

LAND AT TAWBRIDGE FARM, MILLSOME LANE, WEMBWORTHY, DEVON

(NGR SS 6700 0585)

Results of archaeological monitoring and recording

Mid Devon District Council planning reference
17/00513/FULL (condition 3)

Prepared by:
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With a contribution from:
Charlotte Coles

On behalf of:
Mr and Mrs Dennis

Report No: ACD1642/2/0

Date: September 2017



archaeology

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Client	Mr and Mrs Dennis
Report Number	ACD1642/2/0
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Report Author	Paul Cooke
Contributions	Charlotte Coles
Checked by	Paul Rainbird
Approved by	Simon Hughes

Acknowledgements

The evaluation was commissioned by the owners, Mr and Mrs Dennis and co-ordinated for AC archaeology by Simon Hughes. The site works were carried out by Paul Cooke, with the illustrations for this report prepared by Sarnia Blackmore. The advice of Stephen Reed, Devon County Council Historic Environment team, is gratefully acknowledged.

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.

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Summary

Archaeological monitoring and recording on land at Tawbridge Farm, Millsome Lane, Wembworthy, Devon (SS 6700 0585) was undertaken by AC archaeology during June 2017. The work comprised the monitoring of groundworks associated with the construction of a new agricultural building. The site lies 300m east of Milsome Castle, a motte-and-bailey type castle potentially dating to the mid-12th century.

A total of three ditches were exposed. These were dated to the medieval period and were considered to represent ditch boundaries to former plots. A small assemblage of medieval pottery and a residual prehistoric worked flint were recovered from the ditches. The date of the pottery was broadly consistent with the known medieval occupation of the area.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report sets out the results of archaeological monitoring and recording associated with the construction of a new agricultural building on land at Tawbridge Farm, Millsome Lane, Wembworthy, Devon (SS 6700 0585). The work was required as condition 3 of planning permission (reference 17/00513/FULL) granted by Mid Devon District Council, following consultation with the Devon County Council Historic Environment Team.
- 1.2 The works were commissioned by the owners, Mr and Mrs Dennis and were undertaken by AC archaeology during June 2017.
- 1.3 The site lies some 4km to the south of Wembworthy on land close to the River Taw and to the south of Millsome Lane; a farm track that links the B3220 at Taw Bridge with a group of barns and yard (Fig. 1). The area covered by the new agricultural building comprises part of a wider pasture plot situated at 112m aOD (above Ordnance Datum) on ground that slopes down towards to the River Taw to the northwest. Its underlying solid geology comprises mudstone and siltstone of the Bude Formation (British Geological Survey Online Viewer).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The principal archaeological interest in the site is its close proximity to Millsome Castle (National Heritage List for England ref. 1016227), which lies 300m to the west of the site on elevated ground above the River Taw. Comprising a motte-and-bailey type castle, it is thought to date from the mid-12th century. The Historic England listing describes the monument as follows:

The monument includes a medieval motte on a natural rise above the valley of the River Taw, and has commanding views over the surrounding countryside. The monument survives as an oval mound which measures 49m from north to south and 43m from east to west at its base, and is 9m high. To the north there is a section of ditch which measures 15m wide and up to 3m deep. This peters out to the south at both the western and eastern sides of the mound where it is preserved as a buried feature.

- 2.2 The 1839 Coldridge parish tithe map depicts a small hamlet named 'Milson' in the position of the barns and yard adjacent to the site. The plot in which the site is located is shown as having been formed of three plots, with the position of the proposed new agricultural store as within a small rectangular plot (695). This is named in the

accompanying apportionment as 'Orchard'. This arrangement is unchanged on the First and Second-Edition 25-inch Ordnance Survey Maps of 1887 and 1904.

3. AIMS

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

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1** The monitoring and recording was carried out in accordance with a project design prepared by AC archaeology (Hughes 2017) and with reference to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (2014). It comprised the bulk reduction of the footprint of the new agricultural building, an area that measured 55m by 20m, using a machine fitted with a toothless grading bucket. Stripping of soils was carried out under the control and direction of the site archaeologist and ceased at the level at which archaeological deposits or natural subsoil was exposed.
- 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.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Introduction (Plan Fig. 1; Plate 1)

Natural subsoil (context 110) consisted of a mixed mid red to mid brownish-red clay to clay-loam with areas of weathered slate exposed. It was present at a depth of between 0.5m and 0.80m below existing levels, with the greatest-depth present in the southwest corner of site. The natural subsoil was overlain by a 0.23m thick mid reddish-brown loamy-sand buried subsoil (102). This was in turn sealed by agricultural subsoil (101) and topsoil (100). In the western portion of the site the agricultural subsoil blended into an approximately 0.5m thick mid reddish-brown sandy-silt loam (107), which contained common gravels and rubble and rare coke/coal fragment inclusions.

Three ditches were exposed (F104, F108 and F111) that cut through buried subsoil (102).

5.2 Ditch F104 (Section Fig. 2a, Plate 2)

Ditch F104 was exposed in the southeast portion of the area investigated. It was aligned northeast to southwest and measured 0.7m wide and 0.51m deep with moderately-steep sides and a narrow concave base. It contained two fills (105 and 106), which consisted of a mid greyish-brown sandy-silt loam and a mid reddish-brown loamy sand respectively. Two sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from fill 105.

5.3 Ditches F111 and F108 (Sections Fig. 2b-c; Plates 3-4)

Ditch F111 extended approximately northwest to southeast across the site in a kinked alignment. Towards the southeast it was cut by the terminal of ditch F108. Ditch F111 measured 1.1m wide and 0.65m deep with steeply-sloping convex sides and a narrow

flat base. It contained a dumped basal deposit of abundant rubble pieces in a mid brown silty-clay loam matrix (112). This was overlain an accumulation of mid reddish-brown sandy-silt loam (113) with common gravel inclusions. Four sherds of medieval pottery and a residual prehistoric worked flint were recovered from upper fill 113.

Ditch F108 was aligned northeast to southwest. At its northeast extent, where it cut ditch F111, its terminal curved to the southeast. It measured 0.94m wide and 0.53m deep with steeply-sloping sides and a flattish base. The ditch contained a mid brown sandy-silt loam fill (109), which had frequent gravel inclusions. No finds were recovered.

6. FINDS *by Charlotte Coles*

- 6.1** All finds recovered on site during the evaluation have been retained, cleaned and marked where appropriate. They have been quantified according to material type within each context and the assemblage examined to extract information regarding the range, nature and date of artefacts represented. The collection of finds is summarised in Table 1 below and consists of worked flint and medieval pottery.

Table 1- Summary of finds by context (weights in grams)

Context	Context Description	Worked Flint		Medieval Pottery	
		No	Wt	No	Wt
105	Fill of ditch F104			2	4
113	Fill of ditch F111	1	8	4	14
Total		1	8	6	18

6.2 Worked flint

A single piece of worked flint (8g) was recovered from context 113, this is a retouched flake of mottled grey flint.

6.3 Medieval pottery

A total of six sherds of medieval pottery (18g) were recovered from contexts 105 and 113. These comprise; two sherds of upper greensand derived pottery dating from 950-1350AD from context 105, and four sherds of North Devon medieval coarseware, which dates from 1200AD to the middle of the 15th century, from context 113.

7. COMMENTS

- 7.1** Monitoring at Tawbridge Farm has revealed a small number of medieval ditches. Ditches F104 and F111 have been dated from finds as being of medieval origin. Undated ditch F108, which was demonstrated to be a subsequent addition to ditch F111, was therefore likely to be broadly contemporary. The arrangement of the ditches and the absence of other features suggests that they represented the boundaries to former plots.
- 7.2** Despite the broad range of dates provided by the small assemblage of pottery, they generally correspond to the known medieval occupation of the area, with this probably associated with the adjacent former hamlet 'Milson' and perhaps the nearby Milsome Castle.
- 7.3** The residual retouched flint flake recovered from ditch F111 provides a background indication of prehistoric activity in the vicinity.

8. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

- 8.1 The finds, paper and digital archive is currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ under the unique project code of **ACD1642**. It will be held until the need for any further archaeological work on the site is established and ultimately will be offered to the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter under a temporary reference number, but if they are unable to accept this, then it will be dealt with under their current accession policy.
- 8.2 An online OASIS entry has been completed, using the unique identifier **296921** which includes a digital copy of this report.

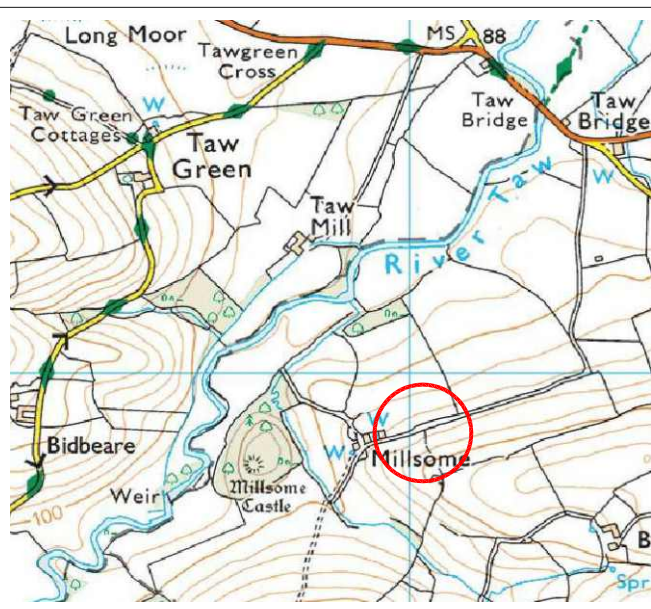
9. REFERENCES

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

DRO, Coldridge parish tithe map, 1841 and apportionment 1844

Hughes, S., 2017, *Land at Tawbridge Farm, Millsome Lane, Wembworthy, Devon: Project design for archaeological monitoring and recording*. Unpublished AC archaeology document ref. ACD1642/1/0

Ordnance Survey 25-inch Devonshire map sheet 53.7, surveyed 1887, published 1889, revised 1904, published 1905



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0 50m
Scale 1:1000@A4

PROJECT

Land at Tawbridge Farm, Wembworthy, Devon

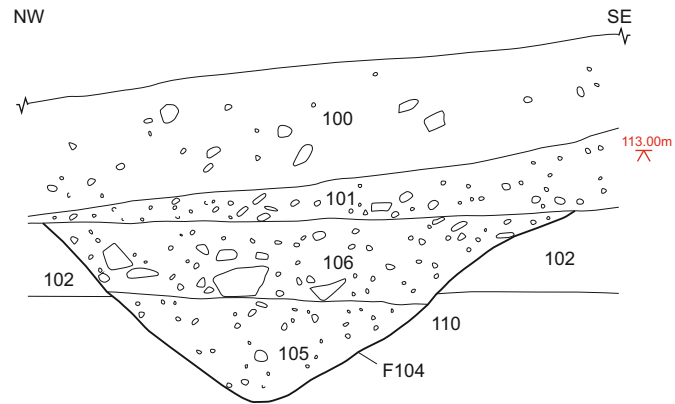
TITLE

Fig. 1: Location of site and plan of archaeological features

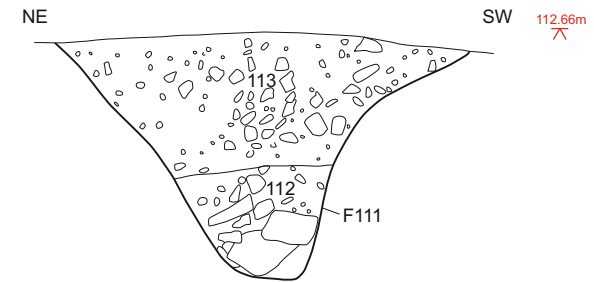


AC archaeology

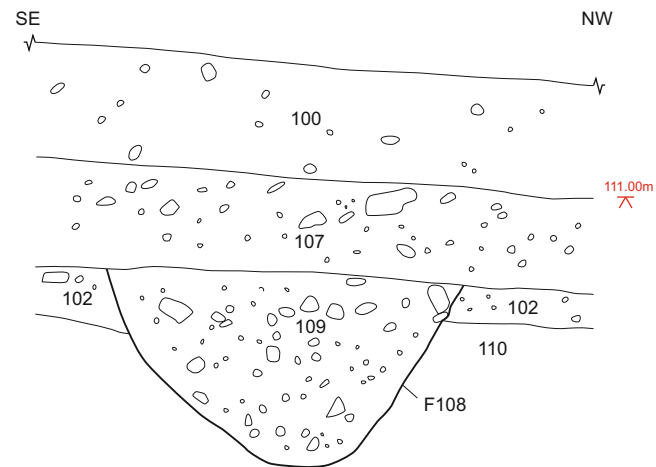
a) Section of ditch F104



b) Section of ditch F111



c) Section of ditch F108



0 1m
Scale 1:20@A4



Plate 1: General view of site looking southwest



Plate 2: Ditch F104, view to northeast (scale 1m)



Plate 3: Ditch F111, view to southeast (scale 1m)



Plate 4: Ditch F108, view to southwest (scale 1m)

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