

LAND OFF THE A361, TIVERTON, DEVON

(Centred on NGR SS 98476 13646)

Scheduled Monument 1019058 Condition Report

Long Barrow Immediately North of Blenheim House, 310m
South West of Putson Cross

Prepared by:
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On behalf of:
Devon County Council

Report No: ACD1579/4/0

Date: July 2018



AC archaeology

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The views and recommendations expressed in this report are those of AC archaeology and are presented in good faith on the basis of professional judgement and on information currently available.

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Summary

Archaeological walkover and topographic surveys were undertaken by AC archaeology during May and June 2018 on and adjacent to a Scheduled Monument, long barrow immediately north of Blenheim House, 310m south west of Putson Cross (NHLE 1019058), a probable funerary monument of Neolithic date.

The walkover and topographic survey has provided a current condition report for the monument. The key findings are that the mound appears to have been significantly further reduced since it was surveyed in 1985 and that the potential upstanding barrow material survives largely only within the rear of the property known as Long Burrow. The barrow ditches will survive as buried features, but no surface indication of these was identified.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** This document sets out the results of archaeological walkover and topographic survey of the Scheduled Monument known as 'Long barrow immediately north of Blenheim House, 310m south west of Putson Cross' (National Heritage List for England no. 1019058) which was undertaken by AC archaeology during May and June 2018. The barrow is situated adjacent to the construction of a new road junction for the A361 dual carriageway at Tiverton, Devon (SS 98476 13646) and the works presented here were undertaken as part of agreed mitigation following consultation with Historic England and the Devon County Council Historic Environment Team following planning consent granted by Mid Devon District Council (ref. 17/00098/FULL).
- 1.2** The long barrow is located on a level spur of ground standing approximately 7m above the valley of the River Lowman at a height of 94m above Ordnance Datum (Fig. 1). The scheduled area containing buried remains of the monument crosses parts of four gardens to the rear of houses on Uplowman Road. The underlying solid geology consists of sandstone of the Tidcombe Sand Member overlain by superficial alluvium deposits of clay, silt and sand (British Geological Survey Online Viewer 2018).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1** Long barrow 1019058, is described by Historic England as:

This monument includes a Neolithic long barrow situated on the southern side of the valley of the River Lowman. The monument survives as an elongated oval mound aligned east-west, which is widest at the eastern end. It measures approximately 92m long, 18m wide at the east tapering to 11m wide at the west and is up to 0.9m high. The flanking quarry ditch is partially visible on the northern side, extends round the eastern end and to the south, and is elsewhere preserved as a buried feature which measures up to 10m wide. Partial excavation has shown that this ditch measures up to 3.2m deep. The long mound and its ditch extends through the gardens and grounds of three separate properties. The land boundaries which cross the monument, together with patios, paths, other garden features, standing buildings, and a septic tank are excluded from the scheduling, although the ground beneath these features is included.

Long barrows were constructed as earthen or drystone mounds with flanking ditches and acted as funerary monuments during the Early and Middle Neolithic periods (3400-2400 BC). They represent the burial places of Britain's early farming communities and, as such, are amongst the oldest field monuments surviving visibly in the present

landscape. Where investigated, long barrows appear to have been used for communal burial, often with only parts of the human remains having been selected for interment. Certain sites provide evidence for several phases of funerary monument preceding the barrow and, consequently, it is probable that long barrows acted as important ritual sites for local communities over a considerable period of time. Some 500 examples of long barrows and long cairns, their counterparts in the uplands, are recorded nationally. As one of the few types of Neolithic structure to survive as earthworks, and due to their comparative rarity, their considerable age and their longevity as a monument type, all long barrows are considered to be nationally important.

Despite reduction in its height through cultivation, partial excavation and disturbance through modern services to houses, the long barrow immediately north of Blenheim House, 310m south west of Putson Cross, will contain archaeological and environmental information relating to the construction and use of the monument and its landscape. It is unusual for this part of Devon, being the only remaining monument of this type known west of West Dorset.

- 2.2** The long barrow has been subject to previous mapping and monitoring as listed in the Devon Historic Environment Record (HER ref. MDV1364, Long Burrow, Tiverton). This monitoring established that it had been subject to ploughing prior to incorporation within gardens. Despite this damage the barrow survived as a distinct earthwork until the mid 1980s when much of it was levelled by bulldozing (Smith 1990).
- 2.3** The fields and former fields (prior to the construction of the A361) adjacent to the barrow have been subject to fieldwalking with a large amount of worked flint and chert collected, which has identified material from a wide range of dates from the Mesolithic through to the Bronze Age (Quinnell *et al.* 2015). Approximately 400m to the northeast of the site is a round barrow of probable Bronze Age date (Scheduled Monument 1017132) which has been subject to topographic and geophysical survey (Rainbird 2018).
- 2.4** As part of the wider application area for the new road junction, a programme of archaeological work associated with planning permission reference 14/01168/MFUL had been undertaken. This included a trial trench evaluation (Caine and Rainbird 2016) and targeted excavations (Rainbird 2017), with this work comprising a series of excavation areas that were positioned to target features recorded during the trial trench evaluation. Of particular note were three adjacent pits containing a Late Neolithic finds assemblage that included worked flint, Grooved Ware pottery and a stone axe (Rainbird and Quinnell forthcoming).
- 2.5** Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken by AC archaeology during October and November 2017 on land adjacent to the long barrow. Monitored works included the removal of a hedgebank and the excavation of 36 postholes for the construction of an acoustic fence (Farnell 2018). This formed a component to a wider new road junction development that had principally exposed a small number of Late Neolithic pits. The work exposed further evidence for Late Neolithic activity (3000–2500 BC), which consisted of a possible pit containing twelve sherds of Grooved Ware pottery.

3. AIM

- 3.1** The aim of the archaeological walkover and topographic survey was to provide an up-to-date record of the long barrow. This will be used to enhance the site record held by the Devon HER and Historic England.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Topographic survey

The topographic earthwork survey of the bowl barrow was undertaken using a Leica Net rover GPS, with 1-2cm accuracy, although some lack of accuracy was experienced due to the presence of a dense canopy of trees on parts of the site. Field data was downloaded for processing into survey software then transferred into a CAD environment for field annotation. All levels relate to height above Ordnance Datum.

4.2 Walkover survey

At the same time as the topographic survey an assessment was made through observation of the current condition of the monument, including a photographic record.

5. RESULTS (Fig. 2)

5.1 Introduction

The results of the topographic and walkover surveys are presented together below. The key findings are that the mound appears to have been significantly further reduced since it was surveyed in 1985 and that the potential upstanding barrow material survives largely only within the rear of the property known as Long Burrow.

5.2 The area which was exposed as a section in 1985 has been further flattened, presumably for the laying of a lawn for the property known as Blenheim House; this would also have required the removal of several mature pine trees which are shown sitting on the long barrow on photographs dated 1985 (Smith 1990). This has removed much of the previously surviving low long barrow by a further 8m to the west of where the section was recorded in 1985 (Plate 1) with potential barrow material surviving only immediately adjacent to the boundary with the neighbouring property Long Burrow (Plates 2 and 3).

5.3 The best potential surviving upstanding part of the barrow is within the rear of the property known as Long Burrow. Here a low garden revetment wall (Plate 4) to the north of the house may contain behind it and below the level lawn area to its north (Plate 5) surviving barrow material as far as the former leat and within the north boundary with the neighbouring property; this is shown in profile 1 (Fig. 2) and measures approximately 20m wide, a little larger than the 18m previously recorded and may indicate that the remaining material has spread further to the north since 1985. The surveyed levels indicate that the surviving deposit of barrow material may be approximately 0.70m high, which further indicates some erosion as it was previously recorded as c. 1m high in 1985 (Smith 1990, 19). To the northwest of Long Burrow house a distinct slope may be the tail of the long barrow (Plate 6) as originally identified by Smith (1990). The deposits forming the possible tail are being damaged by large tree roots (Plate 7).

5.4 The barrow ditches will survive as buried features, but no surface indication of these was identified.

6. COMMENT

6.1 The archaeological walkover and topographic surveys have added to the detailed record for this monument. The combined results show that the upstanding part of the long barrow has been further significantly denuded since the previous survey in 1985. Within the scheduled area only to the rear of the property known as Long Burrow and a

very small area within the garden of Blenheim House has the potential for surviving remains of the barrow structure. In these areas it is evident that there will be much damage caused by tree roots. The expectation that the buried ditches of the monument survive remains unchanged.

7. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

- 7.1 The paper and digital archive is currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd at 4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ, under the unique project code of **ACD1579**. If required, an archive of the unprocessed data may be deposited with the Archaeological Data Service.
- 7.2 An online OASIS entry has been completed, using the unique identifier **306999** which includes a digital copy of this report.

8. REFERENCES

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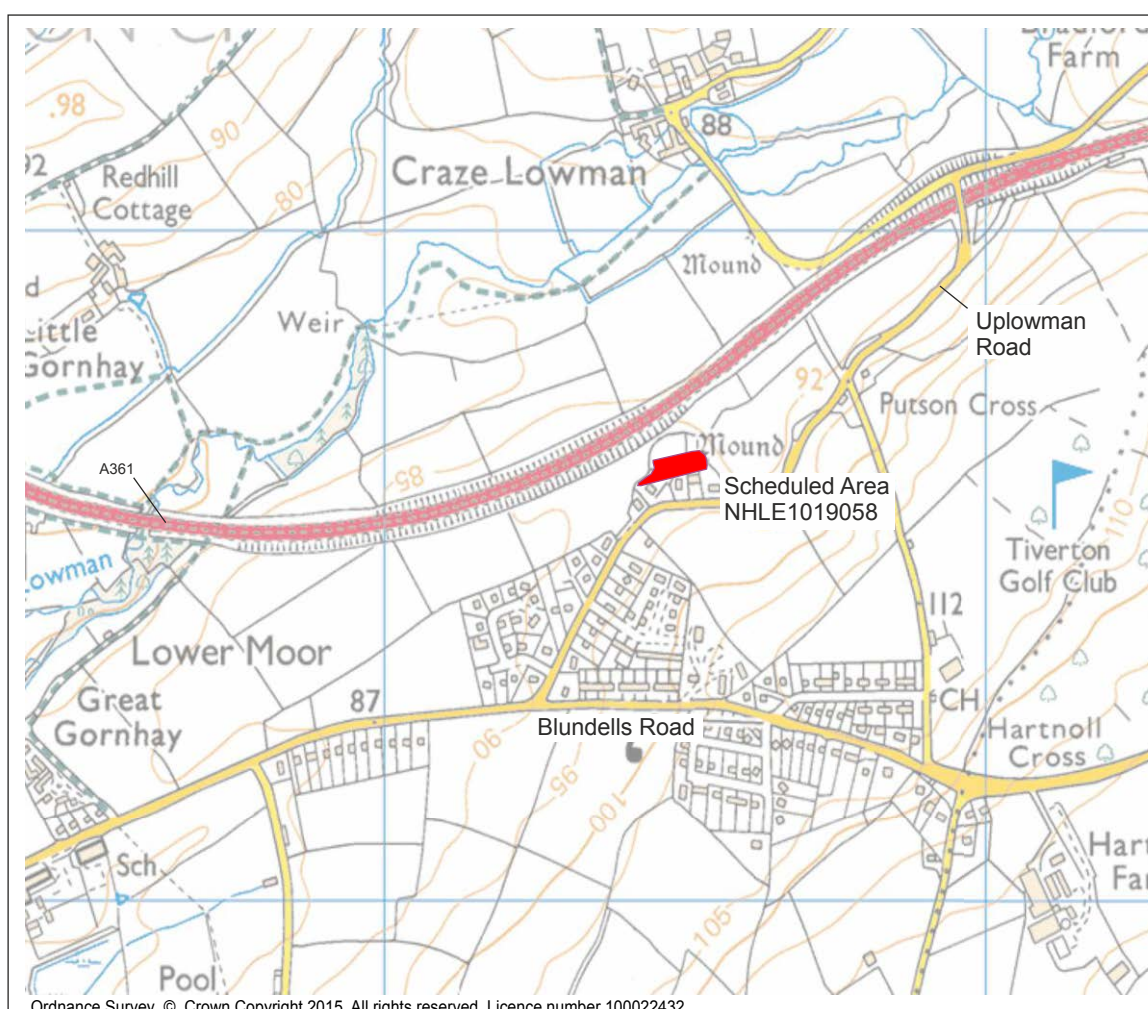
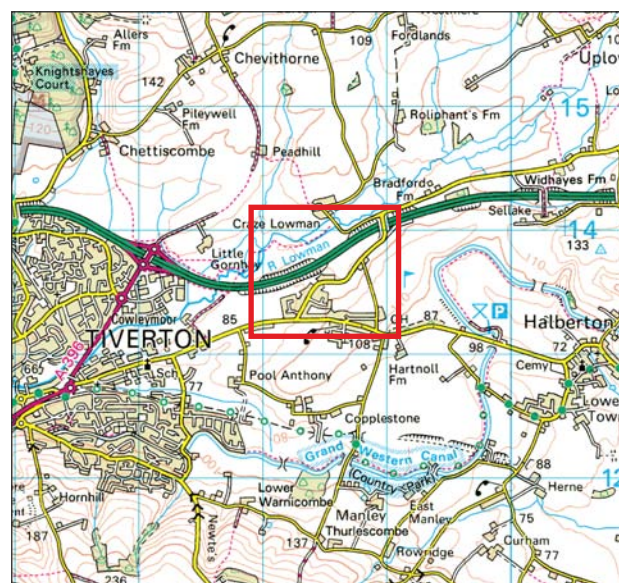
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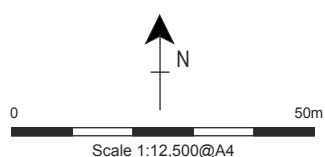
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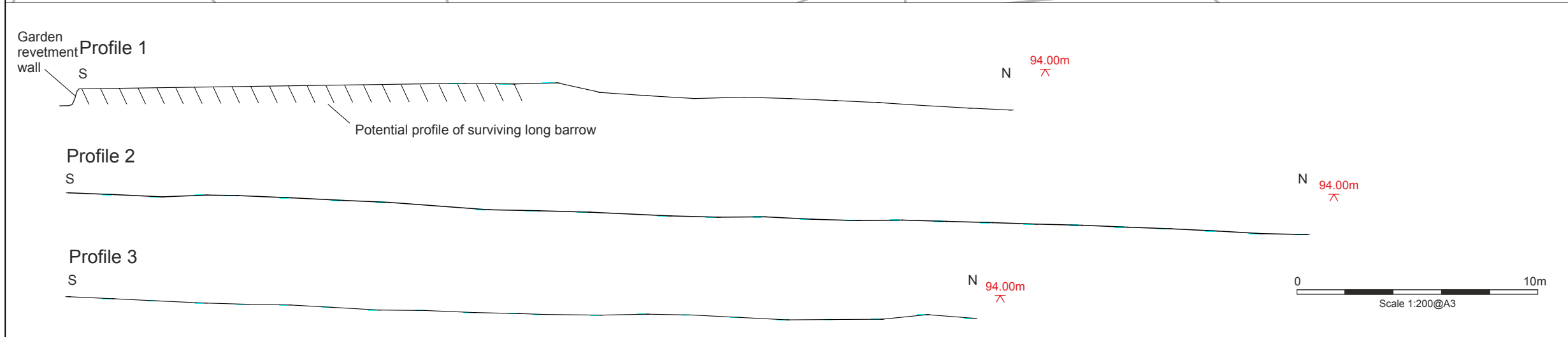


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PROJECT
Land off the A361, Tiverton, Devon

TITLE
Fig. 1: Site location



PROJECT
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TITLE
Fig. 2: Plan showing scheduled long barrow NHLE 1019058, with the results of the topographic survey superimposed on the results of the previous survey and excavation (Smith 1990)

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Plate 1: Area of long barrow NHLE 1019058, in the rear of Blenheim House, looking south to location of extant remains in 1985, which are no longer present



Plate 2: Area of long barrow NHLE 1019058, looking southwest towards the rear boundary of the property known as Long Burrow



Plate 3: Area of long barrow NHLE 1019058, looking northwest showing the rear boundary of the property known as Long Burrow from the adjacent property (Blenheim House). The position of the garden roller indicates the potential for the survival of barrow material immediately adjacent to and within the heavily planted hedge boundary

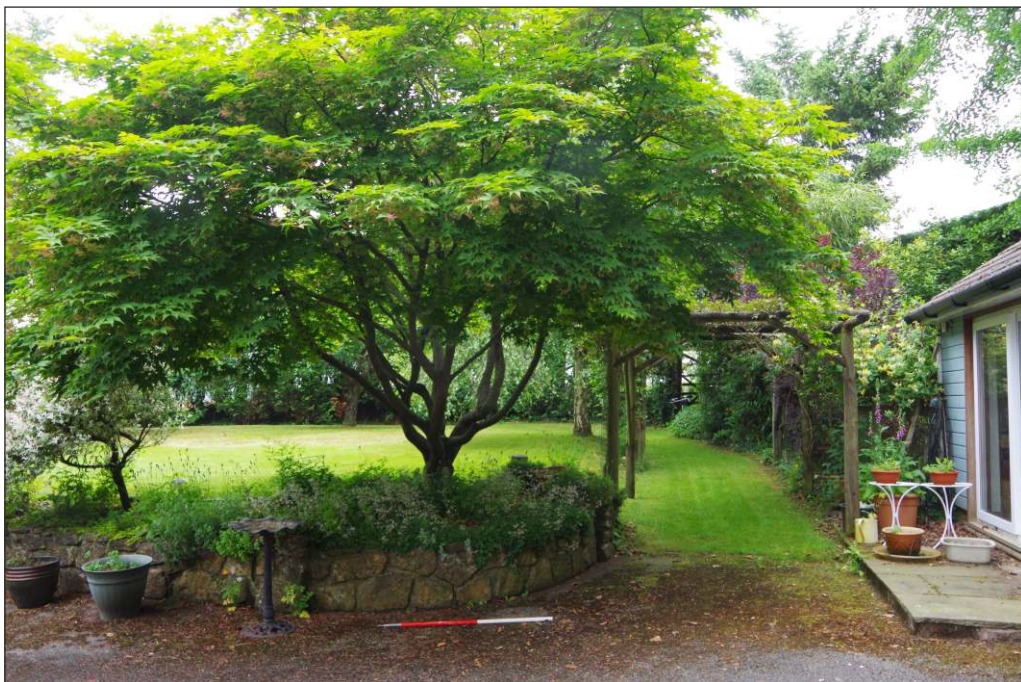


Plate 4: Area of long barrow NHLE 1019058, garden revetment wall within the property known as Long Burrow looking north. Barrow material may survive behind the wall and below the level lawn area to its north (scale 1m)



Plate 5: Area of long barrow NHLE 1019058, level garden behind the revetment wall within the property known as Long Burrow looking east. Barrow material may survive below the lawn (scale 1m)



Plate 6: Area of long barrow NHLE 1019058, sloping lawn within the property known as Long Burrow looking northeast. This may be the tail of the long barrow (scale 1m)



Plate 7: Area of long barrow NHLE 1019058, the possible tail of the long barrow within the property known as Long Burrow looking east, showing tree root damage (scale 1m)

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