

Land West of North Molton North Devon

Archaeological Evaluation

for

Waddeton Park Ltd


CA Project: 4877
CA Report: 14203

June 2014

Land West of North Molton North Devon

Archaeological Evaluation

CA Project: 4877
CA Report: 14203

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date	3 June 2014
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SUMMARY

Project Name:	Land West of North Molton
Location:	North Devon
NGR:	SS 7328 2960
Type:	Evaluation
Date:	12-14 May 2014
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon
Accession Number:	NDDMS2014.42
Site Code:	LNM 14

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in May 2014 on land to the west of North Molton, North Devon. A total of three trenches were excavated.

The fieldwork identified a ditch and the remains of a bank, both associated with a former field boundary of likely post-medieval or modern date. A series of other linear features were identified which could not be precisely characterised, but could be related to similar date activity.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In May 2014 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for Waddeton Park Ltd on Land to the West of North Molton, North Devon (centred on NGR: SS 7328 2960; Fig. 1). The evaluation was undertaken as part of a programme of archaeological works requested by Stephen Reed, Archaeologist, Devon County Council Historic Environment Team (DCCHET), archaeological advisor to North Devon Council (NDC), to assess the archaeological potential of the site and the impact of proposed development upon any archaeological resource present within it.

1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2014a) and approved by Mr Reed. Following the approval of the WSI, it was determined that only parts of the site would be subject to groundworks associated with the proposed development. As such, the completed scope of work was revised to reflect this. 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 Mr Reed, including a site visit on 14 May 2014.

The site

1.3 The proposed development is 4.42ha in extent. The site comprises agricultural pasture land, set across parts of three fields (each divided by hedgebanks). The northern boundary of the site is formed by the North Molton to South Molton road, the eastern boundary by the grounds of the North Molton School. Agricultural land borders the site to the south and west. The site lies between 180m and 210m AOD, rising from the north-west to south-east. Following the approval of the WSI, it was determined that only the northern most field would be subject to built development associated with the proposed development. This area (hereafter 'the current evaluation area') is 1.8ha in extent.

1.4 The underlying bedrock geology of the north and central area is mapped as Upcott Slates Formation of the Devonian period, with the southern extent mapped as Sandstone, Siltstone and Mudstone of the Devonian period (BGS 2014).

Archaeological background

- 1.5 The site has been previously subject to desk-based assessment (CA 2014b) and subsequently geophysical survey (Stratascan 2014). The desk-based assessment concluded archaeological trends applicable to the site, which remain applicable to the current evaluation area. Similarly, the geophysical survey was completed to the site boundary. The following is a summary of those documents.
- 1.6 The possible Bronze Age standing stones located between c. 30m and c. 830m west and north of the site suggest ritual or ceremonial activity, however no associated or contemporary settlement or agrarian activity was noted through desk-based research. No evidence from between the Bronze Age and Roman periods was noted within 2km of the site through desk based research (CA 2014b).
- 1.7 During the medieval and post-medieval periods documentary sources record the establishment of North Molton. Recovered archaeological evidence of medieval activity has been limited to farmsteads, for example at Lower Poole Farm to the east of the site (CA 2014b).
- 1.8 Following the completion of the desk-based assessment, a geophysical survey was undertaken. This identified the presence of a number of possible archaeological anomalies. These were determined to be of either archaeological, agricultural or natural origin. The majority were located in the central field of the site and comprised linear anomalies (likely to be field boundaries) and an area of quarry activity. Within the current evaluation area a number of curvilinear and linear features were identified (Stratascan 2014).

Archaeological objectives

- 1.9 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 NDC 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

- 1.10 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of three trenches (Trench 1 being 15m in length, Trench 2 being 25m in length and Trench 3 being 35m in length). All were 1.6m in width and were excavated in the locations shown on the attached plan (Fig. 2). Trenches 2 and 3 were moved from their original locations agreed in the WSI due to the presence of mature trees and overhead power lines respectively, with the approval of Mr Reed. 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).
- 1.11 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).
- 1.12 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) and were sampled accordingly. A single bulk sample was retrieved from feature 205 but was found not to contain any material of palaeoenvironmental interest. All artefacts recovered were processed in accordance with Technical Manual 3 *Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation* (1995).
- 1.13 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 the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon under accession number NDDMS2014.42, 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 (FIG. 3-5)

2.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts and find are to be found in Appendices A and B respectively.

2.2 The general stratigraphy of the current evaluation area comprised loosely-bedded shillet bedrock, overlain by a thin intermittent subsoil derived from this material (typically 0.18m thick), overlain by the present topsoil and turf which was typically 0.3m thick.

Trench 1 (Fig. 2 and 3)

2.3 Trench 1 contained a linear features cut into natural substrate 101. Feature 102 was recorded as being 1.95m in width and <0.16m in depth in the central/east area of the trench, orientated approximately northeast–southwest. It contained clayey silt fill 103 (Fig. 3, Section AA); a single fragment of worked flint was recovered. At the western end of the trench a feature (which contained no artefacts or indications of having been open) was interpreted as being of natural origin. No subsoil was observed in this trench, and topsoil/turf 100 overlay the archaeological feature.

Trench 2 (Fig. 2 and 4)

2.4 At the eastern end of the trench cutting natural silt, feature 205 was recorded orientated northwest-southeast measuring 2m in width and 0.3m in depth (Fig. 4, Section CC). It contained two fills: at its base 204 (a sandy silt clay <0.14m in thickness) and overlying this 203 (a sandy clay <0.07 in thickness). The profile of feature 205 was asymmetric, the profile being regular at its west edge and irregular on its east edge. Bulk sample <1> was retrieved from fill of 204 feature 205, and contained very small quantities of charcoal dust.

2.5 Natural substrate 201 was cut by north/south orientated ditch 206. It was 2.6m wide and 0.4m deep, with an asymmetrical profile. The ditch had a steep western side, an irregular, gradually sloping eastern side and a broad concave base. It was filled by silty clay deposit 207 (containing a small number of large stones), measuring up to 0.3m in length and 0.13m in depth (Fig. 4, Section BB). A single sherd of post medieval pottery was recovered from this material. Subsoil 202 (which contained a small fragment of Romano-British pottery) was observed in this trench to partially overly ditch 206, which was overlain by topsoil/turf 200.

- 2.6 Approximately 2.5m to the west was parallel feature 208. Both in plan and section, this feature was difficult to define to any degree of accuracy, and plough impact was noted to both the feature edge and the remnants of its fill 209. It was overlain by topsoil 200. Its maximum dimensions were noted to be 0.6m in width 0.02m in depth (Fig. 4). It was filled by 209, a material similar to that within ditch 206. One sizeable stone was present on the surface of 209, and it contained no finds.

Trench 3 (Fig. 2 and 5)

- 2.7 Natural substrate 302 was cut at the southwest end of the trench by feature 304, recorded as measuring 0.6m in width and 0.22m in depth orientated north-south (Fig. 5, section DD). It contained a single fill 303 (a silt clay) from which no finds were recovered. The feature profile was asymmetric, being steep in profile on its northeast edge and irregular in the southwest. No artefacts were recovered from this feature.

The finds and palaeoenvironmental evidence

- 2.8 The finds recovered from the evaluation are summarised in Appendix B and consisted of pottery and worked flint.

Pottery: Roman

- 2.9 One unfeathered bodysherd of pottery in a black-firing, sand tempered fabric, which is broadly dateable to the Roman period, was recovered from subsoil 202.

Post-medieval

- 2.10 Single sherds of North Devon gravel-tempered ware were recovered from topsoil 100 and fill 207 of ditch 206: a rimsherd from a large bowl from the former and part of a handle from a jug or crock from the latter. This glazed earthenware was manufactured in the Barnstable area of North Devon and, when found within Devon, dates to the mid 16th to late 18th centuries (Allan 1984, 129-131).

Worked flint

- 2.11 A small, worked out, single-platform, pyramidal blade and possible bladelet core was recovered from fill 103 of feature 102. This burnt item is Mesolithic or Early Neolithic in date.

Palaeoenvironmental evidence

- 2.12 One environmental bulk sample (38 litres of soil) was retrieved from a single deposit with the intention of recovering evidence of industrial or domestic activity and material for radiocarbon dating. The sample was processed by standard flotation procedures (CA Technical Manual No. 2).
- 2.13 Sample 1 (flot 66ml) was recovered from fill 204 of feature 205. The sample contained abundant modern roots and a small amount of highly fragmented, unidentifiable charcoal dust. The paucity of artefacts and ecofacts means no further interpretative information is possible.
- 2.14 There is no material available for radiocarbon dating. It is recommended that this flot is discarded.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 The results of the trenching within the current evaluation area accord with the results of the desk-based assessment (CA 2014b) and geophysical survey (Stratascan 2014) in uncovering limited evidence of archaeological activity.
- 3.2 Ditch 206 correlates well with a linear anomaly indicated on the geophysical survey (Fig. 2: yellow annotation) and may be associated with the boundary visible on the 1842 North Molton Tithe Map and in part on aerial photography of 1995 (CA 2014b; Fig. 5). This boundary was also observed as short sections of hedgebank during the course of site works (Fig. 2: brown annotation). Ditch 206 and undated feature 208 (which could represent a ditch or bank) may be a slightly earlier iteration of the boundary, though there is insufficient precision in dating evidence to conclude this definitively.
- 3.3 Features 102 and 304 also appear to correspond with anomalies identified by the geophysical survey, however in the case of feature 304 only the south-western extent was identified and large feature 205 was not identified by the survey. Given that an artefact was recovered from feature 102 and small quantities of charcoal dust were identified from the bulk sample from fill 304, a connection to the agricultural activity noted on the Tithe Map Apportionment Register of 1842 (or any other date) cannot entirely be ruled out.

4. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Mark Brett, assisted by Antony Beechey and Mary Lutescu-Jones. The report was written by Mark Brett, the finds report was written by Jacky Sommerville, the palaeoenvironmental report was written by Sarah Cobain and the illustrations were completed by Leo Heatley. The archive has been compiled by Mark Brett and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Ian Barnes.

5. REFERENCES

Allan, J. P. 1984 *Medieval & Post-medieval Finds from Exeter 1971-1980*. Exeter Archaeological Reports: 3. Exeter. Exeter City Council and The University of Exeter.

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2014 *Geology of Britain Viewer* http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geology_viewer_google/googleviewer.html Accessed 6 May 2014

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2014a *Land to the West of North Molton, North Devon, Devon: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2014b *Land to the West of North Molton, North Devon: Heritage Desk-Based Assessment*, CA Report No. **14017**

Stratascan 2014 *North Molton, Devon: Geophysical Survey*, Stratascan Job Ref. **J6729**



APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth/thickness (m)	Spot-date
1	100	Layer		topsoil	mid greyish brown clayey silt			0.3	MC 16/18
1	101	Layer		natural	light yellowish grey shillet within a silt matrix			N/K	
1	102	Cut		feature	broad, shallow, slightly convex base	>2	1.95	<0.16	
1	103	Fill	102	fill of feature	mid orangey brown clayey silt			<0.16	
2	200	Layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown clayey silt			0.3	
2	201	Layer		natural	light greenish white shillet within a silt matrix			N/K	
2	202	Layer		subsoil	mid orangey brown clayey silt			0.16	RB
2	203	Fill	205	2nd fill of feature	shale within light grey sandy clay matrix			<0.07	
2	204	Fill	205	1st fill of feature	mid orangey brown sandy silty clay			<0.14	
2	205	Cut		feature	broad, shallow, concave base	>2	2	0.3	
2	206	Cut		ditch	asymmetric profile; broad, flattish base		2.6	0.4	
2	207	Fill	206	fill of ditch	mid yellowish brown silty clay			0.4	MC 16/LC18
2	208	Cut		?cut for feature	shallow, almost imperceptible		0.6	<0.02	
2	209	Fill	208	?feature fill	mid yellowish brown silty clay			<0.02	
3	300	Layer		topsoil	mid greyish brown silty clay			0.2	
3	301	Layer		subsoil	mid yellowish brown silty clay			0.2	
3	302	Layer		natural	light yellowish grey shillet within a silt matrix			N/K	
3	303	Fill	304	fill of feature	mid orangey brown silty clay			0.22	
3	304	Cut		Feature	slightly irregular profile; moderately sloping sides and uneven base	>2	0.6	0.22	

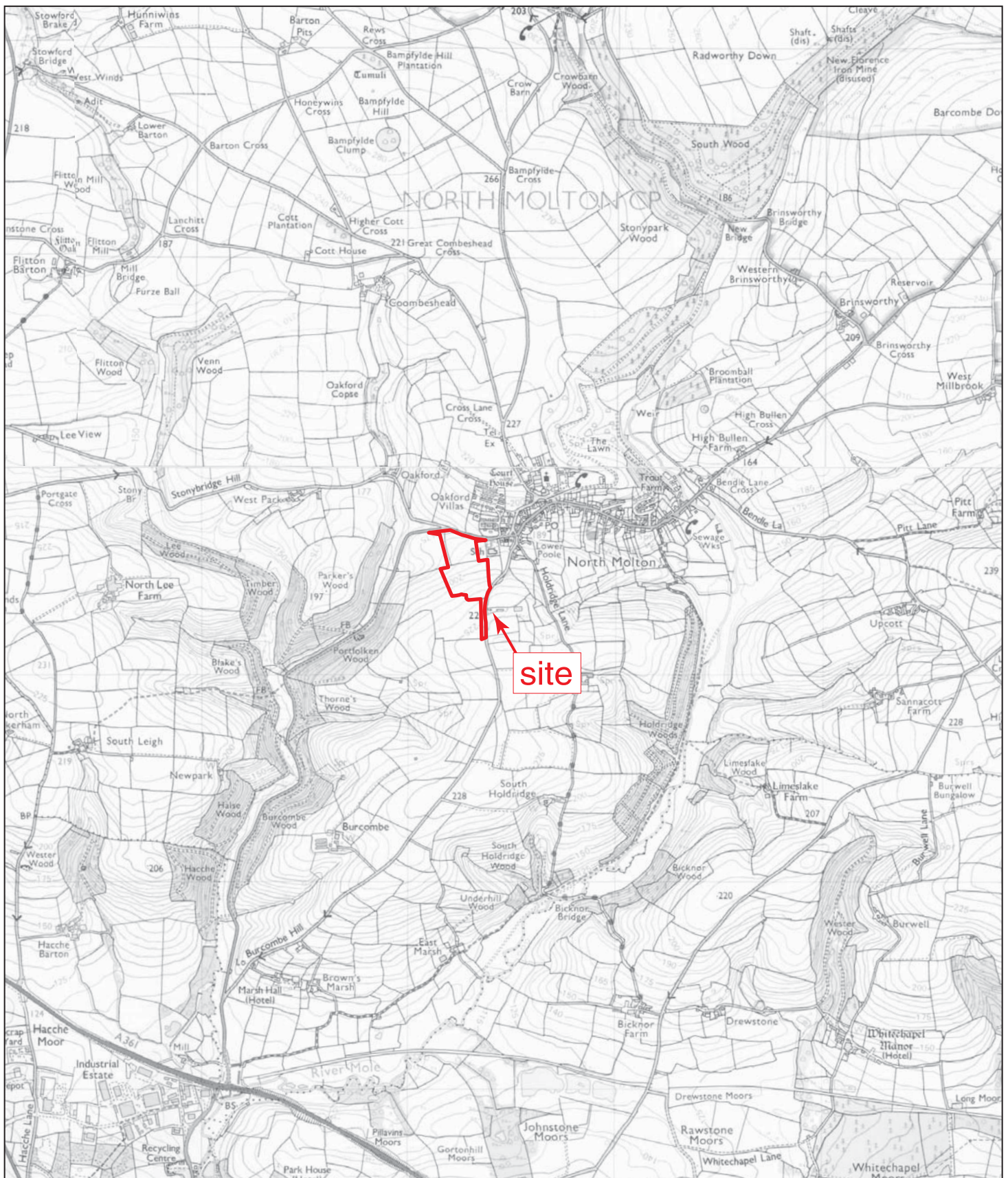
APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

Finds concordance

Context	Description	Count	Weight(g)	Spot-date
100	Post-medieval pottery: North Devon gravel-tempered	1	75	MC17-C18
103	Worked flint: core	1	12	-
202	Roman pottery: black-firing, sand-tempered fabric	1	1	RB
207	Post-medieval pottery: North Devon gravel-tempered	1	26	MC17-C18

APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Land West of North Molton, North Devon	
Short description	An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in May 2014 on land to the west of North Molton, North Devon. Three trenches were excavated. The fieldwork identified a ditch and the remains of a bank, both associated with a former field boundary of likely post-medieval or modern date. Further anomalies were investigated and proved to be of probable geological origin.	
Project dates	12-14 May 2014	
Project type	Evaluation	
Previous work	Heritage desk-based assessment (CA 2014) Geophysical survey (Stratascan, 2014)	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Land West of North Molton, North Devon	
Study area (M ² /ha)	4.42ha	
Site co-ordinates (8 Fig Grid Reference)	SS 7328 2950	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator		
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Ian Barnes	
Project Supervisor	Mark Brett	
MONUMENT TYPE		
None		
SIGNIFICANT FINDS		
None		
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon Accession Number: NDDMS2014.42	Ceramics, flint
Paper	Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon Accession Number: NDDMS2014.42	Trench recording forms, context sheets, digital photographic register, levels register, Permatrace drawings
Digital	Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon Accession Number: NDDMS2014.42	Digital photographs
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2014 <i>Land West of North Molton, North Devon: Archaeological Evaluation</i> . CA typescript report 14203		



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PROJECT TITLE

Land West of North Molton,
North Devon

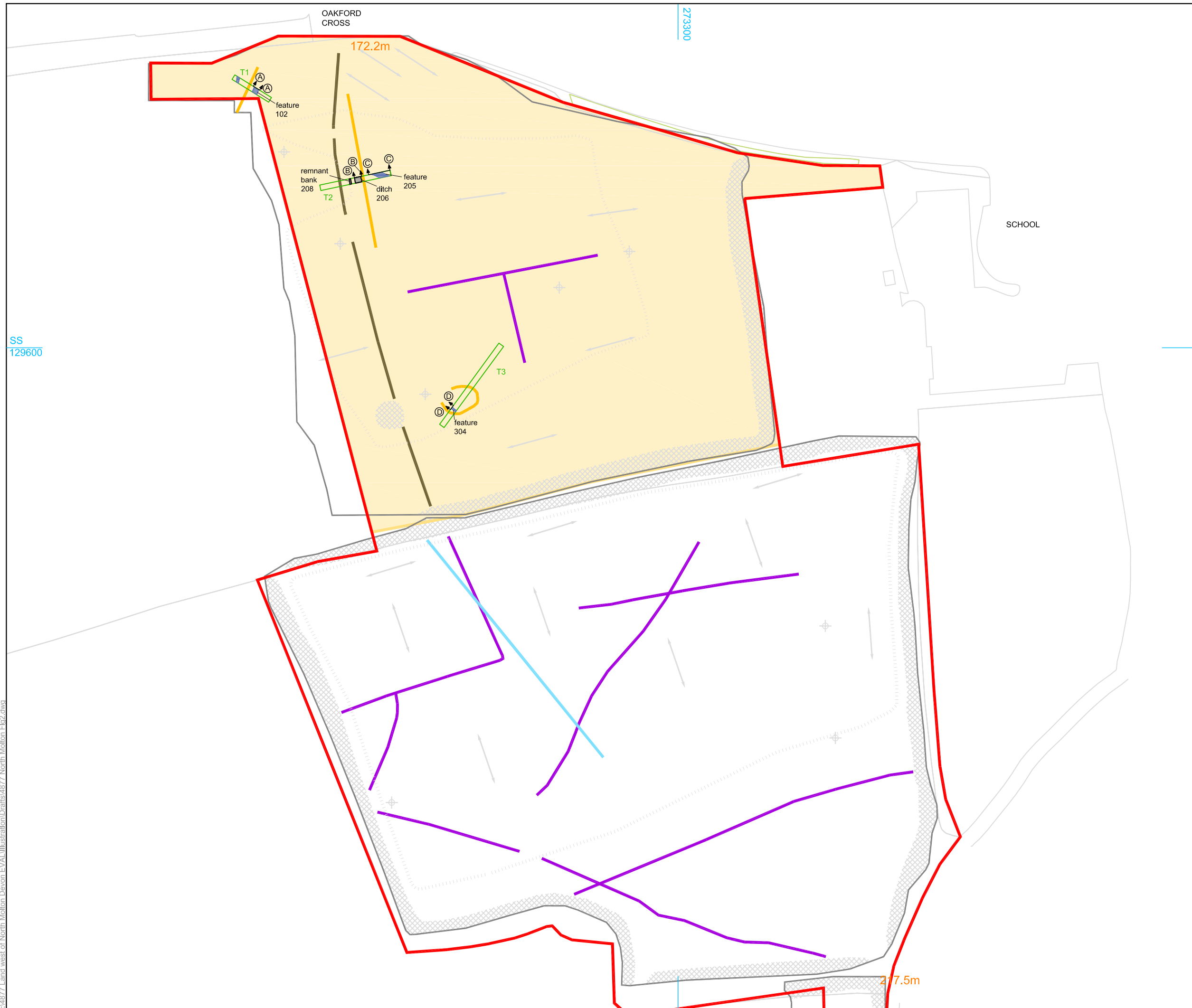
FIGURE TITLE

Site location plan

PROJECT NO. 4877 DATE 23-05-2014
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APPROVED BY LM SCALE@A4 1:25,000

FIGURE NO.

1



- site
- current excavation area
- evaluation trench
- archaeological feature
- geological feature

Geophysics key

PROBABLE ARCHAEOLOGY

- Positive anomaly / weak positive anomaly - probable cut feature of archaeological origin
- Negative anomaly / weak negative anomaly - probable bank or earthwork of archaeological origin
- Linear anomaly probably related to a former field boundary not present on available mapping
- Linear anomaly related to a former field boundary present on available mapping pre-1900
- Scattered magnetic debris related to a former field boundary present on available mapping pre-1900
- Strong magnetic debris related to a former quarry present on available mapping pre-1900

POSSIBLE ARCHAEOLOGY

- Positive anomaly / weak positive anomaly - possible cut feature of archaeological origin
- Negative anomaly / weak negative anomaly - possible bank or earthwork of archaeological origin

OTHER ANOMALIES

- Closely spaced parallel linear anomalies - probably related to agricultural activity such as ploughing
- Linear anomaly - probably related to pipe, cable or other modern service
- Magnetic disturbance associated with nearby metal object such as service or field boundary
- Strong magnetic debris - possible disturbed or made ground
- Scattered magnetic debris
- Area of amorphous magnetic variation - probable natural (e.g. geological or pedological) origin
- Magnetic spike - probable ferrous object



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PROJECT TITLE
Land West of North Molton, Devon

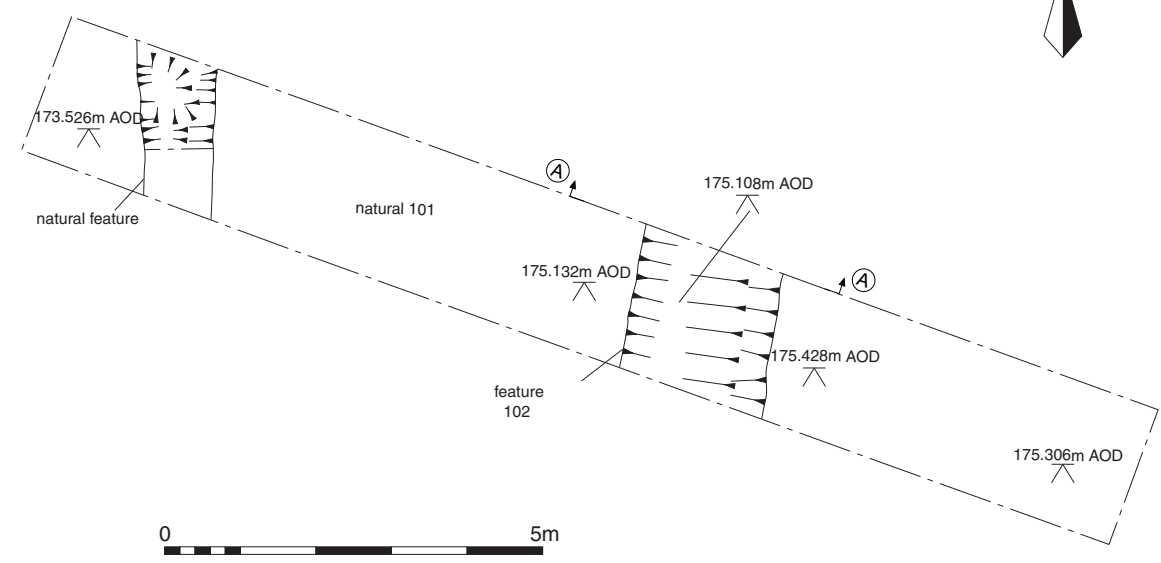
FIGURE TITLE
Trench location plan showing archaeological features and geophysical survey results

PROJECT NO. 4877	DATE 05-06-2014	FIGURE NO.
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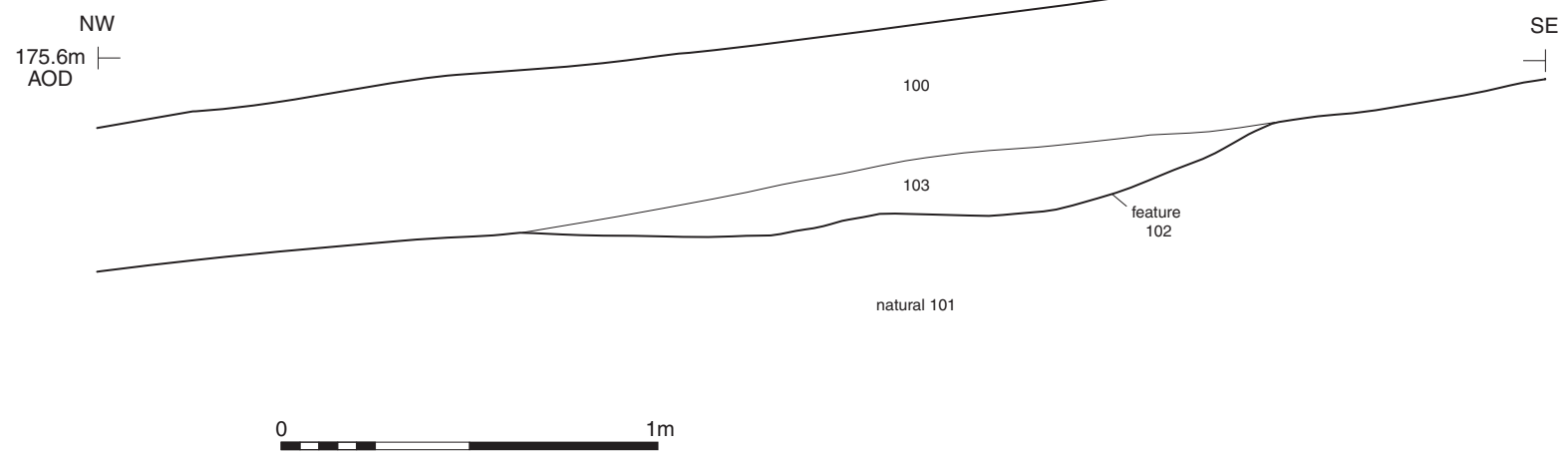


Trench 1



Trench 1, looking west (1m scales)

Section AA



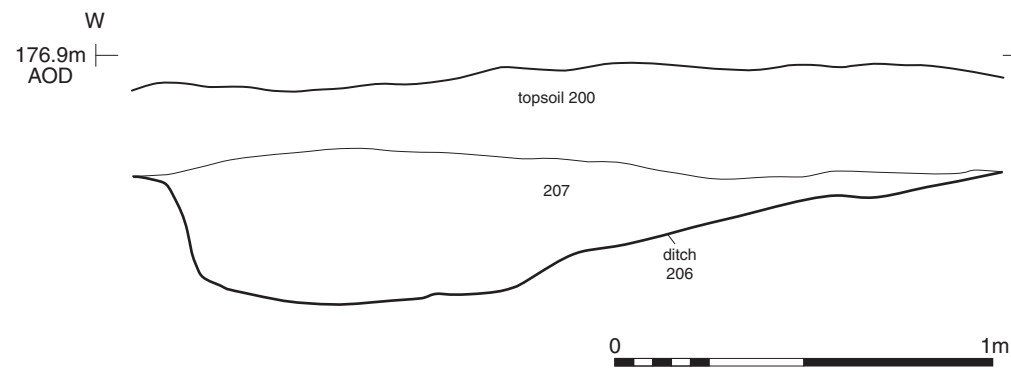
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PROJECT TITLE
 Land West of North Molton, Devon

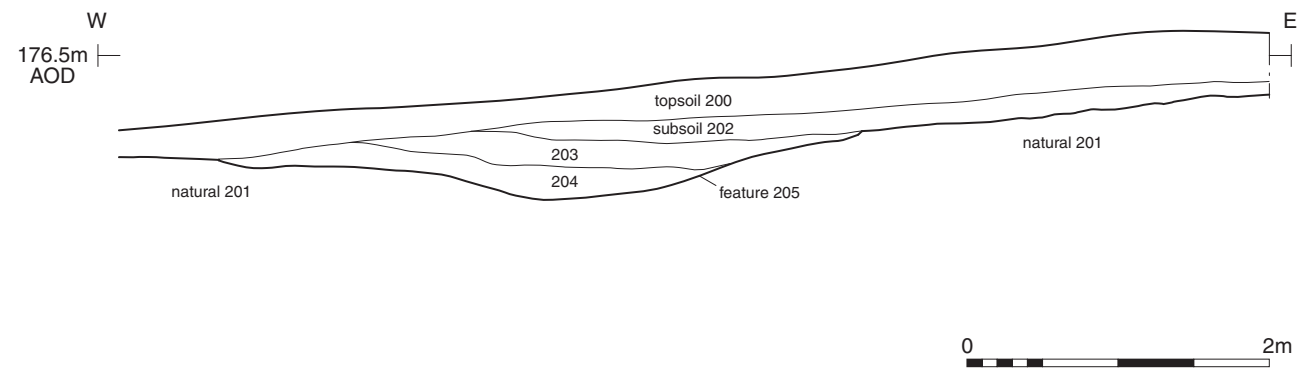
FIGURE TITLE
 Trench 1: plan, section and photograph

PROJECT NO.	4877	DATE	04/06/2014	FIGURE NO.
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APPROVED BY	LM	SCALE@A3	1:100 & 1:20	

Trench 2, Section BB



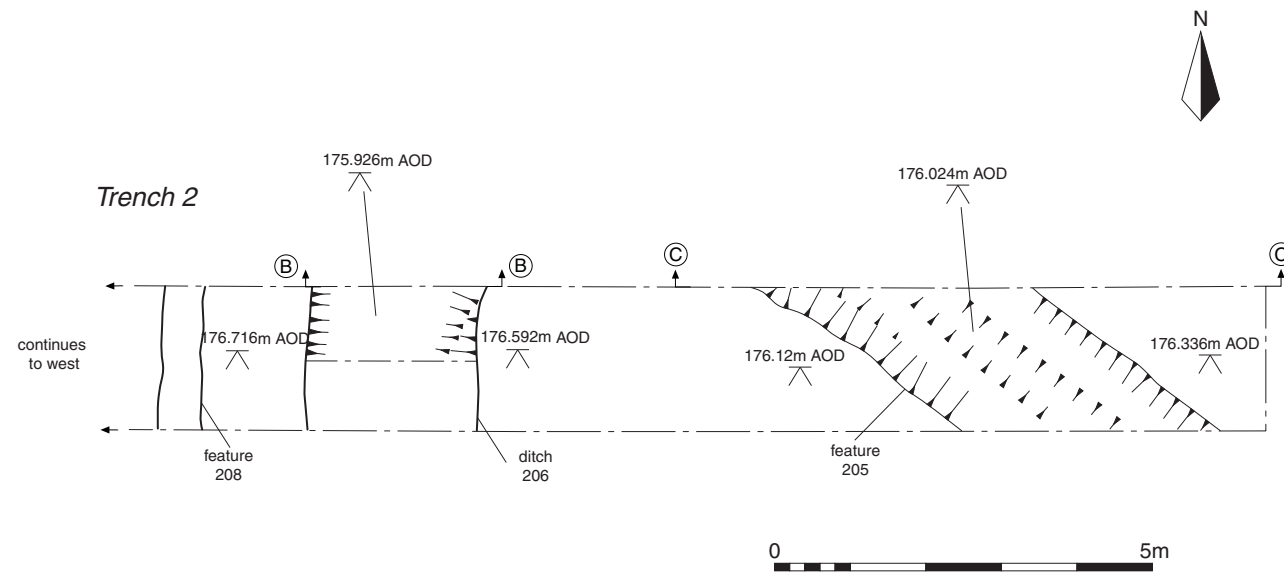
Trench 2, Section CC

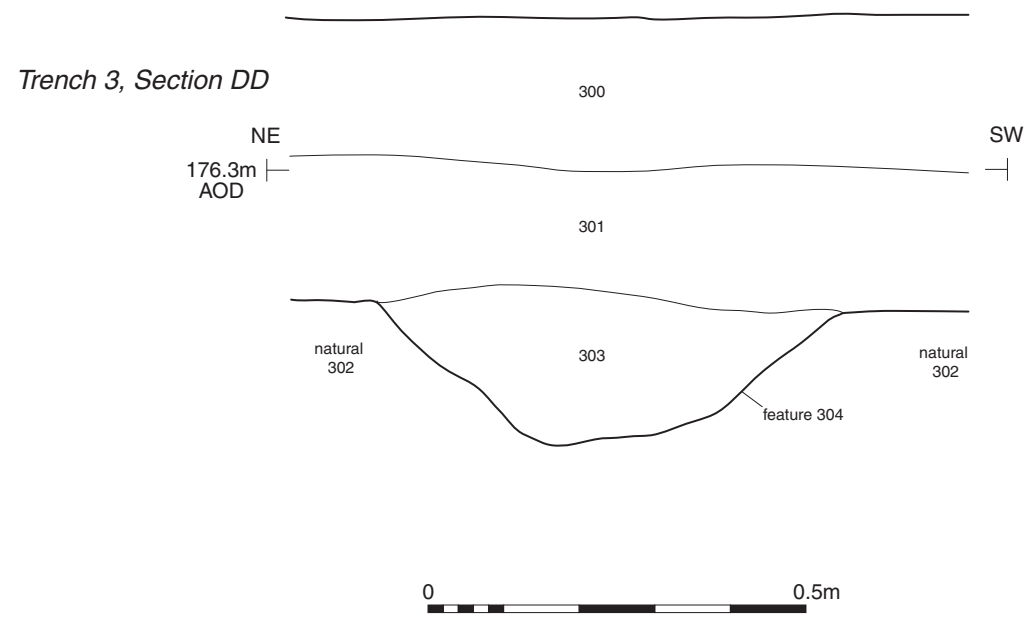
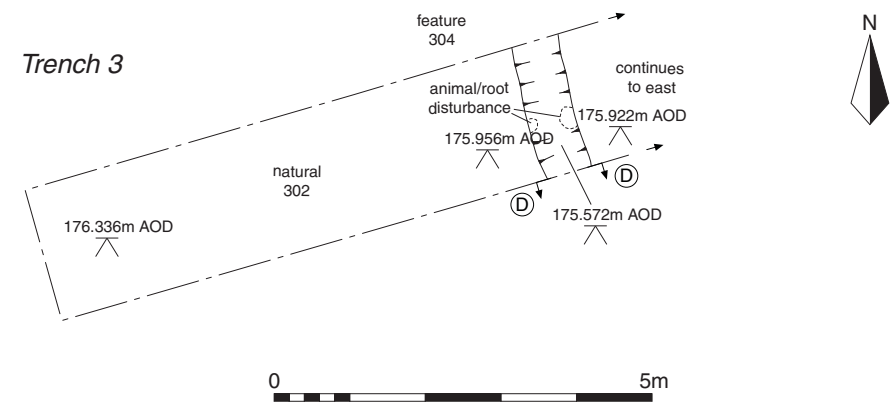


Trench 2, Feature 208 (edge dashed), looking north (1m scale)



Trench 2, Ditch 206, looking north (1m scale)





Trench 3, feature 304, looking south-east (1m scale)

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PROJECT TITLE
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FIGURE TITLE
Trench 3: plan, section and photograph

PROJECT NO. 4877	DATE 05/06/2014	FIGURE NO.
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