

Land at Bury Barton, Polbury, Lapford, Devon

NGR SS 73207 07147

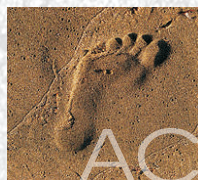
Results of an archaeological watching brief

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On behalf of:
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archaeology

LAND AT BURY BARTON, POLBURY, LAPFORD, DEVON

NGR SS 73207 07147

Results of an archaeological watching brief

Planning ref: Mid Devon District Council 11/00427/FULL

Scheduled Monument No. 1002669 (Roman Fort and Earthwork Enclosure, Bury Barton)

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by AC archaeology in July 2011 during groundworks associated with the construction of a new agricultural building on land at Bury Barton, Polbury, Lapford, Devon.

The watching brief was carried out during the machine excavation of 16 stanchion pits for a new barn. The site lies within a Roman Fort complex at Bury Barton. The majority of the fort is a Scheduled Monument (1002669), although much of the existing farm is excluded from this protection. It is only the northern end of the new agricultural structure that falls within the scheduled area. The watching brief established that no archaeological deposits or features were exposed in the groundworks and no artefacts were recovered.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document sets out the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out during groundworks associated with the construction of a new agricultural building at Bury Barton, Polbury, Lapford, Devon (Fig. 1). The work was undertaken by AC archaeology and was commissioned by the site owner, Mr Andrew Quick. The work was required by English Heritage as part of a Scheduled Monument Consent (ref. S00008659), and as a condition of planning permission requested by Mid Devon District Council, as advised by Devon County Council Historic Environment Service (DCCHES).
- 1.2 The redevelopment initially comprised the demolition of existing farm buildings, which comprised a concrete yard, cubicle shed and a Dutch Barn. Following the removal of these buildings sixteen new stanchion pits were excavated.
- 1.3 The new agricultural building will encompass an area of approximately 28m by 20m. The site lies at around 114m OD and the underlying solid geology comprises mudstones, siltstones and sandstones of the Holsworthy Group.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 An initial desk-based assessment showed that the main archaeological interest is that the site lies within the area of a Roman Fort complex at Bury Barton. The majority of the fort is a Scheduled Monument (No. 1002669), although much of the existing farm is excluded from this protection. It is only the northern part of the new agricultural structure that falls within the scheduled area.
- 2.2 Limited archaeological investigations (Fig. 2) have been carried out on the site of the fort (Todd 2002). It is likely to be in the position of a smaller and earlier marching camp (DCCHER ref. 20942) located on the east side. The fort itself encompasses an area of approximately 1.9 hectares, with the defences comprising a triple-ditched enclosure with ramparts, surviving in places as earthworks and elsewhere as cropmarks. Within the interior of the fort excavations identified foundation trenches for timber buildings, as well as a midden deposit.
- 2.3 A settlement/manor at Bury Barton is recorded as early as the Domesday Survey of 1086 (Gover *et al* 1931, 369), when it was known as *Beria*. The existing farm has medieval origins and there is a surviving medieval chapel on the north-west side.
- 2.4 The 1840 Lapford parish tithe map depicts Bury Barton farm as a series of buildings arranged around a central courtyard. No structures are shown on the west side where the new building is proposed, with this part of the present farm then situated within a field named on the accompanying apportionment as 'Kitchen Park'. The land-use at this time was pasture and the

farm was owned by Catherine Bury and occupied by William Denham. There are few changes on either the 1888 or 1904 Ordnance Survey 25-inch maps.

3. AIM

- 3.1 The aim of the watching brief was to preserve by record any archaeological features or deposits exposed during groundworks associated with the development, with particular reference to any evidence for Roman military remains, as well as Romano-British to medieval settlement or industry.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a brief prepared by DCHES (Reed 2011) and with reference to a method statement prepared by AC archaeology (Valentin 2011). The groundworks comprised the excavation of 16 stanchion pits, with each 0.9m² in plan (Fig. 3). The pits were excavated by a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket.
- 4.2 All deposits revealed were recorded using the standard AC archaeology *pro forma* recording system, comprising written, graphic and photographic records and in accordance with AC Archaeology's *General Site Recording Manual, Version 1* (Revised April 2005).

5. RESULTS

- 5.1 A total of 16 stanchion pits was machine-excavated instead of the initial 20 as first proposed. Three stanchion pits at the north end of the building were not excavated, as steel uprights were to be screwed into the concrete floor foundations, while a pit at the southern end of the building was deemed unnecessary.
- 5.2 The seven eastern pits (1-7) were excavated at the base and followed the course of an old hedgeline. These pits contained between 0.2-0.3m of mid brown topsoil exhibiting a lot of root disturbance, and 0.6-0.7m of hard, compact mottled red and yellow clay/sandstone natural subsoil. The first four stanchion pits (1-4) contained the remains of a concrete wall – the return of an existing wall built in the 1980s (Plate 1).
- 5.3 The seven western pits (8-14) revealed a general layer sequence comprising 0.3m of dark brown silty clay topsoil, overlying 0.6m of mixed grey and yellow clay natural subsoil. The pits on this side had a very high water table and contained rotted vegetation (Plate 2).
- 5.4 The two northern road side stanchion pits (15 and 16) were excavated close up against an existing concrete wall. There was much disturbance within these two pits caused by the wall footings, but compact mottled red and yellow clay/sandstone natural subsoil was recorded.

6. COMMENT

- 6.1 None of the stanchion pits contained any pre-modern archaeological features or deposits and no finds were recovered. It is likely that any remains that were present are likely to have been removed when the now demolished buildings and yard were constructed.

7. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

- 7.1 The paper and digital archive are currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ. It is anticipated that they will be ultimately deposited at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter. A temporary reference number has been obtained from the museum, which is RAMM: 11/19.

7.2 The OASIS (Online Access to the Index of Archaeological InvestigationS) number for this project is 116341.

8. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

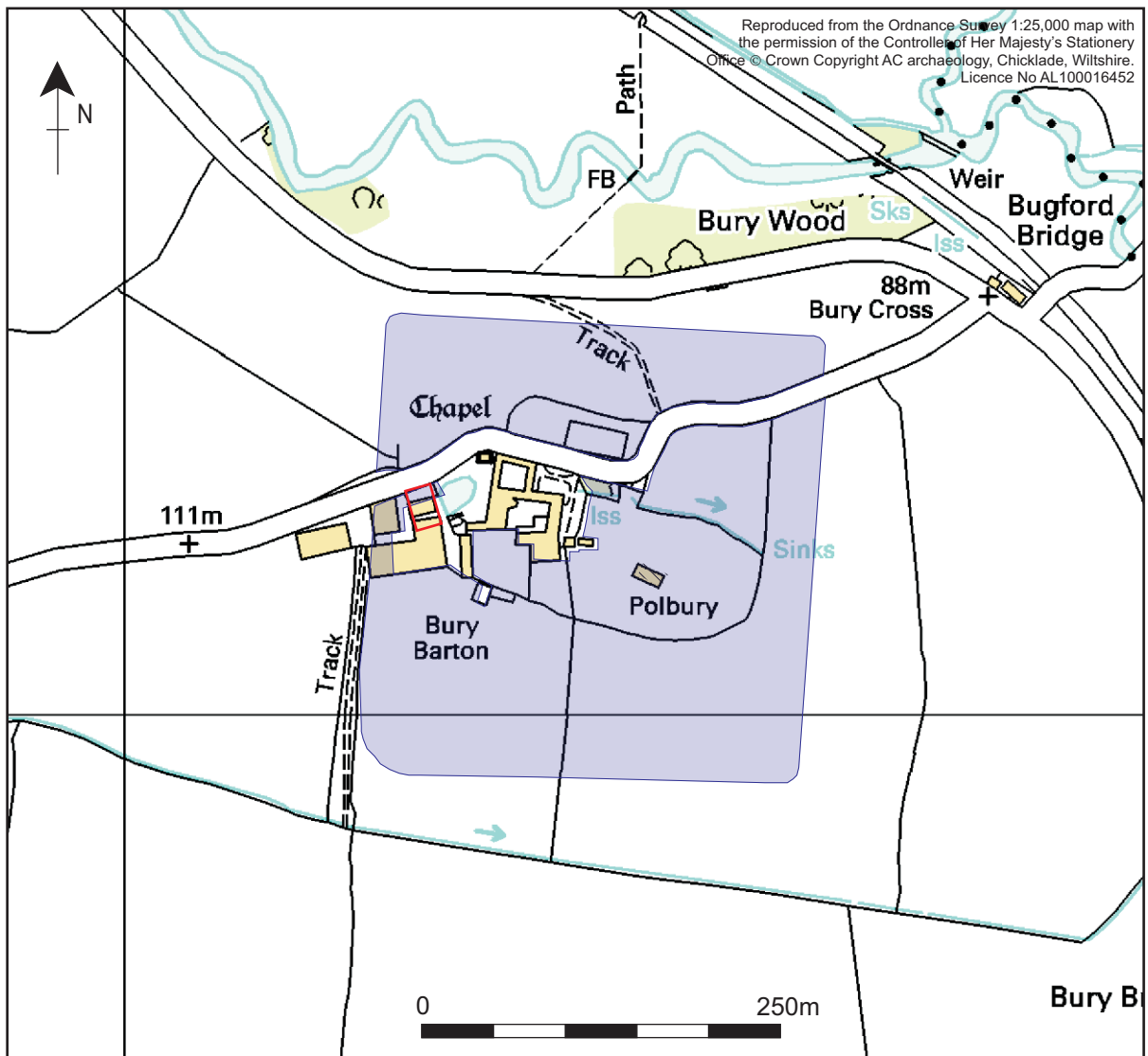
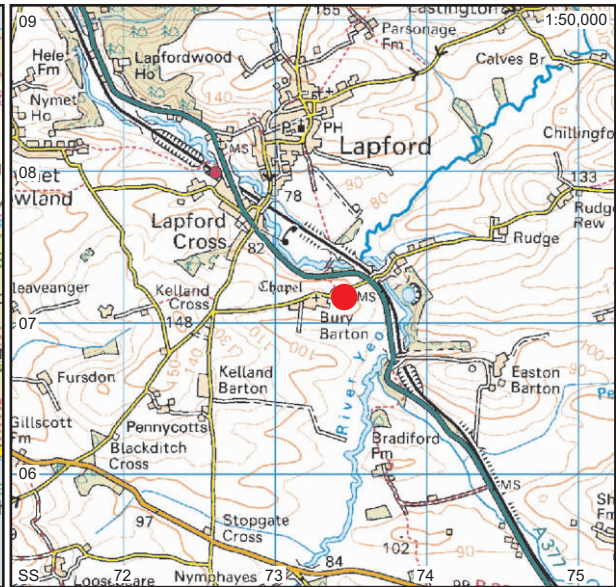
8.1 The watching brief was commissioned by the site owner Mr Andrew Quick and was undertaken by Kerry Tyler. The illustrations for this report were prepared by Sarnia Blackmore. The advice and collaboration of Stephen Reed, Devon Archaeology Officer, and Nick Russell, English Heritage Inspector, are duly acknowledged.

9. **REFERENCES**

Reed, S. 2011, *Brief for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording at Polbury, Lapford*, DCHES, ARCH/DM/MD/17883.

Todd, M. 2002, 'The Roman Fort and Later Roman Site at Bury Barton', *Proc. Devon Archaeol. Soc.* 60, 37-58.

Valentin, J., 2011, *Land at Bury Barton, Polbury, Lapford, Devon: Method statement for an archaeological watching brief*. Unpublished AC archaeology document, ref. ACD327/1/2



Key

- Scheduled area
- New agricultural building

PROJECT

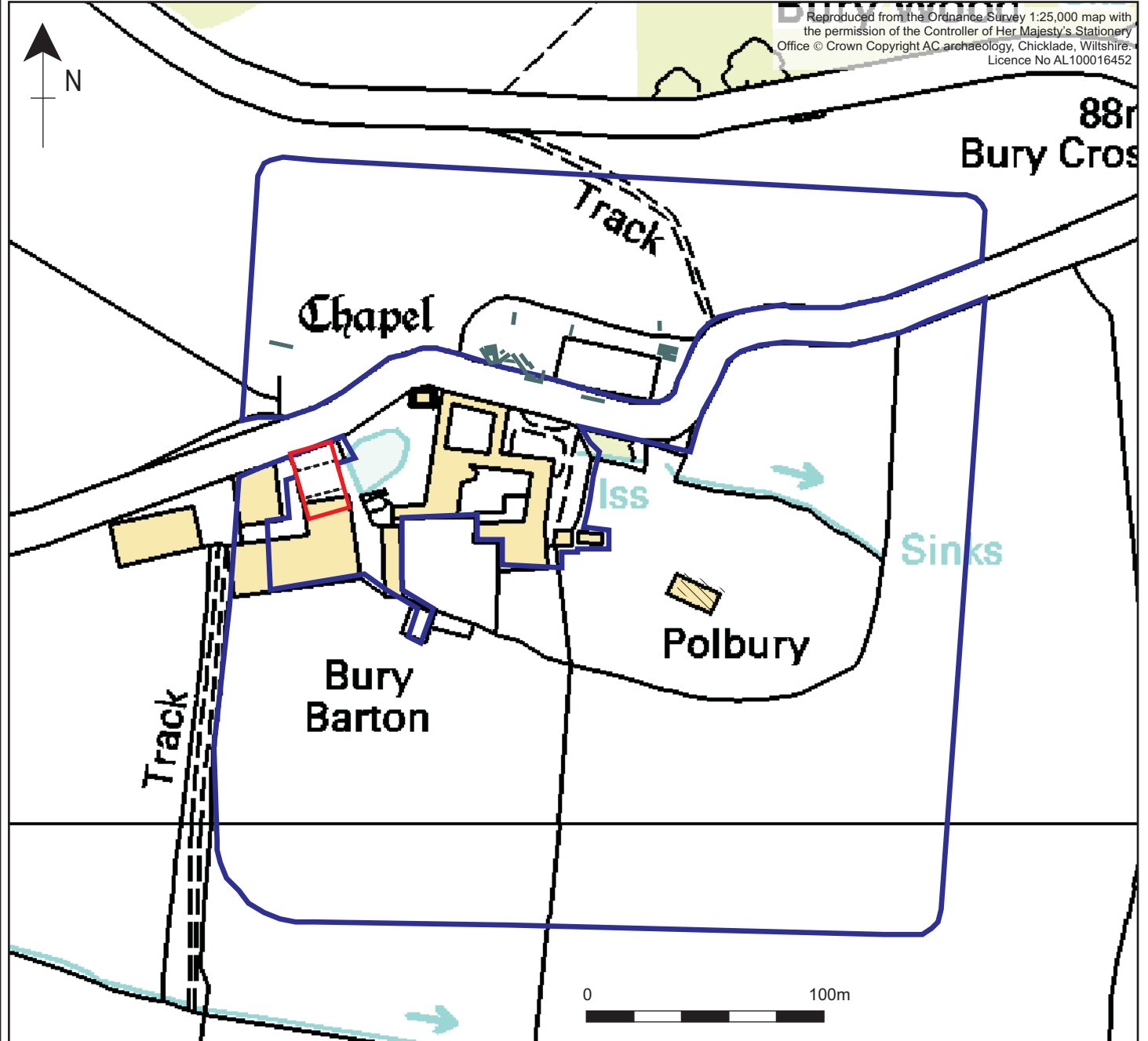
Bury Barton Farm, Lapford

TITLE

Fig.1: Location of site and extent of scheduled area



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Key

-  Scheduled area
-  New agricultural building
-  Excavations 1983-5

PROJECT

Bury Barton Farm, Lapford

TITLE

Fig.2: Location of site in relation to previous excavations



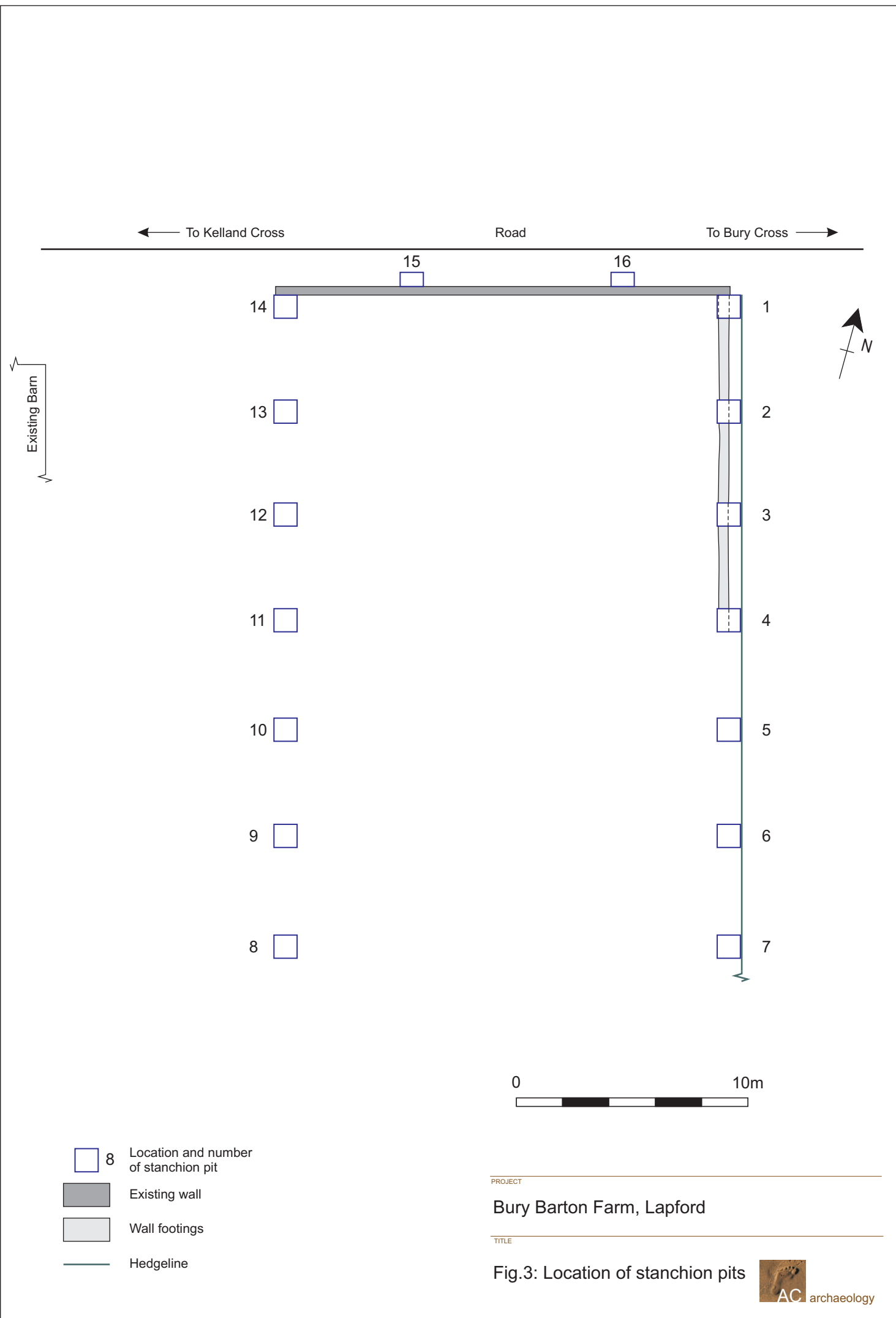




Plate 1: Test Pit 1, view to the south (Scale 1m)



Plate 2: Test Pit 13, view to the north (Scale 1m)

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