

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Colebrook, Mid-Devon	National Grid Reference SS76020170	Number:
Subject: Erection of agricultural buildings on land at NGR 276019 101701, Guscotts Farm, Copplestone		Photo attached? YES
Planning Application no: 12/00098/FULL & 12/00102/FULL	Recipient museum: Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter	
OASIS ID: southwes1-124857	Museum Accession no: RAMM:12/28 in lieu of an accession number	
Contractor's reference number/code: CGF12	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 06/06/2012	
<p>Description of works.</p> <p>Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) at the request of Mr. I. Rice of C&R Construction (SW) Ltd. (the Agent) on behalf of Mr. R. White (the Client) during groundworks associated with the proposed development. The work was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation drawn up by SWARCH in accordance with a Brief supplied by Stephen Reed of Devon County Historic Environment Service (DCHES). The work was undertaken by Dr. S. Walls.</p> <p>The development site lies in an area of archaeological potential where Prehistoric activity in the wider landscape is recorded in the Historic Environment Record. The application area itself lies 100m to the west of a Prehistoric funerary monument visible on aerial photographs. The development area was historically part of Guscotts Farm, a corruption of <i>Godescote</i> which is first recorded in 1305 (<i>Estgodescote juxta Colbrok</i> (Gover et al. 1932, 405)). The ruins of Guscotts survive a short distance to the south-west of the development site. The farmstead is shown on the Colebrook tithe map of 1845, although the 'farm' had been subsumed, along with Copplestone Barton, into Broomhill Farm by this date (see Figure 1). All three farms were owned and run by one Robert Madge.</p> <p>The area of the development (c.600m²) was stripped by a machine using a 1.75m wide grading bucket under careful archaeological supervision. The topsoil was comprised of two bands of material: an upper 0.3m thick deposit (100) of very clean soft buff-red sandy-silt containing almost no stones, and a lower 0.25m thick deposit (101) of red slightly clayey sandy-silt with rare charcoal flecks and small sub-rounded to sub-angular stones (up to 50mm). The lower topsoil overlay the natural subsoil (110), a red sandy-silt with occasional irregular bands of gravel running approximately north-south. The undisturbed subsoil was only exposed across the southern part of the development area and a small part of the north, as the footings of the proposed buildings were not of a sufficient depth to impact upon any archaeological deposits or features that may have survived there (Figure 2b).</p> <p>Three archaeological features were noted: one pit [102] and two linears, [106] and [108] (see Figures 2a and 2c).</p> <p>Feature [108] was a 0.65m wide linear exposed over 8m and orientated north-west to south-east. Two sections were placed across this linear, which revealed that it had a gentle V-shaped profile and survived to a depth of 0.18m (see Figures 2c and 3). Linear [108] was filled by (109), a soft clean tan-grey silt-sand with very rare stone inclusions. This fill contained four sherds of medieval pottery. This feature was truncated by linear [106], which was up to 0.9m wide and revealed over 8m following an almost identical orientation to linear [108], indicating that it probably represents a re-cut. Linear [106] had very gentle sloping sides and a flattish or slightly concave base and survived to a depth of 0.18m. Linear [106] was filled by a greyish-tan silt-sand with common small gravel inclusions (>30mm). The function of these linears is unclear, but they are probably remnant boundary features.</p> <p>Pit [102] was an irregular sub-ovoid feature (1.1×1.8m) with steep sloping irregular sides and base. The basal fill was a clean soft red sandy-silt (105), which was overlain by a fine grey-brown silt-sand (104) with occasional gravel fragments. The upper fill (103) was a compact dark-grey gritty silt-clay with common small stones. Although this feature produced no finds, the dark nature of the upper fill suggests that it was probably of fairly recent origin, although it was sealed by the topsoil deposits.</p> <p>In addition to the groundworks for the proposed buildings, a wider visibility splay was created at the entrance to the site from the road (i.e. opposite Broomhill Farm). This work involved the removal of small sections from three hedgebanks, all of very similar construction. They were c.1.6m high, c.2.5m wide at the base narrowing to c.1m at</p>		

the top (see Figure 3). All three were all constructed with a core c.0.4m high and c.0.9m wide of compact dark red sandy-silt (113) overlain by a c.0.6m high fine clean buff-red sandy-silt (112) (re-deposited topsoil?) and an outer layer (c.0.6m high) of loose mid reddish-brown silty-sand (111) with frequent roots.

FINDS

A small number of finds were recovered, mostly from the topsoil (see Figure 4). The recent material included: a round black plastic fitting (marked 'Fuelwood F.A.T.9') from an agricultural vehicle or perhaps dairying equipment, ×2 fragments (9g) of light clinker, and ×1 sherd (7g) of refined white earthenware with blue transfer print decoration post 1770. The topsoil also produced ×12 sherds (80g) of North Devon medieval coarseware, ×1 sherd (2g) North Devon medieval sandy ware, and ×3 sherds (17g) Upper Greensand tempered ware (×1 rim sherd) (see Figure 4). Feature (109) also produced ×4 sherds (19g) North Devon medieval coarseware pottery. This is a relatively large collection of medieval pottery, dating to the 12th-14th century. The Upper Greensand-tempered pottery may even be slightly earlier, and is a relatively rare find in rural Devon (J. Allan, *pers. comm.*).

Two lithic flakes (6g) were also recovered, one late chalk-derived flake and one chert flake, possibly late Mesolithic/early Neolithic in date (M. Tingle *pers. comm.*)

One intact glass bottle (marked 'Walter Gregory's Antiferment for Cider') was recovered from the hedgebank (context (111)). This 'antiferment' was produced in Wellington, Somerset, by a Victorian 'animal medicine manufacturer'.

DISCUSSION

While in absolute terms the volume of finds and the number of features excavated are relatively small, the presence of medieval pottery and features tallies nicely with the mention of *EstGodescote* in 1305. The suffix *cote* is normally regarded as a relatively late place-name element associated with very minor settlements, but the presence of Upper Greensand tempered pottery implies the site was occupied perhaps as early as the 11th century, with clear implications for many of the other small, apparently insignificant farming settlements dotted across the Devon landscape.

REFERENCES

Gover, J.E.B., Mawer, A. & Stenton, F.M. 1932: *The Place-Names of Devon* (ii). The English Place-Name Society.

A plan as well as any other relevant drawings must be attached showing the location and extent of site, areas investigated and features exposed.

Recorder: S. Walls

Date sent to HER: 16.07.2012

Please email completed form to: archaeol@devon.gov.uk or post to County Archaeology Service, Environment Directorate, Matford Lane Offices, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter EX2 4QW. Information recorded on this form will be added to the Historic Environment Record, and made available to all researchers.

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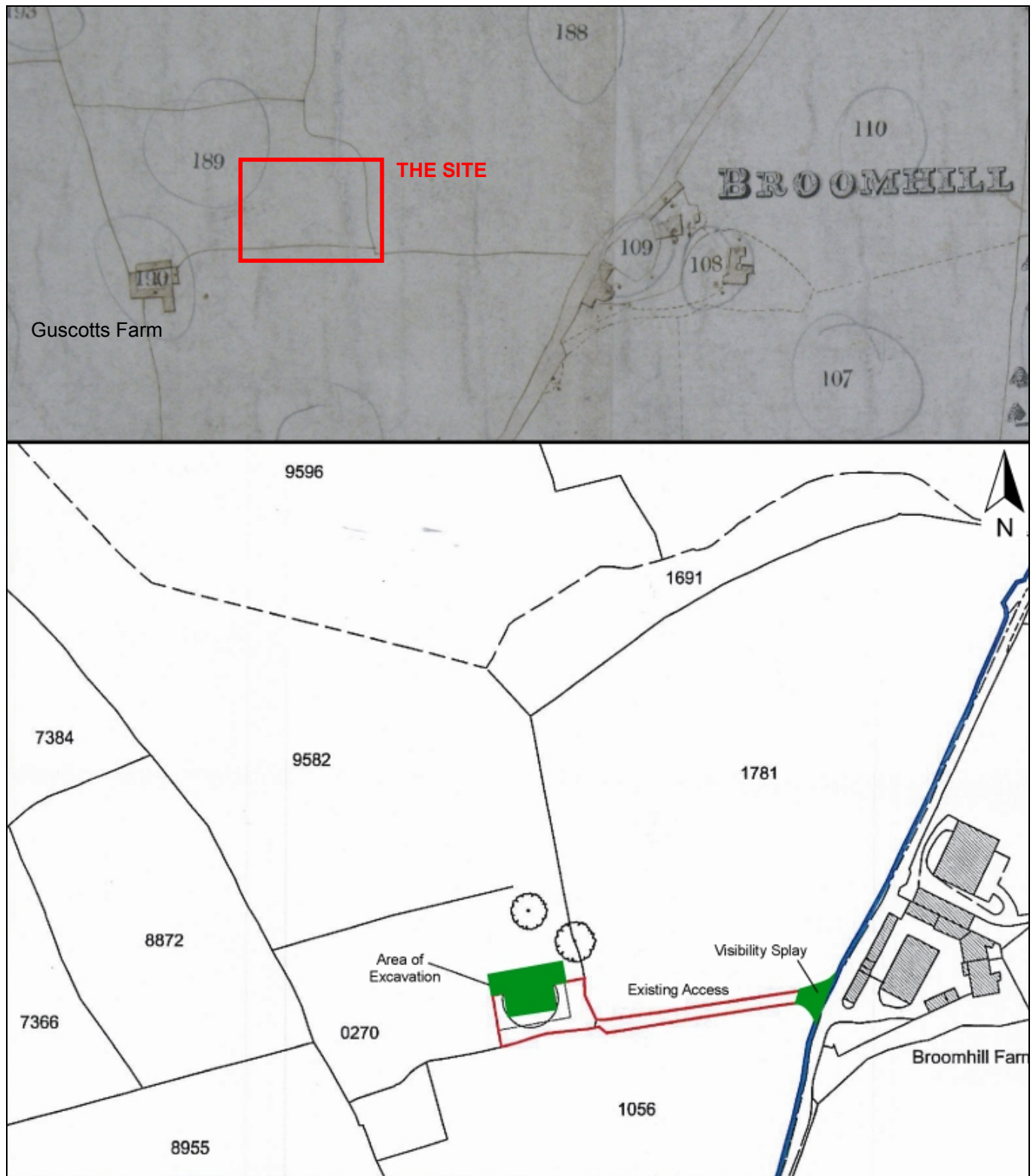


Figure 1: Above: Extract from the Colebrook tithe map of 1845; the development site lies in field 189.
Below: Site plan showing location of the excavations and visibility splay.

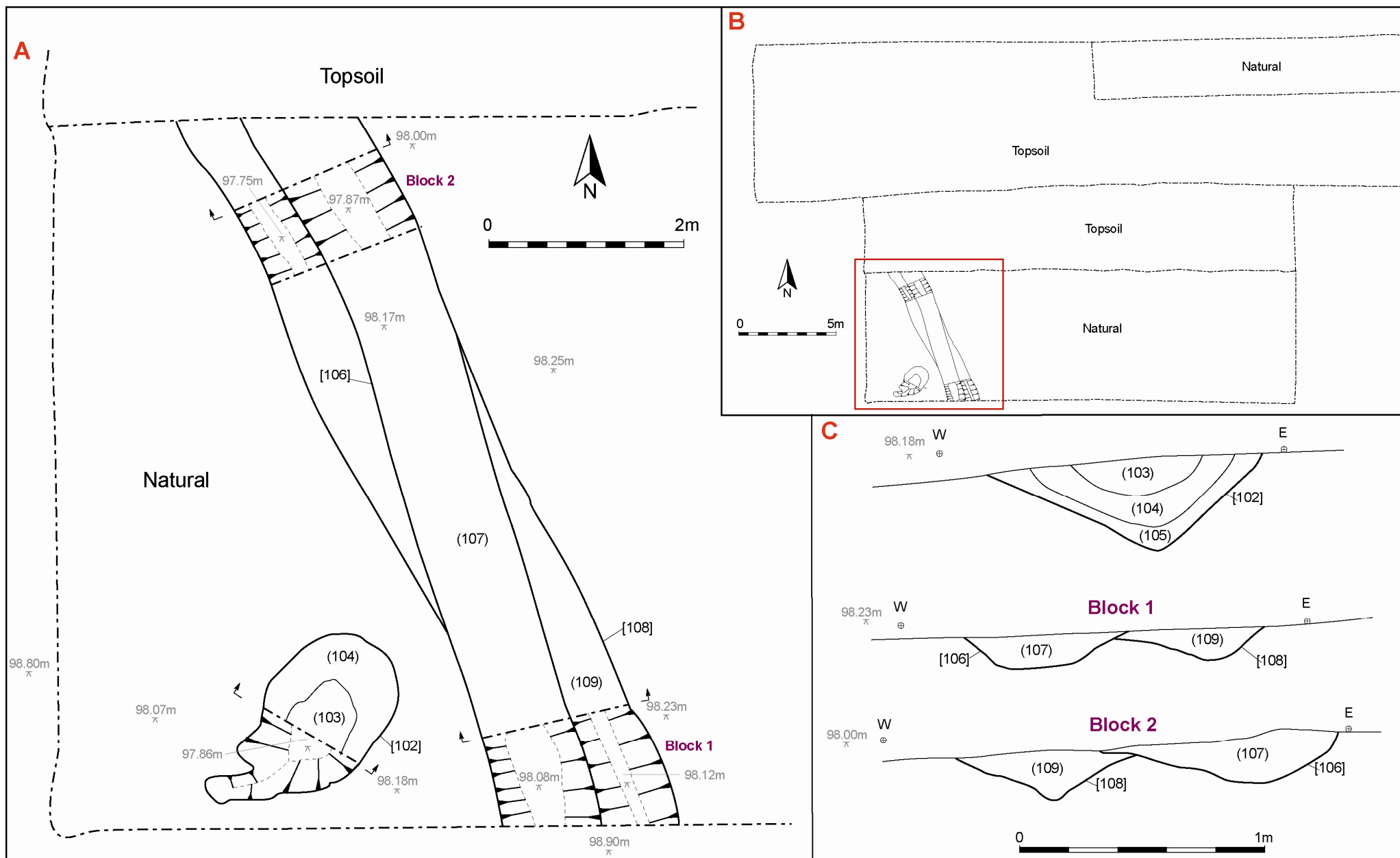


Figure 2: A: Detailed plan of the archaeological features. B: Plan of the excavated areas, with the area framed in red is shown in detail in 2A. C: Excavated sections through the three features.



Figure 3: Above: south-facing section of Block 1 through linears [106] and [108] (2m scale).
Below: east-facing section through hedge south of the access track (scale 2m).



Figure 4: Photograph showing the ceramic finds. Group A: North Devon medieval coarsewares (13th-14th century); Group B: North Devon sandy ware (13th-14th century); Group C: Upper Greensand tempered (11th-13th century); Group D: refined white earthenware with blue transfer print (post 1770).