

**REPLACEMENT FENCE ADJACENT TITHE BARN,  
BARTON FARM, BRADFORD ON AVON, WILTSHIRE**

**Archaeological Observations and Recording**



**Report No. 53244/3/1**

**March 2007**

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## **Archaeological Observations and Recording, March 2007**

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# **REPLACEMENT FENCE ADJACENT TITHE BARN, BARTON FARM, BRADFORD ON AVON, WILTSHIRE**

## **Archaeological Observations and Recording, March 2007**

### **SUMMARY**

*An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Terrain Archaeology in March 2007 during the installation of a new fence to the east of the Tithe Barn, Barton Farm, Bradford on Avon. No features or deposits of archaeological interest were found.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Terrain Archaeology was commissioned by English Heritage to undertake a programme of archaeological observations and recording during the installation of a new fence adjacent to the Tithe Barn, Barton Farm, Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire.

The proposed development comprised the replacement of the existing chainlink fencing with post and rail wooden fencing to the east of the Tithe Barn. New postholes were excavated by hand along the line of the previous fence.

Archaeological Observations and Recording, also known as an archaeological watching brief, is defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists as “a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons, within a specified area or site where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed.”

The site lies on ground sloping gently to the north along the eastern boundary of the farm centred on NGR ST82326047 (Figures 1 and 2).

The site lies within Scheduled Monument No. 26710 “Monastic grange at Barton Farm”.

The fieldwork was carried out on the 5<sup>th</sup> March 2007 by Steven Tatler.

Terrain Archaeology would like to acknowledge the help and cooperation of the following during this project: Chris Bally (Regional Landscape Manager, English Heritage) and Chris and Luke of Parsons Landscapes.

### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The site lies along the eastern boundary of Barton Farm, Bradford-on-Avon and the following is abstracted from the Scheduled Monument description in English Heritage’s Record of Scheduled Monuments. The monument includes the Tithe Barn, the West Barn and the associated buried remains of a medieval monastic grange immediately east of the River Avon. The standing structures are grouped around an open rectangular yard, the most visually impressive of these being the early 14<sup>th</sup> century Tithe Barn on its south side. The barn is approximately 51m long by 9m wide, built of coursed rubble and ashlar and is orientated east-west. The walls are buttressed and the barn retains its original massive cruck-built timber roof, now stone tiled. A 14<sup>th</sup> century two-storey outbuilding, possibly a granary, lies on the east side of the yard. On the west side are the ruins of a further medieval ashlar-built barn of cruciform shape, aligned broadly north-south and originally approximately 40 m long and 8.5 m wide. Part of this West Barn was incorporated into a new barn of 1769, itself now derelict and fire-damaged. To the north of these remains lies a single storey rubble and ashlar building currently known as ‘The Stable’. To the south of the wall

that now divides the yard from the gardens of Barton Farm is an ashlar built and slate-roofed waggon shed of post-medieval date. Excavation has shown that, beneath layers of 19<sup>th</sup> century smithing debris, the yard contains medieval deposits relating to the use of the farmyard. The grange was planned and laid out by the Abbess of Shaftesbury in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century and remained in the abbey's possession until the Dissolution. The farmhouse is mostly 18<sup>th</sup> century with the east wing dating to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. It is constructed from ashlar and has a stone tiled roof.

To the west of the monument lies Barton Bridge, a narrow stone-built bridge on four pointed arches dating from the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The objective of the archaeological observations was to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on the site.

The archaeological works aimed to observe and record all the *in situ* archaeological deposits and features revealed during the groundworks to an appropriate professional standard.

## **METHODS**

The work was undertaken in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation produced by Terrain Archaeology (Document No. 3244/1/1), and the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Code of Conduct and Standard and guidance for archaeological watching briefs* (1994, as revised).

All fence postholes were excavated by hand and the spoil investigated. The holes were all between 0.30 m and 0.35 m across and between 0.6 m and 0.7 m deep. Approximately 30 m of post and rail fencing were observed.

All features and deposits, exposed during the works, were recorded using components of the Terrain Archaeology recording system of complementary written, drawn and photographic records. Each fencepost hole was given a unique number, with each context numbered as a suffix to the fencepost hole number (e.g. 101.1, 101.2, etc).

The records, and any materials recovered, have been compiled in a stable, cross-referenced and fully indexed archive in accordance with current UKIC guidelines and the requirements of the receiving museum.

## **RESULTS**

A total of 19 postholes were excavated by hand along the eastern boundary of the farm (Figure 2; Plates 1 and 2) and a sequence of similar deposits was observed across the whole of the site and these are described below. The details of the stratigraphy in each posthole is summarised in Appendix 1 and selected postholes are illustrated in Plates 3-6.

### **Natural deposits**

The underlying natural consisted of pale yellowish-brown sandy silt with very few inclusions. This was observed in all postholes at a depth of between 0.15 m and 0.5 m below ground level.

### **Dumped material**

Overlying the natural in postholes 103 and 108–118 was a mixed deposit of mid brown silty loam and limestone rubble, between 0.05 m and 0.35 m thick. At the southern end of the fenceline in

postholes 112 and 113 a layer of loose black cinders, between 0.05 m and 0.10 m thick, was observed overlying the limestone rubble. This deposit contained occasional pieces of red brick.

### **Modern Deposits**

Sealing these deposits was a dark brown silty loam topsoil, between 0.10 m and 0.20m thick.

### **Finds**

No finds were recovered during this watching brief.

## **DISCUSSION**

The small scale and character of the groundworks means the scope for undertaking more than a simple description of the findings is extremely limited. None of the postholes produced recognisable evidence for any *in situ* archaeological features or deposits. The spread of limestone rubble encountered in most postholes probably derives from remedial work carried out on the tithe barn some time after the monument was taken into Guardianship in 1939, rather than from the original construction of the tithe barn. Together with the small spread of cinders these deposits are probably associated with landscaping around the tithe barn.



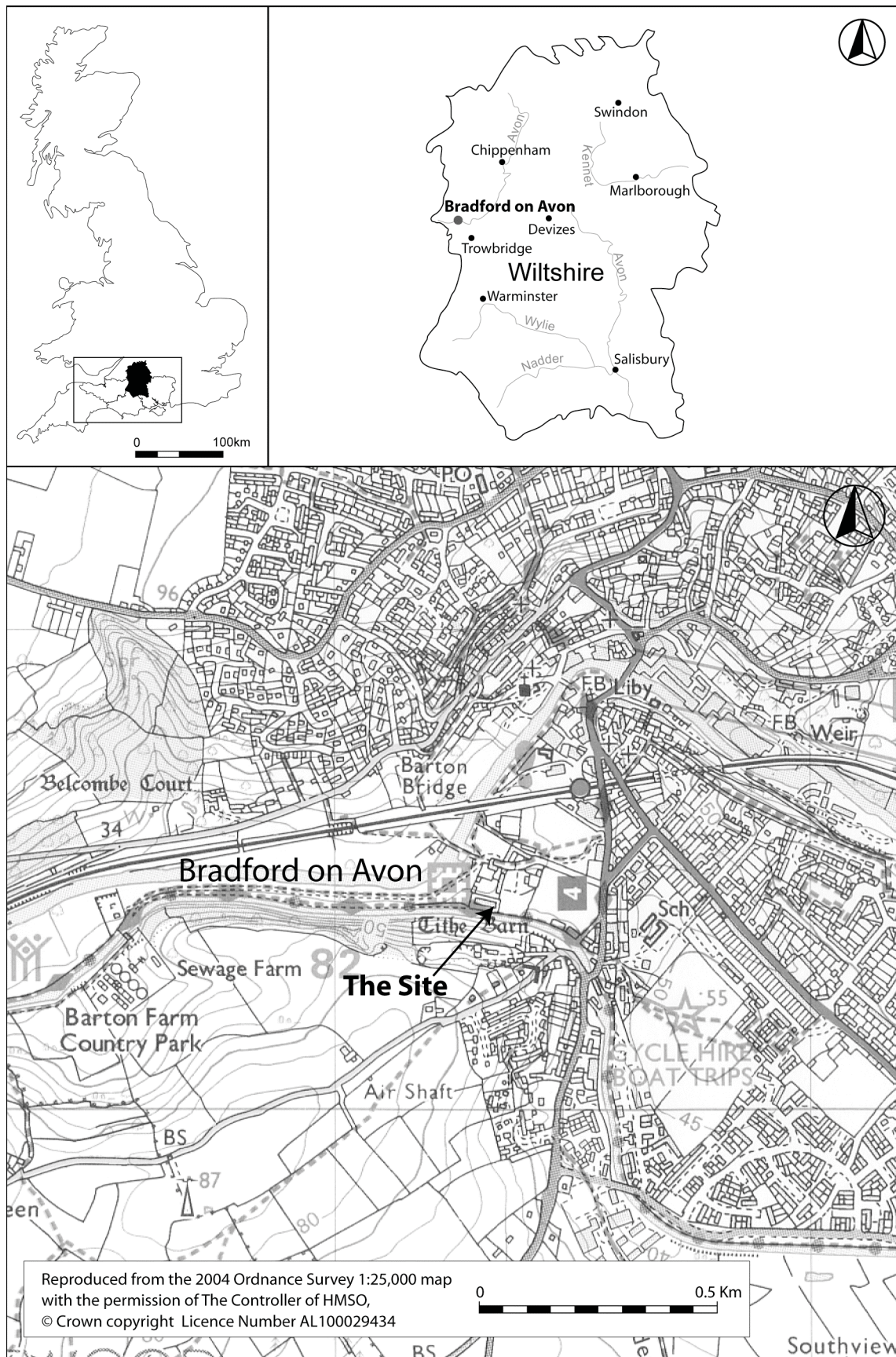


Figure 1: Site location map

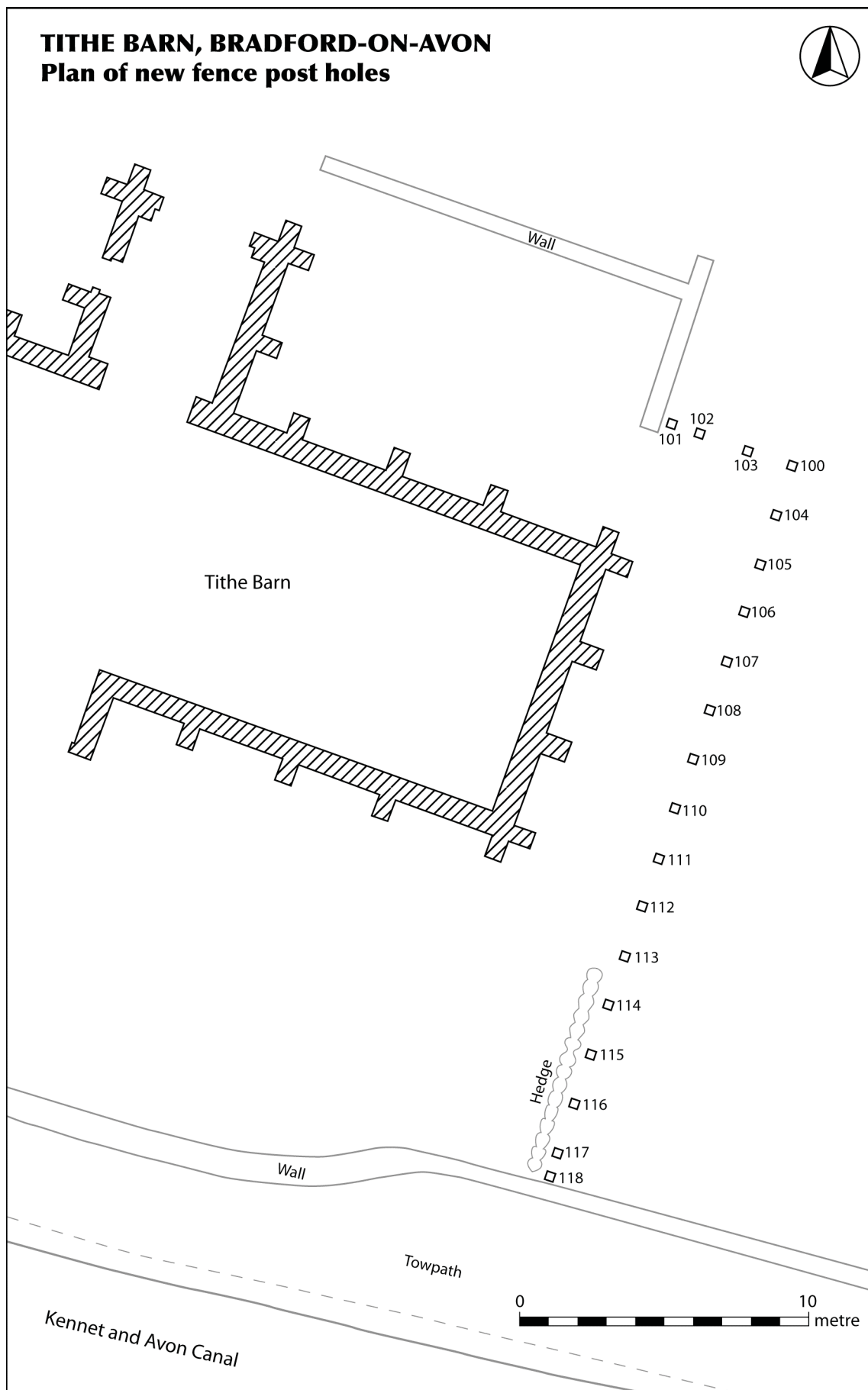


Figure 2: Plan showing location of postholes





*Plate 1: View of northern end of fenceline.*



*Plate 2: View of fenceline from north.*





*Plate 3: Posthole 103.*



*Plate 4: Posthole 106.*



*Plate 5: Posthole 110.*





*Plate 6: Posthole 113.*

**APPENDIX 1: Posthole Summary**

(indicating depth (in metres below present ground level) of the top of all deposits encountered)

Posthole	Topsoil	Dumped Cinders	Dumped Stone Rubble	Natural	Depth of posthole
100	0			0.20	0.60
101	0			0.15	0.60
102	0			0.15	0.60
103	0		0.20	0.40	0.60
104	0			0.25	0.60
105	0			0.25	0.65
106	0			0.25	0.70
107	0			0.20	0.60
108	0		0.15	0.20	0.60
109	0		0.10	0.25	0.65
110	0		0.15	0.30	0.70
111	0		0.20	0.30	0.70
112	0	0.15	0.20	0.30	0.70
113	0	0.15	0.25	0.35	0.65
114	0		0.20	0.35	0.60
115	0		0.20	0.40	0.60
116	0		0.25	0.40	0.60
117	0		0.15	0.40	0.60
118	0		0.15	0.50	0.60