



Three Barrows Near Corfe Castle, Dorset

Archaeological Watching Brief Report





**THREE BARROWS, NR CORFE CASTLE,
DORSET**

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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QUALITY ASSURANCE

SITE CODE	79400	ACCESSION CODE		CLIENT CODE	
PLANNING APPLICATION REF.		NGR	NGR 394134, 084334		

VERSION	STATUS*	PREPARED BY	APPROVED BY	APPROVER'S SIGNATURE	DATE	FILE
1	I	NB	SF		6/02/12	X:\PROJECTS\79400\79400_THREE BARROWS_REPORT V1.DOC
2	E	SF	REG		7/02/12	X:\PROJECTS\79400\79400_THREE BARROWS_REPORT V2.DOC

* I= INTERNAL DRAFT E= EXTERNAL DRAFT F= FINAL

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Figure 1: Location of site and monitored areas

Front cover: Excavating south entry pit.

Back cover: Sheep on the barrows

**THREE BARROWS, NR CORFE CASTLE,
DORSET****Archaeological Watching Brief Report****Summary**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by SSE Power Distribution to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the replacement of an existing overhead 11Kv line with a buried cable and the construction of a new small substation on land near Three Barrows, north-west of Corfe Castle, Dorset, centred on National Grid Reference 394134, 084334.

The works were positioned to the immediate north of a group of bowl barrows and the County Archaeologist advised an archaeological watching brief should be maintained during the groundwork to record anything of archaeological interest.

Monitoring of two access trenches either side of the road leading to Isolation Hospital did not locate any archaeological finds or features.

The watching brief was undertaken in November 2011.

**THREE BARROWS, NR CORFE CASTLE,
DORSET****Archaeological Watching Brief Report****Acknowledgements**

This project was commissioned by SSE Power Distribution and we are grateful to Greg Moore in this regard. Wessex Archaeology would like to acknowledge the role and assistance of Steve Wallis (Dorset County Council) and Martin Papworth (National Trust) during this project. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Phil Edwards (HMC) for his help on site.

The watching brief was undertaken by Naomi Brennan. This report was written and compiled by Naomi Brennan. The illustrations were prepared by Ken Lymer. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Sue Farr.

**THREE BARROWS, NR CORFE CASTLE,
DORSET****Archaeological Watching Brief Report****1 INTRODUCTION****1.1 Project Background**

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by SSE Power Distribution (the Client), to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the construction of a small substation (**Figure 1**), positioned to the north-west of Corfe Castle and centred on NGR 394134, 084334 (hereafter 'the Site').
- 1.1.2 The development comprised the replacement of an existing overhead 11Kv line with a buried cable and the construction of a new small substation.
- 1.1.3 The Dorset County Archaeologist and National Trust Archaeologist advised that the groundworks associated with the new substation and the entry pits for the mole should be monitored by an archaeologist given the proximity of three Scheduled barrows and the proven occurrence of early occupation debris in the area.
- 1.1.4 The watching brief was carried out on the 24th November 2011.

1.2 The Site, location and geology

- 1.2.1 The Site is located approximately 3.5km to the north-west of Corfe Castle, to the immediate north of the A351. It is bounded by Soldiers Road to the west and the A351 to the south. A track to Isolation Hospital and Isolation Cottage bisects the watching brief area.
- 1.2.2 The Scheduled Monument site of Three Barrows (Scheduled Monument (SM) number 21970) lies to the immediate north-west of Site.
- 1.2.3 The topography of the Site is generally flat though the ground rises on the western side of Soldiers Road to the site of the barrows. The Site lies at an elevation of approximately 29m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).
- 1.2.4 The Site is currently under pasture. The underlying geology is clay with flints (BGS, sheet 328).

1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 1.3.1 Although no features are recorded within the Site itself, the group of three bowl barrows immediately to the north-west form part of a Scheduled Monument (SM 21970). These barrows are amongst a number which survive in the area of the Purbeck Hills and there is also a proven occurrence of early occupation debris in the area.
- 1.3.2 The monument includes a group of three bowl barrows aligned east-west and situated on a local rise with views to the north-east over Middlebere Heath. The eastern barrow mound measures 35m in diameter and is 2m high. Adjoining this barrow on its west side is another bowl barrow 2m high and 18.3m across. The western bowl barrow, a further 10m to the west, is 2m high and 23m in diameter. Surrounding each mound is a ditch from

which material was quarried during its construction. The ditches of the most eastern barrow and of the barrow adjoining it can no longer be seen at ground level, having become infilled over the years, but survive as buried features c. 5m and c.3m wide respectively. The ditch of the western barrow has become partially infilled, but can still be seen as a slight depression 2m wide and 0.25m deep.

1.3.3 Bowl barrows of this type date from the Late Neolithic period to the Late Bronze Age, but most examples belong to the period 2400-1500 BC.

1.3.4 Isolation Cottage and Isolation Hospital situated at the end of the access road were an early 20th century hospital and nurses accommodation for the treatment of highly infectious diseases such as smallpox. The cottage is currently used as a holiday cottage.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 The objective of the watching brief was to record, as far as reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, nature, character and relationships of any surviving archaeological remains observed during the groundworks.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1.1 The full detailed methodology of the archaeological works was set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation (Wessex Archaeology 2011); this is summarised below:

2.1.2 The fieldwork consisted of the monitoring of open groundworks made beneath the present ground surface. These consisted of groundworks associated with the new substation and the entry pits for the mole. A continuous archaeological presence was maintained during these groundworks undertaken within the area of the watching brief.

2.1.3 All deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* record sheets with a unique numbering system for individual contexts. Observed areas were related to Ordnance Survey mapping.

2.1.4 A full photographic record was maintained, using digital cameras equipped with an image sensor of not less than 10 megapixels. Digital images will be subjected to a managed quality control and curation processes which will embed appropriate metadata within the image and ensure long term accessibility of the image set.

2.1.5 A unique site code **79400** was allocated to the Site, and was used on all records.

2.2 Best practice

2.2.1 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the relevant guidance given in the *Institute for Archaeologist's Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (IfA 2008).

2.3 Copyright

2.3.1 This report may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (e.g. Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the

intellectual property of third parties, which we are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferrable by Wessex Archaeology. You are reminded that you remain bound by the conditions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of the report.

3 WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Details of individual excavated contexts and features are retained in the project archive.

3.2 Results

3.2.1 Two trenches were machine excavated to allow access for the mole, one to the south of the track to Isolation Hospital immediately adjacent to the hedge and the second to the north of the track. Both were 0.42m wide and between 0.9-1.0m deep. The trenches were 7.5m and 8.6m in length respectively.

3.2.2 Both trenches contained a similar soil sequence which comprised up to 0.24m of very dark grey-black topsoil (101). This was very humic and bioturbated with a very loose and friable texture and overlay (102), a pale red-brown sandy subsoil which extended to around 0.42m below present ground level. Below this was the natural geology (103), which comprised a pale yellow-white sandy clay with flints.

3.2.3 The southern trench was crossed by a modern land drain and the northern trench was cut by a utility trench which corresponded to a redundant gas line which lay below the excavated depth.

3.2.4 No archaeological features or deposits were observed.

4 FINDS

4.1.1 No archaeological artefacts were recovered from this watching brief.

5 DISCUSSION

5.1.1 Despite the archaeological potential, no archaeological finds or features were recorded during the watching brief.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1.1 No further work is recommended.

6.1.2 An OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/projects/oasis/> will be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators Forms. All appropriate parts of the OASIS online form will be completed for submission to the AHBR. This will include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy will also be included with the archive).

- 6.1.3 A summary detailed the results of this work will be sent to *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society* to be included in their annual summary of work.

7 ARCHIVE

- 7.1.1 The project archive was prepared in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Appendix 3 of *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991) and in accordance with the *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage* (Walker 1990). The project archive is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology under the project code **79400**. In due course the complete archive will be deposited with the National Trust at their Wessex Regional Office, Warminster.

8 REFERENCES

English Heritage, 1991, *Management of Archaeological Projects*, English Heritage

Institute for Archaeologists, 2008, *Standard and Guidance for archaeological watching briefs*

Walker, K., 1990, *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for Long-term Storage*, UKIC Archaeology Section

Wessex Archaeology, 2011, *Three Barrows, Nr Corfe Castle, Dorset: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*, unpublished WSI reference number 79400.01

9 OTHER SOURCES

British Geological Survey (BGS) 1:50,000 sheet 328

Scheduled Monument Information available via:
<http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

Information on known archaeology and findspots searchable via:
<http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archsearch/>

APPENDIX 1: OASIS RECORD FORM
9.1 Three Barrows, Near Corfe Castle, Dorset - Wessex Archaeology
OASIS ID - wessexar1-143112
Versions

View	Version	Completed by	Email	Date
<u>View 1</u>	1	S Farr	s.farr@wessexarch.co.uk	6 February 2013

Completed sections in current version

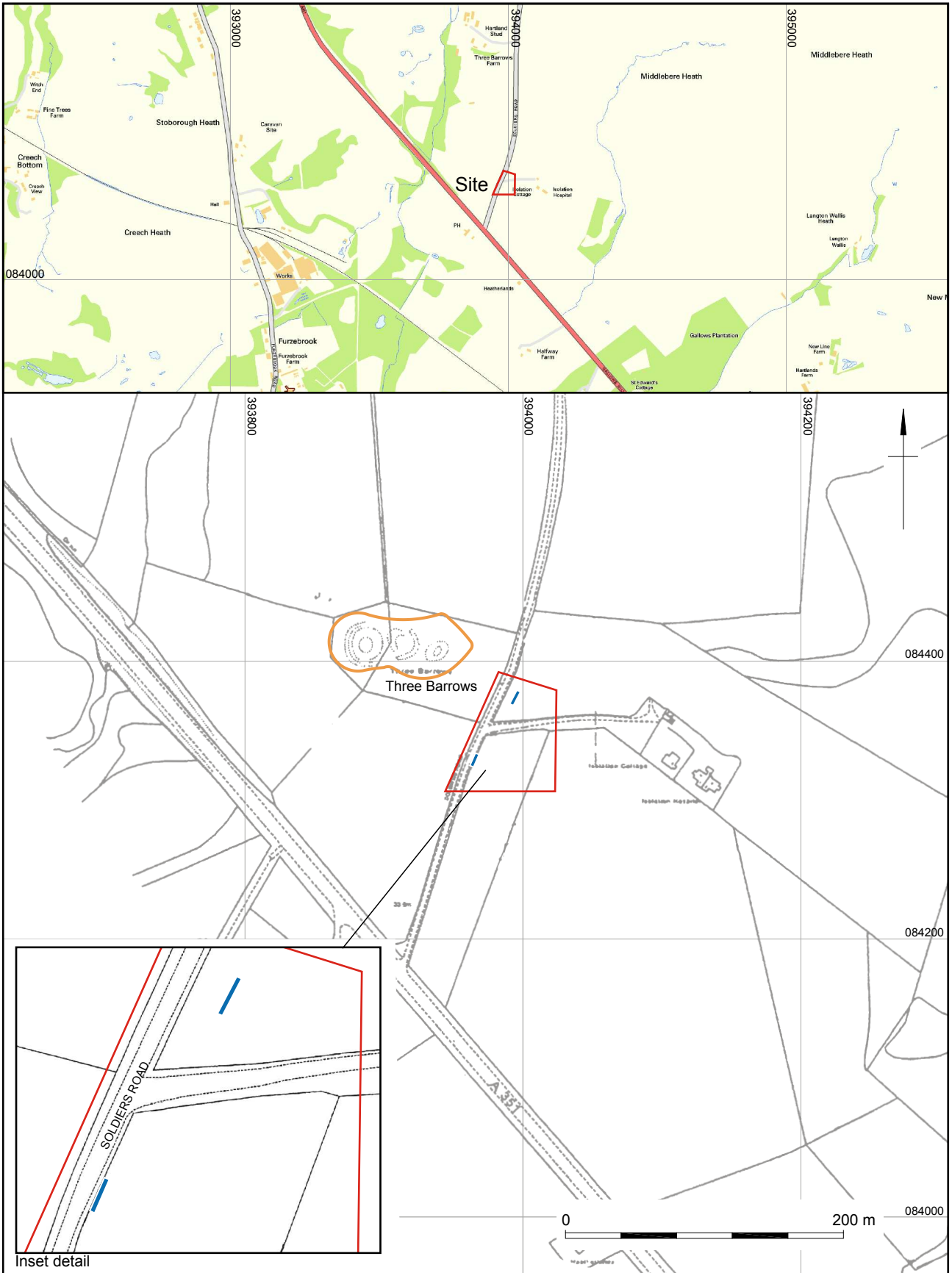
Details	Location	Creators	Archive	Publications
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	1/1

Validated sections in current version

Details	Location	Creators	Archive	Publications
No	No	No	No	0/1

File submission and form progress

Grey literature report submitted?	No	Grey literature report filename/s
Images submitted?	No	Image filename/s
Boundary submitted?	file No	Boundary filename
HER signed off?		NMR signed off?



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	Date:	01/02/13	Revision Number:	0
	Scale:	1:20,000, 1:4000 & 1:1250	Illustrator:	KL
	Path:	Y:\PROJECTS\79400\Drawing Office\Report figs\wb\13_02_01\79400_wb.dwg		

Location of site and monitored areas

Figure 1



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