

BG226: Edgcott
Exford
Minehead
Somerset

Archaeological Monitoring
and Recording

REPORT

July 2019





**BG226: Edgcott
Exford
Minehead
Somerset**


for

C1 project code: C1/AMR/19/EES

Wessex Water plc

REPORT

Prepared by	Richard McConnell and Tara Fairclough
Date	29/07/19

Approved by	Richard McConnell
Signed	
Date	30/07/19

Issue	01
-------	----

PROJECT DETAILS

Wessex Water Scheme ref.	BG226
Planning Application ref.	N/A
Local Planning Authority	N/A
Scheduled Monument Consent ref.	N/A
Historic Environment Record ref.	EEM14777
Collecting Museum	South West Heritage Trust
Museum accession code	TTNCM 83/2019
OASIS reference	contexto1-353134

C1 STAFF

Director, Historic Environment Consultant	Richard McConnell BA (Hons), MCIfA
Post-excavation Manager, Historic Buildings Archaeologist, Stone Specialist	Cheryl Green FSA, BA Hons, PhD, MCIfA
Illustrator, Project co-ordination, Historic Buildings Archaeologist	Tara Fairclough BA (Hons), PCIfA
Archaeological Officer, Animal/Human bone Specialist, Archivist	Clare Randall FSA, BA (Hons), BSc (Hons), MSc, PhD, MCIfA
Senior Field Archaeologist	Peter Fairclough BA (Hons)

DISCLAIMER

This report is produced solely for the benefit of an individual client and for the proposed uses stated in the report, and should not be relied upon for other purposes or by other parties unless specifically agreed by us in writing. The different elements of the report are designed to be integral to each other and therefore do not necessarily stand alone. Opinions and information provided in this report are on the basis of C1 using reasonable skill and care, however no investigative method can eliminate the possibility of obtaining partially imprecise, incomplete or less than fully representative information. This document is limited to the scope and limits agreed with the client under our appointment. Any investigative work undertaken as part of the commission will have been subject to limitations imposed by such factors as timescales, budgets, seasonal variations and weather conditions.

COPYRIGHT

C1 shall retain the copyright of any commissioned reports or other projected documents, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved, excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client and the HES for the use of such documents by them in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the project design/specification. This licence will be extended to those conducting bona fide research as long as it does not breach client confidentiality.

Summary

Context One Heritage & Archaeology (C1) carried out archaeological monitoring and recording during the construction of a replacement water main at Edgcott, Exford, Minehead, Somerset. The project was commissioned by Wessex Water plc (WW) under a Term Agreement with C1.

The monitoring and recording was requested by the Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA) Historic Environment Service as sections of open-cut trenching was likely to coincide with the former remains of a post-medieval mill leat and water meadows identified on historic maps. These are recorded on the ENPA Historic Environment Record.

A change in excavation methodology in the area of the former leat around Egcot Mill meant that no groundworks took place in the locations where it may have been identified. Topsoil removal in the region of the former water meadows revealed ragged areas of darker soil within the subsoil and it is possible that these relate to silted gutters although they had no discernible depth when machine-excavated for the pipe trench.

Contents

Summary.....	i
1. Introduction.....	1
2. The Site.....	1
3. Archaeological aims and research objectives.....	2
4. Methodology.....	2
5. Results.....	3
6. The finds.....	3
7. Discussion and Conclusion.....	4
8. Archive.....	4
9. Bibliography.....	4
Appendix 1: Context summary.....	10

Figures

Figure 1. Site setting showing route of new water main.....	6
Figure 2. Area of archaeological monitoring, heritage asset locations and photo viewpoints.....	7

Plates

Plate 1. General view across the Site showing extent of the easement from the south-east.....	8
Plate 2. General view across the Site showing distribution of directional drill pits from the north-west.....	8
Plate 3. General view across the Site showing open-cut trenching from the south-east.....	9
Plate 4. View showing anomalies possibly relating to the water meadows from the south-east.....	9

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Context One Heritage & Archaeology (C1) carried out archaeological monitoring and recording during the construction of a replacement water main at Edgcott, Exford, Minehead, Somerset (the 'Site') (**Figure 1**). The project was commissioned by Wessex Water plc (WW) under a Term Agreement with C1.
- 1.2 The monitoring and recording was requested by the Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA) Historic Environment Service (HES). In a reply to an email consultation request from Ms Fern Kenyon-Hamp, Assistant Environment and Planning Adviser, WW on 8 April 2019, Ms Shirley Blaylock, Conservation Officer, Historic Environment, ENPA stated:
- "I have a few comments on the consultation:*
- 1. The route just clips the line of a possible water meadow system MMO2989 this could be avoided by moving the line slightly to the SW to SS84513885.*
- 2. The open cut crosses a former leat to Edgcott Mill twice at approximately SS84593874 and SS84743866 – at this latter point the routes runs approximately parallel with or on top of the leat for about 65m. I recommend that an archaeological contractor is employed to advise on the route to minimise impact and undertake a watching brief in this section."*
- 1.3 A site inspection carried out by Richard McConnell (C1) during a meeting with Fern Kenyon Hamp (WW) on 17 April 2019 did not identify any above ground traces of the leat although differential growth in the area of the former water meadows broadly indicated an informal arrangement of redundant gutters.
- 1.4 The programme of archaeological works comprised four elements: the production of a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which set out the project strategy (McConnell and Fairclough 2019); archaeological monitoring and recording; post-excavation and report production (this document); and archive preparation and deposition.
- 1.5 The monitoring and recording requirements altered slightly following the initial review of the WSI. In an email dated 30 May 2019 Ms Shirley Blaylock specified the scope of the monitoring operation should be extended to include the whole of the proposed open-cut section relating to the former water meadows and the leat to Edgcott Mill.
- 1.6 The requirement follows advice by Central Government as set out in paragraph 199 of the *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)* (DCLG 2018).

2. The Site

- 2.1 The water main (NGRs western end, 284281 139052; eastern end, 285272 138484) covers a linear distance of c. 1.30km. Pipe laying comprised a combination of open-cut trenching and insertion of the new pipe through the existing main either through 'pipe bursting' or 'pipe insertion', both of which only involved excavation at entry and exit locations. The western end started at a ford on the River Exe near 'Windbrook' and travelled north-east for c. 80m along a lane (unnamed) to meet the Edgcott Road, which it then followed in a south-easterly direction for approximately 220m, before turning south and exiting the road into pasture. The remainder of the route ran along the southern flank of the Edgcott Road through pasture and former meadow before terminating at Park Street opposite the junction with Combe Lane. Monitoring and recording was required along the central section of the route, specifically where it intersected known heritage assets (**Figure 1**). The route is situated on land that is c. 275m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) in the west, descending to 260m aOD in the east, and undulates throughout. The recorded geology for the Site is Ilfracombe Slates Formation - Slate (BGS 2019). The soils are characterised as Freely draining acid loamy soils over rock (CSAIS 2019).
- 2.2 The portion of the water main identified for archaeological monitoring and recording coincided with two known heritage assets recorded by The Historic Environment Record for Exmoor National Park (HER). The

pipeline crossed an area of Post-medieval water meadow (**HER ref. MMO2989**) of a type known as a catch work, ditch gutter or field gutter system. Further to the east, the pipeline coincides with a former mill leat for Edgcott Mill (**HER ref. MSO11267**), both of which are redundant and now filled. The HER records a number of Post-medieval water meadows in the immediate vicinity of the pipeline as part of a managed lowland landscape.

3. Archaeological aims and research objectives

3.1 The principal aims of the archaeological monitoring were to:

- identify, investigate and record all significant buried archaeological deposits revealed on the site during groundworks;
- determine the character of the archaeological remains, where present;
- recover environmental information, which may provide further information relating to the local historic environment of the area;
- provide sufficient information to enable further mitigation strategies to be determined, where appropriate

3.2 The research objectives were to:

- determine whether there is any surviving below ground evidence specifically relating to the former mill leat at Edgcott Farm and former water meadows

3.3 The broader research objectives accord with several research aims of the South West Archaeological Research Framework 2008 (SWARF). These included:

- 21b: Medieval and Post-Medieval agriculture.
- 43: Address the lack of knowledge of Post-Medieval to Modern food production.
- 45: Broaden understanding of Post-Medieval to Modern technology and production

4. Methodology

4.1 All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) (December 2014) and in accordance with the *Somerset Archaeological Handbook* (2017). C1 adhered to the *Code of Conduct* of the CIfA (1985, rev. 2000, 2014), and *Regulations for Professional Conduct* (CIfA, 2014, rev. 2015) at all times. The fieldwork methodology is summarised below.

4.2 C1 gave notification of the commencement of the works to the HES but it was not deemed necessary for a representative to visit the Site and monitor archaeological fieldwork. Monitoring will continue until the deposition of the Site archive.

4.3 Prior to the commencement of Site works, the excavation methodology was agreed between those responsible for carrying out the groundworks and C1 to ensure that all parties were aware of the monitoring requirements. In the event, the groundworks methodology was altered and the area of open-cut trenching was reduced and replaced with the directional drill method.

4.4 Construction groundworks comprised the machine excavation of the following:

- Topsoil removal along the lengths of open-cut pipeline to create an easement c.3m wide
- Excavation of pipe trenches, 0.45m wide and up to 1.20m deep and centrally placed within the easement

- Excavation of directional drill pits at entry and exit locations where new pipe sections were bored underground

4.5 Easement

Easement groundworks included the topsoil strip of a 3m wide corridor in preparation for pipe trenching. The entire length of easement subject to monitoring and recording was inspected for archaeological potential. Excavation was carried out by a 2.5 tonne Tackauchi 250 slew with a 1.60m toothless grading bucket.

4.6 Pipe trenches

Inspection of the pipe trench excavations were deemed necessary as depth of soil removal over the easement was insufficient to permit an adequate assessment of archaeological potential. Excavation of the open-cut trenching was carried out by a 2.5 tonne Tackauchi 250 slew with a 0.45m toothless grading bucket.

Drill pits

Drill pit groundworks comprised the excavation of seven pits each measuring 3m x 1.60m and up to 1.20m deep and was carried out by a 2.5 tonne Tackauchi 250 slew with a 1.60m toothless grading bucket.

- 4.7 An archaeologist was on Site to monitor these operations with the aim of identifying and recording any archaeological features/deposits/finds present.
- 4.8 By default, core details of the deposit sequence across the Site were recorded using C1 *pro-forma* profile forms in digital format using iPad mini tablets. The frequency with which profiles were recorded was based on any variation of the deposit sequence. Soil colours were logged using a Munsell soil colour chart. Spoil was examined for the retrieval of artefacts. A photographic record of the monitoring and recording was carried out and involved the sole use of digital images. The photographic record included working shots to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation mounted.

5. Results

- 5.1 In accordance with standard archaeological practice, each deposit recorded during the investigation was given a unique context number and is shown in standard brackets, e.g. (100). Deposit colours were matched on Site against a Munsell soil colour chart and described against the relevant hue and reference, e.g. brownish yellow (10YR 3/1). Details of all the recorded deposits have been tabulated in **Appendix 1** and are summarised below.
- 5.2 Nine profiles of the deposit sequence were recorded during groundwork excavations including areas of easement and open-cut trenching and all seven drill pits (**Figure 1**). The deposit sequence observed was very similar in all locations. The easement was only soil stripped to a depth of 0.20m - 0.30m (**Plate 1**) while the drill pits and pipe trench were excavated to a maximum depth of 1.20m (**Plates 2 and 3**).
- 5.3 The topsoil (contexts (100), (200), (300), (400), (500), (600), (700) and (800)) comprised a strong brown (7.5YR 5/6) compacted silt loam with occasional gravel fragments and measured up to 0.30m thick. This overlay subsoil (contexts (101), (201), (301), (401), (501), (601), (701) and (900)) and consisted of reddish yellow (7.5YR 6/6) compacted silt loam with frequent river gravels. The subsoil was situated above natural river gravel deposits in the drill pits (contexts (102), (202), (302), (402), (502), (602) (702)), a grey (7.5YR 6/1) friable sandy loam, up to 0.40m deep, with frequent rounded river gravel, while the natural observed in the pipe trench (901) comprised grey (7.5YR 5/1) compacted silty clay, 0.10m deep with occasional gravel fragments. Deposits associated with the water meadow system (1000) were recorded as strong brown (7.5YR 5/6) compacted silt loam, 0.05m deep, with occasional gravel fragments (**Plate 4**).

6. The finds

- 6.1 No finds were observed or recovered during archaeological monitoring.

7. Discussion and Conclusion

- 7.1 A change in the methodology from open-cut trenching to intermittent drill pits in the area of the former leat around Egcot Mill meant that no groundworks took place in the locations where it may have been identified. However, an opportunity arose to inspect the mill building itself and this still contains some of the mechanism including the drive shaft and a possible edge of the leat. Topsoil removal in the region of the former water meadows revealed ragged areas of darker soil within the subsoil and it is possible that these relate to silted gutters although they had no discernible depth when machine-excavated for the pipe trench.

8. Archive

- 8.1 The NPPF requires that an archaeological archive arising from development works is made publicly accessible (para. 199). The archive comprises two parts: the paper/digital archive including site records and images; and the artefact/ecofact assemblage.

Paper/digital archive

- 8.2 Where archaeological features/deposits are recorded, the archive generated from this usually comprises site records, drawings and photographs either in paper format or born-digital data. Within three months of the conclusion of a project this is normally transferred into the care of a Trusted Digital Repository such as the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) as scanned paper records or native born-digital data. The digital archive will be compiled in accordance with the standards and requirements of the ADS, as set out on their website.
- 8.3 As no archaeological evidence was encountered, all relevant data has been incorporated into this assessment report and the paper/digital archive will be stored on the C1 cloud storage server or discarded.

Physical archive

- 8.4 The artefact/ecofact assemblage is the legal property of the landowner (excluding any items that fall under The Treasure Act 1996). However, it is usual practice for the landowner to transfer ownership of this assemblage to a receiving institution (usually a museum) once it has been fully assessed and/or analysed. Receiving institutions store the assemblage and make it publicly accessible. Alternatively, the landowner can choose to keep the assemblage but arrangements must be made to ensure its long-term curation and public accessibility in accordance with NPPF.
- 8.5 On this occasion, there is no physical archive to deposit.

Dissemination: report

- 8.6 Copies of the report will be submitted to the following:
- client and/or agent
 - the HES so that it can be included as part of the county Historic Environment Record (HER) the ADS, via OASIS (On-line Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations – <http://oasis.ac.uk/england/>)

Dissemination: publication

- 8.7 By default, a short entry will be prepared for publication in the summary section of the next county archaeological journal or equivalent periodical.

9. Bibliography

Cranfield Soils and Agrifood Institute:
Soilscapes (CSAIS), 2019

Available at: <http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/#>
accessed on 20 May 2019

Campbell, G., Moffett, L., and Straker, V.,
2011

Environmental Archaeology - A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation (second edition), Historic England

- Chartered Institute of Field Archaeologists (CIfA), December 2014 *Code of Conduct*. Reading: CIfA
- Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), December 2014 (rev. 2015) *Regulations for professional conduct*. Reading: CIfA
- Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), December 2014 *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*. Reading: CIfA
- Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) 2018 *National Planning Policy Framework*, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office
- English Heritage, 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects*. English Heritage
- Geology of Britain viewer - British Geological Survey (BGS), 2019 Available at:
<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html?>, accessed on 20 May 2019
- Historic England, 2015 *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide*. Historic England
- McConnell, R., and Fairclough, T., 2019 *Written Scheme of Investigation for a Programme of Archaeological Monitoring and Recording: The Cottage Gallery, The Borough, Wedmore, Somerset BG226: Edgcott, Exford, Minehead, Somerset* Context One Heritage and Archaeology, unpublished
- Museum and Galleries Commission, 1992 *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections*. Museum and Galleries Commission (MGC)
- South West Heritage Trust, 2017 *Somerset Archaeological Handbook*. Somerset Historic Environment Service
- South West Heritage Trust, 2008 South West Archaeological Research Framework
- South West Heritage Trust, 2012 South West Archaeological Research Framework. Research Strategy 2012-2017
- Watkinson, D., and Neal, V., 2001 *First Aid for Finds*.

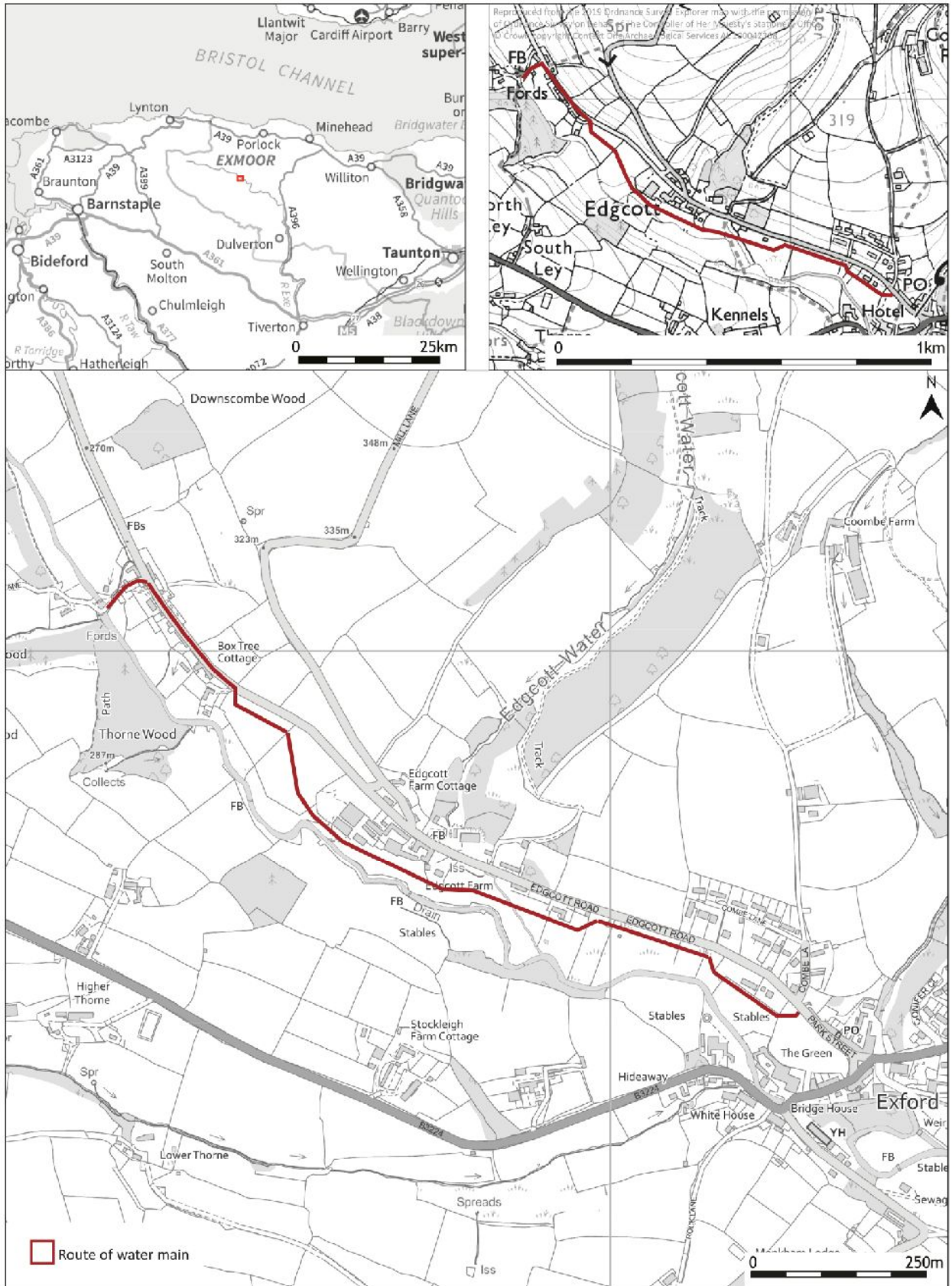


Figure 1. Site setting showing route of new water main

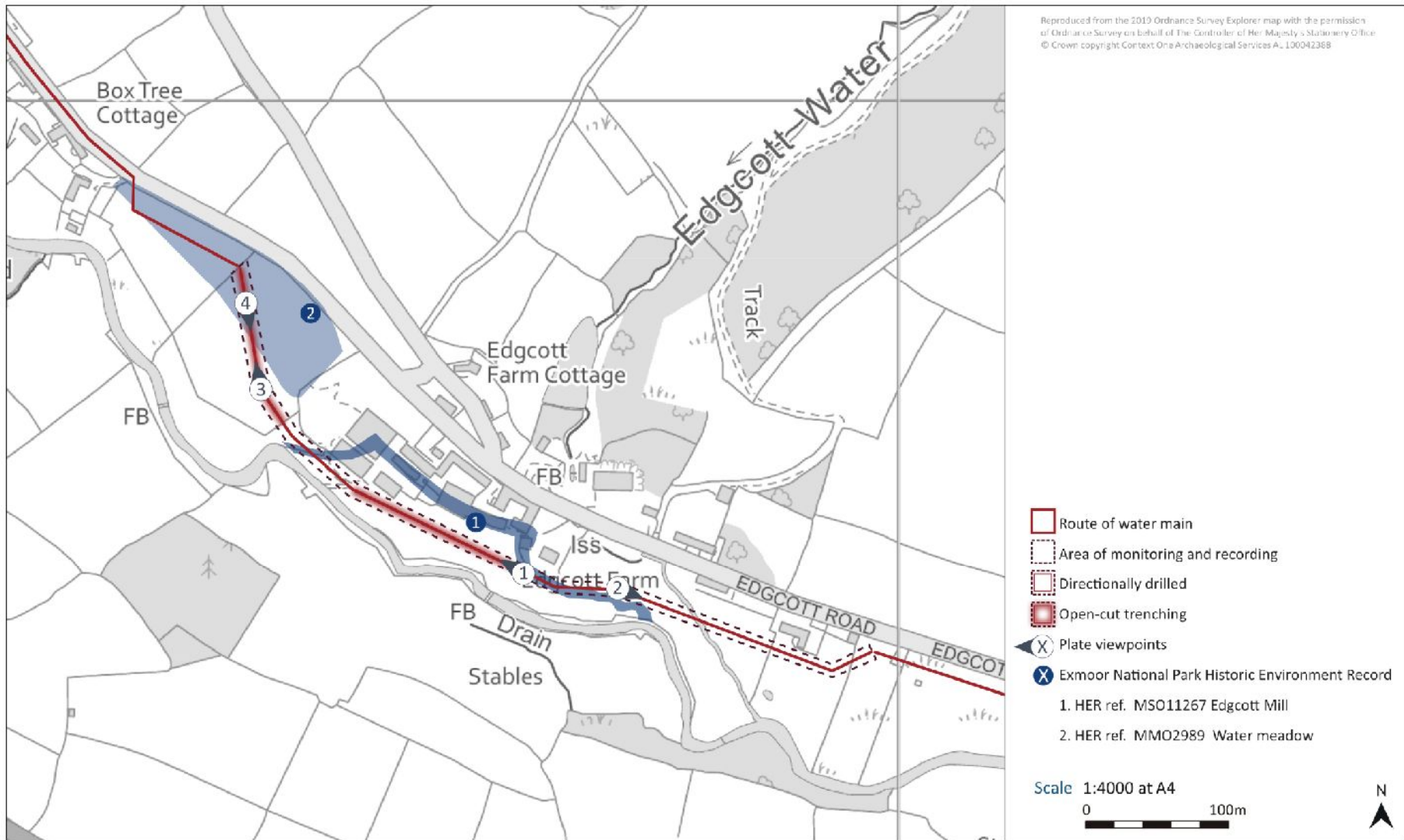


Figure 2. Area of archaeological monitoring, heritage asset locations and photo viewpoints



Plate 1. General view across the Ste showing extent of the easement from the south-east



Plate 2. General view across the Site showing distribution of directional drill pits from the north-west



Plate 3. General view across the Site showing open-cut trenching from the south-east



Plate 4. View showing anomalies possibly relating to the water meadows from the south-east

Appendix 1: Context summary

CONTEXT NO.	PERIOD	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	EARLIER THAN	CONTEMP. WITH	LATER THAN	LENGTH	WIDTH/DIAMETER	THICKNESS/DEPTH
Drill pits 1-7									
100-700	Modern	Layer	Topsoil. Strong brown (7.5YR 5/6) compacted silty loam with occasional gravel fragments	NA	-	101-701	3.00m	1.60m	0.30-0.40m
101-701	Undated	Layer	Subsoil. Reddish yellow (7.5YR 4/6) compacted silt loam with gravel with frequent rounded river gravels	100-700	-	7-102	3.00m	1.60m	0.40-0.50m
102-702	Natural	Layer	Natural. Grey (7.5YR 6/1) friable sandy loam with frequent rounded river gravels	101-701	-	NA	-	-	>0.10
Open-cut trenching									
800	Modern	Layer	Topsoil. Strong brown (7.5YR 5/6) compacted silty loam with occasional gravel fragments	NA	-	NA	-	3.00m	>0.20m
900	Undated	Layer	Subsoil. Strong brown (7.5YR 5/8) compacted silt loam with gravel with frequent rounded river gravels	NA	-	901	-	0.45m	0.20m
901	Natural	Layer	Natural. Grey (7.5YR 5/1) compacted silt loam with occasional gravel fragments	900	-	NA	-	0.45m	>0.10m
1000	Modern	Deposit	Possible water meadow deposit. Strong brown (7.5YR 5/6) compacted silt loam with occasional gravel fragments						

