

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Abbotsham, North Devon	National Grid Reference SS 42318 28392	Number:
Subject: Archaeological monitoring on land at Cornborough Farm, Abbotsham, Devon in advance of the erection of an agricultural farm building		Photo attached? YES
Planning Application no: 1/0180/2014/FUL	Recipient museum: Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon	
OASIS ID: southwes1-176897	Museum Accession no: NDDMS2014.71	
Contractor's reference number/code: ACB14	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 11-14 th August 2014	
<p>Description of works.</p> <p>Archaeological monitoring was undertaken by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) at the request of Mr. David Lomas (The Client), prior to the erection of an agricultural building at Cornborough Farm, Abbotsham, Devon (Figure 1). This work was undertaken by P. Webb between 11th and 14th August 2014 in accordance with a WSI drawn up in consultation with Ann Marie Dick of the Devon County Historic Environment Team (DCHET).</p> <p>The proposed development is situated on the southern face of a hillside, sloping from 70.6mAOD in the north to 62mAOD at the southern limit of the site. The land is currently in use as pasture, but previously has been used as arable land. It lies within an area of known Prehistoric activity, with possible barrow cemeteries (Historic Environment Record numbers: 33091, 33085), and discovery of stone implements, including a Palaeolithic or Mesolithic stone axe (HER number: 895826), Mesolithic flint scatter (HER number: 33121), Mesolithic scrapers (HER number: 33120) and Neolithic petit-tranchet arrowhead (HER number: 33117). It was felt possible that further evidence of Prehistoric settlement may survive within the application footprint, in the form of artefacts and/or buried archaeological deposits. Later activity is represented by the Medieval church (HER number: 33082), to the north-east, and the 16th century Abbotsham Court (HER number: 33064) to the south-west.</p> <p>A rectangular area covering the footprint of the agricultural barn, c.77x55m and orientated east-west (Figure 2), was excavated by mechanical excavator with a toothless grading bucket under archaeological supervision in accordance with the WSI. The topsoil (100) consisted of a dark brown clay silt loam (c.0.1-0.2m in depth) and overlay plough soil (101); a mid brown friable to firm clay with 10% sub-rounded to sub-angular stone 10-150mm diameter (0.1-0.2m in depth). These overlay a deposit of natural yellow clay (102) and shillet within a matrix of soft grey brown clay (103).</p> <p>No archaeological features or deposits were identified on the site. However, a number of artefacts were recovered from the plough soil, comprising c.125 fragments of Medieval and Post-Medieval pottery and c.30 lithic artefacts, all of which show heavy signs of abrasion and small piece size reflecting the ploughed nature of the site.</p> <p>The majority of the lithics are debitage fragments, with a high proportion of primary flakes, but also including partially worked blade and flake cores. None of these were diagnostic of period, and only three flakes show signs of retouch, forming two notched pieces and one backed flake. The high proportion of primary flakes and lack of exhausted cores is likely to reflect the small size and poor quality of the available pebble flint material, with pieces discarded when impurities were hit causing unwanted break patterns. The quantity and nature of the assemblage suggests that there was Prehistoric settlement activity in the vicinity, perhaps towards the top of the hill, with waste discarded down the slope.</p> <p>The pottery was all recovered from the subsoil, and includes one sherd of possible Bronze Age gabbro with Dartmoor granite temper, but also Medieval gravel and non-gravel tempered coarsewares, 16th century gravel and non-gravel tempered wares, including some green glazed pieces, Post-Medieval gravel tempered glazed wares and 18th century white refined wares. Three fragments of joining possible cloam oven were also recovered.</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.		
Recorder: P. Webb		Date sent to HER: 18.08.2014

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: Site location map; site location in red.

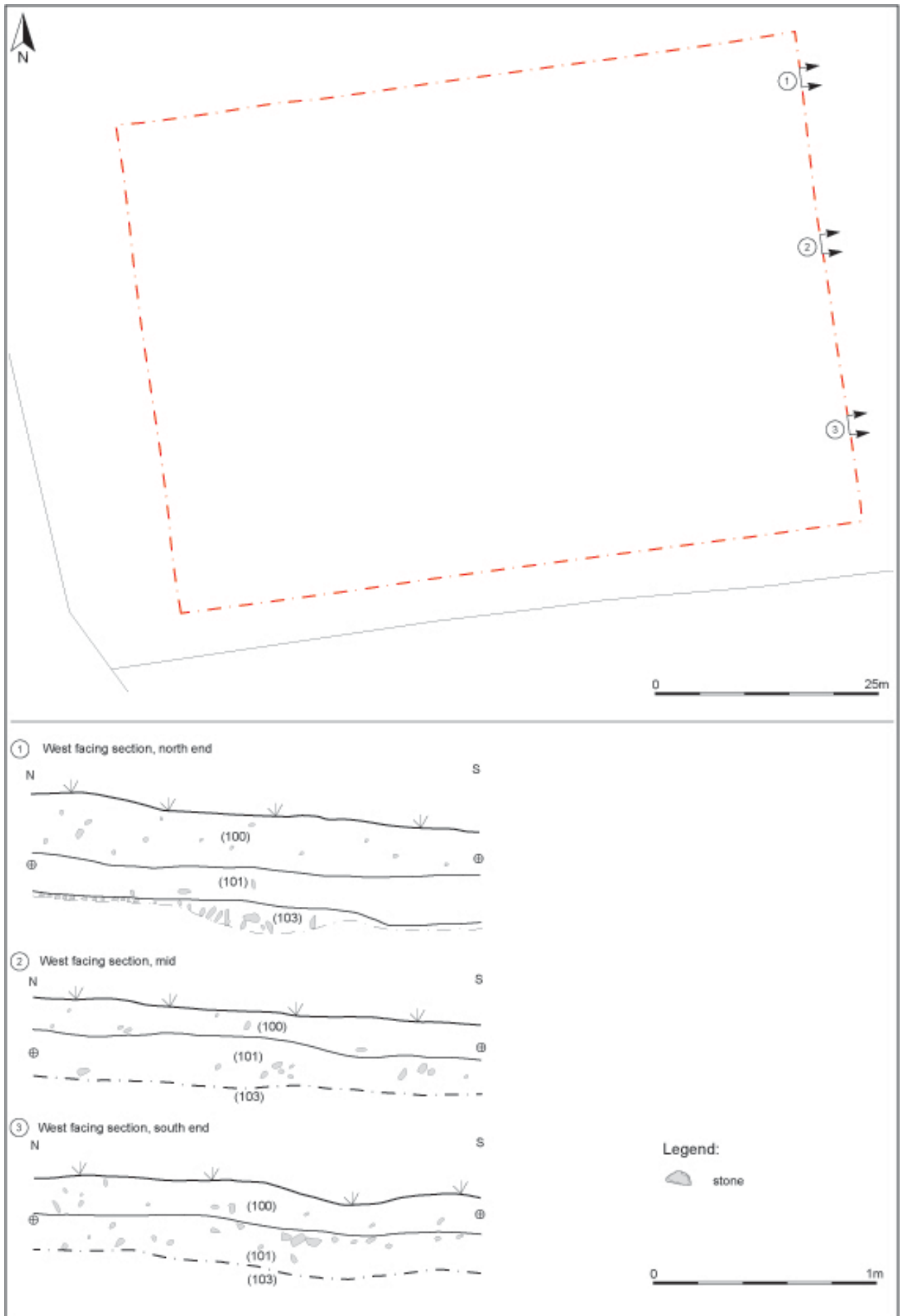


Figure 2: Site plan and representative sections (greyscale numbers on plan correspond to section drawing numbers).



Figure 3: Post excavation view of site; looking south-west (1m and 2m scales)



Figure 4: Representative west facing section; looking east (2m scale).