

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Axminster, East Devon	National Grid Reference SY 29884 97932	Number:
Subject: Watching Brief During Excavation for a New Water Main on Land Adjacent to the Duke's Way Development, Axminster		Photo attached? N
Planning Application no: N/A	Recipient museum: Royal Albert Memorial Museum	
OASIS ID: N/A	Museum Accession no: RAMM 40/2010	
Contractor's reference number/code: EA7161	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 10 February 2010	
<p>Description of works.</p> <p>A watching brief was undertaken during topsoil stripping for a new water main in the field to the east of the Duke's Way development at Axminster (Fig. 1). The trench excavation took place to connect the existing water main with the newly-installed main through the development site. The existing water main located within the development site is to be abandoned.</p> <p>An area measuring 35m by 4m was stripped of topsoil (Fig. 1). The topsoil, which measured 0.30m in depth, comprised grey-brown clay silt with inclusions of flint gravels, brick, glass, china, coal, slate and charcoal, with the density of these inclusions greater at the north end of the site. A small assemblage of finds was retained, comprising 2 sherds of Roman pottery, three sherds of medieval pottery, and 2 sherds of post-medieval coarsewares.</p> <p>The topsoil overlaid natural subsoil – a hard light grey clay with shale fragments. The existing water main was exposed at the north end of the site. No features were exposed cutting into the natural subsoil.</p> <p>Excavation for the new water main within the adjacent field had extended through the boundary dividing the two fields. The boundary was not recorded in detail due to safety concerns over the deep, waterlogged trench. The boundary defines a pronounced drop in topography from east to west that represents a natural scarp near the head of dry valley. It is possible that the western side of this scarp was steepened during the Second World War when an anti-tank ditch was excavated to the west. The boundary is formed by a low bank of topsoil, with a maximum height of 1m. On its west side is an infilled ditch measuring approximately 2m wide by 1m deep. There is also a ditch on the east side, measuring approximately 2m wide by 1.50m deep. The fill of the ditch appears to abut the hedgebank suggesting some movement and build-up of topsoil through ploughing downhill.</p> <p>In summary, with the exception of the hedgebank, no archaeological features were exposed. The presence of Roman pottery is consistent with the finds of Roman tile from a field to the south and the field to the west which may indicate the presence of a Romanised building somewhere in the vicinity.</p>		
<p>A plan as well as any other relevant drawings must be attached showing the location and extent of site, areas investigated and features exposed.</p>		
Recorder: Andrew Passmore, Exeter Archaeology	Date sent to HER:	

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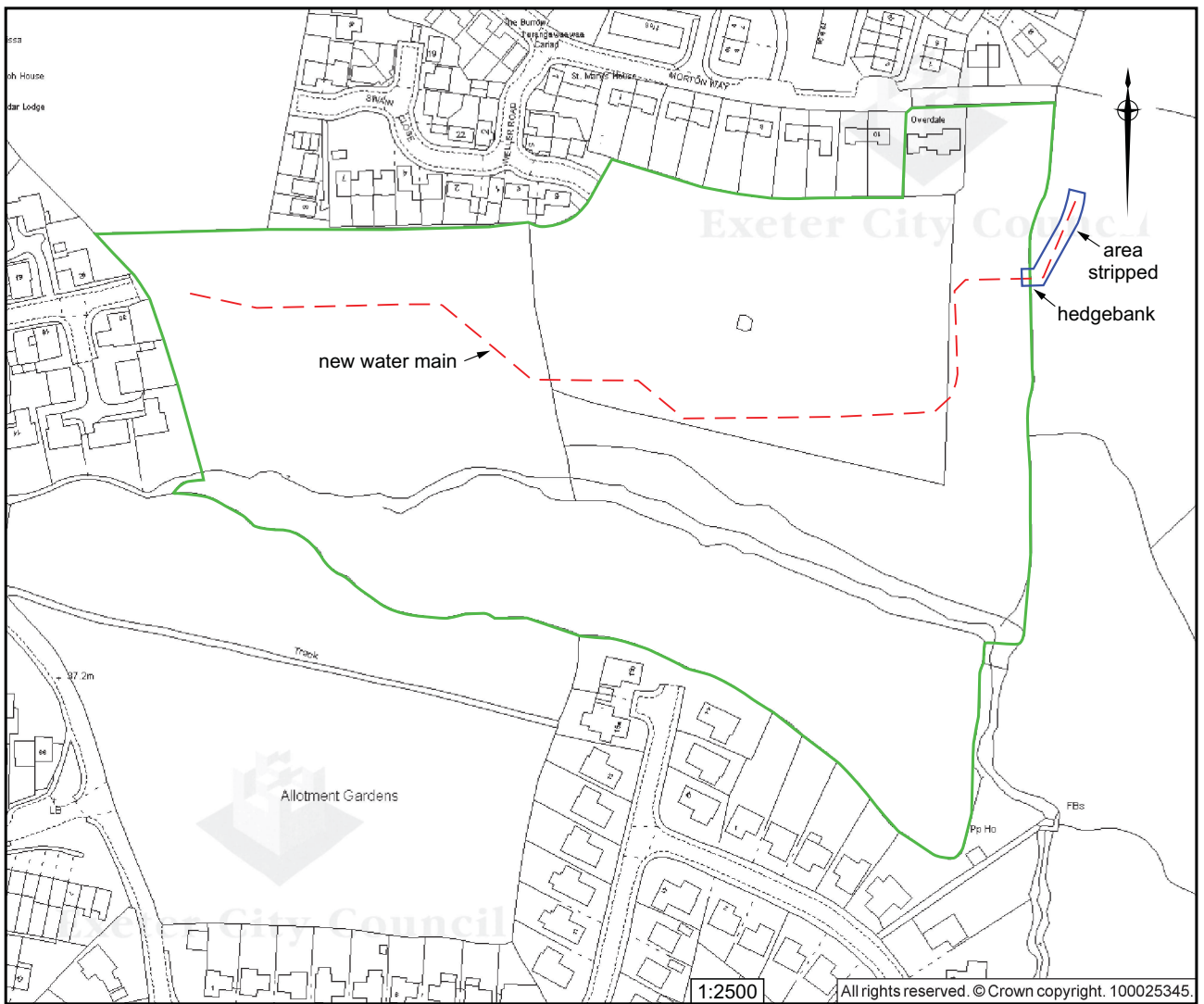
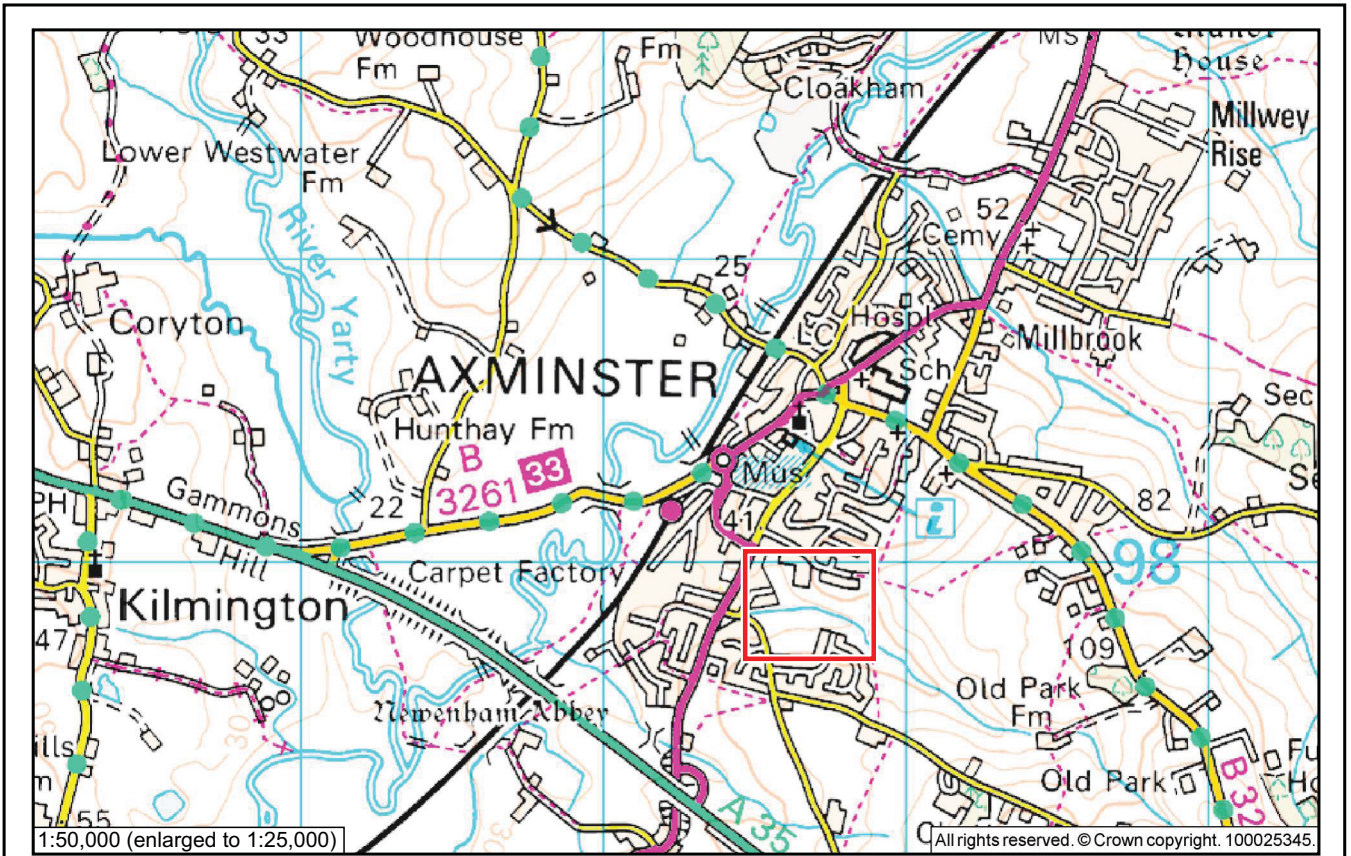


Fig. 1 Location of observations.