

**BLACKSMITH'S COTTAGE**

**WOODFORD**

**BLACKAWTON**

**DEVON**

Historic Building Recording and Archaeological Monitoring



South West Archaeology Ltd. report no. 201222



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## Blacksmith's Cottage, Woodford, Blackawton, Devon Historic Building Recording and Archaeological Monitoring

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By Dr S. Walls & F. Balmond  
Report Version: Final  
Issued: 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2020  
Revised: 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021  
Finalised: 26<sup>th</sup> January 2021

### SUMMARY

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*South West Archaeology Ltd. was commissioned to undertake a programme of historic building recording and archaeological monitoring in advance of works to the former Blacksmith's Cottage at Woodford, Blackawton to convert the structure into a residential dwelling.*

*The manor of Blackawton is recorded at Domesday as Avetona, its name possibly meaning 'settlement on the river'. The 'black' element is first recorded in 1281 and may be a reference to the dark soils of the area. Woodford is a hamlet located within the parish of Blackawton, just to the west of that settlement. A building appears to be shown in the location of the Blacksmith's Cottage on historic mapping dating from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; census data shows that Thomas Pulling was a blacksmith resident in Woodford until his death in 1888, after which a smithy is no longer recorded in the settlement. The Blacksmith's Cottage is shown continually as a structure on mapping up to the present day, although its use appears to have changed from residential to an ancillary/storage function at some point in the late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century.*

*The cottage has been substantially re-built and re-purposed as an open fronted store. The monitoring of the floor reductions confirmed the presence of a fireplace in the south-west elevation, with partial paved floors surviving and the remnant of a central dividing wall having formerly separated the cottage into two rooms.*

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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THE AGENT

THE STAFF OF THE DEVON COUNTY HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT TEAM (DCHET)

## PROJECT CREDITS

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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<b>LOCATION:</b>	BLACKSMITH'S COTTAGE
<b>PARISH:</b>	BLACKAWTON
<b>DISTRICT:</b>	SOUTH HAMS
<b>COUNTY:</b>	DEVON
<b>NGR:</b>	SX 79732 50817
<b>OASIS No:</b>	SOUTHWES1-403112
<b>PLANNING REF:</b>	0263/19/FUL
<b>SWARCH REF:</b>	BWBC20

### 1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) was commissioned by a Private Client (the Client) to undertake historic building recording and archaeological monitoring of conversion works to the Blacksmith's Cottage, Woodford, Blackawton, Devon. A WSI was produced (Boyd 2020), setting out the methodology for historic building recording and archaeological monitoring and recording as part of a staged programme of works and for related off-site analyses and reporting, prior to conversion of the existing structure to form a residential dwelling.

### 1.2 PLANNING CONTEXT AND CONDITION(S)

Works on this site are being undertaken as part of a conditional Planning Permission 0263/19/FUL. In accordance with paragraph 199 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (2019), and the Local Development Framework Policy on archaeology, consent has been granted, conditional upon a programme of archaeological work being undertaken. The condition states:

*No development shall take place until the developer has secured the implementation of a programme of historic building recording and archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out at all times in accordance with the approved scheme, or such other details as may be subsequently agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.*

*Reason: To ensure, in accordance with guidance in paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2018), that an appropriate record is made of the historic building fabric and archaeological evidence that may be affected by the development.*

### 1.3 TOPOGRAPHICAL AND GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The proposed site lies near the hamlet of Woodford, with a road running immediately adjacent to the southern border and within an agricultural landscape with hedgebanks and wooded areas. The site lies at a height of approximately 93m AOD. The soils are recorded as the well-drained fine loamy soils over rock of the Denbigh 1 Association (SSEW 1983), overlying the sedimentary mudstone, siltstone, limestone and sandstone of the Bovisand Formation (BGS 2020).

### 1.4 HISTORICAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The site lies within the parish of Blackawton, in the hundred of Coleridge and the deanery of Totton. The origin of the name Blackawton is uncertain, with the earliest documentary reference appearing to be 'Avetona' in the Domesday Book. This may have derived from a combination of 'afon' and 'tun' meaning 'settlement on the river'. The prefix Black first appears in 1281 and may refer to the dark colour of the soil in this area. The Manor of Blackawton was a large manor, held at Domesday by King William having been held by Esger the Constable in 1066. Lysons records that it was given by Peter

Fitzmatthew, Lord of Stokenham to Torr Abbey and after the dissolution was granted to the Russel family. Their descendant, the Earl of Bedford sold it to the Roopes c. 1618 by whom it was bequeathed on the death of William Roope Esq. in 1745 to an ancestor of Arthur Holdsworth Esq. who held the manor in 1822 (Lysons 1822).

The proposed site is made up of a small building which appears on the tithe map of 1840, within the same plot of land and the same entrance to the plot. A Design and Access Statement carried out in 2018 (Cox and McCabe 2018) includes a number of extracts from different sources which suggest the building was possibly used as a residential cottage for the smithy which lay across the road. The building is described on the Devon HER as: 'Small one room plan cottage, probably not more than 250 years old, on opposite side of the road to the smithy. Originally two storey, as there is a rounded section inside which looks like the site of a stair. The fireplace seems to have been against what is now the wall opposite to the open side. There is a plastered niche just inside the open front but otherwise it lacks identifiable features. It deserves consolidation in its present form as an ephemeral piece of local history and as a representative of the humblest form of dwelling to be found in the countryside.'

Few archaeological sites have been identified in the vicinity of Woodford, the majority of the sites recorded on the Devon Historic Environment Record relate to buildings recorded on historic maps, although a mill is documented along The Gara, to the south east of the development site. A blacksmiths workshop also lies immediately opposite Blacksmiths Cottage, on the south side of the road through Woodford. No archaeological fieldwork appears to have been carried out immediately at or adjacent to the development site. Archaeological excavation carried out at Town Farm, Blackawton, to the east of the site in 2015 uncovered evidence of three late medieval or post medieval clay quarrying pits. Finds recovered from the site included medieval and post medieval pottery and two pieces of worked flint (Caine and Rainbird 2015).

The nearest designated asset to the development site is the Grade II Listed Woodford Farmhouse, to the north east of the site. A number of Listed Buildings are located in the settlement of Blackawton, including the Grade I Listed Church of St Michael and the historic core of the settlement is also a Conservation Area. There are no Scheduled Monuments or Registered Parks and Gardens within 1km of the development site. The site lies on land classified by the Devon Historic Landscape Characterisation as Orchard.

## **1.5 METHODOLOGY**

The building recording and archaeological monitoring was undertaken by Samuel Walls in December 2020. All work was undertaken in line with best practice and follows the guidance outlined in: ClfA Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures (2014) and Historic England Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Processes (2016). The desk-based assessment follows the guidance as outlined in: Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (ClfA 2014, Revised 2020) and Understanding Place: historic area assessments in a planning and development context (English Heritage 2012). The discussion of setting buildings on the approaches outlined in the appropriate guidance (DoT guidance and Historic England 2015).

## **1.6 SITE LOCATION**

The settlement of Woodford lies c. 0.6km west of Blackawton along The Gara river. Halwell lies c.3.7km to the north west, at the meeting point of the A3122 and the A381. Woodford is a small rural hamlet in a largely enclosed agricultural landscape.

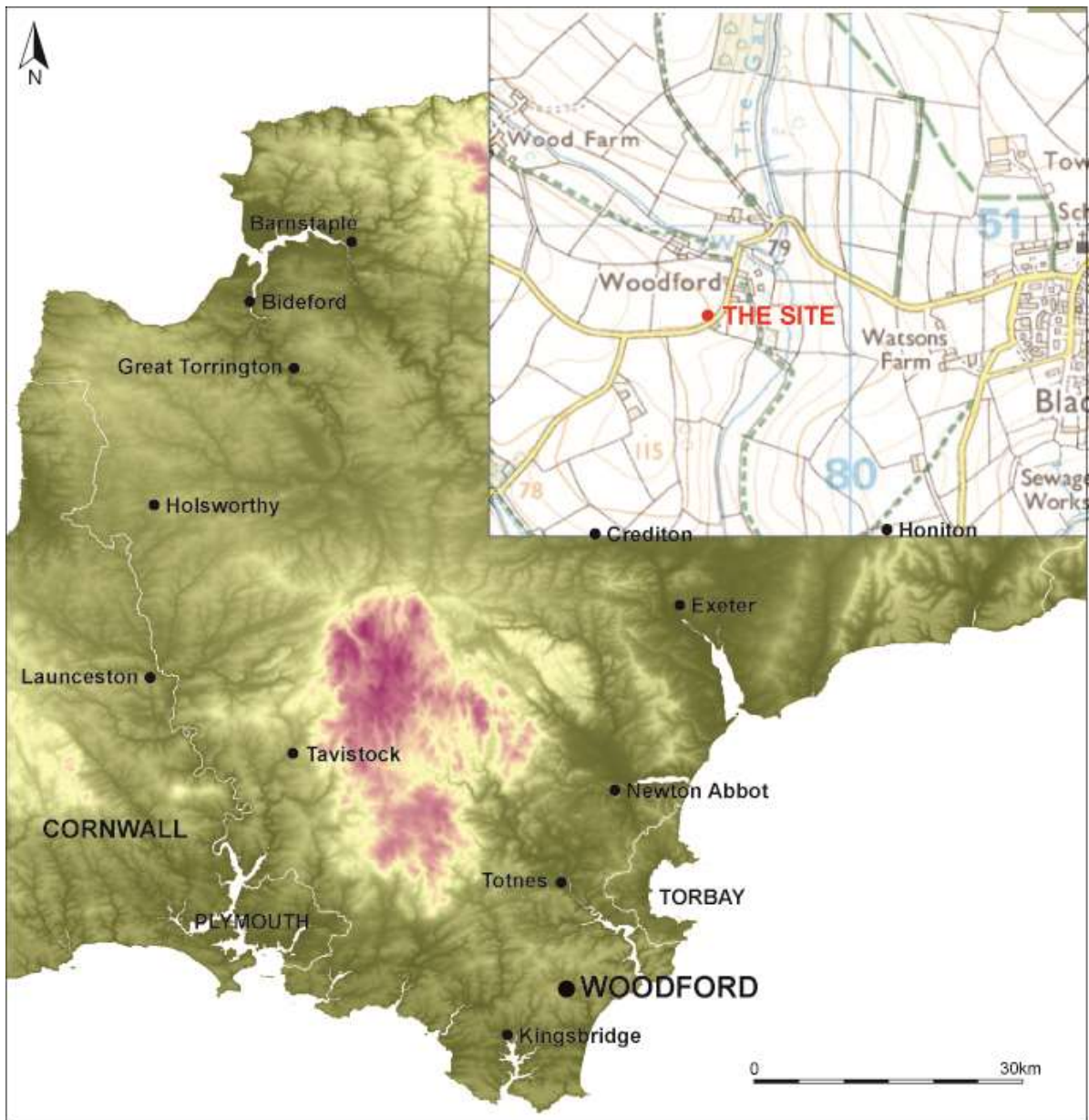


FIGURE 1: LOCATION MAP.

## 2.0 DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

The first map available to this study is the 1803 surveyors draft map for Dartmoor which suggests a property was present on the site of Blacksmith's Cottage at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This appears to show a number of buildings lining both sides of the main road through Woodford at this date, the Blacksmiths Cottage being the most southerly property in the linear settlement. It appears that the forge building on the south side of the road is also shown (Figure 2).



FIGURE 2: THE 1803 SURVEYORS DRAFT MAP (BL). THE APPROXIMATE SITE IS INDICATED.

The Blackawton Tithe Map (Figure 3) shows Woodford in greater detail and shows a number of properties are present at this date, including a building on the site of the Blacksmith's Cottage and adjacent forge. The plot number in which the cottage sits (1774) is recorded as 'lands not charged with any rent charge', along with a number of the other buildings around it and therefore no further information is given. The plot to the north, which it appears to sit within (1773), is named Suckcrafts Orchard.



FIGURE 3: EXTRACT FROM THE BLACKAWTON TITHE MAP (TNA) THE SITE IS INDICATED IN RED.



TABLE 1: TRANSCRIPTION OF TITHE APPORTIONMENT. THE PLOT IN WHICH THE SITE LIES IS SHADED GREEN

Plot No.	Landowner	Occupier	Plot Name	Cultivation
1728	Fortescue Wells	Edward Dennis	Higher Orchard	Orchard
1735			Plot	Arable
1736	Lands not charged with any rent charge			
1772	Charles Barker	Henry Ferris	Robin	Arable
1773			Suckcrafts Orchard	Orchard
1774	Lands not charged with any rent charge			
1775				
1776				
1777				

The 1841 census for Blackawton records a Thomas Pulling (aged 30), a blacksmith, his wife Mary and three children living in Woodford. They are all recorded as having been born in the parish. It would appear likely that they were the residents of Blacksmith's Cottage at this date, although the cottage is not individually named in this census. At the 1851 census the family are still resident, along with three of their children; the eldest son is recorded as Blacksmith's son or apprentice. Thomas Pulling the blacksmith, his wife Mary and one unmarried daughter are still documented as resident in Woodford at the 1861 census and again in 1871 and 1881, although by the date of the latter two censuses' they live alone.

The First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1886 (Figure 4) shows the cottage as a small rectangular structure, possibly with an extension or lean to on its south western elevation. It sits within a relatively large plot, shown as orchard and fronts onto the main road through Woodford. A smithy is labelled on the opposite side of the road, where the building depicted appears to have been divided into two properties, the south western property having a small addition to the south west elevation and an outbuilding. The 1891 census records three cottages as unoccupied in Woodford at this date and it is possible one of these is Blacksmith's Cottage which is never individually named on the census. Thomas Pulling died in 1888 and was buried in the churchyard in Blackawton; by the 1891 census as Mary is recorded living alone in Halwell Village. Three of their four children including both sons predeceased them, suggesting that there may not have been a family member to take over the smithy.

The Second Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1904 (Figure 5) shows little difference in the depiction of Woodford. The Blacksmiths Cottage still appears to be a roofed structure at this date, although the smithy is no longer labelled on the south side of the road. This may correspond with the forge no longer being required or used after the death of Thomas Pulling.

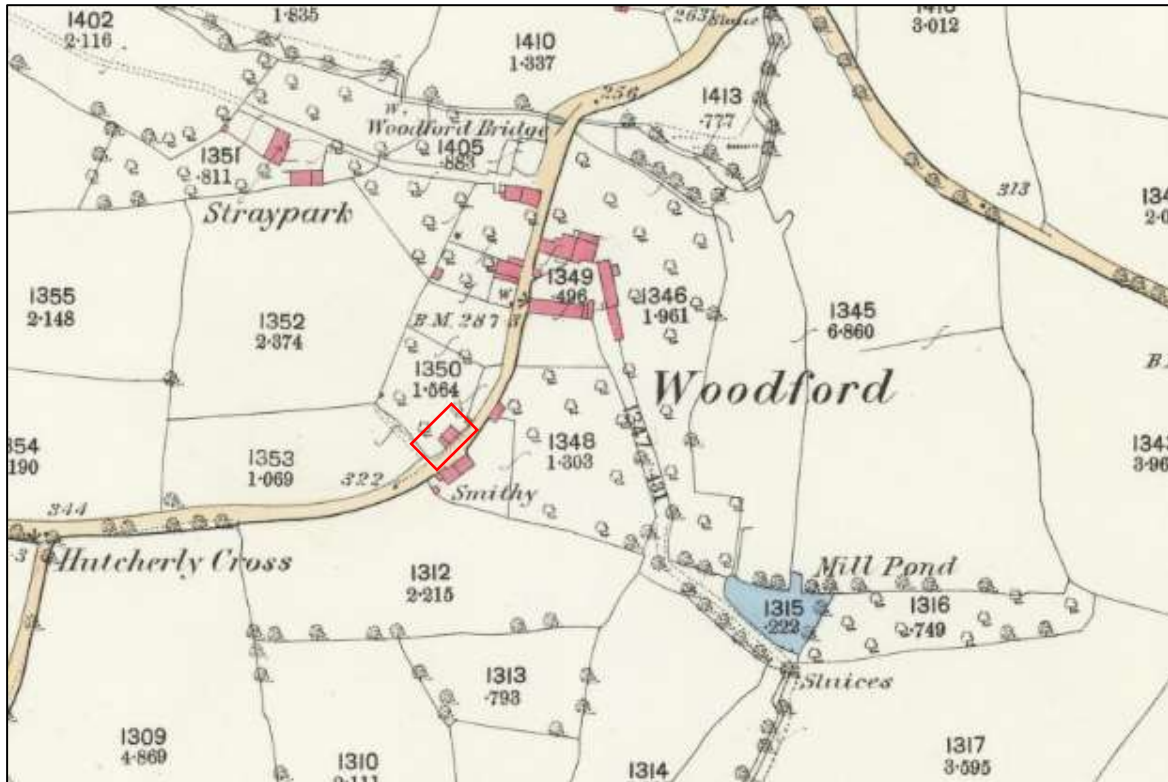


FIGURE 4: EXTRACT FROM OS 1<sup>ST</sup> EDITION MAP, SURVEYED 1886 (NLS). THE BLACKSMITHS COTTAGE IS INDICATED.

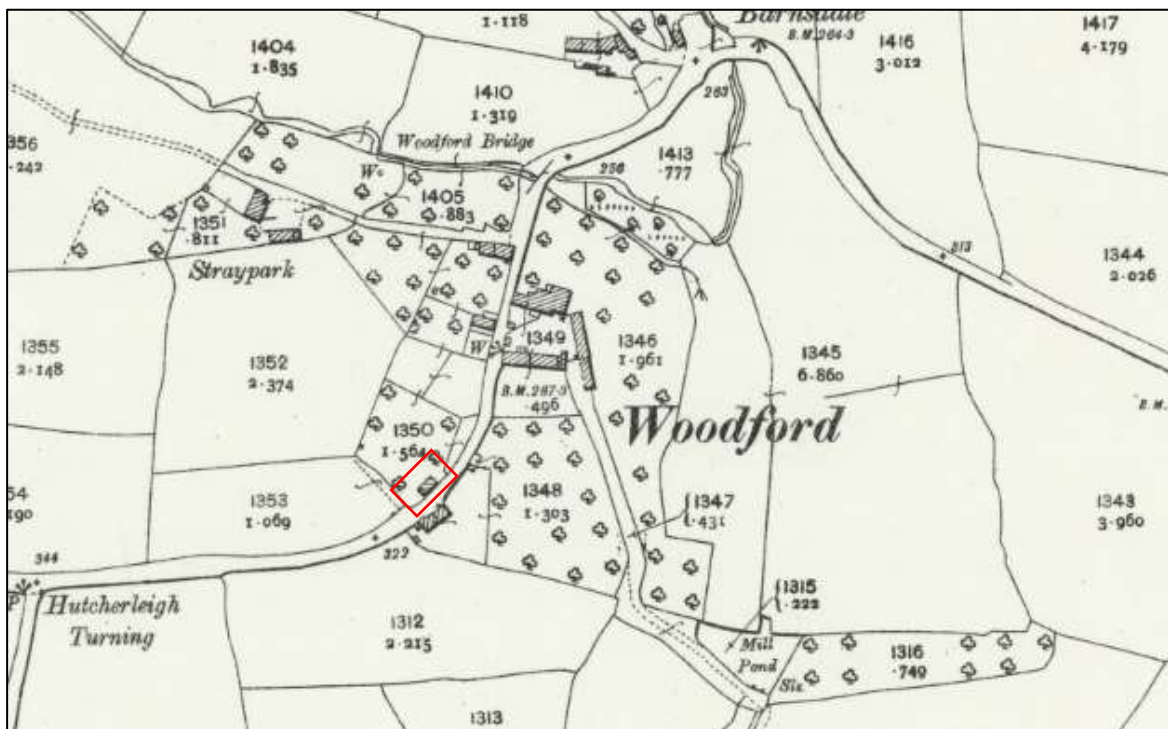


FIGURE 5: EXTRACT FROM OS 2<sup>ND</sup> EDITION MAP, REVISED 1904 (NLS). THE BLACKSMITHS COTTAGE IS INDICATED.

Later historic mapping (not illustrated) from the 1960s shows little further change to the property, although the orchard in which it sits appears to have been removed by this date and it is located on the edge of a larger agricultural field. It is still depicted as a roofed structure with the small extension or lean to on the south western elevation shown. Aerial photographs from 1999 (Figure 6) and 2018 (Figure 7) show that boundary reinstatement has taken place to the

north and west of the cottage along the lines of the historic boundaries. The structure also appears to have been reroofed between the dates of these two photographs.



FIGURE 6: 1999 AERIAL IMAGE OF THE SITE. © 2020 INFOTERRA LTD & BLUESKY. THE SITE IS INDICATED



FIGURE 7: 2018 AERIAL IMAGE OF THE SITE. © GOOGLE MAPS THE SITE IS INDICATED.

## 3.0 HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING

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### 3.1 SITE DESCRIPTION

Blacksmiths Cottage sits on the north-western end of the small hamlet of Woodford, flanked by the public road to the south-east, with the remains of the open fronted smithy buildings on the opposite side of the road. The site is surrounded by enclosed fields. On the approach along the narrow country lane from the west, the larger open fronted blacksmiths workshops opposite the cottage are a much more obvious indication of entering the hamlet of Woodford. The low stone-built structure to the north side of the road which is the site under consideration appears on first inspection to be a simple single storey bank barn.

Access to the site was through a field gate to the west, with the field sloping moderately up from the gate, so that building is approached almost at roof level. The structure, from the outside, gives the appearance of being a bank barn, terraced into the hillside. The building is abutted by the stone wall boundary of the field from the south-west, and to its north-east.

### 3.2 BUILDING DESCRIPTION

The building is constructed of stone rubble, c.0.6m thick, with some cement re-pointing and bond evident in places to the walls. The mono-pitch roof is modern and of corrugated sheeting and plastic. The upper two-three courses appear to have been re-built, presumably when this replacement roof was added. The south-west and north-west elevations are both blind, whilst the north-east is open-fronted. The south-east elevation has a blocked central door, and re-built window opening.

Internally the building exhibited a few more historic details, which demonstrated a former domestic function before it became used as a barn. The south-west elevation had the scar of a former fireplace, with a c.0.3m deep scar for a lintel, and the partial remains of a clay lined bread-oven to its northern side (Figure 8). The internal space curves to the north around this stack, the wall relieved in a smooth curve the inner face of the stones dressed, which could perhaps have once incorporated a stair, although no clear scarring for a structure was apparent in the stonework. There were some slight traces of white lime plaster adhering in places to the lower courses of stonework. The floor was simply of packed earth, with some stone rubble evident.



FIGURE 8: STACK WITH REMAINS OF OVEN TO THE RIGHT, PAVED FLOOR AS EXPOSED DURING EXCAVATIONS, VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-EAST (1M SCALE).

The front (south-east facing) elevation has been rebuilt, although the lower courses of build remain good, so the position of the (blocked) central doorway is seemingly correct. The sole remaining window opening is entirely rebuilt, at least to the left-hand side, with an angled splayed reveal on this side, with a modern timber lintel and frame (see Figure 9), so the original form of openings are unclear within this elevation. A potential continuation of the sloping reveals to the right-hand side of this opening drop down below the slate sill towards the floor but are very ragged; suggestive of either a deeper window opening, or a doorway, which has been altered to a window during the rebuild of this elevation. The sloping reveal on this side of the opening also has several larger stacked stones, although unshaped this is potentially an attempt to produce quoins.



FIGURE 9: RE-BUILT WINDOW OPENING, VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-WEST (1M SCALE).

The north-west elevation contained a single low blocked opening, with splayed reveals and stone lintel, this was some 1m high and 0.8m wide, but very low for being a window. The interior of this opening appeared to retain some historic lime plaster. The opening clearly demonstrates that the ground on this side has been raised by at least c.0.4m, as the current ground level was part way up this blocked opening.

## 4.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken during the same visit as the building recording by S. Walls. All excavation was undertaken to the depth of the historic floor surface and/or natural substrata. Exposed features and deposits were excavated by hand and in accordance with the WSI and CIfA guidelines. Additional supporting photographs can be seen in Appendix 1.

A deposit of packed reddish-brown silt-clay with some occasional sub-angular stone (a demolition/collapse deposit) covered the site. This was removed by a machine fitted with a grading bucket.

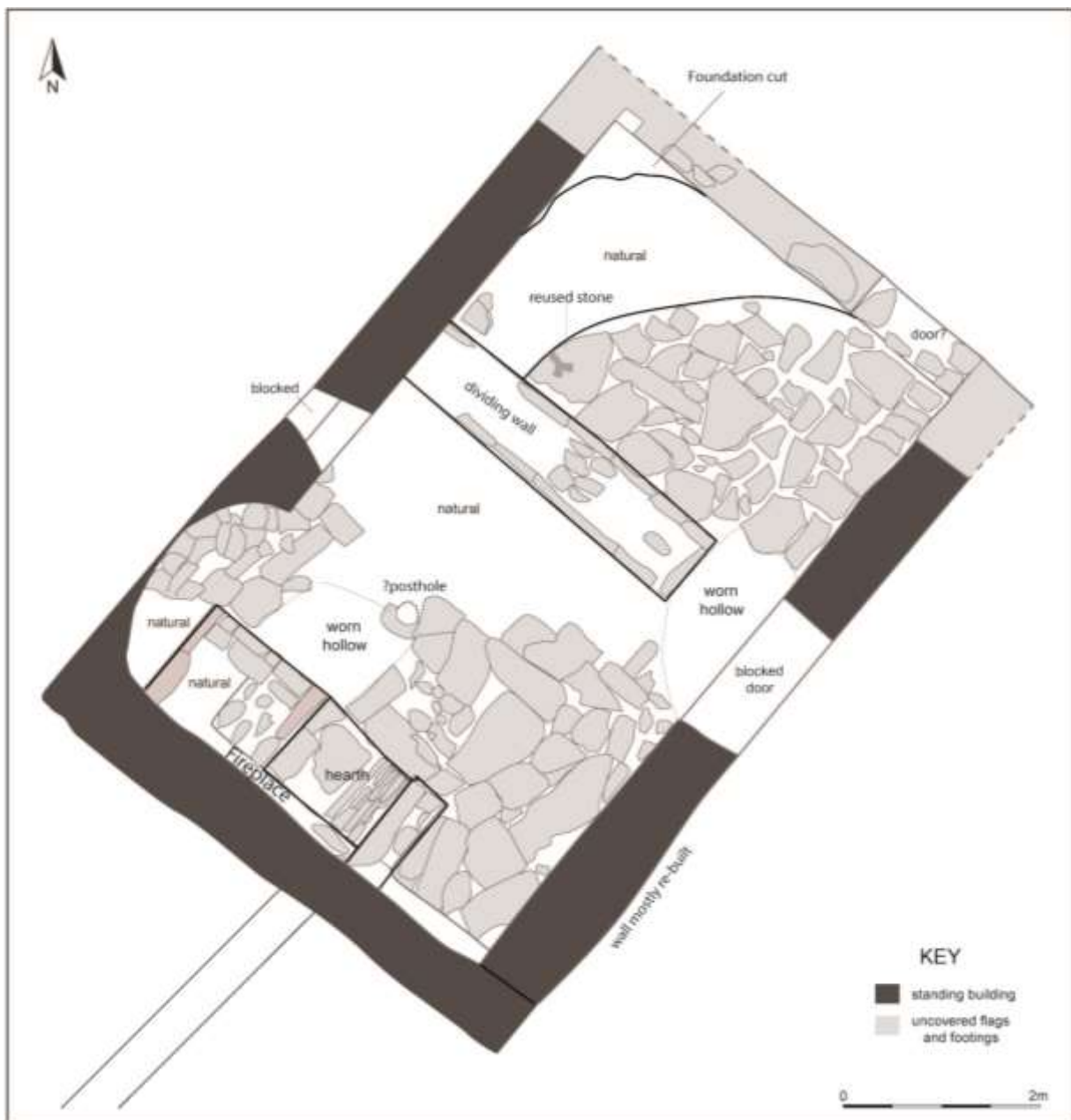


FIGURE 10: PLAN OF SITE SHOWING THE EXPOSED HISTORIC FLOORS, IN RELATION TO THE STANDING BUILDING FABRIC.

## 4.2 EXCAVATION RESULTS

Monitoring provided some additional evidence of the historic structure and its former layout, with a central dividing wall, which had been built abutting the external wall to the north-west and aligned on the central door to the south-east. This former division may have been of cob construction, given the reddish-brown clay-silt packed earth nature of the deposits which were removed from above the historic floor surfaces. The south-west room had a hearth surviving to the centre of the south-west, whilst the north-east room appears to have been unheated.

The south-west (heated room) had a centrally positioned fireplace to the south-west, with a c.1m by 1.1m hearth. The stone paved floor did not survive across the entire room, having been removed, or perhaps never existing to the north-east. The central portion in front of hearth also seemed to have been removed or never existed. The flooring also stopped in the curved portion of wall to the north-west corner of the fireplace, with the floor here being weathered natural shillet, suggesting the former presence of a structure (cupboard or stair) to this side of the bread oven.

The footing of the demolished north-east elevation was exposed, but this revealed no details as to the presence of any former openings, although the partially paved floor hints that there may have been a door to the south-east end of the elevation. The floor in the north-east room, was clearly secondary, and had been laid in a worn hollow of natural shillet. It did not appear that the floor had ever extended across the entire room. The paving was noted to include a stone with a worn 'Y' shape on one of the stones (Figure 12), which suggests that these stones have been re-used from elsewhere, with this stone perhaps having been formerly associated with a cheese press.



FIGURE 11: THE EXPOSED FLOORS; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-EAST (1M SCALE).

### 4.2.1 FINDS

The finds assemblage which was left on site, consisted of 1x ceramic egg (used to encourage hens to lay), 4x fragments of animal bone, 7x large Fe nails, 1x Fe Devon Shovel head, 1x FE pipe fragment, 1x Fe bar fragment, 1x Fe strap fragment, and 3x sherds of white refined earthenware.



The finds were all recovered from the demolition layer and or immediately on top of the surviving floor. There were very few traces of slate or any roofing material noted during the excavations, so it is unclear how the cottage would have been roofed, but it appears most likely that it would have been thatched.



FIGURE 12: RE-USED STONE IN PAVED FLOOR TO THE EAST, THE INCISED 'Y' COULD RELATE TO A FORMER USE AS PART OF A CHEESE PRESS, VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-WEST (1M SCALE).

#### 4.2.2 DISCUSSION

The archaeological monitoring identified the historic floors of the former cottage, confirming the former domestic nature of the building, although the very limited finds assemblage recovered seemed to mostly relate to the subsequent use of the building, as a chicken shed and storage rather than its domestic use.

## 5.0 DEVELOPMENTAL PHASING OF THE BUILDINGS

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The building appears to demonstrate three main phases, and whilst its exact date of construction is unknown, its form and layout suggests a later 1700s origin. Whilst the building clearly had a domestic use at one time, the absence of many surviving original openings and the odd position and height of the blocked opening (Keeping place?) in the north-west elevation may indicate that the building may have had a different origin, being re-purposed into a cottage.

### 5.1.1 PHASE 1 – LATER 1700S TO EARLY 1800S

A simple, probably two-storey, stone cottage, with a heated south-western end and central opening on to the public highway to the south-west.

### 5.1.2 PHASE 2 - 1800S

An internal (cob) division is added dividing the (downstairs) space into two rooms. The stone paved floors were likely added as the former weathered natural became worn. The north-eastern room was seemingly unheated.

### 5.1.3 PHASE 3 – 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY, ABANDONMENT AND RE-USE

The cottage was seemingly abandoned in the very late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century, eventually becoming derelict. It was re-roofed as a single storey open-fronted store at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## 6.0 CONCLUSIONS

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The manor of Blackawton is recorded at Domesday as Avetona, its name possibly meaning 'settlement on the river'. The 'black' element is first recorded in 1281 and may be a reference to the dark soils of the area. Woodford is a hamlet located within the parish of Blackawton. A building appears to be shown in the location of the Blacksmith's Cottage on historic mapping dating from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; census data shows that Thomas Pulling was the resident blacksmith in Woodford until his death in 1888, after which a smithy is no longer recorded in the settlement. The Blacksmith's Cottage is shown continually as a structure on mapping up to the present day, although its use appears to have changed from residential to an ancillary/storage function at some point in the late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century (presumably following the death of Thomas Pulling).

The monitoring confirmed that the building had formerly been a domestic cottage and had been substantially re-built and re-purposed as an open fronted store. The monitoring of the floor reductions confirmed the presence of a fireplace in the south-west elevation, with partial paved floors surviving and the remnant of a central dividing wall having formerly separated the cottage into two rooms.

## 7.0 Bibliography

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[http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer\\_google/googleviewer.html](http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html)

APPENDIX 1: ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING PHOTOGRAPHS



1. THE SITE, VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-WEST (1M SCALE).



2. THE SITE VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH (1M SCALE).



3. THE SITE VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-EAST (1M SCALE).



4. THE SITE VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-EAST (1M SCALE).



5. SCAR OF FIREPLACE WITH RE-BUILD ABOVE, VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-EAST (1M SCALE).



6. REMAINS OF BREAD OVEN, WITH CURVING WALL, SUGGESTIVE OF POSSIBLE STAIR, VIEWED FROM THE EAST (1M SCALE).



7. DETAIL OF OVEN, WITH SCAR FOR LINTEL FOR FIREPLACE ABOVE, VIEWED FROM THE EAST (1M SCALE).



8. DETAIL OF STACK, VIEWED FROM THE EAST (1M SCALE).





9. BLOCKED OPENING AND (?)STAIR, VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-EAST (1M SCALE).



10. AS ABOVE, POST-EXCAVATION, VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-EAST (1M SCALE).



11. BLOCKED CENTRAL DOOR, VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-WEST (1M SCALE).



12. BLOCKED CENTRAL DOOR FOLLOWING EXCAVATION, VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-WEST (1M SCALE).



13. INTERNAL SPACE, VIEWED FROM THE NORTH (1M SCALE).



14. REMAINS OF THE HEARTH, VIEWED FROM SOUTH-EAST ABOVE (1M SCALE).



15. HEARTH AND CHIMNEY REMAINS, VIEWED FROM THE EAST (1M SCALE).



16. LEFT: STACK REMAINS AND PAVING, VIEWED FROM THE EAST (1M SCALE).



17. RIGHT: PAVING AND (?) DRYING CUPBOARD SCAR, VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-EAST (1M SCALE).



18. PAVING AT SOUTH END, VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-WEST (1M SCALE).



19. SURVIVING FOOTINGS OF THE DEMOLISHED NORTH-EAST ELEVATION, VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-WEST (1M SCALE).



20. STONE PAVING TO THE EASTERN END (ROOM), VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-WEST (1M SCALE).



21. DETAIL OF STONE PAVING TO THE EASTERN END (ROOM), VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-WEST (1M SCALE).



22. PAVED FLOOR IN THE EASTERN ROOM, VIEWED FROM THE NORTH (1M SCALE).



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