

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Dunkeswell, East Devon	National Grid Reference: ST 1421 1107	Number:
Subject: Archaeological monitoring and recording at Abbey View Cottage, Dunkeswell Abbey, Devon.		Photo attached: N
Scheduled Monument Consent: SM 24841 Ref. HSD 9/2/14174	Recipient museum: Royal Albert Memorial Museum	
OASIS ID: exeterar1-75388	Museum Accession no: 129/2010	
Contractor's reference number/code: EA6936	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 06/04/10 and 08/04/10	
<p>Description of works: (Fig. 1) The groundworks are sited within the precinct of the former Dunkeswell Abbey a Cistercian foundation of 1201 which was dissolved in 1539. The site has statutory protection as a Scheduled Monument (SM 24841) and Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) was therefore required by The Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), acting upon the advice of English Heritage. The SMC for the enabling works involved in the insertion of a new septic tank was necessary as it was considered possible that archaeological remains or deposits associated with the abbey might survive and such remains or deposits are protected by the scheduling. A method statement for the proposed watching brief was prepared by Exeter Archaeology in March 2010 SMC having been granted on condition that archaeological monitoring and recording took place during the course of works.</p> <p>Results: (Fig. 2) A watching brief was maintained during the excavation of the new septic tank (see attached plan). The tank dimensions were 2.1m square by 1.8m deep. Excavation of this area revealed a layer of modern topsoil (101) 400mm thick overlying a clay soil deposit with stone and mortar fragments, 500mm in depth. This in turn overlay a further 500mm of clay soil deposit which contained considerable quantities of slate fragments (probably roofing slate). These deposits overlay natural clays. Excavations for the outflow pipe, which was about 5m long, 300mm wide and 400mm deep, revealed a stone revetted wall of probable post-medieval date along the edge of the stream to the north of septic tank. Observations of the outflow pipe-trench revealed a friable mid-brown silty clay deposit containing frequent large limestone fragments.</p> <p>Deposit sequence: 0.00-400mm Friable mid - to dark-grey silty clay - Cultivated topsoil 400-900mm Mid-grey silty clay with limestone fragments (5-10%), mortar flecks (5%), and stone building fragments (2-3%) – Dissolution deposit 900mm-1.4m Light- to mid-grey silty clay with slate fragments (25-30%), and charcoal flecks – Dissolution deposit or medieval occupation deposit? 1.4-1.8m Light to mid-yellow/red silty clay – Alluvial deposit 1.8m+ Compact mid-red clay – Natural claysoil</p> <p>Conclusion: The heavily mixed layer (102), with a small amount of building rubble, recorded beneath the topsoil is considered likely to represent the deposit resulting from the stripping of the interior and dismantling of many of the Abbey's buildings following its dissolution in 1539. This sealed a mixed deposit (103) which included large quantities of charcoal and slate; this may also be a Dissolution deposit resulting from the stripping of the roof of one or more of the buildings. These deposits in turn were noted to overly a layer of alluvial natural subsoil. No dateable pottery or other artefacts were recovered.</p>		

Recorder:

MFR Steinmetzer (Exeter Archaeology)

Date sent to HER:

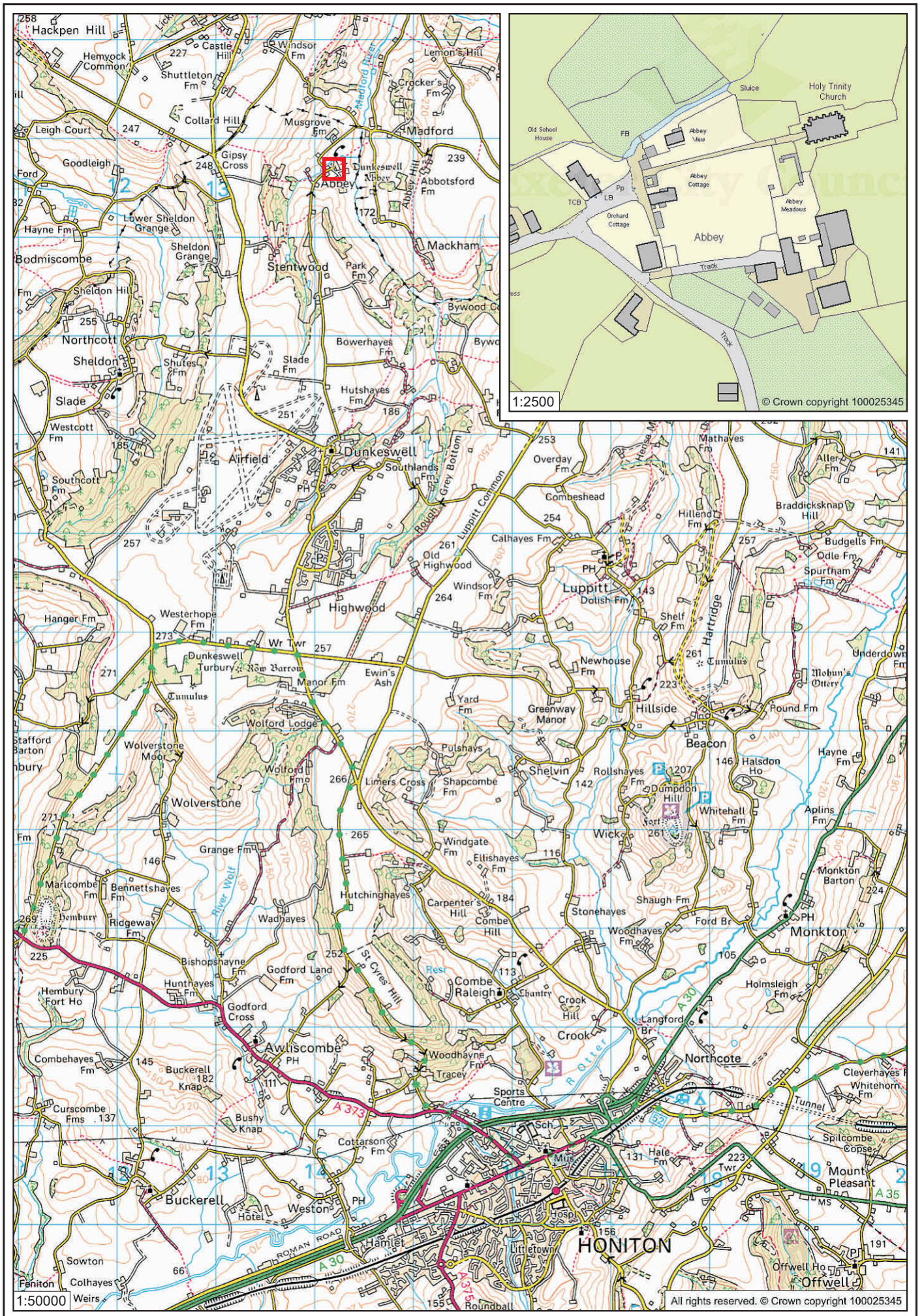


Fig. 1 Site location.

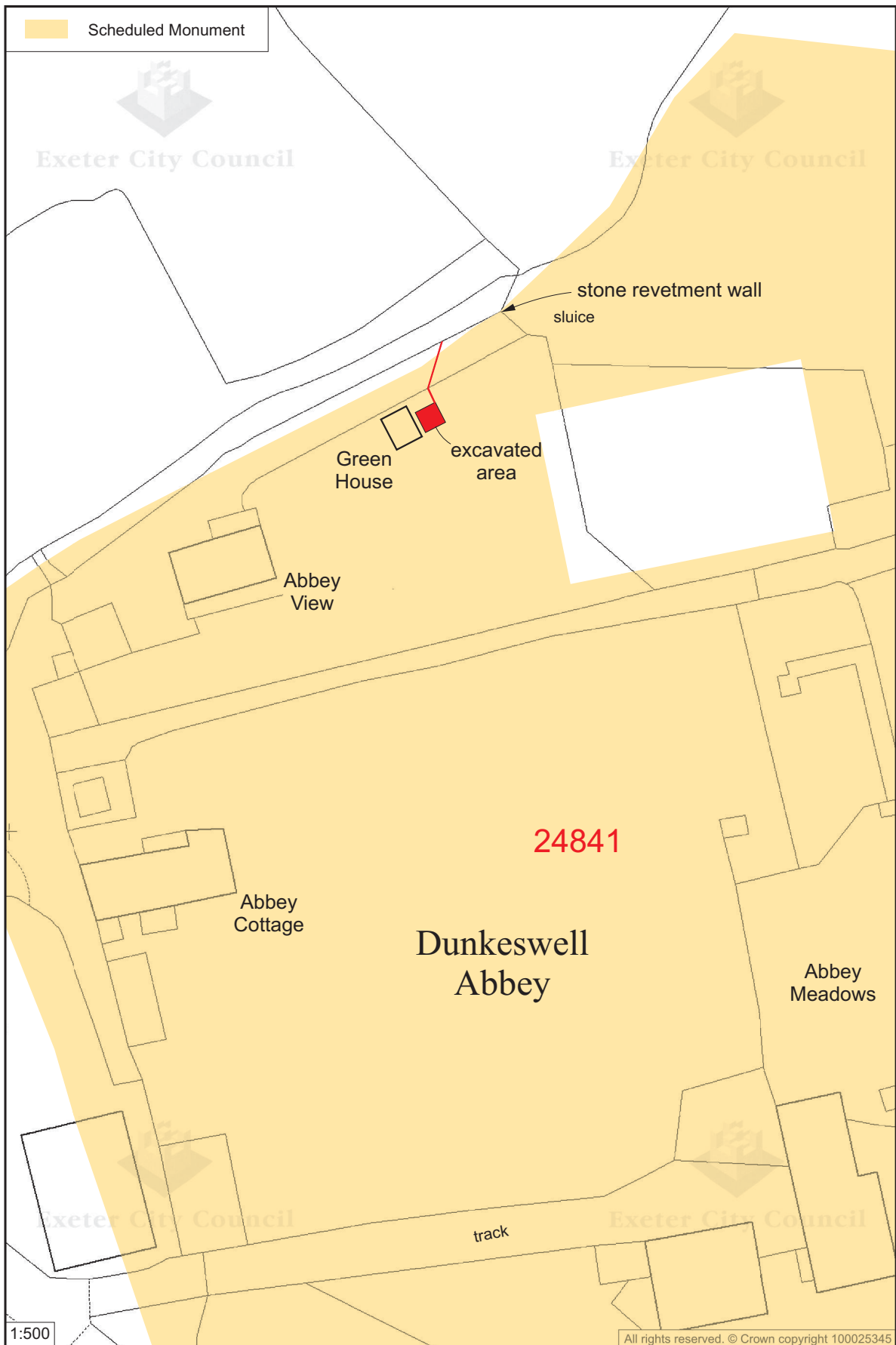


Fig. 2 Location of new septic tank and outlet.