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Land to the Rear of Barclays Bank Plc Mount Folly, Bodmin, Cornwall

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Cornwall Council Planning ref: PA11/05472
WA ref: 103960.02
January 2016



**Land to the Rear of Barclays Bank Plc
Mount Folly, Bodmin, Cornwall**

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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January 2016



**Cornwall Council Planning Ref: PA11/05472
Report Ref: 103960.01**



Quality Assurance

Project Code	103960	Accession Code		Client Ref.	
Planning Application Ref.	PA11/05472	Ordnance Survey (OS) national grid reference (NGR)	207260 066938		

Version	Status*	Prepared by	Checked and Approved By	Approver's Signature	Date
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v01	I	SF	GSC		12/01/16
File:	\\projectserver\wessex\Projects\103960\Report				
v02	E	BTC	ADC		13/01/16
File:	\\projectserver\wessex\Projects\103960\Report				

* I = Internal Draft; E = External Draft; F = Final

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Land to the Rear of Barclays Bank Plc Mount Folly, Bodmin, Cornwall

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Contents

Summary	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
1 INTRODUCTION.....	5
1.1 Project background	5
1.2 The Site.....	5
2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND	5
2.1 Introduction	5
3 METHODOLOGY.....	6
3.1 Aims and objectives	6
3.2 Fieldwork methodology	7
4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS.....	7
4.1 Natural deposits and soil sequences	7
4.2 Archaeology	7
5 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE	7
6 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE.....	7
7 CONCLUSION	8
8 STORAGE AND CURATION	8
8.1 Museum	8
8.2 Archive.....	8
8.3 Discard policy.....	8
8.4 Copyright.....	8
8.5 Security Copy.....	8
9 REFERENCES.....	9

Figures

Figure 1: Site location plan

Plates

Front cover: View of site, from north-east

Plate 1: South-west facing representative section of trench



- Plate 2: Wall remnants, view from north-west
Plate 3: North-east facing representative section of trench.
Back cover: View of excavations, from east



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Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Alstron Properties through their agent APS Architectural Design to undertake an archaeological watching brief on land to the rear of Barclays Bank Plc, Mount Folly Bodmin, Cornwall. The archaeological watching brief comprised of the excavation of footings for the construction of six residential apartments. The work was undertaken on 18th and 19th of September and 28th of October 2014.

During the course of the excavation no archaeological remains were uncovered. However during the course of ground clearance prior to their excavation a length of north-west to south-east aligned wall was uncovered. This appeared to form part of a boundary wall for landscaped gardens and was located to the south west of the building imprint.



Land to the Rear of Barclays Bank Plc Mount Folly, Bodmin, Cornwall

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Andrew Scholes of APS Architectural Design for commissioning the work on behalf of Alstron Properties. The advice and assistance of Phil Copleston, Historic Environment Planning Advice Officer for Cornwall Council, was gratefully received.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Matthew Kendall and Simon Flaherty. The report was written by Simon Flaherty. The illustrations were prepared by Ken Lyden. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Gareth Chaffey.



Land to the Rear of Barclays Bank Plc Mount Folly, Bodmin, Cornwall

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) has been commissioned by APS Architectural Design, acting on behalf of Alstron Properties (the Client), to undertake an archaeological watching brief on land to the rear of Barclays Bank Plc, Mount Folly, Bodmin, Cornwall PL31 2DE, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 207260 066938, hereafter referred to as 'the Site' (**Figure 1**).

1.1.2 Outline planning permission (Application Number: PA11/05472) was granted in September 2011 for the proposed construction of six residential apartments. An archaeological condition (Condition 19) was placed on the outline planning approval and stated that:

No development shall take place within the area to be developed until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological recording based on a written scheme of investigation submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that provision is made to record finds of archaeological interest in accordance with the requirements of PPS5 'Planning for the Historic Environment'.

1.1.3 Following discussions with the Senior Archaeologist at Cornwall Council (CC), archaeological advisor to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), an archaeological watching brief was recommended.

1.1.4 The watching brief was undertaken on 18th and 19th of September and 28th of October 2014.

1.2 The Site

1.2.1 The Site comprises an irregular block of land covering an area of 0.33 ha. The Site is positioned within the centre of Bodmin town centre. It is bounded to the west by Turf Street, to the south by an access road to Priory car park, Crinnick's Hill, to the east by Priory Park and to the north by mature trees.

1.2.2 The Site lies on gently sloping ground at an elevation of c. 87 m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) on the south-western side of the Site, dropping down to c. 83 m aOD to the north-east. The basal geology of the area is recorded as Saltash slate and siltstone (BGS website)

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Bodmin (*Bodmine*) is recorded in Domesday (Williams and Martin 2002) as an established settlement, with its likely origins in at least the later Saxon period. It was a medieval market

centre, and in the 12th century Bodmin was the most important 'coinage town' in Cornwall and still retains a series of Burgage plots.

- 2.1.2 The name Bodmin is Old Cornish in origin (*Bodmeneghi*), suggested by Mills to mean 'dwelling by church land' (1991, 41) and by Padel to mean 'dwelling of monks' (1988, 111). Mills records the first occurrence of the name c. 975 (Ibid. 1991, 41), this perhaps indicating a pre-Conquest foundation for (or forerunner to) Bodmin Priory. The medieval *Life of St Petrock* includes a description of the foundation of the monastery of Bodmin, which Ralegh Radford (1973, 251) equates with the monastery of Dinurin in which Kenstec, the Bishop of Cornwall, had his seat in about AD 870. There is limited archaeological evidence to suggest a pre-Conquest occupation: excavations at the priory revealed grass-marked pottery in shallow scoops (WA6) sealed by make-up for medieval floor layers (O'Hara 1985. 212).
- 2.1.3 Throughout the medieval period the town of Bodmin formed the geographical and religious centre of Cornwall. Ralegh Radford records that the old Celtic monastery became a house of Augustinian canons when it was reconstituted by Bishop Warlewast of Exeter between 1107–1137 (1973, 251). In the Augustinian priory church was the shrine of St Petroc, located to the east of the Site, along with a range of new buildings constructed slightly to the south of the old monastery including cloisters, monks' dormitory, refectory, chapter house, prior's lodging, pond and culver-house.
- 2.1.4 The North aisle of the church was excavated and seen to end in a West tower. It was built in the 12th or 13th centuries, and the east end of the church appears to have been rebuilt about the same time. After the Dissolution, the church was used for secular purposes, including metal-casting (English Heritage web).
- 2.1.5 In the early 13th century the Franciscan order established a friary and numerous chapels in the area of Mount Folly Square (Halliday 1958, 128; Soulsby 1986, 53). Other religious foundations included two lazar (leper) houses and several chapels: St Leonard, St Nicholas, St Anthony, St George and St Margaret, which have given their names to various parts of the town. The wealth of the town in the late medieval period is demonstrated by the rebuilding of the Parish church of St Petroc from 1469-1472; it is the largest parish church in Cornwall.
- 2.1.6 The Site lies to the south of the possible Saxon and early medieval town centre of Bodmin, and to the west of the possible location of the market square. During the medieval period economic development may have involved the tin industry (one of the main extraction areas lay on Bodmin Moor).

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims and objectives

3.1.1 The aims of the watching brief were:

- *to determine the presence or absence of archaeological remains, and should remains be present, to ensure their preservation by record to the highest possible standard;*
- *to confirm the approximate date or date range of the remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence;*
- *to determine or confirm the approximate extent of any remains;*
- *to determine the condition and state of preservation of the remains;*



- to determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present; and
- to prepare a report on the results of the watching brief.

3.2 Fieldwork methodology

- 3.2.1 The watching brief was conducted according to the agreed WSI (WA 2014) and comprised the excavation of the footings of a residential dwelling. The location of the footings has been indicated within **Figure 1**.
- 3.2.2 Prior to machining, the Site was scanned by the principal contractor using a cable avoidance tool. The Site was excavated under constant archaeological supervision using a tracked mechanical excavator employing a toothless ditching bucket.
- 3.2.3 All potential features and deposits of possible archaeological origin were partially excavated to ascertain their nature and function and were fully recorded using WA's *pro forma* record sheets. All deposits were assigned a unique number.
- 3.2.4 A photographic record was maintained using digital photography. Digital photography adhered to the National Monuments Record Digital Imaging Guidelines. A full graphic record was maintained. The site drawings were drawn an appropriate scale, typically 1:10 for sections and 1:20 for plans.
- 3.2.5 Site survey was carried out using a Leica Viva series GNSS unit using the OS National GPS Network through an RTK network with a 3D accuracy of 30mm or below. All survey data was recorded using the OSGB36 British National Grid coordinate system.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

4.1 Natural deposits and soil sequences

- 4.1.1 The deposit sequence changed little over the site (**Plate 1**). The southern end of site contained an overburden layer that was a mid-grey silty sandy loam. It was derived from the initial clearing and tidying of the site prior to construction taking place and was 0.2 m thick. This was sat upon 0.12 m thick dark grey silty sandy loam top soil. Located beneath the top soil was a mid-greyish brown silty clay loam sub soil. This varied in depth at the southern end of site it was 0.15 m thick however as the site sloped downwards towards the north it was up to 0.39 m thick. The natural geology of saltash slate and siltstone was encountered at an approximate depth of 0.45 m.

4.2 Archaeology

- 4.2.1 A length of wall (**Plate 2**) was located towards the south-east of the footings at a distance of 4 m, when the ground was cleared prior to their excavation. The stone built wall ran in a north-west to south-east direction, it ran for a length of 18.5 m and was 0.42 m wide. The wall appears on the 1881 Bodmin Town Plan Map and appears to form a boundary for part of a landscaped garden.

5 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE

- 5.1.1 No archaeological finds were found during the course of the watching brief

6 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

- 6.1.1 No material suitable for environmental analysis was present within the monitored areas.



7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1.1 No archaeological remains were encountered during the supervision of the excavation of the footings for the building imprint. However, during the ground clearance prior to the excavation of the footings a north-west to south-east aligned wall was encountered that appears within the 1881 Bodmin Town Plan Map and seems to be part of a boundary for a landscaped garden.

8 STORAGE AND CURATION

8.1 Museum

- 8.1.1 It is recommended that the project archive resulting from the excavation be deposited with **The Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro**. The Museum has agreed in principle to accept the project archive on completion of the project. Deposition of any finds with the Museum will only be carried out with the full agreement of the landowner.

8.2 Archive

- 8.2.1 The complete site archive, which will include paper records, photographic records, graphics, artefacts, ecofacts and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by **The Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro**, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; IfA 2009; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).
- 8.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the **103960**, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive comprises the following:

- *01 files/document cases of paper records & A3/A4 graphics*

8.3 Discard policy

- 8.3.1 WA follows the guidelines set out in *Selection, Retention and Dispersal* (Society of Museum Archaeologists 1993), which allows for the discard of selected artefact and ecofact categories which are not considered to warrant any future analysis. Any discard of artefacts will be fully documented in the project archive.
- 8.3.2 The discard of environmental remains and samples follows nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1993; 1995; English Heritage 2002).

8.4 Copyright

- 8.4.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative archive relating to the site will be retained by Wessex Archaeology Ltd under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved. The Museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use shall be non-profitmaking, and conforms to the *Copyright and Related Rights* regulations 2003.

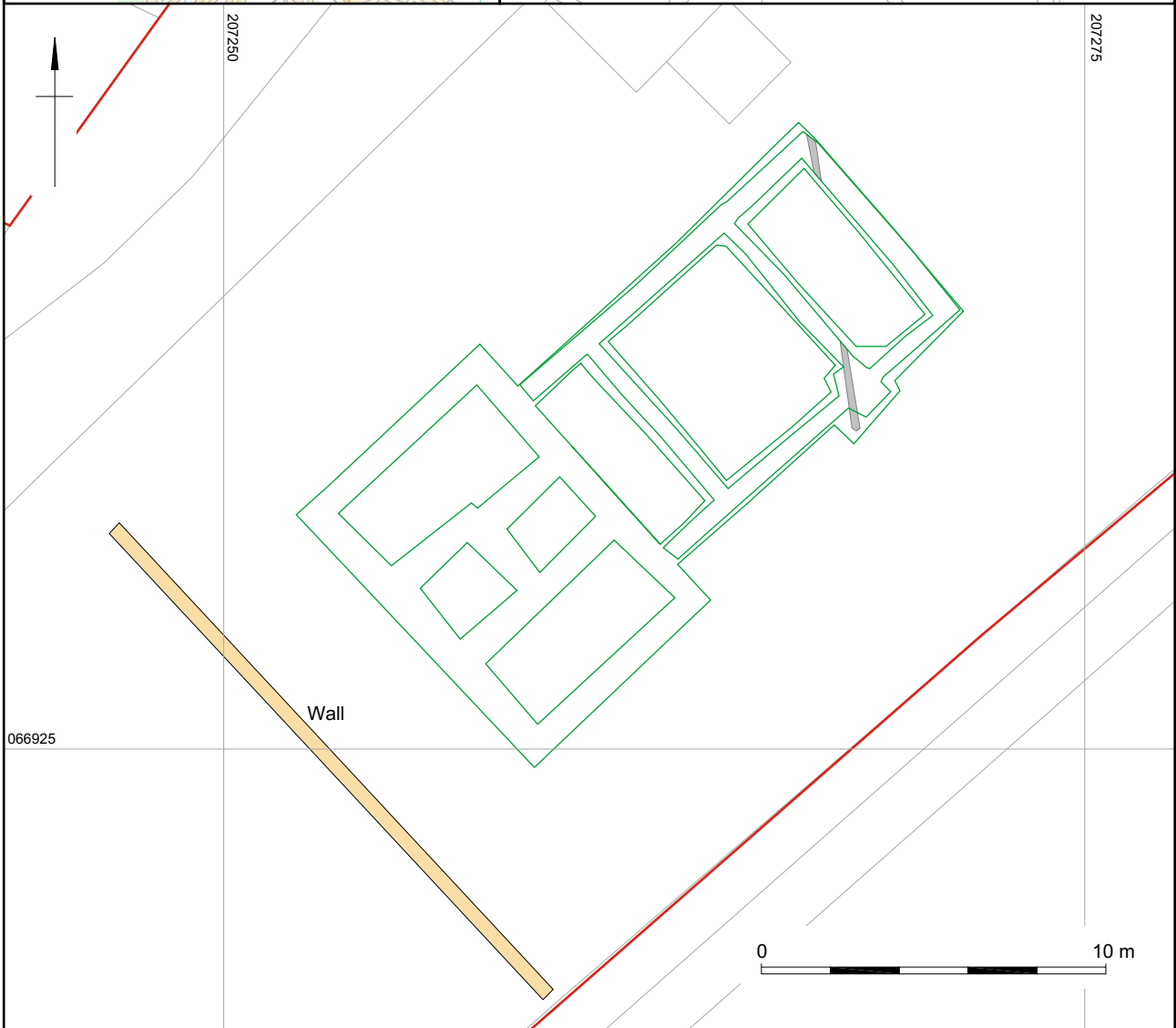
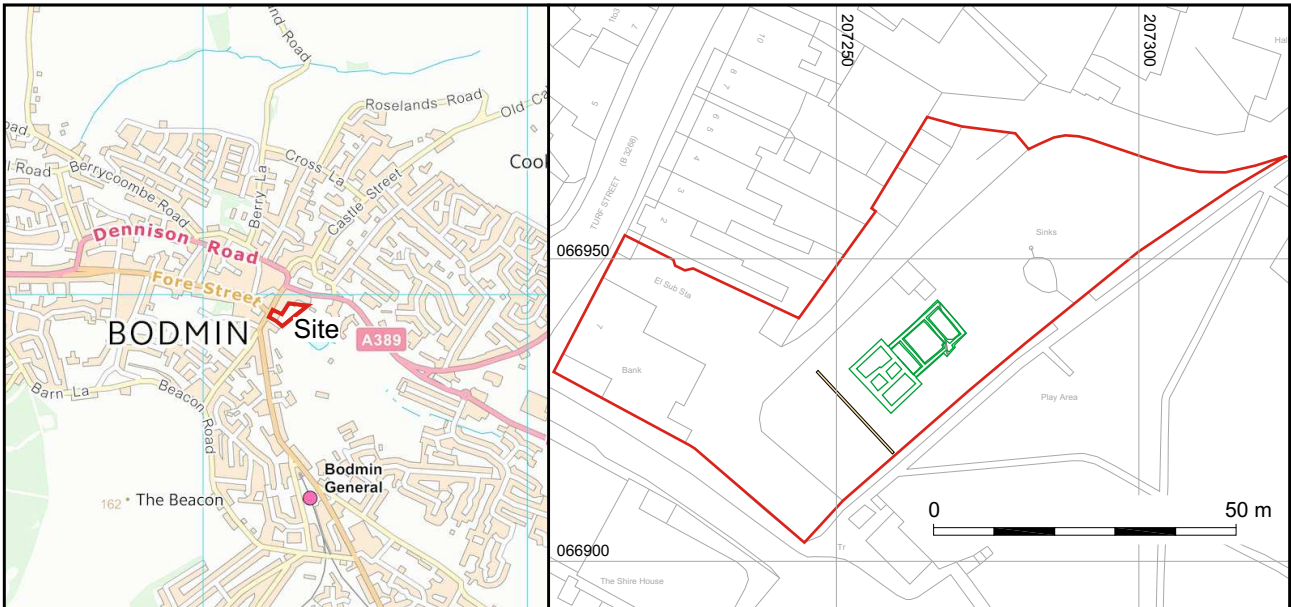
8.5 Security Copy

- 8.5.1 In line with current best practice (e.g. Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.



9 REFERENCES

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Site location plan

Figure 1



Plate 1: South-west facing representative section of trench

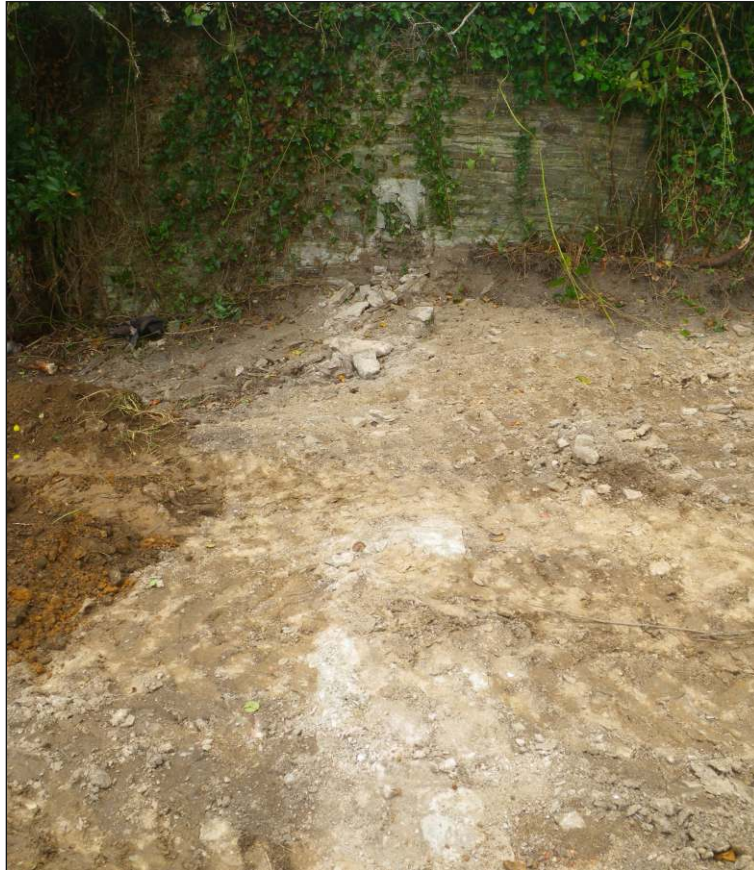


Plate 2: Wall remnants, view from north-west



Plate 3: North-east facing representative section of trench



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Date: 12/01/2016

Revision Number: 0

Scale: n/a

Layout: KL

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