

English Heritage Extensive Urban Survey

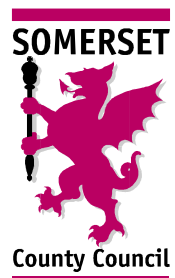
An archaeological assessment of

Minehead

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SOMERSET EXTENSIVE URBAN SURVEY

MINEHEAD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

by Clare Gathercole

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SOMERSET EXTENSIVE URBAN SURVEY

MINEHEAD

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*

A relatively large amount of primary documentation is available for Minehead, particularly for the post-medieval period. These documents include manor surveys, bailiffs' accounts, court records, charters and churchwardens' accounts. Not all of this material has yet been assimilated by historians. None of the primary documents was consulted for the purposes of this report: the potential exists for a much more detailed study than this one.

2. *Local histories*

Minehead has been well-served by local historians. In addition to the early work of Hancock (1903), more recent studies include those of Binding & Stevens (1977) and Lamplugh (1987). The historical content of this report relies largely on these sources. The VCH has not yet covered the area of Minehead.

3. *Maps*

The earliest map showing Minehead is a sketch of coastal defences dated to c1544. Another sketch of the town from c1701 also exists, together with an early plan of the harbour. The only other maps to predate the Ordnance Survey surveyors' drawings of c1802 are a large scale plan of Lower Town (c1792), which shows the fire damage of 1791, and an estate map of Staunton Fry (c1770) showing an area on the south side of the town.

In addition to the 19th century Ordnance Survey maps and Tithe Maps, there is an 1822 map showing the Luttrell estate at Minehead.

III. A BRIEF HISTORY OF MINEHEAD

Minehead lies in a relatively sheltered position in the lee of North Hill, at a convergence point of upland, lowland and coastal landscapes. Though separate small settlements in each of these landscapes have physically grown together only comparatively recently to form the town as it appears today, they have long been linked under one name. The various forms of this name have consistently reflected the importance of the sheltering North Hill to the town. The earliest recorded forms of Minehead's name - *Mynheafdon* (1046), *Maneheve* (1086), *Menehewed* (1225) and *Menedun* (also 1225) - contain elements allied to both Welsh and Old English words for hill or mountain (Welsh *mynydd*, passing into Old English as *myned*; and the English *dun*).

There is abundant evidence of activity around Minehead long before the historic settlements, though there is only limited evidence suggesting actual occupation in the area of the modern town itself. Earthworks, including the Bronze Age barrows of Selworthy Beacon and the Iron Age enclosure and possible field system of Furzebury Brake, survive on the high ground north of the town. A considerable proportion of the flints recovered from the area also comes from the higher land of North Hill and Higher Hopcott (away from land at times prone to flooding). However, a secondary centre of finds exists in the intertidal area, where the remains of a submerged forest survive together with peat deposits: in this environment a number of flints have been found together with planking suggesting possible structures.

It is possible that the known Iron Age sites on North Hill remained the principal settlements until the 8th or 9th century, for it appears that Roman influence in this area was slight. However, certainly by Domesday (1086) there were agricultural settlements at Minehead and Alcombe. There were also several other hamlets and farmsteads in the area, perhaps including Periton, Staunton and Woodcombe, the names of which suggest that they may be of pre-Conquest origin. Fishing is believed to have been taking place here by this date (though it is not specifically referred to in the Domesday Book), but negative evidence, in the form of Minehead's omission from accounts of Viking attacks on the Somerset coast, may suggest that there was no harbour - or settlement - of any importance (though there could be other reasons for the omission).

The manor of Minehead, like that of Alcombe to the south, belonged to the Saxon Algar, and was larger than its other neighbours, Bratton and Mene. All these manors passed to the Mohuns after the Norman Conquest and were administered from Dunster Castle, though the manor of Alcombe and part of the manor of Minehead (together with the tithes) were granted to the great monastic houses - Bath Abbey (as Dunster Priory's endowment) and Bruton - in the early Mediaeval period. But for three hundred years, Minehead remained essentially a small, scattered agricultural and fishing settlement on a feudal estate.

It appears from the available documents that things began to change during the 14th century. A comparison of the c1300 manor survey and the 1383-4 bailiffs' accounts shows that a process of letting out of demesne land and commutation of feudal service for cash rent was under way. This reflects a complex national trend, in which specific events of the 14th century (including the Black Death) played a part. The letting out of blocks of land, and references to waste land reclamation appear to show that the survivors in Minehead were doing well. The Mohuns, on the other hand, had financial problems which forced the widow Joan to sell the reversion of the estates in 1375. Joan herself survived for another thirty years; when she died, her indignant heirs then instigated a lawsuit challenging the sale. In these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that the purchasers, the Luttrells - who were in any case heavily involved in national politics - were slow to take a personal interest in the estates, which were at first primarily a professionally managed source of income for them.

By this time, the harbour at Dunster, which had formerly been most profitable for the Mohun estates, was silting up. It was this which prompted the deliberate development of Minehead as a replacement centre of trade and therefore revenue. In fact, references to a town, port and fair at Minehead occur as early as 1380, before the Luttrells gained full control. But during the 15th century it became, thanks to the influence of its overlord, not only a successful fishing and trading port (with the Luttrells' connections with France encouraging continental trade), but also one of very few departure points for pilgrims to Santiago de Compostella. There were 120 households by 1435, and a market by at least 1461 (though probably earlier). In 1474, burgesses (and a portreeve) are mentioned, implying that some form of incorporation had already occurred. This reference comes from the period (1461-1485) when the Luttrell estates were attainted (due to their Lancastrian sympathies): though the heir's mother remained in occupation at Minehead, circumstances were a little unusual.

Certainly, Minehead was not a planned civic and commercial venture in the mould of Dunster. The town lacked physical coherence, having already assumed the form it retained until the late 19th century, with three distinct foci: Higher or Church Town (around the newly rebuilt 15th century church); Middle or Lower Town (around the mill); and Quay Town. It was a replacement harbour, not a substitute for the showpiece estate centre of Dunster - and the Luttrells were, as later events showed, correspondingly unwilling to encourage the pretensions of its citizens.

From the late Mediaeval period until the late 18th century Minehead's history is dominated by the fortunes of its quays. The early harbour area lay on a creek some way south of the present quay, at the then mouth of the Bratton

Stream. Though this was adequate for small fishing boats and coasters, it was from the beginning difficult to maintain a sufficient depth of water for the ocean going vessels on which Minehead's international trade depended. There are references to problems with silting as early as the 14th century, and to the construction of jetties in the 15th century, with a proportion of the manor's harbour tolls being left with the townfolk for their upkeep.

Minehead succeeded in retaining its deep water facilities into the 16th century and the town became increasingly important as trade grew. Though much of this was local, or with Wales and Ireland (Leland describes the town as full of Irishmen in the mid-16th century), with wool and livestock being principal commodities, Minehead had a significant role in trading on more exotic imported commodities. In Henry VIII's reign, Minehead possessed more ships suitable for naval use than any other Bristol Channel port, and indeed a 1544 sketch of (proposed?) coastal defence measures shows several large vessels anchored in the bay.

At the accession of Elizabeth I, Minehead was one of only two Somerset ports with port and custom officials. However, though on paper trade was healthy, in fact the condition of the harbour was becoming critical. Despite constant efforts to keep the harbour clear (the townsmen claimed to spend £50 a year on it), a receding tidal maximum was encouraging the formation of a shingle bank which impeded access to the quays. It was agreed by all that urgent, drastic measures were required. However, the Luttrells found themselves temporarily unable to finance any large scheme. Buoyed up by their past profits, and eager to escape any part of the Luttrell tolls and levies, the townfolk opportunistically petitioned the Queen to grant them Borough status in order that they could take responsibility for the repair of the harbour. Perhaps they sincerely believed that they could manage the harbour better than had the Luttrells, who reluctantly acquiesced to the petition (at least at first), stressing the urgency of repairs in a letter to the Queen. The 1559 Charter of Incorporation, which established a free Borough and Parliamentary representation, was therefore made *conditional* on the fulfilment of the town's obligations with respect to the harbour.

It very quickly became apparent that the mercantile and fishing community of the new town could not afford the radical measures needed to repair the harbour. Appeals were made to the Luttrells, and by 1570 (having left the town to stew for a while) Thomas Luttrell was attempting to raise funds. But he died in 1571, leaving a son, George, in his minority. This, in combination with the naval levies of Elizabeth's reign meant that the harbour continued without major repairs for most of her reign, its condition gradually worsening. When George Luttrell was finally in a position to address the problem, his proposals were accompanied by a demand that the Borough charter, which was a real thorn in his side, be revoked. The burgesses were described by him as "but simple and rude handicraftmen who are fitter to be governed than to govern others" - and they had patently failed to fulfill the terms of the Elizabethan charter. The charter was revoked in 1607, after years of petitions, inquisitions and counter-petitions, though the town retained its Parliamentary privilege. However, George had already embarked on the "Newe Key", which forms the basis of the present harbour. This was usable by 1605 and more or less completed by 1616 (it seems he had much more grandiose schemes which never came to fruition).

The new harbour had a dramatic effect on Minehead's fortunes, though resentment amongst the townfolk at their loss of status continued and there were periodic petitions for its restoration. Population, which had declined in the later years of Elizabeth's reign, began to rise and the town expanded, particularly around the quay and the market, as trade boomed. In 1626, Minehead was one of 24 English and Welsh seaports ordered to fortify against possible Spanish attacks, and in 1630 Gerard described a little market town with a much frequented harbour. The town saw action in the Civil War in 1642 and 1643. Hertford and his Royalist volunteers escaped through the port in 1642 - at some risk to life and limb, since they had misjudged the mood of the manor and town. The next year Minehead was blockaded and raided from the sea. Though Thomas Luttrell pragmatically backed down at Dunster when the Royalist army threatened, the sympathies of Minehead town remained Parliamentary.

In the years after the first Civil War, Minehead was extremely busy, sending troops to Ireland and trading. A number of important merchant families established themselves in the town in this period, as did many smugglers. Most trade was still with Wales, the Bristol Channel ports and Ireland, but in the 1670s a fishing fleet went to Newfoundland every year. However, the quay was silting up again by the late 17th century. The harbour accounts from this period (from 1666 to 1800) have survived, and these show how expensive the harbour was to maintain. Works undertaken in 1682 enabled the harbour to take larger vessels, but did not address the root problem and though trade continued to flourish, it was - again - on borrowed time.

A further harbour scheme by the Luttrells was accompanied by a c1701 “Survey and Description of the Defects of the Pier at Minehead” which survives, with maps. This latest set of improvements, though accompanied by Parliamentary support guaranteeing duties to finance it, was dogged by ill fortune: finally completed around 1714, it was immediately ravaged by storms, and thenceforth required constant repairs, as high water level continued to drop. It is true that trade boomed in the early 18th century (with cloth and livestock still the main commodities), and that Defoe (1724) described Minehead as the safest harbour on the south side of the Bristol Channel and a fine port. However, this took place against a background of soaring costs, passed on to the merchants wherever possible, and growing friction between the merchants and the Luttrells. Whilst the latter constantly needed to increase duties to maintain the harbour, the former saw these as increasingly exorbitant. So, for example, a failed attempt was made by a group of merchants to make Watchet a staple port (to avoid the Luttrells’ expensive weigh beam), and the townsmen continued to petition (somewhat unrealistically) for the restoration of their charter. Extra spice was added by the anti-establishment attitudes of a number of Quakers - including influential merchants - in the town. On the other hand, the Luttrells increasingly manipulated the election of Members of Parliament to their advantage, and maintained a tenuous control.

The political turbulence of the town in the 18th century cannot have helped when the problems of the harbour - its state of repair and its high duties - combined with the failure of the local woollen industry (on which much of Minehead’s trade depended) really began to bite. Trade and the fisheries declined dramatically in the later 18th century. Collinson, writing in 1791, says:

“About the beginning of the present century upwards of forty vessels were employed to Ireland. Many others were engaged in the West India, Virginia and Straits trade; and four thousand barrels of herring were at that time shipped here annually for the Mediterranean. But all this is now nearly at an end; the trade is lost; the herrings have left the coast; and there are at present only five or six vessels belonging to the port.”

This decline was mirrored in the general fortunes of the town and the late-18th/ early-19th century was a difficult time for Minehead. The town contracted, despite attempts - which included the setting up of the Turnpike Trust - to revive it: there were 34 fewer recorded households in 1783 than in 1705. Then in 1791 the first of two serious fires took place, destroying much of Lower Town. Minehead hit rock bottom. Though grandiose schemes for rebuilding Lower Town were quickly announced, little was actually done: there are descriptions of blackened shells still remaining five years later - and indeed much of the town was not finally rebuilt until well into the 19th century. Many of the worst affected, who had nowhere to live and nowhere to work, simply moved away, and the population once more fell (from 2000 in 1790 to 1480 by 1830). The Luttrells were blamed for their agent’s failure to relieve the suffering of the townspeople and there was increasing unrest. Confident of their control of the Parliamentary Borough, the family must have been shocked by the vitriolic opposition they encountered in the closely fought election of 1796. Ironically, the Luttrell comeback, during which they had virtual control of the Parliamentary Borough from 1802 onwards, sealed Minehead’s fate: it was classed with the rotten boroughs in the 1832 reform act and disenfranchised. In 1834 injury was added to insult: the port lost its jurisdiction, when Bridgwater’s limits were extended to cover Minehead’s old waters.

On the other hand, sea bathing became fashionable in the 18th century, and Minehead’s development as a resort had already beginning before 1800. The 1794 Universal British Directory says that “ a number of persons of fashion have been induced to visit it as a bathing-place” , and several other heady descriptions of its environs exist from the turn of the century. Minehead, offering not only sea-bathing but also relative isolation (despite the new turnpike road which made it newly accessible), was at first an exclusive resort for persons of romantic sensibility, catering for “the pensive or rational pleasures of them who choose to enjoy Nature...” rather than “felicity hunters, the teasing insects of fashion” (Rev. Richard Warner, c1800). Savage (1830) also says that visitors “will not be annoyed by the company of the frivolous part of the fashionable world of whom so many are to be found in some of our watering places at particular seasons of the year.” On the other hand, Minehead was short of “gracious lodgings”. Many cheaper lodgings existed, a reminder, perhaps, of the town’s heyday as a port. Though not considered entirely suitable for the better class of visitor which was anticipated, these lodgings were perfect for gentleness in reduced circumstances. Hence, by 1851 the town was already becoming a retirement centre.

A belated campaign of municipal works from the 1860s onwards - at Luttrell expense - transformed the town, particularly Lower Town. The town centre and the main 19th century suburbs were laid out on the ruins of the old town, providing for visitors. Puddle Street became the Parade; Watery Lane became the Avenue; gas lighting, water and sewers were all provided, as was a new church. The coming of the railway - relatively late, after a long campaign by the town - in 1874 had a dramatic effect on Minehead. For the first time, day trippers en masse had direct access to the town (though steamboats and coaches had been coming for some time) and, inevitably, something of its original character as a resort was lost. On the other hand, its economy benefitted enormously. Minehead grew rapidly (the population rose from 1,542 in 1851 to 2,782 in 1901) and in 1894 the Urban District Council was first elected. Its jurisdiction was extended in 1916 to include Alcombe, together with the intertidal area. Though Alcombe was still separate from Minehead's three foci at this time, the town's rate of growth promised to absorb it.

This promise has been fulfilled in the 20th century, though Minehead's development has taken one or two unexpected turns. Until the Second World War, it continued along the path set in the 19th century. The resort's facilities expanded, with the opening of the pier in 1901 (enabling pleasure steamers to call at the town, which they did regularly throughout the 1920s and 1930s), the provision of electricity in 1903, and the establishment of a number of pleasure gardens and a cinema.

With the outbreak of war in 1939, a flood of evacuees began to pour into the town and the population rose dramatically. The pier was demolished, as part of the coastal defence preparations, and was not rebuilt after the war, so that the bigger boats could no longer visit Minehead. Not until 1951 when the harbour was given to the Urban District Council by the Luttrells and cleared yet again, did pleasure boats return. However, any diminution in Minehead's holiday appeal has been reversed since 1962 when Butlins opened. Originally conceived as a small camp, it has risen to be Butlins "flagship" and draws thousands of visitors to the town each year. The permanent population has also risen as large numbers of people have retired or been relocated to the sprawling suburbs of the modern town which have now covered most of the low lying land and swallowed the historic settlements.

IV. THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF MINEHEAD

GENERAL COMMENTS

0.1 Archaeological work in the town

Though there has been very little archaeological work in the town itself, Minehead Bay has recently (1996) been the subject of extensive field survey in connection with the Minehead Sea Defences Scheme.

0.2 Standing structures and visible remains

Relatively few Mediaeval structures survive in Minehead, partly because of the fires of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. However, a number of Listed post-medieval buildings cluster in the historic centres of Church Town and Quay Town.

1. PREHISTORIC

(Map A)

There are extensive prehistoric remains to the north of the town of Minehead. These are beyond the remit of this report, but are detailed in the SMR.

1.1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge

The SMR records a number of finds of prehistoric artefacts (see below). These are largely chance recoveries, for there has been little archaeological work in the town. The intertidal area has, however, recently been surveyed (McDonnell, 1996), resulting in the improved definition of areas of prehistoric deposits.

1.2 Context

Minehead 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 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 Minehead, however, the presence of significant prehistoric remains in the intertidal areas, together with the earthworks and field systems on the uplands to the north, suggest that the main focus of settlement was on the high ground, with exploitation of the coastal area taking place from that base: this accords with the pattern of prehistoric activity in West Somerset, as it is currently understood.

1.3 Standing structures and visible remains

Parts of the submerged forest are visible at low tide.

1.4 Archaeological features, shown on Map A

1.4.a Artefact scatters (inland)

MIN/101 Flint and stone tool finds

The SMR records a number of inland sites at which scatters of flint or stone tools have been found around Minehead. These include: SMR 35241, near Hopcott Common, a site which has produced mesolithic and neolithic flints and arrowheads; SMR 35242, a Neolithic scraper, found close to Blenheim Road; SMR 35243, a site south-west of Periton House which has produced thirty neolithic and mesolithic flints; SMR 35244, a mesolithic microlith find at Millbridge; and SMR 33570, flints found near Ellicombe.

The artefact finds are defined from the SMR.

Not mapped Imprecisely located flint finds include a mesolithic axe (SMR 35385).

1.4.b Landscape features and artefacts (intertidal)

MIN/102 Minehead Bay peat deposits, submerged forest and associated finds

In Minehead Bay there survive remnants of submerged landscapes, including peat deposits and areas of submerged forest (SMR 35064) which consist of fallen tree trunks, tree boles with root systems, and clay and gravel deposits. These remnants, which have recently been mapped as part of the Minehead Sea Defences Environmental Assessment (McDonnell, 1996), are extensive but unstable and vulnerable. With them have been associated a number of finds suggestive of prehistoric activity. SMR 33782, a site within the submerged forest, has produced mesolithic, neolithic and Bronze Age flints (not all precisely located). Further to the west, possible planks and laid tree trunks have been recovered from the peat deposits: these may represent the remains of a prehistoric structure.

The peat deposits in the inter-tidal zone will be analysed in detail over the next five years as part of the Minehead Sea Defences Scheme.

From the Minehead Sea Defences Scheme Environmental Report (McDonnell, 1996) and the SMR.

2. ROMAN

(No map)

2.1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge

There is no evidence of any Roman presence, or any sub-Roman occupation, in Minehead itself.

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.

Minehead is one of 26 of the 45 historic towns covered by this project at which there is as yet no evidence of Roman settlement on the site of the later town, reflecting the generally reduced penetration of Roman influence into the West Somerset uplands.

3. SAXON

(No map)

3.1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge

There has been no archaeological work directly relating to the Saxon period in Minehead. Although there is documentary evidence for scattered pre-Conquest settlement in and around Minehead and Alcombe, the locational evidence is considered insufficient for any attempt at mapping. For this reason, the possible Saxon origins of sites in Minehead are discussed in the next section.

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 8th or 9th century onwards) saw the beginnings of a resurgence of first trading places and then towns, under the control of the Saxon royal families, in the context of a network of royal estate administration centres and subordinate settlements which was already established (in some cases long-established). Though only a relatively small number of places with any claim to be towns existed by the time of the Domesday Survey, many of the subordinate settlements recorded at that point were to become towns in the Mediaeval period. Minehead is one of ten of the 45 historic towns covered by this project which had no urban pretensions before the Conquest but were nevertheless in existence as agricultural settlements.

3.3 Standing structures and visible remains

There are no visible remains of the Saxon period in Minehead.

4. MEDIAEVAL/ POST-MEDIAEVAL

(Maps B to F)

Although a number of sites and areas in Minehead are known to be of Mediaeval (or earlier) origin, the overall level of evidence is not such as to enable the extents or the components of the Mediaeval town to be adequately differentiated from those of the post-medieval. Therefore, these periods are considered together.

4.1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge

There has been no archaeological work relating to the Mediaeval or post-medieval settlements, except for the recent survey of the intertidal area (McDonnell, 1996).

4.2 Context

Both in Britain and on the continent, the Mediaeval 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 Mediaeval 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 Mediaeval 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 Mediaeval period.

Minehead 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 Mediaeval period. It was one of eleven of the 45 towns which had a harbour or quays in the Mediaeval period. In this case, unusually, the harbour development, which occurred only after the important port of Dunster silted up, was the main impetus behind the urbanisation of the settlement. Minehead is

one of a relatively small number - five - of the Mediaeval towns which consisted of a largely irregular layout (though with some regular tenements) superimposed on an existing settlement (or in this case settlements).

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. Minehead 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. Indeed, it was one of the two most important ports in the county during the post-medieval period.

4.3 Standing structures and visible remains

There are very few standing buildings of Mediaeval origin in Minehead, partly because of later fires. Listed survivals include: the 15th century Church of St Michael (SMR LB 30154) and churchyard cross (SMR LB 30144); the much altered "Old Priory" (SMR LB 30030), which also contains 15th century fabric; and the cross base in Market House Lane (SMR LB 30097).

A much larger number of post-medieval buildings survive, especially around St Michael's Church and to the south of the Quay, in areas less affected by fire. Many of these buildings, largely cottages and farms, are Listed and details of these are included on the SMR.

Archaeological components

Until the 20th century, Minehead consisted of four main settlement foci (Church Town, Lower Town, Quay Town and Alcombe) and a number of outlying hamlets. The scattered nature of the Mediaeval town (SMR 33771) has entailed the production of several maps for this period: the descriptions of some archaeological features have also been arranged geographically.

4.4 Archaeological features (Church or Upper Town), shown on Map B

4.4.a Redevelopment in earlier settlement components

Settlement around the church on the hill is of probable pre-Conquest origin, but no attempt has been made to map the extent of earlier occupation.

4.4.b Communications: Roads and paths

MIN/416, MIN/503

Pre-1802 roads

The development of the network of lanes, centred on St Michael's church, which until the 19th century formed the skeleton of Church Town is not fully understood. There is no evidence at all for any formal planning. It would appear rather that the principal Mediaeval tracks and paths (MIN/416), which connected church, harbour, lower town and fields, were gradually supplemented by lanes to enclosed commons and farms. The Ball, originally known as New Street, is thought to post-date Church Street, which was the original main route down to the junction with Quay Lane. Fishers Lane, the steep pathway to the quay, may be of early origin, but must originally have run towards the Mediaeval quay (see p17): the exact course of this track across open land is not known.

From the 1802 and 1822 maps.

4.4.c Water

MIN/406

The holy wells

There are two holy wells close to St Michael's Church. Pems Well (SMR 33785) is a wishing well of uncertain date: it may be Mediaeval, or perhaps earlier. St Michael's well (SMR 33786) is referred to in 16th century records in Dunster Castle Archive. Its exact location is not recorded in the SMR, but the spring was known in the early part of the 20th century, when its stonework was removed as part of drainage work in St Michael's Lane. The possible site marked here is that of the well shown in 1890 on the road now known as Church Road.

Pems Well is shown on the 1996 map; the possible site of St Michael's Well is from the 1890 map.

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

MIN/402

The Mediaeval churchyard

St Michael's churchyard (SMR 33769) has been in use since at least the Mediaeval period. Its location - on a coastal hill side and close to springs - is reminiscent of known pre-English Christian sites in the West Country. It is possible therefore that the site could be of much earlier origin, and perhaps contain the remains of very early burials and structures. However, there is as yet no archaeological evidence of this.

The churchyard contains a badly damaged 15th century cross base (SMR 33770, SMR LB 30144). The Grade II* Listed church (SMR 34881, SMR LB 30154) is itself mostly of 15th century origin, though the south porch may be earlier. It was heavily restored in the 19th century, and the 19th century walls and gate are also Listed (SMR LB 30147).

The extent of the churchyard is that shown on the 1822 map.

4.4.e Settlement (including farms)

MIN/510, MIN/511

Upper Town - pre 1822 settlement

Church Town contained two discernible settlement nuclei until comparatively recently, one (the upper, MIN/510) around the church itself, and another (the lower, MIN/511) at the junction of Church Street, Quay Lane and the Holloway to Lower Town.

Very little is known archaeologically of these settlement areas, which consisted of a mixture of tenements, cottages and farms. There is, however, considerable potential for further documentary research.

The 1822 map, which is the main source for the mapped areas, postdates the two early 19th century fires (of 1811 and 1815) which affected Upper Town.

From the 1822 map.

MIN/527

New Street - possible pre-1815 occupation areas

New Street, which was of probable later Mediaeval or post-medieval origin, is said to have been completely destroyed in the fire of 1815 (Hancock, 1903) and to have remained partly ruinous in the 1830s. The only map of this area predating the fire (the 1802 OS surveyors' drawing) is very small scale, and unclear. An area of possible early occupation has therefore been marked from the appearance of the plots on the 1822 map, but further research might clarify the situation.

From the 1802 and 1822 maps.

MIN/421

Shute Farm

Shute (or Stoates) Farm, close to the church, is of probable Mediaeval origin. It may have originated in the 1400s as a block of land (or "shot") let out from the open field (Binding & Stevens, 1977). It appears from the 1822 map that the building complex was differently oriented before the extension of St Michael's Road in the later 19th century, and the surviving Listed farmhouse (SMR LB 30152) may reflect this orientation (although it is itself probably 18th century). Part of the original farmyard may therefore lie under the road. The farm was renovated in 1822: a description survives of the then new complex, which included house, dairy, cellar, brewhouse, cider house and furze/ turf house.

From the 1822 map and information in Binding & Stevens, 1977.

MIN/509

Upland farms, Church Town

A string of small farms and cottages, including Higher and Lower Moor Farms, and the cottages of Lower Moor, lay to the west of the main settlement nuclei on the edge of the moorland. Since

there is evidence that wasteland reclamation and land enclosure was under way by the late Mediaeval period, it is possible that some of these dwellings may be of Mediaeval origin, though the post-medieval Listed structures (SMR LB 30105-7) are of 16th to 18th century date. Some of these sites - chiefly Higher Moor Farm - now lie deserted.

From the 1822 map.

4.4.f Market place(s)

MIN/407

Upper Town market place

Minor market areas may have existed in front of the church and at the Cross (at the top of the quay path). The available maps show the early 19th century situation, confused by encroachments onto open space and fire destruction. The mapped areas may therefore not represent the full extent of early open spaces.

From the 1822 map.

4.4.g Agricultural sites

MIN/502

Upland commons

The limits of enclosure and the edge of the commons in 1822 are shown.

From the 1822 map.

4.5 Archaeological features (Lower Town), shown on Map C

4.5.a Redevelopment in earlier settlement components

Settlement around the mill in Lower Town is of probable pre-Conquest origin, but no attempt has been made to map the extent of earlier occupation.

4.5.b Communications

(a) Roads, streets and route ways

MIN/416, MIN/503

Pre-1791 roads

Though many of the early roads in Lower Town were obscured by 19th century redevelopment, their alignments were largely preserved. Moreover, the 1792 plan of fire damage in Lower Town clearly shows the streets which existed at that time. Many, if not most, of these were of probable Mediaeval origin. Puddle Street, a broad, damp lane with the stream running down its centre, was the main thoroughfare. At its east end (at Puddle Bridge) it branched: Watery Lane, or "La Lane" (as it is called in Mediaeval documents) led east to the lord's warren; the original cart road led north to join Quay Lane; and the New Road - which had very recently replaced the old footpath to the Mediaeval quay - led directly north-east. At the west end of Puddle Street lay the major crossroads, where the Holloway and Bampton Street (the main routes from Upper Town, Porlock and Alcombe) met Friday Street. Parks Lane was in existence by 1822; though its town end certainly existed earlier, more research might clarify the origins of this route skirting the 19th century remnants of parkland.

It has been suggested that a rudimentary grid plan may have existed in Lower Town. In fact, there is little archaeological knowledge of the development of the plan recorded on the 1791 map; any archaeological observations of exact alignments, frontages and dated roadside developments will therefore be of value.

Most roads marked are shown on the 1792 map. Some, on the margins of Lower Town, are taken from the 1822 map.

(b) Bridges
MIN/417

Lower Town bridges

At least two bridges in Lower Town are referred to in Mediaeval documents. That to the west crossed the stream as it left the Wethull meadow (on what is now Parks Lane), whilst that to the east crossed the stream at the end of Puddle Street, and was flanked by a ford. There is some confusion over the names of the bridges. The eastern one was certainly known as Puddle Bridge by the 18th century. That to the west may have been called Tothhullbriggs (Binding & Stevens, 1977). There are also references to the "Great Stony Bridge", which may have crossed the stream at the entrance to Frog Street (as the lower end of the Holloway was known).

There is no archaeological knowledge of any substantial stone bridge structure at any of these three sites, though the name of the Great Stony Bridge suggests that at least one existed. Whether any remains have survived the 19th century redevelopments of the area remains to be seen.

The sites are marked from the 1792 map and information in Binding & Stevens, 1977.

4.5.c Water
MIN/515

The stream

The course of the stream in Puddle Street is shown as it appears on the 1792 and 1822 maps.

From the 1792 and 1822 maps.

MIN/420

The creek

It is stated in the local histories (Hancock, 1903; Binding & Stevens, 1977) that the stream swung north-east beyond Puddle Bridge to form the creek on which the Mediaeval quays were situated (though since water also ran along the lane to the warren, the stream must have forked). It is also suggested that the old stream bed was located during the construction of Blenheim Terrace in the 19th century (Stevens, undated), implying that the stream may have run approximately along the line of the present road, with the original footpath to the quay running alongside it. This does not sit well with references to the North Field lying on the north side of La Lane. There is no well-recorded archaeological evidence of the creek, but archaeological remains may survive beneath the 19th and 20th century developments.

Mapped (very approximately) from information in Hancock (1903) and Binding & Stevens (1977).

4.5.d Manors and estates

Whilst there is no evidence that a Mediaeval manor house existed in Minehead, there are 14th century Mohun references to the "Court", an early Mediaeval estate administration centre. This is described as containing a grange, cowhouse, wine cellar and chapel; a steward's house probably also existed. There are also references to Courtygate Field, a small field which lay outside the gates of the Court, to its west.

The site of the Court is not known, though there are two strong possibilities:

MIN/410

Possible site of demesne buildings - Court Green

Court Green is generally regarded as the likeliest location of the early estate buildings. Lying just south of the manor mill (see p15) and away from the area most liable to flooding, it has room for the Field to its west (though this cannot have been by the main gate). In contrast to much of Lower Town, Court Green has retained several Listed Buildings (SMR LB 30037-9, 30076), though these are of 17th and 18th century origin. There is as yet no archaeological evidence that the site was distinctive in the Mediaeval period, though the retention of its integrity through the upheavals of the 19th century may itself be of significance.

From the 1792 and 1822 maps, the List and Binding & Stevens (1977).

MIN/426

Tythings Court

This is a possible alternative site for early demesne buildings. The late 18th century map shows a triangular Court forming, along with a number of adjacent street frontages, a regular block to the north of the stream. Its name implies that it was the site of the Court for the Tithing, which might well have been linked to early demesne buildings (Binding & Stevens, 1977). Though lower lying and more prone to flooding, this site would have been more convenient for the Mediaeval market place; moreover, a small field could have lain alongside Tythings Court Lane, between the entrance to the Court and lane which became Parks Lane. Again, archaeological evidence is entirely lacking.

From the 1792, 1822 and 1840 maps.

MIN/419

The Old Priory

The Grade II* Listed Old Priory (SMR LB 30030) is a building of 15th century origin, on a prime site at the point of ingress for goods - and visitors - from the quayside. Documentary evidence suggests that it acted as the manor court and estate office for many years, at least from the 16th century. It has also been suggested as a possible location for the 'Court' (Bond, c1990). The traditional association with the Priory, however, may indicate that the monastic properties were administered here until the Dissolution (although there is little hard evidence for this).

The building is defined from the 1792 map.

4.5.e *Burial sites, religious houses and places of worship*

MIN/501

Quaker burial grounds (Lower Town)

There was a Quaker meeting house and burial ground in Market House Lane in the early 18th century, when it was described as newly built (Hancock, 1903). The probable area in which this lay is marked from information in Binding & Stevens (1977), though further research might pinpoint it more exactly. At least two burials, the bones of which have been recovered and reburied in the churchyard, occurred here.

From Binding & Stevens, 1977.

Not mapped

Several sources also refer to a Quaker meeting house on the corner of Butts Lane and Bampton Street (from 1689). References are made to a rented burial ground "walled and enclosed all round with good trees growing therein", which was in use in the early 18th century. It is possible that this is one of the identified burial grounds (see MIN/501), perhaps that at Alcombe (Bond, c1990). There are also records of a number of Quaker burials in the churchyard (Batty, 1983).

4.5.f *Settlement (Urban)*

MIN/517

Lower Town - pre 1792 settlement

Lower Town was the market and administrative centre of Minehead in the late Mediaeval and post-medieval period, and indeed Leland described it as the fairer part of town in the mid 16th century. There is no evidence that burghage tenements existed, but the town contained a succession of early municipal buildings, including the old Town Hall (of which the site is unknown), the "New" Hall (as it was called in the 17th century) in Friday Street, and the manor offices (see above, p14). There must also have been a good number of substantial merchant dwellings, as well as more ramshackle properties. Though little is known archaeologically of the pre-19th century settlement, the 1792 plan shows how it was then characterised by irregular building crowding the streets and encroaching, particularly, onto Puddle Street.

Very little survives above ground of the early town, which was largely obliterated by the Victorian rebuilding. However, it remains possible that archaeological deposits may survive beneath the later town. If so, there may be areas of particularly good preservation along the old stream lines.

From the 1792 map.

MIN/522

Lower Town - areas burnt in 1791

The 1791 fire started in the Bampton Street mill, and about 70 houses together with their outhouses and warehouses were lost. The effect on Lower Town was devastating, as the 1792 map shows. Shown here are the properties which are marked on that map as destroyed in the fire. They may offer particularly interesting archaeological deposits, if earlier building foundations or cellars have survived beneath destruction layers.

From the 1792 map.

MIN/404

Lower Town Market Place

Though much general market activity appears to have moved into Friday Street (perhaps originally the fish market) in the late 17th or early 18th century, when a new Town Hall was constructed there, it was previously concentrated to the north. An early 18th century survey makes reference to the Old Market and implies that it included not only the square defined by the Almshouses and Market House Lane, but also much of Puddle Street (Hancock, 1903). In part, Hancock's deduction about the Old Market is based on references (to a mill house, two grist mills and a dwelling and malt house called Tanners) which appear to relate to known properties close to Puddle Bridge.

The exact extent of the early market is difficult to determine because it had been much encroached upon by the time of the earliest large scale map (1792). The area shown represents the probable core of the Mediaeval market place in Lower Town, but it may have stretched further south, where irregular post-medieval properties suggest encroachment. Also, since the Mediaeval cross (SMR LB 30097) standing by Quirke's almshouses of 1630 has been provisionally identified (in the SMR and by Binding & Stevens, 1977) as the original market cross (SMR 34828), perhaps still *in situ*, it is possible that an area to the north-east of that marked also formed part of the early market.

Such an extensive and open market area would probably reflect the importance of the livestock trade to Minehead. Indeed, there are references in a late lease to the former name of the area around the cross being the Shambles, where cattle were slaughtered and butchers, as well as general provisioners, traded.

The marked area is approximate, based partly on the 1792 map and partly on information in Hancock (1903) and Binding & Stevens (1977).

4.5.g Industrial sites

(a) Mills

MIN/409

The demesne mill

This site is almost certainly that of the Mediaeval manor mill, and probably that of the mill mentioned in Domesday. Though little is known of the extent and layout of the early mills, an early 18th century manor survey refers to a house, two water grist mills, a garden and a millpond and water courses on this site: the leat itself is of Mediaeval origin.

In the 19th century, there was a corn mill - Town Mills (SMR 33774) - on the site, and this was altered for modern milling in the 20th century. Part of the head pond, leat and wheel pit still survived in the 1970s, by which time milling had ceased, though all the machinery had by then been removed.

The area shown includes the conjectured early mill site itself and surrounding land. By the late 18th century this area certainly included miscellaneous street frontage developments and this may also have been the case in the Mediaeval period. Although the site may have been less affected

than other parts of Lower Town by the redevelopments of the 19th and 20th century, the extent of archaeological survival is not known.

From the 1792 map and the 1822 and 1840 maps.

MIN/414

The mill near Puddle Bridge

There are references to at least one mill other than the demesne mill in post-medieval Minehead. On the marked site, a new grist mill was built c1590 by James Quirke to replace an earlier grist and fulling mill (Binding & Stevens, 1977). This suggests that a Mediaeval mill may also have been located here (though a 15th century manor survey records only the demesne mill): since the site lies opposite the "Old Priory", it is possible that this may in origin have been part of the property of the Priory (though an alternative site for the canons' mill somewhere upstream of the manor mill has also been mooted).

The mill on this site (SMR 33773) continued to operate until the mid 19th century. In fact on the 1822 map, two separate mills appear to be shown in this area and the flow of the stream is split. The second 'mill', to the south side of the lane, does not, however, show on either the 1792 or the 1840 map, and may be connected with the developing tannery (see below). Further research might clarify the situation.

The mill site has been considerably affected by later 19th century redevelopment of the area, and the extent of archaeological survival is not known.

From the 1792, 1822 and 1840 maps and the suggestions of Binding & Stevens (1977).

(b) Other industrial sites

MIN/528

The tannery

The tannery (SMR 35154) was in existence by c1737, in association with a glovers: a manor survey of this date refers to an establishment of considerable size (for its time), with over 20 rooms.

From the 1822 map.

MIN/529

Hemp Gardens

Rope making appears to have also been carried out near Hemp Gardens (a street name commemorating the production of the raw material for ropes there), where bollards and pits associated with the industry have been found (these are not precisely located) (Broughton, undated).

From the 1996 map (no boundary defined).

Not mapped

A dyehouse was recorded in Bampton Street in the mid 18th century and there was a ropewalk in what is now Parks Lane (Binding & Stevens, 1977).

4.5.h Agricultural sites

MIN/411

The open fields

Minehead's North and South Fields lay to the north and south of the main stream. Blocks of land were being separately let in these fields by the 14th century, and they may have been largely subdivided if not enclosed by 1435 (Binding & Stevens, 1977). Remnants of blocks of strips of these fields can be seen on 18th and 19th century maps (still attached to smallholdings in the town), though their original extent had been obscured by that date.

Smaller fields included Wethull, west of the town by the stream, and Tothhullbrigg (not certainly identified: it may have been the same field). These were winter pastures and meadow (and had largely been leased out by 1384). There was also a small field, Courtygate, outside the Mediaeval demesne buildings, which was available for winter grazing.

The boundaries of the fields have not been defined as there is insufficient information.

MIN/514

The Pound

The post-medieval pound was on Bampton Street and this may have been the site of the Mediaeval pound also.

From the 1822 map and Binding & Stevens (1977).

4.5.i Other

MIN/425

The Butts

The archery butts were located south of Butts Lane in the Mediaeval period (Binding & Stevens, 1977).

No boundary has been defined.

4.6 Archaeological features (Quay Town), shown on Map D

4.6.a Redevelopment in earlier settlement components

Occupation alongside the earlier quay may be of pre-Conquest origin, but no attempt has been made to map the possible extent of earlier occupation.

4.6.b Communications

(a) Roads, streets and route ways

MIN/416, MIN/503

Pre-1802 roads

It is unlikely that there was a 'road' along the seafront until the construction of the early 17th century quay (see GLA/518, p18) demanded it. The Mediaeval quay was reached by Quay Lane, or by footpaths from Church Town and Lower Town. The exact routes of these Mediaeval footpaths have been largely obscured by the moving of the harbour and by later road developments; however, part of the post-medieval path from Church Town to the Quay survives as Church Path.

From the 1822 map.

(b) Harbours, quays and shipwrecks

MIN/403

The Mediaeval Quay

The harbour was deliberately developed by the Luttrells from the 14th century onwards, initially to replace the trading port of Dunster which was silting up. There was perhaps no more than a shingle landing place for fishing boats before this. The first jetty appears to have been destroyed in storms in 1407 and references to the wooden 'juttee' which the Luttrells part-funded in 1421-2 are to its replacement. This structure and its successors (SMR 33775) lay well to the south of the later post-medieval harbour. A map of c1701 shows "The place where the old Peer was but now its becom only a Ridge of Shingle & Beach stones", probably referring either to the late 15th century jetty of Sir Hugh Luttrell, or perhaps to a general accumulation of shingle over a series of Mediaeval constructions (perhaps protecting them). Indeed, throughout the 15th century there are occasional references to the maintenance of the harbour, with shingle build up a problem: in 1483, an order is given for people to stop throwing stones at the "were". Even so, an early 16th century account by a French traveller describes the harbour as the most beautiful in the channel, and as consisting of substantial unmortared boulders.

A sketch of coastal defences apparently dating from c1544 shows a series of breakwaters or jetties along Minehead's coast. Though too sketchy to be of much use for locating archaeological features, it does suggest that the situation at least by the mid 16th century may have been more elaborate than the c1701 map suggests. An area in the lee of the 'juttee' has therefore been marked as of potential archaeological interest.

From the c1701 map.

MIN/516

The Weir pool

An early attempt to scour the little harbour involved the construction of a tidal pool with sluices, which filled at high tide and was then "flushed" at low tide. This may have been constructed in the mid 16th century. A map connected with the early 18th century harbour improvements notes its position and describes it as "Some remains of a pond which had a Drain leading into ye Peer about highwater mark with severall Sluces to wash out ye sullage of ye Peer when ye tide was out but now its ruined & houses built in ye Place". The houses have subsequently been cleared and the pool underlies a green: the extent to which the feature survives has not been assessed.

Marked approximately from the c1701 map.

Not mapped

Medieval shipwrecks:

Whilst no Mediaeval wrecks have been positively identified, the wreck of a Genoese(?) vessel which sunk before 1380 may lie between Mean High Water and the outer limit of the intertidal area. This wreck is potentially of considerable importance (McDonnell, 1996).

MIN/518

The post-medieval quays

The history of the post-medieval quay schemes is well-documented and much studied. There is no space for details here, though a summary is included in Section II: the local histories should be consulted for further details.

The first new quay was completed c1616 and, though since much repaired, forms the stub of the surviving quay. Lying some way north of the Mediaeval jetties, it shifted the focus of Quay Town, and temporarily overcame the problems created by falling water levels and shingle deposition. However, it had repeatedly to be repaired and improved. A major extension was built in the early 18th century, and other improving works were carried out at the same time. This was the last major alteration. Though attempts to repair the quay and maintain water depth continued until the late 18th century, the dropping water level defeated the town and there was no further major work until the construction of the Pier at the very end of the 19th century (see p27). The harbour continued to silt up throughout the 19th and early 20th century. It eventually became so dangerous that it was closed in 1947. After the removal of shingle banks, it reopened in 1951 for the use of small boats.

The early 17th and early 18th century quay structures are Listed together as SMR LB 30150. The quay end houses three late-17th/ early-18th century canons.

The 17th century quay is from the c1701 map, and the 18th century extension from the 19th century maps.

MIN/523

The post-medieval harbour area/ shipwrecks

The area shown is that defined by R. McDonnell in the Environment Agency's Minehead Sea Defences Scheme Environmental Report (McDonnell, 1996). As well as post-medieval structural outworks (breakwaters, back works and mooring posts etc), this area may contain a number of shipwrecks. Of those recorded in the report (from the Wrecks section of the Hydrographic Office), at least four victims of stranding - all dated to the 17th century - may lie within this area. These include two probable Dutch merchant ships (potentially of national significance) and two others (including the "Happy Endurance") of regional significance. There may also be other

smaller boats, and the remains of their cargoes: the early 18th century repair proposals include one for “Two Stops or Cheques to prevent ye Eastwardly winds from making a whirlpool in ye water in ye Peer which often forces ye Ships so as to sink one another”.

The marked area also includes a site of timbers dated dendrochronologically to 1466, lying just north of the area marked as the Mediaeval quay on the 1701 map (McDonnell, 1996).

The area defined is from McDonnell’s suggestions in the Minehead Sea Defences Scheme Environmental Report (McDonnell, 1996).

Not mapped The wreck of the Samaritan (1670) may lie between Mean High Water and the outer limit of the intertidal area. At least one other, unidentified, wreck may lie anything up to five miles off shore.

MIN/525 Other coastal works
Other post-medieval coastal works include a masonry structure just south of the Mediaeval quay site.

From the Minehead Sea Defences Scheme Environmental Report (McDonnell, 1996).

4.6.c Water

The creek (MIN/420) is described on p13.

4.6.d Military sites

MIN/519 The gun battery
The coastal defences sketch of c1544 shows a gun battery at Minehead. The location of this (if it was ever built) is not clear from the sketch, but Binding & Stevens (1977) suggest that it may have been on the site of the new harbour constructed in the early 17th century.

An approximate site has been mapped on the GIS, from the suggestions of Binding & Stevens (1977). For the sake of clarity, this is not shown on Map D.

4.6.e Settlement

MIN/418 Quay Town (Mediaeval)
The marked area represents a conjectural area of settlement associated with pre-Conquest and early Mediaeval fishing and mercantile activities. It may include the remains of cottages, boat houses (referred to after 1383), herring-smoking houses (referred to in the 18th century) and other structures. The extent of archaeological survival is not known.

Based on the location of the Mediaeval juttee on the c1701 map and on comments in Binding & Stevens (1977).

MIN/520 Quay Town (post-medieval)
The construction of the new quay effectively relocated Quay Town, and waste land north of Weir Pool was rapidly settled. By the end of the 17th century, the new Quay Street (there had not previously been a proper road) was flanked by houses and cottages, including a number of lodgings houses and the customs office.

The properties on the eastern side of Quay Street have gradually disappeared, though some survived into the 20th century (being demolished after severe storms in 1910). Others had already disappeared by the time the Tithing Map was made. The extent to which archaeological remains of these properties might survive is not yet known. In contrast, a number of Listed Buildings of post-medieval origin survive on the west side of Quay Street.

From the c1701 and the 1822 maps.

4.6.f *Industrial sites*

MIN/521

The shipwright's yard

The c1701 map shows a shipwright's yard on the north side of the post-medieval quay.

From the c1701 harbour map.

4.6.g *Agricultural sites: fishweirs*

MIN/401

The Fishweirs

A series of tidal fishweirs stretches along the West Somerset coast from Gore Point to Lilstock, with the greatest concentration in Minehead Bay. Here, the structures consist of dry stone walls or piles of boulders, usually arranged as broken chevrons (but sometimes as three sides of a square) and positioned, mostly towards low water mark, to funnel the outgoing tide through nets and traps.

The Minehead fishweirs (SMR 33348, SM 33730; SMR 33776), some of which are still in use, are documented from the 13th century onwards, with most of the records relating to their rental from the manor. Five weirs are recorded at Minehead in 1299-1300, and ten in 1380; by 1596, George Luttrell owned 17 fishweirs (though these would not all have been at Minehead). Though the structures have inevitably been often rebuilt in the intervening centuries, some of those still standing are probably of Mediaeval origin and some Mediaeval fabric may survive.

The Scheduled area (SM 33730) includes one two-sided and one three-sided stone weir.

The weirs were surveyed in 1985 and have recently been resurveyed. The positions of individual weirs have not been mapped on the GIS. However, this information is available in the Minehead Sea Defences Scheme Environmental Report.

The areas in which the Minehead fishweirs are found are defined from the SMR (area amended to include all individual weirs shown in the Minehead Sea Defences Scheme Environmental Report). They are shown in part on Map D, with the remainder shown on Map F.

4.6.h *Artefact scatters*

MIN/526

Pottery

A scatter of post-medieval pottery is recorded from the beach, and there have been other isolated finds in the intertidal zone.

From the Minehead Sea Defences Scheme Environmental Report.

4.7 Archaeological features (Alcombe and Staunton), shown on Map E4.7.a *Redevelopment in earlier settlement components*

Settlement at Alcombe and Staunton is of probable pre-Conquest origin, though no attempt has been made to map the extent of early occupation.

4.7.b *Communications: Roads*

MIN/416, MIN/503

Pre-1802 roads

Though the street plan of Alcombe has been much elaborated in the 20th century, the early routes still survive. A number of roads - none of which were until the 19th century of any great quality - from Minehead, Porlock and Dunster converged at Alcombe Cross (or Staunton Cross), from which also led Marsh Lane, the old lane to the Mediaeval marshland commons. Of the two routes heading south-east, the more southerly was the earlier.

From the c1770 and 1802 maps.

MIN/504 Alcombe or Staunton Cross
Alcombe Cross (SMR 33781) was probably a boundary cross and was situated at the Alcombe turnpike. The date of the cross, which has now disappeared, is unclear.

The approximate position is marked from the c1770 Staunton map.

4.7.c *Burial sites, religious houses and places of worship*

MIN/422 Mediaeval chapel site, Alcombe

Alcombe was in the parish of Dunster, but was far enough away to warrant a chapel of ease, St Michael's. This chapel may have continued in use after the Dissolution, when Dunster Priory estates fell to the crown: the date of its closure is unknown.

Binding & Stevens (1977) locate the site through references to it being built near "le lynch": field names opposite Manor Farm include several occurrences of lynch. Moreover, when a barn in Lynch's Orchard was demolished for houses to be built in the 1930s, the foundations of an older building were seen. This may have been the chapel, though the discovery was not extensively recorded.

From Binding & Stevens, 1977.

MIN/501 Quaker burial ground, Alcombe

There was a Quaker burial ground in Alcombe between 1741 and 1780, and 35 burials are recorded. Part of the land was let to the Methodists in 1846, and a chapel was built there. The site has now been partly redeveloped for housing.

From information in Binding & Stevens, 1977.

Not mapped Hancock (1903) also states that there was a monastic cell on the Abbey's estates, located close to the chapel.

4.7.d *Settlement*

MIN/505 Alcombe

Though Alcombe is of probable pre-Conquest origin, time did not allow detailed consideration of its archaeology in this report

The marked settlement areas in Alcombe are based on 19th century maps, except for the Red Lion Inn, apparently larger than its 19th century counterpart and perhaps slightly differently positioned, which appears on the c1770 map of Staunton. A number of post-medieval Listed Buildings survive.

The marked areas are from the 1802 and 1840 maps and the c1770 Staunton map.

MIN/507 Staunton

Settlement at Staunton may be of pre-Conquest origin. However, time did not allow a detailed study of this settlement's archaeology.

The c1770 map of Staunton Fry shows three small settlements, no more than hamlets. Lower Staunton consists of a single major building complex, with attendant industrial site (see MIN/506, p22), and a couple of cottages. At Middle Staunton, there is a single building adjacent to the stream. At Upper Staunton, the c1770 map clearly shows, clustered around the route junctions at both ends of the settlement, a number of buildings which disappeared during the 19th century. Other plots at the eastern end of the settlement have continued in occupation.

The marked plots are from the c1770 map.

MIN/530

Ellicombe

Scattered development at Ellicombe is shown on the 1802 map. This includes the house which is now Ellicombe Manor (but is labelled Parsonage on the 1802 map) and Rowe Farm, together with a number of smaller plots, some of which may be agricultural buildings.

From the 1802 map.

4.7.e Industrial sites

(a) Mills

Not mapped There is a tradition of a mill at Alcombe, though the exact site is unknown.

(b) Other industrial sites

MIN/506

The Alcombe limekiln and works

Alcombe's lime and sandstone has probably been quarried for centuries. There are certainly references to the quarrying of sandstone in the 16th century. In addition, a licence was granted in 1707 for a search for copper, tin, lead and coal, and five men sank exploratory mines. Though the sites of the shafts are not known, and the attempt is said to have been given up by 1713, there may have been associated activity in the marked area, which is shown on the c1770 map as containing both a limekiln and a copper works (possibly: the map is very faint). The site has subsequently been partially quarried away.

From the c1770 map.

4.7.f Agricultural sites

MIN/502

Commons

The edge of the hill commons in 1822 is shown.

From the 1822 map.

4.8 Archaeological features (Other outlying areas), shown on Map F

4.8.a Redevelopment in earlier settlement components

Settlement at both Periton and Woodcombe may be of pre-Conquest origin. However, no attempt has been made to map the early settlement, as insufficient information was available.

4.8.b Communications

(a) Roads

MIN/416, MIN/503

Pre-1802 roads

The road network is shown *as it appears on the 1802 and 1822 maps.*

MIN/504

Whitecross

From the 1822 map.

(b) Harbour and quays

MIN/524

Known Post-Mediaeval shipwrecks

These include: The Lamb (wrecked 1736, whilst carrying soldiers to Ireland), reported to survive as a "coherent vessel structure (it was seen in 1975) [Two sites are included in the marked area - the one numbered as the Lamb (site 005) and one which may also represent its location (site 061)].

There are also some unidentified wrecks, which may be of post-medieval or 19th century date.

From the Minehead Sea Defences Report (McDonnell, 1996).

4.8.c Water

MIN/424

The millpond

The millpond above Higher Hopcott (SMR 33783) may be of Mediaeval origin (Binding & Stevens, 1977).

From the 1996 map and information in Binding & Stevens, 1977.

4.8.d Manors and estates

MIN/415

The Park and Parkhouse

The first references to a deer park (SMR 33777) west of Lower Town occur in 1279, and the park was extended by the Luttrells in the 15th century (from 51 to 150 acres). Many "Park" field names - including West Park, Ball Park, Pit Park, and Park Pales - can be traced, and part of the original park boundary may also have survived until the construction of the more recent housing estates. Leland says that the Park had been "destroyed" by Andrew Luttrell in the early 16th century: in fact, the land was temporarily leased out to provide legacies for his younger children, then mortgaged by his eldest son, who died before the mortgages could be redeemed. Disputes connected with the park lands rumbled on into the 18th century and there must be many references to the lands in documents.

At its maximum extent, the Park is supposed to have stretched out along the stream towards Whitecross and Woodcombe, though it did not immediately abut the town (there are 14th century references to a plot of waste ground between the park and the mill being enclosed). A suggested boundary is sketched by Binding & Stevens, though it has not been entered on the GIS.

Parkhouse Farm is shown as it appears on the 1822 map. No details of its history were ascertained for this report. A water meadow system (SMR 34515) at Parkhouse was recorded from aerial photographs before the construction of the modern estates.

Most of the area of the park, including the site of Parkhouse Farm, has been redeveloped as suburban estates. It is therefore unlikely, though not impossible that remains of any further landscape features associated with the park will be found.

Part of the possible park boundary is shown from the 1822 map. A sketch of the projected park boundary exists in Binding & Stevens (1977).

Not mapped

Half the tithes of the church and about a fifth of the manor lands were granted to Bath Abbey in the 11th century as part of Dunster Priory's endowment. These lands lay to the south-west of the town. Whilst they are not mapped in this report, the approximate extent is sketched in Binding & Stevens (1977).

4.8.e Burial sites, religious houses and places of worship

MIN/501

The burial ground

There is a tradition that a plague pit or Quaker burial ground (SMR 33778) existed south-west of Lower Town. However, an excavation by P. Hawtin in the mid-1970s failed to locate the site.

The site is marked from the SMR.

4.8.f Settlement

MIN/413, MIN/512

Woodcombe (pre 1822 settlement)

Settlement at Woodcombe may be of pre-Conquest origin (Binding & Stevens, 1977), though no attempt has been made to map the early settlement. Woodcombe Farm itself probably represents the primary occupation (it is first referred to in the 13th century). Six landholders are referred to in a 1407 rental, so it is possible that some of the houses and gardens shown on the 1802 and 1822 maps (not all of which survived the 19th century) may be of Mediaeval origin. A laid out

tenement, clearly in existence by 1802, may be of later date: further research might clarify this.

Woodcombe is no longer separate from Minehead, but only small scale suburban development has taken place, and Woodcombe Farm retains its integrity, containing a largely 18th century Listed farmhouse (SMR LB 30175) with earlier origins. It is possible therefore that there may be significant archaeological survival.

From the 1802 and 1822 maps.

MIN/412, MIN/513

Periton (pre-1822 settlement)

Settlement at Periton is likely to be of pre-Conquest origin, though no attempt has been made to map separately the early occupation. There are certainly Mediaeval references to the settlement; Periton Farm is first referred to in the 13th century, and five landholders are referred to in a 1407 rental, whilst four small farms are mentioned in an early 18th century manor survey.

The actual extent of Periton in 1822 is shown. Two complexes of Listed 18th century structures survive, including one on the former Periton Farm. However, Periton has been absorbed into the suburbs of Minehead and a certain amount of redevelopment has taken place. The extent of archaeological survival has not been assessed.

From the 1822 map.

MIN/405

Hopcott

The origins of the farms at Higher and Lower Hopcott have not been researched for this report. Lower Hopcott appears on the c1770 map, which shows buildings set around a courtyard, possibly slightly to the north of the present buildings and possibly partially beneath the modern road (judging from changes of road alignment). There may also have been a garden area to the east of the buildings. Higher Hopcott appears on the 1802 OS drawings. However, either or both may be of earlier origin.

The farms are defined from the c1770, 1802 and 1822 maps.

4.8.g *Industrial sites: Mills*

MIN/408

Bratton Mill

Bratton Mill (SMR 33816) was the manor mill of Bratton (which is not covered by this report). It was first mentioned in the 13th century (though it was of probable earlier origin), and continued in operation probably until the early 18th century. The site is marked as ruined on the 19th century maps. In the 1980s, two mill ponds, the leat and part of the wheel pit (all dry) were still visible.

This site has not yet been affected by modern development, and significant archaeological remains of the Mediaeval mill may survive.

From the 1822 map and information in the SMR.

4.8.h *Agricultural sites*

MIN/423

The warren

The warren (SMR 35156) and the marshland commons lay to the east of Minehead. Game birds and fish were kept here as well as rabbits, and the Luttrells' fowler lived out here in the 17th century. These areas were very extensive, stretching around the coast to Dunster. Because of their size and their lack of precise definition, no boundaries have been defined on the GIS. Much of the coastal strip was converted into golf links in the 19th century.

The boundaries of the warren have not been defined.

MIN/502 Commons
The limits of the upland commons in 1822 are shown. The Staunton map of c1770 also shows the contemporary edges of Ewey Hill Common and Staunton Common; it also illustrates the process of enclosure, showing the “new hedge” to the south of Lower Hopcott.

From the c1770 and the 1822 maps.

Not mapped A vineyard referred to in Mediaeval documents probably lay somewhere near Woodcombe on the south facing slopes of North Hill (Binding & Stevens, 1977).

4.8.i Artefact scatters

MIN/526 Pottery
A scatter of post-medieval pottery is recorded from the beach, and there have been other isolated finds in the intertidal zone.

From the Minehead Sea Defences Scheme Environmental Report.

4.8.j Other

MIN/508 The bowling green
A bowling green is marked to the north of Quay Town in 1701.

From the 1701 map.

5. INDUSTRIAL (LATE 18TH AND 19TH CENTURY) (Maps G and H)

5.1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge

There is little archaeological knowledge of industrial Minehead, though the quarrying industry and speculative mining operations have been subjects of some interest.

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 Mediaeval 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.

Minehead was one of the thirteen existing boroughs and towns which were either Municipal Boroughs or Urban Districts at the end of the 19th century. These varied in character. Minehead was one of a handful of tourist centres in the county by the end of the 19th century, and one of the two most important coastal resorts (the other being Burnham). Both resorts were amongst the seven of the 45 towns at which there was large-scale expansion in the 19th century.

5.3 Standing structures and visible remains

A number of Listed Structures of this period survive in all elements of the settlement. These are mainly villas associated with the later 19th century expansion of Minehead as a resort, though some late 18th century buildings also survive.

5.4 Archaeological components (centre), shown on Map G

5.4.a Redevelopment in earlier settlement components

Areas described in earlier sections are shown lightly shaded. The distribution of 19th century Listed Buildings shows that a considerable amount of redevelopment took place in the early settlement areas of Church Town, Lower Town,

Quay Town and Alcombe. However, to a greater or lesser extent, these areas retained their essential character. In parts of Lower Town, on the other hand, change was so wholesale in the 19th century that much of the town centre has been remapped for this period.

5.4.b Communications

(a) Roads, streets and route ways

MIN/606 The New Road to the Quay and the turnpikes

The earliest of the Minehead, Dunster and Carhampton turnpikes was the New Road to the Quay which is shown on the 1792 map of Lower Town. This road was initiated by a group of merchants in 1762. It replaced the old footpath and required the removal of some property (Blenheim House), the location of which is unclear.

The route of the Minehead turnpike in the urban area has not been marked, as its course is not clear.

From the 1792 map.

MIN/608 19th century suburban roads

A number of major suburban road developments took place, largely in Lower Town, in the 19th century. These included the Parade, the Parks and Park Street, North Road and the Avenue (laid out in expectation of the railway's arrival). However, many of these new roads remained unsurfaced and subject to flooding (particularly in the Parade and the Avenue, old Puddle Street and Watery Lane) for years; building was similarly slow.

At the end of the 19th century, the laying out of Bancks Street (which is only partially complete on the 1904 map) further obscured the early town plan. Bancks Street was accompanied by the first of the suburban gridded streets of Lower Town. The Esplanade, too, was created at this time.

Developments in Church Town included the realignment of Church Road and the extension of St Michael's Road as part of a network of hillside avenues (Beacon Road, Burgundy Road etc).

From the 1842, 1889/90 and 1904 maps.

MIN/625 Other new 19th century roads

These included the Porlock road and Warren Road.

From the 1889 map.

MIN/626 Pathways on North Hill

A number of lanes and pathways on North Hill became formalised during the 19th century, partly in association with land enclosure, and partly in connection with Minehead's tourist industry.

From the 1889/90 and 1904 maps.

(b) Railways

MIN/601 The Taunton to Minehead Railway

In 1856, the Luttrells proposed the extension of the West Somerset Mineral Railway to Minehead and offered free access to the harbour. Though royal assent was obtained, this scheme came to nothing. A further proposal (1863) for a broad gauge line to Minehead initially suffered from lack of capital: it was not until 1874 that the railway reached the town. The Taunton to Minehead line (SMR 33462), which was converted from broad gauge in 1882, was operated by the Bristol and Exeter Railway (subsequently the Great Western). Though it was closed by BR in the 1960s, it was reopened as a private line, the West Somerset Railway, in 1974.

The Railway Station and a goods shed to the north-east are both Listed (SMR 35155, SMR LB 35459; SMR LB 35460).

From the 1889 map.

(c) *Harbour and quays*

MIN/611

The Pier

Though there had been some 19th century formalisation of the old ship yard north of the Quay, the Pier was a development of the very end of the Victorian period: it opened in 1901. It was 700' long, and constructed of cast iron, steel and timber. The construction of the pier also the rebuilding of part of the harbour wall and the slipway; a sea wall and esplanade were also built in 1901. The pier was removed in 1940.

From the 1890 and 1904 maps.

MIN/621

The sea wall and promenade

These were in existence by 1900.

From the 1904 map.

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

MIN/610

St Andrew's Church

The Grade II* Listed St Andrews Church (SMR LB 30174) was built in 1880 for the expanding Lower Town.

From the 1889 map.

MIN/619

St Michael's Churchyard extension

From the 1890 map.

MIN/624

Other chapels

There were a number of Non-conformist chapels in the town. These included those of: the Methodists (SMR LB 30149), opened c1877 in the Avenue; and the Baptists (SMR LB 30111), opened c1821 in the Parks. The Catholic church on Alcombe Road, which opened late in the 19th century, replaced an earlier chapel on the Butts.

Where mapped separately, these are from the 1889/90 and 1904 maps and information in the List.

5.4.d *Settlement*

MIN/618

Church Town

In the 19th century, there was some small scale redevelopment within the two early nuclei of Church Town. Despite the burgeoning road network, there was by 1904 only limited suburban growth, this being concentrated both immediately adjacent to the church and along St Michael's Road, where the realigned Shute Farm also stood.

From the 1890 and 1904 maps.

MIN/609

Lower Town - expansion and rebuilding 1822 - 1889

In the wake of the disastrous fires of 1791 and 1815, much of Lower Town was gradually rebuilt. Though the plan did not at first alter significantly, it became more regular as new blocks and terraces were laid out along the new streets. The new developments were geared principally to the growing holiday and retirement trades, and included many 'villas' suitable for use as lodgings. However, much of the centre of Lower Town was also rebuilt and here were constructed fine commercial and municipal buildings such as the Town Hall (1889, SMR LB 30157) and the Midland Bank (SMR LB 30051). The laying out of Wellington Square in front of St Andrew's

Church also enabled the 18th century statue of Queen Anne (SMR LB 30173, Grade II*) to be suitably displayed.

From the 1842, 1889 and 1904 maps.

MIN/629

The auction mart (Lower Town)

A new market place was deliberately developed adjacent to the railway station in the late 19th century.

From the 1904 map.

MIN/614

Quay Town

Residential development was not extensive in the 19th century, though some new properties were erected, mostly at the southern end of the post-medieval settlement area.

From the 1889/90 and 1904 maps.

5.4.e Industrial sites

MIN/602

Limekilns (Quay Town)

Brick and stone built limekilns were situated on the Quay (SMR 33772), and at the present junction of Blenheim Rd and Northfield Rd.

From the SMR and the 1822 and 1890 maps.

MIN/613

Quarries and gravel pits

North of the Quay was an area of gravel pitting, whilst an old quarry is marked opposite Shute Farm in Church Town.

From the 1890 map: no boundary has been defined.

MIN/627

The Gasworks (Quay Town)

The town gasworks was established as part of the Luttrells' municipal improvements. The town had gas street lighting by 1869.

From the 1890 map.

MIN/622

Shipbuilding (Quay Town)

Ships were also built on the beach near the timber yard at the end of Blenheim Road in the 19th century.

From Binding & Stevens, 1977.

MIN/628

Saw mills (Quay Town)

There was a timber yard and saw mill at the south end of Quay Street by the mid 19th century. This both imported and exported timber.

MIN/616

Slaughterhouses and tannery (Lower Town)

The tannery (SMR 35154) in the Avenue was in existence by the early 18th century and its previous incarnation is shown lightly shaded on the map. However, it expanded in the 19th century and continued in operation until the 1930s, when the site was redeveloped as a cinema.

A slaughterhouse behind Bampton Street was in existence by 1889.

From the 1822 and 1889 maps.

Not mapped There were at least four maltings by 1842, and a mineral water works by 1888.

5.4.f *Agricultural sites*

MIN/615

Fisheries

The 19th century maps name some fish pools: Crab Pool lay just off the south end of Quay Street.

From the 1889/1890 map.

5.4.g *Other*

MIN/630

Pit Park

An odd field formation visible on the 1822 map (but not on earlier or later maps) is probably to be identified with the cock-fighting and circus area (Pit Park) mentioned by Webber (WSANHSN vol 24). The site is now under a modern estate.

From the 1822 map.

5.5 *Archaeological components (outlying area), shown on Map H*

5.5.a *Redevelopment in earlier settlement components*

Those sites described in earlier sections are shown lightly shaded. There was some redevelopment in these areas, especially in Alcombe and, to a lesser extent, Periton. There were few major alterations, however, and very little has been remapped for this period.

5.5.b *Communications*

(a) *Roads, streets and route ways*

MIN/605

The "New Road to Minehead"

On a very faint part of the c1770 map of Staunton manor is marked a "new road to Minehead", running slightly to the east of the old Dunster road and close to a boundary cairn at the edge of Staunton Common. This road does not appear on subsequent maps.

From the c1770 map.

(b) *Harbour and quays*

MIN/604

The shipwreck

At least one shipwreck (SMR 35391) of possible 19th century (or earlier) date lies exposed on the beach off Minehead.

From the SMR.

Not mapped

Several wrecks are documented but not precisely located. The wreck of the *Tartar* (1882) may lie between Mean High Water and the outer limit of the intertidal area. The wrecks of the *Industry* (1817), the *Elizabeth and Jane* (1833), the *Lark* (1834), the *Topsy* (1869) and the *Janet* (1876) may lie between Mean High Water and five miles out.

5.5.c *Water*

MIN/617

Reservoir

The water company was formed in 1874, and reservoirs were constructed to the west of Church Town and near Woodcombe.

From the 1889 and 1904 maps.

5.5.d *Burial sites, religious houses and places of worship*

MIN/623

Alcombe Church

Building of St Michael's Church, Alcombe, commenced in 1900 and it was opened in 1903. It was extended in 1937.

From the 1904 map.

MIN/624 The Methodist Chapel, Alcombe
The Methodist Chapel in Alcombe was built on part of the old Quaker burial ground.

From the 1889 map.

5.5.e *Settlement (Alcombe)*

MIN/607, MIN/620

Alcombe, Staunton and Ellicombe (19th century)

Development at Alcombe, Staunton and Ellicombe in the 19th century consisted of a mixture of suburban housing - such as Alcombe Lodge and Dunster Lodge - and farm extensions.

From the 1840 map.

5.5.f *Settlement (Other outlying)*

MIN/631

Outlying 19th century settlement

Scattered developments occurred around the main settlement foci. Some of these - such as Higher Woodcombe, or Periton House, were of significant size, whilst others may have been agricultural buildings: details have not been ascertained for this report.

From the 1842, 1889/90 and 1904 maps.

5.5.g *Industrial sites*

MIN/603

The Brickworks

Of the brickworks at Minehead, that on Warren Point (SMR 33779) adjacent to Warren House (which is also marked) began operations c1750, and closed c1919. It is now buried beneath part of Butlins.

The other brickworks, the Victoria Brick & Tile Works (SMR 33780) in Alcombe, opened in 1897 (though the name "Brickland" given to the field on the Dunster Tithe Map (1843) suggests there might have previously been brick making on the site). The actual works were on the north side of the road, whilst to the south was a large clay pit. The works closed in 1947 and the northern land has been redeveloped for housing, whilst the clay pit is now used as a caravan site.

From the 1889 and 1904 maps.

MIN/602, MIN/613

Quarries and limekilns

Many quarries were cut or continued in use in the 19th century. Those marked on the maps include ones at Higher Moor, Whitecross, west and south of Periton, around Hopcott, and at Alcombe. Those at Alcombe were extensive, and were accompanied by limekilns. Part of the area marked for quarrying earlier in the century was, however, being used for housing by 1904.

From the 1840, 1889/90 and 1904 maps.

MIN/616

The Tanyard (Alcombe)

Alcombe Tanyard was in existence by 1817. It may have closed by 1851 (when no tanner is recorded in the census) (Binding & Stevens, 1977), and was certainly closed by the end of the century. The site has subsequently been redeveloped for housing.

From the 1840 map.

MIN/632

Smithies (Alcombe)

Smithies are marked at Alcombe on Marsh Lane and opposite Nut Tree Field.

From the 1889 map.

5.5.h Other

MIN/612

Leisure facilities

There was a racecourse on the beach, but there are no records of any associated structures. The golf course was established during the 19th century: its extent is not shown, though the pavilion is marked.

From the 1889 and 1904 maps and the Minehead Sea Defences Scheme Environmental Report (McDonnell, 1996).

6. 20TH CENTURY (Map I)**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. Minehead is one of 15 of the 45 historic towns covered by this project which is classed as a Town in the County Structure Plan. It is one of seven towns which has seen extremely high levels of expansion in the 20th century (the same seven as saw large scale expansion in the 19th century).

6.2 Standing structures and visible remains

There are three Listed Buildings of 20th century date, though two of these (the Market House, SMR LB 30108; and the Grade II* Listed Kildare Lodge, SMR LB 30162) are dated to 1902 and 1903 respectively. The remaining building, SMR LB 3019, is Edwardian.

6.3 Settlement components, shown on Map I**6.3.a Redevelopment in earlier settlement components**

Components described in earlier sections are shown lightly shaded. There have been few major redevelopments in the town, with the exception of the tannery site (replaced by a cinema by 1938) and Warren Point brickworks (now beneath part of Butlins). Parts of Quay Street were much rebuilt in the early 20th century following the storms of 1910, though the new building respected the plan of the old settlement (and has therefore not been separately mapped). Parts of the outlying settlements have been affected by later suburbs, but only Parkhouse and the Park have been obliterated by this.

All mapped components are from the 1938 map and the 1996 OS digital maps, except where stated.

6.3.b Communications**(a) Roads, streets and route ways**

MIN/707

20th century roads

An extensive network of suburban roads has developed in the 20th century: some of the more important arteries have been mapped. The major approach routes to the town have also been altered with the construction of the new A39 and Seaward Way.

(b) Railways

MIN/709

Railway branch

A railway branch linked the saw mills to the main line by 1938. This has since disappeared, though its route can still be traced.

(c) Harbour and quays

MIN/702

Shipwrecks

20th century shipwrecks include the steamship, the *Pelican*, stranded in 1928.

From the Minehead Sea Defences Scheme Environmental Report (McDonnell, 1996).

MIN/705 Sea wall and slipways
The sea wall has been extended, in 1918 and at later dates. New slipways were also constructed in the 1930s.

6.3.c Water

MIN/710 20th century reservoirs
Reservoirs were created to serve Alcombe and the growing suburbs.

6.3.d Military sites

Not mapped There are a number of World War II beach defences around Minehead, including a gun emplacement (SMR 35359) and several pillboxes (SMR 35360, 35388, 35389 and 35390). The SMR should be consulted for details.

6.3.e Burial sites, religious houses and places of worship

MIN/701 The cemetery
Porlock Rd cemetery was in existence by 1938.

6.3.f Settlement

MIN/706 20th century residential development (general)
Map I shows the pattern of 20th century expansion to the south and west of the historic settlements of Minehead, linking them to Alcombe. This expansion has been largely suburban in character.

MIN/704 Parks and gardens
Parks and gardens laid out in the early part of the 20th century include the Parks walk (1920s) and Blenheim Gardens (1925).

(a) Leisure areas

MIN/703 Butlins/ campsites
A number of camp and caravan sites and leisure areas have been established in the 20th century. Of these, Butlins is by far the largest, dominating the eastern side of the town. Butlins opened in 1962: the original swimming pool, which predated Butlins, lay to the west of the complex, and has now gone.

6.3.g Industrial sites

MIN/708 20th century industry (general)
Early 20th century industrial sites included quarries and brickworks of 19th century origin, which continued to operate well into the 20th century. They also included a saw mill (SMR 33784) linked by a branch line to the railway. This has now been subsumed into the industrial and trading estate between Butlins and Lower Town, on which the bulk of Minehead's more recent industry is concentrated.

V. THE POTENTIAL OF MINEHEAD

1. Research interests

Minehead's harbours and foreshore (including the intertidal area) have been the subject of more research than the town itself. But much remains to be learnt about the Mediaeval harbour and the intertidal zone. The development of Minehead's settlement and street pattern is particularly complex, and archaeological input into its study would also be of value.

2. Areas of potentially exceptional preservation

Much of Minehead is both dry and affected by development. Possible wet areas may exist in Lower Town and in the harbour area, but these areas have been much disturbed.

3. *Limitations*

Though Minehead was prosperous in the later Mediaeval and the post-medieval periods, settlement remained somewhat scattered. The town does not, therefore, have one concentrated core of archaeology in quite the same way as other historic settlements, though it has several smaller, less intensively occupied areas.

4. *Extent of current protection*

(Central area shown on Map J)

Minehead contains a number of Listed Buildings, though none is Grade I. The only Scheduled Monument in the area covered by this report is SM 33730 (the fishweirs). The Conservation Areas were redesignated in 2003, the former 3 becoming 4 (Quay Street, higher Town, Wellington Square and Whitegate Road). The Alcome conservation area was enlarged at the same time. AHAPs have been delineated which cover the historic centres together with a large area of the harbour and foreshore to the east. In addition, much of the area around Minehead (not covered by this report) falls within Exmoor National Park or is owned by the National Trust.

5. *Management Proposals*

See the Archaeological Guidance Document.

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3. Maps

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- c1770 The Manor of Staunton Fry: SRO DD/L 1/10/35A
- c1792 Map of Lower Town showing fire damage: SRO DD/L 1/10/35A
- 1802 OS surveyors' drawings at 3": fiche in SSL
- 1822 The Manor and Parish of Minehead: SRO DD/L 297/2
- 1842 Minehead Tithe Map: fiche in SSL
- 1842 Dunster Tithe Map: fiche in SSL
- 1844 Wootton Courtenay Tithe Map: fiche in SSL
- 1888-90 OS 1:2500: fiche in SSL
- 1904 OS 1:10560
- 1938 OS 1:10560
- 1996 OS digital map data

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| MIN/520 | D | MIN/618 | G |
| MIN/521 | D | MIN/619 | G |
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| MIN/610 | G | MIN/706 | I |
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Maps

Map A - Prehistoric

Map B - Medieval and post-medieval Higher Town

Map C - Medieval and post-medieval Lower Town

Map D - Medieval and post-medieval Quay Town

Map E - Medieval and post-medieval Alcombe

Map F - Post-medieval wider area

Earlier components in yellow.

Map G - 19th century core

Earlier components in yellow.

Map H - 19th century wider area

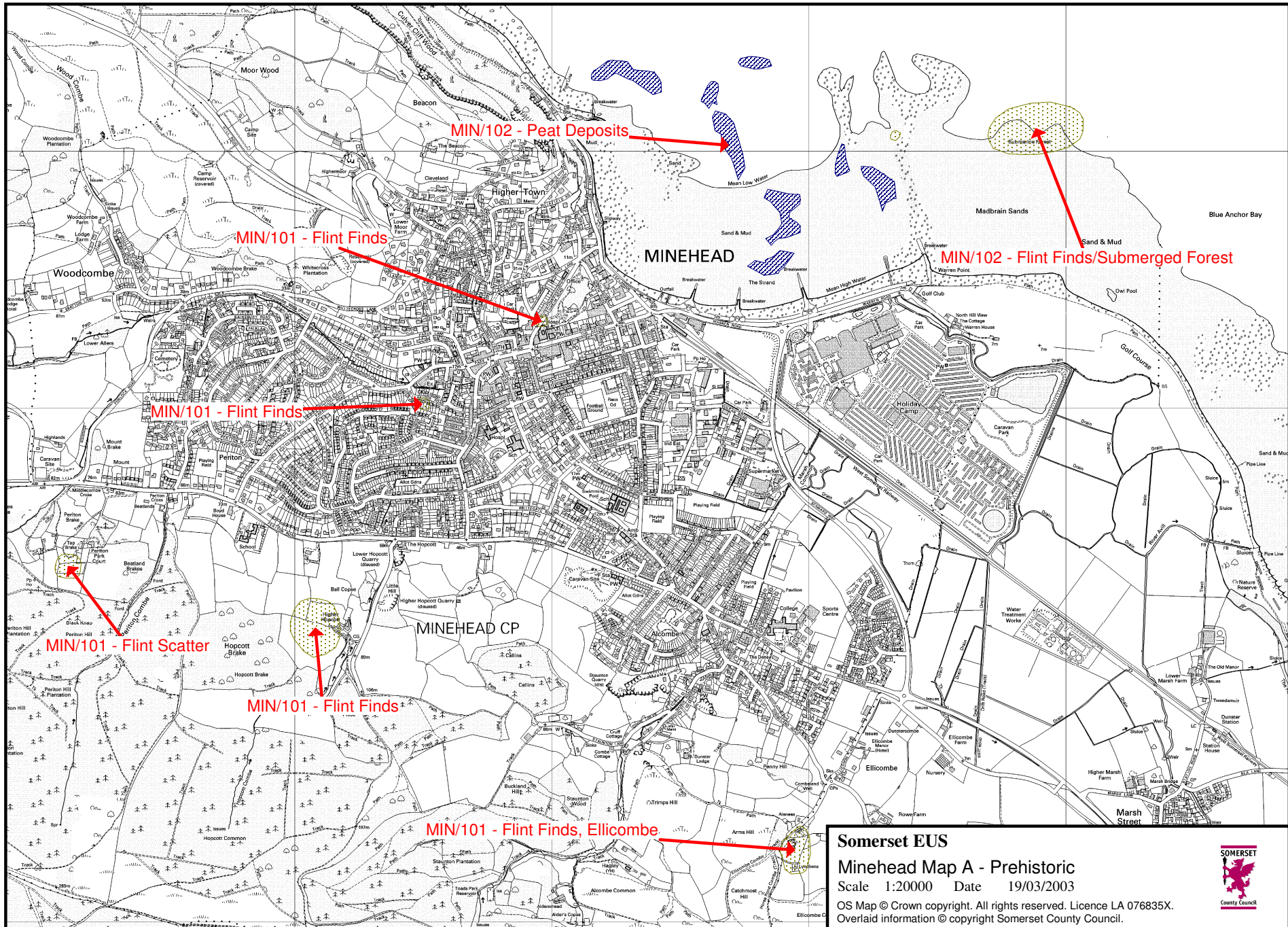
Earlier components in yellow.

Map I - 20th century

Earlier components in yellow.

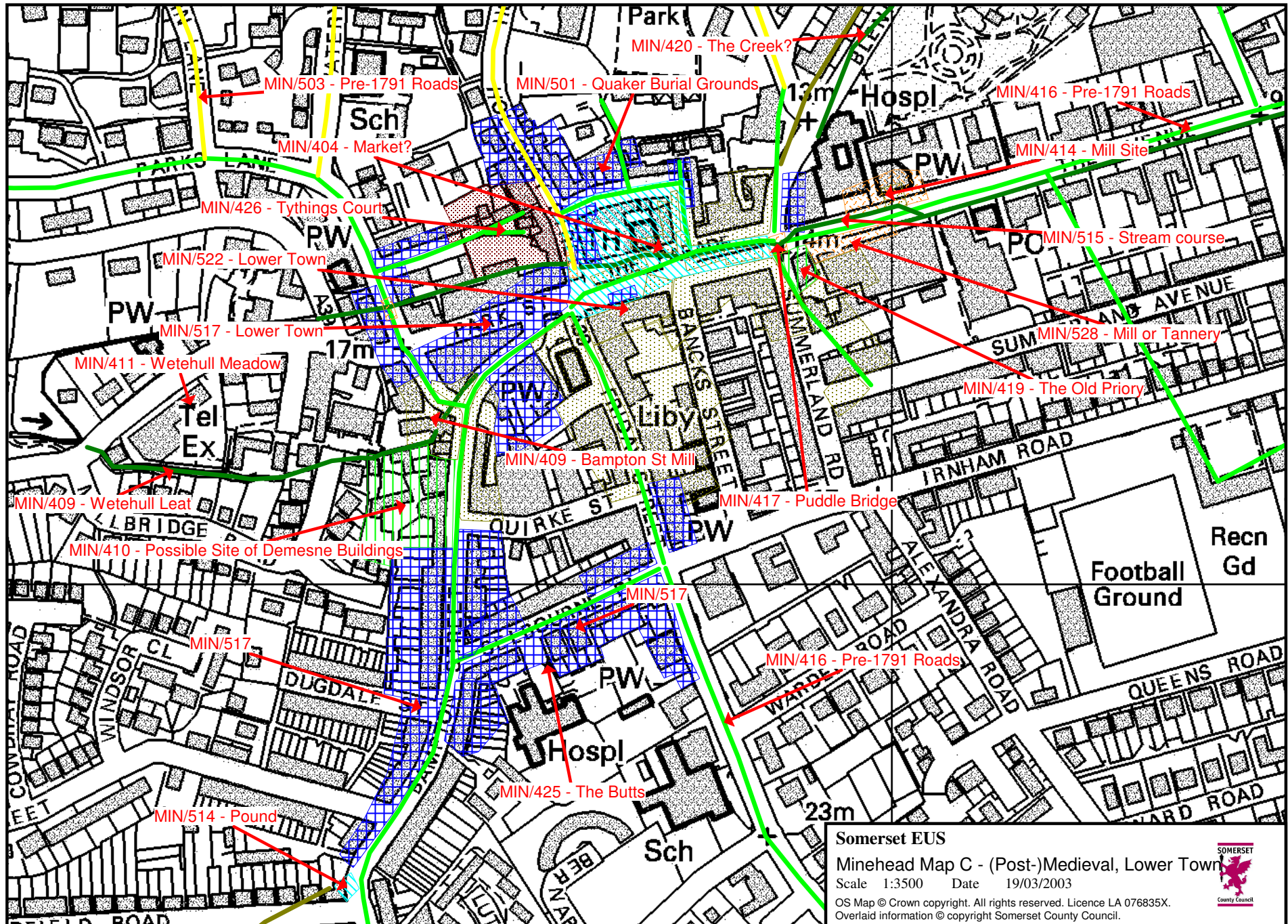
Map E - Existing designations

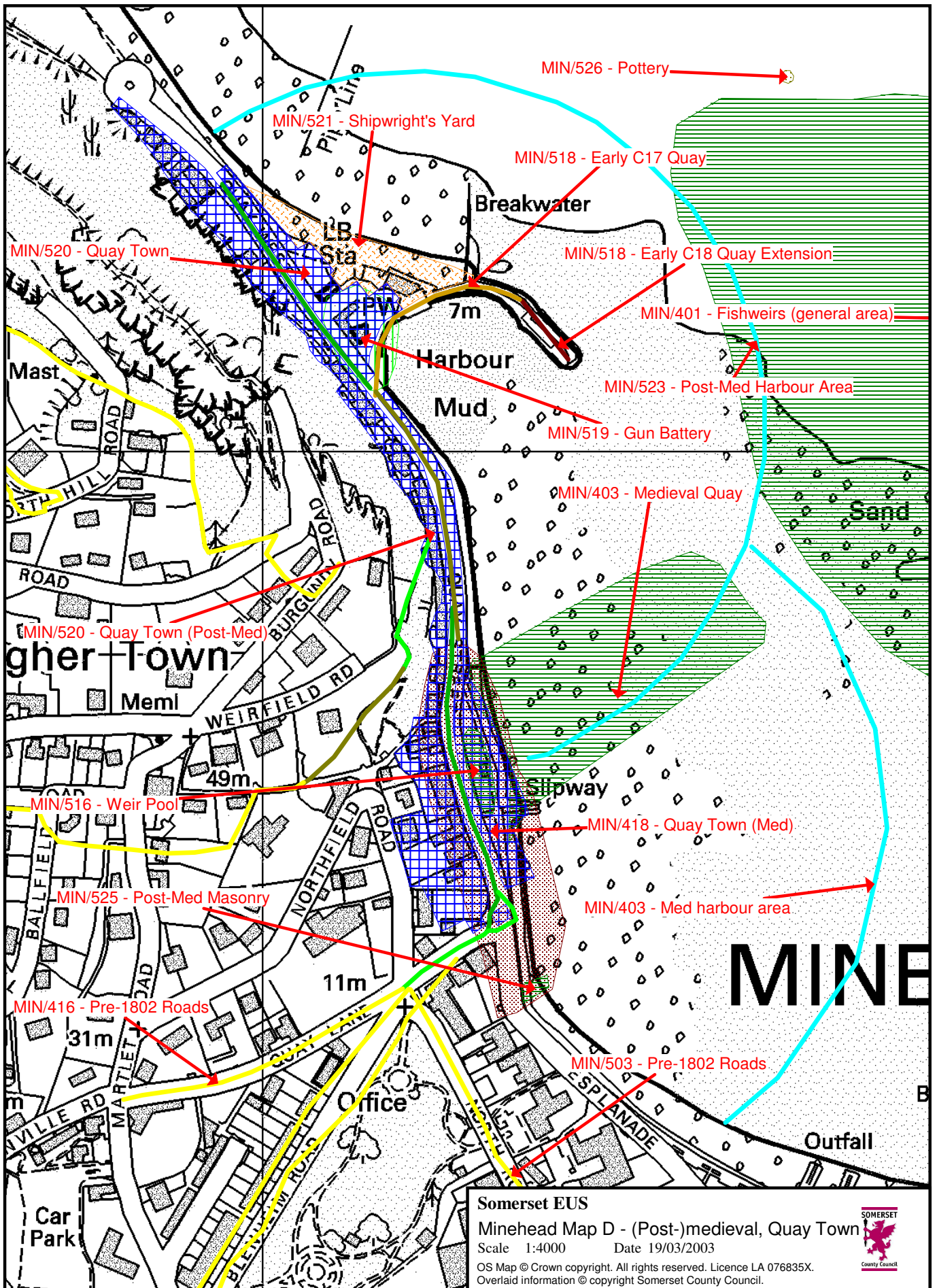
Key: Scheduled Monuments (dark blue),
Listed Buildings Grade I (light blue, none)
Grade II* (light green)
Grade II (green)
Registered Park (brown, none)
Conservation Area (green)
Area of High Archaeological Potential (pink)



Somerset EUS
Minehead Map A - Prehistoric
 Scale 1:20000 Date 19/03/2003
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MIN/526 - Pottery

MIN/521 - Shipwright's Yard

MIN/518 - Early C17 Quay

MIN/518 - Early C18 Quay Extension

MIN/401 - Fishweirs (general area)

MIN/523 - Post-Med Harbour Area

MIN/519 - Gun Battery

MIN/403 - Medieval Quay

MIN/403 - Med harbour area

MIN/516 - Weir Pool

MIN/525 - Post-Med Masonry

MIN/418 - Quay Town (Med)

MIN/416 - Pre-1802 Roads

MIN/503 - Pre-1802 Roads

MIN/520 - Quay Town

MIN/520 - Quay Town (Post-Med)

Breakwater

Harbour

Mud

Slipway

Outfall

MINE

7m

49m

11m

31m

LB Sta

Office

Car Park

North Hill Road

Burgundy Road

Weirfield Rd

Northfield Road

Ballfield Road

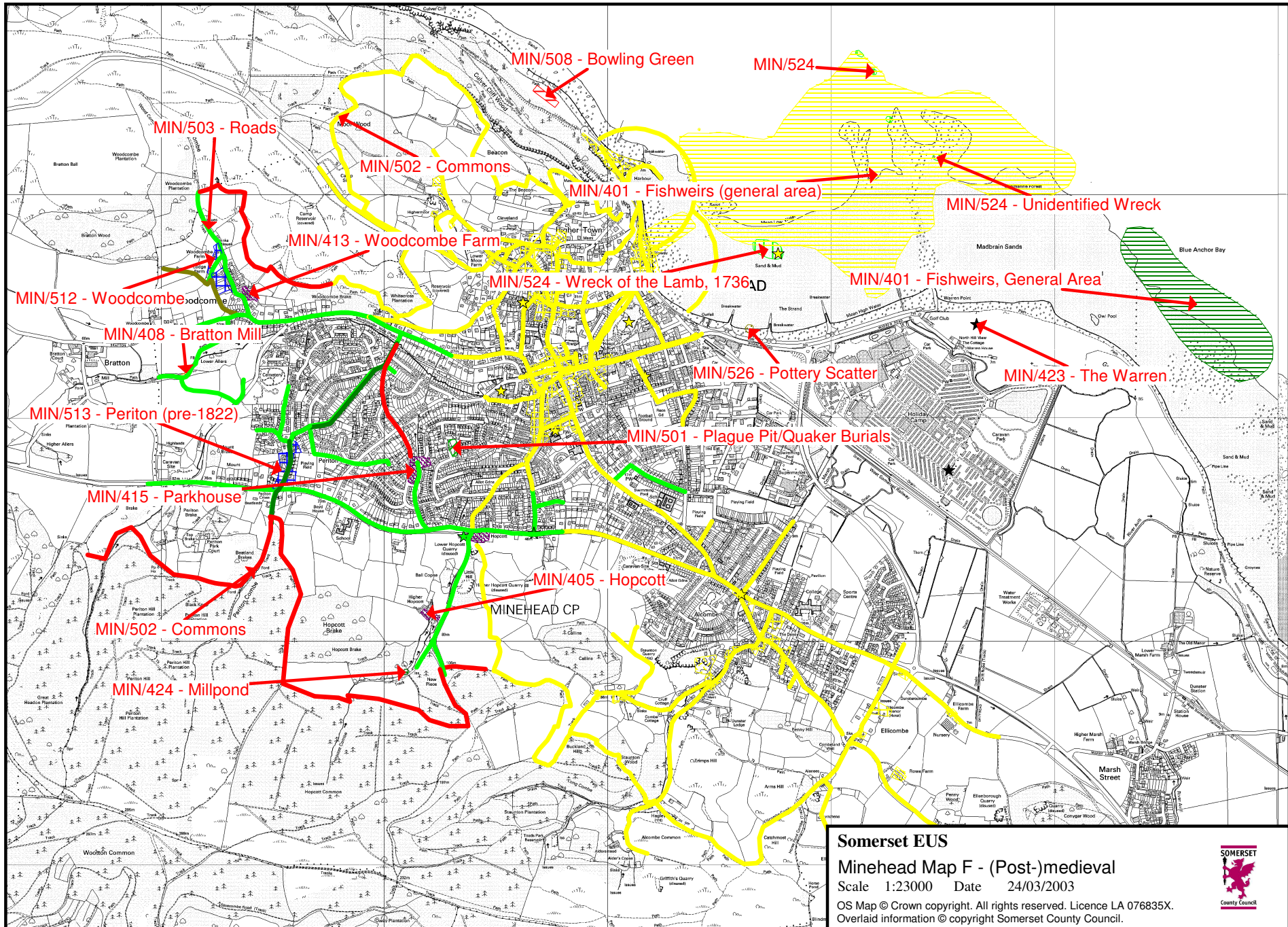
Quay Lane

Esplanade

Meml

Mast

Sand



MIN/508 - Bowling Green

MIN/524

MIN/503 - Roads

MIN/502 - Commons

MIN/401 - Fishweirs (general area)

MIN/524 - Unidentified Wreck

MIN/413 - Woodcombe Farm

MIN/524 - Wreck of the Lamb, 1736 AD

MIN/401 - Fishweirs, General Area

MIN/512 - Woodcombe

MIN/408 - Bratton Mill

MIN/526 - Pottery Scatter

MIN/423 - The Warren

MIN/513 - Periton (pre-1822)

MIN/501 - Plague Pit/Quaker Burials

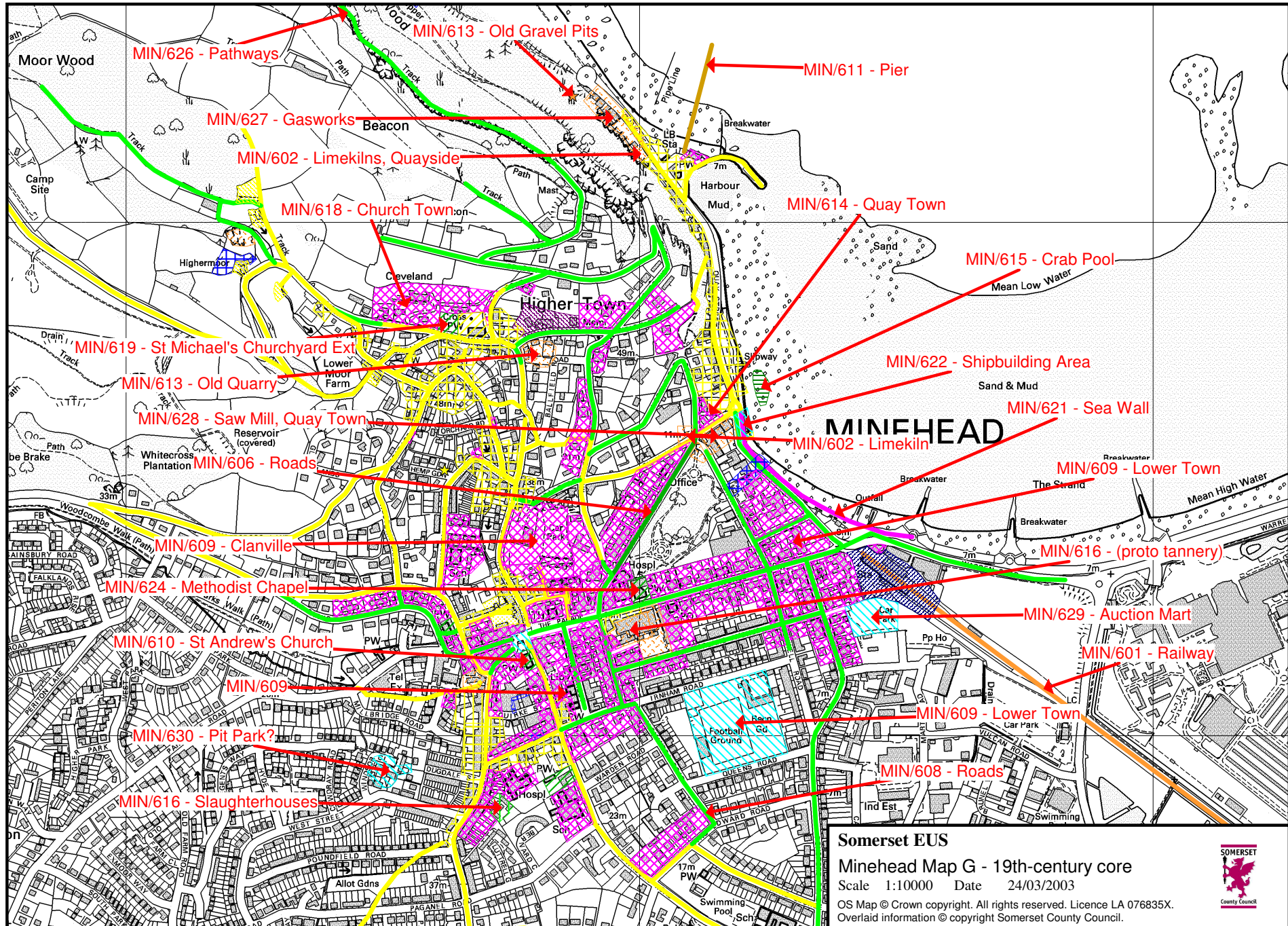
MIN/415 - Parkhouse

MIN/405 - Hopcott

MIN/502 - Commons

MIN/424 - Millpond

MINEHEAD CP



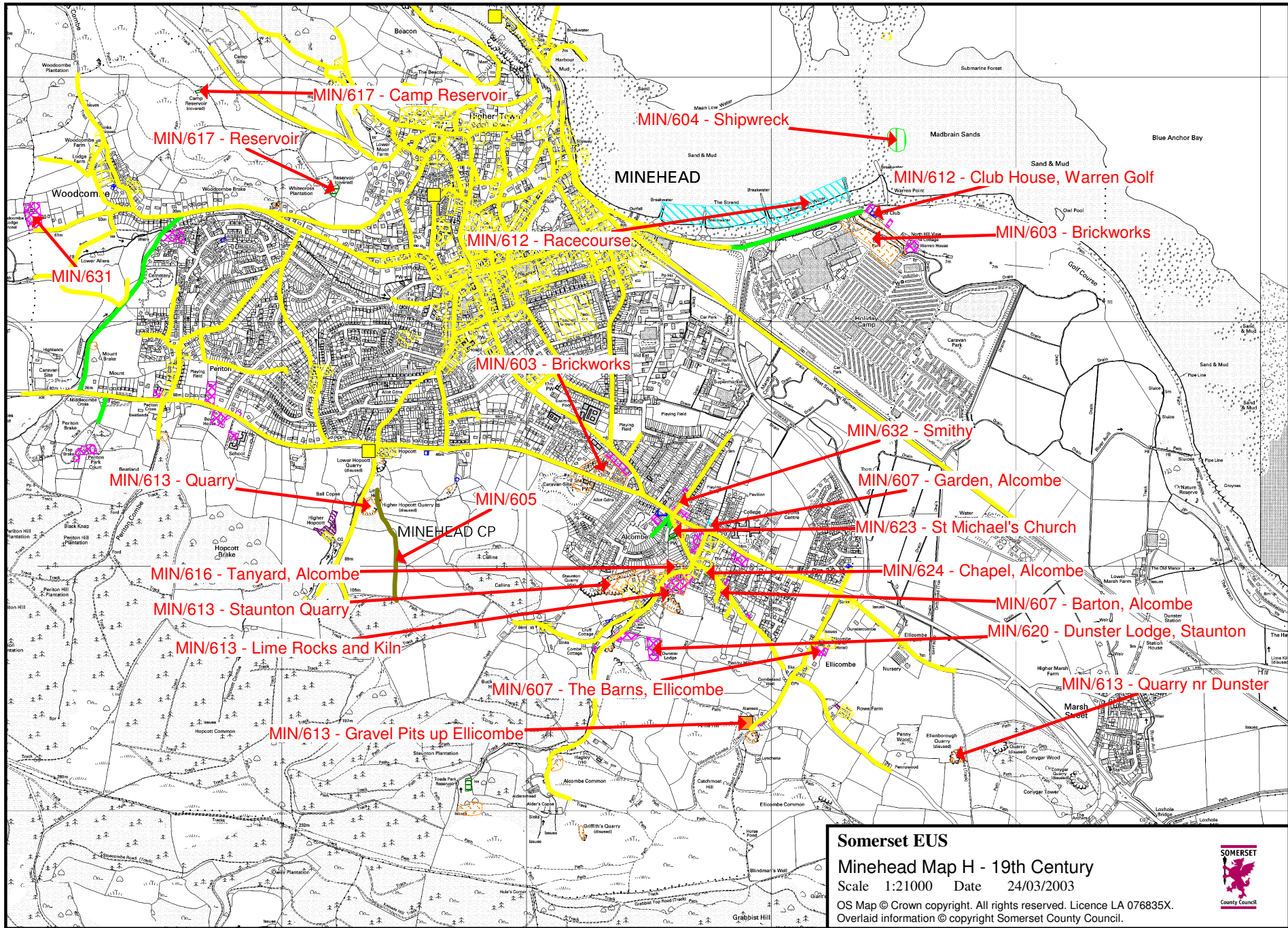
Somerset EUS

Minehead Map G - 19th-century core

Scale 1:10000 Date 24/03/2003

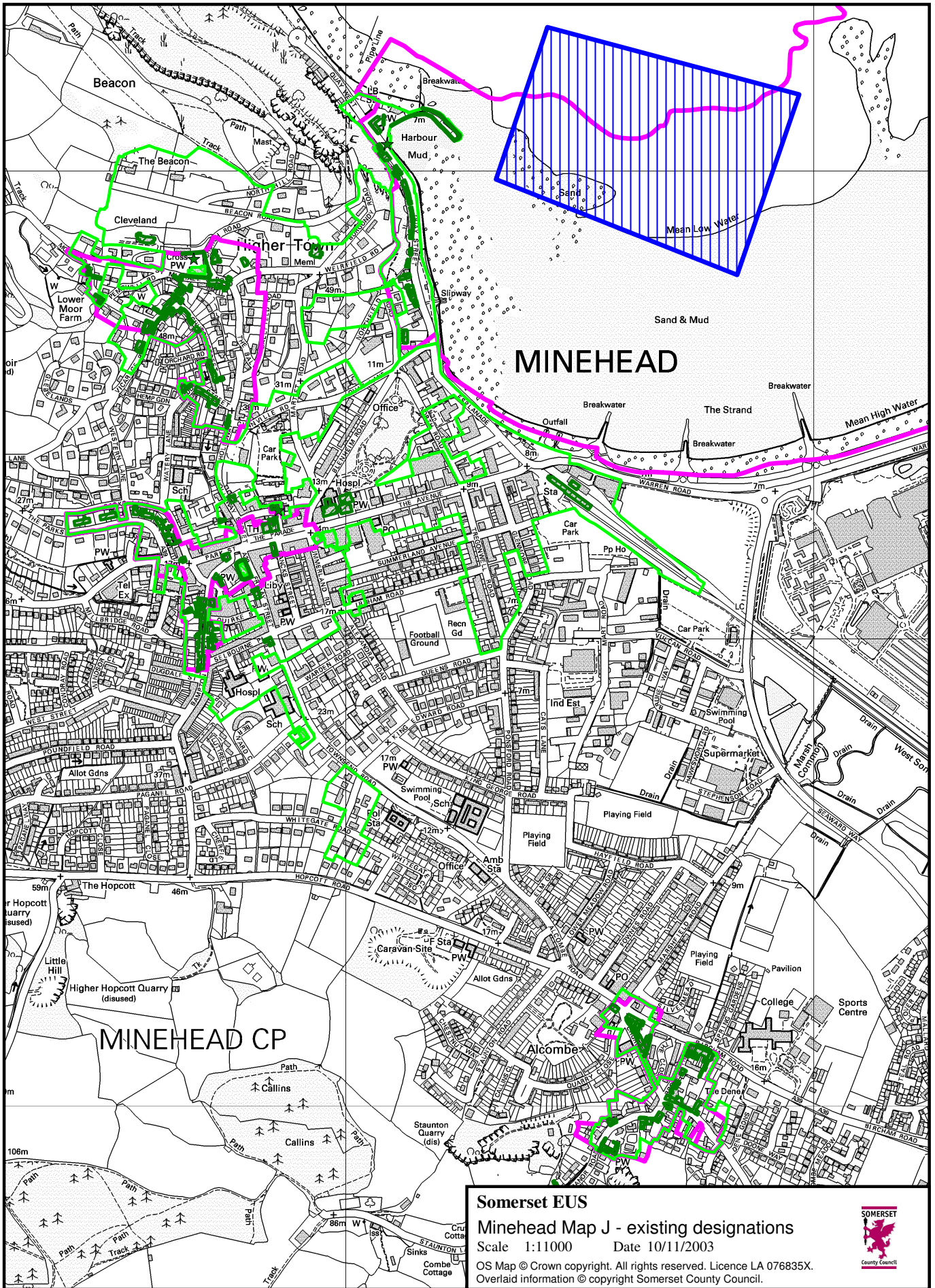
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Somerset EUS
 Minehead Map H - 19th Century
 Scale 1:21000 Date 24/03/2003
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Somerset EUS

Minehead Map J - existing designations

Scale 1:11000 Date 10/11/2003

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