

Land to the east of Piccadilly Copse, Strete Raleigh, Whimble, Devon

NGR SY0534695753

Results of an archaeological trench evaluation

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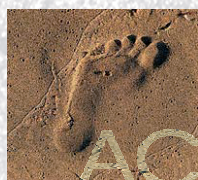
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On behalf of:

Mercia Crematoria Ltd

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archaeology

LAND TO THE EAST OF PICCADILLY COPSE, STRETE RALEGH, WHIMPLE, DEVON

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RESULTS OF AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRENCH EVALUATION

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Summary

As part of proposals for the development of land to the east of Piccadilly Copse, Strete Raleigh, Whimble, Devon (NGR SY0534695753), an archaeological trench evaluation was undertaken by AC archaeology during May 2009. The site occupies an area of approximately 2.5 hectares and is situated on agricultural land to the south of the Roman road between Exeter and Honiton and in an area where extensive evidence for prehistoric activity has been previously identified.

The evaluation comprised the machine-excavation of twelve trenches, each 1.6m wide and totalling 276m in length, with these positioned in areas likely to be affected by the proposed development. The remains of a ditch and bank were recorded in one trench, with a boundary shown in this location on the 1839 parish tithe map and also as recently as on a map dating to 2004. A second linear feature was also recorded, which is not shown on historic maps, but is also likely to be post-medieval or later in date. In the remaining trenches largely negative results were recorded and no pre-modern finds were recovered.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological trench evaluation undertaken in support of a planning application (ref. 09/0311/MFUL) for a proposed new crematorium on land to the east of Piccadilly Copse, Strete Raleigh, Whimble, Devon, was undertaken by AC archaeology during May 2009. The work was commissioned by Mercia Crematoria Ltd and was requested by East Devon District Council, as advised by Devon County Historic Environment Service (DCHES).
- 1.2 The proposed development site is within agricultural land on the south side of the former A30 road. It covers an area of approximately 2.5 hectares and is situated on ground which slopes gently down to the west (Fig. 1). It lies at around 105m OD and the underlying solid geology comprises Permo-Triassic Aylesbeare Mudstone.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site is located to the south of the Roman road between Exeter and Honiton and in an area where extensive evidence for prehistoric activity has been previously identified. This evidence includes cropmarks indicating settlement and funerary activity (eg. Devon County Historic Environment Records 58508, 74675, 10537 and 62082), as well as surface scatters of worked flint identified during fieldwalking or small-scale watching briefs (eg. 54195, 55755, 55756 and 63441). Archaeological investigations to the east of the site in advance of improvements to the A30 identified evidence for Iron Age and Neolithic settlement (62739, 62740).
- 2.2 A settlement at Strete Raleigh is recorded as early as the Domesday Survey of 1086, when it was known as *Estrata*. The present name derives from its proximity to the Roman road and from Henry de Raleigh, who held the manor in 1242.
- 2.3 The Whimble parish tithe map of 1839 depicts the site as occupying two fields divided by a central east-west boundary, with the present larger field then divided into four separate land parcels. The accompanying apportionment of 1842 names the two fields which the site occupies as 'Outer Four Acres' and 'Inner Four Acres', with both being under arable cultivation and owned by Thomas Wentworth Buller Esq and occupied by Thomas Drawer.

2.4 By 1888, the Ordnance Survey first-edition 25-inch map shows the site as within a single field, with the central east-west boundary removed by this time. This is still the case in 1903.

3. AIM

3.1 The aim of the evaluation was to establish the presence or absence, extent, depth, character and date of any archaeological features or finds within the site.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a brief provided by DCHES (Reed 2009) and subsequent method statement prepared by AC archaeology (Valentin 2009). It comprised the machine-excavation of twelve trenches, each 1.6m wide and with a total length of 276m. This represents an approximate 5% sample of the area affected by the proposed development. The location of trenches is shown on Fig. 2.

4.2 The site was recorded in accordance with the AC archaeology pro-forma recording system, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and in accordance with AC archaeology's *General Site Recording Manual, Version 1*. All plans were drawn at a scale of 1:50 and sections at 1:10. All levels have been related to Ordnance Datum.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

The trenches were generally excavated onto undisturbed natural subsoil, which comprised clay with gravels, through a largely consistent overlying layer sequence of agricultural ploughsoil above an intermittent topsoil/natural interface layer. Trenches 8 and 9, located across a localised natural hollow, contained a colluvial subsoil. Trenches 1-4, 7 and 9-12 contained no archaeological features or deposits and are summarised by table only in Appendix 1. The results from Trenches 5, 6 and 8 are described below and are also tabulated in Appendix 1.

5.2 Trench 5 (Detailed plan and section Fig. 3a and b)

This NE to SW aligned trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.38m onto natural subsoil (context 502), which comprised a firm mid red clay with patches of abundant glacial gravels. The agricultural ploughsoil (500) was a 0.28m thick layer of mid reddish-brown loose clay silt, lying above a 0.1m thick intermittent mid brownish-red interface subsoil layer (501).

The trench contained a single NW to SE aligned linear feature (F503), present towards the SW end of the trench. F503 was 0.67m wide and 0.17m deep and had moderately sloping sides and a flat base. It contained a single mid brownish-red silty clay fill (504) and no finds were recovered. The feature continued into Trench 6 as F606 and F608 (see below).

5.3 Trench 6 (Detailed plan and section Fig. 3d-f, Plates 2 and 3)

This trench was cross-shaped in plan and was excavated mainly onto natural subsoil (602), present at a maximum depth of 0.53m below ground level. This was sealed by a 0.15m thick interface subsoil layer (601), which was below 0.28-0.38m of agricultural ploughsoil (600).

The trench contained a linear feature (F604) with associated bank material (605), and segments from the same NW-SE linear feature (F606 and F608). North to south aligned ditch F604 was 0.68m wide and 0.1m deep, with gradually sloping sides and a flat base. The ditch contained a single dark reddish-brown silty clay fill (603). Finds recovered comprised a sherd of 19th to 20th-century industrial whiteware pottery from a marmalade jar and a fragment of 19th to 20th-century bottle glass.

Layer 605 was adjacent and to the east of ditch F604 and is likely to represent the remnants of an associated bank. The deposit, which sealed subsoil layer 601, comprised a 0.25m thick and a minimum of 2.1m wide layer of mixed clay, which was truncated in its upper levels by ploughing.

Approximate NW to SE aligned ditch segments F606 and F608 ranged between 0.7m and 0.75m wide and both were 0.2m deep. The profile varied between moderately-sloping and flat-based (F608) to more rounded (F606). The ditch segments contained a consistent mid reddish-brown silty clay fill (607 and 609) and no finds were recovered.

5.4 Trench 8

This trench was located towards the centre of the site and within a shallow natural hollow aligned NW-SE. Natural clay subsoil (802) was present at a depth of 0.52m directly below a 0.21m thick layer of colluvial subsoil of (801), which was beneath 0.31m of agricultural ploughsoil (800).

Subsoil layer 801 contained two sherds of 19th-century earthenware pottery.

6. COMMENTS

6.1 The evaluation has established that there is unlikely to be any evidence for prehistoric or Romano-British archaeological remains on the site. The two linear features and bank remnant identified are probably modern in date, with the only finds recovered dating to the 19th century or later.

6.2 The approximately north to south aligned ditch feature (F604) and associated bank (605) within Trench 6 are likely to be the remains of a former field boundary depicted in this location on the 1839 Whimble parish tithe map and, based on the modern Ordnance Survey mapping, was still present as recently as 2004 (see Fig. 1).

6.3 The undated NW to SE aligned ditch segments excavated within Trenches 5 and 6 are likely to be part of the same linear feature that was probably a small agricultural drainage ditch, which extended down the gradient towards the ponds and ditch on the west side of the site. Although undated, the nature of the fill and its presence immediately below the topsoil indicates a fairly recent date.

7. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

7.1 The paper and digital archive and finds are currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ. They will be deposited at Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter under the accession code 169/2009.

7.2 The OASIS (Online AccesS to the Index of Archaeological InvestigationS) number for this project is 60458.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The evaluation was commissioned on behalf of Mercia Crematoria Ltd by Andy Marshall. The site trial-trenching was carried out by Simon Hughes, Chris Caine and Colin Wakeham and the illustrations for this report were prepared by Sarah Cottam.

9. SOURCES CONSULTED

DRO, Whimble parish tithe map, 1839, and apportionment, 1842.

Ordnance Survey 25-inch Devonshire sheet 69.15, surveyed 1888, published 1889, revised 1903, published 1905.

Reed, S., 2009, *Brief for archaeological evaluation: Land east of Piccadilly Copse, Strete Raleigh, Whimble*. Unpublished DCHES document, ref. Arch/dc/ed/14312.

Valentin, J., 2009, *Land to the east of Piccadilly Copse, Strete Raleigh, Whimble, Devon: Method statement for an archaeological trench evaluation*. Unpublished AC archaeology document, ref. ACD62/1/0.

Appendix 1: Trench descriptions

Trench 1			Length 20m	Width 1.6m	Alignment NE-SW
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation		
100	Mid reddish-brown loose clay silt with moderate rounded gravel inclusions	0-0.32m	Ploughsoil		
101	Mid reddish-brown friable silty clay with common rounded gravel inclusions	0.32-0.45m	Interface layer		
102	Mid to light red firm clay with patches of abundant manganese flecking and rounded gravel inclusions	0.45m+	Natural subsoil		

Trench 2			Length 20m	Width 1.6m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation		
200	Mid reddish-brown loose clay silt with moderate rounded gravel inclusions	0-0.26m	Ploughsoil		
201	Mid reddish-brown friable silty clay with common rounded gravel inclusions	0.26-0.32m	Interface layer		
202	Mid to light red firm clay with patches of abundant manganese flecking and rounded gravel inclusions	0.32m+	Natural subsoil		

Trench 3			Length 20m	Width 1.6m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation		
300	Mid reddish-brown loose clay silt with moderate rounded gravel inclusions	0-0.35m	Ploughsoil		
301	Mid reddish-brown friable silty clay with common rounded gravel inclusions	0.35-0.41m	Interface layer		
302	Mid to light red firm clay with patches of abundant manganese flecking and rounded gravel inclusions	0.41m+	Natural subsoil		

Trench 4			Length 20m	Width 1.6m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation		
400	Mid reddish-brown loose clay silt with moderate rounded gravel inclusions	0-0.29m	Ploughsoil		
401	Mid reddish-brown friable silty clay with common rounded gravel inclusions	0.29-0.33m	Interface layer		
402	Mid to light red firm clay with patches of abundant manganese flecking and rounded gravel inclusions	0.33m+	Natural subsoil		

Trench 5			Length 20m	Width 1.6m	Alignment NE-SW
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation		
500	Mid reddish-brown loose clay silt with moderate rounded gravel inclusions	0-0.31m	Plough soil		
501	Mid reddish-brown friable silty clay with common rounded gravel inclusions	0.31-0.38m	Interface layer		
502	Mid to light red firm clay with patches of abundant manganese flecking and rounded gravel inclusions	0.38m+	Natural subsoil		
503	NW to SE aligned, 0.67m wide linear feature with moderately sloping sides and flat base	0.31-0.48m	Ditch cut		
504	Mid brownish-red friable silty clay with moderate rounded gravel inclusions	0.31-0.48m	Fill of ditch F503		

Appendix 1: Trench descriptions

Trench 6		Length 46m	Width 1.6m	Alignment N-S/E-W
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
600	Mid reddish-brown loose clay silt with moderate rounded gravel inclusions	0-0.28/0.38m	Ploughsoil	
601	Mid reddish-brown friable silty clay with common rounded gravel inclusions	0.28/0.38m-0.53m	Interface layer	
602	Mid to light red firm clay with patches of abundant manganese flecking and rounded gravel inclusions	0.53m+	Natural subsoil	
603	Dark reddish-brown friable silty clay with common rounded gravel inclusions	0.53-0.69m	Fill of ditch F604	
604	NW to SE aligned, 0.68m wide linear feature with moderately sloping sides and flat base	0.53-0.69m	Cut of ditch	
605	Mid brownish-red friable clay with common rounded gravel inclusions.	0.38-0.62m	Hedgebank layer	
606	NW to SE aligned, 0.7m wide linear feature with moderately sloping sides and concave base	0.28-0.53m	Ditch cut	
607	Mid reddish-brown friable silty clay with moderate rounded gravel inclusions.	0.28-0.53m	Fill of F606	
608	NW to SE aligned, 0.75m wide linear feature, with moderately sloping sides and flattish base	0.28-0.0.46m	Ditch cut	
609	Mid reddish-brown friable silty clay with moderate rounded gravel inclusions	0.28-0.0.46m	Fill of F608	

Trench 7		Length 20m	Width 1.6m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
700	Mid reddish-brown loose clay silt with moderate rounded gravel inclusions	0-0.27m	Ploughsoil	
701	Mid reddish-brown friable silty clay with common rounded gravel inclusions	0.27-0.34m	Interface layer	
702	Mid to light red firm clay with patches of abundant manganese flecking and rounded gravel inclusions	0.34m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 8		Length 30m	Width 1.6m	Alignment NE-SW
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
800	Mid reddish-brown loose clay silt with moderate rounded gravel inclusions	0-0.31m	Ploughsoil	
801	Mid red friable silty clay with moderate rounded gravel inclusions	0.31-0.52m	Colluvial subsoil	
802	Mid to light red firm clay with patches of abundant manganese flecking and rounded gravel inclusions	0.52m+	Natural subsoil	

Trench 9		Length 20m	Width 1.6m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
900	Mid reddish-brown loose clay silt with moderate rounded gravel inclusions	0-0.33m	Ploughsoil	
901	Mid reddish-brown friable silty clay with common rounded gravel inclusions	0.33-0.43m	Colluvial subsoil	
902	Mid to light red firm clay with patches of abundant manganese flecking and rounded gravel inclusions	0.43m+	Natural subsoil	

Appendix 1: Trench descriptions

Trench 10			Length 20m	Width 1.6m	Alignment N-S
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation		
1000	Mid reddish-brown loose clay silt with moderate rounded gravel inclusions	0-0.3m	Ploughsoil		
1001	Mid to light red firm clay with patches of abundant manganese flecking and rounded gravel inclusions	0.3m+	Natural subsoil		

Trench 11			Length 20m	Width 1.6m	Alignment NE-SW
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation		
1100	Mid reddish-brown loose clay silt with moderate rounded gravel inclusions	0-0.29m	Ploughsoil		
1101	Mid reddish-brown friable silty clay with common rounded gravel inclusions	0.29-0.32m	Interface layer		
1102	Mid to light red firm clay with patches of abundant manganese flecking and rounded gravel inclusions	0.32m+	Natural subsoil		

Trench 12			Length 20m	Width 1.6m	Alignment NE-SW
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation		
1200	Mid reddish-brown loose clay silt with moderate rounded gravel inclusions	0-0.3m	Ploughsoil		
1201	Mid reddish-brown friable silty clay with common rounded gravel inclusions	0.3-0.37m	Interface layer		
1202	Mid to light red firm clay with patches of abundant manganese flecking and rounded gravel inclusions	0.37m+	Natural subsoil		

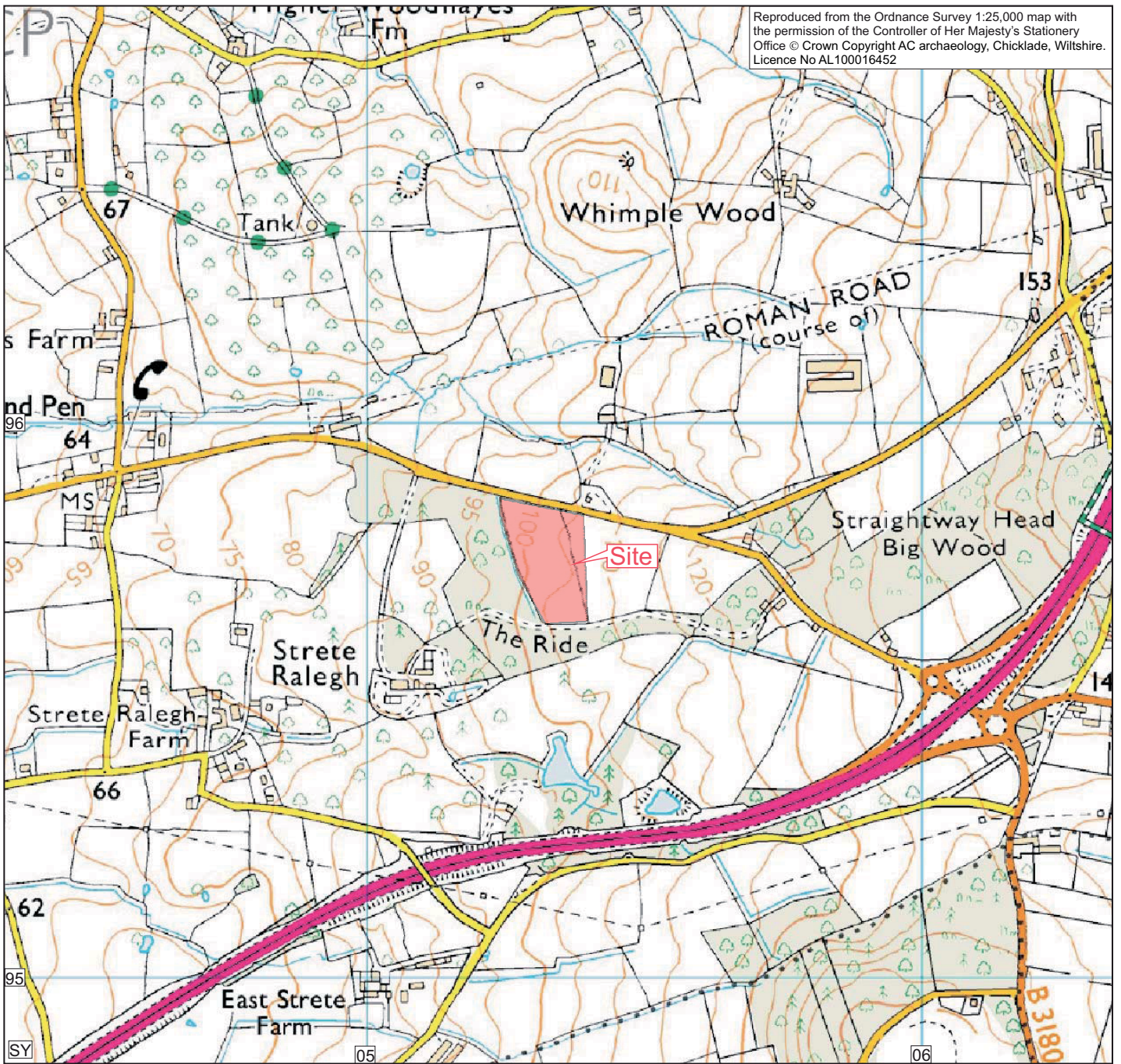


Fig. 1: Site location

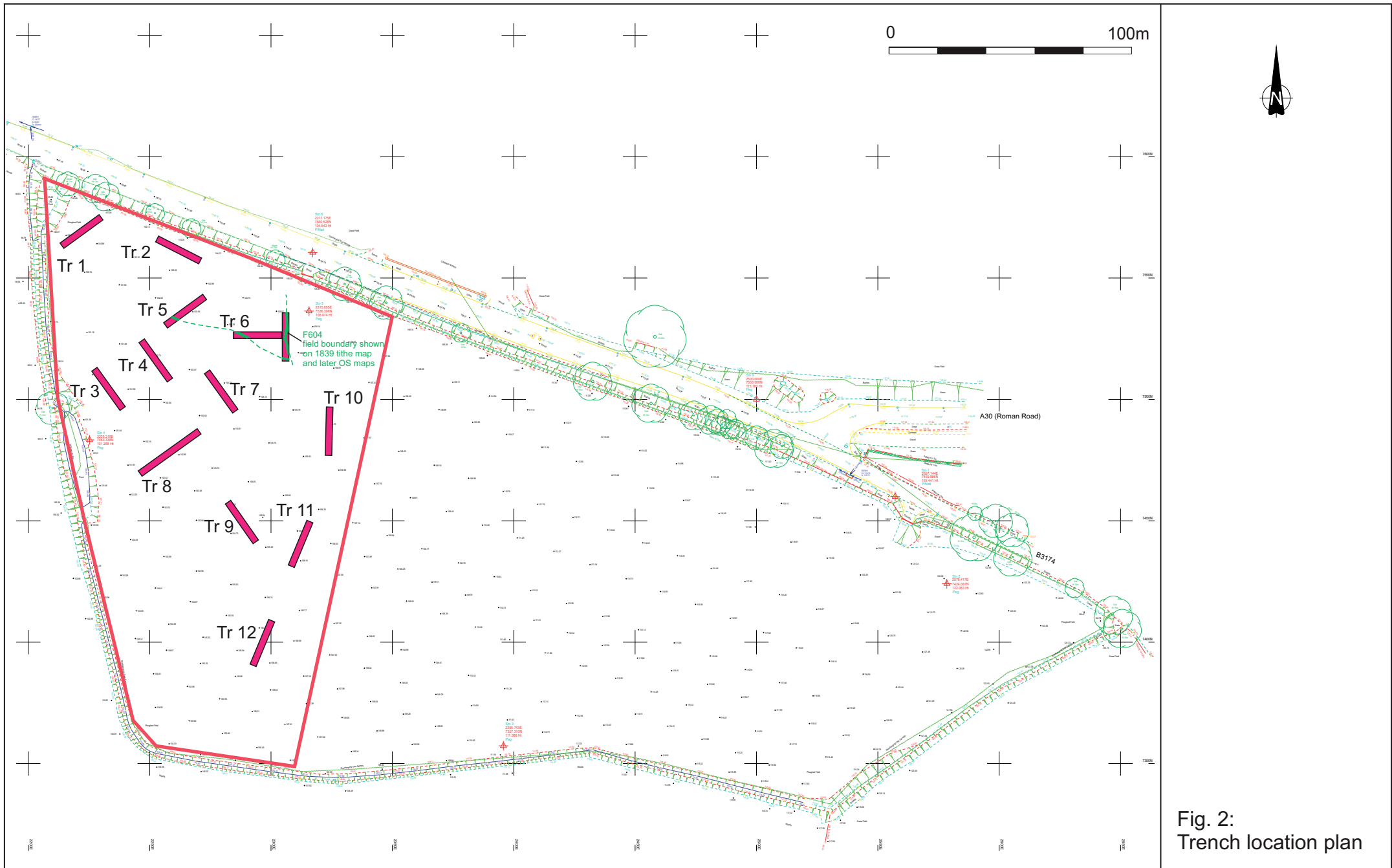
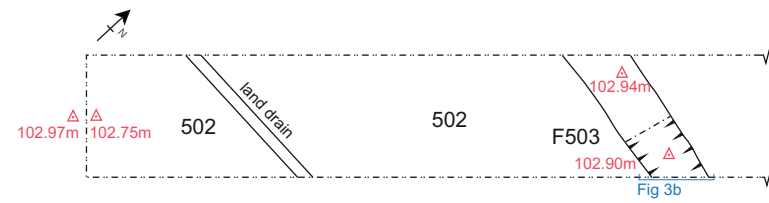


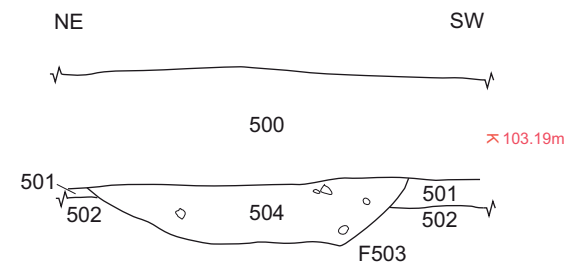
Fig. 2:
Trench location plan

Trench 5

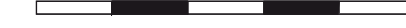
a) Plan



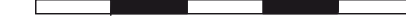
b) Section, F503



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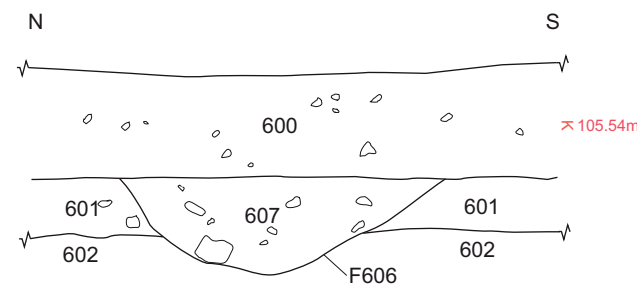


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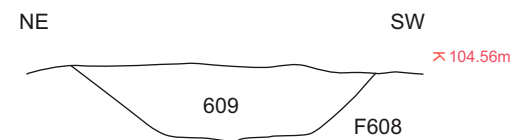


Trench 6

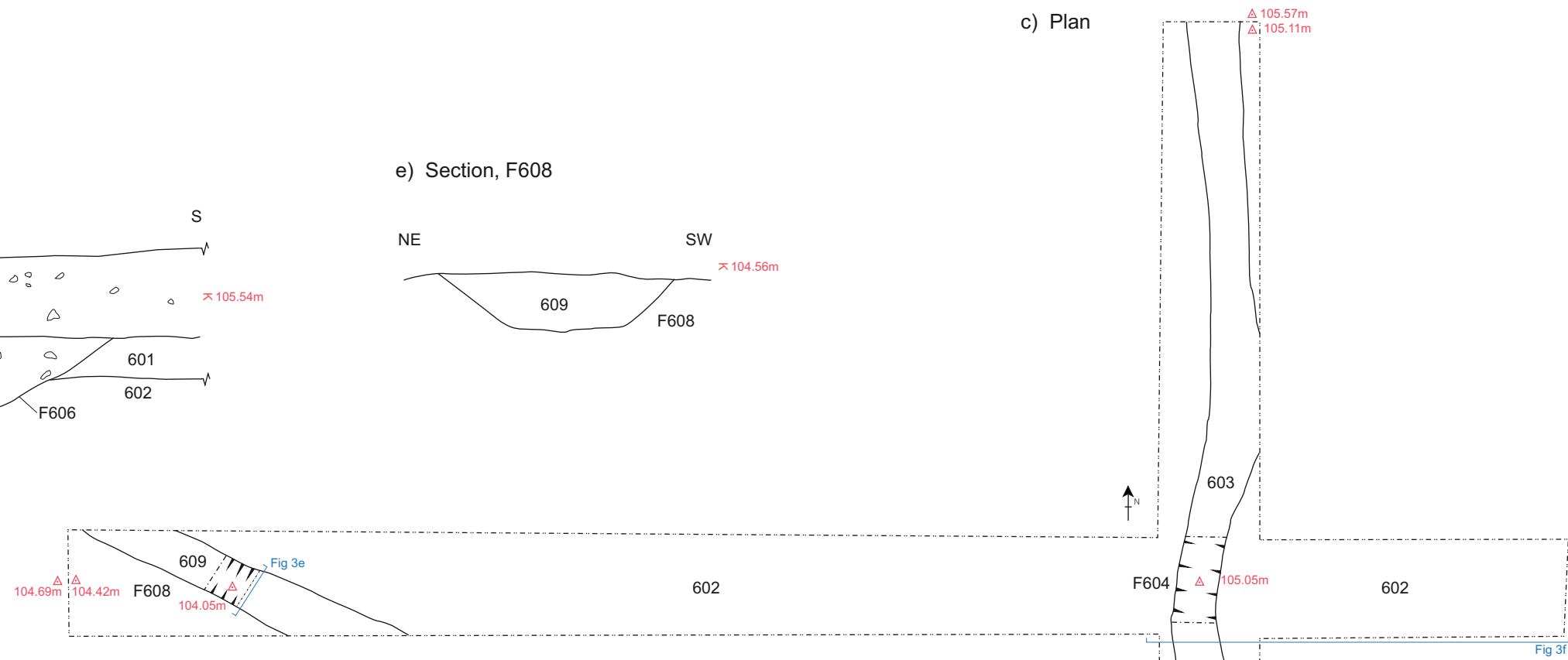
d) Section, F606



e) Section, F608



c) Plan



f) Section, F608

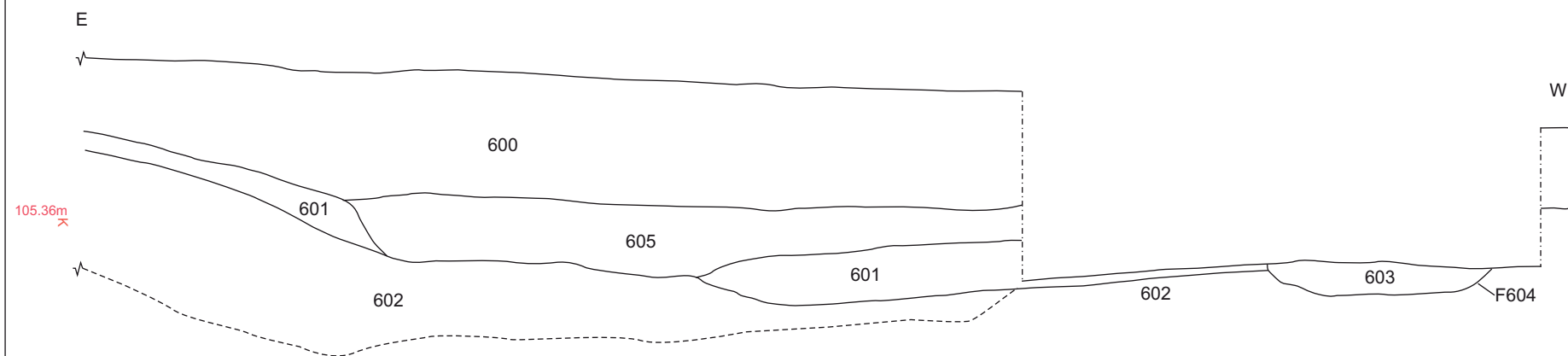


Fig. 3:
Plans and sections,
Trenches 5 and 6



Plate 1: General view of the site, looking northwest



Plate 2: View of Trench 6 showing ditch F604 and bank material 605, looking south (Scales 1m and 2m)



Plate 3: Ditch F608, Trench 6, looking southeast (Scale 1m)



Plate 4: Excavating Trench 7, looking northwest

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