

Wood Farm, Farringdon, Devon

Results of an archaeological trench evaluation

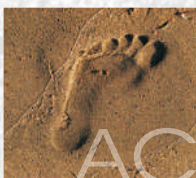
NGR SY 01287 91752

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On behalf of
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archaeology

WOOD FARM, FARRINGDON, DEVON

(NGR SY 01287 91752)

Results of an archaeological trench evaluation

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Summary

An archaeological trench evaluation was carried out by AC archaeology on land at Wood Farm, Farringdon, Devon, in support of a planning application for a proposed new agricultural worker's dwelling. The site lies in an area where cropmarks relating to possible prehistoric settlement have been identified. The evaluation comprised the machine excavation of a single L-shaped trench within the proposed development site. The trench measured 45m in length and was positioned to target one of the cropmark features as well both ranges of the new building.

The trench was excavated to a depth of between 0.37-0.51m below ground level onto a mid brown red clay and gravel natural subsoil. The overlying sequence comprised between 0.24-0.36m of topsoil, over 0.13-0.16m of subsoil. Two parallel northwest-southeast aligned linear features were exposed. The character of the features, and the date of the find recovered from one of the features, indicates that they both relate to land drainage practices carried out during the post-medieval period.

1. INTRODUCTION (Fig. 1)

- 1.1 This report sets out the results of an archaeological trench evaluation carried out on land at Wood Farm, Farringdon, Devon (NGR SY 01287 91752; Fig. 1), in support of a planning application (East Devon District Council application number 11/1350FUL) for a new agricultural worker's dwelling. The work was carried out by AC archaeology on 11 August, 2011, and was commissioned by the site owner, Mr Troy Stewart. The work was carried out in accordance with a brief supplied by the Devon County Historic Environment Service (Dick 2011), and an approved Project Design prepared by AC archaeology (Passmore 2011)
- 1.2 The site lies to the northwest of the village of Farringdon, on agricultural land between Denbow Farm to the west and Farringdon House to the east. The topography is generally level at around 55m aOD, although there is a general trend of a gradual slope down to the east. The underlying layer sequence comprises a solid geology of Exmouth Mudstones and Sandstones.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 An initial desk-based appraisal has identified two linear cropmarks indicative of prehistoric settlement within the proposed development site and a further two cropmarks further to the south forming a possible prehistoric enclosure (HER entry 59080).
- 2.2 Within a 1km radius of the site there are number of historic farmsteads, many of which are first recorded in the medieval period. On a number of these sites, post-medieval farmhouses and historic agricultural buildings survive.

3. AIM

- 3.1 The aim of the trench evaluation was to establish the presence or absence, extent, depth, character and date of any archaeological features, deposits or finds within the site. The results of the work will be reviewed and used to inform any subsequent

mitigation, either further investigation or re-design, as a condition of planning permission, if granted.

4. METHODOLOGY (Fig. 1)

4.1 The evaluation comprised the machine-excavation of a single L-shaped trench totalling 45m in length (Fig. 1). This represents an approximate 20% sample of the area to be affected by development and was positioned to cross the projected line of the cropmark feature, as well as the two ranges of the building. The trench was excavated using a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket under archaeological supervision.

4.2 The site was recorded in accordance with the 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*. All plans were drawn at a scale of 1:50 and sections at 1:10 or 1:20, as appropriate. All levels have been related to Ordnance Datum. All spoil heaps were scanned for finds.

5. RESULTS (Fig. 2; Plates 1-2)

5.1 The trench was excavated through a simple layer sequence comprising between 0.24-0.36m of mid-brown sandy-silt topsoil (100), over between 0.13-0.16m of light yellow-brown silt-sand subsoil (101) onto mid brown-red clay and gravel natural subsoil (106), present at a depths of between 0.37-0.51m below ground level. The trench contained two northwest-southeast aligned linear features, F103 and F105.

5.2 Feature 103

This feature measured 0.50m wide by 0.20m deep, with moderately-sloping sides forming a concave base. The feature was filled with a mid yellow-brown clay silt mixed with brown red clay (102) containing abundant charcoal fragments and moderate small-medium sub-rounded stones <0.05m long. No finds were recovered.

5.3 Feature 105

This feature measured 0.41m wide and was excavated to a depth of 0.40m, although was not fully excavated. The profile comprised near vertical sides and the feature contained a mixed backfill of mid brown-red and grey-brown silty sandy clay with occasional small-large sub-rounded stones <0.10m long. A single clay pipe stem fragment was recovered from the fill.

6. DISCUSSION

6.1 The evaluation has established the presence of two parallel northwest-southeast aligned linear ditches. Feature 105, which contained a clay pipe stem, clearly represents part of a post-medieval drainage ditch or field drain and was therefore not fully excavated. Feature 103, located to the east of and parallel to F105, may also form part of a general network of land drainage practices carried out within the area. Both features were aligned following a gentle northwest downhill slope.

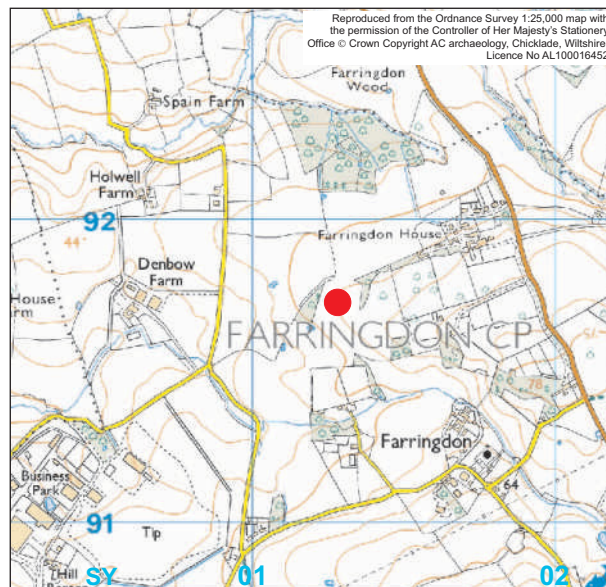
6.2 The linear cropmark feature identified from aerial photographs and targetted as part of this investigation was not exposed in the evaluation trench. The soil strip was carried out under controlled conditions and the exposed surface was of good clarity. Any

archaeological features, deposits or finds that might have been present would, therefore, have been identified during the work. The cropmark feature may, therefore be of geological origin, or have been ploughed out since the aerial photograph was taken in 1996.

- 6.3** The evaluation has established that excavations associated with the development are unlikely to impact upon any pre-modern archaeological features or deposits.

7. SOURCES CONSULTED

Dick, A. M., 2011, *Brief for archaeological evaluation undertaken in support of a planning application: Hill Barton, Farringdon, Devon*, DCHES document, ref. ARCH/DM/ED/18189
Passmore, A.J., 2011, *Wood Farm, Farringdon, Devon Project design for an Archaeological Trench Evaluation* NGR SY 01287 91752, AC archaeology document reference ACD353/1/1



- Application area
- Cropmarks
- Proposed structures
- Trench location

PROJECT

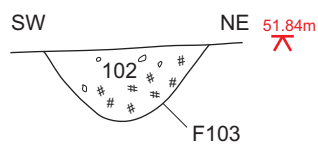
Wood Farm, Hill Barton, Farrington, Devon

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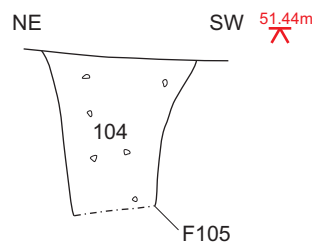
Fig.1: Location of site



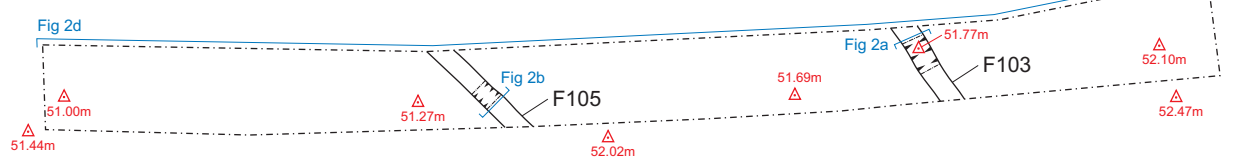
a) Section of feature F103



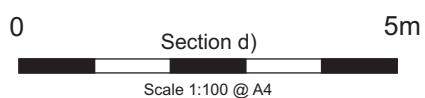
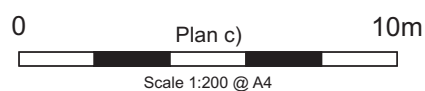
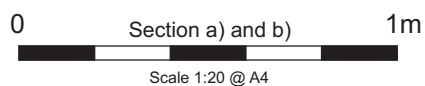
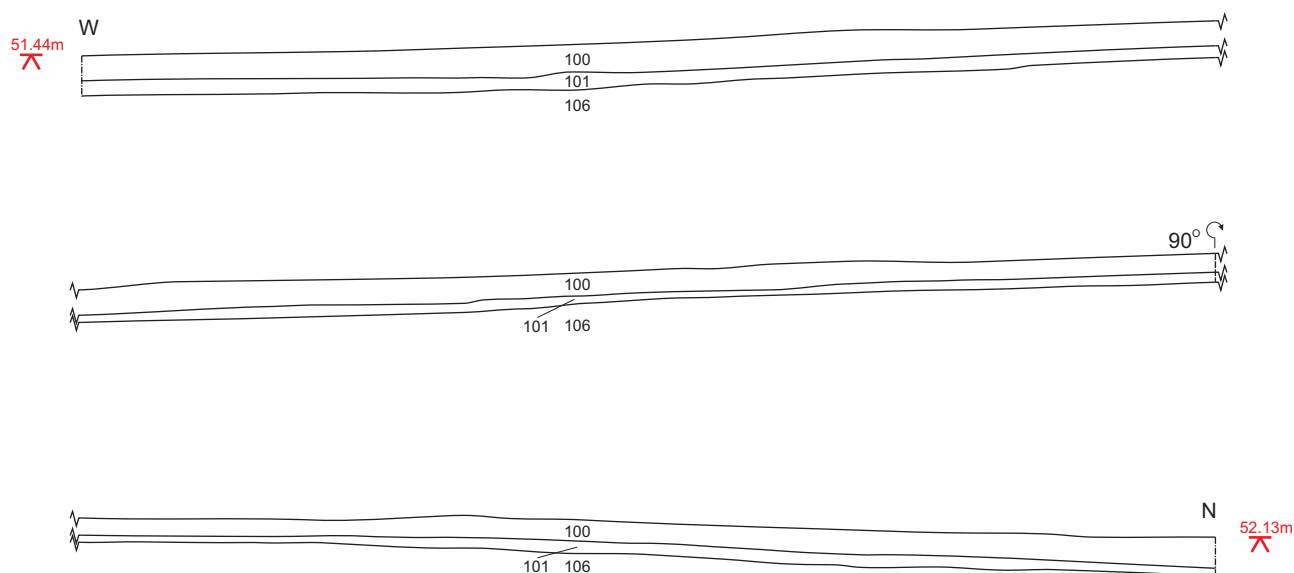
b) Section of feature F105



c) Plan of Trench 1



d) Section of Trench 1



PROJECT

Wood Farm, Hill Barton, Farringdon, Devon

TITLE

Fig.2: Plan and sections, Trench 1



Plate 1: View of site, facing northwest

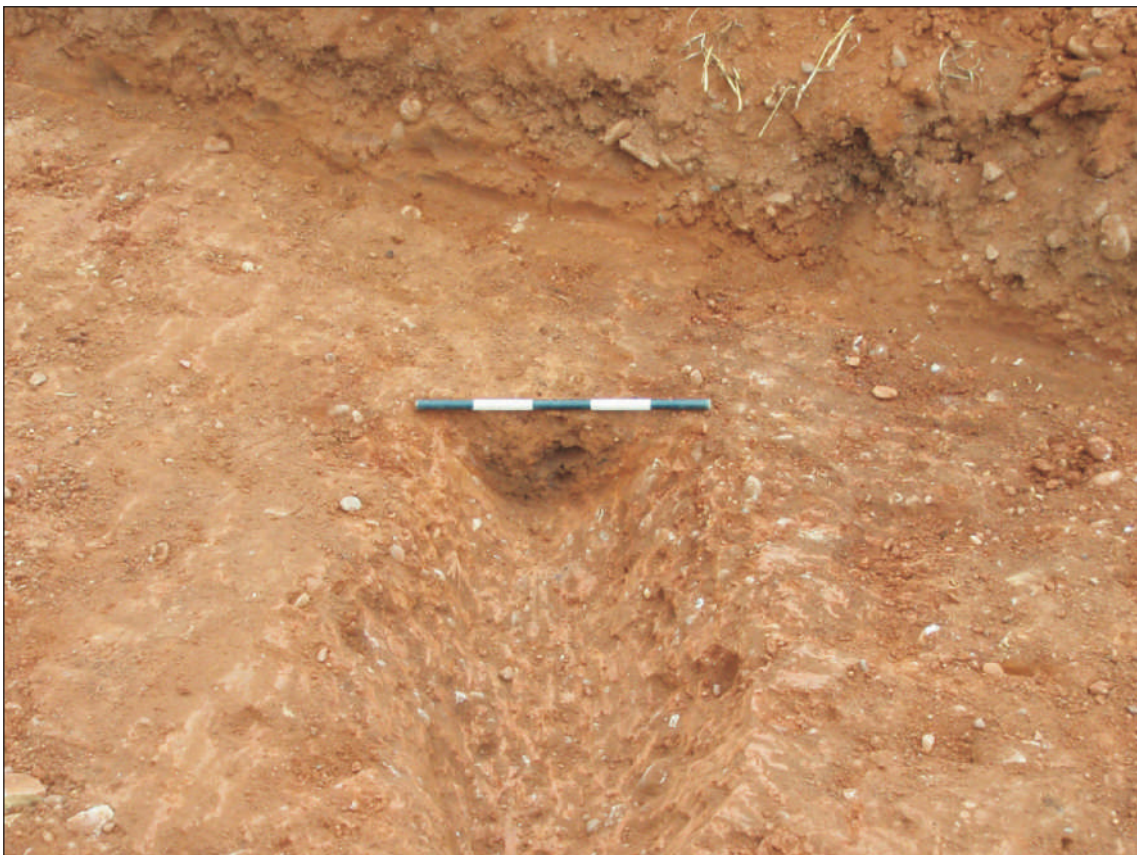


Plate 2: Linear feature F103, facing northwest (Scale: 0.5m)

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