

# Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

<b>Civil Parish &amp; District:</b> Dartington, South Hams	<b>National Grid Reference</b> SX 77890 63006	<b>Number:</b> (Leave blank for HES to fill in)
<b>Subject:</b> Archaeological monitoring and assessment at Huxham's Cross Farm, Rattery Road Dartington, Devon		<b>Photo attached?</b> Y / N  N
<b>HET Ref:</b> Arch/DM/SH/30644a		
<b>Planning Application no:</b> 0632/17/FUL	<b>Recipient museum:</b> N/A	
<b>OASIS id:</b>	<b>Museum Accession no:</b> N/A	
<b>Contractor's reference number/code:</b>  N/A	<b>Dates fieldwork undertaken:</b>  23-Jan-2018/ 12-Apr-2018	
<p><b>Description of works.</b></p> <p><i>Summary</i></p> <p><i>An archaeological assessment (watching brief) was carried out on land at Huxham's Cross Farm, Dartington, prior to the construction of a training centre. The works included digging foundations for a single timber building, and creation of pond earthworks. Machine excavated groundworks were archaeologically monitored as a precautionary step, to prevent the unrecorded destruction of any archaeological features that may survive. No archaeological features were encountered in the shallow topsoil and no evidence of any human intervention was visible in the dense shale geology below.</i></p> <p><b>The development</b></p> <p><i>Site location</i></p> <p>The site lies within a former pasture, 225m south-west of Huxham's Cross in Dartington parish. It is located just east of a lane, on land sloping to the south east, at a height of approx 70m above OD. The land is currently in horticultural use. A recently (2015) constructed barn exists on the property, just to the north of the proposed new building.</p> <p><i>Geology</i></p> <p>The site lies within Middle Devonian Slate of the Norden Formation (BGS sheet 350, Torquay), which outcrops less than 30cm below the surface. The soil is of a freely draining slightly acid, loamy type, used in the past for a range of crops and well suited to pasture (<a href="http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/index.cfm">www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/index.cfm</a>).</p> <p><b>Archaeological Context</b></p> <p>The archaeological record in this area of South Devon contains a high number of crop mark sites, discovered from targeted aerial reconnaissance and in some cases confirmed by other forms of evidence including geophysical survey. This includes a hilltop enclosure of probable late prehistoric date (MDV115036) 0.9km southwest (SX 771 625) of the development site and another enclosure north of Billany Farm, a little over 1km WSW of the site. Large earthwork enclosures have long been known in North Wood (MDV8145) 0.7km northwest of Huxham's Cross and a rectangular ditched enclosure (MDV28877) has been recorded 0.6km southeast, near Parsonage Cross.</p> <p>Nearer to the development site, another cropmark enclosure (MDV 8136), of assumed prehistoric date, has been noted only</p>		

50m to the north. Of greater significance to this development, a linear cropmark (MDV43002), recorded from an AP in 1989, cuts west to east across the contour of the slope, transecting the development site and has potential to be affected by the proposed works. Its purpose or origin is not known, but it could be an abandoned boundary ditch, or a disused water course. No evidence of the feature exists on the Tithe Map of 1840.

Numerous find spots have been recorded in the Devon HER for this locality, particularly to the north and west of the development site. Finds have included prehistoric flint and ceramic fragments, as well as ceramics of medieval and post medieval date.

The area surrounding Huxham's Cross remained rural and undeveloped, well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, made up of a typical Devon patchwork of fields, and lanes linking isolated farmsteads, whose origins may be loosely dated to the medieval period. Only the Hamlet of Week to the south had sufficient houses to be notable as a settlement on the Tithe Map of 1840, while the modern village of Dartington itself, was a fragmented cluster of houses and farms rather than a focussed village. Dartington Hall is a 14<sup>th</sup> century manor, which was once surrounded by a 315 acre deer park, though much of this land had been converted to agricultural by 1840.

### Groundworks

The new structure is to be built from timber. This requires the excavation of a level platform, cut into the slope on the slightly higher, northern ground, but built up above the ground at the lower end. In addition, a rainwater storage pond to the south of the building requires the digging of a hollow with a built embankment on the downslope (south) side.

Turf and topsoil were removed in trenches of 1m wide along the north, south and western extremities of the building plot, totalling c.30m, to a depth of c.20-30cm, using a toothless grading bucket, before proceeding further. At roughly 30cm the natural geology was encountered in the form of dense compacted shillet, which lies fairly consistently at that depth over the entire trench. A similar methodology was employed for the excavation of the pond.

### Results

No structures, soil features, deposits, burials or artefacts were noted in the cleaned up sectional view of the upper soils exposed in the building foundation trench, and the shillet itself showed no signs of any past human interventions such as pits or ditches. Metal detection of the spoil and trenches also revealed nothing of significance. Neither were any features encountered in the digging of the pond, though a modern land drain, comprising a ceramic pipe in a machine cut and backfilled trench, was observed, but not recorded.

The course of the linear cropmark visible on aerial photographs, was not exposed during this programme of works. However, if its assumed course is projected from the visible fragment that is visible on an RAF vertical AP of 1946, this would suggest it traversed the field slightly further north, probably in the vicinity of the pre-existing farm building.

**A plan as well as any other relevant drawings must be attached showing the location and extent of site, areas investigated and features exposed.**

**Recorder:**

Phil Newman SW Landscape Investigations

**Date sent to HER:**

Please email completed form to: [archaeol@devon.gov.uk](mailto:archaeol@devon.gov.uk) or post to Historic Environment Service, Devon County Council, Lucombe House, County Hall, Exeter EX2 4QD. Information recorded on this form will be added to the Historic Environment Record, and made available to all researchers.

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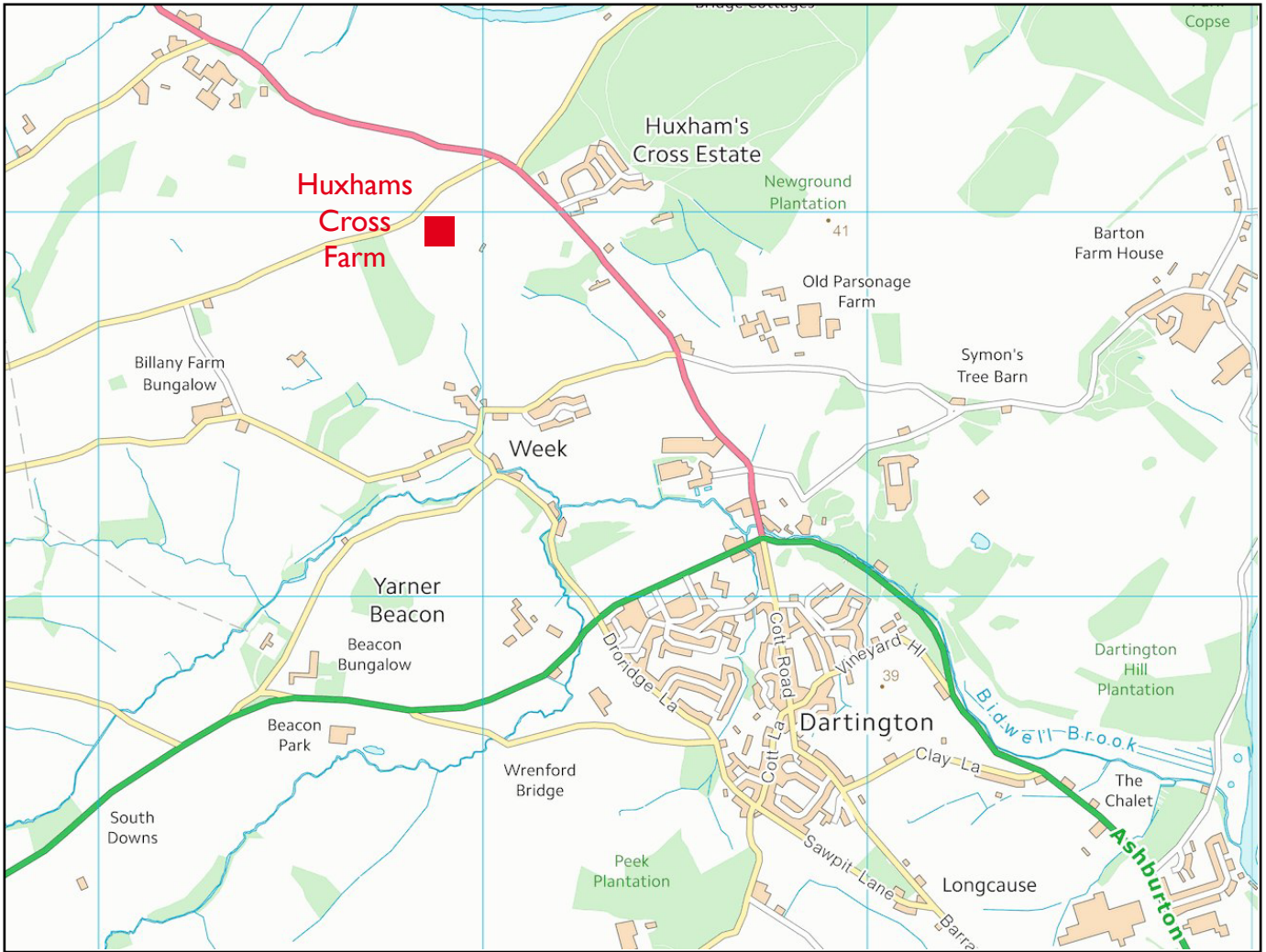


Fig 1 (top) Location map. Ordnance Survey © Crown Copyright and database right 2018.

Fig 2 (bot) Map showing location of groundworks in context of local topographical features.