

# LAND AT TUMBLING FIELD LANE, TIVERTON, DEVON

(Centred on NGR SS 9563 1221)

Results of an Archaeological Trench Evaluation

Planning Reference: Mid Devon District Council  
20/01263/MFUL

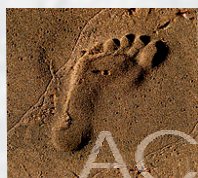
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Prepared by:  
Stuart Randall

On behalf of:  
LiveWest

Report No: ACD2414/2/0

Date: January 2021



archaeology

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Client	LiveWest
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Report Author	Stuart Randall
Contributions	
Checked by	Paul Rainbird
Approved by	John Valentin

## Acknowledgements

The evaluation was commissioned by LiveWest and managed for AC archaeology by John Valentin. The site works were carried out by Stuart Randall and Chris Blatchford, with the illustrations for this report prepared by Sarnia Blackmore. The advice of Marrina Neophytou, Devon County Council Historic Environment Officer, is gratefully acknowledged.

The views and recommendations expressed in this report are those of AC archaeology and are presented in good faith on the basis of professional judgement and on information currently available.

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## CONTENTS

### *Summary*

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Archaeological and historical background	1
3.	Aims	2
4.	Methodology	2
5.	Results	2
6.	Discussion	2
7.	Conclusion	3
8.	Archive and OASIS	3
9.	Sources consulted	3

### **List of figures**

Fig. 1: Location of site and trenches

### **List of plates**

Plate 1: General view looking southeast

Plate 2: Trench 1, looking northwest

Plate 3: Trench 2, looking northwest

Plate 4: Trench 3, looking northwest

Plate 5: Trench 4, looking northeast

Plate 6: Trench 5, looking west

### **Appendix**

Appendix 1: Tabulated context descriptions by trench

## Summary

*An archaeological trench evaluation was undertaken by AC archaeology during December 2020 on land at Tumbling Field Lane, Tiverton, Devon (NGR SS 9563 1221). The evaluation comprised the machine excavation of five trenches totalling 125m in length with each 1.5m wide. These were positioned to provide representative coverage of the proposed development area.*

*The archaeological investigations exposed a small number of modern stone-lined field drains and rubbish dumps and no significant archaeological features were encountered. Alluvial deposits were found throughout the site and possible modern landscaping has taken place in the southwest corner adjacent to the entrance.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological trench evaluation was undertaken by AC archaeology during December 2020 to inform a planning application for the erection of 22 dwellings with parking, landscaping and construction of new access, on land at Tumbling Field Lane, Tiverton, Devon (NGR SS 9563 1221; Fig. 1). The evaluation was commissioned by LiveWest and was required following consultation with the Devon County Council Historic Environment Team.
- 1.2 The site is located towards the northern end of Tumbling Field Lane and is a single pasture field covering approximately 0.75 hectares, currently an unused paddock (Plate 1). The site's shape is irregular and it is bordered by houses to two sides, Tumbling Field Lane to the northwest and mature hedgerows on the other sides. The site lies on undulating ground at around 68m aOD (above Ordnance Datum), with the underlying solid geology comprising mudstone of the Bude Formation (British Geological Survey Online Viewer 2021).

### 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The main archaeological interest in the site was flagged up by the Tiverton Archaeological Group (TAG) in correspondence as part of the planning application, in that there was a possibility that it contained below-ground remains relating to the woollen cloth industry which was the dominant industry in Tiverton between the 15th and 18th centuries. Fulling mills have been documented along the Lowman both upstream and downstream of this area, while a number of leats are recorded in its vicinity. Fields on the periphery of the town may also have contained cloth drying racks, where elsewhere their below-ground presence has been denoted by postholes set at regular intervals forming the straight lines of the racks (Rainbird 2019).
- 2.2 Approximately 250m to the south of the site lies Cranmore Castle, which is a large univallate Iron Age hillfort which sits above the confluence of the Rivers Exe and Lowman. The hillfort is a Scheduled Monument (National Heritage List for England [NHLE] ref. 1020156).

### **3. AIMS**

- 3.1** The aims of the investigation were to establish the presence or absence, extent, depth, character and date of any archaeological features, deposits or finds within the site. The results of the evaluation, as set out in this report, will inform the determination of the planning application.

### **4. METHODOLOGY**

- 4.1** The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a project design by AC archaeology (Valentin 2020), the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Field Evaluation* (December 2014, updated 2020) and the DCCHET online document *Specification for Field Evaluation*. It comprised the machine excavation of five trenches totalling 125m in length, with each being 1.5m wide, positioned to provide representative coverage across the development area (Fig. 1).
- 4.2** All trenches were located with a Leica Net rover GPS accurate to 1cm. The removal of overlying soils within the trenches was undertaken in 20cm spits (maximum) under the control and direction of the site archaeologist. Stripping by mechanical excavator ceased at the level at which archaeological deposits or natural subsoil was exposed.
- 4.3** 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). Detailed sections and plans were produced at a scale of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50, while all site levels relate to Ordnance Datum.

### **5. RESULTS (Fig. 1; Plates 2-7)**

- 5.1** No archaeological features, deposits or finds were present in the five trenches. Tabulated context descriptions for all trenches are provided in Appendix 1. Context numbers are prefixed by the relevant trench number (e.g. 100 for Trench 1, 200 for Trench 2 etc.).
- 5.2** Natural subsoil, which comprised light yellowish-red clay with abundant gravel and pebbles, was exposed at a depth of between 0.6m and 0.8m below the ground surface. This was generally overlain by a 0.25m to 0.38m thick topsoil composed of dark grey silty clay loam. This was above an alluvial subsoil layer, 0.28m to 0.55m in thickness, and composed of light reddish brown silty clay with occasional poorly sorted sub angular gravel and pebble fragments.
- 5.3** Modern stone-lined land drains were uncovered in Trenches 3, 4 and 5, while dumps of plastics, brick rubble and china were located in Trenches 1, 2 and 4.

### **6 DISCUSSION**

- 6.1** No traces of features relating to the woollen cloth industry were discovered within the development area. Possible landscaping may have occurred at the site entrance in the southwest corner of the site where the alluvial deposits were thinner and the ground level was much lower than the adjacent plot to the south.

## 7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The evaluation produced no evidence of features, deposits or finds relating to the cloth industry. No evidence of drying racks, fulling mills or leats were found in any of the evaluation trenches. Alluvial clay deposits were found throughout the site. The only features encountered were modern land drains and rubbish dumps that probably relate to the recent use of the site as an allotment.

## 8. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

- 8.1 The paper and digital archive is currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ under the unique project code of **ACD2414**. It will be held until it is known if any further archaeological work on the site is required.
- 8.2 An online OASIS entry has been completed using the unique identifier **410250**, which includes a digital copy of this report.

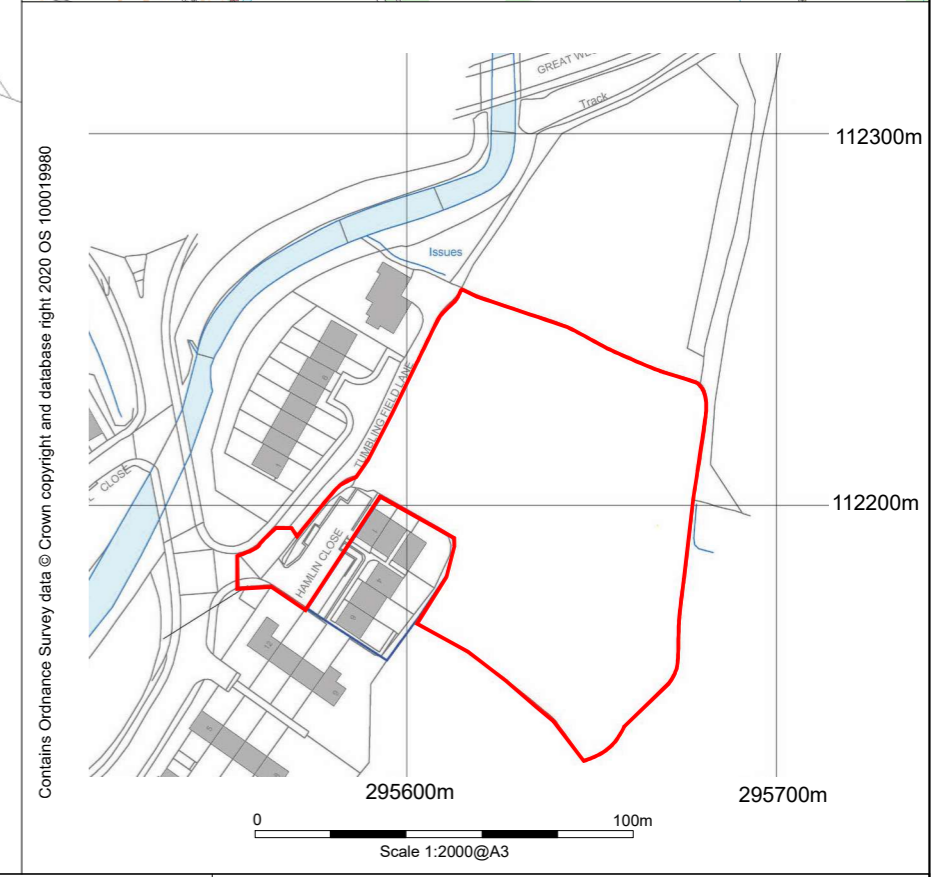
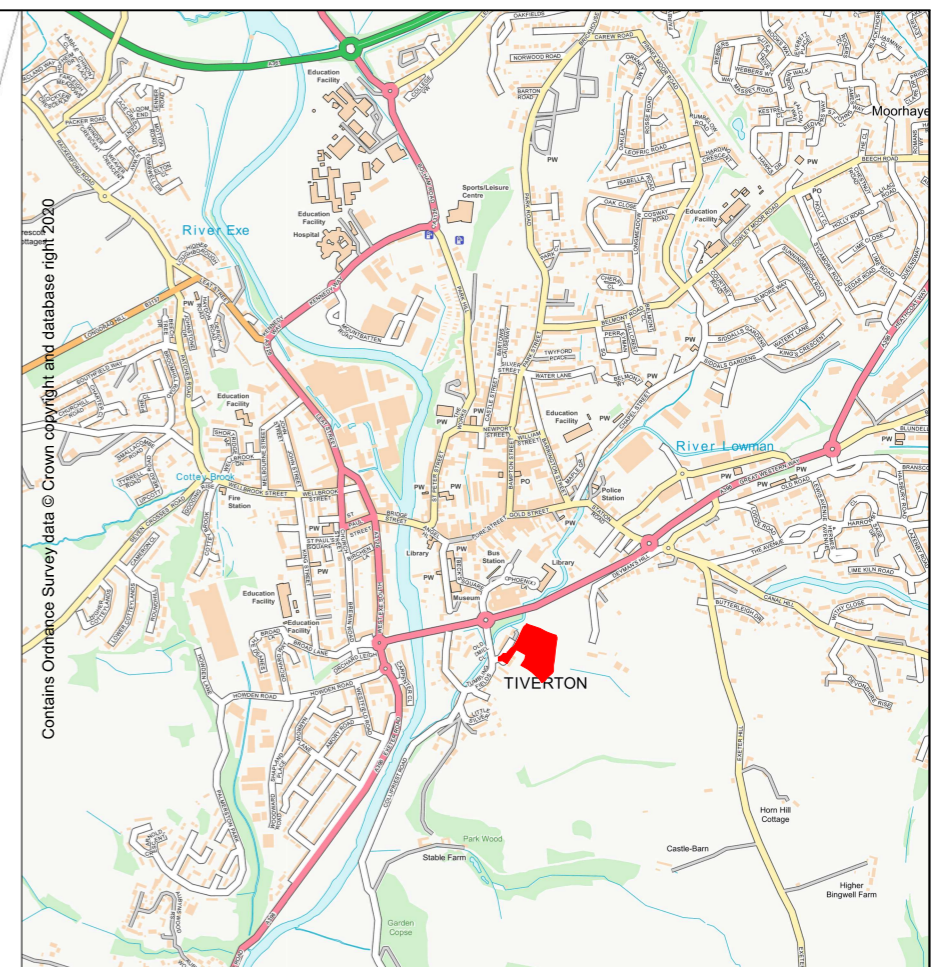
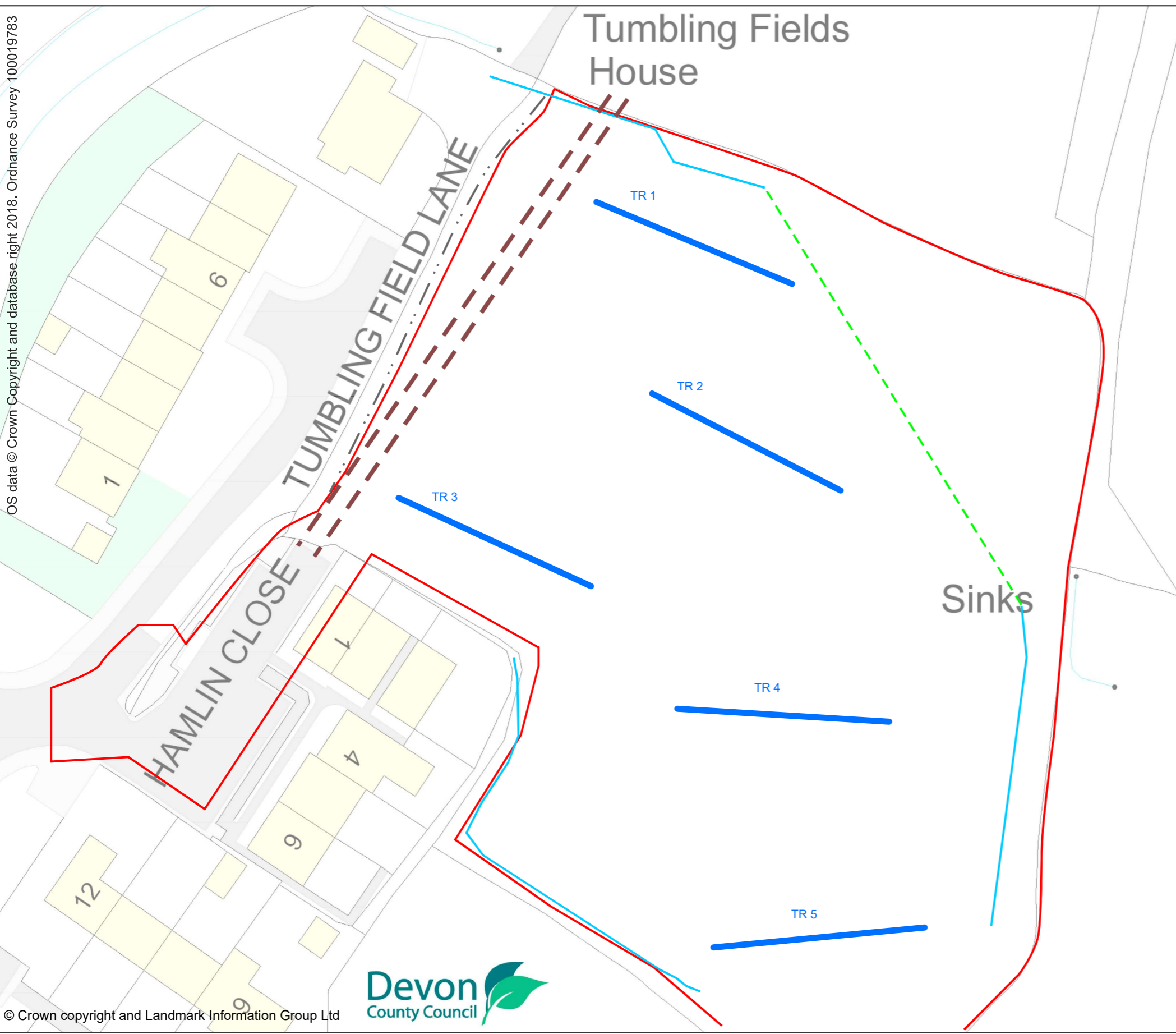
## 9. SOURCES CONSULTED

British Geological Survey Online Viewer, 2021, [www.bgs.ac.uk](http://www.bgs.ac.uk)

DCC, 2021, Devon County Council Historic Environment Viewer, <http://www.map.devon.gov.uk/DCCviewer/>.

Rainbird, P., 2019, 'Archaeology on tenterhooks.' *Devon Archaeological Society Newsletter* **133**, 3.

Valentin, J., 2020, *Land at Tumbling Field Lane, Tiverton, Devon: Project Design for an Archaeological Trench Evaluation*. Unpublished AC archaeology doc. no. **ACD2414/1/0**.

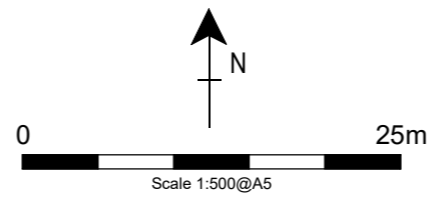


**Key**

- Site
- Evaluation trenches

**Utilities**

- Existing high voltage electricity cables
- Existing drainage ditch
- Existing land drainage (indicative only)
- Existing combined sewer



PROJECT **Land at Tumbling Field Lane, Tiverton, Devon**
  
 TITLE **Fig. 1: Location of site and trenches**



Plate 1: General view looking southeast



Plate 2: Trench 1 looking northwest  
(scale 1m)



Plate 3: Trench 2 looking northwest  
(scale 1m)





Plate 4: Trench 3 looking northwest (scale 1m)



Plate 5: Trench 4 looking northeast (scale 1m)



Plate 6: Trench 5 looking west (scale 1m)

# Appendix 1

Tabulated Context Descriptions by Trench



## APPENDIX 1: TABULATED CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS BY TRENCH

Trench 1		Length 25m	Width 1.5m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
100	Dark grey silty clay loam	0-0.3m	Topsoil	
101	Light reddish brown silty clay with occasional gravel pebbles	0.3m-0.6m	Alluvial subsoil	
102	Light yellowish-red clay with abundant angular gravel and pebbles	0.6m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 2		Length 25m	Width 1.5m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
200	Dark grey silty clay loam	0-0.35m	Topsoil	
201	Light reddish brown silty clay with occasional gravel pebbles	0.35m-0.7m	Alluvial subsoil	
202	Light yellowish-red clay with abundant angular gravel and pebbles	0.7m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 3		Length 25m	Width 1.5m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
300	Dark grey silty clay loam	0-0.38m	Topsoil	
301	Light reddish brown silty clay with occasional gravel pebbles	0.38-0.66m	Alluvial subsoil	
302	Light yellowish-red clay with abundant angular gravel and pebbles	0.66m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 4		Length 25m	Width 1.5m	Alignment E-W
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
400	Dark grey silty clay loam	0-0.25m	Topsoil	
401	Light reddish brown silty clay with occasional gravel pebbles	0.25m-0.8m	Alluvial subsoil	
402	Light yellowish-red clay with abundant angular gravel and pebbles	0.8m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 5		Length 25m	Width 1.5m	Alignment E-W
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
500	Dark grey silty clay loam	0-0.35m	Topsoil	
501	Light reddish brown silty clay with occasional gravel pebbles	0.35m-0.7m	Alluvial subsoil	
502	Light yellowish-red clay with abundant angular gravel and pebbles	0.7m+	Natural subsoil	

b.g.s = below ground surface

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