

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Merton, Torridge	National Grid Reference: SS52571197	Number:
Subject: Extension of domestic dwelling at Ashgrove House, Clarks Lane, Merton		Photo attached? YES
Planning Application no: 1/0143/2013/FUL	Recipient museum: Museum of Barnstaple & North Devon	
OASIS ID: southwes1-149855	Museum Accession no: N/A	
Contractor's reference number/code: MAH13	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 1 st May 2014	
<p>Description of works. Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) at the request of John Simmons (the Agent) on behalf of Mr and Mrs Gould of Ashgrove House Trust (the Client), during the excavations of footings for an extension to Ashgrove House, Clarks Lane, Merton, Devon (Figure 1). This work was undertaken by Dr S. Walls on 1st May 2014 in accordance with a WSI drawn up in consultation with Ann-Marie Dick of the Devon County Historic Environment Team.</p> <p>The proposed development lies adjoining the north-west corner of Ashgrove House adjacent to the churchyard of All Saints' Parish Church, a largely 15th century Church with a probable earlier foundation. SWARCH undertook a programme of monitoring during the construction of Ashgrove House and the adjacent (to the west) Pink Hill House in 2004 and uncovered the partial remains of a building, possibly those of a longhouse-type structure to the south of the present houses. This building is shown on White's 1779 estate map of the Manor of Merton and on the 1842 tithe (see Figure 2). In the accompanying tithe apportionment the building is listed as <i>Houses and Courtlage</i>, owned by Lord Clinton and Leased to a Sussanah Ward as part of the Holding of Beers. The 1841 census lists a Susaa(sic) Ward, 68 as a Malster living in Church Village with her family.</p> <p>It is possible that the building exposed during these previous excavations may be related to a medieval settlement focused around the church, and that further associated deposits may survive within the footprint of the proposed development.</p> <p>The area of the proposed conservatory was reduced by 0.15-0.2m prior to the excavation by machine of a 1m wide and 0.6m deep trenches for the footings (Figure 3). The majority of the excavated material was made up ground dating from the construction of the house in c.2005. The present topsoil/paving overlying a 0.1m deep layer of yellow-grey sandy-clay rubble including fragments of bricks and sub-angular stone (>90mm dia.), which overlay a 0.2-0.3m thick layer of clean grey gravel of small sub-angular stones (>50mm dia.) in a sandy matrix. The clean gravel abutted the concrete footings of the house and overlay a modern drainage pipe. The drainage pipe and house footings cut into a thin lens (0.05m thick) of moist dark-brown (buried) topsoil. This thin topsoil overlay the natural, a clean and compact yellow-grey clay, which showed no sign of disturbance (Figure 4).</p> <p>During monitoring of the footings for the house by C. Preece in March 2004, he noted that the topsoil deposit (over 0.2m deep) lay directly upon the natural. This suggests that this phase of monitoring has exposed this same historic (though reduced in depth) topsoil.</p> <p>No archaeological features or deposits were encountered, and no finds recovered.</p>		
<p>A plan as well as any other relevant drawings must be attached showing the location and extent of site, areas investigated and features exposed.</p>		
Recorder: S. Walls	Date sent to HER: 02/05/2014	

Please email completed form to: 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.

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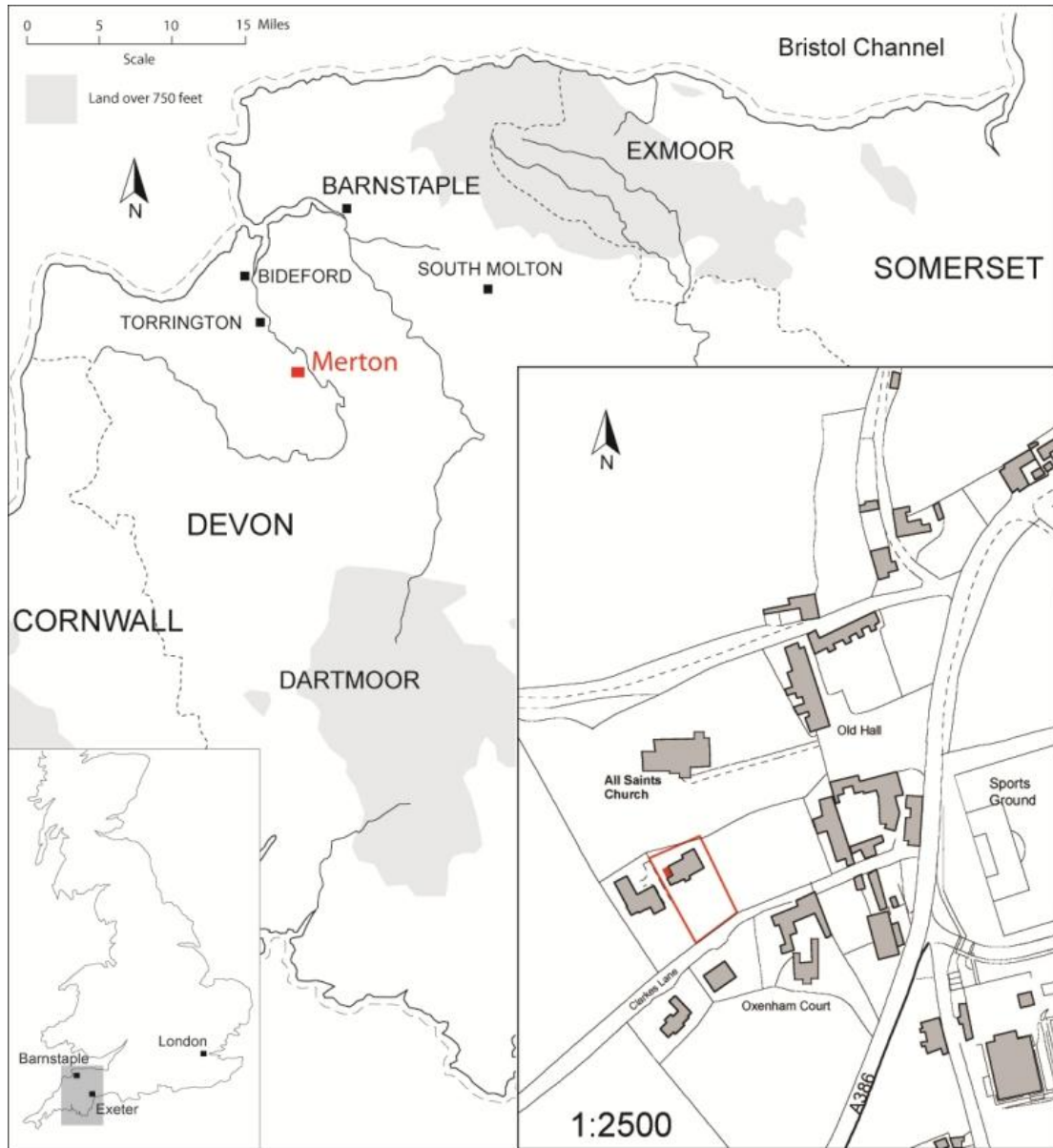


Figure 1: Location of the site (indicated in red).

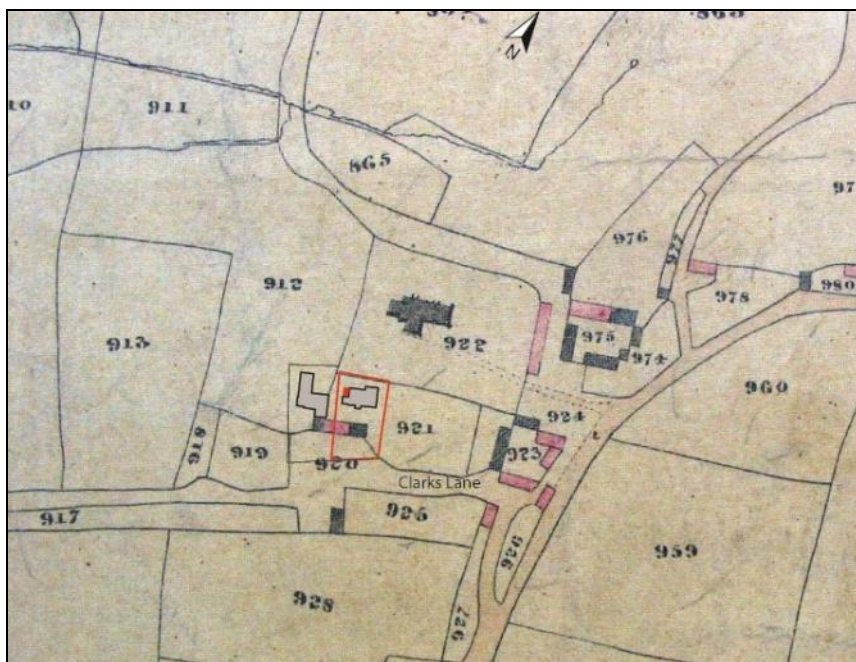


Figure 2: Extract from the 1842 tithe map of Merton, overlain with plots and buildings of the modern Ashgrove and Pink Hill Houses.



Figure 3: Shot showing the excavated footing trenches, viewed from the north (1m scale).



Figure 4: The excavated footing trench, viewed from the east (1m scale).