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12 Main Street Mursley New house: Archaeological evaluation

Report No. MK089/17

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12 Main Street Mursley
New house: Archaeological evaluation
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1. SUMMARY

CFA Archaeology Ltd carried out an archaeological evaluation for Mr Ken Grimsdell for the demolition of an outbuilding and erection of a detached dwelling with parking in the rear garden of 12 Main Street, Mursley, Aylesbury Vale District Council (SP 81794 28536). One trench was excavated revealing three modern features – presumably pet burials.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1. General

This document presents the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) on the 22th June on the development site (the Site) in the rear garden of 12 Main Street Mursley, Aylesbury Vale District Council (Fig.1, SP 81794 28536). The work was commissioned by Mr. Ken Grimsdell.

2.2. Planning Background

The Buckinghamshire County Council's Archaeological Planning Officers issued planning condition no. 10 (planning ref AVDC 16/03862/APP) for the work.

The work was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) dated 15th June 2017, covering this programme of works produced by CFA Archaeology Ltd and approved by Buckinghamshire County Council's Planning Archaeologist.

2.3. Background

The Site is located in Mursley, south of Milton Keynes. The Site lies within the historic core of the village of Mursley which was a medieval market village where markets and fairs were held from the thirteenth century. The Site lies at the junction of Main Street and Cook Lane (Fig. 1). Main Street is the principal thoroughfare through the village and Cooks Lane leads east from it from a junction near to the church. The Site is located roughly in the centre of Mursley Conservation Area and east of the church of St Mary the Virgin (Fig. 3).

Mursley lies in an area of boulder clay and morainic drift over Oxford Clay and Kellaways Beds (www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/index.html). An archaeological evaluation at Manor Farm immediately north of the Site found the local drift geology to be gravel.

2.4. Archaeological Background

A 500m search of HER data was requested from Bucks CC (Fig. 2). The approved Written Scheme of Investigation summarises the archaeological finds in this area as follows:

Neolithic

A polished flint axe was found in a field on the south side of Mursley (MBC13269 / EBC12958)

Iron Age

In 2001 on the east side of the village watching brief by Archaeological Services and Consultancy during topsoil stripping in advance of trenching for pipeline found three Iron Age pits (EBC16226). In 1999 in the same area, magnetic susceptibility and magnetometry surveys were carried out by Oxford Archaeotechnics on behalf of Anglian Water along route of proposed new trunk main from Mursley to Swanbourne and Mursley to Drayton Parslow (EBC16184, EBC16191).

Roman

A Roman coin, Follis of constantine II, 337-341 AD was found Mursley infant School.

Medieval

Mursley is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 as 'Musley' (MBC24616). Various charters survive showing that Mursley held fairs and markets from the 13th to 15th centuries and these are thought to have been held where the Main Street widens, north of the church (MBC23058). There are also charters relating to Luffield Priory's holdings in Mursley (MBC7530, MBC7530, locations not shown in fig 2). St Mary the Virgin parish church (1288706 / MBC10769,) is a Grade II* Listed Building and clearly has medieval origins. Though the tower is 14th-15th century, the main part of the building was rebuilt in the 19th century. The site of a medieval cross in churchyard was noted in 19th century (MBC10770). Circling the village are remains of medieval and post-medieval ridge and furrow cultivation in the fields around Mursley; the closest to the development lies just 80m to the south-east around Cedars Farm.

South of the village is a Scheduled Monument about 80m west of Cedars Farm, a moated site (1018667 / MBC1761) with the island measuring a square roughly 22m x 22m.

In 2003 an archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Manor Farm by Archaeological Services and Consultancy. A number of trenches were opened across the farm area. Trenches 5 and 6 lay immediately north of the current proposed development and each revealed single undated post hole cut into the gravel. To the east of the entrance into the farm from Cooks Lane was Trench 7 which revealed the base of an undated very shallow north-south linear gully. Trench 8 to the east of this found a shallow sub-circular feature 0.4m in diameter. The features in Trenches 5, 6 and 8 were thought to possibly derive from rooting rather than having an anthropogenic origin.

To the north of Manor Farm in the centre of the village, trial trenching carried out in 2005 by Northamptonshire Archaeology located a large sub-circular steep-sided pit possibly 2m in diameter and 0.56m deep, with unidentifiable animal bone fragments, burnt clay and sherds of late 10th to 11th century pottery in the lower fill. The pit which was close to the existing street frontage, may have been deliberately back-filled soon after construction. An undated spread of cobbles was also identified. Evidence of post-medieval activity included disturbed layers with building debris and 17th century pottery, and a possible track-side ditch or hedgeline (MBC23710 / EBC16550).

Post-medieval

Eleven listed buildings other than the church are scattered along the high street, all Grade II listed, and most of them 17th century with timber frames though some have 16th century origins and one is 19th century (1214253 / MBC15670, 1214310 / MBC15675, 1214309 / MBC15674, 1288746 / MBC15669, 1288665 / MBC15673, 1288747 / MBC3228, 1214082 / MBC15667, 1214308 / MBC3229, 121429 / MBC15672, 1288745 / MBC15668). A Tudor brick wall is also listed (1214308 / MBC3229) immediately west of the development.

Three gold guineas of Charles II, found were in a small, oval-shaped brass box, by men grubbing at the root of a tree, in 1858 (MBC5631/2/3) though their exact location was not recorded. A post-medieval coin was also found by metal detecting about 80m south-east of the development (MBC29151).

A large sand / gravel extraction pit is shown to the south-west of Mursley along church lane on the 19th century OS maps (MBC23118). Another possible extraction pit can be seen to the north as a hollow on the early OS maps (MBC23111).

A possible garden is shown north of the rectory on the 1st edition 6 inch OS map (MBC21846).

The church has various monuments commemorating parishioners who died serving in WWI and WW2 (MBC32996, MBC32999, MBC32982).

2.5. Objectives

The aims of the evaluation were to:

- To investigate the evidence for and origins of the different phases of land use and enclosure within the area, including any evidence for pre-Roman, Roman, Saxon, medieval and postmedieval activity;
- To place the results of the investigation within the wider landscape context and contribute to an understanding of the pattern of land use;
- Using the spectrum of environmental techniques appropriate for this aspect of investigation, an attempt will be made to model the landscape and its transformation brought about by the settlement's inhabitants and due to natural events.
- To enable an informed decision to be made regarding the future treatment of any archaeological remains and consider any appropriate mitigation measures to be undertaken either in advance of and/or during development.

3. WORKING METHODS

3.1. General

CFA Archaeology Ltd follows the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct, Standards and Guidance.

3.2. Trenching

One trench measuring 10.5 by 1.6m was excavated in the central part of the Site as stated in the WSI.

3.3. Excavation and Recording Strategy

Topsoil was removed by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision.

Trench was planned with a Trimble Geo7X RTK GPS unit accurate to 8mm horizontally and 12mm vertically. All the features were sample-excavated by hand. The character, composition and general depositional sequence of the site stratification were recorded on pro-forma sheets, with a unique context number being allocated to each distinct deposit and feature. A full photographic record comprising digital images was made. General views were taken to place the site in context, as well as specific features.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

4.1. General

The location of the trench is shown in Fig. 1 and a summary is contained in Appendix 1. Illustrations and photos referred to in the text can be found at the back of the report. An overview of the trench is presented below, followed by the descriptions of trenches containing features. Archaeological context numbers are shown in brackets.

4.2. Trench Descriptions

Only topsoil was present, directly overlying natural sediments (Fig. 4). Topsoil (0101) was composed of dark grey loamy garden soil, often mixed with fine gravel, occurring in local natural sediments (0103).

Trench 1 measured 10.5 m by 1.6m and was excavated on aNW-SE alignment. The trench was excavated on natural slight slope; hence the depth of the trench varied from the W to the E side of the trench. The depth of topsoil was a consistent 0.25m except for the SE end of the trench, which

was levelled under the entrance way. There were no signs of former ploughing on the Site.

Three square modern features were found, all of them containing skeletons of dogs (Figs. 5-6).

5. DISCUSSION

Although the Site was located in the centre of the historical village and within a 16th century garden wall which is grade II Listed Building (MBC3229), no archaeological remains were found. The three pet burials had clean rectangular cuts in plan and were visibly cut from the level of the topsoil. No datable material was recovered from the features..

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The evaluation has not revealed any significant archaeological remains. Natural sediments directly underlay relatively thin topsoil.

Despite the location of the Site in the historical core of the village, within a 16th century wall, no remains of historical importance would be endangered by the future development.

7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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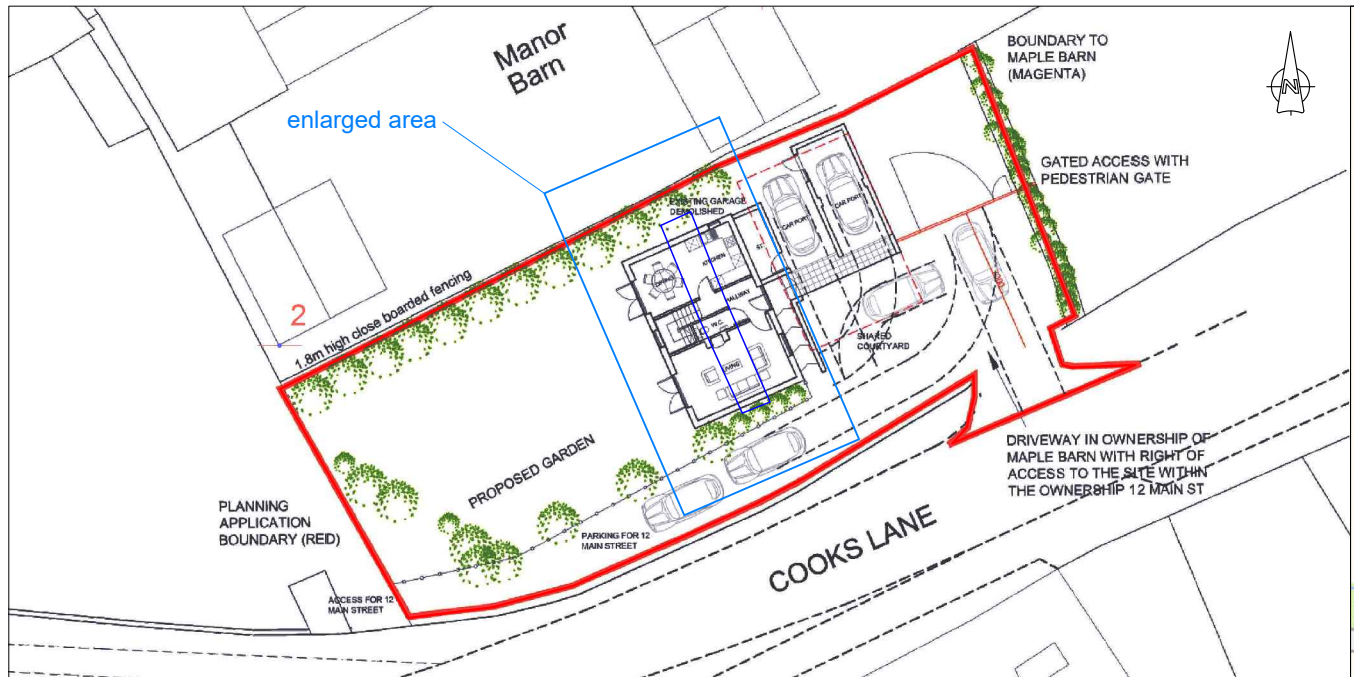
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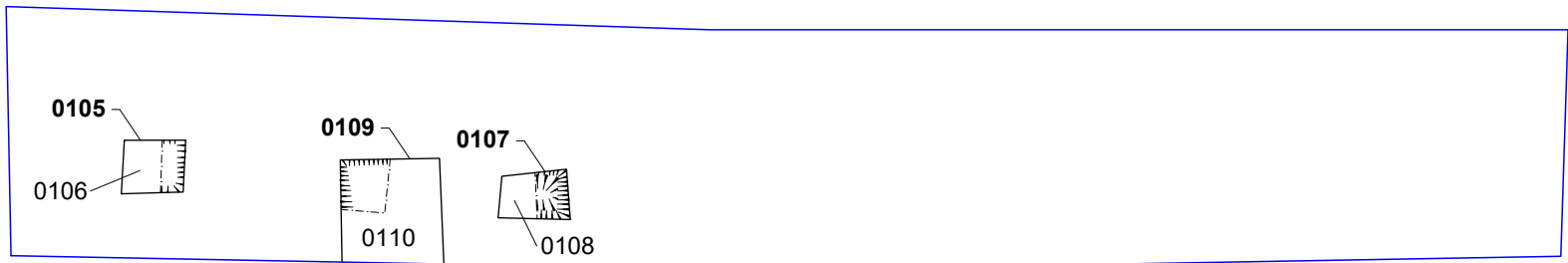
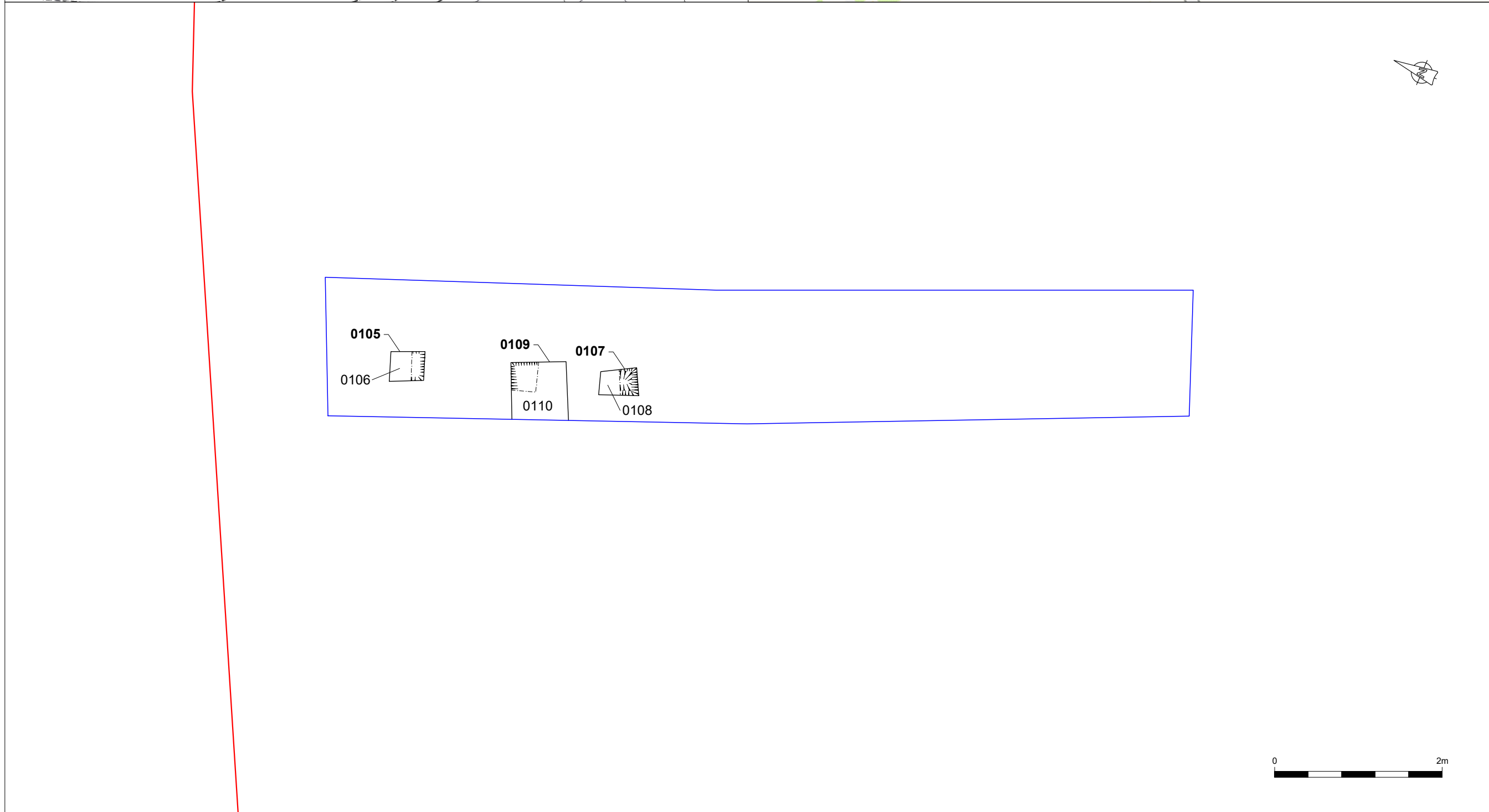
APPENDIX 1: Trench Summary

Trench 01		Trench Size 10.5 x 1.6m
Trench depth 0.25-0.66m	Topsoil depth 0.22-0.58m	Subsoil depth -
<i>No archaeology, except three pet burials</i>		



Key:

- Site Boundary
- Trench Outline



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Title:
Site location and trench plan

Project:
12 Main Street Mursley New house: Archaeological evaluation

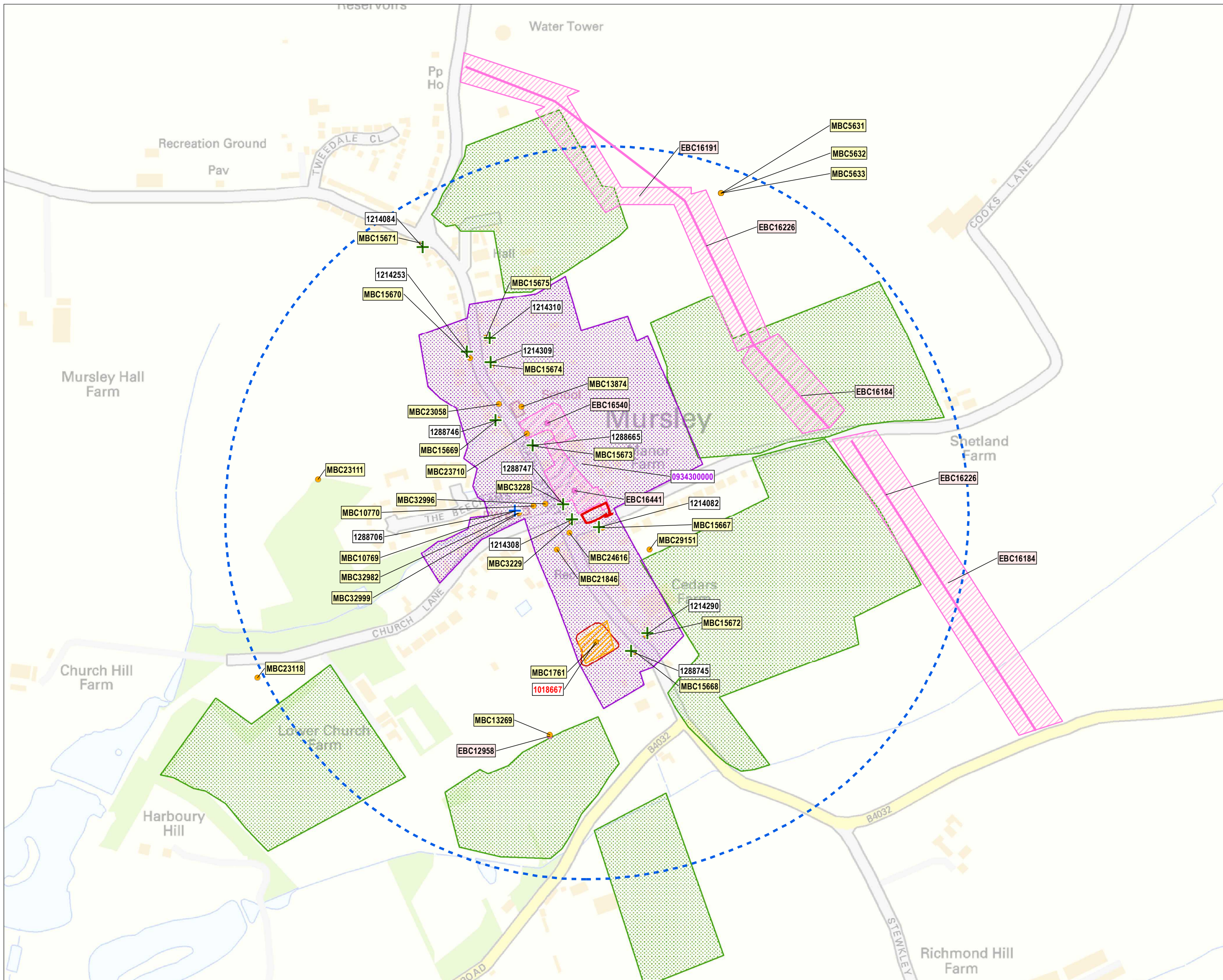
Client:
Mr Ken Grimdsell

Scale at A3:
1:50

Drawn by: MP	Checked by: SW	Date: 05/07/2017
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Key:

- Site Boundary
- Scheduled Monument
- + Grade II* Listed Building
- + Grade II Listed Building
- HER Site (point)
- Medieval moat recorded in field survey
- HER Event (point)
- HER Event (linear)
- HER Event (area)
- Ridge and Furrow surviving in 1995 (area)
- Archaeological Notification Area

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Title:
Heritage assets within 500m of the development site

Project:
12 Main Street Mursley New house: Archaeological evaluation

Client:
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Scale at A3:
1:4,849

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Fig. 3 - General shot of the Site



Fig. 4 - General shot of Trench 01, from the NW

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Fig. 5 - Post-ex of modern feature 0106, from the SE



Fig. 6 - Post-ex of modern feature 0108, from the SE

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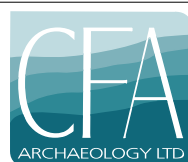
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Fig. 7 - Post-ex of modern feature 0110, from the W

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