

# TAVISTOCK GUILDHALL AND POLICE STATION, TAVISTOCK, DEVON

(NGR SX 48223 74408)

Written Scheme of Investigation for historic building recording  
and an archaeological watching brief

West Devon Borough Council planning references 1827/17/FUL,  
condition 4, 1828/17/LBC, condition 4, and 1976/18/LBC,  
condition 3

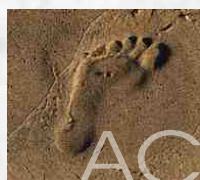
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On behalf of:  
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AC archaeology

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document sets out proposals for undertaking historic building recording prior to and during, along with an archaeological watching brief during, the redevelopment of Tavistock Guildhall and Police Station, Tavistock, Devon (SX 48223 74408). The investigations are required under conditions 4 of planning permission and Listed Building Consent (West Devon Borough Council references 1827/17/FUL and 1828/17/LBC respectively) for 'conversion and change of use of grade II\* former Police Station and Guildhall to form mixed use development of Heritage Gateway Centre and Council Offices', and condition 3 of Listed Building Consent (West Devon Borough Council reference 1976/18/LBC) for 'new door opening and lowered floor level'. Guidance on the scope of works has been provided by the Devon County Historic Environment Team (DCHET) and Historic England as part of their consultation responses to the applications.
- 1.2 The investigations will be carried out by AC archaeology and have been commissioned by Gillespie Yunnie Architects on behalf of Tavistock Town Council.
- 1.3 Tavistock Guildhall and Police Station is located within the historic core of the town on the northwest side of the River Tavy at a height of approximately 80m aOD. The underlying geology consists of Carboniferous basaltic lava and tuff of the Milton Abbot Formation overlain by superficial quaternary alluvium deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel (British Geological Survey online viewer 2018).
- Statutory designations**
- 1.4 The building is located within the Tamar Valley Mining District with Tavistock (Area A10ii) of the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site inscribed by the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO in 2006. It is also located within the Tavistock Conservation Area.
- 1.5 The western half of the application area falls within part of the Scheduled Monument of Tavistock Abbey (National Heritage List for England no. 1020401). The monument includes part of the standing, ruined, and buried remains which together encompass the greater part of Tavistock Abbey, a Benedictine establishment founded in 974 and dissolved in 1539. Upstanding remains of the

abbey survive as discrete structures or remains, or incorporated within later buildings including the Guildhall and Police Station. (Blaylock 1998; 2001). Below-ground remains of the abbey survive, preserved below 19th-century landscaping deposits when the ground level was raised as part of rebuilding of the centre of Tavistock by the Dukes of Bedford.

- 1.5** The Guildhall and Police Station is a Grade II\* Listed Building under the name 'Guildhall, Police Station, Attached Railings and Boundary Wall' (National Heritage List for England no. 1309358). The Listing includes the following summary description:

*Purpose-built combined court and police station with former police accommodation block and fire engine house. Circa 1848, incorporating some late-C15 fabric. Late C19 and late C20 alterations. Designed initially by John Foulston and then by Theophilus Jones for the Duke of Bedford.*

## **2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** Tavistock Abbey, which was of the Benedictine order, was founded in AD974, and was dissolved in 1539 (Devon County Council Historic Environment Record (HER) MDV3919). Above-ground remains of the abbey are fragmentary, but include gatehouses into the courts, lengths of the precinct wall, a hall and part of the abbey church (Stead 1999, fig. 11). Excavations in 1997 and 1999 exposed medieval masonry at the west end of the church as well as part of a tiled floor and three graves (*ibid.*, fig. 8).
- 2.2** After the dissolution some of the abbey buildings were dismantled, whilst others were retained. The ruined church was razed to the ground in 1670, and in the early 18th-century former monastic buildings to the south of the church were built into Abbey House, now incorporated into the larger Bedford Hotel.
- 2.3** Income received by the 6th and 7th Dukes of Bedford from the copper boom of the later 18 and 19th centuries was spent on the rebuilding of the town. Buildings to the east of the parish church were swept away and the ground level raised significantly. Bedford Square was laid out to the east of the Church, and Bedford Street (and associated properties) constructed to the south of the churchyard. Archaeological evidence for these episodes of post-medieval activity was found in 1997 and 1999, and further evidence for the raising of the ground level to the west of the church was recovered during a watching brief behind West Street in 2011 (Passmore 2011), to the east of the church in Guildhall Square in 2012 (Stead 2012), and to the south of the church in 2017 (Kysh 2017).
- 2.4** The Guildhall and Police Station is a multi-phase building, probably containing two medieval elements (Blaylock 1998; HER MDV29023, MDV72669 and MDV3924), reused post-dissolution. The Listed Building description provides the following 19th- and 20th-century history of the building.

*In 1823 the Plymouth architect John Foulston was commissioned by the sixth Duke of Bedford to repair the 'old buildings' in the square, including Trowte's House, a late-C15 structure that was later incorporated into the Guildhall and police station complex. The 1830s saw not only the creation of a Tavistock police force, but public pressure for a purpose-built court. By 1847 the seventh Duke's architect, Theophilus Jones, was working on designs for a Guildhall. This was a combination building, which incorporated a police station and cells in a semi-basement below the courtroom. It was designed in conjunction*

with amendments to Trowte's House, absorbing that building into the court as a magistrates' room; and the development of police accommodation and a fire engine house to the north. The whole project was forward-thinking in terms of public law, order and safety and the connections between them.

Re-planning following a flood in the late C19 meant that the whole police station effectively moved north, into Trowte's House, although the basement below the Guildhall continued to be used for prisoner access. Tavistock became the headquarters of a division of the county constabulary from 1856 until 1921, when it became a sub-divisional headquarters. In about 1969 the northern part of the range ceased to be used as accommodation and the police station expanded into this building. The court closed in circa 1996-7.

### **3. AIMS**

**3.1** The scheme will involve the conversion of the currently unused Guildhall and Police Station into public and Town Council uses including a heritage centre and shop. This will involve changes to the building, including removal of post-1840s external additions and internal partitions, the creation of new doorways, and changes to current finishes of historic spaces. Whilst retaining most historic spaces and fixtures and fittings the scheme will remove and obscure fixtures and fittings and historic architectural features of interest. The first aim of the investigation is therefore to prepare a full survey of the building complex (as within the application area) prior to works commencing. Where access is not available, or observations are required during the building works (e.g. the creation of new openings or removal of internal finishes) these areas will be recorded during the conversion of the building.

**3.2** The scheme also has the potential to expose buried archaeological deposits relating to the history of the building, and its place within the development of medieval and later Tavistock. These works will focus on, but not be restricted to, the limited ground reduction within the Scheduled Monument, which has the greatest archaeological potential. Groundworks at the rear of the building have the potential to expose a 19th-century leat (MDV61767). A second aim is therefore to monitor all relevant groundworks, and excavate and record any exposed archaeological deposits.

### **4. METHODOLOGY**

**4.1** All works will be undertaken in accordance with this Written Scheme of Investigation, the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* and *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (both revised 2014), and the AC archaeology *General Site Recording Manual, Version 2*. The Written Scheme of Investigation will be provided to project staff.

#### **Historic building recording**

**4.2** The historic building recording will be undertaken in accordance with the guidance set out in *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (Historic England 2016), and undertaken to level 3.

**4.3** The recording will comprise the following:

- A written description;

- A photographic record comprising a colour digital record (minimum 16 megapixels). Where appropriate, all photographs will include a photographic scale. Details of photographs taken will be made on *pro forma* record sheets; and
- Annotated as existing architect's drawings (plans, profiles and elevations) will be updated to show the location of observed historic fabric and fixtures and fittings, along with information on the phasing and development of the building.

**4.4** The recording will consider the following:

- Date/period of initial build and subsequent alterations,
- Materials and method of construction (and differences in material and construction techniques/architectural styles in each identified phase),
- Fenestration and the design of elevations in relation to the function of internal spaces,
- Internal arrangements including evidence for alterations,
- Original fixtures and fittings,
- Subsequent fixtures and fittings, and evidence for change of use, and
- Ephemeral evidence of occupation and use, for instance any evidence of historic graffiti or signage.

**Archaeological watching brief**

**4.5** All groundworks with the potential to expose archaeological deposits will be monitored by the attending site archaeologist who will have the authority to request the contractor to halt excavation in the case of significant deposits being exposed, to enable sufficient time for the area to be cleaned and investigated. The contractor will be required to allow a reasonable time delay for the archaeological contractor to complete the recording of complex or important deposits. In the unlikely event that agreement cannot be reached between the contractor and the archaeological contractor, or where a delay of more than 24 hours is requested, the archaeological contractor shall inform and seek the advice of the DCHET and Historic England.

**4.6** Excavation will be undertaken by hand or with a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. Should archaeological deposits be exposed then excavations by the contractor will cease, and will continue by the archaeological contractor to the required depth or the base of archaeological deposits.

**4.7** All pre-modern archaeological features and deposits exposed will be excavated by hand to the following sample levels where applicable; the full excavation of small discrete features (pits, postholes, stakeholes etc), half-sectioning (50% excavation) of larger discrete features and, long linear features will be excavated to sample 20% of their length – with hand investigations distributed along the exposed length of any such features, specifically targeting any intersections, terminals or overlaps. Should the above percentage excavation not yield sufficient information to allow the form and function of archaeological features/deposits to be determined, the sample may need to be increased or the full excavation of large or linear features/deposits may be required. Additional excavation may also be needed for the taking of palaeoenvironmental samples and recovery of artefacts. In addition, sample areas of the sides of excavation areas and trenches will be cleaned by hand and exposed archaeological deposits recorded.

- 4.8** If human remains are encountered, their excavation and removal will be undertaken on receipt of the appropriate licence from the Ministry of Justice. Any consents or licenses required will be obtained on behalf of the client by AC Archaeology. The Devon County Council Historic Environment Team and Historic England will be informed immediately.
- 4.9** Should gold or silver artefacts be exposed, these will be removed to a safe place and reported to the local coroner according to the procedures relating to the Treasure Act 1996. Where removal cannot be effected on the same working day as the discovery, suitable security measures will be taken to protect the finds from theft.
- 4.10** Where it can be established that previous disturbance has been so thorough that archaeological deposits could not be reasonably expected to survive, or that in the judgment of the site archaeologist sufficient exposure of the natural subsoil has been found to be devoid of archaeological interest and that the site is considered to have no further potential, then following consultation with the DCHET and Historic England, monitoring of the site groundworks will be terminated.

#### ***Recording***

- 4.11** All artefacts, features or deposits revealed will be recorded using the standard AC archaeology *pro-forma* recording system, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and in accordance with AC archaeology's *General Site Recording Manual, Version 2*. Site plans will be drawn at a scale of 1:50 or 1:20 and sections of features and trench sides at 1:20. An overall location plan will be prepared at a suitable scale.
- 4.12** All site levels will be related to Ordnance Datum and areas investigated to published property boundaries.
- 4.13** All metal finds and other typologically distinct or closely-dateable artefacts will be recorded three-dimensionally.
- 4.14** A photographic record of all archaeological deposits will be made in both plan and section. The record will be made using a colour high-quality digital camera (minimum of 16 megapixels) illustrating in both detail and generally the principal features and finds discovered. The photographic record will also include working shots to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted. A photographic scale and north arrow shall be included in the case of detailed photographs.

#### ***Finds and samples***

- 4.15** All pre-c.1750 finds will be retained. The presence of later material will be noted, but examples will not be retained except where they are items of intrinsic interest, or their further examination is considered necessary for the dating of specific features or deposits or for the interpretation of a feature.
- 4.16** Necessary conservation work, including any on-site emergency conservation actions, will be undertaken by specialist conservators or laboratories who regularly provide sub-contract services and conservation advice to AC archaeology.
- 4.17** All artefacts recovered are to be washed (where the condition of the material allows) and marked. Finds will be bagged, boxed, labelled and stored in accordance with current UKIC guidelines as set out in *Guidelines for the treatment of finds from*

*archaeological sites*. Appropriate separation will be maintained of bulk finds from those small or delicate objects requiring special treatment or packaging.

**4.18** Where deposits of palaeoenvironmental potential are encountered, including carbonised or waterlogged organic deposits, these will be sampled as appropriate in accordance with English Heritage 2011 guidelines, *Environmental Archaeology – A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation*. Where required, sampling will be undertaken in consultation with the Historic England Regional Scientific Advisor.

**4.19** The following techniques will be used:

- Bulk samples of up to 40/60 litres will be taken from any sealed deposits relevant for environmental sampling (waterlogged deposits, pits, peat, etc). Bulk samples will be sub-sampled as appropriate.
- If it is felt appropriate by the relevant specialist (see below), samples taken (both bulk samples and monolith tin samples) will be examined for diatoms, insect, plant macrofossils and molluscs.
- Bulk samples will be processed using the standard flotation methods with the following mesh sizes: 5.6mm, 4mm and 500 micron.
- Monolith tin samples, with tins measuring no more than 500mm in length, will be overlapped in the standard way to allow for a continuous sample of the entire sequence to be taken. Samples will be adequately recorded and labelled. A register of samples will be made and sampling record sheets (using the standard AC archaeology pro-forma recording system – see section 4.11 above) will be completed for all samples taken and will include the following information: sample type, reason for sampling, sample size, context, sample number, spatial location, date, context description and the approximate percentage of the context sampled. The samples will be recorded on the relevant site section drawing and photographs of the sample locations taken.

**4.20** Radiocarbon samples will be taken if sufficient material from relevant deposits is located. AMS dating can be determined from monolith samples.

## **5. REPORTING**

**5.1** A report will be prepared, subject to the preparation of specialist reports, within three months of the completion of fieldwork and will be made available digital in (PDF) format. If there is a delay of more than three months then a short interim report will be prepared. The report will be distributed to the client, the Devon County Historic Environment Record, and Historic England.

**5.2** The report will include the following elements:

- a table of contents;
- non-technical summary;
- the site's location in national grid and address form;
- a summary of the historical background to the site;
- a description of the investigation's aims and methodology;
- the date of the record and recorders;

- a description of the results of the historic building recording and archaeological watching brief, and a discussion of the results in relation the known history and development of the building, and where necessary the wider development of Tavistock,
- if appropriate a research design for further analysis and publication (see section 5.4 below);
- the location of the archive;
- a bibliography;
- location maps; and
- relevant phased floor plans, trench plans, elevations, sections, profiles, phased plans, and a selection of photographs.

**5.3** Details of the project will be submitted to the OASIS (Online AccesS to the Index of Archaeological investigationS) database, along with a digital version of the completed report. The OASIS number will be quoted in the report.

**5.4** In the event that significant remains are recorded then, in line with government planning policy, wider publication of the significant results may be required by the DCHET, usually in either a regional or national archaeological journal. If such remains are encountered, the publication requirements, including any further analysis that may be necessary, will be confirmed by the DCHET. A final draft, together with confirmation that it has been accepted by the editor of an appropriate journal or publisher, will be submitted to the DCHET within 12 months of the completion of fieldwork.

## **6. THE PROJECT ARCHIVE**

**6.1** A fully integrated site archive will be prepared with reference to the document *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE). The digital element will be compiled in accordance with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) standards and guidelines. It will consist of:

- All relevant born-digital data (images and site data collected digitally etc.); and;
- Digital copies made of all other relevant written and drawn data produced and/or collected during fieldwork and as part of the subsequent post-excavation analysis phase that is not presented within the client report.

**6.2** The digital archive will be deposited with the ADS within three months of acceptance of the final report.

**6.3** Any finds recovered during the watching brief will be deposited with the Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery, under the relevant accession number. This has been applied for (November 2018) and is awaited.

**6.4** Copies of the relevant sections of the archive (e.g. digital photographs) will be provided, on request, to Historic England.

## **7. HEALTH & SAFETY**

**7.1** Archaeological staff will operate under AC archaeology's Health and Safety Policy. All works will also be carried out in accordance with current Health and Safety legislation, to include (but not exclusively rely upon) the *Health and Safety at Work*



*etc Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and the Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2015.*

- 7.2** The Project Manager responsible for Health and Safety for AC archaeology is Simon Hughes. Simon is accredited under the *Site Manager's Safety Training Scheme* (SMSTS).
- 7.3** In accordance with the provisions of the AC archaeology Health and Safety Policy, the AC archaeology site representative will be responsible for ensuring that operations under his/her control are carried out in accordance with the procedures outlined in 7.1 and in the site-specific risk assessment.
- 7.4** Archaeological staff will not work in unsafe or unhealthy conditions, even where not to do so will result in the possible under-recording of the archaeological resource. Safety helmets, high visibility vests and boots are to be used by all site personnel. Archaeological staff **must not** enter any area where there is a considered to be a health and safety risk that has not or is not being appropriately mitigated against.
- 7.5** All site staff carry *Construction Skills Certification Scheme* (CSCS) cards and senior members have up to date first aid qualifications, as well as CAT and Genny and banksmen certification. AC archaeology is registered as an approved contractor under the Worksafe Health and Safety Scheme (SMAS), Contractor's Health and Safety Assessment Scheme (CHAS) and CQMS Safety Scheme, as recognised bySSIP (Safety Schemes in Procurement).
- 7.6** AC archaeology carries Public Liability Insurance cover to £5,000,000, Employers Liability to £10,000,000 and Professional Indemnity cover to £5,000,000.

## **8. PERSONNEL AND PROGRAMME**

- 8.1** The investigations will be managed on behalf of AC archaeology by Andrew Passmore BSc MClfA, Project Manager, AC archaeology. The historic building recording will be carried out by Andrew Passmore BSc MClfA and Stella De-Villiers MA who have suitable experience of this type of investigation. The watching brief will be undertaken by permanent members of staff, who again will have suitable experience of this type of investigation. They will all adhere to the ClfA Code of Conduct.
- 8.2** The project will be monitored by the DCHET and Historic England who will be informed of the start and finish dates of the fieldwork. Any variations to this document shall be agreed with the DCHET and Historic England before they are carried out. A start date for the investigations is not currently known.

## **9. SOURCES CONSULTED**

Blaylock, S., 1998. *An Assessment of the Physical Remains of Tavistock Abbey*, Exeter Archaeology Report No. **98.75**.

Blaylock, S., 2001. *Tavistock Abbey, Devon: Further Recording of the Standing Fabric 2001*, Exeter Archaeology Report No. **01.82**.

Kysh, N., 2017. *3 Abbey Place, Tavistock, Devon, (NGR SX 41201 74342), Tavistock Abbey: Scheduled Monument no. 29679; National Heritage List for*

England no. 1020401, *Results of an archaeological watching brief*, AC archaeology Document No. **ACD1681/2/0**.

Passmore, A., 2011, *Archaeological Watching Brief at 20 West Street, Tavistock, Devon NGR SX 4796 7434*, AC archaeology Document No. **ACD357/1/0**.

Stead, P.M., 1999, 'Archaeological Investigations at Tavistock Abbey 1997-1999', *Proc. Devon. Archaeol. Soc.*, **57**, 149-203.

Stead, P., 2012, *Guildhall Square Car Park, Tavistock, Devon, Results of an archaeological watching brief, Tavistock Abbey: Scheduled Monument no. 29679*, AC archaeology Document No. **ACD421/2/0**.

National Heritage List for England website,  
<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

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