

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Clovelly, North Devon	National Grid Reference: SS 3329 2260	Number:
Subject: An archaeological watching brief on land at Downland Farm, Clovelly, North Devon		Photo attached: No
Planning Application no: 1/0197/2009/FULM	Recipient museum: Barnstaple	
OASIS ID: exeterar1-65310	Museum Accession no: NDDMS:2009.47	
Contractor's reference number/code: EA 6906	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 16.09 – 18.09.2009	
<p>Description of works:</p> <p>An archaeological watching brief was maintained during the construction of four drainage ponds (A to D; Fig 2) as required under condition 2 of the grant of planning permission.</p> <p>The site occupies a south and east facing slope to the south of the A39 road and lies at an elevation between 175m and 209m AOD. Groundwater issues from a number of points along the western boundary and flows to the east and south.</p> <p>The major part of the site was most recently used as pasture, but has become heavily waterlogged and is reverting quickly back to boggy moor, supporting an extremely dense growth of rushes. The fields that make up the northern part of the area are currently given over to pasture.</p> <p>Results:</p> <p>Some 1.57ha (c.49%) of the proposed total of 3.23ha of topsoil stripping was monitored, along with some 615m of temporary drainage trenching. Topsoil was examined for the recovery of artefacts.</p> <p>The monitored areas were targeted to provide the broadest spectrum of elevation, aspect, and ground conditions.</p> <p>No archaeological features or deposits were present, and no finds were recovered, other than two pieces of modern bottle glass. All areas, including the superficially better-drained site of the northern ponds, showed either continual or seasonal waterlogging of the partially gleyed topsoil which without exception lay directly on heavy, yellow clays. All areas also showed evidence of modern deep ploughing that had penetrated the top of the natural clay to a depth of up to 100mm.</p> <p>No deposits of peat were present within any of the areas; the groundwater constantly moves as a result of the gradient, and this may have prevented its formation, or it is possible that peat which had accumulated historically has been removed as a result of agricultural activity.</p> <p>Conclusion:</p> <p>The areas that were investigated across this marginal tract of land showed no evidence of former activity other than that relating to its use as grazing in the historic period;</p>		

perhaps a reflection of the circumstance suggested by the landowner, that the poor ground conditions are peculiar to this part of the current holding, and that far more amenable soils are to be found only a short distance away.

Recorder:
Paul Pearce
Exeter Archaeology

Date sent to HER:



Fig. 1 Location of site.

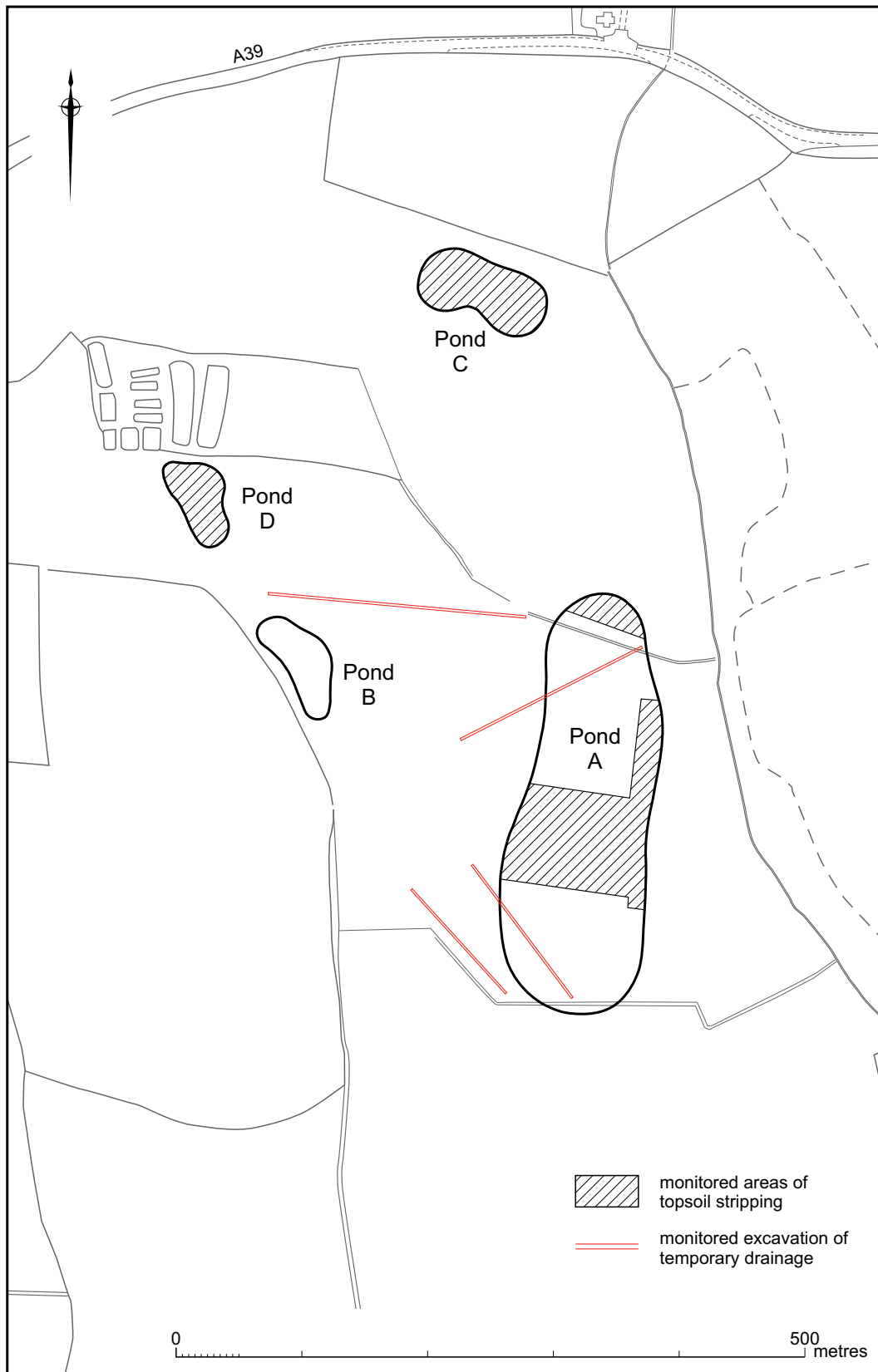


Fig. 2 Location of monitored areas. Based on plan supplied by Woodward Smith Chartered Architects. Scale 1:5000.