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**Land at Holmes Mill
Burgh by Sands
Carlisle, Cumbria**

Archaeological Watching Brief

Report No. Y159/14

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**Land at Holmes Mill
Burgh by Sands
Carlisle
Cumbria**

Archaeological Watching Brief

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Summary

An archaeological desk-based assessment and watching brief was undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd on behalf of Ian Hodgson on land at Holmes Mill, Burgh on Sands, Carlisle, Cumbria during May 2014. The desk-based research identified two HER sites along with medieval ridge and furrow in the surrounding fields. A watching brief was undertaken in an area 25m × 60m to the south of the Holmes Mill complex prior to the construction of two agricultural buildings. A ditch identified as part of an enclosure recorded as a cropmark (HER No. 9758) was excavated along with a large pit, though no finds were recovered and these features remain undated.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of an archaeological desk-based assessment and watching brief by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) on behalf of Ian Hodgson undertaken during May 2014, ahead of development on land at Holmes Mill, Burgh by Sands, Carlisle, Cumbria. The development is for two new agricultural buildings. All work was undertaken in accordance with a specification issued by the Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service (CCCHES) and a Written Scheme of Investigation (May 2014) prepared by CFA Archaeology. The CFA code and number for the project is HOMM/2180.

1.1 Site Location and Description

The site is to the north of Burgh by Sands, just to the south of the Holmes Mill building complex (Fig. 1, NGR NY 33668 61070). It is located on a pasture field which has been disturbed by machinery and livestock. It is bordered in the west by Powburgh Beck and in the east by a road. To the south of the site is another pasture field lying at a lower level. The development area measured 25 × 60m, and was relatively flat with a slight rise towards the north.

The geology of this area consists of ‘Sherwood Sandstone Group – red, yellow and brown sandstone, part pebbly; subordinate red mudstone and siltstone’ with superficial deposits of Devensian Glaciofluvial Deposits, namely sands and gravel (BGS 2014).

1.2 Archaeological and Historical Background

Prior to the watching brief no intrusive archaeological fieldwork is known to have taken place within the proposed development area or in the immediate surrounding area. The site lies 2.5km northeast of Burgh by Sands which is rich in remains relating to the Romano-British period, including the Roman Frontier World Heritage Site, Hadrian’s Wall (scheduled monument) and Burgh Roman Fort, which have been the subject of several investigations.

Documentary research of the site and the surrounding area show that there are no sites of known pre-medieval date recorded in the HER within the 500m buffer of the proposed development area, though there are several fields which show evidence of ridge and furrow associated with medieval and post-medieval farming practices.

An undated enclosure cropmark (HER 9758) passes through the development area. This cropmark is thought to represent the remains of a ditch surviving below ground that formed part of possible prehistoric enclosure.

The remaining site identified in the HER is the original 'Holmes Mill' building of Victorian date (HER 10662).

1.3 Project Objectives

In accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (May 2014), prepared by CFA Archaeology Ltd, and the recommendations by Jeremy Parsons; the general objective of the project was to conduct a watching brief during all groundbreaking works in order to identify the presence/absence, character and quality of any archaeologically sensitive deposits which may lie within the development area.

The specific aim of the watching brief was to evaluate a cropmark feature, possibly indicating the presence of an enclosure identified from aerial photographs (HER No. 9758).

2. WORKING METHODS

2.1 Monitoring

The project was monitored by Jeremy Parsons of the Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service (CCCHES), who was kept informed of developments on site.

2.2 Desk-based Research

The following sources were consulted:

- Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Record (HER) for sites, find spots or monuments within the proposed development area or within a 500m buffer zone around the proposed development area, as well as aerial photographs and relevant secondary documentary sources;
- Internet sources were consulted for information relating to general background, listed buildings and other heritage resources within the study area.

The bibliography contains a list of all sources consulted, including online resources and unpublished reports.

2.3 Watching Brief

All machining was undertaken using a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Topsoil was removed completely by machine down to the top of natural subsoil or the first significant archaeological horizon, whichever was encountered first. Stanchion holes were located along this southern edge; three were targeted for machine excavation to identify the presence/absence, character and quality of any archaeologically sensitive deposits in this area.

The linear feature (004) was sample excavated at 10% of its length and a minimum of 1m per section at regular intervals. No finds were recovered. Intersections were investigated to establish relationships between features. The weather conditions during fieldwork were bright

and sunny, and archaeological visibility was poor. Pit 011 was sampled at 50%, although western extent could not be completely exposed due to unstable, built-up material at ground level.

All archaeological remains were recorded by means of photographs, drawings and written records conforming to IfA standards (1994b) and CFA's quality manuals. All features were planned and drawn in section at an appropriate scale (normally 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50). The photographic record consists of accurately recorded digital photographs.

2.4 Standards and Guidance

CFA Archaeology is a registered organisation (RO) with the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA). All work was conducted in accordance with relevant IfA Standards and Guidance documents (1994a and 1994b and 2001), English Heritage guidance (Campbell et al. 2011), and CFA's standard methodology.

A summary of the results of archaeological works will be submitted for inclusion in OASIS (ref. cfaarcha1-179606)

2.5 Archiving

The project archive, comprising all CFA record sheets, finds, plans and reports, will be prepared to current guidelines (IfA 2001 and Brown 2011) ensuring the proper transfer of ownership. The project report shall include an index to the site archive and all digitally generated data. The archive will be retained by CFA until being deposited at a suitable repository.

3. DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

3.1 Cartographic Sources

A selection of Ordnance Survey maps were examined. No significant development has appeared to have taken place within the proposed development area during the modern period. Development and expansion can be seen from the 1974-1978 Ordnance Survey Post-WWII 1:10,000 Cumberland Map onwards until present day, with continued addition of buildings in the field west of the original Holmes Mill building, just north of the proposed development.

3.2 HER sites

Figure 2 shows the location of all cultural heritage sites within the 500m buffer around the proposed development area, these are listed in the gazetteer (Appendix 1).

Holmes Mill (10662) lies in the northwest corner of the field to the east of the proposed development. It includes a T-shaped set of buildings dating to the Victorian era.

An enclosure cropmark (9758) exists in the same field, orientated north-south, before turning west along the south edge of the adjacent field within the proposed area of development. The cropmark is thought likely to represent the remains of a ditch surviving below ground that

formed part of field system or settlement; though the date is unknown it is possibly prehistoric. This has been identified from an aerial photograph in the Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Record.

Ridge and furrow attributed to the medieval and post-medieval periods have been identified in the surrounding fields.

There have been a number of previous archaeological investigations within Burgh by Sands itself, with the majority taking place in the south, in the area of Hadrian's Wall scheduled monument, confirming the presence of significant archaeological remains of Roman date.

4. RESULTS

A full list and description of contexts comprises Appendix 2. Tables listing all photographic and drawn records form appendices 3 and 4, with appendices 5 and 6 forming environmental tables.

A total area of 25 × 60m was stripped and monitored over the location of the cropmark enclosure identified from aerial photographs (Figs 2 and 3 and Plate 1). Ground to the north and south was also stripped as part of the development; there were no features recorded in these areas apart from a few tree boles.

A ditch was recorded, which corresponded to the enclosure cropmark (9758) identified from aerial photographs (Figs 2 and 3). Ditch 004 was exposed to a length of 60m and was orientated east-west, the full length of the proposed development, and was relatively linear. Four sections were placed along its length, which revealed the ditch to be between 1.24 and 1.34m wide and 0.53 and 0.6m deep. Generally its sides were shallow in the upper part of the ditch with a noticeable break in slope to form steeper sides down to a very slight concave base.

Primary and secondary fills were recorded along the length of Ditch 004 (Fig. 4 and Plate 2). The primary fill ranged from a firm, mid-light brown-grey, sandy silt (005) with frequent sub-rounded stone inclusions (0.04-0.6m) in the east, to a moderately firm, mid grey-orange silty sand (010) with an increasing gravel content towards the west. The secondary fill (006) was much more uniform and consisted of moderately firm, mid grey-brown sandy silt with frequent sub-rounded (0.04-0.6m) stone inclusions. No finds were found in any of the sections, though a environmental samples were taken (005) to assess the environmental potential of the ditch.

A pit (011) was recorded in the west of the stripped area, almost abutting Ditch 004 to the north, but there was no physical relationship between the two features (Fig. 5). The pit was found to contain fills with an apparent similar formation processes as Ditch 004. The primary fill (012) consisted of light grey sandy-silt with abundant gravel inclusions and a sterile, yellow-red sandy lens to the west (Fig. 6). The secondary fill (013) was yellow-brown sandy silt with abundant stone inclusions. The silt component decreased as the fill neared the cut edge, making it very difficult to define in plan; the cut interface was very gravelly throughout the pit, blurring the horizon between it and the surrounding natural (003), but investigations showed that it was approximately 3.6m long, north-south by more than 2.1m with a depth of 1.2m (Plate 3).

Along the southern extent of the site three deposits (007-009) were identified within a possible channel. The full extent of these deposits went beyond the limit of excavation; however, three stanchion holes were investigated (Plate 4), which showed very sterile, brown-grey, silty sand (009) with infrequent stone inclusions measuring 0.06-0.08m underlying organic, black-grey, sandy silt with common stone inclusions, mixed with sandy lenses (007). These two deposits were present in all three stanchion holes, but a third clay deposit (008) was also present in the east, partially overlying Deposit 007.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

By Mhairi Hastie

5.1 Methodology

Three bulk soil samples were processed through a system of flotation, the floating debris (flot) was collected in a 250 μ m sieve, and once dry, scanned using a binocular microscope; the remaining material in the tank (retent) was washed through a 1mm mesh and sorted for any archaeological significant remains.

The results are tabulated in Appendix 6 and summarised below.

5.2 Results

The quantity of archaeological significant material recovered from the samples was extremely low and poorly preserved. The quantity of material recovered is not sufficient to allow meaningful discussion.

Cereal grain: A small poorly preserved fragment of what appears to be a cereal grain was recovered from the fill of pit (011). Only a small section of the grain survives and it could not be identified to species level.

Hazelnut shell: Fragments of hazelnut shell were recovered from all three samples; in all cases the amount of nutshell recovered was low (no more than 3 fragments per sample) and the nutshell was much abraded. None of the nutshell would be suitable for AMS dating.

Charcoal: Wood charcoal was recovered from all of the samples in varying quantities. The largest quantities of charcoal being recovered from an organic deposit (007). Initial examination of the charcoal suggests that it consists principally of small scrubby species, such as hazel, alder and birch. Samples 1 and 3, from deposit 007 and the fill of pit (011) respectively, contain sufficiently large enough fragments for AMS dating, if required.

5.3 Recommendations

- No further work is recommended for the cereal grain and hazelnut shell.
- Identification of the wood species present would need to be carried out prior to submission for AMS dating.

6. DISCUSSION

The single ditch, orientated east-west, corresponds with the cropmark enclosure identified by aerial photography. In the photograph, the cropmark extends east into the field adjacent to the site and then turns north where it appears to become a double-ditch, with a second north-south linear cropmark running parallel to the east. No secondary enclosure ditch was recorded within the site. Historic maps to 1868 show the site as being largely undeveloped, and existing as a large open field. This suggests that this ditch is likely to pre-date the modern era, and might possibly date to the Roman or Prehistoric periods given its form and the large amount of Romano British and prehistoric activity in the wider area. However, no dating evidence was recovered from the ditch during the watching brief.

It is possible that ditch (004) was broadly contemporary with the large pit (011) to the north given the similarities in the fills and the forms of the cuts. However, again no dating evidence was recovered.

7. CONCLUSION

The archaeological evaluation undertaken at land on Holmes Mill, Burgh by Sands, Cumbria confirmed the presence of a possible enclosure ditch, as shown on aerial photographs, as well as a single pit, of possible Roman or Prehistoric date, though no artefacts were recovered from these features. It is notable that the ditch was located on the higher ground of the sands and gravel, above the wetter low lying mosses and bogs which is a common feature in the archaeological landscape of the area (EH 2005).

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Cartography

1868 Ordnance Survey Pre-WWII 1:10,560 Cumberland Map

1900 Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 Cumberland Map

1925 Ordnance Survey Pre-WWII 1:2,500 Cumberland Map

1957 Ordnance Survey Post-WWII 1:10,560 Cumberland Map

1971 Ordnance Survey Post-WWII 1:2,500 Cumberland Map

1974-1978 Ordnance Survey Post-WWII 1:10,000 Cumberland Map

APPENDICES 1-6

Appendix 1: Gazetteer of HER Sites within 500m Buffer

HER No.	Name	Source	Period	NGR
9758	Holmes Mill Enclosure Cropmark	Cropmark	Unknown – prehistoric/Romano British	333749 561245
10662	Holmes Mill	Roofed Building	Post-Medieval – Victorian	333737 561238

NMP No.	Name	Source	Period	NGR
10850	Ditch	Cropmark	Unknown – prehistoric/Romano British	333749 561245

Appendix 2: Context Summary

Context no.	Fill of	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Discussion
001		Across site		c.0.2	Topsoil: moderately firm, mid brown-grey silty soil with very little inclusions. Heavily disturbed by machinery and livestock, contains a lot of animal waste.
002		Across site		Trace-0.15	Subsoil: moderately firm, mid grey-brown silty, sand mix, increasing in depth from east to west
003		Across site			Natural: firm, mid orange-red, gravel and sand mix; ranging from light orange-yellow sand to mid orange-red gravels/
004		>60	1.24-1.34	0.53-0.6	Cut of Ditch: steep-sided linear with definitive break in slope in sides down to a slight concave base. Slight wiggle in its east end but generally orientated east-west. Corresponds to HER 9758 cropmark.
005	004	>20	1.09	0.39	Primary fill of east part Ditch 004: firm, mid-light brown-grey sandy silt with frequent sub-rounded stone inclusions measuring 0.04-0.06m, with larger stones located towards the base of the fill. Lenses of ferrous sand diffuse within fill. Only found in the east extent of the ditch.
006	004	>60	1.24-1.34	0.14-0.2	Secondary fill of Ditch 004: moderately firm, mid grey-brown sandy silt with frequent sub-rounded stone inclusions measuring 0.04-0.06m. Less of a silt component than fill 005
007		>30	>3	0.2	Organic deposit: moderately firm, mid black-grey sandy silt with common stone inclusions, overlies 009, underlies 008. Slightly mottled with sandy lenses.
008		>20	>2	0.2	Clay deposit: firm, light grey silty clay with infrequent stone inclusions, overlies 007.
009		>20	>3	0.44	Sand deposit: moderately loose, light brown-grey silty sand with infrequent stone inclusions measuring 0.06-0.08m, very sterile, underlies 007.
010	004	>50	1.03-1.1	0.38-0.42	Primary fill of west part Ditch 004: moderately firm, mid grey-orange silty sand with abundant sub-angular, irregular stone inclusions measuring 0.03-0.08m. Far more gravelley than 005 with lenses of ferrous sand.
011		c.3.6	>2.1	1.02	Cut of Pit: Sub-oval pit with shallow sided rim, with sides becoming steep to meet a concave base. Orientated north-south, located just north of ditch 004. Horizon clarity at the upper interface is very clear, not visible on surface.
012	011	<3.6	>1.2	0.68	Primary fill of Pit 011: firm, light grey, sandy silt with abundant sub-angular-sub-rounded, irregular, small-medium stone inclusions. Very gravelley deposit, especially towards the base of pit. Contained very sterile, mid yellow-red sand lense in its west side.
013	011	c.3.6	>2.1	0.49	Secondary fill of Pit 011: moderately firm, mid yellow-brown, sandy silt with frequent stone inclusions, becomes increasingly more gravelley towards the natural, making horizon very unclear.

Appendix 3: Photographic Register

Number	Contexts/description	Facing	Conditions
1	Pre-excavation shot of site location	NW	Good/Overcast
2	Working shot, exposing Ditch 004	W	Good/Sunny
3	Pre-excavation shot of Ditch 004	W	Good/Sunny
4	Pre-excavation shot of Ditch 005	E	Good/Sunny
5	Location shot of tree bole and Ditch 004 Section 1	E	Good/Overcast
6	West-facing section of Ditch 004 Section 1	E	Good/Overcast
7	East-facing section of Ditch 004 Section 1	W	Good/Overcast
8	West-facing section of Ditch 004 Section 1	E	Good/Overcast
9	East-facing section of Ditch 004 Section 2	W	Moderate/Overcast
10	Location shot of Stanchion Holes (spray painted yellow)	W	Good/Sunny
11	East-facing Section of Ditch 004 Section 2	W	Good/Sunny
12	West-facing section of Ditch 004 Section 2	E	Poor/Sunny
13	Mid-excavation shot of west-facing section of relationship slot through Ditch 004 and Pit 011	E	Good/Overcast
14	East-facing section of Ditch 004 Section 4	W	Poor/Sunny
15	West-facing Section of Stanchion Hole Test Pit 1	E	Moderate/Sunny
16	West-facing Section of Stanchion Hole Test Pit 2	E	Moderate/Sunny
17	West-facing Section of Stanchion Hole Test Pit 3	E	Moderate/Sunny
18	East-facing Section of Ditch 004 Section 3	W	Moderate/Sunny
19	West-facing Section of Ditch 004 Section 3	E	Moderate/Sunny
20	Post-excavation Shot of Ditch 004	E	Moderate/Sunny
21	North-facing Section of Pit 011	S	Moderate/Sunny
22	Pit 011	SW	Moderate/Sunny

Appendix 4: Drawing Register

Drawing	Sheet	Scale	Plan / Section	Description/contexts
1	1	1:10	Section	West-facing section of Ditch 004 Section 1
2	1	1:40	Plan	Plan of Ditch 004 Section 1
3	1	1:10	Section	East-facing section of Ditch 004 Section 2 (undercut)
4	1	1:40	Plan	Plan of Ditch 004 Section 2
5	1	1:10	Section	East-facing section of Ditch 004 Section 4
6	1	1:40	Plan	Plan of Ditch 004 Section 4 and Pit 011
7	1	1:10	Section	West-facing section of Stanchion Hole Test Pit 3
8	2	1:10	Section	East-facing section of Ditch 004 Section 3
9	2	1:100	Plan	Plan of southern deposits and Stanchion Hole Test Pits
10	2	1:40	Plan	Plan of Ditch 004 Section 3
11	2	1:10	Section	North-facing Section of Pit 011
12	2	1:10	Section	West-facing section of relationship slot of Ditch 004 and Pit 011

Appendix 5: Sample Register

Sample	Context	Fill of	Type	Volume (l)
1	7		Bulk	20
2	5	004	Bulk	30
3	12	011	Bulk	10

Appendix 6: Composition of samples

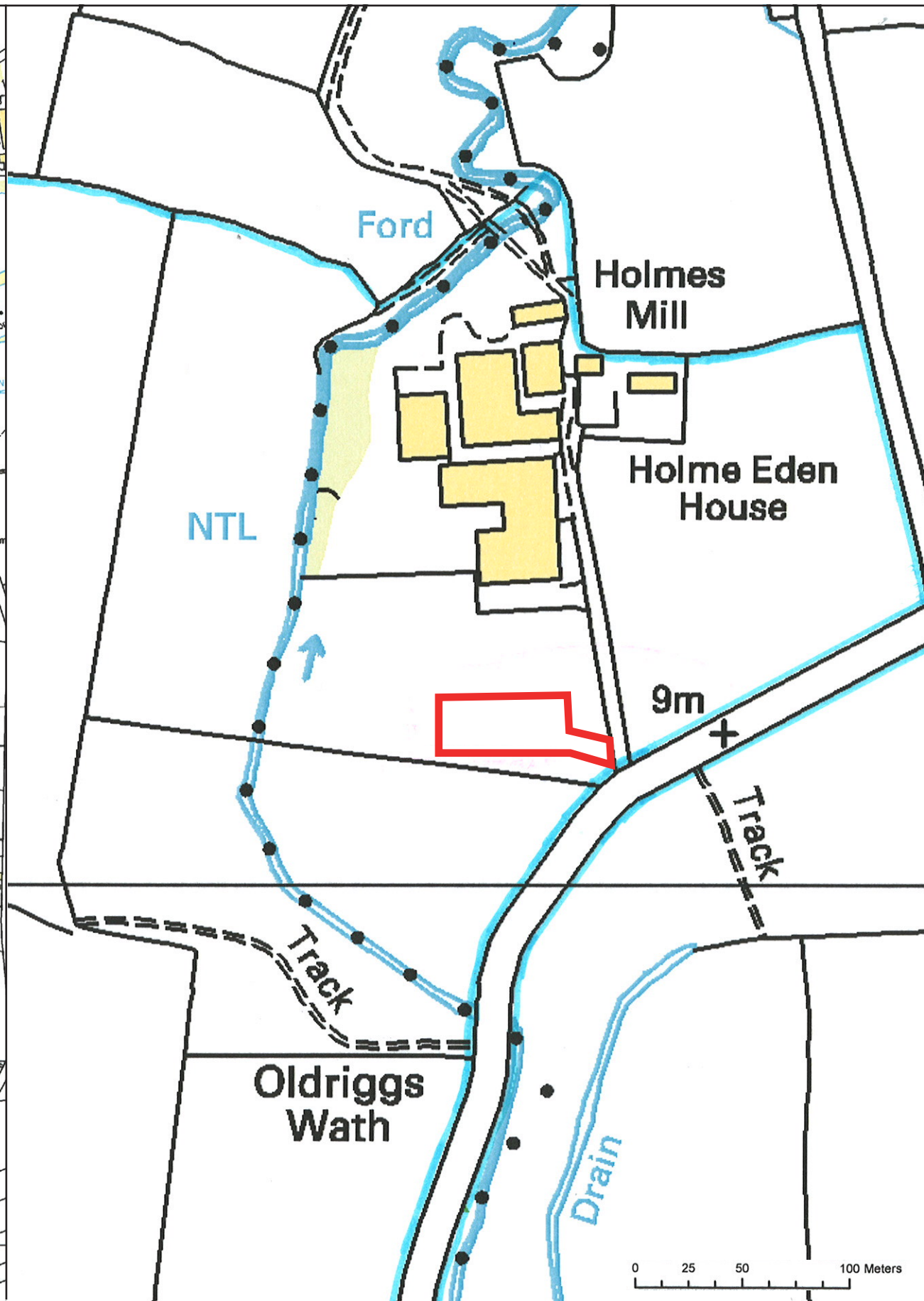
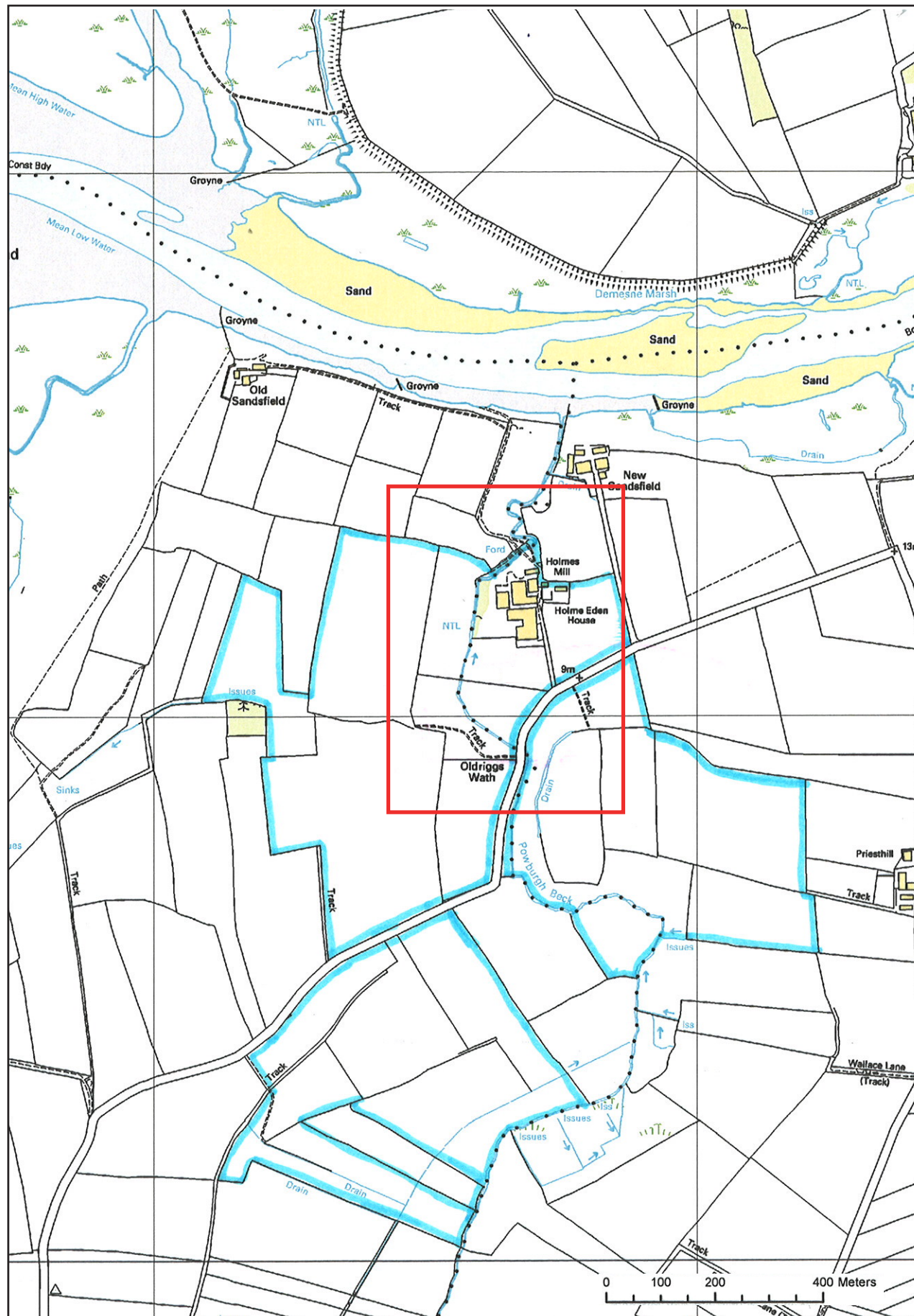
Sample no.	Context No.	Sample description	RETENTS					FLOTS			
			Sample vol (litres)	Slag	Nutshell	Charcoal		Flot vol (ml)	Cereal grain	Charcoal	Comments
						Qty	AMS				
1	007	Organic deposit	20	++	+(SF)	++++	*	40		++++	
2	005	Primary fill of Ditch (004)	30		+(SF)	++ (SF)		20		+(SF)	Flot largely modern root debris
3	012	Primary fill of Pit 9011)	10		+(SF)	+(SF)	*	20	+(1 x frag)	+(SF)	Flot largely modern root debris

Key: + = rare (1-10 items), ++ = occasional (11-50 items), +++ = common (51-100 items) and ++++ = abundant (>101 items)

SF = small fragments (<5mm in dia.)

VSF = very small fragments (<2mm in dia.)

FIGURES 1 – 6



Key

Trench Location



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Fig. No: 1 Report: Y159/14

Title
 Site Location and trench layout

Project
 Land at Holmes Mill
 Burgh by Sands, Carlisle
 Cumbria
 Archaeological Watching Brief

Client
 Ian Hodgson

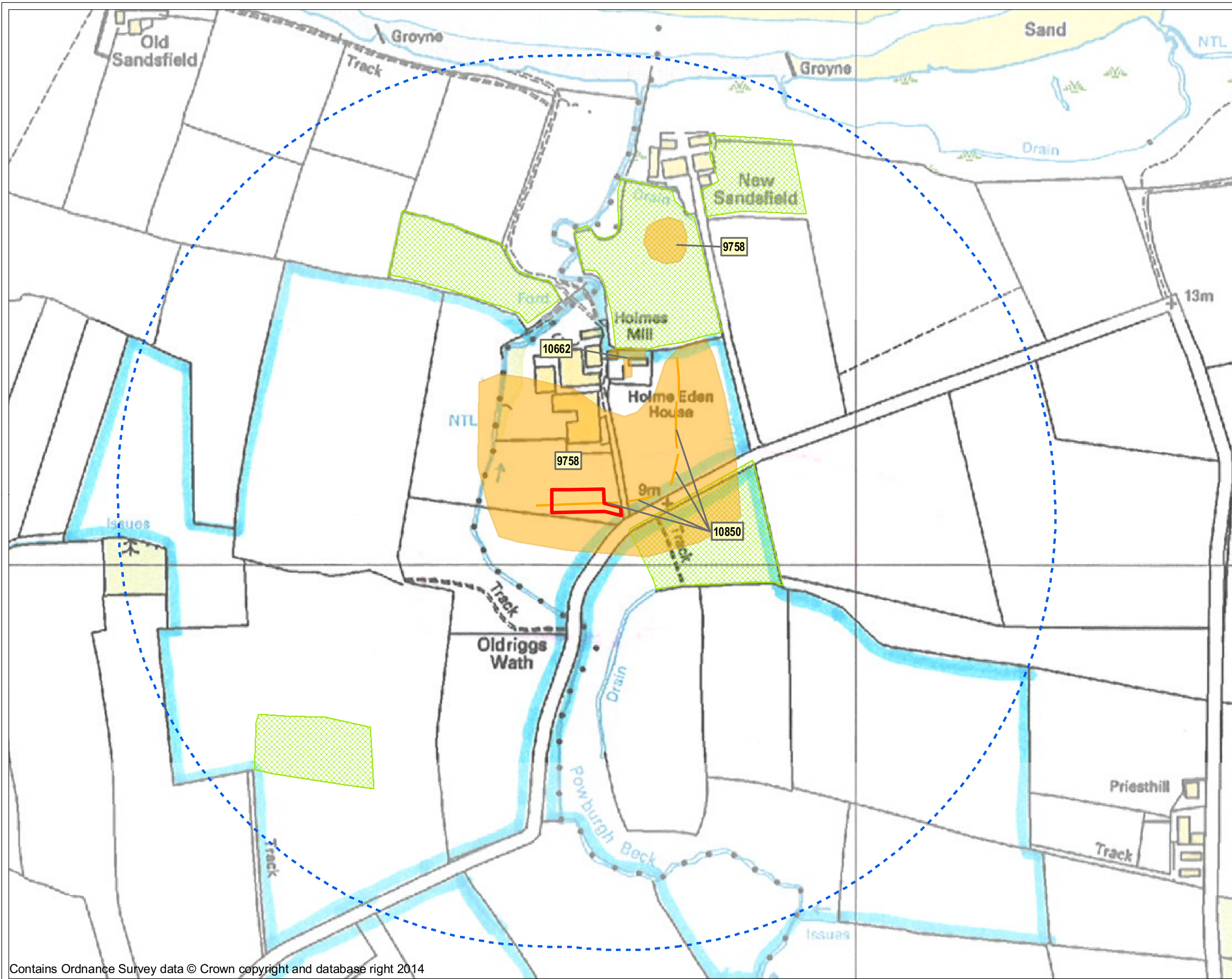
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Key:

- Trench Location
- - - 500m Buffer
- Ditch 10850
- HER Sites
- Ridge and Furrow



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Fig. No: 2 Report No: Y159/14

Title:
 HER sites within 500m buffer

Project:
 Land at Holmes Mill
 Burgh by Sands,
 Carlisle, Cumbria
 Archaeological Watching Brief

Client:
 Ian Hodgson

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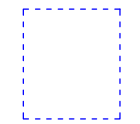
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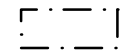
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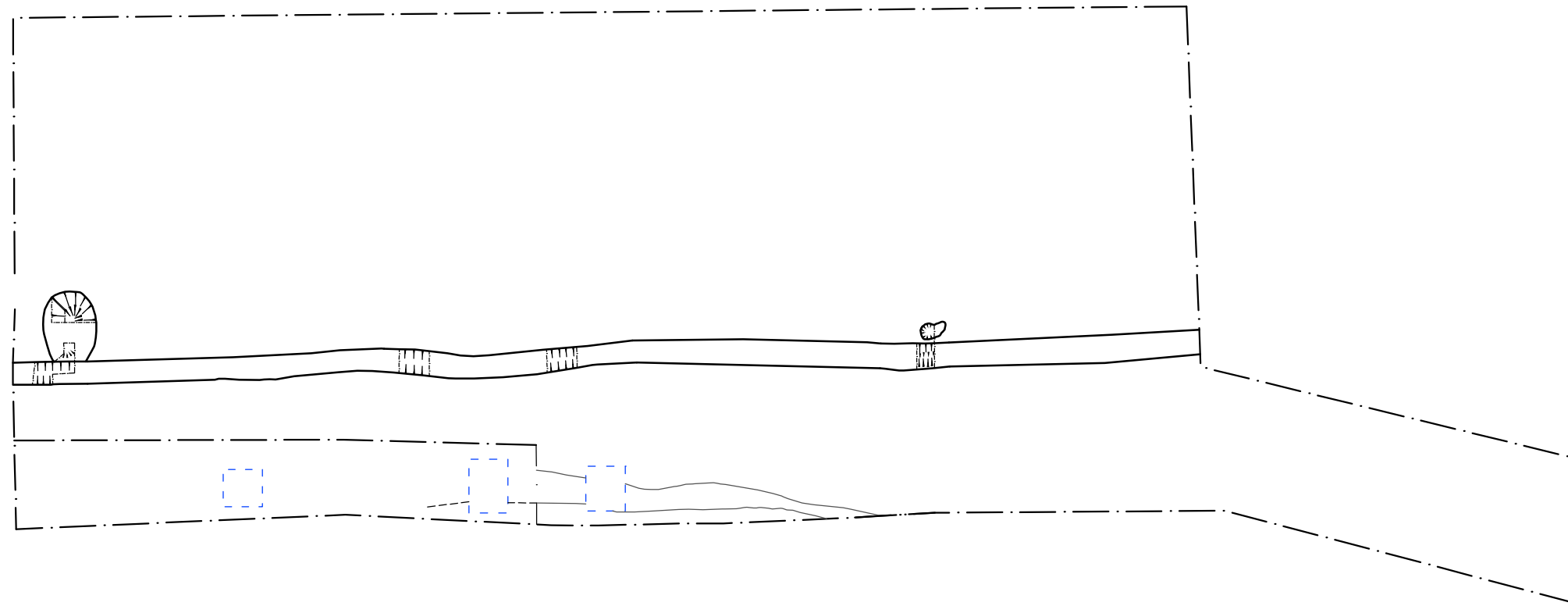
Key:



Stanchion holes



Area stripped



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Fig. No: 3 Report No: Y159/14

Title:
Site Plan

Project:
**Land at Holmes Mill
Burgh by Sands, Carlisle
Cumbria
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Client:
Ian Hodgson

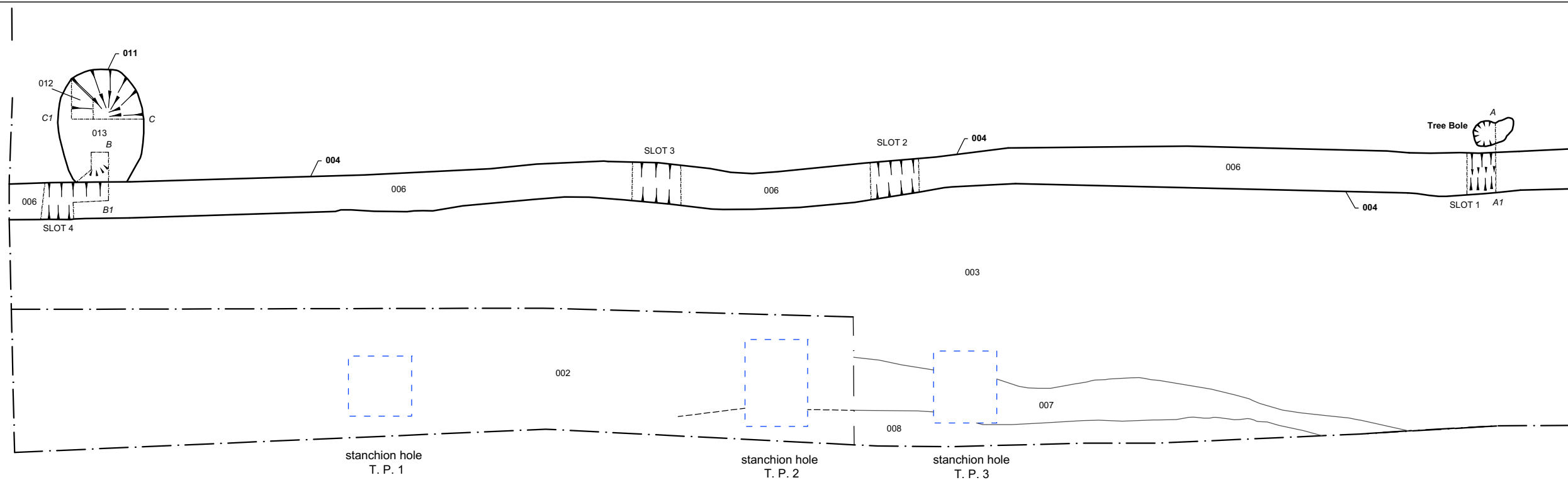
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Key:

Fig. 4 - West-facing section of Slot 1 of Ditch 004

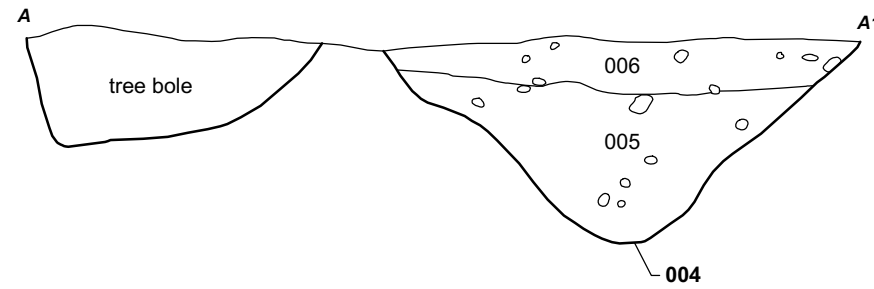


Fig. 5 - West-facing section showing relationship between Pit 011 and Ditch 011

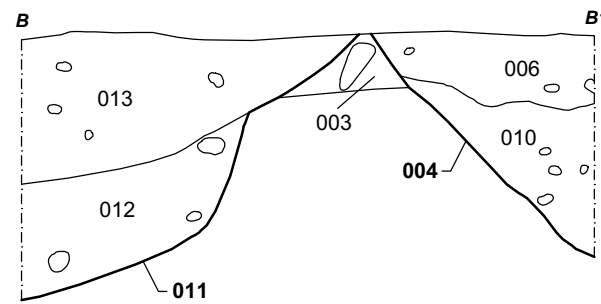
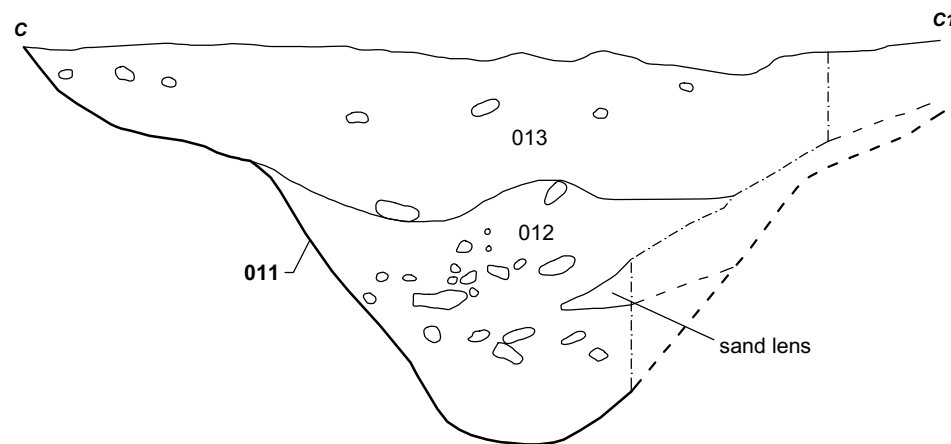


Fig. 6 - North-facing section of Pit 011



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Fig. No:	4-6	Report No:	Y159/14
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Title:
Sections

Project:
**Land at Holmes Mill
 Burgh by Sands, Carlisle
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 Archaeological Watching Brief**

Client:
ABCD

Scale at A3:
1:20



Drawn by:	Checked:	Date:
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PLATES 1-4



Plate 1 - Ditch 004



Plate 2 - West-facing section of Slot 1 of Ditch 004



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Plate 3 - North-facing section of Pit 011



*Plate 4 - West-facing section of Stanchion Hole 2 showing deposits **007-009** in the south of site.*



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