

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION  
OF A PROPOSED CEMETERY EXTENSION,  
TIVERTON ROAD,  
CULLOMPTON, DEVON**

**Prepared on behalf of Cullompton Town Council**

by  
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**Exeter Archaeology**

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## Summary

*An archaeological trench evaluation was undertaken on land adjacent to Cullompton cemetery (ST 0156 0757) during November 2009, prior to the extension of the cemetery. The work comprised the machine-excavation of 5 trenches, totalling 270m in length, with each trench 1.6m wide.*

*Excavation revealed evidence of quarrying activity, probably modern in date, within the southern half of the site. Deep deposits of clay loam had been introduced to fill pits and level the ground across this area. The investigation revealed little evidence of pre-modern activity. A small collection of worked flint and residual post-medieval pottery was recovered.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared for Cullompton Town Council and presents the results of an archaeological trench evaluation undertaken by Exeter Archaeology (EA) in November 2009 on land adjacent to Cullompton cemetery, Tiverton Road, Cullompton (centred on NGR ST 0156 0757). The work was required by Mid Devon District Council (MDDC), as advised by the Devon County Historic Environment Service (DCHES) as a condition of planning permission for the development of the site to form an extension to the existing cemetery (planning ref. 06/02301/FUL).

### 1.1 **The site** (Figs. 1 and 2)

The site lies on the western side of Cullompton and covers an area of approximately 1.1 hectares. It consists of a single irregularly-shaped field on the south-west side of St Andrews Hill, immediately to the north of Tiverton Road. The site lies between 66m and 88mAOD and the underlying solid geology consists of lower sandstone of the Permian or Triassic period. The soil is assigned to the Bromsgrove association, described as well-drained reddish coarse loamy soils (Soil Survey 1983).

### 1.2 **Archaeological background**

In 1984 aerial reconnaissance identified the remains of a multiphase Roman fort 80m to the north-east of the site (Griffith 1984). A small fort, clearly visible as cropmarks on aerial photographs, was thought to have been replaced by a larger work whose ramparts, until recently, were reflected on all four sides by field boundaries of substantial earthen banks carrying hedges. Only the west and south sides now retain their hedgebanks. The whole site is a Scheduled Monument (Devon 1029).

A complex of cropmarks, indicative of settlement activity, and potentially connected with the fort, is situated in a small field immediately to the north of the site.

Examination of 19th-century mapping shows no evidence of settlement within the site. In 1841 (tithe map, fig. 4) the site consisted of parts of three fields; a mixture of pasture and arable. Two field boundaries (since removed) are shown crossing the site.

## 2. AIMS

The principal aim of the evaluation was to establish the presence or absence, character, extent, depth and date of archaeological features within the site. The results of the evaluation (this document) are intended to inform the planning process and may be used to formulate a programme of further archaeological work either prior to and/or during development.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the requirements of a project brief supplied by DCHES (Reed, 2006) and in line with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by EA in response to that document. The WSI is included as Appendix 1.

The evaluation comprised the machine excavation of five trenches, totalling 270m in length, with each trench 1.6m wide. The positions of the trenches are shown on Fig.2.

Trenches were excavated under direct archaeological control using a wheeled excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket. Topsoil and underlying deposits were removed to the level of either natural subsoil, or the top of significant archaeological deposits (whichever was higher).

The standard EA recording system was employed; stratigraphic information was recorded on *pro-forma* context record sheets and individual trench recording forms, plans and sections for each trench were drawn at a scale of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate and a detailed black and white print and colour (digital) photographic record was made. *Pro forma* registers were maintained for photographs, drawings and context sheets. Finds were labelled and bagged on site and taken to the EA offices for processing and cataloguing.

#### 4. RESULTS

Relevant detailed plans and sections are included as Figs 2 and 3 and detailed context descriptions for each trench are set out in Appendix 2.

A generally uniform overlying layer sequence of topsoil, clay loam subsoil and weathered natural subsoil was encountered in all the trenches. The average combined thickness of these deposits was 1m.

##### 4.1 The trenches

*Trench 1* (Fig. 3, Plate 1 and 2)

This trench measured 70m x 1.6m, was orientated N-S and excavated to a maximum depth of 2m. Within the northern half of the trench natural clay subsoil (111) was exposed from a depth of 1m, overlain by clay loam subsoil (110). Within the southern half of the trench, colluvial subsoil (109) was exposed at a depth of 0.6m below current ground level, extending below the 2m maximum depth of the excavation.

The only archaeological feature present was a probable quarry pit (108) located at the centre of the trench. This cut through subsoil (110 and 109) and was in excess of 1.5m deep. The pit was irregular in shape, at least 13m wide and extended beyond the base of the trench. The pit had been backfilled with at least six clay loam deposits (102-107). A small piece of perspex was recovered from fill 106.

The fills of the pit were sealed by a modern clay loam deposit (101), 0.3m thick and containing small fragments of concrete and metal. This introduced layer was exposed along the full length of the trench to the south of the pit, and for a short distance to the north. Detailed context descriptions for this trench are set out in Table 1, Appendix 2.

*Trench 2*

This trench measured 50m x 1.6m, was orientated E-W and excavated to a maximum depth of 1.1m. Natural subsoil (202) was exposed at a depth of 1.1m below ground level, overlain throughout the trench by clay loam subsoil (201), which was in turn overlain by topsoil (200). No archaeological features, pottery or other finds were present. The layer sequence is set out in Table 2, Appendix 2.

*Trench 3*

This trench measured 50m x 1.6m, was orientated E-W and excavated to a maximum depth of 0.9m. Natural subsoil (303) was exposed at a depth of 0.9m below ground level, overlain throughout the trench by clay loam subsoil (302), which was in turn overlain by a recent buried topsoil (301). This was sealed by upcast material (300), presumably relating to quarrying activity identified in Trenches 1 and 4. No archaeological features, pottery or other finds were present. The layer sequence is set out in Table 3, Appendix 2.

*Trench 4* (Fig. 3, Plate 3)

This trench measured 60m x 1.6m, was orientated E-W with an angled return to the NW. Natural subsoil (405) was exposed at a depth of 0.3m, overlain by a clay loam subsoil (402). A layer of mixed clay and soil (401) was located at the eastern end of the trench and is probably associated with the quarrying activity seen within Trench 1. The only archaeological feature present was a ditch (403), measuring 4m wide and 0.7m deep, located towards the western end of the trench, and cutting natural subsoil at a depth of 0.1m below ground level. The single clay loam fill (404) was similar to the topsoil, indicating a relatively recent date, and included a single sherd of 19th century pottery. Detailed context descriptions for this trench are set out in Table 4, Appendix 2.

*Trench 5* (Fig. 3, Plate 4)

This trench measured 40m x 1.6m, was orientated E-W and was excavated to a general depth of 0.3m, the level of natural subsoil (503). The only archaeological feature present was a ditch (504) located at the western end of the trench, and considered to be a continuation of ditch 403 exposed to the north. This measured 4.5m wide and 1.2m deep. Several 20th-century bottles and modern paint tins were recovered from its lower clay loam fill (505). A layer of mixed clay and soil (501) towards the east end of the trench may be associated with the quarry activity seen in trench 1. The layer sequence is set out in Table 5, Appendix 2.

## 5. THE FINDS

A small assemblage was recovered, composed of prehistoric and post-medieval finds, described briefly below.

### 5.1 Lithics

A single worked flint was found. This was a small scraper recovered from the topsoil in Trench 4.

### 5.2 Post-medieval pottery

A total of nine sherds of post-medieval pottery, weighing 264g were recovered, primarily from topsoil. They comprise eight sherds of South Somerset coarsewares, and a single sherd of 19th-century plain whiteware. The coarsewares generally date between the late 16th and early 18th centuries. Their presence is likely to be the result of manuring.

### 5.3 Modern

A single fragment of perspex was recovered from the infill of quarry 108 (Trench 1).

## 6. DISCUSSION

The trench results indicate that the northern and western sides of the site contains a simple and undisturbed deposit sequence of topsoil over subsoil with natural subsoil no deeper than 1m below ground level.

Within the SE part of the site natural subsoil is significantly deeper, overlain by colluvial clay. This material has been cut through by a relatively recent quarry pit, the infilling of which entailed the importation of a considerable amount of clay loam, which has raised the ground level in places by up to 1m, no doubt in order to return the area to productive agricultural use.

Surface irregularities within the immediate area and mixed clay loam soils exposed in the eastern ends of trenches 4 and 5 suggest that this quarrying activity extended across a large part of the SE part of the site. The small amount of finds recovered from overlying deposits provides a probably late 20th-century date for its disuse.

The only other feature exposed was a NW-SE aligned ditch exposed in trenches 4 and 5 (contexts 403 and 504 respectively). The fills of this feature, a probable former agricultural ditch, contained 19th and late 20th century finds indicating that the feature is of relatively modern date. The position and alignment of the ditch correlates well with that of a field boundary shown on the tithe map of 1841 (fig. 4).

## 7. CONCLUSION

In summary, the trench evaluation has produced consistent results and can be viewed as providing a representative and reliable sample of the deposit sequence across the site. A significant, modern episode of re-profiling of the natural topography has been demonstrated, following post medieval or modern quarrying activity, but no evidence has been found within the site for significant archaeological activity of any period.

## SITE ARCHIVE

The site records have been compiled into a fully integrated site archive which is currently held at Exeter Archaeology's offices under project number 5981, pending deposition at The Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter (accession no. 214/2007). Details of the excavations, including a pdf copy of this report have been submitted to the on-line archaeological database OASIS (exeterar1-67885).

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project was commissioned by Cullompton Town Council (CTC) and administered by Judy Morris (CTC) and Peter Stead (EA). The site work was carried out by Marc Steinmetzer, assisted by Paul Jones. The illustrations for this report were prepared by Sarnia Blackmore. We are grateful to Steven Reed (DCHES) for his assistance and advice during the course of the project.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Soil Survey of England and Wales (1983): Soils of England and Wales: Sheet 5 South West England. Ordnance Survey, Southampton.

Stead, P. 2008. *Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological assessment and evaluation at the proposed cemetery extension, Cullompton, Devon*. Exeter Archaeology unpublished document.



WRITTEN STATEMENT OF INVESTIGATION FOR  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION  
AT THE PROPOSED CEMETERY EXTENSION, CULLOMPTON

*Prepared by Exeter Archaeology  
for  
Cullompton Town Council*

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This document has been produced by Exeter Archaeology (EA) for Cullompton Town Council, to describe the methods for archaeological assessment and trench evaluation of land adjacent to Tiverton Road, Cullompton, Devon (ST 0156 0757). It represents the 'Written Scheme of Investigation' for archaeological work required prior to the determination of planning application No. 06/02301/FUL (Mid Devon District Council) for the extension of the existing cemetery and provision of access and parking, and describes the archaeological investigation and reporting required by the Devon County Historic Environment Service (DCHES).
- 1.2 The proposed cemetery extension lies 80m to the south-west of a Roman fort on St Andrew's Hill. This is a Scheduled Monument (Devon 1029), and a complex of cropmarks, indicative of settlement activity, and potentially connected with this fort, are situated within 40m of the site.

2. AIMS

- 2.1 *Desk-based assessment*  
Using existing cartographic and documentary sources, the aim of the assessment is to establish the archaeological and historical context of the site, and to inform the methods of the subsequent trench evaluation.
- 2.2 *Trench evaluation*  
The aim of the evaluation is to determine the presence of archaeological deposits within the area to be affected by the proposed development, and if so, to establish their age, character and extent. If any such remains are shown to survive, the information gained from this evaluation will be used to determine the nature and extent of the further archaeological investigations which may be required in mitigation for the development.

3. METHOD

- 3.1 *Desk-based assessment*  
A study will be made of the relevant cartographic sources, to include tithe map/s and early Ordnance Survey maps of the area, as well as documentary and photographic records held at the County Historic Environment Register

(HER). The results will be discussed with the DCHES in order to inform the methods of the subsequent trench evaluation.

### 3.2 *Trench evaluation*

It is proposed to excavate trenches, with an approximate width of 1.5m, to a total length of 300m (a 5% sample). The positions of the trenches will be determined following discussion of the results of the desk-based assessment with the DCHES.

3.3 Trenches will be excavated by a machine fitted with a toothless grading bucket under the direct control of the site archaeologist to expose the upper surface of archaeological deposits or *in situ* weathered subsoil whichever is highest in the stratigraphic sequence. Where archaeological deposits are exposed, hand cleaning and excavation of the deposits will be undertaken to determine their nature and extent. Hand-excavation will normally comprise:

- The full excavation of small discrete features.
- Half-sectioning or quadranting (50% excavation) of larger discrete features.
- The excavation of long linear features to sample between 10-20% of their length - with hand-investigations distributed along the exposed length of any such features, specifically targeting any intersections, terminals or overlaps.

Any variation on the above will be undertaken in agreement with the DCHES.

The full depth of archaeological deposits will be assessed, although this will not include excavation to *in situ* subsoil if it is clear that complex and deep stratigraphy will be encountered.

If deposits are only partially exposed within a trench then, after consultation with the client and the DCHES, the relevant trench may be extended to facilitate the understanding of the deposits.

Spoil will be examined for the recovery of artefacts.

3.4 Any archaeological features/deposits exposed will be excavated and recorded as per Exeter Archaeology standard recording procedures (see below) and in accordance with the standards of the Institute of Field Archaeologists. However, if complex or extensive archaeological deposits are exposed then their extent, nature and depth *only* will be determined by these investigations. These investigations will make no attempt to fully excavate - where exposed - any such deposits.

### 3.5 *General project methods*

The project will be organised so that specialist consultants who might be required to conserve artefacts or report on other aspects of the investigations can be called upon (see below).

- 3.6 Health and Safety requirements will be observed at all times by any archaeological staff working on site, particularly when machinery is operating nearby (see below), when as a minimum, reflective jackets, safety helmets and protective footwear will be worn.
- 3.7 As appropriate, the Exeter Archaeology Scientific Officer will assess deposits on site to determine the possible yield (if any) of environmental or microfaunal evidence, and its potential for radiocarbon dating. If deposits of potential survive, these would be sampled using the EH Guidelines for Environmental Archaeology (EH CfA Guidelines 2002/1).
- 3.8 Initial cleaning, conservation, packaging and any stabilisation or longer term conservation measures will be undertaken in accordance with relevant professional guidance (including *Conservation guidelines No 1* (UKIC, 2001); *First Aid for Finds* (UKIC & RESCUE, 1997).
- 3.9 Any human burial remains or cremations will initially be left *in situ*. If removal at either this or a later stage in the archaeological works is deemed necessary, these will then be fully excavated and removed from the site subject to the compliance with the relevant Department of Constitutional Affairs Licence, which will be obtained by EA on behalf of the client. Any remains will be excavated in accordance with Institute of Field Archaeologist Technical Paper No. 13 (McKinley and Roberts 1993). Where appropriate bulk samples will be collected.
- 3.10 Should gold or silver artefacts be exposed, these will be removed to a safe place and reported to the local coroner according to the procedures relating to the Treasure Act 1996. Where removal cannot be effected on the same working day as the discovery suitable security measures will be taken to protect the finds from theft.
- 3.11 The project will be monitored by the DCHES, who will be informed of the progress of the work and may wish to inspect the excavations.
- 3.12 Any additional archaeological fieldwork, required in response to the results of the evaluation, will be subject to the production, of a separate WSI to be submitted and approved by the local authority before the commencement of that work.

#### 4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING

- 4.1 Standard Exeter Archaeology recording and sampling procedures will be employed, consisting of:
  - standardised single context record sheets; survey drawings, plans and sections at scales 1:10,1:20, 1:50 as appropriate;
  - black and white print and colour digital photography;

- survey and location of finds, deposits or archaeological features, using EDM surveying equipment and software where appropriate; and
- labelling and bagging of finds on site from all excavated levels, post-1800 unstratified pottery may be discarded on site with a small sample retained for dating evidence as required;

## 5. REPORTING AND ARCHIVING

5.1 An illustrated summary report will be produced detailing the results of the fieldwork. This will contain, as appropriate:

- location plan;
- a written description of the exposed remains and a discussion and interpretation of their character and significance in the context of any locally available historical evidence;
- plans and sections at appropriate scales showing the exact location of trenches and of any significant archaeological deposits within them; and
- specialist reports as appropriate.

5.2 Copies of the report will be produced for distribution to the Client and the local planning authority, and will also be deposited with the site archive. If further archaeological investigation is required the results of these investigations will be incorporated in the overall site archive.

5.3 An ordered and integrated site archive will be prepared with reference to *The Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 1991 2nd edition) upon completion of the project. This will be deposited with RAM Museum, Exeter in consultation with the Curator of Antiquities, in accordance with a timescale agreed with the Curator and with DCHES. A museum accession number for the work will be obtained prior to commencement on site. The guidelines in the *Procedures for the Deposit of Archaeological Archives from Developer Funded Fieldwork to Exeter City Museum (2005)* will be followed.

5.4 Details of the project will be submitted to the OASIS (Online Access to the Index of Archaeological investigationS) database.

5.5 A short report summarising the results of the project will be prepared for inclusion within an appropriate national journal or journals *if merited*.

5.6 Should the evaluation encounter particularly significant archaeological remains, then a more detailed publication report may be required in conjunction with the results of any future archaeological work that may be carried out on the site.

## 6. PROJECT ORGANISATION

- 6.1 The project will be undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced EA archaeologists, and completed under the general management of Timothy Gent, BA MPhil, who produced this document.

### *Health & Safety*

- 6.2 Exeter Archaeology operations are subject to Health and Safety policies prepared by Exeter City Council which include all aspects of work covered by the *Health and Safety at Work Act* (1974). All monitoring works within this scheme will be carried out in accordance with current *Safe Working Practices* and a *Risk Assessment* will be prepared in advance.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### *Specialists contributors and advisors*

The expertise of the following specialists can be called upon if required:

*Bone artefact analysis:* Ian Riddler;

*Dating techniques:* University of Waikato Radiocarbon Laboratory, NZ; Alex Bayliss (EH);

*Charcoal identification:* Rowena Gale;

*Diatom analysis:* Nigel Cameron (UCL);

*Environmental data:* Vanessa Straker (English Heritage);

*Faunal remains:* Southampton University Faunal Remains Unit and sub-consultants, Dale Seargantson, Polydora Baker (EH); Lorraine Higbee (Taunton);

*Foraminifera analysis:* Mike Godwin;

*Finds conservation:* Alison Hopper-Bishop (Exeter Museums); Salisbury Conservation Centre;

*Human remains:* Louise Loe (Bournemouth University); Dr. James Steele (Centre for Human Ecology, Southampton);

*Lithic analysis:* Dr. Linda Hurcombe (Exeter University); John Newberry (Paignton);

*Medieval and post-medieval finds:* John Allan (Exeter Archaeology);

*Metallurgy:* Chris Salter (Oxford University); Ancient Monuments Laboratory (English Heritage) Peter Crew (Snowdonia National Park), Gill Juleff (Exeter University);

*Molluscan analysis:* Terrestrial-Paul Davis (Bristol); Marine- Jan Light (Godalming);

*Petrology/geology:* Roger Taylor (RAM Museum); Dr R. Scrivener (British Geological Survey);

*Plant remains:* Julie Jones (Bristol); Wendy Carruthers (Llantrisant)

*Pollen:* Dr Heather Tinsley (Bristol); Elizabeth Huckerby (Lancaster University Archaeological Unit);

*Prehistoric pottery:* Henrietta Quinnell (Exeter);

*Radiocarbon dating:* University of Waikato, New Zealand: Scottish Universities Research and Reactor Centre, East Kilbride

*Roman finds:* Paul Bidwell & associates (Arbeia Roman Fort, South Shields);

*Soil Science:* Matthew Canti (EH) and sub-consultants;

*Textiles:* Penelope Rogers (York)

## APPENDIX 2

## CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS BY TRENCH

Table 1: Trench 1

Context No.	Depth (b.g.s.)	Description	Interpretation
100	0-0.1m	Turfline	Turfline
101	0.1-0.4m	Mid red brown clay loam	Introduced topsoil
102	0.4-0.7m		Fill of quarry 108
103	0.4-0.8m		Fill of quarry 108
104	0.7-1m		Fill of quarry 108
105	1-1.1m		Fill of quarry 108
106	1.1-1.3m		Fill of quarry 108
107	0.6-1.9m		Fill of quarry 108
108	0.2-1.9m	Irregular quarry	Quarry
109	0.6-1.3m	Light to mid brown yellow clay loam	Colluvial subsoil
110	0.1-1m	Mid red brown clay loam	Subsoil
111	1+	Mid red clay	Natural subsoil

Table 2: Trench 2

Context No.	Depth (b.g.s.)	Description	Interpretation
200	0-0.4m	Mid brown clay loam	Topsoil
201	0.4-1.1m	Mid brown clay loam	Subsoil
202	1.1+	Mid red clay loam	Natural subsoil

Table 3: Trench 3

Context No.	Depth (b.g.s.)	Description	Interpretation
300	0-0.5m	Mid red brown clay loam	Quarry upcast
301	0.5-0.7m	Mid brown clay loam	Buried topsoil
302	0.7-0.9m	Light to mid red brown clay loam	Subsoil
303	0.9m+	Mid red clay loam	Natural subsoil

Table 4: Trench 4

Context No.	Depth (b.g.s.)	Description	Interpretation
400	0-0.1m	Mid brown red clay loam	Topsoil
401	0.1-0.4m	Light to mid yellow brown clay loam	Quarry upcast
402	0.1-0.3m	Mid red brown clay loam	Subsoil
403	0.1-0.8m	NW-SE aligned linear	Field boundary ditch
404	0.1-0.8m	Mid brown red clay loam	Fill of ditch 403
405	0.3m+	Mid red clay loam	Natural subsoil

Table 5: Trench 5

Context No.	Depth (b.g.s.)	Description	Interpretation
500	0-0.2m	Mid red brown clay loam	Topsoil
501	0.2-0.4m	Mid brown red clay loam	Quarry upcast
503	0.3m+	Mid red loamy clay	Natural subsoil
504	0.2-1.3m	NW-SE aligned linear	Field boundary ditch
505	0.4-1.3m	Black silty clay	Fill of ditch 504
506	0.2-0.5m	Mid brown clay loam	Fill of ditch 504



Fig. 1 Location of site.

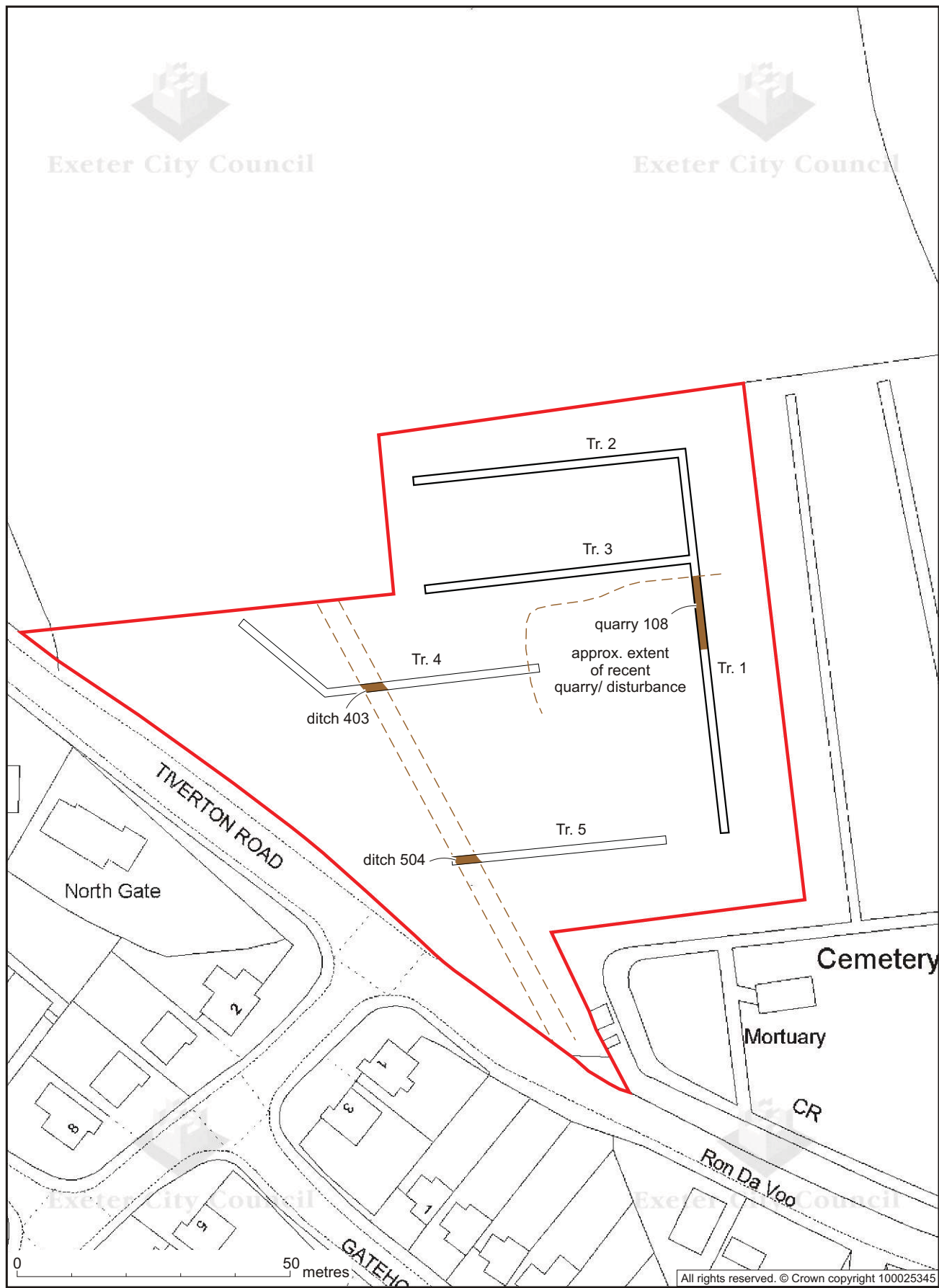


Fig. 2 Trench location plan, showing post medieval quarry and former hedge ditch.



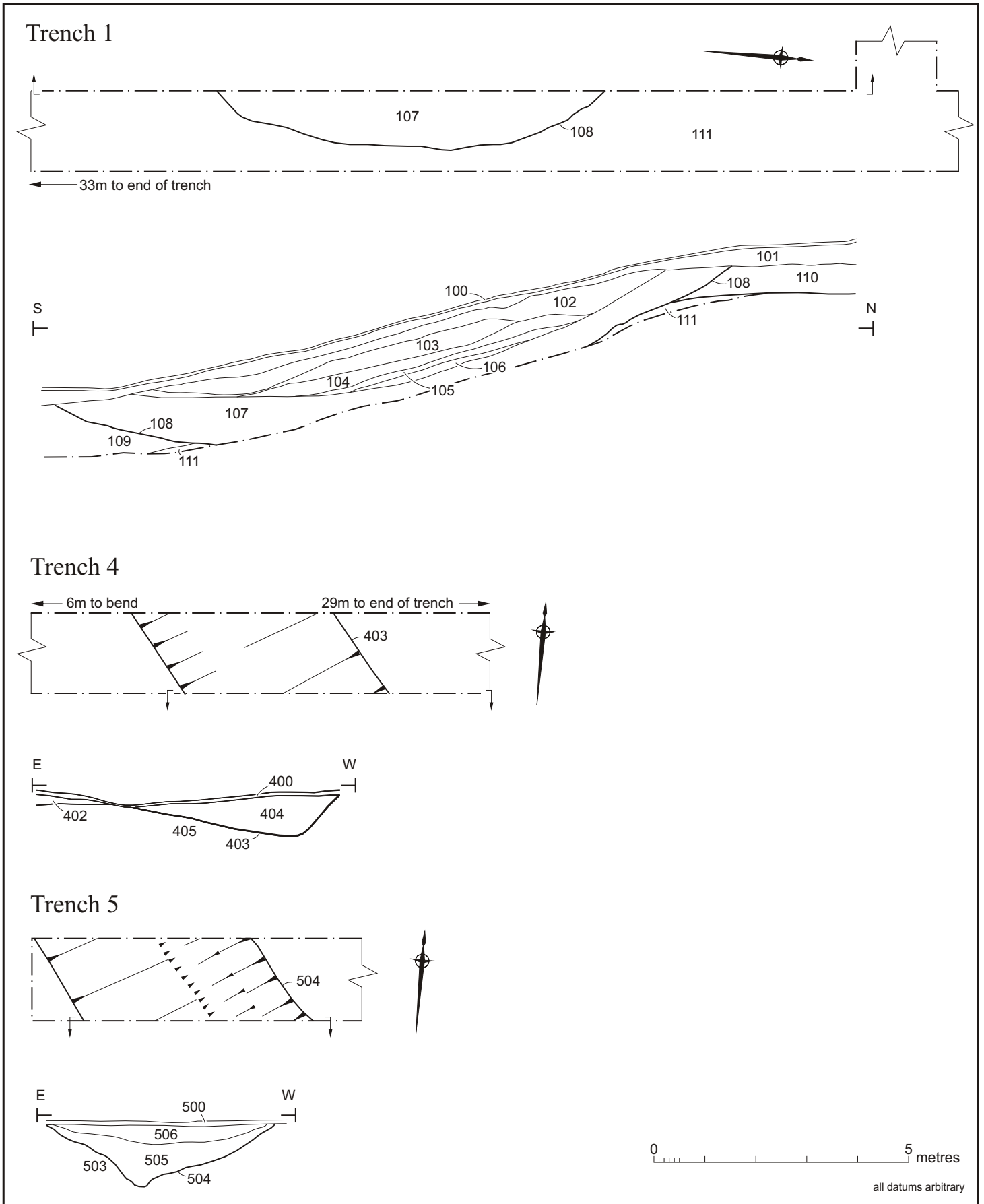


Fig. 3 Plans and sections Trenches 1, 4 and 5.

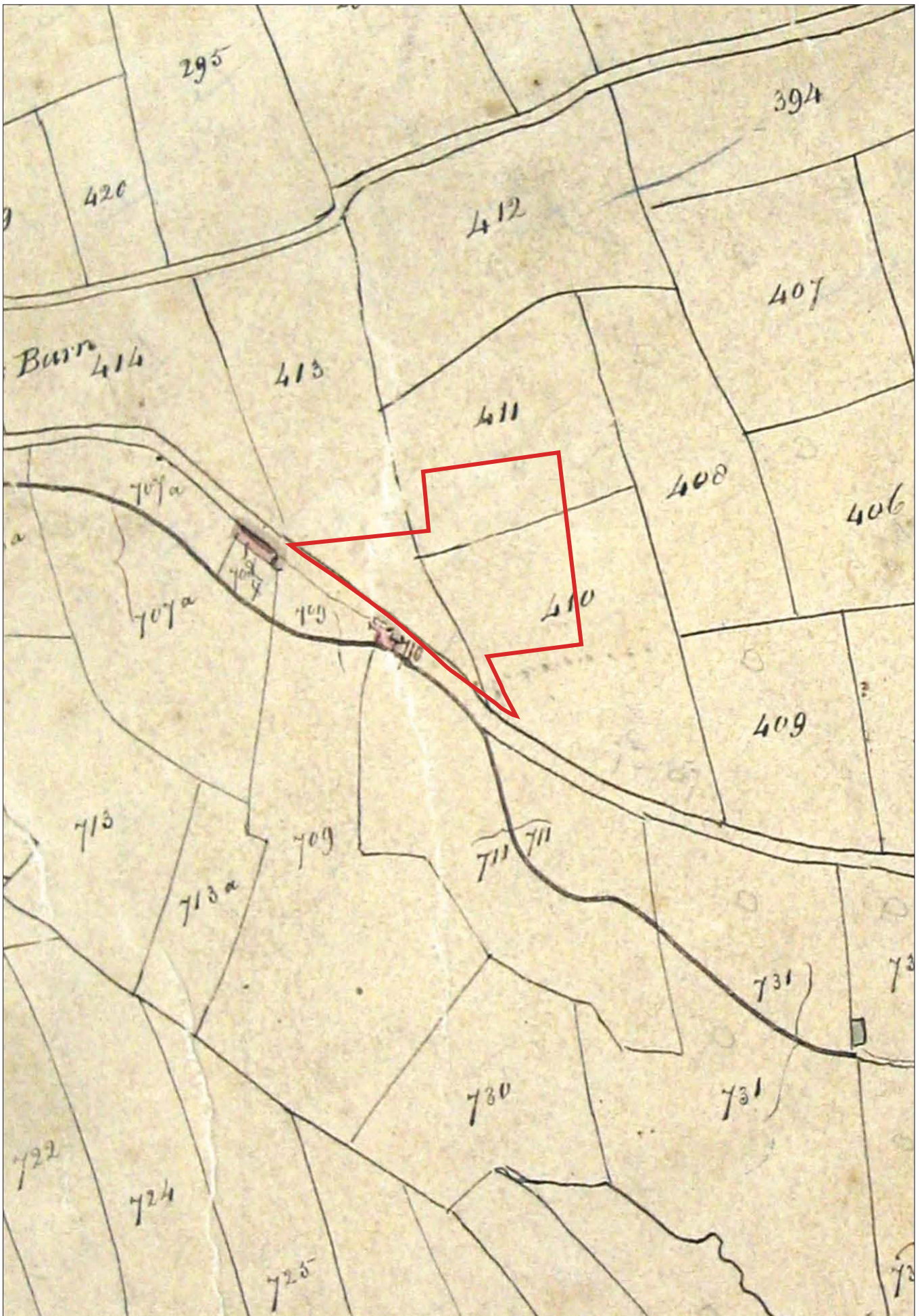


Fig. 4 Extract from Cullompton tithe map 1841, showing field boundary crossing site (ditch 403/504). Scale approx. 1:2500.



Plate 1 General view of site, looking north-east.



Plate 2 Section through quarry 108, Trench 1, looking south-west. 1m scale.



Plate 3 Section through ditch 403, Trench 4, looking south-east. 0.25m scale.



Plate 4 Section through ditch 504, Trench 5, looking south. 0.25m scale.