Client: Highland Council
Date: November 2010

Archaeological Evaluation at Conon Bridge School, Leanig Road, Conon Bridge, Highland.

Director: Stuart Farrell
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Planning Ref. 10/03797/FUL
Grid Ref: 254675 855443
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Non-Technical Summary

Stuart Farrell was commissioned by Highland Council Housing and Property Service in November 2010 to undertake an archaeological evaluation at Conon Bridge School, Leanig Road, Conon Bridge (254675 855443) as part of a project for a new school with associated access and services. Highland Council Archaeology Unit produced a specification for this work.

Work in November 2010 revealed a number of archaeological features of interest of some pits in a small area close together of an unknown date, remains of a dam and mill pond of circa 1870, a single post-hole of unknown date, remains of rig and furrow, and a number agricultural drains, some of which were modern.

It is recommended that further archaeological work be undertaken in the form of an open area excavation for one area of the proposed development. This work should be undertaken prior to the development being started.
**Figure 1 – Site Location. 1:25000**
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Figure 2 – Site Plan 1:1250 (A3)
© Highland Council
Figure 3 – Location Of Trenches.
© J. Hepburn-Wright Chartered Surveyor.
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Sections 1:10
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1. INTRODUCTION

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by the author on behalf of Highland Council Housing & Property Service in regard to a condition of planning as required as part of a planning application. The proposed development site forms an area of ground to the east of the existing Conon Bridge Primary School, Leanig Road, Conon Bridge with an existing access to the south on a slight N-facing slope. The development site is a ‘green field’ site.

The work was required as part of a planning condition by Highland Council Planning Department (ref. 10/03797/FUL), which stated the following:

Prior to the commencement of development, a programme of archaeological work for the preservation and recording of any archaeological features affected by the proposed development, including a timetable for investigation, all in accordance with the attached specification, shall be submitted to and require the approval in writing of the Planning Authority. All arrangements thereby approved shall be implemented by the developer at his expense in accordance with the approved timetable for investigation.

Reason: In order to preserve the archaeological and historical interest of the site.

A specification for the work was supplied to the client by the Highland Council Archaeology Unit (see Appendix 1).

2. BACKGROUND

The proposed development site forms an area of ground to the east of the existing Conon Bridge Primary School, Leanig Road, Conon Bridge with an existing access to the south on a slight N-facing slope. The development site is a ‘green field’ site. Bounded by a stone wall to the South, by a post and wire fence to the East and North, to the West is the existing school and playground. Existing water services lie to the area to the E of the area of the evaluation, in the form of the main supply for the Black Isle. No upstanding archaeological features are to be found on the site.

Currently no recorded archaeology is recorded in Highland Council Historic Environmental Record or CANMORE/PASTMAP to the development area. Immediately to the SE work conducted by Headland Archaeology Ltd in 2010 revealed a burnt mound (pers comm. E Bailey).

Within the development site is indicated on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1881 (see figure 4) a sluice and possible lade and an open field adjacent to a farm named Teanahaun, which is comprised of an L-shaped and rectangular building, with a farmhouse and a garden, with a well. By the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map of 1906 the two farm buildings are now one with the pond marked as Mill Dam and Sluice and is larger in size than previous edition. Mill dam again shown on OS maps of 1938 and 1959. By the OS edition of 1970 only part of the Mill Dam is shown but not named. By 1974 only a smaller part is show. Not shown on edition of 1983, neither is farm, same on edition of 1992. The farm is not shown on earlier map of Thomson’s map of 1832.

The farm of Teanahaun is recorded in the Ordnance Survey Name Book (Book 31, page 31) as follows: ‘This name applies to a small farm house, one story high with
offices attached, the former being thatched and the latter slated, and both are in good repair. Sir Kenneth Mackenzie proprietor.'

The farm of Teanahaun is listed in the Ross & Cromarty County Valuation Rolls, parish of Urquhart as being in existence in 1877, but is not listed 1868-9, with no mention of it being a mill or having a mill component. Nothing recorded in the period up to 1900.

3. METHODOLOGY

The archaeological evaluation took place on the site on the 18th and 19th of November 2010. Weather during the first day work was overcast with sunny intervals, work on the 19th was bright and sunny. The trenches were excavated using a JCB with a 1.5m wide straight-edged bucket under direct archaeological supervision, but due to wet ground and reinstatement requirements of Highland Council, on the 19th this was replaced by a 10-ton back-acting machine with a 1.8m wide straight edged bucket (trenches 1-8 were excavated by JCB, with trenches 9-16 by second machine). Trenching was conducted on areas where any new sub-surface ground works were to be carried out, these being the school. Topsoil was removed to a depth of between 0.25m and 0.35m in depth.

4. RESULTS

A total of 16 trenches or 716.13 m² were excavated of the proposed development area (area of new school) with depth of topsoil and subsoil ranging from between 0.25m – 0.35m. The topsoil and subsoil consisted of loose dark black-brown soil with frequent small angular and rounded stones. It lay on top of a loose, soft mid orange-brown sandy silt natural to the centre, west and east of the site with patches of gravels and yellow sand. The natural to the north and especially to the south-east was comprised of a yellow-brown sandy marl and contained occasional areas of fine yellow sand and patches of blue clay. The centre of the site is of a small natural ridge with the ground sloping away to all sides.

Results of trenches (see figure 3) were as follows:

1 – 49.2m in length by 1.5 m wide (or 73.8 m²) excavated NW-SE. Work revealed topsoil of 0.35m in depth. Work revealed 3 archaeological features of large oval pit [103] and 2 smaller oval-shaped pits [105 and 107] of an unknown date (see plates 3-5). 1 field-drain of tile also found, plough scars to SE, at very edge of trench to SE were ploughed-out rig & furrow.

[Gap between trenches 1 & 2 due to existing sewer]

2 – 28m in length by 1.5 m wide (or 42 m²) excavated NW-SE. Topsoil to depth of 0.3m. Work revealed remains of rig & furrow throughout trench (see plate 6) 0.6m wide and 0.4m apart. No other features or deposits.

3 – 37.4m in length by 1.5 m wide (or 56.1 m²) excavated NE-SW. Topsoil to depth of 0.3m. Work revealed no archaeological features or deposits.
4 – 22.4m in length by 1.5 m wide (or 33.6 m²) excavated NNW-SSE. Topsoil to depth of 0.3m. Work revealed no archaeological features or deposits.

5 – 18.2m in length by 1.5 m wide (or 27.3 m²) excavated NNE-SSW. Topsoil to depth of 0.25m. Work revealed no archaeological features or deposits.

6 – 19.3m in length by 1.5 m wide (or 28.95 m²) excavated NW-SE. Topsoil of 0.35m onto yellow marl and clay, ground very wet. Excavation had to be shortened due to JCB sinking. Work revealed no archaeological features or deposits.

7 – 24.7m in length by 1.5 m wide (or 37.05 m²) excavated NW-SE. Remains of rig & furrow to NW, to the SE area wet. Work revealed no archaeological features or deposits.

8 – 19.3m in length by 1.5 m wide (or 28.95 m²) excavated NW-SE. Topsoil 0.3m in depth. Work revealed a single archaeological feature of an oval pit [802] and a field boundary/ditch [804] at SE end of trench aligned NE-SW (see plates 7 and 8).

(Trenches were now excavated by 10-ton machine.)

9 – Of two trenches 4.8m and 2.8m in length by 1.8 m wide (or 9.84 m²) excavated NW-SE. These trenches were made in area of dam as marked on the 1st edition OS (see figure 4), the dam is visible onsite as a u-shaped grass bank 0.3m high and 0.25m wide and 2.4m in length. The first trench was made into the area of the mill pond, which revealed it to be infilled with sandstone rubble and modern metal debris to a depth of 1m (see plate 10), with no indication of any deposits to its base. Find of single worked stone block in fill. The 2nd trench was cut through the dam face, which revealed the dam wall to be constructed of only natural ground (see plate 11).

10 – 52.2m in length by 1.8 m wide (or 93.96 m²) excavated NE-SW. Topsoil 0.3-0.35m in depth. Work revealed no archaeological features or deposits, though the first 7m of the trench revealed more rubble infill from the former mill pond.

11 – 46.4m in length by 1.8 m wide (or 83.52 m²) excavated E-W. Topsoil 0.3m in depth. Work revealed remains of rig & furrow to E end of trench.

12 – 26.5m in length by 1.8 m wide (or 47.7 m²) excavated N-S. Topsoil 0.3m in depth. Work revealed single tile field drain running E-W, adjacent to this was found a large post-hole [1202] of unknown date.

13 – 41.2m in length by 1.8 m wide (or 74.16 m²) excavated ENE-WSW. Topsoil 0.25m in depth onto yellow sand and wet silts. One possible feature was revealed to be a tree-bole. Find of 3 field drains, 2 of which modern, the other of rounded stones. Work revealed no archaeological features or deposits.

14 – 28.2m in length by 1.8 m wide (or 50.76 m²) excavated NNE-SSW. Topsoil 0.3m in depth onto yellow sand. Find of 1 modern field drain. Work revealed no archaeological features or deposits.

15 – 7.3m in length by 1.8 m wide (or 13.14 m²) excavated N-S. Topsoil 0.28m in depth. Placed to see if there was in any continuance of the feature in Trench 12. Work revealed no archaeological features or deposits.
16 – 8.5m in length by 1.8 m wide (or 15.3 m²) excavated NNE-SSW. Topsoil 0.25m in depth onto yellow sand and clay, area very wet. Work revealed no archaeological features or deposits.

5. DISCUSSION

The archaeological evaluation conducted on this site revealed a number archaeological features of interest of a group of pits of an unknown date within trenches 1 and 8 with a field boundary or ditch that may be associated with the rig & furrow remains to the area of the west side of the site. The single post-hole in trench 12 may relate to the cultivation remains. Overall the rest of the site seems very wet especially to the south and south-east; hence the variety of field drains especially to the N. The mill dam seems to date from the construction of the farm which is about 1870 with no indication of it seeing any earlier use and was infilled probably in the early 1970’s before the current school was built.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that further archaeological work in the form of an open area excavation for this site be undertaken to an area of ground 30m by 30m (area is limited by existing sewer and boundary wall) to fully determine the pits and their relationship to the cultivation remains. Though there is archaeology in the vicinity of the development site to the South (burnt mound); only the one small area of excavation is recommended to be undertaken.

This recommendation is subject to approval by the Highland Council Archaeologist.

7. REFERENCES

County Valuation Rolls Ross & Cromarty 1868-1900.
Highland Council Historic Environment Record.
National Monuments Record of Scotland PASTMAP/CANMORE databases.
Maps Consulted

Ordnance Survey sheet NH55NW 1:10,000 of 1974.

Ordnance Survey sheet NH55NW 1:10,000 of 1983.


8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following for their help during the work:
- Mrs D Buchanan, Principal Architect, Highland Council Housing & Property Service;
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- Mr Philip Shannon, Highland Council Housing & Property Service;
- Staff and Pupils of Conon Bridge School;
- Davie of D I Bain Ltd Contractor for onsite works;
- Mr. E Rutter for help onsite;
- Staff of Highland Council Archaeology Unit;
- Staff of Highland Council Archives.

9. ARCHIVE

The following is to be deposited in the National Monuments Record in Edinburgh:
- Notebook of results
- Copy of this report

A set of digital images showing the progress of the work has been deposited with Highland Council Sites and Monuments Record. Digital images used in this report have been deposited with HSMR on disc as well as a copy of this report as a PDF file.

10. DISCOVERY & EXCAVATION IN SCOTLAND

A short summary of the results of this project will be submitted to the Council for Scottish Archaeology’s publication Discovery & Excavation in Scotland. OASIS record no.87909.

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Plate 1 – View of site before excavation facing N (flags line of sewer).

Plate 2 – View of site before excavation facing S.
Plate 3 – View of pit 1 in trench 1 facing SE – scales 0.5m & 1m.

Plate 4 – View of pit 2 trench 1 facing SE - scales 0.5m & 1m.
Plate 5 – View of section of pit 3 trench 1 facing SE - scale 0.5m.

Plate 6 – View of rig & furrow in trench 2 – scale 1m.
Plate 7 – View of ditch/field boundary in Trench 8 facing SE – scales 1m.

Plate 8 – View of section of pit 1 trench 8 facing NE – scale 0.5m.
Plate 9 – View of site of mill dam facing SE – scales 2m.

Plate 10 – View of infill rubble facing W – scales 2m.
Plate 11 – View of section through dam facing W – scale 1m.

Plate 12 – View of section of pit 1 trench 12 facing E – scale 0.5m.
Appendix 1 – HCAU Specification

HIGHLAND COUNCIL ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT, PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICE
SPECIFICATION FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Erection of new school building and multi use games area at Conon Primary
School, Leanig Road, Conon Bridge
NGR 254675 865443 (10/03797/FUL)

1) Summary
This project may impact on valuable features of historic and archaeological
importance. In view of the archaeological sensitivity and potential of the site,
HCAU advised that an archaeological evaluation be undertaken in advance of
development. The implementation of this brief will meet the concerns raised.

This brief is for an evaluation to determine the archaeological baseline of the
application site. If significant deposits are encountered, recommendations for
further measures necessary to mitigate the impact of the development should be
made.

This brief has been produced for the applicant who will be responsible for the work
and all costs incurred, including any tendering and contractual arrangements. This
brief must be read with reference to the HCAU Development Guidance that sets
out in detail who is responsible for what, as well as the terms of reference,
objectives, method, monitoring and reporting arrangements.

The Development Guidance is available on our webpage at www.highland.gov.uk/
archaeology or a printed copy is available from this office on request.

2) Archaeological Background
The application lies in a wider area where archaeological remains are
recorded and there is moderate to high potential for the survival of buried
archaeological remains. As such, there is a requirement to evaluate the entire
application area in advance of development.

3) Objectives
- To identify the location, nature and extent of any features or objects of
  archaeological importance that would be damaged or destroyed by this
development.
- To propose arrangements for the safeguarding where possible, and recording
  where necessary of any archaeological features or finds identified. These will
  need to be agreed with the Highland Council Archaeology Unit.
- To make sure that the needs for archaeological conservation and recording
  are met without causing any unnecessary delay or disturbance to the
development project.

4) Methodology
All fieldwork must be informed by a desk-based assessment undertaken in
advance of the start of works.
Fieldwork

An evaluation by trial trenching will be conducted across the entire application site. The location of these trenches will be informed by the results of a desk-based assessment and a study of the local topography. The trenches will be of varying (but not unduly excessive) lengths and sizes and set on varying orientations; an indicative trench plan will be included as part of the project design for comment and approval by HCAU.

The application site will be subject to a 5% sample evaluation.

The evaluation report will make recommendations regarding the need for further excavation work to record any identified features. All recovered artefacts and ecofacts must be subject to a programme of post-excavation analysis and the results incorporated into a final report.

The Archaeological Contractor must refer to the minimum standard requirements as laid out in HCAU Development Guidance. This brief itself is not comprehensive or definitive - tendering Archaeological Contractors will need to determine for themselves the methodology that will deliver the required product. This should be laid down in a Project Design (or Written Scheme of Investigation) and agreed with HCAU in advance of the start of site works. The start of archaeological work will be subject to the submission and approval of this document.

5) Schedule & Monitoring

The Archaeological Contractor is responsible for agreeing arrangements for monitoring with HCAU staff. We will monitor projects as necessary to ensure that minimum standards are met. Prior notice of fieldwork starting dates, with contact names, telephone numbers and arrangements for access must be given to HCAU by the Archaeological Contractor.

The Archaeological Contractor must make a short progress report (by telephone) to HCAU for every week of fieldwork undertaken. Any unexpectedly significant or complex discoveries, or other unexpected occurrences which might significantly affect the archaeological work and/or the development must be notified by the Archaeological Contractor immediately to the applicant and HCAU. The finds or features must be left in situ until arrangements have been made for safeguarding or recording them. In the meantime work may continue on other areas of the site.

6) Products

Following completion of the fieldwork, an archive and report will be produced and disseminated according to the standards set out in the HCAU Development Guidance. The report should describe the nature of the fieldwork undertaken; the conditions and limitations within which the work was carried-out; the results that were obtained and recommendations for mitigation and/or further work, as appropriate. Further work may include additional fieldwork, post-excavation analysis, specialist studies and publication.
Appendix 2 – Photograph Register
All scales are 1m unless otherwise stated.

1 – View of site facing NW.
2 – View of site facing N (flags show route of sewer).
3 – View of site facing NE.
4 – View of site facing N.
5 – View of site facing E.
6 – View of site of mill dam facing NW.
7 – View of site facing SE.
8 – View of site facing S.
9 – View of site facing S.
10 – View of section of pit 1 trench 1 facing SE – scales 0.5m and 1m.
11 – View of section of pit 1 trench 1 facing SE – scales 0.5m and 1m.
12 – View of section of pit 1 in relation to trench facing SE
13 – View of pit 2 trench 1 facing SE - scales 0.5m & 1m.
14 – View of pit 2 trench 1 facing SE - scales 0.5m & 1m.
15 – View of pit 2 trench 1 facing SE - scales 0.5m & 1m.
16 – View of pit 3 trench 1 facing SE - scale 0.5m.
17 – View of pit 3 trench 1 facing SE - scale 0.5m.
18 – View of trench 1 upon excavation facing SE.
19 – View of trench 1 upon excavation facing NW.
20 – View of trench 2 upon excavation facing NW.
21 – View of rig & furrow in trench 2 – scale 1m.
22 – View of rig & furrow in trench 2 – scale 1m.
23 – View of trench 2 upon excavation facing SE.
24 – View of trench 3 upon excavation facing NE.
25 – View of trench 3 upon excavation facing SW.
26 – View of trench 4 upon excavation facing SSE.
27 – View of trench 4 upon excavation facing NNE.
28 – View of trench 5 upon excavation facing NNE.
29 – View of trench 5 upon excavation facing SSW.
30 – View of trench 6 upon excavation facing NW.
31 – View of trench 6 upon excavation facing SE.
32 – View of trench 7 upon excavation facing SE.
33 – View of trench 7 upon excavation facing NW.
34 – View of trenches 3-6 upon excavation facing N.
35 – View of trenches 1-2, 4 and 7 upon excavation facing NW.
36 – View of ditch/field boundary in Tr8 facing SE – scales 1m.
37 – View of ditch/field boundary in Tr8 facing SE – scales 1m.
38 – View of ditch/field boundary in Tr8 – scales 1m.
39 – View of section of ditch/field boundary in Tr8 – scale 1m.
40 – View of section of ditch/field boundary in Tr8 – scale 1m.
41 – View of section of pit 1 trench 8 facing NE – scale 0.5m.
42 – View of section of pit 1 trench 8 facing NW – scale 0.5m.
43 – View of features in trench 8 facing SE.
44 – View of features in trench 8 facing SE.
45 – View of trench 8 upon excavation facing SE.
46 – View of trench 8 upon excavation facing NW.
47 – View of trenches 1 and 8 upon excavation facing SE.
48 – View of trenches 1-2 facing E.
49 – View of site of mill dam facing NW – scales 2m.
50 – View of site of mill dam facing SE – scales 2m.
51 – View of infill rubble facing NW – scales 2m.
52 – View of infill rubble facing W – scales 2m.
53 – View of infill rubble facing W – scales 2m.
54 – View of worked stone from infill – scale 0.5m.
55 – View of worked stone from infill – scale 0.5m.
56 – View of section through dam facing W – scale 1m.
57 – View of section through dam facing SW – scale 2m.
58 – View of section through dam facing SE – scale 2m.
59 – View of section through dam facing SE – scale 2m.
60 – View of trench 10 upon excavation facing NE.
61 – View of trench 10 upon excavation facing SW.
62 – View of trench 11 upon excavation facing W.
63 – View of trench 11 upon excavation facing E.
64 – View of rig & furrow E end of trench 11 facing E.
65 – View of section of pit 1 trench 12 facing E – scale 0.5m.
66 – View of section of pit 1 trench 12 facing E – scale 0.5m.
67 – View of section of pit 1 trench 12 with tile-drain in foreground facing E – scale 0.5m.
68 – View of trench 12 upon excavation facing N.
69 – View of trench 12 upon excavation facing S.
70 – View of tree-bole trench 13 facing N – scales 1m.
71 – View of tree-bole trench 13 facing N – scales 1m.
72 – View of modern-field drain trench 13 facing NE – scale 1m.
73 – View of trench 13 upon excavation facing WSW.
74 – View of trench 13 upon excavation facing ENE.
75 – View of trench 14 upon excavation facing SSW.
76 – View of trench 14 upon excavation facing NNE.
77 – View of trench 15 upon excavation facing N.
78 – View of trench 15 upon excavation facing S.
79 – View of trench 16 upon excavation facing NNE.
80 – View of trench 16 upon excavation facing SSW.
81 – View of trenches 11, 13-14 upon excavation facing NE.
82 – View of trenches 11-12, 14-15 upon excavation facing E.
83 – View of trenches 9-12, 15 upon excavation facing E.
84 – View of trenches 11-12, 14-15 upon excavation facing E.
85 – View of trenches 11, 13-14 upon excavation facing E.

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**LOCAL AUTHORITY:** Highland  
**PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:** Conon Bridge School, Conon Bridge  
**PROJECT CODE:** CBS 10  
**PARISH:** Urquhart and Logie Wester  
**NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:** Stuart Farrell  
**NAME OF ORGANISATION:** n/a  
**TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:** Evaluation  
**NMRS NO(S):** n/a  
**SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):** n/a  
**SIGNIFICANT FINDS:** None  
**NGR (2 letters, 6 figures):** NH 54675 55443  
**START DATE (this season):** November 2010  
**END DATE (this season):** November 2010  
**PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.):** n/a  

**MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:** An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in November 2010 for a development of a new school with associated access and services. Work revealed a number of archaeological features of interest, including a group of pits of an unknown date and remains of rig & furrow. Further work was recommended. Full Report submitted to HCAU and NMRS.  

**PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:** Area of Excavation.  
**CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:** n/a  
**SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:** Highland Council Housing & Property Service  
**ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:** 39a Park Street, Nairn, IV12 4PP  
**EMAIL ADDRESS:** stuart714@btinternet.com  
**ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited):** Deposited with NMRS
Appendix 4 – Context Register

101 – Topsoil – Dark-brown black sandy silt, well sorted with small to medium rounded stones, 0.25-0.35m in depth.

102 – Fill of pit – Greyish-black silty sand fill, well sorted with medium to large rounded and angular stones, 1.1m in diameter by 0.3m deep.

103 – Cut of pit – Oval shaped cut of pit with gentle sloping sides and rounded base, 1.1m in diameter by 0.3m deep.

104 – Fill of pit – Greyish-black silty sand fill, 0.7m wide and 0.28m deep.

105 – Cut of pit – Oval shaped cut of pit with steep sides and round base, 0.7m wide and 0.28m deep.

106 – Fill of pit – Greyish-black silty sand fill, 0.5m by 1.1m (by edge of trench) by 0.16m deep.

107 – Cut of pit – Oval shaped cut of pit with gentle sloping sides and flat base, 0.5m by 1.1m (by edge of trench) by 0.16m deep.

800 – Topsoil – Dark-brown black sandy silt, well sorted with small to medium rounded stones, 0.25-0.35m in depth.

801 – Fill of pit – Greyish-black silty sand fill, 0.6m by 0.65m by 0.23m deep.

802 – Cut of pit – Oval shaped cut of pit with steep sides and irregular base, 0.6m by 0.65m by 0.23m deep.

803 – Slot though field ditch/boundary – grey-black sandy silt fill with small to medium rounded and angular stones, 0.74m wide by 0.14m deep.

804 – Cut of field ditch/boundary – Irregular shaped cut, with irregular sides and base, 0.74m wide by 0.14m deep.

1200 - Topsoil – Dark-brown black sandy silt, well sorted with small to medium rounded stones, 0.25-0.35m in depth.

1201 – Fill of pit – Brownish-grey sandy silt, with rounded stones, 0.45m in diameter and 0.22m deep.

1202 – Cut of pit – Oval shaped cut of possible Post-hole, irregular shaped with rounded base, 0.45m in diameter and 0.22m deep.

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