



Gibbet Moor Farm Rackenford Devon

Archaeological Evaluation



for
Pegasus Group and
Lumicity Ltd

on behalf of
WK Reed

CA Project: 880087
CA Report: 16072



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A	26 February 2016	Jonathan Orellana	Laurent Coleman	Internal review		Derek Evans

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SUMMARY

Project Name:	Gibbet Moor Farm
Location:	Rackenford, Devon
NGR:	SS 8801 1673
Type:	Evaluation
Date:	1-4 February 2016
Planning Reference:	15/01604/MFUL
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter
Accession Number:	RAMM 16/02
Site Code:	GMF 16

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in February 2016 at Gibbet Moor Farm, Rackenford, Devon. A total of ten trenches was excavated.

Features were identified in the western part of the site only, and comprised five ditches and a row of three postholes, all of which probably corresponded to post-medieval/modern field boundaries. An undated pit/posthole was also identified in the south-western part of the site.



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In February 2016, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for Pegasus Group and Lumicity Ltd on behalf of WK Reed at Gibbet Moor Farm, Rackenford, Devon (centred on NGR: SS 8801 1673; Fig. 1). The evaluation was undertaken to accompany a planning application to Mid Devon District Council (MDDC) (ref. no 15/01604/MFUL) for development of poultry units and biomass boiler unit, formation of attenuation pond, access track and hardstanding, and landscaping and associated infrastructure. Stephen Reed, Archaeologist, Historic Environment Team, Devon County Council (DCCHET) (archaeological advisor to MDDC) outlined the requirement for desk-based assessment, geophysical survey and trial trenching. The desk-based assessment and geophysical survey have been undertaken. This document is the report on the results of the trial trenching.
- 1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2016) and approved by Mr Reed. The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014), the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (Historic England 2015). It was monitored by Mr Reed, including a site visit on 4 February 2016.
- The site**
- 1.3 The site is c. 6.9ha and comprises two agricultural fields which are currently under pasture. The development area comprised the proposed footprints of the poultry units, attenuation pond and access tracks.
- 1.4 The site is located c. 350m south of the A361 and is bounded to the east by Shell Lane and on the remaining sides by further agricultural fields. The site slopes gently towards the west/south-west; the eastern half of the site lies at 269m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) and drops gently to 245m AOD in the west of the site. The site boundaries comprise hedgerows and wire fences.
- 1.5 The underlying geology of the site is mapped as Bude Formation mudstone a sedimentary bedrock formed during the Carboniferous Period, overlain by superficial deposits of Head which formed during the Quaternary period (British Geological

Survey (BGS) 2015). Soil within the site is classified as slowly-permeable, seasonally wet, acid loamy and clayey soils (Cranfield Soil and Agrifood Institute, Soilscales, 2015). The natural substrate encountered during the evaluation comprised clay with occasional outcrops of stone.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The site has been subject to heritage desk-based assessment (CA 2015) and geophysical survey (AOC Archaeology 2015). The following is a summary of these investigations.

2.2 No designated heritage assets are recorded within the site. Prehistoric flints have been recovered from within the site and its immediate environs, and a group of three Scheduled barrows lie immediately to the north-east of the site. This evidence is indicative of prehistoric activity in this area.

2.3 From the medieval period onwards, the site is likely to have formed part of a wider agricultural landscape associated with the medieval and post-medieval farms recorded within the wider environs of the site (CA 2015).

2.4 The geophysical survey of the site detected anomalies of potential archaeological interest (Gm2), former field boundaries (Gm1) and anomalies of a geological nature (Gm3) (AOC 2015).

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 The objectives of the evaluation are 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 *Standard and guidance: Archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014). This information will enable MDDC 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).

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of 10 trenches, all measuring 25m in length and 1.8m in width, in the locations shown on the attached plan (Fig. 2). The locations of Trenches 2, 4 and 5 were adjusted slightly due to an overhead power line. Trenches were set out on OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates using Leica GPS and surveyed in accordance with CA Technical Manual 4: *Survey Manual*.
- 4.2 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*.
- 4.3 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* and were sampled and processed. A bulk environmental sample <1> was recovered from the lower fill, 103, of pit/posthole 102. All artefacts recovered were processed in accordance with Technical Manual 3 *Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation*.
- 4.4 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 Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, under accession number RAMM 16/02, along with the site archive. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix D, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

5. RESULTS (FIGS 2-4)

- 5.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts, finds and environmental samples (palaeoenvironmental evidence) are to be found in Appendices A, B and C, respectively.
- 5.2 The natural substrate was identified at a depth of 0.3m below present ground level (bpgl) in all trenches and comprised clay with occasional outcrops of stone. The

natural was directly sealed by ploughsoil. Archaeological features, which were recorded in Trenches 1-4, cut the natural substrate and were sealed by plough soil. No archaeological features or deposits were identified in Trenches 5-10.

Trench 1 (Figs 2-4)

- 5.3 The natural substrate was cut by pit/posthole 102. This feature had steep sides and a flat base (Fig. 4, section AA) and was c. 0.4m in diameter and 0.22m in depth. It contained two undated fills, 103 and 104. A bulk environmental sample <1> was recovered from its charcoal-rich lower fill 103. This sample was found to contain large quantities of charcoal fragments including mature oak.

Trench 2 (Figs 2-4)

- 5.4 A series of three broadly parallel east/west aligned ditches, 202, 205 and 208, was identified in Trench 2. Ditches 202 (Fig. 4, section BB) and 205 had similar flat-based profiles and were 1.25m in width and 0.45m in depth and 1.4m in width and 0.31m in depth respectively. Both contained two fills, primary fills 203 and 206 and secondary fills 204 and 207 respectively, and a fragment of clay pipe was recovered from fill 204. Ditches 202 and 205 corresponded closely to linear anomalies. Ditch 208, identified towards the south-eastern end of Trench 2, had a V-shaped profile and measured 0.58m in width and 0.31m in depth. No dating evidence was recovered from its single fill 209. The ditch had not been identified by the geophysical survey.

Trench 3 (Figs 2-3)

- 5.5 Two parallel shallow ditches were identified in Trench 3, running on a north-east/south-west alignment. Ditch 302 was 0.74m wide and 0.05m deep; ditch 304 was 0.85m wide and 0.09m deep. Each of these ditches contained single, undated fills 303 and 305. These features corresponded to a historic field boundary detected by the geophysical survey.

Trench 4 (Figs 2-4)

- 5.6 A north/south aligned row of three shallow postholes, 402, 404 (Fig. 4, section CC) and 406, was identified in Trench 4. The postholes had moderately sloping sides and flat bases. No finds were recovered from the single fills, 403, 405 and 407, of these features.

6. THE FINDS

- 6.1 Artefactual material from the evaluation was hand-recovered from one deposit (a ditch fill). The recovered material dates to the post-medieval/modern period. Quantities of the artefact types are given in Appendix B.

Clay tobacco pipe

- 6.2 Fill 204 of ditch 202 (Trench 2) produced a fragment of clay tobacco pipe stem, which is broadly dateable to the late 16th to late 19th centuries.

7. THE BIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Plant Macrofossils

- 7.1 A single sample (three litres of soil) was taken from a charcoal rich deposit within Trench 1 to evaluate the preservation of palaeoenvironmental remains with the intention of recovering environmental evidence of industrial or domestic activity on the site. The sample was processed by standard flotation procedures (CA Technical Manual 2: *The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites*; Appendix C).
- 7.2 The lower fill (103, sample <1>) within undated pit/posthole 102 contained large quantities of charcoal fragments greater than 2mm. The well preserved charcoal assemblage included mature wood fragments of oak (*Quercus* sp.) and showed no evidence of vitrification. No plant remains other than a small number of monocotyledon stem fragments were recorded within this sample. The assemblage is likely to be representative of dumped material.
- 7.3 The environmental remains provide no indication of the date of this deposit and no firm evidence for any specific activity taking place on site such as metalworking or charcoal production.

8. DISCUSSION

- 8.1 The trial trenching located features which had been identified by the geophysical survey. However, some features had not been identified by the geophysical survey

and a feature which had been identified by the geophysical survey was not found during the trial trenching.

- 8.2 The ditches and the row of postholes identified in Trenches 2-4 are probably of post-medieval/modern date: A fragment of clay pipe was recovered from ditch 202 and the features generally corresponded to, or were parallel to, existing and former field boundaries.
- 8.3 The function of the undated pit/posthole identified in Trench 1 remains unclear but it should be noted that it contained significant quantities of charcoal fragments.

9. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Jonathan Orellana, assisted by George Gandham, Edoardo Vigo and Jacopo Cerasoni. This report was written by Jonathan Orellana. The finds and biological evidence reports were written by Jacky Sommerville and Sarah Wyles, respectively. The report illustrations were prepared by Sam O'Leary. The archive has been compiled and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Laurent Coleman.

10. REFERENCES

AOC Archaeology 2015 *Land at Gibbet Moor Farm, Templeton, Devon: Archaeological Geophysical Survey*

British Geological Survey, *Geology of Britain Viewer* <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>. Accessed August 2015

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2015 *Land at Gibbet Moor Farm, Rackenford, Devon: Heritage Desk-Based Assessment*, CA typescript report **15666**

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2016 *Land at Gibbet Moor Farm, Rackenford, Devon: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*

Cranfield Soil and Agrifood Institute, *Soilscapes Viewer*

<http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/> Accessed August 2015



APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

T. No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D (m)	Spot-date
1	100	layer		topsoil	dark brown silty clay			0.3	
1	101	layer		natural substrate	light yellowish brown clay with occasional stone				
1	102	cut		pit/posthole	sub-circular in plan, steep-sided and flat base	0.44	0.36	0.22	
1	103	fill	102	1st fill of pit/posthole	black silty clay with abundant charcoal	0.36	0.24	0.12	
1	104	fill	102	2nd fill of pit/posthole	mid greyish brown clay silt	0.44	0.36	0.13	
2	200	layer		topsoil	dark brown silty clay			0.35	
2	201	layer		natural substrate	light yellowish brown clay with occasional stone				
2	202	cut		ditch	E/W aligned, U-shaped profile and flat base	>2	1.25	0.45	
2	203	fill	202	1st fill of ditch	mid bluish grey silty clay	>2	1.1	0.3	
2	204	fill	202	2nd fill of ditch	mottled orange brown clay	>2	1.25	0.27	LC16-LC19
2	205	cut		ditch	E/W aligned, U-shaped profile and flat base	>2	1.4	0.31	
2	206	fill	205	1st fill of ditch	mid bluish grey silty clay	>2	1.4	0.22	
2	207	fill	205	2nd fill of ditch	mottled orange brown clay	>2	0.94	0.18	
2	208	cut		ditch	E/W aligned, V-shaped profile	>2	0.58	0.28	
2	209	fill	209	ditch fill	dark greyish brown clay	>2	0.58	0.28	
3	300	layer		topsoil	dark brownish grey silty clay			0.3	
3	301	layer		natural substrate	light brownish yellow clay				
3	302	cut		ditch	NE/SW aligned, moderate sloping sides and flat base	>1.7	0.74	0.05	
3	303	fill	302	ditch fill	mid brownish grey clayey silt	>1.7	0.74	0.05	
3	304	cut		ditch	NE/SW aligned, moderate sloping sides and flat base	>1.7	0.85	0.09	
3	305	fill	304	ditch fill	mid brownish grey clayey silt	>1.7	0.85	0.09	
4	400	layer		topsoil	dark brownish grey silty clay			0.3	
4	401	layer		natural substrate	light yellowish brown clay with occasional stone				
4	402	cut		posthole	circular in plan, flat base	0.25	0.24	0.07	
4	403	fill	402	posthole fill	mid greyish brown silty clay	0.25	0.24	0.07	
4	404	cut		posthole	circular in plan, flat base	0.28	0.27	0.07	
4	405	fill	404	posthole fill	mid greyish brown silty clay	0.28	0.27	0.07	
4	406	cut		posthole	circular in plan, flat base	0.4	0.4	0.07	
4	407	fill	406	posthole fill	mid greyish brown silty clay	0.4	0.4	0.07	
5	500	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.35	
5	501	layer		natural substrate	yellowish grey clay with occasional stones				
6	600	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.35	
6	601	layer		natural substrate	yellowish grey clay with occasional stones				
7	700	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.3	
7	701	layer		natural substrate	mid brownish grey clay with occasional stones				
8	800	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.35	
8	801	layer		natural substrate	yellowish grey clay with occasional stones				
9	900	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.3	
9	901	layer		natural substrate	yellowish grey clay with occasional stones				
10	1000	layer		topsoil	dark greyish brown silty clay			0.25	
10	1001	layer		natural substrate	yellowish grey clay				

APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

Context	Category	Description	Count	Weight (g)	Spot-date
204	Clay tobacco pipe	Stem	1	6	LC16-LC19

APPENDIX C: THE PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

Table 1: Assessment table of the palaeoenvironmental remains

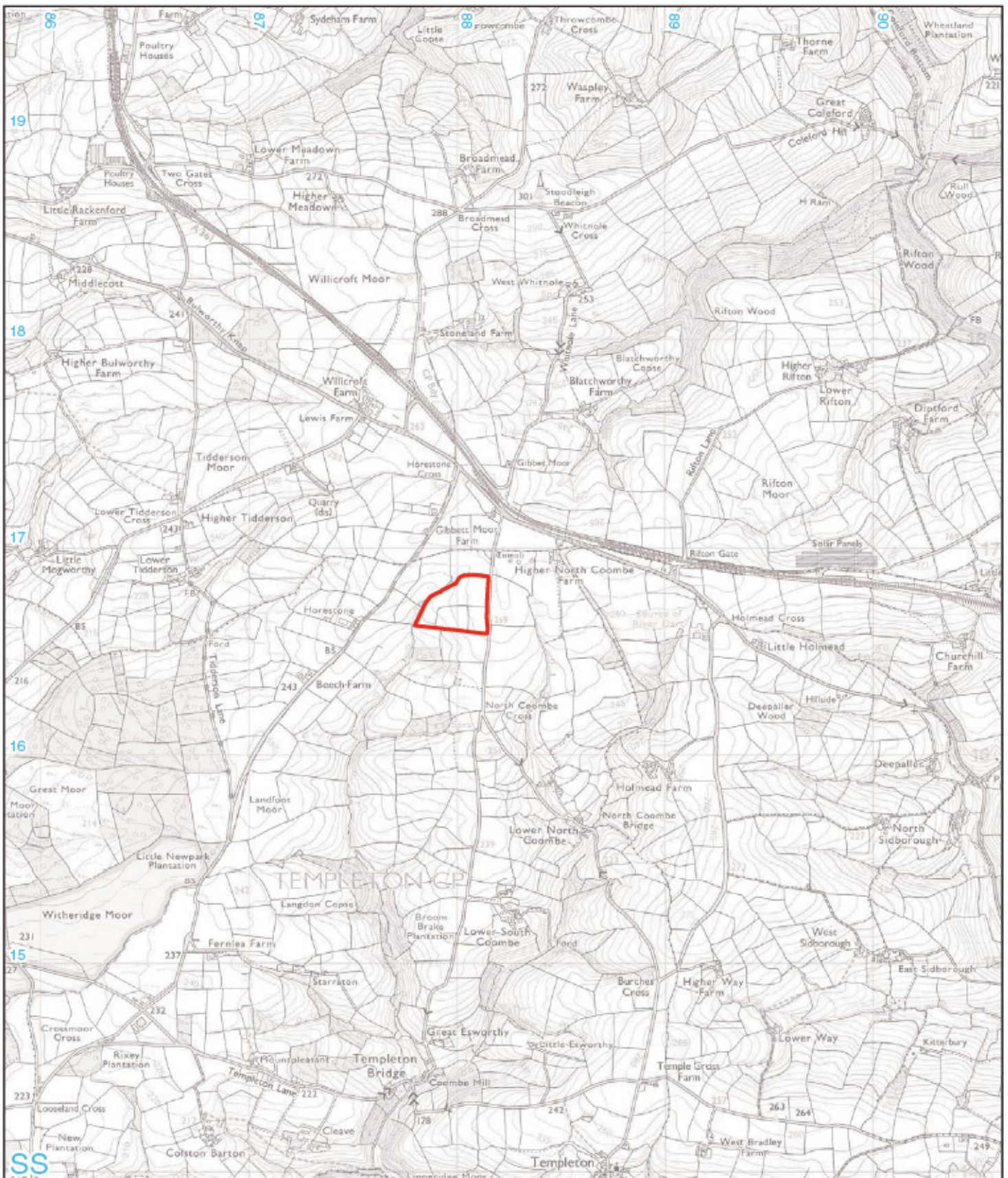
Feature	Context	Sample	Vol (L)	Flot size	Roots %	Grain	Chaff	Charred Other	Notes for Table	Charcoal	Other
Trench 1 - Undated pit/posthole											
102	103	1	3	750	1	-	-	-	monocot stem frags (++)	+++++	-

Key

+ = 1–4 items; ++ = 4–20 items; +++ = 21–49 items; ++++ = 50–99 items; +++++ = >100 items

APPENDIX D: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Gibbet Moor Farm, Rackenford, Devon	
Short description	An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in February 2016 at Gibbet Moor Farm, Rackenford, Devon. A total of ten trenches was excavated. Features were identified in the western part of the site only, and comprised five ditches and a row of three postholes, all of which probably corresponded to post-medieval/modern field boundaries. An undated pit/posthole was also identified in the south-western part of the site.	
Project dates	1 – 4 February 2016	
Project type	Evaluation	
Previous work	Desk based Assessment CA 2015 Geophysical Survey AOC 2015	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Gibbet Moor Farm, Rackenford, Devon	
Study area (M ² /ha)	6.9ha	
Site co-ordinates	SS 8801 1673	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	N/A	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Laurent Coleman	
Project Supervisor	Jonathan Orellana	
MONUMENT TYPE	None	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	Royal Albert Memorial Museum RAMM: 16/02	Clay pipe
Paper	Royal Albert Memorial Museum RAMM: 16/02	Context sheets, trench sheets, section drawings
Digital	Royal Albert Memorial Museum RAMM: 16/02	Survey data, digital photos
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2016 <i>Gibbet Moor Farm, Rackenford, Devon: Archaeological Evaluation</i> . CA typescript report 16072		



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PROJECT TITLE
 Gibbett Moor Farm, Rackenford, Devon

FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan



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CHECKED BY LM	DATE 08/02/2016	
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Geophysics Key
(AOC Archaeology Group)
2015

- Linear trend (field boundary)
- Linear trend (agriculture)
- Possible archaeology
- Disturbed area (modern?)
- Disturbed area (geology?)
- Survey area
- Proposed development area

- site boundary
- development area
- evaluation trench
- archaeological feature



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PROJECT TITLE
Gibbet Moor Farm, Rackenford, Devon

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

DRAWN BY: LM
CHECKED BY: LM
APPROVED BY: JD

PROJECT NO: 080807
DATE: 08/02/18
SCALE: 1:1250

FIGURE NO:
2

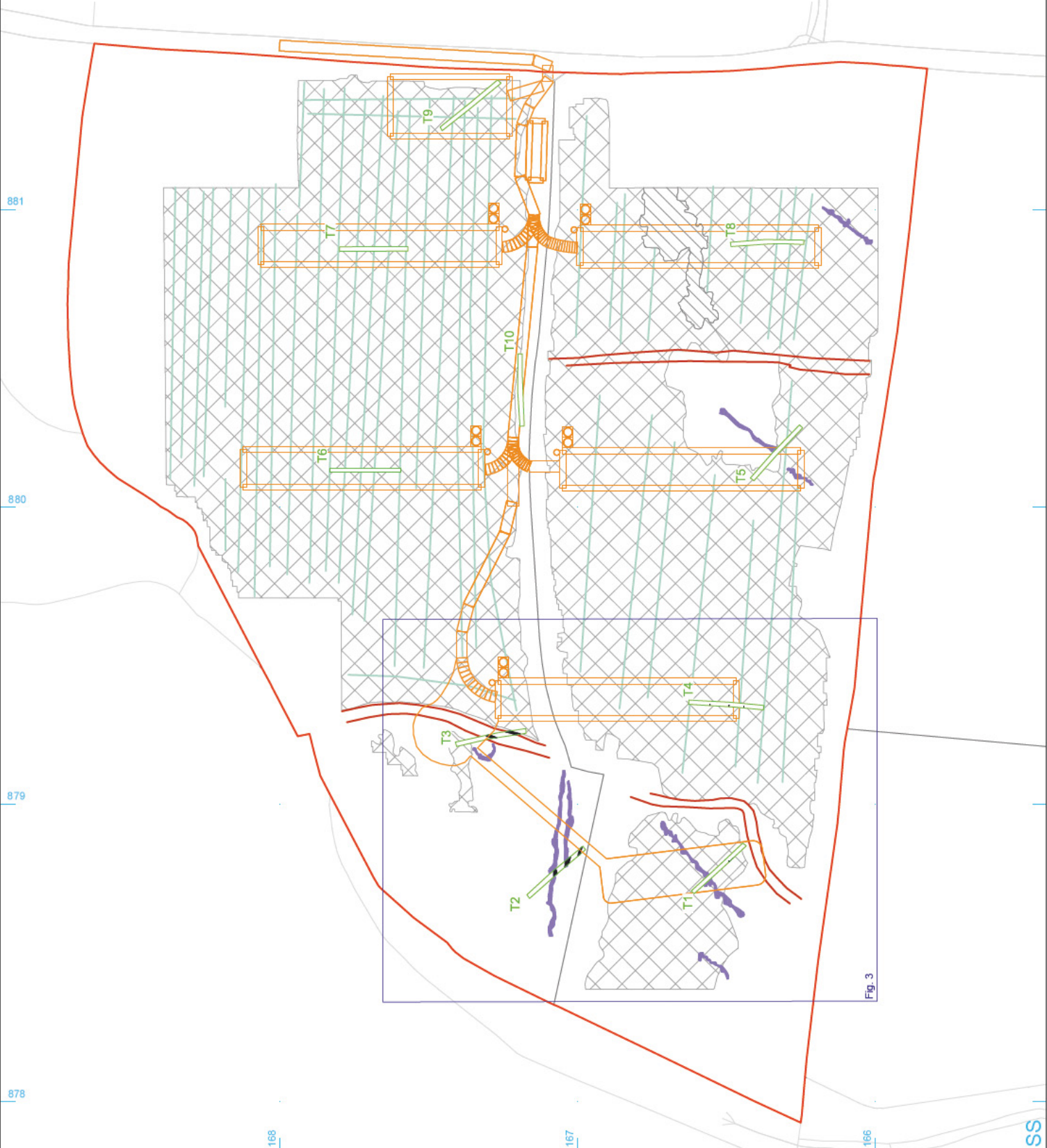
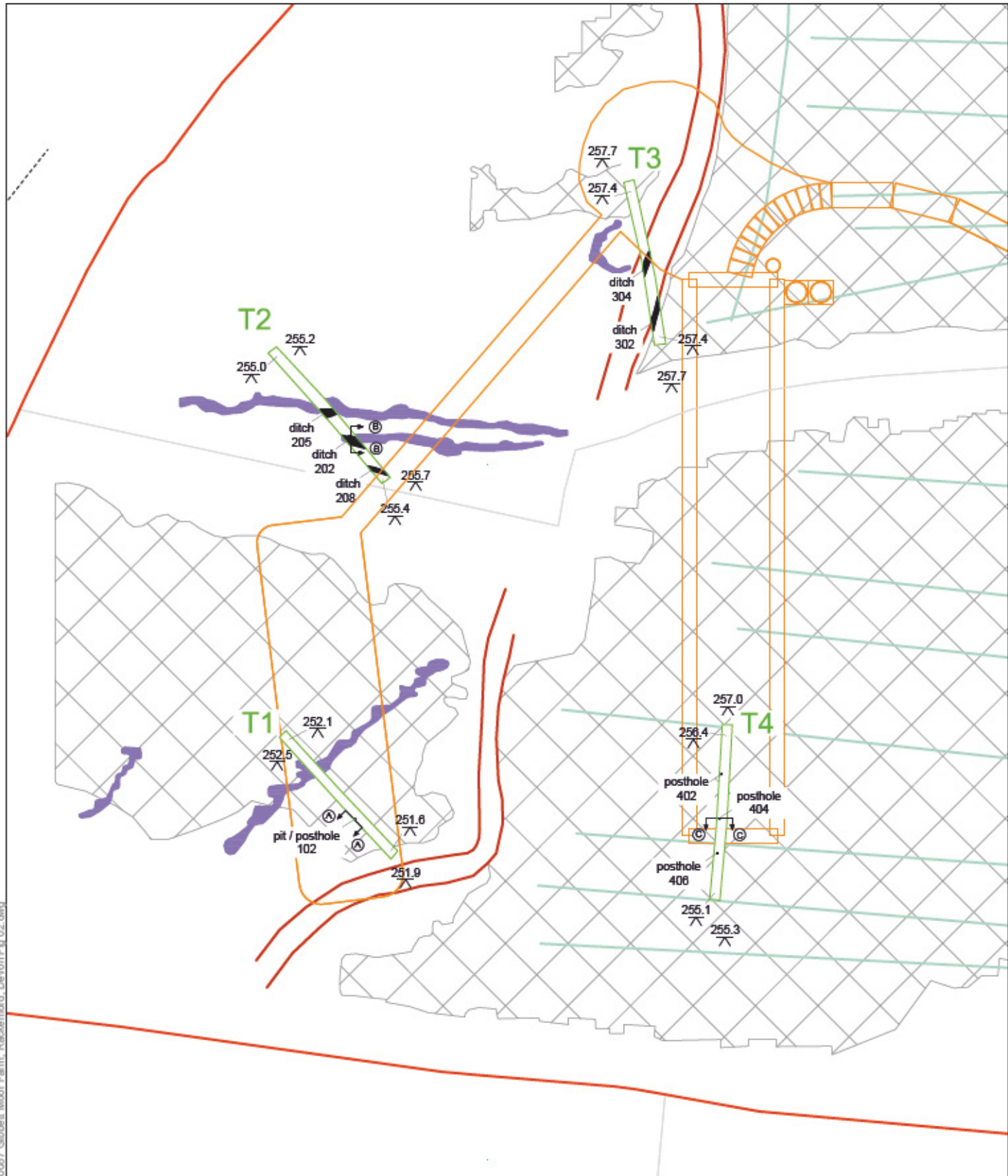


Fig. 3

C:\Users\jasm\Documents\GIS\temp\A\publish_59281830087_Gibbet Moor Farm, Rackenford, Devon.Fig.02.dwg



- site boundary
 - development area
 - evaluation trench
 - archaeological feature
 - section location
- 0 25m

- ### Geophysics Key (AOC Archaeology Group) 2015
- Linear trend (field boundary)
 - Linear trend (agriculture)
 - Possible archaeology
 - Disturbed area (modern?)
 - Disturbed area (geology?)
 - Survey area
 - Proposed development area



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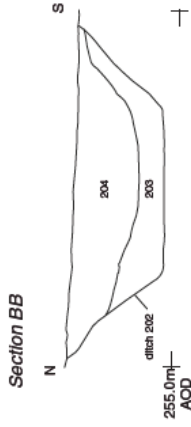
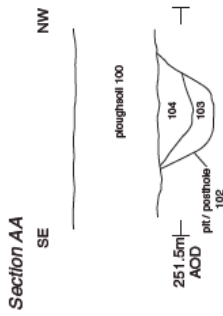
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PROJECT TITLE
 Gibbet Moor Farm, Rackenford, Devon

FIGURE TITLE
 Trenches 1 - 4 showing archaeological features and geophysical survey results

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APPROVED BY	JO	SCALE	A4 1:750		3

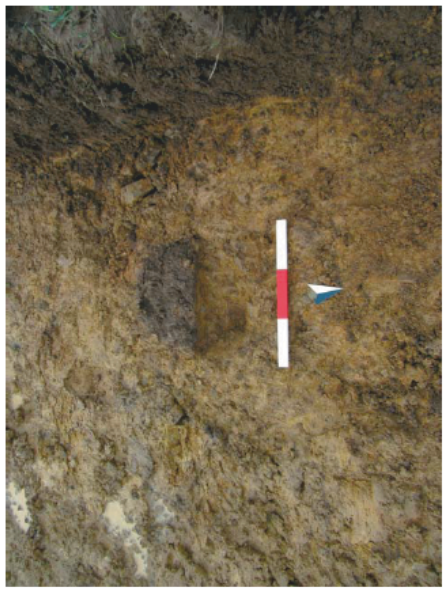
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Pit/posthole 102, looking south-west (scale 1m)



Ditch 202, looking east (scale 1m)



Posthole 404, looking south (scale 0.3m)

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PROJECT TITLE
Gibbet Moor Farm, Rackenford, Devon

FIGURE TITLE
Trenches 1, 2 and 4 sections and photographs

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