

Civil Parish & District: Axminster, East Devon	National Grid Reference SY 28712 97153	HER Identifier:
Subject: Archaeological monitoring a at Higher Abbey Farm, Axminster, Devon		Photo attached? Yes
Planning Application no: 20/0981/FUL	OASIS ID: Southwes1-402664	
Contractor's reference number/code: AHAF20	Date fieldwork undertaken: 19 th January 2021	
<p>Description of works: Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) on behalf of a private client during groundworks associated with a proposed new agricultural building at Higher Abbey Farm, Axminster, Devon (Figure 1). The monitoring was carried out by J. Bampton on the 19th of January 2021. This work was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (Boyd 2020) drawn up in consultation with the Devon Council Historic Environment Team.</p> <p>The site is at Higher Abbey Farm, c.1.5km south-west of the centre of Axminster, south of the A35 and Abbey Lane, which runs off of the A358 (part of the <i>Fosse Way</i>). The site adjoins existing barns at Higher Abbey Farm, c.75-85m south of the curtilage of the Scheduled Newenham Abbey (MDV11222; SAM no. 1011671) and Grade II Listed Higher Abbey Farmhouse (MDV81856; MDV11219; LE no. 1333472). The abbey includes the buried and upstanding remains of a Cistercian abbey occupied between 1246 and 1539. It conformed to a traditional monastic plan, with a church and three ranges of two-storey buildings around an open square cloister, with ancillary buildings outside the nucleus. Higher Abbey Farmhouse is located on the site of a chapel depicted on early 17th century plans and is Listed as having 15th-17th century elements. The site was at a height of c.30m AOD. The soils of the site are the deep permeable mainly fine loamy soils variably affected by groundwater of the Waterstock Association (BGS 2021), which overlie the sedimentary mudstone of the Branscombe Formation (SSEW 1983).</p> <p>An area c.15m x c.23m was to be reduced and made-up across a slight slope to form a level on which to build. This area abutted an existing building and yard and contained piles of stone and brick rubble and concrete material/hard-core. The finished floor level of the proposed structure was level with the extant yard/building and after levelling and reduction of the existing ground on the site, the works formation level was within the made-ground/dumped material already on the site. Once turfy scrub was removed and piles of hard-core material on the upslope side of the site were levelled and reduced to approximate formation level, a test pit, c.0.40m deep was excavated and was still within rubble/building waste made-ground. The proposed development did not result in deep enough excavation to reveal buried archaeological features or deposits.</p> <p>Conclusion: No significant archaeological features or deposits were present. Excavations did not reach a required depth in order to prove or disprove the presence of significant archaeological features or deposits.</p> <p>Bibliography: Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983: <i>Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales</i>. British Geological Survey 2020: <i>Geology of Britain Viewer</i>. http://www.bgs.ac.uk Devon Historic Environment Viewer 2020: <i>HER and HLC</i>. http://map.devon.gov.uk/DCCViewer/</p>		
Recorder: J. Bampton, South West Archaeology Ltd		Date sent to DCHER: 28/01/2021

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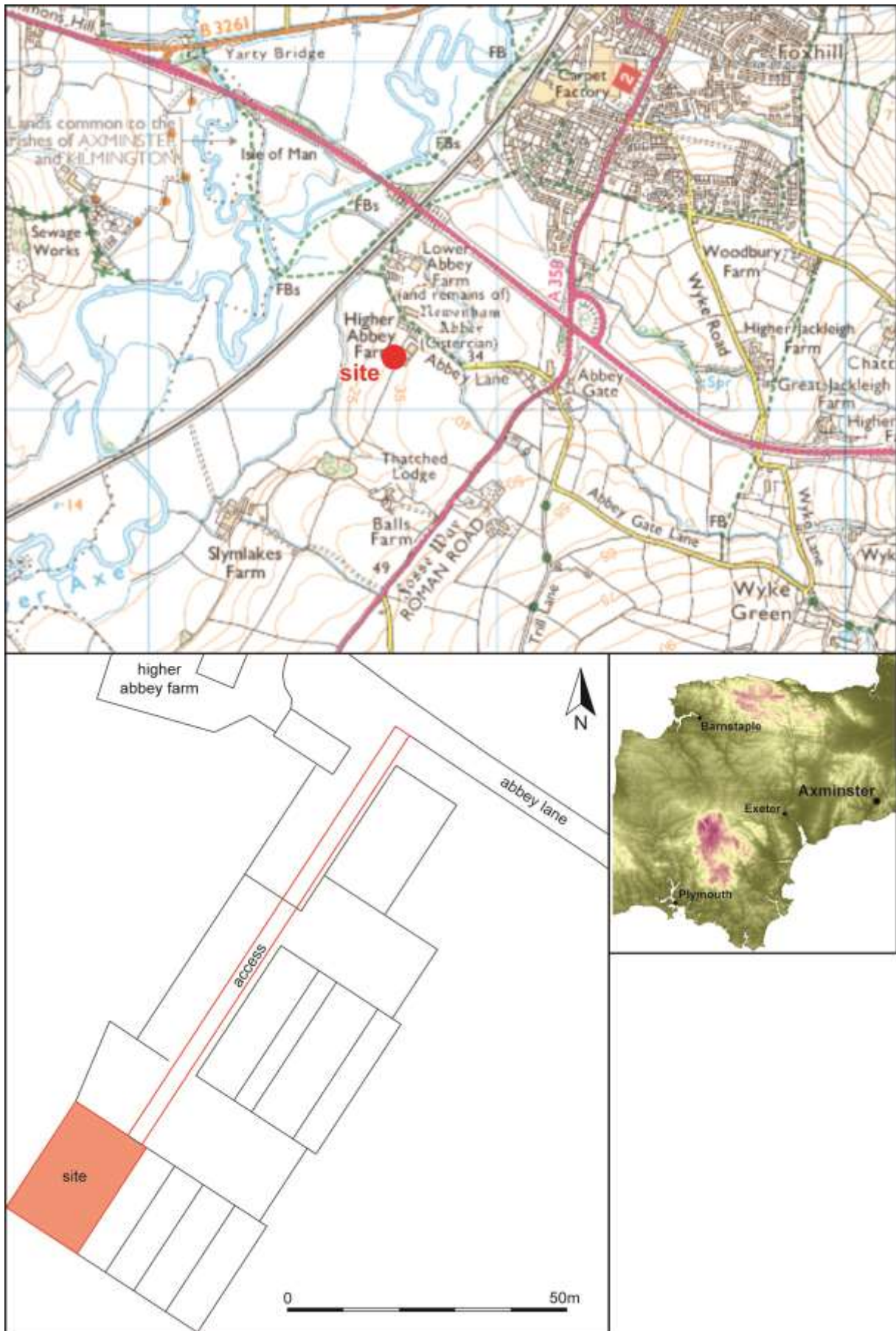


FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION.



FIGURE 2: SITE SHOT PRE-EXCAVATION; VIEWED FROM THE WEST-SOUTH-WEST (NO SCALE).



FIGURE 3: VIEW TOWARDS HIGHER ABBEY FARM FROM BESIDE THE SITE, INDICATING HEIGHT OF EXISTING YARD (TO RIGHT); VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-WEST (NO SCALE).



FIGURE 4: MADE-GROUND ON EAST SIDE OF SITE BELOW SITE FORMATION LEVEL IN TEST PIT, MID-EXCAVATION; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-WEST (NO SCALE).