

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Merton, Torridge	National Grid Reference SS 5137 1469	Number: (Leave blank for HES to fill in)
Subject: Archaeological monitoring and recording		Photo attached? Y
Planning Application no: Application not yet submitted	Recipient museum: Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon	
OASIS ID: contexto1-83896	Museum Accession no: NDDMS 2010:39	
Contractor's reference number/code: COAS/WBF/10/GPO	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 24/10/2010	
<p>Description of works.</p> <p>Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) was awarded the contract to carry out archaeological monitoring and recording during preliminary development groundworks at Great Potheridge House, Merton, Okehampton, Devon. The project was commissioned and funded by Encompass Training SW Ltd.</p> <p>The archaeological work was requested by the Local Planning Authority (Torridge District Council) on the advice of Ms Ann Dick (Archaeologist, Devon Historic Environment Service) in order to inform a planning application for the erection of a new drying shed located close to where the demolished remains of a complex of farm buildings and other possible earlier remains from the 17th century mansion are considered to be buried. The archaeological brief issued by Ms Dick stated that the principal objective of the archaeological programme was to observe, investigate, excavate and record any surviving below-ground archaeological artefacts and deposits across the area affected by the proposed drying shed (see Figure 1). This was achieved by monitoring topsoil stripping to a depth of approximately 0.30m.</p> <p>In addition to the Archaeological Brief issued by Ms Dick, topsoil stripping was also carried out to the same depth (0.30m) on the areas for a proposed utility block and proposed standings for two static caravans (see Figure 1). These areas lie in very close proximity to those earthworks identified and recorded within Exeter Museums Archaeological Field Unit Report No. 93.10 '<i>Great Potheridge Farm, Merton: An Archaeological Presentation Survey</i>' (Pye and Wescott 1993) (see Figure 1). The authors of this report concluded that the most probable interpretation of the earthworks is that they included medieval or later fishponds which were adapted and included within a formal garden at the rear of the main house. However, despite the topsoil stripping of the proposed utility block and standings for the static caravans, no archaeological remains or deposits were observed (see Plates 1-3).</p> <p>Monitoring of the drying shed area revealed the remains of two brick walls lying directly underneath dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/4) silty clay topsoil (100), and running closely parallel to each other in a north-west to south-east direction (see Plate 4). Wall (101) measured approximately 0.70m wide compared to wall (102) that measured a maximum of 0.30m wide. Although the same generic style solid brick was used to construct both walls, with each brick measuring approximately 6cm (h) x 21cm (l) x 9.5cm (d), the bonding pattern between the two walls were dissimilar; wall (101) was stretcher bonded, whilst wall (102) was English bonded. Very little of the soft lime mortar bonding these two walls remained, as it appeared to have been largely replaced with the surrounding soil. Due to the close alignment of the two walls, it is also feasible to suggest that wall (102) may have been constructed at a slightly later date in order to re-face wall (101). However, both sections of wall were in relatively poor condition and as such only a maximum of two courses of bricks could be seen in certain places from wall (102), thus hindering a further detailed explanation. The undiagnostic style of the bricks also make dating problematic but the absence of a 'frog' and the dimensions probably place the date of the bricks no later than the 18th-19th centuries.</p> <p>Approximately mid-way along the observed length of wall (101) the alignment of bricks was disturbed and the cut for the wall (101)[105] could be seen. This disturbed section measured approximately 1.35m long and was filled with brownish yellow (10YR 6/6) silty clay (104) with large pieces of deposited slate measuring approximately 0.40m x 0.30m.</p>		

Considering the location of the observed wall it is confident to conclude that these remains formed part of what was an L-shaped range of farm buildings observed around the north end of the east wing of the main house on maps and plans dating from around 1866 (Pye and Wescott, 1993) (see **Figure 1** for location of demolished buildings in relation to the Site, taken from an extract of the 1st edition 1887 OS 25" map).

The remainder of the groundworks revealed only a simple soil sequence of topsoil overlying the light brown (7.5YR 6/3) natural Crackington formation sandstone (103) and no further archaeological remains or deposits relating to the manor or outbuildings were observed.

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:

Fay Pegg, Context One Archaeological Services Ltd

Date sent to HER:

20/10/2010

Please email completed form to: archaeol@devon.gov.uk or post to County Archaeology Service, Environment Directorate, Matford Lane Offices, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter EX2 4QW. Information recorded on this form will be added to the Historic Environment Record, and made available to all researchers.

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- archaeologically monitored areas of development
- archaeological features
- complex of L shaped farm buildings as seen on the 1887 25" OS map
- earthworks - DHER Monument no. 20538

PROJECT TITLE
Great Potheridge House, Merton,
Okehampton, Devon

FIGURE TITLE
Site setting showing relevant
archaeological landscape

SCALE
as shown

PROJECT CODE
COAS/WBF/10/GPO

FIGURE NO.
1



Plate 1. Stripped area for proposed location of static caravan 1



Plate 2. Stripped area for proposed location of static caravan 2



Plate 3. Stripped area for proposed location of utility block



Plate 4. Walls (101) and (102) within stripped area for proposed drying shed