

# Braunton Flood Defence Improvement Works, Devon

(NGR SS 4879 3686 and SS 4860 3640)

Results of an archaeological watching brief phase 2

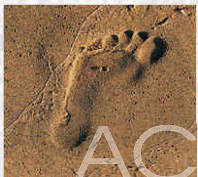
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Prepared by  
Kerry Kerr-Peterson

On behalf of the Environment Agency

Document No: ACD401/1/0

Date: March 2012



archaeology

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# Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

<b>Civil Parish &amp; District:</b> Braunton, North Devon	<b>National Grid Reference</b> Centred on SS 4879 3686 and SS 4860 3640	<b>Number:</b> (Leave blank for HES to fill in)
<b>Subject:</b> Braunton Flood Defence Improvements Works: Results of an archaeological watching brief phase 2		<b>Photo attached?</b> Y
<b>Planning Application no:</b> N/A	<b>Recipient museum:</b> Museum of Barnstaple & North Devon	
<b>OASIS ID:</b> 121086	<b>Museum Accession no:</b> NDDMS 2011.58	
<b>Contractor's reference number/code:</b>  ACD401	<b>Dates fieldwork undertaken:</b>  15 November 2011 to 16 January 2012	
<p><b>Introduction (Figs 1 and 2)</b> An archaeological watching brief was carried out by AC archaeology between November 2011 and January 2012 during excavations for elements of the flood defence improvement works at various points along the River Caen, within the historic core of the town of Braunton, Devon. The excavations were located in the area of the Hordens Bridge (including the site compound), and the Braunton Caen School playing field, the Bowling Club and the memorial gardens (Figs 1 and 2). A watching brief had previously been carried out during the excavation of geotechnical pits at these locations (Dean 2011). No archaeological features or deposits of palaeo-environmental interest were observed.</p> <p><b>Results (Fig. 2)</b> The excavations were carried out in four areas along the route of the River Caen, and each is described below from south to north along the river.</p> <p><b>Hordens Bridge (Plate 1)</b> The excavations at Hordens Bridge comprised the widening of the river, construction of a concrete retaining wall along the River Caen, and the insertion of a gas pipe crossing. The groundworks involved the excavation of a trench on the southeast side of Hordens Bridge, across the riverbed once the water had been retained using a coffer dam and sandbags. The trench measured 10m long by 2m wide and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.3m. The sequence of deposits exposed was a series of river-derived gravel layers including large rounded pebbles and sand. The trench that was excavated for the insertion of a the gas pipe crossing was approximately 5m long by 1m wide and was excavated to a total depth of 1m. The sequence of deposits was the same as previously described.</p> <p><b>The Memorial Gardens</b> In order to create a flood channel within the north part of the memorial garden, a 6.5m wide area was stripped of topsoil (0.15m deep) for a length of approximately 20m. A trench was then excavated along the west side of the entire length of the stripped area that was 5m wide and excavated to a maximum depth of 0.8m. A smaller, 0.6m wide trench was then excavated along the west side of this trench for a further depth of 0.6m. The sequence of deposits that were exposed comprised 0.15m thick mid-dark brown, soft, clay silt topsoil that overlaid 0.4m of light yellow-brown, soft, silt clay subsoil. Beneath this was a series of river-derived gravel and sands. A further area, approximately 5m long and up to 6m wide, was stripped of topsoil to a depth of approximately 0.15m for the insertion of an access ramp towards the south side of the Memorial Gardens.</p> <p><b>The Bowling Green (Plate 2)</b> At the east end of the Bowling Green the river channel was widened and a concrete retaining wall constructed. The groundworks involved the excavation of a trench that measured 10m long by 2.5m wide by a maximum of 2.3m deep. The sequence of deposits comprised 0.15m of tarmac for the Bowling Green car park and 0.3m of associated make-up. This overlaid 0.5m of light yellow-brown, soft, silt clay subsoil with sparse small to medium sized stones that lay above a deposit of river gravels consisting of medium to large sized rounded pebbles.</p> <p><b>The Playing Field</b> A temporary site compound was located in the playing field of Braunton Caen School. The topsoil was stripped along the length of the northern part of the field for a width of up to 21m. Below the c. 0.15m deep topsoil, which was the same as previously described, was mid orange-brown silt clay made-up ground (101) with common inclusions of post-medieval pottery and brick.</p>		

**The Finds**

A total of four sherds of post-medieval pottery (392 grams) were recovered from the made-up ground layer (101) in the playing field as a representative sample of the artefacts present. These are all post-medieval North Devon grit tempered ware dishes and are represented by three rims and a body sherd. There are a minimum of four vessels present with three pieces dating to c.18th-19th century with one having a significant sooting on the exterior, and the other being slightly earlier (c.17th-18th century).

**Comment**

No archaeological features were exposed or significant artefacts recovered during the groundworks. In the deeper trenches natural river gravels were revealed, overlain by modern deposits. These excavations did not go sufficiently deep enough to expose any palaeo-environmental deposits. The only archaeological deposit found throughout the entire scheme was a 19th-century (or later) levelling layer recorded in the playing field.

**Reference**

Dean, K., 2011, *Braunton Flood Defence Improvement Scheme, Braunton, Devon, results of an archaeological watching brief*, NGR SS 4879 3686 & SS 4860 3640, AC archaeology document number ACD324/1/0

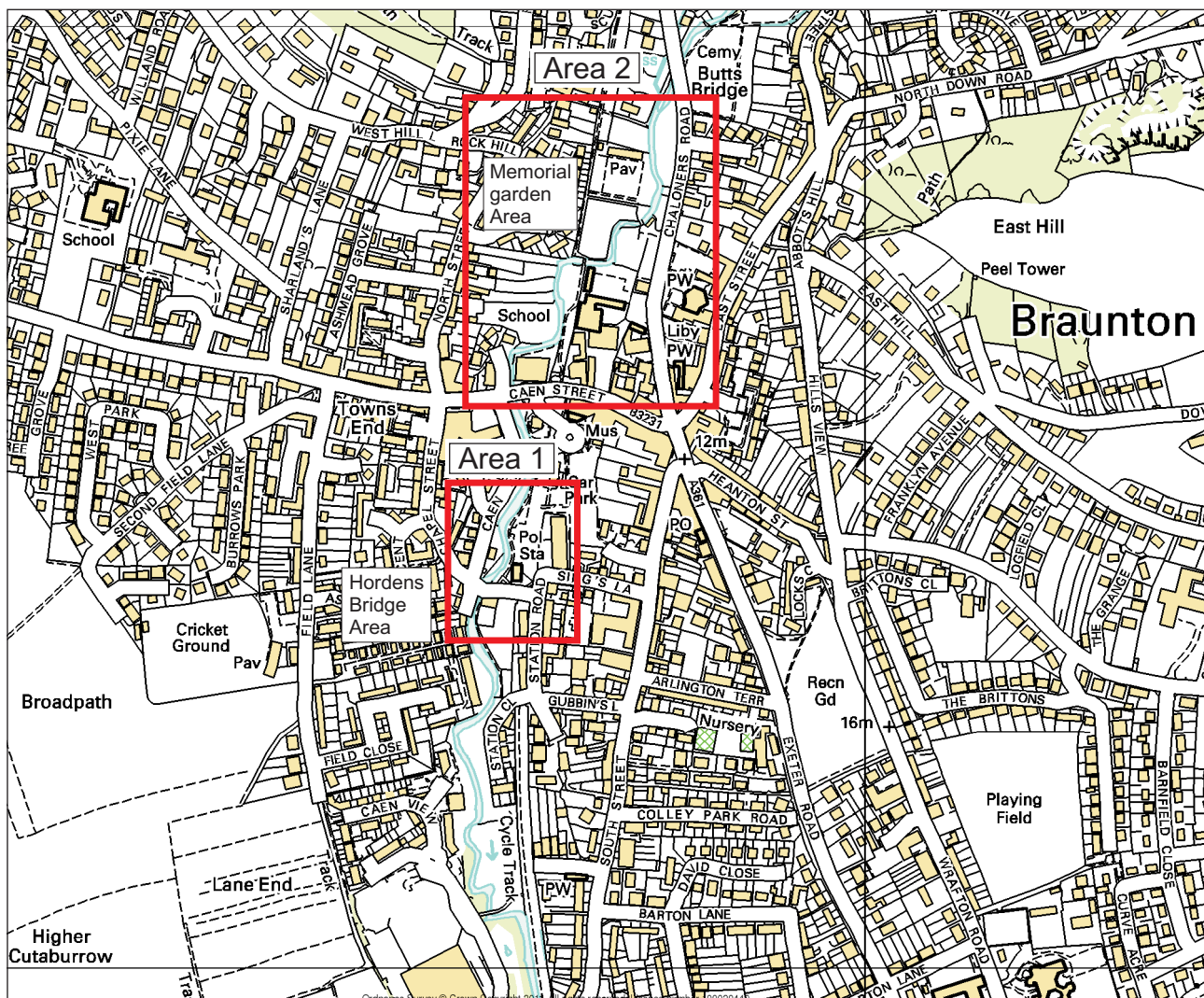
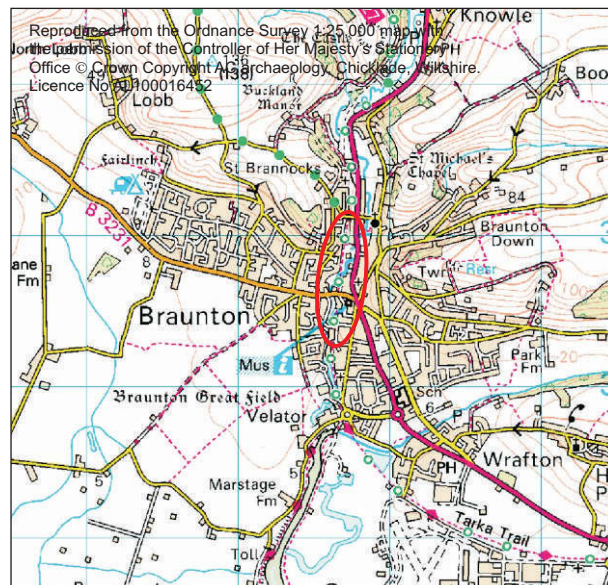
**A plan as well as any other relevant drawings must be attached showing the location and extent of site, areas investigated and features exposed.**

**Recorder:**

Kerry Kerr-Peterson, AC archaeology

**Date sent to HER:**



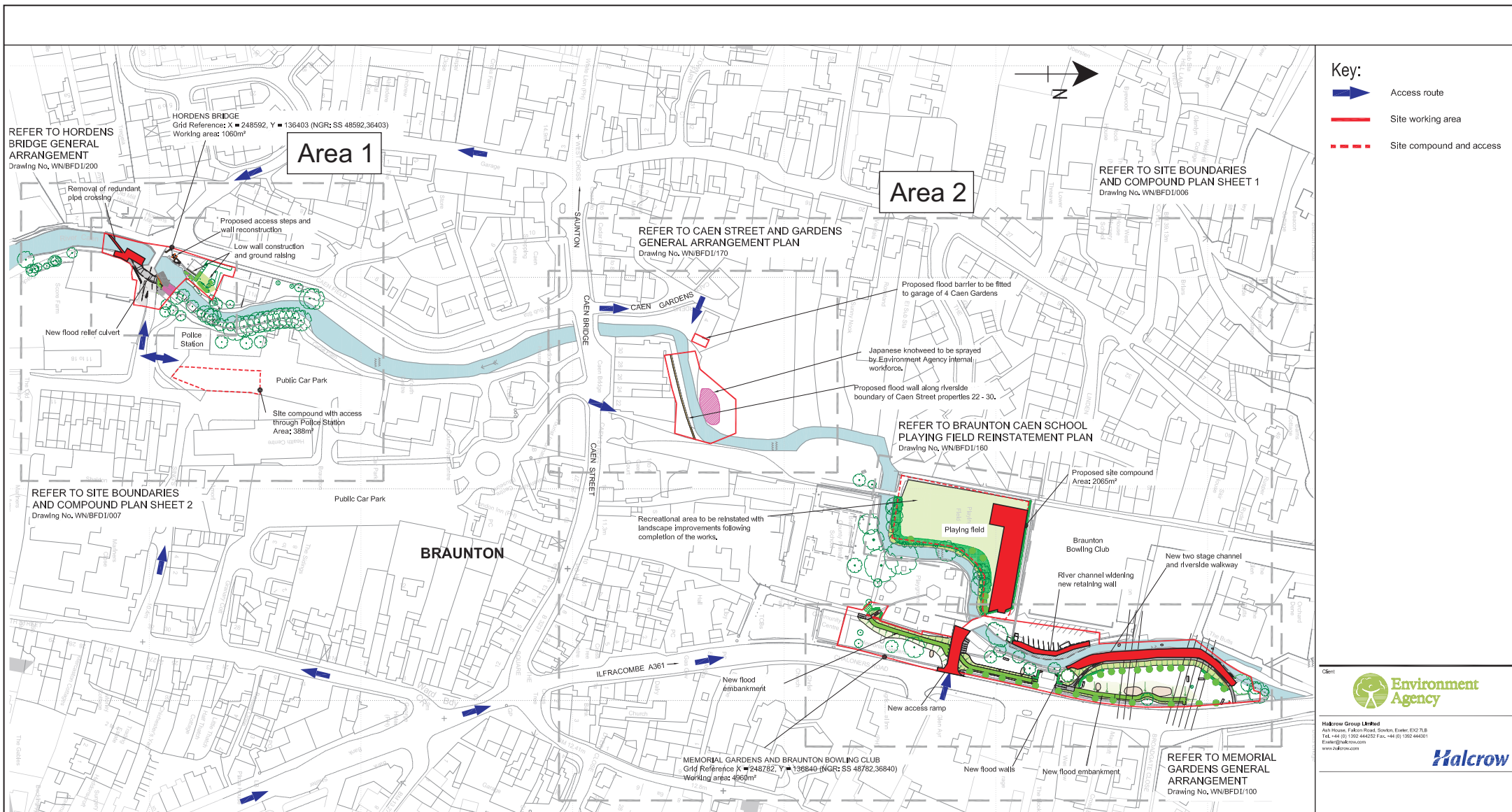


PROJECT

Braunton Flood Defence Improvement Works, Devon

TITLE

Fig.1: Location of site



PROJECT  
Braunton Flood Defence Improvement Works, Devon

TITLE  
Fig. 2: Location of areas observed







Plate 1: General view of excavation next to Hordens Bridge looking southwest



Plate 2: Sequence of deposits within the north-east facing section of the Bowling Green car park river widening trench

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