

HILLTOWN FARM WARKLEIGH NORTH DEVON DEVON

Results of Archaeological Monitoring & Recording



South West Archaeology Ltd. report no. 200213



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Hilltown Farm, Warkleigh, North Devon, Devon

Results of Archaeological Monitoring & Recording

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Work undertaken by SWARCH for
Woodward Smith Chartered Architects (the Agent)
on behalf of a Private Client (the Client)

Summary

This report presents the results of archaeological monitoring and recording carried out by South West Archaeology Ltd. during groundworks associated with the erection of a replacement dwelling at Hilltown Farm, Warkleigh, Devon. The site is located in an area of known archaeological potential with a background of prehistoric activity within the wider landscape. A 17th century farmhouse stood on the site of development until 2017 and it is suggested that this replaced an earlier, possibly medieval farmhouse set within a wider medieval agricultural landscape.

The catastrophic fire in 2017 gutted a building substantially rebuilt in the later 17th century, but one with medieval origins. The archaeological monitoring that took place determined that the medieval house had been built on a terrace cut into the gentle slope, and that ground levels to the north-east and south-east had subsequently been reduced, removing any archaeological levels in those areas. A small number of 19th and 20th century features were identified, as well as a small but fairly complex area of medieval features at the north-eastern end of the farmhouse. A sub-square hollow 4.40x3.30m across and associated with two possible beams slots, two postholes, and a fragment of cobbling, survived below the floors of what had been the end room of the house. Part of the base of the hollow appeared worn as if used as a surface, and on top of this a cobbled floor had been laid which only survived where it subsided into the cut. The slots and postholes were cut into the base of the hollow. It is possible the cobbling belonged to the floor of a cross passage, and the hollow formed part of an earlier floor; the evidence is, however, equivocal. Only a small amount of datable material was recovered from the site, but enough to suggest the cobbled surfaces had been laid during the medieval period, and these were in turn sealed by redeposited natural containing a small amount of post-medieval pottery.



February 2020

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

LOCATION:	HILLTOWN FARM
PARISH:	CHITTLEHAMHOLT, SATTERLEIGH AND WARKLEIGH
DISTRICT:	NORTH DEVON
COUNTY:	DEVON
NGR:	SS 65852 23160
PLANNING NO.	66331
OASIS NUMBER:	SOUTHWES1-348130
DCHET REFERENCE:	ARCH/DM/ND/33935A
SWARCH REF.	CHF19

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) was commissioned by Woodward Smith Chartered Architects (the Agent) on behalf of a Private Client (the Client) to undertake archaeological monitoring and recording during groundworks associated with the erection of a replacement dwelling at Hilltown Farm, Warkleigh, Devon.

This work was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (Boyd 2019) drawn up in consultation with the Devon County Council Historic Environment Team (DCHET) and in line with best practice and ClfA guidelines (2014).

1.2 TOPOGRAPHICAL AND GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Hilltown Farm is one of a series of isolated farmsteads situated between South Molton, approximately 6km to the north-east, and High Bickington, approximately 6.5km to the south-west. It is c.1.6km west of the River Mole in the rolling countryside of North Devon. The site lies at the western end of a large farm complex on ground sloping from the north-west to south-east between heights of c.165m-160m AOD (Figure 1).

The soils of this area are the well-drained fine loamy or fine silty soils over rock of the Manod Association, with the well-drained fine loamy soils of the Neath Association (SSEW 1983). These overlie the sandstones of the Bude Sandstones Formation (BGS 2020).

1.3 METHODOLOGY

The archaeological monitoring was conducted in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (Boyd 2019) drawn up in consultation with Devon County Historic Environment Team (DCHET) and in line with best practice. A single irregular area orientated approximately north-east to south-west, and measuring 17m long and up to 15m wide, covering a large portion of the footprint of the destroyed former structure, was excavated by machine to the depth of weathered natural using a toothless grading bucket under archaeological supervision. Exposed archaeological deposits were excavated by hand and in accordance with the WSI and ClfA guidelines. The archaeological monitoring took place in September 2019.



FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION (THE SITE IS INDICATED).

1.4 HISTORICAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Hilltown is located to the north-east of the manor of Warkleigh, in the historic hundred and deanery of South Molton. From the reign of Henry II the manor of Warkleigh was owned by the Raleigh family, with whom it remained until 1324 when it was sold with Satterleigh, to Lord Martyn. From him the manor descended through the Audleys, to the Bouchiers, and later to the ownership of James Gould (Lysons & Lysons 1822).

The Devon Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) indicates that Hilltown Farm is located within a landscape of medieval farmland, with enclosures based on strip fields. The Devon HER notes the presence of cropmarks relating to medieval or post-medieval fieldsystems (MDV120934; MDV120960; MDV120964; MDV120965). The cropmarks of probable Prehistoric enclosures have also been identified (MDV120938; MDV120939). Most of the neighbouring farms are described as being post-medieval in date: West Satterleigh dating to the 16th century (List1258736), Old Parsonage Farm to the 17th century (List1258692), and Warkleigh to the 19th century (List1258734). However, this is likely to reflect the limitation of the Listing process and many of these houses are

likely to be medieval in origin.

The planning permission relates to the rebuilding of the Grade II 17th century Hilltown Farmhouse which was destroyed by fire in 2017. The Listing text (now removed from the Historic England website) described the structure as:

Farmhouse with barn and outbuildings attached. Farmhouse late C17, barn probably C18 and outbuildings. C19. Painted rendered stone rubble and cob. Thatch roof, continuous over attached barn, gable end to right, hipped at left end. Brick stacks to right gable end and to left (former gable) end of farmhouse, and tall brick shaft to rear outshut. Gable ended slate roof to attached outbuildings. Farmhouse has 2-room and cross-passage plan, the passage containing C19 straight-run staircase, with smaller parlour to left and large kitchen to right. Dairy wing added probably in C18 to rear creating L-shaped plan, with slated outshut in the angle. Barn attached at left end set at right angles to farmhouse, the roof continuous, but upper left side of barn has been partially demolished. Outbuildings with cob courtyard walls with pantile capping extend forward at the right end of the barn to front of farmhouse. 2 storeys. 4-window range. C19/early C20 fenestration. 3-light casement at left end, otherwise 2 lights, all 2 panes per light. Ground floor has a 3-light casement 6 panes per light to each side of plank door, the upper 2 panels glazed. Barn has double plank doors to cart entrance. Interior. Largely remodelled in C19, all 4-panelled doors surviving and C19 staircase. Kitchen fireplace at right end has late C17 ovolo moulded timber lintel with incised X, bar and scroll stops. Recess to left may have originally been a smoking chamber, later converted to creamery. Roof trusses are wide span straight principals with pegged lapped collars. Some, almost certainly reused, smoke-blackened rafters at intervals suggest a complete rebuilding in the late C17 of a former medieval farmhouse.

Hilltown is an unremarkable place name but may be documented as far back as 1256 (as *la Helle*, FF), *Hilton* in 1330 (SR), and appearing in 1428 via *John atte Hill* and in 1524 in *John Hyll* (EPNS 1932). The tithe map and apportionment indicate that in 1841 Hilltown Farm was owned by the Reverend William Karlake and leased by one William Mills. Andrews (1960, 57-58) notes the farm was sold by the representatives of the Karlakes (Meddon Bruton) to the tenant 'a few years ago'. The surrounding land was a mix of meadow, pasture, arable and orchard. The layout of the farmstead in 1840 is essentially identical to that of 1903, save for the addition of a horse engine house and a large pool; it remained largely unchanged into the later 20th century, whereupon the farmstead expanded considerably to the east with the construction of numerous modern farm buildings.

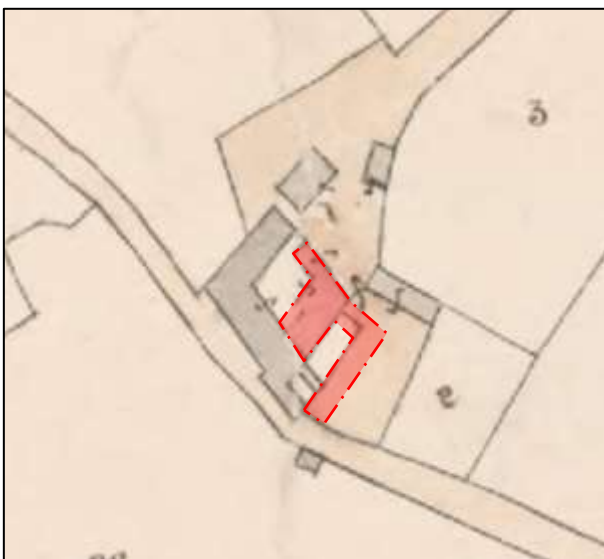


FIGURE 2: EXTRACT FROM THE 1841 WARKLEIGH TITHE MAP SHOWING HILLTOWN FARM (DHC). THE EXCAVATED AREA IS INDICATED.



FIGURE 3: EXTRACT FROM THE 1ST EDITION OS 25INCH MAP, SURVEYED 1888, PUBLISHED 1889 (DEVON SHEET XXI.15). THE EXCAVATED AREA IS INDICATED.

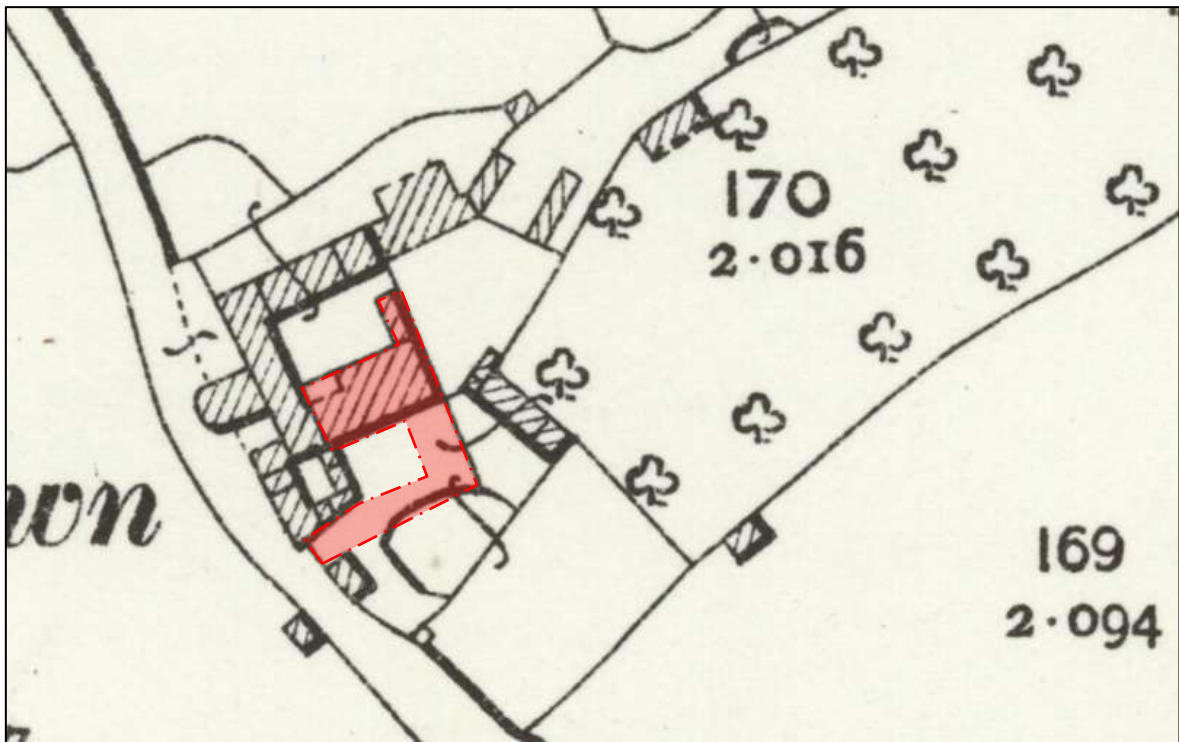


FIGURE 4: EXTRACT FROM THE 2ND EDITION OS 25INCH MAP, SURVEYED 1903, PUBLISHED 1905 (DEVON SHEET XXI.15). THE EXCAVATED AREA IS INDICATED.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The archaeological monitoring comprised the excavation of a single irregular area orientated approximately north-east to south-west, measuring 17m long and up to 15m wide, covering most of the footprint of the destroyed farmhouse (Figure 5). The walls of the farmhouse had already been demolished and removed prior to the start of works. The site was stripped by a 18t tracked mechanical excavator to the depth of weathered natural using a toothless grading bucket under archaeological supervision. Over most of the site the weathered shillet was only just below the surface, and it became clear the farmhouse had both been terraced into the slope and left sitting on a plinth of shillet as levels had been reduced to the east and south.

The excavations identified a total of 16 features, concentrated to the eastern end of the farmhouse. These included: cobble floor surfaces; one drain; two gullies/slots; two pits; three postholes; one wall foundation; and two other features. Full context descriptions can be found in Appendix 1; finds concordance in Appendix 2; and photographic archive in Appendix 3.

2.2 EXCAVATION RESULTS

2.2.1 DEPOSIT MODEL

The stratigraphy was consistent across the whole site. A layer of overgrown demolition material (100) up to 0.10m thick overlay a layer of re-deposited red-brown and yellow-grey shillet-rich clay-silt natural (101) and (102) up to 0.13m thick; dark grey friable silt subsoil (103) up to 0.03m thick; and the natural shillet (139).

2.2.2 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY FEATURES

At the western end of the farmhouse was feature [139], a large sub-rectangular cut measuring up to 5.65m x 5.20m across and 0.32m deep with near vertical sides and flat base (see Figure 5). In the centre of its north-western side a recess measuring 1.90m wide and extending out 0.40m was present; this was set with concrete slabs and may have formed the base of a fireplace or perhaps a threshold. However, the post-fire architect's drawings and aerial photographs show neither a stack nor a doorway at this location. Cut [139] was filled with demolition material from the levelling of the farmhouse; some wooden joists survived indicating there had been a 19th century suspended timber floor here.

At the north-eastern corner of the farmhouse was a linear drain [111] (see Figure 5). It ran parallel to the back of the house and was 5m long and 0.50m wide with a surviving depth of 0.15m, with near vertical sides and flat base. It was formed of a stone-built structure {113} of angular and sub-angular stones up to 0.25x0.10x0.10m in size with a central channel 0.10m wide filled with (112), a soft mid grey-brown silt. At the western end was a 20th century ceramic drain/sump, and the feature terminated at a modern manhole to the east within the concrete yard. This drain passed beneath what is *assumed* to have been early outshut/possible stair turret but runs between clearly later features and the fill contained blue transfer-printed pottery (i.e. post 1770 and probably post 1850). Thus, it is interpreted as a 19th century drain, despite its archaic build.

Adjacent to this drain was pit [114] (see Figure 5). This was sub-rectangular in plan, measuring 1m x 0.42m across on a north-west to south-east orientation. It contained an upper fill: (115), loose mortar-rich shillet with large angular stone inclusions; this feature appeared clearly recent (i.e. 20th century) in date and was not excavated.

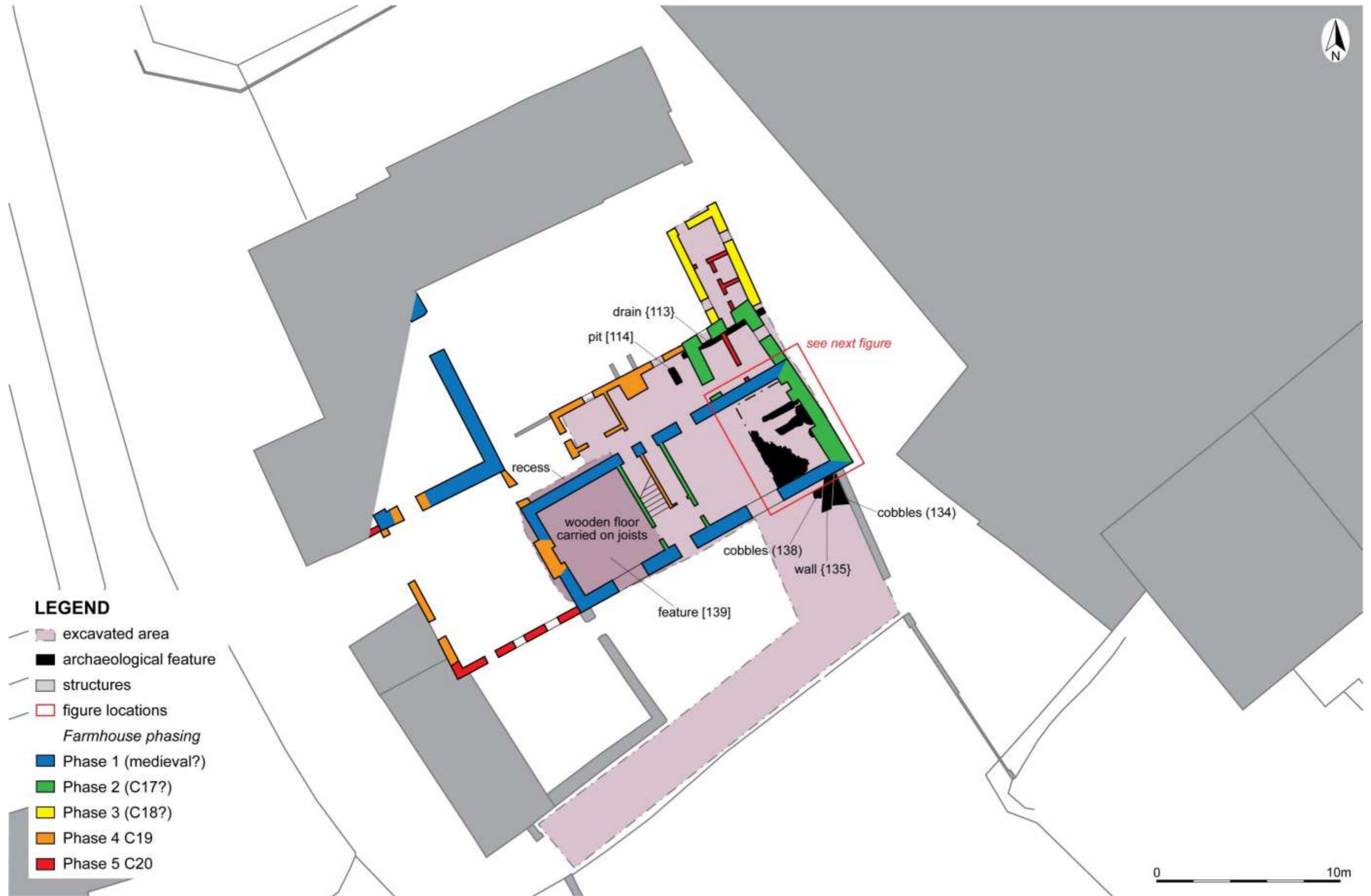


FIGURE 5: SITE PLAN SHOWING LOCATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES (BASED ON SUPPLIED PLANS; PHASING IS PROVISIONAL AND BASED ON AN INTERPRETATION OF THE SUPPLIED PLANS AND LISTING DESCRIPTION).

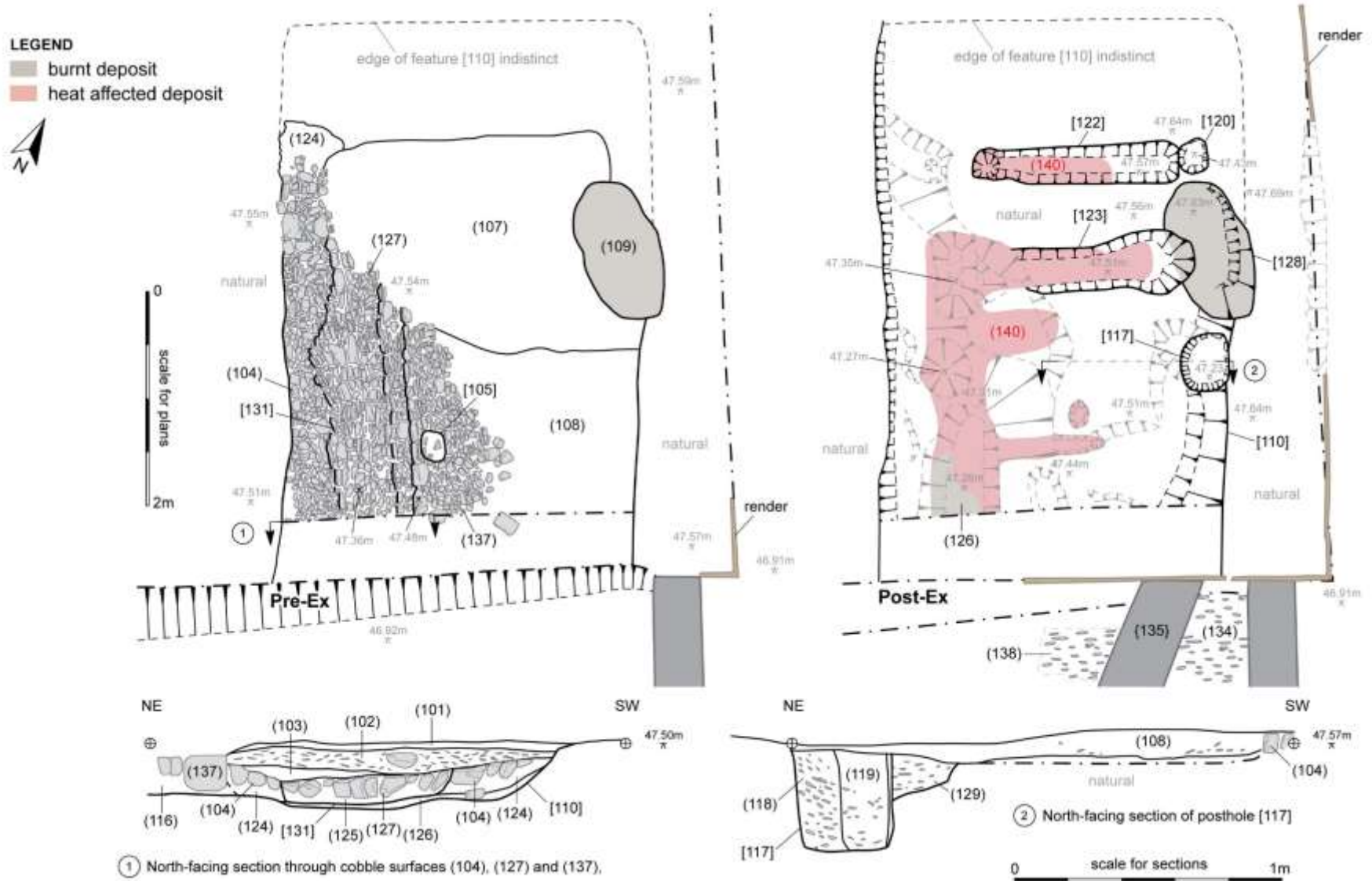


FIGURE 6: SITE PLANS AND SECTIONS (HEIGHTS ARE AOD).



FIGURE 7: COBBLE SURFACES (104), (127) AND (137) SET WITHIN FEATURE [110], WITH FIRE PIT [128]; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-EAST (2M SCALES).

Beyond the south-east corner of the farmhouse, and at a lower level, the remains of a stone wall were encountered {135}. It had been orientated approximately north to south and survived as two courses of loosely set angular stone rubble in a grey clay bond; the surviving remnant was a 2.05m long and 0.55m wide. This wall was set within construction cut [136], which measured 0.61m wide and 0.20m deep with vertical sides and flat base. This wall may be shown on the tithe map (see Figure 2, where a boundary is shown projecting from the house a little way down from the south-east corner). Either side of this wall were two panels of rough, poor quality cobbling. Panel (134) measured up to 2×0.60m and was located between the standing garden wall and wall {135}; these cobbles appeared to overlay the natural. To the east of wall footing {135}, panel (138) was encountered; it measured 0.7×0.5m across.

2.2.3 MEDIEVAL FEATURES

In the south-east corner of the site was a large sub-square feature 4.40m+ by 3.30m across, feature [110] (see Figures 6-8, 10). This broad, shallow cut contained a series of other features, and while for the most part it did sit within the footprint of the destroyed farmhouse, it did appear to extend beneath of the south-east wall of the house.

Feature [110] had an uneven, undulating base up to 0.28m deep, marked by a strong steep, often vertical cut to the south-west, but with less well defined and more gently sloping edges to the north-west and north-east; the south-eastern edge lay somewhere beyond the edge of excavation. For the most part, the base of the feature was fairly rough; however, along its south-western side it descended to its lowest point via a series of well-defined hollows, and the natural appeared worn as if it had been used as a surface. In the south corner a thin layer of firm mid-to-dark reddish-brown clay-silt 0.04m thick was present (126); this lay above a section of the natural which had been discoloured and appeared baked (140), and which extended across much of [110] (see Figure 6). The purpose and function of this feature is difficult to determine; layers above the base of the hollow produced small abraded sherds of North Devon medieval coarseware, but these are likely to relate to the cobbled surfaces above rather than the date and use of this hollow. The hollow

appears to sit within the walls of the former farmhouse, but at a much lower level than the floors – and walls – of the rest of the building.

Sealing the base of the lower part of feature [110] was a fairly thick layer of a firm mid reddish-brown clay-silt (124). This layer, with (108) and (116), extended across c.50% of the feature, petering out to the north and east. To the south and west it formed part of the bedding layer for a layer of cobbles, the surviving remnant covering a triangular area 3.50m×1.10m across. This area of cobbling was divisible into several component parts. Cobbles (104) were the lowest, tightly packed and poorly sorted sub-angular stones up to 0.25×0.10×0.10m in size set within a matrix of mid grey-brown firm clay-silt. A clear straight kerb could be identified along the eastern edge of (104), where the cobbling stepped up to cover a small sub-rectangular area (137) measuring up to 2×0.95m on the same north-west to south-east orientation. This surface (137) was formed of packed sub-rectangular slatestone cobbles up to 0.25×0.10×0.10m in size with a matrix of mid grey-brown firm clay silt; the kerb was formed of more regular angular cobbles up to 0.25×0.20×0.15m in size. These cobbles had been set on bedding layer (116), mid reddish-brown firm clay-silt very similar to (124). This surface was cut by a small possible posthole [105]. To the east, a firm mid reddish-brown clay-silt layer (108) extended beyond the area of the surviving cobbles and probably represents a continuation of the bedding layer, indicating the cobbles once extended further to the east within feature [110].

Cobbles (104) had been cut down the centre by linear slot [131] and the cobbles re-set (127). This slot was orientated north-west to south-east and measured 2.70×0.44-0.66m wide and 0.12m deep with vertical sides and flat base. It contained two fills: (125), a firm basal yellow-grey clay-silt up to 0.05m thick, over which was cobble surface (127), consisting of tightly packed poorly sorted sub-angular slatestone cobbles up to 0.25×0.10×0.10m in size, had been laid. These cobbles were similar to those of (104), though slightly more irregularly laid. Layer (125) produced three sherds of North Devon medieval coarseware.



FIGURE 8: FEATURE [110] POST-EXCAVATION; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-WEST (2M SCALES).

Several features were identified cut into the base of [110] to its north-eastern side: Two linear slots [122] and [123], a small posthole [120] and a large posthole [117], and a hollow [128]. The latter was largely filled with heat-affected and discoloured shillet. The relationship between these features and the other layers in hollow [110] was poorly preserved: the top of the this area had been disturbed and confused during the demolition of the standing structure, which had deposited a thin layer of demolition material (107) some most of the area.

The two linear slots, [122] and [123] were identified beyond the edge of the surviving cobbles. They ran parallel to each other on an approximate north-east to south-west alignment congruent with hollow [110]. Slot [122] was c.1.94m long and up to 0.40m wide and 0.08m deep with a shallow concave profile. It contained a single fill (132), a loose shillet within a firm reddish-grey-brown clay-silt. Approximately 0.50m to the south-east was slot [123], which was 1.70m long and 0.40m wide and 0.08m deep with a shallow concave profile. It contained a single fill (133) that was identical to that of (132).

A small posthole [120] was identified at the eastern end of slot [122]. It was circular in plan, measuring 0.30m in diameter and 0.32m deep with near vertical to vertical sides and irregular base. It contained a single fill (121), a firm mid red-brown clay-silt with a number of packing stones, including a fragment of perforated slate. There may have been a matching posthole at the western end of the slot, but it was shallow and poorly defined.

Posthole [117] was located to the eastern side of hollow [110]. It was sub-square in plan, 0.54×0.44m across and 0.37m deep with near vertical sides and a flat base. It contained two fills: packing material (118), a loose grey shillet with packing stones; and post-pipe (119), dark grey soft slightly clayey silt which contains fragments of decaying wood. Fill (119) was overlain by layer (108); normally this would indicate the posthole predated layer (108), but the survival of decayed wood in the post-pipe would suggest it is a later feature and that (108) was redeposited or spread when its posited cobbling was taken up.

The last feature, hollow [128], was located just to the north of [117]. It was sub-oval in plan on an approximate north-west to south-east alignment and measured 1.38×0.72m across and up to 0.10m deep. It survived as a shallow feature with a gently concave profile, and whilst it did not have a fill *per se* it formed of an area (109) of blackened and pinkish shillet, suggestive of having been under a hot/consistent heat source, and that the feature represents the seat of a fire.

Locating hollow [128] within the former farmhouse indicates it is positioned directly beneath the fireplace with the late 17th century ovolo moulded timber lintel with incised X, bar and scroll stops; postholes [120] and [117] would be located to either side. The evidence for heating clearly relates to this historic fireplace, and the two postholes *could* relate to posts positioned either side of the hearth (for supporting the lintel, during construction, or perhaps supporting a spit etc.).

The stratigraphically latest layers overly the lower part of cobbled surfaces (104) and (127). These consisted of a sequence of three distinct but thin layers of redeposited natural (101), (102) and (103). These are interpreted as levelling deposits that seal the cobbles and raise the level of the floor to match that of the rest of the farmhouse. One body sherd of post-medieval North Devon gravel tempered pottery came from layer (103), and this perhaps took place during the 17th century remodelling of the farmhouse.

2.2.4 FINDS

Only a small quantity of finds was recovered during the excavations. They included: ×1 sherd (165g) of 16th-17th century North Devon gravel tempered pottery from layer (103); ×2 sherds (13g) of North Devon medieval coarseware, and 2 copper alloy objects (×1 button; ×1 illegible coin) from the demolition material infilling/overlying hollow [110]; ×5 sherds (76g) of post-medieval white-refined

earthenware from drain fill (112); a roof slate from the fill of posthole [120]; and ×3 sherds of North Devon medieval coarseware from the bedding layer beneath cobble surface (127). A small number of medieval and post-medieval sherds of pottery were also recovered from unstratified contexts across the site. The finds recovered would indicate that the site has medieval origins, and that the North Devon production centres dominated throughout its history.



FIGURE 9: DETAIL OF THE SOUTH-WEST CORNER OF FEATURE [110], SHOWING THE HEAT AFFECTED NATURAL BENEATH COBBLED SURFACES (104) AND (127); VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-WEST (PART 2M SCALE).



FIGURE 10: FEATURE [110], POST-EXCAVATION; VIEWED FROM THE EAST-SOUTH-EAST (2M SCALES). NOTE THE WORN SHILLET/ POSSIBLE SURFACE APPEARS RESTRICTED TO THE SOUTH-WESTERN SIDE OF [110] (TOP LEFT).

2.3 DISCUSSION

The archaeological monitoring revealed a number of features relating to the 19th century and modern farmhouse, and one area containing a series of earlier features. The extant farmyard sits on a sloping hillside into which a series of terraces have clearly been cut, stepping down from the upper north-west terrace where the remaining barns are situated. The footprint of the former Listed farmhouse structure is located on the middle terrace, with a lower terrace to the south-east forming a garden area and access track.

The destroyed former structure was recorded in its Listing text as being a 17th century rebuild of an earlier farmhouse, taking the form of a *two-cell* cross-passage building. The norm for Devon is the *three-cell* cross-passage form, and thus the later 17th century rebuilding – perhaps undertaken following an earlier catastrophic event – may have seen a larger structure reduced in size (though see below). *Contra* the Listing, the (probable threshing) barn to the north-west (formerly joined to the farmhouse by a wing) has tremendously thick stone and cob walls (c.1.0m) which would suggest it is also medieval in origin.

The archaeological evidence would confirm the presence of structures predating the 17th century, although terracing associated with the (re)construction of the farmhouse and the demolition of the destroyed building appears to have truncated much of the site. The main evidence lies in hollow [110]. As discussed, the purpose of this hollow is unclear but, at least part, the base appears to have served as a surface, perhaps on the line of a cross passage, later raised with a cobbled floor inserted. The two slots identified, [122] and [123], could be joist slots that belonged to a suspended timber floor, although it would be rather early for such an innovation.

It is also possible that the observed hollow [110] could have been enlarged from an earlier, smaller feature. The clear wear pattern in the base of [110] is restricted to a c.1m band parallel with the south-west side of the feature (see Figure 10). Therefore, it is possible we have one side and the base of a rock-cut linear feature, the north-eastern side (where the shillet looks ragged) being dug out at a later point to install the kerb in the cobbles. However, the posited original cut is too narrow for a cross passage and is highly unlikely to have been a foundation trench as all the other farmhouse walls were built off the top of the shillet.

Lastly, while Figure 5 would appear to demonstrate that feature [110] corresponds with an inner room, the fact that it appeared to extend beneath the walls of the later farmhouse to the south-east could be taken to imply it formed part of a cross wing or, more tentatively, it belonged to an earlier structure altogether – perhaps a small rectangular hovel partly cut into the slope. The evidence for a heating in the base of the feature *might* suggest an *in-situ* fire, but again, it is not clear.

Hollow [110] was later infilled and a reasonably good cobbled surface installed; the layers associated with this phase appear to be medieval in date, although the pottery is small and abraded and thus may be residual. Cobbles (104)/(127)/(137) probably only survived because they had subsided into this hollow. The clear kerb in the cobbles would imply this *was* the location of a cross passage, or perhaps the back edge of a room with a non-domestic use. The reasoning behind taking up and relaying a section of these cobbles (127) is unclear, but perhaps they had become damaged through use. The post-medieval North Devon pottery found over these cobbles would suggest they can be associated with a late medieval/early post medieval phase of the house.

The stratigraphy and dating do not allow us to say for certain whether the other features here – the slots and postholes – can be associated with these medieval/early post-medieval features. On balance, they are likely to be close contemporaries although the surviving fragments of wood in posthole [117] would suggest this is probably later. The heat-affected fill of hollow [128] clearly

shows at the same level as layer (107), and undoubtedly relates to the fireplace that was located at this end of the old farmhouse. The material sealing the cobbles may have extended across the whole area, but as the site was levelled during the demolition of the old walls and the historic floor levels (i.e. concrete or otherwise) taken up, it is impossible to be certain.

The other features identified were all clearly late and relate to the 19th century and later farmhouse.

3.0 CONCLUSION

The catastrophic fire in 2017 gutted a building substantially rebuilt in the later 17th century but with medieval origins. The archaeological monitoring that took place determined that the medieval house had been built on a terrace cut into the gentle slope, and that ground levels to the north-east and south-east had subsequently been reduced, removing any archaeological levels in those areas. A small number of 19th and 20th century features were identified, as well as a small but fairly complex area of medieval features at the north-eastern end of the farmhouse. A sub-square hollow 4.40×3.30m across and associated with two possible beams slots, two postholes, and a fragment of cobbling, survived below the floors of what had been the end room of the house. Part of the base of the hollow appeared worn as if used as a surface, and on top of this a cobbled floor had been laid which only survived where it subsided into the cut. The slots and postholes were cut into the base of the hollow. It is possible the cobbling belonged to the floor of a cross passage, and the hollow formed part of an earlier floor; the evidence is, however, equivocal. Only a small amount of datable material was recovered from the site, but enough to suggest the cobbled surfaces had been laid during the medieval period, and these were in turn sealed by redeposited natural containing a small amount of post-medieval pottery.

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APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Context	Type	Description	Relationships	Depth/thickness (m)	Spot date
(100)	Layer	Demolition rubble – angular and sub-angular stone rubble mixed with mid to dark grey-brown silt. Demolition rubble from the 2017 destruction of the farmhouse.	Overlies (101)	Up to 0.10m thick	Modern
(101)	Layer	Re-deposited natural – reddish-brown shillet rich firm clay-silt. Probable levelling layer.	Overlain by (100); overlies (102)	Up to 0.08m thick	Post-medieval
(102)	Layer	Re-deposited natural – yellow to grey-yellow shillet rich clay-silt. Probable levelling layer.	Overlain by (101); overlies (103)	Up to 0.05m thick	Post-medieval
(103)	Layer	Subsoil – dark grey soft silt. Probable natural silting deposit.	Overlain by (102); overlies (127)	Up to 0.03m thick	Post-medieval
(104)	Surface	Cobble surface – sub-triangular area orientated approximately north-west to south-east and measuring 3.50x1.10m. Tightly packed poorly sorted sub-angular slatestone cobbles up to 0.25x0.10x0.10m in size and set within a matrix of mid grey-brown firm clay-silt. Likely to extended further across the site.	Cut by [131]; overlies (124)	0.10m thick	Post-medieval
[105]	Cut	Possible post-hole – sub-oval feature measuring 0.28x0.21m in diameter. Not excavated as defined by absence of cobbles rather than clearly defined cut. Possible base of post-hole.	Filled by (106); cuts (137)	0.05m deep	Post-medieval / Modern
(106)	Fill	Fill of possible post-hole [105] – mid red-brown firm to stiff clay-silt with common small shillet fragments.	Overlain by (103); fill of [105]	0.05m thick	Post-medieval / Modern
(107)	Layer	Demolition material within hollow formed by [110] – upper layer of mid dirty grey-brown firm clay-silt with stone and modern rubble.	Overlies (108); same as (100)	Up to 0.10m thick	Modern
(108)	Layer	Possible bedding layer material for removed cobble surfaces – mid red-brown to brown firm clay-silt. Covers an area measuring c.2.05m north-south x 1.30m wide and appears to abut cobbles (137).	Overlain by (107); abuts (137); overlies (119); part of (116),(124)	Up to 0.10m thick	-
(109)	Fill	Fill of fire pit [128] – area of blackened pinkish natural shillet. Not a fill as such, but a heat affected area of the natural suggesting that feature [128] was the seat of a fire.	Overlain by (107); fill of [128]	-	-
[110]	Cut	Sub-rectangular feature – orientated approximately north-west to south-east and measuring 4.4m+ x 3.30m. Sharp, near vertical western edge and more gradual eastern edge, with fairly flat base towards east and north-east, becoming more undulating and irregular to the south-west. Nature of the natural in the south-west corner suggests possible wear/compaction of a surface. This area also shows discolouration indicative of being heat affected.	Filled by (126); cuts (130)	Up to 0.28m deep	-
[111]	Cut	Drain – linear cut orientated approximately north-east to south-west. Measures 5+mx0.50m wide and surviving to a depth of 0.15m with near vertical sides and flat base.	Filled by (112), (113); cuts (130)	0.15m deep	Post-medieval / Modern
(112)	Fill	Infill of drain – mid grey-brown silt.	Overlain by (100); overlies (113); fill of [111]	0.15m thick	Post-medieval / Modern
{113}	Structure	Drain construction – stone-built structure of drain [111] – angular and sub-angular stones up to 0.25x0.10x0.10m in size lining edges of linear drain cut. Central channel 0.10m wide. Would probably have had stone capping.	Overlain by (112); fill of [111]	0.15m high	Post-medieval / Modern
[114]	Cut	Pit – sub-rectangular feature orientated approximately north-west to south-east. Measures 1.0x0.42m. Judged to be modern and not excavated.	Filled by (115); cuts (130)	-	Modern
(115)	Fill	Fill of pit [114] – loose mortar rich shillet with large (up to 0.20m) angular stone inclusions.	Overlain by (100); fill of [114]	-	Modern

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(116)	Layer	Bedding layer for cobbles (137) – mid red-brown firm-stiff clay-silt with common small shillet fragments.	Overlain by (137); same as (124); overlies [110]	Up to 0.15m thick	Post-medieval
[117]	Cut	Posthole – large sub-square post-hole measuring 0.54m x 0.44m and 0.37m deep with very steep to near vertical sides and flat base.	Filled by (118), (119); cuts (129)	0.37m deep	-
(118)	Fill	Post-packing fill of posthole [117] – loose grey shillet with angular packing stone inclusions up to 0.20m in size.	Abutted by (119); fill of [117]	0.37m thick	-
(119)	Fill	Sub-square post-pipe within post-hole [117] – dark grey soft slightly clay-silt with fragments of decaying wood. Measures 0.18m wide.	Overlain by (108); abuts (118); fill of [117]	0.37m deep	-
[120]	Cut	Posthole – sub-circular feature measuring 0.30m in diameter and 0.32m deep with near vertical to vertical sloping sides and irregular base.	Filled by (121); cuts [110]	0.32m deep	-
(121)	Fill	Fill of posthole [120] – mid red-brown firm to loose clay-silt with common to frequent shillet and occasional packing stones up to 0.10m in size.	Overlain by (107); fill of [120]	0.32m thick	-
[122]	Cut	Linear gully/slot – orientated approximately north-east to south-west. Measures 1.94m long x 0.40m wide, tapering to 0.30m at western end, and 0.08m deep with a shallow concave profile.	Filled by (132); cuts (130)	0.08m deep	-
[123]	Cut	Linear gully/slot – orientated approximately north-east to south-west. Measures 1.70m long x 0.40m wide and 0.08m deep with a shallow concave profile.	Filled by (133); cuts (130)	0.08m deep	-
(124)	Layer	Bedding layer for cobbles (104) – mid red-brown firm-stiff clay-silt with common small shillet fragments.			
(125)	Fill	Fill of linear cut [131] – mid yellow-grey firm clay-silt with common small shillet fragments.	Overlain by (127); fill of [131]	Up to 0.05m thick	Post-medieval
(126)	Fill	Fill of feature [110] – mid-dark red-brown firm clay-silt with darker material within, perhaps carbonised material. Common sub-angular to sub-rounded small stone inclusions. This fill is only present in the south-west corner of the feature and is situated above an area of heat affected natural.	Overlain by (124); fill of [110]	0.04m thick	-
(127)	Surface	Cobble surface – linear area of re-set cobbles within cobble surface (104). Orientated approximately north-west to south-east and measuring 2.70x0.44-0.66m. Tightly packed poorly sorted sub-angular slatestone cobbles up to 0.25x0.10x0.10m in size and set within a matrix of mid grey-brown firm clay-silt.	Overlain by (103); overlies (125); fill of [131]	0.10m thick	Post-medieval
[128]	Cut	Fire pit – sub-oval feature orientated approximately north-west to south-east. Measures 1.38x0.72m and up to 0.10m deep. Forms a shallow feature with a gently concave profile.	Filled by (109); cuts (130)	Up to 0.10m deep	-
(129)	Deposit	Probable natural deposit filling two likely natural shallow scoops adjacent to posthole [117]. Scoops are sub-oval and measure up to 0.50m in size and 0.16m deep and appear to be weathered natural. Fill deposit comprises shillet within yellow-brown loose clay-silt.	Cut by [117]; fill of (130)	Up to 0.16m thick	-
(130)	Natural	Natural – grey to bluish-grey shattered shillet/slatestone becoming stiff yellow stony clay silt to the south.	Cut by [110], [138]	-	-
[131]	Cut	Linear cut – orientated north-west to south-east and measuring 2.70x0.44-0.66m wide and 0.12m deep with vertical sides and flat base.	Filled by (125), (127); cuts (104)	0.12m thick	Post-medieval
(132)	Fill	Fill of linear gully/slot [122] – loose shillet within matrix of grey-brown firm clay-silt.	Overlain by (107); fill of [122]	0.08m thick	-
(133)	Fill	Fill of linear gully/slot [123] – loose shillet within matrix of grey-brown firm clay-silt.	Overlain by (107); fill of [123]	0.08m thick	-
(134)	Surface	Cobble surface – irregular area of cobbles measuring up to 2.0x0.60m. Cobbles are of a poor quality and in a poor state of survival.	Abuts {135}; overlies (130)	-	-

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{135}	Structure	Linear wall footing – orientated approximately north to south. Measures 2.05×0.55m wide and survives for two courses. Constructed of angular stone rubble with grey clay bond.	Fill of [136]	0.20m high	-
[136]	Cut	Construction cut for wall {135} – linear cut orientated approximately north to south. Measures 2.05×0.61m wide and 0.20m deep with vertical sides and flat base.	Filled by {135}; cuts (130)	0.20m deep	-
(137)	Surface	Cobble surface – sub-rectangular area orientated approximately north-west to south-east. Measures up to 2.0×0.95m. Tightly packed poorly sorted sub-angular slatestone cobbles up to 0.25×0.10×0.10m in size. Clear kerb along western edge with (104) formed of larger more carefully positioned angular and sub-angular cobbles up to 0.25×0.20×0.15m in size. This surface noticeably steps up from cobble surface (104).	Overlain by (103); abuts (104); overlies (124)	Up to 0.15m thick	Post-medieval
(138)	Surface	Cobble surface – irregular area of cobbles measuring up to 0.70×0.50m. Cobbles are of poor quality and in a poor state of survival.	Abuts {135}; overlies (130)	-	-
[139]	Cut	Reduced-level structure – sub-rectangular cut orientated approximately north-west to south-east. Measures 5.65m+ × 5.20m × 0.32m deep with near vertical sides and flat base. Recess to the centre of the north-western edge measuring 1.90m wide and extending 0.40m out forms a likely fireplace. A suspended wooden floor on joists sat over this feature.	Cuts (130)	0.20m deep	-
(140)	Surface	Irregular area at the base of [100] where the natural shillet appears to have been heat affected.	-	-	-

[100] feature described in report

Archaeological feature – cut;

Archaeological feature – structure;

Archaeological feature – surface.

Appendix 2: Finds concordance

Context	Pottery			Other			Date
	Sherds	Wgt. (g)	Notes	Frgs.	Wgt. (g)	Notes	
103	1	165	North Devon gravel tempered body sherd				16 th -17 th century
107	2	13	North Devon medieval coarseware	1 2	5 10	Animal bone, rib Metal – copper alloy, ×1 button, ×1 coin	Medieval?
112	5	76	White refined earthenware with blue transfer print. ×3 plates; ×1 jug handle	1	17	Animal bone, rib	Post-medieval
121				1	314	Stone - diagnostic roof slate with hole	-
124				2	3	Mortar	-
125	3	18	North Devon medieval coarseware. ×2 jar rim; ×1 possible jug body sherd with scored decoration	1	1	Animal bone, tooth fragment	Medieval
U/S	3	211	×2 North Devon gravel tempered sherds Type 3 bowl, post-medieval ×1 North Devon medieval coarseware scrap	1	40	Smooth elongate stone pebble, possible honestone	
TOTALS	14	483					

APPENDIX 3: SUPPORTING PHOTOGRAPHS



1. SITE OF THE FORMER HOUSE POST-DEMOLITION BUT PRE-EXCAVATION; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-EAST (NO SCALE).



2. SITE OF THE FORMER HOUSE PRE-EXCAVATION; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-NORTH-EAST (NO SCALE).



3. SITE OF THE FORMER HOUSE PRE-EXCAVATION, DEMONSTRATING THE TERRACING OF THE FLOOR COMPARED TO THE SURROUNDING YARD; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-WEST (NO SCALE).



4. THE NORTH-EAST GABLE END OF THE FORMER HOUSE, SHOWING HOW THE COB WALLS OF THE BUILDING HAD BEEN PERCHED UP ON A STEP CUT INTO THE SHILLET BEDROCK; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-EAST (NO SCALE).



5. END WALL OF THE MEDIEVAL FORMER THRESHING BARN; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-SOUTH-EAST (NO SCALE).



6. AREA 01 POST-EXCAVATION; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-EAST (2M SCALES).



7. AREA 01 POST-EXCAVATION; VIEWED FROM THE WEST-NORTH-WEST (2M SCALES).



8. COBBLE SURFACES (104), (127), AND (137) WITHIN CUT [110]; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-WEST (2M SCALES).



9. DETAIL OF COBBLE SURFACES (104), (127), AND (137); VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH (2M SCALES).



10. (LEFT) DETAIL OF COBBLE SURFACES (104), (127), AND (137); VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-WEST (2M SCALES).



11. (RIGHT) DETAIL OF COBBLE SURFACES (104), (127), AND (137); VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-EAST (2M SCALE).



12. COBBLES (104) AND (127); VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-EAST (2M SCALES).



13. NORTH-WEST FACING SECTION OVER COBBLES (104) AND (127); VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-WEST (1M SCALE).



14. POST-HOLE [105], PRE-EXCAVATION; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-WEST (1M SCALE).



15. SONDAGE CUT THROUGH LAYERS (107) AND (108), WITH POSTHOLE [117] IN THE BACKGROUND; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-WEST (1M SCALES).



16. FEATURE [110], NORTH-WEST FACING SECTION SHOWING COBBLE SURFACES (104) AND (127); VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-WEST (PART 2M SCALE).



17. FEATURE [110], POST-EXCAVATION SHOWING HEAT AFFECTED AREAS; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-SOUTH-WEST (2M SCALES).



18. FEATURE [110], POST-EXCAVATION; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH (2M SCALES).



19. FEATURE [110], POST-EXCAVATION SHOWING FEATURES CUT INTO THE NATURAL AND HEAT AFFECTED AREAS; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-WEST (2M SCALES).



20. FEATURE [110], POST-EXCAVATION SHOWING DETAIL OF THE HEAT AFFECTED SOUTH-WEST CORNER; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-EAST (2M SCALE).



21. POST-HOLE [117], NORTH-WEST FACING SECTION; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-WEST (1M SCALE).



22. POST-HOLE [117], MID EXCAVATION; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-WEST (1M SCALE).



23. POSTHOLE [117] POST-EXCAVATION; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-WEST (0.5M SCALE).



24. POST-HOLE [120], SHOWING POST PACKING; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-WEST (0.50M SCALE).



25. POST-HOLE [120], POST-EXCAVATION; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-WEST (0.50M SCALE).



26. FIRE PIT [128] WITH POST-HOLES [117] AND [120], POST-EXCAVATION; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-WEST (1M SCALE).



27. SUNKEN FEATURE BUILDING/ROOM [139] POST-EXCAVATION; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-WEST (2M SCALES).



28. DRAIN [111] POST-EXCAVATION; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-WEST (2M SCALE).



29. PIT [114] PRE-EXCAVATION; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-EAST (PART 2M SCALE).



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