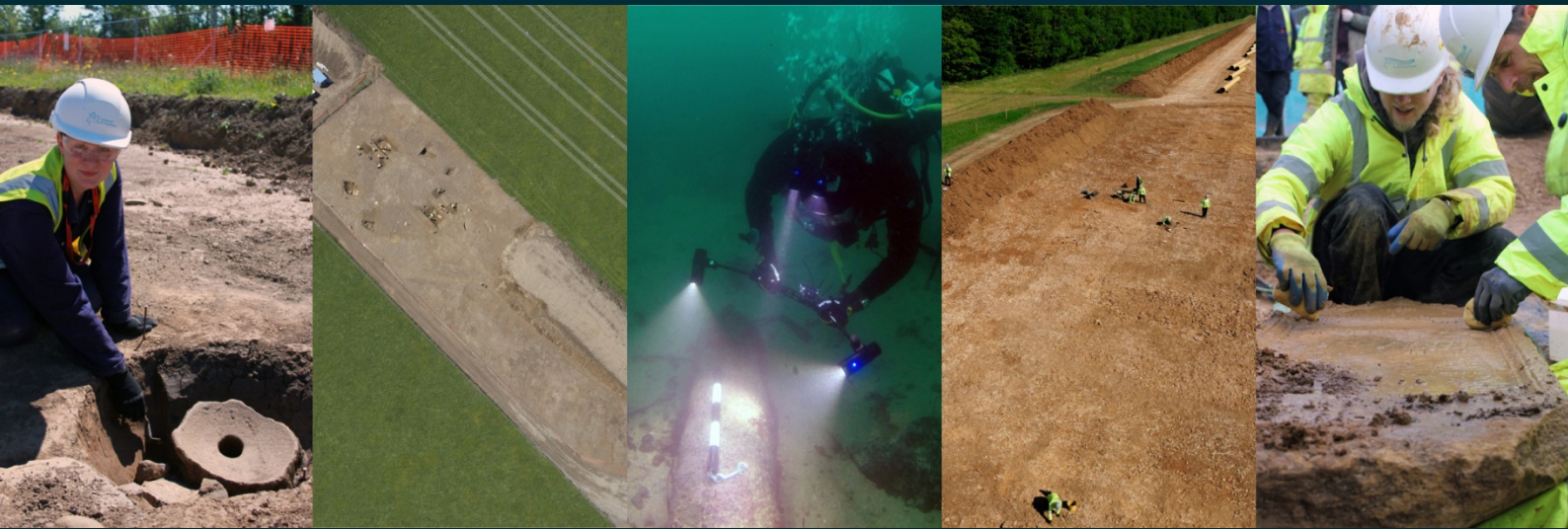


# Land South of the A379 (Residential Site) Exeter

*Archaeological Evaluation*



for  
IKEA Ltd

CA Project: 880150  
CA Report: 16520

October 2016



# Land South of the A379 (Residential Site) Exeter

## Archaeological Evaluation

CA Project: 880150  
CA Report: 16520



Document Control Grid						
Revision	Date	Author	Checked by	Status	Reasons for revision	Approved by
A	5 October 2016	Martin Gillard	Derek Evans	Internal review	–	John Dillon
B						

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## CONTENTS

SUMMARY .....	2
1. INTRODUCTION.....	3
2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.....	3
3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	5
4. METHODOLOGY .....	6
5. RESULTS .....	7
6. THE FINDS .....	7
7. DISCUSSION.....	8
8. CA PROJECT TEAM.....	8
9. REFERENCES.....	8
APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS .....	10
APPENDIX B: THE FINDS.....	10
APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM .....	11

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Fig. 1 Site location plan (1:25,000)
- Fig. 2 Trench location plan, showing archaeological features, geophysical survey data and data from previous fieldwork (1: 250)
- Fig. 3 Trenches 1 and 2: sections and photographs (1:20)



## SUMMARY

<b>Project Name:</b>	Land south of the A379 (Residential Site)
<b>Location:</b>	Newcourt, Exeter
<b>NGR:</b>	SX 96002 90838
<b>Type:</b>	Evaluation
<b>Date:</b>	19 September 2016
<b>Planning Reference:</b>	13/4524/01
<b>Location of Archive:</b>	To be deposited with the Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM), Exeter (artefacts) and the Archaeology Data Service (digital archive)
<b>Site Code:</b>	LSAR 16

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in September 2016 on land south of the A379, Newcourt, Exeter. A total of two trenches was excavated.

The evaluation recorded a pair of parallel ditches, one of which contained modern artefactual material. These ditches had been detected by a previous geophysical survey and are the continuation of an extant field boundary visible to the immediate south of the site.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In September 2016, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for IKEA Ltd on land south of the A379, Newcourt, Exeter (centred on NGR: SX 96002 90838; Fig. 1).
- 1.2 Outline planning consent for residential development of the site has been granted by Exeter City Council, conditional on a programme of archaeological work (planning ref: 13/4524/01, Condition 3). The scope of this evaluation was defined subsequently in discussions with Andrew Pye, Exeter City Council Principal Project Manager (Heritage) (ECCPPMH).
- 1.3 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a detailed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by CA (2016a) and approved by the ECCPPMH. The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014).

### ***The site***

- 1.4 The proposed development area lies on the south-western fringes of Exeter, to the south of the A379, and encloses c. 4.3ha in total. The southern part of the site comprises part of a fallow field; the northern part of the site is occupied by a looped slip road off the A379. The field containing the site is bounded to the north by the A379, to the south by a residential estate, to the east by the Exmouth branch railway line and to the west by a field with Newcourt Way beyond.
- 1.5 The site slopes down from c. 32m AOD at its eastern edge to c. 27m AOD at its western edge.
- 1.6 The underlying bedrock geology of the site is mapped as Dawlish Sandstone Formation of the Permian Period. No superficial deposits are recorded (BGS 2016).

## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The proposed development area and its immediate environs have previously been the subject of several archaeological investigations, comprising:

- two desk-based heritage assessments (JMHS 2006a and CA 2013);
- two geophysical surveys, covering the present site and the areas to the south and west (Stratascan 2006a and 2006b);
- four archaeological evaluations: one carried out to the immediate west of the present site (CA 2016b), one along the line of Newcourt Way prior to its construction, and two across fields south-west of the present site (JMHS 2006b, 2007a and 2007b); and
- an archaeological excavation conducted along the corridor of Newcourt Way prior to its construction (Gilbert 2012; JMHS 2010) and an as-yet unpublished archaeological excavation to the south-west of the site (AC Archaeology, pers. comm 2013, cited in CA 2013).

2.2 The following section is summarised from these sources.

### ***Mesolithic (10,000 BC–4000 BC)***

2.3 A small number of unstratified Mesolithic flint tools were recovered during the archaeological works in advance of Newcourt Way, but there is little other evidence for Mesolithic activity in the wider area.

### ***Neolithic (4000 BC–2400 BC)***

2.4 The archaeological excavations to the south-west of the current site recorded a Neolithic ditch. Archaeological works associated with the construction of a supermarket c. 300m north-west of the present site identified late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age pits. Additionally, unstratified Neolithic flint tools were recovered during the Newcourt Way archaeological works.

### ***Bronze Age (2400 BC–700 BC)***

2.5 A series of Bronze Age pits and ring ditches and an oval enclosure were recorded during the archaeological works at the supermarket site (c. 300m north-west of the present site).

2.6 The Newcourt Way archaeological works recorded a substantial enclosure and roundhouse of probable early Bronze Age date, as well as a possible outer



enclosure and several small structures. Evidence for a contemporary field system was also recorded.

- 2.7 The evaluation trenches excavated to the west of the present site recorded a Middle Bronze Age ditch cutting an earlier pit (Fig. 2; T11); four further undated pits occupied a similar stratigraphic position and may also have been Bronze Age in date.

### ***Iron Age (700 BC–AD 43)***

- 2.8 The works to the south-west of the site recorded an Iron Age roundhouse and associated features.

### ***Roman (AD 43–AD 410)***

- 2.9 Roman activity in the area was focused along the road between Exeter and the port at Topsham (on the line of present Exeter/Topsham Road, which passes c. 1.5km south of the present site). No Roman features are known within the immediate environs of the site.

### ***Early medieval (AD 410–1066), medieval (1066–1539), post-medieval (1540–1800) and modern (1800–present)***

- 2.10 The area of the site appears to have remained in agricultural use throughout these periods. The geophysical survey of the present site recorded a linear anomaly which appears to be a continuation of a field boundary still extant to the immediate south.

## **3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- 3.1 The objectives of the evaluation were to provide more information about the archaeological resource within the site, including its presence/absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and significance. This data will be used to help determine the need for, and inform the scope of, any further archaeological works at the site.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The evaluation fieldwork comprised the excavation of two trenches (T1 and T2, Fig. 2) in the southern part of the site. The northern part of the site is occupied by a looped slip road off the A379; this area of the site was not subject to the evaluation, as it is considered that the construction of the slip road will have largely destroyed any below-ground archaeological remains which may have been present.
- 4.2 Both of the evaluation trenches were 75m long and 1.8m wide. They were located to test the geophysical anomaly and to provide a representative sample of the remainder of the site.
- 4.3 The trenches were set out on OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates using Leica GPS and surveyed in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 4: Survey Manual*.
- 4.4 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. Where archaeological deposits were encountered, they were excavated by hand in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.5 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 samples were taken.
- 4.6 All artefacts recovered were processed in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 3: Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation*.
- 4.7 Subject to agreement with the legal landowner, CA will make arrangements with the Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM), Exeter, for the deposition of the artefact collection.
- 4.8 A digital archive will be prepared and submitted to the Archaeology Data Service (ADS).
- 4.9 A summary of information from this project, as set out within Appendix C, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.



## 5. RESULTS

- 5.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results. Figure 2 shows the recorded archaeological features in plan. Detailed summaries of the recorded contexts can be found in Appendix A. Details of the artefactual material recovered during the evaluation can be found in Section 6 and Appendix B.
- 5.2 The natural geological substrate comprised silty sand with bands of gravel and was exposed 0.14m–0.4m below the present ground level. It was cut in the western ends of both trenches by a pair of parallel north-west/south-east-aligned ditches. The westernmost of these ditches (102/204) was 1.25m–1.46m wide and 0.18m–0.26m deep; the easternmost ditch (104/202) was 2.34m–2.97m wide and 0.36m–0.52m deep. Both of these ditches contained single sandy silt fills. The fill of ditch 102/204 contained no artefactual material other than a residual worked flint; the fill of ditch 104/202 contained modern pottery.
- 5.3 The natural substrate and the infilled ditches were sealed directly by the topsoil.

## 6. THE FINDS

- 6.1 Fill 203 (ditch 202; T2) contained quantities of modern pottery and glass; this material was discarded on site.
- 6.2 Two artefacts of prehistoric and Roman date were recovered residually from later contexts. These are discussed below, and detailed further in Appendix B.

### *Pottery: Roman*

- 6.3 A single bodysherd (3g) from topsoil 100 (T1) is in a fine, oxidised fabric (OXF). This type of coarseware was produced throughout the Roman period and is likely to be of relatively local manufacture.

### *Lithics*

- 6.4 Fill 105 of ditch 104 (T1) produced a proximal fragment from a flint flake. The flake can be only broadly dated to the prehistoric period. The degree of edge damage is consistent with redeposition in a later context.

## 7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1 The evaluation recorded a pair of parallel ditches, one of which contained modern artefactual material. These ditches correspond to a linear geophysical anomaly and are the continuation of an extant field boundary visible to the immediate south of the site. The section of this boundary within the site is depicted on the tithe map for the area (1844), but had been removed by the time of the 1887 Ordnance Survey map.
- 7.2 There was no evidence that the limited prehistoric remains recorded by the previous evaluation to the west (CA 2016b) extended as far as the present evaluation site.

## 8. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Martin Gillard, assisted by Parris Stubbings and Edoardo Vigo. This report was written by Martin Gillard. The finds report was written by Jacky Sommerville. The report illustrations were prepared by Rosanna Price. The project archive has been compiled and prepared for deposition by Jessica Cook. The project was managed for CA by Derek Evans.

## 9. REFERENCES

- BGS (British Geological Survey) 2016 *Geology of Britain Viewer* <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>  
Accessed 20 September 2016
- CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2013 *Land South of A379, Newcourt, Exeter: Heritage Statement* CA typescript report **13224**
- CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2016a *Land South of A379, Newcourt, Exeter: Written Scheme of Investigation for a Programme of Archaeological Investigation*
- CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2016b *Land South of A379, Newcourt, Exeter: Archaeological Evaluation* CA report **16176**



Gilbert, D. 2012 "A Bronze Age Enclosure with Extramural structures and field system on land to the north of Old Rydon Lane, Exeter" *Proceedings of the Devon Archaeological Society* **70**: 67-85

JMHS (John Moore Heritage Services) 2006a *An Archaeological DBA of The Newcourt area-Lower RNSD site and land alongside Old Rydon Lane and the A379, Topsham*

JMHS (John Moore Heritage Services) 2006b *An Archaeological Excavation in the corridor of the proposed road linking the A379 to Old Rydon Lane, Topsham, Exeter*

JMHS (John Moore Heritage Services) 2007a *An Archaeological Evaluation of ORLN & Langdon Site, South Exeter*

JMHS (John Moore Heritage Services) 2007b *An Archaeological Evaluation of ORLN & Langdon Site, South Exeter: addendum*

JMHS (John Moore Heritage Services) 2010 *An Archaeological Excavation in the corridor of the proposed road linking the A379 to Old Rydon Lane, Topsham, Exeter*

Ordnance Survey 1889 (surveyed 1887) 1:10560, LXXX.SE, Devonshire (includes: Clyst St George; Clyst St Mary; Exeter; Sowton; Topsham.)

Stratascan 2006a *Newcourt, Exeter, Devon: geophysical survey*

Stratascan 2006b *Land to the south-east of Exeter, between the A379 and Old Rydon Way: geophysical survey*

### **Cartographic sources**

1844 *Heavitree Tithe Map*

1887 *1st Edition 6-inch Ordnance Survey map (sheet 80.12)*



**APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS**

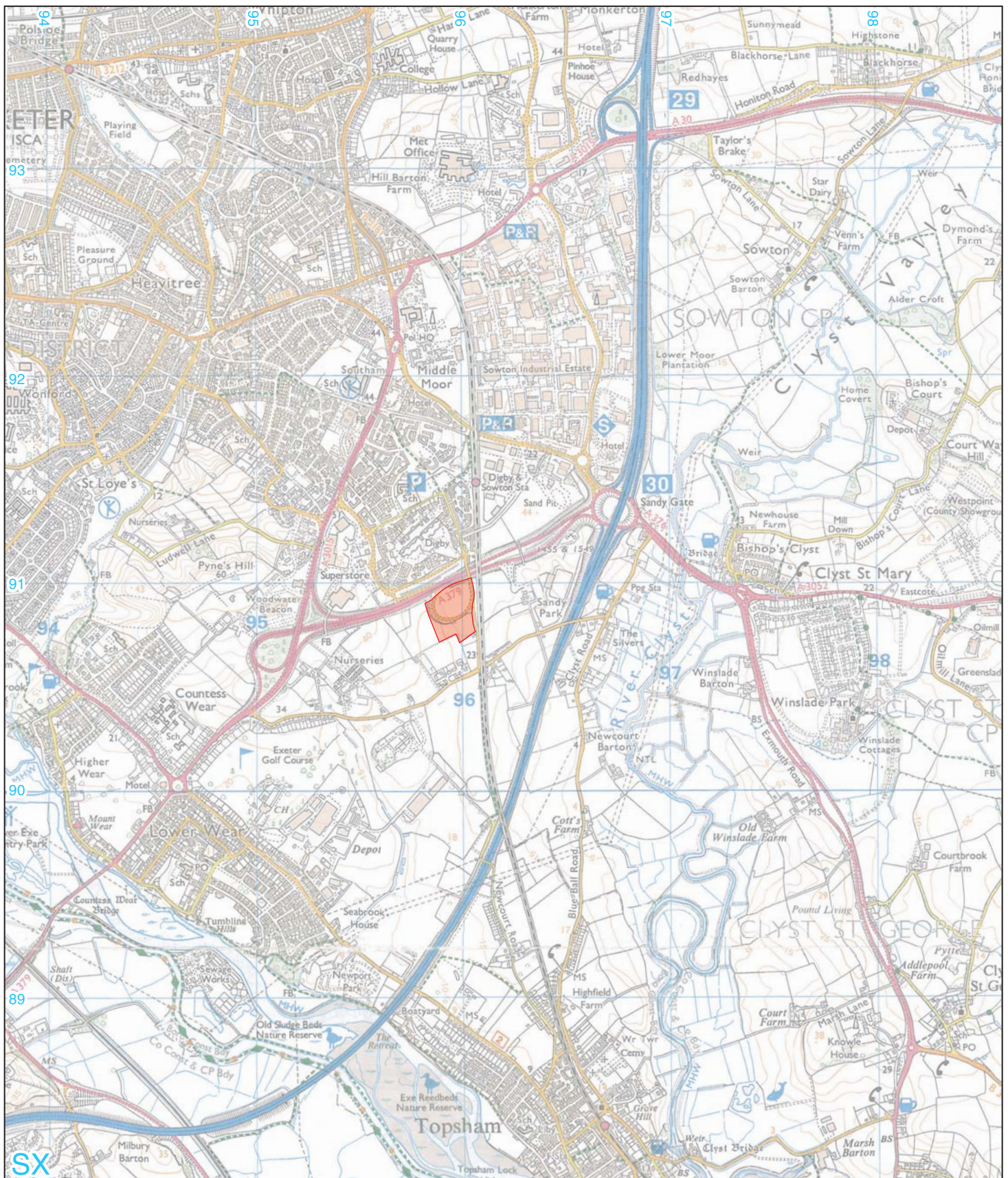
Trench no.	Context no.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)
1	100	Layer		topsoil	mid grey brown sand silt			0.14–0.4
1	101	Layer		natural	white, brown, orange and pink silt sand with gravel			
1	102	Cut		ditch	shallow and irregular ditch	>2	1.24	0.18
1	103	Fill	102	fill of ditch	light grey brown sand silt			
1	104	Cut		ditch	field boundary ditch	>2	2.34	0.36
1	105	Fill	104	fill of ditch	mid grey brown sand silt			
2	200	Layer		topsoil	mid grey brown sand silt			0.14–0.4
2	201	Layer		natural	white, brown, orange and pink silt sand with gravel			
2	202	Cut		ditch	field boundary ditch	>2	2.97	0.52
2	203	Fill	202	fill of ditch	mid grey brown sand silt			
2	204	Cut		ditch	shallow and irregular ditch	>2	1.46	0.26
2	205	Fill	204	fill of ditch	light grey brown sand silt			

**APPENDIX B: THE FINDS**

Context	Category	Description	Fabric Code	Count	Weight (g)	Spot-date
100	Roman pottery	Fine, oxidised fabric	OXF	1	3	Roman
105	Worked flint	Flake	–	1	6	Prehistoric

## APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project Name	Land South of the A379 (residential site), Exeter: Archaeological Evaluation	
Short description	<p>An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in September 2016 on land south of the A379, Newcourt, Exeter. A total of two trenches were excavated.</p> <p>The evaluation recorded a pair of parallel ditches, one of which contained modern artefactual material. These ditches had been detected by a previous geophysical survey and are the continuation of an extant field boundary visible to the immediate south of the site.</p>	
Project dates	19 September 2016	
Project type	Evaluation	
Previous work	Desk-based assessment (CA 2013); geophysical surveys (Stratascan 2006); archaeological evaluation (CA 2016)	
Future work	Unknown	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
Site Location	Land South of the A379, Newcourt, Exeter	
Study area (m <sup>2</sup> /ha)	1.1ha	
Site co-ordinates	SX 96002 90838	
<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	Martin Gillard	
<b>MONUMENT TYPE</b>		
	None	
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS</b>		
	None	
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVES</b>		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM), Exeter	Ceramics, worked flint
Paper	N/A	N/A
Digital	Archaeology Data Service (ADS)	Database, digital photos, scanned images of the primary site archive
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
Cotswold Archaeology 2016 <i>Land South of the A379 (residential site), Exeter: Archaeological Evaluation</i> CA typescript report <b>16520</b>		



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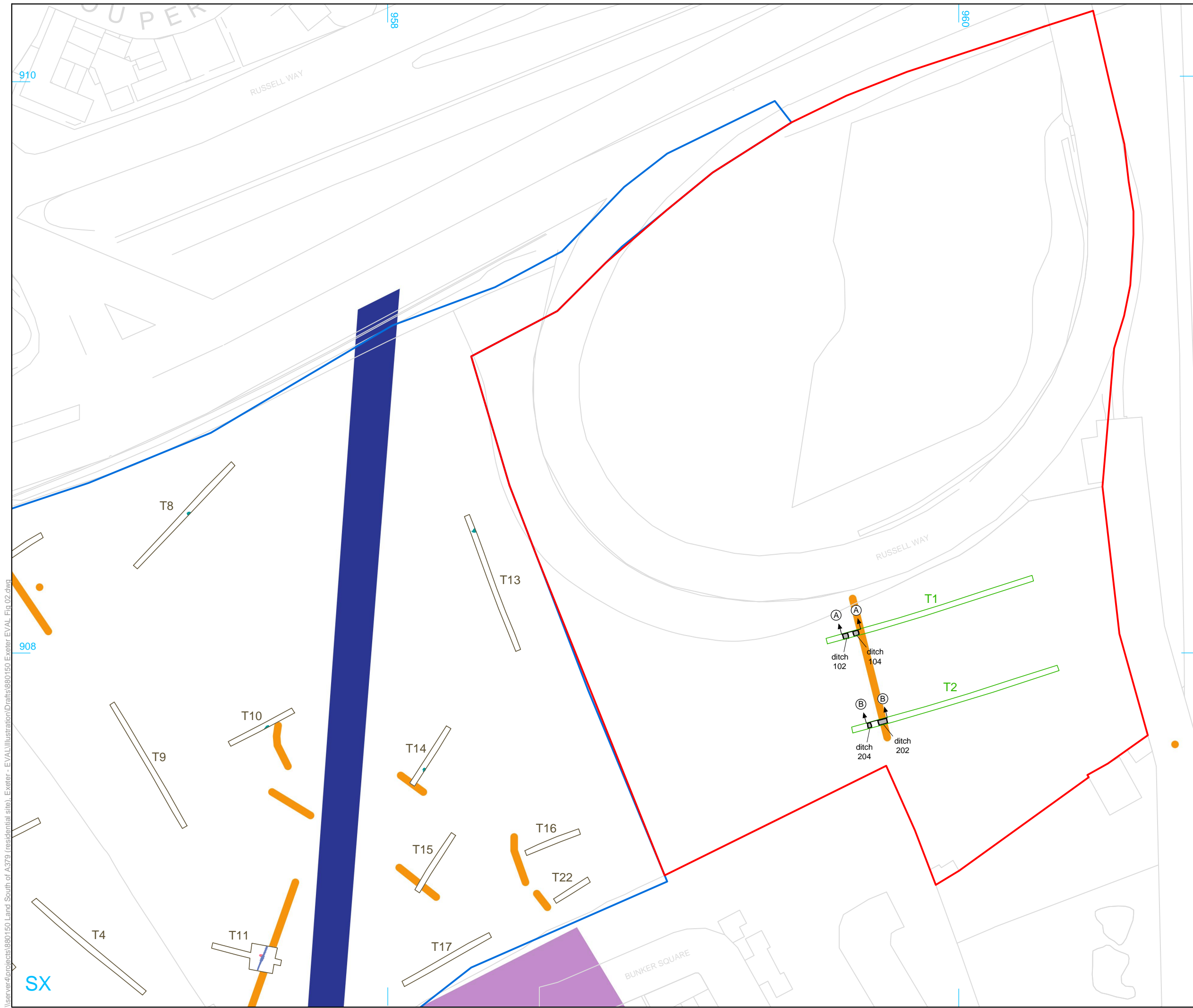
**PROJECT TITLE**  
 Land south of A379 (residential site),  
 Newcourt, Exeter, Devon

**FIGURE TITLE**  
 Site location plan

0 1km

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APPROVED BY	DE	SCALE	1:25,000	<b>1</b>



- site boundary
- retail site boundary
- evaluation trench
- previous evaluation trench
- archaeological feature
- B B section location
- pipeline

**Previous Archaeological Investigation**

- Geophysical anomalies
- Area of Iron Age roundhouse and associated features



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**PROJECT TITLE**  
 Land south of A379 (residential site),  
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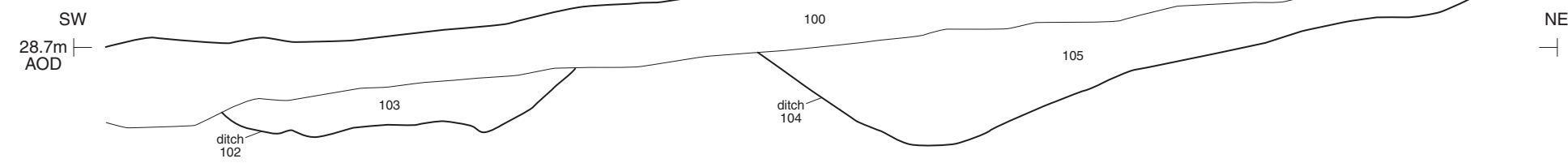
**FIGURE TITLE**  
 Trench location plan, showing  
 archaeological features, geophysical survey  
 data and data from previous fieldwork

<b>DRAWN BY</b>	RP	<b>PROJECT NO.</b>	880150	<b>FIGURE NO.</b>
<b>CHECKED BY</b>	LM	<b>DATE</b>	27.09.16	<b>2</b>
<b>APPROVED BY</b>	DE	<b>SCALE@A3</b>	1:1,250	

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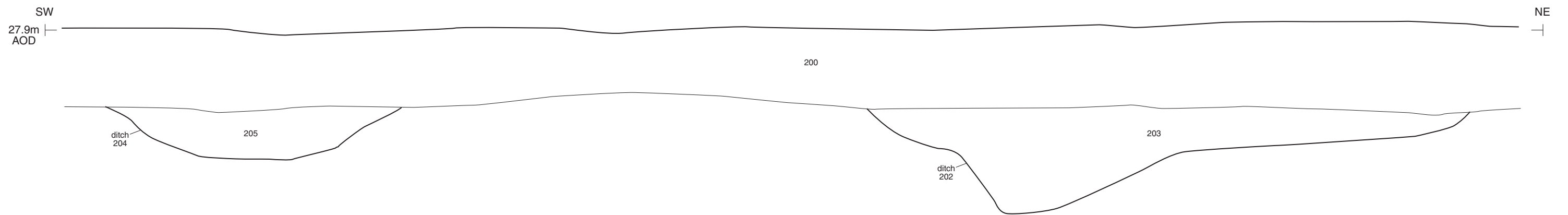
SX

Trench 1, Section AA



Trench 1, ditches 102 and 104, looking south-west (2m scale)

Trench 2, Section BB



Trench 2, ditches 202 and 204, looking north-east (2m scale)




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**PROJECT TITLE**  
 Land south of A379 (residential site),  
 Newcourt, Exeter

**FIGURE TITLE**  
**Trenches 1 and 2: sections and  
 photographs**

DRAWN BY	RP	PROJECT NO.	880150	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	LM	DATE	27.09.16	<b>3</b>
APPROVED BY	DE	SCALE@A3	1:20	



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