

# Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

<b>Civil Parish &amp; District:</b> Kingsteignton	<b>National Grid Reference</b> SX86757130 to SX93817294	<b>Number:</b>
<b>Subject:</b> Archaeological watching brief on works at Hackney Marshes, Kingsteignton		<b>Photo attached?</b> Yes
<b>Planning Application no:</b> N/A	<b>Recipient museum:</b> RAMM	
<b>OASIS ID:</b> 93619	<b>Museum Accession no:</b> 172/2010	
<b>Contractor's reference number/code:</b> EA7348	<b>Dates fieldwork undertaken:</b> 14/09/10 – 05/11/10	
<p><b>Background:</b></p> <p>An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Exeter Archaeology (EA) during the works for a new cycle route through Hackney Marsh Nature Reserve to the Passage House Inn, passing close to the Hackney Canal and skirting a large sub-oval enclosure of unknown date. The work was carried out by Glendinning Contracting on behalf of Jacobs Engineering UK Ltd. The new cycleway followed existing pathways with the route divided, for the purpose of this project, into three sections A to C as per the attached plan (Fig. 1). The principal works listed in the brief involved the following:</p> <p>Sections A &amp; B: Scrape verge          Section A: Clean and re-shape drainage ditch          Section B: Excavate and install Gabion Baskets          Section C: Excavations for new pond, path and drainage ditch</p> <p>The works were carried out according to a brief provided by the Devon County Council Historic Environment Service (DCHES ref: Arch/cm/te/16914, Rance 2010). Areas of potential archaeological impact were highlighted in the brief and graded in terms of the extent of monitoring each area required. The specified areas of interest were the sub-oval enclosure in section A, the potential for structures and surfaces associated with the quay/wharf at Hackney Canal Lock in Section B, and the possible exposure of palaeoenvironmental deposits in Hackney Marsh (Section C); this section was also highlighted for the proximity to a prehistoric inhumation 100m west of the proposed cycle route.</p> <p><b>Results:</b></p> <p><b>Section A</b></p> <p>Works in this section of the path were entirely superficial involving the clearance of soil and organic matter which had accumulated in the existing drainage ditches. The works did not expose previously unexcavated soils. During intermittent monitoring and recording nothing was seen which could relate to features which may have been identified with the undated sub-oval enclosure known at this location and no other archaeological observations were made.</p> <p><b>Section B</b></p> <p>Works in this section began at the west end, just east of the footbridge over the watercourse and on the south side of the path and comprehensive monitoring commenced. A shallow layer of topsoil was removed from the existing path surface exposing a mixed layer of medium brown sandy loam containing occasional perforated buff-coloured brick and slate fragments with a scattering of loose imported gravel; this layer was considered to be modern. The ridge of ground beneath the path appears to have been purpose built. From the footbridge the path rises gently to the east above marshy ground to the south and a watercourse to the north. On the south side of the existing path deeper excavations were carried out to install supportive gabions for the widened path. A 33m length of trench was dug to a maximum depth of 900mm below the stripped surface level; it was c.1m wide (shown in grey on Fig.1). At 700mm below the surface a dark grey-black silty clay was exposed (Photo. 1); this was at the level of the surrounding reed bed and is considered contemporary with it. Below this, at 750mm below the surface, was a pinkish-grey sandy clay natural to the base of the trial pit. No archaeological features were exposed and no finds were recovered.</p> <p>Further excavations for supportive gabions were carried out to the east. The existing path sits on a ridge of ground over 2m above the reed beds to the north and at least 3m above the canal to the south. The northern edge of the path was to be supported by a single row of gabions. Trial pits were monitored along the path embankment. A total of six trial pits were dug to a maximum depth of 1m (location of all TPs shown on Fig. 1).</p>		

TP 1. The excavation was made from the top of the sloping verge. The TP measured 0.70m wide and with a maximum depth of 1m below the path surface. Two levels of make-up soil were exposed, possibly of two phases. Both layers were modern with plastic in evidence at the base of the excavation.

TP 2. This pit exposed a soil profile consisting of 0.15m of grey-brown sandy topsoil over a mixed layer of firm orange-brown clay to the final depth of excavation at 1m below surface. Patches of grey clay were mixed into the orange-brown variety and a brick fragment was also seen. The entire bank was considered to be of made ground and of modern origin.

TP 3. This pit exhibited a similar soil profile to that seen in TP 2. Beneath the topsoil was orange-brown clay containing brick fragments and occasional coal down to 0.50m. Below this was firmer orange-brown clay but again containing brick fragments.

TP 4. This pit had 0.15m of topsoil overlying medium brown clay loam containing a metal fragment (possibly of railings). Below this at 0.40m was firm orange-brown clay with patches of grey clay and occasional brick fragments. A pale buff brick was noted in the spoil. The pit was dug to c.0.80m.

TP 5. Beneath 0.15m of topsoil was a mixed layer of clay with patches of medium brown clay loam. This contained pale orange brick fragments. At 0.65m below the surface the clay became more compacted but with the same brick inclusions; final depth of pit was at 0.90m.

TP 6. The soil profile consisted of 0.15m of topsoil over a patchy layer of grey clay to 0.28m. From here to 0.45m was a medium brown sandy loam with occasional small stones. Below this to the final depth at 0.80m was a firm orange-brown clay; this appeared to be re-deposited as there were pockets of grey-brown loam within the clay.

All of the trial pits exposed made-up ground to the base levels reached in each.

The extant path and the ridge of ground upon which it sits appeared to be modern.

No archaeological remains were observed.

### Section C

Monitoring and recording took place of excavations for a small pond and new sections of path were dug to the north-east of the existing path (Fig. 1). The proposed new curving paths lay c.4m to the north-east of the existing path. A maximum of 0.25m of topsoil was removed exposing the formation level of medium brown weathered clay natural. No archaeological features or deposits were exposed.

A drainage channel was dug between the old and new paths to a maximum depth of 0.55m (Photo. 2). The trench measured 10.3m x 2.5m. Beneath 0.22m of dark brown loamy topsoil was a further 0.08m of medium brown silty clay. Below this was a thin layer (0.05m) of darker brown silty clay and from this combined depth of 0.35m to the final depth of excavation at 0.55m, was a firm light brown natural clay.

The new pond was situated in slightly lower ground at the bottom of a gentle slope up to the existing path. The excavation measured 6.3m x 4m (Photo. 2). The soil profile consisted of very thin topsoil over medium brown weathered silty clay to a depth of 0.11m below the surface. A firm light brown natural clay was observed below this layer to the base of the excavation at 0.90m.

### Conclusion and Archive:

No features or remains were observed which could relate to the undated sub-oval enclosure previously recorded adjacent to Section A. No archaeological deposits of significance were observed during the course of the works. The existing path in Section B appeared to be built on modern made ground.

An archive has been prepared and has been provided with a RAMM Accession number of 172/2010 although the archive is currently held at Exeter Archaeology, Custom House, Exeter, awaiting future deposition. An OASIS (Online AccessS to the Index of archaeological investigations) entry has been prepared with the ID number of 93619.

**Recorder:** G. Young, Exeter Archaeology

**Date sent to HER:**

17/02/2011



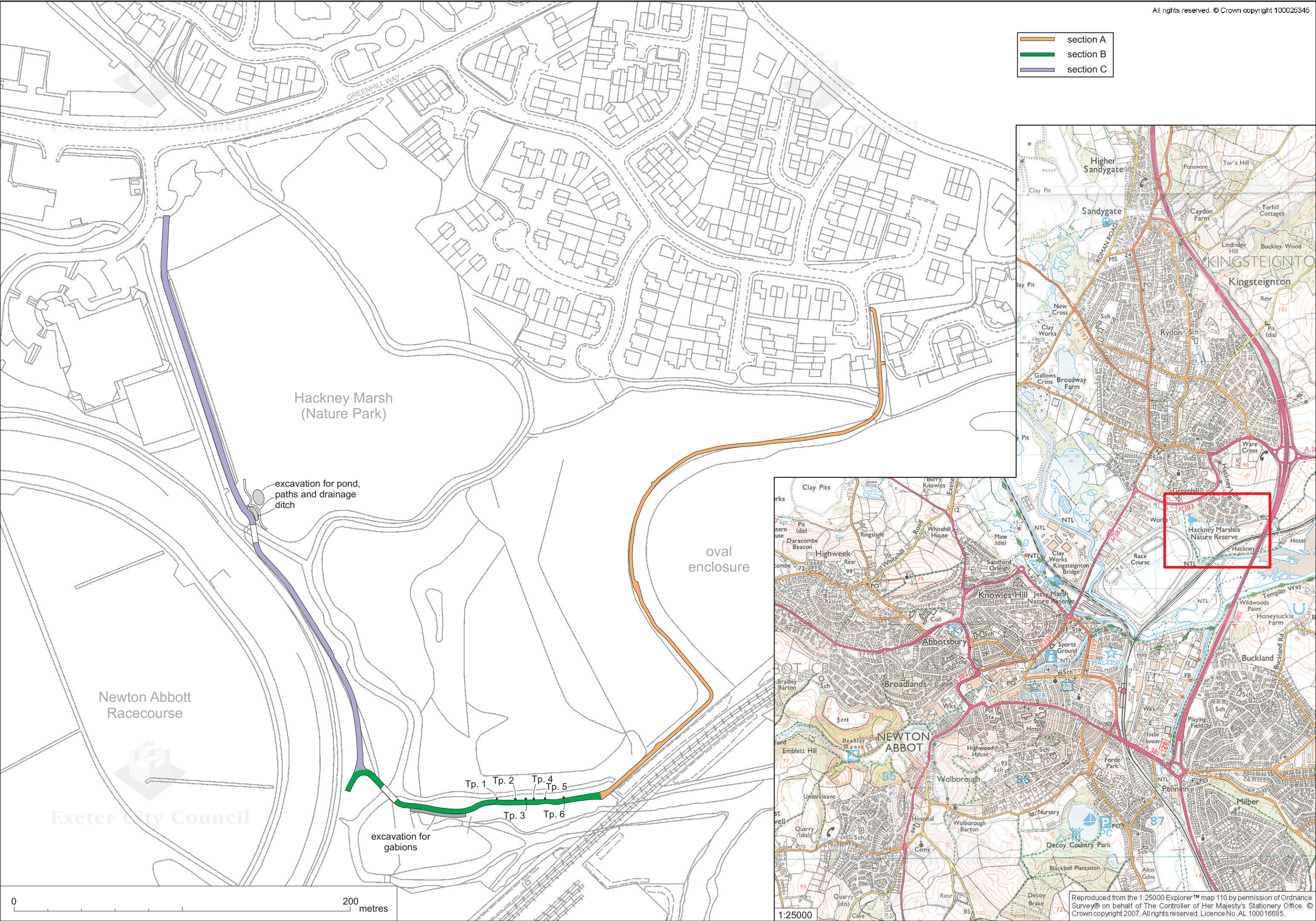


Fig. 1 Location of monitored excavations.





Photo. 1 Section B; south-facing section of trench for gabions showing made up ground over original soil. Scale 0.25m. View west.



Photo. 2 Section C; excavations for drainage ditch and pond beyond. Scale 0.25m. View north.