

Archaeological Impact Assessment

**DITCHLING BEACON
East Sussex**

NGR 533338 112980

**Commissioned by
THE NATIONAL TRUST**



**Project No. 5845
Report No. 2012272**

Richard James BA, MIFA

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**Archaeology South-East,
Units 1 & 2
2 Chapel Place
Portslade
East Sussex BN41 1DR**

Tel: 01273 426830

Fax: 01273 420866

fau@ucl.ac.uk

www.archaeologyse.co.uk

Summary

A Desk Based Assessment has been prepared for a proposed car park remodelling at Ditchling Beacon, East Sussex. The existing car park has been terraced into the hillside, but retains original ground as a central mound and around the western and northern edges. The remodelling will involve cutting back into previously undisturbed deposits.

The assessment has concluded that:

- *The Site has a high potential for containing archaeological deposits of prehistoric and Romano-British date;*
- *There has been little or no known modern disturbance to the central mound and the upper part of the western and northern edges of the car park;*
- *Proposed groundworks in these areas may damage or destroy any potential archaeological deposits;*
- *No setting issues have been identified in relation to designated historic assets.*

The evidence has been reviewed and recommendations for mitigation are offered.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), a division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology, University College London, was commissioned by the National Trust (NT) to carry out an archaeological desk-based assessment, incorporating an impact assessment, of a proposed car park redevelopment at Ditchling Beacon, East Sussex (NGR 533338 112980 - Figs 1 & 3). The Site comprises an existing oval car park terraced into sloping downland on the main ridge crest of the South Downs. The proposed works are designed to improve the car parking, bus stop, pedestrian and interpretation facilities, mainly by reworking existing features but including some additional groundworks.
- 1.2 This report follows the recommendations set out by the Institute for Archaeologists in *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessments* (IFA 2011) and utilises existing information in order to establish as far as possible the archaeological potential of the Site. The report concentrates on the Site, but incorporates information derived from a wider landscape study prepared as part of an earlier project (Bannister 2000).
- 1.3 A wider Study Area with a radius of 1km has been considered to place the Site in context (Fig. 1).
- 1.4 It should be noted that this form of non-intrusive appraisal cannot be seen to be a definitive statement on the presence or absence of archaeological remains within any area but rather as an indicator of the area's potential based on existing information. Further non-intrusive and intrusive investigations such as geophysical surveys and machine-excavated trial trenching may be needed to conclusively define the presence/absence, character and quality of any archaeological remains in a given area.
- 1.5 In drawing up this desk based assessment, cartographic and documentary sources held by the East Sussex Record Office have been consulted, together with material supplied by the National Trust. Archaeological data was obtained from the Historic Environment Record held by East Sussex County Council (ESHER) and the National Trust Historic Buildings and Sites Monument Record (NTHBSMR). Listed Building and Conservation Area data was acquired from English Heritage and Lewes District Council. Relevant sources held within the Archaeology South-East library were utilised, and appropriate Internet databases interrogated. These included: The Defence of Britain Project, The English Heritage National Heritage List, and the Magic website, which holds government digital data of designated sites (Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Registered Historic Parks and Gardens and Registered Historic Battlefields) in GIS map form.

2.0 SITE TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 2.1 The Site is situated on the upper south-eastern facing slope of Ditchling Beacon, a 248m high hill on the main ridge of the South Downs, above the point where the ridgeline is reached by the upper end of the dry valley of Big Bottom. It lies at an altitude of 230-235m aOD. The car park has been terraced into the slope to a maximum depth of c.2m, and comprises a ring of tarmac surrounding an oval mound of pre-existing ground left as a central feature. It is surrounded by publicly accessible grassland to the north and west, with arable land to the south.
- 2.2 According to the online British Geological Survey 1:50,000 mapping¹, the natural geology of the Site is predominantly Chalk (Seaford Chalk Formation).

¹ http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html, accessed 08/01/2013.

3.0 PLANNING BACKGROUND

3.1 Town and Country Planning Legislation and Procedures

- 3.1.1 As from March 2012, Government policies relating to planning are given in the National Planning Policy Framework. Section 12 (paragraphs 126 – 141) of the Framework (*Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*) outlines policies relating to the historic environment and the key role it plays in the Government's definition of sustainable development, the principle which underpins the document.
- 3.1.2 The Framework requires that local planning authorities '*should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment*', recognising that '*heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource*' and should be conserved '*in a manner appropriate to their significance*'.
- 3.1.3 The Framework requires that planning applicants should '*describe the significance of any heritage assets affected*' by their application, '*including any contribution made by their setting*'.

3.2 The South East Plan

- 3.2.1 The Regional Spatial Strategy for South-East England, The South East Plan, was published in May 2009. It set out the vision for the future of the South East until 2026. Government changes to regional structures of power led to the abolishment of regional government offices and the revocation of the status of regional spatial strategies in mid-2010. The South East Plan was then temporarily reinstated following a recent decision by the High Court. However, it will eventually be superseded by changes proposed in the Decentralisation and Localism Act. The policy related to Heritage states:

Policy BE6 - Management of the Historic Environment

When developing and implementing plans and strategies, local authorities and other bodies will adopt policies and support proposals which protect, conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment and the contribution it makes to local and regional distinctiveness and sense of place. The region's internationally and nationally designated historic assets should receive the highest level of protection. Proposals that make sensitive use of historic assets through regeneration, particularly where these bring redundant or under-used buildings and areas into appropriate use should be encouraged.

3.3 Lewes District Local Plan / Local Development Framework

The Lewes District Local Plan (adopted March 2003) is in the process of being replaced by the Lewes District Local Development Framework. A number of Local Plan policies relating to the historic environment have been saved to ensure a consistent approach to planning decisions in the interim:

Policies H2-4: Listed Buildings

Seek to preserve the architectural or historic character and setting of Listed Buildings.

Policies H4-5: Conservation Areas

Seek to preserve the historic and architectural character and appearance of Conservation Areas.

4.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The Historic Environment Records maintained by East Sussex County Council (SHER) and the National Trust (NTHBSMR) were consulted. Listed Building and Conservation Area data was acquired from English Heritage and Lewes District Council. Details were taken of all archaeological sites within a defined Study Area (1km radius from the centre of the Site). The identified sites are tabulated in Appendix 1 and shown plotted on Fig. 1. Designated heritage areas are plotted on Fig. 2.

4.2 Archaeological Periods Represented

4.2.1 The timescale of the archaeological periods referred to in this report is shown below. The periods are given their usual titles. It should be noted that for most cultural heritage assessment purposes the boundaries between them are not sharply distinguished, even where definite dates based on historical events are used. All site numbers refer to Fig. 1.

Prehistoric: Palaeolithic (c. 700,000 BC - c. 10,000 BC)

Prehistoric: Mesolithic (c. 10,000 BC - c.5,000 BC)

Prehistoric: Neolithic (c. 5,000 BC - c.2,300 BC)

Prehistoric: Bronze Age (c. 2,300 BC - c. 600 BC)

Prehistoric: Iron Age (c. 600 BC - AD 43)

Romano-British (AD 43 - c. AD 410)

Anglo-Saxon (c. AD 410 - AD 1066)

Medieval (AD 1066 - AD 1540)

Post-medieval (AD 1540 to date)

4.3 Scheduled Ancient Monuments

4.3.1 The Site does not lie within a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM). However, it lies immediately east of a SAM (Ditchling Beacon Hillfort). Ten SAMs are recorded within the Study Area (Figs 1 & 2):

- Hillfort, a beacon and dewpond on Ditchling Beacon (SAM 27031) (25m from the Site) **(10)**;
- Middle Brow Earthwork (SAM ES50) (720m from the Site) **(5)**;
- Round barrow south of Ditchling Beacon (SAM ES285) (550m from the Site) **(3)**;
- Anglo-Saxon barrow field 650m south-west of Wick Farm (SAM 27049) (975m from the Site) **(1)**;
- Part of Western Brow round barrow cemetery and an Anglo-Saxon barrow field 690m south of Westmeston Farm (SAM 27051) (475m from the Site) **(8)**;

- Part of Western Brow round barrow cemetery and an Anglo-Saxon barrow field 700m south of Westmeston Farm (SAM 27052) (565m from the Site) (**8**);
- Pair of bowl barrows 720m SSE of Westmeston Farm forming part of Western Brow round barrow cemetery (SAM 27053) (640m from the Site) (**8**);
- Three bowl barrows 750m south-east of Westmeston Farm, forming part of Western Brow round barrow cemetery (SAM 27054) (850m from the Site) (**8**);
- Bowl barrow 750m south-east of Westmeston Farm, forming part of Western Brow round barrow cemetery (SAM 27055) (900m from the Site) (**8**);
- Three bowl barrows 770m south-east of Westmeston Farm, forming part of Western Brow round barrow cemetery (SAM 27056) (950m from the Site) (**8**).

4.4 Listed Buildings

4.4.1 The Site does not contain any Listed Buildings. However, three Listed Buildings exist within the Study Area (reference numbers relate to the original EH database record; numbers in bold are located on Fig. 1):

- Parish Church of St Martin (418197) (Grade II*) – 815m from the Site (**21**);
- The Old Rectory (418198) (Grade II) – 915m from the Site (**45**);
- April Cottage Culpepper (418199) (Grade II) – 895m from the Site (**46**).

4.5 Conservation Areas

4.5.1 The Site does not lie within a Conservation Area. However, the Study Area contains one Conservation Area (Fig. 2):

- Westmeston Conservation Area –720m from the Site;

4.6 Archaeological Notification Areas

4.6.1 East Sussex County Council, who advise the local planning authorities in the county on archaeological matters, have identified various Archaeological Notification Areas (ANAs) throughout the county. It must be stressed that these areas are not exclusive. Sites outside them can contain archaeological remains of major importance that may be presently unknown. Conversely not every part of these areas will inevitably contain archaeological remains. Their boundaries are not necessarily precise. They have no statutory status but are designed to provide guidance to planning officers on the location of significant areas of archaeological

potential, to be regarded as a material consideration when determining planning applications.

4.6.2 The Site lies wholly within an extensive ANA (Fig. 2):

- ANA76: Ditchling Beacon & Western Brow.

A further four ANAs are recorded within the Study Area (Fig. 2):

- ANA74: Home Bottom (300m from the Site);
- ANA773: Westmeston medieval and post-medieval village (700m from the Site);
- ANA1319: Wick Farm (770m from the Site);
- ANA1350: North Bottom (740m from the Site).

4.7 Prehistoric

4.7.1 Boxgrove is the only site that contains large numbers of *in situ* finds of Palaeolithic date so far discovered in Sussex. A small number of isolated findspots are also known, with most having been recovered from geologically disturbed contexts. The majority of finds in the region have been associated with the raised beaches in the Upper Coastal Plain, as at Boxgrove and Slindon (Woodcock 1978). Other finds have been retrieved from clay-with-flint deposits on the chalk downland plateaux and the river gravel terraces, although these deposits are 'fragmentary and thin' (Woodcock 1999). More rarely, artefacts have also been retrieved from the downland slopes themselves (Pope 2000, 221-222).

4.7.2 Many Mesolithic sites in Sussex are represented by concentrations of flintwork rather than by settlement sites. These flint scatters are found in all parts of the county, forming clusters that may represent activity zones. The clusters predominate in the river valleys, with other sizeable concentrations along the Coastal Plain and on the High Weald.

4.7.3 Flintwork concentrations, causewayed enclosures and barrows indicate that settlement and farming during the Neolithic period was concentrated on the chalk downland and along the raised beaches. This period saw intensification in downland forest clearance (Drewett 1999, 16). A variety of different monument types are represented on the downland block between the Ouse and the Adur, including long barrows and two causewayed enclosures at Offham and Whitehawk.

4.7.4 Early Bronze Age settlement sites are still thought to be poorly represented in Sussex as a whole, although ritual landscapes in the form of round barrow cemeteries are common on the downland. By the Middle Bronze Age, however, increased population and perhaps drier soils had encouraged settlement to spread from the Downs onto the Coastal Plain (a pattern which continued to increase into the Late Bronze Age). The

downland was quite densely settled at this period, particularly in the middle and late phases (Drewett, Rudling & Gardiner 1988), with examples known from the Study Area, including several oval enclosures. Associated with the settlements are a number of field systems, many of them visible on air photographs (Fig. 15).

4.7.5 Most of the evidence for Iron Age activity in Sussex is found on the downland. It is noticeably scarcer than that for Bronze Age activity. The most visible evidence relates to a series of defended enclosures, many of which originated in the Late Bronze Age (Hamilton & Manley 1997). Ditchling Beacon is an example of such a site.

4.7.6 *Ditchling Beacon*

The hillfort is a 5.5 hectare univallate sub-rectangular enclosure of early-mid Iron Age date (it has produced archaeological material from the period 750-400 BC – Hamilton & Gregory 2000). It is almost symmetrical in plan apart from a scalloped northern edge where it follows the downland scarp; this regularity of shape prompted many early writers to interpret it as a Roman military camp, although Col. Augustus Lane Fox (later General Pitt-Rivers) doubted this following his visit of 1867 (Lane Fox 1869) and Hadrian Allcroft in 1908 categorically dismissed any link with ‘those terrible squat interlopers’ (i.e. Roman legionaries) (Allcroft 1908). Early photographs indicate a relatively prominent upstanding rampart, of simple dump type (Curwen 1931, 130), although this was flattened for agricultural purposes in 1947 and now exists only as a crop/soil mark, apart from a few lengths of earthwork along the northern side.

4.7.7 Relatively little archaeological work has taken place on the hillfort. The Brighton and Hove Archaeological Club carried out a limited investigation of the eastern rampart in 1929, excavating three small trial trenches and recovering a poor collection of artefacts (Crow 1930). A further five small trial trenches were excavated in 1983 to assess plough damage, which was found to have been considerable (Rudling 1985). Neither campaign produced evidence for any internal settlement within the enclosure, and the lack of environmental evidence due to the acidic clay-with-flint subsoil further hampered interpretation. Based on the available evidence, it has been postulated that the hillfort functioned as a stock enclosure, similar to other downland enclosures at Chanctonbury and Harting Beacon (Drewett, Rudling & Gardiner 1988).

4.7.8 Fourteen prehistoric sites have been recorded within the Study Area:

- Barrow group containing at least one early medieval barrow; remainder unexcavated and may be Bronze Age (1);
- Bronze Age bowl barrow (2);
- Bronze Age bowl barrows (3);
- Early Bronze Age to Romano-British field system (4);

- Bronze Age earthwork, possibly a platform barrow or other ritual/ceremonial site (5);
- Bronze Age barrow (6);
- Bronze Age bowl barrow (7);
- Bronze Age and Anglo-Saxon barrow cemetery (8);
- Early Bronze Age enclosure (9);
- Iron Age univallate hillfort (10);
- Bostal terraceway, possibly of prehistoric origin (11);
- Bostal trackway, possibly of prehistoric origin (12);
- Hollow-way, possibly of prehistoric origin (13);
- Ridgeway, probably of prehistoric origin (14).

4.8 Romano-British

4.8.1 During the Romano-British period, Sussex formed part of the client kingdom of the Regni. Most of the major sites of the period occupy the river valleys and coastal plains. Settlement on the downland consisted mainly of small agricultural settlements set within field systems, although the downland blocks west of the Adur valley attracted higher status occupation with a number of villas being established, together with temples (Rudling 1999).

4.8.2 Four Romano-British sites have been recorded in the Study Area, all relating to artefact finds:

- Coin of Tiberius (AD 14-37) found within the parish of Ditchling. 'at or near the Beacon' (provenance recorded only to nearest kilometre square) (15);
- Coin hoard of 31 late 3rd century antoniniani and a small bronze ring discovered by a metal detectorist on the northern scarp in 1984 (16);
- Hoard of nine denari dating to c.140 AD found on north scarp in 1985 (17);
- Two 2nd century copper alloy brooches found in 1980-81 (18).

4.9 Anglo-Saxon

4.9.1 The area of densest Anglo-Saxon settlement in Sussex (as identified by cemeteries) is thought to have lain between the Ouse and Cuckmere rivers (Bell 1978, 64), although settlement quickly expanded into other areas of the region, following the main river valleys. Early Saxon settlements are rare, with most evidence derived from cemeteries, although work at Chalton in Hampshire suggests that the earliest settlements were established on the upper reaches of the chalk dip slope. They appear to have been abandoned by the 9th century, and settlement had shifted to the river valleys and the fertile Greensand shelf at the foot

of the chalk scarp, forming the basis of the string of villages (including Ditchling and Westmeston) that still exist today.

4.9.2 Four Anglo-Saxon sites are recorded within the Study Area:

- Barrow group containing at least one early medieval barrow (1);
- Bronze Age and Anglo-Saxon barrow cemetery (8);
- 9th century strap end found by metal detectorist in 1984, halfway up Ditchling Bostall (provenance recorded only to nearest kilometre square) (19);
- Village of Westmeston, recorded from 795 (20).

4.10 Medieval

4.10.1 The medieval period saw the development of a distinctive settlement pattern along the northern edge of the South Downs. A line of agricultural villages developed along the Greensand shelf at the foot of the scarp, surrounded by open arable fields. The parishes were long and narrow, extending out into the Weald to the north, providing woodland pasture, and up onto the downland to the south, providing sheepwalks. Ditchling Beacon lies at the boundary between two of these land-units, the manors (and parishes) of Ditchling and Westmeston, with the Site lying within the latter. Other land-uses are also recorded, including Ditchling Park, a royal stud farm owned in the 14th century by Edward the Black Prince, although the boundaries are unclear (Bannister 2000). The sheepwalks of the respective manors were accessed by deeply incised hollow-ways, or bostalls, that zig-zagged up the scarp slope.

4.10.2 Four medieval entries are recorded within the Study Area:

- Parish Church of St. Martin, constructed from the 12th century onwards (Grade II* Listed Building) (21);
- Wick Farm, a farmstead of medieval origin (22);
- Earthwork lynchet forming eastern boundary of Burnthouse Farm (23);
- Parish and manor boundary, separating Ditchling and Westmeston, marked by boundary stones and mounds (24).

4.11 Post-Medieval

4.11.1 The post-medieval period saw little significant change in the landscape around Ditchling Beacon, although much of the scarp itself was quarried for chalk – this necessitated the construction of a new road up the slope after the original Ditchling Bostall (further to the west) was breached by quarrying (in the 19th century, according to Bannister, although the present route was surveyed by the Ordnance Survey in 1797 – Fig. 6).

The hillfort became the site of a fire beacon from at least the 16th century, and was subsequently occupied by a signalling station manned by the Royal Engineers until the advent of the telegraph rendered it obsolete. The downland ridge was used as sheep pasture for most of this period, apart from short periods of arable use, usually associated with periods of warfare. Military training took place on and around the Beacon during both world wars, with trench systems surviving as ephemeral earthworks to the west of the hillfort. During the Second World War, the Beacon was designated as a Defended Locality, manned by a company of infantry (c.100-120 men) with four machine guns and two anti-tank guns: the seemingly remote nature of the location is belied by the details of the German invasion plans which required paratroopers to take the downland behind the coastal towns. Any enemy troops breaching these defences and descending the scarp would have faced incineration from a flame fougasse positioned in one of the old quarries next to the road.

4.11.2 Following the end of the war, much of the Beacon appears to have been ploughed for arable. This is the context within which the hillfort ramparts were flattened in 1947. The ploughing appears to have continued up until the early 1980s – correspondence held by the East Sussex Record Office from 1981, relating to the purchase of the car park site by the National Trust from Brighton Borough Council, states that there was ‘no intention of starting construction of the car park until Mr Ray [tenant of High Park Farm] has harvested the corn’ (ESRO BMW/A/19/3/4). The creation of a purpose built car park had been a pressing issue since before the war, with local writers complaining that motorists would drive up onto the hillfort itself (Christie, Hill, Johnston & Pepler 1937).

4.11.3 30 post-medieval sites are recorded in the Study Area, of which 14 are Listed Buildings:

- Second World War feature of unknown type **(25)**;
- Second World War aircraft crash site **(26)**;
- 19th century beacon site **(27)**;
- Chalk pit and two limekilns **(28)**;
- Chalk pit **(29)**;
- 19th century dew pond **(30)**;
- Ditchling Lime Works, in use from early 18th century **(31)**;
- Chalk quarries supplying Ditchling Lime Works, in use from the late 18th century **(32)**;
- Remains of rectangular earthwork enclosure predating the chalk quarry – may be a sheepfold **(33)**;
- Dewpond lying adjacent to hillfort rampart **(34)**;
- Large chalk pit of early 19th century origin **(35)**;
- Chalk pit of early 19th century origin **(36)**;
- Ditchling Bostall, laid out in the 19th century to replace an earlier route **(37)**;

- 19th century parish boundary stone **(38)**;
- 19th century parish boundary stone **(39)**;
- 19th century parish boundary stone **(40)**;
- 19th century parish boundary stone **(41)**;
- Site of former dewpond **(42)**;
- Site of first World War practice trenches **(43)**;
- Second World War ditched compound **(44)**;
- The Old Rectory, mid-19th century (Grade II Listed Building) **(45)**;
- April Cottage Culpepper, 17th century (Grade II Listed Building) **(46)**.

5.0 CARTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

- 5.1 Richard Budgen's county map of 1724 (Fig. 4) shows little detail, although it does illustrate several interesting points: the hillfort is shown as a square symbol, labelled '*Ditchling cast. hill*', located along the main ridgeway route
- Budgen marks a series of mile markers along the ridgeway, indicating that it functioned as a major coach road at the time, linking Eastbourne with Midhurst (Margary 1971). The only route he marks ascending the scarp is Burnthouse Bostall, to the west of the Study Area, which was then a coach road but is now just a bridleway extending past the Chattri war memorial towards Patcham.
- 5.2 Thomas Yeakell and William Gardner's 2-inch 'Great Survey' of 1778 shows more detail (Fig. 5). They do not mark the hillfort, and the ridgeway had declined in status to a trackway – the main route is shown in red, climbing the scarp up to the Beacon. The route does not conform exactly to any of the known historic alignments, but this is likely to be an issue of accuracy. The Ordnance Survey draft 1-inch map of 1797 (Fig. 6) labels Ditchling Beacon for the first time, and shows the bostall ascending the scarp following the line of the existing road. The Site lay at the crossroads between the scarp road and the ridgeway, but no other details are marked, although the open aspect of the downland landscape is clear. The landuse, as indicated by the map, was open pasture. An estate map of 1820 (ESRO ACC 2919) (not illustrated) shows a similar picture, with the Site lying within Westmeston Sheep Down and crossed by a simple track.
- 5.3 The Site lies within Westmeston parish, although no details are shown on the Tithe map of 1842 (Fig. 8). It lay with an expansive plot of open downland pasture called Middleton Sheep Down, in the ownership of Henry Lane and leased by William Sturt. The surveyor did not record any of the downland tracks, unlike his colleague who prepared the Ditchling Tithe map in 1839 (Fig. 7) – this map shows the present road line climbing the scarp, with the chalk pits marked by pencil shading (possibly a later addition), and a single ridgeway track across the Beacon passing close to a circular dewpond – this area was listed as Tenantry Down, owned and farmed by Lord Abergavenny.
- 5.4 A range of 25-inch and 6-inch Ordnance Survey maps are available for the Site for the period 1874 – 1979 (Figs 9 – 14). They all show a static landscape of open downland, crossed by unfenced tracks, with the hillfort prominently marked to the west. The Site lay at the point where a braided series of ridgeway tracks met to cross the bostall road, before continuing to the east. The only change is in the number of individual trackways, which ebb-and-flow. A formal car park is indicated on the 1979 edition (Fig. 14) on the Site, although it is unlikely to be the existing car park in its

current form as correspondence between the National Trust and the former Brighton Borough Council indicates that negotiations to purchase and remodel the car park were still in progress in 1981 (ESRO BMW/A/19/3/4). It would appear that the Council had laid out a parking area prior to 1979, but the form it took is unknown.

- 5.5 In summary, the historic mapping emphasises the lack of significant change within the landscape around the Site over the last few centuries.

6.0 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS

6.1 A selection of air photographs were sourced from the English Heritage Archive, with others inspected at the East Sussex Record Office and online. No features of archaeological significance were noted, although many of the photographs were of inappropriate scale or poor quality, and the Site is of small size in a 'busy' corner of the landscape. A cropmark plot compiled by East Sussex County Council shows no cropmarks or soilmarks in the area of the Site other than the hillfort and several former trackways (Fig. 15). A photograph from 1946 (Fig. 17) shows the hillfort clearly, with the Site situated within an oval enclosure which may be the remains of the Second World War defended area, probably a barbed wire defence – no trace of these features survives (or the zigzag features immediately east of the road, which may be slit trenches). The images viewed were:

- RAF/106G/UK/538, frame 3098 (24/07/1945) (EHA);
- 3G/TUD/UK/157, frame 5201 (19/04/1946) (online²);
- ESRO AMS5868/1/10 (August 1947);
- RAF/541/220, frame 4086 (31/12/1948) (EHA);
- OS/76146, frame 223 (08/04/1976) (EHA);
- OS/94177, frame 161 (15/06/1994) (EHA).

7.0 WALKOVER SURVEY

7.1 A walkover survey of the Site was undertaken on 9th January 2012. The weather was dry, and visibility was good.

7.2 The objective of the walkover survey was to identify historic landscape features not plotted on existing maps, together with other archaeological surface anomalies or artefact scatters, and also to assess the existence of constraints or areas of disturbance that may have impacted upon the predicted archaeological resource. The walkover survey was rapid, within the parameters of the project, and was not intended as a detailed survey.

7.3 The Site comprises the existing car park, an oval plot cut into the slope, surfaced with tarmac and bounded by hedgerows on the southern and eastern sides. In the centre is an oval, flat-topped grassy mound, 25m by 20m in area.

7.4 The car park has been terraced into the slope to a depth of over 2m at the northern end, although probably retaining the original ground level at the southern end. The western side varies in depth from 1.0m next to the bus stop to 0.6m near the entrance. The eastern side appears to retain

² <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/geography/researchprojects/sussexairphotos/1940/12-5201.jpg>

the original ground level, and is defined by a broad earth bund. The central mound is flat-topped and slopes in line with the natural slope, indicating that it is likely to be original unexcavated ground, ranging in height from 1.3m at the northern end to 0.6m at the south. The central roadway is tarmac, with the parking areas comprising gravel – several potholes in the tarmac indicate that it is laid directly onto chalk bedrock.

- 7.5 No artefacts or structural remains were observed additional to those already recorded in the 2000 survey (Bannister 2000). Based on the walkover survey, it is suggested that all archaeological deposits are likely to have been destroyed in the interior of the car park, although deposits may survive within the central mound and in the northern and western slopes of the car park cut. The eastern and southern sides comprise fill material, and have no archaeological significance.

8.0 ASSESSMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

8.0.1 A preliminary review of the cultural heritage evidence detailed earlier indicates that the site has considerable archaeological potential.

8.1 Prehistoric

8.1.1 The Study Area has produced considerable evidence for prehistoric occupation of all periods, but particularly later prehistory (Bronze Age and Iron Age). This includes Early Bronze Age ritual landscapes (barrow cemeteries), later Bronze Age-Iron Age farming settlements and field systems and the Iron Age hillfort. Although open sheep pasture for most of the medieval and post-medieval periods, arable cultivation since the early 20th century is likely to have destroyed surface traces of many more archaeological sites than are currently visible, elements of which may survive as cut features in the subsoil. Consequently, it is possible that further evidence for prehistoric occupation may survive anyway along the downland ridge.

8.1.2 The potential of the Site for this period in general is high.

8.2 Roman

8.2.1 The only secure Romano-British sites within the Study Area are a series of coin hoards, two of which were found on the lower slopes of the scarp and two of which are poorly provenance. However, it is possible that some of the prehistoric field systems on the dip slope continued in occupation into the Roman period.

8.2.2 The potential of the Site for this period is moderate.

8.3 Anglo-Saxon

8.3.1 Two barrow cemeteries containing a mixture of Bronze Age and Anglo-Saxon burials are known from the Study Area, located on the ridge to either side of the Site. It is possible that further examples have been ploughed out, but may survive as cut features in the subsoil, although any given example has a higher likelihood of being prehistoric due to the generally greater number of Bronze Age examples in the area. A strap fitting of 9th century date was recovered from Ditchling Bostall, although this is of less significance as it represents a casual loss by a horseman.

8.3.2 The potential of the Site for this period is moderate.

8.4 Medieval

8.4.1 Throughout the medieval period, the Site lay within unenclosed downland sheep pasture, crossed by a number of trackways, including the ridgeway route which appears to have passed through, or close to, the Site. Given this landuse history, it is unlikely that any significant deposits relating to this period exist on or around the Site.

8.4.2 The potential of the Site for this period is low.

8.5 Post-Medieval

8.5.1 The Site has been downland pasture up until the early 20th century, when much of the area was ploughed up to counter-act wartime food shortages. A further short period of pasture may have returned to the Beacon during the agricultural depression of the interwar period. During both world wars, the area around the Beacon was intensively used for military training, with considerable localised excavation of fieldworks. During the Second World War, the Beacon was fortified in advance of an expected German invasion, although much of this infrastructure would have been barbed wire and picket posts rather than substantial engineering – although most of this military activity took place to the west of the Site, one air photograph suggests a fenced enclosure around the area of the Site itself.

8.5.2 The potential of the Site for this period is low.

8.6 Summary of Potential

8.6.1 A desk-based assessment can generally only consider the potential of a site in principle. As is the case here, its conclusions usually require testing by fieldwork in order to confirm whether remains are actually present and, if this is the case, to establish their character, condition and extent and thus indicate the weight that ought to be attached to their preservation. It must always be acknowledged that remains of a type for which there is no prior evidence may be found on a site by fieldwork.

8.6.2 The potential for discovery of new sites has been revealed by a review of known archaeological sites in the immediate vicinity. The estimated potential for sites and/or findspots being located within the appraisal area can be summarised as follows:

Prehistoric – High
Romano-British – Moderate
Anglo-Saxon - Moderate
Medieval – Low
Post-medieval – Low

9.0 EXISTING IMPACTS ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

- 9.1 Although the Site lies in an area of high theoretical potential for containing archaeological deposits, this potential may have been impacted upon by past and current landuse practice.
- 9.2 The Site appears to have been under mostly pasture until the early 20th century, which will have had little significant impact on any buried archaeological deposits. However, historic mapping indicates that from at least the early 18th century, and probably considerably longer, the main ridgeway track, often braided in nature, has passed through, or close to, the Site. Soils are relatively thin on the ridge (although actual depths are unknown – neither the 1930 nor the 1985 published reports of fieldwork in the vicinity recorded topsoil depths), and the area of the Site is likely to have experienced considerable erosion over the centuries from traffic using the ridgeway. This may well have been exacerbated in the 20th century following the advent of motor vehicles – evidence from the 1930s indicates that cars were driven up to the Beacon itself by sight-seers, and during the Second World War the area was used for training by armoured vehicles, including tanks. Consequently, it is probable that any archaeological deposits within the Site may have suffered from a combination of erosion and compaction.
- 9.3 Furthermore, inspection of the Site suggests that the current car park was created by the excavation of a large circular trench into the hillside, apart from the central knoll which appears to be original ground left intact. Consequently, any archaeological deposits within the lower parts of the car park are likely to have been destroyed, although they may survive within the central knoll and around the upper parts of the northern and western edges – a watching brief during the construction of the existing bus bay in 2003 concluded that the site had been completely truncated within the car park itself (Greatorex 2003).

10.0 IMPACT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Archaeological Deposits

10.1 At this stage a detailed description of the construction methods is not available, so the impact can only be considered in the broadest terms. Sixteen separate tasks have been identified in the draft proposal, and these will be discussed in turn (numbers relate to the numbering system on Fig. 16):

1. *Repositioning of existing interpretation panel*: this is a minor change in an area of existing erosion due to a braided footpath with no anticipated impact on archaeological deposits;
2. *Repair of eroded areas on the eastern bund, using fill material from the car park works*: bund is entirely fill material, therefore no impact on archaeological deposits;
3. *Erection of stock proof fencing around the car park*: this is a minor operation with no anticipated impact on archaeological deposits;
4. *Creation of more defined exit to the South Downs Way using a change in surfacing*: area already truncated by existing car park, so no impact on archaeological deposits;
5. *Installation of self-closing gate at eastern exit of car park*: area already truncated by existing steps and utility manhole chamber, therefore no anticipated impact on archaeological deposits;
6. *Ramping of existing steps down to the Ditchling road*: area already truncated by existing steps and utility manhole chamber, therefore no anticipated impact on archaeological deposits;
7. *Delineation of new parking bays by change in surfacing*: area already truncated by existing car park, so no impact on archaeological deposits;
8. *Creation of new area for ice-cream van*: this will involve the excavation of part of the southern edge of the central mound (a minimum of 0.6m high), to a maximum width of c.2m. This may impact upon buried archaeological deposits within the mound;
9. *Extension of stock fence along the verge*: this is a minor operation with no anticipated impact on archaeological deposits;
10. *Installation of cattle grid within the entrance*: area already truncated by existing car park, so no impact on archaeological deposits;
11. *Installation of granite setts to encourage one-way circuit around the car park*: area already truncated by existing car park, so no impact on archaeological deposits;
12. *Creation of bicycle and motorbike parking near the bus stop*; according to the draft proposal, this will require the cutting back of the existing slope to a width of up to 2m. This may impact upon buried archaeological deposits;

13. *Reordering of the existing bus stop*: this will be repositioned within the existing car park footprint, in an area already truncated, so no impact on archaeological deposits;
14. *Cutting back of the existing chalk banks and the central island to allow the bus to negotiate round*: this will require the cutting back of the existing slopes to varying widths up to 2m. This may impact upon archaeological deposits in both areas;
15. *Creation of ramp at northern end of car park to allow vehicular access*: this area already has a degree of erosion and truncation from an existing braided informal pathway, but it is possible that undisturbed deposits may survive within the uneroded areas between. This may impact upon archaeological deposits;
16. *Insertion of timber sleepers across the path*: this area has already been truncated by the existing eroded pathway, so no impact on archaeological deposits is anticipated.

10.2 In summary, four of the proposed tasks (nos 8, 12, 14 and 15) may involve some disturbance of surviving buried archaeological deposits. This may include complete truncation/destruction, depending on the depth of proposed disturbance.

Designated Sites

10.3 The proposed works will have no physical impact on the fabric of any designated sites. As the car park is already designed to sit within, rather than on, the landscape, and comprises a limited remodelling of an existing facility, it is also considered to have no significant impact on the setting of any designated sites.

11.0 PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER WORK

11.1 As mentioned above (see 1.5) it is important to remember that desk based appraisals cannot provide a definitive statement on the presence or absence of archaeological deposits in a given area. Such an appraisal can only reflect the potential of that area for containing such deposits based upon existing archaeological and historical data available. Any conclusions can only be tested by the application of fieldwork techniques.

11.2 The assessment has identified the possible existence of significant archaeological deposits relating to prehistoric and Romano-British date, within the area of proposed development. It is recommended that the following programme of archaeological work is carried out, with the aim of providing a definitive confirmation of the presence or absence of archaeological deposits within the Site and to mitigate any impacts:

- Limited trial trenching to investigate the central mound, with the objective of clarifying its character and origin, and confirming the presence or absence of archaeological deposits;
- A watching brief during the construction works, concentrating on the four tasks where potential impact on archaeological deposits has been identified, to ensure that any archaeological deposits or features are adequately recorded by qualified archaeological staff.

12.0 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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English Heritage Archive

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Ordnance Survey 1:2500 (1910)
Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 (1951)
Ordnance Survey 1:2500 (1958)
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Archive of Strutt and Parker, Lewes: correspondence between National Trust and Brighton Borough Council relating to the car park purchase (1978 – 81) (ESRO BMW/A/19/3/4)

Also checked:

Map of Ditchling Farm, estate of Walter Lucas (1706) (ESRO AMS 5800) (no coverage of Site);

William Figg, Plan of estates...belonging to John Martin Cripps (1819) (ESRO AMS 4952/1/8,11) (no coverage of Site);

Brighton Borough Council, Engineer and Surveyor's Department records: Sir Demetriadi's [*sic.*] land at Ditchling Beacon (1939) (ESRO DB/D/46/1374) (not available at time of visit due to stock-taking);

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Appendix 1 - Summary Table of Archaeological Sites (refer to Fig. 1)

(NTHBSMR numbers are prefixed 142; ESHER numbers are prefixed MES; Defence of Britain numbers are prefixed S; Listed Building numbers are in *italics*)

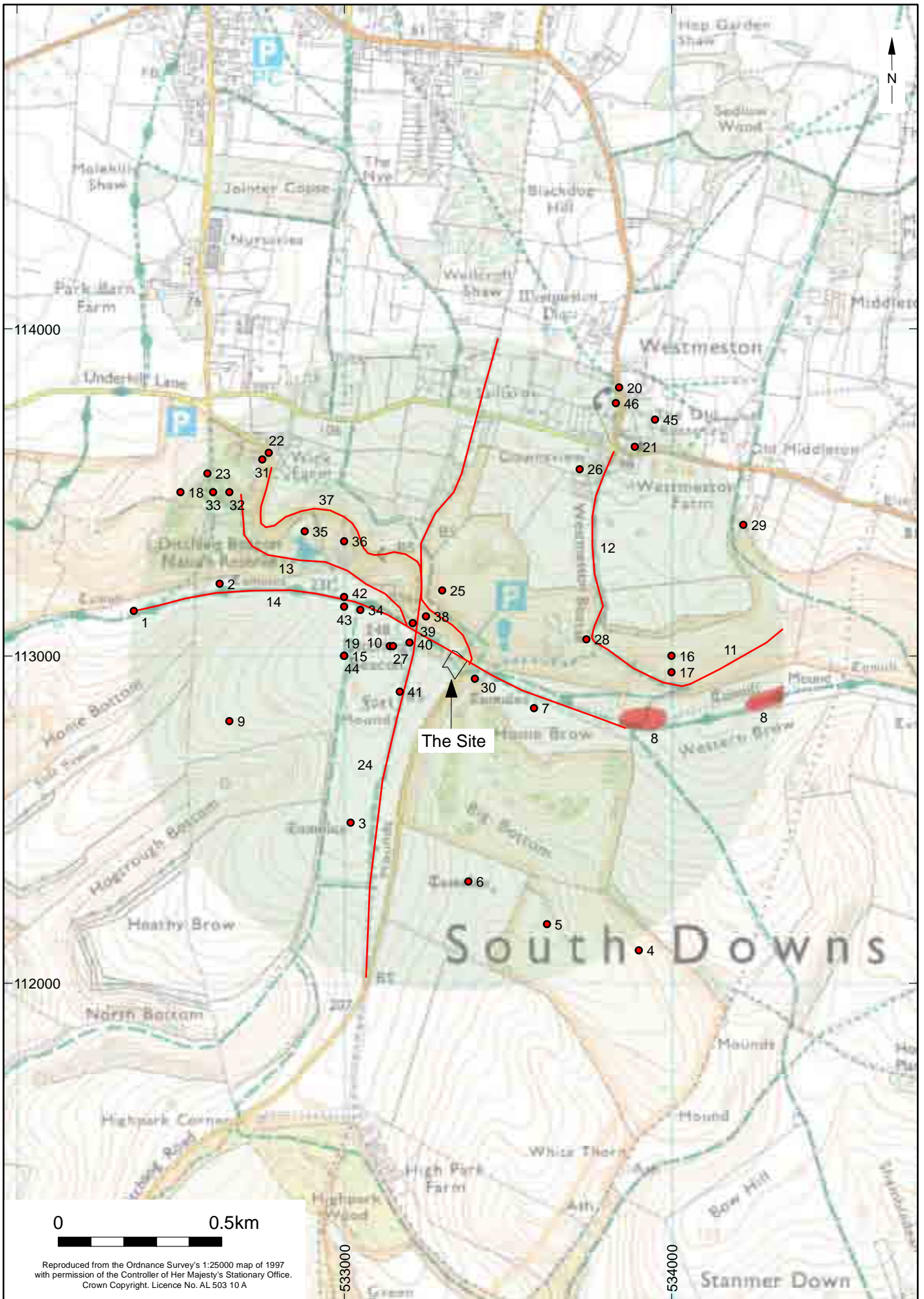
Site No.	HER No./LB No.	NGR (TQ)	Description	Period
1	MES1287 142405 SAM 27049	323 131	Barrow group containing at least one early medieval barrow. <i>Scheduled Ancient Monument</i>	Bronze Age & Anglo-Saxon
2	MES1288 142406	3262 1322	Bowl barrow.	Bronze Age
3	MES1291 SAM ES285	3302 1249	Site of bowl barrows. <i>Scheduled Ancient Monument</i>	Bronze Age
4	MES1336	339 121	Celtic field system, with lynchets and field-banks.	Bronze Age – Romano-British
5	MES2061 SAM ES50	3362 1218	Middle Brow earthworks – possible platform barrow or ceremonial/ritual site. <i>Scheduled Ancient Monument</i>	Bronze Age
6	MES2062	3338 1231	Site of bowl barrow.	Bronze Age
7	MES2063	3358 1284	Site of bowl barrow.	Bronze Age
8	MES2065 142432 142433 SAM 27051 – SAM 27056	3417 1287	Barrow cemetery forming a linear group of c.20 barrows, with larger barrows of Bronze Age date surrounded by smaller satellite barrows of Anglo-Saxon date. <i>Scheduled Ancient Monument</i>	Bronze Age & Anglo-Saxon
9	MES7206	3265 1280	Oval enclosure surviving as a crop mark to the south-west of the hillfort.	Bronze Age
10	MES1289 142400 SAM 27031	3314 1303	Ditchling Beacon hillfort: univallate enclosure, now largely ploughed out although stretches of the northern rampart survive within pasture.	Iron Age
11	MES2066	3444 1315 – 3473 1287	Bostal terraceway.	Neolithic - Post-Medieval
12	MES19498 142434	3390 1322	Bostal trackway linking Westmeston to the downs.	Neolithic - Post-Medieval
13	142410	3268 1352 – 3317 1312	Hollow-way: deep bostal forming the original accessroute between Ditchling and the downs until truncated by chalk quarrying.	Neolithic – Post-Medieval
14	142422	3390 1280 – 3163 1290	Ridgeway following the crest of the South Downs, braided in places.	Neolithic - Post-Medieval
15	MES1283	33 13	Coin of Tiberius picked up within parish of Ditchling ‘...at or near the Beacon’.	Romano-British
16	MES2072	34 13	Hoard of 61 late 3 rd century antoniniani and a small, plain bronze ring discovered with the aid of a metal detector on the northern	Romano-British

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Ditchling Beacon, East Sussex

			scarp of the downs in 1984.	
17	MES2076	3400 1295	Hoard of 9 silver denarii discovered in 1985 on the north scarp of the downs.	Romano-British
18	MES6983	325 135	Two 2 nd century copper alloy brooches found 1980-81 near the 'old Ditchling lime works'.	Romano-British
19	MES2079	33 13	9 th century 'Trehiddle style' copper alloy strap end found in 1984 near an old trackway halfway up the hill on the east side of Westmeston (Ditchling Bostall).	Anglo-Saxon
20	MES19499	3384 1382	Westmeston village, formed by at least 765.	Anglo-Saxon – Post-Medieval
21	418197	33888 13639	Parish Church of St Martin. <i>Grade II* Listed Building</i>	Medieval - Post-Medieval
22	MES17103 142424	3277 1362	Wick Farm.	Medieval - Post-Medieval
23	142420	3260 1367 – 3250 1347	Lynchets, Burnthouse, forming boundary between downland and the cultivated fields.	Medieval - Post-Medieval
24	142425	3341 1373 – 3317 1289	Parish and manor boundary, separating Ditchling and Westmeston, marked on the ground by small mounds and by boundary stones.	Medieval - Post-Medieval
25	MES7750	333 132	Second World War site of unknown function, possibly associated with a flame fougasse.	Post-Medieval
26	MES7761	3372 1357	Second World War aircraft crash site – unknown type.	Post-Medieval
27	MES19398 142401	3315 1303	19 th century beacon site.	Post-Medieval
28	MES19500 142423	3374 1305	19 th century chalk pit and limekilns.	Post-Medieval
29	MES19879	3422 1340	19 th century chalk pit.	Post-Medieval
30	MES19886	3340 1293	19 th century dew pond.	Post-Medieval
31	142407	3275 1360	Ditchling Lime Works, in use from at least the early 18 th century.	Post-Medieval
32	142408	3265 1350	Chalk quarries, excavated into the scarp, in use from the 18 th century.	Post-Medieval
33	142409	3260 1350	Remains of a rectangular earthwork enclosure, bounded by a bank and ditch, and partly truncated by quarrying. Possibly a sheepfold.	Post-Medieval
34	142412	3305 1314	Dewpond.	Post-Medieval
35	142413	3288 1338	Large chalk quarry of at least early 19 th century origin.	Post-Medieval

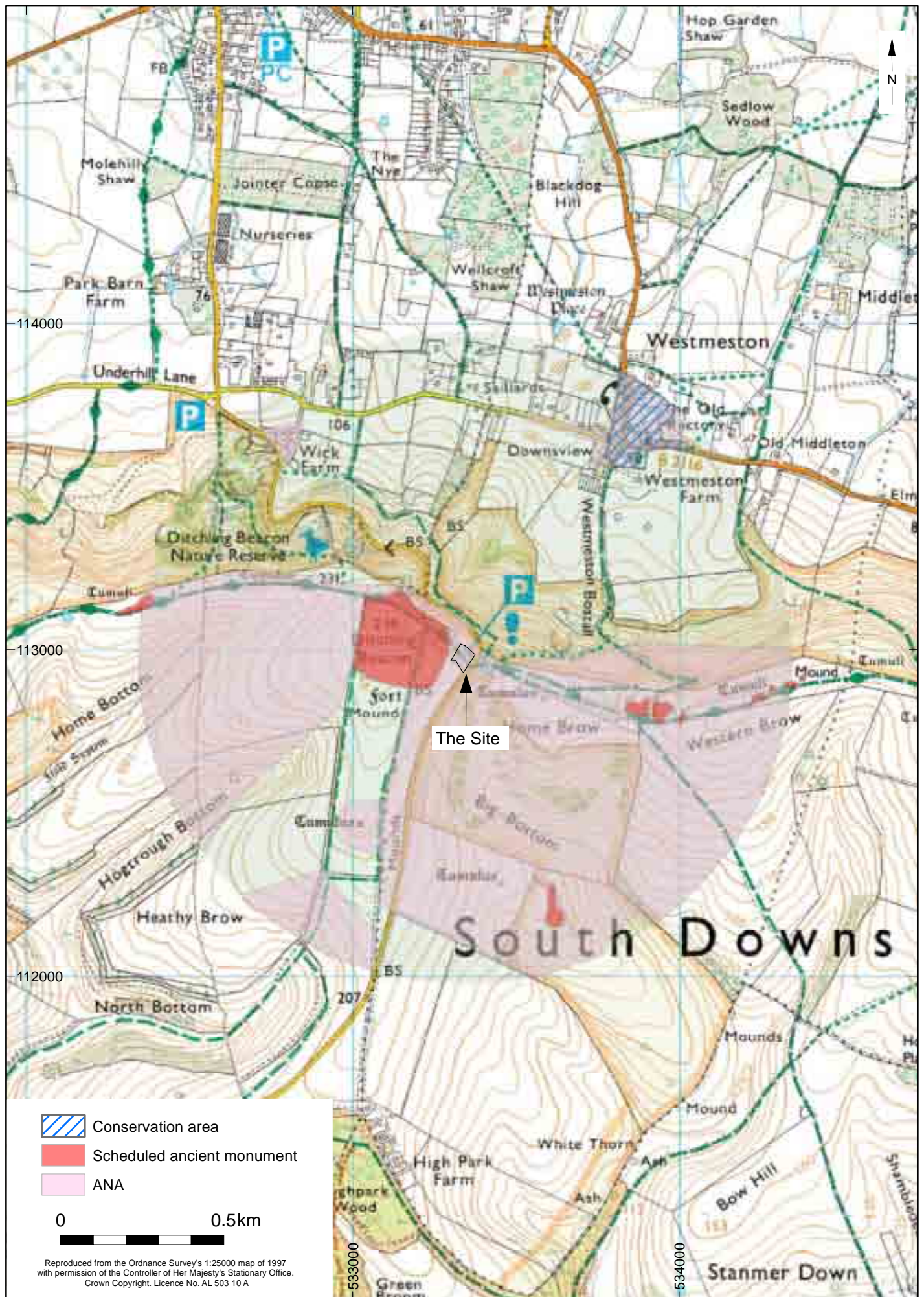
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Ditchling Beacon, East Sussex

36	142414	3300 1335	Chalk pit of 19 th century date.	Post-Medieval
37	142415	3280 1360 – 3340 1300	Ditchling Bostal, a later [post-medieval replacement for an earlier track – map evidence suggest it was created before 1797.	Post-Medieval
38	142416	3325 1312	Site of parish boundary stone.	Post-Medieval
39	142417	3321 1310	Parish boundary stone, sandstone with parish initials engraved.	Post-Medieval
40	142418	3320 1304	Site of parish boundary stone.	Post-Medieval
41	142419	3317 1289	Site of parish boundary stone.	Post-Medieval
42	142421	3300 1318	Site of former dewpond, survives as shallow depression.	Post-Medieval
43	142426	3300 1315	Site of First World War practice trenches.	Post-Medieval
44	142427 S0010103	3300 1300	Site of Second World war Defended Locality, visible on air photographs as an ovoid ditched enclosure on the west side of the hillfort, with other smaller fenced enclosures around. Manned by one infantry company with 4 machine guns and two 2 pdr anti-tank guns.	Post-Medieval
45	418198	33950 13722	The Old Rectory. <i>Grade II Listed Building</i>	Post-Medieval
46	418199	33830 13772	April Cottage Culpepper. <i>Grade II Listed Building</i>	Post-Medieval



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© Archaeology South-East		Ditchling Beacon	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 5845	Jan 2013	Site location, study area and archaeological data	
Report Ref: 2012272	Drawn by: JLR		



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Project Ref: 5845	Jan 2013	Heritage designations	
Report Ref: 2012272	Drawn by: JLR		



National Trust

Property: Ditchling Beacon
Title: Scheduled Ancient Monument

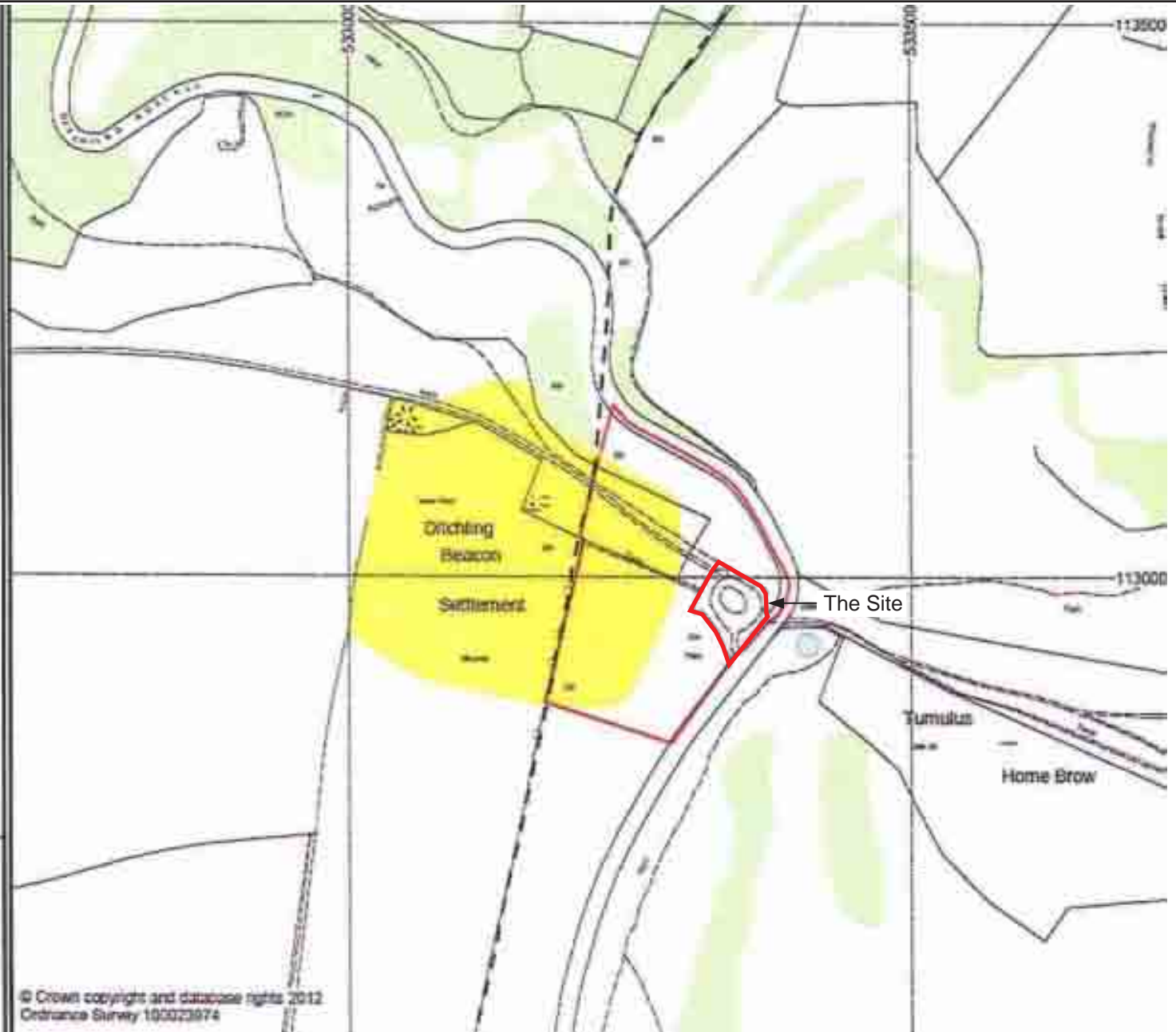
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Filename: Ditching_SAM_20121004



London and South East, Polegate Lacey Consulting Hub
Polegate Lacey, Dorking, Surrey GU8 0BD
Telephone 01323 403401

Legend

-  NT ownership boundary
-  Scheduled Ancient Monument



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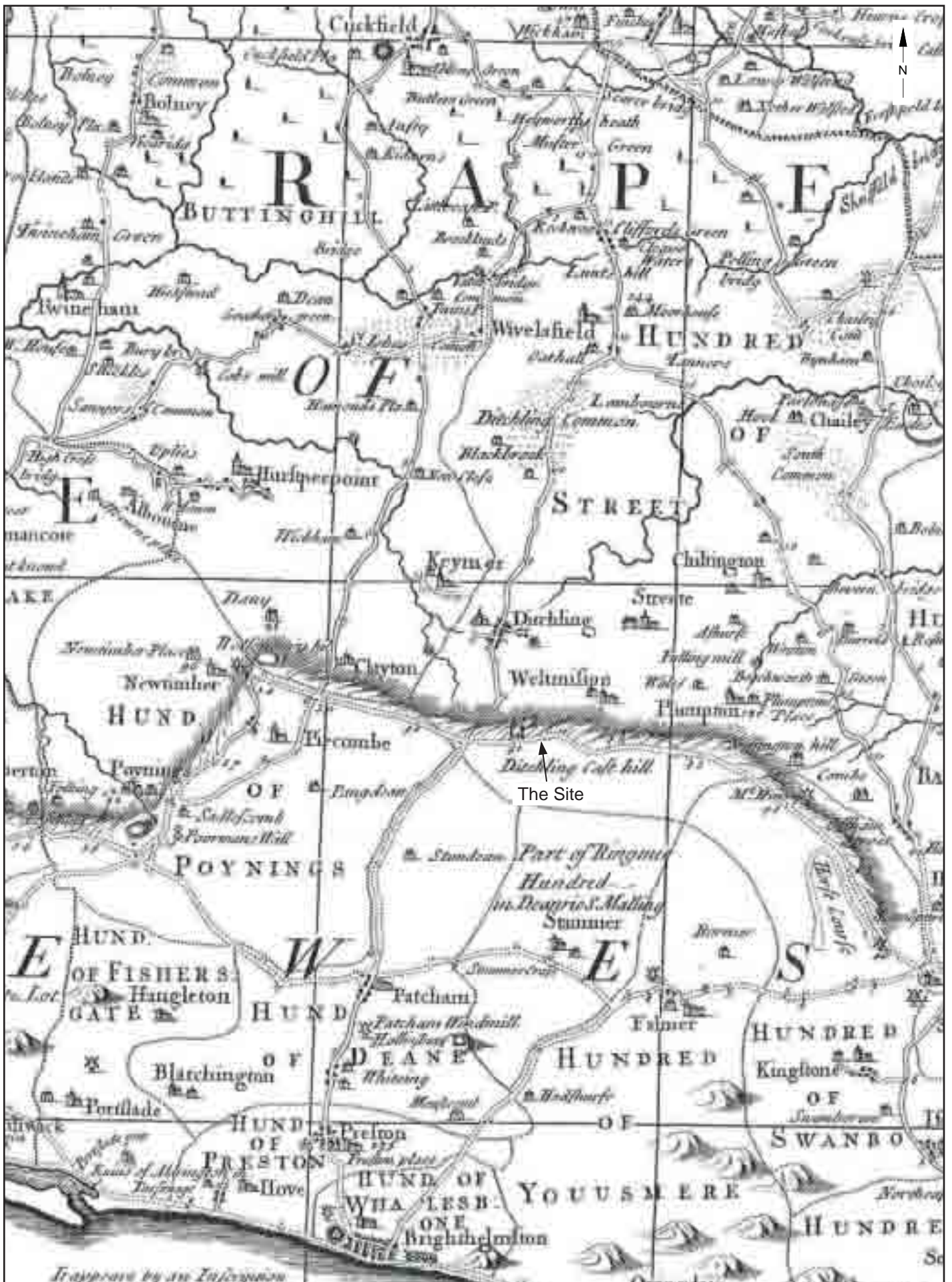
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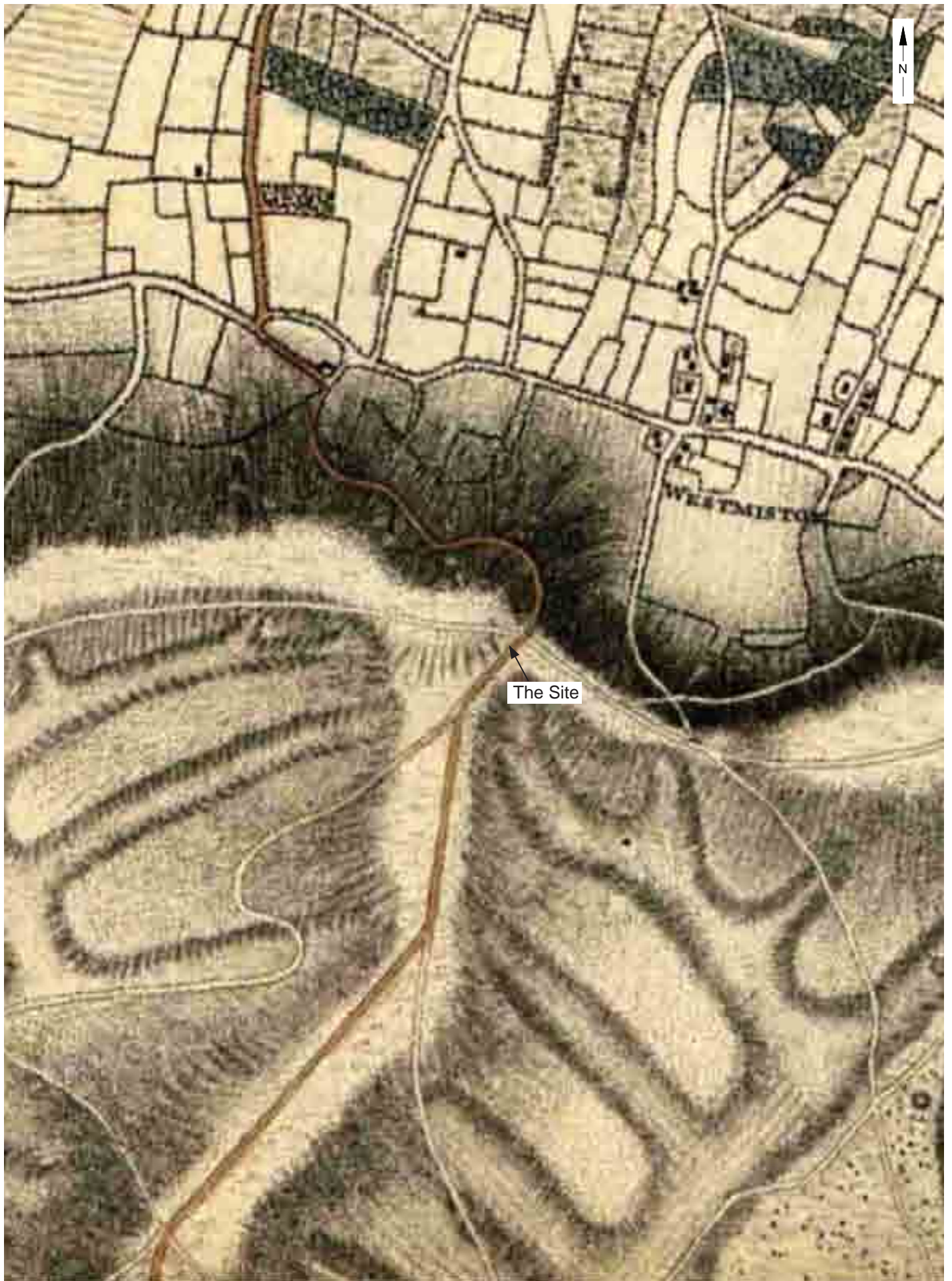
Ditchling Beacon

Site plan

Fig. 3



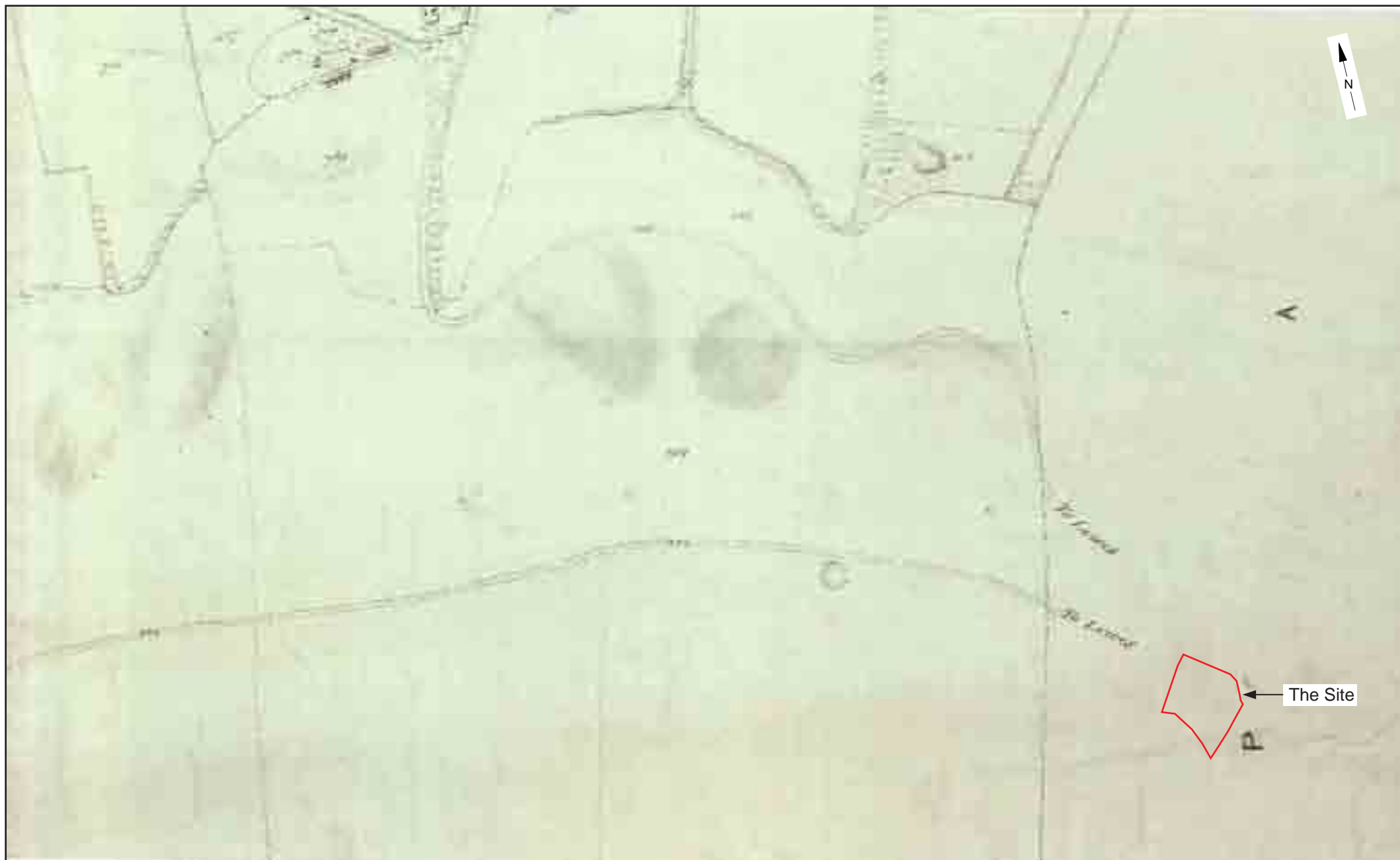
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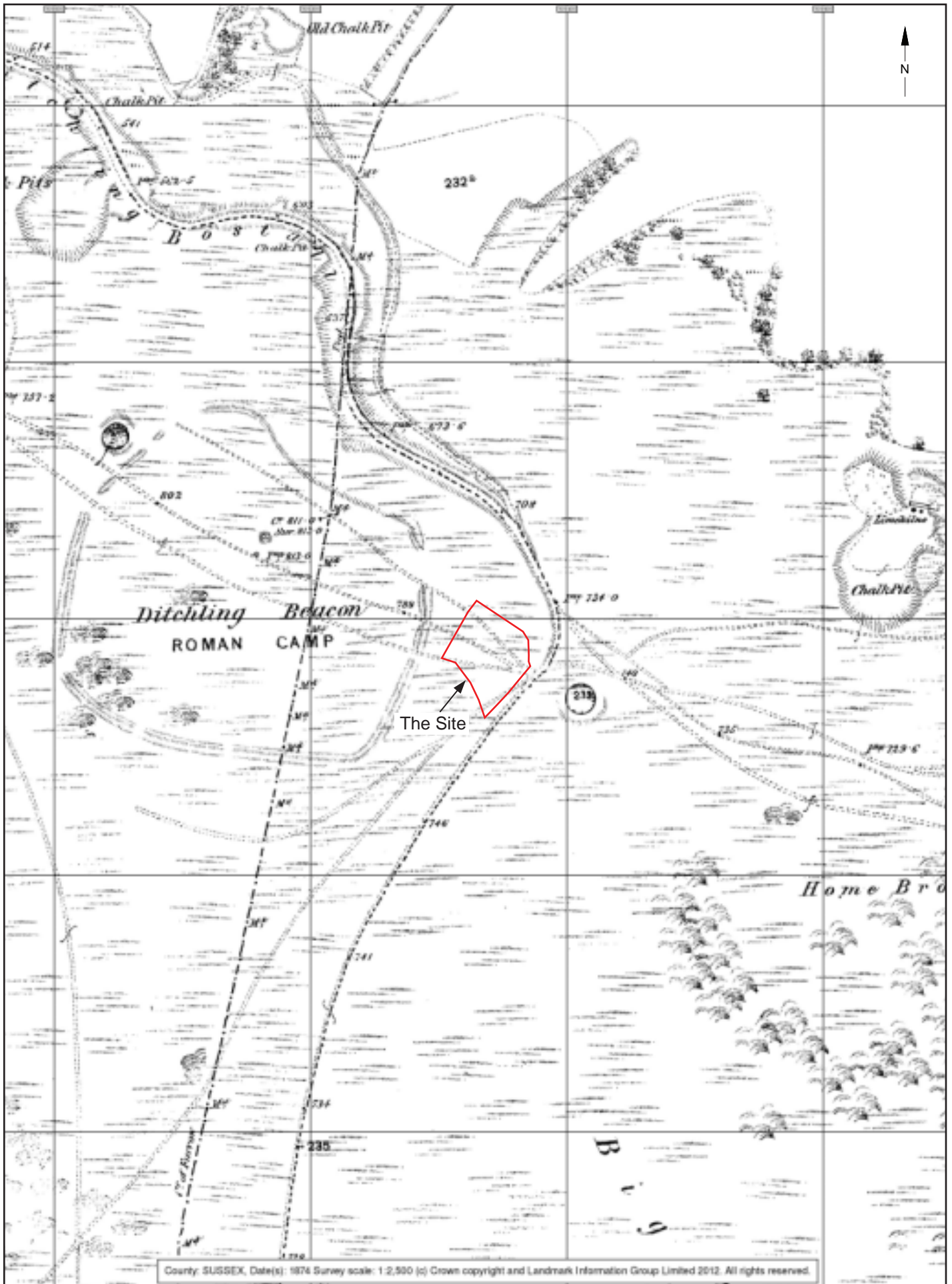
Ditchling Beacon

Ditchling Tithe, 1839

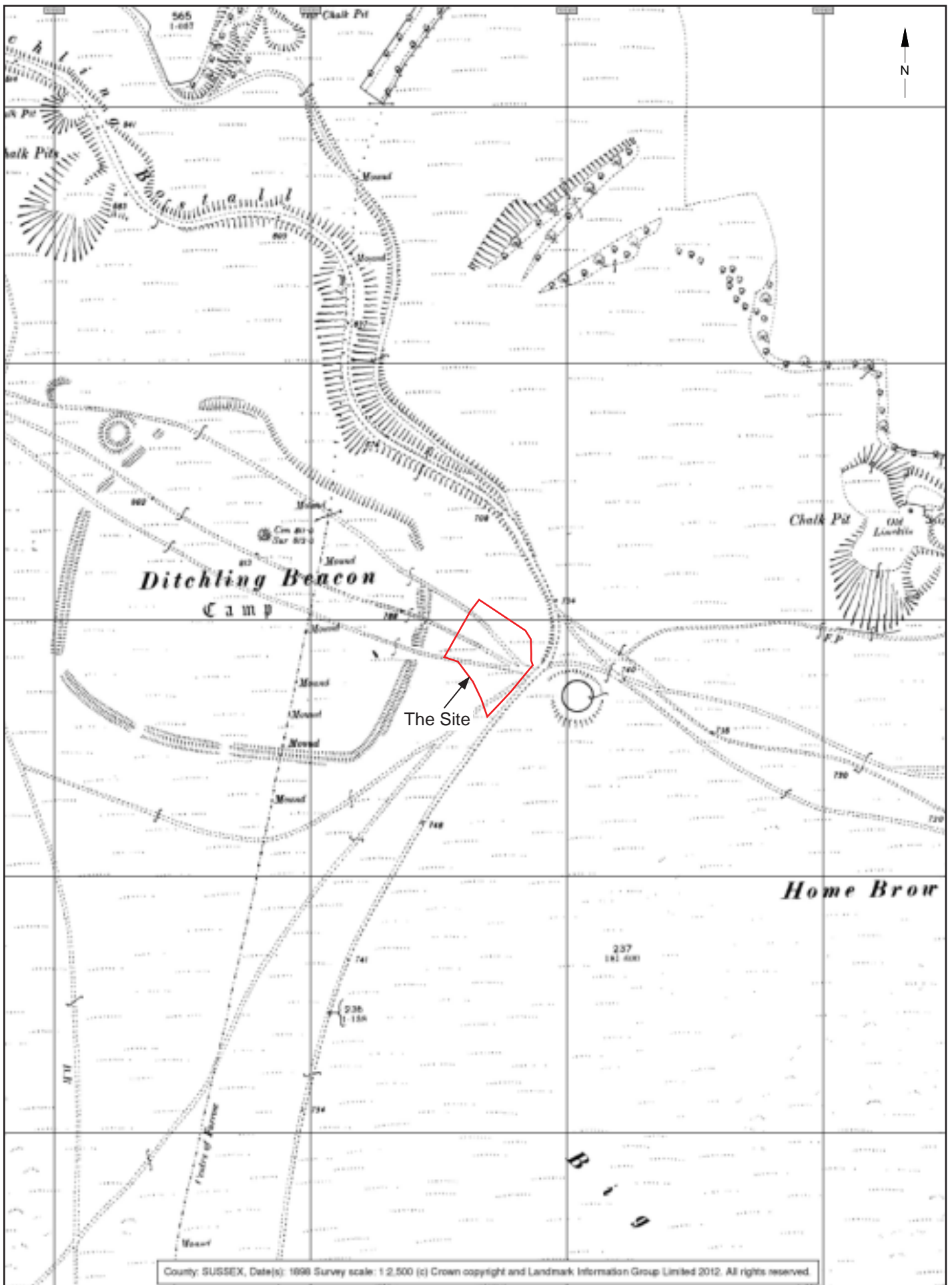
Fig. 7



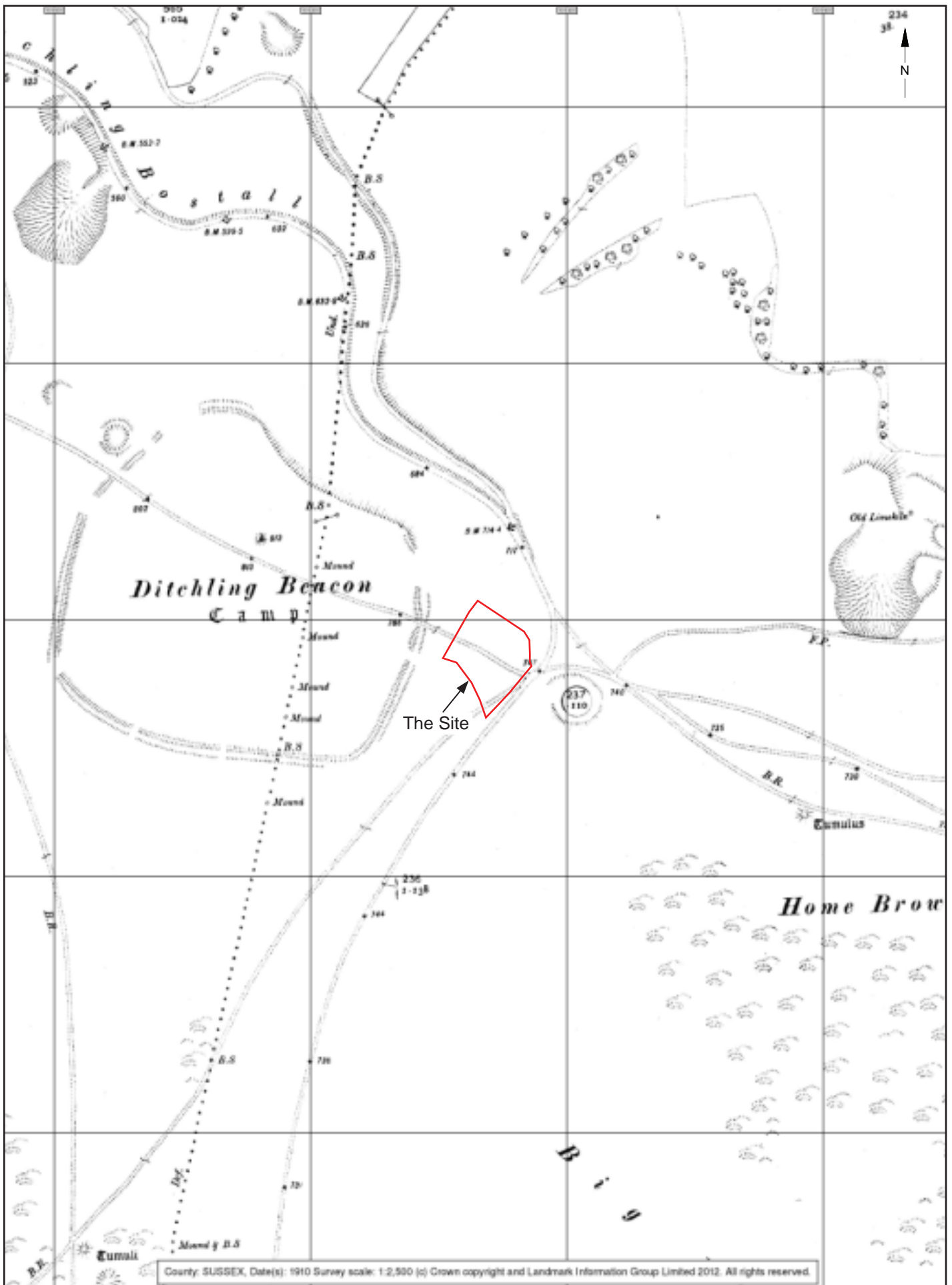
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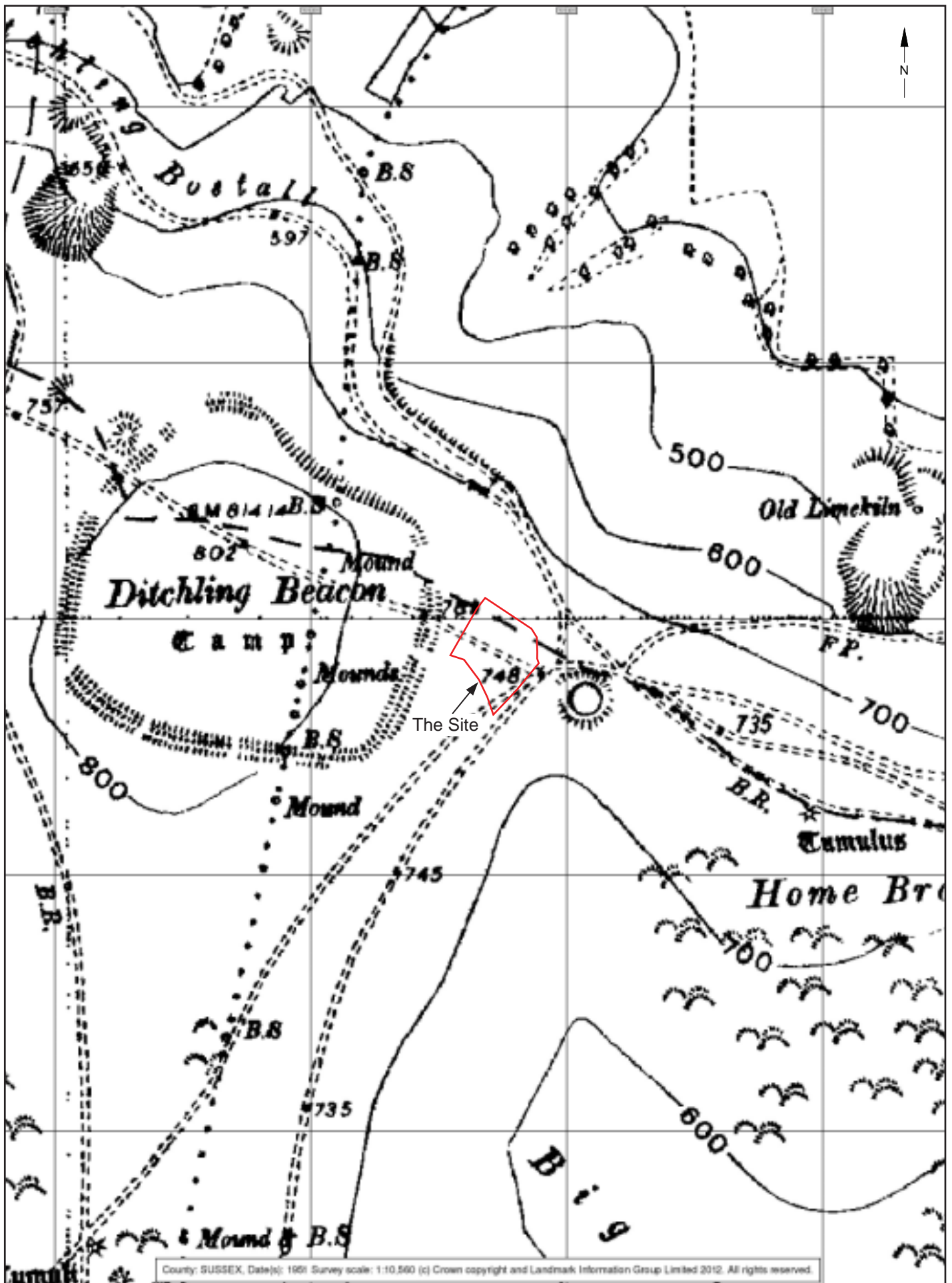
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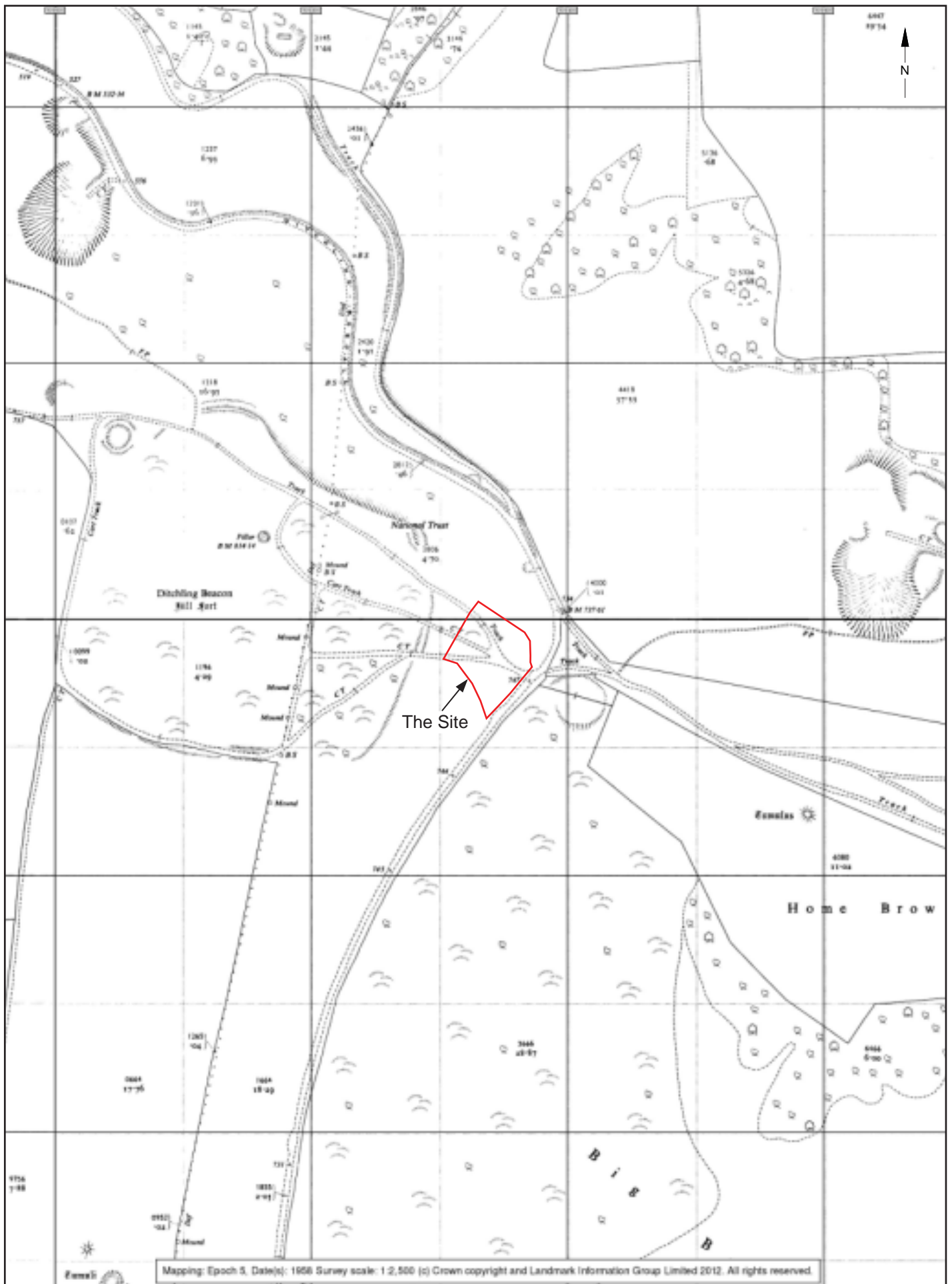
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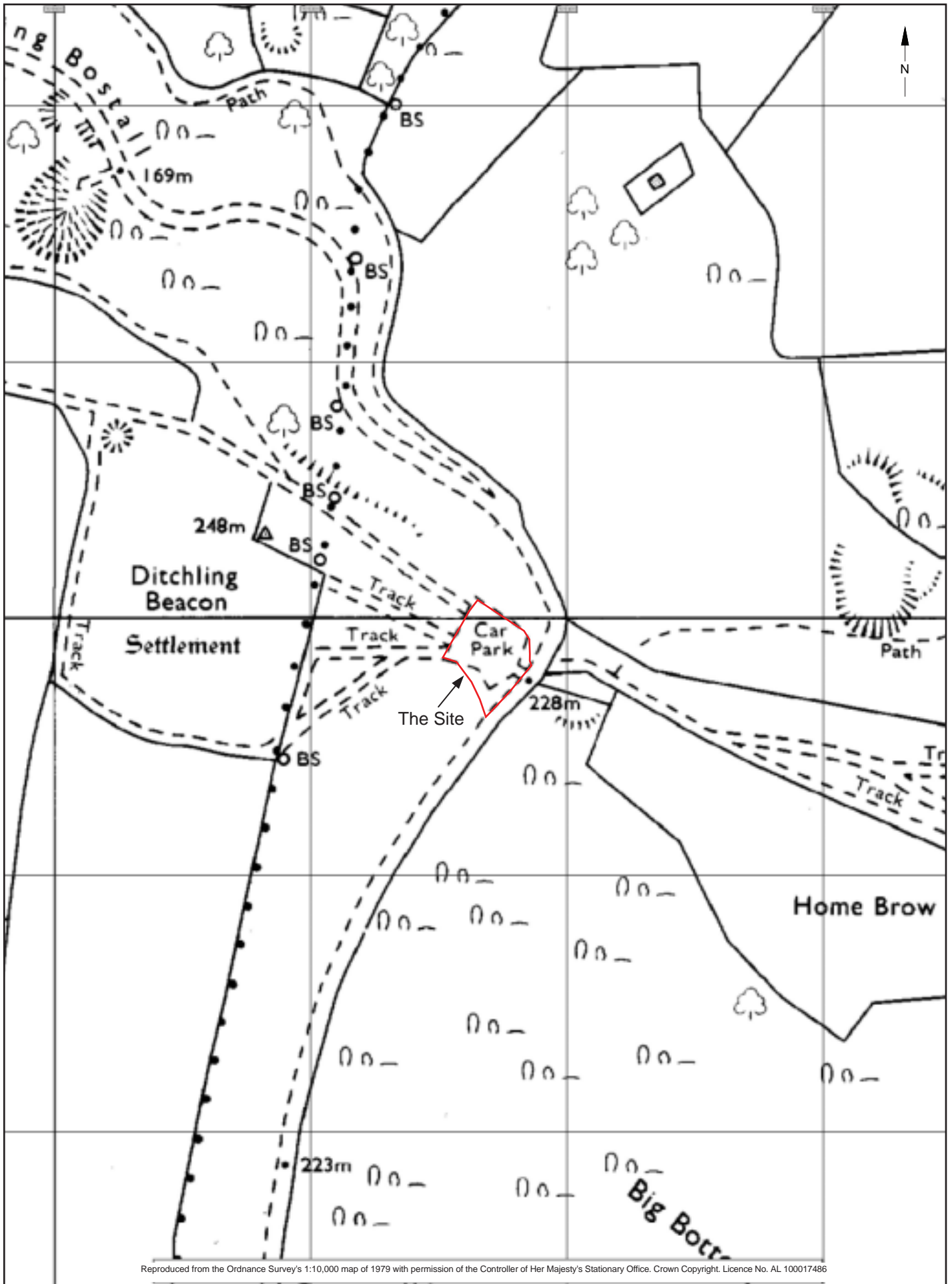
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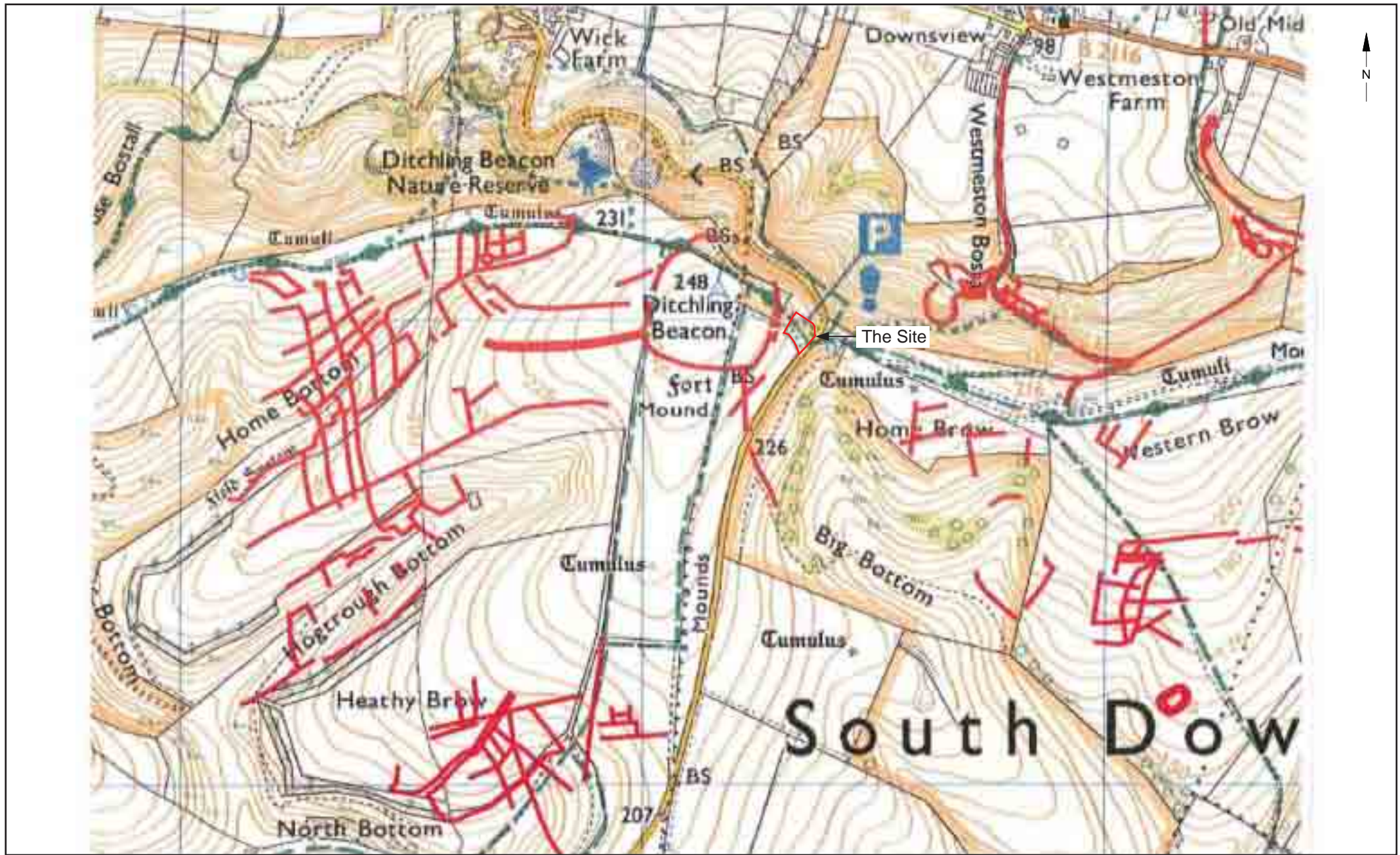
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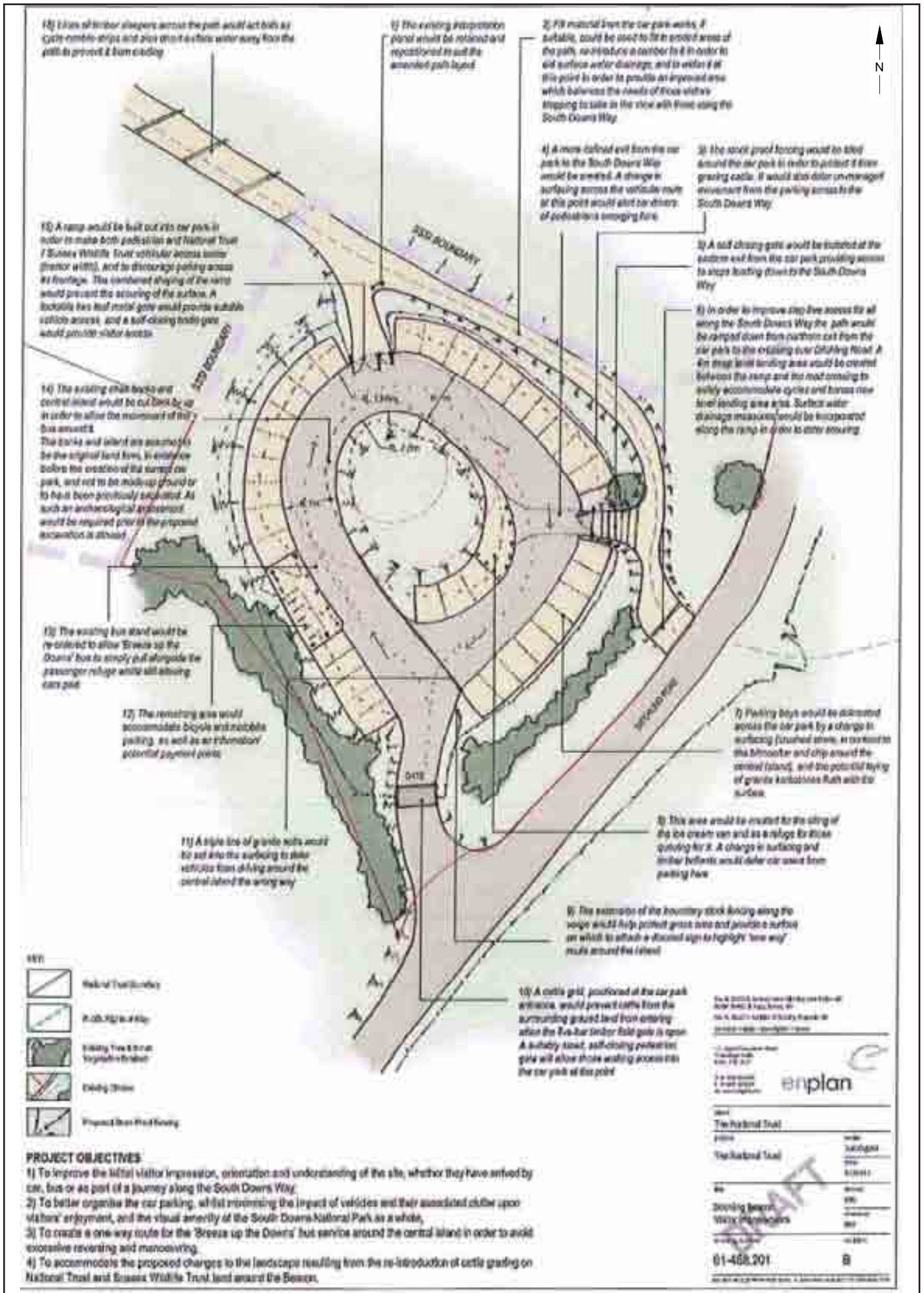
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Ditchling Beacon

Cropmark plan (ESHER)

Fig. 15





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Head Office
Units 1 & 2
2 Chapel Place
Portslade
East Sussex BN41 1DR
Tel: +44(0)1273 426830 Fax:+44(0)1273 420866
email: fau@ucl.ac.uk
Web: www.archaeologyse.co.uk



London Office
Centre for Applied Archaeology
Institute of Archaeology
University College London
31-34 Gordon Square, London, WC1 0PY
Tel: +44(0)20 7679 4778
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