

LAND TO THE SOUTH OF JACKSON MEADOW, LYMPSTONE, DEVON

Centred on SX 99338 83464

Results of an archaeological watching brief

Planning Reference: East Devon District Council 12/2625/MFUL

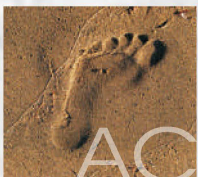
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On behalf of:
JMS Construction SW Ltd

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archaeology

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief on land south of Jackson Meadow, Lympstone, Devon (centred on SX 99338 84364) was undertaken by AC archaeology in March and April 2014 during groundworks and construction for a residential development.

Five boundary or drainage ditches of probable medieval date were uncovered. They matched the orientation of the historic field pattern. An assemblage of medieval pottery, dating to the 12th to 13th centuries, was recovered from the base of one of the ditches.

1. INTRODUCTION (Fig. 1)

- 1.1 An archaeological watching brief on land to the south of Jackson Meadow, Lympstone (centred on SX 99338 84364), was undertaken by AC archaeology from 5 March to 16 April 2014. The investigations were commissioned by JMS Construction SW Ltd and were required as condition of the grant of planning permission for the development by East Devon District Council (reference 12/2625/MFUL), as advised by the Devon County Historic Environment Team (hereafter DCHET).
- 1.2 The site lies towards the centre of the dispersed village of Lympstone, which is split between concentrations adjacent to the sea front and to the northeast of the parish church. The development covers an area of approximately 0.3ha and is situated to the northeast of the parish church on what is currently pasture land bounded to the north by the recent residential development of Jackson Meadow. It is positioned on ground that slopes moderately to the south at around 20m aOD, with the underlying solid geology comprising mudstone of the Exmouth Mudstone and Sandstone Formation (British Geological Survey 2014).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site lies in an area containing a small number of findspots dating from the prehistoric to medieval periods. A single prehistoric worked flint flake was recovered during monitoring of the development at Jackson Meadow immediately to the north of the site (Devon Historic Environment Record EDV4239). Further prehistoric worked flints and pottery have been recovered from Front Meadow to the south of Church Road. Here, late Saxon and medieval pottery was also recorded (MDV71290). A small number of Roman 3rd century coins have also been recorded from the general area, two from the churchyard (MDV10244 and MDV59552) and one further to the southwest near Underhill Farm (MDV10248).
- 2.2 The parish church of St Mary was largely rebuilt during the 19th and early 20th century but retains some earlier fabric including part of the 15th tower (MDV10241).
- 2.3 The Lympstone parish tithe map of 1840 depicts the site within what was part of a wider field, described as 'Outer Field' in the accompanying apportionment. A small building with an 'L' shaped arrangement is depicted on the southwest side of this wider plot. The 1890 Ordnance Survey first-edition 6-inch map shows the building within the plot as no longer present, with the southwest boundary formalised into a straight alignment by this date, which is consistent with the current arrangement. Against the southeast boundary, the addition of a small plot is also depicted, with this containing a small structure by 1905.

3. AIMS

- 3.1** The aim of the watching brief was to preserve by record any archaeological features or deposits exposed during groundworks associated with the project.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1** The archaeological watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by AC archaeology (Hughes 2014). It comprised the attendance of a site archaeologist during groundworks across the site.
- 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 and plans were produced at a scale of 1:10 and 1:20 and all site levels relate to Ordnance Datum.

5. RESULTS (Plans, Figs 2 and 4a, and sections, Figs 3a-d and 4b; Plates 1-4)

5.1 Introduction

Archaeological features and deposits were identified mainly in the northeast corner of the site and are discussed in detail below. The natural geology of the area (context 103) was a mid brown to reddish-brown coloured clay. Overlying deposits consisted of a subsoil (101), generally a minimum of 0.2m thick but frequently deeper, consisting of a mid reddish brown silty clay loam, below a topsoil (100) of mid brown to grey silty clay loam up to 0.46m thick. A further lower subsoil layer (102) – a mid reddish brown silty clay loam – was present in the western end of the site. A total of five linear archaeological features and a natural coombe were recorded.

5.2 Excavations in the northwest corner of the site (Plots 9 and 10)

A series of archaeological features were exposed within the north central part of the excavation for Plots 9 and 10. The southwest termini of the features were exposed, and they all continued northwest beyond the limits of the excavation. The earliest feature was a ditch terminal F115, which measured 1.1m wide by up to 0.65m deep with a symmetrical profile with moderately steep sloping sides and a concave base. It contained five fills (116-9 and 125). Primary fill (116) consisted of reddish brown sandy clay with occasional small to large sub-rounded and rounded pebbles, which appeared to be redeposited natural. Above this was a layer (117) of mid red clay, whilst 118 above consisted of mid brown clay sand with common small sub-rounded stones. Upper fills (119) and (125) consisted of red clay and light brown silty sand respectively. There were no finds from any of these fills. Fill F115 was sealed by buried soils 114 and 130.

The western side of ditch F115 had been cut by another ditch (F106), although the exact point from which F106 cut F115 has been lost by the later excavation of a larger ditch (F108). This feature measured 0.35m wide by 0.13m deep; it was NW-SE oriented and its southeast terminal was exposed. It had a single fill (107) consisting of light grey and reddish brown sandy silty loam. It was heavily truncated by ditch F108.

Ditch F108 measured at least 0.7m wide by 0.73m deep. It was NW-SE orientated and had a symmetrical profile with moderately steep sloping sides and a concave base. It had been cut through the buried soil 130. Ditch F108 contained three fills (109-11). Primary fill 109 consisted of mid greyish brown silty sand and contained medieval pottery of 12th- to 13th-century date.

Secondary fill 110 consisted of mid reddish brown silt clay which appears to be redeposited natural. The upper fill (111) consisted of mid brownish grey silty clay loam.

Ditch F112 measured 0.56m wide by 0.16m deep and its southeast terminus was exposed. It had a steep northeast side with a shallow southwest side and an uneven base. It cut ditch F108. It contained a single fill (113) consisting of a light reddish brown silty clay loam. There were no finds.

A natural coombe was partially revealed to the southwest of ditch features F106, F108, F112 and F115. This was not fully excavated during the groundworks. The lowest exposed fill was colluvium (126), which was overlaid by a further colluvial layer (129), which was very similar in character to the overlying subsoil (101) that had developed to a thickness of 0.75m within the coombe.

5.3 Excavations in the southwest side of the site

In building plot 13, a linear ditch (F105) was exposed in two foundation trenches. It measured 1.1m wide by 0.51m deep and had moderately sloping sides and a rounded base. It was NE-SW oriented, and contained a single fill (104) consisting of mid reddish brown silty clay with abundant sea shell, including oysters, cockles and winkles.

6. THE FINDS *by Charlotte Coles and John Allan*

6.1 Introduction

The finds recovered during the watching brief were retained, cleaned and marked where appropriate. They were then quantified according to material type within each context and the assemblage was scanned to extract information regarding the range, nature and date of artefacts represented. The finds included a moderate collection of medieval pottery, several sherds of post-medieval pottery, a single piece of worked flint and a small collection of shell. Finds totals by material type are given in Table 1.

Context	Context Description	Medieval Pot		Post-Medieval Pot		Worked flint/chert		Shell	
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
100	Topsoil			1	11				
101	Subsoil	6	67	2	61	1	5		
104	Fill of ditch 105							10	47
109	Fill of ditch 108	102	513						
Unstrat		10	38						
Totals		118	618	3	72	1	5	10	47

Table 1: Finds quantification by material type. Weight in grams.

6.2 Medieval Pottery

A total of 108 pieces of medieval pottery was recovered from two contexts and a further 10 sherds were unstratified. Of these, 102 pieces in a chert-tempered calcareous fabric were recovered from context 109; these are 12 rim sherds, 7 base sherds and 83 body sherds from vessels with cupped rims dating from the late 12th to early 13th century. An additional four of the sherds from the subsoil 101 are also in the same fabric. This material is similar to pottery found in Front Meadow to the south of the church in Lymptone, and assemblages of this material have also been found at Kenn and Membury. The other two sherds of material from the subsoil are derived from an open form of Exeter Fabric 40 and date from the 13th to 15th century. The 10 sherds of unstratified pottery are a sandy tempered ware not local to the area, and are similar to Ham Green Ware. These also date from the 12th or 13th century.

6.3 Post-Medieval pottery

There are three sherds of post-medieval pottery, all recovered from the overlying soil sequence in the western portion of the site. These are a handle from a 16th-17th century vessel recovered from the topsoil 100, a body sherd from a South Somerset courseware dish of 18th century date and a body sherd of blue transfer-printed pottery of 18th century or later date, both recovered from the subsoil 102.

6.4 Worked flint

A single piece of worked flint was recovered from the subsoil. This is a dark grey mottled flint flake, with some cortex still present.

6.5 Shells

The 10 shells from the fill 104 of ditch F105 are a small retained sample recorded assemblage. They consist of a mixture of oysters, winkles and cockles.

7. DISCUSSION

7.1 The ditches F115, F106, F108 and F112 were constructed in sequence from northeast to southwest. The medieval 12th to 13th century pottery from the primary fill of ditch F108 indicates that ditches F106 and F115, and the intervening soil layers, are medieval or earlier in date.

7.2 The series of ditches F115, F106, F108 and F112 follow the orientation of the historic field boundaries as depicted on the first edition Ordnance Survey maps and in this location could mark a former division of a larger field. The long sequence of intercutting may indicate that they formed drainage ditches associated with the boundary. Ditch F105 also follows an orientation which would match the pattern of historic fields. It is possible that the landscape formerly containing much smaller fields, as recorded on historic maps further to the southwest in the village. The Devon Historic Landscape Characterisation labels this historic field pattern as 'modern fields that have been created by adapting earlier fields of probable post-medieval date'; it also shows that the church marks the eastern edge of the historic core of Lypmstone.

7.3 Lypmstone is named as a manor at Domesday which was under the ownership of Saeward at the time of the Conquest. The parish Church of St Mary, to the southwest of the site, is supposed to have origins of at least the 13th century in that location (Devon HER MDV10241). Finds from fields to the south of the church, at Front Meadow, also regarded to be outside of the historic core of the village in the Devon Historic Landscape Characterisation, includes Saxo-Norman pottery earlier than the Jackson Meadow assemblage and later medieval pottery dating to after the finds from Jackson Meadow (MDV71290; and C. Coles pers. comm.). The site of Lypmstone House, to the southeast of the site, has been proposed as the location of the former manor house of Lypmstone (MDV17787). It is perhaps possible to propose, on albeit limited evidence, that the medieval core of the village was centred on the church with the historic core moving westward towards the estuary over time. A chart of the Exe Estuary commissioned by Henry VIII shows that this pattern had already been established by the 16th century (Fox 2007, fig. 3).

8. CONCLUSIONS

8.1 The archaeological watching brief has revealed buried features of probable medieval date. The deposits were revealed in only a small part of the development area, with part of the site containing a natural coombe.

8.2 It has been tentatively proposed, on very limited evidence, from this site and nearby Front Meadow, that the medieval core of the village and associated infields extended further to the east, in the areas to the north, east and south of the church, than is evident by the current historic core of Lympstone in the present day.

9. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

9.1 The finds, paper and digital archive is currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ. The finds archive will be offered to the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, under the reference number RAMM14/71, but if they are unable to accept this, then it will be dealt with under their current accession policy. The paper and digital archive will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service.

9.2 An online OASIS entry has been completed, using the unique identifier 193674, which includes a digital copy of this report.

10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

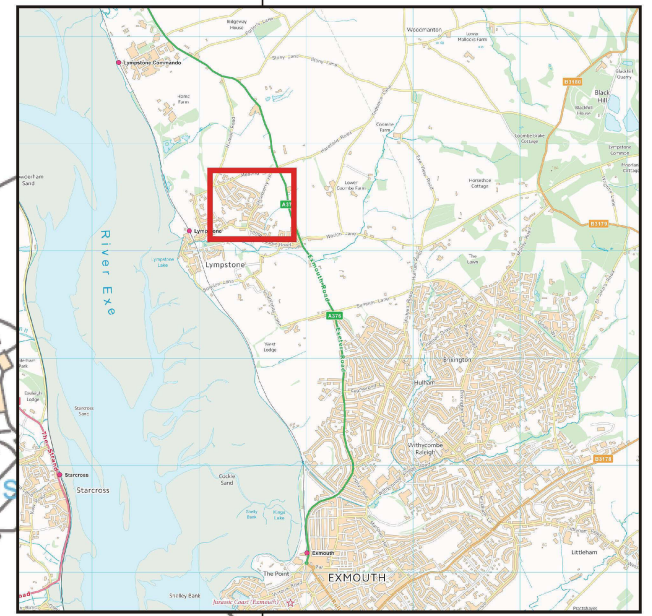
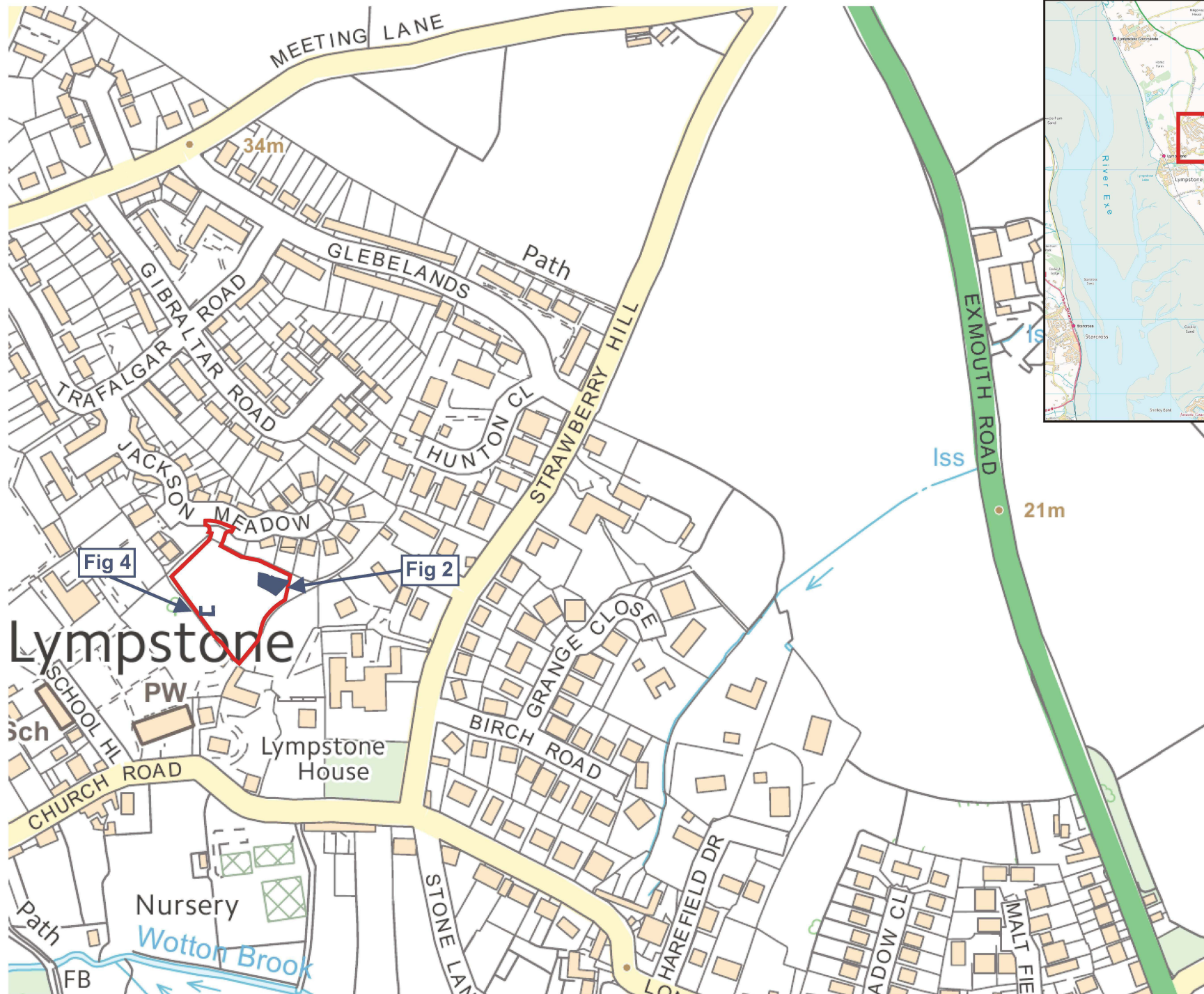
10.1 The watching brief was commissioned by JMS Construction SW Ltd and managed for AC archaeology by Simon Hughes. The site works were carried out by Christopher Caine, Paul Cooke, Stella De-Villiers, Will Smith, Abigail brown and Alex Farnell. The illustrations for this report were prepared by Elisabeth Patkai. The collaborative role of Stephen Reed, DCCHET Archaeology Officer is duly acknowledged.

11. REFERENCES

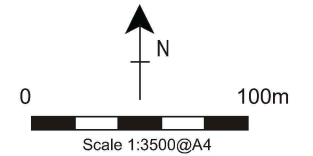
British Geological Survey 2014, www.bgs.ac.uk/opengeoscience

Fox, H.S.A. 2007, 'Two Devon estuaries in the middle ages: fisheries, ports, fortifications and places of worship', *Landscapes* 8, 39-68.

Hughes, S. 2014, *Land South of Jackson Meadow, Lympstone Devon, NGR SX 99338 84364, Project Design for an archaeological watching brief, East Devon District Council planning ref. 12/2625/MFUL*, AC archaeology document no. ACD861/1/0



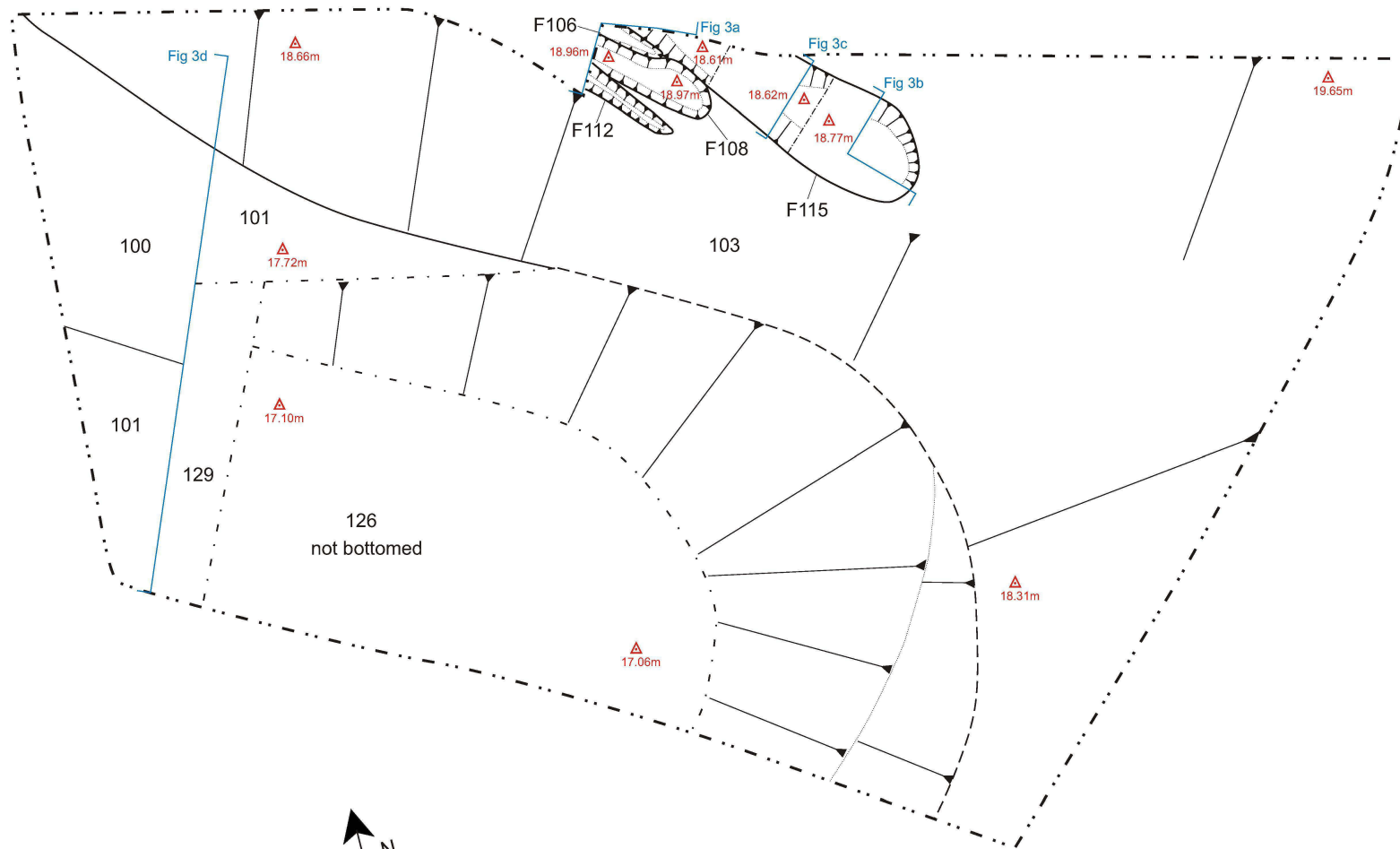
- Site boundary
- Areas with archaeological features



PROJECT
**Land at Jackson Meadow,
 Lympstone, Devon**

TITLE
**Fig. 1: Site location with
 locations of archaeological
 features**



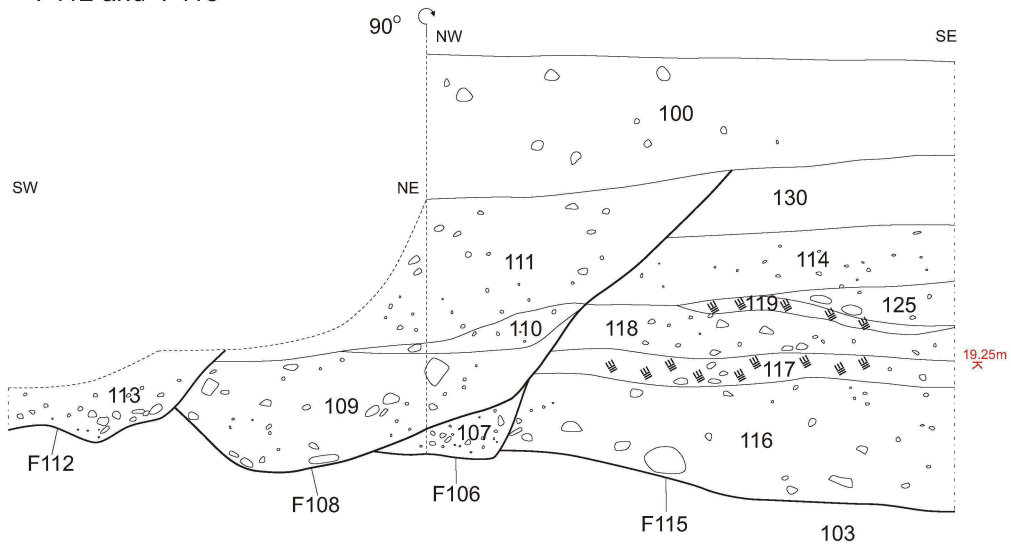


PROJECT
 Land at Jackson Meadow,
 Lypstone, Devon

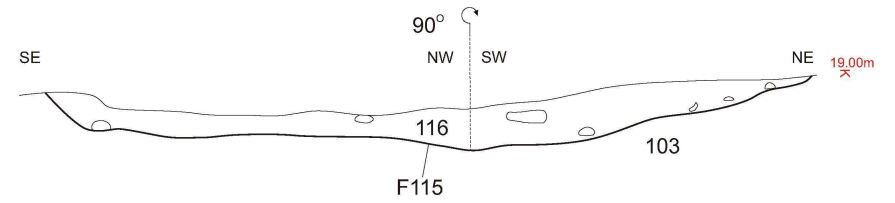
TITLE
 Fig. 2: Plan of
 archaeological features in
 building plots 9 and 10



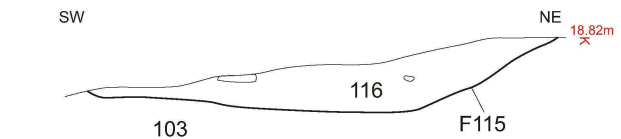
a) Section of F106, F108
F112 and F115



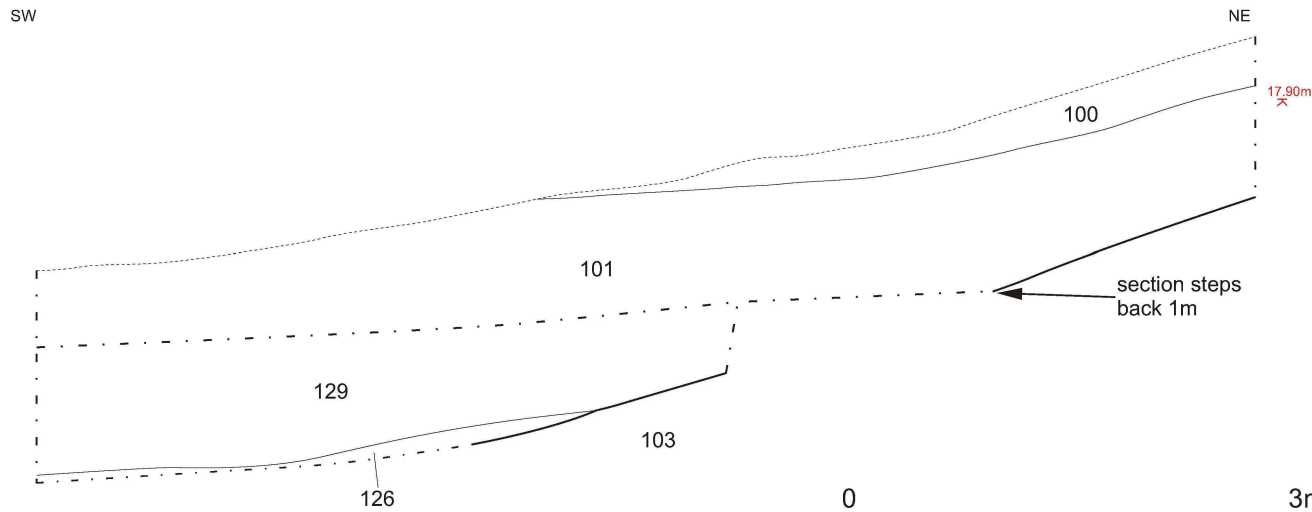
b) Section of F115



c) Section of F115



d) Section of natural coombe

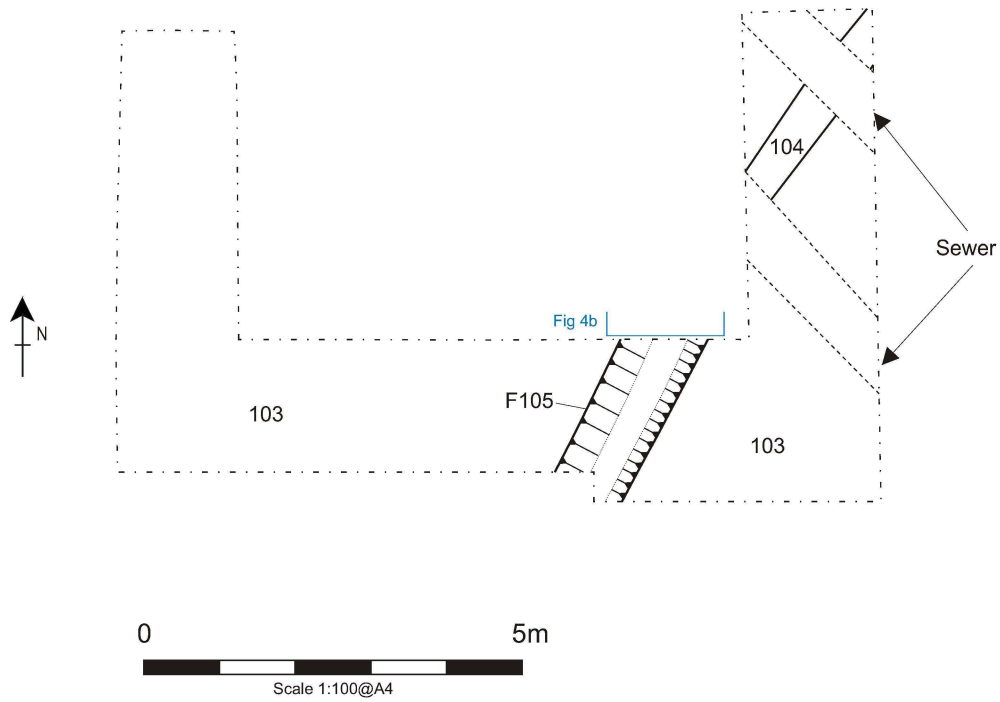


-  Stones
-  Clay

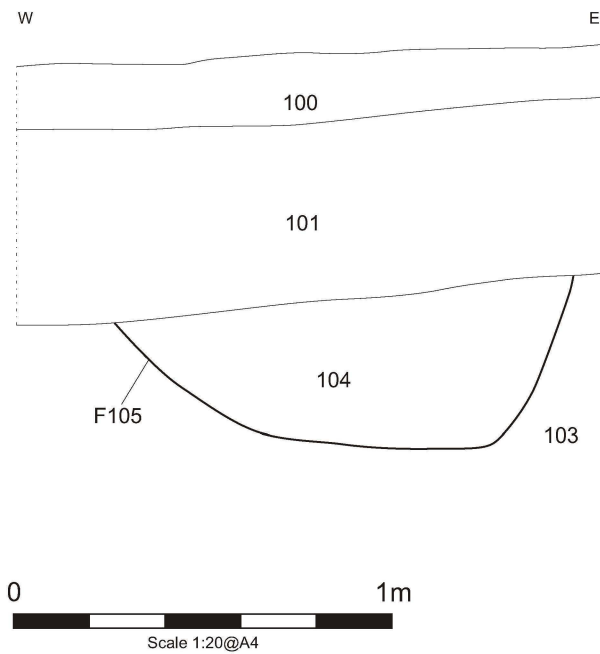
PROJECT
Land at Jackson Meadow,
Lypstone, Devon

TITLE
Fig. 3: Sections

a) Plan



b) Section of F105



PROJECT

Land at Jackson Meadow, Lypstone, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 4: Plan and section of
ditch F105 in building plot 13



Plate 1: General view of the site, looking south



Plate 2: Southeast-facing sections of ditches F106, F108 and F112 (scale 1m)

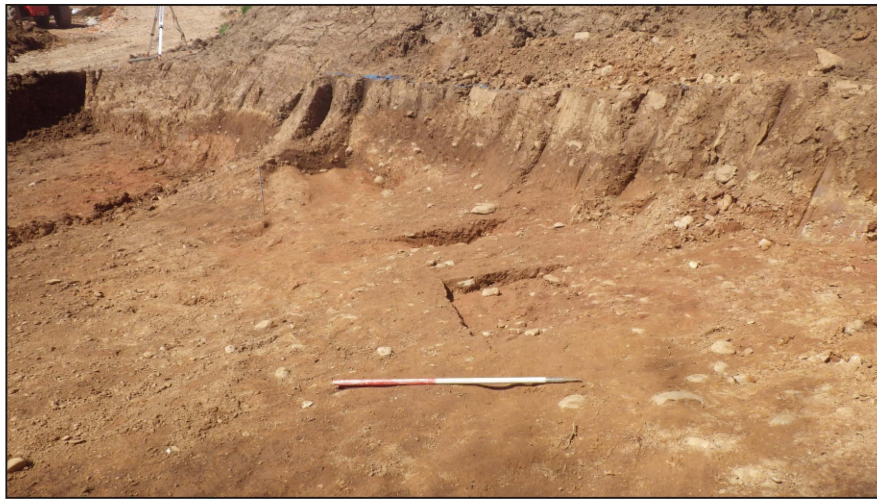


Plate 3: Ditches F106, F108, F112 and F115, looking northwest (scale 1m)



Plate 4: Natural coombe, looking southeast (scale 1m)

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