

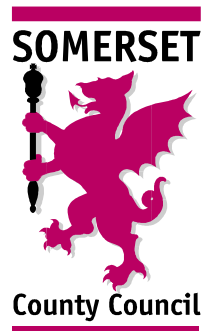
English Heritage Extensive Urban Survey

An archaeological assessment of

Dulverton

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SOMERSET EXTENSIVE URBAN SURVEY

DULVERTON

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

by Clare Gathercole

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SOMERSET EXTENSIVE URBAN SURVEY

DULVERTON

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Somerset County Council would like to thank all the people who assisted in the compiling or editing of this report.

I. INTRODUCTION

This report forms one of a series commissioned by English Heritage and prepared by Somerset County Council with the aim of assessing urban archaeology as part of the Monuments Protection Programme. The work was carried out from 1994 to 1998 by Clare Gathercole and Miranda Richardson (from 1996), managed by Chris Webster. The reports are essentially as completed during that period but have been updated by Chris Webster with new archaeological information in early 2003.

English Heritage has funded two programmes assess the urban archaeological resource - intensive and extensive. The former is restricted to the major historic cities, characterised by a great depth of archaeological remains, a wealth of historical documentation and in many cases, by a great deal of archaeological investigation. The extensive urban surveys cover the smaller towns and are based on information in the local Sites and Monuments Record with limited amounts of new information collected during the project. Once the information has been collected and mapped, attention is focused on the analysis of the town plan and defining topographic units within the town. This will lead to the preparation of guidance for planners, developers and others involved in the management of the town.

II. MAJOR SOURCES

1. Primary documents

There is some limited manorial documentation, which is discussed by Green (1883).

2. Local histories

There are no detailed histories of Dulverton, though there exists an accessible short account by Binding and Bonham-Carter (1986), on which the brief history below is largely based.

3. Maps

The earliest available map for Dulverton is a 1790 map of the Sydenhams' estates which shows a considerable amount of detail, though not around Old Berry Farm.

III. A BRIEF HISTORY OF DULVERTON

Dulverton lies in the deep, wooded valley of the River Barle, at an ancient route convergence and river crossing below the iron age hillfort of Oldberry Castle, itself one of a number of such hillforts in the area. The very name of the settlement as it is first recorded in 1084 (*dieglaford-tun* = "hidden ford"-tun) reflects the perceived importance of its location at this time, and it is probable that considerable traffic had passed this point for many centuries. Though actual settlement in the valley before the Saxon period is not necessarily implied, the Gheld Inquest (1084) and Domesday (1086) surveys suggest that at least by the Conquest administrative, commercial and perhaps defensive functions for the hill farms were centred in a valley settlement bordering the moor. Domesday records that Dulverton (*Dolvertune*) was a royal manor before the Conquest, and it is possible that the medieval (and later) pattern of ephemeral aristocratic interests in the area because of its proximity to the Royal Forest of Exmoor was already established: separate holdings at *Potesdone* (Pixton) and *Holme* (Hollam) are mentioned in 1086; each of these, together with the later site at Combe, came to contain substantial residences, though only Pixton remained a separate manor.

In fact, the pattern of land holdings in the area became quite complex. The manor of Dulverton retained its integrity until the late 12th century, when the Turbervilles (to whom William I had granted the manor) gave the church and some land to Taunton Priory. The remainder of the manor passed to the Shete family, under whose lordship some embryonic urban functions appeared. In 1306, during her third marriage, Hawisia, a Shete heiress who lived in the late-13th/early-14th century, received Dulverton's first market and fair grant. However, her death, in the early-14th century, saw the effective end of any pretensions that Dulverton may have had, and it is not recorded as a borough in the 1334 lay subsidy. Though she had a son by her second husband (a Boneville), and he inherited her personal share of the manor, the other two thirds of the manor properties reverted to the King. Granted to the Earl of Sarum, the properties were regranted to Taunton Priory in 1336; the Boneville heir also granted his third to the Priory by 1340.

With the entire manor in the hands of Taunton Priory, Dulverton's economy, which was probably based on the wool trade and the local markets for cattle, packhorses and produce, stagnated. Though the markets and fairs were kept up (a 1488 grant reestablished the fair, which had presumably lapsed), the settlement did not grow and may have contracted. Matters did not improve when the manor passed back to the King at the Dissolution, as the settlement now lacked even the limited economic cohesion which Priory management had given it. The mid 1550s saw an attempt by the inhabitants of Dulverton to establish a form of self-government on the model of the boroughs and to revive the market, which may have lapsed. The 1555 Marian grant which they received refers to "the town and borough of Dulverton ... very populous and in decay and the poor inhabitants now in great want". Ten leading inhabitants were empowered to manage the commerce of the town: one of these was a Sydenham, who later purchased the lordship of the manor, a role which the Sydenhams maintained until 1858.

These measures appear to have arrested economic decline to some extent and Dulverton survived as a small market town (as Gerard described it in 1633). A 1568 survey of the estates records eighty messuages, twenty cottages, twenty crofts, six mills, six dovecotes, and thirty orchards, though not all of these would have been in Dulverton itself. The presence of six mills is perhaps the most noteworthy statistic, as it appears to imply an active woollen industry. This continued through the 17th century, relatively little upheaval reaching Dulverton during that century's troubles. At the end of the 18th century, Collinson (1791) described Dulverton as a small market town, with two paved streets, whose inhabitants were principally employed in the manufacture of coarse woollens and blankets, and in husbandry.

A similar picture emerges from Greenwood's 1822 description of a market town with 232 families with roughly half engaged in agriculture and half in trade or manufacture. However, Dulverton's "romantic" situation was also by now encouraging visitors of sensibility. The population at this time was rising and continued to do so until the middle of the 19th century. In the second half of the century, however, a number of hill properties were abandoned, reflecting a series of poor years for farmers. Though this was in part compensated for by tourism, particularly sporting tourism, and the growth of related businesses, the population fell between 1861 and 1891, and only briefly rose again between 1891 and 1911.

The First World War seriously reduced the numbers of sporting gentlemen visiting Dulverton, and between 1911 and 1981 the population continued to fall. However, the town still functions both as a small market and administrative centre and as the "Southern gateway to Exmoor" (and headquarters of the National Park), much as it has since the medieval period.

IV. THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF DULVERTON

GENERAL COMMENTS

0.1 Archaeological work in the town

There has been no archaeological work in the town, although the SMR contains some information on surrounding sites. The Exmoor National Park archaeologist undertook a watching brief on cable undergrounding in 1997 with limited results.

0.2 Standing structures and visible remains

Dulverton contains a number of Listed Buildings, though most are of 18th or 19th century date. Its two finest monuments - Barle Bridge and Oldberry Castle - are both Scheduled.

1. PREHISTORIC

(Map A)

1.1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge

Though the SMR contains information on one certain prehistoric site (SMR 33542) and one possible one (SMR 33560), there does not appear to have been any archaeological excavation at either.

1.2 Context

Dulverton is one of 37 of the 45 historic towns covered by this project at which there is as yet no strong evidence of prehistoric settlement on the site of the later town - though there was certainly activity in the area and it should be remembered that it is notoriously difficult for archaeologists to demonstrate a prehistoric presence in areas subsequently built up. Whilst 'towns' were not, generally speaking, a feature of prehistoric landscapes, many of the same factors which made the site desirable in later periods would already have been operative. Nevertheless, the pattern of settlement in the upland areas of West Somerset - as it is currently understood - suggests that the main focus was in these periods on the high ground.

1.3 Standing structures and visible remains

The remains of an iron age hillfort are visible at Oldberry Castle.

1.4 Archaeological features, shown on Map A

1.4.a Burial sites

DUL/102 The mound at Newgate

There is a possibility that a mound near Newgate may represent a prehistoric burial site, though information contained in the SMR (SMR 33560) suggests that it is more likely to be a field clearance mound (of uncertain date).

From the SMR.

1.4.b Settlement

DUL/101 Oldberry Castle

At Oldberry Castle (SMR 33542, SM Som 331), remains of an iron age univallate hillfort still survive. Part of bank and ditch circuit, which originally formed an irregular oval about 220 metres long and 90 metres wide, can still be traced, particularly at its northern end in the woods: here, the bank, constructed of stones, stands to a height of over two metres above the present level of the (partly infilled) ditch, itself more than five metres wide. However, much of the circuit has been plough-damaged or destroyed.

There is no record of any excavations at Oldberry Castle and the extent of survival of remains in the interior is not known.

From the SMR.

2. ROMAN

(No map)

2.1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge

The SMR contains a record of a find of 4th century Roman coins at Dulverton in association with iron-working debris. However, the exact location of this find (SMR 33562) is not recorded.

2.2 Context

The Roman period was one of deliberate, strategic urbanisation. The area which is now Somerset appears to have been less affected than some other areas by this, in that few really urban sites are known, and this probably reflects its marginal position. However, the widespread distribution of Roman or Romanised settlements shows that the county - particularly east of the Parrett - was heavily populated and exploited in this period.

Dulverton is one of 26 of the 45 historic towns covered by this project at which there is as yet no evidence of Roman settlement, though Roman material has been found in the area. This reflects the generally reduced penetration of Roman influence into the West Somerset uplands.

2.3 Archaeological features

There is as yet no firm archaeological evidence of Roman settlement at Dulverton.

3. SAXON/ MEDIEVAL/ POST-MEDIEVAL (Maps B, C and D)

Though the existence of a pre-Conquest settlement is suspected, archaeological evidence at Dulverton is currently insufficient to allow completely separate treatment of the Saxon, medieval and post-medieval periods.

3.1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge

There has been no archaeological work relating to Saxon, medieval or post-medieval Dulverton.

3.2 Context

Though the post-Roman and early Saxon periods were characterised by a return to non-urban lifestyles, the later Saxon period (from the 9th century onwards) saw the beginnings of a resurgence of trading places and towns. This was controlled, in England, by the Saxon royal families (though it was part of a wider trend), and took place in the context of a network of royal estate administration centres which was already established (in some cases long-established). The reasons for the changes were many and complex, combining defensive, administrative and ecclesiastical considerations with, increasingly, purely commercial aspirations.

As one of the heartlands of the kings of Wessex, Somerset played an important part in the early re-urbanisation of the south, and there are a number of places amongst those studied for this project which can claim to have been towns before the Norman Conquest. However, there are also a number which can claim to have been 'central places' performing more limited, and non-commercial, functions: not all such places developed into towns, but many towns originated in such specialised settlements. Dulverton is one of five of the 45 historic towns covered by this project which, whilst it had not developed any really urban functions by the end of the Saxon period, was probably the administrative centre for a royal estate. There were eleven other administration centres in the survey which had developed urban functions by the Conquest (and another six which also had minsters).

Both in Britain and on the continent, the medieval period saw the growth of town foundation and, to an extent, urban living (though the bulk of the population continued to live in villages). The reasons for this growth were many and complex. In England they included both general factors - such as the growth of mercantile trade (especially the cloth trade) - and more specific ones - such as the post-Conquest establishment of a network of (theoretically) loyal magnates and prelates with large estates and commercial privileges. The latter led to the increasing relaxation of the royal stranglehold on the profits of towns and chartered boroughs (where tenants paid cash rents and were free of feudal ties), which in turn enabled the establishment of new purpose-built commercial areas (the majority of places classed as towns in the medieval period have at least some planned elements). Of course, some boroughs were already in existence by the Conquest, and the existing pattern of Saxon urban or semi-urban centres was an important influence on the medieval one. This is evident in Somerset which, like many parts of the south and west (where the majority of the Saxon *burhs* and boroughs had been established), was peppered with small boroughs in the medieval period.

In archaeological terms, the medieval towns are characterised by evidence of partially planned, intensive occupation of restricted areas. Typical features which may occur include: regular, or semi-regular, street layouts; large market places (usually obscured by later encroachments); blocks of regular, long, narrow, plots end on to the commercial frontage; churchyards, either within the medieval layout or outside it - the latter often indicative of a deliberate shift

of activity; regular or irregular suburbs or marginal areas occupied by quays, or industrial sites such as mills; and high status sites such as castles, manor sites and large religious precincts.

Dulverton is one of 20 of the 45 historic towns covered by this project which first acquired urban status (though not in this case borough status) in the medieval period. It is one of a relatively small number - five - of the medieval towns which consisted of a largely irregular layout (though with some regular tenements) superimposed on an existing settlement.

The basic pattern of towns had been established by the end of the middle ages, and there were very few major changes in the post-medieval period, though the economic fortunes of particular towns rose and fell. Nearly all the Somerset towns depended on either cloth manufacture or cloth trade to some extent. Dulverton was no exception, and was one of many of the 45 historic towns covered by this project which held its own economically for much of this period.

3.3 Standing structures and visible remains

The only Listed Structures of certain medieval origin in Dulverton are the church (SMR LB 31391) and Barle Bridge (SMR LB 31396), whilst in the immediate vicinity there is only Combe (SMR LB 31382). The Listed Buildings of medieval origin in the historic core are shown on Map B, and the outlying ones on Map D.

A small number of Listed post-medieval structures also survive (perhaps concealing earlier origins in some cases). These include Sydenham House (SMR LB 31406), and cottages and tenements in Bridge Street and Jury Road (SMR LB 31399, 31410, 31411), as well as some of the structures at Pixton (SMR LB 31418, 31419). The Listed Buildings of post-medieval origin in the historic core are shown on Map C, and the outlying ones on Map D.

3.3.a Communications features

(a) Roads

DUL/407

Medieval roads

Much of the 1790 street plan was probably of medieval (or earlier) origin. Though it is possible that some earlier alignments may have been obscured if the market place was deliberately laid out in the medieval period, there is as yet no firm evidence of any such.

From the 1790 map.

(b) Bridges

DUL/401

Barle Bridge

Barle Bridge (SMR 33563, SMR LB 31396, SM Som 267) is a five-arched structure of medieval origin, repaired in the 17th century and several times subsequently. However, it stands at or by a crossing point - originally a ford - considerably more ancient. It is therefore not simply the bridge itself which is of interest to archaeologists, but also its immediate surroundings, from which evidence of earlier crossing alignments may be recovered.

The area around Barle Bridge is based on that marked in the SMR.

3.3.b Water

Not mapped

The SMR mentions a holy well (SMR 33549), the location of which is unknown.

3.3.c Manors and estates

DUL/411

Possible early manor sites

There is very little evidence, documentary or archaeological to suggest the location of any pre-14th century (possibly pre-Conquest) manor house sites, and the earliest suspected manor house site in the town (Sydenham house) dates to the 16th century. Two possible sites are marked on Map B - one adjacent to the churchyard and the other the site of the later Vicarage and adjacent farm. The former, partly under an orchard in 1790 but proposed as an area of medieval occupation by Aston & Leech (1977) abuts an area interpreted as early market (see p8) but which contains Sydenham House and could therefore arguably also be interpreted as a possible old manor site:

further documentary research might shed light on this. The latter forms a discreet plan unit in 1790, but again further research is necessary into the antiquity of this site.

These sites are highly conjectural and are based on elements of the late post-medieval plan, together with the suggestions of Aston & Leech that these areas may have been in medieval occupation. Further research is necessary to test the hypothesis that these areas were occupied in the medieval period and to establish the status of any such occupation.

The marked areas are partly from the 1790 map, and partly from the suggestions of Aston & Leech. The ascription of possible high status to these sites remains conjectural.

3.3.d Burial sites, religious houses and places of worship

DUL/402

All Saints Church

The church (SMR 33544, SMR LB 31391) is first referred to in 1150, in documents relating to its transfer from Turberville ownership to that of the Augustinians of Taunton Priory. The earlier history (if any) of the church, which is unusually orientated, remains to be investigated. However, given the probable importance of the crossing point, it is at least possible that the unusual orientation may reflect a previous usage of the site.

The present church is a 19th century rebuild (1852-5) of a largely 15th century building (according to the 19th century architect), though the 13th century tower survives.

The original extent of the churchyard is unclear. Aston & Leech (1977) suggest that the southern portion of the modern churchyard (shaded separately) may at one time have been built up. The earliest map of the churchyard (1790), however, shows its southern and eastern limits directly abutting buildings now separated from it by Church Walk, though the extent is otherwise similar to that of the present day. Further research - documentary or archaeological - is necessary if the changes to the churchyard boundary are to be understood.

The extent of the churchyard is from the 1790 map; the division between the northern part (medieval or earlier) and the southern (possibly later medieval or post-medieval) is from Aston & Leech (1977).

3.3.e Settlement (Urban)

Not mapped

The relationship of the earlier Saxon settlement to the medieval town (SMR 33453) remains unclear. However, it is almost certain that the areas marked as possibly being under medieval occupation, will also contain any archaeological remains of the early settlement which may survive.

(i) Market place(s)

DUL/403

The market place

The street plan of Dulverton is consistent with the existence in the medieval period of a large, central market place, stretching, perhaps from the churchyard, down towards the bridge. Its exact extent is not entirely clear, since considerable encroachment (see p10) had occurred by 1790 (the date of the first detailed map of the town). To the east of Lady Street, encroachment was at least in part residential, this area being partly occupied by the 16th century (or earlier) Sydenham House (SMR LB 31406) (see also above, p7). However, to the west, market functions are more clearly reflected in the market house and shambles visible on the 1790 map and described by Collinson (1791). Much remains to be learnt about the original extent of the market and of the processes by which it was reduced.

The extent of the medieval market is conjectural, from the street plan in evidence on the 1790 map.

(ii) Urban occupation

DUL/405

Pre-1790 settlement

In these areas, which were still in occupation in 1790, it is probable that remains of medieval and post-medieval building ranges may survive. The 1790 map shows a number of broad plots, particularly at the eastern end of the settlement, probably reflecting a lack of pressure on space in the late 18th century. The history of the settlement, however, suggests that occupation may have been somewhat more intensive in earlier periods, though never comparable to the more economically vibrant towns.

From the 1790 map.

DUL/406

Possible medieval occupation

Since Dulverton may have contracted in the post-medieval period, a number of possible areas of medieval occupation, subsequently abandoned, have been suggested. Some of these are implied by apparently vacant plots on the 1790 map, but others are conjectural, and follow the suggestions of Aston & Leech (1977). The impression which they give of a town considerably larger in the medieval than in the post-medieval periods is probably misleading, but in any individual case there is insufficient information to be sure whether there was medieval activity on the site. Archaeological research may eventually clarify the picture, since much of the area marked as possibly under medieval occupation has not been seriously affected by modern development.

These areas mostly follow the suggestions of Aston & Leech (1977), though the 1790 map can also be shown to support some of them.

3.3.f Industrial sites: mills

The history of Dulverton's mills is of some interest, but is not wholly clear. At least one water mill existed by 1331, as shares in it are mentioned in an inquisition that followed the death of the manor incumbent. This may have been Higher Mill, but this is not certain. There is also an early reference to a fulling mill, reflecting the importance of wool in Dulverton's economy. Again, the exact location is not known.

DUL/417

The mill leat

Several mills were served by the mill leat which leaves the River Barle at the Weir (DUL/512).

Where the line of the mill leat is marked, it has been taken from the 1790 map.

DUL/404

Higher Mill

Higher Mill (SMR 33545) was the largest mill in the post-medieval period and 19th century, and may have been the main town mill in the medieval period. In the 19th century it had two breast wheels and functioned as a corn mill. Milling continued until 1973. The wheel has been removed.

From the 1790 map.

DUL/412

Lower Mill

A mill stood close to the southern end of the mill leat at least by 1790 and very probably earlier. In 1790 this was still a small building, but it was developed and extended in the early 19th century (see p15). The SMR records the remains of an earlier sluice surviving (SMR 33546).

From the 1790 map.

3.3.g Agricultural sites

DUL/413

The pound

The position of the medieval pound is suggested by Binding & Bonham-Carter (1986). The actual position of the 19th century pound is known (see GLA/612, p15).

From Binding & Bonham-Carter, 1986.

3.4 Archaeological features (centre in 1790), shown on Map C

Map C has been produced to show the actual state of development in 1790, although it shows few new components. Those components described under Map B are shown more lightly shaded.

3.4.a Communications

(a) Roads, streets and routeways

DUL/502 Pre-1790 roads

In the later medieval or post-medieval periods, encroachments created the two main streets (now High Street and Fore Street) which were already visible on the 1790 map and were described by Collinson in 1791. Fore Street is divided by the Shambles on the 1790 map into King Street and Queen Street: the Shambles was cleared away early in the 19th century and Fore Street created.

From the 1790 map.

3.4.b Water

Not mapped There were water channels in the main streets by 1791, according to Collinson.

3.4.c Manors and estates

Sydenham House (see p7, 10) is believed to have been the manor house from at least the late 16th century onwards.

3.4.d Settlement (Urban)

(i) Market place(s)

DUL/501 Encroachment in the market place

Collinson describes in 1791 “the market house, a good, commodious fabric, and a row of shambles for the butchers...”, and both are shown on the 1790 map. The market house was built in 1760 (replaced in 1866). The western encroachments in 1790 appear to include a block of vacant plots (or pens). The eastern encroachments include Sydenham house (SMR LB 31406), perhaps an early manor house, with gardens and a main entrance facing the church.

From the 1790 map.

(ii) Town plots

DUL/503 The Vicarage and Rectory

Further research might clarify the history of the Vicarage and Rectory properties. The former appears as a large, post-medieval house with adjacent courtyard complex in 1790, and may have an earlier origin (see p7); the Vicars’ Orchard lies between the stream and the churchyard. The latter lies to the south of the probable medieval occupation and may be a late development, with “the Green” attached to it perhaps being a deliberate contemporary creation.

From the 1790 map.

DUL/504 Post-medieval developments

A number of blocks representing actual 1790 property extents in or just beyond the medieval town are shown. Most of these are as likely to contain medieval deposits as they are post-medieval.

From the 1790 map.

3.4.e Industrial sites

(a) Mills

DUL/505 The Paper Mill

Six mills are referred to in the 1568 survey, though these need not all have been watermills. Two mills, both of possible medieval origin, show clearly on the 1790 map (see p9). Another possible early site is that of the Paper Mill (SMR 33561) at the junction of the mill leat and the stretch of road then called the Strand, on the site of which a small building is shown on the 1790 map.

From the 1790 map, the SMR and Aston & Leech (1977).

3.5 Archaeological components (outlying area), shown on Map D

3.5.a Communications

(a) Roads, streets and routeways

DUL/407, DUL/502

Pre-1790 roads

The 1790 road pattern is essentially similar to the modern one, though roads onto common land and partially enclosed land some distance from the settlement had not yet formalised. A number of trackways probably existed which are not marked: the SMR contains information on one such at Old Berry Farm (SMR 33276). A lane marked in 1790 running south from the dog-leg in Combe Lane towards Brushford has subsequently disappeared.

From the 1790 map.

3.5.b Water

DUL/512

The Weir

A weir was certainly in existence by 1790, but its earlier history is unknown.

From the 1790 map.

3.5.c Manors and estates

DUL/408, DUL/508

Pixton

Pixton lies on the edge of the area covered by this report and has not been studied in any great detail.

The Gheld Inquest (1084) and the Domesday Survey (1086) both mention a small landholding at Pixton (*Potesdone*), implying a possible very small settlement. Pixton remained a separate manor, and is mentioned in the 1327 lay subsidy (owned by a man named Picottstone). However, the location of any early settlement within the area which later became the park is not known.

The area marked includes the house which existed in the 19th century, together with the platform to its east. Whilst this *may* be the site of a previous building, further research is necessary to clarify the history of the area around Pixton. The park (SMR 34594) itself, part of the 19th century boundary of which is shown, may be largely a post-medieval creation. Its archaeology has not been studied; the SMR contains a record of a late 19th century bathing pond (SMR 33439).

The house area is from the 1838 map. The park boundary is taken from the SMR.

DUL/409, DUL/509

Combe

Combe was not a manor house, but has a long history of substantial dwellings. Combe is mentioned in the 1327 lay subsidy, and the associated silver mine (not located) in other documents; though the present house (SMR LB 31382) dates mostly from c1590, the west wing incorporates fabric from an earlier building, probably a medieval hall house. A detail of a painting showing the late 16th century house before subsequent alterations is reproduced in Binding & Bonham-Carter (1986).

The house and surroundings have been repeatedly altered in the succeeding centuries. During 18th century alterations at Combe, Tudor coins and two Armada medals were found under the porch of the Tudor house (hence the date of c1590). Gray (1947) describes the 19th-century enclosed courtyard and archway - both possibly of earlier origin but since removed. These alterations and landscaping schemes may have damaged archaeological deposits, but the extent to which they have affected the immediate surroundings of the house and gardens has not been ascertained.

The area marked includes the house complex, eastern yard and southern garden shown on the 1790 map, together with a further area north of the house, in which the 19th century maps show a terraced platform (whether this was a garden earthwork or something more is not clear).

From the 1790 and 1838/1890 maps.

DUL/414

Hollam

As at Pixton, a small land holding at Hollam (*Holme*) is mentioned in the Gheld Inquest and Domesday, implying a possible small settlement, and the residence is mentioned in the 1327 lay subsidy. Though little or nothing is known about any early small settlement or farmstead, it is perhaps likely to be on or close to the site of the post-medieval Hollam House, which was not emparked like Pixton. However, the site marked here, which was in use in the late 18th century, may not adequately represent the extent of any earlier remains: further research may clarify this matter.

From the 1802 and the 1838 maps (Hollam is not covered by the 1790 map).

3.5.d Settlement (Rural)

(a) Farms

DUL/410, DUL/511

Old Shute

The name of Old Shute suggests it may be of medieval origin: further research, documentary or archaeological, might clarify the history of the farm. The 1790 map appears to illustrate a transitional point in the farm's development, showing both a complex of buildings (since abandoned) on Oldshute Lane itself, and a large house and garden, the nucleus of the present day farm, slightly to the north of this. The site of the old farm has been bisected by a lane, but may contain considerable archaeological remains of an extensive complex of buildings.

From the 1790 map.

DUL/416

Old Berry Farm

Very little information was available on Old Berry Farm, which is not covered by the 1790 map. The marked area is that occupied by the farm buildings and yards on the 1838 map and the earlier history of the site is unknown. The SMR includes reference to banks forming a trackway (SMR 33439) between Old Berry and its spring. These are described as post-medieval, but may be earlier.

From the 1802 and 1838 maps (the area around Old Berry is excluded from the 1790 map), and from the SMR.

DUL/510

Beasley Farm

The nucleus of Beasley Farm is shown on the 1790 map, but no details of its history are known.

From the 1790 map.

(b) Other settlement

DUL/415

Battleton

Battleton formed a small "suburb" of Dulverton by 1790, though it consisted mostly of very small, scattered dwellings at this time. Further research might clarify the origins of this small settlement, which at least by the 19th century contained a number of estate cottages (SMR LB 31393). Archaeological remains of older properties may survive, though occupation is unlikely to have been very intensive anywhere in the marked area.

From the 1790 map.

DUL/504 Other occupied plots
A number of other plots occupied in 1790 are shown, some of which are probably cottages (perhaps, though not necessarily, of medieval origin) and some agricultural buildings.

From the 1790 map.

3.5.e Industrial sites

Not mapped There was a silver and lead mine near Combe (SMR 16277) in the medieval period, referred to in the 1314 Close Rolls. The mines, on Priory land, were not worked on any great scale after 1757.

3.5.f Agricultural sites

DUL/506 Water meadows near Hollam
The SMR records banks and ditches forming the remains of a post-medieval water meadow system (SMR 33459) south-west of Hollam.

The site is marked from the SMR.

DUL/507 Commons
The edge of the common in 1802 is shown.

From the 1802 and 1838 maps.

4. INDUSTRIAL (LATE 18TH AND 19TH CENTURY) (Map E)

4.1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge

There has been no archaeological work relating to 19th century Dulverton, though some of its small industrial installations are of some interest.

4.2 Context

The late 18th and 19th centuries saw some changes to the urban pattern, with the beginning of the emergence of larger centres (often at the expense of smaller ones), linked by vastly improved communication lines (turnpikes, railways and canals). Somerset was not characterised by the kind of large scale industrialisation and urbanisation seen in other counties - indeed, the virtual collapse of its most important industry, which was cloth, affected nearly all of the medieval and post-medieval towns - but some did take place. The changes were reflected in a series of alterations to town governance, which left the county with a total of only fifteen Municipal Boroughs and Urban Districts by the end of the 19th century.

Dulverton is one of the 22 or so places which though they did not merit Borough or Urban District status at the end of the 19th century, remained market centres and can probably still be regarded as towns (though several of them had sunk towards village status during the course of the century). It was one of five of these which was the centre of its own Rural District. It was also one of a handful of tourist resorts in the county.

4.3 Standing structures and visible remains

A number of Listed Structures of 19th century origin survive in the town, including cottages (eg SMR LB 31393, 31414), suburban villas (eg SMR LB 31394, 31409), municipal (eg SMR LB 31401, 31405) and industrial (eg SMR LB 31402) buildings. These are shown on Map E.

4.4 Archaeological components, shown on Map E

4.4.a Redevelopment in earlier settlement components

The medieval core of Dulverton was not seriously affected by later developments. Settlement components of earlier origin and described in previous sections are shown lightly shaded.

4.4.b Communications

*(a) Roads, streets and routeways*DUL/601 19th century roads

A number of minor roads were created in the 19th century.

From the 1838, 1889-90 and 1904 maps.

DUL/607 Turnpikes

The turnpike through Dulverton formed part of the original Minehead to Bampton turnpike, opened in 1765. Though a shorter route was opened in 1827, the Dulverton roads were not disturnpiked. The 1790 and 1838 maps show turnpike gates and cottages at the junction of Vicarage Hill with Jury Road, and just to the north of Battleton House.

From Bentley & Murless (1985) and the 1790 and 1838 maps.

*4.4.c Water*DUL/610 Wells

Well sites behind cottages in Jury Road and Chapel Lane are marked on the 1820 and 1889 maps (*not shown on Map E*).

From the 1820 and 1889 maps.

*4.4.d Settlement (Urban)*DUL/605 Town expansion and redevelopment

Small amounts of residential or commercial expansion around the post-medieval core of Dulverton took place in the 19th century, and some large gardens were also laid out. It is possible that some of these sites had previously been occupied in the medieval period (see p9).

Also shown are the 19th century encroachments in the market place: the previously open plots were built up and the market house rebuilt.

From the 1820, 1838, 1889-90 and 1904 maps.

DUL/608 The Vicarage

The Vicarage was rebuilt in the 19th century.

From the 1820 map.

DUL/609 The Workhouse

The Workhouse, now Exmoor House (SMR LB 31397) was built in 1855.

From the 1889-90 map.

4.4.e Settlement (Rural)

Some outlying settlement is not included on Map E, though it has been mapped on the GIS.

DUL/602 Extensions to existing farms and large houses

Building took place at Hollam, Pixton, Beasley, Old Shute and Combe. Combe was also landscaped at the end of the 19th century: much of this is not mapped, though the new lake is shown.

From the 1820, 1838, 1889-90 and 1904 maps.

DUL/603 Outlying plots (general)

A number of other plots were occupied in the 19th century, some of them suburban in character, others agricultural. These have not been studied in any detail for this report.

From the 1820, 1838, 1889-90 and 1904 maps.

4.4.f Industrial sites

DUL/606

Industrial sites

A concentration of industry around Lower Mill formed an extension of its activities. The 19th-century mill (SMR 33546) functioned as a corn mill (operating until the 1930s) and had a single low breast wheel, with the race culverted under the mill itself. The adjacent laundry was formerly a woollen mill, then a lace and crepe mill (some of the buildings for which were erected in 1814) and joinery. Its millwheel was removed in the 1930s during modernisation. Further research might clarify the history of this small, industrial area.

Higher Mill also extended its grounds in the 19th century though the main mill continued to be on the older site.

From the 1820, 1838, 1889-90 and 1904 maps.

DUL/604

Quarries

A number of small quarries are marked in the area around Dulverton on the 19th century maps.

From the 1820, 1838, 1889-90 and 1904 maps.

4.4.g Agricultural sites

DUL/612

The pound

The site of the 19th century pound is marked.

From the 1889 map.

DUL/611

The nursery and tramway

The nursery at Weirhead was bisected by a tramway.

From the 1889-90 maps.

5. 20TH CENTURY

(Map F)

5.1 Context

The 20th century has seen a vast physical expansion of some existing towns, and some expansion in most of the 45 historic towns covered by the project. However, there have only been limited alterations to the overall pattern of urban settlement. The County Structure Plan still contains fifteen settlements defined as Towns: this is almost identical to the late 19th century list of Municipal Boroughs and Urban Districts. Dulverton is one of 30 of the 45 historic towns covered by this project which is not classed as a town in the County Structure Plan.

5.2 Standing structures and visible remains

Listed structures of 20th century origin include the lych gate at All Saints' (SMR LB 31392) and the K6 telephone box in Bridge Street (SMR LB 35471).

5.3 Settlement components, shown on Map F

5.3.a Redevelopment in earlier settlement components

Though there has been a certain amount of 20th century development in Dulverton's historic core, particularly in the areas of possible medieval occupation between the post-medieval town and the river, the bulk of suburban development has occurred to its east. Components described in previous sections are lightly shaded.

All mapped components are from the 1996 OS digital maps, except where stated.

*5.3.b Communications**(a) Roads, streets and routeways*DUL/705 20th century roads

There have been very few 20th century road developments of any real significance.

*5.3.c Water*DUL/704 Flood relief bank*5.3.d Burial sites, religious houses and places of worship*DUL/706 The cemetery*5.3.e Settlement (Suburban)*DUL/702 Suburban growth

Dulverton's suburbs have clustered mainly along the river and the Minehead road, though Battleton has also expanded. As well as the built up areas, the sports fields are also marked.

DUL/703 The caravan park*5.3.f Settlement (Rural)*DUL/707 Extensions to existing farms and large houses

The principal extensions and alterations have occurred at Combe.

*5.3.g Industrial sites*DUL/701 20th century industry

Industrial sites include the hydro-electric plant (SMR 33551) established by the Dulverton Electric Light Company in the early 20th century.

*5.3.h Agricultural sites*DUL/708 The salmon farm**V. THE POTENTIAL OF DULVERTON****1. Research interests**

Though Dulverton's archaeological potential may be limited, the relationship of its pre-Conquest and medieval forms to the earliest mapped form is of some interest.

2. Areas of potentially exceptional preservation

There are probably no areas of exceptionally well-preserved archaeological deposits, with the possible exception of limited areas along the river where waterlogged remains may be encountered. However, some areas once in medieval occupation may have escaped significant building.

3. Limitations

Modern development in the centre of Dulverton has been limited and post-medieval streets and frontages survive well.

4. Extent of current protection

(Shown on Map G)

There are two Scheduled Monuments in the area covered by this report: Barle Bridge (SM Som 267) and Oldberry Castle (SM Som 331). A Conservation Area has been defined and there are a number of Listed Buildings.

5. Management Proposals

See the Archaeological Guidance Document.

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3. Maps

- 1790 Plan of manor of Dulverton: SRO DD/X/DL 1/1
 1802 OS surveyors' drawings at 3": fiche in SSL
 1820 Plans of manor of Dulverton: SRO DD/X/DL 1/2
 1838 Dulverton Tithe Map: fiche in SSL
 1889-90 OS 1:2500: fiche in SSL
 1904 OS 1:10560 2nd edition
 1996 OS digital maps

VII. COMPONENT INDEXES**1. Component to map**

<i>Component</i>	<i>Map</i>	<i>Component</i>	<i>Map</i>
DUL/101	A	DUL/508	D
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DUL/401	B	DUL/510	D
DUL/402	B	DUL/511	D
DUL/403	B	DUL/512	D
DUL/404	B	DUL/601	E
DUL/405	C	DUL/602	E
DUL/406	B	DUL/603	E
DUL/407	B,D	DUL/604	E
DUL/408	D	DUL/605	E
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DUL/410	D	DUL/607	E
DUL/411	B	DUL/608	E
DUL/412	B	DUL/609	E
DUL/413	B	DUL/610	E
DUL/414	D	DUL/611	E
DUL/415	D	DUL/612	E
DUL/416	D	DUL/701	F
DUL/417	B	DUL/702	F
DUL/501	C	DUL/703	F
DUL/502	C,D	DUL/704	F
DUL/503	C	DUL/705	F
DUL/504	C,D	DUL/706	F
DUL/505	C	DUL/707	F
DUL/506	D	DUL/708	F
DUL/507	D		

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Maps

Map A - Prehistoric

Map B - Medieval core

Map C - Post-medieval core

Key: Components shown on earlier maps are shown in yellow.

Map D - Pre 1790 settlement

Key: Components shown on earlier maps are shown in yellow.

Map E - 19th century

Key: Components shown on earlier maps are shown in yellow.

Map F - 20th century

Key: Components shown on earlier maps are shown in yellow.

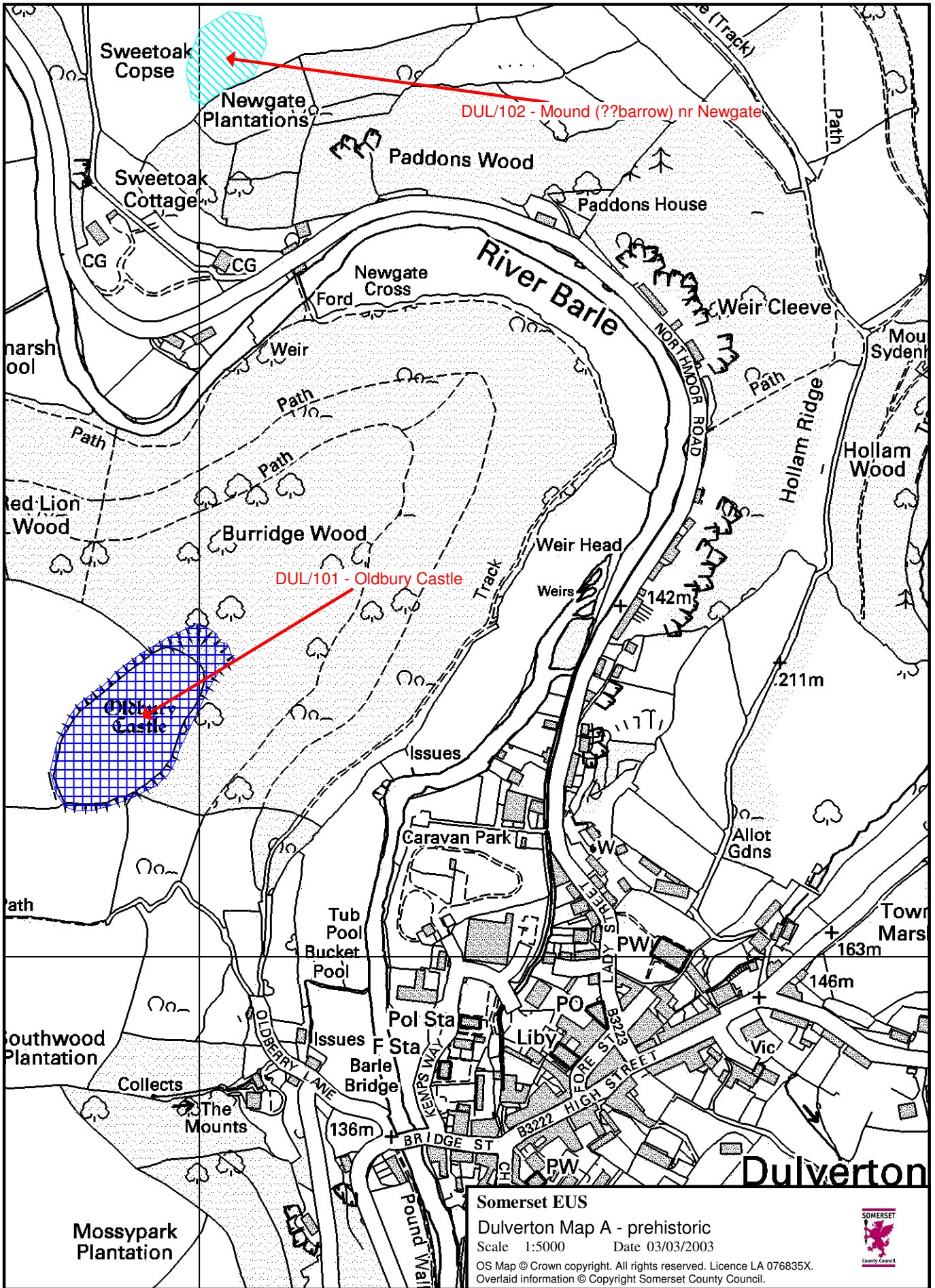
Map G - Existing designations

Key: Scheduled Monuments (none)

Listed Buildings	Grade I (light blue)
	Grade II* (light green)
	Grade II (dark green)

Conservation Area (light green)

Area of High Archaeological Potential (none)

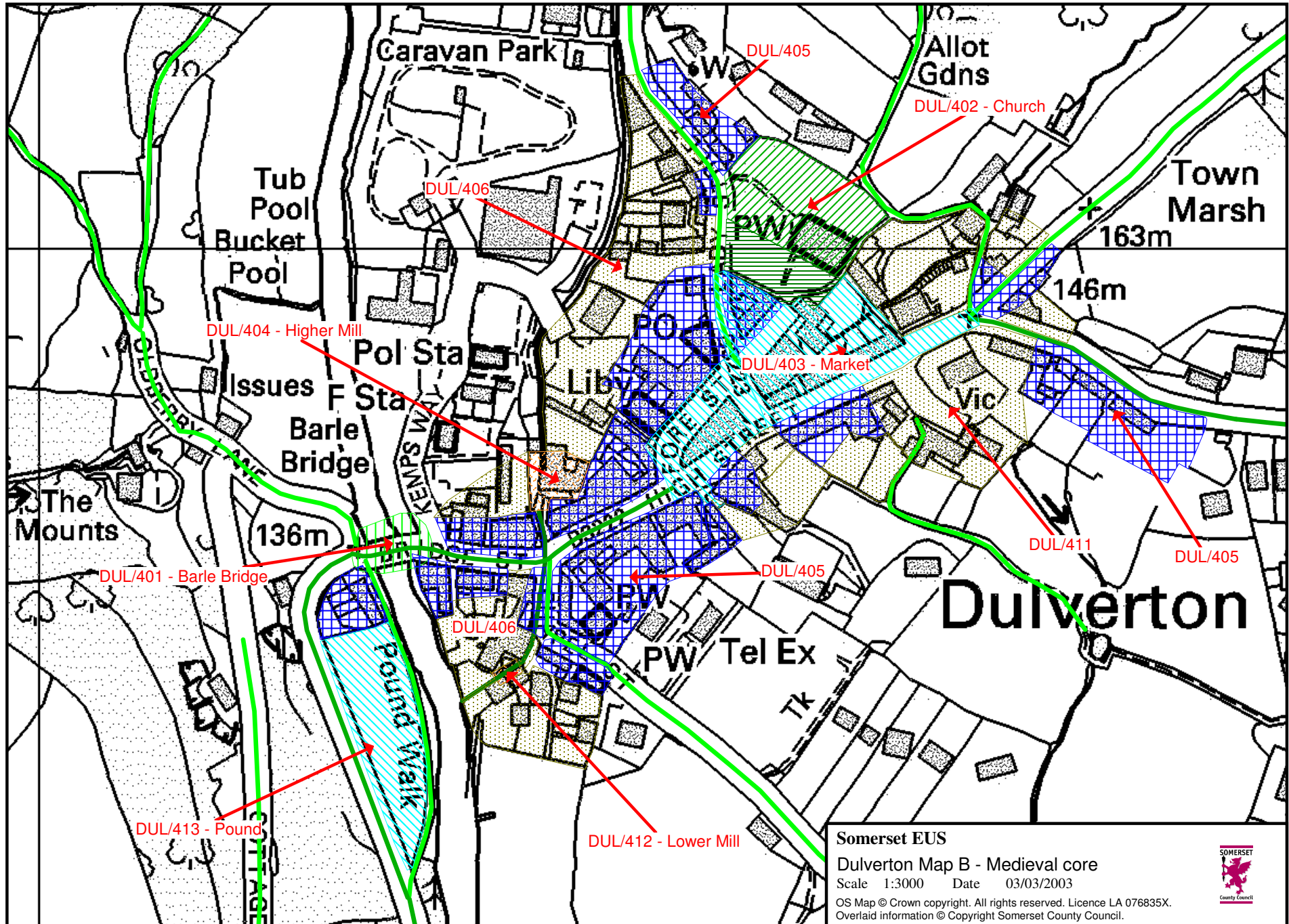


Mossypark Plantation

Somerset EUS
 Dulverton Map A - prehistoric
 Scale 1:5000 Date 03/03/2003

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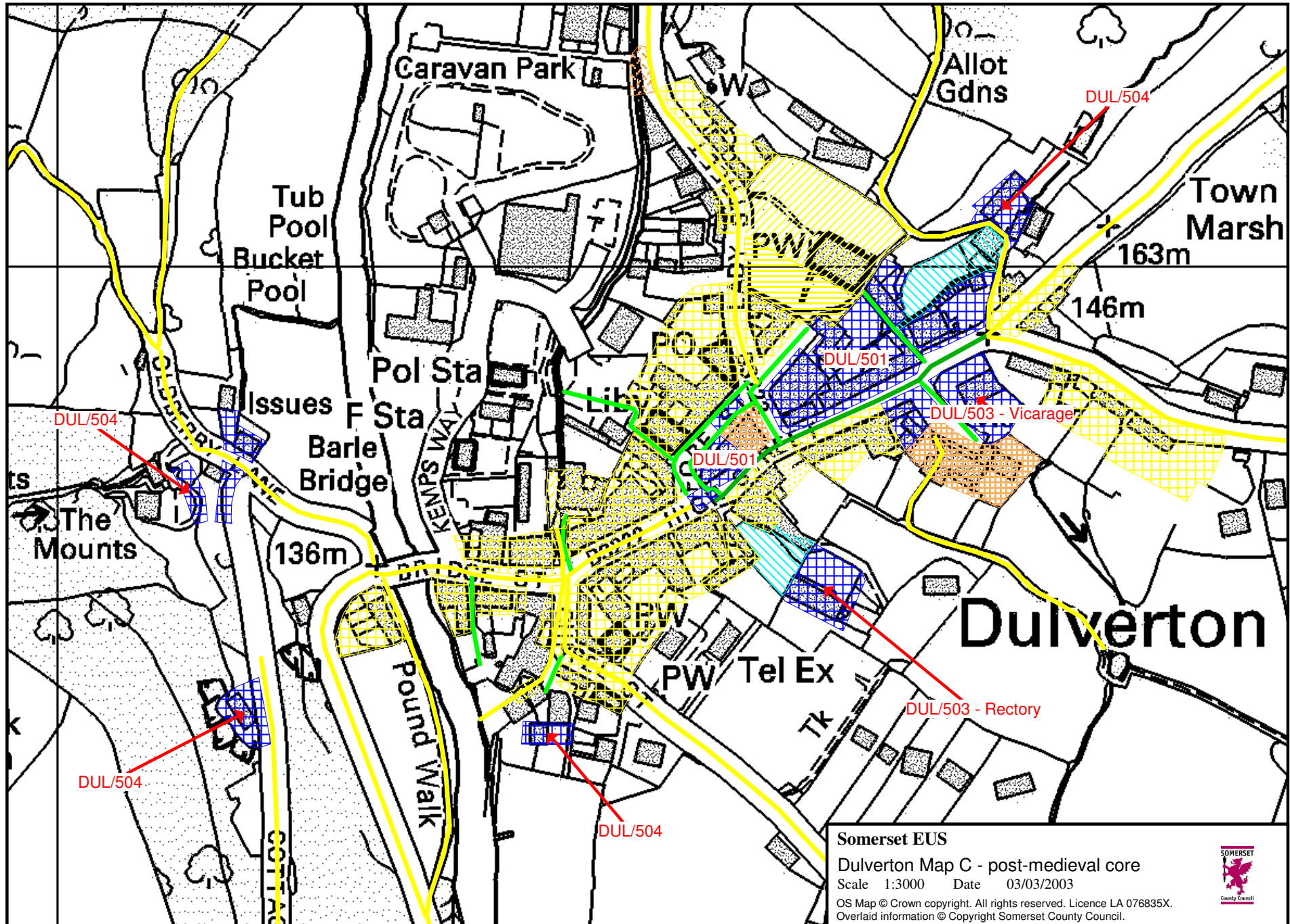
Somerset EUS

Dulverton Map B - Medieval core

Scale 1:3000 Date 03/03/2003

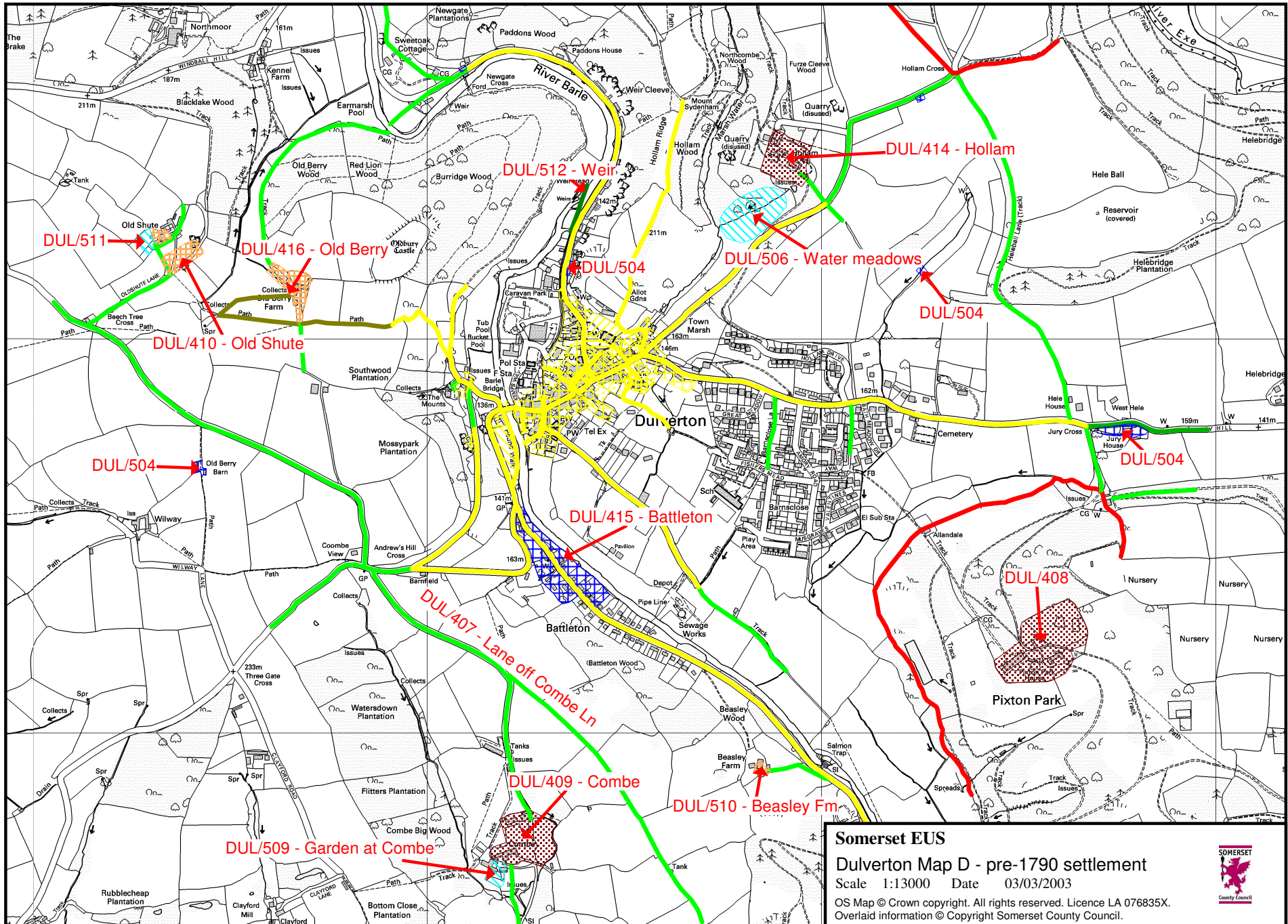
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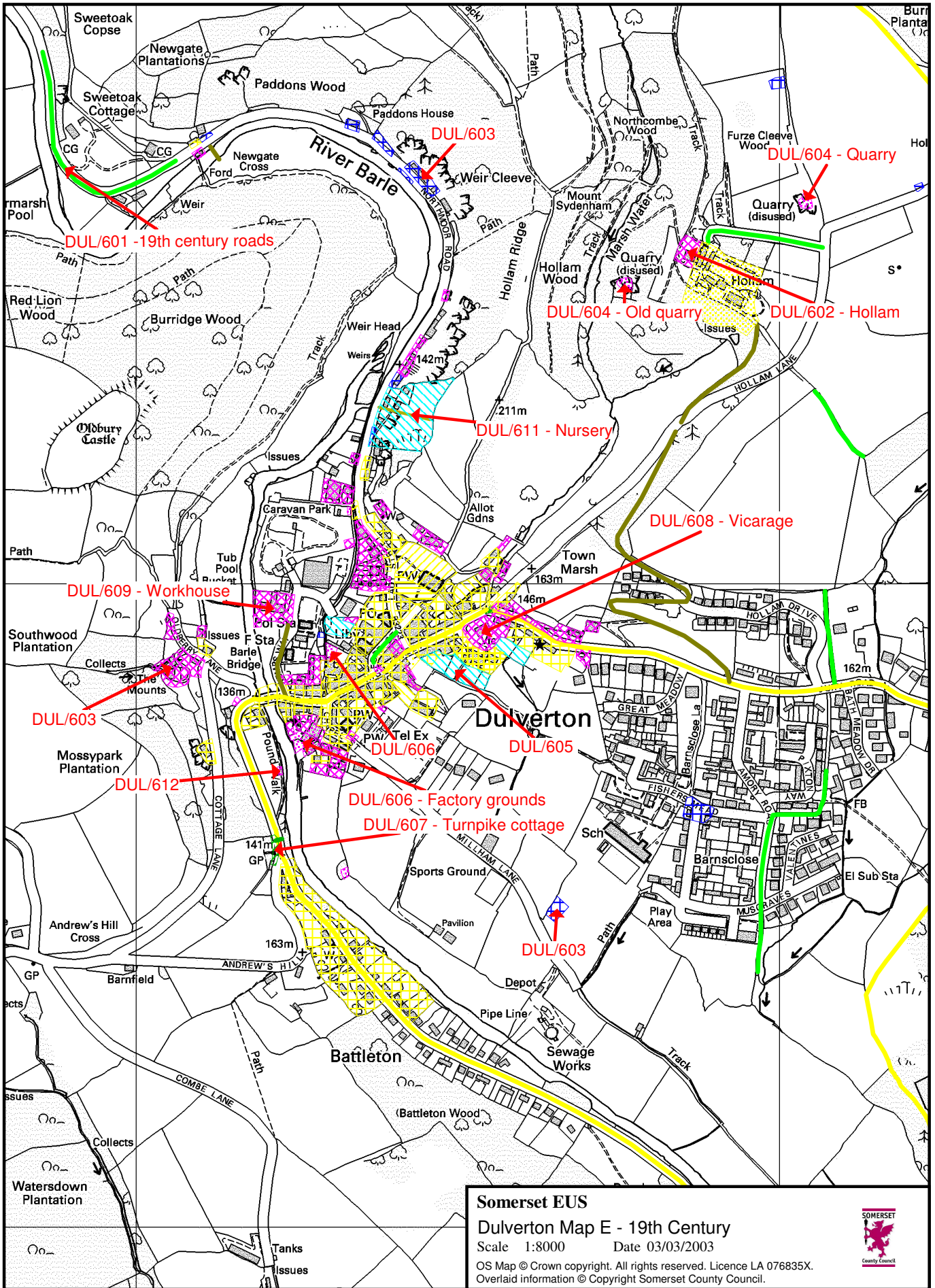
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 Dulverton Map C - post-medieval core
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Somerset EUS
 Dulverton Map D - pre-1790 settlement
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DUL/601 - 19th century roads

DUL/603

DUL/604 - Quarry

DUL/604 - Old quarry

DUL/602 - Hollam

DUL/611 - Nursery

DUL/608 - Vicarage

DUL/609 - Workhouse

DUL/603

Dulverton

DUL/605

DUL/606 - Factory grounds

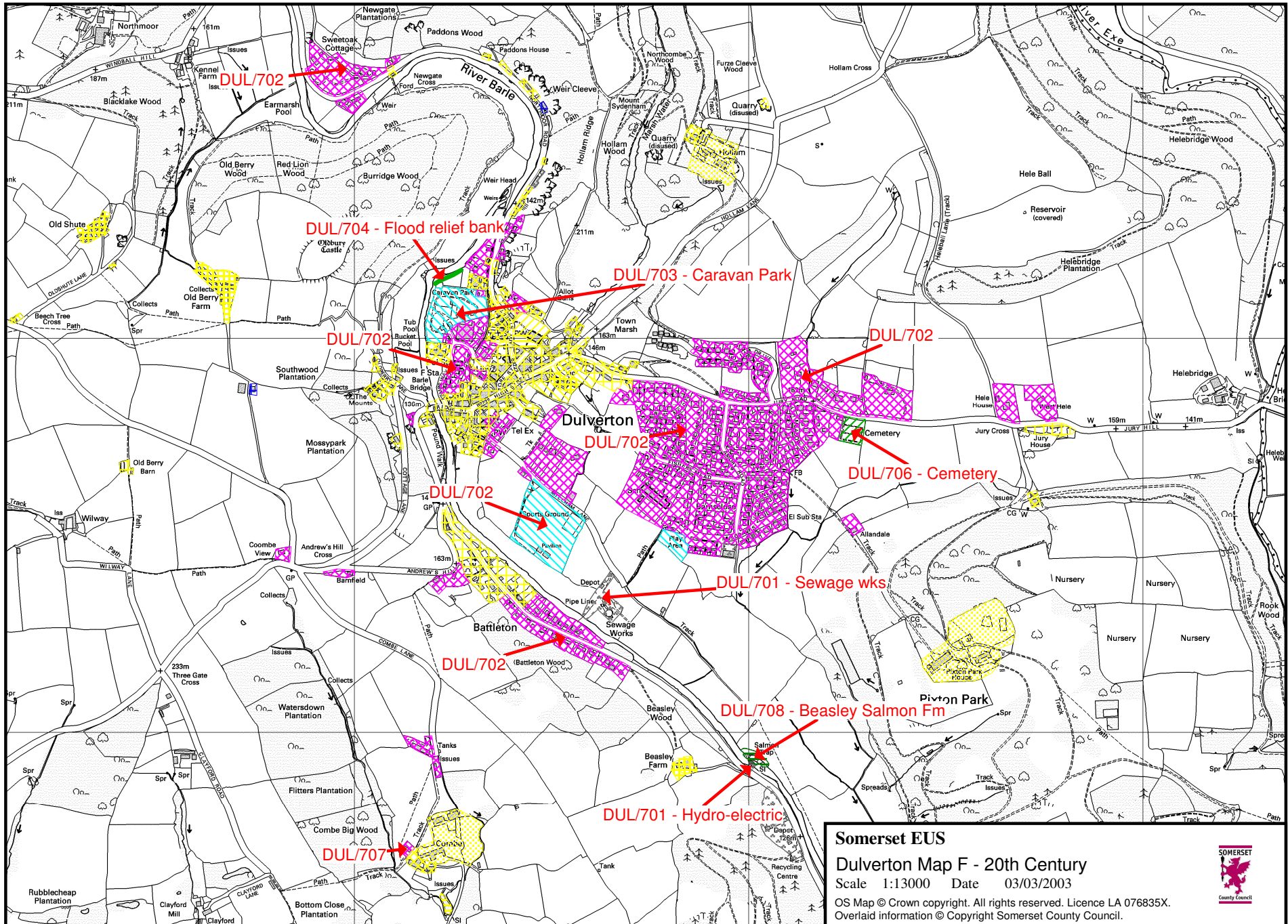
DUL/607 - Turnpike cottage

DUL/612

DUL/603

Battleton





Somerset EUS
 Dulverton Map F - 20th Century
 Scale 1:13000 Date 03/03/2003
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