

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Exmouth, East Devon	National Grid Reference SX 0005 8094	Number:
Subject: Archaeological monitoring and recording at The Strand, Exmouth, Devon		Photo attached: N
Planning Application no: n/a	Recipient museum: Royal Albert Memorial Museum	
OASIS ID: exeterar1-77451	Museum Accession no: 106/2010	
Contractor's reference number/code: EA 7171	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 29/04/2010	
<p>Background</p> <p>The site (Fig. 1), known as The Strand Inclosure, is a public garden lying in the centre of the historic town of Exmouth. Little is known of Exmouth prior to the medieval period when it probably formed part of the manor of Littleham. By the 13th century a small settlement had risen around the ferry to Starcross, lying to the east of Chapel Street. From 1790 the Rolle family did much to develop the town as a watering place. One of the major changes of the early 19th century was the building of an embankment and the reclamation of about 50 acres of estuary. Undertaken by William Hull in 1811 the exercise pushed the extent of Exmouth westwards and gave land to the steadily growing town. In 1830 the Market House for the town was erected on the site but this building was demolished in 1869 and the land given over for public amenity with the pleasure garden being opened on April 6th 1871.</p> <p>Description of works:</p> <p>Although the works constituted permitted development, a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording work was requested by East Devon District Council as advised by Devon Council Historic Environment Service (DCHES). Archaeological monitoring and recording was therefore carried out during the enhancement works by Exeter Archaeology. In the event the enhancement works, following initial investigation of the ground conditions, were limited to relatively shallow depths. The results of a borehole survey across the site were also consulted (Devon County Council Materials Laboratory Ref No 09SS010/1).</p> <p>Results: (Fig. 1)</p> <p>Initial inspection of the groundworks in the north corner of the site demonstrated the presence of a dark brown sandy topsoil (101) about 300mm in depth. Below this was a layer of brown sandy clay (102) with inclusions of brick fragments with a depth of 700mm. This in turn lay above a firm orange-brown clay layer (103) 200-300mm thick at a depth of about 1.1 – 1.2m below the existing ground surface. These results were cross-referenced with the results from a borehole survey (W1-W6) carried out in March 2009 and a similar sequence of deposits as described above was apparent. Deposits below the clay layer (103) are considered to be natural deposits of mixed sands.</p> <p>In view of the results from the watching brief and the borehole survey it was agreed with DCHES that no further archaeological work would be required.</p> <p>Conclusion:</p> <p>The date and function of layer 103 is uncertain although it may represent a ‘capping’ layer intended to mitigate the effects of a high water table given the site’s original close proximity to the shoreline. Whether this took place contemporary with the major reclamation being undertaken nearby in the early 19th century is uncertain but it would seem likely that the exercise had taken place prior to or as part of the erection of the Market House in 1830. The thick layer above the clay (102) almost certainly does represent a deposit of made ground associated with the general raising of the ground level in the 19th century as part of the construction of the Market House or as part of the works in preparation for the formal public garden following the demolition of the Market House; brick rubble was recorded in the deposit.</p>		
Recorder: M. Steinmetzer (Exeter Archaeology)		Date sent to HER:

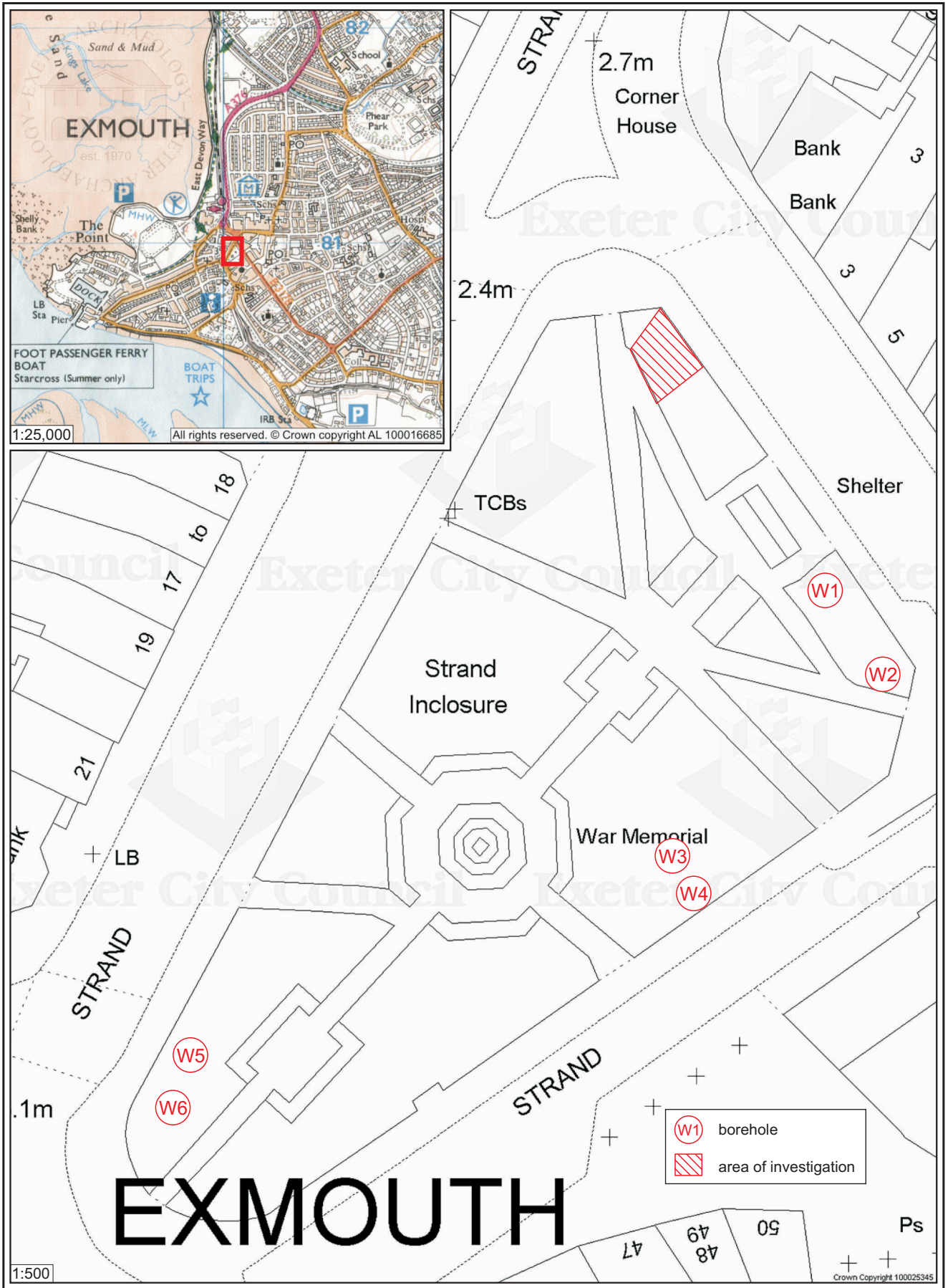


Fig. 1 Site location: area of investigation and location of boreholes.