

**NEW INTERPRETATION PANEL, FIDDLEFORD MANOR,
FIDDLEFORD, STURMINSTER NEWTON, DORSET
Archaeological Observations and Recording**



Report No. 53339/3/1

April 2011

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Front cover: *View of Fiddleford Manor with new interpretation panel being erected in foreground.*

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SUMMARY

An archaeological watching was carried out by Terrain Archaeology in April 2011, during the erection of a new interpretation panel in the grounds of Fiddleford Manor, Fiddleford, Sturminster Newton, Dorset (at OS NGR ST8008913554). No features or deposits of archaeological significance were observed. Natural clay was observed at a depth of 0.6 m below current ground level.

INTRODUCTION

Terrain Archaeology was commissioned by English Heritage, to undertake archaeological observations and recording during the installation of a single interpretation panel at Fiddleford Manor, Fiddleford, Sturminster Newton, Dorset (Figures 1 and 2).

The new interpretation panel was situated adjacent to the gravel path approach to Fiddleford Manor at NGR ST8008913554. It lies adjacent to Scheduled Monument No. 22971 'Fiddleford Manor'. Fiddleford Manor is a Grade I Listed Building.

Archaeological Observations and Recording, also known as an archaeological watching brief, is defined by 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*" (IfA 2008).

The fieldwork was carried out on 5th April 2011 by Peter Bellamy BSc (Hons), MIfA.

Terrain Archaeology would like to acknowledge the help and cooperation of the following during this project: Sarah Holmes and Heather Sebire (English Heritage) and the sign contractor.

THE SITE

Fiddleford Manor lies on the floodplain on the east side of the river Stour about 1.25 km ESE of Sturminster Newton. The building is centred on Ordnance Survey NGR ST80081356 and lies at a height of about 61 m above OD. The interpretation panel was erected on the access path the south side of the building at NGR ST8008913554.

The underlying geology is mapped as Alluvium overlying Valley Gravels and Kimmeridge Clay (British Geological Survey 1:50,000 series map Shaftesbury Sheet 313, Drift Edition, 1974).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Fiddleford Manor was built as a manor house about 1355 for William Latimer. The 14th century building comprised a large hall associated with a chamber block of two floors at the west end and a range of service rooms with a solar above. It was extensively remodelled and extended to the north in the 16th century by Thomas and Ann White. The building was extended to the east and

west in the 17th century. The house was bought by St Thomas Freke after the Restoration and subsequently passed to the Pitt Rivers family. In the 18th century the hall was shortened and other parts of the structure demolished. To the northwest is a 16th century mill-house.

The standing remains include part of the 14th century hall and solar and the 16th century extension to the north. Parts of the demolished structure can be seen as slight earthworks.

There have been a number of archaeological investigations at Fiddleford Manor, including an excavation by the Central Excavation Unit and two watching briefs undertaken by Wessex Archaeology in 2000 and 2004 (Laidlaw 2000; Ritchie 2004).

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 undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (Terrain Archaeology 2010, Document No 3339/0/1, November 2010), with the Institute for Archaeologists *Code of Conduct and Standard and guidance for archaeological watching briefs* (IfA 2008).

All features and deposits, regardless of their perceived date and archaeological significance, were recorded using components of the Terrain Archaeology's system of complementary written, drawn and photographic records. These 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 post holes were dug by hand by the sign contractor and the spoil deposited immediately next to the pit. After the archaeological recording, the sign was concreted in place and the upper part of the hole filled with topsoil and turf. The location of the post holes was surveyed by taped measurements.

RESULTS

Post holes

Two post holes were dug by hand for the erection of the new interpretation panel in the grass immediately adjacent to the northeast angle of the gravel path (Figure 2; Plates 1-3). The post holes were 0.2 m in diameter and 0.62 m deep and spaced 0.36 m apart (centre to centre). Dark yellowish-brown clay natural was encountered at a depth of 0.60 m below the current ground surface. Above this was a layer of dark greyish brown humic silty clay soil containing occasional charcoal flecks and sparse brick and mortar fragments and flecks near the top. No differentiation in this soil layer could be determined in the eastern post hole. In the western post hole this layer lay beneath a 0.03 m thick layer of gravel sealed by a 0.07 m thick turf layer. This gravel layer was undoubtedly associated with the construction of the current gravel path to Fiddleford Manor.

Finds

No finds were recovered from the fieldwork.

CONCLUSION

The watching brief revealed no deposits or features of archaeological significance. The soil deposits observed were probably associated with gardening activity.

ARCHIVE

No archive will be retained beyond this report, copies of which will be lodged with the National Monuments Record and the Dorset County Council Historic Environment Record.

REFERENCES

- | | | |
|--|------|---|
| IfA (Institute for Archaeologists) | 2008 | <i>Standard and guidance for archaeological watching briefs.</i> (Revised Edition). |
| Laidlaw, M., | 2000 | Fiddleford Manor, Fiddleford, Sturminster Newton, Dorset: Archaeological Watching Brief Report. Wessex Archaeology Report No. 47855. Unpublished Client Report. |
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| Terrain Archaeology | 2010 | New Interpretation Panel, Fiddleford Manor, Fiddleford, Sturminster Newton, Dorset. Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Observations and Recording. Terrain Archaeology Document Ref. 3339/0/1, November 2010. |

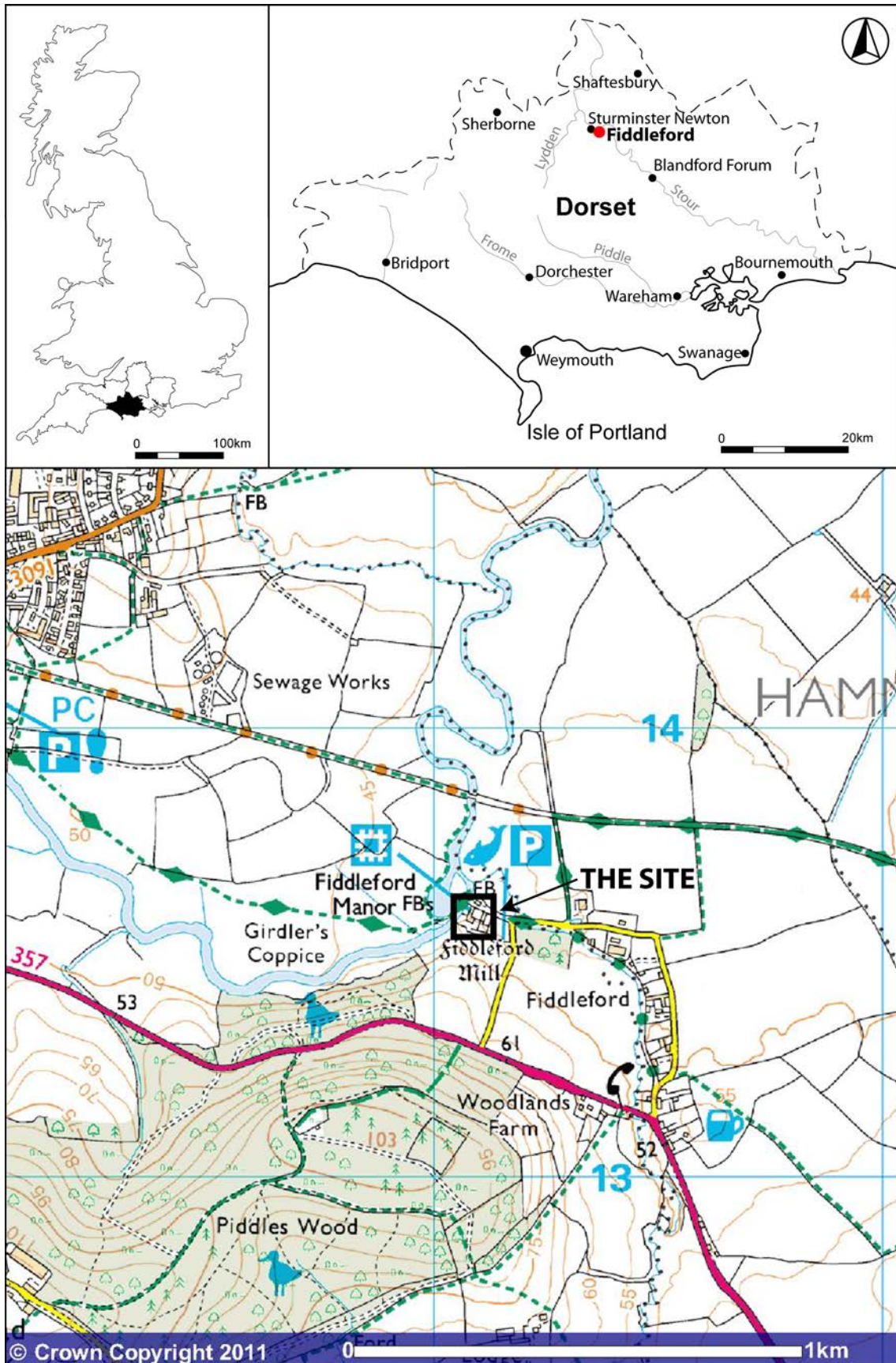


Figure 1: Fiddleford Manor Location map.

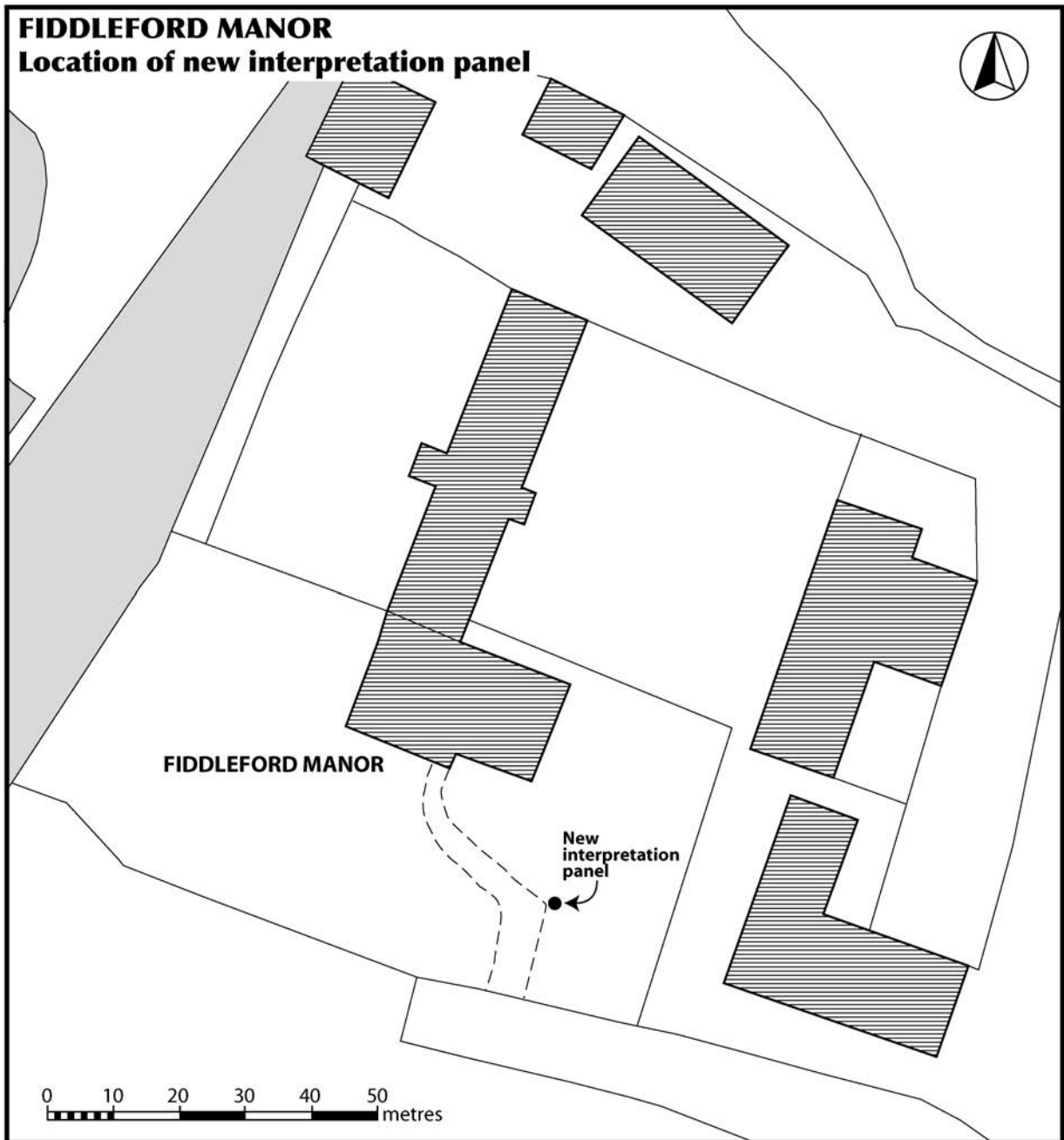


Figure 2: Location of new interpretation panel.



Plate 1: General view of location of new interpretation panel, looking ENE.



Plate 2: Location of new interpretation panel looking north.



Plate 3: Post holes for new interpretation panel, looking south. 0.3 m scale.