

TOPSHAM RUGBY CLUB, TOPSHAM, EXETER

(NGR SX 95668 89103)

Results of an archaeological watching brief during construction of a clubhouse extension

Condition 5 of Exeter City Council planning reference 09/1523/03

Prepared by:
Will Smith

On behalf of:
Tarka Solutions

Document No: ACD656/2/0

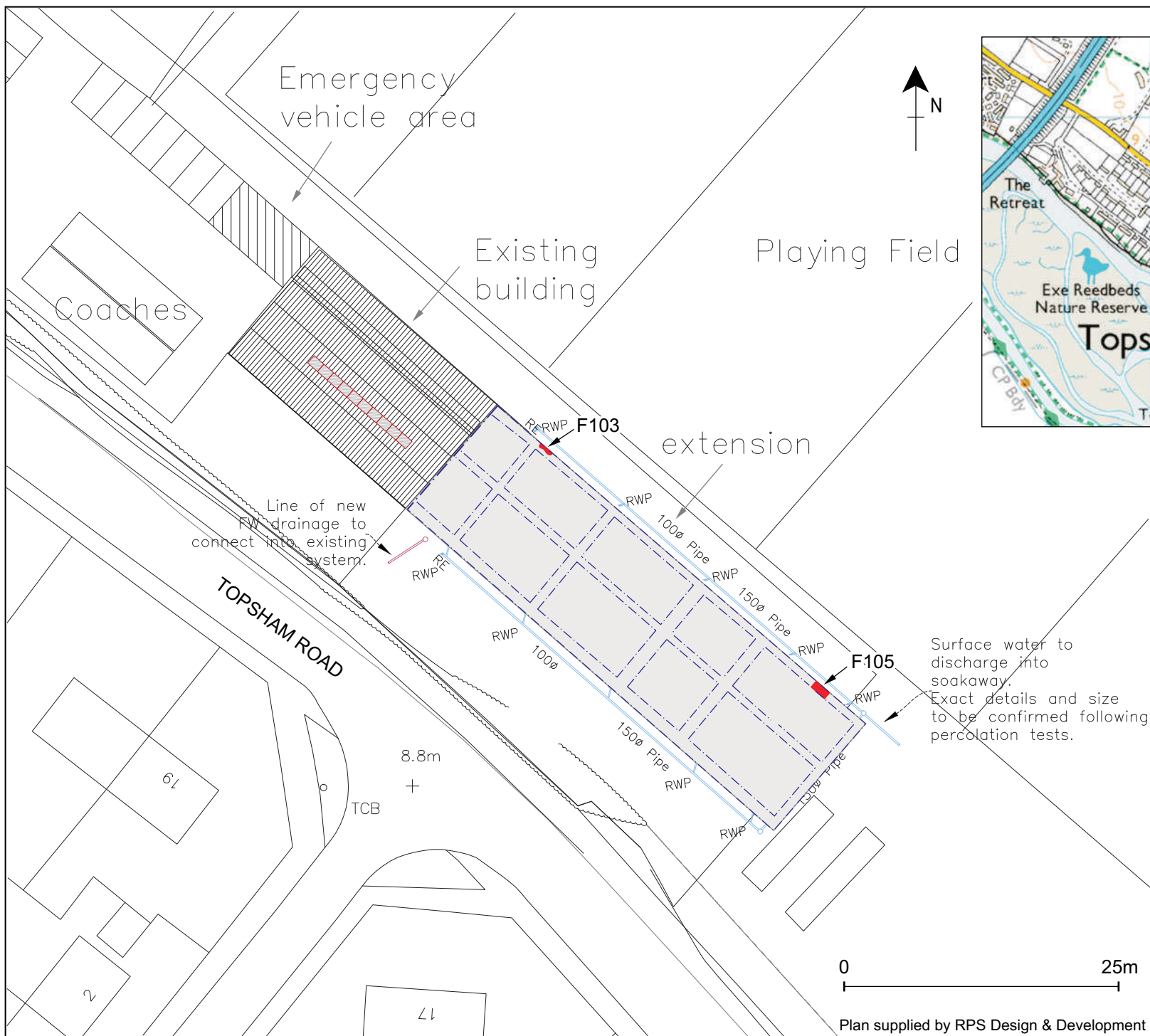
Date: August 2013



AC archaeology

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

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| Civil Parish & District: Exeter | National Grid Reference SX 95668 89103 | Number: |
| Subject: Topsham Rugby Club, Topsham, Exeter: results of a watching brief during construction of a clubhouse extension | | Photo attached? Plates 1-4 |
| Planning Application no: 09/1523/03 | Recipient museum: Royal Albert Memorial Museum | |
| OASIS ID: 155819 | Museum Accession no: ref. no. 13/66 | |
| Contractor's reference number/code: ACD656 | Dates fieldwork undertaken: 28 Feb–8 March 2013 | |
| <p>Introduction</p> <p>An archaeological watching brief was carried out during groundworks associated with the extension of the existing clubhouse at Topsham Rugby Club, Topsham, Exeter. The work was carried out by AC archaeology and was commissioned by Tarka Solutions on behalf of the Topsham Rugby Club. The site is located on the north side of Topsham Road at the northwest end of Topsham adjacent to the M5 motorway.</p> <p>The site is situated within an area of prehistoric artefact findspots and known Roman archaeological deposits and features. An assemblage of lithics has been recovered west of the site, whilst further Neolithic artefacts and evidence of contemporary settlement (along with some Mesolithic flints) were found during excavations south of Topsham Road in advance of construction of the M5. The site lies adjacent to Topsham Road, a known Roman road connecting the 1st century AD fortress at Exeter and the smaller military base at Topsham. During the early 20th century, 2nd century AD Roman finds were recovered from the area, and a late 3rd century AD bakehouse was excavated under the present car park of the Rugby Club. In 1974, in advance of the construction of the M5 motorway, a 1st century AD Roman farmstead was excavated on the south side of Topsham Road. This comprised timber buildings, pits and ditches. More recent work on the east side of the M5 in the University of Exeter sports pitches has identified an enclosure of 2nd-3rd century AD date. During inspection of geotechnical pits in advance of the extension to the clubhouse by the ECC Archaeology Officer, a possible broad linear feature was observed aligned parallel to Topsham Road. It was identified in two test pits (nos 2 and 3; see architect's plan file name TP Position 121102-100 PO 18-2-13 (2)). A single fragment of Roman tile was recovered from the base of the topsoil.</p> <p>Results (Fig. 1)</p> <p>The watching brief consisted of the monitoring of the stripping of topsoil and the excavation of trenches for the footings and services. All excavation was undertaken by a tracked machine fitted with a toothless bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Excavation of the service and footings trenches reached a maximum depth of 0.9 – 1.0m below current ground level exposing the underlying red sandstone and gravel geology (108). The soil sequence above the natural consisted of a sandy silt loam topsoil layer (100), overlying a slightly more gravelly subsoil layer (111), both of which contained post-medieval and modern pottery, CBM and clay pipe, none of which was retained. A single flint was recovered from 100. Within much of the site the depths of these deposits were variable, and across most of the site were dark with a high organic content; the soils were lighter to the east of F105.</p> <p>The only archaeological feature recorded was a single SW-NE aligned linear feature F105 located approximately 40m southeast of existing clubhouse. This feature measured by 1.70m wide by 0.36m deep, and was cut from the level of the subsoil. It contained a fill of weathered natural (107) overlain by a silty deposit (106). No artefacts were recovered from this feature but judging by the depth from which it is cut it is unlikely to be older than later post-medieval in date.</p> <p>Immediately SE of the clubhouse, the base of a possible Victorian rubbish pit (F103) cutting into the natural was exposed. A number of modern services also cut through this area causing significant disturbance.</p> <p>Comments</p> <p>In summary, no early archaeological features were exposed, and only a single early find – a flint – was recovered. F105 is probably a post-medieval boundary ditch, which would explain the difference between the deposits either side of it.</p> | | |
| Recorder: William Smith (AC archaeology) | | Date sent to HER: 16 August 2013 |



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Key

- Area of excavation
- Trenches excavated
- Features identified

Surface water to discharge into soakaway.
Exact details and size to be confirmed following percolation tests.

PROJECT
Topsham Rugby Club, Topsham, Devon

TITLE
Fig. 1: Location of site and observations



0 25m

Plan supplied by RPS Design & Development

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