Land at Trevilley Farm Lane, Newquay, Cornwall

NGR SW 83687 59648

Results of a Strip, Map and Sample Excavation

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On behalf of
Aardvark EM Ltd

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archaeology

LAND AT TREVILLEY FARM LANE, NEWQUAY, CORNWALL

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CONTENTS

List of figures

List of plates

Summary

An archaeological strip, map and sample excavation for a solar farm on land at Trevilley Farm Lane, Newquay, Cornwall, was undertaken by AC archaeology during June and August 2011. The site lies to the southeast of Hendra Holiday Park, less than 1km southeast of Newquay, on agricultural land that lies between 39-41m aOD.

A geophysical survey carried out by Stratascan Ltd identified a number of possible archaeological features located within the application area, including a rectilinear enclosure with a possible associated trackway in the north-west part of the site, and a linear feature in the middle and southern part of the site. The investigation comprised the machine-excavation of five areas (Areas A-E) within the proposed site to target these features.

Excavation of each of the five areas showed a layer sequence comprising topsoil, over subsoil onto clay and shale natural subsoil, present at depths of between 0.24-0.48m below ground level. The investigation has established the presence of the rectilinear enclosure targetted by Area E, although the possible associated trackway to the west of the enclosure and targetted by Areas A and B was not present. The enclosure measured approximately 20m along the north-south axis and comprised two linear ditches that measured between 1.06-1.10m wide by 0.14m deep. No finds were recovered, although a single struck flint recovered from Area B to the west may suggest a prehistoric date. A pair of parallel linear features was also present within Area C. These likely represent flanking ditches either side of a former post-medieval hedgebank boundary.

1. INTRODUCTION (Fig. 1)

1.1 An archaeological strip, map and sample excavation associated with the construction of a new solar farm on land at Trevilley Farm Lane, Newquay (SW 83687 59648), was undertaken by AC Archaeology during June and August 2011. The work was commissioned by Aardvark EM Ltd on behalf of Hendra Holiday Park. The location of the site is shown on Fig. 1.

1.2 The development comprises the installation of a network of 900kWp Solar PV modules for the generation of electricity. The solar arrays are connected to inverter housing and an 11kVa cable, which lead to an off-site substation.

1.3 The development covers an area of 4.8ha and lies to the southeast of Hendra Holiday Park, less than 1km southeast of Newquay. The site is situated between 39-41m aOD and is currently used as agricultural land. The underlying geology of the area comprises Interbedded Slate and Sandstone from the Meadfoot Group (British Geological Survey website).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 A geophysical survey of the proposed application site and surrounding area had previously been undertaken by Stratascan Ltd. The results indicated the presence of a number of ring ditches, enclosures with associated features and linear anomalies across the whole of the survey area. Within the application area itself, a single rectilinear enclosure (*c.* 20m x 30m) with a possible associated trackway was identified adjacent to the north-west boundary of the site, while a north-east to south-west aligned linear feature also crosses the eastern part of the site. The probable trackway corresponds with the route of a path shown on the 1881 Ordnance Survey 1st edition 25-inch map and it is still visible as an earthwork. It may be associated with the nearby Post-Medieval mining site. The enclosure appears to be aligned upon the trackway

and may therefore be associated with the trackway. The linear feature in the eastern corner of the site comprises part of a more extensive system of linear features that appear to be related. They may represent the remains of an extensive early field system, potentially of later prehistoric or Roman date.

3. AIMS

3.1 The principal aim of this investigation was to preserve by record any archaeological features present which will be damaged or destroyed by the development.

3.2 More specific aims were to:

- establish the presence/absence of the rectilinear enclosure and associated trackway, and the linear feature;
- determine the extent, condition, nature, character, date and significance of any hitherto previously unrecorded archaeological remains encountered;
- establish the nature of the activity of any hitherto previously unrecorded archaeological remains;
- to recover any environmental evidence from archaeological features;
- to identify any artefacts relating to the occupation or use of any hitherto previously unrecorded archaeological remains; and,
- to provide further information on the archaeology of Cornwall from any archaeological remains encountered.

4. METHODOLOGY (Figure 2)

4.1 The work was undertaken in accordance with a project design prepared by AC archaeology (Valentin 2011). Five parts of the site were examined. Areas A, B and E investigated the possible rectilinear enclosure and associated trackway adjacent to the northwest boundary of the site, whilst Areas C and D investigated the north-east to south-west aligned linear feature. The location of these areas is shown on Fig. 2. The width of each excavation areas measured 5m wide, while the full length of the excavation areas measured 10m (Area A), 45m long (Area B), 13m (Area C), 8m (Area D) and 25m (Area E).

4.2 In each area the removal of soil overburden to the level of natural deposits was carried out using a tracked 360^0 mechanical excavator fitted with a wide toothless bucket and working under constant archaeological supervision. The areas were then hand cleaned and recorded.

4.3 All deposits and features revealed were recorded using the standard AC Archaeology *pro forma* recording system, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and in accordance with AC Archaeology's *General Site Recording Manual, Version 1*.

5. RESULTS (Figures 3-4; Plates 1-3

5.1 Introduction

Ground reduction across the five areas comprised the removal of between 0.18-32m of mid brown friable silt clay topsoil (100), over between 0.02-0.30m of mid red-brown friable silt clay subsoil (101) onto natural subsoil (102). Natural subsoil comprised mid brown-yellow clay with shale (Plate 1). Two parallel linear ditches were exposed within Area C and two ditches were exposed at either end of Area E.

5.2 Area A

This area measured 5m by 10m and was excavated to a depth of 0.24m below ground level onto natural subsoil. The overlying layer sequence comprised 0.22m of topsoil over 0.02m of subsoil. No archaeological features or deposits were exposed and no finds recovered.

5.3 Area B

This area measured 5m wide by 45m long and was excavated to a depth of 0.27m below ground level onto natural subsoil. The overlying layer sequence comprised 0.22m of topsoil over 0.05m of subsoil. No archaeological features or deposits were exposed, although a single struck flint flake was recovered from the topsoil.

5.4 Area C (Fig. 3, Plate 2)

This area measured 5m by 13m and was excavated to a depth of 0.44m below ground level onto natural subsoil. The overlying layer sequence comprised 0.32m of topsoil over 0.12m of subsoil. Two parallel north-east to south-west aligned linear features (F104 and F106) were exposed. Feature 104 measured 2.70m wide by 0.40m deep with a gently-sloping north-western edge and a moderately sloping south-eastern edge. The feature contained a single mid brown silt clay fill (103). Feature 106, located 2m to the southeast of F104, measured 2.4m wide and had steeply-sloping sides. It contained a mid brown silt clay fill, which was not fully excavated. A single sherd of blue and white industrial china and an undiagnostic iron object were recovered from the fill of F104.

5.5 Area D

This area measured 5m by 8m and was excavated to a depth of 0.27m below ground level onto natural subsoil. The overlying layer sequence comprised 0.18m of topsoil over 0.09m of subsoil. No archaeological features or deposits were exposed and no finds recovered.

5.6 Area E (Fig. 4, Plate 3)

This area measured 25m by 5m and was excavated to a depth of 0.45m below ground level onto natural subsoil. The overlying layer sequence comprised 0.18m of topsoil over 0.27m of subsoil. Two roughly east-west aligned linear features (F108 and F110) were exposed. Feature 108 was located towards the northern end of Area E and measured 1.10m wide by 0.13m deep, Feature 110 was located towards the southern end of Area E and measured 1.06m wide by 0.14m deep, with moderate sloping sides and a broad, flat base. Both features had moderately, sloping sides with broad, flat bases, and contained identical light yellow-brown silt clay fills (107 and 109 respectively.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The investigation has confirmed the presence of the rectilinear enclosure identified in the geophysical survey, located within the north-western corner of the site. Hand-excavated segments through these features showed them both to be of similiar size with a consistent profile and containing a sterile light yellow brown silt clay fill. No associated features or deposits were exposed within the interior of the enclosure, and no finds were recovered from either the excavated spoil or from the linear features. A single struck flint flake recovered from the topsoil within Area B to the immediate west may suggest the enclosure ditch is of prehistoric date. The enclosure, measures just 20m by 30m long, which is much smaller than other excavated prehistoric and later rectangular enclosures in the lowlands of the South West (cf Griffiths 1994). The character of the enclosure has some comparisons with early Neolithic mortuary enclosures (cf Castle Hill in East Devon; Fitzpatrick *et. al.* 1999 23, 65-6 and wider discussion 213-216) although again the enclosure is at the smaller end of the range of excavated examples.

6.2 The nature of installation works within this area has been purposefully designed to avoid any impact on archaeological remains. This includes the construction of concrete pads for ground-mounted solar panels requiring the excavation of foundation pits measuring 2.20m² to a maximum depth of 0.20m below ground level. The archaeological remains observed during excavation of Area E were shown to be present at a depth of 0.45m below ground level, and so providing a buffer of around 0.25m. Groundworks associated with the excavation of the pits were, therefore, highly unlikely to impact upon archaeolgical features or deposits within the area.

6.3 The investigation has also established the presence of two parallel linear features exposed within Area C. These are likely to represent infilled flanking ditches of a former hedgebank field boundary and are likely to be post-medieval in date based on typology, finds recovery and map evidence.

6.4 The remaining geophysical anomalies targetted as part of this investigation, which included a possible trackway associated with the rectilinear enclosure and a linear feature, were not exposed during the site soil strip. The site soil strip was carried out under controlled conditions and the exposed surface was of good clarity. Any archaeological features, deposits or finds that might have been present would, therefore, have been identified during the work. These anomalies are therefore likely to be of geological origin.

7. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

7.1 The paper and digital archive and finds are currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ. They will be deposited at Cornwall County Museum, Truro, under the accession code TRURI:2001.39.

7.2 The OASIS (Online AccesS to the Index of Archaeological InvestigationS) number for this project is 105427.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The investigation was commissioned by Aardvark EM Ltd on behalf of Hendra Holiday Park. Site works were carried out by Chris Cain and Richard Sims, with the illustrations for this report prepared by Cain Hegarty.

9. REFERENCES

Published Sources

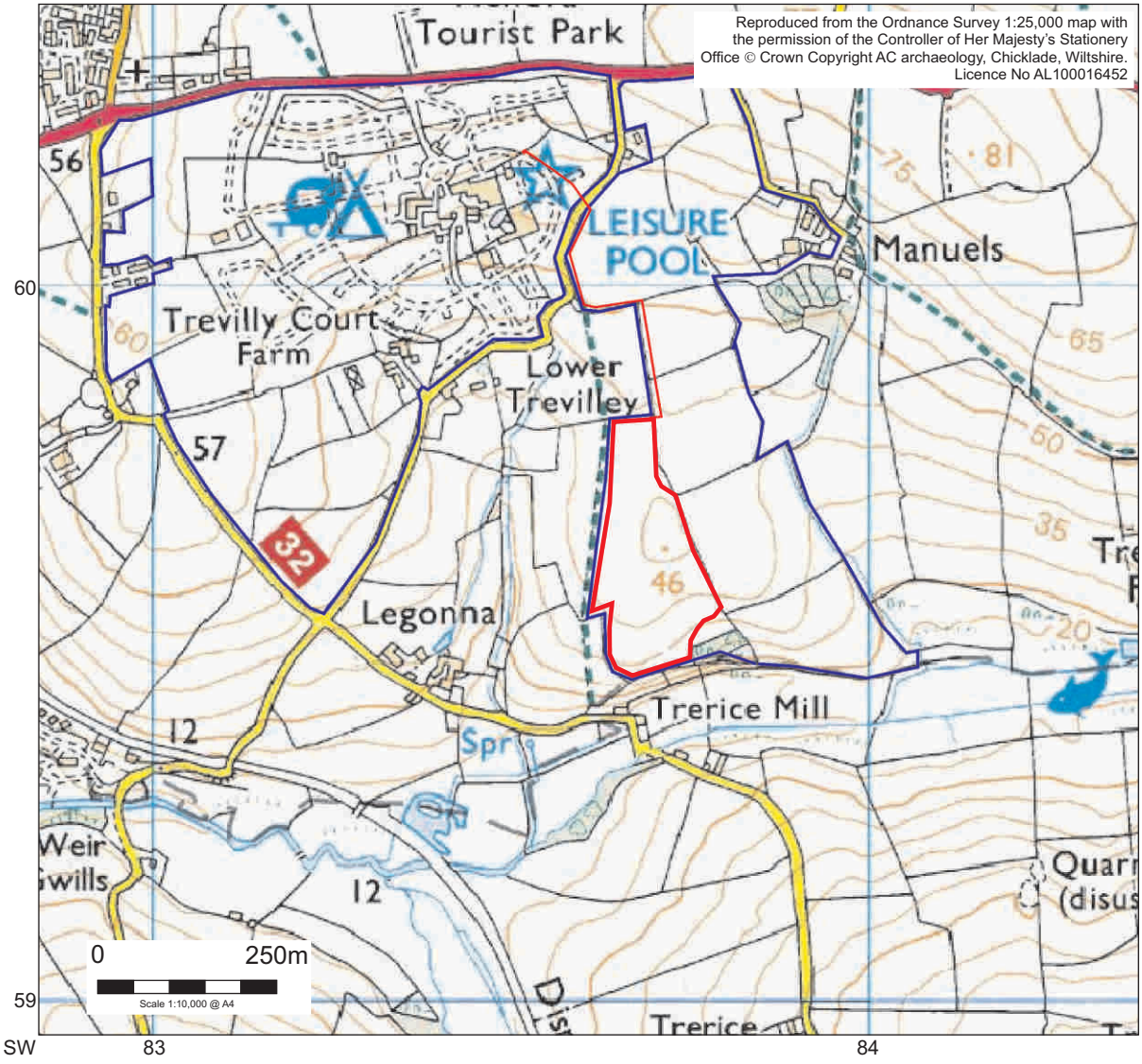
Fitzpatrick, A.P., Butterworth, C.A., and Grove, J. 1999 Prehistoric & Roman Sites in East Devon: the A30 Honiton to Exeter Improvement DBFO Scheme, 1996-9, *Wessex Archaeology Report Number* **16**.

Griffith, F.M. 1994 'Changing perspectives of the Context of Prehistoric Dartmoor', in *Proc. Devon. Archaeol. Soc.* **52**, 85-99.

Valentin, J. 2011 A Proposed Solar Farm on Land at Trevilley Farm Lane, Newquay, Cornwall, TR8 4PX, Project Design for an Archaeological Strip Map and Sample Investigation and Watching Brief, document number ACD328/1/2.

Internet source

British Geological Survey website, www.bgs.ac.uk/opengeoscience.



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Land at Trevilley Farm Lane, Newquay, Cornwall

TITLE

Fig.1: Location of site

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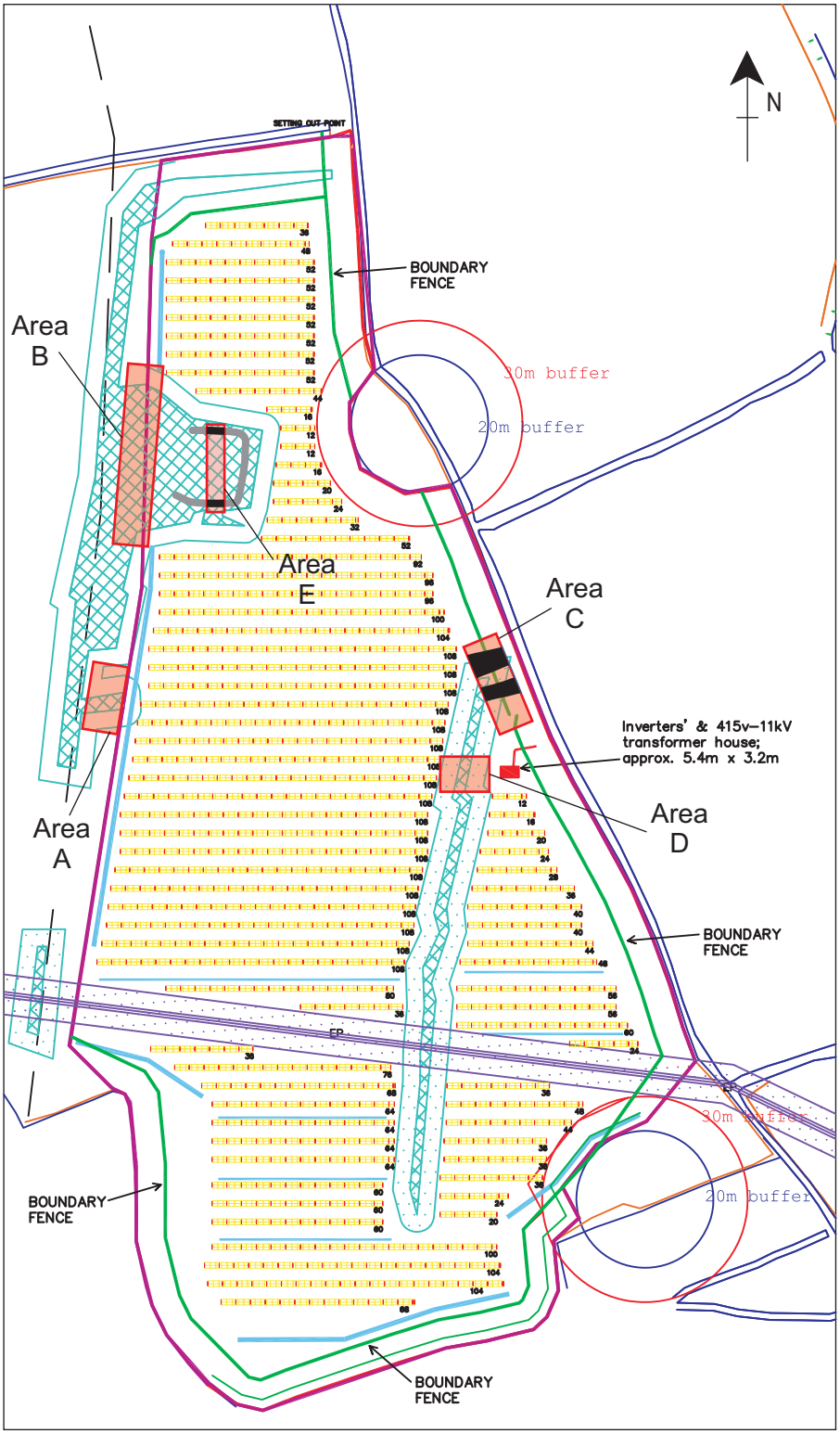

Areas of geophysical anomolies and identified features

Excavated strip map and sample areas and recorded features

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Land at Trevilley Farm Lane, Newquay, Cornwall

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Fig.2: Location of strip, map and sample areas

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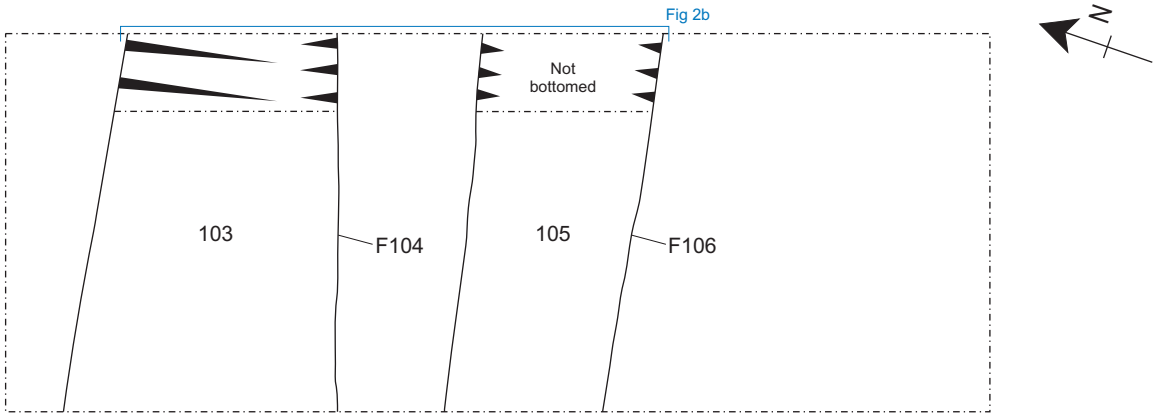
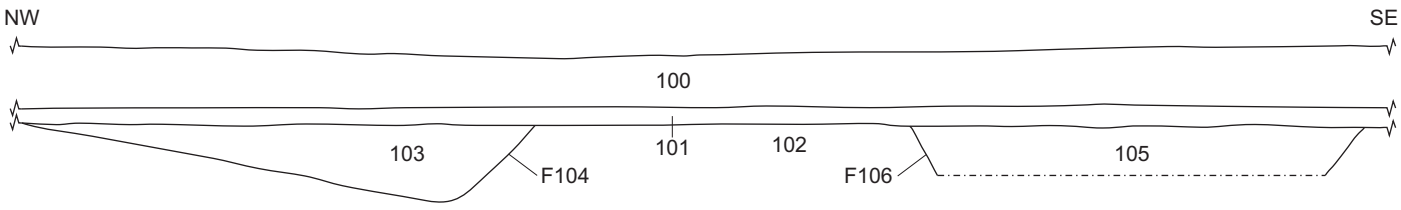
a) Plan of features F104 and F106, Area C



b) Section of features F104 and F106, Area C



0 Plan 5m

Scale 1:100 @ A4

0 Section 3m

Scale 1:50 @ A4

PROJECT

Land at Trevilley Farm Lane, Newquay, Cornwall

TITLE

Fig.3: Plan and section, features F104 and F106, Area C

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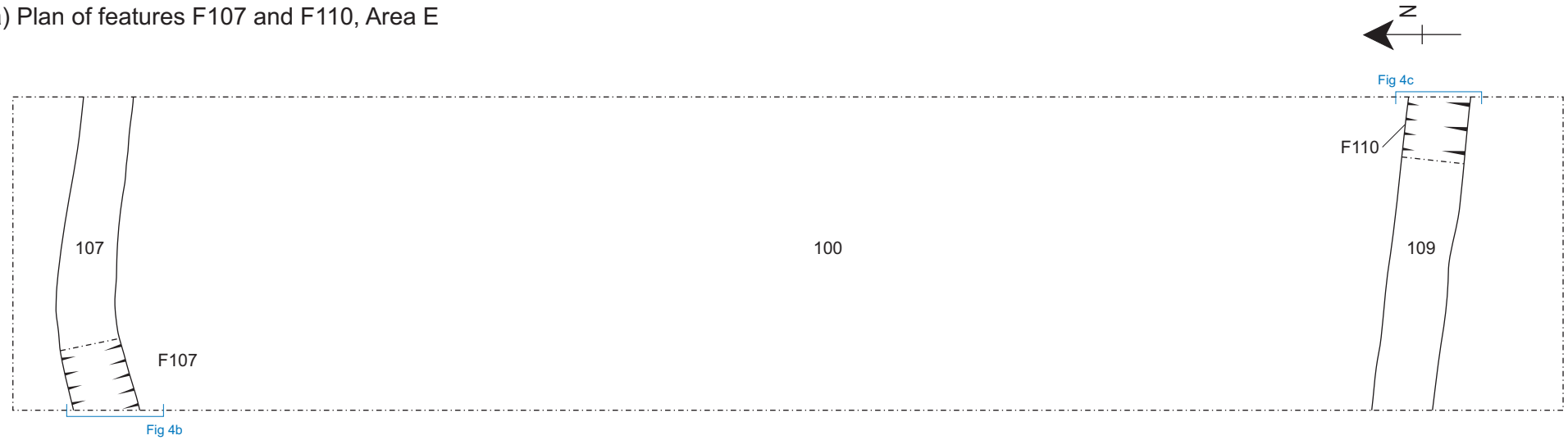
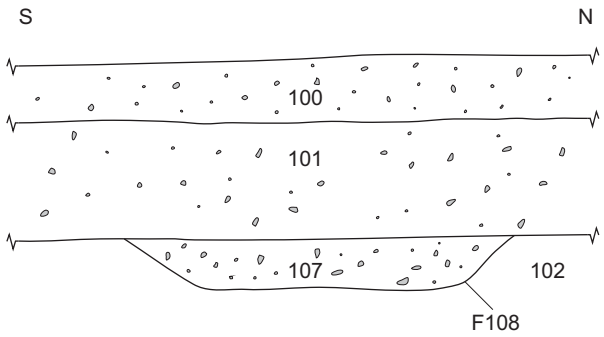
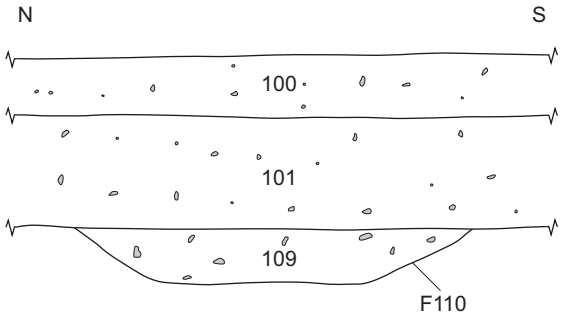
a) Plan of features F107 and F110, Area E

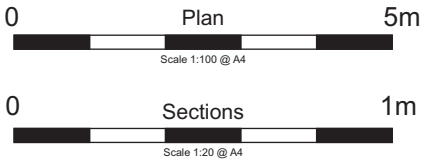


b) Section of feature F108, Area E



c) Section of feature F110, Area E





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Land at Trevilley Farm Lane, Newquay, Cornwall

TITLE

Fig.4: Plan and section, features F108 and F110, Area B

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Plate 1: General view of site, Area C, looking southeast. (Scale 1m)

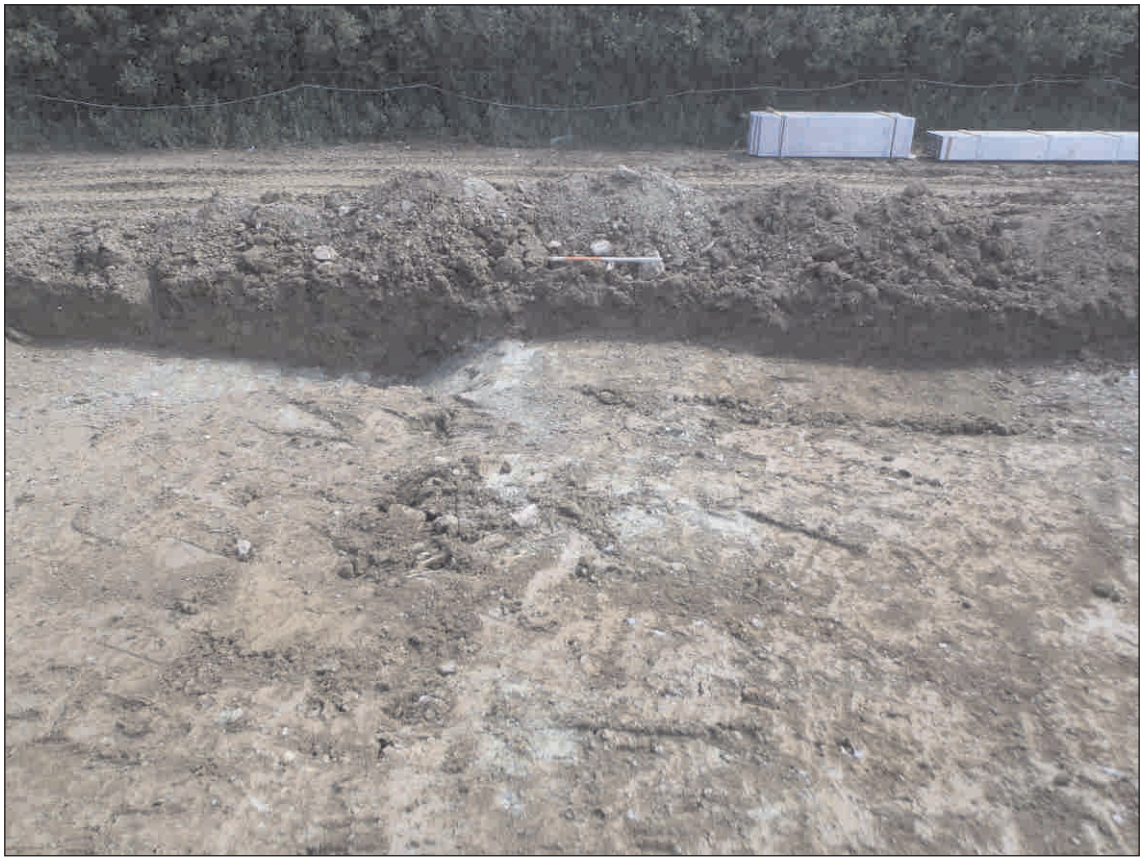

Plate 2: Linear features F104 & F106, Area C, looking northeast. (scale 1m)

Plate 3: Ditch F110 Area E, looking east. (Scale 1m)

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