

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Starcross CP, Teignbridge	National Grid Reference SX 9777 8140 – SX 9762 8090	Number: (Leave blank for HES to fill in)
Subject: Watching Brief during construction of the Exe Estuary Cycleway/ Trail from Cockwood Harbour to Starcross.		Photo attached? N
Planning Application no: ARCH/CM/TE 13560	Recipient museum: RAMM	
OASIS ID: 54648	Museum Accession no: 196/2008	
Contractor's reference number/code: EA 6400	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 29/05/08 to 11/08/08	
<p>Description of works.</p> <p>Groundworks associated with the construction of a new section of cycleway between Cockwood Harbour and Starcross were monitored (Fig. 1). Topsoil was removed from the new route across fields to the north of the harbour. An existing drainage ditch was widened and dredged, the major part of which extended along the eastern edge of Cockhaven Golfcourse.</p> <p>Excavations in fields to the north of the harbour revealed that beneath the topsoil lay made-ground, comprised of varied deposits, including some with building debris. These deposits were of similar age, yielding four clay pipe stem fragments of late 17th-/early 18th-century date, together with sherds of 18th and 19th century pottery. A residual sherd of medieval chert-tempered coarseware pottery was also found. Finds from the topsoil include modern glass, pottery and building material fragments, a copper alloy Newark token one penny, dated 1811, and 11 worked flints, including a pointed tool and possible arrowhead.</p> <p>The existing drainage ditch was c. 1.2m deep and 335m long, and partitioned into three sections by a 25 metre length of piping to the south and a boundary wall further north. The dredging operation exposed layers of alluvium (brown/grey/blue-grey), brown sands and/or fine gravels in the sides. Sandwiched between the upper horizon of these geological levels and the silty topsoil were shallow layers of made ground, comprising pinkish-brown sands and gravels, sometimes admixed with brown silts. These deposits occasionally yielded fragments of red brick and sherds of glazed white-slipware pottery. A number of ceramic field drain pipes were exposed.</p> <p>A ditch (008) was exposed c. 18m from the southern end of the existing drainage ditch, orientated E-W. This was 1.2m wide and 0.5m deep (Fig. 2), had been dug into alluvium (012), and was sealed beneath the made-ground (002) and topsoil (001). Two wooden planks (009) had been set on edge on the flat base to form a central channel, and the voids between the outsides of the planks and the ditch walls had been partially backfilled with grey alluvium (011). The central space between the planks had been infilled with sands and gravels (010), to allow easy passage of water, then capped by a third plank (009) before the remainder of the ditch was filled with deposit 010. The wood used to produce the planks has not been identified, but appears not to be oak.</p> <p>A date for this feature is not known. It is situated to the south of the Slaplake Brook outfall, a stream that had been controlled on its approach to the Exe estuary by the early 1800s, and canalised to a single channel in the 20th century. No surface indication of the ditch or associated features is present on early maps or aerial photographs. The east-west alignment would best serve attempts to drain the area, presumably discharging into the estuary.</p>		
Recorder: Roy Krakowicz	Date sent to HER: 10.2.09	

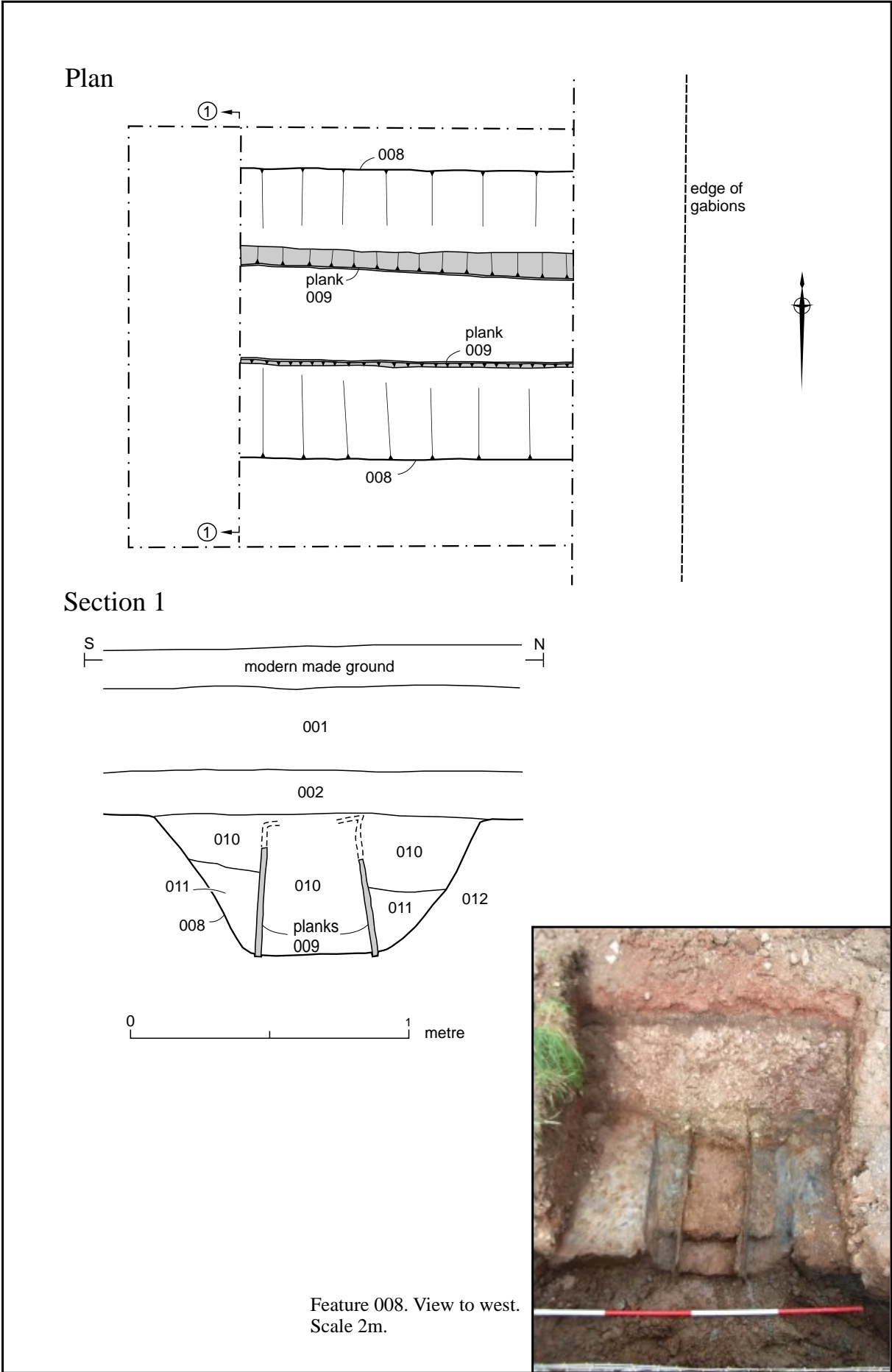


Fig. 2 Plan, section and photograph of feature 008.