

# Sawmills Ashcombe Devon

Archaeological Evaluation

for Solstice Renewables Ltd

> CA Project: 4988 CA Report: 14357

> > August 2014

# Sawmills Ashcombe Devon

# Archaeological Evaluation

## CA Project: 4988 CA Report: 14357

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date	11 August 2014	
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date	15 August 2014	
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signed	D. De Red.	
date	15 August 2014	
issue	01	

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#### SUMMARY

Project Name:	Sawmills
Location:	Ashcombe, Devon
NGR:	SX 9155 7790
Туре:	Evaluation
Date:	4 to 8 August 2014
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter
Accession Number:	RAMM: 14/45
Site Code:	SAW 14

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in August 2014 at Sawmills, Ashcombe, Devon. A total of fourteen trenches were excavated.

Five undated ditches, predominantly north-east/south-west and north-west/south-eastaligned, were recorded within the site. From their positions and alignments all are thought to represent elements of former field boundaries predating the 1840 Ashcombe tithe map and later OS map editions. Modern plough furrows and field drains were also noted.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In April 2014 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for Solstice Renewables Ltd on land at Sawmills, Ashcombe, Devon (centred on NGR: SX 9155 7790; Fig. 1).
- 1.2 The evaluation forms part of a programme of archaeological works to accompany a future planning application for the installation of a solar array within the site. This programme of archaeological works was requested by Stephen Reed, Archaeologist, Devon County Council Historic Environment Team (DCCHET), archaeological advisor to Teignbridge District Council (TDC), in order to provide further information on the archaeological potential of the site.
- 1.3 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2014) and approved by Stephen Reed. The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2009), the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991) and the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (English Heritage 2006). It was monitored by Stephen Reed, including a site visit on 7 August 2014.

#### The site

- 1.4 The site lies approximately 1km south-west of the village of Ashcombe, near Exeter, Devon and currently comprises four arable fields set within agricultural land and mixed mature woodland to the south-east of Ashcombe Cross. The approximately 27 ha site with a potential developable area of 18 ha is bounded to the west by Colley Lane (B3192) which follows a north-west/south-east-aligned natural ridge. The site is bisected by a lane dropping north-eastward from Colley Lane Cross towards Ashcombe, from a saddle on the ridge at a height of 174m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum). Ground level falls from the ridge to the north-east with the slope increasing in steepness from north to south. Along the south-eastern edge, close to the woodland, the slope is relatively severe.
- 1.5 The solid geology within the site is mapped as Alphington Breccia Formation and Heavitree Breccia Formation (undifferentiated) of the Permian period (BGS 2014).

The natural substrate encountered within Trenches 1 to 13 comprised a pink-brown gritty sand-clay and bedrock.

### Archaeological background

- 1.6 The site has previously been the subject of an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (DBA; Archaedia 2014), the results of which are summarised below.
- 1.7 There was some limited potential for currently unrecorded prehistoric features being present within the site, which lies within an area of prehistoric activity. Scatters of worked flint were recovered from parts of the site in 1997 during a brief field examination, and many hundreds of flints have been found to the west of the site at Higher Rixdale Farm. Evidence for probable prehistoric sites, in the form of enclosures, has been identified east of the site whilst Castle Dyke lies to the south, and there are numerous barrows, cairns and a hut circle recorded in the site vicinity. Further afield, to the north-west, a barrow cemetery has been recorded on Ideford Common.
- 1.8 A number of Roman sites are also known from the locality, and a piece of tile of possible Roman date has been found within the site itself. To the north-west, Rixafer Road has been identified as part of the Roman road over Haldon ridge to the Teign crossing. Evidence of a Roman settlement to the south of Ashcombe Barton was found in 1997 when quantities of Roman tile were recovered on the site of a previously identified enclosure.
- 1.9 Immediately west of the site, Colley Lane may represent an early routeway as it lies on a ridge alongside the parish boundary. It became a turnpike road in the early 19th century and there is an associated milestone.
- 1.10 The present landscape is occupied by farms and settlements documented in the Domesday Book (implying settlement dating to the Anglo-Saxon period) or the later medieval period, and indications of medieval field systems are identifiable in the field patterns. The surviving boundaries within and bounding the site could be of medieval origin. The farmstead associated with Seacombe Farm, located to the east of the Site, may have been created in the 18th century, and had gone by 1840. A lane from Colley Lane to Seacombe passed through the site. It seems possible that this was an earlier road, as it links Colley Lane Cross to Milton Hill, but it does not

appear on Donn's map of 1765. Industrial activity in the area is represented by large and small quarries, limekilns and gravel pits.

1.11 A geophysical survey of the site (Stratascan 2014) identified a number of probable archaeological anomalies including an enclosed ring ditch and former field boundaries. A number of possible archaeological anomalies were also identified but it was not possible to determine their origin with any degree of confidence. The remaining anomalies were interpreted as being of geological or modern origin; relating to agricultural activity, land drains, underground services, ferrous objects and fencing.

#### Archaeological objectives

1.12 The objectives of the evaluation were to provide information about the archaeological resource within the site, including its presence/absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality. In accordance with the *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2009), the evaluation was designed to be minimally intrusive and minimally destructive to archaeological remains. The information gathered will enable DCCHET to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset, consider the impact of the proposed development upon it, and to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the development proposal, in line with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (DCLG 2012).

#### Methodology

- 1.13 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of fourteen trenches (including one Tshaped and one cross-shaped trench arrangement), each 20m or 30m in length and approximately 1.8m wide, in the locations shown (Fig. 2). It was not possible to excavate Trench 14, due to an ongoing insecticide trial within the southernmost field, and the requirement for trenching in this area was dropped with the consent of Stephen Reed (DCCHET). Trenches were set out on OS National Grid (NGR) coordinates using Leica GPS and surveyed in accordance with CA Technical Manual 4 *Survey Manual* (2012).
- 1.14 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* (2013).

- 1.15 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) but none were identified that required environmental sampling. All artefacts recovered were processed in accordance with Technical Manual 3 *Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation* (1995).
- 1.16 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, under accession number RAMM: 14/45, along with the site archive. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix B, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

#### 2. RESULTS (FIGS 2-10)

- 2.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are to be found in Appendix A.
- 2.2 Within all three fields subject to evaluation trenching the natural geological substrate was overlain by approximately 0.1m to 0.2m of subsoil and 0.1m to 0.2m of topsoil. An area of root disturbance in Trench 4 broadly correlated with the position and alignment of a former trackway or field boundary depicted on an 1809 map edition. In addition, a modern plough furrow was noted in Trench 12 and a modern field drain was recorded in Trench 11.
- 2.3 Archaeological features were encountered in Trenches 1, 3, 7, 12 and 13.

#### Trench 1 (Figs 2, 3 & 6)

2.4 The natural substrate 103 was identified at a depth of 0.34m below present ground level (bpgl). It was cut by a north-east/south-west-aligned U-shaped ditch 105 which measured 0.56m in width and 0.12m in depth (Fig. 7, Section AA). It contained a single silt-clay fill 104, which yielded no dating evidence. The location and orientation of ditch 103 suggests that it represents part of a former post-medieval

field boundary, predating the 1840 Ashcombe Tithe Map, subsequently sealed by subsoil 102 and topsoil 101.

### Trench 3 (Figs 2, 3& 7)

2.5 The natural substrate 302 was identified at a depth of 0.38m bpgl. It was cut by north-west/south-east-aligned ditch 303. Ditch 303 had a U-shaped profile and measured 1.1m in width and 0.1m in depth (Fig. 3, Section BB). It contained a single undated sand-clay fill 304. The location and orientation of ditch 302 suggests that it represents part of a former post-medieval field boundary, predating the 1840 Ashcombe Tithe Map, perpendicular to that encountered in Trench 1. The ditch was sealed by subsoil 301 and topsoil 300.

#### Trench 7 (Figs 2, 4& 8)

2.6 Natural substrate 702 was recorded at a depth of 0.25m bpgl. It was overlain by subsoil 701 which appeared to have been cut by a north-east/south-west-aligned ditch 703, corresponding in position with a linear anomaly identified during the preceding geophysical survey, which may identify a former field boundary predating the 1840 Ashcombe Tithe Map. Ditch 703 was 0.85m wide and 0.25m in depth, with a shallow U-shaped profile (Fig. 4, Section CC). Its single silt-clay fill 704, which contained no dating evidence, was overlain by topsoil 700.

#### Trench 12 (Figs 2, 4 & 9)

2.7 The natural substrate 1202 was identified at a depth of 0.2m below present ground level (bpgl). It was cut by a broadly east/west-aligned U-shaped ditch 1204 which measured 1.08m in width and 0.44m in depth (Fig. 3, Section DD). It contained a single undated silt-clay fill 1203. The location and orientation of ditch 1204 correlates closely with a linear geophysical anomaly and the ditch may represent part of a former field boundary, predating the 1840 Ashcombe tithe Map, subsequently sealed by subsoil 1201 and topsoil 1200.

#### Trench 13 (Figs 2, 4 & 10)

2.8 The natural substrate 1302 was identified at a depth of 0.15m bpgl. It was cut by north-east/south-west-aligned ditch 1304. Ditch 1304 had a U-shaped profile and measured 0.98m in width and 0.24m in depth (Fig. 3, Section EE). It contained a single undated sand-clay fill 1303. The location and orientation of ditch 1304 suggests that it represents a former continuation of the extant field boundary demarcating the eastern side of this field. The ditch appeared to be cut through subsoil 1301 and was sealed by topsoil 1300.

#### 3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 Despite the archaeological potential of the site, as highlighted by the preceding desk-based assessment (Archaedia 2014) and geophysical survey (Stratascan 2014), the evaluation has identified no artefacts or features of prehistoric or Roman date within the site.
- 3.2 The evaluation has identified a series of undated ditches within Trenches 1, 3, 7, 12 and 13, within the northern and southern parts of the site. These apparent boundary ditches are not depicted on, and appear to predate, the 1840 Ashcombe Tithe Map and later OS map editions.
- 3.3 The evaluation has identified no archaeological or geological features correlating in position or orientation with the geophysical survey anomalies tested by Trenches 5, 6, and 8 to 13.

#### 4. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Alistair Barber, assisted by Tony Brown, Michael Joyce and Dane Wright. The report was written by Alistair Barber and the illustrations prepared by Daniel Bashfield. The archive has been compiled by Alistair Barber, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Damian De Rosa.

#### 5. **REFERENCES**

- Archaedia 2014. Archaeological and Heritage Assessment Of Sawmills, Ashcombe Estate, Dawlish, Devon, EX7 0QD. Report **14.01**. Project 1116
- BGS (British Geological Survey) 2014 *Geology of Britain Viewer* http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geology viewer\_google/googleviewer.html Accessed 11 August 2014
- Stratascan 2014. Sawmills, Ashcombe Estate, Dawlish, Devon, EX7 0QD. Job ref: J6599

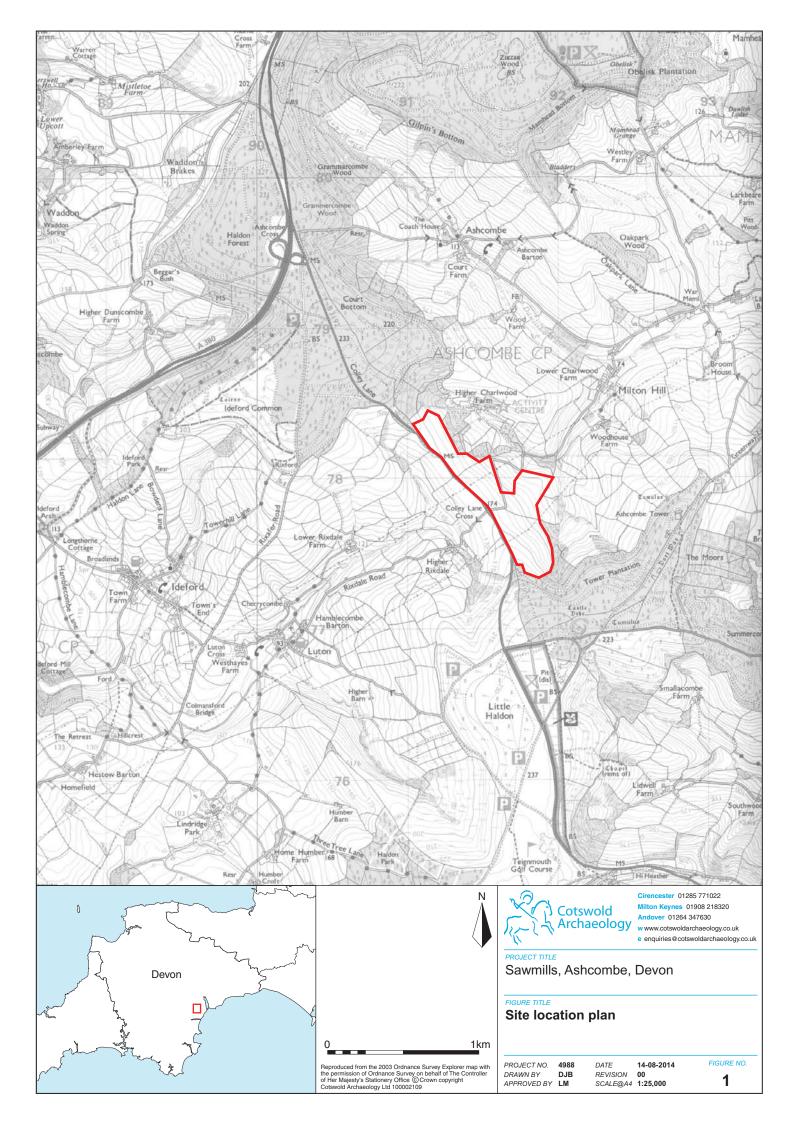
#### **APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS**

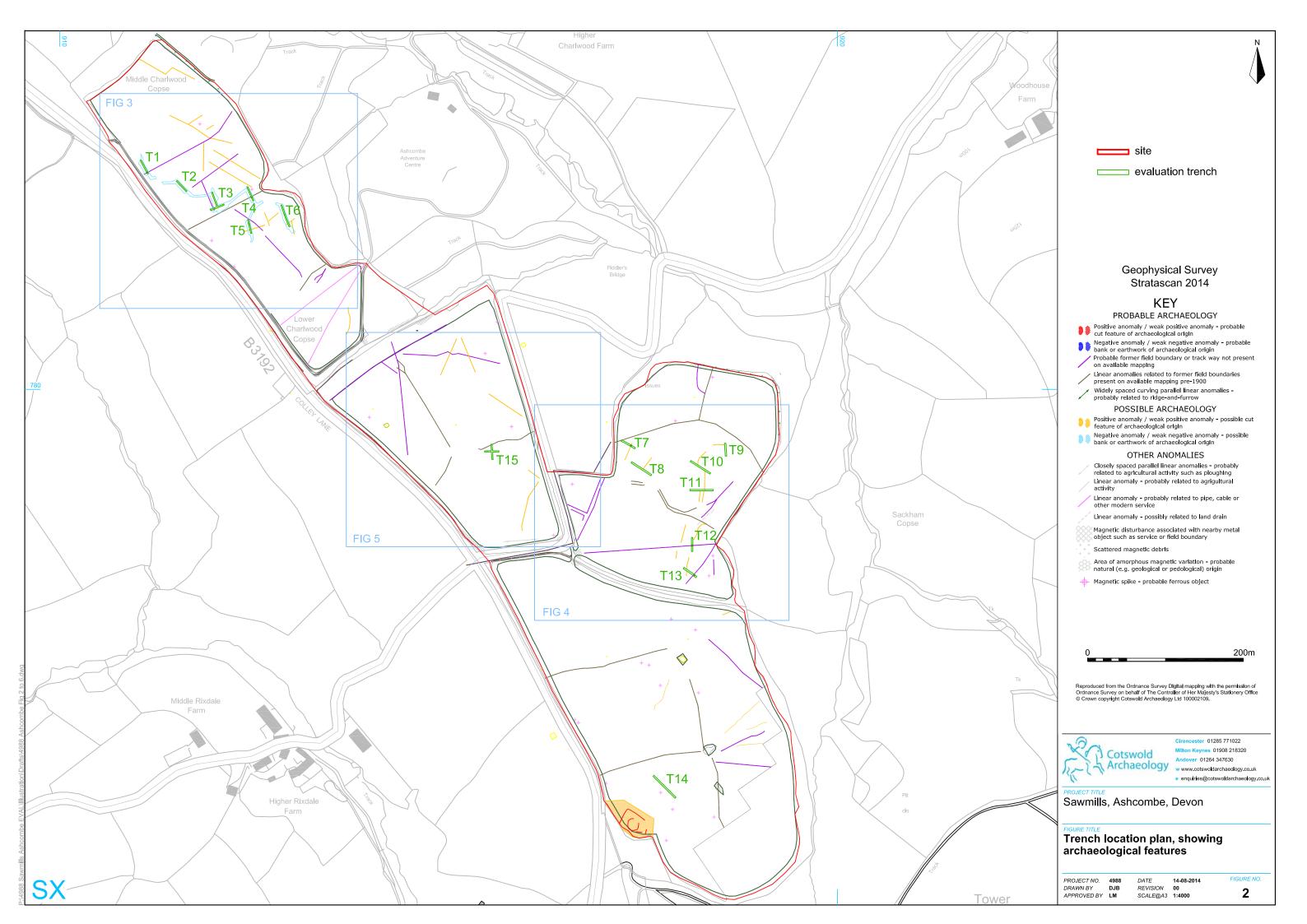
Trench No.	Context No.	Туре	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth /thick ness	Spot- date
								(m)	
1	101	Deposit		Topsoil	Dark brown silt-clay	>20	>1.8	0.12	
1	102	Deposit		Subsoil	Red-brown silt-clay	>20	>1.8	0.22	
1	103	Deposit		Natural substrate	Red-brown silt-clay and bedrock	>20	>1.8		
1	104	Fill	105	Ditch fill	Light brown silt-clay	>1.8	0.56	0.12	
1	105	Cut		Ditch	North-east/south-west-aligned U-shaped ditch	>1.8	0.56	0.12	
2	201	Deposit		Topsoil	Dark brown silt-clay	>20	>1.8	0.15	
2	202	Deposit		Subsoil	Red-brown silt-clay	>20	>1.8	0.1	
2	203	Deposit		Natural substrate	Red-brown silt-clay and bedrock	>20	>1.8		
3	300	Deposit		Topsoil	Dark brown silt-clay	>20	>1.8	0.2	
3	301	Deposit		Subsoil	Red-brown silt-clay	>20	>1.8	0.18	
3	302	Deposit		Natural substrate	Red-brown silt-clay and bedrock	>20	>1.8		
3	303	Cut		Ditch	North-west/south-east-aligned U-shaped ditch	>1.8	1.1	0.1	
3	304	Fill	303	Ditch fill	Pink-brown sand-clay	>1.8	1.1	0.1	
4	400	Deposit		Topsoil	Dark brown silt-clay	>20	>1.8	0.1	
4	401	Deposit		Subsoil	Red-brown silt-clay	>20	>1.8	0.1	
4	402	Deposit		Natural substrate	Red-brown silt-clay and bedrock	>20	>1.8		
5	500	Deposit		Topsoil	Dark brown silt-clay	>20	>1.8	0.2	
5	501	Deposit		Subsoil	Red-brown silt-clay	>20	>1.8	0.13	
5	502	Deposit		Natural substrate	Red-brown silt-clay and bedrock	>20	>1.8		
6	600	Deposit		Topsoil	Dark brown silt-clay	>30	>1.8	0.2	
6	601	Deposit		Subsoil	Red-brown silt-clay	>30	>1.8	0.11	
6	602	Deposit		Natural substrate	Red-brown silt-clay and bedrock	>30	>1.8		
7	700	Deposit		Topsoil	Dark brown silt-clay	>20	>1.8	0.1	
7	701	Deposit		Subsoil	Red-brown silt-clay	>20	>1.8	0.15	
7	702	Deposit		Natural substrate	Red-brown silt-clay and bedrock	>20	>1.8		
7	703	Cut		Ditch	North-east/south-west-aligned U-shaped ditch	>1.8	0.85	0.25	
7	704	Fill	703	Ditch fill	Light brown silt-clay	>1.8	0.85	0.25	
8	800	Deposit		Topsoil	Dark brown silt-clay	>30	>1.8	0.2	
8	801	Deposit		Subsoil	Red-brown silt-clay	>30	>1.8	0.05	
8	802	Deposit		Natural substrate	Red-brown silt-clay and bedrock	>30	>1.8		
9	900	Deposit		Topsoil	Dark brown silt-clay	>20	>1.8	0.08	
9	901	Deposit		Subsoil	Red-brown silt-clay	>20	>1.8	0.06	
9	902	Deposit		Natural substrate	Red-brown silt-clay and bedrock	>20	>1.8		
10	1000	Deposit		Topsoil	Dark brown silt-clay	>30	>1.8	0.1	
10	1001	Deposit		Subsoil	Red-brown silt-clay	>30	>1.8	0.06	
10	1002	Deposit		Natural substrate	Red-brown silt-clay and bedrock	>30	>1.8		
11	1100	Deposit		Topsoil	Dark brown silt-clay	>30	>1.8	0.1	
11	1101	Deposit		Subsoil	Red-brown silt-clay	>30	>1.8	0.2	

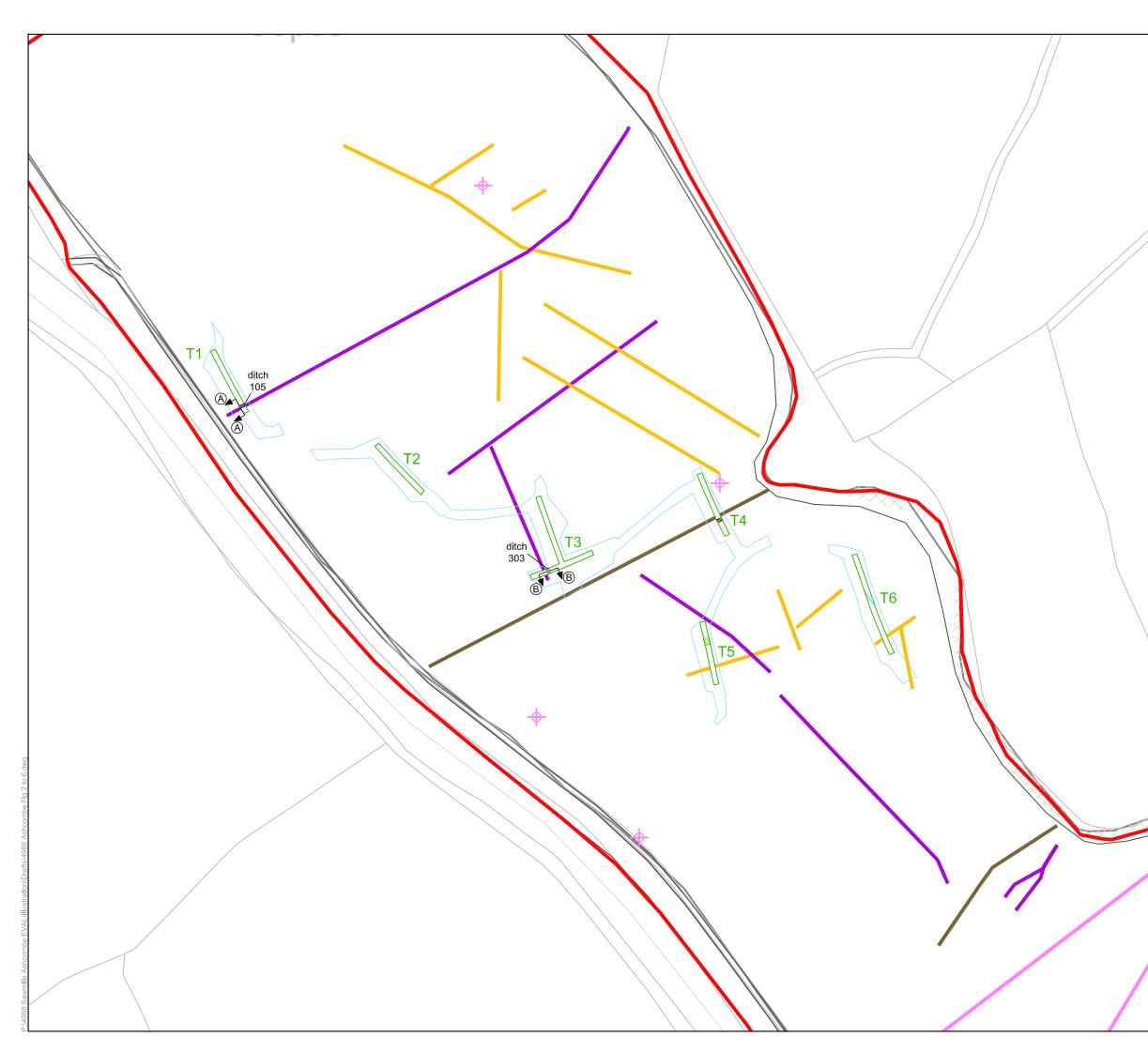
11	1102	Deposit		Natural substrate	Red-brown silt-clay and bedrock	>30	>1.8		
12	1200	Deposit		Topsoil	Dark brown silt-clay	>20	>1.8	0.16	
12	1201	Deposit		Subsoil	Red-brown silt-clay	>20	>1.8	0.04	
12	1202	Deposit		Natural substrate	Red-brown silt-clay and bedrock	>20	>1.8		
12	1203	Deposit		Ditch fill	Red-brown sand-silt	>20	1.08	0.44	
12	1204	Deposit		Ditch	North-east/south-west-aligned U-shaped ditch	>20	1.08	0.44	
12	1205	Fill	1206	Furrow fill	Red-brown sand-silt	>1.8	1.46	0.19	
12	1206	Cut		Furrow	North-east/south-west-aligned U-shaped furrow	>1.8	1.46	0.19	
13	1300	Deposit		Topsoil	Dark brown silt-clay	>20	>1.8	0.09	
13	1301	Deposit		Subsoil	Red-brown silt-clay	>20	>1.8	0.07	
13	1302	Deposit		Natural substrate	Red-brown silt-clay and bedrock	>20	>1.8		
13	1303	Fill	1304	Ditch fill	Red-brown sand-silt	>1.8	0.98	0.24	
13	1304	Cut		Ditch	North-east/south-west-aligned U-shaped ditch	>1.8	0.98	0.24	

#### APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

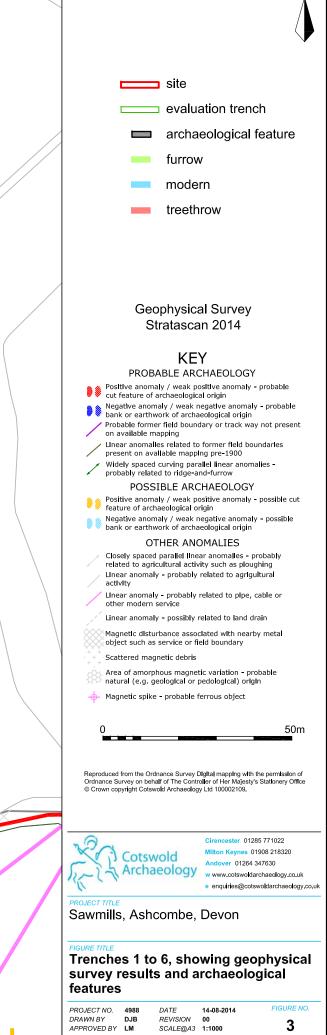
Project Name	Sawmills, Ashcombe, Devon.		
-		indertakan bu Catawak	
Short description	An archaeological evaluation was u	-	
	Archaeology in August 2014 at Sawmi	Ils, Ashcombe, Devon. A	
	total of thirteen trenches were excavated.		
	Five undated ditches, predominantly r	north-east/south-west and	
	north-west/south-east-aligned, were reco	orded within the site From	
	_		
	their positions and alignments all are thou	ught to represent elements	
	of former field boundaries predating the	1840 Ashcombe tithe map	
	and later OS map editions. Modern ploug	oh furrows and field drains	
	were also noted.	<b>J</b>	
	were also noted.		
Project dates	4 to 8 August 2014		
Project type	Evaluation		
Previous work	Desk-Based Assessment (Archaedia 2014)		
(reference to organisation or SMR	Geophysical survey (Stratascan 2014)		
numbers etc) Future work			
	Unknown		
PROJECT LOCATION			
Site Location	Sawmills, Ashcombe, Devon		
Study area (M²/ha)     27 ha       Site co-ordinates (8 Fig Grid Reference)     SX 9155 7790			
PROJECT CREATORS			
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology		
Project Brief originator	N/A		
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology		
Project Manager	Damian De Rosa		
Project Supervisor	Alistair Barber		
MONUMENT TYPE	None		
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None		
PROJECT ARCHIVES	Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.)	Content	
Physical	None	None	
Paper	Royal Albert Memorial Museum RAMM: 14/45	Trench Recording Forms, Context sheets Photographic Register	
Digital	Royal Albert Memorial Museum RAMM: 14/45	Digital photos	
BIBLIOGRAPHY			
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2014 Sawmills,	Achaemba Devers Archeeoleriaal Evelu	<i>(</i> ; 0.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1.1	

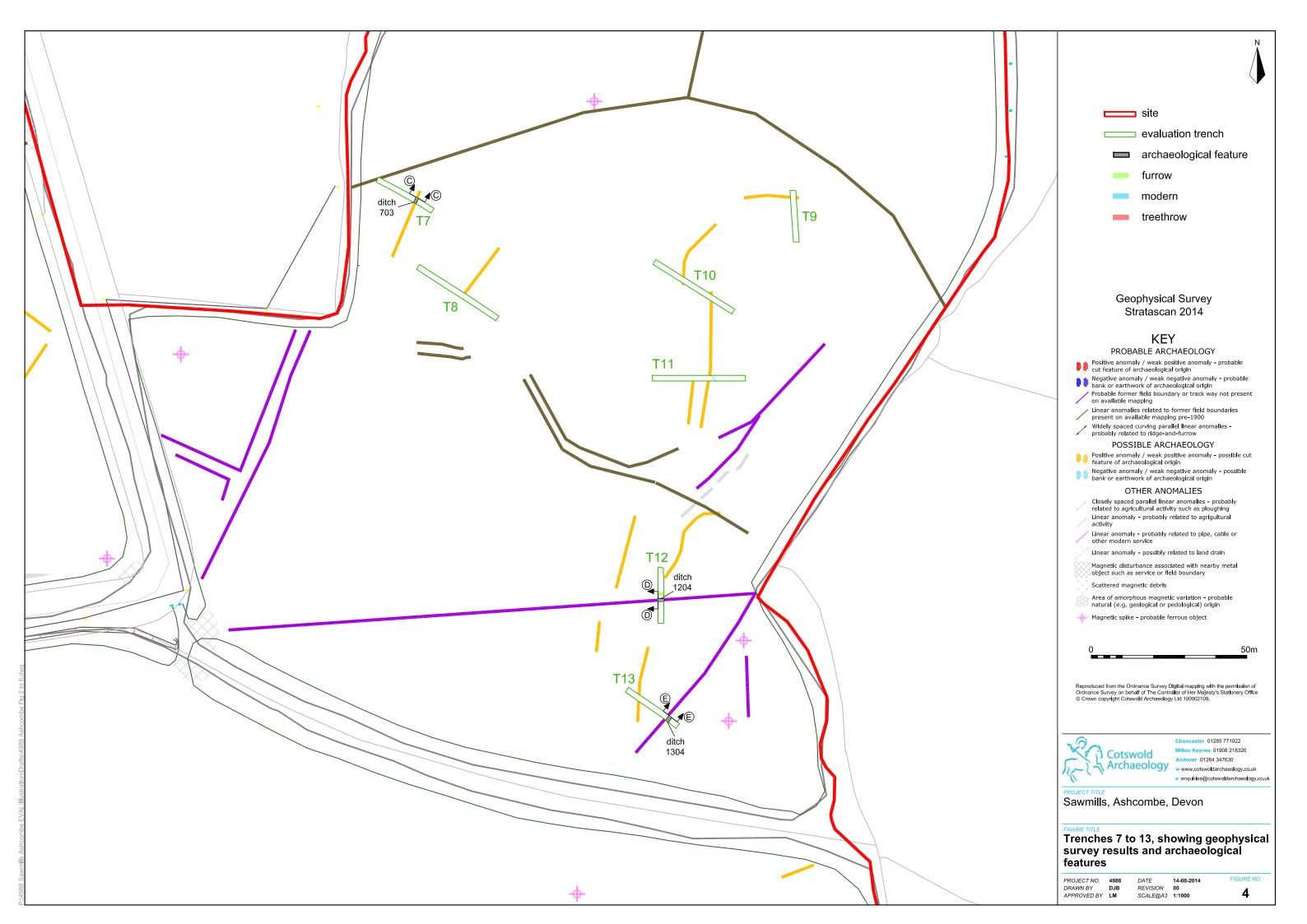


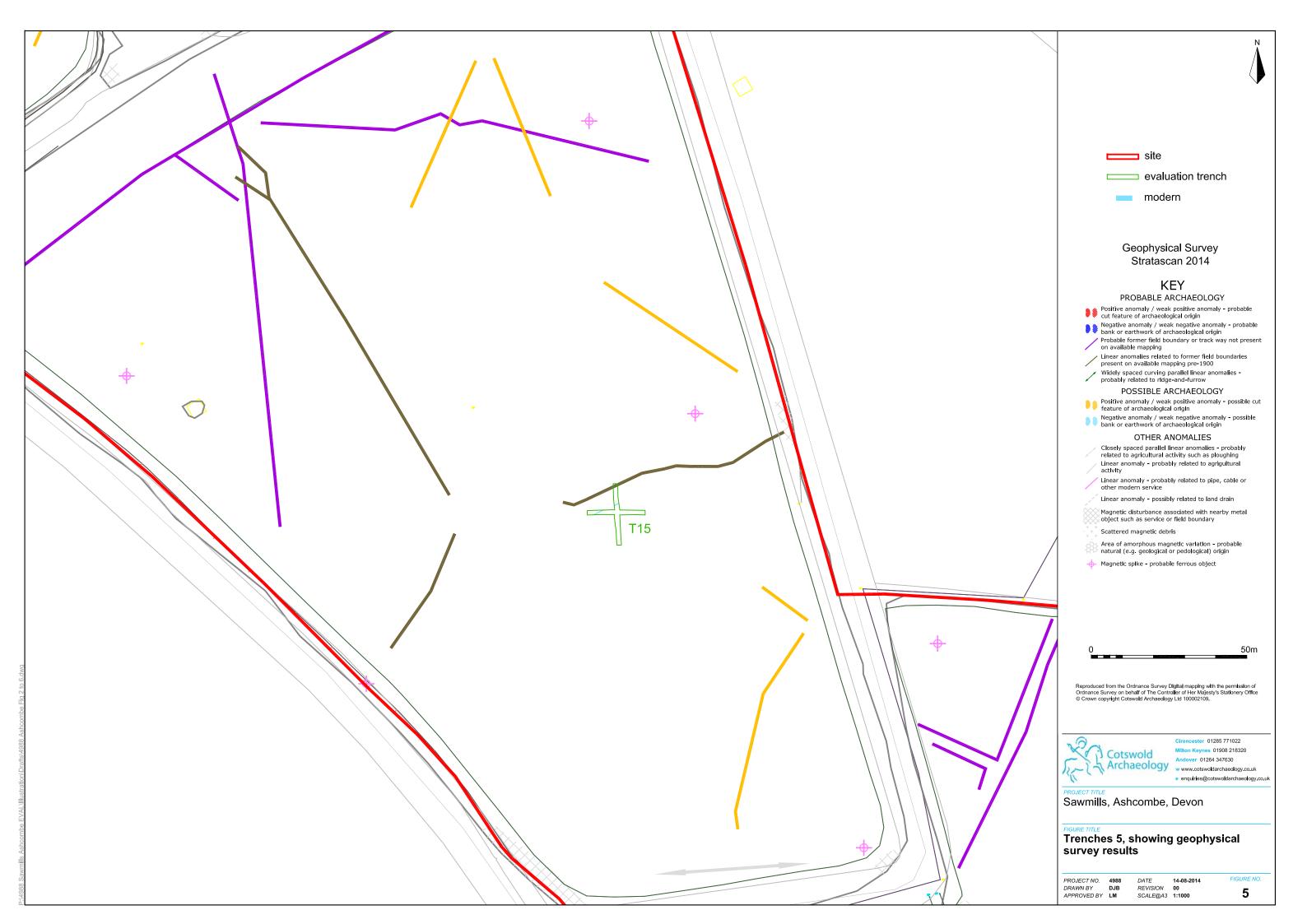


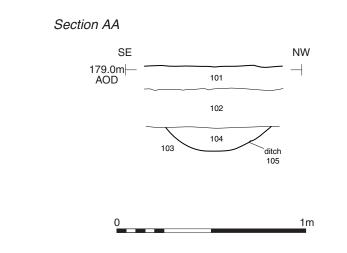










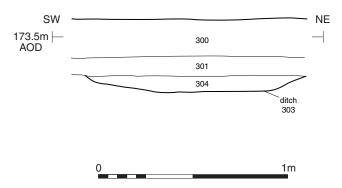




Ditch 105, looking south-west (scale 0.5m)

Cotswold Archaeology PROJECT TITLE Sawmills, Ashcombe	e enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
FIGURE TITLE Trench 1: section at PROJECT NO. 4988 DATE DRAWN BY DJB REVISION APPROVED BY LM SCALEØA	14-08-2014 FIGURE NO. 00 C



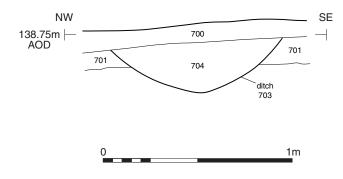




Ditch 303, looking south-east (scale 0.5m)

Cotswold Archaeology www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk e enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
PROJECT TITLE Sawmills, Ashcombe, Devon
Trench 3: section and photograph         PROJECT NO.       4988         DATE       14-08-2014         FIGURE NO.
DRAWN BY DJB REVISION 00 APPROVED BY LM SCALE@A4 1:20 7

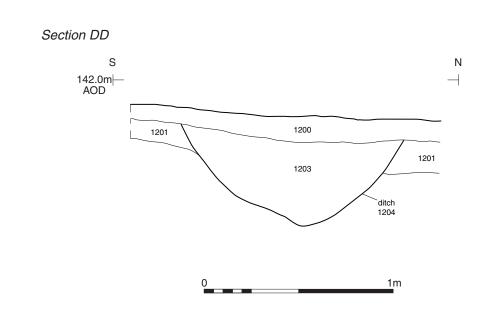






Ditch 703, looking north-east (scale 1m)

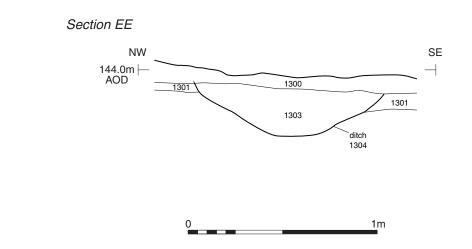
Cirencester 01285 771022 Milton Keynes 01908 218320 Andover 01264 347630 w www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk e enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
Sawmills, Ashcombe, Devon
FIGURE TITLE Trench 7: section and photograph
PROJECT NO. 4988 DATE 14-08-2014 FIGURE NO. DRAWN BY DJB REVISION 00 APPROVED BY LM SCALE@A4 1:20 8





Ditch 1204 and furrow 1206, looking west (scales 1m)

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PROJECT NO. 4988 DATE 14-08-2014 FIGURE NO. DRAWN BY DJB REVISION 00 9 APPROVED BY LM SCALE@A4 1:20 9





Ditch 1304, looking north-east (scale 1m)

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Sawmills, Ashcombe, Devon FIGURE TITLE Trench 13: section and photograph PROJECT NO. 4988 DATE 14-08-2014 PROVED BY LNB REVISION 00 APPROVED BY LNB SCALE@A4 1:20 10