

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Bampton, Mid Devon	National Grid Reference: SS 94141 23201	Number:
Subject: Archaeological monitoring and recording during remedial groundworks to return ground level to its previous level at Higher Barn, Bampton		Photo attached? YES
Planning Application no: N/A	Recipient museum: Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter	
OASIS ID: southwes1-289378	Museum Accession no: N/A	
Contractor's reference number/code: BHB17	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 21 st June 2017	
<p>Description of works. Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) at the request of Phil Cookson of Holistic Ideas Ltd (the Agent) during groundworks associated with the reinstatement of ground levels at Higher Barn, Bampton, Devon. The monitoring was carried out in dry and sunny conditions by S. Walls on 21st June 2017. The site had previously been stripped by machine and bulldozer without archaeological supervision, with the levels significantly altered. The works were undertaken in accordance with a method statement produced by Devon County Historic Environment Team (Reed 2017), and in consultation with Stephen Reed (the author of said statement).</p> <p>To the north-west corner of the northern field in which earthworks have been undertaken lies a substantial mound of unknown age or origin, but identified on the HER as a possible prehistoric burial mound, medieval motte or prospect mound (ref: MDV7365). This monument is likely associated with the landscaped gardens around Combe Head, and may have been constructed or enhanced as a landscape feature of the garden. There was therefore potential to encounter archaeological remains associated with this mound which may help understand its origins and function. The soils of the area are the well-drained fine loamy soils of the Neath Association (SSEW 1983) overlying mudstone of the Crackington Formation (BGS 2015).</p> <p>The groundworks comprised the removal of the various bunds which had been constructed, largely around the perimeter of the site, and returning the field to its approximate previous levels. A series of five evaluation trenches were excavated to the depth of undisturbed natural, as the proposed re-instatement works were not to this depth. All five trenches exposed a similar site stratigraphy, with a c.0.25m deposit (100) of dry, compact and friable yellow-grey slightly clayey silt containing common small sub-angular stones (>30mm diameter). This overlay a c.0.3m deposit (101) of slightly looser yellow-grey silt with common large sub-angular stones (>80mm diameter). These layers of re-deposited material overlay to the west of the site a disturbed, yet probably buried, layer of topsoil (102) of dark grey-brown slightly clayey silt, which contained some lenses of re-deposited natural. The buried topsoil survived up to a maximum depth of 0.2m, but was typically less. To the west deposit (102) overlay the natural (103), of yellow-grey silt with common sub-angular stones. To the east deposit (101) directly overlay the natural (103).</p> <p>The previous groundworks on the site had therefore removed all of the topsoil, and cut into the natural across the central and southern part of the site, and to a slightly lesser extent to the east. This is likely to have completely destroyed/removed any archaeological features or deposits that had been in this area. To the west (towards the undesignated mound) the topsoil had been at least partially stripped, prior to spoil mounds being piled up on top, as such there is potential for archaeological features or deposits to survive in the c.20-25m wide strip along the western boundary, and to a limited extent c.5-10m strip along the northern boundary. It should be noted however that the topsoil appears to directly overlie the natural, with no sub-soil present; which suggests that any archaeology is likely to have suffered significant truncation through agricultural activity prior to the more recent groundworks.</p> <p>No finds were recovered, despite all of the various spoil heaps on the site being walked over.</p> <p>Conclusions</p> <p>The majority of the site (including the rest of the field, and the field to the south) has been subject to severe if not complete truncation. The excavated trenches demonstrated that the area closest to the 'mound' has not been so severely affected, with buried topsoil overlying the natural below the layers of dumped material. No archaeological features or finds were recovered and the proposed restoration of the field to normal levels will not result in any further truncation of any surviving archaeological features or deposits.</p> <p>References</p> <p>Reed, S. 2017: <i>Method Statement For Archaeological Monitoring And Recording During Remedial Groundworks At Higher Barn, Bampton.</i></p> <p>Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983: <i>Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales (a brief explanation of the constituent soil associations).</i></p> <p>British Geological Survey 2014: <i>Geology of Britain Viewer.</i> http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html</p>		
Recorder: S. Walls	Date sent to HER: 04/07/2017	

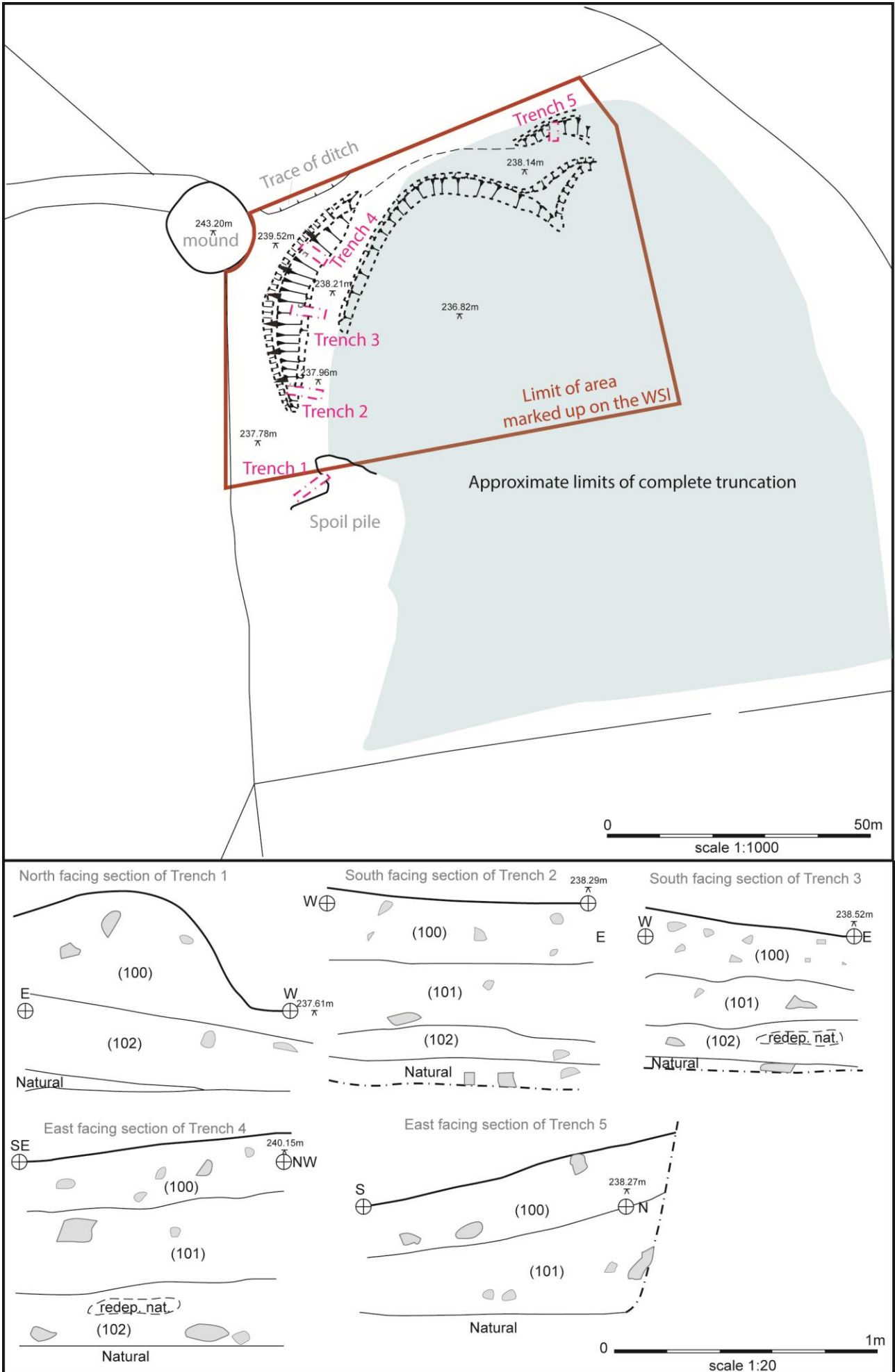


Figure 1: Site plan showing excavated areas and sample sections.



Figure 2: Post-excavation shot of Trench 2; viewed from the east (scale 1m).