

Land at St Peter's School, School Close, Tavistock, Devon

NGR SX48677433

Results of an archaeological trench evaluation

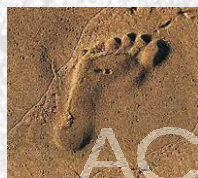
Planning ref: West Devon Borough Council 12658/2009/TAV

Prepared by:
Stephen Robinson

On behalf of:
Property Services Department,
Diocese of Exeter

Document No: ACD159/2/0

Date: June 2010



archaeology

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Tavistock, West Devon	National Grid Reference SX48677433	Number:
Subject: Archaeological trench evaluation on land at St Peter's School, School Close, Tavistock, Devon		Photo attached: Plates 1 and 2
Planning Application no: 12658/2009/TAV	Recipient museum: Plymouth City Museum	
OASIS ID: 78254	Museum Accession no: AR.2010.11	
Contractor's reference number/code: ACD159	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 1 June 2010	

Introduction

An archaeological trench evaluation was undertaken by AC archaeology as a condition of planning permission for an extension to St Peter's School, Tavistock, to provide three classrooms and associated works. The evaluation was undertaken on behalf of the Property Services Department, Diocese of Exeter. The site is situated on a grassed area on the southwest side of the main school building (Fig.1). It lies at around 137m OD and the underlying solid geology comprises Devonian Slate. In the absence of a nearby Ordnance Survey benchmark, all site levels relate to a site survey only, as shown on Fig.1. The principal archaeological interest on the site is the presence of three small circular mounds visible on historic aerial photographs (DCHER ref. 12639). These are presently recorded as possible prehistoric barrows.

Results (Section Fig 2; Plates 1 and 2)

The evaluation comprised the machine-excavation of two trenches, one of which was T-shaped in plan and positioned on the most easterly mound (Trench 1). The other trench (2) was positioned immediately to the northwest of the mound. The total length of the trenches was 25m, with each having a width of 1.6m. Where Trench 1 was positioned over the mound, this was excavated to a maximum depth of 600mm and minimum depth of 200mm, through both turf/topsoil (context 10) and stone rubble (context 11), before natural subsoil was revealed (context 12). Turf/topsoil comprised a light brown silty loam, with the main component of the trench comprising stone rubble layer (11) composed mainly of Devonian Slate. Natural subsoil comprised a mixture of bedrock and a yellowish/orange-brown clay silt containing common slate pieces. The northeast part of the trench was excavated to a depth of 100mm before revealing natural subsoil. This part of the trench revealed evidence of relatively recent truncation associated with the construction of the adjacent school building. No pre-modern archaeological features were present.

Trench 2 was excavated to a maximum depth of 200mm through turf/topsoil (context 20), onto natural subsoil (context 21). Turf/topsoil comprised a light brown silty loam, with the natural subsoil comprising yellowish/orange-brown clay silt containing common slate pieces. No archaeological features were present.

The finds

The finds are summarised by material type in Table 1. All are of post-medieval date and include 20th century wine bottle glass and a small and insignificant number of sherds of post medieval pottery. Most of the pottery comprises industrial whitewares, blue and white transfer ware and a single sherd of imported stoneware. A small number of North Devon coarsewares were found, and these are notable by their distinctive orange oxidised fabrics which have many large quartz inclusions. This pottery was being produced in the 18th and 19th centuries in Bideford. All the sherds, with the exception of a rim from a lid seated jar (which is earlier in date than the other pieces), are plain body pieces with a thick green or clear glaze on the internal surfaces. No further work is required on this assemblage and, with the agreement of the recipient museum, all finds can be discarded.

Table 1 Quantification of finds recovered from Context 11

Material	Number	Weight (g)	Comments
Glass	2	67	20th century bottle glass
<i>Pottery</i>			
Industrial whiteware	4	26	
Blue and white transfer ware	1	17	Rim of bowl decorated with floral pattern
Stoneware	1	27	Body sherd from imported stoneware jar
North Devon Coarseware	5	48	Post medieval, includes a rim from a lid seated jar which could be early, other are glazed plain body sherds.
<i>Pottery Total</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>118</i>	

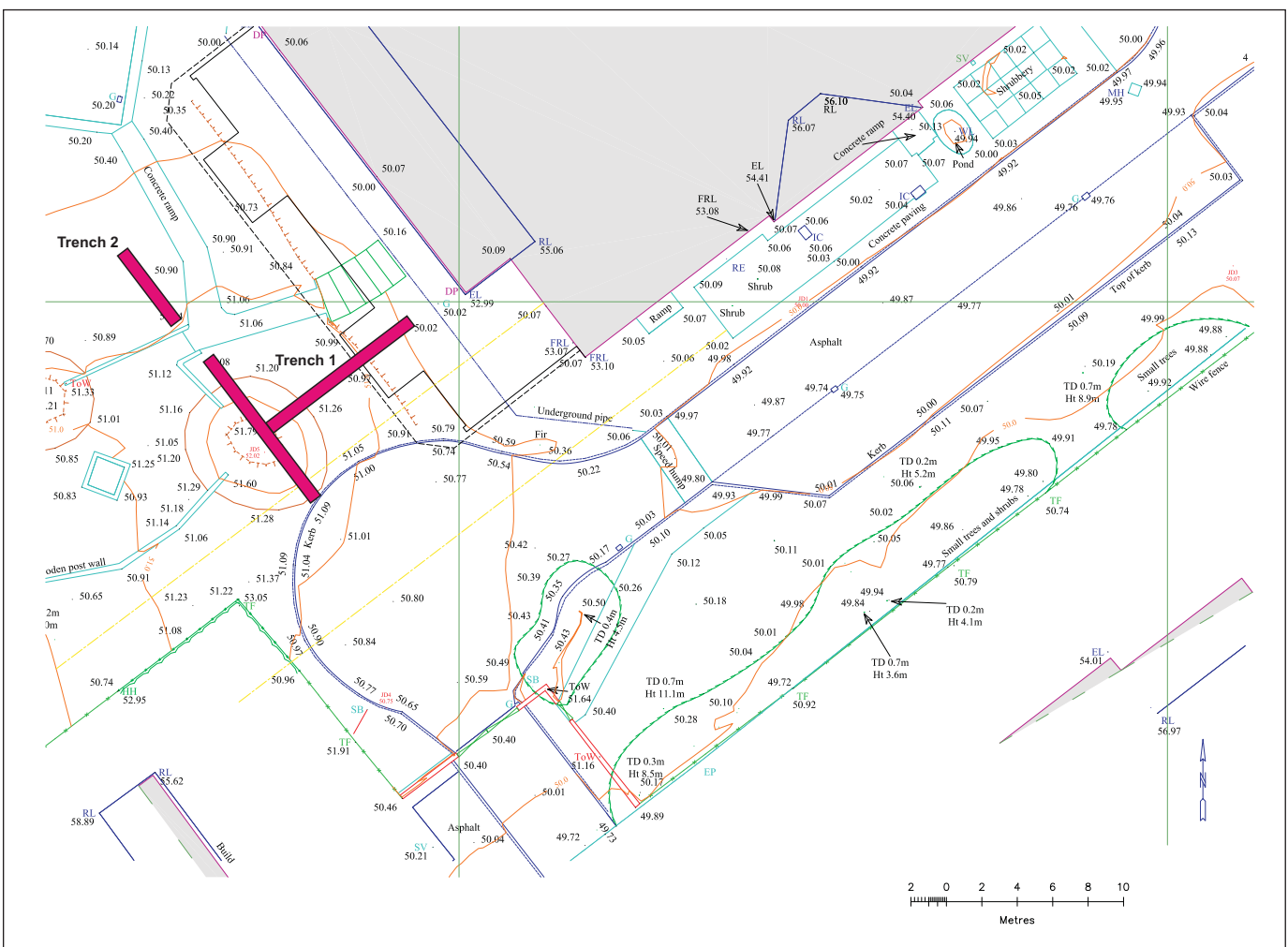
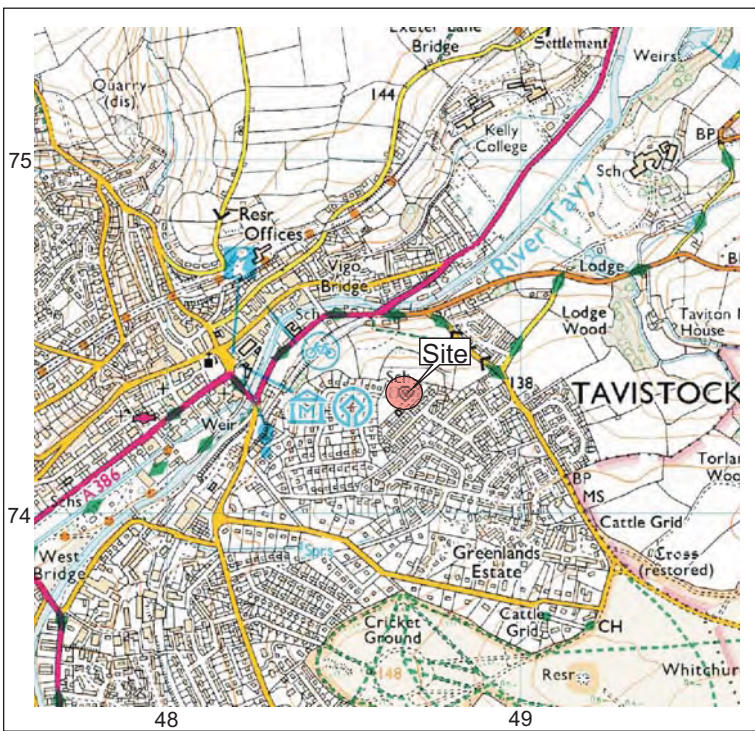
Comments

The evaluation has demonstrated that the mound investigated is probably early 20th century in date and could have been formed as either upcast from stone quarrying or from a mining prospection pit. The presence of quarry pits nearby on early 20th century maps, suggests the former is more likely. The mound is partly formed by an outcrop of natural bedrock (Devonian Slate) and the deposition of slate waste, represented by the rubble layer (context 11). No evidence for any earlier activity was present in the trenches. The two other small mounds situated immediately to the west are also likely to have the same function.

Recorder: Stephen Robinson, AC archaeology

Date sent to HER: 10 June 2010

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PROJECT
**St Peter's Junior School,
 Tavistock**

TITLE

Fig. 1: Site and trench location

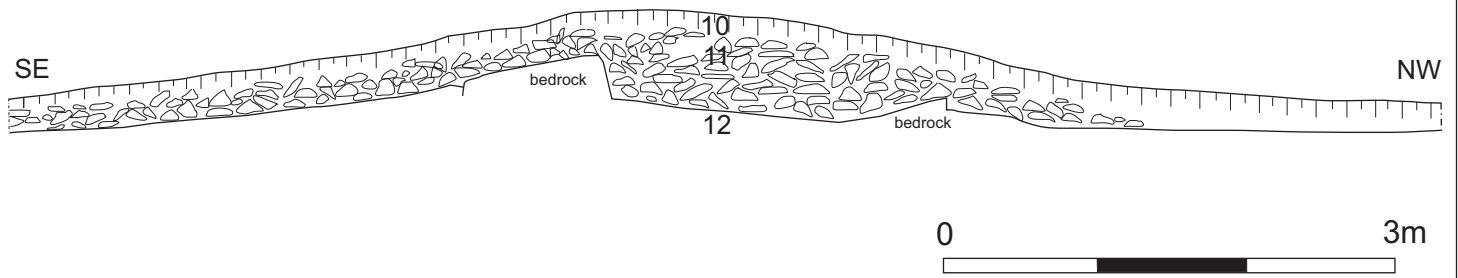


Fig. 2: Section across Trench 1



Plate 1:
Trench 1 viewed from the northeast
(Scales 2m and 1m)



Plate 2: Trench 1. View from the southeast (Scale 2m)

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