

# Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

<b>Civil Parish &amp; District:</b> Bow, Mid-Devon	<b>National Grid Reference</b> SS 7133 0173	<b>Number:</b>
<b>Subject:</b> Archaeological monitoring and recording at Bow Aquatic & Garden Centre, Bow, Devon		<b>Photo attached?</b> YES
<b>Planning Application no:</b> 14/1606/FULL	<b>Recipient museum:</b> The Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM), Exeter	
<b>OASIS ID:</b> southwes1-197573	<b>Museum Accession no:</b> N/A	
<b>Contractor's reference number/code:</b> BAG14	<b>Dates fieldwork undertaken:</b> 7-8 <sup>th</sup> December 2015	
<p><b>Project background.</b></p> <p>Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) at the request of Mr. Dave Tucker of the Bow Aquatic and Garden Centre, Bow, Devon. This work took place during groundworks associated with the construction of a new cafe building as part of the planning application. The monitoring was carried out by Peter Webb on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> December 2015. This work was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation drawn up in consultation with Stephen Reed of the Devon County Historic Environment Team (DCHET).</p> <p>The site is located within a landscape of gently-rolling hills ranging in height from 90-150m(AOD), on the outskirts of the small town of Bow and is located approximately 24km north-west of Exeter and c.28km south-east of Great Torrington (Figure 2). Bow, in the parish of Nymet Tracey in the hundred of North Tawton and deanery of Chulmleigh, is taken from the Middle English <i>bogh</i>, meaning 'the arch', and refers to the 12<sup>th</sup> century arched bridge over the River Yeo. The town dates to the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, and is also known as <i>Nymet</i> (Watts 2004), though the majority of the buildings date to between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.</p> <p>The soils of this area are the well-drained gritty reddish loamy soils of the Crediton Formation (SSEW 1983), overlying the sedimentary breccias of the Bow Breccia Formation (BGS 2015). The proposed site is located within an area of high archaeological potential, with nine probable prehistoric funerary monuments within the immediate landscape. To the west lies a Late Neolithic henge site as well as evidence for other prehistoric enclosures.</p> <p>The immediate fieldscape is described by the Devon HLC as <i>barton fields</i> laid out in the 15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries, whilst to the north are <i>medieval enclosures based on strip fields</i> and to the east and west <i>modern enclosures adapting post-medieval fields</i>.</p> <p><b>Results.</b></p> <p>Three areas with a total area of c.261m<sup>2</sup> (Figure 2) were stripped of topsoil by machine using a toothless grading bucket under archaeological supervision. The soft-friable red-brown clay-silt topsoil across the site was c.0.15m thick. At the east end of the site this overlay a compacted soft-friable red-brown clay-silt re-deposited layer c.0.18-0.20m thick, which in turn sealed the compacted soft-friable brown-red silt-clay subsoil c.0.08 thick, and the natural, a brown-red soft-friable silt-clay.</p> <p>Area #1 was located in the south-eastern corner of the site, to the east of the main garden centre building, and formed the footprint of the new cafe building. It was orientated north-west to south-east; measured 23.5m×11m and was initially stripped of topsoil. Foundation trenches along the eastern, southern and western edges of the area were subsequently excavated to a depth of 0.40-0.80m. A possible truncated sub-rounded post-hole [104], measuring 0.44m×0.32m×0.04m deep with moderately sloping sides and slightly concave base, was located along the southern length (Figure 3) with a fill red-brown soft silt-clay (105) containing a clay pipe stem. The cuts for numerous modern service trenches were also identified within the area.</p> <p>Area #2 was located towards the centre of the site and was excavated to evaluate the potential for archaeological remains in an area earmarked for future development. It was orientated north to south; measured 3m×1m (Figure 3) and was excavated to a depth of 0.03m, through a modern gravel surface and terram base layer. This sat directly above the natural. A modern post-hole, with concrete post-setting was identified towards the southern end of this area. No archaeological features were identified.</p> <p>Area #3 was located in the south-western corner of the site and was excavated to evaluate the potential for archaeological remains in an area earmarked for future development. It was orientated north to south; and measured 12.5m× 0.4m and was excavated to a depth of 0.22m. Along its entire western length was the modern cut for the existing poly-tunnel situated immediately to the west (Figure 3). No archaeological features were identified within this trench, though an un-worked gravel flint flake (15g) was recovered from the topsoil.</p>		

## Conclusions.

The results of the archaeological monitoring indicate that much of the site has been disturbed by the operation of the extant garden centre with much of area #1 covered by a layer of re-deposited soils, and continuously interrupted by service trenches and pond features. Area #2 was situated within an area that appears to have previously been terraced, extending from the existing building to c.1.9m to the west. This act of terracing has resulted in the removal of all subsoil layers, with the modern surface laid directly onto the natural across this area. In all likelihood any archaeological features, unless deep cut, are similarly likely to have been destroyed. Whilst area #3 was only narrow, situated within the slight gap between existing poly-tunnels, it shows that the cuts for these extend into the natural, and that their close proximity to each other suggests that earlier features, unless deep cut, are unlikely to survive. The recovery of a flint flake from the topsoil of this area suggests that there may have been prehistoric activity in the general area, perhaps associated with the nearby funerary complex.

## Finds

Apart from the single clay pipe stem (2g) from (105) and flint flake from (300), the only other finds came from modern backfill layer (123). This produced: 2 fragments of modern stoneware flowerpot (745g) and 1 fragment (5g) of white refined earthenware. The finds have been discarded.

## Bibliography

Lysons, D. and Lysons, S. 1822: *Magna Britannia: Volume 6, Devonshire* London

Soil Survey of England and Wales (SSEW) 1983: *Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales (a brief explanation of the constituent soil associations)*. Harpenden.

Watts, V. 2004: *The Cambridge Dictionary of English Place-Names*, Cambridge

Williams, A. and Martin, G. 2002: *Domesday Book: A Complete Translation*, London

## Websites

British Geological Survey 2015: *Geology of Britain Viewer*.

[http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer\\_google/googleviewer.html](http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html) [accessed 09.12.2015].

Recorder: P. Webb

Date sent to HER: 16.12.15



Figure 1: Area #1 after topsoil strip, showing re-deposited layer (101); viewed from west (scales 1m and 2m).

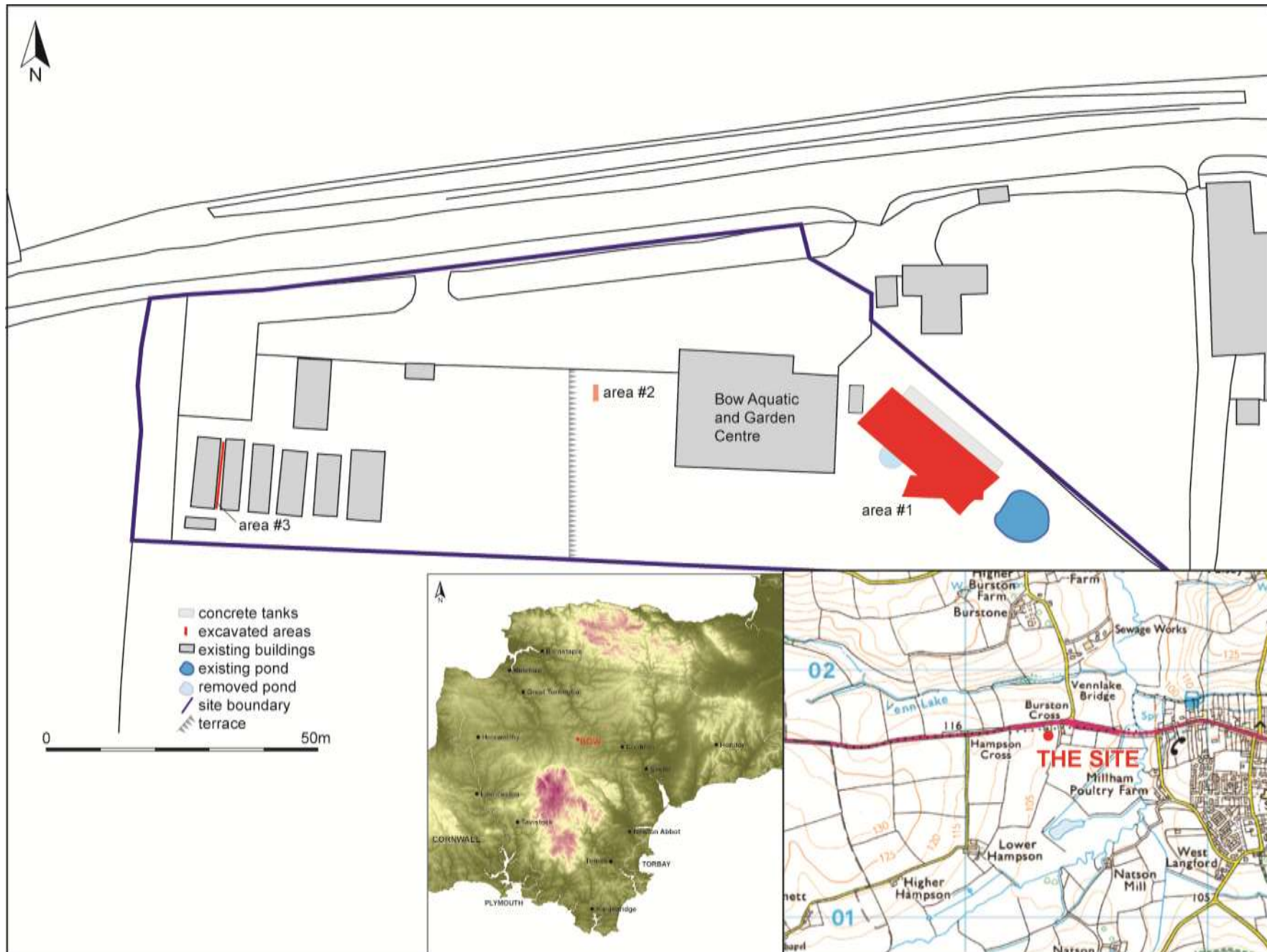


Figure 2: Site plan showing locations of area (based on supplied architect's drawings). See Figure 3 for detailed plans and sections.

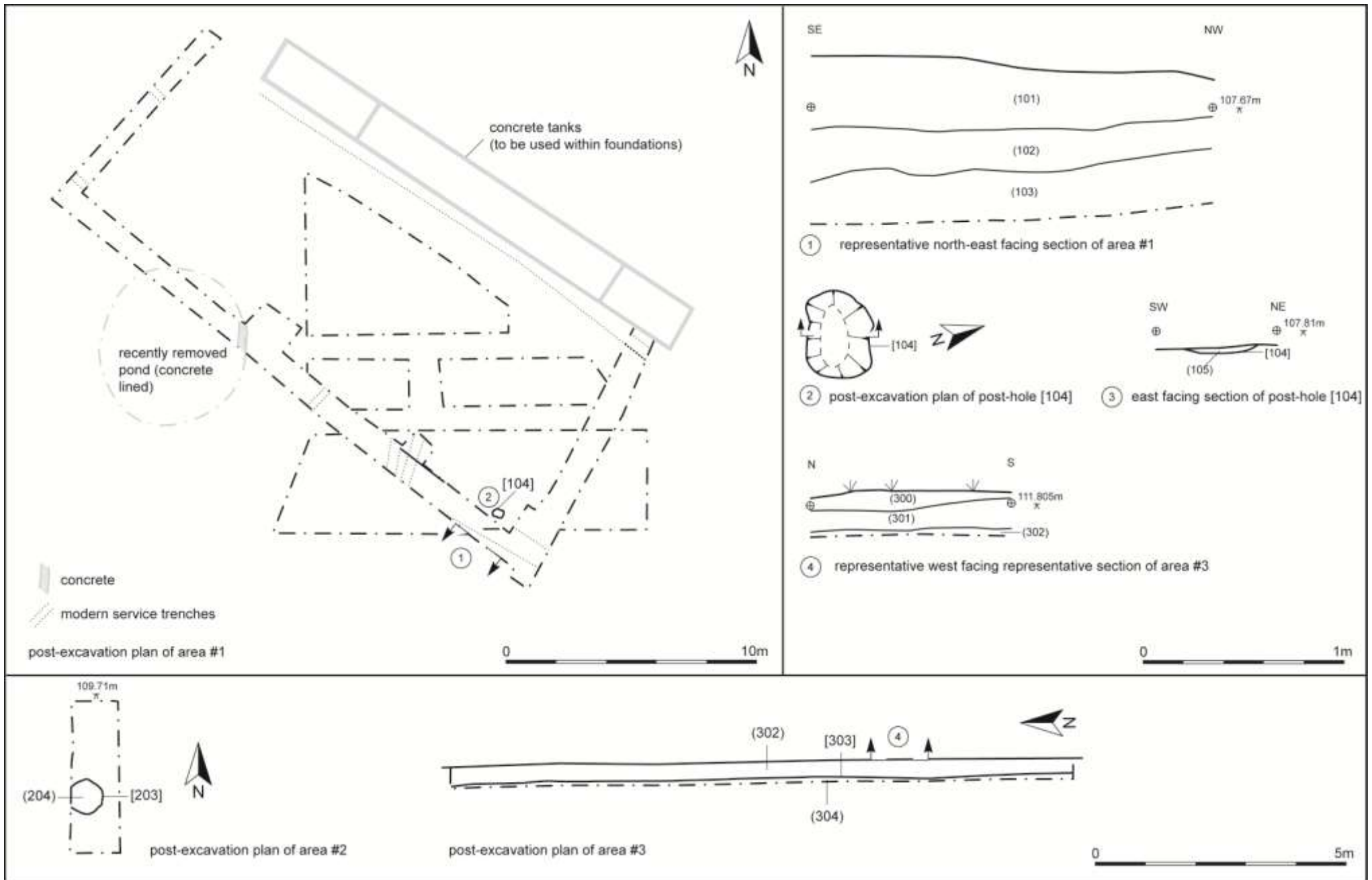


Figure 3: Plans and sections of features. For location of plans see Figure 3.