



Green Lane Shopping Centre, Barnstaple, Devon

Archaeological Watching Brief



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Site location Green Lanes Shopping Centre
Green Lanes
Barnstaple

County Devon

National grid reference (NGR) 255762 133332 (SS 55762 33332)

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Currie & Brown UK Ltd, on behalf of Green Lanes Jersey Property Unit Trust (Rockspring Property Investment Managers LLP), to undertake an archaeological watching brief during initial groundworks for the redevelopment of the south-west entrance to the Green Lane Shopping Centre, Barnstaple, Devon, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 255762 133332. The groundworks covered an area of approximately 510 square meters.

Two footing 'trenches' were opened using a mechanical excavator fitted with a breaker and then a toothless grading bucket to remove sub-floor material. Due to the depth of the existing reinforced concrete shopping centre floor, the associated bedding layers and substantial nature of the previous foundations no surviving archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were identified in either of the excavated footing trenches. Trench 1 terminated at the upper surface of a concrete underpinning associated with the historic gable wall of the adjoining Grade II Listed building of 38 High Street. Trench 2 terminated at the upper surface of natural geological clay.

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Oliver del Mar, Currie & Brown UK Ltd Associate Quantity Surveyor, for commissioning the archaeological watching brief on behalf of Green Lanes Jersey Property Unit Trust (Rockspring Property Investment Managers LLP). Wessex Archaeology is also grateful for the advice of Stephen Reed, Devon County Council Senior Historic Environment Officer, who monitored the project for North Devon Council, and to Peter Appleton of Pearce Construction (Barnstaple) Ltd for their cooperation and help on site.



Green Lanes Shopping Centre Barnstaple, Devon

Archaeological Watching Brief

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project and planning background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by Currie & Brown UK Ltd, on behalf of Green Lanes Jersey Property Unit Trust (Rockspring Property Investment Managers LLP), to undertake archaeological monitoring of groundworks during the redevelopment of the south-west entrance to the Green Lane Shopping Centre, fronting High Street in Barnstaple, Devon, EX31 1UL (**Fig. 1**). The monitored works centred on NGR 255762 133332.

1.1.2 Planning permission (ref. 60414) has been granted by North Devon Council (NDC), subject to Conditions, for alteration of the south-west entrance of the Shopping Centre and the change of use of units 19 and 20 to form a café with outdoor seating area. The redevelopment entails the demolition of the existing south entrance building, including a section of the northern wall which abuts the adjoining Listed Building of No. 38 High Street. Following advice from Stephen Reed, Devon County Council Senior Historic Environment Officer (DCC SHEO), the following archaeological Condition is attached to the planning permission:

1.1.3 Condition 4:

No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The development shall be carried out at all times in strict accordance with the approved scheme or such other details as may be subsequently agreed in writing by the District Planning Authority.

Reason:

To ensure, in accordance with Policy ENV14 of the North Devon Local Plan and paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework that an appropriate record is made of archaeological evidence that may be affected by the development.

1.1.4 The Conditions placed on the granting of Listed Building Consent (LBC,ref: 60415) were fulfilled by previous recording of the historic gable elevation of 38 High Street (NLHE No. 1385153; Wessex Archaeology 2017).

1.1.5 A Planning and Heritage Statement (Montagu Evans 2015) and Listed Building Works document (Haskoll 2015) were prepared and submitted as part of the planning and Listed Building consent applications.

1.1.6 Previous works undertaken by WA in relation to the wider Green Lane development site include three Heritage Statements, an archaeological evaluation and excavation (WA 2012, 2013a, 2013b, 2014 and 2015).



1.1.7 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which detailed the aims, methodologies and standards to be employed (WA 2016). Stephen Reed, Devon County Council Senior Historic Environment Officer, approved the WSI, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority (LPA), prior to fieldwork commencing. The watching brief was undertaken on Wednesday 2 August 2017.

1.2 Location, topography and geology

1.2.1 The watching brief was applied to groundworks in the south-western corner of the Green Lane Shopping Centre, Barnstaple. The Site covers an area of approximately 510 m² and comprises the following elements:

- *The south-west entrance to the shopping centre;*
- *Unit 19 – Topshop/Topman (ground, first, second, third floor); and*
- *Unit 21 – Tick Tock (watch and repair shop).*

1.2.2 The shopping centre entrance is located at the intersection of High Street and Joy Street, Units 19 and 21 are located to the east and west side of the entrance respectively. The building is 3 storeys in height.

1.2.3 The Site is fairly level at around 13 m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

1.2.4 The underlying geology is mapped as a sedimentary mudstone bedrock of the Piltown Mudstone Formation, overlaid by Taw River Terrace Deposits comprising superficial gravels, sand and silt (BGS 2017).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The archaeological and historical background to the Site has been previously described and recorded in archaeological assessments and investigations for the wider Green Lane Shopping Centre area (Wessex Archaeology 2012, 2013a, 2013b, 2014 and 2015) and from the Planning and Heritage Statement (Montagu Evans 2015) and Listed Building Works document (Haskoll 2015). Reference should be made to these documents for detailed background information.

2.2 Archaeological and historical context

2.2.1 Results of excavations undertaken as part of the wider Green Lane Shopping Centre development in 2014 (WA 2015) 55 m east of the Site, revealed evidence for medieval activity including pottery, dated to the 13th–15th century. While some of this material was residual in later (post-medieval) features, a small number of features, mostly in the southern half of the site, were likely to be of medieval date. These included a small ditch running parallel to and just inside the Joy Street frontage and a post-hole on the same alignment, as well as a small number of pits and other features extending further back from the street. They contained varying quantities of domestic waste, comprising mainly pottery and animal bone.

2.2.2 Post-medieval features were more prevalent in the northern half of the site, although at least three pits lay in the southern half in an area known to have been occupied by buildings fronting Joy Street by 1830. As well as domestic waste, a number of features also contained slag, indicating ironworking on or close to the site during the post-medieval period. Ironworking was also documented on the site in the 19th century.



2.2.3 The 1889 published edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map shows the entirety of the Site to be developed. Subsequent OS mapping shows little further development within the Site. The historic layout of the town, represented by burgage plots, is still clearly visible in the wider area throughout the 20th century. The 1988 and 1992 edition OS plans illustrate the redevelopment of the majority of the Site as the Green Lane Shopping Centre.

38 and 38A High Street

2.2.4 Located directly adjacent to the Site is the Grade II Listed property of 38 and 38A High Street. This building may have been a single house that was divided into two shops. It has been suggested that the building originated in the later 16th or 17th century but has been almost completely rebuilt in the 19th century (WA 2017). At the time of listing the property retained some historic internal plasterwork, probably dating from the 18th century. It also mentioned 16th-century roof trusses with crucked feet which are rare examples of regional vernacular architecture (Montagu Evans 2015, 18-19).

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Aims

3.1.1 With due regard to the ClfA *Standard and guidance: archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014b), the principle aim of an archaeological watching brief is to record the archaeological resource during development within a specified area using appropriate methods and practices, and in compliance with the *Code of conduct* and other relevant by-laws of ClfA.

3.2 Objectives

3.2.1 In furtherance of the project aim, the following objectives were defined:

- *To allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works; including*
 - *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;*
 - *To provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard; and*
 - *To prepare a report on the results of the watching brief*



4 METHODS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the detailed methodology set out within the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2016) and in general compliance with the standards outlined in ClfA guidance (ClfA 2014a). The methods employed are summarised below.

4.2 Fieldwork methods

Recording

4.2.1 All exposed deposits and features were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's pro forma recording system. A complete drawn record of excavated features and deposits was made including both plans and sections drawn to appropriate scales and tied to the Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid.

4.2.2 Disrupted GNSS signal in the area did not allow for a GNSS georeferenced survey to be undertaken. Excavated areas were instead drawn by hand, using fixed point to tie drawings into existing engineering plans for the area (**Figure 1**)

4.2.3 A full photographic record was made using a digital camera equipped with an image sensor of not less than 10 megapixels. Digital images have been subject to managed quality control and curation processes, which has embedded appropriate metadata within the image and will ensure long term accessibility of the image set.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

5.1.1 Trench 1 (**Plate 1**) was located in the north-western corner of the Site, against the historic gable of 38 High Street. The reinforced concrete floor (101) of the shopping centre, extending from 0.00–0.59 m below ground level (bgl) overlay a layer of coarse gravel bedding-layer (102), extending to 0.59–0.64 m bgl. Layer 102 directly overlay a concrete underpinning layer (103) supporting the abutting historic gable wall.

5.1.2 Trench 2 (**Plate 2**) was located to the south-east of Trench 1. A modern inspection pit at the north-east corner of Trench 2 was left *in situ*. Similarly to Trench 1, the reinforced concrete floor (201) of the shopping centre, extended from 0.00–0.21 m (bgl). The concrete floor overlay a layer of coarse, pink, gravel bedding (202), extending from 0.21–0.40 m bgl. Which in turn directly overly a sterile, dark yellow, natural clay (203).

5.1.3 No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were present in either of the excavated footing trenches. No material requiring environmental analysis was present in either of the excavated footing trenches.

6 CONCLUSION

6.1.1 Construction of the original south-west entrance to the Green Lane shopping centre appears to have involved unexpectedly substantial reinforced concrete foundations and superstructure, this is borne out by the difficulties encountered by both the demolition and groundwork contractors. In the area of intrusive groundworks for the redevelopment, it was apparent that the depth of the floor slab and extent of the foundations and services had removed all evidence for previous structures or features. The majority of the existing floor slab is to be retained within the redevelopment.



7 ARCHIVE STORAGE AND CURATION

7.1 Museum

7.1.1 The archive resulting from the watching brief is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Bristol. The Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon (MBND) has agreed in principle to accept the archive on completion of the project, under an accession code to be confirmed.

7.2 Preparation of the archive

7.2.1 The archive, which includes paper records, graphics and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of archaeological material by MBND, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014c; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).

7.2.2 All archive elements are marked with the site code 115260, and the accession code to be assigned by MBND, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive currently comprises the following:

- 01 files/document cases of paper records and A3/A4 graphics;

7.3 Selection policy

7.3.1 Wessex Archaeology follows national guidelines on selection and retention (SMA 1993; Brown 2011, section 4). In accordance with these, and any specific guidance prepared by the museum, a process of selection and retention will be followed so that only material considered to have potential for future study will be retained. The selection policy will be agreed with the museum and is fully documented in the project archive.

7.4 Security copy

7.4.1 In line with current best practice (eg, 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.

7.5 OASIS

7.5.1 An OASIS online record (<http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main>) has been initiated, with key fields and a .pdf version of the final report submitted. Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, copies of the OASIS record will be integrated into the relevant local and national records and published through the Archaeology Data Service ArchSearch catalogue.

8 COPYRIGHT

8.1 Archive and report copyright

8.1.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative/digital archive relating to the project will be retained by Wessex Archaeology under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved. The client will be licenced to use each report for the purposes that it was produced in relation to the project as described in the specification. 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 conforms to the *Copyright and*



Related Rights Regulations 2003. In some instances, certain regional museums may require absolute transfer of copyright, rather than a licence; this should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

- 8.1.2 This report will be submitted to the local Historic Environment Record (HER) where it can be freely copied without reference to Wessex Archaeology, for the purposes of archaeological research or development control within the planning process.

8.2 Third party data copyright

- 8.2.1 This document and the project archive may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (eg, Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which Wessex Archaeology are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferable by Wessex Archaeology. Users remain bound by the conditions of the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act* 1988 with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of such material.

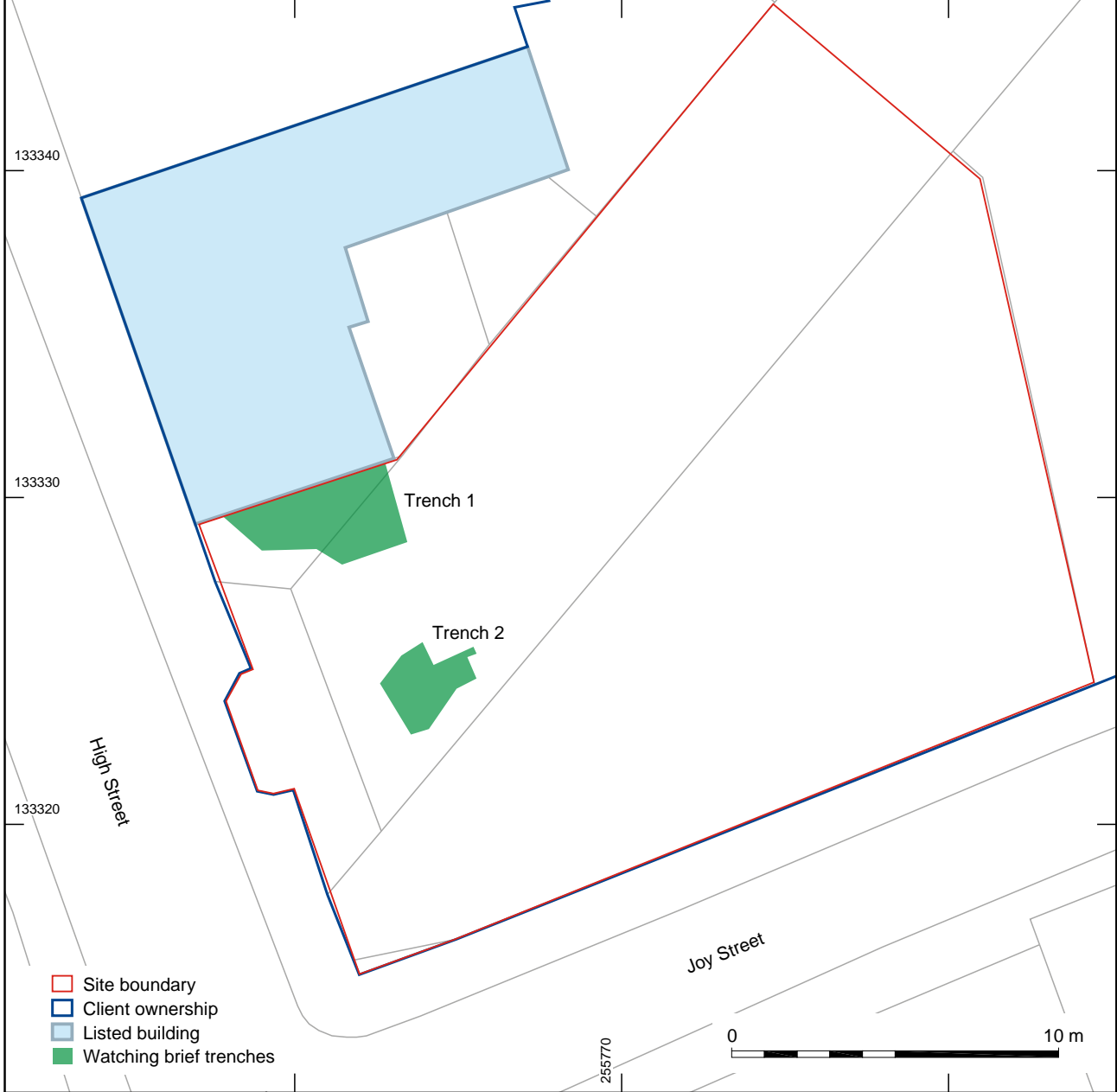


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- Site boundary
- Client ownership
- Listed building
- Watching brief trenches



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Site location and trench plan


Figure 1



Plate 1: Trench 1, looking west, 1 x 1 m scale



Plate 2: North-facing section of Trench 2, looking south, 1 x 1 m scale

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