

# Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

<b>Civil Parish &amp; District:</b> Combe Martin, North Devon	<b>National Grid Reference</b> 258873,146178	<b>Number:</b>
<b>Subject:</b> Demolition of redundant Roman Catholic Church, Castle Street, Combe Martin & erection of one dwelling & detached double garage		<b>Photo attached?</b> YES
<b>Planning Application no:</b> 52378	<b>Recipient museum:</b> Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon	
<b>OASIS ID:</b> southwes1.122779	<b>Museum Accession no:</b> NDMS2012.7	
<b>Contractor's reference number/code:</b> CMCS12	<b>Dates fieldwork undertaken:</b> 01/06/, 25/06/ & 27/06/2012	
<p><b>Description of works.</b> Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) at the request of Mr. M. Prowse (the Agent) on behalf of Mr. M. Stephens (the Client) during demolition and groundworks associated with the proposed redevelopment of the former Roman Catholic Church, Castle Street, Combe Martin (Figure 1). The work was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation drawn up by SWARCH in response to a Brief supplied by Stephen Reed of Devon County Historic Environment Service (DCHES). The work was undertaken by Dr. S. Walls.</p> <p>The development site lies within the historic core of Combe Martin, in an area where early post-medieval lead/silver smelting has previously been noted. Although the site had already been disturbed by the construction of the church, it was thought that buried archaeological deposits, features or artefacts associated with the metallurgical industries may have survived beneath the extant building. The 1843 tithe map and 1842 apportionment for Combe Martin indicates that the development site was an <i>Independent Chapel</i> with a small area of adjoining <i>waste</i> (see Figure 2).</p> <p>All of the buildings (built c.1960s) were removed from the site prior to archaeological monitoring; the removal of the concrete floors that covered most of the site was monitored during the first site visit (see Figure 4). The garden walls to the rear (southern part) of the plot were also recorded as they were to be demolished as part of the development. The excavation of the foundations for the garage and the eastern half of the house were monitored during subsequent visits. The trenches were opened by a 5 tonne mechanical excavator using a 1.6m wide grading bucket. Following these works, and in consultation with DCHES, it was felt that further monitoring was unnecessary as the site was sealed by clean mining debris.</p> <p>The development site can be divided into two areas: the garden to the south and the house foundation trenches.</p> <p><b>The Garden</b> The topsoil within the garden was a 0.35m thick dark-brown friable silty loam (101) (note that the topsoil was thicker – closer to 0.75m thick – in the adjoining properties). This overlay a thick (0.8+m) deposit of yellowish-grey grading to grey, fine soft sandy-silt (110), containing abundant loose shillet fragments (&gt;50mm). This deposit of shillet is seemingly too soft to be natural, and it contained extremely rare charcoal smears that suggest it was re-deposited, most likely waste from nearby mining activity.</p> <p>The rear wall to the plot was 2.2m high and 0.3-0.4m wide, constructed primarily of sub-angular stones, occasional sub-rounded to sub-angular fragments of quartz (typically 0.25×0.1m) and rare slate fragments. The wall was roughly coursed and bonded with a hard greyish-white lime mortar, with some cement repairs. A single orange-grey brick was noted towards the base of the wall, adjacent to a straight join immediately to the east, perhaps indicating an area of repair or rebuild. 1.5m from the western end of the wall was an infilled rectangular slot, suggesting the wall may have formed part of a structure that extended into the development site from the west; if so, there was neither further archaeological nor cartographic evidence for such a building.</p> <p>The southern garden wall was abutted by the western and eastern boundary walls. The western wall was c.1m high and of two phases, with the southern end rebuilt with cement bonding. The older element to the north was of the same construction as the southern wall, with the inclusion of occasional quartz pebbles. The eastern wall was 0.5m high and was constructed of narrower stones with no quartz pebbles, bonded with grey cement and partially rendered.</p> <p>Following the demolition of the garden walls, the foundations for the garage were excavated; these trenches fell</p>		

largely within the former garden (see Figure 1). Three archaeological features were identified, all of which extended from the adjoining properties. Features [102], [104] and [106] were noted in section and originally abutted the southern garden wall, or else had been truncated by it (see sections 1 and 2 of Figure 3). Feature [102] was observed in the west-facing side of the trench; it was sealed by the topsoil deposit (101) and was 0.3m wide and 0.6m deep with steep sloping sides and a flat base. [102] contained a single fill of dark brown clay-silt (103) with rare large sub-angular stones (>100mm) and mortar fragments; several possible tipping lines were visible within the fill. Feature [102] continued the line of the southern garden wall (although it was cut 0.4m deeper), which suggests that it was a robber trench for an earlier (pre-1843) boundary.

Pits [104] and [106] were noted only in the north-facing section of the garage footings, and were also overlain by topsoil (101). Pit [104] was 0.25m wide and 0.3m deep, with a steeply-sloping profile and a concave base; it was filled by a dark brown clay-silt (105) containing rare shillet fragments, roots and a single fragment of engineering brick (post 1850). Pit [106] was located 1m to the west of [104] and was 0.3m wide and 0.4m deep with a steep curving profile and concave base. Pit [106] was filled by (107), a grey-brown silt-clay with common fragments of shillet and rare lumps of dark grey clay.

### The house footings

The rest of the site had been covered by buildings, and was sealed by a layer of concrete 0.22m thick overlying a deposit of rubble 0.15m thick containing common slate fragments and salt-glazed sewer pipe fragments (109). These modern deposits again overlay the re-deposited natural (110).

The footings against the eastern boundary of the site (adjoining the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century house next door) were excavated to reveal details relating primarily to the stratigraphy of the adjoining plot (see section 3 of Figure 3). The truncated remains of a wall was revealed; this was 0.45m wide and 0.3m high {108} and built of slate and stone with a hard white lime mortar containing small occasional fragments of slate and stone (>40mm). Wall {108} had cut into topsoil deposit (101) (see Figure 4). It appears the re-deposited shillet (110) had been terraced, presumably at the time the house was built, and a garden created on top of this mining waste.

### Finds

A small number of finds were recovered during the monitoring, mainly and predictably comprised of post-medieval North Devon coarsewares and 19<sup>th</sup> century industrial pottery.

Context	Count	Wgt. (g)	Notes
(105)	1	28	Fragment of engineering brick
topsoil	8	576	×5 North Devon gravel-tempered (×2 rims), post-medieval
			×2 red wares, 19 <sup>th</sup> century
	3	20	×1 North Devon gravel-free (×1 handle) , post-medieval
	1	42	White refined earthenwares
			Grey salt-glazed stoneware, 19 <sup>th</sup> century
<b>Totals</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>666</b>	

**A plan as well as any other relevant drawings must be attached showing the location and extent of site, areas investigated and features exposed.**

**Recorder:** S. Walls

**Date sent to HER:** 17.07.2012

Please email completed form to: [archaeol@devon.gov.uk](mailto:archaeol@devon.gov.uk) or post to County Archaeology Service, Environment Directorate, Matford Lane Offices, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter EX2 4QW. Information recorded on this form will be added to the Historic Environment Record, and made available to all researchers.

Any plans or photographs embedded within or attached to this form remain the copyright © of the recorder, and must not be reproduced in any publication without the explicit consent of the copyright holder.

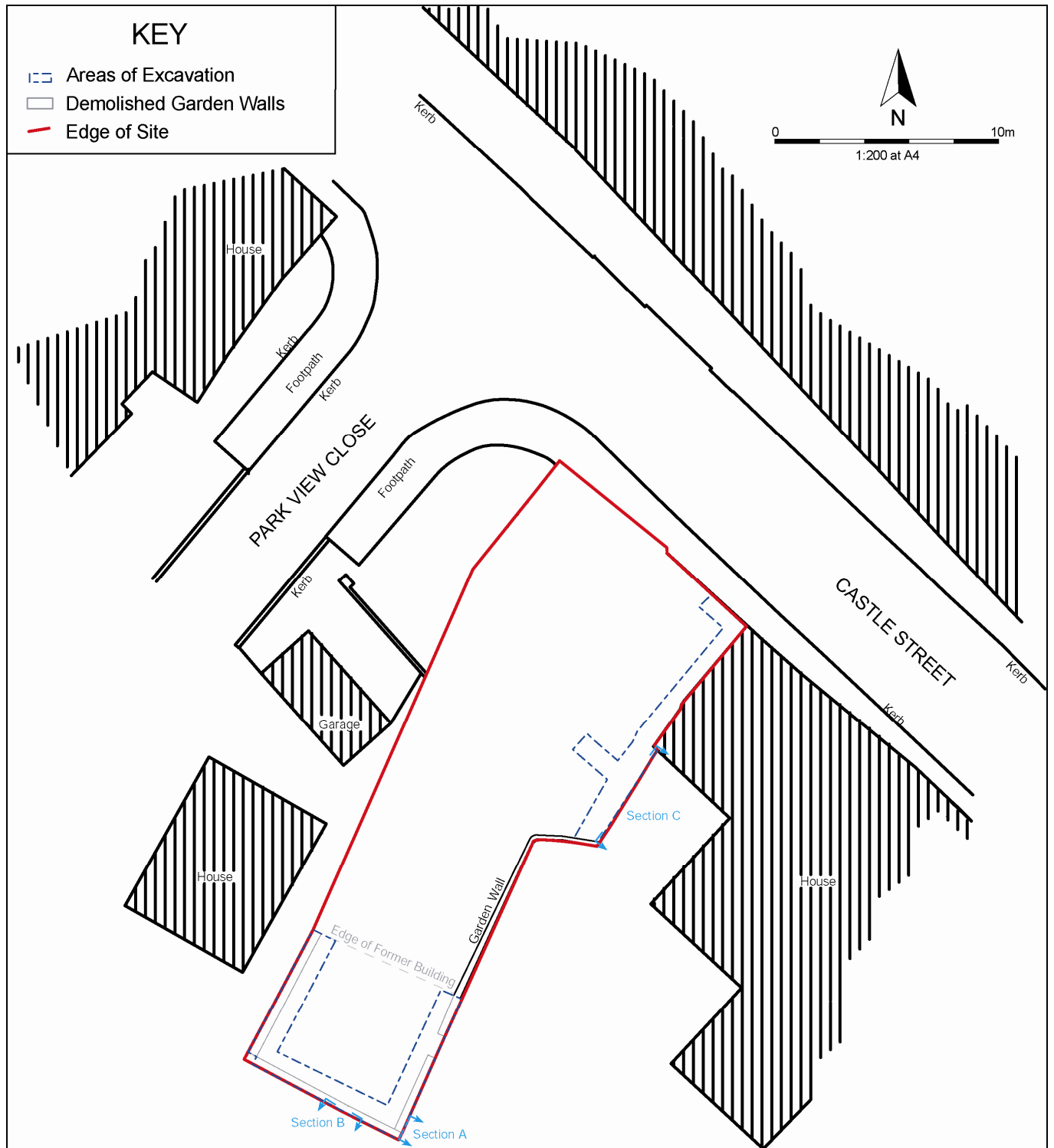


Figure 1: Site plan showing the location of the excavations.



Figure 2: Extract from the 1842 Combe Martin Tithe Map. The development site is bounded in orange.

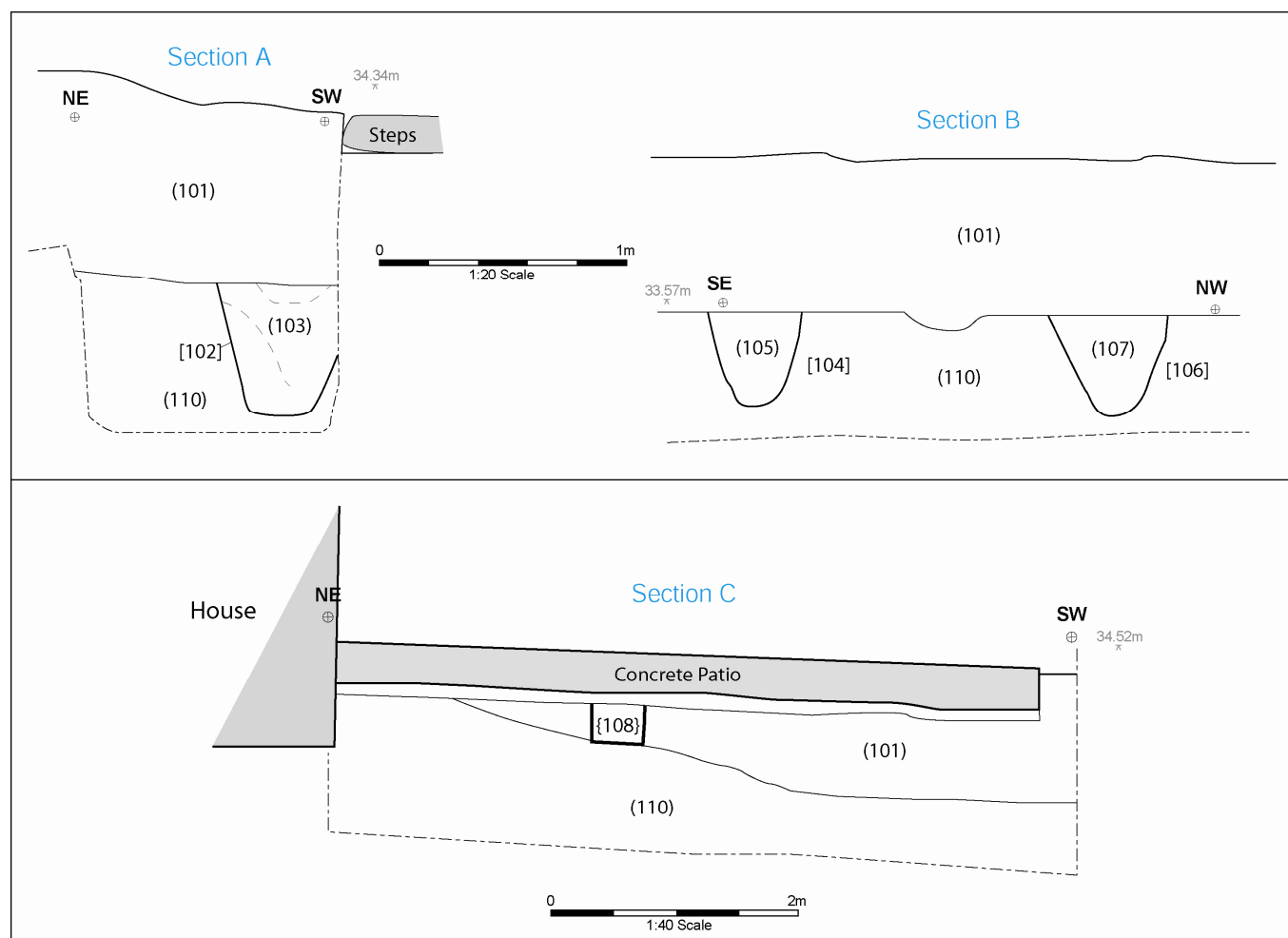


Figure 3: Sections of the archaeological features extending from the adjoining plot (see Figure 1 for locations).





Figure 4: Above: The site during the removal of the concrete floors and foundations, viewed from the north-east. Below: Photograph showing wall {108} in Section C, viewed from the north-west (scale 2m).