Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Exminster, Teignbridge	**National Grid Reference** SX 9570 8740	**Number:**

Subject: Archaeological Watching brief on Exminster Marshes	**Photo attached?** N

Planning Application no: 07/01739/FUL	**Recipient museum:** Royal Albert Memorial Museum
OASIS ID: exeterar1-59736	**Museum Accession no:** 311/2007
Contractor's reference number/code: EA 6176	**Dates fieldwork undertaken:** 21/08– 09/10/07

Description of works.
Groundworks undertaken by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds relating to the development of Exminster Marshes to produce habitats favoured by wading birds were monitored and recorded by Exeter Archaeology (EA). The monitored areas lie immediately to the east and southeast of Exminster on low-lying land to the west of the Exeter Canal between the canal and the A379 Exeter/Dawlish road (Fig.1).

The groundworks comprised of the insertion of a number of pipelines, a submersible pump and associated infrastructure (P1 – P5) and the digging of two ditches (D1 and D2). The following elements were monitored: pipelines 1 and 2 (and associated ditch (D1), catchpits and trench for a submersible pump), and pipelines 3-5 including a diversion ditch (D2) around pipeline 5.

P1 was a 280m long pipe-line trench 0.3m wide with a maximum depth of 1.2m – 3 natural horizons were observed:
1. a soft very dark grey clay topsoil, measuring between 0.05 and 0.15m thick overlaid 2. a mottled yellow/light grey silty clay with a maximum depth of 0.45m. Between the base of layer 2 and the maximum depth of the trench at 1.2m was a layer of light/mid-grey silty clay with a maximum observed depth of 0.7m. In the field to the north of the northern existing drainage ditch a 4m wide by 0.40m deep depression, orientated east-west, was exposed below the topsoil. This feature had a rounded profile with gentle sides, and was backfilled with topsoil containing frequent small stones. In the trench for the submersible pump organic alluvial clay associated with the functioning post-medieval drainage ditch was exposed, buried under later alluvial deposits. The only other feature exposed in pipeline 1 was a post-medieval drainage ditch which is visible as an earthwork in the centre of the field; this was partially infilled with black organic silt.

Pipelines P2, P3 and P5 all exhibited a dark brown soft silty clay topsoil, measuring up to 0.50m thick, overlaid a sequence of grey silty clay alluvial deposits. P2 was excavated to a depth of 2m, 0.6m wide. P2 involved the digging of an associated ditch (D1) excavated to a depth of 1m with a width of 1.1m.
P3 was excavated to a maximum depth of 2m and was 1.6m wide.
P4 comprised of a gulley dug between an existing drainage ditch and a small pond to the south. Two horizons of natural were observed: 1. a dark brown clayey silt to a depth of 0.7m, below this was 0.2m of blue/grey alluvial clay excavated to a maximum trench depth of 0.9m. P4 was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.9m and was 1.6m wide.
P5 was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.1m and was 0.9m wide. P5 involved the digging of an additional D-shaped diversion ditch (shown at NE end of P5 on Fig 1) up to 1m in depth; 2 natural horizons were observed 1. a brown silty claysoil up to 0.4m in depth, 2. a grey brown alluvial clay 0.6m in depth to the observed base of the ditch cut.

In all cases no archaeological features were observed.

In summary, with the exception of functioning or abandoned drainage ditches relating to the post-medieval reclamation of the marshes, the only feature exposed during the work was a shallow ditch or pit, probably of modern date.
No finds were recovered from the excavations.

Recorder:	**Date sent to HER:**
Andrew Passmore (Exeter Archaeology)	13-11-09

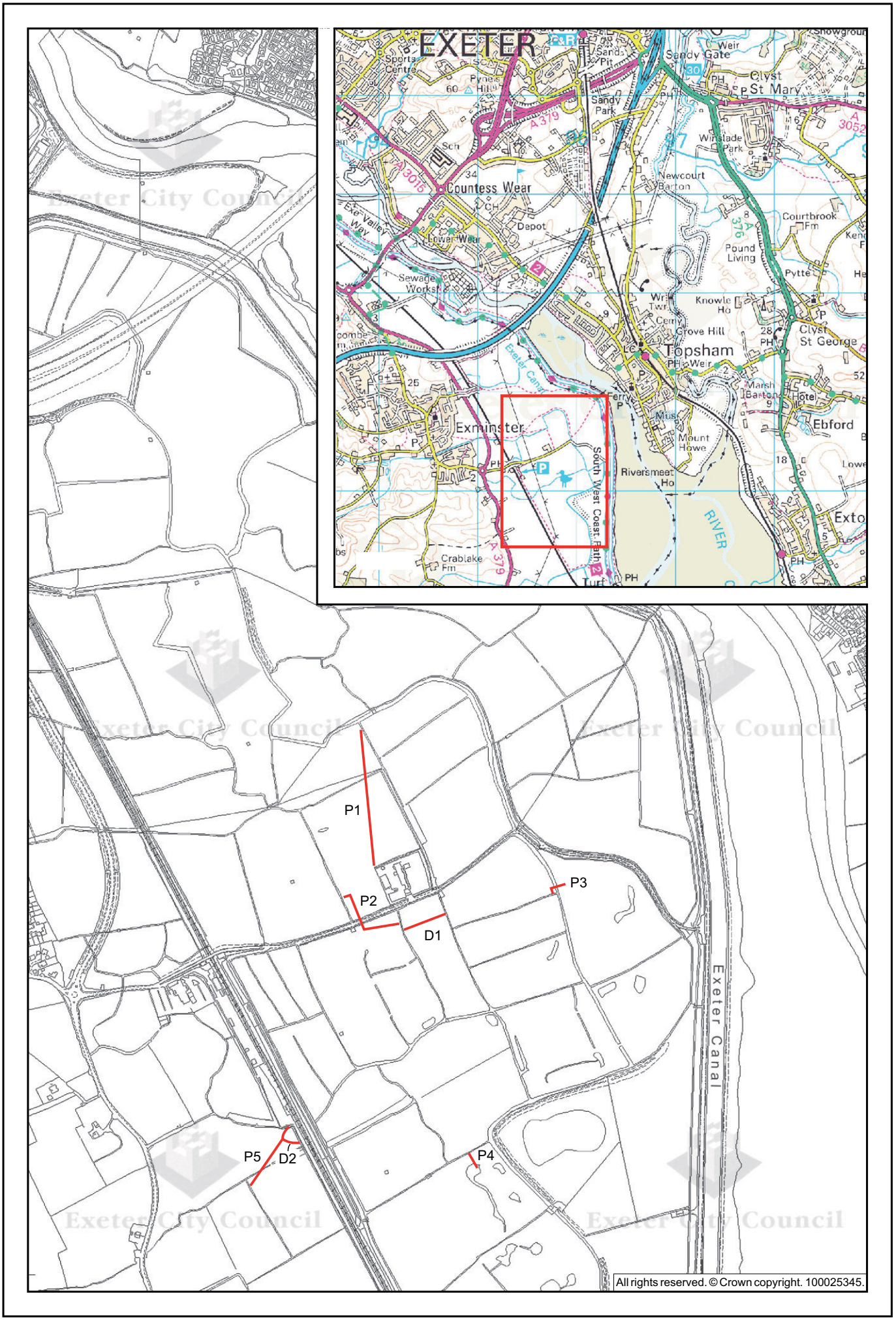

Fig. 1 Location of site. Scale 1:10,000.