

WEST KNIGHTON FARM, HIGHGATE LANE, WEST KNIGHTON, DORSET:

Results of an archaeological evaluation

NGR SY 73238766

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archaeology

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Results of an Archaeological Evaluation

SUMMARY

An archaeological trench evaluation was undertaken by AC archaeology Ltd on land at West Knighton Farm, Highgate Lane, West Knighton, Dorset in November 2016. It was in support of a planning application for a proposed development for the erection of four new houses and four holiday cottages. The evaluation comprised three trenches, two of which contained evidence for archaeological activity on the site. This activity was revealed below a significant depth of relatively modern overburden representing made ground. Trench 1 contained deposits of post-medieval origin including a possible post-hole, and a wall foundation, with a further feature containing a small quantity of 18th century pottery. Trench 3 contained three linear features, including a probable former field boundary ditch of post-medieval date and one linear feature that contained a single sherd of Romano-British pottery. A further insubstantial gully contained a small quantity of 13th century pottery. A small assemblage of artefacts, including several pieces of prehistoric flint, was also recovered from the evaluation.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** This document sets out the results of an archaeological trench evaluation in advance of development for four proposed new houses and four new cottages on land at West Knighton Farm, Highgate Lane, West Knighton, Dorset (NGR SY 73238766). The location of the site is shown on Fig. 1.
- 1.2** The evaluation was undertaken following consultation with the Dorset County Council's Senior Archaeologist (DCCSA), who recommended that an archaeological trench evaluation was undertaken. This was to provide supporting information for the proposed development (Ref WD/D/16/001596).
- 1.3** The application area covers c. 2400 m² comprising areas of yard, hard standing, and gardens associated with West Knighton Farm. The site is bounded by Highgate Lane to the south, and residential properties to the both the east and west. Pasture fields lie to the north. The application area lies on a gentle north-facing slope, standing at c. 60m OD.
- 1.4** The site lies in an area of variable geology comprising sands, silts and clays of the West Park Farm group (BGS online).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The site lies within the Broadmayne and West Knighton Conservation area, and lies within 500m of fifteen listed buildings. These range in date from a former terrace of mid-17th century cottages, now a single dwelling 'Yoah Cottage' (List Entry Number: 1119212), to a former 19th century schoolhouse (LEN: 1119211); all of these, bar the Grade I listed parish church of St Peter, are listed as Grade II. The closest listed buildings comprise West Knighton Farmhouse, forming the

western boundary to the site, which is of early 18th century date with later additions (LEN: 1304021).

- 2.2 The church of St Peter incorporates elements dating from the 12th century, with alterations occurring from the 13th through to the 17th centuries (LEN: 1323955), and was restored in the late 19th century. The church yard contains a Grade II listed example of a table tomb, dated to the late 17th century (LEN: 1153986).
- 2.3 Within the wider landscape, a post-medieval brick and tile kiln with waster heaps lies some 500m to the northeast (NMR Number: SY78NW35).
- 2.4 The site lies within the historic core of the medieval settlement of *Chenistetone*, which was recorded in the Domesday Survey as a medium sized village composed of 16 households, and had a taxable value of £6 (Powell-Smith, 2011); this was certainly above average for this area (the nearby village of Whitcombe was valued at £4.5). The population comprised 5 villagers, 5 smallholders and 6 slaves and held two ploughs and contained two mills. The land was owned by William of Ecouis in 1086.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Aims

- 3.1 The principal aims of the programme of works were:
 - To establish the presence/absence, extent, date, nature, function and phasing of the archaeological remains present within the targeted sites and to make a full and detailed archaeological record;
 - To characterise the overall nature of any archaeological remains encountered and to understand the process of their formation
 - To recover ecofactual and environmental information in accordance with a palaeo-environmental sampling strategy;
 - To contribute to archaeological research framework questions; and
 - To produce an assessment report on the results of the order to inform the post-excavation analysis and subsequent publication phase of the mitigation works.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a project design prepared by AC archaeology Ltd. (Carter 2016), which was submitted to and approved by the DCCSA prior to commencement of the investigation.
- 4.2 The evaluation comprised the excavation by machine of three trenches each measuring 8 x 1.6m in plan and positioned within the footprint of the proposed development. (Fig.).
- 4.3 All soil removal was undertaken under the control and direction of the Site Archaeologist. Topsoil and overburden were removed by a mechanical excavator, using a toothless bucket, and stored alongside each trench. Stripping by mechanical excavator ceased at the level at which archaeological deposits or natural subsoil were exposed.
- 4.4 The evaluation was 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 (2012). Detailed sections were drawn at 1:10 while a site plan was produced at 1:50. All site levels relate to Ordnance Datum.

- 4.5 The archive has been prepared using the site code ACW970 and is currently stored at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd. (Wiltshire).

5 RESULTS

Introduction

- 5.1 Two of the three trenches (Trs 1 & 3), revealed evidence for archaeological activity which included features of post-medieval and earlier date. A number of other features are of uncertain origin.

Trench 1 (plan Fig. 2a; sections Fig. 2b-e)

- 5.2 This trench was aligned approximately east-west and was positioned on a gravelled area on level ground. A maximum depth of 0.6m was excavated through a gravel surface and associated make-up (present car parking area) and a depth of made-ground (contexts 101/102) before archaeological activity was revealed cutting through natural gravels/clay. The recorded layer sequence is summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Trench 1 general depositional layer sequence

Context	Depth b.g.s.	Description	Interpretation
100	0 – 100mm	Gravels.	Car park surface.
101/102	100 – 600mm (max.)	Mixture of redeposited natural clay/gravels with chalk lenses.	Post-medieval / modern - made ground.
103	600mm +	Yellow – brown clay and gravels.	Natural.

Feature F104

- 5.3 This feature was circular in plan with a maximum diameter of 1m. Excavation revealed a steep sloping profile and flat base at a depth of 0.45m. It contained a single fill (105), composed of mid-brown sandy clay containing abundant flint gravels. A small quantity of 18th century pottery was recovered.

Feature F106

- 5.4 This feature was ovoid in plan with a steep sloping profile and rounded base at a depth of 0.2m. It contained a single fill (107), composed of grey-brown silty clay containing abundant gravels and occasional small limestone pieces. No dating evidence was recovered.

Feature F110 (not investigated)

- 5.5 Where revealed, this undated feature was sub-circular in plan with maximum dimensions present of 1.7m x 0.8m, continuing beyond the trench limits. It was composed of a mid-grey brown silty clay containing occasional chalk pieces and flint gravels.

Structure 111

- 5.6 This structure was part of a N-S aligned wall foundation with associated construction cut and fill (114 & 113) and possible remnants of an associated rammed chalk floor or rendering deposit (112). The wall foundation was constructed with mortared sub-angular / tabular limestone pieces, with at least two courses in depth present. No dating evidence was recovered.



Trench 1 View from the east. 2x1m scales

Trench 2

- 5.7** This trench was aligned approximately N-S and was positioned on hard standing adjacent to a number of outbuildings and on level ground. A maximum depth of 0.5m was excavated through a concrete surface and a depth of made ground before revealing natural clay / gravels. No archaeological deposits were present. The recorded layer sequence is summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Trench 2 general depositional layer sequence

Context	Depth b.g.s.	Description	Interpretation
200	0 – 100mm	Gravels.	Car park surface.
201/202	100 –500mm (max.)	Mixture of redeposited natural clay/gravels with chalk lenses.	Post-medieval / modern - made ground.
203	600mm +	Yellow – brown clay and gravels.	Natural.

Trench 3 (plan Fig. 2f; sections Fig. 2g-h)

- 5.8** This trench was aligned approximately E-W and was positioned on a grassed area on ground sloping gently down to the west. A depth from 0.65m to a maximum 0.9m was excavated through topsoil and redeposited soils (contexts 300/301) before archaeological activity was revealed cutting through natural gravels/clay. The recorded layer sequence is summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: Trench 3 general depositional layer sequence

Context	Depth b.g.s.	Description	Interpretation
300	0 – 100mm	Gravels.	Car park surface.
301	100 – 900mm (max.)	Mixture of redeposited natural clay/gravels with chalk lenses.	Post-medieval / modern - made ground.
302	650 - 900mm +	Yellow – brown clay and gravels.	Natural.

Feature F303

- 5.9** This feature was linear in plan with a maximum length revealed of 1.6m and a width present of 0.6m. Excavation revealed a steep sloping profile and flat base at a depth of 0.2m. It contained a single fill (306), composed of a loamy grey-black sandy clay containing sparse flint gravels. A single sherd of Romano-British pottery was recovered.

Feature F304

- 5.10** This feature was linear in plan, terminating within the trench limits at its northern extent. A length of 0.8m and width of 0.45m was revealed. Excavation revealed a gradual sloping profile and rounded base at a depth of 0.1m. It contained a single fill (307), composed of a loamy grey-black sandy clay containing no coarse components. A small quantity of medieval pottery was recovered.

Feature F305

- 5.11** This feature, partly truncated by a modern land drain, was linear in plan with a maximum length revealed of 1.6m and width of 2.8m. Excavation revealed a gradual sloping profile and uneven base at a depth of 0.55m. It contained two fills composed of a grey-brown sandy clay containing abundant flint gravels (upper fill 308) and a lower fill composed of a greenish brown sandy clay containing sparse flint gravels (309). A small quantity of both medieval and later pottery was recovered from each fill.



Trench 3: View from the west. 2x1m scales

6. THE FINDS by Emma Firth & Julian Richards

Summary

- 6.1** This is a small and unremarkable assemblage of finds, of which the largest concentration was recovered from Trench 3. The range of material includes flint, pottery (ranging from Romano-British to modern date), animal bone, shell and ceramic building materials, all in very small quantities. The most interesting group of finds was a small number of medieval pottery sherds recovered from contexts 308 and 309, but little can be said of such a limited assemblage.

Methodology

- 6.2** All the finds from the site have been retained, cleaned and marked where appropriate. Finds were then quantified according to material type within each context. The assemblage was then scanned by context to extract information regarding the range, nature and date of artefacts represented. This information is briefly discussed below. Table 4 quantifies finds by context and material type.

Flint by Julian Richards

- 6.3** A total of twelve flints weighing 56g was recovered from five contexts within Trenches 1 and 3, with the majority being recovered from contexts within Trench 1. The assemblage comprises 11 flakes and one chip. All are fresh and unpatinated and appear to be gravel derived. There is nothing diagnostic in the assemblage.

Ceramic Building Material

- 6.4** A total of three fragments weighing 86g was recovered from context 111. The ceramic building material all derives from a single modern brick.

Roman Pottery

- 6.5** A single sherd weighing 10g of Romano-British pottery was recovered from Trench 3 (context 306). The sherd is an undiagnostic greyware.

Medieval Pottery

- 6.6** Thirteen sherds of medieval pottery weighing 69g were recovered from Trench 3 (contexts 307 and 309). The medieval pottery dates from the 13th century. Only two diagnostic sherds are present; the first is a handle decorated with stabbing, from a jug with a green (copper) glaze and made from a pale firing sandy fabric. The second comprises two conjoining sherds from a jar, with a plain everted rim, in a coarse sandy ware identifiable as a South-East Wilts/East Dorset type ware. Soot on the external surfaces suggests this vessel was used for cooking. The remaining plain body sherds are of the same fabric, asides from three conjoining sherds of Hermitage type wares, although they are too small to be diagnostic.

Post-medieval Pottery

- 6.7** A total of twelve sherds weighing 88g of post-medieval pottery was recovered from Trench 1 (context 105) and Trench 3 (contexts 308 and 309). Several recognisable wares are present, including two sherds of Bristol/Staffordshire 18th century slipware, two conjoining Wessex

redware sherds with a manganese glaze, and six Donyatt type glazed wares. The post-medieval pottery has a date range from the 18th century.

Modern Pottery

- 6.8 A single sherd weighing 1g was recovered from Trench 3 (context 308). It is an industrial whiteware and is otherwise undiagnostic.

Animal Bone

- 6.9 Two fragments of animal bone were recovered from Trench 3 (context 308) including part of a cattle illium (pelvis) and an unidentified fragment.

Oyster shell

- 6.10 A single oyster shell weighing 13g was recovered from Trench 1 (context 105). The oyster shell is a left-hand valve and there is damage to one end of the shell where it has been opened.

Trench	Context	Flint		Ceramic Building Material		Roman pottery		Medieval pottery		Modern pottery		Post medieval		Animal bone		Oyster shell	
		no	wt (g)	no	wt (g)	no	wt (g)	no	wt (g)	no	wt (g)	no	wt (g)	no	wt (g)	no	wt (g)
1	105	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	1	13
1	111	-	-	3	86	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	306	5	18	-	-	1	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	307	1	1	-	-	-	-	4	45	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	308	2	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	5	7	1	169	-	-
3	309	2	9	-	-	-	-	9	24	-	-	6	79	1	2	-	-
Grand Total		12	56	3	86	1	10	13	69	1	1	12	88	2	171	1	13

Table 4: Quantification of finds by context and material type

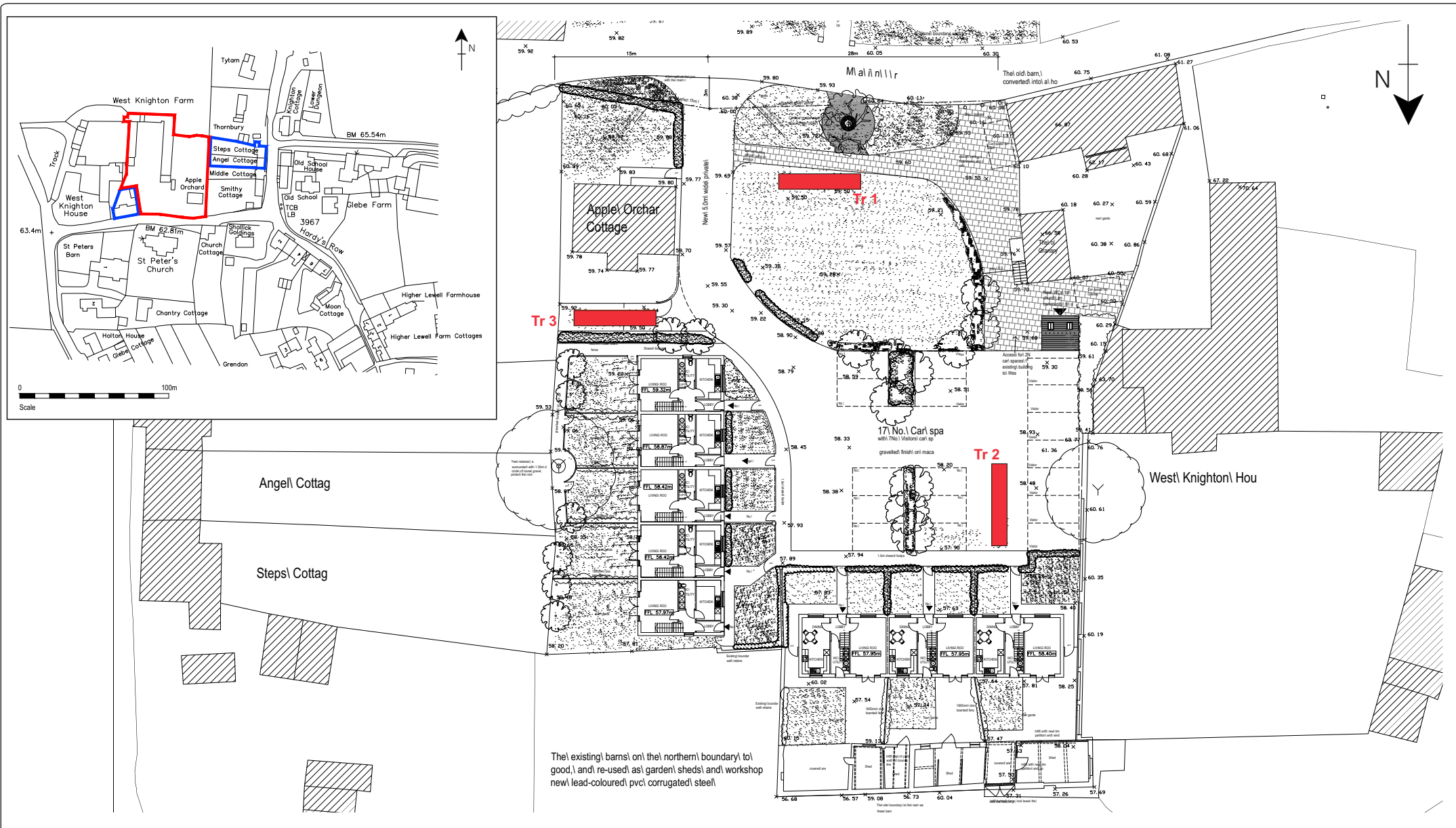
7. COMMENT

- 7.1 The trench evaluation has identified limited evidence for archaeological activity pre-dating the post-medieval period. All of this activity was revealed below a considerable depth of relatively modern overburden representing made ground, probably derived from the clearing/levelling of the site sometime in the 20th century. Trench 1 revealed part of a wall foundation, the position of which is likely to relate to a terrace of former nineteenth century buildings as shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey 1889 map. The remaining post-medieval activity includes linear features and two probable refuse pits, also possibly relating to the above buildings. Part of a former probable post-medieval field boundary was present in Trench 3. The medieval deposits comprised one gully containing pottery from the 13th century, which would suggest further activity of this date, within or near the confines of the proposed development area. This may also be the case regarding the remaining deposits encountered.

8. REFERENCES

British Geological Survey. 2016, <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>. Accessed 12/12/2016

Carter, D. 2016, *West Knighton Farm, Highgate Lane, West Knighton, Dorset: Project Design for an archaeological evaluation*. AC archaeology Ltd. Doc. No. ACW970/1/0



PROJECT

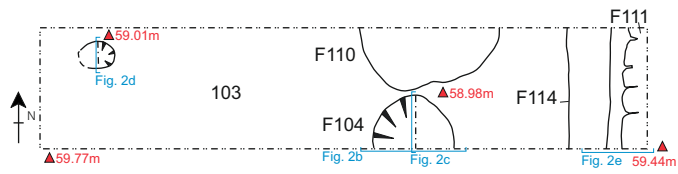
West Knighton Farm

TITLE

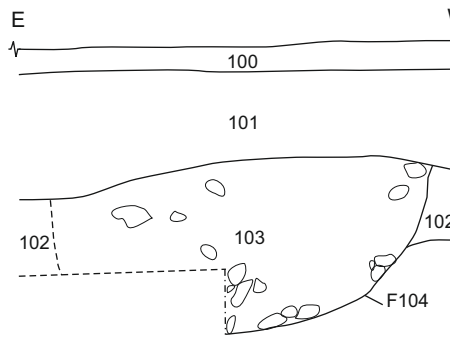
Fig. 1: Site and trench locations

Trench 1

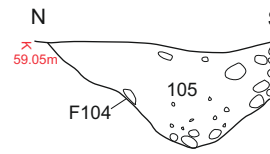
a) Plan



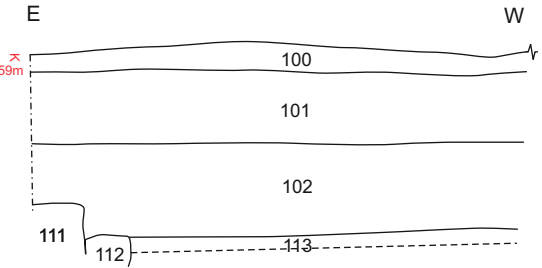
b) Section, F104



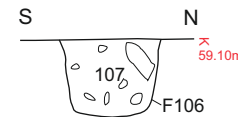
c) Section, F104



e) Representative section

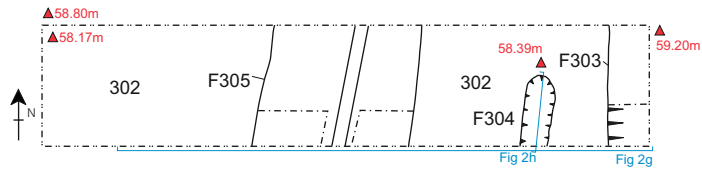


d) Section, F106

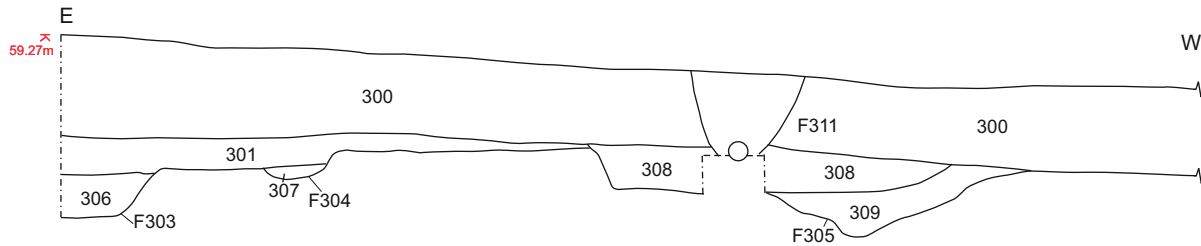


Trench 3

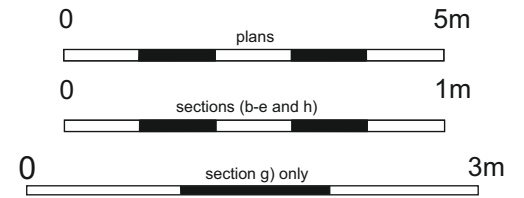
f) Plan



g) Section of trench



h) Profile of F304



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