

***HOLLANDS HOUSE, DORCHESTER, DORSET: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION REPORT***

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1 ABSTRACT

*AOC Archaeology conducted an **Archaeological Evaluation** on the site of the proposed redevelopment of Hollands House, Dorchester, Dorset on behalf of the Magna Housing Group and their architects Ridge and Partners LLP. The evaluation work was undertaken in 3 days from 9th October – 11th October 2007 by Austin Ainsworth, Project Officer and Paolo Guarino Site Assistant, under the overall project management of Ron Humphrey, Fieldwork Manager. The site was monitored by Steve Wallis, Planning Archaeologist, Dorset County Council. The evaluation was deemed necessary by the Archaeological Advisor to West Dorset District Council as pre-determination before an application for planning consent was made. The results of the evaluation will be submitted in support of any future planning application in relation to the site. Three Trenches were excavated and evaluated within the footprint of the proposed new structure, a three and four storey office block intended to be the headquarters for the Magna Housing Group.*

The site contained no finds, features or structures of archaeological value except for a 19th century well. Tarmac and a 'type 1' aggregate sub-base overlay geologically deposited chalk in Trenches 1 and 2. A modern service trench was recorded in Trench 1. An infilled 19th century well which cut the natural chalk and was sealed by the carpark sub-base was present in Trench 3. The site had been terraced into the hillside as part of the construction of the extant Hollands House an event which appears to have removed any archaeological remains which may once have been present. Previous archaeological work to the north, west and south of the present site had revealed evidence for burials belonging to the Poundbury Roman burial complex; no archaeological remains relating to the burial complex were encountered during the archaeological evaluation.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This document is an Evaluation Report setting out the results of **Archaeological Evaluation** works on the site of the proposed development of Hollands House, Dorchester, Dorset (Figure 1).
- 2.2 Currently the site is occupied by the carpark for Hollands House. The proposed development is for a three and four storey office development which will be the new headquarters for the Magna Housing Association.

3 SITE LOCATION

- 3.1 The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) SY 6862 9083, and is within land bounded by Marabout industrial estate to the north, a TA centre to the east, Poundbury Road to the south and Miller's Close to the west. The site is sub-rectangular and covers an area c. 44 m by 46 m (Figure 2). The area affected by the development covers a total area of approximately 0.2 hectares (2,024 m²).

4 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The archaeological evaluation was in response to a pre-determination decision, in line with Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (Archaeology and Planning) called for by Steve Wallis, Planning Archaeologist, Dorset County Council on behalf of West Dorset District Council. The proposed development is intended to be for Magna Housing Group's new headquarters and will comprise a three and four storey office building.

5 PLANNING BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The archaeological evaluation was in response to a pre-determination decision, in line with Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (Archaeology and Planning) called for by Steve Wallis, Planning Archaeologist, Dorset County Council on behalf of West Dorset District Council.

6 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 6.1 Geological information contained within the geotechnical report (Listers 2007, 3) states that the site is underlain by the Newhaven Chalk Formation. This Formation is generally represented near the surface by firm white chalk with thin marl seams. The Formation becomes less weathered with depth becoming, below the weathered mantle, a very weak and weak chalk rock. Locally, head deposits are anticipated to occur towards the west of the site as a relatively narrow outcrop trending southwest to northeast. These generally comprise poorly stratified clay, silt, sand, gravel and chalk. Locally within 100 m of the west of the site, Made Ground is present, associated with the Dorchester to Yeovil Railway Line.
- 6.2 The site area is generally flat lying except for a short section of ground within the southeast corner of the site. Within this part of the site the ground levels slope down by c. 2 m towards the north over a horizontal distance of c. 5 m. The site is surfaced with tarmac within the carpark area and localised grass covered soft landscaped areas.
- 6.3 Geotechnical investigations were conducted on site by Listers Geotechnical Consulting (2007) and have been summarised below.

The site and laboratory test work confirmed the generally expected ground conditions, with a relatively thin layer of Made Ground overlying the Newhaven Chalk Formation.

“The Made Ground was encountered from ground level down to a typical depth of 0.40 m bgl. The Made Ground typically comprised tarmac over sub-base within the carpark area or grass covered topsoil within the soft landscaped areas. In consideration to the relatively thin layer of Made Ground and the 1.0 to 1.5 m elevation of Poundbury Road compared to the site levels, it is considered likely that the site has been constructed in an area of cut.”

7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 7.1 The proposed development site lies within an extensive area of Roman burials to the west side of Dorchester's Roman town. In the 1970s burials were uncovered beneath the Poundbury Industrial Estate to the west and north of the site. To the south of the site, on the other side of Poundbury Road, the excavations on the Little Keep site in 2007 also revealed Roman burials. Discovery of other burials in the vicinity indicates that the cemetery extended over an even wider area. The site, therefore, has the potential for the presence of Roman burials and associated archaeological remains.
- 7.2 A Desk Based Assessment has not been prepared for this project.
- 7.3 No previous archaeological investigations have been undertaken on the site itself.

8 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

- 8.1 The aims of the Evaluation were defined as being:
- To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the site.
 - To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.
 - To record and sample excavate any archaeological remains encountered.
 - To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of any archaeological features and deposits.
 - To determine the extent of previous truncations of the archaeological deposits.
 - To enable the Planning Archaeologist, Dorset County Council to make an informed decision on the status of the site, and any possible conditions for further work required if a planning application is made.
 - To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation in order to inform the mitigation strategy as part of the planning process.
- 8.2 The specific objectives of the Evaluation are to:
- Determine the presence of any remains of Roman date on the site.
 - Assess the potential of the site to inform on the Roman development, especially the cemetery complex, and chronology of Dorchester.
 - Assess the degree and extent of truncation of earlier deposits by the phases of late post-medieval and modern buildings on the site.
- 8.3 The final aim is to make public the results of the investigation, subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

9 METHODOLOGY

- 9.1 A site code **HHD07** was provided by AOC, as the unique site identity.
- 9.2 The evaluation work was undertaken in 3 days by Austin Ainsworth, Project Officer and Paolo Guarino Site Assistant, under the overall project management of Ron Humphrey, Fieldwork Manager. The site was monitored by Steve Wallis, Planning Archaeologist, Dorset County Council.
- 9.3 The evaluation consisted of three machine-excavated trenches, measuring 10m x 1.8m (Figure 3). Before excavation the entire site was visually inspected and all trenches were scanned with a Cable Avoidance Tool (CAT) to check for live services.
- 9.4 All overburden was removed down to the top of the first recognizable archaeological horizon using a 7.5 tonne JCB 3CX with a 1.8m wide toothless ditching bucket.
- 9.5 All machining was carried out under direct control of an experienced archaeologist. The site and spoil heaps were scanned visually for finds.
- 9.6 All excavation was undertaken with a view to avoiding damage to any archaeological features or deposits which appeared to be demonstrably worthy of preservation *in situ*.
- 9.7 After recording, the trenches were backfilled with excavated material to within 50mm below ground level to allow for reinstatement of the carpark tarmac.
- 9.8 A Temporary Bench Mark (TBM) was set up on site, transferred from a Bench Mark (BM) located to the southeast of site on Poundbury Road. This BM had a value of 76.2m OD.
- 9.9 All of the work was carried out in line with Archaeological Guidance Paper (AGP): 3, Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork (English Heritage June 1998); and IFA Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (IFA October 1995).

10 RESULTS

- 10.1 The site contained no finds, features or structures of archaeological value except for a 19th century well. Tarmac and a 'type 1' aggregate sub-base overlay geologically deposited chalk in Trenches 1 and 2. A modern service trench was recorded in Trench 1. An infilled 19th century well which cut the natural chalk and was sealed by the carpark sub-base was present in Trench 3. The site had been terraced into the hillside as part of the construction of the extant Hollands House an event which appears to have removed any archaeological remains which may once have been present. Previous archaeological work to the north, west and south of the present site had revealed evidence for burials belonging to the Poundbury Roman burial complex; no archaeological remains relating to the burial complex were encountered during the archaeological evaluation.

Trench 1 – (Figure 4)

10.2 Surface of Trench = 74.93m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD)

Level (OD)	Depth (BGL)	Context Number	Description
74.93-74.83m	0.00m	(1/001)	Tarmac
74.83-74.53m	0.10m	(1/002)	Type 1 hardcore – pink grey sand with stones and pebbles
74.53-73.43m (NFE)	0.40m	(1/003)	Roadstone – loose cobble sized stones and sand. Fill of (1/004)
74.53-73.43m (NFE)	0.40m	(1/004)	Cut for modern service trench
74.53-74.48m	0.40m	(1/006)	Lens of white chalk. Fill of (1/004)
74.53-74.25m (NFE)	0.40-0.68m	(1/005)	Natural. Unweathered chalk.

No archaeological features were observed in Trench 1. Natural (1/005), an Unweathered white chalk lay at 74.53m OD at its highest recorded point, this was cut in the west of the trench by (1/004) a vertically sided northwest – southeast aligned modern service trench. The service trench was filled by (1/003) loose cobble sized stones and sand (roadstone). The top 0.10m of the service trench was filled with off-white re-deposited chalk natural (1/006). The service trench where observed was 2.00m long, 0.80m wide and excavated to a depth of 1.10m. The service trench was not fully excavated. Layer (1/002) overlay the modern service trench and was the 0.30m thick Type 1 aggregate sub-base for the 0.10m thick tarmac carpark surface (1/001).

Trench 2 – (Figure 4)

10.3 Surface of Trench = 75.14m AOD

Level (OD)	Depth (BGL)	Context Number	Description
75.14-75.04m	0.00m	(2/001)	Tarmac
75.04-74.84m	0.10m	(2/002)	Type 1 hardcore – brown grey sand with stones and pebbles
74.84-74.74m	0.30m	(2/003)	Roadstone – loose cobble sized stones and sand.
74.74-74.69m (NFE)	0.40-0.45m	(2/004)	Natural. Unweathered chalk.

No archaeological features were observed in Trench 2. Natural (2/004), an Unweathered white chalk lay at 74.74m OD at its highest recorded point. Natural was overlain by a levelling layer of 0.10-0.15m thick cobble sized stones and sand (roadstone) (2/003). Layer (2/002) overlay the modern service trench and was the 0.20m thick Type 1 aggregate sub-base for the 0.10m thick tarmac carpark surface (2/001).

Trench 3 – (Figure 5)

10.4 Surface of Trench = 75.01m AOD

Level (OD)	Depth (BGL)	Context Number	Description
75.01-74.91m	0.00m	(3/001)	Tarmac
74.91-74.61m	0.10m	(3/002)	Type 1 hardcore – brown grey sand with stones and pebbles.
74.61-74.31m	0.17m	(3/003)	Capping layer over well (3/005). Roadstone – grey beige sand with stones
74.31-74.01m (NFE)	0.88-1.18m	(3/004)	Backfill of well (3/005). Dark grey silty sand with CBM fragments.
74.31-74.01m (NFE)	0.88-1.18m	(3/005)	19 th century red brick well
74.41-74.01m (NFE)	0.57-0.67m	(3/006)	Natural. Unweathered chalk.

Trench 3 contained a 19th century well, apart from this no archaeological features were observed within the trench. Natural (3/006), an Unweathered white chalk lay at 74.41m OD at its highest recorded point. The natural was cut by a 19th century well (3/005). The well was constructed from unfrogged red brick (210x100x75mm), was laid in stretcher bond and mortared with a dark grey Portland cement. The well had an external diameter of 1.20m, an internal diameter of 0.95m and was partially excavated to a depth of 0.30m for finds recovery. The fill of the well (3/004) was dark grey silty sand, ash and clinker with frequent brick fragments and occasional sherds of glazed pottery. The well was capped by (3/003) a levelling layer of 0.30m thick cobble sized stones and sand (roadstone). Layer (3/002) overlay the modern service trench and was the 0.20m thick Type 1 aggregate sub-base for the 0.10m thick tarmac carpark surface (3/001).

11 FINDS

- 11.1 Three sherds of late 19th/early 20th century pottery was recovered from context (3/004), the backfill of 19th century well (3/005). The finds were assessed on site and not kept for further analysis.

12 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 12.1 The area of the footprint for the new office block has revealed no archaeological remains of significance, the only features revealed were a 19th century well in Trench 3 and a modern service trench in Trench 1. The site was levelled and terraced at the time of the construction of the extant structure, Hollands House. The site lies within the Poundbury Roman burial complex with burials of known Roman date to the north, west and south. It is believed that if burials were present on the site that they lay at a shallow depth below ground level and were removed during enabling works for the construction of Hollands House. The area of the proposed site for the new structure has been evaluated; the location of any attendant service trenches outside the footprint of the building has not. As the site has been terraced into the hillside and severe truncation has occurred across the site, not just in the area of the new build footprint AOC believes that no further archaeological fieldwork is necessary inside the new build footprint or outside of it during any enabling works or the excavation of any new service trenches. The final decision relating to further archaeological work on the site rests with West Dorset District Council and/or their Archaeological Advisor.

13 PUBLICATION

- 13.1 A summary of the results from the evaluation will be included in the Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society.

14 ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

- 14.1 Following completion of the fieldwork the site archive will be prepared in the format agreed with Dorchester Museum. The excavation archive will be security copied and a copy deposited with the National Archaeological Record (NAR). An OASIS form will be completed and an electronic copy of the Evaluation Report deposited with the Archaeological Data Service (ADS).

15 BIBLIOGRAPHY

- AOC Archaeology Group (2007). *Hollands House, Dorchester, Dorset: a Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*.
- English Heritage (1998a). *Archaeological Guidance Paper 3: Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork*. (English Heritage London Region).
- English Heritage (1998b). *Archaeological Guidance Paper 4: Standards and Practices in Archaeological Reports*. (English Heritage London Region).
- Institute of Field Archaeologists (1995, revised 2001). *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*.
- Listers (2007). *Ground Investigation: Hollands House, Poundbury Road, Dorchester, Dorset*. Listers Geotechnical Consultants
- Museum of London (1994). *Archaeological Site Manual (3rd ed)*.

Figure 1: Site Location Plan

Figure 2: Detailed Location plan

Figure 3: Trench Location Plan

Figure 4: Sections of Trenches 1 and 2

Figure 5: Plan and Section of Trench 3

APPENDIX A – CONTEXT REGISTER

Context	Context Description	Length	Width	Depth
1/001	Tarmac carpark surface	10.00m	1.80m	0.10m
1/002	Carpark Type 1 hardcore sub-base	10.00m	1.80m	0.30m
1/003	Roadstone - Backfill of modern service cut 1/004	2.00m	0.80m	1.10m (NFE)
1/004	Cut for modern service trench	2.00m	0.80m	1.10m (NFE)
1/005	Unweathered chalk (Natural)	10.00m	1.80m	0.30m (NFE)
1/006	Re-deposited Natural - Backfill of modern service cut 1/004	2.00m	0.80m	0.10m
2/001	Tarmac carpark surface	10.00m	1.80m	0.10m
2/002	Carpark Type 1 hardcore sub-base	10.00m	1.80m	0.20m
2/003	Roadstone – levelling layer	10.00m	1.80m	0.10- 0.15m
2/004	Unweathered chalk (Natural)	10.00m	1.80m	0.10m (NFE)
3/001	Tarmac carpark surface	10.00m	1.80m	0.10m
3/002	Carpark Type 1 hardcore sub-base	10.00m	1.80m	0.30m
3/003	Roadstone – capping layer over well 3/005	3.00m	1.80m	0.30m
3/004	Silty sand – backfill of well 3/005	0.95m	0.95m	0.30m (NFE)
3/005	Red brick 19 th century well	1.20m	1.20m	0.30m (NFE)
3/006	Unweathered chalk (Natural)	10.00m	1.80m	0.10m

APPENDIX B - OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

Project details

Project name	HOLLANDS HOUSE, DORCHESTER, DORSET
Short description of the project	<p>AOC Archaeology conducted an Archaeological Evaluation on the site of the proposed redevelopment of Hollands House, Dorchester, Dorset on behalf of the Magna Housing Group and their architects Ridge and Partners LLP. The evaluation work was undertaken in 3 days from 9th October to the 11th October 2007 by Austin Ainsworth, Project Officer and Paolo Guarino Site Assistant, under the overall project management of Ron Humphrey, Fieldwork Manager. The site was monitored by Steve Wallis, Planning Archaeologist, Dorset County Council. The evaluation was deemed necessary by the Archaeological Advisor to West Dorset District Council as pre-determination before an application for planning consent was made. The results of the evaluation will be submitted in support of any future planning application in relation to the site. Three Trenches were excavated and evaluated within the footprint of the proposed new structure, a three and four storey office block intended to be the headquarters for the Magna Housing Group. The site contained no finds, features or structures of archaeological value except for a 19th century well. Tarmac and a 'type 1' aggregate sub-base overlay geologically deposited chalk in Trenches 1 and 2. A modern service trench was recorded in Trench 1. An infilled 19th century well which cut the natural chalk and was sealed by the carpark sub-base was present in Trench 3. The site had been terraced into the hillside as part of the construction of the extant Hollands House an event which appears to have removed any archaeological remains which may once have been present. Previous archaeological work to the north, west and south of the present site had revealed evidence for burials belonging to the Poundbury Roman burial complex; no archaeological remains relating to the burial complex were encountered during the archaeological evaluation.</p>
Project dates	Start: 09-10-2007 End: 11-10-2007
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	HHD07 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	7927 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation

Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 2 - Offices
Monument type	WELL Post Medieval
Monument type	CARPARK Modern
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Modern
Methods & techniques	'Targeted Trenches'
Development type	Urban commercial (e.g. offices, shops, banks, etc.)
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Position in the planning process	Pre-application

Project location

Country	England
Site location	DORSET WEST DORSET DORCHESTER Hollands House, Dorchester, Dorset
Postcode	DT1 1SW
Study area	0.20 Hectares
Site coordinates	SY 6894 9131 50.72 -2.44 50 43 12 N 002 26 24 W Line
Height OD	Min: 74.41m Max: 74.74m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	AOC Archaeology
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	AOC Archaeology
Project director/manager	Ron Humphrey
Project supervisor	Austin Ainsworth
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Magna Housing Group

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Dorset County Museum, Dorchester
Digital Archive ID	HHD07
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography','Text'
Digital Archive notes	To be kept at AOC Archaeology, Twickenham until deposition.
Paper Archive recipient	Dorset County Museum, Dorchester

Paper Archive ID HHD07

Paper Media available 'Context sheet','Drawing','Photograph','Plan','Report','Section'

Paper Archive notes To be kept at AOC Archaeology, Twickenham until deposition.

Entered by Austin Ainsworth (austin.ainsworth@aocarchaeology.com)

Entered on 24 October 2007