

## Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

<b>Civil Parish &amp; District:</b> Barnstaple, North Devon	<b>National Grid Reference:</b> SS 5554 3335	<b>Number:</b>
<b>Subject:</b> Archaeological monitoring and recording at Barnstaple Castle, Barnstaple, Devon.		<b>Photo attached:</b> Y
<b>Scheduled Monument Consent No:</b> S00197348	<b>Recipient museum:</b> n/a	
<b>OASIS ID:</b> oakforda1-339999	<b>Museum Accession no:</b> n/a	
<b>Contractor's reference number/code:</b> OA1522	<b>Dates fieldwork undertaken:</b> 08/10/2018	
<p><b>Background:</b> An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Oakford Archaeology in October 2018 during building work at Barnstaple Castle, Barnstaple, Devon (SS 5559 3330). The site (Fig. 1) lies in an area of high archaeological potential within Barnstaple Castle, a scheduled monument (SM 33062). The work was therefore required by English Heritage (EH) as part of scheduled monument consent.</p> <p>The Norman motte-and-bailey castle lies within the western corner of the earlier Anglo-Saxon burh and was probably built by the late 11th century, although it is not recorded in documents until the following century. The earth and stone motte stands to a height of c. 14m with a diameter of over 60m and retains masonry fragments from a shell keep, tower and stone walls descending the slopes of the motte. A document of 1274 indicates the presence of a hall, chamber and kitchen within the keep.</p> <p>Records suggest that by the reign of Stephen, in 1136, Barnstaple Castle was abandoned, although it was rebuilt shortly after in 1139 by Henry Tracy. In 1228 the defences were reduced in height on the orders of Henry III and the castle was in disrepair by the end of the 13th century. The whole site is recorded as utterly ruinous during the reign of Henry VIII. Castle House was built within the area of the bailey in the 19th century and the motte was landscaped and planted with trees. The mansion was demolished in 1976.</p> <p>Excavations conducted by Trevor Miles between 1972-5 on the northwest side of the motte revealed the presence of 105 graves forming part of a Saxon cemetery which was in use until the Norman Conquest. The bailey defences were also excavated at this time.</p> <p><b>Description of the works and results:</b> A watching brief (Fig. 2, Pl. 1-15) was maintained during works associated with the installation of five people-counters on Castle Green. Three sets (1, 4-5) required excavations, while two sets were wall mounted (2 &amp; 3) The excavations were on average 0.25m wide and 0.45-0.7m deep.</p> <p>Point 1 (1): 100 0-0.15m mid brown silty clay (topsoil) 0.15-0.52m mid grey aggregate (modern made ground)</p> <p>Point 1 (2): 0-0.2m mid brown silty clay (topsoil) 0.2-0.5m+ mid reddish-brown silty clay grey aggregate (5-10%)</p> <p>Point 4 (1): 400 0-0.2m dark brown humic soil (flowerbed) 401 0.2-0.28m mid reddish-brown silty clay 402 0.28-0.45m+ mid to dark reddish-brown silty clay shale flecks (2-3%), charcoal flecks (1%)</p>		

Point 4 (2):

403 0-0.15m mid to dark brown silty clay (topsoil)

404 0.15-0.55m+ mid to dark yellowish-brown silty clay large limestone aggregate (10-15%)

Point 5 (1):

500 0-0.2m mid brown silty clay (topsoil)

501 0.2-0.38m mid yellow silty clay shale flecks (10-15%)

502 0.38-0.45m+ mid brown silty clay

Point 5 (2):

500 0-0.3m mid brown silty clay (topsoil)

503 0.3-0.6m+ mid to dark brown silty clay lime flecks (5%), shale flecks (5-10%), charcoal flecks (1-2%)

**Conclusion:**

The small nature of the works didn't permit the identification of clear periods of activity and it is likely that the majority of deposits identified are related to 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century made ground deposits. This is the only report on these works.

**Project archive and 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:**

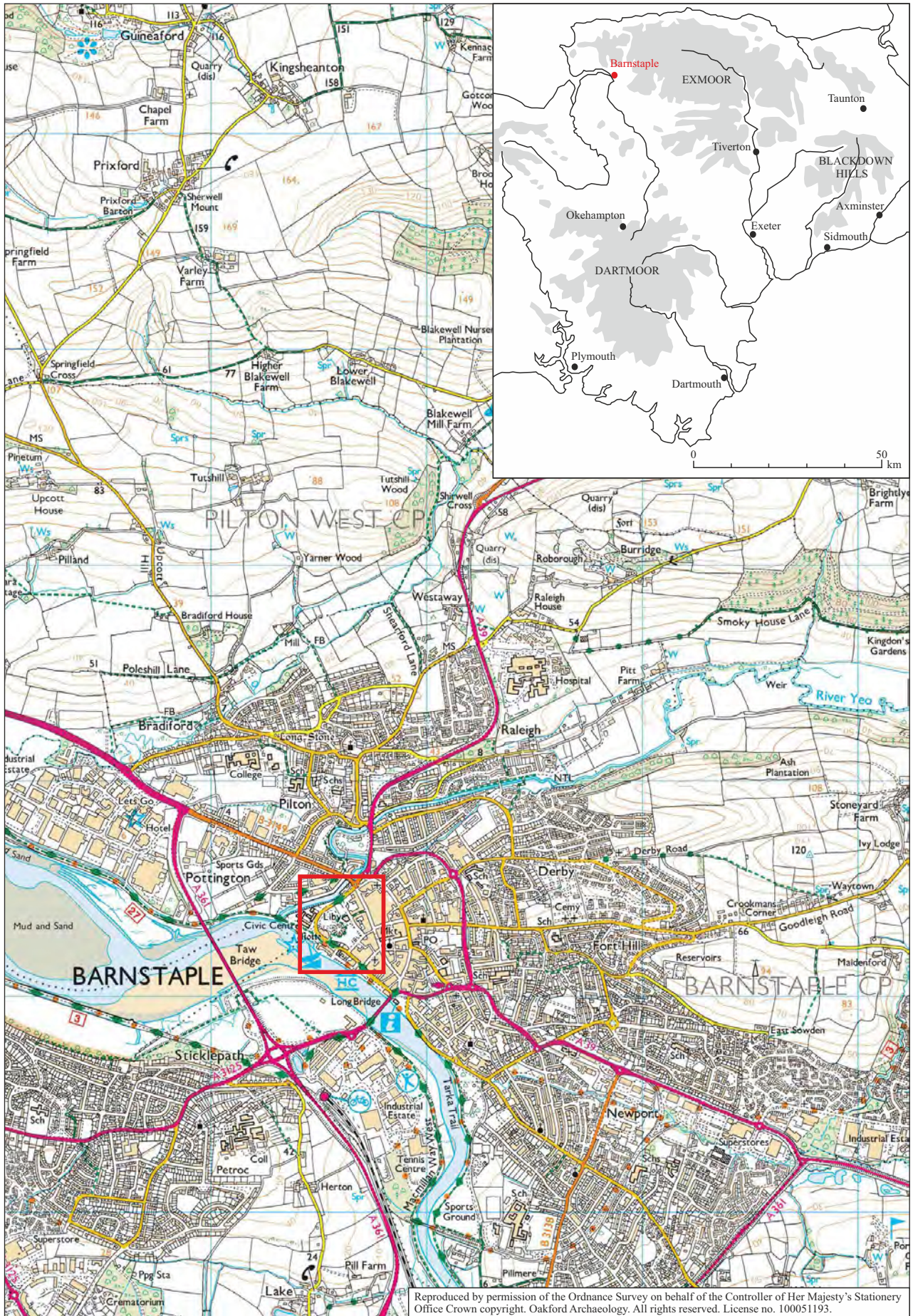


Fig. 1 Location of site.

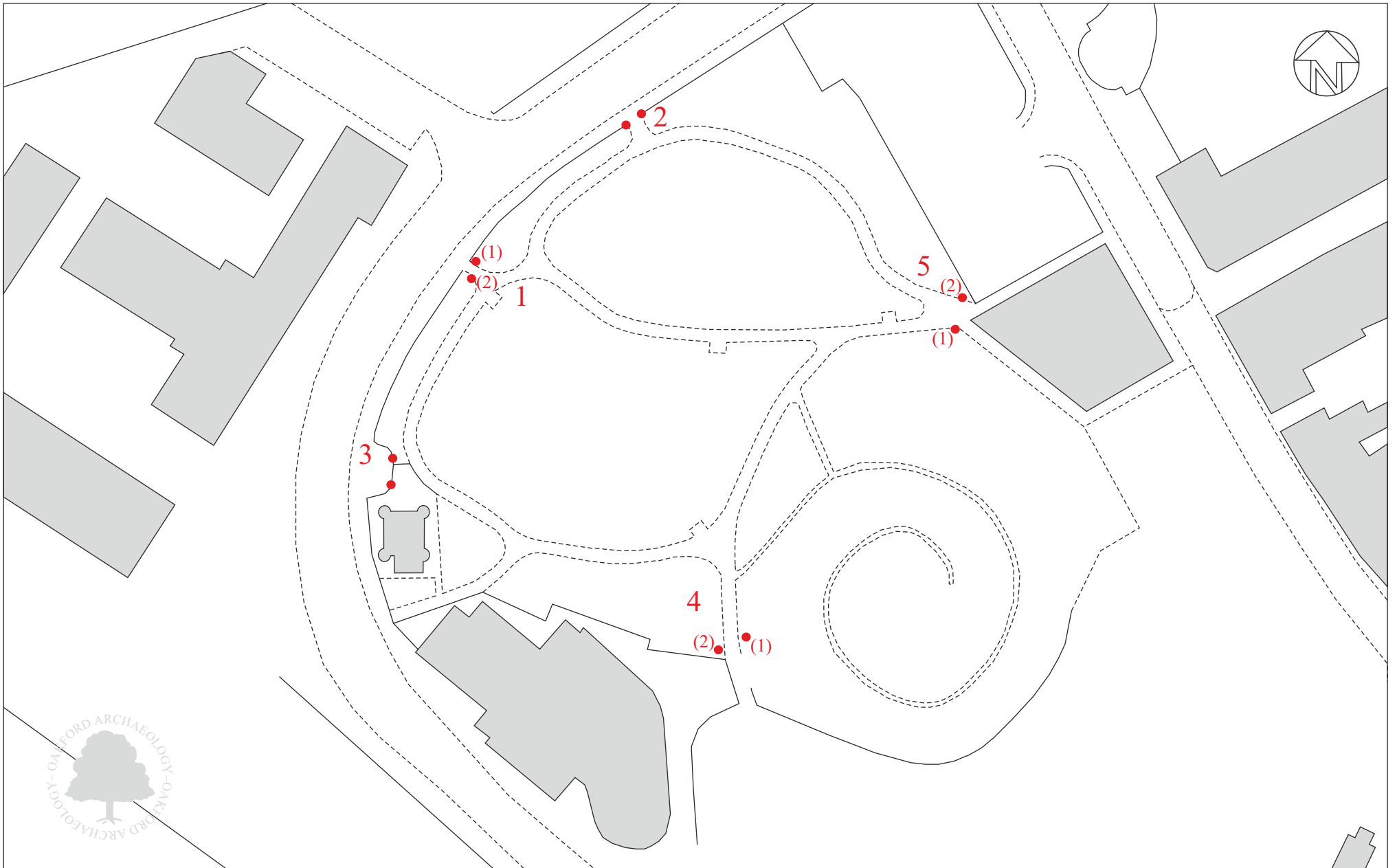


Fig. 2 Plan showing location of observations.



Pl. 1 General view of counter location 1 before installation. Looking northwest.



Pl. 2 Section through counter 1 (1). 0.25m scale. Looking northeast.



Pl. 3 General view of counter location 1 after installation. Looking northwest.



Pl. 4 General view of counter location 2 before installation. Looking northwest.



Pl. 5 General view of counter location 2 after installation. Looking southeast.



Pl. 6 General view of counter location 3 before installation. Looking west.



Pl. 7 General view of counter location 3 after installation. Looking east.





Pl. 8 General view of counter location 4 before installation. Looking southeast.



Pl. 9 General view of counter location 4 after installation. Looking southeast.



Pl. 10 Section through counter 4 (1). 0.25m scale.  
Looking east.



Pl. 11 Section through counter 4 (2). 0.25m scale.  
Looking west



Pl. 12 General view of counter location 5 before installation. Looking southeast.



Pl. 13 General view of counter location 5 after installation. Looking southeast.



Pl. 14 Section through counter 5 (1). 0.25m scale.  
Looking south.



Pl. 15 Section through counter 5 (2). 0.25m scale.  
Looking north.