

LAND AT SANDERSON'S FIELD, KINGSTON, DEVON

(NGR SX 63577 47968)

Results of an Archaeological Trench Evaluation

Appeal Reference APP/K1128/W/18/3218474

South Hams District Council Planning Reference
3965/17/OPA

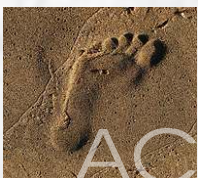
Prepared by:
Paul Rainbird

With a contribution from:
Naomi Payne

On behalf of:
Ryder Architecture

Report No: ACD1774/2/0

Date: April 2019



archaeology

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(Centred on NGR SX 63577 47968)

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Client	Ryder Architecture on behalf of clients
Report Number	ACD1774/2/0
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Report Author	Paul Rainbird
Contributions	Naomi Payne
Checked by	John Valentin
Approved by	John Valentin

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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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CONTENTS

Summary

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Archaeological background	1
3.	Aim	2
4.	Methodology	2
5.	Results	2
6.	The find	4
7.	Discussion	4
8.	Conclusions	5
9.	Archive and OASIS	5
10.	Sources consulted	5

List of figures

- Fig. 1: Location of site and trial trenches, with archaeological features shown in relation to the geophysical interpretation
- Fig. 2: Trench 1, plan and sections
- Fig. 3: Trench 2, plan and sections
- Fig. 4: Trench 4, plan and section
- Fig. 5: Trenches 6 and 7, plans and sections

List of plates

- Plate 1: General view of site, looking southeast
- Plate 2: Trench 1, general view of the trench looking southeast
- Plate 3: Trench 1, section of Romano-British enclosure ditch F107, looking southwest with Trench 2 in the background
- Plate 4: Trench 2, section of probable late medieval or post-medieval ditch F205, looking southeast
- Plate 5: Trench 4, section of Romano-British enclosure ditch F403, looking northeast
- Plate 6: Trench 7, general view with undated curvilinear ditch F709 in the foreground, looking southwest
- Plate 7: Trench 7, section of undated curvilinear ditch F709, looking southeast

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Tabulated context descriptions by trench

Summary

An archaeological trench evaluation was undertaken by AC archaeology during March 2019 on land at Sanderson's Field, Kingston, Devon (SX 63577 47968). The evaluation comprised the machine-excavation of seven trenches totalling 179m in length, with each 1.5m wide. A previous geophysical survey indicated the presence of part of a possible squared enclosure within part of the site.

Of most interest from the evaluation was the evidence for Romano-British rural settlement in the northeast part of the site, as also identified by the geophysics. General evidence for activity dating to this period, and similar types of settlement, has been found elsewhere in the South Hams. The small size of the enclosure ditches, the lack of discrete features, such as pits and postholes, and the paucity of finds indicates that preservation of any associated settlement evidence is likely to be poor. This is probably due to plough truncation over several centuries of agricultural use of the site prior to its conversion for use as a village cricket green. The only artefact recovered was a small sherd of Roman pottery from the enclosure ditch.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological trench evaluation on land at Sanderson's Field, Kingston, Devon (SX 63577 47968) was undertaken by AC archaeology during March 2019. The evaluation was required to provide supporting information for a planning application appeal (APP/K1128/W/18/3218474), following consultation with the Devon County Council Historic Environment Team. The appeal is associated with South Hams District Council Planning application 3965/17/OPA for the erection of 12 dwellings. The location of the site is shown on Fig. 1.
- 1.2 The site is located within agricultural land that bounds the current northwest extent of Kingston. It is bounded to the southeast by an unnamed road that extends from the parish church of St James and the core of the village to the southwest and Vicarage Farm to the northeast, with Four Cross crossroads beyond. Currently used as a cricket pitch, the site is situated on ground that slopes gradually down to the south between 107m and 100m above Ordnance Datum towards a stream valley (Plate 1). The underlying solid geology comprises slate, siltstone and sandstone of the Dartmouth Group (British Geological Survey Online Viewer 2019).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Recent archaeological work in the area, comprising a geophysical survey and subsequent trial trench evaluation, located some 150m to the northeast, was undertaken in 2017 (Rainbird 2017). This work established the presence of a probable curvilinear enclosure dating to the mid to late Iron Age.
- 2.2 The 1841 Kingston parish tithe map depicts the site as unchanged from its current form. It is named in the accompanying tithe apportionment as 'Lower Vicarage Park'.
- 2.3 As part of the current application, the site has been subject to a geophysical survey (Dean 2018). The interpreted results from this indicated the presence of part of a possible squared enclosure (Fig. 1). This extends into the neighbouring plot to the northeast and had the potential to represent Iron Age to Romano-British activity on the site. A separate linear anomaly, which lies to the south of this and extends on the same general alignment as the possible enclosure, was considered to be potentially associated.

3. AIM

- 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. 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 the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Field Evaluation* (revised December 2014). It comprised the machine-excavation of seven trenches totaling 179m in length, with each 1.5m wide. Trenches were positioned to target anomalies identified by the previous geophysical survey, as well as to achieve comprehensive sample coverage of the site (Fig. 1).
- 4.2** All trenches were located with a Leica Net rover GPS accurate to 1cm. The removal of soils within the trenches was undertaken in 20cm spits (maximum) under the control and direction of the site archaeologist. Stripping by mechanical excavator ceased at the level at which archaeological deposits or natural subsoil was exposed.
- 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 or 1:20, while all site levels relate to a temporary benchmark given the arbitrary value of 100m.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

Archaeological features of probable Romano-British and post-medieval date were present in Trenches 1, 2, 4, 6 and 7 and are described below, while detailed tabulated context descriptions for all trenches are provided in Appendix 1. Context numbers are prefixed by the relevant trench number (e.g. 100 for Trench 1, 200 for Trench 2 etc.).

Natural subsoil, comprising a light greyish-red clay, was encountered in all seven trenches at between 0.5m and 0.9m below the ground level. This was sealed by an agricultural subsoil of mid reddish-brown silty clay, then a dark reddish-brown silty clay loam topsoil.

5.2 Trench 1 (Plan Fig. 2a, sections Figs 2b-d; Plates 2-3)

This trench was positioned in the north corner of the site in the location of three possible linear features interpreted from the results of a previous geophysical survey. It was T-shaped, with one arm NW-SE aligned and the other NE-SW, and had a total length of 48m, width of 1.5m and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.6m slightly into the natural subsoil. Three ditches (F103, F105 and F107) were present and matched the positions of the anomalies identified by the geophysical survey.

Ditch F103

This was orientated broadly NW-SE and was 0.87m wide by 0.4m deep. It had steep irregular and concave sides with a concave base (Fig. 2d). A single fill was present (104), composed of a light to mid reddish-brown silty clay. No finds were recovered.

Ditch F105

This was orientated broadly NW-SE and was 0.92m wide by 0.3m deep. It had steep irregular sides with a flat to concave base (Fig. 2b). A single fill was present (106), composed of a light to mid reddish-brown silty clay. No finds were recovered.

Ditch F107

This was orientated broadly NE-SW and was 0.7m wide by 0.4m deep. It had steep straight to irregular sides with a flat to concave base (Fig. 2c). A single fill was present (108), composed of a dark reddish-brown silty clay. No finds were recovered.

5.3 Trench 2 (*Plan Fig. 3a, section Figs 3b-c; Plate 4*)

This trench was positioned in the northwest part of the site. It was NE-SW aligned, had a length of 20m, width of 1.5m and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.6m slightly into the natural subsoil. A ditch (F205) of probable late medieval or post-medieval date and a natural tree throw hollow (203) were present. These had not been identified by the geophysical survey.

Tree throw 203

This was an irregular feature measuring a minimum of 1.5m across by 0.66m deep with an irregular base (Fig. 3b). A single fill was present (204), composed of a mid reddish-brown silty clay. No finds were recovered.

Ditch F205

This was orientated NW-SE, and was 1.05m wide by 0.5m deep. It had steep irregular and concave sides with a concave base (Fig. 3c). A single fill was present (206), composed of a mid reddish-brown silty clay. No finds were recovered.

5.4 Trench 4 (*Plan Fig. 4a, section Fig. 4b; Plate 5*)

This trench was positioned in the southeast corner of the site in the location of a possible linear feature interpreted from the results of the previous geophysical survey. It was T-shaped, with one arm NE-SW aligned and the other NW-SE, and had a total length of 32m, width of 1.5m and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.6m slightly into the natural subsoil. A ditch of probable Romano-British date was present (F403), and matched the position of the anomaly identified by the geophysical survey.

Ditch F403

This was orientated broadly NE-SW and was 0.75m wide by 0.45m deep. It had steep straight sides with a flat base (Fig. 4b). Two fills were present, with the basal fill (405) a mid brown silty clay with abundant shillet fragments, which was below an upper fill (404) of mid brown silty clay, which contained one sherd of pottery of Romano-British date.

5.5 Trench 6 (*Plan Fig. 5a, section Fig. 5b*)

This trench was positioned in a central area of the site in the location of a linear feature interpreted from the results of a previous geophysical survey. It was N-S aligned, had a length of 16m, width of 1.5m and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.54m slightly into the natural subsoil. A single ditch (F603) was present crossing the centre of the trench and matched the position of the anomaly identified by the geophysical survey.

Ditch F603

This was orientated broadly E-W and was 0.58m wide by 0.2m deep. It had gradual sloping sides with a concave base (Fig. 5b). A single fill was present (604), composed of a mid yellowish-brown silty clay. No finds were recovered.

5.6 Trench 7 (*Plan Fig. 5c, sections Figs 5d-f; Plates 6-7*)

This trench was positioned in the southern corner of the site. It was broadly NE-SW aligned, had a length of 30m, width of 1.5m and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.9m slightly into the natural subsoil. A possible pit or linear terminal (F707) of unknown date and a curvilinear ditch (F709) also of unknown date were present. These had not been identified by the geophysical survey.

Possible pit or gully terminal F707

This was orientated broadly NW-SE and was not fully exposed in the trench. It measured 0.5m wide by 0.3m deep and 0.5m long, continuing beyond the edge of the trench to the NW. It had irregular sides and a flat base (Fig. 5f). A single fill was present (708), composed of a mid brown silty clay. No finds were recovered.

Curvilinear ditch F709

This was excavated in two segments (F703 and F705), was up to 1.13m wide by 0.56m deep and extended into the trench from the east for 4m before terminating in the south. It had steep sides and a flat base (Figs 5d-e). A single fill was present (704/706), composed of a mid brown silty clay. No finds were recovered.

6. THE FIND *by Naomi Payne*

- 6.1 The evaluation produced a single find, a sherd of pottery from context 404. The sherd, which weighs 3g, is an abraded piece of footring from a Roman samian ware vessel. The fabric's colour and inclusions suggests that it is East Gaulish in origin, possibly from Rheinzabern (date range c. AD140-250).

7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1 The evaluation has identified evidence for Romano-British occupation on the site in the form of part of a squared ditched enclosure, with the ditches exposed in Trenches 1 and 4; the ditch in the latter trench contained a single sherd of Roman pottery. A probable contemporary ditch, as it follows the same orientation as the enclosure, was exposed in Trench 6. These features all matched anomalies interpreted from the results of the previous geophysical survey. Features not previously indicated by the geophysical survey were found at the margins of the site in the northwest (Trench 2) and the south (Trench 7); these are undated.
- 7.2 The Romano-British enclosure is defined by shallow ditches (F105, F107 and F403), with an example in Trench 1 (F103), perhaps representing internal division within the enclosure. A further ditch (F603, Trench 6) runs parallel with the south side of the enclosure and probably represents contemporary land division. Ditched enclosures are regarded as typical of Iron Age and Romano-British rural settlement in Devon. Although most of these sites are known only from aerial photography and cannot all be regarded as Late Iron Age or Romano-British in date (Griffith 1986, 57-60; 1994), a recent review of Romano-British rural settlement has shown for excavated sites in South West England that enclosed farms are typical of Devon (and Cornwall), that 32% of these were originally occupied in the Late Iron Age and in Devon are often located on hillslopes (Brindle 2016). The most extensively investigated site of this type in the South Hams is that at Mount Folly, approximately 4km southeast of Kingston, where settlement within a squared enclosure has been dated as extending from the Late Bronze Age through to the Romano-British period (www.mtfolly.org).

- 7.3 The remaining ditches and gullies were located on the edges of the site. These are undated, but ditch F205 in Trench 2 appears to run parallel on a NW-SE alignment with the historic extant field boundaries and probably represents previous sub-division of the field in the later medieval or post-medieval periods. The site falls within an area characterised as ‘probably based on medieval fields, but the many straight field boundaries suggest they were substantially re-organised in the post-medieval period’ (DCC 2019). The features in Trench 7 are not of obvious function and an association with the Romano-British activity on the site cannot be ruled out.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 Of most interest from the evaluation is the evidence for Romano-British rural settlement in the northeast part of the site and as identified by the previous geophysics. General evidence for activity dating to this period, and similar types of settlement, has been found elsewhere in the South Hams. The small size of the enclosure ditches, the lack of discrete features, such as pits and postholes, as well as the paucity of finds indicates that preservation of the settlement is poor. The poor preservation is probably due to plough truncation over several centuries of agricultural use of the site prior to its conversion for use as a village cricket green. The 1841 Kingston tithe apportionment lists the field as being in arable cultivation at that time. Small quantities of charcoal were observed in ditch fills, indicating that there is some potential for the ditch fills to preserve information about the past environment.

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 **ACD1774**. It will be held until it is known if any further archaeological work on the site is required. On completion of all archaeological work the finds and paper archive will be offered to the Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery, but if they are unable to accept this, then it will be dealt with under their current accession policy. Also at this stage, if required a digital archive will be compiled in accordance with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) standards, guidelines and the *AC archaeology Data Management Plan for Digital Archives* (Coles 2018).
- 9.2 An online OASIS entry has been completed using the unique identifier **344052**, which includes a digital copy of this report.

10. SOURCES CONSULTED

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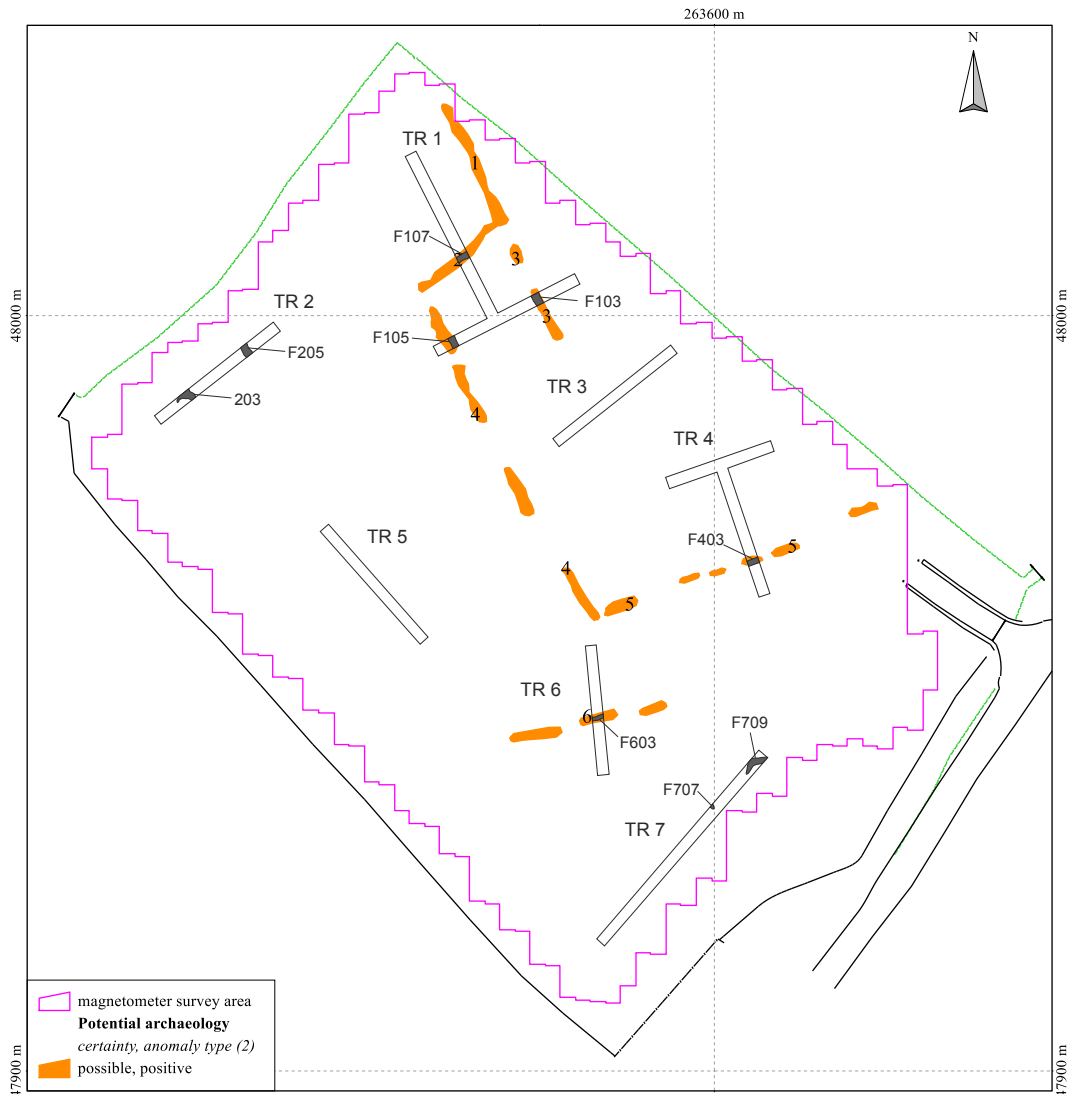
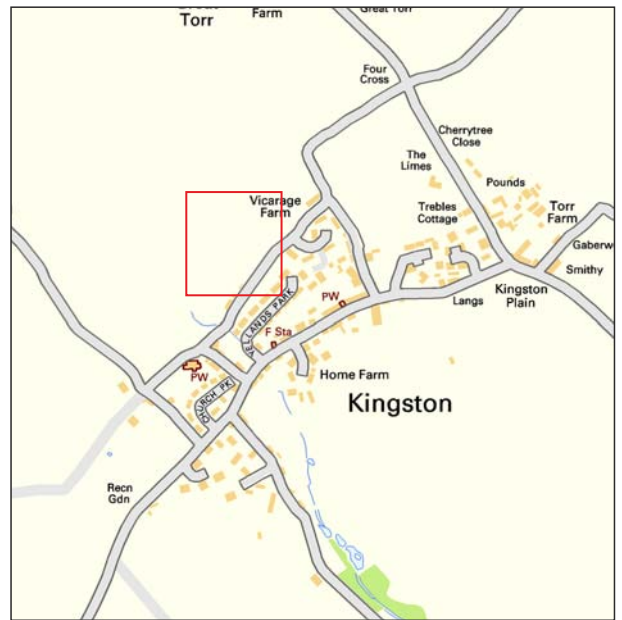
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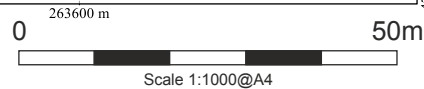
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 Trenches with archaeological features identified

PROJECT

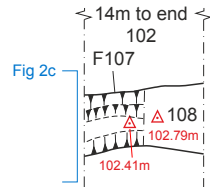
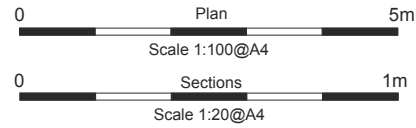
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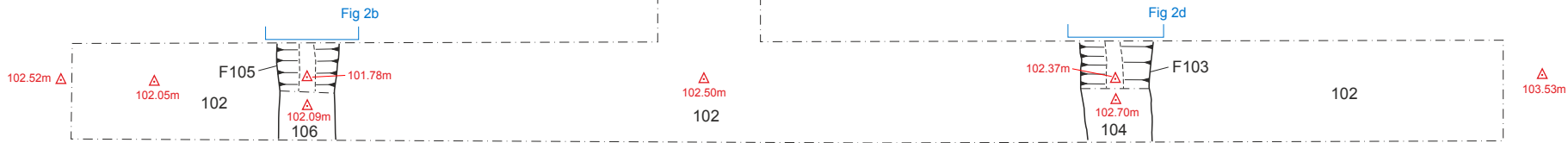
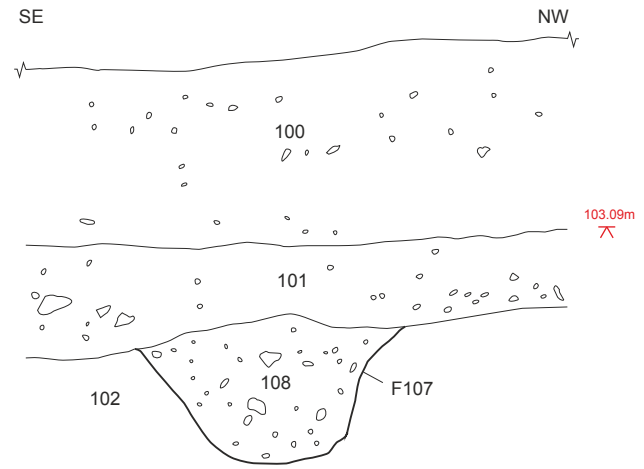
Fig.1: Location of site and trial trenches, with archaeological features shown in relation to the geophysical interpretation



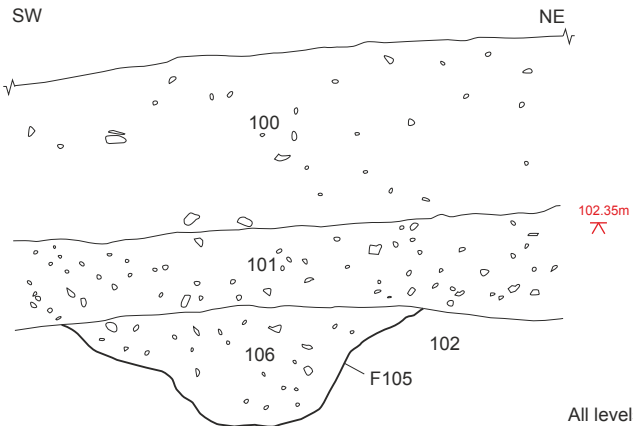
a) Trench 1, plan



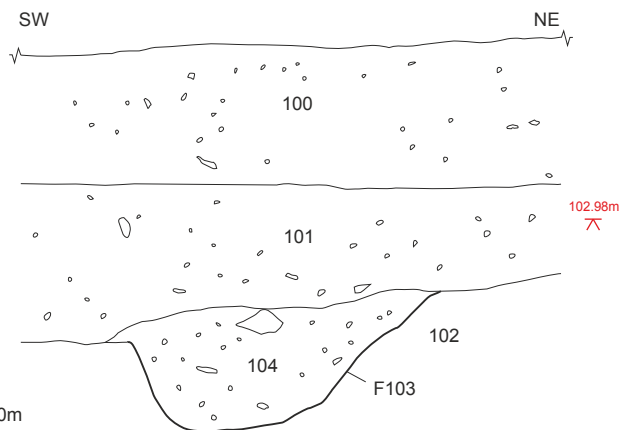
c) Section of ditch F107



b) Section of ditch F105



d) Section of ditch F103

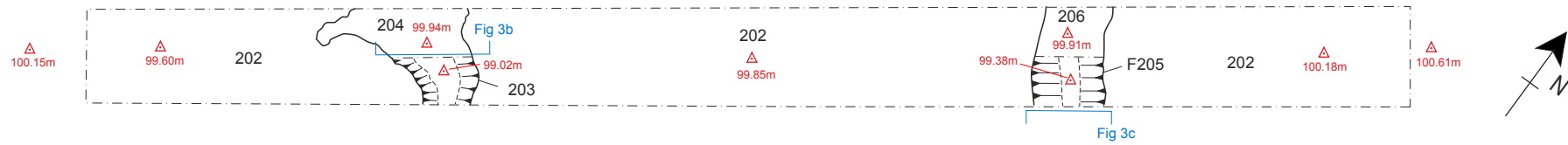


All levels based on an arbitrary 100m

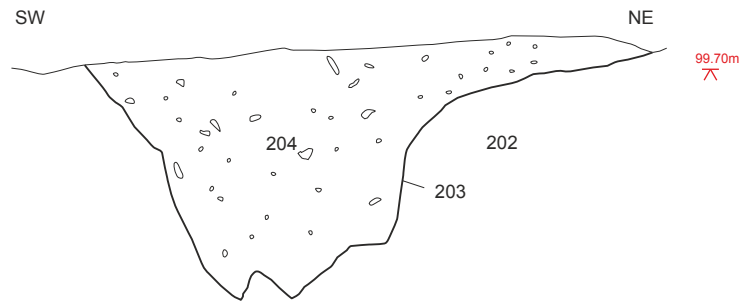
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Fig. 2: Trench 1, plan
and sections

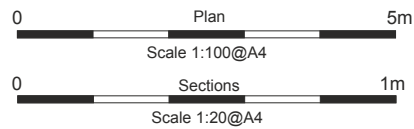
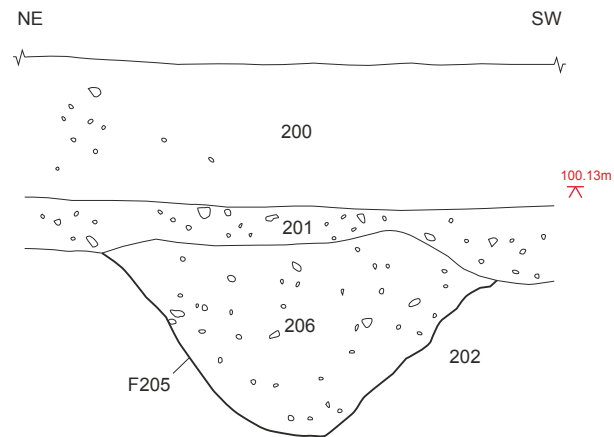
a) Trench 2, plan



b) Section of tree throw 203



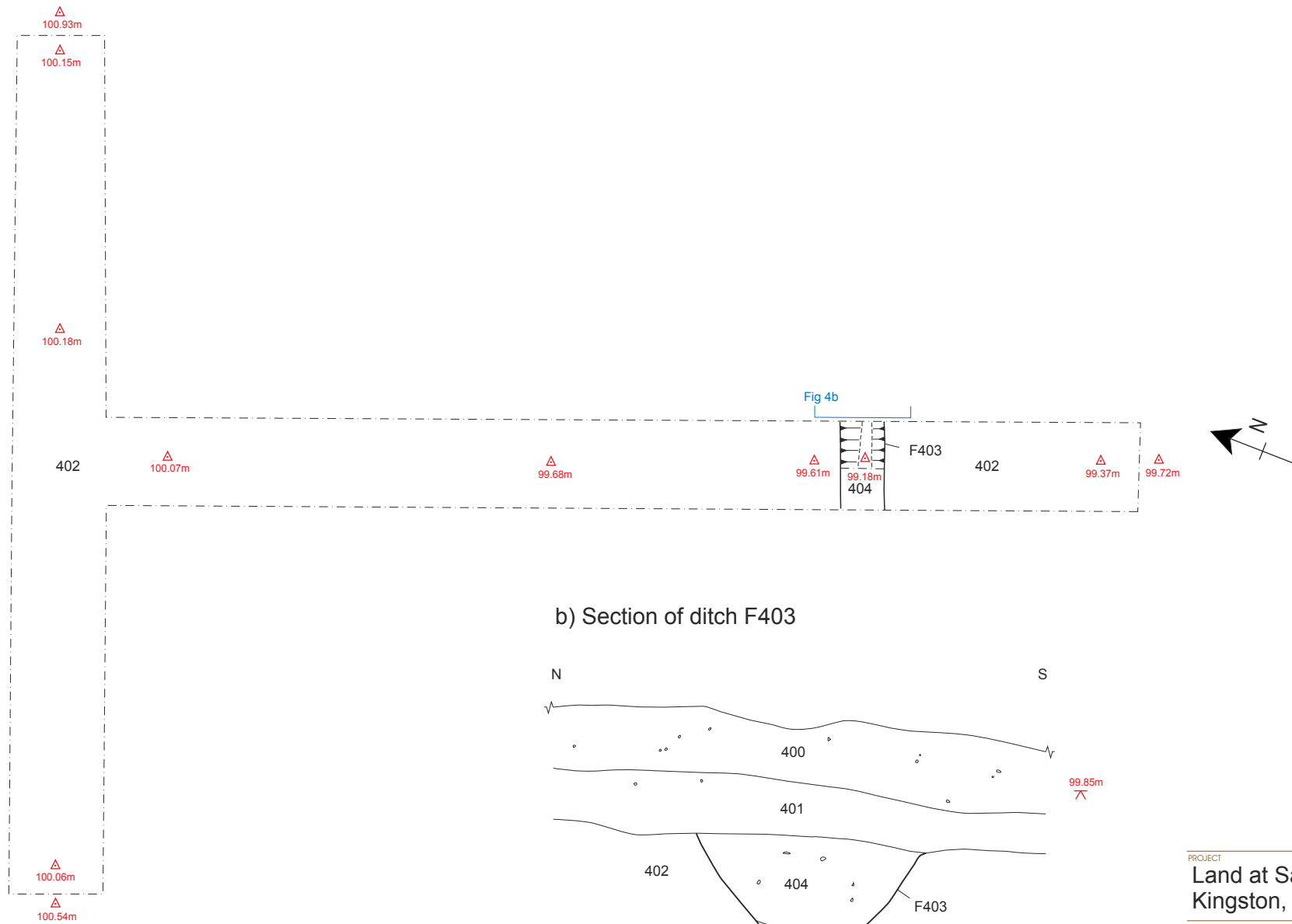
c) Section of ditch F205



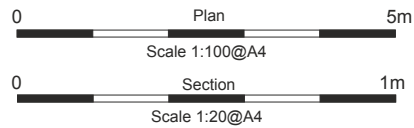
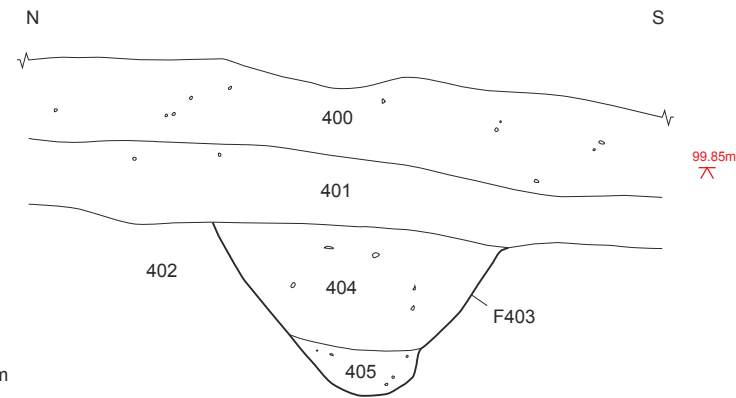
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Kingston, Devon

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Fig. 3: Trench 2, plan
and sections

a) Trench 4, plan



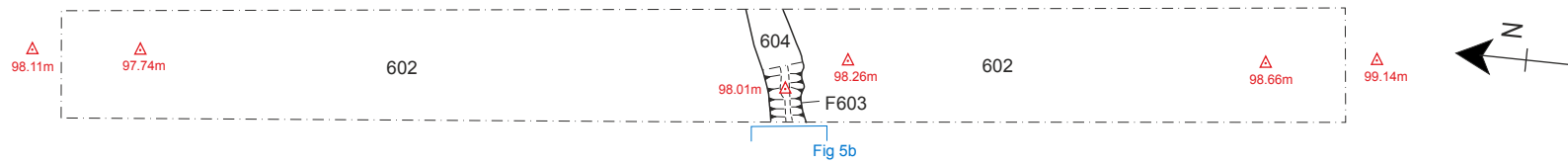
b) Section of ditch F403



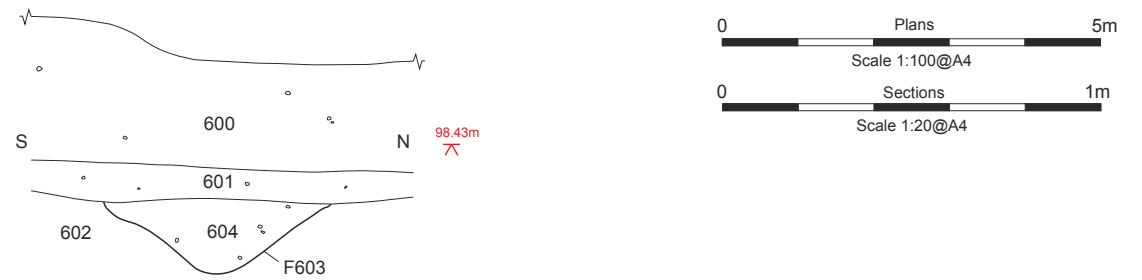
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TITLE
Fig. 4: Trench 4, plan
and section

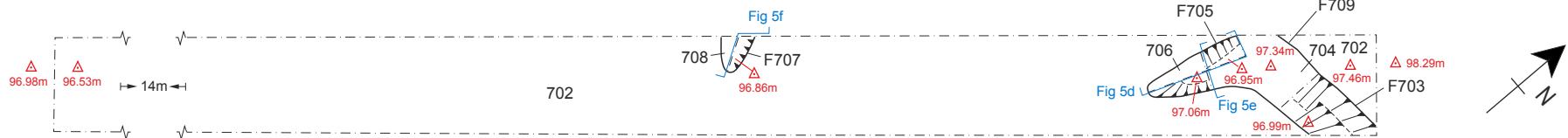
a) Trench 6, plan



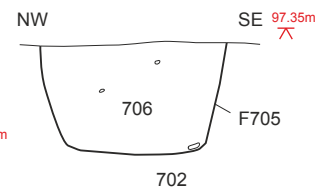
b) Section of ditch F603



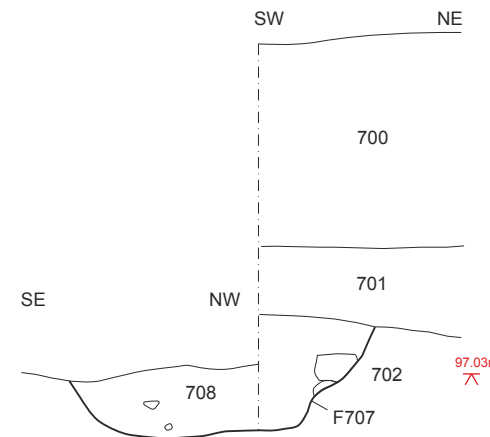
c) Trench 7, plan



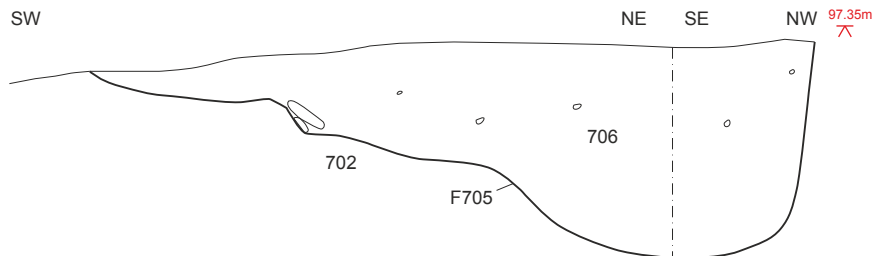
e) Section of gully F709



f) Section of gully F707



d) Section of gully F709



PROJECT
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TITLE
Fig. 5: Trenches 6 and 7,
plans and sections



Plate 1: General view of site looking southeast



Plate 2: Trench 1, general view of the trench looking southeast (1m and 1m scales)



Plate 3: Trench 1, section of Romano-British enclosure ditch F107, looking southwest with Trench 2 in the background (1m scale)



Plate 4: Trench 2, section of probable late medieval or post-medieval ditch F205, looking southeast (1m scale)



Plate 5: Trench 4, section of Romano-British enclosure ditch F403, looking northeast (0.5m scale)



Plate 6: Trench 7, general view with undated curvilinear ditch F709 in the foreground, looking southwest (1m and 1m scales)



Plate 7: Trench 7, section of undated curvilinear ditch F709, looking southeast (1m scale)

Appendix 1

Tabulated Context Descriptions by Trench



APPENDIX 1: TABULATED CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS BY TRENCH

Trench 1		Length 48m	Width 1.5m	Alignment NW-SE NE - SW
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
100	Dark reddish-brown silty clay loam	0-0.4m	Topsoil	
101	Mid reddish-brown silty clay	0.4-0.5m	Agricultural subsoil	
102	Light greyish-red clay	0.5m+	Natural subsoil	
F103	Linear cut 0.87m wide, 0.4m deep, NW-SE aligned. Steep irregular and concave sides with concave base	0.5-0.9m	Cut of ditch	
104	Light to mid reddish-brown silty clay	0.5-0.9m	Fill of ditch F103	
F105	Linear cut 0.92m wide, 0.3m deep, NW-SE aligned. Steep irregular sides with flat to concave base	0.5-0.8m	Cut of ditch	
106	Light to mid reddish-brown silty clay	0.5-0.8m	Fill of ditch F105	
F107	Linear cut 0.7m wide, 0.4m deep, NE-SW aligned. Steep straight to irregular sides with flat to concave base	0.5-0.9m	Cut of ditch	
108	Dark reddish-brown silty clay	0.5-0.9m	Fill of ditch F107	

Trench 2		Length 20m	Width 1.5m	Alignment NE - SW
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
200	Dark reddish-brown silty clay loam	0-0.38m	Topsoil	
201	Mid reddish-brown silty clay	0.38-0.53m	Agricultural subsoil	
202	Light greyish-red clay	0.53m+	Natural subsoil	
203	Irregular feature minimum of 1.5m across by 0.66m deep with irregular base	0.53-1.19m	Tree throw	
204	Mid reddish-brown silty clay	0.53-1.19m	Fill of 203	
F205	Linear cut 1.05m wide, 0.5m deep, NW-SE aligned. Steep irregular and concave sides with concave base	0.53-1.03m	Cut of ditch	
206	Mid reddish-brown silty clay	0.53-1.03m	Fill of ditch F205	

Trench 3		Length 13m	Width 1.5m	Alignment NW-SE NE - SW
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
300	Dark reddish-brown silty clay loam	0-0.56m	Topsoil	
302	Mid reddish-brown silty clay	0.56-0.74m	Agricultural subsoil	
301	Light greyish-red clay	0.74m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 4		Length 32m	Width 1.5m	Alignment NW-SE NE - SW
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
400	Dark reddish-brown silty clay loam	0-0.31m	Topsoil	
401	Mid reddish-brown silty clay	0.31-0.53m	Agricultural subsoil	
402	Light greyish-red clay	0.53m+	Natural subsoil	
F403	Linear cut 0.75m wide, 0.45m deep, NE-SW aligned. Steep straight sides with flat base	0.53-0.98m	Cut of ditch	
404	Mid brown silty clay	0.53-0.86m	Upper fill of ditch F403	
405	Mid brown silty clay with abundant shillet fragments	0.86-0.98m	Basal fill of ditch F403	

Trench 5		Length 20m	Width 1.5m	Alignment NW - SE
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
500	Dark reddish-brown silty clay loam	0-0.53m	Topsoil	
501	Mid reddish-brown silty clay	0.53-0.83m	Agricultural subsoil	
502	Light greyish-red clay	0.83m+	Natural subsoil	

b.g.s = below ground surface

APPENDIX 1: TABULATED CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS BY TRENCH

Trench 6		Length 16m	Width 1.5m	Alignment N - S
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
600	Dark reddish-brown silty clay loam	0-0.3m	Topsoil	
601	Mid reddish-brown silty clay	0.3-0.5m	Agricultural subsoil	
602	Light greyish-red clay	0.5m+	Natural subsoil	
F603	Linear cut 0.58m wide, 0.2m deep, E-W aligned. Gradual sloping sides with concave base	0.5-1.08m	Cut of ditch	
604	Mid yellowish-brown silty clay	0.5-1.08m	Fill of ditch F603	

Trench 7		Length 30m	Width 1.5m	Alignment NE - SW
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
700	Dark reddish-brown silty clay loam	0-0.58m	Topsoil	
701	Mid reddish-brown silty clay	0.58-0.9m	Agricultural subsoil	
702	Light greyish-red clay	0.9m+	Natural subsoil	
F703	Curvilinear cut 1.13m wide, 0.48m deep. Steep sides with flat base	0.9-1.38m	Cut of ditch	
704	Mid brown silty clay	0.9-1.38m	Fill of ditch F703	
F705	Curvilinear cut segment 0.56m deep. Steep slightly concave sides with concave base	0.9-1.46m	Cut of ditch terminal	
706	Mid brown silty clay	0.9-1.46m	Fill of ditch terminal F705	
F707	Pit of linear terminal cut >0.5m long, 0.5m wide, 0.3m deep, NW-SE aligned. Irregular sides with flat base	0.9-1.2m	Cut of pit or ditch terminal	
708	Mid brown silty clay	0.9-1.2m	Fill of pit or ditch terminal F707	
F709	Segments of curvilinear ditch F703 and F705	-	Group number	

b.g.s = below ground surface

Devon Office

AC archaeology Ltd
Unit 4, Halthaies Workshops
Bradninch
Nr Exeter
Devon
EX5 4LQ

Telephone: 01392 882410

Wiltshire Office

AC archaeology Ltd
Manor Farm Stables
Chicklade
Hindon
Nr Salisbury
Wiltshire
SP3 5SU

Telephone: 01747 820581

Fax: 01747 820440

www.acarchaeology.co.uk