

Land Between Lower Road and Bibberne Row, Stalbridge, Dorset

Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment

NGR ST 74175 17303



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

Avon Archaeology Limited was commissioned by Grass Roots Planning Ltd to undertake an archaeological desk-based assessment of land between Lower Road and Bibberne Row, Stalbridge, Dorset as part of an upcoming planning application for residential development of the area, anticipated to entail 150 residential units along with a small employment/office hub. The site is an irregular triangle in plan and contains a total of around 5.5 hectares. It is currently undeveloped farmland.

Prehistoric activity in Stalbridge may be indicated by the two field names Barrow Hill and The Ring/Ring Close to the north of the site; documentary evidence suggests that they derive from Old English terms referring to prehistoric burial mounds and stone circles respectively. Aerial photographs may show a raised mound on one of the Barrow Hill fields. Roman activity of late 3rd to mid-4th century was focussed around the Barrow Hill/Gold Street area, and there have been numerous isolated finds of Roman coins of a similar date throughout the town.

In AD998, an estate at Stalbridge, extending to 20 hides, was in the hands of the then newly-founded Sherborne Abbey, and the majority of it remained so at the time of Domesday Book. The estate contained various types of cultivated land and a mill, and within several centuries a deer park, a market, and a fair. St. Mary's Church, close to the manorial complex, is at least 12th century in date, although may have been founded substantially earlier, and it belonged to the Abbey. Although the original manor house does not survive, it may have been to the south of the church. After the Dissolution of the Monasteries, the lands of Sherborne Abbey were divided up, and a former abbot of Sherborne was granted the Stalbridge estate. It passed between a number of families and individuals from 1547 onwards.

In the post-medieval period, if not earlier, Stalbridge underwent gradual enclosure and expansion. Southern Stalbridge, in which the study site lies, underwent development from the later 18th century, although the majority of the area was not developed until the mid-20th century. The Ring was used as the location for the town's biannual fair from at least the early 18th century, and probably before.



Cartographic evidence shows that the study site had its modern day form from at least 1782. Although in 1840 the site was in use as pasture, by the 20th century it was under arable cultivation, and remains arable up to the present day. It is possible that the site is located close to the original settlement of Stalbridge, which place-name evidence suggests may have been either by Bibberne Brook or the Stour River.

Although early medieval occupation could have been centred close to the study site, there is a significant possibility that any archaeological remains on the site have been disturbed by modern ploughing techniques, and therefore the potential for in situ archaeology remains low.



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NOTES

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAL	Avon Archaeology Limited	OS	Ordnance Survey
aOD	Above Ordnance Datum		
DB	Domesday Book		
OE	Old English		
DRO	Dorset Record Office		
HER	Historic Environment Record		
NGR	National Grid Reference		
NMR	National Monuments Record		
ME	Middle English		



1 INTRODUCTION

Avon Archaeology Limited was commissioned by Grass Roots Planning Ltd to undertake an archaeological desk-based assessment of land between Lower Road and Bibberne Row, Stalbridge, Dorset as part of an upcoming planning application for residential development of the area, anticipated to entail 150 residential units along with a small employment/office hub. The proposed site is centred on NGR ST 74175 17303.

The site has a total area of just over 5.5 hectares, and is an irregular triangle in plan. It is currently undeveloped arable farmland. It is bounded to the north by Bibberne Row, to the east by Lower Road, to the south by farmed fields, and to the west by a short, unnamed residential road. For the purposes of the following discussion, the northern field is referred to as Field 1, and the southern field as Field 2 (**Figure 2**).

2 METHODOLOGY

Information was collated from the collections of the Dorset History Centre and the National Monuments Record in Swindon. Additionally, Ms Claire Pinder, Archaeology and Historic Environment Record Officer for Dorset County Council, conducted a trawl of the Dorset Historic Environment Record on behalf of AAL. A variety of online bibliographic resources, most notably COPAC, BIAB, the Archaeology Data Service, and Google Scholar, were used to identify potentially useful sources of information, whether published or otherwise¹. A visit to the site was made by the author on Wednesday, 19th June 2019 in order to create a digital photographic record.

¹www.copac.ac.uk; www.biab.ac.uk; <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/>; www.scholar.google.com



3 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The site boundaries encompass two undeveloped farmed fields, both irregularly triangular in shape and divided by a hedge line. It is bounded to the north by Bibberne Row, to the east by Lower Road, to the south by farmed fields, and to the west by a short, unnamed residential road. The ground rises gently from around 59maOD in the south-eastern corner, to around 64maOD in the north-western corner.

The BGS notes the underlying geology as:

Kellaways Formation. Mudstone, grey, commonly silici-silty or silici-sandy, with (predominantly in the upper part) beds of generally calcareous siltstone and sandstone.

However, immediately to west of the site there is a distinct geological foundation, identified as:

Cornbrash Formation. Limestone, medium- to fine-grained, predominantly bioclastic wackestone and packstone with sporadic peloids; generally and characteristically intensely bioturbated and consequently poorly bedded, although better bedded, commonly somewhat arenaceous units occur in places, particularly in the upper part. Generally bluish grey when fresh, but weathers to olive or yellowish brown. Thin argillaceous partings or interbeds of calcareous mudstone may occur.

It is possible that this outlying geology will encroach into the western bounds of the site.

4 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Modern-day Stalbridge is a civil parish in North Dorset, including the settlements of Stalbridge and Stalbridge Weston, as well as numerous outlying farms such as Gomershay and Thornhill. Although Youngs (1979)



was consulted, it gave no additional information aside from that the fact that Stalbridge is also an ancient parish.

The earliest verifiable documentary evidence for Stalbridge comes from an AD998 Anglo-Saxon charter, S 895, in which King Æthelred gave permission for the Sherborne monastic community to be converted to Benedictine rule, and confirmed the holding of 20 hides of land in Stalbridge (*Stapulbreicge*) by the monastery² (www.esawyer.org.uk; Reuter, 2005, 1). Sherborne was established as an episcopal see in AD705 (Page, 1908, 62). In AD1075, the See of Sherborne was transferred to Old Sarum and from there, to Salisbury (Page 1908, 45). Although in AD1086 the Bishop of Salisbury held the manor of Stalbridge, the Sherborne monks continued to lease from him 14 of the 20 hides of estate land (Page 1908, 7; Morris 1975). In AD1122, the abbeys of Sherborne and Horton were combined, and the resulting institution became an abbey in its own right; in AD1191, Sherborne Abbey was granted the use of Stalbridge church (Page 1908, 64). It was victim to the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1540, when its lands and properties were split between the king and various senior abbey clergy (Jones 2009, 46; Bettey 2005, 190).

Stalbridge appears in the Domesday Book of 1086 as *Staplebrige*, part of Brownsall Hundred. The name derives from OE *stapol* and *brycg*, 'bridge built on posts or piles' (Mills 1989, 280). The core of modern Stalbridge does not contain any waterways or bridges, however; both Mills and Penn think that the original settlement was probably close to the Bibberne Brook or the Stour (Mills 1989, 280). In AD1086, the manorial estate amounted to 20 hides and was in the hands of the Bishop of Salisbury, who held 6 hides in lordship. 14 hides were leased from him by the monks of Sherborne. The estate consisted

² Mills (1989, 280) lists an earlier source of AD860-865, which comes from the Cotton Faustina collection of the British Library; however, this manuscript is actually late 14th century in date, and therefore the details it gives for very early charters must be treated with some caution.



of 29 plough teams in total – a large number, given that 2 men would work each plough which would be drawn by up to 8 oxen (Aston 2002, 122) – as well as 19 villagers, 2 smallholders, and a slave. The estate included a mill, and comprised 25 acres of meadow, 4 x 2 furlongs of pasture, and 1 league x 3 furlongs of woodland. In addition, a man named Lambert held 2 hides in Stalbridge, 1 plough, and 6 smallholders; and Manasseh held 3 virgates and 1 plough which '[William] Rufus stole from the church' (Morris 1975). The picture DB paints of Stalbridge, therefore, is a fairly large, thriving place, which probably indicates that it derived from a fairly large, thriving Anglo-Saxon estate. The longevity of the church's hold there, moreover, is clear. At this time, Stalbridge Weston was its own manorial estate, known only as Weston, and consisted of 8 hides held by the Bishop of Salisbury (Morris 1975).

The exact location of the original manor house of Stalbridge is unknown, although it may have been to the south of St. Mary's Church, as Leland suggested in the early 16th century (Jones 2009, 38). It must certainly have been close, especially given that the main medieval water supply was a spring on the southern side of the church (*ibid*). In 1540 the manor was given to John Barnstaple, previously an Abbot of Sherborne, and from him it was sold to the Duke of Somerset in 1547. Very soon after, it was sold to the Audley family, who held it until 1636, and who constructed a new manor house, the ruins of which can still be seen today (Jones 2009, 50 - 53). After being in the hands of Robert Boyle and the Walter family, it was inherited by the Paget family of Anglesey in 1780, where it remained into the 20th century (Jones 2009, 58; 90; 93).

As was common practice, a deer park was attached to the manor house, which was only enclosed in 1618 when the later manor house, Stalbridge House, was built by Mervyn, Lord Audley (Jones 2009, 50 and 51; Fletcher 2011). With this enclosure Lord Audley faced virulent protests from the local



community, as the act included the removal of legal rights of common to the park land (Jones 2009, 31). A much larger 'new park' was established in the 18th century by Edward Walter, whose enclosure walls remain prominent in the landscape (Jones 2009, 51).

The Church of St. Mary must have had its origins in at least the 12th century, if not earlier, as excavations at the church have revealed earlier stone foundations underneath the still-standing 14th century fabric, on the same alignment (Hunt 1978, 117). In addition, of course, the land had been held by the clergy from at least the late 10th century, although the earliest documentary evidence for the church itself dates to AD1145 (Page 1908, 64). St. Mary's has gone through at least three phases of construction and refurbishment - 12th century or earlier, 14th century, and 19th century (Hunt 1978, 117).

During the medieval period, it is likely that the manors of both Stalbridge and Weston were surrounded by common land, open waste, and woodland, into which assarts were gradually carved (Taylor 1966, 253). In 1290, Edward I granted Sherborne Abbey the right to a market at Stalbridge, as well as free warren on their demesne lands there (Page 1908, 66); this was followed by a charter for a fair in 1335 (Jones 2009, 13). Both the weekly market and biannual fair continued into the 19th century (Jones 1993, 12; Jones 2009, 119). During the 12th to 14th century, it seems that Stalbridge grew quite noticeably, with at least seven new farms and settlements being established; including, possibly, Bibberne Bridge Farm (Taylor 1966, 253). By 1350, indeed, the manor of Stalbridge totalled 310 acres of arable land, 26 acres of meadow, and an unspecified acreage of pasture (Jones 2009, 16). Leland, writing in the 1530s, described Stalbridge as a 'pleasant but remote town with a single street of quite good buildings, with a church at its north end' (Chandler 1993, 141; Chandler's transcription). By the early 18th century, the



parish of Stalbridge included the tithings of Stalbridge Weston, Thornhill, and Gomershay, all previously manors (Hutchins 1773; DRO PE-STG/MI/1/1). Cartographic evidence, discussed further below, suggests that the modern village nucleus was more or less established by 1782; during the 18th century, Stalbridge was well-known for its silk industry, which probably accounts for such a developed town nucleus at such an early date. The industry started to fade during the early 19th century (Page 1908, 362-3). Development along outlying roads and in outlying fields took place during the mid-19th and late 20th centuries (www.old-maps.co.uk).

Although there is as of yet no archaeological evidence, a variety of documentary sources suggest that the place-names Barrow Hill Lane and The Ring, still present today, may be of pre-medieval origin. Both lie to the north-east of the development site, The Ring by about 200m and Barrow Hill a little under 800m. However, as neither have yet been entered onto the HER, I think it is worthwhile here presenting the evidence which I have collected during this study.

Barrow Hill may appear in an Anglo-Saxon boundary charter of AD933 (S 423), which describes the extent of Stalbridge Weston's manor, as *on beorhleage* (Mills 1989, 281). The OE element *beorg* translates as 'hill' or 'mound', but Gelling (1988, 132-137) highlights that this place-name element was often (although not always) applied to burial tumuli, evolving into the modern term 'barrow'. The earliest verifiable documentary evidence for Barrow Hill comes from a 1705 survey of the manor of Stalbridge (Jones 2009, 115); this is a relatively early date for an extant place-name, suggesting that it had been in use for a long time before this. As discussed below, aerial photographic, cartographic, and archaeological evidence may also indicate that Barrow Hill refers to in situ archaeological remains.



The Ring is of uncertain origin, although Mills (1989, 205) believes that it was 'no doubt originally a reference to a circular enclosure or other feature', as the OE element *hring* normally means a stone circle or enclosure specifically (Mills 1996, 126). What is most interesting is that two documents of 1731 give a secondary name for The Ring, 'the fairplace' (DRO PC-STG/7/1). As noted above, Stalbridge was granted rights to a fair in 1350, and The Ring must have been the chosen location. A further suggestion of prehistoric activity may be present in a document of 1685 (DRO D-FRY/755), which identifies a 'Longstone Meadow', although it is uncertain whether this refers to a pre-medieval or medieval stone, and it is impossible to know its exact location.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

A trawl was made of the Dorset HER on AAL's behalf by Ms Claire Pinder, covering a 500m radius from the site, which is represented in **Figure 10**. Unfortunately, the trawl only yielded two results, as very little archaeological work has been carried out there. These were Bibberne Bridge (HER 2049035 - MDO4756), probably of mid-19th century construction, and the Stalbridge Inn public house (HER DO13476 - MDO13476), which is of a slightly earlier date. However, over 50 Grade II listed buildings and monuments lie within the parish of Stalbridge, the majority within the town's nucleus itself. Most date to the 18th century onwards, but several are of 17th century origin, and there are even some such as The Old Bakehouse, High Street and the outlying Sturt Farm which contain 15th century fabric. St Mary's Church is grade II*, due to its early 13th century font and numerous extant 14th century features; a medieval stone cross, 240m south-east of the church, is also grade II* listed. Full descriptions of each of the listed buildings and monuments are available from the Historic England website.



Three archaeological investigations located outside of the radius of the HER trawl have been undertaken during recent years, which can be found on the ADS. The first was an evaluation at Barrow Lea, Barrow Hill, situated immediately to the west of the find spot of Roman coins, pottery and other artefacts. Two small walls and four possible archaeological features were recorded, and pottery of post-medieval, modern, and possible medieval date was found (Butterworth 1995; Farrars 1965, 119). In 1998, an archaeological watching brief at Dorset House, Ring Street, found a 19th century feature, a modern feature and an undated linear feature, along with post-medieval and modern artefacts (Brading 1998). An archaeological desk-based assessment carried out in the same year, centred on Grove Lane, concluded that Roman occupation was likely between Stalbridge Park and Barrow Hill, and noted a possible Roman burial uncovered 50m to the north of the assessment's study area, on Gold Street (Hawkes 1998).

The Portable Antiquities Scheme database records a large number of finds from Stalbridge parish. These include over 20 Roman coins, exclusively from the mid-3rd to mid-4th centuries; a large collection of medieval artefacts (coins, coin weights, harness pendants, etc.); and a smaller collection of post-medieval coins. One very late Iron Age silver stater of the Durotrigian style has also been found. Unfortunately, the PAS database does not allow users to access the precise OS grid coordinates of each find; however, the number of artefacts found does strongly suggest a continuous and notable human presence in the area from at least the 4th century AD.

6 SITE VISIT

The author made a site visit on Wednesday 19th November 2019, during which time a photographic record was made. A portion of the survey is represented in **Plates 1 and 2**.



Unfortunately for the purposes of this survey, both fields were under intense arable cultivation, and therefore could not be entered as such. The crops may also have hidden some of the more subtle changes in topography. However, the general slope of the land was clearly seen, with Field 1 gently sloping towards the south at its southern end, and Field 2 sloping relatively steeply towards the south-east and Bibberne Brook. The hedge line between the two runs along what is roughly the highest point of the two fields.

In terms of any indications of archaeological features, these were hidden from view by the crops.

7 HISTORIC MAP EVIDENCE

The earliest available cartographic evidence of the area is a map of the parish and tithings of Stalbridge dated to 1738 (DRO PE-STG/MI/1/1; **Figure 3** and **4**). In its bottom right-hand corner is the following inscription:

The whole town of Stalbridge in all its four tithings contains 7,280 acres in statute measure, in ?number? are 1,257 souls. The greatest length ... by Mount Pleasant ... King's Mill is 4 miles and [a] half, the greatest breadth near 4 miles. Circumference 15 [miles].

This is a relatively large size for a lowland parish, and may indicate that the Anglo-Saxon estate on which it was based was also of a large size.

The green boundary lines which separate the four tithings which make up the parish are of particular interest. The boundary line between Weston tithing and Stalbridge 'town' tithing runs between what was then Green Lane and Barrow Hill, directly through the 1840 tithe plot 8, and roughly 100m south-west of the possible mound shown on aerial photograph RAF/58/0598, Frame



85. As stated above, Mills (1989, 281) hypothesized that the modern Barrow Hill appears in the 933AD Anglo-Saxon boundary charter S 423 as *on beorhleage*, separating Stalbridge Weston and Stalbridge; the tithing boundary line on this map adds significant weight to this assertion. It is interesting to note that Barrow Hill was a short road at this date, indicating that it was indeed named after a specific feature very nearby.

Other cartographic elements of note are the inclusion of The Ring and *Bibburn* (Bibberne) Bridge in the key, as well as 'The Bridge', which I cannot locate on the map itself; there is a possibility that this refers to the bridge after which Stalbridge was named. Despite there possibly being a settlement at Bibberne in the 14th century (see above), this 1731 map does not show any occupation in the area. Although known by a different name, Lower Road was well established by this date.

In 1781 – 2, the estate of the manor of Stalbridge was surveyed and drawn, with agreed field enclosures, outlined in blue, latterly added (DRO D.1490/1; **Figures 5** and **6**). This was accompanied by a survey book (DRO D-484/15/2), which we can compare with the later 1840 tithe apportionment discussed below. The newly enclosed fields shown on the 1782 map included Field 1 of the study site (erroneously labelled 'Sandals', although recorded as 'Sandhills' in the survey), and several plots to the south of the study site. Although the Parliamentary Act of Enclosure was passed in 1811 (DRO D1/10345), which completed the process of dividing up and enclosing areas of common land and selling the plots to private owners (see, for example, Tate 1943), enclosure was practiced before this through verbal or written agreements between lords of the manor and their tenants. This was clearly the case in Stalbridge. A large number of the fields surrounding the study site were characterised by the straight sides of enclosure rather than the curved, reverse S shape of medieval open field systems by 1782 (Tate 1943; Eyre



1955). The element *close* in many of the 1782 survey plots, including the Ring Closes, may also reflect early enclosure. The word is of ME origin (Field 1972, 268) referring specifically to an 'enclosure; fenced or hedged piece of land'. Indeed, Whitfield (1981) has shown that open field enclosure occurred in nearby Henstridge as early as the 13th century.

The nucleus of the village of Stalbridge in 1782, centred on the manorial complex and church, closely mirrored the core of Stalbridge today. Although most of the southern half of modern Stalbridge had not yet been constructed, a number of buildings had sprung up on newly enclosed land centred at the meeting place of the modern Thornhill Road and Lower Road. A short track running down the eastern side of Field 1, corresponding to the modern unnamed residential road, had been established, although no buildings are depicted alongside it. As discussed earlier, the Old Park and New Park had been newly enclosed. The majority of field names listed in the 1782 survey were still in use in 1840, although a number of the fields were much larger in size in 1782 (such as Higher and Lower Ring Close, Stephen's Leaze, Redbrinks, and Hindle's Ground). It is likely that the plots which only appear from 1840 onwards were carved out of these previously much larger fields.

The Stalbridge tithe map was published in 1839 (**Figure 7**), with its corresponding apportionment being completed the following year. An extract of the apportionment, showing plots in the vicinity of the study site, is presented below in **Table 1**. At this time the parish of Stalbridge totalled 5,630 acres, with 4,233 acres being meadow or pasture and 1,248 arable. The remaining land was woodland, common or waste.



Table 1

Extract from Stalbridge tithe apportionment, 1840 (DRO D-484/18/1)

A – Acres; R – Roods; P – Perches³

Owner	Occupier	Plot No.	Description	Land Use	A	R	P
Henry William Marquis of Anglesey	Robert Cook	532	Wash house and garden, formerly part of Ring Close	Arable	1	0	0
Henry William Marquis of Anglesey	Labourer's allotments, 64 in number	533	Higher and Lower Ring Closes	Arable	14	0	17
Henry William Marquis of Anglesey	Elias Duffet	534	Part of Lower Ring Close	Arable	0	3	7
William Taylor, lessee to Henry William Marquis of Anglesey	Himself	535	Barn, yard and garden	Pasture	0	0	19
John Glyde, lessee to Henry William Marquis of Anglesey	Henry Taylor	536	Sand Hills	Pasture	6	2	4
Henry William Marquis of Anglesey	Charles James	537	Sand Hills	Pasture	7	3	0
Rev. Littleton Charles Powys (glebe)	Samuel Harris	538	Bibbern	Meadow	7	3	27
Matthew Burge	Himself	539	Bibbern	Pasture	6	2	33
Henry William Marquis of Anglesey	William Taylor	540	Hindley's Ground	Pasture	6	3	24
Henry William Marquis of Anglesey	William Taylor	541	Hindley's Ground	Arable	3	0	22
Henry William Marquis of Anglesey	John Longman	542	Gill's Mead	Pasture	3	0	6
Henry William Marquis of Anglesey	Labourer's Allotments, 17 in number	543	Windsor Pleck	Arable	3	3	13
Henry William Marquis of Anglesey	John Talbot	544	Pleck	Arable	3	0	3
Henry William Marquis of Anglesey	William Moore	552	Redbrinks	Meadow	3	3	23
John Glyde, lessee of Henry William Marquis of Anglesey	William Taylor	553	Longmead	Meadow	5	3	16
John Glyde, lessee of Henry William Marquis of Anglesey	Henry Taylor	592	Gooseham	Pasture	2	3	26
Henry William Marquis of Anglesey	John Antell	763	Stephen's Leaze Mead	Meadow	8	3	15
Henry William Marquis of Anglesey	Edith Green	764	Stephen's Close	Pasture	8	3	27
Robert Shepard, lessee to Henry William Marquis of Anglesey	Edith Green	765	Paine's Hill	Pasture	0	3	32
Robert Shepard, lessee to Henry William Marquis of Anglesey	James Eavis	766	Bibbern's or Lane End	Pasture	3	0	1
Henry William Marquis of Anglesey	Samuel Harris	767	New Meadow	Pasture	5	0	1
Henry William Marquis of Anglesey	Samuel Harris	768	New Meadow	Pasture	3	1	28
Henry William Marquis of Anglesey	William Moore	769	Southwells	Pasture	7	0	12
Henry William Marquis of Anglesey	Mary Crew	770	Nettle Bed or Garden	Garden	0	2	30
Henry William Marquis of Anglesey	John Hoddinott	771	Southwells	Pasture	3	2	32

³ There were traditionally 4 roods to the acre, and 40 perches to the rood. An acre is the equivalent of 0.405ha (or just over 4,000m²), and this therefore makes a rood about 1012m², and a perch just over 25m²



The study site, tithe plots 536 and 537, was in use as pasture and known as Sand Hills, surely a description of the soil composition and the topography. In fact, the vast majority of the field names listed refer to either the topography, size, use, or ownership of the land, and are for the most part self-explanatory (including Paine's Hill, which was named after Walter Payne in 1350 (Mills 1989, 287)). However, several plots have place-name elements which have now gone out of use or may be of special interest: Bibbern, (Windsor) Pleck, and Redbrinks. Mills (1996, 35) traces Bibbern back to AD933, when it was known as *Bydeburnan*, OE *byden* + *burna*, 'stream in a hollow'. Pleck derives from the ME *plek*, 'small piece of land' (Field 1972, 273). Redbrinks may of interest because of the element *brink*, 'edge of land before a steep slope or body of water', which the Oxford Dictionary notes was incorporated into ME from the Scandinavian languages. This would indeed fit with the topography of the area; the element *red* is probably a description of the soil's colour (cf. Field 1972, 181). What is of interest is the Scandinavian influence so far south.

In terms of development of the town between 1782 and 1840, this had been minimal. Several new buildings had been erected where the modern Thornhill Road and Lower Road meet, Barrow Hill Farm had been established, and one of the fields on the western side of The Ring (tithe plots 851 – 852 and 1782 plot 150) had been divided into a large number of small strips, presumably owned or leased to different individuals. No other notable changes had taken place.

I discovered during the course of this research that, according to the tithe apportionment, Barrow Hill field names are restricted to tithe plots 8, 9 and 10; the possible feature discussed in the aerial photographic section sits within tithe plot 8. Surrounding fields, such as tithe plots 14b and 15, are described



as ‘Stone’s Ground against Barrow Hill’; suggesting, again, that the Barrow Hill field name applied to a very specific area.

Southern Stalbridge had been noticeably developed by the 1888 1st edition 6” OS map (**Figure 8**), with rows of cottages being established on both sides of modern Ring Street and the eastern side of Thornhill Road. The entire area was from this time known as ‘The Ring’. To the south of our site, Bibberne Farm had been erected; as noted above, this farm may be built on the remains of earlier occupation. The railway had also come to Stalbridge, running along its western side.

Almost no development had occurred by the time of the 1902 2nd edition 1:2500 OS map (**Figure 9**), although a number of fields throughout the town had been converted into allotment gardens, including those directly to the north and east of the study site, and one small shed or outbuilding had been constructed along the eastern side of Field 2. Two additional outbuildings were erected in the north-west corner of Field 1 during the 1930s. More intense development took place later in the century, with large-scale construction centred on and around Thornhill Road, Lower Road, and Ring Street occurring between the 1960s and 1980s (www.old-maps.co.uk). Modern aerial imaging suggests that Field 1 still contains at least one outbuilding in its north-west corner.

8 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHIC AND LIDAR EVIDENCE

A trawl of aerial photographs held at the Historic England Archive in Swindon (the NMR) was kindly made on behalf of AAL by staff there, and a personal visit was made by the author in order to view them. LIDAR data extracted from the Environment Agency was also consulted.



Only a small number of aerial photographs are available of the area from the NMR, which are presented in **Appendix 1**. All of the earliest photographs, dating to 1947, clearly show modern arable cultivation. Although nothing of archaeological interest was seen on our site in any photograph, photograph RAF/58/0598, Frame 84, shows a possible large circular feature in the field directly south of Bibberne brook and immediately to the west of Bibberne Farm; this could not be seen in any other photographs, and whether it is an archaeological feature is uncertain. To the north of our site, on photograph RAF/58/0598, Frame 85, a small mound can clearly be seen in the field to the north of Barrow Hill, part of tithe plot 8. Again, this is not visible in any other photograph, and indeed, a tree sits in roughly the same spot on photograph RAF/CPE/UK/1974, Frame 3171. Therefore, the mound may reflect a natural feature rather than an archaeological feature; but, given the field name, it may equally be the elusive barrow alluded to in surrounding place-names.

Unfortunately, there is no available LIDAR data for the area at either a 1m or 2m resolution.

9 PLANNING POLICIES

9.1 In North Dorset, planning policies both national and local relating explicitly to matters of the historic environment, including archaeology, and which have direct implications for the site under consideration here, are laid out in the National Planning Policy Framework and the North Dorset District Council Local Plan.

9.2 At the national level, guidance is set down by the National Planning Policy Framework, July 2018, Department of Communities and Local Government. See especially Section 16, Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, 54-57.



9.3 For North Dorset specifically, the historic environment is considered in policy 5 of the Local Plan (adopted 2016), which states that:

(Paragraph 4.114) The District's rich historic environment is one of its key strengths, which needs to be conserved and enhanced for future generations. National policy indicates that local planning authorities should set out in their local plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment....

(Paragraph 4.137) The Council will expect developers to identify any heritage assets that may be affected by their development proposals and describe the significance of the identified assets including any contribution made by their setting. The significance should be described in terms of the heritage asset's archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interests....

(Paragraph 4.159) Due to the often hidden nature of archaeological remains, it is not always possible to identify the locations of such heritage assets. Similarly, important features and fabric of listed buildings can often be hidden during different phases of construction or due to later alterations. For this reason, a desk based assessment of any development site which may contain hidden or unidentified heritage assets should be submitted along with applications for development.

9.4 Dorset has an important legacy of heritage and cultural assets. There are a wide range of designated and undesignated historic buildings, archaeological sites and remains, and historic parks and gardens as well as places, areas and landscapes of historic interest. Information about the county's heritage assets can be found in the Dorset Historic Environment Register. These assets make a significant contribution to the identity of the locality in which they are set, helping to create a sense of place. Applications for development which affect heritage assets and their settings directly or indirectly will need to describe the nature of the significance of the assets affected, and set out how development will maintain and enhance heritage assets and their settings in a manner appropriate to that significance. New



development should seek opportunities to draw on the historic environment in order to maintain and enhance local character and distinctiveness.

10 CONCLUSION

Despite a paucity of archaeological investigation in Stalbridge, other sources allow us to paint a broad picture of the development of the settlement from at least the late Roman period. Earlier activity may be indicated by the two field names Barrow Hill and The Ring/Ring Close; documentary evidence suggests that they derive from OE terms referring to prehistoric burial mounds and stone circles respectively. Although there are no indications of extant remains near The Ring, aerial photographs may show a raised mound on one of the Barrow Hill fields – although this is not necessarily archaeological.

Roman activity was focussed around the Barrow Hill/Gold Street area, where occupation debris dating to the late 3rd to mid-4th century and a possible burial have been found. There have been numerous isolated finds of mid-3rd – mid-4th century Roman coins throughout Stalbridge, suggesting that the population was at least travelling through the area regularly at that time.

An estate at Stalbridge existed from at least the late 10th century, although it may have been established during the previous century. In AD998, it was in the hands of the monks of Sherborne; although the See of Sherborne had been transferred to the Bishop of Sarum by AD1086, the majority of the Stalbridge lands remained in the monks' hands at the time of DB. Between these two dates, the size of the manorial estate was unchanged, at 20 hides. It comprised a variety of cultivated land and a mill, and within several centuries a deer park, a market, and a fair. St. Mary's Church, close to the



manorial complex, is at least 12th century in date, although may be substantially older. It belonged to Sherborne Abbey, from at least the mid-12th century. Although the original manor house does not survive, it may have been to the south of the church; the ruins which can still be seen today pertain to a later manor house, constructed in 1618. After the Dissolution of the Monasteries, the lands of Sherborne Abbey were divided up, and an abbot of Sherborne was granted the Stalbridge estate. The estate was passed between a number of families and individuals from 1547 onwards, including the lords of Audley and of Anglesey.

In the post-medieval period, if not earlier, Stalbridge underwent gradual enclosure and expansion. A large number of listed buildings still stand in Stalbridge, most dating to the 17th century onwards. Southern Stalbridge, in which the study site lies, underwent development from the later 18th century, although the majority of the area was not developed until the mid-20th century. The Ring was used as the location for the town's biannual fair from at least the early 18th century, and probably before.

Cartographic evidence shows that the study site had its modern day form from at least 1782. Although in 1840 the study site was in use as pasture, by the 20th century it was under arable cultivation, and remains arable up to the present day. Despite being farmed land even in the earliest cartographic sources, it is possible that the site is located close to the original settlement of Stalbridge, which place-name evidence suggests may have been either by Bibberne Brook or the Stour River.

Although early medieval occupation could have been centred close to the study site, there is a significant possibility that any archaeological remains on the site have been disturbed by modern ploughing techniques, and therefore the potential for in situ archaeology remains low.



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- 1781-2 Survey accompanying DRO D.1490/1. DRO D-484/15/2
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- 1839 Stalbridge tithe map. T/STG
- 1840 Stalbridge tithe apportionment. DRO D-484/18/1

NMR, Aerial Photographs

- | | | |
|------|-----------------|------------|
| 1947 | RAF/CPE/UK/1974 | Frame 3171 |
| 1970 | RAF/58/0598 | Frame 84 |
| 1970 | RAF/58/0598 | Frame 85 |

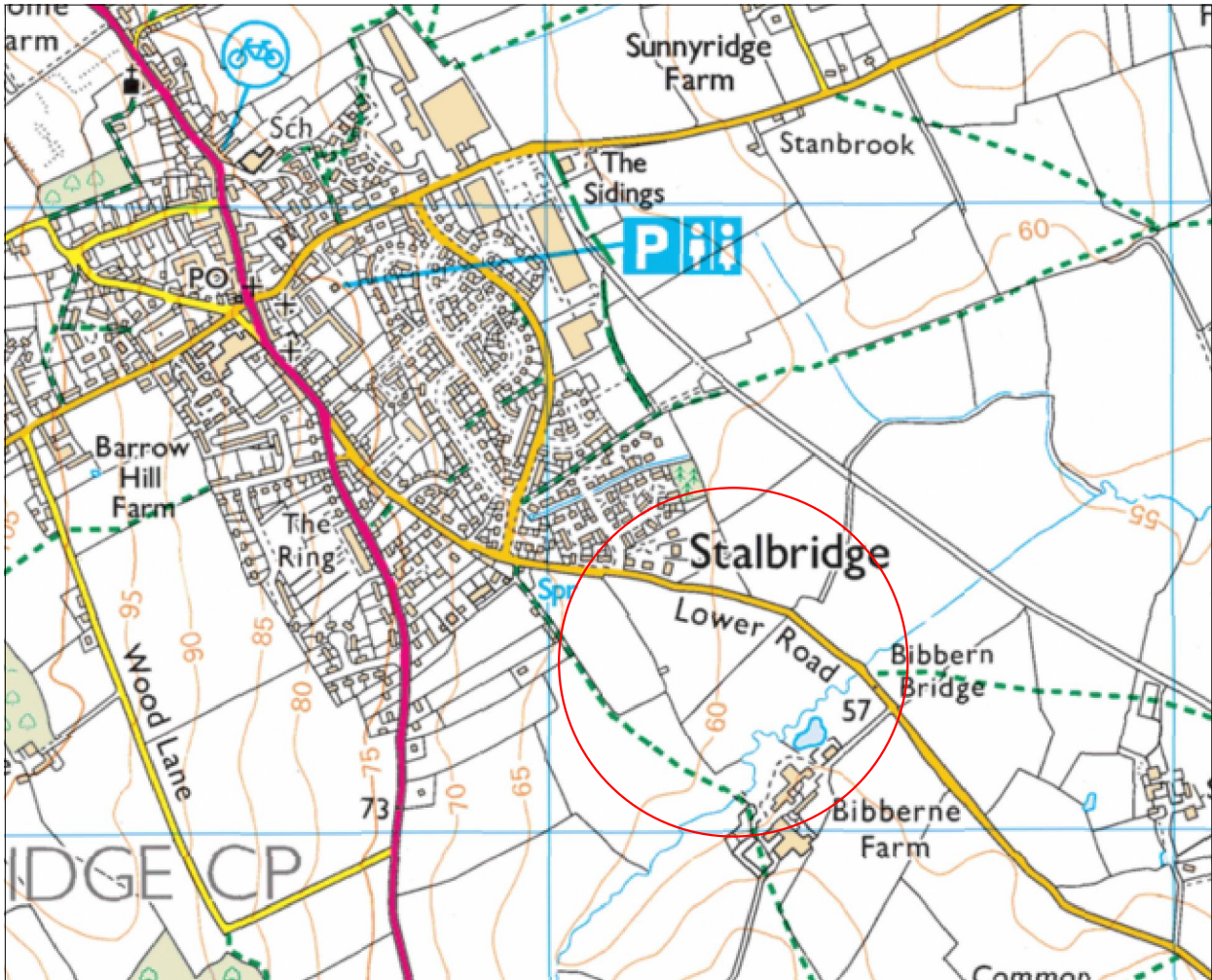


Figure 1

Site Location Plan

Grid lines at 1km

 Site location

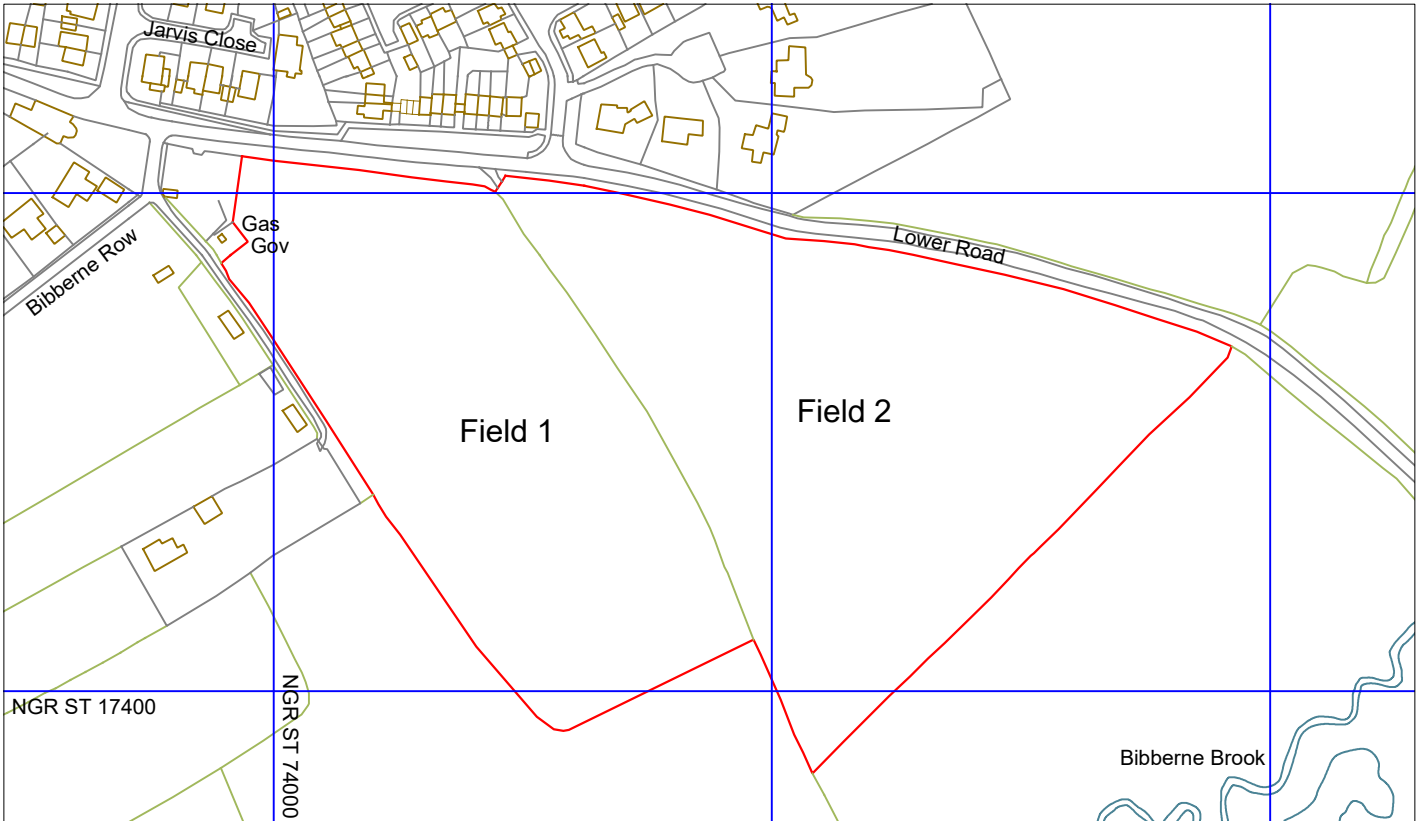


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Figure 2

Site plan showing red line boundary
Grid lines at 200m intervals



— Site boundary





Figure 3

1738 map of the parish of
Stalbridge (DRO PE-STG/MI/1/1)
Unscaled



Figure 4

Detailed extract from the 1738 map of the parish of Stalbridge, showing Barrow Hill tithing boundary. (DRO PE-STG/MI/1/1). Unscaled



Source: DRO

— Site boundary





Figure 5



1781-2 map of the manors of Stalbridge, Anteo and Stalbridge Weston, with later pencil additions showing enclosure (DRO D.1490/1)

Source: DRO

Figure 6

Detailed extract of the 1781-2 map of the manors of Stalbridge, Anteo and Stalbridge Weston, with later pencil additions showing enclosure (DRO D.1490/1)

Source: DRO



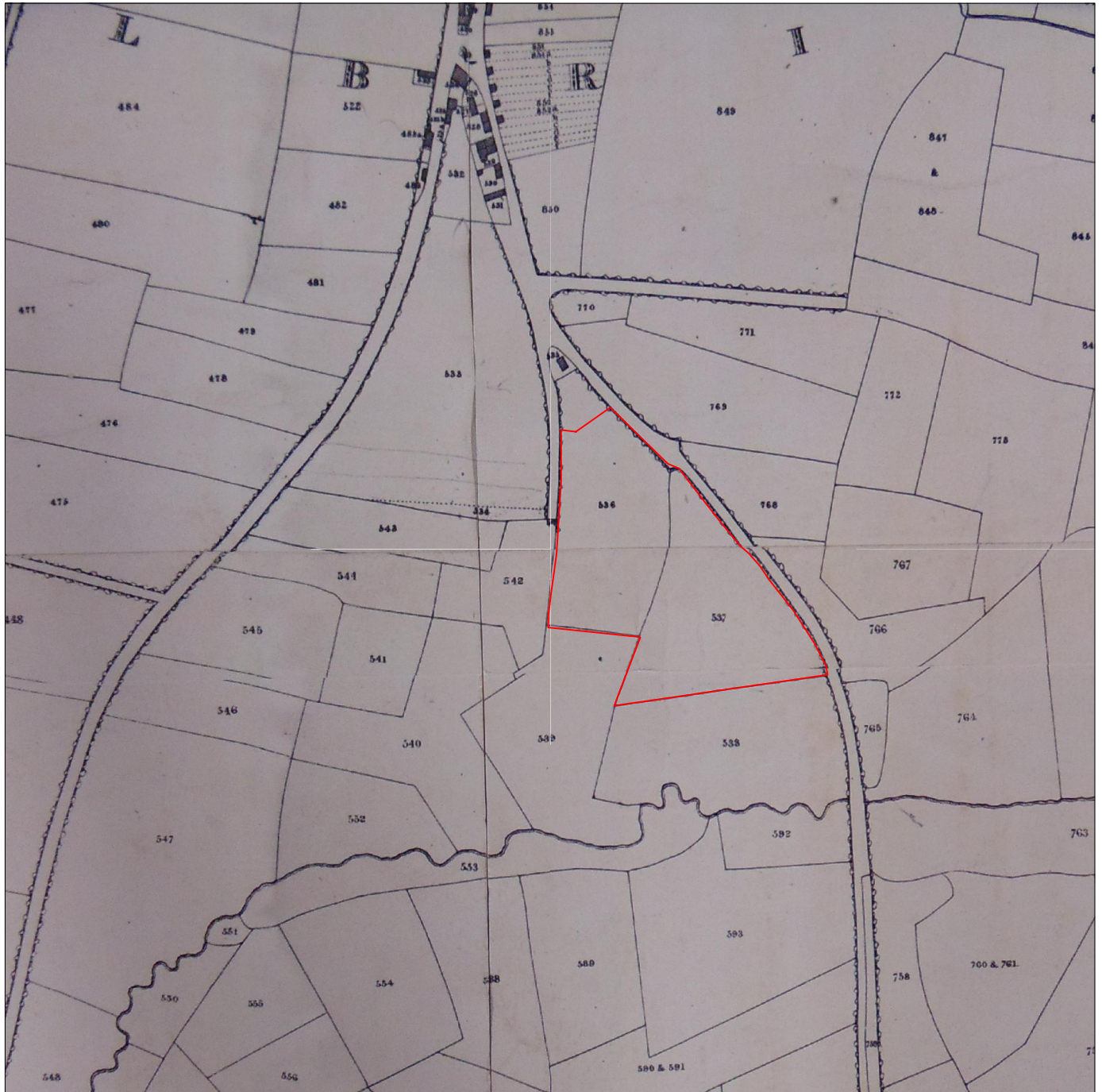
— Site boundary



Figure 7

Detailed extract of the 1839 Stalbridge tithe map (DRO D-484/18/1)

Source: DRO



— Site boundary

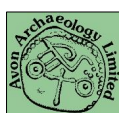
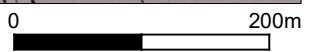


Figure 8

Detailed extract from the 1888 1st edition 6" OS map, sheet Dorset:
VII S.W

Source: DRO



— Site boundary

0 200m



Figure 9

Detailed extract from the 1902 2nd edition 1:2500 OS map, sheet Dorset:
VII.9

Source: NLS

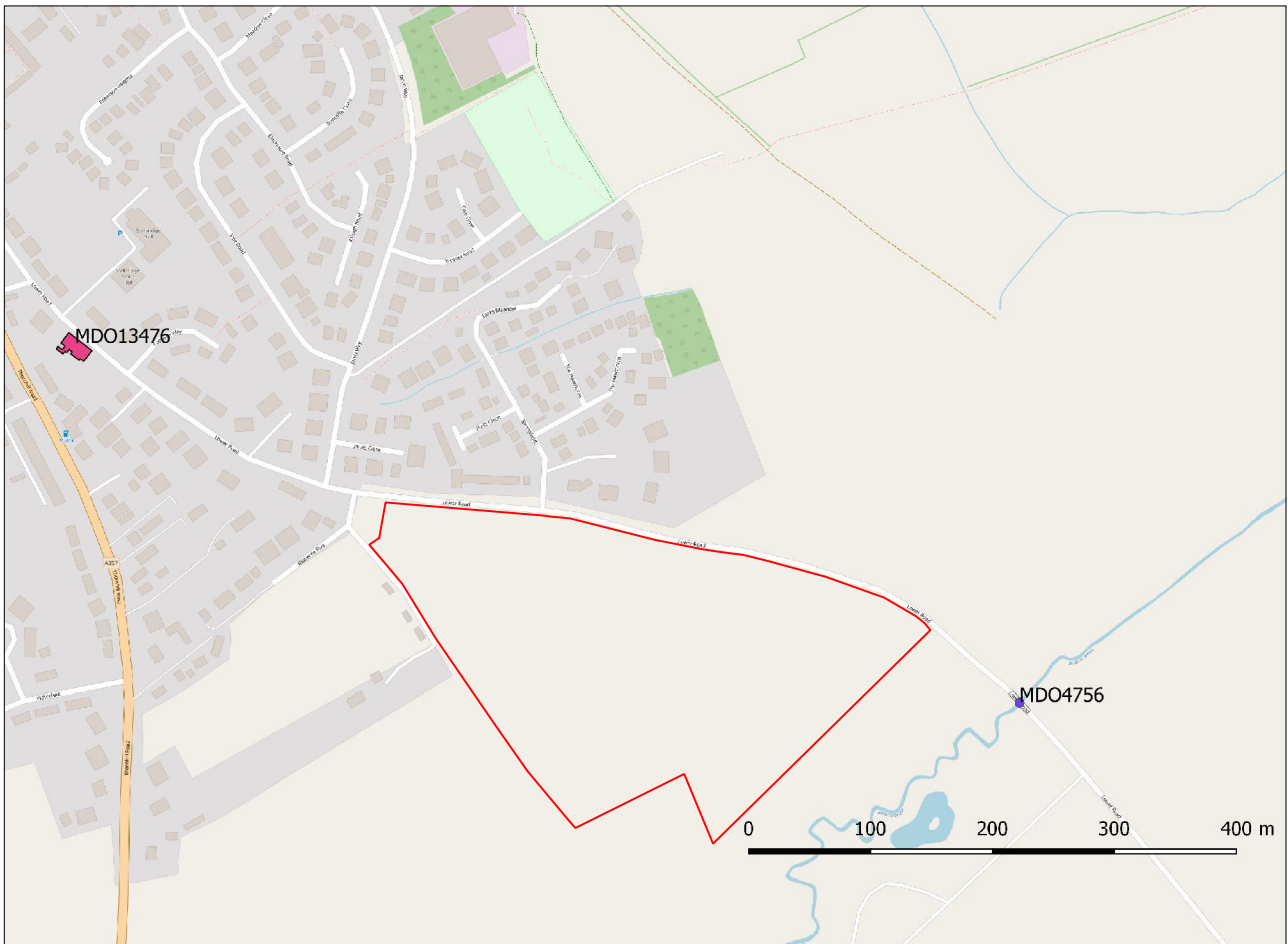


— Site boundary



Figure 10

Dorset Historic Environment Record: Monuments. Results of data trawl



— Site boundary



Plates



Plate 1. Panorama of Field 1, looking south to north-west.



Plate 2. Panorama of Field 2, looking south-east to south.

Appendix: Results of NMR trawl

HISTORIC ENGLAND Air Photographs

Full single listing - Verticals, Standard order

Customer enquiry reference: 119909

Sortie number	Library number	Camera position	Frame number	Held	Centre point	Run	Date	Sortie quality	Scale 1:	Focal length (in inches)	Film details (in inches)	Film held by
RAF/CPE/UK/1924	550	FS	2310	P	ST 739 173	28	16 JAN 1947	AC	10000	20	Black and White 8.25 x 7.5	NMR
RAF/CPE/UK/1924	550	FS	2311	P	ST 745 171	28	16 JAN 1947	AC	10000	20	Black and White 8.25 x 7.5	NMR
RAF/CPE/UK/1944	561	FS	2343	P	ST 746 168	10	23 JAN 1947	AB	10000	20	Black and White 8.25 x 7.5	NMR
RAF/CPE/UK/1944	561	FS	2344	P	ST 739 170	10	23 JAN 1947	AB	10000	20	Black and White 8.25 x 7.5	NMR
RAF/CPE/UK/1974	583	RP	3170	P	ST 741 166	22	11 APR 1947	A	9960	20	Black and White 8.25 x 7.5	NMR
RAF/CPE/UK/1974	583	RP	3171	P	ST 734 169	22	11 APR 1947	A	9960	20	Black and White 8.25 x 7.5	NMR
RAF/58/0598	1955	V	84	P	ST 744 166	4	06 JUL 1970	AC	13000	6	Black and White 9 x 9	NMR
RAF/58/0598	1955	V	85	P	ST 734 173	4	06 JUL 1970	AC	13000	6	Black and White 9 x 9	NMR
OS/74058	12030	V	148	P	ST 737 170	4	15 MAY 1974	A	7600	12	Black and White 9 x 9	NMR
OS/74058	12030	V	149	P	ST 737 176	4	15 MAY 1974	A	7600	12	Black and White 9 x 9	NMR
OS/011005	15807	V	9237	P	ST 744 169	3	07 MAY 2001	A	8000	6	Black and White 9 x 9	NMR
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OS/97794	22515	V	14	N	ST 744 175	1	16 SEP 1997	A	7000	12	Black and White 9 x 9	NMR
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Total Sorties 8

Total Frames 16

