

PREFACE

This report has been compiled by Exeter Museums Archaeological Field Unit (EMAFU) at the request of Devon County Council for incorporation into an Environmental Statement being prepared on the Torbay Ring Road Stage 3 scheme. It supersedes EMAFU Report No. 93.50, and contains some modifications including revised illustrations. This assessment should be read in conjunction with EMAFU Report No. 94.63 *Archaeological Assessment of DCC Torbay Ring Road Stage 3: Valley (Alternative) Route*. Both revised reports (EMAFU Report Nos 94.62, 94.63) include an additional rapid assessment in the form of an Appendix and additions to the text where relevant, based on the amended DCC route maps and additional information received from Structural Soils Ltd in September 1994.

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT
OF DCC TORBAY RING ROAD
STAGE 3
PLATEAU (PREFERRED) ROUTE**

by

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1. INTRODUCTION

This assessment has been prepared at the request of Devon County Council to evaluate the archaeological impact of the proposed preferred route (Plateau Route) of Torbay Ring Road Stage 3 as shown on DCC Drawing No. 6057T/142/A. This report should be read in conjunction with EMAFU Report No. 94.63 *Archaeological Assessment of DCC Torbay Ring Road Stage 3: Valley (Alternative) Route*. The results of borehole and trial pit investigations are also included in this report.

1.1 The proposed route (Fig. 1)

The total length of the proposed route is approximately 2.7km. The route commences in the parish of Marldon at the Churscombe Cross roundabout. From here it follows the line of Kings Ash Road (A380; the old parish boundary between Marldon and Paignton) for *c.* 500m. At SX871619 the route diverges to the south-west (new roundabout to be constructed) and passes to the north-west of the Hill Top Nursery buildings. At SX87006176 it cuts across the parish boundary into Paignton (now Torbay BC). From here the route sweeps to the west through gently-sloping fields to the west of Luscombe Road as far as the south-east corner of the 19th-century reservoirs (Great Park Lakes). The route then returns eastward to rejoin Kings Ash Road just west of the built-up area and continues to Tweenaways Cross at the limit of Torbay Ring Road Stage 4. Along the southern part of the route the valley slopes are less steep.

Since the inception of the scheme (as shown on DCC Drawing No. 6037T/134, Jan. 1993), the Plateau Route alignment has moved 30-40m to the west in the vicinity of Great Parks Lane, and additional land for landscaping purposes also been acquired near Cruel Cross (DCC Drawing No. 6057T/142/A, Nov. 1993).

1.2 The project brief

The scheme has been considered taking into account a reasonable buffer zone (of at least 25m) to either side of the working corridor. The aims of the assessment are;

- (i) to identify archaeological features along the proposed route which are considered worthy of preservation/conservation;
- (ii) to identify features which will require archaeological recording, and any particular areas, sites or features which might require more detailed assessment or evaluation;
- (iii) to identify areas where archaeological features are likely to be encountered during construction work.

The assessment comprises:

- (i) a brief survey of available documentary evidence (including maps) in the Devon Record Office and Westcountry Studies Library, Exeter;
- (ii) a search of the Devon County Sites and Monuments Register (SMR), County Hall, Exeter;
- (iii) an examination of the borehole and trial pit logs supplied by Structural Soils Ltd (see also Appendix);
- (iv) a rapid field examination of the proposed route.

2. SITES OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL INTEREST

These are numbered as below on Fig. 1.

1. **Cruel Cross** (Fig. 2)

The revised route (Nov. 1993) includes construction and landscaping at Cruel Cross (SX86946190). This was located within the late medieval estate of Westerland (see below) and has been suggested as the site of a gallows in the medieval period (SMR SX86SE/125). The road from the north leads from the present settlements of Higher and Lower Westerland. A footpath to the east of Cruel Cross, leading diagonally from SX86986206 across the field known as 'Cruel' in the mid 19th century (No. 762 on Marlton Tithe Map), will also be affected at its southern end by construction of the new roundabout near Ramshill Cross. Dating evidence for the roads and trackway may be encountered during construction work in this general area.

2. **Parish and estate boundary** (Fig. 5)

The parish boundary between Marlton and Paignton (now part of Torbay BC) is cut by the proposed route to the west of the main road at SX87006176. Marlton itself was from early times included (at least in part) within the manor and ecclesiastical parish of Paignton, which was held by the Bishops of Exeter until the Reformation. The boundary itself should historically be regarded as an estate boundary, marking the southern extent of Westerland. This was an estate of at least late medieval origin which was at one time regarded as a sub-manor of Paignton. In the mid 19th century the land to the north of the boundary belonged to Lower Westerland. The land to the south of the boundary was divided between several tenements (the Kings Aish Estate being recent). A trackway may have existed alongside this boundary (see 4 below).

Archaeological deposits in the form of buried soils may be preserved beneath the hedgebank which marks the boundary. Such sealed deposits are potential repositories of environmental information (e.g. pollen) and also of organic material which can be radiocarbon dated if present in sufficient quantity.

3. **Cropmark sites: possible prehistoric enclosures** (Fig. 5)

In general, prehistoric enclosure (settlement) sites tend to be located, or at least identified, along ridges or on upper valley slopes rather than within the valleys themselves. The proposed route travels along the western edge of a plateau where the presence of such sites may be expected, and there is ample evidence of prehistoric activity on the other side of the Westerland Valley.

Just south of the parish/estate boundary mentioned above, to the north-west of Smallcombe Cross, two adjacent sites have been identified from aerial photographs which were taken in 1984. At SX87006167 a faint oval cropmark has been identified (SMR SX86SE/72). In the adjoining field at SX87056163, there are clearer signs of a rectilinear enclosure and another linear feature (SMR SX86SE/73). The proposed route corridor passes through the northernmost (oval) feature.

No evidence of these features was detected above ground during fieldwork, and a subsequent examination of the profiles of nearby trial pits proved to be inconclusive. These features may well be of prehistoric date. The nature and extent of the sites should be determined by archaeological investigation (see 6.2.2).

The northernmost of the two fields is now given over to rough, neglected pasture. In the mid 19th century it comprised two fields known as Higher and Lower Oldway (Paignton Tithe Map and Apportionment, Nos 774, 773; see also 6 below). These field-names indicate the presence of an ancient road: either Kings Ash Road itself (part of an old route shown on Ogilby's Road Map of 1675), or possibly a trackway running alongside the estate boundary. Such boundaries or trackways are often located near prehistoric earthworks which functioned as convenient landmarks. However, no above-ground evidence of any such trackway was detected during the preliminary fieldwork.

4. Mill field-names: ?site of windmill

Four fields located to the west of Luscombe Road were called 'Millpair' in the mid 19th century (Paignton Tithe Map Nos 771, 814-6). These names probably refer to the former existence of at least one windmill, although no surviving evidence for such was observed above ground during fieldwork. The proposed route passes through the northernmost of these fields, just south of Kings Ash House.

5. Watercourse

A watercourse running south from Great Park Lakes is followed by the proposed route for about 500m, past Greatpark Lane leading southward towards Kings Ash Road. This represents part of the water supply from the Westerland Valley which was utilised in the medieval period by the Bishops of Exeter to serve their mill at Paignton. No evidence of culverting was found during the preliminary fieldwork, however much of this area comprised rough, neglected pasture, and it is possible that features were obscured by vegetation. At SX867608 the route cuts not only the watercourse, but also Old Widdicombe Road leading from Blagdon (medieval settlement).

Buildings along the route (not numbered on Fig. 1)

Buildings likely to be affected by construction are as follows:

- (i) buildings at north and outbuildings at rear of Hill Top Nursery;
- (ii) outbuilding at SX86846152 (within the northernmost 'Millpair' field);
- (iii) 'Naptor' at SX86686123 (Fig. 3).

All these are of 20th-century date and do not require further recording.

3. COLLUVIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEPOSITS

An examination of the borehole and trial pit logs supplied by Structural Soils Ltd confirmed that colluvial deposits (hillwash) up to several metres deep are located along the route, although the

deposits are not as extensive as those encountered along the valley route. These deposits are archaeologically significant for two reasons:

- (i) They may overlie and seal early ground surfaces (buried soils) or other deposits which could contain preserved organic material (e.g. pollen). Such material can provide information about past land use. Similarly, dateable material (e.g. charcoal, wood, peat) can often be retrieved.
- (ii) The colluvium may contain material from settlement sites which were located upslope.

The area of deepest colluvium lies at the south-east corner of Great Park Lakes (Fig. 3), and there seems little doubt that the valleys in general have undergone substantial topographical changes as a result of colluvial activity.

4. POTENTIAL FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLING

The geology of the Plateau Route has been investigated by Structural Soils Ltd for Devon County Council, to ascertain the suitability for road construction. This involved the digging of 37 boreholes (BH) and 54 trial pits (TP). Examination of the log books kindly supplied by Structural Soils Ltd (and also Norwest Holst Soil Engineering Ltd who investigated the Valley Route) has indicated several areas of potential for environmental sampling. These areas of archaeological interest are listed and summarily interpreted below (from north to south). The general locations are shown on Fig. 1.

TP241 E of Cruel Cross. Between 1.15-2.90m, 'occasional black carbonaceous speckles'. (Fig. 2)

BH212-4 SE of Great Park Lakes. Up to 3m+ colluvium (see section 3).
TP212 (Fig. 3)

Additional information about the following supplied by Norwest Holst Soil Engineering (all shown on Fig. 4):

BH12 S of Greatpark Lane. At a depth of 2m, very clayey band 1.4m above weathered sandstone. Possible buried soil.
(BH202 on the eastern side of the watercourse contains black organic fragments).

TP11 By watercourse, W of Highfield Crescent. At 1.4m, silty sandy layer (1.1m deep) containing 'occasional black fibrous spongy wood fragments' overlying weathered breccia bedrock. Waterlogged.
(BH201 on the eastern side of the watercourse contains black organic fragments).

BH1 Southernmost limit of route. Between 2.5-3.5m, rootlets and plant remains. Waterlogged.

5. CONCLUSION

The main areas of archaeological interest along the route are as follows:

- (i) *Cropmark sites: possible prehistoric features* (No. 3)

These features, and any other associated or nearby features detected during the evaluation, may require conservation (see 6.2.2, 6.2.3).

(ii) *Colluvial and palaeoenvironmental deposits*

These are most likely in the areas highlighted in section 4. Prehistoric deposits are of particular interest. Archaeological sampling of preserved deposits may be required (see 6.2.1).

(iii) *Boundary features*

Certain hedgerows cut by the route may prove to be archaeologically significant (see 6.2.1).

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Preservation

No features requiring preservation have been identified along the route on the basis of existing knowledge. However it may be necessary to earmark certain sites for preservation in the light of the results of the recommended evaluation excavations. This relates particularly to the cropmark sites (No. 3).

6.2 Archaeological evaluation

In accordance with the Department of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance Note No. 16 *Archaeology and Planning* (Nov. 1990), it is recommended that evaluation excavations are carried out well in advance of road construction in order to establish the extent and nature of any archaeological deposits or features. This will permit more considered decisions to be made about the treatment of sites during the development scheme.

6.2.1 Palaeoenvironmental sampling

Potential areas have been identified in section 4 above, and samples should be taken from these areas as part of the evaluation programme if suitable deposits are located during trenching. The evaluation programme should therefore include provision for laboratory processing, species identification and the dating of any samples taken at this stage. Some areas may require additional excavation. The location of the relevant boreholes and trial pits are shown on Fig. 1, and the potential sample areas on Figs 2-4.

(i) *Buried soil.* At this stage, interpretation can only be provisional. Trenching of the clay band recorded in BH12 is needed to confirm whether or not it represents soil sealed by subsequent hillwash. If so, it may contain material (e.g. charcoal) suitable for radiocarbon dating in addition to pollen, macrofossils or chance artefactual material.

(ii) *Organic material.* Any organic material from the deposits recorded in TP241, TP11 and BH1 should be sampled for radiocarbon dating, palynological (pollen) analysis and the identification of preserved plant remains, if found to be suitable after trenching.

(iii) *Colluvium.* In view of the depth of colluvium recorded within the boreholes in the area south-east of Great Park Lakes (Fig. 3, BH212-4, TP212), trenching is required to ascertain if any organic deposits are located here.

Further palaeoenvironmental sampling. Wherever appropriate, samples should be taken from hedgebanks crossed by the route (e.g. the parish boundary, Fig. 1, No. 2; Old Widdicombe Road, south of Great Park Lakes), where the possibility of preserved buried soils may be related to the other palaeoenvironmental samples taken.

6.2.2 *Cropmark sites*

It appears that the route will cut through part of the northernmost site (identified as a faint oval cropmark), and it is recommended that a geophysical survey is carried out prior to the final determination of the route by DCC (see below). This should include as many fields as possible. There will be a certain amount of survey outside the actual corridor, but this is necessary to place the information in the context of the surrounding landscape. Depending on the results of the survey, it may be necessary to make further recommendations for excavation of the site. The survey should also determine whether the site should be avoided by the proposed route.

6.2.3 *Geophysical survey*

Topographical and geological information suggests that around one third of the Plateau Route would be suitable for geophysical survey, and it is recommended that this should be undertaken in practicable areas along and immediately adjacent to the route corridor. The main area involved would be the central part of the route, from the rear of Hill Top Nursery as far as the extent of the level plateau south of 'Naptor' (between A and B on Fig. 1). This would encompass the area of the likely prehistoric cropmark sites, and allow for the detection of other buried features in the vicinity. Survey may also be useful at the beginning of route, along the eastern part of corridor (Windmill Hill). It would exclude areas of steep slope or deep colluvial deposits.

The programme would consist of a topsoil magnetic susceptibility survey and subsequent magnetometer surveys in selected areas where appropriate (to target features). Both these methods are non-intrusive, with virtually no ground disturbance, and are in line with the approach currently adopted by the Highways Agency for new trunk-road schemes (e.g A30 Improvements east of Exeter).

The geophysical survey should be carried out in advance of construction to allow for the possibility of archaeological excavation, and for possible amendments to the proposed route should any features be deemed worthy of conservation.

6.3 **Watching brief**

It is recommended that a watching brief be undertaken along the length of the route during construction work. Fieldwalking should be carried out soon after the topsoil has been stripped in order to retrieve surface finds and identify any sites or features relating to the areas of interest in sections 2 and 4.

A watching brief carried out during construction work itself should identify any further features of archaeological interest which have not been visible in plan at the initial stages. **It should be noted that additional sampling or recording, and/or limited hand excavation in selected**

areas may be necessary. For example, at this stage it will be determined whether the taking of samples from ruptured hedgebanks (e.g. boundary No. 3) is appropriate. Accordingly, allowance should be made within the programme at this stage for accommodating any such eventualities. The contractors should be alerted to the presence of archaeologists on site, although their presence need not cause undue delay or hindrance.

6.4 Further archaeological investigations

It may be necessary to undertake more detailed investigations in certain areas along the route. The nature, location and extent of any such investigations can only be determined after the evaluation recommended above (6.2) has been completed.

APPENDIX

The realignment of the proposed Plateau Route and additional land acquired for landscaping purposes (DCC Drawing No. 6057T/142/A, Nov. 1993) was rapidly assessed by EMAFU in September 1994. This involved a study of available cartographic sources and the examination of the geological investigations undertaken by Structural Soils Ltd between June and September 1993 (information supplied by DCC, September 1994).

Alterations to the route have resulted in the inclusion of an additional historical site (No. 1). From an archaeological perspective, the proposed Plateau and Valley Routes are now coterminous between Greatpark Lane and Kings Ash Road. Consequently, relevant information from the geological survey undertaken by Norwest Holst Soil Engineering Ltd along the proposed Valley (Alternative) Route has also been included in this report (section 4). This report contains certain other amendments or modifications based on new information, primarily based on the geological surveys. However, it should be noted that geological investigations undertaken for specific engineering purposes are not usually capable of pinpointing archaeological features or deposits, but can only give an indication of their presence.

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