

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Tavistock, West Devon	National Grid Reference SX 4745 7402	Number: (Leave blank for HES to fill in)
Subject: Land to the rear of 11 Ford Street, Tavistock		Photo attached? N
Planning Application no: 11496/2008/TAV	Recipient museum: Plymouth City Museum	
OASIS ID: exeterar1-75205	Museum Accession no: AR.2008.39	
Contractor's reference number/code: EA6619	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 10 November 2008 to 11 August 2009	
<p>Description of works (Figs 1 and 2)</p> <p>An appraisal of the historic structures on the site was undertaken prior to works commencing along with a watching brief during construction. The site lies to the rear of 11 Ford Street and was formerly occupied by the Tavistock Gasworks (1831-1905). Mine workings associated with Wheal Pixon may be present under the south-east corner of the site. Previous investigations on the site include a geotechnical desk-based study (Frederick Sherrell Ltd 2007 <i>Proposed Redevelopment at 11 Ford Street, Tavistock, Devon Phase 1 Desk Study Report</i>, a copy of which is included with the archive), a geophysical survey and a geotechnical investigation comprising the excavation of test trenches and the drilling of boreholes.</p> <p>Historic Structures</p> <p>The north-west boundary wall of the site was constructed of uncoursed, large local slate blocks bonded in a hard granitic lime mortar. There was occasional use of granite, particularly as quoins, along with a single industrial brick with its outer surfaces covered with slag. The wall was constructed onto the natural clay. The wall formerly turned to the south-east forming the boundary with Maudlins Lane, but the wall above the road level had been demolished prior to fieldwork commencing. The wall first appears of a plan of the gasworks of 1867, and probably dates to this period when the gasworks was enlarged (cf Frederick Sherrell 2007, figs 5 and 6. The wall incorporated a single feature – doorway from the plot to the north-west. The doorway was blocked with unbonded stone rubble and yellow industrial bricks, the latter possibly indicating the blocking dates to after the closure (and demolition) of the gasworks. The position of the doorway corresponds with a pathway depicted on the 1883 1:500 Ordnance Survey map.</p> <p>The north-west and north-east walls of the former garage were the remains of an 1867 retort house associated with the gasworks (see Frederick Sherrell 2007, figs 6 and 7). The walls were constructed of roughly coursed local slate with occasional red and yellow industrial bricks, bonded with hard pale brown-white gritty lime mortar whilst the upper courses were bonded in hard white gravelly lime mortar. The top of the wall had been rebuilt with flat slates and a course of concrete block bonded with a hard granitic cement that also formed a render on the north-west wall's inside face. The walls were 0.50m thick and laid directly onto the back on a construction terrace set into the natural subsoil.</p> <p>The south wall of the site post-dates the demolition of the gasworks and is probably associated with the subdivision of the former gasworks into smaller properties.</p> <p>Watching Brief</p> <p>Topsoil stripping was monitored within the footprints of units 3 and 4. The stepped nature of the development involved deep excavations only in the upper halves of these plots. The topsoil – a friable dark grey-brown to black clayey silt with abundant slate rubble and occasional brick, metal and white lime mortar fragments – measured 0.50m deep and overlaid natural stiff yellow clay. A single sherd of granite-derived coarseware (c. 1200-1450) was recovered from the topsoil. To the south-east of the doorway in the north-west boundary wall a short stretch of a demolished stone wall was exposed. The masonry was integral to the boundary wall and formed the footing of a boundary wall within a former small plot on the site. To the east of the wall a cobbled surface was exposed, set on a thin bed of coal fragments. The cobbles represented the surface inside a former building located at the north-west corner of the site. No evidence was exposed for surfaces or for the storage of coal behind the retorts.</p> <p>No monitoring took place within units 1 and 2. Inspection of the logs from the geotechnical investigation (Frederick Sherrell Ltd 2008 <i>Proposed Redevelopment at 11 Ford Street, Tavistock, Devon Phase 2 Site Investigation Report</i>, trial pits 5 and 6) show that within this area there is between 0.50m (north-west end) and 1.60m (south-east end) of post-gasworks (and actually probably later 20th-century) deposits into which the ground beams of units 1 and 2 and services have been laid.</p>		
Recorder: Andrew Passmore, Exeter Archaeology	Date sent to HER: 22 April 2010	

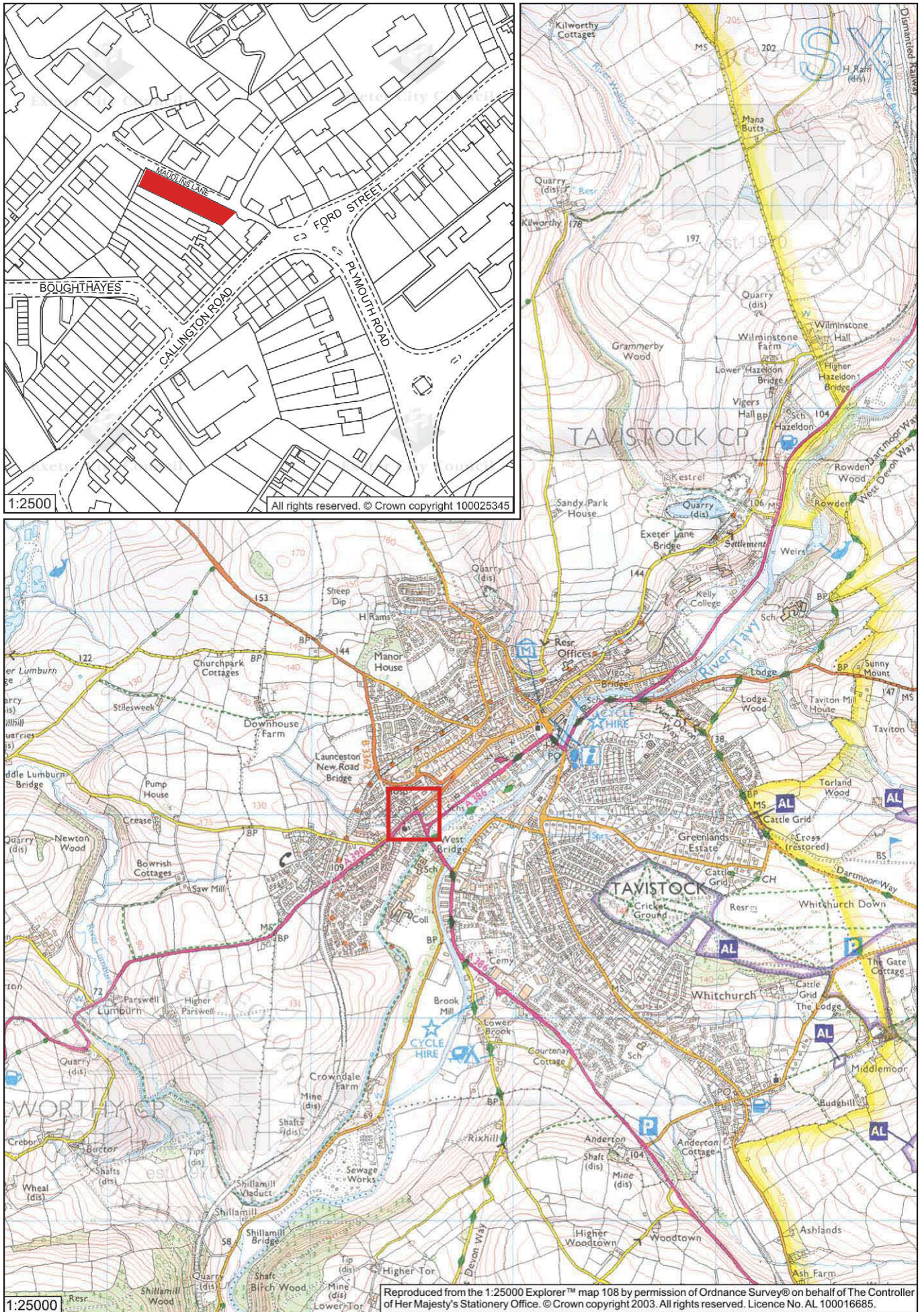


Fig. 1 Location of site.

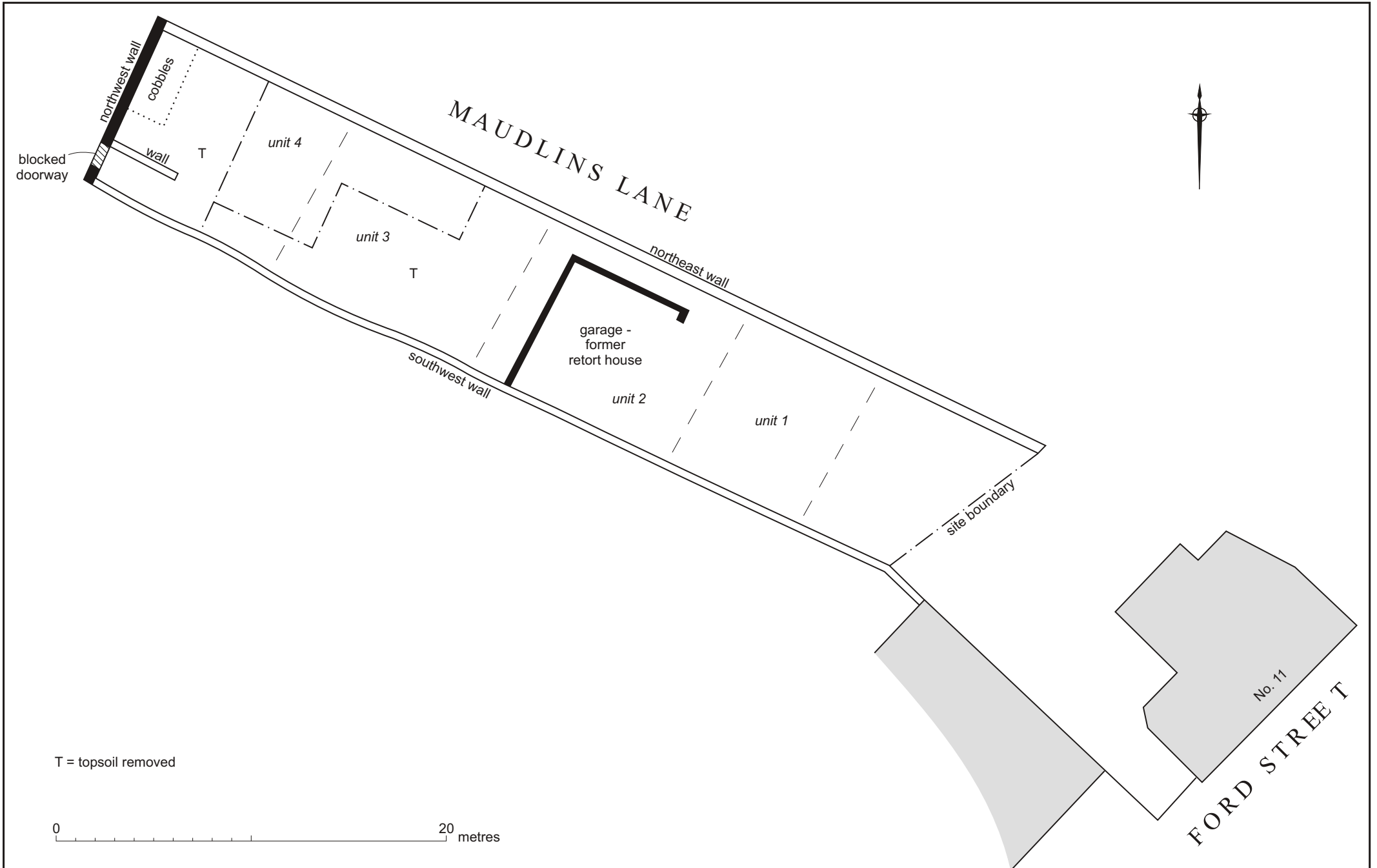


Fig. 2 Ground plan to rear of No. 11 Ford Street, Tavistock.