

Charles Street

Building for the Future, Preserving the Past



In September 2010, Simons were granted planning permission to redevelop the Charles Street site, which has been earmarked for regeneration for almost 30 years.

The first phase of the project will provide new offices for West Dorset District Council and a library and adult learning centre. Once this stage is completed, work will begin on the retail side of the development, which includes over 13,000 sq m of new retail space, affordable apartments, new areas of public realm and 485 car parking spaces.

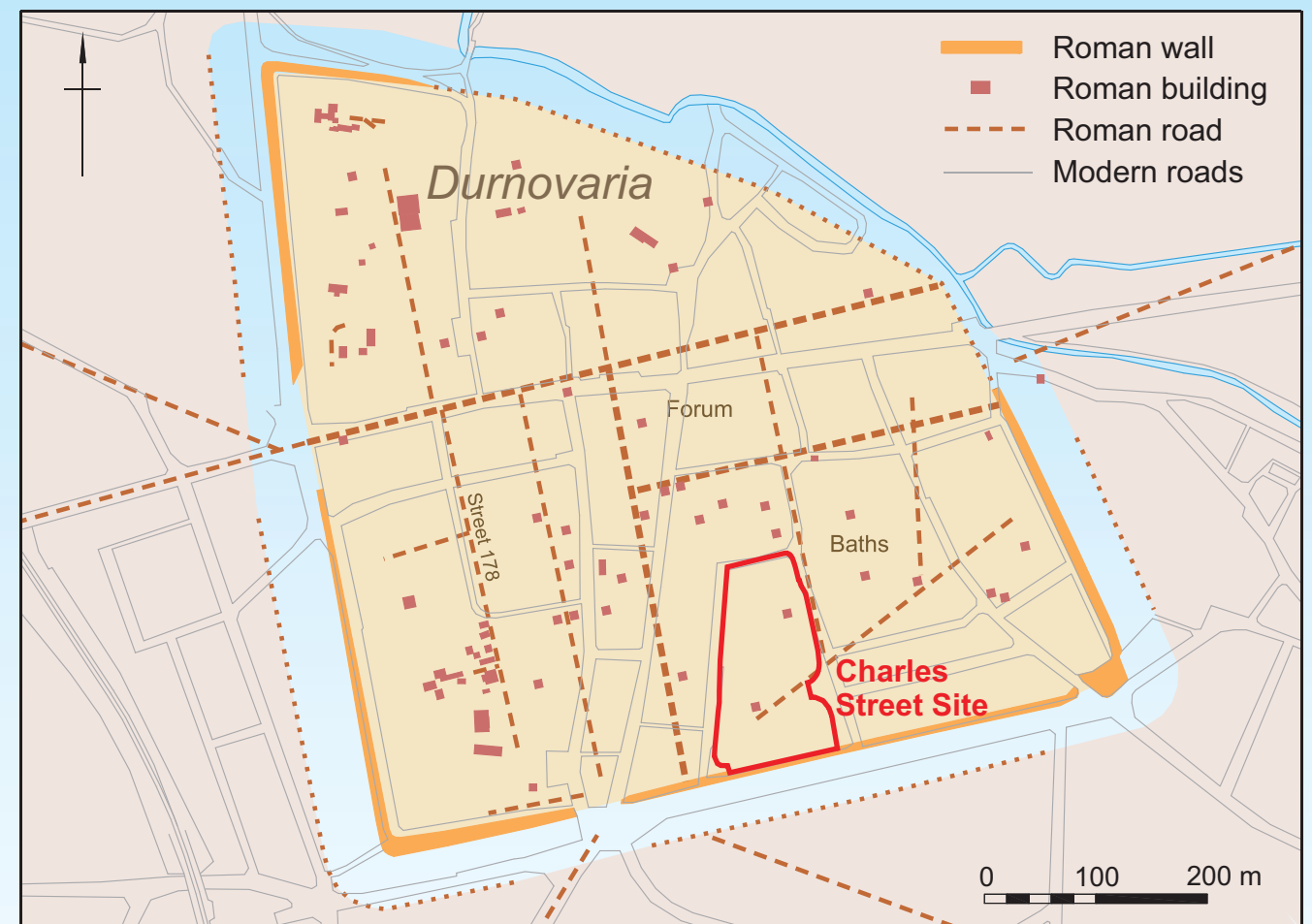
Charles Street lies near to the southern edge of the Roman town, *Durnovaria*. The row of trees along South Walks marks the line of the Roman town walls.

The Roman public baths, which were imposing buildings, stood not far away.

Currently, developers and planners are working together at Charles Street to preserve as much of possible of this important chapter in Dorchester's history.



Reconstruction of the Roman town



Charles Street *Latest Results*



View of revealed gullies related to Roman buildings



Roman burial of an infant



Mosaic ceramic and stone tiles

The first results from the excavation show that houses stood on the site in Roman times. As well as the stone foundations of the walls of the rectangular buildings, traces of some of the floors have already been found.

One room has an *opus signinum* floor. This flooring was popular in Roman times and was made of *tesserae*, small stones and pieces of tile set in clay. Other finds include pieces of painted wall plaster, coins and pottery.

The burial of a baby has also been found. Although most Romans were buried in large cemeteries outside the town, infants were buried within the settlement.

After experts have looked at the finds, public talks will be given and a report will be written. The finds will be given to the County Museum in High West Street.



Painted wall plaster



Roman Samian fine pottery



Local pottery wares

Charles Street *Latest Results*



Archaeologists excavating down to Roman times

The first results from excavations found foundations of Roman houses, rectangular buildings and the traces of walls and floors.

This week the archaeologists have found traces of how the stone was robbed from Roman buildings in recent times. It is known that

the ruins of some Roman buildings still stood in Dorchester until 300 years ago.

After experts have looked at the finds, public talks will be given and a report will be written. The finds will be given to the County Museum in High West Street.



A Roman wall foundation that is still in place

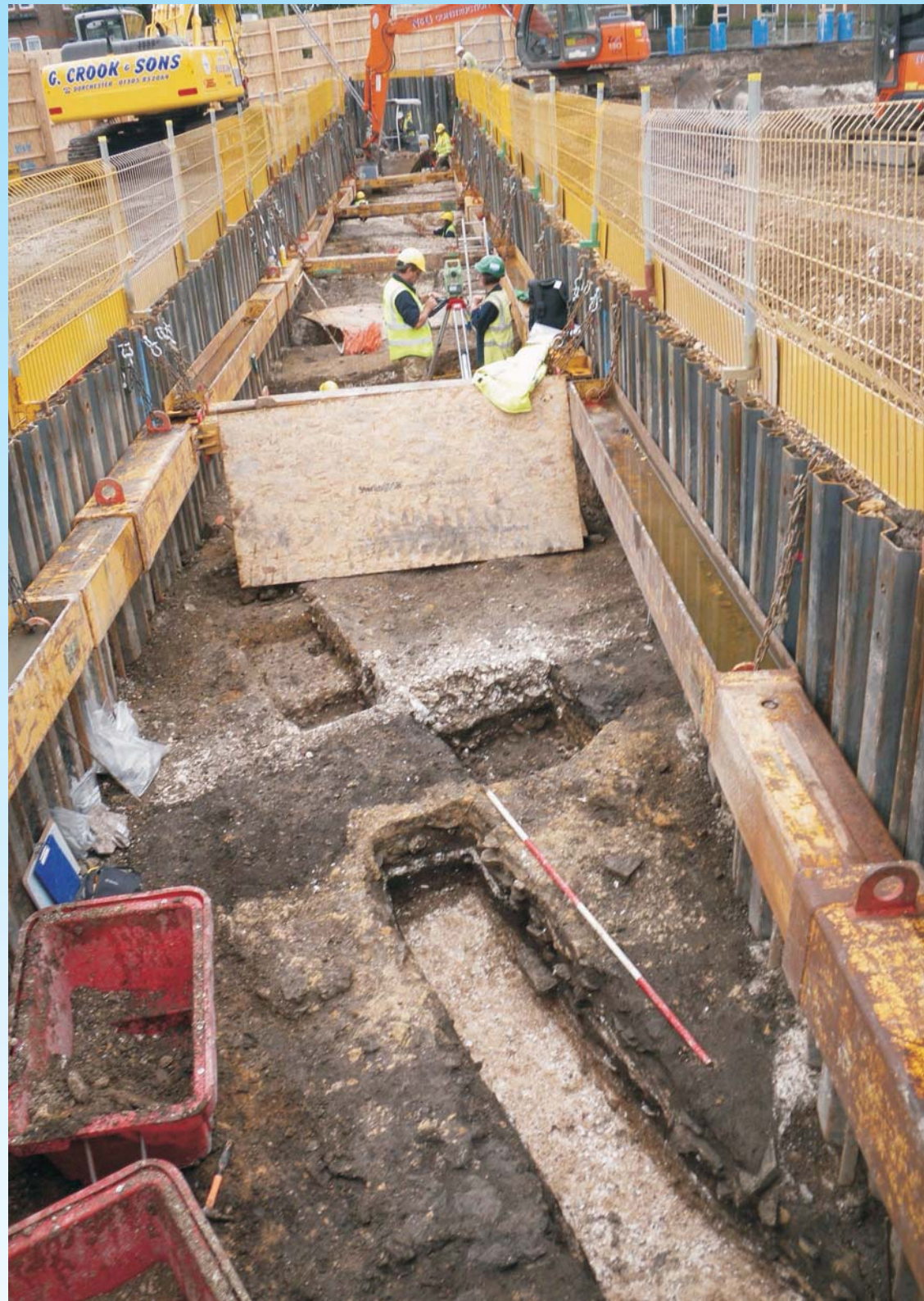


Smaller stones are that remains of another wall after the big stones had been robbed



A Roman *opus signinum* floor which is made of small stones and pieces of clay tiles

Charles Street *Latest Results*



Archaeologists excavating down to Roman times

This week it has become clear that the Roman activity in the excavation area was relatively short lived. All of the buildings seem to belong to a single phase. This may be because the site was on the outskirts of the town, even though major public buildings stood only a few hundred yards away.

The buildings seem to have been systematically demolished in the late Roman or post-Roman period.



A later copy of a coin of the Emperor Probus (AD 276–282)



Part of a bronze hairpin.
Roman women often had elaborate hairstyles that were held by in place by pins.



This stone column was probably the base of a roof support

Charles Street *Latest Results*



Archaeologists excavating down to Roman times



Roman spoon made from bone



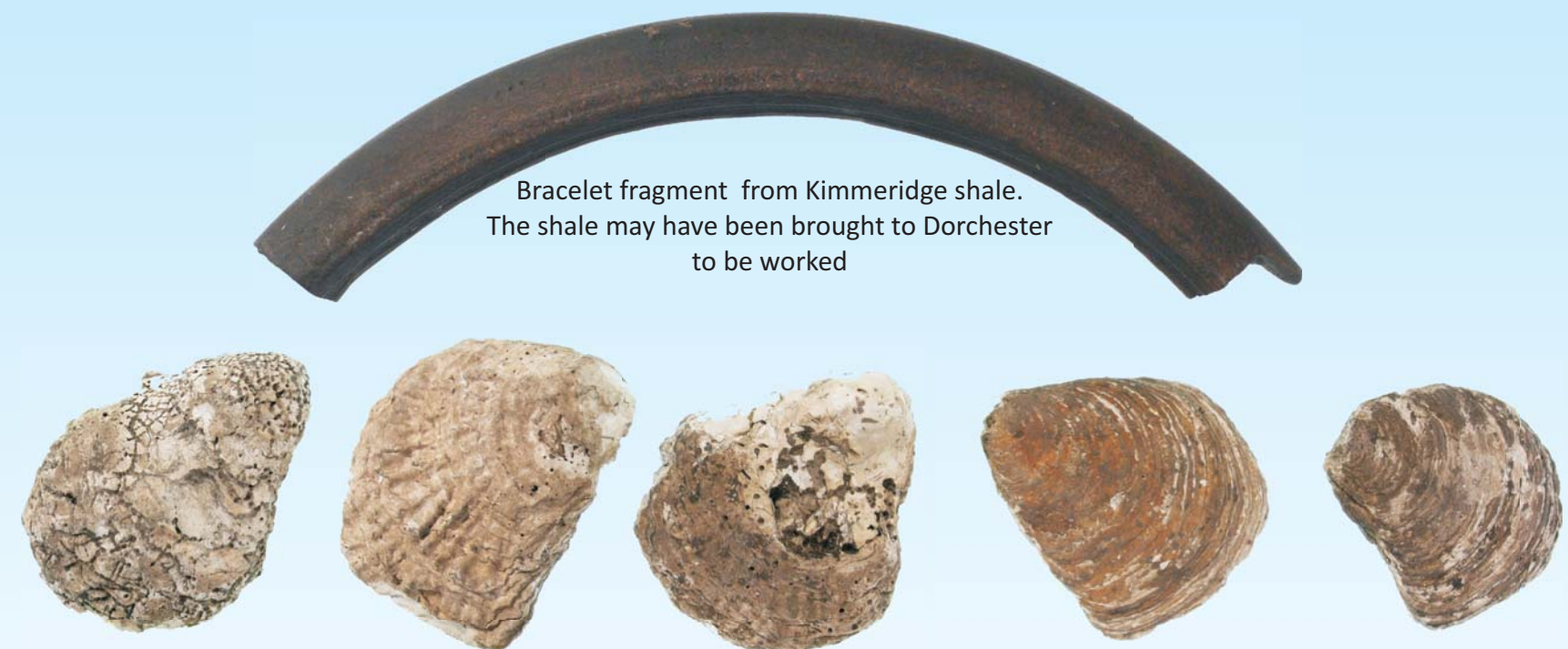
Gaming counters made from chalk and pottery

This week the excavations are drawing to a close. The floors and foundations of the Roman town house have been removed. Beneath them are layers of rubble which were used as a level surface to build on. Under this there are a few traces of activity from earlier in Roman times.

The finds tell us about the daily lives of the people who lived in the

house. Oysters were popular in Roman times and many shells have been found. Other things were brought from the coast. They include part of a delicate bracelet made of Kimmeridge shale, and an *amphora* for transporting olive oil from Spain.

A collection of gaming counters gives a hint of some of the games played almost 2000 years ago.



Bracelet fragment from Kimmeridge shale.
The shale may have been brought to Dorchester to be worked

Oysters that were probably farmed in Poole Harbour