

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: North Devon	National Grid Reference SS 4519 2637	Number:
Subject: Archaeological monitoring & recording on land to the rear of 40 Meddon Street, Bideford, Devon, during groundworks of a residential development for a single dwelling		Photo attached? YES
Planning Application no: 1/0755/2011/REM	Recipient museum: Museum of Barnstaple & North Devon/ADS	
OASIS ID: southwes1-163449	Museum Accession no: No physical archive	
Contractor's reference number/code: MSB13	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 11 th November 2013	

Description of works

Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) at the request of Mr Tom Summers (The Client), prior to a residential development on land to the rear of 40 Meddon Street, Bideford, Devon (Figure 3). This work was undertaken by J. Bampton on the 11th of November 2013 in accordance with a WSI drawn up in accordance with a brief supplied by Ann-Marie Dick of the Devon County Historic Environment Team (DCHET).

The proposed development was in an area used for parking to the rear of 40 Meddon Street. This was within former burgage plots in the historic core of Bideford, a Domesday settlement. Meddon Street (formerly *Maydenstrete*) is recorded as having been in existence by 1348. The 1889 Ordnance Survey mapping and an 1888 town plan of Bideford shows the proposal site to have been occupied by two structures with outbuildings. The two structures divide the site east-west and, on their eastern side, appear to respect a possible north-south subdivision of the medieval burgage plot. It was possible that medieval and post-medieval features, including the former medieval burgage plot boundary, may have survived as buried archaeological deposits within the proposal site. In addition to the medieval potential of the site, the Historic Environment Record (HER) records the presence of prehistoric and Roman finds (i.e. Roman coin: HER No. MDV57958) from the wider area, along with post-medieval culm mining activity and a number of established 17th century buildings such as the Almshouses on the opposite side of Meddon Street (HER No. MDV503).

The groundworks on site consisted of removing the existing tarmac layer and hard-core made-ground beneath to 0.35m below the planned finished floor level, which is equal to that of the existing adjacent access road (37.70m AOD). A test pit was excavated to establish whether further ground reduction was required prior to the excavation of the footings. Foundations were then dug to an appropriate depth (c.0.30m into the compact natural) (see Figures 1 & 3). The rear wall of the proposed dwelling is to replace the existing rear wall of the adjacent garages and electrical sub-station. The existing wall was leaning to the south and it will be removed and its foundations deepened.

Results

The layers encountered (see Figures 2 & 3) were as follows: Tarmac (100), 0.05m thick; Concrete and hard-core made-ground (101), 0.22-0.24m thick, with occasional pottery and frequent modern CBM; Buried topsoil (102), 0.20m thick, mid grey-brown, soft clay-silt with very occasional small shell fragments, CBM and large masonry stone blocks (200×300×400mm), moderate charcoal flecks and pottery finds; Subsoil (103), 0.10-0.30m thick (thinnest at the west end of the site), mid red-brown, firm silt-clay with very occasional fine shell fragments, moderate-frequent angular stones (30-50mm dia.) and pottery finds; Natural (104), occurring below 0.62-0.67m below finished/original ground level, light-red brown compact clay and shillet.

All finds were recovered from the Buried topsoil (102) and Subsoil (103) and a sample from Made-ground (101) and all subsequently discarded. The (101) finds included: ×2 sherds (34g) of 18th century North Devon Gravel Tempered wares (NDGT). The (102) finds included ×1 fragment (95g) of ceramic sewer pipe; ×7 sherds (272g) of 19th century industrial wares, including White Refined Earthen wares and cream flowerpot; ×2 rim sherds (179g) of late 18th century NDGT; ×1 sherd (32g) of 19th century NDGT; ×1 cockle shell (2g). The (103) finds included ×1 sherd (1g) of North Devon Medieval Coarse ware.

The presence of a storm drain running through the east footing trench and extant wall along the north would have truncated any archaeological remains in these areas, thus the areas were left undisturbed for ease of further site work; 2.20m of the west footing trench was left for access to the site; the remaining south footing trenches and test pit were excavated to the top of Natural (104) and revealed no archaeological features, although large stones, probably from the base of a construction were encountered within the buried topsoil (102) and made-ground (101).

These stones may pertain to the structures present on the 19th century mapping. No significant archaeological features or deposits were encountered on the site.

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: J. Bampton

Date sent to HER: 12.11.2013



Figure 1: Front east-west footing, showing the storm drain in the top right & the rear wall to be removed in the top left corner, viewed from the west (2m scale).



Figure 2: Sample section from test pit, viewed from the south (1m scale).

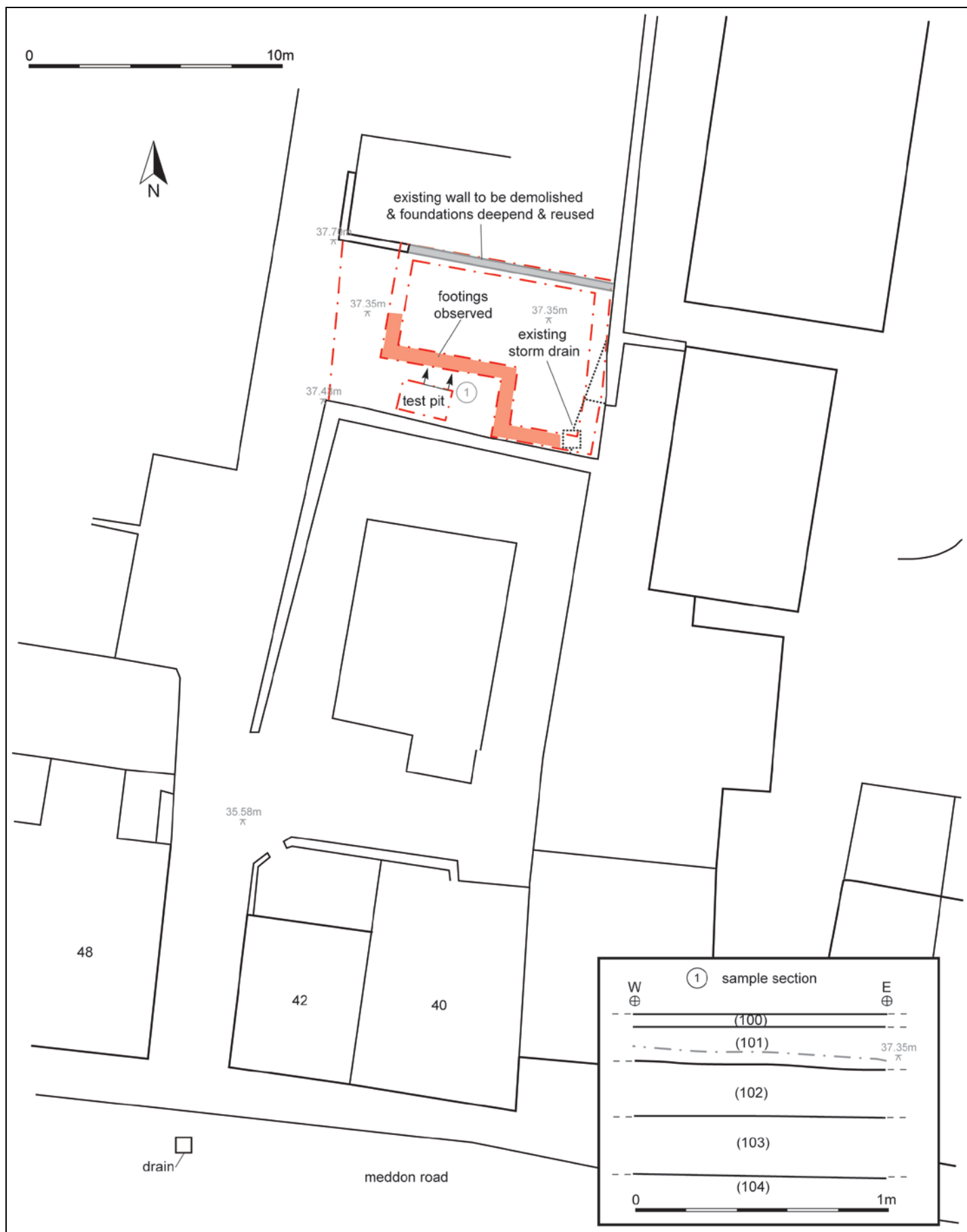


Figure 3: Site plan, observed footings shaded in red (Insert: sample section from test pit).