THAMES VALLEY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

SERVICES

SOUTH WEST

Manege at Westlake, Ermington, Ivybridge, Devon

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Richard Tabor

Site Code: WEP13/227

(SX 6197 5370)

Manege at Westlake, Ermington, Ivybridge, Devon

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Ms Michelle Grove

by Richard Tabor

Thames Valley Archaeological Services

(South West) Ltd

Site Code WEP 13/227

June 2014

Summary

Site name: Manege at Westlake, Ermington, Ivybridge, Devon

Grid reference: SX 6197 5370

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 19th May 2014

Project manager: Andrew Weale

Site supervisor: Richard Tabor

Site code: WEP 13/227

Area of site: *c.* 1150 sq m

Summary of results: No archaeological features were encountered. Only modern artefacts were recorded in the topsoil.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services (South West), Taunton and will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) in due course, with accession code **PLYMG.2013.23.**

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 06.06.14 Steve Preston✓04.06.14

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Manege at Westlake, Ermington, Ivybridge, Devon
An Archaeological Watching Brief

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Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out on land at Westlake, Ermington, Ivybridge, Devon (NGR SX 6197 5370) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Michelle Grove, of 26 Longfield, Lutton, Plymouth, Devon, PL21 9SN.

Planning permission has been granted by South Hams District Council (21/1914/13/F) for the construction of a manege associated with new stables. The consent was subject to a condition relating to archaeology requiring a programme of archaeological work. Mr Graham Tait (Archaeology Officer, Devon County Historic Environment Team) indicated that this was to take the form of a watching brief during groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's Planning Policy Statement, *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Tait. The fieldwork was undertaken by Richard Tabor on the 19th May 2014 and the site code is WEP 13/227. No monitoring visit was required.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services South West, Taunton, and will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) in due course, with accession code PLYMG.2013.23.

Location, topography and geology

Westlake is a hamlet located 1.5km west-north-west of Ermington and south west side of Ivybridge, Devon (Fig. 1). The site lies on the south side of the lane on a north-facing slope (Fig. 2). It lies at a height of c. 132m above Ordnance Datum. Geological mapping shows that the site lies on Middle Devonian Slates formed from basaltic, pyroclastic rock (BGS 2014). The soils on and around the site are characterized as free-draining, slightly acid loams of low fertility (NSRI 2013).

Archaeological background

The presence of springs within Westlake and its situation at the head of a valley in which the Long Brook issues, a tributary of the River Yealm, suggests that the name may derive from the *OE laece*, meaning a stream or bog

(Mills 2002, 405). Westlake is not mentioned in Domesday Book but it may have been within the manor of West Worthele or, more probably, the larger Ermington. The latter was held by the king in 1086 and was valued at £13 10s having land for 20 ploughs. There was a total of 54 householders. It was held by Esger prior to the Norman conquest, when geld was paid for three hides (Williams and Martin 2002, 279).

As highlighted in a briefing note produced by Mr Tait, research and fieldwork along the route of a gas pipeline from Fishacre to Lyneham identified two features close to the site which were the particular reasons for instigating the present archaeological work. A mound *c*. 200m to the south, visible in several aerial photographs and identified at ground level as recently as 2010, may be a Bronze Age barrow; whilst a linear feature to the west is undated. It was considered that there might be hitherto unknown features or deposits associated with either which might be affected by groundworks on the site. The Medieval manor of West Worthele was situated *c*. 700m north-north-west of the site and a Palaeolithic handaxe found *c.* 1km to the east is a reminder that finds of that period have occurred in the wider area.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to identify, excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the works. This was to have involved examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks, in particular the stripping of topsoil prior to ground reduction for construction surfaces and the digging of foundation and service trenches.

Results

The stable block (Fig. 3)

The new stable block design entailed no cutting into the soil. A wooden structure was raised on a base of concrete blocks laid on the ground surface. No archaeologically relevant horizons were exposed..

The Manege (Figs. 3-5; Pls1-4)

Topsoil and other overburden within the manege was excavated by a 360^0 tracked machine fitted with a *c*. 0.90m wide bucket under constant archaeological supervision. However, the extent of excavation was limited by difficulties in removing the soil from the manege area. In view of this exploratory trenches A to F (Fig. 3, Pl. 1) were excavated from which it became clear that the probability of archaeology occurring on the site was very low. The trenches amounted to 23% coverage of the site. Following consultation with Mr Graham Tait, the

county archaeological officer, the watching brief was discontinued on the grounds that the work carried out up to that point would constitute a sufficient evaluation of the site's archaeological potential. The archaeological condition for planning would be judged as satisfied so long as there was 'an appropriate level of recording'.

There were two distinct soil sequences on the site. At the western end of trench A and in trenches B and C topsoil (50) of yellowish brown silty sand varied in depth from 0.50m to 0.65m. It included sparse small limestone, rarely burnt, and very rare small lumps of charcoal. In these areas it lay over a colluvial deposit (51) of yellow sandy clay including sparse subangular yellow limestone (Pls. 2 and 3; Fig. 4, sections 1 and 2). The colluvium varied in depth from 0.10m at the western end of trench A to 0.40m in trench B, tapering away completely between trenches C and D. It had been penetrated occasionally by animal burrowing (Fig. 4, section 1) but in other respects it was entirely sterile. The colluvium lay directly over yellow silty sand (52) which included yellow limestone, some iron-rich. This was interpreted as a natural periglacial deposit.

In the eastern end of trench A and in trenches D to F the topsoil (50) became progressively shallower from 0.50m towards the centre of the site (between trenches C and D) to 0.34m in trench E (Fig. 5, section 4), beyond which it increased in depth to over 0.50m in trench F. Over this area it lay directly over the natural surface (52). A sondage was excavated by machine at the eastern end of trench A to ensure that the natural horizon had been identified correctly. This revealed a change in the natural geology below (52) at depths varying from 0.96m to 1.16m below the ground surface (Fig. 5, 53; Pl. 4). This comprised limestone set in reddish pink silty clay. The sampled areas were restricted to the central and southern parts of the site once it became clear that the impact of groundworks would be restricted exclusively to topsoil in the northern part of the site due to steepness of the slope.

Two sherds of modern glazed pottery were observed in the topsoil, one at the western end of trench A, the other towards the south of trench F. Neither was retained.

Conclusion

The manege site lies *c*. 200m downslope of a possible Bronze Age barrow in an adjoining field. However, no archaeological features or deposits were identified during the watching brief and both of the artefacts observed were modern. The topsoil proved to be fairly deep, probably due to the downslope movement of soil following modern ploughing. In the western area of the site the topsoil covered a sterile colluvium whilst to the east, over an underlying ridge, it lay directly over natural geology.

References

BGS, 2014, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000. http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html (accessed: 28th May 2014)

Mills, A D, 1998, *Dictionary of English Place-Names*, Oxford

NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework,* Dept Communities and Local Govt, TSO, Norwich

NSRI, 2013, 'Soilscapes', https://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/ National Soils Research Institute (accessed: 28th May 2014)

Williams, A and Martin, G H, 2002, *Domesday Book, a complete translation,* London

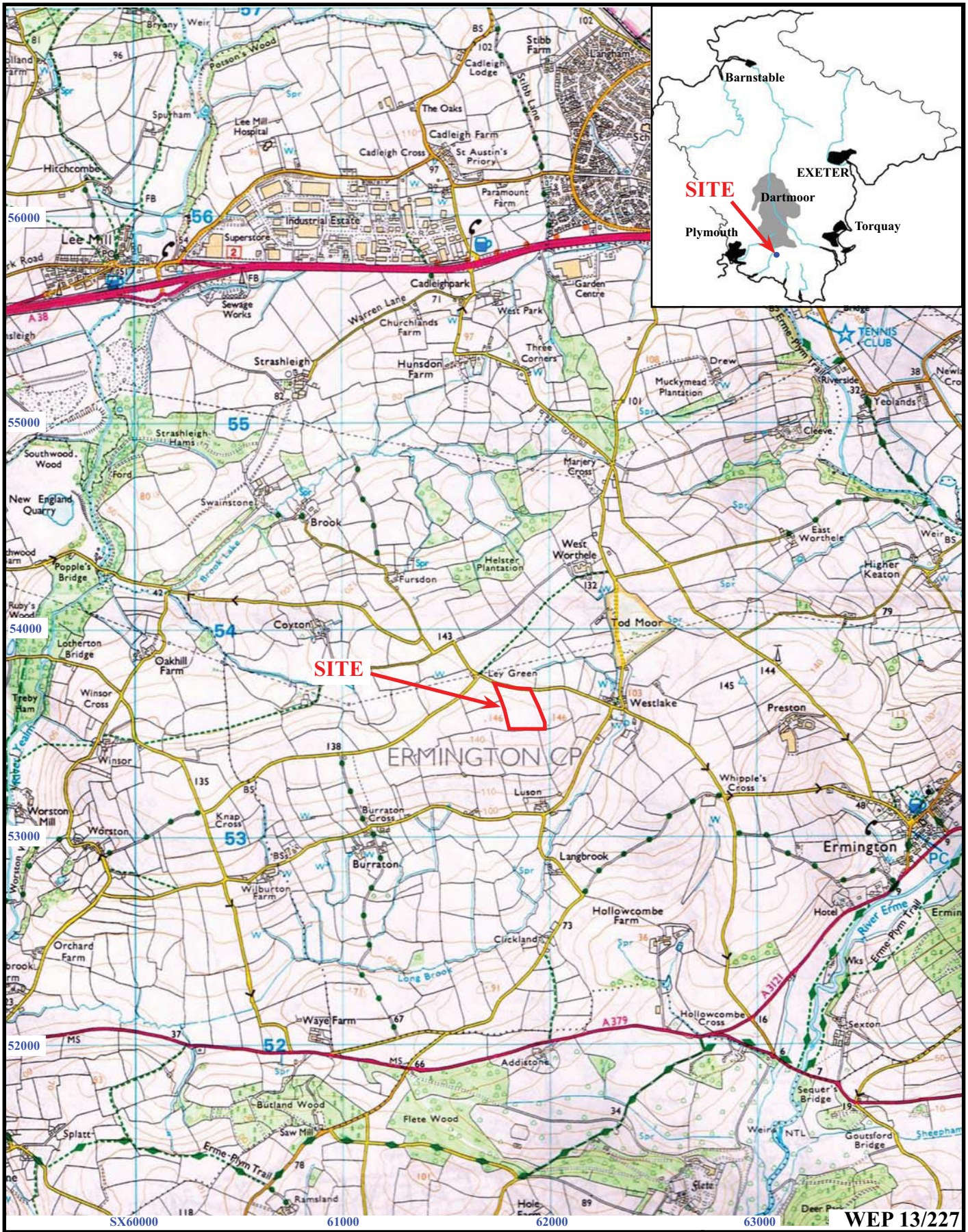

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Figure 1. Location of site in relation to Ermington and Ivybridge and within Devon.

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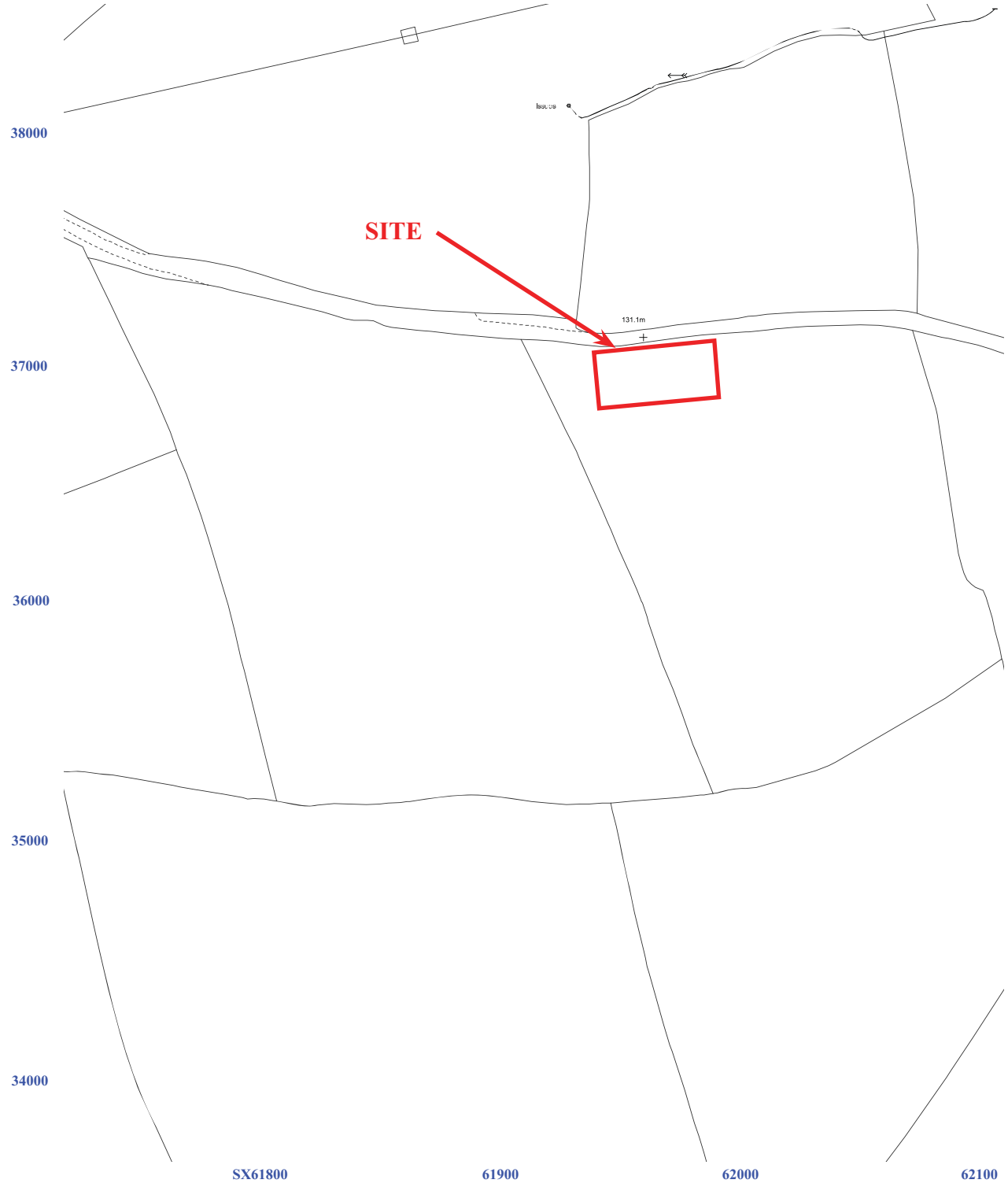

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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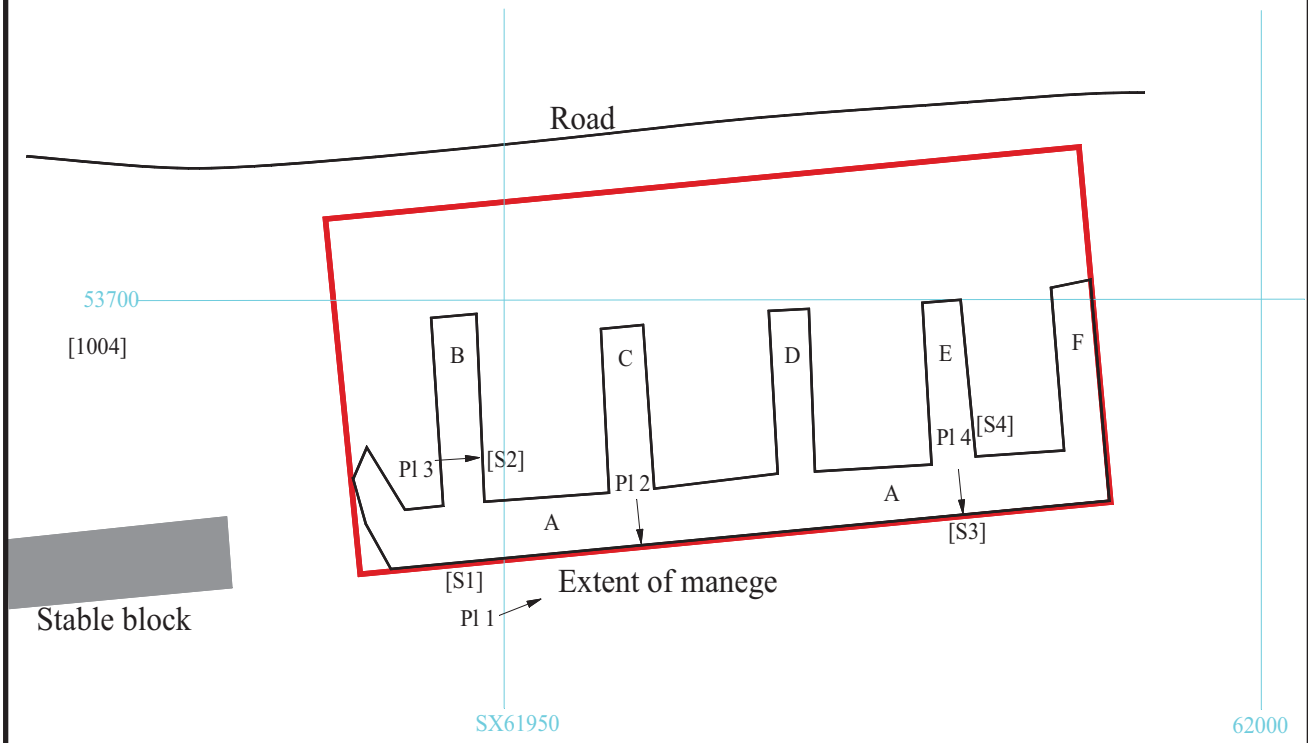

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Figure 3. Site plan showing locations of excavated area, sections and plate viewpoints

0 25m

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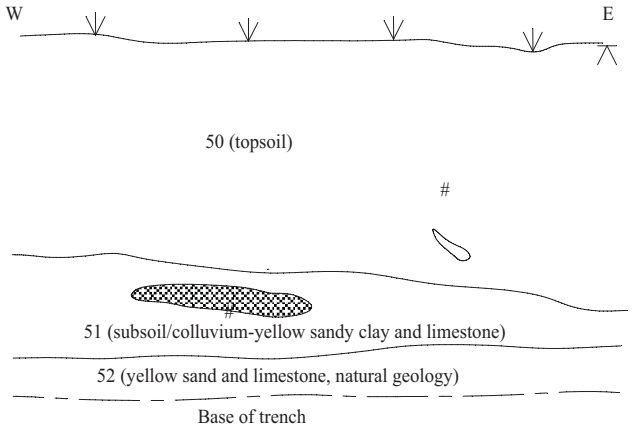
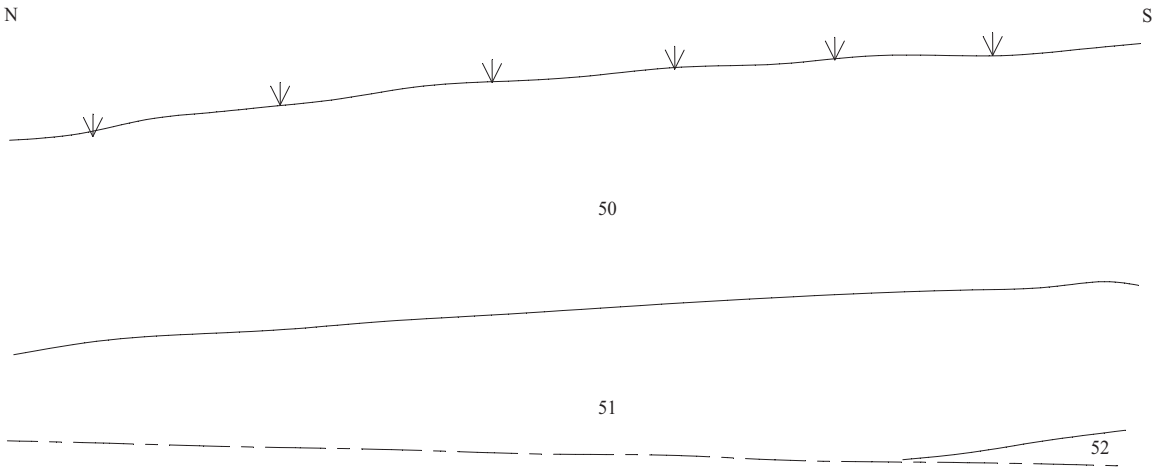
Section 1



Section 2



Charcoal

Faunal disturbance

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Figure 4. Sections 1 and 2

0 1m

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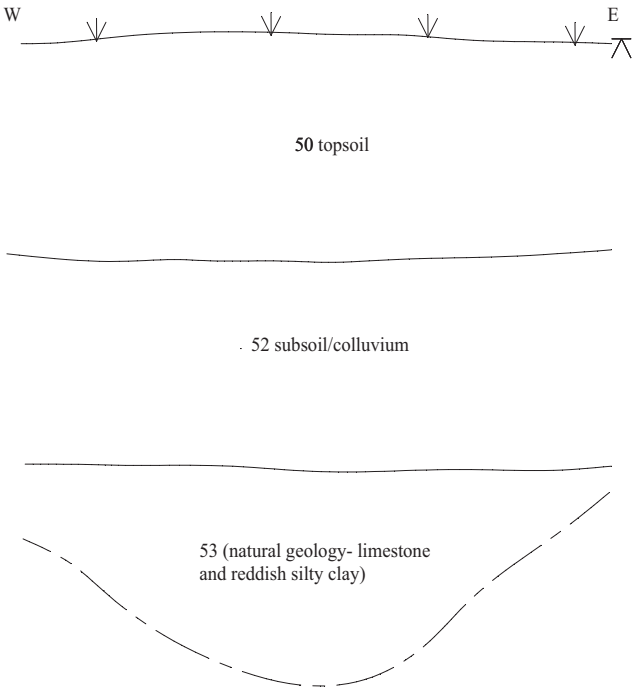
Section 3



Section 4

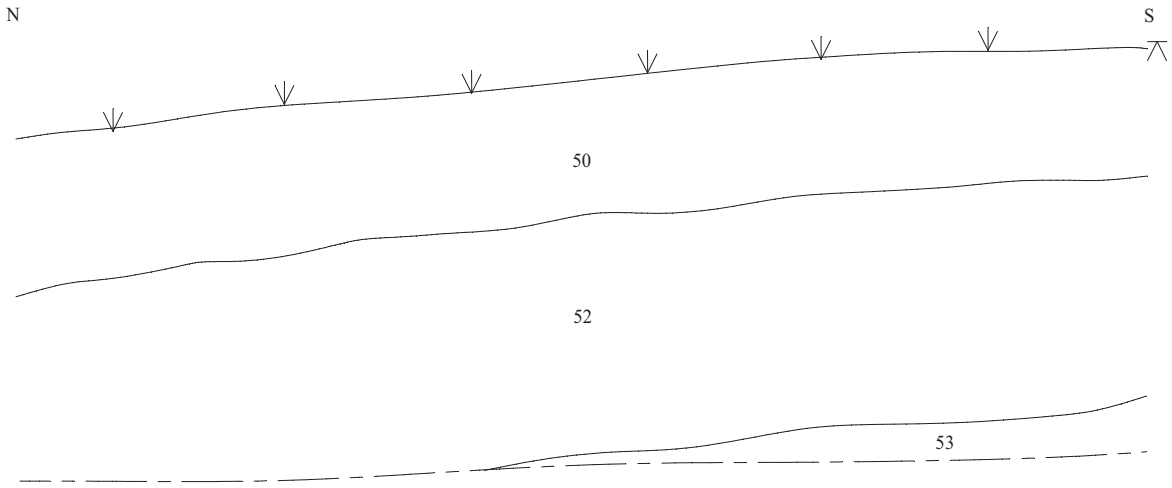


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Figure 5. Sections 3 and 4

0 1m

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Plate 1. General view of the site, looking east-north-east

Plate 2. Section 1 (A) looking south, Scale:2m

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Plates 1 and 2.

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Plate 3. Section S2 (C) looking east, Scale: 2m

Plate 4. Section S3 (A) looking south, Scale: 2m

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Plates 3 and 4.

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TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern	AD 1901
Victorian	AD 1837
Post Medieval	AD 1500
Medieval	AD 1066
Saxon	AD 410
Roman	AD 43
Iron Age	BC/AD 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC

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