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Stowe Park, Stowe,
Buckinghamshire
Survey Report

Hazel Riley

DRF 1

SURVEY REPORT



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Stowe Park, Stowe, Buckinghamshire

An archaeological survey by English Heritage

County:	Buckinghamshire
District:	Aylesbury
Parish:	Stowe
OS Map No:	SP 63 NE
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Surveyed:	September 2000-February 2001; July 2001
Report by:	Hazel Riley
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Frontispiece: Oxford Bridge and the West Boycott Pavilion

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Summary

An archaeological survey of the historic park at Stowe in Buckinghamshire was carried out by English Heritage during the autumn and winter of 2000-2001. The work, commissioned by the National Trust, was funded in part by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The survey recorded extant archaeological features in that part of the park owned by the National Trust. The survey work was carried out using GPS and EDM instrumental techniques, to produce a digital plan. Large areas of medieval ridge and furrow are preserved in most of the Deer Park and New Park. Eighteenth and 19th-century features include the park boundaries, the remains of planting schemes and park buildings. In the twentieth century the house at Stowe became a school and much of the park became agricultural land. In the last two decades of that century, the National Trust acquired the gardens and most of the park at Stowe, and began a programme of restoration and research.

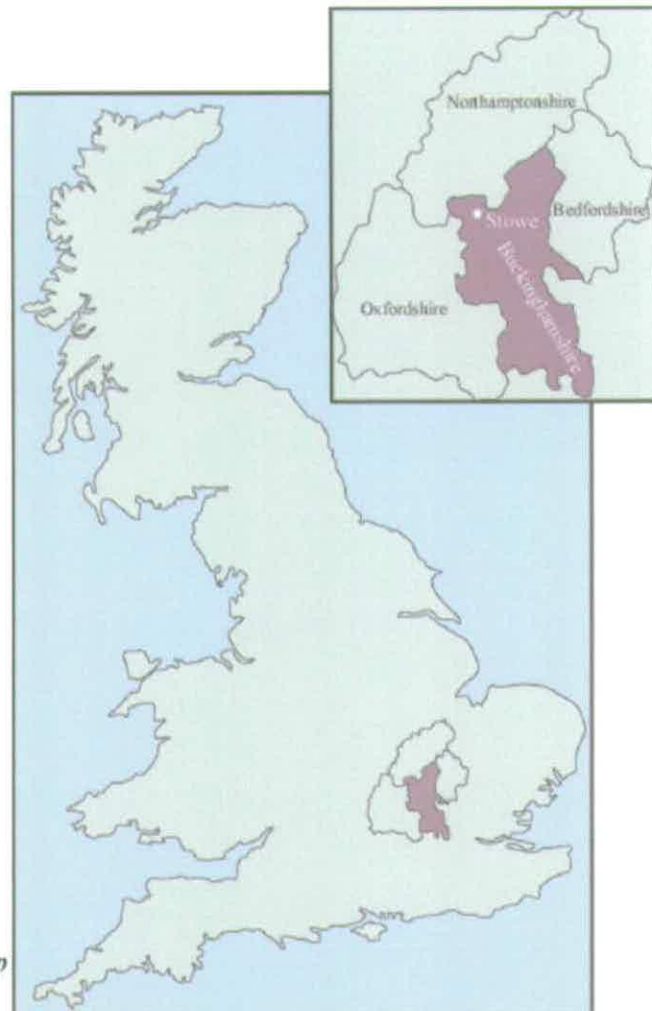


Fig. 1. General location map

INTRODUCTION

The archaeological survey work at Stowe was commissioned by the National Trust and carried out by the Exeter Office of English Heritage. The work was undertaken with financial help from the Heritage Lottery Fund. It forms part of a wider programme of restoration and research work around the house, gardens and park at Stowe, sponsored by the Heritage Lottery Fund together with other organisations.

The house and gardens at Stowe are well known. Their importance in the history of landscape design has long been recognised, and much has been written about the contribution of Bridgeman, Kent, Vanbrugh and Gibbs to the design of the place and its buildings. Its surrounding parks, their buildings, the Ridings and approaches are less well known. This is partly as a result of their recent history - they became fragmented when the Stowe Estate was finally sold off in 1921 - and partly because they were intended to be a background to the gardens themselves. By the middle of the 19th century the designed landscape around Stowe covered an area of c 250 ha. The scale of the designed landscape around Stowe is hard to appreciate today. It stretches from the lodges at Silverstone to the north to the Buckingham Lodge to the south - a distance of some 10 kms (Figs 5 and 6).

BACKGROUND

Location and topography

Stowe lies 4 kms north-west of Buckingham and is centred at SP 675 375 (Fig 1). The house and park lie on deposits of boulder clay, which overlie clays and limestones of the Jurassic series. Deposits of glacial sands and gravels occur across the area (British Geological Survey, Towcester, Sheet 202; Clarke 1967). The topography of the area is determined by the headwaters of the River Great Ouse, with the streams generally flowing south to this river. The principal watercourse is the Dad Stream, which runs close to the park boundary on the north and west side. A second stream runs from Akeley Wood through the gardens to join with the Dad Stream just south of the park. Both of these watercourses have been used to provide water features in the house and gardens. The ground slopes generally from the north-east to the south-west. The highest points in the park lie at c 145m OD around Wolfe's Obelisk and the Bourbon Tower. A fairly narrow promontory extends from this area of high ground to the south-west, Stowe House lies on this promontory. The valley of the Akeley Wood stream is part of the south vista from the house to the Corinthian Arch and beyond (Fig 6). To the north of the house, the land rises in a north-easterly direction towards Wolfe's Obelisk, and drops away steeply to the north-west in the valley of the Dad Stream, providing a discreet site for Home Farm (Fig 21).

Scope of the report and sources consulted

This report concerns the extant field remains which survive in the parks at Stowe, specifically those surviving in those parts of the park currently owned by the National Trust (Fig 2). No features within the gardens were considered, and those areas falling within the historic park but not owned by the National Trust were not considered.

In order to understand these remains, a number of sources were considered. The English Heritage database of archaeological sites (NewHis); the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens, the National Trust Sites and Monuments Record and the Buckinghamshire County Museum Archaeological Service Sites and Monuments Record were consulted. The air photographs housed at the National Monuments Records Centre (NMRC), Swindon, were examined. These included both vertical photographs dating from as early as 1946, and oblique photographs taken with the historic landscape in mind. Gary Marshall (National Trust) provided much information as to the location of archaeological features in the park at Stowe.

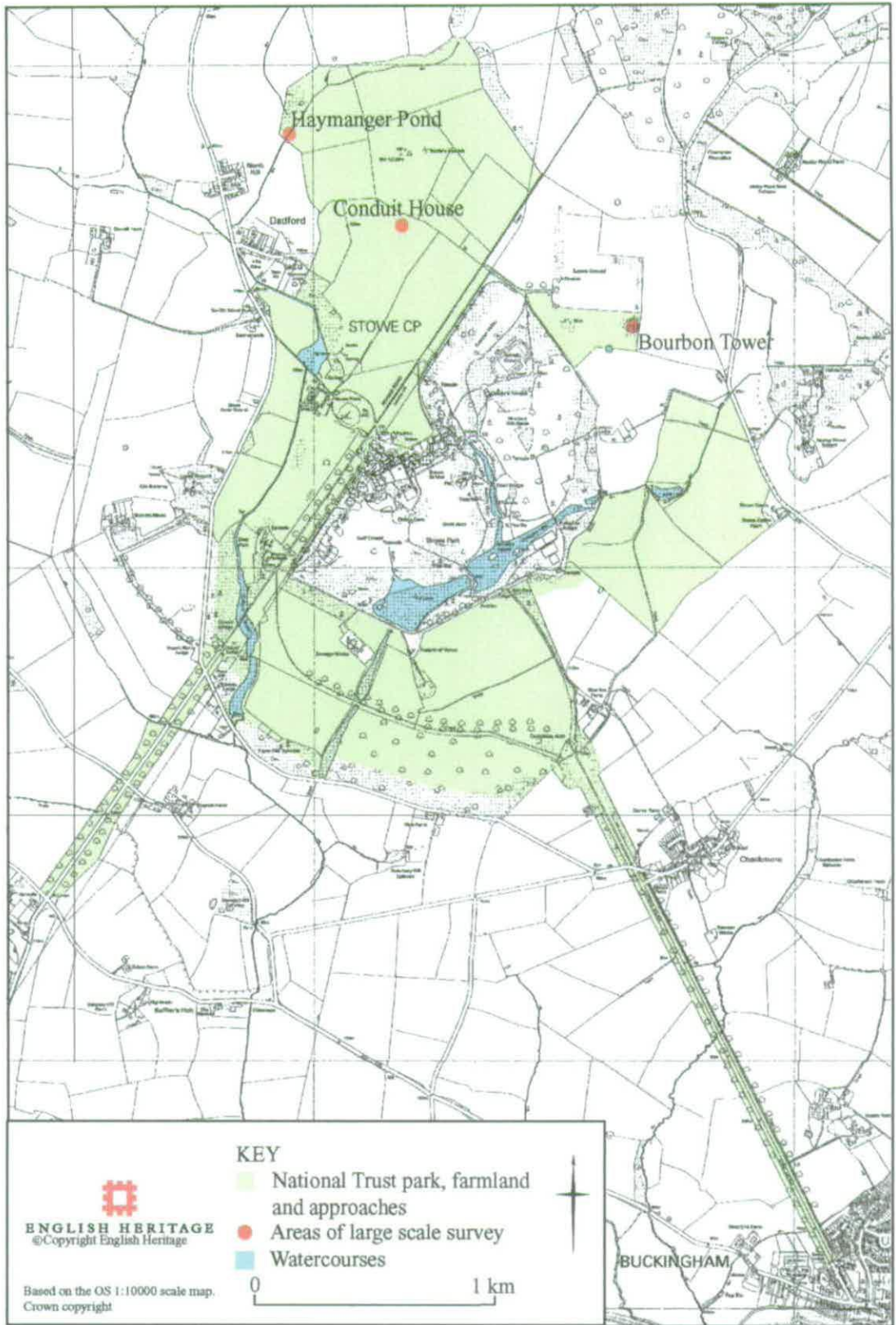


Fig. 2. Stowe: area considered in the survey

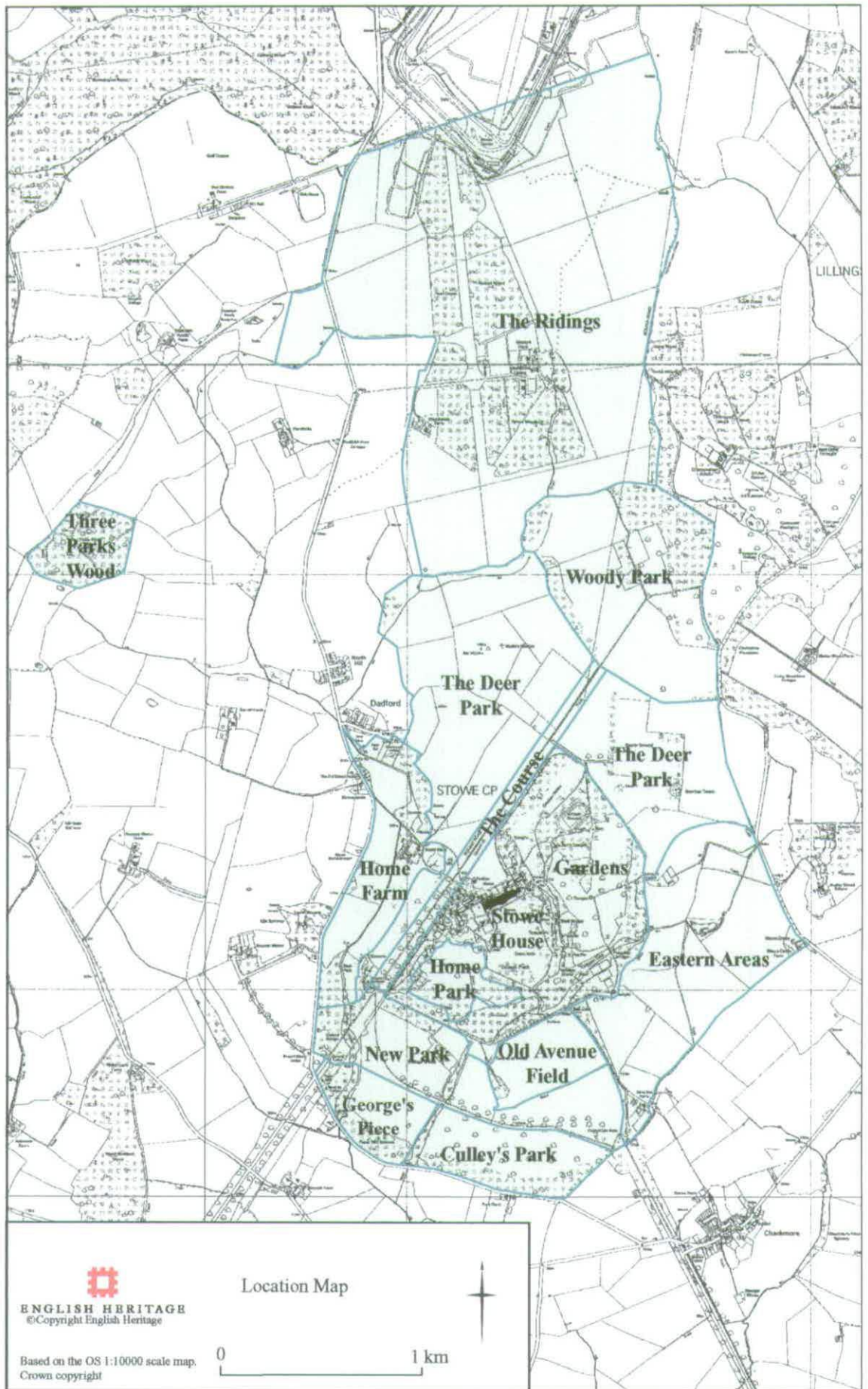


Fig. 4. Stowe: location of the parks at Stowe



Fig. 5. Stowe: general view looking north across the gardens. The Deer Park and the Ridings beyond it lie at the top of the photograph. An early approach to the house is visible in the foreground, right. (© Crown Copyright/MOD.)

Published sources considered included the reports by Michael Bevington (Bevington 1989a,b,c,d; 1991), the series of articles by George Clarke on the History of Stowe, published in the *Stoic*, and the history of the gardens at Stowe by John Martin Robinson (1990). The key maps concerning the park and gardens at Stowe are the 18th-century plans by Bridgeman, the Ordnance Survey map of 1814, the estate plan of 1843 by Henry Howard, and the Ordnance Survey maps of 1880 and 1900. Richard Wheeler (National Trust) kindly made available his unpublished maps of the Stowe Estate in 1633, 1771 and 1843, based on detailed documentary research. The history of the park is summarised in *Stowe, The Framework Conservation Plan. Volume 4: The Park and Wider Landscape* (Felus 1999).

Nomenclature

To avoid confusion and repetition, the names of buildings, people and topographical features follow those given in Felus 1999. Figure 3 shows the location of the main features and buildings in the park and surrounding area; figure 4 shows the location of the various parks associated with Stowe from the medieval period to the 19th century.

The house, gardens and parks at Stowe

There was a manor house at Stowe as early as the mid-16th century, when Thomas Giffard held the lease. Previous to this, in the early 14th century, there was enough accommodation at Stowe to house the king's huntsman with 21 men for five days. By 1589, the Temple family had bought Stowe manor, and during the latter decade of the 16th century the house was

Fig. 6. Stowe: general view looking south towards Buckingham. The Grand Avenue runs from the Corinthian Arch to the outskirts of Buckingham; the Bycell Riding lies to the left of the photograph, New Park to the right. (NMR 15697/18)



re-built or extended and a walled garden laid out. Sir Richard Temple (1634 – 1697) pulled down the old house at Stowe, built a new house on a new site to the north of the old one, and laid out a large garden to the south. It is this house, designed by Cleare in the 1670s, which is at the core of the current mansion at Stowe (Page 2001; Clarke 1967;1968) (Figs 6 and 21).

The location of the earliest park at Stowe is not known. A park is mentioned in Stowe parish in 13th century documents; Three Parks Wood, to the north of Stowe, has been suggested as a possible location (Felus 1999). A lease document of 1572 mentions 'Old Park field'. During the 17th century the park and surrounding landscape were developed. The axial rides in Stowe Woods - The Ridings - were probably laid out in the early decades of the 17th century, with further elaboration at the end of that century or early in the next. Two parks are mentioned in the survey of Stowe dating from 1632 and 1633. 'Owlde Park' is the area of Home Park, to the south-west of the house and now contained within the gardens. The survey also mentions another park of around 200 acres, this is most likely to be Woody Park, enclosed around this time. A deer course probably linked these two parks, following the line of the Roman road, starting from Home Park at the south-west and running up to Woody Park. This part of the Avenue is still called the Course (Fig 4).

The Deer Park (Fig 4) has its origins in the mid-17th century. Sir Peter Temple bought a herd of fallow deer from Lord Spencer at Wicken in 1651. Documents suggest that Woody Park and the area around the Bourbon Tower formed the historic core of the Deer Park at this time. By the 1720s the park at Stowe had expanded to cover around 400 acres, containing Woody Park, the area north of Lamport village and the land to the north of the Course, but not including the Conduit House. By the middle of the 18th century the Deer Park was complete. The main buildings in the Deer Park date from the 18th century. Stowe Castle and the Keeper's Lodge (later the Bourbon Tower) (Figs 19 and 20) on the eastern side of the park, built in 1738 and 1742, were followed by the Obelisk in 1754. The Conduit House was re-built in 1790. Home Farm was begun in 1787; its walled gardens and meadows formed part of the eastern edge of the Deer Park (Fig 21).

New Park was laid out from 1816 onwards by the 1st Duke of Buckingham and Chandos. New Park itself was about 90 acres of parkland, originally for red deer. It was surrounded by several pieces of land which were not strictly in the park but contained park-style planting; these are Old Avenue Field, George's Piece and Culley's Park (Figs 7 and 10).

The approaches

The Grand Avenue (also known as the Buckingham Avenue) runs from the town of Buckingham to the Corinthian Arch, a distance of over 2kms (Figs 3 and 6). Planted in 1774, it was originally a double avenue of elm and beech. Due to Dutch Elm disease, it was felled and replanted in the 1970s. The Oxford Avenue, so called because it used to pass through an isolated part of Oxfordshire, is a double avenue of limes, oaks and chestnuts, planted at around the end of the 18th century. It runs for just over 1km from the Water Stratford Lodge to the Oxford Gate (Figs 3 and 7). The Northampton Drive was developed in the early part of the 19th century. It brought visitors from Silverstone, through the Ridings and Woody Park, to join the Course close to the north-eastern corner of the gardens – a distance of some 5 kms (Fig 3).



Fig. 7. Stowe: general view looking north-east. The Oxford Avenue and the Course cut across the left side of the photograph. Wolfe's Obelisk lies to the extreme left edge; Home Farm and the valley of the Dad Sream are below it. New Park and the Queen's Drive are visible in the foreground. (©Crown Copyright/MOD.)

Recent history

By the middle of the 19th century, the estate was experiencing financial difficulties. Much mature timber in the parks was sold during the 1850s. The Oxford Avenue survived, as most of its trees were lime; New Park and the surrounding areas had only been planted a few years previously so its trees now stand reasonably intact. In 1855 the Ridings were sold to become part of the Whittlebury Estate. In 1921 the estate was broken up and sold off. New Park, a

small part of the Deer Park and the gardens and house became Stowe School. The Deer Park to the north of the Course became part of Home Farm and so a certain amount of recent arable cultivation was carried out in the historic park.

The Oxford Avenue was sold but survived as pasture land, and the Grand Avenue was eventually given to Stowe School. In 1989, Stowe School gave the gardens to the care of the National Trust. With the help of the Heritage Lottery Fund, the National Trust were able to purchase Home Farm and much of the Deer Park in the 1990s.

Previous research and survey work

A summary archaeological survey of the gardens and park was undertaken by the National Trust in 1989 (Wainwright 1989). The earthworks at Dadford which adjoin the Deer Park have been surveyed (Marshall 1996). The National Trust have also carried out numerous excavations and watching briefs in the gardens and park. In the park, these include a watching brief at the Oxford Avenue which revealed Roman features and the location of two Roman pottery kilns in the Deer Park to the east of the school sports ground (Marshall 1996; Wainwright 1990; Marshall 1995). An excavation to determine the structure of the dam at Haymanger Pond was undertaken in 2000 (O Jessop pers comm). Excavations and geophysical survey were carried out prior to restoration work at the Conduit House (Jessop 1999). An architectural study of Home Farm has been undertaken (Marshall 1997; 2000). Birmingham University have recently started the Whittlewood Project, concerned with the development of the medieval landscape in the area of Whittlewood Forest. Fieldwalking and large-scale earthwork survey are included in the project and the parish of Stowe forms part of the study area (Page 2001). English Heritage carried out large-scale earthwork surveys of Haymanger Pond, the Conduit House and the Bourbon Tower (Hunt 2000; Riley 2000a,b).

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The fieldwork was carried out in the autumn and winter months of 2000–2001. The outbreak of foot and mouth disease in February 2001 meant that the fieldwork could not be completed until July 2001. The following survey methodology was developed to cope with the need to survey large areas of ground in a very limited time scale. The difficulty was compounded by the fact that a fair proportion of the areas to be considered were within wooded areas. The extant archaeological features were surveyed at a scale of 1: 2500 using differential GPS (Global Positioning System) equipment where tree cover allowed. For most of the park, Leica single frequency GPS equipment was used. A permanent survey position was established at Home Farm, this was used as the reference station for all of the GPS survey of the park. The GPS survey data was processed using Leica's SKI software and transformed from the GPS co-ordinate system (WGS 84) to the Ordnance Survey National Grid (OSGB 36) using a network of three Ordnance Survey triangulation pillars. The GPS was also used to co-ordinate temporary survey points. These survey points were then used for EDM survey to fill in the gaps that GPS could not reach. The survey data and embedded feature codes were processed using Key Systems Key-Terra Firma software, running in an Autocad (R14) environment.

Where features were large enough to be recorded at 1: 2500 scale, the tops and bottoms of earthwork scarps were recorded. Where features were too degraded or too small to be

depicted at this scale, the centre of the feature was recorded, or, in the case of features such as tracks, two edges of it. Single points in the centre of the numerous tree holes were recorded.

A large amount of ridge and furrow survives in the park at Stowe. This was recorded in two ways. Where practical, the centre of each ridge was recorded using GPS or EDM as appropriate. In some cases, however, the ridges were so slight that field survey was not time-effective. In these instances, the extent and spacing of the surviving ridge and furrow was recorded from air photographs. These areas are indicated and the reference number of the photographs used given. In the eastern area, however, it was requested by the National Trust that the extent of the ridge and furrow visible on air photographs should be shown, even though it does not now survive as extant archaeology.

The survey data is presented in two formats. The Simmons digital topographic survey at 1:2500 scale was available. A series of 11 plots at 1:2500 scale showing the archaeology on the digital mapbase were produced. The survey is also available as a digital product, for use with the National Trust's own digital database. The digital survey has been phased into broad time periods; this forms the basis for the discussion below and the plans included in this report.

Each feature or group of features recorded during the course of the survey has a NewHis record number (English Heritage's database). The appendix contains a summary of this record for each site, together with the National Trust record number (from Wainwright 1989) and the Buckinghamshire Sites and Monuments Record number (CAS number) where appropriate. A layer containing the NewHis record numbers for the features is available in the digital data set. The NewHis record number is given below where specific sites are discussed.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS IN THE PARK AT STOWE

The prehistoric period

Several pieces of worked flint have been found during fieldwalking in the large arable field east of Wolfe's Obelisk. These include scrapers and flint points. Two worked flakes were found during fieldwalking in the Bycell Ridings (NT SMR 155043; 155044; Page 2001). No features of possible prehistoric origin were identified during the course of the survey.

The Roman period (Fig. 8)

There is a growing body of evidence for Roman activity at Stowe. The well known Roman road from Alchester to Towcester runs through the park at Stowe. Its course lies to the south-east of the Oxford Avenue, entering the park at Paper Mill Spinney and running along the line of the ha-ha, across the lawn of the North Front of the house and into the Bourbon Fields. Here, the route sharply changes from north-east/south-west to NNE/SSW, and the route runs through Woody Park. Just to the south of Woody Park, in an arable field, a very degraded scarp is discernible, this may be the remains of the road or a later track along its route (SP 63 NE 73). In the winter of 1954-1955 this field was deep ploughed and large stones broke the plough; the following summer a stony ridge was discerned as the soil surface dried out (Clarke 1967). Part of the course of the Roman road through the park is visible on air photographs (HSL UK 69 869 1066, 1067). The quarries at the Oxford Gates lie on the course

of this road. A linear feature, perhaps a trackway, and a large, squat oak pollard, perhaps a way-marking tree, may mark the continuation of the road as a later route (SP 63 NE 152,153). These scraps of field evidence add a little to the evidence for Roman settlement at Stowe recovered from fieldwalking and excavation. Two ditches, discovered at the Oxford Avenue during a watching brief, contained significant amounts of Roman pottery in their fill (Marshall 1996). The sites of two Roman pottery kilns have been identified in the Bourbon Fields (Wainwright 1990; Marshall 1995). The pottery associated with these sites has been identified as 'pink grog ware', found over much of the South Midlands, but not previously associated with a specific kiln site (information from Paul Booth, Oxford Archaeology). Several chance finds of Roman pottery are recorded from the park and gardens and a coin, a Denarius of Severus Alexander, was found near the Oxford Bridge. Seventeen sherds of Roman-British pottery were found during the Whittlewood Project's fieldwalking at Stowe. This limited evidence suggests industrial activity represented by pottery manufacture and perhaps associated settlement.

A strap-end of Anglo-Saxon date and a spear head, possibly of also from this period, found in one of the lakes and in the gardens form the evidence for the earliest post-Roman activity at Stowe (CAS, no record number; Marshall 1996).

The medieval period (Fig. 9)

Medieval settlements

There are four settlements recorded in Domesday in, or very close to, the area of the park and gardens at Stowe. These are Stowe, Boycott, Dadford and Lamport. The site of the village of Stowe is presumed to be around the church of St Mary, which still lies within the gardens and close to the house. The settlement was still in existence in the 17th century, but documents suggest that it was being depopulated at this time. The date of its disappearance is not known exactly (Page 2001). Some medieval pottery has been found in this general area (O Jessop, pers comm). The settlements at Dadford and Lamport still exist today. Both lie outside the survey area. Several probable medieval house platforms and ridge and furrow survive in Dadford Field (Marshall 1996). The park boundary cuts the eastern edge of these earthworks, and the slight earthwork remains which survive in the park close to its western edge may well be the remains of lynchets and an access way to Dadford. There are some earthworks suggestive of settlement remains to the south of the small hamlet of Lamport. The site of the village of Boycott may lie around Boycott Farm, outside the survey area (Page 2001).

Ridge and furrow

The park and gardens contain the remains of the open fields worked by the inhabitants of these four villages, marked by ridge and furrow. The surviving ridge and furrow in the park is in the form of large blocks of long strips, draining to the major watercourses. In a few instances, where the topography dictates, strip lynchets occur. The best examples of this are at the western edge of Culley's Park, with some less obvious instances occurring to the north of the Walled Gardens. Some truncated examples also survive in the Oxford Avenue (SP 63 NE 170,89,157).

New Park contains the best preserved ridge and furrow in the park (Fig 10). Here, as elsewhere in the park, ridges or headlands are often used as convenient planting sites for

single trees or sections of avenues. Headlands are often used as access ways to and through the strips. These routes are often perpetuated. This seems to have been the case in the Old Avenue Field and in Culley's Park (SP 63 NE 164,169,181,191).



Fig. 10. Ridge and furrow in New Park.

The designation of particular blocks of ridge and furrow to the four settlements of known medieval origin in or close to Stowe Park is difficult. Richard Wheeler's map of Stowe in 1633 shows the landscape in its later medieval incarnation. The large areas of ridge and furrow to the north and east of Dadford, known as Cundit Field in 1633, were probably part of the open fields of Dadford. Most of the ridge and furrow in this area has been slighted by later agriculture. Air photographs taken in the 1940s, 1960s and 1970s show the Deer Park west of the Course and north of Home Farm as either arable fields or improved pasture. The ridge and furrow is preserved best to the south-east of the Obelisk and on the east facing slope to the south-east of the Conduit House (SP 63 NE 88). A block of ridge and furrow between Home Farm Reservoir and the present day village of Dadford is also well preserved. It contains the remains of tracks providing access from Dadford eastwards, perhaps to Stowe village, but now blocked by the formation of Home Farm Reservoir at the end of the 18th century (SP 63 NE 105). The line of the Roman Road, known as the Course by 1633, may well have formed the boundary between the open fields worked by the people of Dadford and Stowe. However, another possible candidate is the valley below the Conduit House, where the very faint earthwork remains of an access way may mark this division.

Although the probable site of Boycott village lies outside the survey area, the Oxford Avenue preserves some ridge and furrow which probably represents a fragment of the village's open fields. The ridge and furrow is very well preserved in places, particularly between Welsh Lane and the Water Stratford Lodge. A hollow way, aligned with the ridge and furrow, lies just to the south of Welsh Lane. It may have led from Boycott village out to the fields (SP 63 NE 158).

The open fields of Stowe probably lay to the south and east of the village; documentary evidence suggests that some also lay to the west. The fields to the south and east are named Windmill Field, ?Old Field, Middle Field, Warden Hill and Nether Field in 1633 (Wheeler 1633 map). The best-preserved ridge and furrow lies in what was Middle Field and Warden Hill. This corresponds to the area of the early 19th-century New Park, together with the areas which were not strictly speaking in the park, but were planted up sympathetically, such as George's Piece and Culley's Park. The best examples of ridge and furrow preserved at Stowe can be seen in New Park, particularly in the area of the Queen's Drive, and also in the western part of Culley's Park. In some cases headlands have been ploughed over, suggesting different phases of working, and headlands have also become perpetuated as access ways across the fields and perhaps also utilised as more formal carriage drives (below). One of the most interesting examples of this occurs in New Deer Park to the west of the sewage works, where a headland has strips of ridge and furrow running over it. Towards its northern end, a rectangular hollow may be the remains of an enclosure or, possibly a quarry. Ridge and furrow overlies this feature, making it one of the earliest pieces of extant archaeology in the park at Stowe (SP 63 NE 179).

Those fields to the west of Stowe, mentioned in documents (Page 2001) may be seen in Home Farm meadows and around the lower part of the Course (SP 63 NE 111, 138). Documents also indicate that Stowe and Lamport shared some open fields, perhaps Hawkwell Field (now in the gardens). Lamport's own fields may have been those to the south of the settlement, where 20th century agriculture has removed most of the ridge and furrow, but it is still visible on air photographs (HSL UK 69 869 1064). Lamport Common - which became Woody Park in the early part of the 17th century - lay to the north of Lamport.

Roads and tracks

The old road from Buckingham to Towcester passes through the eastern edge of the park. It was stopped by licence by the 2nd Duke of Buckingham and now survives as a track and, in



Fig. 11. The Fairy Oak: an ancient oak pollard marks the old road from Buckingham to Towcester.

places, a deep hollow way where it is preserved as a field boundary to the east of Lamport (outside the survey area). Within the survey area, the road survives as a very slight earthwork to the north and south of the Bourbon Tower, which straddles the road, suggesting that at least this section of the road had gone out of use by 1742 when the building was constructed (SP 63 NE 74). The earthworks survive here because ploughing in the last century skirted the area around the tower and its trees. A large oak pollard, perhaps some 500 years old and known as the Fairy Oak, lies to the side of the track as it approaches Lamport, suggesting that it is a way-marking tree (Fig 11) (SP 63 NE 75).

The eighteenth century (Fig. 12)

This period was one of great importance in the development of the landscape at Stowe. The house and gardens were re-built or re-modelled on several occasions. Much of the park was made at this time, together with extensive planting and many of the park buildings were constructed and the approaches laid out. The archaeological remains representing this activity consist of the buildings themselves and features associated with the use of the park. The latter include tracks or carriage drives and water features. The remains of the planting schemes - in the form of tree holes or tree stumps also survive, as do the park boundaries.



Fig. 13. Using GPS to survey the ha-ha ditch at the Temple of Friendship.

Boundary features

The north-west corner of the park contains a well preserved stretch of ditch which formed part of the park boundary. This ditch clearly cuts the ridge and furrow near Dadford (SP 63 NE 81). Elsewhere, the park boundary is marked by a scarp and a short length of bank near Home Farm; a natural scarp forms the rest of the boundary between the farm and the Boycott kennels (SP 63 NE 134,135). The boundary between the park and gardens is marked by an impressive ha-ha (SP 63 NE 112). The stone-faced retaining wall is currently in the process of restoration. The ha-ha marks the extent of the gardens by the early 19th century. The north-western and south-western garden boundaries were in place by the mid-18th century, but the eastern side did not take its present form until the early 19th century (Wainwright 1989). The best-preserved stretches are along the Course and between the Temple of Venus and the Temple of Friendship (Fig 13). A curved bastion juts out of the ha-ha about halfway between the house and the Boycott Pavilions (Fig 14). It originally contained a mount and marked the point where two garden walks intersected - Nelson's Walk and the Lime Walk, both significant parts of the early 18th-century garden (Bevington 1990). A very slight ditch marks the infilled ha-ha between the Upper Buckingham River and the East Boycott Pavilion. A sunken fence was used for this stretch of garden boundary.

Early 18th-century features

The Deer Park extends to the North Front of the house and the effect is well illustrated by John Buckler's drawing of 1815, showing deer grazing close to the house. Early in the 18th

Fig. 14. The bastion in the ha-ha by the Course.



century the arrangement was much more formal. The area contained a large canal, begun in 1716. It is depicted on Bridgeman's plan of 1720. This shows a narrow, rectangular body of water, with a rounded end away from the house, flanked by areas of formal planting. The canal was filled in between 1756 and 1763 and the area was gradually made less formal. The remains of the canal are visible as parchmarks and can be seen on the same series of air photographs taken in 1990 which show up the canal and other features of the formal gardens of the early 18th century on the South Lawn (Fig 15) (SP 63 NE 124). The slight scarp to the east of the parchmark may be part of this earlier formal layout to the North Front, perhaps

Fig. 15. The North Front: parchmarks of the early 18th-century canal. (NHC 13142/26)



Fig. 16. The North Front: the mound marks the site of one of the earliest garden buildings at Stowe, Nelson's Seat.



marking the edges of the regular blocks of trees shown on Bridgeman's plan of 1720 (SP 63 NE 126). The two circular features, one incomplete, are difficult to interpret. They could be part of this early 18th century formal phase - one is aligned with the canal - but they are not shown on the Bridgeman plans. This area also contains the remains of one of the earliest garden features, Nelson's Seat. This was an open rectangular structure, originally designed by Vanbrugh. It was built in 1719 and demolished by 1797. A large, flat-topped mound stands on the site of this building (Fig 16) (SP 63 NE 125). Early representations of Nelson's Seat do not show that it was built on a mound (Bridgeman 1720; Seeley 1759), but an engraving of 1769 shows it apparently on a mound (compare Seeley 1759 and 1769). The mound was there in the 1840s, when a statue of George II was moved to the mound from a column in the gardens.

Although New Park was laid out in the 19th century (below) it does contain the remains of a possible early 18th-century feature. This is a slight, degraded bank, difficult to make sense of on the ground. It overlies ridge and furrow but is on a similar alignment (SP 63 NE 188). The bank runs from the ditched boundary of the Old Avenue Field up towards the Corinthian Arch, stopping at the Queen's Drive. It can be seen on vertical air photographs (HSL UK 69 869 19APR69 1065). This may be associated with the continuation of the Abele walk, planted by Bridgeman in the 1720s, in the so-named Old Avenue Field to the north. It aligns with the Corinthian Arch, the gap in the headland marking the old avenue, and the south front of the house. The old avenue is shown to the south of the *guglio* in the Octagon Lake in Rigaud's engraving of 1733, but it is unclear as to whether it continued any further than this. The feature could be the remains of a track or drive through the field, perhaps associated with agricultural rather than formal use, although its alignment argues against this interpretation.

Buildings in the park

Most of the buildings in the park were constructed in the 18th century, although the Conduit House may have replaced an earlier building. Features associated with that building and the Bourbon Tower were the subject of large-scale earthwork surveys by English Heritage (Riley 2000a; Hunt 2000). Wolfe's Obelisk and the Conduit House lie in the north-western side of the Deer Park (Fig 17) (SP 63 NE 10,15). The Conduit House houses the water supply for the mansion. The remains of 18th-century planting survive around it in the form of trees, tree

Fig. 17. The Deer Park: Wolfe's Obelisk, the Conduit House (undergoing restoration) and the remains of 18th-century planting.



stumps and tree holes. The Obelisk incorporates masonry originally used to construct the *guglio* in the Octagon Lake. It was built on one of the highest points of the park in 1754 and dedicated to General Wolfe in 1759. The Obelisk lies on an axis with the Temple of Concord and Victory and is the focal point of the view south down the Silverstone Great Riding. The Obelisk is built on a small, flat-topped mound which overlies the surrounding ridge and furrow. The estate map of 1839 shows eight tree clumps around the Obelisk. The remains of some of these survive as tree holes to the north of the monument. The remains of a small pond, with tree cover nearby, lie close to the Obelisk. It is very similar to those close to the Conduit House and the Bourbon Tower. These ponds were probably placed deliberately close to the key park buildings to attract deer and other wildlife (Fig 18) (SP 63 NE 84,91,96).



Fig. 18. Extract from the 1843 estate map showing pond close to the Bourbon Tower.

Separated from these buildings by the Course, but still contained within the Deer Park, is the Keeper's Lodge. Built in 1742, the tower provided accommodation for the Park Keeper as well as ornamenting the park (Fig 19). Surviving oak and pine trees, together with some tree stumps, mark the planting carried out in 1808 to commemorate the visit of the exiled French royal family. It was at this time that the building was re-named the Bourbon Tower. Stowe Castle is visible from the Bourbon Tower. It marks the eastern edge of the estate and is a prominent feature from many parts of the eastern areas (Fig 20).

Fig. 19. The Bourbon Tower lies at the north-eastern edge of the Deer Park.



The Corinthian Arch punctuates the south vista and the Grand Avenue, it also marks the eastern edge of New Park. The Boycott Pavilions perform a similar function at the western edge of New Park. The west pavilion (the east pavilion is within the gardens) is built on a level platform, terraced into the hillside. The cut for this platform survives as an earthwork. A slight linear bank runs in front of the pavilion, probably formed of spoil which has been landscaped to hide the building platform from the Oxford Avenue and Course approaches (*Frontispiece*) (SP 63 NE 35,146).

The site of the Kennels, marked on the 1843 estate plan, lies close to Haymanger Pond. It was probably an ornate building: a proposal drawing by Fairchild in 1762 shows a Doric façade. No remains are visible on the ground, but large pieces of dressed stone were reported in the

Fig. 20. Stowe Castle: castle facing into the park, farm the other side, Stowe Castle is a prominent landmark on the eastern edge of the Stowe Estate.



area in the early 1990s. The dressed stone blocks under a tree close to Home Farm may have originated from this building (SP 63 NE 72,130).

Water features

As well as the ponds associated with some of the park buildings, mentioned above, several other small ponds lie scattered across the park. Within the survey area, that in the Deer Park north of the Queen's Drive is more likely to belong to the early 19th century (below), but the pond close to the New Inn and that to the south of the Bycell Riding are probably 18th-century creations (SP 63 NE 194).

The major water features from this period within the park at Stowe are Oxford Water and its southern continuation, Paper Mill Lake. Oxford Water was created in around 1760, when the Dad Stream was enlarged. Together with the Oxford Bridge, it forms part of the impressive approach around the Oxford Gates (*Frontispiece*). Paper Mill Lake was made from an earlier mill pond, and formed part of the view from the southern approach, before the Queen's Drive was constructed (below) (SP 63 NE 150,165,173,185).

Haymanger Pond, in the north-eastern section of the park, was the subject of a large-scale survey by English Heritage (Riley 2000b). This large pond, created by the damming and canalization of the Roothouse River, was one of a series of three large ponds or lakes in this section of the park feeding the mill at Home Farm (below). These water features would also have also been used for fishing and wild fowling (SP 63 NE 71).

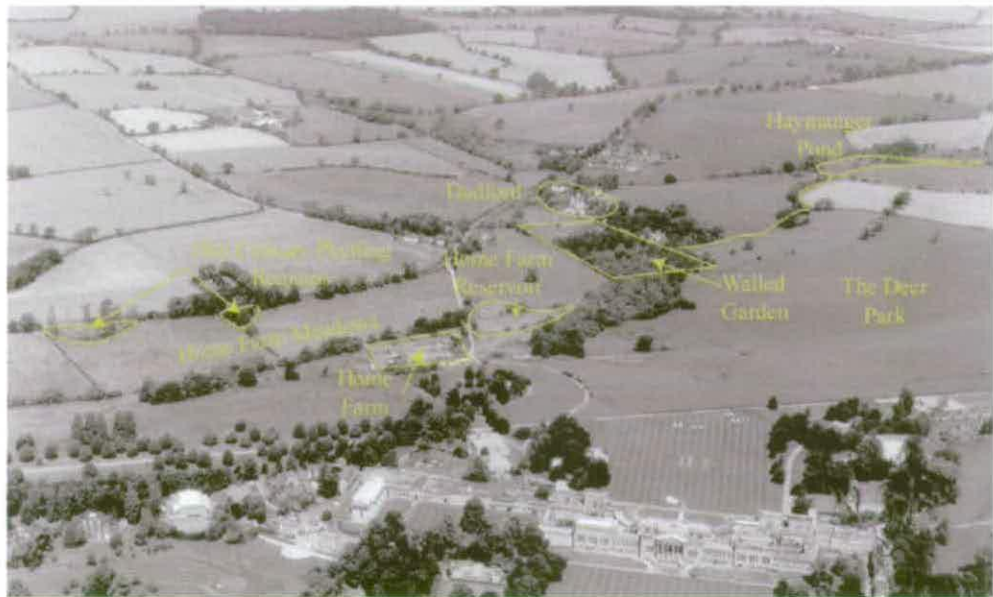


Fig. 21. Home Farm, Dadford and the Deer Park. (NMR 15096/49)

Home Farm

Home Farm, the estate farm for Stowe, lies in the valley of the Dad Stream and only a few hundred yards from the estate village of Dadford (Fig 21) (SP 63 NE 58). Home Farm was probably begun in 1787 and is an important building in its own right, with many original features surviving. The farm provided meat and dairy products to the house and managed the livestock grazing in the surrounding parks (Marshall 2000). Several features associated with the operation of the farm are preserved in Home Farm meadows, which run alongside the Dad Stream, and in the area to the north of the farm. Three walled gardens, probably built at the

very end of the 18th century, lie to the north of the farm. Only the easternmost of these belongs to the National Trust and is part of the survey area. The garden walls are of brick and survive in various states of repair. The interior of the garden is very overgrown and badly drained, although clearance work has begun. Each garden once contained a central pond and was divided by two intersecting paths (estate map of 1843), but the vegetation at the time of the survey meant that the remains of such features could not be assessed (Figs 21 and 22) (SP 63 NE 103).



Fig. 22. Extract from the 1843 estate map showing Home Farm.

To the south of the gardens is a large pond, Home Farm reservoir, the lowest of the ponds feeding the mill at Home Farm (SP 63 NE 106). Some of the retaining stone work at its southern end survives, close to the farm track. Dadford Stream itself appears to have been canalized along most of its route from Dadford, along the bottom of the gardens, and from the reservoir down the valley towards Oxford Water. This is particularly apparent on the 1843 estate map. A former watercourse is visible as a meandering earthwork in one of the three Home Farm meadows (SP 63 NE 143). As well as serving the mill, the Dad Stream fed a sheep wash. The ruins of this lie to the south of the farm, with the remains of brick and stone walls on both sides of the stream. Two brick arched bridges over the Dad Stream are part of the farm infrastructure (Fig 22) (SP 63 NE 131,132).

Tracks and carriage drives

As shown on the estate map of 1843, a series of roads, carriage drives and tracks crossed the Stowe Estate. Some of these survive in the park as earthworks. A drive was built from the

North Front to the eastern end of Dadford village, providing access to the functional part of the estate: Dadford, the walled gardens and Home Farm. This survives as a slight earthwork for part of its course, particularly east of the reservoir where it clearly overlies some ridge and furrow. The remains of the planting by this drive, shown on the 1843 map, can be seen as tree holes (SP 63 NE 101).

A substantial, flat-topped bank runs along the southern part of Home Farm meadows. This is the course of a track from the Dadford to Buckingham Road to the Dad Stream. It may have continued over the stream towards the quarries south of Home Farm, although the estate map of 1843 shows it turning north-east alongside the stream, rather than crossing it (SP 63 NE 148).

The approach to Stowe from Buckingham has been altered several times. In the 1730s, before the Corinthian Arch and the Grand Avenue were built, the approach from the south was via the Bell Gate Drive then through the Old Avenue Field south of the garden to join with the Course at the Boycott Pavilions. Part of this drive appears to survive as an earthwork in the Old Avenue Field (Fig 5)(SP 63 NE 192). It appears to overlie the surrounding ridge and furrow, but may have used an existing headland (a headland is visible to the west in the Bellgate Drive and beyond). The western end of this feature is confused by the recent use of the area as a rubbish dump. At its eastern end it is broken on the line of the Abele Walk, perhaps for the continuation of this feature executed by Bridgeman in the 1720s, or to allow the uninterrupted view from the South Front to the Corinthian Arch. If this breach was made in the 1720s, it would have been inconvenient as part of the 1730s approach to the house.

Some earthwork features marking the course of former drives or roads also survive in Culley's Park. A low bank and a hollow way, crossing the field from the SE corner to the Corinthian Arch, mark the route of a road or drive depicted on the 1814 OS map. Part of this route may also have used an existing headland. The course of the old Dadford to Buckingham road was diverted to its present position sometime between 1843 and 1880. Its course is perpetuated by a raised track which runs along the eastern side of the park and is now used for farm access.

The approaches

The Grand Avenue, a double avenue of elm and beech planted in 1774, begins at the Buckingham Lodges and ends at the Corinthian Arch (Figs 3 and 6). The avenue was felled in the 1970s due to Dutch elm disease and re-planted with beech, horse chestnuts and limes. The remains of the original planting scheme survive in the form of numerous tree holes and several, very large tree stumps (SP 63 NE 200). The Oxford Avenue, a double avenue of limes, oaks and chestnuts, was planted in the late 18th century. It largely escaped the timber sales of the 1850s, but some tree holes and stumps mark the position of fallen or felled trees (SP 63 NE 159).

Planting

The remains of the 18th-century planting on the Course are well preserved, particularly in the section between the Boycott Pavilions and the North Front. Originally the deer course at Stowe (Felus 1999, 15), the Course was planted as a double avenue of elms in 1712. This

scheme can be seen in the form of double row of very slight tree holes between the Boycott Kennels and Home Farm quarry (SP 63 NE 113).

Tree holes, a linear hollow and a small mound mark the sites of 18th-century planting schemes around the Conduit House, Wolfe's Obelisk and on the summit of the Conduit Field (SP 63 NE 90,95,97). A scarp and linear ridges mark the site of more formal planting from this time at the top of Home Farm meadows, bordering and screening the Dadford to Buckingham road (Fig 22) (SP 63 NE 139,140). Similar ridges also occur on the park boundary with this road, in the vicinity of the Oxford Gate quarries (SP 63 NE 149). Several large tree stumps in the area of the Bycell Riding survive in an arable field (SP 63 NE 77).

The nineteenth century (Fig. 23)

Although the estate suffered in the latter decades of the 19th century, with the timber sales and increasing financial troubles, the earlier part of that century saw the final phases of the development of the Stowe estate. New Park was created and much planting in this area to the south of the house was carried out. A new drive was made, drawing together many of the features in this part of the park. Improvements were also made to the approach to Home Farm from Dadford and part of the Course (probably) became a triple avenue early in the 19th century.

New Park

New Park is the area of deer park to the south and west of the gardens, bounded by the ha-ha to the north and the deer fence to the south. It was laid out by the Marquess of Buckingham from 1816 onwards and was originally stocked with red deer. It contains lakes, a carriage drive and many mature trees - most escaped the timber sales of the 1850s as they were then relatively young. The deer fence survives for much of its length along the southern edge of



Fig. 24. Looking into New Park from George's Piece. The 19th-century deer fence and gate are still in use.

Fig. 25. New Park: the Queen's Drive.



New Park (SP 63 NE 168). Some of the best preserved fence runs from the bottom of Oxford Water up through the quarries. One of the original gates is still in use, giving access to George's Piece (Fig 24). A broad, linear earthwork running from the Corinthian Arch to meet the modern road marks the course of a carriage drive. It was laid out around 1821 and named the Queen's Drive to mark Queen Victoria's visit in 1845. The modern road follows the course of the drive through New Park to join the Course at the Boycott Pavilions. The drive was planted as a double avenue with mostly oak, chestnut and lime. Although many still exist as mature trees, sites of former trees are marked by tree holes and stumps (Fig 25) (SP 63 NE 182,183).

The Upper Buckingham River (also known as the Copper Bottom Lake) and the Lower Buckingham River were developed around 1830 from the outfalls of the large water bodies in the gardens. The Upper Buckingham River has a cascade at its north-eastern end and a scarp at this end is probably associated with the lake's construction (SP 63 NE 173,185). An earth and stone dam between the two lakes carries the Queen's Drive across the valley here. East of this, a small circular depression marks the site of a pond, similar to those described above, and marked on the 1843 estate map (SP 63 NE 172).

South of New Park proper, two large fields, Culley's Park and George's Piece, were planted sympathetically. The course of the Green Drive was given a double avenue of oak, lime and chestnut in the mid- to late 19th century, and gaps in this avenue are well marked by tree holes and stumps (SP 63 NE 172).

The Northampton Drive

At the northernmost corner of the survey area part of the Northampton Drive is preserved as an earthwork where a dam carries it over the end of the Roothouse River (SP 63 NE 82). The course of the Northampton Drive in Woody Park lies outside the survey area, but is clearly visible on air photographs (106G UK 1380 9APR46 4233). The course of the drive between Woody Park and the course lies in arable fields. This drive was created by the Marquess of Buckingham in the early 19th century and brought visitors south through the Ridings, along the edge of Woody Park to join the Course near the north-east end of the Grecian valley (Fig 3).

Agriculture

The remains of narrow ridging lie in the field in the northern edge of the park, south of the canalized Roothouse River (SP 63 NE 85). The ridges are narrow and straight, suggesting that they are post-medieval in date. The 1st edition map of 1880 shows that field was not part of the park at this time, suggesting that it was under arable cultivation at this time. It may be the result of the Stowe steam plough, used by Mr Thomas Beards, steward to the Duke of

Buckingham and the tenant of Home Farm in the 1860s (Sheahan 1862). A small hollow in Home Farm meadows is probably the remains of an agricultural building – perhaps an animal shelter. It lies just to the south of a building marked on the 1880 OS map (SP 63 NE 142).

Military training at Stowe

The owners of Stowe had a long interest in both the regular army and the reserves of the Militia and Yeomanry (Bevington 1991). The Buckinghamshire Yeomanry, raised by the first Marquess in 1794, used the park at Stowe as a training ground from 1803 until the First World War. Activity was centred on the Bourbon Tower. The area of the Deer Park between the course and Lamport was used as a cavalry drill park (Fig 26). The Bourbon Tower was re-modelled as a mini fort, complete with earthworks, gun embrasures, a magazine and saluting battery. These survive around the tower (Hunt 2000). A rifle range was laid out, covering 800 yards from a point east of the tower to targets set up adjacent to the Course.

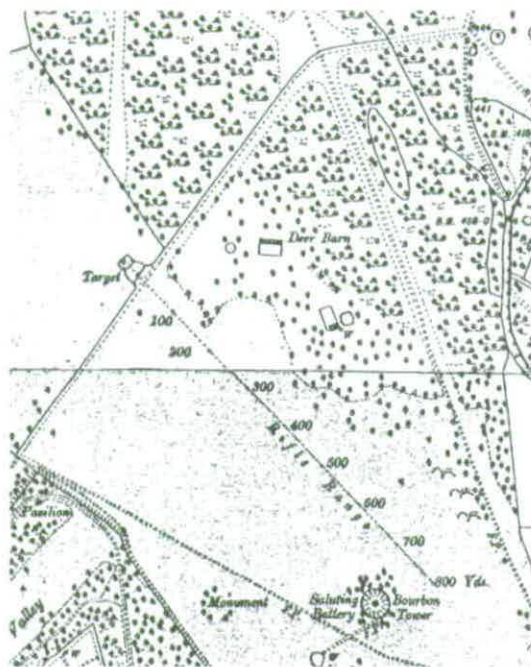


Fig. 26. Extract from the OS map of 1900 showing the rifle range, target butt and Bourbon Tower. (Buckingham sheet 8 NW and SW)

The target butts remain as a substantial but ploughed out earthwork (SP 63 NE 93). Yeomanry camps were held at Stowe in the Old Avenue Field in the latter part of the 19th century and early 20th century, hence its alternative name of Camp Field. The second Duke, as Colonel Commander, took a keen interest in the regiment. His troops erected an obelisk to his memory after his unfortunate death in 1864. This stands to the west of the Bourbon Tower on the edge of a tree clump. The long mound on the western side of the Course, opposite the bastion in the ha-ha, may have had its origins in the use of the park for military training in the 19th century, although it could equally have functioned as a 'blocking' mound (Fig 27) (SP 63 NE 114).

The post-medieval period (Fig. 23)

Several features in the park are difficult to date other than generally as post-medieval. The most important of these are the remains of gravel and sand quarries which occur across the whole of the Stowe Estate. A possible medieval quarry is described above. The quarries near Lamport and in New Park (including Culley's Park and George's Piece) all cut ridge and furrow (SP 63 NE 78, 166, 175, 186, 187). Some are located close to the main approaches – like those around the Oxford Gate, the Boycott Kennels and the Corinthian Arch (SP 63 NE 151, 152, 187). A large quarry scoop lies just to the south of the Northampton Drive, close to the Roothouse River (SP 63 NE 86). This location suggests that the gravel and sand were used in the construction and maintenance of the tracks and drives. The quarries around the Boycott Kennels may have supplied the brick-works at Boycott Manor. An area of quarrying occurs close to the Conduit House, perhaps providing material for its construction (SP 63 NE 97).

Fig. 27. The mound on the western side of the course.



The quarries at the Oxford Gate are deep and extensive. Their position, so close to the Oxford Gate, may indicate that they pre-date this approach. The quarries are not shown on the OS map of 1880. However, irregular areas of planting shown on the map follow their outline and may indicate that they had been abandoned for some time. The planting on and around these quarries now screens them from the approach (SP 63 NE 197).

The twentieth century (Fig. 28)

In 1921 what remained of the Stowe Estate was finally sold off. The house, together with the gardens, a small part of the Deer Park, New Park and the Grand Avenue became the property of Stowe School. The rest of the Deer Park became part of Home Farm. Air photographs dating from the 1940s to the 1980s show that much of the Deer Park has been ploughed at some time or other during this period.

Some planting was undertaken in the 20th century. The remains of this can be seen as trees and tree stumps in the Old Avenue Field and the Bellgate Drive.

The Second World War

The most important features from the 20th century to survive in the park at Stowe date from the Second World War. Air photographs show four zig-zag shaped slit trenches in the gardens (HSL UK 69 869 19APR 69 1065). One of these trenches, now a slight bank, lies just outside the gardens, close to the end of the ha-ha north of the Temple of Concord and Victory (SP 63 NE 129). It is shown clearly on an air photograph taken in 1946 (CPE/UK 1792 11OCT46 4185). The purpose of these trenches is unclear, Stowe School continued as a school throughout the war years. They may have been practice trenches, constructed by the school's active Officer Training Corps. Close to the trench near the North Front is a square platform, probably a tennis court (SP 63 NE 128).

Agriculture

In the Deer Park, immediately adjacent to the Course opposite the North Front, several linear channels run down-slope (Fig 15) (SP 63 NE 122). These are the result of 20th-century field drainage operations (O Jessop, pers comm). Other features connected with 20th-century agriculture include field boundaries which divided up the Conduit Field and access tracks to the barn south-east of the Conduit Field. The linear feature to the south of the barn is puzzling (SP 63 NE 100). It is slight and could conceivably be the remains of ridge and furrow. However, as there are no traces of any other ridges in the area, it may be the result of much later agricultural practice. The concrete foundations of a building lie in the Oxford Avenue, just to the south of Welsh Lane (SP 63 NE 161). This is most likely to be the remains of an agricultural building, as are the dumps of concrete rubble in the south-eastern corner of Culley's Park (SP 63 NE 177).

A large quarry south of Home Farm, still in use today, provided gravel for Silverstone aerodrome. A deep quarry pit south-west of the Corinthian Arch also dates from the twentieth century (SP 63 NE 123,207).

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The National Trust estate at Stowe contains a wide variety of extant archaeological features. There is certainly the potential for the discovery of prehistoric and Roman features in the form of buried archaeology at Stowe (below). The pre-parkland landscape contains the remains of ridge and furrow, in various stages of preservation. That contained within New Park is mostly in a good state of preservation. The remains in the Oxford Avenue and in Home Farm meadows are also in good condition.

The parks contain important buildings, and remains of their 18th-century context are preserved in the form of some trees, stumps and tree holes. The earthwork remains of small ponds also occur close to the main park buildings. The Course contains lines of tree holes showing its 18th- and 19th-century avenues. Carriage drives and tracks occur as earthworks throughout the parks, in particular the Queen's Drive survives as a subtle earthwork near the Corinthian Arch. Early 18th-century features survive as buried archaeology around the North Front of the house.

Some of the main issues to be followed up arising from this survey are as follows:

- Carry out large-scale surveys of the earthworks at Dadford and Lamport; investigate the site of Boycott as suggested by the Whittlewood Project.
- Investigate the ?quarry scarp by the Sewage Works.
- Continue working with the tenant farmer to ensure an appropriate level of stocking in New Park, and monitor the position of feeding areas and agricultural vehicle access in the park.
- Carry out geophysical survey of the North Front to confirm the layout of the early 18th-century canal and other features.

- Investigate the mound in the North Front. Is it an original feature of Nelson's Seat? Ensure the mound is adequately protected from vehicle damage.
- Investigate the slight bank overlying the ridge and furrow north of the Corinthian Arch, consider cartographic/documentary research, geophysical survey.
- Carry out geophysical survey of the Kennels area to locate the site of the building and yard shown on the 1843 estate map.
- Investigate Woody Park with particular reference to the course of the Northampton Drive and Second World War features (below). Features associated with the end of the Deer Course would also be expected in Woody Park, although the area in question is now mostly under arable cultivation.
- Commission specialist flying for air photography in drought periods, with reference to:
 - Prehistoric and Roman features
 - Earlier house/garden features around the North and South Fronts of the house in particular
- Carry out research into the 20th century, with particular reference to the Second World War. Although outside the area, the following sites are of note:
 - A Prisoner of War Camp was sited opposite the Water Stratford (see AP CPE/UK 1Y92 11OCT46 3187)
 - Air photographs taken in 1947 show some trenches of a similar shape to those located within the gardens at Stowe (CPE/UK 1926 16JAN47)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Staff at the National Trust, Stowe, were unfailingly helpful and supportive during the course of the survey. Gary Marshall, Oliver Jessop and Kate Felus (National Trust, Stowe) have provided much information about the history and archaeology of the park and gardens which forms the historical background for this survey. Richard Wheeler (National Trust, Stowe) kindly allowed me to consult his manuscript maps of the Stowe area. The tenant farmers for the National Trust at Stowe helped with information about land use in the 20th century. Colleagues at the English Heritage Exeter Office stoically recorded acres of ridge and furrow in the very wet winter of 2000-2001.

LIST OF PLANS AND DIGITAL FILES

Plots of the extant archaeological features at 1:2500 scale covering the following map tiles:
 SP 6739
 SP 6638-6738
 SP 6838

SP 6637-6737
SP 6837
SP 6636-6736
SP 6836
SP 6435
SP 6635-6735
SP 6835
SP 6834-6934

Plot of the extant archaeological features at 1:5000 scale showing suggested phasing.

Digital plan at 1:2500 scale (on CD-Rom) showing the extant archaeological features

Large-scale survey reports and plans on Haymanger Pond, the Conduit House and the Bourbon Tower

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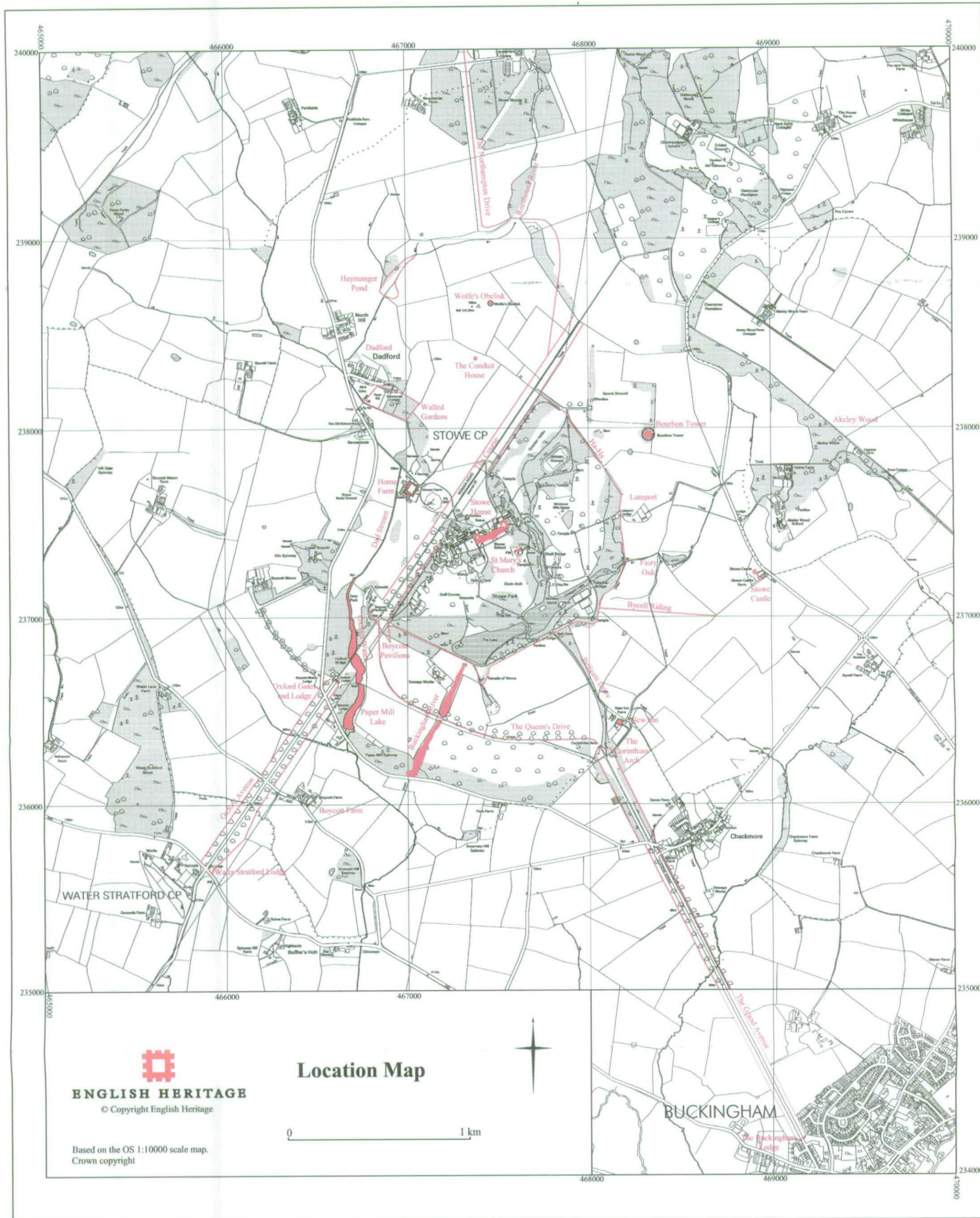


Fig. 3. Stowe: main buildings and features mentioned in the text

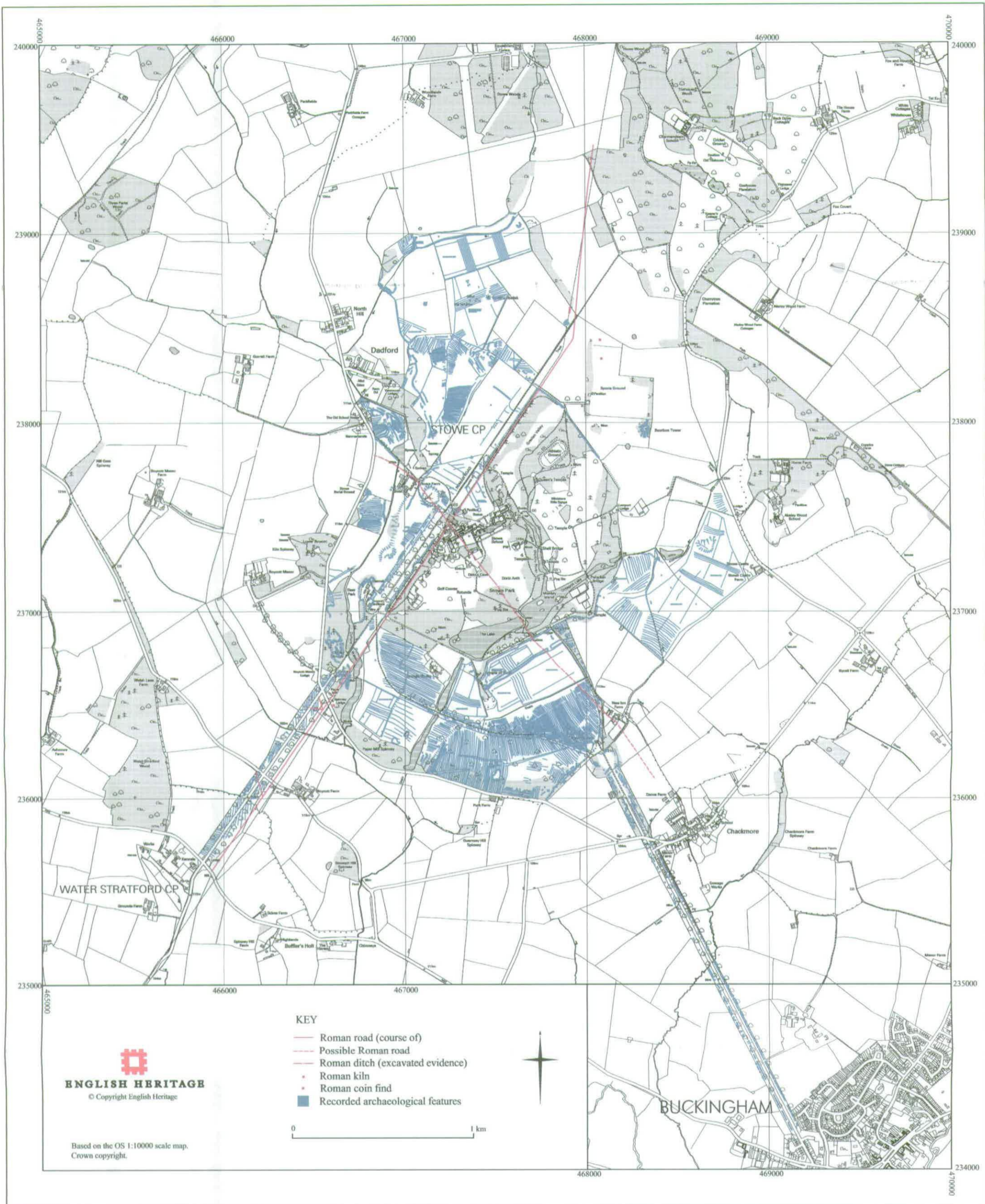


Fig. 8. Phase plan: features and finds dating from the Roman period

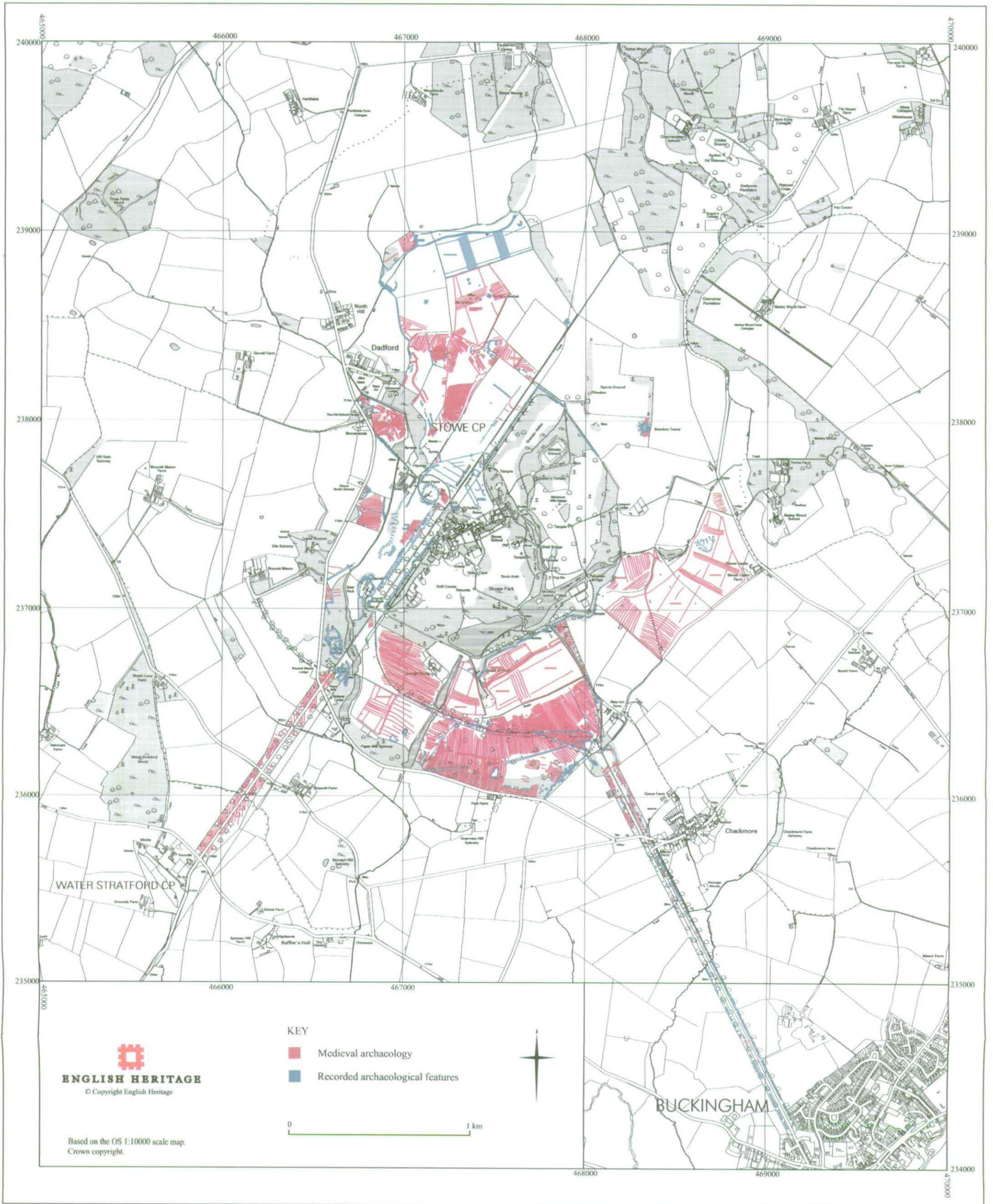


Fig. 9. Phase plan: extant features dating to the medieval period

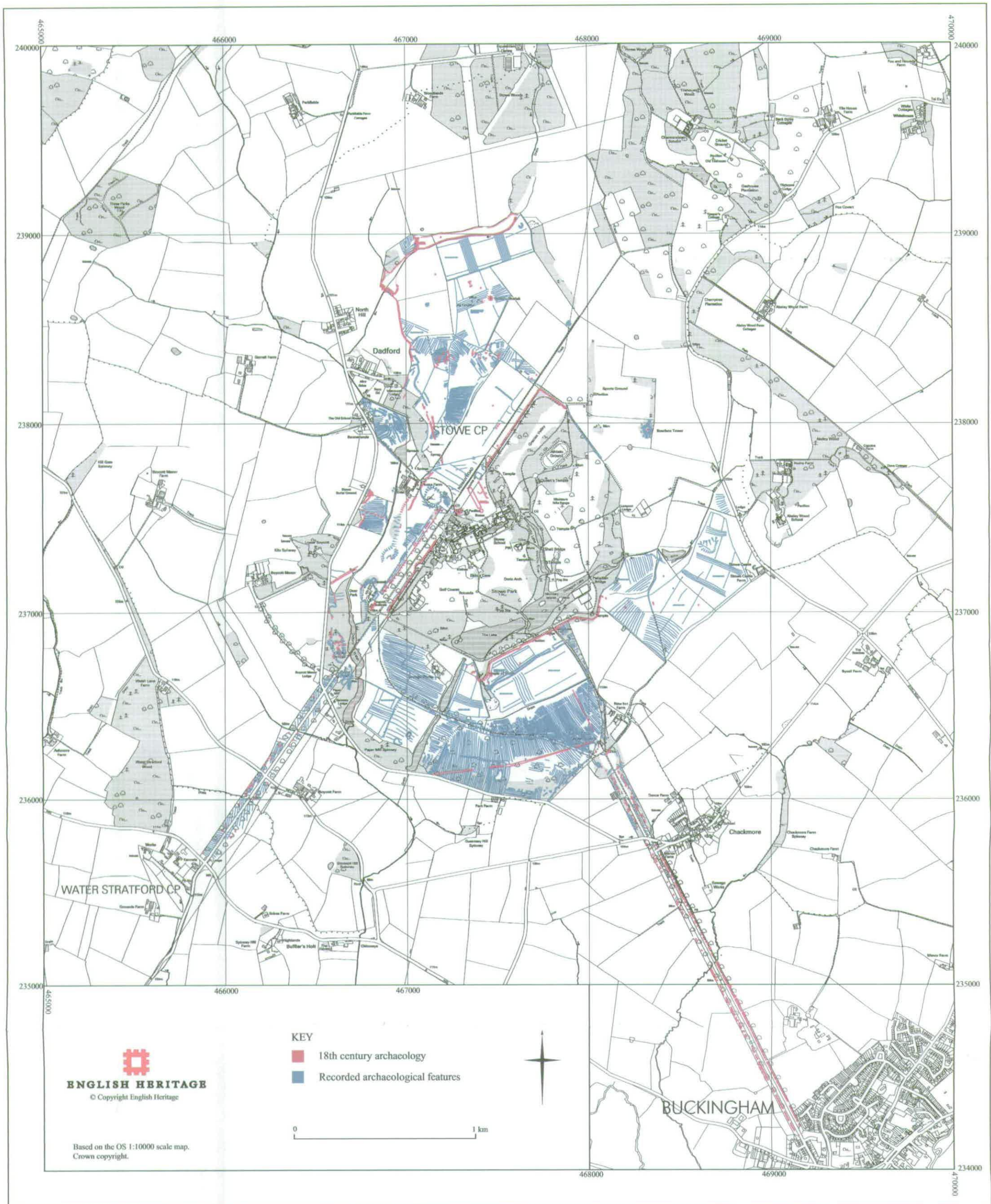


Fig. 12. Phase plan: extant features dating to the 18th century

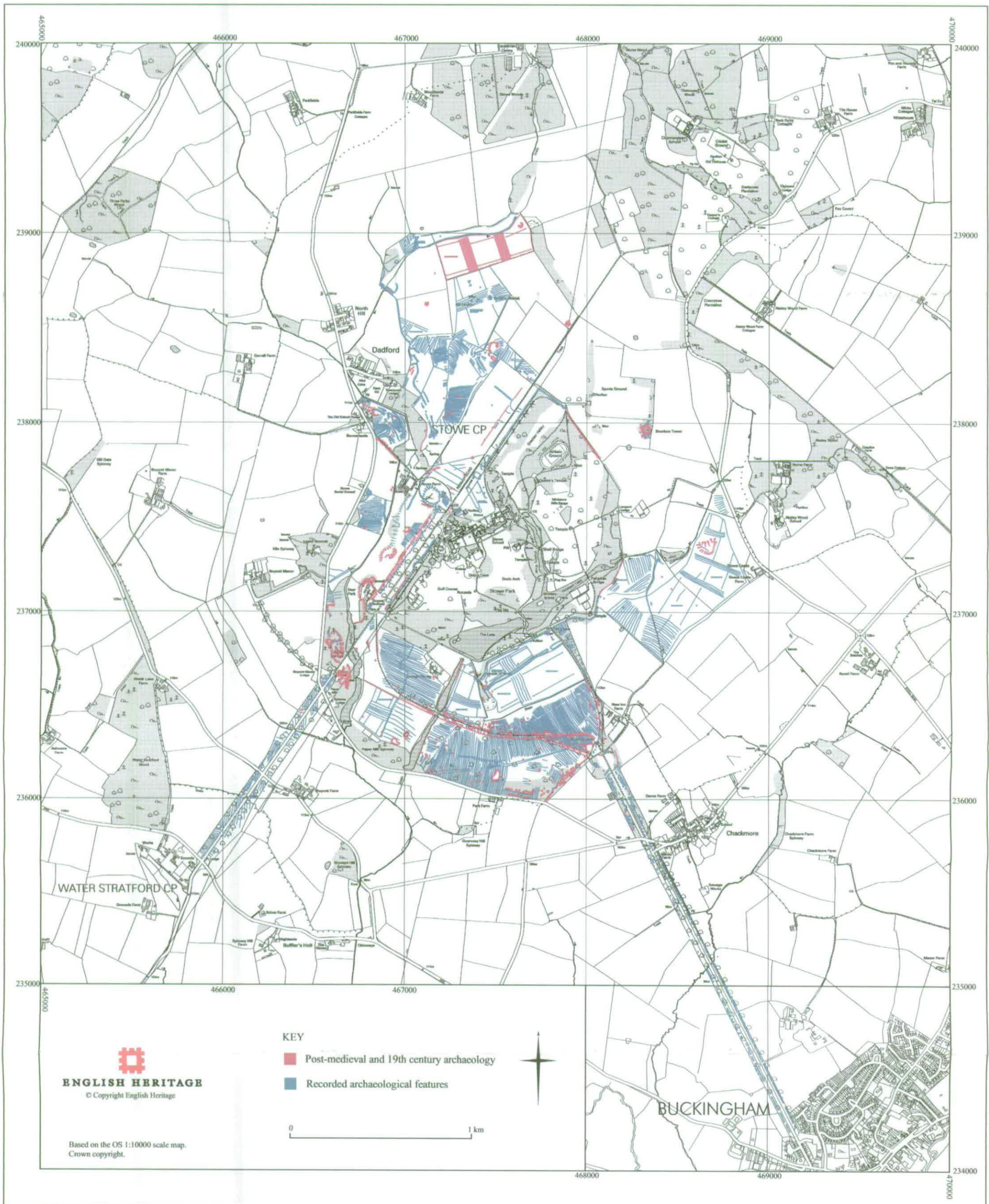


Fig. 23. Phase plan: extant archaeological features dating to the post-medieval period and the 19th century

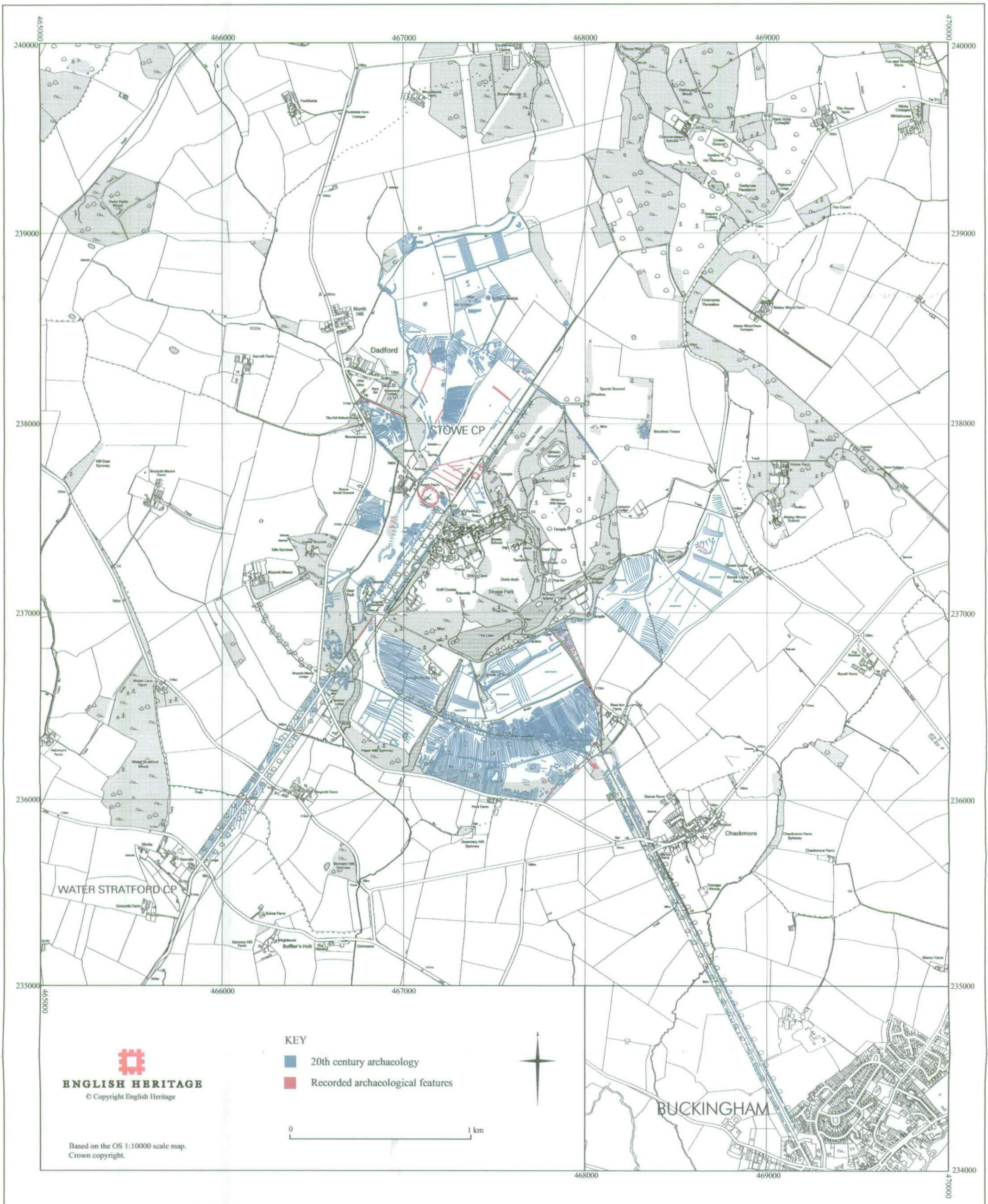


Fig. 28. Phase plan: extant archaeological features dating to the 20th century


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