

**HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING OF  
LINHAY AT HILL KILN FARM,  
SAMPFORD PEVERELL, DEVON**

**Martin Watts**

**December 2008  
Project No. SPL 175/08**

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## **Summary**

*A free-standing agricultural building associated with Hill Kiln Farm, Sampford Peverell, is a good example of small-medium sized traditional Devon linhay, an open-fronted cattle shed with first-floor storage for fodder. It was built on a new site, enclosing the north corner of a former triangular meadow, between 1844 and 1888, together with a small stock yard enclosed by a stone wall, with a stream running along its north-east side. The roof of the building is now clad with corrugated metal sheeting and, although much of the timberwork is original, the first floor structure is decayed, particularly at the north-east end. The linhay, which is not a listed building, was still in use at the time of survey.*

## **Introduction**

The recording of a linhay at Hill Kiln Farm, Sampford Peverell, has been carried out at the request of the property owner, prior to the conversion and reuse of the building as holiday accommodation.

Planning permission has been granted by Mid Devon District Council for the conversion of the linhay to holiday accommodation, planning application reference 07/02081/FULL. The linhay is not a listed building.

A detailed visual non-intrusive survey was carried out by Martin and Sue Watts in October 2008. Background and other relevant information have been compiled from a variety of sources, which are acknowledged and referenced.

The recording brief prepared by Stephen Reed of the Devon County Council Historic Environment Service is appended.

A copy of the site record and photographs will be deposited with the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, under accession number 380/2008. A digital copy of the report will be uploaded onto the OASIS (Online AccesS to the Index of archaeological investigationS) database, under reference: martinwa1-51597.

## **Location**

The linhay is situated in Sampford Peverell parish, to the east of Whitnage Road, a minor road that leads north from Sampford Peverell to Whitnage, at NGR ST 3033 1150. The building occupies an isolated site, close to a bend in the lane where it crosses a small stream that flows from the north-west. This stream formerly marked the boundary between Sampford Peverell and Burlescombe parishes. The linhay is located in an area of Permian/Triassic breccia and conglomerate (Institute of Geological Sciences, Geological Map, 1974, sheet 310). There is considerable evidence in the surrounding fields of stone extraction and lime kilns, the latter being the source of the name Hill Kiln Farm.

## **Historical background**

No buildings are shown in the vicinity on the Ordnance Survey surveyors' 3 inch drawing of 1802 (sheet 41.2). Two limekilns and a small rectangular building are marked on the site of the present Hill Kiln Farm on the Sampford Peverell Tithe Map of 1844, but no building is shown on the site of the linhay (Fig.1). The field in which the linhay was

subsequently built is recorded in the Tithe Apportionment as Three Cornered Meadow, just over half an acre (0.2ha) in area, which was owned by Mary Hewett and in the occupation of Robert Pearse. The site now occupied by Hill Kiln Farm was owned and occupied by Tristram Whittier Esq., and described as 'Part of Great Hill, Lime Rock, &c'. The Tithe Award indicates that the fields in this part of the parish were owned and occupied by a number of different people, rather than being part of a single estate or large farm. In 1889 the soil of the parish was described as sandy and very fertile, the chief crops being wheat, barley, oats and grass (Kelly's *Directory*). The linhay, with its small enclosed yard, is shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of 1888/9 and subsequent editions, as are the farm buildings adjacent (Fig.2). It is understood that Hill Kiln Farm was held on a tenancy by the present owner's father from about 1940, and was purchased by the present owners in the 1970s.

### **Description of the building**

A linhay is an open-fronted cattle shed, which had a dual purpose, the sheltering of cattle and the storage of hay. It is a distinctive local type of farm building, being prevalent in Devon, but virtually unknown elsewhere in England (Child 1995, 71). The linhay at Hill Kiln Farm is a good example; it is about 14.6m long by 4.3m deep overall, and contains 6 bays. Its rear and end walls are built of roughly-coursed rubble stone, bedded in clay and lime mortar, with some dressed blocks of conglomerate forming quoins at the south-east end. The mortar is generally a light pinky-buff colour, with some large sharp stone inclusions. The timber first floor structure and roof are supported at the front (south-east side) on timber posts. The ground level at the front of the linhay falls about 0.25m from south-west to north-east. The open front faces south-east onto a small yard enclosed by a rubble stone wall. A stream runs along the north-east side of the yard, in a gully against the foot of the wall (plan, Fig.3).

The roof, which is covered with corrugated metal sheeting, is understood to have originally been clad with slate (pers comm., M. Turner). The original clay ridge tiles, of inverted V shape, and blue/grey in colour, were retained and reused when the corrugated sheeting was put on. The roof is carried on five A-frame trusses of similar construction (section, Fig.3). The feet of the principals on the north-west side are notched over timber blocks bedded on to the head of the rear wall. There appears to be a continuous outer timber wall plate (modern) along the head of the back wall, with a 5cm x 5cm batten nailed to it and the foot of each principal. On the south-east side the feet of the principals are carried on horizontal timber blocks on the heads of the vertical posts that define the bays, the inner ends of the horizontal blocks being supported by short angled timber struts. The principals, which are of pit-sawn oak, are about 17cm x 8cm cross section, lapped and pegged at the apex, with a ridge board nailed to the west face of some of them. A single collar is nailed and bolted to the west face of each pair of principals. The bolts have square nuts. Some carpenter's/assembly marks are visible on some of the trusses: the second from the west has three small circular gouge marks, the third has four and the fourth has two, the latter close to the position of the collar and the ridge (see photographs). There are two rows of through purlins, one set at collar level and the other just below the ridge. The purlins, which are of roughly barked timber, are carried on timber brackets fixed to the upper faces of the principals on the north-west slope and notched into the principals on the south-east slope; they appear to have been renewed.

The first floor level is about 1.8 to 2m above the ground floor, which was covered with cow dung and straw at the time of survey. The first floor is carried on five horizontal oak

beams, approx 15cm wide x 16cm deep, with plain chamfers along their bottom corners. These timbers have been cut from relatively small trees. The inner ends of these beams are set on oak plates built into the rear wall. The outer ends are tenoned into the vertical posts at the front of the linhay. A carpenter's/assembly mark – V – is visible on the outer end of the beam between bays 2 and 3 (from the south-west) (see photograph). The mortise and tenon joints between the beams and front posts are generally very weathered and some have been reinforced with timber plates and blocks. The beam between bays 1 and 2 has broken and has been repaired with a softwood timber plate bolted along one face.

Between the gable end walls and the beams, the floor in each bay is carried on 8 joists at (roughly) 0.45m centres. The joists are generally of elm or pine; they average about 12cm x 7.5cm in cross section and most show conversion marks from having been ripped down by a large circular saw. The ends of the joists are built into the gable walls at both ends and sit on the tops of the main cross beams. In the third and fourth bays from the south-west end some joists span two bays. The first floor was formed with wide timber boards, some of which survive; other areas have been sheeted over with corrugated iron, to provide a platform for the storage of fodder; some straw was being stored at the west end at the time of survey. The flooring is a mixture of wide butt-jointed hardwood and softwood boards, the latter 18cm wide by 2.5cm thick. The boarding surviving in bay 1 is of circular-sawn elm, 28cm wide x 2.5cm thick and, in bay 6, 33cm wide by 2cm thick band-sawn elm. The upper floor is accessible by a vertical stout timber ladder fixed in the corner against the inside of the south-west gable wall. The inner joist in bay 1 has been left out, to allow access to the upper level.

The front posts, which are about 17cm x 14cm section, oak, originally stood on the ground, but all have been shortened, due to decay, and raised on cast concrete blocks of varying size. The lower section of the post to the north-easternmost truss has been replaced with a round pole 15cm in diameter, with a rectangular section timber prop above, both recent insertions. The upper sections of the original posts were painted black. At the head of each post is a horizontal timber block which supports the foot of the roof truss principal. A modern softwood plate runs the full length of the building, notched into the top of the blocks, apparently renewed (or added) when the sheet metal roofing was put on.

The enclosed yard is entered through a gate at the west end of the linhay; there is also a former entrance into the field on the west side (plan, Fig.3). The yard is floored with mass concrete, which falls slightly to the east side. The stream enters the north-east corner of the yard through a low rectangular opening, 0.47m wide by 0.47m high, with a rough stone lintel supporting the rubble stone wall over. The floor of the stream is lined with slate where it enters the yard; it runs in a stone- and concrete-lined gulley about 0.16m wide along the foot of the east wall, exiting in the south-east corner through a circular opening, 0.4m in diameter, formed with culvert bricks. Some concrete curb stones have been used to form a low wall along the west side of stream towards its south end. The rubble stone wall enclosing the yard stands to a height of about 2.75m on the east side; the south wall stands about 2.3m high, with a slate course in the stonework 1m above the level of the yard. The wall curves round at the south-west corner, returning to the west, where it stands about 2.5m above the yard floor level.

### **Dating and discussion**

Map evidence indicates that the linhay was built on a previously unoccupied site between 1844 and 1888, presumably as part of the development of a farm on the site of former lime kilns on the opposite side of the road. The linhay is a good example, retaining much of its original timberwork, although the first floor structure and cladding are decaying; there are several repairs to the original timbers and the post supporting the easternmost roof truss has been replaced. The feet of all the front posts have been encased in concrete. The original roof cladding material, understood to have been slates, has been replaced with corrugated metal sheeting, which has undoubtedly prolonged the life and use of the building. The enclosed stock yard connected to the linhay is a feature which has been noted elsewhere, although this particular example appears well arranged and self-contained, with its own natural water supply.

Martin Watts  
November 2008

### **Acknowledgements**

I am grateful to the site owners for information concerning the linhay and to Sue Watts for her help with the site survey and in the preparation of this report.

### **Reference**

Child, Peter. 1995. Farm Buildings, in Peter Beacham, ed., *Devon Building*, 60-94



Fig.1 Extract from Sampford Peverell Tithe Map, 1844, showing location of linhay (Devon Record Office)

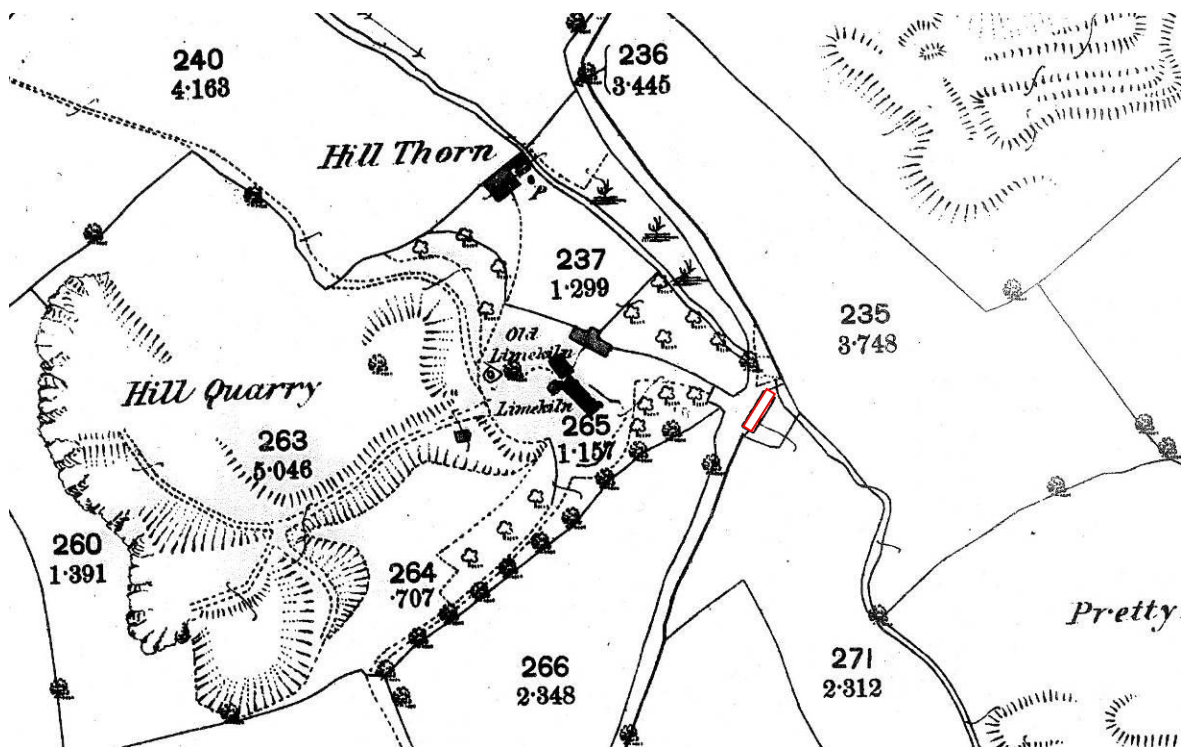


Fig.2 Hill Kiln, linhay: Ordnance Survey 1:2500, 1888. Not reproduced to scale

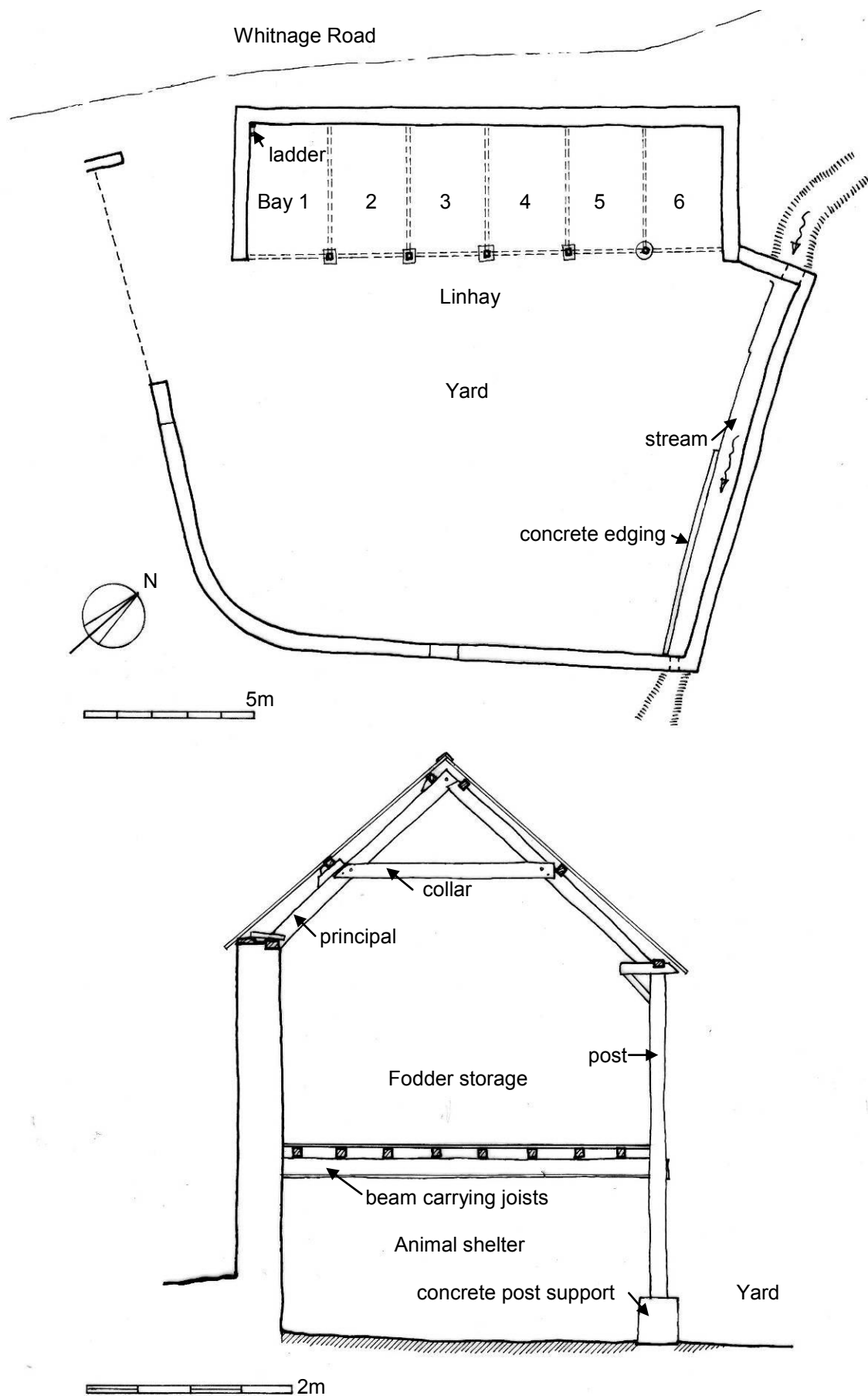


Fig.3 Hill Kiln Linhay: ground plan and typical section (n-w – s-e)





Linhay and walled yard from south



Open front, from south



From west



From east



From north



North-east end, with stream entry to right



From south-west



Walled yard, looking south





Ground level, looking north-east



Roof structure, looking north-east



Weathered joint between beam and post



Roof structure, looking to north



Head of post with principal foot support



Typical roof truss, from north-east



Principal and collar joint



Detail of principal bearing on wall head

## Appendix

### BRIEF FOR HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING

Location: Land and Buildings at NGR 303309 115003 (Hill Kiln Farm),  
Whitnage Road  
Parish: Sampford Peverell  
District: Mid Devon District Council  
County: Devon  
NGR: 303309.115004

Planning Application no: 07/02081/FULL

Proposal: Conversion of barn to holiday accommodation and construction of new  
vehicular access

Historic Environment Service ref: Arch/dc/md/12591

#### 1. INTRODUCTION AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

1.1 This brief has been prepared by the Devon County Council Historic Environment Service (HES), at the request of the site owner, with regard to the archaeological works - in this case a programme of historic building fabric recording - required as a condition of planning consent for the above works.

1.2 In accordance with PPG15 (1994) Planning and the Historic Environment, PPG16 (1990) Archaeology and Planning Policy and the Local Development Framework Policy on archaeology, consent has been granted, conditional upon a programme of archaeological work being undertaken. This condition requires that:

*'No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority.' The development shall be carried out at all times in strict accordance with the approved scheme, or such other details as may be subsequently agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.'*

1.3 The principal objectives of the programme shall be to investigate and record any historic building fabric or architectural detail that is obscured removed or otherwise affected by the development and

1.4 The barn subject to this application for conversion is a six-bay linhay - enclosed within its own small field - and represents a traditional type of agricultural building that is increasingly being subject to conversion to dwelling. The building is shown on the 1880-90OS map.

1.5 This Brief covers the application area as defined in the plans submitted in support of this application.

## 2. WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION

2.1 This document sets out the scope of the works required to record the historic fabric affected by the proposed development and will form the basis of the *Written Scheme of Investigation* to be prepared by the archaeological consultant and approved by the HES and the Local Planning Authority (LPA).

2.2 The Written Scheme of Investigation must be submitted by the applicant or on their behalf by their agent or archaeological consultant and approved by the HES and the Local Planning Authority *prior* to any development commencing on site.

## 3. PROGRAMME OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS

### 3.1 *Desk-based assessment*

The programme of work shall include a desk-based *appraisal* of the site to place the development area into its historic and archaeological context. This work will consist of map regression based on the Ordnance Survey maps and the Tithe Map(s) and Apportionments. An examination will also be made of records and aerial photographs held by the HER.

This information will be presented as part of the final report along with the results of the fieldwork.

### 3.2 *Historic building recording*

3.2.1 A record shall be made of the historic fabric of the building affected by the conversion. This works shall conform broadly to Level 2 - 3 of recording levels as set in *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice - English Heritage 2006* (available on-line at the English Heritage website) and described in outline below:

Level 2 is a descriptive record, made in circumstances similar to those of Level 1 but when more information is needed. It may be made of a building which is judged not to require any fuller record, or it may serve to gather data for a wider project. Both the exterior and the interior will be viewed, described and photographed. The record will present conclusions regarding the building's development and use, but will not discuss in detail the evidence on which these conclusions are based. A plan and sometimes other drawings may be made but the drawn record will normally not be comprehensive and may be tailored to the scope of a wider project.

Level 3 is an analytical record, and will comprise an introductory description followed by a systematic account of the building's origins, development and use. The record will include an account of the evidence on which the analysis has been based, allowing the validity of the record to be re-examined in detail. It will also include all drawn and photographic records that may be required to illustrate the building's appearance and structure and to support an historical analysis. The information contained in the record will for the most part have been obtained through an examination of the building itself. If documentary sources are used they are likely to be those which are most readily accessible, such as historic Ordnance Survey maps, trade directories and other published sources. The record will not normally discuss the building's broader stylistic or historical context and importance at any length. It may, however, form part of a wider survey – thematic or regional, for example – of a group of buildings, in which additional source material

contributes to an overall historical and architectural synthesis. A Level 3 record may also be appropriate when the fabric of a building is under threat but time or resources are insufficient for detailed documentary research, or where the scope for such research is limited.

3.3 The photographic record shall be made in B/W print supplemented by digital or colour transparency. If digital imagery is to be the sole photographic record then suitably archivable prints must be made of the digital images by a photographic laboratory. Laser or inkjet prints of digital images, while acceptable for inclusion in the report, are not an acceptable medium for archives. The drawn and written record will be on an appropriately archivable medium.

3.4 The consultant should make themselves familiar with the specification required for each of the recording levels. The detail of the proposed archaeological works should be set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation, including reference to the appropriate IFA and scientific guidelines for the analysis and dating of the historic buildings.

3.5 Should significant historical and/or architectural elements be exposed within the building by conversion works the Mid Devon District Council's Conservation Officer and the HES will be informed. The applicant will ensure that any such exposed elements remain undisturbed until their significance can be determined and to allow consideration for their retention *in situ*.

#### 4. MONITORING

4.1 The archaeological consultant shall agree monitoring arrangements with the County Historic Environment Service and the District Conservation Officer and give two weeks notice, unless a shorter period is agreed with the HES, of commencement of the fieldwork. Details will be agreed of any monitoring points where decisions on options within the programme are to be made.

4.2 Monitoring will continue until the deposition of the site archive and finds.

#### 5. REPORTING

5.1 The reporting requirements will be confirmed with the HES on completion of the site work.

5.2 The report shall be prepared collating the written, graphic, visible and recorded information outlined above. The report shall include plans of the features, including their location, description of the historic building fabric, architectural features of interest, below-ground archaeological deposits and artefacts together with their interpretation. It is recommended that a draft report is submitted to the HES for comment prior to its formal submission to the Local Planning Authority.

A copy of this brief shall be included in the report.

5.3 The HES would normally expect to receive the report within three months of completion of fieldwork - dependant upon the provision of specialist reports, radiocarbon dating results etc the production of which may exceed this period. If a substantial delay is

anticipated then an interim report will be produced. A copy of this brief shall be included in the report.

5.4 A copy of the report will also be submitted to the Mid Devon District Council's Conservation Officer - address below.

5.5 On completion of the report, in addition to copies required by the Client and the District Council Conservation Officer, hard copies of the report shall be supplied to the HES on the understanding that one of these copies will be deposited for public reference in the HER. In addition to the hard copies of the report, one copy shall be provided to the County Historic Environment Service in digital format - in a format to be agreed in advance with the HES - on the understanding that it may in future be made available to researchers via a web-based version of the Historic Environment Record.

5.6 The archaeological consultant shall complete an online OASIS (*Online Access to the Index of archaeological investigationS*) form in respect of the archaeological work. This will include a digital version of the report. The report or short entry to the Historic Environment Record will also include the OASIS ID number.

#### 5.7 *Publication*

Should particularly significant historic fabric, architectural features, below-ground remains, finds be encountered, then these, because of their importance, are likely to merit wider publication in line with government planning guidance. If such remains are encountered, the publication requirements – including any further analysis that may be necessary – will be confirmed with the HES.

### 6. PERSONNEL

6.1 The recording work shall be carried out by a professional historic building specialist to be agreed with the HES. Staff must be suitably qualified and experienced for their project roles. All work should be carried out under the control of a member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC), or by a person of similar standing. The Written Scheme of Investigation will contain details of key project staff and specialists who may contribute during the course of the works - excavation and post-excavation.

6.2 Health and Safety matters, including site security, are matters for the consultant. However, adherence to all relevant regulations will be required.

6.3 The archaeological consultant shall give the HES two weeks notice of commencement of works and shall be responsible for agreeing monitoring arrangements. Details will be agreed of any monitoring points where decisions on options within the programme are to be made.

6.4 Monitoring will continue until the deposition of the site archive and finds, and the satisfactory completion of an OASIS report - see 5.5 below.

6.5 The work shall be carried out in accordance with *IFA Standards and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures (1996)*, as amended (2001).

## 7. DEPOSITION OF ARCHIVE AND FINDS

7.1 The archaeological consultant shall contact the museum that will receive the site archive to obtain an accession number and agree conditions for deposition. *The accession number will be quoted in the Written Scheme of Investigation.*

7.2 Archaeological finds resulting from the investigation (which are the property of the landowner), should be deposited with the appropriate museum - in a format to be agreed with the museum, and within a timetable to be agreed with the HES. The museum's guidelines for the deposition of archives for long-term storage should be adhered to. If ownership of all or any of the finds is to remain with the landowner, provision and agreement must be made for the time-limited retention of the material and its full analysis and recording, by appropriate specialists.

7.3 The artefact discard policy must be set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation.

7.4 The condition placed upon this development will not be regarded as discharged until the report has been produced and submitted to the HES and the LPA, the site archive deposited and the OASIS form submitted.

## 8. CONTACT NAMES AND ADDRESSES

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Catherine Marlow, Conservation Officer, Mid Devon District Council, Phoenix House, Phoenix Lane, Tiverton, Devon, EX16 6PP

11th September 2008