

LAND AT VICARAGE HILL, KINGSTEIGNTON, DEVON

Centred on NGR SX 8757 7303

Results of an Archaeological Watching Brief

Teignbridge District Council Planning Reference:
11/00644/MAJ

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On behalf of:
Devonshire Homes Ltd

Report No: ACD827/2/0

Date: November 2015



AC archaeology

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Summary

Archaeological monitoring and recording carried out on land at Vicarage Hill, Kingsteignton, Devon (centred on NGR SX 8757 7303) was undertaken by AC archaeology between December 2014 and June 2015 during groundworks associated with a residential development.

The archaeological investigations recorded the presence of Bronze Age activity on the site, with this consisting of the base and collapsed body of a Middle Bronze Age pottery vessel deposited within a pit. Two adjacent undated small pits were also exposed, which were considered to be contemporary.

A probable medieval to post-medieval ditch was also recorded.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document sets out the results of archaeological monitoring and recording carried out during groundworks associated with a residential development on land at Vicarage Hill, Kingsteignton, Devon (SX 8757 7303). The work was required as condition 33 of planning consent granted by Teignbridge District Council (ref. 11/00644/MAJ), following consultation with the Devon Council Historic Environment Team (hereafter DCCHET).

1.2 The archaeological works were commissioned Devonshire Homes Ltd. and were carried out by AC archaeology between December 2014 and June 2015.

1.3 The site was located on the southeast side of Kingsteignton, on land extending to the south of Vicarage Hill Road (Fig. 1, Plate 1). It occupied an irregular-shaped plot positioned on the northern side of Penns Mount Hill on ground that sloped moderately-steeply towards the north between 35m and 25m aOD (above Ordnance Datum). The underlying solid geology comprised slate of the Whiteway Mudstone Formation (British Geological Society Online Viewer)

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The site is situated to the southeast of the historic core of Kingsteignton within an area that was covered by former medieval field systems (Devon Historic Environment Record, ref. MDV9247). Remnants of these survived as parts of the existing field system and as previously-recorded lynchets to east and southeast of the site (MDV 14461 and 14463).

2.2 Previously identified prehistoric activity in the area was limited to prehistoric worked flints recovered to the east during groundworks associated with the Teigngrace to Kingsteignton water main construction and during recent archaeological investigations on Penns Mount to the south (AC archaeology forthcoming).

3. AIM

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 Archaeological works were carried out in accordance with a Project Design prepared by AC archaeology (Hughes 2013). All topsoil stripping was carried out using a tracked 360° machine fitted with a toothless bucket. Footings trenches and service trenches were excavated using a toothed-bucket. The groundwork excavations were directly supervised by the attending archaeologist. Groundworks comprised the bulk reduction of topsoil from the entire site, with subsequent deeper level reduction for the internal road layout, house plots and parking areas (Fig. 2).

4.3 All features and deposits exposed 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, 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

Natural subsoil (context 102) consisted weathered bedded slate in a light yellow to mid red silty-clay matrix (context 102). It was exposed at a depth of 0.6m below existing levels and within the areas stripped for the internal road layout, the house plots and parking areas. The natural subsoil was overlain by a mid reddish-brown colluvial subsoil (101) and a dark brown silty-loam topsoil (100). One piece of worked flint was recovered from subsoil 101.

A total of three pits (F105, F107 and F109) and one ditch (F112) were exposed (Fig.2), with these described in detail below.

5.2 The archaeological features

Pit F105 (Plan Fig 3a and section Fig. 3b, Plates 2 and 3)

Sub-circular pit F105 measured 0.44m long, 0.4m wide and 0.1m deep with steeply-sloping sides and a flat base. On the base of the pit was the remains of a truncated Bronze Age pottery vessel that measured 0.25m across and was comprised of an *in situ* base and collapsed body sherds. This was overlain by a mid greyish-brown clayey-silt loam (104). One piece of worked flint was also recovered from deposit 104.

Pit F107 (Plan Fig 3a and section Fig. 3c, Plate 4)

Oval pit F107 measured 0.6m long, 0.4m wide and 0.09m deep with gradually-sloping sides and a concave base. It contained a mid grey clayey-silt loam (106) with common, small to medium sub-rounded and sub-angular stone, and rare, small charcoal fleck inclusions. No finds were recovered from pit F107.

Pit F109 (Plan Fig 3a and section Fig. 3d, Plate 5)

Sub-round pit F109 measured 0.26m long, 0.24m wide and 0.14m deep with steeply-sloping sides and a concave base. It contained a mid brown clayey-silt loam (108) with common, small to medium sub-angular stone and rare small charcoal fleck inclusions. This feature was undated.

4.3 *Ditch F112* (Plan Fig 2 and section Fig. 3e, Plate 6)

Ditch F112 was northeast to southwest aligned and was exposed for a length of 5m. It measured 0.46m wide and 0.2m deep with moderately-steep sloping sides and a concave base. The ditch contained a light brownish-grey silty-clay primary fill (111),

which was overlain by an accumulation of mid brown silty-clay (110). No finds were recovered from ditch F112.

6. THE FINDS

By Henrietta Quinnell

6.1 Introduction

All finds recovered on site 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 assemblage consists of a group of prehistoric pottery and two worked flints. The finds are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of finds by context

Context	Context Description	Worked Flint		Prehistoric Pottery	
		No	Wg	No	Wt
101	Subsoil	1	17		
104	Fill of pit F105	1	1	399	2567
Total		2	18	399	2567

6.2 Prehistoric Pottery

The 399 sherds 2567g came from fill 104 of pit F105. This represented part of a vessel placed upright in the pit. Its base, which measured some 250mm across, was complete, but as with most of the other sherds, had cracked up badly. Other sherds represented upper parts of the vessel. There were two sherds that were small parts of a flat-topped, slightly everted, rim. A single sherd had two widely separated finger nail impressions, which suggested at least one line of impressions around the vessel.

The sherds included a lug (Plate 7). This is large and round, with a broad deep horizontal groove across its width, and appears to be without parallel, certainly in South West England.

The fabric is unusually hard-fired for the prehistoric period but still very friable. It has a generally oxidised colour, which is tinged with a pale/white shade, suggesting that the clay used may have had a source among the ball clays of the Bovey area. The clay contained large, inclusions (many more than 5mm) of smashed rock of a fine texture.

The overall form of the vessel is difficult to establish but is likely to have been of simple slightly biconical shape. The base diameter is likely to have been much less than the original height of the vessel, and so it is apparent that very little of the vessel survives. While no precise parallel for this vessel is known, it most probably belongs broadly within the Trevisker tradition of the Middle Bronze Age (Quinnell 2012). Trevisker-related vessels in Devon, especially in the area around Exeter, tend to have little decoration (see Quinnell 2011). When lugs occur, they are usually paired, occasionally in fours.

If the vessel was originally deposited complete in its pit, then cracking up would have occurred as the pit filled in and its site became eroded. It is likely that more than half the vessel is not now present.

6.3 Worked flint

There were two pieces of worked flint recovered, but neither closely dateable. These consist of a cortical flake probably sourced from the Haldon area with a little retouch from subsoil 101 and a fragment of a thin flake with invasive retouch from pit F105 fill 104.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

By Cressida Whitton

A single bulk soil sample (Sample 1, context 104) was recovered from the collapsed *in situ* Bronze Age pot. The vessel was block-lifted on site and returned to the AC Finds Department for hand-excavation where the remaining deposit was excavated. A 5 litre sample from within and around the collapsed pot, was processed using standard flotation method, but the deposit contained no ecofacts.

8. DISCUSSION

8.1 Archaeological monitoring and recording of the groundworks at Vicarage Hill exposed a small number of archaeological features. The most important of which was pit F105, which contained the base and collapsed body of the Middle Bronze Age Trevisker-type pot (c.1500-1000BC). This was almost certainly a deliberate placement in a pit, which had been excavated to accommodate the size of the vessel. Although probably deposited complete, its partial survival was due to the shallow-nature of the pit, with the upper portion having been truncated away, probably as a result of agricultural activity.

8.2 Deposition of this nature is often linked with funerary activity, with associated cremated material forming part of the deposit. However, as no burnt material was recovered from the associated fill in the pit, its function is less clear. The adjacent small pits (F107 and F109) were undated, but based on proximity and their similar and sterile deposit-types, they may well have been contemporary features. If correct, then these may have comprised further non-funerary features suggesting that the nature of activity represented here could have been associated with settlement.

8.3 Ditch F112 was undated, but based on its alignment as parallel to Vicarage Road, it perhaps represents a medieval or post medieval boundary associated with the existing field system.

9. CONCLUSIONS

The archaeological investigations have recorded the presence of previously-unknown Bronze Age activity on Penns Mount, with this represented by the deposition of a, probably originally complete, Middle Bronze Age pottery vessel within a pit. A lack of associated cremated material, which might have been expected from such a feature and would have provided a funerary association to this activity, makes its function unclear.

10. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

10.1 The paper and digital archive is currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ. A museum-allocated temporary reference number has been obtained from the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, which is RAMM: 15/51.

- 10.2** An online OASIS entry has been completed, using the unique identifier **229236**, which includes a digital copy of this report.

11. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

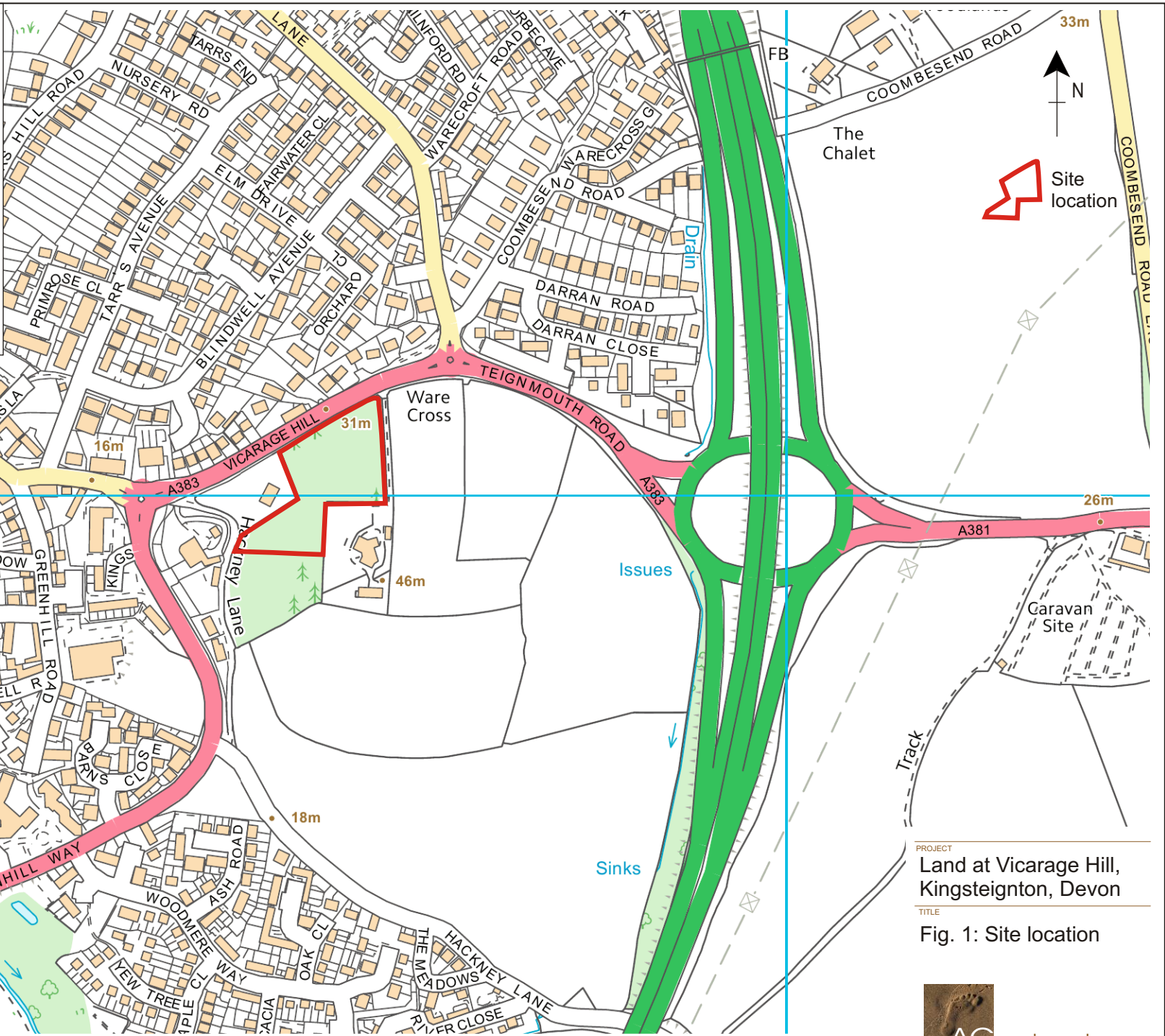
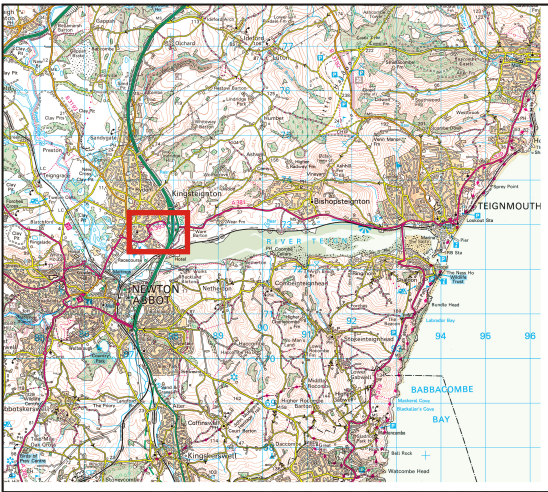
- 7.1** The evaluation was commissioned by Devonshire Homes Ltd. The site monitoring was carried out by Abigail Brown, Alex Farnell and Simon Hughes. The illustrations for this report were prepared by Elisabeth Patkai. The collaboration of Stephen Reed, Devon Archaeology Officer, is duly acknowledged.

12. REFERENCES

Hughes, S., 2013, *Land At Vicarage Hill, Kingsteignton, Devon: Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological watching brief*. Unpublished AC archaeology document, ref. ACD827/1/1

Quinnell, H., 2011. 'Prehistoric Pottery' in Pearce, P., Steinmetzer, M. and Quinnell, H., 'An Early Neolithic pit alignment, Grooved Ware and Bronze Age field boundaries at the former Royal Naval Stores Depot, Old Rydon Lane, Exeter', *Proc Devon Archaeol Soc* **69**, 37-41.

Quinnell, H., 2012. 'Trevisker Pottery: some recent studies', in W.J. Britnell and R.J. Silvester (eds), *Reflections on the Past; Studies in Honour of Frances Lynch*, 146-171.



PROJECT
Land at Vicarage Hill,
Kingsteignton, Devon

TITLE
Fig. 1: Site location



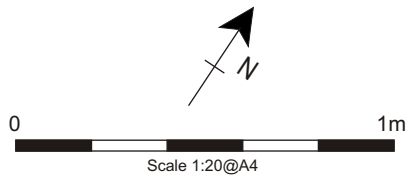
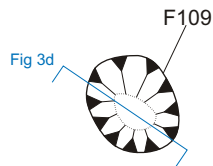
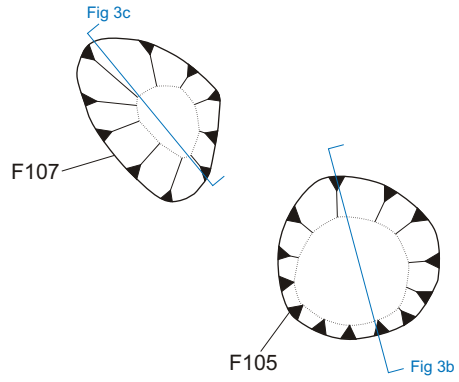
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PROJECT
 Land at Vicarage Hill,
 Kingsteignton, Devon
 TITLE
 Fig. 2: Development plan with
 archeological features shown



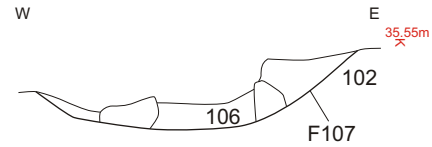
a) Plan of pits F107, F105 and F109



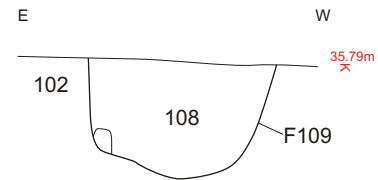
b) Section of F105



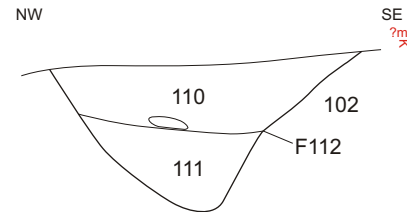
c) Section of F107



d) Section of F109



e) Section of F112



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Land at Vicarage Hill,
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TITLE
Fig. 3: Plan and
sections





Plate 1: General view of site looking northeast towards Vicarage Hill Road



Plate 2: Showing pre-excitation view of pit F105 with collapsed Bronze Age pot in situ, view to northeast (scale 1m)



Plate 3: Showing mid-excitation view of pit F105 with Bronze Age pot base in situ, view to northeast (scale 0.4m)



Plate 4: Pit F107, view to north (scale 0.4m)



Plate 5: Pit F109, view to south (scale 0.4m)



Plate 6: Ditch F112, view to northeast (scale 0.3m)



Plate 7: Bronze Age pottery lug (scale 3cm)

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