

English Heritage Extensive Urban Survey

An archaeological assessment of

Stogursey

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SOMERSET EXTENSIVE URBAN SURVEY

STOGURSEY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

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SOMERSET EXTENSIVE URBAN EVALUATION

STOGURSEY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

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

I. MAJOR SOURCES

1. *Primary documents*

Stogursey is moderately well documented, though many of the records relate to the Priory rather than the borough. None of these records have been consulted for this study.

2. *Local histories*

Stogursey has been covered by the Victoria County History (Dunning & Siraut, 1992) and this is the major source for the history of the town.

3. *Maps*

The earliest large scale map is Chilcott's survey of 1795, which clearly shows the morphology of the town. There is a slightly earlier map of 1770 showing parts of the surrounding estates and the town at a smaller scale.

II. A BRIEF HISTORY OF STOGURSEY

Stogursey lies towards the south-west of its parish between the low-lying coast and river areas and the Quantock uplands, and in contact with both. Whilst the early history of settlement at Stogursey itself is unclear, there is evidence of both prehistoric (especially later prehistoric) and Roman activity in the surrounding area. St Andrew's Well at Stogursey *may* be an ancient holy well, but there is as yet no sign that it would have been more than an isolated sacred site before the Saxon period.

At Domesday, a small agricultural settlement, *Stoche*, and its mill, are recorded. This was part of the manor of *Stoke*, the principal manor of the parish, which in turn formed part of Cannington hundred, in which lay a major royal estate. It has been suggested that there may have been a minster at *Stoche* (Bond, c1990), partly because of the size of the later medieval establishment in relation to the status of the Priory, and partly because at least one dependent chapelry is attested, at Lilstock (which was only detached in 1881: Lilstock appears to have been the old port of the Saxon settlement). These factors, together with the proximity of St Andrew's Well (traditionally the site of Saxon baptisms), are accepted indicators of possible minster status, though in Stogursey's case direct evidence is lacking.

The manor of *Stoke* was held by Beorhtsige before the Conquest. It was then granted to the Norman William de Falaise, and passed down in the line of his daughter, who married into the de Courcy family: it is from this family that the second element of the name Stogursey comes. There followed the foundation of the Castle, probably soon after Domesday in the late 11th century, and of the Priory, very early in the 12th century. It is not absolutely clear how the existing settlement was affected by these developments, which apparently predated the establishment of the medieval borough by some years.

The first reference to a borough is in 1225, when Stogursey had its own jury at the eyre. At this time, or more probably some time before, the settlement was remodelled around the central market place. An annual fair at the end of November and a Saturday market are first recorded in 1301 and in the same year there were 60 burgages in the town. From 1306 Stogursey was taxed as a borough, and in 1340 it was worth more than twice as much as Nether Stowey. In 1361, it was recorded as a Parliamentary borough, though this appears to have been an unacceptable expense to the town (Bond, c1990). Nevertheless the borough expanded to the north, and there were more than 80 burgages in 1614.

The town's economy was based initially on the retail of agricultural produce, though by the 15th century it was involved in the cloth industry in a small way. Whilst it was a profitable borough, its stability was not assisted by the periodic conflicts which occurred throughout the medieval period. In the early 13th century, not long after the borough's foundation, there was a troubled period when the Castle was held for King John and, only a few years later, involved in a rebellion. The Castle was twice ordered to be slighted, in 1215 and 1228, and whilst these orders do not appear to have been carried out, it was in 1233 refortified on the orders of the King. The rest of the 13th century remained unsettled with the pattern of succession interrupted by forfeitures and rebellion.

In the 14th century, there was continued friction in the town, often caused by the presence of the alien priory belonging to the Norman Abbey of Lonlay. The disproportionate privileges of these enclaves set up soon after the Conquest were looked on with favour by very few people in 14th century England, and they were repeatedly suspended by the monarchy. There was violent conflict between Stogursey Castle and Priory in the 1320s and 1330s, though later that century the Priory estate was temporarily let to Stogursey's MP, courtesy of the King.

The Priory was dissolved in the early 15th century, putting an end to that cause of conflict in the town. The Castle continued active in national politicking, becoming a major Lancastrian power base. Besieged and burnt in 1457, it was rebuilt only to the extent that it could act as an administrative centre for what became a relatively minor estate of the Percys and the Egmonts. The status of Stogursey was much reduced, and its urban role diminished through the post-medieval period. The market lost its importance although it continued to be recorded until the early 18th century and two annual fairs (May and September) continued until the mid 19th century. Collinson in 1791 described a place with no market and consisting of but one long street.

There was a moderate population increase in the 19th century which was not maintained, though there has been a little modern suburban development. The borough was last recorded in 1833 and Stogursey reverted to village status.

III. THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF STOGURSEY

GENERAL COMMENTS

0.1 Archaeological knowledge

The only excavations in Stogursey have been within the Castle area and the Priory precinct. The first Castle excavations in the 19th century were not fully recorded, but there has subsequently been further work in connection with the restoration of the Castle. Excavations in the Priory took place in 1941. Additional observations were made in the church during work c1940, and archaeological excavation and monitoring attended developments in the Priory precinct in the 1980s. Other developments were not systematically monitored until recently.

0.2 Standing structures

Stogursey retains much of its medieval form, though details have been obscured (particularly in the vicinity of the Priory) and few early structures are apparent. The exceptions are the Castle, which remains an important part of the townscape, and the church, both of which originated in the early medieval period.

1. PREHISTORIC

(No map)

1.1 Archaeological knowledge

There is evidence of prehistoric occupation in the parish, but much of it comes from the shore rather than the neighbourhood of Stogursey. There is one possible long barrow (SMR 35252) to the north-west at Burton, where an arrowhead (SMR 34096) was also found. Few crop or soil marks have been evident in the landscape, but the possibility of spot finds at Stogursey should be borne in mind, given the archaeological context.

1.2 Context

Stogursey 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 areas subsequently built up. Whilst ‘towns’ were not, generally speaking, a feature of prehistoric landscapes, many of the same factors which made the site desirable in later periods would already have been operative. In the case of Stogursey, the later settlement lies in an area which has produced few earlier prehistoric sites or artefacts, due in part to the high post-glacial sea level which drowned parts of the local landscape. However, scattered flints have been found on Stolford Beach (SMR 34893) and a mesolithic flint scatter was found at Hinckley Point (Webster & Croft, 1992). The large late bronze age hoard (SMR 34093) found at Wick Park to the north of Stogursey and close to a bronze age barrow (SMR 34063, which appears to cover a neolithic burial) is considered to be of some importance. The hoard provides a link between metallurgical traditions and contains an unusually high proportion of tools: it is possible that the Stogursey area at this time formed a metallurgical production and distribution centre (McNeil, 1973).

1.3 Archaeological features

There is no evidence of settlement at Stogursey itself.

No map has been produced for this period.

2. ROMAN

(No map)

2.1 Archaeological knowledge

Stogursey lies in an area west of Comwich in which several small Roman settlements are known (eg SMR 35283, at Hinckley Point) and in which scattered finds have occurred (eg SMR 34086, 34095).

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.

Stogursey is one of 26 of the 45 historic towns covered by this project at which there is as yet no evidence of Roman settlement. Though there was certainly activity in the area, which lay not far west of the Roman port of Comwich, it appears not to have been as densely settled as some other parts of the county.

2.3 Archaeological features

The possibility of pre-Saxon settlement at Stogursey should be born in mind, since in the context of the (currently hypothetical) combination of ancient holy well and Saxon minster some further continuity is not implausible. There is as yet no evidence to support this, however.

No map has been produced for this period.

3. SAXON

(Map A)

3.1 Archaeological knowledge

There is insufficient archaeological knowledge of Stogursey to be sure of the extent, location and character of Saxon archaeological deposits. It is a question of some importance, since until the early settlement is located and dated, the extent of continuity between early medieval settlement and borough will not be understood.

3.2 Context

Though the Post-Roman and early Saxon periods were characterised by a return to non-urban lifestyles, the later Saxon period (from the 9th century onwards) saw the beginnings of a resurgence of trading places and towns. This was controlled, in England, by the Saxon royal families (though it was part of a wider trend), and took place in the context of a network of royal estate administration centres which was already established (in some cases long-

established). The reasons for the changes were many and complex, combining defensive, administrative and ecclesiastical considerations with, increasingly, purely commercial aspirations.

As one of the heartlands of the kings of Wessex, Somerset played an important part in the early re-urbanisation of the south, and there are a number of places amongst those studied for this project which can claim to have been towns before the Norman Conquest. However, there are also a number which can claim to have been 'central places' performing more limited, and non-commercial, functions: not all such places developed into towns, but many towns originated in such specialised settlements.

Stogursey is one three of the 45 historic towns covered by this project which, whilst it had not developed any really urban functions by the end of the Saxon period, was the site of a known or possible pre-Conquest minster. There were twelve other minster settlements in the survey which had developed urban functions by the Conquest.

3.3 Archaeological features, shown on Map A

3.3.a Settlement

STY/301

The Saxon settlement

The position of the original settlement is not known for certain. It is perhaps most likely to have been adjacent to the medieval church, the rather awkward position of which suggests a pre-existing site. Irregularities in the town plan in this area may imply some kind of constraints on the definition of the Priory estate and, subsequently, the road layout. However, this may have been a single land boundary (perhaps a minster estate boundary) rather than existing settlement. An alternative location for the settlement, it could be argued, is between the Castle and the church, even (conceivably) partly beneath the Norman motte and baileys.

The marked area is intended to define the areas most likely to contain archaeological deposits relating to three elements of the Saxon settlement. There is insufficient knowledge to define these in any detail. The three elements are: the settlement, from which traces of humble timber buildings and rubbish pits might be expected; the possible minster, or pre-Conquest church, which is most likely to underlie the medieval building but may have had associated structures according to its status; and the manor centre, *perhaps* in Stogursey, again possibly under the Norman castle, from which slightly more substantial timber buildings might be expected. It also includes the well, which is supposed to have been a baptismal site.

The marked area is conjectural. It defines the areas in Stogursey most likely to contain the deposits outlined above, but can only be regarded as an approximate guide.

3.3.b Industrial sites

Not mapped

A mill is referred to at Domesday. There is no guarantee that this was on the same site as the medieval mill, which was fed by the same medieval water system as the Castle moat (see below, p12).

4. Medieval (Map B)

4.1 Archaeological knowledge

There have been some excavations at the Castle and Priory, the former in the 19th century and the 1980s, and the latter in 1941. There are no useful records of the 19th century excavations, nor is the later information yet accessible. However, the 1941 work shed light on the Priory drainage system. Observations were also made in the church during work on the heating system c1940 and work was carried out prior to the building of a bungalow in the Priory precinct in the 1980s. There have been no archaeological investigations in the area of the medieval town.

4.2 Context

Both in Britain and on the continent, the medieval period saw the growth of town foundation and, to an extent, urban living (though the bulk of the population continued to live in villages). The reasons for this growth were many and

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

In archaeological terms, the medieval towns are characterised by evidence of partially planned, intensive occupation of restricted areas. Typical features which may occur include: regular, or semi-regular, street layouts; large market places (usually obscured by later encroachments); blocks of regular, long, narrow, plots end on to the commercial frontage; churchyards, either within the medieval layout or outside it - the latter often indicative of a deliberate shift of activity; regular or irregular suburbs or marginal areas occupied by quays, or industrial sites such as mills; and high status sites such as castles, manor sites and large religious precincts.

Stogursey is one of 20 of the 45 historic towns covered by this project which first acquired urban status in the medieval period and one of the ten of these 20 which acquired full borough status. Stogursey was one of eight of the 45 towns associated with a castle, and like one other of these eight (Nether Stowey), may have been deliberately created out of an existing minster settlement to service and profit the castle. It was also one of eight of the towns which had at least one large or important religious establishment (several other towns had smaller or less significant establishments), though the castle was in this case (as in two others of the eight) a more important influence. It was one of 19 of the 45 towns at which a planned area was laid out in the medieval period partially across or - more commonly - immediately adjacent to an established settlement.

Stogursey is particularly well-preserved and is one of the three classic castle/priory/ borough survivals in Somerset (the others are Montacute and Dunster).

4.3 Standing structures

The major structures are the remains of the motte and baileys, and the parish church. Otherwise, few medieval buildings appear to survive, though earlier structures may be hidden behind the prevalent 18th and 19th century facades. The listed buildings of medieval origin are shown on **Map B**.

4.4 Archaeological components, shown on Map B

4.4.a Redevelopment in earlier settlement components

The planned medieval town superceded the earlier settlement.

4.4.b Communications: Roads

The medieval town was established around a crossroads, with the Castle dominating the southern approach, and the church and Priory the somewhat convoluted eastern approach on the other side of the brook. It is quite possible that the borough plan represents a modification of the earlier lanes: it has been suggested (Dunning & Siraut, 1992) that the road from the old port and river crossing at Comwich originally ran further south, with the greenway north of Durborough forming part of it, and that the route was deliberately diverted when the market was established (therefore having to skirt the pre-existing Priory).

STY/412

Old road alignment

The route east was slightly less direct in the medieval and post-medieval periods. The road was straightened in 1865 and the old lane has now vanished.

Taken from the 1795 map.

4.4.c Water

Stogursey's watercourses, none of which are of any great depth, are in part the product of medieval diversions, but there have also been later diversions which have confused the issue. The post-medieval and 19th century maps all show slightly different water systems and priorities. Further study is needed on this subject.

STY/407, STY/413

The Castle moat and mill leat

The Castle moat and mill leats formed an integrated system, the mechanics of which are not understood in detail. The mill pool, on the north side of the middle bailey, adjoined both the motte ditch and the middle bailey ditch, the former apparently acting as a feeder and the latter as an overflow.

The Castle moat and middle bailey ditch (part) have been mapped from their remains as shown on the modern map.

STY/415

The town ditch

The town ditch, or Law Ditch, was not defensive, but marked the boundaries of the borough. Water was channelled along the back of the burgages from St Andrew's Well on the south side of the town. Whilst parts of the southern ditch remain, the location of any northern counterpoint is uncertain. No northern ditch was in evidence in 1795, and this may suggest that the ditch, if it existed, ran behind the earlier burgable plots and was overtaken by borough expansion in the medieval period.

The southern stretch of ditch is based on the 1795 and 1841 maps. How this relates to the eastern brook (which again has the appearance of a diverted channel) running along the edge of the Priory estate is unclear. The northern stretches are totally conjectural, based on the burgable area definitions below.

4.4.d Military sites

STY/403

The Castle

The Castle (SMR 34071, SMR LB 30598, SM 33708) was first mentioned in either 1090 (Aston & Leech, 1977; Bond, c1990) or 1204 (Dunning & Siraut, 1992). It was probably begun by William de Courcy, the son in law of William de Falaise, and it is possible that the remains of de Falaise's original fortified dwelling underlie it (Dunning & Siraut, 1992).

The Castle had a turbulent history. In 1215 it was held for King John and by 1228 it was the base of the over-powerful robber baron Fawkes de Breauté. Both sets of circumstances resulted in demolition orders. Whilst it is thought that these may not have been carried out, re-fortification for the King was ordered in 1233. The Castle was passed down several lines, remaining a power centre and becoming a Lancastrian base in the 15th century. In 1457 it was burnt down, and was not fully restored by subsequent holders of the land, existing as a partial ruin. However, some repairs and rebuilding were carried out in the late 15th century (Dunning & Siraut, 1992), and it remained an administrative centre, containing a prison as well as domestic quarters. The buildings were in decay in the 16th century and by the end of that century the Castle was being used as a warren. The gatehouse was extended to become a 17th century house, now restored.

The surviving form of the Castle, described more fully in the SMR, accords well with a late 11th century date. It consists of a motte about 2m in height surrounded by a berm (of up to 15m width) and moat with the remains of a causeway bridge (SMR LB 30599). The moat, formed by the diversion of the brook, has recently been cleared out. There is an inner bailey; traces of two baileys to the east survive and it is possible that there were further outworks, perhaps to the west (Aston & Leech, 1977) or north (see SMR 34071), where the bailey appears to have been truncated. There are signs (in the shape of two large depressions) that structural remains survive in the middle bailey (the date of these is not known). Moreover, a possible earlier access route can be seen disappearing under the raised platform of the inner bailey.

The curtain wall survives at heights of up to 6m (with modern garden walling linking portions of it). There is a 1733 engraving by the Bucks (reproduced in Aston & Leech, 1977) showing that much remained of the stonework at this date. The dating of the wall is uncertain, and it probably represents several phases of rebuilding and repair between the 12th and 14th centuries. Parts of a western bastion remain, and excavations in 1981-2 uncovered another possibly circular tower to the east, underlying the 14th century gatehouse. Some traces of interior structures, including a possible hall range, which once abutted the curtain wall, may still be seen within it: the excavations also uncovered evidence of timber structures against the curtain wall. There are further details of these in the SMR.

It is clear from field surveys and the limited excavations in the Castle area that there is a complex structural sequence, which is hardly understood, on the site. Archaeological survival has been shown to be good, especially in the vicinity of the still partially waterlogged moat, pool and leat system. The core of the site is now scheduled.

The marked area is based on areas of potential archaeological interest identified in the SMR and in Aston & Leech, 1977. The area of interest is somewhat larger than the area currently scheduled.

4.4.e Manors and estates

The pattern of growth in Stogursey bears the imprint of constraints to south and east. Whilst no detailed study of the estates in the surrounding area has been made for the purposes of this report, certain features have been noted as they affect archaeological expectations in the vicinity of Stogursey.

Not mapped There was a park associated with the Castle in 1295. This later became part of one of the surrounding estates (Wyndeats) and was still referred to as the king's park in the 16th century. It lay to the west of the Castle, and can be partially traced in old field names. The perimeter of the park has not yet been identified.

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

STY/404

The Priory

The Priory (SMR 34068) was an outpost of the Abbey of Lonlay in Normandy and was established c1100, possibly on a Saxon minster estate (see above, p6). It was a small house, with few monks, though it may originally have been conceived in grander terms. As with other such houses, its fortunes rose and fell with the tides of politics: it was repeatedly taken into the king's hands, and was at one time let to one of the burgesses, Johannes Bakeler (the town's MP). It was dissolved in 1414 and the endowments went to Eton College (which holds the living to this day).

Most of the Priory buildings are no longer visible, the dovecote (SMR LB 30621) and the church (see below) being the exceptions. Whilst several buildings are mentioned in an early 14th century document (including a hall, chamber, storeroom, kitchen, brewhouse, bakehouse and barn), the layout of the precinct is unclear, but could almost certainly be elucidated by excavation. Slightly later records refer to a solar, latrines, gatehouse and stables. The priors house was used for a time as the vicarage and was not demolished until the early 19th century, when it was said to be too large for the tenants: a late 18th century plan of the house survives.

The very extent and antiquity of the precinct is uncertain, and again might be illuminated by excavation at possible boundaries - including old roads and property boundaries to north and west: boundaries to south and east were probably marked by natural features. The (?diverted) brook to the west may at some date formed a boundary, but the 1795 map shows Priory land on its western bank.

Excavations in 1941 investigated a so-called "secret passage" between church and Priory. The excavators were of the opinion that they had in fact uncovered part of the Priory drainage system, consisting of substantial stone-lined drains, sump and outflow with sluice gate. There were two

inflows, from the Priory lavatories and from the Guest House or Infirmary. More recently, a watching brief conducted during the excavation of trenches for a bungalow revealed no sign of medieval archaeology (Aston & Murless, 1978).

The church (SMR 34077, SMR LB 30602), which may overlie an earlier Saxon establishment (see above, p6), was both the parish and the Priory church, and is one of the largest in West Somerset. The church retains elements of the Norman architecture (notably the tower and transepts), and the original apsidal ends to the transepts and chancels were uncovered in the 1940s (nothing of earlier date was noticed during this work). The chancel was remodelled c1180 to meet the needs of the monks, and the surviving early medieval fabric of the church is notable for the continental influences on its architecture. There were two subsequent major rebuilds, in the 15th century (the nave) and the 19th century.

The graveyard has been in use since at least medieval times, possibly much earlier. However, the position and extent of the burial area when the Priory was in existence is not absolutely clear. Part of the southern boundary wall of the churchyard (SMR LB 30609) is of medieval origin, suggesting this is a long-standing division. Apart from burials, the graveyard may also contain remains of a 12th century chapel known to have adjoined the church.

Those excavations that have taken place suggest that the archaeological potential of the Priory estate is high, especially in the vicinity of the brook, where waterlogging exists. Until the plan of the Priory can be established (it seems not to have been standard, due to the small size of the house), all sites within the area must be treated with caution, though, obviously, not all will contain structural remains.

The mapped area is based on the precinct suggested in Aston & Leech, 1977.

STY/405

An area abutting the Priory

Whilst not obviously part of the medieval Priory, this may originally have been church land: it abutted the churchyard until the road alterations of the 19th century and contains only two plots on the 1795 map. These are labelled as the vicarage and the mason's yard. The area also contains a building running along the edge of the churchyard, possibly over the conduited brook: these features now underlie the street.

From the 1795 map.

STY/414

St Andrew's Well

St Andrew's Well (SMR 34070, SMR LB 30628) was the main source of water for the town, but may also have been a holy well, possibly of ancient origin. According to the SMR, there is a local tradition that it marks the site of Saxon baptisms. It apparently had a garden with it in 1532 (Dunning & Siraut, 1992) and other post-medieval references are to the lake formed by the spring. In 1791, the springs were enclosed and since then there have been a series of repairs and rebuilds to the wellheads.

The site of the well is marked from the modern map. No attempt has been made to define the direction and extent of the post-medieval lake and gardens. Further research could perhaps pinpoint their location.

4.4.g *Settlement (Urban)*

There has been no archaeological evaluation of the medieval urban areas in Stogursey. However, their archaeology is potentially of great importance in the establishment of the settlement's developmental sequence from small Saxon settlement through several stages of medieval and post-medieval expansion and contraction.

STY/503

The Borough

Most of the Borough boundary is shown on the 1795 map. This is most unlikely to be identical

with medieval borough designations, but is significant in what it omits. In particular, the area opposite Town Burgage (marked as Almshouse land on the 1770 map) is without the borough. The two late 18th century maps together suggest that the likelihood of medieval structures in the land south of Town Burgage is low.

From the 1795 map.

STY/401

The market place

The market place consisted of a large rectangular open area at the hub of the crossroads. This area has been much encroached upon, probably in the medieval period. A shambles was recorded in 1475 and the area included almshouses (SMR 34073), supposed to have been founded before the 15th century. These were both in the northern Fore St area cleared in the mid 19th century. Other encroachments became established as the blocks now north of St Andrew's Road, which are likely to overlie the remains of medieval properties arranged more haphazardly than in the surrounding burgage areas. A particular aim of excavation in any of these areas of the market would be to attempt to define the chronology of encroachment on the planned market area.

The remains of the market cross (SMR 34628, SM 33707) are sited at the west end of the market place and date from the 13th or 14th century.

The market place has been mapped from the 1795 map together with comments in the Victoria County History, Bond (c1990) and Aston & Leech (1977).

The burgage plots are still clearly visible as regular blocks on the post-medieval map. They divide into three categories: the burgage plots around the market, which are probably the earliest; the later expansions to north and west; and the areas to the north marked Burgage on the 1795 map, but which show no sign of being developed at all.

STY/402

Burgage plots around the market

These areas probably represent the earliest burgages in the town. They form regular blocks of long, narrow plots around the market place: these can still be seen in part. In this area is likely to have been the most intensive activity and building. Because of the ultimate failure of the borough and the low level of modern development in this part of the settlement, the marked areas must be considered to be of high archaeological potential, with likely survival of both frontages (shops and dwellings) and back yards (workshops and pits), quite possibly in complete sequences.

STY/406

An area adjacent to the Priory

This area is of uncertain status. Included in the post-medieval borough boundary (of 1795) and lying between the Castle and the obvious burgages, it *could* have formed part of the early developed area. However, the fact that there is no sign on the 1795 map of plot division or development also suggests that it may have originally formed part of either the Castle or the Priory lands, in which case it may have lain open until the 19th century (when it became the site of the malthouse). Any archaeological work in the area should aim to establish its medieval status if possible.

STY/408

Lime Street burgages

The areas along Lime Street north of the putative town ditch line are thought to have been established in the later medieval period, though the date is somewhat unclear. Documents show that the number of burgages increased between the early 14th and the early 17th centuries (Dunning & Siraut, 1992), and it may be possible to achieve more precise dating from documentary research. Archaeological dating of these areas is important for the understanding of the rise and fall of the borough's fortunes: the 1795 map shows that several of the plots were simply fields at that date. These areas, though, have been subject to modern estate development, particularly to the north and east, and archaeological deposits may have been damaged.

STY/409

Town Burgage

Many of the above comments also apply to this area, which is marked as Town Burgage on the 1795 map. Though this is a large area, only the part nearest the main road is likely to contain significant medieval structures: the rear of Town Burgage consists on the 1795 map of a series of strips, probably remnants of open field, as with the two areas described below. The frontages have perhaps been subject to somewhat greater post-medieval redevelopment than those on Lime St, because of their position on High Street. The entire back area has been developed as a modern estate.

Town Burgage was linked to the earlier town by a narrow band of ad hoc development, which may well represent an intermediate stage of expansion.

STY/410

Lawson and Shurton Burgages

Lawson Burgage (to the west) and Shurton Burgage (to the east) are shown on the 1795 map as a series of strips, and were in fact remnants of the Lowelstone and Shurton open fields. Taken into the borough some time before 1795 (and still referred to as fields in, respectively, the 15th and 16th centuries), there is no sign that they were developed as Town Burgage was. On the contrary the name Rack Acres given to the southern part of Lawson Burgage implies that it lay open and in use for the stretching of cloth, an activity which leaves few substantial archaeological remains. To this day, there has been only minimal development in this area.

The definition of all the above areas is based on the 1795 map in conjunction with the analysis of Stogursey's development by Dunning & Siraut (1992).

4.4.h Settlement (Rural)

STY/411

Dawlea Farm

Dawlea Farm was the centre of the estate of Wyndeats (part of the Castle demesne), at least in the post-medieval period. It is known that there was a 17th century house on the site, and it is possible that earlier estate centres (the estate was already in existence by Domesday) may have existed on the same site. Further research - documentary before archaeological - might clarify this.

The defined area includes the farm buildings as they appear on the maps up to 1888. As an area of potential medieval archaeology, it should be regarded as somewhat conjectural.

4.4.i Industrial sites

(a) Mills

STY/407

The Castle mill

The medieval mill (SMR 34072) lay below the Castle on the same site as the post-medieval mill, which survives: the present building (SMR LB 30597) is 18th century. It was supplied by the overflow from the Castle moat system and by water channelled along the rear of the burgages from St Andrew's Well. The defined area covers not only the site of the mill buildings, but also the confluence point of the several leats and ditches, the relationship of which is not clearly understood.

The marked area is based on the SMR to the east but extended to the west to include a leat which appears only on the 1802 map.

(b) Other industrial sites

Not mapped

There were limestone quarries in the area from the 15th century onwards (hence Lime St). In connection with the textile industry, a dyehouse had been built near the Castle by 1495; racks are referred to by the early 16th century - these may have been in Lawson Burgage (see above, p12).

5. POST-MEDIEVAL (Map C)

5.1 Archaeological knowledge

There is little knowledge of Stogursey's post-medieval archaeology.

5.2 Context

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. Stogursey 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.

5.3 Standing structures

There are several listed buildings of this period in and around Stogursey, including 18th century cottages in the centre (eg SMR LB 30600, 30612-3) - illustrating the return to village status - and substantial farms on the road west. The listed buildings originating in this period are shown on Map C.

5.4 Archaeological components, shown on Map C

5.4.a Redevelopment in earlier settlement components

Settlement components described under earlier periods are shown more lightly shaded. Within these areas, the distribution of Listed Buildings shows some limited redevelopment around the market place.

5.4.b Settlement (Urban)

There was very little expansion in the post-medieval period, as Stogursey's fortunes were at a low ebb. However, several plots on the 1795 map lie without the borough boundary, suggesting that they may have been of comparatively recent origin.

STY/501 Post-medieval occupation (various)

These are plots shown on the 1795 map beyond the borough boundary. Several of these areas, including most notably the area to the north of the church, have reverted to field. The nature of these plots, which all lie on or near the brook, could be ascertained by reference to the tithe apportionment, which was not consulted for this study.

From the 1795 map.

5.4.c Industrial sites

(a) Mills

STY/502 A possible mill site

Further research would be necessary to confirm the nature of this plot, *shown on the 1802 map.*

(b) Other industrial sites

Not mapped There were limestone quarries in the area around Stogursey in the post-medieval period. There is a reference to "Sandpits" just to the south of Stogursey. A tanhouse is supposed to have existed near St Andrews Well by 1689 and a tanyard by the 1760s (Dunning & Siraut, 1992).

6. INDUSTRIAL (LATE 18TH/ 19TH CENTURY) (Map C)

6.1 Archaeological knowledge

Stogursey's 19th century archaeology has not been the subject of study.

6.2 Context

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

Stogursey is one of the 22 or so places which though they did not merit Borough or Urban District status at the end of the 19th century, remained market centres and can probably still be regarded as towns (though several of them had sunk towards village status during the course of the century).

6.3 Standing structures

There are many 19th century buildings in the town, a few of which are listed. These include the remarkable school (SMR LB 30633). Listed buildings of 19th century origin are shown in *red* on **Map C**.

6.4 Archaeological components, shown on Map C

6.4.a Redevelopment in earlier settlement components

Components described under earlier periods are shown more lightly shaded. In the central area, 19th century courts were built off Lime St and West St and there was further redevelopment around the market, none of it of any great scale.

6.4.b Communications

STY/603 The Combwich road diversion
The Combwich road was diverted in 1865.

From the 1888 map.

6.4.c Water

STY/602 The town ditch extension
The diversion of the town ditch around plots marked on the 1795 map is not shown until the 1888 map and may have taken place in connection with improvements at the mill.

From the 1888 map.

6.4.d Settlement (Urban)

There was very little expansion of Stogursey in the 19th century.

STY/601 19th century developments (various)
Small scale developments, including the vicarage and new school, *from the 1888 map.*

6.4.e Industrial sites

Not mapped A *malthouse* is shown near the Castle on the 1888 map.

7. 20TH CENTURY (Map C)

7.1 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. Stogursey is one of 30 of the 45 historic towns covered by this project which is not classed as a town in the County Structure Plan.

7.2 Settlement components, shown on Map C

7.2.a Redevelopment in earlier settlement components

Components described under earlier periods are shown more lightly shaded. There has been very little modern redevelopment in the centre of Stogursey.

7.2.b Settlement (Suburban)

New estates have been built to the north, in part to house power station personnel. Whilst some of this development has been on former open field, some of it has, regrettably, impinged on areas of medieval archaeology without adequate monitoring.

STY/701 20th century suburbs (various)
Estates on previously undeveloped land.

7.2.c Settlement (Rural)

STY/702 20th century farm extensions (various)

7.2.d Industrial sites

STY/703 The Sewage works.

The above are from the 1995 digital maps.

IV. THE POTENTIAL OF STOGURSEY

1. Research interests

Stogursey can be expected to be a well-preserved example of a moderately successful medieval semi-planned borough spared much post-medieval development. However, also of particular interest to the understanding of the town is the establishment of the location of the early settlement, and the exploration of the possible ?minster site.

2. Areas of potentially exceptional preservation

Those small excavations which have taken place in Stogursey have encountered waterlogged deposits adjacent to the watercourses which run through both Castle and Priory. It is possible that a similar phenomenon occurs where the town ditch ran, and most likely that there are waterlogged deposits on its extant southern arm, in which there may be preserved the remains of the medieval backs.

3. Limitations

There has not been excessive modern development in the centre of Stogursey, with possibly less than 5% of frontages affected (Bond, c1990). This means that much medieval archaeology may have survived (although the extent of Victorian cellaring is unknown).

4. Extent of current protection

There are a number of listed buildings and two scheduled monuments in the town, the latter being the Castle (SM 33708) and the market cross (SM 33707). There is also a Conservation Area and an AHAP. The existing constraints are shown on **Map D**.

5. Management proposals

See the Archaeological Guidance Document.

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- 3. Maps**
- c1770 SW Stogursey parish, showing part of the town: SRO D/P/Stogs. 23/4
- 1795/1806 Chilcott's survey of manors of Fairfield and Durborrow: DD/AH 65/12
- 1802 OS surveyors' drawings at 3": fiche in SSL
- 1841 Tithe map: fiche in SSL

1888	OS 1:2500: fiche in SSL
1904	OS 1:10560
1995	OS digital data

VI. COMPONENT INDEXES

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Maps

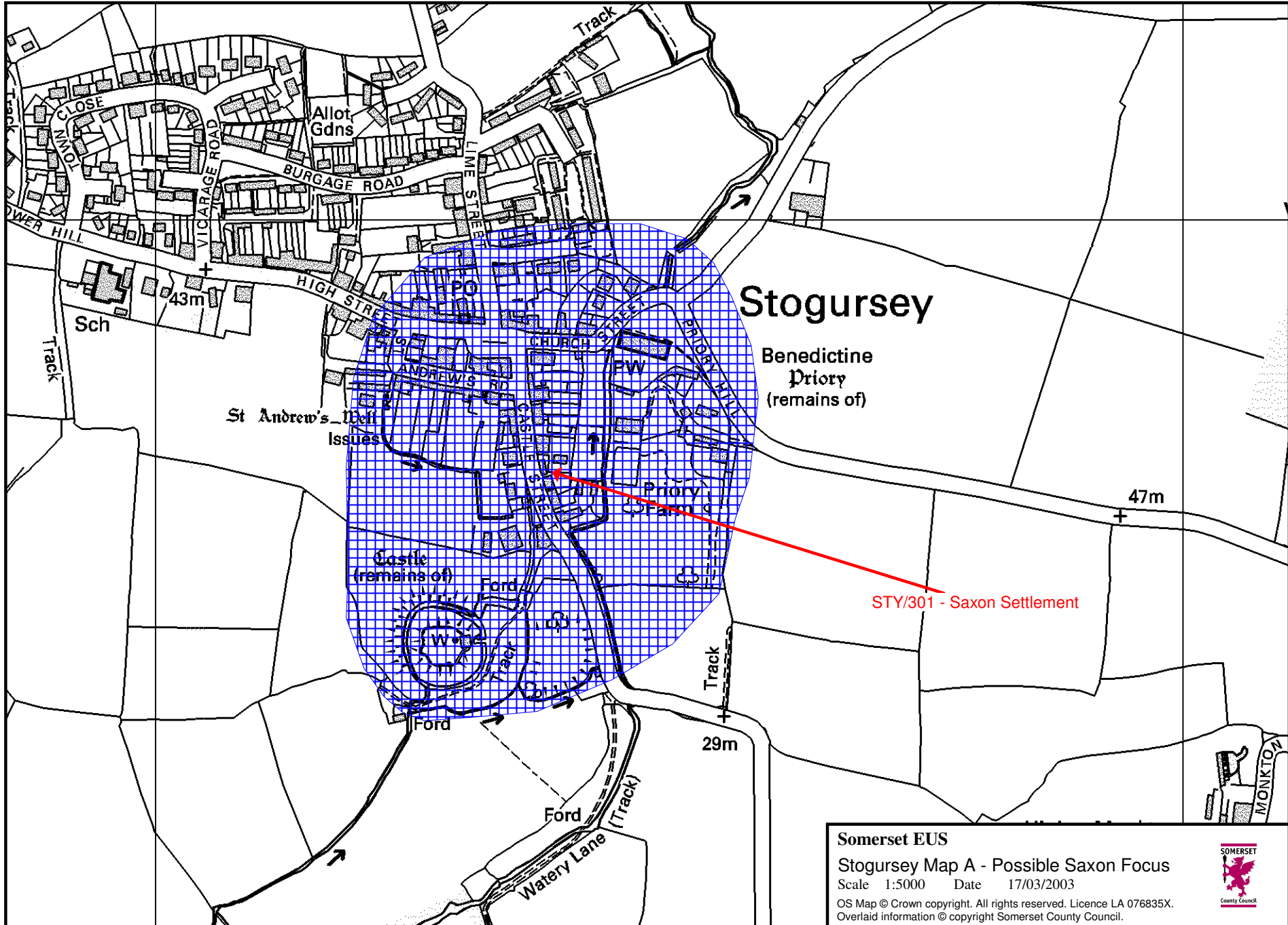
Map A - possible Saxon focus

Map B - The medieval town

Map C - Post-medieval to 20th century

Map D - Existing designations

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



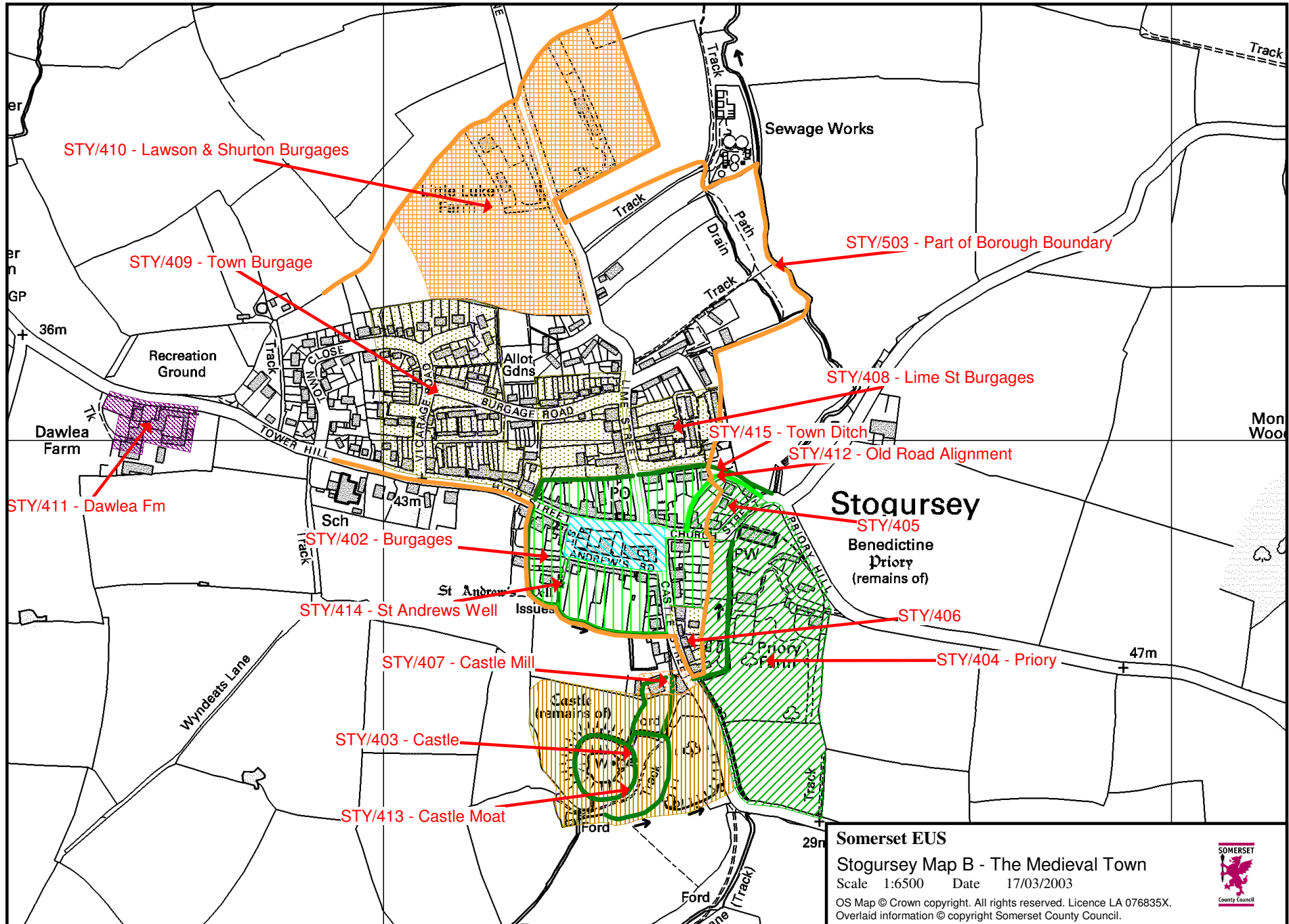
Stogursey

Benedictine
Priory
(remains of)

STY/301 - Saxon Settlement

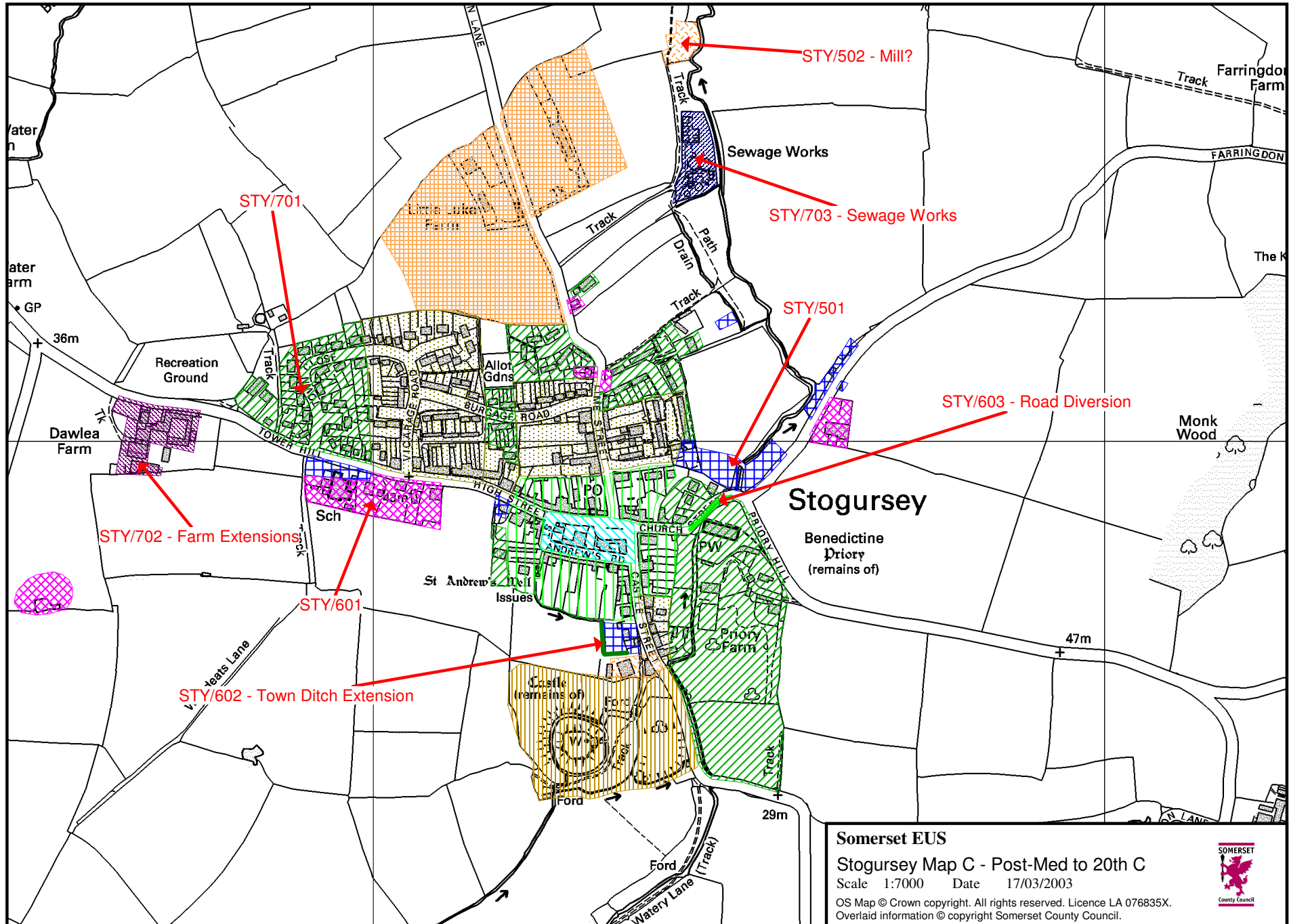
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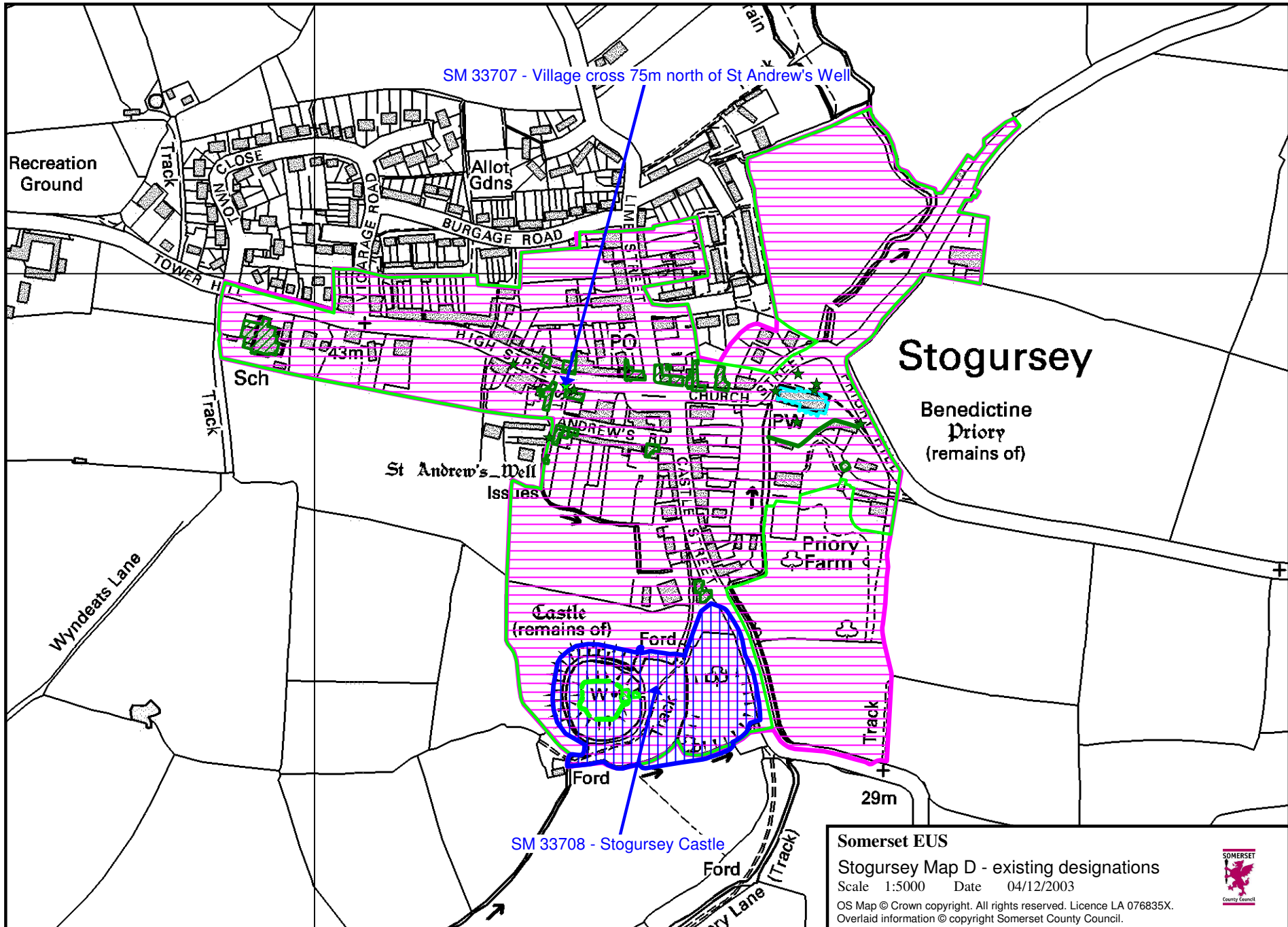
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Stogursey Map C - Post-Med to 20th C

Scale 1:7000 Date 17/03/2003

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Stogursey Map D - existing designations
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