

# Plymouth Council Historic Environment Record

<b>Civil Parish &amp; District:</b> Plympton, City of Plymouth, North Devon	<b>National Grid Reference</b> SX 4575 5428	<b>Number:</b>
<b>Subject:</b> Archaeological monitoring on land at Boringdon Hall, Plympton, Devon, in advance of the erection of a new spa building		<b>Photos attached?</b> YES
<b>Planning Application no:</b> 14/00795/AMD	<b>Recipient museum:</b> n/a	
<b>OASIS ID:</b> southwes1-188740	<b>Museum Accession no:</b> n/a	
<b>Contractor's reference number/code:</b> PBH14	<b>Dates fieldwork undertaken:</b> 17 <sup>th</sup> - 26 <sup>th</sup> February 2015	
<p><b>Description of works.</b></p> <p>Archaeological monitoring was undertaken by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) at the request of Matt Bromley of WWA Surveyors (The Agent) on behalf of James Nettleton (the Client), prior to the erection of a new spa building to the rear of Boringdon Hall, Plympton, Devon (Figure 1). This work was undertaken by B. Morris and J. Bampton between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> February 2015 in accordance with a WSI drawn up in consultation with Mike Daniells of Plymouth City Council Historic Environment Service (PCCHEs).</p> <p>Boringdon Hall, a Grade I Listed Building (Listing 473204), is situated in a shallow combe near the summit of a hill, at a height of c.100m AOD. The soils of this area are the well-drained fine loamy and fine silty soils of the Denbigh 1 Association (SSEW 1983), which overlie Upper Devonian Slates (BGS 2015). The site overlooks the town of Plympton, which lies to the south. The proposed development is situated within the grounds of the Hall, formerly a grange of Plympton Priory. Following the Dissolution, the grange was sold to Thomas Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton (Youings <i>Devon Monastic Lands</i>), passed to the Mayhew family, and from them by marriage to the Parkers of North Molton. The Parkers subsequently moved to Saltram, and by the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century the Hall was recorded as "in part dilapidated, what remains is now occupied as a farm house" (Lysons <i>Britannia</i> 1822). The Hall fell into disrepair from the 1940s, and extensive works were required in the later 1980s to turn the building into a hotel, of which the proposed spa would form a part.</p> <p>Groundworks associated with the development consisted of a new (temporary) access track through the field adjacent to the east; this track was c.8-15m wide (Figure 2). The ploughsoil was a mid orange-brown clay-silt with common small shillet inclusions c.0.25m thick, overlying a firm slightly yellowish-grey clay-silt subsoil with common small shillet fragments. The main site strip comprised an area of c.160x90m (Figure 3 and 4) and took place within the field to the north of the Hall, where the footprint of the spa building was terraced into the slope. To the west, the topsoil across the field was partially stripped; the excavated material from the footprint of the spa was to be spread across this western area, and the topsoil reinstated. This partial topsoil strip did not expose the undisturbed natural.</p> <p>On earlier cartographic sources an 'upper yard' of farm buildings is shown next to a lane leading to the park associated with the Hall. One of these farm buildings (a lincay) survived into the 1980s (see Figure 5), but was demolished during the redevelopment of the site. During the monitoring it became clear that a substantial depth of redeposited material had been spread across this area, infilling the lane and covering the field to a maximum depth of 3m. No trace of the farm buildings around the 'upper yard' was observed, although a single well was uncovered. This circular well had an internal diameter of c.0.55m (Figures 8 and 9) and was built of stone with walls c.0.30m thick; the stones were, on average, 0.30x0.07x0.25m across with no visible bonding. The top of the well had been truncated by the dig, but the surviving section was 5.55+m deep with water 3.90m deep; below the waterline the well was cut into the bedrock.</p> <p>The only other surviving element of the 'upper yard' was a second well, tucked under the eastern hedgebank on the other side of the former lane. This well was square, 1m across and rock cut (Figure 6 and 7); it was c.2.5m deep and partly infilled by collapsed stonework. Curiously, a narrow (0.5m) tapering slot had been cut into the rock on the downslope side of the well, and then blocked with relatively fine stonework. The top of the well was defined by a coursed drystone wall, with two side walls rising to a crude slab roof; these walls were supported by granite lintels with ovolo carving, probably reused from the Hall (similar elements were noted on the chimney and tower of the Hall).</p> <p>A very small number of unstratified post-medieval finds were recovered from the site, which included white refined ware (three sherds), North Devon gravel-tempered (x1), and North Devon gravel-free pottery (x1), all of which was discarded on site. One edge-trimmed flint flake, probably used as a cutting tool, was recovered from the ploughsoil in the adjoining field.</p>		

A plan as well as any other relevant drawings must be attached showing the location and extent of site, areas investigated and features exposed.

Recorder: P. Webb

Date sent to HER: 17.03.2015

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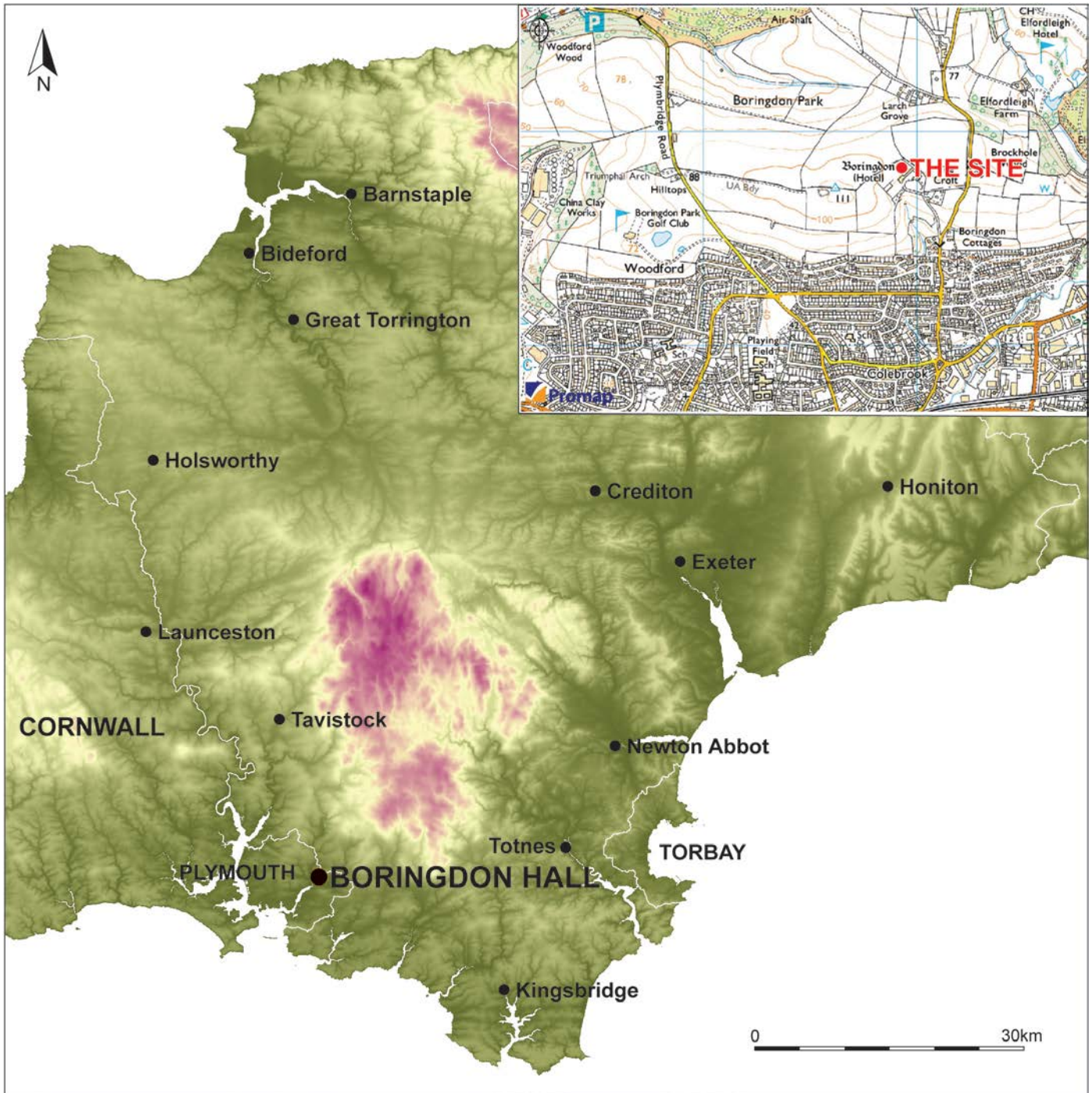


Figure 1: Site location map (the site is indicated).

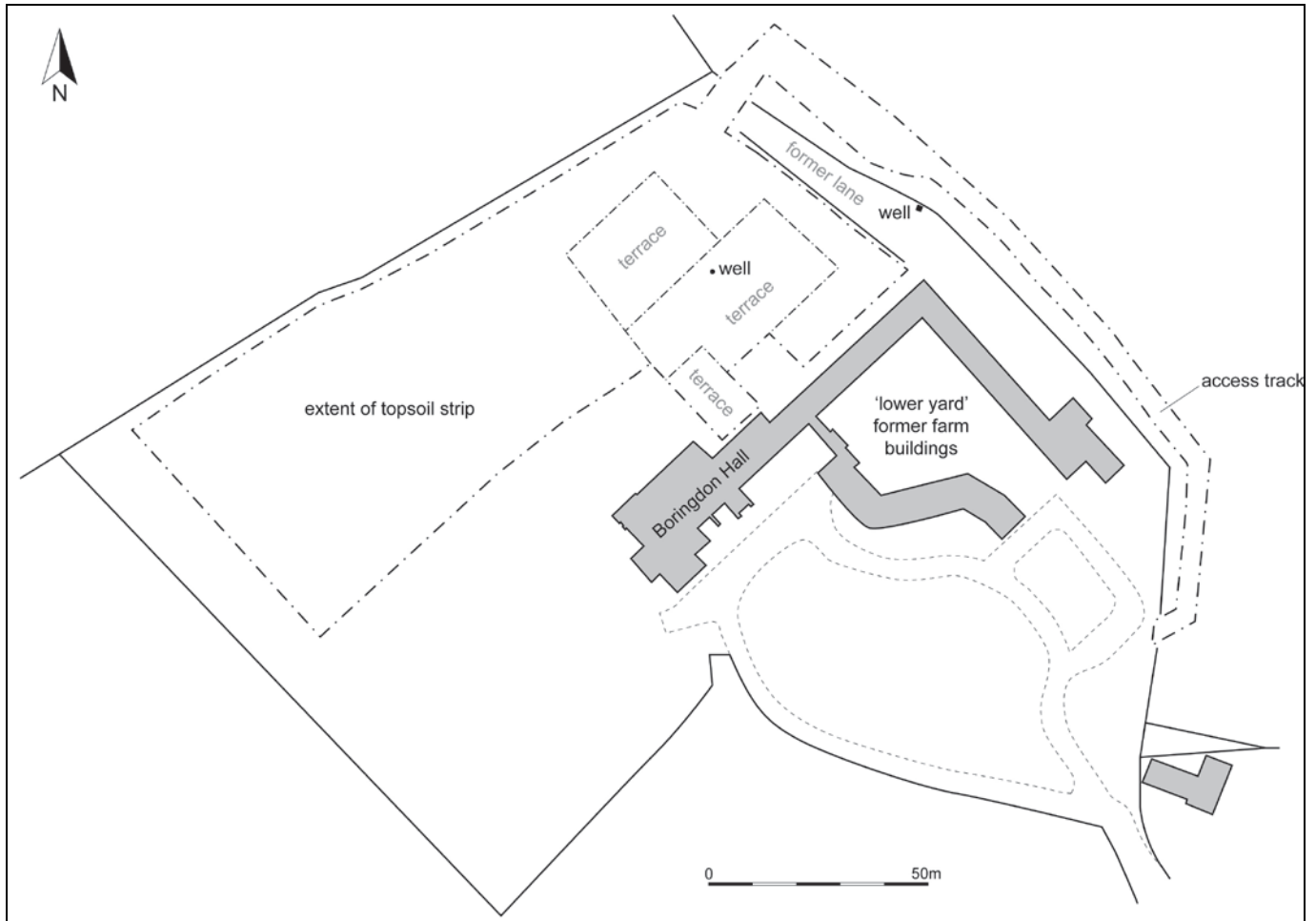


Figure 2: Site plan.



Figure 3: South-west facing section through layers of overburden on the site; looking north-east (2m scale).



Figure 4: 1986 photograph of the redevelopment at Boringdon Hall, showing the original ground height to the rear of the hall prior to the dumping of spoil.



Figure 5: 1986 photograph of the redevelopment at Boringdon Hall, showing the former linhay (centre background) prior to its demolition; viewed from the south.



Figure 6: The first well, shown emerging from the battered slope of the excavation; viewed from the south-east (1m scale).



Figure 7: View down into the well; viewed from the south-east (1m scale).



Figure 8: View of the second well, tucked under the eastern hedgebank; viewed from the south-west.



Figure 9: View down into the well; viewed from the south-west.