

AGRICULTURAL & ENVIRONMENTAL APPRAISAL  
PLANNING APPLICATION  
SOUTH HAMS DISTRICT COUNCIL

PROPOSED AGRICULTURAL DWELLING IN  
ASSOCIATION WITH NEW FARM BUILDINGS COMPLEX  
(ALREADY APPROVED) ON GREEN FIELD SITE FOR  
MR. R. FERRATON OF LOWER MANOR FARM, RINGMORE,

REF: RES/P/1  
JOHN MILLS,  
RURAL ENTERPRISE SERVICES,  
195, NEWTON ROAD,  
TORQUAY, DEVON.

## INTRODUCTION

In early January 1988, I was approached by Mr. R. Perraton to discuss his proposed re-location of agricultural activities from the existing farm buildings at Lower Manor Farm to a green field site somewhat removed from the present congested access and in an area where positive pollution control management could be more sensibly envisaged.

As a result of a site meeting and discussion with Mr. Perraton on the 12th January, 1988, I was instructed and agreed to be prepared, if required, to:-

1. Submit a report on agricultural needs related to the relocation of the agricultural activities to a green field site.
2. Carry out an inspection and study of the farming enterprise in respect of:
  - (i) Its viability.
  - (ii) Its labour requirement
  - (iii) The number of people who, by necessity, should live on the farm.

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## PROCEDURE

Between the 12th January, 1988 and the 6th October, 1988 I held various meetings and telephone discussions with the following:

South Hams District Council Planning Officers, Devon County Council Chief Valuers, South West Water Authority Pollution Inspectors and Devon County Council Chief Engineers Local Highway Engineer

regarding their opinions and requirements and the general desirability in respect of:

1. The need to re-locate agricultural activities from their present location to a green field site.
2. The location of such a green field site bearing in mind the requirements of Devon County Council Landscape Policy Areas, Proposal Lan.1.

As a natural outcome of these discussions, my letter of the 26th April, 1988 to Mr. L. Bland, Planning Officer, South Hams District Council, was written. (A copy of this letter is attached as Appdx.1 of this report). On the 22nd June, 1988, Planning Approval was given for a range of new farm buildings as indicated on the Location and Site Plan which are attached as Appendices 2 & 3 of this report.



3. The location of the now approved site relative to the existing farmhouse led both Mr. Richard Perraton and myself to feel that proper supervision and care of livestock housed in these buildings would not be possible unless a new dwelling were to be erected within sight and sound of the new farm buildings. I have, therefore, prepared the following Agricultural Appraisal.

#### LOCATION.

The area farmed as one enclosed unit and known as 'Lower Farm, Ringmore', is entirely within the Parish of Ringmore. The present farmhouse and buildings are part of a complex just to the west of the main village settlement and is outside of the conservation area shown on Inset 1.3.13 Ringmore described in Chapter 7 of the Modbury Local Plan dated March 1986. A map showing the location and boundaries of the farm is attached as Appdx. IV of this Report.

#### GENERAL BACKGROUND.

The area of land now farmed by Mr. Perraton is approximately 200 acres in extent, of which 190 acres are in agricultural use. The remaining 10 acres are made up of 8 acres of woodland and 2 acres of farm buildings and roads.

Since moving into the farm in March, 1984 Mr. Perraton has established a dairy herd of about 50 cows and has built up a flock of 250 ewes. About 35% of the total area of the farm is in cereals.

#### THE LAND.

The soils that make up the very large proportion of the area of land farmed by Mr. Perraton are brown earths and all are generally of a fine loamy textural class. The major restricting factors in their agricultural capability are either gradient or lack of soil depth. However, there is a valley feature in the farm which is made up of a typical alluvial gley soil most likely Conway Series. The proportions of soils in the area are 90% brown earth, 10% cambic gley alluvium.

#### LAND USE CAPABILITY.

As the most recent and accurate survey of agricultural land related to its capability was carried out by The Soil Survey of England & Wales and was covered in their Soil Survey Record No.39, Soils of Devon, 11, Sheets SX.65. This survey was carried out as an Indicator Survey of the South Devon Slate Lands. I have used the same Land Use Capability Classifications as those in the above-quoted Survey. I have rounded figures as a percentage of the whole farm and the results are as follows.

In capability Class III, Land with Moderate Limitations that restrict the choice of Crops and/or reduce yields and/or demand careful management, there is an area of 55%. Of this some 30% has a lack of soil depth as its major restriction and 25% as the major restriction in use related to climate.

In Land Capability Class IV, Land with moderately severe limitations that restrict the choice of crops and/or require careful management, there is an area of 35% that has a limitation due to gradient.

The remaining 10% of the area falls into Class V, Land with severe limitations that restrict the use to pasture, forestry and recreation. The restricting factor in this is predominantly gradient with some wetness in narrow valley floors.

#### CROPPING.

The present use of the land is in the following proportions:

Arable Crops:	35%	70 acres
Grassland for conservation:	15%	30 acres
Grassland for grazing:	45%	90 acres
Woodland:	4%	8 acres
Buildings etc:	1%	2 acres.

#### STOCKING.

The numbers of stock on the farm tend to vary seasonally between the following parameters:

Dairy Cows:	between 48 - 52
Calves:	between 15 - 45
Other cattle:	between 20 - 30
Breeding ewes:	between 250-280
Lambs:	between 350-400.

The seasonal variation is largely due to calving pattern. The current programme is to have a spring calving dairy herd, thereby having maximum production when lower cost feeding in the form of grass is available. There is currently a quota of 230,000 litres for the holding.

#### BUILDINGS.

The only buildings on the farm at present are the two traditional barns next to Lower Manor Farm farmhouse with a relatively new Dutch barn type structure to the seaward side of these stone barns which is used for storing hay and straw and has some form of winter sheltering for the dairy herd. There is a silage clamp near the farm buildings but this is not currently in use due to pollution problems associated with it. The traditional stone and slate barns are not really suitable for modern agricultural use and considerable animal health problems do occur as a result of keeping stock in these now unsuitable structures.

#### DWELLINGS.

The only dwelling on this holding is the farmhouse at Lower Manor Farm which is of traditional stone and slate structure of uncertain age, but certainly pre circa 1700. It has 5 bedrooms.



#### LABOUR REQUIREMENT

Using standard labour factors applied by M.A.F.F., in assessment of eligibility for Grant Aid, the labour requirement on this farm is 2.9 labour units. In fact there is one resident full time worker on the farm - Mr. R. Perraton, and a full time worker who lives in a nearby settlement. The use of contractors on some of the arable work makes up the apparent shortfall in labour terms. However, it is quite normal for the labour actually employed on farms to come to less than the M.A.F.F. hypothetical requirement and a holding of this type is very often quite well run with two full time workers with some contracting help.

#### VIABILITY.

Again applying M.A.F.F. standard data this time related to income against the cropping and stocking of the farm, the results in a comparable income per labour unit of labour actually employed, comes to 55% of the reference income. This reference income is based on the Average Earnings of Full Time Workers Outside Agriculture in Gt. Britain (excluding the Greater London Area). This low percentage performance against comparable income is largely attributed to the completely inappropriate and inadequate buildings presently situated at Lower Manor Farm and ever since Mr. Perraton has been on the farm he has been looking at the feasibility of improving the buildings complex at Lower Manor Farm.

#### FUTURE FARM POLICY.

It has now been agreed without reservation that the future viability of this farming enterprise is dependent on providing a range of more suitable buildings than those presently available. Any improvements to the buildings on the existing site are inappropriate, if not impossible, due to the problems that are covered in my letter of the 26th April, 1988. A new range of buildings are to be located on a green field site that has been approved by the South Hams District Council. However, this site is so remote from the existing dwelling that it cannot be properly supervised without a new dwelling being constructed within site and sound of the new complex.

#### CONCLUSIONS.

From my examination of the case, I am in a position to state quite definitely that:

1. The holding, if properly managed, with a range of new buildings, could well be viable.
2. That once a new range of buildings has been installed, there would still be a labour requirement in true terms of 1½ labour units.
3. That the number of people who, by necessity, should live on the farm and within sight and sound of the buildings in which stock are kept is one person. It is not at all likely that there ever will be a need for more than one person to live within sight and sound of the new farm building complex.

JOHN MILLS  
RURAL ENTERPRISE SERVICES.

LIST OF APPENDICES

- Appendix 1. Letter to South Hams District Council Planning Department dated 26th April 1988.
- Appendix 2. Location Plan showing boundary of farm and site of proposed new farmstead.
- Appendix 3. Site and Location Plan showing the position of the new dwelling relative to farm buildings and other ancillary works.



AGRICULTURAL & ENVIRONMENTAL APPRAISAL

APPENDIX 1.

L. Blend, Esq.,  
Planning Officer,  
South Hams District Council,  
Follaton House,  
TOTNES,  
S. Devon.

195 Newton Road  
Torquay  
TQ2 7JH  
Telephone (0803) 63933

26th April, 1988.

Dear Sir,

re: Re-location of stock-keeping enterprise, i.e., dairy and young stock, from existing buildings, Lower Manor Farm, Ringmore, to green field site on land owned and occupied by Mr. Richard Perraton.

Further to our recent telephone discussion on the above, I have now been formally requested by Mr. Perraton to submit to you my technical assessment of the agricultural needs and benefits likely to accrue as a result of re-location of the above activities.

This 200 acre mixed farm, has as it's principle enterprise the keeping of 60 dairy cows, with sheep being run over the land in winter, the needs and benefits of relocation are mainly linked to improved livestock management and welfare and are listed below:

1. The size, location and condition of the existing farm buildings at Lower Manor Farm lead me to form the opinion that the entire building set-up is, to say the least, extremely poor and it is perhaps surprising that Mr. Perraton manages to keep going at all. The farmstead is confined to a restricted area with no sensible possibility of improvement or expansion. This was the opinion I came to when I first visited the farm in early 1984, when still working with the Ministry of Agriculture as a land and water service general advisor. It was then obvious to me that the best solution to the general management and welfare problems encountered on the site would be best resolved by a re-location to a green field site where a range of modern buildings could be erected and room for possible further expansion was then also made available.
2. Another contributory factor to the need to re-locate is associated with the extremely difficult task Mr. Perraton has already encountered in attempting to control pollution from foul waste entering the small stream that rises in and around the buildings at Lower Manor Farm, and from there runs down through Mr. Perraton's land to discharge on the beach at Ayrmer Cove. Springs actually arise from the slate outcropping under the buildings and cannot be separated from the dung and silage effluent which are the natural by-products of keeping livestock in and around these buildings. I have, from discussion with South West Water Authority Pollution Inspectorate staff, ascertained that they would look most favourably on a re-location to a green field site and they are only withholding stronger action than that taken so



far on the understanding that Mr. Perraton is making every attempt to re-locate.

3. Regarding vehicular access to Lower Manor Farm, this, to say the least, is poor, being a single track road through a conservation area with the lower portion in private ownership. Several times recently the Milk Marketing Board's tankers have not been able to collect the milk from the farmstead due to the road being obstructed by parked cars. This puts in jeopardy the viability of the whole business. This small lane was obviously never designed for modern farm traffic and conditions would be greatly improved if the agricultural activities were removed from the site.
4. The new location shown to me by Mr. Perraton on the morning of the 22nd April, when taking into account the general landscape and planning considerations of the area, is in fact the only really sensible site for a range of buildings on this farmstead. The topography of the farm very generally consists of a single valley feature with very steep sides with some level land around the perimeter of the valley. It would be most difficult to find another site that has reasonable vehicular access and intrudes less on the landscape.
5. I feel that this preferred site is sufficiently remote from the existing farmhouse that a dwelling for either the farmer or a worker would be necessary to maintain proper oversight of the stock being housed and tended in the new range of buildings. However, as this move is being planned in stages, it could be sensible to consider a planning application for a mobile home associated with the new building complex, pending the final outcome of the envisaged changes around Lower Manor Farmstead.

I hope the above does clarify things for you. If you do require any further information from me do not hesitate in contacting me.

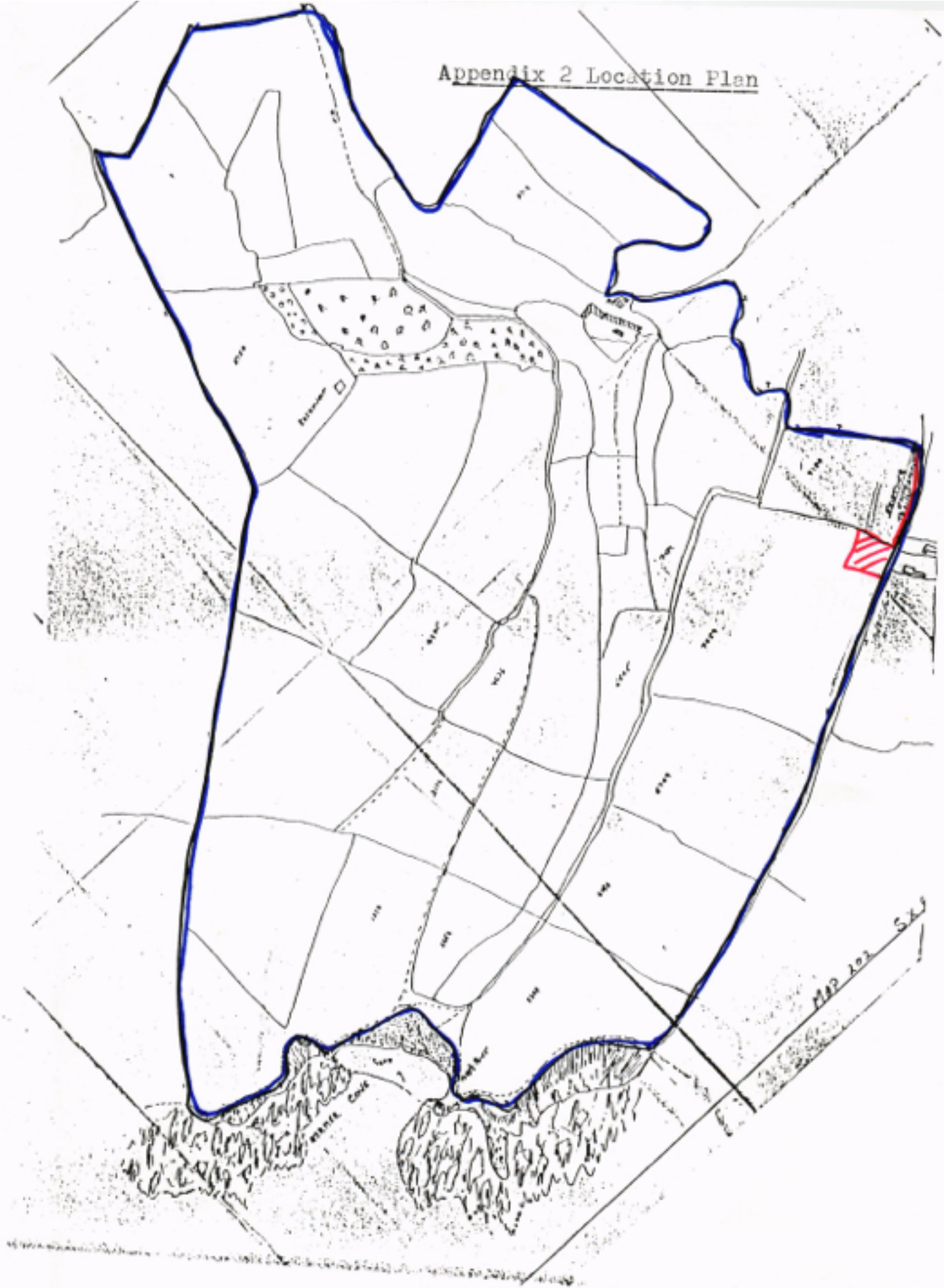
Yours sincerely,

John Mills.

P.S. I will be away until 16/5/88



Appendix 2 Location Plan

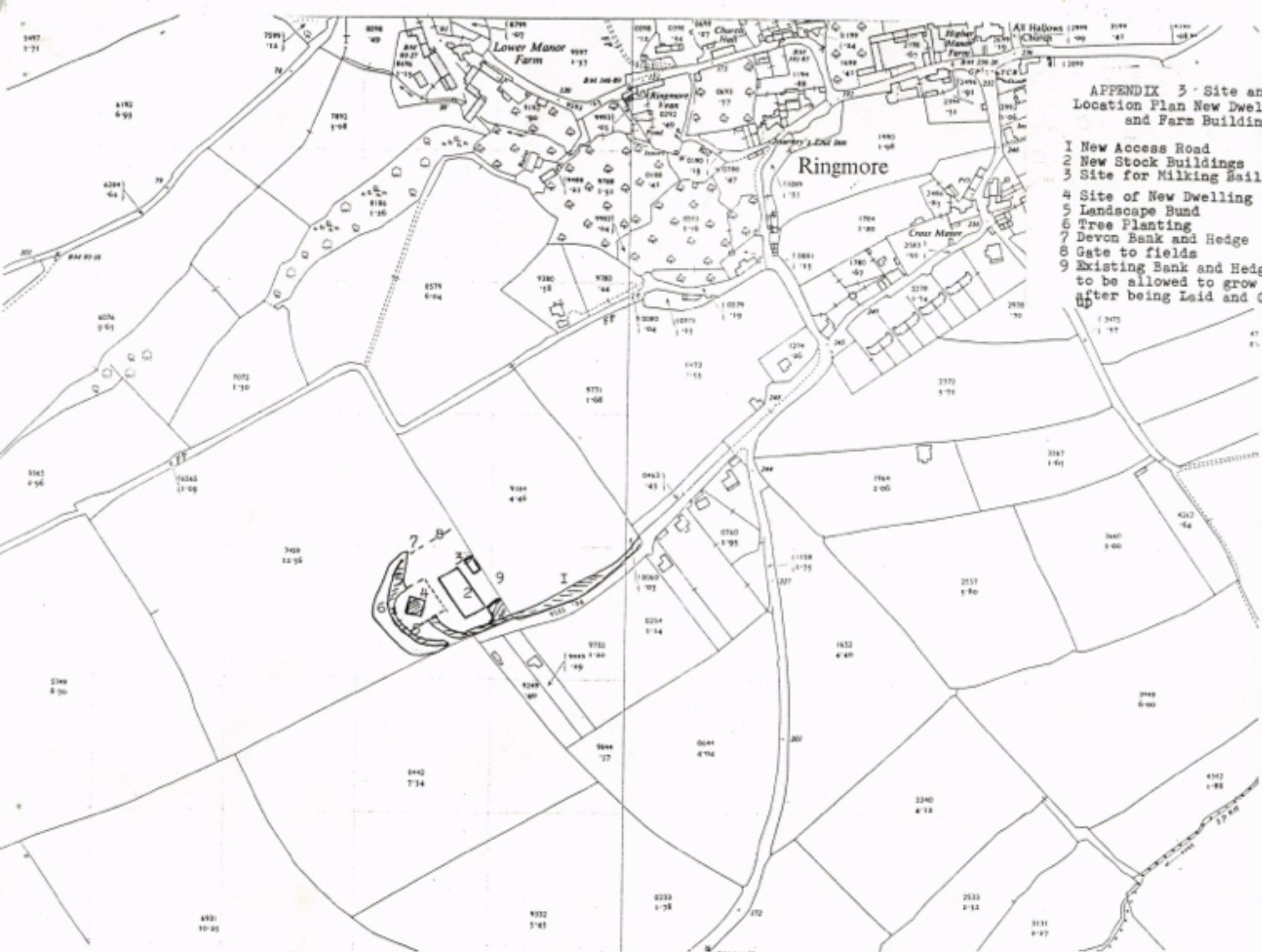


Farm Boundary



Site of New Farm Buildings





**APPENDIX 3 Site and Location Plan New Dwelling and Farm Buildings**

- 1 New Access Road
- 2 New Stock Buildings
- 3 Site for Milking Bail
- 4 Site of New Dwelling
- 5 Landscape Bund
- 6 Tree Planting
- 7 Devon Bank and Hedge
- 8 Gate to fields
- 9 Existing Bank and Hedge to be allowed to grow on after being Laid and Capped