

# Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

<b>Civil Parish &amp; District:</b> Totnes, South Hams	<b>National Grid Reference</b> SX 8002 6020	<b>Number:</b>
<b>Subject:</b> Archaeological monitoring and recording at 11 Leechwell Street, Totnes, Devon during the erection of a low carbon dwelling		<b>Photo attached?</b> YES
<b>Planning Application no:</b> 56/3193/14/F	<b>Recipient museum:</b> Royal Albert Memorial Museum	
<b>OASIS ID:</b> southwes1-206797	<b>Museum Accession no:</b> N/A	
<b>Contractor's reference number/code:</b> TLW15C	<b>Dates fieldwork undertaken:</b> 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 24 <sup>th</sup> and 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2015	

## Description of works.

Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) at the request of Douglas Cockbain (the Client), during the erection of a low carbon dwelling at 11 Leechwell Street, Totnes, Devon. This work was undertaken by Dr B. Morris and J. Bampton in September 2015 in accordance with a WSI drawn up in reference to a brief supplied by Graham Tait of the Devon County Historic Environment Team.

The site lies at the east end of the garden to No.11 Leechwell Street, on the south-west edge of Totnes; on the east facing slope of the valley to the river Dart, between Leechwell Street and Leechwell Lane. Totnes was first recorded in 1086 and it sits at, historically, the lowest bridging point of the river Dart and its upper tidal limit. After the Norman conquest the town became a defensive position overlooking the Dart and through the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries it expanded beyond its defensive walls (which had gone by the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century) to the east and south-west. The expansion to the south-west from Rotherfold, through The Lamb Passage, Cistern Street and including the area of Leechwell Street covered an area associated with the droving and trading of animals. The tenements along Leechwell Street are characteristic of medieval burgage plots laid out over pre-existing medieval plough strips. On the historic mapping the site can be seen to lie just beyond the southern extremity of the medieval burgage plots and it probably marks the limit of the town's medieval expansion. Excavations in 1991 of the 19<sup>th</sup> century cattle market by Exeter Archaeology identified 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> century pottery and a 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> century house.

The 1888 Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping indicates footpaths running east-west across the site on its north and south sides and through its middle; and further divisions or paths aligned north-south. During 2007-08 SWARCH identified 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century features including pits and a roughly cobbled surface immediately north of the site at The Lamb that, along with 19<sup>th</sup> century boundaries, respected medieval burgage plots. It is possible a burgage plot existed beneath the extant garden (Desk-based assessment - SWARCH Report No.: 081022).

An area the width of the garden, c.34m, by c.15m was excavated across the western half of the garden to No.11 Leechwell Street (Figure 2). Due to the slope on the site the excavated area was c.1.70m deep along its western side and 0.30m deep along its eastern side. A wall foundation, depression and five pits were encountered.

The site stratigraphy (Figures 1 and 3) was composed of: Topsoil (100), a dark grey-brown, friable clay-silt, 0.29m thick overlaid all fills of archaeological features on the site, all of which in turn cut Subsoil (101). Subsoil (101), a mid yellow-brown, friable clay-silt with occasional sub-rounded stones and frequent root disturbance, 0.40-0.70m thick overlaid Natural (102). Natural (102) was a weathered mid brown yellow, firm silt-clay with frequent small sub-angular stones that became a more compact white clay and stony shillet at greater depth.

Late medieval linear **Wall Foundation [103]** was aligned east-west and only survived at the western end of the site. It contained three fills including redeposited natural and slate fragments and stone rubble that contained a sherd of Totnes-type ware medieval pottery. Post-medieval Sub-oval **Pit [107]** cut the wall foundation and contained 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery and sawn animal bone. Three modern pits were encountered; **[110]**, **[116]** and **[118]**, which contained White Refined Earthen wares (WRE) and recent 20<sup>th</sup> century waste material. Post-medieval **Pit [114]**, was a broad oval pit that may have denoted the eastern/down slope extent of Depression [112]. It contained 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century pottery including Totnes-type wares and Delft ware. **Depression [112]** was a shallow, possibly natural hollow filled with stone rubble and soil to create a more even slope across the garden in the post-medieval period. It contained medieval, 18<sup>th</sup> century and 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery, including South Somerset wares and North Devon Gravel Tempered wares.

Other than those finds encountered in the features a large number and variety of ceramics were recovered from the topsoil (103 sherds; 748g) and subsoil (32 sherds; 1111g), particularly in the north half of the site, including; medieval and post-medieval Totnes-type wares, modern and other stonewares including 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century Frechen stoneware, 18<sup>th</sup> century Notts. and Bristol/Staffordshire ware, black basalt wares, Chinese porcelain, industrial red wares, WRE and 20<sup>th</sup> century flower pot. Other finds included animal bone-, glass-, clay pipe-, oyster shell-, brick- and slate fragments and, an iron nail and lead fragment.

**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:** 07.12.2015

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Figure 1: Site shot post-excavation; looking north-west (1m & 2m scale).

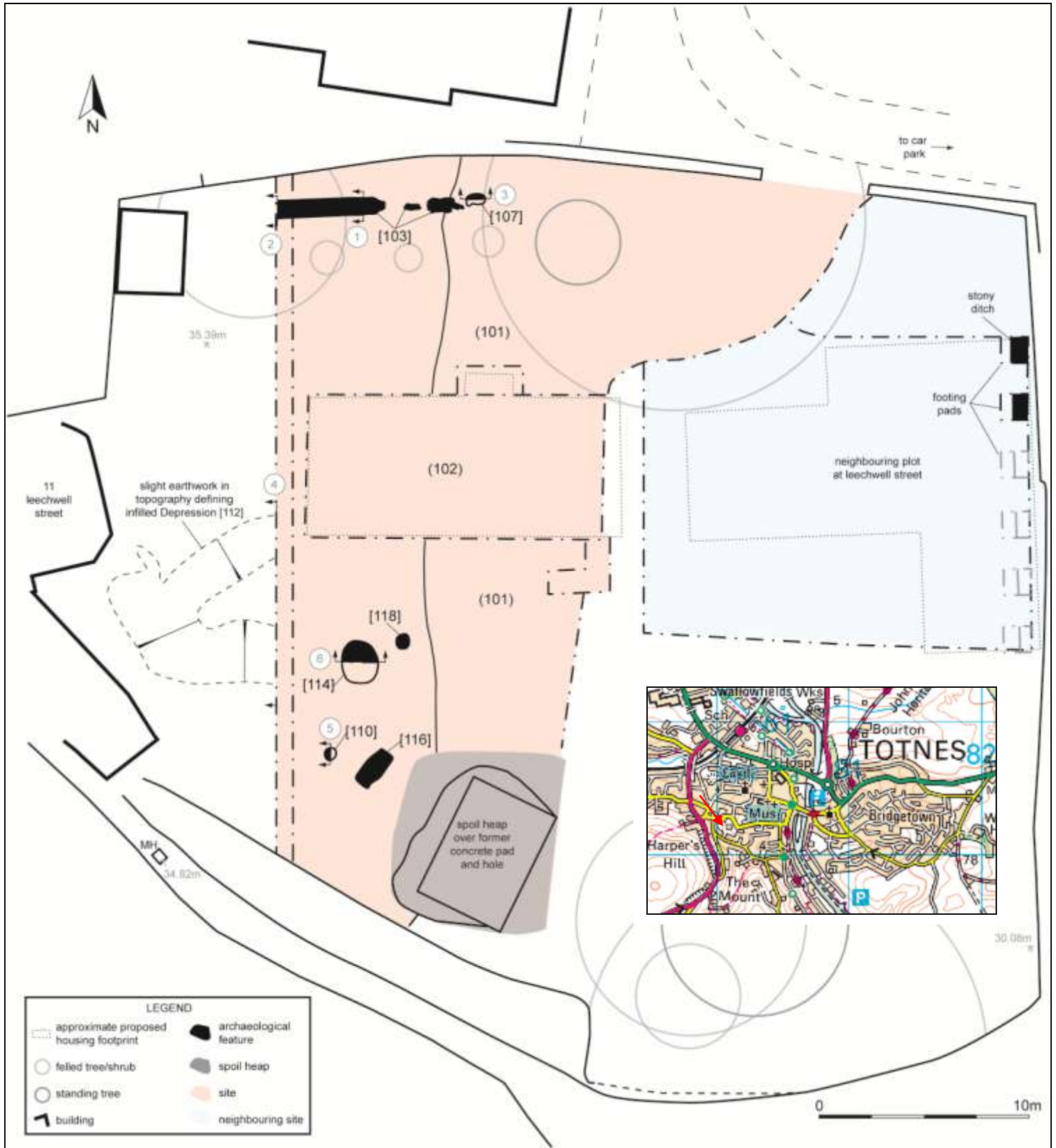


Figure 2: Site plan (insert: Totnes, site location indicated). Section drawings and detailed plans shown in Figure 2.

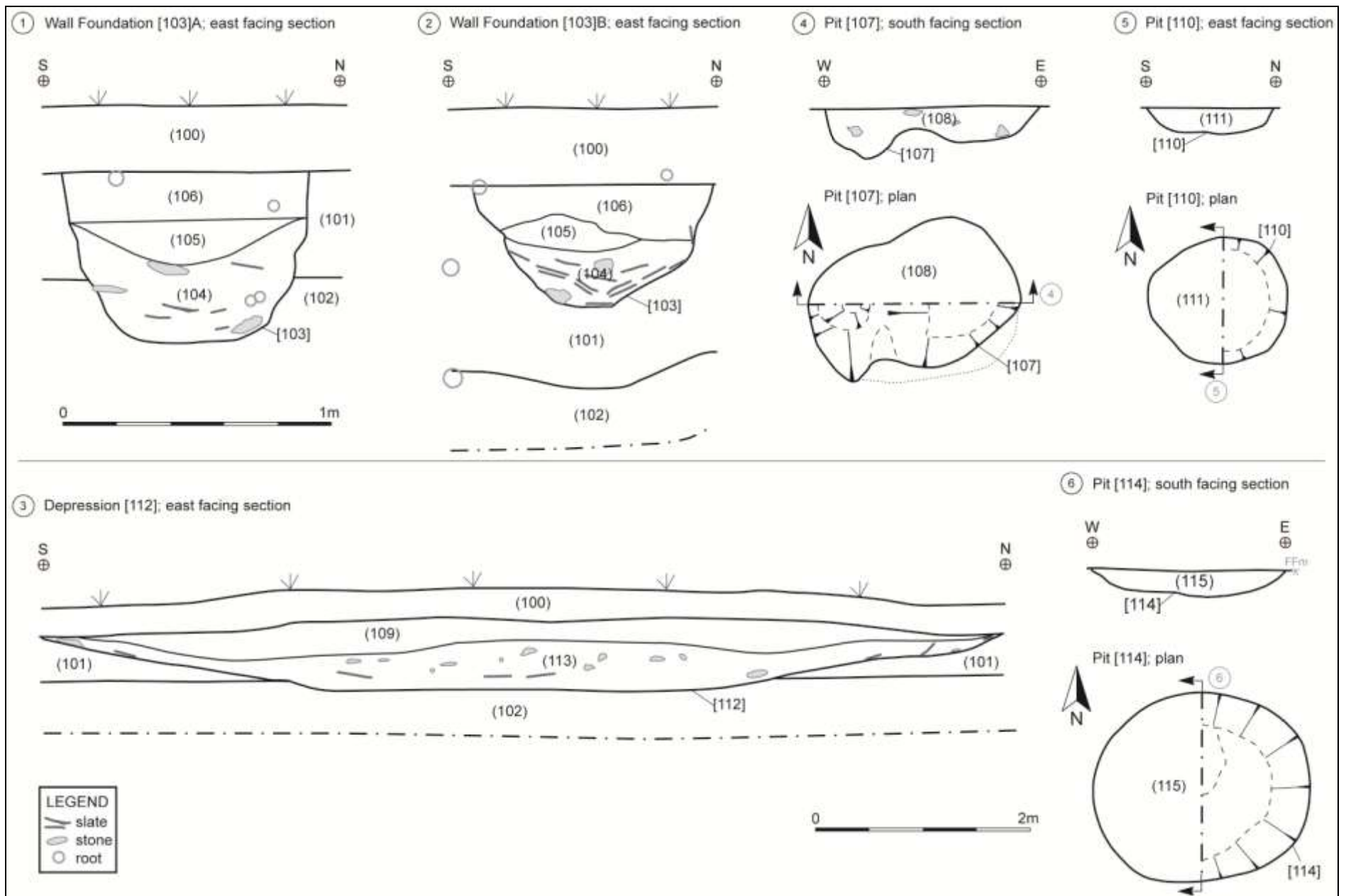


Figure 3: Section drawings. For locations of the sections and plans see Figure 2.