

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Bideford, Torridge	National Grid Reference SS 4650 2635	Number:
Subject: Archaeological monitoring and recording at Littlebrook, Mines Road, East-the-Water, Bideford, Devon during the residential development of up to 14 dwellings and a local play area		Photo attached? YES
Planning Application no: 1/0030/2010/OUT	Recipient museum: Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon (MBND)	
OASIS ID: southwes1-148872	Museum Accession no: NDDMS2014.52	
Contractor's reference number/code: BMR13	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 9 th -13 th May 2014	
<p>Description of works.</p> <p>Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) at the request of Gareth Davies (the agent) on behalf of Elan Homes (the client), during the development at Littlebrook, Mines Road, East-the-Water, Bideford, Devon (Figure 1). This work was undertaken by J. Bampton between 9th and 13th May 2014 in accordance with a WSI drawn up in accordance with a brief issued by Ann Marie Dick of the Devon County Historic Environment Team.</p> <p>The development lies c.863m east of the River Torridge and <i>Bideford Long Bridge</i> on the eastern extent of <i>East-the-Water</i>. The site is divided roughly in half with the southern half containing the house, <i>Littlebrook</i>, and the northern half an associated meadow with <i>Mines Road</i> curving along its west and north boundaries, fields to east and housing to its south-east (Figure 1). The site lies within an area which is identified by the Devon Historic Landscape Characterisation Project as comprising former medieval enclosures. The hedge banks which form the external boundaries of the site appear to be those shown on the 1880s Ordnance Survey mapping, which, in practice, indicates that they are likely to be "important" hedgerows under the 1997 Hedgerow Regulations. The development involves the removal of much of the bank which forms the western (roadside) site boundary. This bank may retain archaeological and/or palaeoenvironmental information within and beneath its structure. <i>Mines Road</i> is named after the paint pigment mining of <i>Bideford Black</i>, which took place in the area for c.200 years until 1969. This involved relatively small scale open-pit mining; the pond-like divots of which can be seen in the north half of the site and the adjacent field to the east. Although this process may have truncated earlier archaeological deposits, they are in themselves becoming more archaeologically significant as evidence of the mining industry is lost to development.</p> <p>The majority of the northern half of the site had been terraced away from the boundary with the southern half of the site (Figure 2). It was comprised of Topsoil (100) (c.0.28m thick), redeposited after mineral exploration and exploitation, overlaying Natural (102). A surviving seam of the <i>Bideford Black</i>, (104), was identified (Figures 2, 5). It had been mined away to its east and a large pit from this was extant in the south-east corner of the north half of the site. A single ditch, [105], was identified in this half of the site. Ditch [105] (1.70m wide × 0.22m deep × 25m+ long), aligned NNE-SSW had gentle-moderate sides and a gentle concave but irregular base (Figures 2, 3, 6). It contained two fills, (106) and (107), lower and upper respectively. Fill (106) was a mid yellow-brown, soft-friable silt-clay with occasional angular stones and shillet fragments; Fill (107) was a dark brown-grey, friable clay-silt with frequent root disturbance that produced 20th century pottery. Fill (106) seemed like a heavily root disturbed natural clay that may indicate an old hedge line marking the western extent of the <i>Mines Road</i> pit-mining operation just before the more substantial bank boundary along <i>Mines Road</i>; or demarcating a parallel trackway to the road.</p> <p>The majority of the southern half of the site had been levelled and ground made up after the extraction of <i>Bideford Black</i> in the 19th and 20th century prior to the construction of the now removed house, <i>Littlebrook</i> (Figures 2, 4). These made ground layers, (103), varied up to 2m+ deep and were cut by 20th century services associated with the house. These layers comprised redeposited subsoil and natural and layers of waste material and topsoil. Geotechnical pits bottomed out at 3m deep without finding natural at the deepest point investigated of the made-ground. No significant archaeological features or deposits were encountered.</p> <p>The section of removed bank showed that the road had been cut into the natural and that the bank was more substantially made up on- and from the roads-side; with redeposited natural, (108) and (110), overlaying subsoil (101) (Figures 2, 3, 7). The mixture of redeposited subsoil, (109) and the topsoil had been heavily root disturbed and showed some creep on to the road and probable modification from relatively recent drainage and services along this side of the road. The amount of root disturbance in these active layers made clearer analysis difficult. Only finds of modern debris were encountered in the topsoil of the bank and were not retained.</p>		

A sample of finds were recovered from the site and subsequently discarded. The topsoil finds from the north half of the site included: ×3 fragments of CBM (3g); ×2 flowerpot (4g); ×4 Post-medieval North Devon wares (23g); ×7 White Refined Earthen wares (21g). From the made-ground (103): ×1 glass HP sauce bottle (250g); ×1 opaque glass vessel sherd (9g); ×1 piece of plastic (4g); ×1 Fe nail (10g); ×1 piece of rubber (27g); ×1 coke fragment (3g); ×1 tarmac fragment (31g); ×2 stone wares (73g); ×4 flowerpot (113g); ×3 CBM fragments (78g), 1 tile, 1 machine-made brick, 1 hand-made brick; ×20 White Refined Earthen wares (445g); ×1 Post-medieval North Devon Gravel Tempered ware (29g); ×1 17th century yellow slip ware rim (13g); ×2 Medieval North Devon Gravel Tempered ware (25g). From the ditch fill, (107): ×1 19th century stoneware base (10g); ×1 Fe nail (4g); ×1 green bottle glass sherd (45g); ×2 White Refined Earthen wares (2g); ×2 CBM fragments (2g); ×1 burnt clay pipe bowl and heel (12g), broken; ×2 Post-medieval North Devon wares (28g); ×1 Bideford Black fragment (44g). The older finds from (103) were taken from the upper layers that constituted a mixture of redeposited subsoil and natural. This may suggest some early activity on the site that has been long since truncated.

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: 15.05.2013

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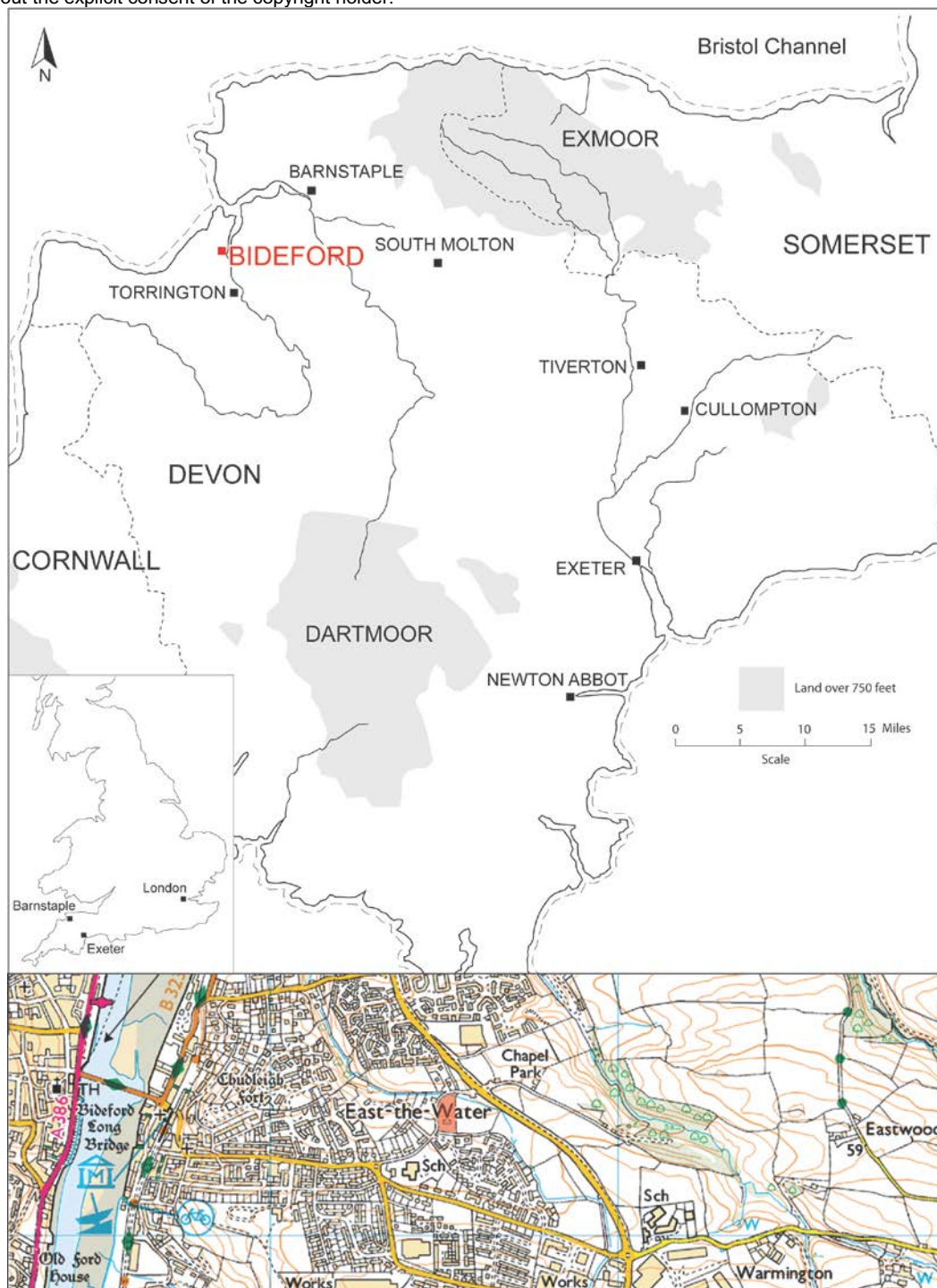


Figure 1: Site location, highlighted in red.

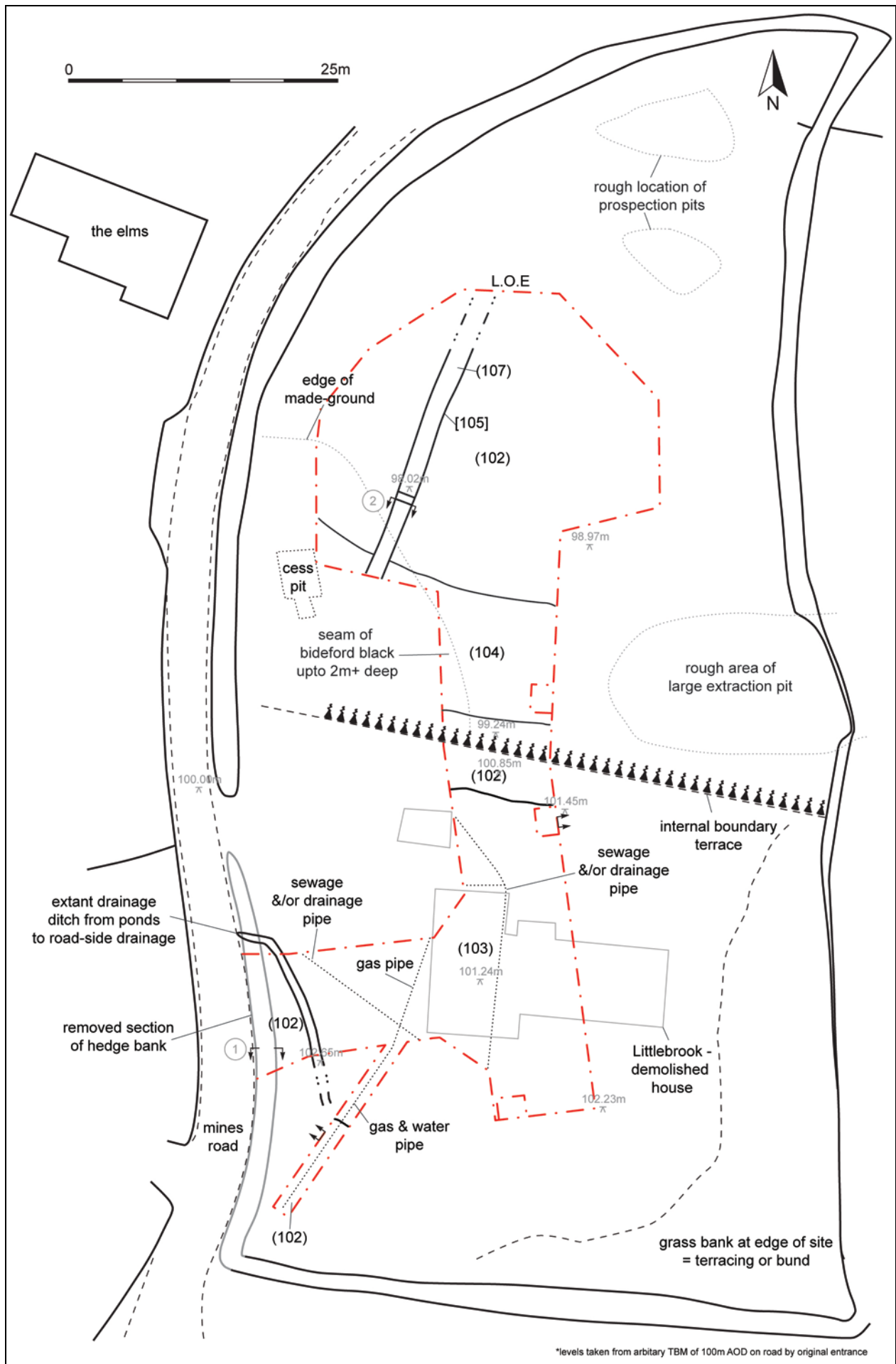


Figure 2: Site plan (grey scale section numbers correspond to sections in Figure 3).

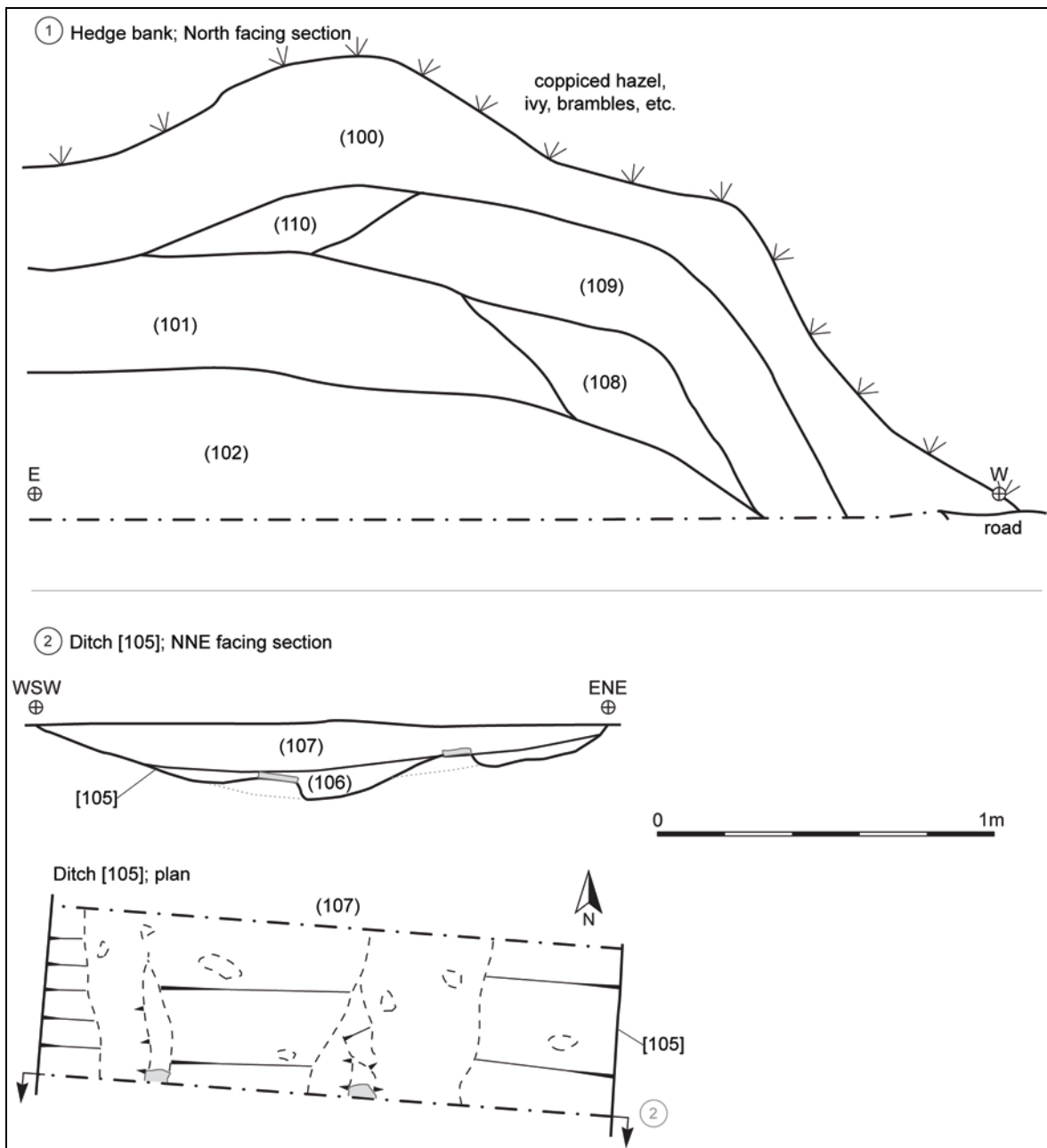


Figure 3: Site drawings; bank section, and Ditch [105] section and plan of excavated segment.



Figure 4: South half of site mid-excavation showing made-ground (103) and services, viewed from the east (2m scale).



Figure 5: North half of site mid-excavation showing *Bideford Black* seam (103), viewed from the north (2m scale).



Figure 6: Ditch [105], viewed from NNE (1m scale).



Figure 7: Section through bank, viewed from north (2m scale).