

**LAND AT OTTERY ROAD
FENITON
DEVON**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

For

STRATEGIC LAND PARTNERSHIPS

CA PROJECT: 3336
CA REPORT: 11027

JANUARY 2011

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DEVON

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prepared by	Stuart Joyce, Project Officer
date	1 February 2011
checked by	Cliff Bateman, Project Manager
date	
approved by	Simon Cox, Head of Fieldwork
signed	
date	
issue	01

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SUMMARY

Project Name: Land at Ottery Road
Location: Feniton, Devon
NGR: SY 3022 9925
Type: Evaluation
Date: 25 to 26 January 2011
Location of Archive: to be deposited with Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter
Site Code: ORF 11

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in January 2011 on land at Ottery Road, Feniton, Devon. A total of four trenches was excavated.

A number of ditches corresponding to a north-west/south-east orientated field system were identified. It is considered probable that elements of the field system pre-date the medieval period, although it is also possible that some of the identified features may be considerably older.

An undated ditch and gully, as well as a pit containing a 19th-century horseshoe and the articulated skeleton of a horse, were also identified.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In January 2011 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for Strategic Land Partnerships on land at Ottery Road, Feniton, Devon (centred on NGR: SY 3022 9925; Fig. 1). The evaluation was undertaken to accompany a planning application for development at the site.

1.2 A programme of archaeological investigation was recommended by Devon County Council Historic Environment Service (DCCHES), archaeological advisor to East Devon Council. This evaluation forms part of the archaeological investigation and has been guided by discussions with Stephen Reed, Archaeological Officer, Devon County Council. A subsequent detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) was produced by CA (2011) and approved by Stephen Reed. The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IfA 2008), the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991), and the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (EH 2006). It was monitored by Stephen Reed, including a site visit on 27 January 2011.

The site

1.3 The site covers approximately 7.1ha of farmland and comprises a single arable field. It is situated on the east side of a small hill and is bounded to the north by residential developments, to the east by Ottery Road, to the south-east by a single residential property, and to the south and west by further agricultural land (Fig. 2). The site slopes gently downwards east to west from 85m to 75m AOD.

1.4 The solid geology of the site predominantly comprises sandstone of the Otter Formation. A small area of conglomerate (of the Budleigh Salterton pebble beds formation) extends into the site from the south-west (BGS 1974). The natural geological substrate, comprising clay sand deposits, was encountered across the site.

Archaeological background

1.5 A desk-based assessment has previously been undertaken at the site (CA 2010) It is not proposed to repeat the findings of this report in full, rather a summary is presented below.

- 1.6 No prehistoric features are recorded within the site, and there is only limited evidence of prehistoric activity within the wider environs. A barrow was excavated in 1920, 180m east of the site, revealing charcoal and traces of burning. It had previously been investigated during the 19th century (ibid.). A watching brief in advance of development, 600m south-east of the site, recorded no archaeological features. However, it did recover a single piece of worked flint of potentially prehistoric date and a small, abraded sherd of Roman pottery (Manning 1998).
- 1.7 The historic parish boundary between Ottery St Mary and Feniton parishes crosses the site, and a distinct 'kink' (150m to the east of the site) in its course may relate to a medieval enclosure. This boundary was described in a charter of 1061 and later became the medieval manor and hundred boundary. Several of these 'kinks' are noted on the boundary of Ottery St Mary parish, and it is suggested they respected prominent local landmarks (Rose-Troup 1939, 219). The nearby barrow may have some relation to this 'kink' in the parish boundary, and an Early medieval/Scandinavian origin for this feature has been suggested. The field in which this barrow was located was named 'Denbury', possibly indicating a Danish settlement close by, and other local place names also have Danish associations, including 'Danes' Mill' in Feniton (Watson 1929, 377).
- 1.8 Feniton is recorded in the Domesday Book as *Finetone*, at which time the manor probably shared a mill with Buckerell manor (VCH 1906, 400). The focus of the Feniton estate was located 1.1km east, around the present day Feniton Court (CA 2010).
- 1.9 Sweethams Cottage, Gosford, is situated immediately adjacent to the site. This Grade II Listed structure has its origins in the 17th century, with subsequent historic alterations. The Lodge at Iron Gate, Gosford, 300m south of the site, is also Grade II Listed, and dates to the 19th century (ibid.).
- 1.10 A geophysical survey carried out by Pre-Construct Geophysics (PCG) revealed linear anomalies indicative of a former field system, as well as traces of probable former ridge and furrow. Elsewhere, the survey recorded magnetic variations that most probably reflect recent and current activities, including a former field boundary, ridge and furrow ploughing, at least one buried utility and a number of strongly magnetic features that might be associated with modern services (PCG 2010). The possible field system ditches are identified on Figure 2 as features A to D.

Archaeological objectives

- 1.11 The objectives of the evaluation were to establish the character, quality, date and extent of any archaeological remains or deposits surviving within the site. This information will assist East Devon District Council in making an informed judgement on the significance of the archaeological resource, and the likely impact upon it of the proposed development.

Methodology

- 1.12 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of 4 trenches each measuring 30m in length and 1.8m in width, in the locations shown on the attached plan (Fig. 2). Trenches were set out on OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates using a Leica 1200 series SmartRover GPS and surveyed in accordance with CA Technical Manual 4 *Survey Manual* (2009).
- 1.13 All trenches were excavated by mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. Where archaeological deposits were encountered they were excavated by hand in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual* (2007).
- 1.14 Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with CA Technical Manual 2: *The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites* (2003), however, no deposits were identified that required sampling. All artefacts recovered were processed in accordance with Technical Manual 3 *Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation* (1995).
- 1.15 The archive and artefacts from the evaluation are currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the artefacts will be deposited with Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, along with the site archive. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix C, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

2. RESULTS (FIGS 2-5)

- 2.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts and finds are to be found in Appendices A and B respectively. Details of the relative heights of the trenches expressed as metres Above Ordnance Datum (m AOD) appear in Appendix A.
- 2.2 A broadly similar stratigraphic sequence was identified in all of the trenches. Undisturbed natural clay sand substrate was revealed within all of the trenches, at depths of between 0.5m and 1m below present ground level (bpgl). This was overlain by subsoil, up to 0.5m thick, which in turn was sealed by topsoil c. 0.3m thick.
- 2.3 Archaeological features generally corresponding to the potential ditches identified as anomalies in the geophysical survey cut the natural substrate horizon and were sealed by subsoil. A single pit containing the articulated skeleton of a horse was identified cutting the subsoil. No features corresponding to the cultivation marks interpreted as anomalies in the geophysical survey were identified.
- 2.4 Initially 0.5m to 1m long sections were excavated through all the ditches, which were then fully recorded. Subsequently 100 percent of the revealed feature was excavated in an attempt to recover finds.

Trench 1 (Figs 2 & 3)

- 2.5 Parallel ditches 103 and 107 (Fig. 3, sections AA and CC) were identified at the northern and southern ends of the trench, orientated north-west/south-east. Ditch 103 had a moderately sloping northern side, a gently sloping southern side and a concave base. It measured c.1.3m in width and 0.35m in depth and contained a single fill. The fill, 104, contained one piece of worked flint, considered probably residual due to the post-depositional damage along its longer edges. Ditch 107 had moderately sloping sides with a slightly concave base. It measured c.1.35m in width and 0.4m in depth. No dating evidence was recovered from its single fill 108.
- 2.6 North-east/south-west orientated gully 105 was located in the centre of the trench (Fig. 3, section BB). It measured c.0.15m in width and 0.3m in depth with a steep sided v-shaped profile. No dating evidence was recovered from the single fill 106 of this feature. All features were sealed by subsoil 101.

- 2.7 Ditches 103 and 107 corresponded to east-west orientated geophysical anomalies (A and B respectively) and may represent field system ditches. Gully 105 was not identified by the geophysical survey.

Trench 2 (Figs 2 & 4)

- 2.8 North-south aligned ditch 203 was located at the centre of the trench (Fig. 4, section DD). It had a moderately sloping sides and a concave base. It measured c.1.7m in width and 0.35m in depth and contained a single fill, 204, from which no artefactual material was recovered.

- 2.9 Ditch 203 corresponded to a north-south orientated geophysical anomaly C.

Trench 3 (Figs 2 & 5)

- 2.10 East-west orientated ditch 303 was located at the south-western end of the trench (Fig. 5, section EE). It measured c. 1.3m in width and 0.3m in depth and contained a single fill, 304. It had a moderately sloping northern side, a gently sloping southern side and a concave base. No dating evidence was recovered from the single fill 304 of this feature, which was sealed by subsoil 301.

- 2.11 Located towards the north-eastern end of the trench was east-west orientated ditch 305 (Fig. 5, section FF). It measured c.1.8m in width and 0.65m in depth and contained a single fill, 306. It had moderately steep sides and a flattish base. Four pieces of worked flint/chert were recovered, including an obliquely truncated blade of probable Mesolithic date, however the 'rolled' condition of two of the pieces suggests they were possibly re-deposited; as such a prehistoric date for ditch 305 is not certain. Fill 306 was sealed by subsoil 301.

- 2.12 Located at the north-eastern end of the trench was pit 307, which cut the subsoil and natural (Fig. 5, section FF). It had an irregular profile and base and measured 2.06m in width and 0.8m in depth. Its single fill, 308, contained an articulated horse skeleton and an iron horseshoe dated to the 19th century.

- 2.13 Ditch 305 corresponded with east-west-east orientated geophysical anomaly D. Ditch 303 and pit 307 were not identified by the geophysical survey.

Trench 4 (Fig. 2)

- 2.14 No finds, features or deposits of archaeological significance were identified in this trench. The anomaly identified by geophysical survey and interpreted as a cultivation mark was not identified.

The Finds and Palaeoenvironmental Evidence

- 2.15 Finds consisting of worked flint and chert were recorded from two deposits (Appendix B). An iron horseshoe recovered from pit 307 in association with animal bone, is a modern type with 'toe-clip', indicating manufacture after c. 1850, and is not further reported on.
- 2.16 A large, worked flint flake was identified from ditch 103 (fill 104), and was the only artefact recovered from this feature. This piece occurs in good-quality (flaw-free) pale grey-coloured flint, with a patch of thick chalky cortex suggesting derivation from a primary (chalk) source. Damage to the longer edges of this piece was noted and in isolation, it cannot be regarded as evidence for the (prehistoric) dating of this feature.
- 2.17 The lithics recovered from ditch 305 (fill 306) were similarly the only finds from this feature. The 'rolled' condition of two of the pieces suggests these were possibly re-deposited and a prehistoric date for ditch 305 is not claimed. In addition to unutilised flakes of dark grey flint and greensand chert, this group includes two tools; an obliquely truncated blade in a grey flint with a slight mottled patina, and a side-scraper or backed piece in black flint. Only the truncated blade is suggestive of dating, with this form of tool being commonly found among Mesolithic assemblages.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 The results of the evaluation trenching correlate closely with the preceding geophysical survey that identified anomalies (Fig. 2; A – D) interpreted as components of a former field system (PCG 2010). No archaeological features were identified within trench 4 suggesting that the postulated field system does not extend south of the corner formed by anomalies C and D. The relationship of ditches 103 and 107 (anomalies A and B respectively) revealed within Trench 1 to the field system formed by anomalies C and D remains unproven, although the comparable

alignments of the various elements may suggest that they are all broadly contemporary.

- 3.2 However, it is possible that ditch 305 (anomaly D) may represent the former line of the historic parish boundary between Ottery St Mary and Feniton parishes. The projected line of the ditch aligns with the current course of the parish boundary to both the east and the west of the current site. Such an alignment would have smoothed out one of the 'kinks' noted in the current boundary (Rose-Troup 1939, 219).
- 3.3 it remains difficult to confidently date the field system, although given its differing alignment to the current field arrangement, it is suggested that it pre-dates the post-medieval period. All of the identified ditches were sealed beneath subsoil, which itself is interpreted as having been formed from the ploughed out remnant of ridge and furrow. Such evidence provides a *terminus ante quem* for the ditches most probably in the post-medieval/modern period. The worked flint recovered from ditches 103 and 305 are, due to their rolled and damaged nature, considered to be residual.
- 3.4 Pit 307 identified in Trench 3 contained the articulated skeleton of a horse, dated by the recovery of horseshoe from at least the mid 19th century. Ditch 303 and gully 105 do not fit into the putative field system and given their limited exposure further interpretation is not possible. The cultivation marks identified by the geophysical survey were not identified during the evaluation.

4. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Stuart Joyce, assisted by Luke Brannlund and Anthony Beechey. The report was written by Stuart Joyce. The finds were reported on by Ed McSloy. The illustrations were prepared by Lorna Gray. The archive has been compiled by Stuart Joyce, and prepared for deposition by James Johnson. The project was managed for CA by Cliff Bateman.

5. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 1974 *Sidmouth*, 1:50,000 series sheet 326 and 340, solid and Drift.

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2011 *Land at Ottery Road, Feniton, Devon: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*.

CA 2010 *Land at Ottery Road, Feniton, Devon: Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*. CA Typescript report **10006**.

Pre-Construct Geophysics (PCG) 2010 *Land at Ottery Road, Feniton, Devon: Geophysical survey*.

Manning, P. 1998 SMR Report: *Watching brief by Exeter Archaeology*.

Watson, H. W. 1929 'A Devonshire Village (Feniton) in the Olden Days' in *Report and Transactions of the Devonshire Association*, 61, 375-399.

APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench 1 - Ground level: northern end 77.74m AOD; southern end 77.96m AOD

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
100	Layer	Topsoil – Red, brown, slightly clay sand silt. Common pebble inclusions			0.21	
101	Layer	Subsoil – Red brown, clay silt sand. Rare pebble inclusions			0.24	
102	Layer	Natural – red clay sand				
103	Cut	Ditch				
104	Deposit	Fill of ditch 103				
105	Cut	Gully				
106	Deposit	Fill of gully 105				
107	Cut	Ditch				
108	Deposit	Fill of ditch 107				

Trench 2 - Ground level: eastern end 77.73m AOD; western end 79.34m AOD

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
200	Layer	Topsoil – brown grey, sandy silty clay			0.55	
201	Layer	Subsoil – brown silty sandy clay. Occasional rounded stone inclusions			0.48	
202	Layer	Natural – brown orange sandy clay. Occasional rounded stone inclusions				
203	Cut	Ditch				
204	Deposit	Fill of ditch 203				

Trench 3 - Ground level: northern end 76.81m AOD; southern end 77.32m AOD

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
300	Layer	Topsoil – Brown, silty sandy clay. Small rounded pebble inclusions			0.3	
301	Layer	Subsoil – brown silt, sand clay			0.28	
302	Layer	Natural – orange brown, sandy clay. Occasional rounded pebbles				
303	Cut	Ditch				
304	Deposit	Fill of ditch 303				
305	Cut	Ditch				
306	Deposit	Fill of ditch 305				
307	Cut	Pit, containing articulated horse skeleton				
308	Deposit	Fill of pit 307				

Trench 4 - Ground level: eastern end 78.55m AOD; western end 80.48m AOD

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
400	Layer	Topsoil – grey brown, slightly clay sandy silt. Moderate small to medium sized small stone inclusions			0.35	
401	Layer	Subsoil – grey brown, clay sandy silt. Friable compaction occasional small to medium sized stone inclusions			0.13	
402	Layer	Natural – Pink clay sand. Rounded stone inclusions				

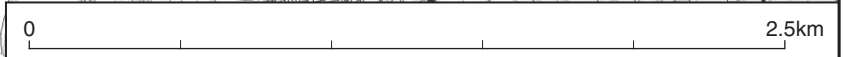
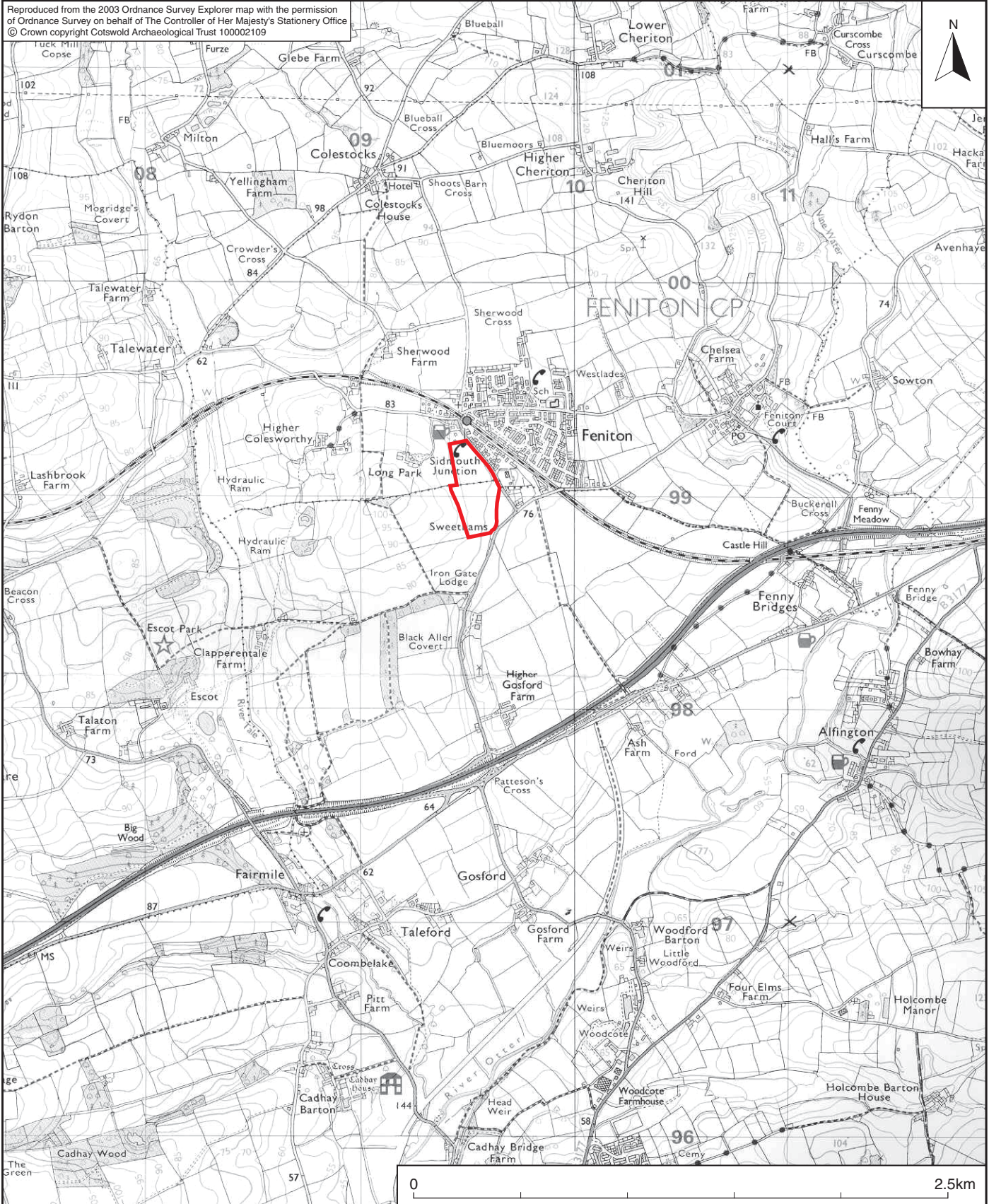
APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

Context	Description	Ct.	Wt.	Date
104	Worked flint: flake	1	47	-
306	Worked flint: obliquely-truncated blade, side scraper, flake	3	22	-
	Worked chert: flake	1	11	
308	Iron horseshoe	1	924	C19
	Animal bone: horse	39	3538	

APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Land at Ottery Road, Feniton, Devon	
Short description	<p>An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in January 2011 on Land at Ottery Road, Feniton, Devon. A total of four trenches was excavated.</p> <p>A number of ditches corresponding to a north-west/south-east orientated field system were identified. It is considered probable that elements of the field system pre-date the medieval period, although it is also possible that some of the identified features may be considerably older.</p> <p>An undated ditch and gully as well as a pit containing a 19th-century horseshoe and the articulated skeleton of a horse were also identified.</p>	
Project dates	25 to 26 January 2011	
Project type	Archaeological Evaluation	
Previous work	CA 2010 <i>Land at Ottery Road, Feniton, Devon: Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment</i> . CA Typescript report 10006	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Ottery Road, Feniton, Devon	
Study area (M ² /ha)	7.1ha	
Site co-ordinates (8 Fig Grid Reference)	SY 3022 9925	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	N/A	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Cliff Bateman	
Project Supervisor	Stuart Joyce	
MONUMENT TYPE		
	None	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS		
	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter	Flint, animal bone
Paper	Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter	WSI, pro forma registers, recording forms and photographs
Digital	Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter	Digital photographs
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2011 <i>Land at Ottery Road, Feniton, Devon: Archaeological Evaluation</i> . CA typescript report 11027		

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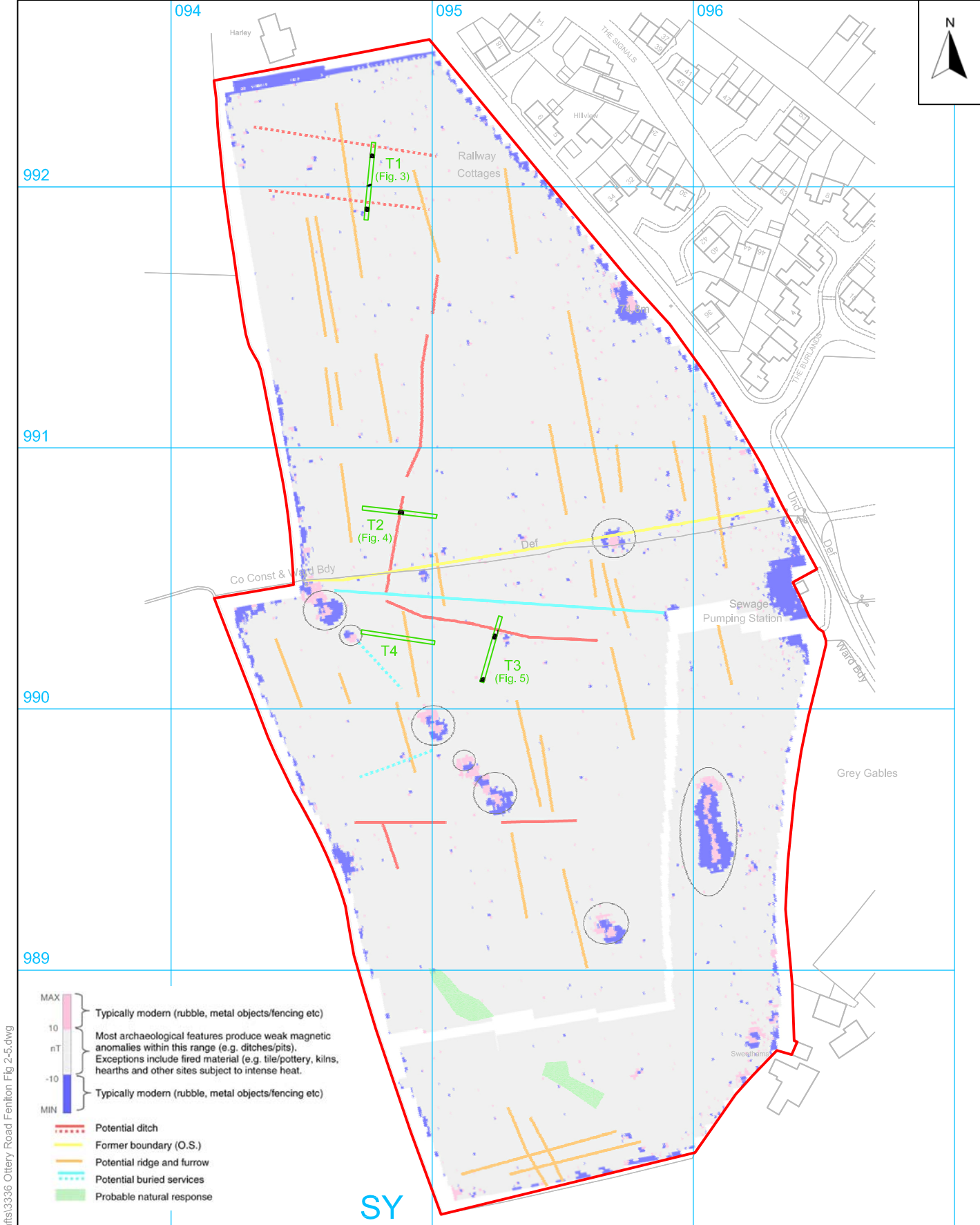


 **COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY**

PROJECT TITLE
 Land at Ottery Road, Feniton
 Devon

FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan

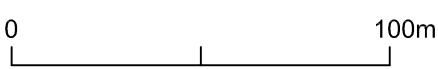
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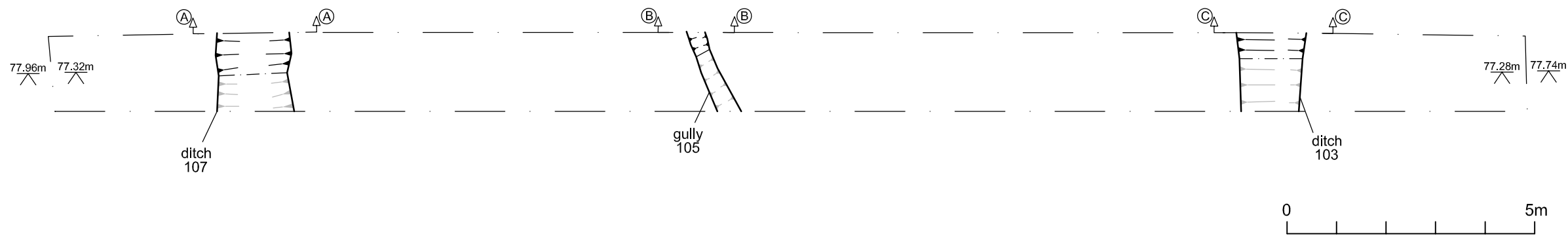
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- site
- evaluation trench
- archaeological feature

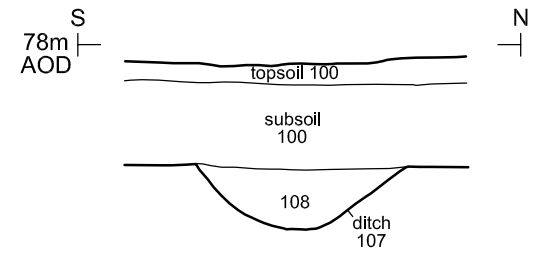


COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY			
<small>PROJECT TITLE</small> Land at Ottery Road, Feniton Devon			
<small>FIGURE TITLE</small> Trench location plan, showing archaeological features and geophysical results			
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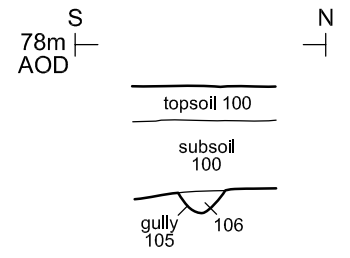
Trench 1; plan



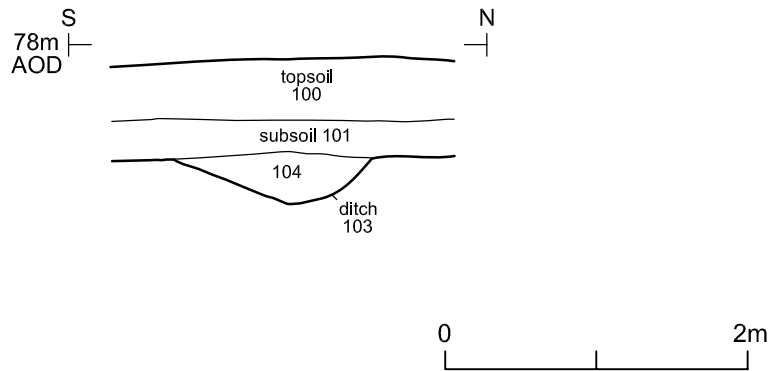
Section AA



Section BB



Section CC

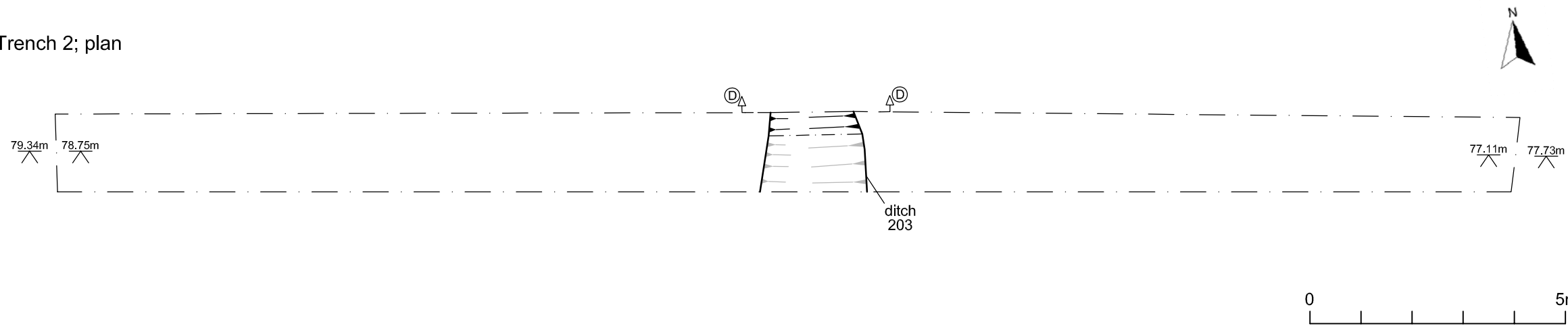


View of ditch 107, looking west. Scale 2m

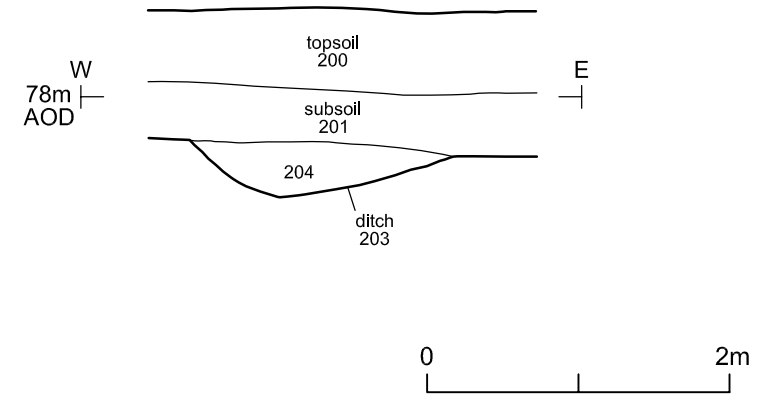


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Trench 2; plan



Section DD

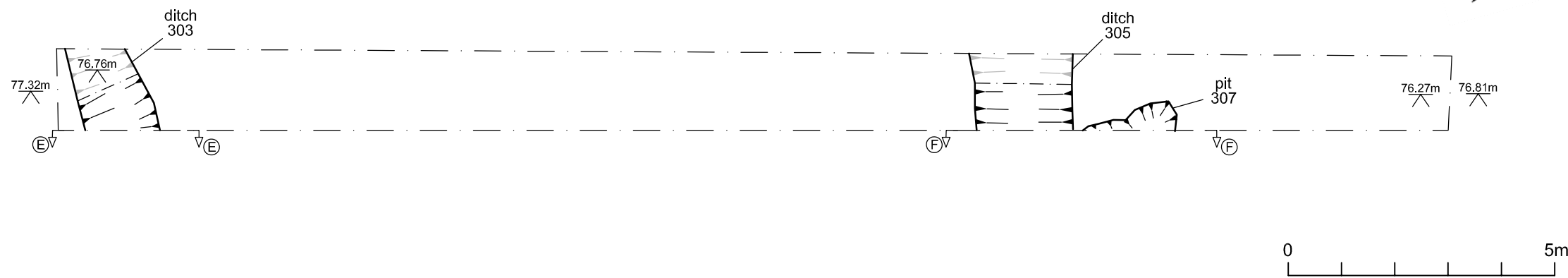


View of ditch 203, looking north. Scale 1m

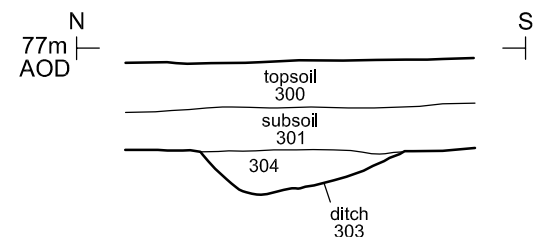


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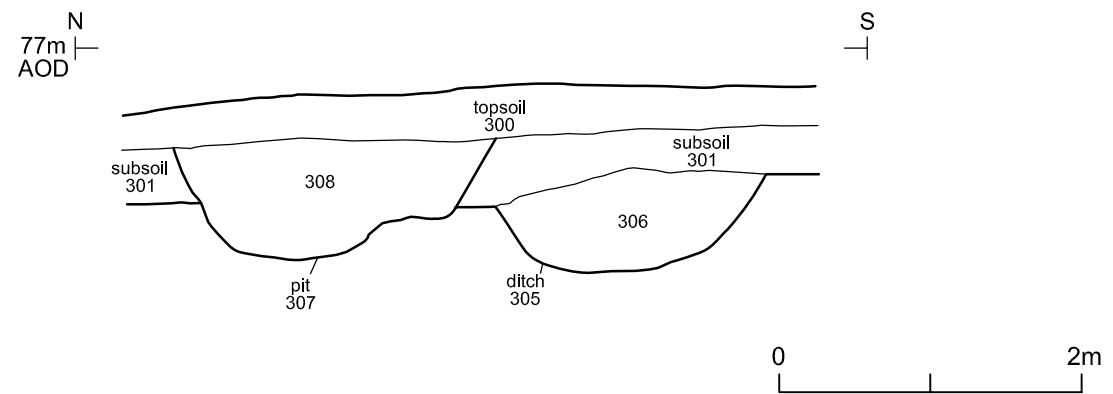
Trench 3; plan



Section EE



Section FF



View of pit 307 and ditch 305, looking east. Scale 2m



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PROJECT TITLE
Land at Ottery Road, Feniton
Devon

FIGURE TITLE
**Trench 3; plan, sections and
photograph**

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