

# LAND AT 4 BELLE VIEW, KENTON, DEVON

(NGR SX 9573 8326)

Results of an archaeological watching brief

Planning reference: Teignbridge District Council  
12/03136/FUL

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archaeology

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## Summary

*An archaeological watching brief at 4 Belle View, Kenton, Teignbridge, Devon (centred on SX 9573 8326) was undertaken by AC archaeology during November 2013 and June 2014 for groundworks associated with the extension of a residential development. Historical map evidence indicated that the location had been the site of St. Ann's Chapel which may have been medieval in date.*

*A ditch of probable post-medieval date and a wall foundation aligned slightly differently to the current building on the site were the only archaeological features of probable pre-modern date. An assemblage of pottery, glass and a nail dating to the 19th to 20th centuries were the only finds. No positive evidence for the location of St Ann's Chapel was observed.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION (Fig. 1)

- 1.1 An archaeological watching brief on land to the west of 4 Belle View, Kenton (centred on SX 9573 8326), was undertaken by AC archaeology from 27 November 2013 to 16 June 2014. The evaluation was commissioned by Charles E Ware and Son on behalf of clients and undertaken as part of the planning permission reference 12/03136/FUL determined by Teignbridge District Council, as advised by the Devon County Historic Environment Team (hereafter DCHET).
- 1.2 The site comprised the grounds of the end house of a row of four located adjacent to the High Street and opposite All Saints Parish Church. It is situated on level ground, terraced into the hillside at the west end, at a height of around 15m aOD, with the underlying solid geology comprising sandstone of the Dawlish Formation (British Geological Survey 2014).

### 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Belle View (formerly Belle Vue) is located within the historic core of the village. Kenton is first recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086 when it was known as *Chenton*. All Saints Parish Church, located opposite Belle View, is believed to have been originally constructed around 1360-70. The late 19th and early 20th century 25-inch Ordnance Survey maps show the annotation 'St Ann's Chapel Site of' in close proximity to the terrace of houses now forming Belle View; it is possible that this had medieval origins.
- 2.2 The 1880s 1st edition OS map shows 4 Belle View and its associated terrace organised as in the present day and this was the arrangement after 1840 as the Kenton parish tithe map shows a completely different arrangement with a pair of now demolished houses fronting onto the High Street. To the rear of these houses, in the area of the west end of the later terrace, only gardens and a few small outbuildings are shown.
- 2.3 According to Harold Fox (2007) 18th-century rentals for Kenton refer to a house 'called St Anne', and the antiquarian Richard Polwhele refers to 'a chapel dedicated to St Anne' which 'anciently' stood there (DRO 1508M Devon/rentals/Kenton/2, for 1748; Polwhele 1793–1806, vol.2, 158, n. and 168). It would have been used by fishermen, although the dedication to St Anne suggests an association also with the ferries across the Exe. Records show that the owner of Kenton manor spent 9 shillings on his ferry in 1423 (Fox 2007).

### 3. AIMS

- 3.1 The aim of the watching brief was to preserve by record any archaeological features or deposits exposed during groundworks associated with the project and in particular any evidence for the Chapel of St. Ann's marked on historic maps.

### 4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The archaeological watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation by AC archaeology (Valentin 2013). It comprised the attendance of a site archaeologist during groundworks.
- 4.2 All features and deposits revealed were recorded using the standard AC archaeology proforma recording system, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and in accordance with AC archaeology's *General Site Recording Manual, Version 2* (revised August 2012). Detailed sections and plans were produced at a scale of 1:10 and 1:20 and all site levels relate to Ordnance Datum.

### 5. RESULTS

#### 5.1 Introduction (Plan Fig. 2 and sections Figs 2b and 3; Plates 1-8)

The groundworks comprised three geotechnical pits followed by the stripping of an area of garden and yard and extending the levelled area for 1m to west by the demolition of a stone revetment wall after which footings and services trenches were dug. The total area of groundworks measured approximately 31 square metres. Archaeological features and deposits were identified across the site in the areas to the west of the standing building and are discussed in detail below. Relevant detailed plans and sections are included as Figs 2-3 and photographs as Plates 1-8. The natural geology of the area (context 0004) was a mid light yellowish red silty sand.

- 5.2 The earliest archaeological feature observed on the site was probable ditch F0023 which was revealed in section by the cutting back of the hillside to the west of the plot, following the removal of a former revetment wall (F0007), and extending the level area of the plot by approximately 1m (Plate 2). Ditch F0023 measured 1.55m wide and 1.05m deep with a U-shaped profile and cut the natural (0004) below topsoil (0025). It had a single fill (0024) consisting of mid yellowish brown sand derived from redeposited natural. It contained fragments of probable roof slate indicating a post-medieval date is likely for the fill which appears to have been a backfilled soon after its digging. As this feature was not seen in plan it is possible that it may be a pit rather than a ditch.

- 5.3 The earliest structural feature observed on the site is wall F0018 which was partially revealed in Geotechnical Test Pit 3 located directly adjacent to the standing building (Plates 3 and 4). The wall (F0018) consisted of irregular stone blocks up to 0.5m long and bonded by light grey mortar. The wall was located in a steep-sided foundation trench (F0016) 0.1m wide and filled by a mid reddish brown silty clay with occasional mortar fragments (0017). The foundation trench cut the natural (0004). The full width of the wall was not revealed, but it was a minimum of 0.3m wide. On the east side it was clearly a different build and phase to stone footings (F0021) which support the brick wall of the current house. It also appeared to be oriented on a more northeasterly-southwesterly direction when compared with the current building. In the west section of the geotechnical test pit wall F0018 appeared to have been cut by a deposit of brick (F0020) sitting on a burnt layer (F0015) which together with loose bricks (0019) may be a demolition layer (Plate 5). A more coherent brick floor (F0028) was identified at the same depth

below ground surface in a footings trench directly adjacent to the west. Brick floor F0028 consisted of unfrosted bricks (0.24m long x 0.12m wide x 0.06m deep) laid flat and bonded by a light grey mortar (Plate 6). Where revealed in the footings trench it was clear that the burnt layer (0015), previously observed in the disturbed section of Geotechnical Test Pit 3, sat on top of this floor, rather than below it as had originally been indicated by the disturbed deposits in Geotechnical Test Pit 3. The finds collected from layer (0015) were all modern in date. On the west side the brick floor was abutted by stone wall (F0027) consisting of irregular stone blocks up to 0.35m long and bonded by a light grey mortar. The wall F0027 and floor F0028 were located c. 0.7m below ground surface and may be the remains of a coal cellar related to the neighbouring dwelling; it is not shown on historic mapping. A similar wall foundation (F0026) compared to wall F0027 was revealed during the levelling of the garden area (Plate 7). This was at a higher level, directly beneath the cobbled yard surface (0002), and this wall is shown enclosing the garden on the 1880s 1st Edition OS map.

**5.4** The current brick dwelling (F0022) is constructed on a wider footing constructed of stone (F0021). This stone footing does not represent a pre-modern building on the same footprint as the foundation trench (F0012), filled by light grey brown silty clay (0013), cuts buried topsoil (0011) which contained ceramics and glass of 19th to 20th century date. This buried topsoil (0011) and buried subsoil (0014) sit above burnt layer (0015), also containing modern finds, and presumably relate to the rapid introduction of garden soils following the demolition of the structure related to brick floor (0028). The footings for the current building were also overlain by a patch of mortar (0008) and a small gully (0009), a former eavesdrop or open drain, filled by a deposit (0010) of mid grey brown silty clay.

**5.5** The whole garden area was covered by a layer (0003) of pale to mid reddish brown sandy silt containing occasional CBM fragments. This was 0.1m thick and was made ground for the construction of a metalled surface (0002) consisting of rounded stone cobbles up to 0.1m thick. This metalling extended across the site and provided a surface for the outside space. On the east side of the plot, closest to house, it formed the modern surface, whereas in the west, as shown in Geotechnical Testpits 1 and 2, the cobbles were overlain by deposit (0001), a thin band of dark grey brown silty clay 0.02m thick. This was a deliberate dump of charcoal-rich burnt material, probably from a fireplace within the house. Finally this was overlain by up to 0.32m of horticultural topsoil (0000), a dark grey brown friable silty clay forming a flowerbed. This sequence was adjacent to the revetment wall F0007 which was demolished and shown to predate the brick and stone outhouse to the rear of the property which, abutted it (see Plate 8). Natural (0004) was encountered at 0.52m below the topsoil. This had been cut by F0005, a 0.38m deep construction cut with steep straight sides and a flat base containing revetment wall F0007. Foundation trench F0005 had a single fill (0006) consisting of mid yellowish brown silty sand. The retaining wall (F0007) was 3.18m in height and constructed with irregularly shaped stone (up to approximately 0.5m long), in a pale grey mortar. This wall was constructed to retain the terrace cut (the ground level was c. 2m higher on the opposite side of the revetment).

## **6. THE FINDS** by *Charlotte Coles*

### **6.1 Introduction**

The finds recovered on site during the watching brief were retained, cleaned and marked where appropriate. They were then quantified according to material type within each context and the assemblage was scanned to extract information regarding the range, nature and date of artefacts represented. A very small assemblage of post-medieval pottery, glass and iron was recovered, as well as several pieces of charcoal. Finds totals by material type are given in Table 1.

## 6.2 Comments

Two pieces of post-medieval pottery were recovered from buried topsoil (0011), these are 19th-20th century blue and white industrial wares. Three pieces of 19th-20th century bottle glass were retrieved from buried topsoil (0011) and burnt layer (0015). A single badly corroded iron nail from burnt layer (0015) is a sample of dozens observed in this context on site and also likely to be of 19th or 20th century in date; the nail has small amounts of charcoal adhering to the surface of the shank and four pieces of charcoal were also recovered from this context.

Context	Context Description	Post-Medieval Pottery		Glass		Iron		Charcoal	
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
0011	Buried topsoil	2	34	1	28				
0015	Burnt layer			2	33	1	20	4	4
<b>Totals</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>

Table 1: Finds quantification by material type. Weight in grams.

## 7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1** The probable ditch F0023 was only seen in section and it is difficult to draw conclusions as to its actual form and function. The feature is probably post-medieval in date, but it does not match the line of a field boundary on historic mapping and may not, ultimately, be a linear feature. However, if it did continue to the east then it would have been at a greater elevation than the level of the terrace prior to the current groundworks and indicates that significant truncation of deposits has occurred at the west end of Belle View Terrace. The evidence for truncation reduces significantly the expectations of finding archaeology of earlier than the post-medieval period in the plot under investigation here.
- 7.2** Stone wall foundation F0018 was not fully revealed, but where visible it appeared to be on a slightly different northeasterly-southwesterly alignment to that of the present buildings. It is undated, but pre-dates the footings upon which the current building is built. The truncation of deposits and the lack of finds dating to earlier than the 19th century mean that this wall does not relate to the St Ann's Chapel supposedly located on the site.
- 7.3** That the site of St Ann's Chapel was marked incorrectly by the early OS surveyors is suggested by Harold Fox's (2007) contention that chapels of this dedication were often related to ferries which plied across estuaries in Devon. In addition to Kenton he cites two others that fit what he called an 'emerging pattern'; both dedicated to St Anne and associated with medieval ferries close to the mouth of the Taw estuary in north Devon and the other at the mouth of the Plym, at Turnchapel. If Fox's emerging pattern is correct then the Kenton chapel perhaps ought to have been located on the opposite side of the parish church closer to the River Kenn, which was formerly tidal and provided water access to the estuary.
- 7.4** The remaining features observed, including the brick floor and garden wall, can be related to the 19th and 20th century occupation of the site.

## 8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1** The archaeological watching brief has revealed buried features of probable post-medieval and modern date. No evidence to support the historical association of the site with St Ann's Chapel of probable medieval date was found.

## **9. ARCHIVE AND OASIS**

- 9.1** The finds, paper and digital archive is currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ. It will be held until the need for any further archaeological work on the site is established and whether the creation of a digital archive for deposition at the Archaeology Data Service is required. The finds and paper archive will be offered to the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, under the reference number RAMM13/67, but if they are unable to accept this, then it will be dealt with under their current accession policy.
- 9.2** An online OASIS entry has been completed, using the unique identifier 196750, which includes a digital copy of this report.

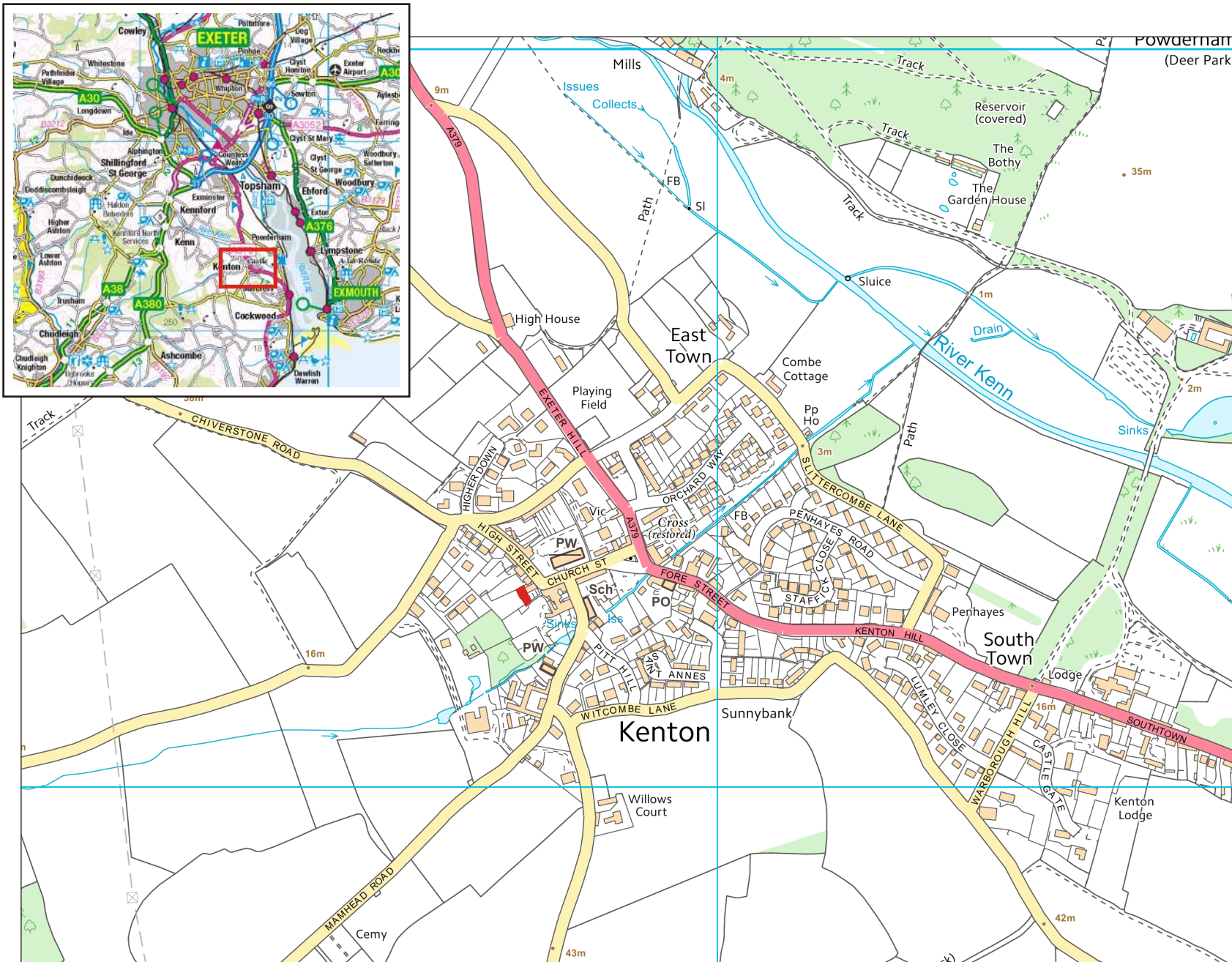
## **10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 10.1** The evaluation was commissioned by Charles E. Ware and Sons on behalf of clients. The site works were carried out by Christopher Caine, Paul Cooke, Alex Farnell and Gareth Holes. The illustrations for this report were prepared by Elisabeth Patkai. The collaborative role of Stephen Reed, DCCHET Archaeology Officer is duly acknowledged.

## **11. REFERENCES**

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- Polwhele, R. 1793-1806, *History of Devonshire*.
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Site location



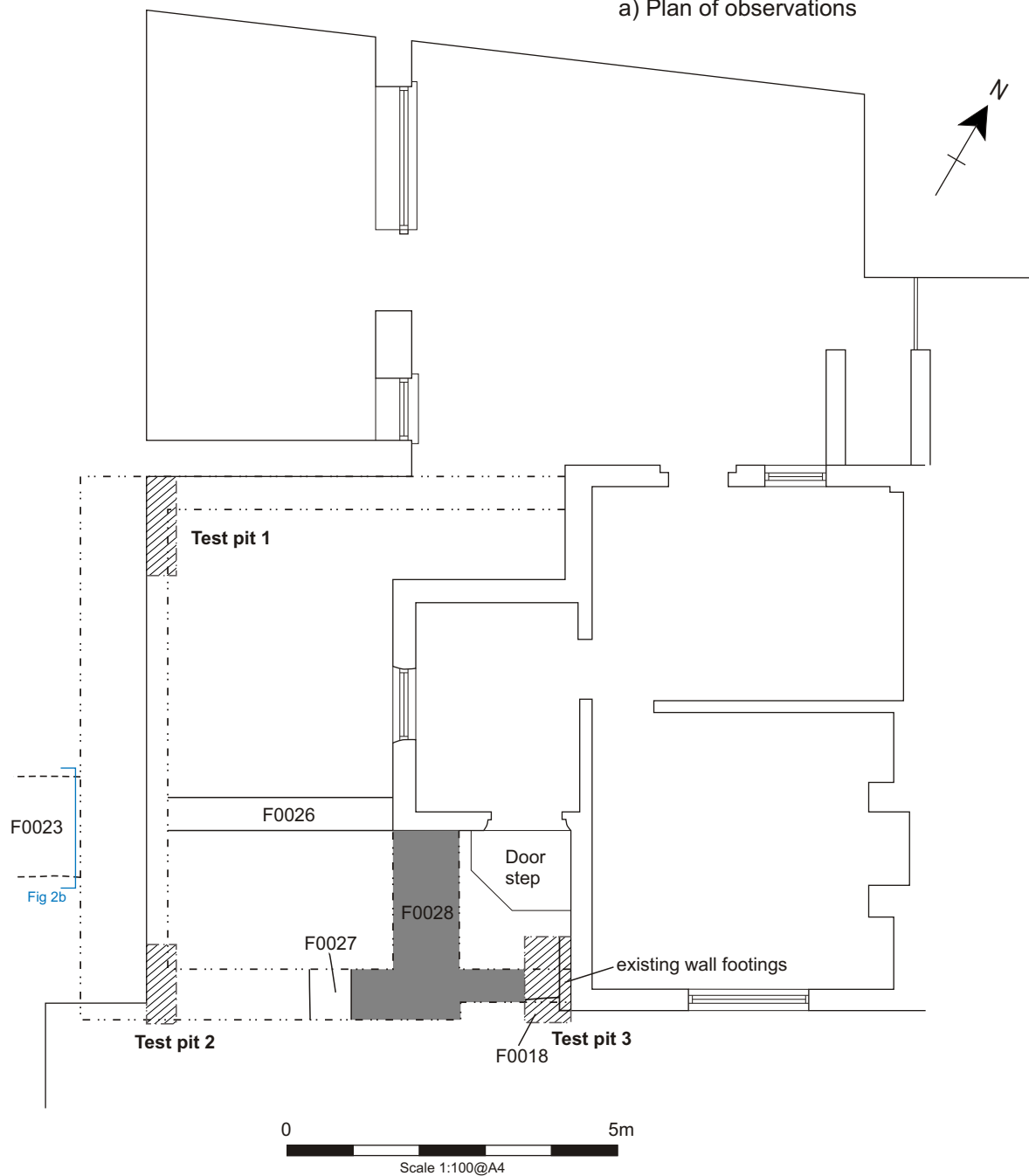
PROJECT  
**Land at 4 Belleview, Kenton,  
 Devon**

TITLE  
**Fig. 1: Site location**

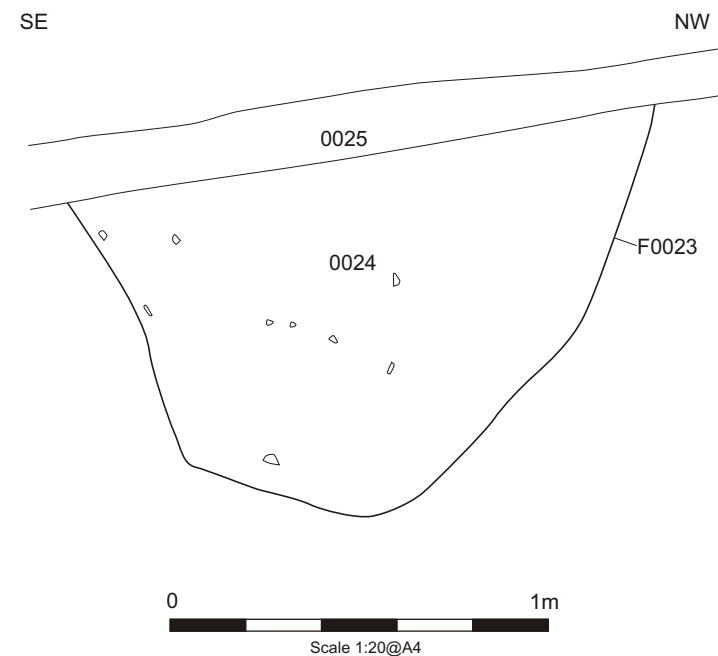




a) Plan of observations



b) Section of F0023

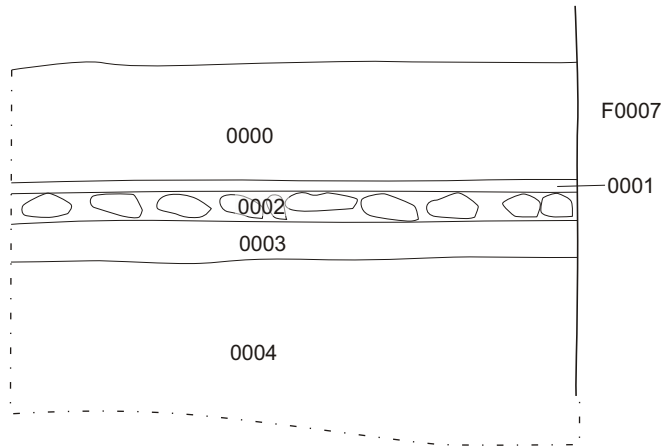


PROJECT  
Land at 4 Belleview, Kenton,  
Devon

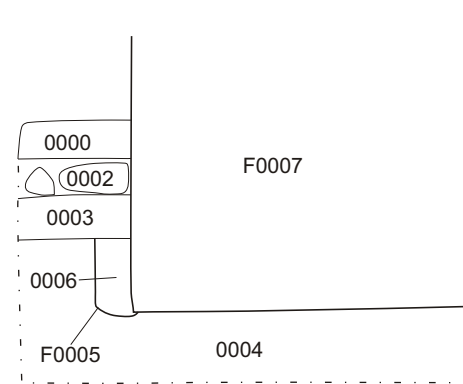
TITLE  
Fig. 2: Site plan showing  
archaeological observations  
with features and section of  
F0023



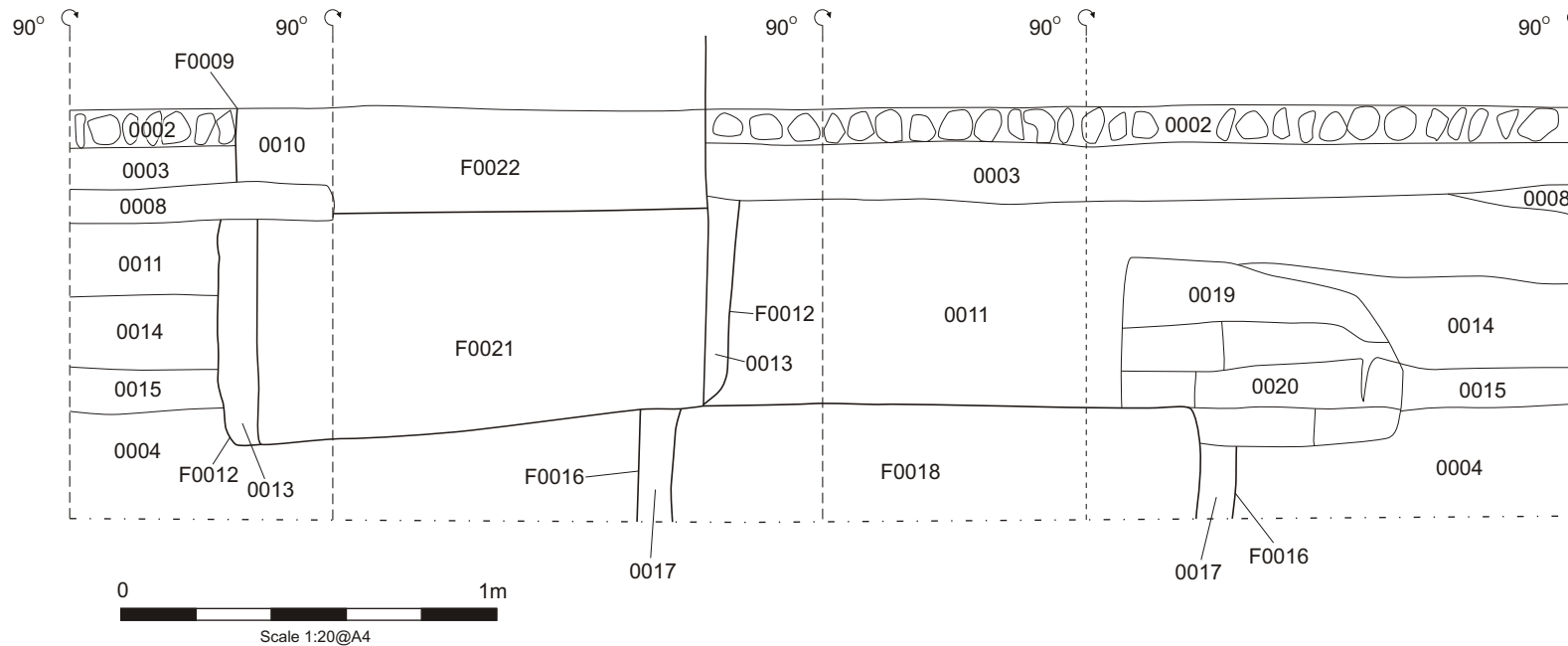
a) Section of test pit 1



b) Section of test pit 2



c) Section of test pit 3



PROJECT  
Land at 4 Belleview, Kenton,  
Devon

TITLE  
Fig. 3: Sections of features  
in geotechnical pits





Plate 1: View of the site prior to the beginning of groundworks, view from the southeast



Plate 2: Probable ditch F2003, viewed from the east (scale 2m)



Plate 3: Geotechnical Test Pit 3, looking east (scale 1m)



Plate 4: Geotechnical Test Pit 3, wall F0018, looking south (scale 1m)





Plate 5: Geotechnical Test Pit 3, brick deposit F0018 and burnt layer (0015), looking northwest (scale 1m)



Plate 6: Footings trench, brick floor F0028, looking north (scale 1m)



Plate 7: Site-wide levelling, garden wall foundation F0026, looking east (scale 1m)



Plate 8: Site-wide levelling, demolished revetment wall (F0007) section, looking north (scale 1m)

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