

LAND AT GRANGE FARM, CANNINGTON, SOMERSET

(Centred on NGR ST 2619 3905)

Results of an Archaeological Trench Evaluation

Somerset Historic Environment Record PRN Ref. 39279

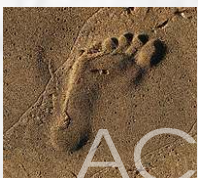
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With a contribution from:
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On behalf of:
Greenslade Taylor Hunt

Report No: ACD1917/2/0

Date: October 2018



archaeology

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Client	Greenslade Taylor Hunt
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The views and recommendations expressed in this report are those of AC archaeology and are presented in good faith on the basis of professional judgement and on information currently available.

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Summary

An archaeological trench evaluation on land at Grange Farm, Cannington, Somerset (NGR ST 2619 3905), was undertaken by AC archaeology during October 2018. The evaluation comprised the machine-excavation of 14 trenches totalling 420m in length and with each 1.8m wide. These were positioned to provide representative coverage in areas to be affected by development.

The evaluation revealed evidence for archaeological activity in only two of the trenches. Towards the southwest part of the site a ditch was recorded containing a small assemblage of Romano-British pottery dating to the 2nd century AD. The ditch is most likely to relate to agriculture rather than settlement due to its apparent isolated position and the paucity of finds recovered. Two further ditches were revealed in Trench 8, within the central part of the site, and these represent ditches of post-medieval date which formerly flanked a field boundary depicted on the Cannington tithe map of 1839. Within the southwest part of the site a modern made ground related to recent flood alleviation works was present.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** An archaeological trench evaluation on land at Grange Farm, Cannington, Somerset (NGR ST 2619 3905; Fig. 1), was undertaken by AC archaeology during October 2018. The evaluation was commissioned by Greenslade Taylor Hunt on behalf of clients and was required by Sedgemoor District Council as supporting information for a forthcoming planning application for development, as advised by the South West Heritage Trust Senior Historic Environment Officer.
- 1.2** The site is a single agricultural field located on the southeast side of Cannington covering an area of approximately three hectares (Plate 1). It is generally level and low-lying at around 10m aOD (above Ordnance Datum), with the underlying solid geology comprising Mercia mudstone of the Triassic period (British Geological Survey Online Viewer 2018).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The southern part of the site was subjected to archaeological trial trench evaluation as part of recent flood alleviation works (Reynish 2015). Five trenches were excavated within the field (as shown on Fig. 1), with generally negative results recorded. However, evidence for Romano-British settlement and land division was present in other trenches just to the northeast. Not far to the east of the site a sub-rectangular enclosure of late prehistoric or Romano-British form is recorded as a cropmark.

3. AIMS

- 3.1** The aim of the work 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.
- 3.2** More site specific aims were as follows:
 - To clarify the presence/absence, extent, condition, nature, character, date and significance of any archaeological remains encountered;
 - Identify any artefacts relating to the occupation or use of the site;
 - Undertake any palaeoenvironmental investigation as appropriate; and,
 - Provide further information on the archaeology of Somerset.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1** The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a project design prepared by AC archaeology (Valentin 2018) and with reference to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2014) and the *Somerset Archaeology Handbook* (South West Heritage Trust 2017). It comprised the machine-excavation of 14 trenches totalling 420m in length and with each 1.8m wide. These were positioned to provide representative coverage in areas to be affected by development.
- 4.2** All trenches were located with a Leica Net rover GPS with sub-10mm accuracy. The removal of overlying deposits within the trenches was undertaken in a maximum of 0.2m spits under the control and direction of a site archaeologist. Stripping by mechanical excavator ceased at the level at which archaeological deposits or natural geology was exposed. Spoilheaps were scanned for displaced artefacts.
- 4.3** All features and deposits revealed were 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* (revised August 2012). Detailed sections and plans were produced at a scale of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate. All site levels relate to Ordnance Datum.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

All of the trenches containing archaeological features are described in detail below, with context descriptions for all of the negative trenches presented in tabulated form in Appendix 1. Across the site, the recorded layer sequence comprised a ploughsoil of greyish-brown sandy silty loam, above a yellowish-brown sandy silt agricultural subsoil. The natural subsoil largely comprised mottled yellow and pale grey sandy silty clay. The natural subsoil was present at a depth of between 0.3m and 0.75m below the current ground surface.

5.2 Trench 8 (Plan Fig. 2a, section Fig. 2b; Plate 2)

This trench was located in the central part of the site and was aligned approximately northeast-southwest. The overlying layer sequence consisted of ploughsoil (context 800), overlying subsoil (801). The natural subsoil (802) was present at 0.4m below the ground surface. The trench contained two linear features (F803 and F805).

Ditch F803

This was aligned northwest-southeast and measured 1.7m wide by 0.5m deep, with a broad U-shaped profile consisting of moderately sloping sides leading onto a flat base. It had a single fill (804) composed of pale yellow to greyish-brown sandy silt interspersed with moderate poorly-sorted coarse gravel from which no finds were recovered.

Ditch F805

This was aligned northwest-southeast, running parallel with F803 and located 2m from it. It measured 1.2m wide, but was not excavated. The exposed fill was identical in colour and composition to that contained within ditch F803. No finds were recovered.

5.3 Trench 14 (Plan Fig. 2c, section Fig. 2d; Plate 3)

This trench was located in the southwest corner of the site and was aligned approximately north-south. The overlying layer sequence consisted of topsoil (context 1400), overlying subsoil (1401). Directly below the subsoil was the horizontally truncated remnant of a fossilised sub/ploughsoil

(1402) composed of mid to dark brown sandy silt. The natural subsoil (1403) was present at 0.74m below the ground surface. The trench contained one linear feature (F1405).

Ditch F1405

This was aligned northeast-southwest and measured 1.35m wide by 0.34m deep, with a broad shallow U-shaped profile, consisting of gentle to moderately sloping sides leading onto a flat base. It contained a single fill (1404) composed of mottled light brown clayey silt interspersed with occasionally poorly-sorted waterworn gravels. Nine sherds of local Romano-British Norton Fitzwarren pottery, from a single vessel of 2nd century date, were recovered from this fill.

6. THE FINDS *by Mark Corney*

6.1 Introduction

All finds recovered on site during the evaluation have been retained, cleaned and marked where appropriate. They have been quantified according to material type within each context and the assemblage examined to extract information regarding the range, nature and date of artefacts represented.

6.2 Romano-British pottery

A total of nine sherds (66g) of Romano-British pottery was recovered from context 1404, the fill of ditch F1405. The sherds, some conjoining, are from a single wheel-made vessel, a bowl with a flat out-turned rim.

Fabric

A moderately hard ware with dark grey external surface and grey-brown core. The matrix contains fine rounded to sub-angular quartz, fragments of shale and very fine mica. The fabric is broadly similar to Fabric 8 recorded at Norton Fitzwarren, approximately 15km south of Cannington (Timby 1989, 55).

Form

The vessel is a flat-rim bowl copied from the Black Burnished Ware industries; Dorset BB1 type 22 (Seager Smith and Davies 1993, 233-4) and South Western Black-burnished type 73 (Holbrook and Bidwell 1991, 133). The form is predominantly of 2nd century date first occurring in the early Hadrianic period and increasing in frequency into the mid to late 2nd century.

7. DISCUSSION

7.1 The results of the trench evaluation have largely been negative which supports the findings of the previous investigation in the southern part of the site (Reynish 2015). Linear features were found in two trenches and, although they relate to rural activities in relation to an agricultural landscape of ditches for field boundaries and drainage, they illustrate two phases of use of the site, and these findings, along with evidence for more recent groundworks, are discussed below in chronological order.

7.2 Romano-British

The earliest feature identified on the site is ditch F1405 in Trench 14. This ditch contained pottery from a single vessel, which means that it is unlikely that the sherds are residual in this context. The ditch was aligned northeast-southwest, but no continuation to the northeast was observed in Trench 11 and it is probable that the feature does not continue for any significant distance in that direction. The focus of Romano-British activity in the area occurs some 650m to the east of Trench 14 where geophysics followed by evaluation identified a cluster of ditches and pits/postholes although no formal structures were identified (Reynish 2015). Approximately

130m to the southwest of Trench 14 a small number of sherds of Romano-British pottery were uncovered from two features (Ibid.). More formal Romano-British settlement in the area has been uncovered in the form of a villa complex on the northwest side of Cannington, approximately 1.5km from Trench 14 (Hart 2016).

7.3 Post-medieval

Parallel ditches F803 and F805 in Trench 8 contained no finds but take the form of field boundary ditches and this is confirmed by historic mapping. The Cannington tithe map of 1839 shows that they follow the line of a boundary which provided a division of the current field at that time. This boundary had been removed by the time of the surveying of the first edition Ordnance Survey 25-inch map published in 1889.

7.4 Modern

Trenches 11 and 12 within the southwest part of the site revealed a modern made ground deposit, 1101 and 1102, below the ploughsoil (Plate 4). Although no finds were recovered, on-line satellite imagery shows that this was deposited in 2016 during the construction of flood alleviation works.

8. CONCLUSIONS

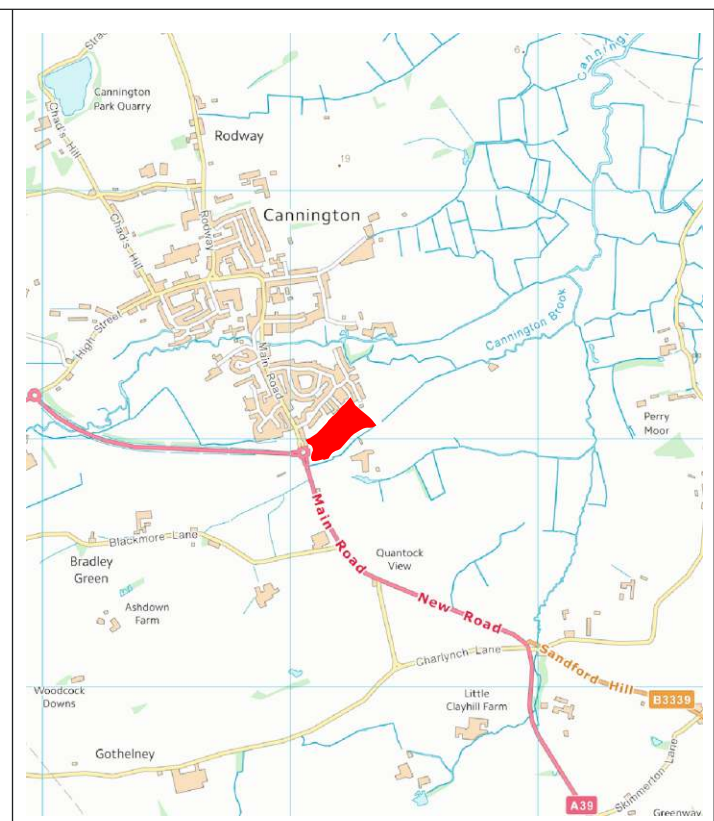
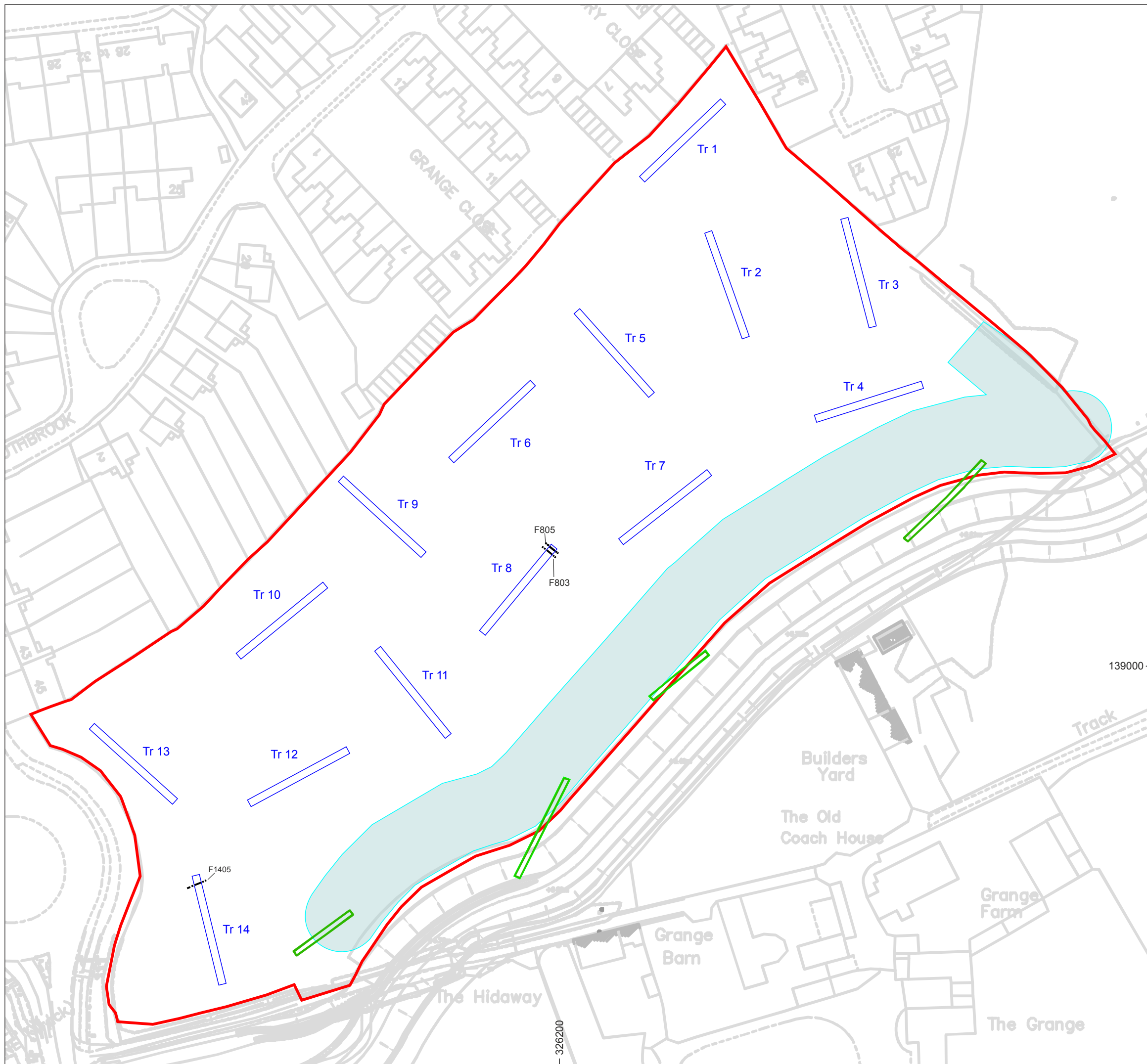
- 8.1** The archaeological works have uncovered evidence for previously unsuspected small-scale use of the site in the Romano-British period. This almost certainly represents a field boundary of this date. Also identified was the line of a further field boundary of post-medieval date. The generally negative results are in accord with previous trial trench evaluation on the site (Reynish 2015).

9. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

- 9.1** The finds, paper and digital archive is currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ under the unique project code of **ACD1917** and will be deposited under the accession number **TTNCM 79/2018** which has been issued from the Somerset Heritage Centre. It will be held until the need for any further archaeological work on the site is established.
- 9.2** An online OASIS entry has been completed, using the unique identifier **330509**, which includes a digital copy of this report.

10. SOURCES CONSULTED

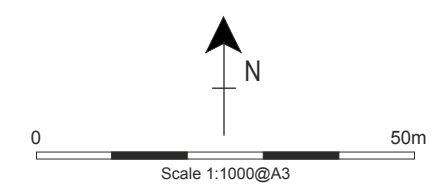
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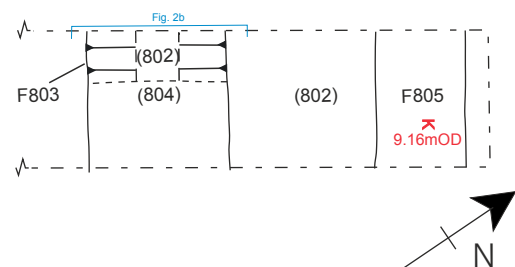
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Legend

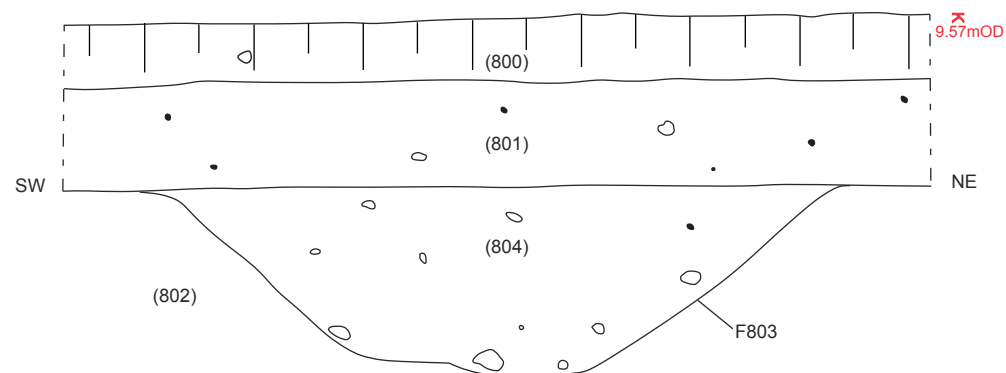
- Site boundary
- Evaluation trenches with archaeological features shown
- Previous evaluation trenches (Cotswold Archaeology 2015)
- Flood alleviation maintenance buffer



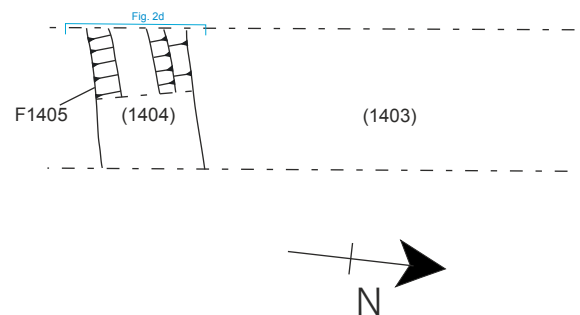
a) Plan of Trench 8



b) Southeast facing section of F803



c) Plan of Trench 14



d) East facing section of F1401

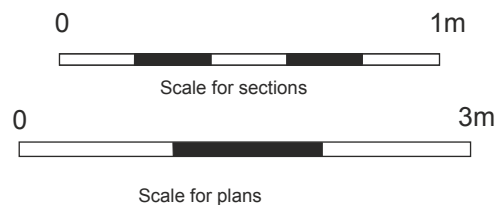
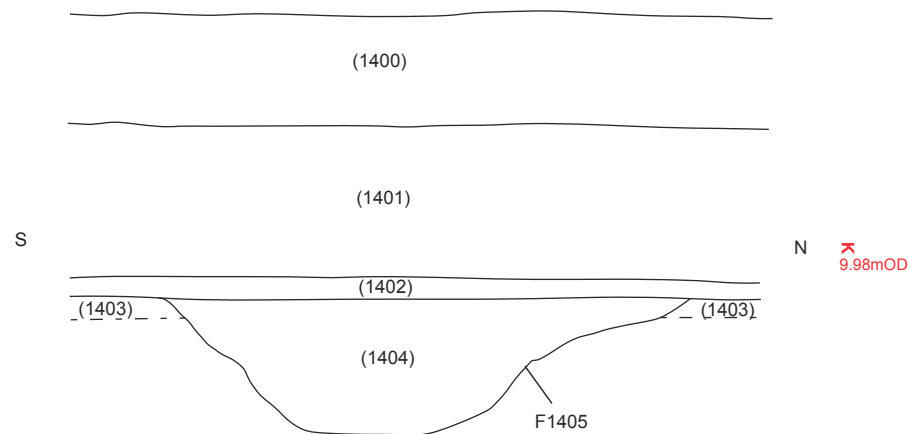




Plate 1: View of Trench 5
from the northwest.
(scales 2x1m)



Plate 3: Trench 4, northeast facing section of ditch F1405.
(scale 1m)



Plate 2: Trench 8, southeast facing section of ditch F803.
(scale 1m)



Plate 4: Northwest facing section at the southwest end of
Trench 12 showing made ground (1201). (scale 1m)

Appendix 1

Negative Trench Tabulated Context Descriptions

APPENDIX 1: NEGATIVE TRENCH TABULATED CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench 1		Length 30m	Width 1.8m	Alignment NE-SW
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
100	Greyish-brown sandy silty loam	0-0.15m	Ploughsoil	
101	Yellowish-brown sandy silt	0.15-0.30m	Agricultural subsoil	
102	Mottled yellow and pale grey sandy silty clay	0.30m +	Natural subsoil	

Trench 2		Length 30m	Width 1.8m	Alignment NNW-SSE
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
200	Greyish-brown sandy silty loam	0-0.15m	Ploughsoil	
201	Yellowish-brown sandy silt	0.15-0.45m	Agricultural subsoil	
202	Mottled yellow and pale grey sandy silty clay	0.45m +	Natural subsoil	

Trench 3		Length 30m	Width 1.8m	Alignment N-S
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
300	Greyish-brown sandy silty loam	0-0.20m	Ploughsoil	
301	Yellowish-brown sandy silt	0.20-0.30m	Agricultural subsoil	
302	Mottled yellow and pale grey sandy silty clay	0.30m +	Natural subsoil	

Trench 4		Length 30m	Width 1.8m	Alignment E-W
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
400	Greyish-brown sandy silty loam	0-0.30m	Ploughsoil	
401	Yellowish-brown sandy silt	0.30-0.50m	Agricultural subsoil	
402	Mottled yellow and pale grey sandy silty clay	0.50m +	Natural subsoil	

Trench 5		Length 30m	Width 1.8m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
500	Greyish-brown sandy silty loam	0-0.22m	Ploughsoil	
501	Yellowish-brown sandy silt	0.22-0.40m	Agricultural subsoil	
502	Mottled yellow and pale grey sandy silty clay	0.40m +	Natural subsoil	

Trench 6		Length 30m	Width 1.8m	Alignment NE-SW
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
600	Greyish-brown sandy silty loam	0-0.22m	Ploughsoil	
601	Yellowish-brown sandy silt	0.22-0.40m	Agricultural subsoil	
602	Mottled yellow and pale grey sandy silty clay	0.40m +	Natural subsoil	

Trench 7		Length 30m	Width 1.8m	Alignment NE-SW
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
700	Greyish-brown sandy silty loam	0-0.25m	Ploughsoil	
701	Yellowish-brown sandy silt	0.25-0.35m	Agricultural subsoil	
702	Mottled yellow and pale grey sandy silty clay	0.35m +	Natural subsoil	

APPENDIX 1: NEGATIVE TRENCH TABULATED CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench 9		Length 30m	Width 1.8m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
900	Greyish-brown sandy silty loam	0-0.28m	Ploughsoil	
901	Yellowish-brown sandy silt	0.28-0.40m	Agricultural subsoil	
902	Mottled yellow and pale grey sandy silty clay	0.40m +	Natural subsoil	

Trench 10		Length 30m	Width 1.8m	Alignment NE-SW
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
1000	Greyish-brown sandy silty loam	0-0.30m	Ploughsoil	
1002	Mottled yellow and pale grey sandy silty clay	0.30m +	Natural subsoil	

Trench 11		Length 30m	Width 1.8m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
1100	Greyish-brown sandy silty loam	0-0.15m	Ploughsoil	
1101	Reddish-brown clay containing frequent gravels	0.15-0.35m	Made ground	
1102	Mottled yellow and pale grey sandy silty clay	0.35m +	Natural subsoil	

Trench 12		Length 30m	Width 1.8m	Alignment NE-SW
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
1200	Greyish-brown sandy silty loam	0-0.32m	Ploughsoil	
1201	Reddish-brown clay containing frequent gravels	0.32-0.75m	Made ground	
1202	Mottled yellow and pale grey sandy silty clay	0.75m +	Natural subsoil	

Trench 13		Length 30m	Width 1.8m	Alignment NW-SE
Context	Description	Depth	Interpretation	
1300	Greyish-brown sandy silty loam	0-0.40m	Ploughsoil	
1301	Yellowish-brown sandy silt	0.40-0.75m	Agricultural subsoil	
1302	Mottled yellow and pale grey sandy silty clay	0.75m +	Natural subsoil	

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