

Proposed New Garages and Associated Groundworks, Passlands, Membury, Axminster, Devon

NGR ST 28146 02954

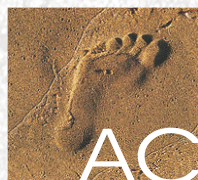
Results of an archaeological watching brief

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On behalf of
Mrs J. Wootton

Report No: ACD226/2/0

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AC archaeology

**PROPOSED NEW GARAGES AND ASSOCIATED GROUNDWORKS,
PASSLANDS, MEMBURY, AXMINSTER, DEVON**

(ST 28146 02954)

RESULTS OF AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief during the excavation of three trenches during the development of land at Passlands, Membury was undertaken by AC archaeology during December 2010. The proposed development site lies 100m west of Membury Castle, a scheduled Iron Age hillfort.

Monitoring during the excavation of the three trenches demonstrated that terracing associated with a former cowshed and associated concrete yard had truncated all deposits above the natural greensand across the whole extent of the proposed redevelopment area. The potential for the presence for hitherto previously unrecorded archaeological features in areas not monitored is therefore considered to be negligible.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document describes the results of archaeological monitoring during groundworks associated with the development of land at Passlands, Membury, Axminster, Devon at ST 28146 02954 (see Fig. 1). The development comprises the construction of two garages, a replacement conservatory, conversion of an existing garage to craft room, creation of new access, as well as demolition of existing buildings (cowshed with associated yard).
- 1.2 The monitoring, which was undertaken by AC archaeology during November 2010, was commissioned by the owner, Mrs J. Wootton. It was carried out as a condition of the grant of planning consent (Planning ref. 10/1505/FUL) issued by East Devon District Council.
- 1.3 The site is located 100m to the west of Membury Castle, a scheduled univallate Iron Age hillfort of approximately 1.3 hectares (SAM ref. 29645). The land slopes gently downhill to the west at around 185m OD and the underlying solid geology comprises Upper Greensand.
- 1.4 The area to be redeveloped had been partly occupied by a cowshed with a concrete yard to the west. The site of the cowshed had been terraced into the hill slope to a maximum depth of 1.5m below the level of the lawn south of Passlands house (Plate 1). To the west of the cowshed an area of concrete hardstanding lay on made ground to create a level platform.



Plate 1: Membury hillfort rampart in distance and terrace in foreground (view to east). 2m scale

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1** An initial desk-based appraisal was undertaken and comprised a review of Archaeological and historical data held by the Devon County Council Historic Environment Record (DCHER) and historical cartographic and documentary information at Devon Record Office (DRO) and Westcountry Studies Library (WCSL), both in Exeter (Valentin 2010).
- 2.2** Immediately to the south of Passlands, a possible double-ditched prehistoric enclosure is recorded from aerial photographs (DCHER ref. 75959). A number of artefact scatters are recorded in the vicinity (e.g. 14494, 28717, 50368 and 50369).
- 2.3** The Membury parish tithe map of 1842 shows no farm or other buildings. The site is depicted as comprising two small plots of land, both of which are wooded. The accompanying apportionment of 1840 names these both as *Colehay*, owned by Henry Gardener and occupied by John Bond. The land-use is described as orchards. By 1888 the 25-inch first edition map shows that the two fields had been combined and that a house had been built alongside the road frontage, while a well is present to the rear. The house at this time is named as Prospect Cottage. The 1903 second edition 25-inch map shows no changes to the layout, although the building at the front of the site is now called Passlands Farm.

3. METHODOLOGY

- 3.1** Although the intention had been to monitor the groundworks associated with the proposed development in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation prepared (Valentin 2010), on arrival the site archaeologist established that the area had been previously terraced. It was therefore agreed that three trenches would be machine excavated to establish the depth of terracing and potential survival of archaeological remains.

3.2 The excavation of the three trenches was carried out under the supervision of the site archaeologist. Attendance was 'comprehensive' in accordance with the meaning of the term as defined in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standards and Guidance for An Archaeological Watching Brief* section 3.2.10: *i.e.* present during all groundworks

3.3 Field observations were recorded on appropriate *pro forma sheets* comprising part of the AC archaeology recording system, supplemented by narrative text (notebook), photographic and drawn records as appropriate.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Three trenches measuring 3.00m x 1.80m were machine excavated with a 1.80m wide toothless grading bucket. The trench locations are shown on Fig. 2.

4.2 Trenches 1 and 2 were located at the eastern end of the development area at the foot of the terrace wall separating the development area from the garden of Passlands; both were excavated to a depth of 900mm and cut directly into undisturbed greensand subsoil; all overlying deposits having been truncated by the terrace cut for the demolished cowshed (Plates 2 & 3).

4.3 Trench 3 was located 8m west of the terrace wall and excavated to a depth of 250mm. The trench cut through modern debris to reveal the junction between the undisturbed greensand subsoil and the rubble make up for the terrace associated with the former cowshed and yard (Plate 4).

4.4 No finds or archaeological features were noted in any of the trenches or the areas exposed by demolition activities.



Plate 2: Trench 1 (view to the south). 2m scale



Plate 3: Trench 2 (view to the south). 2m scale



Plate 4: Trench 3 (view to the south). 2m scale

5. DISCUSSION

- 5.1 Monitoring during the excavation of the three trenches has demonstrated that terracing associated with the former cowshed and concrete yard has truncated all deposits above the natural greensand for a distance of at least 8m to the west of the wall currently separating the garden of Passlands from the development area (see Fig. 2). The potential for previously unrecorded archaeological features is therefore considered to be negligible.
- 5.2 The monitoring has also determined that the ground formerly occupied by the concrete yard has not only been terraced, but subsequently artificially raised and levelled with waste rubble prior to the laying of the new yard surface. Any groundworks or construction within this area are therefore unlikely to result in the disturbance of hitherto previously unrecorded archaeological features.

6. ARCHIVE

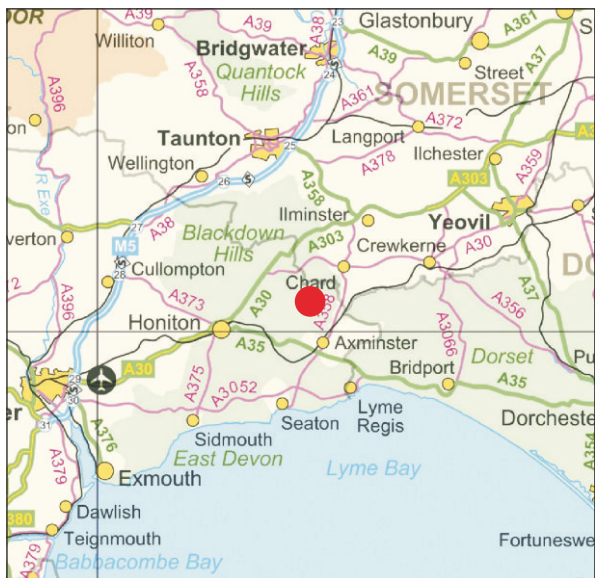
- 6.1 The paper and digital archive and finds are currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ. They will be deposited at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, under the accession number 161/2010 together with any archive generated by any subsequent work on the site.
- 6.2 The OASIS (Online AccesS to the Index of Archaeological InvestigationS) number for this project is 91554.

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 7.1 The watching brief was commissioned by the owner of the property, Mrs J Wootton. The fieldwork was carried out by Mark Corney and the illustrations for this report were prepared by Cain Hegarty. The advice and collaboration of Stephen Reed, Devon County Council Archaeology Officer, is duly acknowledged.

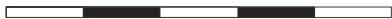
8. SOURCES

DRO, Membury parish tithe map, 1842 and apportionment, 1840
Institute for Archaeologists, 2001, *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief* (and subsequent revisions) Institute of Field Archaeologists
Ordnance Survey 25-inch Devonshire sheet 60.9, surveyed 1888, published 1890, revised 1903, published 1905.
Valentin, J. 2010, Land at Passlands, Membury, Devon: *Method Statement for an Archaeological Watching Brief*. Unpublished AC archaeology document, ref. ACD226/1/0



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PROJECT

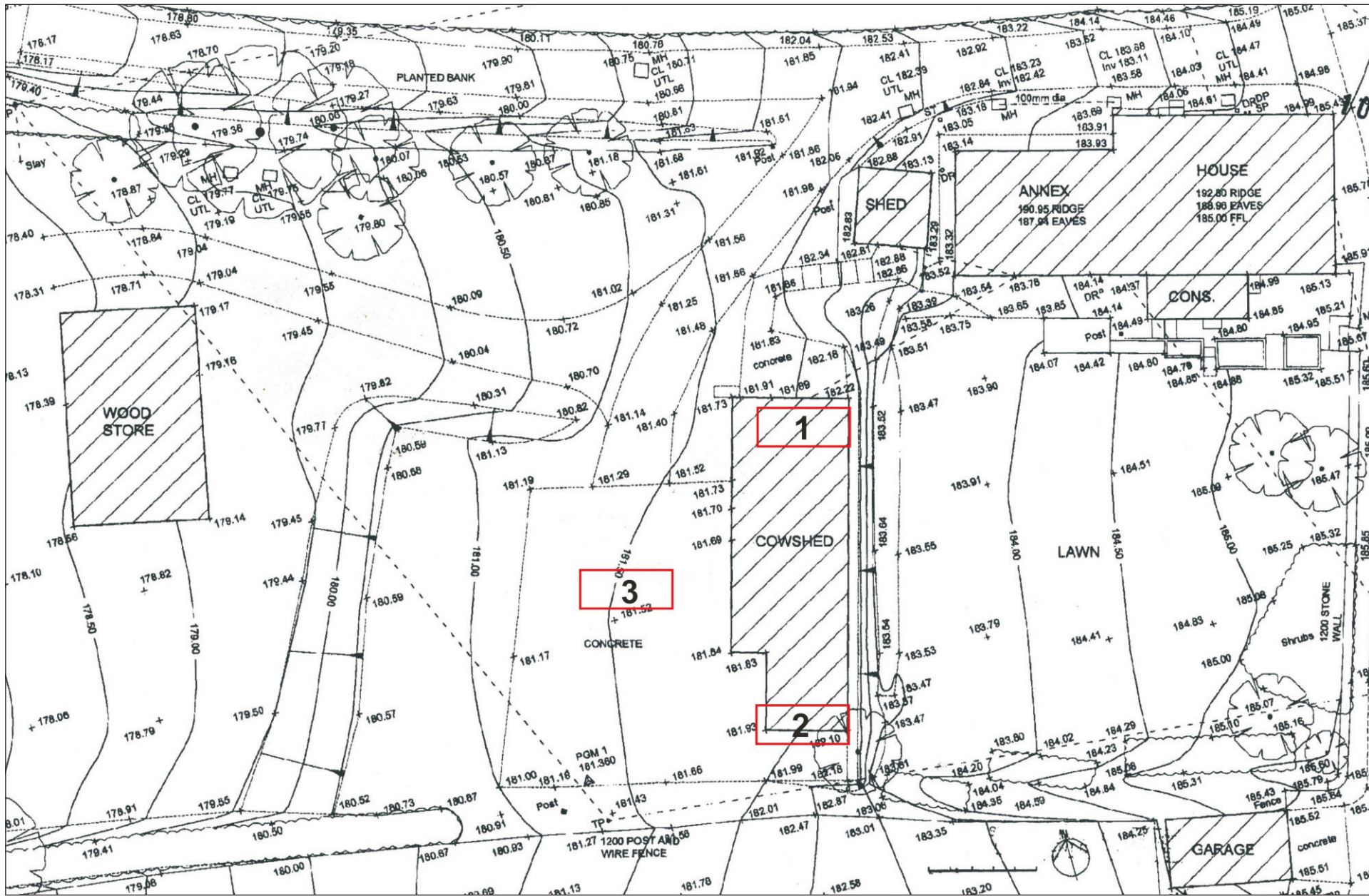
Passlands, Membury

TITLE

Fig 1: Site location



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1 Trench location and number



PROJECT
 Passlands, Membury

TITLE
 Fig 2: Location of Trenches 1-3



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