

# LAND OFF THE A361, TIVERTON, DEVON

(NGR SS 98503 13644 and SS 98622 13984)

Results of archaeological monitoring and recording

Mid Devon District Council Planning Reference:  
17/00098/FULL

Scheduled Monument 1019058

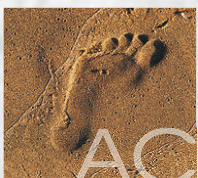
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Prepared by:  
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On behalf of:  
Devon County Council

Report No: ACD1579/2/1

Date: January 2018



archaeology

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Approved by	Simon Hughes

## Acknowledgements

The work was commissioned by Anette Smith, Devon County Council. The site works were carried out by Alex Farnell and Paul Bracken, with the illustrations for this report prepared by Leon Cauchois. The advice of Stephen Reed Senior Historic Environment Officer, is gratefully 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

*Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken by AC archaeology during October and November 2017 on land to the south of the A361 near Tiverton (SS 98503 13644). The site lay adjacent to scheduled monument 1019058, a Neolithic long barrow.*

*Monitored works included the removal of a hedgebank and the excavation of 36 postholes for the construction of an acoustic fence. This formed a component to a wider new road junction development that had principally exposed a small number of Late Neolithic pits.*

*The work exposed further evidence for Late Neolithic activity (3000–2500 BC). This consisted of a possible pit containing a quantity of Grooved Ware pottery.*

*A 19th century possible pit and a profile through the removed undated but probable post-medieval hedgebank was also recorded.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

**1.1** Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken during groundworks associated with the construction of an acoustic fence for a new road junction of the A361 dual carriageway at Tiverton, Devon (SS 98503 13644). The work was required as a condition of planning consent granted by Mid Devon District Council (ref. 17/00098/FULL), following consultation with Historic England and the Devon County Council Historic Environment Team (hereafter DCHET). Part of the work was carried out within the scheduled area of 'Long barrow immediately north of Blenheim House, 310m southwest of Putson Cross' (National Heritage List for England reference 1019058). This was carried out under Scheduled Monument Consent granted by Historic England (reference S00165207).

**1.2** The site of the proposed new junction occupies approximately six hectares of agricultural land and is located on the eastern outskirts of Tiverton, to the north and south of the A361 dual carriageway (Fig. 1). It will comprise the construction of a 'cloverleaf' road junction with access and egress onto both the eastbound and westbound carriageways of the A361 and a stretch of connecting highway and a junction and access onto Blundells Road to the south. Planning reference 17/00098/FULL, which represents a component to the existing planning permission for the wider scheme (14/01168/MFUL), relates to land to the rear of Blenheim House, Uplowman Road. Works included in this component and monitored as part of this work comprised re-profiling an existing hedgebank and construction of an acoustic boundary fence.

**1.3** The site comprised the rear portion of the garden to Blenheim House, which was separated from formerly agricultural land to the north by a tree-lined hedgebank (Plate 1). It lay at 90m aOD (above Ordnance Datum) on elevated ground above low-lying land to the south adjacent to the River Lowman. The underlying solid geology consists of sandstone of the Tidcombe Sand Member ([www.bgs.ac.uk](http://www.bgs.ac.uk)).

## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

**2.1** Long Barrow 1019058, is described by Historic England as:

*...a Neolithic long barrow situated on the southern side of the valley of the River Lowman. The monument survives as an elongated oval mound aligned east-west, which is widest at the eastern end. It measures approximately 92m long, 18m wide at*

*the east tapering to 11m wide at the west and is up to 0.9m high. The flanking quarry ditch is partially visible on the northern side, extends round the eastern end and to the south, and is elsewhere preserved as a buried feature which measures up to 10m wide. Partial excavation has shown that this ditch measures up to 3.2m deep. The long mound and its ditch extends through the gardens and grounds of three separate properties.*

- 2.2** Investigations of the long barrow comprising a survey and an excavation had been carried out during the 1980's following damage to the eastern portion of the monument (MDV1364). This work established that much of the upstanding deposits in this part of the monument had been destroyed (Smith 1990). However, beneath extant trees, surviving dumped deposits and a mound core comprised of stone slabs and stacked turves that sealed a buried land surface were recorded. In the area that had been previously covered by the mound, a 2.4m diameter pit was exposed but contained no artefacts. The perimeter ditch to the long barrow was also investigated and was found to measure around 6m wide and up to 3.25m deep. A small quantity of worked flints including scrapers and part of a transverse arrowhead was recovered from the ditch fills.
- 2.3** As part of the wider application area for the new road junction, a programme of archaeological work associated with planning permission reference 14/01168/MFUL had been undertaken. This included an Historic Environment Assessment (Jordan 2014), geophysical survey (Richardson 2014), trial trench evaluation (Caine and Rainbird 2016) and targeted excavations (Rainbird 2017). The latter part of this work comprised a series of excavation areas that were positioned to target features recorded during the trial trench evaluation. Of particular note were three adjacent pits containing a Late Neolithic finds assemblage that included worked flint, Grooved Ware pottery and a stone axe.

### **3. AIMS**

- 3.1** The aim of archaeological monitoring and recording was to preserve by record any archaeological features or deposits exposed during groundworks associated with the scheme. This is with particular reference for the presence of features, deposits or artefacts associated with prehistoric activity.

### **4. METHODOLOGY**

- 4.1** The archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken in accordance with a project design prepared by AC archaeology (Hughes 2017) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' document, '*Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief*' (published December 2014).
- 4.2** Monitored groundworks comprised the removal of an existing hedgebank and the excavation of 36 post holes for the new acoustic fence (Fig. 2). This work was carried out within the scheduled area of Long Barrow 1019058 and the area to the north (Fig. 2).
- 4.3** 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 as appropriate.

## 5. RESULTS

### 5.1 Acoustic fence posthole excavations (Plan Figs 2 & 3a and section 3b; Plates 2-4)

Thirty-six postholes were excavated, each measuring 0.6m in diameter and up to 1m deep. Postholes 1-8 were located within the scheduled area.

Postholes 10-28 were located within the garden plot to the southeast of the hedgebank. Natural subsoil (context 101), which consisted of a light yellowish-red sandy-silt with common gravel inclusions, was present within these postholes at a depth of 0.4m below existing levels. This was overlain by a 0.2m thick mid greyish-brown silty-loam subsoil (111) and a dark greyish brown silty-loam topsoil (110). Postholes 1-9 and 29-36 followed the line of the former hedgebank that formed the boundary to the garden of Blenheim House (see below). These were excavated into the fill of its associated flanking ditch and overlying soils spread from the levelling of the bank.

Two features representing possible pits (F112 and F114) were partially-exposed in the excavation of Posthole No. 26

#### *Possible pit F114*

Possible pit F114 was the earlier of the two features and measured 0.24m deep with shallow sloping sides and a concave base. It contained a mid yellowish-brown sandy-silt fill (115) that had common gravel inclusions. A total of 12 sherds of Neolithic Grooved Ware pottery was recovered.

#### *Possible pit F112*

Possible pit F112 measured approximately 0.6m across with moderately-steep sloping concave sides and a concave base. It contained a single root-disturbed fill (113) composed of dark greyish-brown silty-loam with occasional sub-angular gravel and pebble inclusions. Fragments of 18th-19th century bottle glass and pottery were recovered.

### 5.2 Hedgebank removal (Plan Fig. 2 and section Fig. 3c; Plate 5)

The section of the hedgebank bounding the garden to Blenheim House that was removed measured approximately 60m long. It was comprised of a bank flanked by ditches (F105 and F107).

The bank measured 2m wide and 1.2m high. It was composed of a dump of up-cast re-deposited natural subsoil (102), which was overlain by a mid yellowish to reddish-brown silty-sand (103). The flanking ditches contained mid-reddish brown silty-sand to sandy-silt loam fills (104 and 106). The bank and ditches were overlain by a root-disturbed topsoil (100). No finds were recovered.

## 6. THE FINDS by Naomi Payne and Henrietta Quinnell

### 6.1 Introduction

All finds recovered 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 collection of finds are summarised in Table 1 below and consist of a quantity of Neolithic and post-medieval pottery.

Table 1. Finds summary (weight is in grams)

Context	Context Description	Prehistoric pottery		Post-medieval pottery	
		No	Wt	No	Wt
113	Fill of probable pit F112			7	43
115	Fill of probable pit F114	12	47		
<b>Total</b>		<b>12</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>43</b>

## 6.2 Prehistoric pottery (Plate 6)

Twelve prehistoric sherds (47g) were recovered from context 115, fill of possible pit F114. The sherds come from at least two vessels in differing fabrics. The first has voids suggesting the use of a temper now leached out; two conjoining rim sherds most probably come from a Grooved Ware vessel, with possible decoration on the abraded exterior. The second vessel is of a fabric without voids, with at least one sherd having decoration apparently formed by lines of overlapping fingernail. Again Grooved Ware would be appropriate. This adds to a number of pits with Grooved Ware pottery, including the recent works as part of the same overall scheme (Quinnell *et al* 2016, Rainbird 2017)

## 6.3 Post-medieval pottery

Seven sherds (43g) from the same imari-style porcelain bowl with hand-painted decoration were recovered from context 113, fill of probable pit F112. They date from the 18th or 19th century.

## 7. DISCUSSION

7.1 Monitoring of excavations for the new acoustic fence have recorded parts of two possible pits (F114 and F112) and a profile across a hedgebank.

7.2 The pits, which were exposed within the excavation of Posthole No. 26 of the new acoustic fence have been dated from finds to the Late Neolithic (3000-2500BC) and 18th to 19th century periods. The presence of the Late Neolithic pottery in possible pit (F114), is clearly of some importance, especially given its location as within close proximity to the Scheduled long barrow. This, now heavily disturbed monument, which although was not closely-dated from the investigations carried out in the 1980's, is considered to also date from the Neolithic period. The recording of pit therefore has the potential to represent activity carried out potentially several centuries subsequent to the construction of the adjacent long barrow. Furthermore, the deposition of Grooved Ware pottery also draws comparisons with the assemblage of finds recovered from pits recorded during the associated works for the new road junction some 300m to the west. In these, as well as Grooved Ware pottery, worked flint and a stone axe were also recovered (Rainbird 2017). As a group, these findings from the recent work associated with the new road junction have provided evidence that has served to extend the area of Late Neolithic activity.

7.3 Further examples of nearby finds of Grooved Ware pottery have also come from a pit some 800m to the south (Cotswold Archaeology 2014) and sherds tentatively identified as Grooved Ware have also been recovered from a ring ditch located c.450m to the west (Valentin 2009). Nevertheless, the general number of comparative pit features containing Grooved Ware pottery in Devon is low. Known examples include those from; Old Rydon Lane, Exeter (Pearce *et al.* 2011); Topsham (Jarvis and Maxfield 1975); and Moore Farm, Harberton (Mudd and Joyce 2014, 181).

7.4 The deposition of Grooved Ware sherds in pits and tree throws during the Neolithic is associated with the suggested practice of structured deposition, where a variety of

items, which can include pottery, flint and polished stone items, burnt remains and animal bone, may be deliberately placed into the ground (Thomas 1999). In the southwest these features tend to be modest in size (c. 1m in diameter) and contents, notwithstanding the presence of completely decayed organic artefacts. The assemblage from pit F114, consisting of sherds from two different vessels, is potentially consistent with this practice, which continues to be recognised into the Early Bronze Age. While this activity is taken as an indicator of settlement, the motivations for it are uncertain and it has been suggested that it may represent a symbolic act of 'closure' at the abandonment of a site following a period of occupation (*ibid* 1999).

- 7.5** Recording of the removed section of hedgebank exposed a simple sequence of flanking ditches and a bank comprised of up-cast material. There was no evidence for a buried soil beneath the bank. The boundary is depicted on the Tiverton, Tidcome tithe map of 1842 as part of a system of fields lying to either side of Uplowman road that are characterised in the Devon Historic Environment Record as of probable 15th to 18th century date. It bounds a plot that is named in the accompanying apportionment as '*Long Burrow*', and its curving alignment clearly respects what would have been (until the 1980s) a substantial upstanding earthwork.

## **8. CONCLUSIONS**

- 8.1** The archaeological monitoring and recording work has principally exposed evidence for Late Neolithic activity in the area adjacent to a broadly contemporary long barrow (Scheduled Monument 1019058). A possible pit containing a quantity of Grooved Ware pottery, has provided further evidence for Neolithic activity to that recorded during associated archaeological work on the same road scheme. More widely, the findings represent an additional example of what is a small number of pits with Late Neolithic Grooved Ware recorded from Devon.

## **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 ACD1579 and the temporary reference number **RAMM 15/29** issued by the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter. It will be held until the need for any further archaeological work on the site is established, then it will be dealt with under their current accession policy.
- 9.2** An online OASIS entry has been completed, using the unique identifier **306999**, which includes a digital copy of this report.



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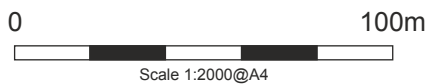
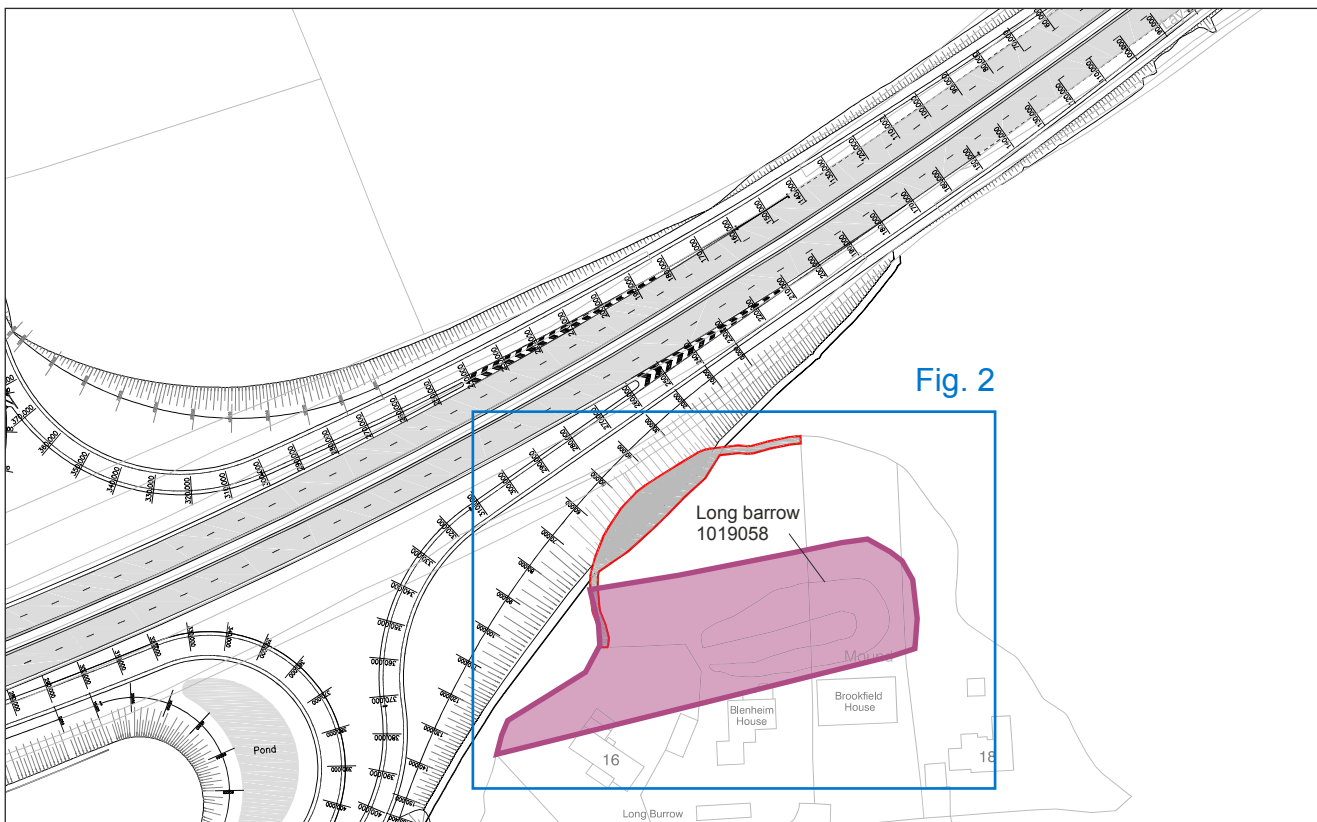
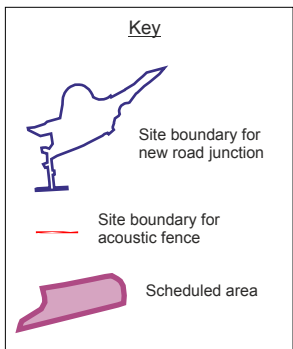
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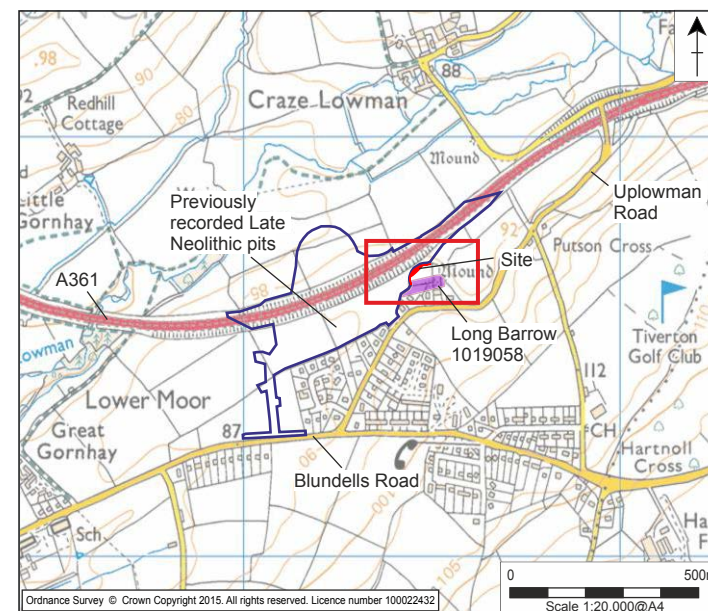
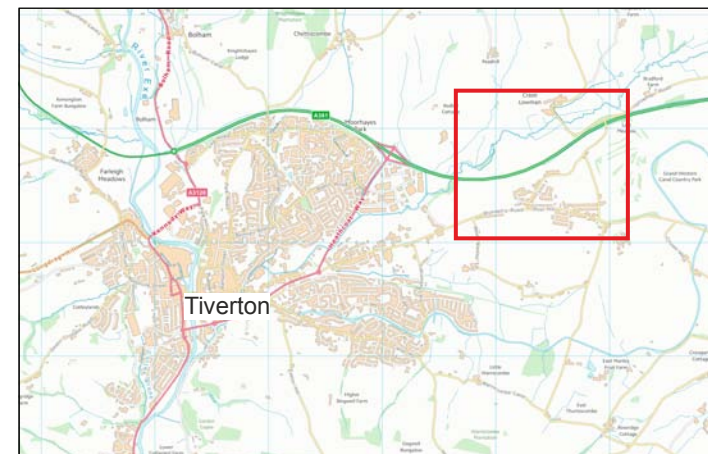
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PROJECT  
Land off the A361, Tiverton, Devon

TITLE  
Fig. 1: Site location



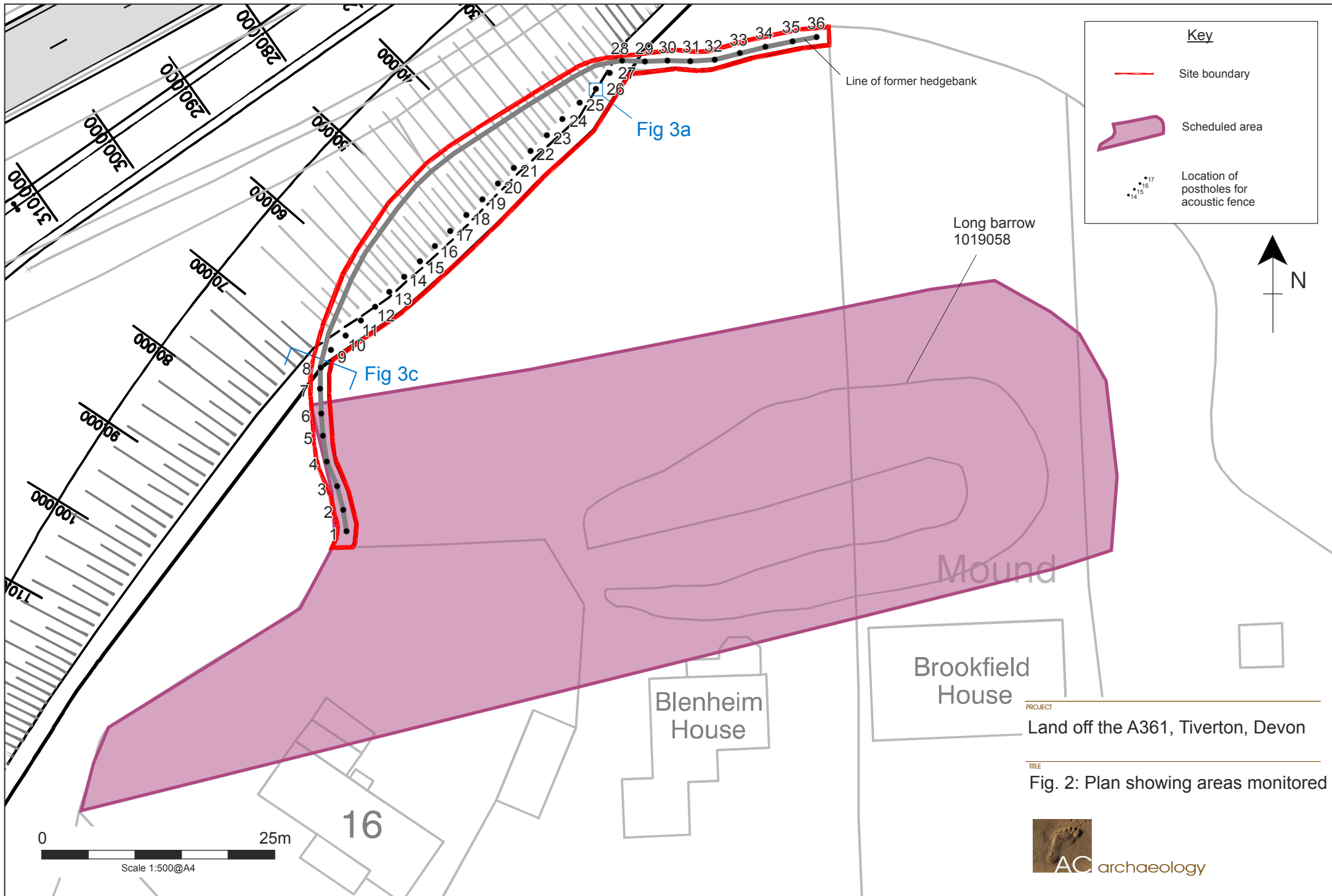
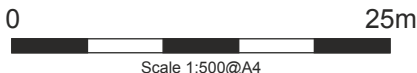


Fig 3a

Fig 3c

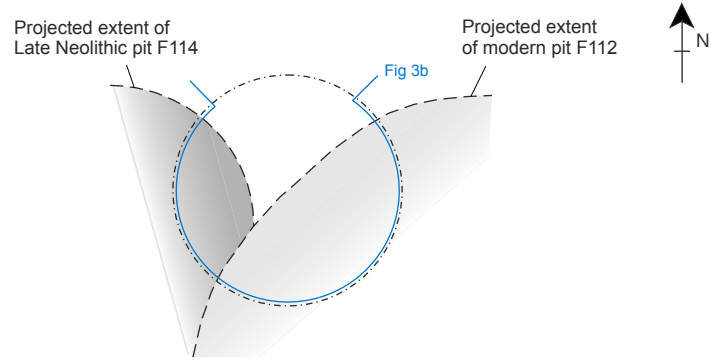


PROJECT  
Land off the A361, Tiverton, Devon

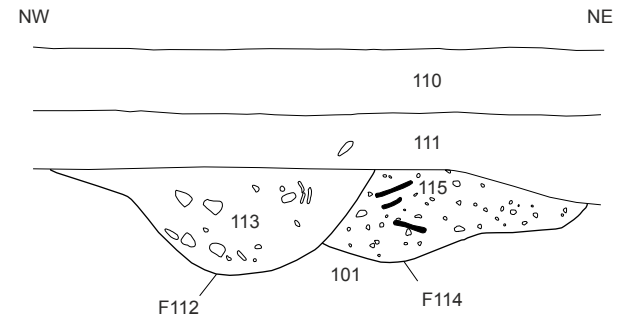
TITLE  
Fig. 2: Plan showing areas monitored



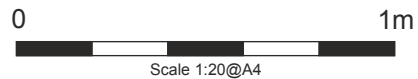
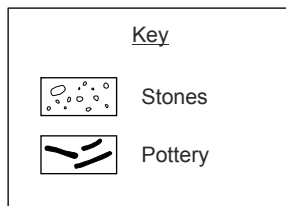
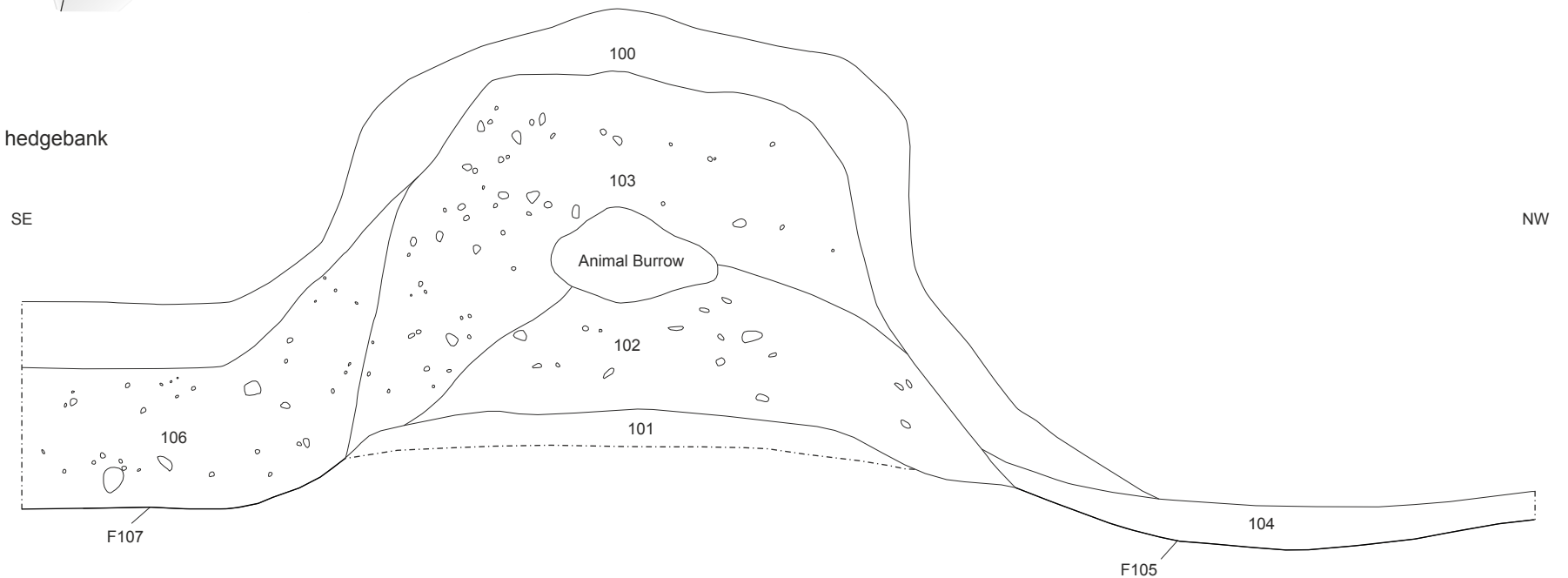
a) Plan of Posthole 26



b) Section of Posthole 26



c) Section through hedgebank



PROJECT  
Land off the A361, Tiverton, Devon

TITLE  
Fig. 3: Plan and section of posthole 26 excavation and section of hedgebank





Plate 4: Pit F114 with *in situ* Late Neolithic pottery, view to southwest (Scale 0.2m)



Plate 5: Showing section through hedgebank. View to southwest (Scale 1m)



Plate 6: Late Neolithic pottery from pit F114

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