

Land at Broadstone Farm, Broadstone, Westonzoyland, Somerset

NGR ST 3492 3501

Results of an archaeological trench evaluation

Somerset County Museum Accession Number TTNCM 15/2011

Somerset County Council Historic Environment Service PRN 30300

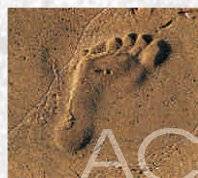
Prepared by
Simon Hughes

with a contribution from
Kerry Dean

On behalf of
West of England Developments Ltd

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archaeology

LAND AT BROADSTONE FARM, BROADSTONE, WESTONZOYLAND, SOMERSET

(ST 3492 3501)

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Summary

An archaeological trench evaluation was carried out by AC archaeology during March 2011 on land at Broadstone Farm, Broadstone, Westonzoyland, Somerset (NGR ST 3492 3501). The site is located on the northwest side of the village, in an area where there is evidence for prehistoric and Romano-British settlement and agricultural practices. It is located on raised ground above the low-lying wetlands area and was considered to have good potential for settlement remains of these periods to be present.

The evaluation comprised the machine-excavation of four trenches with a combined length of 85m, with these positioned to provide sample coverage of the western part of the site away from the location of former farm buildings. A very shallow linear feature was recorded, which may represent evidence for early, possibly late prehistoric land division. A few later post-medieval to modern features, comprising pits and postholes were recorded, with these likely to have been associated with the adjacent former complex of Broadstone Farm. A single sherd of Late Iron Age pottery was recovered from the agricultural subsoil layer in one of the trenches.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological trench evaluation on land at Broadstone Farm, Broadstone, Westonzoyland, Somerset (NGR ST 3492 3501; Fig. 1 & Plate), was undertaken by AC archaeology during March 2011. The work was commissioned by West of England Developments Ltd and was required by Sedgemoor District Council as a condition of planning permission for residential development (ref. 1/53/10/080), as advised by Somerset County Historic Environment Service.
- 1.2 The site is located on the northwest side of the village, in a former pasture field that had recently been stripped of turf. It previously contained a number of derelict buildings on the east side which had been demolished prior to the work. It lies at around 6m OD on generally level ground. The site lies at the northwest edge of a 'Burtle Island', which is formed by a series of drift deposits (alluvium, peat and sand), overlying a solid geology of Mercia Mudstone. Surrounding the island is the marginal land of the Somerset Levels.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The principal archaeological interest is that the site is located in an area where a number of findspots have previously been recorded. These include a prehistoric bronze palstave from immediately to the west (SCHER PRN 44934), as well as a flint scatter and Roman pottery from Pentzoy Farm (12109 and 1210). There are also a number of probable prehistoric or Romano-British enclosures and field systems recorded as cropmarks in the vicinity (eg. 11250, 11861, 11851 and 12797). The site is located on raised ground above the low-lying wetlands area, with therefore potential for settlement remains of these dates to be present. The site of the AD1285 Battle of Sedgemoor is located just to the north.
- 2.2 Until recently, the east part of the site contained buildings and yards relating to Broadstone Farm. A farm complex is shown on maps dating from the 1880s through to 1991.

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 report 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 2011), submitted to and approved by the Historic Environment Officer, Somerset County Council prior to commencement.
- 4.2 The work comprised the machine-excavation of four trenches totalling 85m in length and with each trench 1.9m wide. Trenches were positioned in the western part of the site away from the former farm buildings (Fig. 1). Each trench was excavated using a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket and working under constant archaeological supervision.
- 4.3 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 relate to Ordnance Datum.

5. RESULTS

- 5.1 The results from all trenches are described in detail below, with relevant plans and sections included as Figs 2-3 and photographs as Plates 1-4.

5.2 **Trench 1** (Detailed plan Fig. 2a, sections 2b-c; Plate 2)

This trench was 20m long and excavated to a depth of 0.58m into natural subsoil (context 102), which comprised a light greyish-brown clayey sand (context 102). This was below a light brown silty sand subsoil (101) and a dark brown silty sand topsoil (100). The trench contained a single sub-round possible pit or posthole feature (F103), located towards the centre of the trench and cutting through subsoil layer 101.

F103 was 0.6m wide and 0.08m deep, with moderately steep sloping sides and a flat base. It contained a dark brown silty sand fill (104) with rare charcoal inclusions. A fragment of post-medieval handmade brick was recovered from fill 104 and a rim-sherd of Late Iron Age pottery was recovered from subsoil layer 201.

5.3 **Trench 2** (Detailed plan Fig. 2d, sections 2e-f)

This trench was 20m long and excavated to a depth of 0.6m onto natural subsoil, which comprised a light greyish-brown clayey-sand (context 202). This was below a light brown silty sand subsoil (201) and a dark brown silty sand topsoil (200). The trench contained a single small posthole feature (F203), located towards the west end of the trench and cutting through subsoil layer 101.

F203 was 0.18m wide and 0.09m deep, with steeply sloping sides and a flat base. It contained a dark brown silty sand fill (204) with occasional clinker pieces. No other finds were recovered.

5.4 **Trench 3** (Detailed plan Fig. 3a, sections 3b-e; Plates 3-4)

This trench had a total length of 25m and was excavated to a depth of 0.4m onto natural subsoil (310), which comprised a light brownish-yellow clayey sand. This was below subsoil (301) and topsoil (300) layers. The trench contained a linear feature (F311) and two possible pits (F302 and F308).

Northeast to southwest aligned linear feature F311 was 0.4m wide and extended into a truncated rounded terminal at its southwest end. Two segments were excavated through the feature (304 and 306). These established that it was a maximum of 0.14m deep, with

moderately steep sloping sides and a concave base. It contained a consistent light greyish-brown silty sand fill (305 and 307). A worked flint waste flake was recovered from fill 305.

Possible pit F302 cut through subsoil layer 301, had a diameter of 0.6m and was 0.08m deep, with irregular gradually-sloping sides and irregular base. It contained a dark greyish-brown silty sand fill (303) and one sherd of post-medieval lead-glazed earthenware pottery was recovered.

Sub-rectangular pit F308 cut through subsoil layer 301 and truncated linear feature F311. The feature was 1.75m long, 1.5m wide and 0.17m deep, with steeply-sloping sides and a flat base. It contained a mixed dark greyish-brown silty sand fill (309). The fill contained abundant 19th to 20th-century domestic refuse finds, including industrial whiteware pottery sherds, sheet iron fragments, leather strips and animal bone (not retained).

5.5 Trench 4

This trench was excavated to a depth of 0.47m onto natural subsoil (402), which comprised a light yellow sand with laminated limestone fragment inclusions. The natural subsoil was overlain by subsoil (401) and topsoil layers (400). The trench contained no archaeological features or deposits and no finds were recovered.

6. THE FINDS

By Kerry Dean

- 6.1 All finds recovered on site have been retained, cleaned and marked where appropriate. Finds have been quantified according to material type within each context, then the assemblage was scanned to extract information regarding the range, nature and date of artefacts represented. All finds are summarised in Table 1 and described briefly below.

Table 1. Summary of finds. Weight in grams (g)

Context	Prehistoric pottery		Post-medieval pottery		Worked flint/chert		Brick	
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
101	1	30						
104							1	258
303			1	4				
305					1	6		
Totals	1	30	1	4	1	6	1	258

6.2 Prehistoric pottery

One plain, bead rim sherd (30g) dating to the later Iron Age was recovered residually from the subsoil layer of Trench 1.

6.3 Worked flint

A single waste flake of dark brown/black flint (6g) was recovered from the fill of an east-west aligned shallow linear feature in Trench 3 (F311).

6.4 Post-medieval finds

One body sherd of lead-glazed earthenware (4g) was recovered from the fill of a possible pit (303). This is probably 18th or 19th century date. One fragment of hand-made post medieval brick (258g) was recovered from the fill of possible pit/posthole F103, Trench 1.

7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1** The evaluation has established that there is evidence for archaeological activity on the site, although this is limited to a small number of features in Trenches 1, 2 and 3. The majority of the features are likely to be post-medieval or modern, which is on the basis of finds recovered or that they cut, rather than being sealed by the agricultural subsoil layer present on the site.
- 7.2** The straight and very shallow linear feature present in Trench 3 (F311) is likely to be the earliest feature recorded on the site. This was sealed by subsoil and contained a single flint waste flake. There were no associated features present and it is likely that this represents remnants of an early, possibly prehistoric field boundary, which has been largely ploughed out. The recovery of a sherd of Late Iron Age pottery from the subsoil of Trench 1 suggests further limited prehistoric background activity in the vicinity.
- 7.3** The remaining features recorded on the site, which comprised possible pits and postholes in Trenches 1, 2 and 3, all cut through the subsoil layer and are broadly later post-medieval to modern in date. These features are likely to be associated with the adjacent farm formerly present to the east of the site.

8. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

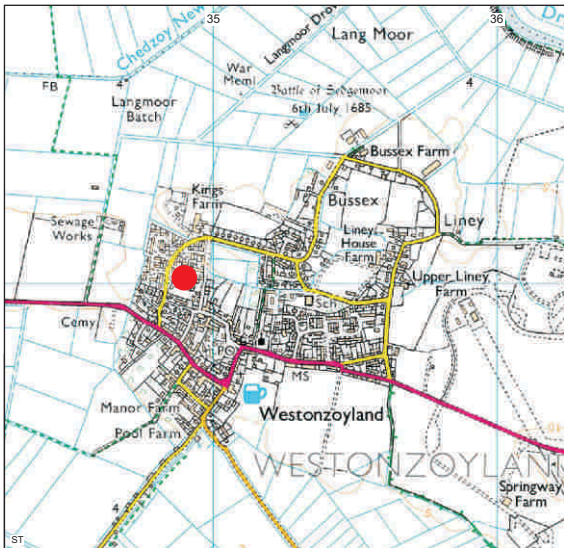
- 8.1** The paper and digital archive and finds are currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd at 4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ. They will be deposited at the Somerset County Museum, Taunton under the accession code TTNCM 15/2011.
- 8.2** The OASIS (Online AccesS to the Index of Archaeological InvestigationS) number for this project is 96803.

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

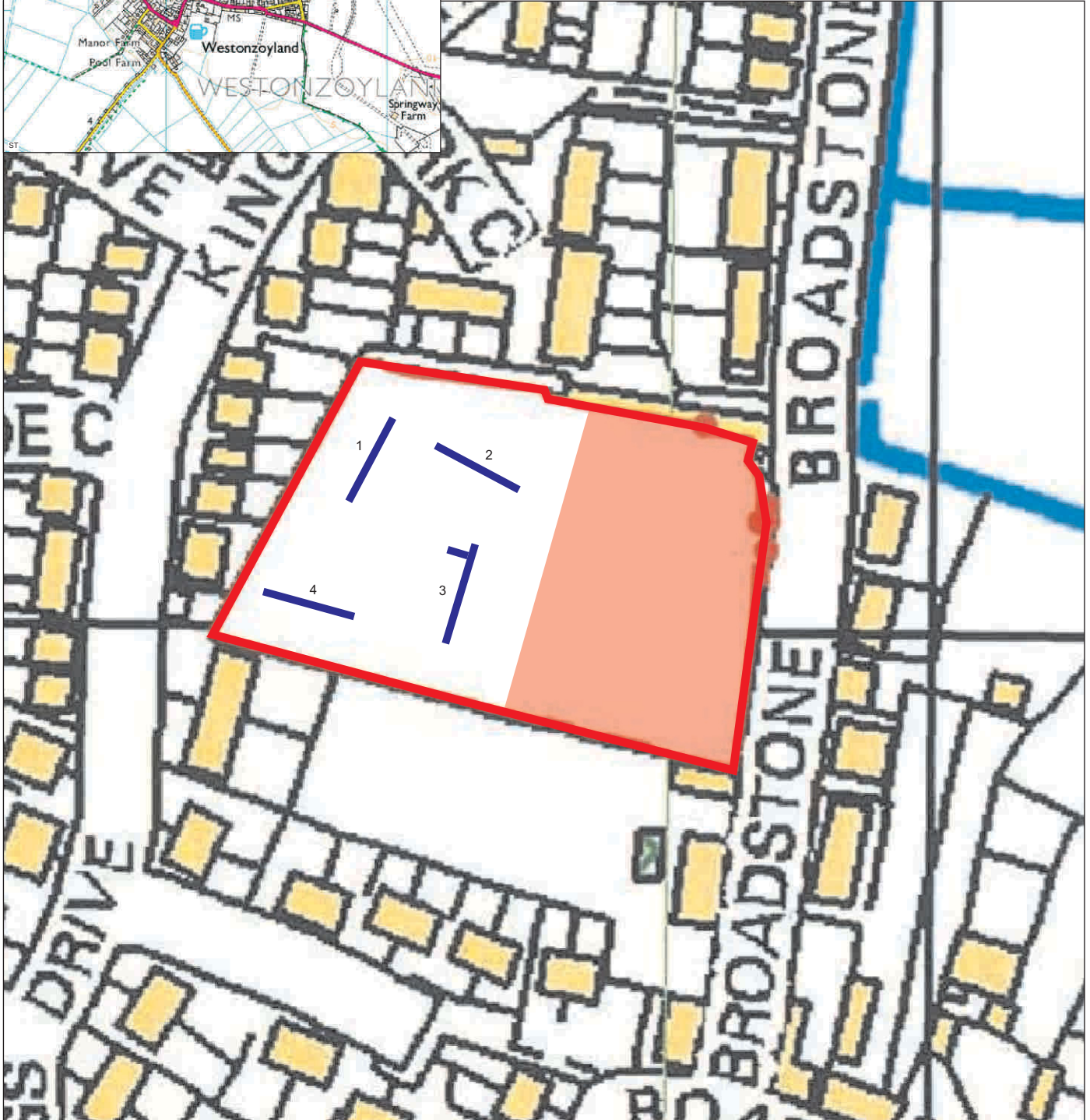
The evaluation was commissioned by Andy Lehner on behalf of West of England Developments Ltd. The site trial trenching was carried out by Simon Hughes and Naomi Hughes, with the illustrations for this report prepared by Cain Hegarty. The advice and collaboration of Naomi Payne, Somerset Archaeology Officer, is duly acknowledged.

10. REFERENCES

Valentin, J., 2011, *Land at Broadstone Farm, Broadstone, Westonzoyland, Somerset: Method statement for an archaeological trench evaluation*. Unpublished AC archaeology document, ref. ACD273/1/0



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0 100m



Trench location and number



Approximate location of former farm

PROJECT

Broadstone Farm, Westonzoyland

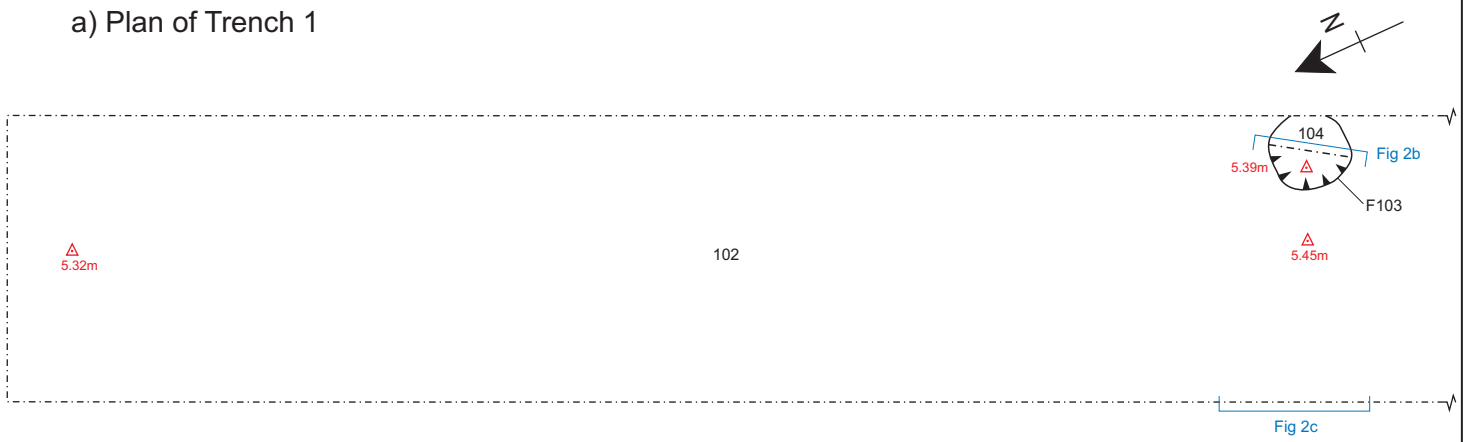
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Fig. 1: Site and trench locations

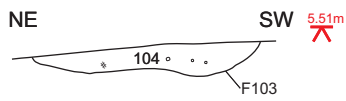


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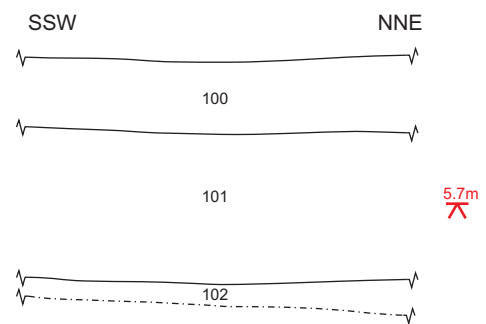
a) Plan of Trench 1



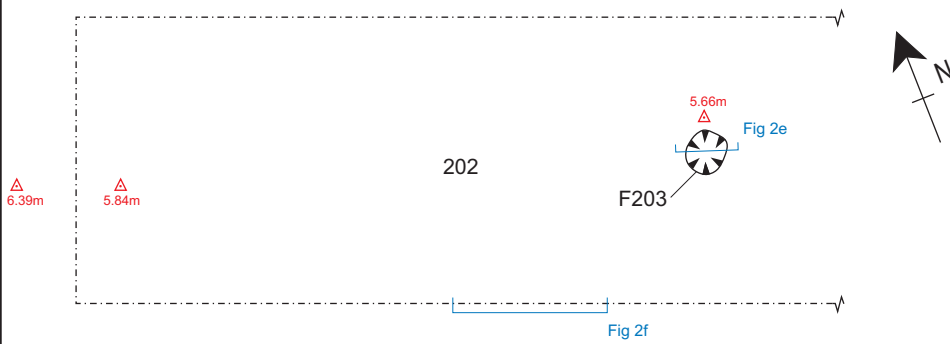
b) Section of Pit F103



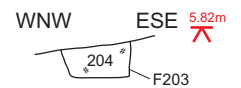
c) Representative section of Trench 1



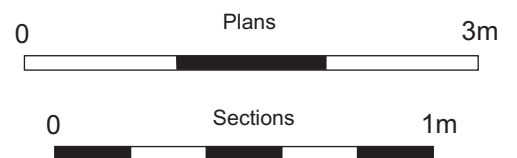
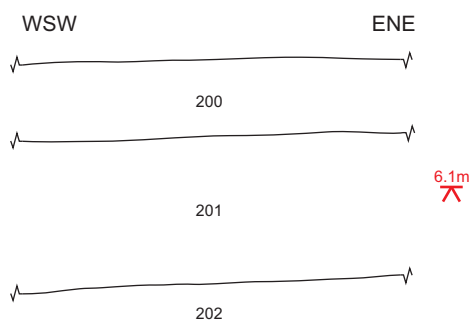
d) Plan of Trench 2



e) Section of Pit F203



f) Representative section of Trench 2



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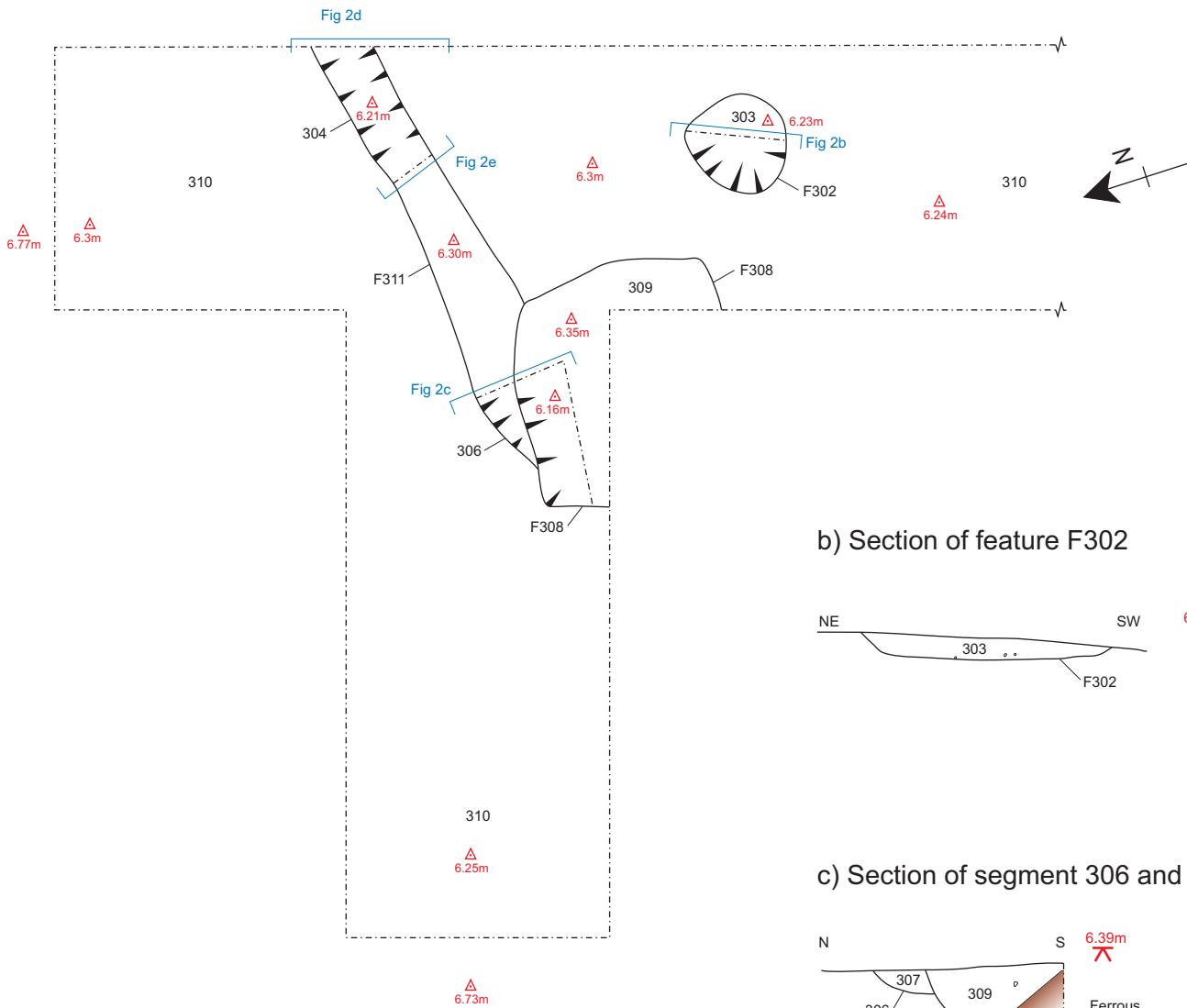
Broadstone Farm, Westonzoyland

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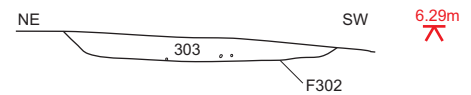
Figure 2. Plans and Sections, Trenches 1 and 2



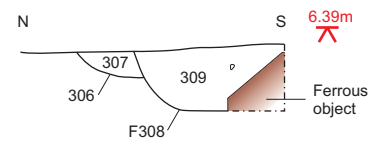
a) Plan of Trench 3



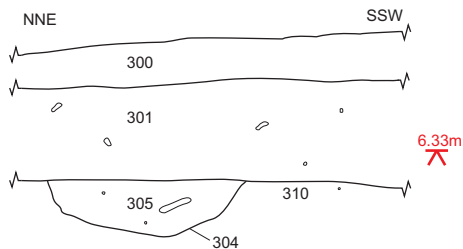
b) Section of feature F302



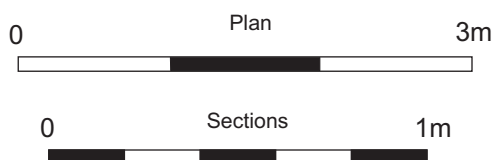
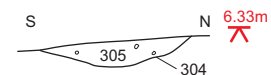
c) Section of segment 306 and F308



d) Section of segment 304, F311



e) Section of segment 304, F311



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Broadstone Farm, Westonzoyland

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Fig. 3: Plan and sections, Trench 3





Plate 1. General view of site from Trench 4, looking northeast



Plate 2. Trench 1, F103 northwest facing section, view to southeast (scale 0.3m)



Plate 3. Trench 3 general view, including linear feature F311 and pit F308. View to southeast



Plate 4. Trench 3, F311 segment 304, east facing section. View to west (scale 0.3m)

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