

English Heritage Extensive Urban Survey

An archaeological assessment of

Wiveliscombe

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SOMERSET EXTENSIVE URBAN SURVEY

WIVELISCOMBE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

by Clare Gathercole

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SOMERSET EXTENSIVE URBAN SURVEY
WIVELISCOMBE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

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

I. INTRODUCTION

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

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

II. MAJOR SOURCES

1. Primary documents

Detailed documents survive for some aspects and periods of Wiveliscombe's history. These include several years of 15th century manor court rolls and accounts, and post-medieval rentals and surveys made for the Bishops or their tenants. Extracts from the medieval sources are reproduced in Hancock (1911).

2. Local histories

There is no Victoria County History coverage of Wiveliscombe yet. The main local history is still that by F. Hancock (1911).

3. Maps

There are no detailed maps of Wiveliscombe itself earlier than the Tithe Map of 1841, but an earlier map of Wiveliscombe Farm (1810) exists. There is also an estate map of 1816, which was not seen during the writing of this report.

III. A BRIEF HISTORY OF WIVELISCOMBE

The broad, sheltered south-facing vale of the Brendon Hills in which Wiveliscombe now lies was an attractive location even in the prehistoric period. Though there is as yet no direct evidence of prehistoric settlement on the site of the Wiveliscombe itself, a number of artefact finds have been made in the neighbourhood (particularly to the east) and cropmarks of possible settlement enclosures and field systems have been detected to the south-east of the town. These lie below the Castle, an iron age hillfort with signs of earlier occupation, which lies just beyond the area covered by this report but would have been a dominant presence in the early landscape. Perhaps not surprisingly, then, signs of Roman activity are chiefly military in character: the Castle itself may have been occupied at some point, but a fort - perhaps not very long lived - was also established at a point overlooking the valleys converging in the combe.

We do not know when the spur on which Wiveliscombe sits was first occupied, but the settlement name is of probable Old English origin, referring to an early settler in the combe. Saxon farmsteads on the royal estate of

Wyfelescumbe were well-established by the reign of King Edward the Confessor (1042-1066), for a charter of that period lists fifteen of them, and there may already have been a minster church at Wiveliscombe itself. Edward granted all his lands around Wiveliscombe to the Bishops of Wells, however, and it is as ecclesiastical property that Wiveliscombe is described in the Domesday Survey of 1086. At this time the estate was the Bishops' third largest landholding (though several sub-manors were already held from the Bishops), and was therefore of some importance. On at least one early episcopal registers it appears as its own hundred, though this status was not in the end officially recognised (Waldron, 1883).

There is no sign in the Domesday description of any urban settlement at Wiveliscombe, but it is likely that a small agricultural settlement existed. This may originally have focussed on a minster, but by the end of the Saxon period it is possible that there was already a country residence of the Bishops dominating the settlement. However, we have no definite reference to the Bishops' manor until the mid 13th century, when the grant of rights to hunt an attached park implies the existence of a residence. Successive Bishops rebuilt and extended the manor house - which became known as the Palace - between the 13th and 16th centuries, and this was in a sense their main focus of interest at Wiveliscombe. Though the Bishops retained overall control of the three manors into which the estate had been split until the early 19th century, much of the estate - even the demesne farm - was let out to subtenants.

The first reference to a 'town' at Wiveliscombe is in a Papal bull of 1179, though Hancock (1911) claims that there was a mint there slightly earlier, in the time of King Stephen (1135-1154). But it was not until 1284/5 that the Bishops acquired a grant for a weekly market and annual fair. There is subsequent reference to a borough in 1301, and to burgesses in 1309-29, though it is not clear whether Members of Parliament were ever returned. The town, centred on a market slightly north of the likely Saxon settlement area, and well away from the Bishop's residence, does not appear to have been planned with any great degree of attention. But it was probably moderately profitable, with an economy based on the local market, on supplying the Bishops' manor and on the burgeoning cloth industry.

Wiveliscombe's greatest profits from the cloth industry came in the post-medieval period, however, when it developed a trade in coarse woollens which rivalled Wellington's. Yet in the early post-medieval period the Bishops' influence waned, due to a misunderstanding with Queen Elizabeth I: the estate was alienated on a long lease between the late 16th and the late 17th centuries, and the Bishop's manor was never afterwards the place it had been. So, though the town may have expanded in this period - we are not at present sure - it may have become rather shabby. Gerard (1633) was certainly not impressed, saying "I have not found anything in it or of it worth noting".

The town was not directly troubled by the disturbances of the mid 17th century, though it lost a number of men in Monmouth's rebellion and its aftermath. Its economy continued more or less stable and in the late 18th century Collinson was able to describe a large market town which was still exporting coarse woollens, and which had three annual fairs. Though in 1791 it had recently lost one of its two weekly markets, the 19th century directories imply that this was a temporary blip and that market activities again expanded. The woollens trade, on the other hand, did decline in the first half of the 19th century, but the growth of Hancock's Brewery - the biggest in the west of England by the 1860s (according to Kelly's Directory) - cushioned the effects of this, as did the growth of quarrying in the surrounding area. The town acquired a local board in 1859, which was replaced by an Urban District Council in 1894. The population has remained fairly stable since 1801, and though much of its 19th century industry, and the market, has now gone, Wiveliscombe still thrives as a service town for the Brendon Hills.

IV. THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF WIVELISCOMBE

GENERAL COMMENTS

0.1 Archaeological work in the town

There has been a small excavation on the Roman fort (Webster, 1959), and in the grounds of the Bishops' Palace (McCrone, 1991) but none in the town itself, leaving many questions unanswered about the Saxon, medieval and post-medieval settlements.

0.2 Standing structures and visible remains

Earthworks of early date survive around Wiveliscombe, including the truncated remains of the Roman fort south-east of the town. Many Listed Buildings also exist in the town, the majority of relatively late date: these are referred to in the text as appropriate.

1. PREHISTORIC

(Map A)

1.1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge

There has been no archaeological work on prehistoric sites at Wiveliscombe, but the SMR contains details of some finds and cropmarks in the area (described below). No systematic work has been undertaken.

1.2 Context

Wiveliscombe is one of 37 of the 45 historic towns covered by this project at which there is as yet no strong evidence of prehistoric settlement on the site of the later town - though there was certainly activity in the area and it should be remembered that it is notoriously difficult for archaeologists to demonstrate a prehistoric presence in modern urban areas. Whilst 'towns' were not, generally speaking, a feature of prehistoric landscapes, many of the same factors which made the site desirable in later periods would already have been operative. Indeed, Wiveliscombe is also one of five towns at which there is evidence of a prehistoric defended enclosure or hillfort either within or close to the later town and representing some form of predecessor to it. In this case, the iron age hillfort (the Castle) is only of moderate size (as would be expected in West Somerset) and is a little way from the later town site. However, a significant connection is indicated by the relative situations of hillfort, subsequent Roman fort and town in a vale which was already a favoured landscape in the prehistoric periods.

1.3 Standing structures and visible remains

No visible remains of known prehistoric date survive in the area covered by this report, though the iron age hillfort, the Castle, lies just to the east.

1.4 Archaeological features, shown on Map A

1.4.a Military sites

Not mapped The Castle (SM 32170) is excluded from this report.

1.4.b Settlement

WIV/101 Enclosure (SMR 44149)
The cropmark of a small enclosure, possibly a prehistoric settlement, is noted in the SMR just to the south-east of Manor Farm.

From the SMR.

1.4.c Agricultural sites

WIV/102 Possible field system (SMR 44150)
Cropmarks associated with the Roman fort may be those of a prehistoric field system.

From the SMR.

2. ROMAN

(Map A)

2.1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge

A small excavation was carried out in 1956 on the apparent Roman fort to the south-east of the town (Webster, 1959). There is little other well-provenanced archaeological evidence of Roman activity, though the SMR contains a note of cropmarks of features possibly associated with the fort and Wiveliscombe parish has produced two substantial hoards of Roman coins (only one of which falls within the study area).

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.

Wiveliscombe is one of 26 of the 45 historic towns covered by this project at which there is no evidence of Roman settlement on the site of the later town, though it is also one of five associated with a fort. There was, however, activity in the surrounding area.

2.3 Standing structures and visible remains

The Roman fort is still visible as a low earthwork, though the rampart has been removed.

2.4 Archaeological features, shown on Map A

2.4.a Military sites

WIV/201

The fort (SMR 43793, SM Som 329)

A rectangular earthwork, measuring approximately 100 metres north-south and 130 metres east-west, is visible in the fields south-east of Wiveliscombe as a scarped plateau with clear traces of at least one ditch. In 1956 it was trenched in order to test the hypothesis that it represents the remains of a Roman fort (Webster, 1959). The excavation found evidence of a cobble-revetted rampart up to six metres wide, which survived only to a height of about 0.25 metres. Outside the rampart were the remains of at least two carefully V-cut ditches with narrow, flat bases. These had been cut into an artificially levelled area, and the excavator suggested that where the terrace was widest and the natural slope least (to south, east and west) a third ditch may once have existed: this has not been tested. The inner ditch, which was up to seven metres wide and survived to a depth of more than three metres, was the larger and was not separated from the rampart by any berm. A trench put in at the intersection of the earthwork with Quakers Lane failed to find the rampart and may therefore indicate the site of an entrance.

The form of the earthwork was considered by the excavator to be consistent with that of Roman military work. Only a few fragments of pottery were found in the early levels of the site: whilst these were not of a type very easy to date, they were probably early Roman, and at least ruled out a prehistoric origin for the site. The condition of the ditches - with little primary silting - suggested that they had either been regularly cleared out, or had not been in use for very long, whilst the limited amount of rampart material in the ditch fills indicates deliberate clearance at some date subsequent to the infilling of the ditches through plough action.

The fort is a Scheduled Monument (SM Som 329).

From the SMR.

WIV/202

Adjacent cropmarks

Adjacent to the fort are cropmarks of enclosures and linear features (SMR 43814, 44150). These are of uncertain period but some at least may be connected with the fort.

From the SMR.

2.4.b Artefacts

Not mapped

Collinson reports the discovery of a Roman coin hoard (SMR 43798) in the valley in 1711, but the precise location of the hoard is not known. A subsequent discovery (in 1946) took place within the Castle itself, but Collinson's description implies this was not the case with the earlier hoard.

3. SAXON (Map B)

3.1 *Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge*

There is no archaeological evidence relating to Saxon Wiveliscombe.

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.

Wiveliscombe is one of seven 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, had both ecclesiastical and administrative functions. It is one of 22 towns associated with a known or probable pre-Conquest minster, and one of 22 associated with a royal manor centre (though the estate was transferred to the church before the Conquest).

3.3 *Standing structures and visible remains*

There are no visible remains of Saxon Wiveliscombe.

3.4 *Archaeological components, shown on Map B*

3.4.a *Communications: Roads*

WIV/301 Possible Saxon roads

It has been suggested that the irregular lanes west of the church may represent the remains of the pre-town settlement layout (Aston & Leech, 1977). Others of the medieval town streets may also be of pre-Conquest origin (R.A. Croft, pers. comm.; D. Luxton, pers. comm.), but more evidence on the development of Wiveliscombe will be needed before this can be stated with confidence.

The actual road lines are from the 1841 map and their early origin is conjectural.

3.4.b *Manors and estates*

WIV/401 The Bishop's Palace

The Bishop's Palace *may* have been of pre-Conquest origin, perhaps even originating as the centre of the late Saxon royal manor. Whether or not this was so, the proximity of the site to the church indicates a possibility of some form of pre-Conquest settlement. For a description of this area in the medieval period, see p7.

The mapped area is based on the 1841 map.

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

WIV/302 The church (SMR 43873)

Though the church at Wiveliscombe is not mentioned in documents until 1179, Aston & Leech (1977) suggest that its raised situation, its dedication (to St Andrew), its large parish and the existence of a dependent chapel (at Fitzhead) suggest that the church at Wiveliscombe originated as a minster. Though there is at present no direct evidence for this, a strong possibility must exist that at least one pre-Conquest building stood on the site and that burials also took place here in the Saxon period.

For a description of the medieval church see p9.

The mapped area is from the 1841 map.

3.4.d Settlement

WIV/303

Saxon settlement

A possible area of Saxon settlement by the church and manor site is shown. There is no evidence that this was in any sense a town and it probably consisted of a collection of timber buildings along the irregular lanes west of the church. No archaeological evidence to support this assessment of the location or extent of the Saxon settlement has yet come to light, and it must be regarded as conjectural.

The area shown is conjectural.

3.4.e Mills

WIV/402

The mill

A mill is referred to at Domesday. The site of this is not known, but if the Bishop's Palace site were already occupied, then the Saxon mill may have been on or close to the site of the medieval Bishop's Mill (see p11).

The mapped area is from the 1841 map.

4. MEDIEVAL AND POST-MEDIEVAL

(Map C)

There is insufficient evidence to distinguish these two periods in Wiveliscombe.

4.1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge

A limited amount of archaeological work has taken place in the area of the Bishop's Palace (McCrone, 1991), but none in the town itself.

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.

Wiveliscombe 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. 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.

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. Wiveliscombe 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, and, indeed, became a fairly important cloth town.

4.3 Standing structures and visible remains

The medieval and post-medieval plan of Wiveliscombe survives well. However, there are few Listed structures of known medieval origins: those which do survive include a remnant of the Bishop's Palace gateway (SMR LB 45075) and the churchyard cross (SMR LB 45051). Buildings in Church Street (SMR LB 45053) and the Square (SMR LB 45086) may also contain medieval fabric. In addition, the Church Hall contains windows taken from the late medieval manor house, whilst the 'missing' southern face of the northern manor gateway is to be found in the Square.

A handful of Listed Buildings of known post-medieval origin also survives in Church Street (SMR LB 45056, 45057), High Street (SMR LB 45061, 45065, 45068), Rotten Row (SMR LB 45076), the Square (SMR LB 45089) and South Street (SMR LB 45060).

The Listed Buildings of known medieval or post-medieval date in the town centre are shown on Map C. Others may survive behind later 18th and 19th century facades.

4.4 Archaeological components (core), shown on Map C

4.4.a Redevelopment in earlier settlement components

Components described under earlier periods are shown more lightly shaded. The relationship between the medieval town and the earlier settlement has not been established. Whilst there are few signs of regular planning, it is nevertheless possible that diversions and reorganisations took place in the old settlement area, part of which has therefore been remapped.

4.4.b Communications: Roads and streets

WIV/403 Pre-1800 roads and streets

Many of the roads and streets of Wiveliscombe are of probable medieval or earlier origin. Little is known of the process by which they came to be urban streets rather than country lanes, however, and though there are few obvious signs of planning, it is possible that some have been straightened (such as Fore Street or Church Street) or diverted (South Street) as well as widened at various times. Any archaeological evidence regarding the relative dates of streets or their former courses will be of great interest.

From the 1802 and 1841 maps.

4.4.c Water

WIV/404 Water supply

The town supply was brought down from springs near Withycombe Farm in an artificial open channel to a small reservoir at the top of West Street, called the water house, and conduited from there to outlet points in the town. The date of origin of the leat is not known, but original (?datable) bricks still survive upstream of the reservoir (D. Luxton, pers. comm.).

The Withycombe leat and West Street reservoir are from the 1841 map.

Not mapped

The Bishops' Palace was supplied from a spring at Hartswell (SMR 43790), which was culverted and piped to the Palace, and subsequently collected to power the Bishop's Mill. The spring is still visible.

4.4.d Manors and estates

WIV/401 The Bishop's Manor or Palace (SMR 43784)

History

The Bishops of Wells were granted the Wiveliscombe estates in the mid 11th century, not long before the Conquest. Before that, Wiveliscombe had been a royal estate and there may therefore have already been a high status residence on the site, though this remains unproven. The date of the first Bishop's Manor house is obscure. It presumably existed - if only as a lodge - during or just after the mid 13th century when the Bishops were establishing their hunting rights, and by the end of the 13th century documentary references to Bishops' sojourns at the Wiveliscombe house are beginning to occur. Collinson (1791) states that the Palace was built by Bishop John Droxford (1309-29) and it may indeed be that the site was improved and perhaps extended at that date. Further improvements are reputed to have been made by Bishop John's successor, Ralph of Shrewsbury (1329-63). Historical records suggest that between the late 14th century and the early 16th the house was less favoured by the Bishops (Dunning, 1990), though the manor accounts make it clear that during this time the fabric was by no means neglected (Hancock, 1911). But in the 16th century two Bishops, Bishop Knight (1541-7) and Bishop Bourne (1554-60), made Wiveliscombe their chief residence and probably carried out further works. Illustrations made in the early 19th century are described by Hancock (1911) as showing a late medieval house, implying that considerable alterations had been made to the 14th century house by the later Bishops.

Bishop Bourne may have been the last Bishop to occupy the house, for the Wiveliscombe estates were alienated in the late 16th century and by the time they were recovered in the late 17th century by the Bishops it seems that the complex must have been in a poor state of repair. By 1735 a workhouse had been built on part of the site, though much of the original fabric, including the kitchens, remained standing well into the 19th century, and windows from the buildings were incorporated into the local church school rooms during that period.

Layout

The eventual boundary of the Palace complex is fairly clear even from the mid 19th century maps, which show three distinct elements to the site: the Green, to the north; the walled main precinct; and the mill pond and enclosure. But the original relationship of the precinct to the churchyard - into which it appears to bite - has not been established. Moreover, within the three areas only limited detail is known of the layout.

The Green was an open area to the north of the Bishop's Palace, through which there was access to the northern gateway. It may originally have extended as far as Church Street, but if so tenements were subsequently laid out across the northern part of it. The rest was used mainly as a public junketing ground in the post-medieval period, but at the east end of the Green in 1841 there still stood the Tithe Barn and adjacent lincays. This may have been the barn recorded in the surviving manor accounts as having been new built in the mid 15th century, a building for which huge amounts of timber and stone tiles were brought into Wiveliscombe. It was demolished between 1841 and 1889, and the extent to which archaeological remains survive is uncertain, for a small evaluation trench put across its site in 1990 failed to locate any (McCrone, 1991). At the same time, another trench was put in west of the Tithe Barn site in the Green itself. This trench found no evidence of *in situ* structures, except for part of a drystone wall possibly associated with a path edge or a garden feature of uncertain date. However, it recovered dumped material including medieval ridge tiles apparently representing at least one phase of demolition or re-roofing of nearby buildings.

The walled main precinct would have included the house itself, a chapel (referred to by 1348), stables, dovecot and other ancillary buildings and gardens. By 1841 few buildings stood in the area, except for a cluster in the north-west corner which included the Post-medieval poorhouse and incorporated the northern medieval gatehouse which still partly survives. Whether these buildings mark the site of the main house or of its outbuildings remains to be established, for the precise position of the Bishop's Palace itself is unknown. A negative watching brief which took place in the late 1980s in the southern part of the area (R.A. Croft, pers. comm.) may suggest that the northern half of the enclosure, away from the mill pond, is the more likely site (which is in

accord with the usual description of the house as facing south across the park). D. Luxton (pers. comm.) also suggests that the centre of archaeological interest is likely to lie in the north-west part of Palace Gardens. The only positive identification of buried structures of possible medieval date in the area so far came in a service trench just within the western precinct boundary in 1965, which revealed a substantial wall, which could have been either a garden wall or the wall of a building.

For the Bishop's Mill, see below, p11. The mill pond probably also functioned as the Bishops' fishpond, which is referred to in medieval documents (but see also p12).

Archaeological potential

Many issues remain to be addressed on the Bishop's Palace site, including the possibility of pre-Conquest use of the site, the development of the medieval precinct and the location of most of the major buildings. Unfortunately, significant amounts of modern development have taken place in the Bishop's Palace area. It is therefore likely that the archaeology has been severely compromised, though it is still possible that some remains - accordingly of increased importance - survive in the modern garden areas. Part of the gatehouse still stands, though its southern arch has been rebuilt (in early brick).

The areas shown are from the 1841 map.

Not mapped

The Bishop's Park

In 1256 the right of Free Warren was granted to the Bishops of Wells to hunt their park. Whilst the full extent of the medieval park has not been ascertained, it was of 271 acres when it was let out in 1551. The occurrence of field names such as High Parks may recall the approximate position of the park, which lay mainly to the south of the Manor House. Whether the park was laid out across any areas of pre-urban settlement west of the house has not been established.

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

WIV/302

The church (SMR 43873)

Wiveliscombe's church may have originated as a minster (see above, p5). But it is first mentioned directly in the Papal Bull of 1179 by which the Bishops' rights were recognised. In 1242 it became a Prebend of Wells, and in 1262 a Vicarage was established to serve both Wiveliscombe and the chapel at Fitzhead.

The church was rebuilt in the mid 14th century, and subsequently modified. Unfortunately, it was again rebuilt in 1829 by Richard Carver, and the removal of the medieval structure, cracked though it may have been, entailed the use of dynamite. It is therefore unclear how much of the archaeological remains of at least two medieval buildings and possible pre-Conquest predecessors will have survived. Only fragments of the medieval fabric were rescued from the 1829 demolition, though the church still contains some of its 16th century carved furnishings and memorials. On the other hand, the 1829 reconstruction works also involved the levelling up of the burial ground, which is likely to have protected those earlier remains which did survive demolition and clearance.

The remains of a 14th century cross (SMR LB 45051) still survive in the churchyard, which has been in use for burials since at least the medieval period and almost certainly earlier. The churchyard has the appearance of having been encroached upon on several sides by 1841. The buildings shown at that date included the poor house, in the south-east corner of the churchyard, which obscures the pre-18th century relationship between the churchyard and the Bishops' precinct. In the north-west corner of the churchyard stands a late medieval or 16th century house, and a second poorhouse also stood here, facing Rotten Row. School rooms were added to the surviving building at the end abutting Rotten Row in the early 19th century; the fabric includes some fine 16th century windows, which may have come from the demolished palace (R.A. Croft, pers. comm.). Collinson (1791) also mentions the existence of a hospital and seventeen cottages

for needy families: further research might establish whether other buildings shown on the 1841 map represent these.

The churchyard is from the 1841 map.

4.4.f Settlement (Urban) (SMR 43786)

It is not wholly clear in Wiveliscombe which areas are of medieval (or earlier) and which of post-medieval origin. The relative dating of areas of the historic core should be a priority in any archaeological work which takes place.

(a) Market Place

WIV/406

The market place

The main market area in medieval Wiveliscombe lay on a hill some little way from the Bishop's residence, and may have been deliberately established there to protect the Bishops' privacy. The earliest available map (1841) shows an area which had already been much encroached on, and it is not easy to discern what the original shape would have been. Documentary references to a cross (the Rye Cross), a market house (replaced by the 1841 Market and Town Hall), a prison house, a range of shambles, stalls and plots of empty ground with permission to erect standings occur in medieval and post-medieval documents, and in Collinson (1791). The locations of few of these features are known precisely. There is therefore much still to be learnt about the medieval and post-medieval market place, and any archaeological work which enables its development to be traced and mapped will be of great interest.

The area shown is somewhat inexact, but is based on the development pattern shown on the 1841 map.

Not mapped

A subsidiary market area may have existed at the junction of Fore Street and Church Street (subsequently known as Cheapside). Both streets were themselves wide enough to suggest street markets. This market area is not shown separately.

(b) Burgage plots

WIV/407

Plots around the Market Place

The area around the Market Place and extending along the radiating spokes of Fore Street (High Street), North Street, West Street and Silver Street, probably formed the nucleus of the medieval Borough. The 1841 map shows some evidence of the original (probably) medieval layout along field strips, though the tenements appear cramped and irregular (which may be an effect of the topography). There is as yet no direct evidence for the extent of archaeological remains in the market area, which remained the core of the town and may therefore have suffered damaging development. But whilst only one Listed Building possibly containing medieval fabric is contained in the area (SMR LB 45086), at least five Listed Buildings dated from the 16th to early 18th centuries survive (SMR LB 45061, 45065, 45068, 45085, 45089).

From the 1841 map.

(c) Other town plots and suburbs

WIV/408

Golden Hill

On the 1841 map Golden Hill displays evidence of regularly laid out closes and of irregular building within them. Neither the date nor the character of the developments of this area has been securely dated, but it has been suggested that it could have been planned and laid out as early as the late medieval period (R. A. Croft, pers. comm.). Whilst it seems likely, on the face of it, that most medieval and post-medieval activity would have been concentrated along the road frontage and closer to the south end of the street, it is also possible that industrial activity was taking place in the backs. No Listed structures of known pre-1750 origin survive in the area.

From the 1841 map.

WIV/405

Church Street

Church Street may have existed before the Conquest, but if so it is likely to have been remodelled in the medieval period with the establishment of the town to the north. In the medieval period, the Bishop's manor farm was situated on the north side of the street. The site was let out, and in 1559, Bourne House (SMR LB 45057) was built there, opposite the entrance to the Bishop's Palace, by Bishop Bourne when he was deprived of his see (D. Luxton, pers. comm.). But the present Manor Farm was not established until the 19th century and this fact, together with the position of Church street, so close to the Bishop's Palace, and the spacious 1841 layout, seems to suggest that the north side of the street was occupied at least by the post-medieval period by a residential semi-agricultural (rather than an industrial) suburb. Supporting archaeological evidence is limited, however. There is one other post-medieval Listed Building (the 17th century house, SMR LB 45056), but no archaeological excavation has taken place: any opportunity to establish the extent and character of remains on the north side of Church Street will be of value.

Occupation along much of the south side of the street was constrained in the medieval period by the presence of the church and of the Bishop's Palace and Park, which appears to have inhibited redevelopment of the old Saxon settlement area. However, irregular development was present, particularly at the east end of Church Street - and along Ford Road (formerly Frog Street) - by 1841: the date at which this had become established is not known.

From the 1841 map.

WIV/409

Other marginal areas

At least by 1841 there was also irregular development along West Street, North Street and South Street: some of this may have been of medieval or post-medieval origin, but very little is known about it. There has been no archaeological work and no Listed Structures of early origin survive. However, the north side of West Street may have housed small dye mills, which are documented as having used the waters of the town leat in the Post-medieval period. A considerable amount of small-scale tanning took place in South Street, where some associated remains are still visible within the standing buildings (D. Luxton, pers. comm.).

From the 1841 map.

(d) Mills

WIV/402

The Bishop's Mill (SMR 43788)

The medieval Bishop's Mill is mentioned in the surviving manor accounts, which contain references to major 15th century repairs. It stood to the south of the Manor House, beyond the large collecting pond which probably served as both a mill pond and a fish pond (though see also p12). This pond is clearly shown on the 1841 map, though it has now been filled in. At least two sets of possible mill buildings are also shown on the 1841 map, both at the eastern end of a large, enclosed orchard south of the mill pond. A group of buildings adjacent to the pond itself probably represents the main Bishop's Mill, whilst another group, positioned slightly further south and straddling the lane, may have been either the unidentified medieval mill site (see below) or a later development. In addition there are smaller buildings at the mill pond head and east of the lane, which may also have been connected with the mill site(s).

Whilst either or both of the main groups may well have stood on the site of the medieval mill(s) - or, indeed, the Domesday mill - this has not been proven archaeologically. The site of the mill orchard and pond has been partially built over, but the SMR notes remains of a filled in wheel pit and sluices for an overshot wheel.

The mapped areas are from the 1841 map.

WIV/501

Other mills

Mills existed in the post-medieval period down West Road, where traces of the leat are still visible

(D. Luxton, pers. comm.) and down South Street (Aston & Leech, 1977; SMR 43789), though it is not known whether these were of medieval origin.

From the 1841 map.

Not mapped In addition to the above mill sites, the town leat from Withycombe drove small post-medieval indigo dye mills, the sites of which are not known.

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

4.5.a Communications: Roads

WIV/403 Pre-1800 roads and streets

The roads around Wiveliscombe as they were by 1802 (or in one or two cases 1810) are shown.

From the 1802 and 1841 maps.

4.5.b Manors and estates

Not mapped The Bishop's Park: see p9.

4.5.c Rural settlement

WIV/502 Farms and rural settlement

There was a limited amount of rural settlement around Wiveliscombe, which included the hamlet of Hartswell and a number of farms. There were relatively few medieval farms, because of the Bishop's landholdings, but the prebendal farm was that of 'Parsonage' or Culverhay (D. Luxton, pers. comm.). Of the post-medieval farms, some shifted their sites (eg Greenway Farm), disappeared (Emborough) or were considerably modified (Hill Farm) in the later 19th and 20th centuries. Nothing is known of the archaeology of these sites: only one Listed Building of possible post-medieval origin survives, at Hartswell (SMR LB 45060).

From the 1802 and 1841 maps.

4.5.d Agricultural sites

WIV/410 Fishponds

The existence of at least one Bishop's fishpond is documented and it has been suggested (D. Luxton, pers. comm.) that it was situated not at the manor itself but at Plain, at the end of North Street.

From information provided by D. Luxton (pers. comm.).

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

5.1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge

There has been no archaeological work relating to the late 18th and 19th century remains in Wiveliscombe.

5.2 Context

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

Wiveliscombe 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).

5.3 Standing structures and visible remains

Listed Buildings of late 18th or early 19th century origin in and around Wiveliscombe are shown on Map E. Apart from the rebuilt parish church (SMR LB 25049, 25050), and the Congregational Chapel (SMR LB 45083, 45084, 45085), these consist of a concentration of residential and commercial dwellings in the town centre, surrounded by a ring of larger houses and farms. The latter include Abbotsfield (SMR LB 40127, 40128) and Tor House (SMR LB 45058), Manor Farm (SMR LB 40132, 40133), and Culverhay and Greenway Farms (SMR LB 40101, 40130).

5.4 Archaeological components, shown on Map E

5.4.a Redevelopment in earlier settlement components

Components described under earlier periods are shown more lightly shaded. Whilst there was considerable piecemeal redevelopment in the core of the town, as shown by the distribution of Listed Buildings, there was little major alteration to the medieval pattern. The most important exception to this was the development of Hancock's Brewery on Golden Hill, which has been mapped across the previously occupied areas.

5.4.b Communications

(a) Roads, streets and routeways

WIV/607 19th century roads and turnpikes

The Wiveliscombe turnpikes were operated by the Wiveliscombe Trust, set up in 1786. One of their major undertakings was a new road, built in the early 1820s, leaving West Road above Coate's Farm to the south-west of Wiveliscombe.

From the 1841 and 1888-9 maps.

(b) Railways

WIV/601 The Railway (SMR 43373)

The Barnstaple Branch of the Devon & Somerset Railway (later the Great Western) reached Wiveliscombe relatively late (by 1872). The station (SMR 43948) and the line closed in 1966.

From the 1888-9 maps.

5.4.c Water

WIV/609 Reservoir

A reservoir was established between Withycombe Farm and the town in the 19th century.

From the 1888 map.

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

WIV/602 Chapels and burial grounds

The Congregational Chapel was opened in 1708 and several times enlarged in the 19th century, but it was not until 1810 that land for a burial ground was purchased.

From the 1888 map.

5.4.e Settlement (Suburban)

WIV/603 19th century suburbs

There was very limited suburban growth at Wiveliscombe in the 19th century, mostly up North Street and Ford Road. The largest development, however, was the big house and attached park at Abbotsfield (SMR 43800; SMR LB 40127, 40128). Opposite this complex was another late 19th century landscaped park attached to Culverhead (SMR 43950).

From the 1841-1904 maps.

5.4.f Settlement (Rural)

WIV/608

Farms and general rural

There were considerable extensions made at Manor and Greenway Farms, both of which contain Listed structures (SMR LB 40132-3; and SMR LB 40130, respectively). A handful of small rural plots (unclassified) is also shown on Map E.

From the 1841-1904 maps.

5.4.g Industrial sites

WIV/605

Quarries

The main quarrying activity took place beyond the limits of this report, but there were several smaller quarries within the study area; the largest of these was Alps Quarry off West Road (D. Luxton, pers. comm.).

From the 1841-1904 maps.

WIV/604

Hancock's Brewery (SMR 43787)

Hancock's Brewery has been the subject of considerable historical study, and the studies of both N. Chipchase (1978) and M. Miles (1985) contain more details than can be given here. The firm was set up in 1807, when a brewery and malthouse was built in tenements and back gardens off Golden Hill. It gradually expanded, and occupied land on both sides of the road by 1813. By the 1860s it was supposedly the largest brewery in the west of England and was a mainstay of the town's economy. Further expansions into pop and cider followed, and in 1927 Hancock's joined forces with Arnold's of the Rowbarton Brewery, Taunton. Though this allowed brewing to continue for another 30 years or so, eventually rationalisation of the firm's activities led to an end to brewing in Wiveliscombe. The premises were closed and sold off in 1960, the machinery being removed without any recording taking place. Since then, part of the 19th century complex has burnt down and the rest has been much altered, though some exteriors still survive (not in Listable condition).

From the 1841-1904 maps.

WIV/606

Other industry

The Gas Works (SMR 43955) was set up in 1857, and a woollen factory was established on Ford Road late in the 19th century.

From the 1888 - 1904 maps.

6. 20TH CENTURY**(Map F)****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. Wiveliscombe is one of 30 of the 45 historic towns covered by this project which is not classed as a town in the County Structure Plan.

6.2 Settlement components, shown on Map F**6.2.a Redevelopment in earlier settlement components**

Components described under earlier periods are shown more lightly shaded. Several areas of potential archaeological importance to the south of the church have seen significant redevelopment in the 20th century, and have therefore been remapped: these include the Bishop's Palace and mill sites, the South Street mill site and part of the Saxon settlement area.

All mapped components are from the 1998 OS digital maps unless otherwise stated.

6.2.b Communications: Roads

WIV/701 20th century roads

Apart from minor suburban roads (not shown), one new road (Croft Way) has been put round the south edge of the town in the 20th century.

6.2.c Water

WIV/704 Sewage works

Wiveliscombe merits two sewage works.

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

WIV/707 Churchyard

The medieval churchyard has been extended in the 20th century.

6.2.e Settlement (Urban)

(a) Commercial area

WIV/705 Urban general

The new road south of the town has created a new urban margin, currently occupied by car parks.

(b) Suburbs

WIV/702 20th century suburbs

Suburban development has taken place to north, south and east of the town.

6.2.f Settlement (Rural)

WIV/703 Rural (general development)

Beyond the town itself, the major developments have been the expansion of Manor Farm and the shifting of Withycombe Farm, but several other (unclassified) developments are also shown.

6.2.g Industrial sites

WIV/706 Industry

Small industrial developments have taken place east of the 19th century brewery and railway station sites.

V. THE POTENTIAL OF WIVELISCOMBE

1. Research interests

There are several sites of particular interest in Wiveliscombe, including a major residence of the Bishops of Wells, a Roman fort and a possible early mill site. In addition, the large 19th century brewery site may be considered of interest. But there are also a number of wider questions which need to be addressed, including the role of the site in the prehistoric and Roman landscape, the relationship between the Saxon settlement and the medieval town, the extent of medieval occupation and the date and character of the surrounding pre-1800 suburbs.

2. Areas of potentially exceptional preservation

There are no areas of potentially exceptional preservation in Wiveliscombe. Until the 20th century there were several previously occupied sites - including the Bishop's Palace - which had been little disturbed by redevelopment. Unfortunately this is no longer the case, though a handful of semi-deserted farm sites still survive beyond the town itself.

3. Limitations

As stated above, there has been damaging modern development on important sites to the south of the medieval town, though the medieval core itself has been less affected.

4. *Extent of current protection*

(shown on Map G)

There is a number of Listed Buildings in and around Wiveliscombe, and two Scheduled Monuments (the Roman fort, SM Som 329 and Kings Castle SM 32170, outside the report area). Both a Conservation Area and an AHAP (Area of High Archaeological Potential) have been defined.

5. *Management Proposals*

See the Archaeological Guidance Document.

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3. Maps

- 1802 OS surveyors' drawings at 3": fiche in SSL
 1810 Wiveliscombe Farm: SRO DD/R1 C/1660
 1816 [Estate map, privately held: not seen for this report]
 1841 Tithe Map: fiche in SSL
 1888-89 OS 1:2500 1st ed: fiche in SSL
 1904-05 OS 1:10560

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

<i>Component</i>	<i>Map</i>	<i>Component</i>	<i>Map</i>
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WIV/201	A	WIV/603	E
WIV/202	A	WIV/604	E
WIV/301	B	WIV/605	E
WIV/302	B,C	WIV/606	E
WIV/303	B	WIV/607	E
WIV/401	C	WIV/608	E
WIV/402	C	WIV/609	E
WIV/403	C,D	WIV/701	F
WIV/404	C	WIV/702	F
WIV/405	C	WIV/703	F
WIV/406	C	WIV/704	F
WIV/407	C	WIV/705	F
WIV/408	C	WIV/706	F
WIV/409	C	WIV/707	F
WIV/501	C		
WIV/502	D		

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Maps

Map A - prehistoric and Roman

Map B - Saxon

Map C - Pre-1800 core

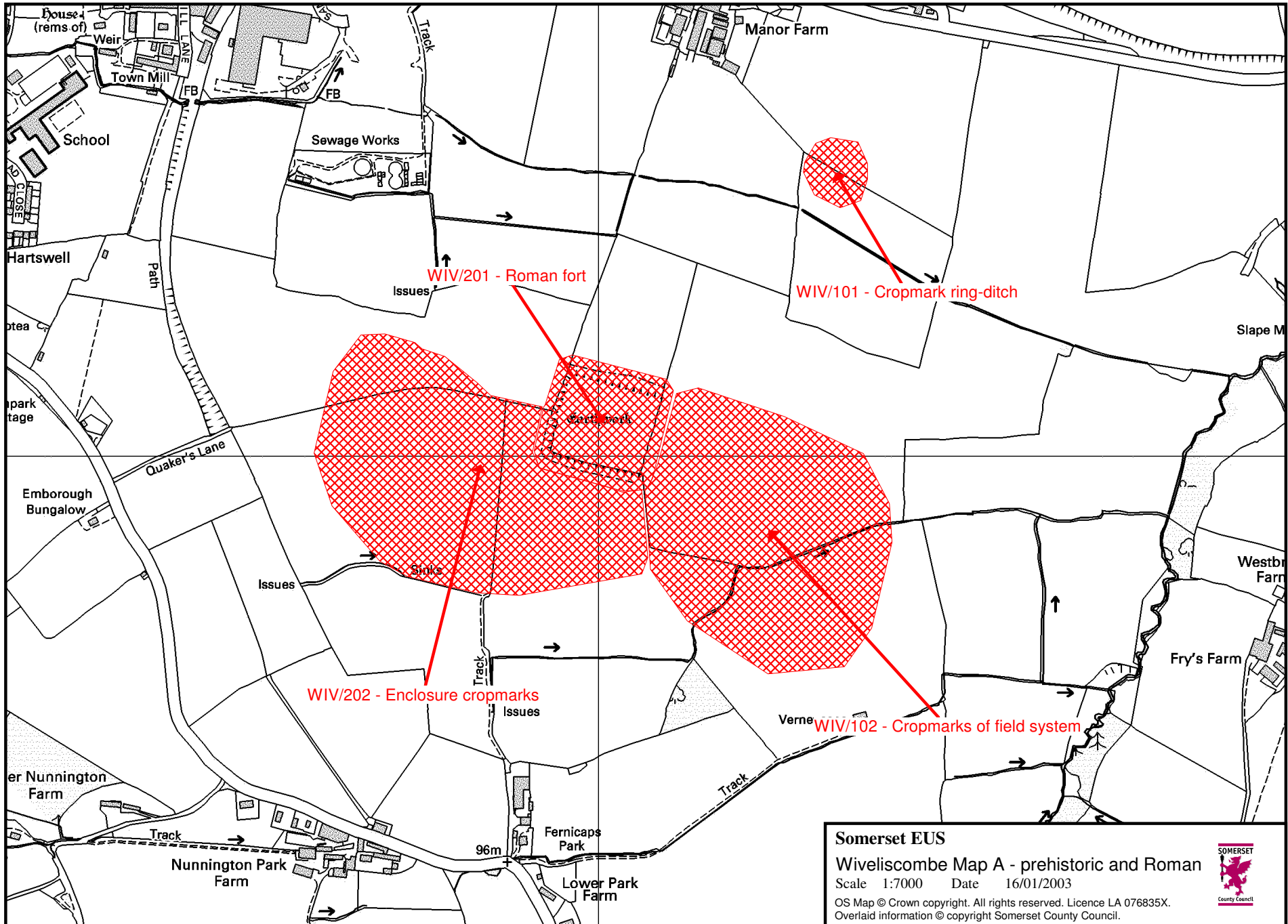
Map D - pre-1800 outlying

Map E - 19th century

Map F - 20th century.

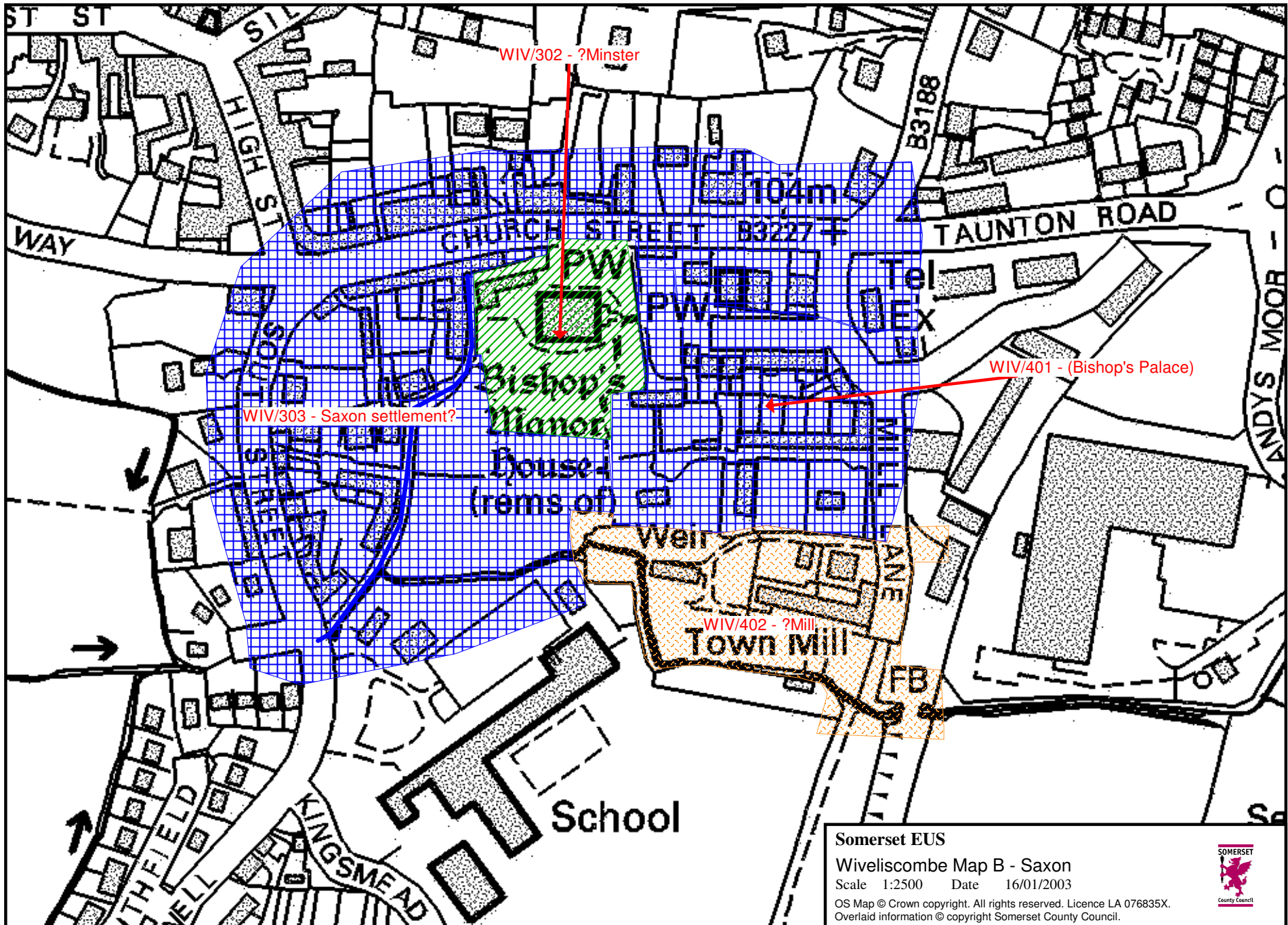
Map G - Existing designations

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



Somerset EUS
 Wiveliscombe Map A - prehistoric and Roman
 Scale 1:7000 Date 16/01/2003
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Somerset EUS

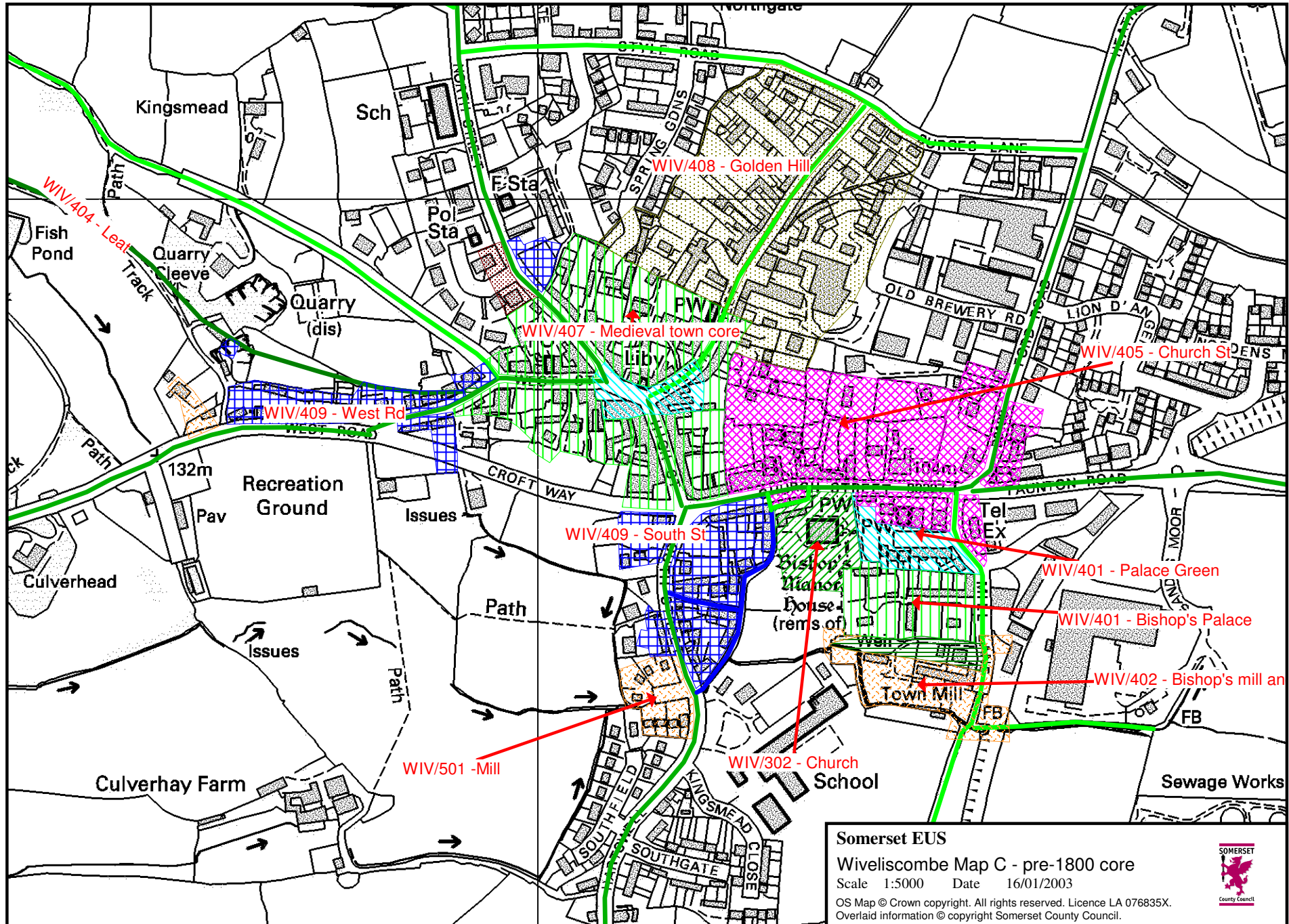
Wiveliscombe Map B - Saxon

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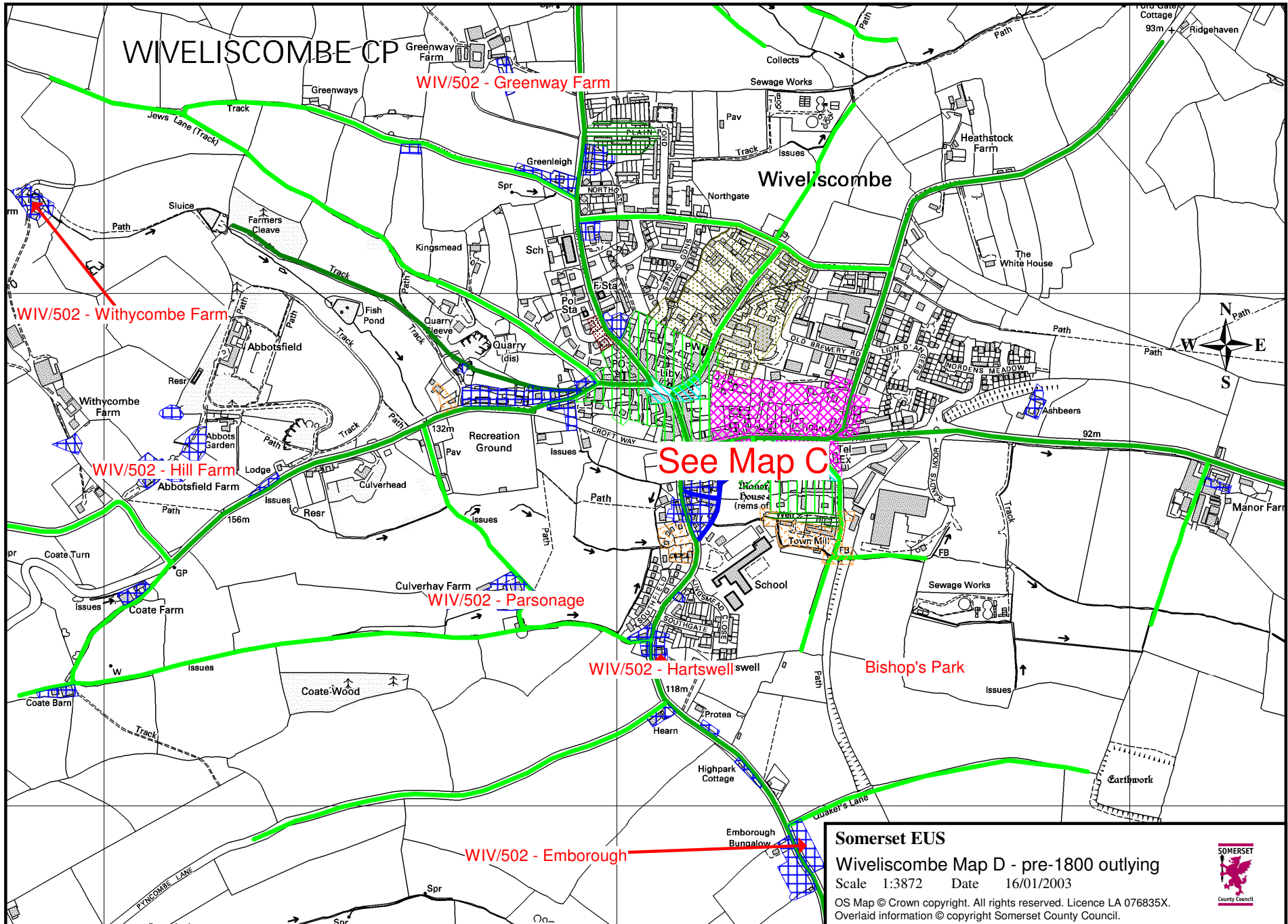
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Wiveliscombe Map C - pre-1800 core

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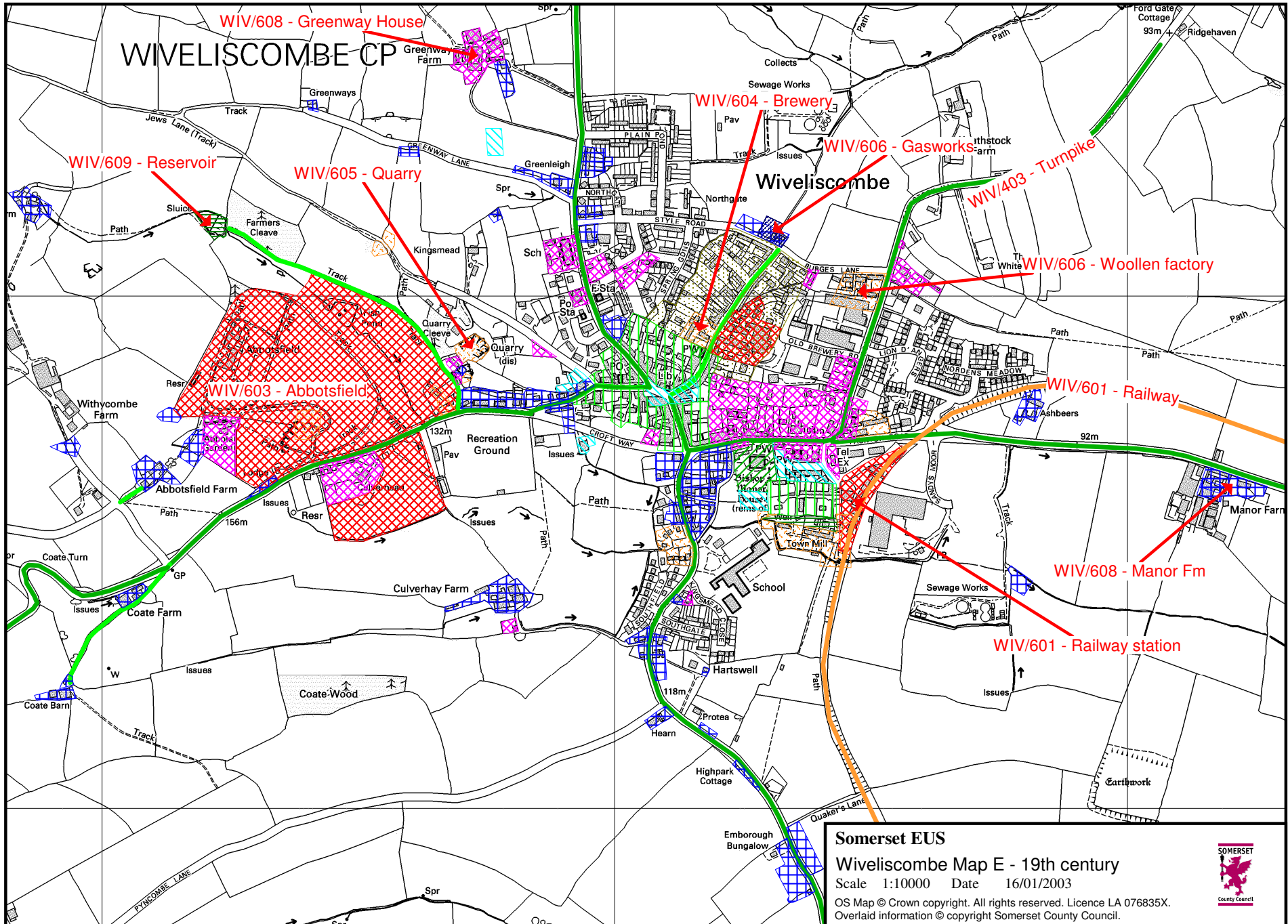
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Wiveliscombe Map D - pre-1800 outlying

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WIVELISCOMBE CP

WIV/608 - Greenway House

WIV/609 - Reservoir

WIV/605 - Quarry

WIV/603 - Abbotsfield

WIV/604 - Brewery

WIV/606 - Gasworks

WIV/403 - Turnpike

WIV/606 - Woollen factory

WIV/601 - Railway

WIV/608 - Manor Fm

WIV/601 - Railway station

Somerset EUS

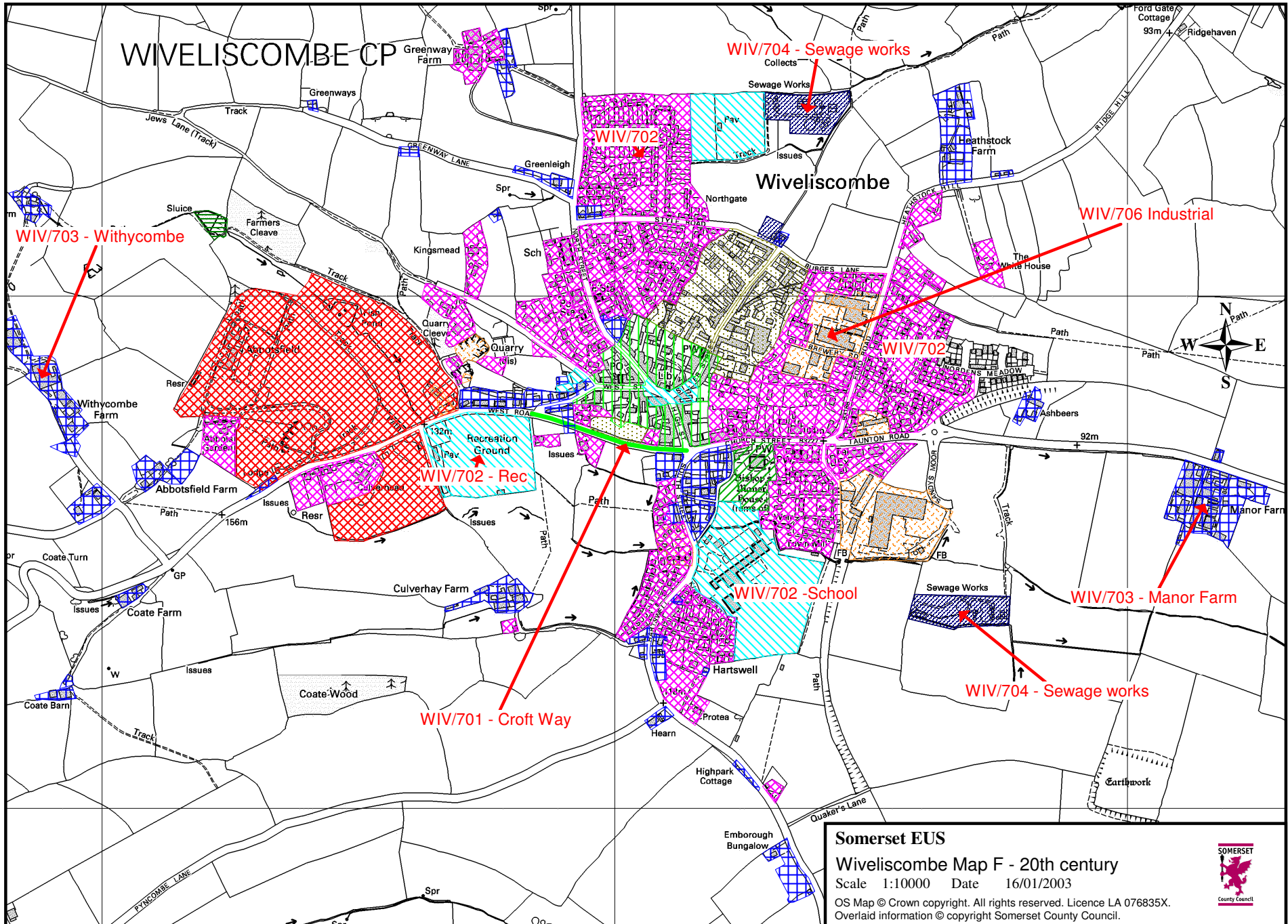
Wiveliscombe Map E - 19th century

Scale 1:10000 Date 16/01/2003

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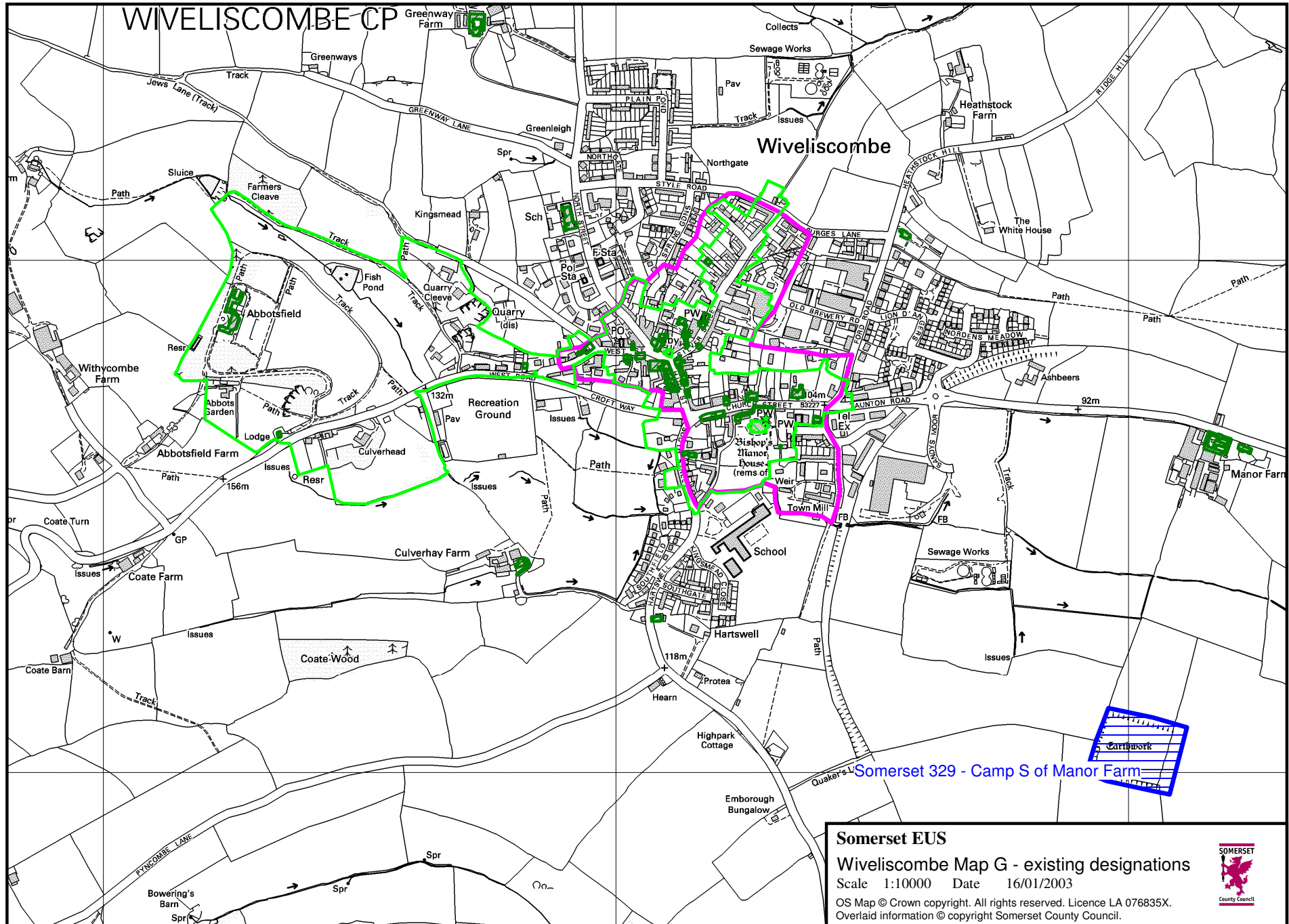


WIVELISCOMBE CP

Somerset EUS
 Wiveliscombe Map F - 20th century
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