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# Land off Marine Drive Looe-Hannafore, Cornwall

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Ref: 107450.01  
March 2015



## **Land off Marine Drive, Looe-Hannafore, Cornwall**

### **Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

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**March 2015**

**WA ref. 107450.01**



## Quality Assurance

<b>Project Code</b>	107450	<b>Accession Code</b>		<b>Client Ref.</b>	
<b>Planning Application Ref.</b>		<b>Ordnance Survey (OS) national grid reference (NGR)</b>	NGR 225113, 52209.		

<b>Version</b>	<b>Status*</b>	<b>Prepared by</b>	<b>Checked and Approved By</b>	<b>Approver's Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
v01	I	Michael Fleming	Andy Crockett		20/03/2015
File:					
File:					
File:					
File:					
File:					

\* I = Internal Draft; E = External Draft; F = Final

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# Land off Marine Drive, Looe-Hannafore, Cornwall

## Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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## **Land off Marine Drive, Looe-Hannafore, Cornwall Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

### **Summary**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Bam Nuttall /Mott MacDonald Joint Venture (BMMJV), on behalf of The Environment Agency (EA), to undertake an archaeological watching brief on land off Marine Drive, Looe, Cornwall. Due to the proximity of known archaeological remains the reconsolidation and construction of a new extension to the sea wall, re-profiling of land slippage and installation of surface drainage to control run-off from the hillside were archaeologically monitored. The monitoring of the engineering contractor's groundworks took place from the 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> January, 5<sup>th</sup> February and 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> February 2015. One north-south aligned stone surface and a single, undated post-hole were exposed, although no further finds or deposits were uncovered in any part of the Site.



## **Land off Marine Drive, Looe-Hannafore, Cornwall Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

### **Acknowledgements**

Wessex Archaeology are grateful to Bam Nuttall /Mott MacDonald Joint Venture for commissioning the archaeological work. In particular, our gratitude is extended to Paul Riccoboni and Martin Wearn for their assistance throughout the project.

The watching brief monitoring and recording was undertaken by Michael Fleming. This report was also compiled by Michael Fleming. The illustrations were produced by Nancy Dixon. The project was managed by Andy King.



# Land off Marine Drive, Looe-Hannafore, Cornwall

## Archaeological Watching Brief Report

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Project background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology were commissioned by Bam Nuttall / Mott MacDonald Joint Venture to undertake an archaeological watching brief on land off Marine Drive, Looe, Cornwall, during construction of an extension to the sea wall, re-profiling of land slippage and installation of surface drainage, to control run-off from the hill side (**Plate 1**), centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 225113 52209, hereafter referred to as the 'Site'; **Figure 1**). The watching brief took place from the 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> January, 5<sup>th</sup> February and 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> February 2015. The aim of the watching brief was to identify and record any archaeological remains exposed within the area of groundworks.

1.1.2 The reconstruction of the coastal defences are being undertaken under permitted development rights

#### 1.2 Site location, topography and geology

1.2.1 The area of the watching brief lies at the western-most end of Marine Drive, West Looe, approximately 11km south of Liskeard at the mouth of the Looe River in Cornwall. The site is situated on a plateau of agricultural land just above and a steep slope that leads down to, Wallace Beach below. Looe Island is visible to the south (NGR 225675, 51437). A public coastal footpath runs across the agricultural land leading from Marine Drive heading west.

1.2.2 Ground level across the Site is located at a height of approximately 21m above Ordnance Datum and rises sharply northwards where the pasture becomes scrub land.

1.2.3 The underlying geology is grey-green mudstone with sub-ordinate siltstone (a Devonian slate locally known as 'shillet'). (British Geological Survey 2014).

#### 1.3 Archaeological background

##### *Introduction*

1.3.1 The following is summarised from the approved Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by BMMJV (2014).

##### *Prehistoric*

1.3.2 The former National Monuments Record (NMR) includes a number of nationally important Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) within a 10km radius of Looe, the closest of which is a standing stone of possible prehistoric date to the northern side of Looe Island (NGR 225613, 051521). Others include a stone circle near Stonetown Farm, Dunloe (NMR No. CO94, NGR 223585, 58309), round barrows south of Wilton Mill (NMR No. CO409, NGR 220028, 54411), Mabel barrow (NMR No. CO106, NGR) and a round barrow at Bin Down (NMR No. CO231, NGR 227540, 57645).

##### *Romano-British*

1.3.3 A large bronze ingot discovered by divers to the south of Looe Island, amongst other finds from the island of pottery fragments including B1 amphora from the Aegean (Todd 1983 122), has led to suggestions of the island possibly being that of *Ictis*, a tin trading island



seen by Pytheas in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC and mentioned by Diodorus Siculus in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC ([http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/search/fr.cfm?rcn=NMR\\_NATINV-889812&CFID=196413&CFTOKEN=47263542](http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/search/fr.cfm?rcn=NMR_NATINV-889812&CFID=196413&CFTOKEN=47263542)).

#### *Medieval*

- 1.3.4 A comprehensive record of information concerning the Site and its surrounding landscape can be found in the archaeological evaluation report associated with works conducted by Time Team in 2008 by Thompson and Hall (2009).
- 1.3.5 The place name Lammana, which first appears in documentation from 1144AD, relates to Looe Island but also the adjacent area of mainland. The 'Lann' element referring to an early Christian enclosure when Pope Lucius II confirmed it as one of the possessions of Glastonbury Abbey. From the mid-1200s there is also a reference to a church on the island, dedicated to St. Michael. A chapel was established on the mainland, due partly to pilgrims wanting to show their devotion sometimes dying while attempting to cross to the island.

#### *Previous Archaeological Works*

- 1.3.6 Excavations in 1935 and 1936, by the local archaeologist Croft Andrews, recorded the ground plan of the mainland chapel and a site called 'Monk's House', uncovering two inhumations at the chapel and suggesting the sites dated from the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD to the 17<sup>th</sup> century AD.
- 1.3.7 Excavations by Time Team in 2008 at the mainland chapel and Monk's House revealed one further inhumation at the chapel and uncovered the south-western wall of the house. Finds from the excavations refined Croft Andrew's date to the 13<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century AD. A geophysical survey conducted by Time Team also showed three high resistance features on the site of Monk's House.

## **2 METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Aims and objectives**

- 2.1.1 With due regard to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standards and guidance: Archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014a), the aims of the watching brief were to establish the presence/absence of any archaeological remains on the Site, and to record them prior to their destruction.

### **2.2 Fieldwork methodology**

- 2.2.1 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (BBMJV 2014), a brief summary of which is presented below.
- 2.2.2 All drainage trenching was monitored by an experienced WA archaeologist. Exposed deposits were assigned a unique context number and recorded using WA's *pro forma* record sheets.
- 2.2.3 A photographic record was created using digital cameras. Particular attention was taken to record the trench locations to provide a full record of both the original and final condition of the excavated areas.
- 2.2.4 Site survey was carried out using a Leica Viva series GNSS unit using the OS National GPS Network through an RTK network with a 3D accuracy of 30mm or below. All survey data was recorded using the OSGB36 British National Grid coordinate system.





- 2.2.5 For health and safety reasons, monitoring of the cliff edge was completed at a safe distance, therefore cleaning of surfaces and or sections was not possible, and photographs taken were of the ground conditions as exposed.

### **3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

- 3.1.1 Detailed descriptions of the exposed deposits are presented in Appendix 1; a summary of the results is provided below.

#### **3.2 Stratigraphy**

- 3.2.1 The geology of the Site comprised of a mid. Grey-brown clay-silt-sand topsoil (101) and mid. yellow-brown clay-silt-sand subsoil (102) overlying a compact mid. yellow-brown clay-silt-sand colluvium (108) overlying layers of sub-angular shillet/ mudstone bedrock (109) (Plate 2).
- 3.2.2 The drainage trenching cut through various deposits of natural or man-made origin revealing a compacted footpath/surface to the east of the trench [103] (Plate 3) and a single post-hole [106] (Plate 4).
- 3.2.3 A series of pits and remnants of a 1930's road surface were visible in the south-facing collapsed cliff edge. For health & safety considerations these could only be observed from the beach (Plate 5).

### **4 CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1.1 Despite the Site being located in an area of known archaeological activity, the only recorded features were that of a road surface and an undated and possibly associated post-hole, at its western edge. A continuation of this surface was previously exposed by Croft Andrews in 1936, to the north of the present drainage trenching, when it was seen to be overlying the remains of the Monk's House and running parallel to the eastern-most field boundary (Olson 1994 Figure 13).
- 4.1.2 A series of undated pits and remnants of a 1930's road surface were also observed from a safe distance, exposed in the collapsed cliff-edge.

### **5 STORAGE AND CURATION**

#### **5.1 Museum**

- 5.1.1 Cornwall record office is not currently accepting documentary archives. Prior to deposition the archive will be temporarily stored at Wessex Archaeology's offices under Site Code 107450.

#### **5.2 Preparation of Archive**

- 5.2.1 The complete site archive, which will include paper records, photographic records, graphics and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Cornwall Record Office, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014b; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).



### **5.3 OASIS**

- 5.3.1 An OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/projects/oasis/> has been initiated for the work and key fields in regard of the evaluation has been entered under OASIS ID wessexar1-201817. All appropriate parts of the OASIS online form will be completed for submission to the Cornwall and Scilly Historic Environment Record. This will include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy will also be included with the archive).

### **5.4 Discard policy**

- 5.4.1 Wessex Archaeology follows the guidelines set out in *Selection, Retention and Dispersal* (SMA 1993), which allows for the discard of selected artefact and ecofact categories which are not considered to warrant any future analysis. Any discard of artefacts will be fully documented in the project archive.

### **5.5 Security Copy**

- 5.5.1 In line with current best practice (Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.

### **5.6 Copyright**

- 5.6.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative archive relating to the Site will be retained by Wessex Archaeology Ltd under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved. The Museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use shall be non-profit making, and conforms to the *Copyright and Related Rights regulations 2003*.



## 6 REFERENCES

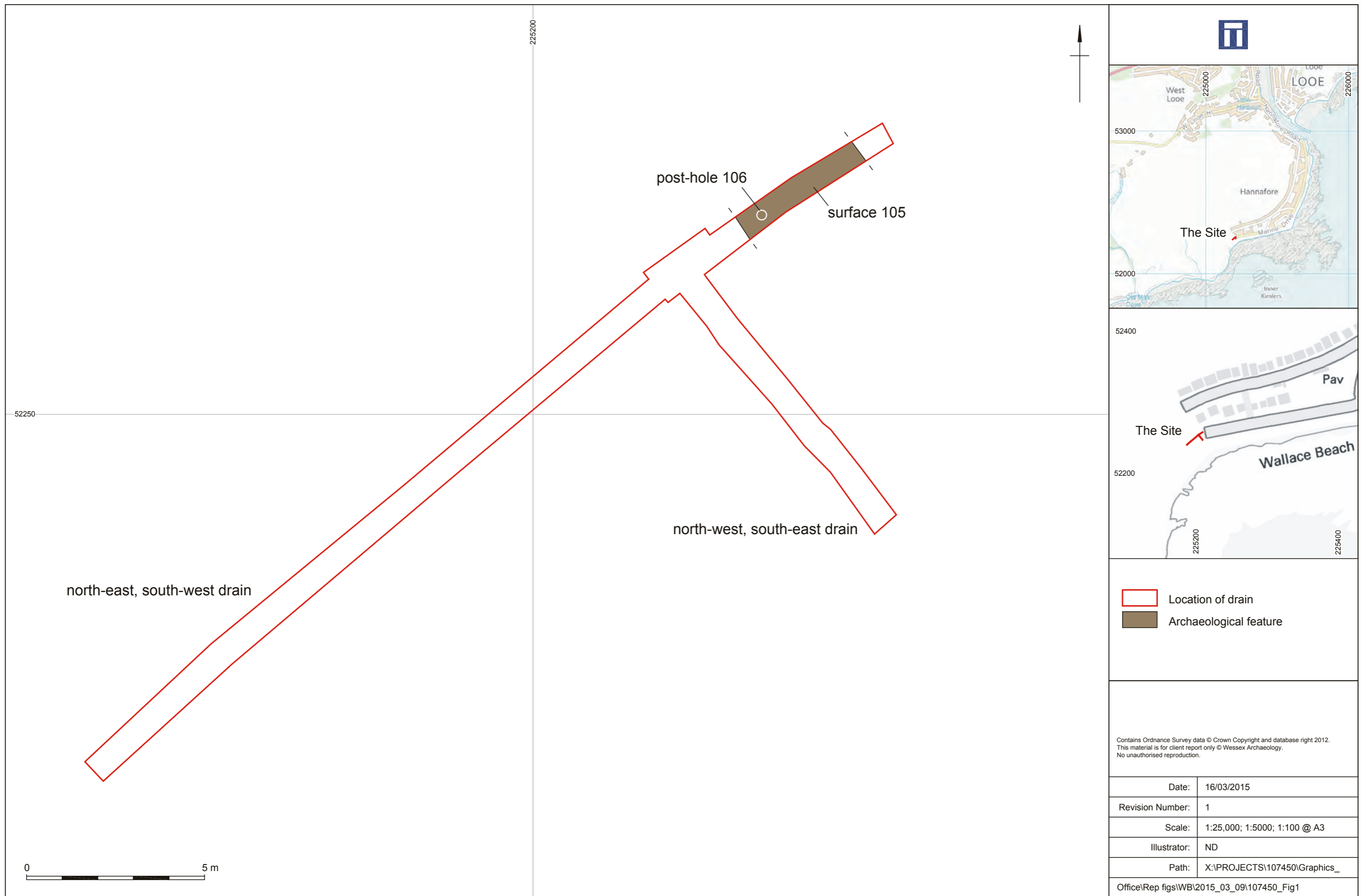
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## 7 APPENDICES

### 7.1 Appendix 1: Context summary

Surface Water Drainage Trench and Sea Wall Repair			
Context	Description		Depth of deposit (m)
101	Topsoil	Mid. grey-brown soft clay-silt-sand	0.25
102	Subsoil	Mid. yellow-brown soft clay-silt-sand	0.50
103	Cut	Cut of surface construction	0.35
104	Layer	Deliberate backfill. Mid. yellow-brown compacted clay-silt-sand	0.25
105	Layer	Surface. Cobbled/ metalled surface with Mid. yellow-brown compacted clay-silt-sand	0.12
106	Cut	Cut of post-hole	0.20
107	Fill of 106	Secondary fill. Mid. yellow-brown soft clay-silt-sand	0.20
108	Colluvium	Mid. yellow-brown compacted clay-silt-sand	0.56+
109	Natural	Mid. yellow-brown compacted clay-silt-sand with abundant, randomly dispersed sub-angular shillet/ mudstone lenses	0.25+



Site plan showing trench locations and exposed archaeological features

Figure 1



Plate 1: Proposed drain location from the South West



Plate 2: Representative section of site stratigraphy from the North


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Plate 3: Extent of surface (105) from the South West



Plate 4: Section of posthole [106] from the West



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Plate 5: View of collapsed cliff-top from the South

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