

# Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                               |                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Civil Parish &amp; District:</b><br>Barnstaple, North Devon                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>National Grid Reference</b><br>SS 5599 3291                | <b>Number:</b>           |
| <b>Subject:</b> Archaeological watching brief of groundworks for the construction of an extension to the rear of 6 Litchdon Street, Barnstaple, Devon                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                               | <b>Photo attached?</b> N |
| <b>Planning Application no:</b> 39320                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>Recipient museum:</b> Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon |                          |
| <b>OASIS ID:</b> southwest 1-56456                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Museum Accession no:</b> 2006.100                          |                          |
| <b>Contractor's reference number/code:</b> BLS08                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Dates fieldwork undertaken:</b> June 3-6 and 9, 2008       |                          |
| <p><b>Description of works.</b></p> <p>Groundworks to the rear of 6, Litchdon Street, Barnstaple, for the construction of a two-storey extension (and access to the site) were monitored and recorded by South West Archaeology.</p> <p>Existing, single-storey structures and their flooring were removed and an area of 5.4x7.3m was stripped to the level of yellow silt-clay natural. A further area of garden to the rear of the proposed extension measuring 2.5x1.8m was reduced by 1.1m and a 1.6m wide breach made in the garden wall to the northwest so as to allow access to the site (see attached plan). Note, the garden was 1.7m higher than the site of the proposed extension and reduction in this area did not reach the level of natural (see attached section drawing).</p> <p>The area of the proposed extension was covered with concrete flooring and around 0.1m of hardcore; the removal of this material revealed several modern services, mainly in the southwest of the site. Mid-site was a shallow sub-circular cut [111]; its fill (112) contained 19<sup>th</sup> century or later pottery indicating a modern origin. In the west corner of the site was a circular well, diameter of cut [113] 1.55m. The lining {114} was of roughly-coursed sub-angular to angular stone set back into the clay natural and bonded with mid-brown clay-silt (0.4m of this was removed but produced no dating evidence). The well was backfilled with a loose mid-grey silt-clay (115) containing stone, brick, 19<sup>th</sup>-century or later pottery and lime mortar with coal inclusions; 0.4m of this fill was excavated. The well evidently served the property at 6 Litchdon Street and had been filled in the 19<sup>th</sup> century or later.</p> <p>To the northeast of the proposed extension the removal of modern retaining walls and the level reduction for access revealed a section through the garden (attached); this consisted of the following layers (lowest first):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Firm yellow silt-clay natural.</li> <li>• A mid-grey, firm silt-clay (107) containing occasional rounded silt stone &lt;75mm across, fragments of charcoal, a pieces of slate &lt;50mm across. There was also some animal bone and late 15<sup>th</sup> - early 16<sup>th</sup> century pottery. This layer was 0.4-0.6m thick.</li> <li>• A black, charcoal-rich, soft clay-silt (110) &lt;100mm thick extending 2m northwest-southeast</li> <li>• A lens of gritty, stony grey clay-silt (109) &lt;60mm thick extending 0.4m northwest-southeast, 16<sup>th</sup> century pottery was common.</li> <li>• A loose orange sandy-silt (102) in which stone and slate (some heated) was common, also 16<sup>th</sup> century pottery. An intermittent layer &lt;100mm thick; this layer sloped gently upwards to the northeast.</li> <li>• A mid-grey soft clay-silt (101), 0.4-0.6m thick containing occasional roofing slates and lime mortar and charcoal fragments, 16<sup>th</sup> century pottery was common.</li> <li>• Cut into the south-east end of (101) was [108]; a concave cut 0.35m deep filled with (105) a dark grey, soft clay-silt containing mid to late 18<sup>th</sup> century pottery.</li> <li>• Built over (105) was a wall {106}; this ran for 2.15m southeast-northwest, with a return at its south-eastern end running southwest for 0.8m. This wall consisted of 3-4 rough courses of poorly worked shale and occasional brick bonded with soft, white lime mortar; it was 0.25m high and 0.33m thick. This had probably been built as a retaining wall for the garden behind the house in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.</li> <li>• The wall was overlain by (100) a dark grey loamy topsoil 0.5-0.75m thick; this contained common pottery, some of it modern (e.g. industrial slip-coated white earthenwares with transfer-printed decoration, etc.) but with residual material dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century.</li> </ul> <p>Also, in the north-western section of the area reduced for access, between (100) and (102) there was loose pale-brown sandy-silt layer (103) up to 100mm thick extending 0.8m northwest-southeast and running 0.2m into the</p> |                                                               |                          |

excavation; it contained a sherd of 16<sup>th</sup> century pottery and roofing slates.

The area of the proposed extension showed only modern features, with the exception of the well that may be earlier and pit [108]. The structures formerly in this area may have truncated any older features as their floor level was about 0.5m lower than on the adjoining plots to each side.

The reduced area of the garden and the section revealed by the removal of modern retaining walls, consisted of several thick layers of probable garden soils – (100), (101) and (107) with some thin, intermittent layers suggestive of dumped material associated with pottery production (102), (103), (109) and (110); these were deposited between (101) and (107). The ceramic evidence suggests this dumping occurred in the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century. There was no indication that these generally loose and unconsolidated layers represented *in situ* structures related to pottery production, but the presence of wasters and kiln furniture, and the unabraded character of the ceramic assemblage, indicate pottery production was taking place in the immediate vicinity.

The source of this dumping is almost certainly the Litchdon Street potteries, known to have been located nearby.

#### **Pottery synopsis:**

Despite the small size of the area investigated, a considerable amount (>7kgs) of pottery was recovered.

Context (107) [29 sherds, 0.32kg] contained late C15th-early C16th pottery and wasters, and a fragment of late medieval ridge tile. Context (102) [46 sherds, 1.74kg] contained pottery and wasters dated to the ?early C16th. Of interest were the coarse sagger fragments, including one fused to the bottom of a North Devon cup base, that were also present. Contexts (101) [154 sherds, 3.26kg], (103) [1 sherd, 0.01kg], and (109) [15 sherds, 0.32kg] contained pottery and wasters dated to the C16th.

Pit [108] contained fill (105) [19 sherds, 1.12kg]; this produced mid-late C18th material.

John Allan's comments:

"This material is clearly kiln waste and kiln furniture, with many blistered sherds, burnt edges, frazzled glaze, etc; the kiln furniture includes burnt slates with glaze dribbles and one sagger base firmly stuck to the cup within it. The entire collection appears to date to c.1500-50. Hitherto, excavations in Barnstaple have recovered enormous quantities of post-1600 (mainly post-1650) wasters and a small amount of 13C and 15C material (Markuson 1979). This is therefore the first find of an otherwise unrepresented period of the town's pottery production, containing a number of features of wider interest. The date at which saggars came into use in SW England, for example, is uncertain, & this is probably the earliest instance of this significant innovation."

The pottery assemblage will be examined as part of the programme of works, funded by Devon County Council, designed to bring a number of sites/finds in Barnstaple to publication (Allan & Griffiths *forthcoming*).

#### *References:*

Allan, J. & Griffiths, N. *forthcoming* 'Some recent ceramic finds of medieval and later date from Barnstaple', *Proc Devon Archaeol Soc* [provisional details, as of 01.04.09]

Markuson, K.W. 1979: 'Excavations on the Green Lane Access Site, Barnstaple, 1979', *Proc Dorset Archaeol Natur Hist Soc* vol. 38, 1980, 67-90.

**A plan as well as any other relevant drawings must be attached showing the location and extent of site, areas investigated and features exposed.**

#### **Recorder:**

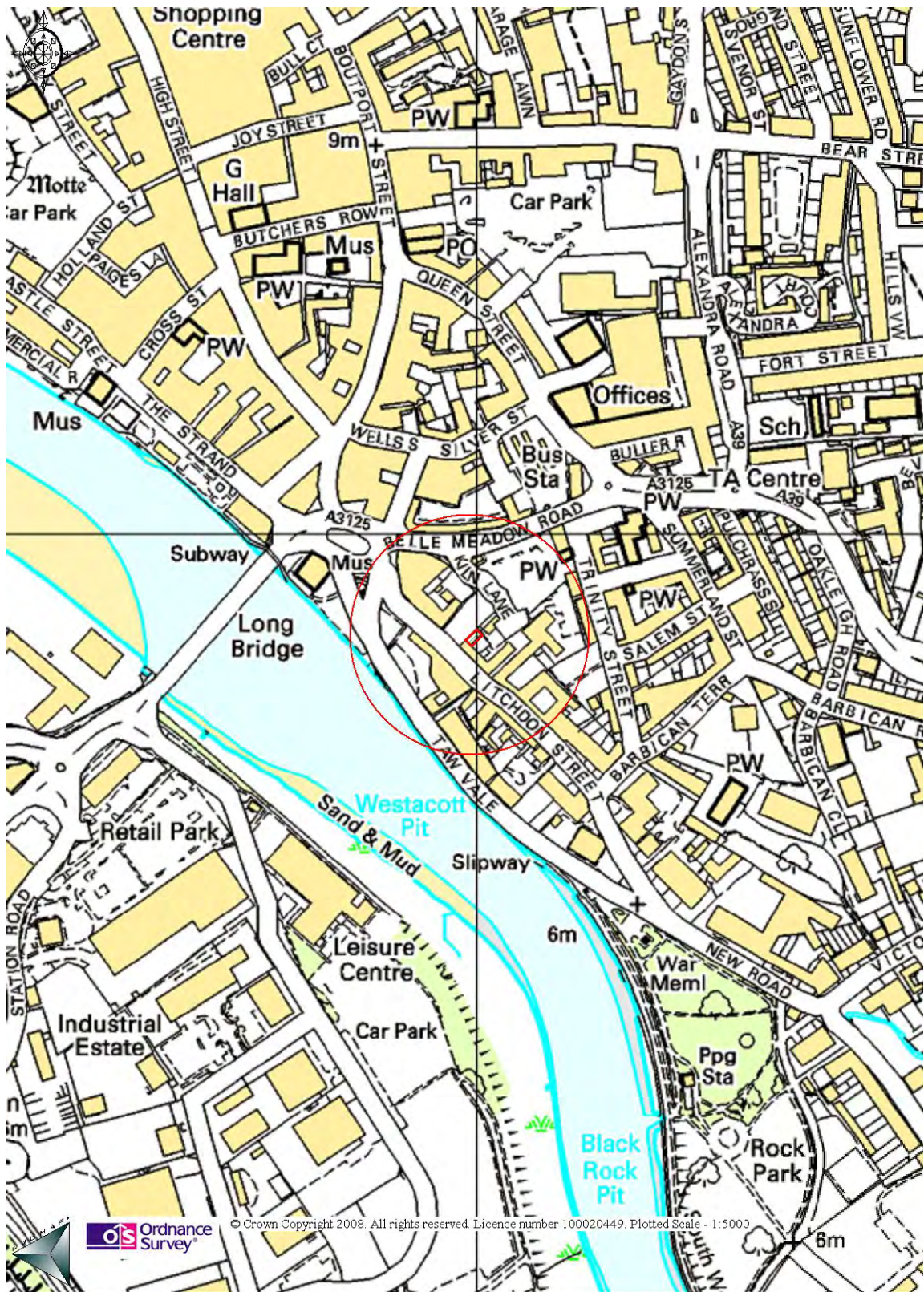
Martin Gillard (South West Archaeology)

#### **Date sent to HER:**

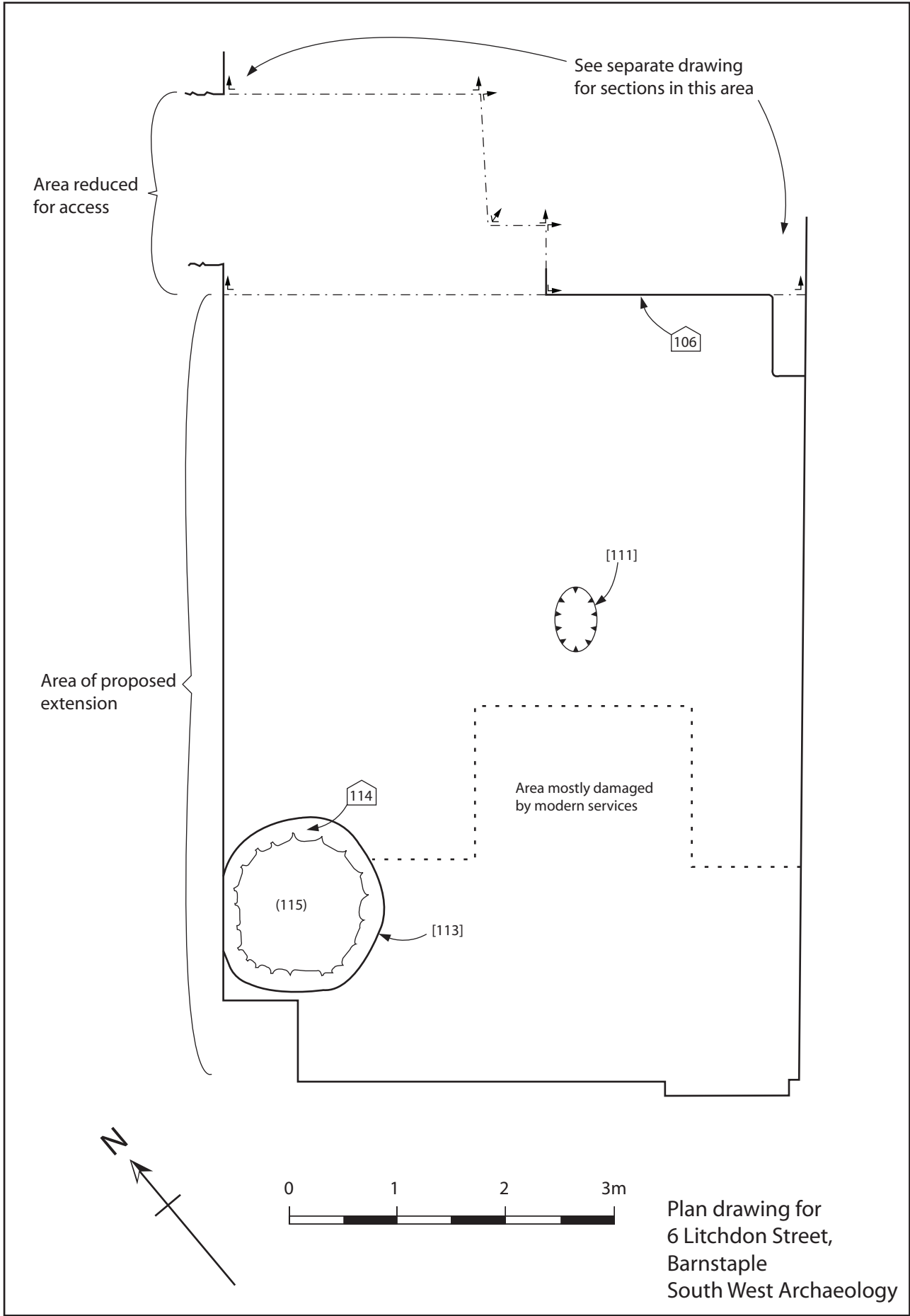
8.04.09

Please email completed form to: [archaeol@devon.gov.uk](mailto:archaeol@devon.gov.uk) or post to County Archaeology Service, Environment Directorate, Matford Lane Offices, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter EX2 4QW. Information recorded on this form will be added to the Historic Environment Record, and made available to all researchers.

Any plans or photographs embedded within or attached to this form remain the copyright © of the recorder, and must not be reproduced in any publication without the explicit consent of the copyright holder.



Location of 6 Litchdon Street, Barnstaple  
 South West Archaeology



Section drawings for  
6 Litchdon Street,  
Barnstaple  
South West Archaeology

