Lok'nStore
Matford Park Road, Exeter, Devon

Archaeological Watching Brief

Planning Ref: 17/1215/FUL
Ref: 200850.2
November 2018

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Document Information

Document title	Lok'nStore, Matford Park Road, Exeter, Devon
Document subtitle	Archaeological Watching Brief
Document reference	200850.2

Client name	Lok'nStore Ltd
Address	112 Hawley Lane Farnborough Hampshire GU14 8JE

Site location	Hussey's Auction Centre, Matford Park Road, Exeter, EX2 8FD
County	Devon
National grid reference (NGR)	SX 92705 89519
Statutory designations	N/A
Planning authority	Exeter City Council
Planning reference	17/1215/FUL
Museum name	Exeter Royal Albert Memorial Museum
Museum accession code	RAMM:18/16

WA project code	200850
Date(s) of fieldwork	25-04-2018 to 01-05-2018
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Quality Assurance

Issue number & date		Status	Author	Approved by
1	22-10-2018	As issued to client	SPB	
2	01-11-2018	After client review, to be submitted to planning	SPB	
3				

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Lok'nStore Ltd to undertake a watching brief during the redevelopment of the site for their new premises (centred on NGR SX 92705 89519) at what was formerly Hussey's Auction House, Matford Park Road, Exeter, Devon EX2 8FD.

The watching brief was carried out under a condition of planning permission granted during July 2017 by Exeter City Council (17/1215/FUL), which required the implementation and completion of a programme of archaeological work, which focussed on deeper groundworks for a pipe diversion trench and associated manholes.

The results of this phase of work were broadly consistent with the finding of a previous phase of geotechnical investigation which identified made-ground, alluvial deposits and localised gravels. The groundworks associated with the new development did not generally extend beyond more recently made-ground. No significant archaeological features or deposits were identified during the watching brief, although evidence of modern truncation or levelling overlain by made-ground to a depth of 1.00 m below present ground level was identified.

A single sample was taken from a deposit which contained organic material, but on assessment the sample was found to have no palaeoenvironmental potential.

The watching brief was undertaken between the 25th April and 1st May 2018.

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Rhys Warren-Thomas (Director of Construction, Lok'nStore Ltd), Phil Stevens (Fellows Construction Consultants, Nick England (Devon Contractors Ltd), and Toby Shaddick (Devon Contractors Ltd; site manager) provided every assistance whilst we were on site. Wessex Archaeology is also grateful for the advice of Andrew Pye, who monitored the project for Exeter City Council, and to Devon Contractors Limited for their cooperation and help on site.

The fieldwork was directed by Ray Holt. The palaeoenvironmental sample was processed by Sam Rogerson and the flots were sorted by Nicki Mulhall and, assessed by Inés López-Dóriga. This report was written by Steve Beach and reviewed by Simon Woodiwiss. The project was managed by Simon Woodiwiss on behalf of Wessex Archaeology.

Lok'nStore, Matford Park Road, Exeter, Devon

Archaeological Watching Brief

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project and planning background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Lok'nStore ('the client'), to undertake a watching brief during the redevelopment of the site centred on NGR SX 92705 89519, at Hussey's Auction House, Matford Park Road, Exeter, Devon EX2 8FD (**Fig. 1**).

1.1.2 The watching brief was carried out under condition 7 (of the planning permission) granted on the 29th November 2017 by Exeter City Council (ECC; 17/1215/FUL), which required the implementation and completion of this programme of archaeological work.

1.1.3 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with written scheme of archaeological work (WSAW) which detailed the aims, methodologies and standards to be employed Wessex Archaeology 2018). The WSAW was submitted to Andrew Pye, archaeological advisor to ECC for comment, and subsequently submitted by the client to the ECC planning case officer under the discharge of conditions application, prior to the start of the works. The watching brief was undertaken between the 25th April and 1 May 2018.

1.2 Scope of the report

1.2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the results of the watching brief, to interpret the results within their local or regional context (or otherwise), and to assess their potential to address the aims outlined in the WSAW (Wessex Archaeology 2018), thereby making available information about the archaeological resource (a preservation by record).

1.3 Location, topography and geology

1.3.1 The watching brief was located within the commercial and light industrial area of Marsh Barton/Matford, approximately 3 km to the south of Exeter city centre. The site is bordered to the north-west by the Exeter Livestock Market, to the north-east by Matford Park Road, and to the south-west by a recently constructed bus depot (Stagecoach).

1.3.2 The Site is irregular in shape, measuring approximately 0.6 ha, and is generally flat and level with existing ground levels at approximately 2 m above Ordnance Datum (OD).

1.3.3 The underlying geology is mapped as Permian Alphington Breccia Formation, which is described as reddish brown, clayey, silty, fine-grained breccia, overlain by Quaternary Alluvium deposits (clay, silt, sand and gravel). British Geological Survey (2018) mapping also shows that a fault (normal fault) is located approximately 10 m to the west of the site, trending north-west to south-east, although no downthrow direction is provided. The Heavitree Breccia Formation is shown to outcrop immediately to the south-west of this fault (British Geological Survey online viewer).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Previous investigations related to the development

Geotechnical Investigations (2017)

2.1.1 In April 2017 Geotechnical Investigations were undertaken at the site (Ruddlesden Geotechnical 2017). The investigation was undertaken to determine subsurface ground conditions, to provide recommendations for foundations and associated structures, and to assess the extent of any contamination at the site. The deposits encountered during those investigations are summarised below.

2.1.2 The tarmac surface was underlain by up to 0.40 m of hardcore, which overlay made ground that varied in thickness from 1.00 to 1.40 m.

2.1.3 The made ground in turn overlay silty and sandy clay alluvial deposits with localised gravels that was recorded down to depths of between 2.40 and 2.60 m, below this the deposits were recorded as a slightly clayey sandy gravel with localised organic matter. The base of which, where encountered was recorded as reaching between 3.45 and 5.40 m in depth.

2.1.4 Where the Alphington Breccia Formation was encountered below the clayey sandy gravels, it was recorded as a purplish to yellowish brown slightly clayey slightly sandy gravel of mudstone and sandstone.

Archaeological Evaluation and Borehole Survey (2011)

2.1.5 In 2011 Wessex Archaeology (Wessex Archaeology 2012) undertook a programme of archaeological work at a site to the east, comprised of four trial trenches, four test pits and two transects of six boreholes. The borehole transects were positioned to investigate the locations of potential palaeochannels.

2.1.6 In both borehole transects alluvially deposited sediments were recorded between the basal gravel and the thick homogenous overbank flood deposits. In one transect the sediments were thin minerogenic and slightly humic silts; in Transect 1 similar minerogenic silts were recorded, but in addition one borehole contained silty gritty peaty deposits rich in waterlogged plant remains. These sediments, interpreted as entrained detrital material deposited at the edge of an active channel, have been radiocarbon dated to the early Mesolithic. The plant remains indicate a river valley flora dominated by hazel and oak, typical for the period.

2.2 Archaeological and historical context

2.2.1 During watching briefs undertaken on previous groundworks to the north-east of the site at the existing business park, a paleochannel, aligned east to west produced waterlogged organic material, including wood fragments. Radiocarbon dates obtained from the organic fragments at the base of the channel provided a date range of between 9,750–9,200 BC. Willow fragments from the upper fill of the channel were dated to AD 1400–1520. It is unlikely that the sequence developed over such a long period of time and it is possible that the upper fill may represent the medieval fill of a channel of the River Exe (Exeter Archaeology 2009).

2.2.2 Possible paleochannels have been identified within the site from aerial photography. Photographs taken during the 1999–2000 *Getmapping* programme indicate a possible curving linear feature which may represent a former course of the Matford Brook (*ibid.*).

2.2.3 Evidence of prehistoric activity in the area of the site is attested by a linear round barrow cemetery at Castle Park, Alphington, approximately 600 m to the west. This site is scheduled under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, identifying it as one of the most important archaeological sites in the country. The cemetery (DV 10625) comprises a group of nine barrows in a linear arrangement. In addition, to the south of the cemetery there is a double ditched rectangular enclosure at Matford Lane. The Pond Farm Romano-British settlement site is recorded approximately 1 km to the west of the enclosure. It was originally identified from aerial photography and subsequently partially excavated in advance of the M5 motorway construction.

2.2.4 A former sluice is recorded on late 19th and early 20th century Ordnance Survey mapping to the east of the Site, on the Matford Brook. By 1932 it had been replaced by a footbridge.

2.2.5 As part of previous ground investigations (Ruddlesden Geotechnical 2017), a study of historic maps concluded that the site had remained undeveloped until around 1992, when a building was constructed in the southern part of the site.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Aims

3.1.1 The aims of the watching brief, as stated in the WSAW (Wessex Archaeology 2018) and as defined in the CIfA's *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2014a), were:

- To allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of the development or other works;
- To provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard; and
- To guide, not replace, any requirement for contingent excavation or preservation of possible deposits.

3.2 Objectives

3.2.1 In order to achieve the above aims, the objectives of the watching brief, also defined in the WSAW (Wessex Archaeology 2018), were:

- To determine the presence or absence of archaeological features, deposits, structures, artefacts or ecofacts within the specified works area;
- To record and establish, within the constraints of the works, the extent, character, date, condition and quality of any surviving archaeological remains (a preservation by record);
- To place any identified archaeological remains within a wider historical and archaeological context in order to assess their significance; and

- To make available information about the archaeological resource on the site by preparing a report on the results of the watching brief.

4 METHODS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the detailed methodology set out within the WSAW (Wessex Archaeology 2018) and in general compliance with the standards outlined in CIfA guidance (CIfA 2014a). The methods employed are summarised below.

4.2 Fieldwork methods

General

4.2.1 The archaeological advisor to ECC was given notice before the site works commenced, and arrangements were made for the advisor to visit the site, as necessary, to monitor the works in progress.

4.2.2 Following prior agreement with archaeological advisor to ECC (1st May and 12th June 2018) not all areas detailed within the WSAW were monitored (one end of a pipe trench and the lift pits).

4.2.3 The watching brief monitored the excavation of the area highlighted in **Figure 1**.

Watching brief methods

4.2.4 The watching brief was undertaken by an archaeologist. All mechanical excavation was undertaken using a toothless bucket and, was constantly monitored by the watching archaeologist.

Recording

4.2.5 All exposed archaeological deposits and features were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's pro forma recording system.

4.2.6 The groundworks were recorded from the side, in the form of a measured sketch section and accompanying geoarchaeological descriptions and interpretations.

4.2.7 A full photographic record was made using a digital camera equipped with an image sensor of not less than 10 megapixels.

4.3 Environmental methods

Environmental sampling

4.3.1 Sampling was undertaken following Wessex Archaeology's in-house guidance, which adheres to the principles outlined in Historic England's guidance (English Heritage 2011 and Historic England 2015).

4.3.2 Bulk environmental soil samples, for the recovery of plant macrofossils, wood charcoal, small animal bones and other small artefacts, was taken from well-sealed and dateable contexts or features.

4.3.3 Appropriate strategies for the recovery, processing and assessment of artefacts and environmental samples were in line with those detailed in the WSAW (Wessex Archaeology 2018). The treatment of artefacts and environmental remains was in general accordance with: *Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of*

archaeological materials (CIfA 2014b) and *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation* (English Heritage 2011).

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 No significant archaeological features or deposits were identified during the watching brief. However, modern disturbance was identified up to 1.00 m below ground level (bgl), where a sharp boundary between the alluvial clay layer 102, and the overlying made-ground (context 101) had been formed by mechanical truncation.

5.2 Soil sequence and natural deposits

5.2.1 The watching brief identified modern overburden as the upper layers of the trench (**Plate 1**). This overburden extended to a depth of 1.00 m bgl and, comprised modern hardcore between 0.00–0.50 m bgl (100), and made-ground, consisting grey and yellow silty clays with inclusions of ceramic building material (CBM), tarmac, stone blocks and concrete rubble to a depth of 1.00 m blg (101). The boundary between this made-ground and the underlying alluvial clay was sharp and indicative of machine truncation.

5.2.2 The upper part of alluvial clay (102) was truncated by machine, and in this state the layer extended to a depth of 1.50 m bgl (0.50 m thick) and, comprised grey-green silty clay. Below this, grey-yellow alluvial clay with a diffuse boundary with 102, extended to 1.80 m bgl (0.30m thick).

5.2.3 Below alluvial layers 102 and 103 was a layer of blue-grey sandy gravel with clay components. This aggregate gravel comprised sandstone and mudstone elements less than 0.10 m in diameter. In the north-west part of the trench the upper boundary of 104 (with 103), increased in sand and clay content and contained some organic material, which was sampled for environmental evidence (see below). Layer 104 extended to 2.75 m bgl and was 0.95 m thick.

5.2.4 The final layer encountered (105; not shown on **Plate 1**) comprised yellow sandy gravel with clay components. As with the previous layer (104) the gravel comprised an aggregate of sandstone and mudstone, which extended below the base of the trench, at 2.75 m bgl.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 Despite the absence of significant archaeological features, a relatively thin layer of sand and clay containing potential organic material was identified and sampled on the upper surface of layer 104 at *c*. 1.80 m bgl. Though considered unlikely to be archaeological in origin, this layer was sampled. as it may have contained organic material, which might correspond with Mesolithic environmental material recovered from adjacent investigations and, may have contained indicators relating to climate and vegetation history, and even human influence.

6.1.2 Consequently, a bulk sediment sample was taken from a gravel layer (104) and was processed and assessed for the presence of waterlogged environmental evidence.

6.2 Aims and Methods

6.2.1 The purpose of this assessment is to determine the potential of the environmental remains preserved at the site to address project aims and to provide archaeobotanical data valuable for wider research frameworks.

6.2.2 The size of the sample was 16 litres. The bulk sediment sample was processed by standard flotation methods on a Syraf-type flotation tank; the flot retained on a 0.25 mm mesh, residues fractionated into 4 mm and 1 mm fractions. The coarse fraction (>4 mm) was sorted, weighed and discarded. A 50% subsample of the flot was scanned using a stereo incident light microscopy (Leica MS5 microscope) at magnifications of up to x40 for the identification of environmental remains. The preservation and nature of the environmental material was recorded.

6.3 Results

6.3.1 The flot was large (250 ml) but made up of degraded plant material and woody root/stem pieces. No other environmental material was observed.

6.4 Further potential

6.4.1 The sample has no palaeoenvironmental potential and requires no further analysis, therefore it is recommended for discard.

7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Summary

7.1.1 No archaeological features or deposits were identified during the watching brief.

7.1.2 There was evidence of modern truncation or levelling overlying made-ground to a depth of 1.00 m bgl.

7.1.3 The deposits encountered during this phase of work corresponded with the results of the 2017 geotechnical investigations (Ruddlesden Geotechnical 2017); although it might be noted that localised organic matter was identified at a slightly higher level of *c*.1.80 m (as opposed to between 2.40 m and 2.60 m during the earlier geotechnical investigations).

7.2 Discussion

7.2.1 No significant archaeological features or deposits were identified at the site, though one deposit was investigated in detail, albeit with a negative result. The restricted nature of the groundworks, however, offered limited opportunity to observe any buried archaeological remains that might have been present within the site, although significant deposits had been identified in earlier investigations.

7.2.2 It is likely that previous landscaping or levelling events may have truncated (or removed) any archaeological features in the upper layers of the sequence, and below the modern overburden, no significant archaeological deposits were identified.

7.2.3 The results of this phase of work were broadly consistent with the finding of the previous phase of geotechnical investigation.

8 ARCHIVE STORAGE AND CURATION

8.1 Museum

8.1.1 The archive resulting from the watching brief is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Salisbury. Exeter Royal Albert Memorial Museum has agreed in principle to accept the archive on completion of the project, under the accession code RAMM: 18/16. Deposition of any finds with the museum will only be carried out with the full written agreement of the landowner to transfer title of all finds to the museum.

8.2 Preparation of the archive

8.2.1 The archive, which includes paper records, graphics, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Exeter Royal Albert Memorial Museum, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; CIfA 2014c; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).

8.2.2 All archive elements are marked with the 200850/RAMM:18/16 accession code, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive currently comprises the following:

- 1 file of paper records and A3/A4 graphics.

8.3 Selection policy

8.3.1 Wessex Archaeology follows national guidelines on selection and retention (SMA 1993; Brown 2011, section 4). In accordance with these, and any specific guidance prepared by the museum, a process of selection and retention will be followed so that only those artefacts or ecofacts that are considered to have potential for future study will be retained. The selection policy will be agreed with the museum, and is fully documented in the project archive.

8.3.2 In this instance, the following categories are selected to not be retained: Palaeoenvironmental Sample.

8.4 Security copy

8.4.1 In line with current best practice (eg, Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.

8.5 OASIS

8.5.1 An OASIS online record (http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main) has been initiated (**wessexar1-329478**), with key fields and a .pdf version of the final report submitted. Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, copies of the OASIS record will be integrated into the relevant local and national records and published through the Archaeology Data Service ArchSearch catalogue.

9 COPYRIGHT

9.1 Archive and report copyright

9.1.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative/digital archive relating to the project will be retained by Wessex Archaeology under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act* 1988 with

all rights reserved. The client will be licenced to use each report for the purposes that it was produced in relation to the project as described in the specification. The museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use conforms to the *Copyright and Related Rights Regulations* 2003. In some instances, certain regional museums may require absolute transfer of copyright, rather than a licence; this should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

9.1.2 Information relating to the project will be deposited with the Historic Environment Record (HER) where it can be freely copied without reference to Wessex Archaeology for the purposes of archaeological research or development control within the planning process.

9.2 Third party data copyright

9.2.1 This document and the project archive may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (eg, Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which Wessex Archaeology are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferable by Wessex Archaeology. Users remain bound by the conditions of the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act* 1988 with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of such material.

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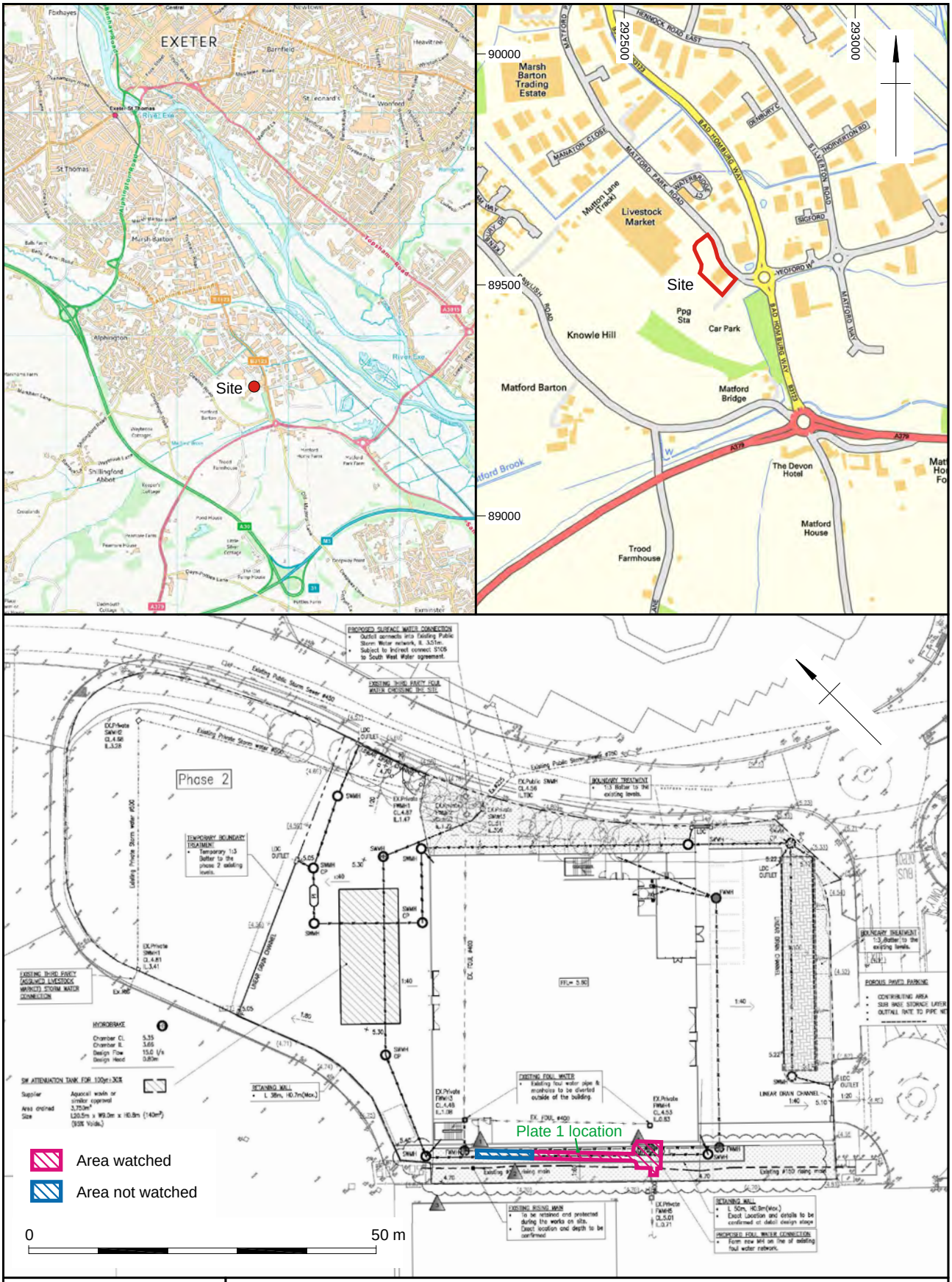

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Scale:	1:50,000, 1:10,000 & 1:800 @A4	Illustrator:	KJF
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Coordinate system: OSGB36 (OSTN15/OSGM15)

Site location and watching brief area

Figure 1

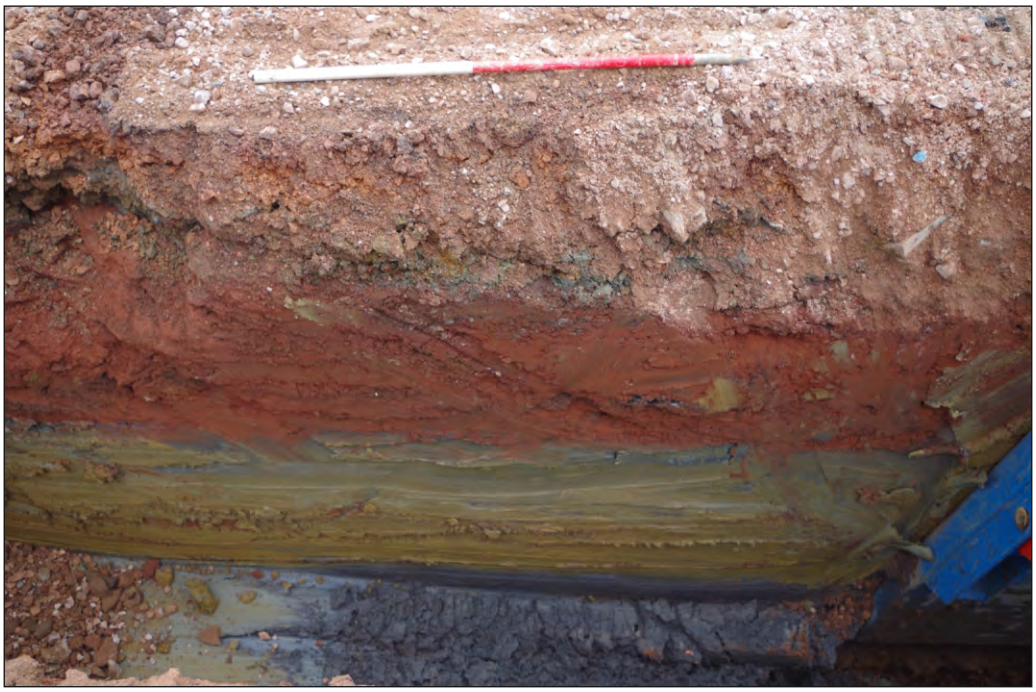

Plate 1: South facing section of pipe diversion trench

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Trench summaries

NGR coordinates and OD heights taken at centre of each trench; depth bgl = below ground level

Trench 1	***28.50 m x 1.00 m Max depth 3.50 m***		**NGR 292678 089508**	***4.70 m OD***
Context	***Interpretation***	***Fill of***	***Description***	***Depth bgl (m)***
100	Layer	-	Modern hardcore – reddish-yellow and grey hardcore	0.00 – 0.50
101	Layer	-	Made ground – grey and yellow silty clays with abundant inclusions of modern CBM, tarmac, stone blocks <0.45m and concrete rubble	0.50 – 1.00
102	Layer	-	Alluvial clay – grey-green silty clay with a sharp (truncated) boundary with 101, and a diffuse boundary with 103	1.00 – 1.50
103	Layer	-	Alluvial clay – grey-yellow silty clay with a diffuse boundary with 102	1.50-1.80
104	Layer	-	Blue-grey sandy gravel with clay components. Gravel comprises sandstone (<0.10m) and mudstone (<0.06m). The upper boundary of 104 (with 103), increased in sand and clay content to the north-west, and contained some organic material	1.80 – 2.75
105	Layer	-	Yellow sandy gravel with clay components. Gravel comprises sandstone (<0.10m) and mudstone (both <0.06m)	2.75 +

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