

Mockham Down Farm, Brayford

Heritage Impact Assessment

By B Morris

1.1 Project Background

South West Archaeology Ltd. was commissioned by Nigel Polkinghorne (the Agent), acting on behalf of Mr Burridge, to produce an impact assessment for three lodges at Mockham Down Farm, Brayford, Devon. This report has been produced in response to a request made by Veryan Heale (English Heritage Principal Inspector of Ancient Monuments) with regard to the Scheduled Mockham Down Camp which lies immediately adjacent to the proposed development (communication dated 04.12.13).

1.2 Site Location

Mockham Down Farm is located 0.8km north-west of the village of Brayford, c.10km north-north-west of the town of South Molton, just to the south of the A399. The farm lies on the western slopes of Mockham Down, a discrete dome-shaped hill among the lower foothills of Exmoor, which rises to a height of c.310m AOD.

1.3 Historical and Archaeological Background

Mockham Down Farm historically belonged to Mockham Barton, and presumably formed part of the extensive grazing area that belonged to the Domesday estate of *Mogescoma*, meaning *Mocca's Valley* (EPNS 1931, 61). In c.1840 the land formed part of the Fortescue estate and was leased by one Alexander Skinner. On the Devon Historic Landscape Characterisation it is listed as land enclosed in the post-medieval period. The modern farm at Mockham Down does not appear on any maps until the 20th century; up to c.1900 it is shown or listed as a plantation. The several shallow quarries on the site are first shown on the c.1888 1st edition OS map. A shaft (roughly located where the Barn now stands) is shown on the c.1905 2nd edition OS map, reputedly a trial working searching for silver-lead (Claughton 1989, 12). Immediately to the east of the farm stands Mockham Down Camp, a univallate enclosure of probable Iron Age date (MDV 1985; and see below). Approximately 90m to the east of the camp stands a relatively well-preserved barrow (MDV12070). To the north of the site, a series of holloways are visible leading up to the site (MDV56295), and extend into the woodland.

1.4 Mockham Down Camp

The camp is a univallate defended enclosure enclosing an area of 1.6ha. The bank and ditch varies in size and is most developed on the south-west, south and south-eastern sides, where the ditch is up to 1.4m deep and the banks up to 1.8m high. In contrast, on the northern side the enclosure bank is slight (c.0.4m high) but well-defined, and there is no ditch. The character of the earthworks has led some to suggest it was an unfinished enclosure (OS Arch. Division Card), and certainly the 1st and 2nd edition OS maps indicate there was no ditch on this side. However, it remains possible the bank and ditch were slighted in the past, perhaps during quarrying operations. There are two linear holloways in the field north-east of the enclosure, in the approximate location of a ditch; however, there are alternative interpretations (quarry pits or perhaps ponds?).

A linear quarry has been excavated through the northern part of the site, presumably for road stone, and there are clear spoil heaps and barrow runs associated with these works between the quarry and the northern bank.

This monument is neither large enough, nor strongly defended enough, to qualify as a hillfort, and falls into the category of defended or hillslope enclosure. It should contain archaeological and environmental evidence relating to its construction and structural history, longevity, subsistence practices and domestic arrangements.

The enclosure was clearly sited in this elevated location in order to command wide views, and be highly visible in its contemporary landscape. However, the character of the modern landscape is such that the landscape presence of the enclosure is negligible. The earthwork lies within a post-medieval enclosed landscape, divided up by tall stone-faced hedgebanks topped with mature beech hedgerows/trees. To the north, north-west, west and south-west these hedge trees are augmented by woodland and garden trees. The top of the hill is very gently convex, and from the enclosure views out from the monument are very restricted. In winter, the earthworks are just visible through the trees from some viewpoints; in summer the monument would be almost entirely screened by vegetation. This would not, of course, be the case if the hedgerows were routinely managed, but it seems unlikely all the tall hedgerows and the woodland would be removed within the kind of timeframe required to radically alter the current outlook of this monument.

1.5 Mockham Down Farm

The enclosure is separated from the farmhouse by its gardens, but the large barn and two associated timber lodges located immediately to the north-west are visible from the interior of the monument. The farmhouse and its associated outbuilding are built of stone rubble with brick reveals to the windows and doors, under pantile roofs. The barn is a modern timber portal-framed shed with timber cladding, terraced into the hillside. The Old Lodge located immediately to the east of the barn (and not the subject of the retrospective SMC) is clad in dark stained timber with a shallow-pitched roof of green felt. Lodge #1, located to the east, is also clad in dark stained timber, with a pitched roof of grey 'felt slates'. It stands on a platform that is terraced slightly into the hillside. Access to the site is from the west via a tarmac drive flanked by wooden fencing with wire.

It is clear that the three buildings (the barn and two lodges) located north-west of the enclosure will have impacted upon any buried archaeological features located within their footprint. However, it is also clear that Lodge #1 falls outside the Scheduled area of the enclosure, even if we assume a buried ditch to be present north of the visible bank. None of these structures are particularly in keeping with the vernacular style of the farmhouse, and in that sense are not very sympathetic developments within the immediate locality of the enclosure. However, they are not particularly visible from elsewhere in this landscape, and the large bank of spoil adjacent to the quarry screens parts of the interior of the enclosure. With this in mind, the impact on the immediate setting of the monument is **negative/moderate**, on the wider landscape setting **neutral** to negative/minor.

In terms of the two proposed lodges (#2 and #3), these would be located to the west of the Barn and within the block of woodland north of the farmhouse. The woodland consists largely of oak and beech, with clear evidence of coppicing. Views to, from and including the enclosure would be very limited due to the screening provided by the woodland. The proposed build includes provision for pantile roofs (Design and Access Statement), which would be more in keeping with the farmhouse and outbuilding. The structures would impinge on the rural setting of the monument, but would be located between two areas already subject to some development. On balance, the impact would be appreciable but not dramatic: impact **negative/moderate**.

1.6 Archaeological Impact

The archaeological impact of the two proposed lodges and associated access and services will be limited to the area of woodland north of the farmhouse. However, it is clear that within this woodland there are the earthworks of two holloways (part of the group recorded to the north: MDV56295) and a relict field boundary. In addition, there is a relict field boundary running parallel with the road that marks an area of former roadside waste; these narrow strips reclaimed from the road were often settled by 'squatters' who would build small cottages and create gardens. The ground within this narrow strip is notably uneven, but there was no clear sign of any structural material and on balance it seems more likely this is dumped spoil from elsewhere.

1.7 References

EPNS 1931: *The Place-Names of Devon* (2 vols.).

Cloughton, P.F. 1989: 'Mining in the Parishes of East Buckland and Charles, North Devon', *British Mining Memoirs* 39, 4-13.

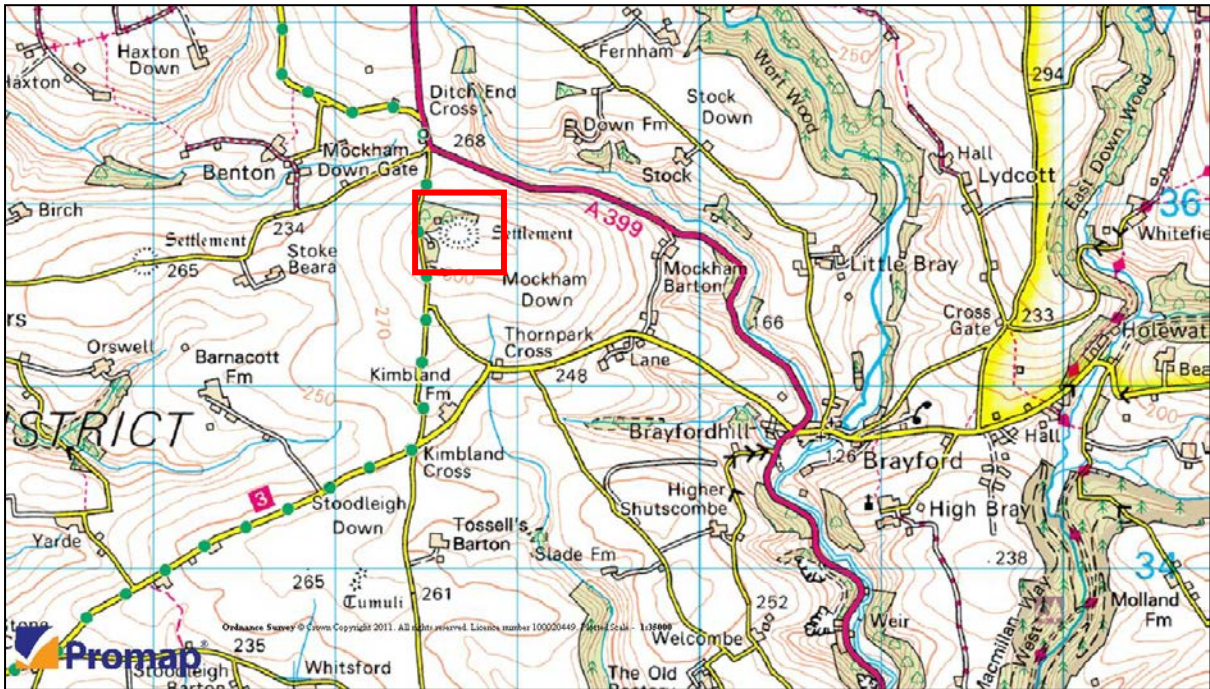


Figure 1: Location map. The site is indicated.

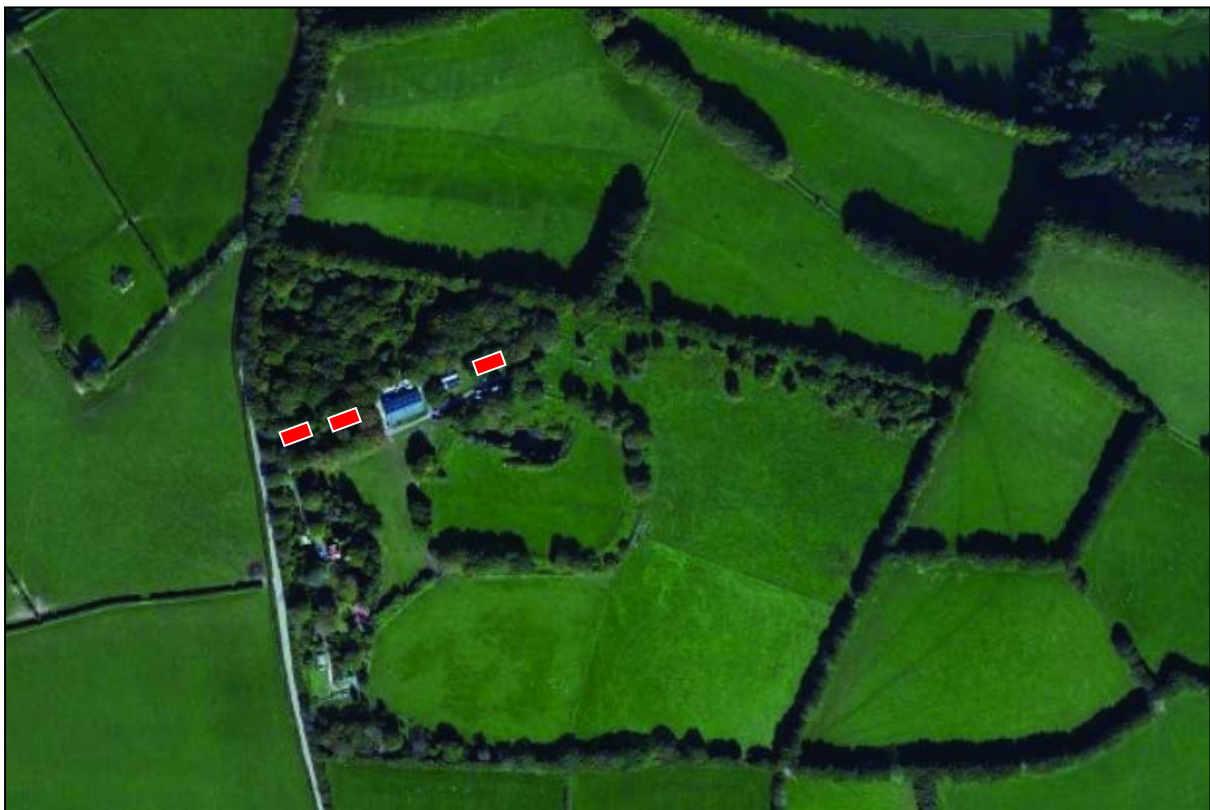


Figure 2: Aerial photograph showing the site (Bing maps). The approximate location of the three lodges is shown.

1.8 Historical Mapping

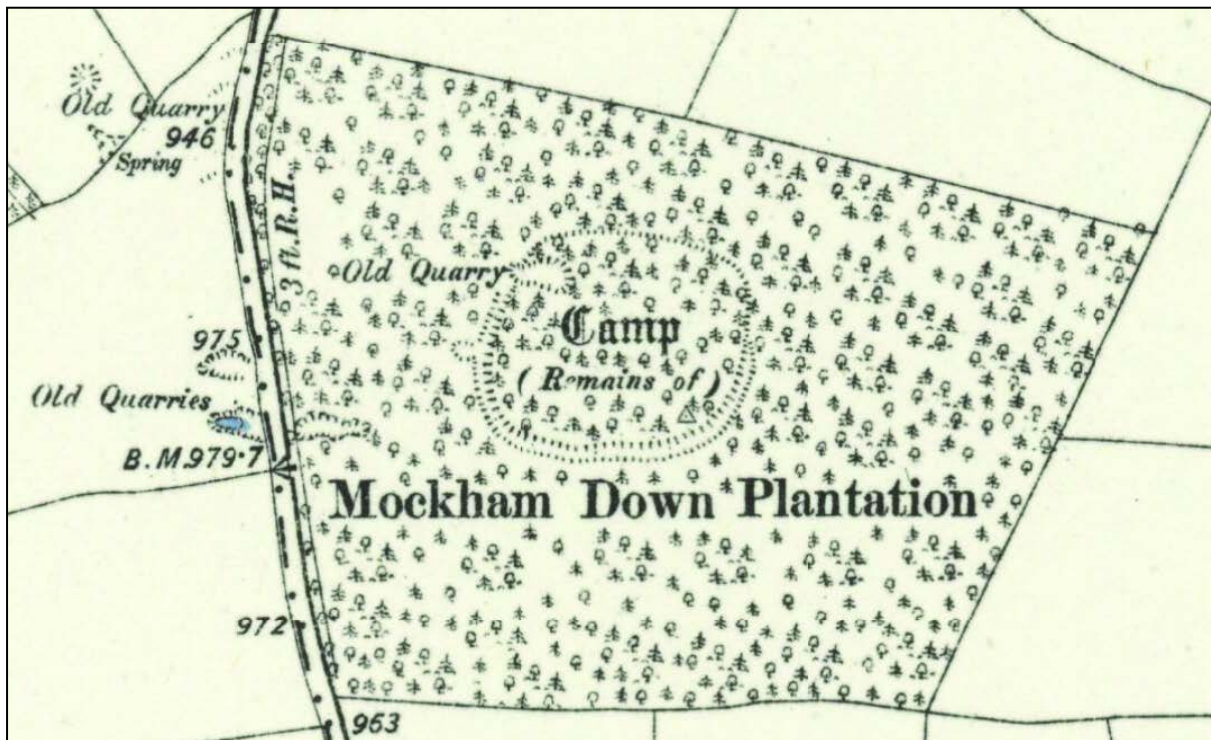


Figure 3: OS 1st Edition map c.1888 (DHC).

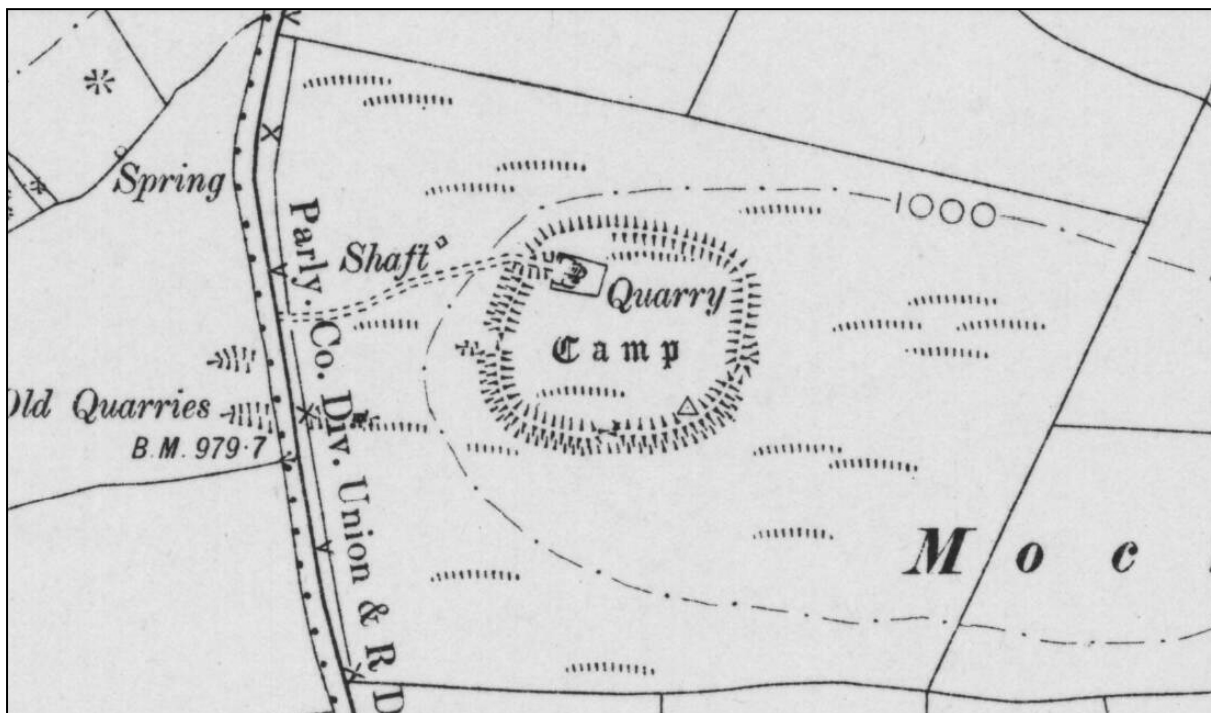


Figure 4: OS 2nd Edition map c.1905 (DHC).

1.9 Supporting Jpegs



Figure 5: View down the A399 from the north [distance 1.5km] (the site is indicated).



Figure 6: The site viewed from the north-north-east [distance 1.2km].



Figure 7: The site viewed from the west, from another Scheduled hillslope enclosure [distance 1.6km].



Figure 8: The site, viewed from the south [distance 1.5km].



Figure 9: View from Exmoor, near Five Barrows, from the north-east [distance 6.2km].



Figure 10: View along the northern bank of the enclosure towards Lodge #1, from the east.



Figure 11: View along the northern bank of the enclosure from the east-north-east; the Old Lodge and Barn are visible.



Figure 12: Lodge #1 viewed from the south; the two trees in the foreground stand on the enclosure bank.



Figure 13: As above, detail of Lodge #1, from the south.



Figure 14: The Old Lodge, viewed from the interior of the enclosure, from the east.



Figure 15: View of the north-western side of the enclosure, showing the tarmac access road, from the west.



Figure 16: The north-western side of the enclosure, showing the tarmac access road, and the Old Lodge, from the west.



Figure 17: The Barn, viewed from the east.



Figure 18: View up the drive to the Barn and lodges, with the earthworks of the enclosure visible on the right, from the west. Lodges #2 and #3 would be located in the woodland to the left of the photograph.



Figure 19: View along the tarmac drive, from the west. The Barn is located behind the trees to the left; the earthworks of the enclosure are on the skyline to the right. Access to Lodges #2 and #3 would be through the gateway on the left.



Figure 20: The woodland north of the farmhouse, viewed from the gateway in Figure 19; from the south.



Figure 21: The woodland north of the farmhouse, viewed from the gateway in Figure 19; from the south.



Figure 22: The same area, viewed from the west.



Figure 23: View along the eastern holloway, viewed from the north.



Figure 24: View along the western holloway, viewed from the north.



Figure 25: View along the intake from roadside waste, with the relict field bank to the left and the current hedgebank to the right; viewed from the north.



Figure 26: View of the relict hedgebank running west-south-west to east-north-east across the north-west corner of the woodland, with the former roadside bank in the foreground; viewed from the west.