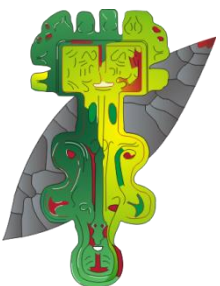


*Absolute
Archaeology LLP*

2015

Results of an Archaeological Watching Brief on Land Belonging to

14-16 Weighbridge Place, St Helier, Jersey, JE2 3NF




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Absolute Archaeology LLP

On behalf of

Morris Architects

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Summary

This document sets out the results of a targeted watching brief on the site of the former Southampton Hotel, 14-16 Weighbridge Place, St Helier, Jersey, JE2 3NF (the Project Site). The work was carried out in conjunction with plans to demolish the existing buildings and to construct a new building comprising basement, ground floor restaurant, four storey offices, and fifth floor plant/storage (Planning Application Reference P/2011/0840).

The monitoring was carried out in two phases, Phase One took place from 27th – 9th August 2014 and Phase Two was carried out from 1st – 2nd September 2014.

The results of the watching brief confirmed the preservation of an archaeological horizon at a depth of c. 3.2m below the current ground level, raising the potential for significant archaeology to be preserved in this region of St Helier.

The timber feature recorded during the programme of work was dated to the early 19th century and will be preserved in situ beneath the current redevelopment of the Project Site.

No further archaeological features, layers or deposits were identified as a result of the monitoring and no pre 19th century finds were identified in the spoil.

No further work was recommended in conjunction with the development of the Project Site.

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We would like to thank Mr Peter Garforth, for Morris Architects and Mr Peter Stirrup, for Comprop for their assistance during this project. We would also like to thank Ms Olga Finch (Curator of Archaeology, Jersey Heritage) and Ms Tracey Ingle (Principal Historic Environment Officer, States of Jersey) for their help and expertise.

Contents

1. Introduction.....	7
2. Project Site.....	7
3. Methodology	8
3.1. Approach to Archaeological Investigation.....	8
4. Report.....	9
5. Results	9
5.1. Phase One.....	9
5.2. Phase Two.....	13
6. Discussion	15
7. Conclusion	18
8. Bibliography.....	19
9. Appendix.....	20

Figures

Figure 1 Location Plan	8
Figure 2 SW facing view of the Southampton Hotel façade during the ground reduction.....	10
Figure 3 WSW facing elevation of Posts 1 - 9.....	13
Figure 4 WNW facing elevation of Posts 10 - 15	14
Figure 5 Plan showing the location of Posts 1-15.....	15
Figure 6 1737 Meade Map with Project Site location shown in red	16
Figure 7 1800 Map of St Helier with Project Site shown in red.....	17
Figure 8 1837 Le Gros map with Project Site circled in red.....	18

Photographs

Photo 1 North facing view of Posts 1- 9 (Scales 2 x 1m)	11
Photo 2 East facing view of Posts 1 - 9 (Scales 2 x 1m)	11
Photo 3 NE facing view of Posts 1- 4 during excavation (Scale 1 x 500mm).....	12

Photo 4 NNW facing view of horizontal timber between Posts 5 – 6 (Scale 1 x 1m)..... 12

Photo 5 NE facing view of Posts 9 – 15 (Scales 1 x 1m & 1 x 500mm) 14

Appendix

Appendix 1 Context Index 20

Appendix 2 Chronological Table (Guide Only)..... 22

1. Introduction

This document sets out the results of a targeted watching brief on the site of the former Southampton Hotel, 14-16 Weighbridge Place, St Helier, Jersey, JE2 3NF (hereafter referred to as the Project Site). The work was carried out in conjunction with plans to demolish the existing buildings and to construct a new building comprising basement, ground floor restaurant, four storey offices, and fifth floor plant/storage (Planning Application Reference P/2011/0840).

The monitoring was carried out in two phases, Phase One took place from 27th – 9th August 2014 and Phase Two was carried out from 1st – 2nd September 2014.

The programme of work was informed by condition 10 of the Decision Notice which states that *“Prior to commencement of the development hereby permitted, a programme of archaeological assessment (including excavation of the cleared site) with full archaeological mitigation in the event of finds of archaeological significance, to the terms of a brief to be supplied by the Department, shall be submitted to and approved by the Minister for Planning and Environment, to be thereafter implemented’. And that “a targeted watching brief during construction ground-works is the most appropriate response to the archaeological potential of this site.”*

The programme of work comprised a targeted watching brief, with provision for the recording of surviving below ground archaeology, revealed during ground disturbance associated with the approved development.

2. Project Site

The Project Site includes the plot of the former Southampton Hotel (potentially previously named The Old London Hotel) and is located in the wharf area to the south of the town of St Helier, Jersey. The development will effect 14-16 Weighbridge Place, a row of four early Victorian buildings, constructed in the 1820's–1830. Number 16 Weighbridge Place was remodelled and converted into a single building in the 20th century. All three structures are recorded as potential listed buildings (HE0750, HE0507, HE1165).

A brief assessment of the historic maps indicates that the Project Site is located on land reclaimed from the sea, during the extension of the wharf in the 19th century. Geologically the site is recorded as comprising alluvial deposits overlain by made ground associated with the historic development of the harbour and frontage.

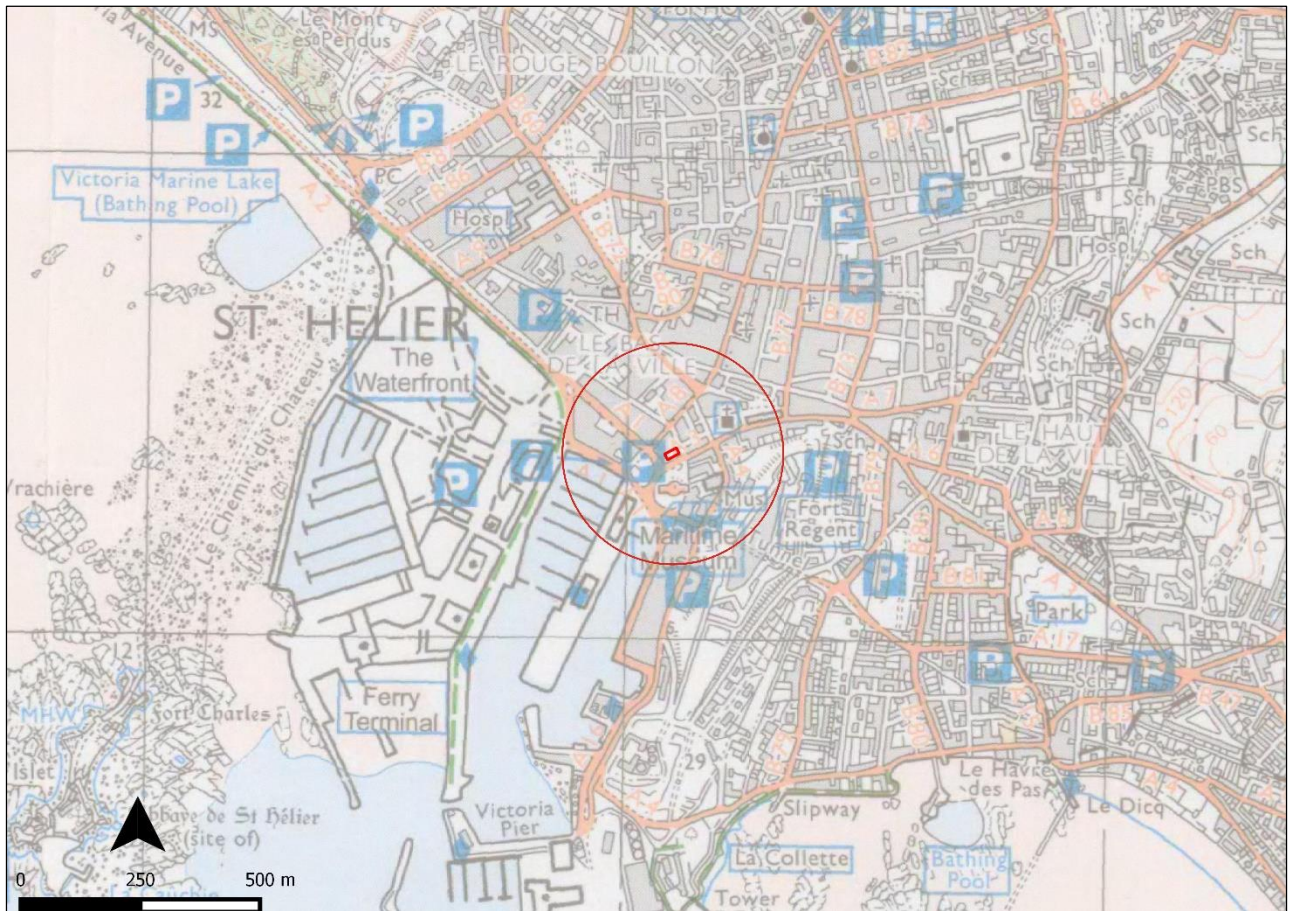


Figure 1 Location Plan

3. Methodology

3.1. Approach to Archaeological Investigation

A watching brief was carried out following the demolition of the northwest, northeast and the majority of the south-eastern elevations of the former Southampton Hotel. Piles were established around the perimeter of the area of ground reduction, prior to the commencement of the excavation, in order to stabilize the site.

The broad aim of the watching brief was to identify and record features of archaeological interest discovered during groundwork associated with the development, in order to mitigate the impact of the works on the archaeological resource and to enable the discharge of the planning condition.

All work was undertaken in accordance with the IFA *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (revised 2008 and updated 2013).

The primary aims sought to:

- Assess the potential for archaeological activity associated with the Project Site;
- Record and identify archaeological features and deposits to a level appropriate to their extent and significance;
- Undertake sufficient post-excavation assessment to interpret archaeological features and phasing identified during site works, and to place these within their local and regional context;
- Create a site archive for deposition in a suitable repository.

4. Report

A digital copy of the final report will be submitted to the States of Jersey Department of the Environment, (Planning and Building Services), and Oxford Archaeology (Heritage Management Services) for assessment prior to submission of the completed document. Once approved a digital copy in pdf format will issued to the States of Jersey Historic Environment Record on the understanding that it will become a public document after an appropriate period of time (generally not exceeding six months).

A hard and digital copy of the report will be accessioned into the public resources held by the Planning and Environment Department, by the Jersey Heritage Trust and by the Société Jersiaise *no later than three months* after the project has entered the public domain.

The results will be published as a note in the Société Jersiaise annual publication.

5. Results

5.1. Phase One

The mechanical reduction of the Project Site continued to a depth of 3.2m below ground level, revealing made ground, comprising a mix of sand, silt, gravels and clay. Nine wooden posts were revealed, apparently set into the sand, supported with clay and stone packing. The tops of the timbers had been broken and the remaining posts measured 200mm – 300mm in diameter, widening at the base, where remnants of the root bowl were preserved. The lengths of the timber ranged from 1.1m to 500mm. The nature of the apparent structure suggests that the posts were set into a land surface, however no complete sections were visible due to the concrete piles established around the perimeter of the site and the disturbance caused by the establishment of the basement to the former Southampton Hotel.



Figure 2 SW facing view of the Southamption Hotel façade during the ground reduction

Posts 1 – 5 were aligned SSE – NNW for a distance of 2m, before returning NNE at the point of Post 6. The remnant of horizontal timbers were noted in the spoil and one degraded example (Timber 1) was recorded in situ between Posts 5 and 6.

Post 2 was removed from site in order to obtain a carbon date. The radiocarbon date was returned as 86 ± 31 BP. This was calibrated to a date range at 95.4% probability of 1686 – 1732 cal AD (25.9%) and 1808 – 1928 cal AD (69.5%). Once the sample was taken, the post was examined. The timber showed no signs of carpentry marks and still had the bark attached. The base of the post retained evidence of historic root growth, which was compacted with light greyish brown clay (11). Small fragments of industrial waste (coke/clinker) and ceramic building material were identified in the compacted material.



Photo 1 North facing view of Posts 1- 9 (Scales 2 x 1m)



Photo 2 East facing view of Posts 1 - 9 (Scales 2 x 1m)



Photo 3 NE facing view of Posts 1- 4 during excavation (Scale 1 x 500mm)



Photo 4 NNW facing view of horizontal timber between Posts 5 – 6 (Scale 1 x 1m)

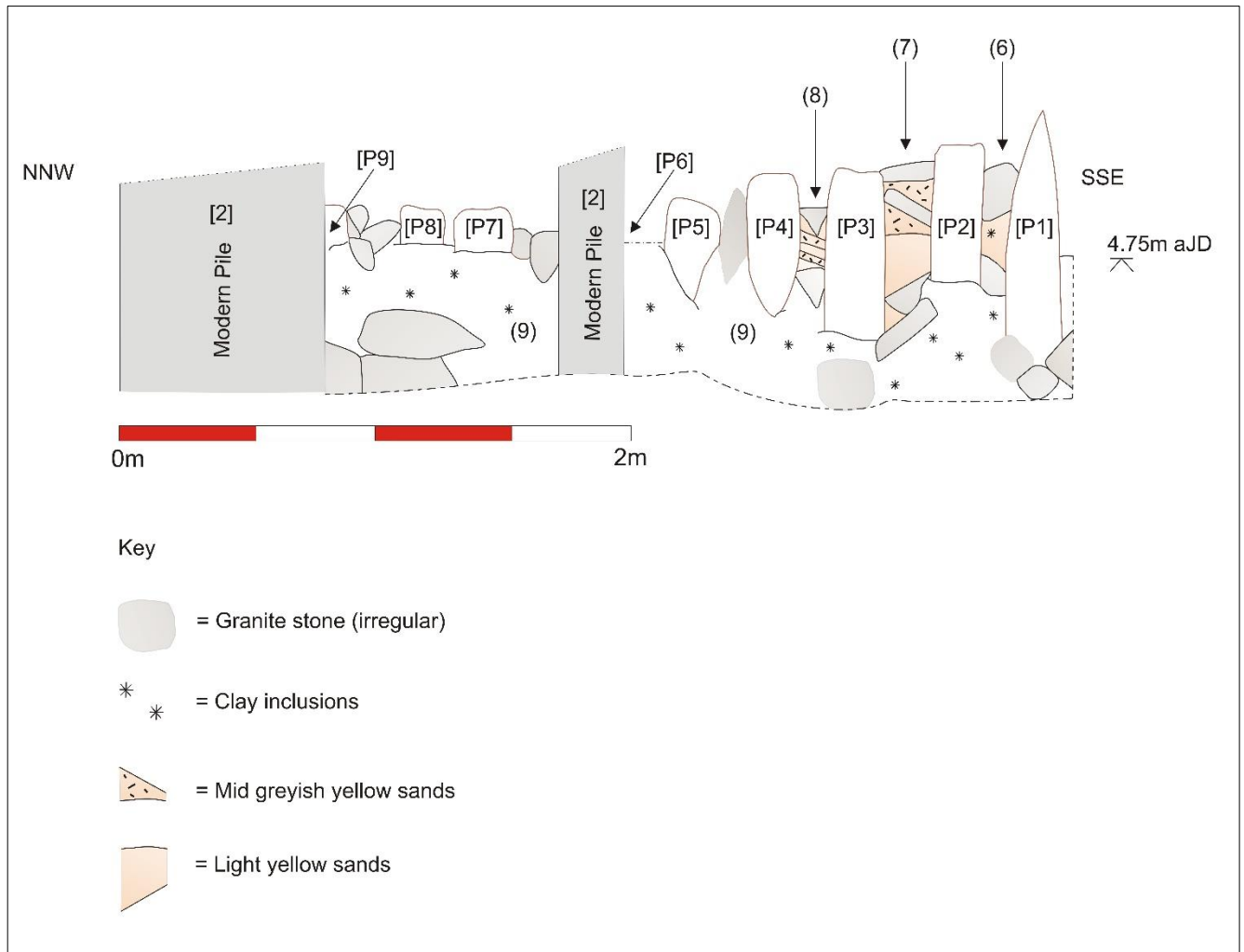


Figure 3 WSW facing elevation of Posts 1 - 9

5.2. Phase Two

Following the removal of the test piles, mechanical excavation continued to the north of the Project Site. During this phase a further six posts were revealed, orientated NNE – SSW. The posts ranged from 200mm – 300mm in diameter and extended to a height of 200mm – 500mm. Posts 10 – 15 appear to be a continuation of the feature identified during Phase one and have been recorded as feature [5].



Photo 5 NE facing view of Posts 9 – 15 (Scales 1 x 1m & 1 x 500mm)

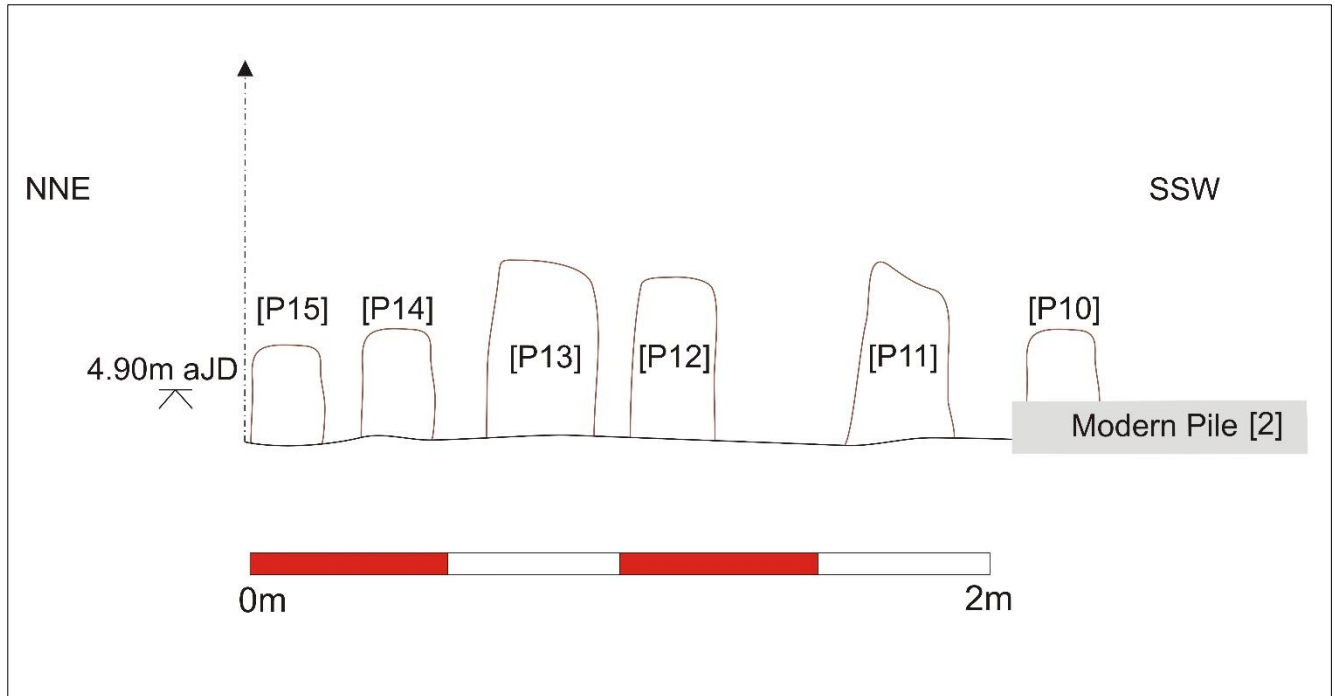


Figure 4 WNW facing elevation of Posts 10 - 15

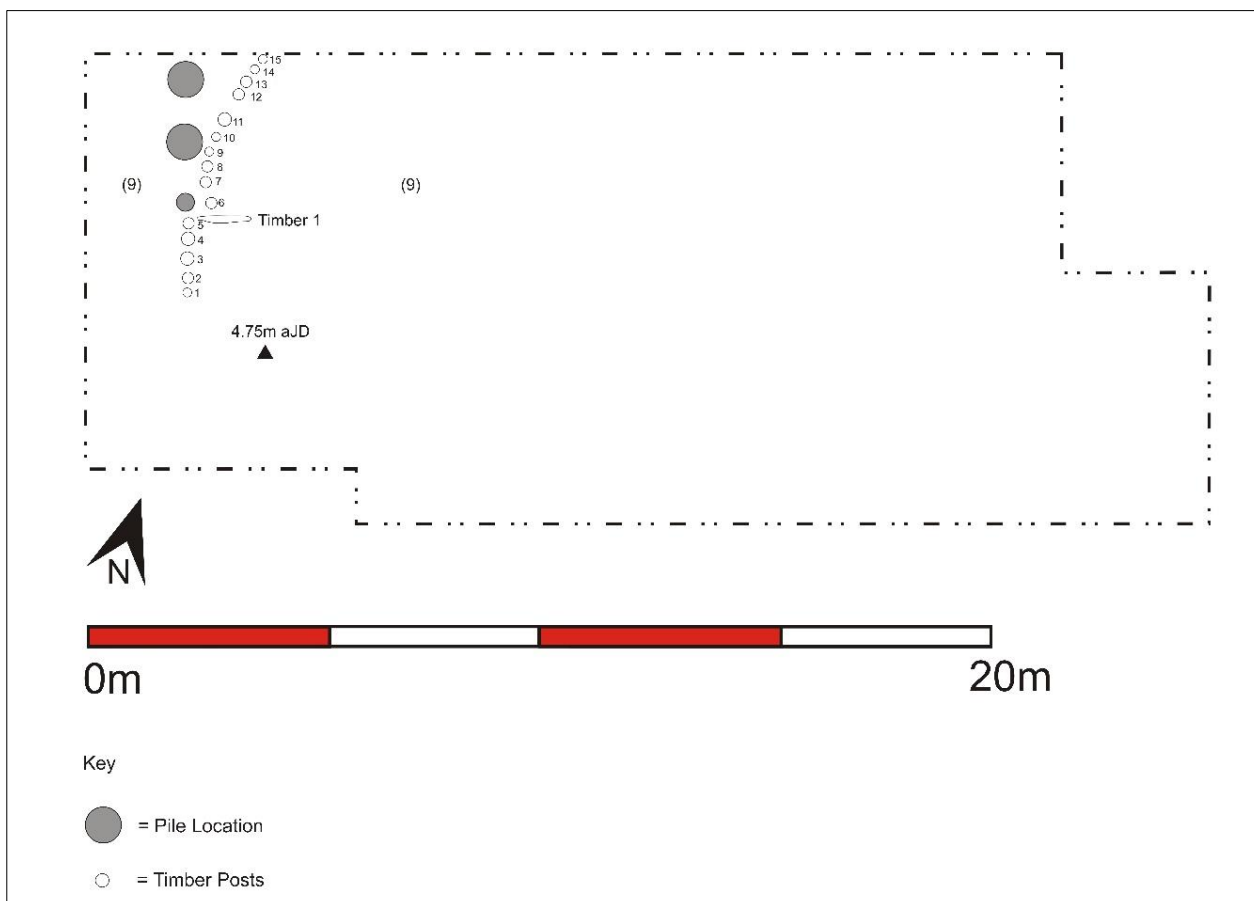


Figure 5 Plan showing the location of Posts 1-15

Excavation continued to a depth of 7m below current ground level in an isolated area to the SE of the Project Site, revealing a further 3m of sand overlaying natural clay deposits (11).

6. Discussion

The results revealed that an archaeological horizon is preserved at c. 3.2m below the current street level. This is sealed by redeposited sand, clay and gravel, which corresponds to the reclamation of the harbour in the early 19th century. The nature of the timber structure [5] is not known, however the form may be interpreted as a jetty, or similar wharf structure. The radiocarbon date favours an early 19th century date, which would place the felling of the timber in the first decade of the 1800's. Cartographic resources document that the area was developed by 1837 (figures 6-8) and therefore, if the structure does predate the reclamation of the land, it would appear to have been erected close to this date. Evidence of waste inclusions in clay deposit (11) adds weight to an industrial period date for the structure.

The potential for the structure to be associated with the construction of the 19th century buildings cannot be ruled out, however the orientation of the posts deviates from the street plan and the depth of the timber appears to be too deep to be consistent with early piling.

Furthermore evidence of horizontal beams suggests some sort of walkway, rather than a load bearing vertical function.

It is likely that the timber feature [5] was buried at the time of the harbour reclamation and that the posts and timbers to the east of the feature were disturbed during the construction of the basement to the hotel.

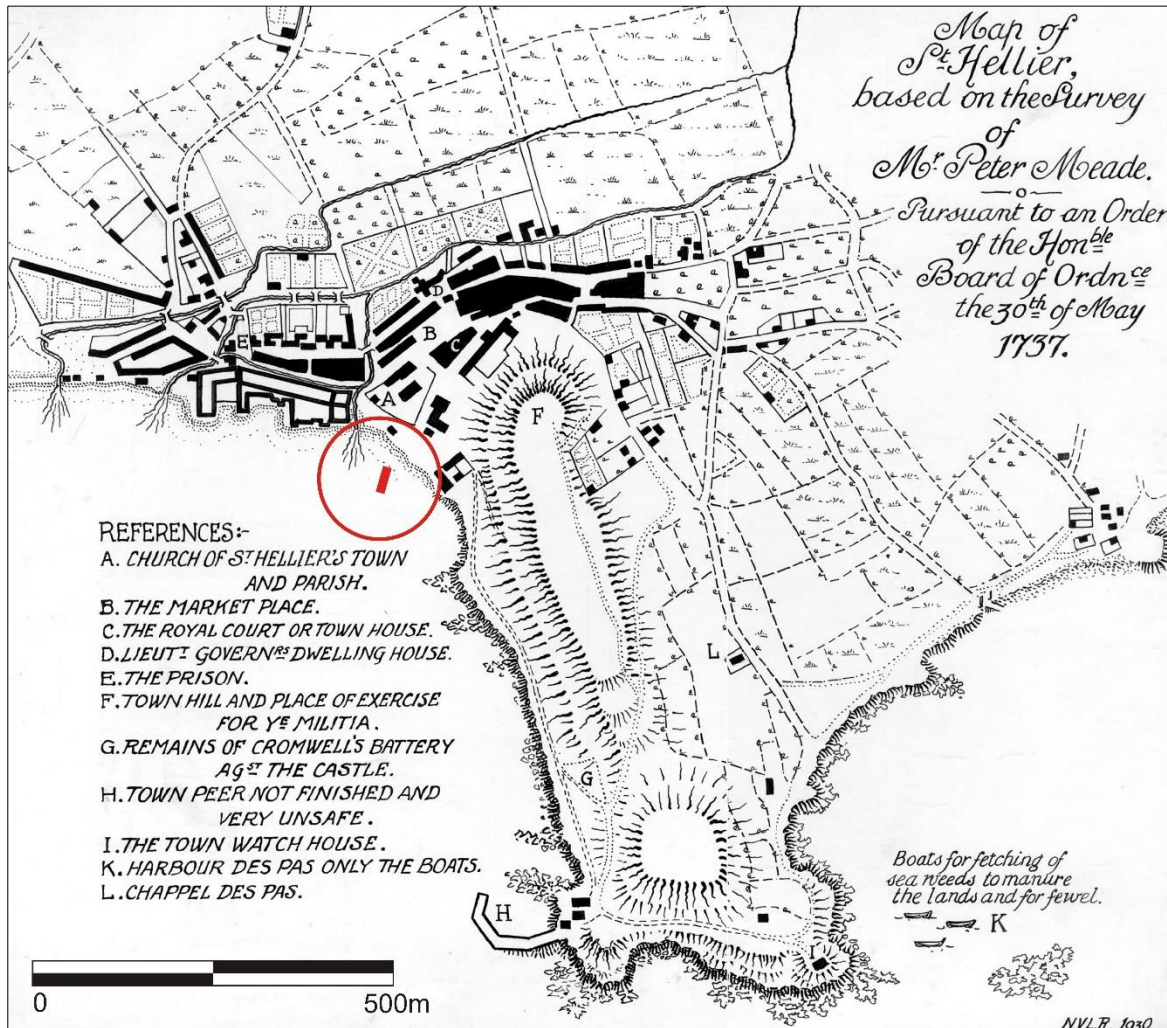


Figure 6 1737 Meade Map with Project Site location shown in red

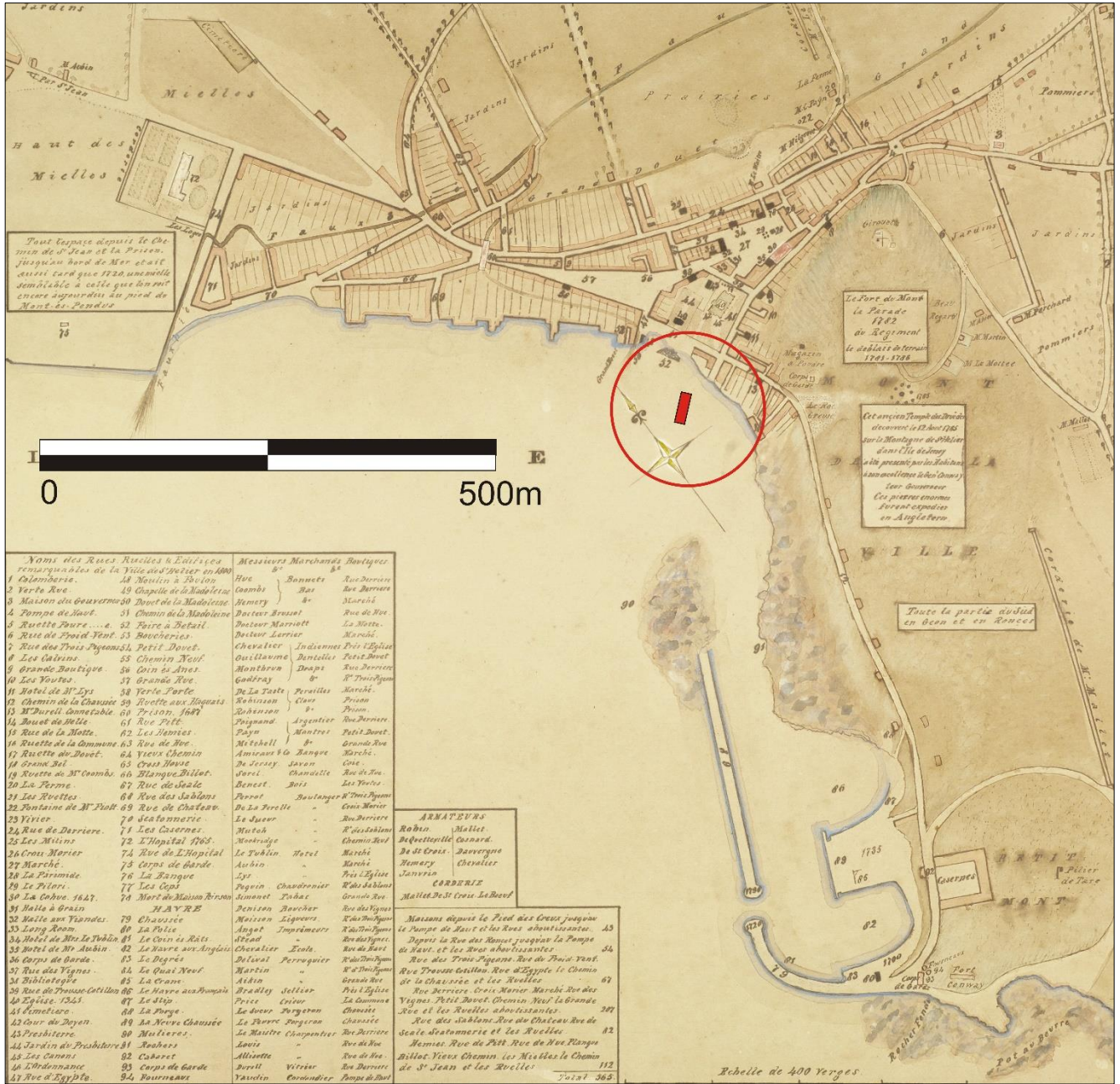


Figure 7 1800 Map of St Helier with Project Site shown in red



Figure 8 1837 Le Gros map with Project Site circled in red

7. Conclusion

The results of the watching brief confirmed the preservation of an archaeological horizon at a depth of c. 3.2m below the current ground level, raising the potential for significant archaeology to be preserved in this region of St Helier.

The timber feature recorded during the programme of work was dated to the early 19th century and will be preserved in situ beneath the current redevelopment of the Project Site.

No further archaeological features, layers or deposits were identified as a result of the monitoring and no pre 19th century finds were identified in the spoil.

No further work was recommended in conjunction with the development of the Project Site.

8. Bibliography

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9. Appendix

Appendix 1 Context Index

Context Number	Type	Depth/ Height	Width	Length /Diameter	Colour	Finds	Recorded Date
1	Reinforced Concrete Surface - Modern	200mm	>10m	>25m	-	-	28.08.2014
2	Modern Piles - Grouped	-	-	-	-	-	28.08.2014
3	Made Ground- Fill 21 st century – associated with current development	1.5-2m	10m	25m	Mid yellowish brown	-	28.08.2014
4	Fill – 19 th century	1 -1.5m	>10m	>25m	Light yellowish Brown	Occasional tin glazed pottery sherds and glass – not retained	28.08.2014
5	Feature – Wooden Posts comprising Posts 1 – 15	<1.1m	-	>10m	-	-	10.09.2014
6	Fill – Packing between timber posts 1 & 2	<1.1m	150mm	-	-	Coal fragments	28.08.2014
7	Fill – Packing between timber posts 2 & 3	<1.1m	200mm	-	-	Coal fragments	28.08.2014
8	Fill – Packing between timber posts 3 & 4	<500mm	100mm	-	-	Coal fragments	28.08.2014

9	Natural sand deposits	3m	>10m	>25m	Light yellowish brown	-	11.09.2014
10	Natural Clay	>800mm	-	-	Mid yellowish brown	-	11.09.2014
11	Clay fill compacting base of Post 2	-	-	-	Light greyish brown	-	28.08.2014

Appendix 2 Chronological Table (Guide Only)

Period	Date	Information
Prehistoric	250000 – 100/56 BC	Generalised period from the earliest human activity in the island to the official conquest of Gaul by the Romans.
Palaeolithic	250000 - 10000 BC	Defined by a number of key sites showing Neanderthal and Early Human activity, for example La Cote de St Brelade. Mobile groups, ephemeral habitation evidence, stone tool technology.
Mesolithic	10000 – 5000 BC	Period of major transformation in the European environment and landscape after the end of the last Ice Age and the beginning of the Holocene. Mobile hunter-gatherer communities, sophisticated tool technology and some semi-permanent settlement with evidence for the exploitation of the coastal zones of the islands. Example at Lihou Priory on Guernsey.
Neolithic	5000 – 2400 BC	The Channel Islands saw an earlier transition to the Neolithic than in Britain. Emergence of monumental architecture, first (potentially) with menhirs later by chambered tombs and subsequently gallery graves. Development of complex society, more sedentary lifestyles and more clearly defined symbolic behaviour.
Chalcolithic/Beaker phase	2400 – 1800 BC	Earliest introduction of copper to western Europe. Expansion of the pan-European Beaker phenomenon, including prestigious material culture and individual burials. Bell Beakers found throughout the archipelago including local emulations called Jersey Bowls. Cist-in-Circle monuments.
Bronze Age	1800 – 800 BC	The Introduction of Bronze as a material, used by the elite at first and later available to the populace more widely. Barrows/tumuli for the dead in the early stages replaced by a lack of monuments and the preponderance toward hoard deposition. Large quantities of bronze metalwork found throughout the islands and in Jersey in particular.
Iron Age	800 – 100/56 BC	Little change to domestic life in the islands. Return of monumental architecture in the form of promontory forts (at C�atel Rozel, Fremont etc) in the earlier periods, followed by warrior and horse burials in the Middle to Later stages (Guernsey only).
Gallo-Roman	100/56 BC – 400 AD	Used to describe a fusion of indigenous late Iron Age traditions in France and the Channel Islands with Roman culture. Represented by the identification of Gallo-Roman ceramics and roofing material recently excavated at Grouville Parish Church, confirming the first evidence of Gallo-Roman occupation in Jersey.
Early Medieval	400 – 973 AD	Represents the time from the end of the Roman period c.400 AD to the annexation of the Channel Islands as a region of Normandy under William Longsword in 973.
Medieval	973 – 1600 AD	Norman and post-Norman phases of Channel Island life. The islands remained loyal to the English crown despite the loss of territories in NW France under King John. Period of fortification building throughout the archipelago and in Jersey at Mont Orgueil and later at Elizabeth Castle. 1600 AD is an arbitrary date, but enables the separation of periods with more intensive industries.
Post-Medieval	1600 – 1900 AD	Period of rapid change in Jersey including the growing urbanisation of St Helier, the involvement of the island in the English Civil War and the Napoleonic Wars. Industrial activity did not impact the island as it did Britain and the rest of Europe.
Modern	1900 – 1950 AD	Radical alterations to the landscape during WWI and particularly WWII. Extensive defensive fortifications across the Channel Islands and forming part of Hitler's Atlantic wall.