

Land and Barn at Devonia, Chaffacombe, Chard, Somerset.

A programme of Archaeological Monitoring and Recording



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for

Paul Rowe Architectural Services on behalf of Mr R. Whitton

by



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Non-technical summary

Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording during groundworks relating to the Land and Barn at Devonia, Chaffcombe, Chard, Somerset, in relation to groundworks in advance of the construction of two residential properties. This project was commissioned by Paul Rowe Architectural Services and funded by Mr. R. Whitton.

The monitoring programme was required as a condition of planning consent in mitigation of a development proposal to demolish an agricultural building and construct two houses with associated garaging on the Site. This was because previous investigations in close proximity to this area produced considerable evidence of Romano-British occupation adjacent to the Roman road, the Fosse Way.

Despite this, no visible archaeological features or deposits of archaeological interest were encountered during development excavations. No finds were recovered.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording during groundworks relating to the Land and Barn at Devonia, Chaffcombe, Chard, Somerset, on 8 and 9 June 2015, in advance of the construction of two residential properties. This project was commissioned by Paul Rowe Architectural Services and funded by Mr. R. Whitton.
- 1.2 The monitoring programme was required as a condition of planning consent (South Somerset District Council planning application ref. 15/01135/FUL) in mitigation of a development proposal to demolish an agricultural building and construct two houses with associated garaging on the Site. The requirement followed advice by Central Government as set out in paragraph 141 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).
- 1.3 In a consultation response letter from Mr Steven Membery (Senior Historic Environment Record Officer, Somerset County Council) to South Somerset District Council dated 21 April 2015 (ref. 2015/0400), Mr Membery stated:

“A watching brief adjacent to Goldenhaye Lane produced evidence for the existence of Romano-British occupation adjacent to the Roman Road, the Fosse Way. A series of small pits and an extensive area of demolition rubble, containing considerable quantities of pottery, were recorded. The application area lies in close proximity, and it is therefore possible that similar remains may exist within the site.

For this reason I recommend that the applicant be required to provide archaeological monitoring of the development and report on any discoveries made as indicated in the National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraph 141).”

- 1.4 The programme of archaeological works comprised four elements: the production of a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which set out the project strategy; monitoring and recording during development groundworks; post-excavation and report production; and archive deposition. The WSI was approved by Mr Membery on 1 June 2015 prior to the commencement of any Site works.

2. Site location and topography

- 2.1 The Site (centred on NGR ST 36011 08507) covered 300 square metres and was located close to the A30 to the north-west of the Cricket St Thomas estate (**Figure 1**). Access to the A30 runs south from the east side of ‘The Firs’, which fronts onto the road. To the east, the Site was bounded by a paddock and an area of disused quarrying, whilst to the south and west of ‘Devonia’ there were open fields. The Site was generally level and bounded by developed hedges. Prior to development works, the Site comprised agricultural land (mostly grass) and an agricultural building.

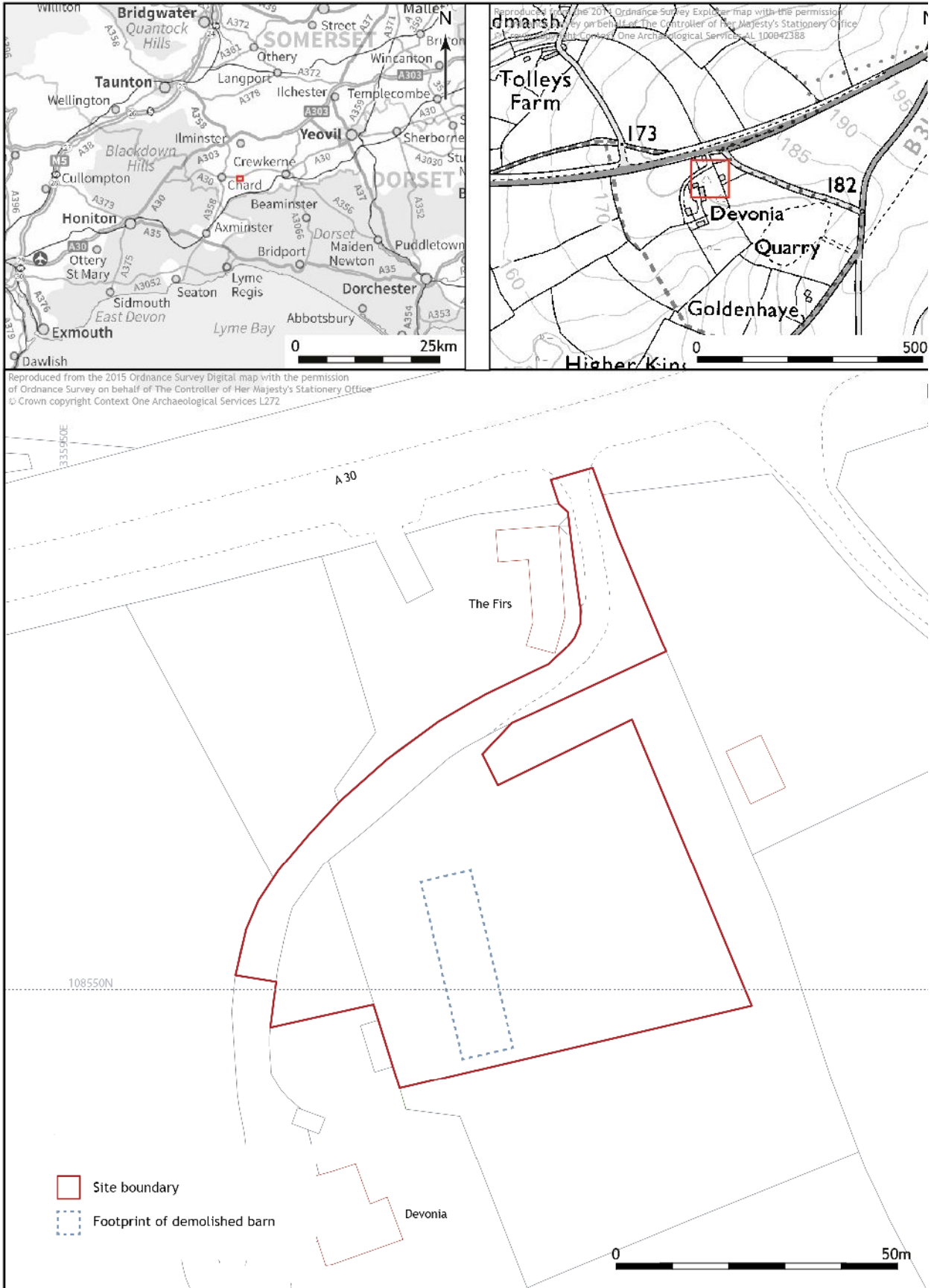


Figure 1. Site setting

3. Methodology

Development groundworks methodology

- 3.1 Topsoil reduction was carried out across the Site by machine, to provide a surface for car parking, access road and a patio area. A foundation trench was also excavated measuring 0.64m wide and c. 0.80m deep. A tracked 360 machine equipped with a toothless bucket was used.

Archaeological methodology

- 3.2 The programme of archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the *Heritage Service Archaeological Handbook* issued by Somerset County Council in 2011, and the codes, standards and guidelines set out by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 1985, rev. 2012; 1990, rev. 2008; 1994, rev. 2008, 2014). Current Health and Safety legislation and guidelines were followed on Site.
- 3.3 In the absence of archaeological remains, profile sections of the deposit sequence across the Site were recorded using standard COAS *pro forma* profile sheets to illustrate the soil morphology. This was recorded as a graphical representation accompanied by a brief description. Photographs including a suitable scale were also taken. The frequency with which profile sections were recorded was based entirely on any variation of the deposit sequence.
- 3.4 All deposits were recorded as individual contexts and ascribed a unique number. Contexts referenced in this report are presented in standard terms, e.g. (100), (203).
- 3.5 A photographic record of the fieldwork comprised digital images in .jpg format and monochrome prints. As a minimum, the record included photographs of each profile section, the Site setting and development works.

4. Results

- 4.1 No visible features or deposits of archaeological interest were encountered during the monitoring programme.
- 4.2 Development excavations varied between 0.20m and 0.85m deep and demonstrated a similar deposit sequence across the Site. This comprised greyish brown sandy silt topsoil (001), (**Plates 1 & 2**) with, in places, evidence of recent bonfires, overlying a yellowish brown sandy clay subsoil (002), over brownish yellow sandy clay natural (003). This full sequence was visible in the foundation trench (**Plate 3**). Additional foundation trenches were cut more shallowly into the chalk base of the original barn, but they did not impinge on the soil sequence, and no further observation was deemed necessary (**Plate 4**).



Plate 1. Profile 1 (from W; 1m scale)



Plate 2. Profile 2 (from W; 1m scales)



Plate 3. Profile 3 (from W; 1m scale)



Plate 4. Chalk used in the demolished barn (from E)

5. The finds

- 5.1 No finds were collected or observed during the archaeological programme of works.

6. Discussion

- 6.1 Despite the proximity of the Site to the course of the Fosse Way Roman Road, which runs to the south east, no archaeological features or material were observed.

7. Archive

- 7.1 An ordered and integrated Site archive has been prepared to comply with guidelines set out in *Standards in the Museums Care of Archaeological Collections* (Museum and Galleries Commission 1992) / *Management of Archaeological Projects in the Historic Environment* (English Heritage 2006).

- 7.2 The project archive is currently held by COAS and consists of the following:

Item	Number	Format
Profile record sheets	1	Paper
Photographic Register	1	Paper
Digital images	38	.JPG

- 7.3 The paper archive has been scanned as a single file in .PDF format and will form the Site archive to be deposited with the South West Heritage Trust.
- 7.4 Copies of this report will be deposited with the client/agent and included as part of the Somerset Historic Environment Record.

8. COAS acknowledgements

- 8.1 We would like to thank the following for their contribution to the successful completion of this project:

Carol Rowe, Paul Rowe Architectural Services
 Paul Rowe, Paul Rowe Architectural Services
 Steven Membery, Senior Historic Environment Officer, Somerset County Council

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