



Fisherman's Hut At Cockhead, Bollinhurst Reservoir, Disley, Cheshire

Rapid Desk-Based Assessment



Oxford Archaeology North

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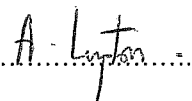
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SUMMARY

United Utilities requested that Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) undertake the desk-based research of a small structure identified as a fisherman's hut, which lies on the north bank of Bollinhurst Impounding Reservoir, Cockhead, near Disley, Cheshire (SJ 9730 8360). The reservoir is situated on the north-east fringes of Lyme Park, a National Trust property, which lies on the Cheshire and Derbyshire border, some 20km south-east of Manchester.

A proposed scheme of improvements to the reservoir, which may yet include the demolition of the fisherman's hut, has already been outlined by United Utilities. However, in light of the building's proximity to Lyme Park, the National Trust recommended that desk-based research be undertaken prior to any decision on the fate of the building being reached.

The research has concluded that the fisherman's hut is of limited value only. Cartographic sources demonstrate that it is not of great antiquity, and was only built during the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. A study of the HER appears to offer little information on the building, nor is it listed, which would strongly suggest that it is not architecturally, socially or historically of great consequence. Moreover, far from being a fisherman's hut, its proximity to the reservoir and to the boundary wall would suggest that it was built at the same time or shortly after the wall and reservoir dam were erected. The building appears to be the housing for the valve shaft of the overflow system, and also probably has functioned at some point as an office for maintenance staff.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) would like to thank United Utilities for commissioning and supporting the project.

Chris Ridings undertook the desk-based research and produced the report. Mark Tidmarsh produced the drawings. Alison Plummer managed the project and also edited the report.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 United Utilities have requested that Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) undertake a rapid desk-based research of a small structure identified as a fisherman's hut, which lies on the north bank of Bollinhurst Impounding Reservoir, Cockhead, near Disley, Cheshire (SJ 9730 8360). The reservoir is situated on the north-east fringes of Lyme Park, a National Trust property, which lies on the Cheshire and Derbyshire border, some 20km south-east of Manchester.
- 1.1.2 A scheme to improve the impounding reservoir has been proposed by United Utilities, which may require the demolition of the fisherman's hut. The research has been undertaken to ascertain its purpose, history and to understand its potential associations with local features or structures, such as the nearby reservoir and farmstead.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

2.1.1 The rapid desk-based research was carried out in accordance with the relevant IFA and English Heritage guidelines (Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1999 *Standard and guidance for archaeological Desk-based Assessments*; English Heritage, 2006a *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE)).

2.2 RAPID DESK-BASED RESEARCH

2.2.1 A study area that extended 0.25km to each side of the proposed pipeline, to form a corridor 0.5km wide, was examined in order to gain an understanding of the historical and archaeological background of the area, and to assess the potential impact of the development on sites of archaeological significance (Fig 2). A general historical and archaeological background of the area was compiled and map regression analysis was undertaken.

2.2.2 Several sources of information were consulted as part of the research, which have provided a brief history and map regression of the study area. Archive sources that were consulted include:

2.2.3 ***Historic Environment Record, Cheshire (HER)***: the HER is a list of all known sites of archaeological interest within Cheshire, and also holds copies of aerial photographs dating from the 1940s through to the present day. The HER is the primary source of information for a study of this kind

2.2.4 ***Oxford Archaeology North***: OA North has an extensive archive of secondary sources relevant to the study area, as well as numerous unpublished client reports on work carried out both as OA North and in its former guise of Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU). These were consulted where necessary.

2.2.5 Several historic cartographic sources were consulted in order to trace the physical development of the study area:

(i) ***Tithe Map 1851***;

(ii) ***Ordnance Survey Cheshire 1881 (First Edition), 1:10,560 series***;

(iii) ***Ordnance Survey Derbyshire 1891, 1:10,560 series***;

(iv) ***Ordnance Survey Cheshire 1899, 1:10,560 series***;

(v) ***Ordnance Survey Derbyshire 1899, 1:10,560 series***;

(vi) ***Ordnance Survey Cheshire 1912, 1:10,560 series***;

(vii) ***Ordnance Survey Derbyshire 1924, 1:10,560 series***;

(viii) ***Ordnance Survey Derbyshire 1938, 1:10,560 series;***

(ix) ***Ordnance Survey Cheshire 1938, 1:10,560 series.***

2.3 ARCHIVE

2.3.1 The results of all archaeological work carried out will form the basis for a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE) 2006a). The original record archive of project will be deposited with Cheshire Record Office.

2.3.2 The Arts and Humanities Data Service (AHDS) online database *Online Access to index of Archaeological Investigations* (OASIS) will be completed as part of the archiving phase of the project.

3. DESK-BASED RESEARCH

3.1 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1.1 The fisherman's hut (SJ 9730 8360) lies at Cockhead on the north bank of Bollinhurst Reservoir, which is itself, located on the north-eastern fringes of Lyme Park on the Cheshire/ Derbyshire border (Fig 1)
- 3.1.2 Immediately to the west of the fisherman's hut is Cockhead farm, whilst less than a kilometre to the north of this farm is the small village of Disley. Approximately 20km to the north-west, is the major conurbation of Manchester.
- 3.1.3 The following outlines the topography and geology of the local area, whilst a map regression traces the development of the buildings in and around the Bollinhurst Reservoir. Moreover, in light of the proximity of Lyme Park, Cockhead Farm and the reservoir itself, a brief history and development of all three will be presented, in order to demonstrate any associations, if any, with the hut itself.

3.2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 3.2.1 Lyme Park rises in a southerly and easterly direction and is drained by a number of streams, which in the south of the park, have deep cut valleys or cloughs. The geology of the area consists of sandstones with coal measures and Carboniferous millstone grit. In lower areas of the park in particular, the solid geology is overlain by boulder clay and fluvio-glacial Pleistocene gravels (Countryside Commission 1998).
- 3.2.2 The coal measures and the streams ensured that the surrounding area was developed for industry, in particular coal mining and water and steam-powered textile production. Agriculturally the area seems to have been marginal and from the earlier medieval period seems to have been given over to woodland pasture, with areas of relatively dense tree cover existing until at least the later medieval period. This woodland pasture was primarily exploited for hunting and for common grazing (LUAU 1997; OA North 2006).

3.3 LYME PARK

- 3.3.1 Lyme Park estate and park is dominated by the Grade I listed (IoE 406869; HER 1633/1) building, Lyme Hall, an Elizabethan manor house, built in buff sandstone and Welsh slate, and dating to c1570. Its designer remains unidentified, as does the exact position of its preceding medieval hall, but the present building is known to have undergone successive phases of development during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These have transformed the original L-shaped Elizabethan plan into the familiar Italianate palazzo design of the current house (LUAU 1997; OA North 2006).

- 3.3.2 Lyme was granted to the first Piers Legh and his wife Margaret by Richard II in 1398, in recognition of his loyal service. Following the acquisition of the estate, a house was built c.1400, but this appears to have been little more than a hunting lodge. The present structure was not built until Sir Piers Legh VII had inherited the estate, and it was only then that it was made the family's main residence and consequently
- 3.3.3 During the 1720s, Giacomo Leoni, the Venetian architect and the Platt family of masons, transformed the Tudor hall to resemble an Italianate palazzo, whilst the nineteenth century saw an extensive programme of restoration and alterations under the supervision of the architect, Lewis Wyatt. It was during the mid-nineteenth century that the present garden was established. By the twentieth century the upkeep and maintenance of Lyme had become problematic for the family and subsequently, in 1942, the third Baron Newton (Richard William Davenport Legh) gave Lyme Hall and its surrounding grounds to the National Trust, thus ensuring its future.
- 3.3.4 The Grade II* parkland includes a 6.8-hectare (17 acre) Victorian garden featuring a sunken parterre, an Edwardian rose garden, lake and ravine garden. This garden is enclosed by a medieval deer park with herds of red and fallow deer that cover nearly 566 hectares (1400 acres) of parkland, moorland and woodland. In addition, there is an eighteenth century hunting tower called 'The Cage' 1km to the north of the Hall.

3.4 MAP REGRESSION

- 3.4.1 ***Tithe Map 1851***: the map (Fig 2) depicts Cockhead Farm clearly, although it is not annotated as such. An L-shaped structure lies to the north of the farmstead, with a pair of rectangular buildings to the south. The apportionment records that the occupier of the farm was a John Barlow, and that the property was part of the Lyme Park Estate, which was under the ownership of Thomas Legh. To the south of the farmstead, there is the narrow watercourse, Bollinhurst Brook, which had yet to be significantly widened into the present-day Horse Coppice Reservoir. To the south-east of the farmstead, there is Bollinhurst Wood, whilst to the west, there is a series of substantial fields, which the apportionment records as pasture land. This area would eventually become the site of the present day Bollinhurst Reservoir.
- 3.4.2 ***Ordnance Survey Mapping Cheshire 1881 (First Edition); Derbyshire 1891***: although the Bollinhurst Reservoir had been constructed by this time (Section 3.6), neither of these maps depict its presence. The area to the north of Bollinhurst Wood appears to be open ground, which is marked as *Bollinhurst*. However, the farm at Cockhead is clearly annotated, whilst the main body of water to the west of the farm (Horse Coppice Reservoir) is referred to as the *Stockport Reservoir*.
- 3.4.3 ***Ordnance Survey Mapping Cheshire 1899; Derbyshire 1899***: the new reservoir appears on both of these later editions, although the water is simply annotated as *Reservoir (Stockport District W.W)*. The new 'zoned earth' dam is represented as a substantial earthwork aligned north/ south with an overflow

marked at its north extent. Cockhead farm is again present and the body of water to the west is still referred to as *Stockport Reservoir*. However, there is still no evidence of the fisherman's hut.

- 3.4.4 ***Ordnance Survey Mapping Cheshire 1912***: the map (Fig 4) shows little difference to the previous version, although there now appears to be a small structure to the north of the dam, which would be consistent with the positioning of the present fisherman's structure. This appears to either abut or have been incorporated into the boundary wall built by the water authority (Stockport District W.W.)
- 3.4.5 ***Ordnance Survey Mapping Derbyshire 1924, 1938; Cheshire 1938***: there is little change from the previous mapping, in any of these later additions. The fisherman's hut is again represented by a small structure at the north end of the dam.

3.5 THE FISHERMAN'S HUT

- 3.5.1 The fisherman's hut is a single-storey shed, which is constructed from coursed, rock-faced sandstone, with a flat roof of bitumen and sandstone flags (Plates 1 and 2). It is broadly aligned east/west along its main axis with access provided by a pair of doors at either end of the south elevation. These have well-cut lintels, as do the pairs of partially-boarded ventilator casements on the south and west elevations. The close proximity of the dam's overflow system to the shed (Plates 3-5), would suggest that the building is likely to house the mechanism for a valve shaft and probably serves also as a general maintenance shed.

3.6 BOLLINHURST RESERVOIR

- 3.6.1 Bollinhurst Impounded Reservoir features a 'zoned earth' dam that dates to the late nineteenth century (c.1872), and which was designed by the engineer George Henry Hill (1827-1919), under the terms of the Stockport District Waterworks Act 1863. It measures 245m long, 17m high and 4.6m high, and its innovative design meant that its valve shaft was located in the reservoir behind it. It is constructed from concrete, clay and stone, and a parapet has been erected along the crest of the dam

3.7 DISCUSSION

- 3.7.1 There is little doubt that the fisherman's hut is of late nineteenth or early twentieth century provenance, and there is a dearth of evidence to suggest that an earlier structure could have been present. Cartographic sources clearly demonstrate that the structure was not built until the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, and its proximity to, or probable abutment of the reservoir boundary wall would suggest that it must have been constructed at a similar date. Certainly, it would be nigh impossible for a small structure such as this to have survived the significant earthworks that were obviously undertaken, in order to create the large-scale 'zoned earth' dam of Bollinhurst Reservoir.

- 3.7.2 Cartographic sources appear to confirm that the hut was built at a similar time to the dam itself, and its proximity would suggest that it is related to the overflow system of the dam. It may also function or have functioned as an office for maintenance staff.

3.8 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.8.1 In light of the apparent modernity, the building should be viewed as having limited archaeological and historical significance. However, it is recommended that the building should receive a cursory inspection of English Heritage (2006b) Level I standard, prior to any works undertaken by United Utilities.

4. BIBLIOGRAPHY

4.1 PRIMARY SOURCES

Tithe Map 1851

Ordnance Survey Cheshire 1881, 1:10,560 series

Ordnance Survey Derbyshire 1891, 1:10,560 series

Ordnance Survey Cheshire 1899, 1:10,560 series

Ordnance Survey Derbyshire 1899, 1:10,560 series

Ordnance Survey Cheshire 1912, 1:10,560 series

Ordnance Survey Derbyshire 1924, 1:10,560 series

Ordnance Survey Derbyshire 1938, 1:10,560 series

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4.2 SECONDARY SOURCES

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5. ILLUSTRATIONS

5.1 LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Site Location

Figure 2: Site location superimposed upon extract from the Tithe map, 1851

Figure 3: Site location superimposed upon extract from Ordnance Survey map, 1881

Figure 4: Site location superimposed upon extract from Ordnance Survey map, 1912

5.2 PLATES

Plate 1: The south elevation of the fisherman's hut

Plate 2: The west elevation of the fisherman's hut

Plate 3: The fisherman's hut in relation to the overflow system of the dam for Bollinhurst reservoir

Plate 4: The 'zoned earth' dam of Bollinhurst reservoir, facing north-west. The fisherman's hut lies to the centre of the plate, but the dam's parapet obscures the majority of the structure.

Plate 5: North-facing view of the fisherman's hut from behind the parapet wall of the dam

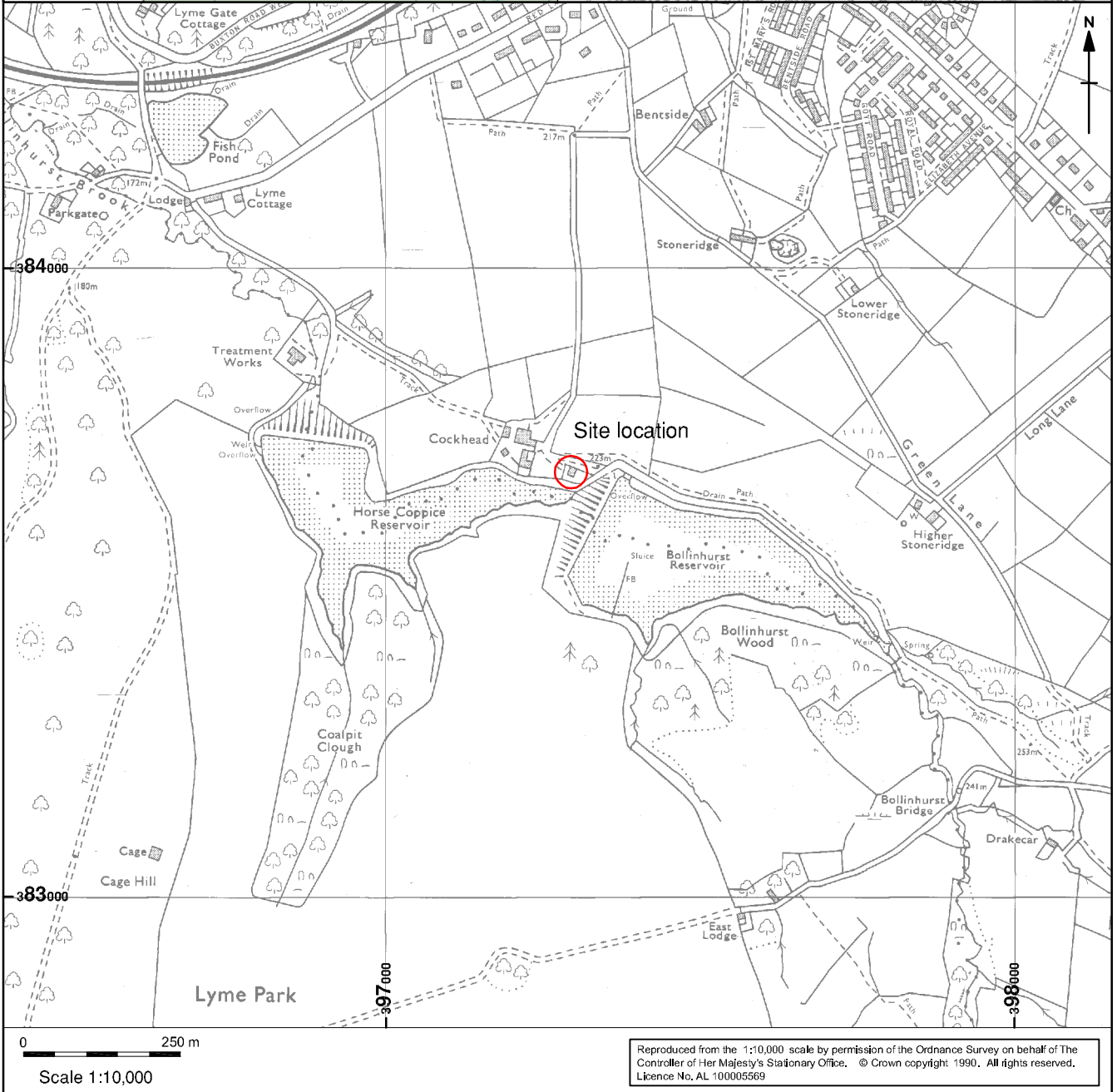


Figure 1: Site Location



Figure 2: Site location superimposed upon extract from the Tithe map, 1851

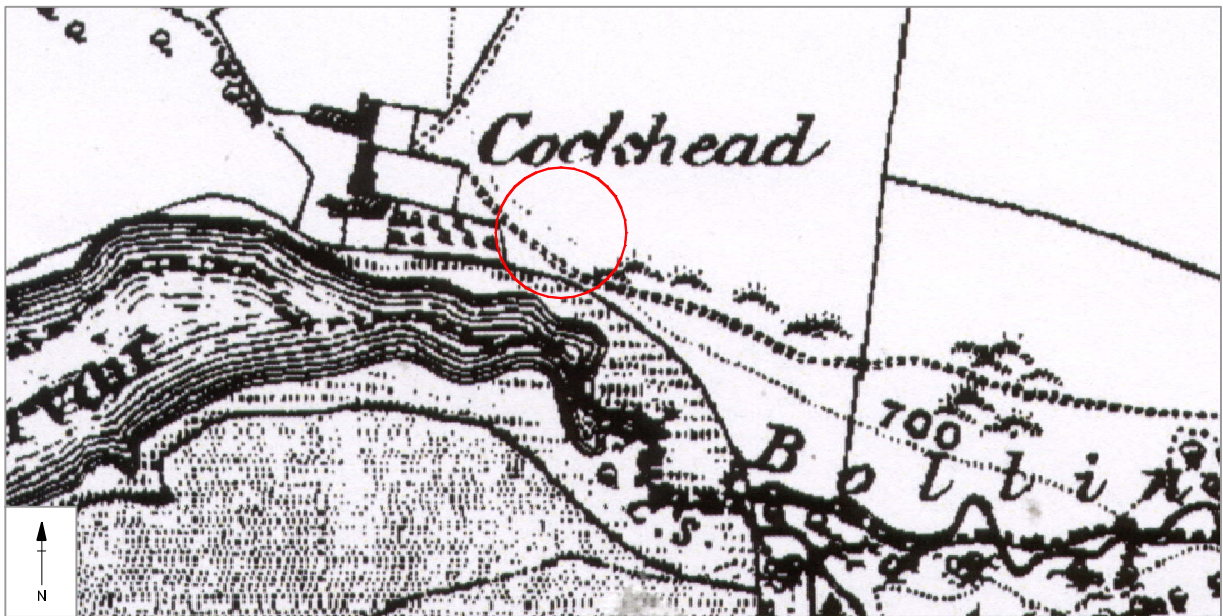


Figure 3: Site location superimposed upon extract from Ordnance Survey map, 1881

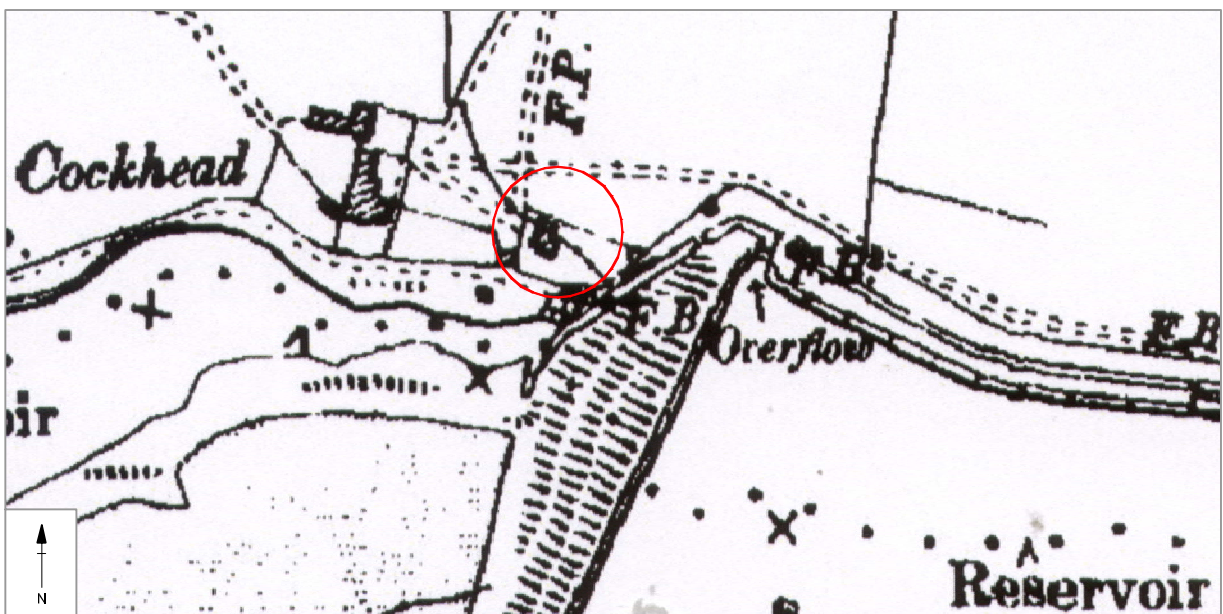


Figure 4: Site location superimposed upon extract from Ordnance Survey map, 1912



Plate 1: The south elevation of the fisherman's hut



Plate 2: The west elevation of the fisherman's hut



Plate 3: The fisherman's hut in relation to the overflow system of the dam for Bollinhurst reservoir



Plate 4: The 'zoned earth' dam of Bollinhurst reservoir, facing north-west. The fisherman's hut lies to the centre of the plate, but the dam's parapet obscures the majority of the structure.



Plate 5: North-facing view of the fisherman's hut from behind the parapet wall of the dam