

LAND AT NORTH GRAY'S FARM, MEMBURY, AXMINSTER, DEVON

NGR SY 2608 0650

Results of Archaeological Monitoring and Recording

East Devon District Council Planning Reference
14/0088/FUL

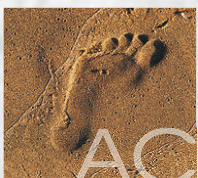
Prepared by:
Simon Hughes

With a contribution from:
Naomi Payne

On behalf of:
Mr & Mrs Tetlow

Report No: ACD980/2/0

Date: May 2016



archaeology

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Membury, East Devon District	National Grid Reference ST 2608 0650	Number:
Subject: Land at North Grey's Farm, Membury, Axminster, Devon: results of archaeological monitoring and recording		Photo attached? Yes
Planning Application no: 14/0088/FUL	Recipient museum: N/A	
OASIS ID: 252578	Museum Accession no: N/A	
Contractor's reference number/code: ACD980	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 9th June 2015 to 13th April 2016	
<p><i>Introduction</i></p> <p>Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken by AC archaeology during groundworks associated with the construction of a new country house on land at North Grey's Farm, Membury, Axminster, Devon between June 2015 and April 2016. The site was located approximately 2.3km to the northwest of Membury. It occupied part of a wider pasture plot to the east of the North Grey's Farm positioned on ground that lay at around 135m aOD, with the underlying solid geology comprising mudstone of the Branscombe Mudstone Formation.</p> <p>The development lay in an area where a number of prehistoric worked flint scatters had been recorded as well as evidence for early medieval ironworking.</p> <p><i>Results</i></p> <p>Monitored groundworks comprised the bulk reduction of soils from the footprint of the proposed country house, as well as trenching for a ground heat system, electricity cable and sewerage system. The ground heat system comprised the excavation of a concentration of closely positioned zig-zagged trenches measuring 0.4m wide. The stripping for the associated driveway was not of a sufficient depth at to expose the natural subsoil.</p> <p>Natural subsoil (context 102), which consisted of a light brownish grey sand with abundant large chert gravels, was exposed at a depth that ranged between 0.2m and 0.4m below existing levels. This was intermittently exposed within the house footprint area and consistently within the trenches for the ground heat system, electricity cable and sewerage system. It was overlain by a mid greyish-brown sandy-silt loam subsoil (101) and a mid brownish-grey silty-loam topsoil (100). Five ditches (F103, F105, F111, F113 and F115) and a tree throw or possible pit (F107) were exposed within the area stripped for the country house and the excavations for the ground heat system trenches.</p> <p>Ditches F103 and F105 were aligned northeast to southwest and were parallel to each other. They measured 2.05m and 1m wide respectively and contained similar mid greyish-brown silty-loam fills (104 and 106). A segment was excavated across ditch F103, which exposed it to have a shallow concave profile that was 0.21m deep. Its position corresponded with a lynchet marking deeper soils to the northwest. A fragment of modern glass was recovered from ditch F103.</p> <p>Ditch F111 extended from the southern extent of the area strip and petered out to the north. It measured 0.55m wide and 0.07m deep with a shallow concave profile and contained a light brownish-grey clayey-loam fill (112) that was undated. To the south of this was ditch F113, which was likely to have represented a continuation of ditch F111. Here it measured 0.5m wide and 0.3m deep with a consistent fill as within F111. No finds were recovered from ditch F113.</p> <p>Tree throw or root-disturbed pit or F107 was located in the area between ditches F103 and F105. It was oval in plan and measured 1.78m long, 1.2m wide and 0.31m deep with gradual sides to the south and diffuse steep sides in the north. It contained a root-disturbed re-deposited natural subsoil basal fill (108), which was overlain by dark grey and mid greyish-brown sandy-silt loams (110 and 109). Three pieces of worked flint were recovered from deposit 110.</p>		

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Towards the south of the area monitored for the ground heat system was ditch F115. This was exposed in three positions within the multiple trenches. It measured 1m wide and 0.06m deep with a shallow concave profile. It contained a mid brown loose silty-loam fill (116) from which one piece of worked flint was recovered.

The finds by Naomi Payne

Introduction

The finds included a small assemblage of worked flint and chert, and a few sherds of post-medieval pottery and glass. The finds are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of finds by context

Context	Context Description	Worked flint/chert		Glass		Post-medieval pottery	
		No	Weight	No	Weight	No	Weight
100	Topsoil	7	162g	2	41g	5	22g
104	Fill of ditch F103	3	19g	1	2g		
110	Fill of tree throw F107	3	2g				
116	Fill of ditch F115	1	1g				
Total		13	183g	3	43g	5	22g

Worked flint and chert

13 pieces (183g) of worked flint and chert were recovered from four contexts. The flint is summarised in the following table.

Table 2. Summary of flint by context

Context	Context description	Comment on flint
100	Topsoil	1 x chert core, 1 x chert scraper, 3 x tertiary chert flakes, 2 x secondary flint flakes
104	Fill of ditch F103	1 x notched flint flake, 2 x retouched flint flakes
110	Fill of pit F107	3 x small chert chips
116	Fill of ditch F115	Tertiary flint flake

The majority of the assemblage is made up of flakes and chips, but there is also a broken notched flake, a core and a probable scraper. The collection contains a reasonably high proportion of chert. All of the lithics are residual and the small assemblage must reflect general background activity during the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age, rather than any concentrated occupation.

Glass

Three sherds (43g) of modern vessel glass were recovered from two contexts.

Post-medieval pottery

Five sherds (22g) of post-medieval pottery were recovered from the topsoil. This material ranges in date from the 17th/18th century to the early 20th century.

Comments

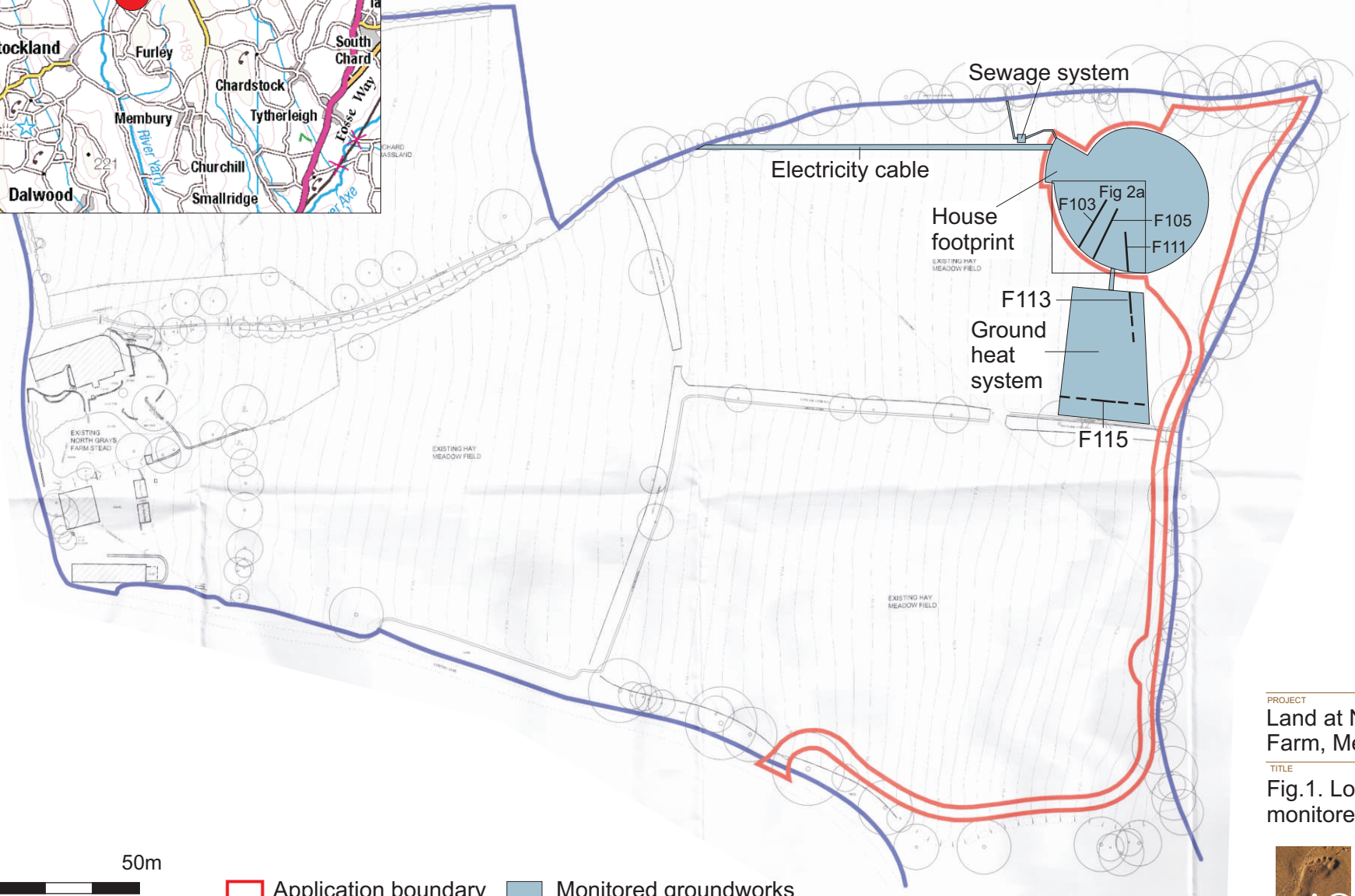
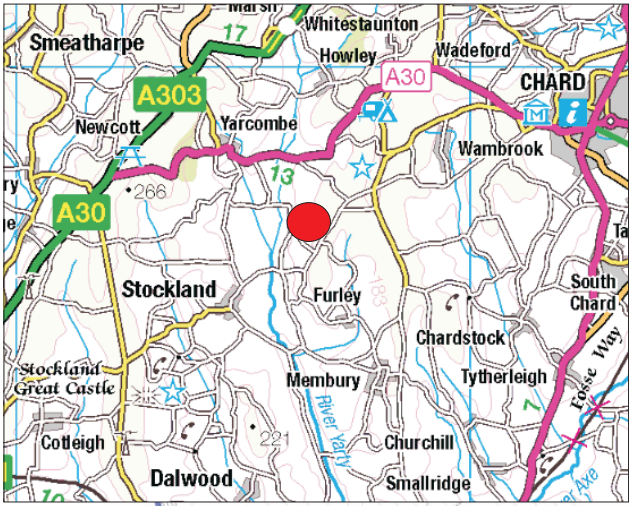
Parallel ditches F103 and F105 were likely to have represented flanking ditches to a former hedgebank of probable medieval to post-medieval origin, with the deeper soils evident to the northwest of this, the likely result of cultivation.

Probable equivalent ditch segments F111 and F113 were undated, but its alignment, which differed from parallel ditches F103 and F105, as well as the lighter colour fill, may suggest that it had an earlier origin, but this could not be confirmed. This was unlikely to have been the case for ditch F115, which although contained a worked flint find, was probably of a more recent origin based on its fill composition. The diffuse nature of F107 suggests that it is more likely to have been a natural feature, perhaps associated with the former hedgebank as represented by flanking ditches F103 and F105.

The recovery of a number of worked flints complements the previously-recorded finds made in the vicinity that suggest a background of prehistoric activity in the general area.

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Recorder: Simon Hughes, AC archaeology	Date sent to HER: May 2016
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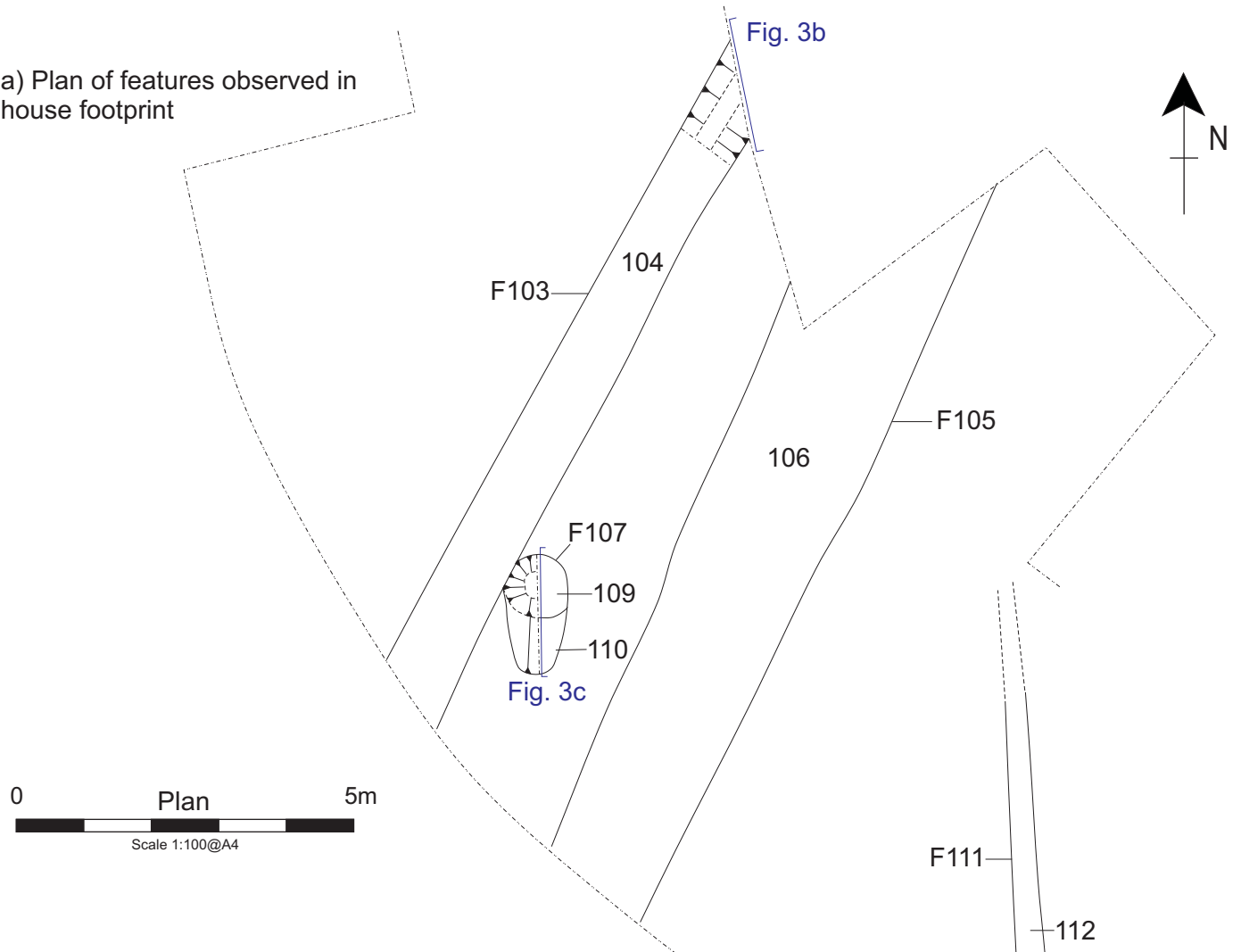
Application boundary
 Monitored groundworks

PROJECT
Land at North Gray's Farm, Membury, Devon

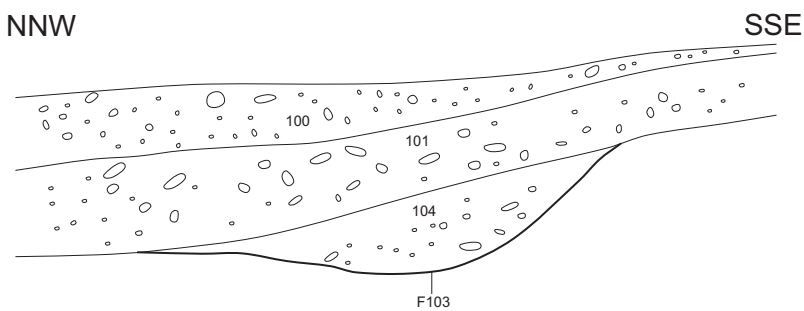
TITLE
Fig.1. Location of site with monitored areas shown



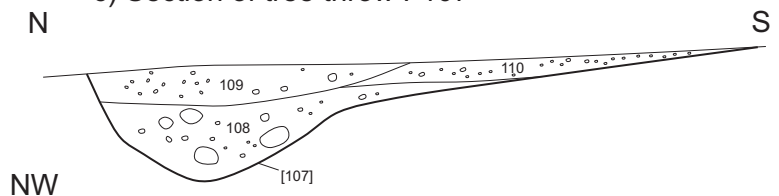
a) Plan of features observed in house footprint



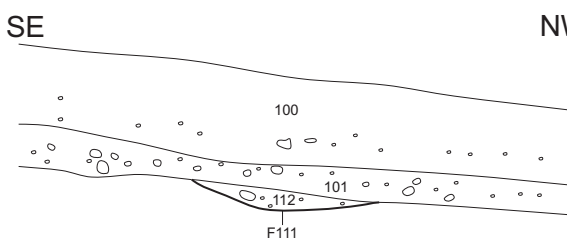
b) Section of ditch F103



c) Section of tree throw F107



d) Section of ditch F111



PROJECT

Land at North Gray's Farm, Membury, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 2: Plan and sections of features observed in house footprint





Plate 1: General view of site looking southeast



Plate 2: Working view of stripped area for county house.
Looking southeast (scale 1m)

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