

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING
AT THE TANYARD,
WOODBURY, DEVON**

**Prepared on behalf of
Summerfield Homes**

by
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Exeter Archaeology

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of three new houses on land at The Tanyard, Woodbury, Devon (NGR SY 0074 8687) was carried out by Exeter Archaeology from October 2007 until January 2008.

The historic research has established that a number of buildings existed within the boundaries of the site from at least 1829, with these shown as an indistinct mass of industrial buildings by 1888. Most of these buildings had been removed by the late 20th century.

The monitoring of the access road uncovered evidence for part of one of the buildings depicted on 19th-century maps, with identified remains including walls and a cobbled surface. In the area of Units 2 and 3 thirteen wood-lined vats associated with the tannery were found. The monitoring further revealed that across large parts of the site landscaping associated with the construction of the tannery has taken place. This has completely removed any underlying archaeological features or deposits on the higher ground to the south, while along the street frontage lower alluvial deposits survived underneath post-medieval deposits. No archaeological features prior to the early 19th century were found

Despite its previous land-use, the watching brief has established that the site contains generally poor survival of post-medieval archaeological features. No finds were recovered pre-dating the post-medieval period. The documentary evidence and the character of the features indicated that they represent evidence for tanning activity dating to the 19th and 20th century.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report sets out the results of an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of three new houses on land at The Tanyard, Woodbury, Devon (NGR SY 0074 8687), which was carried out by Exeter Archaeology (EA) from October 2007 until January 2008. The work was required by the local planning authority (East Devon District Council) under a condition attached to the grant of planning permission (No. 03/P2278).

1.1 The site

The site (Fig. 1) lies c. 350m to the south-west of Woodbury Church. It covers an area of approximately 0.6 hectares, on level land adjacent to a small brook. The area is bounded on the northwest by the B3281 and on the north-east by Gilbrook House. The site lies at a height of c.38m AOD and the underlying natural subsoil comprises alluvial clays and gravels (BGS 1995).

1.2 Archaeological background

The earliest large-scale map to depict the property dates from the tithe survey of c. 1841. The property was then referred to as Gillbrook, a holding of some 8.5 acres, owned by the Vicars Choral of Exeter Cathedral, and leased and occupied by William Saunders. Although there was no mention of a tannery, according to the parish history, he had taken it on in 1829 after the bankruptcy of William Hole and formed a partnership with William Walter Ware, whose family were to retain the property over many generations (Brighouse 1981).

The diocesan copy of the tithe map shows the site to have contained an L-shaped building with a smaller structure between it and the barn that formed part of the northern boundary of the site. Gilbrook House, some 20m to the northeast of the site, appears to have originated as a single storey cob building during the 18th century. This was revealed during re-facing (Brighouse 1981).

Map evidence clearly indicates that the L-shaped building was expanded to a rectangular footprint with a whole complex of buildings alongside by 1888. These remained in place until at least the 1950's. To the northeast of the site, Gilbrook House and the house adjoining to the south-west were listed at Grade II in 1952.

2. METHODOLOGY

The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a method statement prepared by EA (2007), submitted to and approved by the Devon County Historic Environment and Archaeology Officer prior to commencement on site. This document is included as Appendix 1.

The work comprised the machine excavation of foundations for three new houses and drainage work associated with the construction of a new access road. The location of archaeological observations is shown on Fig. 2.

Machining was undertaken under archaeological supervision using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket.

All features and deposits were recorded using the standard EA recording system, comprising context record sheets and individual trench recording forms. Sections and plans for each trench were drawn at 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50. A detailed black and white print and colour digital photographic record was made. Registers were maintained for photographs, drawings and context sheets on *pro forma* sheets. Finds and samples were labelled and bagged on site and taken to the EA offices for processing and cataloguing.

3. RESULTS

Relevant detailed plans are included as Fig 2. Observations made during the watching brief revealed no evidence of archaeological activity pre-dating the late post-medieval period. Instead the sequence consisted of surviving fragments associated with the 19th century Tanyard, along with evidence of two former river channels.

3.1 The Watching Brief

The results of the watching brief were largely negative. Observations made during the machining of the foundations for Units 2 and 3 showed that landscaping associated with the tannery buildings had completely removed any evidence for earlier archaeological activity. The foundations were cut straight through the top of the underlying alluvial gravels. Part of the overlying soil sequence survived in the section uncovered for the retaining wall at the southeast end of the development area. This showed a mixed layer of alluvium and colluvium approx. 0.8m thick directly overlying alluvial gravels. A rubble deposit, roughly 0.5m thick, which related to the demolition of the tannery in the late 20th century, overlay these earlier deposits.

Across the rest of the site only a few remains of the tannery complex were uncovered. Archaeological monitoring of the drainage work associated with the construction of a new access road revealed a small section of roughly NE-SW aligned wall footings (130) probably associated with the 19th century tannery as shown on the OS map of 1888. An associated cobbled floor (132) was located to the southwest. Two further walls (180 and 181), at right angles to the main one, were also identified. A later, probably 20th century tanning vat (117), built with a brick wall and a concrete floor, was located to the south of this wall.

In the area to the southwest of Units 2 and 3 thirteen wood-lined vats (136-169) were found. These were aligned E-W in three parallel rows and cut into the underlying alluvial clays and gravels. Each vat was approximately 2.5m square with wooden plank lining and had survived to a depth of c. 0.3m. These are likely to have been associated with one of the later phases of the tannery.

Monitoring along the front of the site and in the area between Unit 1 and 2 uncovered evidence of two former river channels (109 and 179). These were sealed below a layer of 19th century made ground (175), which was in turn overlain by a later cobbled surface (176) probably associated with the tannery.

4. CONCLUSION

The development site lies next to Gilbrook House, a Grade II listed building dating back to at least the late 18th century. No evidence for activity of this date on the site was found during the work, although structural remains of a former building associated with the later 19th century tannery complex were identified during the housing development. This included walls, a cobbled surface and the remains of tanning vats. The walls appear to represent the north wing of a building as depicted on maps of 1888 and 1905, although structures are shown on the site as early as 1839. Further remains of buildings shown on the maps of 1888 and 1905 were expected to be found during the watching brief, although the demolition of the complex during the 20th century may have removed any trace of this. It is also possible, however, that the buildings may have had only superficial foundations.

The finds recovered from the site suggest a 19th-century date for the construction of the building, while the finds from the overburden indicate a 20th-century date for its demolition. This is also supported by the map evidence.

SITE ARCHIVE

The site records have been compiled into a fully integrated site archive which is currently held at Exeter Archaeology's offices under project number 6654, pending deposition at Royal Albert Memorial Museum (66/2008). Details of the monitoring, including a pdf copy of this report have been submitted to the on-line archaeological database OASIS (exeterar1-58711).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project was commissioned by Summerfield Homes. We would like to thank John Harvey (Summerfield Homes). We are also grateful to Faye Glover (Devon County Historic Environment Service) for their assistance with the smooth running of the project. The fieldwork was directed by Richard Sims and Marc Steinmetzer. The illustrations for this report were prepared by Neil Goodwin.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brighouse, U.W. 1981 *Woodbury: A view from the Beacon*.

Appendix 1

METHOD STATEMENT FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
WATCHING BRIEF AT THE TANYARD, WOODBURY, DEVON

*Prepared by Exeter Archaeology
for
Summerfield Homes*

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document has been produced by Exeter Archaeology (EA) for Summerfield Homes, to describe the methods for an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with construction of three new houses on land at The Tanyard, Woodbury, Devon (NGR SY 0074 8687). It represents the Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological work required under a condition attached to the grant of planning permission (No. 03/P2278, East Devon District Council). This document describes the archaeological fieldwork and reporting work required by the Devon County Historic Environment Service (DCHES).

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The earliest large-scale map to depict the property dates from the tithe survey of around 1841. The property was then referred to as Gillbrook, a holding of some 8.5 acres, owned by the Vicars Choral of Exeter Cathedral, and leased and occupied by William Saunders. Although there was no mention of a tannery, according to the parish history, he had taken it on in 1829 after the bankruptcy of William Hole and formed a partnership with William Walter Ware, whose family were to retain the property over many generations.
- 2.2 The diocesan copy of the tithe map shows the site to have contained an L-shaped building with a smaller structure between it and a barn that formed part of the northern boundary of the site. Gilbrook House, some 20m to the north-east of the site, appears to have originated as the single-storey cob building which was revealed during re-facing.
- 2.3 Map evidence indicates that the L-shaped building was expanded to a rectangular footprint with a whole complex of buildings alongside, present by 1888, and these remained in place until at least the 1950s. To the north-east of the site, Gilbrook House and the house adjoining to the south-west were listed at Grade II in 1952.
- 2.4 Plots 2 and 3 of the development will both partially overlies the site of the tannery building present by around 1841, while The Barn appears to represent a significant enlargement of the structure also shown on the tithe map.

3. AIMS

- 3.1 The principal objective of the watching brief will be to preserve by record any surviving below-ground archaeological artefacts or deposits within the area affected by the proposed development.

4. METHOD

- 4.1 EA will also liaise closely with the main contractor on site to ensure that an appropriate site presence is maintained during the relevant excavations.

- 4.2 All relevant remaining groundworks associated with the development will be undertaken with the site archaeologist in attendance. Any archaeological deposits identified will be recorded as per EA standard recording procedures (see below) and in accordance with the standards of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

- 4.3 All machining will be carried out using a 360° tracked excavator (or equivalent wheeled mechanical excavator) equipped with a toothless grading bucket. Machining will cease if intact archaeological deposits are exposed. If no such deposits are present then, once natural subsoil has been confirmed, or the formation level reached, across the whole of the development area, archaeological monitoring will be terminated. Similarly, if it can be demonstrated that there has been significant modern truncation, then archaeological monitoring will be terminated in these areas.

- 4.4 Any exposed features or deposits present will be cleaned and investigated by EA staff to determine their extent and character. If necessary this will include hand-excavation of the deposits down to the formation level required for the development. If archaeological features are present, then hand-excavation will normally comprise:

- The full excavation of small discrete features;
- half-sectioning (50% excavation) of larger discrete features; and,
- long linear features will be excavated to sample 10-20% of their length - with hand-investigations distributed along the exposed length of any such features, specifically targeting any intersections, terminals or overlaps.

General project methods

- 4.5 The project will be organised so that specialist consultants who might be required to conserve artefacts or report on other aspects of the investigations can be called upon (see below).

- 4.6 Health and Safety requirements will be observed at all times by any archaeological staff working on site, particularly when machinery is operating nearby. As a minimum, reflective jackets, safety helmets and protective footwear will be worn.

- 4.7 As appropriate, the Exeter Archaeology Scientific Officer will assess deposits on site to determine the possible yield (if any) of environmental or

microfaunal evidence, and its potential for radiocarbon dating. If deposits of potential survive, then these would be sampled using the EH Guidelines for Environmental Archaeology (EH CfA Guidelines no. 2002/1).

- 4.8 Initial cleaning, conservation, packaging and any stabilisation or longer term conservation measures will be undertaken in accordance with relevant professional guidance (including *Conservation guidelines No 1* (UKIC, 2001) and *First Aid for Finds* (UKIC & RESCUE, 1997).
- 4.9 Any human burial remains or cremations will initially be left *in situ*. If their removal is unavoidable, then these will then be fully excavated and taken from the site subject to compliance with the relevant Ministry of Justice regulations. Any remains will be excavated in accordance with *Institute of Field Archaeologist Technical Paper No. 13* (McKinley and Roberts 1993). Where appropriate bulk samples will be collected.
- 4.10 Should gold or silver artefacts be exposed, these will be removed to a safe place and reported to the local coroner according to the procedures relating to the Treasure Act 1996. Where removal cannot be effected on the same working day as the discovery suitable security measures will be taken to protect the finds from theft.
- 4.11 The project will be monitored by DCHES, who will be given reasonable notice of commencement of the fieldwork and will be informed of the progress of the work and may wish to inspect the excavations.

5. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING

- 5.1 Standard Exeter Archaeology recording and sampling procedures will be employed, consisting of:
 - Standardised single context record sheets; survey drawings, plans and sections at scales of 1:10 and 1:20 as appropriate;
 - black and white print and colour digital photography;
 - survey and location of finds, deposits or archaeological features, using EDM surveying equipment and software where appropriate; and,
 - labelling and bagging of finds on site from all excavated levels.

6. REPORTING AND ARCHIVING

- 6.1 The reporting requirements will be confirmed with the DCHES on completion of the site work. In the event that little or no archaeological remains are exposed, only minimal reporting would be required, in the form of a short entry to the Devon County Historic Environment Record (HER), sent to the DCHES. If archaeological deposits or remains are exposed during the course of the watching brief, then more detailed reporting would be required, in the form of an illustrated summary report and, if merited, wider publication.
- 6.2 Should a summary report be required it will contain the following elements as appropriate:

- a location plan;
 - a written description of the exposed remains and a discussion and interpretation of their character and significance in the context of any locally available historical evidence;
 - plans and sections at appropriate scales showing the exact location of exposed archaeological deposits; and,
 - specialist reports as appropriate.
- 6.3 Copies of the report will be produced for distribution to the Client and the local planning authority, and will also be deposited with the site archive. Hard copies and a digital copy of the report will be supplied to the DCHES. The condition placed upon this development will not be regarded as discharged until the report has been produced and submitted to the LPA.
- 6.4 A fully integrated site archive will be prepared with reference to *The Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 1991 2nd edition) upon completion of the project. This will be incorporated with the archive generated by any subsequent mitigation work and deposited with RAM Museum, Exeter in consultation with the Curator of Antiquities, in accordance with a timescale agreed with the Curator and with DCHES. A museum accession number for the work will be obtained prior to commencement on site (66/2008). The guidelines in the *Procedures for the Deposit of Archaeological Archives from Developer Funded Fieldwork to Exeter City Museum* (2005) will be followed.
- 6.5 Details of the project will be submitted to the OASIS (Online Access to the Index of Archaeological investigationS) database.
- 6.6 Should particularly significant remains, finds and/or deposits be encountered, then these, because of their importance, are likely to merit wider publication in line with government planning guidance. If such remains are encountered, the publication requirements – including any further analysis that may be necessary – will be confirmed with the DCHES, in consultation with the client. On behalf of the client, Exeter Archaeology will then implement publication in accordance with a timescale agreed with the above parties.

7. PROJECT ORGANISATION

- 7.1 The project will be undertaken by a suitably experienced and qualified EA archaeologist. It will be co-ordinated by John Valentin BSc MIFA, EA Project Manager.

Health & Safety

- 7.2 Exeter Archaeology operations are subject to Health and Safety policies prepared by Exeter City Council which include all aspects of work covered by the *Health and Safety at Work Act* (1974). All monitoring works within this scheme will be carried out in accordance with current *Safe Working Practices*.

8. SPECIALIST CONTRIBUTORS AND ADVISORS

The expertise of the following specialists can be called upon if required:

Dating techniques Scottish Universities Research and Reactor Centre; Alex Bayliss (EH);

Environmental data: Vanessa Straker (English Heritage) University of Bristol;

Faunal remains: L. Higbee (Taunton);

Finds conservation: Alison Hopper-Bishop (Exeter Museums);

Human remains: Louise Loe (Oxford Archaeology);

Medieval and post-medieval finds: John Allan (Exeter Archaeology) and sub-consultants;

Metallurgy: Ancient Monuments Laboratory (English Heritage), Gill Juleff (Exeter University);

Molluscan analysis: Marine-Janice Light (Godalming); Terrestrial- Dr. M. Allen (AEA, Wiltshire);

Numismatics: Norman Shiel (Exeter);

Petrology/geology: Dr R. Scrivener (British Geological Survey);

Plant remains: Julie Jones (Bristol);

Pollen: Dr R. Scaife (University of Southampton);

Prehistoric pottery: Henrietta Quinnell (Exeter);

Radiocarbon dating: University of Waikato, New Zealand: Scottish Universities Research and Reactor Centre, East Kilbride

Roman finds: Paul Bidwell & associates (Arbeia Roman Fort, South Shields);

Soil Science: Dr. M. Allen (AEA, Wiltshire).

9. SOURCES CONSULTED

Unpublished sources

Devon Record Office

Woodbury Tithe Apportionment (1839) and Tithe Map (c. 1841)

Published sources

Brighouse, U.W. 1981 *Woodbury: A View from the Beacon*.

English Heritage: Listed Buildings On-line website.

Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map sheets XCIII.5 & 6, 1889 & 1890.

Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map sheet SY 0086, 1955.

Appendix 2

APPENDIX 2:
FINDS QUANTIFICATION

Feature	Phase	Context	Context date	Post-medieval pottery		Animal bone		CBM	
				Qty	Weight	Qty	Weight	Qty	Weight
		103	19C					8	504
		112	Modern			23	1992		
		128	19C	1	152	1	348	1	154
Totals				1	152	24	2340	9	658



Fig. 1 Location of site. Scale 1:10000 @ A4.

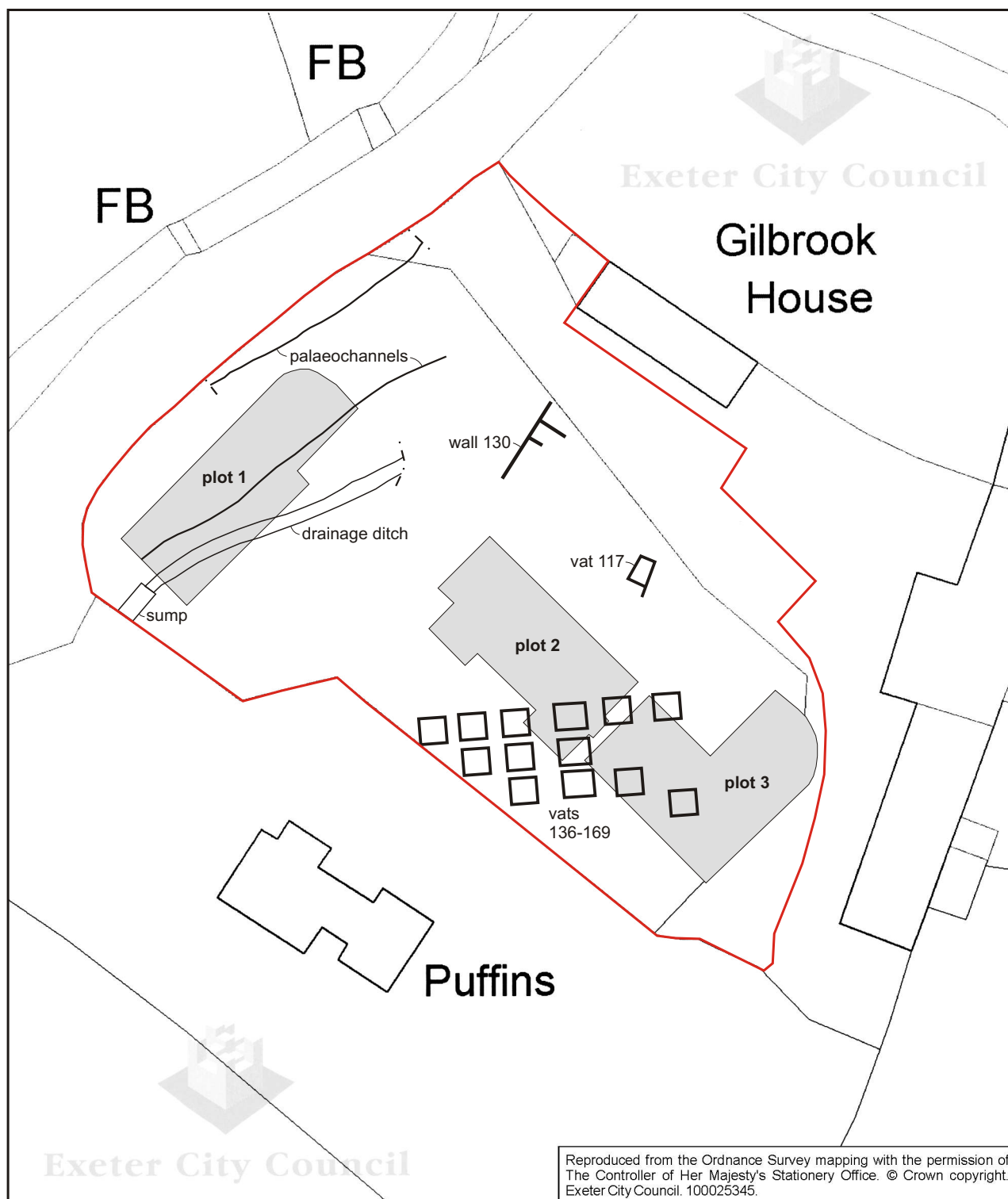


Fig. 2 Site plan showing location of features. Scale 1:500.



Plate 1 Working Shot excavating foundations within Plot 1, looking east.



Plate 2 View of Brick tannery pit (119), looking east. Scale 1m.



Plate 3 View of Wall (130) and cobbled surface (132), looking north-west. Scale 1m.



Plate 4 General view of Tanning Vats (142)-(160), looking north-east.