

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
OF LAND OFF EXETER ROAD,
CREDITON, DEVON**

by

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Exeter Archaeology

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SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation, comprising 680m of trenching, was undertaken during December 2006 on land off Exeter Road, Crediton, Devon. This work exposed a single undated linear feature, possibly a field boundary ditch of medieval or later date. No other archaeological features or deposits were exposed.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared for Midas Homes and presents the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Exeter Archaeology (EA) in December 2006 on land off Exeter Road, Crediton, Devon (centred SX 8376 9977). The evaluation was required by the local planning authority (Mid Devon District Council) as a condition of the grant of planning consent for the development of the site as a housing estate consisting of 83 homes (planning ref: 06/0131/FUL).

2. THE SITE (Fig. 1)

The site consists of two fields, currently under pasture, occupying an area of approximately 2ha. The site is bounded on the east by Exeter Road and Four Mills Lane, on the north and west by housing, and on the south by fields sloping down to the River Yeo. The site slopes steeply from southwest to northeast, from a height of 76m to just over 48m AOD.

Geologically, the site is situated within the Crediton trough, and overlies a boundary between the Permian Creedy Park Sandstone and the Crediton Breccia. The major part of the area comprises the former, which is overlain by colluvial deposits at the north-eastern corner of the site.

3. PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

The site has been the subject of a desk-based assessment, undertaken by EA in 1998 (Collings and Freeman 1998). No specific sites of archaeological potential were identified within the site although the eastern field was used as an orchard in the 19th and early 20th centuries. It was noted that extensive prehistoric and Romano-British activity has been recorded in the general area.

A geophysical survey of the site was undertaken by Oxford Archaeotechnics in the same year. The results were interpreted as largely negative, although a single linear anomaly was identified in the eastern field.

4. AIMS

The principal aim of the evaluation was to establish the presence or absence, extent, depth, character and date of any archaeological features or deposits within the site. The results of the evaluation will be used to inform the planning process, and may be used to formulate a subsequent phase (or phases) of archaeological mitigation.

5. METHOD (Fig. 2)

The evaluation was undertaken in accord with a method statement (Gent 2006) produced by EA in response to a brief (Appendix 3) produced by the Devon County Historic Environment Service (DCHES).

Thirteen trenches, 1.50m wide, with a total of length of 680m, were excavated using a tracked machine fitted with a toothless grading bucket. The trenches were sited to provide a sample coverage of the entire development site. Trench 13 targeted the linear anomaly identified in the geophysical survey. Excavation continued until either natural subsoil or

archaeological deposits were exposed, at which point machining ceased. Areas of archaeological survival were cleaned back by hand, investigated, and excavated where appropriate.

Stratigraphic information was recorded on *pro-forma* EA context record sheets, a drawn record was compiled in plan and section at scales of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate, and a photographic record made on black and white film and in digital format.

6. RESULTS

All trenches were devoid of any archaeological deposits or remains, with the exception of trench 5 which is described below.

There was no visible indication of the geophysical anomaly targeted by trench 13.

Descriptions of all deposits are given in Appendix 1. Details of recovered artefacts are provided in section 7 below.

6.1 Trench 5 (Fig. 3)

Trench 5 was aligned north-south, was 20m long and located in the far north east corner of the western field. It was excavated through a simple sequence of topsoil (500) and colluvium (501). Natural subsoil (502) was exposed at a depth of 0.86m and consisted of red sandy clay and mid red brown weathered Breccia in a silt clay matrix.

An ENE-WNW aligned linear feature (503) was exposed at the north end of the trench. This was 1.83m wide and 0.84m deep, with a rounded profile. It cut through the colluvium into natural subsoil, and contained a single sandy silt clay fill (504). No datable material was recovered.

7. THE FINDS *by Jenny Wheeler*

Context	Material	Q'ty	Weight	Date	Comments
300	Post-Medieval pottery	1 sherd 1 vessel	24g	c.1550-1700	Frechen stoneware, bellarmine
600	Clay pipe	1 frag	>2g	17-19C	Stem, plain, discarded
800	Clay pipe	1 frag	>2g	17-19C	Stem, plain, mouthpiece
	Post-Medieval pottery	4 sherds 2+ vessels	184g	17C	South Somerset coarseware, including two sherds large bowl with trailed slip
1000	Post-Medieval pottery	1 sherd 1 vessel	32g	16-19C	North Devon gravel-tempered ware, bowl bodysherd
		1 sherd 1 vessel	8g	17-18C	South Somerset coarseware, bodysherd
1100	Clay pipe	1 frag	2g	17-19C	Stem, plain, discarded
	Post-Medieval pottery	1 sherd 1 vessel	20g	post-1680	Westerwald tankard, rim
1200	Post-Medieval pottery	1 sherd 1 vessel	6g	?18C	South Somerset coarseware
		1 sherd 1 vessel	8g	M-L18C	Yellow-glazed white earthenware ?Bristol-Staffs

Ten sherds of pottery, representing eight vessels, were recovered; all are post-medieval in date, manufactured after AD 1500. All the objects recovered from this project, particularly the South Somerset and North Devon coarsewares are common find types in Devon.

The Westerwald tankard and Frechen Bellarmine were imported from Germany.

8. CONCLUSION

The size and general orientation of the linear feature in trench 5 suggests that it may represent the remains of a field boundary ditch, although it is situated at some distance from the current fence line. If it does represent the remains of a removed broad hedgebank, it has the potential to date to the medieval or post-medieval period.

The residual finds recovered from the topsoil indicate post-medieval activity in the vicinity, and probably arrived on the site as an accidental by-product of agricultural manuring. The known prehistoric Romano-British activity in the area is not represented in the recovered finds.

The evaluation excavations have exposed no archaeological features or deposits other than the potential field boundary ditch, or evidence for previously unknown occupation or activity within the site. Based on these results, the archaeological impact of any future development in this location would appear to be negligible.

ARCHIVE

A fully integrated site archive had been prepared and is currently held by Exeter Archaeology at their premises in Bradninch Place, Gandy Street, Exeter EX4 3LS, pending deposition with the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter. The accession number is 418/2006.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project was commissioned and funded by Midas Homes (MH) and administered by M. Edwards (MH) and T.H. Gent (EA). The fieldwork was directed by S. Hughes. Finds were processed by J. Wheeler and illustrations prepared by T. Ives.

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- Collings, A.G. and Freeman, J.P. 1998. *Archaeological assessment of land at Winswood, Crediton*. Unpublished Exeter Archaeology report **98.79**.
- Gent, T.H. 2006 *Written statement of investigation for archaeological evaluation at land off Dokkum Road and Fulda Crescent, Winswood, Crediton, Devon*. Unpublished Exeter Archaeology document.

APPENDIX 1: Trench Descriptions

Trench No.	1	Length	60m	Orientation	NE-SW
Context No.	Depth	Description		Interpretation	
100	0 – 0.20m	Dark red brown friable clay silt with moderate small Breccia inclusions <0.03m		Topsoil	
101	0.20 – 0.38m	Mid red brown friable silt clay with moderate small Breccia inclusions <0.03m		Colluvium	
102	0.38m +	Mid red brown weathered Breccia in a silt clay matrix		Natural subsoil	

Trench No.	2	Length	45m	Orientation	N-S
Context No.	Depth	Description		Interpretation	
200	0 – 0.25m	Dark red brown friable clay silt with moderate small Breccia inclusions <0.03m		Topsoil	
201	0.25 – 0.45m	Mid red brown friable silt clay with moderate small Breccia inclusions <0.03m		Colluvium	
202	0.45m +	Mid red brown weathered Breccia in a silt clay matrix		Natural subsoil	

Trench No.	3	Length	125m	Orientation	NE-SW SE-NW
Context No.	Depth	Description		Interpretation	
300	0 – 0.24m	Dark red brown friable clay silt with moderate small Breccia inclusions <0.03m		Topsoil	
301	0.24 – 0.50m	Mid red brown friable silt clay with moderate small Breccia inclusions <0.03m		Colluvium	
302	0.50m +	Mid red brown weathered Breccia in a silt clay matrix		Natural subsoil	

Trench No.	4	Length	20m	Orientation	NE-SW
Context No.	Depth	Description		Interpretation	
400	0 – 0.20m	Dark red brown friable clay silt with moderate small Breccia inclusions <0.03m		Topsoil	
401	0.20 – 0.70m	Mid red brown friable silt clay with moderate small Breccia inclusions <0.03m		Colluvium	
402	0.70m +	Mid red brown weathered Breccia in a silt clay matrix		Natural subsoil	

Trench No.	5	Length	20m	Orientation	N-S
Context No.	Depth	Description		Interpretation	
500	0 – 0.32m	Dark red brown friable clay silt with moderate small Breccia inclusions <0.03m		Topsoil	
501	0.32 – 0.86m	Mid red brown friable silt clay with moderate small Breccia inclusions <0.03m		Colluvium	
502	0.86m +	Mixed mid red sandy clay and mid red brown weathered Breccia in a silt clay matrix		Natural subsoil	
503	0.19 – 1.04m	Steep sided concave based linear cut 1.83m wide and 0.84m deep.		Possible boundary ditch	
504	0.19 – 1.04	Dark red brown friable sandy silt clay with moderate Breccia gravel and rare charcoal inclusions		Fill of feature 504	

Trench No.	6	Length	100m	Orientation	E-W
Context No.	Depth	Description		Interpretation	
600	0 – 0.32m	Dark red brown friable clay silt with moderate small Breccia inclusions <0.03m		Topsoil	
601	0.32 – 0.86m	Mid red brown friable silt clay with moderate small Breccia inclusions <0.03m		Colluvium	
602	0.86m +	Mid red brown weathered Breccia in a silt clay matrix		Natural subsoil	

Trench No.	7	Length	40m	Orientation	N-S
Context No.	Depth	Description		Interpretation	
700	0 – 0.26m	Dark red brown friable clay silt with moderate small Breccia inclusions <0.03m		Topsoil	
701	0.26 – 0.58m	Mid red brown friable silt clay with moderate small Breccia inclusions <0.03m		Colluvium	
702	0.58m +	Mid red brown weathered Breccia in a silt clay matrix		Natural subsoil	

Trench No.	8	Length	55m	Orientation	E-W
Context No.	Depth	Description		Interpretation	
800	0 – 0.25m	Dark red brown friable clay silt with moderate small Breccia inclusions <0.03m		Topsoil	
801	0.25 – 0.50m	Mid red brown friable silt clay with moderate small Breccia inclusions <0.03m		Colluvium	
802	0.50m +	Mid red brown weathered Breccia in a silt clay matrix		Natural subsoil	

Trench No.	9	Length	35m	Orientation	NW-SE
Context No.	Depth	Description		Interpretation	
900	0 – 0.28m	Dark red brown friable clay silt with moderate small Breccia inclusions <0.03m		Topsoil	
901	0.28 – 0.58m	Mid red brown friable silt clay with moderate small Breccia inclusions <0.03m		Colluvium	
902	0.58m +	Mid red brown weathered Breccia in a silt clay matrix		Natural subsoil	

Trench No.	10	Length	40m	Orientation	E-W
Context No.	Depth	Description		Interpretation	
1000	0 – 0.20m	Dark red brown friable clay silt with moderate small Breccia inclusions <0.03m		Topsoil	
1001	0.20 – 0.45m	Mid red brown friable silt clay with moderate small Breccia inclusions <0.03m		Colluvium	
1002	0.45m +	Mid red brown weathered Breccia in a silt clay matrix		Natural subsoil	

Trench No.	11	Length	60m	Orientation	N-S
Context No.	Depth	Description		Interpretation	
1100	0 – 0.22m	Dark red brown friable clay silt with moderate small Breccia inclusions <0.03m		Topsoil	
1101	0.22 – 0.50m	Mid red brown friable silt clay with moderate small Breccia inclusions <0.03m		Colluvium	
1102	0.50m +	Mid red brown weathered Breccia in a silt clay matrix		Natural subsoil	

Trench No.	12	Length	60m	Orientation	N-S
Context No.	Depth	Description		Interpretation	
1200	0 – 0.28m	Dark red brown friable clay silt with moderate small Breccia inclusions <0.03m		Topsoil	
1201	0.28 – 0.58m	Mid red brown friable silt clay with moderate small Breccia <0.03m and rare slate inclusions		Colluvium	
1202	0.58m +	Mid red brown weathered Breccia in a silt clay matrix		Natural subsoil	

Trench No.	13	Length	20m	Orientation	E-W
Context No.	Depth	Description		Interpretation	
1300	0 – 0.25m	Dark red brown friable clay silt with moderate small Breccia inclusions <0.03m		Topsoil	
1301	0.25 – 0.65m	Mid red brown friable silt clay with moderate small Breccia inclusions <0.03m		Colluvium	
1302	0.65m +	Mid red brown weathered Breccia in a silt clay matrix		Natural subsoil	

APPENDIX 2: Project brief

Devon County Council Historic Environment Service: Brief for Archaeological Evaluation

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BRIEF FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Location: Land off Exeter Road, Crediton

Parish: Crediton

District: Mid Devon

County: Devon

NGR: SX 83714 9751

Planning Application no: 06/0131/Ful

Proposal: Erection of 81 dwellings

1. INTRODUCTION AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

1.1 This brief has been prepared by the Devon County Council Historic Environment Service (HES), with regard to the archaeological works required by Condition 11 imposed upon the above planning consent.

1.2 The principal objective of the programme shall be to evaluate the survival of below-ground archaeological deposits across the proposed development site. The results will inform as to the requirement for any further investigations required as mitigation for the impact of the proposed development upon the archaeological resource and, as such, represents the *first stage* of a programme of archaeological mitigation.

1.3 In accordance with PPG16 (1990) Archaeology and Planning Policy on archaeology, consent has been granted, conditional upon a programme of archaeological work being undertaken. This condition requires that:

'No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority.'

The development shall be carried out at all times in strict accordance with the approved scheme, or such other details as may be subsequently agreed in writing by the District Planning Authority.

1.4 An archaeological assessment has already been undertaken of the proposed development site (Exeter Archaeology report 98.79), this desk-based assessment also included a consideration of a geophysical survey undertaken by Oxford Archaeotechnics (Survey ref. 1691198/WCD/PRO). The desk-based assessment highlighted the extensive prehistoric and Romano-British activity in the area, while the geophysical survey identified a weak curvilinear feature in the northern part of the eastern field.

2. WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION

This document sets out the scope of the works required to determine the extent and character of any surviving archaeological deposits within the application area and will form the basis of the *Written Scheme of Investigation* to be prepared by the archaeological contractor to be approved by the HES and the Local Planning Authority.

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3. CONTENT OF PROGRAMME

3.1 Evaluation of the site

A series of trenches will be excavated across the proposed development area. The location of these excavations will be determined in consideration of the results of the desk-based assessment and geophysical survey - in particular investigating the curvilinear feature identified by the geophysical survey - as well as the below-ground impact of the proposed development and the site topography. The evaluative trenches should aim to sample 5% of the proposed development site.

3.1.1 Details of the strategy for positioning trenches must be agreed with the HES and should be excavated by a 360° tracked or JCB-type machine - fitted with a toothless grading bucket - to the surface of archaeological deposits or *in situ* natural ground - whichever is highest in the stratigraphic sequence. Excavation of exposed archaeological features shall be carried out by hand, stratigraphically, and fully recorded by context. All features shall be recorded in plan and section at a minimum scale of 1:20, larger where necessary.

3.1.2 As a minimum:

i) small discrete features will be fully excavated;

- ii) larger discrete features will be half-sectioned (50% excavated); and
- iii) long linear features will be sample excavated along their length - with investigative excavations distributed along the exposed length of any such feature.

Any variation of the above will be undertaken in agreement with the HES.

3.1.3 The full depth of archaeological deposits must be assessed. This need not require excavation to natural stratigraphy if it is clear that complex and deep stratigraphy will be encountered.

3.1.4 Should deposits be exposed that contain palaeoenvironmental or datable elements appropriate sampling strategies should be initiated. The project will be organised so that specialist consultants who might be required to conserve or report on finds or advise or report on other aspects of the investigation (e.g. palaeoenvironmental analysis) can be called upon and undertake assessment and analysis of such deposits - if required.

3.1.5 The photographic record will consist of black-and-white print - as an archival resource, supplemented by colour transparency and/or digital imagery. The drawn and written record will be on an appropriately archivable medium.

4. MONITORING

4.1 The archaeological contractor shall agree monitoring arrangements with the County Historic Environment Service and give reasonable notice of commencement of the fieldwork.

4.2 Monitoring will continue until the deposition of the site archive and finds.

5. REPORTING

5.1 A report shall be prepared collating the written, graphic, visible and recorded information outlined above. The report shall include plans of the site, location of trenches and exposed features and deposits as well as artefacts together with their interpretation. It is recommended that a draft report is submitted to the HES for comment prior to its formal submission to the Local Planning Authority.

The report shall summarise the archaeological potential of the site and the impact upon it of the proposed development. It may in appropriate cases make suggestions as to appropriate mitigation of

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the archaeological impact of the proposal, but these will be subject to review by the HES, who will make final recommendations to the Local Planning Authority.

A copy of this brief shall be included in the report.

5.2 The HES would normally expect to receive the report within three months of completion of fieldwork - dependant upon the provision of specialist reports, radiocarbon dating results etc the production of which may exceed this period.

5.3 On completion of the report, in addition to copies required by the Client, hard copies of the report shall be supplied to the HES on the understanding that one of these copies will be deposited for public reference in the HER. In addition to the hard copies of the report, one copy shall be provided to the County Historic Environment Service in digital format - in a format to be agreed in advance with the HES - on the understanding that it may in future be made available to researchers via a web-based version of the Historic Environment Record.

5.4 The archaeological contractor shall complete an online OASIS (*Online AccesS to the Index of Archaeological Investigations*) form in respect of the archaeological work.

5.5 Publication

Should particularly significant remains, finds and/or deposits be encountered, then these, because of their importance, are likely to merit wider publication in line with government planning guidance. If such remains are encountered, the publication requirements – including any further analysis that may be necessary – will be confirmed with the HES.

6. FURTHER WORK

In the light of the results of the archaeological evaluation it will be possible to identify what further work, (e.g. further evaluative work to clarify the site stratigraphy, area excavation, etc), if any, is needed as mitigation for the impact of the proposed development on the archaeological resource. A separate Written Scheme of Investigation will need to be prepared and approved to cover these works.

Should the site be demonstrated to be archaeologically sterile then there would be no requirement for further archaeological works.

7. PERSONNEL

7.1 A professional archaeological contractor, to be agreed with the HES, shall carry out the programme of works. Staff must be suitably qualified and experienced for their project roles. All work should be carried out under the control of a Member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (MIFA), or

by a person of similar standing.

7.2 Health and Safety matters, including site security, are matters for the contractor. However, adherence to all relevant regulations will be required.

7.3 The archaeological contractor shall give the HES reasonable notice of commencement of works and shall be responsible for agreeing monitoring arrangements. Details will be agreed of any monitoring points where decisions on options within the programme are to be made.

7.4 The work shall be carried out in accordance with *IFA Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations (1994)*, as amended (1999).

Devon County Council Historic Environment Service: Brief for Archaeological Evaluation

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8. DEPOSITION OF ARCHIVE AND FINDS

8.1 The archaeological contractor shall contact the museum that will receive the site archive to obtain an accession number and agree conditions for deposition. *The accession number will be quoted in the Written Scheme of Investigation.*

8.2 The archaeological archive resulting from the work should be deposited with the appropriate museum, in a format to be agreed with the museum, and within a timetable to be agreed with the HES. The Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for long-term Storage, published by the UK Institute for Conservation, should be adhered to.

8.3 Archaeological finds resulting from the investigation (which are the property of the landowner), should be deposited with the appropriate museum. The proposed museum should be contacted at the beginning of the project. If ownership of all or any of the finds is to remain with the landowner, provision and agreement must be made for the time-limited retention of the material and its full analysis and recording, by appropriate specialists.

9. CONTACT NAME AND ADDRESS

Stephen Reed, Archaeological Officer, Devon County Council, Environment, Economy and Culture Directorate, Matford Offices, County Hall, Exeter EX2 4QW

Tel: 01392-383303 Fax: 01392-383011 E-mail: stephen.reed@devon.gov.uk

17/10/06

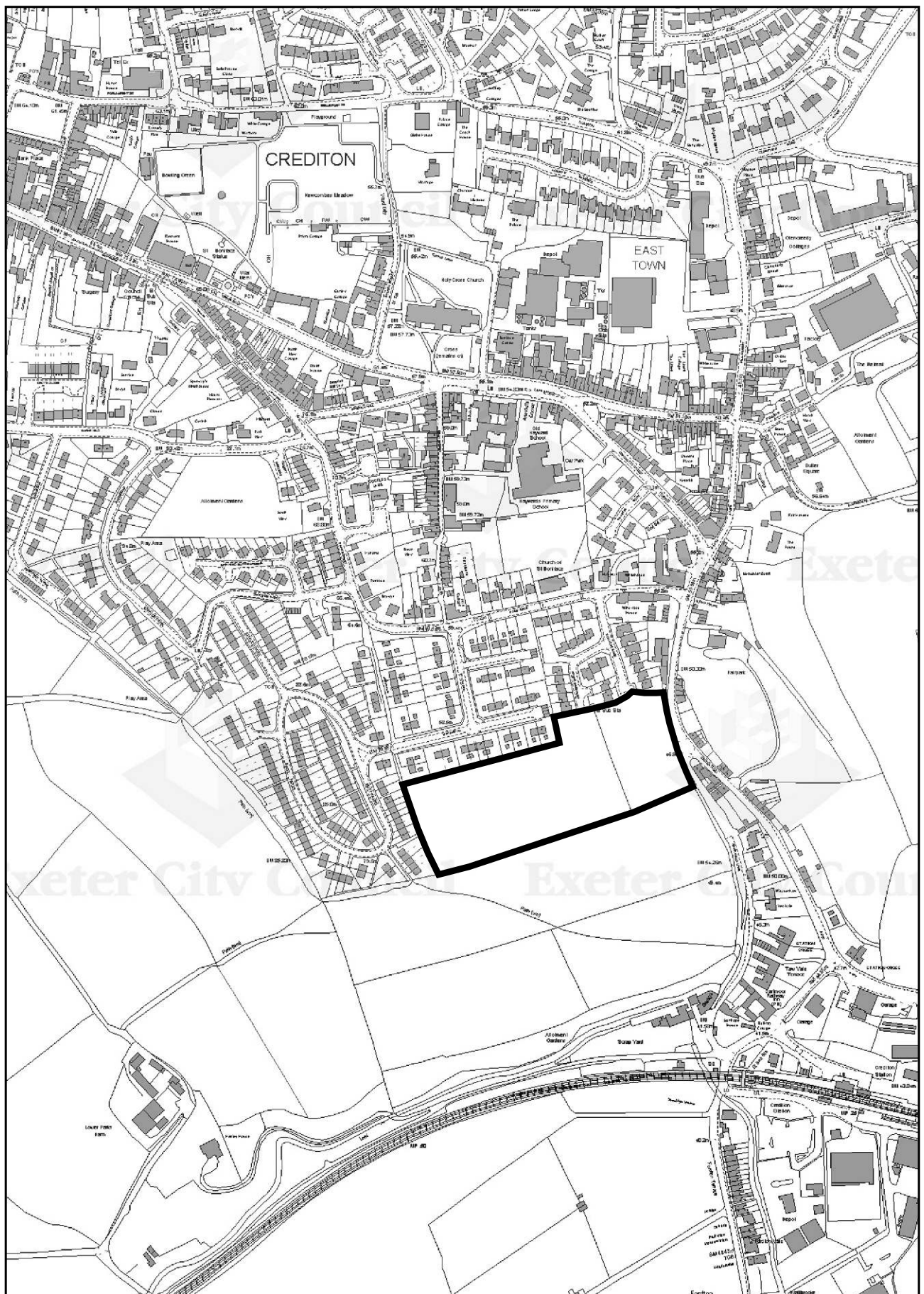


Fig. 1 Location of site. Reproduced (1:5000) from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Exeter City Council 100025458.

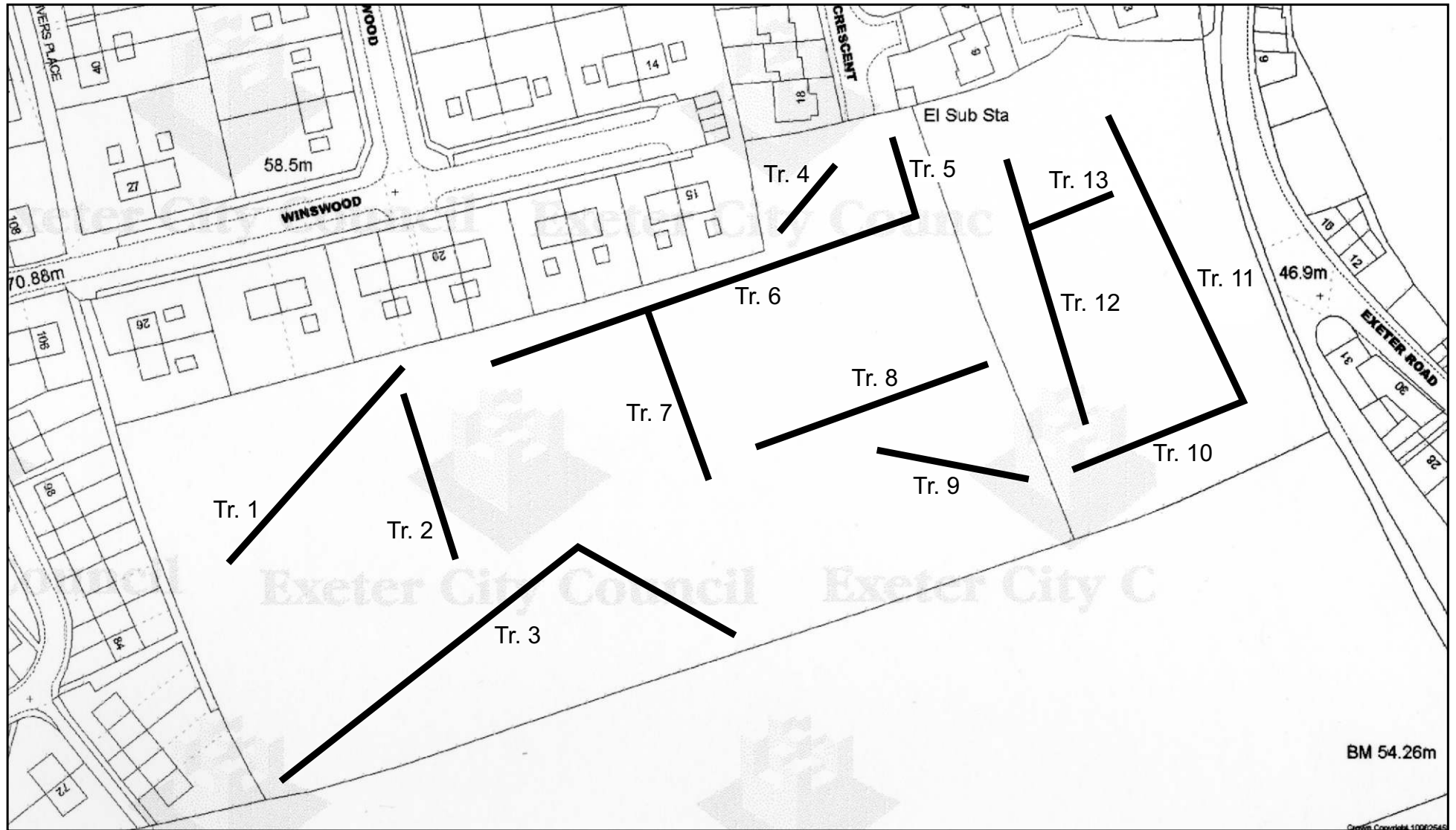


Fig. 2 Location of trenches. Reproduced (1:1,250) from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Exeter City Council 100025458.

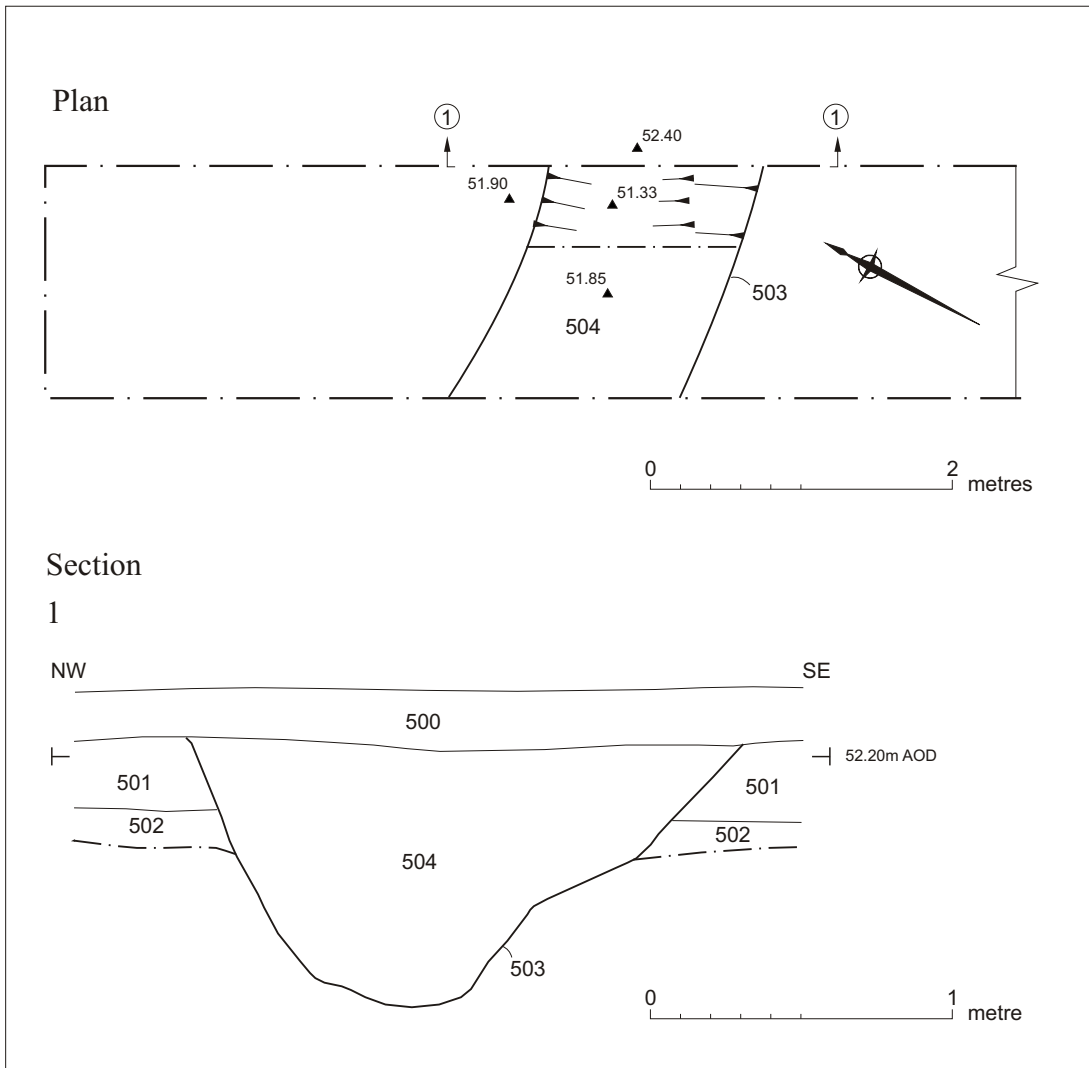


Fig. 3 Trench 5: plan and section.