

LAND ADJACENT TO FOREDOWN ROAD, IPPLEPEN, DEVON

NGR SX 8439 6688

Results of an Archaeological Trench Evaluation

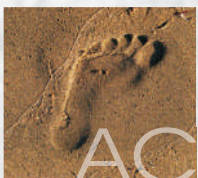
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On behalf of:
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archaeology

LAND ADJACENT TO FOREDOWN ROAD, IPPLEPEN, DEVON

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Results of an archaeological trench evaluation

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Summary

An archaeological trench evaluation was undertaken by AC archaeology during July 2013 on land adjacent to Foredown Road, Ipplepen, Devon (NGR SX 8439 6688). The site occupies approximately 1.3 hectares of agricultural land between Foredown Road and Moor Road and within an east to west aligned dry valley.

The evaluation comprised the machine-excavation of three trenches totalling 80m in length with each trench 1.9m wide. These were positioned to target anomalies recorded from a previous geophysical survey. At the valley base, linear features were recorded consistent with the location of targeted anomalies and with a general meandering linear hollow that was visible on the surface. These are likely to represent a mixture of a drainage feature cut into the valley base and natural water channels. Other targeted anomalies were shown to be a stone land drain and geological banding.

A small quantity of early to middle Iron Age pottery was recovered from buried soil and subsoil layers.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological trench evaluation on land adjacent to Foredown Road, Ipplepen, Devon, was undertaken by AC archaeology during July 2013. The work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd on behalf of clients and was required by Teignbridge District Council in support of a planning application for residential development, as advised by Devon County Historic Environment Team (hereafter DCHET). The location of the site is shown on Fig. 1.
- 1.2 The site covers an area of approximately 1.3 hectares and is situated between Foredown Road to the south, Moor Road to the north and agricultural fields on other sides. The site slopes down from the north and the south towards a dry valley base that bisects the plot (Plate 1). At the base of the valley a meandering linear hollow or channel is visible on the surface extending from outside the site to the northeast. The site lies between c.90m and 77m aOD, with the underlying solid geology comprising slates of the Whiteway Mudstone Formation.

2. ARCHEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site is situated approximately 0.5km to the north of where on-going excavations by Exeter University have identified extensive evidence for prehistoric and Romano-British settlement and field systems.
- 2.2 A geophysical survey of the site itself (Dean 2012) identified a series of linear anomalies thought to represent evidence for early land division and water management.

3. AIMS

- 3.1 The aim of the trial 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, as set out in this report, will be reviewed and used to inform any subsequent mitigation should planning consent be obtained.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1** The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Project Design prepared by AC archaeology (Valentin 2013), submitted to and approved by DCHET prior to commencement on site. It comprised the machine-excavation of three trenches totalling 80m in length, with each trench 1.9m wide. The trenches were positioned to investigate linear anomalies identified from the previous geophysical survey as of potential archaeological origin.
- 4.2** The trenches were excavated using a wheeled mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket and working under the control and direction of the site archaeologist. They were excavated to the level at which either archaeological deposits were exposed or natural subsoil was encountered.
- 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 and plans were produced at a scale of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate. All site levels relate to Ordnance Datum.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Trench 1 (Detailed plan and section Fig. 2; Plate 2)

This trench was positioned across a slightly curving east to west aligned linear anomaly interpreted from the previous geophysical survey. It was excavated onto natural subsoil (context 108) which comprised light yellowish-grey clay with weathered bedded slate, which was present at a depth of between 0.24m and 0.56m below ground level. In the centre of the trench layer 108 was overlain by a further natural subsoil layer (107) of alluvial light yellowish-red silty-clay that had weathered slate fragment and manganese inclusions. In the northern part of the trench, layer 108 was below a thin buried soil (102) of light brownish-grey silty clay containing common slate fragment inclusions. Four sherds of early to middle Iron Age pottery were recovered from layer 102. The trench contained two east to west aligned linear features (F103 and F105) in the approximate location of the targeted linear anomaly.

- 5.2** F103 was cut through buried soil layer 102 and measured 2.22m wide and 0.36m deep, with a shallow concave profile. It contained a fill (104) composed of a light brownish-red silty clay with occasional manganese inclusions. No finds were recovered. Fill 104 was overlain by a colluvial subsoil (101) which comprised a mid reddish-brown silty-loam and was present towards the north of the trench and petered out towards the valley base.

- 5.3** F105 measured 0.74m wide and 0.15m deep, with gradual sloping sides and a concave base. The feature was irregular in plan and petered out to the east. It contained a mid reddish-brown silty-clay fill (106) that had occasional slate fragment and manganese fleck inclusions. No finds were recovered.

- 5.4** Fill 106 and colluvial subsoil 101 were overlain by a mid brown silty-loam topsoil (100).

5.5 Trench 2

This trench was positioned to investigate three linear anomalies interpreted from the geophysical survey. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.44m onto natural subsoil (202), which comprised mixed light greyish-red clay and wide bands of weathered bedded slate. The overlying sequence comprised a light reddish-brown

clay loam colluvial subsoil (201) and topsoil (200). The trench contained no pre-modern archaeological features. Towards the west of the trench the targeted anomaly corresponded with the line of a stone field-drain, while the remaining anomalies are likely to relate to geological banding.

5.6 Trench 3 (Detailed plan and section Fig. 3)

This trench was located across the valley base and positioned to target two NNE to SSW aligned linear anomalies interpreted from the geophysical survey. It was excavated through topsoil (300) and colluvial subsoil (301) onto a mixed weathered slate and light yellowish-brown clay natural subsoil (303), which was encountered at a depth of 0.51m below current levels. One fragment of Iron Age pottery was recovered from layer 301. In the middle of the trench natural subsoil (303) was overlain by an alluvial layer (302) of mid brownish-red silty clay. The trench contained two linear features; a possible ditch (F305) and a stone land drain, both of which corresponded with the locations of the targeted linear anomalies.

- 5.7 Probable ditch F305 measured 2.7m wide and 0.43m deep, with moderately steep sloping sides and a flattish base. It contained a mid reddish-brown silty-clay fill (306) that had rare slate fragment inclusions that was undated. The feature was truncated by a 19th century drainage trench (F307) which contained a ceramic pipe.

6. THE FINDS *by Naomi Payne*

6.1 Introduction

All finds recovered on site during the evaluation have been retained, cleaned and marked. A small quantity of prehistoric pottery was recovered, from Trenches 1 and 3, which are summarised in Table 1 below.

6.2 Prehistoric pottery

A total of five sherds (11g) of prehistoric pottery was recovered from two contexts. Context 102 in Trench 1, a buried soil layer, produced four conjoining sherds of an early to middle Iron Age vessel. This is a rim from a thick-walled jar with a rounded, slightly everted rim. A further sherd was recovered from context 301, Trench 3 subsoil. This body sherd is very small and abraded (less than 0.1g) but appears to be broadly similar in fabric type to the sherds from Trench 1.

Table 1: Summary of finds by context

Context	Context Description	Prehistoric pottery	
		No.	Wt (g)
102	Trench 1 buried soil	4	11
301	Trench 3 subsoil	1	<0.1
Totals		5	11.1

7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1 The evaluation has identified a small number of undated possible ditches or natural channels extending along the valley base. Features F103 and F305 are visible on the surface as a meandering linear hollow which extends into the site from the field to the east. Feature F305 was fairly well defined as a ditch, while the profile of F103 was more shallow and diffuse. The hollow between Trenches 1 and 3 (annotated as boggy ground on Fig. 1) suggests the location of a former pond into which the probable ditch from Trench 3 may have extended.

- 7.2** The recovery of a small quantity of early to middle Iron Age pottery from layers in Trenches 1 and 3 indicates the presence of contemporary occupation in the broader landscape, with the low-lying nature of the site itself not conducive to permanent settlement.
- 7.3** It is likely that irregular linear feature F105 is a water-eroded natural channel rather than of archaeological origin. The remaining interpreted geophysical anomalies targeted by the trench evaluation comprised a stone land drain and geological banding.
- 7.4** Based on the results of the archaeological evaluation there is only limited archaeological potential for the site, with features, where present, consisting of undated possible drainage ditches, natural channels and a stone land drain.

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, EX5 4LQ. They will be offered to the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter, but if they are unable to accept them, then they will be dealt with under their current accession policy.
- 8.2** The OASIS (Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations) number for this project is 155303.

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

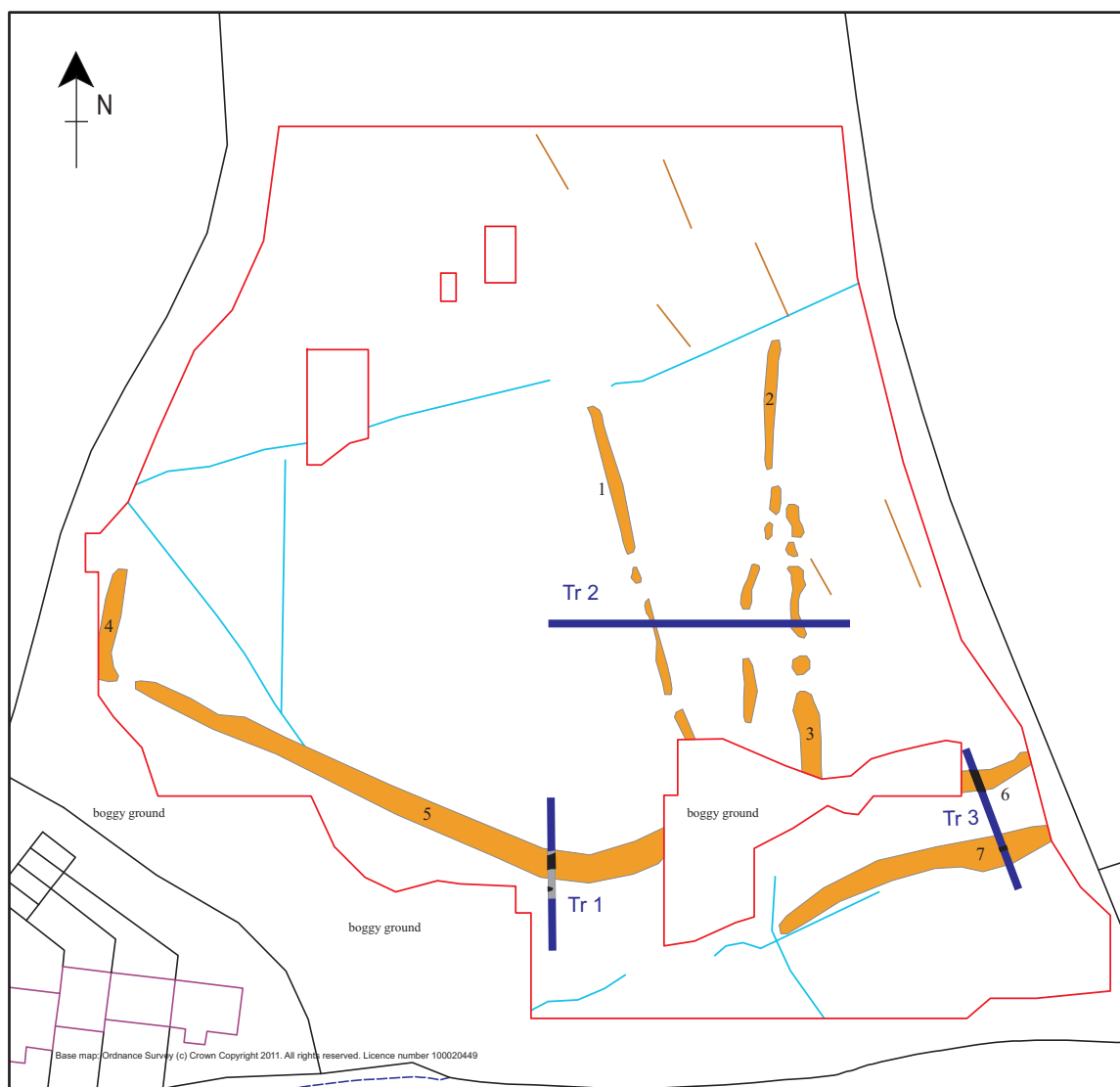
- 9.1** The evaluation was commissioned by Hannah Smalley of CgMs Consulting Ltd. The site work was undertaken by Simon Hughes and Stella de-Villiers, with the illustrations for this report prepared by Sarnia Blackmore. The collaborative role of Stephen Reed, Devon County Historic Environment Officer, is duly acknowledged.

10. REFERENCES

- Dean, R., 2012, *An Archaeological Gradiometer Survey: Land adjacent to Foredown Road, Ipplepen, Devon*. Unpublished Substrata report for client, ref. 120918
- Valentin, J., 2013, *Land adjacent to Foredown Road, Ipplepen, Devon: Project Design for an archaeological trench evaluation*. Unpublished AC archaeology document for client, ref ACD720/1/0



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Legend

— gradiometer survey area and site boundary

gradiometer potential archaeology

— possible archaeology, positive anomaly

gradiometer potential archaeological trends

— possible archaeology, ploughing traces (2)

gradiometer potential services

— possible service trench

— Archaeological trenches with features marked

0 50m
Scale 1:1000@A4

PROJECT

Foredown Road, Ipplepen, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 1: Site and trench location showing geophysics and evaluation results

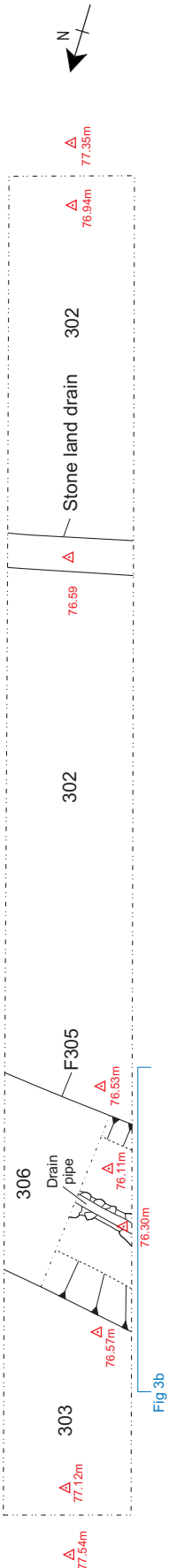


AC archaeology

Continued
below

Scale 1:100@A4

a) Trench 3, plan



b) Section of F305

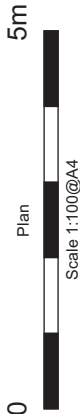
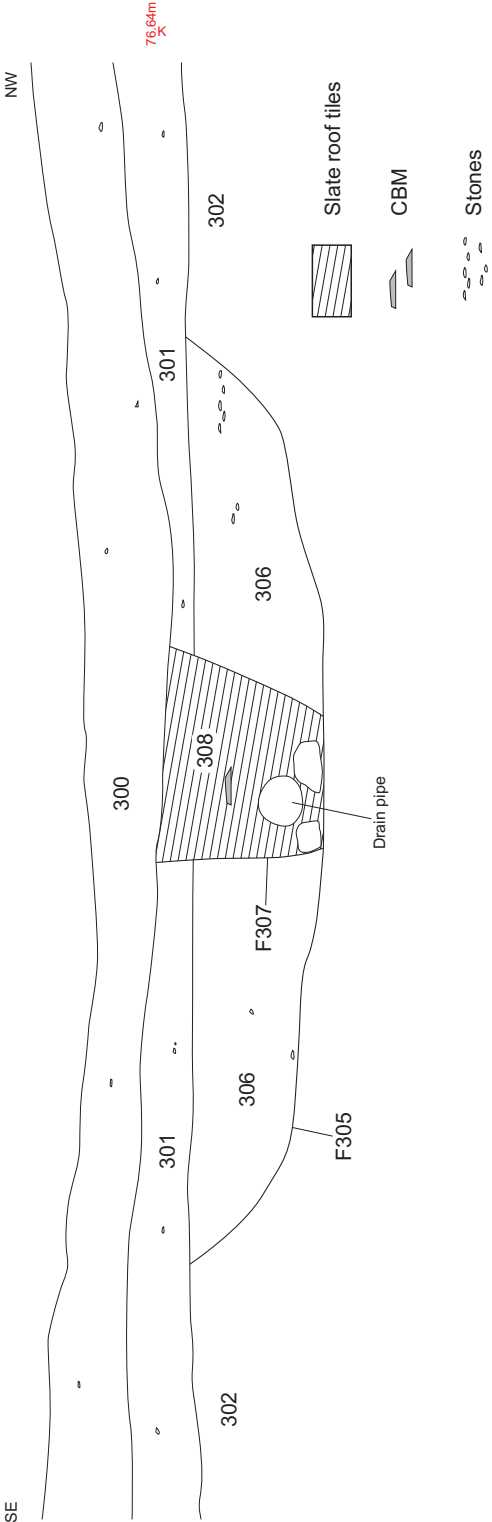




Plate 1: General view of site, looking south



Plate 2: Trench 1, east facing section, view to southwest (scale 1m)

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