



# Corn Exchange Extension, North Square, Dorchester, Dorset

## Archaeological Assessment



Report No. 53552/1/1

January 2021

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January 2021

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# Table of Contents

<b>1.</b>	<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>2.</b>	<b>Site</b> .....	1
2.1	Location .....	1
2.2	Geology.....	1
2.3	Designations .....	1
<b>3.</b>	<b>Aims and Objectives</b> .....	2
<b>4.</b>	<b>Baseline Archaeological Data</b> .....	2
4.1	Introduction .....	2
4.2	Archaeological and Historical Background.....	2
4.3	Previous Archaeological Investigations .....	4
4.4	Site Walk-over .....	4
<b>5.</b>	<b>Archaeological Assessment of Ground Investigations of the Site</b> .....	5
5.1	Introduction.....	5
5.2	Dencher Trial Holes .....	5
5.3	Advanced Investigation Systems Ltd Boreholes.....	6
<b>6.</b>	<b>Suggested Archaeological Deposit Model</b> .....	6
6.1	Introduction.....	6
6.2	Character of the Archaeological Resource.....	6
6.3	Significance of Potential Archaeological Resource .....	7
6.4	Potential Survival of the Archaeological Resource.....	8
<b>7</b>	<b>Further Archaeological Investigation</b> .....	8
<b>8</b>	<b>Possible Mitigation Measures during Construction</b> .....	8
<b>9</b>	<b>References</b> .....	9
<b>Figures</b>		
1	Location of Site .....	10
2	Extract of 1810 Plan of Dorchester (DHC D1/OE1) overlain by modern map and Site Boundary .....	11
3	Extract of 1848 Plan of Dorchester (DHC D/COO:E/7) overlain by modern map and Site Boundary.....	12
4	Extract of 1888 Ordnance Survey Town Plan overlain by modern map and Site Boundary .....	13
5	Projected line of Roman streets in vicinity of the site .....	14
6	Location of Trial Holes .....	15
<b>Plates</b>		
1	View of Car Park north of Corn Exchange, looking east .....	16
2	View of area of proposed new extension with locations of boreholes BH02 and BH03 surrounded by orange netlon fencing, looking south .....	16
3	View of retaining wall of terrace constructed for nineteenth century Market House, looking south.....	16
4	View west showing difference in levels between the site (to rear) and the Kings Arms car park (in foreground).....	17
5	Trial Hole TP1.....	17
6	Trial Hole TP2.....	17
7	Trial Hole TP3.....	18
8	Borehole BH02 sample .....	18
9	Borehole BH03 sample .....	18

## Summary

*Dorchester Town Council is proposing to build a small extension to the municipal buildings (Town Hall and Corn Exchange) in order to install a bio-mass heater and create additional office space above. A planning application (WD/D/20/002160) has been submitted to the local planning authority and is currently under consideration. This report has been produced to assess the nature of the stratigraphy of the site and assess the potential archaeological character of the area of the proposed new extension and to provide data to enable a decision to be made on whether an archaeological trial trench evaluation should be undertaken.*

*Consideration of the previous archaeological investigations in the vicinity, together with an examination of the available historic mapping has enabled an archaeological model to be proposed. There is unlikely to be significant prehistoric activity on the site, but in the Roman period, the site lay close to the centre of the Roman town, just north of the forum. It is thought that part of one of the main E-W streets crosses the south and east part of the area of the new extension and the remainder consisted of the immediate roadside area. In the medieval and early post-medieval period, the site was probably in the backland area behind buildings on the North Square frontage. By the early nineteenth century the site was partially covered by buildings and in the late nineteenth century the area was part of a large market house behind the Corn Exchange.*

*Examination of the ground investigations on the site and the current ground levels reveals that the ground levels were raised up to three metres as part of the construction of the nineteenth century market house. The borehole samples indicate that there had been some post-medieval disturbance down into the natural chalk and elsewhere only a thin layer of probable post-medieval garden soil survives above the chalk beneath the nineteenth century levelling deposits for the market house. No significant archaeological stratigraphy was identified in the borehole samples.*

# Corn Exchange Extension, North Square, Dorchester, Dorset Archaeological Assessment

## 1. Introduction

The Dorchester Town Council, as part of its Climate Emergency Response, is proposing to extend the municipal buildings (Corn Exchange) to house a bio-mass boiler with associated fuel store and water tanks at ground floor level and provide new office accommodation at first floor level.

A planning application (WD/D/20/002160) has been submitted and is currently under consideration by the Local Planning Authority (LPA). As part of the consultation, the LPA's Archaeological Advisor Steve Wallis (Senior Archaeologist Dorset Council) has advised that the applicant should be requested to undertake an archaeological evaluation of the site and submit the results before this applicant is determined, in order that an informed planning decision can be made (Steve Wallis email to Cass Worman, dated 21 October 2010).

This report has been produced to assess the likely archaeological resource existing on the site and examine the data from the ground investigations on the site in order to determine the potential archaeological stratigraphy and assess the likely survival of the archaeology on the site. It is hoped this information will be useful to determine whether a trench evaluation is appropriate for the site, given the small scale of the proposed extension and the depth of overburden on the site.

## 2. Site

### 2.1 Location

The site lies in the centre of the historic core of Dorchester at the convergence of High East Street, High West Street, Cornhill and North Square, adjacent to St Peter's Church, centred on SY 6928 9076, at a height of about 65.8 m aOD (Figure 1). The site is largely occupied by the Town Hall and Corn Exchange buildings, with a car park to the north (Plate 1). The car park is accessed off North Square and the surface is level with an approximate 2.5 m drop down to the rear of the King's Arms property to the east (Plate 4). The north side of the site is formed by the Victory Court.

The location of the proposed new extension lies to the rear of the Corn Exchange buildings in the car park area centred on SY 6929 9078 (Figure 1).

### 2.2 Geology

The underlying solid geology is mapped as Chalk of the Portsdown Chalk Formation, which is shallow-marine in origin, formed in an environment of warm chalk seas, formed approximately 72 to 84 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period. No overlying Superficial Deposits are mapped on the site (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

### 2.3 Designations

**Conservation Areas:** The site lies within the Dorchester Conservation Area (WDDC 2003).

**Designated Heritage Assets:** The *Municipal buildings* (Corn Exchange) are Grade II\* Listed (NHL Entry No. 1110585).

**Non-designated Heritage Assets:** No non-designated heritage assets are recorded on the site in the Dorset Council Historic Environment Record (HER).

### 3. Aims and Objectives

The aim of the assessment is to provide details of the archaeological stratigraphy as revealed by the ground investigations on the site and informed by archaeological investigations in the vicinity to enable a better understanding of the archaeological resource likely to be present on the site.

The objectives of the assessment are:

- to assess the baseline archaeological dataset in the vicinity of the site to model the likely character and significance of the potential archaeological resource on the site.
- to interrogate the data obtained by the ground investigations for the proposed new extension to assess the likely depth and character of the archaeological stratigraphy on the site.
- to present the findings in a report.

## 4. Baseline Archaeological Data

### 4.1 Introduction

There has been only one previous archaeological investigation on the site, but this did not expose any pre-nineteenth century archaeology (Terrain Archaeology 2004a). Therefore, the data from other archaeological events in the near vicinity of the site have been examined to try to build a picture of the likely character of the archaeology of the site. There has been no attempt to systematically examine all the available data within a specific study area around the site; rather a more subjective use of selected investigations has been used, where data is available to help construct a picture of the probable archaeological character of the site. This information has been taken from published sources, Terrain Archaeology's unpublished archives, and data from the Dorset Council Historic Environment Record (DC HER).

### 4.2 Archaeological and Historical Background

#### 4.2.1 Prehistoric

Prehistoric activity within the area of Dorchester is poorly understood and only fragmentary evidence has been obtained to date. The most significant monument is the Neolithic timber monument first identified at Greyhound Yard (Woodward *et al.* 1993). The Corn Exchange site lies outside the likely circuit of this monument. Evidence from a number of sites including Greyhound Yard, Merchant's Garage and County Hall have produced evidence for Bronze Age fields (Bellamy 1992; Smith 1993; Woodward *et al.* 1993), which may have covered the whole area of Dorchester. A large pre-Roman ditch that may also possibly be part of this late prehistoric land division was found at Boots, South Street (Sparey Green 1986). An extensive pre-urban soil layer has been found on many of the sites investigated in Dorchester, which appears to have formed as a result of this late prehistoric agricultural activity.

#### 4.2.2 Roman

The Site lies within the Roman town of *Durnovaria*, founded about AD65. The earliest element of the town appears to be the street pattern, which was laid out on top of the pre-Roman agricultural soil. The full street pattern is not known, but the alignment of a number of streets can be determined. The line of one of the main Roman streets running from the West Gate has been determined by investigations to the rear of St Peter's Church (Sparey Green 1981) and at Greenings Court (Putnam *et al.* 1970). The line of this street is projected to run beneath the north end of the Corn Exchange and across the south east corner of the car park, including part of the area of the proposed new extension (Figure 5). The site lies between two N-S streets. The street to the west passes through the west part of the Dorset County Museum site, where a section of the road was discovered during the construction of Skyrme's Workshop in 1937 (RCHME 1970, 552) and further traces to the south behind Boots, South Street (RCHME 1970, 552). The street to the east is projected to run beneath the east side of the Kings Arms and traces have been recorded beneath Acland Road further to the south (Keen 1979, 135; Woodward *et al.* 1993, 7). The forum of the Roman town probably lay between these streets, which may have formed its northern, eastern and western limits.

Spreads of gravel have been found at Cornhill, which may be part of the forum surface (RCHME 1970, 564-6). None of the associated public buildings around the forum have been found to date.

In the early Roman period, the town appears to have had a relatively low density of buildings and the street frontages were developed with small timber buildings set within relatively large enclosures with further enclosures behind the street frontages (Woodward *et al.* 1993; Trevarthen 2008). Towards the end of the second century AD many of the timber buildings were replaced by buildings with stone footings that are extended and developed by the late 3rd and into the 4th century and include large courtyard town houses and aisled buildings including possible urban farms, which continued to be built up until the end of the 4th century.

#### 4.2.3 Medieval

The early medieval history of Dorchester is not well documented, but archaeology has produced evidence for layers of dark soil accumulation over the remains of the Roman structures. This soil development may date to the post-Roman and early medieval period and at Greyhound Yard appears to be associated with the development of strip fields and timber structures (Woodward *et al.* 1993, 376). Documentary evidence suggests that there was a royal residence at Dorchester in the 9th century and the settlement became a borough with a mint in the 10th century (Penn 1980, 60). *Dorecestre* was recorded as a royal borough in the Domesday survey (Thorn 1983).

The medieval street pattern does not follow the Roman street alignment and the principal streets of High West, High East, and South Streets together with back lanes are likely to have been established by the end of the 10th century. The three parishes of St Peter's, All Saints, and Holy Trinity, with their parish churches, are all late Saxon in origin. Dorchester Castle was built soon after the Norman Conquest in the northern part of the town on the site now occupied by the Prison. The details of Dorchester's development during the medieval period are uncertain, but there appears to have been some organised trading activity from at least the late 12th century and was probably an important trading centre in the 13th century, though in the 14th century Dorchester was not the largest nor most wealthy town in Dorset (Draper 1992; Draper 2001; Penn 1980, 61-2). By the late medieval period it had become a cloth-making town of some local importance and was about the same size as Bridport, Sherborne, and Shaftesbury.

The Dorchester Domesday (1395-1500) recorded land transactions in the town (Mayo 1908, 116-380) and has been used to reconstruct the tenement pattern of late medieval Dorchester (Draper and King 1995). Unfortunately, the area of the site on the east side of the corner of High East Street and North Square (formerly the *High Street to Friars Minor*) has no entries, but it seems unlikely that this area in the centre of the town was undeveloped, so perhaps may have been owned by one of the monasteries, therefore, did not have any transactions recorded by the borough (Draper and King 1995, 40). North Square was the location of the Shambles or butchers' stalls.

#### 4.2.4 Post-medieval and Modern

The town continued as a successful cloth-making town into the 17th century, and by the middle of the century it appeared to be the largest town in the county, though the cloth industry was in decline. In 1724 Defoe described the town as "populous, though not large, the streets broad, but the buildings old, and low" (Penn 1980, 63).

There were a number of major and minor fires in the town during the 17th and 18th centuries. The most disastrous fire happened on 6 August 1613 when 300 houses and churches of Holy Trinity and All Saints were burnt, with only St Peter's church and a few houses near it escaping the conflagration (Hutchins 1868, 340). These fires have likely contributed to the predominantly 18th century and later character of Dorchester. The late 18th and 19th century saw significant expansion and many improvements in the town.

By the late eighteenth century, an inn had been built on the corner plot of the site facing High East Street with a rear entrance into the back yard off North Square (Hutchins 1771 Map of Dorchester). This inn is identified as The Red Lion on the 1810 plan of Dorchester (DHC D1/OE1) (Figure 2). The east side of North Square was fully built up with gardens behind. This part of town continued to have a number of butcher shops until the late nineteenth century. In 1810 the southern part of the current car park was occupied by a house occupied by George Squibb. By 1848 it had become a property of the borough.

The Guildhall of the borough lay on the west side of North Square on the side of St Peter's Church. A new Town Hall was built in 1791 across the entrance of North Square between St Peter's and the Red Lion (Figure 2). This was replaced by the existing Town Hall, designed by Benjamin Ferrey and built by Samuel Slade in 1847-8 (Figure 3). The 1848 map of Dorchester (DHC D/COO:E/7) shows the new town hall with open space behind and with further buildings to the north covering much of the area of the present car park, but the area of the proposed new extension is shown as open space (Figure 3). The Corn Exchange was added to the rear of the building in 1867. A new market hall and the borough police station were added to the rear of the Town Hall/Corn Exchange at about the same time (Figure 4). The borough police station probably became redundant in 1889 when the Dorchester borough police force was absorbed into the Dorset Constabulary. The market hall was demolished some time between 1957 and 1963 according to historic map evidence. Victory Court to the north was probably built in the 1980s on the site of the former Dorchester Arms, later used as West Dorset District Council offices.

### 4.3 Previous Archaeological Investigations

There have been a number of previous archaeological investigations in the immediate vicinity of the site, which can provide data to assess the potential archaeological resource on the site.

The only recorded archaeological investigation on the site itself was a watching brief by Terrain Archaeology during the construction of the brick boundary wall along the north side of the town hall car park in 2004 (Terrain Archaeology 2004a). The footings of the new wall did not penetrate below the remains of the Market House and revealed part of a quarry tile floor and an internal brick partition wall. In addition, the cellars of former houses along the North Square frontage that survive beneath the west end of the car park were recorded. The cellars contained a number of vats, which were probably used for bacon curing and hooks for hanging meat.

Immediately to the north, a watching brief was undertaken in 1977 by Peter Woodward during the construction of a rear extension to the West Dorset District Council offices at 21 North Square (Keen 1977, 120). Much of the area had been disturbed by the cellars of Friary Buildings. A nineteenth century bread oven had been inserted into one of the cellars. A small area of undisturbed ground revealed natural chalk at a depth of about one metre, with traces of an old ground surface above. This was cut by an E-W ditch, probably a boundary ditch of late first century AD date. To the north of this site, during construction works for a rear extension to 19 North Square, further traces of Roman archaeology including pits and part of the old ground surface were found (Terrain Archaeology 2004b).

In 1981 the construction of a new church room in the northwest corner of St Peter's Churchyard revealed part of an E-W Roman street (Sparey Green 1981). This street was bounded by a ditch to the south. Traces of robbed out Roman structures were found to the south of this ditch. Also, a medieval pit was found cut through the Roman street. In 1960, when the buildings on the west side of North Square to the north of St Peter's Church were demolished, a Roman pit was recorded (DC HER EDO4464).

In July 2007 emergency sewage pipe repairs on the west side of North Square outside 3 North Square revealed that the old ground surface still survived in this area, with a thin chalk layer or surface above, sealed by a layer of yellowish-brown stony clay (DC HER EDO5014).

### 4.4 Site Walk-over

A site visit was undertaken on 7 January 2021 to record current ground conditions. Plates 1–2 show the current condition of the car park and the area of the proposed new extension. The retaining wall between the east end of the car park and the King's Arms site is shown on Plates 3–4.

Examination of the Kings Arms car park gives some evidence for the likely earlier ground levels. The north wall of the car park has some blocked openings in the brick wall, which appear to relate to the buildings in this area present in the later nineteenth century. These openings suggest that the present ground levels are similar to those of the later nineteenth century. The western part of the Kings Arms car park appears to have been levelled and may have been terraced into the slope. The evidence from the Kings Arms car park indicates that the present town hall car park has been artificially built up to form the present level surface.

## 5. Archaeological Assessment of Ground Investigations of the Site

### 5.1 Introduction

Two episodes of ground investigation have been undertaken on the site of the proposed extension. Initially a series of three trial holes were dug by hand, but all three had to be terminated before reaching the required depth.

Subsequently, two boreholes were sunk into the same locations as two of the trial holes. This work was not observed archaeologically, but it is possible to assess the recorded results archaeologically to gain some understanding of the surviving archaeological stratigraphy of the site.

### 5.2 Dencher Trial Holes

In August 2020, Dencher Consulting Engineers dug three trial holes within the footprint of the proposed extension (Figure 6). All three trial holes reached the practical limit of excavation, but did not penetrate as far as the chalk bedrock. TP1 was dug to a depth of 0.85 m against the existing building and excavation stopped when a hard patch of infilling or possibly a widening of the building footing was encountered. TP2 and TP3 were excavated to a depth of about 0.7 m and 0.9 m respectively, but both encountered services which restricted excavation. TP3 was subsequently augered to a depth of 2.25 m. The deposits recorded are presented in Table 1.

TP1 revealed some detail of the lower parts of the existing building. Below the above ground rendered part of the building the brick wall continued down to about 0.25 m below ground level. Below this was stone masonry down to a depth of 0.5 m, at which point the wall stepped out 0.20m and comprised large stone blocks. In both trial holes TP2 and TP3, traces of the tiled floor of the former Market House were found immediately below the car park surface. Further traces of this floor had been previously exposed when the north boundary wall to the car park was built in 2004 (Terrain Archaeology 2004a), suggesting the remains of this floor are extensive beneath the car park surface. All three trial holes exposed the upper part of the levelling deposits forming the level terrace for the construction of the Market House.

Depth (m)	Description	Archaeological Interpretation
<b>Trial Hole TP1</b>		
0 – 0.20	Tarmac and Make Up	Car Park Surface – Modern
0.20 – 0.85	Brown silty clay soil with frequent stone rubble	Terrace infill deposits for former Market House.
<b>Trial Hole TP2</b>		
0 – 0.20	Tarmac and Make Up	Car Park Surface – Modern
0.20 – 0.40	Concrete slab with clay quarry tile.	Tiled floor of former Market House. (Is concrete slab local to clay drain below?)
0.40 – 0.70	Mixed mid greyish-brown soil and chalk, flint and stone rubble and clinker(?) in vertical sided cut containing clay drain pipe.	Drain for Market House, below floor.
0.40 – 0.60	Mid yellowish-brown clayey soil with frequent stone rubble.	Terrace infill deposits for former Market House.
0.60 – 0.70+	Hard chalk rubble.	Localised chalk rubble deposit in terracing deposits for Market House.
<b>Trial Hole TP3</b>		
0 – 0.15	Tarmac and Make Up	Car Park Surface – Modern
0.15 – 0.40	Hardcore with clay quarry tile surface.	Tiled floor of former Market House.
0.15 – 0.45	Concrete encasing drain pipe and metal water pipe.	Concrete casing for drain (inserted into Market House floor?).
0.40 – 0.95	Greyish-brown clay with frequent chalk lumps and clinker(?)	Terrace infill deposits for former Market House.
0.95 – 2.25	Greyish-brown clay with frequent flint and limestone and chalk rubble.	Terrace infill deposits for former Market House.

Table 1: Trial Hole data.

### 5.3 Advanced Investigation Systems Ltd Boreholes

Two boreholes (BH02 and BH03) were drilled to a depth of five metres in October and November 2020 by Advanced Investigation Systems Ltd to investigate further the ground conditions on site. Borehole BH02 was drilled through the backfilled trial hole TP2 and borehole BH03 through TP3. The deposits recorded are presented in Table 2.

Both boreholes revealed thick deposits of Made Ground consisting of mixed deposits of clay, limestone, flint and chalk rubble, which have been interpreted as the deposits forming the level terrace for the construction of the nineteenth century Market House. Immediately below these Made Ground deposits, natural chalk was encountered at a depth of 3.9 m below ground level in BH02 and 3.3 m below ground level in BH03. Examination of the photographs of the recovered core samples (Plates 8–9) suggests that the nineteenth century deposits overlay the natural chalk in BH02, but in BH03, there was a 0.25 m thick layer of dark brown soil overlying the chalk. This may be the remains of the former soil cover prior to the construction of the Market House. The character of the soil suggests it is more likely to be a post-medieval garden soil, rather than a remnant of the Roman ground surface, which is normally lighter in colour and more clayey than the soil seen in BH03. In BH02, the upper part of the natural chalk appears disturbed (hence the greater depth of the top of the chalk?). This borehole appears to be within the former footprint of a post-medieval building shown on the 1810 map (Figure 2), which may be the cause of the disturbance.

Depth (m)	Stratum	Description	Archaeological Interpretation
<b>Borehole BH02</b>			
0 – 0.6	Made Ground – Previously Excavated	Soft to firm becoming firm light grey brown very gravelly cobbly bouldery sandy silty clay with flint chalk brick limestone carbonaceous fragments bituminous macadam.	Trial Hole TP2 backfill.
0.6 – 2.3	Made Ground	Loose light brown / cream / locally light brown grey locally clayey slightly sandy angular gravel and cobbles of chalk limestone occasionally brick & carbonaceous fragments.	Terrace infill deposits for former Market House.
2.3 – 3.9	Made Ground	Firm dark grey sandy gravelly organic silty clay with brick chalk flint carbonaceous fragments.	Terrace infill deposits for former Market House.
3.9 +	Chalk		Natural Chalk Bedrock
<b>Borehole BH03</b>			
0 – 2.5	Made Ground – Previously Excavated	Poor recovery. Soft to firm becoming firm light grey brown very gravelly cobbly bouldery sandy silty clay with flint chalk brick limestone carbonaceous fragments bituminous macadam	Trial Hole TP3 backfill.
2.5 – 3.3	Made Ground	Firm dark grey sandy gravelly organic silty clay with brick chalk flint carbonaceous fragments.	Terrace infill deposits for former Market House.
3.3 +	Chalk		Natural Chalk Bedrock

Table 1: Borehole data.

## 6. Suggested Archaeological Deposit Model

### 6.1 Introduction

The information gained from previous archaeological investigations in the vicinity of the site and the results of the ground investigations on the site enables a generalised impression of the likely archaeological resource on the site to be suggested and the likely survival of this archaeological resource.

### 6.2 Character of the Potential Archaeological Resource

#### 6.2.1 Prehistoric

There is no definite prehistoric evidence found in the close vicinity of the Site, but investigations in the wider area of Dorchester suggest that any evidence is likely to consist of remnants of the pre-Roman/early Roman agricultural soil

immediately above the natural chalk and/or possibly the remains of boundary ditches from late prehistoric fields. It is considered that there is a low probability for prehistoric archaeology to be present on the site.

### 6.2.2 Roman

The line of the Roman street from the West Gate is projected to run across the southern part of the footprint of the new extension (Figure 5). The Roman streets appear to have been built directly on the old ground surface and consisted of layers of sand and gravel, sometimes over a basal deposit of flint nodules and rammed chalk (for example, see Terrain Archaeology 2016 and forthcoming). The edge of the street is likely to have been defined by a ditch, as was recorded on the south side of the road at St Peter's (Sparey Green 1981). The edge of the street may have outwash deposits of sand and gravel. In the street recorded at Bennetts Court, Colliton Street, the original roadside ditch was completely infilled with erosion deposits and a second ditch was dug further out (Terrain Archaeology, forthcoming). In the early Roman period, the early timber buildings appear to be set back from the streets with the area between filled with layers of chalk and soil (Woodward *et al.* 1993). Later stone-footed buildings tended to be set closer to the edge of the street. There is no evidence for buildings on the site, but any early timber buildings may lie beyond the limits of the new extension. It is likely that there were buildings along this side of the street in the area immediately adjacent to the forum.

### 6.2.3 Medieval

Relatively few medieval features have been found across Dorchester, which makes it difficult to be particularly specific about the character of the medieval archaeology in this part of Dorchester. It is likely that the North Square frontage was built up, but no documentary evidence for this survives (Draper and King 1995). The area of the new extension would be in the backland behind the buildings on the frontage. In the area behind 19 North Square a small number of twelfth-thirteenth century ditches and pits were discovered (Terrain Archaeology 2004b). It is possible similar features could be present in the backland areas behind the North Square frontage on the site.

### 6.2.4 Post-medieval

The 1610 Speed map of Dorchester suggests a similar arrangement to the late medieval period with houses and other buildings along the frontage and gardens and backland areas behind. The 1771 Hutchins map suggests that for the area of the present car park a similar situation continued into the late eighteenth century. By 1810, a large part of the car park area was covered with buildings and outbuildings, including much of the western part of the area of the proposed new extension (Figure 2), but by 1848 it was open ground again. The buildings across the whole area of the car park were demolished to build the Market House, which involved the artificial raising of the ground levels across the eastern half of the site. Potentially, remains of the earlier buildings on the site might be present below the levelling layers, but it is unlikely that there will be much archaeology relating to the eighteenth and nineteenth century on the site of the new extension.

## 6.3 Significance of Potential Archaeological Resource

Based on the above assessment of the archaeological character of the site, it is only the Roman archaeology that is likely to be of more than negligible significance, if the probability of it occurring on the site of the new extension is taken into account. The projected Roman archaeology is considered to comprise part of a Roman street and the deposits on the roadside edge. Any Roman archaeology on the site should be considered as an element of an important Roman town that functioned as a regional administrative centre and, therefore, should be considered as having **Moderate** significance.

However, although the overall Roman street pattern of Dorchester is not known, the location of this particular street is relatively well determined by observations at High West Street (Farrar 1966 and 1967), St Peter's Church (Sparey Green 1981) and Greenings Court (Putnam *et al.* 1970). The scale of the proposed development means that it would not provide a full section across the street, nor is it likely to expose enough of the area along the street frontage to determine the character of any activity or building in this position with any degree of confidence, assuming that any of this potential archaeological resource now survives on the site.

## 6.4 Potential Survival of the Archaeological Resource

The archaeological investigations in the vicinity of the site which have produced Roman stratigraphy, have also revealed traces of the pre-urban ancient soil, both in the area to the west of the site beneath North Square (DC HER EDO5014) and to the north east on the former St John Ambulance Hall site on Friary Lane (Terrain Archaeology 2000). No trace of this soil layer was present in the borehole samples, nor was there any trace of potential Roman stratigraphy. Borehole BH02 suggests that there is post-medieval disturbance down into the top of the chalk bedrock, perhaps caused by the former buildings over the western part of the site. Borehole BH03 suggests that only a thin post-medieval soil survives over the natural chalk beneath the late nineteenth century terracing deposits. The evidence from the boreholes suggests that no significant Roman and medieval archaeological stratigraphy is present on the site, which may have been extensively disturbed by post-medieval building activity.

## 7. Further Archaeological Investigation

The evidence from the ground investigation boreholes has shown that the area of the proposed new extension contains late nineteenth century deposits down to a depth of at least 3.3 m below present ground level. If further evaluation is required in the form of a trial trench, this will present a significant challenge in order to safely reach the depths required to investigate the survival of any pre-nineteenth century features and/or deposits. Any trench dug within the footprint of the proposed extension would need significant shoring of the sides to prevent collapse and would need to be dug sufficiently far away from the existing building to ensure it does not compromise its structural integrity, therefore, is likely to have to be partially dug in the area beyond the footprint of the proposed extension. The shoring of the trench would significantly inhibit the ability to identify and record any archaeological stratigraphy in section. Alternative approaches to safely digging the trench, such as stepping in the sides of the trench, would require excavating a trench much larger in area than the proposed extension footprint.

Given that the borehole data suggests there is not likely to be much survival of archaeological stratigraphy, this, taken together with the small scale of the proposed development, and the fact that the new structure will have piled foundations (which will have a relatively minor impact on any potential archaeology on the site), it is suggested that the excavation of an evaluation trench may not be the most appropriate method for obtaining further archaeological data for this particular development.

## 8. Possible Mitigation Measures during Construction

The design of the proposed new extension provides very little opportunity to record any possible archaeology disturbed by the construction. The only element of the structure that will penetrate deep enough to affect any surviving archaeology is the piled foundation.

The proposed foundation design consists of thirteen piles supporting a concrete ring beam. The piles are proposed to be 250/300mm diameter bored piles to a nominal depth of 14 m. The proposed pile array consists of five piles each along the north and south edges of the extension footprint and three across the centre (information provided by Dencher Consulting Engineers Drawing 0624-01A). The piles will cover a wider area of the proposed building footprint than that of the previous ground investigations and will include part of the site where the Roman street is projected to have crossed. During the formation of bored piles, the spoil is brought to the surface, but is often very sludgy and difficult to observe anything more than the coarsest of changes in the material the pile is bored through. However, the Roman street gravels, if present, could be quite distinctive compared to the rest of the deposits and it may be possible to determine their presence or absence, though this is by no means certain.

If archaeological mitigation of the construction is required by the Local Planning Authority, then a limited watching brief during piling operations is considered the only possible option, though the likelihood of obtaining useful archaeological data is relatively low.

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Figure 2: Extract of 1810 Plan of Dorchester (DHC D1/OE1) overlain by modern map and Site Boundary.



Figure 3: Extract of 1848 Plan of Dorchester (DHC D/COO:E/7) overlain by modern map and Site Boundary.

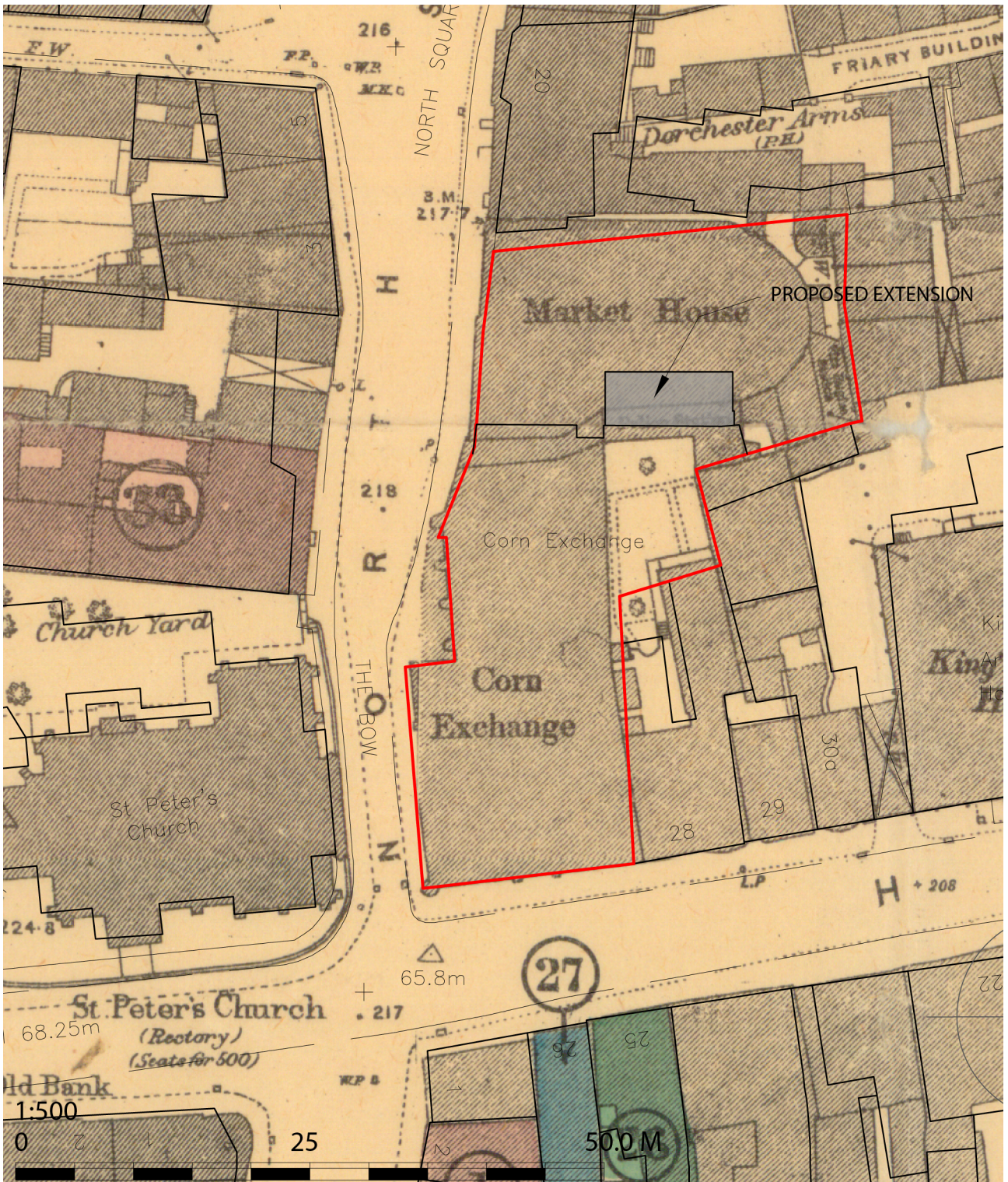


Figure 4: Extract of 1888 Ordnance Survey Town Plan overlain by modern map and Site Boundary.

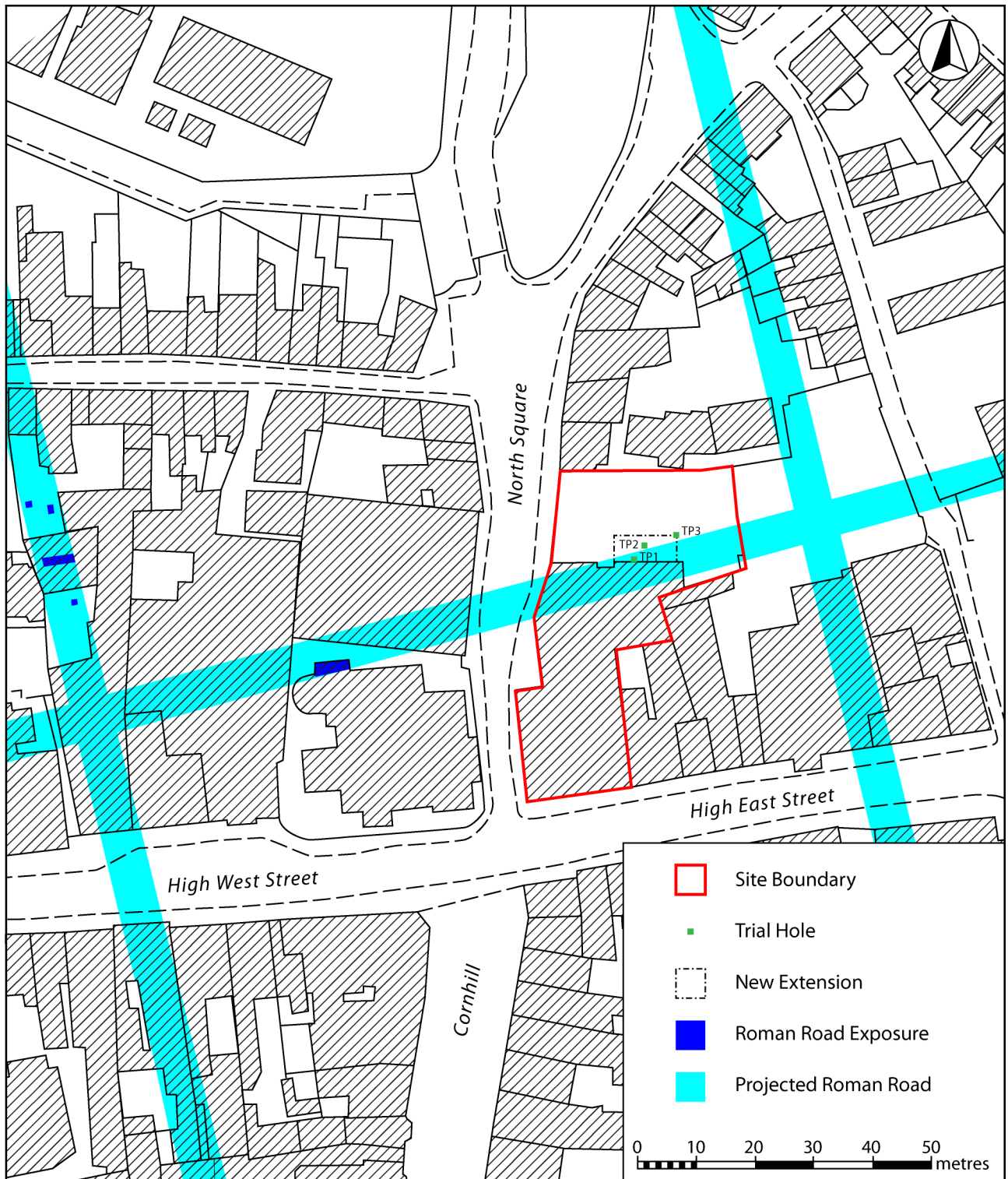


Figure 5: Projected line of Roman streets in vicinity of the site.

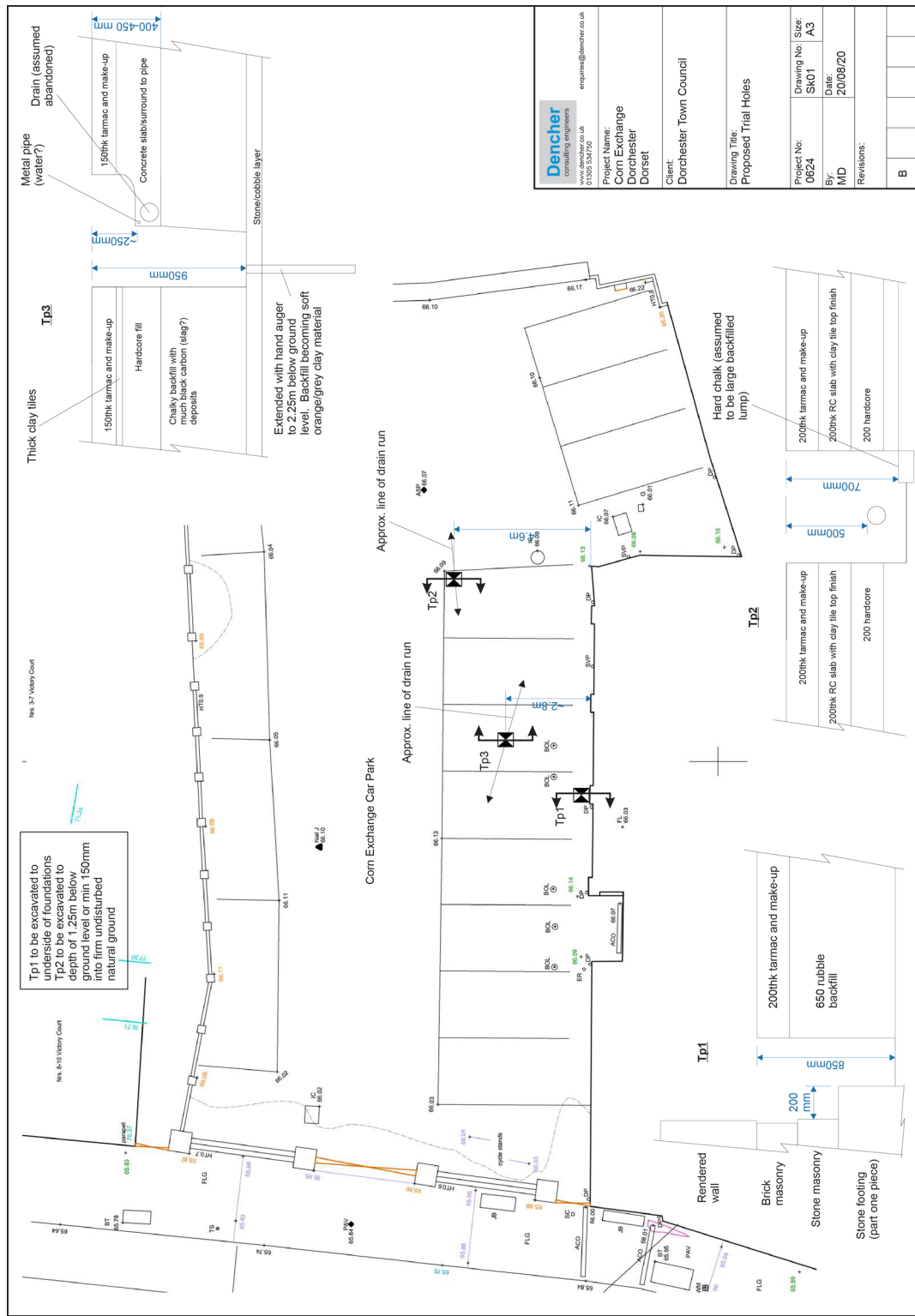


Figure 6: Location of Trial Holes (plan provided by Mike Dencher).



*Plate 1: View of Car Park north of Corn Exchange, looking east.*



*Plate 2: View of area of proposed new extension with locations of boreholes BH02 and BH03 surrounded by orange netlon fencing, looking south.*



*Plate 3: View of retaining wall of terrace constructed for nineteenth century Market House, looking south.*



*Plate 4: View west showing difference in levels between the site (to rear) and the Kings Arms car park (in foreground).*



*Plate 5: Trial Hole TP1. (Photo supplied by Mike Dencher).*



*Plate 6: Trial Hole TP2. (Photo supplied by Mike Dencher).*



Plate 7: Trial Hole TP3. (Photo supplied by Mike Dencher).



Plate 8: Borehole BH02 sample. (Photo from Advanced Investigations System Ltd 2020).



Plate 9: Borehole BH03 sample. (Photo from Advanced Investigations System Ltd 2020).