

LAND AT CHURCH GREEN, BICKLEIGH, DEVON

Centred on NGR SS 9420 0720

Results of an Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation

Prepared by:
Simon Hughes

With a contribution from:
Kerry Kerr-Peterson

On behalf of:
BSA Heritage Ltd

Report No: ACD765/2/1

Date: 8th October 2013



AC archaeology

LAND AT CHURCH GREEN, BICKLEIGH, DEVON

Centred on NGR SS 9420 0720

Results of an archaeological trial trench evaluation

CONTENTS

Summary

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Historical and archaeological background	1
3.	Aims	1
4.	Methodology	1
5.	Results	2
6.	The Finds	3
7.	Discussion	3
8.	Conclusion	4
9.	Archive and OASIS	4
10.	Acknowledgements	4
11.	References	4

List of figures

Fig 1: Location of site and trenches with features identified

Fig 2: Trench 1, plan and sections

Fig 3: Trench 3, plan and sections

List of plates

Plate 1: General view of site, looking east

Plate 2: North east facing section of Trench 1. View to south

Summary

An archaeological trench evaluation carried out at Church Green, Bickleigh, Devon (centred on SS 9420 0720) was undertaken by AC archaeology during September 2013. The site is situated at the centre of the village and occupies an area of around 0.25 hectares of unused scrub land and corrugated-iron sheds. The ground slopes moderately to the southwest at around 70m aOD.

The evaluation comprised the machine-excavation of three trenches totalling 33.5m in length, with each trench measuring 1.9m wide. These were positioned in the east part of the site to be affected by development proposals.

A consistent thin buried soil layer dating to the 12th to 13th century was recorded in each of the trenches and was present under subsoil and garden soil layers. Two probable tree pits were recorded, which date to the later medieval and post-medieval periods, while an undated possible post hole was also present.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document sets out results of an archaeological trench evaluation undertaken by AC archaeology during September 2013 at Church Green, Bickleigh, Devon. The work was commissioned by BSA Heritage Ltd. on behalf of clients in support of a planning application for residential development, as advised by the Devon County Historic Environment Team (hereafter DCHET). The location of the site is shown on Fig. 1.

1.2 The site is situated within the centre of the village and occupies an area of around 0.25 hectares. It is situated west of the parish church and within Bickleigh Conservation Area. The site is currently unused and overgrown and there is a corrugated metal clad shed on the east side. It lies at around 70m aOD and the underlying solid geology comprises sedimentary mudstone, siltstone and sandstone of the Holsworthy Group.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The site has been subject to a previous Heritage Statement (Stephenson 2013). The main archaeological interest in the site is set out in this document, which is its position within the historic core of the village opposite the medieval parish church of St Mary's. The Bickleigh parish tithe map (1842) and accompanying apportionment describes the plot's land use as an orchard and garden at this date with the subsequent first and second edition Ordnance Survey maps depicting no change to this.

3. AIMS OF THE WORK

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 will be reviewed and used to inform any subsequent mitigation and whether or not the significance and state of survival of any buried archaeological remains is great enough to influence the layout of the proposed development should planning consent be obtained.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (Valentin 2013) submitted to and approved by DCHET prior to commencement on site. It comprised the machine excavation of three trenches totalling 33.5m in length, with each trench measuring 1.9m wide. Trenches were positioned in the east part of the site affected by development

proposals (Fig. 1). The removal of soil overburden was undertaken under the control and direction of the site archaeologist.

- 4.2** All features and 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 (revised August 2012). Detailed sections or plans were produced at a scale of 1:10, 1:20 and 1:50 as appropriate. All site levels relate to Ordnance Datum.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Trench 1 (Fig. 2, Plate 2)

Trench 1 was extended following consultation with the DCHET Archaeology Officer to fully expose feature F104 (see below). It was excavated onto natural subsoil (context 103), which comprised a light red silty-clay with bands of weathered bedrock and was present at a depth of 0.44m below current levels. The natural subsoil was overlain by a thin light red silty-clay buried soil horizon (102). A total of seven sherds of medieval courseware pottery were recovered from layer 102. Two features were exposed as cutting through layer 102 (F104 and F106).

Sub-round possible pit F104 measured 0.77m across and 0.15m deep with irregular gradual sloping sides and a concave base. It contained a mid reddish-brown silty-clay fill (105) that had common sub-angular stone and occasional charcoal fleck inclusions. Six sherds of medieval and post-medieval pottery were recovered from fill 105.

Oval natural feature or possible posthole F106 measured 0.21m across and 0.12m deep with a diffuse steep-sided profile. It contained a light brown silty-clay fill (107) with common sub-angular stone and occasional charcoal fleck inclusions. No finds were recovered from fill 106.

The fills of features F104 and F106 were sealed by a mid to light brownish red subsoil (101) that was in turn overlain by a root-disturbed topsoil layer (100).

5.2 Trench 2

This trench was excavated onto natural subsoil (203), which was present at a depth of 0.52m below current levels and comprised a light brownish-red silty-clay with abundant weathered bedrock. The natural subsoil was overlain by a 0.08m thick buried soil layer (202) of mid to light red silty-clay with common gravel inclusions. Layer 202 was overlain by subsoil (201) and root-disturbed topsoil (100).

The trench contained no archaeological features.

5.3 Trench 3 (Fig. 3)

Trench 3 was excavated onto natural subsoil (305), which was present at a depth of 0.55m below current levels. The natural subsoil was overlain by a buried soil of light brownish-red sandy-clay (302) with common small gravel inclusions that was in turn overlain by a mid brownish-red silty-clay subsoil (301). Seven sherds of upper greensand derived medieval pottery were recovered from layer 302.

Subsoil 301 was cut by a sub-oval shaped tree-throw or possible pit F303 towards the northeast end of the trench. F303 measured 0.9m long, 0.61m wide and 0.2m deep with a diffuse steeply-sloping profile. It contained a mid brown clay-loam fill (304). One sherd of post-medieval pottery and five sherds of medieval pottery as well as a fragment of bottle glass were recovered from fill 304.

6. THE FINDS

6.1 Introduction

All finds recovered on site have been retained, cleaned and marked where appropriate, then quantified according to material type within each context. The assemblage has been scanned by context to extract information regarding the range, nature and date of artefacts represented, with this information briefly discussed below. Finds totals by material type are set out in Table 1.

Table 1: Finds quantification by material type. Weight is in grams. CBM = Ceramic Building Material.

Context	Medieval Pottery		Post-medieval Pottery		CBM		Glass		Worked Flint & Chert		Slag	
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
101	2	21	2	17	1	28						
102	7	23							1	9		
105	4	9	2	9								
200			1	19								
301			4	81	3	22					1	167
302	7	36							1	0.5		
304	5	9	1	6			1	5				
Totals	25	98	10	220	4	50	1	5	2	9.5	1	167

6.2 Medieval Pottery

Twenty-five sherds (98g) of medieval pottery were recovered from five contexts. The assemblage includes eight sherds of Exeter Fabric 42, including four pieces of lead glazed jug from context 105 and four plain fragments from context 304. There are a total of three pieces of North Devon Medieval Coarseware, with two from context 101 and one each from contexts 102 & 304. The most common medieval fabric within the assemblage is Upper Greensand Derived Courseware, with a total of thirteen sherds from contexts 102, 302 & 304. One of the sherds from context 302 has a beaded rim and decoration in the form of a single diagonal incised line. Most of the medieval pottery dates to the 12th-13th century.

Post-medieval pottery

Ten sherds (220g) were recovered from five contexts. The majority of the post-medieval pottery assemblage consists of South Somerset lead glazed earthenware. The remaining pieces include a sherd from a South Somerset earthenware dish with trailed slip decoration (context 101) and a candle stick neck from context 301. The candle stick neck is decoration with an olive green glaze and trailed yellow slip. There is a handle scar at the top of the rim a pin hole on either side. The post-medieval pottery dates to the early 19th century.

6.3 The other finds

Two pieces of residual worked flint or chert (9.5g) were recovered from two contexts. The fragment from context 102 is a small broken flake of dark grey-brown flint which has evidence of flaking along one edge. The piece from context 302 is adebitage flake of dark brown, granular chert. The pieces of worked flint are likely to date to the Neolithic or Bronze Age.

A single piece of post-medieval green bottle glass, weighing 5 grams, was recovered from context 304. One fragment of smithing slag, weighing 167 grams and four fragments of post-medieval ceramic building material (CBM), weighing 50grams were recovered from the topsoil.

7. DISCUSSION

7.1 The evaluation has identified the presence of a consistent buried soil in each of the trenches that has been dated to the 12th to 13th century.

7.2 There were three recorded features exposed in Trenches 1 and 3. Each of these had irregular characteristics and are, in the case of features F104 and F303, likely to relate to tree planting and/or growth. This interpretation is consistent with the former use of the plot as an orchard, as depicted on the 19th to 20th century historic mapping. Possible posthole F106 was undated but its diffuse characteristics may also suggest that it is also related to tree growth.

7.3 There were no archaeological features, deposits or finds to suggest that there has been any *in situ* occupation on the site.

8. CONCLUSIONS

8.1 This evaluation has identified the presence of a medieval buried soil across the site. There were no significant features exposed that suggest the presence of any pre-modern structures or any *in situ* occupation. The assemblage of finds dating from the 12th to 19th century is likely to relate to the position of the site in the historic core of the village. The only features exposed are likely to relate to tree growth and are dated to the post-medieval period, which is consistent with the site's former use as an orchard.

8.2 There was a general paucity of significant archaeological features within the part of the site that will be affected by development proposals.

9. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

9.1 The paper and digital archive is currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ. It will be held until the need for any further archaeological work on the site is established and whether the creation of a digital archive for deposition at the Archaeology Data Service is required. A museum-allocated temporary reference number has been obtained from the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter which is 13/56.

9.2 An online OASIS entry has been completed, using the unique identifier 160469, which includes a digital copy of this report.

10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

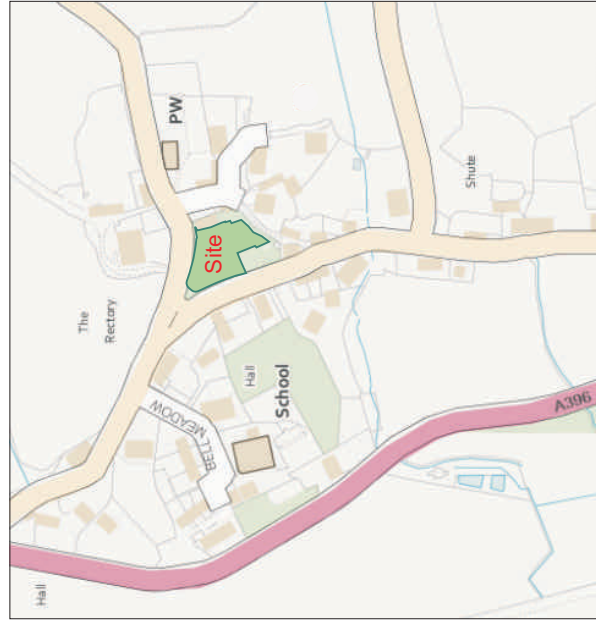
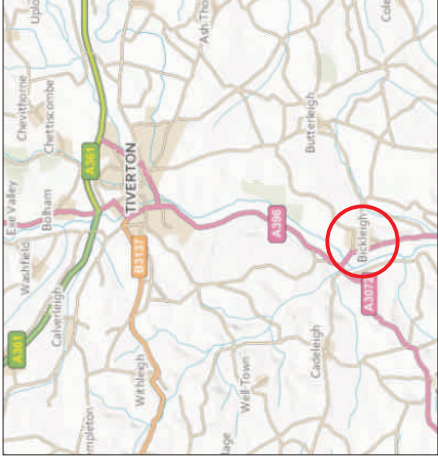
10.1 The evaluation was commissioned by Ben Stephenson of BSA Heritage Ltd on behalf of clients. The site work was carried out by Simon Hughes and Kerry Kerr-Peterson, with the illustrations for this report prepared by Sarnia Blackmore. The collaborative role of Stephen Reed, DCHET Archaeology Officer is duly acknowledged.

11. REFERENCES

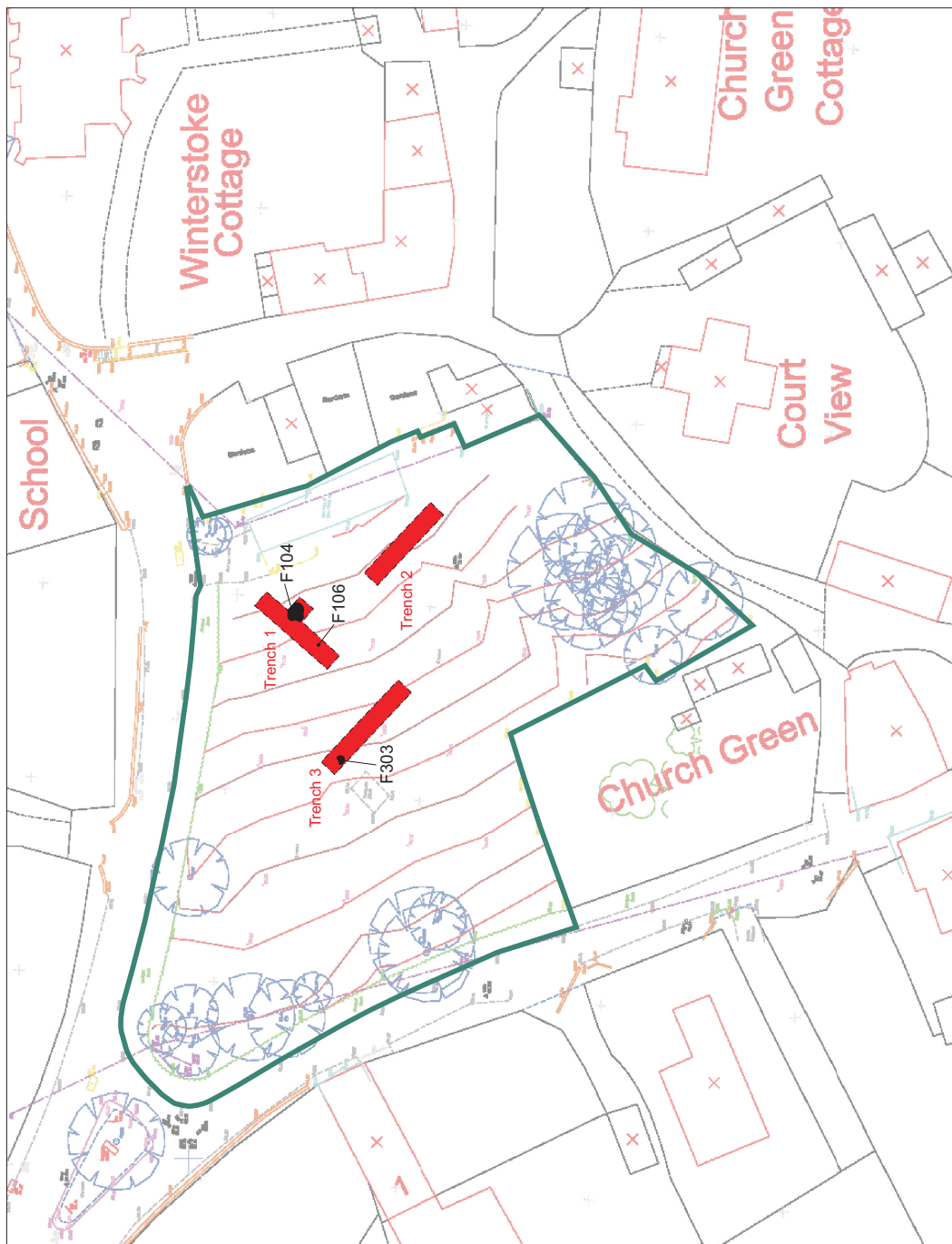
Coleman-Smith, R. & Pearson, T., 1988. 'The Pottery Catalogue: The Donyatt Pottery Type Series', in *Excavations at the Donyatt Potteries* pp 105-335 (Chichester)

Stephenson, B., 2013, *Church Green, Bickleigh, Devon: Heritage Statement*. Unpublished report for client, ref. BSA134_1a

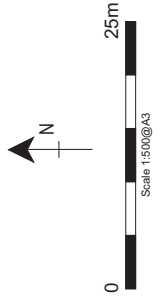
Valentin. J., 2013, *Land at Church Green, Bickleigh, Devon: Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological trial trenching*. Unpublished document for client. Ref. ACD765/1/1



Not to scale

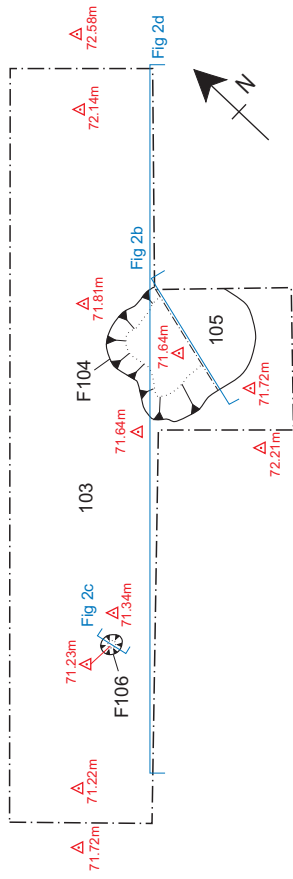


Plan supplied by client

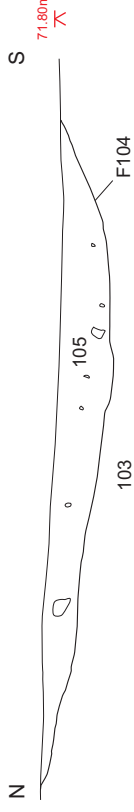


- Trenches 1-3
- Site boundary

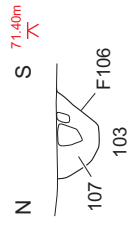
a) Trench 1, plan



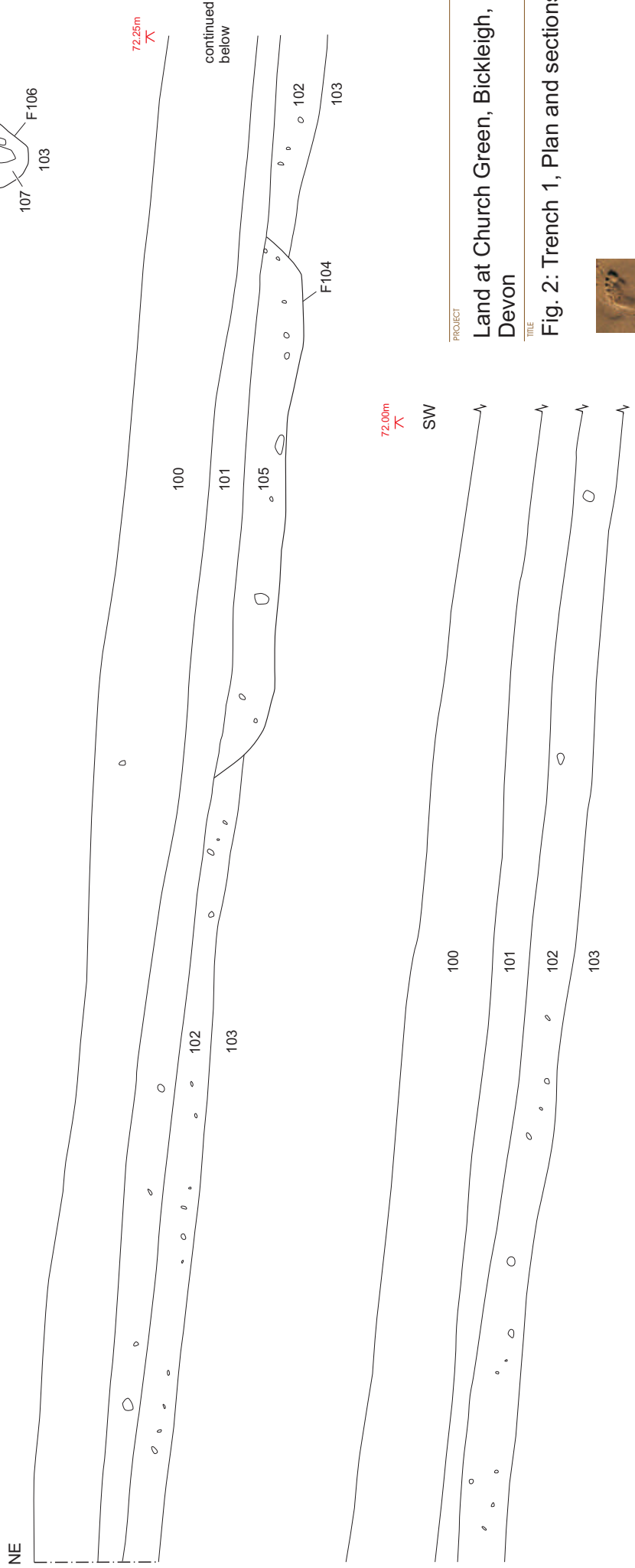
b) Section of F104



c) Section of F106



d) Trench 1, representative section



PROJECT

Land at Church Green, Bickleigh,
Devon

TITLE

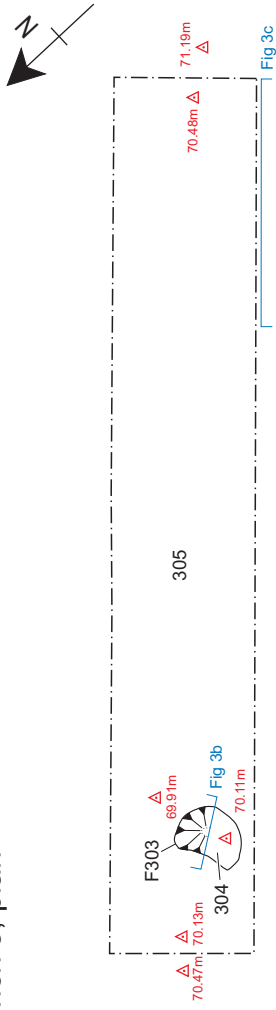
Fig. 2: Trench 1, Plan and sections



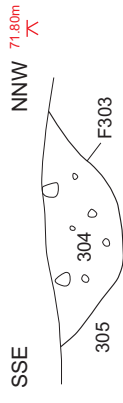
0 5m
Plan 1:100@A4

0 1m
Sections 1:20@A4

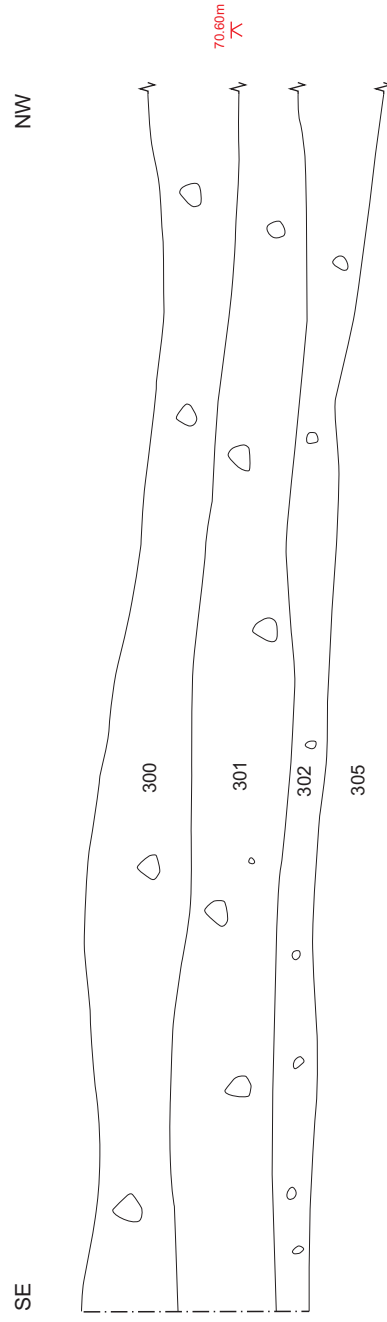
a) Trench 3, plan



b) Section of F303



d) Trench 3, representative section



PROJECT

Land at Church Green, Bickleigh,
Devon

TITLE

Fig. 3: Trench3, Plan and sections



Sections 1:20@A4

Plan 1:100@A4



Plate 1: General view of site, looking east



Plate 2: North east facing section of Trench 1, view to south (scale 1m)

Devon Office

AC archaeology Ltd
Unit 4, Halthaies Workshops
Bradninch
Nr Exeter
Devon
EX5 4LQ

Telephone/Fax: 01392 882410

Wiltshire Office

AC archaeology Ltd
Manor Farm Stables
Chicklade
Hindon
Nr Salisbury
Wiltshire
SP3 5SU

Telephone: 01747 820581
Fax: 01747 820440

www.acarchaeology.co.uk