Cotswold Archaeology

Land adjacent to Newport Mobile Home Park
Exeter Road, Topsham
Devon

Archaeological Strip Map and Sample Investigation

For

RSK ADAS Limited

CA Project: 880259
CA Report: 17664

January 2018

Andover Cirencester Exeter Milton Keynes

Land adjacent to Newport Mobile Home Park
Exeter Road, Topsham
Devon

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Document Control Grid						
Revision	Date	Author	Checked by	Status	Reasons for revision	Approved by
A	15 December 2017	Jeremy Austin	Derek Evans	Internal review	–	Derek Evans
B	12 January 2018	Jeremy Austin	Derek Evans	Client/curator review	General revisions in line with comments	Derek Evans

CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

SUMMARY

Project Name:	Land adjacent to Newport Mobile Home Park, Exeter Road
Location:	Topsham, Exeter, Devon
NGR:	295313 089170
Type:	Strip Map and Sample
Date:	6–7 November 2017
Planning Reference:	13/3185/01
Location of Archive:	Digital archive to be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS)
Site Code:	NMH17

In November 2017, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological Strip Map and Sample excavation on land adjacent to Newport Mobile Home Park, Exeter Road, Topsham, Exeter.

The archaeological works recorded a small number of prehistoric features, comprising two ditches and a scattering of pits/postholes. These features were present mainly in the central part of the site. A relatively large worked flint assemblage was recovered from these features; much of this material was not closely dateable, but there were indications of a Mesolithic/Early Neolithic origin.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In November 2017, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological Strip Map and Sample (SMS) excavation for RSK ADAS Ltd on land adjacent to Newport Mobile Home Park, Exeter Road, Topsham, Exeter (centred at NGR: 295313 089170; Fig. 1). The SMS was undertaken in response to an archaeological planning condition attached to planning permission granted for an extension to the existing caravan park (Exeter City Council planning ref: 13/3185/01).

1.2 The SMS was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by RSK ADAS Ltd (2017). The fieldwork also followed: *Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation* (CIfA 2014), *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) PPN 3: Archaeological Excavation* (Historic England 2015) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE): Project Managers' Guide* (Historic England 2015).

1.3 The SMS fieldwork was monitored by Andrew Pye (Principal Project Manager (Heritage), Exeter City Council), including a site visit on 7 November 2017.

The site

1.4 The proposed development area covers approximately 1.6ha. It lies on the south-eastern fringes of Exeter, on the south-western side of Exeter Road. At the time of the SMS fieldwork, the site largely comprised grassland with internal roads/trackways and a central area of hardstanding. It was bounded by hedgerows.

1.5 The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as Breccia formations of the Permian period, overlain by river terrace sands and gravels (BGS 2017).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The site has been subject to a geophysical survey (Wessex Archaeology 2017) and an archaeological evaluation (AC Archaeology 2017). The following text is summarised from these sources, as well as from additional information contained in the WSI (RSK ADAS Ltd 2017) and CA's report on the adjacent new ALDI site (Cotswold Archaeology 2016; Garland and Orellana, forthcoming).

2.2 A number of past archaeological investigations undertaken in the immediate vicinity of the present SMS site have revealed evidence for activity in the prehistoric and Roman periods.

2.3 Topsham Road, which runs along the north-eastern site boundary, follows the approximate line of a Roman road between Exeter and Topsham.

2.4 Prehistoric worked flints were recovered during an archaeological watching brief maintained during the construction of a water pipeline within the south-western area of the present SMS site (Exeter Archaeology 2010; Fig. 2).

2.5 Archaeological excavations undertaken in 1974 prior to the construction of the M5 (*c*. 400m south-east of the present SMS site) recovered Mesolithic and Neolithic worked flints and pottery from a series of features, as well as an early Roman farmstead and later Roman activity.

2.6 Archaeological works at the new ALDI site off Exeter Road (*c*. 320m south-east of the present SMS site) identified activity dating from the Neolithic to the post-medieval periods. This included a number of Neolithic pits and several Early Bronze Age cremation burials, as well as a probable later prehistoric roundhouse and several phases of Roman occupation (Cotswold Archaeology 2016; Garland and Orellana, forthcoming).

2.7 Recent archaeological works at the Bloor Homes site (on the opposite side of the road to the present SMS site) recorded prehistoric roundhouses.

2.8 Archaeological works at the Heritage Homes site, which lies off Exeter Road to the south of the M5 (*c*. 480m south-east of the present SMS site) recorded Bronze Age and Iron Age activity, as well as early Roman military remains and a Roman masonry building.

Geophysical survey and evaluation

2.9 The geophysical survey did not suggest the presence of buried archaeological remains at the site. The evaluation recorded four prehistoric features (comprising two pits and two ditches), as well as several late post-medieval/modern features. The evaluation report is included as Appendix D of this present report.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 The project aims and objectives are fully outlined in Section 5 of the WSI (RSK ADAS Ltd 2017). The specific aim of the SMS excavation was to excavate and record any significant archaeological remains or deposits surviving within the site prior to their destruction or disturbance by the proposed development.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of three SMS areas (Areas A, B and C; Fig. 2). The SMS areas were targeted on areas of higher archaeological potential identified by the previous archaeological evaluation, where these were to be disturbed by the construction of new concrete slabs and access roads as part of the proposed development.

4.2 All SMS areas were set out on OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates using Leica GPS and surveyed in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 4: Survey Manual*. Overburden deposits were stripped from the SMS areas by a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the natural substrate. Where archaeological deposits were encountered, they were excavated by hand in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*.

4.3 Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 2: The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites*. All recovered artefacts were processed in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 3: Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation*.

4.4 As the project results are recorded sufficiently in this report and that produced for the previous evaluation (AC Archaeology 2017; Appendix D of this report), no project archive will be deposited. The results of the fieldwork will be held by DCCHET in the form of this report and the creation of an OASIS entry (as set out in Appendix C; including an uploaded copy of this report).

5. RESULTS

5.1 This section provides an overview of the SMS results. Detailed summaries of the recorded contexts can be found in Appendix A. The only pre-modern artefactual material recovered during the SMS excavation comprised worked flints (lithics); these are discussed in more detail in Section 6 and Appendix B, which also include a reassessment of the lithics from the previous evaluation (AC Archaeology 2017; included as Appendix D of this report).

5.2 In the following text, context and trench numbers prefixed 'AC' refer to contexts and trenches recorded by the previous evaluation.

5.3 The natural substrate comprised red-brown sandy silt with river gravel inclusions. It was exposed in all three SMS areas at an average depth of 0.5m below present ground level, increasing to 0.8m in the north-eastern corner of Area B. The natural substrate was overlain by a sandy silt subsoil layer, which was an average of 0.25m–0.55m in thickness. The subsoil was sealed in turn by 0.2m–0.3m of topsoil.

5.4 Areas A and B contained archaeological features and are discussed in more detail below. Area C did not contain any archaeological features or deposits.

Area A (Figs 3 & 4)

5.5 Area A was located on AC Tr1, which recorded a prehistoric ditch (AC110; which contained 14 pieces of prehistoric worked flint) and a prehistoric pit (AC116; which contained four sherds of prehistoric (potentially Early Neolithic) pottery), as well as four probable pits of late post-medieval/modern date (AC103, AC105, AC107 and AC117).

5.6 Archaeological features were recorded in the centre of Area A. These were all cut into the natural substrate and sealed by the subsoil. They comprised ditch 109 and three pits/postholes (103, 105 and 107).

5.7 West-north-west/east-south-east aligned ditch 109 (Fig. 4, Sec. AA) was 3.3m wide and 0.23m deep. It contained two gravelly/sandy fills (110 and 112. Two pieces of prehistoric worked flint were recovered from upper fill 112. Ditch 109 corresponds to AC110.

5.8 Pit/posthole 107 (Fig. 4, Sec. BB) was 0.9m in diameter and 0.28m in depth. It contained single sandy/gravelly fill 108, from which a single piece of prehistoric worked flint was recovered.

5.9 Pit/posthole 103 (Fig. 4, Sec. CC) was 0.5m in diameter and 0.3m in depth. Pit/posthole 105 was 0.4m in diameter and 0.19m in depth. Both of these features contained single undated sandy/gravelly fills (104 and 106, respectively).

5.10 Area A contained three substantial areas of late post-medieval/modern disturbance, all of which were cut through the subsoil (113, 115 and 117). Pit 113 (in the north-eastern corner of Area A) appears to correlate to AC117, which contained clay tobacco pipe fragments, 19th century pottery, coal and part of a pair of scissors.

Area B (Figs 3 and 5)

5.11 Area B was located on AC Tr7, which recorded a single prehistoric pit (AC703) from which a total of 16 pieces of prehistoric worked flint was recovered. It was apparent on the ground that AC Tr7 lay slightly to the south of the trench location given in the evaluation report; the actual trench location is shown on Figs. 2 and 3 of the present report.

5.12 Nine features were exposed in Area B. These comprised six pits and three postholes. All were cut into the natural substrate and sealed by the subsoil.

5.13 A cluster of three intercutting pits (211, 213 and 215) was located in the north-western part of Area B (Fig. 5, Sec. DD). Pit 211 was the earliest in the sequence. This pit was 0.93m in length and 0.12m in depth, and survived to a maximum of 0.45m in width. It contained a single undated silty sand fill (context 212). Pit 211 had been truncated on its northern and southern sides by pits 213 and 215. Both of these later pits were *c.* 0.65m in length, *c.* 0.5m in width and *c.* 0.15m in depth. Pit 215 was filled by dark grey silty sand with frequent sub-rounded stone inclusions (context 216), which contained frequent charcoal flecks and 26 pieces of prehistoric worked flint. Pit 213 contained a single undated silty sand fill with gravel inclusions (context 214).

5.14 Pit 207 (Fig. 5, Sec. EE) was 0.88m in length, 0.62m in width and 0.17m in depth. It contained a single silty sand fill (context 208), from which one piece of prehistoric worked flint was recovered.

5.15 Oval pit 203 lay in the east-central part of Area B. This pit was 1.15m in length, 0.4m in width and 0.21m in depth. It contained a single undated sandy/gravelly fill (context 204). Pit 203 was cut on its southern edge by posthole 205. This posthole was 0.39m in diameter and 0.19m in depth, with a single undated silty sand fill (context 206).

5.16 Pit 217 was 0.5m long, 0.35m wide and 0.1m deep. It contained a single undated silty sand fill (context 218).

5.17 Posthole 209 (Fig. 5, Sec. FF) was 0.2m in diameter and 0.22m in depth. Posthole 209 was also 0.2m in diameter and was 0.09m in depth. Both postholes contained single undated silty sand fills (210 and 220, respectively).

6. THE LITHICS

Introduction and methodology

6.1 The only artefacts recovered during the SMS excavation were worked flints (lithics). A combined total of 74 lithics (Appendix B) was recovered during the SMS excavation and the previous evaluation (AC Archaeology 2017; included as Appendix D of this report). The lithics from the evaluation were subject to brief analysis during the preparation of the evaluation report (ibid, Section 3.2) and were re-examined by CA for inclusion in the present report.

6.2 Lithics were recorded according to broad artefact/debitage type and catalogued directly onto a Microsoft Access database. Recorded attributes include dimensions, weight, colour, cortex description (the outer surface of a flint nodule or pebble), degree of edge damage (micro-flaking), rolling (abrasion), breakage, burning and recortication. This last presents as a white or blueish surface discoloration resulting from chemical change within the burial environment (Shepherd 1972, 109).

Raw material, condition and provenance

6.3 Five flakes were made using Greensand chert and the remainder were flint. Greensand chert outcrops in the region of the Blackdown Hills on the Devon/Somerset border.

6.4 Cortex is present on 38 flints: it is chalky on 22 and abraded on 16. This demonstrates a mixture of both primary (chalk/clay-with-flints) and secondary (beach/river gravel) resources. The flint is mostly dark grey or brown.

6.5 Rolling was minimal on 86% and edge damage was minimal on 70%. Such characteristics, and the presence of refitting material (see Pit 215 below), are indications that a proportion of the lithics are stratified. Half of the items are broken and two are burnt.

6.6 The lithics were recovered from pits (65%), ditches (22%) and topsoil/subsoil (14%). The largest groups are from pits 215 (Area B; 23 lithics) and AC703 (AC Tr7; 16 lithics) – both of these features are discussed in more detail below.

Range and variety

Primary technology

6.7 The debitage comprises four blades (6%) and 59 flakes. Indications of dating are discussed below. The assemblage included two multiplatform cores from ditch AC110 (AC Tr1), both of which had been used for the manufacture of flakes.

Secondary technology

6.8 Nine retouched tools were present: retouched flakes, scrapers, a fragmentary knife and a spurred piece. The scrapers comprise one end scraper and two end-and-sides scrapers, all made on flake blanks. The knife fragment is a medial flake fragment with shallow, semi-invasive retouch on the right distal edge. None of the tools are closely dateable types.

Pit 215 (Area B)

6.9 Twenty-three flints were recovered from this pit. Most appeared likely to have been removed from the same multi-platform core and a refitting exercise was carried out. Dorso-ventral refits were discovered on two pairs of flakes. Cortex is present on two-thirds of the flints in this pit but none are primary (with fully cortical ventral faces). Initial decortication would have been carried out elsewhere and the majority of this debitage represents a knapping episode which produced secondary (partially cortical) and tertiary (fully decorticated) flakes. Also included, however, are a burnt flake and one which clearly derives from a different flint raw material.

6.10 Indications of Mesolithic/Early Neolithic dating are provided by two blades (10% of the debitage) and evidence of soft hammer percussion on five items, including the blades. However, the average flake dimensions of 39mm x 34mm x 9mm (from 10 intact flakes) indicate rather thick and squat flakes – almost as wide as they are long. This is usually considered typical of Later Neolithic/Bronze Age debitage (Butler 2005, 122). In this instance, however, it would appear that the larger, thicker flakes mostly represent hard hammer decorticating removals. The tertiary flakes are thinner, longer and include those removed with a soft hammer – more typical of Mesolithic/Early Neolithic flintworking.

6.11 Early Neolithic pits have been excavated at several sites in Exeter, including Pin Brook Enclosure (Sommerville, forthcoming) and at the new ALDI site, Topsham (Cotswold Archaeology 2016; Garland and Orellana, forthcoming) – this last is some 320m south-east of the present SMS site. Early Neolithic pottery was recovered associated with the lithics at both of these sites.

Pit AC703

6.12 Pit AC703 (AC Tr7) produced 16 lithics: one flake of Greensand chert flake and the remaining items of flint. No indications of Mesolithic/Early Neolithic flintworking strategies (such as blade/bladelet production, soft hammer percussion or platform preparation) were observed. However, in such a small assemblage this does not necessarily indicate later dating. The two scrapers were made on flake blanks and are not chronologically diagnostic types.

7. DISCUSSION

7.1 The SMS excavation and the trial trench evaluation (AC Archaeology 2017; included as Appendix D of this report) recorded a small number of prehistoric features, comprising two ditches and a scattering of pits/postholes. These features were present mainly in the central part of the site (Areas A and B), although there was an outlying small prehistoric ditch in the north-eastern part of the site (AC Tr6).

7.2 A relatively large worked flint assemblage was recovered from these features; much of this material was not closely dateable, but there were indications of a Mesolithic/Early Neolithic origin. Additionally, one pit (AC116; Area A/AC Tr1) contained pottery potentially dating from the Early Neolithic.

7.3 The relatively high number of lithics recovered from pits 215 (Area B; 23 lithics) and AC703 (Area B/AC Tr7; 16 lithics) may indicate that they were knapping waste pits, but the function of the other prehistoric features is uncertain. Ditch 109 (Area A) does not appear to be a boundary demarking set areas of activity, as apparently contemporary pits were recorded to either side of it. The postholes do not form any obvious structures.

7.4 The low-level Mesolithic/Early Neolithic activity recorded at the site is consistent with the findings of other archaeological works in the immediate area (see *Archaeological background*, above). In particular, archaeological excavations undertaken prior to the construction of the M5 (*c*. 400m south-east of the present SMS site) recovered Mesolithic and Neolithic worked flints and pottery from a series of features, and works at the new ALDI site off Exeter Road (*c*. 320m south-east of the present SMS site) identified a number of Neolithic pits.

8. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Jerry Austin, assisted by Edoardo Vigo, Parris Stubbings and Jake Godfrey. This report was written by Jerry Austin. The finds report was written by Jacky Sommerville. The report illustrations were prepared by Charlotte Patman. The project archive has been compiled and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Derek Evans.

9. REFERENCES

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APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Area	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D (m)
A	100	Layer		topsoil	dark grey brown sandy silt			0.25
A	101	Layer		subsoil	mid brown sandy silt			0.25
A	102	Layer		natural	red and light brown sand and river gravels			
A	103	Cut		pit	sub circular, steep sides	0.5	0.5	0.3
A	104	Fill	103	single fill	grey brown sandy silt with gravel	0.5	0.5	0.3
A	105	Cut		pit	sub oval, steep sides flat base	0.4	0.35	0.19
A	106	Fill	105	single fill	grey brown sandy silt with gravels	0.4	0.35	0.19
A	107	Cut		pit	oval, steep sides flat base	0.5	0.5	0.28
A	108	Fill	107	single fill	grey brown sandy silt with gravels	0.5	0.5	0.28
A	109	Cut		ditch	gentle sloping sides with a slight concave base	>8	3.3	0.23
A	110	Fill	109	1st fill	mid brown sandy silt with frequent pebbles and gravels	>8	3.3	0.23
A	112	Fill	109	2nd fill	dark brown sandy silt with frequent pebbles. Only extant in east	2	0.7	0.16
A	113	Cut		pit	not excavated			
A	114	Fill	113	upper fill	mid brown sandy clay			
A	115	Cut		pit	Square; not excavated			
A	116	Fill	115	upper fill	dark brown sandy silt modern pot inclusions			
A	117	Cut		pit	steep sided modern intrusion			
A	118	Fill	117	upper fill	dark brown sandy silt with plastic, glass and brick			
B	200	Layer		topsoil	same as 100			0.27
B	201	Layer		subsoil	same as 101			0.29
B	202	Layer		natural	same as 102			
B	203	Cut		pit	longitudinal oval, steep sided flat base	1.12	0.4	0.21
B	204	Fill	203	single fill	mid brown sandy silt frequent pebbles and gravels	1.12	0.4	0.21
B	205	Cut		posthole	truncates south end of 203, circular steep sides, concave base	0.39	0.39	0.19
B	206	Fill	205	single fill	dark brown sandy silt	0.39	0.39	0.19
B	207	Cut		pit	longitudinal oval, steep concave sides flat base	0.88	0.62	0.17
B	208	Fill	207	single fill	grey brown sandy silt with occasional pebbles	0.88	0.62	0.17
B	209	Cut		posthole	circular steep sides concave base	0.21	0.21	0.22
B	210	Fill	209	single fill	dark grey silty sand with rare pebbles	0.21	0.21	0.22
B	211	Cut		pit	longitudinal oval, gentle concave sides and base	0.93	0.45	0.12
B	212	Fill	211	single fill	mid brown sandy sit occasional gravels	0.93	0.45	0.12
B	213	Cut		pit	oval moderate concave sides with concave base	0.65	0.5	0.15
B	214	Fill	213	single fill	mid brown silty sand frequent gravels	0.65	0.5	0.15
B	215	Cut		pit	oval with steep concave sides and a flat base	0.63	0.51	0.14
B	216	Fill	215	single fill	dark grey silty sand with abundant gravels			
B	217	Cut		pit	oval with moderate sides and concave base	0.5	0.35	0.1
B	218	Fill		single fill	light grey brown sandy silt rare gravels	0.5	0.35	0.1
B	219	Cut		posthole	oval concave sides and base	0.24	0.24	0.09

Area	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D (m)
B	220	Fill	219	single fill	dark grey silty sand, rare gravel	0.24	0.24	0.09
C	300	Layer		topsoil	same as 100			0.26
C	301	Layer		subsoil	same as 101			0.25
C	302	Layer		natural	same as 102			

APPENDIX B: THE LITHICS

Primary technology	Evaluation	SMS	Pit 215	Pit 703
Blade	1	3	2	
Core	2			
Flake	34	25	19	13
Secondary technology				
Knife		1	1	
Retouched flake	3	1	1	
Scraper (end)	1			1
Scraper (end-and-sides)	2			1
Spurred piece	1			
Total	**44**	**30**	**23**	

Table B1: breakdown of the lithics assemblage

APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Land adjacent to Newport Mobile Home Park, Exeter Road, Topsham, Exeter	
Short description	In November 2017, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological Strip Map and Sample excavation on land adjacent to Newport Mobile Home Park, Exeter Road, Topsham, Exeter. The archaeological works recorded a small number of prehistoric features, comprising two ditches and a scattering of pits/postholes. These features were present mainly in the central part of the site. A relatively large worked flint assemblage was recovered from these features; much of this material was not closely dateable, but there were indications of a Mesolithic/Early Neolithic origin.	
Project dates	6–7 November 2017	
Project type	Strip Map and Sample excavation	
Previous work	Geophysical survey (Wessex Archaeology 2017) Field evaluation (AC Archaeology 2017)	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site location	Exeter Road, Topsham, Exeter, Devon	
Study area (m^2/ha)	1.6ha	
Site co-ordinates	295313 089170	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	N/A	
Project Design (WSI) originator	RSK ADAS Ltd	
Project Manager	Derek Evans, Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Supervisor	Jerry Austin, Cotswold Archaeology	
MONUMENT TYPE	None	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES	**Intended final location of archive**	**Content**
Physical	N/A – artefacts to be returned to landowner	N/A
Paper	N/A	N/A
Digital	Archaeology Data Service (ADS)	Database, digital photos, scans of primary site archive
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Cotswold Archaeology 2017 *Land adjacent to Newport Mobile Home Park, Exeter Road, Topsham, Devon: Archaeological Strip Map and Sample Investigation* CA typescript report **17664**		

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0 1km

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PROJECT TITLE

Land adjacent to Newport Mobile Home Park, Exeter Road, Topsham, Devon

FIGURE TITLE

Site location plan

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CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	21/11/2017	1
APPROVED BY	DE	SCALE@A4	1:25,000	

295200
295300
295400
89200
89100
Exeter Road
Area A
Area B
Area C
see fig. 3
T1
T3
T4
T5
T6
T7
AC103
AC105
AC107
AC110
AC116
AC117
AC603
AC703
N
site boundary
excavation area
water pipeline watching brief (Exeter Archaeology 2010)
archaeological feature
modern
AC Archaeology Investigations (2017):
evaluation trench
prehistoric feature
post-medieval feature
0
50m

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PROJECT TITLE
Land adjacent to Newport Mobile Home Park, Exeter Road, Topsham, Devon
FIGURE TITLE
The site showing Areas A, B and C and previous evaluation trenches
DRAWN BY CP
CHECKED BY DJB
APPROVED BY DE
PROJECT NO 880259
DATE 14/12/2017
SCALE@A3 1:1,000
FIGURE NO. 2
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0 250 m

N

site boundary
excavation area
archaeological feature (excavated/unexcavated)
post-medieval/modern
section location

AC Archaeology Investigations (2017):

evaluation trench
prehistoric feature
post-medieval feature

0 12.5m

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PROJECT TITLE
Land adjacent to Newport Mobile Home Park, Exeter Road, Topsham, Devon

FIGURE TITLE
Areas A and B

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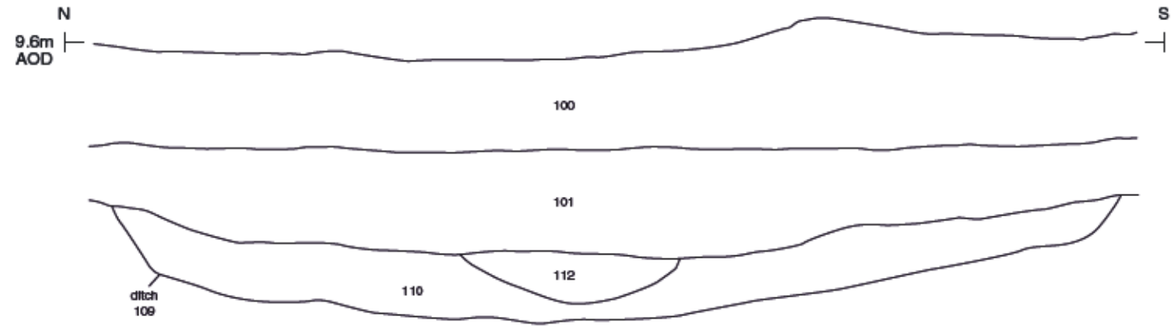
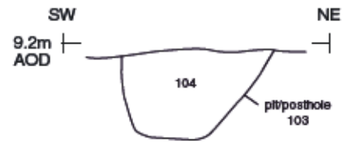
Section AA



Section BB

Section CC



0 1:20 1m

Ditch 109, looking east (scale 1m)

Pit/posthole 107, looking south-east (sclae 0.4m)

Pit/posthole 103, looking north-west (scale 0.3m)

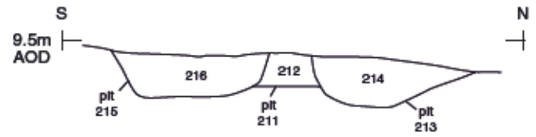
Cotswold Archaeology
Andover 01264 347630
Cirencester 01285 771022
Exeter 01392 826185
Milton Keynes 01908 564660
w www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
e enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE
Land adjacent to Newport Mobile Home Park, Exeter Road, Topsham, Devon

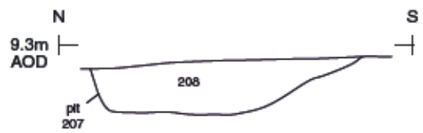
FIGURE TITLE
Area A: sections and photographs

DRAWN BY	CP	PROJECT NO.	880259	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	21/11/2017	4
APPROVED BY	DE	SCALE@A3	1:20	

Section DD



Section EE



Section FF

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Pits 211, 213 and 215, looking west (scale 1m)

Pits 211, 215 and 213, looking east (scale 0.3m)

Posthole 209, looking west (scale 0.3m)

Cotswold Archaeology
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e enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE
Land adjacent to Newport Mobile Home Park, Exeter Road, Topsham, Devon

FIGURE TITLE
Area B: sections and photographs

DRAWN BY	CP	PROJECT NO.	880259	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	21/11/2017	5
APPROVED BY	DE	SCALE@A3	1:20	

APPENDIX D: AC ARCHAEOLOGY EVALUATION REPORT

LAND ADJACENT TO NEWPORT MOBILE HOME PARK, EXETER ROAD, TOPSHAM, EXETER

(Centred on NGR SX 9533 8918)

Interim Results from an Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation

Exeter City Council Planning Permission Reference 13/3185/01

Prepared by:
Simon Hughes

With contributions from:
Charlotte Coles
and
Henrietta Quinnell

On behalf of:
RSK ADAS Ltd

Report No: ACD1652/1/1

Date: September 2017

AC archaeology

LAND ADJACENT TO NEWPORT MOBILE HOME PARK, EXETER ROAD, TOPSHAM EXETER

(Centred on NGR SX 9533 8918)

Interim results from an archaeological trial trench evaluation

Exeter City Council Planning Permission ref. 13/3185/01

Client	RSK ADAS Ltd
Report Number	ACD1652/1/0
Date	5 September 2017
Status	Version 2
Report Author	Simon Hughes
Contributions	Charlotte Coles and Henrietta Quinnell
Checked by	Paul Rainbird
Approved by	Simon Hughes

Acknowledgements

The evaluation was commissioned by James McNicoll-Norbury of RSK ADAS Ltd. The site works were carried out by Simon Hughes, Leon Cauchois and Laszlo Lichtenstein, with the illustrations for this report prepared by Sarnia Blackmore. Thanks to Andrew Pye, Exeter City Council Principal Project Manager (Heritage) who provided useful advice prior to and during the course of the site works.

The views and recommendations expressed in this report are those of AC archaeology and are presented in good faith on the basis of professional judgement and on information currently available.

CONTENTS

List of figures

List of plates

Summary

An archaeological trench evaluation on land adjacent to Newport Mobile Home Park, Exeter Road, Topsham, Exeter (SX 9533 8918) was undertaken by AC archaeology during July 2017. The site occupies approximately 1.6 hectares of mixed grassland and hard standing on the southwest side of Exeter Road.

The evaluation comprised the machine excavation of seven trenches totaling 114m in length, with each trench 1.5m wide. These were positioned to target the results of a previous geophysical survey as well as to test 'blank' areas to test its efficacy. Across the majority of the site negative results were recorded. However, towards the southwest of the site, a small number of prehistoric pits and a linear feature representing a possible ditch or hollow were exposed. A probable small ditch terminal was also recorded at the northeast on the site. An assemblage of worked flints of probable Neolithic to early Bronze Age date and a small number of pottery sherds, potentially of a similar date were recovered from these features. Later activity comprised a collection of post-medieval pits and postholes.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 An archaeological trial trench evaluation forming a stage in a programme of archaeological work on land adjacent to Newport Mobile Home Park, Exeter Road, Topsham, Exeter (SX 9533 8918), was undertaken by AC archaeology during July 2017. It was carried out in advance of a new development comprising an extension to the existing mobile home park. The work was commissioned by RSK ADAS Ltd and was required as a condition of planning consent granted by Exeter City Council, following consultation with the Exeter City Council Principal Project Manager (Heritage) (hereafter ECCPPM).

1.2 The site lies on the southwest side of Exeter Road. It consists of an irregularly-shaped parcel of land to the northwest of the existing Newport Mobile Home Park, which extends to the River Exe (Fig.1). The site currently comprises grassland bounded by tree-lined hedgebanks and with an area of hardstanding approximately at its mid-point (Plates 1 and 2). It is largely positioned a gently sloping terrace at around 9m aOD (above Ordnance Datum) before a moderately steep slope down to level ground adjacent to the River Exe at 5m aOD. The underlying solid geology consists of breccia of the Heavitree Breccia Formation, beneath river terrace deposits (www.bgs.ac.uk).

2. SUMMARY RESULTS

2.1 **Introduction** (Trench location Fig. 2; Plates 1-2)
The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a project design prepared by RSK ADAS Ltd (2017) and with reference to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (2014). It comprised the machine-excavation of seven trenches totaling 114m in length and with each trench 1.5m wide. These were positioned to target anomalies interpreted from a previous geophysical survey (RSK ADAS Ltd 2017), as well as in blank areas to test the survey efficacy (Fig. 2). Archaeological features were present in Trenches 1, 6 and 7 and these are summarised below, with descriptions for the negative trenches presented in tabulated form in Appendix 1. Natural subsoil comprised river terrace gravels in a light reddish-yellow silty-sand matrix.

2.2 **Trench 1** (Detailed plan Fig.3a and sections Figs.3b-g; Plates 1 and 3-4)
Trench 1 was located in the southwest portion of the site. It was excavated onto natural subsoil (context 102), which was present at a depth of between 0.5m and 0.6m below existing levels. The natural subsoil was overlain by a mid reddish-brown sandy loam

subsoil (101) and a dark brownish-grey topsoil (100). The trench contained a total of six features with these dated to the prehistoric and post-medieval periods.

Prehistoric features
Features dated to the prehistoric period consisted of a possible ditch or linear hollow (F110) and a probable pit (F116). These were both sealed by subsoil 101.

Possible ditch or linear hollow F110 measured 1.85m wide and 0.12m deep with a gradual-sided shallow profile. It contained a mid brown silty-sand fill (111), which contained abundant gravel and moderately-common cobble inclusions. A total of 14 pieces of worked flint were recovered from fill 111.

Pit F116 measured approximately 1.2m across and 0.95m deep. The pit had been cut to the south and across the top by later features (F103 and F117). The surviving part of the pit had moderately-steep sloping sides and a flat base. It contained a dark reddish-brown silty-sand fill with abundant gravel inclusions (115). Four small sherds of prehistoric pottery were recovered.

Post-medieval features
Four post-medieval features, comprising a possible pit or ditch terminal (F103), a probable pit (F117) and two possible pits (F103 and F117) were present in the trench.

Possible pit or ditch terminal F103 measured 0.8m wide and 0.98m deep with steeply-sloping sides and a concave base. It contained a dark yellowish-brown silty-sand basal fill (114), which was overlain by a dumped mid brownish-grey sandy-loam fill (104) that had occasional lime mortar fragments, coal and clinker inclusions. Two residual prehistoric worked flints were recovered from this feature.

Pit F117 was located at the northern end of the trench. It cut through subsoil 101 and into pits F103 and F116. The pit measured 5.8m across and 1m deep with moderately-steep sloping sides and a flat base. It contained a sequence of three sandy loam deposits (113, 112 and 109) that were overlain by a dump of gravels (118). Finds recovered from pit F117 consisted of clay tobacco pipe fragments, 19th century pottery, coal and part of a pair of scissors.

Postholes F105 and F107 measured approximately 0.3m across and 0.25m deep with steeply-sloping sides and flat bases. A fragment from a brick and a fragment from a clay tobacco pipe were recovered from their fills (106 and 108 respectively).

2.3 **Trench 6** (Detailed plan Fig.4a and section Figs.4b; Plate 5)
Trench 6 was located close to Exeter Road. It was positioned to investigate an area of the site where four linear anomalies had been identified from the previous geophysical survey. The trench was excavated onto natural subsoil (602), which was present at a depth of 0.42m below subsoil (601) and topsoil layers (600). A single probable ditch terminal was exposed towards the middle of the trench (F603) but did not closely correspond with any of the targeted linear anomalies.

Ditch F603 measured 0.7m wide and 0.27m deep with a moderately-steep concave profile and a rounded terminal to the southwest. It contained a mid reddish-brown silty-sand fill (604) from which two pieces of worked flint were recovered.

2.4 **Trench 7** (Detailed plan Fig.4c and section Fig.5d; Plate 6)
Trench 7 was located to the northeast of Trench 1 within an area of hard standing. Natural subsoil (702) was exposed at a depth of 0.25m below a 0.1m thick subsoil (701) and a gravel surface (700). The trench contained a single pit (F703) at the east

end of the trench. Round pit F703 measured 0.6m across and 0.12m deep with gradual sloping sides and a concave base. It contained a mid greyish-brown silty-sand fill (704) that had abundant gravel inclusions. A total of 15 pieces of worked flint were recovered.

3. THE FINDS *by Charlotte Coles and Henrietta Quinnell*

3.1 Introduction

All finds recovered during the evaluation have been retained, cleaned and marked where appropriate. They have been quantified according to material type within each context and the assemblage examined to extract information regarding the range, nature and date of artefacts represented. The collection of finds are summarised in Table 1 below and consist of worked flint, prehistoric pottery, post-medieval pottery clay tobacco pipe, ceramic building material (CBM), animal bone iron and coal.

Table 1. Summary of finds by context (weights are in grams)

Context	Context Description	Worked Flint/Chert		Prehistoric Pottery		Post Medieval Pottery		Clay pipe		CBM		Animal Bone		Iron		Coal	
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
101	Trench 1, subsoil	5	61			6	63	4	8								
104	Fill of pit F103	2	13													1	4
106	Fill of posthole F105							1	2								
108	Fill of posthole F107									1	114						
109	Fill of pit F117					3	23	2	5								
111	Fill of ditch F110	14	101														
112	Fill of pit F117					2	3										
113	Fill of pit F117					3	10					1	1				
115	Fill of pit F116			4	5												
118	Fill of pit F117					7	236							1	26	2	3
200	Trench 2 topsoil	1	1														
300	Trench 3 topsoil	1	7														
400	Trench 4 topsoil	1	6			1	1										
500	Trench 5 topsoil					2	28										
604	Fill of ditch terminus F603	2	12														
701	Trench 7 Subsoil	2	15														
704	Fill of pit F703	15	143														
Total		43	359	4	5	24	364	7	15	1	114	1	1	1	26	3	7

3.2 **Worked flint** *by Henrietta Quinnell*

43 lithics were retrieved from topsoil/subsoil (10), fills of pit F103 (2), ditch F110 (14), pit F703 (15) and ditch terminus F603 (2). These are listed and described in Table 2.

Table 2. Description of lithics by context

Context	Description of lithics
Topsoil/subsoil layers	The topsoil/subsoil pieces include one chert and one heavily burnt flint. There are an extended end scraper and several pieces with use wear and/all small amounts of retouch.
Pit F103	Both flint and broken pieces with use wear, not fresh.
Ditch F110	Three chert, remainder flint, some nodular, one pebble flint, of variable freshness. There are one exhausted core and several pieces with use ware. A slightly patinated flake has been trimmed as, possibly, a side-scraper.
Ditch F603	Two pieces of the same nodular flint, not closely dateable.
Pit F703	One chert, remainder nodular flint, all fresh. There is one end scraper and one small damaged scraper. This material fits comfortably anywhere within a period between the Early Neolithic and the Early Bronze Age. The majority probably comes from a single on-site knapping episode.

There is nothing in the assemblage which need be Mesolithic and it all probably belongs between the Early Neolithic and the Early Bronze Age.

3.3 **Prehistoric pottery** *by Henrietta Quinnell*

Four sherds of prehistoric pottery (5g) were recovered from context 115, fill of pit F116. They have no form or decoration, are thin (<4mm) and well-made with inclusions of sand and rock fragments (<4mm) including quartz; some inclusions appear waterworn. It is not possible to provide a definite date. Probabilities are the Early Neolithic or a date in the 1st millennium BC.

3.4. **Post-medieval pottery**

17 post-medieval pottery sherds (128g) were recovered from six contexts. These are fully described in Table 3, below. The pottery all dates from the 18th or 19th centuries.

Table 3. Post-medieval pottery catalogue

Context	No. of sherds	Comments
101	6	Delft sherd C18th, 2 sherds of red ware flowerpot C19th, 1 sherd South Somerset, 2 sherds of white wares C19th.
109	3	South Somerset C18th/C19th
112	2	Delft sherd C18th, white ware sherd C19th
113	3	Transfer printed whiteware C19th
118	7	3 flower pot rims C19th. 1 possible chimney pot rim. 3 white wares, including 1 transfer-printed sherd, C19th
400	1	English stoneware C19th
500	2	1 sherd of South Somerset red ware and 1 sherd transfer printed whiteware

3.5. Clay tobacco-pipe

A total of seven pieces (15g) of post-medieval clay tobacco-pipe were recovered from three contexts. These are all stem fragments and are not closely datable.

3.6 Other finds

Miscellaneous other finds included a single piece of modern house brick (114g) retrieved from context 108, a small unidentified piece of mammal bone (1g) from context 113, one arm from a pair of 19th or 20th century iron scissors from context 118 and three small fragments of coal from contexts 104 and 118.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 The results from the trial trenches suggest the presence of prehistoric and some limited post-medieval activity on the site. Of particular interest from the results were pits F116 and F703 exposed in Trenches 1 and 7, as well as the possible ditch or linear hollow F110, also exposed in Trench 1. Finds recovered from these features suggest activity dating from between the Early Neolithic and Early Bronze Age periods (4000-2000BC). These features may reflect the presence of some form of settled activity in this part of the site, with this positioned on the river terrace close the break of slope above the River Exe. The quantity and mixed range of worked flints present in pit F703 suggest that these were the remains of flint knapping,

4.2 To the north of the site, ditch F603 perhaps represented part of a plot boundary of probable prehistoric date. However, given the absence of any other features in the remaining trenches in the part of the site (Trenches 2-5), it is unlikely to be related to adjacent settlement activity.

4.3 The depth at which the archaeological features were present varied between 0.42m for Trench 6 and around 0.5m below existing levels for Trench 1. In Trench 7, the area is likely to have previously been partially stripped for the existing hardstanding, with the depth of overburden here 0.25m thick.

4.4 The prehistoric date of the finds recovered from these features, as well as residual finds from later features and from overlying soils in the majority of the trenches corresponds with previously-recorded prehistoric activity in the vicinity of the site. These include: the recovery of worked flint from a water pipeline that crosses adjacent to Trenches 1 and 7; Neolithic and Bronze activity recorded during the construction of the adjacent section of the M5 motorway; and, Neolithic pits exposed ahead of development of the Aldi store in the next-door plot (RSK ADAS 2017).

4.5 As part of on-site discussions with the ECCPPM it was proposed that across the majority of the site no further archaeological work needs to be undertaken. However, as a second stage of archaeological mitigation, further investigations principally of the areas to be effected by development around Trenches 1, 6 and 7 are likely to be required, including appropriate subsequent reporting, analysis and archiving of the paper, digital and artefact/ecofact archive. Figure 5 shows the trench locations in relation to the proposed development layout.

5. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

5.1 The finds, paper and digital archive is currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ under the unique project code of **ACD1652**. It will be held until the need for any further archaeological work on the site is established and ultimately will be offered to the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter under a pending temporary reference number, but if

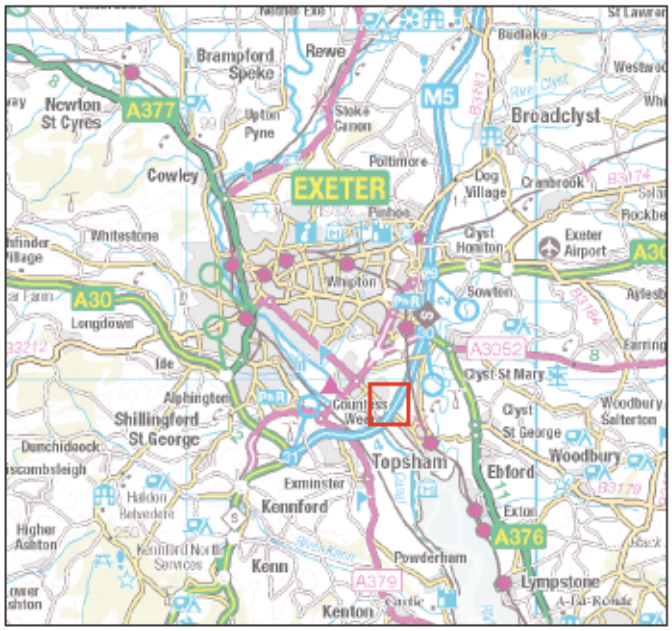
they are unable to accept this, then it will be dealt with under their current accession policy.

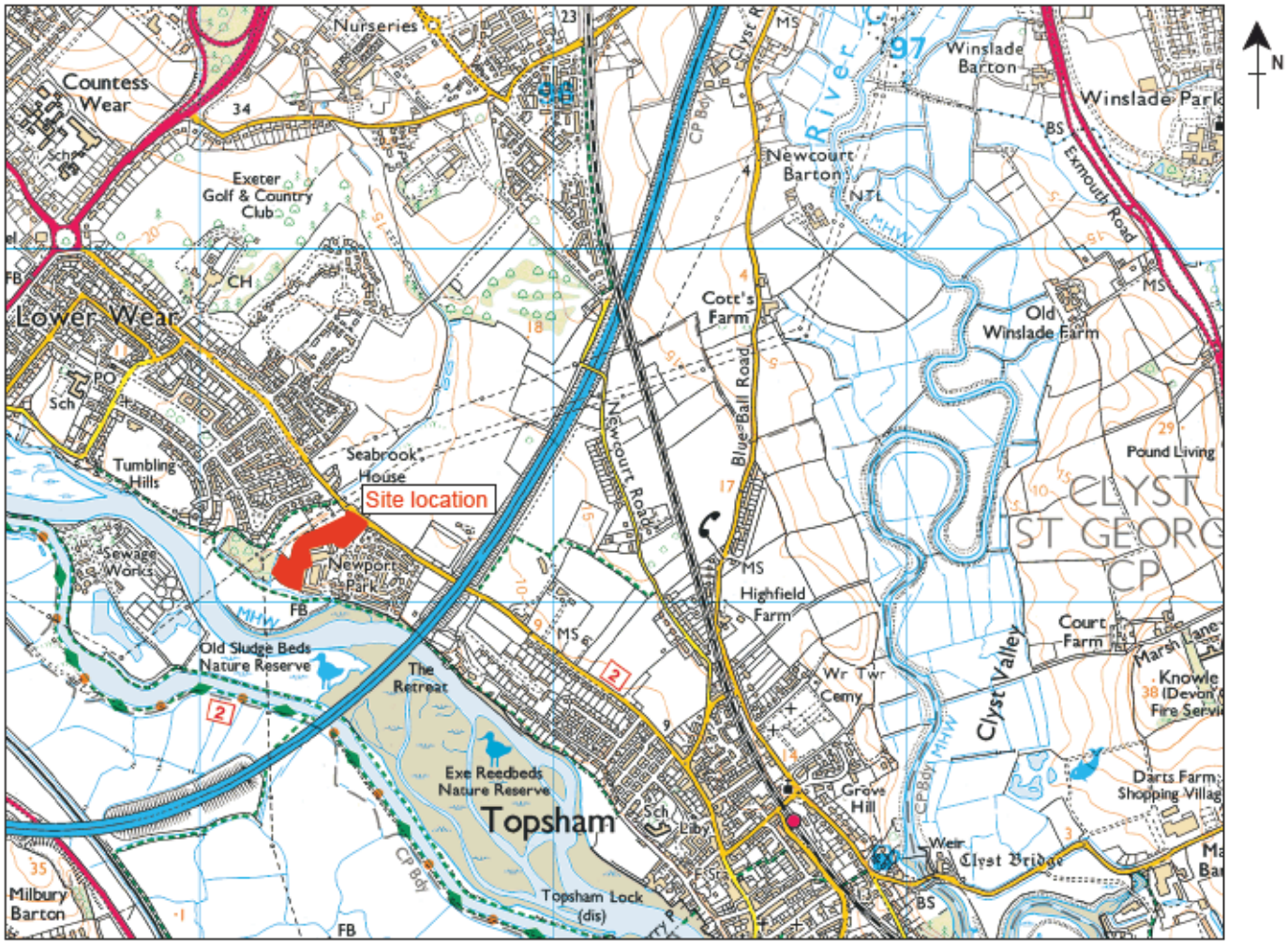
5.2 An online OASIS entry has been completed, using the unique identifier **294803**, which includes a digital copy of this report.

6. REFERENCES

British Geological Survey Online Viewer, www.bgs.ac.uk.

RSK ADAS Ltd., 2017, *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Programme of Works: Topsham Road, Exeter, Devon*. Unpublished RSK ADAS Ltd. Document ref. PE/DO13





PROJECT

Land adjacent to Newport Mobile Home Park, Exeter Road, Topsham,

TITLE

Fig. 1: Site location

AC archaeology

Newport Cottage

Garden Centre

Issues

ETL

Tr 2

Tr 6

F603

Tr 4

Tr 3

Tr5

F703

Tr 7

Newport House

Newport Park Cottages

5

1

11

4

1

26

F117

F116

F107

F103

Tr 1

F105

F110

Plan supplied by West Country Land Surveys Ltd

Legend

Site boundary

Evaluation trenches

Phase

Prehistoric

Post-medieval

Geophysical survey feature

Water main

N

0 25m

Scale 1:500@A3

PROJECT

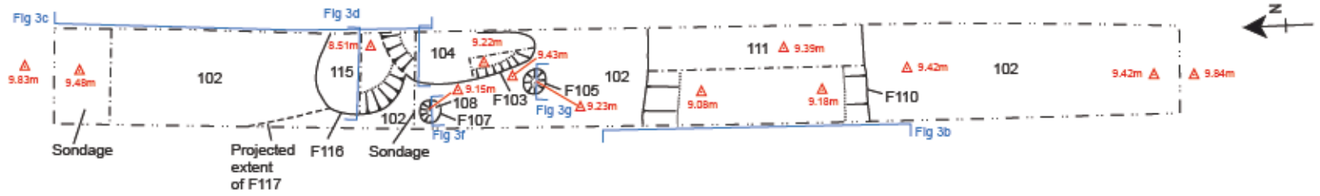
Land adjacent to Newport Mobile Home Park, Exeter Road, Topsham,

TITLE

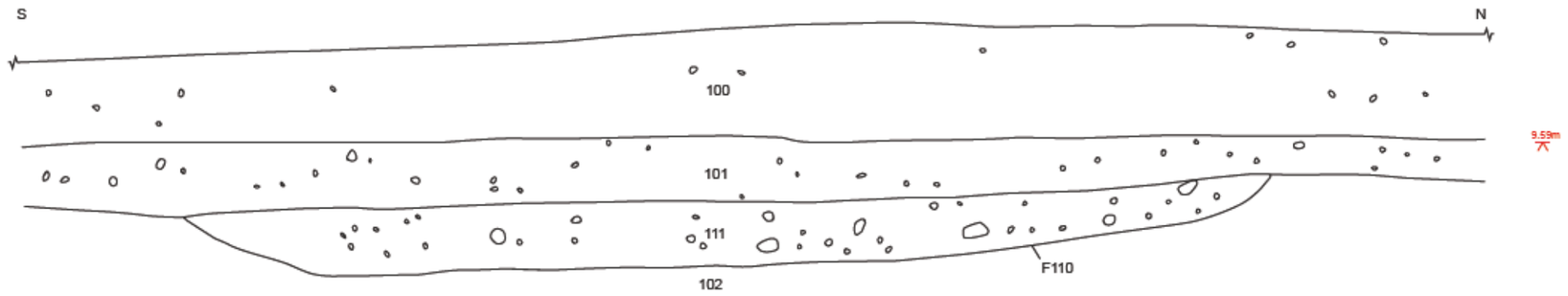
Fig. 2: Location of trenches with archaeological features shown

AC archaeology

a) Trench 1, plan



b) Section of ditch F110



Key to all figures

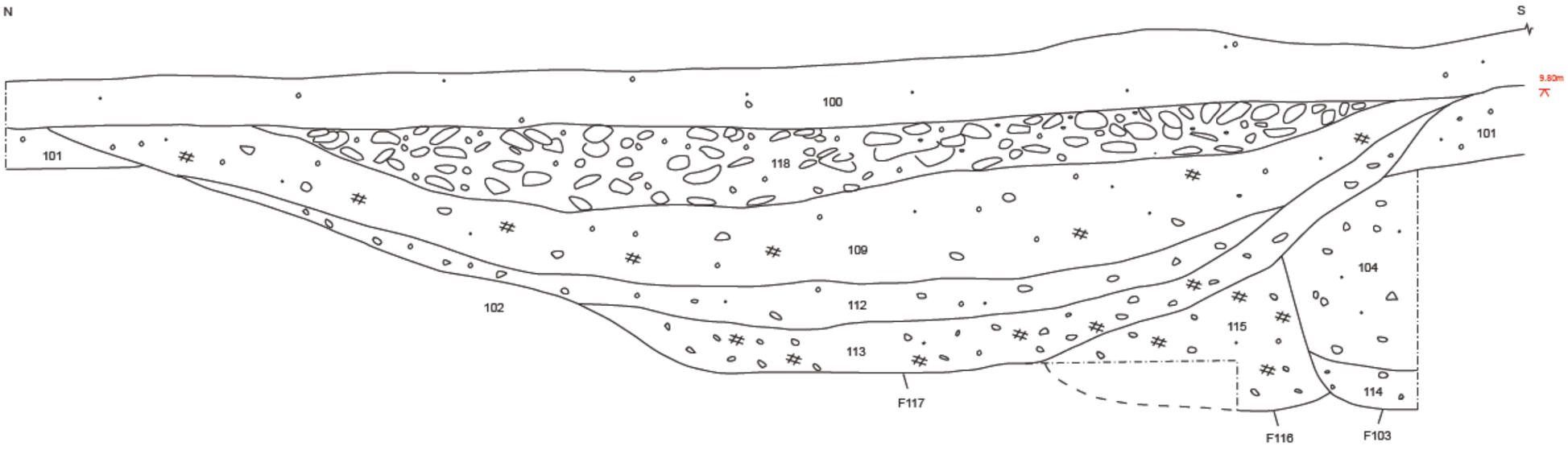
Stones

Charcoal

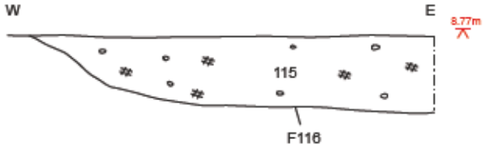
Sections 0 1m
Scale 1:20@A3

Plan 0 5m
Scale 1:100@A3

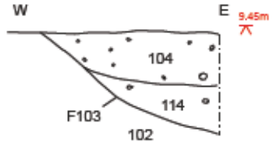
c) Section of pits F103, F116 and F117



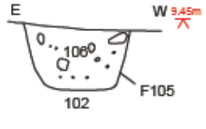
d) Section of pit F116



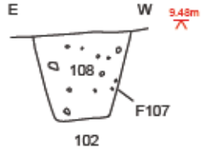
e) Section of ditch F103



f) Section of posthole F105



g) Section of posthole F107



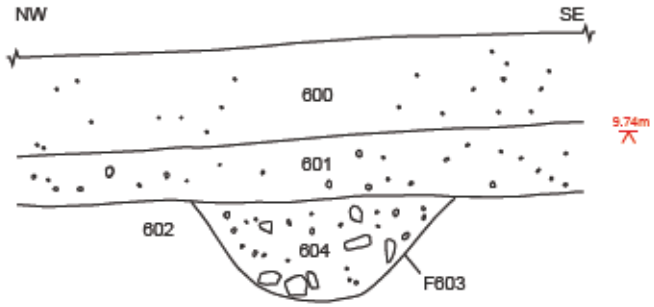
PROJECT
Land adjacent to Newport Mobile Home Park, Exeter Road, Topsham,

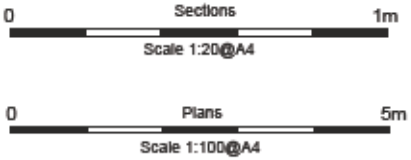
TITLE
Fig. 3: Trench 1, plan and sections

AC archaeology

a) Trench 6, plan

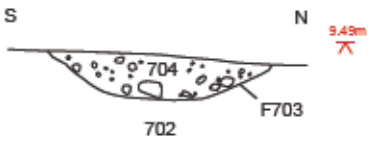
b) Section of ditch F603



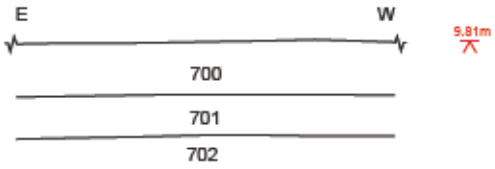


c) Trench 7, plan

d) Section of pit F703



e) Representative section



PROJECT

Land adjacent to Newport Mobile Home Park, Exeter Road, Topsham,

TITLE

Fig. 4: Trenches 6 and 7, plans and sections

AC archaeology

Development layout supplied by URS Infrastructure & Environment UK Ltd

Legend

- Site boundary
- Evaluation trenches

Phase

- Prehistoric
- Post-medieval

N

0 50m

Scale 1:1000@A3

PROJECT

Land adjacent to Newport Mobile Home Park, Exeter Road, Topsham,

TITLE

Fig. 5: Location of trenches in relation to proposed development layout

AC archaeology

Plate 1: Showing southwest portion of site. Looking southwest towards the River Exe from Trench 1

Plate 2: Showing northeast portion of site. Looking southwest with Trench 6 in the foreground

Plate 3: Trench 1, ditch F110. View to west (scale 1m)

Plate 4: Trench 1, pit F116. View to east (scale 2m)

Plate 5: Trench 6, ditch F603. View to northeast (scale 1m)

Plate 6: Showing Trench 7, with pit F703 in foreground. View to west (scale 1m)

Appendix 1

Tabulated negative trench descriptions

Appendix 1: Tabulated negative trench descriptions

Trench 2		Length 10m	Width 1.5m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
200	Dark greyish-brown sandy-loam	0-0.25m	Topsoil	
201	Mid yellowish-brown silty-sand	0.25m-0.42m	Subsoil	
202	Light reddish-yellow silty-sand with abundant gravels	0.42m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 3		Length 10m	Width 1.5m	Alignment NE-SW
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
300	Dark greyish-brown sandy-loam	0-0.18m	Topsoil	
301	Mid yellowish-brown silty-sand	0.18m-0.42m	Subsoil	
302	Light reddish-yellow silty-sand with abundant gravels	0.42m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 4		Length 20m	Width 1.5m	Alignment NE-SW
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
400	Dark greyish-brown sandy-loam	0-0.2m	Topsoil	
401	Mid yellowish-brown silty-sand	0.2m-0.45m	Subsoil	
402	Light reddish-yellow silty-sand with abundant gravels	0.45m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 5		Length 20m	Width 1.5m	Alignment NE-SW
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
500	Dark greyish-brown sandy-loam	0-0.24m	Topsoil	
501	Mid yellowish-brown silty-sand	0.24m-0.45m	Subsoil	
502	Light reddish-yellow silty-sand with abundant gravels	0.45m+	Natural subsoil	

Devon Office

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