

# Devon & Cornwall Police Headquarters Middlemoor, Exeter Devon

*Archaeological Evaluation*



for  
Devon and Cornwall Police

CA Project: 880196  
CA Report: 17563

December 2017



Devon & Cornwall Police Headquarters  
Middlemoor, Exeter  
Devon

Archaeological Evaluation

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A	5 December 2017	Christina Tapply	Paul Clarke	Internal review	–	Derek Evans

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## SUMMARY

<b>Project Name:</b>	Devon & Cornwall Police Headquarters
<b>Location:</b>	Middlemoor, Exeter, Devon
<b>NGR:</b>	95909 91959
<b>Type:</b>	Evaluation
<b>Date:</b>	18–21 September 2017
<b>Planning Reference:</b>	13/4073/03
<b>Location of Archive:</b>	N/A
<b>Accession Number:</b>	N/A
<b>Site Code:</b>	PHM17

In September 2017, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation at the Devon & Cornwall Police Headquarters, Middlemoor, Exeter. A total of eight trenches was excavated within the site.

The evaluation recorded a single undated pit. There was no evidence that activity associated with known prehistoric and Roman activity in the area extended into the evaluation site.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In September 2017, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for Devon & Cornwall Police at the Devon & Cornwall Police Headquarters, Middlemoor, Exeter (centred on NGR: 95909 91959; Fig. 1).
- 1.2 Exeter City Council (ECC) has granted planning permission (planning ref: 13/4073/03) for a Criminal Justice Centre and Police Hub (with associated football pitch and car parking) in the southern part of the site, and a Class A1 Supermarket (with associated petrol filling station and car parking) in the north-eastern part of the site. Condition 8 of this planning permission requires a programme of archaeological investigation.
- 1.3 The scope of this archaeological evaluation was defined in consultation with Andrew Pye, the ECC Principal Project Manager (Heritage). The evaluation relates to the southern part of the site only (the Criminal Justice Centre, Police Hub, football pitch and car parking). The north-eastern (supermarket) element of the proposed development will be subject to a separate scheme of archaeological works.
- 1.4 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Archaeological Work (WSAW) produced by CA (2017) and approved by Andrew Pye. The evaluation was also in line with *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (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**

- 1.5 The proposed development site lies within the eastern part of the Exeter urban area. The proposed Criminal Justice Centre/Police Hub site is approximately 4.3ha in extent and mainly comprises open grassland. A football pitch is present in the approximate centre of the site and a hardcore-surfaced car park lies in the site's north-eastern corner.

- 1.6 The site is bounded by the current police headquarters buildings to the north, by Sidmouth Road to the south and south-west, by a fire station to the south-east and by the Exeter to Exmouth branch railway to the east.
- 1.7 The site is located on a ridge of land, overlooking the Clyst valley to the east, which extends c. 4km from Countess Wear (to the south of the site) to Monkerton (to the north). The site slopes from c. 50m AOD at its western edge down to c. 35m AOD along its eastern side. Beyond the railway line which forms the eastern site boundary, the ground slopes steeply into the adjacent industrial estate, which lies at between c. 25m and c. 10m AOD, and where buildings have been terraced into the ridge.
- 1.8 The solid geology of the site is mapped as Dawlish Formation sandstone of the Permian Period. There is no drift or superficial geology recorded (BGS 2017).

## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The proposed development site has been the subject of a desk-based archaeological assessment (Exeter Archaeology 2004) and a geophysical survey (Stratascan 2005). The following section presents a brief summary of data from these sources, which should be referred to for a full archaeological background.
- 2.2 The site lies within an area of high archaeological potential, where previous investigations have unearthed concentrations of prehistoric, Roman and later features on the ridge overlooking the River Clyst.
- 2.3 Of particular interest is the wealth of prehistoric features that have been discovered to the south of the evaluation site during previous works in the Digby area. These show that the landscape was exploited continuously from the Mesolithic period until the later Iron Age. An Iron Age ditch has been recorded north of Quarry Lane, to the immediate south-west of the evaluation site.
- 2.4 The Roman period is less well represented, but there are indications of a Roman farming landscape in the form of boundary ditches and trackways, and a Roman farmstead was recorded nearby during the construction of the M5 motorway. Additionally, Honiton Road (the A30; c. 520m north of the evaluation site) and

Quarry Lane (c. 100m south of the evaluation site) may preserve the alignments of Roman roads. Part of an undated (but post-Iron Age) north-east/south-west aligned metalled road/trackway has also been recorded north of Quarry Lane, to the immediate south-west of the evaluation site.

2.5 Documentary records suggest that the area was settled around the 12th or 13th centuries. However, the evaluation site itself seems to have remained undeveloped until the 20th century. The Sowton Tithe Map (1837) depicts the site as divided into three fields.

2.6 The geophysical survey recorded a small number of linear anomalies. At least one of these appears to relate to a former field boundary visible on the Sowton Tithe Map.

### **3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

3.1 As defined the WSAW (CA 2017), the objectives of the programme of archaeological investigation were to:

- record and analyse any evidence of past settlement or other land use prior to destruction by the new development;
- recover and analyse any artefactual evidence to date any archaeological remains that may be identified;
- sample and analyse environmental remains to create a better understanding of past land use and economy;
- verify the extent and nature of geophysical anomalies; and
- archive, analyse, report on and publish the archaeological results at a level appropriate to their significance.

### **4. METHODOLOGY**

4.1 The evaluation fieldwork comprised the excavation of eight trenches (Fig. 2). Five trenches were 50m long; three trenches were 30m long. All trenches were 1.8m in width. The trenches were located to provide a representative sample of the site. Several of the trenches were relocated from the positions specified in the WSAW

(CA 2017) in order to avoid live services, fences and areas of hardstanding/carparking.

- 4.2 All trenches were excavated by a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the natural substrate. Records were maintained in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.3 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*. No deposits were identified which required sampling.
- 4.4 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. This summary will include an uploaded copy of this report, which will appear on the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) once verified.
- 4.5 As no significant archaeological features were identified during the archaeological works and no artefactual material was recovered, a project archive will not be prepared. The results of the fieldwork will be held by ECC in the form of this report and the OASIS entry.

## 5. RESULTS

- 5.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results. Detailed summaries of recorded contexts can be found in Appendix A.
- 5.2 The natural substrate was exposed at a depth of 0.6m–0.9m below the present ground level. It was sealed by 0.2m–0.7m of silty sand subsoil, which was covered in turn by 0.2m–0.6m of topsoil.
- 5.3 Sub-circular pit 505 (Fig. 3) was identified at the north-eastern end of T5. This pit was cut into the natural substrate and sealed by the subsoil. It measured 0.42m in width and 0.18m in depth, and contained two undated fills (504 and 503).



## 6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1 The evaluation recorded a single undated pit. There was no evidence that activity associated with the known prehistoric and Roman activity in the area (see *Archaeological background*, above) extended into the evaluation site.

## 7. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Christina Tapply, assisted by Parris Stubbings and Victoria Parsons. This report was written by Christina Tapply. The illustrations were prepared by Charlotte Patman. The archive has been compiled and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Derek Evans.

## 8. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2017 *Geology of Britain Viewer*  
<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>

Accessed 16 May 2017

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2017 *Police Headquarters, Middlemoor, Exeter, Devon: Written Scheme of Archaeological Work for a Programme of Archaeological Investigation*

Exeter Archaeology 2004 *Archaeological Assessment of Police Headquarters, Middlemoor, Exeter* EA report no. **04.19**

Stratascan 2005 *Police HQ, Middlemoor, Exeter: Geophysical Survey Report*  
Stratascan ref. **J1970**

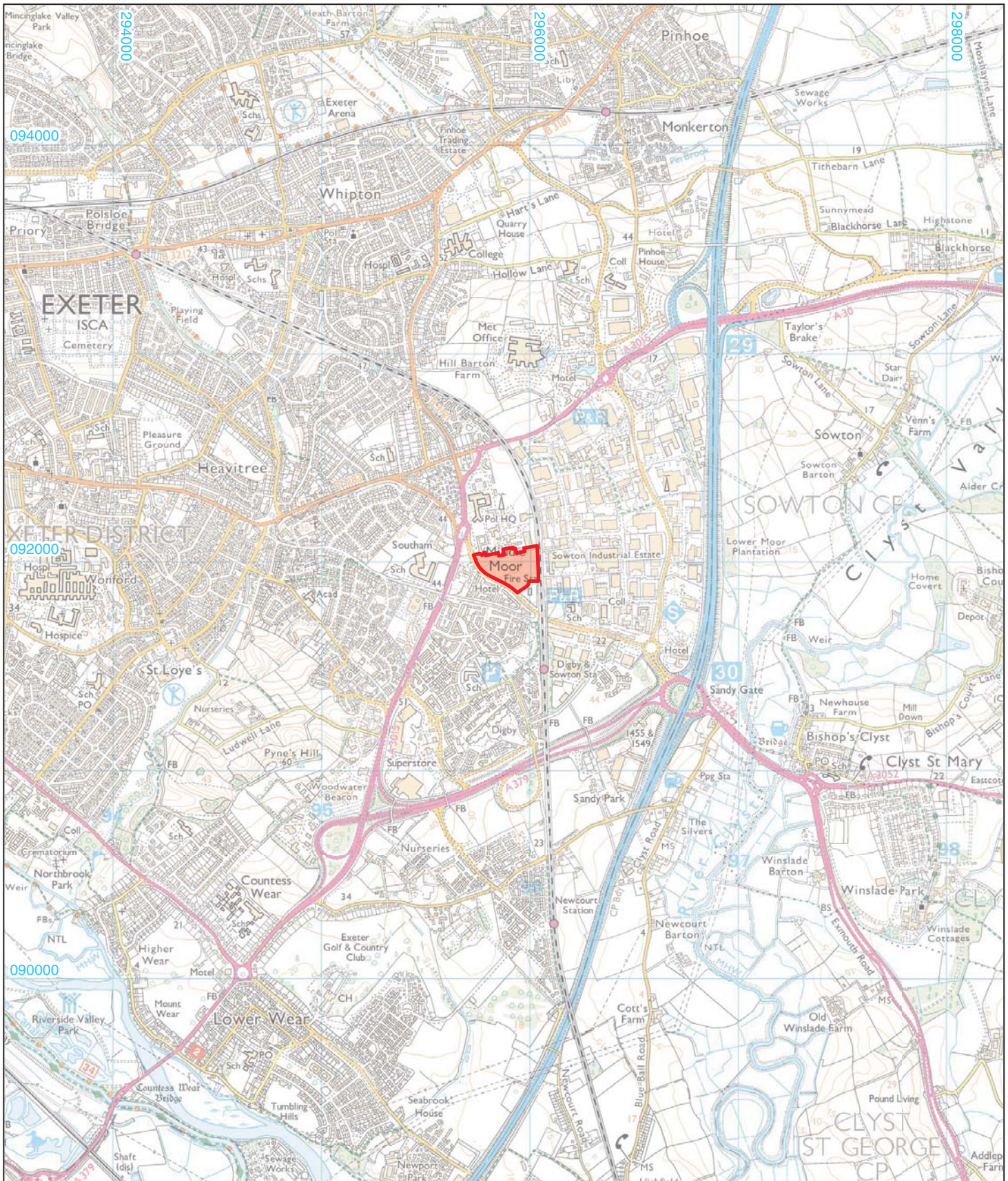


## APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	W (m)	D (m)
1	100	Layer		Topsoil	Mid brown silty sand		0.4
1	101	Layer		Subsoil	Light to mid brown silty sand		0.3
1	102	Geology		Natural	Mid orange silty sand with pale patches		0.7
2	200	Layer		Topsoil	Mid brown silty sand		0.3
2	201	Layer		Subsoil	Light to mid brown silty sand		0.3
2	202	Geology		Natural	Mid pinkish orange silty sand		0.8
3	300	Layer		Topsoil	Mid brown silty sand		0.2
3	301	Layer		Subsoil	Light to mid brown silty sand		0.4
3	302	Geology		Natural	Mid orange silty sand with pale patches		0.7
4	400	Layer		Topsoil	Mid brown silty sand		0.5
4	401	Layer		Subsoil	Light to mid brown silty sand		0.2
4	402	Geology		Natural	Mid orange silty sand with pale patches		0.7
5	500	Layer		Topsoil	Mid brown silty sand		0.4
5	501	Layer		Subsoil	Light to mid brown silty sand		0.3
5	502	Geology		Natural	Mid pinkish orange silty sand		0.8
5	503	Fill	505	Pit fill	Light brownish grey silty sand		0.14
5	504	Fill	505	Pit fill	Light brownish orange silty sand		0.04
5	505	Cut		Cut	Sub circular pit	0.42	0.18
6	600	Layer		Topsoil	Mid brown silty sand		0.3
6	601	Layer		Subsoil	Light to mid brown silty sand		0.3
6	602	Geology		Natural	Mid orange silty sand with pale patches		0.6
7	700	Layer		Topsoil	Mid brown silty sand		0.6
7	701	Layer		Subsoil	Light to mid brown silty sand		0.2
7	702	Geology		Natural	Mid orange silty sand with pale patches		0.8
8	800	Layer		Topsoil	Mid brown silty sand		0.5
8	801	Layer		Subsoil	Light to mid brown silty sand		0.2
8	802	Geology		Natural	Mid orange silty sand with pale patches		0.7

## APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project name	Devon & Cornwall Police Headquarters, Middlemoor, Exeter, Devon	
Short description	<p>In September 2017, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation at the Devon &amp; Cornwall Police Headquarters, Middlemoor, Exeter. A total of eight trenches was excavated within the site.</p> <p>The evaluation recorded a single undated pit. There was no evidence that activity associated with known prehistoric and Roman activity in the area extended into the evaluation site.</p>	
Project dates	18–21 September 2017	
Project type	Field Evaluation	
Previous work	Desk-based archaeological assessment (Exeter Archaeology 2004); geophysical survey (Stratascan 2005)	
Future work	Unknown	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
Site location	Devon & Cornwall Police Headquarters, Middlemoor, Exeter, Devon	
Study area (M <sup>2</sup> /ha)		
Site co-ordinates	95909 91959	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	N/A	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Derek Evans	
Project Supervisor	Christina Tapply	
<b>MONUMENT TYPE</b>		
	None	
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS</b>		
	None	
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVES</b>		
	Intended final location of archive	Contents
Physical	N/A	N/A
Paper	N/A	N/A
Digital	Archeology Data Service (ADS)	Digital photos
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
Cotswold Archaeology 2017 <i>Police Headquarters, Middlemoor, Exeter, Devon: Archaeological Evaluation CA typescript report 17563</i>		



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**Cotswold Archaeology**

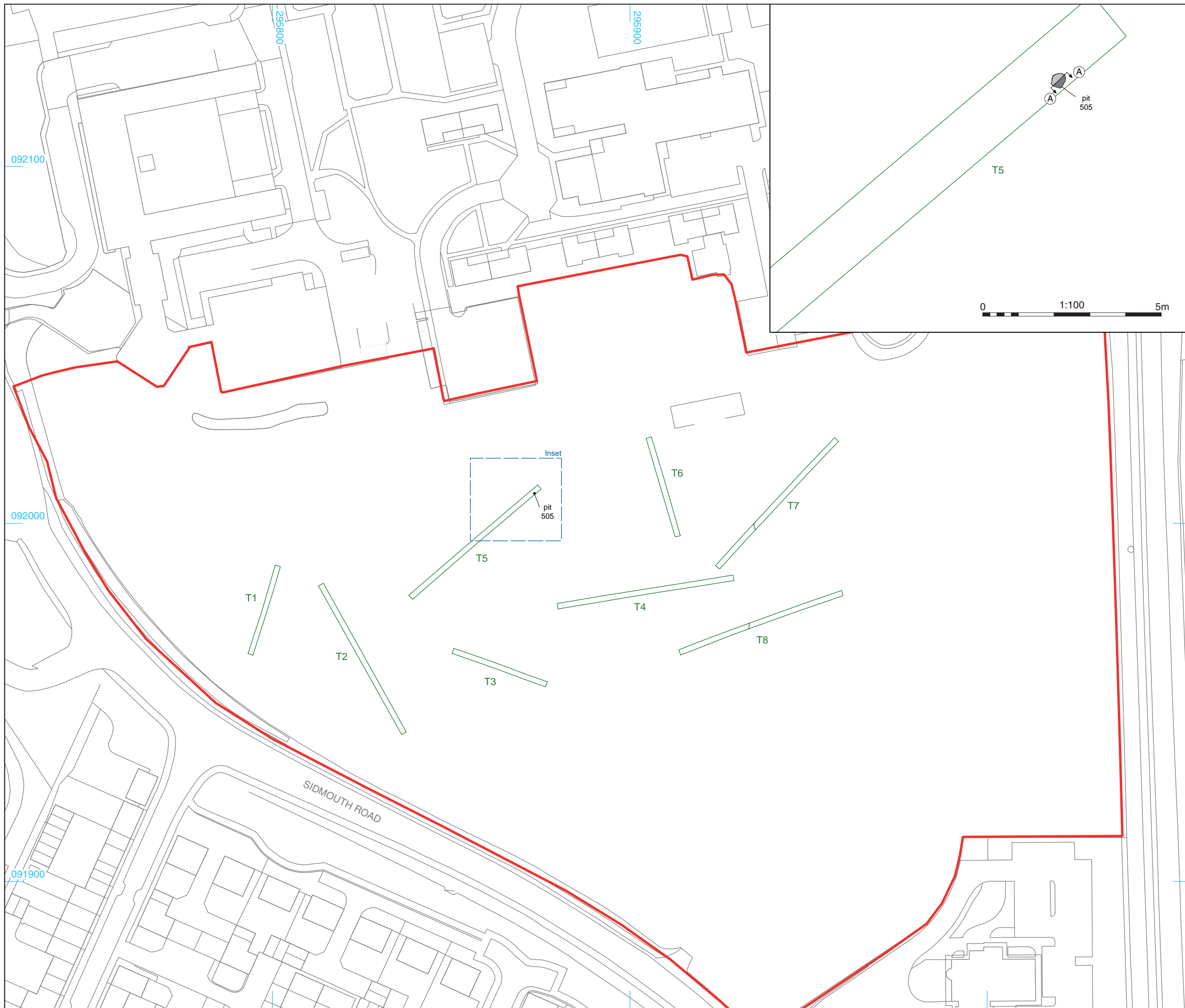
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**PROJECT TITLE**  
 Devon & Cornwall Police Headquarters,  
 Middlemoor, Exeter, Devon

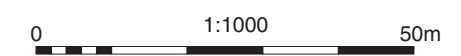
**FIGURE TITLE**  
 Site location plan

<b>DRAWN BY</b> CP	<b>PROJECT NO.</b> 880196	<b>FIGURE NO.</b>
<b>CHECKED BY</b> DJB	<b>DATE</b> 06/10/2017	
<b>APPROVED BY</b> DE	<b>SCALE@A4</b> 1:25,000	<b>1</b>

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- site boundary
- evaluation trench
- archaeological feature (excavated/unexcavated)
- modern
- A A section location



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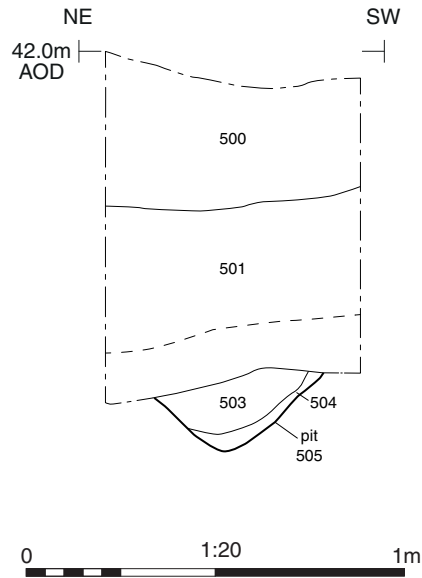
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PROJECT TITLE  
**Devon & Cornwall Police Headquarters,  
 Middlemoor, Exeter, Devon**

FIGURE TITLE  
**Trench location plan, showing  
 archaeological feature**

DRAWN BY CP	PROJECT NO. 880196	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY DJB	DATE 06/10/2017	<b>2</b>
APPROVED BY DE	SCALE@A3 1:1,000 & 1:100	

Section AA



North-west facing section of pit 505 (scale 0.3m)



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PROJECT TITLE

Devon & Cornwall Police Headquarters,  
 Middlemoor, Exeter, Devon

FIGURE TITLE

**Section and photograph**

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 CHECKED BY DJB DATE 06/10/2017  
 APPROVED BY DE SCALE@A4 1:20

FIGURE NO.

**3**

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