Evaluation/Monitoring Report No. 123

AGHINDAIAGH
DERRYLIN
COUNTY FERMANAGH

LICENCE NO.: AE/07/59

Brian Sloan

Site Specific Information

Site Name: Aghindaiagh, Derrylin, Co. Fermanagh

Townland: Aghindaiagh

SMR No. : FERM 259:012

State Care Scheduled Other √ [delete as applicable]

Grid Ref.: IH 242 268

County: Fermanagh

Excavation Licence No. : AE/07/59

Planning Ref / No. : L/2006/1076

Dates of Monitoring: 8th March 2007

Archaeologist(s) Present: Brian Sloan

Brief Summary:

An archaeological evaluation was carried out at a site in the townland of Aghindaigh, Derrylin, Co. Fermanagh as part of the planning application for a new dwelling. The site of an enclosure is recorded within the NISMR located to the south-east of the application site. There are no upstanding remains visible of this archaeological site which is recorded as 'Fort (site of)' on the 1860 OS 6 inch map. The trenches contained some evidence of agricultural activity (such as modern plough furrows and field drains) as well as an isolated spread of burning, but nothing of archaeological significance. It is recommended that no further archaeological fieldwork is carried out.

Type of monitoring:

Excavation of four test trenches by mechanical excavator equipped with a 'sheugh' bucket under archaeological supervision.

Size of area opened:

Four trenches measuring 20m in length and 2m in width.

Current Land Use: Agricultural Pastoral

Intended Land Use: Residential

Brief account of the monitoring

Introduction

The application site is located in the townland of Aghindaiagh, Derrylin, Co. Fermanagh. The site is just outside the village of Derrylin, lying approximately 4km due west of its centre and at a height of approximately 230m above sea level. The application site is located on the south-eastern slope of Molly Mountain and about 250m north-east of the Owengarr River (Figure One). The application site is situated in a roughly triangular field, the boundaries of which are delineated by a wire and post fence interspersed with mature trees and gorse bushes on the south-eastern and northern edges. The field slopes gently upwards towards the north-east.

The evaluation took place as part of the planning application for the construction of a new dwelling, and was requested by Edith Gowdy: Caseworker with Environment and Heritage Service: Built Heritage. It was requested due to the proximity of the application site to the supposed fort (FERM 259:012) (Figure Two) and the possibility that there may be previously unrecorded remains associated with this site.

Excavation

The evaluation consisted of the archaeological supervision of four mechanically-excavated test trenches. The trenches were each approximately 20m in length by 2m in width and their positions are illustrated in Figure Three. All four test trenches were excavated to the subsoil which consisted of an orangey yellow boulder clay.

Trench One

Trench One was located parallel to the south-western most boundary of the application site (Figure Three). Trench One measured 20m by 2m and was aligned approximately north-west/south-east. Trench One was excavated to the surface of the subsoil (Plate 1).

The sod and topsoil layer in Trench One (Context No. 101) consisted of light to mid brown, silty loam. The layer contained occasional sub-rounded stone inclusions (average size: 20 x 20 x 10mm). The layer was around 0.2m thick. Below the sod and topsoil layer (Context No. 101) was a compact, mid to dark brown, sandy loam cultivation soil (Context No. 102) which was 0.1m thick. The cultivation soil contained frequent sub-rounded stone inclusions (average size: 40 x 30 x 20mm).

Following the removal of the cultivation soil (Context No. 102), a linear feature (Context No. 103) was observed cutting the subsoil, roughly aligned east/west (Plate 2). The fill of this feature (Context No. 103) consisted of loose small angular stones and gravel and is interpreted as a field drain. There were no finds recovered from this trench.

The cultivation soil in Trench One (Context No. 102) directly overlay the natural subsoil (Context No. 104) (Plate 4). The subsoil in Trench One (Context No. 103) was an orangey yellow clay with occasional inclusions of small rounded and sub-angular stones (average size 50mm x 30mm x 10mm) as well as larger

angular stones (average size 100mm x 80mm x 50mm), and was encountered at an average depth of 0.3m.

Trench Two

Trench Two was positioned approximately 20m to the south-east of the south-eastern end of Trench One and was aligned south-west/north-east (Figure Three). The trench was 20m long and 2m wide, and was excavated to the surface of the subsoil (Plate 4).

The sod and topsoil layer in Trench Two (Context No. 201) consisted of light to mid brown, silty loam. The layer contained occasional sub-rounded stone inclusions (average size: 20 x 20 x 10mm). The sod and topsoil layer (Context No. 201) overlay a compact mid to dark brown silty loam cultivation soil (Context No. 203). This deposit contained frequent inclusions of small rounded and sub-angular stones (average size: 40mm x 40mm x 30mm) and was approximately 0.1m. No finds were recovered from this deposit.

Following the removal of the cultivation soil (Context No. 203), two features were observed. At the south-western end of the trench was a discreet, isolated spread of burning (Context No. 202). This feature measured 0.6m east/west by 0.35m north/south and when half sectioned was found to be 0.03m deep. The feature was sampled (Sample 1) although it is not interpreted as being of antiquity due to the presence of small brick fragments associated with the burning. A linear feature (Context No. 204) was observed cutting the subsoil at the north-eastern end of the trench, roughly aligned east/west (Plates 7 and 8). The fill of this feature (Context No. 204) consisted of a loose, mid to dark brown silty loam. A small cutting was excavated across this feature to assess its archaeological potential. This cutting demonstrated that the cut of the feature (Context No. 205) was shallow (approximately 0.2m deep) and had gently sloping sides. The feature is interpreted as being the result of an agricultural activity, possibly ploughing or spade cultivation.

The cultivation soil in Trench Two (Context No. 203) stratigraphically overlay the natural subsoil (Context No. 206) (Plate 9). The subsoil in Trench Two (Context No. 206) was an orangey yellow clay with occasional inclusions of small rounded and sub-angular stones (average size 50mm x 30mm x 10mm) as well as larger angular stones (average size 100mm x 80mm x 50mm), and was encountered at an average depth of 0.35m.

Trench Three

Trench Three was positioned approximately 10m to the south-east of, and parallel to, Trench Two and measured 20m in length by 2m in width (Figure Three). The trench was excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil (Plate 10).

The sod and topsoil layer in Trench Three (Context No. 301) consisted of light to mid brown, silty loam. The layer contained occasional sub-rounded stone inclusions (average size: 20 x 20 x 10mm). The layer was approximately 0.15m thick. Below the sod and topsoil layer (Context No. 301) was a compact, mid to dark brown, sandy loam cultivation soil (Context No. 302) which was 0.2m thick. The cultivation soil contained frequent sub-rounded stone inclusions (average size: 40 x 30 x 20mm).

The cultivation soil in Trench Three (Context No. 302) directly overlay the natural subsoil (Context No. 303) (Plate 11). The subsoil in Trench Three (Context No. 303) was an orangey yellow clay with occasional inclusions of small rounded and sub-angular stones (average size 50mm x 30mm x 10mm) as well as larger angular stones (average size 100mm x 80mm x 50mm), and was encountered at an average depth of 0.35m.

Trench Four

Trench Four was positioned approximately 10m to the south-east of, and parallel to, Trench Three and measured 20m in length by 2m in width (Figure Three). The trench was excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil (Plate 12).

The sod and topsoil layer in Trench Four (Context No. 401) consisted of light to mid brown, silty loam. The layer contained occasional inclusions of sub-rounded stones (average size: 20 x 20 x 10mm). The layer was approximately 0.1m thick. Below the sod and topsoil layer (Context No. 401) was a compact, mid to dark brown, sandy loam cultivation soil (Context No. 402) which was 0.08m thick. The cultivation soil contained frequent sub-rounded stone inclusions (average size: 40 x 30 x 20mm).

The cultivation soil in Trench Four (Context No. 402) directly overlay the natural subsoil (Context No. 403) (Plate 13). The subsoil in Trench Four (Context No. 403) was an orangey yellow clay with occasional inclusions of small rounded and sub-angular stones (average size 50mm x 30mm x 10mm) as well as larger angular stones (average size 100mm x 80mm x 50mm), and was encountered at an average depth of 0.2m.

The four test trenches excavated at the application site contained nothing of archaeological significance. It is not thought that the development will impact upon previously unrecorded archaeological remains. It is therefore recommended that no further archaeological fieldwork is carried out. No publication is required save for a short summary in the annual *'Excavations'* bulletin.

Archive:

Finds: N/A.

Photographs: The digital images (37 in total) taken during the evaluation are archived within the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queen's University Belfast.

Samples: One sample was gathered during the evaluation from Context No. 202. This sample has been retained by the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queen's University Belfast.

Plans / Drawings: *N/A*

Signed:_____ Date:_____

Figure One: 1:50,000 Ordnance Survey Map showing location of site (red dot)

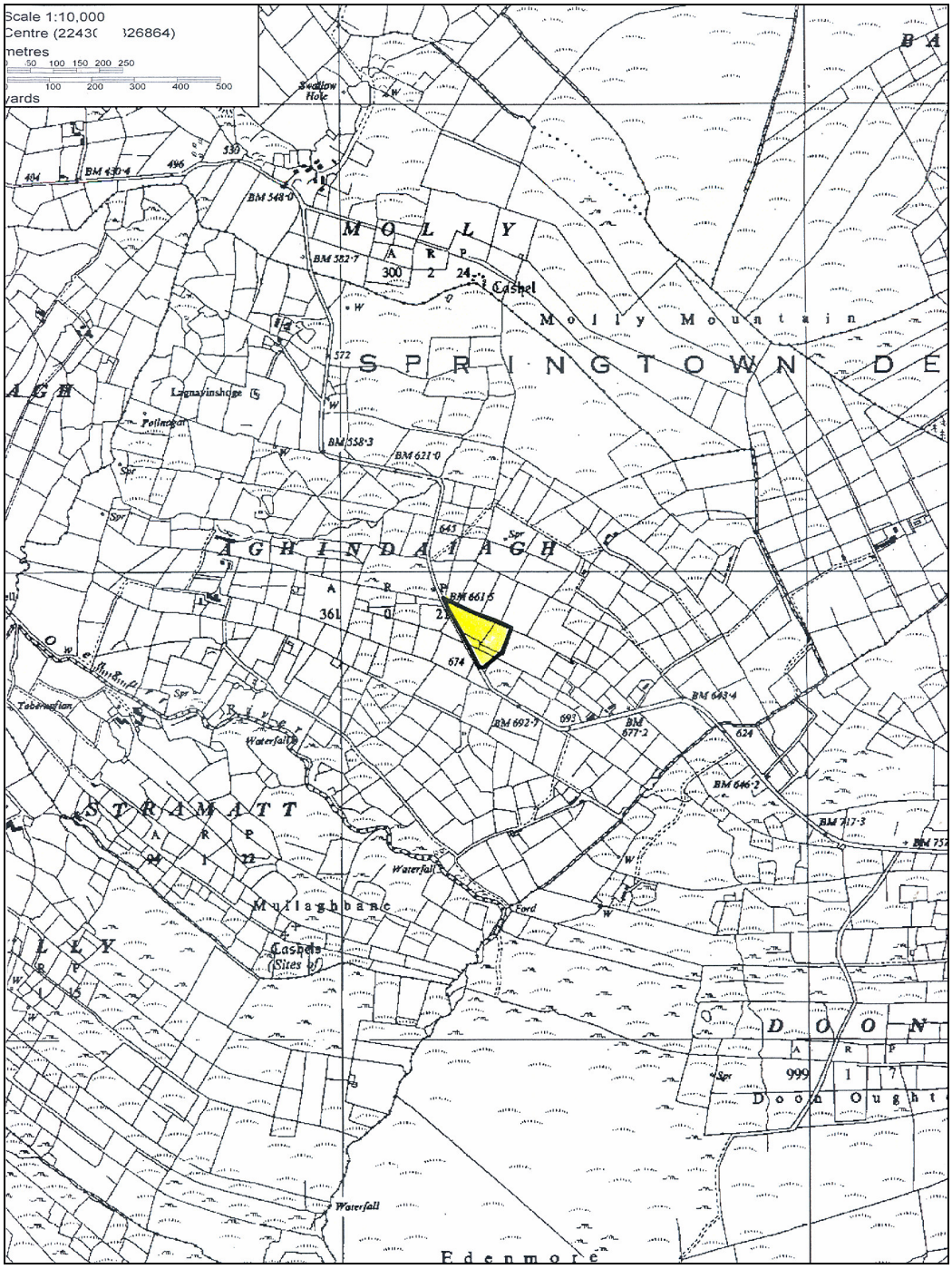

Figure Two: Detailed map of application site (in yellow).

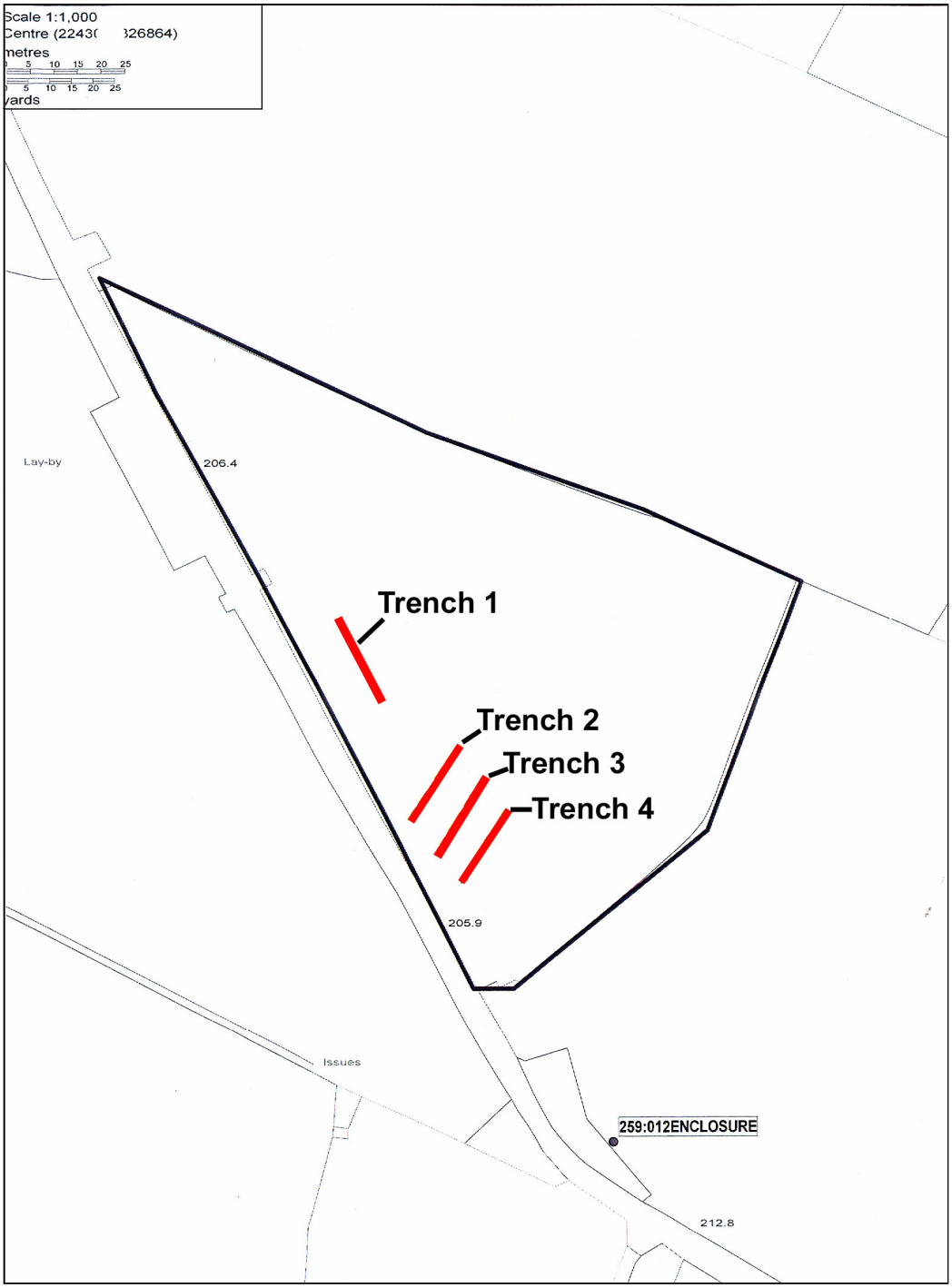

Figure Three: Plan showing location of Trenches.

Plate 1: Trench One following excavation to subsoil (Context No. 104), looking south-east. NB surface water lying on the subsoil.

Plate 2: Field Drain (Context No. 103) in Trench One, looking north-east.

Plate 3: North-east facing section of Trench One

Plate 4: Trench Two following excavation to subsoil (Context No. 206), looking north-west. NB plough furrow (Context No. 204) in the foreground.

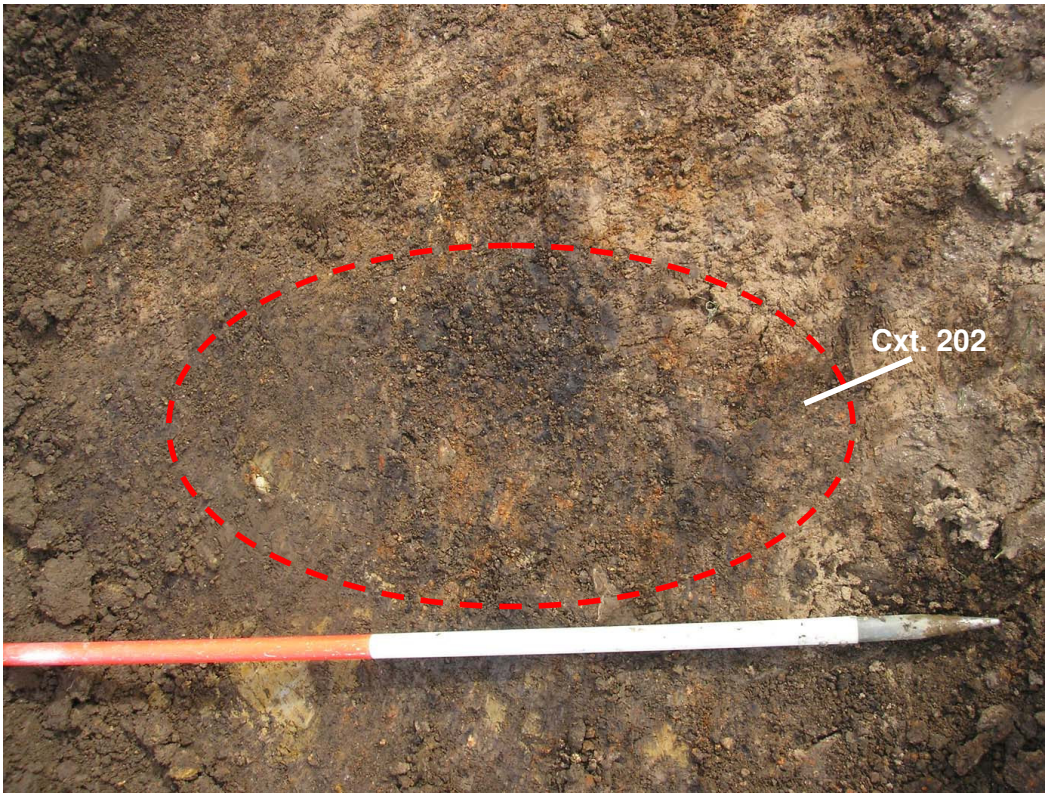

Plate 5: Burnt spread (Context No. 202), looking north.

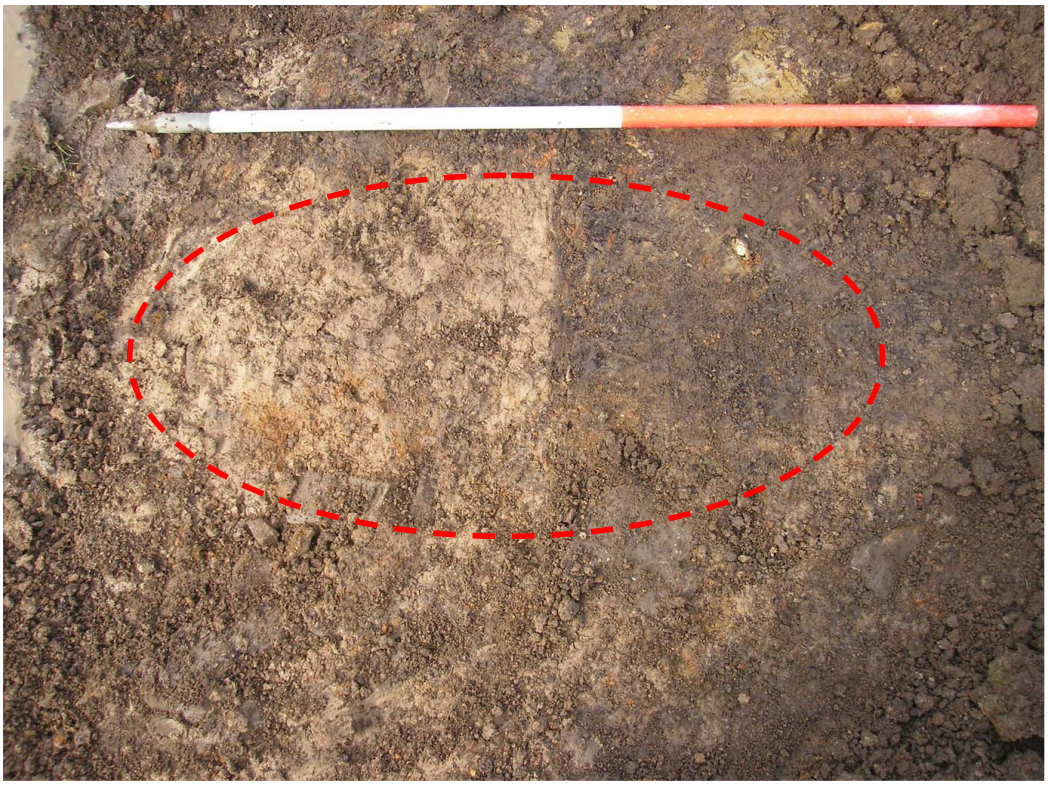

Plate 6: Burnt spread (Context No. 202) following excavation of half of the feature, looking south.

Plate 7: Plough furrow (Context No. 204) in Trench Two, looking south-east.

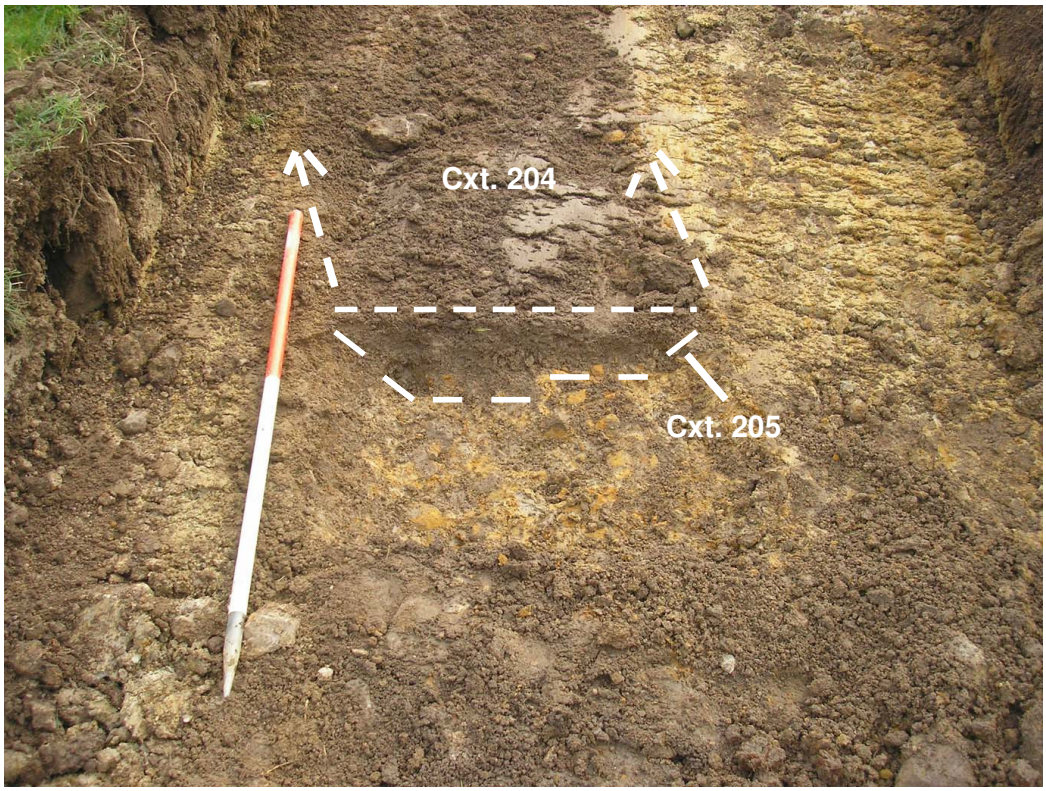

Plate 8: Small cutting across plough furrow (Context No. 204) showing the cut (Context No. 205), looking south-east.

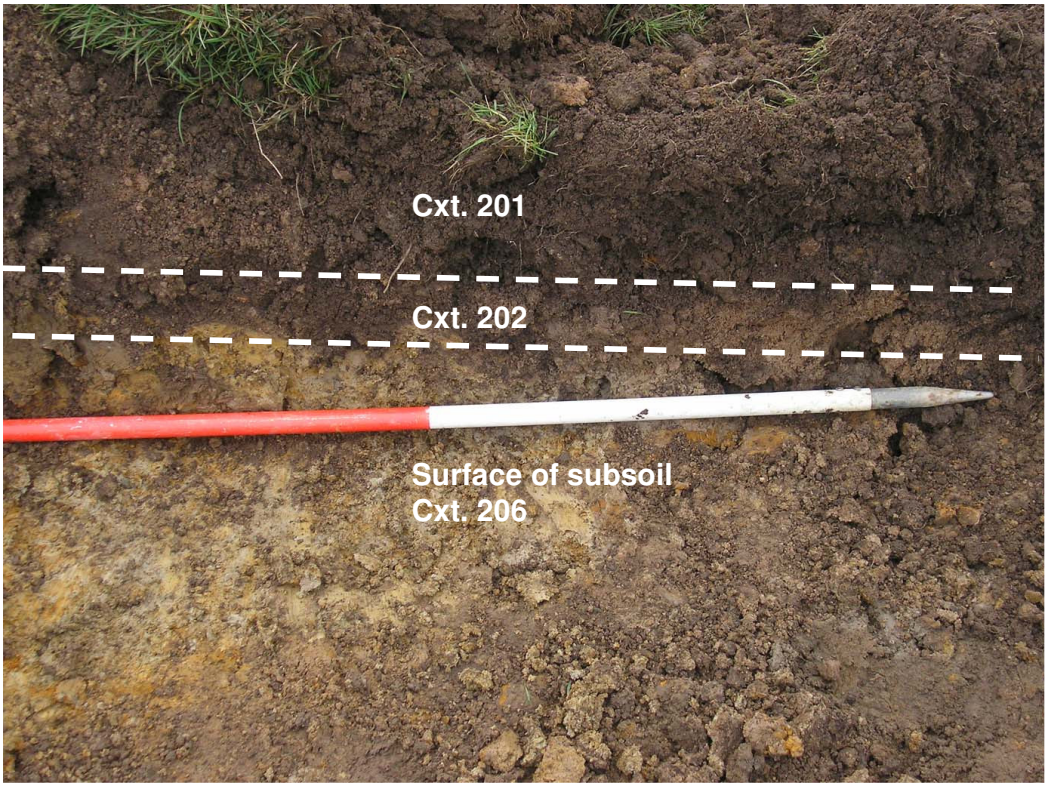

Plate 9: North-west facing section of Trench Two.

Plate 10: Trench Three following excavation to subsoil (Context No.303), looking north-west. NB surface water lying on the subsoil.

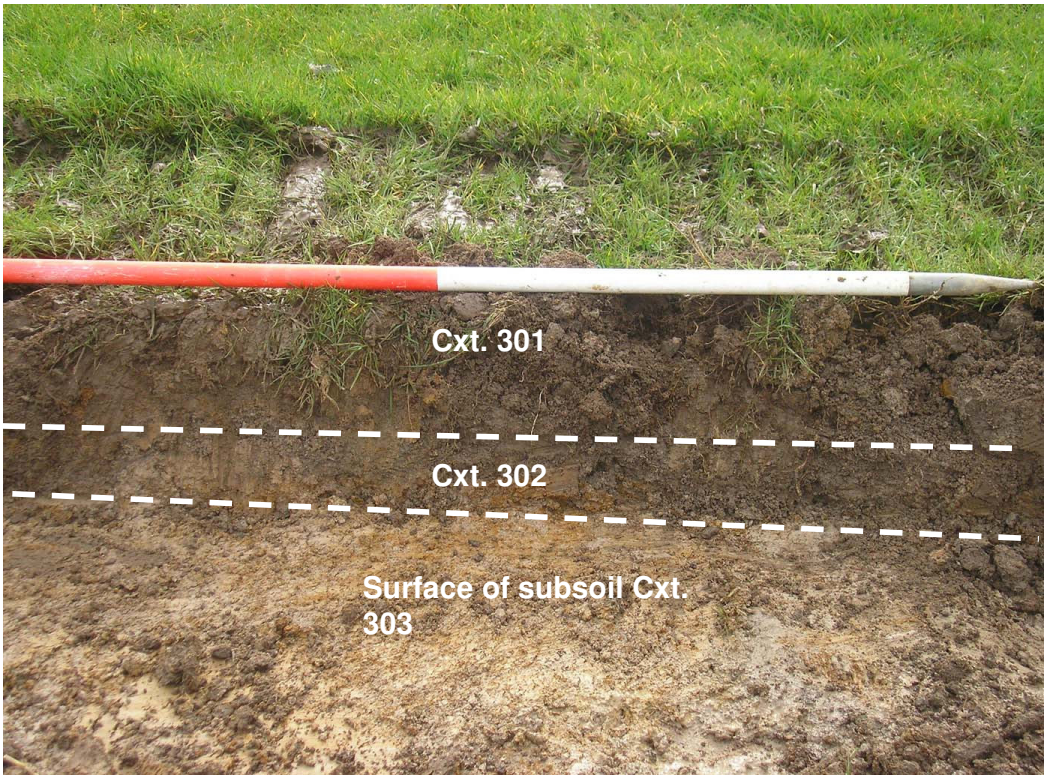

Plate 11: North-west facing section of Trench Three.

Plate 12: Trench 4 following excavation to the subsoil (Context No. 403), looking north-west. NB surface water lying on the subsoil.

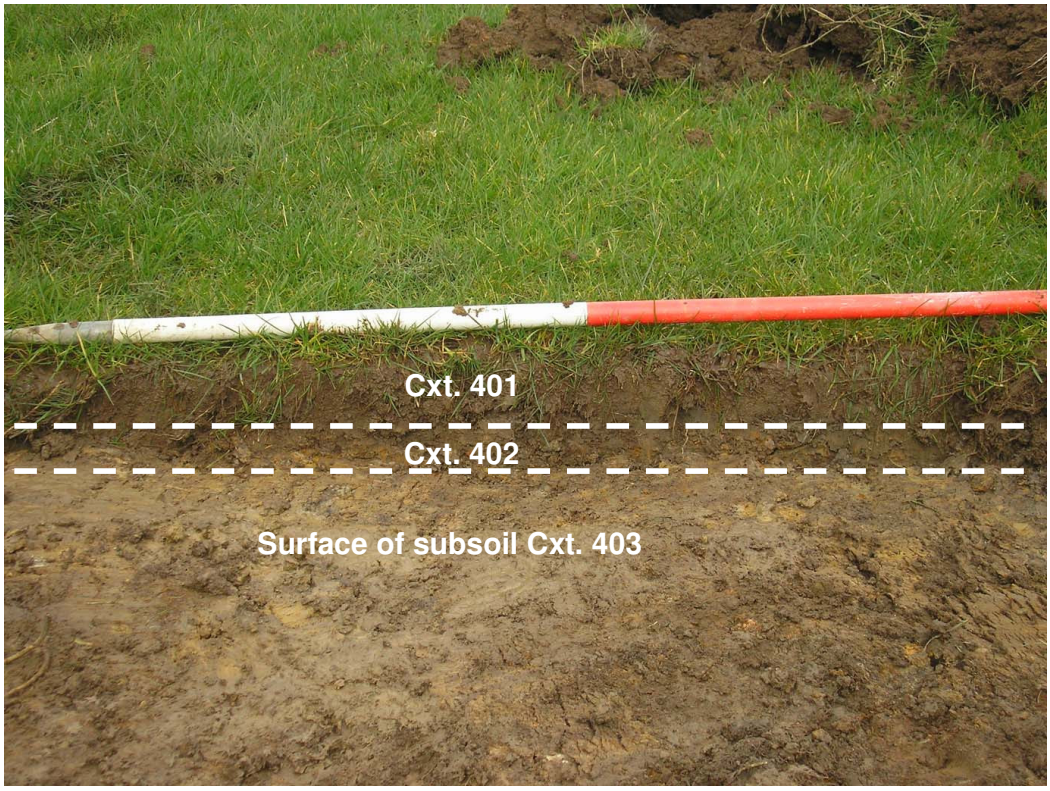

Plate 13: North-west facing section of Trench Four

Plate 14: General overview of the site looking west.