

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Shute & East Devon	National Grid Reference SY 24118 97216	Number: (Leave blank for HES to fill in)
Subject: Pennyhayes Farm, Shute, Axminster, Devon		Photo attached? Y
Planning Application no: N/A	Recipient museum: Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art Gallery	
OASIS ID: contexto1-214015	Museum Accession no: RAMM: 15/20	
Contractor's reference number/code: C1/AMR/15/PFA	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 28 September - 12 October 2015	
<p>Description of works.</p> <p>Context One Archaeological Services (COAS) Ltd carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording at Pennyhayes Farm, Shute, Axminster, Devon (the 'Site'), over four days between 28 September and 12 October 2015. The project was commissioned by Ms Marian Reed, the landowner of Pennyhayes Farm. The request for archaeological monitoring and recording was made by Ms Cressida Whitton (Archaeologist, Devon County Historic Environment Service) to inform management under an existing Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) agreement. In a brief for the Historic Park Implementation plan, Ms Whitton stated:</p> <p><i>"The preservation of the medieval deer park boundary here, as a substantial earthwork and well-defined ditch is of particular importance and the feature is highly recommended for protective and enhanced management under this HLS scheme.</i></p> <p><i>The condition in general is very good, however, there is developing young scrub/saplings along its length, preventing access and grazing and causing root damage to the bank (see 2 below). A more specific problem is related to selective erosion of the bank and ditch deposits caused by cattle and horses at particular pinch points, where water has temporarily accumulated in the ditch and is being used as watering holes. The source of the water has been traced by the landowner to a wider section of the ditch adjacent to the steepest slope of the hill above, where a spring may be feeding a deliberately widened section of the deer park boundary ditch. The possible former pond or watering hole is filled with leaf litter and silt, obscuring its character and its origin is also not known. It may have been part of the medieval deer park but could be any age. It is not marked on late C19th historic mapping, however.</i></p> <p><i>A gravity-fed water pipe may provide the solution of moving the water away from the deer park boundary, to a suitable trough location to the east. For this to occur, the silted-up widened ditch adjacent to the deer park boundary needs to be emptied of silt so that the water source can be located and piped from a suitable reservoir. Although this would require short term mechanical removal of silt/litter by a mini-digger close to the deer park boundary and within its ditch, it is thought that any impacts could be minimised by certain safeguards.</i></p> <p><i>Archaeological monitoring of the operation, in particular to supervise removal of sediments from the widened deer park ditch so that the original base and sides of the ditch are not disturbed and to check for any archaeological artefacts."</i></p> <p>Pennyhayes Farm encompasses an area of historic medieval parkland forming part of the wider historic parkland to the north, dating from AD 1250 and historically known as 'Shute Deer Park'. This was associated with 'Old Shute' mansion which was demolished in AD 1786. During the period of the next 'Shute House', which replaced the old mansion, the parkland developed as a designed naturalistic landscape and the parkland is listed on the Devon Garden's Trust Register of important local historic parks/gardens. Pennyhayes Farm retains features from the medieval deer park comprising ancient, veteran trees and a large, curving deerpark boundary and ditch along its southern boundary.</p> <p>The works comprised the machine cleaning of the deer park boundary ditch and bank, and the machine excavation of a pipe trench and nine test pits (Figures 1 and 2). A machine equipped with a 0.60m toothless bucket was used for these works. It was initially intended that the pond would be utilized for the installation of a new cistern, however in the event this was located elsewhere (linked to the pipe trench) and the pond was not subject to any groundworks.</p> <p>Despite the Site's location within a landscape of medieval parkland, no visible features or deposits of archaeological interest were encountered during the monitoring programme and no finds were observed. The test pits (Plates 1 & 2) were excavated to a depth of between c. 0.30m and 0.80m and measured c. 0.60 x 0.60m wide.</p>		

The test-pitting works demonstrated a largely similar deposit sequence across the Site, which comprised a c. 0.05m layer of mulch (dead leaves and bracken) (100, 200, 300, 500, 600, 700, 800, 900) directly overlying the natural blue/grey clay (101, 201, 301, 401, 601). In places, a light brown silty clay topsoil layer (400, 501) was encountered between the mulch and the clay natural, and within Test Pit 2, which was extended in depth to c. 0.80m, a more compacted yellow natural clay (202) was encountered at c. 0.70m below the ground surface.

The cleaning of the deep park boundary ditch and bank (**Plates 3 & 4**) varied in depth, although the feature measured approximately 1.00m deep from the top of the bank to its base along most of its length. The pipe trenches (**Plates 5 & 6**) were dug to a depth of c. 0.70m below the ground surface and demonstrated a deposit sequence comprising a c. 0.05m layer of mulch overlying a 0.20m – 0.25m mixed woodland topsoil layer, in turn overlying the compacted yellow clay natural at approximately 0.30m below the ground surface.

A plan as well as any other relevant drawings must be attached showing the location and extent of site, areas investigated and features exposed.

Recorder: Orlando Prestidge
Context One Archaeological Services Ltd.

Date sent to HER: 31 October 2016; re-sent 19 May 2017

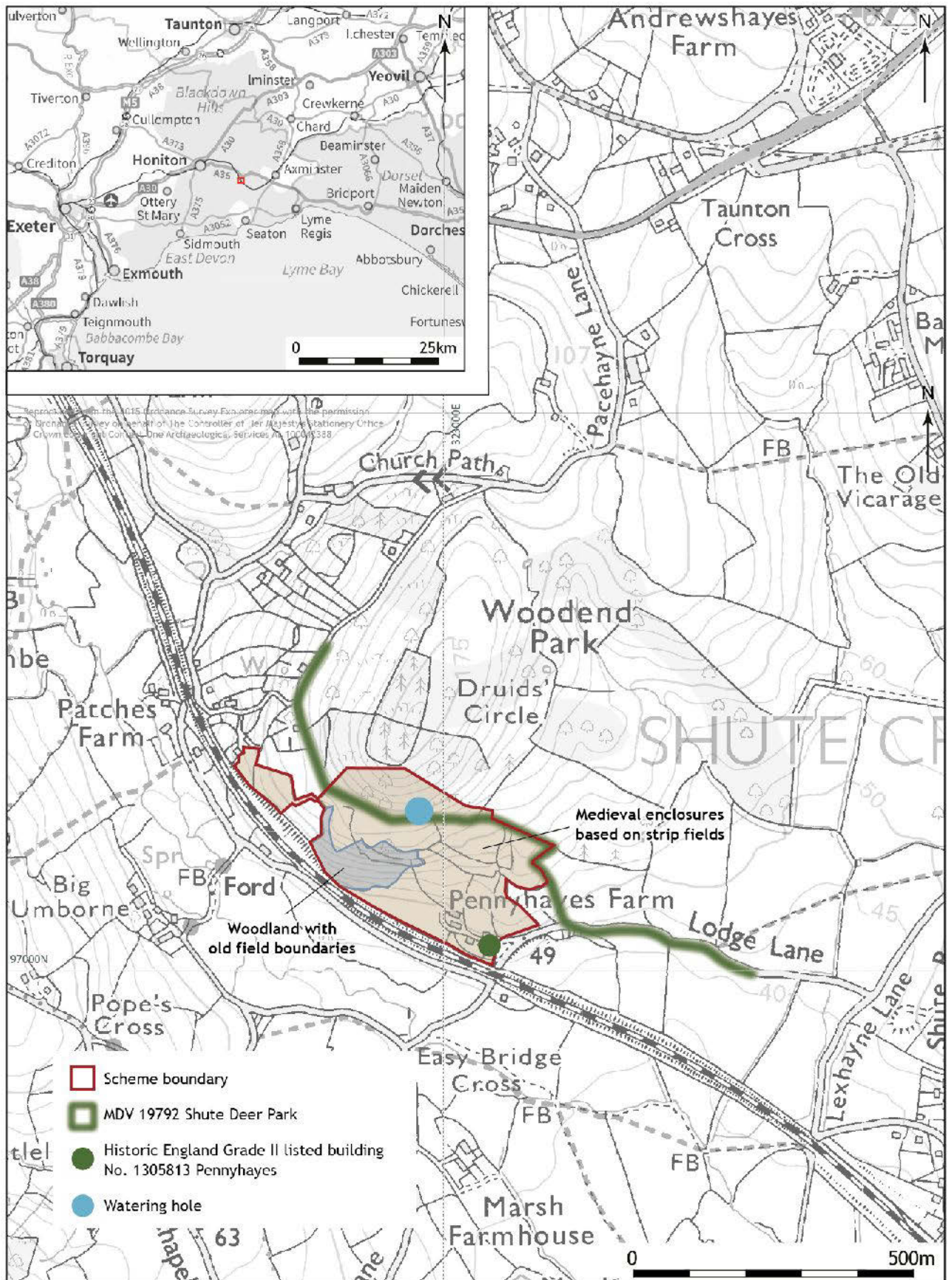


Figure 1: Site location and setting

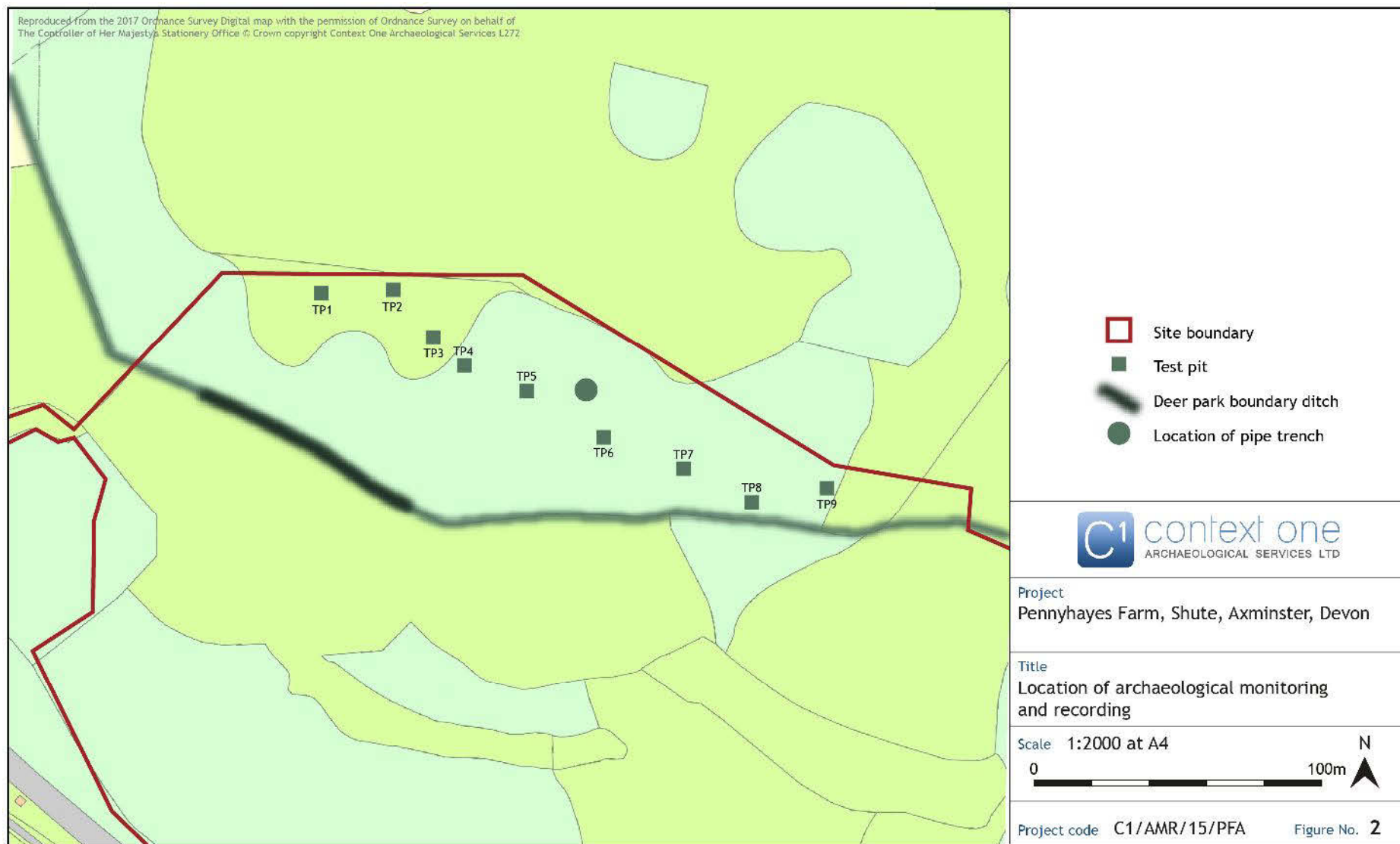


Figure 2: Location of archaeological monitoring and recording



Plate 1. Test Pit 6 in plan (0.20m scale)



Plate 2. Test Pit 2 in plan (0.20m scale)



Plate 3. Deer park boundary prior to cleaning



Plate 4. Interior of deep park boundary post-cleaning



Plate 5. Pipe trench (1.0m scale)



Plate 6. Pipe trench

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