

29-31 DAMERS ROAD

DORCHESTER

DORSET

DT1 2JX

Results of Archaeological Monitoring and Recording



South West Archaeology Ltd. Report no 181115

29-31 Damers Road, Dorchester, Dorset Results of Archaeological Monitoring and Recording

By J. Bampton
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14th November 2018

Work undertaken by SWARCH for the Bracken Group (The Agent)
On behalf of Bownsea Ltd. (The Client)

SUMMARY

South West Archaeology Ltd. was commissioned to undertake archaeological monitoring and recording at 29-31 Damers Road, Dorchester, Dorset, during groundworks associated with a residential development.

The results of the archaeological monitoring and recording indicate the low potential of the site for surviving archaeological deposits. The site had been terraced/levelled and built on in the 20th century, with made-ground layers overlaying the natural across the site. Cartographic sources would indicate that the site was developed in the latter half of the 20th century.

The monitoring was relatively conclusive regarding the archaeological potential of the site. The general paucity of finds indicates a probable lack of earlier archaeological features or deposits on the site prior to its disturbance and development through the 20th century.

No archaeological features or deposits were present on the site.



November 2018

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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PROJECT CREDITS

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

LOCATION:	29-31 DAMERS ROAD
PARISH:	DORCHESTER
DISTRICT:	WEST DORSET
COUNTY:	DORSET
NGR:	SY 68651 90257
SWARCH REF:	DDR18
Planning Application No:	WD/D/18/000314
OASIS No:	southwes1-331975

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) was commissioned by a private client (the Client) to undertake archaeological monitoring and recording with related off-site analyses at 29-31 Damers Road, Dorchester, Dorset, during groundworks associated with a residential development. This work was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) drawn up in consultation with Steve Wallis, Senior Archaeologist at Dorset County Council (SADCC) and ClfA guidelines (Balmond 2018).

1.2 TOPOGRAPHICAL AND GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The site is located near the centre of Dorchester at 29-31 Damers Road (the B3144), to the south of Dorset County Hospital. The site was a former garage and supply building surrounded by residential developments, at a height of approximately 76m AOD.

Although the site is within an urban area, the soils of the surrounding area vary between the shallow well drained calcareous silty soils over chalk of the Upton 1, Andover 2 and Coombe 1 Associations (SSEW 1983); these overlie the Portsdown Chalk Formation (BGS 2018).

1.3 HISTORICAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Dorchester was originally the Roman town of *Durnovaria*. Dorchester means ‘the Roman town of Dorcic’, recorded as *Dorcic/Dorciccaestræ* in the 9th century by Bede; *ceaster* from the Old English, itself derived from the Roman *castrum* referring to a Roman town or fort; and *dorcic* derived from either a personal name or meaning either ‘fist’, ‘appearance’ or ‘I see’ (Watts 2004). These variations may refer to the nearby Maiden Castle as opposed to the settlement itself. By 1086 Dorchester (*Dorecestre*) was a very large manor held by the king (Martin and Williams 2002). The site lies within the western edge of the Dorchester Conservation Area. Historic mapping (see Appendix 2) shows the site as blank c.1888-1913, although with the surrounding residential developments and street plan underway. By the mid 20th century the surrounding residential development has grown and the site has been encroached upon, although it is still not shown to contain any structures. Aerial photography as recent as 2018 (see Appendix 2) shows the ‘garage’ type structure that covered the site prior to demolition shortly before the site visit; the western third shows a longer bay with a separate yard.

A number of surrounding heritage assets indicates activity at the site from the prehistoric period onward. The Dorset Historic Environment Record (HER) lists various Scheduled Ancient Monuments close to the site: Dorchester Roman walls (List Entry No.1002449) c.360m east-north-east; the Romano-British and later Maumbury Rings (1110596) c.475m to the south-west; the Iron Age Maiden Castle (1015775) 2.3km to the south-west; as well as various Bronze Age barrows. Furthermore the

Grade II Listed 19th century Damers Hospital (1110636) is located c.63m north of the site; The Grade II Listed Dorchester West station (1218270) 200m east of the site; and the c.1900, Grade II* Listed Church of St Mary (1110596) with its Grade II Listed gate piers is located c.190m south-east of the site. A Roman coin was found on the site of the Dorset County Hospital and a trade token from a site at Dagmar Road adjacent to the site. Geotechnical reports (Kings 2016; 2017) indicated that made-ground was present across the site, overlaying chalk bedrock.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

The archaeological monitoring and recording was conducted in accordance with a WSI (Balmond 2018). The programme of works was drawn up in consultation with Steve Wallis, Dorset County Council Historic Environment Team (DCCHET) and ClfA guidelines; *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* and *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (ClfA 2015). The archaeological works in this instance aims to determine the presence or absence-, extent, date, condition and complexity of archaeological remains within the site and to ensure the preservation by record of any encountered archaeological deposits or remains in accordance with current industry standards and best practice. Groundworks associated with ground reduction to formation level were monitored.

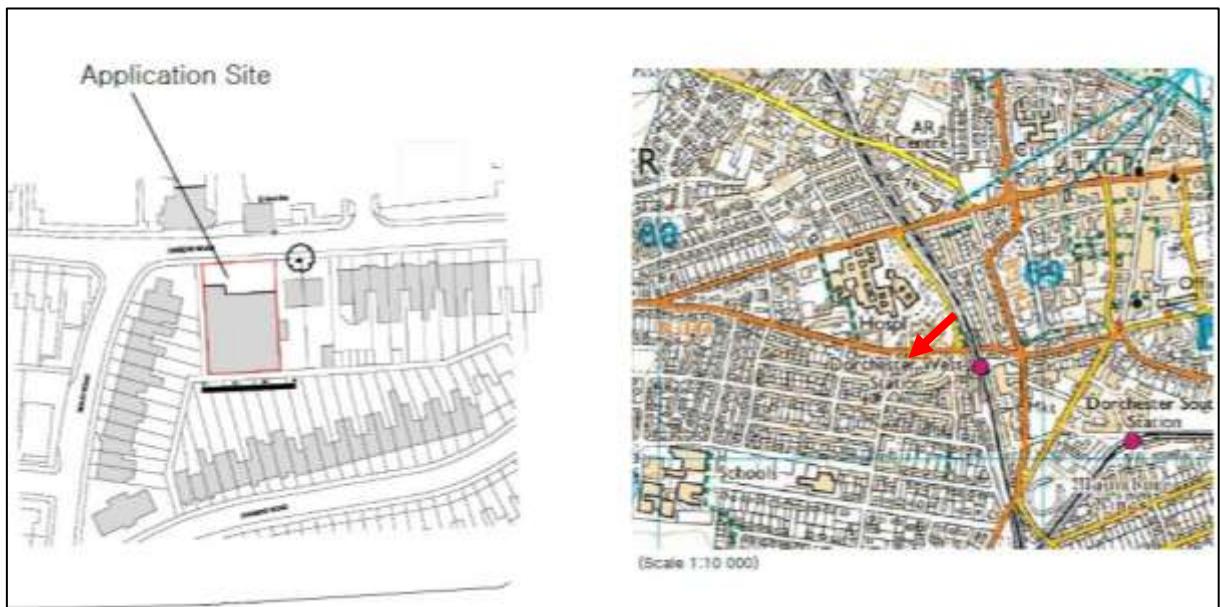


FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION; PLAN PROVIDED BY THE CLIENT (THE SITE IS INDICATED).

2.0 RESULTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING

2.1 INTRODUCTION

An area approximately the width of the site and c.25m of its length was excavated on the 7th November 2018 to the level of formation. A structure that had covered the site had recently been demolished and its concrete floors removed.

No archaeological features were present. The topography of the natural and deposition of made-ground layers indicated the terracing of the site. Approximately two thirds of the site was terraced to a substantial depth that will have fully truncated the archaeological resource. The rest of the site had been terraced to a lesser depth, but was also likely to have truncated any archaeological resource. Full context descriptions can be seen in Appendix 1; supporting cartographic sources and aerial photos in Appendix 2; and supporting photographs in Appendix 3.

2.2 SITE INSPECTION

A building that contained a vehicle inspection pit in its south-east end had extended across the width of the site and had been demolished prior to the site visit. The sites concrete floors had also been removed, although the footings were left until the archaeological monitoring of the site could begin. A working walk way approximately 2m wide had been left around the edge of the site and excavated area. The removed concrete floor levels were c.0.25cm deep (approximately half the depth of formation. The west edge of the site was stepped up across the footprint of a later extension to the original building on the site. The Damers Road-side front of the site contained a skip, plant and security fencing limiting the works in that area.

2.3 DEPOSIT MODEL

Along the western side of the site c.0.26m of modern concrete floor, (100), overlaid c.0.46m of a soily made-ground, (101), which overlaid the Natural, a compact chalk, (102). The Natural occurred at a depth of c.0.76m although this was deeper at the south end of the site and became shallower towards the north. A relatively large 20th century block-work footing divided this western edge of the site from the rest of the site. This footing cut the Natural and on the eastern side of the footing, within the footprint of the demolished building, it contained a greater depth of made-ground, (106). An inspection pit in the south-east of the site, the floor level of which was already c.0.75m lower than the floor surfaces on the western edge of the site, was excavated to a depth of c.1.45m and was still within made-ground deposits. In this corner of the site; concrete floor (103) overlaid made-ground (104), which was made-up of rubble and waste material; which overlaid a mixed chalk and topsoil made-ground (105), which overlaid made-ground (106), which was similar to made-ground (101), although containing more abundant modern, 20th century, debris.

2.4 RESULTS

An area c.25m×20m was monitored during the reduction of ground levels on site. An area c.24m×14m across the site, within the footprint of the main part of the demolished building (two eastern bays), had suffered deep truncation of the natural to below the level of formation. This area had then been made-up in the 20th century. Across the less truncated parts of the site a soily made-ground directly overlaid the natural. No archaeological features or deposits were present.

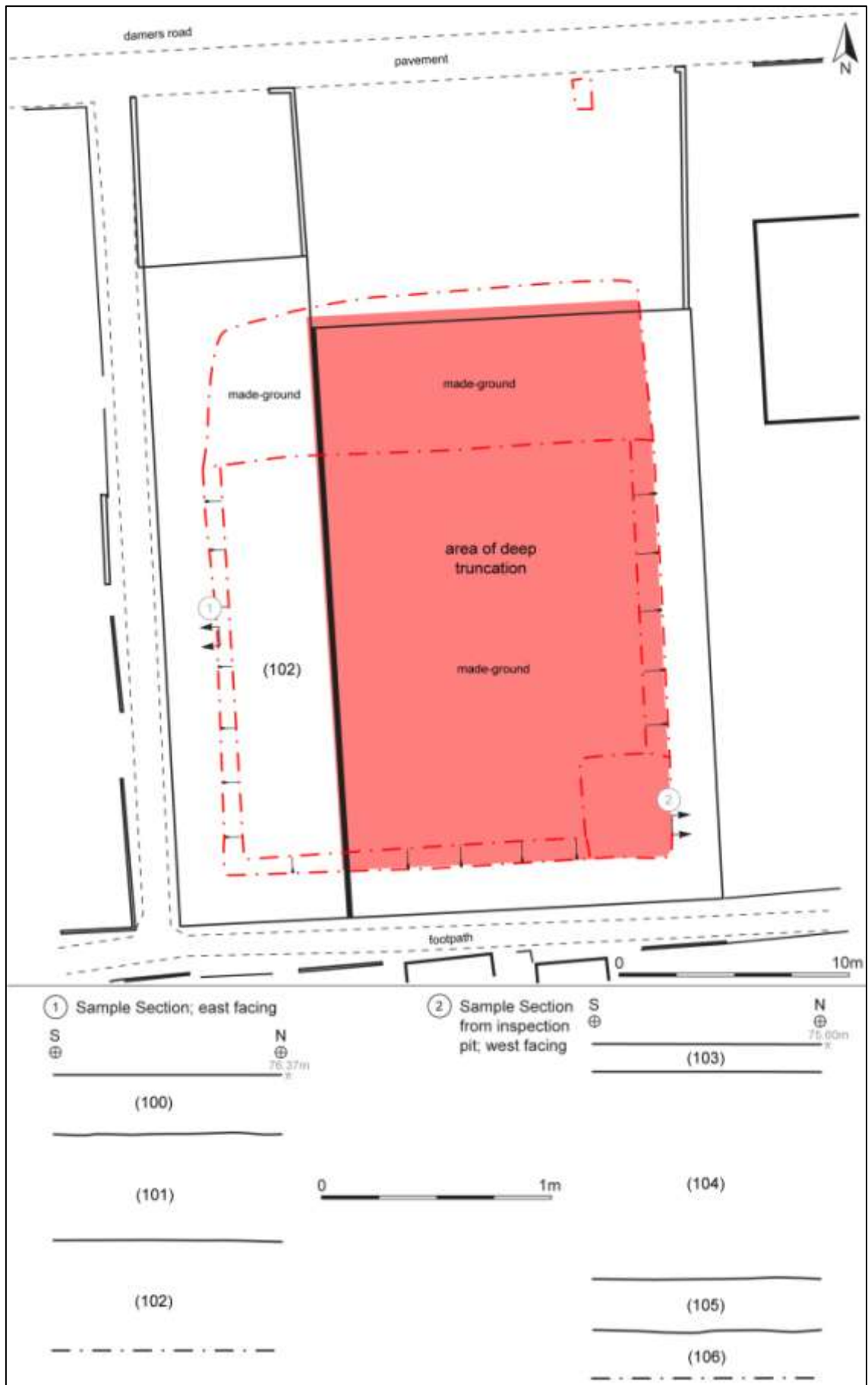


FIGURE 2: SITE PLAN OF EXCAVATED AREA OVER A SIMPLIFIED PRE-DEMOLITION SITE PLAN; AND SAMPLE SECTIONS.

2.5 FINDS

Only modern finds were encountered during the monitoring and recording and were subsequently discarded on site. 20th century White Refined Earthenware (WRE) was present in made-grounds layers (101) and (106). Made-ground (106) also contained plastic and modern rusted iron fragments. A small Victorian medicine bottle was also encountered within made-ground (106).



FIGURE 3: SITE SHOT MID REDUCTION OF LEVELS, THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF DEEPER TRUNCATION/FOOTING TO THE EASTERN TWO BAYS OF THE DEMOLISHED STRUCTURE IS SHOWN IN RED; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-WEST (NO SCALE).

3.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

3.1 DISCUSSION

The results of the archaeological monitoring and recording indicate that the site had been terraced/levelled and built on in the 20th century. Cartographic sources would suggest that the site was developed in the latter half of the 20th century.

Soils or deposits had been removed to the depth of the natural and the natural cut away across most of the site before being overlaid with made-grounds that contained 20th century material. Along the western half of the site these made-grounds were predominantly redeposited topsoil/subsoil sediments. Other than a Victorian medicine bottle, the only other finds on the site were 20th century and discarded on site.

3.2 CONCLUSION

No archaeological features or deposits were present on the site.

The general paucity of finds indicates a probable lack of earlier archaeological features or deposits on the site prior to its disturbance and development through the 20th century. The level of truncation and made-ground mean that any earlier archaeological deposits or features will have been truncated in the mid-20th century upon the construction of the garage buildings.

4.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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<https://explorer.geowessex.com/>

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT LIST

CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION		RELATIONSHIPS	DEPTH/ THICKNESS	SPOT DATE
(100)	<i>Concrete</i>	Thick concrete floor with rubble hard-core base and lino/thick paint type surface. Across higher original floor of western bay of demolished property	Overlaid (101)	0.26m	C20
(101)	<i>Made-ground</i>	Dark brown-grey, loose friable sandy-silt with frequent intrusions/very mucky deposit, contained 20 th century pottery	Overlaid (102); Overlain by (100)	0.46m	C20
(102)	<i>Natural</i>	Compact white chalk	Overlain by (101)(106)	Below 0.72m+	C20
(103)	<i>Concrete</i>	Concrete floor surface	Overlaid (104)	0.12m	C20
(104)	<i>Made-ground</i>	Rubble made-ground of stone rubble of various sizes; also contained metal debris	Overlaid (105); Overlain by (103)	0.90m	C20
(105)	<i>Made-ground</i>	Mixed chalky soil deposit, dark grey with off-white lenses/flecks, friable sandy-silt	Overlaid (106); Overlain by (104)	0.22m	C20
(106)	<i>Made-ground</i>	Mid-dark brown-grey, friable sandy-silt with frequent intrusions including 20 th century pottery, metallic and plastic debris	Overlain by (105)	0.21m	C20

APPENDIX 2: SUPPORTING CARTOGRAPHIC AND AERIAL SOURCES



FIGURE 4: ORDNANCE SURVEY 6 INCH SERIES, 1888-1913 (DORSET HER).



FIGURE 5: ORDNANCE SURVEY, 1:25,000 SERIES, 1937-1961 (DORSET HER).



FIGURE 6: AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH OF THE SITE IN 2018 (GETMAPPING PLC AND BLUESKY INTERNATIONAL LIMITED 2018).

APPENDIX 3: SUPPORTING PHOTOGRAPHS



FIGURE 7: SITE SHOT POST-DEMOLITION OF STRUCTURE; VIEWED FROM THE WEST (NO SCALE).



FIGURE 8: SITE SHOT POST-DEMOLITION OF STRUCTURE; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-WEST (NO SCALE).



FIGURE 9: SITE SHOT POST-DEMOLITION OF STRUCTURE; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH (NO SCALE).



FIGURE 10: INSPECTION PIT IN SOUTH-EAST CORNER OF DEMOLISHED STRUCTURE; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-WEST (NO SCALE).



FIGURE 11: SITE SHOT MID-REDUCTION OF SITE; VIEWED FROM THE EAST (NO SCALE).



FIGURE 12: SAMPLE SECTION IN INSPECTION PIT; VIEWED FROM THE WEST (1M SCALE).



FIGURE 13: WESTERN LIMIT OF EXCAVATION/SAMPLE SECTION; VIEWED FROM THE EAST (1M SCALE).



FIGURE 14: INSPECTION PIT; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-NORTH-WEST (NO SCALE).



FIGURE 15: SITE SHOT MID-REDUCTION OF SOUTHERN HALF OF SITE; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-EAST (NO SCALE).



FIGURE 16: MADE-GROUND IN NORTH HALF OF SITE; BELOW THE DEPTH OF NATURAL IN THE SOUTH-WEST OF THE SITE DUE TO TRUNCATION AND IN-FILL; VIEWED FROM THE EAST (1M SCALE).

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