

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Honiton, East Devon	National Grid Reference: ST 1615 0079	Number:
Subject: Archaeological monitoring and recording at No. 4 Northcote Lane, Honiton, Devon.		Photo attached: Y
Planning Application no: 14/0270/FUL	Recipient museum: n/a	
OASIS ID: oakforda1-207572	Museum Reference no: n/a	
Contractor's reference number/code: OA1237	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 22/01-23/01 and 26/01-27/01/2015	
<p>Description of works: An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Oakford Archaeology in January 2015 on works associated with the construction of two new dwellings at 4 Northcote Lane, Honiton, Devon (ST 1615 0079). The work was required by East Devon District Council (EDDC) as advised by the Devon County Historic Environment Team (DCHET).</p> <p>The site (Fig. 1) lies on the northern edge of the historic town of Honiton. Little is known of Honiton prior to the Saxon period when it probably formed part of a great estate centred on Axminster. It isn't until the early 13th century that a new borough was founded by William de Vernun, fifth Earl of Devon. This was probable laid out on a new site along the main Exeter to London Road (The High Street). The medieval burgage plots are still clearly visible running at right-angles to the High Street defining long narrow property strips of generally similar length. The ends of the plots are defined by two long straight boundaries on either side of the High Street, running exactly parallel with it. These boundaries were probably 'back lanes' in the medieval town; the lane still exists at King Street on the south-west and fragments of lanes or tracks are located on the northern side.</p> <p>Results: A watching brief was maintained during works associated with the construction of two new dwellings. Prior to the main building works starting the entire site was reduced to the level of the natural subsoil. This identified large areas of modern disturbance along the northern and eastern edge of the site. The disturbance along the street frontage is associated with buildings first identified on the 1840 Honiton tithe map (Fig. 2). The site was leased by Richard and John Blake, and consisted of a workshop and stable, with a garden at the rear. The site is shown in more detail on the 1888 (Fig. 3) and 1905 (Fig. 4) Ordnance Survey maps when the earlier buildings have been demolished and replaced with new structures. A modern garage occupied the site for most of the 20th century.</p> <p>The groundworks (Fig. 5) exposed a 0.2m thick cultivated topsoil (100) overlying a 0.4m thick mid brown loamy clay subsoil (101) with occasional gravel. Mid yellow clay natural subsoil (102) was exposed at a depth of 0.6m below current ground level. The removal of the subsoil exposed a NW-SE aligned linear (104/110), parallel with the eastern boundary wall. This was approximately 0.9m wide and 0.26m deep, and contained a single fill (105/111) consisting of mid greyish brown silty clay with frequent stone inclusions. 3 sherds of mid 13th-early 14th century pottery were recovered from fill (105).</p> <p>In addition, two discrete features were exposed. Feature 106 was a small roughly circular feature, with gradually breaking sides and an irregular base. It had a diameter of approximately 0.48m and was 0.17m deep. No finds were recovered from its homogeneous dark greyish black silty clay fill (106). Feature 108 was roughly oval, with gradually breaking sides and a concave base. It was 0.57m wide and 0.2m deep. No finds were recovered from its uniform light yellowish grey silty clay fill (109). Both have been interpreted as naturally formed tree throws.</p>		

Finds:
by John Allan

In total there are 3 sherds weighing 39g that are medieval in character. All of these were recovered from the ditch fill (105). They consist of a single sherd of greensand derived local coarseware from a cupped rim for a jar, with a date range of mid 13th-early 14th century; and 2 sherds of Exeter fabric 40. These include a jug bodysherd and a sherd from a wheelthrown unglazed cooking vessel perhaps formerly with a ladle handle, suggesting a date of 1250-1400.

The post-medieval pottery, consisting of 28 sherds (total weight 348g) and recovered from the topsoil, is of relatively modern industrial wares. In addition 6 clay pipe stems (19th century) were also recovered from the topsoil.

Conclusion:

Following excavation at the rear of the site the works identified a single ditch dating to the mid 13th-mid 14th century. Due to modern disturbance no evidence was found of an associated street/track surface to the south. The paucity of finds and the fact that the ditch is some way away from the rear of the medieval burgage plots would suggest that it served as a field boundary.

Two tree throws to the north were undated but may be associated with the garden first identified on the 1840 tithe map. This is the only report on these works.

OASIS entry

Due to the limited nature of the findings a project archive will not be produced. A summary of the investigations has been submitted to the on-line archaeological database OASIS (Online Access to the Index of archaeological InterventionS).

Recorder:
MFR Steinmetzer (Oakford Archaeology)

Date sent to HER:

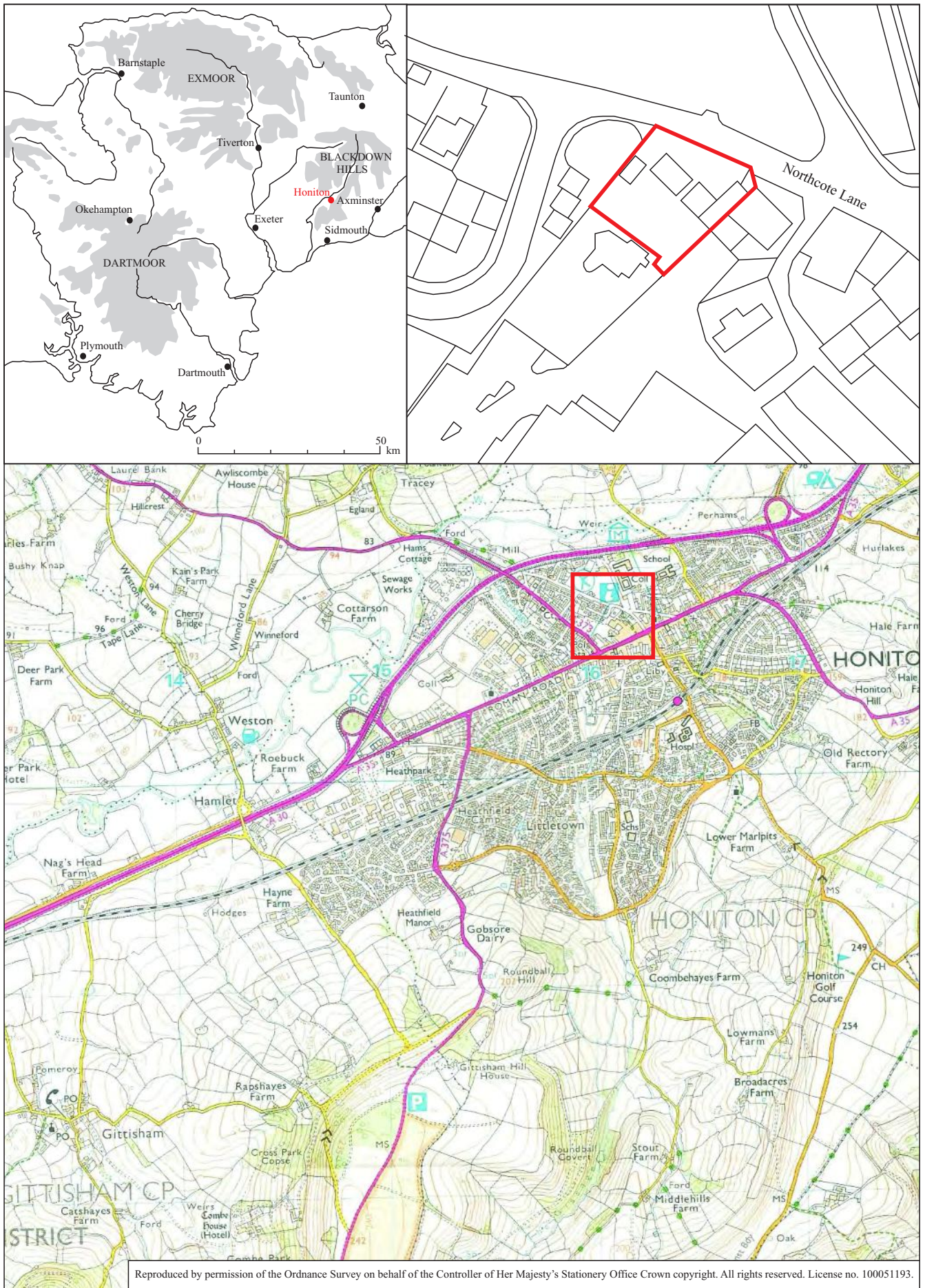


Fig. 1 Location of site.



Fig. 2 Detail from 1840 Honiton Tithe map.

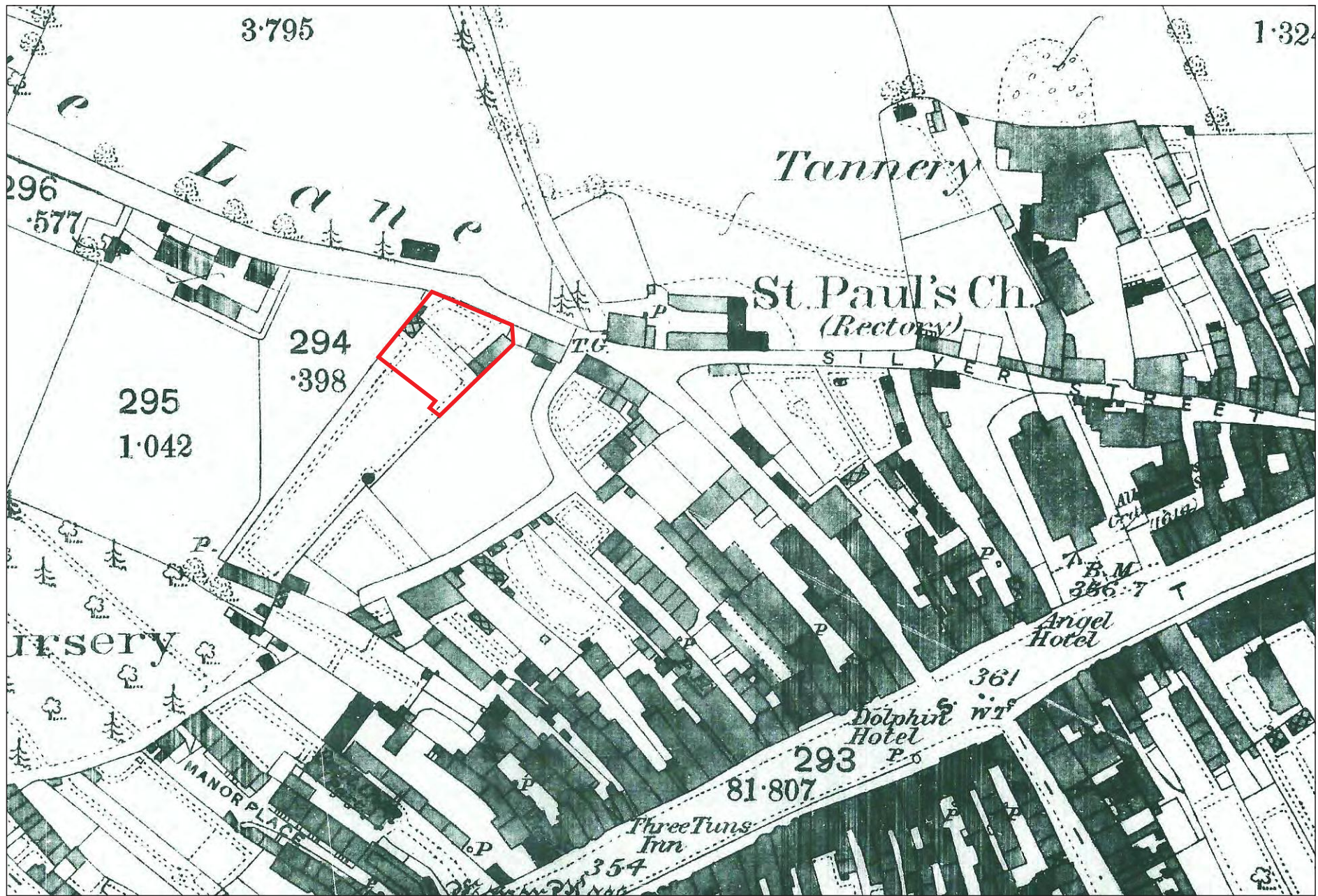


Fig. 3 Detail from the 1st edition 1888 Ordnance Survey map Devonshire Sheet LXX.4.

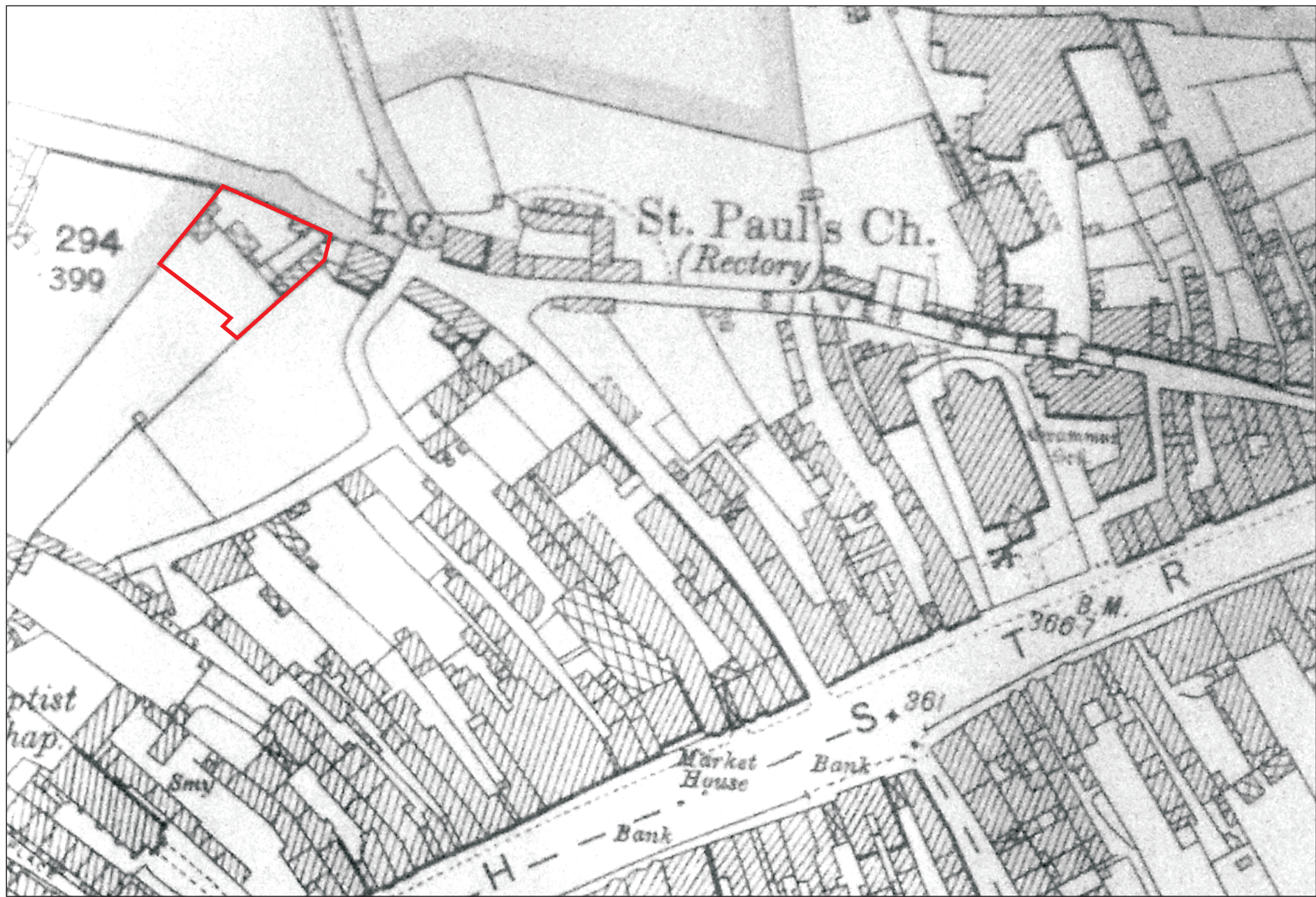


Fig. 4 Detail from 2nd edition 1905 Ordnance Survey map Devonshire Sheet LXX. 4.



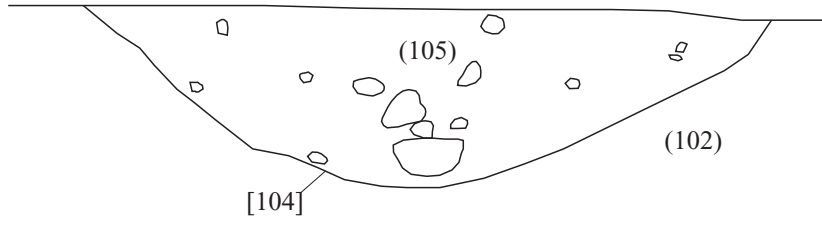
Fig. 5 Plan of site showing location of observations.

Sections

1

NW †

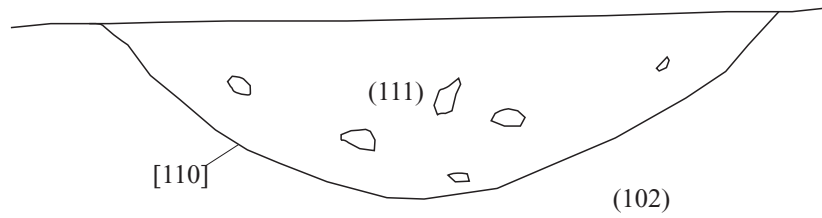
† SE



2

NW †

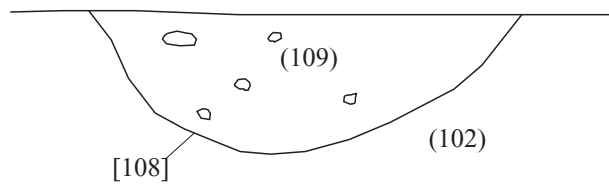
† SE



3

S †

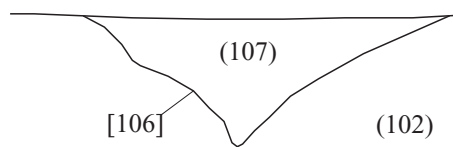
† N



4

N †

† S



0 0.5 metre

all datums are arbitrary

Fig. 6 Sections.



pl 1 General view of ditch [104]. 0.5m scale. Looking northeast.



Pl. 2 Section through ditch [104]. 0.5m scale. Looking northeast.



Pl. 3 General view of tree throw [108], 0.5m scale. Looking southwest.



Pl. 4 Section through tree throw [108], 0.5m scale. Looking southwest.



Pl. 5 Section through tree throw [106]. 0.5m scale. Looking east.