

Thorncombe Farm
Fore Street
Thorncombe
Dorset

Archaeological Monitoring and
Recording

SUMMARY REPORT

April 2017



Thorncombe Farm
Fore Street
Thorncombe
Dorset

for

COAS project code: C1/AMR/17/DTT

Mr and Mrs Frost

REPORT

Prepared by Richard McConnell, Projects Director
Date 19/04/17

Approved by Cheryl Green, Post-excavation Manager

Signed

Date 19/04/17

Issue 01

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DETAILS

Listed Building entry no. 1153285
Listed Building Consent ref. WD/D/16/002032
Local Planning Authority West Dorset District Council
Scheduled Monument Consent ref. N/A
Historic Environment Record ref. TBA
Collecting Museum Dorset Museums
Museum accession code N/A
OASIS reference contexto1-278139

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Summary

Context One Heritage & Archaeology carried out archaeological monitoring and recording during limited groundworks at Thorncombe Farm, Fore Street, Thorncombe, Dorset as a condition of granting listed building consent for the refurbishment of the property.

The property is thought to date to the 16th/17th century and is a vestige of Thorncombe Farm that may have originated at this time. Historic maps indicate that the farm was split up in the late 19th or early 20th century.

The monitoring work was specifically related to the removal and lowering of a floor for a proposed kitchen although this was not carried through. Instead, monitoring was carried out on the removal of flooring elsewhere in the building. However, this merely revealed modern surfaces above a homogenous natural clay deposit that was probably used to level the ground prior to the construction of the building in the 16th/17th century. No artefacts were recovered.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Context One Heritage & Archaeology (C1) carried out archaeological monitoring and recording during limited groundworks at Thorncombe Farm, Fore Street, Thorncombe, Dorset (the 'Site') over two days on 3 and 28 March 2017. The investigation was required as a condition of granting Listed Building Consent (LBC) for the refurbishment of the property (Listed Building Consent reference: WD/D/16/002032) (**Figure 1, Plate 1**). The project was commissioned by the property owners, Mr and Mrs T Frost.
- 1.2 The monitoring and recording was requested by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), West Dorset District Council (WDDC) on the advice of the Conservation Officer for WDDC. In a delegated report compiled by Mr Darren Rogers (Case Officer, WDDC) on 26 October 2016, Mr Rogers noted the following comments made by the Conservation Officer in response to the application for LBC:

"The accompanying Heritage Statement and assessment provide valuable information relating to the importance and significance of this building, the contents of which are accepted.

Proposal: The proposal has adopted a respectful approach to safeguard the significance of the building, the most intrusive element being the lowering of the floor within part of the ground floor of the building. However, evidence suggests that the area to be lowered within the proposed kitchen has been increased in height at some point with the provision of a relatively recent concrete floor. No objections are raised to the proposed works of repair and refurbishment however, given the significance and date of the building it is recommended, as discussed on site with the applicant and agent, that an archaeological watching brief is undertaken during works to remove the existing floor. Furthermore, given the tendency for buildings of this type and period to use large blue lias flagstones, the proposed use of an imported flooring material should also be carefully considered and a condition to this effect should also be applied.

Recommendation: Support with conditions requiring compliance with submitted plans and information together with an archaeological watching brief and samples of the proposed flooring material to be submitted and agreed."

- 1.3 The advice was accepted by the Case Officer and a condition was placed on LBC approval on 1 November 2016. Condition 3 states:

"The development shall not commence until the developer has received approval from the Planning Authority for arrangements for an archaeological observation and recording to take place during (the demolition of any structure and) development. These arrangements shall be submitted to the Planning Authority not less than 4 weeks before commencement of work.

REASON: The area is of archaeological potential and it is important that any archaeological features and finds are properly recorded."

- 1.4 The programme of archaeological works comprised four elements: the production of a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which set out the project strategy; archaeological monitoring and recording; post-excavation and report production (this document); and archive preparation and deposition.
- 1.5 The requirement follows advice by Central Government as set out in the *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)* (DCLG 2012); *The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990*; and *Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*.

2. The Site

- 2.1 The Site (centred on NGR ST 37620 03260) is centrally located in the village of Thorncombe on the southern side of Fore Street opposite a war memorial and St Mary's Church (**Figure 1**). In plan, the property is a narrow rectangle measuring c. 20m x 6.50m and set perpendicular to Fore Street, with the north-west gable end fronting the road and the main aspect facing the north-east. The building has a neighbouring property immediately to the south-west and a further property (No. 1) beyond the garden to the north-east. The Site is largely situated on level ground at an average height of c. 145m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The recorded solid geology for the Site is Upper Greensand Formation - Sandstone, Glauconitic and the drift

(superficial) geology is Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel (BGS 2017). The soils are recorded as slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage (CSAIS 2017).

- 2.2 The Site has been the subject of three heritage statements prepared to support alterations to the property and refurbishment works. The first was carried out by AC Archaeology in 2016 (Boundary Wall to Thorncombe Farm, Fore Street, Thorncombe, Dorset; report reference: ACD1402/1/1) relating to a refused LBC application to create a vehicular access through the northern boundary wall with associated drive and parking bay (LBC application reference: WD/D/16/001290). A Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment and a later addendum (Heritage Assessment of Quarry Tiles) were prepared by Symonds & Sampson to support the present LBC application and partly drew on the results of the heritage statement prepared by AC Archaeology.
- 2.3 The property is thought to date to the 16th/17th century and is a vestige of Thorncombe Farm that may have originated at this time. Historic maps indicate that the farm was split up in the late 19th or early 20th century. The house was listed in 1951 under the name of Thorncombe Farm House. The listing detail describes the building as follows;

"ST 3703 THORNCOMBE FORE STREET, SOUTH SIDE 7/105 Thorncombe Farm House 4. GV II Farmhouse at right-angles to street. Mid C16-C17. Rubble walls with stone plinths and quoins. C20 Roman tile roof with C17 stone coping at gable-ends. Plan: original front doorway to left of centre into cross-passage (now French window). C20 front door well right of centre. Brick stacks on ridge at gables and one C20 brick stack at eaves from front-wall Hall fireplace. Two storeys with 4-window range. Ham stone mullion windows with: hollow chamfers (ground floor, renewed, except one) and ovole mouldings (first floor, renewed). One window breaking above eaves. Interior: plan originally, kitchen cross-passage, Hall, Parlour. Plank and muntin partition on inner left side of cross-passage. Hall: very fine moulded ceiling-beams of heavy section carrying joists. C16. Cut at fire-place end. Stone fireplace with straight chamfer, stopped. Roof structure now C20, formerly thatched. The house is an important example of the cross-passage type with good original features. Part of a closely-packed group in Fore Street. Source: R.C.H.M. Dorset I, p.248 (22)."



Plate 1. Thorncombe Farm from the SE

3. Archaeological aims and research objectives

3.1 The principal aims of the archaeological monitoring were to:

- identify, investigate and record all significant buried archaeological deposits revealed on the site during groundworks;
- determine the character of the archaeological remains, where present;
- recover environmental information, which may provide further information relating to the local historic environment of the area;
- provide sufficient information to enable further mitigation strategies to be determined, where appropriate

3.2 The research objectives were to:

- determine whether there is any evidence specifically relating to the origins and evolution of the present building and whether there is evidence of previous settlement activity on the Site

4. Methodology

4.1 All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) (December 2014). COAS adhered to the *Code of Conduct* of the CIfA (1985, rev. 2000, 2014), and *Regulations for Professional Conduct* (CIfA, 2014, rev. 2015) at all times. The fieldwork methodology employed is summarised below.

4.2 COAS gave notification of the commencement of the works to the Dorset Historic Environment Service (HES).

4.3 Prior to the commencement of Site works, the excavation methodology was agreed between those responsible for carrying out the groundworks and C1 to ensure that all parties were aware of the monitoring requirements.

4.4 An updated strategy for the refurbishment of the interior of the building did not require the lowering of the floor for the proposed kitchen. However, it was agreed that the removal of flooring elsewhere would merit archaeological monitoring (**Figure 2, Plates 2-5**). This included three areas: the cross-passage for a service run; the levelling of ground to the rear of the building for a new WC/utility; and a test trench against the wall in the proposed parlour to check the integrity of the foundations.

4.5 In the absence of archaeological features/deposits, core details of the general deposit sequence were recorded for each area at locations that best typified a representative section. Details were logged on COAS *pro-forma* profile forms in digital format using iPad mini tablets. A summary of the deposit sequence for each profile location is tabulated in **Appendix 1**. Each deposit was given a unique context reference which combines a site staff number as a prefix to the context number itself. Spoil was examined for the retrieval of artefacts. A photographic record of the monitoring work was prepared and comprised digital images in .jpg format of the profiles, areas of groundworks and more general contextual shots.

5. Results

5.1 Groundwork excavations varied between 0.35m and 0.60m in depth. Both the cross-passage and proposed parlour were surfaced with modern linoleum and quarry tiles on concrete floors (1-100 and 3-100) measuring up to 0.20m thick. The area of the proposed utility/WC was surfaced with a shallow concrete floor and sand bedding (1-200) totaling 0.05m thick over a clay and silty clay sediment (1-201), measuring 0.09m thick. The subsequent underlying deposit at all three locations was similar and comprised a silty clay with random flint/limestone fragments that was exposed to a depth of 0.43m in places.

6. The finds

- 6.1 No finds were recovered or observed during archaeological monitoring.

7. Discussion

- 7.1 Despite the age of the house, development groundworks showed that the floors, where excavated, were modern and probably reflect a previous refurbishment in the 1970s. A homogenous clay deposit beneath these probably represents a re-worked natural sediment that was used to level the ground prior to the construction of the building in the 16th/17th century.

8. Archive

- 8.1 As no archaeological evidence or artefacts were encountered during monitoring and recording, all relevant data has been incorporated into this report. As such, the paper/digital archive will be stored on the COAS cloud storage server or discarded.
- 8.2 A copy of this report will be provided to the HES so that it can be included as part of the county 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/>).

9. Acknowledgements

- 9.1 C1 would like to thank Mr Anthony Humby (Site Manager) and the site owners, Mr and Mrs T Frost for their kind assistance during the course of this project.

10. Bibliography

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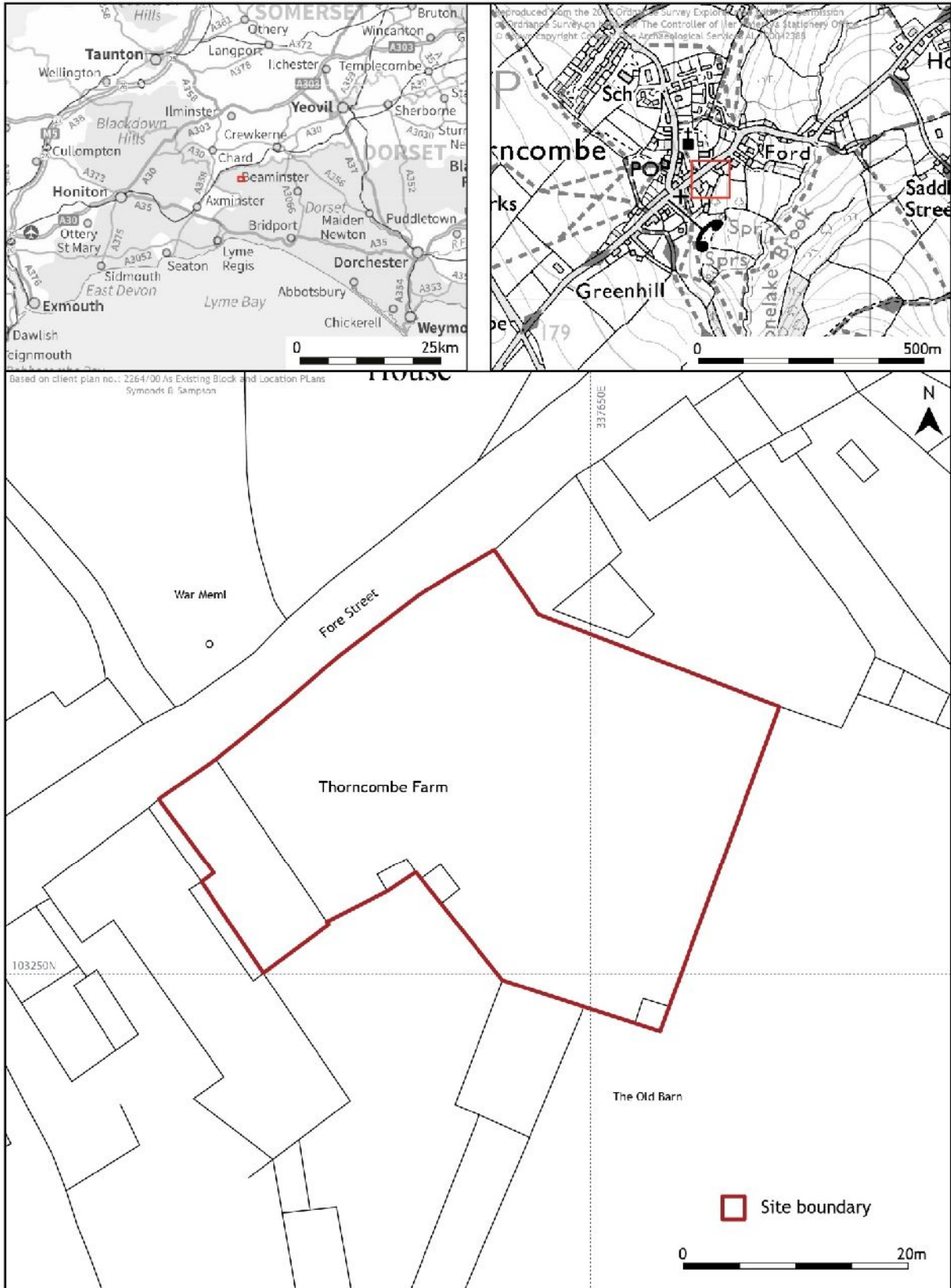


Figure 1. Site setting

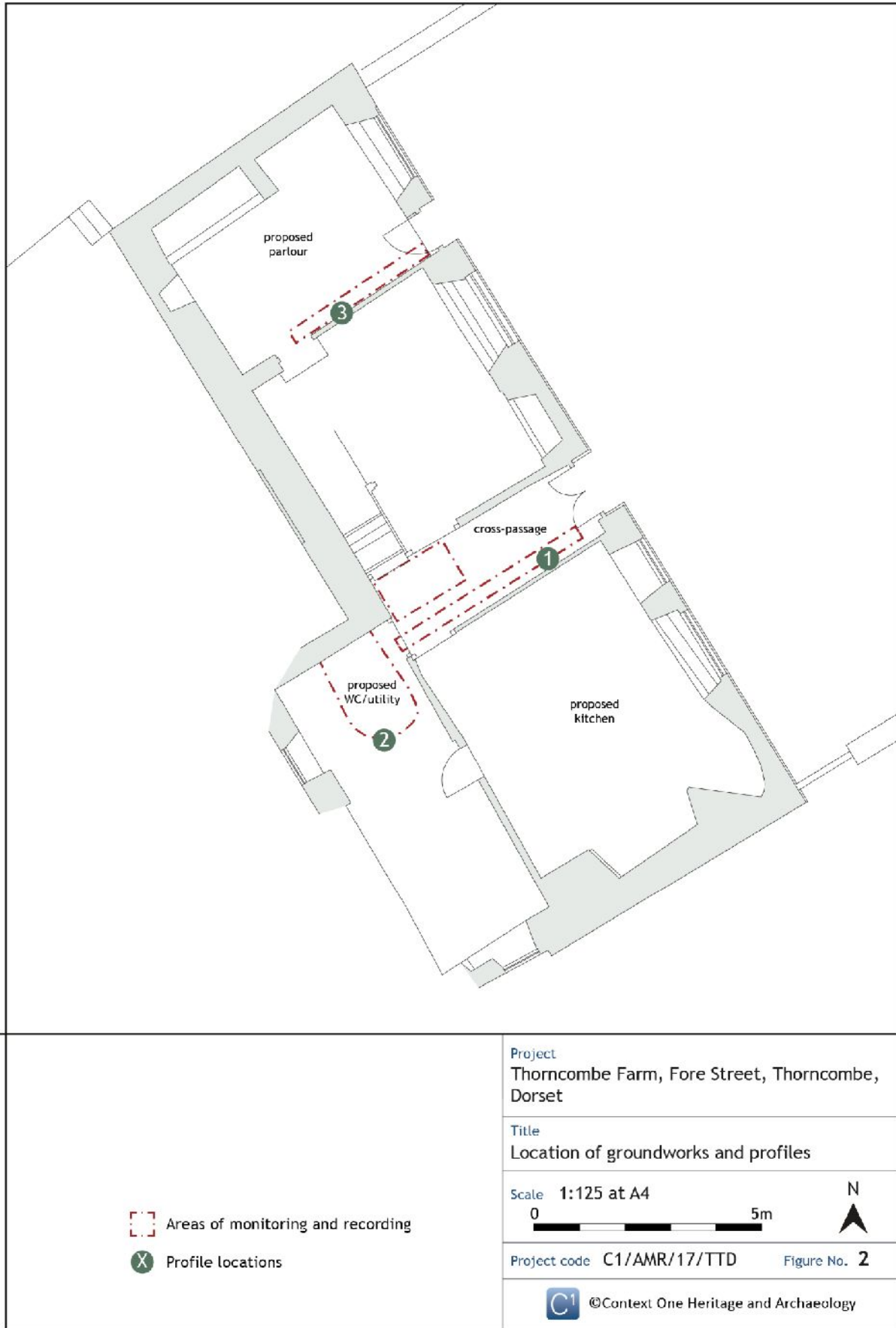


Figure 2. Location of groundworks and profiles



Plate 2. Test trench in cross-passage from NE (no scale) (Profile 1)



Plate 3. Proposed WC/utility from SE (no scale) (Profile 2)



Plate 4. Partial removal of cross-passage floor from NE (50cm scale)



Plate 5. Test trench in proposed parlour from NE (50cm scale) (Profile 3)

Appendix 1: Context summary

CONTEXT NO.	PERIOD	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	EARLIER THAN	CONTEMP. WITH	LATER THAN	LENGTH	WIDTH/DIAMETER	THICKNESS/DEPTH
Profile 1									
1-100	Modern	Layer	Thick concrete floor and linoleum tiles	N/A	-	1-101	4.68m+	0.30m+	0.17m
1-101	?Natural	Layer	A firm, very dark greyish brown (10YR 3/2) silty clay with random, angular medium to large flint/limestone fragments	1-100	?1-202, 4-301	-	4.68m+	0.30m+	0.43m+
Profile 2									
1-200	Modern	Layer	Shallow concrete floor with equally shallow sand bedding	N/A	-	1-201	N/A	N/A	0.05m
1-201	?Modern	Layer	A soft, light olive brown (2.5Y 5/4) predominantly clay and silty clay	1-200	-	1-202	N/A	N/A	0.09m
1-202	?Natural	Layer	A firm, very dark greyish brown (10YR 3/2) silty clay with random, angular medium to large flint/limestone fragments	1-201	?1-101, 4-301	-	N/A	N/A	0.40m+
Profile 3									
4-300	Modern	Layer	Thick concrete floor and linoleum tiles	N/A	-	4-301	3.50m+	0.30m+	0.20m
4-301	?Natural	Layer	A compact, very dark greyish brown (10YR 3/2) silty clay with random, angular medium to large flint/limestone fragments	4-300	?1-101, 1-202	-	3.50m+	0.30m+	0.10m+

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