

English Heritage Extensive Urban Survey

An archaeological assessment of

Langport and Frog Lane

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SOMERSET EXTENSIVE URBAN SURVEY

LANGPORT AND FROG LANE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

by Miranda Richardson

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SOMERSET EXTENSIVE URBAN SURVEY

LANGPORT AND FROG LANE

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 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*

Primary documents concerning Langport are noted in the VCH chapter about the town and that for Huish Episcopi. No primary sources have been consulted for this report.

2. *Local histories*

A local history of the town was written in 1911 by D. Melville Ross.

3. *Maps*

No detailed pre-19th century maps exist for centre of Langport. Three 18th century estate maps for the surrounding area have been used along with the with the 1838 tithe map for Langport and the OS editions.

III. A BRIEF HISTORY OF LANGPORT

Langport occupies a very particular landscape setting, covering a small steep hill, just below the confluence of the Yeo and the Parrett at a narrowing of the river valley. With Hurds Hill occupying a similar position on the west bank, the river could be bridged and the crossing protected, making Langport an ideal settlement location. To the north and south of the town the land was marshy, probably providing only summer pasture, until the advent of modern drainage. It has been suggested that the causeway linking the river crossing to the higher ground is of prehistoric date and although there is as yet no direct evidence of this stray finds and earthwork features of prehistoric date make occupation of this area likely. Similarly, although Roman occupation of the town site and use of the causeway and river crossing has not been proven both are likely, particularly as Roman material has been found in the town centre. There is also good evidence of Roman settlement on the west bank of the river at Frog Lane and at Wearne to the north of the town.

It is, however, the Saxon occupation of the town, which has most interested archaeologists. The settlement was recorded as a burh in the early 10th century Burghal Hideage and in 1086 the Domesday book records 34 burgesses. By 930 a mint was established within the town which continued production into the 11th century. The town remained a royal possession throughout the Saxon period. The parish of Langport is extremely small with little land outside the immediate vicinity of the town, being surrounded on three sides by the neighbouring parish of Huish Episcopi. It is, therefore thought that the economy of the town was based on trade, as a distribution centre by road and river, connected to the royal estate of Somerton.

In the medieval period Langport remained an important trading centre and harbour and was held from 1181 until the early 16th century as part of the manor of Curry Rivel. The wealth of the town was such that in the early 14th century a new suburb was established on the west bank of the river in an attempt to expand Langport's success. 31 burgesses are recorded at Southwick by 1358 and the borough survived into the 16th century. In the post-medieval period Langport was to be the site of a renowned battle of the Civil War.

Trade was maintained as an important part of the economy by the trading company of Stuckey and Bagehot, founded in the town in about 1770. In the late 19th and early 20th century river trade was replaced by rail with the construction of two lines close to the town. In recent years Langport has expanded physically as a dormitory town for both Taunton and Yeovil.

IV. THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF LANGPORT

GENERAL COMMENTS

0.1 Archaeological work in the town

There has only been one major excavation in the town and a ten other archaeological interventions (small scale evaluations and watching briefs). Whilst the excavation on the north side of Bow Street showed the presence of nearly 3 metres of surviving stratigraphy dating from the 12th to the 16th centuries, results of the small excavations have been less conclusive. Most have produced small quantities of late Saxon and medieval ceramics but few features or structural remains have been located. More recently, small evaluations and watching-briefs have provided information on medieval and post-medieval Langport but evidence of the Saxon Town is still sparse.

A list of the archaeological work done in the town is give in section VI.

Outside the town a watching brief on pipe trenches at Wearne in 1976 produced evidence of Roman and medieval settlement.

0.2 Standing structures and visible remains

There are visible earthwork remains of the Saxon burh defences and Langport's civil war defences.

1. PREHISTORIC and ROMAN (Map A)

1.1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge

A watching brief on pipe trenches excavated in 1976 at Wearne, to the north of Langport produced evidence of Roman occupation and burial.

1.2 Context

Langport 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 modern urban areas. 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. In the case of Langport, these would have included the position at a river crossing.

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.

Langport is one of 12 of the 45 historic towns covered by this project at which there is evidence of Roman settlement on part of the site of the later town, though not necessarily at its core. It lies in an area rich in evidence of Roman activity, being situated at a crossing point downstream of the Roman town of Ilchester, and within the belt of villas and estate centres surrounding it.

1.3 Archaeological features (centre), shown on Map A

1.3.a Communications: roads, streets and routeways

LAN/204 Wearne Old Road

Leech (1977:79), suggests that this road may have been related to the Roman occupation of the site.

After Leech 1977:79, 1976: fig.1

1.3.b Burial sites, religious houses and places of worship

LAN/201 Wearne Roman Burials (SMR 54038)

In 1939 the skeletons of a child and two adults of Roman date, one with a faceted bronze finger ring, were discovered during buildings work to the east of Pict's Hill (Anon 1940:19, Gray 1942, 141-2). The owner of Pound Farm reported that burials were recognisable by stone slabs when the field was ploughed. On investigation in 1950 by a Mr Walrond one was shown to be an inhumation burial with a pair of bronze tweezers (Leech, 1976:45-47). It seems likely that these four burials form part of a larger cemetery connected to the Roman settlement at Wearne, the extent of which has not yet been established.

Taken from SMR maps.

LAN/205 Frog Lane Burials (SMR 54054) *mapped with LAN/203*

Four burials were apparently found on this site in 1836 (Ross, 1911:356-7).

Taken from SMR map.

1.3.c Settlement

LAN/202 Wearne Roman Settlement (SMR 54039)

Following reports of Roman material being found in this area, utility trenches excavated in 1975 revealed walls, ditches and artefacts (Leech, 1976:45-50). In addition enclosures have been noted on aerial photographs taken of the site in 1970 which may also be of Roman date. From the quantity and distribution of surface finds and the *in situ* building remains and burials (see above), this would appear to be a fairly substantial Roman rural settlement which may have included both a villa and agricultural or lower class buildings. From the limited collection of artefacts the site appears to have been occupied into the 4th century and there is the possibility of continuity of settlement along the North-South road at Wearne in the medieval period (Leech R. 1977:80, 81, 86, Fig. 70).

After Leech 1976:46, fig.1

LAN/203 Frog Lane Roman Settlement (SMR 54054)

Roman artefacts, including building materials, were found at this site in 1867. In 1836 four burials

and pottery were found during building work at the vinery and kitchen garden (Ross, 1911:356-7) apparently on the east side of Frog Lane. These remains have never been investigated archaeologically and the extent, character and dates for this settlement are still to be established.

Taken from SMR map.

1.3.d Artefact scatters

LAN/206 Roman Pottery (SMR 54136)

Samian ware has been found in the centre of Langport (Ross 1911:28). Other Roman finds have been made in this area of Langport (SMR 54137) and therefore Roman activity in the centre of Langport should not be excluded.

Taken from SMR map.

1.3.e Other

LAN/101 Ring ditch crop marks (SMR 54058)

Two ring ditches have been identified on aerial photographs to the south-east of Wagg bridge. There has as yet been no further archaeological assessment of these features.

Taken from SMR maps

LAN/102 Earthwork (SMR 55320)

A bank has been noted to the north-east of Langport running along the Crest of Swallow Hill, crossing the road to the north of Newtown. The date of this feature is not known and further assessment of this feature is required.

Taken from SMR map.

LAN/103 Cropmarks (SMR 55443)

In the same field as the battle of Langport is thought to have taken place (see below) crop marks have been identified which are thought to be of prehistoric date. There has, as yet, been no further assessment of these features.

Taken from SMR map.

LAN/104 Field Boundary Earthworks (SMR 54922)

Banks forming the remains of field boundaries of unknown date have been noted on aerial photographs of this area. There has as yet been no further archaeological assessment of this field system.

Taken from SMR map.

LAN/105 Earthworks (SMR 55320)

Earthworks have been noted in the field around Huish Episcopi church of uncertain date or form. Further assessment is clearly required.

Taken from SMR map.

not mapped Neolithic Axe (SMR 54151)

A small neolithic polished stone axe was found to the south-west of the town.

not mapped Iron Age Coin (SMR 54150)

An bronze stater of the Durotriges was apparently found in the River Parrett at Langport; the precise location is unknown.

2. SAXON (Map B)

2.1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge

There have been eleven archaeological interventions in Langport, five of which have produced sherds and/or features that are likely to date to the Saxon period (SMR 54139, SMR 55459, SMR 54134, SMR 55867, SMR 56890). Whilst sufficient artefacts have been found to show occupation in at least the late Saxon period, only one feature of this date has been located (SMR 54139). This is likely to be due to the small scale of evaluation excavations rather than a lack of Saxon building.

2.2 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.

Langport is one of fifteen out of the 45 historic towns covered by this project which already had some urban functions or features before the Conquest. In fact, it is one of six boroughs recorded in the Domesday Survey, all of which were established as commercial annexes from adjacent royal estate centres. Langport was one of the smaller boroughs, having been set up in one of the four *burhs* (fortified sites) in the survey, which in this case was linked to the royal estate centre of Somerton (one of three such pairings, the others being Watchet/ Williton and Axbridge/ Cheddar). It is also one of eleven towns which may have had a mint in the 10th or 11th centuries, and one of nine in which possible signs of pre-Conquest planning have been noted in the Assessments.

2.3 Standing structures and visible remains

Some elements of the Saxon burh defences are still visible around the Hill in the centre of Langport.

2.4 Archaeological features, shown on Map B

2.4.a Communications: roads, streets and routeways

LAN/303 Cheap Street (The Hill), Uphill, Priest Lane, Whatley Lane

Aston and Leech suggest that each of these streets formed part of the Saxon burh (1977:82).

Taken from 1995 digital OS.

2.4.b Defences

LAN/301 Saxon Burh (SMR 54134)

Earthworks on the south-west, north and north-east side of Langport hill have generally been interpreted as being the Saxon defences referred to in the 10th century Burghal Hideage. Four excavations and a watching brief on the proposed line of these defences have had mixed results. Two small excavations, both north of the Hanging Chapel, the probable site of the east gate, revealed a dump of clay pre-dating the construction of the extant gate which has been interpreted as the denuded remains of the defensive bank (SMR 55459). In 1969 a trench was excavated across the proposed line of the defences by P. Poyntz Wright of which there is no record. In 1976 a section excavated during construction of houses in the angle of Whatley and Whatley Lane, on the proposed line of the defences, was recorded by CRAAGS (SMR 54139). There was however, no evidence of a built up bank. Similar results were obtained from an excavation on the South side of Whatley Lane in the same year (Leech 1986:165).

It has been suggested that there was a second gate on west side of the borough at the junction of Cheapside and Uphill, or possible at the west end of Whatley Lane and a gate on the north side might also be surmised, allowing entry of a road from Somerton.

Aston and Leech have argued that there was no need for defences on the west side, the settlement being protected by marsh land (1977:80). However, defences on both the north and south side of the settlement appear to turn to form a west-side which could have been followed by the line of the present North Street. Whether the original line of North Street ran inside or outside the Saxon defences, or whether the Somerton road turned into the burh, through a North Gate, perhaps along Priests Lane, is as yet unresolved.

Taken from SMR map and 1977 1:10000 OS.

2.4.c Burial sites, religious houses and places of worship

LAN/302 All Saints Church, Langport (SMR 54133)

Aston and Leech suggest that although the present church dates mainly to the fifteenth century it stands on the site of an earlier, possibly Saxon church (1977:81). In 1065 Huish, Combe and Pibsbury were granted to the bishop of Wells and when the church at Huish was founded (by 1179), Langport became ecclesiastically dependant on it (Bush 1974:33). A watching brief on works in the church revealed little of archaeological significance but recorded several memorials (Graham 2003).

Taken from 1904 OS

2.4.d Settlement (Urban)

(a) Market place(s)

LAN/304 Cheap Street and Market Square

There is no mention of a market at Langport at Domesday, although as has been suggested, this was one of the settlement's primary functions. However, its name, recorded at Domesday as Langport (*Lanporth*), is itself suggestive of an active market. A market place on the north side of The Hill (previously known as Cheap Street), was probably originally triangular in form but has since been encroached upon. The market may also have taken place along The Hill thus providing the Lang- or Long- place name (*for an alternative suggestion see below Bow Street/Cheapside*).

After Aston and Leech 1977:82.

(b) Burgage plots

LAN/305 Burgages

Domesday records 34 burgesses living in Langport, with five 'belonging' to the manor of North Curry. It is likely that these early burgage plots lined the roads mentioned above within the Saxon defences.

After Aston and Leech 1977:82.

(c) Other

LAN/306 Bow Street/Cheapside

Although the causeway on which Bow Street sits is thought to be an early feature it has yet to be shown from when it was widened sufficiently to be inhabited. Both Hoskins (1967:161-164) and Bond (c1990:3) argue that the base of the hill and some of the causeway are likely to have been settled in the late Saxon period, Bond even suggests that this is the long-market referred to in the town's name. Of the three archaeological interventions that have taken place outside the burh two have produced late Saxon or early medieval material. A single late Saxon feature was found near to the base of the hill at Whatley Lane (SMR 54134, Hawkes *et al* 1976). On the north side of Bow Street the first occupation appears to date to the 12th century (SMR 55867, Grant 1985:2). However further investigation will be necessary to establish the extent and character of Saxon settlement below the Hill and along the causeway.

Taken from 1838 Tithe map.

2.4.e Agricultural sites

not mapped Fisheries (SMR 54149)

Domesday mentions two fisheries at Langport worth 10s. One of these was probably situated at the west end of Poolmead (Bush 1974:24). The precise location is unknown.

3. MEDIEVAL (Maps C and D)

3.1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge

There has been little investigation of medieval Langport, other than the Bow Street excavation which produced a sequence of medieval buildings. However, most of the small scale evaluation trenches and watching brief projects have recovered quantities of medieval ceramics.

3.2 Context

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.

Langport is one of the fifteen places out of the 45 historic towns covered by this project which either were boroughs or at least had some urban functions before the Conquest. It was one of five out of the six pre-Domesday boroughs which retained their status in the medieval period, being one of nine of the towns at which signs of planning may date to the pre-Conquest period, and, indeed, had in the 14th century the fourth largest population of the 45 towns in the survey. Langport was also one of just eleven of the 45 towns which had a harbour or quays in the medieval period.

Its neighbour, Frog Lane, though classed as part of Langport for the purposes of the Assessment document, can also be seen as one of six completely new towns set up in the 12th and 13th centuries on greenfield sites, from an existing settlement or borough. All of these new towns were given borough status by their founders - in this case the Bishops of Wells, one of three foundations from Wells - and were subsequently abandoned, or semi-abandoned, with consequently good archaeological preservation.

3.3 Standing structures and visible remains

There are five listed buildings of medieval origin at Langport and Huish Episcopi; both churches, Bow Bridge, the Hanging Chapel and Pound cottage below Hurds Hill.

3.4 Archaeological components (centre), shown on Map C

3.4.a Communications

(a) Bridges

LAN/414 Great Bow Bridge (SMR 53881, LB 51828)

The bridge was first mentioned in 1220 although it may have earlier origins. A bridge of seven or eight arches is shown, sketched on the 1777 map of Langport Westover. However, Ross (1907:164) refers to nine arches apparently recorded in the corporation papers of 1596-1886. The current structure of three arches dates to 1841, built by the Parrett Navigation Company. (Bush 1974:19, Anon 1991)

Taken from 1904 OS.

LAN/415 Little Bridge

Little Bridge was referred to in a deed of 1268 presumably bridging Catchwater rhyne as it ran under Bow Street. This bridge was rebuilt in 1800 and widened in 1875.

Taken from Bush 1974:18

(b) Harbour and quays

LAN/401 Langport Port

Langport's thriving market was dependant on the river Parrett for the importation of goods. Whilst there are likely to have been wharves on the river Parrett itself, the burgage plots along Bow Street causeway backed onto rhynes rather than the more-usual back lanes and is likely that individual properties had wharves on these waterways. There has, as yet, been no excavation behind the Bow Street properties or at the west end of Bow Street to confirm this.

Taken from 1904 OS.

3.4.b Burial sites, religious houses and places of worship

LAN/403 Hanging chapel (SMR 54834, SM 33713)

The Hanging Chapel over the east gate of the Saxon burh defences dates to the 14th century and served as the chapel for the tradesmen's guild. In 1570 it was used as a town hall and in the 18th century a grammar school. It is a Scheduled Monument and has been reassessed as part of this project.

Taken from 1904 OS.

LAN/404 St. Mary Magdalen Leper Hospital, Westover (SMR 53855)

A hospital was founded c.1280 but by the early 14th-century was operating as an almshouse. In 1548-9 there were four residents which is the last documentary trace of the almshouse. In 1860, traces of an ecclesiastical building were apparently found during demolition of an old house, which were thought to be part of the leper hospital complex. Two fields to the south of the road are marked Almshouse plot on the 1838 tithe map. Part of the hospital land is highly likely to contain burials.

Taken from the 1838 Tithe and SMR maps.

3.4.c Settlement (Urban)

(i) Market place(s)

LAN/405 Market Places

The first documentary reference to a market at Langport (other than the towns name) is of 1344 (Bush 1974:27), although an earlier charter exists for a market at Westover in 1304. By 1506 a market cross which stood at the foot of the hill, at the junction of Cheapside, Uphill and North Street, shows that a second market area had been formed below the hill, as the street name 'Cheapside' also suggests.

From Bush 1974:27

(ii) Burgage plots

LAN/406 Bow Street/ Cheapside

Burgage or tenement plots are thought to have been laid out along Bow Street in the 12th century as a planned expansion of the town. The first phase of building noted during excavation on the north side of Bow Street (SMR 55867) was of this date. The causeway is lined on both sides by long narrow plots of regular proportions, most of which survive to the present. Evaluation (SMR 15457, Manning 1998) on the south side, however, showed that the land here had been made up by dumping in the eighteenth century and that the medieval plots must have been much shorter.

Taken from the 1904 OS.

(iii) Other town plots

LAN/417 North Street Expansion

A twelfth century deed refers to a building west of 'old wall', an area called 'the new land of Langport' suggesting recent expansion along North Street following reclamation of marsh land (Bush 1974:17). A block of similar sized plots is recognisable along the west side of North Street which appear to have been laid out as a single unit. A watching bief (SMR 15602) during the construction of the Tesco supermarket showed some evidence of medieval remains along the street frontage but occupation of most of this area appears to have begun in the 17th century (Leach 2002).

Taken from the 1904 OS.

(a) Suburbs

LAN/407 Southwick/Frog Lane (SMR 54052)

In the early 14th century a separate suburb was founded on the west bank of the Parrett at the foot of Hurds Hill. A bailiff for Southwick was present by 1351 and by 1358 Southwick was described as a borough with 31 burgesses paying a total rent of 32s 10d. 31 burgesses were still recorded in 1566 but by 1611 rents were being paid for closes of pasture (Dunning 1974:8). The borough's abandonment may have been due, in part, to flooding of at least the eastern side of the settlement.

After Aston and Leach 1977:82

LAN/413 Westover (SMR 54053)

The medieval suburb of Langport Westover, now in the parish of Curry Rivel, grew up and was in common ownership with Langport Eastover until the 16th century (Bush 1974:17).

Taken from SMR map

3.4.d Industrial sites

(a) Mills

There is documentary evidence for four medieval mills in the immediate vicinity of Langport, only one of which is approximately located.

LAN/409 Windmill (SMR 54145)
A windmill recorded in 1344 stood on Langport hill, possibly on the mound on which a calvary has been positioned within St. Gildas convent. It was worth 26s. 8d. in 1350 but was blown down by a great wind in January 1362 and appears not to have been rebuilt (Bush 1974:27).

Taken from 1977 1:10 000 OS

not mapped New Mill (SMR 54146)
A water mill was termed new in 1344 but had ceased to grind by 1352 because the flow of water had been diverted from it although its conversion to a fishery suggests that it was not diverted very far. A replacement watermill was mentioned in 1351 and 1357 but again its site is unsure. (Bush 1974:27).

not mapped Horse Mill
A tenement with a horse-mill was mentioned in 1382 but it is not known which tenement this refers to (Bush 1974:27).

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

3.5.a Water

LAN/416 Catchwater or Portlake Rhyne (SMR 54927)
The reference to Little Bridge in 1268 suggests that the Catchwater rhyne was in place by this time, however the first record of the rhyne itself dates to 1526. The northern portion of the rhyne was filled in 1966 (Bush 1974:16).

Taken from 1904 OS.

3.5.b Burial sites, religious houses and places of worship

LAN/402 Church of The Blessed Virgin Mary at Huish Episcopi (SMR 54037)
The church of Huish Episcopi is first mentioned in 1179, and the present structure contains some 12th century elements, particularly the south door which is believed to be *in situ*. As the glebe land of the church has been shown to lie within the area of the parish which belonged to the Bishop's manor the church is believed to have been an episcopal foundation. There is evidence of the chapel at Langport being annexed to Huish at least from the 14th century but in all probability from Huish's foundation (Dunning 1974:9). The field surrounding the church contains earthworks of unknown date.

Taken from 1904 OS.

3.5.c Settlement (Suburban)

LAN/418 Huish Episcopi
The extent of the medieval settlement at Huish Episcopi is not precisely known but it probably consisted of buildings around the church and strung along the Huish Road.

Taken from 1904 OS.

3.5.d Settlement (Rural)

LAN/408 Wearne (SMR 54040)
The medieval settlement at Wearne can be traced to the 11th century when it was a small arable

holding and the centre of the west part of Pitney Wearne manor (Dunning 1974:1-13, Leech 1976:45-50, fig 1). Leech has marked the area of a medieval and post-medieval pottery scatter, shown by field walking, along the west side of road leading south from Pound Farm, which probably equates to medieval settlement along the west side of this road. Walls and building debris were revealed in pipe trenches and dated from the 11th to medieval and post-medieval periods.

After Leech 1976, fig. 1

- LAN/412 Littleney (SMR 54051)
The little island of Littleney was part of the bishop's estate in Huish parish at Domesday the village having been conferred to Giso bishop of Wells by Edward the Confessor in 1065. The settlement was deserted by the 14th century in favour of Huish Episcopi but field names in the area still mark the site. (Dunning 1974:2).

From SMR map.

- LAN/419 Pibsbury
The village at Pibsbury was part of the Bishop's grant of 1065 and during the 15th century was the site of a wharf for loading for river transport. (Dunning 1974:2-4)

Taken from 1904 OS

3.5.e Industrial sites

In Huish two mills are recorded:

- LAN/410 Huish Mill (SMR 54044)
A watermill on the north side of Huish Street stood by 1302 and was used more or less continuously into the 20th century. Medieval records for it include the purchase of new mill stones in 1502-4 (Dunning 1974:7).

From 1904 OS.

- not mapped* Huish Manor Horse Mill
A horse mill was recorded on Huish manor in 1478 and 1511 but its rent was left unpaid in 1522 by which time it was probably abandoned. The site of the mill is unknown (Dunning 1974:8).

3.5.f Agricultural sites

- not mapped* Langport fisheries (SMR 54148, 54149)
Lachemere and New Mill fisheries are both referred to from the mid-14th century their locations are not known precisely (Bush 1974:24).

- not mapped* Huish Fisheries
Two medieval fisheries are recorded; Kingswere, recorded in 1275 as attached to Wearne, lay north of Langport on the Parrett, the other belonging to the abbot of Muchelney and was probably south of Langport on the Parrett on the Huish-Muchelney boundary (Dunning 1974:3).

- LAN/411 Bishops Park (SMR 54048)
The Bishop's park originated as a grant of free warren in 1257, was walled to divide it from that of the Abbot of Muchelney's park in Drayton. By the 15th century the park was let for grazing, but by the mid-17th century had been taken into a farm. (Dunning 1974:5)

Taken from SMR map.

4. POST-MEDIEVAL (Map E)

4.1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge

The Bow Street excavation produced evidence of 16th century building in the town centre and several of the evaluation excavations have produced post-medieval material.

4.2 Context

The basic pattern of towns had been established by the end of the middleages, 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. Langport 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, although it was one of the few Somerset towns which suffered directly in the Civil War. However, Frog Lane was one of nine of the 45 towns which ceased to be urban in the post-medieval period.

4.3 Standing structures and visible remains

There are eight listed Post-Mediaeval structures in the parishes of Langport and Huish Episcopi.

4.4 Archaeological components, shown on Map E

4.4.a Communications: bridges

LAN/502

Huish Bridge

Huish bridge was built on the road between Huish Episcopi and Frog Lane in order to cross the Parrett in 1581. It was destroyed by the King's forces in 1646 but was reinstated by 1791 when it was described as made of wood standing on four stone piers (Dunning 1974:3).

Taken from 1904 OS.

4.4.b Military sites

LAN/503

Civil War Battlefield (SMR 55983)

The Battle of Langport took place in 1645. The recently defeated Royalist army, under the control of General Goring, whilst attempting to withdraw to Bridgwater tried to delay the Parliamentary army by positioning themselves on high ground north-east of Langport overlooking Wagg bridge. The Parliamentarians, led by Fairfax, advanced and having taken the river crossing the cavalry charged on the Royalist forces causing them to flee. The site is a registered battlefield.

An alternative site has also been suggested further south, on the south side of Windmill Lane. (SMR 54055)

Taken from SMR map.

LAN/501

Civil War Defences (SMR 55155)

A broad shallow moat and bank running from the marsh to the north-west of the Hill, south-east around its base. They are thought to date to the civil war when the Royalist army held Langport, however this has never been shown archaeologically. (For an alternative view of Saxon date for this feature see Aston 1984:182).

Taken from SMR map.

4.4.c Settlement (Urban)

LAN/504

A market house was built on The Hill in 1563 to which a market bell was added in 1653. In 1596 there were 12 thatched shambles in the market place, however by 1659 this was reduced to 5. In 1713 the market house was partially demolished and in 1732 the present town hall replaced it on the north side of Cheapside. (Bush 1974:27)

After Aston and Leech 1977:82

*4.4.d Industrial sites: mills**not mapped*Windmill (SMR 54147)

In 1596 a burgage which apparently stood on The Hill was known as Mill-House is likely to have been the site of a windmill. However, by 1659 it was no longer working (Bush 1974:27, SMR 54147).

LAN/506

Wartley Mill (SMR 54143)

A grist mill called Wartley was built by the commonality in 1600 and presumably stood in Whatley area of Langport.

not mapped

Two other mills belonging to Abraham Edwards and Lucy Bush were mentioned in the mid-eighteenth century, but their locations are not known.

LAN/505

Wearne Mills (SMR 53988, 53974)

A windmill stood on the scarp above Wearne where a field known as Windmill Hill still contains a windmill mound. In 1585 the mill was owned by James Courtney and it may have been the mill owned by Col. Stawell in 1664 from which sailcloth was stolen, (Dunning 1974:8). The remains of the building are shown on the 1779 map of High Ham and Huish Episcopi.

'Old windmill' on the 1904 OS marks another site to the south of Bowden Lane, north-west of Wearne.

Paradise water Mill is also shown on the 1779 map of High Ham, situated above Wearne.

Taken from 1779 and 1904 OS maps.

5. INDUSTRIAL (LATE 18TH AND 19TH CENTURY)*(Map F)***5.1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge**

Articles about the rebuilding of Bow Bridge and the Langport Iron foundry have been published by the Somerset Industrial Archaeology Society (Anon 1991, Murless 1988).

5.2 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.

Langport 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). Indeed, it was one of three which remained a chartered borough well into the 19th century.

5.3 Standing structures and visible remains

There are over seventy listed buildings and structures dating to this period in Langport and Huish Episcopi. In addition two lime kilns and the iron foundry at Beard's Yard are still standing in and around the town.

5.4 Archaeological components, shown on Map F

5.4.a Communications

(a) Roads Streets and Routeways

LAN/621

Turnpiked Roads

The Langport, Somerset and Castle Cary Trust was established in 1753, with one of the first routes entering Langport from the west through Westover then heading north along North Street and then leading to Somerton. An Act of 1792 created four new routes from Langport. To the north a road led to Othery. A second crossed Langport burh to Huish Episcopi and on to Pibsbury. The third heads south from Huish Church towards Muchelney, although this route was apparently slow to be completed as Bicknell Bridge, over which it passes, was not completed until 1829. The fourth heads north from Huish Church to Wearne then turns west to link with the Othery route. (Bentley and Murless 1985:40-46)

After Bentley and Murless 1985, map 7

(b) Railways

LAN/601

Yeovil and Durston Branch

This branch of the Bristol and Exeter railway was completed in 1853, followed by the line to Curry Rivel in 1906. It was closed in 1964 (Dunning 1974:3). Construction of the railway caused the north end of Frog Lane to be diverted to the west, and a bridge to be built over the railway to carry the Westover Road.

Taken from 1904 OS

(c) Bridges not mapped

Swing Bridge

A swing bridge was built in Langport Westover to enable foot access to the public house when the road layout was changed with the new railway construction in 1853, its precise location is not known.

5.4.b Water

LAN/618

Flood Control Gate and Lock

These lock gates were part of the water scheme completed in 1840 which included a new cut from Little Bow to Bicknell's bridge.

Taken from 1904 OS.

LAN/619

Water-Pump and Well (LB 51826)

A cast iron water pump was erected in 1878 above an artesian well (Warren 1996:35).

Taken from listed building map.

5.4.c Burial sites, religious houses and places of worship

LAN/602

Cemetery

A cemetery is shown on the 1904 OS at the north end of the Avenue.

Taken from 1904 OS.

LAN/603

Methodist Chapel

The Methodist chapel, built at the junction of the Avenue and North Street, was opened in 1890.

Taken from 1904 OS.

LAN/607 Bow Street Chapel
The Independent Protestant chapel was opened in 1829. It was later called the Congregationalist chapel. The building was extended in 1850, 1858, 1874, and 1885.

Taken from 1904 OS.

LAN/608 Baptist Chapel
A Baptist chapel was built on the south side of Whatley Lane in 1851. Between 1928 and 1933 it was used by Langport grammar school and was known as the Stone Building. In 1972 it was used as a private garage. (Bush 1974:36)

After Bush 1974:18

5.4.d Settlement (Urban)

(a) Commercial core

LAN/609 During the industrial period Langport maintained its role as a trading centre largely due to the company of Stuckey and Bagehot, established by 1747 which developed to become the Somerset Trading company in 1883. Langport took on the aspect of a rural market dealing mainly in livestock. In 1823 six new butchers' stalls were erected under the town hall.

In 1855 new pig and cattle markets were established on the South side of Cheapside and in North Street respectively, and in 1871 a sheep market was built in Whatley. In 1890 land was provided for the cattle market at the North end of North Street, removing it from the street itself.

Taken from 1904 OS.

(b) Suburbs

Expansion around Langport has been very largely restricted, by the river and flood lands to the south and north-west, towards Huish Episcopi and along North Street towards Wearne.

LAN/610 Newtown
The settlement on the east side of Swallow Hill was founded in 1845.

Taken from 1904 OS.

LAN/611 Avenue
A series of new buildings were constructed along the Avenue c.1877.

Taken from 1904 OS.

LAN/617 General Housing/Building

Taken from 1904 OS.

5.4.e Settlement (Rural)

LAN/620 Picts Hill
This rural settlement is likely to have been occupied from an earlier periods but is only mapped in the 19th century.

Taken from 1904 OS.

5.4.f Industrial sites

(a) Mills

LAN/612 Pibsbury Windmill (SMR 54046)

The mill was built between 1797 and 1823 and was the tallest in Somerset. It formed part of a larger complex including millers house, barns court sheds and stables and loading facilities. The mill was worked until 1897 and the tower collapsed in 1915.

Taken from SMR map.

(b) Other industrial sites

LAN/613 Tannery

The tannery was established prior to 1832 to the south of Huish, on the river Yeo. The lane leading to it is known as Tanyard Lane. The buildings are currently used as an abattoir.

Taken from 1904 OS.

LAN/614 Lime Kilns (SMR 54043, 54047, 54049)

To the south of Langport, a well preserved kiln stands at the junction of Park Lane and Frog Lane. Another kiln used to stand a little further south of Park Lane but the SMR record notes that this had been demolished prior to 1987 (54049). A limekiln is visible to the north east of the town at Ham Down (54043) which is also recorded in the SMR as being in good repair. A lime kiln site (54047) is situated to the east of Langport at Pibsbury.

Taken from SMR map.

LAN/615 Beard's Yard Foundry

This foundry building was used by Richard Down in the early 19th century (Warren 1996:35).

After Warren 1996:35

5.4.g Other

LAN/616 Kelway's Royal Nurseries (LB 51816, 51817)

The nurseries were founded by James Kelway in 1851 (Dunning 1974:7).

Taken from 1904 OS

LAN/622 Langport Union Workhouse

A workhouse is depicted on this site on the 1814 map of the manor of Wearne which may have been a predecessor of the hexagonal building still standing at Picts Hill, now called Hamdown House and used as a poultry farm.

Taken from 1904 OS

6. 20TH CENTURY

(Map G)

6.1 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. Langport 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.

6.2 Settlement components, shown on Map G

6.2.a Communications: railways

LAN/701 Railway

The line from Curry Rivel junction to Somerton was opened in 1906. The construction of this line caused North Street to be realigned, joining with The Avenue to the north of the railway so that only one bridge was necessary. Langport East station on this line was closed in 1962.

Taken from 1995 digital OS

6.2.b Burial sites, religious houses and places of worship

LAN/702 St. Gildas Convent

In 1903 a group of Roman Catholic sisters established themselves at Hill House in Langport which was renamed St. Gildas Convent. The Church of St. Joseph was built adjoining the convent in 1929 (Bush 1974:36).

Taken from 1995 digital OS.

6.2.c Settlement (Suburban)

LAN/703 Garden City

A small council housing estate was built to the north of the town between 1918 and 1929 (Bush 1974:20).

Taken from 1995 digital OS.

LAN/704 General 20th Century Building

Taken from 1995 digital OS.

6.2.d Settlement (Rural)

LAN/705 Poultry House

Taken from 1995 digital OS.

6.2.e Industrial sites

LAN/706 Sewage Works

Taken from 1995 digital OS.

V. THE POTENTIAL OF LANGPORT

1. Research interests

Langport presents a number of research questions which would benefit from further archaeological research.

Despite excavation to depths of nearly 3m on Bow Street, the earliest period of construction of a causeway and bridging point across the Parrett is still to be established. There is however, the intriguing suggestion of continuity of use of the river crossing and settlement site over a long period given by a number of Roman stray finds and the associated evidence from Wearne and Frog Lane of Roman occupation in the near vicinity. The character of all three of these sites is still to be investigated.

Langport is an important Saxon site, one of only four Somerset burhs recorded in the early 10th century Burghal Hideage and one of a small group of sites which appear to have acted as trading centres for the royal estates, established at a distance from the main royal residences (the closest parallel in Somerset being Axbridge and Cheddar). Understanding of the burh defences is still a matter for research, despite several small scale excavations to this end. The precise form of the burh defences, whether they fully encircled the burh or relied on the marshes for defence on the north-west side is important for the wider questions of the accuracy of the Burghal Hideage hideation in Somerset. The date of the outer defences, whether civil war or Saxon is still to be established. The character of

settlement within the burh defences remains enigmatic, the excavations that have been carried out having produced little secure evidence of early structures. This along with evidence from the other Somerset burhs (particularly Lyng and Axbridge) has raised questions concerning the nature of settlement within these defended sites.

Excavation outside the defences have produced clearer results, with 3m of well preserved stratigraphy dating from the 12th to 16th centuries along the Langport causeway surviving in places. However, the full depth of archaeological stratigraphy has not been excavated, and the original date of settlement along the causeway has still to be shown. The medieval archaeology of the town is of particular importance as one of a small number of non-rural market centres. Medieval remains may provide information concerning the balance between commerce and craft industry in the economy of the town. The archaeology of the well preserved burgage plots is therefore of prime importance.

2. Areas of potentially exceptional preservation

Much of the lower areas of Langport, (North Street, Bow Street, Whatley and Frog Lane for example) are likely to have waterlogged deposits.

3. Limitations

Archaeological preservation is likely to be limited only by more recent expansion and building within the town.

4. Extent of current protection

The Hanging Chapel is a scheduled monument (SM 33713). The conservation area covers most of the historic town core and an Area of High Archaeological Potential has been designated as part of this project.

5. Management Proposals

See the Archaeological Guidance Document.

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3. Maps

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1779	Estate map showing part of High Ham and Huish Episcopi
1812	OS Surveyor's Drawings
1814	Map of the Manor of Wearne in the Parish of Huish Episcopi
1838	Tithe Map
1886	OS 25" (first edition)
1904	OS 6" (second edition)
1995	digital OS

4. Archaeological Interventions

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2002	Car park toilets	(ST 4196 2675)	SMR 15471	Broomhead, R. A. (2002a)
2002	Silkolene works	(ST 416 267)	SMR 15849	Broomhead, R. A. (2002b)
2002-3	All Saints' church	(ST 422 267)	SMR 16101	Graham, A. (2003)

VII. COMPONENT INDEXES

1. Component to map

<i>Component</i>	<i>Map</i>	<i>Component</i>	<i>Map</i>
LAN/101	A	LAN/206	A
LAN/102	A		
LAN/103	A	LAN/301	B
LAN/104	A	LAN/302	B
LAN/105	A	LAN/303	B
		LAN/304	B
LAN/201	A	LAN/305	B
LAN/202	A	LAN/306	B
LAN/203	A	LAN/307	B
LAN/204	A		
LAN/205	A	LAN/401	C

LAN/403	C	LAN/601	F
LAN/404	C	LAN/602	F
LAN/405	C	LAN/603	F
LAN/406	C	LAN/607	F
LAN/407	C	LAN/608	F
LAN/409	C	LAN/609	F
LAN/413	C	LAN/610	F
LAN/414	C	LAN/611	F
LAN/415	C	LAN/612	F
LAN/417	C	LAN/613	F
		LAN/614	F
LAN/402	D	LAN/615	F
LAN/408	D	LAN/616	F
LAN/410	D	LAN/617	F
LAN/411	D	LAN/618	F
LAN/412	D	LAN/619	F
LAN/416	D	LAN/620	F
LAN/418	D	LAN/621	F
LAN/419	D	LAN/622	F
LAN/501	E		
LAN/502	E	LAN/701	G
LAN/503	E	LAN/702	G
LAN/504	E	LAN/703	G
LAN/505	E	LAN/704	G
		LAN/705	G
		LAN/706	G

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LAN/705	19, 24
LAN/706	19, 24

Maps

Map A - Prehistoric and Roman

Map B - Saxon

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

Map C - Medieval core

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

Map D - Medieval area

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

Map E - Post-medieval

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

Map F - Industrial

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

Map G - 20th century

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

Map F - Existing designations

Key: Scheduled Monuments (blue)

Listed Buildings

Grade I (light blue)

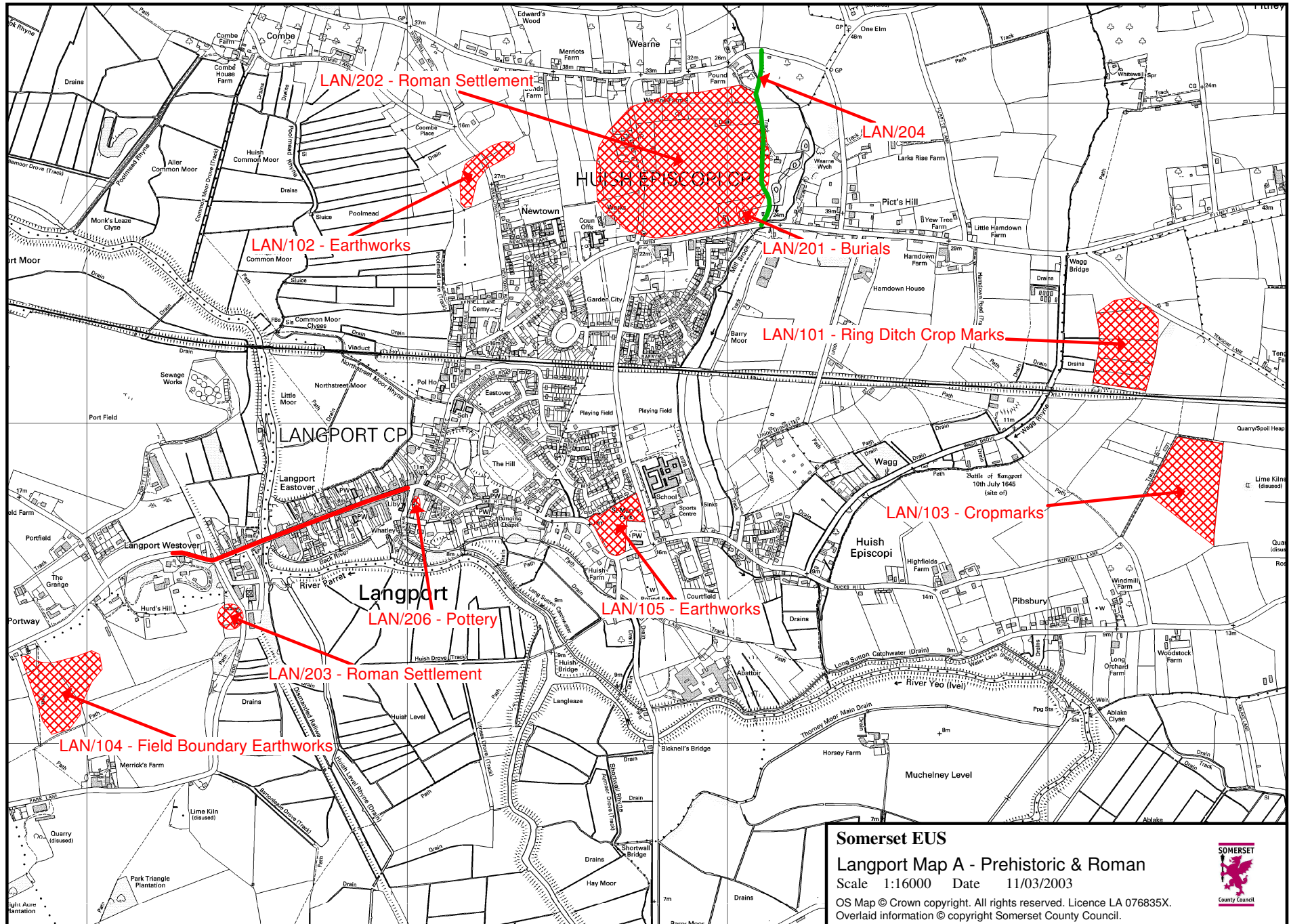
Grade II* (light green)

Grade II (dark green)

Conservation Area (light green)

Area of High Archaeological Potential (pink)

Registered battlefield (brown)



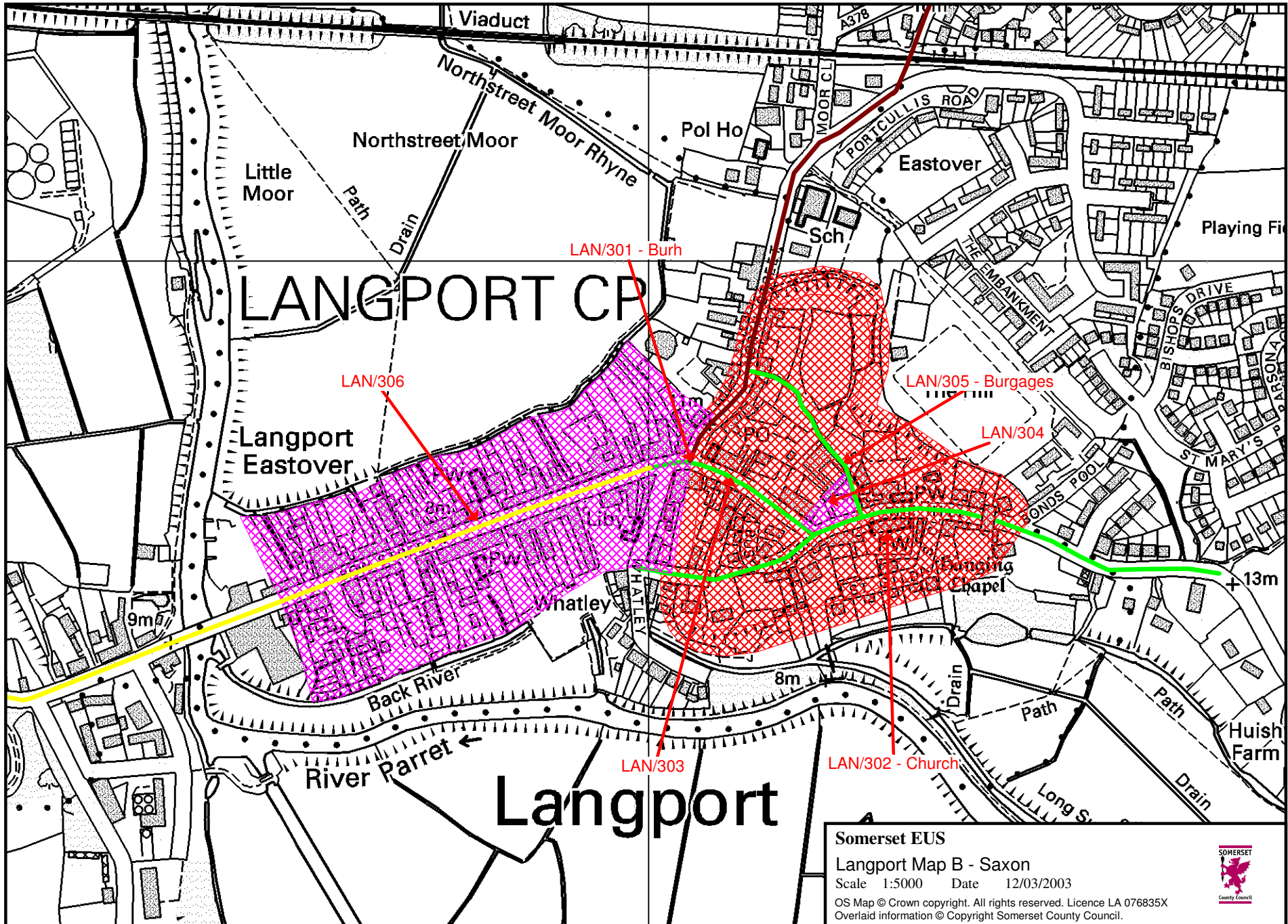
Somerset EUS

Langport Map A - Prehistoric & Roman

Scale 1:16000 Date 11/03/2003

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LANGPORT CP

Langport Eastover

Langport

LAN/305 - Burgages

LAN/301 - Burh

LAN/306

LAN/304

LAN/303

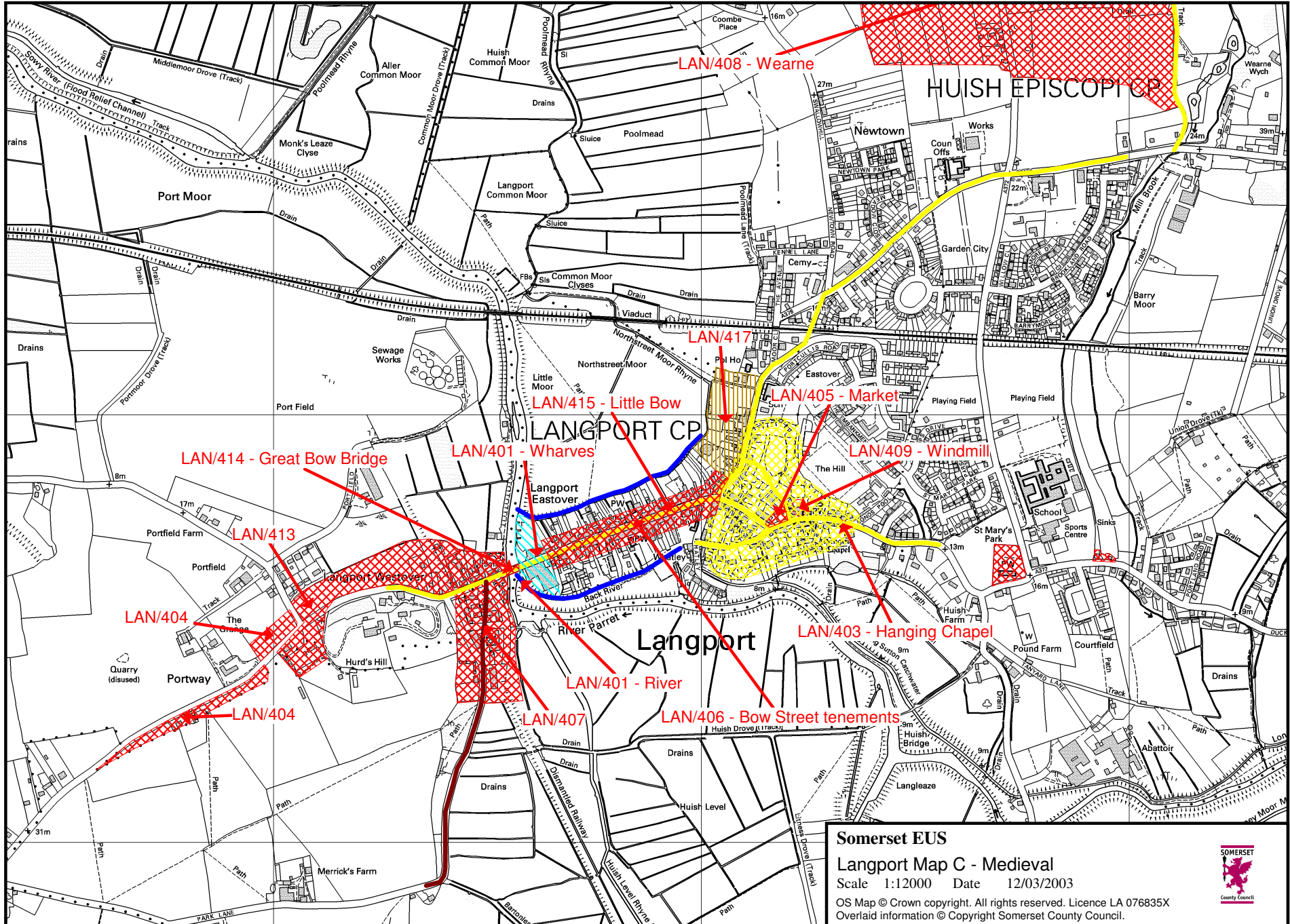
LAN/302 - Church

Somerset EUS
Langport Map B - Saxon

Scale 1:5000 Date 12/03/2003

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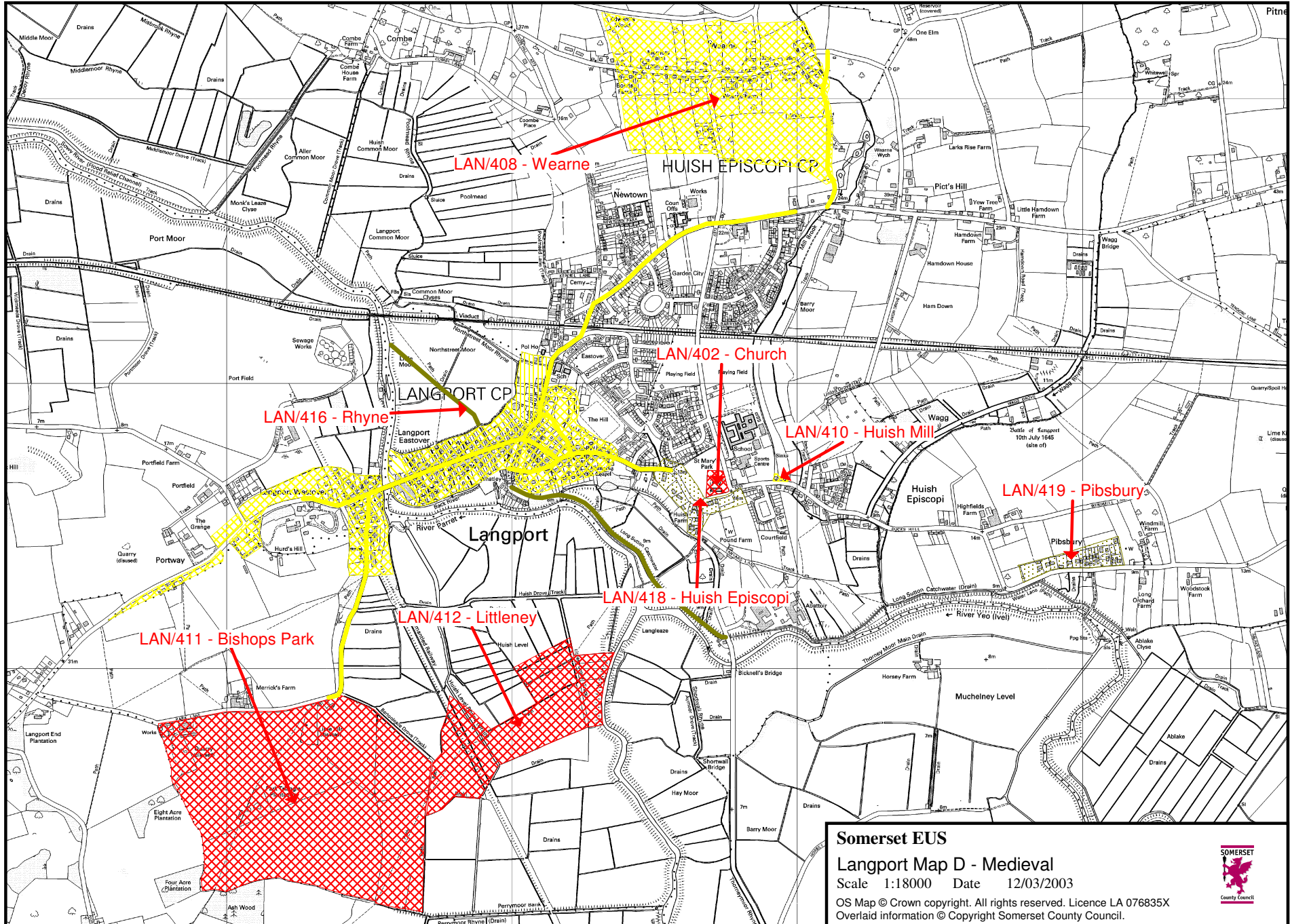
Somerset EUS

Langport Map C - Medieval

Scale 1:12000 Date 12/03/2003

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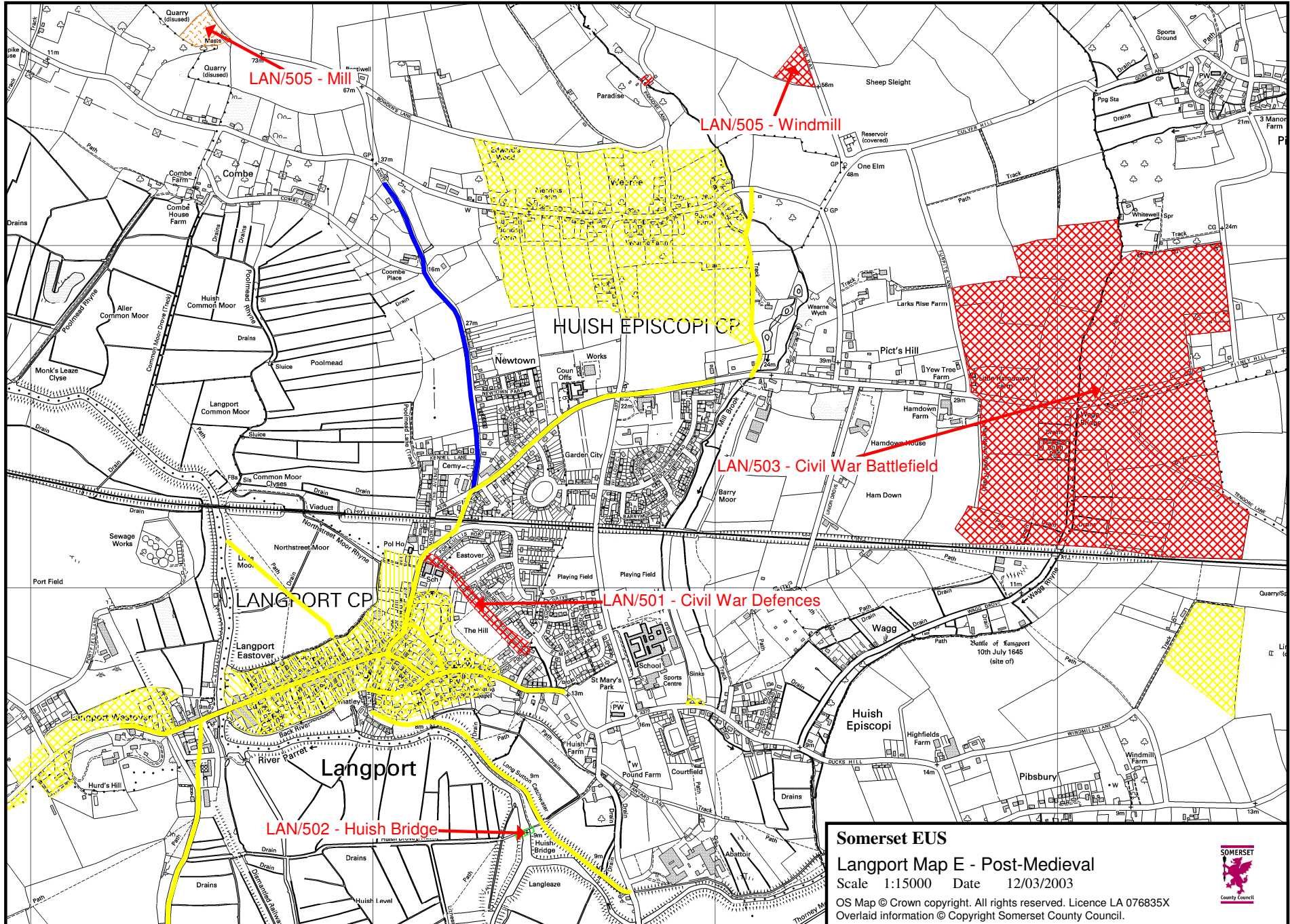
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Langport Map D - Medieval

Scale 1:18000 Date 12/03/2003

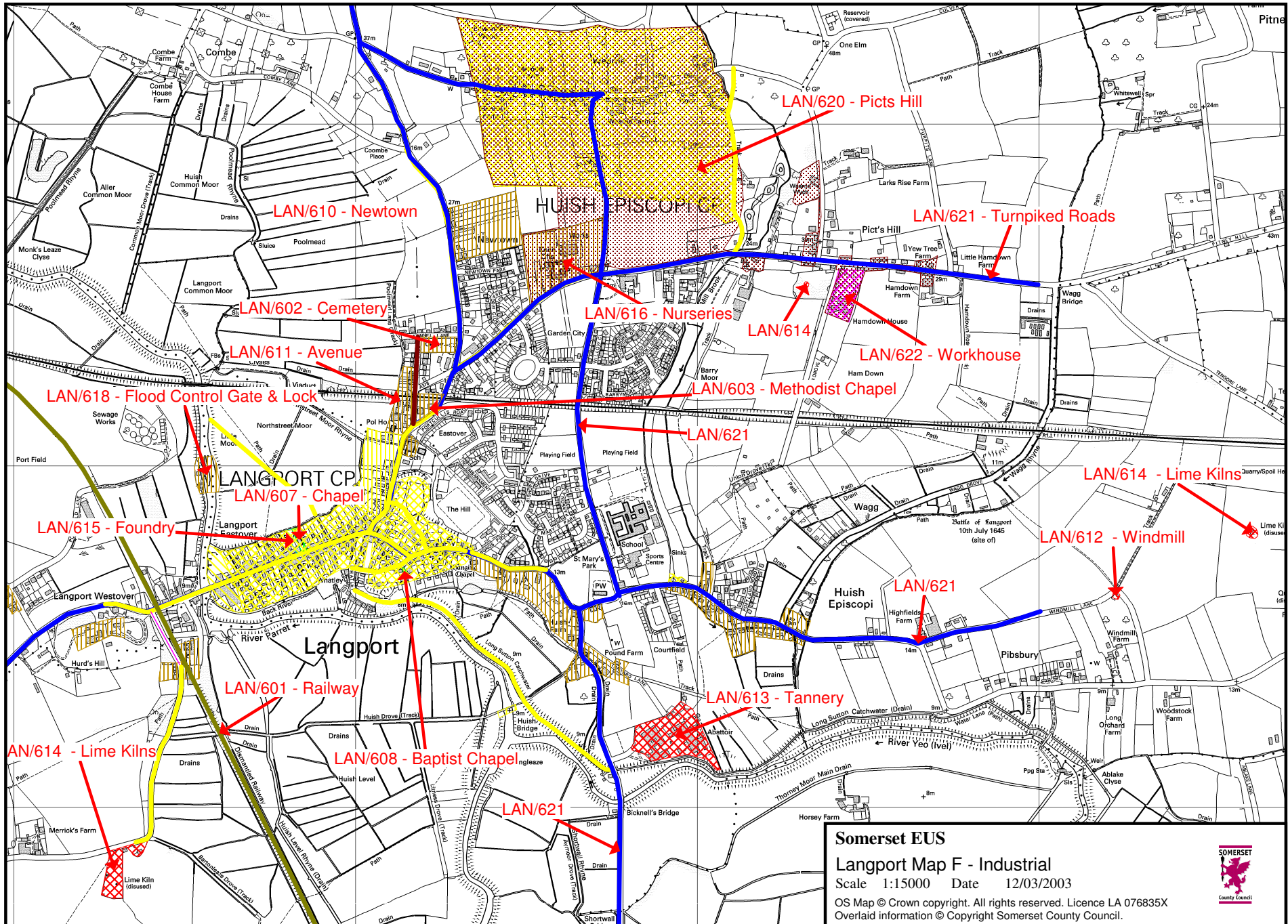
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 Langport Map E - Post-Medieval
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LAN/610 - Newtown

LAN/620 - Picts Hill

LAN/621 - Turnpiked Roads

LAN/602 - Cemetery

LAN/616 - Nurseries

LAN/614

LAN/622 - Workhouse

LAN/611 - Avenue

LAN/603 - Methodist Chapel

LAN/618 - Flood Control Gate & Lock

LAN/621

LAN/614 - Lime Kilns

LAN/607 - Chapel

LAN/612 - Windmill

LAN/615 - Foundry

LAN/621

LAN/601 - Railway

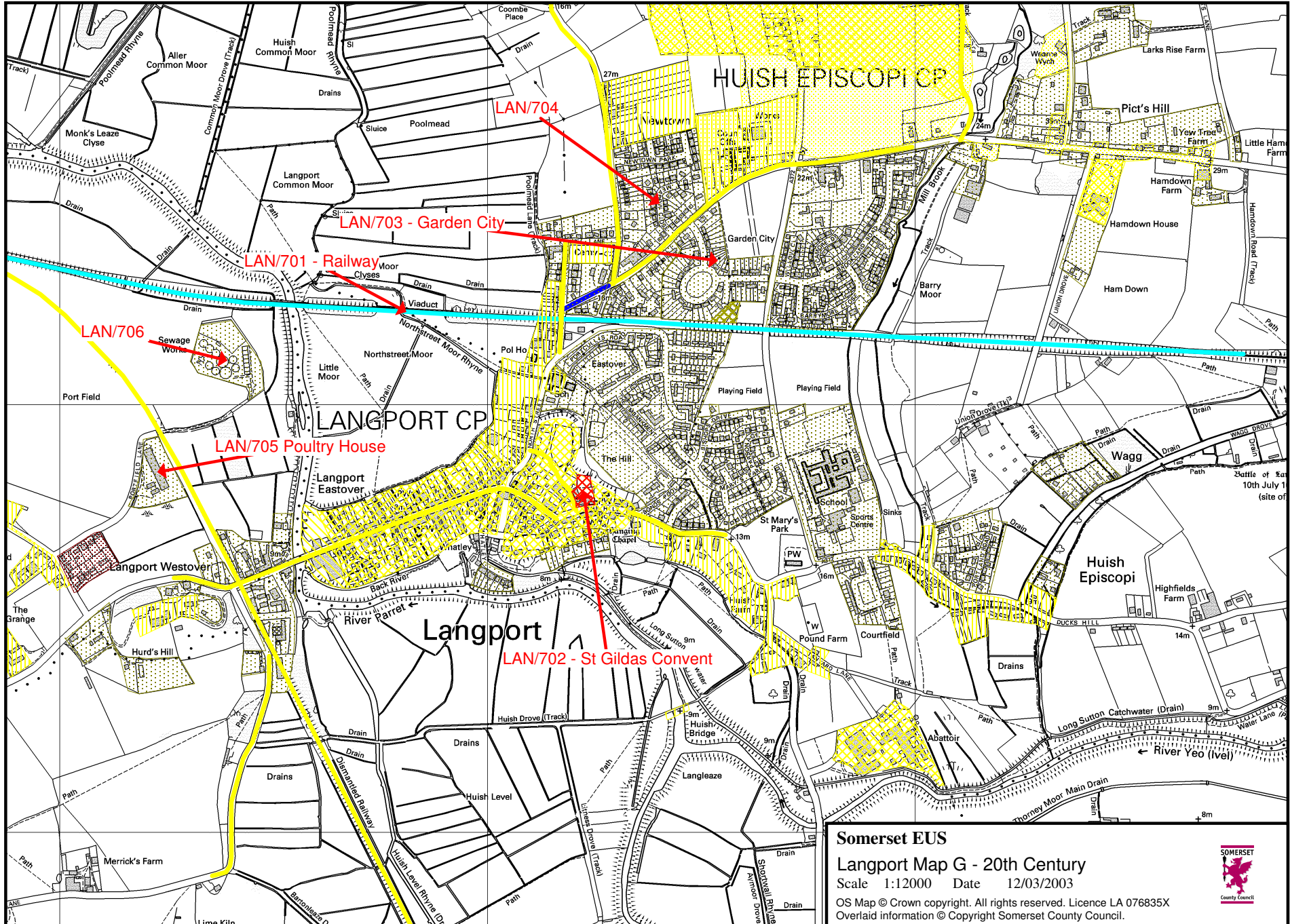
LAN/613 - Tannery

LAN/614 - Lime Kilns

LAN/608 - Baptist Chapel

LAN/621





HUISH EPISCOPI CP

LAN/704

LAN/703 - Garden City

LAN/701 - Railway

LAN/706

LAN/705 Poultry House

LANGPORT CP

Langport

LAN/702 - St Gildas Convent

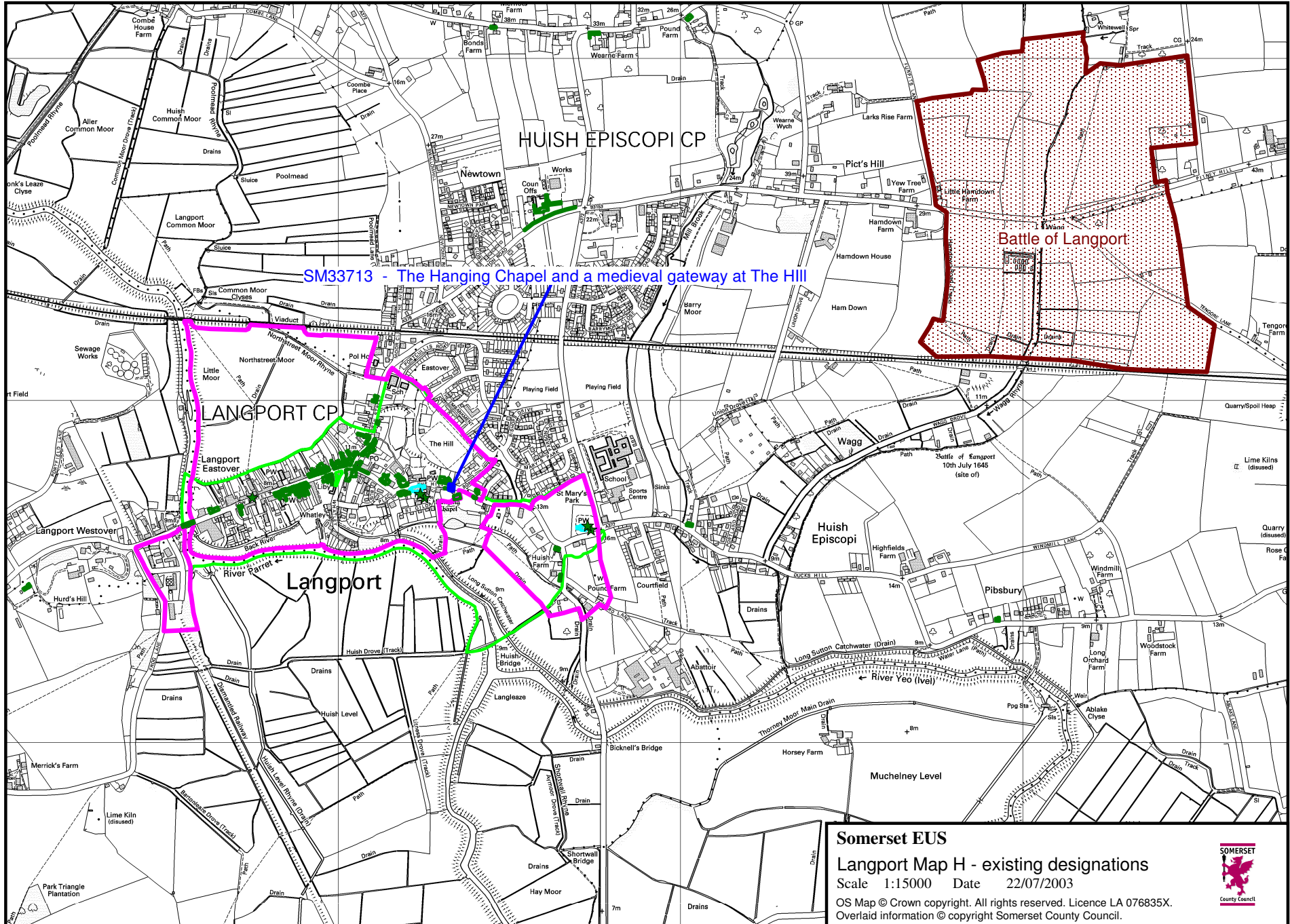
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Langport Map G - 20th Century

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Langport Map H - existing designations
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