English Heritage Extensive Urban Survey

An archaeological assessment of

South Petherton

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SOMERSET

County Council

SOMERSET EXTENSIVE URBAN SURVEY

SOUTH PETHERTON

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

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

I. INTRODUCTION

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

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

II. MAJOR SOURCES

1. Primary documents
Estate papers and manor accounts survive for some of the medieval and post-medieval landholdings around South Petherton, though coverage is incomplete. The Victoria County History (Dunning, 1978) should be consulted for details of surviving records.

2. Local histories
The major source for the history of South Petherton is the Victoria County History, vol 4. But for an early local history by Norris (1913), little else has been written on the town.

3. Maps
There are no detailed maps of South Petherton of pre-19th century date.

III. A BRIEF HISTORY OF SOUTH PETHERTON

South Petherton lies in a naturally sheltered and well-watered situation, on relatively low lying undulating land at the foot of a limestone ridge. The town is almost surrounded by the particularly good agricultural land associated with the Yeovil Sands; to its north-east lies the ridge, which has been quarried for Petherton stone, and for sands and clays suitable for brick and tile making.

There is some evidence of early settlement at South Petherton, which appears to have lain north of the later town and on the other side of the stream, on the more exposed (but more defensible) ridgetop. The site at Stoodham has produced both iron age and Romano-British occupation material, though definite evidence of structures and earthwork defences has not yet been forthcoming. In the Roman period, this settlement lay less than two kilometres north of the Fosse Way, a main communications artery. It also appears to have lain in much the same relationship to an earlier prehistoric way linking Ham Hill and the Blackdowns, a route which retained its importance until the 18th century (Dunning, 1978).

The Roman settlement pattern in the area of South Petherton has not yet been established, though there have been several finds of Roman material (mostly coins). Two "villa" sites supposed to have been found in the 17th and 18th centuries (Collinson, 1791) have not yet been confirmed archaeologically. But the existence of undiscovered Roman farmsteads (not necessarily villas), is perhaps to be expected in a fertile area close to the Fosse Way.

In the Post-Roman period, the Stoodham settlement may have lain abandoned (no material later than the 4th century has yet been found) and until the 8th century, the River Parrett, flowing less than a kilometre to the east, remained the border between Britons and Saxons. The creation of the large royal estate of South Petherton controlling the river crossing therefore took place in the context of the westward expansion of Wessex. We do not know exactly how large the estate was, since much of the land was never hidated. The main settlement of the estate was established (perhaps on a previously unoccupied site) on a low spur on the opposite side of the stream from the old settlement. The Saxon settlement, *Sudperetone* (the southern tun on the Parrett), was of high status, embracing a minster church, a royal palace (according to tradition) and a relatively short-lived 11th century mint feeding a proto-urban market economy. South Petherton, the profitable estate town, remained in royal hands throughout the Saxon period. However, though occasional *-ton* names in the parish recall the settlements' origins as Saxon estate villages, ownership of the surrounding estate had fragmented by 1066, when already there were seven separate estates in the parish.

This early fragmentation affected the medieval development of South Petherton, since different components of the settlement came to form part of several manorial holdings. The two most important holdings derived from those of the Crown and the minster. The core of the royal estate of South Petherton passed directly to the Conqueror and was still a possession of the Crown in 1086. One hide, thought because of its size to be a minster holding, was held by a priest at this date: this probably became the nucleus of the medieval Rectory Estate, which was held by Bruton Abbey from the 12th century until the Dissolution (after which it became the manor of Hele). The main manor of South Petherton was first granted away from the Crown under Henry II and by 1243 South Petherton manor was owned outright by the Daubeney family.

The Daubeneys continued to hold the manor until the family's involvement in Buckingham's rebellion in the late 15th century. The family presided over no determined attempt to encourage the urban functions of the settlement, being content to collect the rents of their properties, and no borough was established. South Petherton did however receive in 1213 a market and fair grant, which was given by King John as an endowment of the Free Chapel of St John, and the market and fair were moderately successful, the value of the fair peaking in the late medieval period. It is not until the 15th century that there are documentary references to anything suggesting anything other than village status, but Leland in the 16th century refers to South Petherton as a market town.

Though the Daubeneys returned to South Petherton, they ran into financial trouble in the 16th century. Much of the manor was sold off, further complicating the landholding situation, and the prestigious manor house passed to South Harp. More dramatic disturbances occurred in the 17th century, when South Petherton was affected by Civil War actions of 1644-5. Troops of both sides were in the town in 1644, when the church suffered some damage at the hands of the Royalists, and in 1645 Parliamentary forces occupied the town after the Battle of Langport. Monmouth also visited the town in 1680 and two townsmen were among those who later suffered for their part in the rebellion.

Nevertheless, the late medieval and post-medieval periods saw some expansion of the settlement, with the creation of the "suburbs" of Palmer Street and South Street. A 17th century description of South Petherton calls it a market town of 300 families, and there was also occupation in the quarrying area of Pitway, and at Little Petherton, at least by the end of the post-medieval period (Dunning, 1978). A modest prosperity, based partly on the settlement's commercial role, but also on quarrying, brick making, and cloth manufacture, continued into the late 18th and 19th century (though cloth manufacture was largely replaced by sailcloth and then leather working). The population rose in the first half of the 19th century, remaining relatively stable until the 1960s when it began to rise again. South Petherton remains a market centre, though it is no longer considered to be a town.

IV.   THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF SOUTH PETHERTON

GENERAL COMMENTS

0.1   Archaeological work in the town
Despite a number of interesting archaeological finds, there has been no methodically recorded archaeological survey or excavation at South Petherton. Sites which are reported to have been investigated in the 17th and 18th centuries have not been confirmed (or disproved) by any modern work.

0.2   Standing structures and visible remains
South Petherton retains much of its historic fabric, both in its plan and in its buildings. Most of the streets were established at least by the 18th century (many may be earlier) and there are a number of Listed Buildings, including some of medieval origin. In addition, there survive on the ridge some degraded earthwork remains of medieval lynchets and, perhaps, prehistoric fortifications.

1. PREHISTORIC
(Map A)

1.1   Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge
There have been several finds of prehistoric material around South Petherton. Apart from the finds at Stoodham (SMR 53425) , the SMR also includes an imprecisely located bronze age palstave and ring (SMR 53449) found in 1842.

1.2   Context
South Petherton is one of eight out of the 45 historic towns covered by this project in the vicinity of which prehistoric activity and/or occupation has been shown, and at which there is also good evidence of settlement on or near the site of the later town (in this case the ridgetop settlement of Stoodham) - possibly, though not necessarily, implying continuity of settlement. It is probable that the figure is far too low, for it is notoriously difficult for archaeologists to demonstrate a prehistoric presence in modern urban areas. Though '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.

1.3   Standing structures and visible remains
Whilst the existence of fortifications at Stoodham remains unproven, it is possible that a ditch at the top of Mere Lynchets may originally have been associated with the settlement there.

*1.4   Archaeological features, *shown on *Map A*
1.4.a   Communications: Roads and routeways
SPE/101   The prehistoric trackway
                 A prehistoric trackway (SMR 53445) linking the iron age fort on Ham Hill with Neroche and the Blackdowns ran to the south of Stoodham, approximately parallel with the Foss Way. The Victoria County History describes the course of this trackway, which long continued in use and was the main route to Taunton in the 18th century (though it is now in part obscured by modern road developments). From the river crossing (Bridge) it ran west via Watergore, Moondown Lane and Frogmary Green to Fouts Cross.

                 From Dunning (1978) and the SMR.

1.4.b   Settlement
SPE/102   Stoodham
                 Numerous finds of pottery, worked flints, whetstones, coins and other metal artefacts indicate the existence, on the promontory opposite the later Saxon settlement, of an extensive 1st to 4th century iron age and Romano-British settlement (SMR 53425).   The finds (which include palaeolithic flints) also indicate possible earlier activity on the site. However, very little is known

either of any earlier settlement or of the layout of the settlement. There is only inconclusive evidence of fortification (in the form of the broad ditch above Mere Lynches), though the site is certainly suitable, and no evidence so far for the locations of hut circles or other buildings: no surface features survive, and no excavations have taken place. The area has been repeatedly ploughed, but it is nevertheless possible that structural remains survive.

Defined from the SMR.

2. ROMAN
(Map A)

2.1   Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge
The SMR contains details of several finds of Roman material in the vicinity of South Petherton. Finds include a coin hoard (SMR 53423) found in 1722 near Petherton Bridge, coins found near Ben Cross (SMR 53436). At least three occupation sites in the area have entries (SMR 53421, 53422 and 53425), but none of these has been methodically investigated.

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.

South Petherton is one of 12 of the 45 historic towns covered by this project at which there is evidence of Roman settlement near the site of the later town, though not at its core. In this case, the evidence is of a continuation of an iron age settlment (Stoodham) into the Roman period. This lay just north of the later town and in the Roman period would have been less than two kilometeres north of the Fosse Way, the major Roman artery into the south-west, and on the fringe of the rich, well-settled Ilchester hinterland.

2.3   Standing structures and visible remains
There are no visible remains of any Roman settlement, but the line of the Fosse Way survives to the south of the town.

2.4   Archaeological features, *shown on* Map A
2.4.a   Redevelopment in earlier settlement components
Stoodham appears to have continued in occupation into the 4th century, and so must have co-existed with the Roman sites reported by Collinson, and others (not included in this report) on the Foss Way. The relationship between these sites is a matter of interest, though insufficient evidence may survive to illuminate it.

2.4.b   Communications: Roads, streets and routeways
SPE/201   The Foss Way
                 The Foss Way (SMR 55101), the major Roman route into the South West, runs not far to the south of South Petherton. The route is shown for the sake of completeness, although it is really beyond the coverage area of this report and a number of roadside sites and features are not shown. The SMR should by consulted for further details.

                 From the SMR.

2.4.c   Settlement
SPE/202   The "villa" sites
                 Two supposed villa sites have been noted close to South Petherton, though we depend for our knowledge of both on Collinson (1791), who recorded local traditions concerning them. One site (SMR 53421), discovered in the 17th century, is said to lie close to the Foss Way at Watergore. At the other (SMR 53422), recorded as being close to Joyler's Mill, "the remains of Roman buildings, urns, paterae and terras were dug up" (Collinson, 1791). Reliable archaeological

evidence for the exact location, extent and current state of preservation of either of these sites is lacking. However, it is possible that further remains associated with high status Roman building complexes may survive; the sites must therefore be regarded as of potential importance, even though the evidence for their villa status must be treated with caution.

The locations of these sites, which are inexact, are from the SMR.

2.4.d   Artefact scatters
SPE/203   Coin finds

Close to Ben Cross, two coins of the 3rd century (SMR 53436) were discovered in 1935. No further material has since come to light in this location.

From the SMR.

3. SAXON
(Map B)

3.1   Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge
Though South Petherton is known to have been an important Saxon settlement, one of the relatively few in Somerset regarded as towns, very little is known about its archaeology and important questions remain to be answered. The site of the settlement, estimated from the location of the church and an informal survey of the surrounding topography, has yet to be confirmed. The site of the "palace" is also unknown, though three possibilities have been suggested (see below, p6).

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, adminstrative 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.

South Petherton is one of fifteen out of the 45 historic towns covered by this project which already had some urban functions or features before the Conquest. In fact, it is one of eleven places which may have had a mint in the 10th or 11th centuries. All of the mints were associated either with royal estate centres or with their linked burhs (fortified sites); in this case, it was the former, though South Petherton is one of at least three places which appear to have been defended for at least part of the Saxon period, though it does not appear in the Burghal Hidage. South Petherton is also one of 22 out of the 45 towns associated with a known or probable pre-Conquest minster.

3.3   Standing structures and visible remains
There is no known Saxon fabric in the present church building and there are no other surviving structures. A possible ditch line used to be visible in an orchard on the north side of Crown Lane, but this area has now been built over.

3.4   Archaeological components, *shown on* **Map B**
3.4.a   Manors and estates
SPE/304   The "royal palace" site

South Petherton was a Saxon royal manor and there is a tradition of a "royal palace" associated with the settlement. If this is correct, the site is of potential importance, perhaps containing the remains of high status buildings and of the mint which operated for a short while in the 11th century.

However, the site of the palace or royal manor house is not known, though a number of possibilities present themselves. A fairly late tradition associates the Saxon manor with the medieval manor house, "King Ina's Palace" (see p10), and another possibility is that the possible boundary ditches (see below) defined not a separate settlement but an integrated manor complex.

The third possibility, the area indicated here, represents an area "something south of the church" pointed out to Gerard in the 17th century as the site of the Saxon royal manor. Nothing was visible to Gerard then, and the exact location of the site pointed out to him is not clear. Though this suggested site has in its favour its proximity to the minster site and the presumed original minster holding (which was most probably allocated from royal land), it is possible that Gerard may instead have been shown the site of a later Rectory manor house (though see p10).

The area shown is conjectural, based on the position of the Rectory mill and possible manor house, from Dunning (1978) and the 1840 map.

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

SPE/301   The Saxon minster and medieval churchyard
South Petherton's medieval churchyard (SMR 53418), which is situated on a low spur, probably represents the remains of a Saxon minster precinct. Evidence for the presence of a minster in South Petherton includes the size of the priest's estate in 1086 and the existence of several dependent chapels in the surrounding area. The fabric of the Grade I existing church (SMR LB 56853) is 12th century and later; it is likely, therefore, that at least one previous church building of some status underlies it; other related structures may also survive under the relatively small medieval churchyard, or perhaps under adjacent parts of the Medieval town.

The churchyard may contain burials from the Saxon period onwards, and many of the more recent post-medieval and 19th century tombs are now Listed. In the 19th century there was also a parish lock up in the churchyard by the gate.

The extent of the churchyard is from the 1840 map.

3.4.c   Settlement

SPE/302   The Saxon settlement
Saxon *Sudperetone* (SMR 53442) was a place of some importance, lying at the heart of a major royal estate taken from British territory probably in the 8th century, and situated opposite the old settlement. It may have been defended, or at least defined, by ditches (see below). Whilst little definite is known about the internal layout of the settlement, it probably included an open market area flanked by timber buildings. It is also possible that the royal manor itself lay within the ditches, in which case structures of greater solidity and quality might be expected. The extent of archaeological survival is unknown, but since the medieval and later settlement directly overlies the probable Saxon settlement area, a measure of damage to the deposits can be anticipated.

The settlement bounds are defined along the stream to the east, and the suggested ditch lines to west and north (see below).

SPE/303   The boundary ditch
It is possible that the Saxon settlement was defended, or at least defined (since the site is not defensible as that of Stoodham is), on the western and northern sides by a ditch. Observations made before relatively recent development on Crown Lane suggested that the western ditch remained visible until this century (Ellison, 1983; Aston, unpub.). The extent to which archaeological remains have survived the development is not known.

It has also been suggested that Palmer Street may have followed the course of the northern ditch (Dunning, 1978). This has not been archaeologically tested.

Defined from Aston (unpub.).

3.4.d Mills

Not mapped   One mill is recorded at South Petherton in 1086. It is not clear which (if any) of the three medieval mills this represents.

4. MEDIEVAL AND POST-MEDIEVAL
(Maps C and D)

Since there is so little archaeological information and the earliest detailed map is the 1840 Tithe Map, there is insufficient information to distinguish between mediaeval, post-medieval and early 19th century developments in many components of South Petherton.

4.1 Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge

There has been no archaeological work in South Petherton, so little is known of the medieval and post-medieval town.

4.2 Context

Both in Britain and on the continent, the medieval period saw the growth of town foundation and, to an extent, urban living (though the bulk of the population continued to live in villages). The reasons for this growth were many and complex. In England they included both general factors - such as the growth of mercantile trade (especially the cloth trade) - and more specific ones - such as the post-Conquest establishment of a network of (theoretically) loyal magnates and prelates with large estates and commercial priveleges. 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.

South Petherton is one of the fifteen places out of the 45 historic towns covered by this project which either were boroughs or at least had some urban functions before the Conquest; but it is one of four in the latter category which appears not to have achieved borough status in the medieval period. 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.

4.3 Standing structures and visible remains

There are a few Listed Buildings of medieval origin in South Petherton, which are shown on Map C and Map D. These include King Ina's Palace (SMR LB 56844), the medieval manor house (which includes 14th century fabric); three cottages of 15th century origin (SMR LB 56838) on St James St, one of which may have been the Parsonage; Hayes End (SMR LB 56786), a house of 15th century origin; and the church (SMR LB 56853), with 12th century and later fabric.

A slightly greater number of Listed Buildings of post-medieval origin exists. Many of these are farms and cottages, but the Court House (SMR LB 56839) is also of 16th century origin.

4.4   *Archaeological components (centre),* shown on *Map C*

4.4.a   Redevelopment in earlier settlement components

Components described under earlier periods are shown more lightly shaded. The only element of the Saxon settlement which has not been redefined for the medieval and post-medieval periods is, however, the churchyard. The settlement itself, though it was not laid out anew in the medieval period, has been analysed from the early 19th century map, and components laid out across the Saxon occupation areas.

4.4.b   Communications: Roads, streets and routeways

SPE/401, SPE/502

Pre-1800 roads (extant)

South Petherton lies at the centre of a web of small streets, lanes and tracks which was formerly more extensive. The process by which the present-day street plan came into being is not fully understood, and is a question of some interest. The earliest reference to a 'street' in South Petherton is to Cheap Street (1443), a row of houses on the north side of the market (Dunning, 1978). Indeed, elucidation of the relationship of the changing market place (see p11) to both St James's Street and the post-medieval suburb of Palmer Street (which may itself have respected a Saxon boundary; see p13) appears to be central to an understanding of the development of the modern street plan. This was probably not completed until the 17th century (Dunning, 1978), with the establishment of the main suburban streets. Of these, Palmer Street may have cut across earlier alignments, and South Street (referred to by the 1630s) may have been established as a diversion around the ford in Hele Lane.

Any opportunity to establish dates and alignments of streets and frontages, particularly in the settlement core, should therefore be taken.

The marked roads are from the 1807 and 1840 maps.

SPE/402   Old road alignments

A number of changes in road alignment may have occurred. Dunning suggests that West Street may originally have run more directly into a larger market place (Dunning, 1978). Other possible previous alignments shown include that of Hele Lane (before the establishment of South Street) and Crown Lane/ Compton Road (before the establishment of Palmer Street).

None of these suggestions has yet been tested archaeologically.

The line of West Street is from Dunning (1978); the possible old line of Hele Lane is based on paths and field boundaries shown on the 19th century maps; the Compton Road line is conjectural.

4.4.c   Water

SPE/501   Watercourses

These old watercourses, the more northerly of which *may* have some connection with the leat system of Canon Mill, may offer good preservation conditions for remains associated with the Rectory estate, Canon Mill and Hele Manor.

From the 1840 map.

4.4.d   Manors and estates

SPE/403   King Ina's Palace

"King Ina's Palace" was built by the Daubeneys (the lords of South Petherton manor), probably in the 14th century and became the manor house of the subsidiary manor of South Harp when the Daubeneys ran into financial difficulty in the 16th century. The surviving Grade II* Listed building (SMR LB 56844) is of 14th century origin, with Post-medieval and 19th century alterations and additions.

Though there exist 13th century references to a Court with two dovecotes (Ellison, 1983), suggesting earlier origins to the medieval manor complex, the name and the 'traditional' association with the Saxon 'royal palace' probably date only from the 19th century. However, until the manor site is archaeologically investigated or the Saxon site is discovered, the association cannot be dismissed.

The defined area is from the 1840 map.

SPE/304, SPE/404, SPE/405

The Rectory

The Rectory estate, which belonged to Bruton from the 12th century until the Dissolution, was probably the successor of the minster estate and the predecessor of the post-Dissolution Hele manor (see below, p10). There is some suggestion that it may also contain the site of the Saxon 'palace' (see above, p6). This is not impossible, since the original minster holding may have been "carved out of the royal holding" (Dunning, 1978), but it remains unproven.

Very little is known of the exact location and character of any buildings which attached to the medieval estate, except for a mill and barn (SPE/405), though there are also references to an as yet unlocated church house. Local tradition suggests that Holbrook's Place (SMR LB 56838), on North Street, was for a time the parsonage (Dunning, 1978) and it may be that there was never a manor house on the land itself. Early 17th century descriptions state that there was certainly then no house, but only a barn: this building, of early 16th century date, was demolished in the 19th century (though it does appear on the Tithe Map), and a stone carrying its coat of arms incorporated into the new vicarage (Dunning, 1978).

The Rectory estate included a mill (SMR 53431) by the early 14th century. In the post-medieval period the mill, which had passed to the Crown, was let as Canon or Cannons Mill; there are references to it in the 16th and 17th centuries, but it probably went out of use in the 18th century. The Tithe Map shows a field called Little Mill Orchard, which is included in the marked area.

The possible area in which the Rectory manor house may have been is from Dunning (1978); the mill site is also based on information from the SMR and the 1840 map.

SPE/504

Hele

The manor of Hele was created after the Dissolution from the lands of the Rectory estate. 18th century descriptions of the manor house on Hele Lane suggest that it was built in the 16th century, possibly replacing the Rectory manor house (if one existed). They also refer to offices, stables, a walled garden, fishponds, a farm house and orchards (Dunning, 1978). The complex is shown on the early 19th century maps, though much of it was demolished in the 1860s.

Early 14th century references to the farm of John Heyle or Hale suggest that this site was previously occupied by a (fairly small) medieval farm (Dunning, 1978).

The area is defined from the 1840 map and Dunning (1978).

4.4.e   Burial sites, religious houses and places of worship
For the medieval churchyard see p7.

SPE/406   The possible site of the Chapel of St John
                 The chapel of St John was endowed by King John in the 13th century. References to the property
                 continue until the 19th century, but the exact location of the chapel itself has not been securely
                 established. The SMR contains an entry for the "Chapel Field" (SMR 53444), some way south
                 of the town. However, 15th century references place the chapel near the town, and the SMR entry
                 also suggests a location north of Hayes End, a suggestion which accords with that of Dunning
                 (1978).

                 *The site north of Hayes End is defined from Dunning (1978) and information in the SMR. The
                 Chapel Field is from the SMR.*

4.4.f   Settlement (Urban)
(a)   Commercial core
(i)   Market place(s)
SPE/407   The Market Place
                 The market place in South Petherton is not large, though it is possible that the early market area
                 was much larger before medieval and post-medieval encroachments occurred (see below). The
                 core of the market, in front of the (minster) church, has survived, but has itself been considerably
                 encroached upon over the centuries. Documented early features within this area include the
                 shambles (on the north side), a common oven and a market house (replaced in the 19th century),
                 which formed part of an encroaching central block of houses and shops. There also used to be a
                 market cross (SMR 53419), which was removed in the 1830s.

                 The market place shown is that which survives in 1996.

SPE/408   Possible early market areas
                 Dunning (1978) and Ellison (1983) both suggest that the original market place may have been
                 substantially larger than that which remained by the time of the earliest maps. Their suggestions
                 differ, but both make sense of certain elements of the street plan. Dunning suggests that an area
                 west and north of the modern market originally lay open, with Crown Lane as the north-western
                 exit: encroachment onto this space encouraged the realignment of the western exit (West Street)
                 and isolated Crown Lane. Ellison, on the other hand, suggests a much larger original market place
                 running north-south through the town: encroachment onto this space thus effectively created the
                 commercial centre on St James's Street (which flanked the original market).

                 Neither of these theories has been tested archaeologically, though they are eminently testable,
                 should the analysis of dateable sequences of deposits in the areas concerned become possible.

                 The marked areas are from Dunning (1978) and Ellison (1983).

(ii)   Other town plots
SPE/409   St James Street south-west
                 This area, which lies south of the market and east of the church, appears on the early 19th century
                 maps to contain irregular infill between the churchyard and the road, and encroachment onto the
                 market place. This corner of the settlement has been much affected by changes in the road
                 network and in the market place, however, and it is difficult to extrapolate from the 19th century
                 maps to the archaeology. It should be borne in mind that the proximity of this area to the
                 churchyard raises the possibility that it may at some point have been used for burials (though there
                 is as yet no evidence for this).

                 From the 1807 and 1840 maps.

SPE/410   St James Street east

Of the property blocks in South Petherton, this is the one which on the 19th century maps bears the closest resemblance to a typical, intensively occupied medieval burgage area. South Petherton was not a borough, but it was nevertheless by the post-medieval period a thriving market town, with St James Street (which may have formed one side of the original market area: see above) increasingly forming its commercial hub. The block contains a Listed (largely rebuilt) 17th century inn (SMR LB 56835) and 18th century shop (SMR LB 56857).

Whether earlier occupation - extending back to the Saxon period - was of a similar character to that depicted in the 19th century is a question which archaeology may be able to address. Though the extent of archaeological survival, particularly along the frontages, has not yet been ascertained, the back stream may have helped to preserve pits and (perhaps) structures.

From the 1840 map.

SPE/411   North Street/ St James's Street

This area between the market and the medieval manor was certainly developed by the 16th century when the nucleus of the Grade II* Listed Court House (SMR LB 56839), which may have been used as the manor house after the sale of King Ina's Palace, was built. It also includes a building which may have been the parsonage and/ or the capital messuage of Southarp manor - Holbrook's Place or Higher House (SMR LB 56838). However, the overall pattern of development of this area is unclear.

The extent of archaeological survival in this area is not known. The stream to the east may have enhanced preservation to the rear of the block.

From the 1840 map.

(b)   Margins and suburbs

SPE/412   North Street

This area seems from the early 19th century maps to have contained by the end of the post-medieval period scattered developments of a semi-rural character, small scale and with extensive grounds. Only at the southern end of the street does occupation appear more intensive. Little specific is known of the character of occupation in North Street before the 19th century, when two chapels, (one surviving as SMR LB 56820) and a smithy are mapped, and no Listable structures predating the late 18th century survive. There is, however, a possibility that some medieval or post-medieval structures may survive in an area which is still relatively open.

From the 1840 map.

SPE/414   South Street

South Street may have been a deliberate creation of the medieval period to avoid the ford on the Hele Lane/ Church Path route (Dunning, 1978); there are documentary references to properties there by the late medieval period, and the name itself occurs in the 1630s. The early 19th century maps show that by this period the area was occupied by a number of farms, cottages and other houses, with a separate nucleus around the northern junction. A Listed farmhouse (South Farmhouse, SMR LB 56849-50) survives from c1700. The area may contain the remains of a number of other post-medieval or medieval buildings, though the intensity of earlier occupation is unclear.

From the 1807 and 1840 maps.

SPE/416   The eastern closes

The pattern of development in these areas appears on the early 19th century maps to be somewhat similar to that of South Street, with a nucleus at the road junction supplemented by Lightgate Farm

and a number of other properties. There is no evidence as yet that occupation dates to the medieval period, but a number of Listed 17th- and 18th-century houses and cottages survive. The remains of other post-medieval (or possible medieval) structures may survive.

A hoard of 15th and 16th century coins (SMR 53448) believed to have been buried during the Civil War was found in the 19th century in Prigg Lane (Silver Street).

From the 1807 and 1840 maps.

SPE/503   The Vicarage
There is nor record of house or glebe being attached to the vicarage in the medieval period. However, references do occur from the 17th century onwards. The area shown represents land accumulated mainly at the very end of the post-medieval period (the early 18th century). A vicarage house existed by 1626 and was extended or possibly rebuilt in the 18th century. The Old Vicarage (SMR LB 56809) replaced it in the mid 19th century, incorporating the coat of arms stone from the old Rectory barn.

From the 1840 map.

SPE/505   West Street
It is possible that West Street represents a realignment of an earlier route. The properties there (themselves of probable post-medieval or earlier origin, and including at least one Listed Building of 18th century or earlier date - SMR LB 56865, 56868) may on the north side either overlie an earlier street line or back onto it. The area requires evaluation to determine the extent and character of the archaeological deposits.

From Dunning (1978) and the 1840 map.

SPE/506   Palmer Street
Palmer Street is believed to have been developed as a prestigious suburb in the post-medieval period, partially overlying earlier settlement areas and road lines (and possible following the line of the Saxon boundary ditch). It was well built up by the early 19th century and still contains a number of Listed Buildings of 17th century and later origin even though many of the properties were replaced with suburban "villas" in the 19th century. The post-medieval and 19th century developments included both suburban residences and farms; on the south side of the road, a number of plots were cleared in the later 19th century and the land attached to Rock Farm.

Palmer Street's archaeology is of importance for the understanding of the limits of the Saxon settlement and the medieval town.

From the 1840 map.

SPE/507   Crown Lane north
This area, which appears to have lain open until relatively recently, is said to have contained visible evidence of the Saxon ditch line (Aston, unpub.) and may contain important archaeological deposits relating to the early settlement. Further documentary research might clarify the history of the land; archaeological evaluation is required to determine the extent to which significant archaeological deposits may have survived the modern development.

From the 1840 map.

4.4.g   Settlement (Rural)
(a)   Farms
SPE/415   Hayes End
At Hayes End, on a site apparently enclosed from the medieval open field and fronting South

Street's back lane, there survives a (much-altered) Grade II* Listed house (SMR LB 56786), which is of medieval origin according to the List, but may be later (Dunning, 1978). This is now accompanied by 19th century farm buildings which are themselves Listed (SMR 56787-9). Further research might clarify the history and potential of this site which may contain the remains of further post-medieval or medieval buildings.

From the 1840 map and the List.

4.4.h   Industrial sites (mills)

SPE/413   North Mills

References to two mills (not including the Rectory mill) at South Petherton occur from the 13th century onwards; in the 14th century they were both held by the Moleyns family. North Mills (Shutlers Mill), which was known as Moleynsmyll in the 16th century, can be fairly securely identified with one of these, whilst the other is Joyler's Mill (see below, p15). By 1659 it was referred to as North Mills, a water grist mill. The extent of archaeological survival of the early mill(s) has not yet been ascertained.

The 19th century mill complex was extensive, consisting of the house, a bakehouse, two grist mills, a bolting mill and a stable. The Listed house (SMR LB 56805) and mill (SMR LB 56806, of 18th or 19th century date) still stand, though milling ceased some time after the Second World War.

Defined from the SMR and the 1840 map.

See also p4 (the Rectory mill)

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

4.5.a   Communications: Roads, streets and routeways

SPE/401, SPE/502

                 Pre-1800 roads
                 See above, p9.

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

SPE/406   Possible site of St John's Chapel
                 See above, p11.

4.5.c   Settlement (Rural)

SPE/417   Watergore

The settlement at Watergore contains Listed farms and cottages (SMR LB 56801, 56803) of 17th and 18th century origin. However, references to Watergore occur in the 15th century and the settlement may therefore also contain the remains of medieval buildings.

From Dunning (1978) and the 1840 map.

SPE/508   Little Petherton

Little Petherton existed as a small roadside settlement by the early 17th century (Dunning, 1978).

From Dunning (1978) and the 1840 map.

SPE/509   Pitway

Pitway developed as a wasteland settlement by the early 17th century (Dunning, 1978). By the early 19th century it was intensively occupied - though this intensity may have been relatively recent, connected with the limestone quarrying activities of the 19th century.

From the 1807 and 1840 maps.

SPE/510   Moor
                 Moor is a post-medieval farm settlement with possible earlier origins (there are a number of references to medieval landholding at Moor in Dunning, 1978). The settlement includes a Listed 17th century cottage (SMR LB 56800) and may contain the archaeological remains of medieval or post-medieval farm or other buildings.

                 From the 1807 and 1840 maps.

SPE/512   Droveway
                 Settlement at Droveway by the end of the post-medieval period consisted of a number of cottages. The extent of earlier occupation is unknown.

                 From the 1807 and 1840 maps.

SPE/511   Other unclassified sites
                 A small number of other plots around South Petherton may contain the remains of post-medieval (or possible earlier) buildings.

                 From the 1807 and 1840 maps.

4.5.d   Industrial sites
(a)   Mills
SPE/419   Joyler's Mill
                 Joyler's Mill is certainly of at least medieval origin, and its history is well-documented (see Dunning, 1978). There are documentary references to not only a mill but also an attached house, hall, chapel, kitchens, farm and fishery in the 14th century, and to a dovecote in the 16th century. These suggest an extensive and prosperous complex of buildings in the medieval and post-medieval periods, and indeed the property is described as a 'manor' in the 16th century (Dunning, 1978). No structures earlier than the 19th century now survive, however, and the extent to which archaeological remains may survive has not yet been assessed.

                 The Listed 19th century mill and house (SMR LB 56799) are themselves of interest. Though milling ceased c1930, and much of the leat system has now been filled in, the undershot wheel and some of the machinery still survive.

                 From the 1807 and 1840 maps and the SMR.

(b)   Other industrial sites
SPE/513   The brickworks
                 A small brickyard was in existence by 1807.

                 From the 1807 map.

4.5.e   Agricultural sites
SPE/418   Mere Lynches
                 The lynchets (SMR 53424) below Stoodham are of medieval origin.

                 From the SMR.

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

5.1   Archaeological work in the town/ Archaeological knowledge
There has been little study of the archaeology of 19th century South Petherton.

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. South Petherton 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.

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.

South Petherton 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

A number of Listed Buildings of 19th century origin exist in South Petherton. These are all Grade II and are mostly spread out along the 'suburban' streets, though they also include farm and industrial (mill) buildings. The churchyard also contains a number of Listed 18th and 19th century tombs.

5.4   Archaeological components, *shown on* Map E

5.4.a   Redevelopment in earlier settlement components

There was considerable rebuilding in the 19th century, more than is implied by the distribution of Listed Buildings. However, there were no major redevelopments and no medieval/ post-medieval settlement components have been redefined for this period. Components described under earlier periods are shown more lightly shaded.

All mapped elements are from the 1887 and 1904 maps.

5.4.b   Communications: Roads, streets and routeways

SPE/604   The turnpikes
                 From the mid-18th century onwards, South Petherton was served by turnpikes adopted by a number of trusts. The old prehistoric route (see above, p4) was adopted by the Ilminster turnpike trust in 1758-9 but was abandoned in the early 19th century. Atkins Gate tollhouse (SMR 53440) was situated on the Martock road.

                 From Bentley & Murless (1985) and the SMR.

SPE/607   Other 19th century roads

                 From the 1840 map.

5.4.c   Water

SPE/608   The chalybeate spring
                 A chalybeate spring (SMR 53447) existed on Hele Lane.

                 From the 1887 map and the SMR.

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

SPE/602   The cemetery
                 The cemetery was established on the edge of town by the main road in the second half of the 19th century and expanded before 1904.

5.4.e   Settlement

SPE/601   Development on the main road
                 A narrow strip of unclassified development skirted the main road east and west of Watergore.

SPE/605   Farms and unclassified plots
                 Small scale expansion occurred near Pitway, Moor, and Little Petherton. Some of this was
                 suburban in character, but much was farm development.

5.4.f   Industrial sites

SPE/603   The brickworks
                 The Reyland Brickworks (SMR 53443) expanded in the 19th century, though they were disused
                 by 1903. Another brickworks (SMR 53429) is shown on the other side of Pitway.

                 From the 1887 map and the SMR.

SPE/606   Gravel pits, quarries and limekilns
                 A number of small pits and quarries existed, quarrying Petherton stone (limestone) and gravel.
                 Associated with them are limekiln sites, such as SMR 53432.

                 From the 19th century maps and the SMR.

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. South Petherton 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   Standing structures and visible remains
There are two Listed 20th century structures, a road sign (SMR LB 56784) and a K6 telephone kiosk (SMR LB 56807).

6.3   Settlement components, *shown on* Map F
6.3.a   Redevelopment in earlier settlement components
There has been continuing suburban development at South Petherton, and this has included a development south of the church for which a new component has been defined across those described under earlier periods (shown more lightly shaded).

All mapped components are from the 1996 OS digital maps.

6.3.b   Communications: Roads, streets and routeways
SPE/706   The A303

6.3.c   Burial sites, religious houses and places of worship
SPE/702   Cemetery extension

6.3.d   Settlement (Urban): Suburbs
SPE/701   Suburbs
                 There has been a moderate amount of suburban growth around South Petherton's historic core,
                 mostly on greenfield sites. However, the development to the south of the church may have
                 affected medieval or earlier archaeological deposits.

6.3.e   Settlement (Rural)
(a)   Farms
SPE/703   20th century farms

(b)   Unclassified
SPE/704   Unclassified plots

6.3.f   Industrial sites
SPE/705   Industrial sites

V.   THE POTENTIAL OF SOUTH PETHERTON

1. Research interests
The most obvious question of interest in South Petherton concerns the establishment of the existence and location of a specific site, the supposed Saxon royal palace. However, this is only part of a broader interest in the relationships between the iron age, Roman, Saxon and medieval settlement foci and prestige sites in and around the modern village.

2. Areas of potentially exceptional preservation
A number of streams and leats in the area may offer good preservation of deposits, particularly on the south side of the town in the meadowland. Should it be the case that the Saxon 'palace' was located between the church and Hele, in subsequently undeveloped land, it may survive in good condition.

3. Limitations
A considerable amount of small scale 19th and 20th century development may have damaged Saxon and medieval remains in the historic core.

4. Extent of current protection
(shown on Map G)
There is a number of Listed Buildings in South Petherton, but no Scheduled Monuments. An Area of High Archaeological Potential has been defined as a result of this survey and there is a Conservation Area.

5. Management Proposals
See the Archaeological Guidance Document.

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3. Maps

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1840   South Petherton Tithe Map: fiche in SSL
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VII.   COMPONENT INDEXES

1. Component to map

Component	Map	Component	Map
SPE/101	A	SPE/408	C
SPE/102	A	SPE/409	C
SPE/201	A	SPE/410	C
SPE/202	A	SPE/411	C
SPE/203	A	SPE/412	C
SPE/301	B	SPE/413	C
SPE/302	B	SPE/414	C,D
SPE/303	B	SPE/415	C
SPE/304	B	SPE/416	C
SPE/401	C,D	SPE/417	D
SPE/402	C,D	SPE/418	D
SPE/403	C	SPE/419	D
SPE/404	C	SPE/501	C
SPE/405	C	SPE/502	C,D
SPE/406	C,D	SPE/503	C
SPE/407	C	SPE/504	C

SPE/505	C	SPE/604	E
SPE/506	C	SPE/605	E
SPE/507	C	SPE/606	E
SPE/508	D	SPE/607	E
SPE/509	D	SPE/608	E
SPE/510	D	SPE/701	F
SPE/511	D	SPE/702	F
SPE/512	D	SPE/703	F
SPE/513	D	SPE/704	F
SPE/601	E	SPE/705	F
SPE/602	E	SPE/706	F
SPE/603	E		

2. Component to page

Maps

Map A – prehistoric and Roman

Map B – Saxon

Map C – Medieval and post-medieval core

Map D – Medieval and post-medieval wider area
Earlier components in yellow.

Map E – 19th century
Earlier components in yellow.

Map F – 20th century
Earlier components in yellow.

Map G - Existing designations
Key: Scheduled Monuments   (dark blue, none),
            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)

SPE/102 - Stoodham

SPE/202 - Roman Villa Sites

SPE/203 - Roman Coin Finds

SPE/101 - Prehistoric Trackway

SPE/202 - Roman Villa Sites

SPE/201 - Foss Way

SOUTH PETHERTON CP
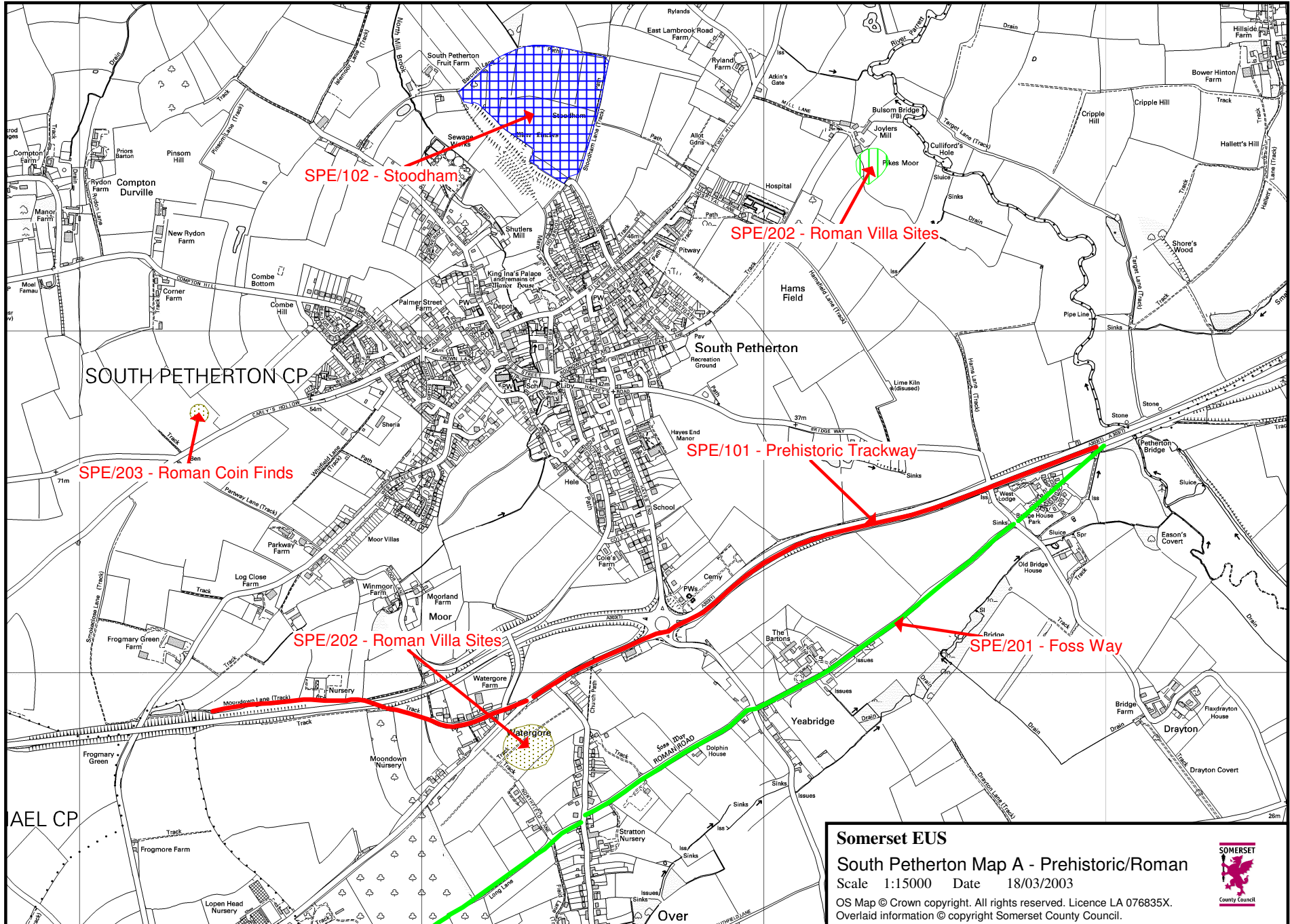
South Petherton

Somerset EUS

South Petherton Map A - Prehistoric/Roman

Scale 1:15000   Date   18/03/2003

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SOMERSET
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King Ina's Palace and remains of Manor House
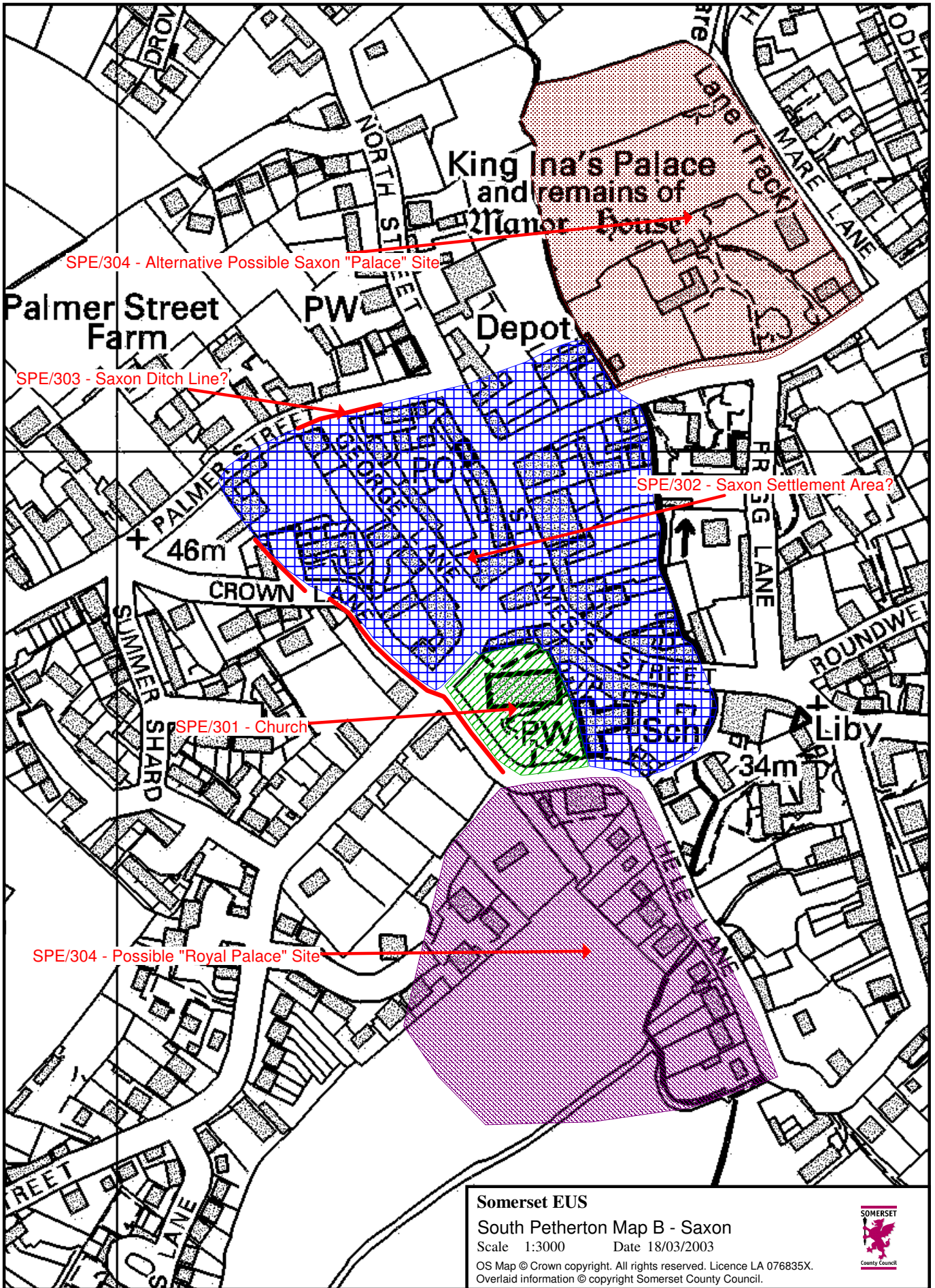
SPE/304 - Alternative Possible Saxon "Palace" Site

Palmer Street Farm

PW

Depot

SPE/303 - Saxon Ditch Line?

NORTH STREET

PALMER STREET

+ 46m

CROWN

SUMMER

SHARD

SPE/302 - Saxon Settlement Area?

SPE/301 - Church

PW

Sch

FROG LANE

ROUNDWE

Liby

34m +

SPE/304 - Possible "Royal Palace" Site
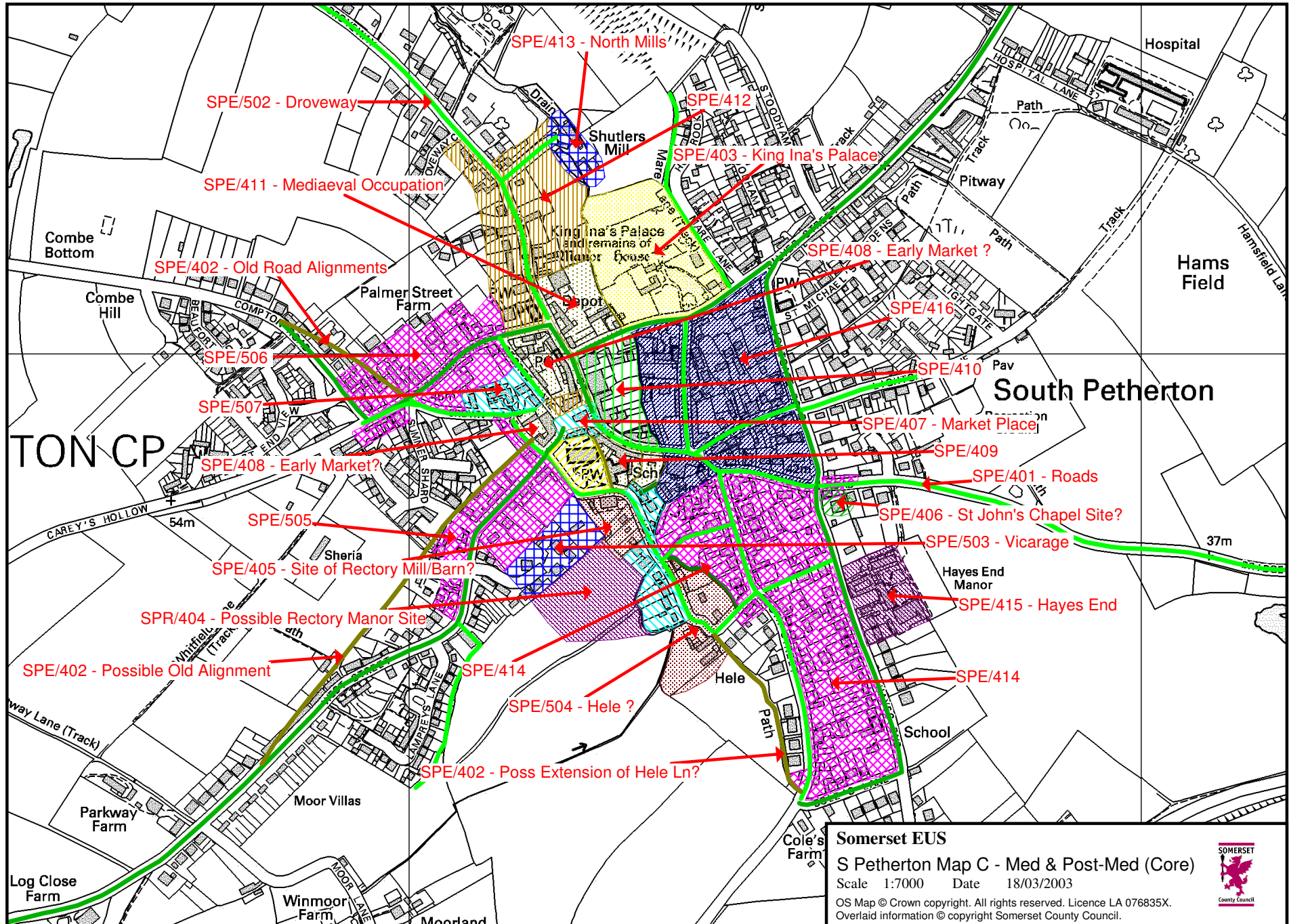
MARE LANE

Lane (Track)

Somerset EUS

South Petherton Map B - Saxon

Scale   1:3000   Date 18/03/2003

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SOMERSET
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SPE/413 - North Mills

SPE/502 - Droveway

SPE/412

SPE/403 - King Ina's Palace

SPE/411 - Mediaeval Occupation

SPE/408 - Early Market ?

SPE/402 - Old Road Alignments

SPE/416

SPE/506

SPE/410

SPE/507

SPE/407 - Market Place

SPE/408 - Early Market?

SPE/409

SPE/401 - Roads

SPE/505

SPE/406 - St John's Chapel Site?

SPE/503 - Vicarage

SPE/405 - Site of Rectory Mill/Barn?

SPE/415 - Hayes End

SPR/404 - Possible Rectory Manor Site

SPE/402 - Possible Old Alignment

SPE/414

SPE/414

SPE/504 - Hele ?

SPE/402 - Poss Extension of Hele Ln?

Combe Bottom

Combe Hill

Palmer Street Farm

TON CP

King Ina's Palace and remains of Manor House

South Petherton

Hams Field

Hospital

Pitway

Hayes End Manor

Sheria

Hele

School

Cole's Farm

Moor Villas

Parkway Farm

Log Close Farm

Winmoor Farm

Moorland

Somerset EUS

S Petherton Map C - Med & Post-Med (Core)

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SOMERSET County Council

SPE/513 - Brickworks

SPE/418 - Mere Lynches

SPE/419 - Joylers Mill

SPE/512 - Droveway

SPE/502 - Pre-1800 Roads

SPE/509 - Pitway

SPE/401 - Pre-1800 Roads

South Petherton

SOUTH PETHERTON CP

SPE/406 - Chapel Field

SPE/508 - Little Petherton

SPE/510 - Moor

SPE/417 - Watergore
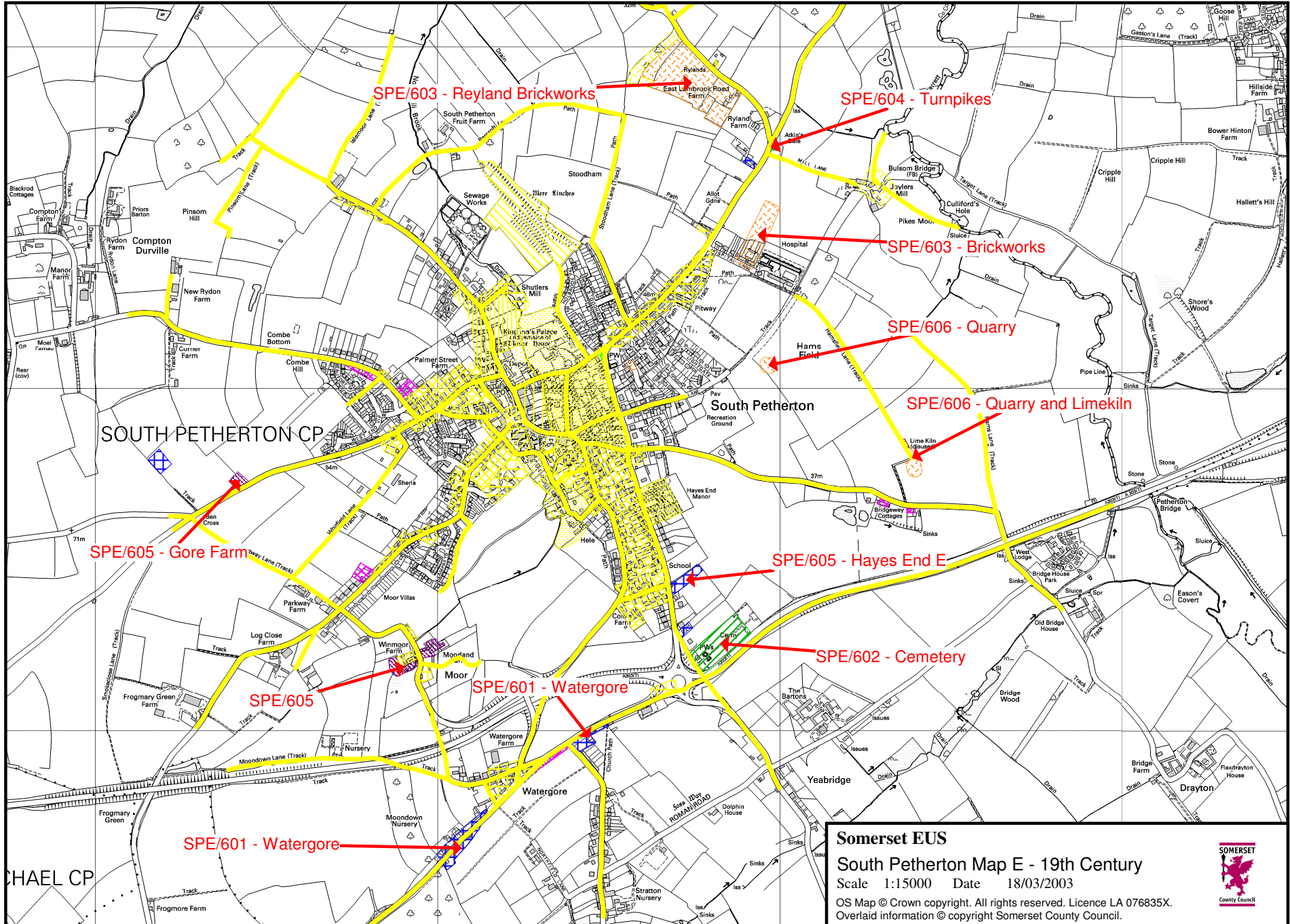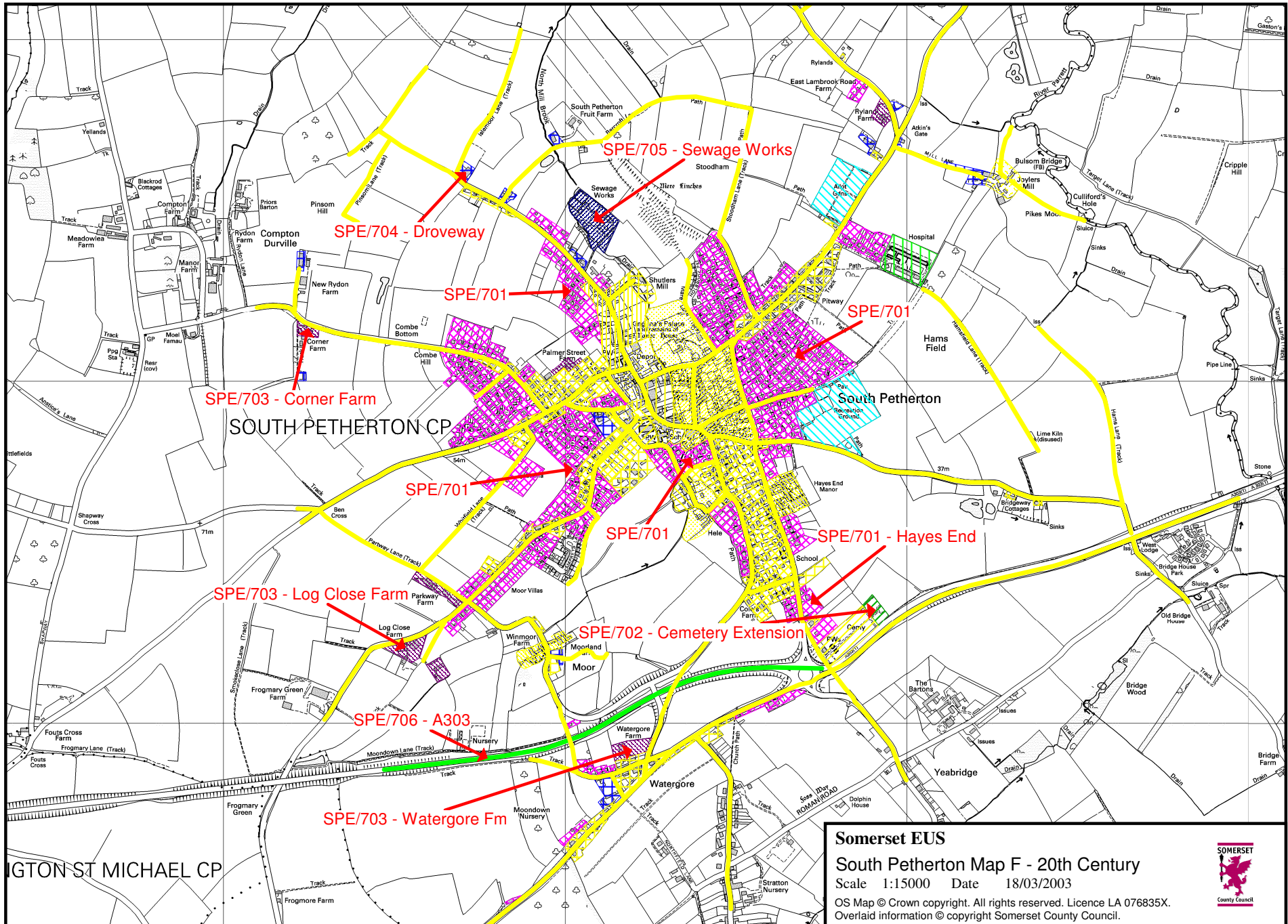
Somerset EUS

South Petherton Map D - Med & Post-Med

Scale 1:13000   Date   18/03/2003

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SOMERSET
County Council

SPE/603 - Reyland Brickworks

SPE/604 - Turnpikes

SPE/603 - Brickworks

SPE/606 - Quarry

SPE/606 - Quarry and Limekiln

SOUTH PETHERTON CP

South Petherton

SPE/605 - Gore Farm

SPE/605 - Hayes End E

SPE/602 - Cemetery

SPE/605

SPE/601 - Watergore

SPE/601 - Watergore

CHAEL CP

Somerset EUS

South Petherton Map E - 19th Century

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SOMERSET
County Council

SPE/705 - Sewage Works

SPE/704 - Droveway

SPE/701

SPE/701

SPE/703 - Corner Farm

SOUTH PETHERTON CP

Hams Field

South Petherton

SPE/701

SPE/701

SPE/701 - Hayes End

SPE/703 - Log Close Farm

SPE/702 - Cemetery Extension

SPE/706 - A303

SPE/703 - Watergore Fm

IGTON ST MICHAEL CP

Somerset EUS

South Petherton Map F - 20th Century

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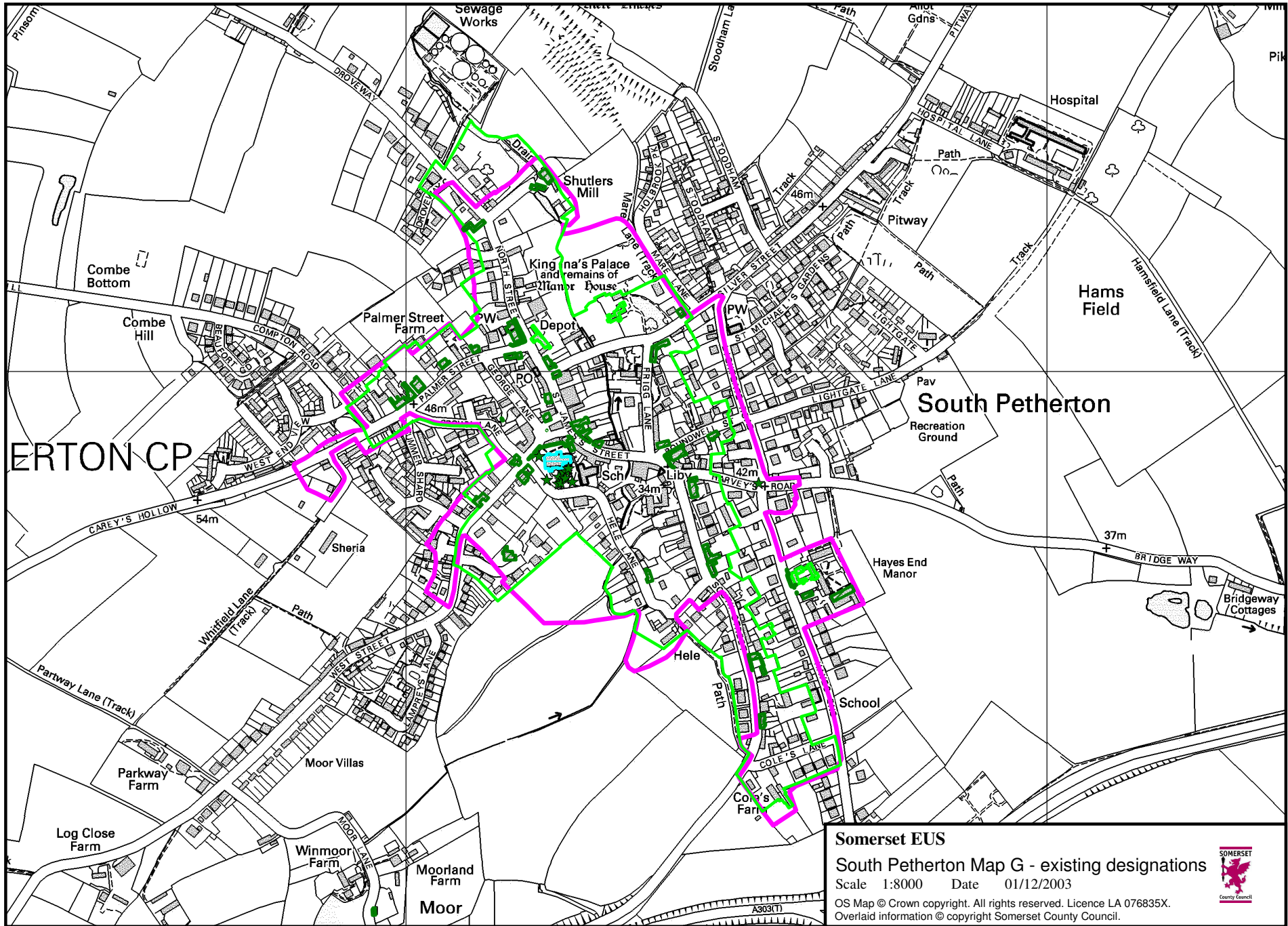Overlaid information © copyright Somerset County Council.

SOMERSET
County Council

Sewage
Works

Shutlers
Mill

Combe
Bottom

Combe
Hill

Palmer Street
Farm

King Ina's Palace
and remains of
Manor House

Depot

Hospital

Hams
Field

Pitway

Path

ERTON CP

South Petherton

Recreation
Ground

Sch

Lib

Sheria

Hayes End
Manor

37m

BRIDGE WAY

Bridgeway
Cottages

Hele

Moor Villas

School

Whitfield Lane (Track)

Path

Partway Lane (Track)

Parkway
Farm

Cole's
Farm

Log Close
Farm

Winmoor
Farm

Moorland
Farm

Moor

SOMERSET
County Council