

LAND AT CASTLE HOUSE, LYDFORD, DEVON

(NGR SX 51004 84819)

Results of archaeological investigations

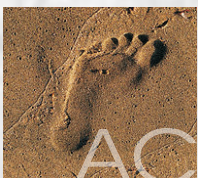
Dartmoor National Park Authority planning reference:
0422/14 (Condition 3)

Prepared by:
Abigail Brown and Simon Hughes

On behalf of:
Ms. Taylor

Report No: ACD1284/2/1

Date: January 2018



archaeology

LAND AT CASTLE HOUSE, LYDFORD, DEVON

NGR SX 51004 84819

Results of archaeological monitoring and recording

Dartmoor National Park Authority planning reference: 0422/14
(Condition 3)

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The views and recommendations expressed in this report are those of AC archaeology and are presented in good faith on the basis of professional judgement and on information currently available.

CONTENTS

Summary

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Archaeological background	1
3.	Aims	2
4.	Methodology	2
5.	Results	2
6.	Comments	3
7.	Archive and OASIS	3
8.	References	4

List of figures

- Fig. 1: Location of site with monitored areas shown
Fig. 2: Site plan and sections

List of plates

- Plate 1: General view of Castle House. Looking north
Plate 2: Showing front elevation of outbuilding. View to northwest
Plate 3: Showing rear elevation of outbuilding. View to southeast
Plate 4: Showing interior of outbuilding with cobble surface 108 and slate surface 110 visible. View to southwest
Plate 5: Showing interior of outbuilding with cobble surface 108 and granite kerb 111 exposed. View to northeast
Plate 6: Detailed view of cobble surface 108. Looking northwest
Plate 7: Detailed view of slate surface 110. View to southeast
Plate 8: Showing granite threshold 112. View to southeast
Plate 9: General working view of groundworks for new link. View to south
Plate 10: Showing stone drain F113. View to southwest
Plate 11: Possible ditch F107. View to southeast
Plate 12: Possible ditch F104. View to southwest

Summary

Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken by AC archaeology between October 2016 and May 2017 on land at Castle House, Lydford, Devon (NGR SX 51004 84819). Work comprised of monitoring groundworks associated with the conversion of an outbuilding. This included ground reduction inside the outbuilding, footings to link the existing house to the outbuilding and associated drainage.

The outbuilding comprised a probable former store or shippon of 18th to 19th century date. Work within the outbuilding exposed previous floor surfaces. These consisted of stone cobbles at one end and a slate linking two opposing entrances at the other. Groundworks for the new link exposed a stone drain to the rear of Castle House, while two undated possible ditches were recorded during excavations for the soakaway to the rear.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken by AC archaeology between October 2016 and May 2017 on land at Castle House, Lydford, Devon (SX 51004 84819) during groundworks associated with the conversion of an outbuilding, construction of a new link and associated drainage works. The work was required by the Dartmoor National Park Authority as condition 3 of planning permission (reference: 0422/14), as advised by the Dartmoor National Park Archaeologist.
- 1.2 Castle House lies on the southwest side of Lydford, with the Castle Inn public house occupying the adjacent plot and Lydford Castle beyond this (Fig. 1 and Plate 1). The outbuilding, which was subject to the archaeological monitoring and recording, comprised a single storey stone-built structure to the northwest of Castle House. To the southeast of the building lay a yard area occupied by a second outbuilding, while to the rear was a garden plot. The site lies at 223m aOD (above Ordnance Datum), with the underlying solid geology comprising mudstone of the Lydford Formation (www.bgs.ac.uk).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Castle House lies within the Saxon burh of Lydford, established, possibly on the site of an earlier post-Roman settlement, during the reign of Alfred the Great as a defensive position providing a barrier against Danish raiders during the late 9th century AD (Dartmoor National Park Authority Historic Environment Record ref. MDV14321). It subsequently became a successful settlement with a mint in operation until 1066. After this date, the Norman Castle, 50m to the southwest of the site, was constructed with its associated bailey (MDV14312). The adjacent Castle Inn public house, formerly the White Horse Inn, probably dates to the 16th to 17th century, although has been largely altered during the 19th century.
- 2.2 The 1846 Lydford parish tithe map depicts Castle House with the outbuilding also shown but potentially larger than the current arrangement. The other outbuilding within the yard to the south is also shown. The First Edition 6-inch Ordnance Survey map of 1883 depicts the arrangement of buildings at Castle House as they are now existing.

3. AIMS

- 3.1** The aim of the archaeological monitoring and recording was to preserve by record any archaeological features or deposits exposed during the groundworks associated with the scheme. This was with particular reference for the potential for medieval remains to be present on the site.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1** All groundworks were undertaken using a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket and working under constant archaeological supervision. Where archaeological features and deposits were exposed they were cleaned, examined and recorded. Where archaeological features were to be removed by the development they were hand excavated and recorded by photographs, drawings and written records.
- 4.2** 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 and 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

5.1 Introduction (Plan Fig. 2a)

Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken within and on the northwest side of the outbuilding, within the footprint of the new link and for soakaway drainage to the front and rear. The results from these are described below. Natural subsoil (context 101) consisted of a light brownish-yellow silty-clay with abundant small to large sub-angular mudstone inclusions.

5.2 Outbuilding (Plan Fig. 2a; Plates 2-8)

The interior of the outbuilding measured approximately 8.5m in length and 4.2m wide. Removal of an existing concrete surface exposed earlier floor surfaces. These consisted of a cobble surface in the northeast portion and a slightly elevated random slab slate to the southwest (110), which were separated by granite kerb stones (109). This kerbing consisted of two granite blocks measuring 0.1m wide. Separately, they measured 2.40m and 1.30m in length. The surfaces were set into a mid grey silty-sand bedding layer. No finds were recovered.

An area excavated on the northwest side of the outbuilding around an existing doorway exposed a threshold (112). This measured 1.10m long, 0.5m wide and was comprised of two granite blocks.

5.3 Link Extension Strip (Plan Fig. 2a; Plates 9-10)

Natural subsoil (101) was exposed in the area for the new link at a depth of 0.12m below existing levels. The excavations exposed a stone drain (F113) that extended along the rear wall of Castle House. It measured 0.5m wide, 0.34m deep and was constructed from c.0.2m long granite vertically placed blocks, capped with slate slabs of up to 0.35m long (S111). Drain trench F113 was backfilled with a dark brownish-grey silty-loam (115) and the drain was silted up with a mid brownish-grey silty-loam (116). No finds were recovered.

5.4 Rear soakaway (Plan Fig. 2a and sections Figs 2b-c; Plates 11-12)

Groundworks for the soakaway to the rear of the outbuilding consisted of the excavation of a pit measuring 1.5m square that was connected to the outbuilding by a 0.25m wide trench. Possible ditches were exposed within the connecting trench (F104) and soakaway pit (F107). These were overlain by an approximately 0.2m thick garden soil (100).

Possible ditch F104 was aligned northeast to southwest. It measured 0.62m wide and 0.36m deep with steeply-sloping sides and a concave base. The possible ditch contained a dark brown silty-clay fill (103) with rare charcoal fleck inclusions. No finds were recovered.

Possible ditch F107 was aligned northwest to southeast and measured 0.88m wide and 0.3m deep. It had steeply-sloping sides and a concave base. The possible ditch contained a dark brown silty-clay fill (108) with occasional charcoal fleck inclusions. No finds were recovered.

5.5 Front soakaway (Plan Fig. 1)

A soakaway pit measuring 1.7m square was excavated in the front yard. Natural subsoil was exposed at a depth of 0.27m below existing levels. It was overlain by a dark grey silty-loam with abundant gravels. This deposit contained 19th to 20th century ceramics, glass and plastics (not retained).

6. COMMENTS

6.1 The monitoring of groundworks during the conversion of the outbuilding, which was of probable 18th to early 19th century date, exposed surfaces beneath an existing concrete floor. These show that the internal area was subdivided by granite kerb 111. The area to the northeast of this, which was covered with slate flooring 110, was more level and slightly elevated above cobbles 108 to the southwest. Its position between two opposing doors, the rear of which had associated granite threshold 112, suggests that it represented a walkway through the building linking the yard to the southeast with the plot to the rear. The remaining area of the outbuilding covered by the cobbled surface may have functioned as a store or possible shippon (animal shed). Indeed, evidence for a blocked ventilation slit present on the front elevation is consistent with this interpretation (see Plate 2). It also suggests that the window openings were a later addition. No evidence for the building having been previously larger, as suggested on the 1846 parish tithe map, was exposed.

6.2 The stone drain (F113), which was exposed to the rear of Castle House, was of probable 19th century date and clearly associated with the existing house.

6.3 The two possible ditches exposed to the rear of the outbuilding were undated. Based on their dimensions, they may have represented simple plot divisions or drains. No boundaries in these locations are depicted on the Lydford parish tithe map or the Ordnance Survey editions. Their alignments, which respect those established by the Saxon village and subsequently maintained, therefore have the potential to have represent earlier origins than the existing Castle House property..

7. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

7.1 The results of the fieldwork will be held by the Historic Environment Record in the form of the final report and the creation of an OASIS entry and uploading of the report. The paper and digital archive will be discarded.

7.2 An online OASIS entry has been completed, using the unique identifier **234042**, which includes a digital copy of this report.

8. REFERENCES

British Geological Survey Online Viewer, www.bgs.ac.uk.

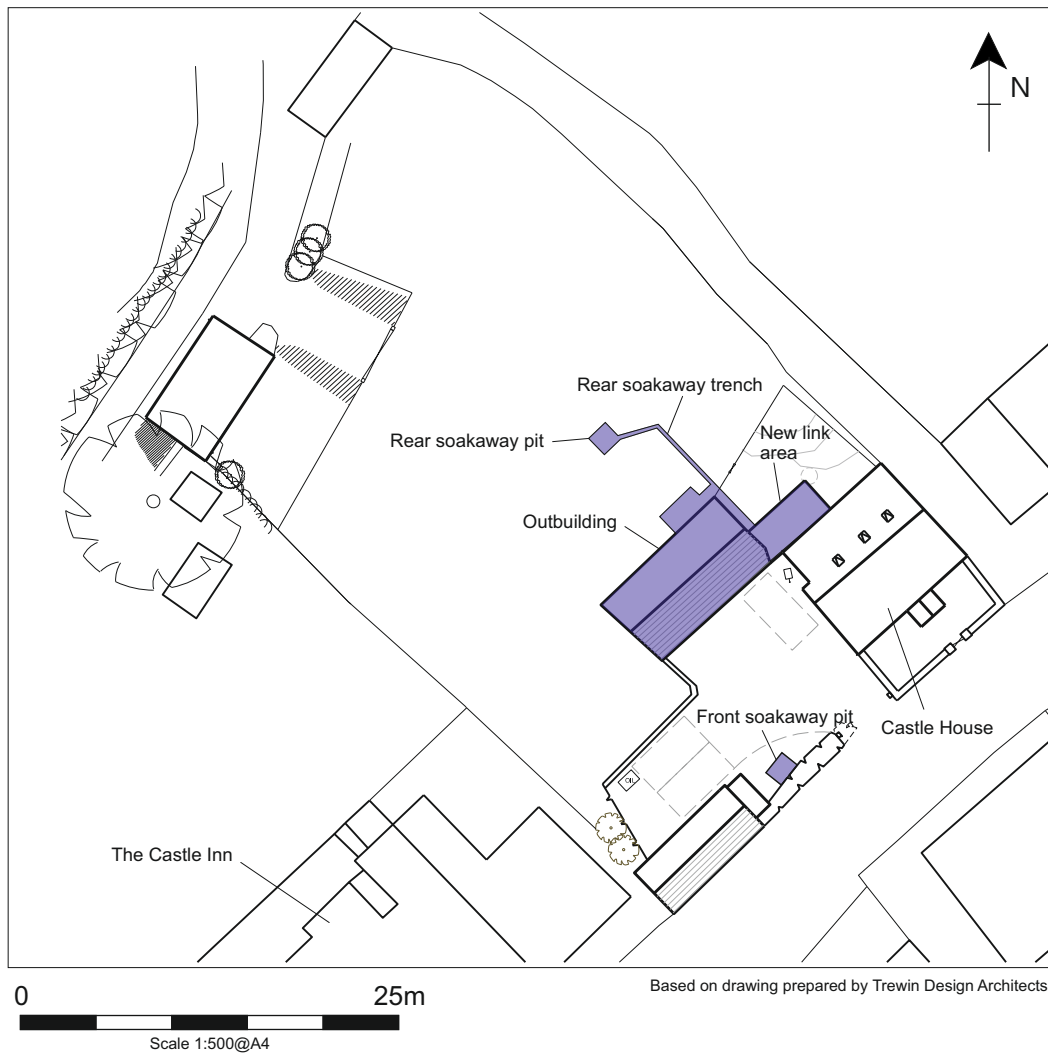
DRO, Lydford Parish Tithe Map 1846

Ordnance Survey 6-inch Devonshire map 88SW, surveyed 1883, published 1883,

Hughes. S., 2015. *Land at Castle House, Lydford, Devon: Project Design for archaeological monitoring and recording*. Unpublished AC archaeology document, ref. ACD1284/1/0



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Based on drawing prepared by Trewin Design Architects

PROJECT

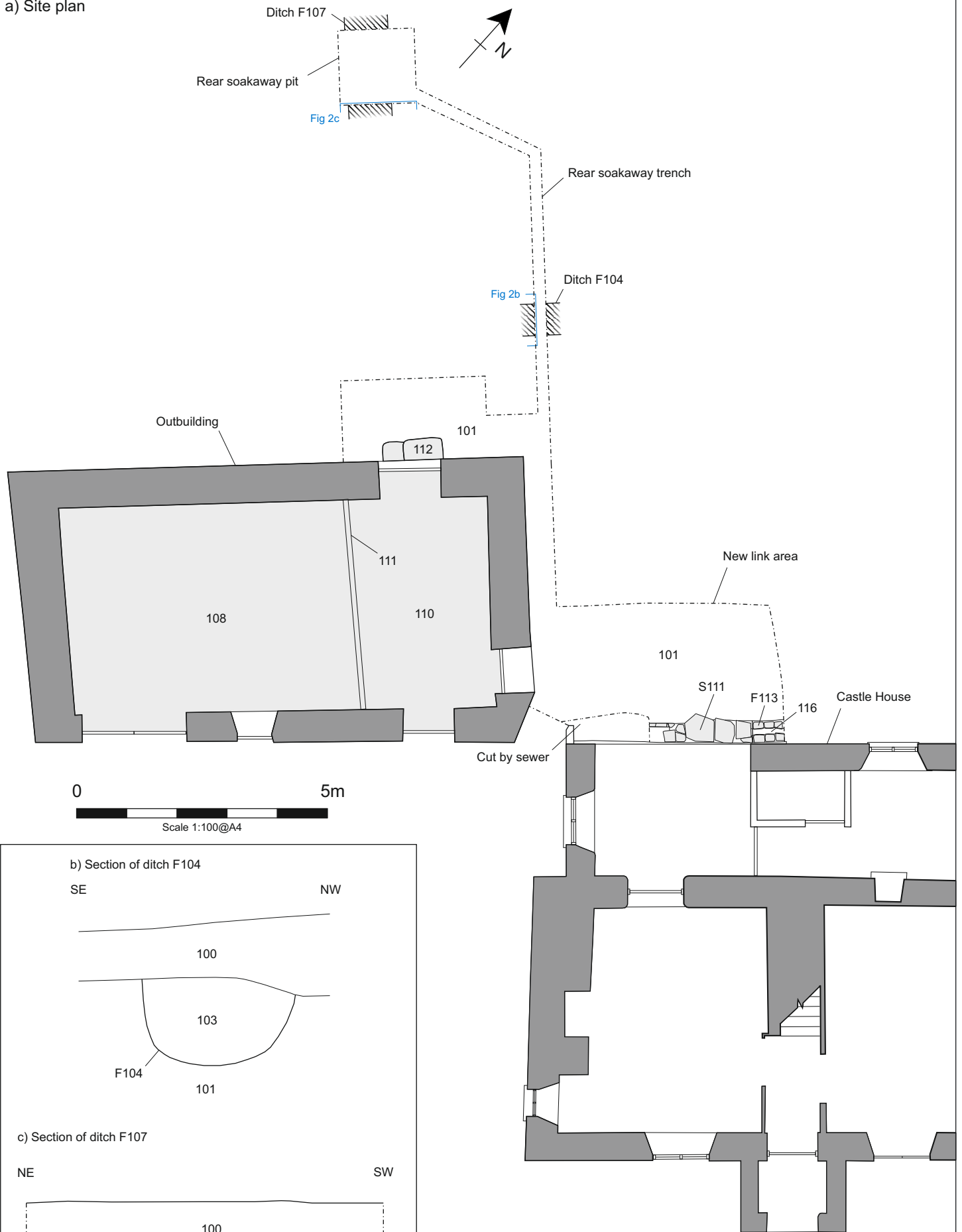
Land at Castle House, Lydford, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 1: Location of site with monitored area shown



a) Site plan



PROJECT

Land at Castle House, Lydford, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 2: Site plan and sections



Plate 1: General view of Castle House. Looking north



Plate 2: Showing front elevation of outbuilding. View to northwest



Plate 3: Showing rear elevation of outbuilding. View to southeast



Plate 4: Showing interior of outbuilding with cobble surface 108 and slate surface 110 visible. View to northeast (scales 2 x 1m)



Plate 5: Showing interior of outbuilding with cobble surface 108 and granite kerb 111 exposed. View to southwest (scales 2 x 1m)



Plate 6: Detailed view of cobble surface 108. Looking northwest (scale 1m)



Plate 7: Detailed view of slate surface 110. View to southeast (scale 1m)



Plate 8: Showing granite threshold 112.
View to southeast (scale 1m)



Plate 9: General working view of
groundworks for new link. View to south



Plate 10: Showing stone drain F113.
View to southwest (scale 0.5m)



Plate 11: Possible ditch F104. View to southwest (scale 1m)



Plate 12: Possible ditch F107. View to southeast (scale 1m)

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