

# Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

<b>Civil Parish &amp; District:</b> Tawstock, North Devon	<b>National Grid Reference</b> SS543314	<b>Number:</b>
<b>Subject:</b> archaeological watching brief in advance of the construction of 14 dwellings together with associated works		<b>Photo attached?</b> YES
<b>Planning Application no:</b> 49577 Arch/DC/DN/15920a	<b>Recipient museum:</b> Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon	
<b>OASIS ID:</b> southwes1-83772	<b>Museum Accession no:</b> NDDMS: 2010.50.	
<b>Contractor's reference number/code:</b> TSM10	<b>Dates fieldwork undertaken:</b> 7-8.09.10, 21.09.10, 1.10.10	
<p><b>Description of works.</b></p> <p>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by South West Archaeology (SWARCH) at the request of Peter How of Chichester Homes Ltd. (the Client) prior to the construction of fourteen dwellings at San mar on the northern edge of the parish of Tawstock. The work was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) approved by DCHES. This work was undertaken by L. Bray, S. Walls and B. Morris.</p> <p>The development lay to the east of a sub-circular cropmark enclosure (DCHER no.4484) which may represent a prehistoric settlement. The enclosure measures 58×55m, with evidence for an entrance or outworks on its south-eastern side. This entrance/outwork falls within the application area, and groundworks for the proposed development were therefore likely to expose, and destroy, deposits as well as artefacts associated with this archaeological site.</p> <p>The proposed development took place within and adjacent to the curtilage of a small farmstead. This is shown on the 1888 OS maps, where it is a barn and orchard belonging to the farm (Roundswell Farm, now "Innisfree") across the (Old Torrington) road. This farm was part of the Down St. Mary, Tawstock estate, sold in 1918 (EHNMR SC00242). At least one of the structures on the site (barn, stone rubble construction with brick quoins and pantile roof) probably dated from this period. The house/bungalow appears to have been built between 1904 and 1956 (probably the 1930s). All extant structures within the development area were demolished prior to archaeological recording.</p> <p>Most of the topsoil on the development area was removed before archaeological recording could be implemented though a thin layer remained over much of the site. Recent and post-medieval pottery was observed in the spoil. Monitoring commenced at this point with the remaining part of the topsoil removed by a tracked mechanical excavator using a 1.8m wide toothless grading bucket under strict archaeological supervision (see Fig. 1a).</p> <p>The topsoil was originally 0.4-0.6m deep and consisted of two layers; a 0.5m thick upper dark brown homogenous loam with very rare stone inclusions, and a lower mid greyish-brown friable clay-silt containing occasional streaks of charcoal and small, sub-angular stone inclusions of up to 0.01m in size. The natural subsoil consisted of a heterogeneous orange-grey clay-silt containing frequent to abundant angular to sub-angular stone inclusions up to 0.15m in size. There were also patches of very clean light grey clay with poorly defined edges found within the natural, which are probably periglacial features.</p> <p>Aside from a number of recent post-holes (still retaining the bases of wooden posts), pipe-trenches, and the foundation trenches for twentieth century buildings, the main feature of note was the remains of a bank and ditch from a field-boundary that ran north-east to south-west across the length of the development plot. This feature is shown on the late 19<sup>th</sup> century OS maps. The ditch [101] was 2m wide at maximum, 0.35m deep and at least 57m in length, curving slightly towards the south at its south-western end (see Figs. 1a &amp; 1c). The fill of the ditch (102) was a firm, mottled, reddish-grey silt-clay which was very humic and contained occasional small stones and wood fragments. The finds from ditch [101] included: 3 fragments of pan tile, 2 iron objects (a hinge and broken nail), and pottery (North Devon Wares (7 sherds, 336g), Bone China (1 sherd, 27g), white refined earthenwares (3 sherds, 45g) and a Bristol/Staffordshire Yellow Slip ware vessel base (1 sherd, 52g)], which dated primarily to the late 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century. Three residual sherds of Medieval (13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century) North Devon Ware also occurred. The ditch had been cut along much of its length by a later pipe trench [109].</p>		

The finds from the topsoil at San Mar included 3 clay pipe fragments, 2 oyster shells, 4 pieces of 19<sup>th</sup> century glass (including 2 complete bottles), a roof slate (71g), a single piece of chert (29g) and 2 possible fragments of kiln furniture (11g). A large assemblage (2.12kg) of pottery was recovered from the topsoil of the site, comprised in the main of 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century material including North Devon wares (113 sherds, 1.855kg), white refined earthenwares with both sponge and transfer printed decoration (26 sherds, 202g), Bone China (1 sherd, 9g), German Stoneware (1 sherd, 21g), Bristol/Staffordshire Yellow Slip ware (2 sherds, 12g) and a 17<sup>th</sup> century tin glazed Delft-type Porringer handle (3 sherds, 10g). The North Devon material included late-19<sup>th</sup> century material (9 sherds, 170g), 18<sup>th</sup> century material (4 sherds, 134g), post-medieval Calcareous Wares (44 sherds, 860g), a single sherd of a Calcareous waster (6g), post-medieval Gritty Wares (20 sherds, 395g), Yellow Slip ware (3 sherds, 31g), and a single shed of Sgraffito (1g). A sizeable proportion of the North Devon pottery assemblage (31 sherds, 258g) was 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> in date, suggesting that medieval activity was occurring close to the site at that time. This would imply that Roundswell Farm was a medieval foundation, rather than a post-medieval farmstead as implied by the HLC for the area.

**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:** S. Walls

**Date sent to HER:** 06.10.10

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.

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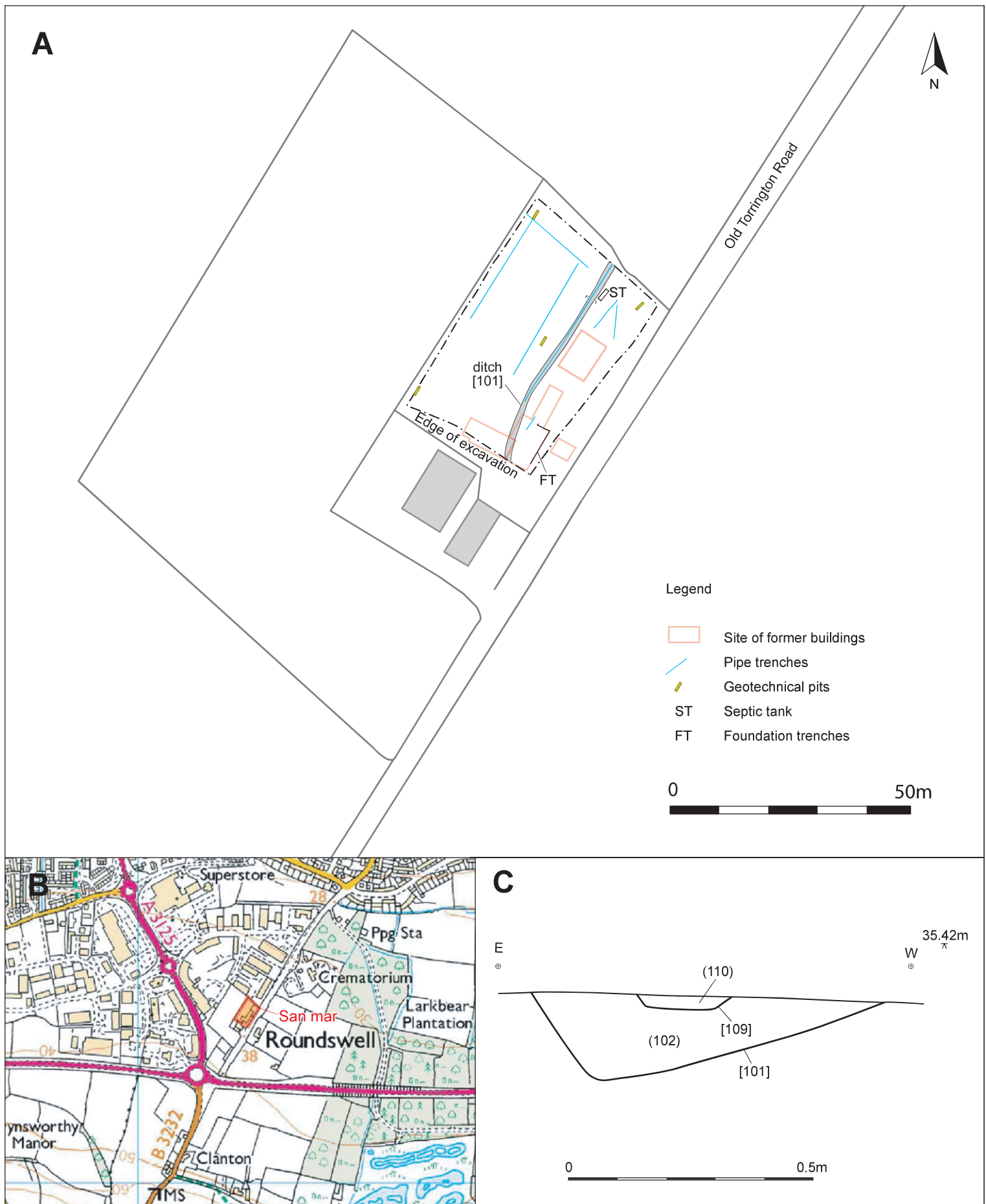


Fig. 1: Tawstock San mar site layout (a) Location map; (b) 1:10,000 (Promap image OS licence no. 100020449); north-facing section; (c) of historic boundary ditch [101].



Fig.: 2a. The site after the topsoil was removed, from the south-east.  
 2b. South-facing section of [101] (scale 2m & 1m).  
 2c. Remains of hedge bank (103), from the south (scale 1m).