

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES
DURHAM UNIVERSITY

on behalf of
J R Power Ltd

Land at Town Farm
Blackawton
Devon

archaeological desk-based assessment

report 2529
November 2010

Contents

1.	Summary	1
2.	Project background	2
3.	Landuse, topography and geology	3
4.	Site walk-over survey	3
5.	Historical and archaeological development	4
6.	The potential archaeological resource	6
7.	Impact assessment	6
8.	Recommendations	6
9.	Sources	6
Appendix 1: Historic Environment Record		8

Figures

Figure 1:	Site location and Historic Environment Record
Figure 2:	Extract from Saxton's map of 1576
Figure 3:	Extract from Bill's map of 1626
Figure 4:	Extract from Donne's map of 1765
Figure 5:	Extract from Carey's map of 1814
Figure 6:	Extract from the Tithe Map of 1840
Figure 7:	Extract from the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1896
Figure 8:	Extract from the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map of 1906
Figure 9:	The two western fields, looking south
Figure 10:	Northwest field, looking north
Figure 11:	Southwest field showing evidence for a recent crop
Figure 12:	North-central field containing cereal crop
Figure 13:	Southeast field looking south
Figure 14:	Gateway between southeast and southwest fields

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 Town Farm, Blackawton, 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 Scheduled Ancient Monuments on or in the near vicinity of the site.
- 1.4 There is no direct evidence for prehistoric or Roman activity within the study area, but an as yet unidentified resource has the potential to exist.
- 1.5 There is no direct evidence for prehistoric or Roman activity within the study area, but an as yet unidentified resource has the potential to exist.
- 1.6 There is no evidence for medieval and post-medieval settlement on the site, and it is likely that during these periods the area was exploited for farming. Evidence for cultivation and former field boundaries have the potential to survive as buried features.

Impact assessment

- 1.7 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

- 1.8 There are no recommendations for further work.

2. Project background

Location (Figure 1)

- 2.1 The site is located at Town Farm, Blackawton, in the parish of the same name, Devon (NGR centre: SX 8050 5136). It is irregular in plan, mainly following existing field boundaries, and covers an area of approximately 13.19 ha.

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 **archaeol3-85675**.

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 five complete enclosed fields; three of these were of pasture, with cattle grazing in one of them. A fourth field contained a cereal crop, and the fifth currently contained grass.

Topography

- 3.2 The proposed development area was on the south-facing slope of a small hill with a minimum elevation of approximately 150m OD and a maximum elevation of 192m OD.

Geology and soils

- 3.3 The underlying solid geology of the area comprises Bovisand Formation mudstone, siltstone, limestone and sandstone of the Devonian.

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 two western fields were of pasture with a modern fence boundary between them (Figure 9). Other field boundaries within the proposed development area were of hedges on top of earth banks, supplemented by modern fences (Figure 10). The northern of these two fields had cattle grazing in it, and the southern currently contained grass but showed evidence for having recently had a cereal crop (Figure 11). The north-central field contained a cereal crop (Figure 12), and the others contained grass (Figure 13). The southern boundary of the proposed development area in the southeast field is an arbitrary line across the field; elsewhere the boundaries follow current field boundaries.
- 4.3 The boundary between the two western fields and the three eastern ones is a bank with a hedge along it. Towards its southern end, it has a gateway through it with substantial stone pillars supporting it, although the current gate is a modern insertion (Figure 14). Apart from this, no features of archaeological interest were observed during the walk-over survey.

5. Historical and archaeological development

Previous archaeological works

- 5.1 No previous archaeological works have been identified within the proposed development area.

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

- 5.2 There is no direct evidence of prehistoric or Roman activity in the proposed development area or in the wider study area. It is probable that the wider landscape was exploited in the later prehistoric and Roman periods from a series of primarily isolated settlements and farmsteads, and evidence for these may survive.

The medieval period (5th century to 1540)

- 5.3 Medieval activity in the study area is focused on the village of Blackawton. This was the site of the medieval manor of Auetona or Aveton (HER 15808) and was mentioned in the Domesday Survey. By 1258 the manor had been given to Tor Abbey. The name Blackawton is first recorded in 1281. The parish church of St Michael (HER 8496) stands 100m to the south of the proposed development area. Its original dated to the 12th century, but nothing remains of this aside from the font (HER 8498). The church was rebuilt in the 14th century and enlarged in the 15th century. An early 16th century rood screen (HER 8497) is in the church. A clapper bridge (HER 45670) stands 800m southeast of the proposed development area.
- 5.4 There is no evidence for medieval activity within the proposed development area. However, the close proximity of the site to the medieval church, which is likely to have formed a focal point for the medieval settlement, indicates that the site was likely to have been used for medieval agriculture. There is therefore the potential for the remains of medieval farming practices such as ridge and furrow to be present on the site.

The post-medieval period (1541 to 1899)

- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 A sundial (HER 8499) and three monuments (HER 8500-2) are associated with the church and date between the later 16th century and the 18th century.
- 5.7 The earliest detailed map of the proposed development area is the 1840 Tithe Map (Figure 6). This shows that the landscape of the study area was characterised mainly by enclosed fields used for agriculture. Rakehills Barn (HER 70396) is marked 200m west of the site. There were also areas of plantations. Blackawton was the main settlement in the area. The map shows that the proposed development area was divided into several enclosed fields. It had largely achieved its present boundaries, apart from a section of the northern boundary which was then part of a larger field, and a section of the southern boundary which has always been part of a larger field. The Apportionment lists the fields as belonging to Charles Baker and occupied by Richard Ellis, and indicates that they were at that time being used for arable.

- 5.8 The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1896 (Figure 7) shows that the overall characteristic of the study area had remained unchanged since the 1840 Tithe Map. However there are a few differences between the two maps. It presents a more detailed depiction of Blackawton, naming a number of buildings. Two inns, Commercial Inn (HER 8505) and Dartmouth Inn (HER 45694), are recorded on the HER, along with a school (HER 45695) and a vicarage (HER 45697) with attached croquet ground. The Ebenezer Chapel (HER 45693), a Wesleyan Methodist chapel, had been established, indicating the growth of non-conformist religions in the area. Also marked in the village but not on the HER are another inn (The George), a post-office, and a reading room. The 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map also marks the location of a smithy in the village (HER 45696): this building is marked but unnamed on the 1st edition map.
- 5.9 Further buildings are located 550-800m southwest of the proposed development area at Woodford. These include a blacksmith's cottage (HER 96162) with associated forge (HER 96161), another cottage (HER 96162), two houses (HER 96167-8), and also a well (HER 96160). To the southwest of Woodford is the site of Lower Woodford Mill, with associated millrace (HER 49982) and mill pond (HER 49984). Another focus of activity is 800m-950m to the northwest, in the area west of Oldstone, where three fish ponds (HER 50012), a grotto (HER 55158), a bowling green (HER 55159) and a hermitage (HER 55166) were located. A number of quarries are located at least 400m to the northwest and east of the site (HER 45689; 45690; 45691; 45705; and 68956). These indicate that while agriculture was the main activity in the area, quarrying was also important. The map shows no significant alterations to the proposed development area itself since the time of the Tithe Map.

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 or the wider study area.
- 5.11 Dobinson (2000) lists Blackawton as the location for a Chain Home Low radar station during World War II (HER 64030). However its position is unusual as the Chain Home radar system required a location along the coastline to avoid interference from the surrounding topography and Blackawton lies around 6km from the coast. Although a hedged enclosure at approximately the correct location is visible on the 1946 RAF aerial photograph, the HER entry sheet suggests that the site referred to is actually Radar Station 14B, near Kingswear, and the grid reference given by Dobinson has accidentally transposed the co-ordinates: Kingswear is located close to the coast east of Dartmouth (www.anti-aircraft.co.uk) and is therefore in the appropriate location for such a station. However, a searchlight battery was located at Blackawton (HER 71963).
- 5.12 Town Farm has been built since the Second World War as a replacement for Rakehills farm, which stood slightly to the northwest. An electricity sub-station has also been constructed to the southeast of Town Farm.

The buildings

- 5.13 There are no statutorily protected buildings within the site. The church of St Michael is located 100m south of the proposed development area and is a Grade I listed building. A number of buildings in the village and also in the surrounding area are

Grade II listed buildings (Appendix 1). All of the buildings are unlikely to be affected by the proposed development.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments and other Designated Heritage Assets

- 5.14 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 direct evidence for prehistoric or Roman activity within the study area, but an as yet unidentified resource has the potential to exist.
- 6.2 There is no evidence for medieval and post-medieval settlement on the site, and it is likely that during these periods the area was exploited for farming. Evidence for cultivation and former field boundaries have the potential to survive as buried features.

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 There are no recommendations for further work.

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), 1840 Tithe apportionment for the parish of Blackawton
Ordnance Survey 1st Edition, 25"
Ordnance Survey 2nd Edition, 25"

Other sources

Dobinson, C. S. 2000 *20th Century Fortifications in England, Vol 2 Acoustics and radar*, English Heritage

Websites

http://www.anti-aircraft.co.uk/chain_home_low_map.html

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

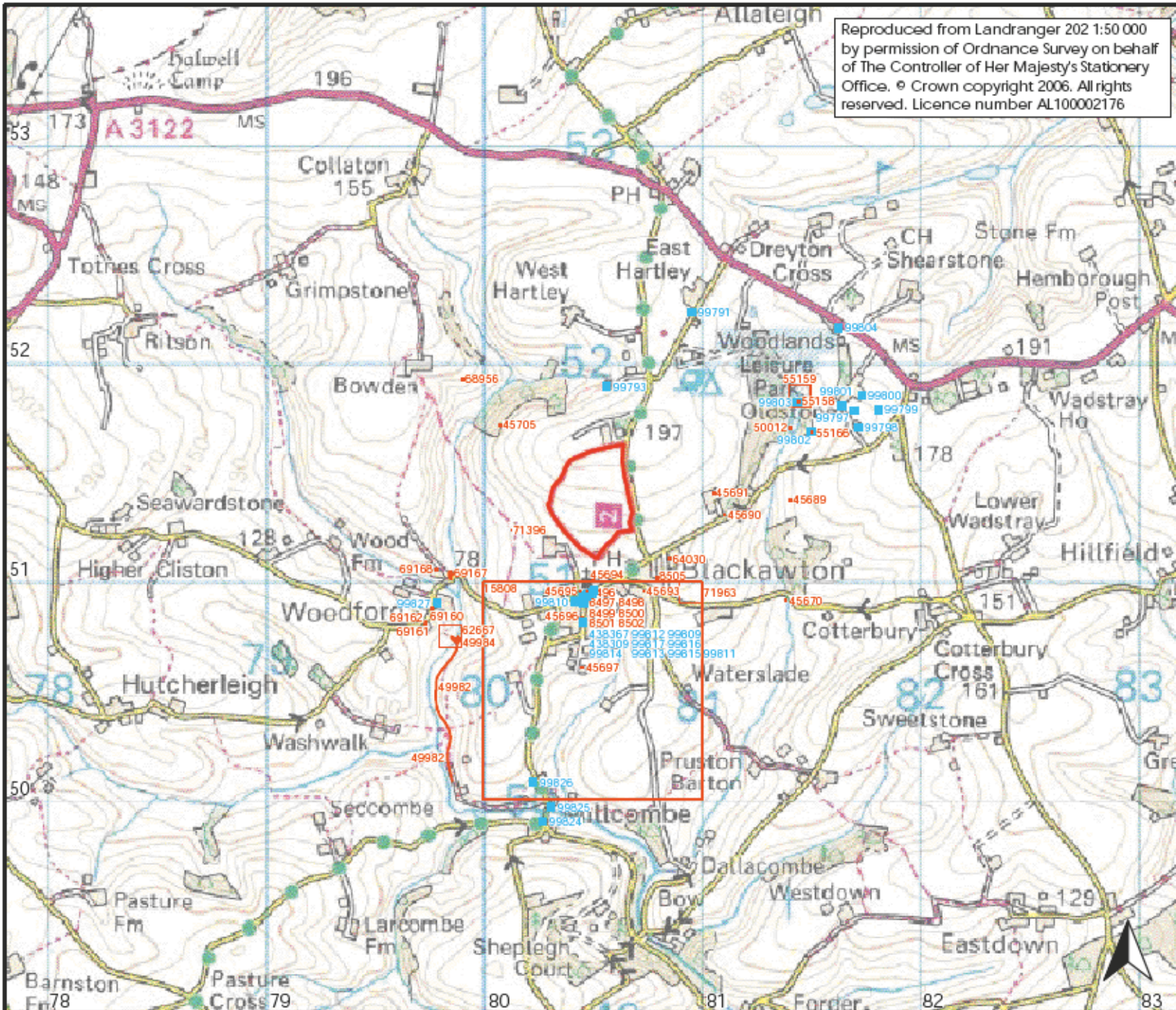
(PRN = Public Record Number)

PRN	Description	Date
8496	Parish church	medieval
8497	Rood screen	medieval
8498	Font	medieval
8499	Sundial	post-medieval
8500	Commemorative monument	post-medieval
8501	Commemorative monument	post-medieval
8502	Monumental brass	post-medieval
8505	Inn	unknown
15808	Settlement	medieval
45670	Bridge	medieval
45689	Quarry	post-medieval
45690	Quarry	post-medieval
45691	Quarry	modern
45693	Chapel	post-medieval
45694	Inn	post-medieval
45695	School	post-medieval
45696	Blacksmiths workshop	post-medieval
45697	Vicarage	post-medieval
45705	Quarry	post-medieval
49982	Mill race	unknown
49984	Mill pond	unknown
50012	Fishpond	unknown
55158	Grotto	post-medieval
55159	Bowling green	post-medieval
55166	Hermitage	post-medieval
62667	Mill	unknown
64030	Radar station	modern
68956	Quarry	post-medieval
69160	Well	post-medieval
69161	Blacksmiths workshop	post-medieval
69162	Cottage	post-medieval
69167	House	post-medieval
69168	House	post-medieval
71396	Barn	unknown
71963	Searchlight battery	modern

Listed buildings

PRN	Description	Grade
99791	East Hartley Farmhouse including front garden area wall to north	II
99793	Langstone Farmhouse	II
99797	Oldstone, ruins of house	II
99798	Kitchen garden walls about 60 metres south of Oldstone	II
99799	Folly about 100 metres east of Oldstone	II
99800	Shell House about 75 metres north, north east of Oldstone	II
99801	Bridge about 60 metres north west of Oldstone	II
99802	Hermitage & plaque about 200 metres south west of Oldstone	II
99803	Boathouse or icehouse about 260 metres west north west of Oldstone	II
99804	Gate-piers at Oldstone Lodge	II
99809	Church of St Michael	I
99810	Gate-piers, gate & steps south east of church of St Michael	II
99811	Gate-piers, gate & steps south, south west of church of St Michael	II
99812	Lychgate, gates & wall immediately south east of church of St Michael	II
99813	Bennett chest tomb c. 7 metres south, south west of tower of church of St Michael	II

PRN	Description	Grade
99814	Cholwich chest tomb about 6 metres south, south west of porch of church of St Michael	II
99815	Chest tomb about 30 metres south of tower of church of St Michael	II
99816	Chest tomb about 8 metres south of south aisle of church of St Michael	II
99817	Blackawton Xhurchgate house	II
99818	Melrose Cottage	II
99824	Millcombe bridge	II
99825	North millcombe	II
99826	Lilac Cottage	II
99827	Woodford Farmhouse	II
438309	Chest tomb about 15 metres south south west of chancel of church of St Michael	II
438367	Blackawton Churchgate house	II



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Figure 1: Site location and
Historic Environment Record



-  site location
-  HER site
-  listed building



approximate site location

not to scale



approximate site location

not to scale

Figure 4: Extract from Donne's map of 1765



approximate site location

not to scale



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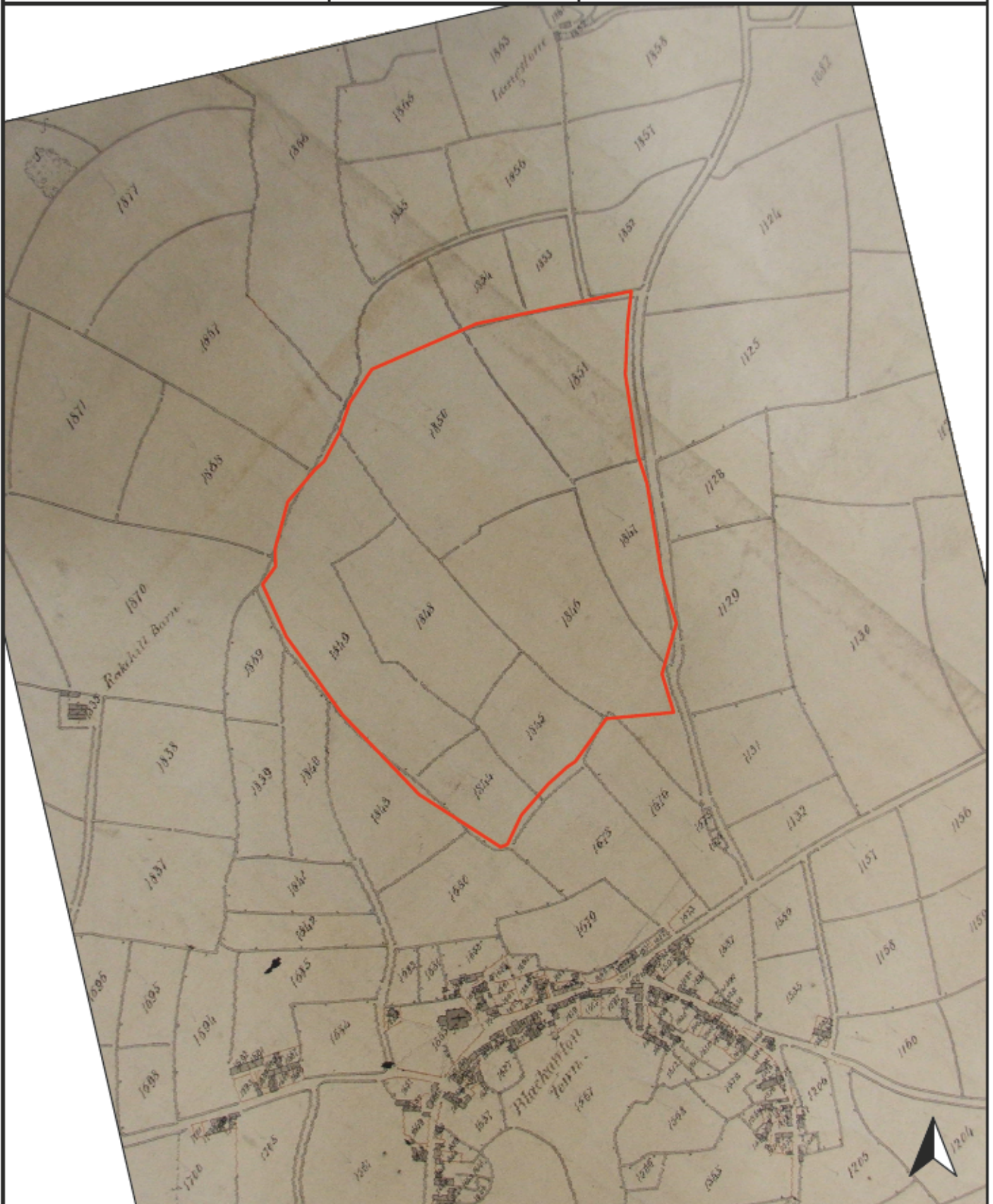
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Figure 5: Extract from Carey's map of 1814

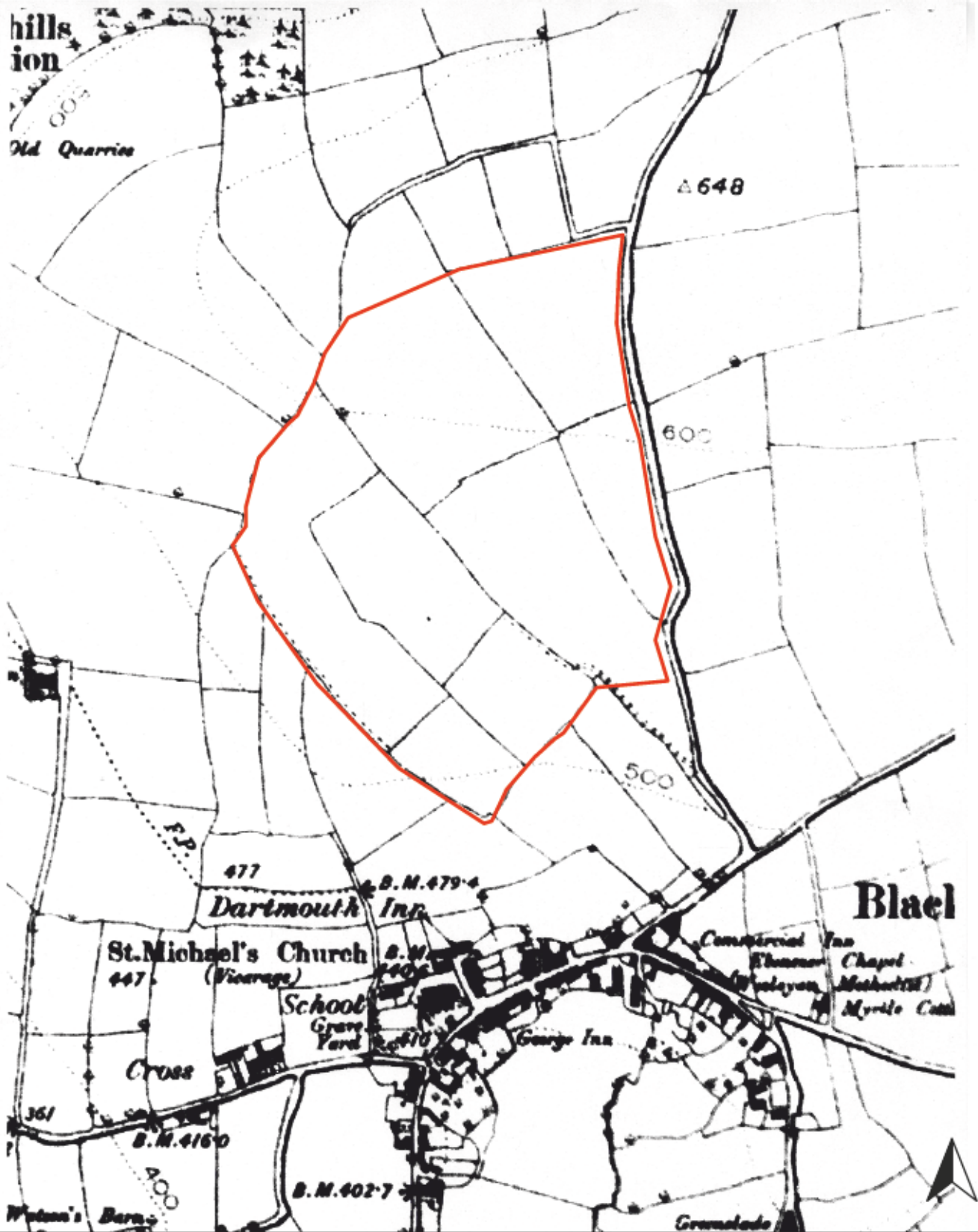


approximate site location

not to scale



 site location



 site location

0 250m
scale 1:5000 for A4 plot

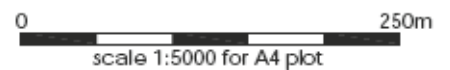
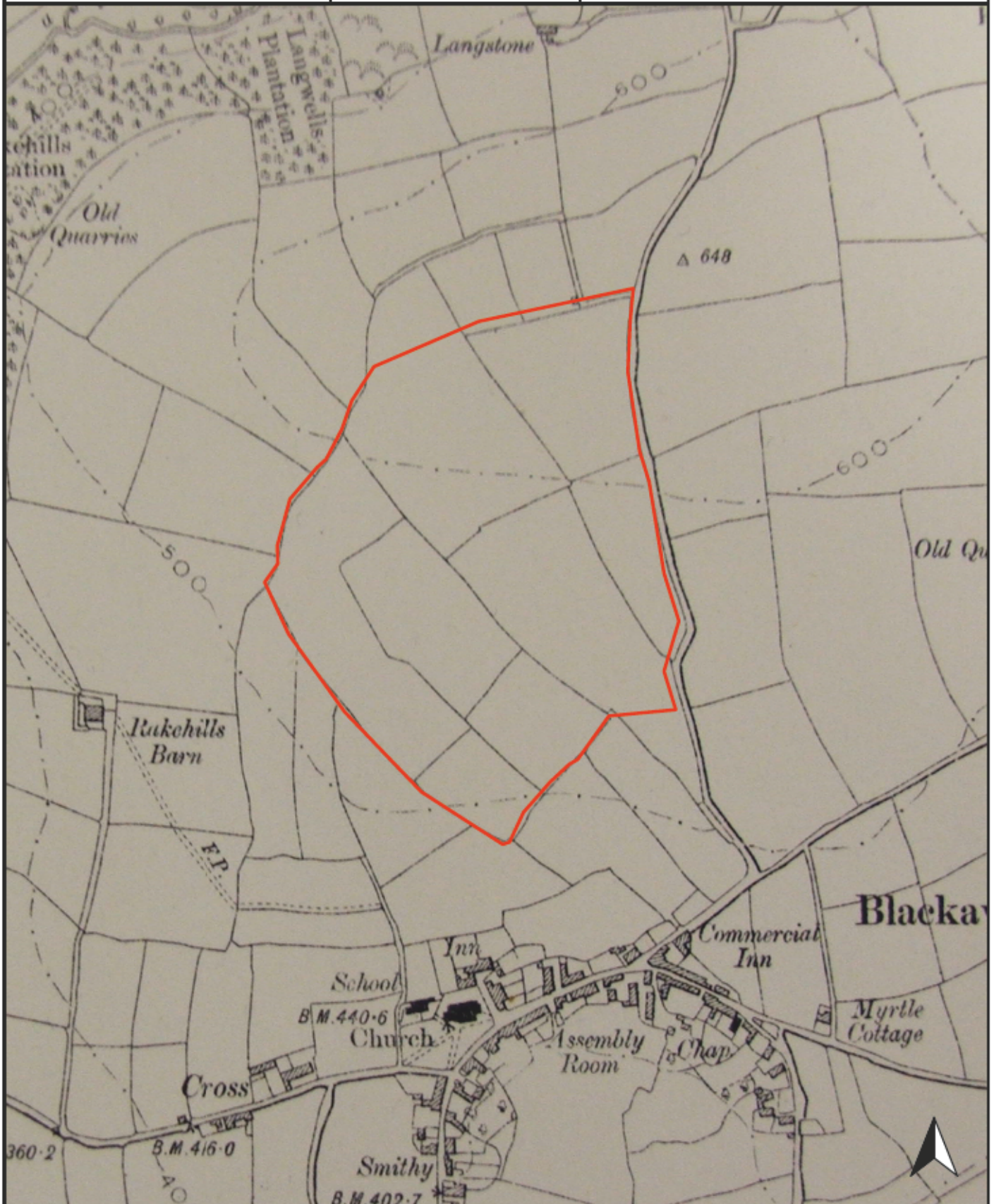




Figure 9: The two western fields, looking south



Figure 10: Northwest field, looking north



Figure 11: Southwest field showing evidence for a recent crop



Figure 12: North-central field containing cereal crop



Figure 13: Southeast field looking south



Figure 14: Gateway between southeast and southwest fields