

ALSCOTT FARM WIND TURBINE, PETERS MARLAND, DEVON

NGR SS 4546 1169

Results of an archaeological watching brief

Torridge District Council planning reference
1/0235/2013/FUL

Prepared by:
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On behalf of:
CgMs Consulting Ltd

Document No: ACD941/1/1

Date: October 2014



AC archaeology

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Peters Marland, Torridge	National Grid Reference SS 4546 1169	Number: (Leave blank for HES to fill in)
Subject: Alscott Farm Wind Turbine, Peters Marland, Devon; Results of an archaeological watching brief		Photo attached? Yes
Planning Application no: 1/0235/2013/FUL	Recipient museum: N/A	
OASIS ID: 191579	Museum Accession no: N/A	
Contractor's reference number/code: ACD941	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 16-24 June 2014	
<p>Description of works.</p> <p><i>Introduction</i> (Fig. 1; Plate 1) An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks associated with the construction of a new wind turbine at Alscott Farm, Peters Marland, Devon and was required under a condition of the grant of planning permission by Torridge District Council. The investigation was commissioned by CgMs Consulting who produced a specification (document no. RB/14269) under which the work was carried out.</p> <p>In the plots immediately south of the site is a Bronze Age bowl barrow, which is designated as a Scheduled Monument, and cropmarks of two ring ditches. An oval cropmark and corresponding earthwork have been identified 300m to the northeast of the turbine. A geophysical survey was carried out in support of a previous application on this site, which identified previously unrecorded enclosures on the line of the access track in the field containing the Scheduled Monument. It also revealed further features possibly representing a field system in the field to the north where the wind turbine is sited.</p> <p><i>Results</i> (Figs 2-4; Plates 2-7) The monitored groundworks comprised the removal of the topsoil undertaken by a mechanical excavator using a toothless bucket. An area measuring 20m² was stripped for the compound located adjacent to an existing access track along the southern field boundary. A 4.50m wide haul road from the existing access track to the turbine base in the field was also stripped of topsoil (Plate 2). At its eastern end, was the crane pad, which measured 20m², and the turbine base, which measured 20m by 5m.</p> <p>The deposit sequence comprised dark brown, moderate clayish-silt topsoil with rare, small to medium sub-angular stones and very rare, small charcoal flecks (001). This layer was up to 0.36m thick, and overlaid a natural layer of mid brownish-yellow, compact silty clay with common, small to medium sub-angular stone (002). The solid geology was exposed in some areas under 002 and comprised Devonian slates. A total of three features were exposed cutting into the natural; these are described from west to east, along with a summary of modern drains.</p> <p>Ditch F005 was aligned north-south and the southern terminus was exposed within the haul road excavation (Plate 3). The recorded segment was 0.80m long, 0.80m wide and 0.15m deep, with a sharp top break of slope, gradual sides and a gradual convex break of slope to a flat base. It contained two fills. The primary fill (004) was a mixed light grey-yellow, fairly compact silty clay with very rare charcoal flecks and was up to 0.14m thick. The secondary fill (003) comprised light brown-grey, moderate clayish silt with very rare, small charcoal flecks and was up to 0.06m deep. No dating evidence was retrieved from the either fill.</p> <p>Ditch F008 was also aligned north-south and exposed across the full 4.40m width of the haul road (Plate 4). It measured 1.25m wide by 0.21m deep with a sharp top break of slope, gradual concave sides and a gradual break of slope to the base, which was very irregular due to root disturbance. It</p>		

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contained two fills. The primary fill was a mixed light grey-yellow, fairly compact silty clay with very rare, small charcoal flecks, and was 0.10m thick. The secondary fill comprised dark brown, moderate clayey silt with very rare, small to medium sub-angular stones and very rare, small charcoal flecks, and was 0.11m thick. No dating evidence was retrieved from either fill.

Ditch F016 was curvilinear, and a 16m long length including its southern terminus was exposed within the excavation for the crane pad (Plates 5-7). It was generally north-south aligned but curved around to the west where it terminated. The ditch measured 0.23m wide by 0.23 deep, with a variable top break of slope, variable concave sides, and a generally sharp break of slope to a flat base. It contained three fills. The primary fill (010/014) was mixed light grey and mid yellow, moderate silty clay with very rare, small charcoal flecks, and was up to 0.08m thick. The secondary fill (013) was only present in the northern extent of the exposure, and comprised very dark brown, moderate clayey silt with no inclusions. It was 0.05m thick. The tertiary fill (009/012) was dark brown, moderate clayey silt with very rare, small charcoal flecks, and was 0.12m thick. No dating evidence was retrieved from any of the fills.

Six modern field drains were exposed; all were north to south aligned, 1m-1.20m wide and spaced approximately 20m to 25m apart. The four field drains on the western side of the site had been dug within the last three years.

Comments

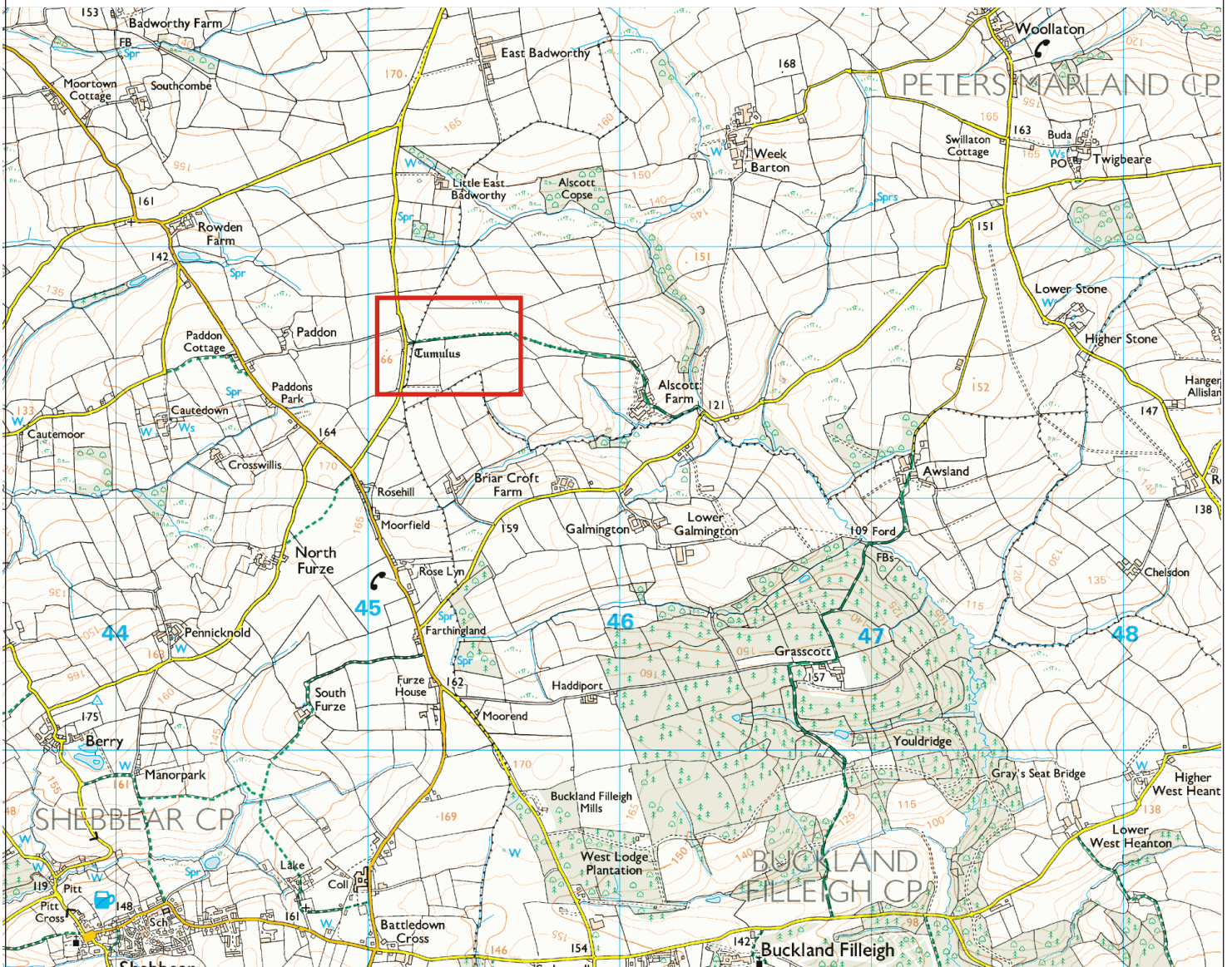
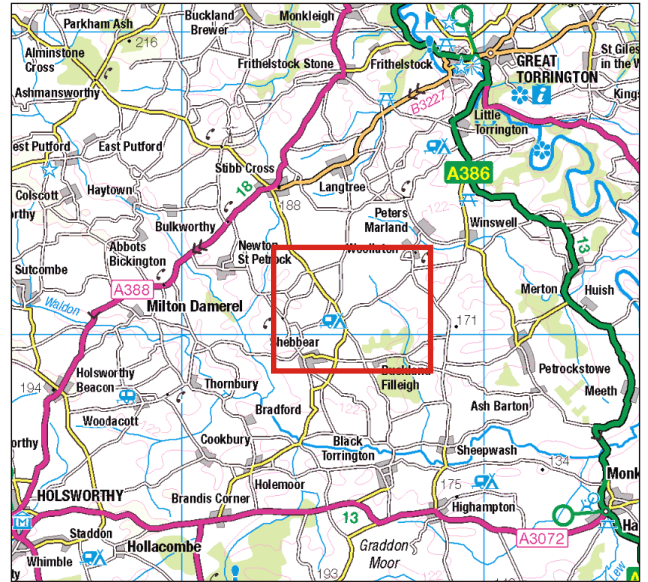
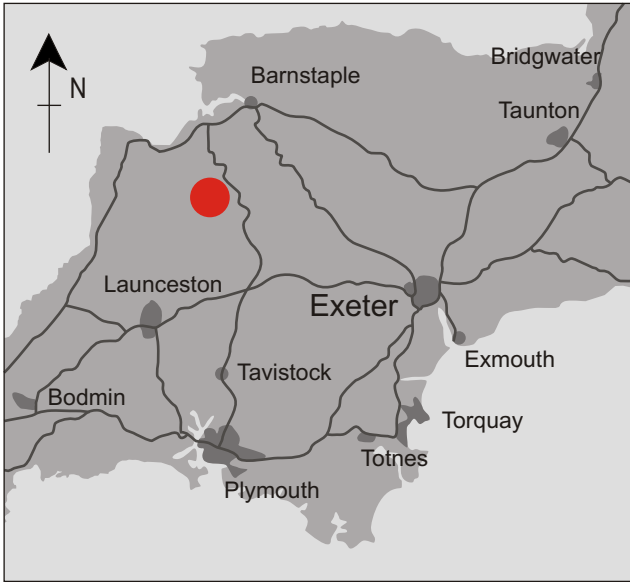
Three archaeological features were encountered within the stripped area, none of which were fully exposed or could be dated. Ditches F005 and F008 were linear, aligned north-south, and on the basis of the limited available evidence could represent boundary ditches, perhaps delineating relict fields extending out from the historic enclosed land north of Briar Croft Farm. This interpretation cannot be put forward for ditch F016 whose curving alignment is inconsistent with the alignments of the historically-enclosed fields to the northeast and south of the site. Instead, an earlier origin is put forward. It had filled up slowly over time without any deliberate anthropogenic intervention, and no other features were found in association with the ditch. It is therefore interpreted as a field boundary ditch in a former, agricultural landscape rather than being associated with settlement or funeral activity.

A plan as well as any other relevant drawings must be attached showing the location and extent of site, areas investigated and features exposed.

Recorder:

Abigail Brown, AC archaeology

Date sent to HER:



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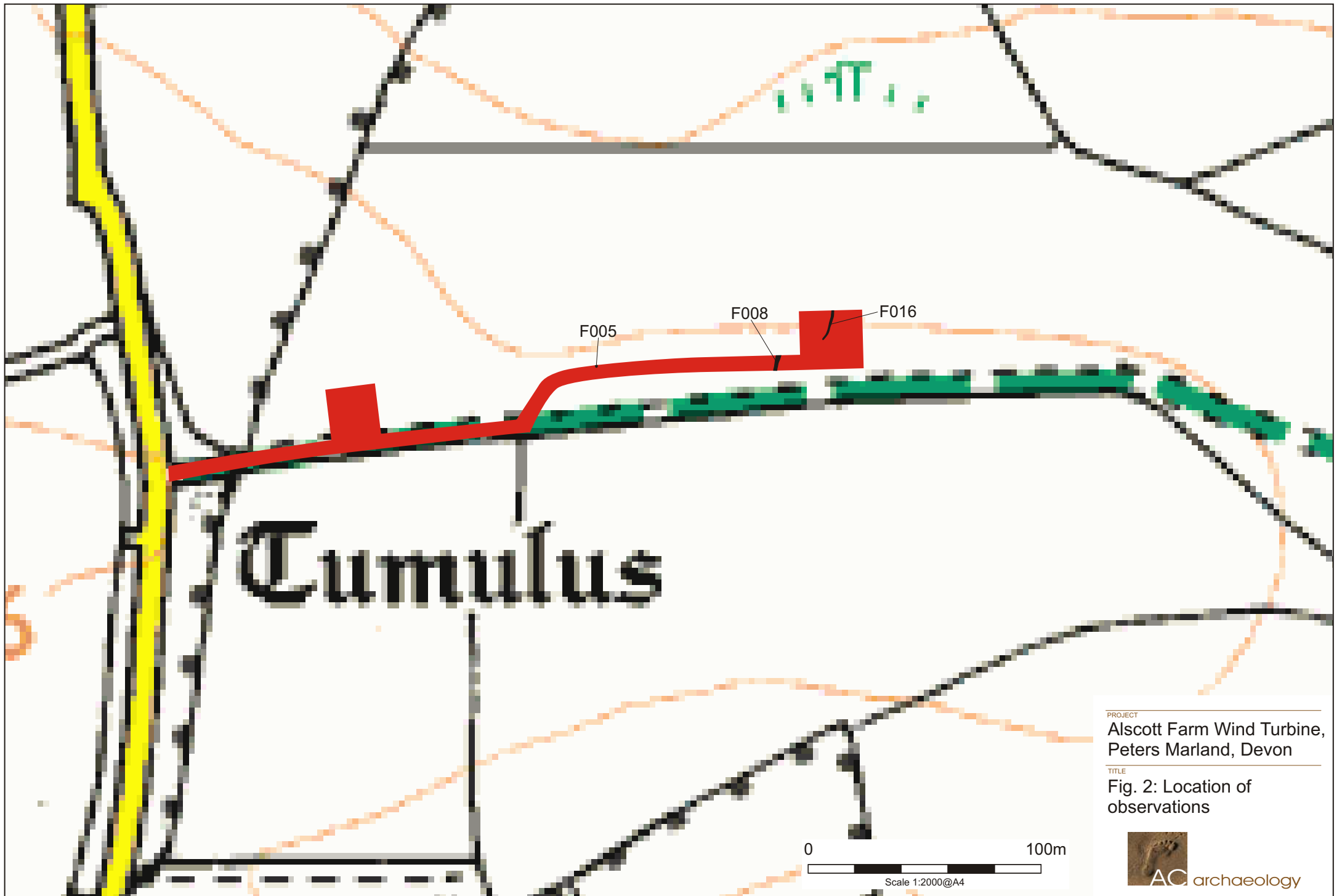
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Fig. 1: Site location



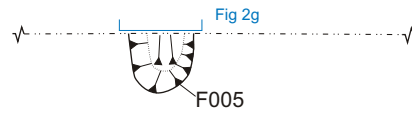


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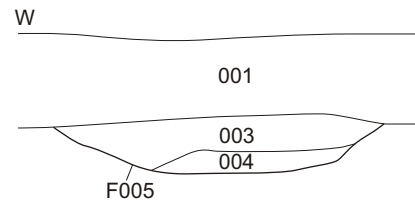
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Fig. 2: Location of
observations



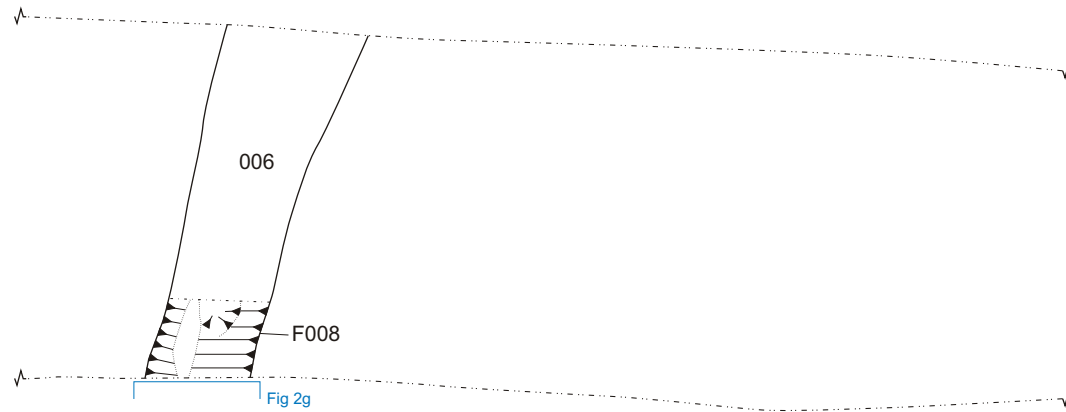
a) Plan of F005



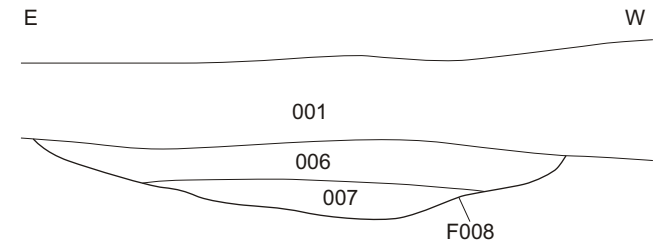
b) Section of F005



c) Plan of F008



d) Section of F008

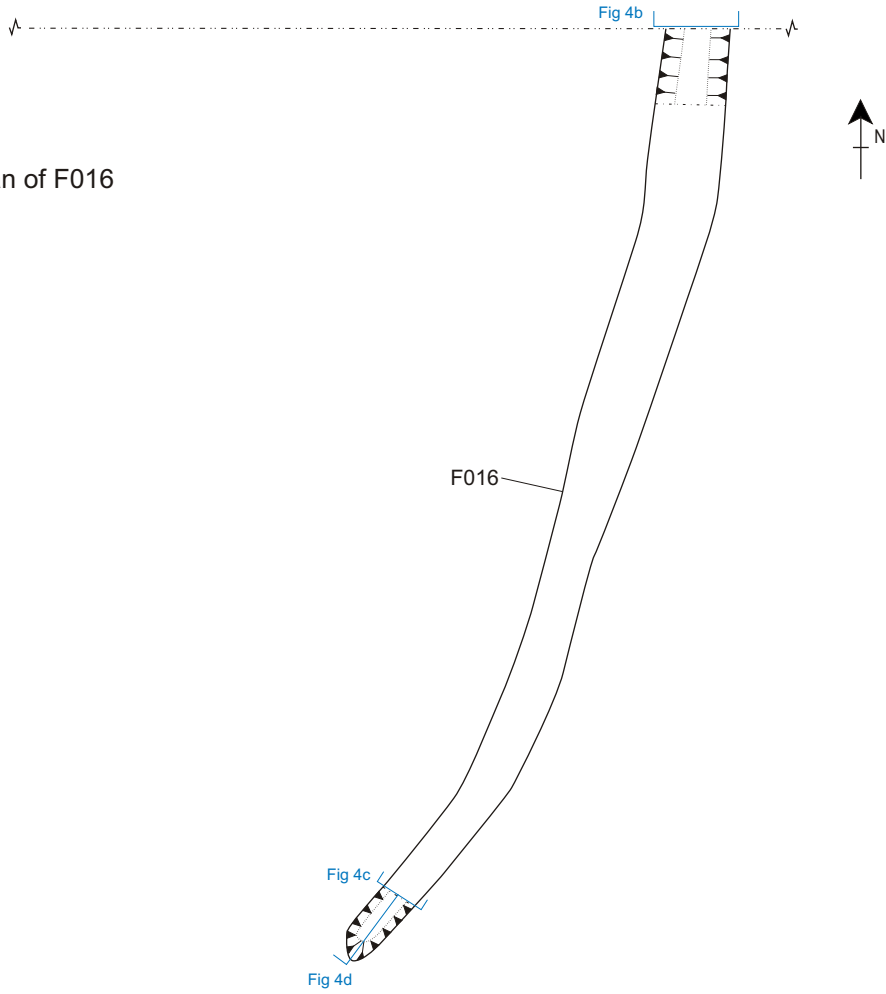


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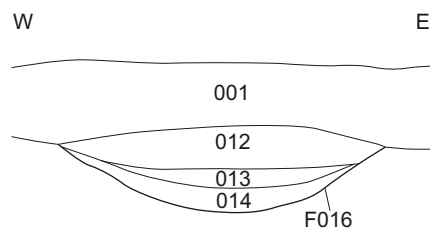
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 Fig. 3: Plans and sections



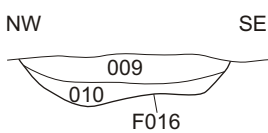
a) Plan of F016



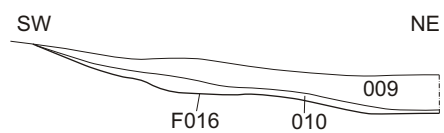
b) Section of F016



c) SW facing section of F016



d) SE facing section of F016



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Fig. 4: Plan and sections



Plate 1: Pre-works view of site looking east



Plate 2: Haul road during stripping looking west. 2m scale.



Plate 3: Ditch F005 looking north. 1m scale.



Plate 4: Ditch F008 looking south. 1m scale.



Plate 5: Stripping of the crane pad looking northwest with F016 visible as the black line behind the scale.



Plate 6: F016 during excavation looking northeast. 1m scale.



Plate 7: Section through F016 looking north. 1m scale.

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