 2: Results

2.1	Helens Close.....	4
2.2	Orchard Overflow Car Park.....	5
2.3	Beagles Car Park.....	5
2.4	Barrington Cottages Staff Car Park.....	5

Part 3: Finds

3.1	Finds assemblage.....	5
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Part 4: Discussion and Conclusions

4.1	Discussion.....	5
4.2	Conclusions.....	5

Part 5: References	6
---------------------------------	---

Figures	7
----------------------	---

Plates	11
---------------------	----

List of Figures

1	Site Location.....	7
2	Location of new and refurbished car parks.....	8
3	Plan of Observations in Helens Close.....	9
4	Plan of Observations in Beagles and Orchard Car Parks.....	10

List of Plates

1	General view of electricity trenches for new car park in Helens Close, looking south.....	11
2	General view of electricity trenches for new car park in Helens Close, looking south.....	11
3	General view of area of new pedestrian bridge in north east corner of Helens Close.....	11
4	View of area of reduced ground for the installation of the new pedestrian bridge in Helens Close.....	12
5	View of topsoil stripping in Orchard overflow car park, looking south.....	12
6	View of topsoil stripping in Orchard overflow car park, looking south.....	12
7	Beagles Car Park during initial stripping, looking south, with possible earlier road just in front of machine bucket.....	13
8	Beagles Car Park, showing drainage trench, looking north.....	13
9	New Staff Car Park, looking north east, showing build up in levels.....	13

Project Report Summary Page

Project Details			
OASIS Reference	terraina1-503161		
Project Title	New Car Parks watching brief, Barrington Court, South Somerset		
Short Description of Project	Terrain Archaeology carried out archaeological observations and recording during works to form or upgrade four car parks at Barrington Court, South Somerset. The watching brief on the new car park at Helens Close revealed no more than a sparse scatter of post-medieval and modern finds. The upgrading of the Orchard Overflow Car Park and Beagles Car Park revealed no significant archaeology. The new staff car park at Barrington Cottages required the raising of ground levels and was not observed.		
Project Dates	Start: 08-06-2021	End: 22-09-2021	
Previous/Future Work	Yes/No		
Project Code	53524		
Monument Type and Period	None		
Significant Finds	None		
Project Location			
County/District/Parish	Somerset/South Somerset/Barrington		
Site Address	Barrington Court, Barrington, Ilminster, Somerset TA19 0NQ		
Site Coordinates	ST 3957 1804; ST 3959 1818; ST 3955 1825; ST 3969 1870		
Site Area	c. 1500m ²		
Height OD			
Project Creators			
Organisation	Terrain Archaeology		
Project Brief Originator	National Trust		
Project Design Originator	Terrain Archaeology		
Project Supervisor	Peter Bellamy		
Project Manager	Peter Bellamy		
Sponsor or Funding Body	National Trust		
Project Archive			
Archive Type	Physical	Digital	Paper
Location/Accession No	National Trust	National Trust	National Trust
Contents	None	Raster images, vector images, text,	Context sheets, plans, sections, report

Barrington Court, Barrington, Ilminster, South Somerset

Archaeological Observations and Recording during Car Park Works, June – September 2021

1. Introduction

1.1 Project introduction

A project by the National Trust to improve the visitor parking arrangements at Barrington Court, near Ilminster, Somerset comprised the formation of a new main visitor car park at Helens Close, together with improvements to the existing main car park at the Beagles and the Orchard overflow car parks, together with the creation of a new staff car park at Barrington Court Cottages. The archaeological programme of works to mitigate the impacts of these car parking improvements on the potential archaeological resource consisted of the archaeological evaluation of Helens Close and archaeological observations and recording during the subsequent works on the car parks where this may disturb potential archaeological features and deposits. The Helens Close evaluation report was issued in February 2020 (Bellamy 2020). This report is on the subsequent archaeological observations and recording.

This programme of works was set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Terrain Archaeology (2019) in part fulfilment of Condition 4 of the granting of Planning Application No. 18/03270/FUL, *Change of use of land to form additional car parking and a visitor route from the car park. Modification of existing car parking facilities to reduce impact on listed buildings and enhance visitors' experience: Barrington Court, National Trust Eastfield Lane Barrington Ilminster TA19 0NQ (GR:339453/118299)*. Condition 4 of the granting of approval of Planning Application No. 18/03270/FUL by South Somerset District Council, the Local Planning Authority, states “*Before the commencement of the development hereby permitted the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, shall have secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which has been submitted and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The WSI shall include details of the archaeological investigation, the recording of the heritage asset, the analysis of evidence recovered from the site and publication of the results. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.*”

Reason: To ensure a proper archaeological assessment is carried out and heritage assets are safeguarded, in accordance with policy EQ3 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028) and the provisions of the NPPF.”

Fieldwork was carried out between the 8th June 2021 and 22nd September 2021 by Peter Bellamy.

1.2 Brief

No written brief for the works was produced by or on behalf of the National Trust.

1.3 Site Location

The four car park locations lie within the National Trust estate at Barrington Court (Figures 1-2). Helens Close is situated near the southern end of the property on the west side of the entrance road into Barrington Court, between Silver Street to the south and Water Street to the north, centred on ST 3957 1804. The Orchard overflow car park lies to the north of Helens Close on the north side of Water Street, centred on ST 3959 1818. Beagles car park is immediately north of Orchard, separated by the reception building, centred on ST 3955 1825. The new staff car park lies on the east side of Barrington Court Cottages in the north east part of the estate, centred on ST 3969 1870. The topography is relatively flat and lies at a height of about 21 m above OD.

1.4 Geology

Bedrock geology is mapped as Jurassic Siltstone and Sandstone of the Dyrham Formation, with no recorded superficial deposits (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

1.5 Archaeological and Historical Background

The following archaeological and historical background was supplied by Martin Papworth, Regional Archaeologist, National Trust.

Barrington is an ancient site and Roman burials and occupation debris have been found just beyond the southern boundary of the present estate.

Barrington is mentioned in Domesday Book and during the 1920s alterations to the Court House remains of a medieval stone building were reported under its east side.

The Daubenay family held the estate from 1236 to 1543 and by 1483 a deer park was recorded at Barrington.

Barrington Court House is believed to have been built for William Clifton when he held Barrington 1552-64. The Cliftons were related to the Phelps family of Montacute who acquired the estate in 1605.

The Strode family mortgaged Barrington in 1625 and it remained in their family until 1775. In 1674, the Strode family commissioned the building of the grand stable block on the west side of Barrington Court, converted to accommodation in the 1920s and now known as Strode House.

Geophysical survey of the South Lawn and a survey of earthworks to the east of the house indicate that the mansion house was complemented by fashionable formal gardens (Papworth 2000).

In 1775, the Harvards bought the estate from the Strodes and kept it in their family for 4 generations before selling it to the Peters family sometime in the mid-19th century.

As time went by, the Court slipped down the social scale, and through most of the 19th century was used as a farmhouse, known as Court Farm, tenanted by the Jacobs family. At various times Farm buildings were erected close to the Court including the Buss stalls to the north-west, which are thought to originate in the 16th century.

The tithe map, of 1842, shows that that much of the land around the village was still in open fields with strips held by different owners and tenants.

At some time in the 19th century, much of the old furniture and fittings in the Court, including wood panelling was sold. The journal *The Builder* of 1845 noted that no carved work remained within the house.

At the end of the 19th century Barrington changed hands frequently as the house fell further into disrepair. In 1904 the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings approached the National Trust and were commissioned by NT to make a survey and estimate for restoration and running costs.

In 1905 Miss J. L. Woodward purchased the Court on the understanding that it would pass to the Trust. In 1907 the NT took on Barrington Court, its first large house. It was in a poor state and for the first few years, funds were raised to keep the place watertight and it was still used as a farmhouse until 1918.

In that year Colonel Abram Arthur Lyle took on the lease of the house. He was a partner to the Tate and Lyle sugar corporation. He commissioned the architect J Edwin Forbes to create an Estate Master plan which created a model estate with farm buildings moved to new locations away from the Court. The result is a layout of buildings dating from 1921-5 including many recreational buildings such as the squash court and cricket pavilion which show definite Arts and Crafts influence.

The garden designs were influenced by Gertrude Jekyll and reflect her work with careful colour schemes, bold groupings and overlays through time. Her plans survive within the archive held at Somerset Record Office including a proposal for the South Lawn, which was never carried out. The work was completed by 1927.

Colonel Lyle furnished the Barrington and Strode House with his collection of historic panelling and architectural features brought from other historic houses.

The Lyles continued to lease the property until 1991 when Andrew Lyle relinquished direct management to the National Trust. The building was then leased by a business, 'Stewart Interiors'. The company used Barrington Court to display examples of their interior designs and reproductions of historic furniture and fabrics until 2008. Since that time the National Trust has displayed the house without historic collections using the room spaces for occasional art displays.

1.6 Previous Archaeological fieldwork

There have been a number of archaeological investigations at Barrington Court, but these have been focussed mainly in areas closer to the main house itself and not in the vicinity of the current proposals. These have included works by the National Trust in 2000, including geophysical survey of the South Lawn, a watching brief during the installation of a water main across the South Lawn, and a survey of earthworks to the east of the house, which indicated that the mansion house was complemented by fashionable formal gardens (Papworth 2000). A watching brief was conducted in 2016 by Terrain Archaeology during the installation of a new biomass boiler system in the area between the former kennels and Strode House, which revealed traces of former farm buildings (Bellamy 2016). Another watching brief was undertaken in 2017 during the laying of a new SSP Cable Duct in the area north of the former kennels, but nothing of archaeological significance was recorded (Bellamy 2017).

The previous archaeological investigations in the area of the car parks are a watching brief in the Orchard overflow car park and a geophysical survey and archaeological evaluation of Helen's Close. Terrain Archaeology observed the installation of a new fibre optic cable from Water Lane to the Barrington Court Ticket Office in 2018. The route of the new cable ran along the eastern and northern edges of the Orchard overflow car park (Bellamy 2018). Nothing was revealed other than a small number of patches of clinker and brick rubble, which appear to fill in hollows in the field. The National Trust undertook a preliminary geophysical survey of Helens Close in April 2018. The survey showed traces of parallel linear anomalies, which may be drainage features. There was also a central higher resistance response running about 20m broad along the centre corresponding with the long field alignment, perhaps a trackway or buried harder surface in this area. The evaluation excavation of Helens Close by Terrain Archaeology in February 2020 consisted of three trial trenches. No significant archaeology was revealed, only two post-medieval or modern features, one of which appears to be a drainage feature and the other is possibly a wheel rut (Bellamy 2020).

1.7 Aims and Objectives

The aim of the archaeological programme of works was to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on the site, in fulfilment of the Planning Conditions. The programme of works will aim to place the archaeological results within the local, regional and national context, as appropriate, and advance understanding of the archaeology of the site and its surroundings.

Its objectives were:

- To investigate and record all the in situ archaeological deposits and features revealed during the programme of works to an appropriate professional standard.
- To record recovered artefacts and other materials to an appropriate standard.
- To present the results in a report to the appropriate standard.

1.8 Groundworks

1.8.1 New Car Park, Helens Close

A new main car park for National Trust visitors was constructed in the field known as Helens Close to the south of the existing car parks. The observed groundworks were the trenching for new electricity cables for the car park and the works to install a new pedestrian bridge in the north east corner.

1.8.2 Orchard Overflow Car Park

The existing Orchard overflow car park is retained as an overspill car park, with some improvements. The groundworks observed related to the creation of a new durable self-binding gravel circulatory route.

1.8.3 Beagles Car Park

The new drainage improvement works for the Beagles car park prior to resurfacing were observed.

1.8.4 New Staff Car Park, Barrington Court Cottages

The formation of the new staff car park in the existing service yard to the rear of Barrington Cottages required the build up of ground levels, rather than any below ground disturbance.

1.9 Methods

The methodology, scope, aims and objectives of the works was set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by Terrain Archaeology in May 2019 (Terrain Archaeology document no. 3524/0/1). All archaeological works were carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for archaeological Watching Briefs* (ClfA 2014), with an archaeologist in attendance during all groundworks that possibly may have exposed pre-modern deposits.

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

The drawn and written archive will be deposited with the National Trust at the earliest opportunity following the completion of the project.

1.10.2 Artefacts

No artefacts were recovered from the archaeological works.

1.10.3 Report

A copy of this report will be lodged with the National Trust, the National Trust HBSMR and with Somerset 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 *terrains1-503161*. 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 Helens Close

The trenching for the new electricity cabling in Helens Close was observed (Figure 3; Plates 1-2). The trench was 0.15 m wide and 0.4 m deep. This revealed a 0.1 m thick layer of mid brown silty clay topsoil over orange-brown silty

clay natural. No archaeological features were identified. A scatter of artefacts were noted, primarily post-medieval and modern pottery and brick, but also included a single sherd of medieval pottery and a very worn Victorian halfpenny. A discussion with Richard Hann (Building Supervisor, National Trust) revealed that material dredged from the moat had previously been spread across this field, so the provenance of this material is uncertain.

The groundworks in the north east corner of Helens Close for the installation of a new pedestrian bridge were also observed. An area 2.2 m wide and 6.5 m long was reduced by machine to a depth of between 0.3 – 0.5 m (Figure 2; Plates 3-4). This revealed a 0.15 m thickness of mid brown silty clay topsoil over orange-brown silty clay natural. No archaeology was observed.

2.2 Orchard Overflow Car Park

The topsoil stripping of the new roadway was observed (Figure 4; Plates 5-6). This was stripped down to a depth of 0.2 m. The mid brown silty clay topsoil was 0.1 m deep over natural orange-brown silty clay. A small number of irregular darker patches containing clinker or brick rubble were visible in the top of the natural. These appear to represent modern infill of soft patches of ground.

2.3 Beagles Car Park

The area of the earthen bund removal along the western edge of the Beagles car park was observed and the bund was confirmed to be a modern feature. The drainage improvements included the excavation of a triangular area roughly 22 by 22 m across in the north east part of the car park down to a depth of 0.7 m (Figure 4; Plates 7-8). This revealed a hard crushed stone car park surface, 0.3 m thick over natural yellowish-brown natural clay with grey mottles. The only feature observed was a 3.0 m wide linear area of hard packed stone 0.25 m thick above the natural and partially incorporated within the existing car park surface. This is of recent date and is probably part of a roadway associated with the car park.

2.4 Barrington Cottages Staff Car Park

A new staff car park was formed in a former service yard that was covered by large dumps of vegetation and soil. After removal of these dumps it was found that the ground levels were too low and the area was built up to form the car park surface. This work was not observed as it was unlikely that any archaeology would be exposed. The levels of the new car park confirm that the ground levels were raised by 0.2–0.3 m (Plate 9).

3. Finds

3.1 Finds Assemblage

No finds were retained from the observations.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

4.1 Discussion

The observations during the car park works confirmed the results of previous archaeological investigations in the area of Helen's Close and Orchard overflow car park, namely, in this part of the Barrington Court Estate there is very little evidence of archaeological activity beyond post-medieval and modern agricultural activity.

4.2 Conclusions

No significant archaeology was revealed during the observations.

5. References

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- Papworth, M. 2000 *Barrington Court, Somerset, South Lawn Archaeological Survey and Excavation.* The National Trust.
- Terrain Archaeology 2019 Barrington Court, Barrington, Ilminster, South Somerset: Written Scheme of Investigation for a Programme of Archaeological Works during the Creation of Additional Car Parking and other Associated Works. Terrain Archaeology Document No. 3524/0/1, May 2019.

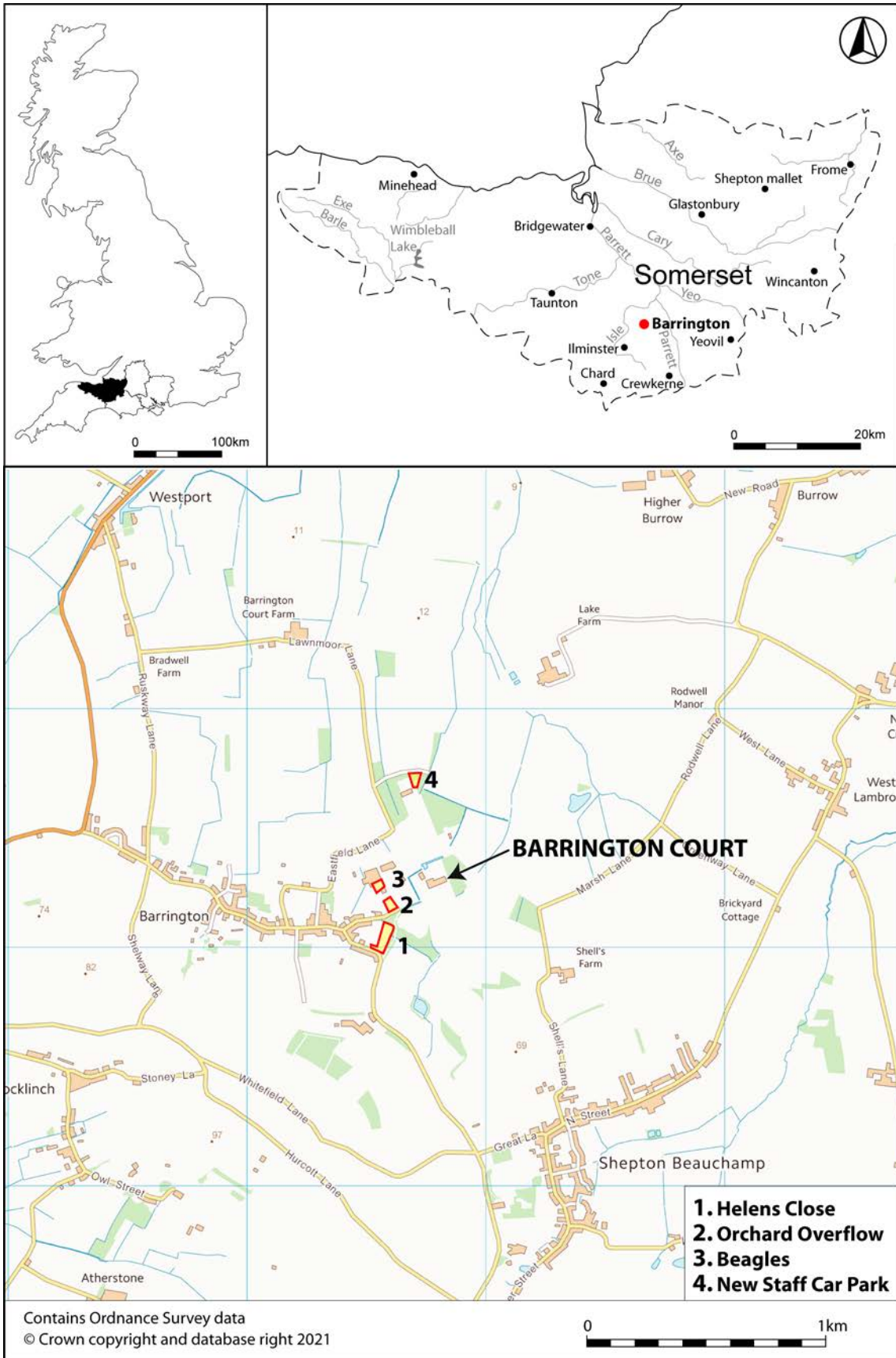


Figure 1: Site Location.

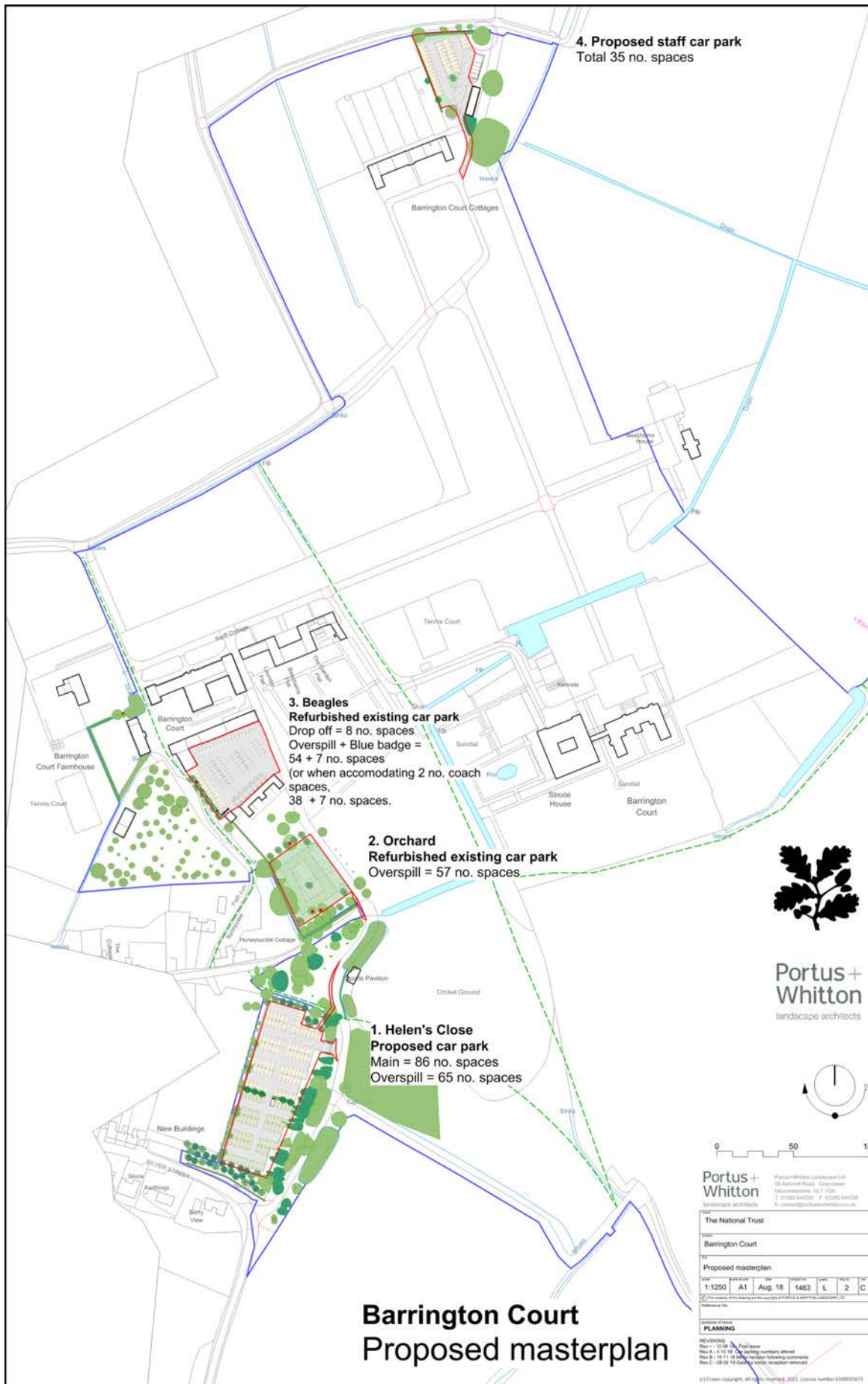


Figure 2: Location of new and refurbished car parks.

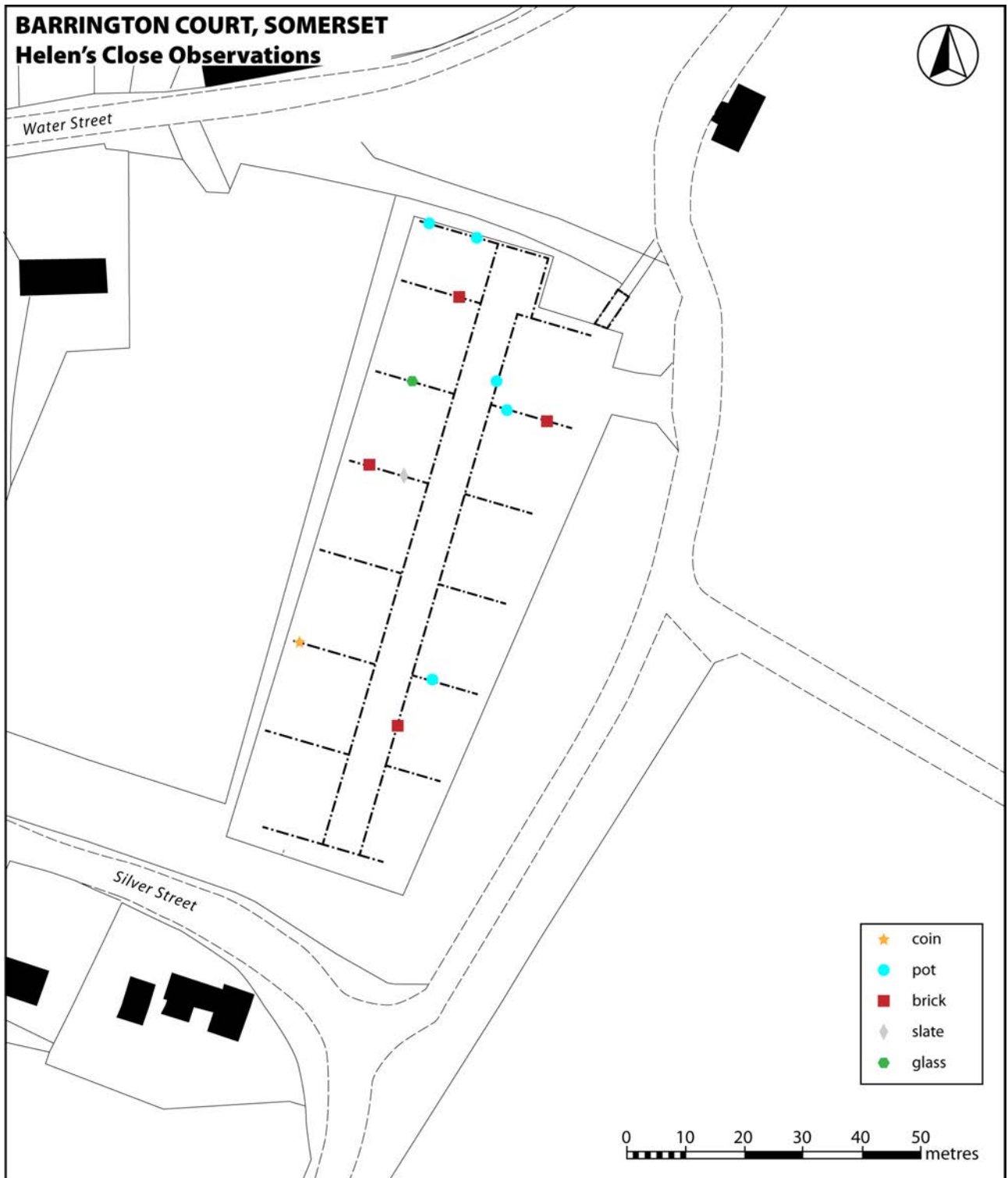


Figure 3: Plan of Observations in Helens Close.

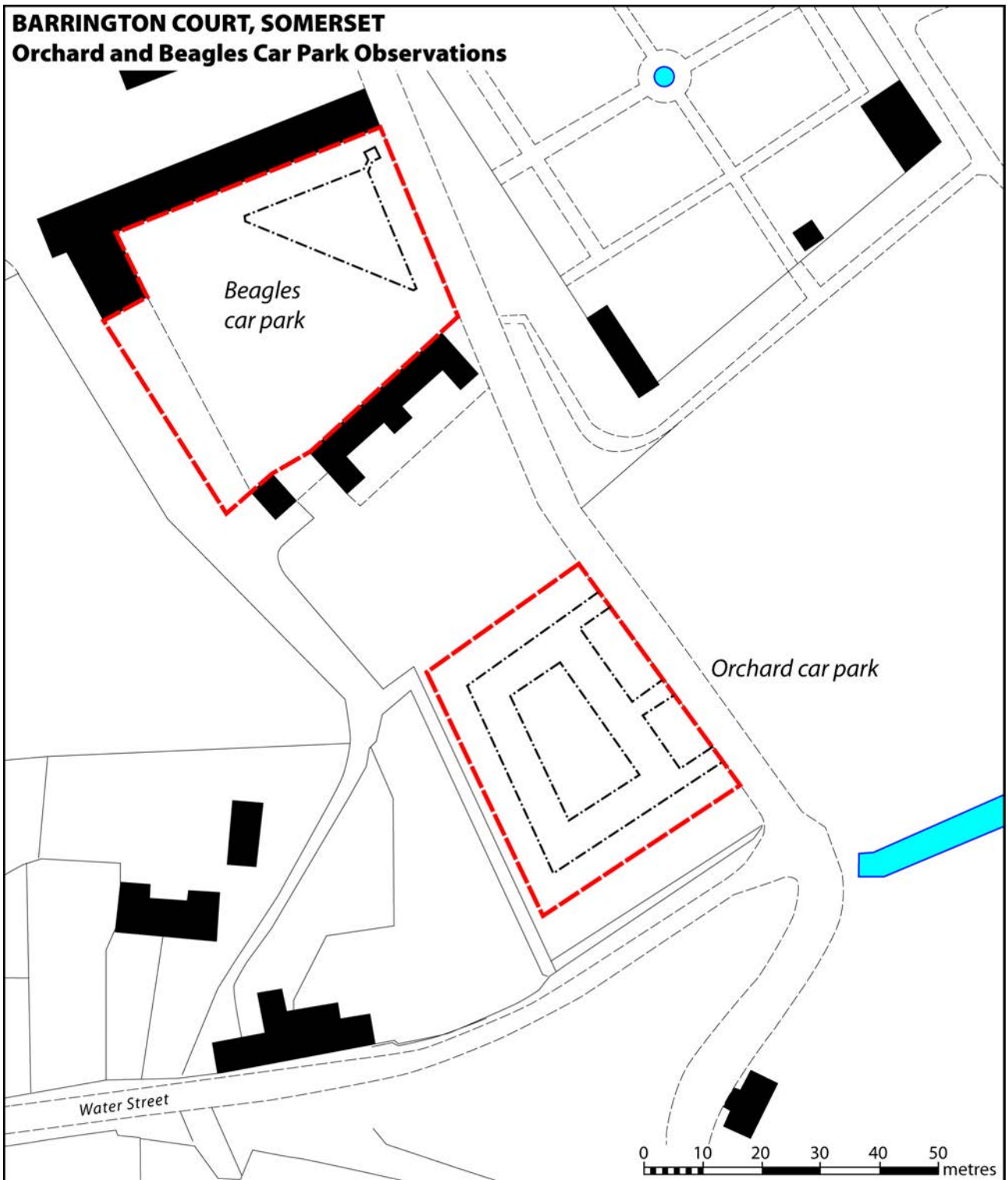


Figure 4: Plan of Observations in Beagles and Orchard Car Parks.



Plate 1: General view of electricity trenches for new car park in Helens Close, looking south.



Plate 2: General view of electricity trenches for new car park in Helens Close, looking south.



Plate 3: General view of area of new pedestrian bridge in north east corner of Helens Close.



Plate 4: View of area of reduced ground for the installation of the new pedestrian bridge in Helens Close. 1m scale.



Plate 5: View of topsoil stripping in Orchard overflow car park, looking south. 2m scales.



Plate 6: View of topsoil stripping in Orchard overflow car park, looking south. 2m scales.



Plate 7: Beagles Car Park during initial stripping, looking south, with possible earlier road just in front of machine bucket.



Plate 8: Beagles Car Park, showing drainage trench, looking north.



Plate 9: New Staff Car Park, looking north east, showing build up in levels.