

Land east of 13 Winters Lane, Portesham Dorset

Results of an archaeological trial trench evaluation

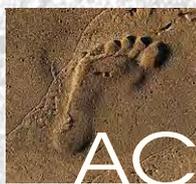
NGR SY6063085771

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AC archaeology

LAND EAST OF 13 WINTERS LANE, PORTESHAM, DORSET;

RESULTS OF AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

NGR SY6063085771

SUMMARY

An archaeological investigation was undertaken by AC Archaeology Ltd, on land east of Winters Lane, Portesham, Dorset during October 2019. The investigation comprised two machine-excavated trial trenches, each 10m in length and 1.8m in width, located across an east to west aligned linear bank, considered to be a possible lynchet. Trench 1 revealed no evidence for a bank, other than a localised soil accumulation, while Trench 2 exposed a buried subsoil horizon, beneath a clay bank, visible as a linear feature running to the east. The absence of a negative lynchet, in either trench, associated with the linear feature, indicates that the feature is unlikely to have been formed by cultivation and appears simply to be an earthen mound of an undetermined function, nature and date. No subsoil archaeological features or artefacts were present in either trench.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report sets out the results of archaeological site investigations, comprising an archaeological trench evaluation, on behalf of Sue Weeden, on land east of Winters Lane, Portesham, Dorset (NGR SY6063085771). The investigations were undertaken as a requirement of an outline planning consent for the development by Dorset Council (DC ref /D/19/000464). The evaluation was undertaken by AC archaeology Ltd during October 2019. The location, extent of the investigation area, and layout of the trenches is shown in Fig. 1.

1.2 Condition 7 of the consent for the development states:

No development or excavation shall take place until the applicant has secured a programme of investigative archaeological work in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to, and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the development shall thereafter accord with the approved scheme.

1.3 The bedrock geology is recorded a Kimmeridge Clay that dates to the Jurassic Period. Superficial colluvial deposits may also exist (BGS online).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 A topographic survey has been prepared for the site owner and is included in Fig. 1. A site visit was also undertaken on 14th August. The upper levels of the site (adjacent to Winters Lane) has clearly been terraced to afford access and stone has been laid to provide a hard standing. To the south of the application area a bank, possibly a medieval lynchet, is visible, running west to east. It is considered that the site has the

potential for undisturbed sub-surface deposits and hence it has been agreed with the site owner to undertake a trial trench evaluation.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 The aims of the investigation were:

- To provide an assessment of the presence/absence, function, date and chronology of any archaeological deposits present on the site;
- to enable a description of the significance of any heritage assets present;
- to enable an assessment of the impact of the proposed development on any heritage asset present;
- to enable further evaluation/mitigation strategies to be produced as part of a future detailed planning application.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 The archaeological investigations comprised the machine excavation of two trenches, each measuring 10m in length and 1.8m in width. Each was excavated using a wheeled mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket, down to the upper horizon of the natural substratum. A general view of the site is shown on Plate 1.

4.2 All deposits encountered during the works were recorded using the standard AC archaeology Ltd pro-forma recording system, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and in accordance with AC archaeology Ltd's General Recording Manual, Version 2 (August 2012). A detailed section was produced at a scale of 1:50, as appropriate. All site levels relate to Ordnance Datum, and trial trench locations were recorded using a Leica Viva GNSS, with a three-dimensional accuracy of 2cm.

4.3 The investigations were undertaken in accordance with a project design (Cox 2019) agreed in advance with the DCSA. The archive has been prepared using the archive number ACW1214 and is currently stored at the offices of AC Archaeology Ltd (Wiltshire).

4.4 An OASIS Form will be completed to allow the project to be included as part of the Online Access to Archaeological Archives database, maintained by the Archaeology Data Service.

5. RESULTS

Trench 1 (Fig. 1; Plate 2)

5.1 This trench was aligned north-east to south-west, across the presumed course of the possible lynchet, and positioned on moderately sloping ground laid to rough pasture.

It excavated to a maximum depth of 0.80m, through topsoil and a subsoil, before a natural clay substrate was revealed at a depth of 0.53m. The general layer sequence is described in Table 1 below. No archaeological deposits or artefacts were present, although there was a slight thickening of the subsoil in the centre of the trench.

Table 1: Trench 1 depositional sequence

Context	Depth	Description	Interpretation
100	0 - 250mm	Dark grey-brown silty clay loam.	Topsoil - present ground surface
101	250- 530mm	Mid yellowish brown sandy clay with occasional small angular limestone and sandstone fragments all poorly sorted.	Subsoil horizon
102	530mm+	Light yellowish grey sandy clay.	Natural substrate

- 5.2** Of particular note was the absence of a ditch or negative lynchet on the downslope side that would normally be formed in the creation of a lynchet.

Trench 2 (Plan Fig. 1; Section Fig. 2; Plates 3-4)

- 5.3** The trench was aligned approximately north-east to south-west and positioned to assess a low linear mound feature sited upon moderately sloping ground towards the east field boundary. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.97m through a topsoil and subsoils. The natural substrate was revealed at a depth of between 0.30-0.70m. The general soil sequence defined in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Trench 2 depositional sequence

Context	Depth	Description	Interpretation
200	0 – 200mm	Dark grey-brown silty clay loam.	Topsoil - present ground surface
201	200- 520mm	Mid yellowish brown sandy clay with occasional small angular limestone and sandstone fragments all poorly sorted.	Subsoil horizon
202	320- 450mm	Mid brown fine sand clay containing very occasional small limestone fragments.	Buried subsoil type layer relating to mound-like linear feature.
203	300- 700mm	Light yellowish grey sandy clay.	Natural substrate

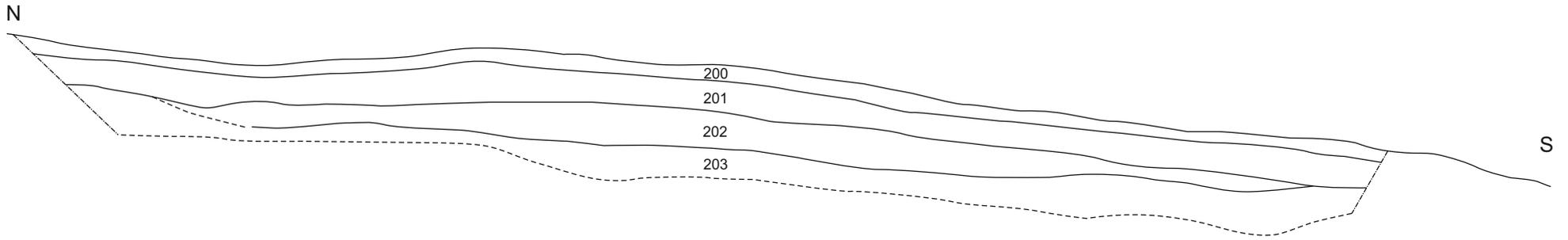
6. COMMENT

- 6.1** No subsoil archaeological features were exposed during the course of the investigations and no finds were present.

- 6.2** Within Trench 1 a simple sequence of topsoil and subsoil was present above the natural clay substrate. There was no evidence of a mound, nor of a negative lynchet on the downslope side of the putative lynchet alignment.
- 6.3** In Trench 2, located to cross the line of a visible surface mound, there was evidence of a thick clay subsoil accumulation with some limestone fragments, but no buried humic soil over the natural clay substrate. Again, there was no evidence for a negative lynchet on the downslope side of the bank. The mound has the appearance of a subsoil accumulation, following a period of ploughing and may be of recent origin. The absence of artefacts prevents ascribing a more definitive date or function to the feature, but this is not part of a lynchet. The feature is therefore considered to be of very low archaeological significance.

7. REFERENCES

Cox, P, 2019 *Land east of 13 Winters Lane, Portesham – Project design for an archaeological evaluation. SY60630 85771. Document ACW1214/1/1. August 2019*



PROJECT

Winters Lane, Portesham

TITLE

Fig 2: Section of Trench 2





Plate 1: General view of site with Trench 1 to the right. Viewed from the north



Plate 2: View of Trench 1 from the south-west (scale 1m)



Plate 3: North-west facing section of Trench 2. View from the north (scale 1m)



Plate 4: View of 'earthen mound' with Trench 2 to the centre. View from the north

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