



Totnes Flood Defence Improvements, Totnes, Devon

Archaeological Watching Brief



South Hams District Council Planning Application No. 3282/16/FUL
Accession Number: TBC
Ref: 112831.01
March 2017



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Totnes Flood Defence Improvements, Totnes, Devon

Archaeological Watching Brief

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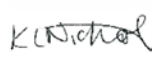
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Quality Assurance

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Plate 3: Trench 2 showing heavy root disturbance, looking east, 0.50m scale



Totnes Flood Defence Improvements, Totnes, Devon

Archaeological Watching Brief

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Bam Nuttall Mott MacDonald Joint Venture, acting on behalf of the Environment Agency, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the Totnes Flood Defence Improvements Works, in Totnes, Devon (centred at SX 80705 60595). This stage of groundworks was located in Area D of the scheme in the Car park of the Steam Packet Inn, St Peter's Quay. Periods of historic levelling associated with quayside development and land reclamation were evident in trial trenches. A wall and associated garden soil which are believed to have been part of the 1825 Pleasure Gardens were also revealed.

The watching brief fieldwork took place between 6th and 16th February 2017.



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Archaeological Watching Brief

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Bam Nuttall Mott MacDonald Joint Venture, acting on behalf of the Environment Agency. The fieldwork was undertaken by William Smith, and the report written by Tracey Smith, with illustrations by Nancy Dixon. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Kirsty Nichol.



Totnes Flood Defence Improvements, Totnes, Devon

Archaeological Watching Brief

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Bam Nuttall Mott MacDonald Joint Venture, acting on behalf of the Environment Agency, to undertake an Archaeological Watching Brief on groundworks associated with improvements to flood defences in Totnes on the River Dart.
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which had been approved by Stephen Reed of the Devon County Council Historic Environment Team (HET), the County Archaeological Officer (CAO) acting on behalf of the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for South Hams District Council.

1.2 The Site

- 1.2.1 The route of the flood defence improvement works is located along a 1.7km length of the River Dart in Totnes (centred SX 80705 60595) extending between the rail crossing of the Dart at its northern end and Baltic Wharf at the south. (**Figure 1**).
- 1.2.2 This part of the watching brief was undertaken on part of Area D of the scheme between Totnes Bridge and Baltic Wharf at St Peter's Quay. The watching brief monitored hand-excavated footings for a new reinforced concrete flood defensive wall between the Steam Packet Inn and Throgmorton House.
- 1.2.3 The underlying geology has been mapped as comprising mudstone, siltstone, limestone and sandstone of the Nordon formation. This is overlain by an alluvial deposit of clay sand and gravel (BGS 2013).

2 HISTORICAL SUMMARY

- 2.1.1 The following summary has been taken from the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (Mott MacDonald, 2016)

- 2.1.2 There are no designated heritage assets within the Site.

2.2 Roman

- 2.2.1 The only evidence of Romano-British activity in the area directly affected by the flood defence scheme is a findspot of a single Coin at St Peter's Quay.

2.3 Medieval

- 2.3.1 Reclamation of the saltmarshes in this area started in the 13th century with the construction of the 'Warland Dam'. This road, or dam, was along the alignment of Warland (Wierland) and Ticklemore Street to its junction with Fore Street.

2.3.2 The earliest documentary reference to a chapel in Totnes is from the Domesday survey of 1066, and the postulated location is recorded on historic Ordnance Survey Maps as being between the Steam Packet Inn and Throgmorton House. The site of St. Peter's Chapel is traditionally thought to have been on St. Peter's Quay; a medieval quay that was being referred to in 1275.

2.3.3 The Parish Church of St. Mary is known to have been rebuilt between 1432 and 1460 during which time the New Town Quay was constructed (c.1451) in order to import the stone required for the Church. This resulted in the waterfront shifting forward slightly to an alignment roughly level with the west side of The Plains.

2.4 Post-medieval

2.4.1 The earliest reference to St. Peter's Quay was in 1719. The Conservation Management Plan for the Fore Street and Plains Area states '*The last significant reclamation hereabouts was when the warehouses beside the river were built; not on an existing quay, but on new ground created at the time-which means the buildings rise cliff-like from the river's bed.*' The oldest of these buildings date to the late 18th century.

2.5 19th Century

2.5.1 A memorial stone set into the wall belonging to the car park of the Steam Packet Inn relates to the establishment of Pleasure Gardens on the site in 1825. These gardens included a bowling green, Chestnut tree-lined walks and benches to encourage visitors to sit and enjoy their surroundings. The inscription is as follows:

1825

This Walk is Dedicated to the Public

By the Corporation of Totnes

William Doidge Taunton

Mayor.

2.5.2 The stone has been retained as part of the redevelopment of the area and will be put back into the scheme in close proximity to its current location.

2.6 Modern

2.6.1 The remains of 20th-century railway siding tracks (identifiable on OS plans) are located in the grassed amenity area between the Steam Packet Inn and Throgmorton House. The Baltic Wharf Shipyard is located at the southern end of Area D.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Watching Brief

3.1.1 The overall aims and objectives of the watching brief were:

- *To determine the presence or absence of archaeological remains, and should they 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 the 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 A detailed description of the watching brief methodology is set out in the approved WSI (Mott MacDonald 2016).
- 3.2.2 The fieldwork consisted of the monitoring of two hand-excavated trenches along the route of the new flood defence wall at the northern edge of the Steam Packet Inn car park (**Figure 1**). Trench 1 was located at the western end of the area; it measured 14.82 m in length, 1 m wide and 1.20 m in depth. Trench 2 was located at the eastern end of the area and was 6.80 m in length, 1 m wide and 1 m in depth.
- 3.2.3 A full photographic record was maintained using a digital camera, and the trench locations were plotted using hand tapes and related to the Ordnance Survey Datum. A written record was made of all deposits revealed by the groundworks.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

- 4.1.1 A full list of context descriptions can be seen in Appendix 1 below.

4.2 Trench 1

- 4.2.1 The earliest feature revealed by the excavation was the remains of a limestone block wall, bonded with a light grey, lime mortar (103, Plate 1). The wall was located at the western end of trench 1 and was orientated north-south and measured 0.44 m in width (Plate 2). Hand excavation revealed that it survived to a height of at least 0.68m, beyond which it was not possible to excavate due to safety constraints. The wall is probably early 19th-century in date, and is depicted on the 1888 Ordnance Survey Map of Totnes. It appears to have been the western boundary wall of the Bowling Green, which was a feature of the Pleasure Gardens established in 1825.
- 4.2.2 Associated with this wall, and appearing to abut against it, was a buried soil layer (102). This deposit was a mid-grey/brown sandy-clay containing occasional gravels and a single fragment of slate. Deposit 102 was only exposed in the base of the trench, so the full depth remains unknown, again due to safety constraints. However, it was visible across the full area of the trench on the east side of the wall. It is likely that 102 was the original ground surface relating to the 1820s Pleasure Gardens and was therefore probably contemporary with boundary wall 103.
- 4.2.3 The western side of wall 103, was abutted by a dark brown, sand and gravel-rich layer (104) at a depth of 1.10 m from the top of the trench. This deposit was also thought to relate to the early 1800s, and may have been a remnant of levelling or drainage for the bowling green.
- 4.2.4 Overlaying both 102 and 104, was a layer of dark brown, loamy sand, 0.74 m in depth and containing occasional, rounded, river pebbles, moderately frequent gravel, limestone pebbles and coal fragments (101). The presence of flow-blue decorated whiteware indicates that 101 was deposited sometime after c. 1830. Animal bone and oyster shell were also noted; suggesting either that domestic refuse was being dumped here during the mid-19th

century or that it was an imported soil brought in to level the ground prior to the area being redeveloped as a quayside.

- 4.2.5 Overlying all of the deposits was a 0.46 m deep modern topsoil deposit (100) associated with the creation of 20th-century flower beds. This also overlay tarmac from earlier 20th-century hard landscaping.

4.3 Trench 2

- 4.3.1 Deposits in Trench 2 were very mixed due to heavy root disturbance (Plate 3). In the base of Trench 2, a mid-brown, sandy-clay (203) containing occasional fragments of slate and pottery was revealed. This deposit has been interpreted as the same buried ground surface (equivalent to 102) as that found in Trench 1. However, the ceramic evidence suggests that 203 could be dated to the 17th century and may therefore have been an early levelling layer for the early post-medieval period of quayside development in the town.

- 4.3.2 The early buried soil 203 was overlain by a 0.34 m deep, pale yellow/brown, coarse sand with gravels (202), which may have originated from dredging of the river and been imported to level up the ground. Deposit 202 was overlain by a dark brown/black silty-clay loam (201), extending to 0.18 m at its deepest point and which is likely to have been a buried topsoil.

- 4.3.3 Uppermost in Trench 2 was a similar deposit to 100; a 0.49 m deep layer of modern flowerbed topsoil (200) over an earlier 20th-century hardstanding.

5 ARTEFACTS

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 A small quantity of post-medieval and modern pottery was recovered during the watching brief, all from stratified deposits. The finds have been quantified by material type and context; the results are presented in **Appendix 1**.

5.2 Pottery

- 5.2.1 The range of pottery wares present is entirely typical of regional post-medieval domestic assemblages. Coarse redwares provide the utilitarian component; these comprise a single sherd of North Devon Gravel Tempered Ware and a sherd of post-medieval redware. The latter is part of a large bowl or pancheon with a mottled cream and brown slip on the interior; this is probably also a product of the North Devon potteries.

- 5.2.2 Alongside the coarsewares are industrially-produced finewares, including examples of transfer-printed whiteware, refined whiteware with flow blue and painted decoration and a single sherd of refined earthenware with a blue fabric.

- 5.2.3 The undecorated redwares are not particularly conducive to close dating, and have a potential date range spanning the 17th–19th centuries. Whiteware with blue transfer-printed decoration was introduced c 1780; coloured transfer-printing was introduced c 1825; ‘flow blue’ dates from c 1830 onwards.

- 5.2.4 All of the finds were recovered from made ground deposits on the west side of the River Dart; an area which was reclaimed from the river from the medieval period onwards. The finds from layer 203 indicate a 17th-century or later deposition date, whilst those from 101 and 202 date from the 19th century. The presence of flow-blue decorated whiteware indicate that layer 101 was deposited after c 1830. Sherd count and weights for the ceramic assemblage can be found in **Appendix 3** below.

6 STORAGE AND CURATION

6.1 Museum

- 6.1.1 The designated repository for the project archive is the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, however this museum is not currently accepting archives. The Site archive will therefore be temporarily stored at WA's Bristol office under Site Code 112831.

6.2 Preparation of Archive

- 6.2.1 The complete site archive, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Royal Albert Memorial Museum, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014b; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).
- 6.2.2 An OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/projects/oasis/> has been initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators Forms. All appropriate parts of the OASIS online form will be completed for submission to the Devon HET. Oasis ID Wessexar1-277590 (**Appendix 3** below).

6.3 Discard Policy

- 6.3.1 Wessex Archaeology follows the guidelines set out in *Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections* (SMA 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.
- 6.3.2 The discard of environmental remains and samples follows nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1993 and 1995; HE (formerly EH) 2011).

6.4 Copyright

- 6.4.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative archive relating to the site will be retained by WA 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*.

6.5 Security Copy

- 6.5.1 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.

7 REFERENCES

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8 APPENDICES

8.1 Appendix 1: Context Descriptions

Context	Category	Description	Depth (bgl)
Trench 1			
100	Layer	Topsoil: 20 th -century made ground and earlier 20 th - century tarmac surface	0.00-0.46m
101	Layer	Made Ground: dark brown loamy sand with gravels. Levelling deposits.	0.46-1.10m
102	Layer	Made Ground: mixed greyish brown sandy clay.	1.10-
103	Structure	Stone and lime mortar wall, orientated north-south. Boundary wall.	0.25-0.35m
104	Layer	Dark brown course sand, possibly 19 th century. Buried ground surface.	0.35-0.40m
Trench 2			
200	Layer	Topsoil: 20 th -century made ground and earlier 20 th century tarmac surface	0.00-0.10m
201	Layer	Made ground: Mid grey brown sandy clay and gravels.	0.10-0.20m
202	Layer	Made ground: Mid yellow brown sand and gravels.	0.20-0.34m
203	Layer	Mid brown sandy-clay, rare pottery sherds, slate fragments	0.34-0.35m

8.2 Appendix 2: Ceramic Assemblage

Context	Pottery (no/weight)
101	7/124g
202	2/8g
203	1/40g
Total	10/172g



8.3 Appendix 3: Oasis

OASIS ID: wessexar1-277590

Project details

Project name Totnes Flood Defence Improvements

Short description of the project

Wessex Archaeology commissioned by Bam Nuttall Mott MacDonald Joint Venture, acting on behalf of the Environment Agency, undertook an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the Totnes Flood Defence Improvements Works, in Totnes, Devon (centred at SX 80705 60595). This stage of groundworks was located in Area D of the scheme in the Car park of the Steam Packet Inn, St Peter's Quay. Periods of historic levelling associated with quayside development and land reclamation were evident in trial trenches. A wall and associated garden soil which are believed to have been part of the 1825 Pleasure Gardens were also revealed.

Previous/future work

Yes / Unknown

Project dates

Start: 06-02-2017 End: 17-02-2017

Any associated project reference codes

112831 - Contracting Unit No.

Type of project

Recording project

Site status

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

Current Land use

Coastland 6 - Other

Investigation type

"Watching Brief"

Monument type

WALL Post Medieval

Significant Finds

SHERD Modern,
SHERD Post Medieval

Project location

Country - England

Site location - DEVON SOUTH HAMS TOTNES Totnes FDI

Postcode - TQ9 5EW

Height OD / Depth - Min: 2.1m Max: 3.38m



Plate 1: Wall 103 at the western end of Trench 1, looking west, 0.50m scale



Plate 2: Full length of Trench 1 after excavation, looking east, 1x1m and 0.50m scales



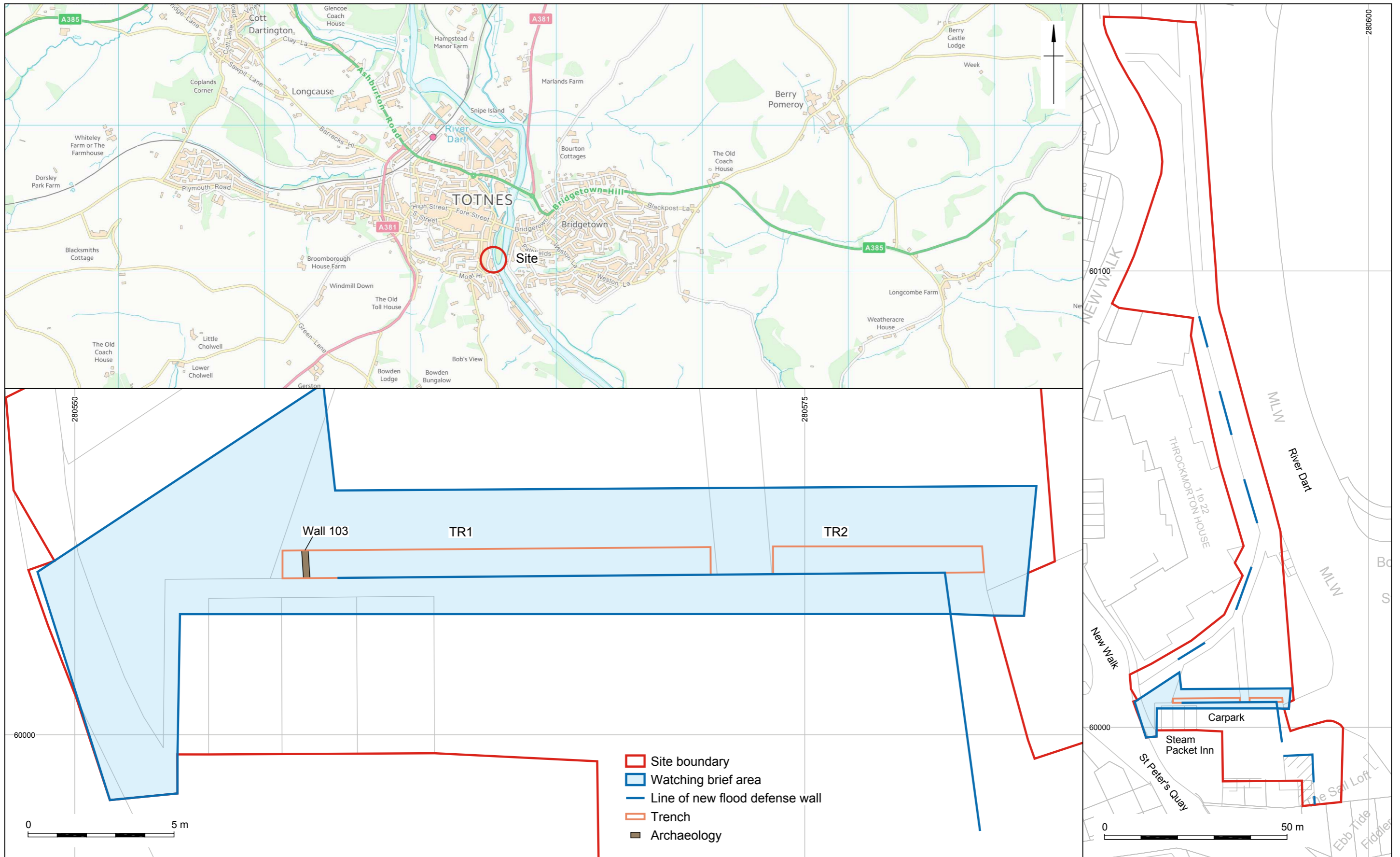
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Plate 3: Trench 2 showing heavy root disturbance, looking east, 0.50m scale

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Coordinate system:
OSGB36 (OSTN15/OSGM15)

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Site plan with trench locations

Figure 1