

# LAND AT WOODLAND ROAD, IVYBRIDGE, DEVON

(Centred on NGR SX 6203 5629)

Results of an Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation

South Hams District Council Planning Reference:  
1971/16/FUL

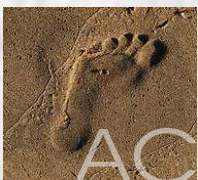
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and  
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On behalf of:  
Persimmon Homes South West

Report No: ACD973/3/0

Date: March 2017



archaeology

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(Centred on NGR SX 6203 5629)

## Results of an archaeological trial trench evaluation and targeted excavation

South Hams District Council planning reference: 1971/16/FUL

Client	Persimmon Homes South West
Report Number	ACD973/3/0
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Report Author(s)	Chris Caine and Paul Rainbird
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Approved by	John Valentin

### Acknowledgements

The evaluation was commissioned by Stephen Taylor of Persimmon Homes South West. The site works were carried out by Chris Caine with the assistance of Paul Cooke and Naomi Kysh. The illustrations for this report were prepared by Leon Cauchois. The collaborative role of Stephen Reed of the Devon County Council Historic Environment Team is duly acknowledged.

The views and recommendations expressed in this report are those of AC archaeology and are presented in good faith on the basis of professional judgement and on information currently available.

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## Summary

*An archaeological trial trench evaluation and subsequent targeted excavation were carried out in advance of residential development by AC archaeology in November and December 2016 on land off Woodland Road, Ivybridge, Devon (centred on NGR SX 6203 5629). The development area occupied approximately three hectares of agricultural land on the western edge of Ivybridge.*

*The evaluation comprised the machine-excavation of eight trenches totaling 290m in length, with each trench 1.60m wide and two areas were enlarged to create 10m by 10m excavation areas. The trenches were positioned to target anomalies interpreted from a previous geophysical survey. Archaeological features were present in three of the trenches, with these consisting of two ditches, a gully, a pit and a tree throw. These features were mainly undated and are either natural in origin or related to agricultural use of the site, with only a small pit indicating possible small-scale non-agricultural use. There was a small assemblage of finds recovered comprising one sherd of medieval pottery, three sherds of post-medieval pottery and some pieces of burnt clay.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological trial trench evaluation and targeted excavation on land off Woodland Road, Ivybridge, Devon (NGR SX 6203 5629; Fig. 1), were undertaken by AC archaeology during November and December 2016. The investigations were carried out in advance of residential development for 74 dwellings and associated works. The evaluation was commissioned by Persimmon Homes South West and was required as a condition for planning consent granted by South Hams District Council, following consultation with the Devon County Council Historic Environment Team (hereafter DCCHE).
- 1.2 The area covers approximately three hectares of agricultural land divided into two fields (labelled for the purpose of this report as Field 1 and Field 2), located on the western edge of Ivybridge (Plate 1). It has an approximate height ranging from 100m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) at the northwestern corner, to 70m aOD at its southeastern corner, with a general slope to the south and east. The underlying solid geology is comprised of Middle Devonian Slate ([www.bgs.ac.uk](http://www.bgs.ac.uk)).

## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site had been the subject of a previous historic environment assessment (Pink 2014) and geophysical survey (Sabin and Donaldson 2014). With the exception of a former post-medieval quarry, which was located to the southwest of the site, the assessment established that no previously identified archaeological sites were present within the application area or in the surrounding environs.
- 2.2 The geophysical survey identified a small number of anomalies, the majority of which have been interpreted as representing linear features that are probably related to former agricultural boundaries or drains. However, two angled linear anomalies present in the centre and the northwest portions of Field 1 may have represented activity that pre-dated the existing field pattern.

### 3. AIM

- 3.1 The main aim of trial trenching was to establish the presence or absence, extent, depth, character and date of any archaeological features, deposits or finds within the site. The results of the work were reviewed during the trench evaluation, and were used to inform mitigation, which comprised the excavation of an additional two 10m by 10m excavation areas.

### 4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a project design prepared by AC archaeology (Hughes 2016) and with reference to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2014). It comprised the machine-excavation of eight trenches totaling 290m in length and with each trench 1.60m wide. These were positioned to target anomalies interpreted from the previous geophysical survey (Fig. 1).
- 4.2 All trenches were located with a Leica Net rover GPS accurate to 1cm. The removal of topsoil within the trenches was undertaken in 20cm spits under the control and direction of a site archaeologist.
- 4.3 and 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, 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate. All site levels relate to Ordnance Datum. Spoil heaps were scanned both manually and by metal detector for displaced artefacts.

### 5. RESULTS

#### 5.1 Introduction

Features of archaeological interest were observed in Trenches 1-3 in Field 1 only and the results for each of these trenches are described in detail below, with descriptions for all trenches presented in tabulated form in Appendix 1. Natural subsoil varied from mid-grey to mid-red brown silty-clay with frequently occurring slate inclusions. In Field 1 it was overlain by a mid-yellow brown, clayey-silt subsoil, which was below a dark grey brown, silty-loam topsoil. In Field 2 the deposits were much more variable. In the northwest corner there was only thin topsoil sitting directly on the natural subsoil, while in Trenches 7 and 8 at the base of the slope was a thick colluvial deposit above the natural subsoil, with the latter revealed at depths of 0.84m to 1.10m below the current ground surface.

#### 5.2 Trench 1 and Excavation Areas A and B (Plan Fig 2a, sections Figs 2b-d; Plates 2-4)

This trench was located near the northwest corner of the site and positioned to examine a possible enclosure, ring ditch and early field boundary interpreted from the results of the geophysical survey. It was L-shaped measuring 30m east-west and 20m north-south. Natural subsoil (context 102) was exposed at a depth of between 0.37m and 0.42m below existing levels. The trench contained two pit-like features (F103 and F105) and one linear feature (F107). To further investigate these features the trench was extended with two 10m by 10m trenches (Areas A and B), with no further features or finds revealed in these extensions.

##### Pit-like features

Pit F103 measured 0.77m long by 0.72m wide and 0.21m deep with moderately sloping irregular sides and a concave base. It contained a single fill (104) comprising a mid-yellow brown silty-

clay with commonly occurring slate gravel inclusions. It contained 12 pieces of fired clay and a few charcoal flecks.

Pit-like feature F105 measured 2.92m long by 1.20m wide and 0.74m deep with moderately sloping irregular sides and an irregular base. It contained a single fill (106), comprising a mid-red brown silty-clay, with commonly occurring slate gravel inclusions and one small sherd of pottery dating to the medieval period. The irregular form of this feature indicates that it is probably a tree throw of natural origin.

#### Linear feature

Gully F107 was fully exposed in Excavation Area A. It measured a little over 3m long by 0.50m wide and 0.15m deep with shallow sloping concave sides and a concave base. It contained a single fill (108) comprising a mid-red brown clayey-silt, with occasionally occurring slate gravel inclusions and no finds.

### **5.3 Trench 2 (Plan Fig. 3a, sections Figs 3b-c; Plates 5-6)**

Trench 2 was located in the west side of Field 1, was aligned north-south, and measured 30m long. It was located to test an area of the site where the geophysical survey did not identify any anomalies. Natural subsoil (202) was exposed at a depth of between 0.46m and 0.51m below existing levels. A small pit (F203) and a linear feature (F205) were revealed.

#### Pit

Small pit F203 measured 0.39m long by 0.29m wide and 0.04m deep with shallow sloping sides and a flat base. It contained a single fill (204) comprising a mid-brown grey silty-clay loam, with frequently occurring slate gravel inclusions and no finds.

#### Linear feature

Ditch F205 was east-west aligned and measured 1.28m wide by 0.37m deep, with moderately steep concave sides and a concave base. It contained two fills (206-7). Basal fill 206 was composed of a mid-grey brown silty-clay loam and commonly occurring gravel inclusions. Upper fill 207 comprised of a mid-brown silty-clay loam and frequently occurring slate gravel inclusions. The ditch contained no finds and cut subsoil layer 201.

### **5.4 Trench 3 (Plan Fig. 4a, section Fig. 4b; Plate 7)**

Trench 3 was located central to Field 1 and was a T-shaped trench with the main north-south aligned section measuring 30m long and a small east-west aligned leg coming off the western side and measuring 10m long. It was positioned to target two sides of a possible enclosure interpreted from the results of the geophysical survey. Natural subsoil (302) was exposed at a depth of between 0.54m and 0.64m below existing levels. One linear feature (F304) was exposed in the north-south leg of the trench, but there was no evidence for any return of an enclosure ditch in the smaller east-west leg of the trench. Three sherds of pottery dating to the 19th century were collected from the topsoil (300).

#### Linear feature

Ditch F304 was east-west aligned and measured 1.72m wide by 0.26m deep with moderately steep sides and a flat base. It contained one fill (303) composed of a mid-yellow brown silty-clay, with commonly occurring slate gravel inclusions and no finds.

## 6. THE FINDS *by Naomi Payne*

6.1 All finds recovered on site during the evaluation have been retained, cleaned and marked where appropriate. They have been quantified according to material type within each context and the assemblage examined to extract information regarding the range, nature and date of artefacts represented. The small collection of finds are summarised in Table 1.

### 6.2 Medieval pottery

From fill 106 of pit F105 was collected a small body sherd (2g) from a medieval jar.

Context	Context Description	Medieval pottery		Post-medieval pottery		Burnt clay	
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
104	Fill of pit F103					12	14
106	Fill of pit F105	1	2				
300	Trench 3 topsoil			3	14		
Total		1	2	3	14	12	14

Table 1: All finds by context

### 6.3 Post-medieval pottery

In the topsoil (300) of Trench 3 were 3 sherds (14g) of post-medieval pottery (2 x industrially-made and 1 x coarse glazed earthenware), all three are probably 19th century in date.

### 6.4 Burnt clay

The fill (104) of pit F103 contained 12 pieces (73g) of burnt clay. These were featureless and amorphous with no definite surfaces.

## 7. DISCUSSION

7.1 The results from the trial trench evaluation and targeted excavation have exposed only a few features of archaeological interest. These comprised a short gully (F107), possibly of natural origin, a tree throw (F105) also of natural origin, two east-west aligned ditches (F205 and F304) and two small pits (F103 and F203). These were all present at depths of approximately 0.40m below existing ground level.

7.2 The interpreted results of the geophysical survey showed that there was the potential for two enclosures in Field 1. The evaluation and targeted excavation has shown that this is unlikely to be the case. No evidence for an enclosure was found in Trench 1, although small undated pit F103 provides evidence for some undated small-scale use of this area and does not appear to be agricultural in origin. Similarly, although ditch F304 in Trench 3 matched exactly the position of the north side of an enclosure predicted by the geophysics, the west side was not found and, given that the results of the geophysics did not indicate a south or east side for the possible enclosure, it must be considered unlikely that one existed in this location. In both areas the lack of enclosures or other settlement use is further supported by the paucity of the finds, with a single medieval sherd from a probable tree throw and the remainder, three sherds of late post-medieval pottery, derived from overlying topsoil.

7.3 The east-west alignment of the ditches (F205 and F304) matches that of the current field pattern. The Devon Historic Landscape Characterisation Project lists the current site as within fields that were enclosed from open strip fields in the later medieval period (DCC 2017). The strip fields

would have been much smaller than the current fields and it is probable that smaller areas were originally enclosed and subsequently field boundaries have been removed to make larger paddocks. This enlargement pre-dates the earliest detailed historic mapping dating to the mid-19th century. Given its close proximity to ditch F205 it is probable that pit F203 is contemporary with the boundary marked by the ditch, and may mark the base of a post which stood at this spot.

- 7.4 The majority of the small collection of finds are consistent with agricultural activity on the site in the medieval and post-medieval periods and the evaluation and targeted excavation has shown that the majority of the anomalies interpreted from the results of the geophysical survey do not relate to archaeological features. The responses are most probably related to variations in the natural geology.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The evaluation has exposed a pair of ditches which may be medieval or post-medieval in date and related to agricultural activity on the site. Other features were restricted to the northwest part and are interpreted as either being of natural origin or small scale undefined and undated use of the site in the past. Subsequent excavation of Areas A and B did not reveal any further archaeological features or deposits. The small assemblage of finds shows no evidence for settlement or intensive use of the site in the past. The archaeological evidence supports the conclusion of the historic environment assessment in that the site has been used historically for agricultural purposes only, with no evidence for historic or ancient settlement.

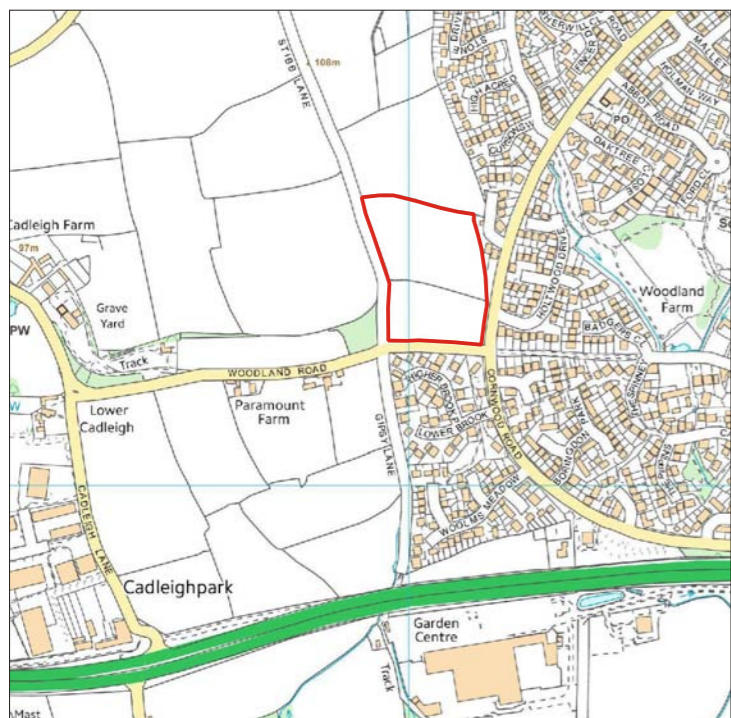
## 9. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

- 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 under the unique project code of **ACD973**. It will be held until the need for any further archaeological work on the site is established and whether the creation of a digital archive for deposition at the Archaeology Data Service is required.
- 9.2 An online OASIS entry has been completed, using the unique identifier **275846**, which includes a digital copy of this report.

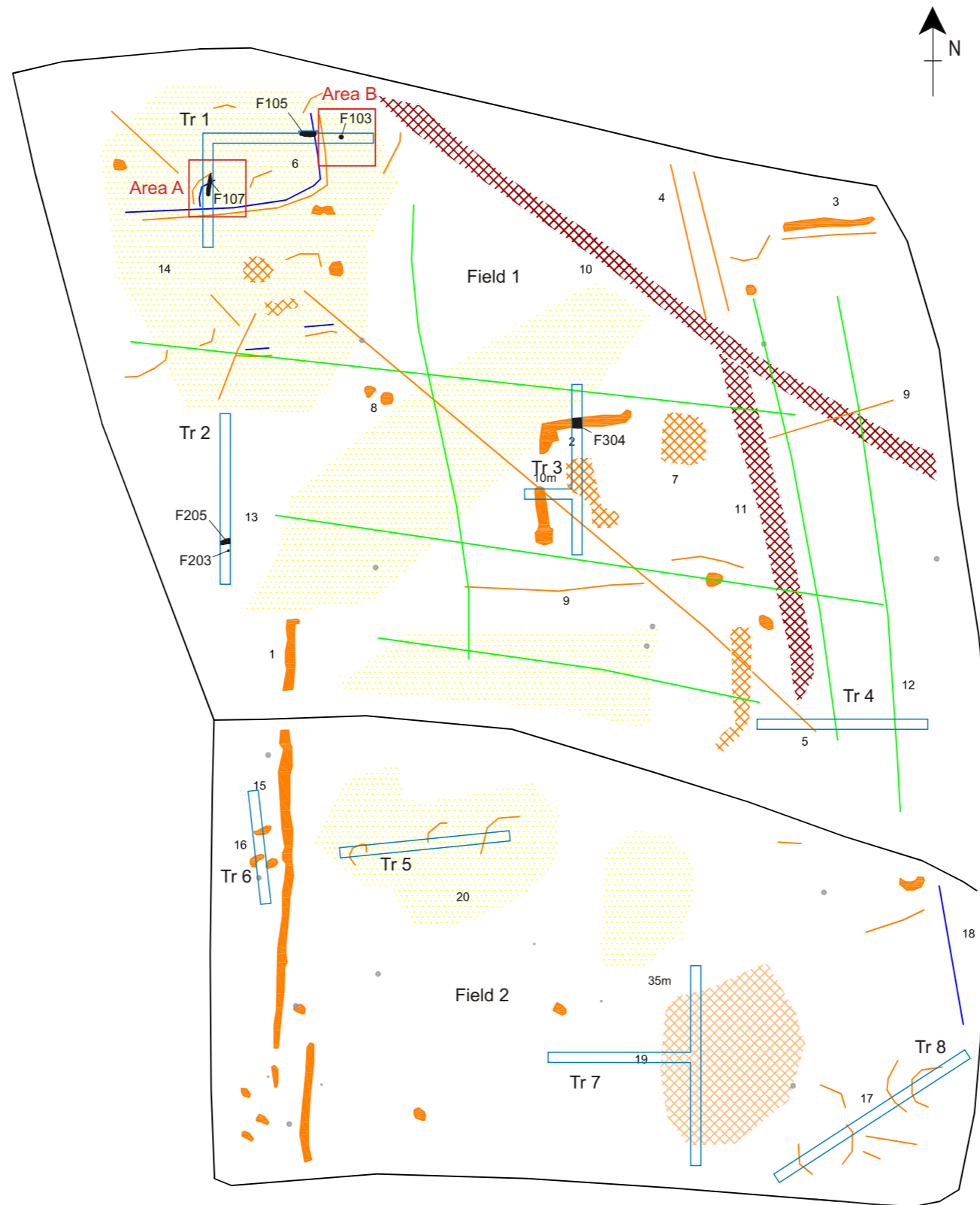
## 10. REFERENCES

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(<http://map.devon.gov.uk/DCCviewer/?bm=OSGreyscale&layers=Historic%20Environment:14&activeTab=Historic%20Environment&extent=219402;44202;325104;145934>).
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### Abstraction and interpretation of magnetometer anomalies

- Positive linear anomaly - possible ditch-like feature
- Negative linear anomaly - material of low magnetic susceptibility
- Linear anomaly - of agricultural origin
- Discrete positive response - possible pit-like feature
- Positive/negative linear anomaly - possible former field boundary
- Positive anomaly - magnetically enhanced material
- Variable magnetic response - of uncertain origin
- Variable magnetic response - of natural origin
- Strong dipolar anomaly - ferrous object

### Key

- Excavation areas A-B
- Evaluation trenches



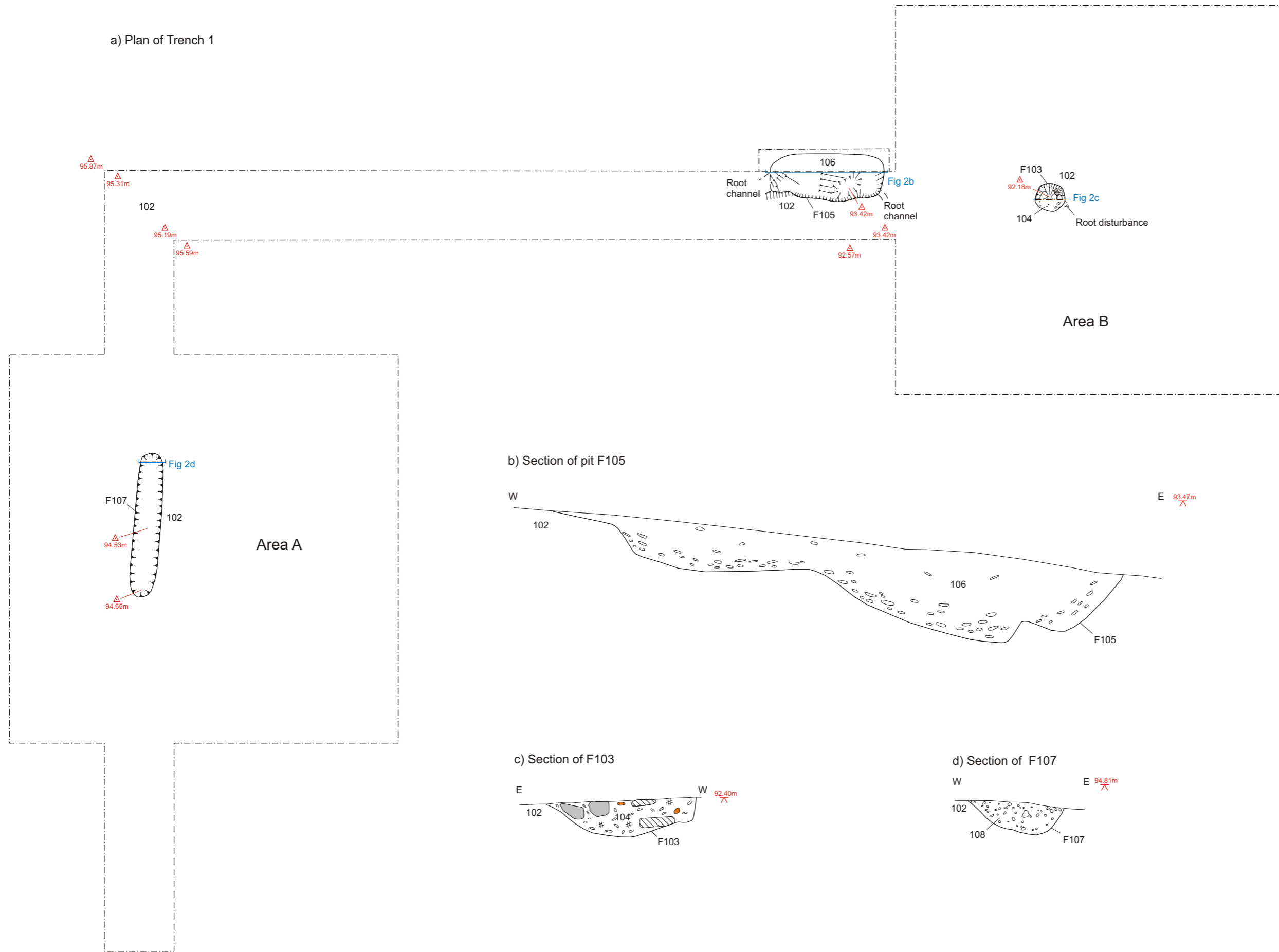
PROJECT

Land off Woodland Road, Ivybridge, Devon

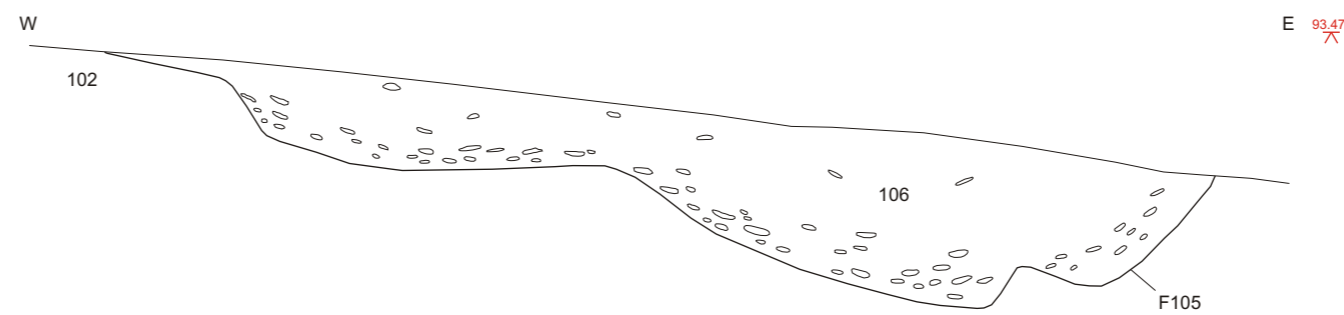
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Fig. 1: Site location and location of trenches and excavation areas A and B in relation to the geophysics interpretation

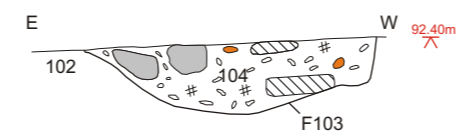
a) Plan of Trench 1



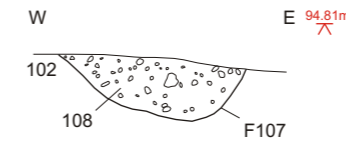
b) Section of pit F105







c) Section of F103



d) Section of F107

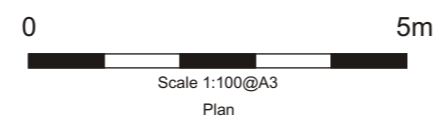


Key to all figures

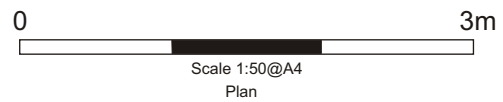
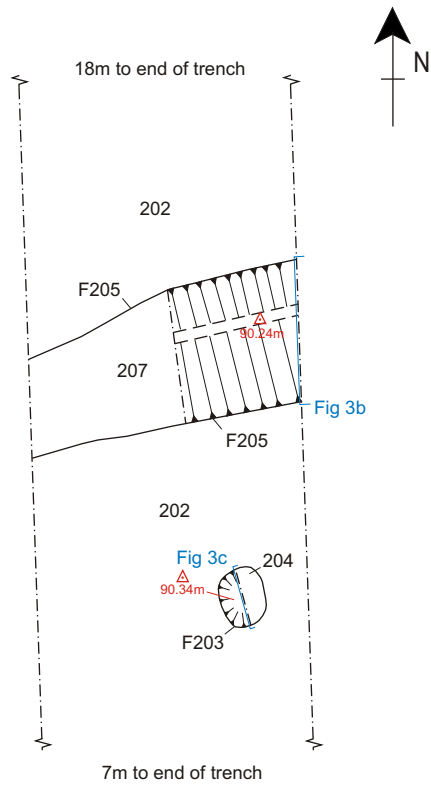
-  Stones
-  Charcoal
-  Burnt clay
-  Shale
-  Quartz
-  Slate

PROJECT  
Land off Woodland  
Road, Ivybridge, Devon

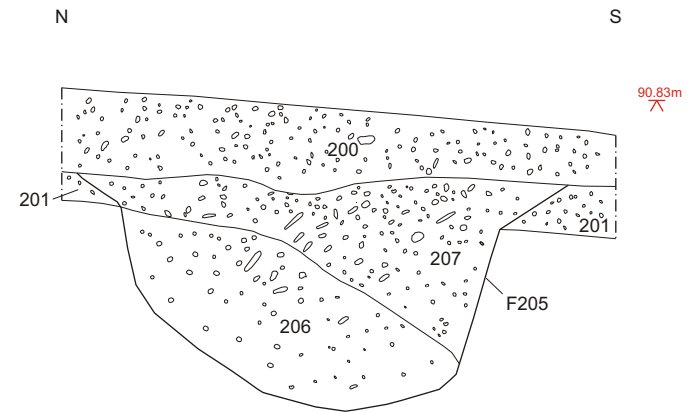
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Fig. 2: Trench 1, Area A and  
Area B plan and sections



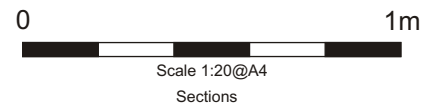
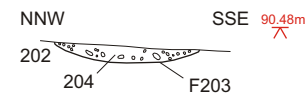
a) Plan of Trench 2



b) Section of F205



c) Section of F203



PROJECT

Land off Woodland Road, Ivybridge,  
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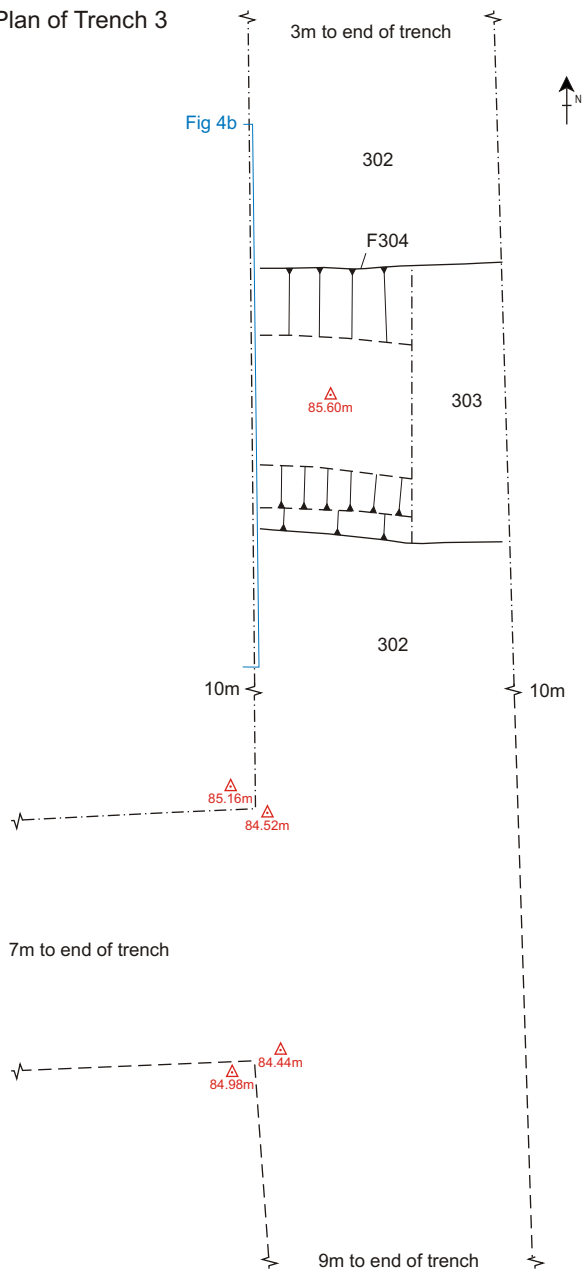
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Fig. 3: Trench 2, plan and sections

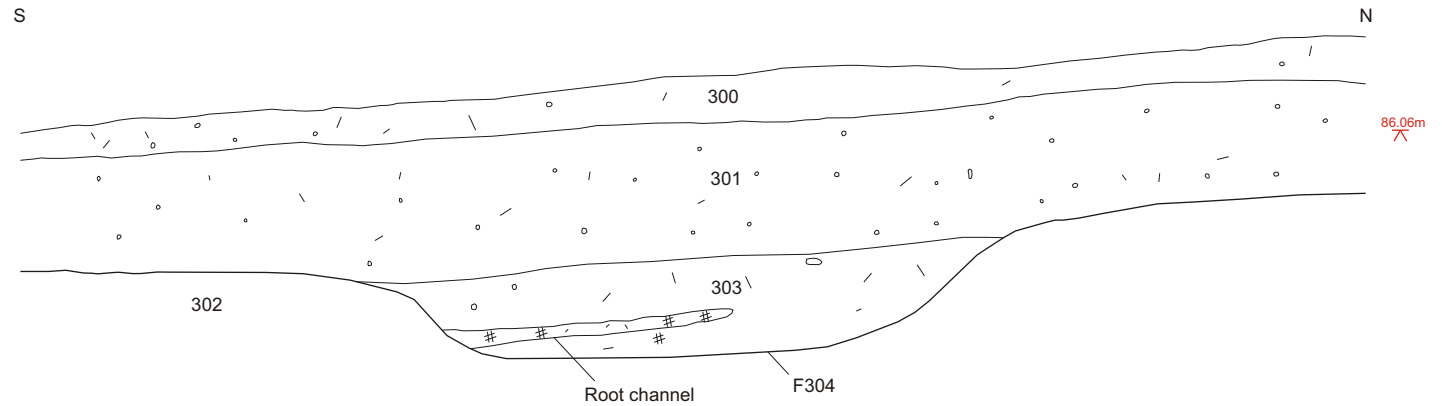


AC archaeology

a) Plan of Trench 3



b) Section of F304



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TITLE

Fig. 4: Trench 3, plan and section



AC archaeology



Plate 1: General view of Area 2, looking southeast



Plate 2: Trench 1, Area B, north facing section of pit F103 (1m scale)



Plate 3: Trench 1, Area B, pit F103, fully excavated, view from northeast (1m scale)



Plate 4: Trench 1, Area A, south facing section of gully F107 (1m scale)



Plate 5: Trench 2, southwest facing section of pit F203 (0.4m scale)



Plate 6: Trench 2, west facing section of ditch F205 (1m scale)



Plate 7: Trench 3, east facing section of ditch F304 (1m scale)

# Appendix 1

## Tabulated Trench Descriptions

**APPENDIX 1: TABULATED TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS**

<b>Trench 1</b>		<b>Length</b> 20m 30m	<b>Width</b> 1.6m	<b>Alignment</b> N-S E-W
<b>Context</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	
100	Dark grey brown, silty-loam	0-0.25m	Topsoil	
101	Mid-yellow brown, clayey-silt	0.25-0.37m	Subsoil	
102	Mid-grey to mid-red brown silty-clay with frequently occurring slate inclusions	0.37m+	Natural subsoil	
F103	Discrete feature measured 0.77m long by 0.72m wide and 0.21m deep with moderately sloping irregular sides and a concave base	-	Pit	
104	Mid-yellow brown silty-clay with commonly occurring slate gravel inclusions	-	Fill of F103	
F105	Discrete feature measured 2.92m long by 1.20m wide and 0.74m deep with moderately sloping irregular sides and an irregular base	-	Tree throw	
106	Mid-red brown silty-clay, with commonly occurring slate gravel inclusions	-	Fill of F105	
F107	Curvi-linear feature measured a little over 3m long by 0.50m wide and 0.15m deep with shallow sloping concave sides and a concave base	-	Gully	
108	Mid-red brown clayey-silt, with occasionally occurring slate gravel inclusions	-	Fill of F107	

<b>Trench 2</b>		<b>Length</b> 30m	<b>Width</b> 1.6m	<b>Alignment</b> N-S
<b>Context</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	
200	Dark grey brown, silty-loam	0-0.25m	Topsoil	
201	Mid-yellow brown, clayey-silt	0.25-0.46m	Subsoil	
202	Mid-grey to mid-red brown silty-clay with frequently occurring slate inclusions	0.46m+	Natural subsoil	
F203	Discrete feature measured 0.39m long by 0.29m wide and 0.04m deep with shallow sloping sides and a flat base	-	Small pit	
204	Mid-brown grey silty-clay loam, with frequently occurring slate gravel inclusions	-	Fill of F203	
F205	Linear feature east-west aligned and measured 1.28m wide by 0.37m deep, with moderately steep concave sides and a concave base	-	Ditch	
206	Mid-grey brown silty-clay loam with commonly occurring gravel inclusions	-	Basal fill of F205	
207	Mid-brown silty-clay loam with frequently occurring slate gravel inclusions	-	Upper fill of F205	

<b>Trench 3</b>		<b>Length</b> 30m 10m	<b>Width</b> 1.6m	<b>Alignment</b> N-S E-W
<b>Context</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	
300	Dark grey brown, silty-loam	0-0.15m	Topsoil	
301	Mid-yellow brown, clayey-silt	0.15-0.54m	Subsoil	
302	Mid-grey to mid-red brown silty-clay with frequently occurring slate inclusions	0.54m+	Natural subsoil	
303	Mid-yellow brown silty-clay, with commonly occurring slate gravel inclusions	-	Fill of F304	
F304	Linear feature east-west aligned and measured 1.72m wide by 0.26m deep with moderately steep concave sides and a flat base	-	Ditch	



**APPENDIX 1: TABULATED TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS**

<b>Trench 4</b>		<b>Length</b> 30m	<b>Width</b> 1.6m	<b>Alignment</b> E-W
<b>Context</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	
400	Dark grey brown, silty-loam	0-0.39m	Topsoil	
401	Mid-yellow brown, clayey-silt	0.39-0.54m	Subsoil	
402	Mid-grey to mid-red brown silty-clay with frequently occurring slate inclusions	0.54m+	Natural Subsoil	

<b>Trench 5</b>		<b>Length</b> 25m	<b>Width</b> 1.6m	<b>Alignment</b> E-W
<b>Context</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	
500	Dark grey brown, silty-loam	0-0.24m	Topsoil	
501	Mid-yellow brown, clayey-silt	0.24-0.65m	Subsoil	
502	Mid-grey to mid-red brown silty-clay with frequently occurring slate inclusions	0.65m+	Natural Subsoil	

<b>Trench 6</b>		<b>Length</b> 20m	<b>Width</b> 1.6m	<b>Alignment</b> N-S
<b>Context</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	
600	Dark grey brown, silty-loam	0-0.28m	Topsoil	
601	Mid-grey to mid-red brown silty-clay with frequently occurring slate inclusions	0.28m+	Natural Subsoil	

<b>Trench 7</b>		<b>Length</b> 35m 25m	<b>Width</b> 1.6m	<b>Alignment</b> N-S, E-W
<b>Context</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	
700	Dark grey brown, silty-loam	0-0.12m	Topsoil	
701	Mid-yellow brown, clayey-silt	0.12-0.40m	Subsoil	
702	Light yellow brown, sandy-silt loam	0.40-1.10m	Colluvium	
703	Mid-grey to mid-red brown silty-clay with frequently occurring slate inclusions	1.10m+	Natural Subsoil	

<b>Trench 8</b>		<b>Length</b> 35m	<b>Width</b> 1.6m	<b>Alignment</b> NE-SW
<b>Context</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	
800	Dark grey brown, silty-loam	0-0.15m	Topsoil	
801	Mid-yellow brown, clayey-silt	0.15-0.44m	Subsoil	
802	Light yellow brown, sandy-silt loam	0.44-0.84m	Colluvium	
803	Mid-grey to mid-red brown silty-clay with frequently occurring slate inclusions	0.84m+	Natural Subsoil	

### Devon Office

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