

## EXETER CITY COUNCIL

### SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - ECONOMY

4 MARCH 2004

### ARCHAEOLOGY RESEARCH PROGRESS

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report advises Members as follows:  
Item 2: progress with archaeology reports and projects funded from the Economy & Tourism budget.  
Item 3: information relating to archaeological projects carried out in the City both for ECC and external clients.

#### 2. *ECONOMY AND TOURISM FUNDED WORK*

##### *Work to date*

- 2.1 The purpose of this programme of work is to make available, in a range of formats and media, the results of archaeological and historical investigations and research undertaken by the City Council on a variety of topics.
- 2.2 In 2003-04 work was carried out on four main projects:
- The City Wall
  - Publication of South Gate report
  - Preparatory work for Roman fortress book
  - Preparation of Medieval Exeter booklets
- 2.3 The first volume of the City Walls a historical survey of the walls up to 1660, has been published and has been well received. The other volume dealing with the interpretation of the physical remains of the Wall is in progress. The South Gate report has also been published.
- 2.4 Preparatory work on the Roman fortress in the form of an assessment and Project Outline, has been completed. Unfortunately the expected financial support from English Heritage to continue the project was not forthcoming, so other avenues for funding the publication will need to be sought. However the Project Outline we have produced can be used to support other applications.
- 2.5 A draft for the Medieval Exeter booklet has been produced. This will be printed in A5 format (40-45 pages) with plentiful illustrations, (40-50). The illustrative material will include a mixture of maps, reconstruction drawings, engravings, paintings and contemporary views. The booklet deals not only with the physical layout of the medieval City and its buildings, but also with its government, religion and the social lives of its inhabitants.

2.6 During the course of research for the booklet it became apparent that we had potential material for a further two publications. The first additional booklet deals with the medieval street and place names of the City, in the form of an alphabetical gazetteer with an explanation of the location and origin of the name (where known).

2.7 The second booklet is intended to throw light on life in the Elizabethan City. We have taken information from a previously untapped source of records in the form of a series of 'presentments' made by the Exeter Court Leet which met several times a year at the Guildhall during the latter half of the 16th century. It is effectively a 'complaints book' of the Elizabethan City Council and contains an enormous amount of detail about the day-to-day problems suffered by the citizens of the time.

### ***Proposed Work***

2.8 In 2004-05 it is proposed to work on four separate aspects of the City's archaeology and heritage. As before these are all projects which are building on work undertaken by AFU over many years.

2.9 Firstly, it is intended to continue with the preparation of the second volume on the City Wall and finalise the booklet which forms the companion to the larger volume.

2.10 The second project concerns the future publication of the archaeology and history of the Cricklepit Mill site. Although funding will be sought from other sources for the basic publication requirements, it is proposed that the Economy & Tourism grant be put towards the production of reconstruction drawings and cutaway views. These will enhance the quality of the final report and can be used for interpretation panels and Museum displays (also see 2.12 below).

2.11 Thirdly it is proposed to produce another popular booklet with a general theme of Roman Exeter. This will draw on previous excavations and archaeological research, with themes such as the Roman army and legionary fortress, the foundation of the City as a 'regional capital', trade and industry, domestic buildings and artefacts.

2.12 Finally, following the suggestion by the Archaeological Advisory Committee, it is proposed that we compile a portfolio of the reconstruction drawings produced by AFU over many years. The sites include the City Walls and Gates, the Cathedral, St Nicholas Priory, the Vicars' Choral, Exeter and Topsham Quays, the Catacombs and the Roman fortress and town. With the addition of some brief text for each view an attractive volume could be created and marketed in the style of *Exeter Reconstructed* or similar. This would be aimed at a very wide 'readership' with good sales potential.

## **3. *PROJECTS FUNDED BY OTHER CLIENTS***

3.1 The following is a summary of the main archaeological projects carried out in the City in the last year. The first five items relate to various development

schemes, or other projects, within Exeter, which are funded, managed or co-ordinated by the Economy & Development Directorate. In some cases the schemes are also the subject of planning applications by external bodies.

### **Princesshay**

- 3.2 AFU has worked as part of the Princesshay Project team for about seven years and have provide advice and information on the archaeological and 'heritage' matters relating to the scheme. The archaeological input has been fully funded by Land Securities.
- 3.3 In 2003 essential works started with highways and statutory undertakers' diversion works being carried out from May through to the end of the year. These 'enabling works' form part of the planning application for the development and are therefore subject to the archaeological requirements of the *Written Scheme of Investigation*. This involved continuous monitoring of excavations in certain areas (e.g. in Paris Street) with provision for detailed excavation and recording as required.
- 3.4 In Bedford Street no stratified medieval deposits were exposed, as the trench excavation had been too shallow to impact on these levels. Two post-medieval walls, relating to Bedford Circus were recorded. A collection of architectural fragments from Bedford Street included 14th/15th century window tracery which probably came from the cloister or church of the medieval Blackfriars.
- 3.5 At the eastern end of High Street a substantial ditch was recorded which was of Roman date. Although only excavated to a relatively shallow depth (0.6m) this would appear to be a defensive feature (outside the East Gate) as it is nearly 7.5m wide. It is much further out from the City Walls than recorded elsewhere and may relate to a previously unknown phase of defensive ditch systems. In Paris Street very little archaeological material was observed at the eastern end (near Civic Centre). Further west (near Paris St. Arcade) two smaller Roman ditches were found and these are likely to be boundary ditches dating to the 2nd or 3rd century AD.
- 3.6 At the north-west end of Paris Street by the junction with the High Street another substantial ditch was located. This was 7m wide (at 0.45m below present ground level) and at least 3.9m deep, as estimated by augering. The upper fill contained late 17th-century pottery including fragments of sugar-refining vessels. It seems likely that this ditch represents part of the Civil War defensive system outside the East Gate. The layout of the defences constructed by the Royalists prior to their surrender in April 1646 was reconstructed by Chris Henderson, following excavations at the ABC Cinema in the late 1980s and using the similar evidence from the areas outside the South Gate and in Magdalen Street. A prominent feature of this layout is a triangular salient cutting off the main approach roads outside the gate, notably Paris Street and Sidwell Street. The present discovery confirms that this salient extended out towards Paris Street (the south-east side has not been previously observed), although the precise position is a few metres to the west of its predicted location.

- 3.7 In Dix's Field and in the area in front of the Civic Centre, observations revealed 18th and 19th century structures, including cellars. Similar records were made in Southernhay, where the boundary wall of Southernhay Green was recorded on both sides. This is of late 17th/18th century date.

#### **St Catherine's Almshouses**

- 3.8 Intrusive excavation was required by the Technical Services unit to investigate the nature and origin of a crack and subsidence on the west side of the chapel inside the almshouse complex. As this site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument it was agreed that two trial pits would be excavated archaeologically by AFU staff.

- 3.9 Within one of the trial pits a large block of masonry was observed at about 0.2m below the present surface. On the south side the block was not keyed in to the adjacent walling and this location appeared to coincide with a vertical crack in the wall above. The origins of the earlier masonry remain uncertain; it may be that this masonry block was discovered during the 15th century chapel construction and was simply incorporated into the foundation.

- 3.10 Following these investigations a programme of repair works was agreed in consultation with English Heritage and subsequently implemented.

#### **High Street Enhancement**

- 3.11 This scheme involving the environmental enhancement of the High Street from Queen Street to London Inn Square is subject to an archaeological watching brief. The majority of the groundworks have not been very intrusive and significant archaeological deposits have not been exposed to date.

#### **City Wall floodlighting**

- 3.12 Because of the designation of the City Wall as a Scheduled Monument a watching brief was carried out on works to install floodlights outside the City Wall, running down Quay Lane from Western Way to the bottom of Quay Hill. Because of the shallow depth of excavations no significant archaeological remains were disturbed.

#### **Cathedral Yard enhancement**

- 3.13 AFU is currently undertaking a desktop study of this scheme to assess the potential archaeological impact and advise on suitable mitigation works. Method statements will be prepared to support an application for Scheduled Monument Consent.

#### **Crown Courts (Southernhay East)**

- 3.14 Following the discovery of the Iron Age settlement here in 2002, work has been progressing on the publication and analysis of the finds. We have recently received determinations of the radiocarbon samples submitted for dating to the University of Waikato in New Zealand. The samples came from burnt organic material found within Iron Age 'Glastonbury Ware' pots, presumed to be food remains but not identifiable as such. The samples have been dated to the period c. 250BC-40BC, and provide a much more reliable

date than previously available by analysis of the pots themselves.

#### **Urban Archaeological Database**

- 3.15 AFU is continuing to update this database for Planning Services, as new information is recorded, on an annual basis.

#### **Tourism Unit**

- 3.16 Much of the work carried out by AFU provides (both directly and indirectly) a useful source of material for Tourism and interpretation projects. We currently provide input for the training of Redcoat Guides and regularly provide services for Heritage Open Days. We have provided illustrative material (including a reconstruction drawing) for the Woollen Trail and are currently assisting with the selection of images and supplying drawings for the City Wall Heritage Trail.

#### **RAM Museum**

- 3.17 As well as undertaking archaeological monitoring of groundworks in the Museum car park AFU have provided material for the *Circled with Stone* exhibition which opened at the end of January. We also provide drawings of artefacts and other display material for Museum activities.

#### **External clients**

- 3.18 Archaeological monitoring is currently in progress at the *Barratt/Persimmon site off Rydon Lane* where a ring ditch containing two intact Bronze Age cremation urns has been excavated. Other prehistoric finds have been made, including Neolithic pottery, decorated Iron Age 'Glastonbury Ware' and clay mould fragments. The moulds were probably used for casting bronze.
- 3.19 An archaeological evaluation excavation undertaken in April 2003 on the site of the former *Victoria Nurseries in Okehampton Street*. The work was commissioned by Gadd Homes Ltd in advance of the submission of a planning application to develop the site for residential use. A series of trackways and ditches dating from the 15th to 17th centuries was found. Some of the finds from the ditches appear to be of high status, e.g. a 15th-century Spanish tin and lead glazed decorated tile (an exotic and rare import). This, together with wall plaster, and ridge tiles, almost certainly originated from the nearby Hayes mansion house, which was destroyed by a Parliamentarian attack on 31 July 1643.
- 3.20 Archaeological monitoring and recording of foundation works for a new restaurant at *21-22 Gandy Street* were undertaken during July 2003 on behalf of Macmillan Scott Partnership. These concentrated on the courtyard to the rear of the site where a new extension was constructed. The yard lies over the line of the ditch of the outer bailey of the Norman Castle, constructed on the orders of William the Conqueror in 1068. This ditch is known to be very deep; some 4m below the rear of the Museum. Despite a large amount of truncation associated with the garden and courtyard of 21/22 Gandy Street the lower ditch fills of the medieval castle ditch survived intact.

- 3.21 Development sites and historic buildings which have been the subject of assessment and recording projects include the following: Ransom Pickard House & Mardon Hall, (Exeter University), Sidwell Street, Grendon Buildings, Old Pinn Lane, Matford Business Park, Globefields Road Topsham, Georges Meeting House, Preston Street, the City Gate (former Crown & Sceptre), Princess Elizabeth Hospital site, Topsham First School and Sidwell Street.

**Other publication work**

- 3.22 In 2003 three reports were published in the county archaeological journal the *Proceedings* of the Devon Archaeological Society. These covered the recent work on the Cowick Street bronze foundry, the 17th century house at 144 Fore Street and Roman cremation burials in Holloway Street.
- 3.23 Reports on the Malthouse, Haven Banks and St Catherines Almshouses are due to be published shortly, work on the Higher Barracks, the medieval moated site at Gardeners' Arms (Coronation Road) and 21 The Mint is nearing completion.
- 3.24 A monograph on the archaeological investigations and historic building restoration works at Bowhill is due to be published by English Heritage this year.

**Forthcoming work**

- 3.25 We are currently engaged as part of the project team for the *Exeter Schools PFI project*, working under the instruction of Mowlem Building. At least three of the proposed school sites contain potential archaeological remains and a watching brief will be required as a minimum on each of the six sites. At the St Luke's site (adjoining Harts Lane near Pinhoe) we are currently undertaking evaluation excavation which is likely to lead to further investigations.
- 3.26 The main source of work in the near future will, of course, be the *Princesshay* scheme. The 'Contract 6' works (which includes the Norwich Union/TSB/Halifax building, St Catherine Street/Egypt Lane and the Almshouses) are due to commence this year and these will include a small archaeological excavation at the end of Chapel Street, enhancement of St Catherine's Almshouses and monitoring of groundworks, in the vicinity. In early summer 2005 the main archaeological excavations will begin and are programmed to continue until March 2006. A number of temporary excavation staff will be required during the latter part of 2005. A Project Manager from within the existing staffing structure will be deployed for the duration of the works. Assuming there is no major downturn in the level of external contract work, a temporary Project Manager will be needed to cover the workload. Other staff will be deployed on the excavations from time to time and on the watching brief works. It is therefore likely that other temporary staff will be required to cover non-Exeter project work. Exact numbers will depend on projected work levels at the beginning of 2005 and a further report on this will be produce at that time.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 AFU operates as a trading undertaking and makes a return on its turnover of circa £650,000 per annum. For Economy and Tourism projects the Archaeology in Exeter budget allocation for 2004/05 is £24,730. It is intended that this will include:

- Compilation of City Wall volume and booklet
- Cricklepit Mill illustrations
- Preparation of Roman Exeter booklet
- Compilation of 'Exeter Reconstructed' volume

Much of this work will be of benefit to the Tourism unit and individual interpretation projects which they are developing.

4.2 Funding for printing costs will be raised mainly from income from the sale of existing publications and a reserve fund for this will be established.

**5. RECOMMENDED** that Members:

- (1) note the progress being made with these projects.

**PETER WEDDELL**  
**HEAD OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD UNIT**

**ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE**

**Local Government (Access to information) Act 1985 (as amended)**

Background papers used in compiling this report:

*None*