

Proposed Dairy Extension, Holditch Court Farm, Thorncombe, Dorset

Archaeological Area Strip



SOUTHWEST ARCHAEOLOGY

Heritage Consultancy

Dorset County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Thorncombe, Dorset	National Grid Reference: ST 34632 02225	Number:
Subject: Archaeological area excavating in advance of a Proposed Dairy Extension, Holditch Court Farm, Thorncombe, Dorset		Photo attached? Yes
Planning Reference: Pre-application	Recipient museum: n/a	
OASIS ID: Southwes1-533723	Museum Accession no: n/a	
Contractor's reference number/code: THCF25	Date fieldwork undertaken: 14 th May 2025	
<p>Description of works</p> <p>A controlled area excavation was undertaken at Holditch Court Farm, Thorncombe, Dorset as part of/ in advance of a planning application for an extension of an existing dairy. The client requested the works in anticipation that there would be need for an archaeological planning condition on the development, given that there had been for the adjoining barn (dairy). The archaeological strip work was undertaken under the control and supervision of Dr. S.H. Walls on the 14th May 2025. All work was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (Boyd 2025), and in line with Dorset Council standards and guidance for archaeological investigations.</p> <p>The footprint of the existing dairy was subject to an archaeological watching brief by AC Archaeology, during which 35 archaeological features were exposed, concentrated primarily to the south and west of the strip. The identified features included 17 pits or postholes, 16 tree-throws/natural features and two probable ditches. Two pits were dated by pottery to the Early and Late Bronze Age, with a further pit and one ditch dated to the early Roman period. Three pits, three possible postholes and one natural tree-throw produced worked chert and flint flakes dating them as broadly prehistoric; or containing residual material. 8 further pits/postholes were undated (see Blatchford 2018).</p> <p>An area measuring 30m by 33m was stripped to the top of a natural undisturbed ground layer by a large, tracked machine with toothless grading bucket under archaeological supervision. An existing barn (dairy) is located to the west end, and a 9m area has previously been terraced away at this western end, and was not therefore stripped. The previous terracing (for the Dairy) was up to c.1.3m deep to the north, and c.0.2m to the south.</p> <p>The stratigraphy on site was simple, consisting of topsoil (100) directly overlying the natural (101). The topsoil was a homogenous dry mid-slightly yellow-grey brown silty-clay. Measuring up to 0.32m thick at its deepest part, but becoming shallower to the south-west corner where it measured just 0.2m deep. The natural (101) on site was a firm reddish to yellow-grey clay with occasional sub-angular to sub-rounded flints and stone typically >80mm diameter, but some natural pockets of slightly larger stones (>140mm diameter).</p> <p>A service trench measuring 0.7m wide was exposed to the south of the stripped area. The trench contained a blue alkathene water pipe, which snaked in and out of the stripped area, presumably as it had been moled. No other archaeological features were noted, although to the south of the site, where the topsoil was shallower, several irregular and shallow slightly loose variations in the natural, may have reflected the former presence of tree cover over this part of the site.</p> <p>Finds recovered from the topsoil of the site included 1x brick fragment (23g), 2x Fe nail head/nails (9g), 1x Fe lump (7g) and 3x tertiary grey flint flakes (28g), 5x shattered natural flint/chert flakes (70g) were also recovered. There were other natural flints noted, but these were not collected as it was clear that they were natural. The natural flint/chert on site tended to be white to slightly reddish-yellow in colour. All of the finds are of low value/significance and will be discarded or returned to the landowner.</p> <p>The monitoring works did not encounter any significant archaeological deposits or finds.</p> <p>Bibliography Blatchford, C. 2018. Land at Holditch Court Farm North, Holditch, Nr Chard, Dorset. Archaeological Monitoring and Recording. AC Archaeology Boyd, N. 2025: <i>Proposed Dairy Extension, Holditch Court Farm, Thorncombe, Dorset: Written Scheme of Investigation</i>. SWARCH report no. THCF25WSiv1.</p>		
Recorder: S.H. Walls and E. Cottam		Date sent to HER: 27 th June 2025



FIGURE 1: LOCATION MAP. CONTAINS ORDNANCE SURVEY DATA © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2025.

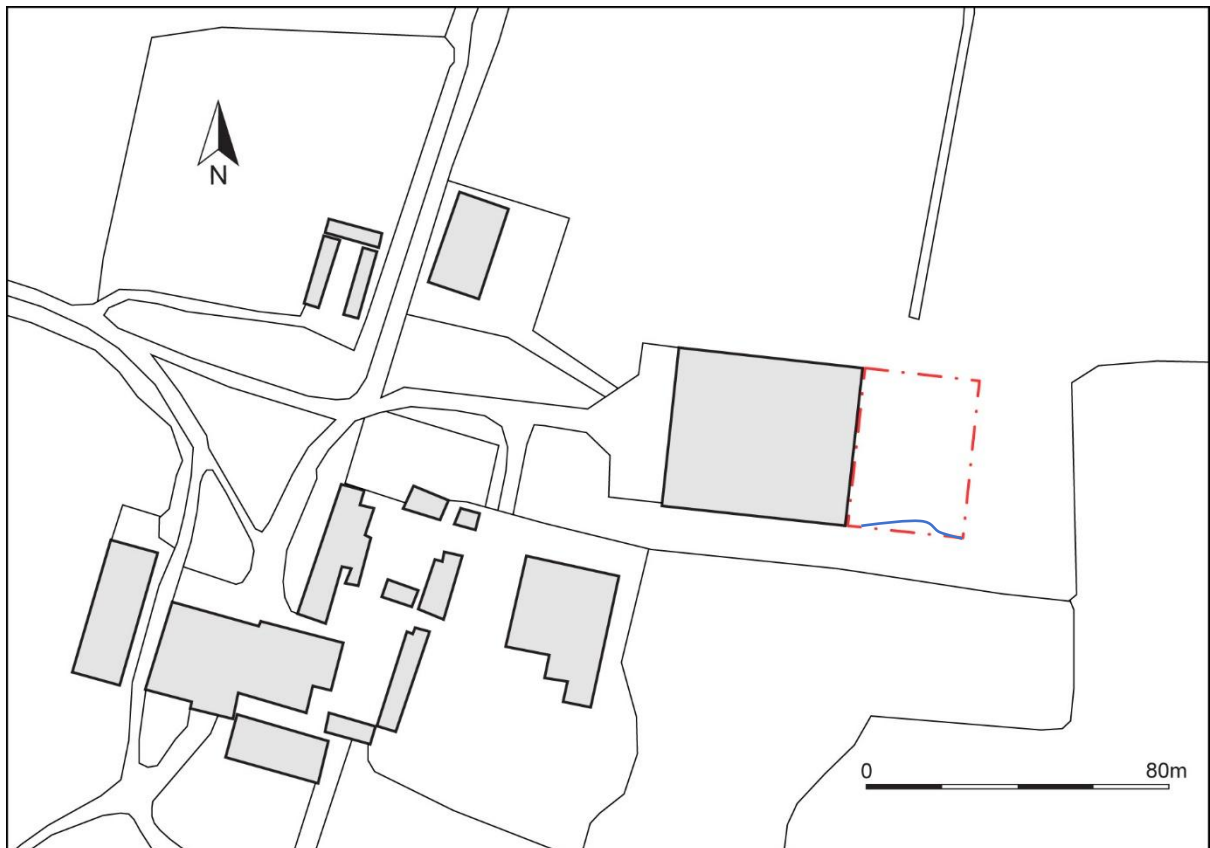


FIGURE 2: LOCATION MAP SHOWING THE AREA OF EXCAVATION IN RED. THE WATER PIPE TRENCH IS SHOWN IN BLUE.



FIGURE 3: EXCAVATION AREA AND EXISTING BARN, VIEWED FROM THE EAST (SCALE 1M).



FIGURE 4: EXCAVATION AREA AND EXISTING BARN, VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-EAST (SCALE 1M).



FIGURE 5: SAMPLE OF SECTION AT EDGE OF EXCAVATION, VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH (SCALE 1M).



FIGURE 6: EXCAVATION AREA AND TERRACE FOR EXISTING DAIRY, VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH (SCALE 1M).