

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Ilfracombe, North Devon	National Grid Reference: SS 5307 4758	Number:
Subject: Archaeological monitoring and recording on land at Hillsborough, Ilfracombe, Devon.		Photo attached: Y
Scheduled Monument Consent No:	Recipient museum: n/a	
OASIS ID: oakforda1-386145	Museum Accession no: n/a	
Contractor's reference number/code: OA1659	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 01/07/2020	
<p>Background: An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Oakford Archaeology in July 2020 during hedge widening and the construction of a new gate on land at Hillsborough, Ilfracombe, Devon (SS 5307 4758). The site (Fig. 1) lies in an area of archaeological potential along the southern edge of Hillsborough promontory fort, a scheduled monument (SM 1002512). The work was therefore required by English Heritage (EH) as part of scheduled monument consent.</p> <p>The Iron Age promontory fort is located on a commanding position on a natural headland to the east of Ilfracombe and defined along the southern edge by two artificially scarped and roughly parallel banks. They survive in some places as low scarps and diverge towards their eastern ends. A LiDAR survey in 2007 produced evidence for a ditch or secondary scarp below the eastern end of the lower rampart. Access to the interior was provided by an inturned entrance which cuts through both the upper and lower ramparts towards their eastern ends. To the south-west of the entrance, a geophysical survey by Substrata in 2012 identified a circular structure which has been interpreted as a possible roundhouse, while a partial geophysical survey of the interior the previous year did not identify any clear archaeological features, although this may be due to the underlying geology.</p> <p>Description of the works: A watching brief (Fig. 2, Pl. 1-4) was maintained during works associated with the removal of a 1m section of hedgebank, the installation of a new gate to allow a vehicular access on to the monument for meadow management and the creation of a new stone ramp immediately to the north of the path.</p> <p>The initial excavations involved the removal of a mid-to-dark brown sandy loam topsoil across areas 1 (5.65m long and 3m wide) and 2 (3.25m long and 2.6m wide) to a maximum depth of 0.15m. This revealed a light-to-mid yellow brown sandy loam subsoil with frequent shillet inclusions. Excavation of two postholes (0.3m wide and 0.6m deep) for the new gate, revealed a shillet natural subsoil at a depth of 0.5m. This was in turn overlain by the 0.35m thick subsoil. A small collection of archaeological material was recovered from the topsoil, totalling 15 sherds and entirely post-medieval and modern in character. This consisted of 10 sherds of late 19th and early 20th century industrial whitewares including Staffordshire transfer printed ware. In addition three fragments of late 19th century bottle glass, including one inkwell and two 20th century glass bottle fragments were recovered.</p> <p>The hedgebank was 1.65m wide and 1.27m high and consisted of a mixed bank core deposit of mid yellow brown sandy loam with frequent shillet inclusions derived from the excavation of the underlying subsoil and natural subsoil. The bank was revetted on the both sides by a dry-stone wall of local slate stone, although this had been largely disturbed and survived only intermittently on the north side. The walls were footed at the base of the bank immediately on top of the subsoil. There was no evidence for a ditch on either side of the bank and the material for its construction was likely removed from its footprint. The bank was overlain by a dark brown silty loam and leafmould representing the result of organic growth and decay on the surface of the bank. Finally, the construction of a footpath sometime in</p>		

the mid-late 19th century on the up-slope (North) side of the bank had resulted in soil accumulating against this side of the bank. Although no finds were recovered from the hedgebank, its location equates with a boundary shown on the 1839 Ilfracombe Tithe map.

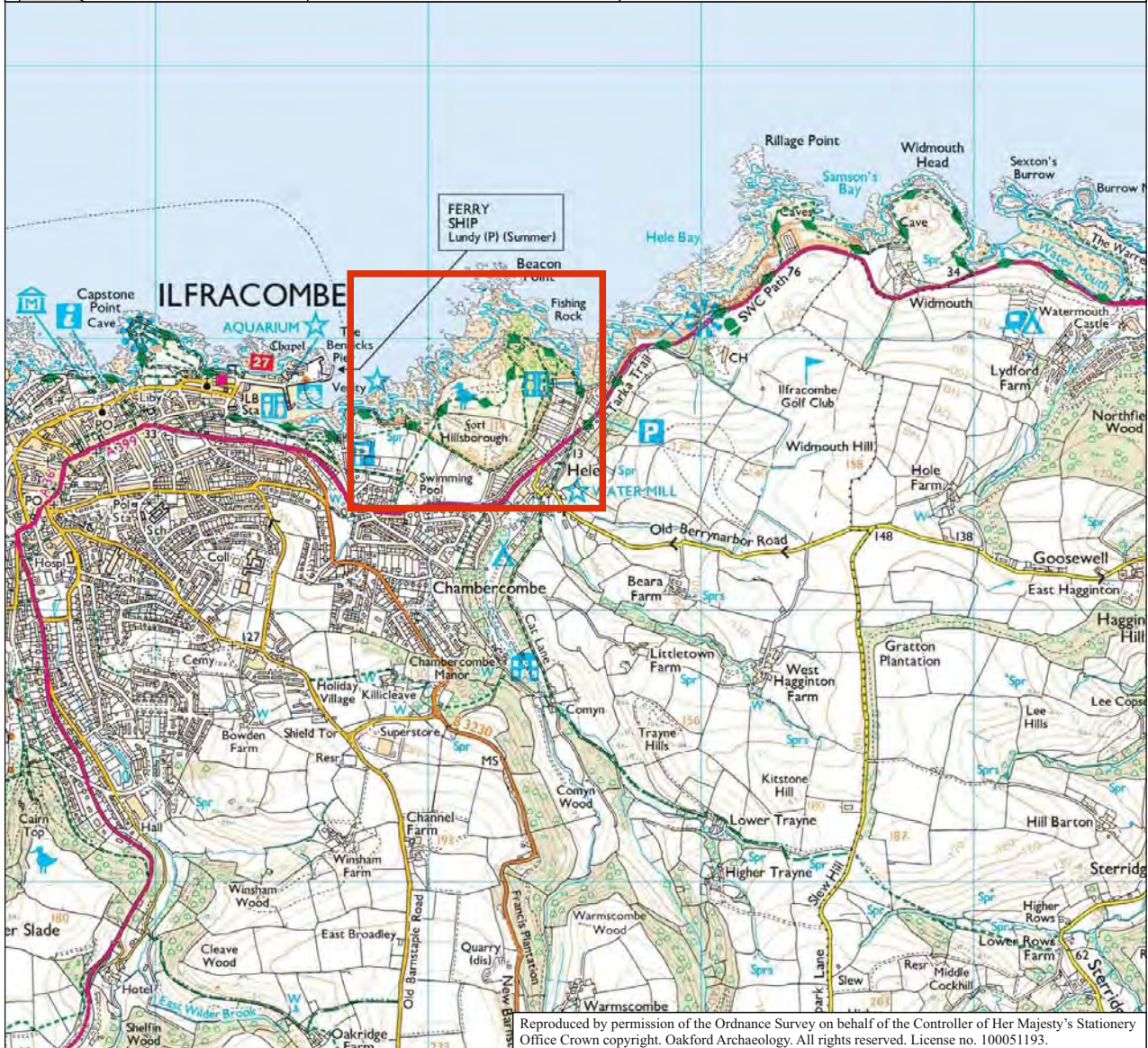
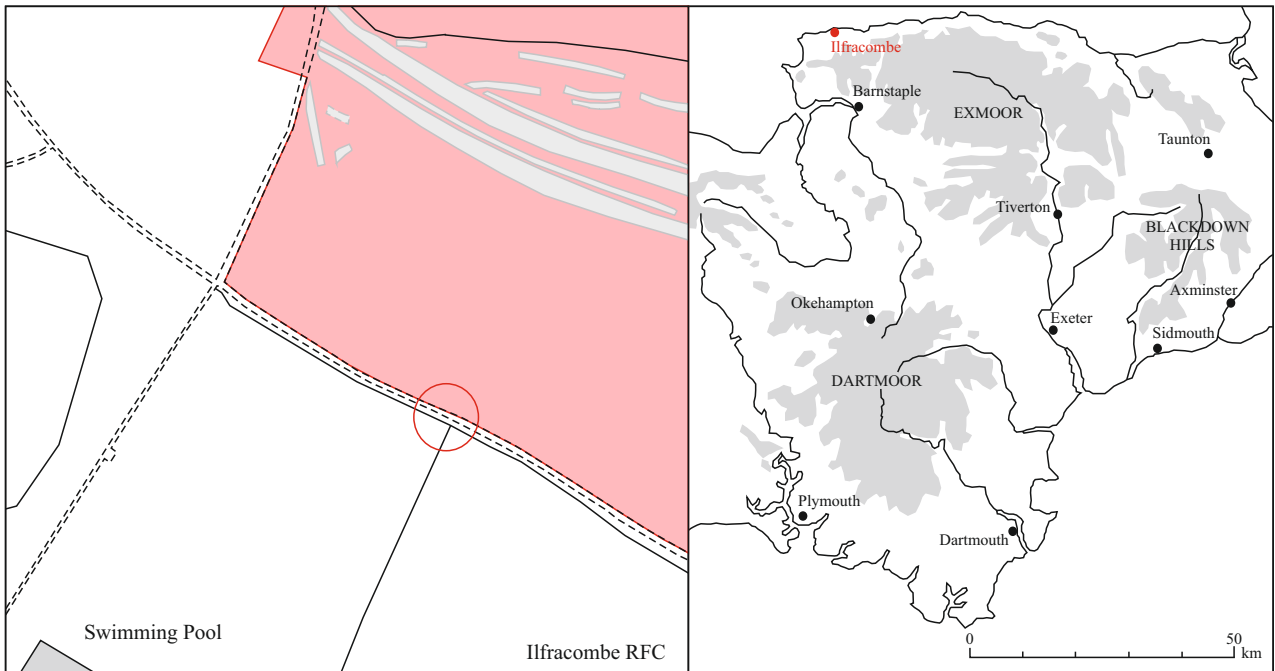
Project archive and OASIS entry

Due to the limited nature of the findings a project archive will not be produced. A summary of the investigations has been submitted to the on-line archaeological database OASIS (Online Access to the Index of archaeological InterventionS).

Recorder:

MFR Steinmetzer (Oakford Archaeology)

Date sent to HER:



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Fig. 1 Location of site.

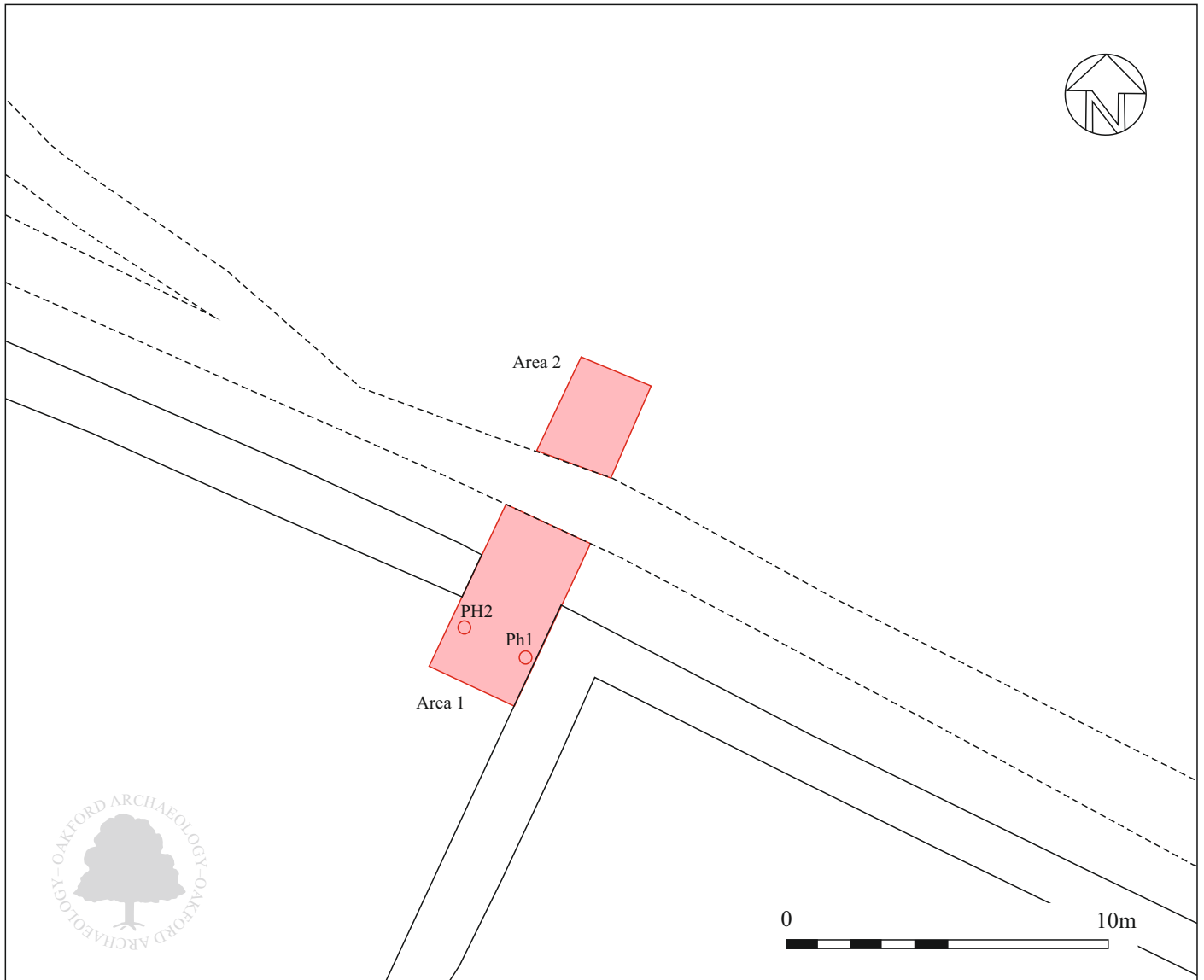


Fig. 2 Plan showing location of observations.



Pl. 1 General view of the two areas showing shallow depth of ground reduction and position of the two post holes. Looking north.



Pl. 2 Section through stone-lined hedgebank. 1m scale. Looking west.



Pl. 3 General view of Posthole 1 showing depth of subsoil. 0.25m scale. Looking south.



Pl. 4 General view of Posthole 2 showing depth of subsoil. 0.5m scale. Looking west.