

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT
OF SLADNOR PARK,
MAIDENCOMBE, TORQUAY**

**Prepared for
Barchester Care Villages Ltd**

DRAFT

Exeter Archaeology

Report No. 05.00

December 2005

CONTENTS

1. Introduction	1
1.1 Aims and objectives of the assessment	1
1.2 Method and sources utilised	1
1.3 The site	1
1.4 Statutory and other designations	1
2. Archaeological and historical background	2
2.1 Archaeological background	2
2.2 Historical background	2
3. Sites of archaeological and historical interest	7
3.1 Within the site boundary	7
3.2 In the vicinity of the site	9
4. Discussion	10
Acknowledgements	10
Sources consulted	11

List of illustrations

- Fig. 1 Location of the site
- Fig. 2 Location of the 16 identified sites of potential archaeological interest and the approximate position of field boundaries and the carriage drive shown on earlier mapping.
- Fig. 3 Extract from the Ordnance Survey 3-inch Drawing No. 38, surveyed in 1802-04, with no structures visible on the site.
- Fig. 4 Extract from C. & G. Greenwood's 1827 *Map of the County of Devon*, enlarged to two inches to the mile, which appears to show the site as still undeveloped.
- Fig. 5 The site in 1843 (Stokeinteignhead Tithe Map reduced to 1:1500).
- Fig. 6 The site in 1890 (Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map sheets CXVI.2 and 6).
- Fig. 7 The site in 1933 (Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map sheets CXVI.2 and 6, reduced to 1:3500).
- Fig. 8 Lithograph of drawing by T. H. Williams captioned 'STADNOR (*sic*) near Torquay, DEVON / The Seat of the Rev^d E^d (*sic*) Webb'.
- Plate 1 The site of the house in November 2005. View looking south-west.
- Plate 2 The gazebo or folly, looking north, November 2005.
- Plate 3 The gazebo or folly, looking south, also showing one of the collapsed arches of the annex, November 2005.
- Plate 4 The stable and coach house, viewed looking north-west, November 2005.
- Plate 5 The view looking north-west across the park, November 2005.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared by Exeter Archaeology at the request of Meedhurst Project Management Ltd to assess the archaeological implications of any development of Sladnor Park, off Teignmouth Road, Torquay, in advance of the submission of a planning application.

1.1 Aims and objectives of the assessment

The assessment forms the initial archaeological component of the project and comprises the results of a desktop survey and field visit. The aims are to, as far as possible, identify the archaeological potential of the application site and to determine the impact of any proposed development. The results of this assessment will be used to inform the planning process; further recommendations may be made in respect of any archaeological mitigation.

The work was undertaken in accordance with a brief supplied by the Torbay Council Archaeology and Historic Environment Officer,¹

1.2 Method and sources utilised

The report has been compiled in accordance with the guidance notes in PPG16 *Archaeology and Planning* (November 1990). The assessment therefore comprises an examination of locally available, cartographic, photographic and documentary sources and has included the following:

- Examination of records and sources held in the Torbay Council Sites and Monuments Register and Devon County Council Historic Environment Record.
- Examination of 1946 RAF vertical air photographs.
- Study of historic maps and other sources in the Devon Record Office, Westcountry Studies Library, Torquay Local Studies Library and Devon & Exeter Institution
- Rapid walk-over/site inspection.

1.3 The site (centred at SX92246824, (Fig. 1))

The site is of an irregular shape and occupies some 50 acres to the east of Teignmouth Road, around the head of an eastward facing coombe. The northern boundary is with Sladnor Park Road, the north-easterly with a field, the eastern is formed largely by Brim Hill and the southern by Rock House Lane.

The geology of the area consists of the Teignmouth Breccia, giving rise to a soil ascribed to the Shaldon series of loamy and gravelly brown earths, where mixed farming has predominated, but with the steep slopes limiting arable cultivation.²

1.4 Statutory and other designations

No statutory designations have been identified on the actual site. The listed buildings in the vicinity comprise Brimhill Villa, Court House, Maidencombe Farmhouse and Rock House (where Rudyard Kipling lived briefly), including its gate piers and gazebo, all at Grade II.³

¹ Torbay Council 2005a.

² Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales) 1:50000 map sheet 339, Newton Abbot, Solid and Drift Edition, 1976; Clayden, B. 1971, 55.

³ Department of National Heritage 1994, 66, 291, 293, 322.

Both the Watcombe Park and Maidencombe Conservation Areas adjoin the site.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Archaeological background

Mr Eric Dudley, an amateur archaeologist, undertook limited archaeological recording of the house, gazebo and coach house in the winter of 1980–81, depositing his notes in what was then the Devon County Sites and Monuments Register.⁴ The only formal archaeological intervention in the locality to have been identified is an assessment of Maidencombe Farm carried out in 2003.⁵

There are records of chance finds of artefacts in the general area of Maidencombe, including a hand axe, a Bronze Age flint arrowhead and a sherd of Iron Age pottery,⁶ suggestive of some form of human activity in the general area during the later prehistoric period.

2.2 Historical background

2.2.1 *The Manor of Maidencombe*

The first mention of the existence of Maidencombe is to be found in the Domesday survey. In 1086 *Medenecome* was a very small manor held by Bernard under Baldwin the Sheriff.⁷ The only personnel named were one slave, one villein and two bordars (smallholders); there was only one plough present, although there was land for three, which suggests an area of around 300 acres of arable.

Maidencombe was located at the southern extremity of a detached portion of Wonford hundred, extending the length of the Teign estuary, and made up of eleven manors, four of them held by Baldwin. It may be that this had comprised a Middle Saxon multiple estate. When the parochial system finally emerged, probably in the 12th century, Maidencombe became part of Stokeinteignhead parish, in which it remained until the coastal strip extending up to Shaldon was transferred to Torquay under the Devon Review Order of 1935.⁸

Although a small manor, in the 13th century it was divided, with Warin fitz Joel and Peter de la Pole both assessed at half a fee.⁹ Subsequent owners were the Tregoz, Bittellesgate, Knollys, Woodvill, Speccot and Arscott families.¹⁰ These would probably have been absentee owners; the earliest suggestion of a high-status residence within the manor is the licence granted by Bishop Grandisson to Ralph Tregoz in 1330 for an oratory at his property (*Mansum*) in *Medenecombe*. However, no-one of that family was taxed in Stokeinteignhead two years later.¹¹

⁴ In Stokeinteignhead parish file.

⁵ Exeter Archaeology 2003.

⁶ Pateman 1991, 305.

⁷ Thorn & Thorn 1985, 16, 126.

⁸ *Kelly's Directory of Devonshire 1939*, 720.

⁹ Whale 1898, 231.

¹⁰ Pole 1791, 250; DRO Calendar: 123M/TB472.

¹¹ Hingeston-Randolph (ed.) 1894, 591. Erskine (ed.) 1969, 53.

An inquisition in 1580 held at Holsworthy following the death of Humfrey Arscott referred to his having held a portion of Maidencombe of Humfrey Speccott, worth £3, as well as other lands in the parish, held of Richard Champernon, worth £7 10s.¹² This suggests that by then land was being held wherever convenient, outside the manorial boundaries.

In 1683 the extensive Speccott lands, comprising some 12 manors, including both Maidencombe and Stokeinteignhead, along with estates in 14 other parishes were partitioned,¹³ which means a complicated subsequent history. It appears that one quarter eventually passed to Thomas Hyne of Aller and three-quarters to the Trelawney family of Henger in Cornwall; the former passing to the Hole family through a marriage and the latter being sold to Thomas Fisher.¹⁴

A poor rate book survives for the parish, covering the years from 1619 to 1668, with the taxpayers being divided geographically.¹⁵ In the first year there were seven named at Maidencombe, who paid amounts varying from the 4s paid by Christopher Melbery down to 7d. There were more ratepayers during the intervening years, fourteen in 1641, but by 1668 there were again seven entries, with Christopher Melbery, presumably a descendant, still paying 4s; there were four payments between 2s 5d and 1s 8d, with the two lowest payments being 4d and 6d. An unusual entry during the middle years of the book had been the very high payment of 40s paid by ‘The Worshipful Mr Treasurer’, identifiable as Robert Hall, who combined the roles of Treasurer of Exeter Cathedral, Archdeacon of Cornwall and Rector of Stokeinteignhead. This suggests that there was also during this period a high-status residence at Maidencombe, presumably at Courthouse, but this is some two centuries before the attractiveness of the area was generally recognised.

In 1731 the Trelawney family’s three-quarter share of the manor was leased to Thomas Fisher prior to his full purchase. The lease listed the properties, some of which extended beyond Maidencombe into Gabwell and Rocombe.¹⁶ There were five tenements listed, two of them by name: ‘Courthouse’, in the possession of William Lang, and ‘Maidencombe’, lately in the possession of James Shilson[?]; the others were merely said to be in Maidencombe and were in the possession of Elizabeth Cade, Elias Blackaller and John Lang. These may perhaps be represented by the five properties rated at more than one shilling in 1668.

A series of churchwardens’ accounts with church rates survives from 1753 until 1813,¹⁷ but only the earliest rate was divided geographically; this named only Ringmore, ‘Stock Town’, Higher and Lower Gabwell and Higher and Lower Rocombe; it appears that Maidencombe was included under Higher Gabwell.

In 1793 the Reverend Richard Polwhele wrote that Maidencombe consisted of five farmhouses, but it is not possible to identify them with total confidence.¹⁸ In 1784 the freehold of three tenements in Maidencombe had been advertised,¹⁹ suggesting that manorial rights were no longer exercised. These comprised Milberries, of about 33 acres, Courthouse, of about 44 acres, and Lang’s, of about 36 acres. All were said to have been occupied by Mr

¹² Inquisitions Post Mortem, Westcountry Studies Library.

¹³ DRO calendar: deed 240M/T1.

¹⁴ DRO deeds 48/16/1/12, 48/2/12 & 401M/T37.

¹⁵ DRO 3420A/PO1.

¹⁶ DRO 48/2/12.

¹⁷ DRO 3420A/PW1.

¹⁸ Polwhele 1793 Vol. 2, 142.

¹⁹ *Trewman’s Exeter Flying Post* 23.9.1784 2d.

Elias Blackaller, as a yearly tenant, and to have had an unlimited right of common and turbary upon Maidencombe. It seems that it was Mr Blackaller who purchased them, as in 1822 the Lysons brothers wrote of the manor of Maidencombe being ‘now the property of Elias Blackaller, John Blackaller, and others’.²⁰ The family’s name is commemorated on today’s maps in the form of Blackaller’s Cove, some 400m north of Maidencombe Beach.

The first Ordnance Survey drawing, surveyed in 1802-04 at three inches to the mile (Fig. 3), showed Maidencombe as Minicombe, a hamlet around Rock House Lane and Steep Hill, surrounded by orchards, an indication of the importance of cider to the local economy.²¹

The most detailed record to have been found is in the tithe survey of 1842–3 (see Fig. 5 for map). The largest estate, of some 129 acres, was then called just Maiden Coombe, and farmed from what is now Courthouse, owned and occupied by Elias Blackaller junior. Perhaps this combined the three farms advertised in 1784.

The 19th century saw substantial changes to Maidencombe, particularly following the opening in the 1830s of the turnpike road that linked the rapidly growing resort of Torquay with the new bridge at Shaldon. The turnpike road partly used existing roads and partly new sections, one of the latter forming the south-west boundary of Sladnor Park. The improved communications meant that Maidencombe became a desirable locality, which landowners could exploit by selling or leasing individual fields for villa development. An early hint of the process was in 1836 when Elias Blackaller junior advertised a house to let ‘lately occupied by a captain of the Navy’, which included ‘a Pump of excellent water, Stables, Gig-house, and also from 5 to 20 Acres of Land if required ... having a full view of the Channel, within a short distance from the Beach and the Mail passes Daily within a Quarter Mile of the House’.²² Elias was to inherit the bulk of the estate of his father (also Elias) who died in 1839,²³ and appears to have played a major role in the development of the area. Although the documentation is sparse, there survive references to him leasing a plot of one and a quarter acres on the south side of Rock House Lane to two St Marychurch carpenters in 1845, and of the auction of the lease of the resulting ‘Dwelling house, Coach house, Stable and Outbuildings, Garden and Shrubbery’ two years later.²⁴ By 1857 a directory referred to Maidencombe as ‘consisting of several gentleman’s houses, and a few farms’, and to the Lord of the manor being Elias Blackaller, Esq.²⁵ However, the 1873 land census showed the holding of Mrs Blackaller to have been reduced to some 67 acres,²⁶ suggesting that freeholds of the villas had been sold off.

However, the area escaped over-development. In 1932 a planning expert wrote that the older part of the community still retained its unique charm.²⁷ The Ordnance Survey revision of 1933 showed that the orchards were still much in evidence.

With the emphasis on planning in the post-war decades Conservation Areas were established at Maidencombe and Watcombe, both adjoining the site.

²⁰ Lysons & Lysons 1822, 461; Stokeinteignhead tithe survey 1842–3.

²¹ Ordnance Survey 3-inch drawing No. 38.

²² *Trewman’s Exeter Flying Post* 18.2.1836 3f.

²³ DRO Inland Revenue Wills B389.

²⁴ DRO 942B/E3/29; 942B/E4/29.

²⁵ Billing 1857, 111.

²⁶ Return of Ownership of Land 1873, Devon, 5.

²⁷ Harding Thompson 1932, 15.

2.2.2 *Sladnor Park*

Sladnor Park seems to be surprisingly little documented and its early years seem to be particularly obscure. The Ordnance Survey's three-inch drawing of 1802–4 shows no development on the site (Fig. 3) and the one-inch map produced by the Greenwoods in 1827 appears to show the site as still without buildings (Fig. 4), but it is difficult to be certain in view of the hachuring and the misplaced hundredal boundary (which actually ran some 130m south-west of the site boundary (Fig. 6)); certainly no gentleman's seat was shown. According to one account Sladnor was occupied by a Mrs Groves in the 1830s, who built the gazebo,²⁸ but no source was given, and no reference has been found to that family being present in the parish until 1857 when a directory records T. Groves, esquire occupying Brimhill Lodge, to the north-east of Sladnor Park.²⁹

The first authenticated reference to the property has been found in the 1841 census, when Sladnor House was occupied by the Revd Elias Webb, then aged 67, along with his wife, three female servants and one male servant with his family;³⁰ a subsequent *Clergy List* identifies the Revd Webb as Perpetual Curate of Sherbourn in Warwickshire.³¹ However, the absence of his name from the voters' lists means that the date of his occupation could not be established. During his residence the Exeter artist Thomas H Williams drew and lithographed the house against a background of what appear to be mature conifers (Fig. 8); the principal entrance was on the south-east facing front, where there were two gables containing Latin inscriptions, while behind the more northerly was a square-sectioned bellcote or cupola.³² Two more gables were present on the south-west facing side, and later photographs show all four gables to have carried prominent barge boards.³³

The most detailed description of the estate to have been located is the tithe survey of 1842–3. This showed the Revd Elias Webb as owning and occupying some 38 acres of what was initially called Sladner House. These comprised nearly 24 acres described as 'Great Meadow Grove House &c' and four arable fields to the south, two of which retained the gently curving boundaries, often characteristic of having originated from enclosure of medieval ploughstrips (Fig. 5). The map shows the house (then without its north-west wing) reached by two drives. In order to provide a tolerable gradient the one from Solomon's Post ran along two sides of a triangular field that was then still part of Elias Blackaller's 129-acre Maiden Coombe holding. The other drive was from the east through the recently constructed Brimhill Lane (not shown on earlier maps and still with its hedges incomplete). The stables and coach house were present to the north-east of the house, while the gazebo or folly appeared to be depicted as intruding slightly into the road. A green lane extended west along the coombe, across the estate from Rock House Lane but stopped short of Teignmouth Road, where four fields belonging to the 54-acre Card's Maiden Coombe estate, then owned and occupied by the Nickels family, intruded into what was subsequently a very compact estate. Two were under arable, one was an orchard and one a meadow. As both Maiden Coombe estates were considerably intermingled it is not possible to determine with confidence to which, if either, Sladnor Park had once been attached. However, the north-east boundary is shown as a dashed

²⁸ Pateman 1991, 306.

²⁹ Billing 1857, 112.

³⁰ HO 107/264/5 p19.

³¹ *The Clergy List for 1846*, 242.

³² Photocopy of lithograph and partial transcription in Devon County Council Historic Environment Record Stokeinteignhead parish file.

³³ Press cuttings of the 1995 fire from the *Herald Express* in the Torbay Local Studies Library 'Torbay Book 13', pp. 112, 170, 175.

line dividing it from Elias Blackaller's field No. 442, suggestive of an insubstantial fence, and providing a hint that Sladnor Park had until recently been part of his Maiden Coombe. Also one of the fields to the south, No. 491, was named Maiden Coombe Park.

The Gentleman's Magazine recorded the death of the Revd Webb, aged 75 in 1848.³⁴ The 1851 census showed his widow occupying 'Sladner House' along with a housekeeper, lady's maid and housemaid, and two male gardeners.³⁵ The 1873 land census showed J. E. Webb as occupying just over 52 acres and living within the parish,³⁶ indicating that the five additional fields had been acquired by then, but the 1871 and 1881 censuses suggest only gardeners occupied the estate.³⁷ In 1883 comes the first located reference to Sladnor Park, when the occupier was Lt-Col J. B. Sterling, identifiable as serving in the Coldstream Guards, and put on half pay in 1889.³⁸

The area was surveyed at 1:2500 scale in 1888 and the resulting maps (Fig. 6) provide the earliest detailed picture of the estate. The north-west wing had been added to the house, the five fields had been integrated into the estate with some of their boundaries removed, the lodge was present on the main road, while woodland screened the house from the north and west, and the orchard was still present to the south. The presumed green lane had been removed and some of the slightly curving boundaries had been straightened. This was the only survey to show isolated trees and their presence indicates the course of some of the lost hedges. A sundial was present on what appear to have been terraced lawns. A circular feature, presumably including a pond, was present in the coombe bottom to the east of the house.

The 1891 census shows William Thomas Hustler in occupation with his wife, adopted daughter and eight servants; he was described as a Deputy Lieutenant for the North Riding of Yorkshire, where the family seat of Acklam Hall was situated.³⁹ This is the first census to name the lodge, occupied by a gardener, while a farm labourer and his family also appear to have been present on the estate. In 1898 the Bishop of Exeter granted William Hustler a licence for a chapel for family prayers.⁴⁰ The area was re-surveyed in 1904 and the resulting map is the only one located that shows the church, fronting Sladnor Park Road towards the north-east corner of the estate. Several other changes were detectable on this map, notably the removal of many field boundaries and of the orchard.

William Hustler died in 1909 and the 1910 Valuation shows the property to have been owned by his grandson William Hustler Beaumont of Thornton Dale in Yorkshire.⁴¹ This indicated that the park was divided between three occupiers: William Beaumont was said to occupy the house and some 12 acres (although the contact address was said to be the local land agents Cox & Son), the Gabwell farmer George Webber occupied 40 acres of agricultural land, with an unnamed lodgekeeper occupying the lodge.⁴² However, a directory of that year gave the occupier of Sladnor Park as Edward Cooper Arden, and he seems to have remained up until the war.⁴³

³⁴ *The Gentleman's Magazine*, August 1848, 216.

³⁵ HO/107/1872/f15/p25.

³⁶ Return of Ownership of Land 1873, Devon, 61.

³⁷ RG10/2088/77/p14; RG11/2170/115/p7.

³⁸ *Kelly's Directory of Devonshire 1883*, 411; *The New Annual Army List ... for 1880*, 66.

³⁹ RG12/1706/91/p11; *Burke* 1894, 1030.

⁴⁰ Photocopy of licence in DCC HER Stokeinteignhead parish file.

⁴¹ DRO 3201V/3/56; *Kelly's Handbook 1928*, 203.

⁴² Hereditament Nos 22, 112, 186.

⁴³ *Kelly's Directory of Devonshire 1910*, 692; 1939, 779.

The Ordnance Survey's revision of 1933 (Fig. 7) showed further changes, particularly reinstatement of some of the field boundaries, while over the spring (south-east of the house) was by then a well house within an enclosure. Further landscaping had taken place east of the house and another structure was present south-east of the coach house and stables (possibly a garage by then).

It is understood that prior to the D-Day invasion American officers were billeted in the house.⁴⁴ Aerial photographs taken by the RAF in 1946 suggest that little had changed apart from the removal of a few field boundaries, with the fields appearing to have been under pasture.⁴⁵ By 1948–9 the directory referred to Sladnor Park Farm, occupied by Kenneth Hearn, and Sladnor Park Kennels.⁴⁶ In the 1960s, under the ownership of the Bent family, the property became a holiday village with the erection of 32 chalets and 16 lodges, swimming pools and tennis courts, and employing between 20 and 30 staff; the recession in the holiday industry led to its closure in 1988.⁴⁷

Following a change of ownership, in the early hours of 7 March 1995 the house caught fire and the damage was so serious that fire brigade building inspectors ruled that the shell was unsafe; the remaining walls, up to two feet thick, were demolished within 48 hours.⁴⁸

3. SITES OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL INTEREST (see Fig. 2)

3.1 Within the site

1. *Site of Sladnor House* SX92016830 Torbay Council SMR No. SX96NW/41 – MTO6010 (Fig. 8 & Plate 1)

This dates from possibly the later 1830s, with a north-west wing being subsequently added. It was the focus of an estate of around 50 acres, through which ran two carriage drives, and is believed to have been built for the Revd Elias Webb. Following its damage by fire in March 1995 it was demolished to ground level. In places the outline can be detected, indicated by walls of the local breccia 0.6m thick. No quarries have been located within the actual site, but Ordnance Survey mapping shows three within 200m of the southern boundary (Fig. 6).

Recording by Mr E. Dudley in 1980 indicated the presence of cellars and presumably the bulk of the walls were bulldozed into them. A mound of stones to the north, a few of them worked, must represent the remainder.

Outbuildings of several phases survive in a largely derelict condition, terraced in to the west, although they include an electricity sub-station. They are composed of brick, concrete block and Torbay limestone. A handrail indicates the presence of steps leading to an upper level, but the heavy vegetation cover prevented close inspection.

⁴⁴ pers. comm. Roger Carswell.

⁴⁵ CPE/UK 1824 4 NOV 46 F/20"/82 SQDN 4190–1.

⁴⁶ *Kelly's Directory of Torquay and Paignton 1948–49*, 72.

⁴⁷ Press cutting from the *Western Morning News* in the Torquay Local Studies Library 'T & D Book 2', p.16'.

⁴⁸ Press cuttings of the 1995 fire from the *Herald Express* in the Torquay Local Studies Library 'Torbay Book 13', pp. 112, 170, 175.

2. *Gazebo or folly* SX91916820 Torbay Council SMR No. SX96NW/42 – MTO1389
(Plates 2 & 3)

This octagonal structure is assumed to be contemporary with the house, along with some 25m of castellated ‘gothick’ walling. The gazebo survives to its original height of 8m and originally contained three floors complete with fireplaces. At its eastern end is a contemporary annex pierced by three arches, two of which have collapsed. Although the main structure displays evidence of recent repointing, major cracks are visible.

3. *Site of coach house and stables* SX92126835 (Plate 4)

The 1843 tithe map shows buildings to be present, presumably contemporary with the house. The 1980 recording referred to accommodation being present, and there is a local tradition that it was occupied up until the last war.⁴⁹ The buildings are of limestone rubble, the central one giving evidence of former habitation, being of two storeys with a trace of a stack. It is flanked by open bays which may have housed coaches and subsequently cars. The extreme eastern bay contains within it a shed of timber and corrugated iron construction. The stables were to the west, divided into three sections.

4. *Site of presumed kitchen garden* SX92136833

The 1946 RAF aerial photographs suggest the presence of a walled garden to the south-east of the coach house and stables. It occupied a sloping site, perhaps terraced, but now thickly vegetated; only the east wall remains prominent, with a brick shed attached, formerly used for animal housing.

5. *Site of holiday chalets* centred at SX92066823

During the 1960s two ranges of holiday camp style chalets were constructed, one facing north-east and the other south-east. The former have been demolished down to their concrete bases, while the latter remain in a derelict condition. They are of brick and concrete block construction with wooden roofs and plastic facias.

6. *Site of green lane* SX92396827 to SX92076819

The tithe map and the two earlier maps showed a green lane running west along the coombe bottom, originally from Rock House Lane, across the centre of the estate but stopping short of Teignmouth Road. The hedges survive for only the 20m section from Brim Hill.

7a & b. *Site of presumed medieval strip cultivation* SX92356801 to SX92206822 & SX92416806 to SX92276823

The tithe map shows two field boundaries with the slight curve suggesting that they resulted from the enclosure of medieval plough-strips. The lynchets at the southern end of both are still visible, resulting from the displacement of plough soil down the secondary slope over the centuries. The more westerly one is very slight, but a 30m section of the more easterly is much more prominent, containing mature trees but unmarked on modern maps. Two other lynchets are present further west, one marking the boundary with Card’s Maiden Coombe and the other where a surviving hedge divided the two arable fields.

8. *Site of pond* SX92246824

A feature, shown on the 1955 map to be a pond, was present on the mapping from 1890. It lay within a circular enclosure, of which at least one small section of the bank survives, but the area today is heavily vegetated.

⁴⁹ Pers. comm., Roger Carswell.

9. *Site of well house* SX92136815

The 1933 mapping is the first to show this structure, over what earlier maps had shown as a spring, within an irregular seven-sided enclosure. The vegetation cover prevented a close inspection.

10. *Site of structures* centred at SX92116822

Ordnance Survey mapping has shown four structures around here, three within small enclosures, of unidentified function, but probably agricultural. As the ground here is steeply sloping it is possible that at least one was a bank barn. Only a small area of concrete adjoining the lawned area of the lodges remains of the three. A trace of the fourth, smaller and to the north-east, close to the septic tanks, survives as a rendered structure, largely covered in vegetation.

11. *Site of carriage drive from Brim Hill* SX92346837 to SX92096832

This was present on the 1843 tithe map, but was not depicted as a continuous route after 1904. Its status is not entirely clear as the entrance from Brim Hill is not obvious today and would have been steeply graded. The 1890 map indicates a structure here, possibly an archway, but no trace of it was identified among the undergrowth.

12. *Site of church* SX92216845

This must be the building for which a licence for family worship had been granted in 1898. It was not mentioned in the directories and it has not been possible to determine the date of its removal. No trace of its former presence was visible. It may therefore have been of prefabricated iron construction.

13. *Hollow way* centred at SX92096843

A deeply sunken track, running east–west before curving to the south, forms the boundary between the rough grassland and woodland at this point.

3.2 In the vicinity of the site

14. *Fir Tree Lodge* SX91936842

This was built as the lodge to Sladnor Park, but its date remains unclear, with no evidence of it prior to the 1888 mapping. It is no longer part of the estate.

15. *Turnpike cottage* SX91916844

The creation of the turnpike road, seemingly in the 1830s, led to the construction of a turnpike cottage at Solomon's Post. The tithe map (Fig. 5) shows gates across both the main Teignmouth to Torquay road and Claddon Lane, which led to Newton Abbot.

16. *Site of pump house* SX92326840

Ordnance Survey mapping showed a pump house in what had been the field owned by Elias Blackaller, some 2m beyond the north-east boundary of the site. Its current status is unknown, the area being somewhat overgrown, with nothing visible from Brim Hill.

4. DISCUSSION

While there are chance finds of prehistoric artefacts in the general area the rapid walk-over survey did not identify any likely indication of prehistoric settlement and the sloping terrain over the bulk of the site suggests it would not have proved attractive for settlement.

The research has failed to identify a precise date for the origin of Sladnor Park, but it appears to have been begun between 1825 and 1840, most likely after the turnpike road was opened in the 1830s, with the Revd Elias Webb present by 1841, and the gazebo or folly and coach house present by 1843. Further acquisitions meant that the estate's full extent was achieved by 1873. Despite the disaster of the 1995 fire and relative neglect since, it still provides an interesting example of a mid 19th-century gentleman's landscaped park, dating from early in the period when coastal scenery was becoming valued. Judicious planting, particular of conifers, has enhanced the natural scene. The amenity woodland remains to the west of the house site, but the deciduous trees show evidence of coppicing, and this along with the four arable fields recorded in 1843 suggest that amenity was not initially the sole function of the estate. The removal of the orchard between 1888 and 1904 indicates that an economic function was by then no longer a requirement, and the changing field boundaries suggest hedgerow removal to improve the view and their replacement by wire fences.

It is conceivable that the Revd Webb's initial 38 acres originated as a farming unit, being of comparable size with the three advertised in 1784, which all appear to have included farmhouses. It is thus possible that there existed a farmhouse within the site (although it may have been located in the hamlet) that was removed before the 1802–4 mapping, and of which no visible trace remains.

The tithe survey suggests that most of the southern half of the estate was then under arable cultivation and there are four lynchets along the southern boundary that imply centuries of ploughing. Conversion to pasture probably occurred later in the 19th century.

The hilly nature of the site means that the bulk of it would be unsuitable for settlement until technology or economic growth made terracing into rock practicable. However, the southern extremity of the site does provide level ground, and it is conceivable that some form of settlement could have been effected there. Should any disturbance be contemplated in this area or in that of the former field boundaries then archaeological monitoring would be advisable since buried features may be present.

There are at least two springs within the estate and while they can lead to the growth of peat, with its potential to preserve organic material over centuries if not millennia, in both cases they appear to have been subject to disturbance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was commissioned by Meedhurst Project Management Ltd and administered for them by N.A. Browne. Its production was overseen by P.J. Weddell, Head of Exeter Archaeology.

The report and illustrations were compiled by A.G. Collings, (except Fig. 1 by J. Read) and the site visit was made by A.J. Passmore and Tony Collings.

The assistance of Hal Bishop, Torbay Council Archaeology and Historic Environment Officer, and of R. Carswell, Site Manager at Sladnor Park, is gratefully acknowledged. Help was also received from the staffs of the Torquay Local Studies Library, the Devon Record Office, the Devon County Council Historic Environment Record, the Devon & Exeter Institution and the Westcountry Studies Library.

SOURCES CONSULTED

Unpublished sources

Devon Record Office

Stokeinteignhead Tithe Apportionment (1842) and Map (1843)
 Stokeinteignhead Land Tax Assessments 1780–1831
 Stokeinteignhead Poor Rate Book 1619–1668 (3420A/PO1)
 Stokeinteignhead Churchwardens' Accounts (including Church Rates) 1753–1813
 (3420A/PW1)
 Deed of Partition 1683 (240M/T1, from calendar)
 Deeds 48/16/1/12 (1712) & 48/2/12 (1731)
 Deeds 401M/T37–47
 Deeds 942B/E3/29; 942B/E4/29
 Inland Revenue Wills B389–390.
 Voters' Lists: Southern Part of the County of Devon, various years
 Duties on Land Values: Stokeinteignhead parish (3201V/3/56)

Westcountry Studies Library

Ordnance Survey 3-inch drawing No. 38
 Index to *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post*
 Censuses for 1841 to 1891
 Inquisition Post Mortem: Humfrey Arscott, 1580

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Entries for map sheet SX96NW
 Material deposited in the Stokeinteignhead parish file by Mr Eric Dudley
 RAF vertical aerial photographs CPE/UK 1824 4 NOV 46 F/20"/82 SQDN 4190–1.

Torbay Council Sites and Monuments Register

Entries for Sladnor Park house and gazebo

Torquay Local Studies Library

Press cuttings of the 1995 fire from the *Herald Express* and from the 1987 *Western Morning News* in 'Torbay Book 13' and 'Tourism & Development Book 2'.

Published sources

Billing, M. 1857 *Directory and Gazetteer of the County of Devon*.
 Burke, B. 1894 *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Landed Gentry of Great Britain & Ireland*, 8th edition.
 Clayden, B. 1971 *Memoirs of the Soil Survey of Great Britain: England and Wales: Soils of the Exeter District [Sheets 325 and 339]*

- Department of National Heritage 1994 *Revised List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, Borough of Torbay, Devon, (Area of Torquay)*.
- Erskine, A.M. (ed.) 1969 *The Devonshire Lay Subsidy of 1332* Devon & Cornwall Record Society New Series **14**.
- Exeter Archaeology 2003 *Archaeological Assessment of Proposed Development at Maidencombe Farm, Steep Hill, Maidencombe, Torquay*, Exeter Archaeology Report No. 03.40.
- Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales) 1:50000 series Sheet 339 Newton Abbot, Solid & Drift Edition, 1976.
- Gover, J.E.B., Mawer, A. & Stenton, F.M. 1969 *The Place-names of Devon*.
- Greenwood, C. & G. 1827 *Map of the County of Devon*.
- Harding Thompson, W. 1932 *Devon: A Survey of its Coast, Moors and Rivers with some Suggestions for their Preservation*.
- Hingeston-Randolph F.C. (ed.) 1894 *The Register of John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter (AD 1327–1369)*, Part I.
- Inquisitions & Assessments Relating to Feudal Aids ...*, 1899 Vol. I.
- Kelly's Directory of Devonshire*, various years.
- Kelly's Directory of Torquay and Paignton*, various years.
- Kelly's Handbook to the Titled, Landed and Official Classes*, 1928, 54th Annual Edition.
- Lysons, D. & Lysons, S. 1822 *Magna Britannia: 6 Devonshire Part II*.
- Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map sheets Devon CXVI.2&3, 1889, 1906, 1933.
- Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map sheet SX9268, 1955.
- Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 map sheet Devon CXVI.N.W & N.E., 1891
- Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 map sheet SX96NW, 1968.
- Pateman, L.L. 1991 *Pictorial and Historical Survey of Babbacombe and St Marychurch* Volume 2.
- Polwhele, R. 1793–1806 *The History of Devonshire*.
- Pole Sir W. 1791 *Collections towards a Description of the County of Devon*.
- Return of Ownership of Land 1873.
- Soil Survey of England & Wales 1:250,000 map of Soils of South West England, 1983.
- Stoate, T.L. (ed.) 1979 *Devon Lay Subsidy Rolls 1524–7*.
- The Clergy List for 1846*.
- The Gentleman's Magazine*, August 1848.
- The New Annual Army List ... for 1880*.
- Thorn, C. & Thorn, F. (eds) 1985 *Domesday Book 9: Devon*.
- Torbay Council 2005a *Brief for an Archaeological Assessment: Sladnor Park, Maidencombe, Torquay*.
- Torbay Council 2005b *Maidencombe Conservation Area: Character Appraisal*.
- Trewman's Exeter Flying Post* various years.
- Ussher, W.A.E. 1913 *The Geology of the Country Around Newton Abbot, Memoirs of the Geological Survey, England and Wales, Explanation of Sheet 339*.
- Whale, T.W. 1898 'The Tax Roll of "Testa de Nevil"', *Rep. Trans. Devonshire. Ass.* **XXX**, 203–257.
- White, W. 1850 *History, Gazetteer, and Directory of Devonshire*.

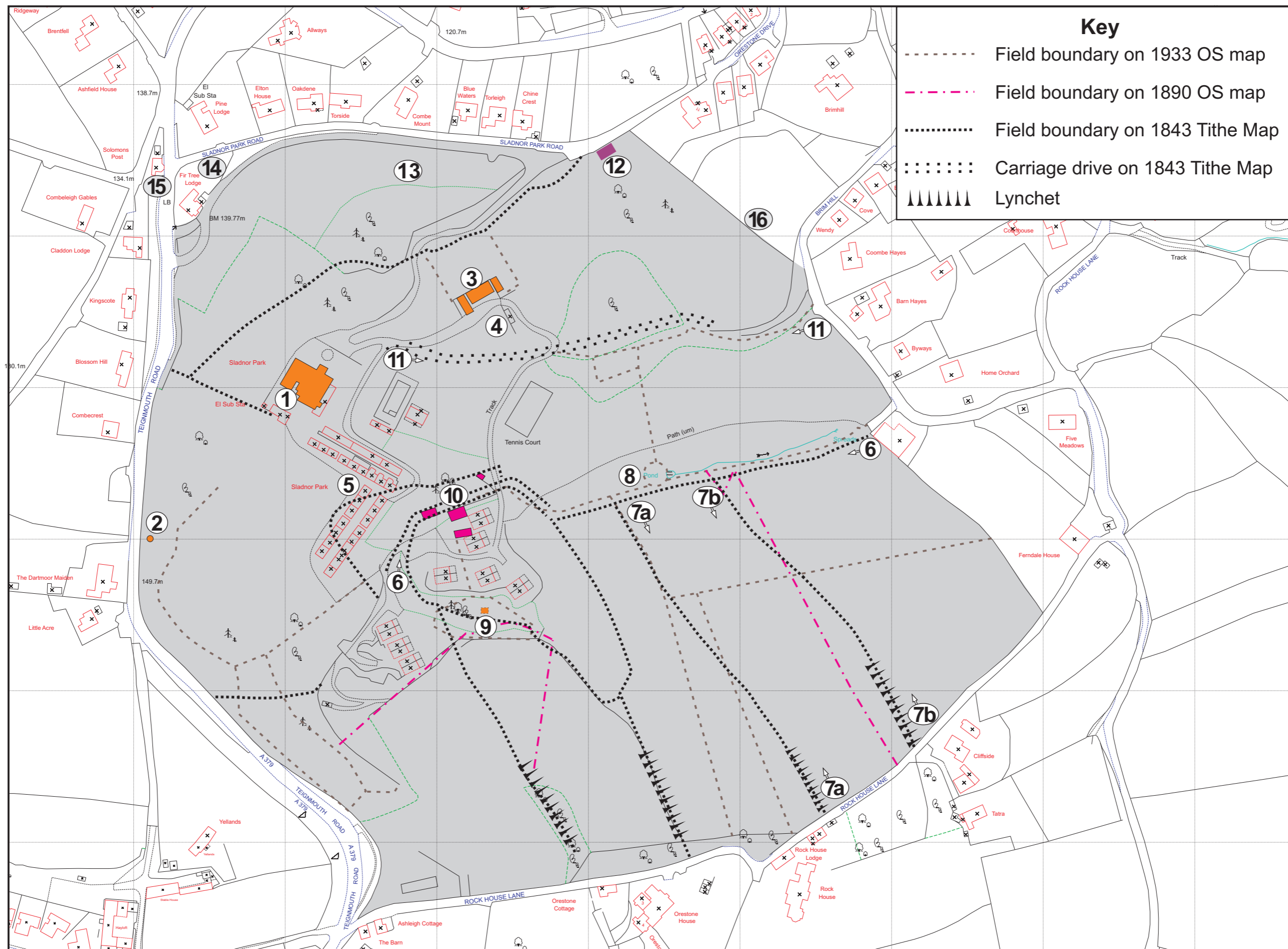


Fig. 2 Location of the 16 identified sites of potential archaeological interest and the approximate position of field boundaries and the carriage drive shown on earlier mapping. Based on the Ordnance Survey mapping at 1:2500 scale with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Exeter City Council 100025458.



Fig. 3 Extract from the Ordnance Survey 3-inch Drawing No.38, surveyed in 1802-04, with no structures visible on the site.

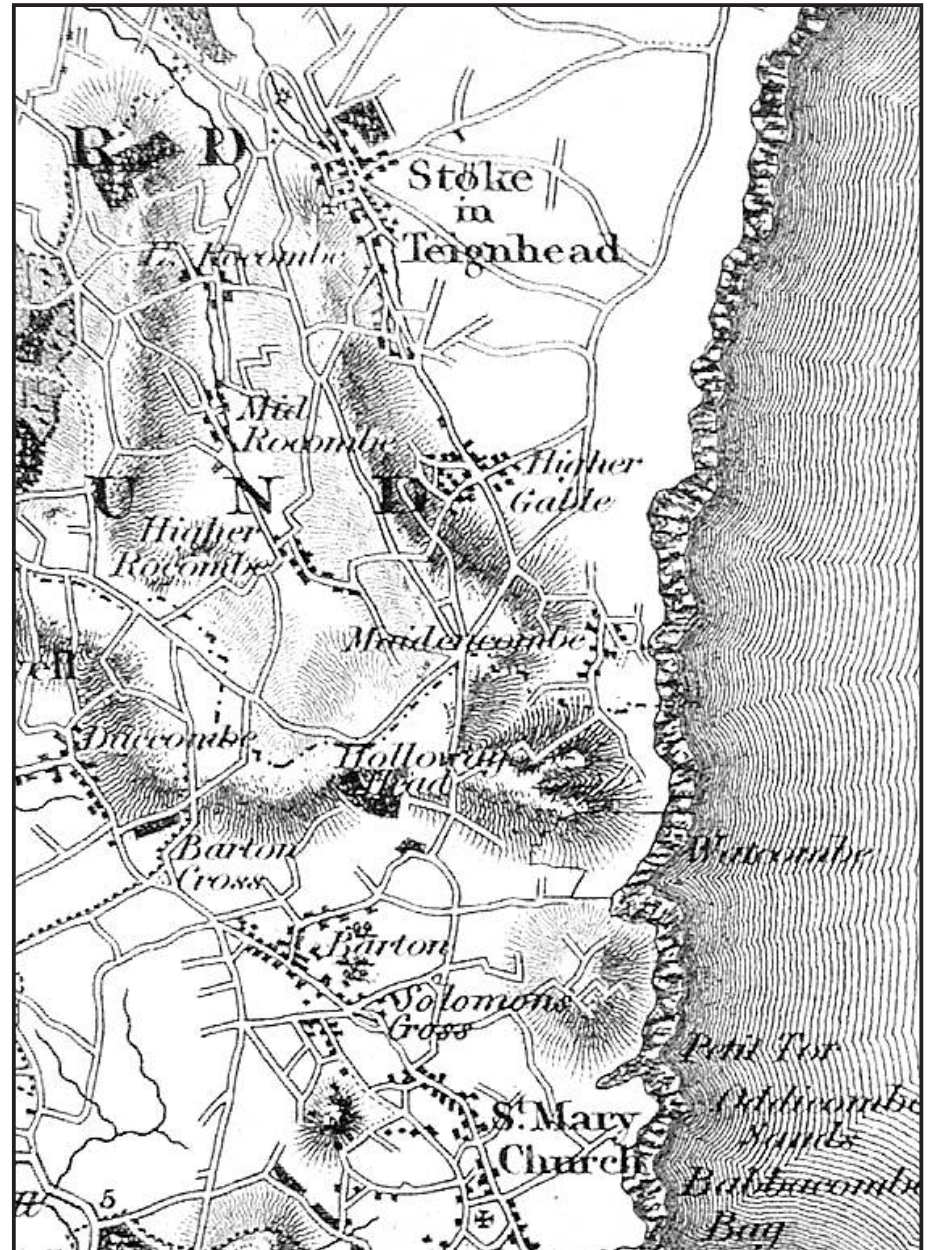


Fig. 4 Extract from C. & G. Greenwood's 1827 Map of the County of Devon, enlarged to two inches to the mile, which appears to show the site as still undeveloped.

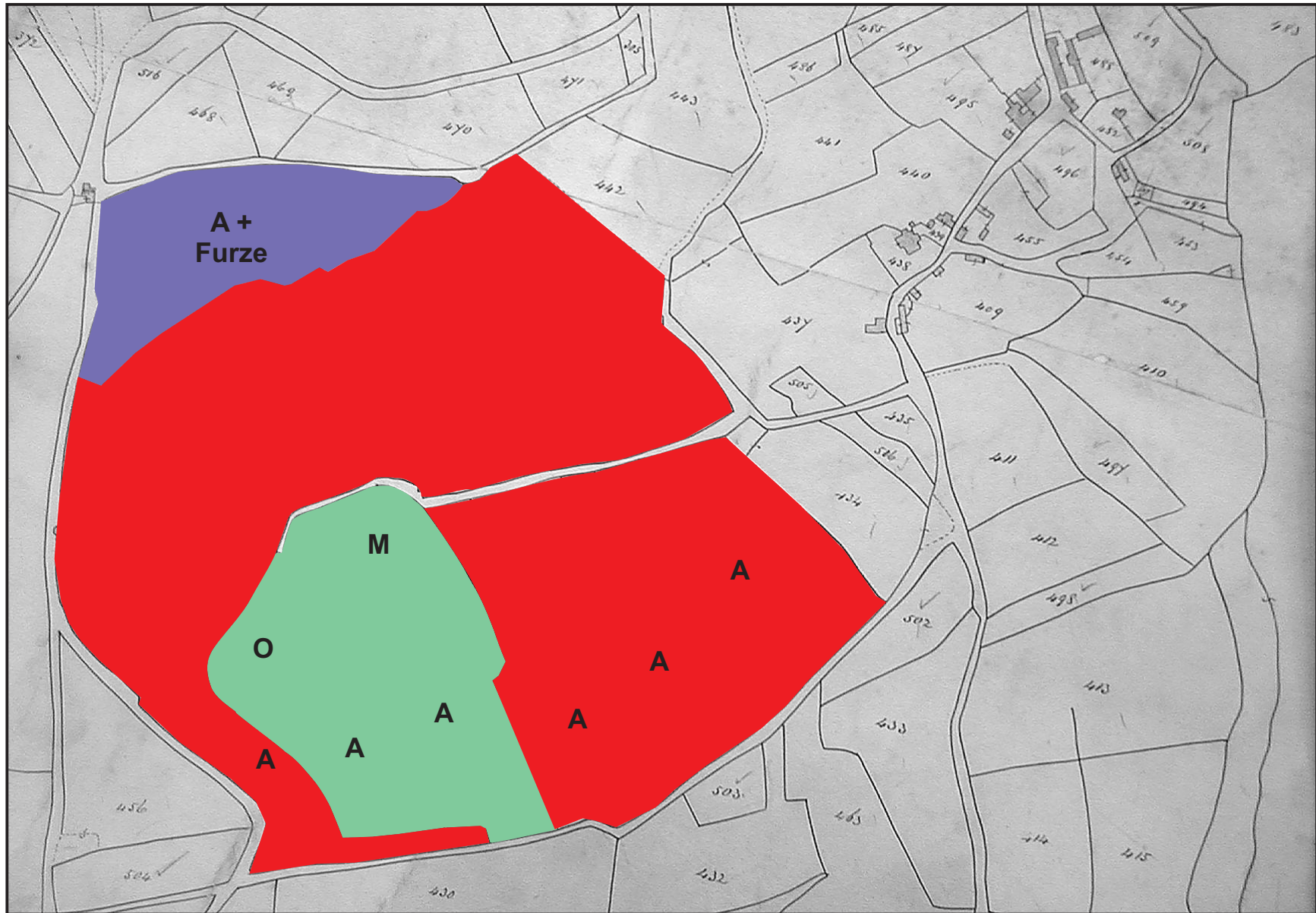


Fig. 5 The site in 1843 (Stokeinteignhead Tithe Map reduced to 1:1500). The red tint shows the Sladnor House property at that date; the blue tint shows the field subsequently acquired from the Maiden Coombe estate and the green tint shows the fields subsequently acquired from the Card's Maiden Coombe estate. A indicates arable, M indicates meadow, O indicates orchard.

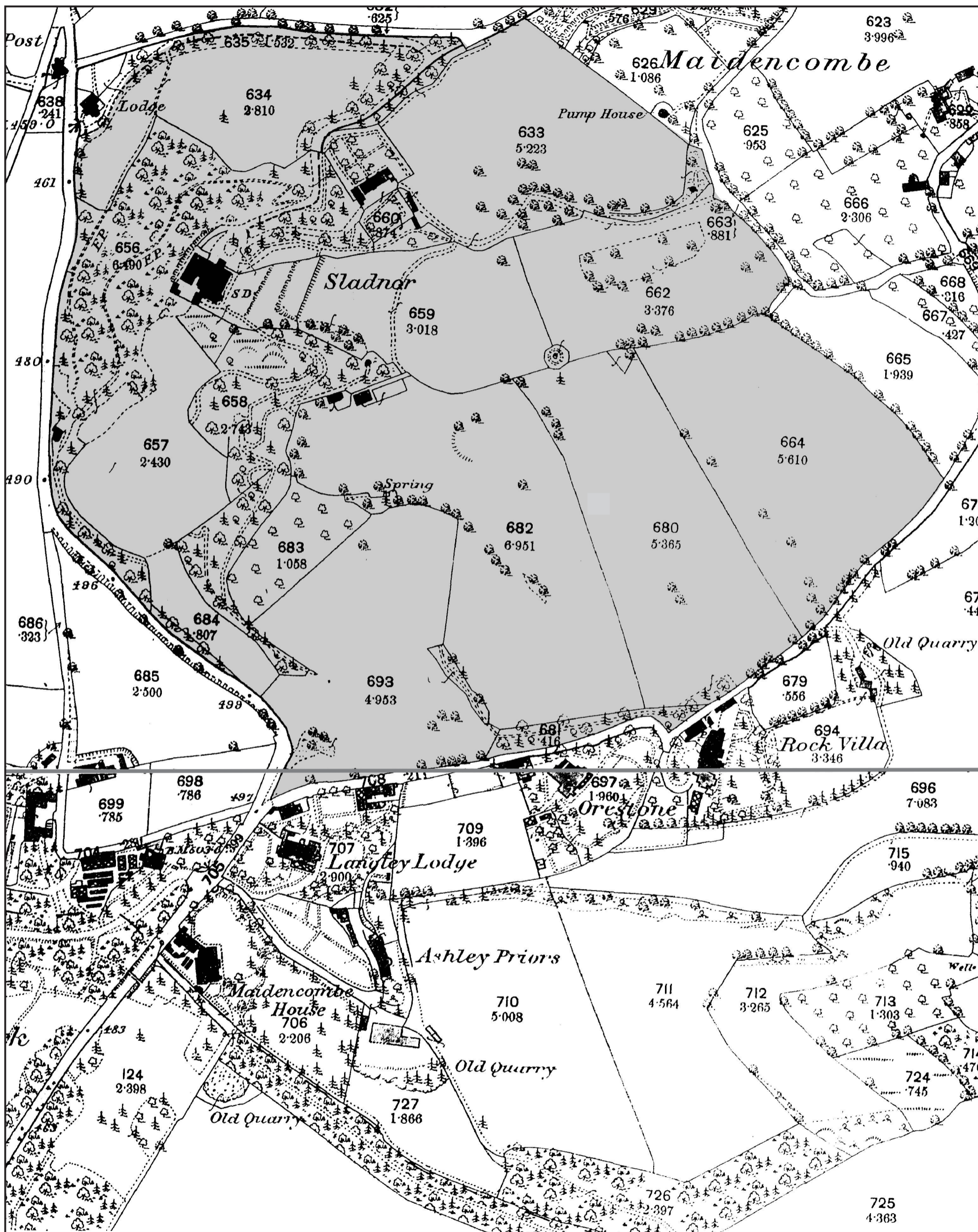


Fig. 6 The site in 1890 (Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map sheets CXVI.2 and 6). Also showing the hundredal boundary and former quarries south of the site.



Fig. 7 The site in 1933 (Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map sheets CXVI.2 and 6, reduced to 1:3500).

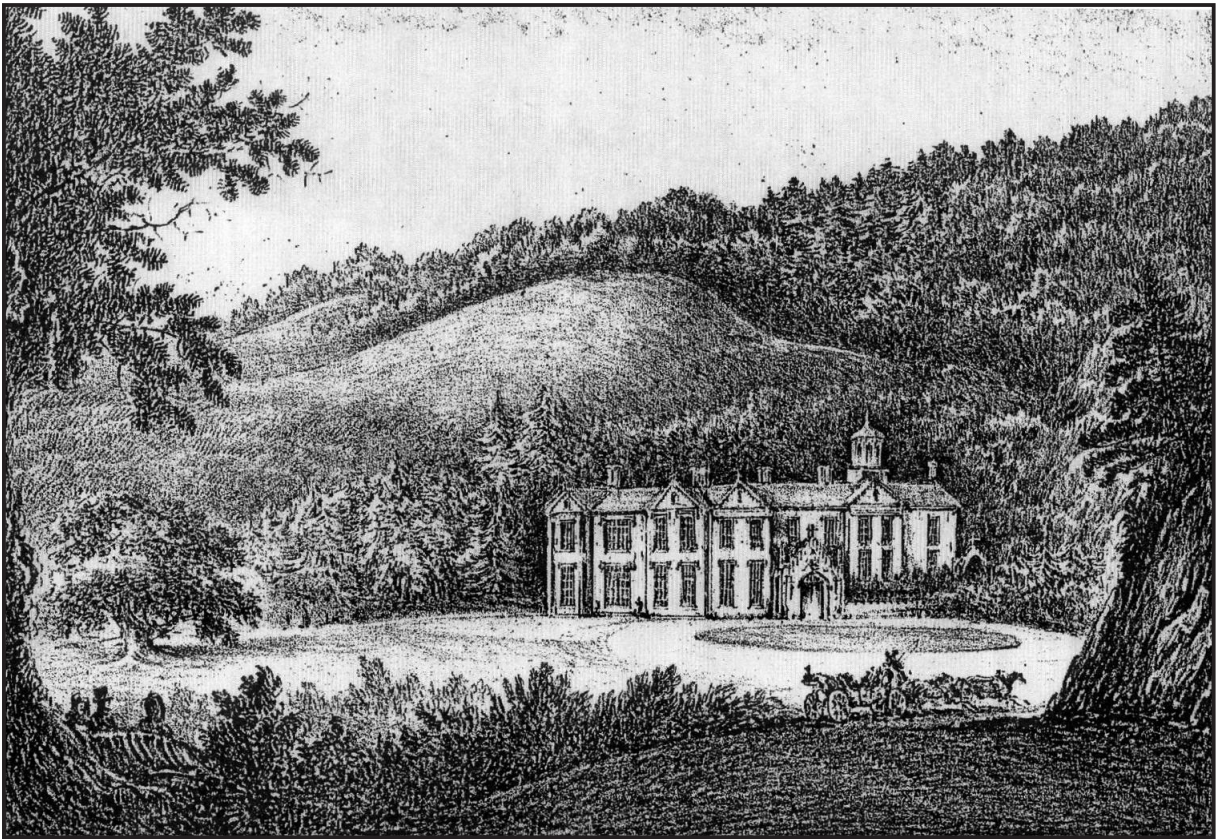


Fig. 8 Lithograph of drawing by T. H. Williams captioned 'STADNOR (*sic*) near Torquay, DEVON / The Seat of the Rev^d E^d (*sic*) Webb'. Reproduced by courtesy of Devon County Council Historic Environment Record, deposited by Mr Eric Dudley. View looking north-west.



Plate 1 The site of the house in November 2005. View looking south-west.



Plate 2 The gazebo or folly, looking north, November 2005.



Plate 3 The gazebo or folly, looking south, also showing one of the collapsed arches of the annex, November 2005.



Plate 4 The stable and coach house, viewed looking north-west, November 2005.



Plate 5 The view looking north-west across the park, November 2005. The arrow shows the location of the house site.