

**Land at Bickland Hill  
Falmouth  
Cornwall**

**Archaeological Evaluation**



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For: **Avalon Planning and Heritage Ltd**  
On behalf of: **Persimmon Homes Cornwall**  
ISCA Project: **P02-0008**  
ISCA Report: **R02-0008-1**

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## PROJECT INFORMATION

<b>Project Name:</b>	Land at Bickland Hill
<b>Location:</b>	Falmouth, Cornwall
<b>Type:</b>	Evaluation
<b>National grid reference (NGR):</b>	SW 7845 3272
<b>Planning authority:</b>	Cornwall Council
<b>Planning reference</b>	Pre-application
<b>Date of fieldwork:</b>	18 - 20 October 2021
<b>Site Code:</b>	SLF21
<b>Location of Archive:</b>	Royal Cornwall Museum
<b>Report number:</b>	R02-0008-1
<b>Report written by:</b>	Simon Sworn, ACIfA
<b>Produced by ISCA for:</b>	Avalon Heritage and Planning Ltd
<b>On behalf of:</b>	Persimmon Homes Cornwall
<b>OASIS number:</b>	iscaarch2-502559

## SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by ISCA Archaeology in October 2021 at Land at Bickland Hill, Falmouth, Cornwall. A total of 5 trenches was excavated.

The evaluation trenches were located to target two geophysical anomalies, as well as a representative sample of the proposed development area. Two ditches of unknown date were in the vicinity of the linear anomalies noted on the geophysical survey. One ditch truncated the underlying subsoil, whereas the other was sealed directly by the overlying plough soil. The ditches pre-date the 1840 Tithe Map, which shows the fields in their present state, and may relate to an earlier medieval/post-medieval field system, though a prehistoric date is possible. A single, shallow, charcoal-rich pit, which was undated, was noted to the northern part of the site.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document sets out a report of an archaeological evaluation carried out by ISCA Archaeology (ISCA), 18 – 20 October 2021 at Land at Bickland Hill, Falmouth, Cornwall, centred at NGR SW 7845 3272 (Fig. 1). The evaluation was commissioned by Avalon Heritage and Planning Ltd (Avalon), on behalf of Persimmon Homes Cornwall, following pre-application advice from Historic Environment Planning – Archaeology (HEP (Arch)), Cornwall Council. This report sets out the background, methodology and the results of the evaluation to inform a planning application for a proposed residential development of 41 dwellings with associated roads, landscaping, and open space.

1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a detailed Project Design produced prior to the commencement of the evaluation (Avalon 2021) and drawn up in consultation with HEP (Arch). The evaluation was also carried out in accordance with the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (CifA 2020).

### *The Site*

1.3 The proposed application site (henceforth referred to as the 'Site') is within an area totalling approximately 1.2 hectares and is presently in use as pastureland. The Site consists of two fields (Field 1 to the north, and Field 2 to the south), separated by a hedge. A moderate slope falls away to the south at a height of approximately 95 – 87 metres aOD (above Ordnance Datum). The Site is located on the northern fringes of Falmouth and is bounded by Bickland Hill to the south-east, pasture fields to the south-west and new housing developments to the north (Figs. 1 and 2). The site is surrounded by hedge banks and is accessed via two field gates off Bickland Hill.

1.4 The majority of the Site is mapped as the Mylor Slate Formation, a sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 359 – 383 million years ago in the Devonian Period and have subsequently undergone metamorphism. No overlying superficial deposits are recorded. (BGS 2021).

## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The Site lies to the north of the Church of St Budock and historic farms Nangitha and Eglos. A desk-based study (AC Archaeology 2015) concluded that there are no Historic Environment Records (HER) entered or unrecognised archaeological features within the Site itself. Located

approximately 680m to the east of the Site was a curvilinear enclosure, of probable prehistoric date, which has been destroyed during modern housing development. Within a 1km radius are a scattering of HER monument records, largely related to early medieval and medieval settlement of the area.

### ***Budock Tithe Map 1840 and Appointment 1843***

- 2.2 The Site lies within the historic parish of Budock and the 1840 Budock Tithe Map shows that the site has changed very little. The map depicts the two fields, both of roughly rectangular shape, and denotes both as in use as arable land (AC Archaeology 2015).

### ***Geophysical survey***

- 2.3 A geophysical survey of the Site was carried out in 2015 (Substrata 2015a). This recorded two linear anomalies of possible archaeological origin within the Site boundary which were targeted within the evaluation (Fig.2: Trenches 1 and 4).
- 2.4 To the immediate north of the Site a geophysical survey (Substrata 2015b) recorded linear anomalies across an extensive area, the majority of which were interpreted as former post-medieval field boundary features. A smaller group of curving linear features were also noted. These were disbursed across the survey area and identified as having a possibly alternative origin.
- 2.5 Fieldwork has reportedly been undertaken on a portion of the site in relation to a condition (9) of the grant of existing planning permission. However, a report has not been completed, and there is no available information on the HER or in planning records regarding the results of this work or by whom it was undertaken.

## **3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- 3.1 The aims and objectives of the evaluation were to provide information about the likely archaeological resources within the Site, and if present, to provide a detailed description of their character, extent, date, quality, and state of preservation. The presented information will facilitate HEP (Arch) to identify and assess the particular significance of any archaeological heritage assets noted at the Site, and to consider the requirement for, and methods of, any further archaeological mitigation work in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).

### ***Research Aims***

- 3.2 All archaeological work was undertaken with the aim of furthering research into the archaeological resource and our understanding of human history and development. The currently understood state of archaeological knowledge in the area is contained in the South West Archaeological Research Framework (2012).

## **4. METHODOLOGY - ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION**

- 4.1 The definition of an archaeological field evaluation is:

‘a limited programme of non-intrusive and/or intrusive fieldwork which determines the presence or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts and their research potential, within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater. If such archaeological remains are present field evaluation defines their character, extent, quality and preservation, reports on them and enables an assessment of their significance in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate.’ (CifA, 2020)

- 4.2 The purpose of an archaeological field evaluation is to:

‘to gain information about the archaeological resource within a given area or site (including its presence or absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality), in order to make an assessment of its merit in the appropriate context, leading to one or more of the following:

- a. The formulation of a strategy to ensure the recording, preservation or management of the resource
- b. The formulation of a strategy to mitigate a threat to the archaeological resource
- c. The formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigation within a programme of research’. (CifA 2020)

- 4.3 The fieldwork evaluation comprised the excavation of 5 trenches in the locations shown on the attached plan (Fig. 2). The trenches were approximately 30m long and 1.6m wide. The

total area excavated measured c 237m<sup>2</sup>. The trenches were located to test the geophysical anomalies as well as to give a representative sample of the remainder of the Site.

- 4.4 All the trenches were set out on OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates using a Leica GPS and scanned for live services by trained ISCA Archaeology staff using CAT and Genny equipment in accordance with the ISCA Safe System of Work for avoiding underground services.
- 4.5 All trenches were excavated by a tracked mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket and machining was conducted under constant archaeological supervision, ceasing when the first archaeological horizon or natural substrate was revealed.
- 4.6 Where archaeological deposits were revealed, these were excavated by hand. Deposits were also assessed for their paleoenvironmental potential (see section 7.1)
- 4.7 Each excavated trench, whether archaeological remains were present or not, is associated with a minimum of a pro-forma trench sheet including project details, trench dimensions, soil descriptions, depth and nature of the overburden and the nature of the underlying natural substrate. All trenches were surveyed using a Leica GPS with aOD levels.
- 4.8 Where archaeological remains were present, each feature and context were recorded by written and measured descriptions. All works were carried out in accordance with the Code of Approved Practice as set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) and recorded according to CIfA guidelines and best practice.
- 4.9 Upon completion of the evaluation, all trenches were backfilled by mechanical excavator in reverse order, with plough soil and subsoil backfilled separately.
- 4.10 ISCA will make arrangements with the Royal Cornwall Museum for the deposition of the Site archive and, subject to agreement with the legal landowner(s), the artefact collection. A digital archive (comprising digital photographs and other relevant digital data) will be submitted to the Archaeological Data Service (ADS).
- 4.11 A summary of information from this project, as set out in Appendix 2, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

## 5. RESULTS (FIGS. 3 – 6)

5.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results. Detailed summaries of the recorded contexts can be found in Appendix 1.

5.2 The natural geology consisted of a yellow-brown silty clay with frequent sub-angular stones. It was exposed in all 5 trenches at a depth of 0.64 – 0.71 metres below the present ground surface. It was sealed by a yellow-brown sandy silt subsoil, generally 0.1 – 0.14 metres thick, which was not always present across the full extent of some trenches. This was in turn covered by roughly 0.5m of plough soil topped with turf. At the time of the evaluation the Site was recently ploughed grassy topsoil.

5.3 Of the 5 trenches, two contained archaeological features (Trenches 1 and 4) and the other three (Trenches 2, 3 and 5) were blank.

### ***Trench 1 (Figs. 3 – 4)***

5.4 A small circular pit [104] was noted towards the northern extent of this trench. The shallow pit measured roughly 0.6m diameter and 0.09m deep. The single fill (103) of the pit contained a large amount of charcoal, though there were no signs of any *in-situ* burning.

5.5 Just to the south of pit [104] was an east/west aligned ditch [106] which had been noted in the geophysical survey. The single fill (105) of this ditch contained frequent sub-angular stones that may have derived from an associated bank. The ditch measured 0.88m wide and 0.45m deep. No associated bank was visible, and it appeared that this area had been subjected to deep ploughing as there was no subsoil present. The fill of the ditch was sealed directly with the overlying plough soil.

5.6 Neither of the two features within this trench produced any datable material.

### ***Trench 4 (Figs. 5 – 6)***

5.7 A single north/south aligned ditch [404] was noted towards the centre of the trench, in the location of the similarly aligned geophysical anomaly. The ditch/gully measured 1.04m wide and 0.33m deep. The single fill (403) contained frequent sub-angular stones. These stones may have derived from a former hedge bank associated with this ditch, though no remnant bank was visible on either side of the ditch. Although no datable material was recovered from



this ditch, it clearly cut through the subsoil (401) layer which was visible along the entire trench.

## **6. ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE**

- 6.1 The only finds observed during the evaluation were 19th – 20th Century pottery fragments within the upper plough soil layers and which were not retained. The only fragment of interest was the lower part of a decorated commemorative mug recovered from the plough soil in Trench 1 (100). The bone china mug was manufactured by Grimwade Winton of Stoke on Trent to commemorate the end of the First World War and would have depicted images of Admiral David Beatty and Field Marshal Douglas Haig, along with the inscriptions 'For Freedom and Honour' and 'Peace 1919'.

## **7. ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE**

- 7.1 All deposits were assessed for their paleoenvironmental potential, samples were taken from the fill of the charcoal rich pit [104] and from the fills of the two linear ditches [106] and [404], and these will be temporarily retained and processed if required.

## **8. DISCUSSION**

- 8.1 The single, shallow pit noted within Trench 1 was undated and appeared in isolation, although since it was not visible in the geophysical survey, it is possible that there could be other similar pits in the vicinity.
- 8.2 The two ditches noted within Trenches 1 and 4 were both undated, though the indication that the ditch in Trench 4 truncated the underlying subsoil suggests that the ditch is not of great antiquity. The similarity of the profiles and the fills of these ditches may suggest that they are of a contemporary date, although this is only speculation. Neither of these ditches appear on the 1840 Budock Tithe Map, which shows the fields in their present form; both fields have remained unchanged to the present day. The two ditches therefore pre-date 1840 and may relate to earlier medieval/post-medieval field systems, though a prehistoric date is feasible.

### ***Geophysical results***

8.3 Apart from the single pit [104] in Trench 1, the recorded features corresponded well to the geophysical survey and no extra archaeological features were observed.

## 9. ISCA PROJECT TEAM

9.1 Fieldwork was undertaken by Simon Sworn and Tim Brown. This report was written by Simon Sworn. Illustrations compiled by Tim Brown. The project was managed for ISCA by Parris Stubbings.

## 10. REFERENCES

AC Archaeology, 2015. Proposed Residential Development on Land off Bickland Hill, Budock Water, Falmouth, Cornwall: Historic Environment Assessment. Report **ACD1132/1/0**

Avalon Heritage and Planning Ltd, 2021. Land at Bickland Hill, Falmouth: Archaeological Evaluation – Project Design. **A2318**

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CifA, 2020. *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*. Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government 2021 *National Planning Policy Framework*

Substrata, 2015a. *Land at Bickland Hill, Falmouth, Cornwall. An Archaeological Gradiometer Survey*. Report **150529**

Substrata, 2015b. *Land at Lower Kergilliak Farm, Falmouth, Cornwall. An Archaeological Gradiometer Survey*. Report **150417**

**APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DISCRIPTIONS (BY TRENCH)**

<b>Trench 1</b>				<b>Length – 30m</b>	<b>Width – 1.6m</b>	<b>Depth – 0.66m</b>	<b>Orientation – N/S</b>	
Context No.	Type	Fill of	Interpretation	Description	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	Spot-date
100	Layer		Plough soil	Dark brown loose silty clay. Occasional small sub-angular stones	>30	>1.6	0.51	20th C
101	Layer		Subsoil	Mid grey-brown firm silty clay. Very occasional small sub-angular stones	>30	>1.6	0.1	
102	Layer		Natural	Light yellow-brown compact silty clay, occasional sub-rounded stones	>30	>1.6	-	
103	Fill	104	Pit	Dark brown-grey silty clay. Frequent charcoal and occasional sub-angular stones	0.62	0.58	0.09	
104	Cut		Pit	Circular cut, with gentle concave sloping sides and base	0.62	0.58	0.09	
105	Fill	106	Ditch	Light grey-brown friable silty clay. Frequent sub-angular stones	>1.6	0.88	0.45	
106	Cut		Ditch	East/west linear, moderate sloping sides and a concave base	>1.6	0.88	0.45	

<b>Trench 2</b>				<b>Length – 32m</b>	<b>Width – 1.6m</b>	<b>Depth – 0.71m</b>	<b>Orientation – E/W</b>	
Context No.	Type	Fill of	Interpretation	Description	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	Spot-date
200	Layer		Plough soil	Dark brown loose silty clay. Occasional small sub-angular stones	>32	>1.6	0.57	
201	Layer		Subsoil	Mid grey-brown firm silty clay. Very occasional small sub-angular stones	>32	>1.6	0.14	
202	Layer		Natural	Light yellow-brown compact silty clay, occasional sub-rounded stones	>32	>1.6	-	

<b>Trench 3</b>				<b>Length – 30m</b>	<b>Width – 1.6m</b>	<b>Depth – 0.74m</b>	<b>Orientation – NW/SE</b>	
Context No.	Type	Fill of	Interpretation	Description	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	Spot-date
300	Layer		Plough soil	Dark brown loose silty clay. Occasional small sub-angular stones	>30	>1.6	0.62	
301	Layer		Subsoil	Mid grey-brown firm silty clay. Very occasional small sub-angular stones	>30	>1.6	0.12	
302	Layer		Natural	Light yellow-brown compact silty clay, occasional sub-rounded stones	>30	>1.6	-	

<b>Trench 4</b>				<b>Length – 26m</b>	<b>Width – 1.6m</b>	<b>Depth – 0.65m</b>	<b>Orientation – E/W</b>	
Context No.	Type	Fill of	Interpretation	Description	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	Spot-date
400	Layer		Plough soil	Dark brown loose silty clay. Occasional small sub-angular stones	>26	>1.6	0.55	
401	Layer		Subsoil	Mid grey-brown firm silty clay. Very occasional small sub-angular stones	>26	>1.6	0.1	
402	Layer		Natural	Light yellow-brown compact silty clay, occasional sub-rounded stones	>26	>1.6	-	
403	Fill	404	Ditch	Light yellow-brown firm silty clay. Frequent sub-angular stones	>1.6	1.04	0.33	
404	Cut		Ditch	North/south aligned linear. Moderate concave sloping sides and a concave base	>1.6	1.04	0.33	

<b>Trench 5</b>				<b>Length – 30m</b>	<b>Width – 1.6m</b>	<b>Depth – 0.64m</b>	<b>Orientation – NE/SW</b>	
Context No.	Type	Fill of	Interpretation	Description	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	Spot-date
500	Layer		Plough soil	Dark brown loose silty clay. Occasional small sub-angular stones	>30	>1.6	0.5	
501	Layer		Subsoil	Mid grey-brown firm silty clay. Very occasional small sub-angular stones	>30	>1.6	0.14	
502	Layer		Natural	Light yellow-brown compact silty clay, occasional sub-rounded stones	>30	>1.6	-	

**APPENDIX 2: OASIS FORM**

<b>OASIS ID:</b>	iscaarch2-502559
Project Name	Land at Bickland Hill, Falmouth, Cornwall: Archaeological Evaluation
Short description of the project	<p>An archaeological evaluation was undertaken ISCA Archaeology in October 2021 at Land at Bickland Hill, Falmouth, Cornwall. A total of 5 trenches were excavated.</p> <p>The evaluation trenches were located to target two geophysical anomalies, as well as a representative sample of the proposed development area. Two ditches of unknown date were in the vicinity of the linear anomalies noted on the geophysical survey. One ditch truncated the underlying subsoil, whereas the other was sealed directly by the overlying plough soil. The ditches would pre-date the 1840 Tithe Map, which shows the fields in their present state, and may relate to an earlier medieval/post-medieval field system, though a prehistoric date is possible. A single, shallow, charcoal-rich pit, which was undated, was noted to the northern part of the Site.</p>
Project dates	18 – 20 October 2021
Previous/Future work	<p>Historic Environment Assessment – AC Archaeology 2015 Report No. <b>ACD1132/1/0</b></p> <p>Geophysical Survey – Substrata 2015 Report No. <b>150529</b></p>
Site code:	SLF21
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Reason for Investigation	National Planning Policy Framework
Position in planning process	Pre-application
Current land use	Pasture
Monument type	None
Significant finds	None
Methods and Techniques	Targeted trenches
Development type	Pre-application
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	
Site location	Bickland Hill, Falmouth, Cornwall
Study area (size)	1.2ha
Site coordinates	SW 7845 3272
Height aOD	95m (max), 87m (min)

**PROJECT CREATORS**

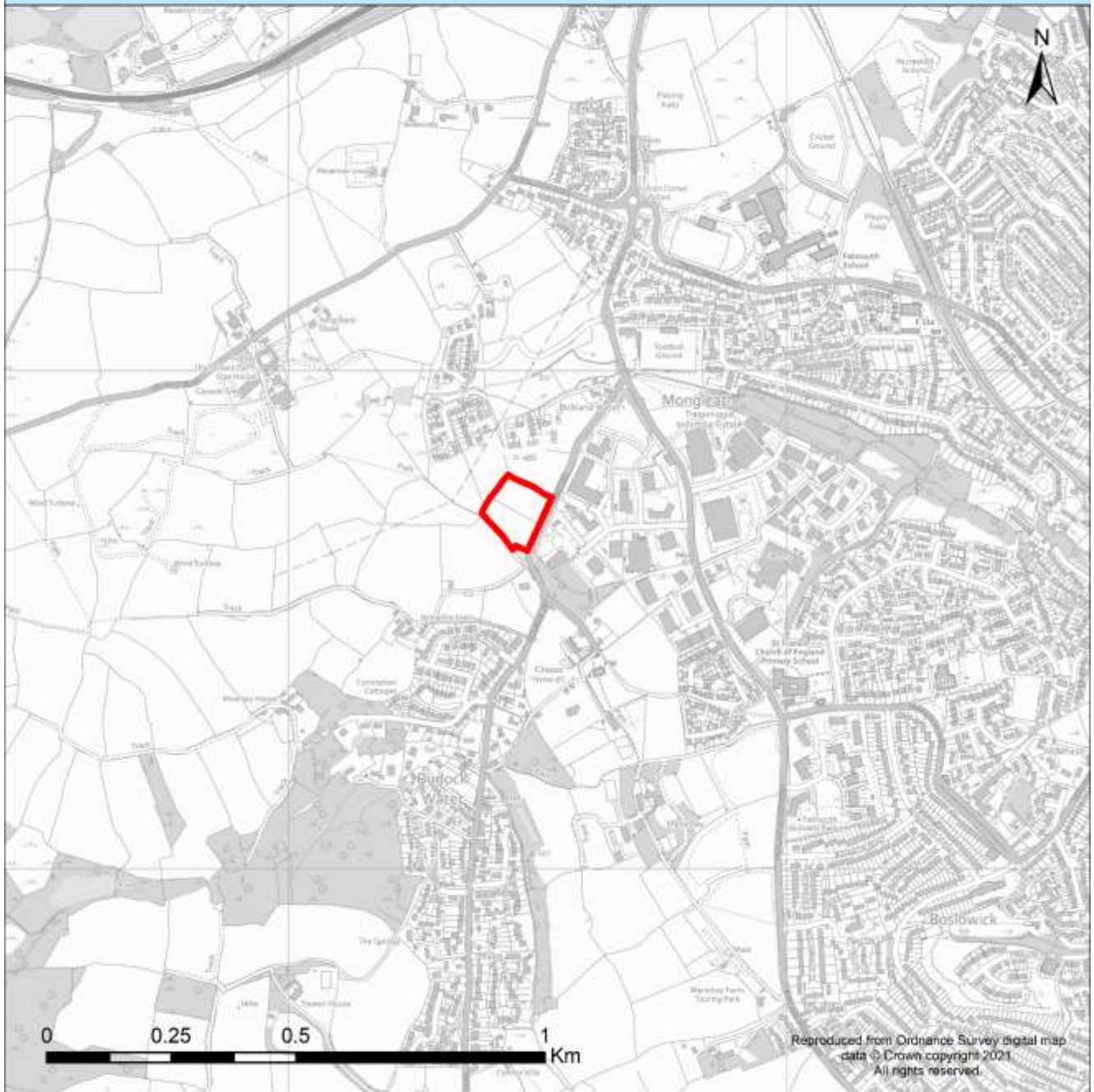
Name of Organisation	ISCA Archaeology
Project Manager	Parris Stubbings
Project Supervisor	Simon Sworn
Type of sponsor/ funding body	Developer

**PROJECT ARCHIVES**

Physical	Pottery (not retained)
Digital	Photographs, survey, report
Paper	Trench sheets, Photograph sheets, drawings
Archive destination	Royal Cornwall Museum

**PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHY**

ISCA Archaeology 2021 Land at Bickland Hill, Falmouth, Cornwall: *Archaeological Evaluation*.  
**ISCA typescript report R02-0008-1**



 Site Boundary

*PROJECT TITLE*  
**Land at Bickland Hill, Falmouth, Cornwall**

*FIGURE TITLE*  
**Site Location**

*FIGURE NO.*  
**1**

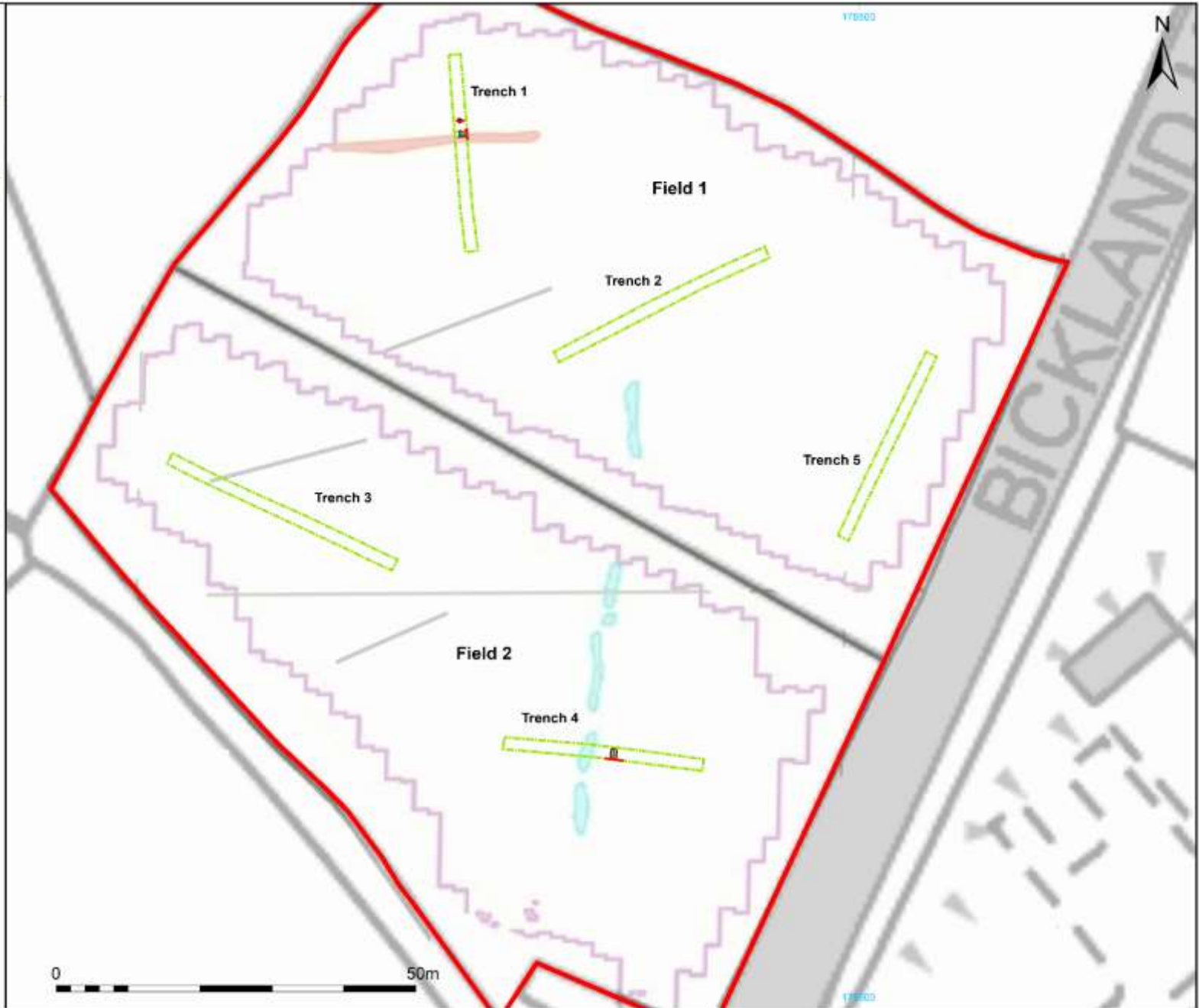


PROJECT TITLE  
Land at Bickland Hill  
Falmouth  
Cornwall

ISSUE TITLE  
Site Plan with  
2015 Substrata  
Gradiometer Results

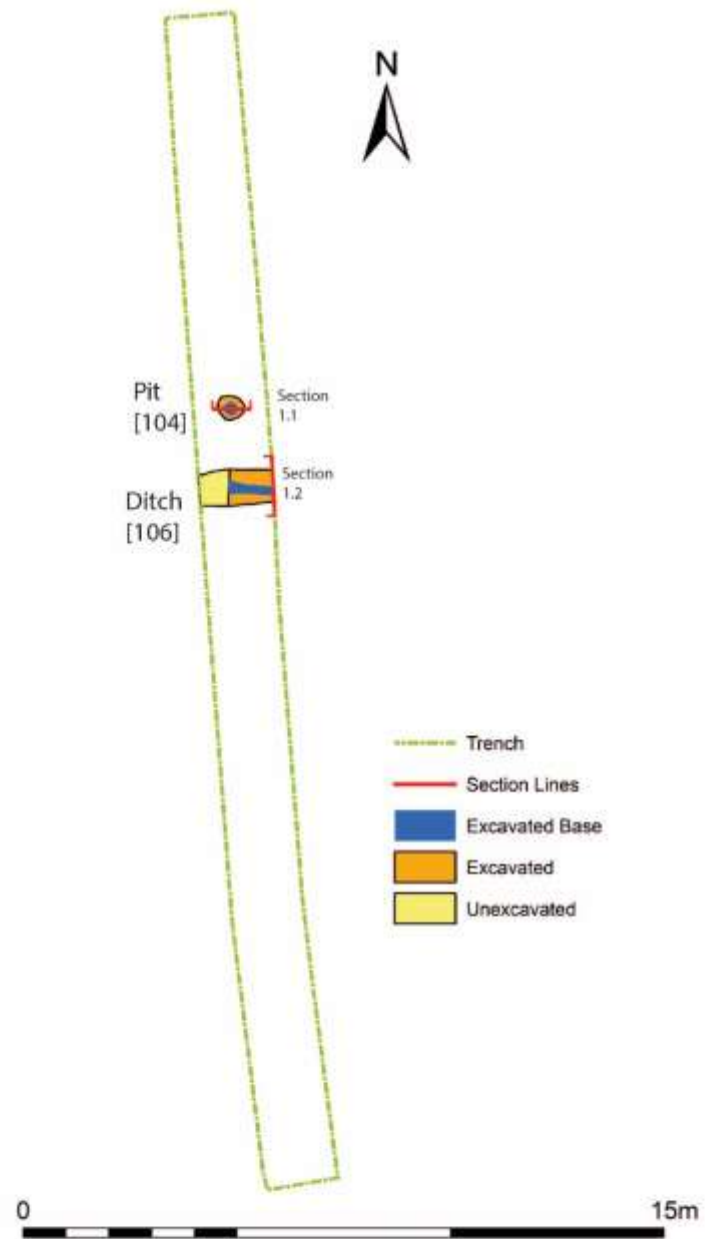
2

-  Site Boundary
-  Trench
-  Section Lines
-  Excavated Base
-  Excavated
-  Unexcavated




DRAWN BY: TB PROJECT NO: P02-0008  
CHECKED BY: TB DATE: 21/10/2021  
APPROVED BY: TB SCALE: 1:500





Tr 1, general view, facing south. Scales at 2x1m


 Fig. 3  
 Trench 1 Plan and Trench Photograph



Tr 1, ditch 106, facing east. Scale at 1m



Tr 1, pit 104, facing south, Scale at 0.4m

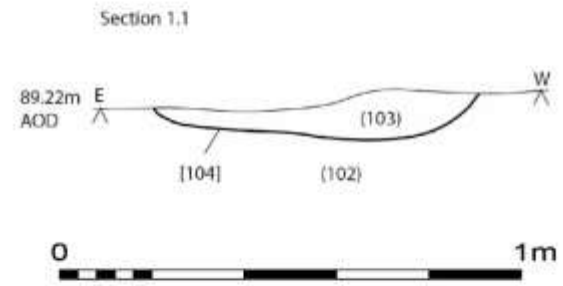
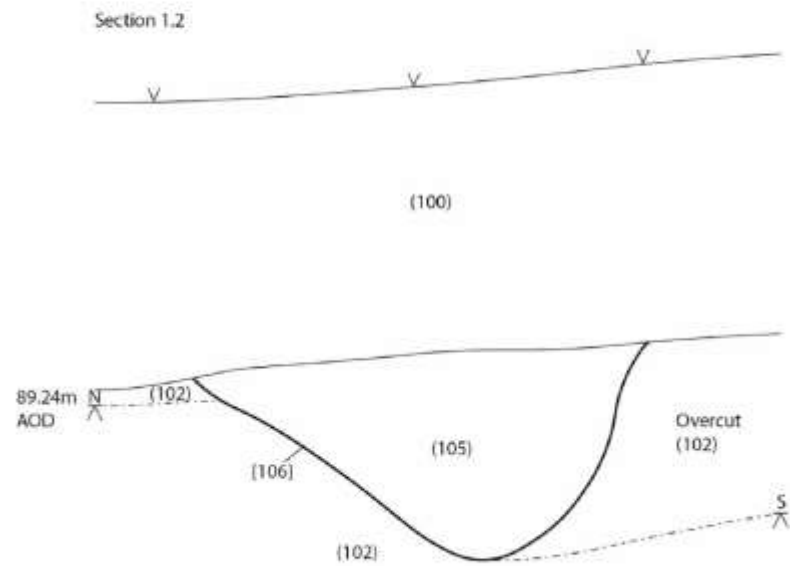
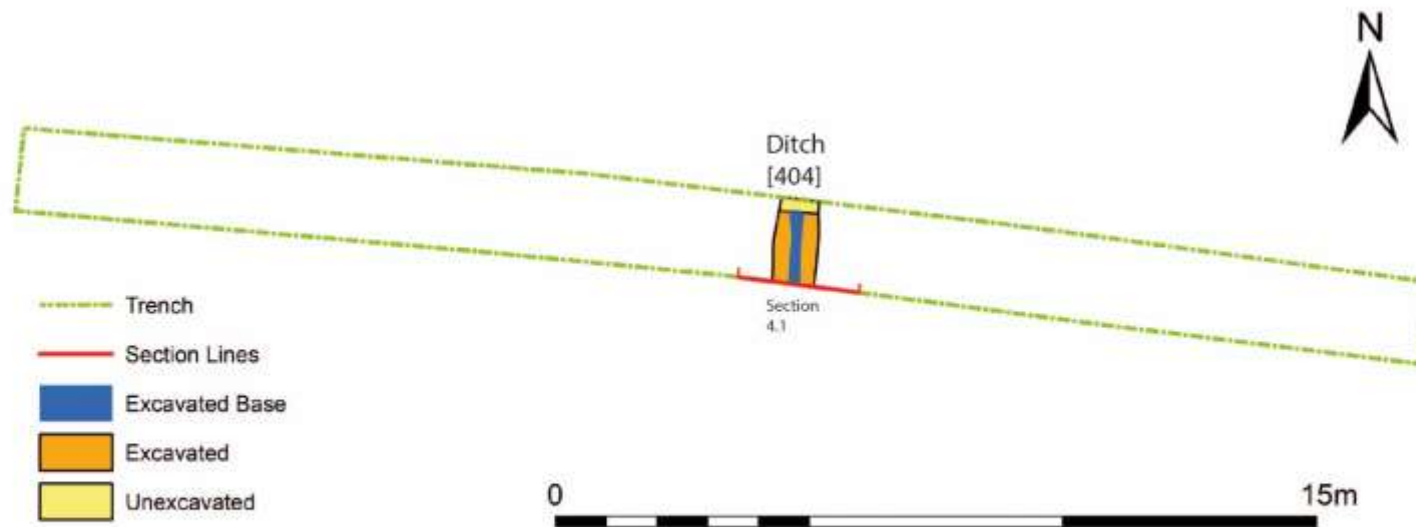


Fig. 4  
Ditch [106] and Pit [104] - Sections and Photographs



Tr 4, general view, facing west. Scales at 2x1 m


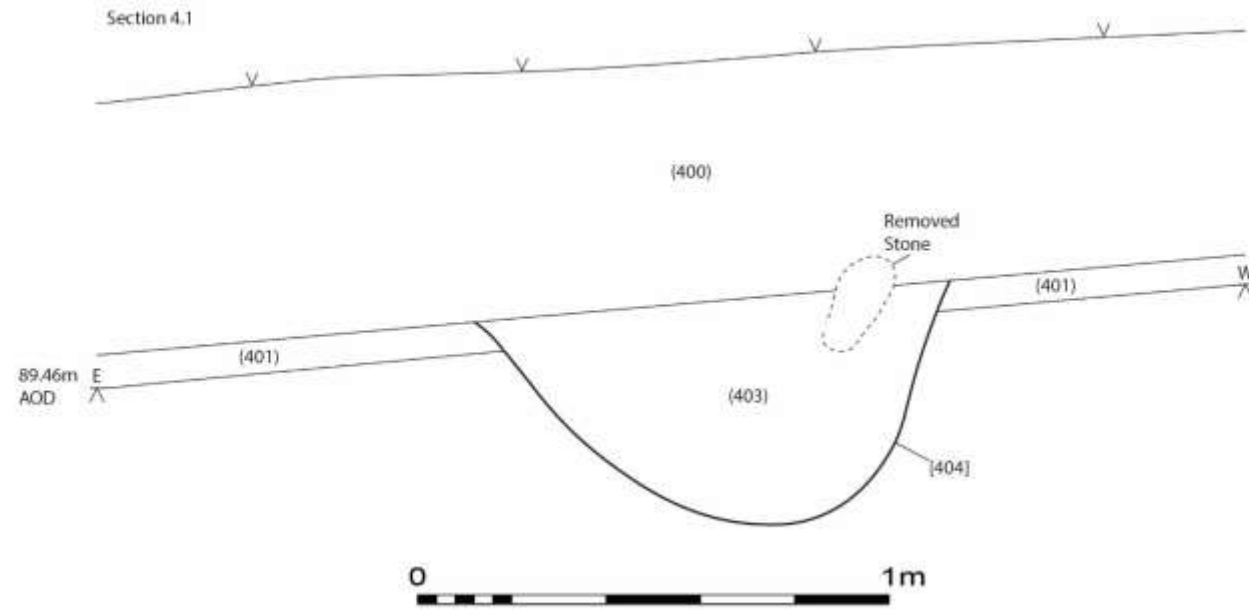


Fig. 5  
Trench 4 Plan and Trench Photograph



Tr 4, ditch 404, facing southwest. Scale at 1m



Fig. 6  
Ditch [404] - Section and Photograph



Fig. 7 - General view of Field 1, facing southeast



Fig. 8 - General view of Field 2 (Tr 3 in foreground), facing southeast