



HPS

Professional Archaeological Services

Dyrham Park (Lightening Protection), South Gloucestershire, SN14 8ER

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Client: National Trust

Project: Programme of Archaeological Monitoring and Recording



Client/Agent Name: National Trust / Purcell
Project Site: Dyrham Park, South Gloucestershire, SN14 8ER
NGR: ST 74151 75732
Document Type: Report
Issue Number: 1.0
Date of Preparation: 04/05/2016
Oasis Reference: heritage10-246576
HER Reference: 20613
Local Planning Authority: South Gloucestershire Council
Planning Reference: PK14/4565/LB
HPS Site Code: HPS-125/16
OS Licence: 100048201

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Non-Technical Summary

This document sets out the results of a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording (watching brief) in the grounds of Dyrham Park, South Gloucestershire, SN14 8ER (the Project Site). Permission has been granted for the provision of lightening protection works associated with Dyrham Park House. The work comprised archaeological monitoring during groundwork associated with the establishment of the earthing system.

The results of the watching brief were positive with excavations to the SSW of Dyrham House preserving evidence of a late 17th / early 18th century culvert and remains of a truncated wall with a potential Medieval date, relating to the development of the site in the 15th / 16th centuries. However the possibility that the wall dates to activity on the site in the Romano-British period cannot be ruled out. This highlights the high archaeological value of the area surrounding Dyrham House and gardens, and the potential for the site to preserve archaeology relating to earlier periods of activity, despite extensive development and landscaping.

Acknowledgements

Heritage Planning Services would like to thank Paul Martin (Absolute Archaeology) for his work on site & for the production of the report graphics and to Kirk Matthews for his patience whilst excavating the pits for the earthing system. We would also like to thank Ms Colette Cuddihy (Project Manager, Dyrham Park) & Mr Alex Jeremy (Purcell) for their help with the project.



1. Introduction

Project Background

1.1. This document sets out the results of a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording (watching brief) in the grounds of Dyrham Park, South Gloucestershire, SN14 8ER (hereafter referred to as the Project Site). Permission has been granted for the provision of lightening protection works associated with Dyrham Park House. The work comprised archaeological monitoring during groundwork associated with the establishment of the earthing system.

1.2. This document has been informed by Condition 10 of the Notice of Decision (South Gloucestershire Council, 22nd January 2015), which states the following-

'No ground disturbance in respect of the proposed lightening protection shall be undertaken until full details of the proposed earthing system has been submitted to and agreed in writing with the Council. Where ground disturbance is required, as part of this system, an archaeological contractor shall be appointed to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the course of the works. Following appointment the archaeological contractor shall submit in writing a method statement (W.S.I.) for the watching brief to the Council for Approval. No ground disturbance shall be undertaken in association with the lightening protection works until written approval has been given by the Council for the method statement which shall be implemented in full to the satisfaction of the Council.'

Reason: In order to ensure the adequate protection of archaeological remains associated with the grade I listed building, and to accord with Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.' (South Gloucestershire, 2015).

1.3. The programme of work comprised an archaeological watching brief, with provision for the recording of any surviving below ground archaeology that may be revealed during ground disturbance associated with the approved project.

1.4. This project was completed under HPS project reference HPS-125/16 and site work was carried out under Absolute Archaeology code AARC210.



The Project Site and Study Area

- 1.5. The Project Site is defined as land directly adjacent to Dyrham Park House. Dyrham House, Park and Gardens is located on the eastern edge of the village of Dyrham, South Gloucestershire. The National Trust owned Grade I listed Baroque Mansion is set within 274 acres (1.1km²) of parkland and gardens, which sit on the escarpment of the southern Cotswolds. The house is situated at the foot of the slope, in a natural amphitheatre with parkland rising steeply to the east and north.
- 1.6. It is thought that a house was built on the site of the current property by the early 15th century and was extended or redesigned in the early 16th century, by the Denys family (Baker: 7). In the latter half of the 16th century Sir Walter Denys sold Dyrham to the Wynter family and in AD 1620 Sir George Wynter, created a new park around the existing property. In 1686 William Blathwayt was awarded the estate by way of his marriage to Mary Wynter, the then heiress. He proceeded to commission the building of an elaborate house with landscaped gardens. However, finances dictated that the existing property be renovated in part, rather than demolished and replaced. The west range was completed in 1694 and the stable block in 1698, following which the remaining sections of the Medieval house were demolished. The Orangery and the East range were completed last, resulting in the transformation to Baroque Mansion by 1703 (Baker: 8)
- 1.7. Geologically the area is defined as Lower Jurassic Bridport Sand Formation. The Project Site lies at c. 125m aOD.

Archaeological Activity

Prehistoric

- 1.8. Residual Mesolithic-Neolithic worked flint has been recovered from the garden area to the West of Dyrham House.
- 1.9. Excavation of a trial trench was carried out in September 2015, ahead of the reinstatement of historic flower beds in the West Garden. Finds included a complete stone axe, part of a polished flint axe, an oblique arrowhead and a probable base/body sherd of a Late Neolithic/ Early Bronze Age pot.

Romano-British

- 1.10. Archaeological monitoring undertaken by AC Archaeology during the construction of the Serpentine pathway, in the West Garden exposed areas of differential soils to the north bank of the lower pond.



Excavation revealed a Late Iron age/Romano British ditch and a spread of Romano British demolition material which included tufa, ceramic tile and mortar.

- 1.11. Further evidence for Romano-British activity was recorded during a watching brief undertaken in the West Gardens in 2011, and again in 2014 during maintenance works. Finds included a residual base/body sherd of grey sandy ware pottery (Martin & Driscoll 2011).
- 1.12. Excavation of a trial trench was carried out in September 2015, ahead of the reinstatement of historic flower beds in the West Garden. The investigation revealed a Roman ditch orientated north-south, cut into natural limestone *Tufa*. 151 sherds of 2nd century Romano-British pottery were recovered. Specialist assessment of the ceramic collection was carried out by Dr Jane Timby. (Martin: 2016).
- 1.13. An archaeological excavation carried out in December 2016, in Church Court, to the West of Dyrham House revealed 3 residual sherds of Romano-British pottery. The finds were recovered from the base of a square post hole, which had been part of the support for the base of the northern Sphinx sculpture documented in Kipps 1712 engraving. The surrounding area was defined by an elaborate pitched stone surface, which was significantly sunken in places, suggesting the location of an underlying ditch feature (Martin: 2016).
- 1.14. A watching brief carried out in January 2016 during the reinstatement of historic flower beds at the far west end of the West Garden revealed Romano-British sherds of pottery and fragments of brick (pers com. Martin, P. 2016).
- 1.15. In 2016, Tim Jones found part (flange) of a *Tegulae* roofing tile and *Pilae* or brick whilst creating the ribbon borders in the West Garden (pers com. Martin, P. 2016).
- 1.16. An archaeological test pit evaluation was carried out in April 2016 to further investigate Romano-British activity in the West Garden. Test Pit 2 revealed 18 sherds of Romano-British pottery and a 3rd century coin (Martin & Barnes. 2016).

Medieval

- 1.17. Excavation in the West Garden has shown that although the creation of the gardens has truncated much of the earlier occupation, evidence of Medieval deposits survive along the lip of the slope between upper and lower gardens. East of the house, 20th century activity relating to a former car park was also shown to have disturbed the earlier deposits lying beneath.



1.18. Excavation of the trial trench carried out in September 2015, ahead of the reinstatement of historic flower beds in the West Garden also revealed 40 sherds of AD 12th/13th century pottery. Specialist assessment of the ceramic collection was carried out by Dr Jane Timby. (Martin: 2016 Pending).

Post-Medieval

1.19. A series of evaluation trenches and geophysical surveys have been conducted within gardens in order to better inform management and restoration. Excavation in the West Garden in 2001 recorded paths and wall footings from the early design, which was created in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Geophysical survey has shown that features on 18th century depictions survive beneath the ground surface, but are cut and overlain with later garden features and service trenches. Further excavation (2012) was carried out to the east of the house, in advance of the installation of a heat pump and heating system (Papworth 2013). Elements of the original gardens were recorded, in addition to features not present in the 17th century imagery.

1.20. Test pitting prior to construction of a *Clairvoyée* located buried truncated topsoil and the remains of a rockery, believed to be Victorian in date and thought to represent the redesign of the 18th century culvert. The feature was made up of sub angular limestone blocks displaying numerous circular solution hollows. Also recorded were three large limestone blocks set upright, measuring between 500mm -200mm in length. The blocks were contained within a construction cut. A second test pit revealed large angular limestone slabs laid horizontally, which continued under both sides of the boxed section baulk (Martin & Driscoll 2008). No artefactual evidence was found in association with the stone layer, but as it was located below the level of 17th/18th century pitched cobbling a possible pre 17th century date was proposed.

Historic Land Surface

1.21. The results of a recent borehole survey carried out to inform the scaffold design around the house (ahead of planned renovations to the roof) have indicated that undisturbed buried topsoil may be preserved at 2.55m below current ground level, to the East of the property (Skales 2014).

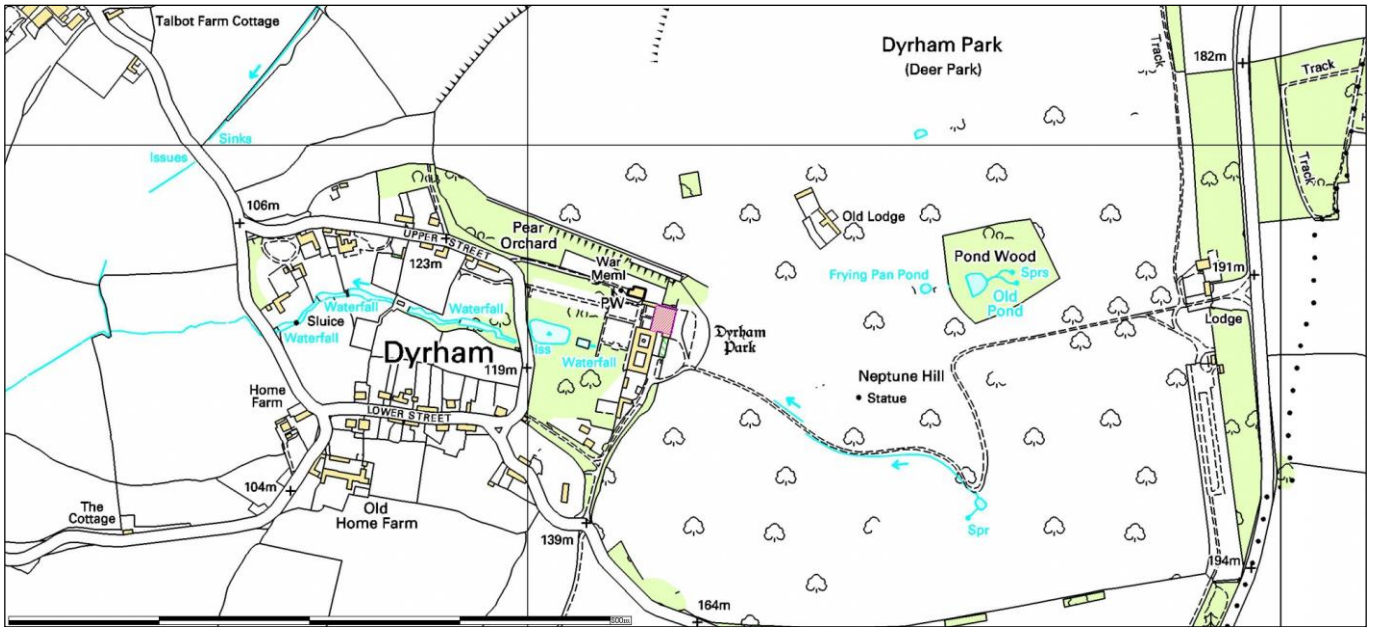


Figure 1 Area of building requiring ground mats (in pink)

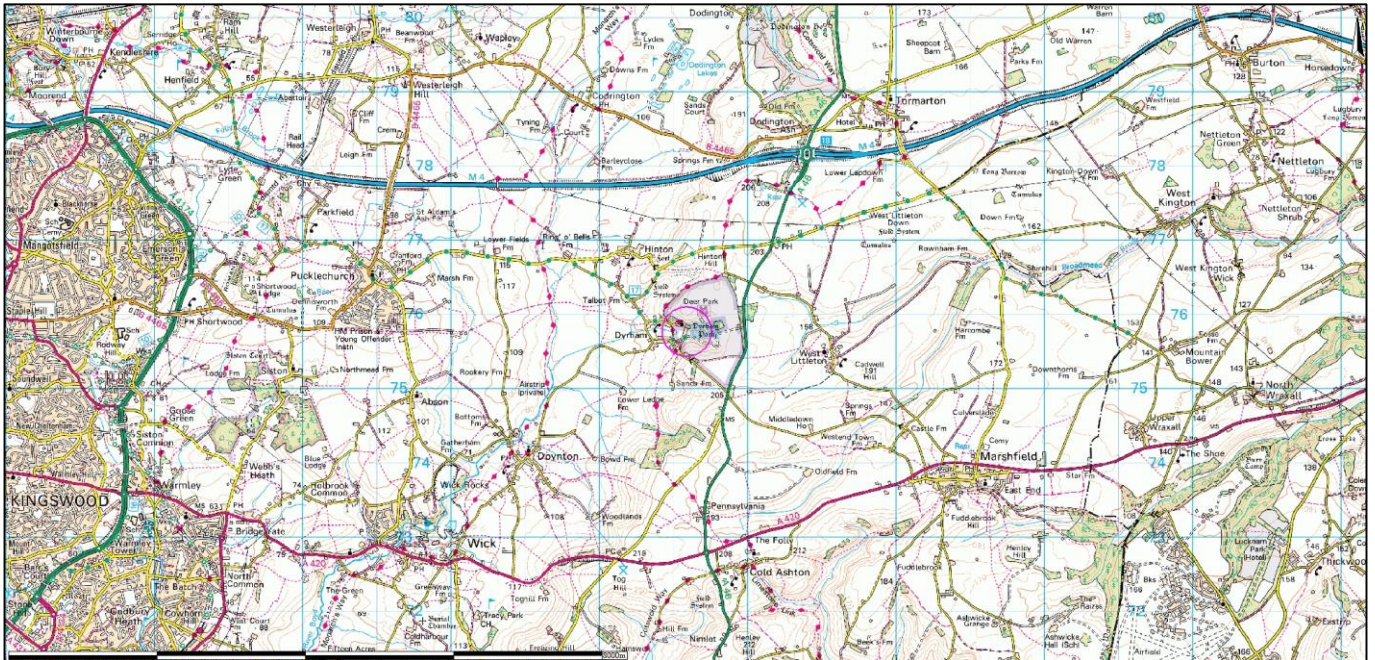


Figure 2 Project Site Location Circled

2. Methodology

Watching Brief

2.1. All work was managed by Heritage Planning Services Ltd. On site monitoring and recording was carried out by Paul Martin, BSc, MCIfA for Absolute Archaeology and completed under Project Code AARC 210.

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2.2. Following the erection of the scaffold to facilitate repairs to the roof of Dyrham House, the number of lightening protection pads required were reduced. 10 locations (2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13, 14, 15 and 18) have been omitted entirely and connections to the ground at 5 locations (3, 4, 12, 16, and 17) have been amended to utilise the scaffold screw piles. The 3 remaining locations requiring excavation to install ground mats are 1, 9, and 11 (pers comm A Jeremy, Purcell: 16/03/2016).



Figure 3 Mat Locations 1, 9, & 11

2.3. The investigation took the approach of an archaeological watching brief, with provision for the recording of archaeological features or finds revealed during groundwork. The programme of work was designed to inform the record on the extent of preserved archaeological remains on the Project Site and to allow for the implementation of a suitable strategy in order to mitigate the impact of the works on the archaeological resource and to enable the discharge of the planning condition.

2.4. All work was undertaken in accordance with the CIfA *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (revised 2014).

2.5. The primary aims were to:

- Seek 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.

3. Archive

- 3.1. The site archive contains all the data collected during the programme of work and has been quantified, ordered, indexed and checked for internal consistency.
- 3.2. The archive was prepared to the standards outlined in MoRPHE PPN 3 - Archaeological Excavation (English Heritage 2008), and in accordance with the guidelines published in *Guidelines for the preparation of Excavation Archives for long-term storage* (United Kingdom Institute for Conservation, 1990) and *Standards in the Museum care of archaeological collections* (Museum and Galleries Commission, 1994) and MoRPHE (2006).

4. Reporting

Once approved the final report will be deposited with the LPA case officer (1 copy), the local museum authority and the Council's Historic Environment Record (1 copy preferably in digital format). A copy will also be uploaded to the Oasis database.

5. Results

Pit One

- 5.1. Pit One was located against the NNE outer wall of Dyrham House and measured 900mm (w) x 1.7m (l) to a depth of 400mm (d). The excavation revealed made ground (101) sealing truncated natural limestone (102) and Post-Medieval / Modern services.



5.2. No archaeology was identified in Pit One and no artefacts were recovered from the spoil, which was monitored throughout.

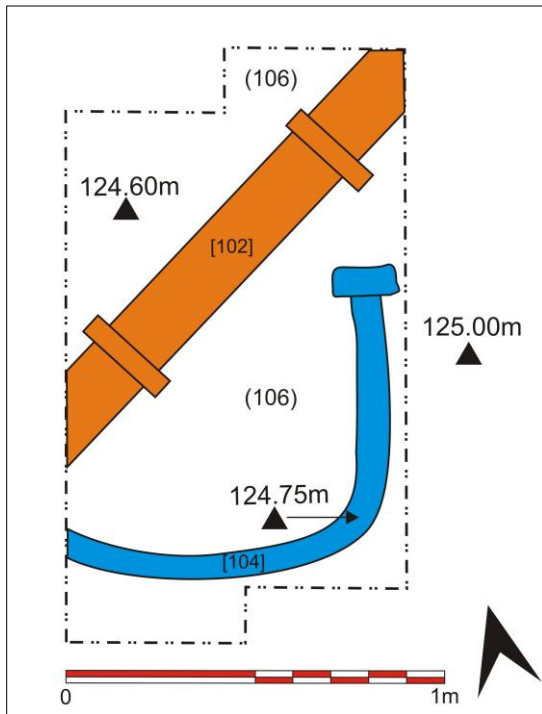


Figure 4 Plan of Pit One



Photo 1 SSE Facing View Pit 1 (Scales 1 x 400mm & 1 x 800mm)



Pit Nine

5.3. Pit Nine was located to the SSW of Dyrham House and measured 600mm (w) x 1.2m (l), to a depth of 430mm. The excavation revealed a limestone capped culvert, orientated NNE – SSW. Although no dating material was recovered, the culvert is likely to date to the Post Medieval period.

5.4. No artefacts were recovered from Pit Nine.

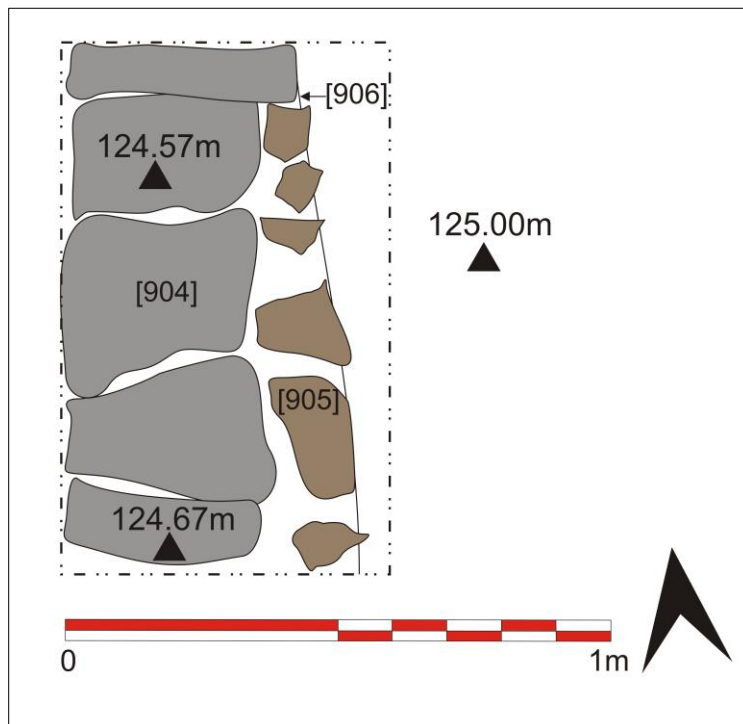


Figure 5 Plan of Pit Nine



Photo 2 NNE facing view of Pit Nine (Scales 1 x 800mm & 1 x 400mm)

Pit Eleven

- 5.5. Pit Eleven was also located to the SSW of Dyrham House and measured 800mm (w) x 1.8m (l) x 870mm (d). The excavation revealed a truncated wall, comprising dressed limestone blocks with lime mortar. The wall is orientated ESE – WSW and has been preserved in situ.
- 5.6. A limestone slab was partially visible to the west of the area of excavation. Although the date and nature of the stone is unknown, it appears to preserve further evidence of early building activity in this area of the site.



5.7. Whilst there was no dating evidence identified, the wall appears to predate the current 1720 layout of Dyrham House.

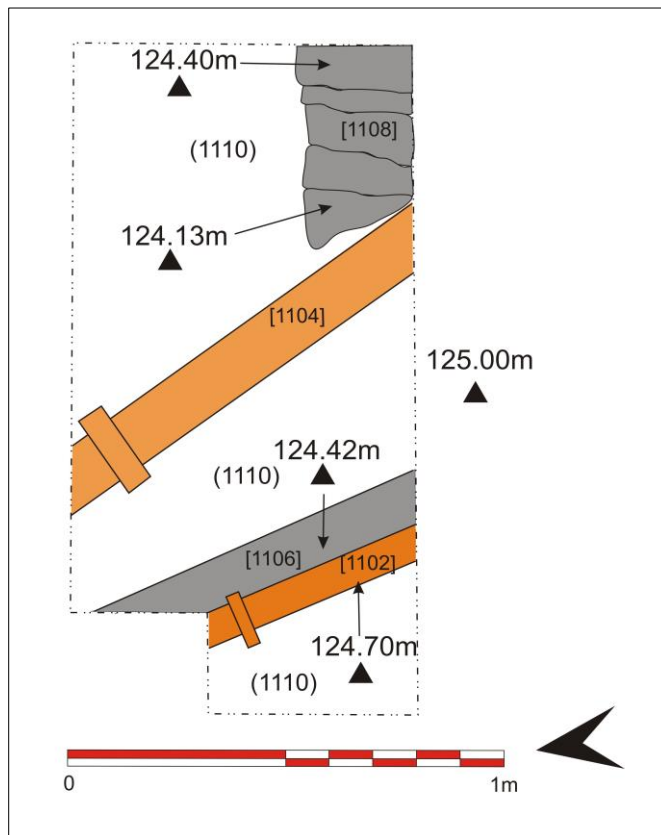


Figure 6 Plan Pit Eleven



Photo 3 ESE facing view of Pit Eleven showing limestone wall cut by service trench (Scales 1 x 800mm & 1 x 700mm)

6. Discussion

- 6.1. Pits Nine and Eleven preserve features relating to the historic use of the park. The limestone culvert identified in Pit Nine, is similar in style to the culvert that runs the length of the Stable Block, in the West Garden, identified during a watching brief carried out by Absolute Archaeology in 2011 (Martin & Driscoll: 2011). The features are thought to relate to the development of the current property and most likely date to the late 17th / early 18th century.
- 6.2. Pit Eleven preserved the truncated remains of a mortared limestone wall. The masonry appeared to be orientated in line with the current property, which it is thought is built on the partial plan of the Medieval house. As there is no comparable structure depicted in this location on early plans detailing



the layout of the Baroque Mansion, it is concluded that the masonry must predated Blathwayt's renovation. It is therefore proposed that the wall may preserve a remnant of the Medieval property or perhaps evidence of Romano-British occupation relating to the widespread material evidence for activity in this period recovered from the West Garden. For this reason the wall has been preserved in situ.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. The results of the watching brief were positive, despite the small area of investigation. This highlights the high archaeological value of the area surrounding Dyrham House and gardens and the potential for the site to preserve archaeology relating to earlier periods of activity, despite extensive development and landscaping.
- 7.2. Both the culvert, limestone slab and the truncated wall were preserved in situ.
- 7.3. No artefacts were recovered during the watching brief.



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9. Appendix

Appendix 1 Context Information

Pit 1							
Description: Hand excavated pit.					NNE-SSW		E-W
					Depth		400mm
					Width		900mm
					Length		1.7m
Contexts 100-106							
Context Number	Type	Depth/Height	Width	Length /Diameter	Colour	Finds	Recorded Date
100	Flagstones	-	>900mm	>1.7m	-	-	5-04-2016
101	Made Ground	-	-	-	-	-	5-04-2016
102	Modern Ceramic Pipe	-	-	250mm	-	-	5-04-2016
103	Cut for [102]			>250mm			5-04-2016
104	Modern Iron Pipe	-	-	150mm	-	-	5-04-2016
105	Cut for [104]	-	-	>150mm	-	-	5-04-2016



106	Natural Limestone	-	>900mm	>1.7m	-	-	5-04-2016
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Pit 9							
Description: Hand excavated pit.					Orientation	NNE-SSW	
					Depth	430mm	
					Width	600mm	
					Length	1.2m	
Contexts 900 - 906							
Context Number	Type	Depth/Height	Width	Length /Diameter	Colour	Findings	Recorded Date
900	Flagstones	-	>600mm	>1.2m	-	-	5-04-2016
901	Modern cement layer	-	>600mm	>1.2m	-	-	5-04-2016
902	Made Ground	200mm	-	-	Mid Greyish Brown	-	5-04-2016
903	Clay Layer	-	-	-	-	-	5-04-2016
904	Limestone Culvert	-	450mm	>1.2m	-	-	5-04-2016



905	Stone Packing for Culvert [904]	-	200mm	1.2m	-	-	5-04-2016
906	Construction Cut for [904]	-	-	>1.2m	-	-	5-04-2016

Pit 11							
Description: Hand excavated pit.					Orientation	ESE-WNW	
					Depth	870mm	
					Width	800mm	
					Length	1.8m	
Contexts 1100 - 1111							
Context Number	Type	Depth/Height	Width	Length /Diameter	Colour	Finds	Recorded Date
1100	Flagstones (Current Surface Material)	-	>800mm	>1.8m	-	-	5-04-2016
1101	Modern Concrete make up layer	150mm	>800mm	>1.8m	-	-	5-04-2016
1102	Post Medieval – Modern Ceramic Pipe	-	-	200mm Diameter	-	-	5-04-2016
1103	Cut for [1102]	-	-	>200mm	-	-	5-04-2016



1104	Post Medieval – Modern Ceramic Pipe	-	-	300mm Diameter	-	-	5-04-2016
1105	Cut for [1104]	-	-	>300mm	-	-	5-04-2016
1106	Limestone Block	-	300mm	-	-	-	5-04-2016
1107	Cut for [1106]	-	>300mm	-	-	-	5-04-2016
1108	Mortared Wall Truncated	-	>300mm	>500mm	-	-	5-04-2016
1109	Cut for [1108]	-	>300mm	>500mm	-	-	5-04-2016
1110	Natural	-	-	-	Mid Yellowish Brown	-	5-04-2016
1111	Mudstone	-	-	-	-	-	5-04-2016



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