

LAND AT WOODBURY COTTAGE, WOODBURY LANE,
AXMINSTER, DEVON

NGR SY 2959 9754

Results of an archaeological watching brief

East Devon District Council planning reference
11/1848/FUL, condition 3

Prepared by
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On behalf of
Mr Roger Gallagher

Document No: ACD1162/2/0

Date: January 2016



AC archaeology

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Axminster	National Grid Reference SY 2959 9754	Number: (Leave blank for HES to fill in)
Subject: Land at Woodbury Cottage, Woodbury Lane, Axminster, Devon		Photo attached? Y
Planning Application no: 13?2590/COU	Recipient museum: N/A	
OASIS ID: 235956	Museum Accession no: N/A	
Contractor's reference number/code: ACD1162	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 29 July 2015	
<p>Description of works</p> <p>Introduction (Fig. 1) This document presents the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken during groundworks associated with the formation of access on land at Woodbury Cottage, Woodbury Lane, Axminster, Devon (SY 2959 9754). The work was required under condition (3) of planning consent granted by East Devon District Council, following consultation with the Devon Council Historic Environment Team. The work was commissioned by the site owner Mr Roger Gallagher.</p> <p>The site occupies a small plot of land at on the east side of Woodbury Cross, adjoining Woodbury Lane and Wyke Road. The site currently comprises the garden to the cottage and is generally level at around 59m above Ordnance Datum, with the underlying solid geology comprising Mudstone of the Blue Anchor Formation (British Geological Survey Online Viewer)</p> <p>Archaeological background The main archaeological interest in the site is its proximity (immediately adjoining and to the northwest) to the Roman fort and later Romano-British settlement at Woodbury Farm (Fig. 1), which is designated as a Scheduled Monument (ref. 22301), and the Dorchester to Exeter Roman road, which is represented by Woodbury Lane. The Scheduling of the Roman fort includes the following description:</p> <p><i>This monument includes a Roman fort with a second century and later settlement overlying it and extending westwards and an associated stretch of the Fosse Way. The fort... survives as a square area defined by a ditch up to 18m wide and 1.6m deep... The interior of the fort measures 144m northeast to southwest by 132m northwest to southeast, giving an area of 1.9ha. Excavations carried out in the northeast corner of the fort in 1981 revealed a number of early Roman features including a pond which had been deliberately backfilled in places with large quantities of rubbish including much third and fourth century Roman pottery. Evidence for the later settlement, which grew up beside the Dorchester to Exeter road, was identified initially through aerial photographs. During 1984, for example, photographs revealed a substantial stone building which has since been interpreted as a mansion. Traces of other associated buildings were also noted in the north western part of the fort... An early Roman ploughsoil 0.2m deep was overlain by a later Roman level up to 0.4m thick which sealed a variety of Roman features including pits, two roads and boundary ditches... A further pipeline trench excavated in July 1992 in the area of the northern ditch of the fort and extending in a south westerly direction across the field west of the fort, confirmed the presence of Roman features, including a road and buried soils within 50m of the fort. In 1993 and 1994, two programmes of geophysical work within the fort and the field to the west further demonstrated the presence of archaeological remains... In the later Roman period the settlement would have ranked as a small town lying at the junction of the two most important roads in the region. The site is thought to be the town of Moridunum which is listed in late Roman itineraries. The site was abandoned by the end of the fourth century and later reverted to cultivation.</i></p> <p>Aim The aim of the watching brief was to preserve by record any archaeological features or deposits exposed during groundworks associated with the scheme. This was with particular reference to the potential for remains associated with the Roman fort and later civil settlement.</p> <p>Methodology An archaeologist was present during all (relevant) groundworks. All groundworks were carried out using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket.</p>		

Results (Fig. 2; Plates 1-6)

A breach was opened in the hedgebank to create an access for the new driveway, the area which was reduced in level (Fig. 2a). The level in the garden is higher than that in Woodbury lane to the north; therefore the new driveway slopes down towards the road, with approximately 0.80m of ground reduction next to the road with approximately 0.50m of ground reduction in the garden.

The deposit sequence in the garden consisted of 0.34m of medium grey-brown sandy-loam topsoil (100), overlying a medium red-brown sandy-silt subsoil (101). Where the ground reduction was greater nearer to the road, the light yellow-brown sandy-clay natural (102) was exposed beneath the subsoil at a depth of 0.64m.

The hedgebank was formed from two deposits (Fig. 2b) – a light grey-yellow sandy-clay redeposited natural (105) that formed the small core of the hedgebank, which was overlaid with a medium grey-yellow sandy-loam layer (106) that forms the bulk of the boundary. On the south side of the hedgebank was a shallow ditch (F103), which measured 0.40m deep, was cut into the subsoil (101), and contained a medium grey-brown sandy-loam fill (104), with inclusions of modern brick and industrially-produced china (not retained).

Summary

The only archaeological feature within the site was the hedgebank forming the boundary along Woodbury Lane. The character of the boundary was historic, and there was no evidence of any underlying Roman boundary or ditch/es adjacent to Woodbury Lane. The former ditch within the plot that was associated with the boundary is of later post-medieval date and was infilled during the 20th century. No other archaeological features were exposed, and the soil sequence was typical of historic agricultural use.

This report and the associated OASIS entry represent the archive for the project.

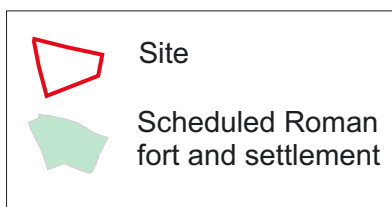
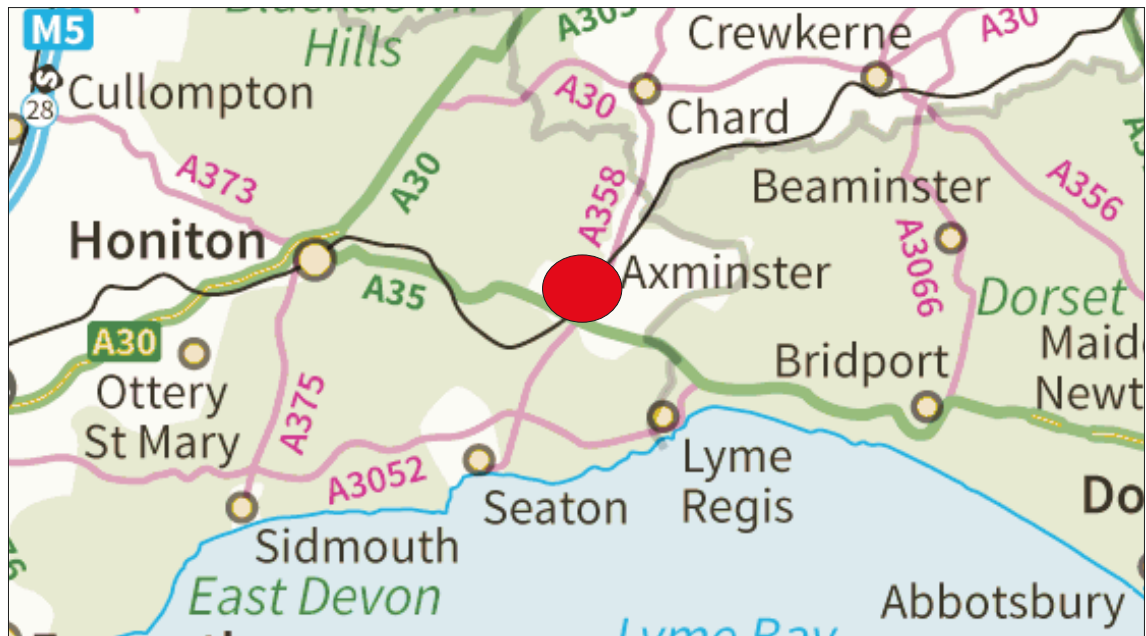
A plan as well as any other relevant drawings must be attached showing the location and extent of site, areas investigated and features exposed.

Recorder:

Stella De-Villiers, AC archaeology

Date sent to HER:

4 January 2016



0 100m
Scale 1:3500@A4

PROJECT

Land at Woodbury Cottage, Woodbury Lane, Axminster, Devon

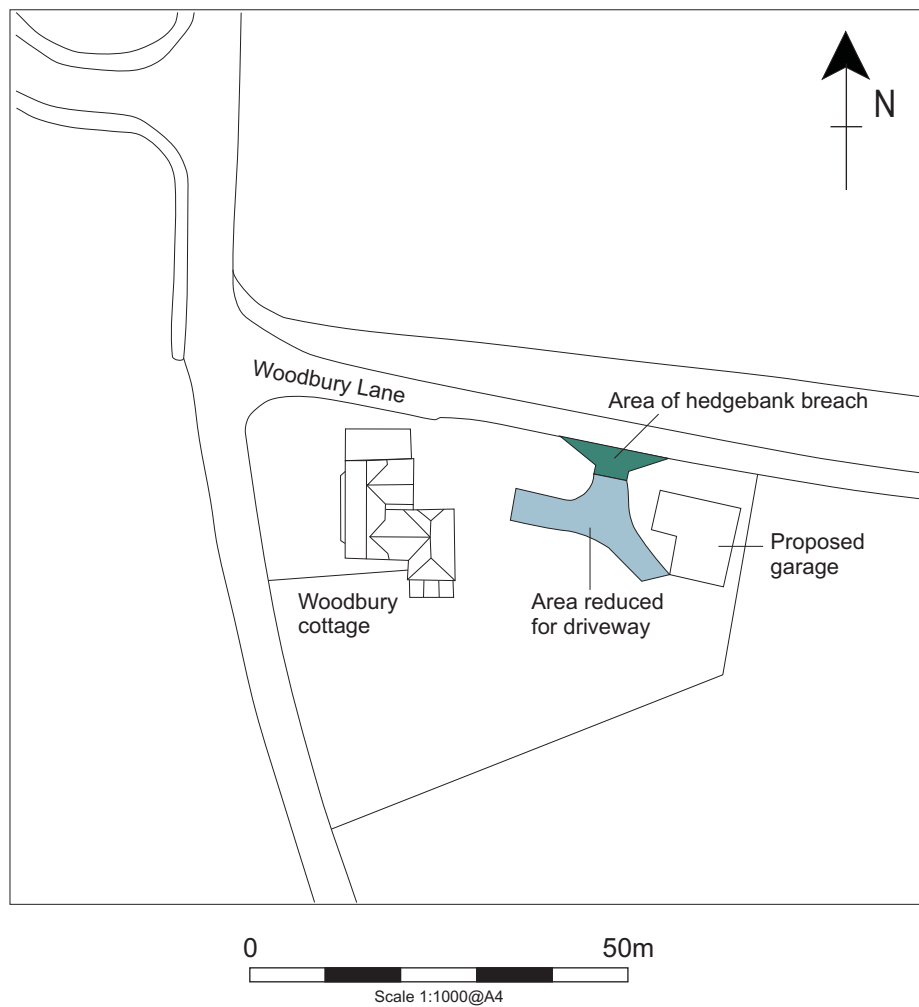
TITLE

Fig.1: Location of site in relation to the Scheduled Roman fort and later civil settlement

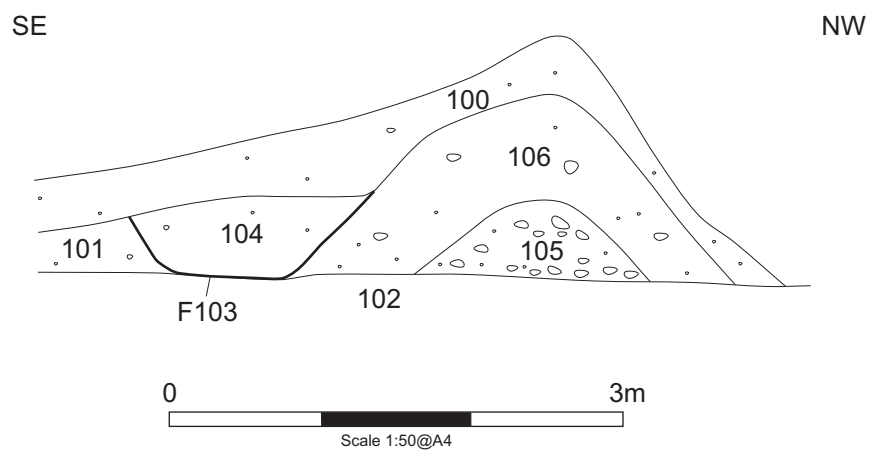


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a) Plan showing areas monitored



b) Section through hedgebank breach



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Land at Woodbury Cottage, Woodbury Lane,
Axminster, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 2: Plan showing areas
monitored and section through
the hedgebank



Plate 1: Area prior to hedgebank breach, looking north



Plate 2: Area to be reduced for driveway, looking towards Woodbury Cottage



Plate 3: Area to be reduced for driveway, looking west



Plate 4: Area of driveway during ground reduction, looking northeast



Plate 5: Section through hedgebank breach, looking southwest



Plate 6: View of driveway and hedge bank breach after work completed, looking northwest

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