

Tithe Barn  
Church Lane (South)  
Sydling St Nicolas  
Dorset  
DT2 9PA  
Scheduled Monument No. SM  
DO 105; HA 1003209



**Archaeological  
Evaluation Report**



February 2012

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**Tithe Barn, Curch Lane (South),  
Sydling St Nicholas,  
Dorset, DT2 9PA:  
Scheduled Monument No. SM DO 105; HA 1003209.**

**An Archaeological Evaluation Report**

*Written by Dan Sykes and Ben M Ford MIFA*

*and illustrated by Conan Parsons*

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## Acknowledgements

OA would like to thank James Fitzharris and the staff of Sydling Court, and Peter Addison and Hugh Beamish of English Heritage for their assistance and guidance during this project.



## Summary

*In advance of a programme of restoration, Oxford Archaeology was instructed by Beauchamps Chartered Surveyors of Dorchester, Dorset to undertake an archaeological evaluation at the Tithe Barn, Sydling St Nicholas, Dorset. The barn is Grade II\* Listed Building and a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) No. SM DO 105; HA 1003209..*

*The works comprised the hand excavation of six small but targeted test pits within the footprint of the barn and took place between 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> January 2012. The test pits revealed evidence in the form of foundations, post and stake holes, possible beam slots, possible post pads and stone flooring for the development and use of the barn since its postulated construction date in the 15<sup>th</sup> century up to its remodelling in the c. 19<sup>th</sup> century, although only Test Pit 6 yielded any dating evidence and that was confined to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.*

*The north, west and south barn walls, probably dating to the 15<sup>th</sup> century were found to be supported upon foundations set into the chalk bedrock. The eastern barn wall, constructed when the barn was shortened in the c. 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the extant aisle stone post-pads sat immediately upon the natural geology with an absence of any foundations.*

*Post holes and stake holes in Test Pits 4 and 5 indicate that evidence survives for a number of now non-existent timber structures within the barn. A number of these could relate to construction or repair episodes possibly holding either scaffolding or setting out stakes. Equally they may indicate evidence for the use of the structure relating to internal division of the barn into different areas.*

*A possible post pad pit, located at the eastern end of the barn in Test Pit 3 may be related to the original form of the barn.*

*A north-south aligned linear feature at the western edge of the barn (Test Pit 1) had an unclear relationship with the adjacent wall and possibly pre-dated it and therefore the construction of the C15th barn, although this feature is possibly simply a drainage channel within the barn.*

*A north - south feature in Test Pit 6 aligned with the eastern edge of the western entrances and contained a small east-west aligned brick structure. It dated to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and probably had a drainage function. The feature contained significant amounts of dressed flint nodules which probably derived from the demolished original eastern end to the barn, and could therefore be contemporary with the remodelling of the eastern end.*

*Intact floor surfaces were found in three of the six test pits. The surfaces fell into two categories: flint and limestone cobbling in Test Pits 2 and 6 and a mixture of limestone flagstones and flint cobbles in Test Pit 4. The flint surface in Test Pit 6 sealed the 19<sup>th</sup> century drain and is therefore probably of a similar date, this suggests a similar date for the surface in Test Pit 2. The limestone flags were heavily worn and may represent the oldest surfacing in the barn. Whether the different stone surfaces, or absence of stone surface reflects different use areas, or simply resurfacing and reuse could not be fully ascertained.*

*A dump of modern building rubble formed a very rough surface between the opposing eastern entrances.*





## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Location, project background and scope of work

- 1.1.1 The owner of the Tithe Barn (the Site) at Sydling Court, Court Lane, Sydling St Nicholas, Dorset, DT2 9PA (Fig 1) has been granted Planning Permission (Ref: 1/D/09/001891) by West Dorset District Council to (i) restore the tithe barn as a function room and for educational purposes (Class D1), and (ii) erect two ancillary accommodation buildings, and re-locate an existing agricultural barn (Full).
- 1.1.2 The Site is a Grade II\* Listed Building and a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) No. SM DO 105; HA 1003209, therefore its structural fabric and below ground remains are protected as a national heritage asset under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act, 1979. Protection of the Site during the proposed development will be administered and maintained by English Heritage (EH) on behalf of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). Final designs and methods of work that will ensure the Site is not damaged will need to be agreed with EH through an ongoing dialogue and the use of formal Scheduled Monument Applications (SMA) and Scheduled Monument Consents (SMC).
- 1.1.3 The above process requires good baseline knowledge of the heritage assets at the Site. The architecture and standing fabric of the Site had already been surveyed and documented and was relatively well understood (OA 1992). Hugh Beamish, Inspector of Ancient Monuments, EH, requested that small scale archaeological investigations should be undertaken to gain a better understanding of the Sites' buried archaeological assets.
- 1.1.4 Oxford Archaeology (OA), were instructed by Beauchamps Chartered Surveyors of Dorchester, Dorset - acting as Agents for the owners, to undertake the archaeological works at the site.
- 1.1.5 In consultation with Hugh Beamish, OA established the type of information that was needed and the scope of the archaeological works required. A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for an Archaeological Evaluation was prepared detailing these works and the archaeological methods to be employed (OA 2011).
- 1.1.6 The archaeological works required SMC and the WSI was submitted with the application which was granted by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and notified by Eleanor Iles, English Heritage, Casework Assistant on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2011 (EH Ref: S00025763).
- 1.1.7 Pursuant to the conditions in the SMC Shane Gould, Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Peter Addison, HEFA and Steve Wallis, Senior Archaeologist, Dorset County Council Historic Environment team were informed prior to the commencement of the works.
- 1.1.8 This report documents the results of the archaeological evaluation which was carried out by Oxford Archaeology in January 2012 by Dan Sykes - Project Officer and Jacek Gruszczynski - Supervisor under the overall management of Ben Ford, Senior Project Manager.

### 1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The Site is situated to the SE of the village of Sydling St Nicolas, within the Sydling St Nicholas Conservation Area and forms part of Court Farm, Church Lane, Sydling St Nicholas. The barn measures 30 m along an E-W axis by 10 m wide on the N-S axis. It has



two sets of opposing large entrances located in the north and south elevations, with a small entrance centrally placed in the eastern elevation.

- 1.2.2 The barn is currently located along the southern side of a small farmyard with modern agricultural buildings to the north, the eastern boundary of the graveyard to St Nicolas's Church lies immediately to the west. Small farm tracks lead from the eastern side of the yard to the north and south and are joined by a further lane that runs westwards along the barns southern elevation (Fig. 1).
- 1.2.3 The Site lies on the western side and to towards the southern end of a gentle chalkland combe, it is roughly level and lies at approximately 116 m above Ordnance Datum. The floor of the barn is uneven, but roughly level between 116.60 – 116.80 mOD. The western wall to the barn acts as a retaining wall to the graveyard, the soils of which extend to a height of c. 1.2 m up the outside face of the wall.
- 1.2.4 Sydling St Nicolas sits in the Dorset Downs and is underlain by chalk bedrock (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/opengeoscience/>).

## 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 The barn was listed in 1956. The entry for the barn records the date as 16th century with later truncation and states that the barn is the most westerly aisled barn in Dorset (<http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/en-105483-tithe-barn-sydling-st-nicholas>).
- 2.1.2 No previous archaeological investigation has taken place at the site, however, an architectural survey of the barn was carried out by OA in 1991/1992 (OA, 1992) and the results from the report of this survey are briefly summarised below.

### *The barn – general description*

- 2.1.3 The barn is constructed from finely coursed flint with buttresses and quoins in coarse shelly Ham limestone. The west end is original with a central buttress and slit windows, but the east end has been rebuilt, probably in the 18th or 19th century shortening the original barn to 9 and a half bays. The porches at the north-east and north sides are original, while the opposing entrances have been modified and widened. The current roof is corrugated iron, but originally would have been thatch. The interior roof is of aisle roof-construction with longitudinal and transverse bracing and tie beams with queen-posts.

### *The roof*

- 2.1.4 Evidence for the original roof is found on the interior, where the flint walls are offset at a height of approximately 2m, above which there are a series of block tapering sockets that probably housed the feet of cruck trusses. There is a large timber pad situated at the east side of the north-east porch, which may represent a surviving footing for a cruck. Elsewhere blocks of chalky limestone and flint rubble have filled the sockets for timber pads and cruck feet. The cruck barn probably contained 8 or more bays.
- 2.1.5 The 'original' cruck roof was replaced with the current aisled timber roof, which is of post-medieval type. The remodelled aisled barn probably contained 10 or more bays and had a queen-strut and collar roof.

### *Date*

- 2.1.6 The stone walls and buttresses offer little evidence for date. They do not correspond with the type of buttress used in the nearby Church of St Nicholas, which was largely rebuilt in the 15th century. A date for the barn of around 1400 would seem likely and would



correspond with other cruck barns built at that time. The aisled construction is of post-medieval appearance in design and detail, though not of very late date, and would fit very well with the inscribed date of 1590 recorded by Hutchins.

### 3 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 General aims

3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of six Test Pits which were distributed evenly within the barn (Fig. 2). Each Test Pit shared a number of general aims, which were to establish the condition, nature, date, and use of any historic floor level[s], deposit[s] and structure[s] encountered, and in addition aimed to:

1. identify the uppermost significant surface[s]/deposit[s]/structure[s] and the stratigraphic sequence of surface[s]/deposit[s]/structure[s] that this may overly;
2. obtain dating evidence from stratigraphically secure contexts;
3. clarify the function of the surface[s]/deposit[s]/structure[s]; is there evidence for storage, threshing, use of transport, division of internal space etc?
4. clarify details of the barns construction method in relation to the inserted aisle-posts, and walls (original and subsequently modified);
5. utilise the results of the evaluation trenches to produce a transverse and longitudinal cross section through the barn floor illustrating the sequence of use with absolute heights and the depth of any overburden.

#### 3.2 Specific aims and objectives

3.2.1 The Test Pit positions were chosen to answer specific questions. The specific aims for each Test Pit were as follows:

- Test Pit 1 – was positioned to examine construction evidence of the western wall and aisle post;
- Test Pit 3 – was positioned to examine the construction evidence of the eastern end wall and aisle post;
- Test Pit 4 – was positioned to examine the widened southern entrance
- Test Pit 5 – was positioned to examine the original northern entrance
- Test Pits 2 and 6 examined the sequences in the central floor area

### 4 PROJECT SPECIFIC EXCAVATION AND RECORDING METHODOLOGY

#### 4.1 Scope of works

4.1.1 The evaluation consisted of six hand dug test pits (TP's), each approximately 1m square in area. The trench dimensions were as follows:

- Test Pit 1 – 1.40 m x 0.75 m
- Test Pit 2 – 1 m x 1 m
- Test Pit 3 – 1 m x 1 m
- Test Pit 4 – 1 m x 1 m
- Test Pit 5 – 1 m x 1 m



- Test Pit 6 – 1 m x 1 m

4.1.2 Test Pits 4, 5 and 6 examined the archaeological sequence within a maximum sondage dimension of 0.5 m by 0.5 m in area within the confines of the overall Test Pit.

## 5 RESULTS

### 5.1 Introduction and presentation of results

5.1.1 The results are presented by first summarising the archaeological sequences in each Test Pit in numerical order, Section 5.2. Descriptions are presented from the earliest to the latest deposits (tabularised tables giving Test Pit/context inventories are presented in Appendix A – these give fuller context descriptions where appropriate).

5.1.2 The locations of all the trenches are shown on Fig. 2, and the Test Pit descriptions are illustrated at the back of the report.

5.1.3 The finds reports can be found in Section 6 (any supporting data-tables are presented in Appendix B).

5.1.4 Section 7 presents the discussion, interpretation and conclusions from all the evidence.

### 5.2 Test Pit Descriptions

#### ***Test Pit 1 (Figs. 2 and 3)***

5.2.1 Test Pit 1 was located near the north-western corner of the barn, between the western wall and the north-westernmost aisle post of the extant roof structure (Fig 2). It measured 1.40 m (E-W) x 0.75 m (N-S), no sondage was necessary.

5.2.2 The natural chalk horizon (103) was encountered 0.05 m below current ground at a height of 116.54 m OD. Along the western edge of the test pit three courses of an off-set flint foundation (104), measuring 0.15m deep were revealed, these sat immediately onto the chalk bedrock and supported the western gable-end wall of the barn – no construction cut was observed. On a parallel alignment and immediately adjacent to the foundation was a 0.30 m deep linear cut (102) which was filled with flint rubble in a light grey calcareous silt matrix (105). This feature extended beyond the northern and southern limits of the test pit. The relationship between this linear feature and the wall foundation was unclear. The Ragstone post pad, that supports the roof post, in the north-east corner of the test pit also sat directly on the chalk natural. The fill of cut 102 was sealed by a mid-dark brown, humic-rich silt deposit (101), which also abutted the post-pad and the gable end wall of the barn.

#### ***Test Pit 2 (Figs. 2 and 3)***

5.2.3 Test 2 was situated on the centre-line of the barns longitudinal axis and centrally between the two opposing pairs of north and south entrances to the barn (Fig 2). It measured 1 x 1m.

5.2.4 An *in-situ* flint cobble and limestone surface (202) was encountered 0.10m below current ground level at 116.72 m OD. The pitched and flat-laid limestone as well as the dressed flint nodules were set into lime mortar. Small patches of beaten chalk overlay surface (202), and these may represent isolated repairs. The surface extended beyond the limits of the trench in all directions. With the agreement of Peter Addison HEFA no additional sondage was excavated, thus maintaining the integrity of this historic



surface. Consequentially no earlier deposits or natural chalk were revealed. The surface was overlain by up to 0.10m of mid-dark brown, humic-rich silt deposit (201).

#### **Test Pit 3 (Figs. 2, 3 and 4)**

- 5.2.5 Test Pit 3 was located against the eastern gable end wall of the barn and the north-easternmost aisle post and measured 1 m x 1 m (Fig 2), a sondage measuring 0.5 m x 1.0 m was located in its western half .
- 5.2.6 An uneven mid brown clay deposit (304) was encountered at 116.66 m OD, between 0.1 m – 0.15 m below current ground level, the sondage confirmed that it was sterile and probably of geological origin. At the southern edge of the test pit a shallow feature (306) was partially revealed, it measured 0.60 m E-W by 0.5 m N-S but extended beyond the southern baulk, and was 0.10 m deep. This was filled with a grey brown silt clay with chalk inclusions (305). This feature had been truncated by an east-west aligned shallow linear (303 filled by 302) whose eastern terminus respected the extant barn wall and then extended 0.96 m westwards to continue beyond the limits of the trench.
- 5.2.7 Both the extant eastern wall to the barn and the extant post pad sat directly on the clay natural with no construction cuts observable or any discernible foundations, and with no relationship to the features 303 and 306 described above.
- 5.2.8 The overburden consisted of a mid-dark brown, humic-rich silt deposit (301), this overlay the entire test pit and abutted both the wall and post-pad. No *in situ* stone floor surface was present, and in places the overburden immediately overlay the natural geology.

#### **Test Pit 4 (Figs. 2, 3 and 5)**

- 5.2.9 Trench 4 was located against the eastern wall at the eastern side of the south-western entranceway and measured 1 m x 1 m (Fig 2). A sondage was excavated in the SW corner of the test pit. The test pit was not perpendicular to the wall to allow for minimal disruption to the existing stone surface.
- 5.2.10 The natural chalk horizon (401) was only exposed within the sondage, at 0.15 m below current ground level at 116.48 m OD. This had been truncated by an east-west aligned construction cut (409) for the existing vertical mortared flint foundation (408) to the southern wall of the barn. The foundation appeared to utilise larger less tightly packed flint than the wall above.
- 5.2.11 A pair of stake/post-holes (404) and (406) cut the chalk and were aligned perpendicular to the foundation/wall. Sealing the chalk natural and the features, was a friable dark grey brown clay silt (402) which was overlain by a surface comprising limestone flags and flint cobbles (401) at 116.70 m OD. This surface abutted the extant barn wall but extended beyond the limits of the test pit (its observable extent was planned and is shown on Figure 3, it does however extend beyond its' observable limits but was covered by overburden).
- 5.2.12 The corner to the entrance to the barn had been modified/repaired with brick.

#### **Test Pit 5 (Figs. 2, 3 and 6)**

- 5.2.13 Test Pit 5 was located adjacent to the western internal corner of the north-east entrance (Fig. 2). It measured 1 m x 1 m, with a sondage measuring 0.5 m x 0.5 m located in its' north-west corner.



- 5.2.14 Natural degraded chalk and clay (517) was recorded at 116.60 m OD, some 0.10 m below current ground level. At this horizon three postholes (503), (507) and (513) as well as four closely positioned stake holes (505), (509), (511) and (519) were revealed. No dating evidence was found in the similar brown silt fills of these features. A pair of north-south aligned wheel ruts were recorded at this level at the eastern extremity of the test pit aligned with the edge of the entrance way into the barn.
- 5.2.15 The sondage revealed a 0.24m deep and 0.10m wide construction cut for the internal corner of the external wall (521), this cut extended beyond the western limits of the test pit. This internal corner was constructed of large squared limestone quoins, with courses of dressed flint nodules forming the main body of the wall.
- 5.2.16 The natural chalk/clay was for the most part covered in a chalk and flint rubble layer (502), which contained a single sherd of 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery and sealed the fills to the features described above. The entire area of the test pit was overlain by organic silt deposit (501).

#### ***Test Pit 6 (Figs. 2, 3 and 7)***

- 5.2.17 Test Pit 6 was located at a mid way point between the north-west and south-west entrances of the barn and measured 1 x 1 m. A 0.5 m x 0.5 m sondage in the north east corner of the trench revealed natural chalk at 116.46 m OD.
- 5.2.18 Natural chalk bedrock had been cut at the western side of the sondage by a north-south aligned linear feature (604) which was 0.10m in depth. A lime mortared brick structure was constructed on the base of the cut, it was 3 courses high and one brick header wide (top level at 116.56 m OD) it was aligned perpendicular to the cut on an E-W axis. The flat base of the feature was lined with pottery sherds, all dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century which lay at the base of a thick deposit of loosely packed dressed flint nodules within a compact dark brown calcareous silt matrix (603). This deposit filled the cut, abutted the brick structure on both its sides and sealed the natural chalk horizon to its east. The feature probably acted as some form of drain. Overlying (603) lay a rough flint cobbled surface (602) at approximately 116.60 m OD. This was overlain by (601), a similar dark brown humic-rich deposit as seen elsewhere within the barn.

## 6 FINDS

### 6.1 The pottery by John Cotter

#### ***Introduction and methodology***

- 6.1.1 A total of 25 sherds of pottery weighing 1260g. were recovered from two contexts, the majority came from (603) in Test Pit 6, with a single sherd from (502) from Test Pit 5 and (Table 1 below). The pottery was examined and spot-dated during the present assessment stage. For each context the total pottery sherd count and weight were recorded on an Excel spreadsheet, followed by the context spot-date which is the date-bracket during which the latest pottery types in the context are estimated to have been produced or were in general circulation. Comments on the presence of datable types were also recorded, usually with mention of vessel form (jugs, bowls etc.) and any other attributes worthy of note (e.g. decoration etc.).

Context	Spot-date	No.	Weight	Comments
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502	c1825-1900+	1	30	Bs Staffs-type refined white earthenware (REFW). Bowl wall sherd w thin dark blue band ext
603	c1800-1900+	24	1230	2 separate vessels incl 3 sherds (rim & bss) from a bowl in S Yorks-type kitchenware with allover internal white slip. Other fresh sherds from large bowl profile in Verwood-type ware - slightly shouldered with simple everted thickened rim, flat base, allover int amber-brownish glaze, unglazed ext
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>1260</b>	

Table 1 Pottery by context

### ***Date and nature of the assemblage***

- 6.1.2 The assemblage is in a very fresh though fragmentary condition with many large sherds present including a complete reconstructible vessel profile. All the pottery present (representing just three vessels) is broadly of 19th-century date, or just possibly early 20th-century. A complete Verwood-type ware profile from a large brownish-yellow glazed bowl (ctx 603) is notable as a late example of this long-lived post-medieval industry located in and around Verwood (Dorset) and neighbouring west Hampshire. The other two pottery types are common 'imports' from the Staffordshire and south Midlands potteries.

## **6.2 The ceramic building material (CBM) by John Cotter**

- 6.2.1 The CBM assemblage comprises 5 pieces weighing 305g. from a single context (603). Like the pottery from this context the CBM is almost certainly of 19th-century date - although it cannot generally be closely dated. This has not been separately recorded but is described below.
- 6.2.2 The five sherds are in a fresh condition and join to comprise two separate fragmentary items of roof furniture. One of these is a ridge tile in a hard, late-looking, sandy orange-red fabric with a characteristic curled edge. The other piece is apparently an edge fragment from a flat roof tile (peg tile?) in a hard, late-looking, sandy purplish-brown fabric. A small piece (9g.) of roofing slate from this context is probably of similar date.

## **7 DISCUSSION, INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **7.1 Reliability of field investigation**

- 7.1.1 In general the archaeological fieldwork is considered to be reliable, and any interpretation of the results should take into account the points below:
- 7.1.2 The test pit positions gave a wide and even coverage of the site, but were small in size and therefore relatively far apart, any comparisons between deposits in different test pits must therefore remain tentative.
- 7.1.3 The works recorded clear stratigraphic sequences from all evaluation trenches, except for within Test Pit 2 where the extant cobbled floor surface revealed beneath the overburden was left intact.
- 7.1.4 Dating evidence retrieved from the works was limited to two features with the majority retrieved from (603) in Test Pit 6, and a single sherd from (502) from Test Pit 5.



## 7.2 Comment on the nature and condition of the archaeological material

- 7.2.1 It is clear that archaeological features relating to construction events for the barn survive beneath the current level of overburden within the barn. These include foundations and construction cuts, possible beam slots, probable post holes and stake holes.
- 7.2.2 Historic floor surfaces were present in three out of six of the test pit locations, and were observed elsewhere within the footprint of the barn. No effort was made to reveal their full extents, as they were covered by varying thickness's of humic overburden but where visible they were planned (Fig 2, plan of barn), and general photographs taken.
- 7.2.3 A surface of modern dumped rubble, existing to an unknown depth lay between the eastern entrances – its extents were planned (Fig 2, plan of barn).
- 7.2.4 Dating evidence was limited to one 19<sup>th</sup> century feature, and one 19<sup>th</sup> century deposit.
- 7.2.5 No human or animal bone was recovered during the evaluation.
- 7.2.6 No waterlogged deposits were encountered, and the water table was not reached within the archaeological works. In addition, no water-lain deposits were encountered.
- 7.2.7 No deposits suitable for environmental soil sampling were encountered and therefore none were taken.

## 7.3 Discussion and interpretation

### *Natural topography*

- 7.3.1 The site is situated on the chalk bedrock of the Dorset Downs and the western end of the barn had been terraced into the chalk, possibly by up to a metre. Solid chalk bedrock was observed in the three westernmost test pits (Nos. 1, 6 and 4), with degraded chalk and sterile clay of probable glacial derivation found to their east in Test Pits 5 and 3 respectively. This difference is probably a consequence of the deeper terracing required at the western end of the barn. The suggested level of the terraced horizon has been plotted on Profiles AA and BB (Fig. 3).

## 7.4 Conclusions

### *Possible pre-barn evidence*

- 7.4.1 It is possible that some of the post-hole, stake-hole and linear features cut directly into the chalk (Test Pits 4 and 5) relate to pre-barn activity – however this is considered to be unlikely.
- 7.4.2 The north-south linear feature (102) in Test Pit 1 had an unclear relationship with the barns western wall and possibly pre-dates it. Its position depth and orientation suggests that it could be the truncated base of a pre-existing boundary ditch – demarcating the churchyard to the west. However its fill of flint nodules suggests it could be contemporary with the other flint rich deposits and date to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### *The evidence for the earlier barn walls*

- 7.4.3 The foundations of the northern and southern walls were constructed from flint nodules and not offset from the wall i.e wall and foundation shared a continuous vertical face. These were constructed within clear construction cuts into the chalk bedrock. In Test Pit 4 this construction cut underlay the limestone flag surface of unknown date, and in Test





Pit 5 the construction cut underlay a deposit containing a single sherd of 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery.

- 7.4.4 The western gable end wall was supported on a stepped off-set foundation constructed from three courses of flint nodules. It sat on the chalk bedrock but had an unclear relationship to the adjacent linear (102).
- 7.4.5 It is probable that the northern, southern and western walls were all constructed with foundations in construction trenches. There is a difference between the construction of the foundations for the western gable end than for the side walls and this could be attributable to the western end being more deeply terraced and acting as a retaining wall.

#### ***The evidence of the later barn walls and isle posts***

- 7.4.6 The eastern gable end and the isle posts were all constructed directly on the natural geology; chalk bedrock to the west, and degraded chalk and sterile clays to the east. The eastern gable end wall is suffering subsidence and there are cracks between this and its jointing with the side walls – this lack of foundation could have contributed to this situation.

#### ***Evidence for possible internal divisions/construction***

- 7.4.7 The stake/post-holes in Test Pit 4 possibly relate to the construction of the 1400 barn and may have held scaffolding uprights. However they also form a perpendicular alignment to the wall and may relate to an internal division or bay.
- 7.4.8 There is a similar case to be made for the post/stake holes in Test Pit 5. Several of the post holes and stake holes revealed in Test Pit 5 apparently cut the backfilled construction cut of the original northern wall and are also partially sealed beneath a layer of chalk and flint rubble (502) which contained the 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery. It is possible that this rubble derives from stone dressing for on site wall repairs, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, carried out from scaffolding that was set into these post and stake holes. A number of these could also form an internal division of bay.
- 7.4.9 The possible post pad pit in Test Pit 3 is thought to relate to an internal partition within the barn which pre-dated the shortening of the eastern gable end and subsequent reorganisation of the interior space.
- 7.4.10 The eastern terminus of the east-west aligned linear (303), which truncated the probable post-pad pit in Test Pit 3, respected the rebuilt eastern gable end wall and is positioned midway between the central doorway in that wall and the aisle post to its north and possibly acted as a beam slot for an internal screen.
- 7.4.11 The linear cut in Test Pit 6, aligns well with the eastern sides of the westernmost entrance. The brick divide[?] and the loose flint nodule fill suggests a drainage function below a resurfaced flint floor. The loose flint nodule fill of linear (102) in Test Pit 1 is similar and may share a similar function. This could suggest a difference in use of the western end of the barn.

#### ***The floor surfaces***

- 7.4.12 Two types of surface were observed, those that predominantly consisted of limestone flags and those of flint nodules (dressed and undressed).
- 7.4.13 The flagstone floor observed in Test Pit 4 (Fig. 2) and elsewhere (Fig. 3 plan of barn) is probably the earliest, and possibly original, floor surface of the barn. Such an important



and well constructed building with dressed Ham stone buttresses and fine flint coursing would probably have also had a similarly high quality floor surface.

- 7.4.14 The knapped flint cobble surface revealed in Test Pit 6 overlay feature (604) which contained pottery of a 19-20<sup>th</sup> century date which broadly corresponds with the assumed date of construction of the present eastern gable end wall. Other areas of this surface type (e.g. Test Pit 2) possibly have a similar origin and date. These deposits may have derived from the demolished fabric during the foreshortening of the eastern gable end.
- 7.4.15 Where stone floors were absent could be a result of the need for different flooring types required in different areas of the barn (simple chalk/dirt floor), later robbing of the materials for use elsewhere, or simply later replacement and modification.

#### ***Modern deposits and overburden***

- 7.4.16 A mid-dark brown, humic-rich silt deposit of varying thickness was seen covering much of the interior of the barn.
- 7.4.17 Modern brick and concrete rubble provided a rough surface between the eastern entrances (Fig. 2 plan of barn), it sits higher than the rest of the barn surface but it is not known how deep this deposit is (Fig. 3 Section AA).

#### ***General***

- 7.4.18 The archaeological work has demonstrated that significant archaeological remains survive at the site below the level of organic overburden that was present at the time of these excavations. These relate to the original construction of the barn and its subsequent re-modelling, principally the insertion of a new aisle-post roof in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the 18<sup>th</sup> / 19<sup>th</sup> century shortening of the eastern gable end. In addition, use and potential subdivision of the interior space of the barn is suggested with notable evidence was recovered for phases of surfacing and probable subdivision of the barns internal space.

The earlier archaeological remains were seen to have been negatively affected by areas of later truncation, both from historical use of the structure and from more recent activity; notably the area between the easternmost entrances where a large dump of building rubble formed an uneven surface – the full impact of which was not possible to ascertain during these works.



## APPENDIX A: CONTEXT INVENTORY

<b>Trench 1</b>						
<b>General description</b>				<b>Orientation</b>	E-W	
Trench 1 identified natural chalk at a depth of 0.05m which was cut by a N-S aligned linear at the west of the trench, parallel and adjacent to the offset foundation of the western gable end wall of the barn. The Ham stone post pad of the present roof sat directly on the chalk.				<b>Ave. depth (m)</b>	0.05	
				<b>Width (m)</b>	</=0.8	
				<b>Length (m)</b>	1.4	
<b>Contexts</b>						
<b>context no</b>	<b>type</b>	<b>Width (m)</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>	<b>comment</b>	<b>finds</b>	<b>date</b>
101	Layer		<0.10	Humic -rich overburden		
102	Cut	0.6	0.24	N-S aligned Cut		
103	Natural			Chalk		
104	Wall		0.18	Offset flint wall foundation		
105	Fill		0.24	Fill of 102		



<b>Trench 2</b>						
<b>General description</b>				<b>Orientation</b>		
Trench 2 identified an in-situ flint and limestone surface				<b>Ave. depth (m)</b>		0.1
				<b>Width (m)</b>		1.0
				<b>Length (m)</b>		1.0
<b>Contexts</b>						
<b>context no</b>	<b>type</b>	<b>Width (m)</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>	<b>comment</b>	<b>finds</b>	<b>date</b>
201	Layer		0.10	Humic-rich overburden		modern
202	Floor			Surface		



<b>Trench 3</b>						
<b>General Description</b>				<b>Orientation</b>		
Trench 3 revealed a post-pad pit which had been truncated by an E-W aligned beam slot. Both the existing post-pad and eastern barn wall sat directly on the clay natural.				<b>Avg.depth (m)</b>	0.1	
				<b>Width (m)</b>	1.0	
				<b>Length (m)</b>	1.0	
<b>Contexts</b>						
<b>Context no</b>	<b>type</b>	<b>Width (m)</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>	<b>comment</b>	<b>finds</b>	<b>date</b>
301	Layer		0.08	Humic-rich overburden		
302	Fill		0.16	Fill of Beam slot 303		
303	Cut		0.24	Beam slot		
304	Natural			Clay		
305	Fill		0.10	Fill of Post-pad Pit 306		
306	Cut		0.10	Post-pad Cut		



<b>Trench 4</b>						
<b>General description</b>				<b>Orientation</b>		
Trench 4 was located in an area of extant flagstone and flint cobbled flooring. A 0.5 x 0.5m sondage revealed two stake holes and the construction cut for the southern barn wall.				<b>Ave. depth (m)</b>		
				<b>Width (m)</b>		1.0
				<b>Length (m)</b>		1.0
<b>Contexts</b>						
<b>context no</b>	<b>type</b>	<b>Width (m)</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>	<b>comment</b>	<b>finds</b>	<b>date</b>
401	Floor			Flagstone/flint cobbled surface		
402	Layer		0.12	Levelling		
403	Fill		0.16	Fill of stake hole 404		
404	Cut	0.10	0.16	Stake hole		
405	Fill		0.18	Fill of stake hole 406		
406	Cut	0.11	0.18	Stake hole		
407	Fill		0.17	Backfill of Construction Cut 409		
408	Wall			Southern Barn wall		
409	Cut	>0.1	0.17	Construction Cut for wall 408		
410	Natural			Degraded chalk		



<b>Trench 5</b>						
<b>General description</b>				<b>Orientation</b>		
Trench 5 identified a construction cut for the northern barn wall, a series of post and stake holes and N-S aligned wheel-ruts				<b>Avg.depth (m)</b>		0.10
				<b>Width (m)</b>		1.0
				<b>Length (m)</b>		1.0
<b>Contexts</b>						
<b>context no</b>	<b>type</b>	<b>Width (m)</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>	<b>comment</b>	<b>finds</b>	<b>date</b>
501	Layer		0.14	Humic-rich overburden		
502	Layer		0.12	Flint/chalk rubble	Pottery	
503	Cut	0.18	0.24	Post hole		
504	Fill		0.24	Fill of post hole 503		
505	Cut	0.06	0.16	Stake hole		
506	Fill		0.16	Fill of Stake hole 505		
507	Cut	0.18	0.14	Posthole		
508	Fill		0.14	Fill of post-hole 507		
509	Cut	0.05	0.10	Stake hole		
510	Fill		0.10	Fill of stake hole 509		
511	Cut	0.05	0.12	Stake hole		
512	Fill		0.12	Fill of stake hole		
513	Cut	>0.18	0.16	Posthole(partially exposed)		
514	Fill		0.16	Fill of post-hole 513		
515	Cut	0.4	0.14	Wheel rut		
516	Fill		0.14	Fill of wheel rut 515		
517	Natural			Degraded natural chalk		
518	Fill		0.24	Fill of stake hole 519		
519	Cut	0.08	0.24	Stake hole		
520	Fill		0.24	Backfill of construction cut 522		
521	Wall			North wall of barn		
522	Cut	>0.10	0.24	Construction cut for wall 521		



<b>Trench 6</b>						
<b>General description</b>				<b>Orientation</b>		
Trench 6 identified a N-S cut containing a narrow brick wall which was overlain by a flint sub-floor and a flint and limestone surface				<b>Ave depth (m)</b>		0.3
				<b>Width (m)</b>		1.0
				<b>Length (m)</b>		1.0
<b>Contexts</b>						
<b>context no</b>	<b>type</b>	<b>Width (m)</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>	<b>comment</b>	<b>finds</b>	<b>date</b>
601	Layer		0.10	Humic-rich silt		
602	Floor		<0.10	Flint cobble / limestone		
603	Layer		<0.30	Flint make-up/floor?	Pottery? CBM	C19-20th
604	Cut	0.14	0.12	N-S aligned cut		
605	Wall	0.10	0.20	3xOrange/red bricks,yellow/grey lime mortar		







## APPENDIX A. FINDS DATA TABLES

## A.1 Pottery

*Pottery spot-date record table*

Context	Spot-date	No.	Weight	Comments
502	c1825-1900+	1	30	Bs Staffs-type refined white earthenware (REFW). Bowl wall sherd w thin dark blue band ext
603	c1800-1900+	24	1230	2 separate vessels incl 3 sherds (rim & bss) from a bowl in S Yorks-type kitchenware with all-over internal white slip. Other fresh sherds from large bowl profile in Verwood-type ware - slightly shouldered with simple everted thickened rim, flat base, all-over int amber-brownish glaze, unglazed ext
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>1260</b>	





## APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

English Heritage, 1991, Management of Archaeological Projects.

Oxford Archaeology, 1992, Fieldwork Manual, (ed. D Wilkinson, first edition, August 1992)

Oxford Archaeology, 1992, Sydling St Nicholas, Dorset - An Architectural Survey of the Tithe Barn (Report for Dorset County Council and English Heritage)

Oxford Archaeology, 2011, Tithe Barn, Sydling Court, Church Lane (south), Sydling St Nicolas, Dorset, DT2 9PA.

Scheduled Ancient Monument (Dorset 105). Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation (Client Report)

Oxford Archaeology, 2000, OA Environmental Sampling Guidelines and Instruction, Manual.



## APPENDIX C. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

<b>Site name:</b>	Tithe Barn, Court Farm, Sydling St Nicholas
<b>Site code:</b>	SYSN11
<b>Grid reference:</b>	SY 630 992
<b>Type:</b>	Archaeological Evaluation
<b>Date and duration:</b>	9th-13 th January 2012
<b>Area of site:</b>	c. 234 m <sup>2</sup>

### Summary of results:

The works comprised the hand excavation of six small but targeted test pits within the footprint of the barn and took place between 9th and 12th January 2012. The test pits revealed evidence in the form of foundations, post and stake holes, possible beam slots, possible post pads and stone flooring for the development and use of the barn since its postulated construction date in the 15th century up to its remodelling in the c. 19th century, although only Test Pit 6 yielded any dating evidence and that was confined to the 19th century.

The north, west and south barn walls, probably dating to the 15th century were found to be supported upon foundations set into the chalk bedrock. The eastern barn wall, constructed when the barn was shortened in the c. 19th century, and the extant aisle stone post-pads sat immediately upon the natural geology with an absence of any foundations.

Post holes and stake holes in Test Pits 4 and 5 indicate that evidence survives for a number of now non-existent timber structures within the barn. A number of these could relate to construction or repair episodes possibly holding either scaffolding or setting out stakes. Equally they may indicate evidence for the use of the structure relating to internal division of the barn into different areas.

A possible post pad pit, located at the eastern end of the barn in Test Pit 3 may be related to the original form of the barn.

A north-south aligned linear feature at the western edge of the barn (Test Pit 1) had an unclear relationship with the adjacent wall and possibly pre-dated it and therefore the construction of the c.15th barn, although this feature is possibly simply a drainage channel within the barn.

A north - south feature in Test Pit 6 aligned with the eastern edge of the western entrances and contained a small east-west aligned brick structure. It dated to the 19th century and probably had a drainage function. The feature contained significant amounts of dressed flint nodules which probably derived from the demolished original eastern end to the barn, and could therefore be contemporary with the remodelling of the eastern end.

Intact floor surfaces were found in three of the six test pits. The surfaces fell into two categories: flint and limestone cobbling in Test Pits 2 and 6 and a mixture of limestone flagstones and flint cobbles in Test Pit 4. The flint surface in Test Pit 6 sealed the 19th century drain and is therefore probably of a similar date, this suggests a similar date for the surface in Test Pit 2. The limestone flags were heavily worn and may represent the oldest surfacing in the barn. Whether the different stone surfaces, or absence of stone surface reflects different use areas, or simply resurfacing and reuse could not be fully ascertained.

A dump of modern building rubble formed a very rough surface between the opposing eastern entrances.

**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with the Dorset County Museum in due course, under the following accession number: TBC



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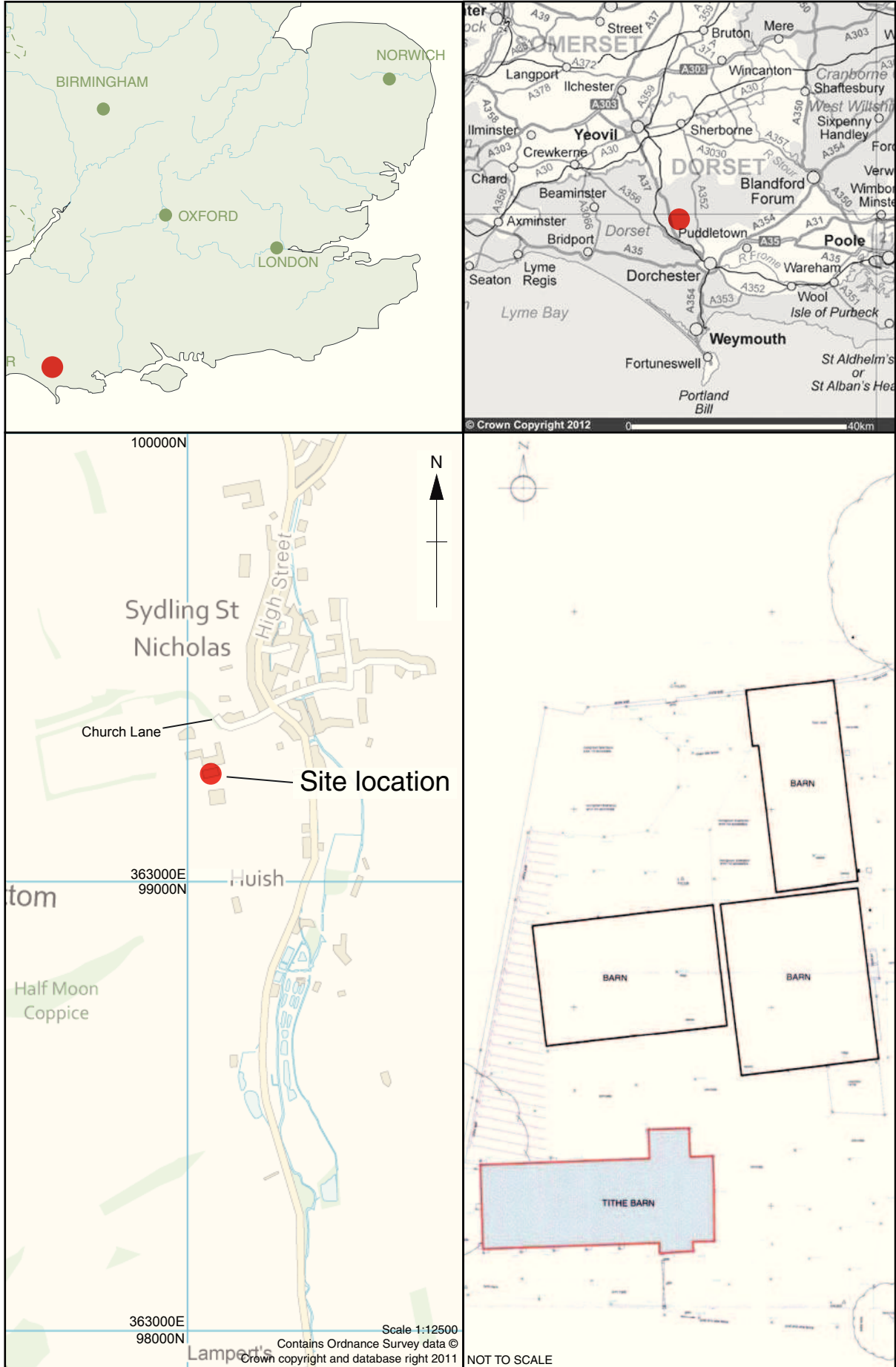
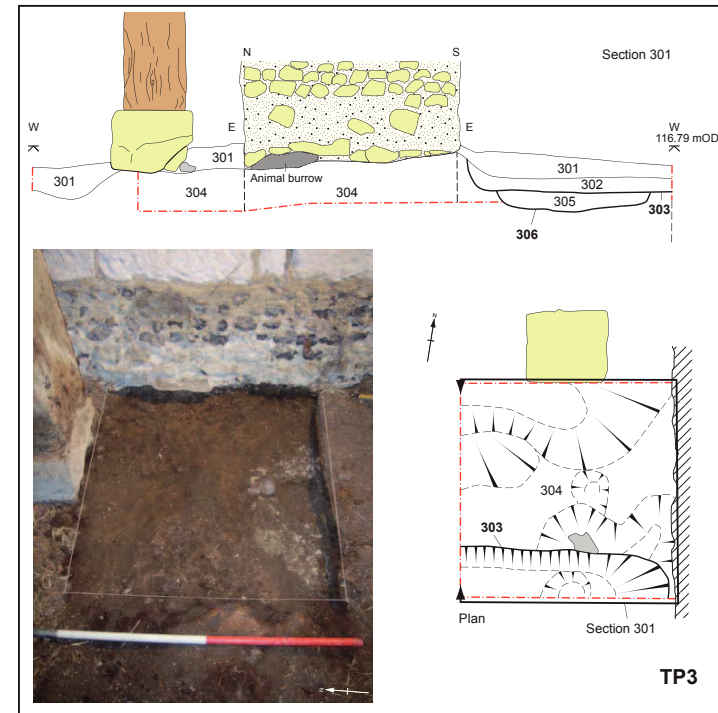
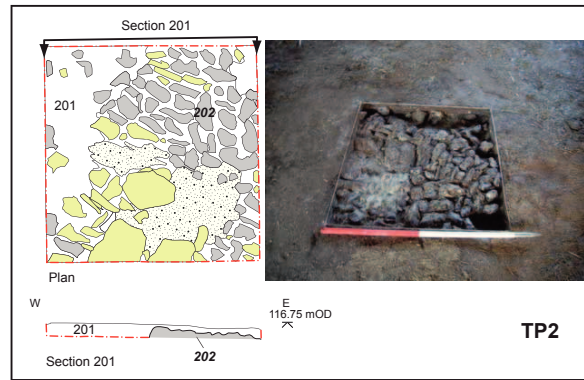
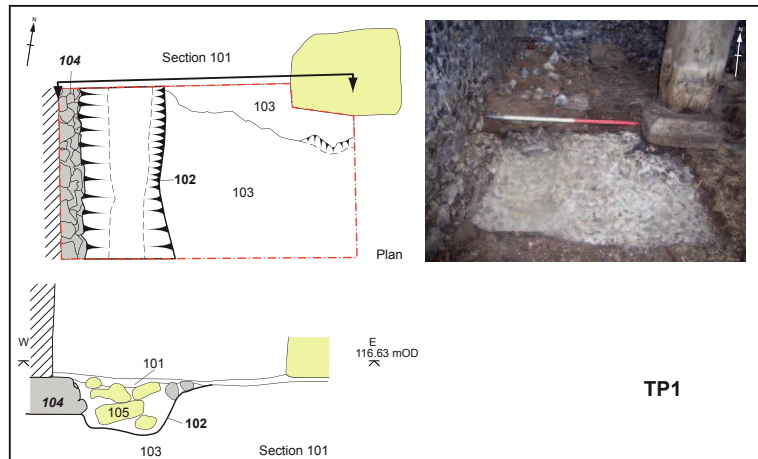


Figure 1: Site location







- Key**
- Flint
  - General stone
  - Wood
  - Brick
  - Pottery
  - Observed area of limestone flag floor
  - Mortar
  - Animal damage
  - Truncation
  - Intervention
  - Wall
  - Section location
  - Reconstructed

All individual plans and sections at the scale below:  
 0 1 m  
 1:25

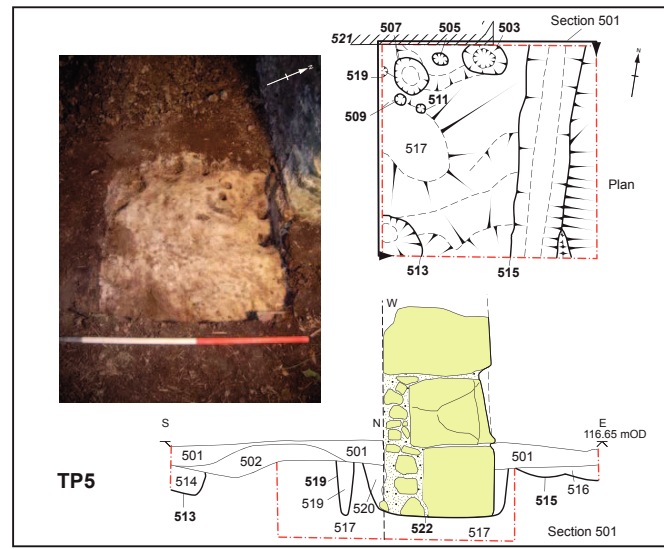
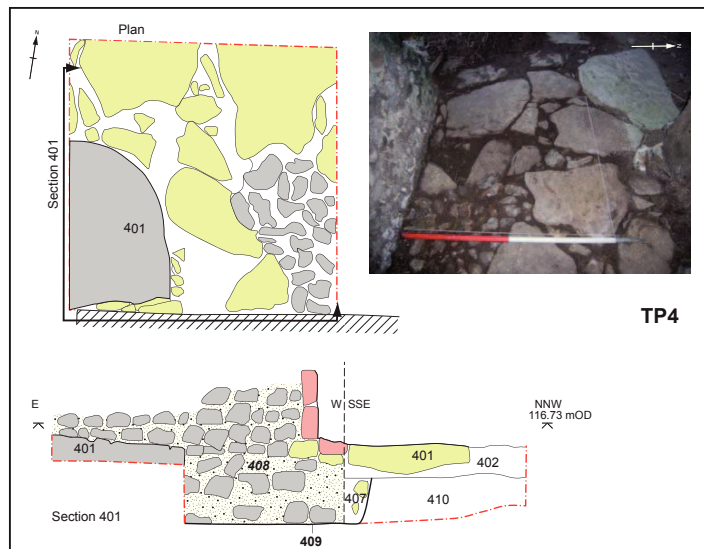
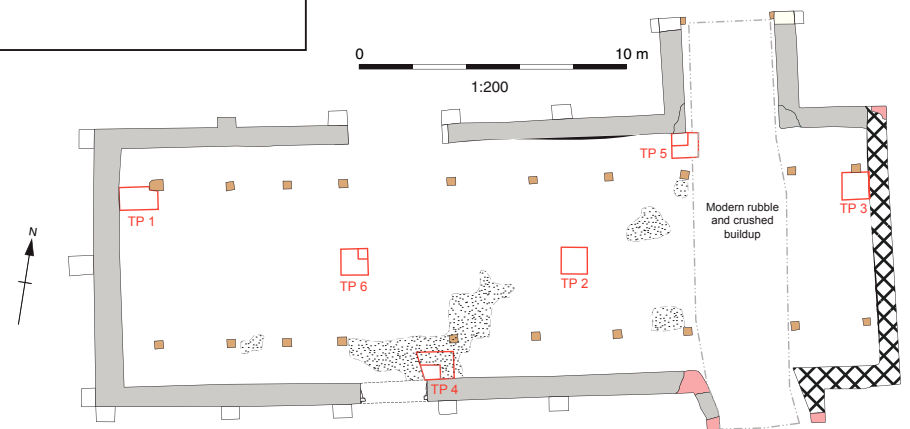
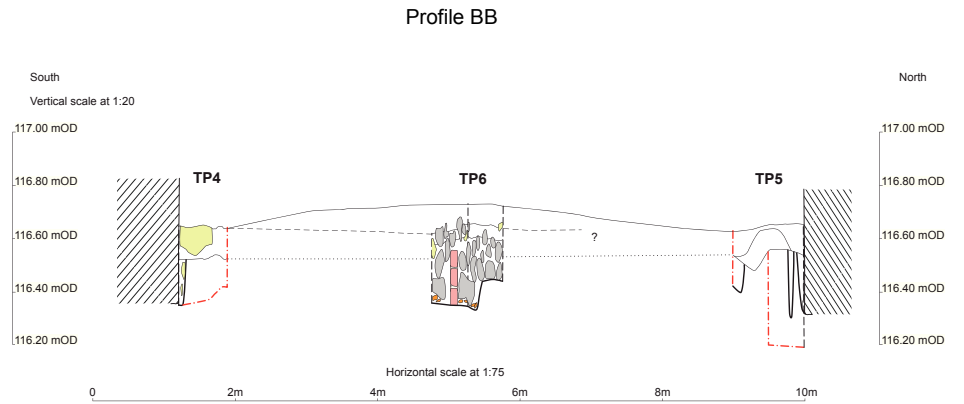
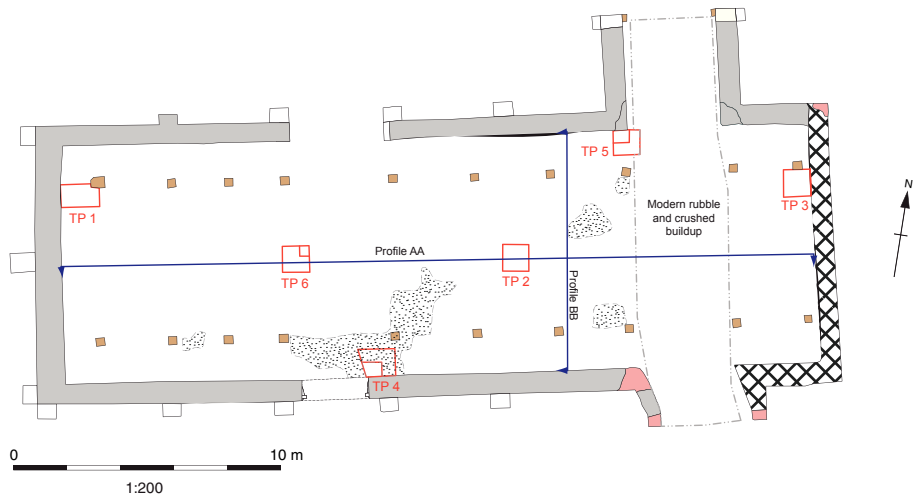
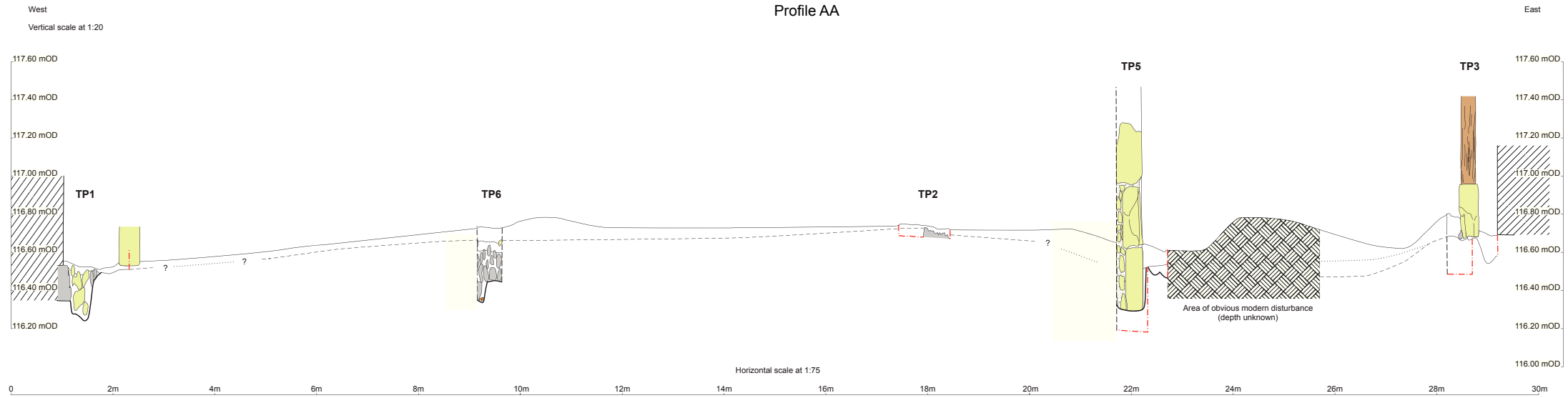


Figure 2: Test Pit location plan -showing plan of first significant archaeological horizon with photograph, and example section for each Test Pit

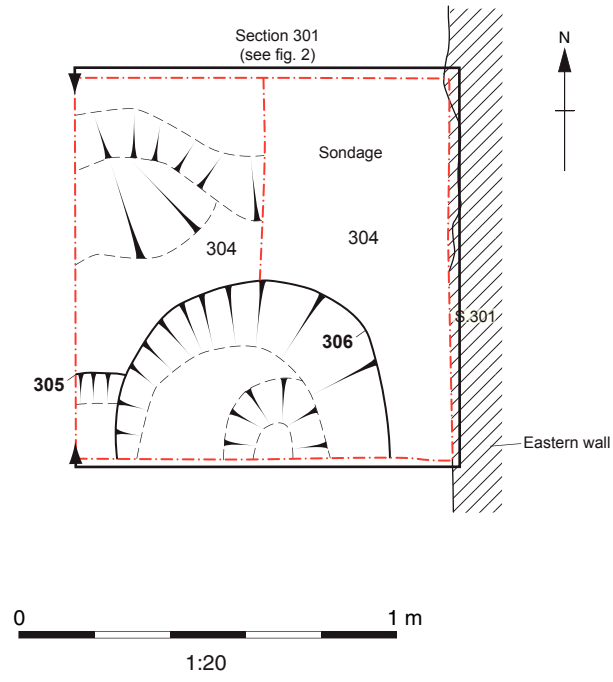




- |                                       |                  |                                     |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Flint                                 | Mortar           | Modern disturbance                  |
| General stone                         | Animal damage    | Extrapolated original floor surface |
| Wood                                  | Truncation       | Extrapolated level of natural       |
| Brick                                 | Intervention     |                                     |
| Pottery                               | Wall             |                                     |
| Observed area of limestone flag floor | Section location |                                     |
|                                       | Reconstructed    |                                     |

Figure 3: Profiles AA and BB – showing cross sections through interior of the barn

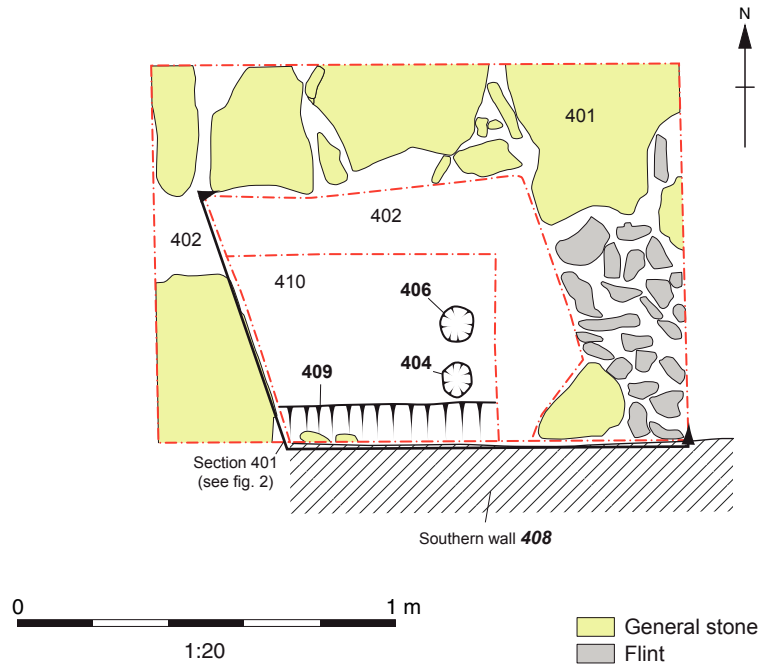




Test Pit 3 - View to the east

Figure 4: Test Pit 3 - Plan and photograph after excavation completed



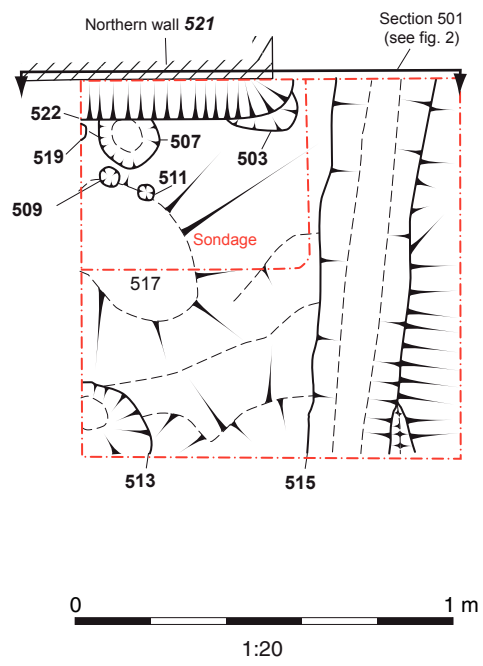


Test Pit 4 - View to the south

Figure 5: Test Pit 4 - Plan and photograph after excavation completed



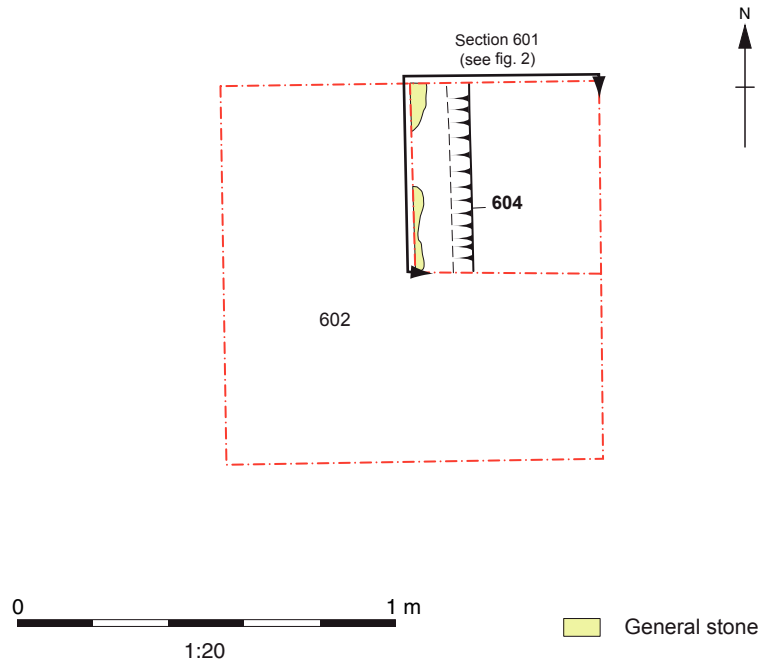




Test Pit 5 - View to the west

Figure 6: Test Pit 5 - Plan and photograph after excavation completed





Test Pit 6 - View to the north

Figure 7: Test Pit 6 - Plan and photograph after excavation completed







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