

# Stratton House Campus, Dorchester, Dorset.

## An Archaeological Field Evaluation



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# Stratton House Campus, Dorchester, Dorset.

An Archaeological Field Evaluation

for

West Dorset District Council

by



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**COAS Project Reference:** C1/EVA/11/SHC

**National Grid Reference:** centred on SY 69106 90775

**Planning Reference:** N/A

**Dorset County Museum Accession Number:** C1/EVA/11/SHC

**OASIS ref:** contexto1-112884

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November 2011

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## **Non-Technical Summary**

*Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out an Archaeological Field Evaluation on land at Stratton House Campus, Dorchester, Dorset (centred on NGR SY 69106 90775) over three days from the 23rd to the 25th August 2011.*

*The Site was made up of tarmac-surfaced car parks north of the town centre and slightly north west of the centre of the Romano-British town, Durnovaria. It is in an area which has produced a rich harvest of Romano-British remains development led archaeology over the past 25 years.*

*A total of five trenches were machine and hand excavated. All the trenches dug into deep brown soils which are a clear sign of ancient occupation of the Site and in one trench, in an area north of Shire Hall, a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD tessellated floor was found. The walls of the building surrounding it had been robbed. A similar floor was found in 1957 about 15m further north west. Another trench, north of Trinity Cottages, found a possible ditch or foundation trench of roughly the same date.*

*Modern walls were discovered in two trenches, one of which also revealed a probable garden wall of the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.*

*The evaluation has shown archaeological features of the Roman period survive at depths varying from 0.75m to 1.40m below the surface and that any future development of the area would need to take account of this. A review of the archaeological literature also shows that extremely important Neolithic (New Stone Age) remains might be found if building work cut into the natural chalk.*

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) undertook an archaeological field evaluation on an area of land at Stratton House Campus, Dorchester (centred on NGR SY 69106 90775, hereafter referred to as the Site). The programme of works was commissioned and funded by West Dorset District Council. The work was carried out over three days from the 23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> August 2011.
- 1.2 The field evaluation was requested by Mr. Steve Wallis (Senior Archaeologist, Dorset County Council), following a consultation request from Mr David Andrews (West Dorset District Council), in anticipation of the intended sale of the Site. The purpose of the field evaluation was to determine the archaeological potential on the Site.
- 1.3 The request for the archaeological work follows advice given by Central Government as set out in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (2010). The recommendation also conforms to County Structure and Local Plans.
- 1.4 This report summarises the topographical, geological, archaeological setting of the site, and presents the results of the evaluation.

## 2. Definition and objectives of a Field Evaluation

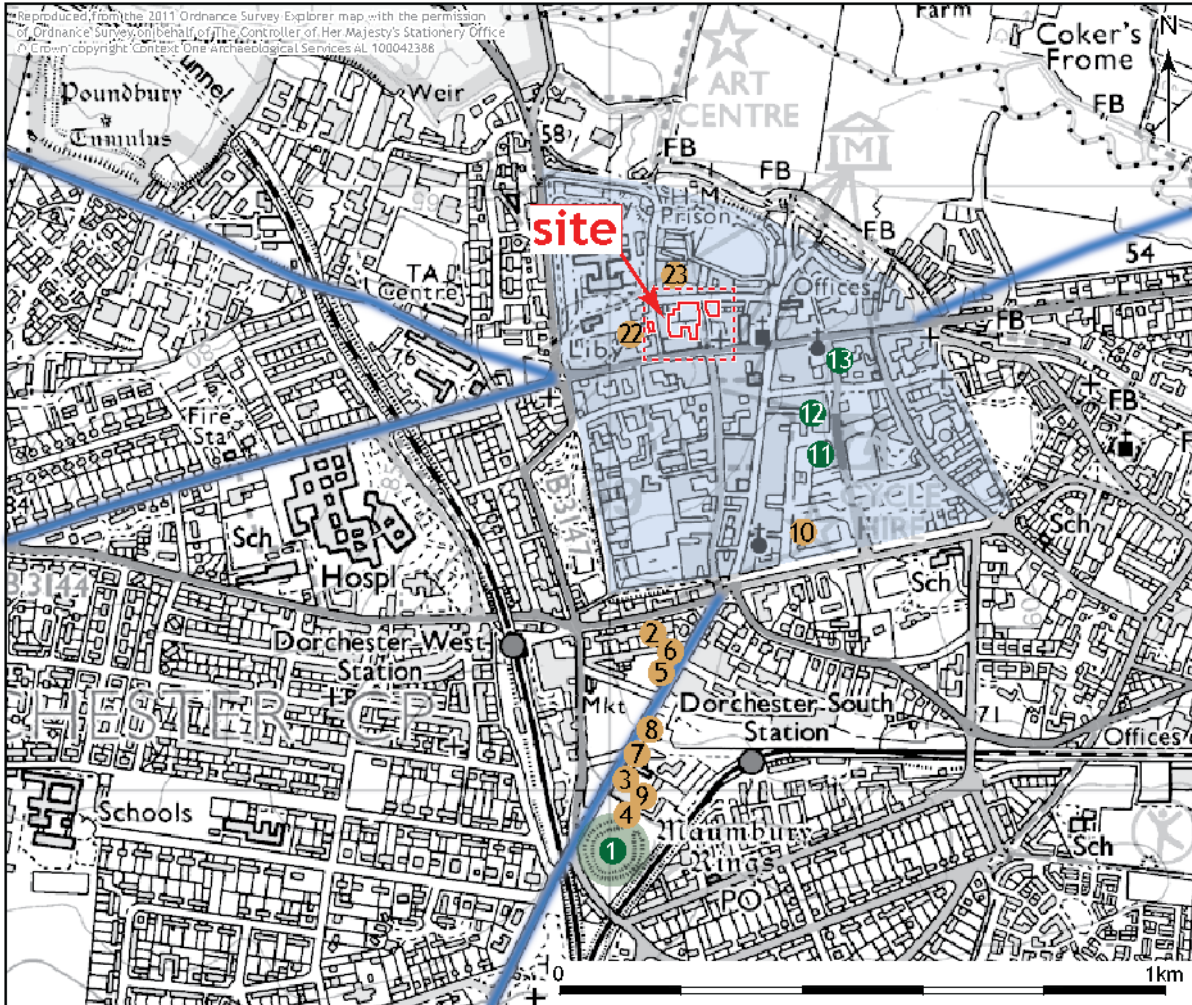
- 2.1 An Archaeological Field Evaluation is defined by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) (formerly the Institute of Field Archaeologists) as:

*“a limited programme of non-intrusive and/or intrusive fieldwork which determines the presence or absence of archaeological features., structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater. If such archaeological remains are present field evaluation defines their character, extent, quality and preservation, and enables an assessment of their worth in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate.” (IfA 1994 rev. 2008).*

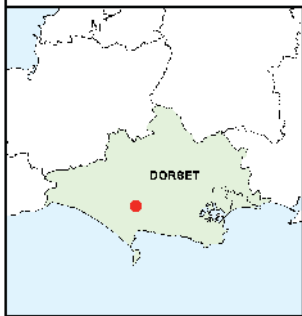
- 2.2 The purpose of a Field Evaluation is also defined by the IfA as:

*“...to gain information about the archaeological resource within a given area or site (including presence or absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality), in order to make an assessment of its merits in the appropriate context, leading to one or more of the following:*

- *the formulation of a strategy to ensure the recording, preservation or management of the resource;*
- *the formulation of a strategy to initiate a threat to the archaeological resource; and*
- *the formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigation within a programme of research (IfA 1994 rev. 2008).*

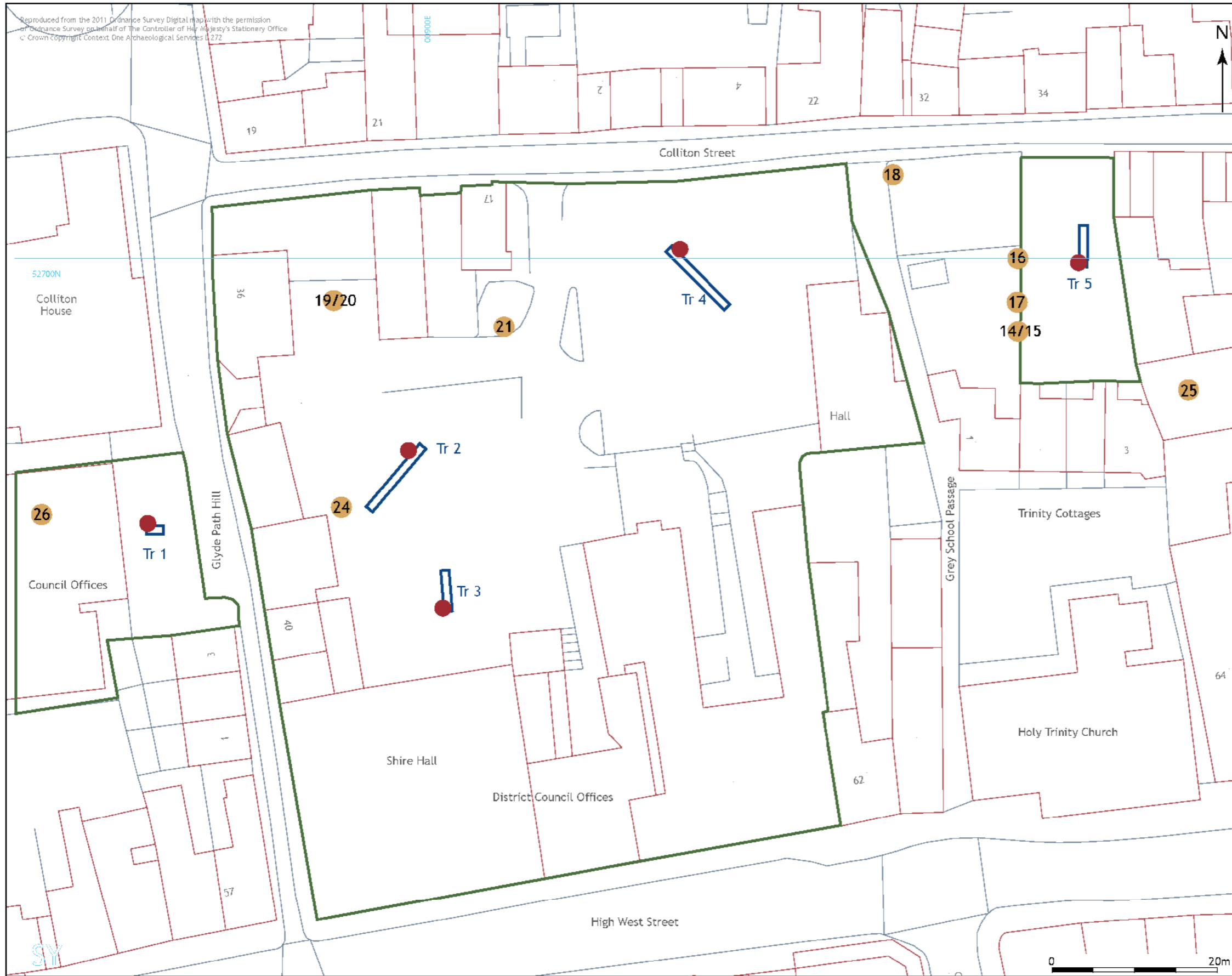


- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. SMR No. 1 041 277 Maumbury Rings, Neolithic henge monument</li> <li>2. SMR No. MDO 19087 Roman burials</li> <li>3. SMR No. MDO 19093 Roman burials</li> <li>4. SMR No. 1 041 279 Maumbury Rings, adult male inhumation<br/>SMR No. 1 041 280 Maumbury Rings, adult female inhumation<br/>SMR No. 1 041 281 Maumbury Rings, adult male inhumation</li> <li>5. SMR No. MDO 18752 Roman inhumation burials<br/>SMR No. MDO 18753 Roman cremation burials<br/>SMR No. MDO 18754 Roman ditches<br/>SMR No. MDO 18757 Roman grave<br/>SMR No. MDO 19036 Durotrigian burial<br/>SMR No. MDO 19126 Roman cremation burial</li> <li>6. SMR No. MDO 18758 Roman grave</li> <li>7. SMR No. 1 041 558 Roman ditch</li> <li>8. SMR No. 1 041 548 Roman ditch<br/>SMR No. 1 041 556 Roman ditch</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. SMR No. 1 041 503 Roman coffined burial<br/>SMR No. MDO 18986 Roman coffined burial</li> <li>10. SMR No. MDO 19006 Roman burials<br/>SMR No. MDO 19073 Roman burials</li> <li>11. SMR No. 1 041 400 Post Hole, Timber Circle<br/>SMR No. 1 041 401 Ditch</li> <li>12. SMR No. 1 041 295 Post Alignment, Timber Circle<br/>SMR No. 1 041 296 Ditch</li> <li>13. SMR No. MDO 18814 Post Hole, Timber Circle</li> <li>22. SMR No. MDO 18732 Timber structure<br/>SMR No. MDO 18737 Wall<br/>SMR No. MDO 18741 Conduit</li> <li>23. SMR No. MDO 18761 Chalk surface</li> </ol> |
|--|--|
- area with additional SMR information shown on figure 2



- Neolithic
- Romano-British
- extents of Roman town
- Roman road

<b>PROJECT TITLE</b>		
Stratton House Campus, Dorchester, Dorset		
<b>FIGURE TITLE</b>		
Site setting showing relevant archaeological landscape		
<b>SCALE</b>	<b>PROJECT CODE</b>	<b>FIGURE NO.</b>
as shown	C1/EVA/11/SHC	<b>1</b>



- site boundaries
- trench locations
- profile locations
- Romano-British

- 14. SMR No. MDO 18319 Three small pits
- 15. SMR No. MDO 18320 Two rammed chalk surfaces
- 16. SMR No. MDO 18321 Three hearths
- 17. SMR No. MDO 18322 Three small pits
- 18. SMR No. MDO 18339 Ditch
- 19. SMR No. MDO 18497 Pit
- 20. SMR No. MDO 18498 Ditch
- 21. SMR No. MDO 18499 Chalk surface
- 24. SMR No. MDO 18991 Mosaic and pavement
- 25. SMR No. MDO 19028 Road
- 26. SMR No. MDO 19029 Pit

<b>PROJECT TITLE</b> Stratton House Campus, Dorchester, Dorset		
<b>FIGURE TITLE</b> Detailed site setting showing trench plan, location of profiles and additional SMR information		
<b>SCALE</b> as shown	<b>PROJECT CODE</b> C1/EVA/11/SHC	<b>FIGURE NO.</b> <b>2</b>



### 3. Site Location, Topography and Geology

- 3.1 Situated in Dorchester in Dorset, the Site (centred on NGR SY 69106 90775) is north west of the centre of Romano-British Durnovaria (**Figure 1**), as bounded by the town walls. It extends from a council offices' car park on the west side of Glyde Path Hill, across the Shire Hall car park and a school playground to a car park east of Grey School Passage and north of Trinity Cottages. To the north it is bounded by Colliton Street and to the South by High West Street.
- 3.2 According to the British Geological Survey (2011), the underlying geology consists of Cretaceous chalk of the Portsdown Chalk Formation, which may include marl seams and bands of flint. The marls do not occur towards its upper boundary. The soils in this area are characterised by freely draining lime-rich loamy soils and shallow lime-rich soils over chalk or limestone (Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC), 2009).
- 3.3 The Site is generally fairly level, although there is a slight decline from the west side of *ca.* 75m aOD to *ca.* 71m aOD on the east. The entirety of the accessible area is surfaced by tarmac for car parking.

## 4. Archaeological and historical background

- 4.1 Dorchester is a town rich in archaeology both within its boundaries and in the wider landscape, including sites of national importance ranging from the Neolithic to Romano-British periods. Relevant archaeological background within the environs of the Site has been drawn from secondary sources. This comprises records held by Dorset County Council as part of the County Historic Environment Record (HER). The principal items and areas of interest are located on **Figure 1** and **Figure 2**. They are summarised below in **Appendix 1** alongside their corresponding HER number and identification number for the appropriate figure.
- 4.2 The intensity of activity is reflected in the number of sites recorded in the Dorset County records so only those considered relevant to the present project have been used. In the wider area a selection of Romano-British remains have been marked on **Figure 1** (1-13 and 22-25), including some beyond the town walls of that period. Prehistoric features thought likely to have bearing on potential discoveries within the present Site have also been included on this figure. The considerable number of entries for Medieval features and Post Medieval listed buildings have been omitted entirely from the maps and from the subsequent presentation of the archaeological and historical background.
- 4.3 Records relating to the Romano-British period within the immediate vicinity of the Site have been marked on **Figure 2** (14-21 and 26-28), both to avoid overcrowding of the image and because there are instances where some earlier discoveries may relate directly to the information gained from the current project.
- 4.4 The Neolithic is represented by a ring of massive post pits at Greyhound Yard and Church Street (**Figure 1**, 11-13; Woodward et al. 1993, 23-30), 300m south of the Site and Maumbury Rings (**Figure 1**, 1), 800m south south east. Neolithic and Iron Age discoveries at Maiden Castle hillfort (3km south west) have formed an important part of European archaeological literature for over seven decades. A second hillfort, Poundbury (**Figure 1**, north west corner), lies 800m west north west of the Site. Excavations from 1968 to 1988 around 300m south of the Site added greatly to the knowledge of the area within the town walls of Durnovaria (Woodward et al. 1993, fig. 1C) and publication of older excavations of the bath house within the south east walls are eagerly anticipated.
- 4.5 Since then there has been further work within the Romano-British walled town which has shed light on the defences (Smith 1990, 110), buildings dating from throughout the period and less substantial features such as pits, post holes and gullies (Davis 1990, 110), including a pit (**Figure 2**, 26) at the former Glyde Path Road clinic, close to Trench 1. Of particular relevance to this project are a mosaic and tessellated pavement discovered to the rear of a house in Glyde Path Hill in 1957 (**Figure 2**, 24; Farrar 1960). The pavement was sited approximately 5m south west of Trench 2, and the mosaic ca. 4m further west. Neither feature has been more closely dated than to the Romano-British period.
- 4.6 The increased number of archaeological events in the area around Trench 5, to the west of the Site no doubt merely reflects the intensity of modern development. Aside from Romano-British pits and compacted chalk surface the presence of a road (**Figure 2**, 14, 16, 17 and 25) of the period gives some indication of the intramural layout of the town.

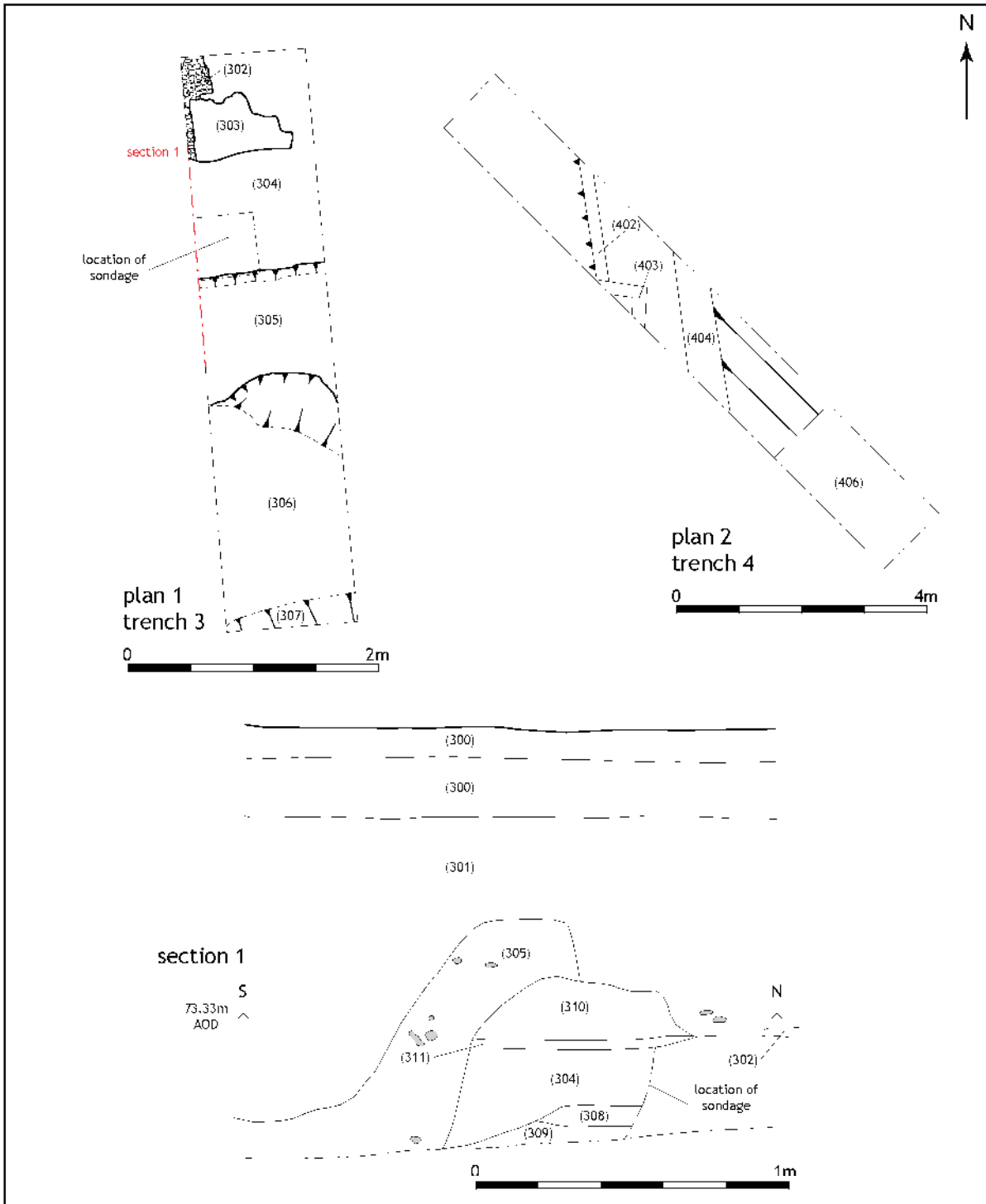
## 5. Map regression

- 5.1 No formal map regression analysis was undertaken, although the 1:500 town map of 1888 and 1:10,000 Ordnance survey from 1889 to 1988 maps held in the Dorset History Centre were consulted. The information derived from it is summarised by trench:

- 5.2 Trench 1 was situated in the car park of council buildings west of Glyde Path Hill. On all Ordnance Survey maps from 1889 to 1929 this space is occupied by buildings, apparently housing. By 1956 it is an open area fronting a building marked as 'Clinic' in the space currently occupied by the council offices.
- 5.3 Trenches 2 and 3 were situated in a car park north of Shire Hall. It has been marked as open space on all maps from 1889 to the present.
- 5.4 Trench 4 was in a car park within a former school play ground. From 1888 until 1929 the area appears to be garden, including some trees during the early part of that period. By 1956 a near square boundary is shown, its south east corner meeting the north west corner of a hall. The area is open again in all subsequent maps.
- 5.5 Trench 5 was also set in a car park, possibly encroaching on the rear boundaries of houses marked on all maps from 1888 to 1956.

## 6. Methodology

- 6.1 The programme of archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* published by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) in 1994 (revised 2008). COAS adhered to the *Code of Conduct* issued by the IfA in 1985 (revised 2008), and *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology* (1990, revised 2008), at all times during the course of the investigation. Current Health and Safety legislation and guidelines were followed on site.
- 6.2 The evaluation comprised the machine excavation of 5 trenches, ranging in size from 2m x 1m to 1.2m x 10m, aimed at gaining representative coverage across different areas of the Site.
- 6.3 A JCB mechanical excavator equipped with a 1m wide, sometimes toothed, but for the most part a toothless bucket was used to remove tarmac and overburden under the supervision of COAS archaeological staff. Machine excavation continued until archaeological features or natural geology was encountered, whichever was first.
- 6.4 Once machine work had been completed, the faces of each trench were examined and, where necessary, cleaned using hand tools. One long face from each trench was cleaned by hand to allow an understanding of the site stratigraphy and for the identification of any archaeological features. Photographs were then taken of representative profiles (**Figure 2**).
- 6.5 The full depth of archaeological deposits was assessed excepting where depth exceeded that judged to be safe.
- 6.6 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using standard COAS pro-forma context recording sheets.
- 6.7 Artefacts collected from archaeological features/deposits were bagged using a combination of site code and context numbers. All finds from the Site were retained for processing in preparation for further analysis and archiving. Specialist reports of the artefact assemblage were compiled using both descriptive and tabular formats (**Section 8, Appendix 3**).
- 6.8 Mr Steve Wallis was kept fully informed of the fieldwork schedule and visited the Site on 23<sup>rd</sup> August.



<p>(000) context number</p> <p>[000] cut number</p> <p>XX.Xm AOD — height above ordnance datum (AOD)</p> <p> stones</p>	<p>PROJECT TITLE</p> <p>Stratton House Campus, Dorchester, Dorset</p>		
	<p>FIGURE TITLE</p> <p>Plans 1, 2 and section 1</p>		
	<p>SCALE</p> <p>as shown</p>	<p>PROJECT CODE</p> <p>C1/EVA/11/SHC</p>	<p>FIGURE NO.</p> <p><b>3</b></p>

## 7. Results

7.1 The weather varied from sunny intervals with showers to overcast and showery. All trenches were in areas under car park tarmac.

7.2 Where a feature is discussed, it is referenced with its cut and associated fill numbers. A tabulated description of individual contexts is given in **Appendix 3**. The deposits and features encountered during fieldwork are listed and described below. In the text, context numbers for cuts appear in square brackets, e.g. [104]; layer and fill numbers appear in standard brackets, e.g. (102).

### Soil Sequence and Geology

7.3 The Site is set on Portsdown Chalk Formation, which may include marl seams and bands of flint. The marls do not occur towards its upper boundary. The soils on site are formed directly over the natural, which was exposed during the Romano-British period by the digging of foundations and grading of surfaces for floors. Deep, dark brown, loams of urban overburden have formed subsequently.

7.4 Trench 1 (**Plate 1**), 2m by 1m, oriented west to east, was situated in the car park on the west side of Glyde Path Hill. The surface layer comprised concrete/tarmac over a layer of broken and redeposited tarmac (100), laid over a levelling deposit of sand and gravel (101), set on the natural chalk (102). On the east side (101) was cut by a BT duct trench. No finds were retained from the trench.

7.5 Trench 2, 10m by 1.1m, oriented south west to north east, was the north of two trenches in a car park north of Shire Hall (**Plates 2 and 3**). The 0.18m deep surface of concrete/tarmac (200) gave way to approximately 1m of undifferentiated dark brown soils at both ends (201; **Plates 4 and 5**) which are likely to have formed from Romano-British and Medieval deposits and overlay natural chalk (202). Concrete and a modern wall prevented full excavation of the south west end of the trench and the stone footings of a roughly north to south oriented wall, probably 19<sup>th</sup> century, cut through the deposits in the middle of the trench. No finds were retained from the trench.

7.6 Trench 3, 1m x 5m, oriented north to south, was the south of two trenches north of Shire Hall (**Plate 5**). The combined concrete/tarmac and make-up layer beneath it were allocated a single context number (300) which sealed a much reworked deposit of poorly differentiated brown soils. These appear to have included the fills of robbing trenches (**Figure 3**, section 1, (301); **Plates 6 and 7**) as well as a general urban build-up, much of it probably having formed in the Medieval and Post Medieval periods. This mixed deposit proved to be the most artefact-rich context on the Site, the great bulk of the material being dated to the Romano-British period.

7.7 A clear and very thorough, robber trench was observed in the middle of the trench, roughly perpendicular to its sides (304) (**Figure 3**, plan 1; section 1). The fill of the robbing trench plainly cut a chalk-rich deposit, (310) (**Plate 7**; **Figure 3**, section 1), sealing the thin, pale brown, silt of a buried soil (3011). This, in turn, lay over the compacted chalk make-up (304), which supported a mortar setting for a tessellated floor or pavement (302) (**Plate 8**). The compacted chalk layer sealed a buried soil of red silty clay (308) which lay over a further layer of compacted chalk (309). The latter might either be a fractured natural surface or the base for an earlier floor.



Plate 1. Trench 1 (from S)



Plate 2. Trench 2 (from NE)



Plate 3. Trench 2, profile, north east end (from SE)



Plate 4. Trench 2, profile, mid-trench (from SE)



Plate 5. Trench 3 (from N)



Plate 6. Trench 3, profile, south end (from SE)



Plate 7. Trench 3, profile, south end (from E)



Plate 8. Trench 3, tesserae (from E)



Plate 9. Trench 4 (from NW)



Plate 10. Trench 4 (from SE)



Plate 11. Trench 4, profile (from SW)



Plate 12. Trench 4 (from NW)



Plate 13. Trench 5 (from NNE)



Plate 14. Trench 5 (from E)

- 7.8 Trench 4, 10m x 1.2m, oriented north west to south east (**Plates 9 and 10**), was situated in the former school playground area of the car park, west of the north end of Grey School Passage. Throughout the trench tarmac (400) gave way to a layer of hogging (405), thinner at the south east end, which lay over brick paving. This was set on mixed dark brown soils (406), mainly deposited during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, of up to 1.8m depth. In part they may include garden soils but also levelling, as well as recutting of old deposits (**Plate 11**), some of which are likely to be Romano-British or Medieval. The dark brown soils lay directly over natural chalk.
- 7.9 A north to south oriented wall of modern brick (**Figure 3**, plan 1) was discovered in the middle of the trench, partly within, partly sealed by (406). A right angled wall of modern brick, (403), surrounded a drainage pipe, probably for a toilet (**Figure 3**, plan 1; **Plate 9**). The wall slighted an early brick and stone built wall (**Plate 12**), well constructed but with a soft mortar, surviving to a height of 0.75m. The wall included Broadmayne bricks which were in widespread use in Dorchester during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (P. Fairclough, pers. comm.).
- 7.10 Trench 5, 1m x 10m, oriented north west to south east (**Plate 13**), was situated in the car park immediately north of Trinity Cottages, east of Grey School Passage. The concrete/tarmac (500) was supported on a yellow gravelly hogging which included fragments of breeze block and a wall of modern brick, set on concrete footings (501). The wall slanted from north north west to south south east in the north end of the trench (**Plate 13**). A rubbly deposit lay between the hogging and the dark brown soils characteristic of the Site (504), the latter of up to 1m depth. Modern material was found in this layer, which was slightly lighter than the corresponding horizon in the other trenches.
- 7.11 Due to the depth two contexts sealed by the brown soil were not excavated. A mid grey brown loam including occasional fragments of chalk and flint (503) appeared to fill a west to east linear cut. A substantial Romano-British tile fragment may reasonably be regarded as broadly contemporary with the fill. The apparently parallel (502) might be associated with it. It included a much higher percentage of chalk and flint fragments and might either be a ditch or robbing trench fill. A Samian sherd in very fresh condition implies deposition in the earlier 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.



## 8. The Finds

8.1 The finds recovered from the evaluation were washed and, where necessary, will be marked with an accession number issued by Dorset County Museum. The finds were separated into artefact types and recorded by context number, quantity and group weight in grams. They were collected according to diagnostic potential. The finds are discussed below and are presented separately in a summary table (Appendix 4). A request will be made to the site owner to transfer the title of all finds to the above Museum.

### Pottery

8.2 The pottery recovered during the course of the evaluation amounted to 24 sherds (1464g), of which a single sherd was modern. The remainder was Romano-British. Most sherds had sharp to slightly rounded edges with no sign of inclusion loss. The Romano-British material is summarised in Table 1. Wherever possible the forms adopted are as described at Greyhound Yard, Dorchester (Seager Smith and Davies 1993)

Context	No. of sherds	Weight in gms	Ware	Form	Decoration
301* (*mixed deposit)	5	113	Black burnished	N/A	N/A
	1	34		Bowl: Type 25, dropped flange	N/A
	1	24		Bowl: Type 99, slightly beaded rim	N/A
	1	21		Jar: Type 2, everted rim within girth	N/A
	1	16	Grey ware	N/A	N/A
	1	10	Fabric 37L	N/A	White slip
	1	54	Samian	Bowl; low broad flange	
	1	13	New Forest parchment	Open bowl, slightly beaded rim	Minimum of 3 concentric reddish brown painted rings
304	1	38	Black burnished	Bowl: Type 13, slight bead	N/A
	1	22		Base: Type 106	N/A
	1	12		N/A	N/A
305	1	6	New Forest stone ware	Neck	Concentric horizontal furrows, metallic bronze finish
306	2	12	Black burnished	N/A	Oblique cross hatch (fitting sherds)
	1	7	Colour coat	N/A	
406	1	21	Black burnished	Jar: Type 1 everted rim	N/A
	1	27	New Forest stone ware	Pedestal base	Metallic bronze finish
502	1	6	Samian	Bowl: upright rim	N/A

Table 1. The Romano-British pottery

8.3 The pottery spans much of the Romano-British period. 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> century sherds include: a white slipped coarse ware (301\*), samian rim sherds (301\*, and 502) and a Type 2 jar sherd (304). A plain upright rimmed Type 13 bowl is only very slightly beaded, hence is likely to date to the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. The two joining sherds with oblique cross-hatching are likely to post date AD200, and two New Forest ware fabrics are of late 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> century AD date. The mixing of finds caused by wall robbing in Trench 3 makes unreliable association with particular features, such as the area of tessellation.

8.4 Black Burnished Ware forms 64% of the total assemblage which, despite the very small number of

sherds, corresponds extremely well with the results from Greyhound Yard, where the figure was 66% (Seager Smith and Davies 1993, 285). At 27%, the proportion of fine wares is likely to be highly distorted by the small size of the assemblage, although it is worthy of note they are present during the earlier and later Romano-British phases.

#### **Animal bone**

- 8.5 A total of 3 small bone fragments (35g) were recovered. They comprised an ovicaprid mandible (304), an unidentified medium mammal rib and a cattle incisor (both from the mixed context 301). The size of the assemblage does not warrant further analysis.

#### **Building material**

- 8.6 The building material included: 17 fragments of roof tile (3626g); a single brick fragment (101g); 13 fragments of plaster, some retaining traces of paint (417g); 48 tesserae (1532g); a fragment each of ashlar and a roof slate (both of an off white fossiliferous sandstone) and a lump of flint, clearly fashioned for use in building.
- 8.7 One of the tiles (305) included part of a 'signature', possibly a double alpha mark, a type recognised at Greyhound Yard (Hassall 173, Figure 95 in *Woodward et al.* 1993). Another appeared to have a perforation for a nail which had been filled on the upper face of the tile.
- 8.8 An ashlar stone (305) had traces of mortar adhering to two adjacent faces. The mortar was of a pale pinkish orange colour with coarse subangular and subrounded colourless quartz inclusions set in sand.
- 8.9 All of the building material appears to be Romano-British, including a brick (304).

#### **Clay pipe**

- 8.10 A single undiagnostic clay pipe stem was found in the mixed context, (301).

#### **Overall assessment of the finds**

- 8.11 Not all finds were collected. Most of those regarded as modern were discarded after being noted on the appropriate context sheet. The predominance of Romano-British material reflects its ubiquity within the walls of Durnovaria rather than the integrity of the deposits, and so offers useful dating for only the robbing phase in Trench 3 and the possible ditches in Trench 5. Although small, there is a high percentage of diagnostic pottery types within the assemblage which demonstrates occupation extending from the 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD.
- 8.12 The presence of roof tile and the very friable painted plaster strongly indicates the presence of at least a moderately high status building, confirmed by the presence of a tessellated surface.
- 8.13 It is of interest that the Type 13 bowl from the compacted chalk layer (304) was in very fresh condition, with internal and external burnishing retaining its sheen. It is reasonable to assume that the context was created sometime during the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries.

## **9. Discussion**

- 9.1 The Site lies close to the centre of Romano-British Durnovaria and the presence of much re-worked urban deposits in all trenches is much as would be expected. The only demonstrably Romano-British features were those in Trench 5, where the depth (1.40m) prevented further characterisation and in Trench 3.
- 9.2 In the latter case a clear sequence of events can be discerned (**Figure 3**, section 1). A compacted chalk surface was set down in the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD as a base for a tessellated floor. The character of the tessellation is similar to that described at the rear of a house in Glyde Path Road

(Farrar 1960) and the two may have formed part of a single pavement, or at least are likely to be contemporary.

- 9.3 There is no evidence to show how the floor fell out of use but it is likely that a film of chalk-rich silt (311) formed over the surface prior to a clearing during which an area of tesserae (302) may have been removed, resulting in a bank of chalk-rich material (310) building up against the south wall, preserving traces of the film as a buried soil. Eventually, the cleaning deposit was cut on its south side during the robbing of the wall stone. Subsequent cuts identified in the trench are unlikely to relate to robbing as there is nothing to indicate that the diggers would have recovered any stone.
- 9.4 Modern walls were discovered in Trenches 4 and 5. One, in Trench 4, was represented on the Ordnance Survey map of 1956, where a square enclosed area subdivided the school yard. The possible garden wall in the same trench is not shown on the map of 1889 or any later maps. It is likely to have been constructed at least several decades before the 1889 map was drawn.
- 9.5 The Site is only 300m north of the very wide-arc'd ring of massive Neolithic post pits and would fall within, or intersect with, its projected north boundary. At Greyhound Yard, they were only observed as cuts into natural, hence similar pits or related features would not have been discovered during this evaluation due to the depth of urban overburden. No direct evidence was found for Medieval deposits, although they may have been concealed within the deep, reworked, brown soils.

## 10. Conclusions

- 10.1 The evaluation has demonstrated that Romano-British structural or cut features survive at depths varying from 0.75m (Trench 3) to 1.40m (Trench 5) below the surface and that any future development of the area would need to take account of this. At deeper levels the potential for Neolithic features of national importance should be considered.

## 11. Archive

- 11.1 The site archive is currently held at the offices of Context One Archaeological Services Ltd and consists of 93 digital images in .jpg format, five drawn plans and sections on stable drawing film and the written paper record, including 17 context sheets, and various photographic, drawing and finds registers. The archive will be prepared to comply with guidelines set out in *First Aid for Finds* (Watkinson and Neal 2001) / *Standards in the Museums Care of Archaeological Collections* (Museum and Galleries Commission 1992) / *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage 1991). Arrangements will be made to deposit the archive with Dorset County Museum within 12 months following the submission of this report.
- 11.2 Copies of the Field Evaluation report will be deposited with:

**West Dorset District Council**  
Stratton House  
58-60 High West Street  
Dorchester  
Dorset DT1 1UZ

**Dorset History Centre**  
Bridport Road  
Dorchester  
Dorset DT1 1RP

## 12. COAS Acknowledgements

- 12.1 Context One Archaeological Services Ltd would like to thank Mr David Andrews (West Dorset District Council) for his cooperation throughout the evaluation and Mr Steve Wallis (Senior Archaeologist, Dorset County Council) who liaised closely with COAS staff. Machine excavation was carried out by G. Crook and Sons and Mr. Lee Garrett, who cut the trench edges.

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**Appendix 1. Dorset County Council Sites and Monuments Record report for archaeological events within the environs of the Site**

HER No.	Description	NGR	Figure 1 identification number
<b>Neolithic / Bronze Age (4000BC - 700BC)</b>			
1041277	<b>Maumbury Rings.</b> Neolithic henge monument comprising a roughly circular bank with internal ditch and a single entrance to the north east. A standing stone may have once stood at the entrance. Most of the interior and the entrance destroyed when Roman amphitheatre constructed on top.	SY 69009 89918	1
MDO 1041 400/401	<b>Upright timber setting and ditch.</b> Neolithic.		11
MDO 1041 295/296	<b>Upright timber setting and ditch.</b> Neolithic.		12
MDO 18814	<b>Upright timber setting.</b> Part of timber circle. Neolithic.		13
<b>Roman (AD43 - AD450)</b>			
MDO 19087	<b>Roman burials.</b> Cinerary urn, cremation, coffin, inhumation.	SY 69068 90265	2
MDO 19093	<b>Roman burials.</b> Crouched inhumation, extended inhumation, mixed cemetery at County Police Station, Weymouth Avenue.	SY 69029 90030	3
1041279	<b>Maumbury Rings.</b> Adult male inhumation found in north entrance ramp of Roman amphitheatre, with small jar c.2nd century AD.	SY 69034 89957	4
MDO 18756	<b>Roman grave</b> found during archaeological observation and recording of geotechnical trial pits at Dorchester Market, Fairfield Road.	SY 69093 90197	
MDO 18758	<b>Roman grave</b> found during archaeological observation and recording of geotechnical trial pits at Dorchester Market, Fairfield Road.	SY 69097 90229	6
1041558	<b>Roman roadside ditch</b> exposed during evaluation in 2001 by AC Archaeology at Dorchester Police Station. Ditch ran parallel and about 7.5m from Weymouth Avenue, thought to be on same line as Roman road to Radipole. V-shaped profile, single sherd of Roman coarseware pottery, oyster shell and animal bone. Ditch cut through pre-Roman buried soil layer	SY 69039 90060	7
1041548	<b>Roman ditch.</b> Ditch running parallel to the present Weymouth Avenue found during excavations by Wessex Archaeology in 1988 at Stationmaster's House, Weymouth Avenue. Oriented NNE-SSW about 7m E of present road. V-shaped profile, possible slight bank on E side. Location and orientation suggests it was a flanking ditch to the Roman road to Weymouth.	SY 69062 90099	8
1041280	<b>Maumbury Rings Roman burial.</b> Adult female flexed inhumation found in a grave in the north entrance ramp, accompanied by a pig jaw.	SY 69036 89961	4
1041281	<b>Maumbury Rings Roman burial.</b> Adult male inhumation found in a grave to the west of the north entrance	SY 69025 89975	4
1041503	<b>Roman coffined inhumation burial</b> discovered during a watching brief on land behind Dorchester Police Station by Wessex Archaeology in 2005. Extended inhumation oriented roughly SW-NE. Formed part of the Roman cemetery along the Roman road to Radipole.	SY 69047 89997	9
1041556	<b>Roman ditch</b> running parallel with Weymouth Avenue and 7m to east. Ditch not excavated but sections have been excavated across it to the north and to the south. Interpreted as a flanking ditch to the Roman road to Radipole, which is projected to run along the line of the present Weymouth Avenue.	SY 69057 90089	8
MDO 18752	<b>Roman inhumation burials</b> recorded through archaeological monitoring during the construction of a new covered market area and associated works, carried out by AC Archaeology in 2001 on Fairfield Road. Two burials and two pottery vessels, each containing charred human bone. Other cut features, including ditches, were recorded.	SY 69088 90208	5
MDO 18753	<b>Roman cremation burials</b> identified during archaeological monitoring during construction of new covered market on Fairfield Road. Two pottery vessels containing charred human bone were identified.	SY 69083 90201	5
MDO	<b>Roman ditches</b> identified during archaeological monitoring at	SY 69094	5

18754	Dorchester Market	90196	
MDO 18757	<b>Roman grave</b> identified during archaeological monitoring at Dorchester Market	SY 69092 90196	5
MDO 18986	<b>Roman coffined burial</b> found at County Police Barracks, Weymouth Avenue.	SY 69054 89980	9
MDO 19006	<b>Roman burials</b> found at County Constabulary Barracks, Weymouth Avenue.	SY 69037 89997	9
MDO 19036	<b>Durotrigian burial</b> found in Cattle Market.	SY 69090 90210	5
MDO 19073	<b>Roman burials</b> found at County Constabulary Barracks, Weymouth Avenue.	SY 69047 89979	9
MDO 19126	<b>Roman cremation burial.</b> Archaeological monitoring during construction of a new covered market carried out by AC Archaeology in 2001 at Fairfield Road. Two pottery vessels containing charred human bone.	SY 69084 90202	5
MDO 18235	<b>Roman road.</b> The remains of a Roman road were found during excavations at Wessex Court, Charles Street. The road is aligned NE-SW and defined by two small flanking ditches. It was probably constructed very early in the history of the Roman town and continued in use into the 4th century, having probably been used throughout the life of Roman Durnovaria. Further parts of this same road have been traced both to the NE and SW of this exposure during other projects.	SY 69326 90429	10
MDO 18319	<b>Three small pits</b> , probably dating to the 1st-2nd centuries AD.	SY 69173 90792	14
MDO 18320	<b>Two rammed chalk surfaces.</b> No associated structural remains, although one was cut by three undated postholes. It is unclear whether they are internal floors within a building or part of an external yard. One of the chalk floors has a 2nd century AD <i>terminus post quem</i> .	SY 69173 90791	15
MDO 18321	<b>Three hearths.</b> Sequence of hearths observed in section. Function undetermined. Romano-British.	SY 69173 90800	16
MDO 18322	<b>Three small pits</b> , probably dating to the 3rd-4th centuries AD.	SY 69173 90795	17
MDO 18339	<b>Ditch.</b> Aligned roughly NNW-SSE and contained a small quantity of Roman pottery dated to the 2nd-4th centuries AD.	SY 69158 90810	18
MDO 18497	<b>Pit.</b> A large rectangular. Contained a very large quantity of Roman building debris, including painted wall plaster, limestone and ceramic roof tile fragments, pieces of opus signinum, tesseræ and a small fragment of tessellated floor, mortar debris, worked stone, etc. A broad range of pottery gave a post AD270 date for fill. A small quantity of animal bone and oyster shell was also recovered. Appears to have derived from the demolition of a high status town house, at some time after the late third century AD. Location building is not known.	SY 69090 90794	19
MDO 18498	<b>Ditch.</b> Aligned roughly ENE-WSW and contained a small quantity of Roman pottery dated to the 2nd-4th centuries AD.	SY 69090 90793	20
MDO 18499	<b>Chalk surface.</b> Probably exterior surface, Romano-British.	SY 69111 90792	21
MDO 18732	<b>Timber structure.</b> Evidence comprised a N-S aligned beam slot, containing a post hole, cut into the rubble layer sealing the late 3rd-early 4th century masonry of a building.	SY 69040 90752	22
MDO 18737	<b>Wall.</b> N-S aligned wall with footings of unbonded large flints under three courses of limestone slabs set in decayed yellow-cream mortar, offset from the western external face of the wall. 3 <sup>rd</sup> century AD or later	SY 69041 90752	22
MDO 18741	<b>Conduit.</b> Conduit of date was built alongside a contemporary N-S street. Cut to a depth of ca. 4m. into the solid chalk and was 1.15m wide at the bottom with a lining of roughly dressed limestone blocks surviving to a height of ca. 0.5m. Probably late 1st century AD.	SY 69038 90752	22
MDO 18761	<b>Chalk surface.</b> Opus signinum surface probably representing elements of a domestic building of late-2nd to 3rd century AD date.	SY 69110 90850	23
MDO 18991	<b>Building.</b> Single wall footing of flint, aligned roughly N-S, with fragments of tessellated floors on west and east sides. To the west	SY 69092 90770	24

	was a fragment of a mosaic floor comprising parts of two medallions enclosed within swastika-meander. To the east was a coarse red tessellated floor, perhaps the border to another mosaic. Some fragments of in situ maroon painted plaster were found on the wall and large quantities of painted plaster and some ceramic roof tile was found in the demolition layers above the floor.		
MDO 19028	<b>Road.</b> Little information but dated as Romano-British.	SY 69194 90784	25
MDO 19029	<b>Pit.</b> Romano-British	SY 69055 90767	26

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## Appendix 2. Historic maps and documents relating to the Site and its environs

Date	Title/ description	Repository	Reference	Comments
1888	Ordnance Survey: Dorchester Town Plan. 1:500	DHC		
1889	Ordnance Survey map, 1st edition, 1:25"	DHC	SY 69	
1902	Ordnance Survey map, 1:25"	DHC	SY 69	
1929	Ordnance Survey map, 1:25"	DHC	SY 69	
1956	Ordnance Survey map, 1:25"	DHC	SY 69	
1971	Ordnance Survey map, 1:25"	DHC	SY 69	
1988	Ordnance Survey map, 1:25"	DHC	SY 69	



## Appendix 3: Context Table

Cont no.	Type	Description	Dimensions			Direct Stratigraphic relationships
			Length	Width/ Diameter	Thickness/ Depth	
100	Layer	10YR 2/1, black. Tarmac/hogging.	2.00m	1.00m	0.0m -0.30m	Above, (101).
101	Layer	10YR 6/8, brownish yellow, sand and gravel. Levelling deposit.	2.00m	1.00m	0.30m - 0.60m	Below (100), above (102).
102	Layer	10YR 8/1, white chalk. Natural.	2.00m	1.00m	0.60m - 0.82m	Below (101).
200	Layer	10YR 7/1, light Grey. Tarmac/hogging.	10.00m	1.00m	0.00m - 0.20m	Above (201).
201	Layer	10YR 3/2, very dark greyish brown, frequent rounded chalk fragments <0.10m, frequent angular flint fragments.	10.00m	1.00m	0.20m - 1.20m	Below (200), below (202).
202	Layer	10YR 8/1, white chalk. Natural.	10.00m	1.00m	1.20m - 2.00m	Below (202).
300	Layer	10YR 7/1, light Grey. Tarmac/hogging.	5.00m	1.00m	0.00mm - 0.30m	Below (300).
301	Layer	10YR 3/2, very dark greyish brown, silty, sandy, clay including moderate to angular flint fragments <0.20m	5.00m	1.00m	0.30m - 1.10m	Below (300) above (302).
302	layer	5YR 5/8, yellowish red. Tessellated pavement.	0.85m	0.25m	0.02m	Below (301) above (303).
303	Layer	10 YR 7/2, light grey lime mortar base for tesserae.	0.80m	0.65m	0.20m	Below (302) above (304).
304	Layer	10YR 7/3, very pale brown clay with frequent chalk fragments <0.10m.	1.70m	1.00m	0.40m	Below (303) above (308).
305	Layer	10YR 3/3, dark brown silty clay with patches of mortar and sand. Robbed wall.	0.80m	1.00m	Unex'd	Below (301) above (304).
306	Layer	10 YR 4/2, dark greyish brown clays with frequent chalk fragments <0.10m.	1.40m	1.00m	Unex'd	Below (307).
307	Layer	10 YR 3/3, dark brown silty clay with patches of mortar and sand. Robbed wall.	0.25m	1.00m	Unex'd	Below (301).

Cont no.	Type	Description	Dimensions			Direct Stratigraphic relationships
			Length	Width/ Diameter	Thickness/ Depth	
308	Layer	10YR 3/3, dark brown silty clay with occasional chalk fragments <0.01m	1.40m	1.00m	0.07m	Below (304) above (309).
309	Layer	10YR 5/3, brown with frequent chalk fragments <0.20m.	1.00m	1.00m	15.00m	Below (308).
310	Layer	10YR 7/1, light grey mortar frequent stone and mortar fragments. Possible robbed wall.	1.00m	1.10m	0.10m	Below (303), above (304).
400	Layer	10YR 2/1, black. Tarmac/hogging.	10.00m	1.20m	0.10m	Above (401), (405).
401	Layer	2.5YR 6/2, red, horizontal layer of red bricks. Surface of playground.	10.00m	1.20m	0.10m	Below (400),(403).
402	Wall	10 YR 7/3, pale red limestone and red brick. Garden wall, C19.	1.40m	1.0m	0.20m	
403	Surface	2.5YR 6/2, red modern brick structure containing plumbing . Outside lavatory.	1.50m	1.40m	1.60m	Below (401).
404	Wall	2.5YR 6/2, red brick. Modern wall.	2.00m	0.50m	1.20m	Below (402).
405	Layer	10YR 4/2, dark greyish brown. Hogging	5.00	1.00m	0.10m	Below (400), above (406).
406	Layer	10YR 4/2, dark greyish brown loam with moderate subangular chalk				
407	Layer	10YR 8/1, white chalk. Natural.	10m	1.00m	1.90m- +	
500	Layer	10YR 2/1, black. Modern concrete tarmac	10m	1.00m	0-0.12m	Above (501)
501	Fill	10YR 6/6, brownish yellow gravelly clay including concrete breeze blocks fragments. Modern footings	10m	1.00m	0.12-0.42m	Below (501), above (504)
502	Fill	10YR 6/1, grey, with rounded chalk gravels <0.05m with sparse soil	2.5m		1.40m- +	Below (504), (503)
503	Fill	Not excavated	0.5m		1.40m- +	Below (504), above (502)

Cont no.	Type	Description	Dimensions			Direct Stratigraphic relationships
			Length	Width/ Diameter	Thickness/ Depth	
504	Fill	10YR 4/2 Dark greyish brown loam including frequent subangular chalk <0.20m			0.42-1.40m	Below (501), above (503), (502)

#### Appendix 4. Finds summary

Context	Pottery		Bone		Shell		Tile		Brick		Tesserae		Painted plaster		Stone		Flint		Clay pipe	
	no.	wt.	no.	wt.	no.	wt.	no.	wt.	no.	wt.	no.	wt.	no.	wt.	no.	wt.	no.	wt.	no.	wt.
301 *	14	313	2	5	1	55	2	117											1	5
301													3	247						
302							10	1416			48	1532								
304	3	72	1	30					1	101										
305	1	6					4	1489					10	170	2	2756	1	508		
306	3	19																		
406	2	48																		
502	1	6																		
503							1	604												

<b>TOTALS</b>	24	464	3	35	1	55	17	3626	1	101	48	1532	13	417	2	2756	1	508	1	5
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301 \* was noted as a 'mixed deposit', as referred to in the text.