THE B3193 CHUDLEIGH ROAD RE-ALIGNMENT, KINGSTEIGNTON, TEIGNMOUTH, DEVON

Located Between SX 86186 75936 and SX 86658 74490

Results of an Archaeological Trench Evaluation, Earthwork Survey and Watching Brief

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On behalf of:
Sibelco UK

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AC archaeology

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CONTENTS

Summary

A trench evaluation carried out on land at Exeter Road Junction, Sandygate, Kingsteignton, Devon (centred on NGR SX 86662 74490) was undertaken by AC archaeology in March 2013. In addition an earthwork survey and an archaeological watching brief were conducted at John Acres Copse (SX 86293 75857) and Lappathorn Copse (SX 86534 75175) in March and September 2013. All sites were investigated as a requirement of Devon County Council Historic Environment Team as part of works for the re-alignment of the B3193 Chudleigh Road.

The evaluation comprised the machine-excavation of three trenches totalling 60m in length and 1.6m wide. No features of archaeological interest were exposed with no evidence of the supposed Exeter to Teignbridge Roman road found. There were no finds.

The earthwork survey made a record of previously noted linear features and hollow depressions surviving in two woodland settings. These relate to former field and woodland boundaries and probable quarrying activities. The watching brief was conducted in the same areas, but added little to the survey results.

1. INTRODUCTION (Fig. 1)

1.1 This document sets out the results of archaeological works undertaken at three locations on the route for the re-alignment of the B3193 Chudleigh Road, Kingsteignton, Devon (SX 86186 75936 to SX 86658 74490). It reports on works conducted with the guidance of Stephen Reed of the Devon County Historic Environment Team (hereafter DCHET).

1.2 The archaeological works were commissioned by Andrew Josephs Associates on behalf of Sibelco UK and carried out by AC archaeology during March and September 2013.

1.3 The line of the road lies slopes gently northwest to southeast from 38m to 25m aOD and crosses through mixed woodland and pasture plots. The underlying geology consists of ball clay deposits of the Abbrook Clay and Sand Member (British Geological Survey 2014).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The archaeology of the study area has already been the subject of two desk-based assessments (Exeter Archaeology 2001 and 2007). A further review of the Devon Historic Environment Record (HER) data was undertaken in November 2009 to check whether any additional entries had been made to the HER and a detailed historical assessment was carried out at the Devon Record Office by Anthony Breen (Andrew Josephs Associates and AC archaeology 2012). The assessments established the presence of unrecorded earthworks in woodland at John Acres Copse and Lappathorn Copse as well as the potential for Roman remains on the site. This principally related to the putative route of the Exeter to Teignbridge Roman road which was thought to cross the southern extent of the scheme.

2.2 The line of the road was also subject in part to geophysical survey (Walford 2009) and trench evaluation (Burke and Meadows 2010). Both works found no evidence of features of archaeological interest. The works reported here did not target these areas.

3. AIMS

3.1 Archaeological trench evaluation

The main aim of the trial trench evaluation was to establish the presence or absence, extent, depth, character and date of any archaeological features, deposits or finds within the application area. This was with particular reference to the potential for a Roman road to cross the site.

3.2 Earthwork survey

The objectives of the survey were to accurately locate earthworks within John Acres Copse and Lappathorn Copse and produce a series of representative profiles across their extent at points selected as typical examples of the range of preservation conditions encountered, or where the earthworks exhibit variations in form or character.

3.3 Archaeological monitoring

The aim was to record any previously unrecorded archaeology. All work was undertaken in accordance with the *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (Institute for Archaeologists 2008).

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 The scope of the study has followed the guidance of Stephen Reed of the DCHET and followed Written Schemes of Investigation approved by DCHET (Andrew Josephs Associates and AC archaeology 2012, Valentin 2013).

4.2 Archaeological trench evaluation

The work comprised the machine excavation of three trenches totalling 60m, with each trench 1.6m wide and all positioned within the footprint of a proposed new roundabout (Fig. 2). The location of extant trees and intrusion caused by existing structures limited the areas available for investigation. The removal of soil overburden was undertaken under the control and direction of the site archaeologist. All features and deposits revealed were recorded using the standard AC archaeology pro-forma recording system, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and in accordance with AC archaeology's *General Site Recording Manual, Version 2* (revised August 2012).

4.3 Earthwork survey

The earthwork survey was undertaken within John Acres Copse and Lappathorn Copse using a total station theodolite. Points of detail were recorded electronically using the TST from stations established using a baseline traverse. OS coordinates for the traverse were established using mapping grade GPS. Field data was downloaded for processing into survey software then transferred into a CAD environment for field annotation. Earthwork survey took place within the pegged out corridor of the scheme following the removal of trees and vegetation.

4.4 Archaeological monitoring

The watching brief comprised a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during the initial infrastructure works within the pegged out road corridor in John Acres Copse and Lappathorn Copse.

5. RESULTS – TRENCH EVALUATION (Figs 1-2; Plates 1-3; Appendix 1)

5.1 Introduction

There were no pre-modern archaeological features or deposits present within the excavated trenches and no finds were recovered. The trenches are summarised below and detailed context information is set out by table in Appendix 1.

5.2 Trench 1 (Plate 1)

Trench 1 was northeast to southwest aligned and 20m long. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.55m onto natural subsoil (context 102) which comprised a mid reddish-yellow that varied from sand with gravels to silty sand at the SW end of the trench. Overlying the natural subsoil was a 0.45m thick mid reddish-brown clayey-loam agricultural subsoil (101) that was in turn sealed by a mid reddish brown silty-clay topsoil (100).

5.3 Trench 2 (Plate 2)

Trench 2 was northeast to southwest aligned and 20m long. Natural subsoil (202) was encountered at a depth of 0.60m below existing levels and comprised a mid reddish-yellow sand with gravels gravel. This was overlain by a 0.45m thick mid reddish-brown clayey-loam agricultural subsoil (201) that was sealed by topsoil (200).

5.4 Trench 3 (Plate 3)

Trench 3 was northwest to southeast aligned and 20m long. It was excavated onto natural subsoil (304), which comprised a mid reddish-yellow silty-sand (304). This was overlain by a 0.60m thick demolition derived deposit containing brick and tarmacadam fragments (302/303). Sealing this was a recently deposited 0.05-0.15m thick soil layer (301) and 0.05m of topsoil above (300).

6. RESULTS – EARTHWORK SURVEY by Phil Newman (Fig. 3)

6.1 John Acres Copse

The swathe of land cut by the course of the proposed road was gently curving and measured 268m by 14m, with a rise in height of approximately 5.6m between the east and western ends. The remains recorded comprised linear hedgebanks with ditches traversing the route and amorphous surface hollows resulting from localised mineral extraction. Woodland clearance was necessary, before the survey could be undertaken. However, due to poor ground conditions, parts of the site had been damaged by forestry operations before the survey took place causing some remains to be incomplete.

At the western end of the route, a hedgebank (A) once separated the woodland from the current asphalt road to Fosterville. This is likely to be an original boundary hedge of this wood and was certainly in use before 1889 when the (Ordnance Survey) OS 1st edition 25-inch map was published. This area had been subject to the dumping of rubbish for perhaps many decades and the bank survived only as a rough scarp of approximately 0.4m high.

The area immediately east of bank A had been disturbed by a very large animal burrow but just beyond the disturbed area was a hollow cut into the ground (B) which probably represented localised surface extraction of mineral resources (see below). The section that was affected by the new road was approximately 25m wide and up to 1.5m deep though its edges had been smoothed by time. The hollow extended some distance to the north into the woodlands.

The north-south hedgebank (C) was abandoned sometime after 1889, when it was shown on the OS map as demarcating an area of woodland on the west side and a pasture field on the east. The latter had since been allowed to develop as an additional area of woodland and the

two sides had merged. The bank was 2.8m wide by 0.6m high. Very slight vestiges of a ditch survived on the eastern side though the whole earthwork had been much disturbed by animal burrowing.

Two clear escarpments (D & E) demarcated the sinuous edges of a hollow near the eastern end of the copse. The remains almost certainly represented further surface mineral extraction.

At the far eastern end of the copse a series of linear ditches with banks originally formed a triangular layout of 44m by 30m. This earthwork was recorded on the 1889 OS map without any annotation but was associated with a water-filled earthwork hollow just south of and outside the route of the road, which also survived. A deep ditch (F), with a bank on its south side, ran SE to NW for 38m before turning at an approximate curved right angle for 28m, then turned back on itself to close the triangle (G and H). The ditch was up to 4m wide and 0.7m deep. It was best preserved on the east side.

6.2 Lappathorn Copse

The Lappathorn Copse section was 243m long by 14m, with a drop in height of 3.5m north to south. Due to extremely poor ground conditions, the pegged area of the new road had been disturbed by forestry vehicles prior to the survey taking place. Only three earthworks were observed, all hedgebanks.

At the northern end of the wood, a hedgebank (J) marked on the 1889 OS demarcating the northern edge of the wood, crossed the line of the new route at an oblique angle. Only a small section of the bank survived between the pegs which measured 2m wide and 0.4m high. A 2m-wide ditch on its south side was heavily silted.

The southern boundary of the wood was also marked by a hedgebank (K) crossing the new road at right angles. The bank was 3.5m wide and 0.5m high with a clear ditch on the south side of 0.9m deep. Just to the north of this hedge were the remains of another linear boundary (L) which cut across the route at an acute angle and may be traced south back to bank K. This bank was more eroded and spread than others in these woods, measuring 3.2m wide by only 0.35m high, and was abandoned sometime before 1889, possibly when the enclosure layouts changed in this area at the commencement of industrial scale clay working in the 18th century.

6.3 Discussion

The most intriguing feature among those recorded is the triangular earthwork ditch (F, G and H) and its association with the possible pond to the south. Its significance must have been clear to the 19th-century OS surveyors who recorded it in outline but its purpose, and therefore its archaeological significance cannot be determined from the modern earthwork survey alone. Its date can also not be established from the appearance of the earthworks.

Small earthen hedgebanks with ditches of the type traversing the route are common in Devon. Many thousands of kilometres survive, usually still in use and dating mostly from the post-medieval period. The fact that three of these examples (C, J and L) within these woods were abandoned can probably be attributed to the changes in this landscape as areas became converted to woodland.

The presence of surface mineral extraction is unsurprising in the Bovey Basin. The claggy soils were used as a component of cob walling and the clays could be used in ceramics and brick making. Alluvial tin, sand and clay have also been historically won from the Bovey Basin. Earthwork (B) may represent a former ‘square pit’, a type of shaft used to extract ball clay from underground deposits. The form of the earthworks do not suggest any specific period for the activity, and square pits have a long lifespan in the area, and continued in use well into the second half of the 20th century (The Ball Clay Heritage Society 2003).

7. RESULTS – WATCHING BRIEF (Plate 4)

The watching brief took place in John Acres Copse and Lappathorn Copse. The majority of the earthworks were buried beneath a made surface embankment for the new road. The only feature visible was earthwork 'C' in John Acres Copse. This had been truncated and was partially visible in section showing that the core was constructed of redeposited clay natural subsoil under 0.6m of forest litter and roots.

8. DISCUSSION

8.1 At the Exeter Road Junction the presumed Roman road crosses the area from northeast to southwest, leading from Exeter towards Teignbridge (Margary 1955, 109-111; Woolner and Woolner 1954). This is thought to have entered the area in the vicinity of Sandygate at the southern end of the proposed development area and crossed the River Teign at Teignbridge, but there has been no modern excavation to test the line of the road or its construction. Limited evidence for Romano-British activity around Kingsteignton has been recorded at the Berry Meadow site in the village (Weddell 1987). The Roman road is believed to follow the line of the current C-class road in a northeast-southwest direction, but the evaluation trenches located to either side of the modern road did not reveal any metalling or roadside ditches. The trenches may not have been close enough to the actual line of the Roman road which, if it exists, may be protected beneath the modern road surface.

8.2 The earthwork survey and to a lesser extent the watching brief provided further detail to earthworks in the copse areas that had previously been recognised. Historic mapping shows that the wooded areas are plantations and the remains of extraction pits further support the conclusion that this had been a mostly open landscape in post-medieval times. The majority of the earthworks relate to field boundaries which historic OS mapping shows as continuing beyond the wooded areas.

9. CONCLUSIONS

9.1 No evidence was found in the evaluation trenches to confirm the expected line of the Roman road between Exeter and Teignbridge.

9.2 The earthwork survey mapped in detail former field boundaries relating to the post-medieval management of the agrarian landscape.

9.3 The earthwork survey also located evidence of small-scale extraction of minerals from the area as a probable precursor to the current industry which makes a significant contribution to the local economy.

10. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

10.1 The paper and digital archive is currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ. It will be held until the need for any further archaeological work on the site is established and whether the creation of a digital archive for deposition at the Archaeology Data Service is required. A temporary deposition number of RAMM12/46 has been obtained from the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter.

10.2 An online OASIS entry has been completed, using the unique identifier 181128 which includes a digital copy of this report.

11. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

11.1 The evaluation was commissioned by Sibelco UK under the guidance of Stephen Reed of the Devon County Council Historic Environment Team. The site work was conducted by Clive Meaton with Gareth Holes and Simon Hughes with the illustrations for this report prepared by Phil Newman and Elisabeth Patkai.

12. REFERENCES

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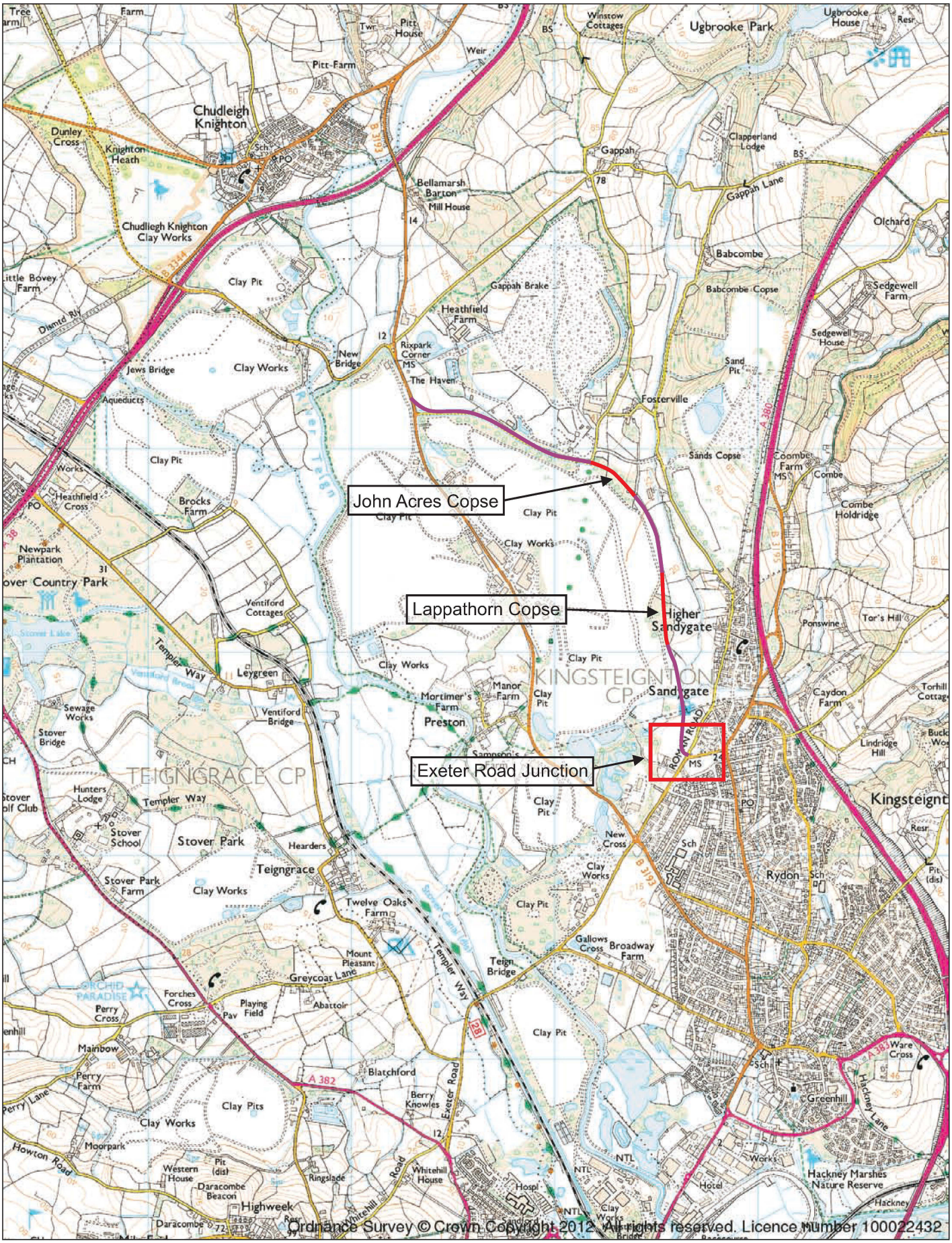

0 1km

Scale 1:25,000@A4

New road alignment

PROJECT

The B3193 Chudleigh Road Re-alignment, Kingsteignton, Teignbridge

TITLE

Fig. 1: Location of sites

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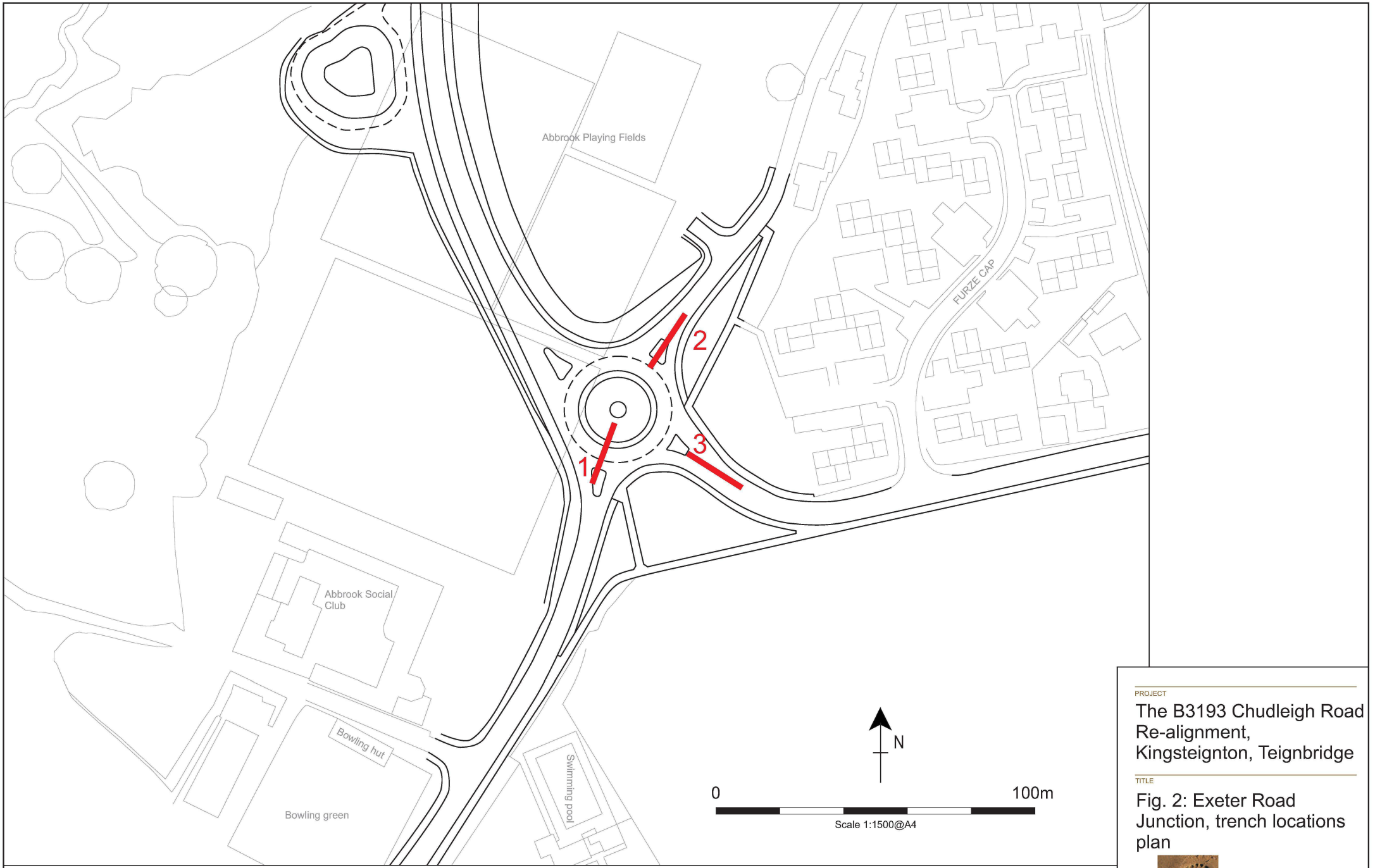

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TITLE

Fig. 2: Exeter Road Junction, trench locations plan

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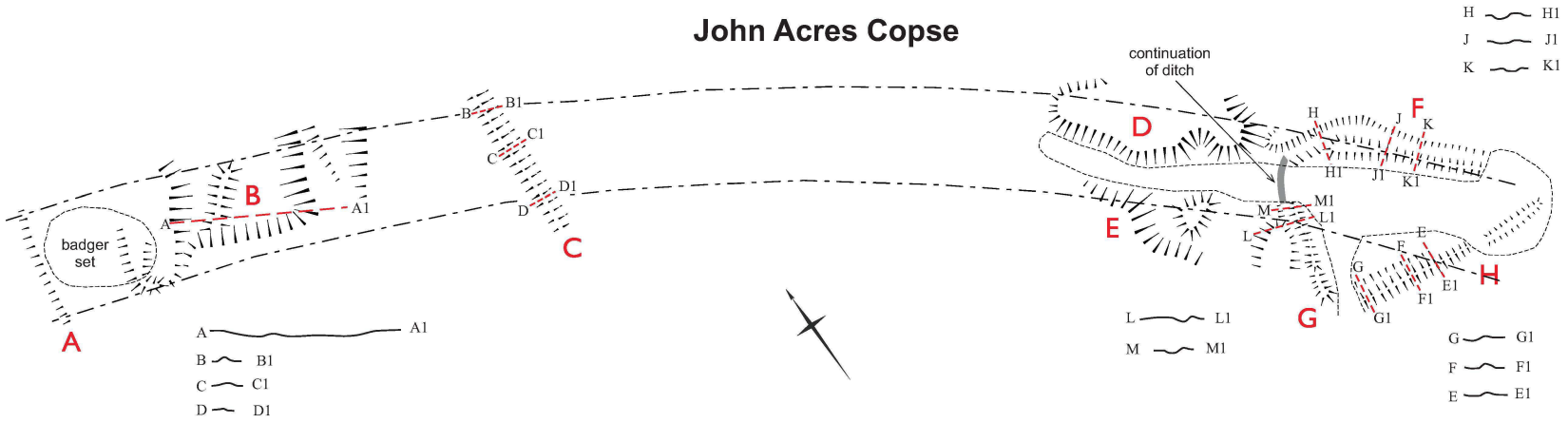

KEY

disturbed area

pegged area

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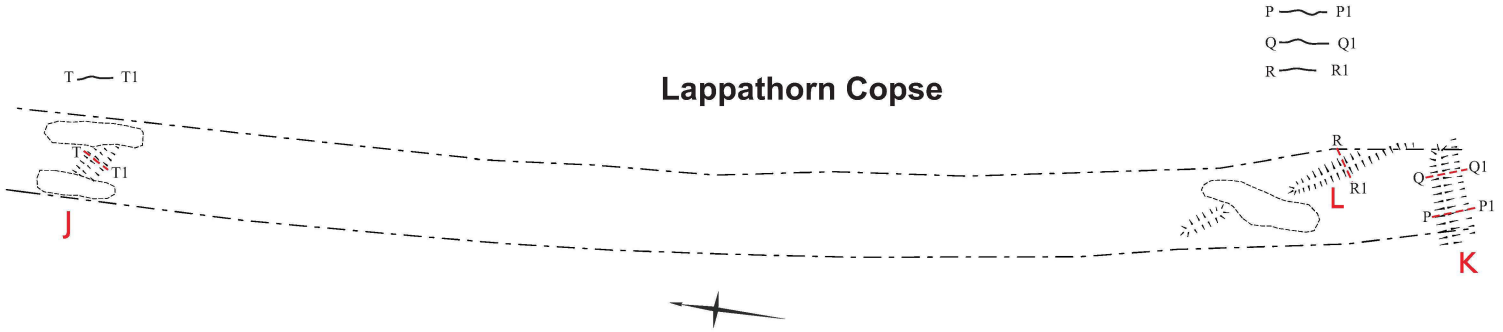

PROJECT

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TITLE

Fig. 3: Earthwork surveys and profiles

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Plate 1: Exeter Road Junction, Trench 1, looking northeast (scales 1m and 1m)

Plate 2: Exeter Road Junction, Trench 2, looking northeast (scales 1m and 1m)

Plate 3: Exeter Road Junction, Trench 3, looking southeast (scales 1m and 1m)

Plate 4: Watching Brief, John Acres Copse, southeast-facing section of Earthwork C (scale 2m)

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