

# Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

<b>Civil Parish &amp; District:</b> Ashreigney, Torridge	<b>National Grid Reference</b> SS 63685 12560	<b>Number:</b>
<b>Subject:</b> Archaeological monitoring and recording on land at Densham Farm, Ashreigney, Torridge, Devon		<b>Photo attached?</b> YES
<b>Planning Application no:</b> 1/1123/2012/FUL	<b>Recipient museum:</b> Museum of Barnstaple & North Devon	
<b>OASIS ID:</b> southwes1-184003	<b>Museum Accession no:</b> NDDMS2015.22	
<b>Contractor's reference number/code:</b> ADF15	<b>Dates fieldwork undertaken:</b> 27 <sup>th</sup> August 2015	
<p><b>Description of works.</b></p> <p>Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) at the request of Aeolus Power Ltd. (the Client) during groundworks associated with the construction of a single wind turbine; accompanying access track, crane hardstanding area and cable trenching on land at Densham Farm, Ashreigney, Torridge, Devon. The monitoring was carried out by P. Webb on 27<sup>th</sup> August 2015. This work was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation drawn up by GK Heritage in consultation with Steve Reed of the Devon County Historic Environment Team.</p> <p>The site is located on private land associated with Densham Farm approximately 1.25km south of Ashreigney and 1.5km north of Hollacombe. It is situated within approximately 7 hectares of agricultural land currently under pasture. The turbine itself is located towards the summit of a north-east facing valley hill-slope of a tributary of the river Taw at a height of approximately 170mAOD (Figure 1). The site lies on the boundary of well drained fine loamy soils of the Neath Association and well drained fine loamy soils of Manod Association (SSEW 1983) overlying sandstone of the Bude Formation (BGS 2015).</p> <p>Densham is first recorded in 1443, with earthworks suggesting that the present farm forms the remains of a shrunken medieval hamlet, though two prehistoric enclosures (MDV17031 and 17032) identified to the north of the site indicate at the possible continuation of activity in the region from much earlier. Historic mapping of the area indicates very little alteration in the field systems, with only limited field boundary changes, primarily their removal.</p> <p>A total of four areas, set within two fields, were excavated under archaeological supervision by a machine using a toothless grading bucket to a depth of between 0.22-0.43m, this being the depth of archaeological layers or natural deposits. The stratigraphy of the site comprised mid-dark brown soft-friable silt-clay topsoil c.0.14-0.26m thick overlying a mid brown soft-friable silt-clay subsoil c.0.15m thick, in turn overlying the natural firm yellow clay with angular sandstone.</p> <p>Area #1, forming the access track to the turbine, was linear in plan, orientated north-east to south-west and measured 62m x 5m wide (of which a 1m wide strip along the full length was monitored). A single linear ditch [004] was identified along the north-western edge of the track. It was orientated north-east to south-west, measuring 26.6+m x 0.6+m x 0.22m deep and contained a single fill (005); mid brown soft silt-clay.</p> <p>Area #2, forming the crane base for the turbine at the south-western end of Area #1, was rectangular in plan, orientated north-west to south-east, measuring 7m x 5.8m. No archaeological features were identified.</p> <p>Area #3, forming a cable trench in the southern field, was curvilinear in plan, orientated north-east to south-west and measured 100m x 0.4m, with a rectangular area at its north-eastern end, measuring 4.4m x 2.8m. No archaeological features were identified.</p> <p>Area #4, forming a continuation of the cable trench in the field to the north of the road, was curvilinear in plan, measuring 137.8m x 0.4m. No archaeological features were identified.</p> <p>No finds were recovered from the site.</p>		

## Conclusions

A single feature was identified during the archaeological monitoring, linear ditch [004]. Whilst no dating evidence was recovered from this feature, its location corresponds with that of a field boundary shown on the tithe map, and it is likely that the feature forms the archaeological remains of this boundary. The relative absence of archaeological features, in combination with the historic mapping, indicates the prolonged use of the site for agricultural purposes.

## Bibliography

British Geological Survey 2014: *Geology of Britain Viewer*.

[http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer\\_google/googleviewer.html](http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html) [accessed 28.08.2015].

Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983: *Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales*.

Recorder: P. Webb

Date sent to HER: 08.09.15

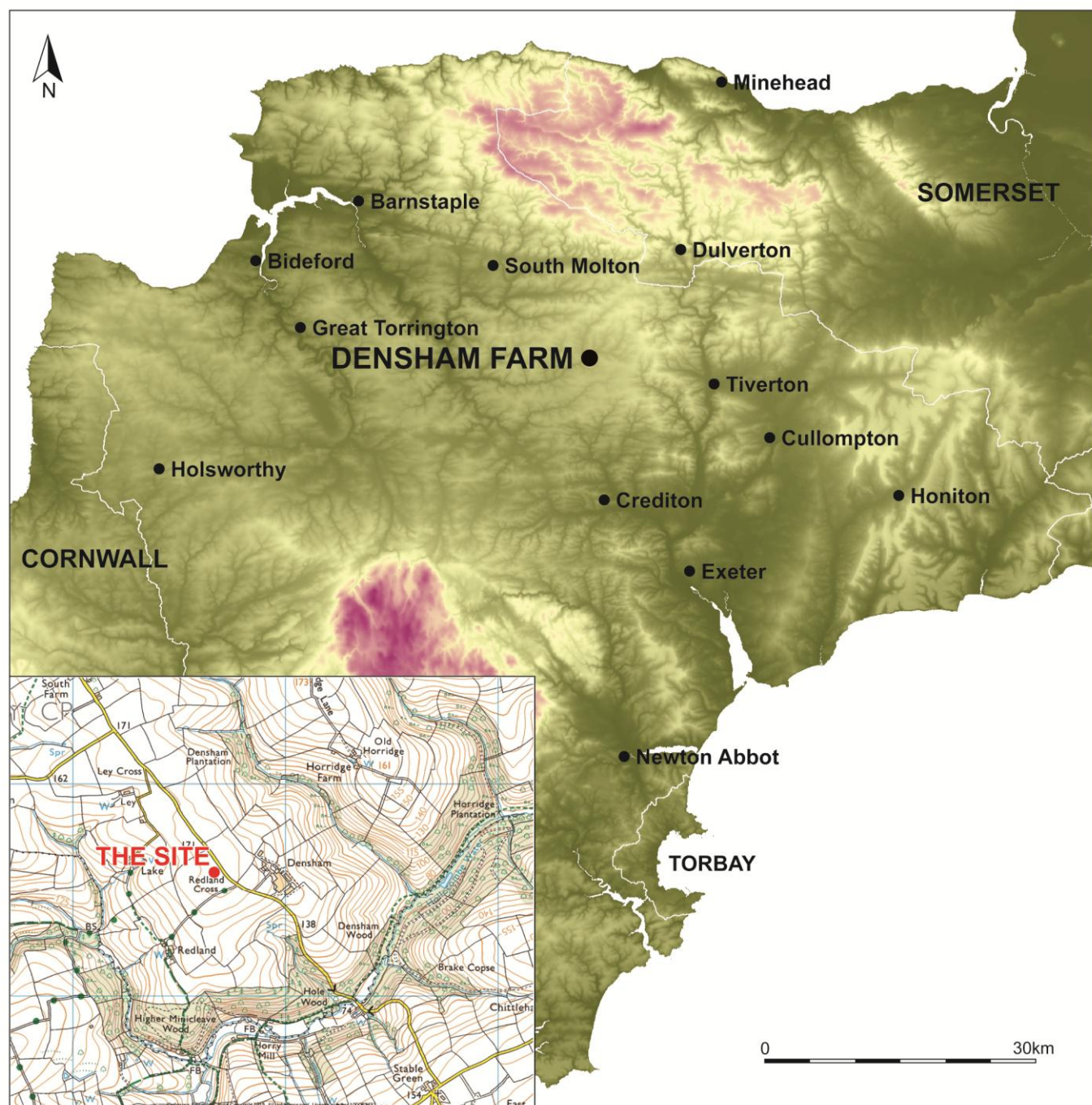


Figure 1: Site location

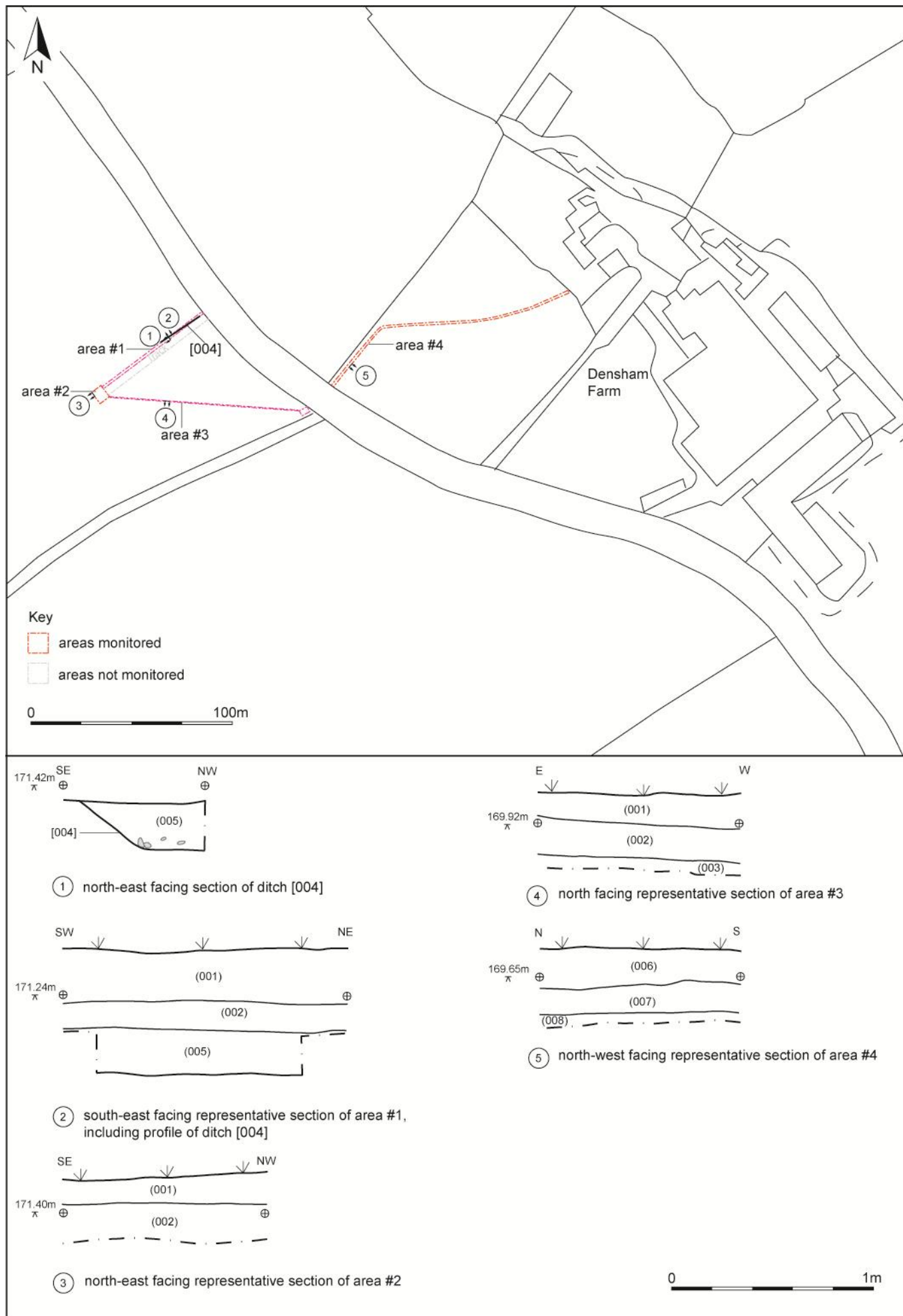


Figure 2: Site plan showing location of excavated areas and archaeological features, with representative sections.





Figure 3: Linear feature [004]; viewed from the north-east (scale 0.3m).



Figure 4: Post-excavation view of area #2; viewed from the north-west (scale 1m and 2m).