

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared by Exeter Archaeology (EA) at the request of Torbay Council, to assess the archaeological implications of a proposed extension (for a nursery) to Great Parks Community Centre, Queen Elizabeth Drive, Paignton (SX 8698 6084).<sup>1</sup>

### 1.1 **The site and geology** (Fig. 1, 2; site centred at SX 8698 6084)

Great Parks Community Centre site lies approximately 2 km west of the historic centre of Paignton on the west side of Queen Elizabeth Drive and to the south of Greatpark Lane. The site of the proposed nursery lies immediately to the north-west of the Community Centre in an area currently mainly under tarmac, with banks on its north and west boundaries. The development area is approximately 240m<sup>2</sup>.<sup>2</sup>

The geology of the site is Permian Conglomerate, Breccia and Sandstone.<sup>3</sup>

### 1.2 **Aims and objectives of the assessment**

The aims of this desktop survey are to, as far as possible, identify the archaeological potential of the application site and to determine the impact (if any) of the proposed development. The results of this assessment will be used to inform the planning process; further recommendations may be made in respect of any archaeological mitigation.

The work was undertaken in accordance with a brief supplied by the Torbay Council Archaeology Officer.<sup>4</sup>

### 1.3 **Method and sources utilised**

The desktop assessment consisted of the examination of material at:

- The Westcountry Studies Library (WCSL)
- The Devon Record Office (DRO)
- Devon & Exeter Institution (DEI)
- Archive material held by Exeter Archaeology (EA)

The Torbay Sites and Monuments Register (SMR) was also consulted.

### 1.4 **Statutory and other designations**

No statutory designations have been identified on the site or in the vicinity.

## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 **Archaeological background**

No structured archaeological investigations are known to have taken place in the immediate vicinity of the site. Archaeological assessments in the wider area include those carried out in 1992–4 for the proposed Torbay Ring Road.<sup>5</sup> Sites relevant to this project identified during these assessments include cropmarks representing enclosures of probable prehistoric date

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<sup>1</sup> Planning Application No. 03/1658 PA.

<sup>2</sup> Bishop 12 October 2003.

<sup>3</sup> BGS 1976.

<sup>4</sup> Bishop 12 October 2003.

<sup>5</sup> Turton 1992; Reed & Turton 1993a; 1993b; 1994a; 1994b.

near Smallcombe Cross (see site 4), and slightly further afield to the south of Higher Blagdon.<sup>6</sup>

## 2.2 General historical background

The large and fertile Saxon manor of Paignton was acquired by the bishops of Exeter and remained in their hands after the Conquest.<sup>7</sup> A weekly market was granted to Paignton in 1295, as was a three-day fair held during the festival of the Holy Trinity. A borough appears to have been established about the same time.<sup>8</sup> Paignton was one of the bishops' richest manors, but between 1519 and 1551 Bishop Veysey disposed of nearly all the manors belonging to his See, and in 1545 the manor was leased to Sir Thomas Speke.<sup>9</sup> In 1557 the manor was granted to Sir William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, and it was he who commissioned the very detailed survey and plan made 10 years later.<sup>10</sup> In 1644 the manor was sold to Sir Henry Cary of Cockington, but financial pressures resulting from his support of the Crown during the Civil War led to the manor being sold to Samuel Kelland Esq. in 1654.<sup>11</sup>

During the medieval and post-medieval periods the settlement focus of Paignton was along Winner Street and around Church Street; this is evident on Donn's map of 1765. Paignton suffered a decline after the Reformation, and was described by Dr Richard Pococke in 1750 as 'a poor town of farmers'.<sup>12</sup> In the mid 19th century it was still surrounded by orchards and fields. The arrival of the railway in Paignton in 1859<sup>13</sup> appears to have been the main impetus for the development of the town as a seaside resort and by the turn of the 20th century the settlement area had expanded considerably.

Just over 1km to the west of the development area are the hamlets of Blagdon. The estate of Blagdon is first recorded in 1242 and was regarded along with the adjacent holding of Collaton as a sub-manor of Paignton; a small monastic foundation may have been established in the vicinity of Lower Blagdon.<sup>14</sup>

## 2.3 History of the site

The site lies to the south of Greatpark Lane, a route which linked the hamlets at Blagdon with the manorial centre at Paignton. The site is shown as undeveloped farmland on the OS surveyors' drawing of 1802–4<sup>15</sup> and the 1840 Tithe Map (Fig. 4). At that date the site of the proposed nursery was occupied by parts of two fields divided by a trackway leading to a third. All were within the 165-acre holding owned and occupied by William Maclean. The south-western field (No. 820) was called 'Hollacre', and the other two were both called 'Bowden'.<sup>16</sup> All three were under arable cultivation. The trackway shown may well have originated for field access, however, there is also a chance that it once led to a building or dwelling. The name of William Maclean has not been located in the last surviving land tax assessment, and consequently the earlier history of the site cannot be established.

<sup>6</sup> Reed & Turton 1994b, 4.

<sup>7</sup> Thorn & Thorn 1985, Exon Notes 2.16–22.

<sup>8</sup> Hoskins 1972, 449–50; Beresford & Finberg 1973, 96.

<sup>9</sup> Cherry & Pevsner 1989, 836; Patterson 1952, 54; Churchward 1932, 240.

<sup>10</sup> Patterson 1952, 54–55.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, 62.

<sup>12</sup> Born 1989, 102.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas 1981, 78.

<sup>14</sup> Turton 1992, 4.

<sup>15</sup> OS 1802–4 surveyors' three-inch drawing.

<sup>16</sup> Field Nos 820–2.

### 3. SITES OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL INTEREST

The following sites are located on Fig. 3. Sites which will, or may be, affected by the development are marked with an asterisk (e.g. \*1).

#### \*1. **Great Parks Farm** SX 8699 6083

‘Greatpark’ is shown on the OS 1:2500 map of 1862 (survey date)<sup>17</sup> and 1888 (Fig. 5) as what appears to be a large house or farm, with a range of outbuildings fronting Greatpark Lane. As no buildings were shown at this location on the 1840 Tithe Map (Fig. 4) the site was presumably developed between 1840 and 1862. By 1906 there was an additional outbuilding to the east of the house and the same layout existed in 1934.<sup>18</sup> The farm was still shown on the OS 1:1250 map of 1970<sup>19</sup> on which it was marked ‘Great Parks Farm’. The Community Centre and the proposed extension appear to directly overlie the site of the farm buildings.

The farm name ‘Great Parks’ may refer to a former enclosed park. In the medieval period these parks were high-status assets used for the keeping of wild animals (for the supply of venison and other meat), and to provide a source of timber. A park at Paignton is documented in 1265,<sup>20</sup> when Henry *de la Pomeraye* was fined and threatened with excommunication for, in the company of others, poaching and killing wild animals (*feras bestias*) in the bishop’s *Parci de Peynetone*. The location of the park remains uncertain, although it has been claimed that a deer park adjoined the Bishop’s Palace.<sup>21</sup> The 1265 document mentions the park boundary (*fossata*), a ditch and by implication also a bank, crossed by the perpetrators, but there is no specific reference to the fence or pale (or wall), or a deer-leap, specifically intended to confine deer. Other animals, e.g. wild swine, were almost certainly kept within the park.

Couldrey also writes that the Earl of Pembroke, to whom Paignton manor was conveyed in 1557, ‘had a grant of a Deer Park at Wylewood Deer Park’.<sup>22</sup> This may have been in the vicinity of Wild Woods Farm, to the north of Beacon Hill, possibly that named as ‘Bery Castle’ on Saxton’s Survey of 1575,<sup>23</sup> and unlikely to be the ‘Park of Paignton’ mentioned above.

Other than the mid 19th-century farm name ‘Great Parks’, there is as yet no clear evidence for the existence of a park in the vicinity of the site. On the Tithe Map and 1888 OS map (Figs 4, 5) such an enclosure might perhaps tentatively be suggested as the sub-rectangular area bounded by Greatpark Lane to the north-west, an adjoining lane to the north-east and field boundaries adjacent to the leat (see site 2) to the south-east and south-west.

In 1840 a field called ‘Great Parks’ lay some 540m to the north-west of the development site,<sup>24</sup> and formed part of the holding in which the site is situated. The OS surveyors’ drawing<sup>25</sup> and the Tithe Map (Fig. 4) depict a trackway leading north-westward from what is now Greatpark Lane towards this field; on the 1888 and 1891 OS maps (Figs 5–6) the route is

<sup>17</sup> Bishop 2003, 1.

<sup>18</sup> OS 1:2500 Sheet 121.8, 1906 & 1934.

<sup>19</sup> OS 1:1250 Sheet SX 8660–8760, Revision of 1970.

<sup>20</sup> Hingeston-Randolph 1889, 229–30. The footnote states that the year may, however, be 1275.

<sup>21</sup> Patterson 1952, 9. Couldrey (1932, 223) adds that it was where Palace Avenue is now.

<sup>22</sup> Couldrey 1932, 233.

<sup>23</sup> Copy of ‘Devonshire with Excester described’ in EA Archives; see also Shirley 1867, 92.

<sup>24</sup> Field No. 769, NGR SX 8655 6125.

<sup>25</sup> OS 1802–4 surveyors’ three-inch drawing.

shown continuing as a footpath to the field boundary. However, no boundaries immediately suggestive of a deer park have been identified in this area and the association, if any, of the field-name with that of the later farm is not clear.

It is not known at what date Greatpark Lane was given its present name. It seems likely that it took its name from the farm in the 19th century. If, however, the name is of earlier origin, perhaps referring to the access route to ‘Great Parks’ field, it seems to imply that the latter may have been of some significance.

## 2. **Watercourse/leat** SX 8688 6075

On the Tithe Map and early OS maps (Figs 4–6) a watercourse is shown running alongside field boundaries to the west and south of the site, following an overall south-easterly direction to the town. The watercourse appears to be part of that described by Patterson as the leat built by the bishops in the medieval period. The water was brought by gravitation, partly in an open channel and partly culverted, for a distance of about three miles. The water supply originated at Westerland from where it was brought by an open leat down the valley, past the site of the reservoir at Blagdon, across Foxhole Lane and into the grounds of Primley House. The leat ran underground through the grounds of Primley House, surfacing near Winner Street and continuing, above or below ground, to the palace precincts and the mill.<sup>26</sup> A field to the north-west of the site adjacent to the leat was called ‘Bove the Leat’ in the Tithe Apportionment.<sup>27</sup>

## 3. **Quarry** SX 8723 6085

The 1888 OS map (Fig. 5) shows an ‘Old Quarry’ within an area of woodland to the north-west of King’s Ash Cross. The quarry is not shown on the Tithe Map or mentioned in the Tithe Apportionment, at which time the area was divided into two plots described as ‘Luscombe Orchard’ and ‘Murray Orchard’.<sup>28</sup>

## 4. **Cropmark enclosures** SX 8700 6167; SX 8705 6163

In two adjacent fields to the north-west of Smallcombe Cross, cropmarks representing two enclosures have been identified on aerial photographs. The northern enclosure is oval; the southern enclosure is rectilinear and has an adjoining linear feature.<sup>29</sup> These enclosures are potentially of prehistoric date.

## 5. **Mill field-name** SX 8685 6120; 8690 6113

Two fields to the north of Greatpark Lane were called ‘Mill Pair’ or ‘Millpair’ on the Tithe Map/Apportionment. Field 816 (‘Millpair’) was owned and occupied by Nicholas Hunt and field 815 (‘Mill Pair’) was owned by Jacob Bartlett and occupied by Samuel Rendle. A further field called ‘Millpair’ owned by Nicholas Hunt lies close by.<sup>30</sup> No mills have been identified in the close vicinity of the field, and no watercourses or leats are depicted on the Tithe Map. As the fields lay towards the top of a hillslope it seems likely that the name refers to a windmill rather than a watermill.

<sup>26</sup> Patterson 1952, 15–16. Recent work by EA (2000, Project No. 3815 and Project No. 4670 – report forthcoming) suggests a watercourse ran eastward from the Bishop’s Palace.

<sup>27</sup> Field No. 809; NGR SX 8683 6081.

<sup>28</sup> Field Nos 790 & 791.

<sup>29</sup> Reed & Turton 1994a, 2–3.

<sup>30</sup> Field No 814 (noted in the Apportionment but not located).

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The proposed extension to Great Parks Community Centre, and the existing Centre itself, lay on the site of Great Park Farm, which appears to have been built between 1840 and 1862. The proposed extension will overlie a large part of the house site. The extent of ground disturbance in this area prior to the laying of the present tarmac surface is unknown, however, it is very likely that remains associated with this substantial building will be encountered during any groundworks.

Prior to the construction of Great Park Farm the site appears to have been farmland, and there are no specific indications of any earlier structures on the site. Nevertheless, the trackway depicted on the 1802–4 surveyors' drawing and the Tithe Map, while probably used merely for field access, might possibly be associated with a former building. Evidence of the trackway and field boundaries may be preserved within the development area.

The name 'Great Park' may relate to the former 'Park of Paignton', which is documented in the 13th century. However, the location of this park has not been positively identified. An area to the south of Greatpark Lane could possibly represent such an enclosure, but the only field located bearing the name in 1840 lies over 0.5km to the north-west. The main physical features associated with such a park are substantial perimeter banks and ditches, and the boundary with Greatpark Lane is perhaps the most likely place within the development area for the existence of any such features. The boundary and road are also of general historic interest as of potential medieval date.

Part of a medieval leat, built to supply the Bishop's Palace and mill (in the town) lies to the west of the development area.

No prehistoric sites are recorded in the close vicinity of the site, but there are a number of sites in the wider area.

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##### ***EA Exeter Archaeology***

Archive for Project No. 4670: Excavation at Paignton Bishop's Palace (report forthcoming)  
Copy of C. Saxton's Survey of 1575 'Devonshire with Excester described'

##### ***DRO Devon Record Office***

Paignton Tithe Map (DRO copy 1840; PRO (microfiche) copy, 1841) and Apportionment (1840)

**WCSL Westcountry Studies Library**

OS surveyors' three-inch drawing No. 38, 1802–4

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Fig. 3 Sites of archaeological interest.

Fig. 5 The site in 1888 (OS 1:2500 Sheet 121.8).

Fig. 6 The site in 1891 (OS 1:10560 Sheet 121NE, enlarged to approx. 1:8000).

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT  
OF PROPOSED EXTENSION TO  
GREAT PARKS COMMUNITY CENTRE  
PAIGNTON, DEVON**

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