

Land at 31 Fore Street, Bradninch, Devon

(NGR ST 00068 04076)

Results of an archaeological watching brief

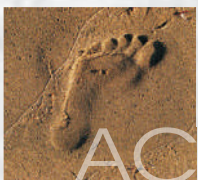
Mid Devon District Council planning reference: 12/1242/FULL

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On behalf of:
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archaeology

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by AC archaeology in July and August 2013 during the construction of a new house on land to the rear of 31 Fore Street, Bradninch. The site covers an area of approximately 0.25ha and lies to the rear of properties on Fore Street, and is bounded to the east by the Hornbeam Gardens residential development

Sections of stone walls and cobbled paving were uncovered. These can be related to buildings recorded in 19th century maps and demolished during the 20th century. All of the archaeological features appear to be post-medieval and modern in date. All finds recovered were modern.

1. INTRODUCTION (Fig. 1)

- 1.1 This document sets out the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken during the construction of a dwelling on land at the rear of 31 Fore Street, Bradninch, Devon (ST 00068 04076; Fig. 1), and represents a report on the works required by Mid Devon District Council under condition 5 of planning reference 12/01242/FULL. The recording was conducted in line with a brief prepared by the Devon County Council Archaeological Officer (DCCAO; Reed 2013), archaeological advisor to Mid Devon District Council.
- 1.2 The watching brief was carried out by AC archaeology and was commissioned by Chris Dent, architect and planning consultant.
- 1.3 The site covers an area of approximately 0.25ha and lies to the rear of properties on Fore Street, and is bounded to the east by the Hornbeam Gardens residential development. It is situated at a height of approximately 80m aOD. The underlying geology is Permian interbedded sandstone and conglomerate.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (Figs 2-4)

- 2.1 Bradninch is a small market town which consists chiefly of one main axis, Fore Street with High Street. It was a large manor in the Domesday Book and was created a Borough in the 12th century. The historic housing stock of Bradninch is regarded as having been severely reduced by several devastating fires, most notably in the late 17th century when all buildings except the church are reported as destroyed, and followed by a further six major fires in the 19th century (Gentry 1985).
- 2.2 The site is situated within the apparent core of the medieval settlement, and lies within an area of archaeological potential in the rear of plots of land aligned on Fore Street. The mid to late 19th-century maps of Bradninch (Figs 2 and 3) depict buildings on the site, which were demolished in the 20th century.
- 2.3 There have been several previous archaeological investigations within the vicinity of the site. The most notable findings included the following:
 - An archaeological assessment and subsequent recording undertaken by Exeter Archaeology in 1999 prior to the Hornbeam Close residential development between Fore Street and Culver Close. The area extended across the remains of six supposed parallel medieval tenement plots probably dating from the c. 12th century and unchanged since the 1839 tithe survey. A number of shallow features and boundaries were identified and sherds of medieval pottery were recovered (Collings and Dyer 2000). These boundaries are present on the 1839 tithe map but are not present on the 1802 Ordnance Survey map

(Figs 3 and 4), which shows the area behind 31 Fore Street divided into three fields with the residential plots severely shortened in comparison to the tithe and later Ordnance Survey maps, casting doubt on the supposed medieval burgage plot origins of the elongated plots. They may, however, be strip fields that were unenclosed at the time of the 1802 survey and later enclosed to form garden plots for the houses on Fore Street by the time of the tithe survey. The tithe survey apportionment is not helpful on this matter as properties within the Borough are not listed.

- During the few archaeological investigations in Bradninch (Hughes 2009, Collings and Dyer 2000, Morris *et al.* 2012, Bampton and Morris 2013) no definite medieval features have been exposed, with only later post-medieval features and artefacts being recorded (e.g. Devon county Historic Environment Record EDV 6115)

3. AIM

- 3.1** The aim of the work was to monitor the groundworks associated with the development to allow any exposed archaeological deposits and features to be investigated, excavated and recorded. In particular, archaeological and artefactual evidence associated with the medieval settlement may have been present, as well as remains of the buildings shown on the tithe map.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1** All works were undertaken in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (Passmore 2013).
- 4.2** An initial rapid desk-based appraisal (summarised in section 2 above) was undertaken to inform the fieldwork and the preparation of this document.
- 4.3** All groundworks were monitored by the attending archaeologist and all features and 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* (revised August 2012). Detailed sections or plans were produced at a scale of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate. All site levels relate to Ordnance Datum.

5. RESULTS (Detailed plan Fig. 5a and sections Figs 5b-e; Plates 1-5)

- 5.1** Excavation of the service and foundation trenches reached a maximum depth of 1.4m below current ground level in the NW corner of the foundation trench exposing the underlying Permian geology (context 103). The same geological deposit was exposed at a much shallower depth in the SE corner, approximately 0.3m below current ground level. Above the natural geology were a series of deposits of 'made-ground' containing moderate to abundant amounts of late post-medieval and modern construction debris (contexts 101, 102, 104). Beneath these deposits in the NW corner of the trench a small section of cobbled pathway (114) was uncovered at a height of 83.45m aOD. This had been repaired with modern concrete. A sewer and manhole of probable late Victorian date were also exposed.
- 5.2** A series of small walls, one running approximately E-W along the southern boundary (F105), and two adjoining walls running approximately N-S (F106, F113) were exposed. The walls consisted of irregular shaped pieces of sandstone bonded with a sandy clay mortar. Inserted into a gap between F105 and F106 and to the west of F106 and abutting these features, two sections of un-frogged brickwork bonded with a dark greyish mortar F109 associated with

concrete paving slabs (108) to the south were recorded. Beneath the paving slabs a levelling layer (110) of compact mid orangey brown silty clay containing abundant red brick fragments and mortar was revealed.

5.3 A 5.10m rainwater drain and 1.8m by 1.8m soakaway pit excavated to a maximum depth of 1.20m was excavated in the area to the NW of the NW corner of the new building. This revealed further deposits of the made-up ground containing post-medieval and modern material. A small concrete faced wall (F115) and an abutting level concrete slab (F116) was revealed at 0.50m below ground surface level. These appeared to be modern garden features.

6. **THE FINDS** by Kerry Kerr-Peterson and Andrew Passmore

6.1 The finds assemblage consisted entirely of modern material and has been quantified by material type, the results of which are shown in Table 1. Following quantification, it has been discarded.

Context	Context Description	CBM		Worked Stone		Clinker		Brass	
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
104	Made-up ground	1	817	1	245			1	112
105	Wall					1	0.4		
109	Wall	1	3,000						
Totals		2	3,817	1	245	1	0.4	1	112

Table1: Finds quantification by material type. Weight measured in grams. CBM = ceramic building material.

6.2 The assemblage contained two pieces of ceramic building material, weighing 3,817g. A piece of brick from (context 104) had a slightly curved profile and is made of a dark reddish-brown fabric with common sub-rounded inclusions. This brick would have been used in an industrial structure such as a furnace or kiln and probably dates to the 19th century. A complete industrially-produced red brick was recovered from F109. One piece of worked stone, weighing 245g, was recovered from (104). This is a piece of sandstone which has a probable nail hole cut into it. One small fragment of clinker came from F105, weighing 0.4g. A brass pin type object was recovered from (104); this has a hoop at one end and an iron shaft at the other. The function of this object is uncertain but it is likely to be 20th century in date.

7. **DISCUSSION**

7.1 The watching brief confirmed the presence of features of archaeological interest in the area of the development. These consisted of structural remains of buildings and surfaces.

7.2 The series of walls (F105, F106 and F113) and the two sections of abutting un-frogged brickwork (F109) formed part of a single structure. The two walls running N-S (F106 and F113) appeared to extend beyond the southern boundary of the property, under the level of the alleyway that links Fore Street to Hornbeam Gardens. An examination of the stonework in the retaining wall to the south of the alleyway showed a number of similarities between this wall and those uncovered during groundworks; they are all of a very similar construction with irregular, mortar bonded sandstone. Both F105 and the alleyway retaining wall showed signs of repair when a sewage pipe running from the manhole cover and F111 had been inserted beneath them. Further investigation showed a very neat alignment between F106 and a section of square cut sandstone blocks in the retaining wall of the alleyway. There are a

number of other changes in the stonework in this retaining wall which correspond with the location of buildings shown on the 1st Edition OS map (1889).

- 7.3** No direct dating evidence for the walls F105, F106 and F113 was recovered, with only a single piece of clinker being recovered from within the construction trench for wall F105. The two sections of abutting un-frogged brickwork (F109) are probably thresholds for doorways and along with the concrete flag surface F108 are probably later additions. The building does not appear on the Tithe map and may be a mid 19th-century extension to the row of outbuildings situated to the north running back from the property on the street frontage. Their function has not been ascertained. Such a row of buildings would not be inconsistent with small-scale industrial workshops, although the local name 'Hornbeam Terrace' may indicate some were dwellings.
- 7.4** The buildings were demolished in the mid-late 1960s, at which date the alleyway was inserted along the original southern boundary of this plot, with the southern walls of the buildings retained as a boundary to the plot to the south. The entire site contained modern landscaping deposits, overlying the earlier features. Finds from these layers, as well as the presence of a buried cobbled pathway with modern repairs (114) along with probable modern garden features F115 and F116, demonstrate that much of this made-up ground is contemporary with the 20th-century demolition of the buildings in the 1960s.
- 7.5** Other sections of wall and cobbled surfaces similar to those previously mentioned were noted in the rear gardens of 29 and 31 Fore Street. These features are probably associated with the buildings of Hornbeam Terrace that were accessed through a now blocked archway in the ground floor of 29 Fore Street.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1** A small group of features were uncovered during the watching brief, and have been related to nearby structural remains. The presence of this suite of related features to the rear of the properties that line the west side of Fore Street indicates that evidence of the earlier layout of the street pattern and associated buildings remains. However, none of the evidence uncovered during the monitoring of these works suggests that they are any older than later post-medieval in date

9. ARCHIVE AND OASIS ENTRY

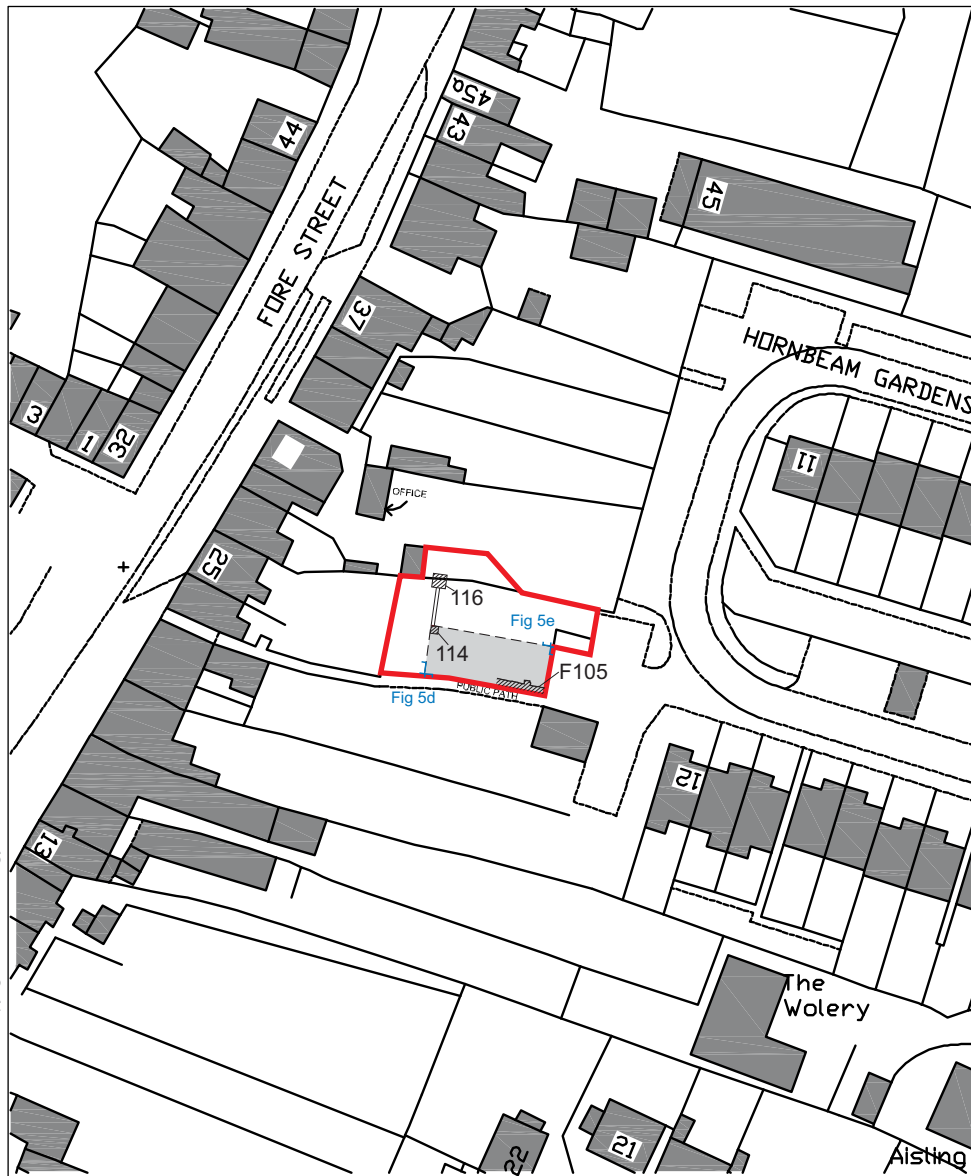
- 9.1** The paper and digital archive and finds are currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ. A museum-allocated temporary reference number has been obtained from the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, which is 13/26.
- 9.2** An online OASIS entry has been completed, using the unique identifier 162005, which includes a digital copy of this report.

10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

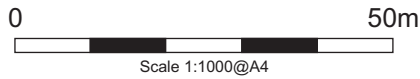
- 10.1** The evaluation was commissioned by Chris Dent, architect and planning consultant. The site work was undertaken by Fiona Pink, Naomi Hughes and William Smith, with the illustrations for this report prepared by Elisabeth Patkai. The collaborative role of Stephen Reed, Devon Council Archaeology Officer is duly acknowledged.

11. SOURCES CONSULTED

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- Ordnance Survey old series 1802 map (AC archaeology archive)
- Ordnance Survey 25-inch map sheet 57.9, surveyed 1888-9
- Passmore, A., 2013, *31 Fore Street, Bradninch, Devon: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*. Unpublished AC archaeology document for client, ref. **ACD678/1/1**
- Reed, S., 2013, Brief for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording, Land at NGR300061 104073 Hornbeam Gardens, Bradninch, DCHES reference **ARCH/DM/MD/19499**



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- Location of site
- Area monitored

PROJECT

Land at 31 Fore Street, Bradninch, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 1: Site location





Location of site

PROJECT

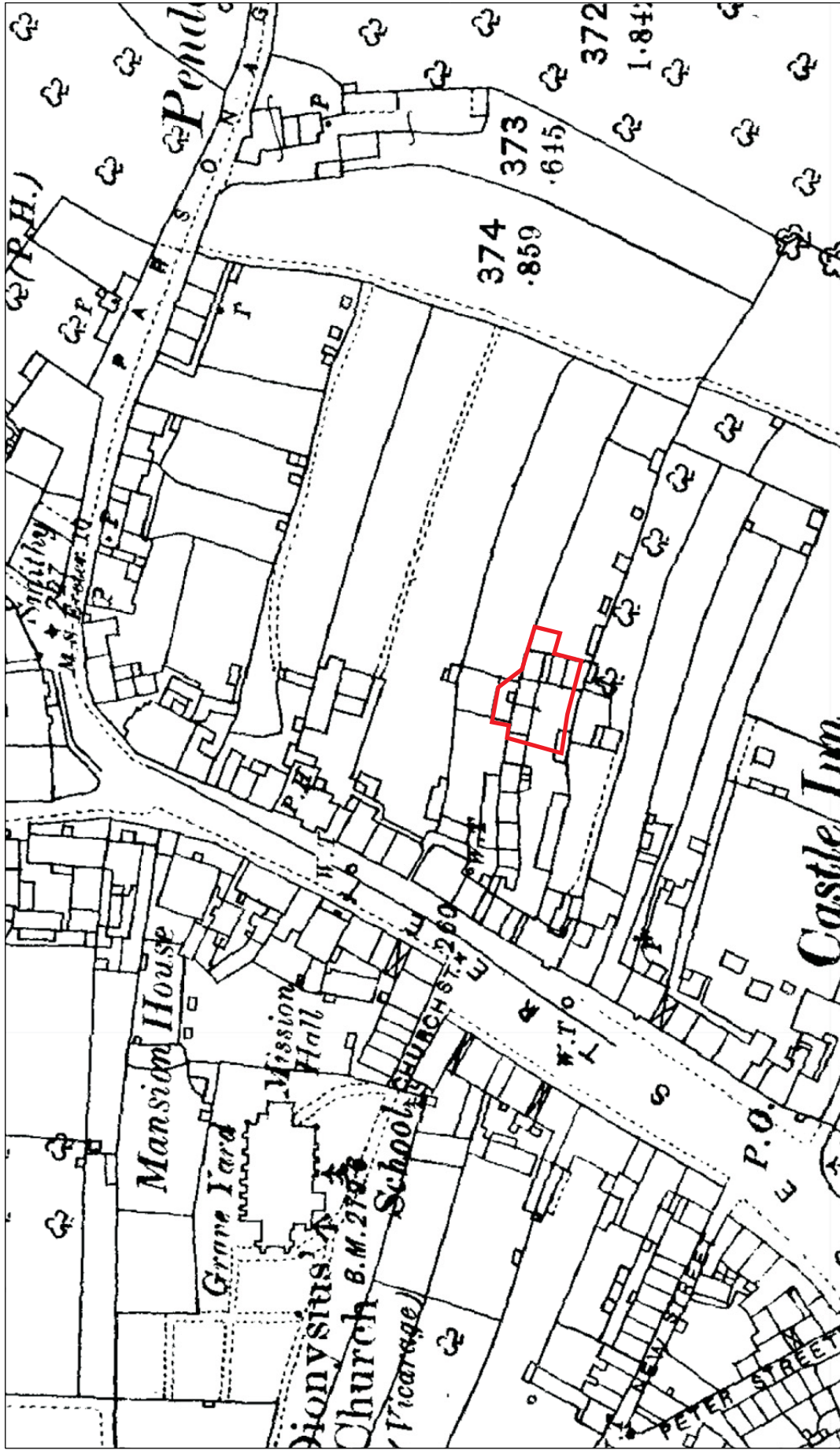
Land at 31 Fore Street,
Bradinch, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 2: Extract from
the Tithe Map, 1839



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PROJECT

Land at 31 Fore Street,
Bradninch, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 3: Extract from the
1st Edition OS map, 1889



Location of site



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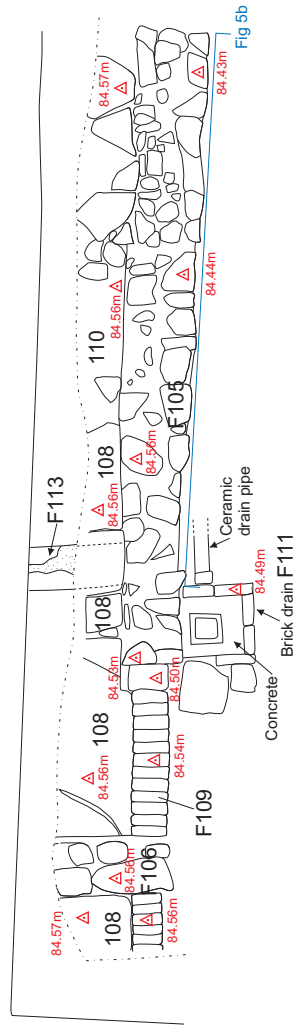
PROJECT
Land at 31 Fore Street,
Bradninch, Devon

TITLE
Fig. 4: Extract from the
old series Ordnance
Survey map, 1802

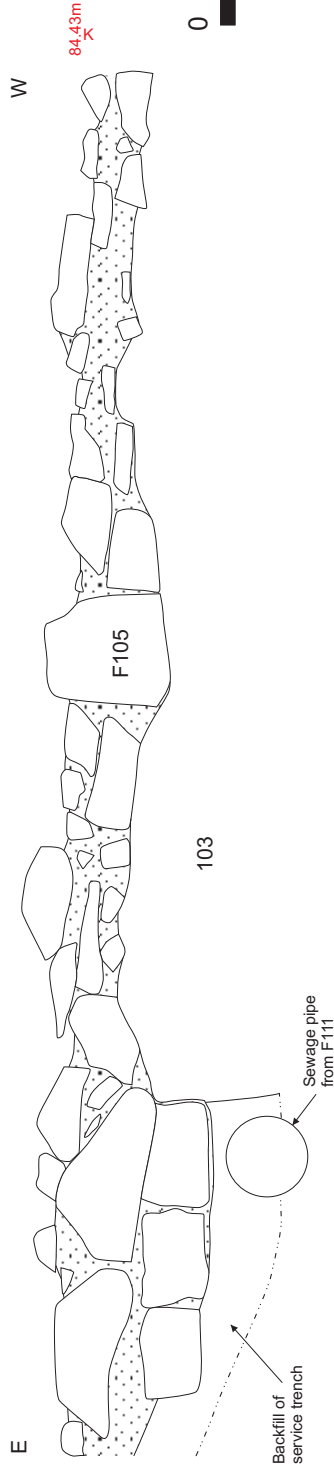


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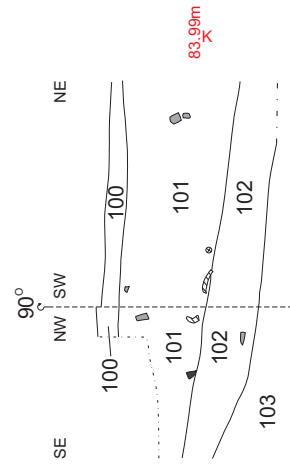
a) Plan of F105, F106 and F111



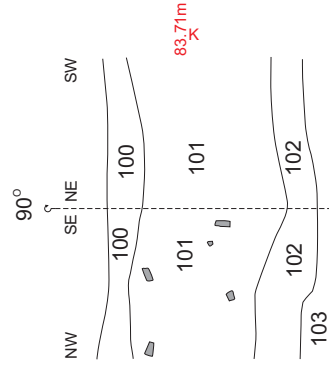
b) Section of F105



d) Section in Southwest corner of footings



e) Section in Northeast corner of footings



Key

-  Brick
-  Slate
-  Tile
-  Mortar





Plate 1: General view of the site from the NE



Plate 2: Cobbled surface 114 beneath made ground. Repair in concrete can be seen in the far right of the surface. View from the SW (scale 1m)



Plate 3: Exposed wall foundations F105 and F106. View from the NE (scale 1m)



Plate 4: Alignment of N-S wall F106 with faced stonework in the retaining wall of the alleyway. View from the N (scale 1m)

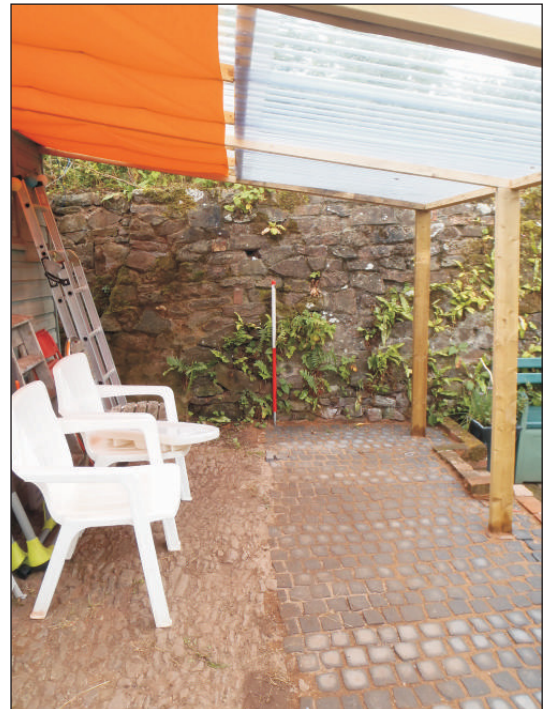


Plate 5: Cobbled surface (cobbles on right are modern) and possible rear wall to buildings of Hornbeam Terrace, rear garden of 29 Fore Street. View from the N (scale 1m)



Plate 6: Concrete pad 116. View from the NW.

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