

LAND OFF WOODA ROAD, APPLIEDORE, DEVON

(Centred on NGR SS 4600 2980)

Results of an Archaeological Trench Evaluation

Outline Planning Reference: Torridge District Council
1/1343/2018/OUTM (condition 19)

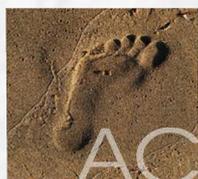
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With a contribution from:
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On behalf of:
Baker Estates Ltd

Report No: ACD2355/2/0

Date: February 2021



archaeology

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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.	Aims	2
4.	Methodology	2
5.	Results	2
6.	The finds	3
7.	Discussion	4
8.	Conclusions	4
9.	Archive and OASIS	5
10.	Sources consulted	5

List of figures

Fig. 1: Location of site and trenches, showing archaeological feature in relation to the geophysical survey

Fig. 2: Trench 23, plan and sections

List of plates

- Plate 1: General view of the site with Trench 1 in foreground, looking southeast
- Plate 2: General view of the site with Trench 10 in foreground, looking northeast
- Plate 3: General view of the site with Trench 16 in foreground, looking southeast
- Plate 4: General view of the site with Trench 18 in foreground, looking southeast
- Plate 5: General view of Trench 19, metal detecting of spoilheap in progress, looking southwest
- Plate 6: Trench 23, general view, looking west
- Plate 7: Trench 23, general view with gully F2303 in the foreground, looking southeast
- Plate 8: Trench 23, gully F2303, looking south
- Plate 9: Sherd from a Westerwald tankard with medallion of George I

Appendices

Appendix 1: Tabulated context descriptions by trench

Appendix 2: Summary of finds by context

Summary

An archaeological trench evaluation was undertaken by AC archaeology during February 2021 on land off Wooda Road, Appledore, Devon (NGR SS 4600 2980). The evaluation comprised the machine excavation of 24 trenches totalling 502m in length with each 1.8m wide. The initial aim of the trenching was to test the reliability of a previous geophysical survey and whether there was any evidence on the site relating to an early medieval battlefield thought to have taken place in the general area.

The trench evaluation returned low level results. Only one trench exposed an archaeological feature, a linear gully, with the remainder containing no archaeological features or deposits. Finds from the gully comprised two small fragments of clinker or fuel ash and a small piece of limpet shell. Finds from topsoil comprised two sherds of medieval pottery, a small assemblage of post-medieval pottery, a piece of clay tobacco-pipe, a shard of glass and a piece of oyster shell.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological trench evaluation was undertaken by AC archaeology during February 2021 at land off Wooda Road, Appledore, Devon (NGR SS 4600 2980). The evaluation was commissioned by Baker Estates Ltd and was required as a pre-commencement condition (19) of outline planning consent (reference 1/1343/2018/OUTM) granted by Torridge District Council, following consultation with the Devon County Council Historic Environment Team (DCCHET). The scheme comprises an outline application for residential development of up to 110 dwellings, public open space and associated infrastructure with all matters reserved except access. The location of the site is shown on Fig. 1.
- 1.2 The site is located to the southwest of Appledore, to the northeast of Northam and to the west of the River Torridge. It covers 3.35 hectares of agricultural land on the north side of Wooda Road and either side of Pitt Hill (Plates 1-5). It is bounded by a sports field and agricultural land to the north, the north-south aligned A386 to the west and by further agricultural land to the east. The site is situated on a gentle southeast facing slope and lies between 25m and 40m aOD (above Ordnance Datum), with the underlying solid geology comprising mudstone and siltstone of the Ashton Mudstone Member and Crackington Formation. There is also an east-west aligned band of sandstone of the Crackington Formation within the eastern part of the site (British Geological Survey 2021).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site has been the subject of a Historic Environment Assessment including a metal detector survey (Costen and Pink 2018) and geophysical survey (Edwards 2018). It is located in a landscape in which there is considered potential for artefactual material associated with a putative battle between Harold and Brian, son of Eudo, which took place in AD 1069. The metal detector survey, however, recovered a total of 98 artefacts, all of which dated to the post-medieval or modern periods; no finds of potential early medieval date were recovered. The exact location of the battlefield therefore still remains unknown.
- 2.2 The geophysical survey results show that there are a small number of anomalies of potential archaeological interest, including possible pits and linear features. There

are no anomalies, however, which indicate the definite presence of former settlement, with most of those recorded likely to relate to agricultural use of the site.

- 2.3** The site is situated within a larger area of land characterised as ‘medieval enclosures based on strip fields’ by the Devon Historic Landscape Characterisation project, while surrounding it there is a small amount of evidence of prehistoric occupation, as indicated by findspots of Bronze Age date and the potential site of three barrows visible on aerial photographs.

3. AIMS

- 3.1** The initial aim of the trenching was to establish the reliability of the geophysical survey and whether there was any evidence on the site relating to an early medieval battlefield site though to have taken place in the general area. The trenching aimed to establish the presence, date and significance of the archaeology, if present. The results of the work, as set out in this report, will be reviewed and used to inform the need for any subsequent mitigation as a next stage of archaeological works.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1** The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with an approved Project Design prepared by AC archaeology (Valentin 2020), with reference to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Field Evaluation* (revised June 2020) and the DCCHE document *Specification for Field Evaluation*. It comprised the machine excavation of 24 trenches, with each 1.8m wide and a total of 502m in length (Trench 9 as per the initial Project Design was not possible to excavate). The trenches were positioned to test the reliability of the geophysical survey.
- 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. All spoilheaps were scanned for metal objects using a metal detector.
- 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 Ordnance Datum.

5. RESULTS (Plan Fig. 1)

5.1 Introduction

An archaeological feature was present in only one of the 24 trenches (Trench 23) and is described in detail below. 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.).

- 5.2** Natural subsoil, which comprised light yellow clay, was exposed in all trenches at a depth of between 0.3m and 0.65m below the ground surface and this was overlain by an agricultural subsoil composed of light yellowish brown clayey loam and a topsoil of

mid greyish brown sandy silty loam. The majority of finds came from the topsoil across the site and comprised two sherds of medieval pottery, 16 sherds of post-medieval pottery, eight pieces of metalwork, one shard of glass, one piece of clay tobacco-pipe stem and one piece of oyster shell.

5.3 Trench 23 (*Detailed plan Fig. 2a and sections Figs 2b-c; Plates 6-8*)

This was located in the eastern part of the site and was aligned northwest-southeast. It was positioned in the location of a linear anomaly interpreted from the results of the geophysical survey. The layer sequence consisted of topsoil (2300) and subsoil (2301) above the natural subsoil (2302) present at a depth of 0.45m below ground surface. The trench contained one linear terminal feature (F2303), which did not match the position of the linear anomaly. A land drain on a similar alignment to the geophysical anomaly was exposed at the northwest end of the trench.

Gully F2303

This was aligned north-south and exposed for a length of 1.55m in the trench, terminating in the north. It measured 0.4m wide by 0.15m deep, with steep sides and a flat base. It had a single fill (2304) composed of light yellowish brown sandy loam, which contained two small fragments of clinker or fuel ash and a small piece of limpet shell.

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 collection of finds is summarised in Appendix 2.

6.2 Medieval pottery

Two sherds (16g) of medieval pottery were recovered from the topsoil in Trench 21. Both are abraded body sherds of North Devon Medieval Coarseware, which was in production between c. AD 1200 and 1450.

6.3 Post-medieval pottery

17 sherds (198g) of post-medieval and modern pottery were recovered from the topsoil in five trenches (nos. 2, 4, 12, 15 and 25). This material includes six sherds of 17th/18th century North Devon Gravel-tempered and Gravel-free pottery, a sherd of 19th century Staffordshire-type white ware with blue sponged decoration, a piece of 19th century flower pot rim, seven sherds from a single late 19th century Mawson and Thompson white cherry toothpaste jar, and a sherd from a Westerwald tankard with a GR medallion, indicating that it dates from after 1714 when George I became king (Plate 9). A larger sherd from a similar tankard has been found in Exeter (Allan 1984, 209 and fig. 117, no. 2598). The only North Devon vessel form which can be identified is a bowl with incurved rim, broadly similar to Type 3E, an example of which has been found in a late 17th century context in Exeter (Allan 1984, 132 and 149).

6.4 Metal finds

Eight iron objects of modern date were recovered from topsoil contexts by metal detector survey. They include three nails, a very large nail or bolt, an L-shaped bracket, two joining flat fragments with one surviving straight edge and a slightly curving profile, and an unidentified fitting with a flat cylindrical element at one end.

6.5 Slag

Two small fragments (2g) of clinker or fuel ash were recovered from context 2304, the fill of gully terminal F2303.

6.6 Glass

A single fragment (31g) of glass was recovered from the topsoil in Trench 15. This is a piece of the base of an English green glass bottle dating from the 18th or early 19th century. The shard has a blueish appearance and pitted surfaces, both likely caused by soil conditions.

6.7 Clay tobacco-pipe

A single piece (8g) of post-medieval clay tobacco-pipe was recovered from the topsoil in Trench 15. This is a stem fragment so it cannot be closely dated.

6.8 Shell

Two shell fragments (14g) were recovered during the evaluation. They include a small oyster shell from the topsoil in Trench 12 and a piece of limpet shell from context 2304, the fill of gully terminal F2303.

7. DISCUSSION

7.1 The evaluation returned low level results. The majority of linear anomalies interpreted from the results of the geophysical survey were found to be modern land drains, the discrete anomalies were not identified as features and may be pedological in origin. Only in Trench 23 was a feature of archaeological interest exposed. This small gully was not identified by the interpreted results of the geophysical survey.

7.2 Gully F2303 terminated within Trench 23. It was aligned north-south which matches the alignment of the historic field pattern, and although the purpose and date of the feature was not established, it probably relates to the agricultural history of the site.

7.3 No features, deposits or finds belonging to the putative battle between Harold and Brian, son of Eudo, which took place in AD 1069 were exposed, despite all spoilheaps being surveyed with a metal detector. The finds from the topsoil were largely post-medieval and modern in date and are probably derived from agricultural practices such as manuring of the fields. There was no evidence to indicate previously unidentified historic settlement within the bounds of the site.

8. CONCLUSIONS

8.1 The majority of linear anomalies interpreted from the results of the geophysical survey were found to be modern land drains, while the discrete anomalies were not identified as features and may be pedological in origin. One small gully was exposed and is probably related to the agricultural history of the site.

8.2 No features, deposits or finds belonging to the putative battle between Harold and Brian, son of Eudo, which took place in AD 1069 were exposed.

8.3 The finds from the topsoil were largely post-medieval and modern in date and are probably derived from agricultural practices such as manuring of the fields. No evidence for previously unidentified historic settlement within the bounds of the site was uncovered.

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 **ACD2355** and the accession number **NDDMS: 4.2020a** issued by the Barnstaple and North Devon Museum, Barnstaple. On completion of all fieldwork the contents of the finds archive will be reviewed by the museum, and if they are considered worthy of retention then they will be transferred to the museum under the allocated accession number with the agreement of the landowner.
- 9.2 An online OASIS entry has been completed using the unique identifier **403908**, which includes a digital copy of this report.

10. SOURCES CONSULTED

Allan, J., 1984, *Medieval and Post-Medieval Finds from Exeter*. Exeter City Council and University of Exeter (Exeter Archaeological Reports no. 3).

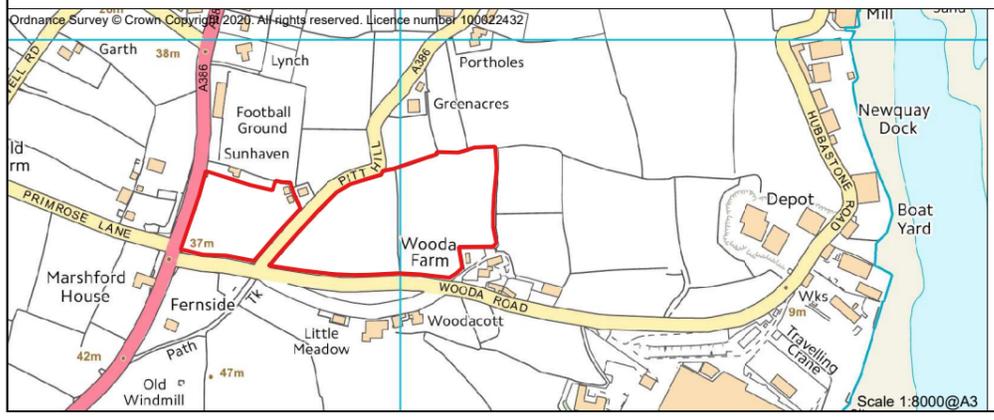
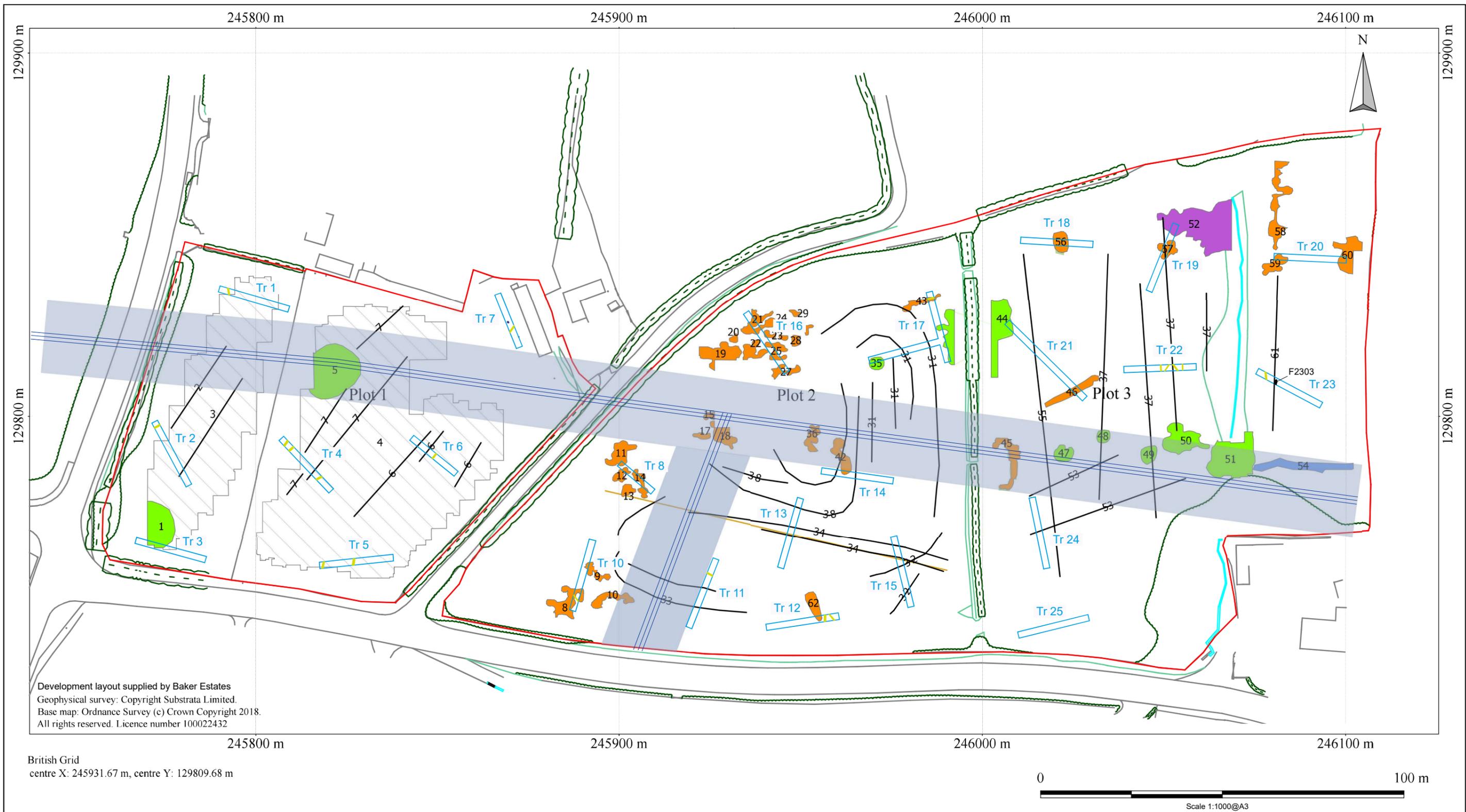
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- Key**
- Site
 - Trenches
 - Archaeological feature
 - Land drains
 - Modern posthole
 - Overhead electricity cable 11kv (with 10m buffer)
- Archaeological magnetometer survey
Survey interpretation**
- possible, positive
 - possible, negative
 - possible, positive/negative
 - possible, enhanced
 - possible, dipolar
 - Possible/likely regular linears

PROJECT

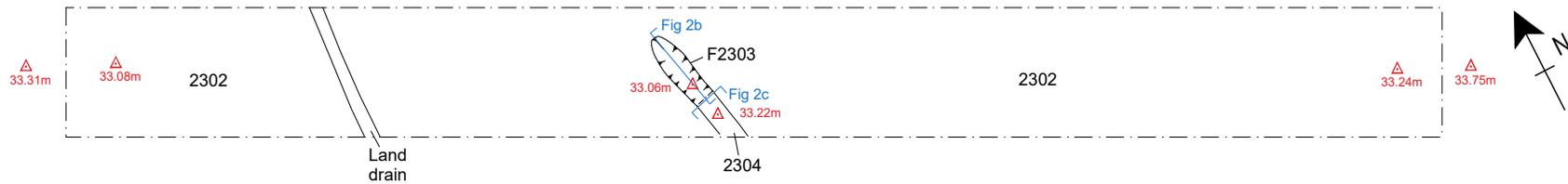
AC archaeology

Land off Wooda Road, Appledore, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 1: Location of site and trenches, showing archaeological feature in relation to the geophysical survey

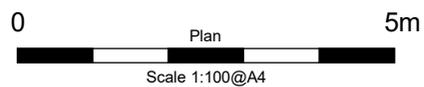
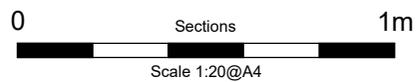
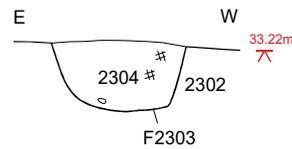
a) Trench 23, plan



b) Section of gully terminal F2303



c) Section of gully terminal F2303



PROJECT
Land off Wooda Road,
Appledore, Devon

TITLE
Fig. 2: Trench 23, plan
and sections



Plate 1: General view of the site with Trench 1 in foreground, looking southeast



Plate 2: General view of the site with Trench 10 in foreground, looking northeast



Plate 3: General view of the site with Trench 16 in foreground, looking southeast



Plate 4: General view of the site with Trench 18 in foreground, looking southeast



Plate 5: General view of Trench 19, metal detecting of spoilheap in progress, looking southwest



Plate 6: Trench 23, general view, looking west



Plate 7: Trench 23, general view with gully F2303 in the foreground, looking southeast (1m scale)



Plate 8: Trench 23, gully F2303, looking south (0.4m scale)



Plate 9: Sherd from a Westerwald tankard with medallion of George I

Appendix 1

Tabulated Context Descriptions by Trench



APPENDIX 1: TABULATED CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS BY TRENCH

Trench 1		Length 20m	Width 1.8m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
100	Mid greyish brown sandy silty loam	0-0.26m	Topsoil	
101	Light yellowish brown clayey loam	0.26-0.3m	Subsoil	
102	Light yellow clay	0.3m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 2		Length 20m	Width 1.8m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
200	Mid greyish brown sandy silty loam	0-0.3m	Topsoil	
201	Light yellowish brown clayey loam	0.3-0.5m	Subsoil	
202	Light yellow clay	0.5m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 3		Length 20m	Width 1.8m	Alignment E-W
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
300	Mid greyish brown sandy silty loam	0-0.25m	Topsoil	
301	Light yellowish brown clayey loam	0.25-0.0m	Subsoil	
302	Light yellow clay	0.5m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 4		Length 20m	Width 1.8m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
400	Mid greyish brown sandy silty loam	0-0.45m	Topsoil	
401	Light yellowish brown clayey loam	0.45-0.6m	Subsoil	
402	Light yellow clay	0.6m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 5		Length 20m	Width 1.8m	Alignment E-W
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
500	Mid greyish brown sandy silty loam	0-0.35m	Topsoil	
501	Light yellowish brown clayey loam	0.35-0.5m	Subsoil	
502	Light yellow clay	0.5m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 6		Length 20m	Width 1.8m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
600	Mid greyish brown sandy silty loam	0-0.44m	Topsoil	
601	Light yellowish brown clayey loam	0.44-0.58m	Subsoil	
602	Light yellow clay	0.58m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 7		Length 20m	Width 1.8m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
700	Mid greyish brown sandy silty loam	0-0.35m	Topsoil	
701	Light yellowish brown clayey loam	0.35-0.42m	Subsoil	
702	Light yellow clay	0.42m+	Natural subsoil	

B.G.S = below ground surface

APPENDIX 1: TABULATED CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS BY TRENCH

Trench 8		Length 12m	Width 1.8m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
800	Mid greyish brown sandy silty loam	0-0.32m	Topsoil	
801	Light yellowish brown clayey loam	0.32-0.5m	Subsoil	
802	Light yellow clay	0.5m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 9 – Not excavated

Trench 10		Length 20m	Width 1.8m	Alignment NE-SW
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
1000	Mid greyish brown sandy silty loam	0-0.3m	Topsoil	
1001	Light yellowish brown clayey loam	0.3-0.55m	Subsoil	
1002	Light yellow clay	0.55m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 11		Length 20m	Width 1.8m	Alignment NE-SW
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
1100	Mid greyish brown sandy silty loam	0-0.26m	Topsoil	
1101	Light yellowish brown clayey loam	0.26-0.48m	Subsoil	
1102	Light yellow clay	0.48m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 12		Length 20m	Width 1.8m	Alignment E-W
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
1200	Mid greyish brown sandy silty loam	0-0.3m	Topsoil	
1201	Light yellowish brown clayey loam	0.3-0.55m	Subsoil	
1202	Light yellow clay	0.55m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 13		Length 20m	Width 1.8m	Alignment NE-SW
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
1300	Mid greyish brown sandy silty loam	0-0.43m	Topsoil	
1301	Light yellowish brown clayey loam	0.43-0.65m	Subsoil	
1302	Light yellow clay	0.65m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 14		Length 20m	Width 1.8m	Alignment E-W
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
1400	Mid greyish brown sandy silty loam	0-0.27m	Topsoil	
1401	Light yellowish brown clayey loam	0.27-0.46m	Subsoil	
1402	Light yellow clay	0.46m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 15		Length 20m	Width 1.8m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
1500	Mid greyish brown sandy silty loam	0-0.35m	Topsoil	
1501	Light yellowish brown clayey loam	0.35-0.45m	Subsoil	
1502	Light yellow clay	0.45m+	Natural subsoil	

B.G.S = below ground surface

APPENDIX 1: TABULATED CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS BY TRENCH

Trench 16		Length 15m	Width 1.8m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
1600	Mid greyish brown sandy silty loam	0-0.3m	Topsoil	
1601	Light yellowish brown clayey loam	0.3-0.48m	Subsoil	
1602	Light yellow clay	0.48m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 17		Length 25m 20m	Width 1.8m	Alignment NE-SW NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
1700	Mid greyish brown sandy silty loam	0-0.39m	Topsoil	
1701	Light yellowish brown clayey loam	0.39-0.46m	Subsoil	
1702	Light yellow clay	0.46m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 18		Length 20m	Width 1.8m	Alignment E-W
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
1800	Mid greyish brown sandy silty loam	0-0.4m	Topsoil	
1801	Light yellowish brown clayey loam	0.4-0.55m	Subsoil	
1802	Light yellow clay	0.55m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 19		Length 20m	Width 1.8m	Alignment NE-SW
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
1900	Mid greyish brown sandy silty loam	0-0.38m	Topsoil	
1901	Light yellowish brown clayey loam	0.38-0.49m	Subsoil	
1902	Light yellow clay	0.49m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 20		Length 20m	Width 1.8m	Alignment E-W
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
2000	Mid greyish brown sandy silty loam	0-0.5m	Topsoil	
2001	Light yellowish brown clayey loam	0.5-0.6m	Subsoil	
2002	Light yellow clay	0.6m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 21		Length 30m	Width 1.8m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
2100	Mid greyish brown sandy silty loam	0-0.32m	Topsoil	
2101	Light yellowish brown clayey loam	0.32-0.37m	Subsoil	
2102	Light yellow clay	0.37m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 22		Length 20m	Width 1.8m	Alignment E-W
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
2200	Mid greyish brown sandy silty loam	0-0.3m	Topsoil	
2201	Light yellowish brown clayey loam	0.3-0.4m	Subsoil	
2202	Light yellow clay	0.4m+	Natural subsoil	

B.G.S = below ground surface

APPENDIX 1: TABULATED CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS BY TRENCH

Trench 23		Length 20m	Width 1.8m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
2300	Mid greyish brown sandy silty loam	0-0.3m	Topsoil	
2301	Light yellowish brown clayey loam	0.3-0.45m	Subsoil	
2302	Light yellow clay	0.45m+	Natural subsoil	
F2303	Linear terminal feature aligned N-S measuring 1.55m long in the trench and terminating in the north by 0.4m wide and 0.15m deep, with steep sides and a flat base	0.45-0.6m	Cut of gully terminal	
2304	Light yellowish brown sandy loam	0.45-0.6m	Fill of gully terminal F2303	

Trench 24		Length 20m	Width 1.8m	Alignment N-S
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
2400	Mid greyish brown sandy silty loam	0-0.39m	Topsoil	
2401	Light yellowish brown clayey loam	0.39-0.52m	Subsoil	
2402	Light yellow clay	0.52m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 25		Length 20m	Width 1.8m	Alignment E-W
Context	Description	Depth b.g.s	Interpretation	
2500	Mid greyish brown sandy silty loam	0-0.31m	Topsoil	
2501	Light yellowish brown clayey loam	0.31-0.44m	Subsoil	
2502	Light yellow clay	0.44m+	Natural subsoil	

B.G.S = below ground surface

Appendix 2

Summary of Finds by Context

APPENDIX 2: SUMMARY OF FINDS BY CONTEXT

Context	Context Description	Medieval pottery		Post-medieval pottery		Iron		Slag		Glass		Clay tobacco-pipe		Shell	
		No.	Wt	No.	Wt	No.	Wt	No.	Wt	No.	Wt	No.	Wt	No.	Wt
200	Trench 2 topsoil			7	22	1	17								
400	Trench 4 topsoil			3	68										
1200	Trench 12 topsoil			2	25	1	100							1	13
1300	Trench 13 topsoil					1	225								
1500	Trench 15 topsoil			3	33	1	6			1	31	1	8		
2100	Trench 21 topsoil	2	16			2	144								
2304	Fill of gully terminal F2303							2	2					1	1
2400	Trench 24 topsoil					1	106								
2500	Trench 25 topsoil			1	50	1	9								
Totals		2	16	16	198	8	607	2	2	1	31	1	8	2	14

(weights in grams)

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