

BU089: Two Mile Coppice, Louviers Road, Weymouth, Dorset

An Archaeological Watching Brief



© Context One Archaeological Services 2012

BU089: Two Mile Coppice, Louviers Road, Weymouth, Dorset

An Archaeological Watching Brief

for

Wessex Water plc

by



Brickfield Offices, Maperton, Wincanton, Somerset. BA9 8EG.

T: 01963 824696

F: 07092 259858

E: mail@contextone.co.uk

W: www.contextone.co.uk

COAS Project Reference: C1/WBF/11/TLW

OASIS Reference: contexto1-108347

National Grid Reference: SY 67797 82275 to SY 68650 82621

West Dorset District Council Planning Reference: N/A

Dorset County Museum Accession Number: C1/WBF/11/TLW

COAS Team:

Project Director: Richard McConnell

Fieldwork Manager: Stuart Milby

Fieldwork: Lee Newton

Post-Excavation Coordinator: Kelly Evans

Report: Richard Tabor

Research: Kelly Evans

Graphics: Tara Fairclough

October 2012

Context One Archaeological Services Ltd shall retain the copyright of any commissioned reports, tender documents or other projected documents, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved, excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client for the use of such documents by the client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the Project Design/Specification/Written Scheme of Investigation.

Contents

Non-technical summary	i
1. Introduction	1
2. Site Location, Topography and Geology	1
3. Archaeological and Historical Background	3
4. Methodology	3
5. Results	4
6. Finds	4
7. Conclusions	4
8. Archive	4
9. COAS Acknowledgements	6
10. Bibliography	6

Appendices

Appendix 1. Context Summary	7
-----------------------------------	---

Illustrations

Figure 1. Site setting showing the HER, route of the easement and locations of test pits	2
--	---

Plates

Plate 1. View from south of Littlemoor (from N)	5
Plate 2. Test pit 1 (from NE; no scale)	5
Plate 3. Test pit 3 (from NW; no scale)	5
Plate 4. Test pit 5 (from SE; no scale)	5

Non-technical Summary

Context One Archaeological Services Ltd carried out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the replacement of a water main at Two Mile Coppice, Louviers Road, Weymouth, Dorset (NGR SY 67797 82275 to SY 68650 82621) over four days during October 2011 at the request of Mr Steve Wallis (Senior Archaeologist, Dorset County Council) due to the recent discovery of an Iron age settlement 1 km west of the Site.

The investigation has found no evidence for the survival of archaeological features or deposits but the discovery of three flints during stripping of the easement implies activity in the area during the Bronze Age.

1. Introduction

1.1 Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the replacement of a water main at Two Mile Coppice, Louviers Road, Weymouth, Dorset (NGR SY 67797 82275 to SY 68650 82621; hereafter referred to as the Site) over four days from 12th to 24th October 2011. The project was commissioned and funded by Wessex Water plc under a Term Agreement contract with COAS.

1.2 The level and scope of archaeological works was suggested by Mr Steve Wallis (Senior Archaeologist, Dorset County Council (DCC)), following a consultation request by Ms Lizzie Willis (Environmental Scientist, Wessex Water). In an email to Ms Willis dated 28th February 2011, Mr Wallis stated that:

“...during construction of the Weymouth Relief Road, a well-preserved Iron Age settlement was found and partly excavated about 1km west of here. The settlement was on the south-facing slope of Southdown Ridge, and the 'new' bottom section of this main replacement would run across the same slope of this same limestone ridge... ...therefore, this area also has archaeological potential.”

1.3 Given the recorded archaeological and historical data for the environs, it was considered that archaeological features/deposits could be present on the Site, and that these could be damaged or destroyed by development. However, as the nature or presence of such features/deposits was unproven on the basis of currently available information, it was determined that a reasonable archaeological response would be to carry out a watching brief during all ground disturbance associated with the development.

1.4 At the request of Mr Wallis, COAS issued a *Written Scheme of Investigation for An Archaeological Watching Brief* (Milby 2011), which provided a strategy for the archaeological works. Mr Wallis was kept fully informed of progress on site as the investigation proceeded. In this instance, it was not deemed necessary to carry out a site monitoring visit.

1.5 The request for the archaeological work follows advice given by Central Government as formerly set out in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (2010) and the Local Development Framework Policy on Archaeology.

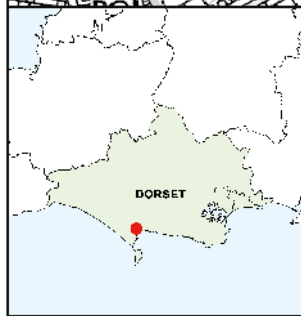
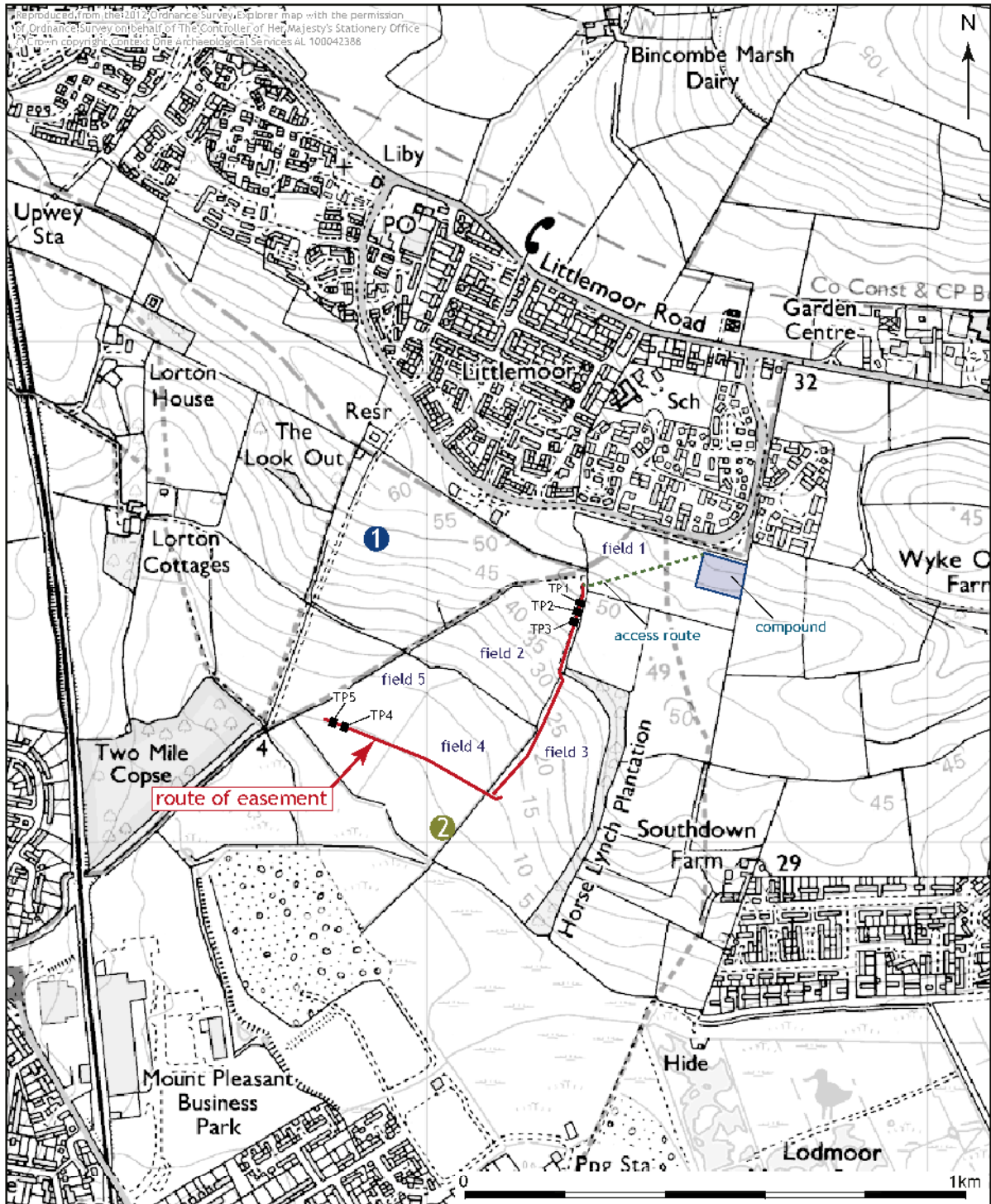
2. Site Location, Topography and Geology

2.1 The Site lay *ca.* 2km north of the centre of Weymouth and 8km south of the centre of Dorchester. It comprised a pipeline easement from *ca.* 125m east of Two Mile Coppice (or Copse) in the south to *ca.* 143m south of Louviers Road, which forms the south boundary of Littlemoor in the north (**Figure 1**). The construction compound was at the north end in Field 1 and the route traversed a further four fields to the south and west.

2.2 The full length of the pipeline was *ca.* 980m. At the south-west end, in Field 5, it lay at *ca.* 5m above Ordnance datum (aOD), falling to 2m in Field 4 before rising eastwards to *ca.* 5m aOD at the south end of Field 3. From there it fell more steeply to *ca.* 45m aOD at the north end of Field 2.

2.3 Due to the easement's situation on a scarp the underlying Jurassic geology changes several times over its course. On the high ground to the north it was over Clavellata Formation Limestone. Progressing down the slope it passed over Osmington Formation Oidal Limestone, Nothe Clay Member Mudstone and undifferentiated Stewartby Member and Weymouth Member Mudstone (BGS 2012).

2.4 The soil is lime-rich, free-draining loam of moderate fertility (NSRI 2012).



●	Lower Palaeolithic
●	Romano-British
1.	HER No. 4 002 610 - MWX468 Acheulian implement
2.	HER No. 4 002 468 A - MWX3442 Roman coin, Trajan, AD98-117
	Test pit location and number

PROJECT TITLE Two Mile Coppice, Louviers Road, Weymouth, Dorset		
FIGURE TITLE Site setting showing HER, route of the easement and locations of test pits		
SCALE as shown	PROJECT CODE C1/WBF/11/TLW	FIGURE NO. 1

3. Archaeological Background

3.1 The archaeological background for the Site has been drawn from the records held by Dorset County Council as part of the Dorset County Historic Environment Record (HER). Areas of archaeological interest are marked on **Figure 1** and summarised below in **Appendix 1** with their corresponding HER number and identification number for the appropriate figure.

Prehistoric

3.2 A flint artefact discovered in the early 20th century over 500m west of the Site is thought to be an Acheulian hand axe (**Figure 1, 1**). The Iron Age hillfort of Chalbury rises ca. 1.6km to the north east.

Romano-British

3.3 A coin of Trajan (AD98 - 117) was found on low ground ca. 180m south of the Site, on the fringe of an area of marshy ground (**Figure 1, 2**).

3.4 Despite the presence of a recently discovered Iron Age settlement ca. 1km to the west no other archaeology is known in the area. Ordnance Survey maps from 1889 to the present show no structures along the course, or in the immediate vicinity, of the pipeline, with the exception of the development and subsequent expansion of Littlemoor immediately north of the compound (**Figure 1**), which began between 1958 and 1963.

4. Methodology

Wessex Water Methodology

4.1 A 360 degree tracked machine, fitted with a toothless grading bucket was used to remove the topsoil within the easement and compound and to excavate five ca. 0.80m wide, ca. 2m long, test pits. Provision was made to allow extra time for the excavation and recording of any significant deposits or features revealed as a result of the groundworks but none were identified.

Archaeological Methodology

4.2 The programme of archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the codes, standards and guidelines set out by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 1985, rev. 2010; 1990, rev. 2008; 1994, rev. 2008) at all times during the course of the investigation. Current Health and Safety legislation and guidelines were followed on site.

4.3 The stripping of the easement and excavation of the test pits was carried out under the supervision of a suitably experienced and qualified COAS archaeological staff member for the purpose of identifying and recording any archaeological remains or deposits. In the absence of archaeological features/deposits, representative profile sections of the deposit sequence across the Site were recorded using standard COAS *pro forma* profile sheets. These include a graduated graphical representation of a profile section showing the stratigraphical sequence which was annotated to define the depths of each observed deposit. The sheets also include summary context forms in order that the character of each layer is summarised. There are also entry fields for the profile location, photographic reference and core details of any artefacts. The frequency with which profile sections were recorded was based entirely on any variation of the deposit sequence.

4.4 A photographic record of the fieldwork comprised digital images in .jpg format. As a minimum, the record included shots of each profile section, the site setting and development works.

4.5 Artefacts collected were bagged using a combination of the Site code and context numbers and retained for processing in preparation for further analysis and archiving.

4.6 The location, extent and altitude of the areas of archaeological work were measured relative to the National Grid and Ordnance Datum using mapping supplied by Wessex Water plc.

5. Results

5.1 The soil layers encountered during fieldwork are listed and described in **Appendix 1**. In the text, context numbers for layers and deposits appear in standard brackets, e.g. (102).

5.2 No features or archaeological deposits were identified but three pieces of flint were recovered during stripping of the easement.

Soil sequence

5.3 The soil sequence varied with the topography which extended from a mid slope terrace immediately south of Littlemoor to marshland in the alleviated valley separating it from Weymouth. With the exception of test pit 1, the easement's stripped topsoil lay directly over a colluvial subsoil (**Plate 1**).

5.4 In test pit 1, the first of a group of closely spaced test pits in Field 2 at ca. 45m aOD, the topsoil lay directly over natural limestone (**Plate 2**) but over the short distance to test pit 3 the sequence included an intervening colluvial subsoil (301) of up to 0.40m had formed over a further deep colluvium (302) (**Plate 3**).

5.5 To the south, on the lowlying ground in the valley, two test pits had very similar profiles, comprising a topsoil of around ca. 0.30m (400) over a ca. 0.70m deep mottled subsoil (401), suggesting episodes of soil movement by water of varying energy, hence probably more alluvial than colluvial (**Plate 4**). The underlying clay (402) was probably formed in similar fashion.

6. Finds

6.1 Three unstratified pieces of flint were found close together during the stripping of the easement.

Flint

6.2 All three pieces (11g) were dark grey, slightly grainy, broad, tertiary flakes from the same source. A flake which has either been damaged or modified retained an area of unilateral bifacial retouch has been converted to a pierce by the removal of spalls. A second flake displayed an area of unilateral ventral retouch and the third is a rejuvenation flake. All flakes have moderately pronounced bulbs of percussion and scars. They are likely to be of Bronze Age date.

6.3 The shared distinctive character of the material and the similar manner of its working suggests that they belong to a single narrow event horizon.

7. Conclusions

7.1 The investigation has found no evidence for the survival of archaeological features or deposits and whilst the character of the three flints clearly indicates an episode of activity on the scarp there is no evidence for settlement or landscape division other than what survives in the modern landscape.

8. Archive

8.1 The Site archive is currently held at the offices of Context One Archaeological Services Ltd and consists of 28 digital images in .jpg format, including two profile sheets and a photographic register. The archive will be prepared to comply with guidelines set out by English Heritage (1991) and the Museum and Galleries Commission (1992). Arrangements will be made to deposit the archive with Dorset County Museum within 12 months following the submission of this report.



Plate 1. View from south of Littlemoor (from N)



Plate 2. Test pit 1 (from NE; no scale)



Plate 3. Test pit 3 (from NW; no scale)



Plate 4. Test pit 5 (from SE; no scale)

8.2 Copies of the watching brief report will be deposited with:

Wessex Water plc
Claverton Down
Bath
BA2 7WW

Dorset County Museum
High West Street
Dorchester
Dorset
DT1 1XA

9. COAS Acknowledgements

9.1 Context One Archaeological Services Ltd would like to thank Ms Lizzie Willis (Environmental Scientist, Wessex Water) for her assistance during the course of the project, and Steve Wallis (Senior Archaeologist, Dorset County Council) for curatorial advice.

10. Bibliography

- British Geological Survey (BGS), 2012 <http://bgs.ac.uk> (accessed: 23rd March 2012)
- Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), 2010 *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment*, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office
- Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), June 1985 (rev. April 2010) *Code of Conduct*. Reading: IfA
- Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), September 1990 (rev. October 2008) *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology*. Reading: IfA
- Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), October 1994 (rev. October 2008) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*. Reading: IfA
- Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), October 1994 (rev. October 2008) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Excavation*. Reading: IfA
- Milby, S., 2011 *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief: Two Mile Coppice, Louviers Road, Weymouth, Dorset*. COAS, unpublished
- National Soil Resources Institute (NSRI), 2012 <http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/> Cranfield University (accessed: 23rd March 2012)
- Ordnance Survey 1889 25" map. <http://www.old-maps.co.uk/maps.html> (Accessed 11th May 2012)
- Ordnance Survey 1902 25" map. <http://www.old-maps.co.uk/maps.html> (Accessed 11th May 2012)
- Ordnance Survey 1937 25" map. <http://www.old-maps.co.uk/maps.html> (Accessed 11th May 2012)
- Ordnance Survey 1958 25" map. <http://www.old-maps.co.uk/maps.html> (Accessed 11th May 2012)
- Ordnance Survey 1963 6" map. <http://www.old-maps.co.uk/maps.html> (Accessed 11th May 2012)
- Ordnance Survey 1990 1:10,000 map. <http://www.old-maps.co.uk/maps.html> (Accessed 11th May 2012)

Appendix 1. Context Summary

Context no.	Period	Type	Description	Earlier than	Contemp. with	Later than	Length	Width/ Diameter	Thickness / Depth
100			Not used						
200			Not used						
300	Modern	Layer	Topsoil. Mid brown firm silty clay, including sparse small subangular fragments of chalk			101			<0.30m
301	Undated	Layer	Subsoil. Mid reddish brown, firm silty clay, including sparse small subangular fragments of chalk	100		102			<0.40m
302	Geological	Layer	Natural. Mid brown firm silty clay, including moderate small subangular fragments of chalk	101					>1.30m
400	Modern	Layer	Topsoil. Mid brown firm silty clay, including sparse small subangular flint fragments			401			<0.30m
401	Undated	Layer	Subsoil. Mottled mid orange and yellow brown, firm clay including sparse small subangular flint fragments	400		402			<0.70m
402	Geological	Layer	Natural. Mottled mid blue and yellow brown firm clay, lacking inclusions			410			>1.0m
500			Topsoil. Mid brown firm silty clay, including sparse small subangular flint fragments						