

**EXETER CITY COUNCIL
ARCHAEOLOGICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Notes for Committee, 17th March 1995

1. FIELD RECORDING PROJECTS

1.1 Malthouse, Haven Banks, St Thomas

An archaeo-historical assessment of this prominent building was prepared recently for Whitbread Severn Inns in connection with a planning application for its conversion to licensed premises.

The site lies close to the Exe about 70 m to the east of the 1984 Shooting Marsh Stile excavation area. The tenement within which the building stands is almost continuously documented from the mid 16th century in a series of leases and rentals. It lay within the manor of Exe Island and was known by the name Barrowhall or Burrowshill. This former marshland plot was leased as a brickfield in the later 17th century.

The earliest detailed plan of the Barrowhall tenement, dating from 1756, shows a rounded corner at the eastern extremity of the plot; it is from this feature that the curved corner of the Malthouse building derives its shape. The building was erected at the margin of the property, adjoining Haven Banks; a lease was granted in September 1789 to the brewers Opie Smith of Bath and Edward Hore of St Thomas, who had by then constructed a 'New Brewhouse and Cellar' occupying two parallel ranges. A substantial further range, the New Malthouse and Cellar, had been added to the south-west side of the brewery by 1791. The premises were referred to as a 'public brewhouse' at this period and became known as the St Thomas Brewery. In 1833 the then owners of the brewery bought the City Brewery across the river in Old Bridge Street (St Edmunds Street). Thenceforth the St Thomas Brewery was used only for malting. There survive within the building three malting kilns that probably date from the late 1850s or early 1860s, although they may be later.

The major part of the Malthouse building was constructed in 1789-91. The structure has been much altered over the past 200 years, although primary roof timbers survive in the north-east and central ranges. No internal brewery features remain on the ground floor other than the malting kilns. Further archaeological recording will be carried out as a condition of planning consent during building works.

1.2 Bowhill House

Fabric recording and a watching brief on small-scale excavation works has continued on behalf of English Heritage, and much progress has been made in recent weeks on completing the compilation of the site archive for archaeological excavations and observations carried out on the site since the late 1970s. Over the coming year the final report will be prepared by Stuart Blaylock for publication in monograph form.

Restoration of the building is now finished. A future use for the premises remains to be identified by English Heritage.

1.3 Mint Lane/Friernhay Street evaluation

An archaeological evaluation was carried out late in 1994 on a development site adjoining St Nicholas Priory, on a piece of ground contiguous with the excavation trench within which the west front of the priory church was found by John Allan in 1984. The 5% evaluation sample permitted the plan of the western end of the church to be completed up to Mint Lane. Little new information was forthcoming on the earliest Norman church, but the layout that resulted from rebuilding the west end of the church in the 14th century is now clear. The church at this stage had narrow side aisles flanking a central axial tower. In the 15th or 16th century an additional aisle was built onto the south side of the nave, probably in a position next to the main door, on the most public side of the building, facing Fore Street. A thick layer of early medieval ('post-Roman') dark soil overlay later Roman deposits. No later Roman structures came to light in the sample. Further elements of the plan of the early Roman barracks found in 1984 were recorded in the bottom of medieval robber trenches. The medieval walls were almost entirely robbed of their stonework, so that nothing remains that would raise an issue of preservation for display purposes. No medieval burials came to light; it would appear that the area to the west and south of the nave was not used for burial.

1.4 City Wall recording

In Northernhay Gardens the programme of fabric survey noted in the last report to the Committee was completed by Aidan Matthews and Richard Parker, under the general direction of Stuart Blaylock. The preliminary conclusions drawn from this exercise represent a major advance in our knowledge of the City Wall and of the Norman castle. It is now apparent that the Roman town wall stands almost to its full height for a considerable length to either side of Athelstan's Tower. The Roman wall is surmounted by a run of crenellations built largely in Triassic sandstone — a material apparently not used in the Roman period but certainly exploited in the 11th and 12th centuries. It seems probable that these features are late Saxon in date since they cannot be placed easily into a Norman or later context. They are overbuilt by a continuation of the Norman curtain wall built atop the massive ringwork bank that encloses the inner bailey. This bank would appear to have continued around the line of the northern corner of the Roman town wall, having been originally mounded up against and over it. Much of the material comprising the Norman bank still survives today in Northernhay Gardens, covering the lower part of the Roman wall, a point that had not been appreciated until now.

A survey was made recently of the length of the City Wall behind West Street, close to the site of the West Gate. The survey was carried out in advance of restoration works in order to provide records for use by the project architect and others.

1.5 Double Locks

The early 19th-century lock on the Exeter Canal was drained last summer to permit repairs to be carried out. The opportunity was taken to make outline records of the structure, which represented a significant engineering work in its day; at the time of its rebuilding in 1825-27 the canal was exceeded in size only by the Caledonian Canal. It is hoped that it will be possible to provide on-site information panels at some time in the future.

1.6 Turks Head

Archaeological recording is currently taking place during refurbishment works within this Whitbread property, which extends from High Street to Waterbeer Street on the south-west side of the Guildhall. Documentary research shows the present licensed premises to comprise three medieval tenements. Two medieval buildings lay against the Guildhall, separated by an open yard next to the three windows of the main hall. Little early fabric is now visible in these buildings. The third tenement adjoined them to the south-west, set back from the street frontages. This building represents an unusual survival of a complete early 17th-century house preserving many original features, including fireplaces and windows.

1.7 51 Bartholomew Street West

An archaeological evaluation is currently being undertaken on a development site on the north-east side of Bartholomew Street West, part of which was occupied in the 19th century by the Exeter Inn. The site lies upslope from the City Wall, whose course is followed by the south-west side of the street. This area falls outside the legionary fortress but may be within the annexe appended to its south-west side overlooking the river. A considerable depth of deposits has been encountered in the site, including 'post-Roman dark soils'. It is probable that later Roman and early medieval layers accumulated in a pocket behind the City Wall at this point, as occurred at Paul Street (observed on the Harlequins development site).

1.8 Other fieldwork observations

Assessments, evaluations or watching briefs have also been carried out in recent months on a number of other sites. These include the R.A.M. Museum, Haven Road, Heavitree Road, Southernhay, South Street, C & A basement, Topsham Road and Longbrook Street.

2. PUBLICATIONS, SURVEYS AND PUBLIC INTERPRETATION

2.1 *Exeter in the Civil War* booklet

It is anticipated that this 40-page A5 booklet by Mark Stoye, to be published in the *Devon Archaeology* series by the Devon Archaeological Society, will appear at the beginning of April. The booklet will make publicly available information on aspects of the AFU's work relating to the Civil War which have until now been summarised only in national journals such as *Post-Medieval Archaeology*. Civil War-period features in the City Wall and elsewhere are identified and set in their historical context in the booklet.

2.2 City Wall Survey

This major survey of the history and fabric of the wall, carried out principally by Stuart Blaylock, is now all but complete. The final form of publication has yet to be fully determined; several 'levels' of reporting are anticipated: summary, a detailed inventory, and a project archive.

2.3 'Exeter' in *Historical Atlas of South West England*

Work has continued intermittently on the preparation of the maps for this publication. It is hoped to complete the task early in April.

2.4 Exeter Urban Archaeological Database

Stage I of the preparation of the Exeter UAD, funded by English Heritage, will be finished early in April. The pilot area covers the Cathedral Close. It is anticipated that the rest of the city will be dealt with in a Stage II project in 1995/6.

2.5 Danes Castle

The site is now likely to be opened to the public in the Spring. A notice-board incorporating a reconstruction of how the fort might have appeared had it been finished has been prepared. South West Water recently won the British Archaeological Awards' biannual Heritage in Britain Award, sponsored by English Heritage, Cadw and Historic Scotland, for the best project securing the long-term preservation of a monument.

3. AFU ECC POST-EXCAVATION AND FIELDWORK PROGRAMME 1995/6

3.1 Annual Summaries and Review

(i) *Summary reports*

Brief accounts of the Unit's work in Exeter are produced for a number of national archaeological journals including:

- (a) *Britannia*
- (b) *Medieval Archaeology*
- (c) *Archaeology in Britain*
- (d) *Post-Medieval Archaeology*

(ii) *Annual review*

Exeter Archaeology 1994/5 annual summary of AFU's work during the past year (A4 format)

3.2 Preparation of publications

During the year work will take place on the preparation of the following publications (proposed publication year in brackets)

- (i) *Exeter Historical Monographs* (Exeter University Press)
 - (a) *Civil War defences of Exeter* (1996)

- (b) *People and Places in Medieval Exeter* (1997)
- (c) *Exeter Underground Passages* (1997)

(ii) **Booklet**

Guide to Exeter City Walls (1996)

(iii) **Journal reports in Proceedings of Devon Archaeological Society** (1996)

- (a) Danes Castle excavation
- (b) Digby prehistoric excavation
- (c) Great Moor Farm, Sowton
- (d) Topsham Quay

3.3 **Roman fortress**

- (a) Completion of primary project reports on sites within the fortress excavated since 1971.
- (b) Completion of finds catalogue for (a).
- (c) Preparation of Detailed Project Design for EAR monograph on sites in the Roman fortress. Grant aid to be sought from English Heritage for a publication project starting in 1996/7.

3.4 **Archaeological archives**

- (a) Re-organisation of project archives in preparation for transfer to R.A.M. Museum.
- (b) Compilation of gazetteer with summary reports on sites excavated since 1971.
- (c) Review of site archives to prepare four-year programme of upgrading starting in 1996/7.

3.5 **Primary project reports**

- (a) Completion of reports on sites at the Quay, Exe Island, Trinity Green and South Gate.
- (b) Completion of medieval and post-medieval finds inventories for 1970s sites and Quay area sites.

3.6 **Contingency**

- (a) Contingency for fieldwork not funded through PPG 16 and PPG 15 arrangements.

C.G. Henderson
Director, Archaeological Field Unit

EXETER: CITY WALL, NORTHERNHAY GARDENS 1993-4

Key

- I: Roman
- II: Pre-castle, Late Saxon: 9C-10-11th
- III: Castle, primary Late C.11th
- III: Castle, secondary, Late C.11th
- IV: Castle, tertiary C.12th
- Unphased medieval
- V: Post-medieval C.17th
- VI: Modern C.18-20th

SW T 65m OD

obscured +

SW 58m OD T

obscured +

NE T

NE T

0 20 metres

Fig. 47 Interpretive drawing of the wall to either side of Athelstan's Tower with shading to show phases of masonry.

EXETER CITY COUNCIL
ARCHAEOLOGICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Notes for Committee, 13th October 1995

1. CITY WALL SURVEY

1.1 Introduction and background

The Exeter City Wall Survey Project was carried out by the Archaeological Field Unit in the course of the years 1993-4 and 1994-5, with funding from English Heritage and Exeter City Council. The guiding principle of the project was to make use of the accumulated experience gained in the archaeological examination and practical maintenance of the wall and its associated earthworks over nearly 20 years (the period 1974-1992, with a particular concentration of work from 1982 onwards), to produce a comprehensive guide to the history, archaeology and current management of the city wall, for use by all those involved in its maintenance. Other aims of the project have been:

- To complete reports on some recent research work on the defences and to carry out some new research and recording on areas of specific interest; this was focussed on an area to either side of Athelstan's Tower in Northernhay Gardens, where much was learned about the Roman, late-Saxon and Norman building works.
- To compile standardised drawings, and a regular photographic coverage of the whole circuit, as a record of the standing fabric and for use in the maintenance process. Also to gather together (by means of catalogues and listings) disparate archives of graphic and photographic materials, which are important sources for the structural history of the wall.
- To review current practices in the treatment of the wall and to suggest improvements where appropriate; to investigate current good practice in the maintenance of ancient monuments and to apply this to Exeter; to investigate suitable materials for use in repairs, especially stone and mortar.

1.2 Extent and ownership

The circuit of the wall is c. 2.35km (1.46 miles) in circumference, and encloses an area of 37ha (92 acres). A large proportion survives as standing fabric in some form: 1705m, or 72.5% of the circuit; although the wall has vanished in the most obvious and accessible points, such as the sites of the gates. The stone wall was one of three elements in the historic defences: an earth rampart (still to be seen in the grounds of the Bishop's Palace, for instance); fronted by the stone wall; with ditches providing further defence outside the circuit (now entirely obscured but known from excavation). Exeter City Council is the principal owner (owning 1385m/81% of the standing wall), but other bodies own substantial sections: The Church Commissioners; The Dean and Chapter of Exeter Cathedral; the Roman Catholic Church; small sections in Northernhay appear to be in private or commercial ownership. Her Majesty's Government owns the interior of the castle, including a part of the inner curtain wall.

1.3 History

Defences on the line now taken by the wall were first laid out as a low earthwork bank with a wattled, or timber, front in the second half of the second century AD. After an interval of some years the front of this bank was cut away, and replaced with a stone wall; at the same time the bank was heightened. The ensemble was probably complete by the year AD 200. Roman masonry survives in numerous places on the circuit of the wall, but the original has often been heavily patched or rebuilt in the course of maintenance work in later centuries. The four main gates were all Roman in origin but, with the exception of a part of the South Gate, were wholly rebuilt in the medieval period. There is a limited survival of demonstrably pre-conquest Saxon masonry at the rear of the castle; other potentially early masonry is seen near Snayle Tower, and at the north-east end of Southernhay. Norman work is concentrated at the castle; Athelstan's Tower was added in the 12th century; ten semi-circular (and polygonal) towers were constructed in the 13th century. Throughout the Middle Ages there was a continual

process of repairs and maintenance, which can be recognised in the fabric by various combinations of stone-type and mortar; several major episodes of rebuilding took place, amongst which a long stretch of wall at Cricklepit Street represents a rebuilding following the collapse of the Roman wall in this area, perhaps in the first decade of the 15th century.

The 16th and 17th centuries saw several ambitious episodes of work on the walls as well as the continuance of routine maintenance work: The construction of the Watergate in 1564-5, provided access through the southern corner of the walled circuit (where there had not previously been a gate), and was linked with the City's development of the Quay. Other work of the 16th century has been recorded in Friernhay (1530s), and near the North Gate. The period of the Civil War saw an immense amount of activity and expenditure on the defences of the city: mostly on new ditches, and systems of earthwork defences outside of the line of the walls, but an appreciable amount was expended on masonry repairs to the wall, and earthwork additions were made to the circuit to provide artillery emplacements, heighten the ramparts, etc.

After the Civil War the wall was never employed in the defence of the city again, and the concept of a defensible circuit gradually faded. Substantial repairs were still undertaken, however: a section of fine masonry in red breccia (Heavitree stone) is to be seen in Southernhay, complete with a datestone of 1743; a similar section to either side of the arch of Maddock's Row, in Northernhay Street, is dated 1772. The circuit was finally, and irrecoverably, breached by the demolition of the gates between 1769 and 1819.

1.4 Key points: recommendations of the survey

In its conclusions the work drew attention to a number of aspects of the wall to which, it was thought, attention could be directed in order to improve the administration, care and maintenance, and presentation of the city wall. These are summarised here in brief form, fuller discussion is to be found in the concluding chapter of the report.

1. An improvement in the statutory protection afforded to the monument by scheduling under the *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act, 1979* would be desirable; this could be accomplished by the extension of the areas scheduled to include, at the least, all of the exposed standing fabric and earthworks, and possibly some of the buried elements. At the same time an improvement in the scheduling definitions, especially the mapping of areas scheduled, would be welcome.
2. In the case of repairs to the wall the employment of contractors who are experienced in the specialised techniques of conservation repairs is essential if work is to be carried out to the necessary high standard.
3. There can be no 'right' or 'wrong' solution to maintenance issues; principles can be outlined, but every case of repair will be different, requiring judgement and sensitivity to the wide range of factors involved.
4. Repairs to ancient masonry should aim to be sympathetic, without attempting to deceive; this, too, is a question of judgement. Suitable materials are the key to this, and suggestions have been made for equivalents to the various ancient stone-types employed in Exeter, almost all of which are now unavailable from quarry sources. It is suggested that stone should be salvaged and stockpiled when it is available (e.g. from demolition) for future use.
5. Current maintenance procedures are satisfactory. It is intended to establish a system of quinquennial inspection in order to prioritise repair requirements. The beneficial effect of routine (annual) removal of vegetation cover is stressed.
6. Archaeological recording is recognised as an essential preliminary to repair works, in order to plan and execute those works on an informed basis (it often has the additional advantage of providing detailed drawings). The archaeological information is cumulative and incremental; improving with each additional piece of work, however small.
7. Some aspects of the wall which are likely to be of particular interest, and to make specific contributions to the improvement of the understanding of the defences, were suggested as possible candidates for research work in the future.

8. Several suggestions for improvements in the display of the wall were made:

- (a) The lower masonry and plinth of the wall has become buried by recent development and/or landscaping at two points in Southernhay (Forte Hotel/Trinity Street and Broadwalk House). These sections should be re-exposed.
- (b) Vegetation on top of, or close up to, the wall should be cleared; although much of this is now done, there are still isolated instances of dense growth hiding wall fabric, if not actively penetrating it (examples in Northernhay Place, and rear of Southernhay). Prevention of excessive build-up of new growth is also desirable, as is the avoidance of new planting too close to the wall (example in Friernhay).
- (c) A related problem is that of plant growth over collapsed sections of wall (Cricklepit Street and Quay Lane). Substantial fragments of fallen masonry are there to be displayed, with some removal of overgrowth and superficial soil cover; this would increase intelligibility of the wall in these areas, as well as allowing the condition of the fallen sections to be observed.
- (d) Conversely other problem areas exist where core masonry is exposed which was not intended independently to withstand exposure to the weather (example of a long stretch of Roman wall core in Paul Street). The solution here may well be to rebury the masonry.

9. Suggestions were made for improvements in the presentation of the wall; these combine to promote awareness of the existence and extent of the surviving defences, and the establishment of a 'wall trail'. Improvements fall into three categories, comprising: further wall-specific information panels (several sites are suggested); the publication of a guide leaflet and a booklet (a leaflet is in hand in the series of 'Field Guides' produced by the Devon Archaeological Society and a booklet is proposed in the series produced by the Museum); longer term improvements in public access to areas of the wall not at present accessible, especially the sections with well-preserved ramparts on the south-eastern side of the city and the interior of the castle.

10. Distribution of the report: the report is produced in an edition of 50 copies for distribution to sponsors, contributors, practitioners, local reference sources and libraries, and other interested parties. It will also be available for sale.

S.R. Blaylock

2. POST-EXCAVATION PROJECTS AND PUBLICATIONS

2.1 Civil War booklet

The A4 booklet *Exeter in the Civil War* by Mark Stoye was published in April as *Devon Archaeology* No. 6. It contains a useful synthesis of the copious archaeological and historical information accumulated by the AFU over the past twenty-five years. New discoveries continue to be made, however, in this rich field of study. Two new outwork bastions next to the castle have recently been identified from an 18th-century Chamber Map Book plan. These earthwork features would have been linked to the outworks excavated by the AFU in the East Gate area.

2.2 Civil War book

The book *From Deliverance to Destruction: Rebellion and Civil War in an English City* by Mark Stoye will be published by Exeter University Press in March 1996. This publication draws heavily on documentary research undertaken by AFU staff over the past ten years or so and includes a section containing a selection of original documents which are printed for the first time.

2.3 City Wall pamphlet

Dr Valerie Maxfield, with assistance from Stuart Blaylock, is currently preparing an A5 (folded A4) pamphlet guide to the City Wall for publication in the DAS Field Guides series. The central element will be a map.

2.4 City Wall booklet

An A5 booklet on the City Wall by Stuart Blaylock is planned for publication in the autumn of 1996. Finances permitting, it is hoped that it will appear in the Exeter City Museums booklet series in a similar format to those recently produced on the Guildhall and the Underground Passages.

2.5 Primary project reports and archives

During the first half of 1995/6 work has been carried out on a wide range of post-excavation projects funded from the City Council Leisure Committee's grant. Reports have been produced on the 1980s excavations at the Quay (2); documentary research on the Underground Passages and medieval aqueducts (2); and documentary histories of properties on the THF hotel site at Magdalen Street and Trinity Lane (2).

Other reports are currently in preparation on the 1980s excavation at Cricklepit Street; the THF hotel site excavations; South Gate excavations; medieval and post-medieval finds catalogues and databases; further reports on the Underground Passages; and the Holloway Street/Acorn Roman military sites.

Jannine Juddery's work on indexing and editing the pre-1450 Exeter property deeds continues according to schedule, and publication of this material in the monograph *People and Places in Medieval Exeter* is planned for 1997.

2.6 Excavations Gazetteer

A gazetteer of sites excavated in Exeter is being compiled which will contain brief summaries of the archaeological results obtained from each site as well as a bibliography.

2.7 Historical Atlas

Work continued sporadically over the summer on the preparation of maps for the 'Exeter' section of the *Historical Atlas of South West England* but much remains to be done.

2.8 Roman Bath-house paper

A paper entitled 'The design of the first-century legionary bath-house at Exeter' has been submitted for publication in the proceedings of an international symposium on Roman baths which will appear in the *Journal of Roman Archaeology* monograph series in 1996.

2.9 Roman fortress monograph

A detailed Project Design for an *Exeter Archaeological Report* monograph on sites excavated in the Roman fortress is in preparation. Grant aid will be sought from English Heritage for a publication project starting in 1996/7.

2.10 *Proceedings of the Devon Archaeological Society*

Reports will be prepared in the second half of the financial year on the results of excavations at Danes Castle, Digby Hospital and Topsham Quay, for submission to PDAS.

2.11 Bowhill House monograph

Stuart Blaylock has commenced preparation of the final report on the results of all the excavations and fabric recording carried out at Bowhill over the past two decades.. The work is being funded by English Heritage, and will be completed in 1996/7. No decision has been taken yet on where the book will be published, but the English Heritage monograph series remains a possibility.

3. FIELD RECORDING PROJECTS

3.1 Bartholomew Street West excavation

An excavation nearing completion at 51 Bartholomew Street West is funded by City Screen Ltd in advance of the construction of a new cinema. The earliest feature so far identified is a Roman quarry pit which underlies two late Roman metalled surfaces within a terrace. Post-Roman dark soil covers the whole area. A late Saxon boundary ditch runs NE-SW at right angles to Bartholomew Street (i.e. parallel with Fore Street). This feature cuts the dark soil but has produced only Roman residual finds. It could therefore date from an aceramic Saxon period, perhaps the 9th or 10th century. A number of 12th- and 13th-century pits attest to relatively intensive occupation in this area from at least 1150. A sequence of post-medieval buildings spans the 17th to 19th centuries.

3.2 Smythen Street evaluation excavations

Preliminary results from a series of trial trenches on a large site bounded by Market Street, Preston Street and Smythen Street confirm the high archaeological potential of this site, which includes the 1930s GPO building and the former RSPCA clinic.

3.3 Malthouse building recording

The former Malthouse premises in Haven Road, St Thomas are currently being converted into a Whitbread Severn Inn. Aidan Matthews and Richard Parker are monitoring the building works, and making detailed records of the structure which will enable the history of this late 18th-century building to be reconstructed. A notable feature is a group of three mid 19th-century malting kilns, one of which will be preserved intact.

3.4 18 North Street

Following the recent fire in this well-known historic building, dating from around 1600, salvage recording has been undertaken by Richard Parker during initial clearance operations. It is hoped to arrange for further archaeological recording to be carried out in future in advance of rebuilding and repairs.

3.5 Lighter Inn, Topsham

The opportunity arose recently to analyse and record the ground-floor plan of this interesting building, which stands on the earliest part of Topsham Quay. The early history of the building is not well documented. It may date from around 1700 (on architectural grounds) and originally possessed an open front reminiscent of the Custom House at Exeter Quay, but with the first floor supported on five timber posts.

C.G. Henderson
Director, Archaeological Field Unit