LAND AT BUCKLEIGH ROAD, WESTWARD HO!, DEVON

NGR SS 43027 28256

Results of an archaeological trench evaluation

Planning ref Torridge District Council 1/0251/2013/FULM

Prepared by:
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On behalf of:
Wainhomes

Report No: ACD691/2/0

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AC archaeology

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CONTENTS

Summary

An archaeological trench evaluation, carried out in support of a planning application for residential development on land at Buckleigh Road, Westward Ho! (NGR SS 43027 28256), was undertaken by AC archaeology during May 2013. A previous geophysical survey on the site identified a series of linear and discrete anomalies that were thought could potentially relate to early land division and settlement.

A total of four trenches was excavated with a combined length of 120m. These were positioned to target potential archaeological anomalies identified during the earlier geophysical survey. The work identified a number of linear features probably relating to medieval and post-medieval land division. The only finds recovered were a single piece of prehistoric worked flint from a trench spoil heap and a sherd of medieval pottery from a ditch.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 An archaeological trench evaluation, carried out in support of a forthcoming planning application for residential development on land at Buckleigh Road, Westward Ho!, Devon (NGR SS 43027 28256), was undertaken by AC archaeology during May 2013. The work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd on behalf of Wainhomes, and was undertaken following consultation with Devon County Historic Environment Team (DCHET). The location of the site is shown on Fig. 1.

1.2 The site is situated on the south side of Cornborough Road and to the west of Buckleigh Road on the southwest edge of Westward Ho!. It is generally level pasture land, lying at a height of around 70m AOD. The underlying solid geology comprises mudstone and siltstone, together with bands of sandstone all of the Bideford Formation.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 A desk-based assessment and geophysical survey have been previously undertaken for the site (Pugh 2012 and Biggs 2012). The assessment established that, although there were no known sites within the proposed development site, there is a general potential for prehistoric activity in the wider area.

2.2 The geophysical survey identified a series of linear anomalies on the site, many of which are present on historic maps and relate to post-medieval land division and drainage. Other linear features were also present which do not respect the existing pattern of fields and were thought to more likely represent earlier land enclosure.

3. AIMS

3.1 The principal 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 evaluation (this document) will be reviewed and may be used to inform a subsequent programme of archaeological investigation and recording within the site, should planning consent be obtained.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 The evaluation comprised the machine-excavation of four 1.60m wide trenches totalling 120m in length (Fig. 2). Trenches were positioned to target anomalies identified during the earlier geophysical survey. The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a project design prepared by AC archaeology (Valentin 2013).

4.2 Turf and topsoil were removed using a wheeled excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket, working under the direct supervision of the site archaeologist. Excavation continued until either the top of archaeological deposits or natural subsoil was reached, at which point machining ceased and areas of archaeological survival were cleaned and investigated by hand.

4.3 All deposits 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 2.* Detailed sections or plans were produced at a scale of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate and all site levels relate to Ordnance Datum.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

Of the four trenches excavated, three (Trenches 2, 3, 4) contained archaeological features. A single sherd of medieval pottery (local coarseware) was recovered from a linear feature in Trench 2 and a flint flake from the spoil heap of Trench 4. No dating evidence was recovered from the other trenches. Trench 1 contained no archaeological features or deposits and is summarised below in table form only.

5.2 Trench 1

No evidence for archaeological features or deposits was identified in this 30m long trench and the recorded layer sequence is set out in Table 1.

Table 1. The recorded layer sequence, Trench 1

Context No.	Depth	Description	Interpretation
100	0-0.30m	Dark grey brown silt	Turf and topsoil
101	0.30m+	Mid yellow to orange clay	Natural subsoil

5.3 Trench 2 (Plan Fig. 3a, sections Fig.3b-d; Plates 1-4)

This trench was aligned northeast-southwest and measured 40m long by 1.60m wide. It was positioned to target a number linear anomalies identified from the geophysical survey. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.50m. Natural subsoil was encountered from a depth of 0.40m. The trench contained three linear features (F203, F205 and F207) which broadly correspond with the location of targeted anomalies. The recorded layer sequence is tabulated below in Table 2.

Table 2. The recorded layer sequence, Trench 2

Context No.	Depth	Description	Interpretation
200	0-0.18m	Dark grey brown silt	Turf and topsoil
201	0.18-0.40m	Mid orange brown silty clay.	Sub/ploughsoil
202	0.40m^{+}	Light yellow to grey clay	Natural subsoil

Feature F203

Linear feature F203 was initially aligned approximately east-west and was exposed for 5m before turning at right angles to the south. It measured between 0.75-1m wide and was 0.28m deep, with moderately steep sloping sides and a flattish base. It contained a light grey clay fill (204) that contained a single sherd of medieval pottery.

Parallel east-west aligned probable ditches F205 and F207 were positioned 1.5m apart. F205 measured 0.65m wide and 0.18m deep with gently sloping sides and a rounded base. The ditch contained a single fill (206) consisting of light grey clay. No finds were recovered.

Linear feature F207 measured 1.35m wide and 0.37m deep, with moderately steep sloping sides (steeper on the north side) and an irregular flattish to rounded base. It contained a single light grey clay fill (208) and no finds were recovered.

5.4 Trench 3 (Plan Fig. 4a, section Fig.4b; Plates 5-6)

This trench was aligned approximately north-south and measured 20m long by 1.60m wide. It was positioned to target a number of linear anomalies identified from the geophysical survey. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.90m. Natural subsoil was encountered from a depth of 0.75m. A probable ditch (F303) was exposed to the centre of the trench. The recorded layer sequence is tabulated below in Table 3.

Table 3. The recorded layer sequence, Trench 3

Context No.	Depth	Description	Interpretation
300	0-0.70m	Dark grey brown silt	Turf and topsoil
301	0.70-0.80m	Mid orange brown silty clay. Present only in northern part of trench	Sub/ploughsoil
302	0.70-0.80m+	Grey mudstone	Natural subsoil

Feature F303

This was an approximate east-west aligned probable ditch measuring 0.78m wide and 0.14m deep, with gently sloping sides and rounded base. It contained a single fill (304) consisting of mid brown silty clay, with occasional mudstone flecks. No finds were recovered.

5.5 Trench 4 (Plan Fig. 4c, section Fig.4d; Plates 7-8)

This trench was aligned north-south and measured 30m long by 1.60m wide. It was positioned to target a number of linear anomalies identified from the geophysical survey. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.45m. Natural subsoil was encountered from a depth of 0.40m. A linear feature (F403) was exposed 8.6m from the north end of the trench. The recorded layer sequence is tabulated below in Table 4.

Table 4. The recorded layer sequence, Trench 4

Context No.	Depth	Description	Interpretation
400	0-0.15m	Dark grey brown silt	Turf and topsoil
401	0.15-0.40m	Mid orange brown silty clay	Sub/ploughsoil
402	0.40m+	Grey mudstone	Natural subsoil

Feature F403

This was an approximately east-west aligned probable ditch measuring 1.85m wide and 0.60m deep, with gently sloping sides (steeper on the south side) and a rounded concave base. It contained a single fill (404) consisting of mid brown silty clay. Inclusions comprised occasional sub-angular stone fragments and mudstone flecks. No finds were recovered.

6. THE FINDS *by Naomi Payne*

6.1 Introduction

All finds recovered on site during the evaluation have been retained, cleaned and marked where appropriate. They have been quantified according to material type within each context and scanned to extract information regarding the range, nature and date of artefacts

represented. Only two finds were recovered; a medieval pottery sherd from a ditch in Trench 2 and a piece of worked flint from the spoil heap of Trench 4. The finds are summarised in Table 5 below.

6.2 Worked flint

A notched flint flake (14g) was recovered from Trench 4 (unstratified). This secondary flake is made from good quantity dark brown/grey flint. A small notch has been created by retouching the dorsal surface at the proximal end, adjacent to the bulb of percussion. The working on the flint is most likely Neolithic or Early Bronze Age in date.

6.3 Medieval pottery

A single undiagnostic body sherd (8g) of North Devon medieval coarseware was recovered from context 204. This was first manufactured in *c*. 1200 AD and continued in production with little discernible change until *c*. 1450.

Table 5. The finds

Trench	Context	Worked flint		Medieval pottery	
		Count	Weight	Count	Weight
2	204			1	8g
4	Spoilheap	1	14g		
Totals		1	14g	1	8g

7. DISCUSSION

7.1 The archaeological features identified during the evaluation broadly equate with those recorded as anomalies by the geophysical survey. The alignment of the linear feature identified within Trench 4 corresponds with a field boundary in that location as shown on the tithe map of 1840 and subsequent Ordnance Survey maps through to 1979. The linear ditch in Trench 3 is on an identical alignment and is therefore likely to relate to the same phase of land division.

7.2 There was a complete absence of features in Trench 1, with the anomalies identified by the geophysics of uncertain origin, as there did not appear to be any discernible variations within the natural subsoil in that trench.

7.3 There were a number of linear anomalies identified in Trench 2, with the majority again corresponding with the geophysics results. The main difference was F203 at the northeast end of the trench where the northwest corner of a possible enclosure ditch was identified. A single sherd of medieval local coarseware pottery was recovered from its fill, with its shallow depth, rounded profile and general paucity of finds from across the site indicating that it more likely relates to land division of this date rather than settlement. The interpretation from the geophysics indicates that F203 links up with F207 to the southwest in a 'zigzag' arrangement. This is unlikely to be the case and it is considered that the anomalies may have been misinterpreted, with the linear features identified more likely to represent adjoining small agricultural enclosures of probable medieval date.

8. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

8.1 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, prior to deposition, if required, under the accession number NDDMS 2013.24 at the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon and online with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS).

8.2 An online OASIS entry has been completed, using the unique identifier 151263, which includes a digital copy of this report.

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The evaluation was commissioned by Will Bedford of CgMs Consulting on behalf of Wainhomes. The site trial trenching was carried out by Paul Jones and Jack Outram, with illustrations for this report prepared Sarnia Blackmore.

10. SOURCES CONSULTED

Biggs, M., 2012, *Geophysical survey report: Buckleigh Road, Westward Ho!* Unpublished Stratascan report for client, ref. J3115

British Geological Survey online 2011 *www.bgs.ac.uk/opengeoscience*

Pugh, P., 2012, *Archaeological desk based assessment: Land south of Cornborough Road, Westward Ho!, Devon*. Unpublished CgMs document, ref. GP/14042

Valentin, J., 2013, *Land at Buckleigh Road, Westward Ho!, Devon: Project Design for an archaeological trench evaluation*. Unpublished AC archaeology document, ref. ACD691/1/0

N

0 500m

Scale 1:12,500@A4

Application area

PROJECT

Land at Buckleigh Road, Westward Ho!, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 1: Location of site

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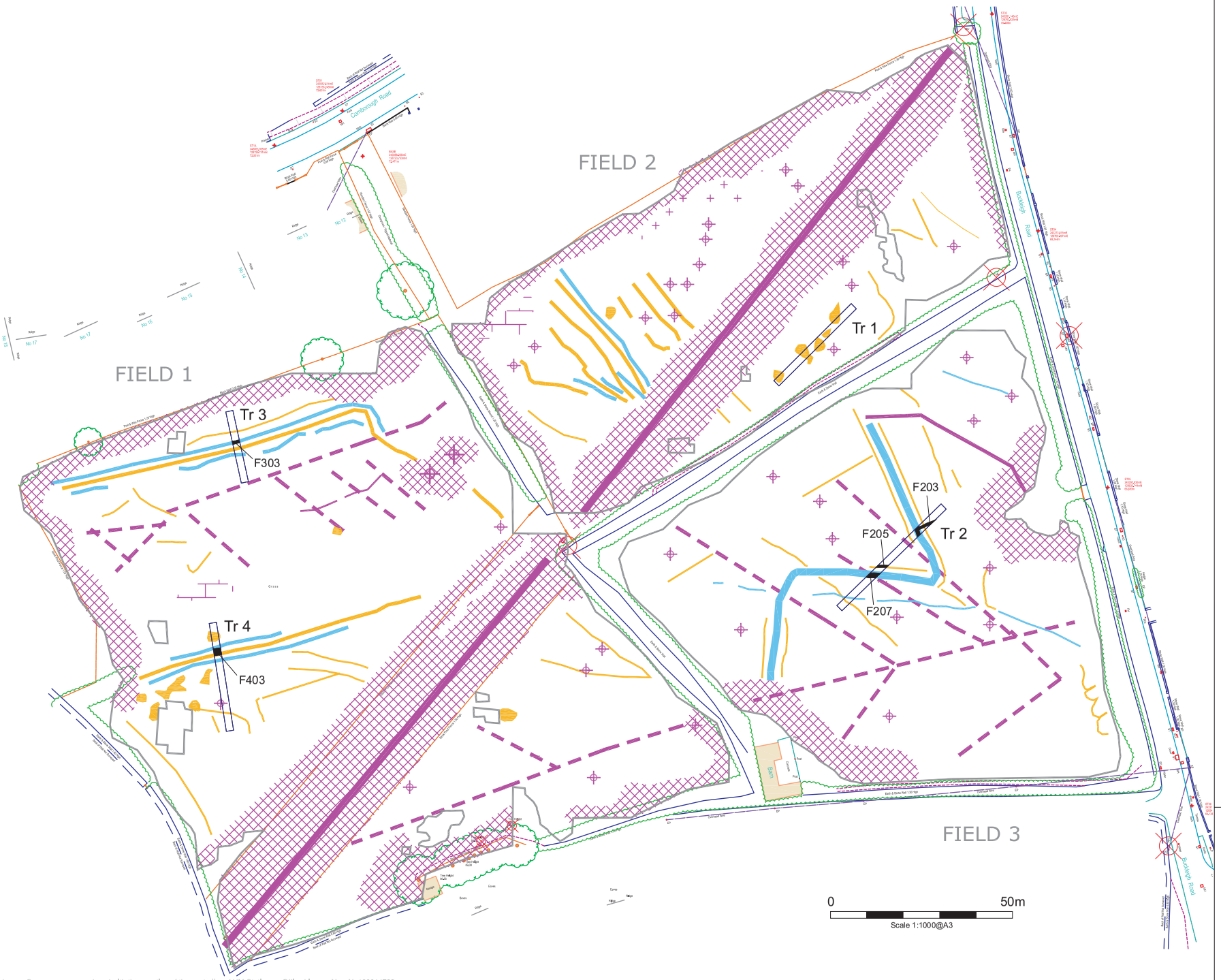

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Fig. 2: Location of trenches in relation to the geophysics results

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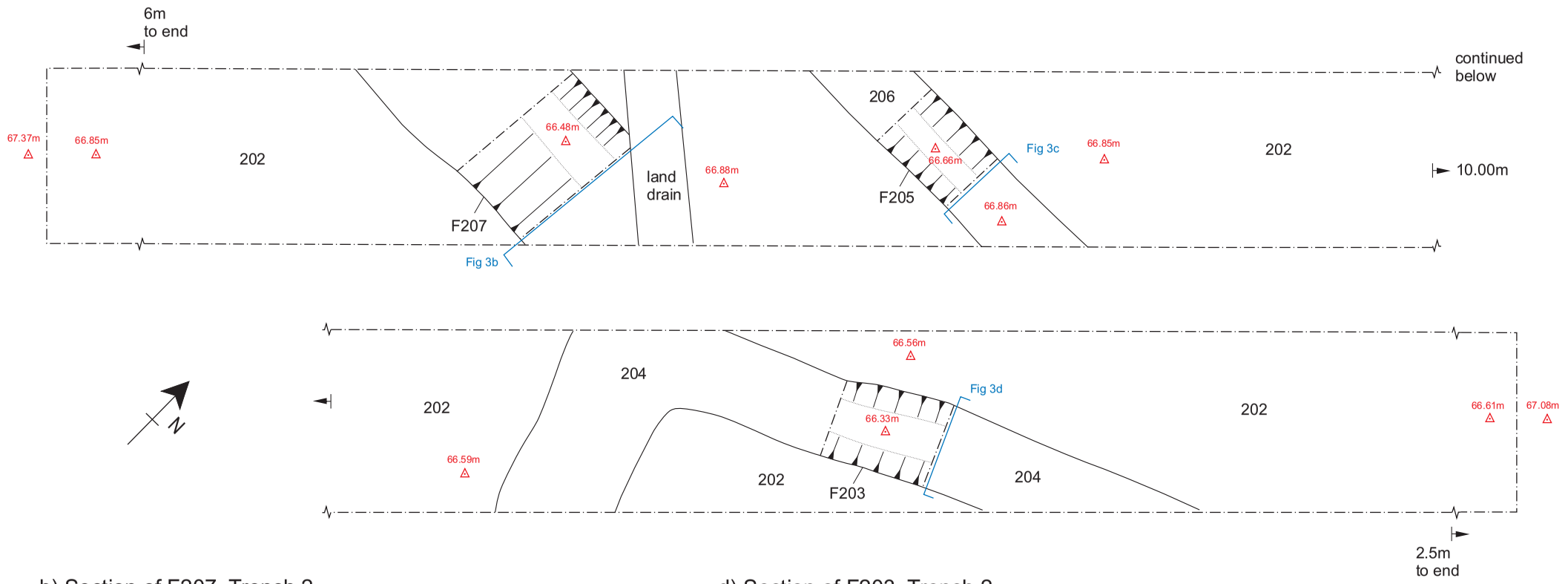
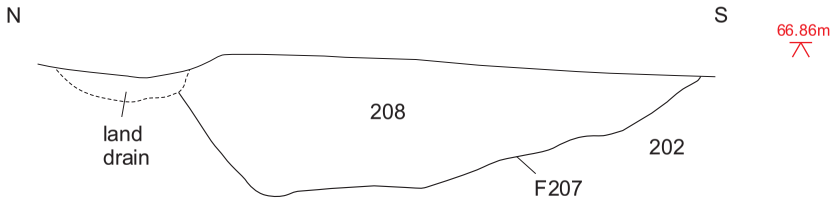
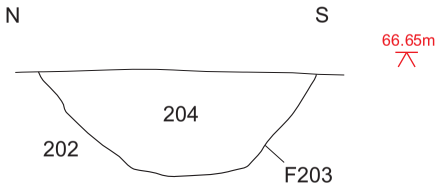
a) Plan, Trench 2



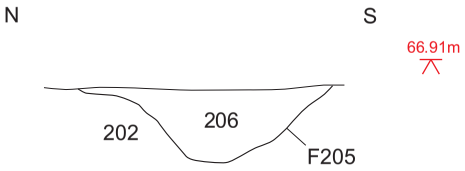
b) Section of F207, Trench 2



d) Section of F203, Trench 2



c) Section of F205, Trench 2



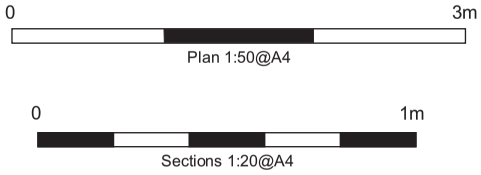


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Fig. 3: Trench 2, plan and sections

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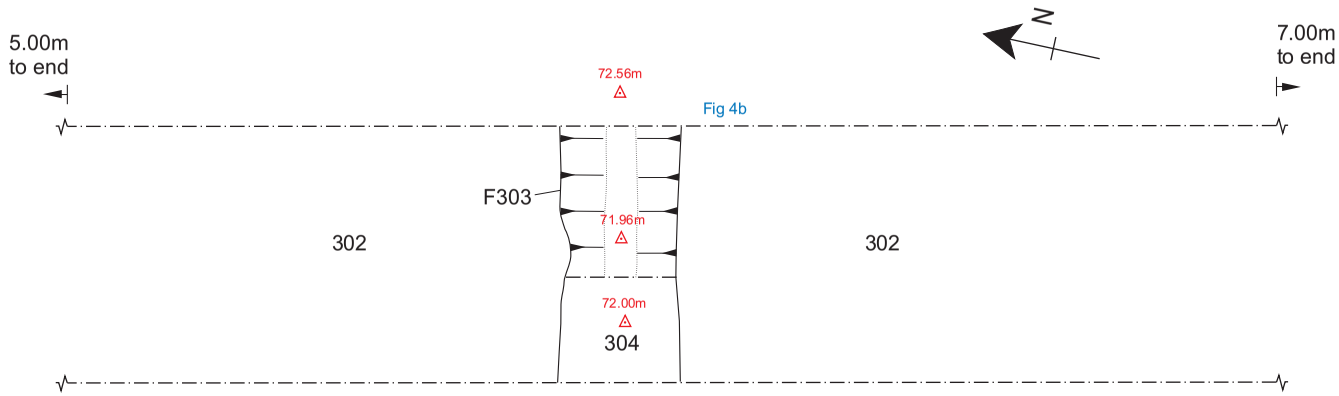
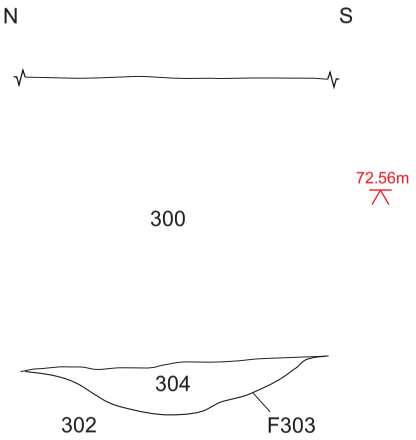
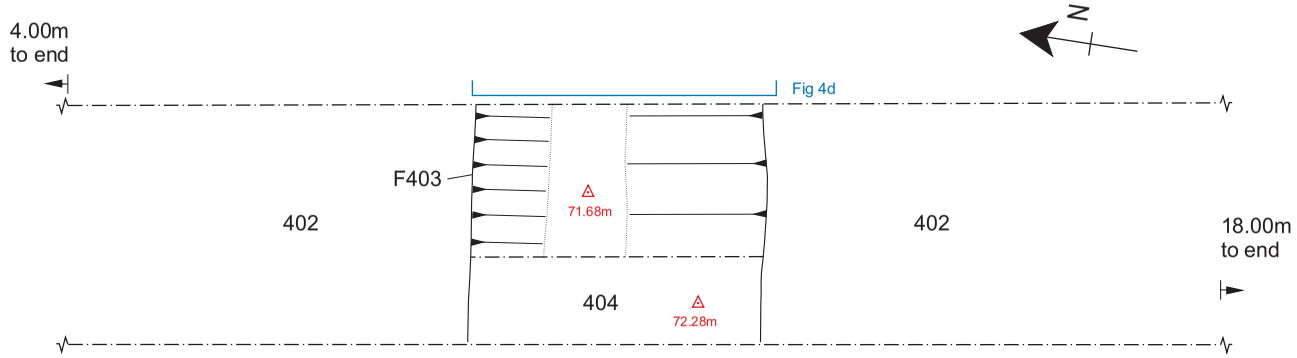
a) Plan, Trench 3



b) Section of F303, Trench 3



c) Plan, Trench 4



d) Section of F403, Trench 4

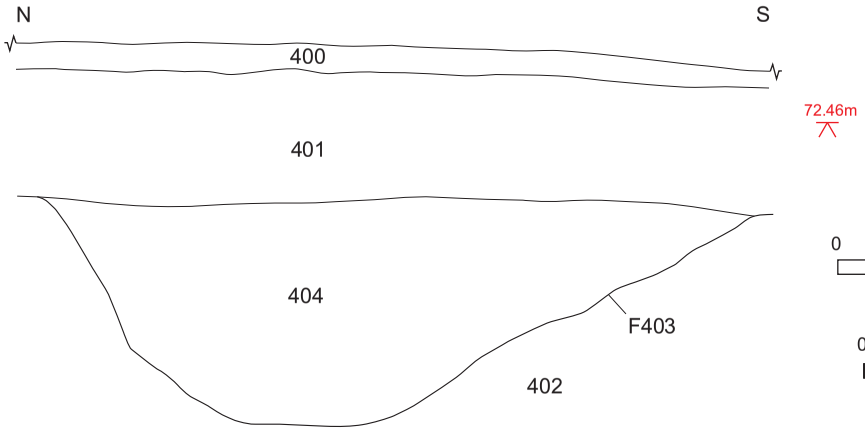


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Fig. 4: Trenches 3 and 4, plans and sections

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Plate 1: General view of Trench 2, looking to southwest

Plate 2: Linear feature F203, Trench 2, view from northwest. 0.25m scale

Plate 3: Linear feature F205, Trench 2, view from west. 0.25m scale

Plate 4: Linear feature F207, Trench 2, view from west. 1m scale

Plate 5: General view of Trench 3, looking to north. 1m scale

Plate 6: Linear feature F303, Trench 3, view from west. 1m scale

Plate 7: General view of Trench 4, looking to south. 1m scale

Plate 8: Linear feature F403, Trench 4, view from west. 1m scale

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