

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Shirwell, North Devon	NGR: SS 59711 37405	Number:
Subject: Archaeological monitoring during groundworks for a drive to the north of Post Box Cottage, Shirwell, North Devon, Devon		Photo attached? Yes
Planning App No: 59923	Recipient museum: n/a	
OASIS ID: Southwes1-263392	Museum Accession no: n/a	
Contractor's reference number/code: SPX16	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 30 th October 2020	
<p>Description of works.</p> <p>Archaeological monitoring was undertaken by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) at the request of a Private Client (the Client). as part of archaeological work before building works associated with the creation of a driveway for both Post Box Cottage and a future plot to the north, at Post Box Cottage, Shirwell, North Devon, Devon. This work was carried out by S. Stevens on 30th October 2019 in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI; Boyd 2016) having been agreed with the Devon County Council Historic Environment Team (DCHET).</p> <p>Post Box Cottage lies within an area of archaeological potential within the historic core of Shirwell and in proximity to the medieval parish church, which is likely to have been the focal point of any early settlement here. Shirwell is recorded as 'Aiscirewilla' in 1086 in Domesday and there would have been a settlement here prior to the Norman Conquest. Given the location and nature of the proposed development here groundworks for the construction of the new dwelling have the potential to expose and destroy archaeological and artefactual deposits associated with the early settlement.</p> <p>The site is located to the north of Post Box Cottage, in the garden, at the centre of the village of Shirwell, on the corner of a junction. Barnstaple lies approximately 5.86km to the south-west and lies at approximately 146m AOD. The soils here are the well-drained fine loamy and fine silty soils of the Denbigh 1 Association, which overlie the sedimentary sandstone of the Bude Formation.</p> <p>The driveway strip located to the north of the cottage was excavated east to west, with a wider visibility splay, and sloping gradually down to the public road. The excavated area measured approx. 18m total in length and 6.5m wide up to the point of the garden fence and then was only 3.5m wide up to the hedge to the west of the garden. The excavation were up to a maximum depth of 0.70m to the east (near the road), whilst being only c.0.1m and still within the topsoil to the west. The excavations revealed a stratigraphy comprising a 0.15m-0.32m thick topsoil (100), of very dark grey-brown soft-friable silt-soil; overlying demolition layer (101), a mixed mid-light yellow-brown and dark grey-brown friable-loose silt, with common sub-angular stone and rubble, including engineering brick, up to 0.40m thick. The demolition layer directly overlay the natural a clean soft to firm yellow silt-clay, with common shillet (see Figure 3).</p> <p>No features were identified within the strip. A small assemblage of finds were found from demolition layer (101), which included: x1 metal boiler pot fragment, x2 Fe objects, x1 modern glass fragment, x1 modern glass bottle, and x7 18th-19th century North Devon coarseware sherds. In addition, x 2 sherds of White refined earthenwares were recovered from topsoil (100). The assemblage was subsequently discarded.</p> <p>Conclusions</p> <p>The results of the strip indicated that other than post-medieval demolition/rubbish that there was little of archaeological interest. The archaeological potential of the rest of the site is still unproven, and groundworks for the future house to be built to the north of this new drive could still have the potential to encounter archaeological features or deposits and should be subject to archaeological monitoring and recording as and when they occur.</p> <p>Bibliography</p> <p>Boyd, N. 2016: Garden of Post Box Cottage, Shirwell, North Devon, Devon: Written Scheme of Investigation. SWARCH report no. SPX16. British Geological Survey 2020: <i>Geology of Britain Viewer</i>. http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983: <i>Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales</i>.</p>		
Recorder: S. Stevens		Date sent to HER: 10.11.2020

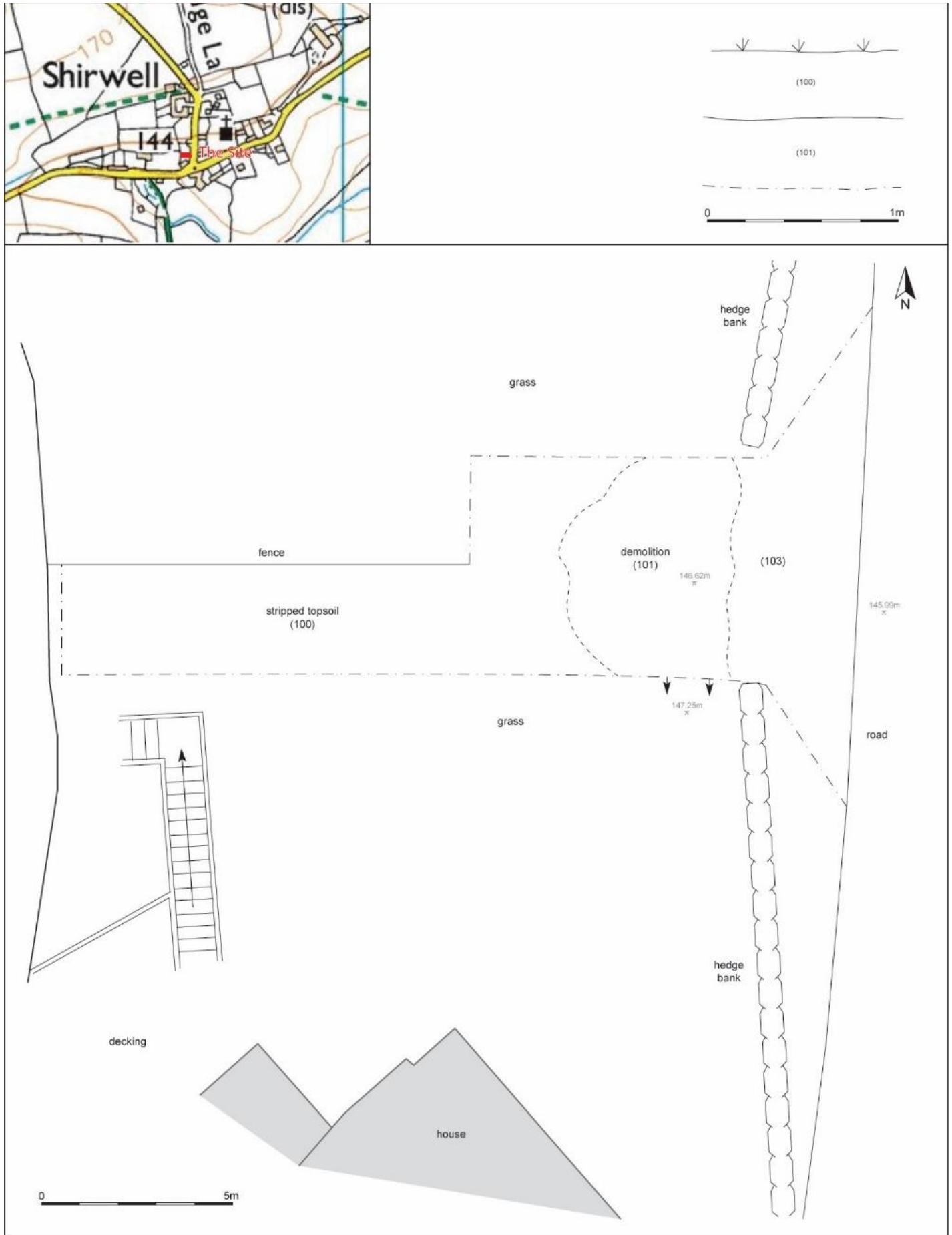


FIGURE 1: SAMPLE SECTION AND SITE PLAN SHOWING LOCATION OF STRIP.



FIGURE 2: SAMPLE SECTION; FROM THE NORTH (1M SCALE).



FIGURE 3: AREA STRIP FOR DRIVEWAY; FROM THE NORTH-EAST (1M SCALE).