

Archaeological Watching Brief at 20 West Street, Tavistock, Devon

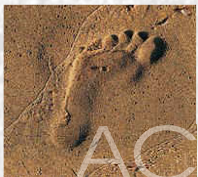
NGR SX 4796 7434

Prepared by
Paul Jones

On behalf of D & G Parsons

Document No: ACD357/1/0

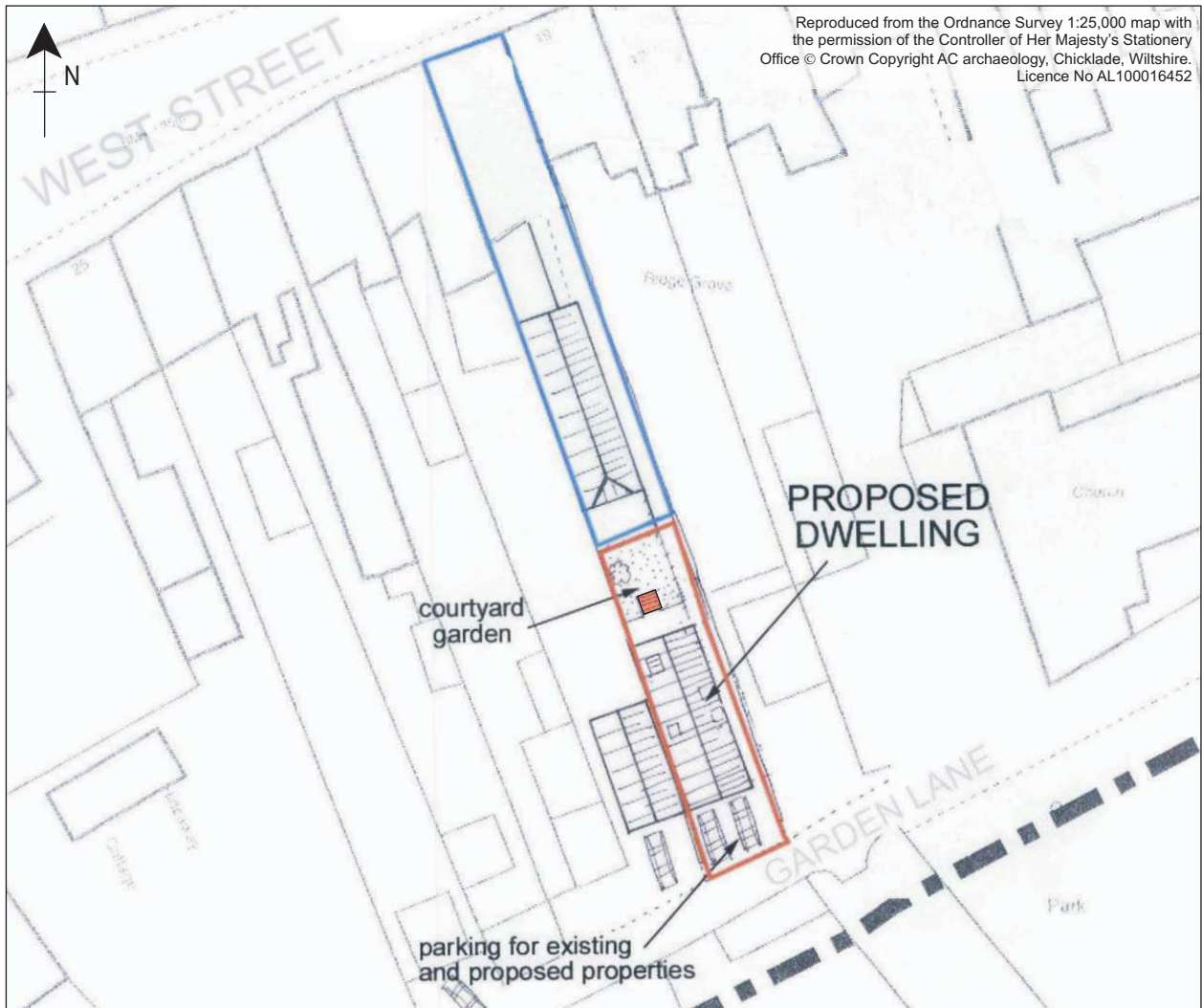
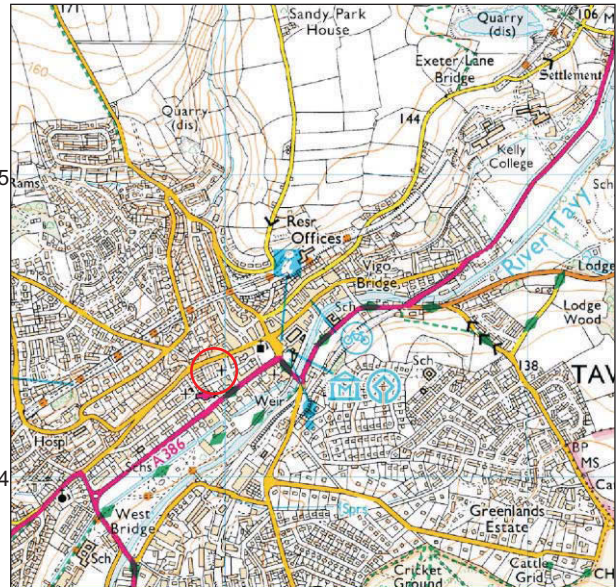
Date: September 2011



archaeology

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Tavistock, West Devon	National Grid Reference SX 4796 7434	Number: (Leave blank for HES to fill in)
Subject: Archaeological Watching Brief at 20 West Street, Tavistock, Devon		Photo attached? N
Planning Application no: 12753/2009/TAV	Recipient museum: Plymouth City Museum	
OASIS ID: 107890	Museum Accession no: AR.2011.39	
Contractor's reference number/code: ACD357	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 15 August 2011	
<p>Description of works. An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by AC archaeology on land at the rear of 20 West Street, Tavistock, Devon, during groundworks associated with the construction of a new dwelling of the property. The work was commissioned by D&G Parsons.</p> <p>The site is located within the area of the medieval town of Tavistock, c.140 metres west of the Scheduled Tavistock Abbey precinct. The abbey and town are believed to have been on the site of a pre-Saxon ecclesiastical centre. The 1752 Wynne Map of Tavistock (DRO part of TD 273) and a plan of c. 1757 (DRO L1258m/m&p/Tavistock14) depicts the site as being within agricultural land between West Street and the River Tavy. On the former, the land is described as a warren and depicted as an orchard, leased to James Bulsteel). The West Street properties have short burgage plots, mostly occupied by buildings, although the adjacent property also contained a small orchard. Wood's map of 1842, produced after the early-mid 19th-century remodelling of the town centre by the Dukes of Bedford, shows that the boundaries of the West Street properties extended further to the south, as far as what is currently called Garden Lane. Some of these properties contained rear ranges of buildings, but none occupied the present site. The first and second edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 maps surveyed in 1883 and 1905 (sheet 105.8) depict a building at the rear of the property within the present development site.</p> <p>The underlying geology comprises interbedded sandstone and argillaceous rocks of the St Mellion Formation with superficial clay, silt, sand and gravel alluvium.</p> <p>Results</p> <p>Prior to archaeological monitoring commencing, the majority of groundworks, including excavations for the foundations of the new building and service trenches, had been completed.</p> <p>Groundworks comprised the bulk excavation of 1.00m³ of ground located within the northern area of the site. Natural deposits were not encountered. At a depth of 1.00m from the surface, a levelling deposit, measuring in excess of 0.60m in depth and consisting of yellowish-brown clay containing frequent amounts of slate and mudstone flecking, was exposed. Sealing this deposit was a light grey demolition deposit, measuring up to 0.40m thick, containing moderate red brick fragments and occasional clinker.</p> <p>An unstratified fragment of an Exeter Series 1 medieval floor tile, probably dating to c. 1300 (cf Keen, L., in Stead, P.M. 1999, 194-5), was recovered from the spoil. The tile has a white slip and green glaze but is undecorated.</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p>No archaeological features were exposed during the observed groundworks, and the recorded levelling and demolished deposits were undated. It is however, probable that they are associated with the mid 19th-century remodelling of the town and incorporation of former lower-lying agricultural land within house/shop curtilages. Previous archaeological investigations in the town centre have identified that during the 18th and 19th centuries the ground level on the floodplain of the River Tavy was raised by up to 2m (cf the discussion by Stead, P.M. and Blaylock, S.R. in Stead, P.M. 1999, 197). The floor tile is of a type previously recovered from investigations in Tavistock.</p> <p>Reference</p> <p>Stead, P.M. 1999 "Archaeological investigations at Tavistock Abbey, 1997-1999", <i>Proc. Devon. Archaeol. Soc.</i> 57, 149-203.</p>		
Recorder: Paul Jones, AC Archaeology	Date sent to HER: 13 September 2011	



PROJECT

Land to the rear of 20 West Street, Tavistock

TITLE

Fig. 1: Location of site



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