

BARTON PITTS, NORTH MOLTON, DEVON

(NGR SS 72368 32018)

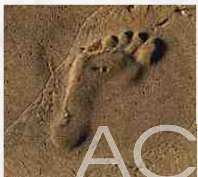
Results of an archaeological watching brief

North Devon Council planning reference 65870, condition 6

Prepared by:
Stella De-Villiers MA ACIfA

Document No: ACD2015/2/0

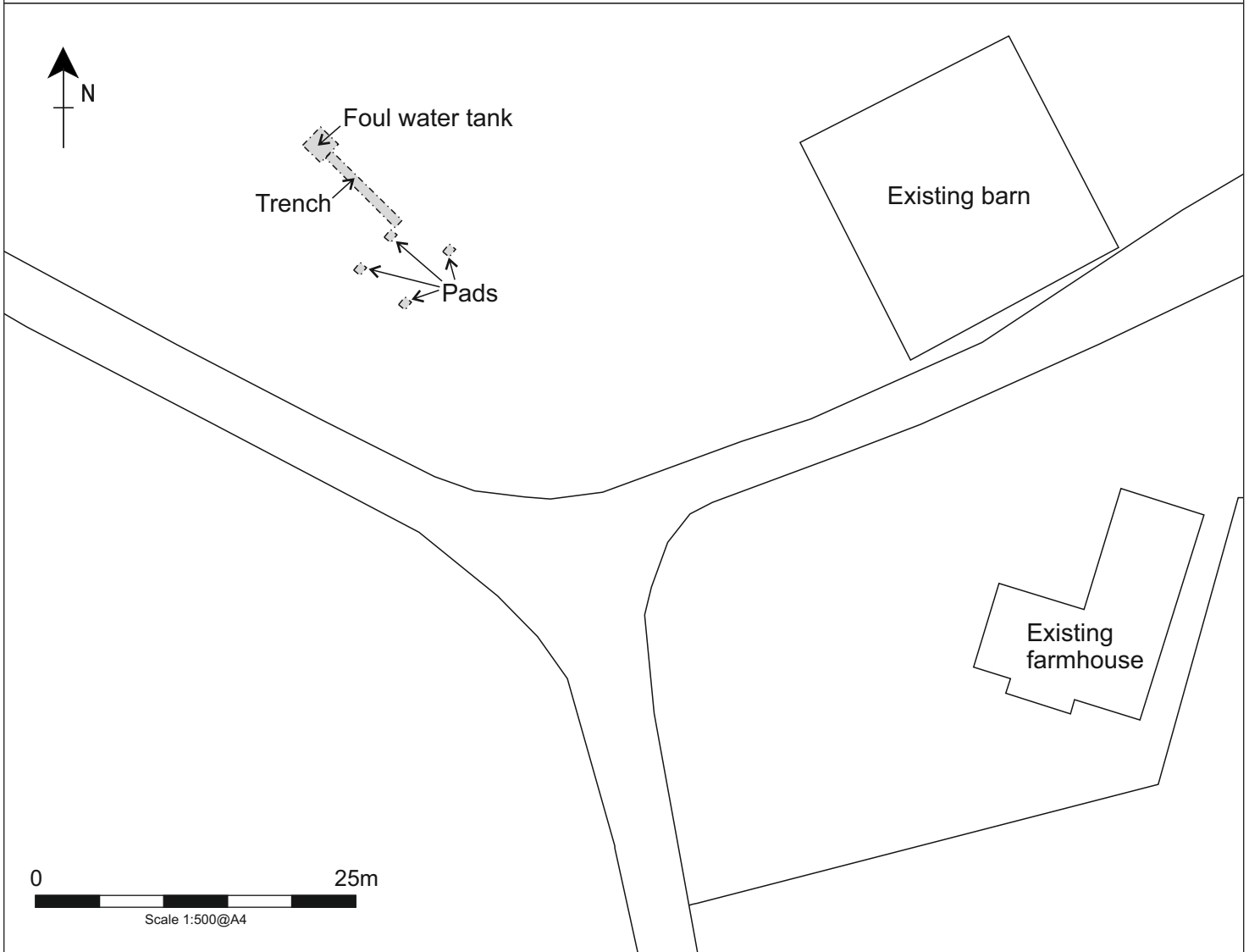
Date: April 2019



AC archaeology

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: North Molton, North Devon	National Grid Reference SS 72368 32018	Number: (Leave blank for HES to fill in)
Subject: Barton Pitts, North Molton, Devon: Results of an archaeological watching brief		Photo attached? Y
Planning Application no: 65870	Recipient museum: N/A	
OASIS ID: 348508	Museum Accession no: N/A	
Contractor's reference number/code: ACD2015	Date fieldwork undertaken: 12 April 2019	
<p>Description of works</p> <p>Introduction</p> <p>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks associated with the construction of a new holiday accommodation unit at Barton Pitts. The site is situated on flat ground at a height of approximately 260m aOD, at the head of an east-west aligned valley. The underlying geology comprises Devonian sandstone of the Pickwell Down Sandstones Formation (www.bgs.ac.uk).</p> <p>Archaeological and historical background</p> <p>The particular archaeological interest in the site is that it is located within an area of recorded former iron mining (as indicated by the Pitts placename) forming part of a wider landscape of iron ore extraction and processing around and to the north of North Molton. The new holiday unit is situated within a field where iron ore extraction took place (Devon Historic Environment Record MDV706), and ironstone with micaceous haematite has been recovered from the surface of the field. Early (i.e. pre-1840s) extraction is undated, but in the 1870s the land formed part of the nearby Bamfield Mine, worked under the name Barton Mine. There were further workings to the east (MDV706) and west where open pits survived until the second half of the 20th century (MDV46880 and MDV46881). In 1840 the field formed part of the Barton tenement, was in arable cultivation, and was named <i>Pit Close</i>, indicative of (otherwise unrecorded) former iron extraction. The North Molton tithe map of 1842 does not depict any features within the field.</p> <p>On the 1889 Ordnance Survey 25-inch map the plot is now woodland called Barton Pitts Plantation. As well as the woodland, the map depicts a series of earthworks that appear to represent large-scale opencast extraction. These pits are shown more clearly on the 25-inch revision of 1904, and can also be discerned on the immediate post-Second World War RAF aerial photographs. Later, and current, maps show the area as a pasture field, although on some aerial photographs a number of small depressions are visible. More extensive earthworks can be interpreted from Environment Agency LiDAR data.</p> <p>Results</p> <p>The groundworks consisted of the excavation for four pads to support the new structure, a trench to a foul waste tank, and the excavation for the tank itself. The pads measured 0.8m long x 0.6m wide x 0.7m deep, the service trench measured 7.8m long x 0.6m wide x 0.5m deep, and the tank excavation measured 2m² x 1.4m deep.</p> <p>The deposit sequence within all these excavations consisted of turf and topsoil (100) overlying a subsoil-based backfill (101), the depth of which must indicate that at least in part it infills one or more former extraction pits. The edges of the extraction pits were not exposed within the excavated areas. The topsoil (100) consisted of a 0.15-0.25m thick moderately compact mid brown-red silty-sand with frequent sub-angular local stone. The backfill (101) consisted of a mid-dark purple-red silty-sand with very frequent sub-angular local sandstone, felled timber fragments and rare small pieces of micaceous haematite.</p> <p>Comments</p> <p>The exposed deposit sequence indicates that the whole field within which the excavations took place was landscaped when the plantation was felled, extraction pits infilled, and the area turned over to pasture in the early 1970s. A consistent levelling deposit was present across the whole area. In the excavation for the tank this deposit continued below the (1.4m) depth of the trench, indicating that this excavation was located within one of the 1870s extraction pits. The sides and base of this pit were not exposed. No finds were recovered (either relating to this iron ore extraction or earlier activity).</p> <p>This document and the associated OASIS entry represent the archive for the project.</p>		
<p>A plan as well as any other relevant drawings must be attached showing the location and extent of site, areas investigated and features exposed.</p>		
Recorder: Stella De-Villiers, AC archaeology	Date sent to HER: 17 April 2019	



Levelling deposit (101)

PROJECT

Barton Pitts, North Molton, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 1: Site location and location of monitored excavations





Plate 1: View of monitored excavations, looking southwest (1m scale)



Plate 2: Section of foul water tank, looking northwest (1m scale)



Plate 3: Section of trench, looking southwest (1m scale)



Plate 4: Section of northeast pad, looking northwest (0.5m 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