

LAND TO THE WEST OF HARVESTERS, UFFCULME ROAD, UFFCULME, DEVON

(Centred on NGR ST 0569 1200)

Results of an Archaeological Trench Evaluation

Planning Reference: Mid Devon District Council
15/00108/MOUT

Appeal Reference: APP/Y1138/W/15/3025120
(Condition 9)

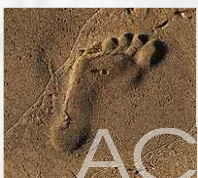
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and
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With a contribution from:
Charlotte Coles

On behalf of:
Devon and Cornwall Housing Ltd

Report No: ACD1545/2/0

Date: April 2017



archaeology

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Checked by	Paul Rainbird
Approved by	John Valentin

Acknowledgements

The evaluation was commissioned by Katie Slack of Devon and Cornwall Housing and managed for AC archaeology by John Valentin. The site works were carried out by Steve Robinson, Paul Jones, Dan Brace, Paul Bracken and Tom Etheridge, with the illustrations for this report prepared by Sarah Cottam. The collaborative role of Stephen Reed of the Devon County 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 trench evaluation on land to the west of Harvesters, Uffculme Road, Uffculme, Devon (ST 0569 1200), was undertaken by AC archaeology during April 2017. The work comprised the machine-excavation of 11 trenches totalling 520m in length, with each 1.5m wide. Only limited evidence for archaeology was present, comprising three former field boundaries represented by infilled ditches, all of which are shown on the 1840 Halberton parish Tithe Map. Two of the boundaries had been removed by 1889, with the final one depicted as in use as late as 1971. A small quantity of post-medieval artefacts was recovered from some of the ditches.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** This document sets out the results of an archaeological trench evaluation undertaken on land to the west of Harvesters, Uffculme Road, Uffculme, Devon (ST 0569 1200). It has been prepared by AC archaeology on behalf of Devon and Cornwall Housing Ltd. The location of the site is shown on Fig. 1.
- 1.2** The evaluation was required by Mid Devon District Council as a condition (9) of outline planning consent following an appeal, and following consultation with the Archaeology Officer, Devon County Council Historic Environment Team.
- 1.3** The site covers an area of approximately 3.5 hectares and is located on the south side of Uffculme Road, to the west of the village centre. It currently comprises a pasture field, which lies between c. 80m and 75m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), with the ground sloping gently down to the southeast and the floodplain of the River Culm. The underlying geology comprises mudstone of the Ayelsbeare Mudstone Group, with colluvial deposits associated with the river in the southeast part (www.bgs.ac.uk).
- 1.4** The new development will comprise the construction of up to 60 dwellings with access onto Uffculme Road, with all other matters reserved.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The topographic position of the site on elevated ground and its southeast facing aspect overlooking the River Culm would have made it favourable location for early settlement, as found elsewhere nearby, such as the Four Ways Cross, Willand (Devon Historic Environment Record ref. EDV4704). This part of Mid Devon, on the edge of the Blackdown Hills, is an area where a number of post-Roman and medieval metalworking sites have been previously identified. Heritage assets currently recorded on the site comprise post-medieval orchard banks in the eastern part (MDV107940), while the line of a possible mill race or leat passes east-west through the southern part (MDV108003).

3. AIMS

- 3.1** The main aim of the trial trenching was to establish the presence or absence, extent, depth, character and date of any archaeological features, deposits or finds within the site, with particular emphasis on whether there were buried archaeological remains associated with potential early

settlement. The results of the work, as set out in this report, will be reviewed and used to inform any subsequent mitigation.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a project design prepared by AC archaeology (Valentin 2017) and with reference to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2014). It comprised the machine-excavation of eleven trenches, totaling 520m in length, with each 1.5m wide.
- 4.2 All soil removal was undertaken under the control and direction of the Site Archaeologist. Topsoil was removed by wheeled mechanical excavator, using a wide toothless bucket, and stored alongside each trench, separated from any subsoil as necessary. Stripping by mechanical excavator ceased at the level at which archaeological deposits or natural subsoil was exposed.
- 4.3 'Negative' trenches were recorded using trench records forms; 'positive' trenches were recorded using the full range of the standard AC archaeology *pro forma* recording system.

5. RESULTS

- 5.1 A total of eleven trenches was excavated across the site, five of which revealed archaeological features (Trenches 2-5 & 8). The layer sequence in all trenches comprised a former ploughsoil, overlying a thin horizon of alluvium. Archaeological features were revealed after the removal of this alluvial layer and all were cutting through natural gravels or clays. A former field boundary, comprising two closely spaced parallel ditches, likely to represent a former hedgebank was revealed in Trenches 2-4 (only hand-excavated in Trench 3). Parts of two further field boundary ditches were revealed in Trenches 5 and 8. Positive trenches containing archaeological deposits are described in text below, with negative trenches summarised in Table 4.

Trench 3 (plan Fig. 2a, section Fig. 2b & c; plates 2 & 3)

- 5.2 This trench was arranged broadly T-shaped in plan and aligned northeast to southwest/northwest to southeast, and was positioned on ground sloping gently down to the southeast. A maximum depth of 0.3m was excavated through a former ploughsoil, along with up to 0.1m of alluvium, before two parallel linear features (F303 & F307), were revealed cutting through natural clay/gravels. Both ditches are contemporary and would likely to have flanked either side a former associated bank. A single field drain was also present. The recorded layer sequence for this trench is summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Trench 3 general layer sequence (b.g.s. = below ground surface)

Context	Depth b.g.s.	Description	Interpretation
300	0 – 30cm	Dark grey-brown silty clay loam	Former ploughsoil
301	30 – 40cm (max.)	Intermittent layer of light grey-brown clay-silt containing occasional small sub-angular/rounded gravels	Alluvial subsoil
302	40cm +	Clay horizon – varies in colour	Natural mudstone

Ditch F303

- 5.3** This feature was linear in plan, on an approximate northeast to southwest alignment. It was 1.55m wide and was present within the trench for a length of 1.5m. It had a steep to moderately sloping profile and narrow flat base at a depth of 0.5m. It contained three fills, comprising a basal fill (304) composed of a dark brown silty clay containing occasional sub-rounded gravels and cobbles, a secondary fill (305) composed of grey-brown silty clay containing occasional sub-rounded/angular gravels, with the upper fill (306) a slightly gleyed mid grey-brown silty clay containing sparse small sub-angular gravels. A small quantity of post-medieval pottery and other artefacts was recovered.

Ditch F307

- 5.4** This feature was linear in plan, on an approximate northeast to southwest alignment. It was 1.25m wide and was present within the trench for a length of 1.5m. It had a moderate to gentle sloping profile and flat base at a depth of 0.3m. It contained a single fill (308) composed of a mid grey-brown silty clay containing occasional sub-rounded gravels and cobbles. No finds were recovered.

Trench 5 (plan Fig.2d, section Fig.2e; plate 4)

- 5.5** This trench was aligned approximately northeast to southwest and was positioned on ground sloping down gently down to the southeast. A depth of 0.25m was excavated through a former ploughsoil, along with up to 0.1m of alluvium, before a single linear feature (F502) was revealed cutting through natural clay/sand/gravels. The recorded layer sequence for this trench is summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Trench 5 general depositional layer sequence

Context	Depth b.g.s.	Description	Interpretation
500	0 – 25cm	Dark grey-brown silty clay loam	Former ploughsoil
503	25 – 35cm (max.)	Layer of light grey-brown clay-silt containing occasional small sub-angular/rounded gravels	Alluvial subsoil
504	35cm +	Clay/sand/gravels	Natural – River Terrace deposits

Ditch F502

- 5.6** This feature was linear in plan, on an approximate northwest to southeast alignment. It was 2.6m wide and was present within the trench for a length of 1.5m. It had a gentle sloping profile and slightly concave base at a depth of 0.22m. It contained a single fill (501) composed of light brown, slightly gleyed in appearance, clay-silt, containing sparse small sub-rounded gravels. No finds were recovered.

Trench 8 (plan Fig. 2f, section Fig. 2g; plate 5)

- 5.7** This trench was aligned approximately northwest to southeast and was positioned on ground sloping down gently down to the southeast. A depth of 0.35m was excavated through a former ploughsoil, along with up to 0.1m of alluvium, before a single linear feature (F802), was revealed cutting through natural clay/sand/gravels. The recorded layer sequence for this trench is summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: Trench 8 general depositional layer sequence

Context	Depth b.g.s.	Description	Interpretation
800	0 – 35cm	Dark grey-brown silty clay loam	Former ploughsoil
801	35 – 45cm (max.)	Layer of mid-brown clay-silt containing occasional small sub-angular/rounded gravels	Alluvial subsoil
804	45cm +	Clay/sand/gravels	Natural – River Terrace deposits

Ditch F802

- 5.8** This feature was linear in plan, on an approximate northwest to southeast alignment. It was 2.4m wide and was present within the trench for a length of 1.8m. It had a gentle sloping profile on its northwest side, but much steeper on its southeast side, and a generally broad flat base at a depth of 0.45m. It contained a single fill (803) composed of dark brown silty clay-silt, containing occasional sub-rounded/angular gravels. A single sherd of post-medieval pottery was recovered. This ditch had been cut by a stone-filled field drain.

5.9 Negative trenches

Table 4: summary of negative trenches

Trench	Depth b.g.s.	Contexts	Description
1	0 – 30cm 30 – 40cm 40cm+	Former ploughsoil - 100 Subsoil - context 101 Natural - context 102	T-shaped trench in plan and on a NE – SW / NW - SE alignment and situated on ground sloping down gently to the southeast. Former ploughsoil composed of dark brown silty clay loam. Subsoil composed of mid-brown clay-silt with sparse gravels. Natural composed of orange-brown sandy clay / silty gravels.
2	0 – 30cm 30 – 40cm 40cm+	Former ploughsoil - 200 Subsoil - context 201 Natural - context 202	NW - SE aligned trench and situated on ground sloping down gently to the southeast. Former ploughsoil composed of dark brown silty clay loam. Subsoil composed of mid-brown clay-silt with sparse gravels. Natural composed of orange-brown sandy clay / silty gravels. Two sections of ditch revealed (203 & 204) part of post-medieval field boundary F303 & F307 revealed in Trench 3 and 403 & 404 revealed in Trench 4.
4	0 – 25cm 25 – 35cm 35cm+	Former ploughsoil - 400 Subsoil - context 401 Natural - context 402	NW - SE aligned trench and situated on ground sloping down gently to the southeast. Former ploughsoil composed of dark brown silty clay loam. Subsoil composed of mid-brown clay-silt with sparse gravels. Natural composed of orange-brown sandy clay / silty gravels. Two sections of ditch revealed (403 & 404) part of post-medieval field boundary F303 & F307 revealed in Trench 3 and 203 & 204 revealed in Trench 2.
6	0 – 25cm 25 – 35cm 35cm+	Former ploughsoil - 600 Subsoil - context 601 Natural - context 602	Approximately NE – SW aligned and situated on ground sloping down gently to the southeast. Former ploughsoil composed of dark brown silty clay loam. Subsoil composed of mid-brown clay-silt with sparse gravels. Natural composed of orange-brown sandy clay / silty gravels.
7	0 – 30cm 30 – 40cm 40cm+	Former ploughsoil - 700 Subsoil – context 701 Natural - context 702	Approximately NE – SW aligned and situated on ground sloping down gently to the southeast. Former ploughsoil composed of dark brown silty clay loam. Subsoil composed of mid-brown clay-silt with sparse gravels. Natural composed of dark grey clay silt / gravels / cobbles.
9	0 – 30cm 30 – 40cm 40cm+	Former ploughsoil - 900 Subsoil – context 901 Natural - context 902	Approximately NE – SW aligned and situated on ground sloping down gently to the southeast. Former ploughsoil composed of dark brown silty clay loam. Subsoil composed of mid-brown clay-silt with sparse gravels. Natural composed of dark grey clay silt / gravels / cobbles. Two field drains present.
10	0 – 30cm 30 – 40cm 40cm+	Former ploughsoil - 1000 Subsoil – context 1001 Natural - context 1002	Approximately NW – SE aligned and situated on ground sloping down gently to the southeast. Former ploughsoil composed of dark brown silty clay loam. Subsoil composed of mid-brown clay-silt with sparse gravels. Natural composed of orange brown clay/sand and gravels.
11	0 – 30cm 30 – 40cm 40cm+	Former ploughsoil - 1100 Subsoil – context 1101 Natural - context 1102	Approximately NW – SE aligned and situated on ground sloping down gently to the southeast towards rear of grassed garden. Topsoil composed of dark brown silty clay loam. Subsoil composed of mid-brown clay-silt with sparse gravels. Natural composed of orange brown clay/sand. Trench immediately backfilled post-recording due to high water table.

6. THE FINDS *by Charlotte Coles*

Summary

- 6.1 A very small assemblage of finds was recovered from the trial trenching at the site and is of low archaeological potential or interest. It is recommended that, unless the landowner wishes to retain the post-medieval and modern finds, they can be discarded.

Methodology

- 6.2 All finds from the site have been retained, cleaned and marked where appropriate. They have been quantified according to material type within each context and the assemblage examined by context to extract information regarding the range, nature and date of artefacts represented. This information is briefly discussed below. Table 5 quantifies finds by context and material type.

Table 5: Finds quantification (weight is in grams)

Context	Context Description	Iron		Post-medieval pottery		CBM		Clay tobacco pipe		Animal Bone	
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
305	Secondary fill of ditch F303			6	73	1	300				
306	Upper fill of ditch F303	2	15	5	81	1	31	1	1	1	5
803	Fill of ditch F802			1	3						
Totals		2	15	12	157	2	331	1	1	1	5

Iron

- 6.3 Two pieces of Iron were recovered from context 306, fill of ditch F303. These are a bent Iron nail and a lump of unidentifiable Iron.

Ceramic Building Material (CBM)

- 6.4 A single piece of CBM was recovered from both context 305 and context 306, fills of ditch F303. These comprise a piece of brick and a fragment of ceramic water pipe.

Post-medieval pottery

- 6.5 The post-medieval pottery consists of six sherds from context 305, five from context 306, and a single sherd from context 803. These are mostly South Somerset type sherds dating to the 18th and 19th century, with the exception of four pieces of 19th century industrial whiteware and a single piece of transfer-printed ware. A single sherd of slipware pottery was recovered from context 803, fill of ditch F802. This sherd is small and very abraded and has a tiny area of slip remaining on the internal surface. This sherd is from a bowl or dish and is a product of the North Devon kilns, either Barnstable or Bideford, and could date from the early 17th century.

Other finds

- 6.6 The other finds consist of a clay tobacco pipe stem and a small piece of unidentified mammal bone, both from context 306, ditch F303.

7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1 The evaluation has established that there is no evidence for early settlement or funerary archaeological activity on the site. What evidence was revealed and investigated, represents three former agricultural boundaries, all of which appear to be depicted on the Halberton parish Tithe Map of 1840. The two parallel ditches revealed in Trenches 2-4 are likely to represent part of a former hedgebank, although apart from the spacing between ditches, no evidence for a former earth/stone/turf bank was evident. This boundary is shown on later maps as extant as late as 1971, but had been removed by 1993.
- 7.2 Although containing no dating evidence, the position and alignment of ditch F502, revealed in Trench 5 correlates almost exactly with another former field boundary, also shown on the 1840 tithe map. This boundary had been removed by 1889, as indicated on the first-edition 25-inch Ordnance Survey map. Ditch F802, revealed in Trench 8, also equates to a boundary depicted on the 1840 tithe map, albeit its position slightly further south, but its alignment almost the same. This ditch contained a single sherd of 17th century pottery.

8. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

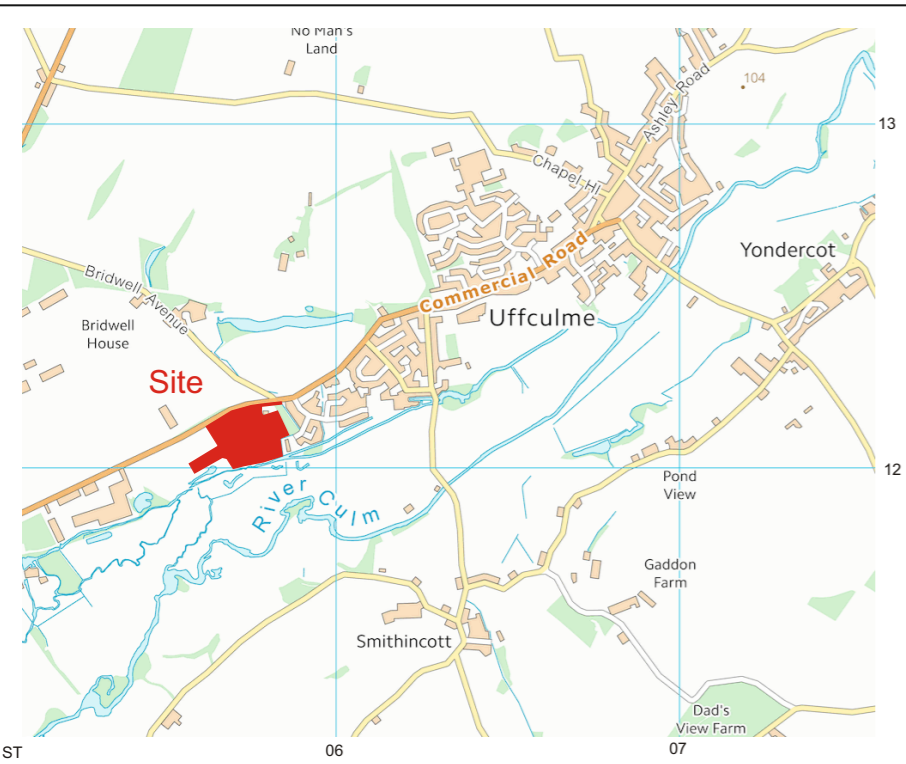
- 8.1 The finds, paper and digital archive is currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ under the unique project code of **ACD1545** and temporary reference number **RAMM: 17/02** received from the Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM) Exeter. It is recommended that the finds, paper and digital material are discarded, with this report therefore representing the archive for the project.
- 8.2 An online OASIS entry has been completed, using the unique identifier **283494**, which includes a digital copy of this report.

9. SOURCES CONSULTED

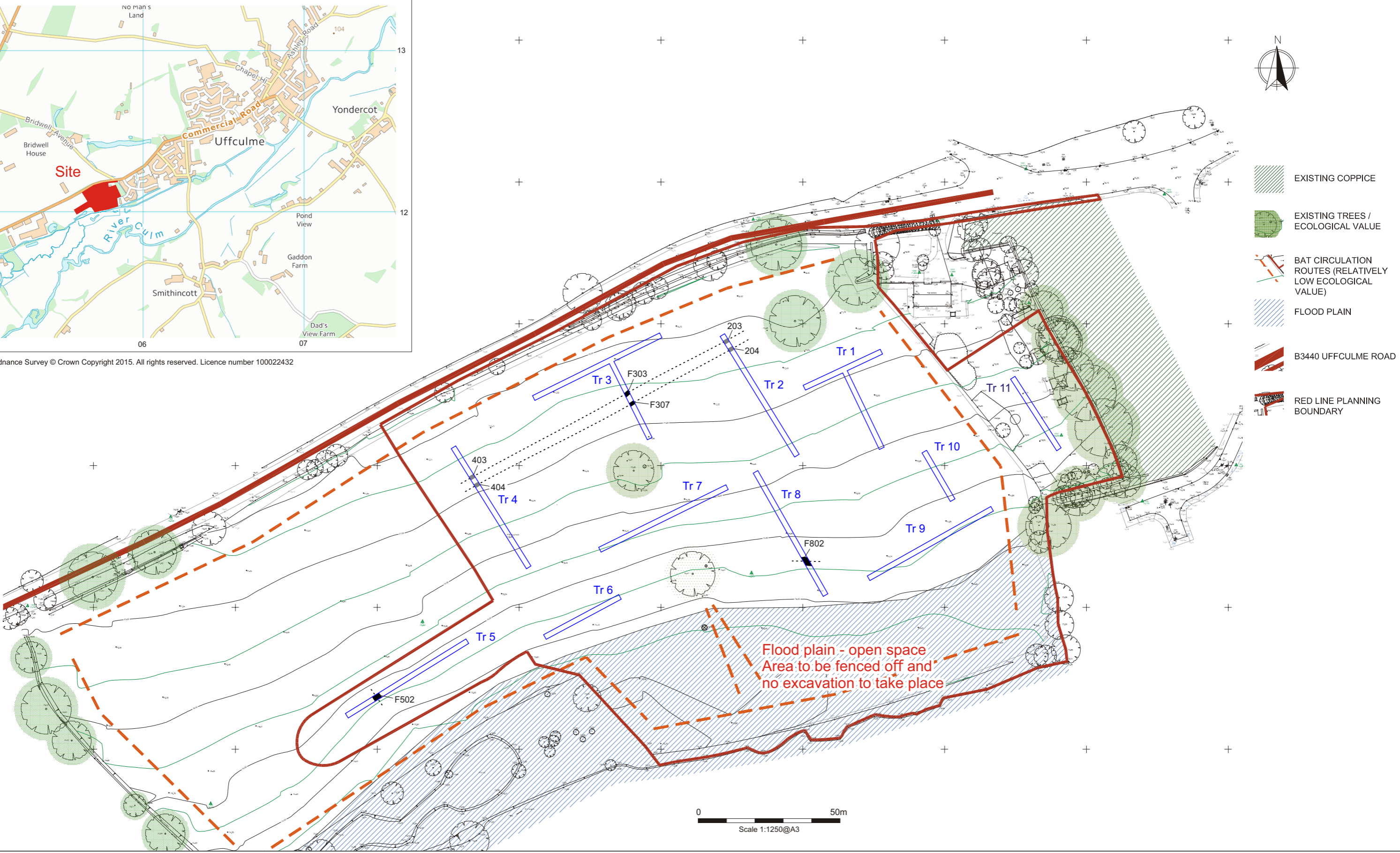
BGS, 2017, *British Geological Survey Geology of Britain On-line Viewer* (www.bgs.ac.uk).

Halberton parish tithe, 1840 (<http://www.devon.gov.uk/tithemaps.html>).



Valentin, J. 2017, *Land to the west of Harvesters, Uffculme Road, Uffculme, Devon: Project Design for Archaeological Investigation and Mitigation*. Unpublished AC archaeology document for client, ref ACD1545/1/0.




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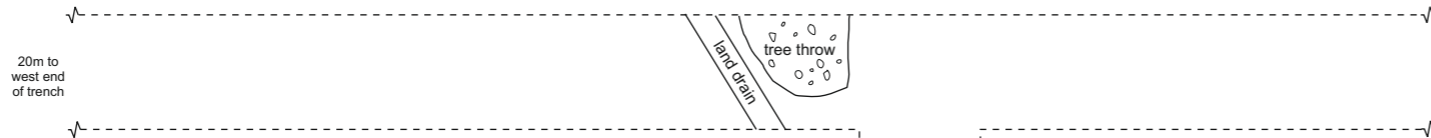


-  EXISTING COPPICE
-  EXISTING TREES / ECOLOGICAL VALUE
-  BAT CIRCULATION ROUTES (RELATIVELY LOW ECOLOGICAL VALUE)
-  FLOOD PLAIN
-  B3440 UFFCULME ROAD
-  RED LINE PLANNING BOUNDARY

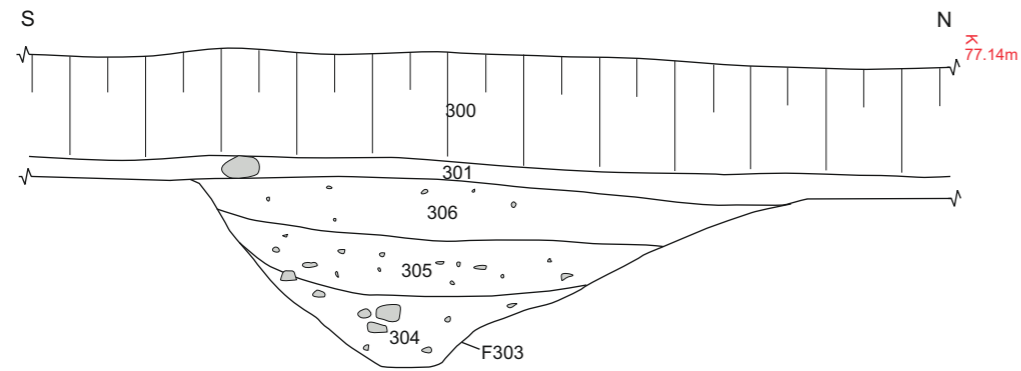
- Key**
-  Archaeological features identified
 -  Archaeological features identified - not excavated


 PROJECT
**Land to the west of Harvesters,
 Uffculme Road, Uffculme**
 TITLE
**Fig. 1:
 Site and trench locations**

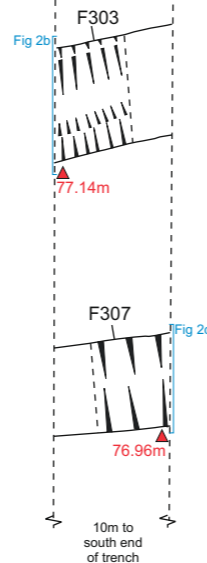
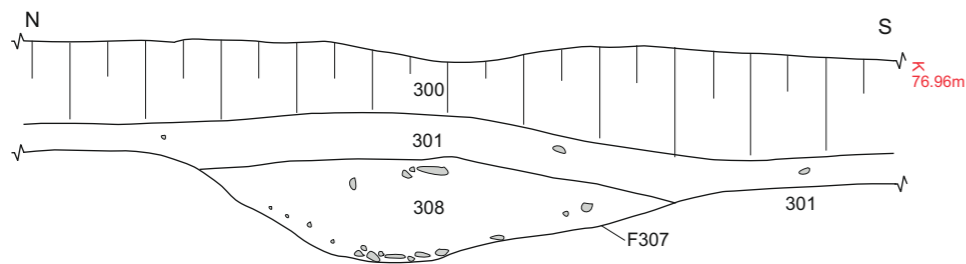
Trench 3
a) Plan



b) Section, F303

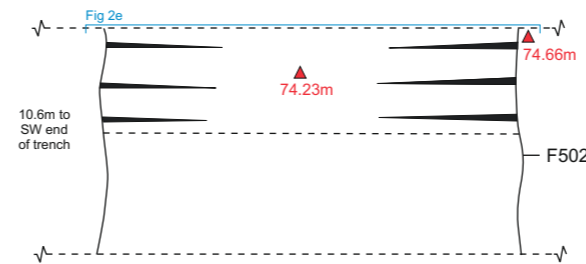


c) Section, F307

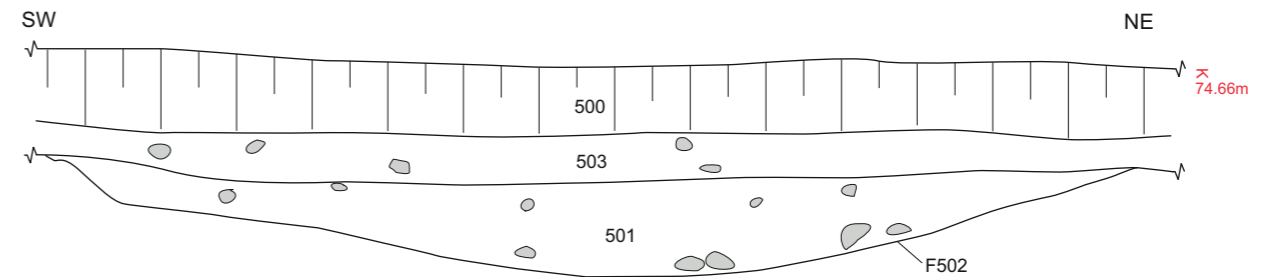


Trench 5

d) Plan, F502

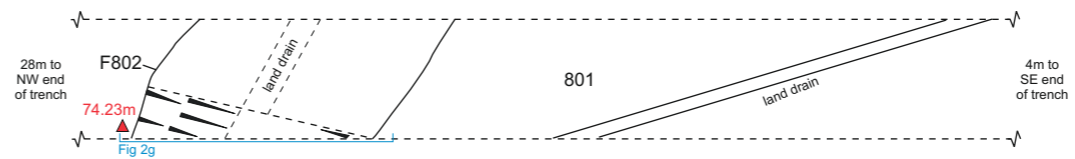


e) Section, F502



Trench 8

f) Plan



g) Section, F802

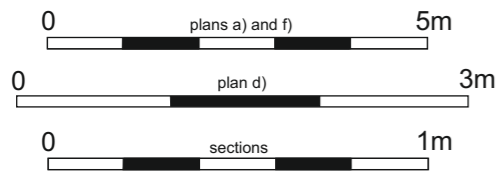
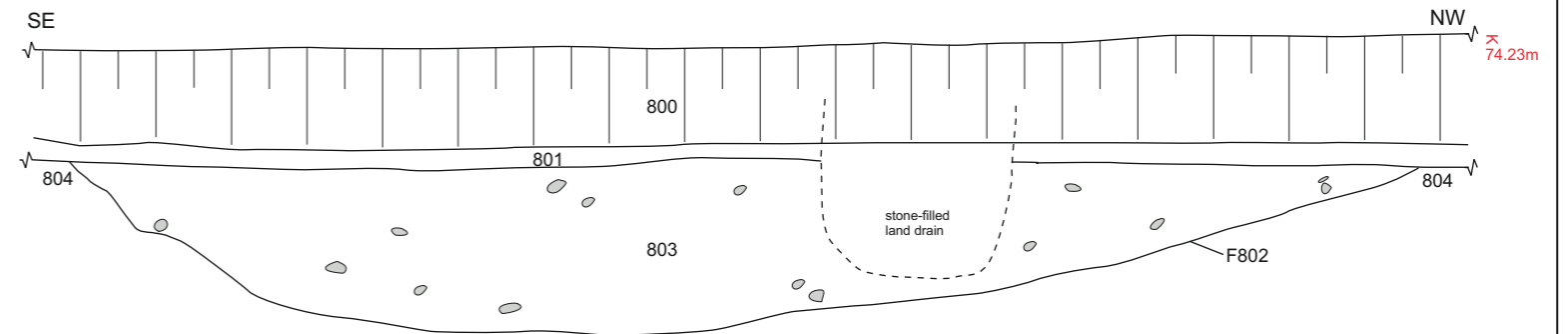




Plate 1: General view of the site looking northwest



Plate 2: Trench 3, northeast facing section of ditch F303 (1m scale)



Plate 3: Trench 3, southwest facing section of ditch F307 (1m scale)



Plate 4: Trench 5, ditch F502, looking northwest (2m scale)



Plate 5: Trench 8, northeast facing section of ditch F802 (1m scale)

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