

Tesco Stores Limited

London Road Daventry Archaeological Appraisal



Western Rampart of Burnt Walls 1923

Oxford Archaeological Unit
September 1993

Tesco Stores PLC

London Road Daventry

Archaeological Appraisal

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A Registered Charity

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London Road Daventry: An Archaeological Appraisal

1. Introduction

The Oxford Archaeological Unit has been commissioned by Tesco Stores PLC to undertake a desktop survey of the land currently being considered as the site for the new Tesco Stores Development at Daventry, Northants. The brief for this survey was to assess the likely impact of the proposed new development upon the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Burnt Walls, and to assess the likely archaeological implications of the development. Archaeological sites in the vicinity are listed in Appendix 1 and are mapped in Figure 1. The sources consulted, both published and unpublished, are listed in Appendix 2. English Heritage were consulted about their general attitude to (an unspecified) development in the general vicinity of the Scheduled Ancient Monument but, as it is understood that this is primarily a internal discussion document there has been no specific consultation with either English Heritage or the County Archaeologist about the detailed development proposals. Such consultation is likely to be required if any specific proposals are made for development. The site was visited in order to view the development area and assess the state of preservation of the Scheduled Ancient Monument.

2. Geology and Topography

- 2.1 The area of the proposed development lies on a low ridge of Upper Lias Clay adjacent to the A45 in the ancient parish of Daventry close to the south-east outskirts of the modern town. It is overlooked by higher ground to the north and south and overlooks slightly lower ground to the east.

3. Archaeological Background

- 3.1 The area of the proposed development lies close to the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Burnt Walls (SAM 39) in an area of intensive Prehistoric, Roman and Medieval settlement. Much of this activity is centred around the Iron Age hill fort at Borough Hill rather than near Burnt Walls, but may be illustrative of the archaeological potential of the area. Borough Hill (itself a Scheduled Ancient Monument until recently) lies 700 m to the north and east of the proposed development. A combination of archaeological excavations in the 19th and early 20th centuries and subsequent stray finds have produced evidence of fairly continuous settlement from the prehistoric to early Saxon periods. Chance prehistoric finds include Palaeolithic and Neolithic flint implements and Bronze Age metalwork, and it is possible that the hill was fortified in the Bronze Age. The hill was fortified twice in the later Prehistoric period with the large but slightly defended contour fort (of which

OAU map no. 7, represents the southernmost defence) being succeeded by a massively protected but much smaller fort at the north end of the hill.

- 3.2 Although the majority of Roman settlement lies in the north of the parish, continued Roman settlement of the hillfort itself is evidenced by the remains of a villa (dating from the 2nd to 4th centuries) and a number of Roman burial mounds. Two or perhaps three Saxon burials are recorded from the hill although in the late Saxon and Medieval periods the hill appears to have been deserted and used as pasture by the inhabitants of the town of Daventry.
- 3.3 To the south of the A45 lie the earthwork remains of a moated manorial site (OAU 2), known locally as John of Gaunt's Castle. This is more likely to have been a moated hunting lodge, associated with the medieval deer park which lay immediately to the south (OAU 5). Most of the site was destroyed by 19th-century brick pits, and has now been extensively developed leaving only the south side of the moat and some unidentified earthworks (OAU 4) extant.
- 3.4 Immediately to the east of the development site lies the undated earthwork enclosure of Burnt Walls (OAU 1). This small triangular enclosure is situated on a low ridge of Jurassic Clay at the confluence of two small streams, and is overlooked by higher ground on all sides except the east. The defences seem to have originally combined a deep ditch with two flanking ramparts on the western side, with banks on the two sides next the streams; they have been extensively mutilated by ploughing and quarrying. The southern half of the monument has been largely quarried away, while the northern half shows marks of medieval ridge and furrow (i.e. the remnants of arable agriculture). Although there are now three gaps in the ramparts, it is probable that the original entrance lay on the western side of the monument at the point marked by the causeway across the ditch.
- 3.5 The site has never been satisfactorily classified or dated. An 18th-century writer speaks of 'many loades of stones of ruined Walls and foundations [being] digg'd up' (Morton 1712), and the extensive post-medieval quarrying of the site has destroyed much of the interior evidence. Trenches were cut through some of the surviving depressions in the interior in 1899 but nothing was found. Various explanations for its origin have been offered, ranging from Iron Age promontory fort to medieval defended enclosure, but none has been conclusively proved: a 1255 charter reference to 'cultivated land at *Brendewalles*' (Gover et al 1933, 19) seems to suggest that the site existed but had been abandoned by this time, a view further reinforced by the surviving evidence of medieval ridge and furrow in the interior of the monument.
- 3.6 The site was visited and the monument inspected on 4th August 1993. Despite the proximity of the modern development to the west the monument

is fairly well shielded from modern interference by the slightly higher ground to the west and by an area of trees and brambles which shields the remains from the road. To the east and south the land is undeveloped pasture. There is at present no public access to the monument, which is currently in use as pasture for cattle and horses, although it was noted that the land is for sale. Although there has obviously been considerable post-medieval damage to the monument, the remains still extant are fairly well preserved and there does not appear to have been significant deterioration since the 1981 survey by the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments (Fig. 3). The earthworks are fairly insubstantial on the eastern and northern sides but have been badly damaged by quarrying on the southern side. However the western defences, consisting of a deep ditch with flanking ramparts, are well preserved, and not unimpressive.

- 3.7 The monument is invisible from the road, and access to the fields on the southern and eastern sides of the monument is difficult. The best view is obtained from the western side where the land is slightly elevated: the playing fields at this point slope slightly from north to south so the best view of the earthworks is obtained from the north eastern corner which directly overlooks the line of the bank and rampart on the western side of the monument.

4 Archaeology of the Study Area

- 4.1 The Northamptonshire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) shows no recorded archaeological sites or finds within the area of the proposed development. The site was inspected during the field visit but the waist high grass precluded any proper assessment of the land or identification of earthworks. Much of the land to the north and west of the development site has been developed but since it appears that there was no prior archaeological assessment or excavation during building, it is impossible to demonstrate the presence or absence of archaeological deposits in the immediate environs. However, the proximity of the proposed development area to Burnt Walls SAM and the multi-period nature of the archaeology of the surrounding area increases the likelihood that archaeological deposits of unknown date and quantity would be encountered. In particular it should be noted that the original entrance to Burnt Walls appears to have been on its western side at the point marked by the causeway across the ditch, and it is therefore likely that some structures associated with this entranceway could be encountered. There is therefore some possibility that the construction of the retail foodstore, sited in the area to the west of the gateway, may encounter significant deposits associated with this entrance or the environs of the monument.

5. Impact upon the archaeology and setting of Burnt Walls

- 5.1 There is some ambiguity about the exact area of the Scheduled Monument, as it was initially Scheduled in 1927 and has not been reviewed since.¹ However, it appears from the unverified maps supplied by English Heritage that the Scheduled area does not extend outside the line of the outer earthworks or the modern fenceline and therefore this development would not physically infringe upon the Scheduled area as it currently stands. It is understood that there are no immediate plans to extend the Scheduling; however, it is not impossible that the effect of a planning application in respect of this land might lead English Heritage to re-assess their scheduling, and extend the boundaries of the monument to include part of the development site. In this eventuality the development would be subject to Scheduled Monument Consent. Of particular importance in this context is the possibility of structures associated with the original entrance to the monument (see above 3.4).
- 5.2 It should also be stressed that the proximity of the development may have an adverse effect upon the setting of the monument, even if it has no direct impact on archaeological deposits. The effect of the proposed development on the SAM should therefore be considered in the light of each of three categories:-

5.2.1 *Views to and from the monument*

The monument is surrounded by a combination of thick vegetation and trees on three sides which limit the view from the interior of the monument on all but the west side. The proximity of the development, and the proposal to site the retail foodstore at the eastern end of the development area, only 22 m from the edge of the western ramparts, is therefore likely to affect adversely the view from the interior of the monument. Although the area designated for this building is currently hidden from the monument by a belt of fairly mature trees it is unclear from the map supplied if this hedgeline is to be incorporated into the development. Even if it were to remain extant in the initial phase of the development any subsequent decline or removal would exacerbate the intrusive impact of the foodstore building and therefore its softening effect must be disregarded; moreover the effect would be diminished in winter.

In addition, the proposals indicate that much of the SAM boundary would be adjacent to a service yard which would introduce intrusive activities to the view from the earthworks. Furthermore, as the proposed development area is on slightly higher ground than Burnt Walls it effectively screens the monument from much of the modern development which has encroached upon

¹ English Heritage have been unable to provide a verified map of the currently Scheduled area, though inasmuch as SAM mapping has any validity, the plans provided are indicative of the extent of the SAM.

its western side. The current development proposals are likely to remove this protection and to introduce intrusive buildings and elements. The view from the interior of the monument is therefore likely to be adversely affected by any development of this land at close proximity.

The view of the monument is also likely to be adversely affected for the same reasons. The current condition of the vegetation round the SAM, mostly fairly mature trees and brambles, means that the best, and indeed virtually the only view of the monument is obtained from the land currently under review for development. This view is of greater significance since the most impressive part of the monument is the western ditch and rampart, and it is this part of the earthwork that is overlooked by the development area. The view of the monument from the east and south is from lower lying land, so even if the thick shrubbery on the other three sides of the SAM were removed to open up other views, this would not mitigate the loss or impairment of the view of the western side.

5.2.2 *Setting*

The original setting of the monument has already been affected by the development of the surrounding area further to the west but, as has been noted, this impact has been softened by the barrier formed by the undeveloped land currently under consideration. The removal of this protection would adversely affect this impression that the monument was still partially in its original rural setting. It is also possible that the proposed development would destroy buried features or deposits associated with the earthworks and so further damage the context of the monument.

5.2.3 *Amenity Value*

The amenity value of the monument is currently fairly low. Public access to the monument is very limited as the land is currently in use as grazing for cattle and horses and access is only possible via a short trackway and over a padlocked five bar gate. The monument is invisible from the road. A layby adjacent to the southern side of the monument allows limited car parking, but without trespass the only view of the earthworks is a partial view of the south western side of the western ramparts obtained from the five bar gate. The view of the monument from the higher ground of Borough Hill to the north was not inspected. The relative inaccessibility of the monument considerably detracts from its current amenity value. However, there is some potential for improving its amenity if carefully planned development improved access and visibility for the public even from the outside.

5.3 The current development proposals can therefore be seen adversely to affect the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument in two of the three categories

considered. In particular it is considered that the siting of the retail foodstore and service area at the eastern end of the development close to the monument is likely seriously to damage the setting and potential amenity value of the Scheduled earthworks.

6. Possible Mitigation

It may however be possible to soften this impact by altering the nature of the development proposals in order to increase public access to the monument and decrease the negative effect of the development. One possible mitigation strategy would involve:

i) Re-siting of the retail foodstore building away from the edge of the monument. One possible alternative would be to relocate this building to the site currently marked 'Surplus store development area' on the other side of the bus lay-by.

ii) Re-siting of the public car park to the east edge of the development site. This would act as a positive mitigation by allowing public access to the view of the western ramparts and ditch of the monument. In addition it may be possible to construct a public access viewing point in the north eastern corner of the car park which would facilitate public access to this view of the earthworks.

iii) Raising of the land at the eastern edge of the development area and landscaping the (newly proposed) public car parking. The eastern edge of the proposed development area slopes upwards from south to north and it may be possible to level this area by raising the land level at the south. This would enhance the view of the monument from the eastern end of the car park. If this area was landscaped with trees or similar vegetation this would have the dual effect of maintaining both the screening of the Scheduled area from the modern development and of preserving the current green belt on all four sides of the SAM. It is also possible that any non-intrusive method of raising the land level would prevent the destruction of any archaeological deposits. However it is likely that any landscaping work undertaken in the immediate vicinity of the SAM would require Scheduled Monument Consent from English Heritage.

7. Conclusions.

There are no recorded archaeological sites within the immediate area of the proposed development but the general level of archaeology in the surrounding area suggests that the possibility of archaeological deposits of unknown date

and quantity cannot be ruled out. Such sites would only be located by a programme of archaeological evaluation and it may be expected that such a programme will be required by the County Archaeologist before any planning application is considered. Although the development does not infringe upon the generally accepted Scheduled area it should be noted that English Heritage have not produced a verified version of the Scheduling Map and it is possible that this generally accepted area may change if the Scheduling is reviewed.

The effect of the development upon the setting of Burnt Walls is likely to be a major consideration in any Planning Application. The current development proposals can be seen severely to affect the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument both by introducing intrusive buildings and activities and by removing the undeveloped barrier between monument and the majority of the modern development. However any mitigation strategy that maintained this barrier and improved public access to the view of the monument from the east is likely to reduce the perceived damage to the setting of the monument.

Oxford Archaeological Unit
September 1993

Appendix 1: Gazetteer of Cultural Heritage Features

OAU no	SMR no	Description
1	632	Undated Earthwork. Burnt Walls earthwork enclosure. Scheduled Ancient Monument NN 39
2	634	(Remains of) Medieval Moated Site. Section of Moat is all that remains of 'John of Gaunts Castle', a probable medieval Hunting Lodge mostly destroyed by 19th and 20th century brickpits and modern development.
3	1294	(Find spot of) Romano-British Coins. 'Several Roman Coins' found in 1874.
4	642 634/1/3 1260/0/1	(Earthwork remains of) small D-shaped enclosure to south of John of Gaunts Castle and probably associated with it. 19th century reports of prehistoric barrow probably refer to this site.
5		Boundaries of Newham Wood as marked on 1803 enclosure map. Probably marks outer boundaries of Medieval Deer park associated with John of Gaunts Castle.
6	633	(Earthwork). Earthwork of small defended enclosure bounded by single trench and internal bank. Entrances on east and west sides. Approx. 40 m x 47 m, barely discernible now.
7	631/3/1	(Earthwork remains of) defences of Iron Age contour fort.
8	631/0/8	(Find spot of) Romano-British Coins.
9	631/0/1 631/0/7 631/0/11	(Find spot(s) of Neolithic Stone axes and Bronze Age Bronze axe.
10	631/4/1	(Site of) Undated Barrow. Prominent in 1823, no trace now remains.
11	631/0/18	(Site of) Post-medieval features and large pit containing Iron Age sherds discovered during cable laying in 1990

Appendix 2: Bibliography

Archive sources Consulted

Northamptonshire Sites and Monuments Record.

Historic maps held by the Bodleian Library, Oxford and Northamptonshire Record Office.

Photo-copies of Air Photographs held by the Cambridge University Committee for Aerial Photography.

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Cartographic Sources

1775 Map of Westchester Turnpike Road.

1803 Enclosure map of Daventry.

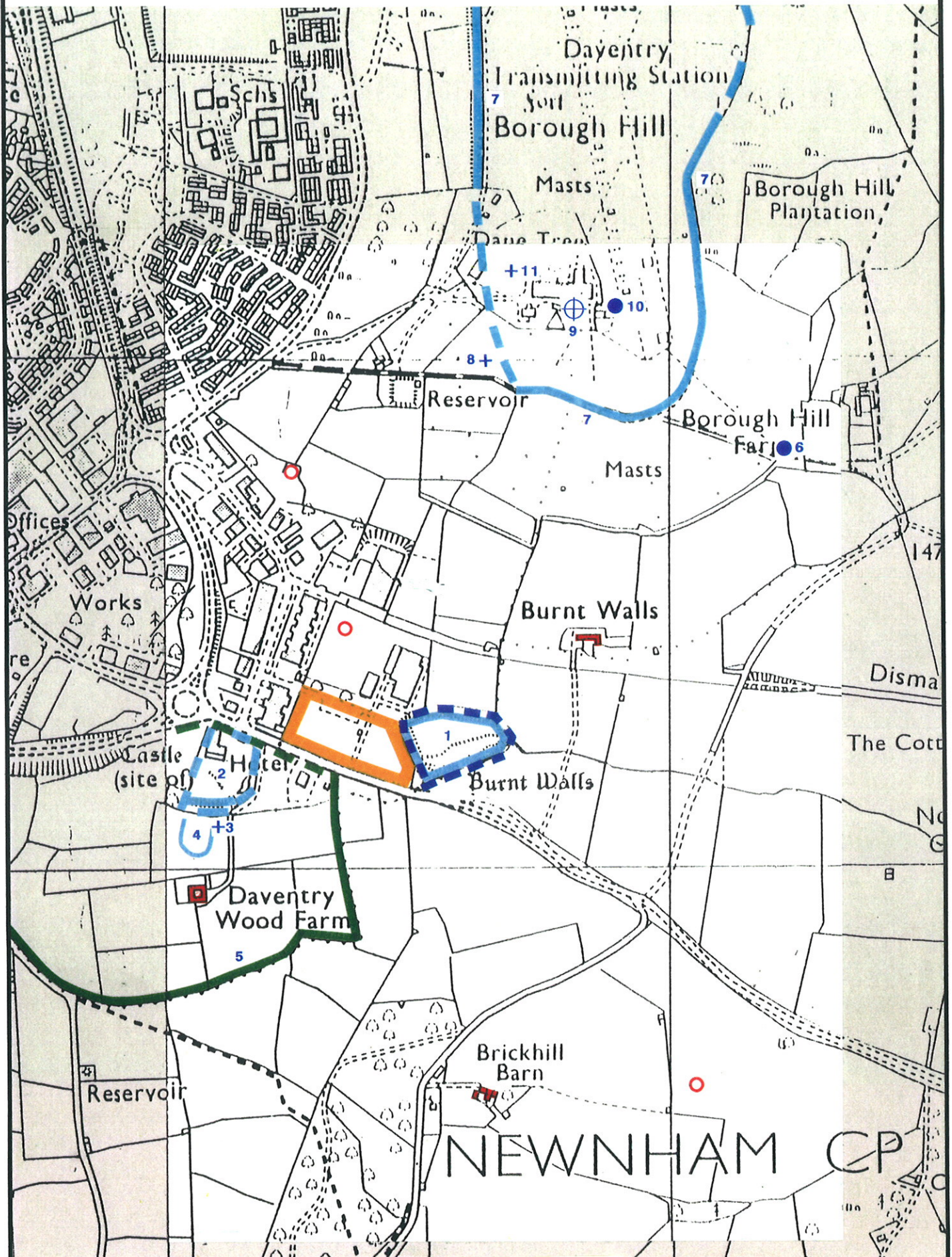
'Early 19th century' map of lands in the parish of Daventry belonging to Christ Church ,
Oxford.

Ordnance Survey 1st ed 6" 1884.

1885 Plan of the proposed Northampton - Daventry Railway

Comp 7:C:\WS\CONS\DAVTRY\REP

Scale 1:10 000 London Road, Daventry. Cultural Heritage features of the study area



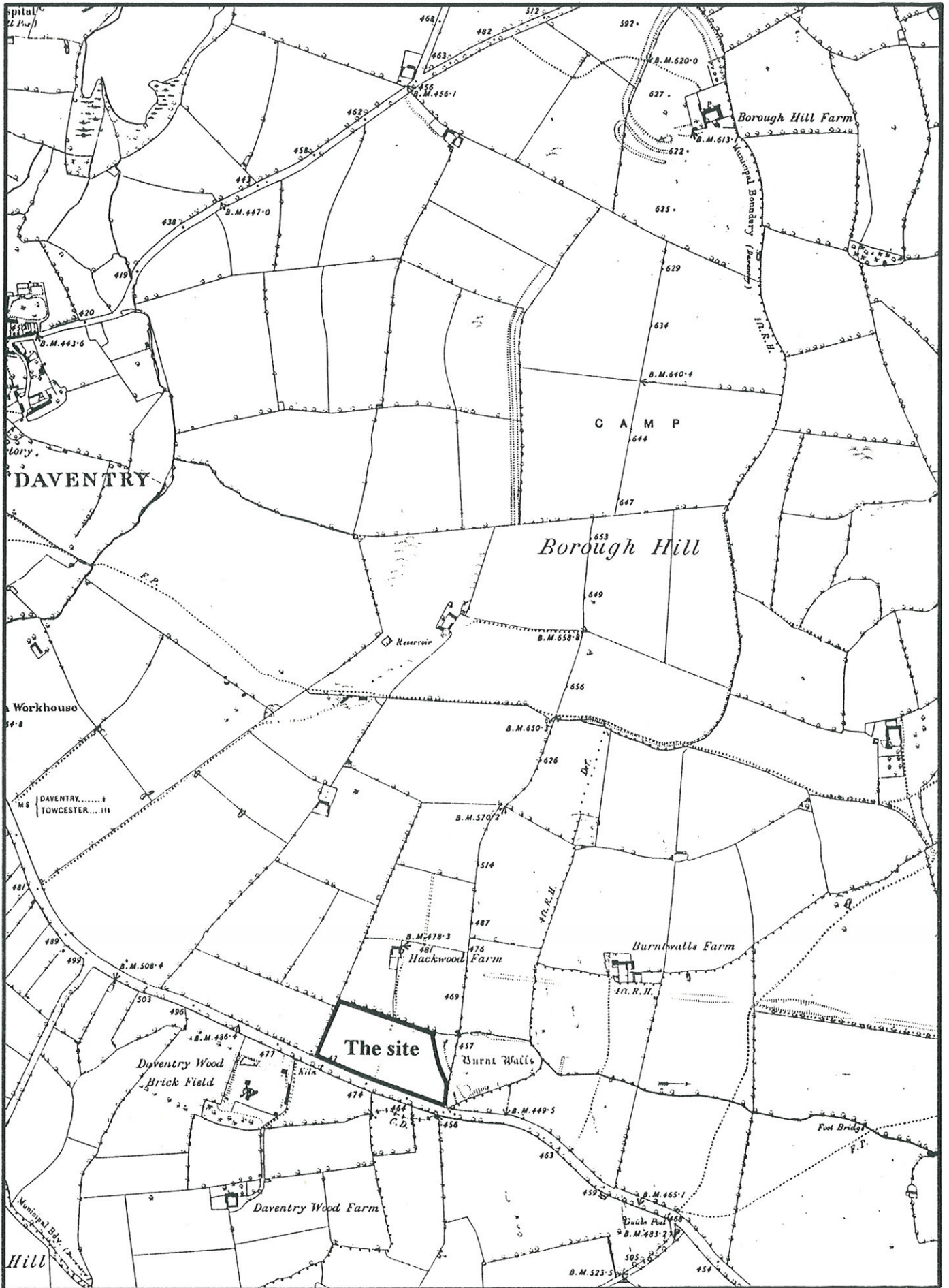
Based upon the Ordnance Survey's 1:25000 map of 1982 with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown copyright

figure 1

London Road, Daventry. Cultural Heritage features of the study area

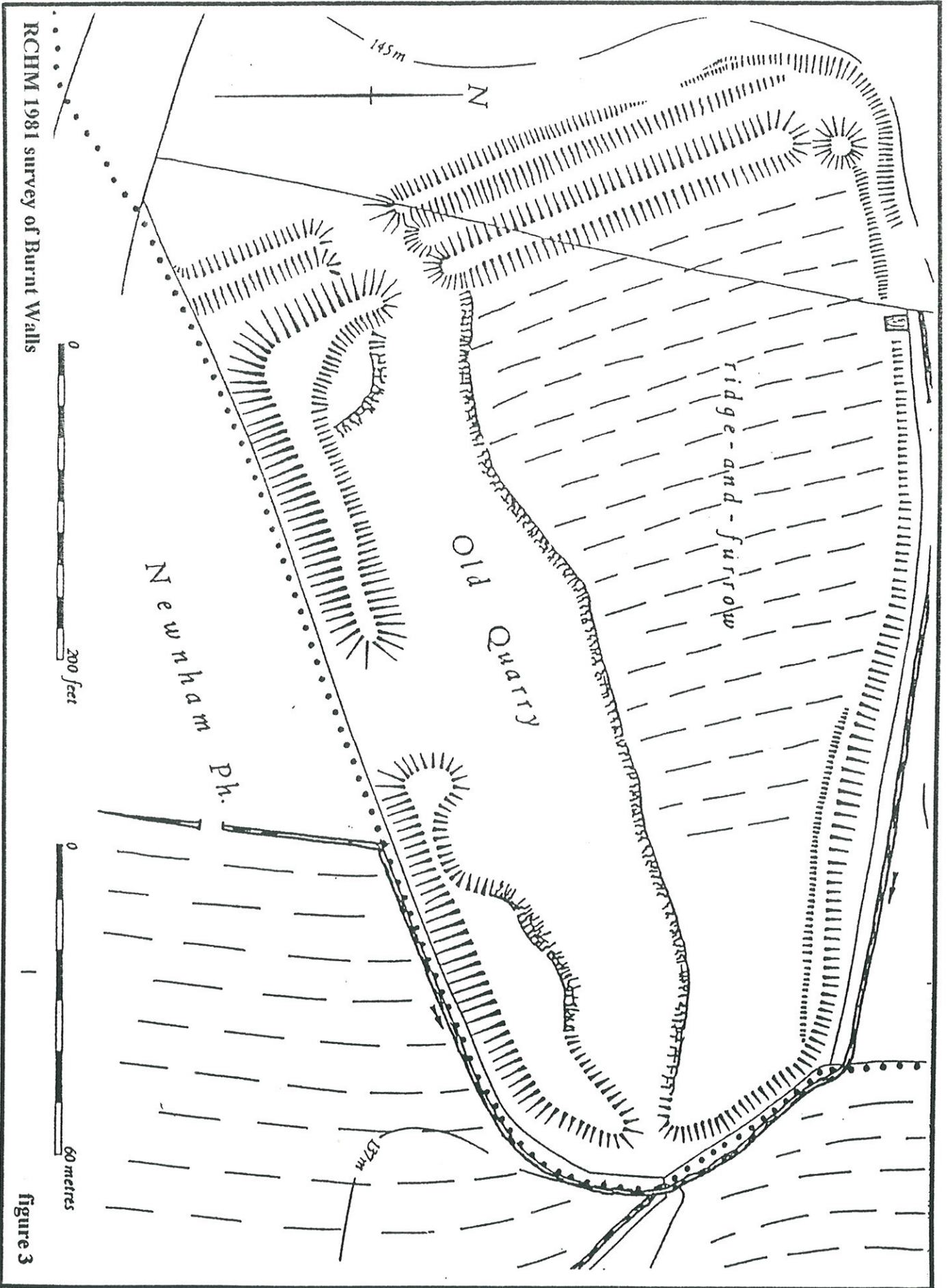
Legend

- Archaeological site
- + " find
- ⊕ " finds scatter
- " earthworks
- — area of destroyed earthworks
- — unverified area of Scheduled Ancient Monument
- — 1803 boundary of Newham Wood
- — Assumed continuation of 1803 boundary of Newham Wood
- Buildings shown on 1884 1st. edition Ordnance Survey 1:10 560 map
- sites of buildings shown on 1884 1st. edition Ordnance Survey 1:10 560 map
- The site



1884 1st. edition Ordnance Survey 1:10 560 map of study area

figure 2



RCHM 1981 survey of Burnt Walls

figure 3



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