



Old Town Hall, Hatherleigh Devon

Archaeological Watching Brief Report





Wessex Archaeology

Old Town Hall, Hatherleigh

Devon

NGR SS540042

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Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Old Town Hall, Hatherleigh, Devon

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Cover: View of site from the east

Figure 1: Site Location showing watching brief area

Plate 1: View of the foundation trenches from the east

Plate 2: Representative section.

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Mr R Arthurs ('the Client') to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 2540 1043. The works consisted of the construction of an extension to the current building on land at the Old Town Hall, Hatherleigh, Devon ('The Site'),

The origins of Hatherleigh may be early medieval with the centre just to the north east of the River Lew. The Site lies in an area of archaeological potential, being within historic core of the town. Hatherleigh Town Hall is an early 20th century building but an earlier building appears on the eastern part of the Site on the OS 1880s -1890s historic maps.

The groundwork revealed topsoil overlying natural deposits of clay. The only archaeological deposit was observed in the western part of the site. It comprised a deposit containing charcoal, animal bones and medieval pottery.

The fieldwork was undertaken on the 16th and 17th January 2008.

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Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology are grateful to Mr R Arthurs for commissioning the project.

The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Mark Williams. This report was written by Piotr Orczewski, who also undertook the fieldwork. The finds were assessed by Lorraine Mephram. The illustrations were prepared by Will Foster.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Mr R. Arthurs (hereafter “the Client”) to undertake an archaeological watching brief on land at the Old Town Hall, Hatherleigh, Devon (hereafter ‘The Site’), centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 2540 1043.

1.1.2 The archaeological watching brief was undertaken as a condition of the planning consent for the conversion of the existing building to 4 flats and the construction of 2 flats and 2 houses.

1.1.3 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the WSI (WA 2008). The standards and guidance given in the Institute of Field Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (revised 1999) were also maintained.

1.2 Site location, description and topography

1.2.1 The Site is roughly rectangular in shape and is located on Bridge Street, in the back yard of the Old Town Hall within the historic core of Hatherleigh. The area of the Site is sloping slightly towards the steep banks of River Lew.

1.2.2 The Site comprises the Old Town Hall which has undergone renovation and the current phase of works involves the excavation of groundworks for an extension to the current building.

1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

1.3.1 The site lies within the historic core of Hatherleigh and within the designated conservation area, comprising the Historic core of the town.

1.3.2 Hatherleigh Town Hall is an early 20th century building but an earlier building appears on the eastern part of the site on the OS 1880s -1890s historic map.

1.3.3 The origins of Hatherleigh may be early medieval with the centre just to the north east of the River Lew.

2 AIMS

2.1 Watching Brief

- 2.1.1 The principal aim of the watching brief was to provide further information concerning the presence/absence, date, nature and extent of any buried archaeological remains and to investigate and record these within the new development.

3 METHOD

- 3.1.1 In order to address the aim of watching brief programme, a constant archaeological presence was maintained during excavation of foundation trenches.
- 3.1.2 The trenches were mechanically excavated using a tracked machine fitted with a 0.6m toothed bucket. Trenches were approximately 0.9m deep.
- 3.1.3 Recording was carried out using Wessex Archaeology *pro forma* recording system supported by photographic record.
- 3.1.4 Artefacts were retained from excavated contexts, then washed, counted and identified.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Natural deposits and soil sequence

- 4.1.1 The natural deposits and soil sequence shows a topsoil **(101)** comprising a dark red brown clay loam with rare flint inclusions, 0.17m thick. Overlying a subsoil **(102)**, which was a compact mid brown orange clay 0.56m thick. The natural geology **(103)** was a dark brownish yellow clay with patches of gray clay.

4.2 Archaeological sequence

- 4.2.1 In the North West corner of Site, below a 0.25m layer of dark greyish brown clay loam topsoil **(201)** a c. 0.5m layer of pale greyish red clay loam **(202)** was recorded. This deposit was looser, grittier and contained charcoal inclusions. Medieval pottery and animal bones were recovered from this layer. The archaeological spread overlay the orange clay subsoil **(203)**.

5 FINDS

- 5.1.1 A small quantity of finds was recovered from context **202**.

5.2 Pottery

- 5.2.1 The pottery is medieval in date with a wide date range, from the late 12th century onwards (Lorraine Mephram pers comm).

5.3 Animal Bone

- 5.3.1 Three ribs and a vertebra were recovered from the watching brief, these were identified as cattle bones.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1.1 A spread of material was identified at the north west of the Site this material contained animal bone and medieval pottery. It was impossible to determine the full extent of the spread which extends further to the north.

7 ARCHIVE

- 7.1.1 The site archive is fully cross-referenced and in stable condition, and is currently housed at Wessex Archaeology under project code 68330. It is anticipated that the archive will be deposited with an appropriate local museum if requested in the future.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY


Wessex Archaeology 2008 Old town Hall, Hatherleigh, Devon, Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological watching brief. Unpublished report.



Plate 1: View of the foundation trenches from the east



Plate 2: Representative section

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