

Land at Hunters Inn, Martinhoe, Devon: Heritage Statement

By F. Balmond and S. Walls of South West Archaeology Ltd. 10.02.2021

Introduction

South West Archaeology Ltd. was commissioned by the National Trust (The Client) to undertake an appraisal of the archaeological potential and heritage constraints of land at the Hunters Inn, Martinhoe, Devon [NGR: SY 07127 84071], as part of an application to install a ground source heat pump. The works will take place largely below ground on land from the Hunters Inn to the car park, south of the property.

Topographical and Geological Background

Hunters Inn is located just to the south of the meeting point of the River Heddon and one of its tributaries flowing from Trentishoe Combe. It sits in the bottom of a combe on the northern side of the junction of local roads leading from Trentishoe (c.1km to the north west), Martinhoe (c.1.3km to the north east) and Parracombe (C.3.5km to the south east). The coast at Heddons Mouth lies c. 1.5km to the north of the site. The ground rises steeply up the sides of the combes which surround the Hunters Inn. The property lies at c. 45m AOD. ell drained fine loamy or fine silty soils over rock of the Manod Association (SSEW 1983), which overlies the sandstones of the Hangman Sandstone Formation with alluvium and head deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel (BGS 2021).



FIGURE 1: LOCATION MAP.

Historic Background

Hunters Inn lies in the parish of Martinhoe in the hundred of Shirwell. Martinhoe was a manor documented at Domesday as held by Drogo son of Mauger of Geoffrey, Bishop of Coutances having been held by Doda in 1066. Its name is believed to mean 'hill-spur of Matta's people', derived from

'matta', an old English personal name; 'ingas' meaning 'the people of' and 'hoh', meaning a heel or sharply projecting piece of ground in Old English (University of Nottingham 2021). Lysons (1822) records that the manor of Martinhoe belonged to the St Albyn family and passed through several families before being held by the Courtenays from whom it passed to the Throckmortons. It seems likely that the land on which the Hunters Inn is located was sold by Sir Nicholas Throckmorton in 1885 to Benjamin Greene Lake as part of the manor etc of Martinhoe (DRO 2828 Z/T/2). The Hunters Inn and the land around it is now in the ownership of the National Trust. The Trust acquired land around Heddons Mouth and Trentishoe Down in 1963 and purchased the Hunters Inn in 2018 (The Hunters Inn 2021).

The Hunters Inn is recorded by the Exmoor National Park Historic Environment Record (ENPHER) as beginning life as a simple thatched cottage. The owner of the cottage kept a barrel of ale for shooting parties walking over the cliffs from Combe Martin and the cottage was enlarged in the later 19th century and became an Inn with rooms rented out. As tourists began to visit the inn was further extended but was burned to the ground following a fire in 1895 (MEM23968). Having purchased the Manor of Martinhoe and its associated lands including the Woody Bay Estate from Sir Nicholas Throckmorton in 1885, Colonel Benjamin Greene Lake rebuilt the Hunters Inn in the arts and crafts style. The rebuilt Hunters Inn was completed in 1906 (National Trust 2021).

Based on documentary references in the Devon Record Office it seems likely that it was known as Hunter's Inn from at least 1823 when Thomas Hoyles was recorded in the list of 'Victuallers Recognicances' at the Devon Quarter Sessions (DRO QS/63/2/11/065). The 1841 census for Hunters Inn also records Thomas Hoyles, then aged 50, as a Publican, suggesting that this was his main occupation at this date.

It is unclear exactly when the 'simple thatched cottage' referred to in the HER record was first constructed; there appears to be no indication of any buildings in the location of the Hunters Inn on the Ordnance Survey draft map for Barnstaple of 1804 (Figure 2) although evidently a property was extant by 1823. The tithe apportionment for the plot shown on the Tithe map (Figure 3) records the land was owned by Sir Robert Throckmorton Bt. as part of holding consisting five plots named 'The Hunters Inn' and occupied by Thomas Hoyles.

The First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1887 (Figure 4) shows significant change to the buildings at the Hunters Inn with extensions apparent to the north, south and west elevations. The rectangular building shown on the tithe map on the south side of the road (possibly a barn, store or stable) has been removed by the date of the First Edition map and replaced with a north-south oriented building in approximately the same location with a further building also added to the east of this. The roads leading south from Hunters Inn appear to have been reconfigured by this date creating a large area in front of the Inn; another small structure is also shown to the west of the Inn. The boundary between plots 389 and 390 has also been removed.

The Ordnance Survey Second Edition map of 1903 (Figure 5) shows further changes at Hunters Inn, the property having been rebuilt on a slightly different orientation following the fire of 1895. Two smaller structures are shown diagonally opposite the Inn, on the south side of the road and a further building is evident to the east of the Inn. Two new buildings (Hunters Lodge) have also been constructed alongside the eastern side of the road leading south from Hunters Inn by the early 20th century.

Historic mapping and aerial photography suggests that the plots to the south of the Hunters Inn (389, 390 and 391 on the tithe map) appear to have been meadow since at least the mid-19th century and continued to be used in this way until the northernmost two plots which were consolidated into one by the later 19th century (389 and 390) were gradually adapted for use as car parking by the National Trust

sometime in the late 20th century. Consolidation of the car park surface to create a hard standing area appears to have taken place between 2010 and 2015.



FIGURE 2: ORDNANCE SURVEY DRAFT MAP OF BARNSTAPLE 1804 (BL). THE APPROXIMATE SITE LOCATION IS INDICATED.



FIGURE 3: EXTRACT FROM TITHE MAP FOR MARTINHOE (TNA). THE PLOTS WHICH ARE LIKELY TO BE AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ARE INDICATED.

TABLE 1L EXTRACT FROM THE 1841 TITHE APPORTIONMENT FOR MARTINHOE. PLOTS LIKELY TO BE AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ARE SHADED GREEN.

Plot	Owner	Occupier	Name	Cultivation
Late Burches				
304	Sir Robert Throckmorton Baronet	John Crang	Bridge Mead	Meadow
The Hunters Inn				
305	Sir Robert Throckmorton Baronet	Thomas Hoyles	Cottage and Gardens	-
388			Bryants Pool Garden	Garden
Mill Town Roadwood				
306	Sir Robert Throckmorton Baronet	John Norman	Bridge Meadow	Meadow
Lower Manacott				
307	Sir Robert Throckmorton Baronet	Charles Dovell	Lower Meadow	Meadow
Mill Clist				
308	Sir Robert Throckmorton Baronet	John and Walter Latham	The Segg	Meadow
Mill Town				
389	Sir Robert Throckmorton Baronet	Philip Ridd	Kitts West Meadow	Meadow
390			Lower Meadow	Meadow
391			Higher Meadow	Meadow

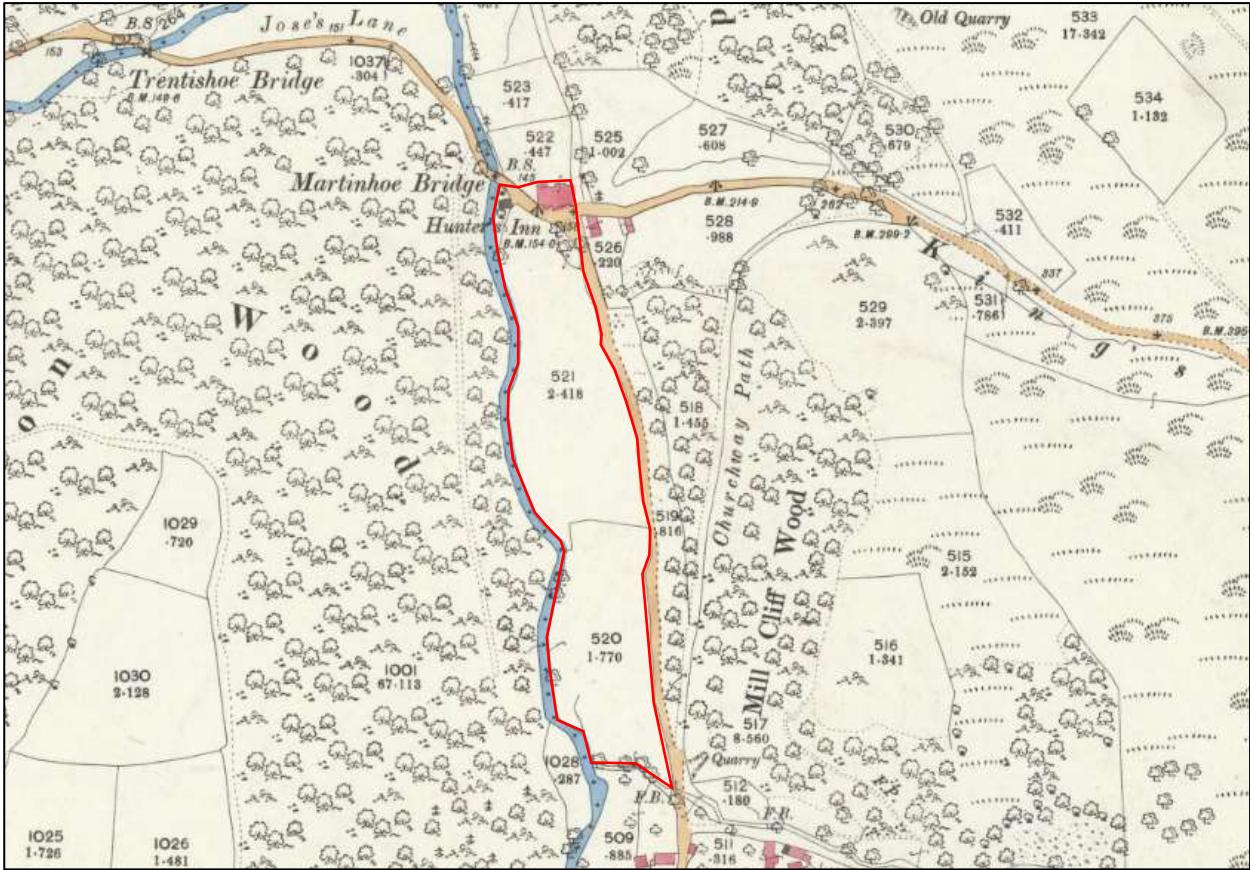


FIGURE 4: EXTRACT FROM THE FIRST EDITION ORDNANCE SURVEY 25 INCH MAP (NLS). THE PLOTS WHICH ARE LIKELY TO BE AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ARE INDICATED.

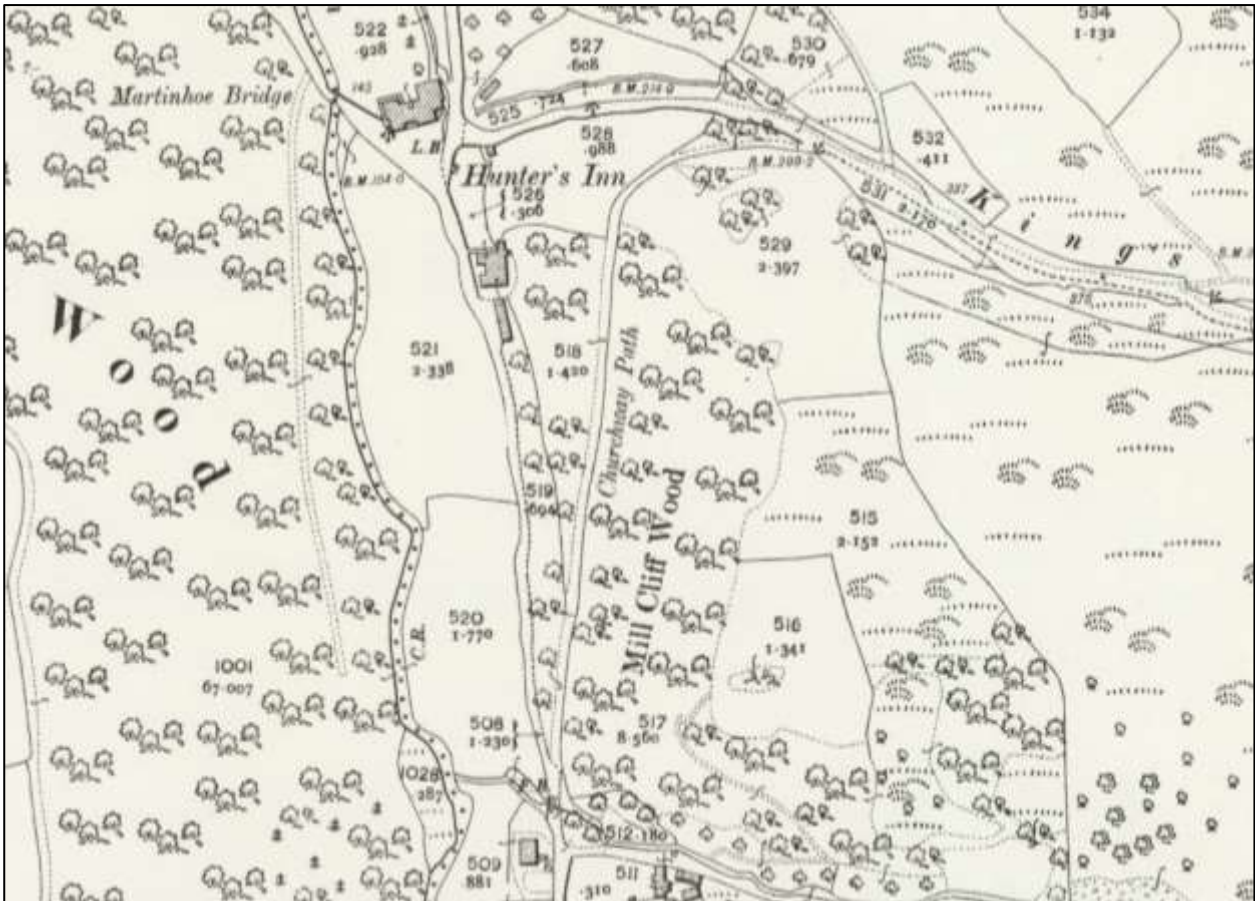


FIGURE 5: EXTRACT FROM THE SECOND EDITION ORDNANCE SURVEY 25 INCH MAP 1903 (NLS). THE PLOTS WHICH ARE LIKELY TO BE AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ARE INDICATED.

Site visit

The site was visited in February 2021 to determine potential archaeological impacts and attempt to identify any undesignated heritage assets that could be affected by the proposals. The majority of intrusive works would occur in a line running broadly north-south through a modern tarmacked carpark. The carpark has a slight earth bund surrounding much of its limits, which presumably represents soils stripped from across the parking area. To the north of the car park, a septic tank and other services are visible. There were no other earthworks or features of note, and the area appears to have low archaeological potential and the proposals will not have a significant impact on the historic landscape or assets.



FIGURE 6: SHOT OF THE CAR PARK, SHOWING LANDSCAPING, VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-WEST (NO SCALE).

Proximity of Designated Heritage Assets

The proposed works to this site are likely to consist entirely of groundworks to install a ground source heat pump. It is intended that the necessary equipment will be installed in the basement of the Hunters Inn building. Should this not prove to be possible it may be that it will need to be installed in an outbuilding. There are no designated heritage assets within the vicinity of the Hunters Inn and its associated car park. The nearest designated assets are the Grade II Listed Syringa Cottage at Trentishoe Combe and Higher Mannacott to the east of Hunters Inn, both of which are screened by topography from the area of the proposed development.

Conclusion

The Hunters Inn at Martinhoe appears to have been recognised as a licensed establishment since c.1823. The property is likely to have been constructed shortly before this date on land owned by the Throckmorton Family. The property was originally a thatched cottage, later expanded to include guest accommodation and rebuilt following a devastating fire in 1895. The building, its associated outbuildings and the road layout all appear to have changed considerably during the course of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The intended area for the installation of a ground source heat pump lies within an area of ground to the south of the Inn which appears to have been part of a series of meadows in the holding of Mill Town at the date of the Tithe survey. This area appears to have been relatively unchanged with the exception of the removal of a boundary between two of the meadows sometime in the mid-19th century. If the works to install the ground source heat pump are carried out on the central or western sides of the meadows indicated on mapping above it appears unlikely that significant archaeological remains would be encountered, although as no archaeological fieldwork has been carried out in this area and it is therefore possible that finds of prehistoric and later date could be encountered. It is anticipated that any service trenching will likely be ‘moled’ for at least some of the length, e.g. across the public highway.

Given that there has been a limited amount of landscaping associated with the creation of car parking and existing septic tank and services, this is likely to have removed the majority of topsoil, and may have truncated any archaeological features or deposits that may have been present. Overall the archaeological impact is likely to be low but is largely untested given the lack of any work in this area.

References

British Geological Survey 2021: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

CIFA 2020: *Standard and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment.*

Exmoor National Park Historic Environment Record 2021: www.exmoorher.co.uk

Lysons, S. and Lysons, D. 1822: *Magna Britannia Volume 6: Devonshire.* London: Cadell and Davies.

SSEW 1983: *Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of the England and Wales.*

The Hunters Inn 2021: *The National Trust* www.thehuntersinnexmoor.co.uk/national-trust/

The National Trust 2021: *Hunters Inn* <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/heddon-valley/features/hunters-inn-set-in-the-heart-of-the-heddon-valley>

University of Nottingham 2021: *Key to English Placenames*

<http://kepn.nottingham.ac.uk/map/place/Devon/Martinhoe>