

Exeter City Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Topsham, Devon	National Grid Reference: SX 9633 8875	Number:
Subject: Archaeological monitoring and recording at Topsham RFC, Topsham, Devon.		Photo attached: Y
Planning no: 18/0913/FUL	Recipient museum: N/A	
OASIS ID: oakforda1-366961	Museum Accession no: N/A	
Contractor's reference number/code: OA1541	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 19-20/08/2019	
<p>Description of works:</p> <p>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Oakford Archaeology in August 2019 at Topsham RFC, Topsham, Devon (SX 9633 8875). The site (Fig. 1) lies in an area where extensive evidence for prehistoric and Roman activity has been previously identified. Previous archaeological work has identified features, deposits and finds relating to prehistoric and Roman settlement, agricultural and funerary activity along Exeter Road. The work was therefore required by Exeter City Council (ECC) as a condition of planning permission, as advised by the Principal Project Manager Heritage (PPMH).</p> <p>A watching brief was maintained during works (Fig. 2, Pls. 1-2) associated with the erection of eight 15m high floodlighting columns (two further floodlight columns were added after the preparation of the WSI) and associated works. The work involved the excavation of a service trench approximately 425m long, 0.1m wide and between 0.5-0.6m deep. In addition, eight pits for the lighting columns were excavated, each approximately 1.1m long, 1m wide and 1.35m deep.</p> <p>Results:</p> <p>Pits 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8 contained a simple sequence of a dark yellowish-brown sandy silt topsoil 0.4m thick, onto a 0.4-0.5m deep light yellowish-brown silty sand subsoil, which in turn overlay the orangey-red sandy natural subsoil. No archaeological features, deposits or finds were uncovered in these.</p> <p>Pit 1 revealed a single NW-SE aligned linear (103). Sealed by the overlying subsoil only the southern edge of the linear was exposed within the lighting pit. No finds were retrieved from its single mid orange-brown silty-sand fill (104). This ditch runs perpendicular to the field boundaries shown on the 1st edition 1888 Ordnance Survey map. It is possible therefore that the linear is a sub-division of the earlier medieval strip fields on the north side of Exeter Road.</p> <p>To the southeast, pit 2 exposed a single NE-SW aligned linear (203). Located along the northwest edge of the pit, linear 203 was cut through the underlying subsoil. Two sherds of 18th-19th century South Somerset redware were retrieved from its single mid yellowish-brown sandy silt fill (204). The location of this linear equates with a boundary shown on the 1888 1st edition Ordnance survey map.</p> <p>A third linear (604), aligned NW-SE, was exposed in Pit 6. The single mid reddish-brown silty sand fill, contained rare charcoal, coal and stone inclusions and a single sherd of 19th century blue-and-white ware. Cut through the subsoil it was sealed by a compact sandy silt (603) that contained modern brick and large sub-angular stones. This deposit has been interpreted as a modern levelling deposit associated with the formation of the level rugby pitch and was in turn overlain by a shallow layer of topsoil (600).</p>		

Finds:

By John Allan

A small collection of archaeological material was recovered from the works. In total 23 sherds, weighing 452g, and post-medieval in character were recovered from the site. They consist of two sherds of North Devon gravel tempered ware (18th-19th century) and 18 sherds of 18th – 19th century industrial whiteware from the topsoil. In addition two fragments of 19th century bottle glass; two 19th century clay pipe stems and five fragments of 19th century brick were also recovered.

Finally, two sherds of 18th-19th century South Somerset redware were retrieved from ditch (204), while a further single sherd 19th century blue-and-white ware was retrieved from ditch (603).

Project archive and OASIS entry

Due to the limited nature of the findings a project archive will not be produced. A summary of the investigations has been submitted to the on-line archaeological database OASIS (Online Access to the Index of archaeological InterventionS).

Recorder:

EJ Patkai (Oakford Archaeology)

Date sent to HER:

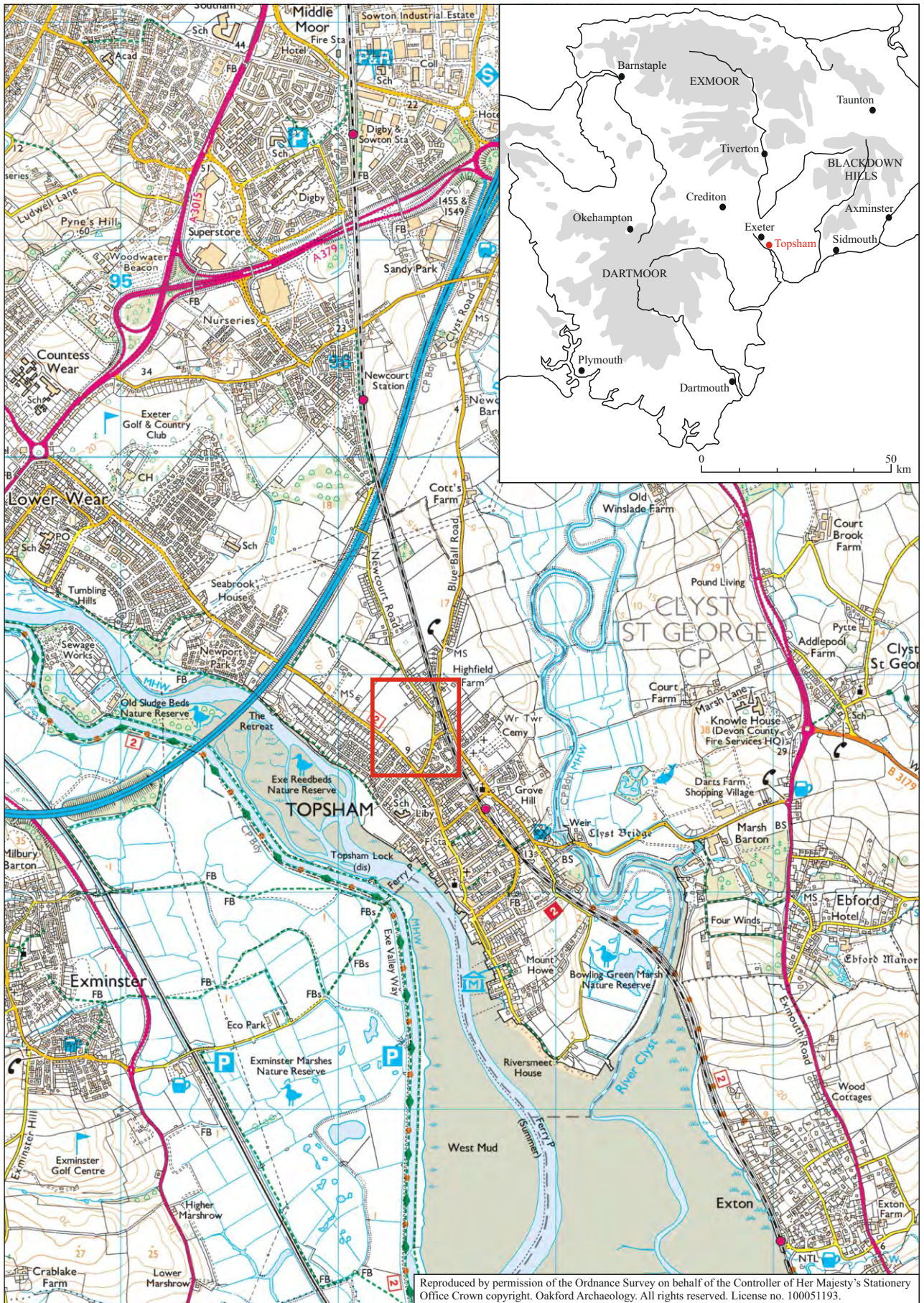
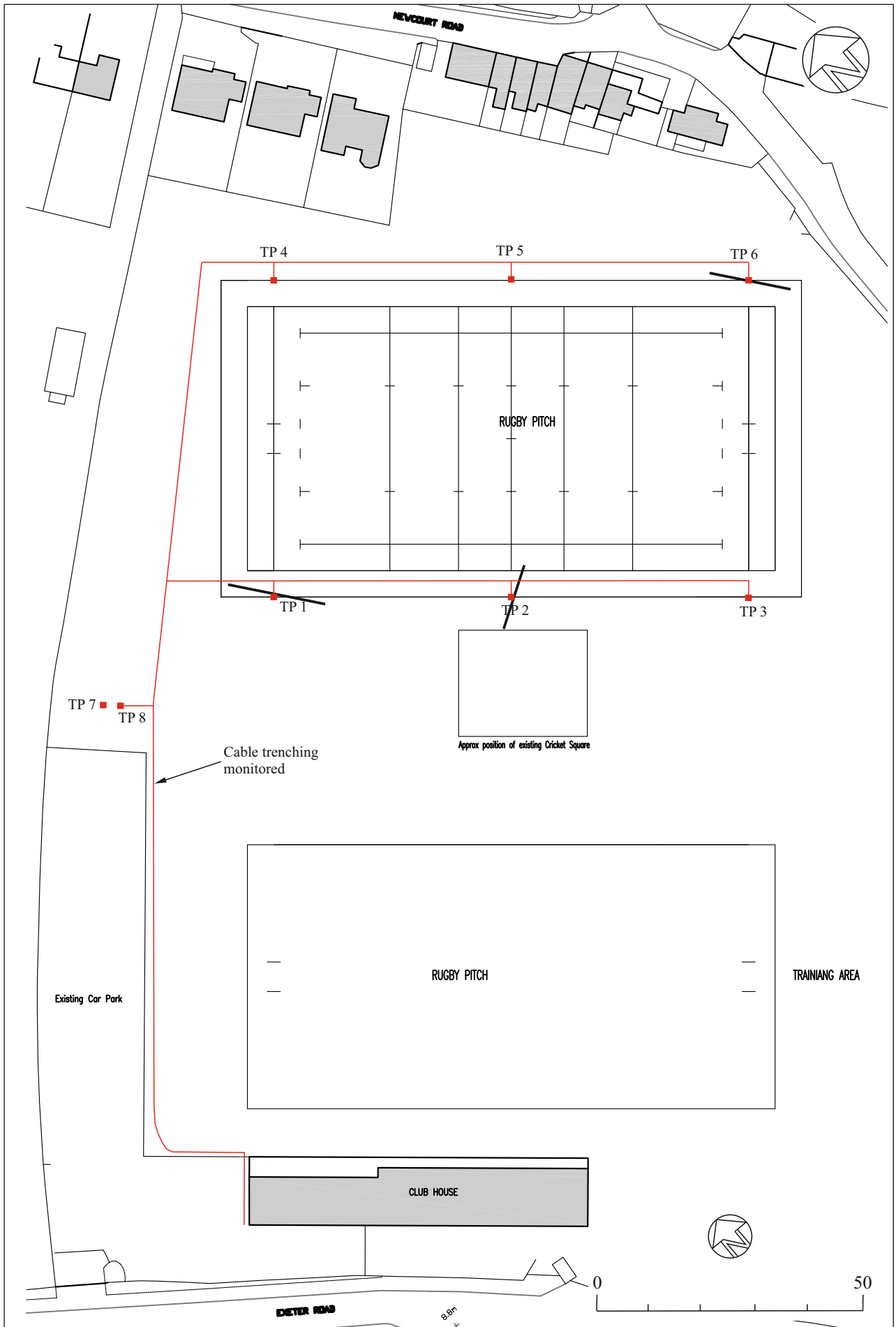


Fig. 1 Location of site.





Pl. 1 General view of cable trench with Pit 4 in foreground. 1m scale. Looking south.



Pl. 2 Pit 2, section showing ditch 203 (right). 1m scale. Looking northwest.