

LAND ADJACENT TO PALACE MILL, CHUDLEIGH, DEVON

centred on NGR SX 8676 7887

Results of an archaeological trench evaluation

Planning reference: Teignbridge District Council 13/02784/OUT

Prepared by:
Andrew Passmore BSc MIfA

On behalf of:
Daniel J Metcalfe

Document No: ACD794/2/1

Date: December 2013



AC archaeology

LAND ADJACENT TO PALACE MILL, CHUDLEIGH, DEVON

Centred on NGR SX 8676 7887

Results of an archaeological trench evaluation

Planning reference: Teignbridge District Council 13/02784/OUT

CONTENTS

	<i>Summary</i>	1
1.	Introduction	1
2.	Archaeological background	1
3.	Aims	2
4.	Methodology	2
5.	Results	3
6.	Discussion	3
7.	Impact assessment	4
8.	Archive and OASIS entry	4
9.	Acknowledgements	4
10.	Sources consulted	4

List of figures

- Fig. 1: Location of site
Fig. 2: Trench location plan
Fig. 3: Trench 1, section and Trenches 2 and 3, plans and sections
Fig. 4: Trench 4, plan and section

List of plates

- Plate 1: Trench 1, western edge of leat F112, viewed from the north. 1m scale
Plate 2: Trench 2, ditch F206 viewed from the south. 1m scale.
Plate 3: Trench 3, the northern edge of F304, viewed from the southwest. 1m scale.
Plate 4: Trench 4, leat F415, viewed from the northwest. 1m scale.

Appendix 1: Trench and context descriptions

Summary

An archaeological trench evaluation carried out on land adjacent to Palace Mill, Chudleigh, Devon (centred on SX 8676 7887) was undertaken by AC archaeology in November 2013. The development area occupies approximately 0.37 hectares of agricultural land on the edge of the village. The site contains the infilled tailrace from the adjacent Palace Mill, a post-medieval corn mill.

The evaluation comprised the machine-excavation of four trenches totalling 76m in length, with each trench measuring 1.60m wide. These were positioned to target the areas where future development may have the greatest impact on archaeological remains, as well as the projected course of the tailrace.

The tailrace was very wide. Fills of 18th- or 19th-century date were exposed, although the majority related to its infilling in the late 20th century. Elsewhere, two undated features were located: a probable drain and a clay extraction pit. The field had been landscaped in the mid 20th century.

It is concluded that the proposed development will not affect the tailrace, but will have a localised impact upon the other features.

1. INTRODUCTION (Fig. 1)

- 1.1 This document sets out the results of an archaeological trench evaluation on land adjacent to Palace Mill Chudleigh, Devon (SX 8676 7887). The investigations were required by the Devon County Historic Environment Team (HET) to support an application (Teignbridge District Council reference 13/02784/OUT) for the "demolition of redundant farm building and erection of dwellings". Guidance on the scope of the investigations has been provided by the HET (Reed 2013), archaeology advisors to Teignbridge District Council.
- 1.2 The archaeological works were commissioned by Daniel J Metcalfe, architect on behalf of the owners and carried out by AC archaeology between 11-13 November 2013.
- 1.3 The site covers an area of approximately 0.42ha, and is situated to the southeast of the historic core of the town, on the floodplain and rising ground to the west of the Kate Brook. The site slopes down to the southeast with the centre of the site lying at a height of 50m aOD. The underlying geology is Devonian slate of the Tavy formation overlain in the valley bottom by Quaternary alluvial deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A rapid desk-based appraisal has been carried out, based on data and maps held by the Devon Historic Environment Record and the Devon Heritage Centre.
- 2.2 The archaeological interest in the site stems from its proximity to the medieval Bishop's Palace and the nearby Palace Mill. The palace, which is designated as a Scheduled Monument, was owned by the bishops of Exeter, and was in use from the second half of the 13th century until 1550. The palace is defined by a roughly triangular enclosure containing at least three substantial buildings as well as earthworks (Devon Historic Environment Record entry MDV8979). Bishops' palaces were high status domestic residences providing luxury accommodation for the bishops and lodgings for their large retinues. The extents of the palaces can sometimes be defined by boundary walls or documentary references. At Chudleigh, there is a reference to a park (as well as a dwelling house) from the 11th century (MDV64329) although its extent is not known. The adjacent placename of Palace Mill (see below) may indicate an association with the wider landscape, although this name may simply

reflect the presence of the nearby palace in the same manner as the nearby post-medieval quarries.

- 2.3 Palace Mill is situated 120m east of the Bishop's Palace, immediately northeast of the application area. Its origins are unclear, and it appears to be frequently confused with Chudleigh Bridge mill, since several accounts refer to it as having fallen down in the early 20th century (MDV19779). It has been referred to as the bishop's flour mill, although another account only refers to it as being mentioned as 'palace' or 'place' mill in 1794 and 1859, when it consisted of a house, mill, barn, stable, outhouses, garden and four small orchards. The buildings were converted to residential accommodation in 1989.
- 2.4 The leat to the mill is recorded on the Historic Environment Record as entry MDV69000. The tailrace was located within the application area and was infilled by the owner during the last century.
- 2.5 The leat and tailrace is depicted on Greenwood's County Map of Devon surveyed in 1827, although the mill itself is not shown. The mill, leat, tailrace and associated outbuildings are all depicted in detail on the 1838 Chudleigh tithe map. The same features are depicted on the 1st edition (1880s) Ordnance Survey maps, although the tailrace is not shown as a flowing watercourse. Most of the fields around the mill and palace are marked as orchards. There were no significant changes to the area until the late 20th century, when infill residential development took place to the north of the application area and Rock Road was realigned and moved to the east forming the present southwest boundary of the application area.
- 2.6 Earlier archaeological remains in the area include three caves at Chudleigh Rocks containing Palaeolithic material (MDVs 14724, 14725 and 9018), findspots of flint flakes (MDVs 14454 and 14559), and Bronze Age pottery recovered from the undisturbed land surface above the Chudleigh Rocks quarries. Burials were uncovered within the Bishop's Palace in the mid 19th century when Rock Road was widened. Due to their location within the complex, these are not thought to relate to the medieval palace and may belong to an earlier cemetery (MDV60673).

3. AIMS

- 3.1 The aim of the investigation is to evaluate the survival of below-ground archaeological deposits across the proposed development area. The results will allow the nature, extent, and date of any surviving archaeological deposits to be understood and an appropriate planning decision to be made by the local planning authority.

4. METHODOLOGY (Fig. 2)

- 4.1 The evaluation comprised the machine excavation of 4 trenches totalling 75m in length, with each trench measuring 1.60m wide (Fig. 2). Trenches were positioned to avoid the existing barn and an adjacent silo, but were located to target each of the four proposed house plots as well as the predicted line of the leat. The removal of soil overburden was undertaken under the control and direction of the site archaeologist, and was carried out in line with a written scheme of investigation prepared by AC archaeology (Passmore 2013).
- 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 or 1:50 as appropriate. All site levels relate to Ordnance Datum.

5. RESULTS (Figs 2-4; Plates 1-6; Appendix 1)

5.1 Introduction

Archaeological features were exposed in all trenches and described in detail below. All of the trenches and contexts are summarised in tabulated form in Appendix 1.

5.2 Trench 1 (Fig. 3a; Plate 1)

Trench 1 measured 19m long and was aligned NW-SE. It was positioned partially to target the tailrace, which was partially exposed (as F112) in the southeast end of the trench.

The tailrace (F112) was unlined and due to safety concerns regarding the instability of its infill and the high water table it was only partially excavated. It measured a minimum of 5.60m wide by 1.10m deep, and on its uphill side had been cut through a post-agricultural subsoil. No historic fills were exposed, with all fills dating to the 20th century.

5.3 Trench 2 (Fig. 3b-c; Plate 2)

This trench measured 10m long was aligned NW-SE. A single linear feature (F206) was recorded in this trench.

Ditch F206 was orientated N-S and measured 2m wide by 0.65m wide deep. Its western uphill edge was steep, whilst its eastern downhill side was shallower and gentler, whilst its base was undulating. The ditch may therefore have held (large quantities of) running water perhaps indicating the feature was a large drain. It had been disturbed on its south side by a tree throw. It contained three fills (F203-205), all distinctly different from the underlying natural, although it is likely that the primary fill represents natural silting.

5.3 Trench 3 (Fig. 3d-e; Plate 3)

This trench measured 21m long and was aligned NE-SW. A single feature (F304) was exposed.

Feature F304 was linear and aligned N-S along the contour of the hillside. It measured 7.50m long by 0.56m deep, and had a steep west side, a gentle east side and flat base. It contained a single fill (F303) that appeared to represent a natural accumulation of material. The feature may be a clay extraction pit.

5.4 Trench 4 (Fig. 4a-b; Plate 4)

Trench 4 measured 25 long and was aligned NW-SE. It was positioned partially to target the tailrace, which was exposed (as F415) in the southeast end of the trench.

The tailrace (F415) was unlined and due to safety concerns regarding the instability of its infill and the high water table it was only partially excavated. It measured 5.40m wide by a minimum of 0.50m deep. Possible pre-20th-century fills were exposed at the edges of the feature, otherwise the remaining two uncovered fills relate to the later 20th-century infilling. It was sealed with up to 1.80m of dumped material raising the ground level of the floodplain. The agricultural subsoil (407) overlaid an early fill of the leat; it is possible therefore that this represents slumped or reworked material.

6. DISCUSSION

6.1 The tailrace for Palace Mill was partially exposed in two trenches (1 and 4). It was extremely large, being 5.4m wide which is comparable with for example, the industrial leats/tailraces at Cricklepit in Exeter. It is as wide as the adjacent Kate Brook Stream. Due to the nature of its infill and the high water table, it was not fully excavated and its depth is not known. The earliest exposed fill (411) dated from the 18th/19th century, with the majority dating to the later 20th century. Another early fill (413) was sealed by an agricultural subsoil (407) and this, along with

other finds from the subsoil across the site, probably indicates that the field was landscaped in the 19th or 20th century, perhaps after the Second World War when the orchard was removed.

- 6.2** Two features were exposed on the hillside above the leat, both of which were aligned N-S along the contour of the hillslope. They were exposed below the agricultural subsoil, but were otherwise undated. F206 was a ditch. The character of its profile would indicate that it contained flowing water, and it may have been a drainage feature, perhaps taking water from the hillside to the north away from and around the mill. F304 was a wide but shallow feature situated at the break of slope between the hill and the floodplain. It is interpreted as an extraction pit for the removal of the natural clay subsoil. Use of the material is not known – there is no recorded industrial use in the immediate vicinity, but it may have been used elsewhere in the Chudleigh area, if not for industrial purposes than perhaps as a constituent of cob for a local building.

7. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1** The proposed development will involve the construction of four houses terraced into the hillside, served by an access track with associated parking on the floodplain to the east. The top of the tailrace from palace mill lies at depths of at least 0.40m below the surface and is likely to be protected from the minimal groundworks required by the construction of the access track. The features identified in trenches 2 and 3 will be impacted on by the construction of the central two houses. However, impact is likely to be restricted to the footprints of the houses and landscaping in the near vicinity.

8. ARCHIVE AND OASIS ENTRY

- 8.1** The paper and digital archive and finds are currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ. Should no further investigations be required, then in agreement with the Historic Environment Team the archive will not be retained.
- 8.2** An online OASIS entry has been completed, using the unique identifier 164474, which includes a digital copy of this report.

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 9.1** The evaluation was commissioned by Daniel J Metcalfe, architect on behalf of the owners William and Valerie Sampson. It was managed for AC archaeology by Andrew Passmore. The site work was undertaken by Alex Farnell, Stella de-Villiers and Abigail Brown. The report was written by Andrew Passmore with the illustrations prepared by Sarnia Blackmore. The finds were identified by Kerry Kerr-Peterson. Thanks are due to William Sampson for his assistance on site.

10. SOURCES CONSULTED

Devon Heritage Centre

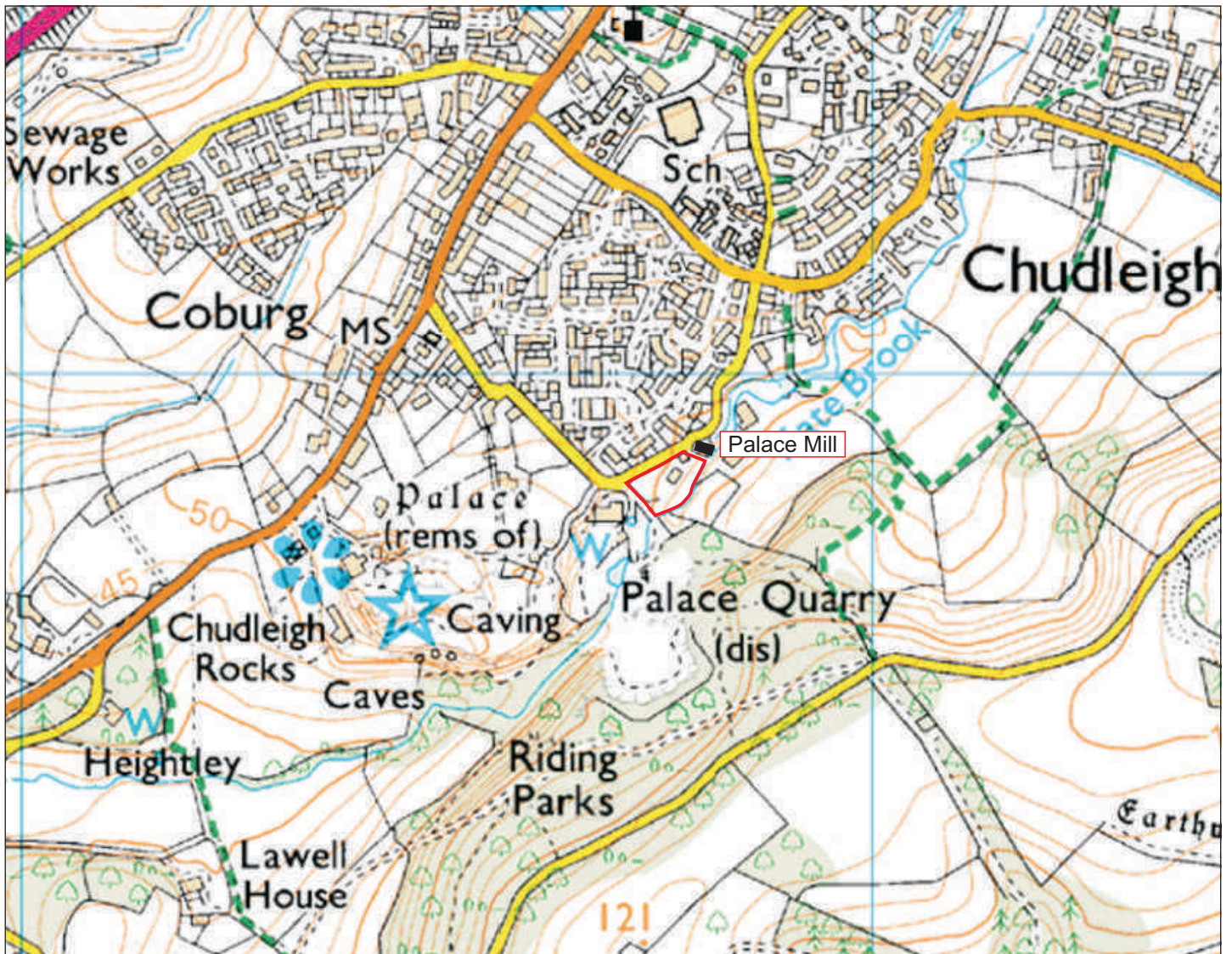
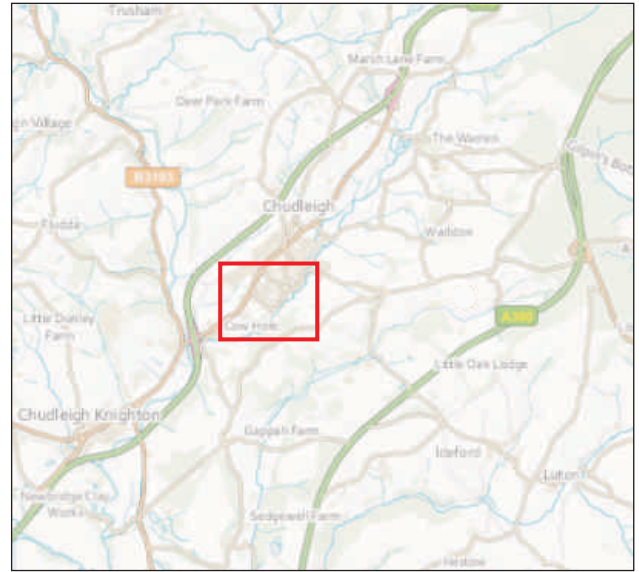
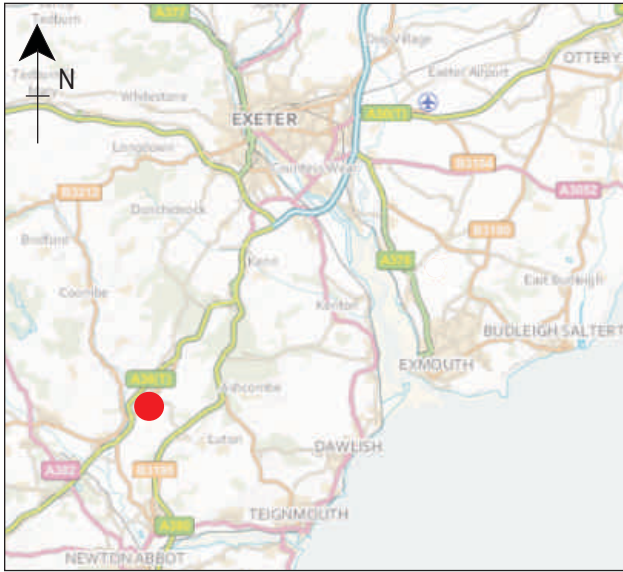
Chudleigh tithe map 1838 and apportionment 1838

County Map of Devon surveyed by Greenwood 1827

Ordnance six-inch first edition Survey Devon map sheet 101 SE 1886

Passmore, A., 2013, *Land adjacent to Palace Mill, Chudleigh, Devon, (centred on NGR SX 8676 7887), Written scheme of investigation for an archaeological trench evaluation, Planning reference: Teignbridge District Council 13/02784/OUT, AC archaeology document no. ACD794/1/0.*

Reed, S., 2013, *Brief for Archaeological Evaluation Undertaken in Support of a Planning Application, Land at NGR 286763 78875 adj. to Palace Mill, Rock Road, Chudleigh, Teignbridge, Devon*, HET reference ARCH/DM/TE/21037.



Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright AC archaeology, Chicklade, Wiltshire. Licence No AL100016452

PROJECT

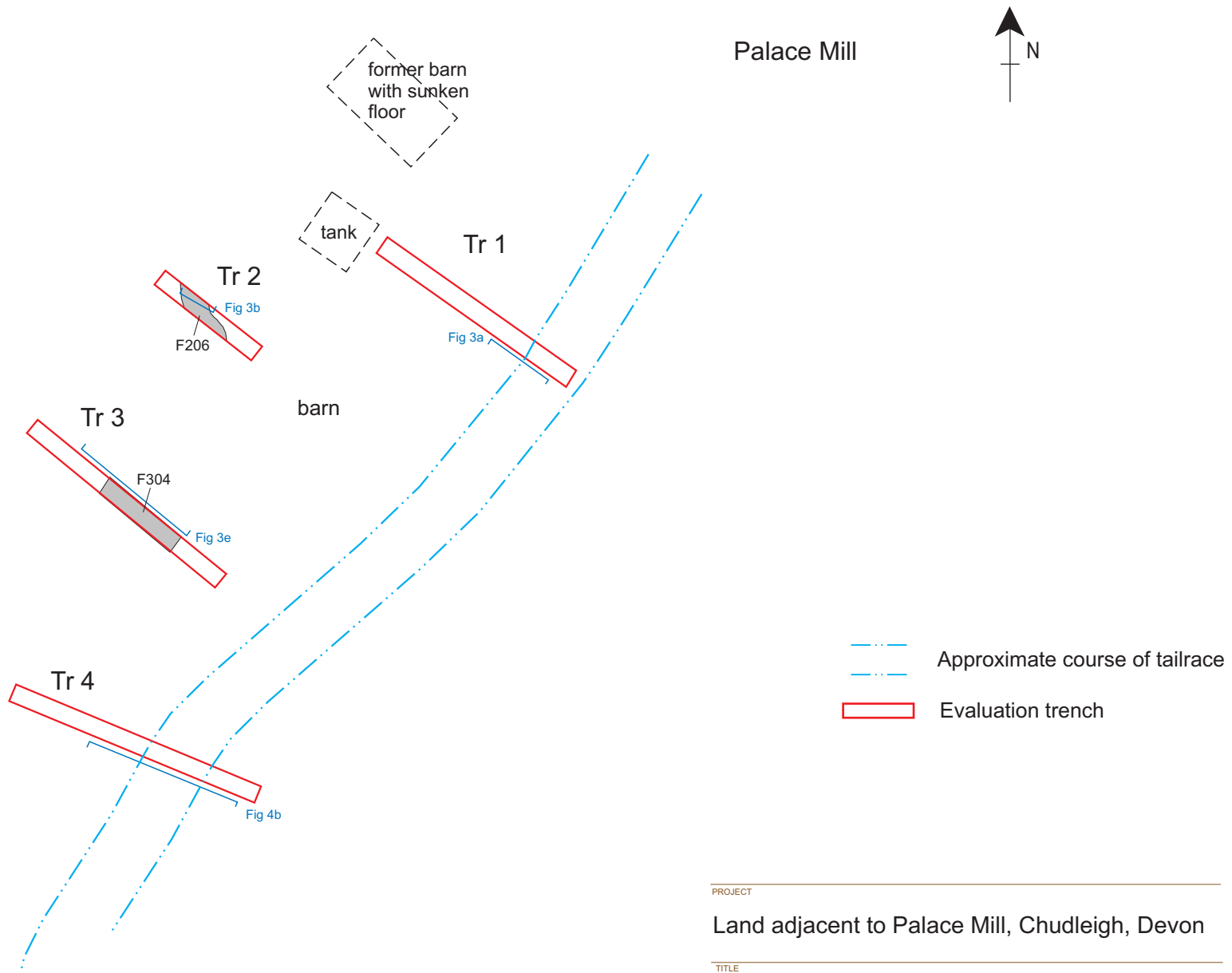
Land adjacent to Palace Mill, Chudleigh, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 1: Location of site

 Location of site





PROJECT

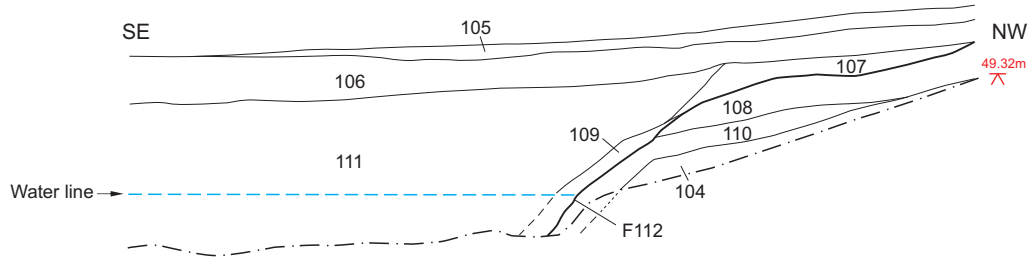
Land adjacent to Palace Mill, Chudleigh, Devon

TITLE

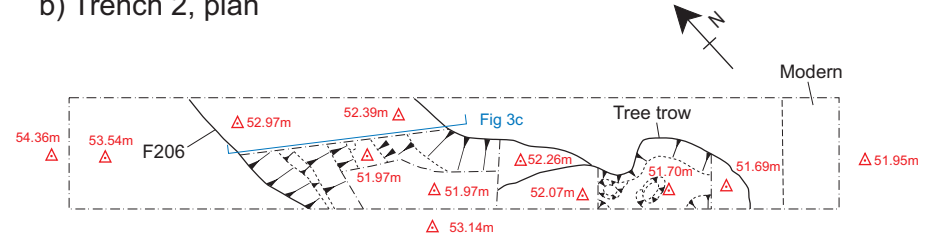
Fig. 2: Trench location plan



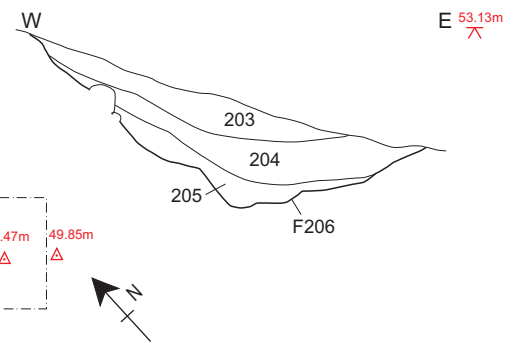
a) Trench 1, section of F112



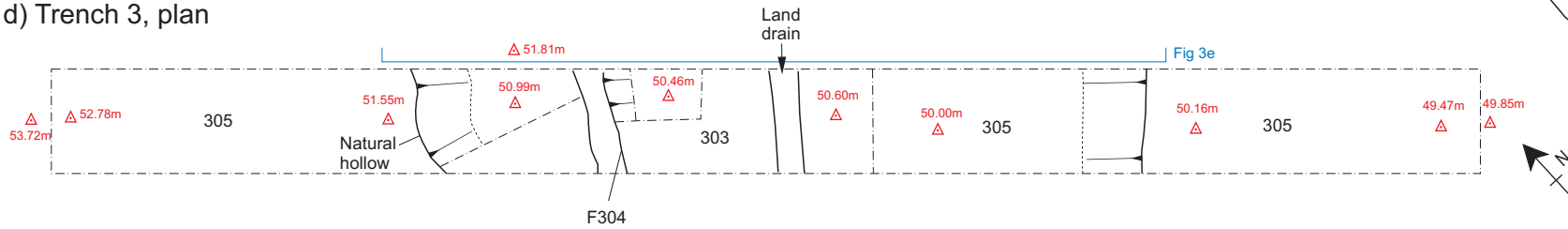
b) Trench 2, plan



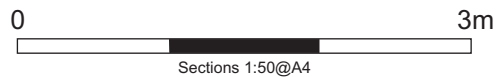
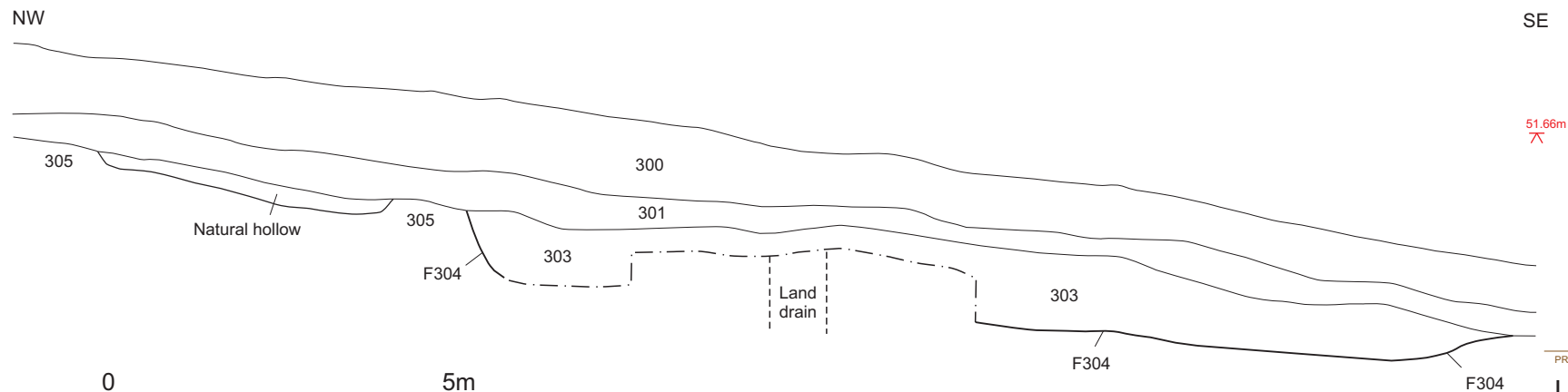
c) Section of F206



d) Trench 3, plan



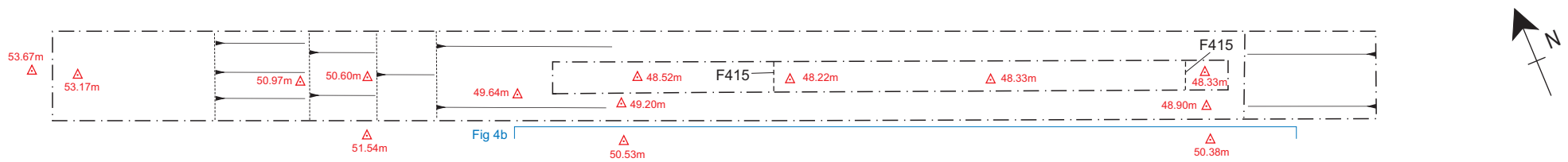
e) Section of F304



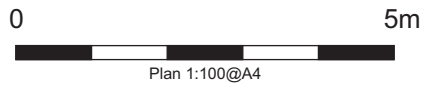
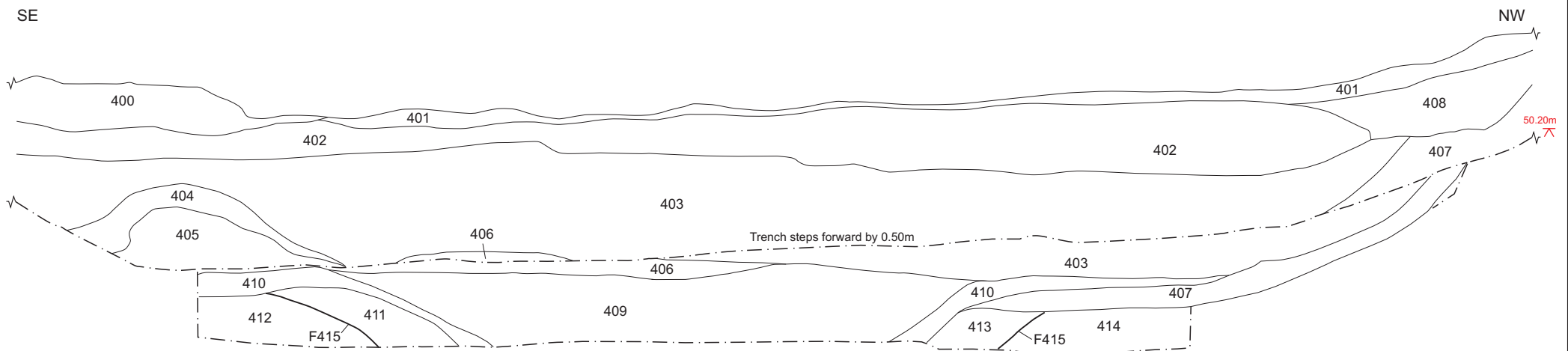
PROJECT
Land adjacent to Palace Mill,
Chudleigh, Devon

TITLE
Fig. 3: Trench 1, section and
Trenches 2 and 3, plans and
sections

a) Trench 4, plan



b) Section of F415



PROJECT

Land adjacent to Palace Mill, Chudleigh, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 4: Trench 4, plan and section





Plate 1: Trench 1, western edge of leat F112, viewed from the north. 1m scale



Plate 2: Trench 2, ditch F206 viewed from the south. 1m scale.



Plate 3: Trench 3, the northern edge of F304, viewed from the southwest. 1m scale.



Plate 4: Trench 4, leat F415, viewed from the northwest. 1m scale.

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