

Continental Cars, New Street, Cullompton, Devon

NGR ST 0195607170

Results of an archaeological trench evaluation

---

Prepared by:  
Stella de-Villiers

On behalf of:  
Anthony Reed

Document No: ACD741/2/0

Date: September 2013



AC archaeology

---

# CONTINENTAL CARS, NEW STREET, CULLOMPTON, DEVON

(NGR ST 01956 07170)

## Results of an archaeological trench evaluation

---

### CONTENTS

	<i>Summary</i>	1
1.	Introduction	1
2.	Historical and archaeological background	1
3.	Aims	2
4.	Methodology	2
5.	Results	2
6.	Discussion	3
7.	Conclusion	3
8.	Archive and OASIS	3
9.	Acknowledgements	3
10.	References	4

### List of figures

Fig 1: Location of site

Fig 2: Trench location plan and representative sections

### List of plates

Plate 1: Section of Trench 1, view to south. Scale 1m

Plate 2: Section of Trench 2, view to north. Scale 1m

Plate 3: Section of Trench 3, view to north. Scale 1m

Plate 4: Section of Trench 4, view to east. Scale 1m



## **Summary**

*An archaeological trench evaluation was undertaken by AC archaeology during August 2013 on land occupied by Continental Cars, New Street, Cullompton, Devon. The proposed development site is located to the north of New Street and is accessed via Shortlands Lane to the west. It is currently used as a mechanics garage with car parking areas.*

*The evaluation comprised the machine-excavation of four trenches totalling 8m in length with each trench 1m wide. This represents a sampled coverage of available areas within the two plots. The trenches revealed a consistent layer of buried garden soil overlying the natural subsoil that was sealed by levelling for the current tarmac surface. No archaeological features were exposed and no find recovered.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1** An archaeological trench evaluation on land occupied by Continental Cars, New Street, Cullompton, Devon, was undertaken by AC archaeology during August 2013. The work was commissioned by the land owner Anthony Reed in support of a forthcoming planning application for residential development, as advised by the Devon County Historic Environment Team (hereafter DCHET). The location of the site is shown on Fig. 1.
- 1.2** The proposed development site is located to the north of New Street and is accessed via Shortlands Lane to the west. It is currently the premises of Continental Cars and comprises garage buildings, an office and car parking areas. The car park areas are tarmac-covered and generally level at around 63m aOD, with the underlying geology comprising Exeter Group sandstone.

## **2. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** A settlement at Cullompton is recorded as early as 880 AD, when it was known as 'Columntune'. Throughout most of the medieval period it was a royal holding (DCHER ref. MDV71719). The present parish church dates to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, but is probably on the site of an earlier minster church dating to the late Saxon period (MDV54301). The site is located within the historic core of the town in an area of former burgrave plots extending back from Fore Street (MDV73707). To the south of the site is the line of the 14<sup>th</sup> century town leat that extends along New Street and to the west is a former 19<sup>th</sup> century woollen mill at Shortlands (MDV15449).
- 2.2** The site is situated approximately 30m to the south of Shortlands where evidence for Romano-British occupation comprising ditches and pits were recorded ahead of development. Artefacts recovered from the site included a complete Black-Burnished Ware jar and an associated gaming board. Further to the north is the site of a Roman fort located on St Andrew's Hill (MDV73707). Here evidence for two phases of defensive ditches has been recorded from aerial photos and excavation with associated pottery dating from the 1st century AD (Simpson and Griffith 1993). Immediately to the west of the site, evidence for a large post-medieval probable gravel extraction pit was recorded ahead of a recent housing development (Context One 2010).
- 2.3** An estate map of 1633 is the earliest map depicting the location of the site (DRO 26502/1). In this the site is shown within an open plot to the rear of Fore Street. The 1840 Cullompton parish tithe map shows the site in more detail as within what

appears to be a sub-divided burgage plot containing a small structure. The first-edition Ordnance Survey map of 1887 shows the site as amalgamated by this date into a single possible orchard plot with a track along its southern side. This is also the case in the subsequent Ordnance Survey map of 1903.

### **3. AIMS**

- 3.1** The aims of the trial trench evaluation were to establish the presence or absence, extent, depth, character and date of any archaeological features, deposits or finds within the site. The results of the work will be reviewed and used to inform any subsequent work, if required, should planning permission be granted.

### **4. METHODOLOGY**

- 4.1** The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Project Design prepared by AC archaeology (Valentin 2013), submitted to and approved by DCHET prior to commencement on site. It comprised the machine-excavation of four trenches totalling 8m in length, with each trench 1m wide. This represented a sampled coverage of available areas within the two plots. The trench locations, in relation to the proposed development, are shown on Fig. 2.
- 4.2** The trenches were excavated using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket and working under the control and direction of the site archaeologist. Stripping by mechanical excavator ceased at the level at which natural subsoil was exposed.
- 4.3** All deposits revealed were recorded using the standard AC archaeology pro-forma recording system, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and in accordance with AC archaeology's *General Site Recording Manual, Version 2*.

### **5. RESULTS**

- 5.1 Trench 1** (Plan Fig. 2a and section Fig. 2b; Plate 1)  
This trench was excavated onto natural subsoil (103), which comprised a mid reddish-yellow sandy-gravel that was present at a depth of 0.84m below current ground level. The natural subsoil was overlain by a 0.4m to 0.5m thick layer mid reddish-brown sandy-loam buried soil (102). This was sealed by gravel levelling (101) for the current tarmac surface (100).

No archaeological features were exposed within the trench and no finds were recovered.

- 5.2 Trench 2** (Plan Fig. 2a and section Fig. 2c; Plate 2)  
This trench was excavated onto natural subsoil (202), which comprised a mid reddish-yellow sandy-gravel that was present at a depth of 0.90m below current levels. The natural subsoil was overlain by 0.7m thick layer of mid reddish-brown sandy-loam buried garden soil (201), which was in turn sealed by the current tarmac surface (200).

The trench contained no archaeological features and no finds were recovered.

- 5.3 Trench 3** (Plan Fig. 2a and section Fig. 2d; Plate 3)  
Trench 3 was excavated onto natural subsoil (303), which comprised a mid reddish-yellow sandy gravel and was present at a depth of 0.85m below current ground level. Overlying the natural subsoil was a 0.55m thick layer of mid reddish-brown sandy-

loam garden soil (302). This was overlain by a gravel levelling layer (301) for the current tarmac surface (300).

The trench contained no archaeological features and no finds were recovered.

#### **5.4 Trench 4 (Plan Fig. 2a and section Fig. 2e; Plate 4)**

This trench was excavated onto natural subsoil (403), which was present at a depth of 0.58m below current levels. The natural subsoil was overlain by a 0.24m thick mid reddish-brown sandy-loam garden soil (402) that was in turn overlain by levelling (401) for the current tarmac surface (400).

No archaeological features were exposed within the trench and no finds were recovered.

### **6. DISCUSSION**

- 6.1** The results of the evaluation have exposed a consistent undisturbed sequence of a thick buried garden soil over a sandy-gravel natural subsoil. The presence and relatively thickness of the buried garden soil is perhaps consistent with the sites former use as an orchard as suggested by the historic mapping.

There were no exposed archaeological features within any of the trenches and no finds recovered.

### **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1** The site lies within an area of broad potential for activity dating from the Romano-British and medieval periods based on features recorded at the adjacent Shortlands site as well its position within a probable former burgage plot. Despite this there was no evidence for activity of these dates exposed within these investigations. However, the presence of a buried soil layer overlying the natural subsoil and sealed by the current car park surface suggests that apart from impact from the extant structures on the site the area is likely to be generally undisturbed.

### **8. ARCHIVE AND OASIS**

- 8.1** The paper and digital archive are currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, near Exeter, EX5 4LQ. They will be offered to the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter and dealt with under their current accession policy.
- 8.2** The OASIS (Online AccesS to the Index of archaeological Investigations) number for this project is 157779.

### **9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

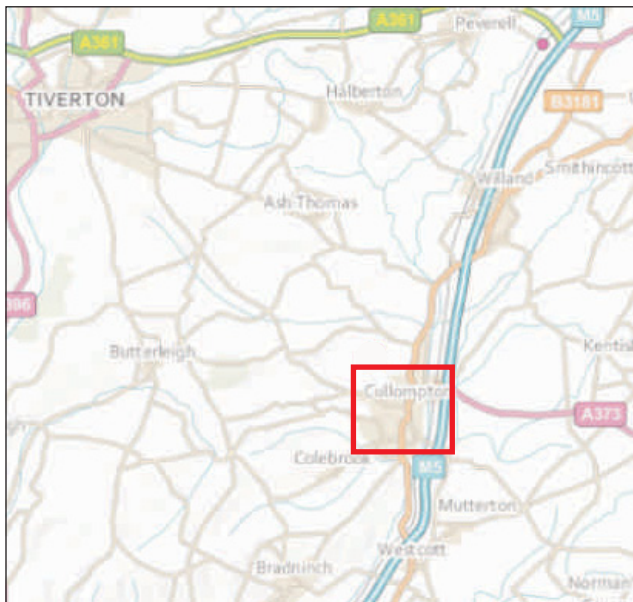
- 9.1** The evaluation was commissioned by Anthony Reed. The site work was undertaken by Stella De-Villiers, with the illustrations for this report prepared by Sarnia Blackmore. The collaborative role of Stephen Reed, Devon County Historic Environment Officer, is duly acknowledged.

## 10. REFERENCES

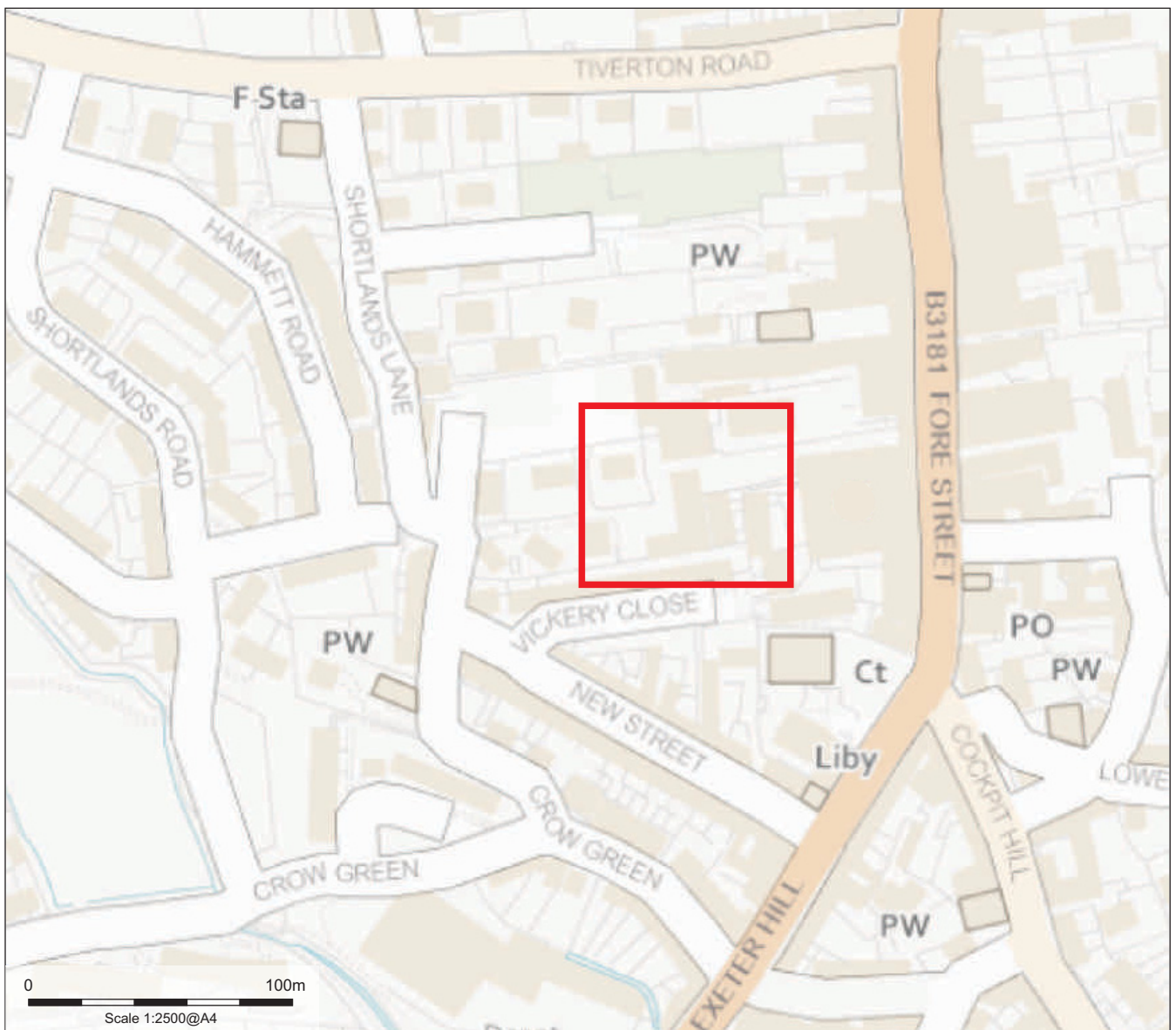
Context One 2010: *Land off Shortlands Road, Cullompton, Devon: An Archaeological Field Evaluation*. Unpublished Context One Archaeological Services Report.

Simpson, S. and Griffith, F. 1993: 'The trial excavation at the Roman fort on St. Andrew's Hill, Cullompton', *Proc. Devon Archaeol. Soc.* 51, 149-59.

Valentin, J., 2013: *Continental Cars, New Street, Cullompton, Devon*. Unpublished AC archaeology document, ref ACD741.



Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright AC archaeology, Chicklade, Wiltshire. Licence No AL100016452



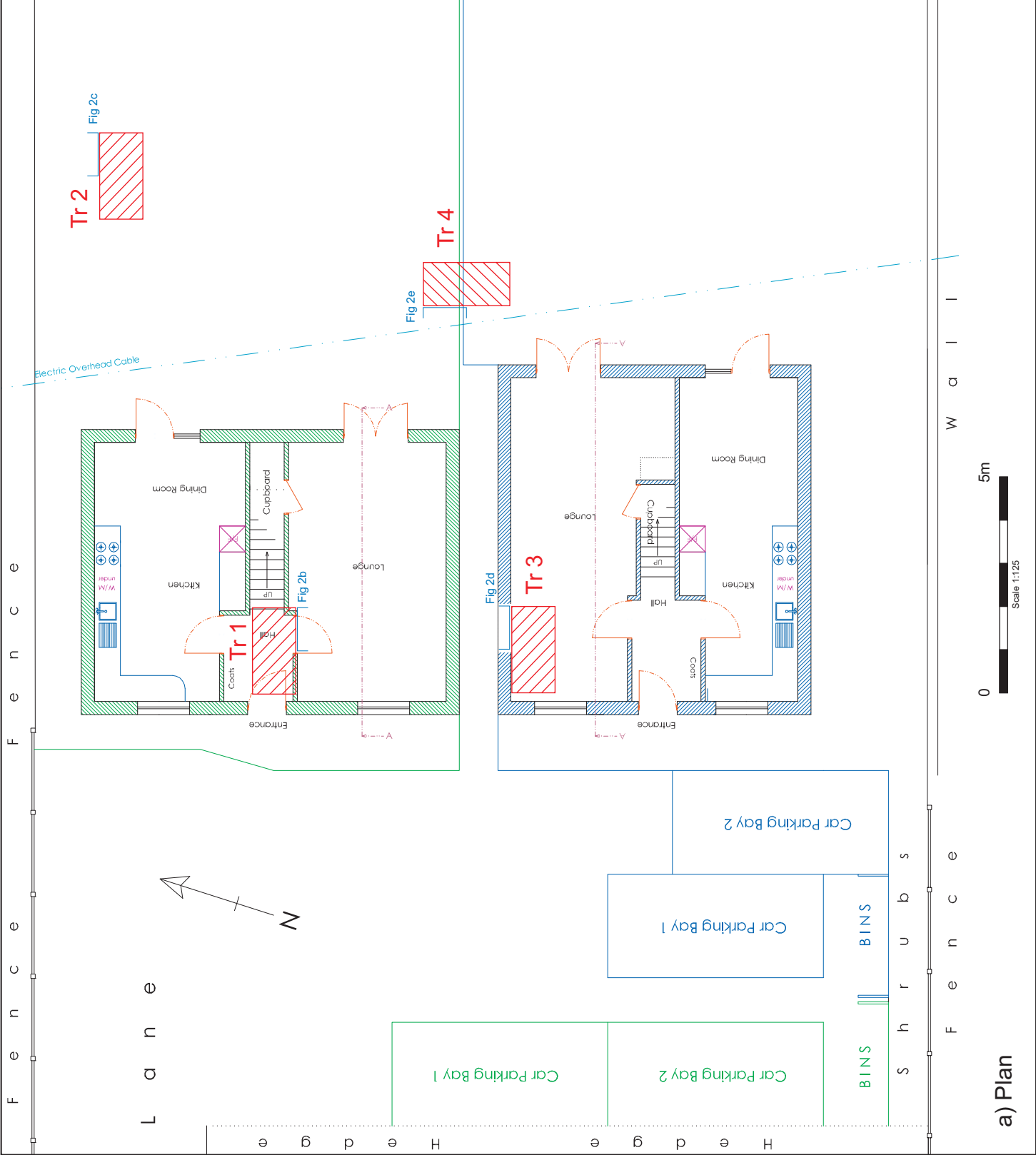
PROJECT

Continental Cars, New Street, Cullompton

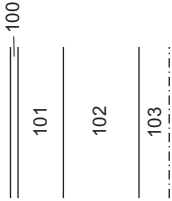
TITLE

Fig. 1: Location of site

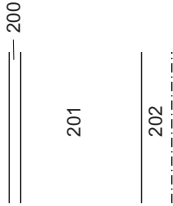




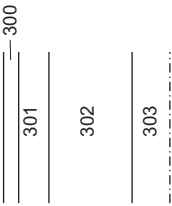
b) Representative section, Trench 1



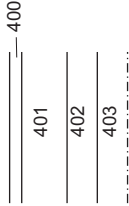
c) Representative section, Trench 2



d) Representative section, Trench 3



e) Representative section, Trench 4



PROJECT

Continental Cars, New Street,  
Cullompton

TITLE

Fig. 2: Trench location plan  
and representative sections



ACI archaeology





Plate 1: Section of Trench 1, view to south. Scale 1m



Plate 2: Section of Trench 2, view to north. Scale 1m



Plate 3: Section of Trench 3, view to north. Scale 1m



Plate 4: Section of Trench 4, view to east. Scale 1m

### Devon Office

AC archaeology Ltd  
Unit 4, Halthaies Workshops  
Bradninch  
Nr Exeter  
Devon  
EX5 4LQ

Telephone/Fax: 01392 882410

### Wiltshire Office

AC archaeology Ltd  
Manor Farm Stables  
Chicklade  
Hindon  
Nr Salisbury  
Wiltshire  
SP3 5SU

Telephone: 01747 820581  
Fax: 01747 820440

[www.acarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.acarchaeology.co.uk)