

LAND AT ELMSWOOD PARK LODDISWELL SOUTH HAMS DEVON

Results of an Archaeological Evaluation



South West Archaeology Ltd. Report No. 250915



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Land at Elmswood Park, Loddiswell, South Hams, Devon

Results of an Archaeological Evaluation

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Work undertaken by SWARCH for Hembury Homes Limited (the Client)

SUMMARY

This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) on Land at Elmswood Park, Loddiswell, South Hams, Devon as part of planning-application 1346/25/FUL, for the proposed construction of eleven dwellings.

The site lies in the settlement of Loddiswell, in the parish of Loddiswell, in the Hundred of Stanborough and the deanery of Woodleigh. The site is described by the Devon Historic Landscape Characterisation as post-medieval enclosed land. The geophysical survey undertaken on the site identified a single linear anomaly defining the corner of a possible enclosure.

Three evaluation trenches (c.75.80m) were excavated across the site, targeting the geophysical anomaly. Three ditches were identified, two being part of the same linear feature, corresponding with geophysical anomalies. These ditches defined part of a fieldsystem, seemingly infilled in post-medieval period, but possibly developed from the medieval period.

*The results of the geophysical survey and evaluation trenching would imply the archaeological potential of this site is **low** and no further archaeological fieldwork is recommended.*



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 DEVON COUNTY HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT TEAM (DCHET)

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

LOCATION:	LAND AT ELMWOOD PARK
PARISH:	LODDISWELL
DISTRICT:	SOUTH HAMS
COUNTY:	DEVON
NGR:	SX 71841 48560
PLANNING NO.	1346/25/FUL
OASIS NUMBER:	SOUTHWES1-525769
SWARCH REF.	LEP25

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) was commissioned by Hembury Homes Limited (the Client) to undertake an archaeological evaluation on Land at Elmwood Park, Loddiswell, South Hams, Devon, prior to a planning application process. This phase of work follows on from a previous geophysical survey (Bampton, 2024) and was undertaken in order to assess the potential impact of the development on any buried archaeological resource. This work was undertaken in accordance with best practice and ClfA guidance, and in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI; Boyd 2025) drawn up in consultation with the Devon County Historic Environment Team (DCHET).

1.2 TOPOGRAPHICAL AND GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The proposed site is located within the village of Loddiswell, across a parcel of land between Elmwood Park and Village Cross Road. This is on a gentle east-facing slope at a height of between c.99.4m and c.102.3m AOD. The site at the time of the evaluation was laid to grass, with a small, wooded area towards the south-west. Surrounding this parcel of land was residential housing.

The soils of the area are of a fine loamy and fine silty soils of Denbigh Association (SSEW 1983), which overlie the slate, siltstone and sandstone of the Meadfoot Group (BGS 2025).

1.3 HISTORICAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The site lies in the settlement of Loddiswell, in the parish of Loddiswell, in the Hundred of Stanborough and the Deanery of Woodleigh. Loddiswell was a Domesday manor. The site is described by the Devon Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) as *post-medieval enclosed land* with some *medieval enclosed land* in the wider area. Mapping from c.1838 shows the layout of the fields here, with subsequent mapping showing the expansion of the settlement around the site through the subsequent years. The wooded southern end of the site is shown to be separate in the 20th century, and an internal boundary is shown crossing the site on historic mapping from c.1904. This boundary was removed in the 20th century. Relatively few archaeological assets are noted by the Devon Historic Environment Record near to the site. A geophysical survey was undertaken prior to the evaluation trenching (see Bampton 2024).

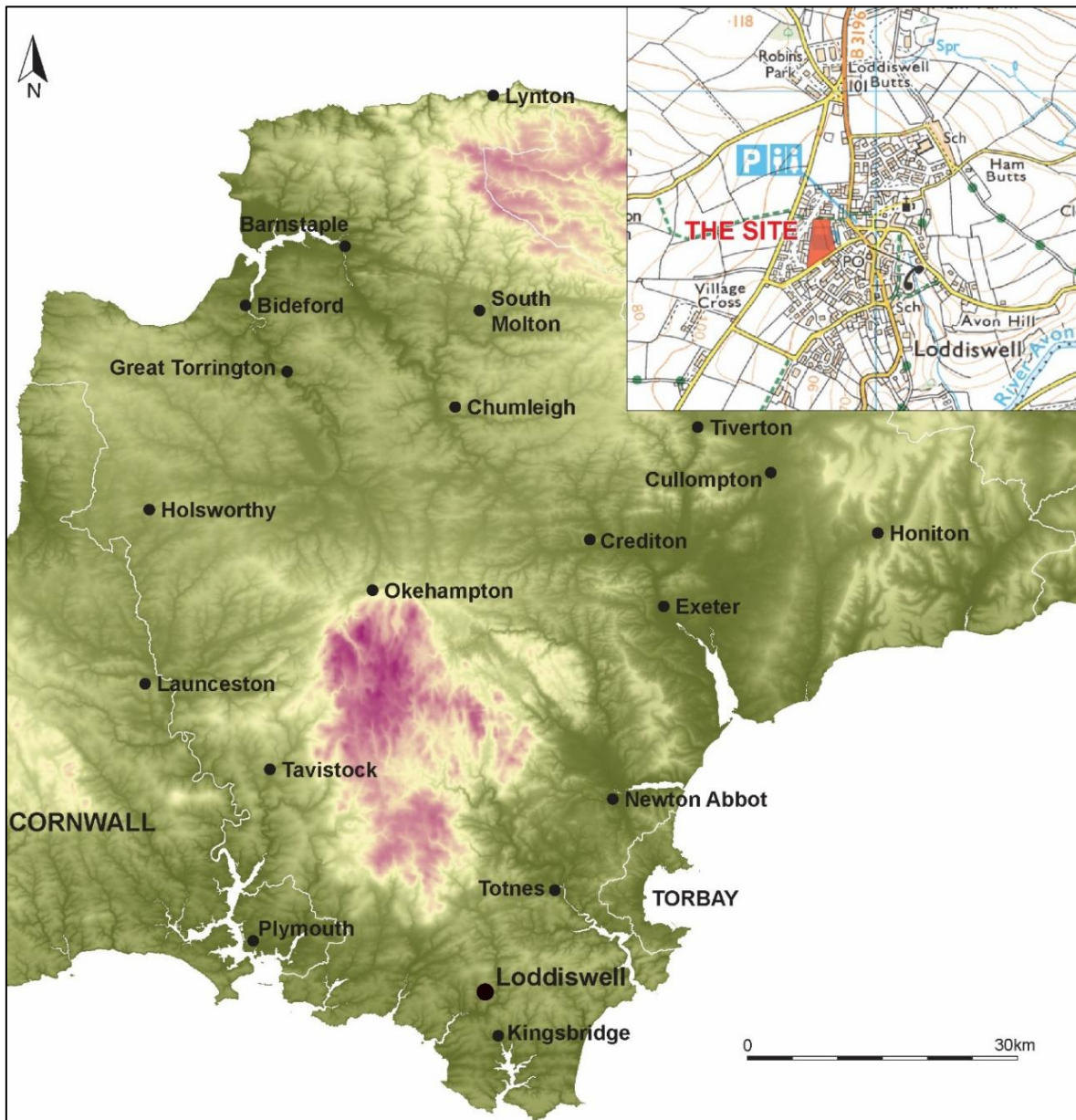


FIGURE 1: LOCATION MAP. CONTAINS ORDNANCE SURVEY DATA © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2024.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

This work was undertaken in accordance with current best practice and ClfA guidance and a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (Boyd, 2025) drawn up in consultation with the Devon County Historic Environment Team (DCHET).

Any desk-based assessment aspect of this report follows the guidance as outlined in: *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment* (ClfA 2014a) and *Understanding Place: historic area assessments in a planning and development context* (English Heritage 2012).

The archaeological evaluation follows the guidance as outlined in: *Archaeological Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (ClfA 2020b) and *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological Watching Brief* (ClfA 2020c). The archaeological works in this instance aims to ensure the preservation by record of any encountered archaeological deposits or remains in accordance with industry standards and best practice. The evaluation trenches targeted anomalies identified on a previous geophysical survey (Bampton, 2024).

2.0 RESULTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Archaeological evaluation trenching was undertaken on the 18th of August 2025 by SWARCH personnel. The evaluation trenches were targeted to investigate part of an undated possible enclosure identified by the geophysical survey (Bampton 2024). Three trenches totalling 84.4m in length and each c.1.50m wide were excavated using a 360° mechanical excavator to the level of the natural geology, which revealed archaeological features and deposits that were cleaned and excavated by hand.

2.2 DEPOSIT MODEL

Across the whole site there was a relatively consistent thickness of topsoil, between c.0.20m and 0.27m deep. It was a dark grey-brown friable clay-silt with minimal amounts of small shillet fragment inclusions, and evidence of rooted inclusions up to 20%. This deposit overlay the subsoil, a dark brown-grey friable silty clay, with occasional amounts of small shillet fragment inclusions up to 20%, and evidence of rooted inclusions up to <5%. The subsoil was between 0.26m and 0.32m thick. Throughout all trenches the natural geological substrate was identified as a weathered mid-brown compact shillet within a mid-light brown-yellow firm silt-clay matrix. The natural geology was identified at a depth of c.0.50 to 0.54m below the current ground surface. Full context descriptions including depths can be found in Appendix 1.

2.3 RESULTS

The evaluation revealed three archaeological features, all ditches, forming two linear features running parallel with each other, and corresponding to, and validating the accuracy of, the geophysical survey (Bampton, 2024; see also Figure 5). The only find recovered from the site was a single fragment of a broken iron object from ditch fill (106); this is likely to be from farming equipment and is post-medieval in date.

A context list with full context descriptions can be found in Appendix 1; a complete finds list in Appendix 2; and supporting photographs in Appendix 3.

2.3.1 TRENCH 1

Trench 1 was aligned approximately east to west and measured 24.80m × 1.50m. At the west end of the trench, the topsoil c.0.26m thick, in contrast to the east end of the trench where it was c.0.23m thick. These deposits overlaid the subsoil, c.0.26m thick in the west, and c.0.27m thick to the east. The natural geological substrate was encountered at 0.52m below current ground level throughout the trench. To the centre of the trench were two linear features [105] and [107]. (Figures 2 & 4).

Linear feature [105] aligned north-east to south-west continues into either side of the trench. This ditch had moderate sides, a concave base and a sharp break in slope. It measured c.1.04m wide and 0.40m deep. This ditch contained two fills (103) and (104). Fill (103) was a friable, dark brown-red, sandy clay, with angular shillet inclusions measuring up to <200mm, making up to 10% of the whole. Fill (104) was a friable, mid brown, sandy clay, with sub angular shillet inclusions measuring up to <100mm, making up to 5-10% of the whole. This ditch truncated linear feature [107]. A single broken iron object came from the fill (106) of this feature.

Possible linear feature [107] aligned north-east to south-west continues into either side of the trench. This ditch had shallow sides, a flat base, and a sharp break in slope. It measured c.>1.38m wide, and 0.06m deep. This ditch contained a single fill (106), a friable, dark brown, sandy clay,

with angular shillet inclusions measuring up to <100mm, making up to 15% of the whole. This ditch was truncated by linear feature [105].

2.3.2 TRENCH 2

Trench 2 was aligned north to south, measured at 26.40m × 1.50m. At the north end of the trench, the topsoil was c.0.24m thick, whereas to the south it was 0.26m thick. This overlaid the subsoil, which was 0.26m thick to the north and 0.28m thick to the south. The natural geology was seen at c.0.50m below current ground level. Towards the centre of the trench was a single linear feature [205], the continuation of Ditch [105] in Trench 1.

Linear feature [205] was aligned east to west. This ditch had moderate sides, a concave base and a sharp break in slope. It measured 0.92m wide and 0.34m deep. This ditch contained two fills (203) and (204), basically identical to (103) and (104) in ditch [105]. No finds were recovered from this feature (Figures 3 & 4).

2.3.3 TRENCH 3

Trench 3 was aligned east to west and measured 24.60m × 1.50m. At the east end of the trench, the topsoil was a c.0.27m thick, whereas to the west it was 0.25m thick. This overlaid the subsoil, 0.27m thick in the east, and 0.26m thick to the west. The natural geology was seen at 0.51-0.52m below current ground level throughout the trench. No archaeological features or deposits were observed.



FIGURE 2: TRENCH 1. SECTION SHOT. DITCHES [105 & 107]. VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-NORTH-EAST (SCALES: 1M & 0.4M).



FIGURE 3: TRENCH 2, DITCH [205]. VIEWED FROM THE EAST (SCALES: 1M & 0.4M).

2.4 FINDS

A single metallic iron object was recovered from Ditch [105], identified as a fragment of post-medieval farm equipment.

2.5 DISCUSSION

The archaeological features encountered on the site corresponded with the targeted geophysical anomalies. These features were identified as two ditches. These are likely to be boundary ditches for a short-lived subdivision of the field, with fills derived from the gradual erosion of a bank. Ditch [107], could be an earlier version of the same boundary feature, which suggests a degree of longevity to this boundary. No pottery was retrieved from these features, but the fragment of an iron object, likely part of agricultural equipment, would imply a post-medieval date.

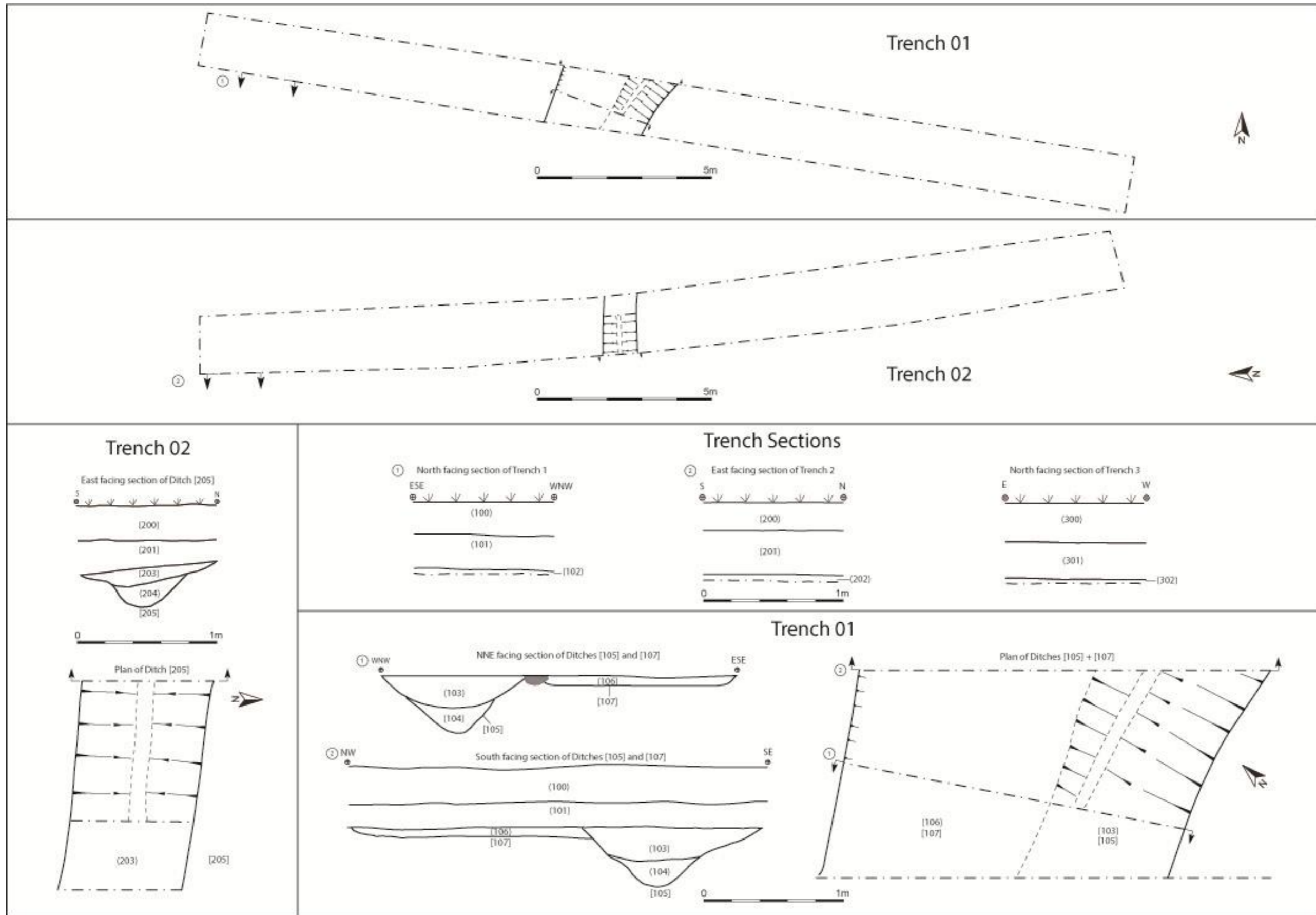


FIGURE 4: PLANS AND SECTIONS FROM TRENCHES 01 AND 02.

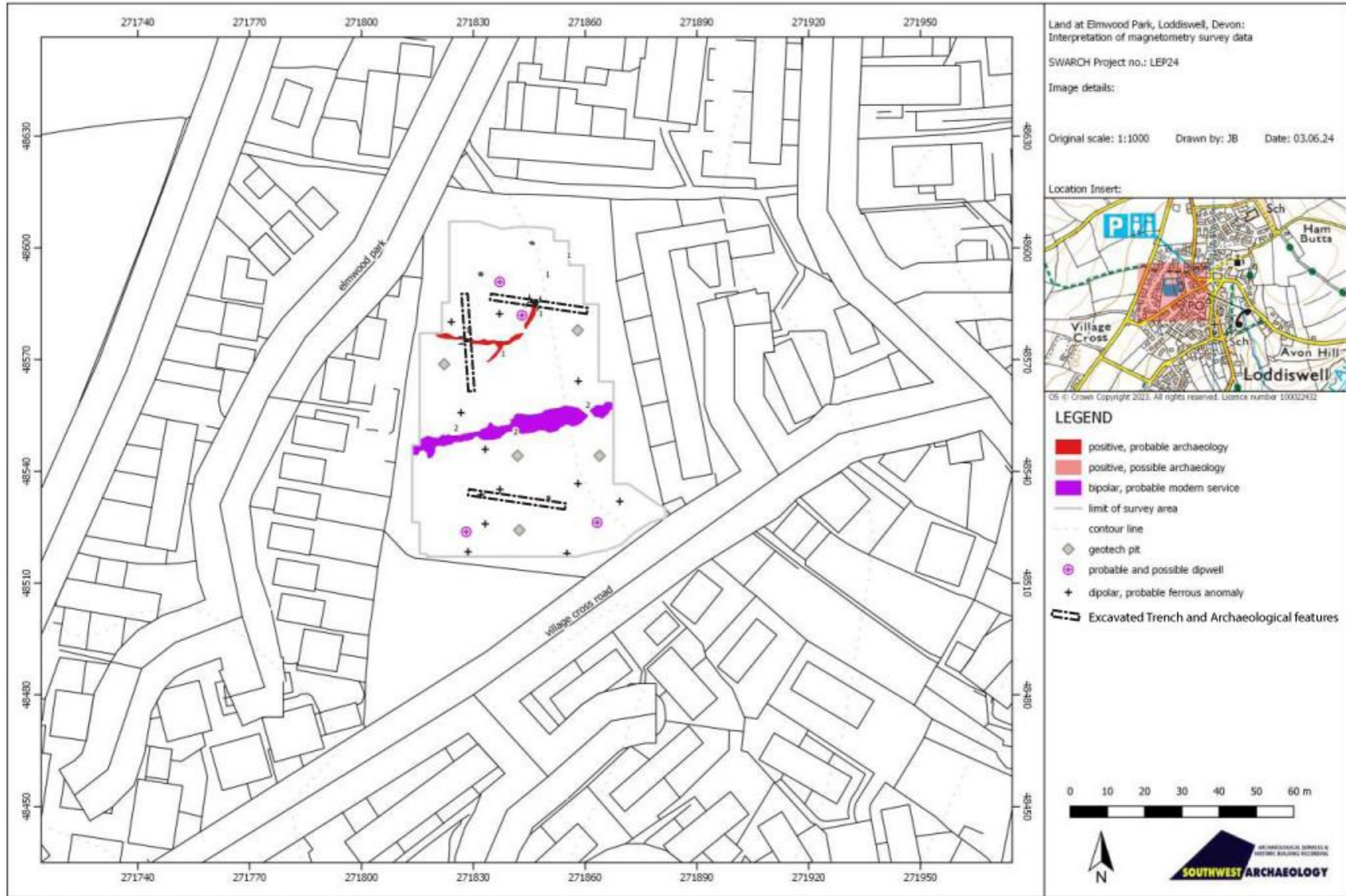


FIGURE 5: PLAN SHOWING TRENCHES OVERLAYING THE GEOPHYSICS RESULTS.

3.0 CONCLUSION

The site lies in the settlement of Loddiswell, in the parish of Loddiswell, in the Hundred of Stanborough and the deanery of Woodleigh. The site is described by the Devon Historic Landscape Characterisation as *post-medieval enclosed land*. The geophysical survey undertaken on the site identified a single linear anomaly defining the corner of a possible enclosure.

Three evaluation trenches (c.75.80m) were excavated across the site, targeting the geophysical anomaly. Three ditches were identified, two being part of the same linear feature, corresponding with geophysical anomalies. These ditches defined part of a fieldsystem, seemingly infilled in post-medieval period, but possibly developed from the medieval period.

The results of the geophysical survey and evaluation trenching would imply the archaeological potential of this site is **low** and no further archaeological fieldwork is recommended.

4.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY & REFERENCES

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APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Context	Type	Descriptions	Relationships	Thickness (m)	Spot Date
Trench 01					
(100)	Layer	Topsoil – Dark grey-brown friable clay silt. Small shillet inclusions; 20% roots.	Overlies (101)	0.26m	-
(101)	Layer	Subsoil – Dark brown-grey friable silty clay. 20% shillet fragments, <5% roots.	Overlain by (100); overlies (102)	0.24-0.30m	-
(102)	Natural	Natural – Weathered mid-brown compact shillet within a mid-light brown-yellow firm silt-clay matrix. 70% shillet inclusions.	Overlain by (101)	0.5m	-
(103)	Fill	Ditch fill – Dark brown-red, sandy clay. 10% angular shillet.	Fill of [105]; Overlain by (101); overlies (104)	0.23m	-
(104)	Fill	Ditch fill – Mid brown, friable sandy clay. 5-10% angular shillet.	Fill of [105]; Overlain by (103)	0.27m	-
[105]	Cut	Ditch cut – Linear feature, N-S orientation, for 1m within trench. 1.04m wide and 0.4m deep. Moderate sides, concave base.	Filled by (104), (103)	0.4m	-
(106)	Fill	Ditch fill – Dark brown, sandy clay. 15% angular shillet inclusions.	Fill of [107]; Overlain by (101); Cut by [105]	0.06m	-
[107]	Cut	Ditch Cut – linear feature, N-S orientation, for 1m within trench. 1.38m wide, and 0.06m deep. Shallow sides with flat base.	Filled by (106); Cut by [105]	0.06m	-
Trench 02					
(200)	Layer	Topsoil – Dark grey-brown friable clay silt. Small shillet inclusions; 20% roots.	Overlies (201)	0.20m	-
(201)	Layer	Subsoil – Dark brown-grey friable silty clay. 20% shillet fragments, <5% roots.	Overlain by (200); overlies (202)	0.20-0.52m	-
(202)	Natural	Natural – Weathered mid-brown compact shillet within a mid-light brown-yellow firm silt-clay matrix. 70% shillet inclusions.	Overlain by (201)	0.52m	-
(203)	Fill	Ditch fill – Dark brown-yellow, sandy clay.	Fill of [205]; Overlain by (202); Overlies (204)	0.12m	-
(204)	Fill	Ditch fill – Mid brown, sandy clay.	Fill of [205]; Overlain by (203)	0.18m	-
[205]	Cut	Ditch cut – Linear feature, E-W orientation, for 1m in trench. 0.92m wide and 0.34m deep. Moderate sides with concave base.	Filled by (203), (204)	0.34m	-
Trench 03					
(300)	Layer	Topsoil – Dark grey-brown friable clay silt. Small shillet inclusions; 20% roots.	Overlays by (301)	0.27m	-
(301)	Layer	Subsoil – Dark brown-grey friable silty clay. 20% shillet fragments, <5% roots.	Overlain by (300); overlies (302)	0.27-0.54m	-
(302)	Layer	Natural – Weathered mid-brown compact shillet within a mid-light brown-yellow firm silt-clay matrix. 70% shillet inclusions.	Overlain by (301)	0.54m	-

APPENDIX 2: FINDS CONCORDANCE

Context	Count	Wgt. (g)	Fe Objects	Date
(103)	1	0.085	Broken iron strap/pin, from farming equipment?	Post-medieval
TOTAL	1			

APPENDIX 3: SUPPORTING PHOTOGRAPHS



1. TRENCH 1. SECTION SHOT. DITCHES [105 & 107]. VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-NORTH-EAST (SCALES: 1M & 0.4M).



2. TRENCH 1. SECTION SHOT. DITCHES [105 & 107]. VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH (SCALES: 1M & 0.4M).



3. TRENCH 1. EXCAVATED SLOT. DITCHES [105] & [107]. VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-WEST. (SCALES: 1M & 0.4M).



LEFT: 4. TRENCH 2. EXCAVATED SLOT. DITCH [205]. VIEWED FROM THE EAST (SCALES: 1M & 0.4M).



RIGHT: 5. TRENCH 2. FEATURE SHOT. DITCH [205]. VIEWED FROM THE EAST (SCALES: 1M & 0.4M).



6. TRENCH 3. TRENCH SHOT. VIEWED FROM THE WEST (SCALES: 1M & 0.4M).



7. TRENCH 3. SAMPLE SECTION. VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH (SCALES: 1M & 0.4M).



8. SITE SHOT; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-EAST CORNER.



9. SITE SHOT; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-WEST CORNER.



10. SITE SHOT; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-WEST CORNER.



11. SITE SHOT; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-EAST CORNER.



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