

OLD BAKEHOUSE, 36A FORE STREET, TOPSHAM, EXETER

(NGR SX 96610 87952)

Results of archaeological monitoring and recording

Exeter City Council planning references 16/0196/03 and
16/0197/07

Prepared by:
Chirs Blatchford
and Stella De-Villiers

On behalf of:
TFQ Architects

Document No: ACD1370/2/0

Date: July 2016



AC archaeology

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Exeter	National Grid Reference SX 96610 87952	Number:
Subject: Old Bakehouse, 36A Fore Street, Topsham, Exeter: Results of archaeological monitoring and recording		Photo attached? Yes
Planning Application and Listed Building Consent nos: Exeter City Council 16/0196/03 and 16/0197/07	Recipient museum: N/A	
OASIS ID: 255306	Museum Accession no: N/A	
Contractor's reference number/code: ACD1370	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 22nd April and 16th May 2016	
<p><i>Introduction</i></p> <p>Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken by AC archaeology prior to and during groundworks associated with the alterations to the Old Bakehouse, 36A Fore Street, Topsham, Exeter (Fig. 1). The property is a Grade II Listed Building of Special Architectural or Historic Interest (National Heritage List number 1333392), and is located within the Topsham Conservation Area. The archaeological investigations were required under the grant of Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent for "part demolition, extension and refurbishment of dwelling". Guidance on the scope of the investigations was provided by the Exeter City Council Principal Project Manager (Heritage) as part of his consultation response to the applications.</p> <p>The programme of work was carried out by AC archaeology and was commissioned by TFQ Architects on behalf of Mr and Mrs Player.</p> <p>The property is located on the north side of Fore street, situated at a height of approximately 5m aOD, within the historic core of Topsham. The underlying geology is Permian sandstone of the Dawlish Sandstone Formation overlaid by Quaternary fourth river terrace deposits of sand and gravel (British Geological Survey website).</p> <p><i>Historical background</i></p> <p>No. 36A is located behind no. 36 and forms the rear of the building, along with an historic three storey extension and a further long single storey barn that had been converted into accommodation, both of which had been constructed by the late 19th century. On the north side of this barn is an additional late 20th century extension. The interior of this barn contained reused timbers.</p> <p><i>Aims of the work</i></p> <p>The aims of the work were twofold. Firstly, to prepare a record of the walls of the rear barn before works commenced. The scheme involved both new openings within this masonry (in particular the northeast elevation), and covering over of their interior elevations. Secondly, to monitor and record any groundworks that had the potential to expose and/or remove buried archaeological remains, and to excavate and record any such remains where they occurred above the planned formation or invert levels.</p> <p><i>Results (Fig. 2)</i></p> <p>The southeast and northeast walls of the rear barn were recorded (Plates 1 and 2), these being the only elements to potentially contain any historic masonry. The lower part of the southeast wall, to a height of 1.70m, is constructed in a mixture of breccia stone blocks (ranging in size from 0.30m by 0.20m to 0.60m by 0.30m), local white sandstone blocks (measuring 0.10m by 0.20m to 0.60m by 0.40m), and small cobbles, all laid in rough courses bonded with lime mortar with patches of repair in cement mortar. At the northeast end of the elevation there is an area of rebuilding that has been executed in only limestone blocks, each measuring up to 0.20m by 0.30m; this may represent a lengthening of the barn or infilling of a doorway, since the adjacent earlier blocks appear to form jambs</p>		

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

of a former opening (Plate 3). The upper part of the wall is constructed of brickwork to heights of four and six courses in a mixture of stretcher and English bond. The wall has then been heightened by 0.80m with additional brickwork which is laid in an irregular bond. It is not as thick as the brickwork below and is set back from the inner face of the wall. To the northeast there is a projecting pillar of brickwork with the brickwork to the northeast of this laid in stretcher bond topped with headers.

The northeast wall contains a large bay window and is covered with plaster. A small patch of this was removed and the wall was found to be constructed in blockwork with an inner face of plasterboard. This is a modern wall which has replaced an older gable.

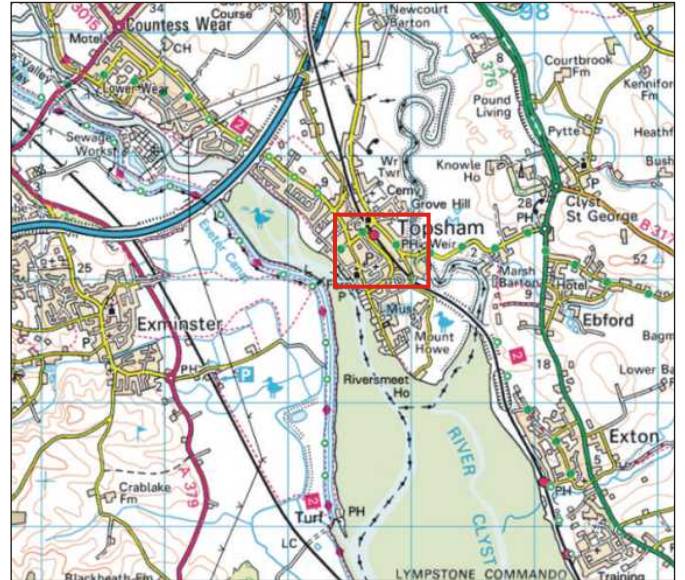
Monitored groundworks comprised the excavation of a new foundation and service trench (Plate 4). It measured 0.6m wide and was excavated to a depth of 0.7m below the adjacent existing concrete raft foundation to the southeast, and to a depth of between 0.93m to 1.2m below the adjacent car park surface to the northwest. This exposed natural subsoil (104) at depths of 0.17m to 0.5m below two existing courses of concrete (100) and hardcore (101) and a cobbled surface (102) situated between 0.16 to 0.3m below ground level in the central part of the trench. The latter overlay a made-up ground deposit consisting of a 0.2m layer of hardcore (103) (Plate 5). The natural (104) comprised a mid brownish-red sandstone with frequent small to medium sub-angular sandstone inclusions and light brownish red sand in fissures of this deposit. No archaeological features, deposits or finds were exposed during the excavation of this trench.

Comments

Despite its location central to the historic settlement of Topsham and close to the foreshore where activities relating to the maritime history of Topsham might be expected, the results of the archaeological works were disappointing in regard to the paucity of finds and for any evidence related to the historical development of this area. The archaeological work has created a record of the historic walls of the rear barn and recorded the profile of a cobbled surface (102) underlying the modern car park surface, but no other archaeological features, deposits or finds were exposed. The cobbled surface would have formerly provided a solid surface for a yard behind no. 36 Fore Street and in front of the barn. The former barn contains no datable features, but is probably of post-medieval date. It has been heightened and extensively repaired, mainly using bricks; the former probably took place during the 20th century.

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

Recorders:	Date sent to HER:
Christopher Blatchford and Stella De-Villiers, AC archaeology	15 July 2016



Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright AC archaeology, Chicklade, Wiltshire. Licence No AL100016452



 Site location

PROJECT

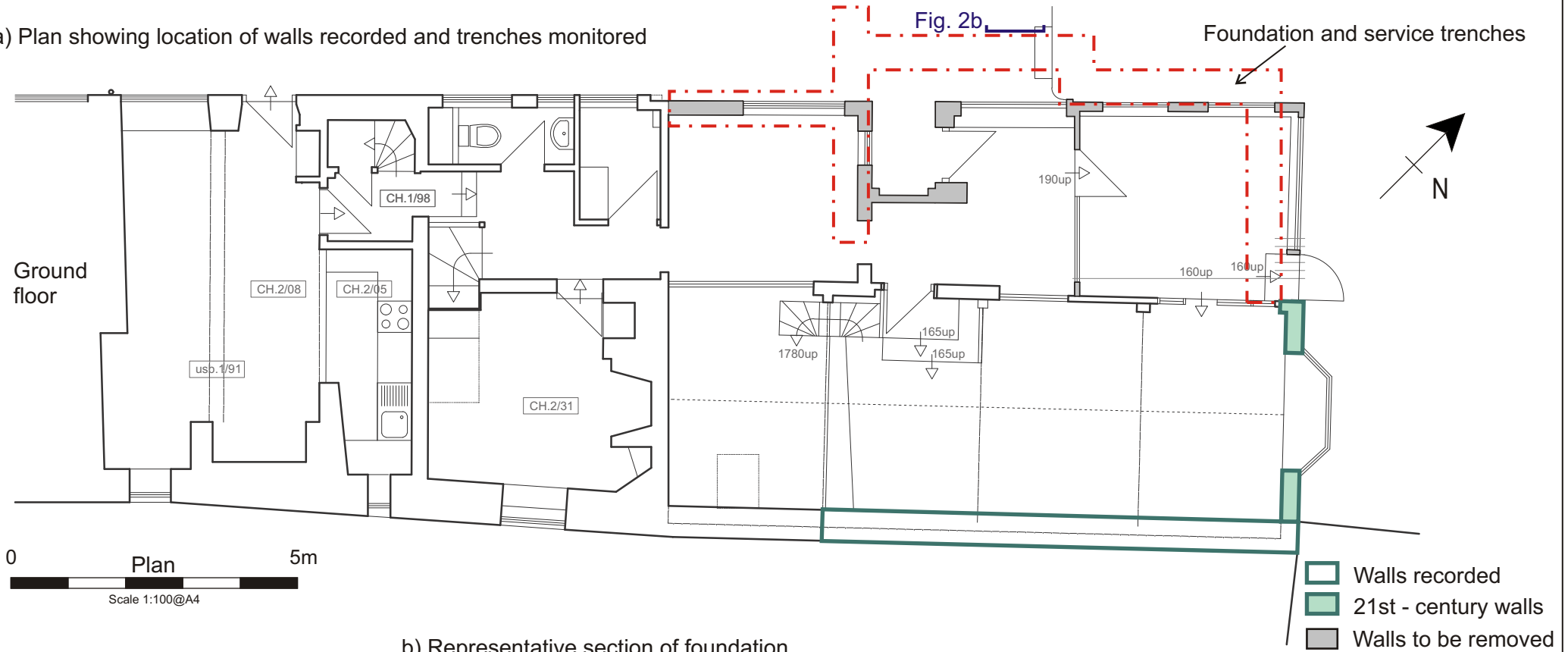
Old Bakehouse, 36a Fore Street, Topsham, Exeter

TITLE

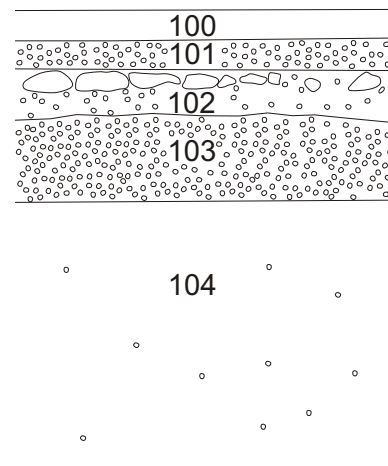
Fig. 1: Site location



a) Plan showing location of walls recorded and trenches monitored



b) Representative section of foundation trench showing cobbled surface (102)



PROJECT
Old Bakehouse, 36a Fore Street,
Topsham, Exeter

TITLE
Fig. 2: Plan of walls recorded
and trenches monitored and
section of trench



archaeology



Plate 1: General view of southeast and part of northeast wall of the rear barn, looking east (1m scale)



Plate 2: General view of southeast wall of the rear barn, looking south (1m scale)



Plate 3: Southeast wall showing possible opening at east end, looking southeast (1m scale)



Plate 4: General view of foundation and service trenches, looking north



Plate 5: Representative section of foundation trench showing cobbled surface (102), looking northwest (1m scale)

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