Fencing Replacement, Maiden Castle, Dorset

Archaeological Monitoring and Recording

REPORT

October 2018

context one
HERITAGE & ARCHAEOLOGY

Looking after the past, today…

Fencing Replacement,
Maiden Castle,
Dorset

for

C1 project code: C1/AMR/17/FMD **English Heritage**

REPORT

Prepared by	Dr Clare Randall, Archaeological Officer
Date	05/10/18

Approved by	Dr Cheryl Green, Post-Excavation Manager
Signed	
Date	24/10/18

Issue	01

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DETAILS

Client project/scheme ref.	N/A
Planning Application ref.	N/A
Local Planning Authority	West Dorset District Council
Scheduled Monument Consent ref.	Consent issued 8/3/17 for NHLE No 1015775
Historic Environment Record ref.	N/A
Collecting Museum	Dorset County Museum
Museum accession code	N/A
OASIS reference	contexto1-300852

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Summary

Context One Heritage & Archaeology (C1) carried out archaeological monitoring and recording as a condition of Scheduled Monument consent for the replacement of fencing at Maiden Castle, Dorset. The project was commissioned and funded by English Heritage.

Maiden Castle is an Iron Age hillfort located c. 2km to the south-west of Dorchester. The area of intervention was restricted to the location of the fencing to be replaced and strainer posts along the rampart.

Despite the fence being positioned on the rampart, no significant archaeological deposits were noted. A uniform topsoil was noted around the circuit of the fence, and as far as could be ascertained this was underlain by similar deposits in all locations. These darker grey brown silts, containing slightly larger chalk fragments, may relate to the upper layers of the dump material forming the rampart, but further observations of the nature, depth or variability of this material was precluded by the narrowness of the post-holes and disturbance created by the original fence posts.

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 Context One Heritage & Archaeology (C1) carried out archaeological monitoring and recording as a condition of Scheduled Monument consent for the replacement of stock fencing at Maiden Castle, Dorset (the 'Site') (**Figure 1**). The project was commissioned and funded by English Heritage.

1.2 The monitoring and recording was requested by Historic England (HE), in response to a Tier 2 Standing Consent Notification for works on the Scheduled Monument (SM). This set-out the project details and identifies the Iron Age inner rampart as having high evidential significance. The Notification was approved by Mr Hugh Beamish (Inspector of Ancient Monuments, HE) on 8 March 2017.

1.3 The programme of archaeological works comprised three elements: archaeological monitoring and recording; post-excavation and report production (this document); and archive preparation and deposition.

2. The Site

2.1 The Site (centred on NGR SY 366874 88458) comprised the line of fence posts along the circuit of the inner earth rampart of Maiden Castle. Maiden Castle is an Iron Age hillfort located *c*. 2km to the south-west of Dorchester (**Figure 1**). The Site sits within an open agricultural landscape, and is itself covered in grazed grassland, whilst being fully open to public access. The area of intervention was restricted to the location of the fencing to be replaced and strainer posts along the rampart. The position of the posts varied in relation to the exterior of the rampart slope, generally at a height of *c*. 128m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The recorded geology for the Site is Seaford Chalk Formation and Newhaven Chalk Formation (undifferentiated) (BGS 2017), with shallow lime rich soils (CSAIS). Whilst Maiden Castle has been subject to extensive research, survey and excavation in the past (Wheeler 1943; Sharples 1991), the majority of the rampart circuit has not previously been subject to archaeological investigation.

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 was any evidence specifically relating to the structure of the upper part of the rampart deposits.

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). C1 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 is summarised below.

4.2 C1 gave notification of the commencement of the works to HE, but it was not necessary for a representative to visit the Site and monitor archaeological fieldwork. Monitoring will continue until the deposition of the Site archive.

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. The works comprised like-for-like replacement of fencing with minimal ground disturbance, with posts extracted and replaced, or cut off *in situ* and replacements driven in, with minimal expansion of the original hole.

4.4 An archaeologist was on Site to monitor all specified groundworks with the aim of identifying and recording any archaeological features/deposits present.

4.5 By default, core details of the deposit sequence across the Site were recorded on C1 *pro-forma* profile forms in digital format using iPad mini tablets. The frequency with which profiles were recorded was based on variation of the deposit sequence. Spoil was examined for the retrieval of artefacts. Manual excavation was not required. A photographic record of the monitoring and recording was carried out and involved the sole use of digital images. This included photographs illustrating more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted.

5. Results

5.1 The method of post replacement (**Plate 1**), creating minimal disturbance by withdrawing the original post and inserting a similarly sized replacement, meant that in many cases only the topsoil was seen (**Plate 2**). The deposit sequence was identical in multiple locations. Greyish brown (10YR 5/8) friable clay silt included frequent angular to rounded chalk fragments (<0.07m) and occasional angular flint fragments (<0.10m) (100), generally *c*. 0.20m deep. This overlay dark greyish brown (10 YR 3/2) friable clay silt with frequent angular to rounded chalk fragments (<0.10m) and occasional angular flint fragments (<0.10m) (101), generally impacted by the posts up to 0.30m deep. The narrowness of the holes, and disturbance to the sides caused by the presence and extraction of the original posts, precluded more detailed observations of the deposit sequence.

6. The finds

6.1 No archaeological artefacts or ecofacts were observed or collected.

7. Discussion and Conclusion

7.1 Despite the fence being positioned along the inner rampart of the Iron Age hillfort, no significant deposits were noted. A uniform topsoil was noted around the fence circuit, and as far as could be ascertained this was underlain by similar deposits in all locations. These darker grey brown silts, containing slightly larger chalk fragments, may relate to the upper layers of the dumped material forming the rampart, but further observations of the nature, depth or variability of this material was precluded by the narrowness of the post-holes and the disturbance caused by the original fence posts and their removal.

8. Archive and Dissemination

8.1 The NPPF requires that an archaeological archive arising from development works is made publicly accessible (para. 141). The archive comprises two parts: the paper/digital archive including site records and images; and the artefact/ecofact assemblage.

8.2 If archaeological features/deposits have been recorded, the archive generated from this, consisting of born-digital data and digital copies of drawings produced during fieldwork, will be transferred into the care of a Trusted Digital Repository. The only suitable repository for digital archaeological archive is the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). The digital archive will be compiled in accordance with the standards and requirements of the ADS, as set out on their website. 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/).

8.3 As no archaeological evidence was encountered, all relevant data has been incorporated into this report and the paper/digital archive will be stored on the C1 cloud storage server or discarded.

8.4 The artefact/ecofact assemblage is the legal property of the landowner (excluding any items that fall under The Treasure Act 1996). It is usual practice for the landowner to transfer ownership of this assemblage to a receiving institution (usually a museum) once it has been fully assessed and/or analysed. Receiving institutions store the assemblage and make it publicly accessible. Alternatively, the landowner can choose to keep the assemblage but arrangements must be made to ensure its long-term curation and public accessibility in accordance with NPPF.

8.5 As no archaeological finds or ecofacts were collected, there is in this case no physical archive.

8.6 Archive deposition will ordinarily be carried out within three months of final report completion.

8.7 A copy of this report will be provided to the client/agent and to the HES so that it can be included as part of the county Historic Environment Record.

9. Bibliography

Cranfield Soils and Agrifood Institute: Soilscapes (CSAIS), 2017	Available at: http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/# accessed on 06 May 2017
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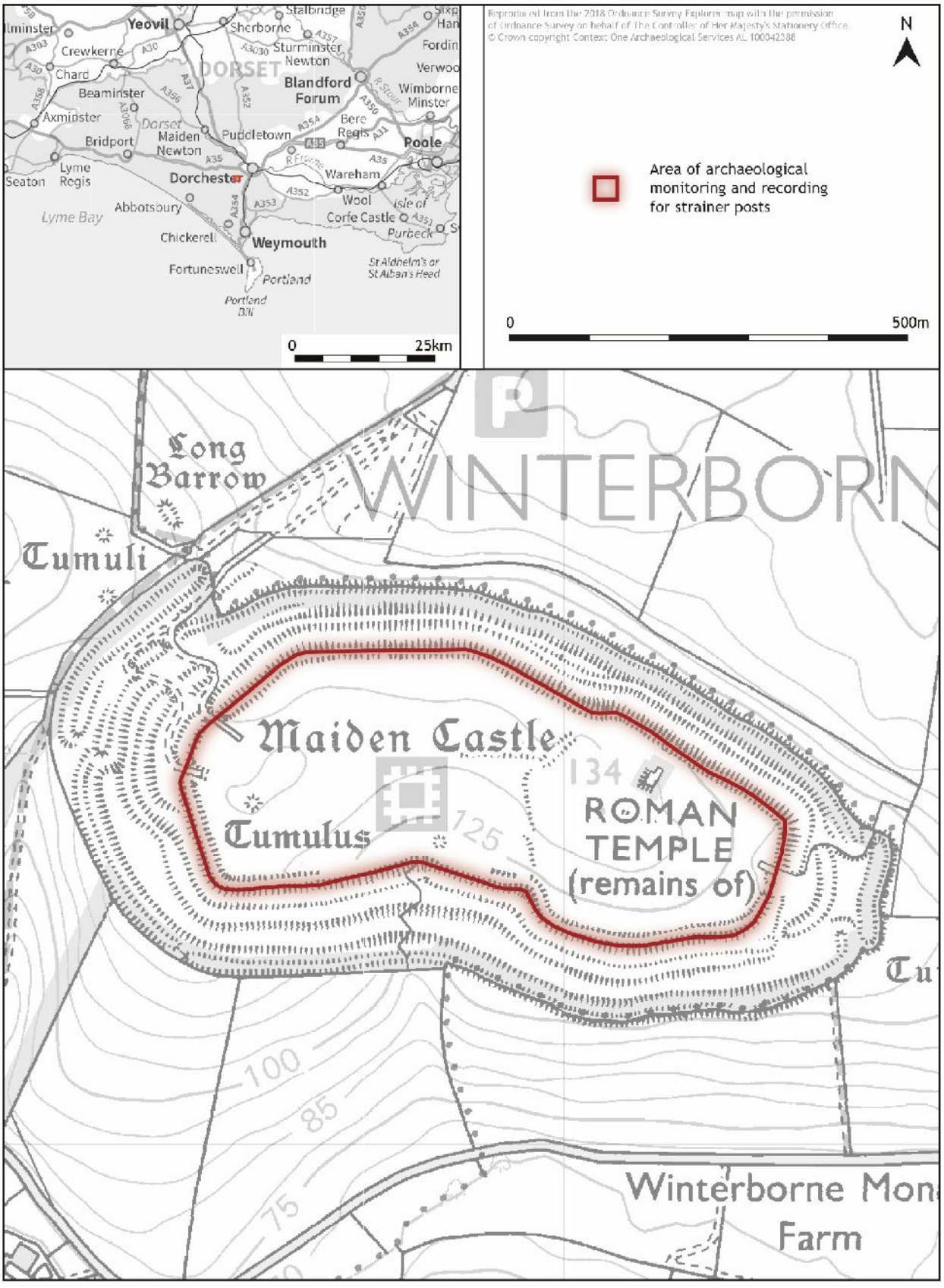

Figure 1. Site setting and location of archaeological monitoring

Plate 1. Replacement fence on same alignment as original (facing E)

Plate 2. Post-hole after withdrawing existing post (vertical view)

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