

An archaeological evaluation of a hedgebank boundary, Premier Barton Farm, Higher Ashton, Devon

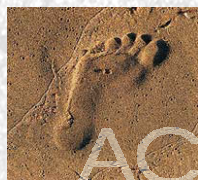
NGR SX8582285475

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On behalf of:
Premier (DGU) Ltd

Document No: ACD85/1/0

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archaeology

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Ashton, Teignbridge	National Grid Reference NGR SX8582285475	Number:
Subject: An arch aeological evalu ation of a hedg ebank bo undary, Premie r Barton Farm, Higher Ashton		Photo attached Plates 1 and 2
Planning Application no: 09/01610/MAJ	Recipient museum: Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter	
OASIS ID: 63503	Museum Accession no: 346/2009	
Contractor's reference number/code: ACD85	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 22 August 2009	
<p>Introduction</p> <p>An archaeological trench evaluation was undertaken in support of a planning application for a new farm stead and trackway, in order to establish whether a field hedgebank (Plate 1) might represent the position of a medieval deer park boundary. A deer park at Ashton is mentioned in 16th century documents, but its location and extent has not been established. The hedgebank is depicted on the parish tithe map of 1840, with the accompanying apportionment of 1838 naming the field immediately to the west of the boundary as 'Old Park'.</p> <p>Methodology</p> <p>The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a brief prepared by Devon County Historic Environment Service (ref. Arch/dc/te/14912). It comprised the machine-excavation of a single 13m long x 1.5m wide trench (Trench 1) across the hedgebank (Fig. 1). The trench extended for a distance of 5m either side of the bank in order to establish the presence/absence of an associated large ditch; deer park boundaries would normally have a substantial ditch on their inner side. The sections of each exposed trench face were recorded at a scale of 1:20 and a plan was prepared at 1:50.</p> <p>Results (Plan Fig. 2a, Section 2b; Plate 2)</p> <p>Natural weathered lime stone bedrock mixed with brownish-yellow clay (context 101) was present at a depth between 0.08m and 0.25m below ground level. This was sealed by a topsoil layer (100), composed of mid greyish-brown sandy clay silt.</p> <p>Sealed by the tail of the bank on its southwest side, a shallow, rounded linear feature was present (F104). This was 0.45m wide and 0.12m deep and was filled with a loose dark brown clayey sandy silt containing occasional small sub-angular stones. No finds were recovered.</p> <p>The bank itself was sealed by topsoil and was constructed directly on top of natural bedrock, with no buried soil or evidence for an early land surface present. The bank was a maximum of 3.2 m wide and had a height of 1.4m (Plate 2). It consisted of a 0.35m thick (maximum) lower layer (102) of loose dark brown sandy silt with common small sub-angular stones. Frequent root disturbance from the associated hedge meant that the division between 102 and the upper bank material (103) was slightly unclear. Layer 103 formed the main part of the bank and was again heavily disturbed by roots. This was a maximum of 1.05m thick and was composed of a loose mid greyish-brown clayey sandy silt, containing frequent large to small sub-angular limestone fragments. No finds were recovered from either bank layers.</p> <p>Comments</p> <p>The hedgebank is a substantial landscape feature, but its size and composition is typical of numerous field boundaries present throughout Devon. The shallow linear feature on its southwest side might represent a small drainage ditch or it is possibly where material has been scoured out of the bedrock to form the bank, but it is clearly not a ditch associated with a former deer park. While there were no finds recovered to establish when the bank was constructed, it was certainly present in 1840 and is likely to have much earlier origins.</p> <p>In the exposed face of the bank at the field entrance, it appears that the boundary was constructed by forming an internal stone wall, with soil then mounded up either side. This does not appear to be the case where the trench was excavated, but it is possible that any internal wall that might once have been present in this location has been heavily disturbed by roots and vegetation growth.</p> <p>The absence of an associated substantial ditch indicates that this hedgebank is unlikely to have formed part of the perimeter of a medieval deer park, and is a field boundary only. The documentary evidence does strongly suggest the presence of a deer park in Ashton, but other boundaries elsewhere must have formed its limits. Based on the results, mainly the absence of (a) finds, (b) a substantial ditch and (c) a buried land surface, it is unlikely that any further archaeological work associated with this development will reveal any new evidence to either date the boundary or to re-interpret its function.</p>		
Recorder: Simon Hughes & John Valentin, AC archaeology		Date sent to HER: 24 August 2009



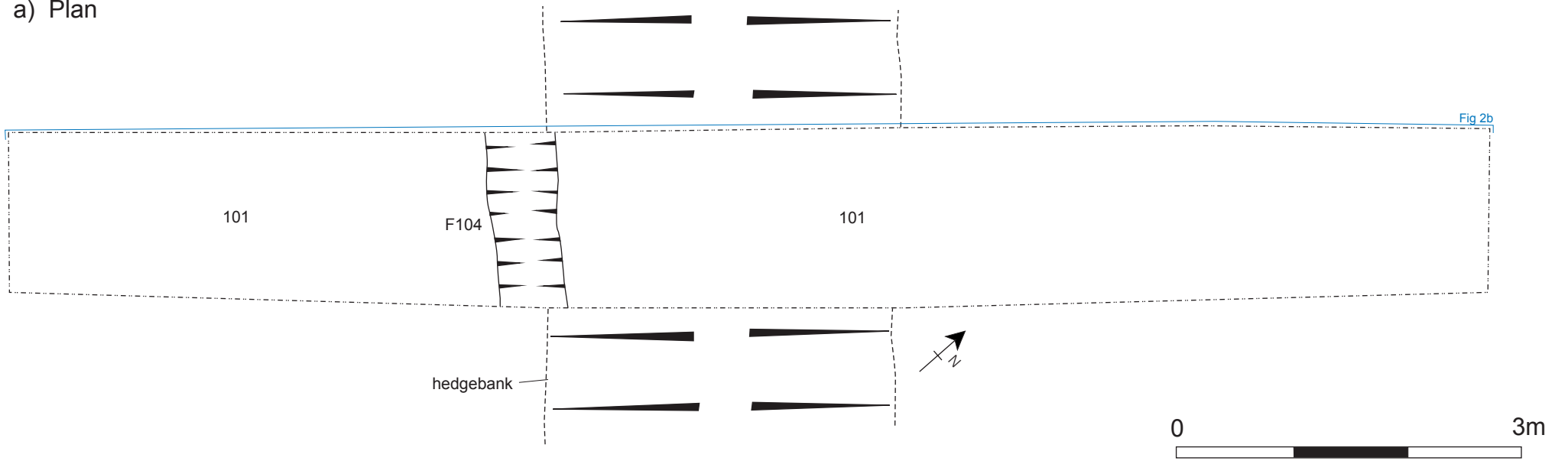
Note -
New hedge to be of indigenous species
(Hawthorn, Blackthorn and Field Maple)
Whips planted in two staggered rows
400mm apart and at 400mm r/c
All to be protected using spiral rabbit guards

TYPICAL TRACK SECTION
1:50

 Drayton Studio Design Associates	Drawing	<h2>Planning Drawing</h2>		Amendments	Job Number	1195 - 01		Revision	E		
	Project	Premier Barton Farm, Higher Ashton, Exeter for Premier (DGU) Ltd			A: Amended after discussions with client - 08 April 2009 B: Amended after discussions with client - 15 April 2009 C: Amended after discussions with client - 14 May 2009 D: Amended titles - 22 May 2009 E: Amended titles - 27 May 2009	Scale	1:500 @ A2	Drawn by	TP - AutoCAD	Date	April 2009
					Copyright is reserved on all drawings and principles of design All dimensions to be verified on site No dimensions to be scaled from this drawing Contractors to check drawings are correct before use					 Drayton Studio Design Associates Chartered Designer and Chartered Architectural Technologist 75 Bridle Close - Hookhills Farm - Paignton - Devon - TQ4 7ST Tel: 01803-844994 Fax: 01803-845650 Email: draytonstudio@helpsfamily.wanadoo.co.uk	

Fig. 1: Trench location

a) Plan



b) Section

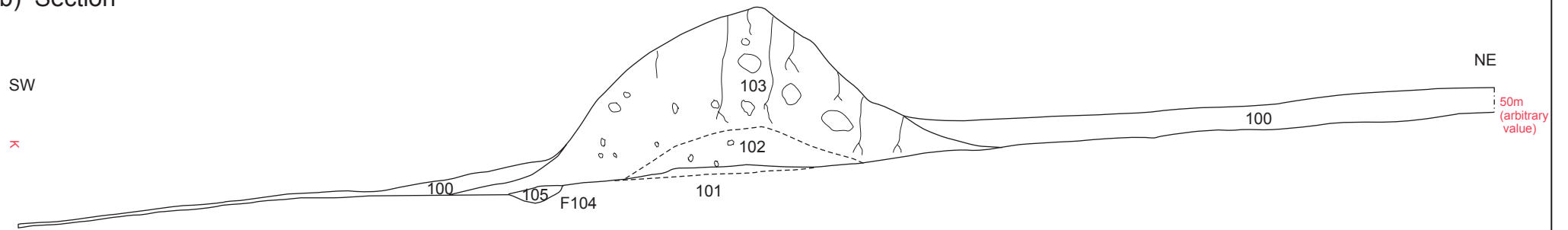


Fig. 2: Plan and section of trench



Plate 1: The hedgebank prior to excavation of Trench 1. View from west (scale 1m)



Plate 2: Southwest facing section of hedgebank. Linear feature F104 lower left. View from south (scale 1m)

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