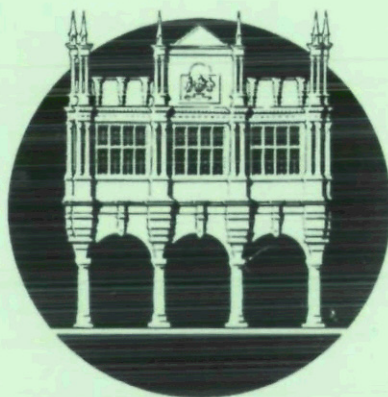


**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
OF LAND ADJOINING NELSON CLOSE,
TOPSHAM**

by

A.J. Sage



Exeter Archaeology



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1. INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of an archaeological field evaluation undertaken by Exeter Archaeology (EA) between the 27 August and 5 September 1997 on land adjoining Nelson Close, Topsham. The evaluation was commissioned by Devon County Council (DCC) who propose to construct a new Combined School on the site.

1.1 The method statement

Following the production of a desktop assessment (EA 1996) which identified the archaeological potential of the site, a method statement for an archaeological evaluation was prepared by EA (January 1997) at the request of DCC. The principal aims of the evaluation were to gather sufficient information to establish the condition, character, extent and date of archaeological deposits and structures within the site area.

1.2 The site

The site (SX96328840) consists of a rectangular area of approximately 1.1ha including a car park and adjoining fields lying on the south-west side of Topsham High Street, and to the north-west of Nelson Close. This area formed part of the arable fields of medieval Topsham, the fossilised cultivation strips later becoming elongated tenements as depicted on the tithe map of 1841.

The site sits on the edge of a steep scarp marking the north-eastern limit of the Exe floodplain. At the south-western (lower) end of the site, the ground falls steeply to what is now Ferry Road and the Recreation Ground, the latter having been reclaimed from saltings during the 1930s.

The underlying natural deposits here comprise terrace gravels overlain by fine Quaternary alluvial silts, which in places reach around 0.75m in depth.

1.3 Background

To the north of the site, a significant number of Roman finds were unearthed at SX962885 during the development of the Retreat Estate in the 1930s. The bulk of the finds dated from after AD 150, although some belong to the 1st century, and occupation over several centuries is attested (SMR SX98NE/35; Radford 1937). It is also understood that Roman coins have been recovered from the reclaimed area seaward of the site (J.P. Allan pers. comm.).

A 'concrete' floor at a site in the lower part of the Retreat Estate (exact location unknown) was also investigated in the 1930s. This was thought to be part of a small 15th-century or later building (SMR SX98NE/39; Radford 1937, 12).

The Topsham survey of 1836, the Topsham Tithe Map (Fig. 5) and the early OS maps of the area (Fig. 6) also indicate the former presence of long narrow burgage plots or agricultural strips (of medieval origin) extending across the site (EA 1997, 2-3). The medieval village and port developed in the area to the south-east of the site.

Little is known about the site in the post-medieval period. Limekilns and associated structures of 18th-century or earlier origin existed to the south of the site, and several scattered buildings are shown on the 1st and 2nd edition OS maps (*ibid.*, 5: Fig. 6). Topsham was the site of several skirmishes during the course of the English Civil War.

2. THE EVALUATION EXCAVATION

2.1 Method

Thirteen evaluation trenches with a total length of 210m were excavated using a JCB fitted with a 1.5m grading bucket. Trenches 1-4 and 6 were aligned approximately NE/SW, and trenches 5, 7-13 were aligned approximately NW/SE (see Fig. 2). Areas of archaeological interest were cleaned by hand and recorded in plan and section at scales of 1:20 and 1:50 as appropriate. All deposits were recorded on standard EA context sheets and a photographic record comprising colour transparencies and monochrome prints was made.

2.2 Results

All the trenches, with the exception of 1, 10-13 were excavated to the level of the undisturbed Quaternary alluvial silts where archaeological features could first be detected. The silt was sandier and shallower to the south-west. Beneath the topsoil, a ploughsoil of varying depth extended over the whole site. The underlying alluvium had been subject to earthworm activity which in places reached down to the level of the basal river gravels.

Most of the features examined extended beyond the limits of the trenches, and their full dimensions are therefore not known. The dimensions are given in Table 1.

Trench 1

Trench 1 (21m long) was located in tithe map field No. 77 in the south-western corner of the site. A layer of redeposited clay and gravel was exposed at a depth of 0.25m. This was probably associated with the construction of the adjacent car park. Two modern features cut this material in the northern part of the trench: a shallow ditch (502) and a small sub-circular post-hole (501).

Trench 2

Trench 2 (24.5m long) was also located in tithe map field No. 77 and extended from the boundary of Ferry Road north-eastwards towards the car park. At a depth of 0.25m, redeposited gravel extended for 2.75m in the south of the trench. This appeared to be upcast material associated with terracing for modern buildings fronting Ferry Road and no excavation took place below this material.

To the north of this area, a ploughsoil (507) overlay layers of animal-disturbed or worm-sorted alluvial silt (504, 508). The upper layer contained Roman and medieval pottery (15 sherds of each) and flintwork (22 flakes), perhaps implying the presence of intrusive features not identified during machine excavation.

At a depth of 0.90m below the surface, a fairly large sub-rounded pit (505) was cut into undisturbed alluvium. It was not possible to establish the full dimensions of this feature as it extended beneath the upcast redeposited gravel. Its fill (506), which was indistinguishable from the disturbed alluvium, contained one residual struck flint and six (discharged) lead musket balls. The river gravels lay at a depth of 1.0-1.25m.

Trench 3

Trench 3 (30m long) was excavated parallel with the north-western boundary of the site within tithe map field No. 75. Beneath the topsoil, some 0.60m of 18th/19th-century cultivation soil overlaying the river gravel which was encountered at a depth of 0.80m.

In the north-east end of the trench, the base of a small irregular ditch (511), orientated north-south, was observed cutting into the river gravel. It was filled with a compact orange brown silty clay (512) containing three sherds of Roman pottery.

Trench 4 (Fig. 3)

This trench (28m long) was excavated at the north end of the site within tithe map field No. 76. Beneath the topsoil, a layer of 18th/19th-century cultivation soil (598/599) with a maximum depth of 0.45m overlay river gravels which were encountered at a maximum depth of 0.70m.

At the north-eastern end of the trench part of a wall (514) was exposed, aligned NE/SW, which consisted of two layers of medium-sized pebbles and cobbles. A shallow construction trench was observed to cut into the river gravel to the north-west, forming a shallow terrace to the south, leaving the depth of the gravel greater on that side. The wall was exposed for a length of 2.0m. No finds were directly associated with this feature, but pottery dating from after c. 1800 was found in the deposit (513) contained within the terrace cut to the south. The feature may represent the foundation of a boundary wall shown on the early OS maps (see EA 1997, Figs 5-6).

To the south-west, the wall had been truncated by a pit (517) containing 20th-century pottery and the remains of a horse burial (which was left *in situ*). To the south-west of the pit, two ditches, aligned north-south, were cut into the gravel. The eastern one (523) was a small uneven feature which contained no finds. The western ditch (519) had an open U-shaped profile. Its fill (520) was similar to the overlying cultivation soil but was slightly stonier. Eight sherds of Roman pottery were recovered from this ditch.

Trench 5

Trench 5 (12.5m long), running NE-SW, was positioned on the south-west side of a surviving stretch of hedgebank, within tithe map field No. 76. At the south-east end of the trench, the hedgebank ditch (603) was seen to cut from the top of the lower (521) of two ploughsoil deposits. The ditch fill was indistinguishable from the upper ploughsoil deposit (522) and contained only 19th-century pottery with fragments of slate, mortar, coal and charcoal. The river gravel was encountered at a depth of 0.75m.

Trench 6 (Fig. 3)

This trench was excavated along the approximate line of the relict boundary hedgebank which formerly divided tithe map fields Nos 75 and 76. A linear feature (525) aligned approximately NW/SE in the centre of the trench probably represented a post-medieval boundary ditch. It was filled with friable mid brown clay silt with occasional charcoal flecks (526) and contained four sherds of pottery dating to after c. 1800.

Beneath the topsoil and 18th/19th-century cultivation soil, a number of features were observed at an average depth of 0.60m, cutting into the Quaternary alluvium.

To the west, part of a large rounded pit (527) with steep sides and a flat base was exposed. This was filled with material (528) very similar in character to the overlying ploughsoil, and contained one sherd of Roman pottery, six prehistoric flint flakes and occasional flecks of charcoal. On the western edge of the pit was a sub-rectangular post-hole (548) which also extended beyond the limit the trench. Its fill (549) was indistinguishable from that of the pit and contained 16 iron nails.

Further west, another linear feature (550) was aligned approximately NW/SE. This had very steep sides with a flat base, and it incorporated a post-hole (552) at its eastern side suggesting a possible post-trench. The post-trench and the post-hole were filled with the same friable mid reddish-brown silt (551, 553), and no datable finds were recovered from either feature.

The post-trench was cut to the north by a large ditch (530), aligned approximately NE/SW. Only the southern edge of this feature was exposed and its dimensions were only determined by the subsequent excavation of trench 7 (see 538 below). The ditch was filled with friable reddish-brown silt with occasional stones (531) and contained residual Roman pottery and tile.

Lying to the south of, and cut by, ditch 530 was a shallow ?gully (556) aligned approximately NW/SE. At the base of the gully were eight small circular post-holes (569, 580, 582, 566, 560, 558, 578, 562). No artefacts were recovered from these features.

Trench 7 (Fig. 4)

This trench, 21m long, extended from the southern corner of tithe map field No. 75 and across the former boundary into field 76. In trench 7, varying depths of cultivation soil (up to 0.40m) overlay Quaternary alluvium. Three linear features were recorded.

The central feature (538) represented the continuation of ditch 530 (from trench 6). The ditch had a fairly steep V-shaped profile. The nature of the fill suggested that the ditch had remained open for some time, and that there had formerly been a bank on its north-western side. The base fill (597; 0.30m) consisted of a light yellowish-brown silt which contained five sherds of residual Roman pottery. This was overlain by three layers of silty sand (596, 595, 594; total 0.35m). The upper fill (539; 0.10m) of light yellowish-brown sandy silt also contained four sherds of residual Roman pottery.

On either side of ditch 538 were two linear features (605, 532) aligned approximately NE/SW. These produced finds dated to after *c.* 1800 from their upper fills and were not excavated. Feature 532 was a continuation of linear 525 seen in trench 6.

Trench 8

Trench 8 (16m long) was positioned to the south-east of the existing hedgebank in field No. 77 (see also trench 5). Beneath the topsoil lay 0.45m of cultivation soil (584) containing four sherds of medieval pottery dating to after *c.* AD 1000. Underlying this was 0.30m of Quaternary alluvium (589). The river gravel was located at a depth of approximately 1m.

Within the north-west end of the trench, a small ditch (606) associated with the existing hedgebank was located. It was not possible to determine the full dimensions of the feature within the limits of the trench.

To the south-east, two features cut from the surface of the alluvium (589) were observed within the south-west facing section of the trench (neither was seen in the north-east facing section). Both features (585, 597) were just over 1m wide and were probably pits. They were filled with light brown friable sandy silt (586, 588), but no artefacts were retrieved.

Trench 9 (Fig. 3)

Trench 9 (15m long) was excavated at the southern corner of the site. Within the trench was a cultivation soil (542, 0.50m) which contained lithic finds, some scraps of Roman tile, and medieval and later pottery. Beneath this was 0.30-0.35m of alluvium overlying the river gravel at a depth of just over 1m below the surface.

Within the south-east end of trench 9, a sub-rectangular feature of pebbles and cobbles (547) was located at a depth of 0.75m. The stones were set into the alluvium (569) and did not contain any bonding material. This may represent the base of a pier. It was 1.0m wide and survived to a height of 0.18m, but it was not possible to determine its length. No associated finds were retrieved.

To the north-west, the foundations of an east-west wall (546) of similar construction were set into the alluvium at a depth of 0.65m. There were no associated finds.

Beyond wall 546, an irregular linear feature (540) aligned NE/SW was located at a depth of 0.80m. This feature was cut into the alluvium and filled with silts (541) containing charcoal flecks and four prehistoric flints.

Trenches 10-13

Trenches 10-13 (5m, 3.5m, 3m and 4m in length respectively) were positioned to the north-east and south-west of trench 9 in an attempt to trace the course of the wall (546).

In trenches 10 and 11, the wall was encountered beneath the ploughsoil at a depth of 0.60m. In trench 11, the wall terminated in the centre of the trench and appeared to incorporate a central drain (represented by a 0.25m gap). In both trenches the wall was set into the alluvium and was constructed of pebbles/cobbles. It survived to a height of approximately 0.10m. No other features or finds were located.

No evidence of the wall, or any other feature, was found in trenches 12 and 13. Trench 12 was excavated to the depth of the gravel at 0.80m. In trench 13, modern bricks and concrete extended to a depth of 1.20m beneath the topsoil.

2.3 Table 1: Summary of evaluation results

The following table is ordered by trench number and context according to their locations within the mid 19th-century fields shown on Fig. 5. An asterisk * after the context number denotes an archaeological feature.

Key

Strat. (column 5) = classification of deposit (A-D) or stratigraphic position of feature (eg A/B = sealed by A and cutting B).

A = modern topsoil

B = 18th/19th-century cultivation soil

C = Quaternary alluvium

D = river gravel

FIELD 75

Trench	Context	Description	Interpretation	Strat.	Depth below surface	Dimensions
Tr. 3	607	brown silt/loam	topsoil	A	N/A	0.25-0.30m deep
	509/602	silts	18th/19th-century cultivation soil	B	0.25-0.30m	0.60-0.65m deep
	511 *	irregular linear feature	?Roman ditch (fill 512)	B/D	0.80m	0.52m wide, 0.28m deep (max.)
		river gravel	natural	D	0.80-0.90m	Not known
Tr. 7 NW	608	brown silt/loam	topsoil	A	N/A	0.12-0.20m deep
	605 *	linear feature	19th-century ditch	A/B	0.20m	not excavated
	600	orange-brown silty sand, deepening away from hedgebank.	18th/19th-century cultivation soil	B	0.12-0.20m	0.30-0.40m deep
		orange sand	Quaternary alluvium	C	0.40-0.60m	Not known

FIELD 75/76 BOUNDARY RELICT HEDGEBANK

Trench	Context	Description	Interpretation	Strat.	Depth below surface	Dimensions
Tr. 6	609	brown silt/loam	topsoil/modern cultivation soil	A	N/A	0.20-0.22m deep
	592	brown sandy silt	18th/19th-century cultivation soil	B	0.20-0.22m	0.35-0.40m deep
	525 *	linear feature	post-medieval ditch (fill 526)	A/B	0.22m	2.0m wide, 0.22m deep (max.)
	527 *	large circular feature	Roman pit (fill 528)	B/C	0.60m	diameter unknown, maximum depth of 0.30m
	548 *	sub-rectangular feature	? Roman post-hole (fill 549)	B/C	0.60m	0.75m wide, 0.54m deep
	550 *	linear feature	?Roman post-trench (fill 551)	B/C	0.60m	0.42m wide, 0.48m deep (max.).
	552 ●	feature in side of 550	?Roman post-hole (fill 553)	B/C	0.60m	0.30m diameter, 0.70m deep
	530 *	see 538 in trench 7 below	medieval ditch (fill 531)	B/C	0.55m	see 538 in trench 7 below
	556 ●	linear feature	?Roman ?gully (fill 557)	B/C	0.60m	1.0m wide (max.), 0.35m deep.
	558, 560 * 562, 566 569, 578 580, 582	circular features	?Roman post-holes in base of gully	N/A	0.90m	between 0.16m-0.30m diam. and 0.20m-0.25m deep
	593	orange sand	Quaternary alluvium	C	0.55-0.60m	At least 0.90m below surface
Tr. 7 centre	608	brown silt/loam	topsoil	A	N/A	0.15-0.20m deep
	600	orange-brown silty sand	18th/19th-century cultivation soil, deepening away from hedgebank.	B	0.15-0.20m	0.1.0-0.40m deep

Trench	Context	Description	Interpretation	Strat.	Depth below surface	Dimensions
Tr. 7 centre	538 *	linear feature with steep V-shaped profile	medieval ditch, same as 530 in trench 6 (above)	B/C	0.55-0.65m	3.65m wide, 0.80m deep
		orange sand	Quaternary alluvium	C	0.25-0.60m	Not known

FIELD 76

Trench	Context	Description	Interpretation	Strat.	Depth below surface	Dimensions
Tr. 7 SE	608	brown silt/loam	topsoil	A	N/A	0.15-0.20m deep
	600	orange-brown silty sand	18th/19th-century cultivation soil, deepening away from hedgebank.	B	0.15-0.20m	0.55m deep
	532 *	linear feature (=525)	post-medieval ditch	A/B	0.45-0.50m	not excavated
		orange sand	Quaternary alluvium	C	0.70-0.75m	Not known

Tr. 4	610	brown silt/loam	topsoil	A	N/A	0.35-0.50m deep
	598/599	dark orange brown silty clay	18th/19th-century cultivation soil	B	0.35-0.50m	0.25-0.45m deep
	514 *	layers of pebbles/cobbles	wall foundation	N/A	0.60-0.65m	at least 2m long
	517 *	linear feature	modern pit	A/B	0.70m	4m diameter
	523 *	linear feature	ditch	B/D	0.65m	0.65m wide (max.), 0.35m deep
	519 ●	linear feature	ditch (fill 520)	B/D	0.60m	0.90m wide, 0.35m deep (max.).
		river gravel	natural	D	0.60-70m	Not known

Trench	Context	Description	Interpretation	Strat.	Depth below surface	Dimensions
Tr. 5	511	brown silt/loam	topsoil	A	N/A	0.30m deep
	522	mid brown silty clay	18th/19th-century cultivation soil	B	0.30m	0.15m deep
	603 *	linear feature	ditch (filled with 522)	B/B	0.45m	2.10m wide, 0.65m deep
	521	orange brown silty clay with pebbles and charcoal flecks?	18th/19th-century cultivation soil	B	0.45m	0.30m deep
		river gravel	natural	D	0.75m	Not known

Tr. 8	512	brown silt/loam	topsoil	A	N/A	0.30-0.35m deep
	584	orange silty clay	18 th /19 th -century cultivation soil, deepening away from hedgebank.	B	0.30-0.35m	0.30-0.45m deep
	585 *	feature in section	? small pit	B/C	0.80m	1.10m wide, 0.20m deep
	587 *	feature in section	? small pit	B/C	0.60m	1.10m wide, 0.30m deep
	606 *	linear feature	ditch associated with hedgebank	B/C	0.60m	0.25m deep
	589	fine light orange brown sandy silt	Quaternary alluvium	C	0.60-0.80m	0.30m
		river gravel		D	0.90-1.10m	Not known

FIELD 77

Trench	Context	Description	Interpretation	Strat.	Depth below surface	Dimensions
Tr. 2	507	brown silt/loam	topsoil	A	N/A	0.40-0.45m deep
	504	mid brown sandy silt, cut by gravel feature to the south; contains many prehistoric, Roman and medieval finds.	18 th /19 th -century cultivation soil	B	0.40-0.45m	0.40-0.55m deep
	505 •	pit containing musket balls	post-medieval pit (fill 506)	B/C	0.90m	0.40m deep (max.)
	508	sandy silt alluvium	Quaternary alluvium	C	0.80-1.00m	0.20-0.25m deep
		pea grit	worm action product	C/D	1.0-1.25m	N/A
		river gravel		D	1.0-1.25m	Not known
Tr. 9	613	brown silt/loam	topsoil	A	N/A	0.25-0.40m deep
	542	mid brown sandy silt	18th/19th-century cultivation soil	B	0.25-0.40m	0.50m deep
	546	layers of pebbles/cobbles	medieval wall foundations	B/C	0.75m	0.75m wide (max.), 0.20m high
	547	layers of pebbles/cobbles	medieval pier-foundation	B/C	0.75m	1.0m wide, 0.18m high
	540	irregular linear feature cut into 569. Contains prehistoric flints	? Roman ditch.	B/C	0.80m	1.75m wide, 0.40m deep
	569	orange brown sandy silt	Quaternary alluvium	C	0.75-0.90m	0.25m deep
	570	pinkish grey sandy clay	Quaternary alluvium	C	1.00-1.15m	0.05-0.10m deep

Trench	Context	Description	Interpretation	Strat.	Depth below surface	Dimensions
		River gravel	natural	D	1.05-1.25m	Not known
Trs 10-11	613	brown silt/loam	topsoil	A	N/A	0.25-0.40m
	543	mid brown sandy silt	18th/19th-century cultivation soil	B	0.25-0.40m	0.50m
	545	layers of pebbles/cobbles	continuation of medieval wall 546	B/C	0.60m	0.85m wide (max.), 0.10m high
Trs 12 13	No archaeological features or deposits					
Tr. 1	500	brown silt/loam	topsoil	A	N/A	0.25m
	501	small feature (cutting car park construction spread)	modern post-hole		0.25m	0.50 diameter (max.), 0.30m deep
	502 *	linear feature (ditto)	modern ditch		0.25m	at least 10m long

2.4 Lithic finds by T.H. Gent

During the excavations a total of 74 struck lithics were recovered, five of which were unstratified. The bulk of the collection came from the south-west quarter of the field closest to the river.

While the recovered implements were restricted to two undiagnostic scrapers (one of which was badly burnt), certain characteristics suggest a Mesolithic date for a sizeable part of the assemblage. At least 18 of the lithics were either small, deliberately fashioned blades, broken blades, or waste material from their production. A blade core, in what appears to be Beer flint, came from trench 6. Two lightly retouched blade fragments were recovered, one at least being a possible microlith. The presence of at least eight flakes with severely abraded cortex or outer surfaces, commonly associated with beach pebbles or large river gravels, is also a recognised feature of Mesolithic procurement strategies, although not exclusive to this period.

Other material, including the larger of the two scrapers, is of a greater general size and bulk and would be more appropriately assigned to the Neolithic or Early Bronze Age periods.

The assemblage is comprised largely of a mid grey mottled flint similar to the material coming from the clay-with-flint sources of south-east Devon. Occasional clean dark flint resembling the material deriving from the Beer region is also present, as are three flakes of Greensand chert. It is interesting to note the presence of a single Portland Chert flake. This almost round flake is of particular symmetry and fine proportions, and has the appearance of a blank. The use of this material for the almost exclusive production of fine quality items (e.g. arrowheads) in the Neolithic period has been noted in south-east Devon.

3 CONCLUSIONS

3.1 Preservation of archaeological deposits

Within this site the level of preservation of archaeological deposits is generally poor. There has been considerable disturbance by cultivation in the medieval and post-medieval periods. The latest phase of cultivation activity appears to be in the 18th century, as all groups of post-medieval finds dated to this period. The depth to which the disturbance has extended is greater than might normally be expected, due to the presence of relatively soft and unconsolidated alluvium beneath much of the site. The effect has been enhanced by worm and root action. In consequence, archaeological features have been truncated and it is often difficult to detect the exact level at which features were originally cut. In some cases insubstantial archaeological features have probably been removed altogether. The presence of finds of different periods within the cultivation soils, and the predominance of residual finds within features, are therefore not surprising.

3.2 Prehistoric period

No features which could be definitely attributed to this period were detected and it is unlikely that they will have survived later cultivation disturbance. The collection of lithic finds, mostly from the southern part of the site, provides a general indication of earlier prehistoric activity in this area, as described in 2.4 above.

3.3 Romano-British period

A small concentration of features was located in the south-western part of the site. Residual finds of Roman pottery were recovered from other features. The date range for the pottery is fairly broad, from the 1st to 3rd centuries AD and includes a small proportion of imported finewares.

Whilst there is some evidence of possible structural features for timber buildings, they do not appear to lie within the core of a substantial settlement. This site may therefore lie on the periphery of a larger settlement to the north-west, where finds have previously been recorded (1.3 above). However, it should be noted that the Romano-British features in the south-western part of the site were better preserved because of their position beneath a later hedgebank. The distribution of features thus may not be accurately reflected in the site record.

3.4 Medieval period

The medieval pottery was largely recovered from cultivation soils and mostly dates from the later 13th or 14th centuries. A small group of 11th-century material was collected from the cultivation soil in trench 8.

This part of Topsham was never within the core of the medieval settlement and undoubtedly formed part of the system of arable fields which formerly extended around the town. By the late medieval period the land divisions had been formalised as tenement boundaries for properties fronting onto the High Street (Fig. 5). No dating evidence for the boundary features was recovered from specific contexts within the excavation. Cartographic evidence from other Devon market towns, such as Newton Abbot, Okehampton and Tiverton suggest that the urban tenement (or burgage plots) were frequently created by the enclosure of open field systems. Dating evidence from Newton Abbot indicates that this process was underway in the 13th century (Weddell 1985, 81). The agricultural use of the plots continued in the post-medieval period when they were used as gardens or orchards.

The evidence for cob buildings within the site, in trenches 9-11, probably belongs to the late medieval or early post-medieval period. Although these are not securely dated by finds, their stratigraphic location beneath the general cultivation soil suggest that they are earlier in date than the 18th century. The evidence is suggestive of agricultural structures rather than domestic ones, with the pier base probably forming part of an open-fronted linhay. The use of beach or river cobbles in medieval buildings in east Devon is not unusual. It has even been recognised in ecclesiastical contexts within medieval chapels at Exmouth and Sidmouth (Weddell 1986, 1990).

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APPENDIX: FINDS CATALOGUE *by G. Langman*

The following is an alphabetical finds listing for the evaluation at the proposed school site, Nelson Close, Topsham, Exeter 1997. All weights given are in grams (to the nearest 2 grams). SF denotes small finds number and qty denotes quantity. The following site code was used to mark artefacts: TNC 97

Clay Pipe

context	bowls	stems	dates/comments
500	-	1	after 1600
518	1	-	bowl fragment: ?18th century
526	-	1	after 1600
533	-	2	after 1600
unstrat	-	1	discarded

Glass

context	qty	comments
526	1	bottle glass: after 1650

Ironwork

context	SF	qty	comments
508	403	1	nail
549	400	16	nails
553	401	1	unidentified

Lead

context	SF	qty	comments
506	402	6	large musket balls, five are flattened (discharged)

Lithics

context	qty	comments
504	22	flint: 2 utilised flakes, 15 struck flakes. chert: 1 utilised (notched), 4 struck flakes
506	3	flint: 1 core, 2 struck flakes
509	1	flint: struck flake
521	1	flint: struck flake
526	2	flint: 2 struck chips
528	6	flint: 2 broken blades, 4 struck flakes
529	5	Portland chert: struck flake (?prepared blank). flint: 4 struck flakes
531	2	flint: 1 core. chert: 1 struck flake
533	1	flint: 1 struck flake
539	1	flint: struck flake
541	4	flint: 1 utilised blade, 1 struck flake, 2 struck chips
542	8	flint: 1 slightly burnt, 6 struck flakes. chert: 1 struck flake
543	1	flint: struck flake
549	1	flint: struck flake
553	1	flint: struck flake
555	2	flint: 1 struck flake, 1 struck chip
584	5	flint: 1 burnt scraper, 4 struck flakes
596	2	flint: 1 struck flake, 1 struck chip
597	1	flint: struck flake
unstrat trench 2	3	flint: 1 ?utilised flake, 1 broken blade, 1 struck flake
unstrat trench 6	1	flint: struck flake
unstrat trench 9	1	flint: struck flake

total lithics: 74

Miscellaneous

context	qty	comments
549	2	small volcanic trap frags

Pottery & Dating Evidence*Abbreviations Listing*

aft	after
BB1	black-burnished ware category 1
bd	body
blk	black
Brdr	Border ware
bs	base
bwl	bowl
C	Century
clp	clay pipe
con	context
cp	cooking pot
cw	coarseware
dec	decorated
Del	Delft
Dor	Dorset
Dr	Dragendorff
dsh	dish
Dut	Dutch
E	early
Eng	English
ew	earthenware
Exe	Exeter
ext	external
fb	fabric
fl	flagon
g	glazed
gg	green glazed
gsg	grey salt-glazed
gtw	gravel-tempered ware
gty	gritty
gvs	grooves
gy	grey
Hants	Hampshire
hnd	handle
hoz	horizontal
ind	industrial
jg	jug
jr	jar
L	late
M	middle
Med	medieval
mic	micaceous
Mil	military
mort	mortaria
ND	North Devon
ox	oxidised
pln	plain
PM	post-medieval
Por	porcelain
Pre	prehistoric
prd	plain-rimmed dish
R	residual
Rom	roman
Saint	Saintonge
SD	South Devon

sdv	sandy								
SE	South-East				597	Roman			
sh	sherd					total sherds: 5			
soot	sooted					total vessels: 1			
SS	South Somerset					total weight: 44			
Staffs	Staffordshire					SW BB1 (cp, Mil-E2C)	5	1	
stnw	stoneware								
Sur	Surrey								
SW	South-Western								
thumb	thumbbed								
TN	Terra Nigra								
typ	type								
ug	unglazed								
unc	unclassified								
ves	vessel								
w	ware								
wsg	white salt-glazed								
ww	white ware								
yg	yellow glazed								
<i>Roman</i>									
context	contents/dating evidence	sherds	vessels						
512	Roman								
	total sherds: 3								
	total vessels: 2								
	total weight: 18								
	amphora	2	1						
	unc fl fb (same ves as con 509)	1	0						
520	Roman								
	total sherds: 8								
	total vessels: 8								
	total weight: 42								
	samian (1 sh dec, 2C)	3	3						
	?Exe sdy gy w (Mil-M2C)	1	1						
	SW BB1 (1 ?jr rim ?L1C/E2C)	3	3						
	SD w bs	1	1						
528	Roman								
	total sherds: 1								
	total vessels: 1								
	total weight: 10								
	SD w (bd sh)	1	1						
531	Roman								
	total sherds: 10								
	total vessels: 6								
	total weight: 104								
	SD w (bd sh)	4	1						
	SE Dor BB1 (1 cp, ?Mil-E2C)	3	3						
	Exe gty gy w (bs, E2C-L3C)	1	1						
	?TN (small scraps)	2	1						
535	Roman								
	total sherds: 1								
	total vessels: 1								
	total weight: 2								
	SD w (small scrap)	1	1						
539	Roman								
	total sherds: 4								
	total vessels: 2								
	total weight: 12								
	SW BB1 (scraps)	1	1						
	Exe gty gy w (E2C-L3C)	1	1						
555	Roman								
	total sherds: 3								
	total vessels: 3								
	total weight: 14								
	SW BB1 (bd sh)	2	2						
	unc gy w	1	1						
<i>Statistics for stratified roman</i>									
total number of sherds: 35									
minimum number of vessels: 24									
total weight of sherds: 246 g									
<i>Medieval & Post-Medieval</i>									
context	contents/dating evidence	sherds	vessels						
500	aft 1600								
	clp: aft 1600								
502	L18C+								
	total sherds: 3								
	total vessels: 3								
	total weight: 30								
	Eng ind ew (L18C+)	1	1						
	Staffs wsg stnw (aft 1740)	1	1						
	Jack blk g w	1	1						
504	18C								
	total sherds: 28								
	total vessels: 16								
	total weight: 372								
	Por dec bs (18C)	1	1						
	SS cw bs (18C)	2	1						
	Med R								
	Saint jg (unusual spout, L13C/14C)	7	1						
	Exe fb 20 (1 cupped rim, after 1200)	6	4						
	Exe fb 42 jg (aft 1250)	1	1						
	unc gg sdy w jg (13C/14C)	1	1						
	Rom R								
	SE Dor BB1	1	1						
	SW BB1	6	3						
	mort (1 rim)	2	2						
	amphora (Dressel 20)	1	1						
506	PM								
	lead musket balls (PM)								
509	14C/15C								
	total sherds: 15								
	total vessels: 9								
	total weight: 182								
	Exe fb 20	2	1						
	Exe fb 42 (2 jg, 1 with patchy gg & hoz gvs, 1 pln gg)	4	2						
	Rom R								
	samian pln (very worn sherds, 1 unusual cup form 2C)	6	3						
	SW BB1	1	1						
	amphora (Dressel 20)	1	1						
	unc fl fb (same ves as con 512)	1	1						
510	aft 1700								
	total sherds: 2								
	total vessels: 2								
	total weight: 12								
	Del Dut dec dsh (c. 1700)	1	1						
	Med R								
	Eng ww jg fb (14C/15C)	1	1						
513	18C								
	total sherds: 4								
	total vessels: 3								

	total weight: 148				Exe fb 20 (1 cp rim)	4	4
	SS cw bwl (18C)	3	2				
	unc gg cw rim (?SS)	1	1	unstrat			
518	aft 1730				total sherds: 3		
	total sherds: 2				total vessels: 2		
	total weight: 14				total weight: 24		
	Staffs gsg stnw bs (aft 1730)	1	1		SS cw (18C)	1	1
	SS cw (17C/18C)	1	1		ug ew (?plant pot)	2	1
	clp: ?18C						
526	18C				<i>Statistics for Med/PM contexts</i>		
	total sherds: 4				total number of sherds: 88		
	total vessels: 4				minimum number of vessels: 67		
	total weight: 202				total weight of sherds: 1.158 kg		
	Sur/Hants Brdr yg ww (17C/E18C)	1	1		<i>Grand Totals</i>		
	SS cw (18C)	2	2		total number of sherds: 123		
	Med R				minimum number of vessels: 91		
	unc sdy jg fb (fb ?42, 14C/15C)	1	1		total weight of sherds: 1.404 kg		
	clp: aft 1600				Slag		
	glass: aft 1650				<i>context</i>	<i>qty</i>	<i>weight</i>
					529	2	18
529	PM				Small Finds		
	total sherds: 8				<i>SF</i>	<i>context</i>	<i>qty</i>
	total vessels: 8				400	549	16
	total weight: 50				401	553	1
	SS cw (16C fb)	1	1		402	506	6
	Med R				403	508	1
	Exe fb 20	2	2			<i>material</i>	<i>comments</i>
	Exe fb 744 (jg, 14C/15C)	1	1			Fe	nails
	Rom R					Fe	unidentified
	Oxford colour coat (M3C+)	1	1			Pb	large ?musket balls
	Exe gty gy w (E2C-L3C)	1	1			Fe	nail
	SD w	1	1				
	SE Dor BB1 prd (L2C-M3C)	1	1		Tile		
533	aft 1600				<i>context</i>	<i>qty</i>	<i>weight</i>
	clp: aft 1600				502	1	26
542	aft 1500				504	5	188
	total sherds: 13						roman: orange fabric, 1 tegula & 1 imbrex fragment; gritty fabric
	total vessels: 12						?roman tegula 3 fragments
	total weight: 54						roman: orange fabric, small scraps (discarded)
	ND gtw (1500-L18C)	1	1		508	2	8
	Med R						roman: red fabric, 2 tegula fragments; orange fabric, 1 tegula fragment
	Saint (ug bd sh)	1	1				roman: orange fabric, 2 tegula fragments & 1 imbrex fragment, 3 scraps (discarded)
	Exe fb 20	3	3		509	3	148
	Exe fb 42 (thmb jg bs)	1	1				roman: red fabric, 1 tegula fragment; orange fabric, 1 tegula fragment
	Exe fb 743 (ug bd sh)	1	1		510	6	182
	unc w (ug, ext soot)	1	1				roman: orange fabric, 2 tegula fragments & 1 imbrex fragment, 3 scraps (discarded)
	Rom R						roman: red fabric, 1 tegula fragment; orange fabric, 1 tegula fragment
	samian rim (worn sh, Dr 37?, 2C)	1	1		520	2	242
	mort rim (small scrap)	1	1				roman: orange fabric, 6 scraps (discarded); pantile 5 fragments (discarded)
	unc ox cw	1	1		526	11	396
	Pre R						roman: orange fabric, 2 scraps (discarded)
	2 small scraps	2	1		531	1	6
543	Med						roman: red fabric, 1 tegula fragment; orange fabric, 2 tegula fragments, 3 scraps (discarded)
	total sherds: 2				542	6	186
	total vessels: 2						roman: red fabric, 1 tegula fragment; orange fabric, 2 tegula fragments, 3 scraps (discarded)
	total weight: 32						pantile (discarded)
	unc cw (?Med/Rom)	1	1		unstrat	12	880
	Rom R						
	?mort (ves with flange)	1	1				
584	aft 1000 (?11C/12C)						
	total sherds: 4						
	total vessels: 4						
	total weight: 38						

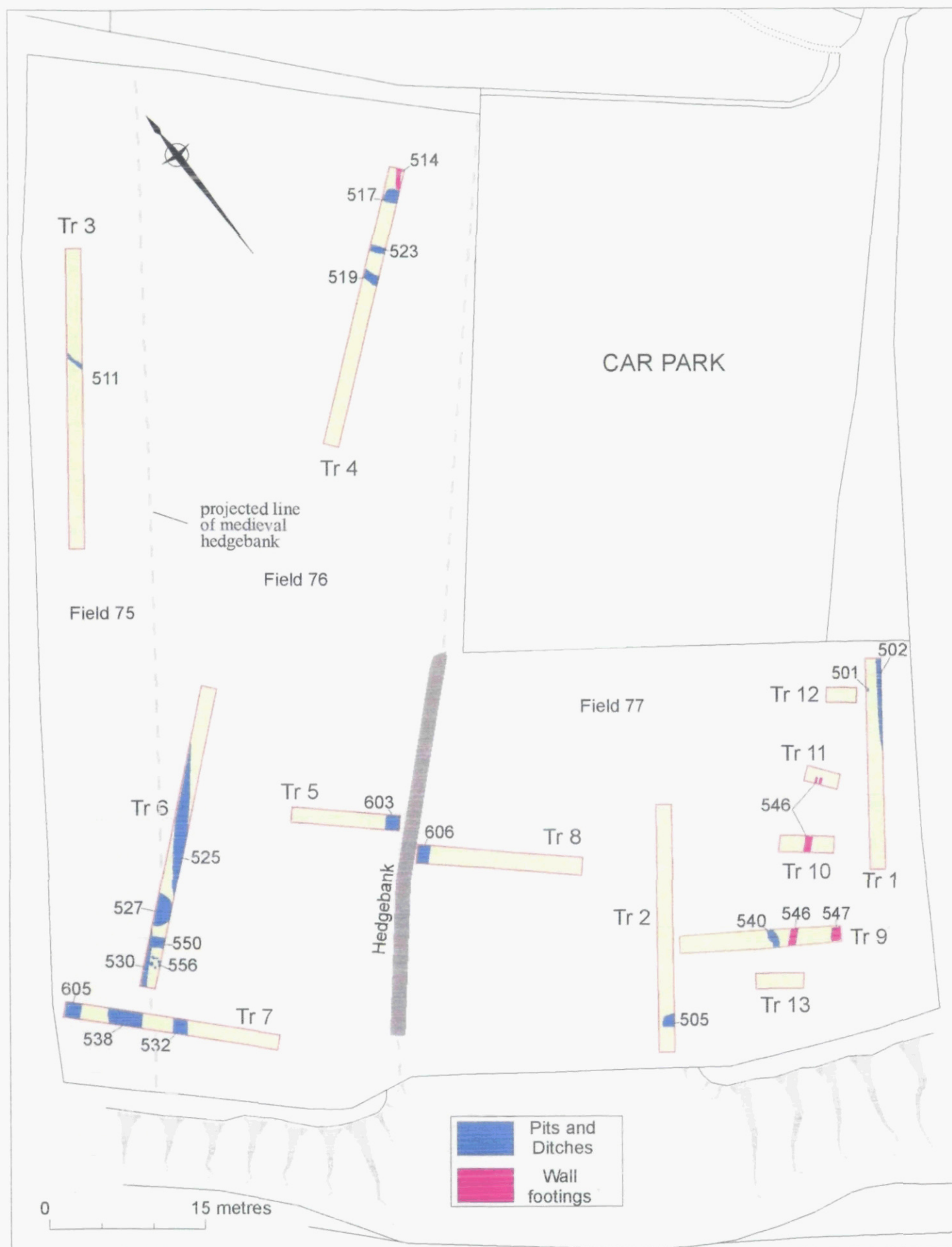
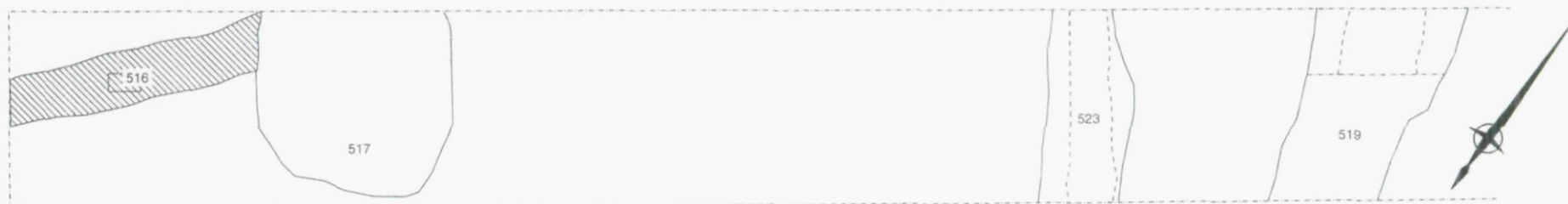
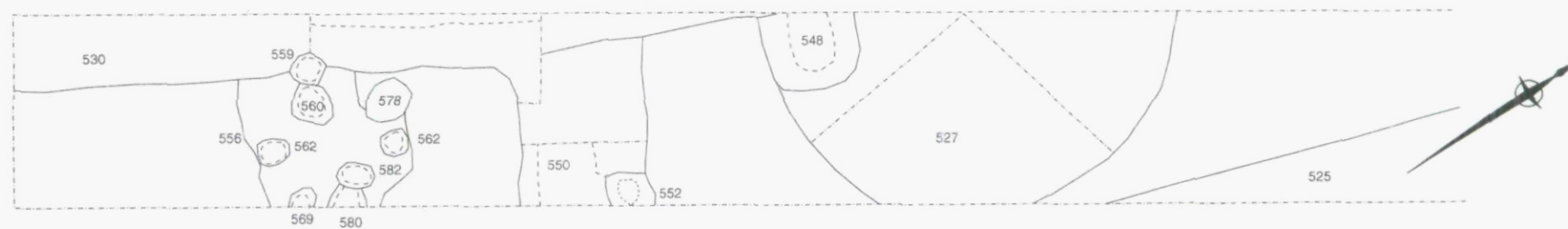


Fig. 2 Summary plan of evaluation trenches and archaeological features. Scale 1:500.

TRENCH 4



TRENCH 6



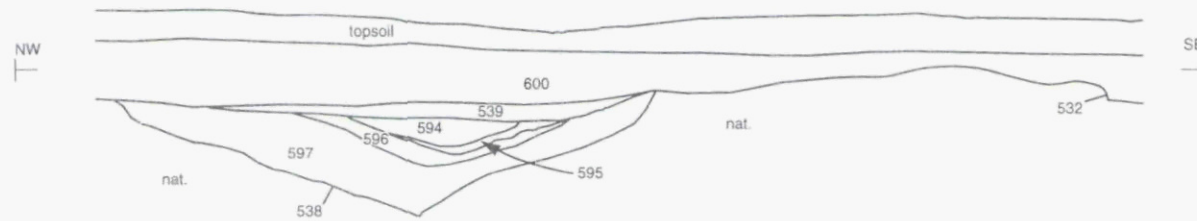
TRENCH 9



0 5 metres

Fig. 3 Partial plan of trenches 4, 6 and 9. Scale 1:50.

Trench 7, Ditch 538



Trench 9

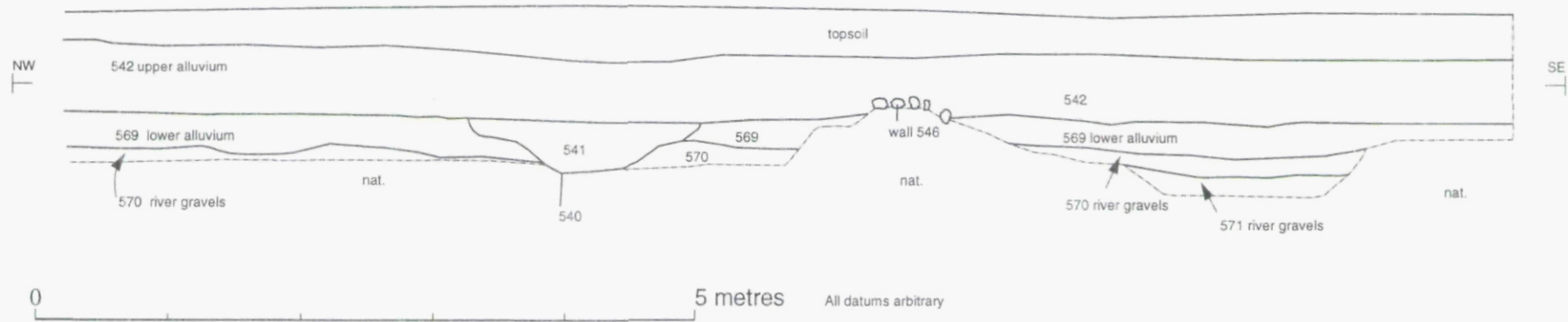


Fig.4 Sections: trench 7 (ditch 538) and trench 9. Scale 1:50.

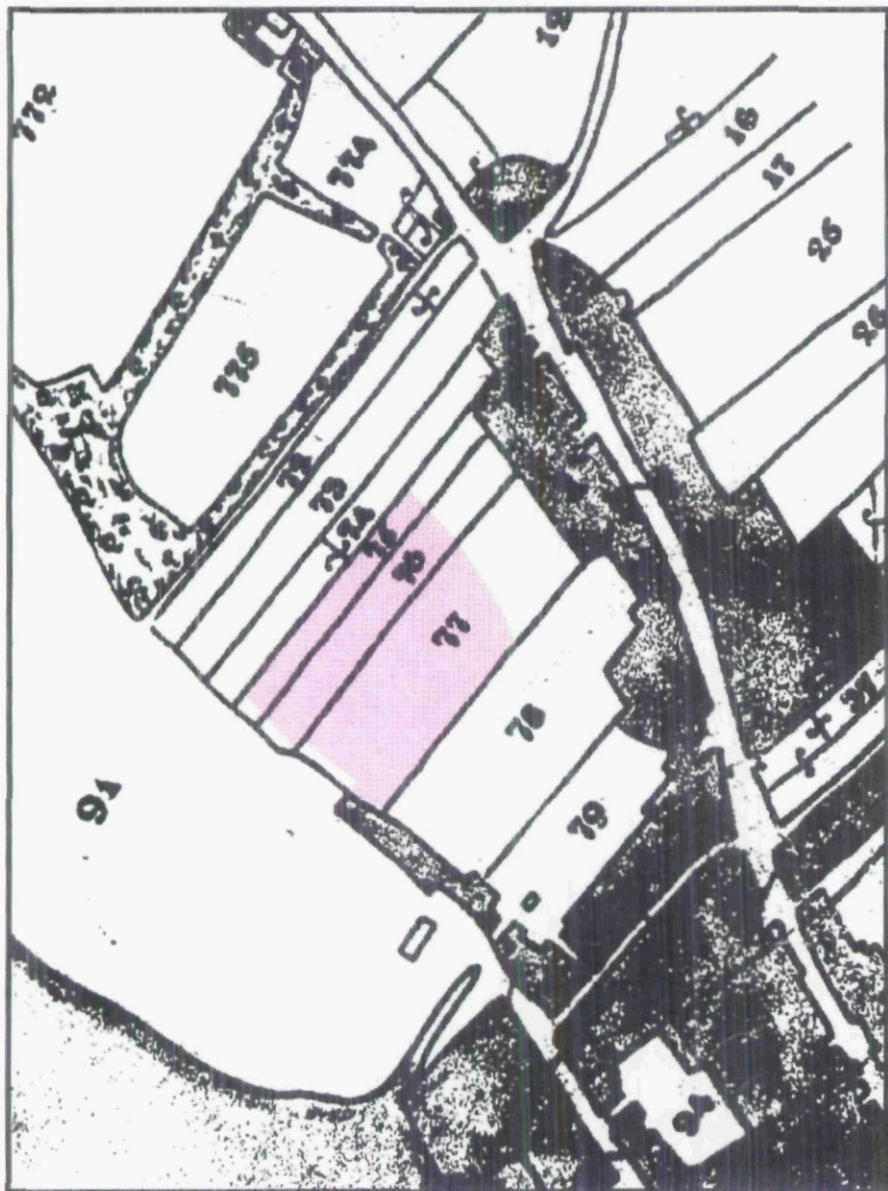


Fig. 5 A detail from the 1841 Topsham Tithe Map, showing the position of the site. Scale approximately 1:3600.

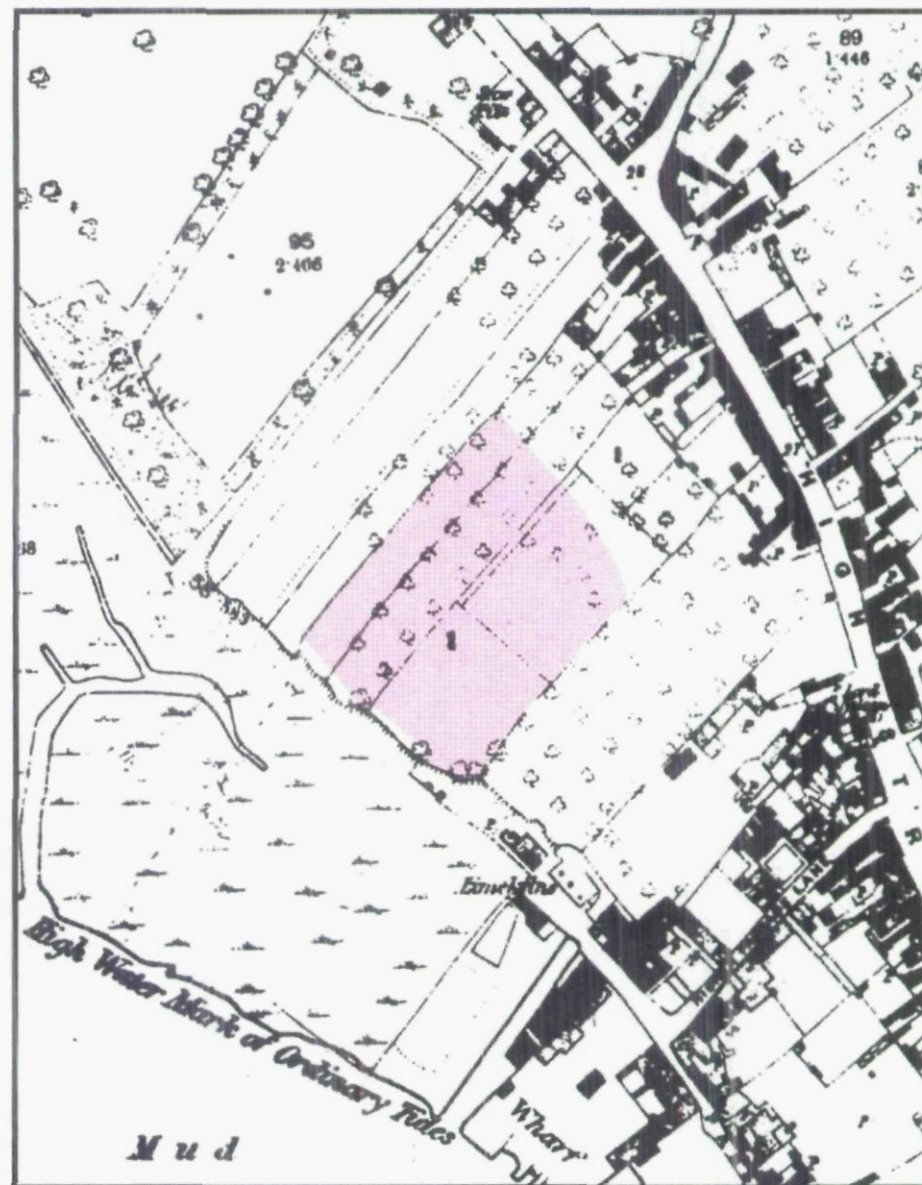


Fig. 6 A detail from the OS 1:2500 map sheet 92.4, 1890. Scale reduced to approximately 1:3100. One structure is visible on the site.