

**Land to the South of the Met Office  
Exeter  
Devon**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

*for*

**Mr Paul Scoble**

CA Project: 3983  
CA Report: 12295

October 2012

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Exeter  
Devon**

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|             |  |
|-------------|--|
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| date        | 11 February 2013   |
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Fig. 1 Site location plan (1:25,000)

Fig. 2 Trench location plan showing archaeological features and geophysical survey results (1:1000)

Fig. 3 Sections (1:20)



## SUMMARY

**Project Name:** Land to the South of the Met Office  
**Location:** Exeter, Devon  
**NGR:** SX 9596 9268  
**Type:** Evaluation  
**Date:** 10-11 October 2012  
**Planning Reference:** 11/1619/01  
**Location of Archive:** Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter  
**Accession Number:** RAMM: 12/76  
**Site Code:** MTO 12

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology October 2012 on land to the south of the Met Office in Exeter, Devon. A total of four trenches was excavated.

Two ditches previously recorded as geophysical anomalies were identified but neither contained dating material. A geophysical anomaly in the eastern part of the site was shown to be modern. A small quantity of unstratified worked flint was recovered. No features relating to the anomalies in the western part of the site were identified.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In October 2012 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for Mr Paul Scoble on land to the South of the Met Office, Exeter, Devon (centred on NGR: SX 9596 9268; Fig. 1). The works were undertaken to address draft Condition (no. 12) attached to Planning Consent (application no. 11/1619/01) for mixed use development of the site.
- 1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with advice issued by Andrew Pye, Archaeology Officer, Exeter City Council and with a subsequent detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2012) and approved by Mr Pye. The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2008), the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991) and the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (EH 2006).

### ***The site***

- 1.3 The proposed development area encloses an area of approximately 4ha, and comprises a single field in use as arable farmland. It is bounded to the north by the Meteorological Office, to the east by Fitzroy Rd, to the south by the A3014 (formerly the A30) and to the west by the Exeter to Exmouth railway (Fig. 2). The site lies at approximately 40m AOD, with the ground level dropping downwards to the south and east.
- 1.4 The land was under arable cultivation but had lain fallow for a year prior to the evaluation.
- 1.5 The underlying solid geology of the area is mapped as Dawlish Sandstone Formation of the Permian period (BGS 2012). All four trenches contained red sand natural deposits.

### ***Archaeological background***

- 1.6 Geophysical survey and evaluation undertaken to the north of Hill Barton Farm identified a ring ditch, or henge, of probable prehistoric date. Three rectangular enclosures potentially of Iron Age to Roman date were identified in the northern and southern parts of the site. Features potentially associated with medieval to post-

medieval land-use were also identified (CA 2010). Geophysical survey of land to the north of the current site (and to the east of Hill Barton Farm) identified field system ditches (pers. comm. Andrew Pye).

- 1.7 The Roman road from Exeter to Dorchester runs immediately to the south of the site, on the line of the present A3015 (formerly the A30).
- 1.8 Hill Barton Farm, located to the north-west of the site, may have medieval origins and evaluation identified features with medieval to post-medieval land use (CA 2010).
- 1.10 A geophysical survey of the current site was undertaken in April 2010 and identified a positive linear anomaly (Fig. 2, A) which may be associated with the Exeter to Dorchester Roman road. A further positive curvilinear anomaly (B) in the north-western part of the site was interpreted as a cut feature of potential archaeological origin. Anomalies C and D correspond to field boundaries depicted on the 1844 Heavitree Parish Tithe Map. Anomalies E and F are also thought to represent field boundaries but do not correspond to features depicted by historic mapping. Anomaly G may represent an infilled feature and earthen bank and may be of archaeological origin, as may anomaly H (Stratascan 2010).

### **Archaeological objectives**

- 1.11 The objectives of the evaluation were to establish the character, quality, date and extent of any archaeological remains or deposits surviving within the site. This information will assist Exeter City Council in making an informed judgement on what (if any) further mitigation might be required.

### **Methodology**

- 1.12 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of four trenches each 25m long and 1.5m wide (Fig. 2). The trenches were targeted on anomalies revealed by the geophysical survey. Trench 2 was moved 2m to the north to avoid damaging roots of the nearby field boundary hedge. A contingency for the excavation of a further 180m<sup>2</sup> of trenching was not invoked. Trenches were set out on OS National Grid (NGR) coordinates using a Leica 1200 series SmartRover GPS and surveyed in accordance with CA Technical Manual 4 *Survey Manual* (2009).

- 1.13 All trenches were excavated by mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. Where archaeological deposits were encountered they were excavated by hand in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual* (2007).
- 1.14 Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with CA Technical Manual 2: *The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites* (2003) but no deposits were identified that required sampling. All artefacts recovered were processed in accordance with Technical Manual 3 *Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation* (2010).
- 1.15 The archive and artefacts from the evaluation are currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the artefacts will be deposited with Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter under accession number RAMM: 12/76 along with the site archive. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix C, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

## **2. RESULTS (FIGS 2-3)**

- 2.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts and finds are to be found in Appendices A and B respectively.
- 2.2 No features were present in Trench 1, and in Trench 2 the only feature was a machine-dug test pit. Ditches, predicted by geophysical survey, in Trenches 3 and 4, were present.
- 2.3 The soil profile in all trenches comprised an orange red sand overlain by a brown silty sand subsoil of between 0.1m and 0.5m thickness. This subsoil seemed to be the result of biological activity in the light sandy soils, although in Trench 3 a relic ploughsoil/colluvium was identified. The topsoil was a 0.3m thick, dark brown sandy silt.

**Trench 3 (Figs 2 & 3)**

- 2.3 The natural substrate was overlain by ploughsoil/colluvium 301 and the latter deposit was cut by ditch 303 (Fig. 3, Section AA). This ditch had sides that sloped at 45° and a rounded base. Its fill, 304, was a redeposited sand natural that contained no artefacts. Ditch 303 was cut from the base of the topsoil and cut colluvial layer 301.

**Trench 4 (Figs 2 & 3)**

- 2.4 Ditch 403 had sides sloping at 45° and a rounded V-shaped base (Fig. 3, Section BB). It was 0.5m deep. Its two fills, 404 and 405 were similar and comprised silts derived from geological deposits. Neither fill contained any finds.

**The Finds and Palaeoenvironmental Evidence**

- 2.5 Artefactual material is limited to a small group of worked flint recovered as unstratified finds. All eight pieces are of a similar, unpatinated grey coloured flint of good quality. The cortex, noted on three flakes, is worn and possibly suggestive of flint from secondary sources. Six of the eight pieces consist of secondary or tertiary flakes, without secondary working. There is a single possible scraper on a flake, with abrupt retouch to its fairly ragged distal edge. At least two flakes show characteristics (broad platform and clear point of percussion) of hard-hammer percussion. None of the removals or the core show evidence for platform preparation. The one, worked-out flake core is of multiple platform type.
- 2.6 High levels of breakage and/or edge damage were noted and are consistent with this being a re-deposited group, probably present in the ploughsoil over an extended period. As a re-deposited group and in the absence of diagnostic tools, dating is difficult. Characteristics of the flakes, together with the multi-platform core, would be most consistent with flintworking of the Late Neolithic or Bronze Age.

**3. DISCUSSION**

- 3.1 Neither of the ditches produced any dating evidence. After the heavy overnight rain that occurred during the evaluation c. 0.2m of sand was found to be redeposited into the excavated ditch 303, and it seems likely that features cut into the relatively loose sand substrata could fill rapidly, so reducing the chance of artefacts becoming incorporated into the fill. Although ditch 303 was parallel to the Roman road it was cut through a deposit of ploughsoil/colluvium and a later date may be probable,



although the possibility that it is of Roman date cannot be entirely discounted. Ditch 403 was in the position predicted by geophysical survey, which shows it to run at an acute angle to the Roman road, perhaps suggesting that these features are not contemporary with one another.

- 3.2 No cut features were identified which corresponded to curvilinear geophysical anomaly B in the north-western part of the site. The anomalies may have been of geological origin. Geophysical anomaly G was shown to be a machine-cut pit with unbraided sawn wood in the backfill.
- 3.3 The small quantity of worked flint, which was recovered from topsoil, showed no clustering and could represent repeated short-term occupation/visits.

#### 4. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Jamie Wright, assisted by Noel Boothroyd and Andy Loader. The report was written by Jamie Wright. The illustrations were prepared by Ian Atkins and the finds report was by Ed McSloy. The archive has been compiled by Jamie Wright, and prepared for deposition by James Johnson. The project was managed for CA by Laurent Coleman.

#### 5. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2012 Geology of Britain Viewer [http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer\\_google/googleviewer.html](http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html) accessed 12 October 2012

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2010 *Land North-East of Hill Barton Farm, Exeter; Heritage Statement.*

Stratascan 2010 *Land South of the Met Office, Exeter.* Geophysical Survey Report



**APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS**

## Trench 1

| No. | Type    | Description      | Length (m) | Width (m) | Depth (m) | Spot-date |
|-----|---------|------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 100 | Topsoil | Dark brown sand  |            |           | 0-0.3     |           |
| 101 | Subsoil | Brown sand       |            |           | 0.3-0.6   |           |
| 102 | Natural | Orangey red sand |            |           | >0.6      |           |

## Trench 2

| No. | Type    | Description  | Length (m) | Width (m) | Depth (m) | Spot-date |
|-----|---------|--|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 200 | Topsoil | Dark brown sand  |            |           | 0-0.3     |           |
| 201 | Subsoil | Brown sand   |            |           | 0.3-0.4   |           |
| 202 | Natural | Orangey red sand   |            |           | >0.4      |           |
| 203 | Fill    | Mixed clay/sand  | 1.5        | 1.6       | >1        |           |
| 204 | Cut     | Vertical sided, straight edged machine-cut pit, extending beyond the trench. | 1.5        | 1.6       | >1        |           |

## Trench 3

| No. | Type      | Description  | Length (m) | Width (m) | Depth (m)          | Spot-date |
|-----|-----------|--|------------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|
| 300 | Topsoil   | Dark brown sand                                    |            |           | 0.28               |           |
| 301 | Colluvium | Brown sand   |            |           | 0.28-0.63          |           |
| 302 | Natural   | Orangey red sand                                   |            |           | >0.63              |           |
| 303 | Cut       | Ditch, cut by trench at right-angle. Rounded base. | 1.5        | 1.2       | 0.75 below topsoil |           |
| 304 | Fill      | Brown sandy fill of 203. Became paler with depth.  | 1.5 exc.   | 1.2       | 0.75 below topsoil |           |

## Trench 4

| No. | Type    | Description  | Length (m) | Width (m) | Depth (m) | Spot-date |
|-----|---------|--|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 400 | Topsoil | Dark brown sand  |            |           | 0-0.3     |           |
| 401 | Subsoil | Brown sand   |            |           | 0.3-0.52  |           |
| 402 | Natural | Orangey red sand   |            |           | >0.5.2    |           |
| 403 | Cut     | Steep sides to a rounded base. Cut at 45° by trench.       | 1.9        | 0.95      | 0.48      |           |
| 404 | Fill    | Lower fill of 403. Orange brown sand, redeposited natural. | 1.7 exc.   | 0.7       | 0.28      |           |
| 405 | Fill    | Upper fill of 403. Dark orange brown sand                  | 1.7 exc.   | 0.95      | 0.2       |           |

**APPENDIX B: THE FINDS**

| Context | Description   | Count | Weight(g) | Spot-date |
|---------|---|-------|-----------|-----------|
| U/s.    | Worked flint: 1 x scraper; 1 x core; 6 x flakes/broken flakes | 8     | 109       | -         |

**APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM**

| <b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>   |   |                                 |
|--|---|---------------------------------|
| Project Name   | Land South of the Met Office, Exeter, Devon   |                                 |
| Short description  | <p>An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology October 2012 on land to the south of the Met Office in Exeter, Devon. A total of four trenches was excavated.</p> <p>Two ditches previously recorded as geophysical anomalies were identified but neither contained dating material. A geophysical anomaly in the eastern part of the site was shown to be modern. A small quantity of unstratified worked flint was recovered. No features relating to the anomalies in the western part of the site were identified.</p> |                                 |
| Project dates  | 10-11 October 2012  |                                 |
| Project type   | Evaluation  |                                 |
| Previous work  | Geophysical survey: Stratascan, 2010, <i>Geophysical Survey Report: Land South of the Met Office, Exeter</i> Job No. J2716  |                                 |
| Future work  | Unknown   |                                 |
| <b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>  |   |                                 |
| Site Location  | Land South of the Met Office, Exeter, Devon   |                                 |
| Study area (M <sup>2</sup> /ha)  | 4ha   |                                 |
| Site co-ordinates (8 Fig Grid Reference)   | SX 9596 9268  |                                 |
| <b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>  |   |                                 |
| Name of organisation   | Cotswold Archaeology  |                                 |
| Project Brief originator   | Exeter City Council   |                                 |
| Project Design (WSI) originator  | Cotswold Archaeology  |                                 |
| Project Manager  | Laurie Coleman  |                                 |
| Project Supervisor   | Jamie Wright  |                                 |
| <b>MONUMENT TYPE</b>   |   |                                 |
|  | None  |                                 |
| <b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS</b>   |   |                                 |
|  | None  |                                 |
| <b>PROJECT ARCHIVES</b>  |   |                                 |
|  | Intended final location of archive  | Contents                        |
| Physical   | Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter<br>RAMM: 12/76   | Flint                           |
| Paper  | Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter<br>RAMM: 12/76   | Trench sheets, Photo sheets etc |
| Digital  | Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter<br>RAMM: 12/76   | Survey data, digital photos etc |
| <b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>  |   |                                 |
| CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2012 <i>Land South of the Met Office, Exeter, Devon: Archaeological Evaluation</i> . CA typescript report <b>12295</b> |   |                                 |



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**PROJECT TITLE**

**Land to the South of the Met Office  
 Exeter, Devon**

**FIGURE TITLE**

**Site location plan**

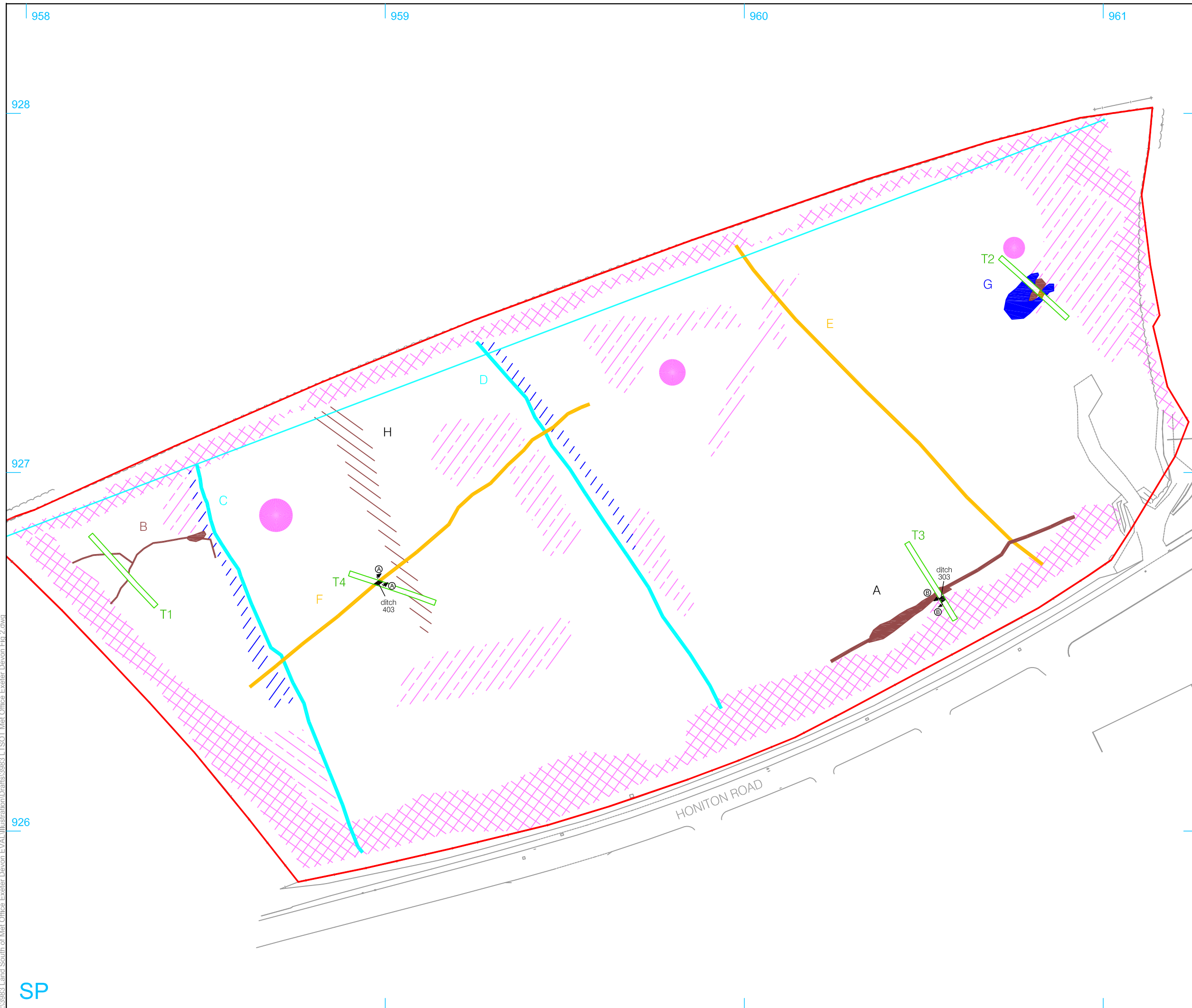


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PROJECT NO. 3983 DATE 23-10-2012  
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 APPROVED BY PJM SCALE@A4 1:25,000

**FIGURE NO.**

**1**



- site
- evaluation trench
- archaeological feature
- modern feature

Geophysical Survey data provided by Stratascan, April 2010

| KEY                                    |   |
|--|---|
| <b>A</b>                               | Anomaly identification letter   |
| <span style="color: magenta;">●</span> | Positive anomaly with associated negative response - ferrous object                   |
| <span style="color: brown;">—</span>   | Positive linear anomaly - cut feature of possible archaeological origin               |
| <span style="color: cyan;">—</span>    | Linear anomaly - probably related to historic field boundary as shown on 1844 mapping |
| <span style="color: gold;">—</span>    | Weak linear anomaly - possibly related to historic field boundary                     |
| <span style="color: brown;">■</span>   | Positive area anomaly - cut feature of possible archaeological origin                 |
| <span style="color: blue;">■</span>    | Negative area anomaly - bank or earthwork of possible archaeological origin           |
| <span style="color: brown;">▨</span>   | Weak positive area anomaly  |
| <span style="color: blue;">▨</span>    | Weak negative area anomaly  |
| <span style="color: magenta;">▨</span> | Magnetic disturbance associated with nearby service or field boundary                 |
| <span style="color: magenta;">▨</span> | Magnetic disturbance associated with disturbed ground or possible magnetic debris     |



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PROJECT TITLE  
**Land to the South of the Met Office Exeter, Devon**

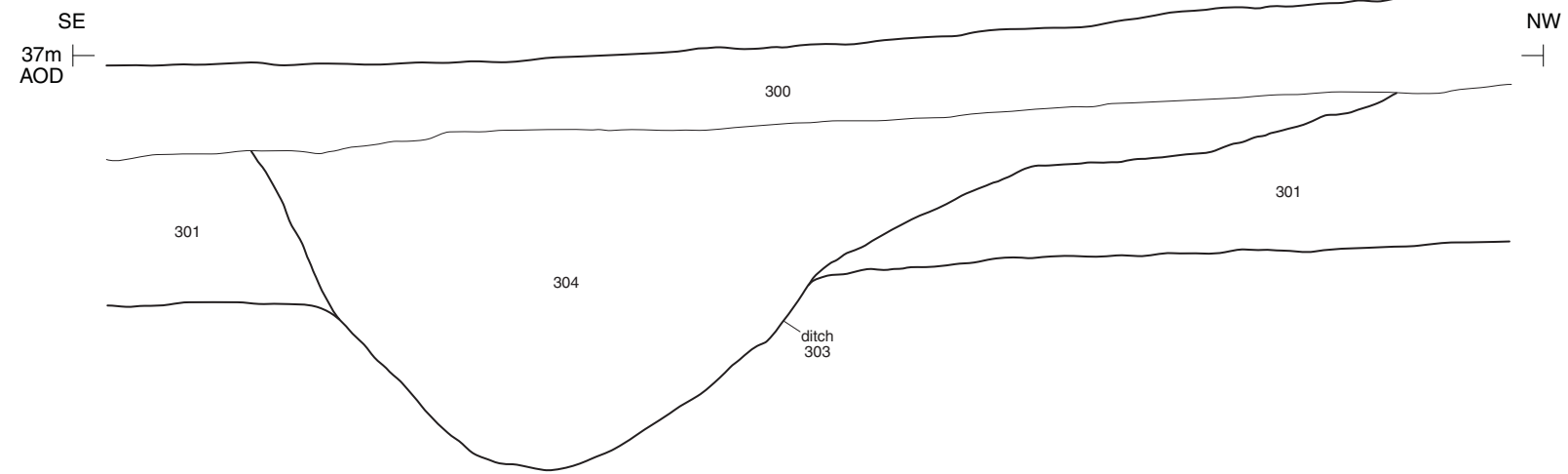
FIGURE TITLE  
**Trench location plan showing archaeological features and geophysical survey results**

|             |      |          |            |            |          |
|-------------|------|----------|------------|------------|----------|
| PROJECT NO. | 3983 | DATE     | 23-10-2012 | FIGURE NO. |          |
| DRAWN BY    | JA   | REVISION | 00         |            |          |
| APPROVED BY | PJM  | SCALE@A3 | 1:1000     |            | <b>2</b> |

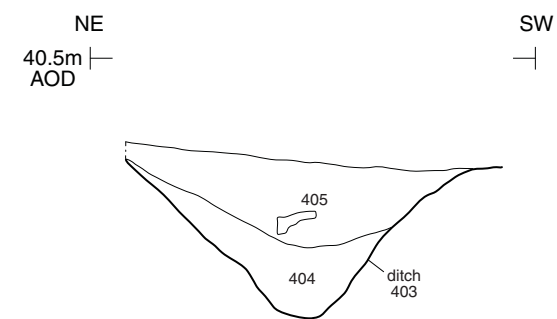
P:\3983 Land South of Met Office Exeter Devon EVAL\Illustration\Drafts\3983 LT\TOT Met Office Exeter Devon Fig 2.dwg

SP

Section AA



Section BB



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PROJECT TITLE  
Land to the South of the Met Office  
Exeter, Devon

FIGURE TITLE  
Sections