



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION
IN THE CORRIDOR OF THE PROPOSED ROAD
LINKING THE A379 TO OLD RYDON LANE,
TOPSHAM, EXETER**

SX 9584 9043 - SX 9556 9082

On behalf of

Dukeminster Ltd

AUGUST 2010

REPORT FOR Dukeminster Ltd
6 Upper Grosvenor Street
London
W1K 2LJ

PREPARED BY David Gilbert

ILLUSTRATION BY Eoin Fitzsimons, David Gilbert, Milena Grzybowska
and Roy Entwistle

FIELDWORK 6th – 23rd May and 2nd – 23rd June 2008

EXCAVATION BY David Gilbert

WATCHING BRIEF BY Daniel Sausins and David Gilbert

REPORT ISSUED 25th August 2010

ENQUIRES TO John Moore Heritage Services
Hill View
Woodperry Road
Beckley
Oxfordshire OX3 9UZ

Tel/Fax 01865 358300
Email: info@jmheritageservices.co.uk

Site Code HTLR 08
JMHS Project No: 1928
Archive Location Exeter Museum
Accession Number 132/2006

CONTENTS

	Page
<i>SUMMARY</i>	1
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Site Location	1
1.2 Planning Background	1
1.3 Archaeological Background	1
2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION	3
3 STRATEGY	3
3.1 Research Design	3
3.2 Methodology	4
4 RESULTS	4
4.1 Excavation Results	6
4.1.1 Prehistoric features	6
4.1.2 Undated features of a possible prehistoric origin	15
4.1.3 Post-medieval features	22
4.1.4 Modern features	30
4.1.5 Undated features	30
4.2 Reliability of Techniques and Results	39
5 FINDS	39
5.1 The Bronze Age Pottery	39
5.1.1 The Pottery Assemblage	39
5.1.2 Petrographic and Calcareous Nannofossil Analysis	43
5.2 The Post-medieval Pottery	49
5.3 Lithics	51
5.4 Other finds	52
5.4.1 Metal	52
5.4.2 Stone	52
5.4.3 Glass	53
5.4.4 Clay Tobacco Pipe	53
5.5 Environmental Remains	53
6 DISCUSSION	53
7 BIBLIOGRAPHY	59
APPENDIX – Errata to the Primary Evaluation of 2006	63

FIGURES

Figure 1	Site Location	2
Figure 2	Overall site plan	5
Figure 3	Area 1	8
Figure 4	Sections of the ditches of the enclosure	9
Figure 5	The Hut Circle	11
Figure 6	Sections of Pit 79	12
Figure 7	Area 4	13
Figure 8	Sections of Ditches 04/005 and 04/039	14
Figure 9	Sections of possible prehistoric features	17
Figure 10	Area to the far north of Area 1, adjacent to A378	18
Figure 11	Area 2 with the area to the east	19
Figure 12	Area to the far east of Area 2	20
Figure 13	Area 3 with the area to the south	21
Figure 14	Area north of Area 1	23
Figure 15	Area 5	24
Figure 16	Section of field ditches and associated post holes	25
Figure 17	Fence Lines	29
Figure 18	Sections of pits 71 and 03/009	30
Figure 19	Sections of Undated Postholes	32
Figure 20	Area south of Area 4	35
Figure 21	Sections of Undated Pits	36
Figure 22	Sections of Undated Pit Clusters	38
Figure 23	Bronze Age Pottery	44
Figure 24	Thin section photomicrographs	48

Figure 25	Geophysical Survey	54
Figure 26	Contour Map	56
Figure 27	Local Bronze Age activity	58

Summary

John Moore Heritage Services conducted an archaeological excavation along the route of the proposed new A379 link road. The excavation confirmed the presence of a substantial enclosure, first identified by aerial photographs, and dated it to the Bronze Age. Within it a single hut circle was recorded, this was a large structure with a double ring of postholes. Possible contemporary structures were also noted external to the enclosure. A major Bronze Age land boundary was recorded following the topography of the area with an entrance way aligned on the enclosure.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The link road from the A379 will run from SX 9555 9083 southwards to Old Rydon Lane at SX 9585 9043. The geology is Heavitree Brecchia with Dawlish Sandstone on the southern edge alongside Old Rydon Lane (Sheet 325, Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales)).

1.2 Planning Background

Planning permission (06/2640/03) has been granted for the provision of a highway junction for access to Russell Way in the north and a link road to Old Rydon Lane in the south. As archaeological remains are known on the route of the link road Condition 10 of the permission stated:

Prior to commencement of development a written scheme of archaeological work shall be submitted to, and be approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. This scheme shall include on-site work, and off-site work such as analysis, publication, and archiving of the results. All works shall be carried out and completed as approved, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local planning Authority.

1.3 Archaeological Background

A desk-based assessment (JMHS 2006a) indicated that the site had the potential to contain archaeological remains of prehistoric and later date. A geophysical survey over the route (Stratascan 2006) revealed the presence of field systems and smaller paddocks, and an enclosure. The proposed route was subsequently evaluated by the excavation of a number of trenches (JMHS 2006b) and the area to the west and east of the southern part of the route has also been evaluated by trial trenching (JMHS 2007a; JMHS 2007b).

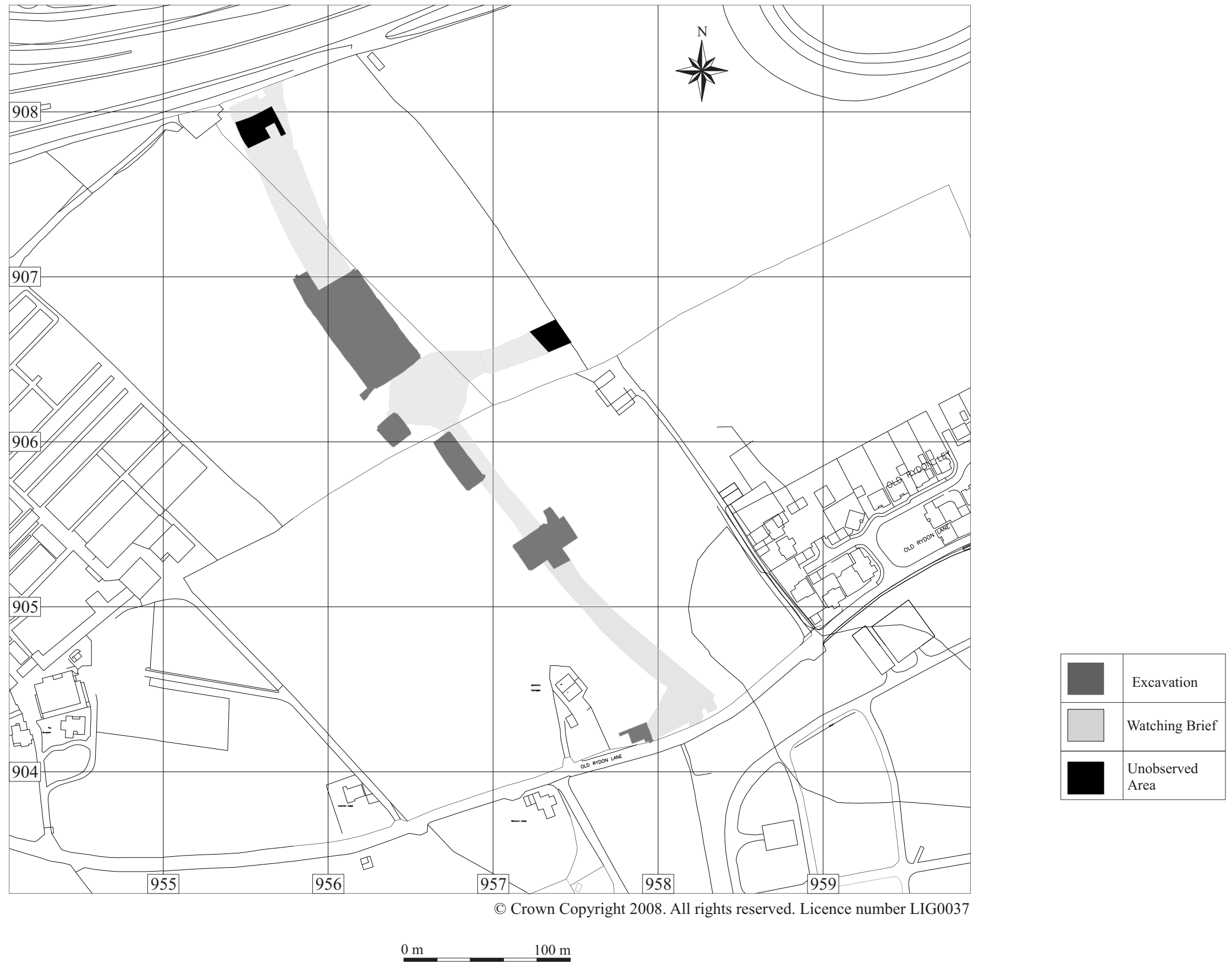


Figure 1. Site location

An archaeological evaluation comprising the excavation of eleven trenches was carried out prior to the determination of the planning application for the application of the link road (JMHS 2006b). The evaluation confirmed the results of the geophysical survey in that the several ditches were located and very few discrete features (post holes and pits) were present. The lack of finds from the excavated features, with the exception of a flint flake, coupled with the presence of prehistoric flintwork and pottery from the topsoil suggests that the field boundaries are prehistoric. The rectangular enclosure in the field may be of the same date. Where dateable, the finds seem to indicate an early Bronze Age date for the activity.

A chert blade core that was found during this evaluation was of Mesolithic or Neolithic date. This may just be a casual loss. A single abraded sherd of Romano-British date was also located (JMHS 2006b).

The apparent field system located by the geophysical survey (Stratascan 2006) extends across the area and possibly pre-dates 1765 (JMHS 2007b). Several linear ditches were located, not all of which had previously been predicted by the geophysical survey, during the initial evaluation of the road corridor (JMHS 2006b). These field systems were confirmed during a second phase of evaluation outside the corridor (JMHS 2007a & 2007b). Other ephemeral features such as isolated pits and postholes were also located and may well be prehistoric as a Neolithic flint scatter was recorded from the topsoil.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The primary aim was to make a record of the archaeological features that were to be affected by the new road.

Particular aims included

- to date the field system boundary ditches
- to date the rectangular enclosure and to determine its function
- to determine the relationship, if possible, between the field system and the enclosure
- to try to determine the relationship of the relic field boundaries with the hedgebank and any related boundary features along Old Rydon Lane to try to confirm the sequence and whether there is any evidence of the early boundary mentioned in an Anglo-Saxon charter.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

The Archaeology Officer of Exeter City Council (ECC) issued a Brief for the work, which John Moore Heritage Services carried out to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with ECC and the client. The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1995).

3.2 Methodology

Five areas were controlled stripped, mapped, excavated and recorded:

- Area 1, the east side of the rectangular enclosure and the area to the east encompassing evaluation trenches 6-8 and 11. A pit was found within trench 6 outside of the enclosure. The area investigated measured *c.* 35m x 70m and included the roadside margins in case landscaping or other works might occur that will affect the archaeological horizon.
- Area 2, south of area 1 and west of evaluation trench 5. The turn in the cropmark was investigated in order to determine that the feature is of a single phase or whether other features are present forming field junctions. It measured *c.* 15m x 15m.
- Area 3, north of trench 4 and west of trench 41. Again the turn in the cropmark feature was investigated for the same reasons given above. Also the possible relationship between this cropmark feature and a ditch seen in trench 41 and a further ditch (not identified in the geophysical survey) seen in trench 4 was also investigated. Area size was *c.* 35m x 12m.
- Area 4, investigated the relationship between the NW-SE cropmark feature and the NE-SW cropmark feature. Area size was initially *c.* 25m x 20m. The extent was then extended in all directions at the behest of the Archaeology Officer of Exeter City Council.
- Area 5, investigated the relationship between the NW-SE cropmark feature and the hedgebank and a possible old boundary alongside Old Rydon Lane. Area was initially *c.* 12m x 6m, but later extended slightly

Excavation of these areas was by 360⁰ excavator using a grading bucket under direct archaeological control. Mechanical excavation was taken down to the top of the archaeological horizon or to 'natural' deposits.

The resulting surfaces were hand excavated and features planned prior to excavation. All intersections of features were excavated in order to determine relationships. In addition at least 20% of each linear feature was hand excavated in order to recover dating evidence for each. When such evidence was not forthcoming then additional lengths were hand excavated. All discrete features (e.g. pits and postholes) were 100% excavated.

The road corridor outside of these excavation areas was the subject of an archaeological watching brief. All ground reduction work was monitored and controlled by an archaeologist.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plan and section drawings being compiled where appropriate.

4. RESULTS

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers, numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material.