

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING  
AT 60–68 WINNER STREET  
PAIGNTON**

**by**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared by Exeter Archaeology (EA) at the request of Rogers and Haynes Architects and presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out between July and October 2003 during the redevelopment of Nos 60–68 Winner Street, Paignton (SX88506070).

### 1.1 **The site** (SX88506070; Fig. 1)

The site is located on the corner of Winner Street and Palace Avenue, occupying a frontage of 60m along the former street and 25m along the latter. Winner Street is believed to date from the original settlement at Paignton; Palace Avenue was created during Paignton's late Victorian expansion. The buildings on the site prior to redevelopment represented several phases of 20th-century development (see section 3 below).

The underlying geology of the site is Permian conglomerate, breccia and sandstone (Geological Survey 1976). The sandstone has in the past been used for building, and some of this is visible towards the rear of the site. During recent observations of the South West Water Paignton Water Mains Rehabilitation Scheme in Winner Street it was noted that the natural subsoil, a reddish-brown sandy clay, lay under the road surface make-up (from 0.1m below the present ground surface (Passmore 2001)).

### 1.2 **The scheme**

The redevelopment involved the refurbishment of the main Co-op buildings behind the retained façades. Limited excavations for new foundations and services were undertaken within the building. Stores to the rear of the main building were demolished and replaced with two new residential units.

## 2. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 **Historical background**

An archaeological assessment of the site was produced by EA in December 2002 (revised 2003). A summary history taken from the assessment is presented below.

The Saxon manor of Paignton was acquired by the bishops of Exeter prior to the Conquest, and until the Reformation remained one of the bishops' richest manors. The extent of the early settlement is unknown, but features dating from the 11th to 15th centuries have been located during archaeological recording in Well Street and Church Road. The church of St John the Baptist contains 12th-century fabric and may lie on the site of an earlier church. The Bishop's Palace, adjacent to the church, contains features of 14th-century date but is probably older.

The earliest large-scale plan of Paignton is the 1840 Tithe Map, which shows settlement along the length of Winner Street. At that date the street was narrower than at present, and buildings extended further west than the current shop frontages. In 1840 the site was divided into four properties with buildings being located adjacent to, but not running continuously along, Winner Street. By 1906 the street frontage had been fully developed with further buildings including a bakery and smithy constructed to the rear (east) of these properties.

In 1906 the Paignton Co-operative Society, which had been formed in 1893, replaced three properties (the former Nos 39, 41 and 43) with a unified three-storey brick building set back

from the earlier building line by 2m. This building was extended to the rear in 1920, and the southern part of the site on the corner of Winner Street and Palace Avenue was developed as a retail unit along both street frontages by 1933 (1935 OS map, Fig. 3). The buildings to the north of the Co-op building had been rebuilt as a pair of houses by this date, and the northern house (now 68 Winner Street) survives. The surviving structures and boundary walls visible within the site at the time of the site visit in December 2002 were of 20th-century date, constructed of red and yellow brick and sandstone.

The assessment concluded that the site was situated close to the historic core of Paignton and at least part of the Winner Street frontage was built up by the 16th century. A large basement/cellar associated with the 1906 (and later) Co-op building is situated within the centre of the site (both inside and to the rear of the existing building). Its construction would have removed deposits within its footprint and, given the relatively high ground level observed in the adjacent street, truncation may also have occurred during construction of the existing buildings.

## **2.2 Archaeological background**

Since the late 1990s a number of archaeological observations have been made within the historic core of Paignton, most to the north and east of the present site. During these observations medieval features of 11th- to 15th-century date have been discovered in Well Street and Church Road. During the South West Water Paignton Water Mains Rehabilitation Scheme in Winner Street two walls were recorded outside 60–68 Winner Street (Passmore 2001). These were probably of 19th-century date and appeared to represent parts of buildings present before the road was widened in the early 20th century.

Since the publication of the assessment, excavation and building recording has been undertaken within the Bishop's Palace complex (Passmore 2003), and a watching brief undertaken to the rear of 16–18 Winner Street 200m to the south (EA project number 4933). During the latter an undated make-up layer probably associated with the existing buildings, was observed.

## **3. RESULTS (Fig. 2)**

### **3.1 Excavations within the existing building**

Excavation for two service trenches and a new lintel were monitored (areas B and D). Parts of areas B and D were situated on the line of an existing 20th-century culvert. The deposit sequence within these trenches consisted of sub-base for a concrete floor directly over natural clay, which was located 0.60m below the existing floor surface. Other than concrete foundations for the existing building and the side wall of the basement/cellar, no features were observed.

### **3.2 Excavations to the rear of the existing building**

Excavations took place in two areas to the north of the basement/cellar (areas A and E). These were fully monitored.

Ground level was reduced by up to 0.30m with a step roughly on a line adjacent to the north end of the Co-op building. This step marked a change in level of approximately 0.90m and represented early 20th-century terracing into natural clay. To the north of this step, natural clay was visible at a depth of between 0.20–0.30m below previously reduced ground level and was overlain by a mixture of 20th-century building rubble and modern demolition debris.

The extreme northern part of the site had also been terraced into the hillside; here the make-up for the existing floor directly overlaid natural clay. A small patch of cobbling was visible to the rear of No. 68 Winner Street.

### 3.2.1 *Area A*

Two features were recorded. The first was a pit (500), partially exposed within the trenches. Its minimum recorded dimensions were 1.70m long, 0.28m wide and 0.40m deep. It contained a dark brown clay fill with occasional fragments of mortar and coke, the coke particularly noticeable towards the base.

To its south was a second pit (501). This measured 1.60m by a minimum of 0.52m wide and 1.10m deep. The pit was filled with bands of clay, and mortar containing slate, charcoal and coal. Its basal fill consisted of compact sandstone, slate and clay; the upper fill contained fragments of industrial china and bottle glass.

### 3.2.2 *Area E*

Two foundations were exposed within this area. The first, to the south-west, were associated with the standing Co-op building and were constructed of local red sandstone bonded in pink mortar (a on Fig. 2). At the east end, a foundation trench bisected a 1m-wide, unmortared, local red sandstone footing of a recently demolished wall (b on Fig. 2). This correlates well with part of the 1920 additions to the Co-op building. The only other feature was a small pit (503), measuring 1m by 0.8m by 0.20m deep, which contained abundant fragments of industrial china including 'Keiller' marmalade jars.

No finds were retained from the above excavations.

## 3.3 **East boundary wall**

Observations of the east boundary were made in conjunction with the recording of the footings of a wall within Area A. The following sequence (north to south) was observed:

- Unmortared, local red sandstone foundation for the east wall of the demolished building that until recently occupied the north-east corner of the site (shaded on Fig. 3). These footings (c on Fig. 2) projected 0.25m either side of the wall and continued below the base of the trench.
- A contemporary local red sandstone wall continued southwards from the demolished building (d on Fig. 2). It was set onto natural clay; at the south end foundations for an east-west aligned return continued down 1.5m from the former ground surface. These foundations were constructed of unmortared red sandstone rubble. The wall appeared to incorporate a door at the southern end, which had been blocked, and subsequently the upper part of the wall rebuilt in brick. A floor scar for the 1906 Co-op building ground level was also visible on this wall.
- Cut into the above wall was the former generator room associated with the Co-op building (e on Fig. 2). This was constructed of brick on a concrete foundation.

## 3.4 **The basement/cellar**

The part of the basement/cellar to the east of the Co-op building was recorded after the removal of the above-ground structures. This part of the cellar was constructed of local red sandstone capped with (fragmentary) red brick, and had a concrete floor that was not removed. The outline of the south-east corner differed from that depicted on architect's plans,

and this change is plotted on the accompanying site plan. The chamber containing the ‘hoist’ at the north-east corner of the cellar was an addition and was constructed in yellow brick.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

The limited observations within the Co-op building fronting Winner Street have demonstrated that its construction involved terracing into the natural ground to provide a level base for a concrete floor. In addition, a cellar had been constructed towards the northern end of the site. This occupied approximately a quarter of the overall footprint of the building. No archaeological deposits were observed within the Co-op building.

The cellar extended eastwards beyond the main range, and the ground had also been terraced and levelled to the east, and immediately to the north, for the outbuildings constructed at the rear of the main store. No archaeological deposits were observed here.

Three 19th/20th-century pits survived on the higher ground to the north where there was less disturbance. Pits 500 and 501 in Area A were located beneath the building(s) shown on the 1935 OS map (Fig. 3). Pit 503 in Area E may have been associated with the former 19th-century property fronting Winner Street.

Apart from remains associated with the 1920’s additions to the Co-op building, the only structural features recorded were those adjacent to the east boundary wall, which relate to late 19th- or early 20th-century buildings.

No evidence was found for early (medieval or early post-medieval) occupation.

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