

**SCATS COUNTRystore, GROVE TRADING ESTATE,
DORCHESTER, DORSET**

**Archaeological Observations and Recording
September 2009**



Report No. 53283/3/1

December 2009

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SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Terrain Archaeology in September 2009, during groundworks associated with the refurbishment and modification of SCATS Countrystore, Grove Trading Estate, Dorchester, Dorset (SY68619112). The site forms part of a designated Scheduled Monument and lies immediately adjacent to areas previously subjected to large-scale archaeological excavation in 1970-72. Two areas on the east side of the SCATS store were investigated. An Early or Middle Iron Age pit and three Late Iron Age and Romano-British ditches were recorded, two of which perpetuated the alignments of features excavated in 1970-72. These were sealed by a thin agricultural soil which was, in turn, cut by a stone footing, believed to be of later Roman date.

INTRODUCTION

Terrain Archaeology was commissioned by Cluttons LLP, acting on behalf of their clients Openfield Group Ltd (formerly Grainfarmers Group Ltd), to undertake archaeological observations and recording during groundworks for refurbishment and alteration of SCATS Countrystore, Grove Trading Estate, Dorchester. These works included construction of a new porch, pedestrian ramp and service infrastructure on the western side of the store, excavation of a new service trench and ground-reduction works for a new retaining wall and temporary car park (hereafter collectively 'the site', Figures 1 and 2).

Archaeological Observations and Recording, also known as an archaeological watching brief, is defined by the Institute for Archaeologists (formerly the Institute of Field Archaeologists) as "a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons, within a specified area or site where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed."

The present SCATS Countrystore (centred on Ordnance Survey NGR SY68619112,) was built in the mid 1960s and subsequently extended northwards. The store building occupies a cut-and fill terrace on the lower east-facing slope of a broad dry chalk coombe. Immediately west of the building, a low concrete block retaining wall revets a raised and roughly metalled car park and storage yard. The southern part of this retaining wall was removed during the 2009 groundworks.

The store and associated land lie on the eastern edge of Scheduled Monument 12501 (Poundbury Camp, associated monuments and section of Roman aqueduct) and the scheme of works was subject to Scheduled Monument Consent under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979) as revised. A Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Observations and Recording (WSI) was prepared, detailing the archaeological justifications, aims and objectives, fieldwork and other methods to be employed (Terrain Archaeology April 2008), and was approved by Dorset County Council's Senior Archaeologist and by English Heritage prior to the commencement of fieldwork.

Fieldwork was carried out between 8th – 16th September 2009 by Mike Trevarthen and Barry Hennessey. The project was managed for Terrain Archaeology by Peter S. Bellamy.

Terrain Archaeology would like to acknowledge the help and cooperation of the following during this project: Alexandra Hamel, Simon Buse (Cluttons), Marcus Harris and the groundworkers (Wedderburn), Steve Wallis (Dorset County Council) and Shane Gould (English Heritage). The pottery from Area 2 was assessed by Lorraine Mephram (Wessex Archaeology, Post-excavation Specialist Services).

THE SITE

The site occupies part of a gently sloping, east-facing hillslope, but landscaping and cut-and-fill terracing resulting from the ongoing development of the Grove Trading Estate have significantly modified the local natural topography since the mid 1960s. The flat-bottomed valley of the River Frome lies immediately to the north, and the northern end of the trading estate is marked by a steep valley-side scarp.

Deposits underlying the site comprise an unknown depth of Pleistocene 'coombe rock' (a soliflucted head deposit of fragmented chalk and flint in a lime-rich silt matrix) over Cretaceous Upper Chalk bedrock. The upper exposure of the coombe rock was marred by numerous discrete and linear solution features, usually filled with almost stoneless mid-orange brown or red-brown clay-loam.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The site lies in an area rich in archaeological remains of prehistoric, Roman and post-Roman date. There have been numerous archaeological observations and excavations in the areas surrounding the site, the largest and most significant of which are immediately to the north and west (Figure 2), and have revealed evidence for a long sequence of occupation, burial and other activity (Green 1987; Farwell & Molleson 1993).

Understanding of the area during the earlier prehistoric period remains limited: Both Earlier and Later Neolithic activity is attested on the plateau of the Poundbury ridge to the west (Wessex Archaeology 2007), and there is evidence for Late Neolithic occupation immediately adjacent to the site. Early-Middle Bronze Age settlement, an enclosure and associated field system have also been identified immediately west of the site (Green 1987, 22-31). Evaluation of the Poundbury ridge has also indicated extensive field systems, largely undated but most likely to be of Middle and Late Bronze Age date (Wessex Archaeology 2007).

In the Early Iron Age, a hillfort (Poundbury Camp) was built c. 0.5 km west of the site, although there is some evidence that this may have had Late Bronze Age antecedents (Ellison 1987, 14). East of the hillfort, Early, Middle and Late Iron Age settlement and burials have also been found (Green 1987). In the Late Iron Age, the hillfort was elaborated to form a multivallate enclosure.

The site lies just northwest of the Roman town of *Durnovaria*. Whilst there is little evidence for extra-mural settlement in this area, the remains of a number of farms have been found nearby (Green 1987), and enclosures for these farms were later used as cemetery boundaries. The large Late Roman cemetery at Poundbury (Farwell & Molleson 1993) lies immediately west of the site.

There are traces of sub-Roman and early medieval occupation from the Poundbury excavations but during the medieval and post-medieval periods the area was used for agriculture, forming part of the open fields belonging to the Manor of Fordington. In 1794 land southeast of the site was taken over by the army for construction of a cavalry barracks (later the Royal Horse Artillery

Barracks, or Marabout Barracks). There was some re-organisation of the field plots beginning in 1842 and in the 1850's the railway line to Yeovil was imposed across the existing fields. The remaining land was enclosed in 1873-4 (Lloyd 1968, 211-2, Morris & Draper 1995).

The area remained as pasture until World War I, when a hutted Prisoner of War camp was built. After the war the camp was demolished and the ground used as allotments. In 1940 these were taken over by the War Office for construction of a new Army Camp, which remained in use until 1964, after which land was gradually re-developed as the Grove Trading Estate. Almost the entire area is now developed.

Some archaeological observations were made by Christopher Sparey Green during construction of the South-Western Farmers building (now SCATS Countrystore) in 1964. The excavations of Poundbury Sites C (1970-72) and G (1979-80) lay to the west of the South-Western farmers building, but a c. two metre wide strip of unexcavated ground remained immediately to the west. Several Bronze Age ditches crossed this strip and a Neolithic pit was found immediately adjacent, in the edge of the South-Western Farmers building construction terrace. Several graves from a Late Iron Age cemetery were found a few metres to the west of the present site.

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 *in situ* archaeological deposits and features revealed during the groundworks to an appropriate professional standard.

METHODS

The archaeological programme of works was undertaken in accordance with the Institute for Field Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (1994, as revised), and with the WSI (Terrain Archaeology 2008). The observations of the groundworks were intensive, as defined by the Institute for Field Archaeologists, with a suitably qualified archaeologist present during all sensitive ground disturbance.

Two trenches (Areas 1 and 2) were mechanically stripped by the client's groundworks contractors using a tracked 360° excavator. Initial clearance of bulk overburden was undertaken using a toothed bucket, with final machining of archaeologically sensitive levels utilising a toothless ditching bucket. The machined trench bases were manually cleaned where necessary. Mechanical excavation of a new service trench was also monitored (Area 3).

All archaeological features and deposits exposed during the works (regardless of their perceived archaeological significance) were recorded using components of the Terrain Archaeology recording system of complementary written, drawn and photographic records, which have been compiled in a stable, cross-referenced and fully indexed archive in accordance with current UKIC guidelines. Trenches were planned at a scale of 1:50 (general plans) or 1:20 (detail plans) with detailed section drawings at a scale of 1:10. The location of the trenches was planned at 1:500 in relation to existing mapped structures.

RESULTS

Area 1

Area 1 comprised an approximately rectangular trench c. 30 m long and c. 4–4.5 m wide immediately west of the SCATS store rear retaining wall (Figures 2-3, Plate 1). The western part of the trench had previously been excavated (Green 1987, Areas C and G) but it was anticipated that the eastern part would contain hitherto un-investigated ground.

Upon stripping the overburden down on to the top of the chalk, it was discovered that the majority of the un-investigated zone had already been destroyed by a deep drain trench and construction of an associated access/service chamber. The remaining fillet of land (0.75–1 m wide) was examined, but yielded no additional archaeological data. A vertically-sided and flat-based military trench 0.55 m wide by 0.5 m deep had already been excavated and backfilled (Figure 3, but was recorded as it does not appear on the published site plan (Green 1987).

Area 2

Area 2 lay some twenty metres southwest of Area 1 in an area not previously subject to archaeological investigation (Figures 2 and 4, Plate 2). An irregularly sub-triangular trench measuring c. 17.5 m long by up to 9 m wide resulted from terracing for a new temporary car park. Removal of part of a modern concrete slab floor (200), a chalk rubble sub-base and other dumped levelling-up deposits (201) revealed several archaeological features cutting up to 0.35 m of stony mid reddish-brown colluvial/agricultural soil. A two metre wide westerly extension to the northern end of the trench accommodated a ramped access to an upper terrace and revealed what may be *in situ* structural remains.

Prehistoric features

Pit 232

This was seen only in a limited exposure where it was cut by Ditch 234 (Figures 4 and 5), sample excavation of Pit 232 showed it to be vertically-sided, in excess of 0.3 m deep and possibly of irregularly sub-circular shape. A single fill (233) was encountered (possibly merely an upper fill), comprising relatively stoneless dark yellowish-brown silty clay loam. Finds from 233 were limited to three sherds of potentially Early or Middle Iron Age flint-tempered pottery, small amounts of burnt flint and a small limestone stone counter or gaming piece. Four pieces of struck flint included two scrapers.

Late Iron Age and Roman features

Ditch 234

Ditch 234 lay beneath the western ramp extension where it appears to perpetuate the southerly alignment of an Iron Age boundary ditch (ditch C194/199) seen in the adjacent Area C excavations (Green 1987, 37 (fig. 25), 43). Aligned NNE-SSEW Ditch 234 was up to 1.3 m wide and 0.5 m deep (Figures 4 and 5). It was sectioned in two places (as 222 and 229), both showing an irregularly concave upper profile with a distinctive steep-sided and concave-based central channel. Although secondary cuts were reported from the northern end of ditch C194/199 (Green 1987, 43), there was no indication that ditch 234 was anything other than a single-phase feature (albeit with an unusual profile).

In the southern excavated segment (222) three poorly-differentiated silty loam fills were identified. The basal fill (225) was a firm mid yellowish-brown with occasional brecciated and nodular flint inclusions. Above this was a similar fill (224) but with moderate brecciated and nodular flint.

These deposits each produced a single sherd of BB1 pottery. The upper fill (223) was a slightly yellowish-grey-brown silty loam with moderate poorly sorted brecciated and nodular flint. Thirteen sherds of BB1 pottery were recovered from this upper fill.

To the north in excavated segment 229 (Figure 5) the deposits equating to 223, 224 and 225 were recorded as single undifferentiated fill (230). No finds were recovered from it. Above was an upper fill of dark yellowish-brown silty clay loam (231) containing a large quantity of Black Burnished Ware pottery (80 sherds) and animal bone. This fill may represent a single localised dump of domestic debris.

Soil layer 226

The upper fills of Ditch 234 were sealed by homogenous mid-dark greyish-brown silty loam (226) up to about 0.2 m thick and containing occasional brecciated and nodular flint, limestone and chalk fragments throughout. Finds recovered from this layer included twelve sherds of BB1 pottery, a single sherd of Samian ware, two iron nails and a Late Neolithic transverse flint arrowhead. Layer 226 also sealed the upper fills of ditch 205. The relationship with Ditch 211 is uncertain as the ground levels were lower in this area and any traces had been removed by machine prior to archaeological recording.

In the report on the previous excavation, this soil layer was ambiguously termed an 'occupation deposit' (Green 1987, 43) but its homogenous composition and its clear basal interface suggest it may in fact be a Roman agricultural soil. This soil may originally have sealed the other ditches in Area 2 as well, but across most of the trench it was removed by groundworks contractors as part of the overburden clearance.

Footing 217

Post-dating soil layer 226 in the Area 2 ramp extension, was a linear arrangement of nodular flint (up to 0.3 m long), limestone, etc. (228) set in a poorly-defined concave-sectioned construction trench (227). This appears to form part of a crude structural footing (Figures 4-5, plates 3-4). Its exact orientation is not easily discerned: superficially it appears to be E-W, but two or three stones dislocated from the southwest exposure of the alignment during initial stripping of the ramp (not shown on plan) may throw the original alignment more toward WNW-ESE. Amongst the stones of 228 were a single piece of BB1 pottery, ceramic Roman roof tile (tegula), three pieces of Purbeck limestone roof tile, a sherd of BB1 pottery and the only oyster shell to be recovered from the site.

Ditch 205

Ditch 205 was aligned NNE-SSW in the northern part of the area (Figures 4 and 5). It measured 0.7 m wide and 0.4 m deep (although slightly truncated). Its SSW end terminated in a sub-square terminal and its course continued northward beyond the edge of the excavated area. A single excavated segment was (205) revealed sides sloping at c. 45° (slightly steeper to the ESE) and a concave base (Figure 5). Its basal fill (213) was of mid-dark orange-brown slightly clayey silty loam, with moderate small and medium stones and occasional chalk fragments. Three sherds of Black Burnished Ware pottery, a single chip of Samian ware and a small residual fragment of probable Early-Middle Iron Age flint-tempered pottery were recovered. An upper fill (206) comprised rather looser dark yellowish-brown loamy silt, with common angular and nodular flint. Fifteen sherds of Black Burnished Ware pottery were recovered.

Ditch 211

Ditch 211 was aligned approximately NE-SW, turning slightly at its northern end to trend NNE-SSW across the southern part of the area (Figures 4 and 5). A length of about 7.5 m was exposed in this area, where it measured between 0.80–1.1 m wide and up to 0.6 m deep. Two excavated segments (214, 217) showed sides sloping at about 45–50° from horizontal, with a variable concave- to narrow flattish base (Figure 5) Segment 214 (to the south) contained a basal fill (216)

of firm mid-dark orange-brown silty loam, with moderate brecciated and nodular flint and a single sherd of Black Burnished Ware pottery, and an upper fill (215) of looser dark yellowish-brown loamy silt, with common stones. Finds included three sherds of BB1, two sherds of Samian ware and some worked flint including a broken bifacial flint pick or core-tool. In segment 217, a single undifferentiated fill deposit (218) was recorded, yielding eleven sherds of BB1, one sherd of Samian ware and a small fragment of residual probable Early-Middle Iron Age flint-tempered pottery.

Service trench (Area 3)

Mechanical excavation of a new service trench (Plate 5) was also monitored as part of the watching brief (see Figure 2 for location). This was about 0.9 m wide and up to about 1 m deep, and was positioned to exploit previously excavated ground where possible. The northern end of the trench cut a previously unexcavated part of the site but no new archaeological features were identified and no finds were recovered.

FINDS

Finds were only recovered from Area 2, other than a single piece of unstratified piece of human bone from Area 1 (Table 1).

Area	Context	Iron	Pottery	CBM	Stone Roof tile	Stone objects	Flaked Stone	Burnt flint	Animal bone	Human bone	Shell
2	206		15/154				26/434		7/10		
2	213		5/24				14/173		1/6		
2	215		5/28	1/124			24/528				
2	216		1/8				6/50		1/4		
2	218		13/119				46/372		17/372		
2	220		2/21				47/760				
2	223		13/102		2/593		12/77		1/5		
2	224		1/4				12/335	1/18			
2	225		1/2				2/60	1/47			
2	226	2	13/105				1/1.5		2/9		
2	228		1/24	1/508	3/2995				3/111		1/68
2	231		80/1589				6/48		10/384		
2	233		3/10			1/1.5	4/113	4/90	1/3		
1	unstrat									1/132	
	TOTAL	2	153/2190	2/632	5/3588	1/1.5	2951.5	6/155	43/904	1/132	1/68

Table 1: Finds Assemblage (no/wt (g))

Iron Objects

Two iron nails were recovered from soil layer 226. Both were broken and had large flat heads. They are probably Roman in date.

Pottery by Lorraine Mephram (*Wessex Archaeology*)

Introduction

A total of 153 sherds of pottery (2190g) was recovered from the site. Other ceramic material includes seven pieces of undiagnostic and undatable fired clay (52 g), which are not discussed further here.

The pottery appears to represent deposition over a relatively short timespan. At its widest this could range between the 1st century BC and the early 2nd century AD, but can probably be confined to the post-conquest period. The overwhelming majority of the assemblage comprises sherds of Black Burnished ware of south Dorset origin (BB1), appearing here in a very restricted range of forms, all of which span the conquest period in currency. There is also a small amount of residual Late Bronze Age/ Early Iron Age pottery.

The pottery derived from 13 contexts. Most of these contained only small quantities of pottery (up to 15 sherds), but one context (ditch fill 231) was more productive, yielding 80 sherds. The majority of these, however, appear to belong to one, or possibly two vessels.

The condition of the pottery ranges from fair to good; mean sherd weight overall is 14.3g, but this is largely influenced by the presence of large, unabraded sherds in ditch fill 231. Mean sherd weight for the latter context group is 19.9g, and for the rest of the assemblage, which consists of smaller, more abraded sherds, it is 8.2g.

Description of the assemblage

Only three fabrics are represented: Black Burnished ware (142 sherds); Samian ware (5 sherds) and flint-tempered ware (6 sherds). Table 1 presents the quantification of pottery by ware type within each context.

The flint-tempered sherds vary slightly in coarseness and frequency of inclusions, but all can be described as coarse. All sherds are small, abraded and undiagnostic; they appear to represent residual material, probably datable to the Early to Middle Iron Age. Flint-tempered fabrics were identified, for example, although not commonly, in the Early Iron Age assemblage from Rope Lake Hole, Purbeck (Davies 1987).

Two of the Samian sherds are decorated (ditch fills 215, 218); both are from form 37 bowls; the rim sherd from 218 has a repair hole just below the rim. The type has a wide date range from the Flavian period through to the mid 3rd century AD, but the narrow plain zone on the rim sherd from fill 218 indicates an early date within this range, in the later 1st or possibly early 2nd century AD.

The Black Burnished ware also varies in coarseness, with some sherds containing very prominent quartz grains, but this variation can be accommodated within the known range from south Dorset and elsewhere (e.g. Seager Smith and Davies 1993, 249). Most sherds (except the coarsest) are burnished. Two forms can be identified from rim sherds: bead rim jars (14 examples) and everted rim jars (one example). One countersunk handle could belong to a jar with either rim form; there is one body sherd with a strap handle stump, presumably from a flagon. The bead rims tend to have a defining groove just below the rim; the most complete example(s), from ditch fill 231 (rim and joining body sherds representing one, or possibly two vessels), are from the high-shouldered bowl form (Seager Smith and Davies 1993, type 16), and at least one other is from a carinated bowl (*ibid.*, type 15). The other rims are less diagnostic, but it is likely that they, too, represent bowls. The bead rim bowls are characteristic of the Durotrigian tradition of the Late Iron Age; the carinated forms are common, for example, amongst the 'Belgic War Cemetery' at Maiden Castle (Wheeler 1943, fig. 72, 171-81), but both carinated and high-shouldered forms continued in use into the late 1st and perhaps into the early 2nd century AD (Seager Smith and Davies 1993, 233). Both forms were found as grave goods in Late Iron Age/Early Roman burials at Poundbury cemetery (Davies 1993, fig. 73).

Discussion

The combination of shelly and flint-tempered fabric types (Fabrics 1-3) and the shouldered vessel forms indicate a date range in the Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age. Such forms appeared during the 'plainware' phase of the post-Deverel-Rimbury ceramic tradition, but continued to be

produced during the succeeding 'decorated' phase, with an overall potential date range, therefore, of 11th to 6th century BC. Comparable shell-tempered and flint-tempered fabrics have been recorded in the area, for example, at Ham Hill, about 10 km to the southwest of the site, and the same site also provides parallels for the carinated vessel forms (Morris 1987). Further parallels can be seen within the South Cadbury assemblage, about 7 km to the west (Alcock 1980, Cadbury 4-6), and in the plainware assemblage from Brean Down, 45 km to the northwest (Woodward 1990, figs. 93-6). On the basis of such a small group of sherds, closer dating within this wide date range is not possible.

All the fabric types, with the possible exception of the quartzite Fabric 4, could have been produced using locally accessible resources, i.e. within a 10 km radius of the site, although given the range of inclusion types there was clearly more than one source of supply (flint from Head deposits, and shell from Jurassic Lias deposits).

The single sherd containing quartzite (Fabric 4) could be of earlier date, and possibly of more distant origin. Quartzite-tempered fabrics were present, for example, amongst the Middle Bronze Age Trevisker-related assemblage from Norton Fitzwarren, about 36 km to the west of the site, where they were considered to be locally produced (Woodward 1989), and the tooled decoration would be consistent with this ceramic tradition. The sherd is so small, however, that definitive dating is not possible.

There are a few conjoining sherds within this small assemblage, but generally the group has the appearance of a 'standard' domestic refuse deposit, containing small parts of several vessels, probably redeposited from another, primary refuse source such as a midden.

Context	Flint-tempered	BB1	Samian	Total
206		15/154		15/154
213	1/5	3/18	1/1	5/24
215		3/13	2/15	5/28
216		1/8		1/8
218	1/4	11/103	1/12	13/119
220	1/10	1/11		2/21
223		13/102		13/102
224		1/4		1/4
225		1/2		1/2
226		12/94	1/11	13/105
228		1/24		1/24
231		80/1589		80/1589
233	3/10			3/10
TOTAL	6/29	142/2122	5/39	153/2190

Table 2: Pottery by fabric type and by context (number and weight in grams)

Ceramic building material

Two pieces of Roman ceramic building material (CBM) were recovered, both from Area 2, both in orange/red oxidised fabric. One was part of the flat of a tegula roof tile (508g) from context 228 (footing 227), missing all of its edges but preserving part of a single curvilinear finger signature mark on its upper surface. The other was a smaller piece of box-flue tile (124g) with parallel combed keying-marks on its outer face (context 215, ditch 211).

Stone roof tile

Five pieces of Purbeck limestone roof tile were found in Area 2. All are of Roman or likely Roman date. Two of the pieces (593g) from context 223 (an upper fill of ditch 235) were re-fitting, from a

single tile. No original edges survived and the margin of the tile was darkened, possibly by exposure to burning. Three pieces (2995 g) from context 228 (the rubbly infill of possible structural footing 227) included the distal end of a tile with characteristic dressed parallel-sides and point, all crudely bevelled on the upper face, and two smaller pieces from separate tiles. Two of these pieces (including the distal piece) showed smoothing/wear on their upper surfaces, suggesting they formed part of a floor of surface prior to their final deposition.

Stone counter/gaming piece (Figure 6)

A single stone counter or gaming piece (SF2, 21g) came from context 233 (the sample excavated fill of pit 232). Made of hard fine-grained pale grey limestone (possibly Purbeck), the piece was sub-circular (16.1 by 14.8 mm) and 4.6 mm thick, with flat, smoothed faces and irregularly rounded edges. Although intrinsically undatable, the piece came from a feature cut by a late Iron Age/Early Roman ditch (Ditch 234), and from which the only pottery recovered was potentially of Early or Middle Iron Age date. However, the possibility that it is an intrusive find from the overlying ditch cannot be discounted.

Flaked Stone

A total 197 pieces (2951.5 g) of struck or artificially worked flint and two pieces of Portland chert were recovered during the excavation (Table 3). Most excavated contexts contained flint in varying amounts, but much, if not all, of the material was residual, reflecting downslope redeposition of prehistoric occupation detritus. Accordingly, the assemblage was generally of mixed character, with surfaces ranging from unpatinated to incipient, patchy and thin patination, and with some pieces bearing heavier blue-white and white recortication. The assemblage is also probably chronologically mixed: Late Neolithic and Bronze Age occupation remains are well attested locally, and have previously been excavated in adjacent parts of the site (Green 1987).

Context	Raw mat	Total	Flake	Broken flake	Blade	Core	Tool	Misc debitage	Tool type
206	F	25	16					9	
206	PC	1		1					
213	F	14	9	1				4	
215	F	24	17	3			1	3	Broken bifacial pick (SF6)
216	F	8	3	3			2		
218	F	42	23	7		3		9	1 scraper (SF8), 1 ?knife on primary flake (SF9)
218	PC	1						1	
220	F	47	28	9			1	9	Waisted' flake (SF10)
223	F	12	9	1				2	
224	F	12	5	3	1	1		2	
225	F	2	2						
226	F	1					1		Transverse arrowhead (SF1)
231	F	6	5					1	
233	F	4	2				2		2 scrapers (SF11 & SF12)
Total No.		199	119	28	1	4	7	40	
Total %		100	59.79	14.07	0.50	2.01	3.52	20.10	

Table 3: Flaked stone assemblage by context

Raw material

Most of the flint is likely to have been sourced locally, and the preponderance of primary and secondary flakes bearing cortex indicates that a considerable amount of nodule reduction was taking place locally. The assemblage as a whole also reflects the generally poor (coarse and brittle, often 'cherty' and partly desiccated) quality of the local flint available from the coombe rock. Late Neolithic pits about 70 m to the north were interpreted as a flint quarry, accessing poor quality tabular flint (Green 1987, 22, 143). A few pieces of finer quality flint were present, probably imported or sourced from the capping deposits of clay-with-flints on the Poundbury plateau to the west. A broken flake and one small piece of knapping waste were in opaque grey 'Portland type' chert. This could have come from the Dorset coast, although visually similar cherts also outcrop more closely in limestone along the south flank of the South Dorset Ridgeway.

Technology

The assemblage is dominated by unretouched flakes (59.79%) and broken flakes (13.56%), with only a few elongate blade flakes present amongst them. This suggests a broadly Later Neolithic to Bronze Age (or even Early Iron Age) derivation, and corresponds well with the occupation range seen in previous excavations of adjacent areas (Green 1987). Earlier periods (Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Early-Middle Neolithic) do not seem to be represented: only a single piece classifiable as a blade was recovered (about 0.5% of the assemblage). All four of the cores recovered are polyhedral or multi-platform types, and, where discernable, hard hammer percussion dominates the excavated assemblage. There are some potentially soft hammer-struck pieces, but this picture is confused as some pieces have been struck through thick cortex, or by other cortical hammerstones – both factors which can have the effect of diffusing percussion impacts.

Tools

Three horseshoe-type scrapers (SF 8, 11 and 12) made on robust flakes attest local domestic activity but are not closely datable beyond a broad Neolithic–Bronze Age attribution. Part of bifacially flaked pick/core tool (SF10) was worked-down from a nodule or large cortical flake to produce an irregular lenticular profile with a gentle longitudinal curve, and a crude knife (SF9) was created by dorsally retouching one edge of a long, sub-triangular primary flake. One transverse arrowhead (SF1) of Later Neolithic date was recovered and compliments the published assemblage of similar arrowheads from earlier Poundbury excavations (Saville 1987, 99-103). A large, irregular flake (SF10) crudely re-worked in opposing directions on its flanks to create a 'waisted' tool with flaring ends was of unknown purpose, but may also be Late Neolithic in date.

Discussion

There is no reason to suspect that any of the flint recovered from the excavation was in its primary context of deposition, and the group as a whole should therefore be regarded as residual. The wide range of patination seen even amongst context groups indicates material deposited over a long timescale, and in a variety of environments. The absence of early prehistoric tool types or of any significant evidence for systematic blade production, together with the dominance of hard hammer-struck flakes and later tool types suggest the assemblage derives from knapping and domestic activity spanning the later Neolithic and Bronze Age/Early Iron Age periods. Later Roman structures are attested in the close vicinity of the site and it remains possible (although not certain) that some of the unpatinated component may derive from dressing of nodular flint for use in these structures.

Animal Bone

43 fragments (904g) of animal bone were recovered, all from Area 2 (Table 1). Many of the pieces were in an abraded condition. The assemblage comprised primarily of cattle and sheep/goat bones and included two sheep mandibles from contexts 231 and 218 and cattle vertebra and pelvis fragments from context 218. No butchery marks were evident.

Human bone

One fragment of femur was recovered from the undifferentiated backfill of a modern drain along the eastern edge of Area 1.

CONCLUSIONS

It has been demonstrated that over half of the previously un-investigated strip of land between the SCATS store building and Christopher Sparey Green's 1970-72 excavation was destroyed without record during subsequent deep drainage works. A thin fillet of undamaged ground (c0.8m wide) was inspected but yielded no additional archaeological information.

To the south, terracing works undertaken to create a temporary car park for the SCATS store revealed three ditches. At least one (Ditch 234) may have originated in the very late Iron Age, but the other two (205 and 211) are probably transitional or Early Roman in date: Pottery evidence suggests all three features had become substantively, if not completely, infilled by the 2nd century AD, after which a thin agricultural soil developed across the site. Two of the ditches (205 and 211) can be directly linked to feature alignments recorded to the north in 1970-72 (Green 1987). An earlier feature (232, probably a large pit) was sample-excavated where it was cut by ditch 234, but more thorough investigation could not be undertaken as its exposure lay below the formation level required for the car park. An unmortared stone footing seen at a stratigraphically higher level may be part of a Later Roman structure, built after development of the Roman agricultural soil. A series of 2nd-4th century farm buildings (or possibly mausolea) were previously recorded just to the north, and the footing may be part of the southern wall of Green's structure R12 (Green 1987, 56, 60, fig 40). If this is the case, the structure would be approximately seven metres across. This is comparable to the neighbouring building R13 just to the north, which was eight metres across.

Although Area 2 investigated a relatively small plot of land, the absence of graves is significant as it suggests the southern and eastern extents of the extensive Late Roman cemetery were correctly identified during previous excavations (*ibid.*).

ARCHIVE

The site archive comprising the written, drawn and photographic records, plus the finds, is intended to be deposited with the Dorset County Museum.

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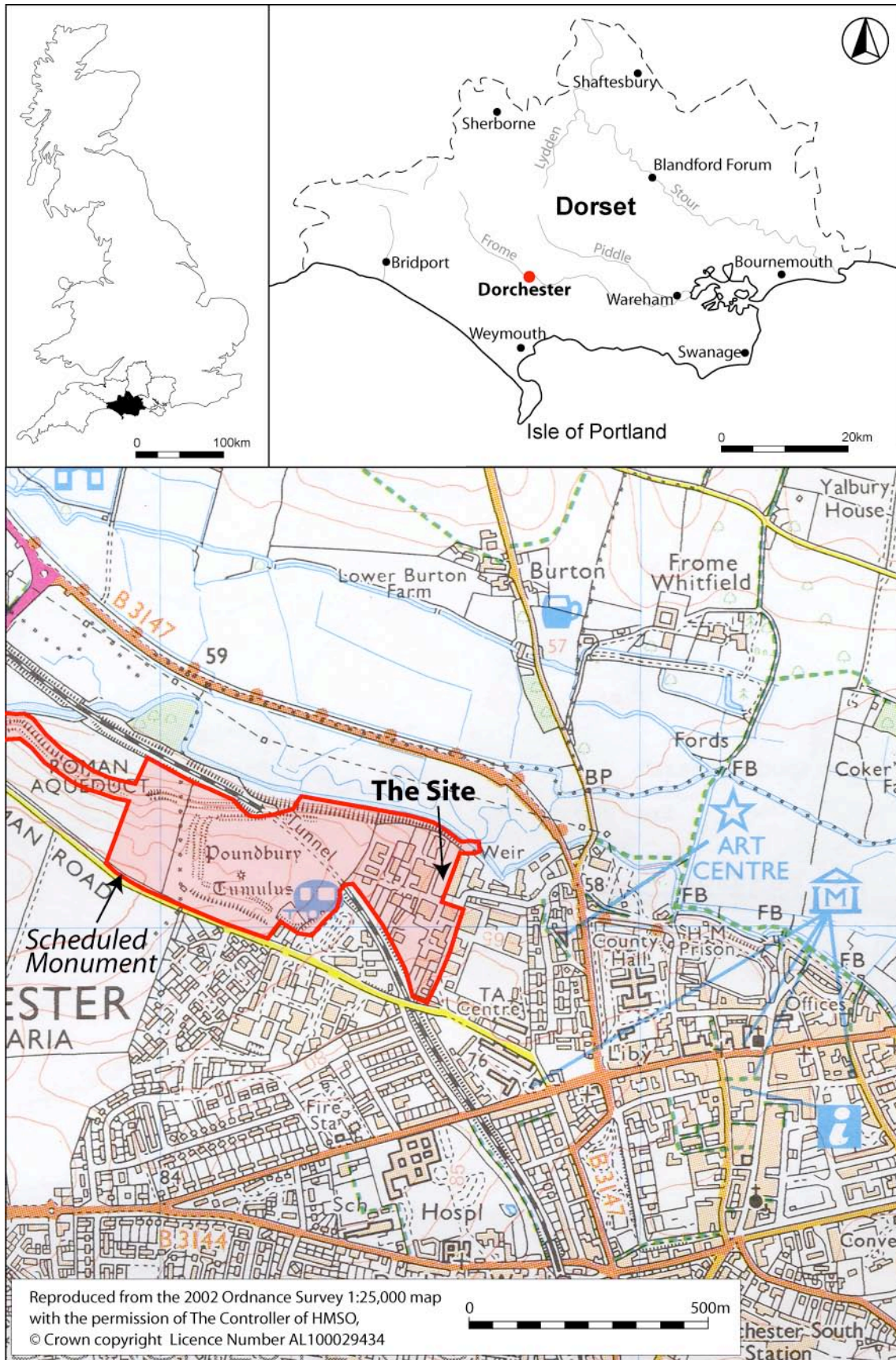


Figure 1: Location map.

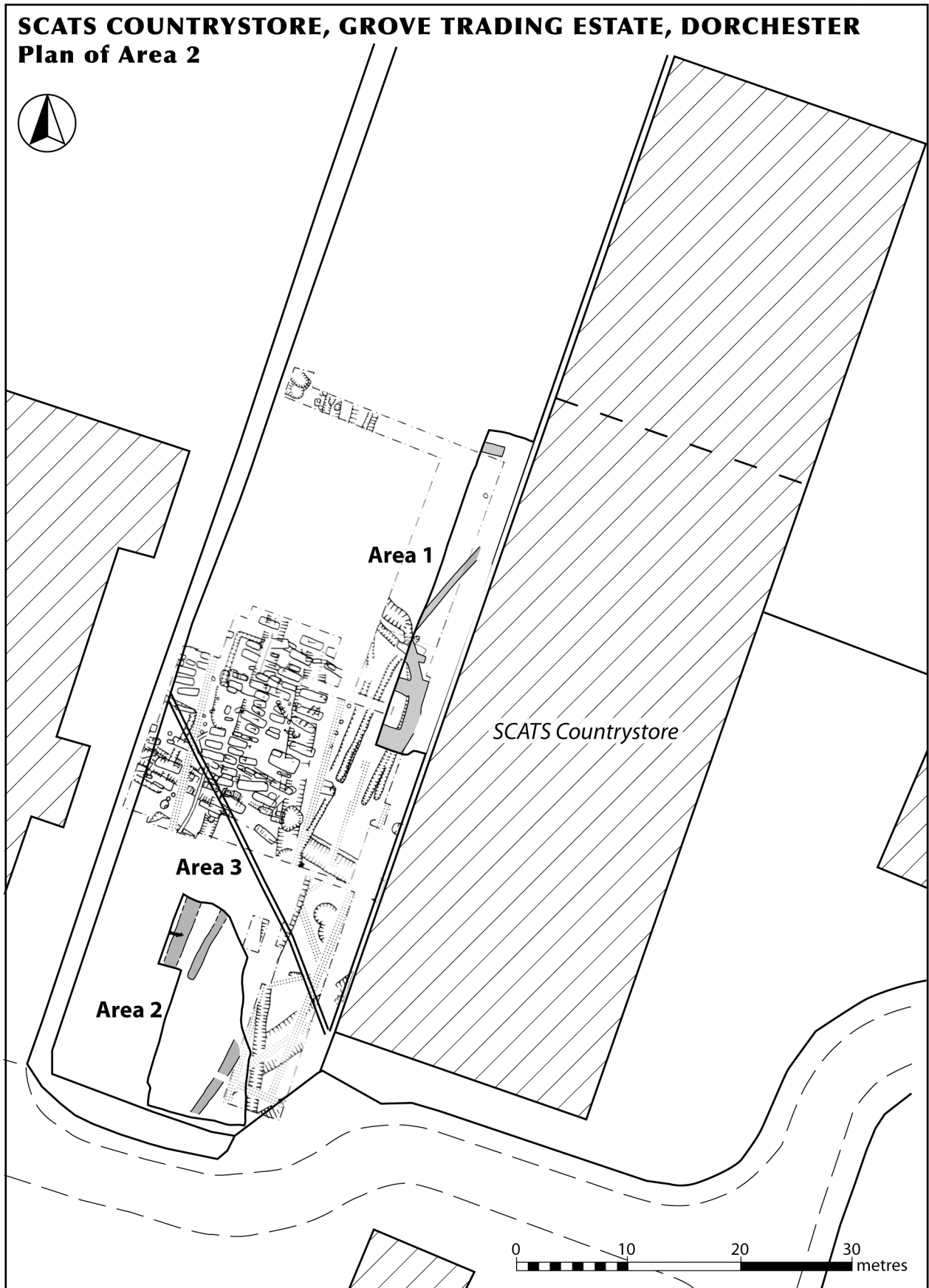


Figure 2: Location plan of observed areas, together with plan of the earlier excavation trenches.

SCATS COUNTRYSTORE, GROVE TRADING ESTATE, DORCHESTER

Plan of Area 1

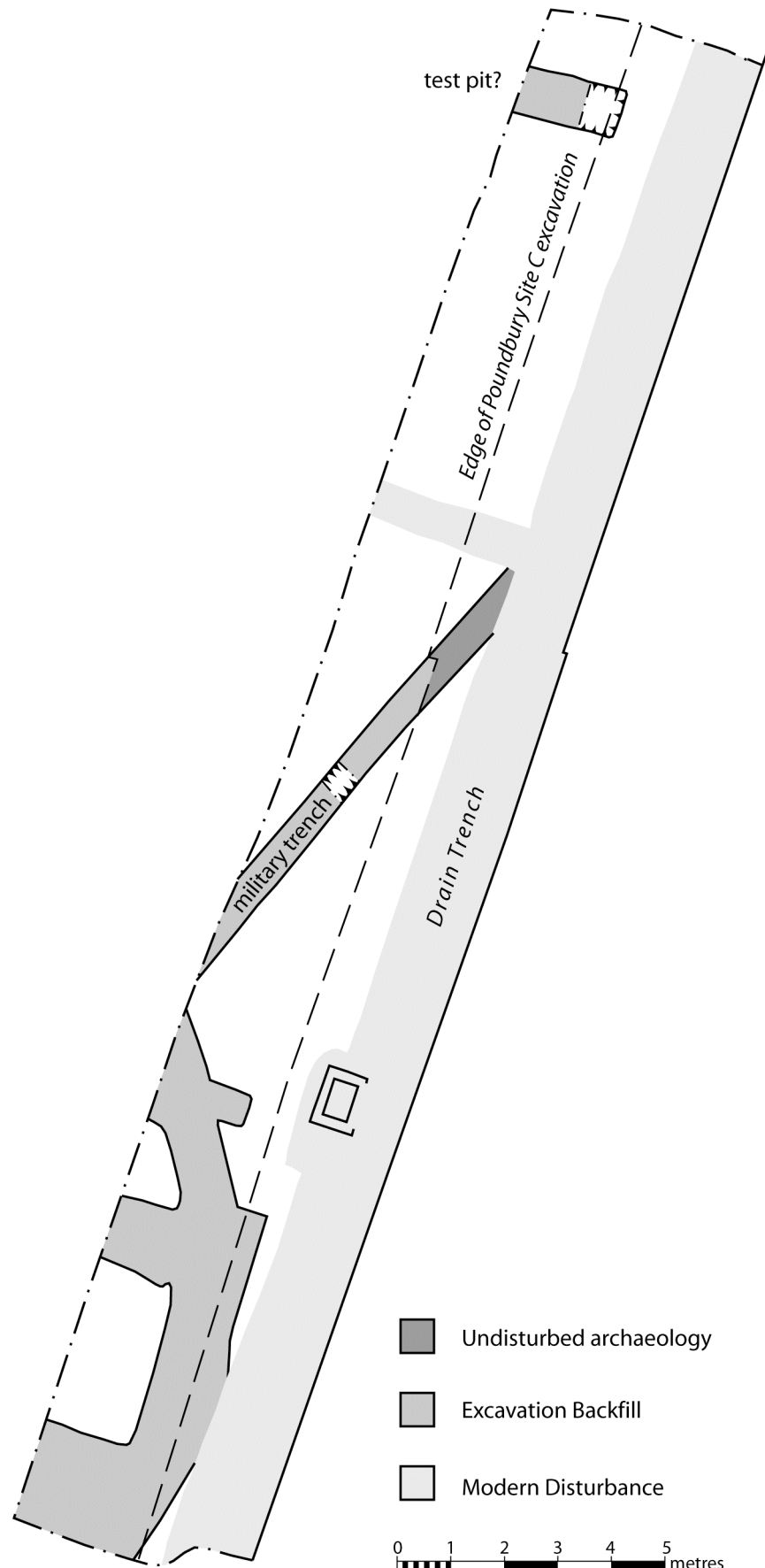


Figure 3: Plan of Area 1.

SCATS COUNTRYSTORE, GROVE TRADING ESTATE, DORCHESTER Plan of Area 2

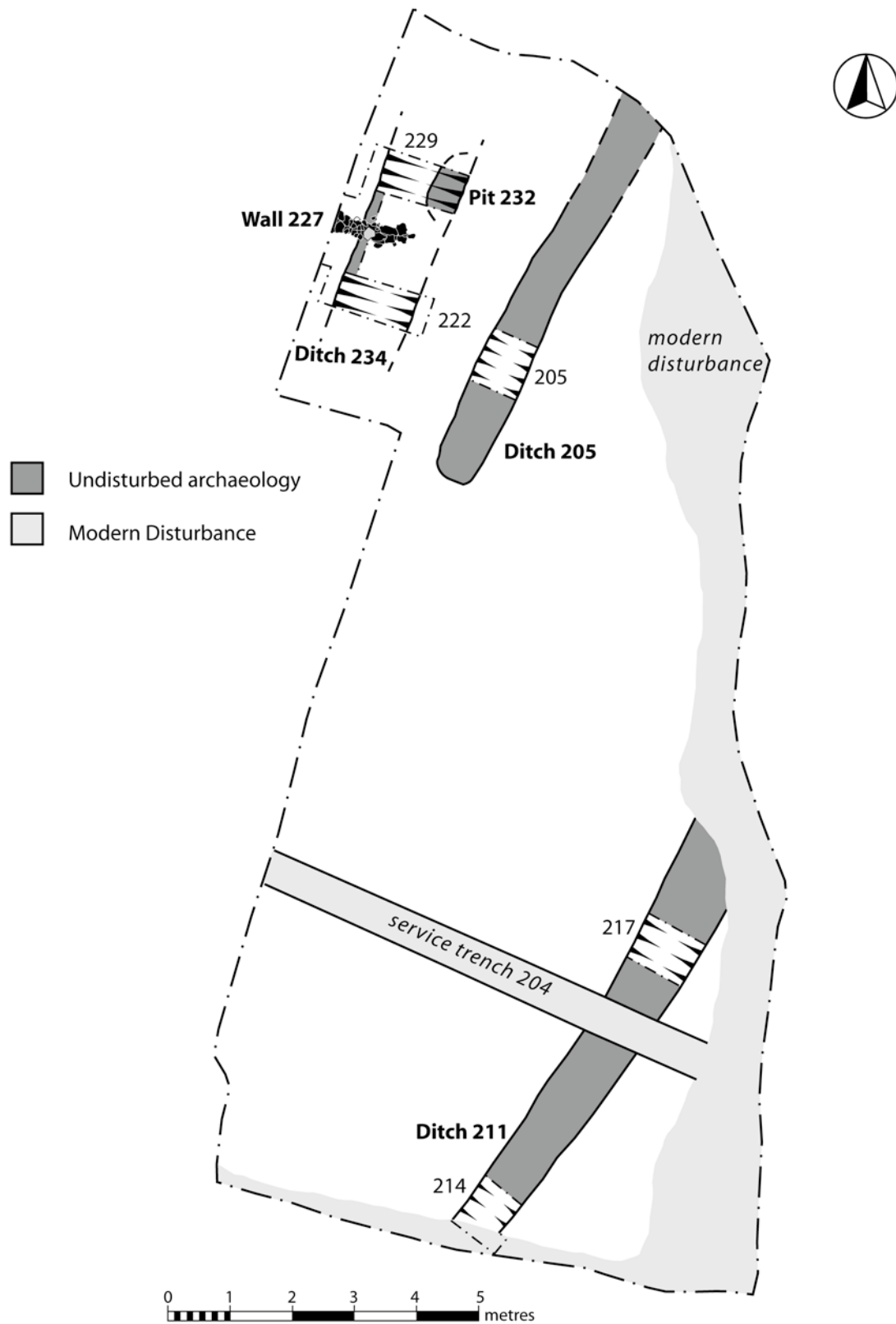
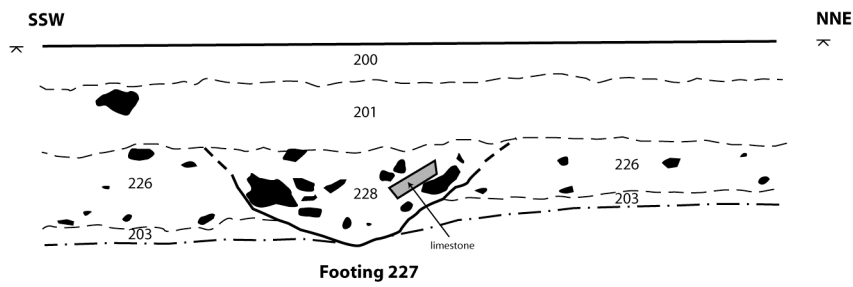
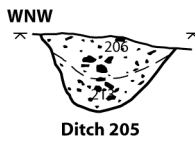


Figure 4: Plan of Area 2.

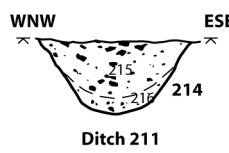
ESE-facing Section through Footing 227



SSW-facing Section through Ditch 205



SSW-facing Section through Ditch 211 (Segment 214)



NNE-facing section through Ditch 234 (Segment 229) and Pit 232

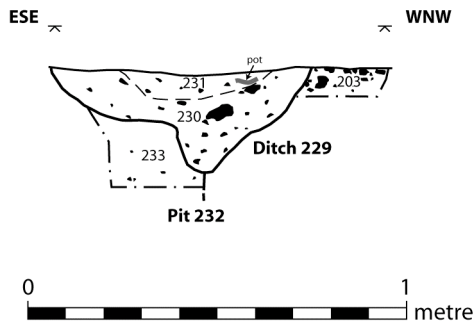


Figure 5: Selected sections

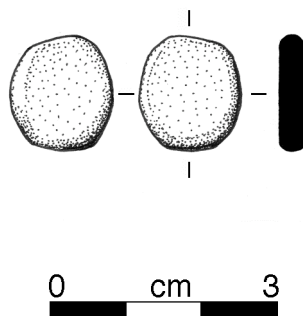


Figure 6: Stone Counter (SF2, context 233)



Plate 1: Area 1 excavations from the north.



Plate 2: Area 2 excavations from the north.

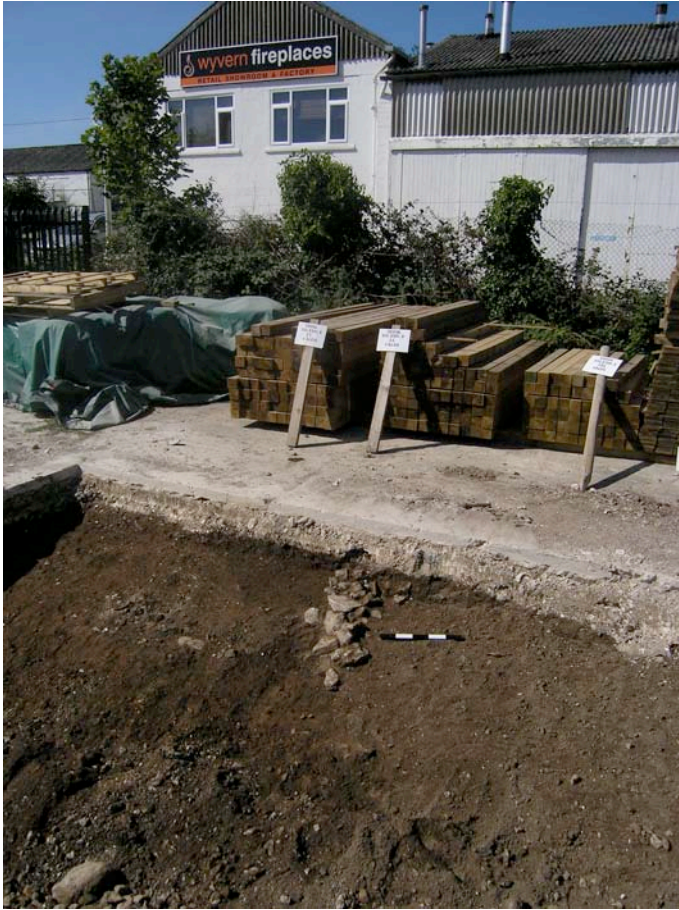


Plate 3: Footing 227: View from ESE prior to excavation.



Plate 4: Footing 227: Detail vertical view prior to excavation (0.5m scale).

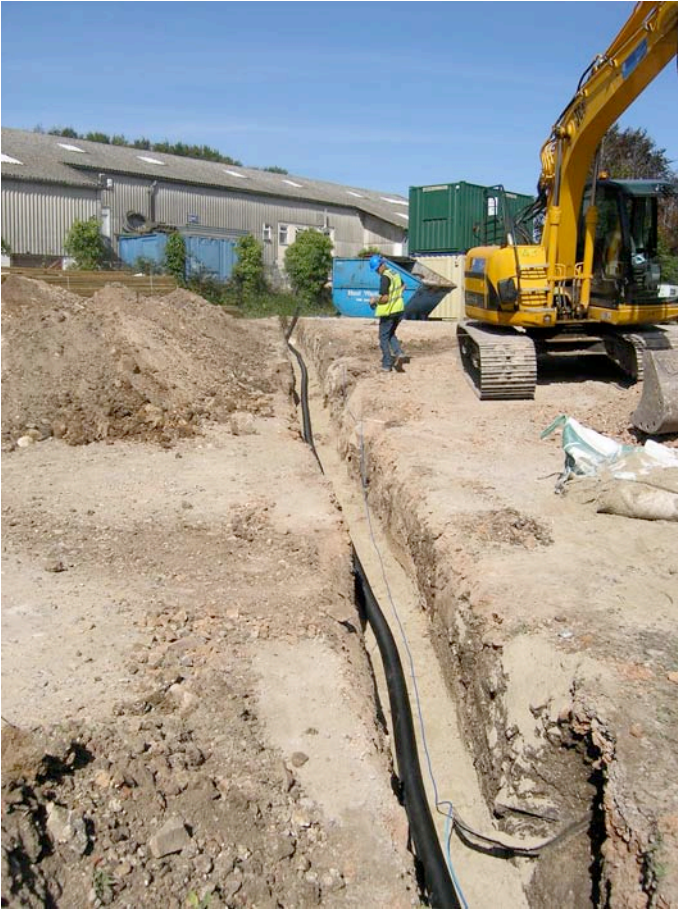


Plate 5: Area 3 (service trench).