

Land adjacent to Avalanche Road, Portland, Dorset

An Archaeological Evaluation Report

January 2017

Information matrix

SITE DETAILS	
Site address	Land adjacent to Avalanche Road, Portland, Dorset.
Site postcode	DT5 2DL
Site NGR	Centred on SY 68487 70720
Site area	c. 0.33ha
Site aOD height (min/max.)	c. 68m
Topography	Flat site
Ground conditions	Largely overgrown with long grasses, shrubs and trees
Site geology	Lulworth Formation (solid)
PROJECT DETAILS	
Client	Betterment Properties (Wey) LTD
Development proposal	Erection of 10 no. two storey dwellings (4 no. Lifetime Homes) & access road with relocation of remaining allotments to land at the rear of site
Local Planning Authority	Weymouth and Portland Borough Council
Planning reference	WP/16/00783/FUL
Planning Condition no.	Under consideration
INVESTIGATION	
C1 site code	C1/EVA/17/APD
Investigation type	Field evaluation through trial trenching
Number of trenches	2
Fieldwork dates	26/01/2017
Fieldwork team	Peter Fairclough, Stuart Milby & Tara Fairclough
Post-excavation team	Tara Fairclough, Cheryl Green, Stuart Milby, Clare Randall
ARCHAEOLOGICAL DETAILS	
Previous events for Site	N/A
Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI)	Approved by Steve Wallis (Senior Archaeologist, DCC) on 23/01/2017
Historic Environment Record reference	EDO6135
Collecting Museum	N/A
OASIS reference	contexto1-273698
REPORT	
Draft report date	30 January 2017
Final report date	31 January 2017
Prepared by	Stuart Milby
Illustrations by	Tara Fairclough
Internal review by	Clare Randall
Checked and approved by	Cheryl Green
ARCHIVING	
Site records	2 x trench recording sheets
Site images	20 images in .jpg format.
Artefacts	N/A
C1 STAFF	
Projects Director, Historic Buildings Archaeologist	Richard McConnell BA (Hons), PCIfA
Fieldwork Manager, Osteoarchaeologist	Stuart Milby BSc (Hons), MSc, PCIfA
Post-excavation Manager, Historic Buildings Archaeologist, Stone Specialist	Cheryl Green FSA, BA Hons, PhD
Illustrator, Project co-ordination, Historic Buildings Archaeologist	Tara Fairclough BA (Hons), PCIfA
Archaeological Officer, Animal Bone Specialist, Archivist	Clare Randall FSA, BA (Hons), BSc (Hons), MSc, PhD, PCIfA
Senior Field Archaeologist, Environmental processor	Peter Fairclough BA (Hons)

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Summary

Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) were instructed to carry out an Archaeological Field Evaluation through trial trenching in support of a planning application relating to Land adjacent to Avalanche Road, Portland, Dorset (the 'Site') in January 2017. The project was commissioned and funded by Betterment Properties (Weymouth) Ltd.

The field evaluation was carried out as Roman remains have been discovered near the Site during archaeological evaluation trenching at Reap Lane (COAS, 2013). Given that the Site appeared not to have been impacted by recent or historical episodes of quarrying, it was deemed that previously unknown heritage assets may be discovered.

Despite this potential, no archaeological features, deposits or finds were observed or recovered during the course of the evaluation works.

This report is produced solely for the benefit of an individual client and for the proposed uses stated in the report, and should not be relied upon for other purposes or by other parties unless specifically agreed by us in writing. The different elements of the report are designed to be integral to each other and therefore do not necessarily stand alone. Opinions and information provided in this report are on the basis of C1 using reasonable skill and care, however no investigative method can eliminate the possibility of obtaining partially imprecise, incomplete or less than fully representative information. This report is limited to the scope and limits agreed with the client under our appointment. Any investigative work undertaken as part of the commission will have been subject to limitations imposed by such factors as timescales, budgets, seasonal variations and weather conditions.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) was instructed to carry out an archaeological field evaluation through trial trenching in support of a planning application which relates to a proposed development on Land adjacent to Avalanche Road, Portland, Dorset (the 'Site') (**Figure 1**). The project was commissioned and funded by Betterment Properties (Weymouth) Ltd.
- 1.2 The evaluation was requested by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), Weymouth & Portland Borough Council (WPBC) on the advice of Mr Steve Wallis (Senior Archaeologist, Dorset County Council (DCC)). In an email dated 14 December 2016 to Planning (WPBC), Mr Wallis commented:

"Many finds of archaeological remains and the results of a number of archaeological excavations show that undisturbed areas of Portland have a high archaeological potential. In the present case I note also that Roman remains have been found close to the present site (they were recorded during an archaeological evaluation by Context One Archaeological Services on the site opposite 1-8 Reap Lane that was the subject of planning application 13/00272/OUT). I am also unaware of any evidence that the present site has been disturbed by quarrying to any significant extent.

Hence, in my opinion it is likely that the proposed development would affect archaeological remains. Considering this and also taking into account the size of the area where development is proposed, I advise that Weymouth and Portland Borough Council should request the applicant to undertake an archaeological evaluation of the site in order for an informed planning decision can be made (i.e. this exercise needs to be pre-determination)."

- 1.3 The programme of archaeological works comprised four elements: the production of a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which set out the project strategy; field evaluation through trial trenching; post-excavation and assessment report production (this document); and archive deposition.
- 1.4 The requirement follows advice by Central Government as set out in paragraph 141 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012). This states:

"Local planning authorities should make information about the significance of the historic environment gathered as part of plan-making or development management publicly accessible. They should also require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted."

2. Aims & Objectives

- 2.1 The objectives of the evaluation were to provide information about the archaeological resource within the Site, including its presence/absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality, in accordance with *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014). This information enable the LPA to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset, consider the impact of any proposed development upon it, and to avoid or minimise conflict between the conservation of the heritage asset and any aspect of the development proposal, in line with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

3. Methodology

- 3.1 All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with and *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (Institute for Archaeologists (ClfA), 1994, rev. 2001, 2008, 2014). COAS adhered to the *Code of Conduct* of the ClfA (1985, rev. 2000, 2014), and *Regulations for Professional Conduct* (ClfA, 2014, rev. 2015) at all times during the course of the evaluation. The fieldwork methodology is summarised below.
- 3.2 COAS gave notification of the commencement of archaeological works to the Senior Archaeologist, DCC and invited an officer to conduct a Site visit for the purpose of monitoring archaeological fieldwork as appropriate. A Site visit was not deemed necessary.

- 3.3 The Senior Archaeologist (DCC) will continue to receive updates on the status of the archaeological works until the deposition of the Site archive (see section 7.).
- 3.4 The archaeological evaluation comprised two trenches, each measuring 20m long x 1.6m wide. This equated to a 2% sample of the Site area. The trenches were laid out according to a pre-defined trench plan (see **Figure 1**) using Ordnance Survey (OS) co-ordinates with a TopCon GRS1 RTK GPS unit.
- 3.5 A 360-degree tracked machine equipped with a 1.6m wide toothless (grading) bucket was used to remove all topsoil/overburden (**Plates 1-4**) under the constant supervision of COAS archaeological staff. Machine excavation continued until natural geology was encountered.
- 3.6 On completion of machine excavation, the trenches were examined and cleaned using hand tools. Core details of each trench were recorded using COAS digital evaluation trench sheets. This included logging a representative section of the trench to allow an understanding of the stratigraphy. A digital photograph of each trench in plan and representative section were taken in .jpg format.
- 3.7 A photographic record of the evaluation was prepared, and involved the sole use of digital images. This included images illustrating in both detail, and general context, the principal features and finds discovered. The photographic record also includes working shots to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted.
- 3.8 On conclusion of the field evaluation, the trenches were left open at the request of the land owner. The Site remains fenced off from public access.

4. Results

- 4.1 The weather conditions were dry, cold and overcast. Neither of the trenches encountered rising groundwater.
- 4.2 Contexts referenced in this report are presented in standard terms, e.g. (1-100), (1-203), prefixed with the recorder's personal identifying number. The last three digits refer to a particular context and are prefixed by the number of the trench, except where topsoil, subsoil and natural contexts extend across trenches in which case the trench number is replaced with a dash.
- 4.3 The depth of evaluation trenches varied between c. 0.5m and c. 0.8m and demonstrated a similar deposit sequence throughout. This was characterised by friable, very dark brown (10YR 2/2) silty clay topsoil measuring c. 0.2m deep, with occasional angular gravel and Portland Stone fragments; overlying firm yellowish brown (10YR 5/4) clay measuring c. 0.2m deep, with occasional Portland Stone fragments. Natural geology comprised solid, light grey (10YR 7/1) platy (Portland Stone) bedrock and remained consistent within both trenches.
- 4.4 No visible features or deposits of archaeological interest were encountered within either trench. Machine excavation of the trenches ceased at c. 0.8m where natural bedrock was encountered.

5. The finds

- 5.1 No finds were observed during the field evaluation.

6. Discussion

- 6.1 Recent evaluation works at Reap Lane (COAS, 2013), within close proximity to the Site, discovered the remains of a Roman structure. Despite this, and the fact that the Site is undisturbed by quarrying, no archaeological features, deposits or finds were observed during these evaluation works.

7. Archive

- 7.1 As no archaeological evidence was encountered, all relevant data has been incorporated into this report. As such, the digital archive will either be held on the COAS cloud storage or destroyed.
- 7.2 Copies of this report will be deposited with the client/agent and included as part of the Dorset Historic Environment Record. A digital copy of the report will also be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service, via OASIS (On-line Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations – <http://oasis.ac.uk/england/>).

8. Bibliography

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| Chartered Institute of Field Archaeologists (CIfA), December 2014 | <i>Code of Conduct</i> . Reading: CIfA |
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| Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) 2012 | <i>National Planning Policy Framework</i> , London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office |
| Milby, S., 2017 | <i>Written Scheme of Investigation for An Archaeological Evaluation: Land adjacent to Avalanche Road, Portland, Dorset</i> . Context One Archaeological Services Ltd, unpublished |

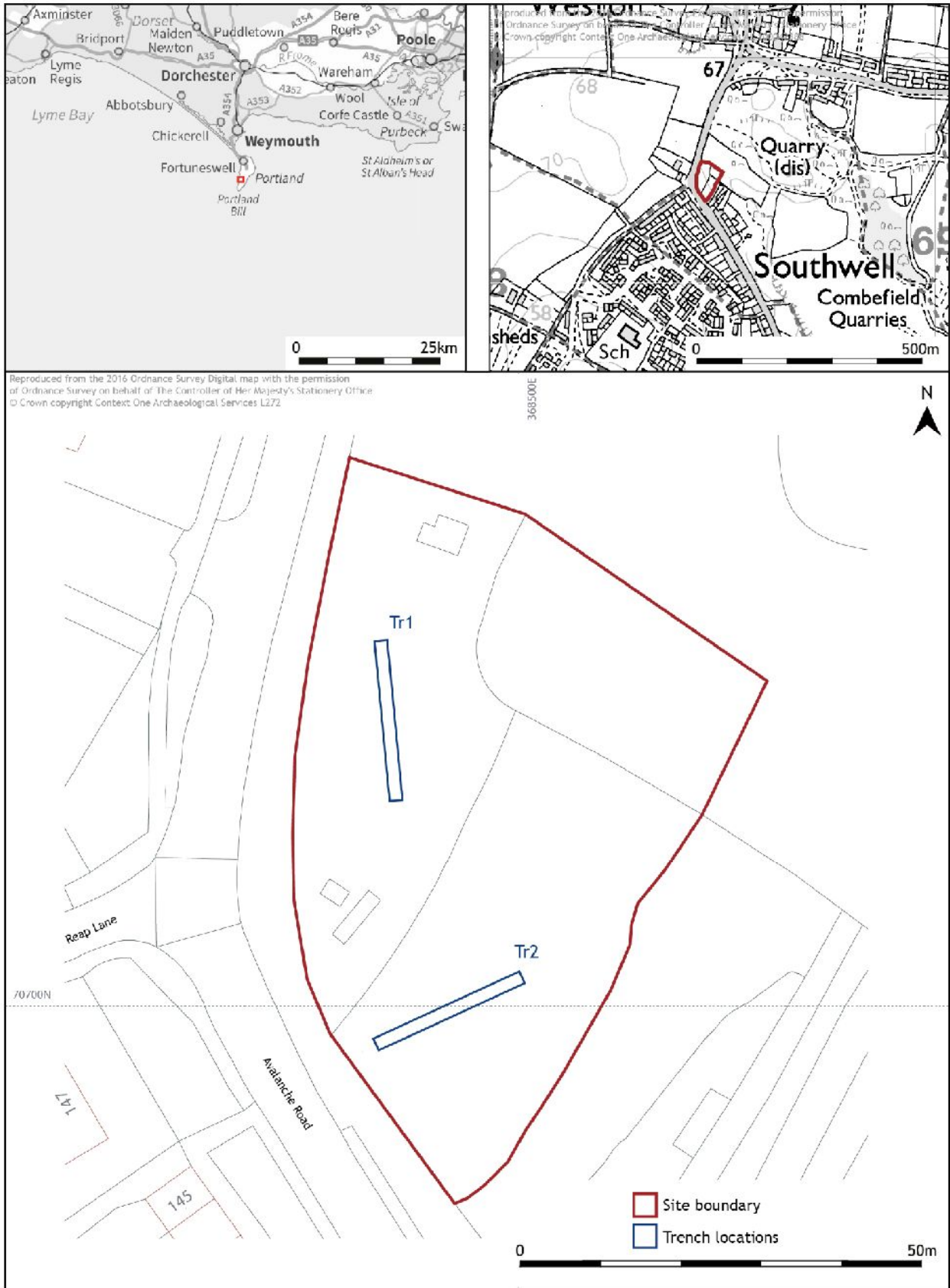


Figure 1. Trench locations



Plate 1. Trench 1 (from NW); 2 x 1m scale



Plate 2. Profile 1 (from W); 1 x 1m scale



Plate 3. Trench 2 (from W); 2 x 2m scale



Plate 4. Profile 2 (from NW); 1 x 1m scale

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