

St James Park
Exeter
Devon

Archaeological Watching Brief



for
Nexus Heritage

on behalf of
Yelverton Properties
Developments Ltd

CA Project: 880184
CA Report: 18248

June 2018



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Exeter
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A	27 June 2018	Jerry Austin	Paul Clarke	Internal review	–	Derek Evans
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SUMMARY

Project Name:	St James Park
Location:	Stadium Way, Exeter
NGR:	292740 093454
Type:	Watching Brief
Date:	September 2017 –April 2018
Planning Reference:	15/1283/03
Location of Archive:	N/A
Site Code:	STJP17

Between September 2017 and April 2018, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief at St James Park football stadium, Stadium Way, Exeter. The watching brief was undertaken in the south-western corner of the site, where a medieval well and conduit are known to have been located.

The watching brief identified no archaeological remains. The observed groundworks did not penetrate to the bottom of a deep redeposited natural fill layer. This material presumably derives from truncation/levelling works undertaken to create the flat football pitch, and was dumped in the south-western corner of the site in order to raise the ground level in this area. This redeposited natural may protect the remains of the medieval well and conduit, which are believed to lie some 10m–12m below the pre-development ground level.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Between September 2017 and April 2018, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at St James Park football stadium, Stadium Way, Exeter (centred at NGR: 292740 093454; Fig. 1). This watching brief was undertaken for Nexus Heritage, on behalf of Yelverton Properties Developments Ltd.

1.2 Exeter City Council has granted planning permission (planning ref: 15/1283/03) for the demolition of the existing buildings at the site and the construction of new stadium facilities and student accommodation, as well as associated landscaping, car parking, internal roads, etc. Condition 6 of this planning permission requires a programme of archaeological work.

1.3 The scope of the required programme of archaeological work was defined subsequently in discussions with Andrew Pye (Principal Project Manager (Heritage), Exeter City Council) as:

- an archaeological watching brief during development groundworks; and
- a building recording survey, to comprise a photographic record of the Stagecoach Family Stand structure prior to demolition.

1.4 This report presents the results of the archaeological watching brief. A separate report has been prepared on the building recording survey (CA 2017a).

1.5 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Archaeological Works (WSAW) prepared by Cotswold Archaeology (2017b) and approved by Andrew Pye on behalf of Exeter City Council. The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014), *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) PPN 3: Archaeological Excavation* (Historic England 2015) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (Historic England 2015).

The site

1.6 The site lies on the north-eastern outskirts of Exeter city centre (Fig. 1). It is bounded by Old Tiverton Road and residential plots to the south-east, St James

Road to the south-west, a railway line to the north-west and industrial units to the north-east. The site is currently occupied by the St James Park football stadium and associated parking areas, plus some industrial units behind Old Tiverton Road.

- 1.7 The site lies at approximately 49m AOD, with ground level dropping in the south-west along St James Road and to the north-west along Well Street.
- 1.8 The solid geology of the site is mapped as Whipton Formation sandstone of the Permian Period. This is overlain in the south-eastern part of the site by River Terrace sands and gravels. No superficial deposits are recorded in the remainder of the site (BGS 2018).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The proposed development site has been the subject of a desk-based heritage statement (Nexus Heritage 2015). The following text presents a brief summary of data from this source, which should be referred to for a full archaeological background.

Prehistoric (pre-AD 43), Roman (AD 43–AD 410), early medieval (AD 410–1066)

- 2.2 The heritage statement recorded no prehistoric, Roman or early medieval sites or finds within a 300m radius of the proposed development site.

Medieval (1066–1539)

- 2.3 It is probable that the area of the proposed development site formed part of the agricultural hinterland to Exeter during the medieval period. Several medieval wells were created in the vicinity of the site to exploit near-surface water sources; these wells were connected by conduits to Exeter city. Of these, Salter's Well had a supply located under what is now the south-western corner of the St James Park football pitch; this is believed to have lain some 5m below the contemporary ground level, and 10m–12m below current ground level. There is no evidence to suggest that there were any buildings or other features on the proposed development site during the medieval period.



Post-medieval (1540–1800)

- 2.4 Historic cartographic sources suggest the possibility that the site may have been used for gardens and allotments during the late medieval period/early post-medieval periods.
- 2.5 St Anne's Chapel lay to the north-west of the proposed development site. During the Civil War, this chapel was converted into a fort or redoubt which was held successively by the Royalists and Parliamentary forces, the latter capturing the fort in January 1646. There is the possibility that associated siege works may have extended into the proposed development site. A previous archaeological evaluation adjacent to the present watching brief site (CA 2018) exposed a large post medieval ditch; this may have formed part of the siege works, although no definitive conclusion could be drawn.
- 2.6 St James' Church was constructed to the immediate south of the proposed development site in the 1830s. An attendant school was built to the north-east of the church in 1845; a second school was built to the north-west of the church in 1906–7. The church was subsequently extended and rebuilt, and was destroyed by incendiary bombs during the Blitz of 1942. The two school buildings still stand, although neither is still in use as a school; they are currently known as the Fountain Centre and The Park, and both are occupied and used by the football club.
- 2.7 The land was leased to the Exeter Football and Athletic Company Ltd in 1908, and the development of the football stadium began. A small wooden grandstand with changing facilities was quickly erected on the Well Street side of the pitch; this was the precursor to the present Stagecoach Family Stand. The pitch was extended and further stands were constructed in the early 20th century. In 1926, the Well Street Grandstand was destroyed by fire. It was replaced later that year by the Family Stand building, which underwent various improvements and modernisations in the later 20th century, finally being demolished in 2017. CA undertook a historic building recording survey of the Family Stand prior to demolition (CA 2017a).

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 As defined in the WSAW (CA 2017b), the objectives of the archaeological watching brief were to:

- monitor groundworks, and identify, investigate and record any significant buried archaeological deposits thus revealed; and
- produce an integrated project archive and a report setting out the project results and the archaeological conclusions that can be drawn from the recorded data.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSAW (CA 2018). An archaeologist was present during intrusive groundworks in the south-western corner of the site only, which was identified as the location of a medieval well and conduit (see *Archaeological background*, above). The monitored groundworks are shown on Fig. 2 (Trenches 1–5) and comprised areas ground reduction/excavation.

4.2 Written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*.

4.3 A summary of information from this project, as set out in Appendix B, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain, along with an uploaded copy of this report.

4.4 As the watching brief results are minor and no significant artefacts were found, the archive will in effect comprise the OASIS entry and no further watching brief archive will be prepared or deposited.

5. RESULTS

5.1 This section provides an overview of the watching brief results. Detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are given in Appendix A. Figs. 3–7 present a series of photographs of the monitored groundworks.

5.2 The five monitored excavation areas (Fig. 2, T1–T5) were excavated to depths of 0.3m–2m below the present ground level (bpgl), as follows:

- T1: 0.3m bpgl
- T2: 1.2m bpgl
- T3: 1.7m bpgl



- T4: 2m bpgl
- T5: 0.6m bpgl

- 5.3 The natural substrate was not exposed in any of the trenches. The earliest-encountered deposit was a reddish brown sandy silt redeposited natural layer, which was exposed in T1–T3 and T5 at a depth of 0.3m–0.7m bpgl, and in T4 at 1.35m bpgl. This redeposited natural was sealed by modern made ground layers/demolition rubble.
- 5.4 The extant site boundary/retaining wall (302/500) ran along the south-western edges of T3 and T5. A concrete-built drain (403) was present in T4. A modern manhole (502) was present in T5.
- 5.5 No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed and, despite visual scanning of spoil, no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.

6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1 The watching brief identified no archaeological remains within the area of observed groundworks. This is presumably because the groundworks did not penetrate to the bottom of the deep redeposited natural fill layer recorded in this area.
- 6.2 The redeposited natural layer presumably derives from truncation/levelling works undertaken to create the flat football pitch, with this material having been dumped in the south-western corner of the site in order to raise the ground level in this area. The redeposited natural may protect the remains of the medieval well and conduit (see *Archaeological background*, above), which are believed to lie some 10m–12m below the pre-development ground level.

7. CA PROJECT TEAM

- 7.1 Fieldwork was undertaken by Jerry Austin and Edoardo Vigo. This report was written by Jerry Austin. The report illustrations were prepared by Esther Escudero. The project was managed for CA by Derek Evans.

8. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2018 *Geology of Britain Viewer* <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> Accessed 12 June 2018

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2017a *St James Park, Stagecoach Family Stand, Exeter: Historic Building Recording* CA typescript report **17513**

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2017b *St James Park, Exeter: Written Scheme of Archaeological Work for an Archaeological Watching Brief and Building Recording Survey.*

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2018 *St James Park, Exeter (Student Accommodation): Archaeological Evaluation* CA typescript report **18065**

Nexus Heritage 2015 *St James Park Development New Stadia and Student Accommodation: Heritage Statement* Report No. **3244.R01 Rev D**



APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Context Interpretation	Description	Depth/ thickness (m)
1	100	Layer	Made ground	Dark grey hardcore and demolition rubble	0.3
1	101	Layer	Natural substrate	Brownish red sandy silt with rare subangular stones	-
2	200	Layer	Made ground	Very dark grey sandy silt with common demolition rubble	0.7
2	201	Layer	Natural substrate	Brownish red sandy silt with rare subangular stones	-
3	300	Layer	Made ground	Dark grey hardcore	0.3
3	301	Layer	Natural substrate	Brownish red sandy silt with rare subangular stones	-
3	302	Structure	Retaining wall	Limestone blocks in stretcher bond, filled with limestone rubble on interior	1.7+
4	400	Layer	Made ground	Dark brown silty clay with abundant brick rubble	0.7
4	401	Layer	Made ground	Dark reddish brown silty clay with modern inclusions	0.65
4	402	Layer	Made ground	Dark red clay with wood inclusions	0.6+
4	403	Structure	Drain	Cement-built	-
5	500	Structure	Retaining wall	Limestone blocks in stretcher bond, filled with limestone rubble on interior	0.6+
5	501	Layer	Made ground	Mid brown silty clay with abundant modern demolition rubble	0.6+
5	502	Structure	Manhole	Rectangular form, bricks laid in stretcher bond	0.6+
5	503	Layer	Made ground	Redeposited red clay	-

APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

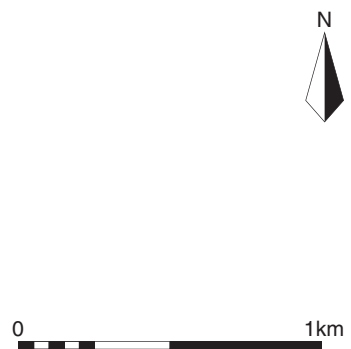
PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	St. James Park, Exeter, Devon: Archaeological Watching Brief	
Short description	<p>Between September 2017 and April 2018, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief at St James Park football stadium, Stadium Way, Exeter. The watching brief was undertaken in the south-western corner of the site, where a medieval well and conduit are known to have been located.</p> <p>The watching brief identified no archaeological remains. The observed groundworks did not penetrate to the bottom of a deep redeposited natural fill layer. This material presumably derives from truncation/levelling works undertaken to create the flat football pitch, and was dumped in the south-western corner of the site in order to raise the ground level in this area. This redeposited natural may protect the remains of the medieval well and conduit, which are believed to lie some 10m–12m below the pre-development ground level.</p>	
Project dates	September 2017–April 2018	
Project type	Watching brief	
Previous work	Nexus Heritage 2015: Desk-Based Assessment Cotswold Archaeology 2017: Historic Building Recording	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	St. James Park, Stadium Way, Exeter	
Study area (m ² /ha)		
Site co-ordinates	NGR 292740 093454	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	Andrew Pye, Principal Project Manager (Heritage), Exeter City Council	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Derek Evans	
Project Supervisor	Jerry Austin	
MONUMENT TYPE	None	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	N/A	N/A
Paper	N/A	N/A
Digital	N/A	N/A
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Cotswold Archaeology 2018 <i>St. James Park, Exeter, Devon: Archaeological Watching Brief</i> . CA typescript report 18248		

APPENDIX C: HER FORM

Follows

Exeter City Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District:	National Grid Reference: 292740 093454	Number:
Subject: St James Park, Stadium Way, Exeter: archaeological watching brief		Photo attached: N/A
Planning permission no: 15/1283/03	Recipient museum: N/A	
OASIS ID:	Museum Accession no: N/A	
Contractor's reference number/code: Site code: STJP18; project number 880184	Date fieldwork undertaken: September 2017 to April 2018	
<p>Between September 2017 and April 2018, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief at St James Park football stadium, Stadium Way, Exeter. The watching brief was undertaken in the south-western corner of the site, where a medieval well and conduit are known to have been located.</p> <p>The watching brief identified no archaeological remains. The observed groundworks did not penetrate to the bottom of a deep redeposited natural fill layer. This material presumably derives from truncation/levelling works undertaken to create the flat football pitch, and was dumped in the south-western corner of the site in order to raise the ground level in this area. This redeposited natural may protect the remains of the medieval well and conduit, which are believed to lie some 10m–12m below the pre-development ground level.</p>		
Recorder: Jerry Austin, Cotswold Archaeology		Date sent to HER:



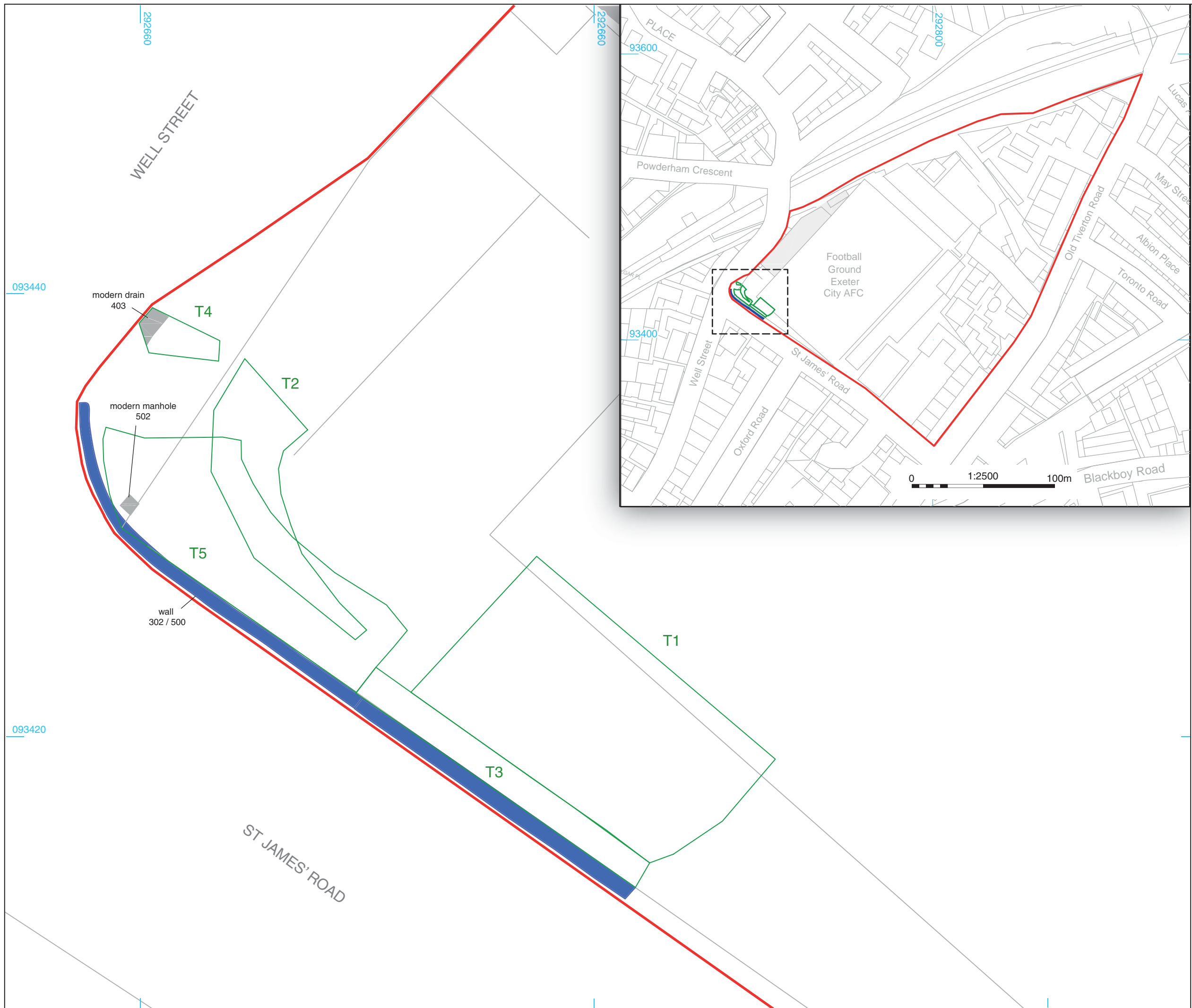

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PROJECT TITLE
 St James Park, Exeter, Devon

FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan

DRAWN BY	EE	PROJECT NO.	880184	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	22/06/2018	
APPROVED BY	DE	SCALE	@A4 1:25,000	1

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Ordnance Survey 0100031673



- Site boundary
- Observed groundworks
- Modern feature
- Structure



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PROJECT TITLE
St James Park, Exeter, Devon

FIGURE TITLE
The site, showing location of monitored groundworks

DRAWN BY	EE	PROJECT NO.	880184	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	22/06/2018	2
APPROVED BY	DE	SCALE @A3	1:150 / 1:2,500	



3

Trench 1, looking north-west (1m scales)



4

Trench 2, looking north-west (1m scales)



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PROJECT TITLE

St James Park, Exeter, Devon

FIGURE TITLE

Photographs

DRAWN BY	EE	PROJECT NO.	880184	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	22/06/2018	3 & 4
APPROVED BY	DE	SCALE@A4	NA	



5

Retaining wall 302 in Trench 3, looking south-west (1m scale)



6

Trench 4, looking north-west (1m scale)



7

Trench 5, looking north-west (1m scale)


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PROJECT TITLE
St James Park, Exeter, Devon

FIGURE TITLE
Photographs

DRAWN BY	EE	PROJECT NO.	880184	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	22/06/2018	5 - 7
APPROVED BY	DE	SCALE @A3	NA	

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