

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
AT PAIGNTON HOSPITAL
CHURCH ROAD, PAIGNTON**

by

M.J. Dyer

Exeter Archaeology

Report No. 99.18

March 1999

Contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1 Project brief	1
2. The site	1
3. Archaeological and historical background	1
4. Method	2
5. Results	2
5.1 Trench 1	2
5.2 Trench 2	3
6. Conclusion	5
Acknowledgements	5
Bibliography	5

List of illustrations

Fig. 1 Location of site.

Fig. 2 Location of trenches.

Fig. 3 Trench 1: plan and section. Trench 2: section.

Fig. 4 The area as shown on 1865 OS 1:2500 map, sheet 122.5.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report describes the result of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Exeter Archaeology (EA) between 24 and 26 February 1999 on the site of a proposed extension to Paignton Hospital, Church Road, Paignton. The work was commissioned by South Devon Healthcare Trust, and was requested by Torbay Council as a condition of planning permission (Application No. 98/1857/PA) in accordance with Government Planning Policy Guidance Note No. 16 (PPG 16) *Archaeology and Planning*, DoE 1990.

1.1 Project brief

The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a brief prepared by the Torbay Council Archaeological Officer (Fiorato 16 February 1999). The main requirements were to establish the nature and extent of any archaeological deposits, including structural evidence, and to record areas of post-medieval/modern disturbance.

2. THE SITE (Figs 1-2)

The site of the extension is centred on SX887608 and is situated immediately to the rear (south) of the existing main ward area. The extension work will involve the demolition and refitting of an existing day-room and wards, and the building of a new ward to either side, taking in two previously undeveloped areas *c.* 7.5 x 5.5m in extent. These areas are at present partly under tarmac and partly under lawn or garden. The area immediately south of the existing wards, including the new areas to be developed, appears to have been terraced and levelled when these parts of the hospital building were constructed. However, from 7m to 10m south of the building, the ground rises by approximately 1m to the foot of a sandstone wall which forms a boundary on this side, and must represent the original ground level prior to terracing. The ground rises to the same level on the west, where it meets the wall of the churchyard. These strips of rising ground are occupied by shrub borders.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The site lies within the historic core of Paignton. It is situated 50m north-east of the church of St John the Baptist, and the boundary wall of the churchyard is only 12m west of the development area. Parts of the surviving church date to the 12th century, and it was rebuilt extensively in the 15th century. The manor of Paignton was one of the richest manors of the Bishops of Exeter, and had been acquired by them before the Norman Conquest. They built a palace at Paignton in the 11th century, and a later (?) walled enclosure and tower from this survive to the south of the church. It is possible that the Palace and church were founded at the same time. Unverified 19th-century references imply that the Palace may have held land to the north of the church, which could possibly have included the hospital site. Paignton developed as a town under the bishops, gaining a market in 1295, and becoming a borough around the same time (Hoskins 1954, 449).

The 1865 first edition OS 1:2500 map (Fig. 4) shows that the development site was occupied by a house called 'Croft' and its grounds. This map shows the churchyard occupying the same area as today, but it has been postulated that the medieval graveyard could have extended further. The Listed red sandstone boundary wall to the south and west of the site is partly 19th-century, but also contains medieval stonework. The wall to the west is part of the boundary of the churchyard, and contains a round-headed, arched gateway which was blocked some five years ago (D. Ellicott, pers. comm.).

The 1904 OS 1:2500 map shows the earliest phase of the hospital, built on the site of 'Croft'. A 1907 datestone can be seen on the north side of the building. The wing to the rear, which will be incorporated into the new development, was built in the 1920s (M. Cavanna, pers. comm.), and is shown on the 1933 OS 1:2500 map. The day-room extension was added in the 1960s.

No previous archaeological investigations are known to have taken place within the site of the development or in the immediate vicinity. No archaeological remains are recorded from the 1960s building work.

4. METHOD

Two evaluation trenches were excavated using a small, tracked mechanical excavator with a 1m-wide toothless bucket. The locations of the trenches were determined by the Torbay Council Archaeological Officer and were intended to sample the previously undeveloped areas that would be affected by the new building.

The trenches were machine-excavated to the upper level of surviving archaeological stratigraphy, and excavation was then continued by hand. The trenches were to be excavated to a maximum depth of 1.2m to comply with safe working requirements. In Trench 1 *in situ* archaeological deposits were fully excavated to undisturbed natural subsoil. In Trench 2 archaeological deposits were investigated by sections and *sondages* to clarify stratigraphic relationships and dates.

Once excavated, the trenches and features were cleaned by hand, and the precise position of the trenches was recorded in relation to the existing hospital buildings. Relevant sections and areas were drawn at a scale of 1:20, and a photographic record was made consisting of colour transparencies and black and white prints. Features and deposits were recorded on standard EA single context record sheets. Finds were collected and labelled.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Trench 1 (Figs 2-3)

This trench, measuring 2m by 1.8m, was excavated to undisturbed subsoil, to a maximum depth of 1m.

A layer of tarmac and gravel make-up (500/501), 0.14m thick, was removed from over the area of the trench. In the southern half of the trench, undisturbed sandy red subsoil (506) lay directly below the tarmac surface, confirming that the site had been terraced down to subsoil level. In the northern half of the trench, the tarmac sealed a layer of clay/loam with brick and tile fragments, which was probably levelling material from the building of the 1920s wing. This layer sealed a ditch (513) aligned east-west which extended across the entire trench. The southern edge of the ditch was fully exposed, and showed that it was U-shaped but with a slightly flattened base, 0.12 to 0.20m wide. The southern edge of a second, parallel depression was excavated along the northern edge of the trench, but was not fully exposed. It is possible that this represents the base of an earlier ditch that was recut by 513 (as suggested by the profile of the upper fill 503 surviving to a maximum width of 1.20m), since the lower fill (504) of the two features was indistinguishable. Layers 503, 504 and 505 all contained sherds of medieval chert-tempered coarse pottery, which elsewhere in South Devon date from the 11th and 12th centuries.

5.1.1 *Context listing: Trench 1*

- 500 Tarmac.
- 501 Gravel bedding for tarmac.
- 502 Reddish-brown clay/loam; firm, slightly plastic. Contained occasional small stones and gravel, and occasional brick and tile fragments, modern china and shell fragments. Modern site levelling material. Sealed 503.
- 503 Mixed light-brown clay-loam and red sandy subsoil; friable. Contained occasional small stones and gravel, occasional limestone and sandstone (up to 0.15m) and occasional charcoal flecks. Upper fill of ditch 513. Over 504.
- 504 Medium-brown clay/loam; plastic. Contained occasional small stones and gravel, a few larger stones and roof slates (up to 0.15m), and frequent charcoal flecks. Fill of ditch 513. Under 503, over 505.
- 505 Mixed red-brown sandy clay and medium-brown clay loam; friable. Contained rare small stones, a few larger stones and roof slates (up to 0.20m) and frequent charcoal flecks. Lower fill of ditch 513. Below 504.
- 506 Undisturbed red sand or gravel subsoil; compact.
- 513 Cut of ditch, cut subsoil (506).

5.2 **Trench 2** (Figs 2-3)

This trench, measuring 5.2m by 1.8m, was excavated within the western of the new areas to be affected, and extended into the rising ground along the south edge of the site. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.70m at the north end, and to a maximum depth of 1.16m at the south end.

The northern half was surfaced with tarmac. After this was removed, the excavations revealed a curving stone-lined and stone-capped drain at the northern end. The outer wall (508) of the drain was up to 0.30m wide, and the inner one (509) was up to 0.20m wide. Both were built of sandstone and limestone rubble plus occasional slate, bonded with a mixture of red clay and white lime mortar. The intervening channel was 0.18m wide and 0.34m deep, with an 0.05m layer of red-brown silt filling the base. The capstones only survived at the northern edge of the trench. Here the drain cavity had been partially filled with concrete, which also extended over the edge of a surviving capstone. Elsewhere, the cavity was filled with a brown sandy clay/loam (511) containing mortar fragments. The curving east end of the drain had been built within a construction cut, which had been excavated into the natural subsoil (506) and backfilled and overlain by a deposit of brown sandy clay/loam (510/512). The western edge of the construction cut had been revetted with a kerb of mortared sandstone rubble (515). The straight section of drain to the west had been trench-built, with the walls set tight against the edge of the cut (520). A modern electric cable had been laid in a trench which cut across the top of the drain.

The fill of the construction cut contained pottery and glass of 18th-century or later date, and the fill (511) of the drain contained glass of late 19th-century (or later) date. This indicates that the drain is a late feature, probably associated with the Victorian house or the first hospital building. The level of the drain shows that the site had already been terraced for one of these episodes of building. The drain was partly demolished, levelled and filled with concrete, perhaps when the hospital wing was constructed in the 1920s. It was further truncated by the laying of the electricity cable.

The southern end of the trench was partly under lawn, and partly under a shrub border. The rise in level through the border indicated the edge of the terracing of the site. Below the garden soil (0.40m thick) of the border, the excavations revealed a ditch, orientated NNE/SSW, running diagonally along the east side of the trench. A section 0.60m wide was excavated across the ditch adjacent to the south end of the trench. The ditch was cut into the natural subsoil. It was V-shaped with splayed sides, and a narrow bottom 0.14m wide. The ditch was 1.20m wide and 0.80m deep as surviving. The fill of the ditch (507) was homogenous: a reddish-brown sandy clay containing frequent charcoal and burnt clay flecks. The ditch produced one struck flint flake, but no pottery. The fill was sealed by a layer (518) of reddish-brown clay mixed with redeposited natural sand subsoil, with numerous pieces of limestone at its top and bottom margins and abundant charcoal flecks and patches of burnt clay. What this layer represents is uncertain, but it was deposited after the silting up of the ditch. Layer 518 lay immediately below the garden soil of the border. As a result of the terracing, the ditch had been truncated further north along the trench, but was still visible, cut into the red sandy subsoil. The northernmost end of the ditch was truncated by the construction cut for the stone-lined drain and by the electricity cable trench.

A second, more modern, electricity cable, encased in ceramic ducting, cut across the southern end of the trench from north-west to south-east.

5.2.1 *Context listing: Trench 2*

- 506 Undisturbed red sand or gravel subsoil; compact.
- 507 Reddish-brown sandy clay; friable. Contained occasional medium stones, frequent charcoal fragments and occasional burnt clay fragments. Fill of ditch 519; below 518.
- 508 Outer wall of capped drain. Built of sandstone and limestone rubble, bonded with clay and lime mortar. Continuous with 509. Within 520. Under 510 and abutted by 510/512.
- 509 Inner wall of capped drain. Build as 508. Within 520. Under and abutted by 510.
- 510 Reddish-brown sandy clay; friable. Contained small waterworn stones and slate fragments, occasional lime mortar fragments, shell fragments and charcoal flecks. Fill of construction cut for drain 508/509; also overlay drain.
- 511 Brown sandy clay/loam; friable, slightly plastic. Contained frequent small to medium stones, lime mortar fragments and charcoal flecks. Fill of drain 508/509 cavity.
- 512 Same as 510.
- 514 Tarmac and gravel make-up.
- 515 Kerb revetting west edge of construction cut for drain 508/509. Built of sandstone rubble, bonded with red clay and lime mortar. Abutted natural subsoil and abutted by 510. Below 510.
- 516 Garden soil. Over 518, 507 and natural subsoil (506).
- 517 Turf and topsoil of lawn. Over 510, 506 and natural subsoil (506),
- 518 Reddish-brown clay mixed with redeposited red natural subsoil and; friable, slightly plastic. Limestone fragments at top and bottom margins. Contained occasional pockets of brown clay, abundant charcoal fragments and burnt clay. Below 516, above 507 and natural subsoil (506).
- 519 Ditch cut. Cut natural subsoil (506).
- 520 Construction trench for straight section of drain 508/509. Below 517, cut natural subsoil (506).
- 521 Concrete filling part of cavity of drain 508/509. Under 514.

6. CONCLUSION

The excavations have shown that the ground level in the area of the proposed extension has been reduced by terracing for the Victorian house and for later hospital buildings. However, archaeological features cut into the subsoil do survive. These are better preserved on the edge of the terracing.

Ditch 513 in Trench 1 can be dated to the 11th or 12th century from the evidence of the pottery recovered from the fill. It is possible that there were two successive medieval ditches on this same alignment. The function of the ditch is uncertain, but it may have been a boundary.

Ditch 519 in Trench 2 has very similar dimensions to 513. Because of their relative alignments (see Fig. 2), it seems unlikely that they are part of the same ditch, but they could be associated. No dating evidence was obtained from the ditch 519. The ditch does not appear to be modern since it does not correspond with any boundary shown on late 19th-century maps. On balance, it seems likely that the ditch is contemporary with 513, with the flint being residual.

The stone-lined drain excavated in Trench 2 may have been associated with the late 19th-century 'Croft' or the earliest hospital building. The 1865 OS map shows that the house extended up to the west edge of Trench 2. The finds from the fill of the construction cut of the drain date from the 18th century or later, and the small amount of silt in the base indicates that it is a relatively recent feature in use for a comparatively short time.

No information is available on the depth of the foundations for the proposed extension, and it is therefore not possible to comment on the effect these will have on the surviving archaeological features.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The evaluation was commissioned by South Devon Healthcare Trust, and was administered by M. Cavanna for SDHT and P.J. Weddell for Exeter Archaeology. The fieldwork was carried out by M.J. Dyer and S.J. Reed (EA). Thanks are due to M. Cavanna for his co-operation during the work, and to D. Ellicott of SDHT Estates Department for his assistance on site. The illustrations were prepared by S. Blackmore and T. Dixon (EA).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Cherry, B and Pevsner, N. 1989 *The Buildings of England: Devon*.
 Hoskins, W.G. 1954 *Devon*.
 OS 1:2500 map sheet 122.5, 1865 (WCSL).
 OS 1:2500 map sheet 122.5, 1904 (WCSL).
 OS 1:2500 map sheet 122.5, 1933 (WCSL).