

# Woodlands, Little Torrington, Devon

*Archaeological Monitoring and Recording*



**SOUTHWEST ARCHAEOLOGY**

**Heritage Consultancy**

## Woodlands, Little Torrington, Devon

### Archaeological Monitoring and Recording

#### Executive Summary

*This report presents the results of a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording undertaken at Woodlands, Little Torrington, as part of conditioned full planning permission: 1/0366/2023/FUL and Listed Building Consent: 1/0367/2023/LBC. This project involved the rebuilding of an adapted 19<sup>th</sup> century extension and the conversion of the fitted kitchen space within the footprint of the medieval building, including the lowering of the floor level, as well as the insertion of associated new services.*

*The building is Grade II Listed (UID: 1326584) as: Farmhouse. Circa second half of the C15 with C17 modifications, extended in C19 and altered in C20.*

*The various area of archaeological monitoring around the building highlighted the extensive 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century alterations and expansion on the farmstead and associated landscaping in and around the farmhouse and courtyard area.*

Client	Private Client
Agent	Cadworks South West Ltd
Property	Woodlands
Parish	Little Torrington
County	Devon
NGR	SS 50391 16857 (centroid on roof of house)
Planning App. no:	1/0366/2023/FUL; 1/0367/2023/LBC
DCHET Ref.	ARCH/DM/TO/38579A
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Report No.	250113
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Data Location	SWASERVER/Swarchfiles/ActiveJobs/SwarchLtd/Little-Torrington-Woodlands
OASIS No.	southwes1-516801
Acknowledgements	The owner and agent, for documentation and access

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWA) was instructed by Cadworks South West Ltd (the Agents) on behalf of a private client (the Client) to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording at Woodlands Farm, Little Torrington.

The recording works were undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI: Boyd: 2024) drawn up in consultation with DCHET and as part of the planning conditions for the work.

Woodlands is a Grade II Listed building, with origins in the medieval period. This was conditioned as part of the works to adapt an extension and to rationalise the floor levels between the extension and end block of the main range.

### 1.2 SCOPE AND CONTEXT

Works were undertaken as part of planning application 1/0366/2023/FUL and listed building consent application 1/0367/2023/LBC for the demolition of the existing lean-to and construction of a new flat roofed side extension.

In accordance with paragraph 205 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (2021), and Policy DM07 of the North Devon and Torrington Local Plan 2014-2034, consent may be granted, conditional upon a programme of archaeological work being undertaken. The recommended condition wording states:

*'No development shall take place until the developer has secured the implementation of a programme of 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 Policy DM07 of the North Devon and Torrington Local Plan 2011 - 2031 and paragraph 205 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021), that an appropriate record is made of archaeological evidence that may be affected by the development'.*

The DCHET comments read as follows:

*I refer to the above application and your recent consultation. The farmhouse itself is a grade II\* listed building dating to the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and the proposed replacement extension lies in an area of archaeological potential to the north and adjacent to the farmhouse. I have had an opportunity to visit the application area today and would consider that, while the ground level here is somewhat lower than the extant floor level within the historic building, any groundworks for the construction of the replacement extension have the potential to expose the remains of any larger archaeological features that may survive as well as artefactual deposits associated with the historic settlement at Woodlands. The impact of development upon the archaeological resource here should be mitigated by a programme of archaeological work that should investigate, record and analyse the archaeological evidence that will otherwise be destroyed by the proposed development.*

*The Historic Environment Team recommends that this application should be supported by the submission of a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) setting out a programme of archaeological work to be undertaken in mitigation for the loss of heritage assets with archaeological interest. The WSI should be based on national standards and guidance and be approved by the Historic Environment Team.*

### 1.3 METHODOLOGY

The site was first visited on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2024 by Dr S. Walls MCIfA, who monitored the removal of the footings of the old extension and excavation of the new footings.

A second phase of work was undertaken in October 2024 by E. Wapshott MCIfA, when the floor removal within the footprint of the listed building was archaeologically monitored.

A final phase of work was undertaken in November 2024 by S. Stevens ACIfA to monitor the excavation of a service trench within the grounds.

### 1.4 LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHY

Woodlands is located c.1km to the east of Little Torrington, c.2km south of Great Torrington. The farmhouse lies in a large clearing between bands of established woodland. The site lies at a height of approximately 71m AOD. The soils of the site are the well-drained fine loamy or fine silty soils over rock of the Manod Association<sup>1</sup>, overlying the sedimentary sandstone of the Bude Formation<sup>2</sup>.

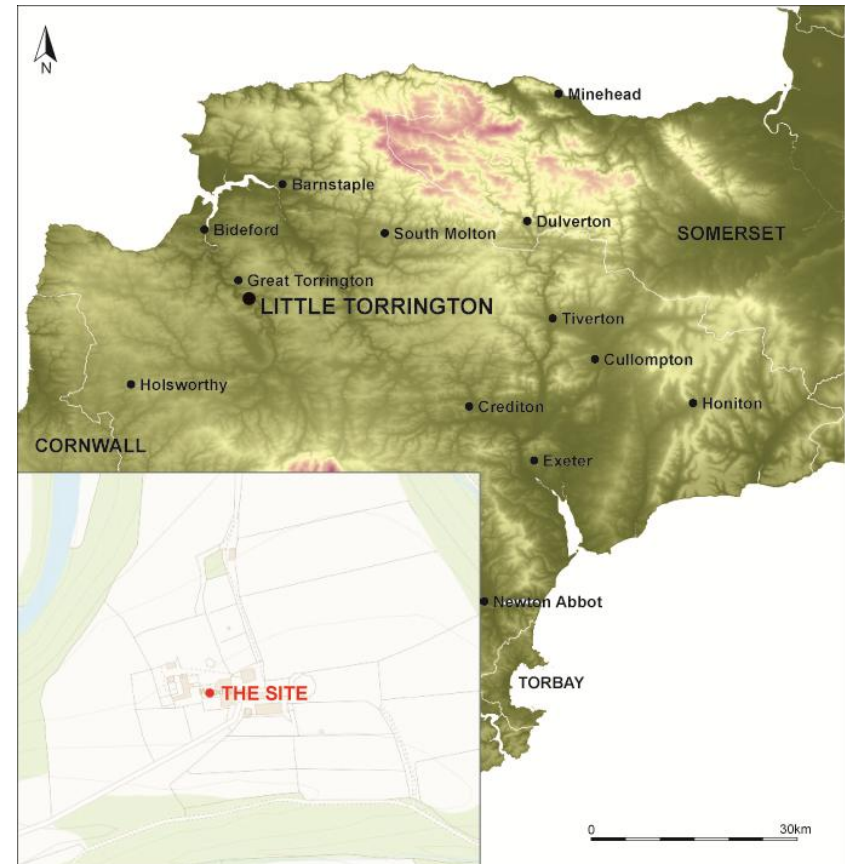


FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION. CONTAINS ORDNANCE SURVEY DATA © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2024.

<sup>1</sup> Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983: *Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales (a brief explanation of the constituent soil associations)*.

<sup>2</sup> BGS 2023: <https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/>

## 2 LISTING TEXT

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The Listing text for the building (UID: 1326584): *Farmhouse. Circa second half of the C15 with C17 modifications, extended in C19 and altered in C20.*

*Rendered stone rubble walls, exposed to front porch. Hipped asbestos slate roof. 2 stone rubble axial stacks with dripcourses, the right-hand one has a brick shaft. Plan: Originally likely to have had 3 room and through passage plan, lower end to the left although the partition between the passage and lower room has been removed. At the date when the house was built it must have had an open hall probably with central hearth but no direct evidence of this survives and the hall is presently heated by a stack at its higher end. The date that the hall stack and ceiling were inserted is unclear since the fireplace has been blocked and the ceiling beams are very plain - it may be that the stack pre-dates the ceiling which could be quite late. At some time probably in the 2nd half of the C17 a 2-storey porch was added at the front of the passage. The inner room is unheated but the existence of a C16 doorway leading into the chamber above it suggests that its ceiling might pre-date that of the hall. The lower room has a stack in its end wall which is a C19 insertion. Beyond it is a narrow room likely to have been added in the C19. A substantial C20 modernization took place when the rear passage doorway was blocked, the partition between hall and passage removed and staircase inserted at the rear of the lower room and passage. A completely new roof was put on the house and the old timbers removed.*

*Exterior: 2 storeys. Symmetrical 5 window front of early - mid C20 3-light casements. Central 2 storey porch with segmental arched rubble doorway which has C20 glazed and panelled door. Above is a much-weathered coat of arms. The rear elevation has mainly C20*

*windows apart from a C17 2-light chamfered wooden mullion on first floor to left of centre and on early C19 16-pane sash below.*

*Interior: At front of passage is wide early C17 roll and hollow moulded wooden doorframe with carve stops and contemporary studded oak door with fleur-de-lys hinges. The square draw-bar holes survive both inside this door and the former rear doorway to the passage.*

*The most remarkable feature of the house is the wide C15 ogee headed wooden arched doorway into the hall which is decorated with a ¼ roll moulding which has raised fleurons carved on it. The ceiling beams in the hall are very plain and appear to be quite late. On the first floor is a C16 4-centred arched wooden doorframe leading into the chamber over the inner room. In the room over the hall, on the stack, is a plaster coat of arms of the Copplestone family with strapwork surround and winged angel's heads to either side probably dating from the early C17. The Copplestone family lived at Woodland from the C15 to the C18. Despite internal alterations to this house the features it preserves are sufficiently unusual and of a good enough quality to make it important.*

## 3 PROPOSALS

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Figures 2 & 3 below are the proposed elevations and ground floor, floor plan for the works as part of the conditioned planning permission. The areas that were focused upon during these works are marked in red boxes on Figures 2 and 3.



FIGURE 2: EXTRACT OF THE PROPOSED ELEVATIONS DOCUMENT BY AGENT (CADWORKS SOUTH WEST LTD) 2024.

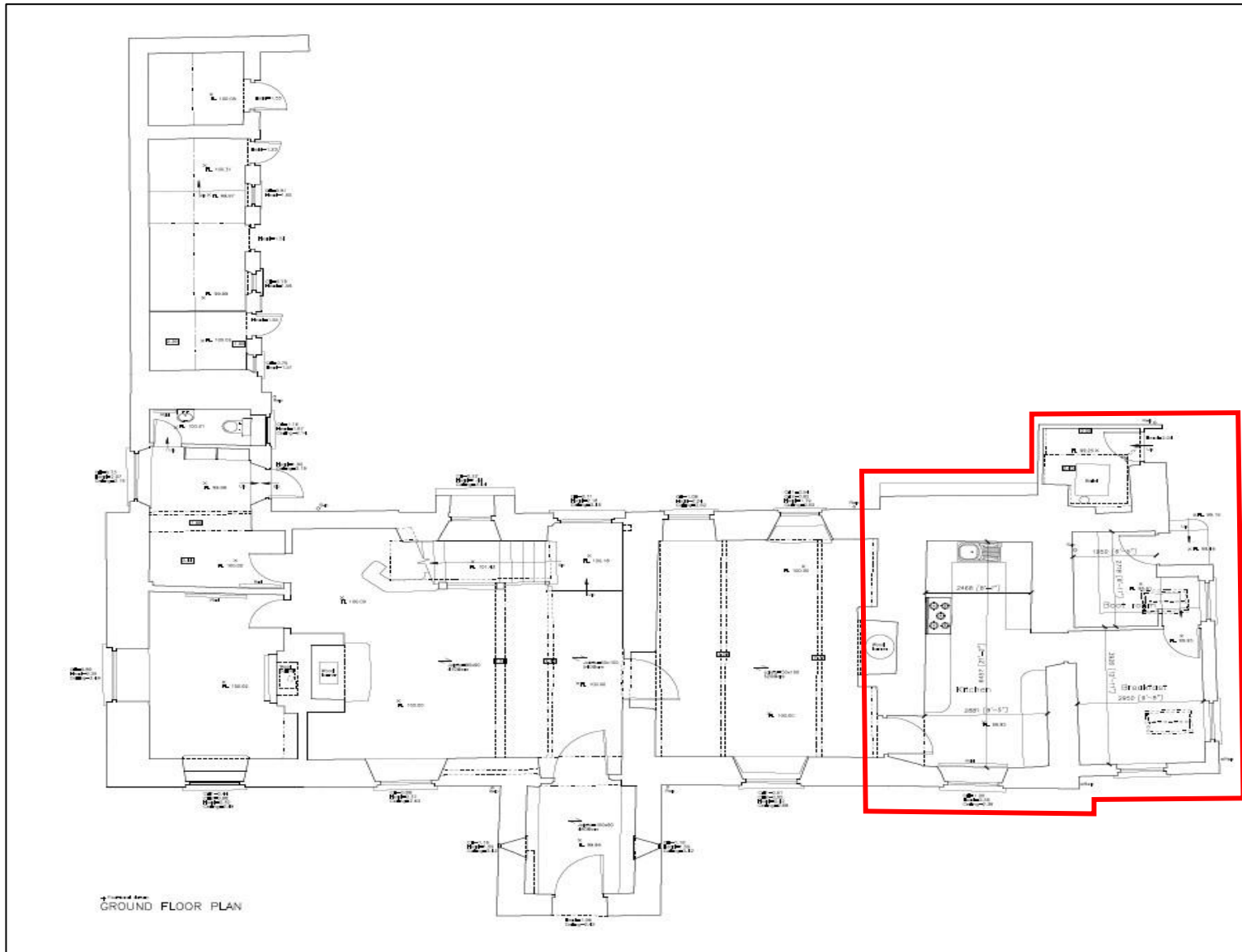


FIGURE 3: EXTRACT OF THE PROPOSED FLOOR PLANS, AS PROVIDED BY AGENT (CADWORKS SOUTH WEST LTD) 2024.

## 4 DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

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### 4.1 DOCUMENTARY BACKGROUND

The site lies in the parish of Little Torrington, in the historic hundred of Shebbear and the deanery of Torrington<sup>3</sup>.

Reverend O.J Reichel, a Devonian antiquarian identified Woodlands, in his *Hundreds of Devon: The Hundred of Shebbear in early times* (posthumously published 1928-1942) with the early-medieval manorial holding of *liteltorilanda* in the Domesday Book of 1086, separate to Little Torrington. This manor he recorded was held by Alvered, on behalf of his overlord Robert. Count of Mortain. Before the conquest it was held by Eldvard the Red, as an independent manor, i.e. a free tenancy. The larger adjacent manor of Little Torrington, which is recorded as *Toritone* in the Domesday book, is indeed held by Robert Count of Mortain, as tenant-in-chief.

The manor-holding of Woodland belonged to the De Woodland family in the later medieval period; the coheiresses of this family passing it to the Sellers and Wibbery families before the whole was united under the ownership of the Wibberies. It passed from them to the Bonvilles, then the Copleston family, a younger branch of whom resided at Woodlands for a number of generations. Lysons records that in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (published 1812), Woodlands had been the property of Thomas Stevens, Esq., who then sold it to the Rev. Josph Palmer, both notable local landowners.

The tithe apportionment of 1838, which accompanied the tithe map for Little Torrington published in 1840, indicated that the farmstead was by then owned by Lord Rolle and rented out to

Richard Ball, which aligns with the census records. In this period the farm is recorded as being a total of 179 acres, 2 rods and 4 perches.

#### 4.1.1 CENSUS DATA

The 1841 census records Richard Ball (45) as resident, described as a *'farmer'* with his wife Betsy (40). They have several servants: John Blight (30), Harriet Short (25), James Blight (14) and James Hunt (15). They also have two apprentices: Elizabeth Spery (15), James Hancock (15). The 1851 census documents Richard and Betsy still resident. Richard is described as a *'farmer of 100 acres and employer of two labourers.'* They have less specialist servants and instead appear to be housing some teenage relatives on the farm who also work; Anne Clarke (15), John May (13) and Elizabeth Buse (18).

As a tenant farm, unsurprisingly by 1861 there is a new occupant - Henry Cawsey (34) and his wife Harriet (32) from a notable local merchant family. Henry is described as a *'farmer of 100 acres.'* *Henry and Harriet have three sons, John, Henry and Thomas.* The family has a number of servants; Mary Baker (23), Mahala Boatfield (14), John Parr (15) and John Labbitt (12) are all described as *house servants*, which may in fact mean they live in house but carry a range of duties across the farm. The 1871 census shows the family in residence unchanged and again in the 1881 – but Henry is now described as a *'farmer of 140 acres, employing two men and two boys.'* Four of Henry and Harriets grown-up children, John (24), Henry (22), Elizabeth (18) and Mary (16), all work on the farm or in the farmhouse, and the family has three teenage servants as well; Thomas Patt (14) and Henry Gooding (15) are described as *'farm servants'* and Ann Harris (15) as a *'domestic servant'*.

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<sup>3</sup> Lysons 1822: *Magna Britannia, Vol. 6: Devon.*

By 1901 the Cawsey family are still at the farm, but Henry has died, Harriet is now marked as the *'head of household'*. John (33) and Henry (32) are running the farm, and Mary (26) and Elizabeth (28) also still work on the farm. The family has a *'domestic servant'* Eliza Short (40), and three *'farm servants'*; John Staliton (15), Edward Hutchins (14) and John Hutchins (11). This is interesting as it suggests the holding may be bucking the late 19<sup>th</sup> century agricultural recession and is indeed prospering – much of the later 19<sup>th</sup> century construction and alteration around the farmstead may easily be ascribed to this tenant farming family who were in occupation more than 40 years.

This more unusual, long run of occupation came to an end between 1901-1911, as in the 1911 census Frederick Ward (63) is described as *'farmer'*; no acreage is given in this document. He lives with his daughter Mary Ann (43) who is his housekeeper, Alice Ward his granddaughter (26) *'works in the house'*, and she has a daughter Edith Ann Ward 4. The family have one specialised, live-in servant, Sidney Lawrence (22), who is described as a *'horseman'*.

#### 4.2 1939 REGISTER

The 1939 England and Wales Register records the Huxtable family present on the farm. James Huxtable (53) and Phoebe (50), his wife are described as *'mixed farmers'*. They work the farm with their son-in-law, Arthur Watkins and their daughter Ella.

#### 4.3 CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES

Despite its acknowledged medieval and 17<sup>th</sup> century fabric, as well as the notable size of the building and quality of its internal details, the farmhouse is not noted on the Saxton map of 1575, or the otherwise quite detailed 1765 Donn Map of Devon, suggesting it was not considered a gentry residence, unlike other similarly dated holdings in the area, Blinsham, Potheridge and Wooley.

The first map that the farmstead is depicted on is the Hartland OS Draft Surveyor's Map of 1804. A cluster of buildings is depicted at Woodlands, although the detail is unclear. It appears to show a large enclosure, with a series of buildings, accessed via a long track from the west, from the direction of the village and from the north, where a ford crossed the river, towards Great Torrington.

Three, long, rectangular buildings are depicted on the c.1840 Little Torrington Tithe Map, consistent with the three historic buildings known on the site. The depictions lack detail, however, with elements such as the porch missing on the farmhouse. Looking at other buildings in the surrounding area, all seem to be represented by simple rectangles, so this likely indicates the level of recording as opposed to any structural phases.

The First Edition OS Map of 1887 shows the site in much greater detail. The farmhouse clearly has a structure at the northern end, in the location of the present lean-to and the proposed side extension. It is coloured in grey, which likely indicates it was roofless or partially ruined at this time. The map also notes that this is the site of a *'Mansion'*. This appears to be an antiquarian recognition of the size and quality of the medieval and 17<sup>th</sup> century fabric on the site but does not quite reflect the narrative; the site being its own small *manorial holding* but never having any evidence of a building which might deserve the title *'mansion'*, as discussed it is not noted on the earlier maps which record gentry residences.



FIGURE 4: EXTRACT OF THE ORDNANCE SURVEY SURVEYOR'S DRAFT, EARLY C.19<sup>TH</sup> (BL).

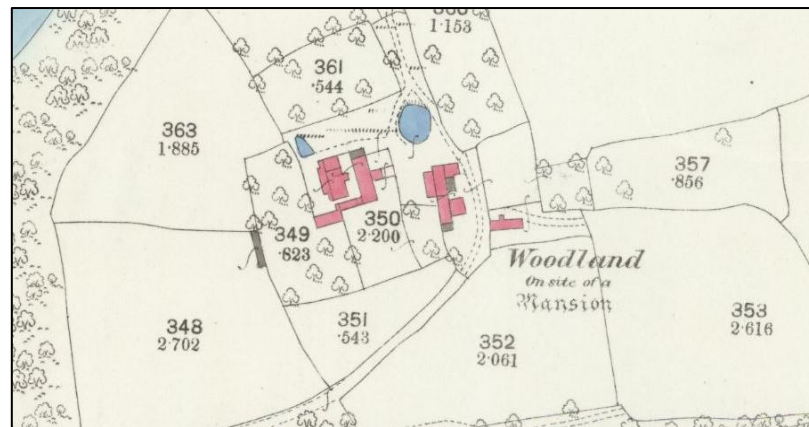


FIGURE 6: EXTRACT OF THE FIRST EDITION OS MAP, 1887 (NLS).



FIGURE 5: EXTRACT OF THE LITTLE TORRINGTON TITHE MAP, c.1840 (DHC).



FIGURE 7: PHOTOGRAPH OF WOODLANDS, LIKELY 1900-1940, HELD IN GREAT TORRINGTON HERITAGE MUSEUM ARCHIVE, NOTED MR HUXTABLES HOUSE ON THE BACK.



FIGURE 8: ©GET MAPPING MILLENIUM MAP. 1999.

#### 4.4 HISTORIC AND AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS

A historic photograph of the site (see Figure 7 above) is held in Great Torrington Heritage Museum's archive, possibly taken when the building's historic plasterwork was first being recorded by antiquarians – it shows the house with its (correct) lime rendered wall covering, taken from the south-east, with very clearly the original 19<sup>th</sup> century lean-to, to the bottom (right) end of the building (indicated on the photograph with an arrow).

A series of aerial photographs have also been taken of the farm between 1946 and present. The 1946 aerial shot (which is of poor resolution so not reproduced here) shows the large barn has recently been reroofed, likely in tin sheeting. The buildings west of the farmhouse appear to still be roofed. By the 1999 mapping (see Figure 8 above) the larger modern farm buildings have been constructed further east and the space around the barn and farmhouse seems to be more open and cleared away, a domestic character garden setting appears to have been established. There is

little meaningful change to the farmstead between the 1999 and 2015 BlueSky mapping.

#### 4.5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

The site lies within an area recorded on the Devon Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) as Former Orchards: *This area was once an orchard planted with fruit trees, but these have been lost in the C20<sup>th</sup>.* This area is then surrounded by Barton Fields: *These relatively large, rectangular enclosures seem likely to have been laid out between C15<sup>th</sup> and C18<sup>th</sup>. Some curving boundaries may be following earlier divisions in the pre-existing Medieval fields. In Cornwall these are sometimes called Barton fields.*

The Devon also HER records the farmhouse as a medieval Hall house altered in the 16<sup>th</sup> century (MDV11942) and the barn opposite as a 17<sup>th</sup> century barn altered in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (MDV58467), the barn is also Grade II Listed. There are no other historic environment records in the vicinity.

When we consider this lack of recorded activity in the immediate area and the long-settled nature of the holding, we can expect occupational deposits in and around the farmhouse and possibly even older evidence sealed beneath the farmhouse and barns footprints. However, considerable landscaping has been undertaken between the house and barn and in the gardens and there is unlikely to be deposits surviving, or if so, they will be much disturbed - the archaeological potential of that area is fairly low. To the west of the house where there are now walled roofless enclosures but previously other ranges of buildings there is an extensive cobbled surface, likely 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century in date, and much patched with cement. It is likely this area could have older disturbance and contain the oldest occupation evidence.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING

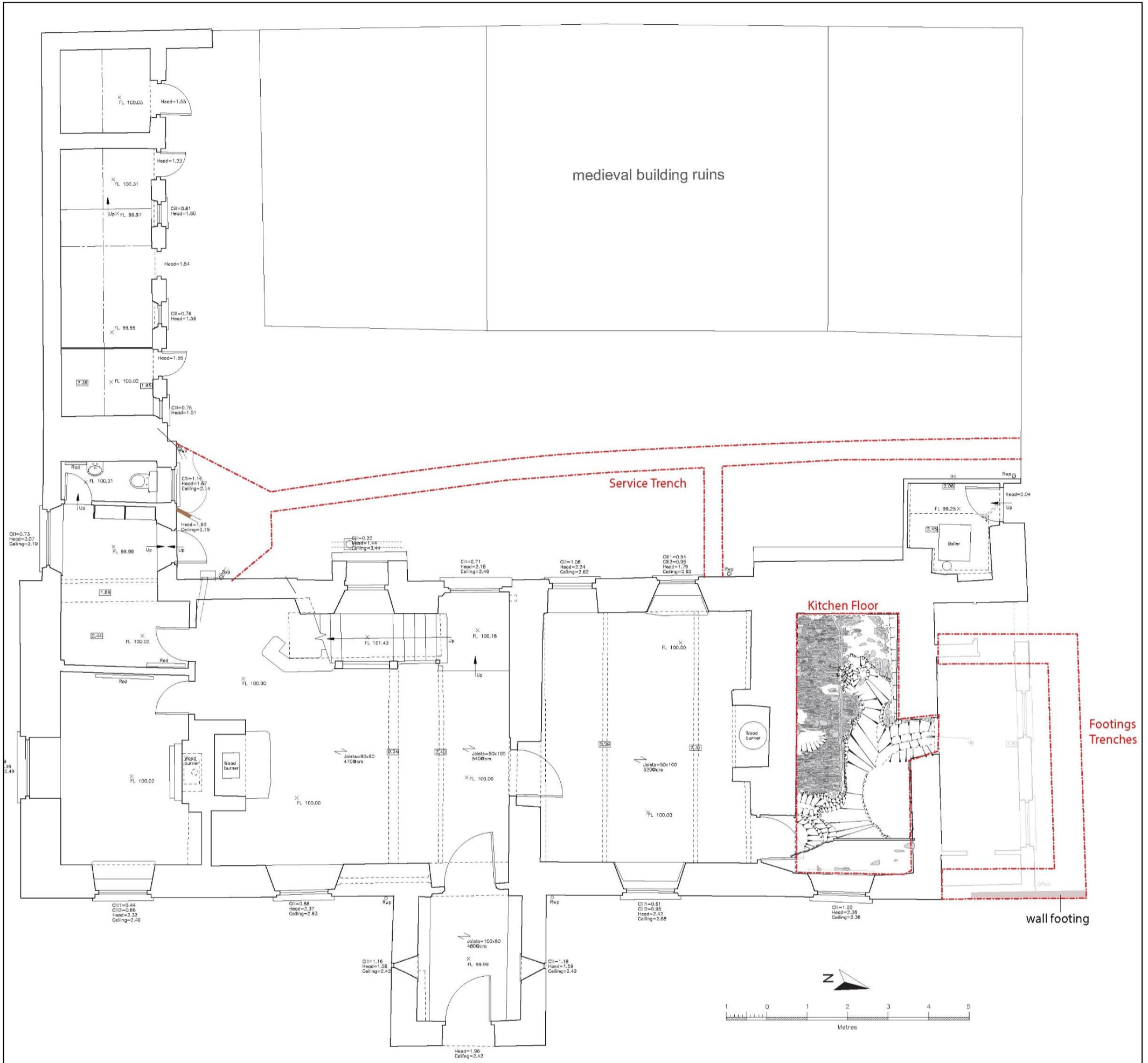


FIGURE 9: PLAN OF THE EXCAVATIONS OVERLAIN ON THE EXISTING PLAN (AFTER P. PRICE SURVEYORS). THE AREAS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING ARE INDICATED IN RED.

## 5.1 FOOTING TRENCHES

This phase of work was carried out by Dr S.H. Walls on 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2024. The earlier extension had been demolished prior to attendance, with the footing in-situ.

The new proposed footings near replicated the previous footprint, although the footing of the previous extension was in general 0.35m deep and 0.6m wide. The new footings were 0.7m wide and excavated to a depth of c.0.8m. The footings totalled c.14m in length.

In general, the stratigraphy is 0.4m of modern surfaces and made ground over a clean firm yellow-grey clay natural with occasional sub-angular platy stone. Internal to the footing, i.e. inside the former building there is a mid-grey-brown topsoil below the concrete. To the west side of the footing trenches there is a drain, concrete and entirely modern deposits.

To the east is a 1.9m long single course of a earth bonded stone footing, 0.3m below the grass level this could be edging for a flower bed but has what appears to be three good quoins to the north corner, at this end they are abutted by concrete block, presumably suggesting a return runs away to the west (see Figure 10). This is presently the edge to a lawned/grassed area. This footing stops 0.5m before the garden wall to the south. There is a dark grey-brown 0.2m thick topsoil below this footing, which likely represents the infilled wall cut, as it stops at both ends of the wall.

This truncated wall footing with quoins found just below the footing of the extension didn't have proper foundations and only a shallow wall-cut, it may represent the last of the remnants of the 19<sup>th</sup> century lean-to previously located on this side of the building.



FIGURE 10: VIEW OF EXPOSED FOOTINGS (OF 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY LEAN-TO?), FROM THE WEST (1M SCALE).

The present footing to the north end of Woodlands House was exposed by this work and recorded. It comprised a single course of large, squared stones, the bottom two quoins on the north-east corner had been removed previously, presumably for the former extension.

The north elevation of Woodlands was mostly rendered, but where stonework was exposed by the demolition of the modern extension it had largely been previously repointed in cement and or the pointing had been entirely washed out. The build to the 'west' side is of well-coursed blocky sub-angular build, with close joints and minimal earth bond. This is of a fine quality known colloquially in this region as 'freestone'. One possible straight build line may suggest structural phasing, directly above the ground floor door into the current kitchen. Beyond this straight build line, to the 'east' side the stonework is of a more typical rubble build, with closely packed unshaped stones and slabs, in a lime mortar.

### 5.1.1 FINDS FROM FOOTING TRENCHES

A single find was recovered from these footing trenches, an electroplated metal dessert spoon of 20<sup>th</sup> century date, which was discarded on site.



FIGURE 11: WORKING SHOT OF THE SITE OF THE DEMOLISHED EXTENSION AND EXCAVATED FOOTINGS, WITH CONCRETE APRON, FROM THE NORTH (1M SCALE).

## 5.2 KITCHEN FLOOR

This phase of work was carried out by E. Wapshott MCIfA on 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

The modern fitted kitchen, lino covering and thin skim of 20<sup>th</sup> century concrete had already been removed prior to attendance. This had exposed a limecrete historic floor (101) which was cleaned and photographed. This floor surface was a hard-packed grey-white, gritty layer, approximately 10cm deep and included some loose river pebble cobbles. The limecrete floor at the south end contained an embedded timber 2.2m long, which appeared to be a base rail for a narrow, lath partition. Beyond this partition the lime

floor was deeper, 0.35-0.4m in depth, with increased packing beneath the limecrete to level the surface.

A section was cut across this floor approximately 1.5m in from the east wall to examine the stratigraphy. This identified that a damaged but significantly surviving slate pebble cobbled floor survived beneath the limecrete floor to the west and centre of the room, damaged and missing to the extreme east and north-east corner.

This cobbled floor (107) also had a central cobbled drain running east-west and was 10-20cm deep on average. This floor was deemed archaeologically significant and the limecrete floor was therefore wholly removed to expose the cobbles and the floor was drawn to scale. In several areas the floor had slumped down into the made-ground below, and these sunken areas had been packed with an earlier lime-mix and packed with slates (105). To the north-west corner another area of damage had received remedial packing mixing loose cobbles and possibly demolition rubble in a lime and earth mix, with artefacts like nails, some window glass and pottery – this levelled the ground and provided support to the central drain – this packing and repair was also buried by the limecrete floor – suggesting at least two phases of damage and alteration in this space, before the limecrete floor was installed.

Beneath the cobbled floor was a deep layer of made ground (108) – clearly intended to build up the natural hillslope, below that was natural – a clean firm yellow-grey clay (100) with occasional sub-angular platey stone, as seen in the exterior excavations.

### 5.2.1 FINDS FROM THE KITCHEN FLOOR

Archaeological finds were recovered from all of the principal layers and provided crucial dating evidence of the phasing of alteration to this flooring. The finds are included in the context list and finds concordance documents in Appendix 2.

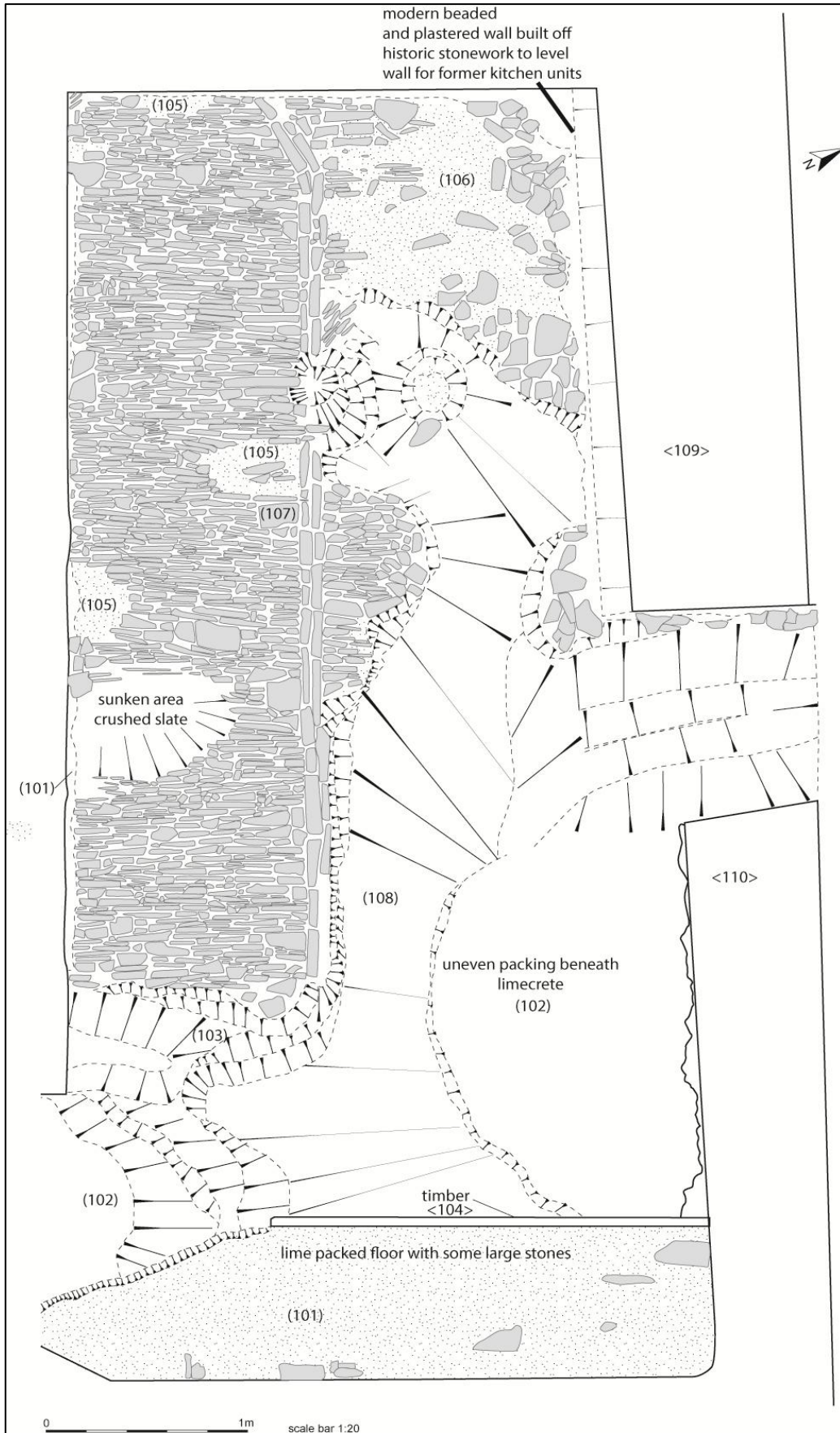


FIGURE 12: SCALED PLAN OF COBBLED FLOOR (107).



FIGURE 13: THE LIMECRETE FLOOR (101) BEFORE SECTIONING AND EVENTUAL EXCAVATION; FROM THE SOUTH (2 x 1M SCALES).



FIGURE 14: THE COBBLED FLOOR (107) AFTER CLEANING; FROM THE SOUTH (2 X 1M SCALES).

### 5.3 SERVICE TRENCHING

This phase of work was carried out by S. Stevens ACIfA on the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

A long service trench was excavated to the rear (west) of the main house, cutting at a shallow oblique angle through the yard, with the standing medieval building remains (see Figure 16).

The trench was c.0.6m wide and was up to 0.9m deep. It ran for c.11m in length. Within the trench were various modern plastic service pipes and a medieval or post medieval drain, which ran north-south along the west wall of the farmhouse, appearing to run under the building to the south-east.

The stratigraphy was of a cobbled surface (111), overlying a layer of light-coloured sand (112), c.0.05m thick; which overlay a buried topsoil (113), a dark grey-brown friable silt, c.0.20m thick; overlying natural (114) a mid-yellow-grey silt-clay.

The cobbled surface of the yard is likely post medieval, c.1700-1900 in date, clearly built around the remains of the earlier medieval buildings. It is much patched and altered, with differences in packing and size and type of stones used, between small pebbles and larger split slates. The various cuts in the subsoil represent phases of modern services.



FIGURE 15: THE SERVICE TRENCH, AS VIEWED FROM THE NORTH (1M SCALE).

#### 5.3.1 FINDS

No finds of archaeological interest were recovered from the service trench.

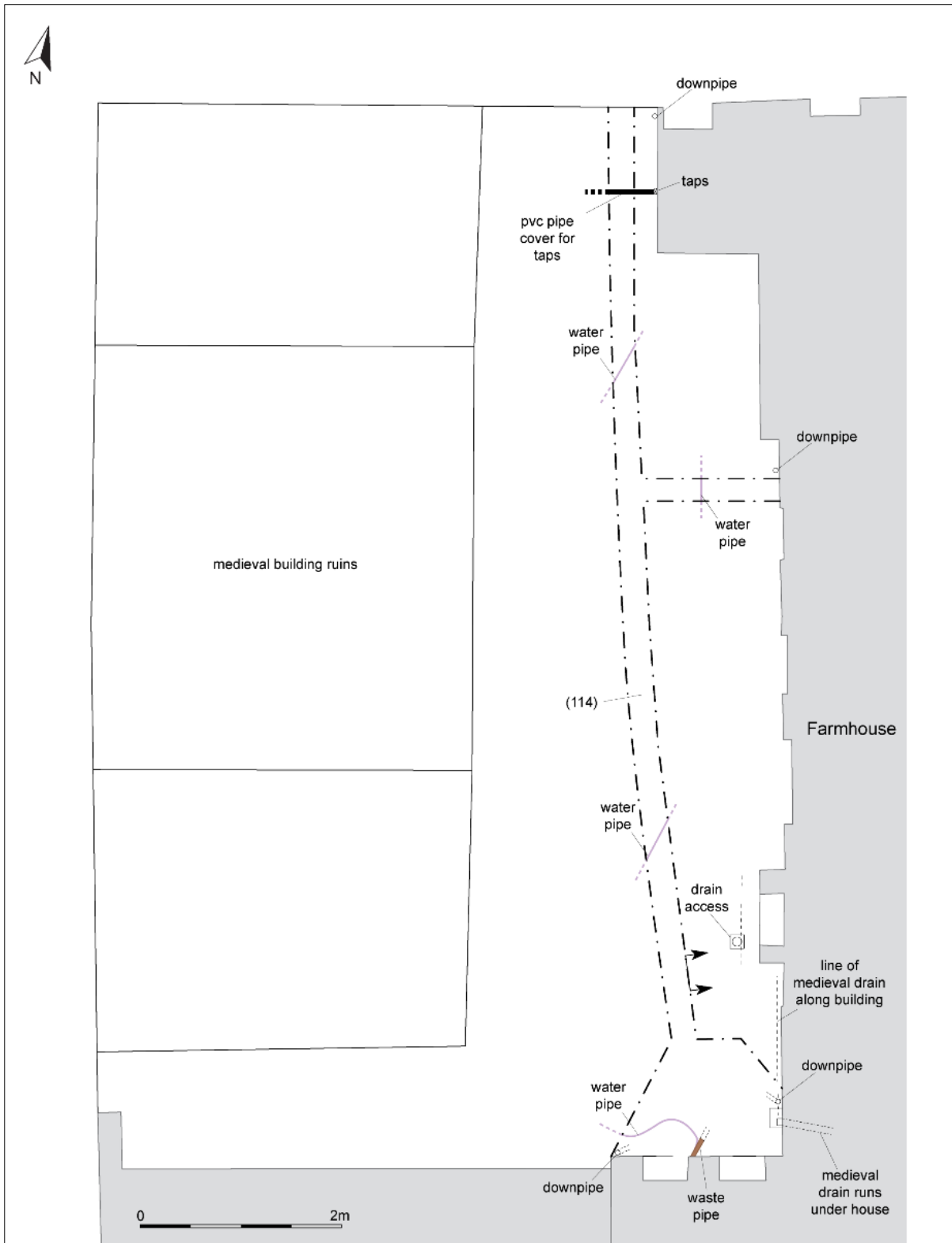


FIGURE 16: PLAN OF SERVICE TRENCH IN RELATION TO HOUSE AND YARD.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

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The various area of archaeological monitoring around the building highlighted the extensive 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century alterations and expansion on the farmstead and associated landscaping in and around the farmhouse and courtyard area.

The floor removal within the footprint of the north end of the building highlighted earlier evidence of floor surfaces from the 17<sup>th</sup> century or possibly later medieval period. This suggests more complex phasing for the farmhouse building, perhaps most likely having evolved out of a detached block (or blocks) of medieval date, subsequently incorporated into a main range when it was formed.

The buildings archaeology and archaeology of the cobbled floor (107) appears to suggest it is associated with the older 'freestone' fabric noted in the build to the 'north-west' end of this block of the building. This build was infilled and partially sat on made ground – deeper inside than out, this levelled the slope, as a building platform and was noted on the exterior during the earlier visit in July 2024. The style of this fabric is common in the medieval period in this region and well into the 17<sup>th</sup> century but isn't commonly seen on buildings later than 1650AD and is almost exclusively considered a *medieval, late medieval or early modern* form of build.

Post-medieval pottery, of a style known as North Devon gravel-tempered ware (broadly dated to 1500-1800) was recovered beneath and within the depth of this floor and may even have been

made at the Great Torrington pottery. More interestingly one piece of medieval coarseware was found beneath the cobbled drain and an etched bone pin were recovered from between cobbles in the floor. This finds evidence and the style of the closely packed split slates, suggests a date range of the 17<sup>th</sup> century or early 18<sup>th</sup> century date (c.1600-1750) for the floor. Where this earlier floor surface was damaged also appeared to align with the rebuild rubble on the 'north-east' corner of this block.

The build-up of material over the historic cobbled floor and levelled limecrete floor respected the footprint of the room as it is now and therefore likely is broadly contemporary, or installed after this portion of the building was altered.

Within this limecrete floor (101) was later glazed 18<sup>th</sup> century pottery, 19<sup>th</sup> century white refined earthenwares, nails, and some black wine bottle glass – suggesting a later 18<sup>th</sup> or early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century date.

The various historic floor surfaces were fully recorded before the space was hand excavated down to the required new level, so it could be rationalised with the extension.

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**APPENDIX 1 – CONTEXT LIST FOR EXTENSION MONITORING – JULY 2024**

TABLE 1: CONTEXT LIST FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING OF EXTENSION FOOTINGS

Context	Type	Description	Relationships	Depth/ thickness (m)
(100)	Layer	Natural yellow-grey clay	N/A	
(101)	Layer	Mid grey-brown topsoil, with grass on top	Overlies structure <104>, which is only 0.3m below the surface.	0.3-0.5m
(102)	Layer	20 <sup>th</sup> century concrete floor surface within footprint of former flat-roofed extension	Overlies layers (101) and (103), as well as natural (100).	0.35m
(103)	Layer	Dark brown friable made-ground in and around footings of 20 <sup>th</sup> century extension	Overlaid by topsoil (101) and concrete floor (102), abuts against older buried wall remains <104> and wall cut [105]	0.4m
<104>	Structure	Remains of wall – single row of foundation stones, 1.9m long, earth bonded, roughly shaped stones, but with dressed block quoins to north end – suggestion of a former return to the west	Overlain by topsoil (101) and abutted by concrete floor (102) and (103), the made-ground. Overlies, or is part of wall cut [105] and overlies the fill of this cut (106).	0.35m
[105]	Cut	Shallow cut for wall, irregular shallow sloping sides, respects length of wall and goes no further	Part of structure <104> and overlaid by it. Filled by (106). Overlain by (101) topsoil, abutted by (103) made ground and cut into natural (100).	0.2m
(106)	Fill	Fill of wall cut – dark, loose rich brown-grey friable silt-clay – former topsoil?	Fill of wall cut [105].	0.2m

**APPENDIX 2 – CONTEXT LIST & FINDS CONCORDANCE FOR FLOOR REMOVAL – AUGUST 2024**

TABLE 2: CONTEXT LIST FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING OF THE FLOOR REMOVAL

Context	Type	Description	Relationships	Depth/ thickness (m)
(100)	Layer	Modern 20 <sup>th</sup> century concrete layer – removed before attendance to site	Overlies layers – (101-108), abuts structures <109> and <110>.	N/A
(101)	Layer	Historic limecrete floor – white-grey, thick dusty lime surface – very fine texture – sand and cement aggregate mixture	Overlain by (100) and overlies layers (102), (103), (105), (107) and (108). Abutted by (106) which appears to repair this floor reusing damaged material from both (101), (102), (105) and (107). Butted by <104> which has been inserted into it and may be part of it – contemporary.	0.09-0.15m on average.
(102)	Layer	Packing layer beneath limecrete – a mix of dusty lime powder and rich-brown clay silt – only at this east end where the cobbled floor has been lost – appears to build up the levels.	Overlain by (100) and (101). Overlies (103), (105), (107) and (108).	0.1m
(103)	Layer	Loosely packed rich dark brown, clay-silt. This only appears at the east end of the room, beneath (101) limecrete floor and appears to address the damaged areas of the cobbled floor, where they are wholly missing – used to build up the levels.	Overlain by (100) and (101) It isn't clear if it is the lower layer of (102), or an upper looser layer of (108), it is finer in texture and less stony but of the same clay-silt matrix.	0.2m-0.25m
<104>	Structure	Timber embedded in (101) which is possibly associated with a partition or former service stairs.	Part of, or butts (101), overlies (108), butts structure <110>.	0.08m wide, 0.10m deep, 2.2m long.
(105)	Layer	Small sections of an earlier lime-packed floor, filled with dense white lime inclusions – a pale grey-brown colour this appears to be mixed with clay as the bond, not a cement – materially different from limecrete floor. Soft and friable, charcoal flecks. Broken roof slates included. Infills sections of sunken cobbled floor – so may only ever have been used to patch areas and never covered the whole area.	Overlain by (100) and (101). Overlies (103) and (107). Abutted by (106) which appears to repair (101).	0.003-0.008m maximum in sunken patches.
(106)	Layer	Packing repair layer to the north side with chunks of stone and lime plaster and appears to interact with cobbled floor (107). Lots of finds: window glass, metal, black wine bottle glass, nails, etc.	Overlain by (100). Butts (101) – it appears to patch and repair damage to this floor and the floor beneath (107). Overlies (108).	0.1-0.3m in some areas, deeper to north side.
(107)	Layer	Split, pale-blue slate cobbled floor in a linear alignment north-south. Stones are long <10cm on average, generally with little packing between individual stones and instead split slate	Overlain by (100), (101), (102), (103) and (105). Abutted by (106) Overlies (108).	0.1m – 0.18m general depth of floor, 0.2m-

		hammered in deep c.0.18-0.23m.	Butts structure <109>.	0.25m in depth for drain– dependant on the inside split slates.
(108)	Layer	Made ground, building platform which seems to infill and level the slope. The deposit is very clean with frequent redeposited clay, large, dressed stones which are sub-square and square 5-15cm in diameter, with irregular larger stones 10-20cm. These are not considered frequent enough to be of built form but possibly provides evidence of demolition.	Overlain by (100-103), structure <104>, layers (105-107), also seemingly overlain by structure <110>, appears to infill structure <109> possible to level ground to form first floor.	0.4m on average although deeper to north, may only be 0.2 against south wall of adjacent room.
<109>	Structure	Medieval or 17 <sup>th</sup> century freestone build, with dressed slate slabs and blocks, with slate levelling courses and straight joint to later rubble. Clay bond but very small joints between squared stones.	Abutted by layers (100-107), possibly infilled by layer (108).	N/A
<110>	Structure	Loose rubble, closely packed, unshaped slabs and stones, clay bond – lime and clay mortar, possibly wholly rebuilt to the corner.	Abutted by layers (100), (101), (102), (103). Overlies layer (108). Also abutted by structure <104>.	N/A

TABLE 3: FINDS CONCORDANCE.

Context	Notes	No.	Wgt.	Pottery	Date	No.	Wgt.	Bone	No.	Wgt.	Glass	No.	Wgt.	Other
101	limecrete floor level	1	0.081	Industrial slip ware	C.18th	1	0.021							
102	made ground beneath floor	2	0.060	NDGT body sherds	18th-19th									
105	earlier lime floor	1	0.003	BTP	17th-18th	3	0.019					2	0.160	FE Pintles
		3	0.010	NDGT body sherds	17th-18th							1	0.013	Black stone?
106	from packing					8	0.056		1	0.006	window glass black glass bottle	2	0.029	Fe nails
107	slate floor	1	0.009	NDGT body sherd	C.17th	1	0.003	Bone pin						
		1	0.007	Med. coarseware	14th-16th									
<b>TOTALS</b>		9	0.170			13	0.099		7	0.069		5	0.202	

**APPENDIX 3 – CONTEXT LIST FOR MONITORING SERVICE TRENCH – SEPTEMBER 2024**

TABLE 4: CONTEXT LIST FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING OF SERVICE TRENCH IN WEST YARD OF FARMHOUSE

Context	Type	Description	Relationships	Depth/ thickness (m)
(111)	Layer	Cobbled yard surface – a mix of neat pebbles	Overlies (112)	0.10m
(112)	Layer	Light coloured sand bedding layer	Overlain by (111); overlies (113)	0.05m
(113)	Layer	A dark grey-brown friable silt - buried topsoil layer.	Overlain by (112); overlies (114)	0.20m
(114)	Layer	Natural – a mid yellow-grey soft silt-clay.	Overlain by (113)	-

## APPENDIX 4 – PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE



Plate 1: Excavated footings, down to 0.8m, north side of extension, looking west, 1m scale.



Plate 2: North-east corner of farmhouse, showing quoins removed for previous extension and build-up of ground forming building platform, east of extension, looking south, 1m scale.



Plate 3: Wide-angled, working, view of north wall of farmhouse, showing different build styles to north-east corner and north and north-west corner; from the north-west.



Plate 4: View of 19<sup>th</sup> century limecrete floor in the kitchen, from the west, 2 x 1m scales.



Plate 5: View of the exposed cobbled floor in the kitchen, from the west, 2m scale.

Plate 6: Detailed view of the fabric of the limecrete floor (101), with photocard scale.



Plate 8: Detailed view of the lime and earth mixed fabric (105), with slates, which packs the sunken areas of the limecrete floor (107), with photocard scale.



Plate 7: Detailed view of the fabric of the cobbled floor (107), with photocard scale.



Plate 9: Detailed view of the earlier phase of packing and remedial works to the cobbled floor where the north-east corner had been damaged, viewed from the east, 2 x 1m scales.



Plate 10: Detailed view of west end of cobbled floor, where the drain curves back to pass through a drain hole in the west wall, now blocked. 0.5m scale. from the north-north-west.



Plate 12: The top of the service trench, where the historic and modern drains have been exposed, 1m scale; from the west.



Plate 11: View of almost fully excavated and removed cobbled floor, showing depth of made ground packing beneath that and above the natural yellow-grey clay, 2m scale, from the east.



Plate 13: Detail of a stone-built box drain emerging from the wall of the historic farmhouse, 0.5m scale, from the west.

