

THE FORMER BRITISH HEART FOUNDATION, 1 CHEEKE STREET, EXETER

(Centred on NGR SX 92545 93000)

Results of an Archaeological Watching Brief and Trench
Evaluation

Outline Planning Reference: 17/0053/03 Exeter City
Council (condition 6)

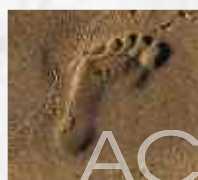
Prepared by:
Paul Rainbird

With a contribution from:
Charlotte Coles

On behalf of:
URBN Construction Ltd

Report No: ACD1619/1/0

Date: October 2017



AC archaeology

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Report Author(s)	Paul Rainbird
Contributions	Charlotte Coles
Checked by	John Valentin
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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.

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief and trench evaluation at the former British Heart Foundation, 1 Cheeke Street, Exeter (NGR SX 92545 93000), was undertaken by AC archaeology between June and September 2017. No archaeological features or deposits were present on the site and it was apparent that the site had been levelled during the post-Second World War redevelopment of the area. A small collection of finds was recovered, comprising medieval and post-medieval pottery and clay tobacco pipe.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** An archaeological watching brief and trench evaluation at the former British Heart Foundation, 1 Cheeke Street, Exeter (NGR SX 92545 93000; Fig. 1), was undertaken by AC archaeology during June and September 2017. The evaluation was commissioned by URBN Construction Ltd and was required by Exeter City Council as a condition (6) of planning consent, as advised by their Principal Project Manager (Heritage). The new development comprises the demolition of the existing building and construction of a 7-storey building, including basement, to provide student accommodation.
- 1.2** The development area covers approximately 0.1 hectares of land previously occupied by a two storey building. It is located on level ground at the corner of Cheeke Street and Bampfylde Street at approximately 47m aOD (above Ordnance Datum). The underlying solid geology for the site is sandstone of the Whipton Formation overlain by river terrace deposits of sand and gravel formed in the Quaternary Period (www.bgs.ac.uk).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The site has been the subject of a historic environment assessment (Armour Chelu 2016). The assessment established that the main archaeological/historical interest to the site was its proximity to Sidwell Street – one of the principal routeways into the city from the Roman period onwards.
- 2.2** The site is in an area of post-Second World War redevelopment having been part of a large area flattened by bombing. The northeast corner of the development area was contaminated by asbestos and was not included within the archaeological works.

3. AIMS – WATCHING BRIEF

- 3.1** The main aim of the archaeological watching brief was to identify areas of archaeological potential within the site. The results of the work were reviewed and used to inform subsequent mitigation by trench evaluation.

4. AIMS – TRENCH EVALUATION

- 4.1** The main aim of the trial trenching was to establish the presence or absence, extent, depth, character and date of any archaeological features, deposits or finds within the site. The results of the work were reviewed when on site with the ECC Principal Project Manager (Heritage) and used to inform subsequent mitigation, which comprised a further phase of watching brief.

4.2 More site specific aims were as follows:

- To clarify the presence/absence, extent, condition, nature, character, date and significance of any archaeological remains encountered;
- To establish if there are any buried remains associated with former buildings on the site as depicted on historic mapping;
- Identify any artefacts relating to the occupation or use of the site; and,
- Provide further information on the archaeology of Exeter.

5. METHODOLOGY – WATCHING BRIEF

5.1 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a project design prepared by Armour Heritage (Farr 2017) and with reference to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (2014).

5.2 The removal by mechanical excavator of the concrete slab forming the base of the demolished building and deeper groundworks were watched by a site archaeologist. Spoilheaps were scanned for displaced artefacts.

5.3 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.

6. METHODOLOGY – TRENCH EVALUATION

6.1 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a project design prepared by Armour Heritage (Farr 2017) and with reference to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2014). It comprised the machine-excavation of six trenches totaling 47m in length and with each 1.8m wide. These were positioned to provide sample coverage of the area.

6.2 The removal of overlying deposits within the trenches was undertaken in a maximum of 0.2m spits under the control and direction of a site archaeologist. Stripping by mechanical excavator ceased at the level at which archaeological deposits or natural geology was exposed. Spoilheaps were scanned for displaced artefacts.

6.3 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.

7. RESULTS – WATCHING BRIEF

7.1 Introduction

Two areas of the site were monitored by archaeological watching brief (see Fig. 1). No archaeological features or deposits were observed.

7.2 Southwest extent of the site (Plate 1)

The first area monitored was in the southwest extent of the site and the removal of the concrete slab of the previous building and reduction of the overburden down to the natural subsoil. The recorded layer sequence comprised a made ground/rubble between 0.12m – 0.25m deep above a buried soil of dark red loamy sand between 0.08m – 0.18m thick. The natural subsoil was composed of mid red clayey sand and was present at depths of between 0.20m and 0.43m below the current ground surface at approximately 47.30m aOD in the northwest to 46.40m aOD in the southeast of the monitored area.

7.3 Basement area (Plate 2)

The second area monitored was the excavation for a basement central to the site and measured 9m by 7m. The layer sequence recorded comprised 0.50m of modern gravel overlying 0.40m of made ground. The natural subsoil was exposed at 0.90m below the current ground surface at 46.10m aOD.

8. RESULTS – TRENCH EVALUATION

8.1 Introduction

None of the trenches contained archaeological features or deposits. The trenches are described below. The natural subsoil was present at a depth of between 0.20m and 1.10m below the current ground surface at 47.52m to 45.50m aOD.

8.2 Trench 1 (Section Fig. 2a)

This trench was located in the northwest corner of the site. It was aligned approximately northeast-southwest and measured 7m long. The overlying layer sequence consisted of 0.22m of made ground composed of demolition rubble (context 100), overlying 0.16m of buried soil (101) composed of dark blackish-red loamy sand. The natural subsoil (103) was therefore present at 0.38m below the ground surface corresponding to 47.52m aOD. At the southwest end of the trench a linear feature (F104) marked the position of the foundation cut for the most recent building on the site. It measured 0.33m wide, continuing beyond the southwest end of the trench, and 0.46m deep, cutting natural subsoil 103. It had a single fill (102) composed of demolition rubble which contained sherds of modern china which were not collected.

8.3 Trench 2 (Section Fig. 2b)

This trench was located to the east of Trench 1. It was aligned approximately northwest-southeast and measured 8m long. The overlying layer sequence consisted of 0.25m of made ground (context 200), above 0.18m of buried soil (201). The natural subsoil (202) was present at 0.43m below the ground surface corresponding to 47.07m aOD.

8.4 Trench 3 (Section Fig. 2c; Plate 3)

This trench was located in the central part of the site. It was aligned approximately northwest-southeast and was 8m long. The overlying layer sequence consisted of 0.12m of made ground (context 300), overlying 0.08m of buried soil (301). The natural subsoil (302) was therefore present at 0.20m below the ground surface corresponding to 46.70m aOD.

8.5 Trench 4 (Section Fig. 2d)

This trench was located in the southeast part of the site and positioned parallel to Bampfylde Street. It was aligned approximately northeast-southwest and was 8m long. The overlying layer sequence consisted of 0.30m of made ground (context 400), above 0.20m of buried soil (401). The natural subsoil (403) was therefore present at 0.50m below the ground surface corresponding to 45.50m aOD. Along the length of the southeast edge of the trench the foundation cut (F404) for the most recent building on the site was exposed. It contained a fill (402) composed of demolition rubble.

8.6 Trench 5

This trench was located in the northeast part of the site. It was aligned approximately northeast-southwest and was 8m long. The overlying layer sequence consisted of 1.10m of made ground (context 500) composed of mixed brick, plastic, slate and glass in a dark reddish brown silt soil. The natural subsoil (501) was present at 1.10m below the ground surface corresponding to 45.90m aOD.

8.7 Trench 6

This trench was located in the central part of the site. It was aligned approximately northwest-southeast and was 8m long. The overlying layer sequence consisted of 0.30m of made ground (context 600), overlying 0.25m of buried soil (601). The natural subsoil (602) was therefore present at 0.55m below the ground surface corresponding to 46.35m aOD. The northwest end of the trench clipped a modern basement and the southeast end disturbed a buried modern steel fuel tank.

9. THE FINDS *by Charlotte Coles*

9.1 Introduction

All finds recovered on site during work 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.

Context	Context Description	Medieval pottery		Post-medieval pottery		Clay tobacco pipe	
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
100	Made ground	1	26	1	165		
200	Made ground			1	22	1	7
300	Made ground					1	18
Total		1	26	2	187	2	25

Table 1: Finds quantification by context (weights in grams)

9.2 Medieval pottery

A single sherd of medieval coarseware in a sandy fabric was recovered from context 100, Trench 1 made ground. The unglazed sherd is from a cooking pot in an unknown fabric dating from the 12th or 13th centuries.

9.3 Post-medieval pottery

Two sherds of post-medieval pottery were recovered from made ground deposits in Trenches 1 and 2. These are a large body sherd of Somerset redware from context 100, dating from the 19th century, while in context 200 a chamber pot rim from a transfer printed vessel dating from the 19th or 20th centuries was recovered.

9.4 Clay tobacco pipe

A single undecorated pipe stem was found from context 200, Trench 2, while a bowl and stem were recovered from context 300 in Trench 3. The bowl is undecorated minus a line of milling around the top and is dated to the last half of the 18th century.

10. COMMENTS

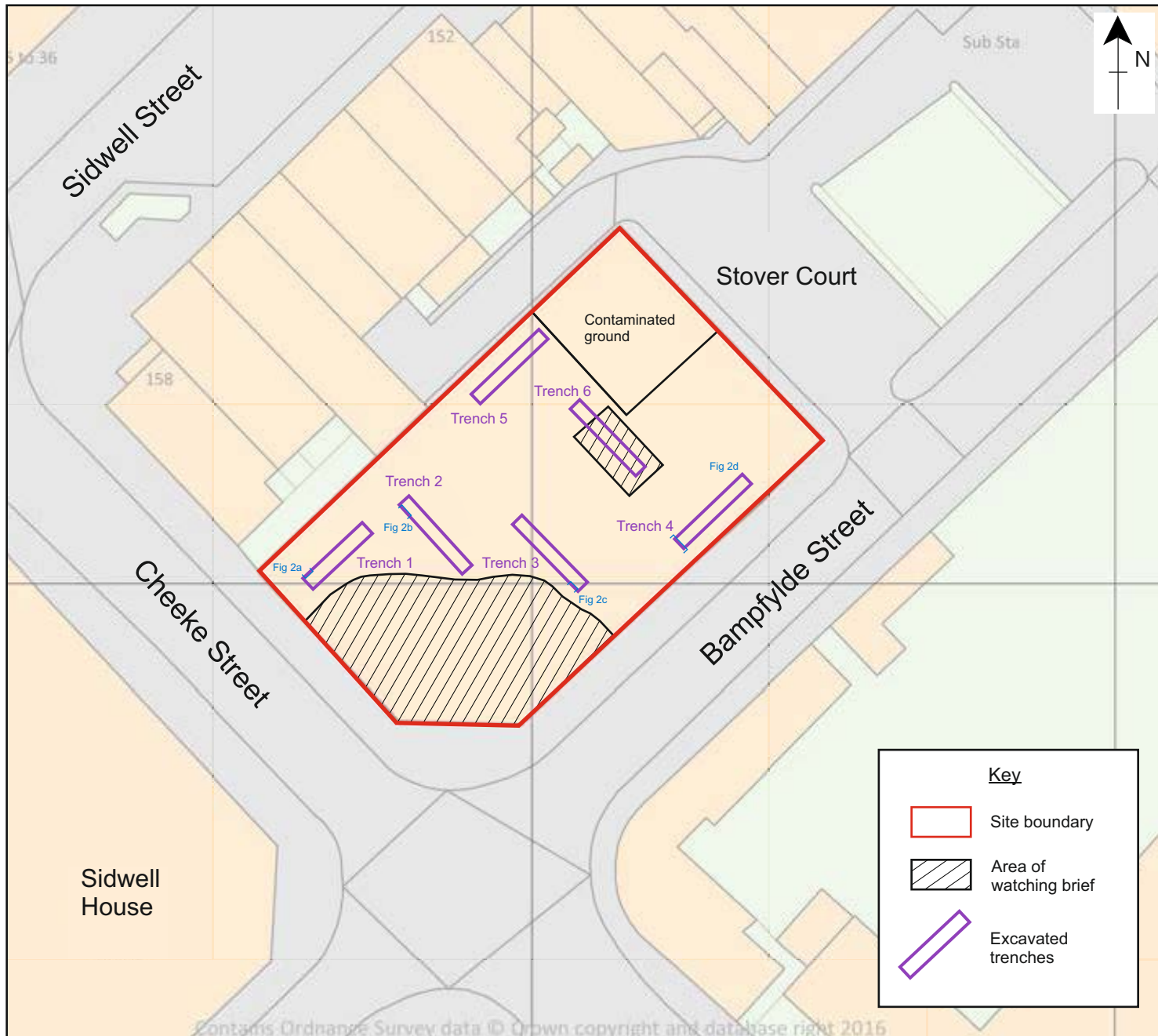
- 10.1** No archaeological features or deposits were present on the site. The principal overlying layers consisted of made ground and a thin deposit of buried soil that was present in the western part of the area. The buried soil was sterile and modern as it covered the foundation cut trench for the most recent building on the site and may have been imported into the site as a levelling layer for the concrete slab. In the eastern half of the site there had been significant deep truncation of the deposits by modern cellars and a buried fuel tank.
- 10.2** A small collection of finds was recovered, comprising medieval and post-medieval pottery and clay tobacco pipe. These were all found in modern made ground deposits. The paucity of the finds and lack of archaeological features or deposits is due to the modern redevelopment of the site.
- 10.3** It is apparent that the site had been levelled during the post-Second World War redevelopment of the site, with no evidence to indicate that pockets of earlier material had survived. However, the negative results from the archaeological works should not be regarded as indicating that this is not a historically important part of the city with its significance derived from close proximity to the main thoroughfare of Sidwell Street.

11. ARCHIVE AND OASIS




- 11.1** 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 **ACD1619**. It will be offered to the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter under the temporary reference number **RAMM: 17/29**, but if they are unable to accept this, then it will be dealt with under their current accession policy.
- 11.2** An online OASIS entry has been completed, using the unique identifier **296969**, which includes a digital copy of this report.

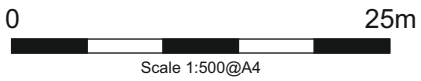
12. REFERENCES

- Armour Chelu, R., 2016, *Bampfylde Street, Exeter: Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment*. Unpublished Armour Heritage rep. no. **AH433/2**.
- BGS, 2017, *British Geological Survey Geology of Britain On-line Viewer* (www.bgs.ac.uk).
- Farr, S., 2017, *British Heart Foundation, 1 Cheeke Street, Exeter. Written Scheme of Investigation: Archaeological Work*. Unpublished Armour Heritage rep. no. **AH499**.



Key

-  Site boundary
-  Area of watching brief
-  Excavated trenches



Based on drawing prepared by AH planning



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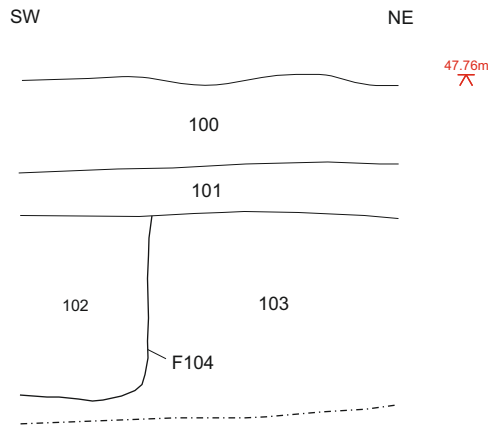


PROJECT
**British Heart Foundation,
 1 Cheeke Street, Exeter**

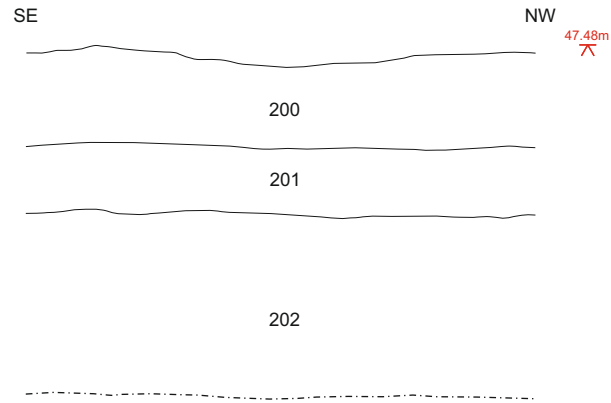
TITLE
**Fig. 1: Location of site, trenches
 and watching brief areas**



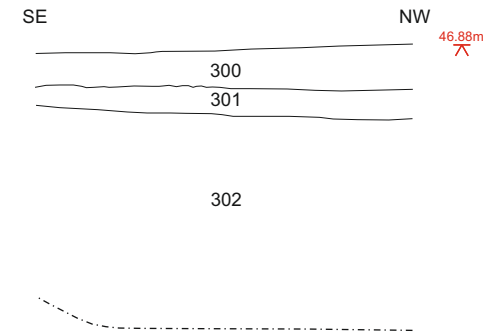
a) Representative section of Trench 1



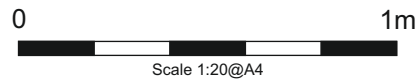
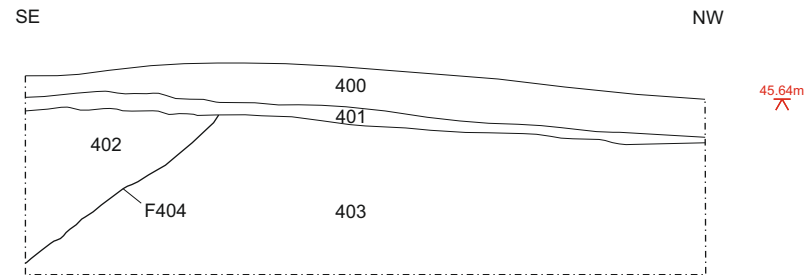
b) Representative section of Trench 2



c) Representative section of Trench 3



d) Representative section of Trench 4



PROJECT

British Heart Foundation,
1 Cheeke Street, Exeter

TITLE

Fig. 2: Representative
trench sections





Plate 1: Watching brief area, southwest extent of the site, work in progress, looking northeast



Plate 2: Watching brief area, basement groundworks, work in progress, looking northwest



Plate 3: Trench 3, work in progress, 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