

ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SERVICES  
DURHAM UNIVERSITY

on behalf of  
J R Power Ltd

Land at South Down  
near Totnes  
Devon

archaeological desk-based assessment

report 2528  
November 2010

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## **1. Summary**

### **The project**

- 1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological desk-based assessment, which was conducted in advance of a proposed development on land at South Down, near Totnes, Devon. The assessment comprised a search of pertinent documentary and cartographic records, records of archaeological interventions, the Historic Environment Record, and a site walk-over survey.
- 1.2 The works were commissioned by J R Power Ltd, and conducted by Archaeological Services Durham University.

### **The archaeological resource**

- 1.3 No archaeological resource has been identified which requires preservation *in situ*. There are no historic or statutorily protected buildings in the vicinity of the site. The structures on site are of 20th-century date. There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments on or in the near vicinity of the site.
- 1.4 There is no evidence of activity in the proposed development area or in the study area prior to the Iron Age, although there is the potential that an as yet unidentified resource may survive.
- 1.5 Recent fieldwork has established Iron Age activity in fields immediately southwest of the proposed development area. Archaeological features were also found within the northeast part of the site. It is possible that these two areas of occupation are contemporary, and that further such archaeological deposits exist across the site.
- 1.6 There is no evidence of activity during the Roman and medieval periods in the proposed development area. However, there is evidence that the wider landscape was exploited during the medieval period, and there is therefore the potential that an as yet unidentified resource relating to this exploitation may survive within the proposed development area: this is most likely to relate to agricultural activity.
- 1.7 During the post-medieval period the site was used for farming, and this has remained the case through to the present day. Field boundaries removed during these periods of activity have the potential to survive as buried features.

### **Impact assessment**

- 1.8 The proposed development has the potential to impact upon any archaeological resource that may be present through the construction of foundations, cable trenches and associated groundworks.

### **Recommendations**

- 1.9 It is recommended that the proposed development scheme planning application is supported by a scheme of archaeological works comprising geophysical survey, the results of which may need to be supplemented by evaluation trenching.

## 2. Project background

### Location (Figure 1)

- 2.1 The site is located at South Down, near Totnes, in the parish of Dartington, Devon (NGR centre: SX 7713 6136). It is roughly rectangular in plan, and covers an area of approximately 21.29 ha. The A385 forms the northern boundary, and a minor stream forms the southern one.

### Development proposal (Figure 1)

- 2.2 The development proposal is for a solar farm. The details of the proposed construction techniques, including any associated works that will have a below-ground impact, are detailed in the environmental statement.

### Objective

- 2.3 The objective of the scheme of works was to assess the nature, extent and potential significance of any surviving archaeological resource within the proposed development area, so that an informed decision may be made regarding the nature and scope of any further scheme of archaeological works that may be required in relation to the proposed development.

### Methods statement

- 2.4 The works have been conducted in accordance with standard Archaeological Services' procedures for desk-based assessments. The works comprised the study of pertinent cartographic and other historical sources, records of previous archaeological interventions, sites listed in the Historic Environment Record (HER) within 1km of the proposed development area, and a site walk-over survey. HER references are referred to in brackets throughout the text of this report, and are listed in Appendix 1.

### Planning guidance

- 2.5 This assessment and its recommendations are a considered response to the proposed development in relation to Government policy, as it is set out in *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment*, and the *Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide*.

### Dates

- 2.6 The field visit took place on 4th November 2010. This report was prepared for November 2010.

### Personnel

- 2.7 Research was conducted and this report prepared by Andy Platell and Jamie Armstrong, with illustrations by David Graham and Janine Watson. The Project Manager was Daniel Still.

### OASIS

- 2.8 Archaeological Services Durham University is registered with the Online Access to the Index of archaeological investigationS project (**OASIS**). The OASIS ID number for this project is **archaeol3-85674**.



### **Acknowledgements**

- 2.9 Archaeological Services Durham University is grateful for the assistance of Marrina Neophytou of Devon County Council Historic Environment Service and personnel of Devon County Record Office and the Devonshire Studies Library, Exeter in facilitating this scheme of works.

## **3. Landuse, topography and geology**

### **Landuse**

- 3.1 At the time of this assessment, the proposed development area comprised 8 enclosed fields of pasture, as well as the buildings and associated road of South Downs farm.

### **Topography**

- 3.2 The proposed development area is slightly undulating and slopes gently to the south, where there is a minor stream. It also slopes down towards the east, and has a mean elevation of approximately 40m OD.

### **Geology and soils**

- 3.3 The underlying solid geology of the area comprises Middle Devonian Slates, which are overlain by alluvial deposits along the southern boundary of the site.

## **4. Site walk-over survey**

- 4.1 A walk-over survey was conducted, to help ascertain the potential of the proposed development area to contain any archaeological resource. The visit noted site topography, earthworks and areas of modern overburden, modern services, boundaries, buildings and other upstanding remains. A *pro forma* recording sheet was completed.
- 4.2 The proposed development area consists of eight fields of improved pasture, with sheep grazing in all of them (Figures 9 and 10). Field boundaries are all hawthorn hedges supplemented with metal fences. The ground undulates slightly across the site, especially towards the stream that forms its southern boundary (Figure 11). However, these undulations all appear to be of natural origin. The farm buildings are of 20th century construction and are not of historic interest.
- 4.3 Construction work has recently been completed on an upgrade to a high-pressure gas pipeline that traverses most of the site in an east-west direction (Figure 12). From the western boundary of the proposed development area, the pipeline runs through the fields to the south of the farm, and then heads in a more northerly direction to reach the road in the second field from the eastern boundary of the proposed development area. Here it has been tunnelled under the road. Works then continue in fields to the north. Some construction machinery and minor spoil tips still remain on site, where tidying up operations have not yet been completed (Figure 13).
- 4.4 There is a slight mound, less than 0.5m high, in the field immediately southeast of the current farm buildings (Figure 14). This mound may have natural origins, but given its location just outside the modern farm, it could cover the foundations for an earlier farm building.

- 4.5 Two slight parallel dips on a west-east orientation cross the third field from the east. These may be the ruts of an earlier track across this field. A slight groove crosses the field northeast of the farm, heading from the road towards the farm. This may be an underground service pipe for the building or a disused path to the farm. No other features of archaeological interest were identified by the walk-over survey.

## **5. Historical and archaeological development**

### **Previous archaeological works**

- 5.1 The Fishacre to Lyneham natural gas pipeline passes through the proposed development area. It was therefore included within the area of the desk-based assessment for this pipeline (HER 4375) and also within the fieldwalking survey (HER 4391) that was conducted along the length of the pipeline route before construction began in 2001 (Cotswold Archaeology 2001a; 2001b). Neither of these projects produced results of significance to the current proposed development area, although former field boundaries (HER 74591) were noted in the field immediately to the west of it. However, archaeological monitoring was also conducted during a major upgrade to the pipeline in 2010. This work has just been completed and the results have not yet been added to the HER: however, a post-excavation assessment report has been produced (Cotswold Archaeology 2010). The results are discussed below (paragraph 5.2).

### **The prehistoric and Roman periods (up to 5th century)**

- 5.2 Until recently there was no direct evidence of prehistoric or Roman activity in the study area, although it is anticipated that the area would have been exploited in prehistory. However, recent archaeological monitoring during the upgrade to the natural gas pipeline revealed a group of undated pits and burnt areas between 0.6m and 1.0m in diameter and 0.07-0.09m deep in Plot 16.1 of that project; the northeast corner of the current proposed development area. These were interpreted as fire pits or hearths for metalworking. Further west in Plot 16.7 (immediately west of the current proposed development area) six clay-lined bowl furnaces, 11 pits and nine ditches were found. Some of these contained iron slag. A radiocarbon sample from one furnace established its date as 391-210 cal. BC, within the Iron Age (Cotswold Archaeology 2010). It is possible that the two areas of activity are related, and that the undated deposits found at the eastern end of the proposed development area also date to the Iron Age. There is therefore potential for further unidentified archaeological resources of this type to be present across the site.

### **The medieval period (5th century to 1540)**

- 5.3 Evidence of medieval activity in the study area is focused to the northwest of the proposed development area and characterised mainly by farming practices and small settlements. The remains of a medieval mansion (HER 8162) are located 500m northwest at Higher Allerton. The building dates to at least the 15th century, possibly earlier, and was restored in the 19th century with further modernisations since then. To the southwest of this building and 450m northwest of the proposed development area is a Lower Allerton farmhouse (HER 14335). This probably dates to the early 16th century, with further work dating to the post-medieval period. Associated with this is a 16th-century barn (HER 33135) which has also undergone later additions: there are also post-medieval farm buildings that form part of the Lower Allerton Farm (see paragraph 5.6). The presence of the farm buildings indicates that the surrounding area was being exploited for agriculture during the

later medieval period, and this activity may have extended into the proposed development area. To the northwest of these buildings, and approximately 700m northwest of the proposed development area, is the site of a hermit's cell and medieval chapel (HER 28887).

#### **The post-medieval period (1541 to 1899)**

- 5.4 Early maps of Devon by Saxton (1576; Figure 2) and Bill (1626; Figure 3) do not depict the proposed development area in any detail and it is not possible to establish what sort of activity may have been taking place on the site at that time. Donne's map of 1765 (Figure 4) and Cary's map of 1817 (Figure 5) are slightly more accurate and detailed maps of the county but still lack enough detail to show how the proposed development area was being exploited in the early 19th century.
- 5.5 Evidence of early post-medieval activity can be found 600m northeast of the proposed development area where a beacon and associated house (HER 8153) were established on Yarner Beacon Hill in 1586.
- 5.6 Post-medieval activity in the study area is largely characterised by agricultural practices and associated farms. A farm (HER 76290) was constructed at Whiteley, 700m to the southeast by the 17th century. Alterations were made to it in the 18th and 19th centuries. At Lower Allerton Farm, established in the medieval period (see paragraph 5.3), a new barn with attached shippons or cow sheds (HER 33136) was constructed to the rear of the farmhouse in the early 17th century. Further outbuildings (HER 33137-8) were added to the farm in the 18th and 19th centuries.
- 5.7 The first detailed plan of the site is the Tithe Map (Figure 6), drawn up in the 1840s. This shows the proposed development area as a series of medium and large enclosed fields, that have altered little since that time, except for the removal of some boundaries to agglomerate some of the fields. The boundaries of the proposed development area had already been set out by this time. A building, described in the apportionment as a '*barn and court*', is present on the site of the current farm. The Tithe Apportionment indicates that the land belonged to Higher Allerton farm, with the owners being Richard and William Soper. However, the fields around the barn are described as South Down Meadow and East South Down, indicating that the name South Down was in use by this time.
- 5.8 During the later part of the 1840s work was begun on the South Devon Railway (HER 22607). By 1847 it had reached Totnes, and by 1849 it had been completed to Plymouth. The line passed within 600m to the south of the proposed development area. It was later amalgamated with the Great Western Railway, and is still in use today.
- 5.9 The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1887 (Figure 7) shows only minor alterations to the study area. A former quarry (HER 470430) is shown on the southeast side of Yarner Beacon Hill, 600m to the northeast of the proposed development area. Three boundary stones (HER 47045-6; HER 47047-8; and 47049-50) marked the parish boundary to the east of the site. Wrenford Bridge (HER 72157) is marked 600m east of the site. A milestone (HER 47043) is shown immediately outside the northwest boundary of the site. The map shows no alterations to the proposed development area except for some minor alterations of internal field boundaries. The area immediately around the barn is mainly wooded.

### **The modern period (1900 to present)**

- 5.10 The 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map of 1906 (Figure 8) shows no significant alterations to the proposed development area. Later editions of the map also show that the only alterations to the site are the modification and removal of field boundaries. The Dartington Hall Cattle Breeding Centre had been established to the northeast by 1954: contemporary maps show that the area was established as a series of radial fields (HER 62798) centred on Dartington Hall: the field boundaries have since been removed. South Downs Farm is first named on the 1975 Ordnance Survey map, although the 1954 map shows buildings on the site at that time.

### **The buildings**

- 5.11 There are no statutorily protected buildings within the site. South Downs Farmhouse and the associated farm buildings date to the 20th century, and are not regarded as archaeologically significant. There are several Grade II listed buildings in the surrounding area (Appendix 1): these are unlikely to be affected by the proposed development.

### **Scheduled Ancient Monuments and other Designated Heritage Assets**

- 5.12 There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the proposed development area, or the near vicinity.

## **6. The potential archaeological resource**

- 6.1 There is no evidence of activity in the proposed development area or in the study area prior to the Iron Age, although there is the potential that an as yet unidentified resource may survive.
- 6.2 Recent fieldwork has established the presence of Iron Age activity in the fields immediately southwest of the proposed development area. Archaeological features were also found within the northeast part of the site. It is possible that these two areas of occupation are contemporary, and that further such archaeological deposits exist across the site.
- 6.3 There is no evidence of activity during the Roman and medieval periods in the proposed development area. However, there is evidence that the wider landscape was exploited during the medieval period, and there is therefore the potential that an as yet unidentified resource relating to this exploitation may survive within the proposed development area: this is most likely to relate to agricultural activity.
- 6.4 During the post-medieval period the site was used for farming, and this has remained the case through to the present day. Field boundaries removed during these periods of activity have the potential to survive as buried features. The buildings of South Downs Farm date to the 20th century and are not of archaeological significance.

## **7. Impact assessment**

### **Visual impact**

- 7.1 The visual impact of the development is considered within the environmental statement.

### **Direct impact**

- 7.2 The proposed development has the potential to impact upon any archaeological resource that may be present through the construction of foundations, cable trenches and associated groundworks.

## **8. Recommendations**

- 8.1 It is recommended that the proposed development scheme planning application is supported by a scheme of archaeological works comprising geophysical survey, the results of which may need to be supplemented by evaluation trenching.

## **9. Sources**

### **Cartographic sources**

Saxton's map of 1576

Bill's map of 1626

Donne's map of 1765

Carey's map of 1814

Devon Record Office (Exeter), c.1840 Tithe apportionment for the parish of Dartington

Ordnance Survey 1st Edition, 25"

Ordnance Survey 2nd Edition, 25"

### **Other sources**

Cotswold Archaeology, 2001a *Fishacre to Lyneham Natural Gas Pipeline: Cultural Heritage Assessment*. Unpublished report **1084**

Cotswold Archaeology, 2001b *Fishacre to Lyneham Natural Gas Pipeline: Archaeological Fieldwalking and Field Reconnaissance Survey*. Unpublished report **1224**

Cotswold Archaeology, 2010 *South-West Reinforcement Project: Ottery St Mary to Aylesbeare; Aylesbeare to Kenn; Fishacre to Choakford gas pipelines, Devon: Post-excavation assessment and updated project design*. Unpublished report

### **Geotechnical works**

No records of geotechnical works within the proposed development area were available for this assessment.

## Appendix 1: Historic Environment Record

The tables include sites recorded within the vicinity of the proposed development area (within an approximate radius of 1km from the site).

### Historic Environment Record

(PRN = Public Record Number, SAM = Scheduled Ancient Monument)

PRN	Description	Date
8153	Beacon	post-medieval
8162	Mansion	medieval
14335	Farmhouse	medieval
22607	Railway	post-medieval
28887	Chapel	medieval
33135	Barn	medieval
33136	Barn	post-medieval
33137	Outbuilding	post-medieval
33138	Outbuilding	post-medieval
47034	Milestone	post-medieval
47043	Quarry	post-medieval
47045	Boundary stone	post-medieval
47046	Boundary stone	post-medieval
47047	Boundary stone	post-medieval
47048	Boundary stone	post-medieval
47049	Boundary stone	post-medieval
47050	Boundary stone	post-medieval
67298	Field system	modern
72157	Bridge	post-medieval
74591	Field boundary	unknown
76290	Farmhouse	post-medieval

### Listed buildings

PRN	Description	Grade
101000	Billany Farmhouse and stables adjoining east north east	II
101001	Barn immediately south east of Billany Farmhouse	II
101010	Little Westcombe	II
101016	Westcombe Farmhouse	II
101017	Bank barn immediately south west of Westcombe Farmhouse	II
101018	Cart shed immediately south of Westcombe Farmhouse	II
101008	Shippon and cartshed immediately north west of Higher Allerton	II
101007	Barn immediately north of Higher Allerton	II
101009	2 gate piers immediately north west of Higher Allerton	II
101006	Stable range adjoining north east of Higher Allerton	II
101005	High allerton	II
101012	Allerton pottery barn adjoining north-west of Lower Allerton Farmhouse	II
101011	Lower Allerton Farmhouse	II
101013	Outbuilding immediately south of Lower Allerton Farmhouse	II
101083	Higher Cobberton Farmhouse	II
101085	Bank barn immediately east of Higher Cobberton Farmhouse	II
101084	Shippon immediately south south east of Higher Cobberton Farmhouse	II
101081	Lower Cobberton	II
101079	Limekilns at Petoe quarry	II
101074	Brooking Lodge	II
101072	Church of St Barnabus	II*
101073	Brooking House	II
402405	Milestone at ngr 769 603 north north east of Blakemore	II
101299	Meadow View	II
101300	Cider house and adjoining cart shed immediately north of lower Blakemore	II
101341	Dorsely Barton	II
426417	Follaton Lodge, Follaton Road	II
101294	Winsland House	II
101003	Brook House	II

PRN	Description	Grade
101004	Droridge	II
101014	Milestone about 135 metres south of Yarner at ngr 618781	II
101019	Yarner Farmhouse	II
101020	Yarner barn	II
101099	1, Lownard Cottage	II
101088	Cob Cottage	II
101089	New Church House Cottage	II
101090	The Old Church House	II
101293	The Farmhouse, the Olde Dairy and Fir Tree Cottage	II
101091	Croft Dene	II
101092	1, 2 and 3, Week Cottages	II
101098	Knoddy	II
101097	Bridge approximately 25 metres south of Woodcott	II
101095	Pigsty and privy immediately south east of Woodcott	II
101094	Granary immediately south of Woodcott	II
101096	Wellhouse or pigsty approximately 13 metres south of Woodcott	II
101093	Woodcott	II

### Previous archaeological interventions

PRN	description
4375	Fishacre to Lyneham Pipeline Assessment
4391	Fishacre to Lyneham Fieldwalking Survey



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



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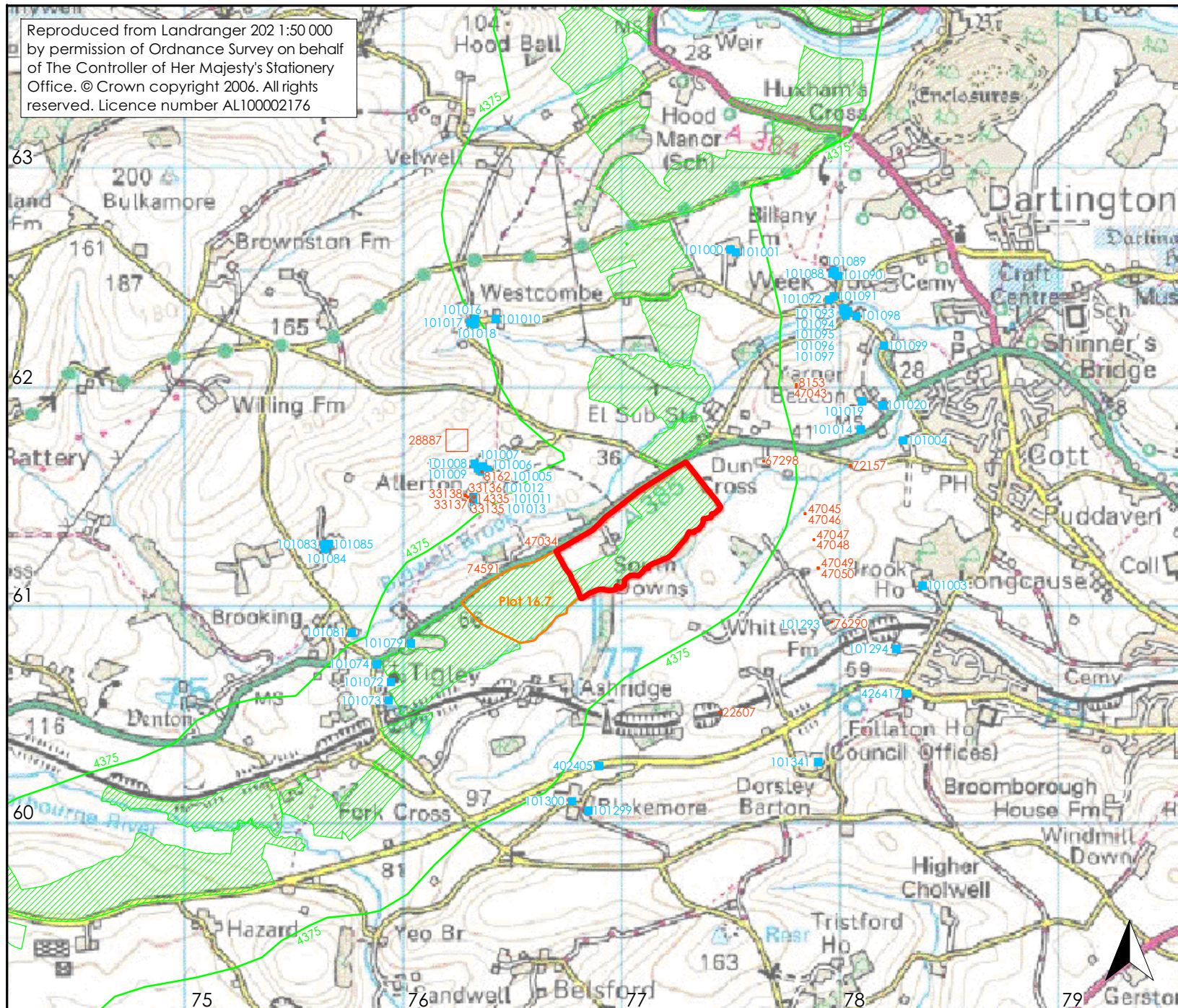
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Figure 1: Site location and  
Historic Environment Record

0 1km  
scale 1:25 000 for A4 plot

-  site location
-  O32556 HER site
-  4375 archaeological event
-  fieldwalking survey (4391)
-  101341 Listed Building





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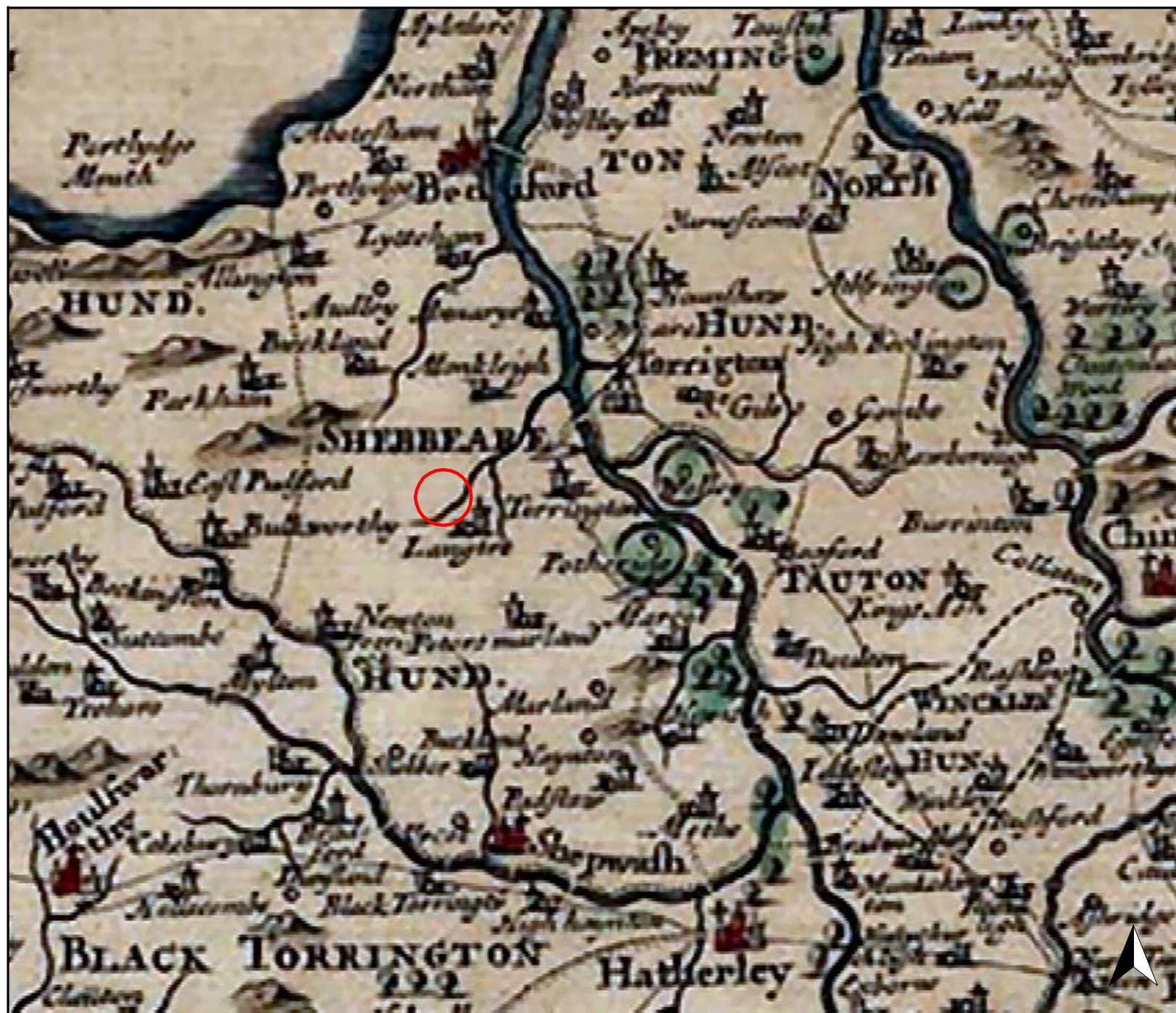
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Figure 2: Extract from Saxton's  
map of 1576

not to scale



approximate site location







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Figure 3: Extract from Bill's map of  
1626

not to scale



approximate site location



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Figure 4: Extract from Donne's  
map of 1765

not to scale



approximate site location





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Figure 5: Extract from Carey's  
map of 1814

not to scale



approximate site location



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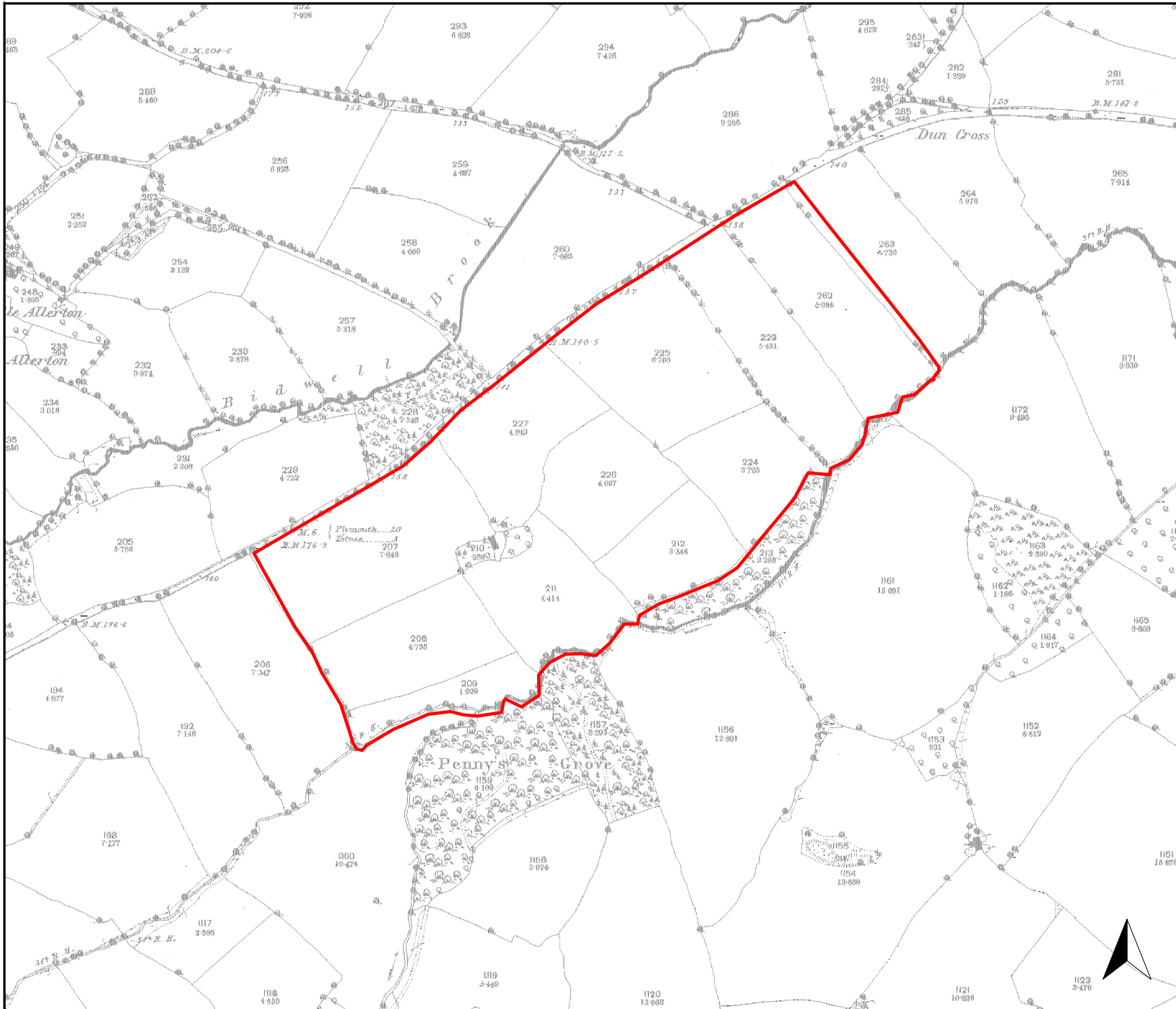
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Figure 6: Extract from the Tithe  
Map of c.1840

0 300m  
scale 1:6000 for A4 plot

 site location





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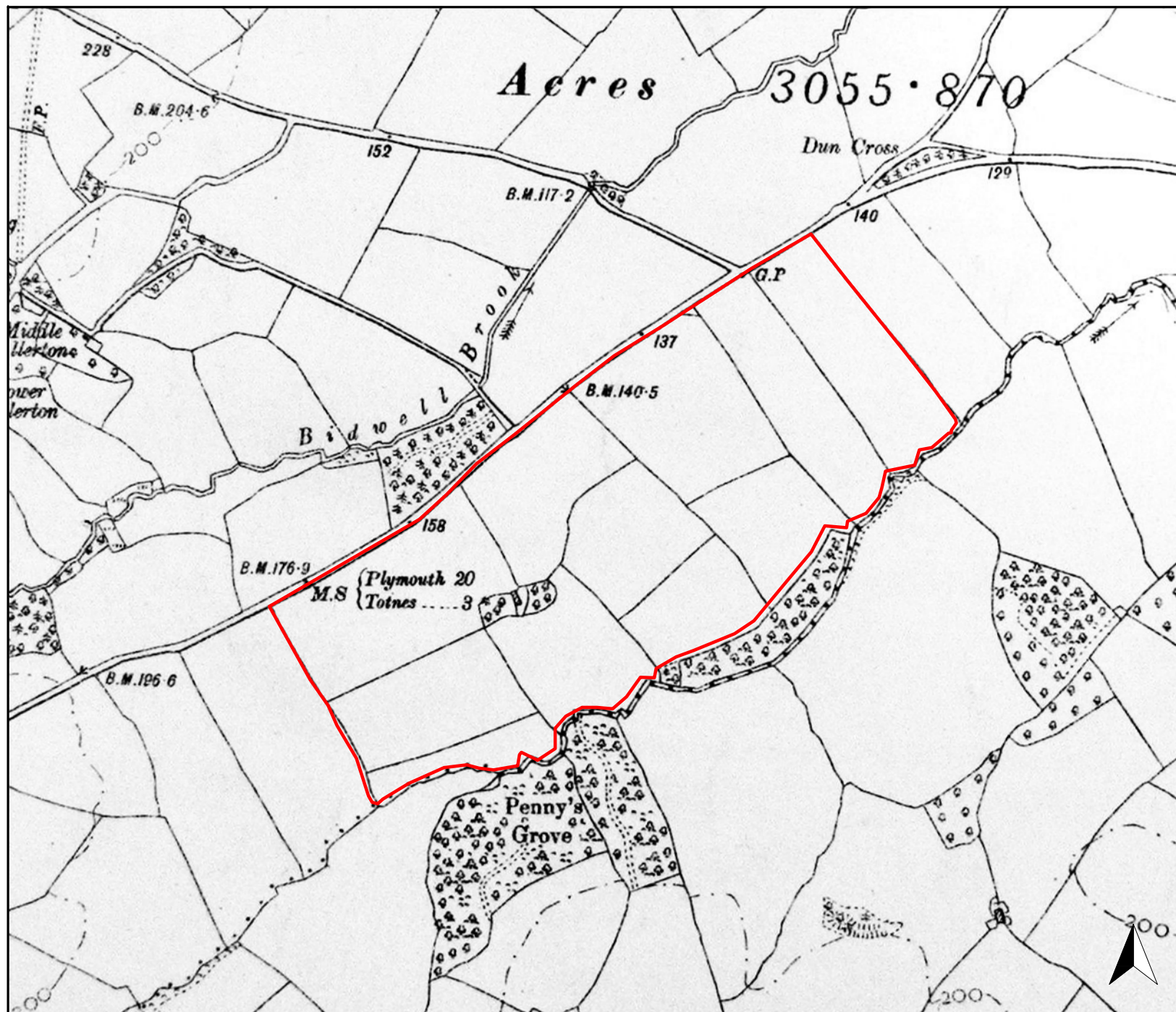
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Figure 7: Extract from the 1st  
edition Ordnance Survey map,  
1887

0 300m  
scale 1:6000 for A4 plot

 site location





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Figure 8: Extract from the 2nd  
edition Ordnance Survey map,  
1906





Figure 9: Field northwest of farm, looking west



Figure 10: Easternmost field, looking south



Figure 11: Southwest field, looking south towards stream





Figure 12: View along recently completed gas pipeline, looking west



Figure 13: Minor spoil tips remaining along gas pipeline



Figure 14: Mound southeast of farm