

Area 2, Phase 2, Stockmoor Village, Bridgwater, Somerset

NGR ST3027034650

Results of an archaeological trench evaluation

Planning ref. Sedgemoor District Council 37/10/00001

Somerset County Museum Accession Number TTNCM 22/2010

Somerset County Council Historic Environment Service PRN 28337

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On behalf of:
Persimmon Homes (South West) Ltd

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archaeology

AREA 2, PHASE 2, STOCKMOOR VILLAGE, BRIDGWATER, SOMERSET (ST3027034650): RESULTS OF AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRENCH EVALUATION

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Summary

An archaeological trench evaluation, carried out in support of a planning application for residential development on land forming Area 2, Phase 2, Stockmoor Village, Bridgwater (NGR ST3027034650), was undertaken by AC archaeology during March 2010. The site is located within an agricultural field to the south of Bridgwater and to the west of Taunton Road (the A38). It is within an area where a number of Romano-British artefacts have been found by metal detectorists and to the north of probable prehistoric or Romano-British enclosures recorded as cropmarks.

The evaluation comprised the machine-excavation of 11 trenches, each 1.6m wide and totalling 405m in length, with these positioned to provide a sampled coverage of the area. Largely negative results were recorded, with a small number of linear ditches present. These are likely to have been post-medieval boundary or drainage features. Three small sherds of late Iron Age pottery were recovered from an agricultural subsoil layer.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological trench evaluation carried out in support of a planning application for residential development on land forming Area 2, Phase 2, Stockmoor Village, Bridgwater, Somerset (Fig. 1 and Plate 1), was undertaken by AC archaeology during March 2010. The work was commissioned by Persimmon Homes (South West) Ltd and was undertaken following consultation with Somerset County Historic Environment Service (SCHES).
- 2.1 The site is located within an agricultural field to the south of Bridgwater and to the west of Taunton Road (the A38 Trunk Road). It lies between c. 5m and 8m OD, with the ground sloping gently down to the northwest. The underlying solid geology comprises permo-triassic mudstone.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The principal archaeological interest in the site is that it is located in an area where a number of Romano-British finds, including coins, have been found by metal detectorists (Somerset HER PRN 17891). There are probable prehistoric or Romano-British enclosures recorded as cropmarks to the south of the site (11890 and 12732). Part of the site is also located on slightly raised ground above the low-lying wetlands area, with therefore good potential for settlement remains of these dates to be present.

3. AIMS

- 3.1 The aim of the evaluation 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 document will be reviewed and used to inform any subsequent mitigation.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a method statement prepared by AC archaeology (Valentin 2010), submitted to and approved by SCHES prior to commencement on site. It comprised the machine-excavation of 11 trenches totalling 405m in length, with each trench 1.6m wide. This represented an approximate 3%

sample of the total site area. Trenches were generally positioned to provide representative coverage across the site, but the low-lying and wet ground in the northwest part of the site meant that none were excavated in this area.

- 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 or 1:20. All levels have been related to Ordnance Datum. Following excavation of the trenches the spoilheaps were scanned for finds both manually and using a metal detector.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

In the majority of trenches largely negative results were recorded and consequently these are described in tabulated form only in Appendix 1. In trenches where archaeological features were recorded these are described in more detail below. Relevant plans and sections are included on Fig. 2.

5.2 Trench 4 (Plan and section Fig. 2a and b)

This trench was excavated onto natural subsoil (402), which was present at a depth of 0.5m below ground level and comprised a light reddish-brown clay with manganese inclusions. The natural subsoil was below a light brown silty clay subsoil (401) which was cut towards the east end of the trench by an approximately northeast to southwest aligned linear feature (F403). This probable ditch was 1.2m wide and 0.28m deep, with moderately-sloping sides and a concave base. It contained a single mid red silty-clay fill (404) with common small to medium stone inclusions. No finds were recovered. The ditch and subsoil were below ploughsoil (400).

5.3 Trench 6 (Plan and sections Fig. 2c to e; Plate 2)

This trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.65m into natural subsoil (604), which comprised a mid brownish-red silty clay, present at 0.55m below ground level. The natural subsoil was below a mid brown silty clay subsoil (601), cut towards the northeast end of the trench by an approximately northeast to southwest aligned linear feature (F603). This probable ditch was 0.7m wide and 0.27m deep, with steeply-sloping sides and a concave base. The ditch contained a dark brown silty-clay fill (602), which contained 19th century bottle glass and a fragment of clay tobacco pipe. The ditch and subsoil were below ploughsoil (600).

5.4 Trench 8 (Plan and sections Fig. 2f and g)

This trench was excavated onto natural subsoil (802), which was present at a depth of 0.62m and comprised mixed grey gleyed clays and light brownish-red silty clays with manganese. The natural subsoil was below a mid brown silty clay subsoil layer (801), which was cut by a northeast to southwest aligned linear feature (F803). This probable ditch was 0.85m wide and 0.31m deep, with moderately sloping sides and a concave base. It contained a two fills, a mid reddish-brown silty-clay main fill (804) and a mid red clay upper fill (805). No finds were recovered. The ditch and subsoil layer were sealed by ploughsoil (800).

5.5 Trench 9 (Plan and sections Fig. 2h to j; Plate 3)

This trench was excavated onto natural subsoil (902), which was present at a maximum depth of 0.7m below ground level and comprised a light reddish-brown clay with manganese inclusions. This was below a mid brownish-red silty clay subsoil

(901), which was cut by a linear feature (F903). This probable ditch was approximately northeast to southwest aligned and was 0.75m wide and 0.15m deep, with moderately sloping sides and a concave base. It contained a mid red silty-clay fill (904). No finds were recovered. The ditch and subsoil layer were sealed by ploughsoil (900).

5.6 Trench 11 (Plan and sections Fig. 2k and l; Plate 4)

Trench 11 was excavated onto natural subsoil (1102) that was present at a depth of 0.52m and comprised a light reddish-brown clay with manganese inclusions. This was below a light brown silty clay subsoil layer (1101), which was cut towards the centre of the trench by an approximately north-south aligned linear feature (F1103). This probable ditch was 1.1m wide and 0.16m deep and had gradually sloping sides and a concave base. It contained a mid red clay fill (1104) and no finds were recovered. The ditch and subsoil layer were sealed by ploughsoil (1100).

6. THE FINDS

6.1 Introduction

All finds recovered on 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. Finds totals by material type are set out in Table 1.

Table 1. Finds summary (weight is in grams)

Trench	Context	Description	Pottery : Prehistoric		Pottery : Post-medieval		Glass: Modern		Clay tobacco pipe	
			No.	Weight	No.	Weight	No.	Weight	No.	Weight
1	100	Topsoil			4	135				
2	201	Subsoil	3	4						
4	400	Topsoil			1	18				
6	602	Fill of ditch F603					4	502	1	1
7	701	Subsoil			1	1				
Totals			3	4	6	154	4	502	1	1

6.2 The pottery

The three small sherds of prehistoric pottery were recovered from the subsoil layer in Trench 2. These are undiagnostic and abraded fragments in a gritty quartz-tempered fabric and are probably late Iron Age in date. The remaining pottery is post-medieval, probably 19th century in date, and comprises lead-glazed, slip-decorated and unglazed red earthenwares.

6.3 Other finds

The glass fragments from ditch F603 are likely to be from the same late 19th century spirit bottle, which is stamped 'W & A Gilbey Ltd' on the base. The clay tobacco pipe fragment from the same context is part of a stem.

7. DISCUSSION

7.1

The evaluation has established generally low level results across the site with the only features recorded comprising parts of two probable former boundary ditches, one of which, although of variable profile, appeared to cross through three trenches (see Fig. 1). The only ditch to contain any finds was F602 in Trench 6, with these dating to the 19th century. For the other ditch, the nature of its fill and its presence immediately below the topsoil also indicates a post-medieval or modern date.

7.2 There was also only a small quantity of finds recovered, although the presence of the three small Iron Age pottery sherds in the subsoil layer of Trench 2 does suggest the possibility of settlement of this date nearby.

7.3 It was not possible to excavate any trenches in the wet and low-lying northwest part of the site, but this area would not have been a favourable location for early settlement in any case. There were no metal objects recovered by metal detector from any of the trial trenches, and it is likely that the Romano-British artefacts, as recorded in the Somerset Historic Environment Record, were found immediately to the south and southeast of the site, where the ground is more elevated and therefore of far higher potential for the presence of settlement remains.

8. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

8.1 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 Somerset County Museum, Taunton under the accession code TTNCM 22/2010.

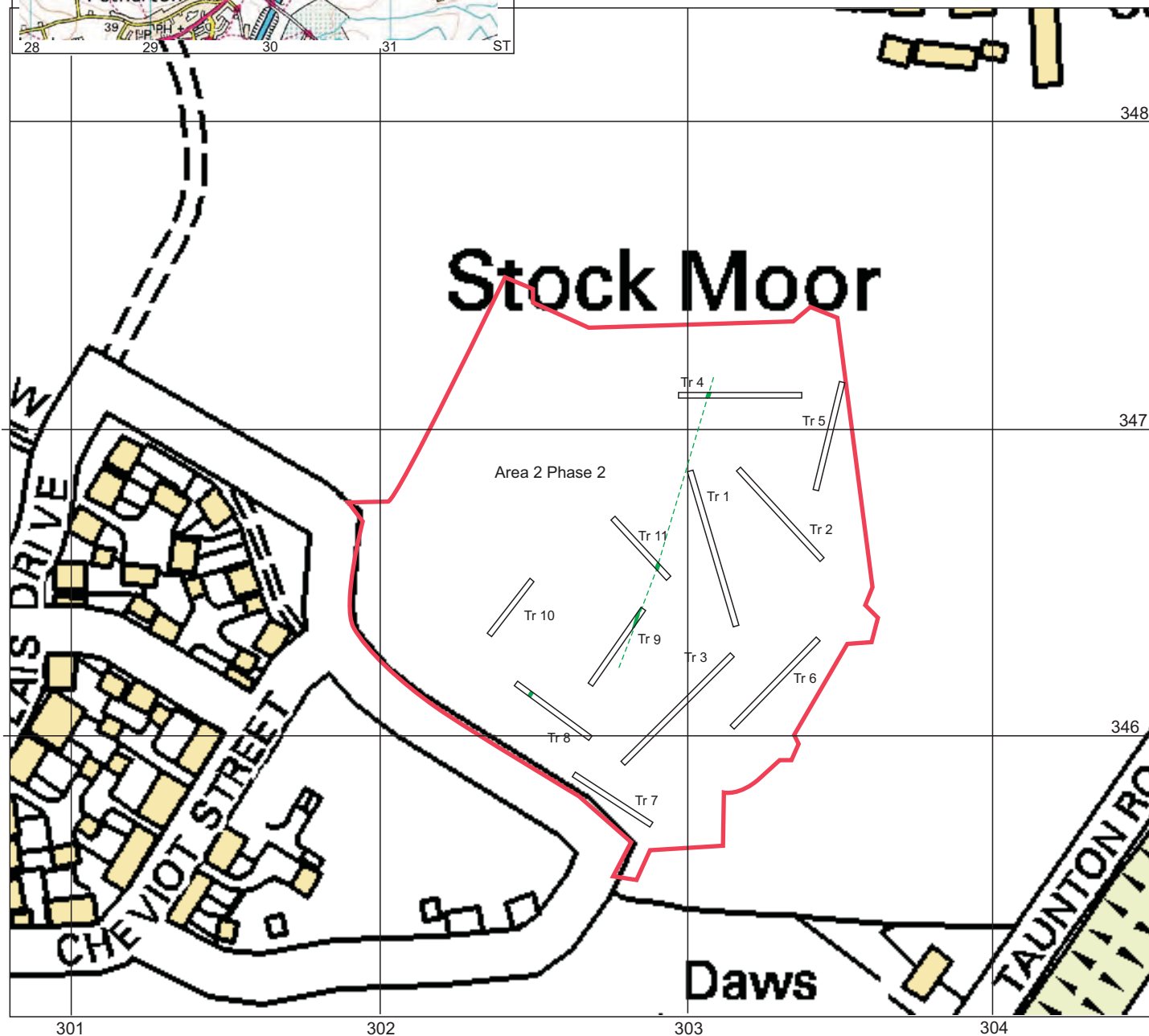
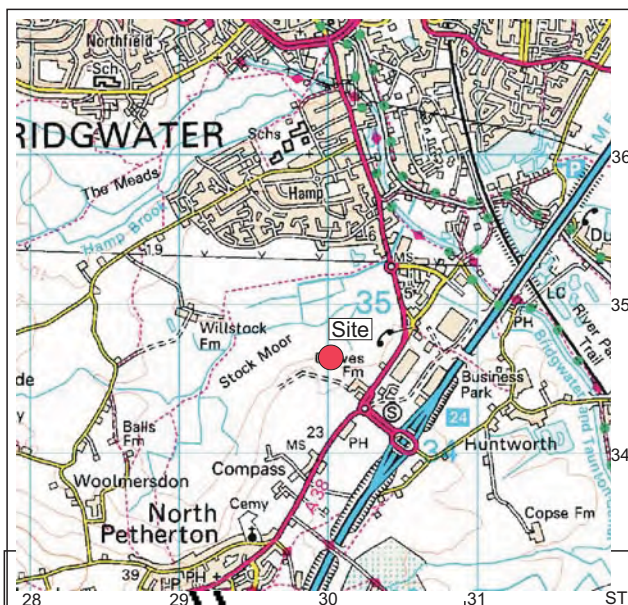
8.2 The OASIS (Online AccesS to the Index of Archaeological InvestigationS) number for this project is 74183.

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The evaluation was commissioned by Persimmon Homes (South West) Ltd. The site trial trenching was carried out by Simon Hughes, Kerry Dean and Tina Tapply and the illustrations for this report were prepared by Sarah Cottam. The advice and collaboration of Naomi Payne, Somerset County Archaeology Officer, is duly acknowledged.

10. REFERENCES

Valentin, J., 2010, *Area 2, Phase 2, Stockmoor Village, Bridgwater, Somerset (ST3027034739): Method statement for an archaeological trench evaluation*. Unpublished AC archaeology document, ref. ACD146/1/0



Key

— Archaeological feature



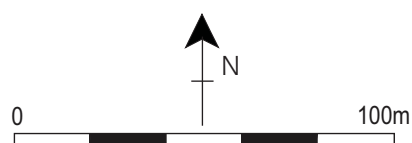
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Stockmoor, Bridgwater

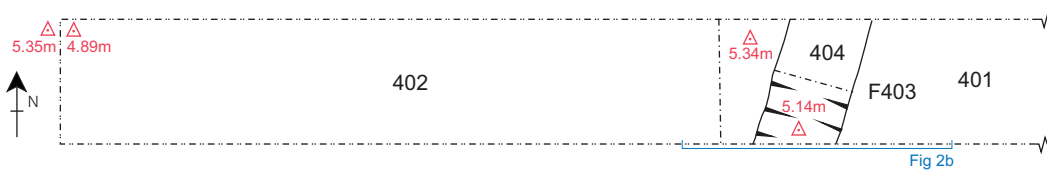
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Fig. 1: Site and trench locations

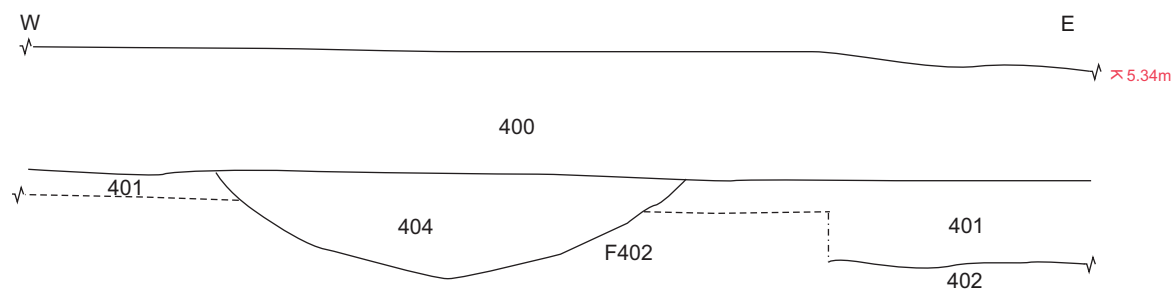


Trench 4

a) Plan

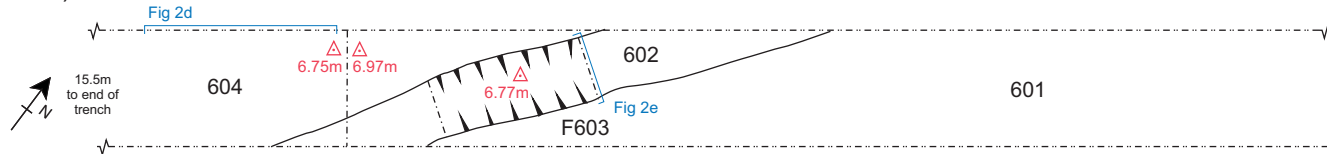


b) Section

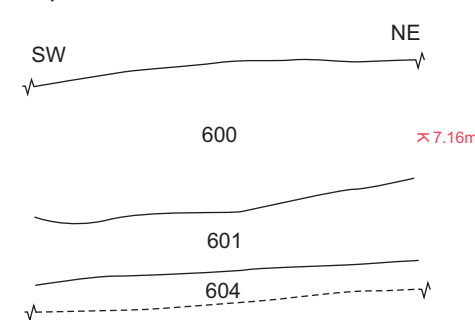


Trench 6

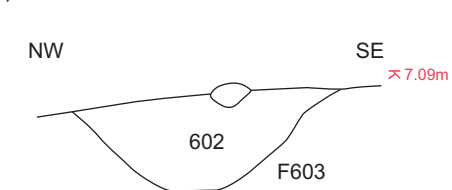
c) Plan



d) Representative section

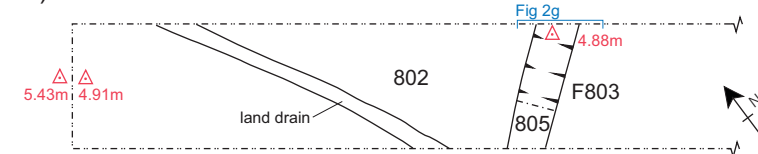


e) Section, F603

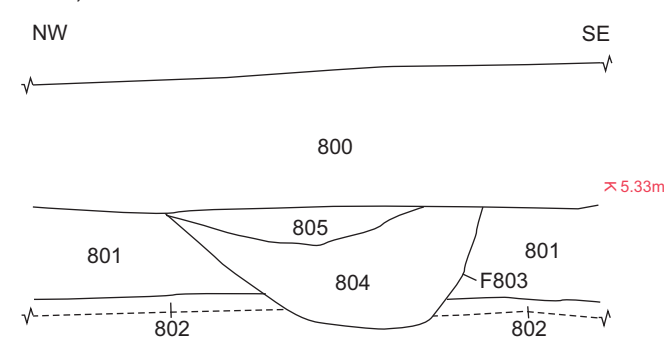


Trench 8

f) Plan

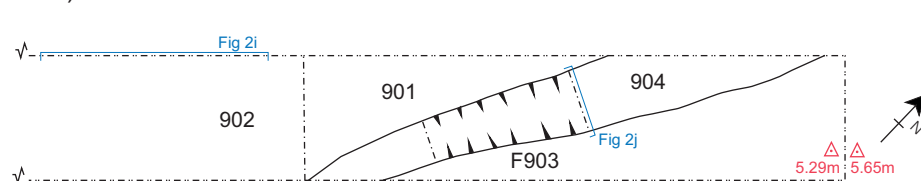


g) Section, F802

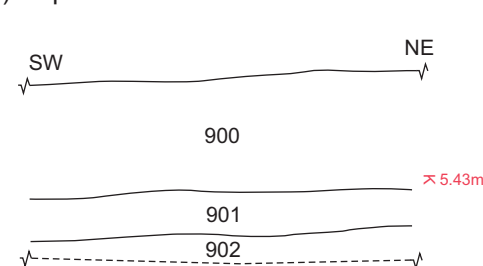


Trench 9

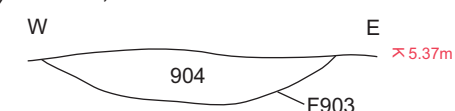
h) Plan



i) Representative section



j) Section, F903

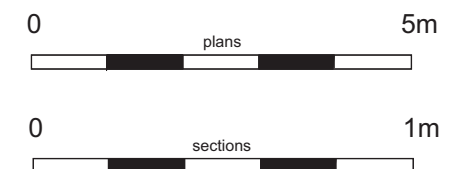
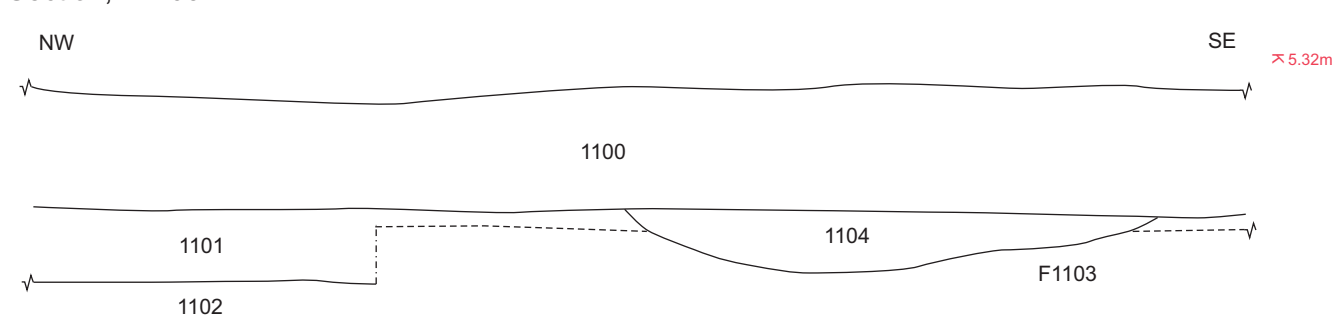


Trench 11

k) Plan



l) Section, F1103



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Fig. 2: Plans and sections,
Trenches 4, 6, 8, 9 and 11



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Plate 1: General view of site. Looking east



Plate 2:
Ditch F603, Trench 6, southwest
facing section. View to northeast
(scale 0.3m)



Plate 3:
Ditch F903, Trench 9, south facing
section. View to north (scale 1m)



Plate 4: Ditch F1103, Trench 11, southwest facing section. View to northeast (scale 1m)

Appendix 1: Descriptions of largely negative trenches

ACD146 Area 2, Phase 2 Stockmoor

Trench 1			Length 50m	Width 1.6m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation		
100	Dark brown friable clayey silt	0-0.32m	Ploughsoil. Four sherds of post-medieval pottery recovered		
101	Light brown friable silty clay	0.32-0.53m	Subsoil		
102	Light brown firm clay with manganese inclusions	0.53m+	Natural subsoil		

Trench 2			Length 40m	Width 1.6m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation		
200	Dark brown friable clayey silt	0-0.39m	Ploughsoil		
201	Light brown friable silty clay	0.39-51m	Subsoil. Three sherds of Late Iron Age pottery recovered		
202	Mid red firm clay	0.51m+	Natural subsoil		

Trench 3			Length 50m	Width 1.6m	Alignment NE-SW
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation		
300	Dark brown friable clayey silt	0-0.33m	Ploughsoil		
301	Light brown friable silty clay	0.33-0.69m	Subsoil		
302	Mid red firm clay	0.69m+	Natural subsoil		

Trench 5			Length 40m	Width 1.6m	Alignment NE-SW
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation		
500	Dark brown friable clayey silt	0-0.34m	Ploughsoil		
501	Light brown friable silty clay	0.34-69m	Subsoil		
502	Mid red firm clay	0.69m+	Natural subsoil		

Trench 7			Length 30m	Width 1.6m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation		
700	Dark brown friable clayey silt	0-0.35m	Ploughsoil		
701	Light brown friable silty clay	0.35-0.6m	Subsoil. One sherd of post medieval pottery recovered		
702	Mid red firm clay	0.6m+	Natural subsoil		

Trench 10			Length 25m	Width 1.6m	Alignment NE-SW
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation		
1000	Mid brown friable silty-clay	0-0.3m	Ploughsoil		
1001	Mid reddish-brown friable silty clay	0.3-0.47m	Subsoil		
1002	Mid greyish-red clay with manganese inclusions	0.47m+	Natural subsoil		

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