

English Heritage Extensive Urban Survey

An archaeological assessment of

Nether Stowey

Clare Gathercole

Jane Murray
Corporate Director
Culture and Heritage
Directorate
Somerset County Council
County Hall
TAUNTON
Somerset
TA1 4DY

2003



SOMERSET EXTENSIVE URBAN SURVEY

NETHER STOWEY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

by Clare Gathercole

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION	3
II. MAJOR SOURCES	3
III. A BRIEF HISTORY OF NETHER STOWEY	3
IV. THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF NETHER STOWEY	4
<i>GENERAL COMMENTS</i>	4
1. <i>PREHISTORIC</i>	4
2. <i>ROMAN</i>	5
3. <i>SAXON AND EARLY MEDIEVAL</i>	5
4. <i>MEDIEVAL</i>	6
5. <i>POST-MEDIEVAL</i>	10
6. <i>INDUSTRIAL (LATE 18TH/ 19TH CENTURY)</i>	12
7. <i>20TH CENTURY</i>	13
V. THE POTENTIAL OF NETHER STOWEY	14
1. <i>Research interests</i>	14
2. <i>Areas of potentially exceptional preservation</i>	14
3. <i>Limitations</i>	14
4. <i>Extent of current protection</i>	14
5. <i>Management proposals</i>	14
VI. SOURCES	14
1. <i>General documentary (Somerset/ Wessex)</i>	14
2. <i>Nether Stowey</i>	16
3. <i>Maps</i>	16
VII. COMPONENT INDEXES	16
1. <i>Component to map</i>	16
2. <i>Component to page</i>	17

Appendix: Maps

SOMERSET EXTENSIVE URBAN SURVEY

NETHER STOWEY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

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

I. INTRODUCTION

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

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

II. MAJOR SOURCES

There is a considerable amount of documentation for the medieval manor of Nether Stowey, which is detailed in the Victoria County History of the town (Siraut, 1985). Subsequent periods are not so well served, though there are also two very valuable mid to late 18th century maps of the town which show the buildings and layout in some detail.

III. A BRIEF HISTORY OF NETHER STOWEY

The history of the town of Nether Stowey *per se* begins in the medieval period, with the building of the castle. However, the history of settlement in the vicinity of the town begins long before that. From very ancient times, the main Quantocks pass has been at this point and the common factor in the early history of the area is this communication line, and its control. The castle may well overlie an earlier earthwork, and there are hints from aerial photographs of prehistoric enclosures in the fields east of Stowey Court: moving west from the town up on to the Quantocks the density of prehistoric sites grows.

The iron age fort of Dowsborough lies about one and a half miles west of Nether Stowey. In the 19th century it was suggested that the fort might have been reused in the Roman period (Greswell, 1897), but this has not been substantiated. In the Saxon period, however, the *herepath*, the military road, ran from Combwich over the Quantocks between the estate centres at Cannington and Williton. It probably followed a Roman road at this point - the name Stowey, recorded as Stawei in 1086, comes from the Old English *stan weg*, or paved road. According to Greswell (1897), there was still a lane known as Stow Here Pat leading onto the Quantocks west of Nether Stowey in the post-medieval period.

There may have been more than one small pre-Conquest settlement here and, perhaps, a minster associated with the largest of these. The suggestion of a possible minster church is in part based on a disputed identification of an estate at *Bodesleghe*, which was in the possession of a priest at Domesday, with the more securely documented early settlement at Budley (Siraut, 1985; Bond, c1990). This village was situated between Nether Stowey church and modern Whitnell, where "Budley" fields lay in the post-medieval period, and is the explanation for the somewhat detached position of the church, which continued in use when the settlement shifted.

The town of Nether Stowey has, in fact, three foci of settlement - the church and manor, the market place, and the castle - or four, if Over Stowey is counted too. These foci may represent the relics of the four separate estates of Saxon origin recorded at Domesday, though these were held of one landowner by then. The early castle at Over Stowey was apparently abandoned in favour of a new site at Nether Stowey (Dunning, 1981). The new castle was probably in existence by 1154 (Renn, 1973), possibly earlier. The settlement below the castle shows no signs of deliberate planning, but it was certainly encouraged by the obliteration of Budley under the manor park and the formation of a borough. The borough may have been in existence by 1157-8 and certainly was by 1225, when it was represented at the eyre (Dunning, 1981). A charter of 1274 refers to the "ancient" borough, and in 1306 26 burgage plots in the centre of the town are recorded (Siraut, 1985).

The economy of the medieval town was based on textiles and pottery, and it had both a weekly market and a yearly fair after 1304. In 1334, the borough taxation for Nether Stowey gave the lowest total of all the Somerset boroughs. Nevertheless, a distinctively urban economy seems to have continued throughout the medieval period: there is little surviving evidence for farming. The castle fell into disuse in late medieval times and much of the stone was probably taken to the manor for the building of Lord Audley's new manor house. But after his failed rebellion in 1497, which also involved the townsmen, the partly-constructed mansion was allowed to fall into ruin.

New lords of the manor rebuilt the site and Nether Stowey continued to be a hive of small-scale industry, particularly pottery, and a commercially important market throughout the post-medieval period. The town still had its market and fair in 1791 when Collinson visited, but was only a "reputed borough", and had the alternative name of Market Stowey in 1795. At the end of the 18th century the town figured briefly in the country's literary life, with Coleridge residing in Lime Street from 1797 to 1800. In 1840 Bragg's directory called it a "small market town" though, in fact, there was a population boom in the first part of the 19th century. By 1861, this had tailed off and Nether Stowey was being described as a "former market town" - though it retained a large population of retailers, professionals and craftsmen.

The second half of the 20th century has seen an expansion of the town's population, with the construction of several housing estates.

IV. THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF NETHER STOWEY

GENERAL COMMENTS

0.1 Archaeological knowledge

There has been some archaeological work at Nether Stowey. In the 19th century, the castle keep was uncovered, though these excavations were not published. More recent works connected with the bypass development and the laying of a pipe trench have revealed evidence of the post-medieval and medieval pottery industries.

0.2 Standing structures

There are several important standing buildings from the medieval and post-medieval periods (qv). Many buildings in the town centre are listed, limiting archaeological research.

1. PREHISTORIC

(No map)

There are no mapped areas for this period.

1.1 Archaeological work

There has been no archaeological investigation of possible prehistoric sites at Nether Stowey and most information comes from aerial photographs. Two enclosures (SMR 11867 and 12386) lie just to the south or south-east of the later site of Budley, and are of uncertain date and function. They appear only as cropmarks. Also, although the castle (SMR 11402; SM 33716) is principally a medieval monument, it might have originated as an iron age earthwork.

1.2 Context

Nether Stowey 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, which lies close to the foot of the main Quantocks pass controlled by Dowsborough hillfort. 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. Indeed, the town is also one of three at which the suggestion has been made that the medieval castle directly overlies a prehistoric earthwork, with the resultant implication of continuity.

2. ROMAN

(No map)

2.1 Archaeological knowledge and 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.

Nether Stowey 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, reflecting the generally reduced penetration of Roman influence towards the Quantocks and the West Somerset uplands.

The only suspected Roman archaeology in Stowey itself is the "paved road" leading to the Quantocks. If, as is likely, the herepath followed this road, then it may lie under the town of Nether Stowey and extend east and west from it. The road is perhaps most likely to underlie one of the main streets - perhaps Castle Street and Castle Hill.

There are no mapped areas for this period.

3. SAXON AND EARLY MEDIEVAL

(Map A)

Not enough is known about the archaeology of Nether Stowey to distinguish pre-Conquest and early post-Conquest sites. Map A shows three conjectural areas of early settlement: of these, medieval Budley is known from earthwork remains

3.1 Archaeological Work

There has been no archaeological investigation to prove or disprove early occupation of the sites, or the existence of a minster.

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. Nether Stowey is one of 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 components, shown on Map A

3.3.a Communications: Roads, streets and routeways

Not mapped The early settlement at Budley lay off the roads which survived as the medieval street plan, on a crossroads of the Stowey-Fiddington and Spaxton-Stogursey routes (Siraut, 1985). Several tracks converge on the possible site. The Tithe Map shows how old lanes and tracks were cut off by the conversion of land west of the Spaxton-Stogursey road into the medieval manor park. Some of these routes outside the area of the present town can still be traced as footpaths. However, the details of the main road west require archaeological elucidation.

3.3.b Settlement

NST/301

Budley

The Deserted medieval Village of Budley was certainly abandoned in the medieval period, but it may have been occupied much earlier. The focus of the settlement is thought to have been around the church and the manor house and farm; and there are earthworks in the gardens there which may be the remains of crofts (SMR 10593). This part of the site has been disturbed only by fishponds, and there may be remains of medieval village buildings and streets, possibly overlying earlier occupation. Slightly further east another probable part of the site has been identified through field name evidence, the existence of a partly filled in pond, and the convergence of tracks (SMR 10596). This area to the east has been repeatedly ploughed and nothing structural is evident on the surface, though scatters of archaeological material may remain.

The area marked on the map is based on information in the SMR.

NST/302

Two other possible foci of early settlement

The mapped areas at the other suggested foci are highly conjectural and require archaeological confirmation. It has been suggested that suggestions of earthworks within the bailey may represent the remains of another very early settlement superseded by the borough (Aston & Leech, 1977). However, these are perhaps more likely to be connected with the castle itself.

The limits of the areas are conjectural.

3.3.c Industrial sites

Not mapped

A mill was mentioned at Domesday, but the known mill site is some way west of the earlier settlement, so there may be another site closer to Budley.

4. MEDIEVAL

(Map B)

4.1 Archaeological knowledge

There is a little archaeological knowledge of the medieval town: the castle was excavated in the 19th century (but not published) and at the end of the 1960s a 13th century kiln was found in Portery Field to the south of the castle (and actually in Over Stowey parish).

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.

Nether Stowey 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. Nether Stowey was one of eight of the 45 towns associated with a castle, and like one other of these eight (Stogursey), may have been deliberately created out of an existing minster settlement to service and profit the castle. 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 (or in this case settlements). Its chief distinguishing feature is its early pottery industry.

4.3 Standing structures

The most important structures from this period are the castle keep (SMR LB 13425) and St Mary's Church (SMR LB 13438). Map B shows Listed Buildings of medieval origin.

4.4 Archaeological components, shown on Map B

4.4.a Redevelopment in earlier settlement components

All of the early settlement foci shown on Map A would have been severely affected, if not obliterated, by the establishment of the castle, burgages, manor and deer park. The medieval components have been mapped across them.

4.4.b Communications: Roads and streets

NST/412

Early roads

Though it followed the establishment of the castle, the medieval town (SMR 10588) grew up around the three possibly early foci (now represented by the castle and its chapel, the market cross, and the church and manor farm), and along the dog-leg on which they lay. The street plan consisted of the three irregular main streets - Castle Street, Lime Street and St Mary's Street - which join in a Y shape at the market place. These streets still form the core of the town. Mill Lane and South Lane may also have existed.

The roads shown are from the 1802 map.

4.4.c Water

Not mapped

The stream flowing along St Mary's Street formed the public water supply, though there may also have been wells: several are shown on the post-medieval maps.

4.4.d Military sites

NST/402

The castle

The castle (SMR 11402, SM 33716), which superseded the castle at Over Stowey (SMR 10673) was built in a strong natural position on an outlier of the Quantocks. The standing remains are consistent with a 12th century date for its construction, which date is also suggested by the documentary evidence. They consist of a motte and two baileys, with the foundations of a keep (SMR LB 13425) and a possible entrance building on top. The foundations were revealed by Peregrine Acland in the 19th century and he reported walls up to 6'6" thick, from which nearly all the usable building stone had been removed (Gresswell, 1897). The site was being let for pasture after 1485, and much of the castle stone may have gone into the manor buildings. The banks and ditches of the baileys have also been affected by quarrying. The site was reputedly garrisoned by Royalists in the Civil War (according to Morris' 1872 directory) and burnt to the ground by Parliamentarians. There have been no properly published excavations at the castle, and we do not

really know whether it was ever residential (Greswell 1897), or whether anything remains of the supposed 17th century conflict.

The area is defined from the Scheduled area and the modern map.

4.4.e Manors and estates

NST/407

Stowey Court

Stowey Court (SMR 11017) is the manor house site. Parts of the late medieval unfinished house survive, and there are some possibly late medieval cottages and some late 15th century walling, but many of the standing elements are Tudor or later. How much remains of any earlier medieval manor buildings is unclear, but the whole site has potential. The fishponds (SMR 10593) probably belong to the Tudor period and there were 18th century formal gardens in areas later converted into orchard (south of the fishponds).

The marked area is based on the 1750 map.

NST/408

Stowey Farm

Stowey House on the south side of St Mary's Street used to be called Stowey Farm. The house is 16th century and later, but again earlier buildings on the site could be expected.

From the 1750 map.

Not mapped

The manor park was a deer park until it was converted into fields in the 18th century, and stretched west from the Spaxton-Stogursey road, between the north and south parish boundaries. The western deerleap can still be seen.

4.4.f Burial sites and places of worship

NST/401

St Mary's church

St Mary's church (SMR 10595; SMR LB 13438), stands to the east of the town, in the manor farm grounds, and probably used to serve the settlement of Budley, though a (re?)dedication of the church is known in the 12th century. All that remains of the medieval fabric of the church is the tower, the rest having been rebuilt in the 19th century. There could be remains of a pre-Conquest church on the site. The graveyard too is at least medieval, possibly earlier, and contains the remains of a 14th century cross (SMR 10040, SM 28817, SMR LB 13439).

The churchyard outline is from the 1750 map.

NST/414

St Michael's chapel

The chapel of St Michael's is known to have existed near the castle in medieval times, and may have served an earlier population. The church is mentioned in a 1362 rental and Castle Hill was referred to in 1620 as St Michael's Hill: however, the exact site is disputed. The OS first edition marks the site to the east of the castle, in the fork of the lanes going around it (SMR 10589). But in a field to the south-east of the castle, Smiths Close (which may have been originally St Michael's Close), a 12th century capital was found and there is said to exist an aerial photograph showing the chapel (see SMR entry 10589). Since St Michael's may be very early, it would be useful if its location could be confirmed and the site evaluated and protected if necessary. Archaeological observations in the vicinity of the more southerly suggested site have shown that in places considerable made up ground, associated with hillside terracing, exists. Archaeological remains of earlier features may have been protected where this occurs.

The marked sites are based on the SMR.

4.4.g Settlement (Urban) (SMR 10588)

(a) Commercial core

NST/404

The market place

The market place was at the fork of the Y formed by the three main streets. The market was formally established somewhat later than the borough, and it is possible that St Mary's Street and Castle Street were deliberately widened to accommodate the market - in which case there may be the remains of early medieval frontages underlying them. The medieval high cross stood in the market place, but this was replaced in the 18th century by the octagonal market cross (SMR 10590) shown on the 18th century map, to which the stocks were adjacent in the 19th century. A shambles existed in the 17th century on the south side of the market, which appears from the maps to have resulted in encroachment there during the 18th and 19th centuries. Two market houses were built in the 18th and early 19th centuries, the former possibly on the site of the medieval cross and the latter at the south end of the market, but these were both demolished in the later 19th century: their position is not clear from the maps, but the remains may well survive under the current road.

The marked area is from the 1750 map. It is possible that the original market may have been somewhat larger.

NST/405

Burgages

The burgage plots, with orchards and paddocks to the rear, may be represented by the series of long plots on the 18th century maps, although very few characteristic front to back building ranges can be seen. The plots centre on the eventual market place, running back from both sides of Castle Street and St Mary's Street and the north-east side of Lime Street. There are buildings of medieval origin still standing in Castle Street and St Mary's Street (SMR LB 13433, 13434, 13444). Although there has been much redevelopment of the street frontages, the backs of these plots have remained relatively undisturbed, with the exception of those to the north of Castle Street, underlying the 19th century tannery developments.

These areas are mapped from the 1750 map.

NST/410

Other medieval town plots

There are areas beyond the burgage plots which are likely to contain medieval remains. These areas would be expected to have seen less intensive activity than in the town area.

These areas are taken from the 1750 and 1840 maps.

(b) Fringes

NST/403

The vicarage

The vicarage lands, standing immediately to the west of the manor lands, and therefore a little way from the church, probably originated with the establishment of the medieval town. This area contains the 17th century Old Vicarage and the modern buildings, and may therefore contain remains of the earlier house. The house is mentioned in 1461, and there are 16th century references to a barn, garden and orchard belonging to it (and 17th century references to a hopyard).

This area is mapped from the 1750 and 1888 maps.

NST/409

The area adjacent to the vicarage

The status of the strangely shaped area to the west of the vicarage is unclear from the Post-medieval maps: further documentary research on the plot could shed light on its history. It may have been part of the vicarage lands, or a separate private holding of medieval or later origin.

The area is mapped from the 1750 map.

NST/411 Other possible areas of medieval occupation
The area between the town and the castle may have seen less intensive medieval occupation.

These areas are taken from the 1750 and 1840 maps.

4.4.h Industrial areas and sites

NST/413 The medieval mill
The medieval mill was situated outside the town - burgesses used to complain about their horses being stolen when they visited it. The location of this mill is uncertain. There was certainly a mill pond west of the castle, in use as the higher pond of the post-medieval mill (SMR 10594), and this may represent an earlier mill site. There are earthwork remains in the Scheduled area (SM 33716).

The site of the mill is from the SMR.

NST/406 The medieval pottery
There are documentary references to potters operating in the 13th century. In 1969, evidence of the medieval pottery was found in Portery Field, south of the castle. This well-preserved site, (SMR 11126), which was seen only as part of a watching brief, has since been Scheduled (as part of SM 33716). It contained structural remains as well as pottery, industrial waste and flood layers, and is of considerable importance as it indicates an unexpectedly early rival to the Donyatt potteries (Coleman-Smith and Pearson, 1988).

The marked area follows the Scheduled area.

Not mapped There are documentary references to the importance of textiles in the economy of medieval Nether Stowey but no evidence has been found.

4.4.i Agricultural sites

Not mapped Nether Stowey's two open fields immediately abutted the back of the burgage plots and their orchards (Siraut 1985). Partial remains can be traced on the Tithe Map but the outline is not clear in its entirety. The 1770 map shows field names close to the town. Nether Stowey also had commons on the Quantocks.

5. POST-MEDIEVAL

(Map C)

5.1 Archaeological knowledge

There has been just one excavation, of a pottery site (SMR 10591).

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. Nether Stowey 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. As in the medieval period, its chief distinguishing feature was its pottery industry and it is therefore one of four of the towns which is of (potential) importance for its post-medieval industrial remains, though these may be on a smaller scale than at Frome and Bridgwater.

5.3 Standing structures

Quite a lot remains of the fabric of the post-medieval town, and much is known from the documentation. Map C shows the Listed Buildings from this and the 19th century.

5.4 Archaeological components, shown on Map C

5.4.a Redevelopment in earlier settlement components

The area of settlement was still somewhat constrained by the many orchards surrounding the town (which can be seen on the 18th century map). Any redevelopment therefore tended to take place within the plots and along the frontages. The largest houses were built along the wider stretches of Castle Street and St Mary's Street, directly over the densest medieval building. There are listed post-medieval buildings, shown on Map C in all three main streets, including large detached houses (eg Castle Hill House, one of the few developments apparently beyond the bounds of the medieval town - SMR LB 13426; Stowey Court - SMR LB 13440; Stowey House - SMR LB 13454), cottages (eg SMR LB 13436), town houses (eg SMR LB 13427, 13430, 13446 and 13431, the last of which is a fine 16th century cross passage house), and the Clock House Inn (SMR LB 13450). The Presbyterian Meeting House was built in 1731.

Settlement components described under earlier periods are shown in lighter shading.

5.4.b Communications: Roads, streets and routeways

NST/504

The turnpike

The main route through the town was turnpiked in the mid 18th century and there is a tollhouse surviving in St Mary's Street (SMR LB 13448). However, the street plan of Nether Stowey did not change significantly in the post-medieval period.

5.4.c Water

Not mapped

As well as the stream, there are known to have been several wells in the town. Some of these are documented, such as the one in the grounds of Castle Hill House (Siraut, 1985) and some appear on the 18th century map (clustered round the town centre).

5.4.d Settlement (Suburban)

NST/503

Castle Hill House grounds, from information on the 19th century maps and in the Buildings List.

5.4.e Industrial sites

NST/501

The post-medieval mill

The post-medieval town mill lay down Mill Lane, north of the castle. The higher mill pond of this mill was by the castle, and the lower on site.

The site is taken from the 1750 map.

NST/502

The post-medieval pottery

There was much industrial activity in post-medieval Nether Stowey, much of it taking place on the backs of the town plots. The pottery site (SMR 10591) which was found in 1968 during bypass work lay just behind the Lime Street plots, the other side of town from the medieval pottery site. This site produced no kilns, but ample evidence, in the shape of kiln waste and fire bars, of a major pottery, dated to the late 16th and early 17th centuries. The kilns are likely to be nearby but have not been located - they may be well preserved if they lie under adjacent gardens or fields. The pottery was clearly producing for more than local use: comparisons with other Somerset industries show that Nether Stowey may have been one of the local leaders in the introduction of new styles (Coleman-Smith and Pearson, 1988).

The marked area is from the SMR.

NST/505

The textile industry

There are references to 16th century flax pits, a dyehouse and racks - all part of the textile industry. In the 18th century the racks were just east of the castle.

The marked area is conjectural.

Not mapped

A slaughterhouse was mentioned in 1593 - the site is unknown, though Butcher's Lane would be a possible location. Marl quarries were also established in this period.

5.4.f Miscellaneous

Not mapped There is said to have been a bull baiting arena near the castle. The VCH refers to a lock up demolished to make way for a bus shelter, but this is not located (Siraut, 1985). The pound is marked on the OS first edition adjacent to a field named Great Pound Meadow on the 18th century map.

6. INDUSTRIAL (LATE 18TH/ 19TH CENTURY)*(Map C)***6.1 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.

Nether Stowey 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).

6.2 Standing structures

Castle Street and St Mary's Street contain several listed early 19th century houses, shown on Map C (eg SMR LB 13428, 13445, 13451). Map C shows Listed Buildings of post-medieval and 19th century origin.

6.3 Archaeological components, shown on Map C*6.3.a Redevelopment in earlier settlement components*

There was little growth at Nether Stowey in the 19th century, though there was some refurbishment of the town centre and the church. The Congregational chapel (SMR 10214) was built in 1807 (now gone) and the church (SMR LB 13438) largely rebuilt. A school was built in 1812 and the Poorhouse stood at the west end of village in 1839. At the end of the 19th century, the Clock Tower was built on the south side of the market, reflecting the importance of clock and watch making to the town at this time.

Settlement components described under earlier periods are shown more lightly shaded. The tannery has been defined across part of the medieval burgh area.

*6.3.b Communications: Roads*NST/603 19th century roads

The only new 19th century road in Nether Stowey was the tanyard road.

From the 1904 map.

6.3.c Places of worship

Not mapped 19th century chapels included the Congregational Chapel (SMR 10214) in Lime Street. Vault burials took place here: one skeleton was recovered during the demolition of the church in 1974.

*6.3.d Settlement (Suburban)*NST/602 19th century suburbs

There was a little expansion behind the main streets affecting land which was probably previously field or orchard.

These areas are from the 1888 and 1904 maps.

6.3.e Industrial sites

NST/601 The tannery
 The tannery, north of Castle Street, was in use at least from the 18th century, but the site was extended in the 19th century to build a mill and barkhouse. This resulted in an access yard which later became a street. The remains of the earlier tannery may survive.

The tannery is from the 1888 map.

Not mapped To the west of the town, there was a copper mine at Bin Combe, south-east of the complex at Dodington. There are also references to three malshouses in the town by 1839 (which could be located by study of the Tithe Apportionment) and to another mill east of the town (Siraut, 1985).

7. 20TH CENTURY

(Map D)

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.

Nether Stowey 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 D**7.2.a Redevelopment in earlier settlement components**

Since the war, the outlying areas of the town have been developed for housing, infilling the area between Mill Lane and the town centre. There has also been some industrial development to the north of the town. There were no archaeological observations during these projects.

All defined components are from the 20th century maps, up to and including the 1995 OS digital data.

7.2.b Communications: roads

NST/705 The bypass.

7.2.c Burial sites

NST/702 The new cemetery, in what was Great Pound Meadow.

7.2.d Settlement (Suburban)

NST/701 20th century suburbs, including developments on parts the old open fields; also including the recreation ground and the fire station.

7.2.e Settlement (Rural)

NST/703 20th century farms.

7.2.f Industrial sites

NST/704 Industrial installations to the north.

V. THE POTENTIAL OF NETHER STOWEY

1. *Research interests*

Archaeological investigation of the early routes through Nether Stowey, and the location and date of St Michael's church and the early settlement foci in relation to the established medieval town is necessary in order to establish the early history of the town. In the case of Budley, some of this might be achieved by non-destructive field survey.

The medieval and post-medieval potteries at Nether Stowey are of more than local significance. The medieval kilns are already Scheduled, but the kilns associated with the post-medieval pottery dumps have not been located, and this should be a priority.

2. *Areas of potentially exceptional preservation*

None.

3. *Limitations*

Nether Stowey is mainly a dry site, though there has been small scale flooding. The archaeological deposits are probably shallow. However, the town centre has remained relatively undisturbed by modern development (except at the west end of Castle Street), so that important evidence may survive of early frontages, outhouses and workshops. Parts of the fringes of the medieval town have unfortunately been affected by recent housing: although much of this land was orchard, it is possible that evidence of early industrial activity may also have been lost. The area of Budley has been protected in part by the manor gardens, though the eastern part has been heavily ploughed.

4. *Extent of current protection*

(shown on Map E)

The castle and the medieval pottery site are Scheduled (SM 33716), as is the medieval cross (SM28817). There are many Listed Buildings. Three Conservation Areas cover: the castle; the church and Stowey Court; and the medieval core around the market. The AHAP has been enlarged as a result of this work.

5. *Management proposals*

See the Archaeological Guidance Document.

VI. SOURCES

1. *General documentary (Somerset/ Wessex)*

- | | |
|--|---|
| Alcock, M, 1993 | <i>The conservation areas of Sedgemoor</i> |
| Aston, M (ed), 1988 | <i>Aspects of the Medieval Landscape of Somerset</i> |
| Aston, M (ed), 1976 | Somerset Archaeology 1974-75, <i>PSANHS</i> vol 120, 72-76 |
| Aston, M, 1977a | Deserted settlements, <i>PSANHS</i> vol 121, 41-53 |
| Aston, M (ed), 1977b | Somerset Archaeology 1976, <i>PSANHS</i> vol 121, 107-128 |
| Aston, M, 1983 | Deserted farmsteads on Exmoor and the lay subsidy of 1327, <i>PSANHS</i> vol 127, 90-93 |
| Aston, M, 1986 | Post-Roman central places in Somerset, in Grant (ed) |
| Aston, M, 1994 | Medieval settlement studies in Somerset in: Aston, M & C Lewis (eds) |
| Aston, M & Burrow, I, 1982 | <i>The Archaeology of Somerset</i> |
| Aston, M & Leech, R, 1977 | <i>Historic Towns in Somerset (CRAAGS)</i> |
| Aston, M & C Lewis (eds), 1994 | <i>The Medieval Landscape of Wessex</i> |
| Aston, M & Murless, B, 1978 | Somerset Archaeology 1978, <i>PSANHS</i> vol 122, 124-134 |
| Bentley, J B & Murless, B J, 1985 & 1987 | <i>Somerset Roads - The Legacy of the Turnpikes</i> Parts 1 and 2 |
| Betty, J H, 1986 | <i>Wessex from AD 1000</i> |
| Bradbury, J & Croft, R A (eds), 1990 | Somerset Archaeology 1989, <i>PSANHS</i> vol 133, 154-185 |
| Braggs, 1840 | <i>Directory of Somerset</i> |

- Burrow, I, Minnitt, S & Murless, B (eds), 1981a
Somerset Archaeology, 1979, *PSANHS* vol 124, 111-140
- Burrow, I, Minnitt, S & Murless, B (eds), 1981b
Somerset Archaeology, 1980, *PSANHS* vol 125, 93-97
- Burrow, I, Minnitt, S & Murless, B (eds), 1983
Somerset Archaeology, 1981, *PSANHS* vol 126, 61-91
- Burrow, I, Minnitt, S & Murless, B (eds), 1984
Somerset Archaeology, 1982, *PSANHS* vol 127, 13-31
- Burrow, I, Minnitt, S & Murless, B (eds), 1985
Somerset Archaeology, 1983, *PSANHS* vol 128, 1-23
- Coleman-Smith, R & Pearson, T, 1988
Excavations in the Donyatt potteries
- Collinson, J, 1791
The History and Antiquities of the County of Somerset
- Coulthard, A J & Watts, M, 1978
Windmills of Somerset
- Costen, M, 1992
The origins of Somerset
- Dennison, E (ed), 1987a
Somerset Archaeology 1985, *PSANHS* vol 129, 1-35
- Dennison, E (ed), 1987b
Somerset Archaeology 1986, *PSANHS* vol 130, 141-161
- Dennison, E (ed), 1988
Somerset Archaeology 1987, *PSANHS* vol 131, 215-228
- Dennison, E (ed), 1989
Somerset Archaeology 1988, *PSANHS* vol 132, 209-243
- Dunning, R W (ed), 1974
Victoria History of the County of Somerset vol 3
- Dunning, R W, 1975
Christianity in Somerset
- Dunning, R W (ed), 1978
Victoria History of the County of Somerset vol 4
- Dunning, R W, 1985
Victoria History of the County of Somerset vol 5
- Dunning, R W, 1987
A history of Somerset
- Dunning, R W, 1991
Some Somerset country houses
- Dunning, R W (ed), 1992
Victoria History of the County of Somerset vol 6
- Dunning, R W, 1995
Somerset Castles
- Ellison, A, 1983
Medieval villages in south-east Somerset
- English Heritage, 1994
County list of scheduled monuments: Somerset
- Fowler, P J, 1971
"M5 and archaeology", *Arch Rev* 6, p10
- Grinsell, L V, 1970
The Archaeology of Exmoor
- Grundy, G B, 1935
The Saxon charters of Somerset
- Haskell, T, 1994
By Waterway to Taunton
- Hulbert, N F, 1936
A Survey of the Somerset Fairs, *PSANHS* vol 82, p83
- Kelly, 1861
Directory of Somerset
- Kelly, 1866
Directory of Somerset
- Lawrence, B, 1952
Quantock Country
- Leech, R, 1981
"The Somerset Levels in the Romano-British period" in *The Evolution of Marshland Landscapes*
- Leech, R & Leach, P, 1982
"Roman town and countryside" in Aston & Burrow, 1982, 63-81
- Minnitt, S & Murless, B J (eds), 1980
Somerset Archaeology 1978, *PSANHS* vol 123, 94-95
- Morris, 1872
Directory of Somerset and Bristol
- Page, W, 1911
Victoria County History, vol 2
- Pearce, S M, 1978
The Kingdom of Dumnonia
- Pevsner, N, 1958
South and West Somerset (the Buildings of England)
- Pigot & Co
Pigot & Co's Directory, 1830
- Pigot & Co
Pigot & Co's Directory, 1842
- Robinson, W J, 1914
West Country Churches
- Rogers, 1976
Wiltshire and Somerset Woollen Mills
- Rutter, J, 1829
Delineations of north-west Somerset
- Savage, W, 1954
Somerset Towns, *PSANHS* vol 99, 49-74
- Warren, D (ed), 1996
Somerset's industrial heritage

- Webster, C J & Croft, R A (eds), 1991
Somerset Archaeology 1990, *PSANHS* vol 134, 207-229
- Webster, C J & Croft, R A (eds), 1992
Somerset Archaeology 1991, *PSANHS* vol 135, 135-164
- Webster, C J & Croft, R A (eds), 1993
Somerset Archaeology 1992, *PSANHS* vol 136, 161-182
- Webster, C J & Croft, R A (eds), 1994
Somerset Archaeology 1993, *PSANHS* vol 137, 129-156
- Webster, C J & Croft, R A (eds), 1995
Somerset Archaeology 1994, *PSANHS* vol 138, 165-185
- Webster, C J & Croft, R A (eds), 1996
Somerset Archaeology 1995, *PSANHS* vol 139, 151-177
- Williams, M, 1970
The draining of the Somerset Levels
- York, B, 1995
Wessex in the Early Middle Ages
- 2. Nether Stowey**
- Bond, C J, c1990
Nether Stowey (Unpublished report for MPP)
- Dunning, R W, 1981
Origins of Nether Stowey, *PSANHS* 125, 124-126
- Good, G L & Russett, V E J, 1987
Earthenware found in the Bristol area, *Bristol Avon Archaeol* 6, 35-43
- Greswell, W H P, 1897
Nether Stowey Castle, *PSANHS* 43, 29-35
- Siraut, M C, 1985
"Nether Stowey" in *VCH* Vol V, 190-200

3. Maps

- c1750 Plan by Thomas England: SRO DD/AH 66/27
- late C18 Plan of Nether Stowey manor: SRO DD/SAS C/1207
- 1802 OS surveyors' drawings at 3": fiche in SSL
- 1840 Tithe Map: fiche in SSL
- 1888 OS 1: 2500: fiche in SSL
- 1904 OS 1: 10560
- 1961,62 OS 1: 10560 + SMR data
- 1978,79,80,83 OS 1: 10000 + SMR data

VII. COMPONENT INDEXES

1. Component to map

<i>Component</i>	<i>Map</i>	<i>Component</i>	<i>Map</i>
NST/301	A	NST/414	B
NST/302	A	NST/501	C
NST/401	B	NST/502	C
NST/402	B	NST/503	C
NST/403	B	NST/504	C
NST/404	B	NST/505	C
NST/405	B	NST/601	C
NST/406	B	NST/602	C
NST/407	B	NST/603	C
NST/408	B	NST/701	D
NST/409	B	NST/702	D
NST/410	B	NST/703	D
NST/411	B	NST/704	D
NST/412	B	NST/705	D
NST/413	B		

2. Component to page

NST/301	6, 16
NST/302	6, 16
NST/401	8, 16
NST/402	7, 16
NST/403	9, 16
NST/404	9, 16
NST/405	9, 16
NST/406	10, 16
NST/407	8, 16
NST/408	8, 16
NST/409	9, 16
NST/410	9, 16
NST/411	10, 16
NST/412	7, 16
NST/413	10, 16
NST/414	8, 16
NST/501	11, 16
NST/502	11, 16
NST/503	11, 16
NST/504	11, 16
NST/505	11, 16
NST/601	13, 16
NST/602	12, 16
NST/603	12, 16
NST/701	13, 16
NST/702	13, 16
NST/703	13, 16
NST/704	13, 16
NST/705	13, 16

Maps

Map A - possible early foci

Map B - Medieval

Map C - Post-medieval and 19th century

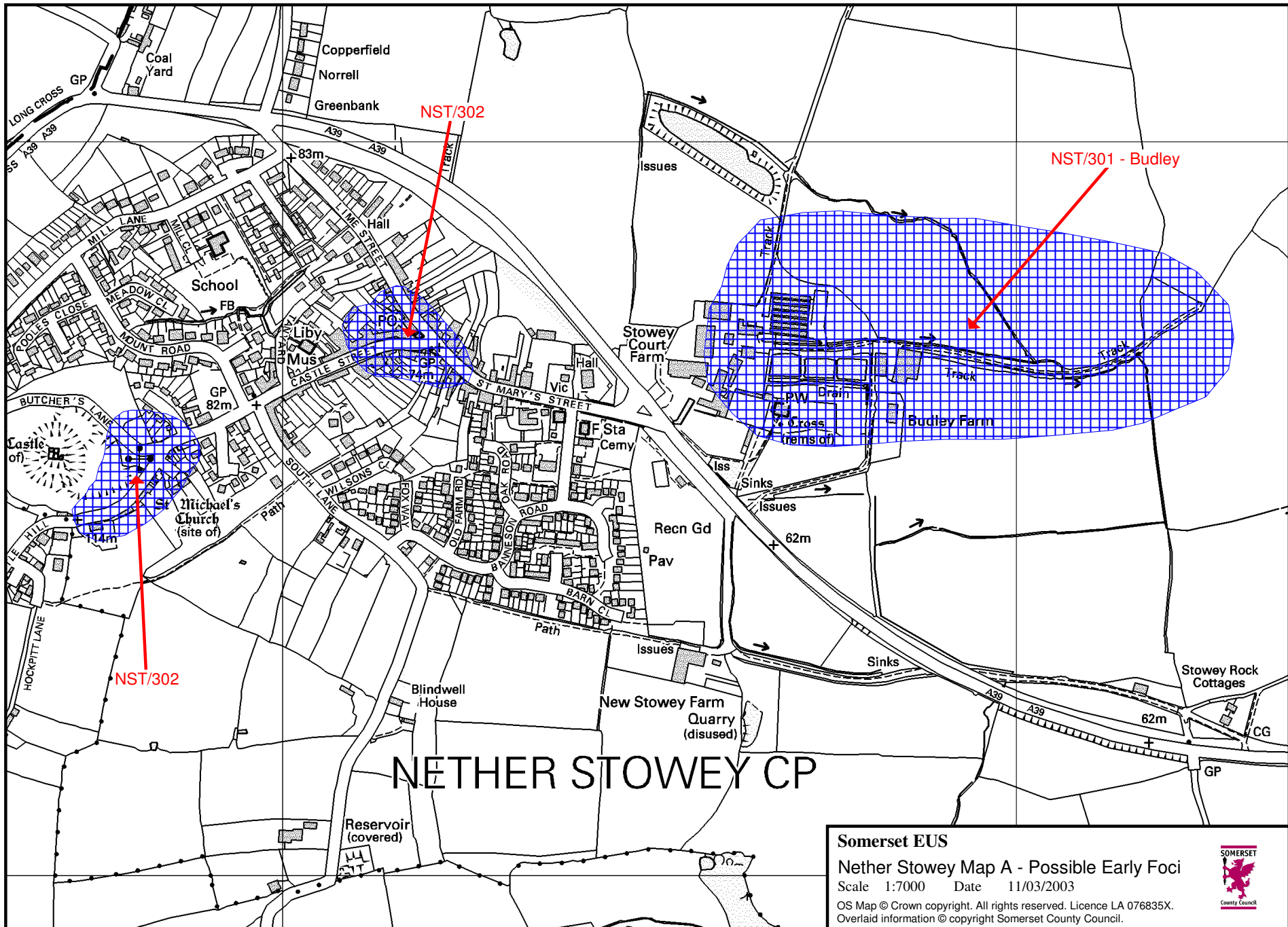
Earlier components in yellow.

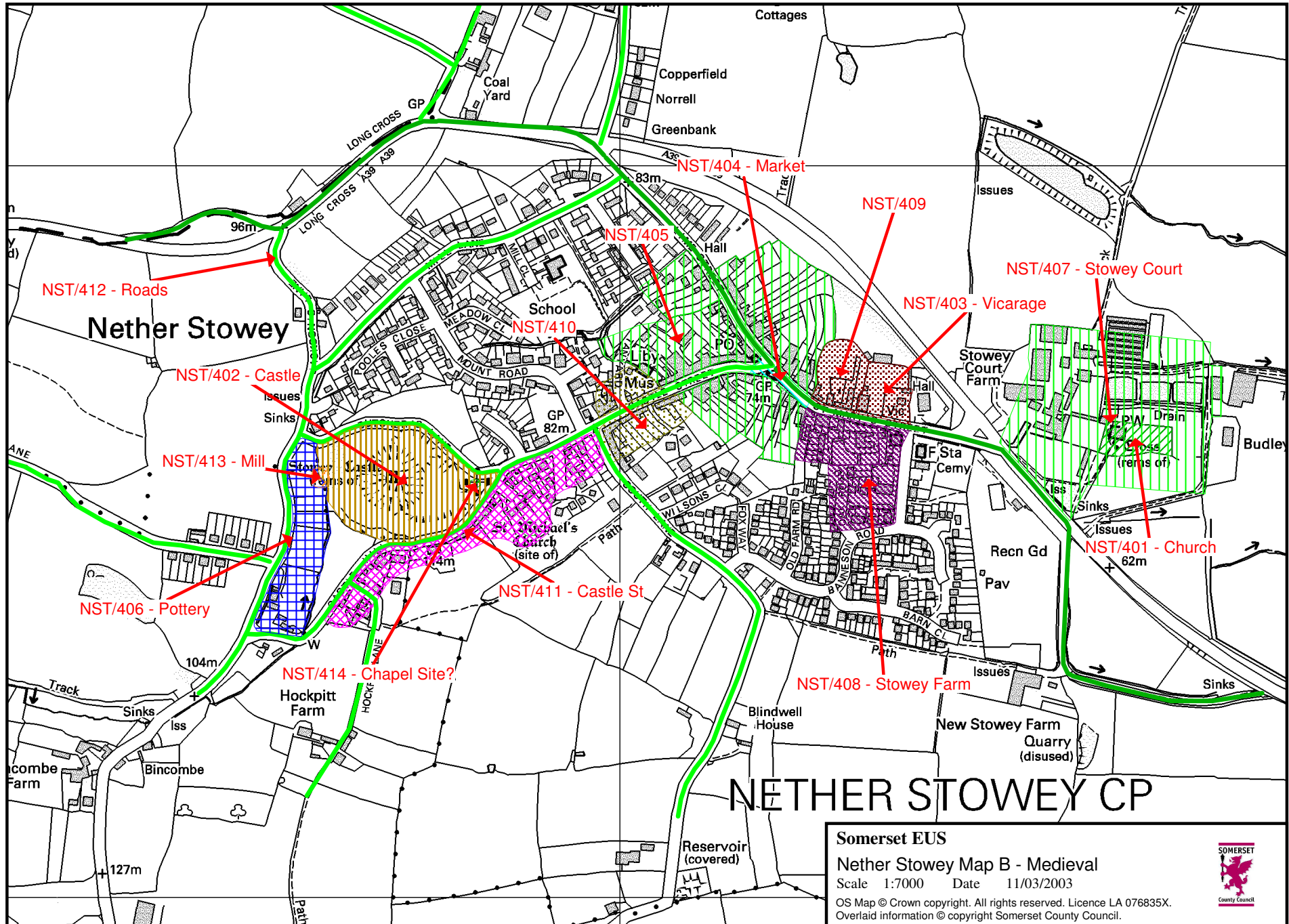
Map D - 20th century

Earlier components in yellow.

Map E - 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)





NST/412 - Roads

Nether Stowey

NST/402 - Castle

NST/413 - Mill

NST/406 - Pottery

NST/414 - Chapel Site?

NST/411 - Castle St

NST/408 - Stowey Farm

NST/404 - Market

NST/405

NST/409

NST/403 - Vicarage

NST/407 - Stowey Court

NST/401 - Church

NETHER STOWEY CP

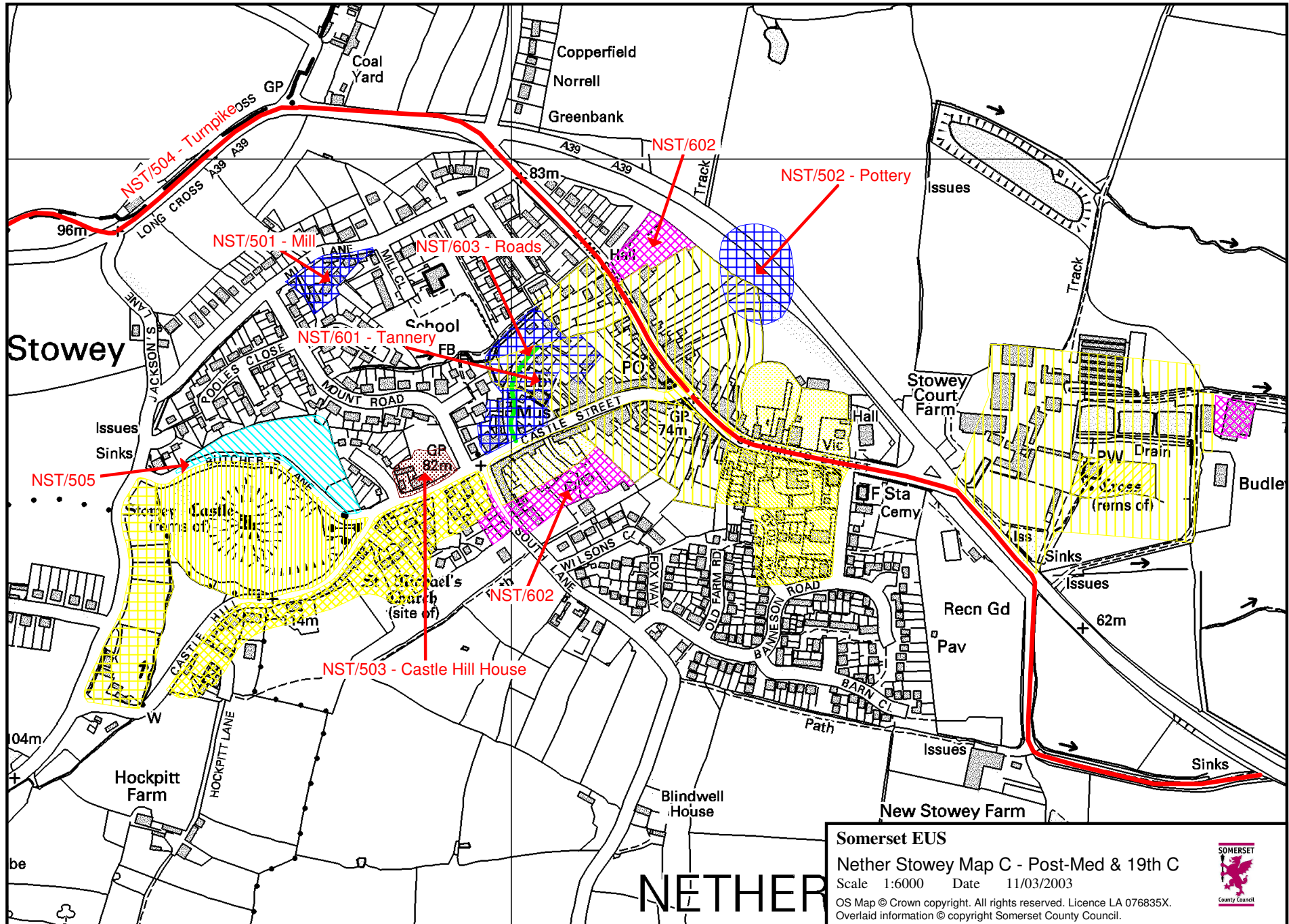
Somerset EUS

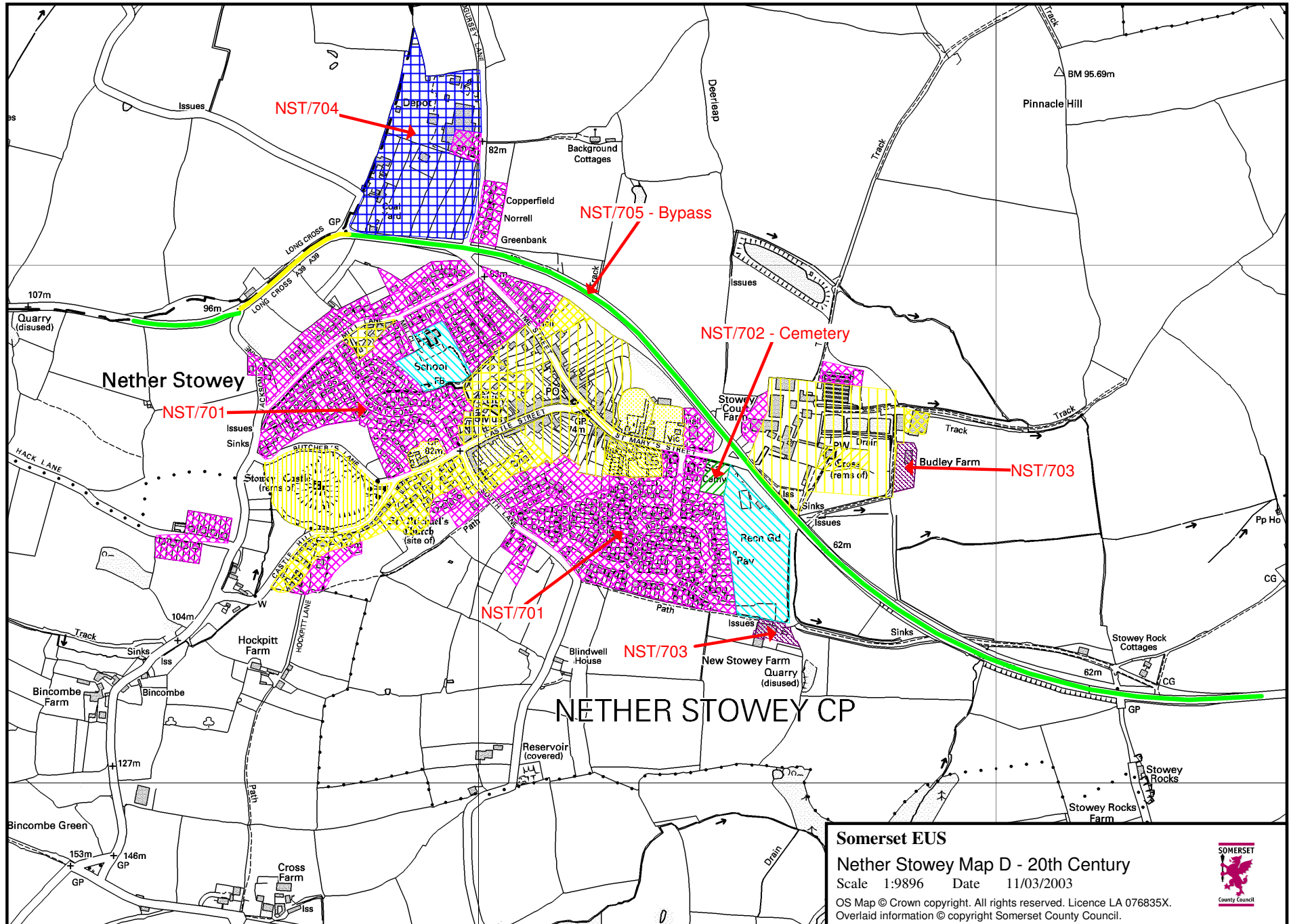
Nether Stowey Map B - Medieval

Scale 1:7000 Date 11/03/2003

OS Map © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence LA 076835X.
Overlaid information © copyright Somerset County Council.

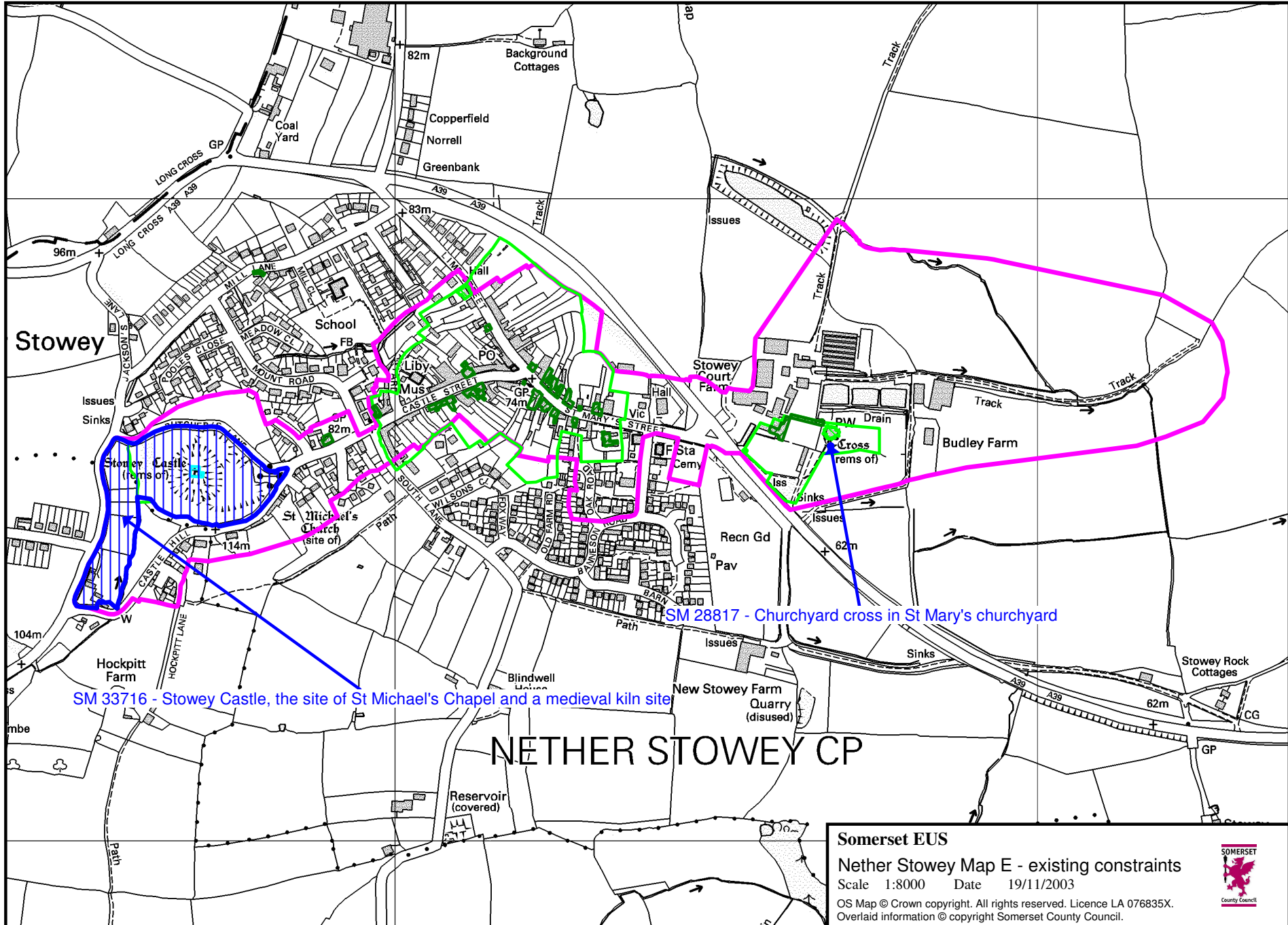






Somerset EUS
Nether Stowey Map D - 20th Century
 Scale 1:9896 Date 11/03/2003
 OS Map © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence LA 076835X.
 Overlaid information © copyright Somerset County Council.





SM 33716 - Stowey Castle, the site of St Michael's Chapel and a medieval kiln site

SM 28817 - Churchyard cross in St Mary's churchyard

NETHER STOWEY CP

Somerset EUS
 Nether Stowey Map E - existing constraints
 Scale 1:8000 Date 19/11/2003
 OS Map © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence LA 076835X.
 Overlaid information © copyright Somerset County Council.

