

Gas Main Replacement High Street and Ramparts Walk Totnes Devon

Archaeological Watching Brief

for

Grontmij

on behalf of

Wales and West Utilities Limited

CA Project: 4108 CA Report: 13221

May 2013

Gas Main Replacement High Street and Ramparts Walk Totnes Devon

Archaeological Watching Brief

CA Project: 4108 CA Report: 13221

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date	24 May 2013
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date	28 May 2013
issue	01

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CONTENTS

SUMM	ARY	. 2
1.	INTRODUCTION	. 3
2.	RESULTS (FIGS 2-5)	. 5
3.	DISCUSSION	. 8
4.	CA PROJECT TEAM	. 9
5.	REFERENCES	. 9
	NDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS	
	IDIX C: LEVELS OF PRINCIPAL DEPOSITS AND STRUCTURES	
	NDIX D: OASIS REPORT FORM	

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Fig. 1 Site location plan (1:25,000)
- Fig. 2 Trench location plan (1:500)
- Fig. 3 Trench 17; plan, section and photograph (1:20)
- Fig. 4 Trench 40; plan, section and photograph (1:20)
- Fig. 5 Trench 83 showing redeposited natural 83001

SUMMARY

Project Name: High Street and Ramparts Walk

Location: Totnes, Devon

NGR: SX 8000 6043 to 8032 6041

Type: Archaeological Watching Brief

Date: 2 January – 18 April 2013

Location of Archive: Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter

Accession Number: 13/33
Site Code: TOG 13

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with gas main replacement on the High Street and Ramparts Walk, Totnes, Devon.

The remains of an undated north/south aligned wall were identified to the west of St Mary's Church in the High Street. A number of possible medieval deposits were identified in close proximity, while an east/west orientated stone drain was uncovered in the area to the west. Works in the area of the Scheduled Monument of Totnes Priory uncovered homogenous deposits probably associated with the infilling of the area immediately behind the town wall, although the possibility that these deposits are associated with the construction of the wall/rampart cannot be discounted.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Between January and April 2013 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for Grontmij on behalf of Wales and West Utilities (WWU) at the High Street and Ramparts Walk (between NGR: SX 8000 6043 and 8032 6041; Fig. 1). The works in Ramparts Walk were located within the area of Totnes Priory (Scheduled Monument Devon 34877).
- Discussions were held between WWU and Phil McMahon, Inspector of Ancient Monuments, English Heritage (EH) and Graham Tait, Assistant County Archaeologist, Devon County Council, to discuss the necessary archaeological mitigation and consents required for replacement of the existing gas main. An application for Scheduled Monument Consent for the works within the Scheduled part of the site (Ramparts Walk) was subsequently submitted, together with a supporting WSI compiled by CA (CA 2013). A separate WSI was produced by CA for the non-scheduled part of the site (High Street) (CA 2012).
- 1.3 A letter (ref. S000054241 dated 22 February 2013) from Ms Natalie Carr, on behalf of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and acting on the advice of Phil McMahon, Inspector of Ancient Monuments, EH, granted Scheduled Monument Consent for the gas main replacement works (to be undertaken under a programme of archaeological works). Trenches 83-89 (Fig. 2) were located within the Scheduled part of the site. Trenches 1-82 were located to the south and west (and therefore outside) the Scheduled area.
- 1.4 The programme of archaeological works was carried out in accordance with both WSI's produced by CA (2012 and 2013) and approved by Phil McMahon, Inspector of Ancient Monuments, English Heritage (EH) and Graham Tait, Assistant County Archaeologist, Devon County Council. The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IfA 2008), the *Management of Archaeological Projects* 2 (English Heritage 1991), the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (EH 2006). It was monitored by Graham Tait, including a site visit on behalf of English Heritage and Devon County Council on 17 April 2013.

The site

- 1.5 The works comprised the excavation of 89 trenches, for insertion of a replacement gas main within the High Street and Ramparts Walk. These were located within the boundary of the Saxon *burh* and the medieval town walls. The works in Ramparts Walk passed through an area formerly occupied by the Benedictine priory.
- 1.6 The site lies at approximately 31m AOD and the underlying solid geology of the area is mapped as being various igneous formations of the Carboniferous and Devonian periods. These are defined by the British Geological Survey as being Microgabbro, igneous bedrock and Ashprington Volcanic Formations, which reflect both silica poor and rich formations respectively. No details of superficial deposits were noted from the BGS data (BGS 2012). The natural substrate was encountered in the majority of the interventions.

Archaeological background

- 1.7 Totnes was founded in the 10th century as one of four Late Saxon fortified towns or burhs in Devon. Situated on a sloping ridge on the west side of the River Dart, it occupies a defensible site overlooking an important river crossing (Haslam 1984, 259-262).
- 1.8 Initially the defences comprised an earthen bank which was probably furnished with a timber front revetment and surmounted by a walkway. The rampart was later provided with a substantial stone front revetment wall, possibly in the 11th century. The line of the defences can be traced in the present street plan (Fig. 2), which largely reflects the original Late Saxon layout. The defences defined an oval enclosure sub-divided internally to form large burgage plots fronting on the High Street and stretching back to the rear of the rampart on each side to the north and south. These have been internally subdivided in later periods to accommodate an increasing density of buildings.
- 1.9 The Benedictine priory of St Mary was founded around 1088 by Judhael, Norman lord of Totnes, and granted by him to the Benedictine abbey of St Sergius & St Bacchus at Angers. The priory was dissolved in 1539, and the buildings stripped and partly demolished. Parts of the north claustral range were rebuilt in 1553 as a guildhall, and in 1624 converted into a magistrate's court and grammar school. The cloister lay immediately to the north of St Mary's, with claustral buildings on the north side of the cloister including a lodgings range and refectory, while other buildings, including a chapter house enclosed the east and west sides (EH 2013).

1.10 There have been few previous observations of the defences; the wall and rampart were observed for the first time in excavations at the East Gate in 1990 (Hurley *et al.* 1992), while the heavily truncated remains of the town wall were also seen in an excavation at South Street in 1993 (Stead 1993). Recent works have been largely negative, although works at the Castle (located to the north of the western end of the High Street) have identified evidence from the Norman period onwards, while works at the rear of Castle Court in 1995 identified an early medieval cultivation soil and a number of late medieval features (Stead 1995).

Methodology

- 1.11 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI's (CA 2012 and 2013). However, following the excavation of the agreed trenches in Ramparts Walk the scope of the works was amended. The amendments comprised additional trenches (Trenches 86 and 88-89). The variations were approved by Phil McMahon and Hugh Beamish (EH) on 16 April 2013.
- 1.12 All of the works were undertaken under archaeological supervision. Modern overburden was removed by machine. Hand excavation (where required) and recording of significant archaeological deposits was then undertaken.
- 1.13 Where archaeological deposits were encountered written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual* (2007).
- 1.14 The archive and artefacts from the evaluation are currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble and will be deposited with the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter under accession number 13/33. A summary of information from this project will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

2. RESULTS (FIGS 2-5)

2.1 This section provides an overview of the archaeological results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts and finds are to be found in Appendices A and B respectively. Only context descriptions from trenches where archaeological deposits have been identified have been included in Appendix 2. Details of the relative

heights of the principal deposits and features expressed as metres Above Ordnance Datum (m AOD) appear in Appendix C.

2.2 The natural geological substrate was encountered in most trenches during the programme of archaeological works. All of the trenches were located within the existing gas main trench. Works primarily comprised cleaning and recording archaeological deposits which had been truncated when the gas main was originally constructed. No archaeological features were identified in Trenches 1-5, 7-16, 18-28, 30-39 and 41-82.

Trench 6

2.3 A mid orangey brown silty clay 6008 containing occasional shale fragments was identified at a depth of 1m bpgl (26.60m AOD). This deposit was overlain by a 0.25m thick layer of mid greyish brown silty clay, 6007, at a depth of 0.75m bpgl (26.85m AOD). Two sherds of 12th to14th century pottery, a single cockle shell, a number of fragments of sheep bone and oyster shells were recorded from deposit 6007. These deposits were cut by modern services and it is possible that 6007 and 6008 represent fills of a truncated feature.

Trench 17 (Fig. 3)

- 2.4 Located in the western part of Trench 17 was a homogenous light orange brown silty clay deposit 17005 which appeared to represent a layer of decayed natural (as also identified in other trenches). This deposit was cut by wall foundation 17002 (see below) and the possibility that this deposit represents the surviving elements of an internal bank cannot be ruled out. No finds were recovered from this deposit
- 2.5 The principal feature identified in Trench 17, at a depth of 0.20m below present ground level (bpgl) (28.09m AOD) and truncating natural clay 17005, was a substantial, probably north/south aligned wall foundation. This was approximately 2.80m wide, surviving to a height of 0.90m and consisted of shale rubble, 17002, bonded with mid brown silty clay and occasional lime mortar. The wall foundation was only exposed in the northern section and had been removed to the south by modern services. No facework was visible and the eastern edge of the wall was not exposed by the works.
- 2.6 Deposit 17003 was overlying wall foundation 17002 and comprised mid brown silty clay with frequent shale fragments. This was in turn overlain by 17004, consisting of

dark brown silty clay with frequent shale inclusions. These deposit appeared to represent a levelling deposit following the partial demolition of wall foundation 17002. No finds were recovered from these deposits and 17004 was overlain by make-up material 17006/17007 for the modern pavement.

Trench 29

2.7 A mid orangey brown silty clay 29006 containing occasional shale fragments was identified at a depth of 0.75m bpgl (28.35m AOD). This deposit was overlain by a 0.08m thick layer of mid greyish brown silty clay, 29005, at a depth of 1.0m below present ground level (28.43m AOD). A single sherd of 12th to 14th century pottery was recovered from this deposit. This was in turn sealed by deposit 29004 which consisted of mid orangey brown silty clay, 0.12m thick and containing occasional shale rubble. This was sealed by 29003, a 0.13m thick deposit consisting of mid greyish brown silty clay and containing occasional shale rubble. These deposits were cut by modern services and it is possible that 29003 to 29006 represent fills of a truncated feature.

Trench 40 (Fig. 4)

2.8 The natural bedrock was cut by a single feature, drain 40010, at a depth of 1.10m bpgl (29.94m AOD). The drain consisted of large slate slabs at the base of the trench, while the walls consisted of smaller slate rubble bonded with mid yellow brown clay, leaving a 0.15m wide channel at the centre. The structure was covered by large slate slabs and backfilled with mid greyish brown silty clay 40009 containing frequent shale fragments. This was in turn overlain by deposit 40008 consisting of mid orange brown silty clay with occasional shale fragments. No finds were recovered from this or the silting 40011 contained within the drain. Deposit 40008 was truncated by modern services 40004 and 40005.

Trenches 83-89

- 2.9 The works in Trenches 83-84 uncovered a homogeneous deposit 83001 (Fig. 5) and 84001 consisting of mid yellowish brown silty clay with frequent large shale fragments. No finds were recovered from these deposits which appeared to comprise redeposited natural.
- 2.10 Further to the north, Trenches 85-89 revealed a similar homogenous deposit 85001/86001/87001/88001/89001. These consisted of mid yellowish brown silty clay with occasional small shale fragments. A single sherd of 19th-century industrial ware

was recovered from service trench fill 86003 in Trench 86, while a single undated roof slate was recovered from service trench fill 88003 in Trench 88.

The finds

2.11 The finds retrieved from the watching brief are summarised in Appendix B. The pottery assemblage amounted to three sherds weighing 15g. In addition, oyster, cockle shell and animal bones were also recovered. The assemblage was retrieved from two stratified contexts and could be dated to the medieval period.

Pottery

2.12 The three sherds recovered, from deposits 6007 and 29005, were all in an unglazed, gritty and micaceous coarseware. The sherds were unfeatured and could only be attributed a broad dating across the 12th to 14th centuries.

Other finds

2.13 Pieces of sheep bone, a cockle shell and oyster shells were also recorded from deposit 6007.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 The watching brief identified the remains of a previously unknown wall foundation in Trench 17 south-west of St Mary's. The wall foundation was not on the line of any existing property boundaries, and although no finds were recovered, is likely to predate the 16th to 17th century house frontages on the northern side of the High Street. It is possible that the wall foundation therefore represents the remains of a defensive and/or ecclesiastical structure associated with the earlier development of the town.
- 3.2 Trenches 6 and 29, to the east and west of Trench 17 respectively, identified a number of discrete deposits. Several 12th to 14th century pottery sherds were recovered from these and they may represent the fills of truncated features, although the possibility that the finds are residual within post-medieval layers cannot be ruled out.
- 3.3 Work in Trench 40 identified the remains of a substantial, well-built stone drain 40010 located along the northern edge of the High Street. No finds were recovered

from the construction or silting and it is probable that the drain is post-medieval in date.

3.4 A number of redeposited natural deposits were identified within the Scheduled area (Ramparts Walk) in Trenches 83-89. These deposits probably relate to medieval and post-medieval infilling of the area immediately behind the town wall. This is likely to have taken place in the period after the re-building of the town wall in the late 11th century until after the abbey passed into private ownership following the Dissolution when buildings started to encroach on Ramparts Walk. It should however be noted that some or all of these deposits may also represent the upper parts of the ramparts themselves.

4. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Matt Nichols, Tom Weavill, Peter Busby, Greg Crees and Marc Steinmetzer. The report was written by Marc Steinmetzer. The illustrations were prepared by Daniel Bashford. The finds report was compiled by Angus Crawford. The archive has been compiled by Marc Steinmetzer and prepared for deposition by James Johnson. The project was managed for CA by Laurent Coleman.

5. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2012

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APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench 6

No.	Туре	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot- date
6000	Surface	Paving slabs	n/k	n/k	0- 0.05m	
6001	Layer	concrete bedding	n/k	n/k	0.05- 0.17m	
6002	Fill	Service trench fill	n/k	n/k	0.17- 0.40m	
6003	Cut	Service trench	n/k	n/k	0.17- 0.40m	
6004	Fill	Service trench fill	n/k	n/k	0.20- 0.55m	
6005	Fill	Service trench fill	n/k	n/k	0.65- 0.75m	
6006	Cut	Service trench	n/k	n/k	0.20- 0.75m	
6007	Layer	mid greyish brown silty clay	n/k	n/k	0.75- 1.0m	C12- C14
6008	Layer	mid orange brown silty clay	n/k	n/k	1.0- 1.10m	

Trench 17

No.	Туре	Description	Length	Width	Depth	Spot-
			(m)	(m)	(m)	date
17000	Surface	Paving slabs	n/k	n/k	0-	
					0.05m	
17001	Layer	concrete bedding	n/k	n/k	0.05-	
					0.25m	
17002	Structure	N-S aligned wall	n/k	n/k	0.25-	
					1.15m	
17003	Layer	mid brown silty clay	n/k	n/k	0.40-	
					0.60m	
17004	Layer	dark brown silty clay	n/k	n/k	0.30-	
					0.40m	
17005	Layer	light orange brown silty clay	n/k	n/k	0.35-	
					1.15m	
17006	Layer	dark brown silty clay	n/k	n/k	0.25-	
	_				0.35m	
17007	Layer	dark brown silty clay	n/k	n/k	0.25-	
	_				0.35m	

Trench 29

No.	Туре	Description	Length	Width	Depth	Spot-
			(m)	(m)	(m)	date
29000	Surface	Tarmac	n/k	n/k	0-	
					0.10m	
29001	Surface	Tarmac	n/k	n/k	0.10-	
					0.23m	
29002	Layer	aggregate	n/k	n/k	0.23-	
					0.45m	
29003	Layer	mid grey brown silty clay	n/k	n/k	0.45-	
					0.60m	
29004	Layer	mid orange brown silty clay	n/k	n/k	0.60-	
					0.75m	
29005	Layer	mid grey brown silty clay	n/k	n/k	0.75-	C12-
					0.83m	C14

29006	Layer	mid orange brown silty clay	n/k	n/k	0.83-	
					1.15m	

Trench 40

No.	Туре	Description	Length	Width	Depth	Spot-
			(m)	(m)	(m)	date
40000	Surface	Tarmac	n/k	n/k	0-	
					0.10m	
40001	Surface	Tarmac	n/k	n/k	0.10-	
					0.20m	
40002	Layer	Aggregate	n/k	n/k	0.20-	
					0.50m	
40003	Layer	Service trench	n/k	n/k	0.50-	
					0.60m	
40004	Cut	Service trench	n/k	n/k	0.60-	
					0.75m	
40005	Cut	Service trench	n/k	n/k	0.60-	
					0.80m	
40006	Fill	Service trench fill	n/k	n/k	0.60-	
					0.75m	
40007	Fill	Service trench fill	n/k	n/k	0.60-	
					0.80m	
40008	Layer	mid orange brown silty clay	n/k	n/k	0.60-	
					0.85m	
40009	Fill	mid grey brown silty clay	n/k	n/k	0.85-	
					1.0m	
40010	Structure	E-W aligned slate drain	n/k	n/k	1.0-	
					1.15m	
40011	Fill	Silting	n/k	n/k	n/k	
40012	Cut	Drain trench	n/k	n/k	0.85-	
	1				1.15m	

Trench 83

No.	Type	Description	Length	Width	Depth	Spot-
			(m)	(m)	(m)	date
83000	Surface	Concrete	n/k	n/k	0-	
					0.10m	
83001	Layer	mid yellow brown silty clay	n/k	n/k	0.10-	
					0.75m	
83002	Cut	Service trench	n/k	n/k	0.10-	
					0.75m	
83003	Fill	Service trench fill	n/k	n/k	0.10-	
					0.75m	

Trench 84

No.	Туре	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot- date
84000	Surface	Concrete	n/k	n/k	0- 0.10m	
84001	Layer	mid yellow brown silty clay	n/k	n/k	0.10- 0.65m	
84002	Cut	Service trench	n/k	n/k	0.10- 0.65m	
84003	Fill	Service trench fill	n/k	n/k	0.10- 0.65m	

Trench 85

No.	Type	Description	Length	Width	Depth	Spot-
		·	(m)	(m)	(m)	date
85000	Surface	Concrete	n/k	n/k	0-	
					0.10m	
85001	Layer	mid yellow brown silty clay	n/k	n/k	0.10-	
					0.50m	
85002	Cut	Service trench	n/k	n/k	0.10-	
					0.45m	
85003	Fill	Service trench fill	n/k	n/k	0.10-	
					0.45m	

Trench 86

No.	Туре	Description	Length	Width	Depth	Spot-
			(m)	(m)	(m)	date
86000	Surface	Concrete	n/k	n/k	0-	
					0.10m	
86001	Layer	mid yellow brown silty clay	n/k	n/k	0.10-	
					0.50m	
86002	Cut	Service trench	n/k	n/k	0.10-	
					0.40m	
86003	Fill	Service trench fill	n/k	n/k	0.10-	
					0.40m	

Trench 87

No.	Туре	Description	Length	Width	Depth	Spot-
			(m)	(m)	(m)	date
87000	Surface	Concrete	n/k	n/k	0-	
					0.10m	
87001	Layer	mid yellow brown silty clay	n/k	n/k	0.10-	
					0.60m	
87002	Cut	Service trench	n/k	n/k	0.10-	
					0.50m	
87003	Fill	Service trench fill	n/k	n/k	0.10-	
					0.50m	

Trench 88

No.	Туре	Description	Length	Width	Depth	Spot-
			(m)	(m)	(m)	date
88000	Surface	Concrete	n/k	n/k	0-	
					0.10m	
88001	Layer	mid yellow brown silty clay	n/k	n/k	0.10-	
					0.55m	
88002	Cut	Service trench	n/k	n/k	0.10-	
					0.50m	
88003	Fill	Service trench fill	n/k	n/k	0.10-	
					0.50m	

Trench 89

No.	Туре	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot- date
89000	Surface	Concrete	n/k	n/k	0- 0.10m	date
89001	Layer	mid yellow brown silty clay	n/k	n/k	0.10- 0.50m	

89002	Cut	Service trench	n/k	n/k	0.10- 0.40m	
89003	Fill	Service trench fill	n/k	n/k	0.10- 0.40m	

APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

Context	Description	Ct.	Wt.	Date
6007	Medieval pottery: sandy greyware	2	6	C12-C14
	Bone: animal	11	87	
	Shell: oyster; cockle	3	40	
29005	Medieval pottery: sandy greyware	1	9	C12-C14

APPENDIX C: LEVELS OF PRINCIPAL DEPOSITS AND STRUCTURES

Levels are expressed as metres below current ground level and as metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), calculated using the benchmark located outside of No. 27 High Street (29.23m AOD).

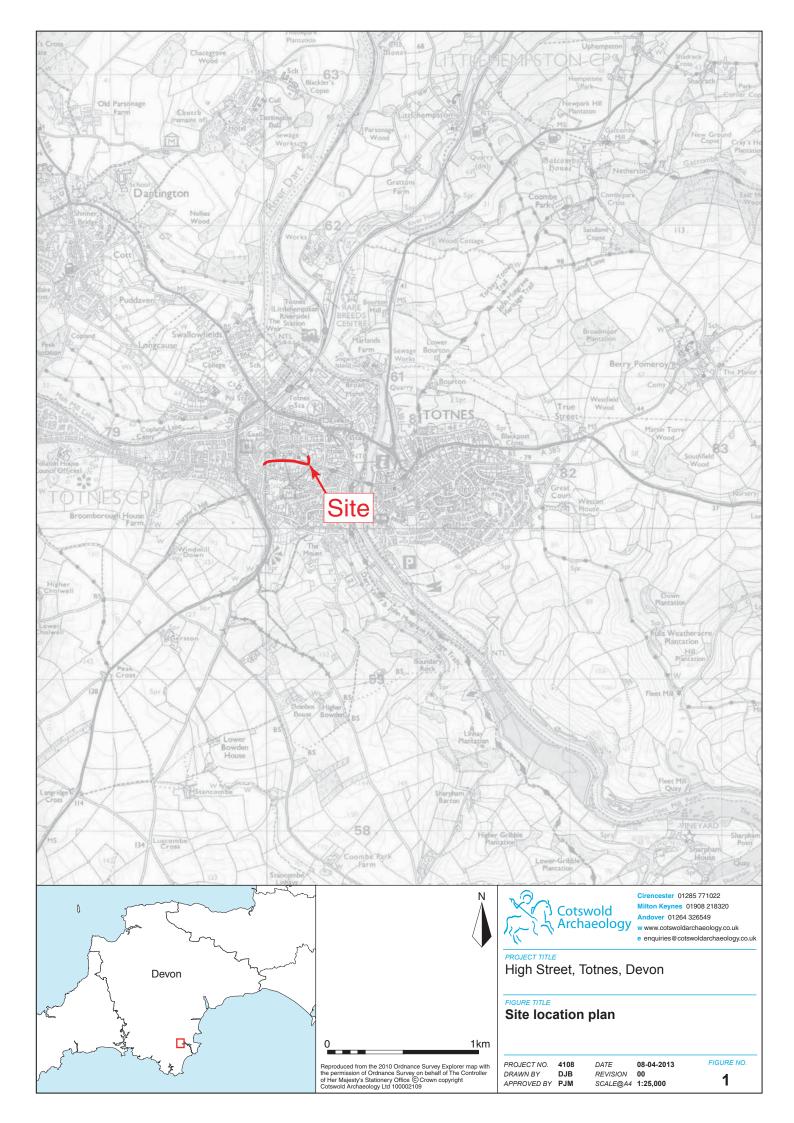
	Trench 6	Trench 17	Trench 29	Trench 40	Trench 83	Trench 88
Current ground level	0.00m	0.00m	0.00m	0.00m	0.00m	0.00m
	(27.60m)	(28.29m)	(29.12m)	(31.04m)	(23.51m)	(23.46m)
Top of deposits	0.75m	0.20m	0.40m	0.55m	0.10m	0.10m
	(26.85m)	(28.09m)	(28.72m)	(30.49m)	(23.41m)	(23.36m)
Limit of excavation	1.15m	1.10m	1.15m	1.10m	0.75m	0.45m
	(26.45m)	(27.19m)	(27.97m)	(29.94m)	(22.76m)	(23.01m)

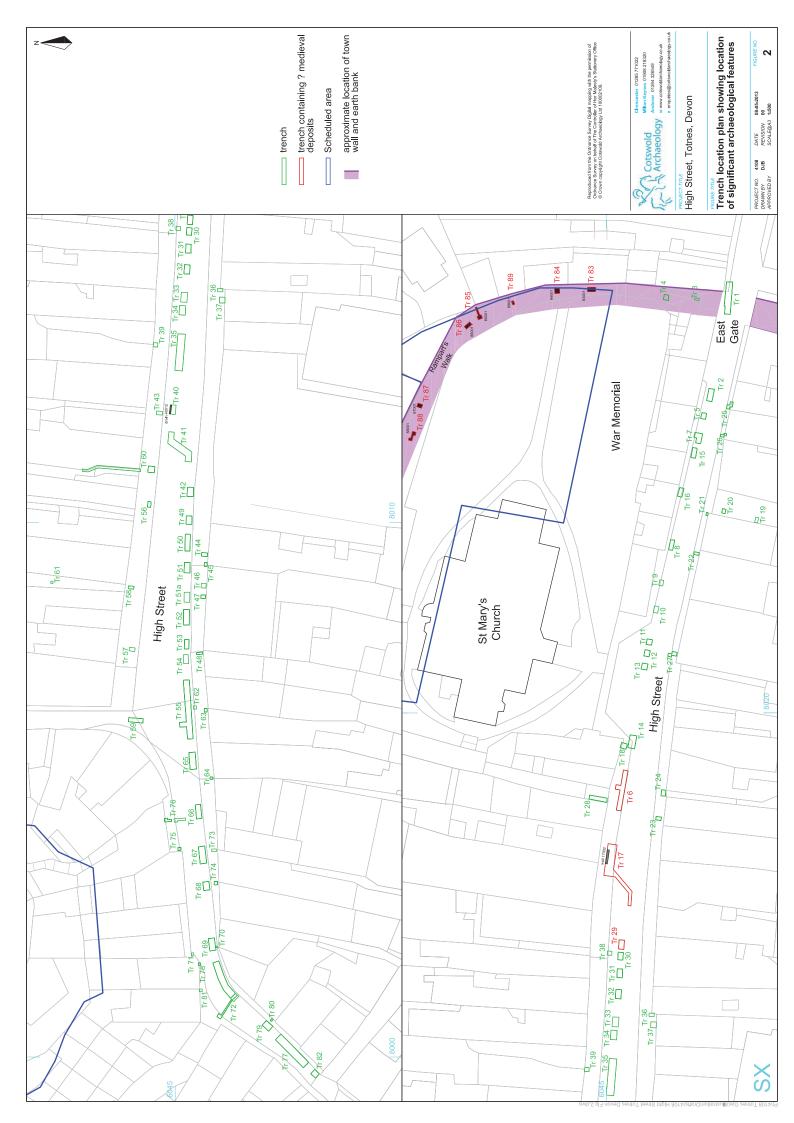
Upper figures are depth below modern ground level; lower figures in parentheses are metres AOD.

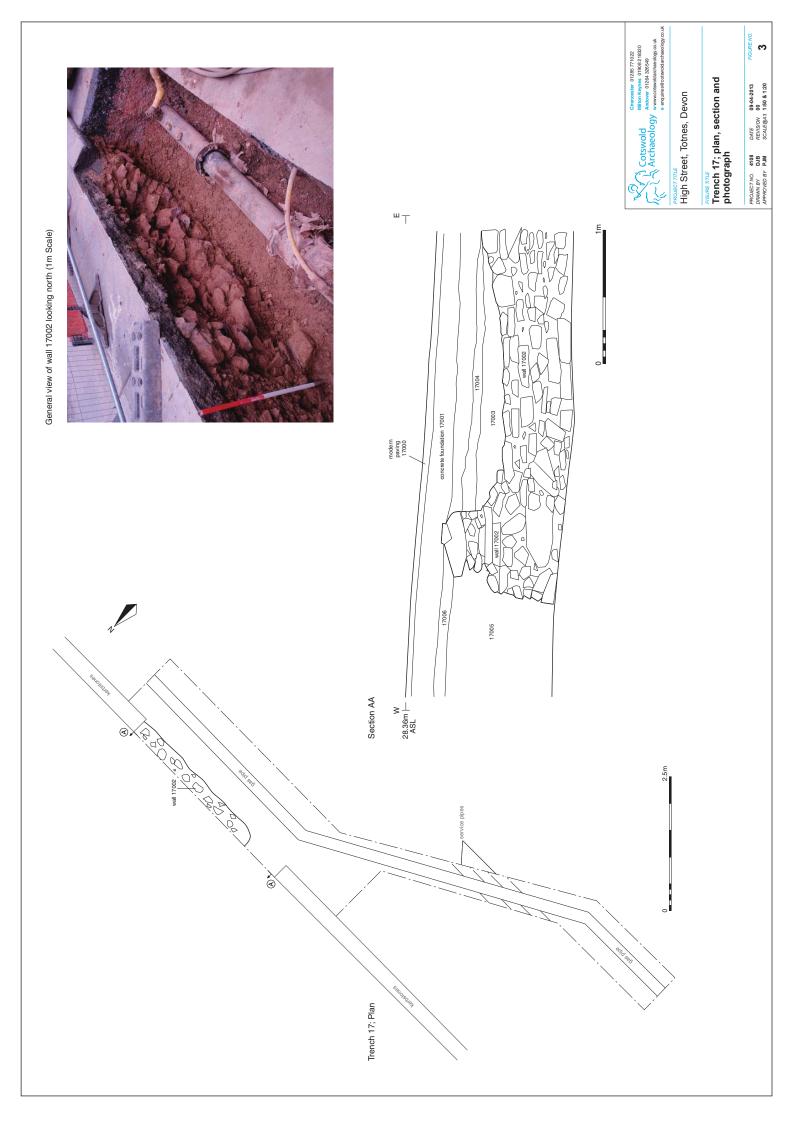
APPENDIX D: OASIS REPORT FORM

Project Name	Gas Main Replacement, High Street and	d Ramparts Walk, Totnes,				
Short description	Devon An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with gas main replacement on the High Street and Ramparts Walk, Totnes, Devon.					
The remains of an undated north/south aligned identified to the west of St Mary's Church in the H A number of possible medieval deposits were in close proximity, while an east/west orientated s was uncovered in the area to the west. Works in the Scheduled Monument of Totnes Priory homogenous deposits probably associated with the of the area immediately behind the town wall, alt possibility that these deposits are associated construction of the wall/rampart cannot be discounted.						
Project dates	2 January – 18 April 2013					
Project type	Archaeological Watching Brief					
Previous work (reference to organisation or SMR numbers etc)						
Future work	n/a					
PROJECT LOCATION						
Site Location	High Street and Ramparts Walk, Totnes,	Devon				
Study area (M²/ha)	Thigh offeet and reamparts want, Totales,	Devon				
Site co-ordinates (8 Fig Grid Reference)	SX 8000 6043 to 8032 6041					
PROJECT CREATORS						
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology					
Project Brief originator	none					
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology					
Project Manager	Laurent Coleman					
Project Manager Project Supervisor	Marc Steinmetzer					
MONUMENT TYPE						
SIGNIFICANT FINDS						
PROJECT ARCHIVES	Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.)	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)				
Physical	Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery	ceramics				
Paper	Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery	Context sheets, trench sheets, photo registers, permatrace drawings, black and white photographs				
Digital	Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery	Digital photographs				
BIBLIOGRAPHY	· ·	·				

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CA typescript report 13221						













natural 40013

water pipe

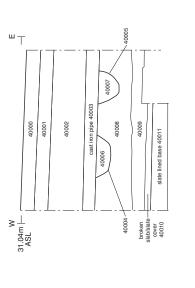
natural 40013

drain 40010 cut 40012 /

Trench 40; plan

slabs > in situ

Section BB



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PROJECT TITLE High Street, Totnes, Devon

ноиметты Trench 40; plan, section and photograph

DATE 09-04-2013 REVISION 00 SCALE@A3 1:20 PROJECTINO. 4108
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APPROVED BY PJM

FIGURE NO. 4 redeposited natural 83001



Trench 83 showing redeposited natural infilling 83001. 5 looking east (scale 1m)



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FIGURE NO.

5

High Street, Totnes, Devon

FIGURE TITLE Photograph

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