

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Black Hill Barn, Hill House Farm, Farmington,
Northleach, Gloucestershire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Susan Porter and David Platt

Site Code: BNG11/78

(SP1272 1615)

**Black Hill Barn, Hill House Farm, Farmington,
Northleach, Gloucestershire**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr J R H Wills

by Susan Porter and David Platt
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

SiteCodeBNG11/78

June 2012

Summary

Site name: Black Hill Barn, Hill House Farm, Farmington, Northleach, Gloucestershire

Grid reference: SP1272 1615

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 6th September 2011–31st May 2012

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Susan Porter and David Platt

Site code: BNG 11/78

Summary of results: No archaeological finds or features were recorded during the watching brief. A proposed trackway upgrade was re-routed and avoided a scheduled monument.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Corinium Museum in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 29.06.12
	Steve Preston ✓ 29.06.12

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Report 11/78

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Black Hill Barn, Hill House Farm, Farmington, Northleach, Gloucestershire (SP 1272 1615) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Michael Fowler of Michael Fowler Architects, 19 High Street, Pewsey, Wiltshire on behalf of Mr J R H Wills, Beevis Farm, Charlbury, Oxfordshire, OX7 3EX.

Planning permission has been granted (08/02718/FUL) by Cotswold District Council to convert Black Hill Barn into residential accommodation. This permission was subject to a condition relating to archaeology which requires the implementation of a watching brief to be carried out during groundworks. A second planning consent was required (10/03124/FUL) for the upgrading of the current farm track which services the barn due to the presence of the scheduled monument Norbury Camp. Scheduled monument consent was obtained (SMC HSD9/2/10689 S00003747) for a 'no dig' construction where the track crosses the site of Norbury Camp. This latter consent was not implemented due to other access constraints.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990) and the Council's policies on archaeology. It is acknowledged that both PPG16 and *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5 2010) have been superseded by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012). The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Charles Parry, Senior Archaeological Officer, Gloucestershire County Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Susan Porter and David Platt between the 6th September 2011 and 31st May 2012 and the site code is BNG 11/78.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Corinium Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located in the region of the Cotswold Hills in the districts of Farmington and Northleach with Eastington, to the north of the village of Northleach. The barn is located in a field east of the A429 (the Roman Fosse Way) and lies close to the scheduled ancient monument (1003350) of Norbury Camp (Fig. 2). The land is currently used for agriculture and pasture with the existing barn used for storage. The geology is mapped as

Bromsgrove sandstone formation (BGS 1998 235), although what was observed was degraded gravel and the area immediately around the barn comprises made ground consisting of rubble and redeposited natural geology.

The complex of buildings indicated on the current Ordnance Survey maps show a cluster of four buildings in a horseshoe arrangement open to the south. However three of these had collapsed/ been demolished with only the north western barn remaining extant..

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location close to the scheduled monument site of Norbury Camp. The Camp is one of a group of Cotswold hill forts that encloses large area. Norbury Camp is listed as an Iron Age hillfort comprising a single bank and ditch earthwork. Excavation revealed Late Bronze Age/ Early Iron Age rectilinear post-built structures and an inhumation burial within (Moore 2006). Also within the circuit of the camp there is a Neolithic chambered tomb/ long barrow. It is possible that contemporary deposits may be found in the areas around these monuments including on the proposal site.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks, with particular attention paid to be paid to ground reduction, digging of foundations for any new buildings, service runs and soakaways, also any overburden removal for creation of the trackway. It was also a requirement of the scheduled monument consent to archaeologically monitor the 'no dig' construction of the trackway.

Any archaeological deposits which were threatened by the groundworks were to be excavated and recorded with all invasive groundworks to be archaeologically monitored.

Results

Barn interior

Ground reduction inside the existing barn was observed to a depth of 0.50m (Pl. 1). This revealed a homogenous layer of a lumpy and powdery limestone made ground overlying larger limestone blocks. Other than the top surface levelled by use, no other floor surfaces were observed. No archaeological deposits were observed.

Barn exterior

Ground reduction was also observed against the external south-east corner of the barn wall (Fig. 3). This trench was dug around the corner for up to 4m west and 4m north and was up to 2m wide. It was dug down to a depth of up to 1.50m and exposed the foundations of the barn. (Pl. 2). This also revealed a stratigraphy comprising a homogenous layer of a lumpy and powdery limestone, but no archaeological deposits.

A stripped area 12.60m x 6.40m to the west of the barn revealed a stratigraphy of 0.05m of topsoil directly above the natural geology (Pl. 4). No archaeological deposits were observed.

Foundation Trenches

Foundation trenches for the new buildings were not directly observed but were photographed by the groundworkers. One of these on the north-east side of the barn is reproduced as Plate 3.

Trackway

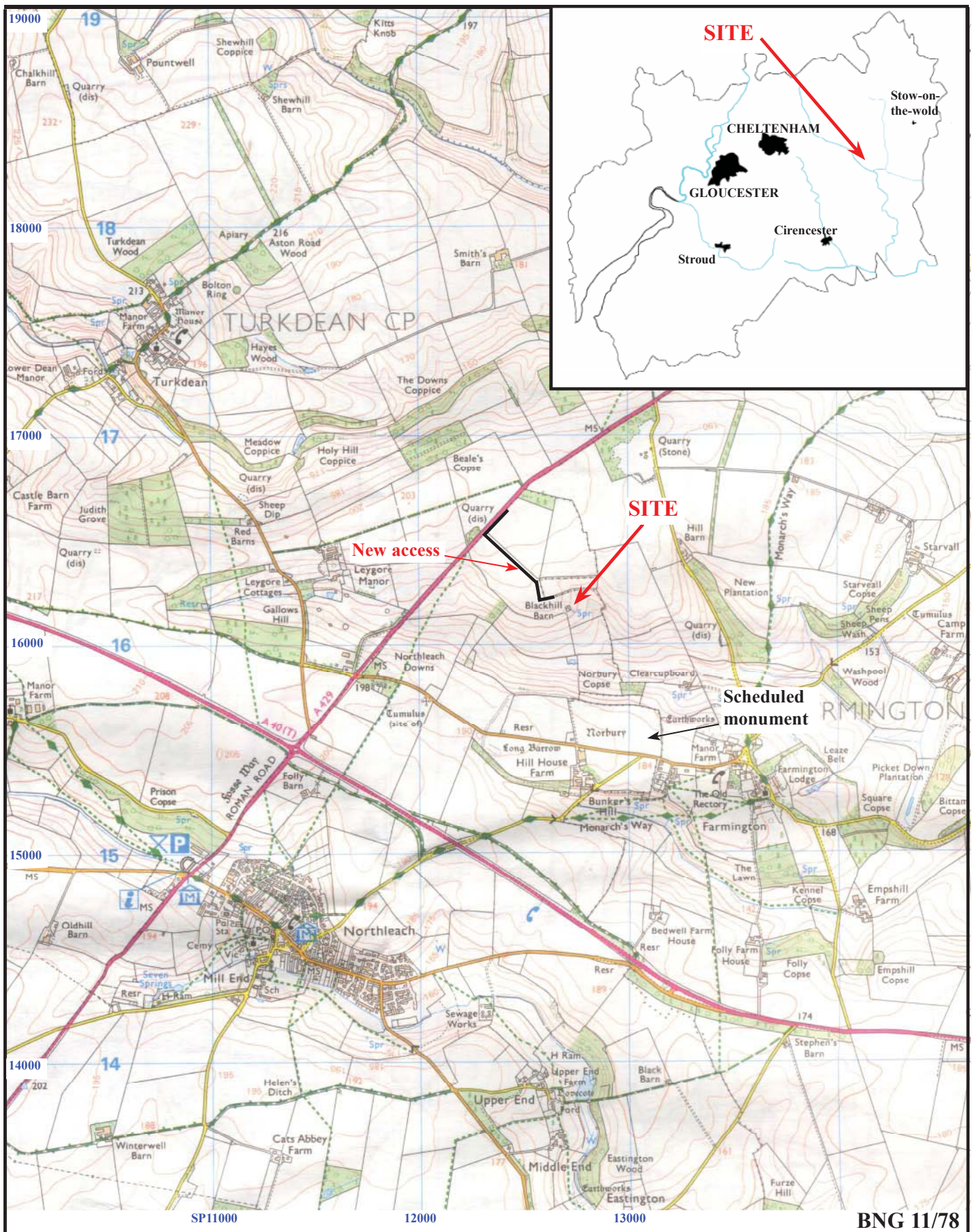
The upgrade of the existing access road from the south which traversed the scheduled monument did not take place due to a realization that, due to the steepness of the valley side, the road may become unusable in winter. A replacement access was instead created accessing the house from the north (Fig. 1). Construction of this was not observed but partly utilized an existing track down the side of the field boundary. The junction with the A429 was metalled with Tarmac but the remainder of the track was gravelled.

Conclusion

Various components of the invasive groundworks were observed comprising both internal and external ground reduction for the extant structure, areas stripped of overburden nearby which exposed the surface of the natural geology, and, from supplied photographs only, a length of trench for the new wall foundations. However, no artefacts nor deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

References

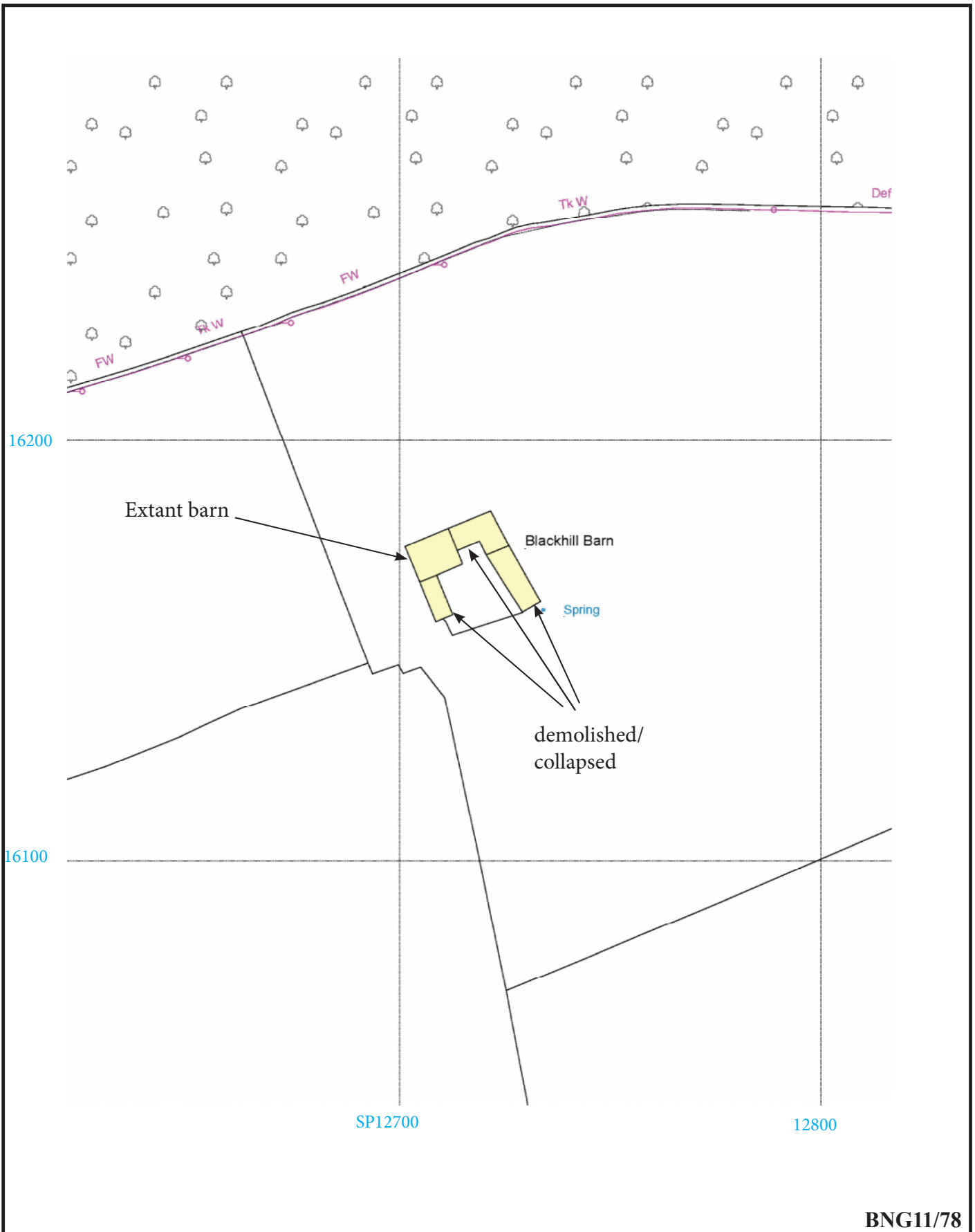
- BGS, 1998, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 235, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Moore, T, 2006, *Iron age Societies in the Severn-Cotswolds. Developing narratives of social and Landscape Change*, Brit Archaeol Rep **421**, Oxford
- NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Department of Communities and Local Government, London (TSO)
- PPG16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, DoE Planning Policy Guidance note 16, (HMSO).
- PPS5, 2010, *Planning for the Historic Environment*, The Stationery Office, Norwich



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Figure 1. Location of site in relation to Northleach, Farmington and within Gloucestershire.

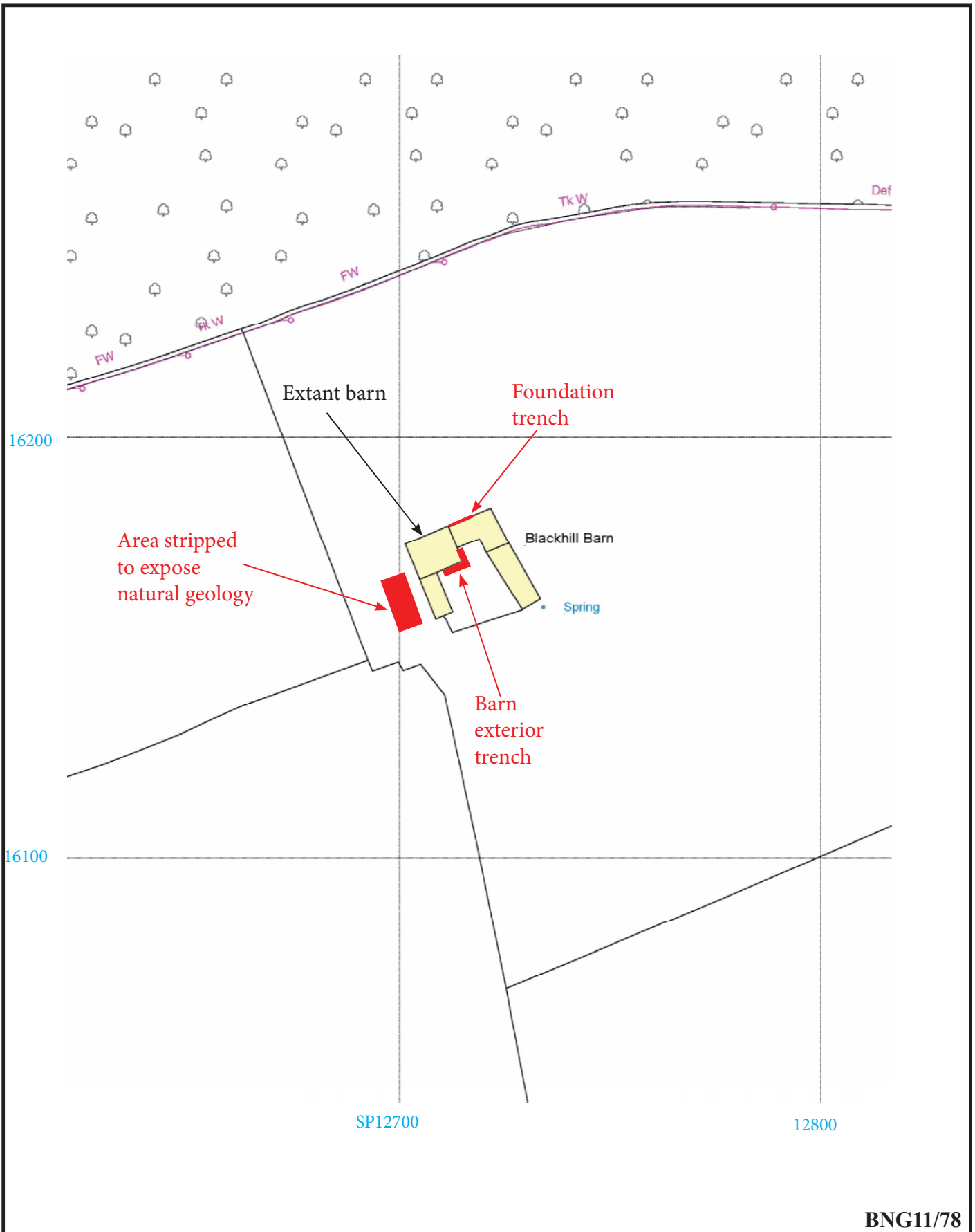
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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Figure 3. Locations observed during watching brief.

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Plate 1. Reduction of floor within barn



Plate 2. Exterior of barn showing exposed footings. looking west. Scales: 1m

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Plates 1-2.

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Plate 3. Footing trench for external wall, looking west



Plate 4. Exterior of barn showing area stripped of overburden with partially stripped area beyond. Looking north west, Scales 2m and 1m

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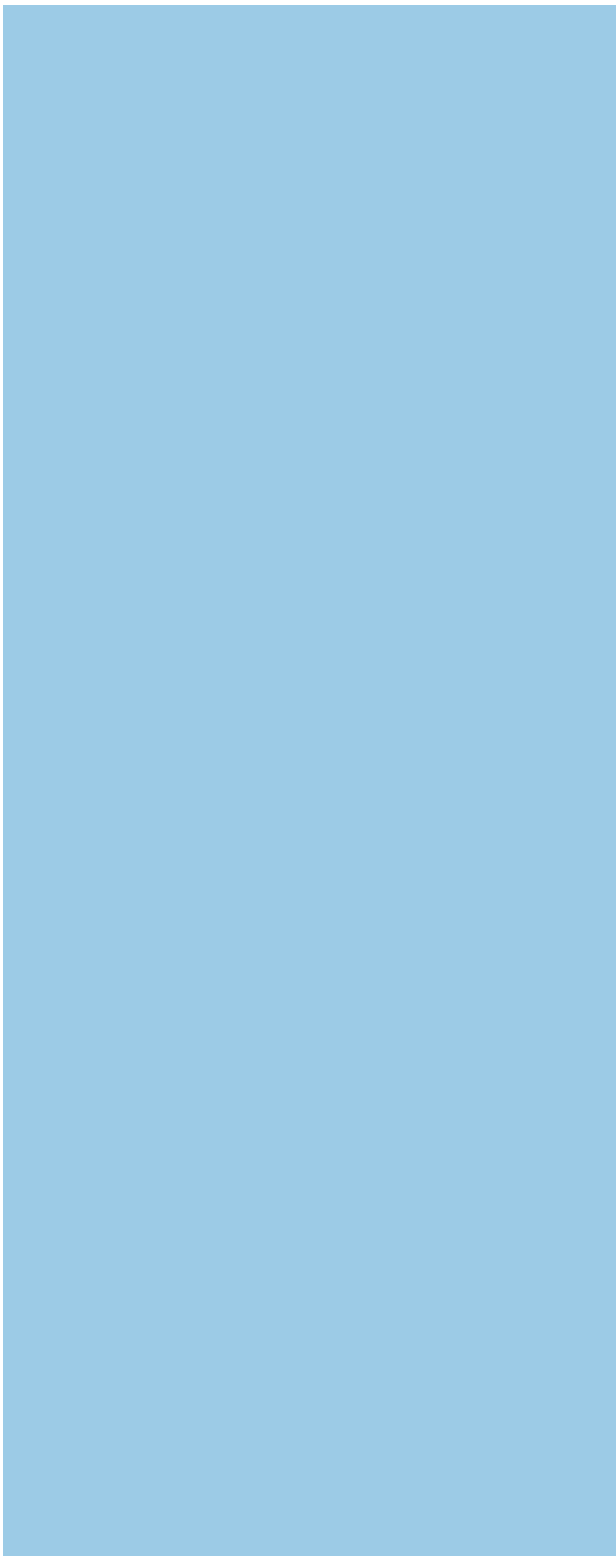
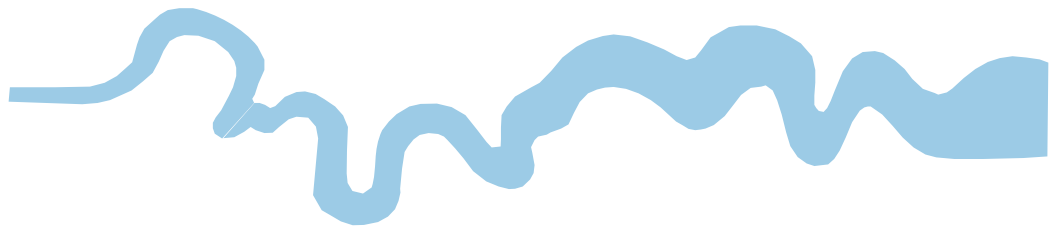
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Plates 3-4.

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TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late _____	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle _____	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early _____	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC





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