

## Brackenside, Bucks Cross, Bideford, Devon

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### Walkover Assessment

By S Walls, South West Archaeology Ltd. 31.03.19

#### **1.1 Project Background**

South West Archaeology Ltd. was commissioned by ARA Architects (the Agent), acting on behalf of Park Dean Resorts UK Ltd. (the Client), to undertake a rapid walkover assessment to form part of a planning submission (1/0019/2019/LBC & 1/0018/2019/FULM) for the proposed construction of 21 holiday lodges at Brackenside, Bucks Cross, Bideford, Devon. The proposed site is an area of woodland and waste located to the north-west of a currently derelict 19<sup>th</sup> century pocket mansion, now known as Brackenside.

#### **1.2 Site Location**

Brackenside is located c.0.15km west of St. Anne's Church; Bucks Cross lies within the parish of Woolfardisworthy, the main village being located c.2km to the south-west. The site sits on the east-facing slopes of a ridge of high ground that fronts onto Bideford Bay, at a height of c.179m AOD.

#### **1.3 Historical and Archaeological Background**

The house at Brackenside has a complicated history: it was built in c.1820 as *Buckish House*, probably by the Loggin family, who inherited the estate and manor from the Coles. By 1850 the House had been re-named *Walland House* and was owned by Mrs Jane Marianne Elwes; she went on to fund the construction of the nearby School House and St. Anne's Church, and gave the House for use as a vicarage in the 1860s following the construction of *Walland Cary* further to the north. The 1838 tithe apportionment describes the two enclosures that form the site as *Second Lawn* and *Plantation*. In the 1840s the drive approached the south-east elevation of the House (see Figure 4); a new drive built (likely in the 1850s) addressed the south-west elevation (see Figure 5), with a rear drive diverted to run within the southern limits of the proposed site.

The Devon HLC characterises this land as ornamental parkland, but it is surrounded by modern fields derived from earlier ones based on medieval strip fields. Analysis of Environment Agency LiDAR data for the area indicates the presence of a shrunken medieval settlement to the west at Bucks Barton (this was also owned by the Loggin family). The LiDAR data also suggests the presence of an irregular earthwork or enclosure within the site; however, the walkover (below) demonstrated that this corresponds with an area of dense vegetation (now removed).

#### **1.4 Walkover Survey**

The site was visited by S. Walls on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2019 in overcast but largely dry conditions. The site was accessed via the current drive leading to Brackenside. The House, a rather fine mid-Victorian villa, appears to be in poor but relatively stable condition; it has a new roof and most of the windows and doors are boarded shut. The former stables, cart shed and other outbuildings are in a deteriorating condition. The gardens remain partly overgrown, but the former walled garden and areas to the north of the House have been recently cleared of brambles and scrub (see Figures 7-8).

The areas to the north and north-west of the house were the focus of the walkover survey. It is largely screened from the back of the house by a short curving length of tall garden wall. The rest of its southern boundary is formed by the remnants of an avenue of trees flanking a former track that lead towards the 19<sup>th</sup> century former School House and St Anne's Church. The eastern boundary is a low earth bank, c.0.5m high, with no mature trees or shrubs. The northern boundary is a stone-faced bank c.0.8-1m high flanking a trackway. There is a gateway in this boundary that provides access to the site, now slightly rutted from the recent clearance works. There are a small number of mature

trees aligned broadly east-west inside this boundary. The curving western boundary is of a similar build to that of the north: a stone-faced earth bank c.0.8-1m high.

The site itself is essentially flat, the only earthworks being associated with vehicular access. These have been exaggerated during the recent clearance of the site, but appear to correspond closely with the posited earthworks shown on the LiDAR (see Figures 2 and 3). At the time of the visit a fence was being erected to separate the outbuildings associated with the House from the site. Examination of the postholes demonstrated that the friable grey-brown clay-silt topsoil is fairly shallow (c.0.3m thick) and overlies a yellow-grey silt-clay natural.

### 1.5 References

NLS (National Library of Scotland) OS 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Maps: <https://maps.nls.uk/>  
The Genealogist, Tithe map and apportionment: <https://www.thegenealogist.co.uk/>

### 1.6 Maps and site plans

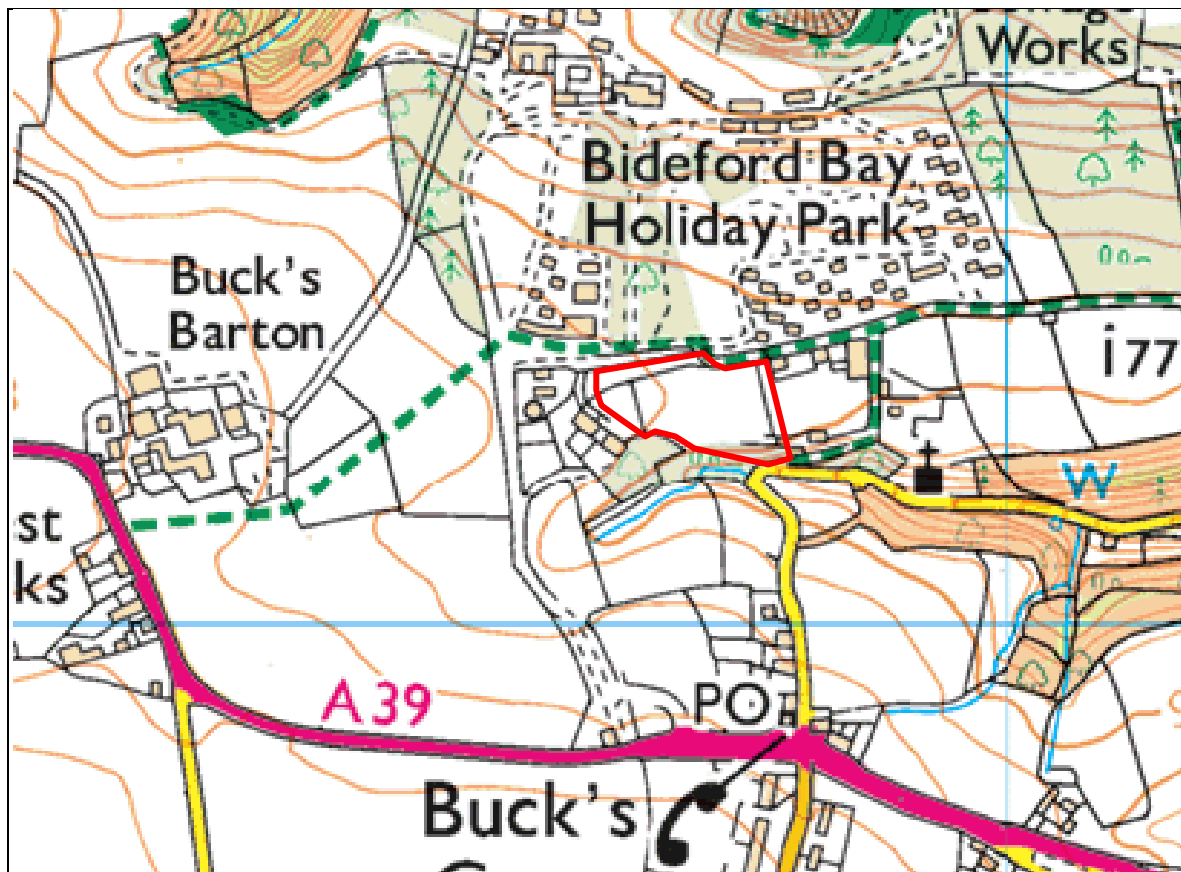


FIGURE 1: LOCATION MAP; THE SITE IS INDICATED.



FIGURE 2: PLAN SHOWING THE PROPOSED AND EARTHWORKS AND FEATURES NOTED IN WALKOVER SURVEY.

### 1.7 Cartographic Sources

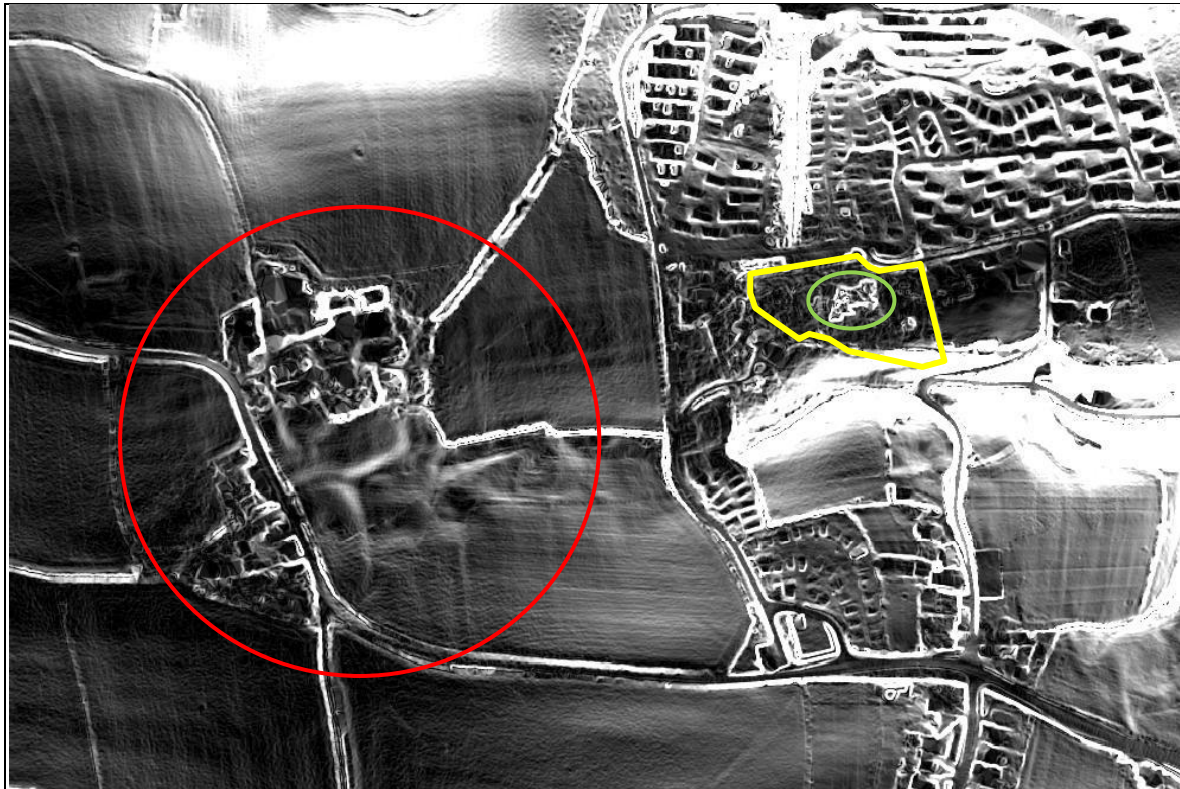


FIGURE 3: IMAGE DERIVED FROM 1M DTM LIDAR DATA (PROCESSED USING QGIS VER2.18.2, TERRAIN ANALYSIS/SLOPE, VERTICAL EXAGGERATION 3.0). DATA: © ENVIRONMENT AGENCY COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHTS 2017; CONTAINS OS DATA © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHTS 2017. THE SITE IS INDICATED IN **YELLOW**, WITH THE POSITED EARTHWORKS RINGED IN **GREEN**; THE EARTHWORKS AROUND BUCK'S BARTON ARE INDICATED IN **RED**.



FIGURE 4: EXTRACT FROM THE WOOLFARDISWORTHY TITHE MAP, THE SITE IS INDICATED (THE GENEALOGIST).

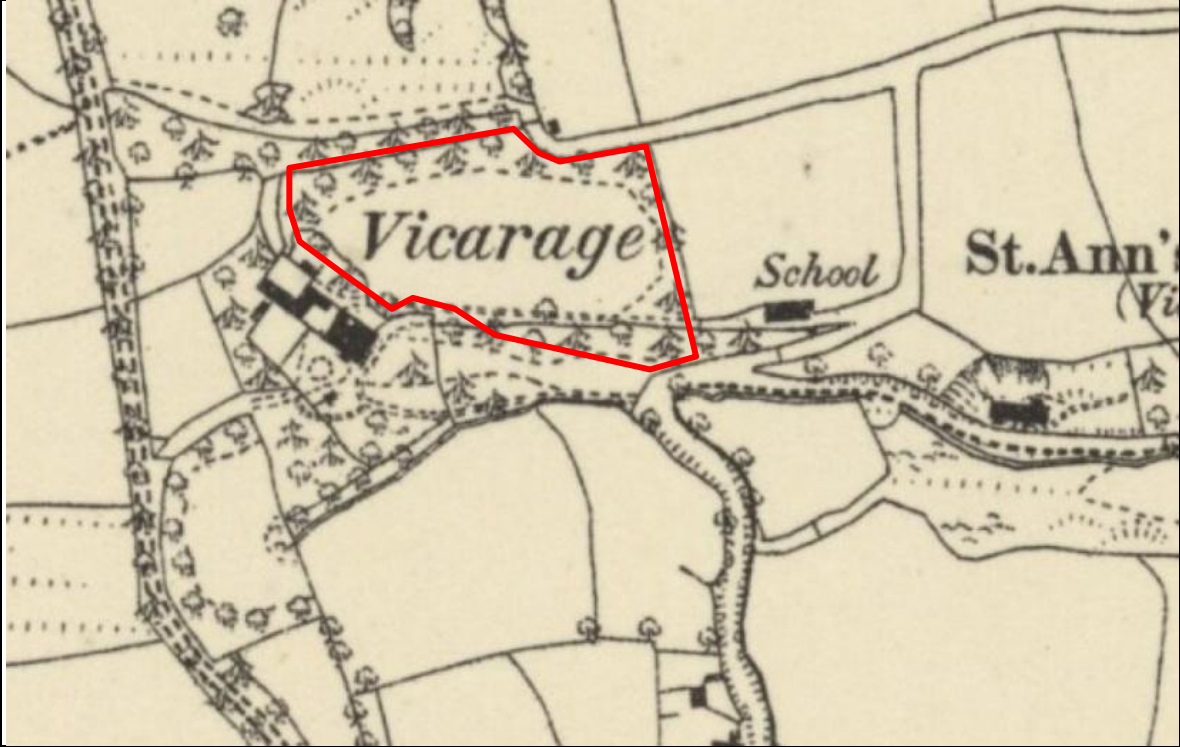


FIGURE 5: EXTRACT FROM THE OS 1<sup>ST</sup> EDITION MAP OF 1885; THE SITE IS INDICATED (NLS).

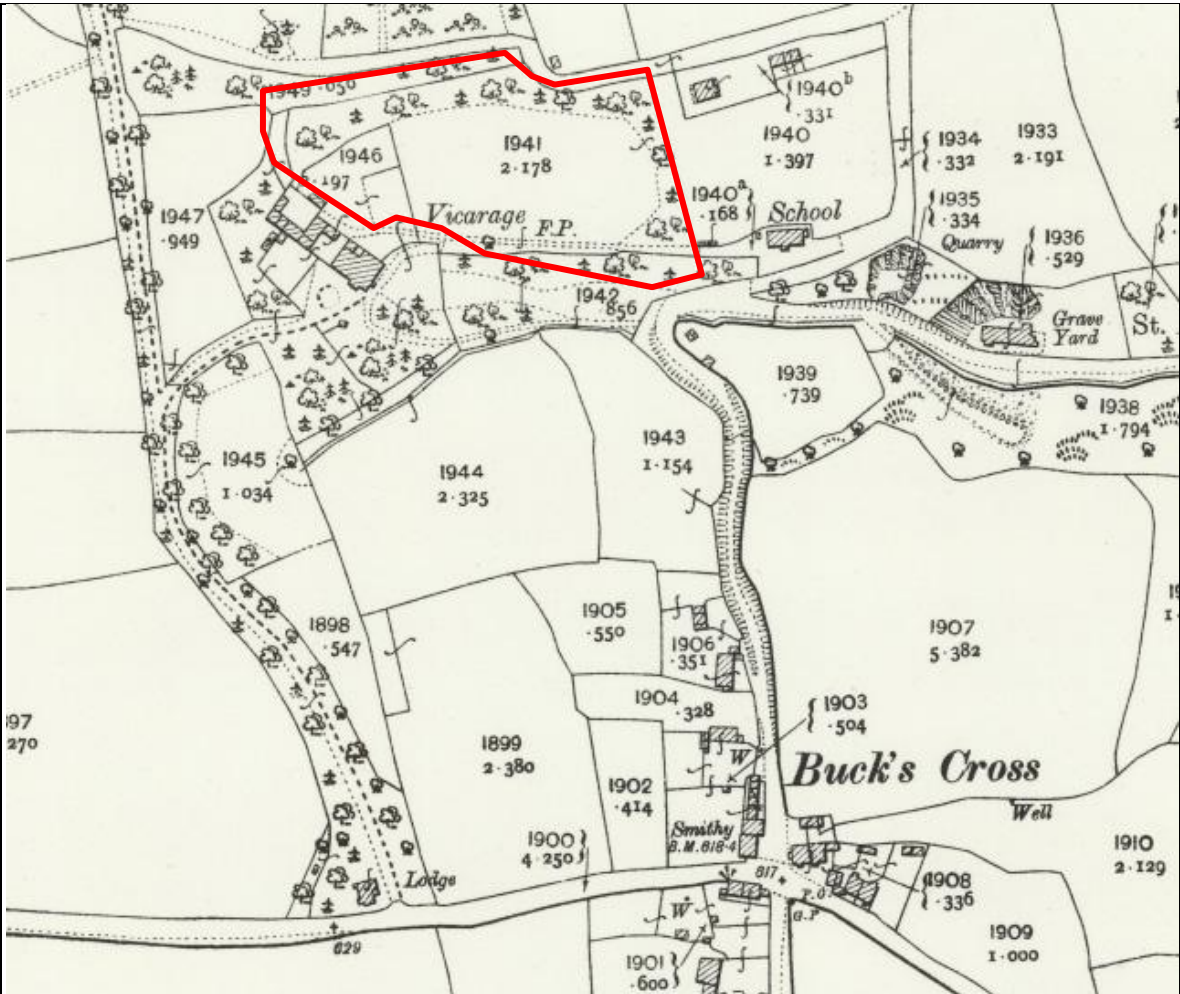


FIGURE 6: EXTRACT FROM THE OS 2ND EDITION MAP OF 1906; THE SITE IS INDICATED (NLS).

## 1.8 Supporting Jpegs



FIGURE 7: THE SITE OF EARTHWORKS SHOWN ON THE LIDAR; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH (NO SCALE).



FIGURE 8: THE SITE OF THE EARTHWORKS SHOWN ON THE LIDAR; VIEWED FROM THE WEST (NO SCALE).