

HEMYOCK CASTLE, CULMSTOCK ROAD, HEMYOCK, DEVON

(NGR ST 1354 1327)

Results of Archaeological Monitoring and Recording

Scheduled Monument: National Heritage List for England
Reference 1004583

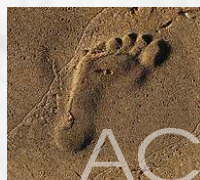
Prepared by:
Simon Hughes and
Kathryn Brook

With contributions from:
Naomi Payne and Charlotte Coles

On behalf of:
Ansa Ltd

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archaeology

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Report Author	Simon Hughes and Kathryn Brook
Contributions	Naomi Payne and Charlotte Coles
Checked by	Paul Rainbird
Approved by	Simon Hughes

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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

Archaeological monitoring and recording at Hemyock Castle, Culmstock Road, Hemyock, Devon (ST 1354 1327) was undertaken by AC archaeology during March 2018. The work comprised the monitoring of groundworks for a replacement water pipe. This linked the Guard Houses with the Manor House, with its route crossing the line of the former curtain wall and moat and into the courtyard of the 14th century castle.

The work exposed archaeological features and deposits relating to the former defences of the castle. This comprised the exposure of the top of the backfilled moat and curtain wall. The curtain wall, which had an existing breach between the Gate House and its northeast corner tower, survived below ground as a rubble core stripped of faced masonry. The wall and moat were overlain and infilled by a series of 19th century levelling deposits. Within the castle courtyard, two phases of probable cobbled surface were revealed adjacent to the Manor House. No dating was recovered from the earlier surface, while the later surface overlay 19th century made ground.

A collection of finds were recovered, most of which were of 18th to 19th century date. A small quantity of pottery dating to the 15th to 16th centuries was also recovered as residual finds amongst the later material.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Archaeological monitoring and recording at Hemyock Castle, Culmstock Road, Hemyock, Devon (ST 1354 1327; *Fig. 1*) was undertaken by AC archaeology during March 2018. The work was required by Historic England as a condition of Scheduled Monument Consent (reference S00188774) for the installation of a new water pipe.
- 1.2 Hemyock Castle is in the centre of the village, bounded by Culmstock Road to the north, with Margaret's Brook separating the site from the parish church of St Mary's to the east (*Fig. 1*). It occupies an approximately rectangular shaped plot of land situated at around 140m aOD (above Ordnance Datum). The route of the new water pipe extended between the Guard Houses and the Manor House, the majority of which was inside the scheduled area of the castle (National Heritage List for England reference 1004583). The underlying solid geology consists of mudstone of the Mercia Mudstone Group beneath a superficial diamicton colluvium (British Geological Survey Online Viewer).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Hemyock Castle dates from the 14th century but may have been the site of an existing 'court' (Devon County Council Historic Environment Record reference MDV1894). The scheduled monument is described by Historic England as:

A quadrangular castle, a strongly fortified residence built of stone around a rectangular courtyard. The castle survives enclosed by curtain walls with circular towers at its corners and at intervals between together with a gatehouse all surrounded by a moat. The towers and curtain walls survive as both partially standing structures and buried features. The surrounding moat is partially water filled surviving elsewhere as a buried feature. Castles such as this are major medieval monument types. Hemyock Castle survives comparatively well and will contain important archaeological and environmental evidence relating to its construction, development, use and landscape context.

Hemyock Castle House, originally the principal manor and later used as a farmhouse is listed at Grade II (1169449). Hemyock Castle Gatehouse and Curtain Walls comprising the remains of the late 14th century structures in addition to earlier similar features are listed at Grade II (1325852).*

- 2.2** The castle was subject to archaeological works comprising a condition survey of the buildings and a series of small excavations in 1989 (Blaylock 1989). Excavations focused principally on exposing the below ground remains of the curtain wall and corner towers of the defences that were largely destroyed during the Civil War. In this variable survival of the footings were present, with much of the fabric having been partially or completely robbed (*ibid*).

3. AIMS

- 3.1** The aim of the monitoring and recording was to preserve by record any archaeological features and to recover artefacts present on the site, which would be destroyed or disturbed by the groundworks. This was with particular reference for the potential for medieval remains associated with the castle to be exposed.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1** The monitoring and recording was undertaken in accordance with a project design prepared by AC archaeology (Hughes 2018) and with reference to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (2014). It comprised the monitoring of machine-excavated trenches for the replacement water pipe linking the Guard Houses with the Manor House. With the exception of the section of new pipe between the Guard Houses and the Gate House, the works were within the scheduled area of the castle (*Fig. 1*).
- 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. 2; Plate 1*)

The trench for the new water pipe measured approximately 0.3m wide and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.5m below existing levels. Its route extended across a concrete surface present between the Guard Houses and the Gate House and through mostly lawn-covered gardens elsewhere.

The natural subsoil, which consisted of a yellow clay with frequent sub-angular gravel and pebble inclusions, was only exposed in the southeast end of the trench adjacent to the Guard Houses at a depth of 0.44m below existing levels. Throughout the gardens, the trench was excavated into a mid-grey silty-loam subsoil (1001), which had degraded mortar fleck and occasional sub angular cobble inclusions. This was sealed by a 0.2m to 0.45m thick dark greyish-brown silty-loam garden topsoil (1000). A total of 20 sherds of post-medieval pottery, two sherds of medieval pottery, six fragments of animal bone, six fragments of 19th to 20th century brick and tile fragments, two pieces of iron working slag, two iron objects and a fragment of modern bottle glass were recovered from the subsoil. Finds from the topsoil comprised 26

sherds of post-medieval pottery, eight fragments of animal bone, 11 fragments of brick and tile including one of 17th to 18th century date and two iron objects.

Archaeological features and deposits corresponding with the position of the former moat (F1011) and curtain wall (S1008) of the castle were exposed, while in the interior of the castle, two cobbled surfaces (1004 and 1006) were present. These are described below.

- 5.2 Moat F1011 and curtain wall S1008** (*Plan Figs 2 and 3a and section 3b; Plates 2-4*)
Between the Guard Houses and Gate House, the trench cut across the position of the former moat (F1011). This measured approximately 4m wide, with its uppermost exposed deposits present immediately below the current concrete surface and comprised of a mid yellowish-red sandy clay (1012) overlain by a dark grey clay (1013). To the southeast, the edge of the moat cut through the natural subsoil and was overlain by a modern levelling layer (1014), while to the northwest, the moat deposits extended over a dark greyish-brown clayey-loam levelling layer (1010). Finds recovered from layer 1010 consisted of 26 sherds of post-medieval pottery, six iron objects and a 19th century brass thimble.

Curtain wall S1008 was partially exposed where the trench crossed between the Gate House and the northeast corner tower of the castle. Here the fabric of the wall protruded through a levelling layer (1005), which represented a probable continuation of deposit 1010. The curtain wall was recorded at a depth of 0.19m below existing levels and measured 1.38m wide. The wall had been robbed of its facing stones, with only its lime mortar bonded rubble core remaining. Finds recovered from overlying levelling layer 1005 consisted of one sherd of medieval pottery, one sherd of post-medieval pottery, a fragment of clay tobacco pipe and a brick fragment.

- 5.3 Cobbled surfaces 1004 and 1006** (*Plan Figs 2 and 3c and section 3d; Plates 5-7*)
Cobbled surfaces 1004 and 1006 were present in the area to the north of the Manor House. Surface 1006 was the earlier of the two and was set on a dark greyish-brown clayey-silt loam possible levelling deposit (1007). The surface, which was comprised of sub-angular cobble stones, was 2m across, 0.16m thick and cambered in profile.

Surface 1006 was sealed by levelling layer 1005, which, as described above, extended across the remains of curtain wall S1008. Levelling layer 1005 was overlain by later surface 1004. Surface 1004 measured 5m across and 0.12m thick. It was comprised of sub-rounded and occasional sub-angular cobbles. It was overlain by a broad demolition layer (1002), comprised of mid greyish-brown clayey-silt loam with frequent medium to large sub-angular stone rubble and occasional mortar fragment inclusions. Amongst the stone rubble were fragments of roughly faced stone. Layer 1002 was sealed by subsoil 1001 and topsoil 1000.

6. THE FINDS *by Naomi Payne and Charlotte Coles*

6.1 Introduction

All finds recovered on site during the monitoring and recording 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.

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

Context	Context Description	Medieval pottery		Post-medieval pottery		Copper alloy		Iron		Slag		Glass		Clay tobacco pipe		CBM		Animal bone	
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
1000	Topsoil			26	269			2	58							11	128	8	309
1001	Subsoil	2	24	20	99			2	38	2	1150	1	2			6	412	6	45
1005	Made ground layer	1	11	1	11									1	5	1	9		
1010	Made ground layer			26	317	1	4	6	608										
1014	Made ground layer							1	14	2	284								
Totals		3	35	73	696	1	4	11	718	4	1434	1	2	1	5	18	549	14	354

6.2 Medieval pottery

Three sherds (35g) of late medieval/early post-medieval pottery were recovered from two contexts (subsoil 1001 and made ground layer 1005). The sherds are from South Somerset vessels dating from c. 1450-1550. They include a jug body/handle sherd from (1001) and body sherds from the same context, and also from layer (1005). These vessels are likely to be Hemyock products (pers. comm. John Allan).

6.3 Post-medieval pottery

73 sherds (696g) of post-medieval pottery were recovered from nine contexts. This material is summarised in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of post-medieval pottery by context

Context	Hemyock	South Somerset	Stoneware	Porcelain	Agate ware	Yellow slipware	Staffs white ware	Transfer print	Shell edge	Flower pot	Forms
1000	3	16		2			3	1		1	2 x rims from SS bowls, one with hammer-headed rim 3 joining sherds from the neck of a jug, 2 joining sherds from the rim of a SS bowl, rim from sgraffito dish
1001		10		1			3	4	1	1	Hand-painted rim sherd from porcelain plate or dish
1005		1									
1010	1	21	1		1	1	1				Agate ware bowl base sherd, several SS slipware/sgraffito sherds including 2 joining sherds with feathered slip
Totals	4	48	1	3	1	1	7	5	1	2	

The majority of the assemblage is composed of South Somerset earthenware. Identifiable vessels include several bowl types and slipware/sgraffito dishes, although most are body or undiagnostic base sherds. There are four sherds from vessels made locally at Hemyock in the early post-medieval period, including three joining sherds from the neck of a jug (cf. nos. 13-16 in Allan, Langman and Dawson 2018, 107). There may be other Hemyock sherds amongst those identified as South Somerset; Hemyock body sherds are difficult to pick out with certainty from the broad category of South Somerset type (*ibid* p. 197). Imported wares include a sherd of Frechen stoneware and a hand-painted rim sherd from an 18th century Chinese porcelain plate or dish. The remainder of the post-medieval pottery comprises industrially-made products of 18th to 19th century date, including agate ware, Bristol/Staffordshire yellow slip ware, Staffordshire white wares, transfer print, shell edge and flower pot.

6.4 Metalwork

One copper alloy item and 11 pieces of iron were recovered from four contexts. A machine-pressed brass thimble was recovered from made ground layer 1010. The thimble dates from the 19th century. The ironwork includes six nails and a sickle blade and tang. The remainder are unidentifiable fragments. All of the iron finds are post-medieval to modern in date.

6.5 Slag

Four pieces (1434g) of undiagnostic iron working slag were recovered from subsoil 1001 and made ground layer 1014. These are likely to be post-medieval to modern in date.

6.6 Glass

A small fragment (2g) of modern bottle glass was recovered from subsoil 1001.

6.7 Clay tobacco pipe

A single fragment of clay tobacco pipe was recovered from made ground layer 1005. This is a stem fragment so it cannot be closely dated.

6.8 CBM

18 pieces (549g) of post-medieval ceramic building material (CBM) were recovered from six contexts. The CBM includes fragments of brick, roof tile, pipe and modern bathroom/kitchen wall tile. The earliest piece is a fragment of ridge tile from topsoil 1000. This has broad low moulded peaks and therefore dates from the 17th or 18th centuries (Blaylock 2004, 208-9).

6.9 Animal bone by Charlotte Coles

A total of 14 pieces (354g) of animal bone were recovered from four contexts. The only identifiable pieces were a cattle ulna from context 1000, a large mammal rib from context 1001, a cattle metatarsal, cattle femur head and cattle second phalanx from context 1000. The cattle femur head is unfused and therefore from an animal under the age of 42 months. The rib and the phalanx both have butchery marks in the form of chops.

7. COMMENTS

7.1 Despite the limited dimensions of the new water pipe trench, archaeological features and deposits relating to the former defences of the castle were exposed. In addition to these, two phases of probable cobbled surface within the castle courtyard were also revealed. While most of the finds recovered were of 18th to 19th century date, a small quantity of pottery dating to the 15th to 16th centuries was present as residual finds amongst the later material. The late medieval to early post-medieval date represents a period subsequent to the 14th century origin of the castle.

7.2 Exposure of the castle moat (F1011) and curtain wall (S1008) comprised only the upper portions of these features. The curtain wall, which is breeched between the Gate House and northeast corner tower, survived below ground as a rubble core stripped of any faced masonry. Comparable removal or partial removal of the curtain wall basal courses was also exposed during the excavations in 1989 (Blaylock 1989). The presence of made ground deposits that sealed the remains of the curtain wall and infilled the moat are likely to represent a phase of landscaping; undertaken to provide direct access to the Manor House. Finds recovered from these deposits (1005 and 1010), suggest that this modification took place during the 19th century.

- 7.3** The cobbled surfaces exposed immediately to the north of the Manor House clearly represented two phases. The cambered profile of the earlier of the two surfaces (1006) may have indicated that it represented a northeast to southwest aligned pathway. No dating was recovered from the earlier surface or its underlying clay levelling, but, based on the overlying 19th made ground (1005), it was of probable post-medieval origin. The later surface (1004), which overlay made ground 1005, was therefore of approximate 19th century date.

8. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

- 8.1** An online OASIS entry has been completed, using the unique identifier **337303**, which includes a digital copy of this report. Finds recovered have been returned to the property owner. This report represents the archive for the project.

9. REFERENCES

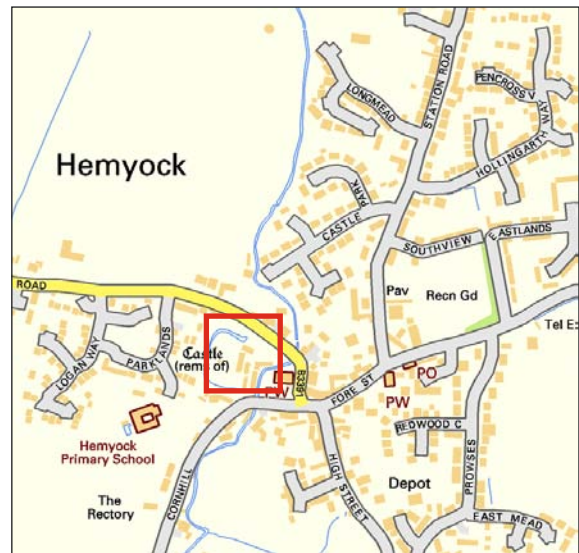
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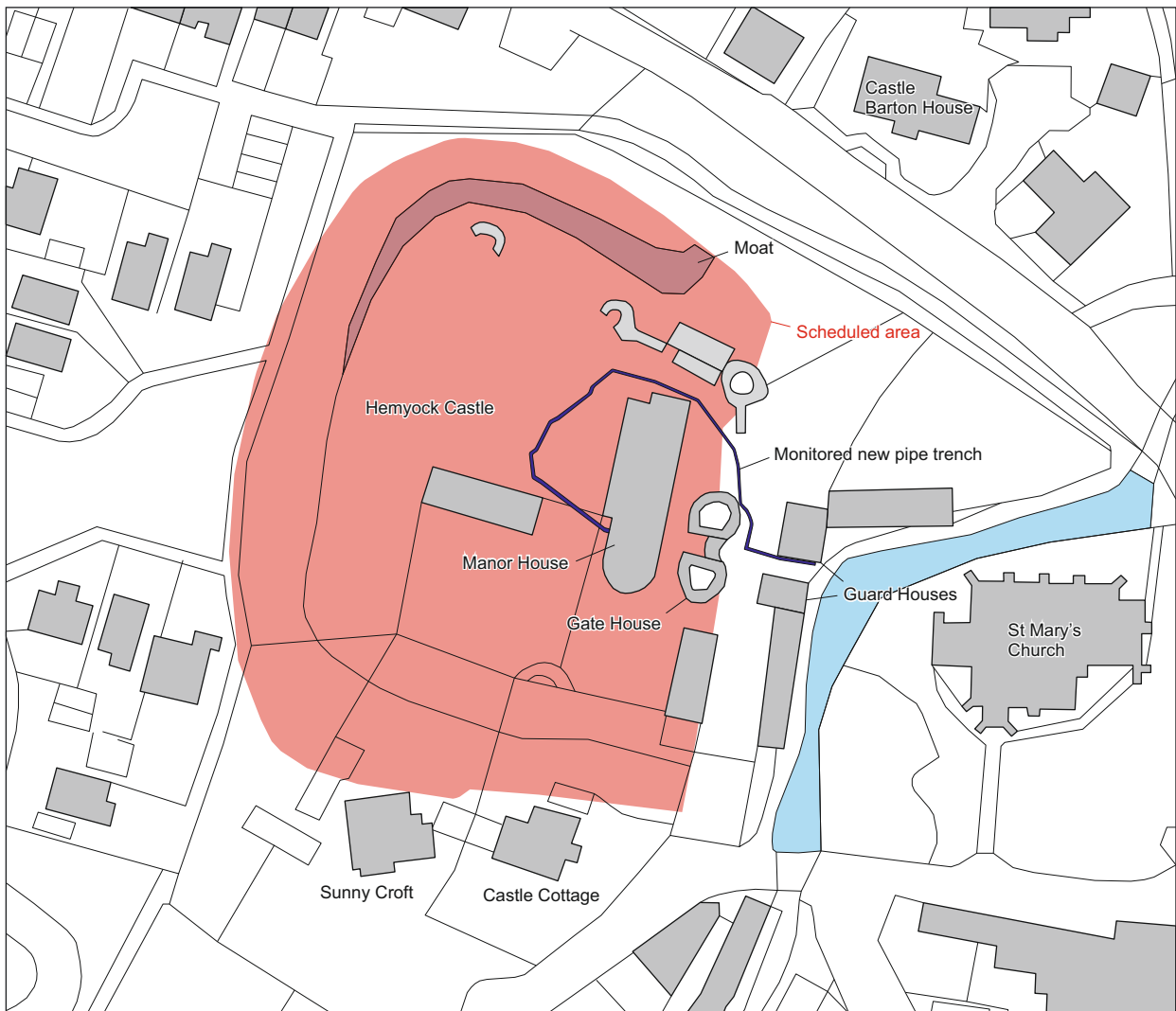
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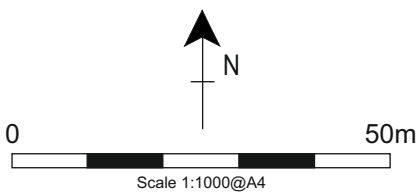
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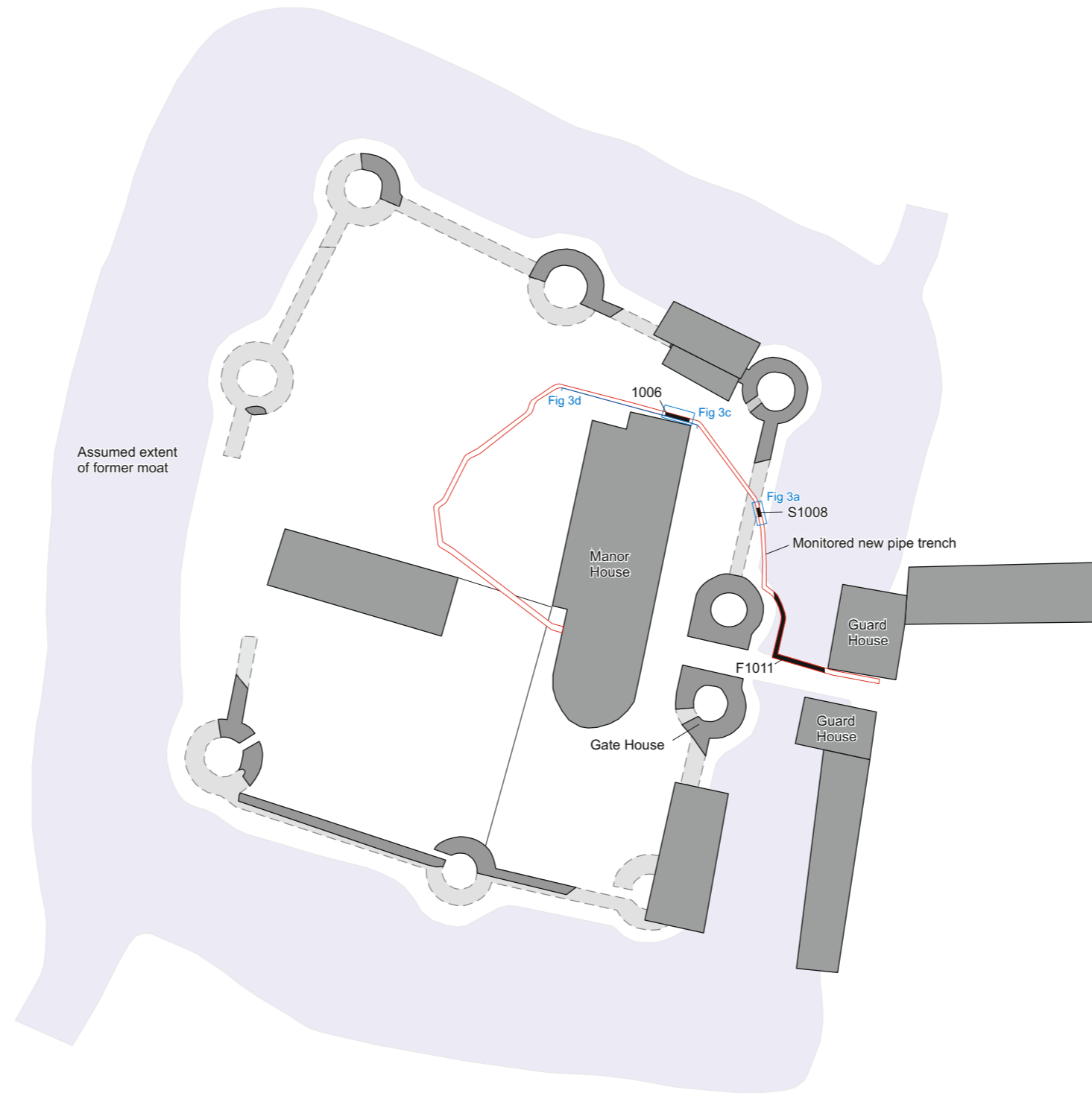
PROJECT

Hemyock Castle, Culmstock Road,
Hemyock, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 1: Site location

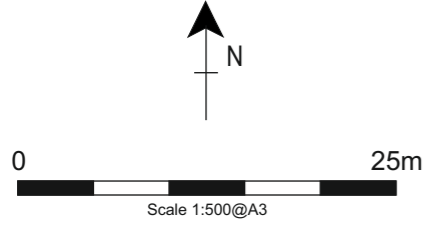




Key	
	Existing buildings
	Projected extent of former structures

PROJECT
Hemyock Castle, Culmstock Road, Hemyock, Devon

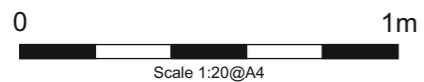
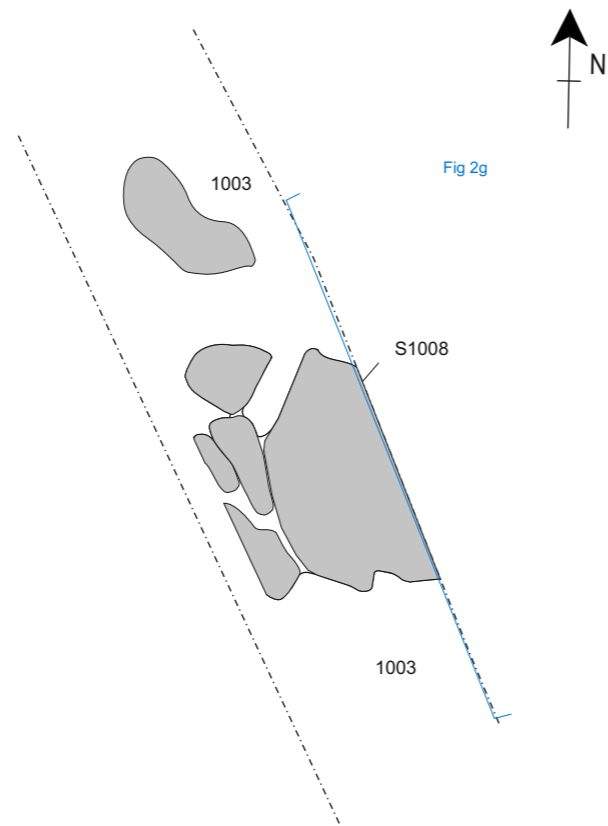
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Fig. 2: Site plan with locations of monitored groundworks and archaeological features shown



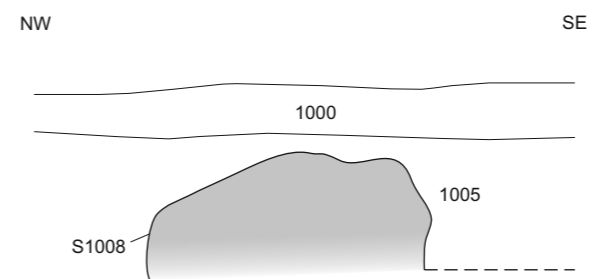
Based on drawing prepared by Blaylock, 1989



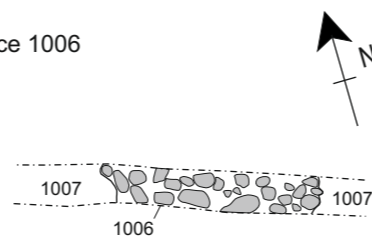
a) Plan of wall S1008



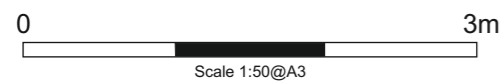
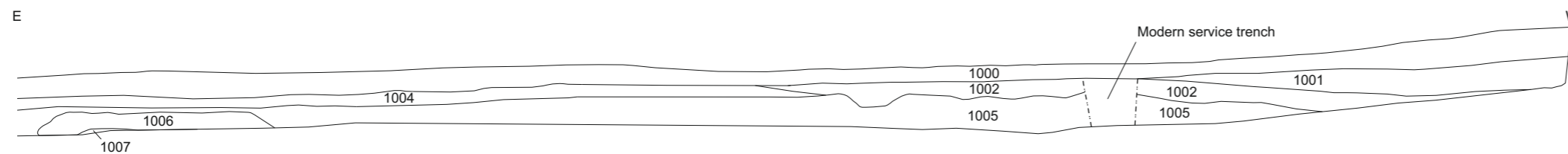
b) Plan of wall S1008



c) Plan of surface 1006



d) Plan of surface 1006



PROJECT
Hemyock Castle, Culmstock Road, Hemyock, Devon
TITLE
Fig. 3: Detailed plans and sections



Plate 1: General view of excavations in progress. Looking north from Gatehouse towards breached curtain wall and northeast corner tower with wall S1008 visible in trench



Plate 2: Working view of excavations through top of moat F1011 deposits. View to south (scale 0.5m)



Plate 3: Showing section through moat infill deposits. View to west (scale 0.5m)



Plate 4: Curtain wall S1008. View to north (scale 0.2m)



Plate 5: General view of excavations along north side of the Manor House. View to west (scale 1m)



Plate 6: Surface 1006, view to south (scale 0.2m)



Plate 7: Surface 1004, view to south
(scale 0.2m)

Devon Office

AC archaeology Ltd
Unit 4, Halthaies Workshops
Bradninch
Nr Exeter
Devon
EX5 4LQ

Telephone: 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