LAND OFF DURRANT LANE NORTHAM NORTH DEVON DEVON

Results of Archaeological Monitoring



South West Archaeology Ltd. report no. 180611



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Land off Durrant Lane, Northam, North Devon, Devon Results of Archaeological Monitoring

By P. Webb

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Work undertaken by SWARCH for Rebecca Fearnley of Fearnley Lott Architects (the Agent) On behalf of Mr and Mrs Pennington and Mr and Mrs Meese (the Clients)

Summary

This report presents the results of archaeological monitoring carried out by South West Archaeology Ltd. for land on Durrant Lane, North, North Devon, Devon. The site is located in an area of archaeological potential, to the north of the medieval Durrant Manor.

The archaeological monitoring at Durrant Lane identified an episode of modern landscaping as well as three archaeological features, all historic field boundaries reflecting the layout of the historic field-system. Whilst all of the features produced dating evidence to demonstrate their infilling during the mid 19th century or later, the curving nature of the features indicates that they may have had earlier, possibly medieval origins. The nature and quantity of the artefacts recovered from within ditch [105] suggests that that the boundary may have been removed at the same time as a structure depicted on the historic mapping was demolished, some of the rubble and waste making its way into the ditch fill.



July 2018

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1.0 Introduction

LOCATION: DURRANT LANE, NORTHAM

PARISH: NORTHAM
DISTRICT: NORTH DEVON

COUNTY: DEVON

NGR: SS 45045 28443 **PLANNING NO.** 1/0369/FUL

HE OFFICER REF. ARCH/DM/TO/29514A

SWARCH REF. NDL16

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) was commissioned by Rebecca Fearnley of Fearnley Lott Architects (the Agent) on behalf of Mr and Mrs Pennington and Mr and Mrs Meese (the Clients) to undertake archaeological monitoring during groundworks associated with the residential development of land off Durrant Lane, Northam, Devon. This work was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (Morris 2016) drawn up in consultation with Stephen Reed of Devon County Historic Environment Team (DCHET) and in line with best practice and CIfA guidelines.

1.2 TOPOGRAPHICAL AND GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The site is located approximately 2.2km north of Bideford, to the north of Durrant Lane on the western bank of the river Torridge. The site comprises the south-western corner of a single large east-south-east sloping pastoral field at a height of $c.45 \, \text{m}$ AOD (see Figure 1). The soils of this area are the well drained fine loamy soils of the Neath Association (SSEW 1983). These overlie the mudstone and siltstone of the Bideford Formation, part of the Holsworthy Group (BGS 2018).

1.3 HISTORICAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The site is located on the edge of a shallow coombe dropping down to the River Torridge to the east, within fields characterised on the Devon HLC as *medieval enclosures based on strip fields*. The Northam tithe map indicates the field to have been divided into five smaller plots during the late 19th century, with the 1840 tithe map depicting a building; all five of the plots owned by William Bartlett. The two smallest fields were gardens, probably related to Durrant House (now the site of a hotel), which lies immediately to the south-west. Durrant House was, according to Lysons (1822), the one-time dwelling of the Melhuish family, who held the manor of Northam from the Dean of Chapter of Windsor 1564-1770. Durrant House purchased from a devisee of the Melhuishes by Sir Richard Goodwin Keats (G.C.B.) Vice-Admiral of the White in 1810, and "Sir Richard has much improved and enlarged the house and grounds". Part of one of the gardens lies on the eastern edge of the development area, and other landscape or archaeological features of 19th century or earlier date may be present. Parts of the site have, however, already been landscaped.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

The archaeological monitoring was conducted in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (Morris 2016) drawn up in consultation with Stephen Reed (DCHET) and in line with best practice. An irregular area orientated approximately east to west and measuring up to c.55m×25m was stripped by tracked machine to the depth of weathered natural using a toothless grading bucket. Exposed archaeological deposits were excavated by hand and in accordance with the WSI and CIfA guidelines.

The evaluation was designed to establish the presence or absence, extent, depth, character and date of any *in situ* archaeological deposits within the site to inform any further planning decisions. The archaeological monitoring took place between 4th and 5th June 2018.

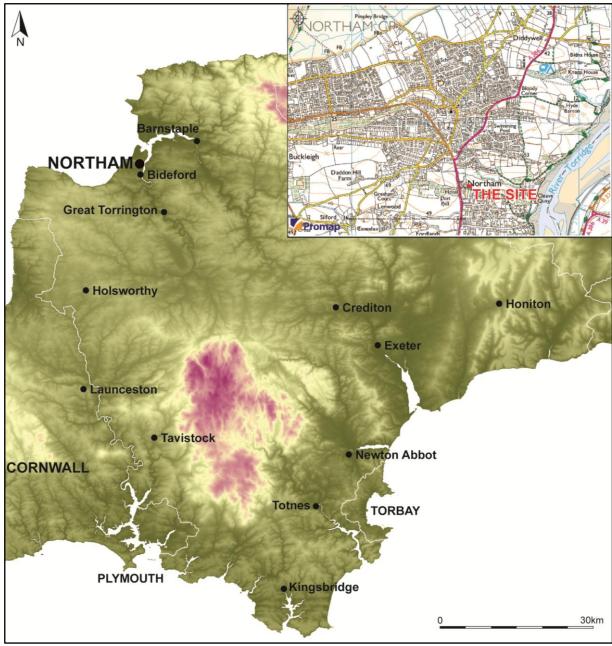


FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION (THE SITE IS INDICATED).

2.0 RESULTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

2.1 Introduction

The archaeological monitoring was carried out between 4^{th} and 5^{th} June 2018; and comprised the excavation of an irregular area orientated approximately east to west covering the footprint of the development area. The area measured up to $c.55m\times25m$ and was stripped by tracked machine to the depth of weathered natural using a toothless grading bucket. Earthworks in the north-western portion of the site show that this part of the site had previously been terraced. Exposed archaeological deposits were excavated by hand and in accordance with the WSI and CIfA guidelines.

A total of three features were identified across the site, all ditches (Figure 2). What follows is a summary of the excavations with finds noted where they occur; see Appendix 1 for detailed context descriptions; Appendix 2 for full finds concordance; and Appendix 3 for a set of baseline photographs.

2.2 DEPOSIT MODEL

There was little variation in the site stratigraphy, much of the site comprising: friable mid-dark grey-brown clay-silt topsoil/turf (100) overlying a mid grey-brown friable-soft silt-clay topsoil (101). This sealed shillet within mid yellow friable-soft silt-clay weathered natural. In the south-western corner of the site an additional layer of light-mid red-grey-brown friable-soft silt-clay subsoil (112) was present. The thickness of these soils was largely consistent across the site, c.0.45m thick, except where the ground had been terraced to the north-west where it was c.0.10m thick (see Figure 2).

2.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES

Ditch [103] was a linear feature located towards the eastern edge of the site. It was orientated approximately north-west to south-east and measured 1.80m wide and up to 0.08m deep with shallow to moderate sloping sides and slightly concave base (Figure 3). It contained a single fill: (104), mid brown soft-friable silt. Finds recovered from this feature included: two sherds (25g) of medieval pottery; five sherds (22g) of post-medieval pottery; and seven fragments (283g) of post-medieval bottle glass from fill (104).

Approximately 2m to the east ditch [105] followed the same north-west to south-east alignment and measured 1.30m wide and 0.30m deep with moderate sloping sides and slightly concave base (Figures 3 & 4). It contained two fills: (106), grey-brown soft silt-clay and (107), brown-grey soft clay with frequent stone inclusions. Finds recovered from this feature included: one sherd (38g) of medieval pottery; 108 sherds (1159g) of post-medieval pottery; 13 fragments (614g) of post-medieval glass; and one fragment (16g) of possible floor tile from fill (106); and 271 sherds (5489g) of post-medieval pottery; one fragment (4g) of clay pipe stem; seven fragments (90g) of post-medieval vessel glass; and two fragments (69g) of ridge tile from fill (107).

Ditch [108] was located along the southern edge of the site on an approximate east to west alignment. It measured 0.80m wide and 0.06m deep with moderate sloping sides and flat base (Figure 3). It contained a single fill: (109), mid grey-brown friable-soft silt-clay. Finds recovered from this feature included: 29 sherds (405g) of post-medieval pottery from fill (109).

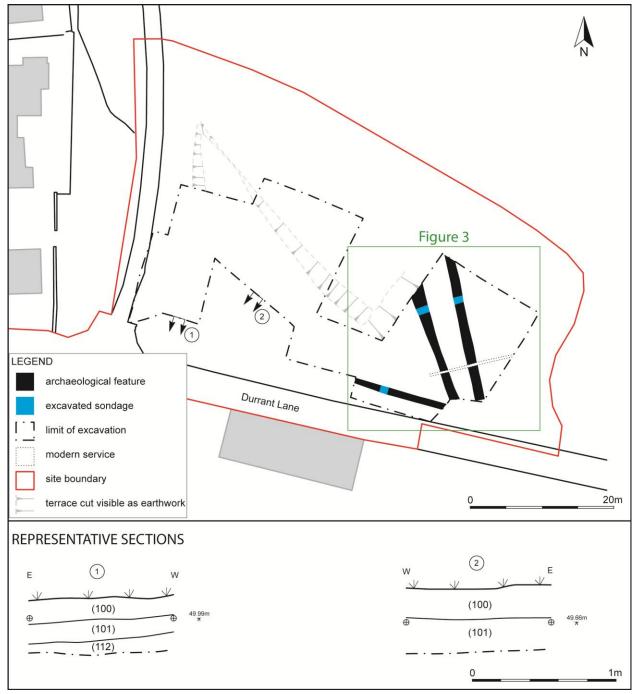


FIGURE 2: SITE PLAN SHOWING LOCATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES.

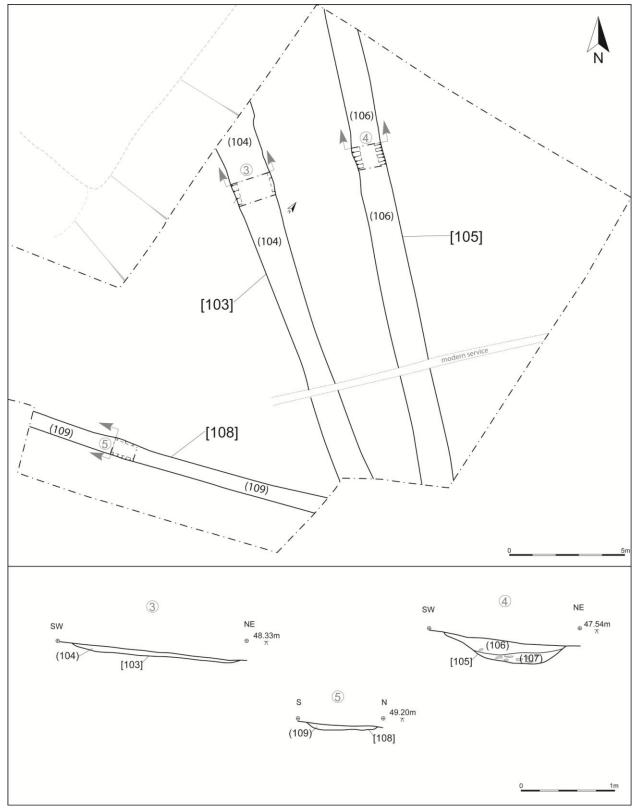


FIGURE 3: SITE PLANS AND SECTIONS. HEIGHTS BASED ON AN ARBITRARY BENCH MARK OF 50.00M AOD.



FIGURE 4: DITCH [105], SOUTH-EAST FACING SECTION; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-EAST (1M SCALE).

2.4 FINDS

A relatively large collection of finds was recovered during the excavation, largely from ditch fills comprising predominantly post-medieval pottery, glass and building materials, but also including medieval pottery fragments. A single worked flint was recovered from subsoil (112).

Of the 424 sherds of pottery recovered from the site, three sherds (63g) were medieval: $\times 2$ sherds (25g) of coarseware from ditch fill (104); and $\times 1$ sherd (38g) of imported French Saintonge pottery dating to the late 13^{th} to 15^{th} centuries from ditch fill (106).

The majority of the pottery on the site was post-medieval. Ditch [103] contained: ×1 sherd (1g) of industrial ware; ×1 sherd (13g) of North Devon gravel free wares; and ×2 sherds (8g) of North Devon gravel tempered wares within fill (104). Ditch [105] contained: ×1 sherd (3g) of North Devon gravel free wares; ×87 sherds (1024g) of North Devon gravel tempered wares; ×1 sherd (12g) of North Devon sgraffito pottery; and ×19 sherds (120g) of white refined earthenware within fill (106); and ×3 sherds (15g) of Bristol & Staffordshire yellow slipware; ×16 sherds (273g) of North Devon gravel free wares; ×231 sherds (4866g) of North Devon gravel tempered wares; ×10 sherds (242g) of North Devon sgraffito pottery; ×10 sherds (77g) of white refined earthenware; and ×1 sherd (16g) of upper greensand pottery within fill (107). Ditch [108] contained: ×1 sherd (3g) of North Devon gravel free ware; ×25 sherds (391g) of North Devon gravel tempered pottery; and ×3 sherds (11g) of white refined earthenware within fill (109). A further: ×1 sherd (13g) of North Devon gravel free pottery; ×2 sherds (61g) of North Devon gravel tempered pottery; ×1 sherd (8g) of imported tin glazed Spanish Majolica ware; and ×5 sherds (77g) of white refined earthenware were recovered from the topsoil.

Other finds recovered from across the site included: animal teeth; post-medieval bottle glass; possible floor tiles; ridge tiles; and slate fragments from ditch fills (104), (106), and (107); whilst a struck flint was recovered from subsoil (112).

The range of finds recovered from the site demonstrates largely post-medieval domestic activity utilising locally produced pottery, though with some earlier and imported examples from France and Spain which may indicate longer term higher status activity, probably associated with the manor house to the south. The presence of floor and ridge tiles and possible roofing slate fragments would indicate the presence of a nearby demolished structure, probably that depicted on the 1840 tithe map.

The single flint was recovered from the subsoil and is likely to be a residual find; and its blade-like form suggests a possible Mesolithic or Early Neolithic date.

2.5 DISCUSSION

The archaeological monitoring at Durrant Lane identified evidence of the north-western portion of the site having previously been terraced to create a level platform; and three archaeological features, all dating to the post-medieval period and relating to historic field boundaries; map regression showing them all to be the boundaries of plot 344 on the 1840 Northam tithe map. Ditches [103] and [105] formed the flanking ditches to the eastern hedgebank boundary (ditch [105] within plot 343), which Ordnance Survey mapping shows to have been removed by 1886; ditch [108] forming the southern boundary to plot 344, the roadside hedgebank remaining in existence.

The recovery of a relatively substantial quantity of pottery, along with roofing slate and moderately large sized stones from within ditch [105] suggests that the domestic structure recorded within plot 343 was demolished at the same time as the boundary was removed; the rubble and waste being used to infill the ditch. Dating evidence from all of the features would indicate that they were all infilled during the post-medieval period, though the curving nature of the boundaries as depicted on the historic mapping suggests that they may all have medieval origins.

The presence of a single worked flint within the subsoil, whilst not indicative in itself of prehistoric settlement, suggests that there was prehistoric activity in the vicinity, possibly dating as early as the Mesolithic period; and likely be related to the greater concentration of Mesolithic activity represented by flint scatters and middens recorded on the Devon and Dartmoor HER at Westward Ho! to the north (MDV107373).

3.0 CONCLUSION

The archaeological monitoring at Durrant Lane identified an episode of modern landscaping as well as three archaeological features, all historic field boundaries reflecting the layout of the historic field-system. Whilst all of the features produced dating evidence to demonstrate their infilling during the mid 19th century or later, the curving nature of the features indicates that they may have had earlier, possibly medieval origins. The nature and quantity of the artefacts recovered from within ditch [105] suggests that that the boundary may have been removed at the same time as a structure depicted on the historic mapping was demolished, some of the rubble and waste making its way into the ditch fill.

4.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY & REFERENCES

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APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Context	Туре	Description	Relationships	Depth/thickness (m)	Spot date						
Area 01											
(100)	Layer	Topsoil/turf – mid-dark grey-brown friable slightly clay-silt.	Overlies (101)	Up to 0.36m thick	Modern						
(101)	Layer	Topsoil – mid grey-brown friable-soft silt-clay.	Overlain by (100); overlies (104), (106), (109)	0.10m thick	Modern						
(102)	Natural	Natural – shillet within yellow friable-soft silt-clay. Some areas more compacted than others.	Overlain by (112); cut by [103], [105], [108]	-	-						
[103]	Cut	Historic field boundary – linear ditch orientated approximately north-west to south-east. Measures 1.80m×up to 0.08m deep with moderate to shallow sloping sides and slightly concave base.	Filled by (104); cuts (102)	Up to 0.08m deep	Medieval? / post-medieval?						
(104)	Fill	Fill of [103] – mid brown soft-friable silt.	Overlain by (101); fill of [103]	Up to 0.08m thick	Medieval? / post-medieval?						
[105]	Cut	Historic field boundary – linear ditch orientated approximately north-west to south-east. Measures 1.30m×0.30m deep with moderate sloping sides and slightly concave base.	Filled by (106), (107); cuts (102)	0.30m deep	Medieval? / post-medieval?						
(106)	Fill	Upper fill of [105] – mid grey-brown soft slightly silt-clay.	Overlain by (101); overlies (107); fill of [105]	0.20m thick	Post-medieval						
(107)	Fill	Lower fill of [105] – mid brown-grey soft clay with frequent sub-angular medium to large stone inclusions.	Overlain by (106); fill of [105]	0.10m thick	Medieval? / post-medieval?						
[108]	Cut	Historic field boundary – linear ditch orientated approximately east to west. Measured 0.80m×0.06m deep with moderate sloping sides and flat base.	Filled by (109); cuts (102)	0.06m deep	Medieval? / post-medieval?						
(109)	Fill	Fill of [108] – mid grey-brown friable-soft silt-clay.	Overlain by (101); fill of [108]	0.06m thick	Post-medieval						
[110]	Cut	Modern service trench – linear feature orientated approximately north-east to south-west. Measures 0.50m wide. Not excavated.	Filled by (111); cuts (104). (106)	-	Modern						
(111)	Fill	Fill of [110] – loose shillet within mid yellow soft silt-clay. Re-deposited natural.	Overlain by (100); fill of [110]	-	Modern						
(112)	Layer	Subsoil – light-mid very slightly red-grey-brown friable-soft silt-clay. Intermittent layer only present in south-west corner of site.	Overlain by (101); overlies (102)	0.10m thick	-						

APPENDIX 2: FINDS CONCORDANCE

	POTTERY			OTHER			DATE
Context	Sherds	Wgt. (g)	Notes	Frags.	Wgt. (g)	Notes	
(100)	1 1 2 5	8 13 61 77	Majolica ware. Tin glazed dish base. Possibly Spanish. Late 19 th century. North Devon Gravel Free pottery. Post-medieval. North Devon Gravel Tempered pottery. Post-medieval White refined earthenware. Includes blue transfer print & x1 possible plant stand. Post-medieval.	1 2	9 <1	Glass - cobalt glass Glass - dark green shard, probable bottle glass.	Post- medieval
(104)	1 2 1 2	1 25 13 8	Industrial pottery. Post-medieval Medieval coarseware? Micacious North Devon Gravel Free pottery. Yellow internal glaze. Post-medieval. North Devon Gravel Tempered pottery. Post-medieval.	7	283	Glass – dark green OE wine bottle; cojoining base fragments.	Post- medieval
(106)	1 87 1 1	3 1024 12 38 120	North Devon Gravel Free pottery. Post-medieval. North Devon Gravel Tempered pottery. Post-medieval. North Devon sgraffito. Base slip only. Post-medieval. Saintonge pottery. Wide handled, big globular pagau. Late 13 th -15 th century White refined earthenware. Post-medieval.	1 1 8 5	8 16 337 277 311	Bone – animal tooth. Ceramic building material. Possible floor tile Glass - dark green fabric. OE wine bottle, including neck and base Glass - dark green fabric. Possible onion jar. Slate fragments.	Post- medieval
(107)	3 16 231 10 10	15 273 4866 242 77	Bristol & Staffordshire Yellow Slipware? Post-medieval. North Devon Gravel Free pottery. Includes rim fragments from possible jug. Post-medieval. North Devon Gravel Tempered pottery. Includes bases, rims, & handles. Post-medieval. North Devon sgraffito pottery. Base slip only. Post-medieval. White refined earthenware. Icludes scalloped rim. Post-medieval.	1 2 6 1 2	4 69 85 5 64	Clay pipe stem. Ceramic building material -ridge tile. Glass - dark green vessel shard. Glass - green vessel shard. Metal - Iron object.	Post- medieval
(109)	1 1 25 3	16 3 391 11	Upper greensand pottery? Base sherd North Devon Gravel Free pottery. Post-medieval. North Devon Gravel Tempered pottery. Post-medieval. White refined earthenware. x1 with blue transfer print. Post-medieval.	1 1	197 <1 4	Slate fragments. Glass - colourless plate glass. Glass - bright green bottle lip. Flint.	Post- medieval

APPENDIX 3: EVALUATION SUPPORTING PHOTOGRAPHS



1. SITE VIEW PRE-EXCAVATION; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH (NO SCALE).



 $2.\,\mathsf{SITE}\,\,\mathsf{VIEW}\,\mathsf{PRE}\text{-}\mathsf{EXCAVATION};\,\mathsf{VIEWED}\,\,\mathsf{FROM}\,\mathsf{THE}\,\,\mathsf{SOUTH}\text{-}\mathsf{WEST}\,\,\mathsf{(NO}\,\,\mathsf{SCALE)}.$



3. SITE VIEW PRE-EXCAVATION, SHOWING NATURAL SLOPE OF THE GROUND; VIEWED FROM THE WEST (NO SCALE).



4. Site view pre-excavation, showing terraced area in North-West Portion of the site; viewed from the east (2m scales).



5. WORKING SHOT, SITE STRIP; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-EAST (NO SCALE).



6. WORKING SHOT, SITE STRIP; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-WEST (NO SCALE).



7. POST-EXCAVATION VIEW OF SITE, EAST END; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-WEST (1M & 2M SCALES).



8. Post-excavation view of site, north-west end with terrace cut visible to the rear; viewed from the south (1m & 2m scales).



9. Post-excavation view of site, north-west end with terrace cut visible to the rear; viewed from the south-west (1m & 2m scales).



10. Post-excavation view of site, southern edge; viewed from the east (1m & 2m scales).



11. Post-excavation view of site, west end; viewed from the south (1m & 2m scales).



12. POST-EXCAVATION VIEW OF SITE, WEST END; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-WEST (1M & 2M SCALES).



13. POST-EXCAVATION SITE VIEW; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-WEST (NO SCALES).



14. DITCH [103] SOUTH-EAST FACING SECTION; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-EAST (1M SCALE).



15. DITCH [103] POST-EXCAVATION; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-EAST (1M SCALE).



16. DITCH [105] SOUTH-EAST FACING SECTION; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-EAST (1M SCALE).



17. DITCH [105] POST-EXCAVATION; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-EAST (1M SCALE).



18. DITCHES [103] AND [105] POST-EXCAVATION; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-EAST (1M & 2M SCALES).



19. EAST-SOUTH-EAST FACING SECTION OVER DITCH [103]; VIEWED FROM THE EAST-SOUTH-EAST (2M SCALE).



20. South-south-west facing section over ditch [105]; viewed from the south-south-west (2m scale).



21. DITCH [108] PRE-EXCAVATION; VIEWED FROM THE WEST (1M & 2M SCALES).



22. DITCH [108], EAST FACING SECTION; VIEWED FROM THE EAST (1M SCALE).



23. DITCH [108] POST-EXCAVATION; VIEWED FROM THE EAST (1M SCALE).



24. EAST FACING REPRESENTATIVE SITE SECTION, ACROSS MIDDLE OF SITE; VIEWED FROM THE EAST (1M SCALE).



25. NORTH FACING REPRESENTATIVE SITE SECTION, ACROSS MIDDLE OF SITE; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH (1M SCALE).



26. NORTH FACING REPRESENTATIVE SITE SECTION, WEST END; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH (1M SCALE).



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