Land at Back Lane/Oak Tree Park, Sticklepath, Devon

NGR SX64219425

Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Assessment

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On behalf of:

West Devon Homes

Document No: ACD20/1/0

Date: November 2008



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(NGR SX 64219425):

ARCHAEOLOGY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

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Summary

An archaeology and cultural heritage assessment of land off Back Street/Oak Tree Park, Sticklepath, Devon (NGR SX 64219425), has been carried out by AC archaeology during November 2008. There is no previously recorded evidence for archaeological remains on the site itself, although it does occupy part of one of a series of medieval burgage plot to the rear of mainly 16th and 17th-century properties that front onto the main street through the village. The buildings and the burgage plots are separated by Back Lane, which would have previously provided access into the plots from their south side.

Historic maps and documentary sources indicate that the site has remained largely unchanged since at least 1843, with the present boundaries still in the same positions. The western and northern boundaries are stone-revetted banks and are likely to date to the medieval period, while the walls and hedges on the eastern and southern sides appear to be more recent additions. In the mid 19th century the site was called' Part of Steddaford's Holmes', with the land-use described as pasture. The burgage plot two along to the west was named 'Crocker's Acre' at this time, perhaps indicating early manufacture of pottery or other ceramics. Burgage plots often contain remains associated with small-scale industry such as ceramics production, and it is possible that evidence for this or some other manufacturing process might be present on this site.

1. INTRODUCTION

- **1.1** An archaeology and cultural heritage assessment of a proposed development on land adjacent to Back Lane and Oak Tree Park, Sticklepath, Devon has been prepared by AC archaeology during November 2008. The location of the site is shown on Fig. 1.
- **1.2** The study has been prepared on behalf of West Devon Homes in order to establish the cultural heritage and archaeological implications of proposals to construct a small number of affordable houses on the site. These proposals are at a very early stage, but if permission is granted, the houses are likely to be built in the southern part of a north-south linear plot of land currently used as playing field. For the purposes of this assessment the whole of the playing field has been considered.
- **1.3** Sticklepath village is situated in the River Taw valley close to a historic crossing point. The main road through the village was formerly the A30 Trunk Road, which connects London with the far south west of England. The road itself is likely to have origins in at least the medieval period. The playing fields occupy an area of *c*. 0.5 hectares of generally level ground, lying at around 200m OD, with the underlying natural layer sequence comprising superficial alluvial deposits above a mixed solid geology of volcanic and metamorphic rocks.

2. METHODOLOGY

- **2.1** The study has comprised a desk-based assessment, as defined by the Institute for Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance for desk-based assessment* (published 1994, revised 2001), of the archaeological and cultural heritage resource of the site. In addition, relevant other recorded information close by is included in order to provide setting/context. A site inspection has also been undertaken.
- **2.2** The scope of the study has included archaeological sites and finds (including Scheduled Monuments), historic buildings (including Listed Buildings), historic landscape features (including Registered Parks and Gardens, Battlefields etc.), or other locally-designated features, or areas, of cultural heritage importance.

- **2.3** The following data sources have been examined:
 - Archaeological records, historic building information and other relevant cultural heritage data held by Dartmoor National Park Authority Historic Environment Record (DNPAHER) AND Devon County Historic Environment Record (DCCHER;
 - historical cartographic, photographic and documentary information held by Devon Record Office (DRO) and West Country Studies Library (WCSL), both in Exeter;
 - English Heritage website Listed Buildings Online; and,
 - other published or unpublished information.

3. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

Relevant protection, guidance and policies relating to the protection, maintenance and enhancement of archaeological sites and other aspects of cultural heritage may be summarised as follows:

3.1 Planning guidance for archaeology

General policy and advice for best practice in the management of archaeological remains under development plan and control systems has been set out in the Department of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance note 16 (PPG 16, November 1990), relevant extracts of which follow:

A6: Archaeological remains should be seen as a finite, and non-renewable resource, in many cases highly fragile and vulnerable to damage and destruction. Appropriate management is therefore essential to ensure that they survive in good condition. In particular, care must be taken to ensure that archaeological remains are not needlessly or thoughtlessly destroyed. They can contain irreplaceable information about our past and potential for an increase in future knowledge. They are part of our national identity and valuable both for their own sake and for their role in education, leisure, and tourism.

A13: If physical preservation in situ is not feasible, an archaeological excavation for the purposes of 'preservation by record' may be an acceptable alternative. From the archaeological point of view this should be regarded as a second best option.

3.2 Listed buildings/structures

Buildings of national, regional, or local historical and architectural importance are protected by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990. Buildings designated as 'Listed' are afforded protection from physical alteration or effects on their historical setting.

3.3 Planning guidance for the historic environment

Department of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (1994) provides general policy and advice for the best practice in the management of Listed Buildings, conservation areas and historic parks and gardens under development plan and control systems. This Guidance Note is intended to encompass all previous legislation concerning Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Historic Parks and Gardens and Historic Battlefields.

3.4 Local authority plan policies

Relevant policies for the management of archaeology and cultural heritage are set out in the adopted (October 2004) *Dartmoor National Park Local Plan First Review 1995-2011*.

Policy AH1: Protection of scheduled and nationally important monuments, sites and area Planning permission will not be granted for development which would have an adverse impact on the setting of visible remains or which would involve significant alteration or cause damage to a scheduled or other archaeological monument, site or area considered nationally important by virtue of its:

(i) survival or condition; (ii) period; (iii) rarity; (iv) fragility or vulnerability; (v) diversity;(vi) documentation;(vii) group value;(viii) potential.

Policy AH3: Protection of locally important: monuments, sites and area

In cases where, due to other material planning considerations, a potentially damaging proposal is acceptable in principle, mitigating measures will be required to minimise those effects together with archaeological investigations, recording of features and safeguarding of artefacts.

Policy AH4: Protection of artefacts of archaeological importance

Where a development will affect moveable artefacts of archaeological and historic importance, planning permission will be granted if those artefacts can be adequately protected against loss, damage or deterioration either through conservation in situ or, where this is not possible, by conservation off site. Planning obligations will be sought to secure the protection of such artefacts.

Policy AH5: Archaeological evaluation

A thorough archaeological evaluation of the effect on archaeological interests will be requested for all proposals involving ground disturbance where it appears to the Authority that development may have an adverse impact on an archaeological monument, site or area. An evaluation will be requested for all proposals falling within the following areas:

(i) moor, heath and woodland of conservation importance as shown on the proposals map;

(ii) the historic cores of all conservation areas;

(iii) sites included within the Devon County Sites and Monuments Register;

(iv) parks and gardens on the national and local registers of parks and gardens of special historic interest.

Policy BL1: Conserving the quality of the built environment

Planning permission will only be granted for new buildings or the conversion, extension or alteration of existing buildings where:

(i) siting, density, form, scale, relationship with existing development and design details, including landscaping, conserve or enhance the local environment;

(ii) the proposal would not detract from the setting of historic buildings or adversely affect the integrity of historic town or village plans;

(iii) materials and finishes to be used on buildings and other structures and surfaces would be appropriate to the area.

Policy BL2: Conservation of the character and appearance of settlements

Planning permission will only be granted where a proposal does not destroy, damage or obscure those buildings, open spaces, trees and other features that make a positive contribution to the visual or historical character of the local built environment. Enhancement or landscaping schemes will be required where these are necessary to improve the visual quality of the development or its setting. Conditions may be imposed or planning obligations may be sought where this is necessary to reduce the impact on, or harmonise a development with, an existing setting.

Policy BL4: Conservation areas

In conservation areas, development will only be permitted where the character or appearance of all those buildings, open spaces, trees, views, historical plan forms and other features which contribute to the visual or historical character of a conservation area is preserved or enhanced. In particular:

(i) the replacement of a building within a conservation area will only be permitted where it can be shown that the existing building is in a dangerous condition and wholly beyond repair or where demolition would allow redevelopment to take place which would significantly improve the character and appearance of the area;

(ii) where complete or substantial demolition of a building within a conservation area is to be followed by redevelopment of the site, permission for the demolition will only be granted where appropriate detailed plans for the redevelopment have been approved and where the Authority is satisfied that there is a genuine intention to implement those plans in the near future; (iii) the change of use, extension or alteration of a building within a conservation area will be permitted only where the form, character and setting of the building and the character and appearance of the area is preserved or enhanced. Development outside a conservation area that would detract from its character or appearance or would adversely affect important views of, or the approaches to, the conservation area will not be permitted.

4. GENERAL HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- **4.1** The village of Sticklepath is first mentioned in documents dating from as early as the 13th century, although the name derives from the Saxon 'staecle', meaning steep. The village is not mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086, but at that time it was not a parish itself, lying in the southeast corner of the ancient parish of Sampford Courtenay.
- **4.2** The settlement appears to have developed in a linear arrangement alongside the ancient road, with its position close to the River Taw meaning that a number of mills were once present. The village is likely to have originally been two distinct settlements centred on Carnall Mills to the east and Cleave Mill to the west, although the main historic core of the village seems to be towards the eastern end, where a number of late medieval and early post-medieval buildings are located alongside the road (see below). To the rear of these are long north-south aligned burgage plots, with the proposed development site lying within the most easterly of these. Burgage plots are characteristic of planned medieval settlement, with houses located alongside the street frontage and the rear strips of land used for such things as small-scale industry, grazing of livestock and cultivation.
- **4.3** During the post-medieval period and into the 19th century the village appears to have had a thriving economy, based on the processing of cloth and corn from four mills. The main road would have allowed easy access for trade at larger settlements such as Okehampton.

5. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDS

5.1 Previously recorded archaeological sites nearby are described in Appendix 1 and shown on Fig. 2. Sites include the finding of a flint scraper of Bronze Age form (A4) as well as a possible enclosure (A3) and earthwork (A5) plotted from aerial photographs. The only scheduled monument in the village is site A8, an inscribed medieval roadside cross located towards the western end of the village, approximately 300m west of the present site.

6. HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDS

6.1 The nearest listed historic structures to the site are the row of buildings to the south adjoining the Taw River Inn (B22, B17 etc. on Fig. 2). The buildings in this row mainly have origins in the 16th century and are generally characterised by rendered cob and stone walls and thatched roofs. The bridge across the River Taw (B3) contains surviving medieval fabric. Other historic buildings in the village are mainly 18th century and later in date and include the former Finch Foundry mill (B2), the Methodist Chapel (B11) and the Type K6 telephone box (B19).

7. STICKLEPATH CONSERVATION AREA

7.1 The present boundary to the village Conservation Area is shown on Fig. 2, although there are current proposals to extend this (DNPA 2005). The site lies within the present Conservation Area, towards the northeast corner.

8. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE

8.1 Historic large-scale mapping of Sticklepath is poorly represented, with the earliest map identified comprising the Sampford Courtney parish tithe map of 1843. Unfortunately part of the paper copy held by Devon Record Office has been badly damaged, with the section that would

have shown Sticklepath village completely removed. A sketch tracing from a poor-quality microfiche has therefore been included with this report. Copies of relevant maps are included as Figs. 3 to 6.

- **8.2** The southern edge of the Ordnance Survey Surveyors' drawing of 1806-7 (Fig. 3) is the main road which crosses through the village. The road forming the present eastern boundary to the site is shown, but individual boundaries of the row of burgage plots are not, with the area being depicted as a single block of land. It is probable that the drawing is too small-scale to show this level of detail.
- **8.3** The 1843 Sampford Courtenay tithe map (Fig. 4) does show the individual plots, with the present site (Plot 2418) named on the accompanying 1844 apportionment as 'Part of Steddaford's Holmes', with the land-use described as pasture. The plot was owned by George Underhill Wills and occupied by him. To the west of the site, Plot 2420 is named 'Crocker's Acre', perhaps indicating early manufacture of pottery or other ceramics (Site A9). The land use of this plot in 1844 was arable.
- **8.4** In 1886, the first edition 25-inch Ordnance Survey map shows the site as largely unaltered from 1843 and this is still the case in 1905 (Fig. 6), although a small building is shown in the southwest corner (Fig. 5). The pattern of houses, roads and fields surrounding the site is also largely unchanged. By 1954 (Fig. 7) the houses bordering the northern end of the site have been constructed and the small structure in the southwest corner now removed.

9. SITE INSPECTION

9.1 The site was visited on 15 October 2008. It is currently used as a play area in the southern part of the site and there is a football pitch to the north (Plate 1). The present main entrance is via a small metal gate and larger wooden farm gate, positioned at the southern end of the site (Plate 2). Within the site the ground is generally level, although there is a general trend of a gentle slope down to the south. The site is currently grass-covered.



Plate 1: General view of site, looking south



Plate 2: The southern entrance to the site, looking south

9.2 The boundaries vary on all sides. The western boundary comprises a stone-revetted bank with trees (Plate 3), the northern boundary is an overgrown bank (Plate 4). There is a farm gate into the adjoining plot at the north end of the western boundary. The eastern boundary is represented by a hedgline at the northern end and then a stone wall and hedge to the south (Plate 5). Alongside this boundary is a row of regularly-planted semi-mature trees. Adjacent to the entrance at the southern end, the boundaries are a low stone wall on the east side and wooden fence to the west (Plate 2).



Plate 3: Western boundary, looking north



Plate 4: Northern boundary, looking west



Plate 5: Eastern boundary, southern end. Looking north

10. COMMENTS

- **10.1** The site is one of a series of regularly laid out and deliberately-planned medieval burgage plots situated to the rear of historic buildings that front onto an early routeway London-Exeter with the southwest. The plots are separated from the houses by Back Lane, itself likely to be an early access link to the burgage plots. Most of the houses along the street frontage have elements dating to the 16th and 17th centuries, but they could conceivably occupy sites where earlier buildings were once present.
- **10.2** Burgage plots often contain evidence for early settlement, agriculture and small-scale industry. This evidence could comprise now infilled internal ditches or stock enclosures, remnants of buildings, or structures or deposits associated with manufacturing. Site A9 occupies a burgage plot two along to the west. On the parish tithe apportionment of 1844 it was named Crocker's Acre, perhaps indicating early ceramics production by utilising the local alluvial clays. There are, however, no previous records of pottery or ceramics manufacture having taken place within Sticklepath.
- **10.3** The site contains no Scheduled Monuments or other statutorily protected heritage resources. There is a number of Listed Buildings within the village, although these are some distance from the site and there is therefore unlikely to be an impact on the setting of these. It does, however, lie within the village Conservation Area, and the design and building materials used for any approved scheme should be of sufficient quality and construction to maintain the character and appearance of this, as well as retaining the historic plan-form and boundaries of the burgage plot.

10.4 The western boundary to the site is hedged and its depiction on early maps means it is considered to be an important hedgerow under criterion 5a of Schedule 1, Part II of the Hedgerow Regulations of 1997, as it is recorded *in a document held at the relevant date at a Record Office as an integral part of a field system pre-dating the Inclosure Act.* The surviving historic boundaries to the site comprise the stone-revetted hedgebank on the west site and the bank to the north. While the south and east walls and hedges represent the line of historic boundaries, the materials currently in place are modern additions. In order to avoid damage to the upstanding historic fabric of the boundaries, access into the site for any development should be from the south side through the existing gates. However, depending on the depth of any groundworks in this area, it is possible that associated internal and external now-infilled ditches might be exposed.

11. CONCLUSIONS

- **11.1** While there are currently no previously recorded archaeological remains within the site, there is clearly some potential for these, based on its position within a historic burgage plot and adjacent field name evidence suggesting early ceramics manufacture nearby. It is possible that evidence for this or some other small-scale manufacturing process might be present on this site.
- **11.2** The historic maps included with this report show the site as largely unchanged since 1844, so the survival of any buried archaeological remains is likely to be good, except where possibly affected by long-term cultivation.

12. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The assessment was commissioned on behalf of West Devon Homes by Lizzie Utley. We are grateful to the staff of Devon Record Office and Westcountry Studies Library for their help and advice and Jane Marchand of Dartmoor National Park Authority kindly provided the recorded archaeological information. The illustrations for this report were prepared by Sarah Cottam.

13. SOURCES CONSULTED

Dartmoor National Park Authority, 2005, *Sticklepath Conservation Appraisal*. DRO Sampford Courtenay tithe map, 1843 and apportionment, 1844. Ordnance Survey Surveyors' Drawing 2-inch sheet 36W, 1806-7. Ordnance Survey 25-inch Devonshire Sheet 77.6, surveyed 1884, published 1886, revised 1904, published 1905, published 1954.

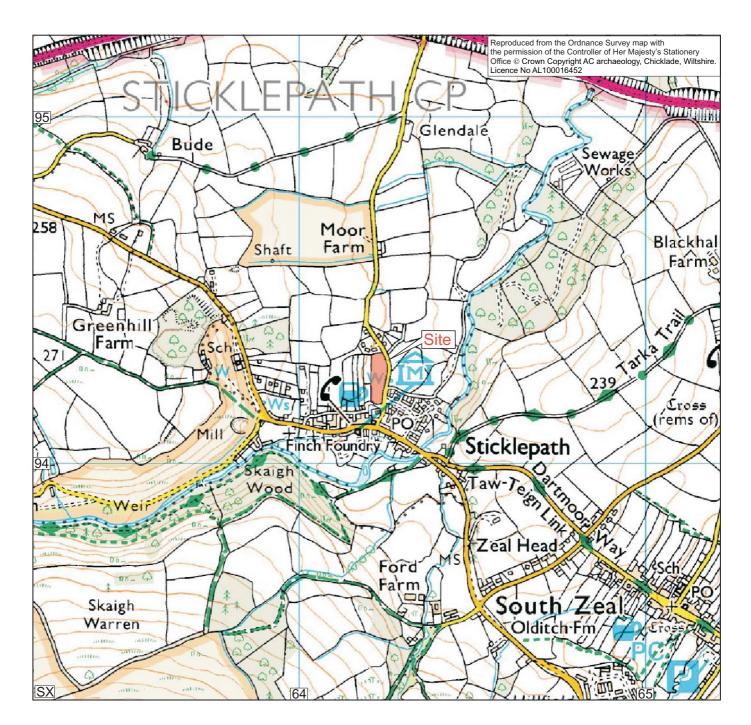


Fig. 1: Site location

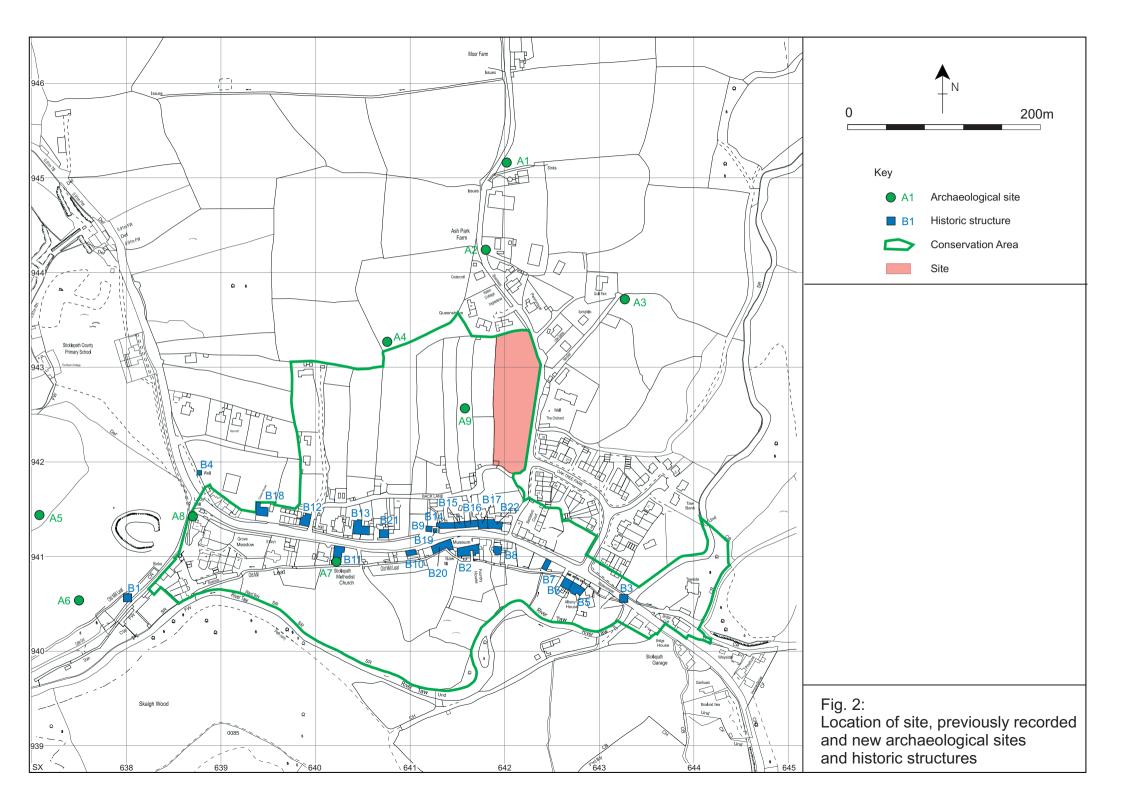




Fig. 3: Extract from the Ordnance Survey 2-inch Surveyor's Drawing, 1806-7



Fig. 4: Sketch derived from the Sampford Courtenay parish tithe map, 1843

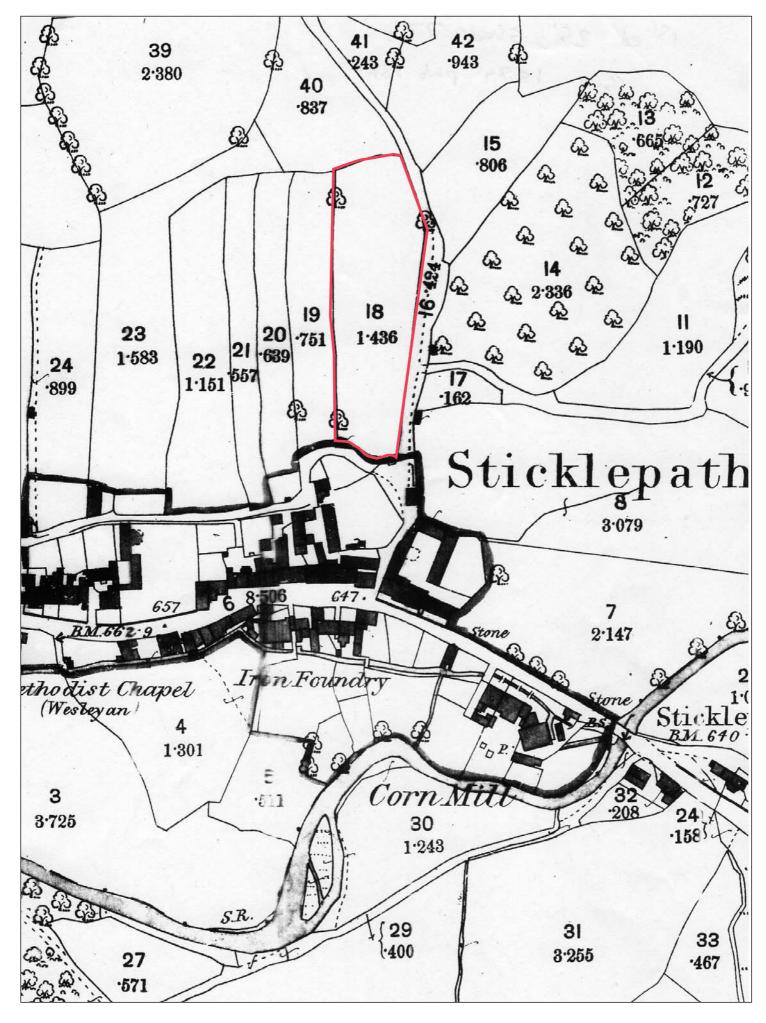


Fig. 5: Extract from the Ordnance Survey first edition 25-inch map, published 1886

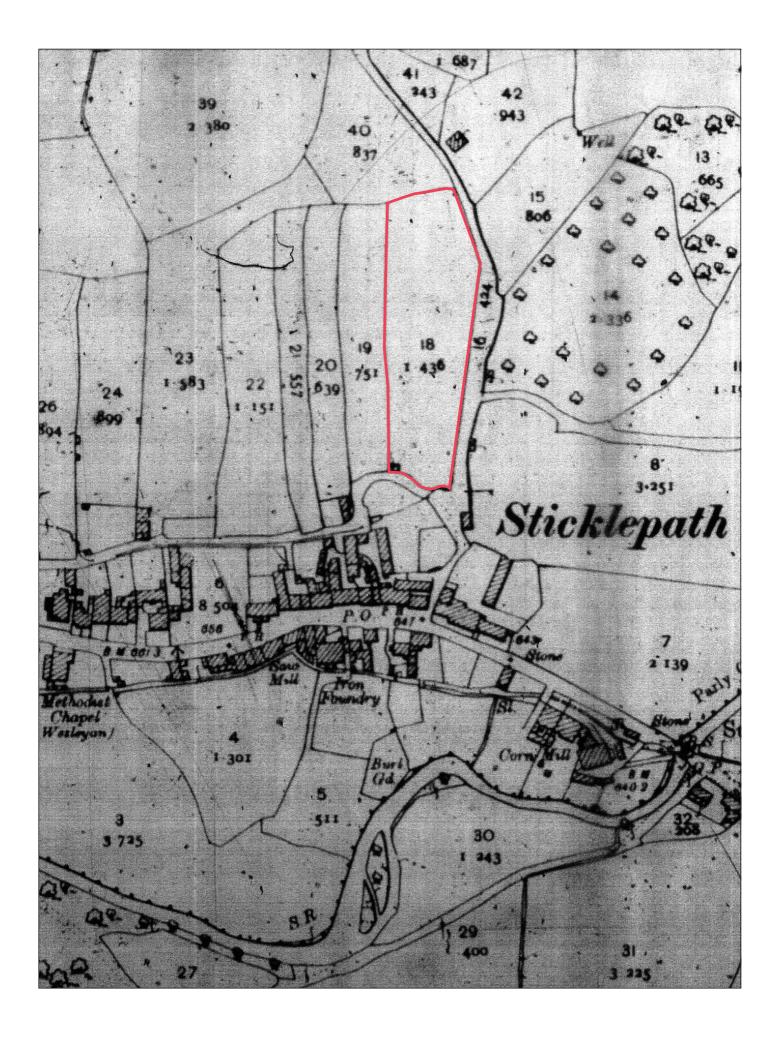


Fig. 6: Extract from the Ordnance Survey second edition 25-inch map, published 1905

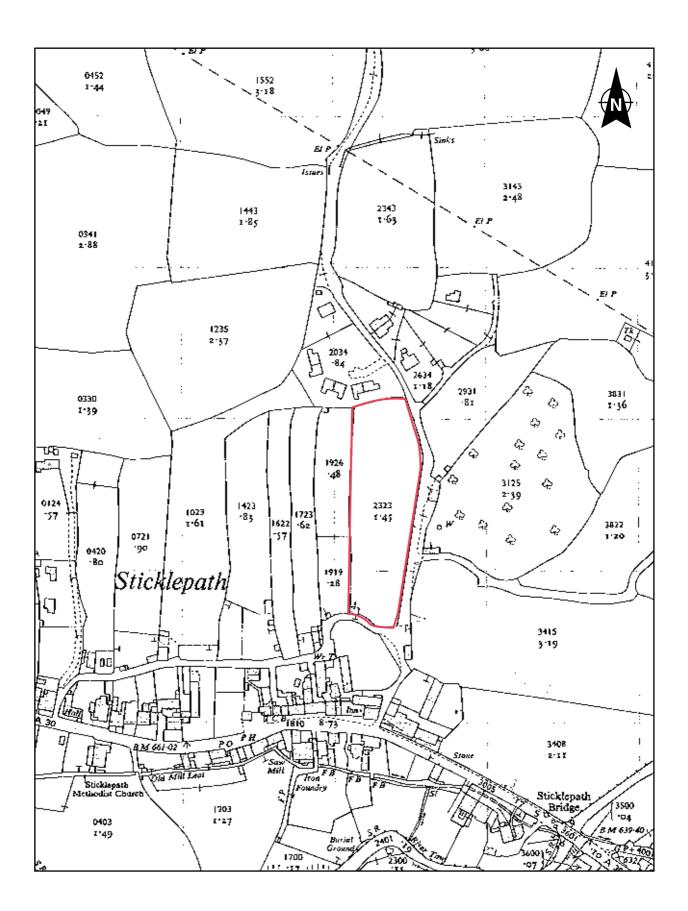


Fig. 7: Extract from the Ordnance Survey 25-inch map, published 1954

APPENDIX 1

APPENDIX 1: CATALOGUE OF PREVIOUSLY RECORDED AND ADDITIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND HISTORIC BUILDINGS/STRUCTURES

Archaeological sites

Site	DNPA HER	Status	NGR	Туре	Date	Description
No.	ref					
A1	59874	-	SX 64229450	Track	Medieval	Trackway from Sticklepath to Langland, both settlements having origins in the medieval period.
A2	59875	-	SX 642-944-	Field name	Post-medieval	Field name 'Ash Park' on 1840s tithe apportionment, may indicate industrial activity in the area.
A3	58847	-	SX 64359435	Cropmark/soilmark	Undated	Possible enclosure visible on1946 aerial photograph
A4	60228	-	SX 641-943-	Findspot	Prehistoric	Small round flint scraper found in Sticklepath
A5	60532	-	SX 637-941-	Earthwork	Undated	Earthwork recorded from 1988 aerial photograph
A6	36983	-	SX 63769403	Watercourse	Post-medieval	Mill leat shown on Ordnance survey maps of 1904 and later
A7	6964	-	SX69—92	Find	Prehistoric	Stone axe found in Surrey, but the source attributed to here
A8	6877	SAM 28756	SX 63899412	Cross	Medieval	Roadside cross made of granite. Likely to be a medieval boundary stone
A9	-	-	SX 64158425	Field name	Possibly medieval	Field name 'Crocker's Acre' on 1844 Sampford Courtenay parish tithe apportionment. Might indicate
						early ceramics manufacture

Historic buildings/structures

Building	DNPA HER	Listed	Grade	NGR	Туре	Date	Description
No.	ref.	building ref.					
B1	6875	-	-	SX 63829403	Mill	Medieval	Former woollen factory then grist mill. Now converted into a modern house.
B2	6931/65146/	93084	*	SX 6418794084	Finch Foundry and	Late 18th century	Originally a woollen factory dating to the late 18th century, later a grist mil and then tool
	65147				Foundry House		factory, saw mill, carpenters and wheelwright's shop. Now a working museum.
B3	13046	-		SX 64359403	Bridge	Medieval	Stone road bridge across River Taw, two arches.
B4	13048	-	-	SX 63899416	Well	19th century	'Lady Well' dating to the 19th century and now under a metal cover.
B5	-	93080		SX 6430094041	Houses	Early 18th century	Taw Leat and cottage to left. Rendered rubble and cob walls, thatched roof.
B6	-	93081		SX 6428994047	House	Early 19th century	Silverlake. Rendered rubble walls, slate roof.
B7	-	93082		SX 6426794068	House	Mid 19th century	Primula House. Stone rubble walls, slate roof.
B8	-	93083	=	SX 6421494081	House	Early 16th century	Post Office, mainly 16th and 17th century with some later alterations. Plastered stone rubble walls and thatch roof.
B9	-	93086		SX 6415194086	Inn	17th century	Devonshire Inn, much altered in the 20th century. Plastered stone rubble walls, thatch roof.
B10	-	93087		SX 6412394079	House	Late 17th century	Chantry's Cottage, rendered rubble walls and thatch roof
B11	-	93088		SX 6404694079	Methodist chapel	19th century	Methodist chapel, built 1816 and enlarged in 1838.
B12	-	93089		SX 6401294112	House	17th century	The Old Cottage, mainly 17th century with later additions. Rendered stone rubble walls and
							thatch roof.
B13	-	93090		SX 6407094104	Houses	Late 18th century	Staplers and The Heritage. Rendered stone rubble wall and thatch roof.
B14	-	93092		SX 6415694108	Houses	Late 17th century	Row of three cottages, stone rubble walls and thatched roofs.
B15	-	93093	11	SX 6417094116	House	c. 1500	Tudor Cottage. Originally built c. 1500, but with 16th/17th century and later alterations.
							Rendered rubble walls and thatch roof.
B16	-	93094	II	SX 6418394113	Houses	Early 16th century	The Dairy and adjoining cottage. Early 16th century with 17th century and later additions.
							Rendered stone rubble walls and thatch roof.
B17	-	93095		SX 6419794110	House	18th century	Sunnyside Cottage. Plastered rubble walls thatch roof.
B18	-	93097		SX 6411094104	House	1835-40	Cleave House. Rendered stone walls and slate roof.
B19	-	93104		SX 6414694102	Telephone kiosk	1935	Type K6 telephone box designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott
B20	-	93085		SX 6416094089	House	17th century	Foundry Cottage. Rendered rubble walls and thatch roof.
B21	-	93091		SX 6409594100	House	Mid 19th century	Sunnyside with attached outbuildings.
B22	-	93096	II	SX 6421394108	Inn	16th century	Taw River Inn, 16th century with 17th century and later additions/alterations. Rendered rubble walls and thatch roof.

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