

AGRICULTURAL APPRAISAL

on behalf of

THE TRUSTEES OF THE DOWNES ESTATE SETTLEMENT

in justification of a proposed storage/irrigation lake sited at

**DUNSCOMBE FARM
NEWTON ST CYRES
EXETER
DEVON
EX5 5BB**

taken and made

Friday 23rd March 2012

by

Mr L C Bird BSc (Hons) MRICS

of

PASSMORE WRIGHT & COMPANY
Chartered Surveyors and Land Agents
**23 THE QUAY
BIDEFORD
NORTH DEVON
EX39 2EZ**

Dated 30th March 2012

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Verbal instructions have been received from Mr Steven Sherry on behalf of the Trustees of the Downes Estate Settlement to prepare an Agricultural/Justification Appraisal in support of a Planning Application for the provision of a storage/irrigation lake on land belonging to the Trustees and which forms part of the Downes Estate.

This Appraisal is to be prepared in accordance with national, regional and local planning policy guidance, notwithstanding the recent introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework, which came into force last week.

2.0 INSPECTION

An inspection of the proposed site was carried out on Friday 23rd March 2012.

Relevant plans relating to the proposed scheme have been sighted and taken into account when considering the justification of the scheme.

3.0 FARMING HISTORY

The Downes Estate is situated on the fringes of the mid Devon town of Crediton and extends to approximately 1400 acres and includes a principle mansion house.

The home farm is let and extends to approximately 419 acres of predominantly arable land, together with a beef cattle enterprise.

There are two further let dairy units, including Fordton Barton, which extends to 203 acres and supports a milking herd of 70 cows plus followers, and a small beef herd. Uton Barton extends to 327 acres and is a commercial dairy farm supporting a dairy herd of 300 cows plus followers and a beef enterprise.

The land at Dunscombe, which will be the site of the proposed lake, is a separate block of agricultural land extending to approximately 246 acres and which is occupied and farmed by the tenants of Uton Barton. This block of land is mixed pasture and arable and accommodates followers to support the main dairy enterprise. There are further miscellaneous blocks of agricultural land and woodland extending to approximately 110 acres.

It is understood that parts of the estate and particularly the farm land at Dunscombe is susceptible to drought, whereby the soils are generally thin and crop yields suffer considerable in dry conditions. This situation has been exacerbated over the past few years with the lower than average rainfall that has occurred.

There is currently no provision for harvesting water on the estate and the intention is that so as to reduce the risk of crops being affected by drought and to relieve the reliance upon the mains water supply to service the stock that a manmade lake is provided for impounding water for irrigation and in-house consumption.

4.0 DESCRIPTION

4.0.1 Proposed Lake

The proposed scheme is for a manmade lake with a maximum capacity of 63,645 cubic metres and which will basically be formed by using the natural contours of the land with the provision of a new dam structure to the east and some back-filling and re-grading to form the northern boundary (as per the attached plans).

4.02 Location

The lake is to be situated on land approximately 2 miles to the east of Crediton town, easily accessible off the main A377 Crediton to Exeter road. The area in question forms part of the Downes Estate, is known as Dunscombe and Lower Dunscombe and the proposed lake itself will be situated approximately 100 metres or so to the south west of Lower Dunscombe Cottages.

It will be accessed off an unclassified 'no through road' via a newly formed hardcore track, which will be retained following completion of the construction works for agricultural and maintenance access purposes to the lake.

Due to the topography of the surrounding ground and being situated within a natural valley, some 300 metres or so from the main road, the lake will be mostly concealed from view other than to the occupiers of Lower Dunscombe and, to a lesser extent, Dunscombe Farm. Screening by way of soft and hard landscaping is to be provided.

There are a number of land drains, natural springs and the remnants of an historic mill leat which run along the bottom of the valley and generally the land where the lake is to be provided is fairly wet and rushy. Therefore its loss as agricultural land will not have significant impact on the current farming regime.

5.0 JUSTIFICATION

Having carried out an inspection of the land and sighted the drawings relating to the proposed lake it is considered that in terms of its size and scale it is wholly commensurate with the existing farming enterprise that it is designed to support.

Due to the lower annual rainfall and potential for drought a storage and irrigation lake such as this is now an essential part of any farms toolkit for securing water. It enables the occupier to store winter water and avoid the uncertainties of summer drought and possible restrictions. It provides security and flexibility by enabling the user to balance water supply with demand. It can be extracted when it is readily available and store it for times when it is needed.

The provision of the lake will enhance wildlife habitat in the area and it can help reduce environmental impacts of summer extraction and reduce the risk associated with potential water conflicts in the catchment area.

It is recognised that water resources are under increasing pressure and so it is incumbent on everyone, particularly agriculture, to use water wisely. The Environment Agency and government now promotes the ‘twin track’ approach for all water users – firstly managing demand and where there is not enough water developing new resources. Effective management of water demand is considered best practice and will be a requirement in the future for licence applications, changes and renewals. Where demand management is not enough, storing high flows for use in the summer will be an important option to consider for increasing supply.

Therefore taking account of the above, the suitability of the land and its location it is considered that the provision of a storage and irrigation lake of this size to serve the Downes Estate is highly justifiable.

6.0 PROVENANCE

This Appraisal is prepared in accordance with the terms of Paragraph I22 of the Planning Policy Guidance Notes 7, Annex I, providing independent unbiased advice.

It is based on the information provided by the owners Agent and produced by a Professional Member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and the holder of an Honours Degree in Estate Management from the University of Northumbria.

The writer has prepared numerous appraisals for District Councils in the locality and has attended Planning Appeals in respect of agricultural occupancy conditions and other agricultural/justification appraisals and has a suitable knowledge of agriculture within the locality.

End of Report.

Signed _____ **Date** _____
Lester Bird BSc (Hons) MRICS
Chartered Surveyor

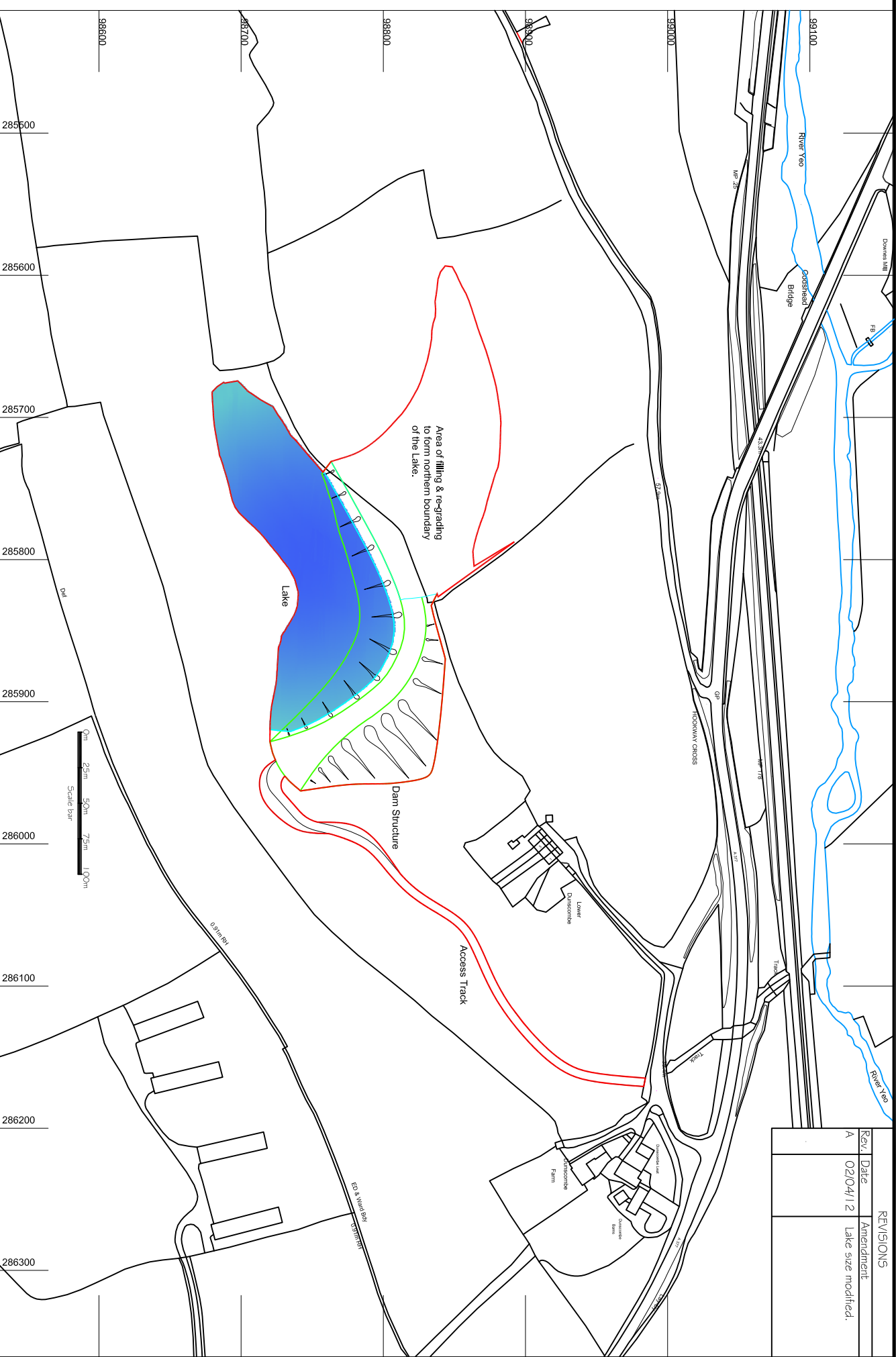
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23 The Quay
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APPENDIX 1

Proposed Plans

(for informative & identification purposes only)

REVISIONS	
Rev.	Date
A	02/04/12
	Lake size modified.

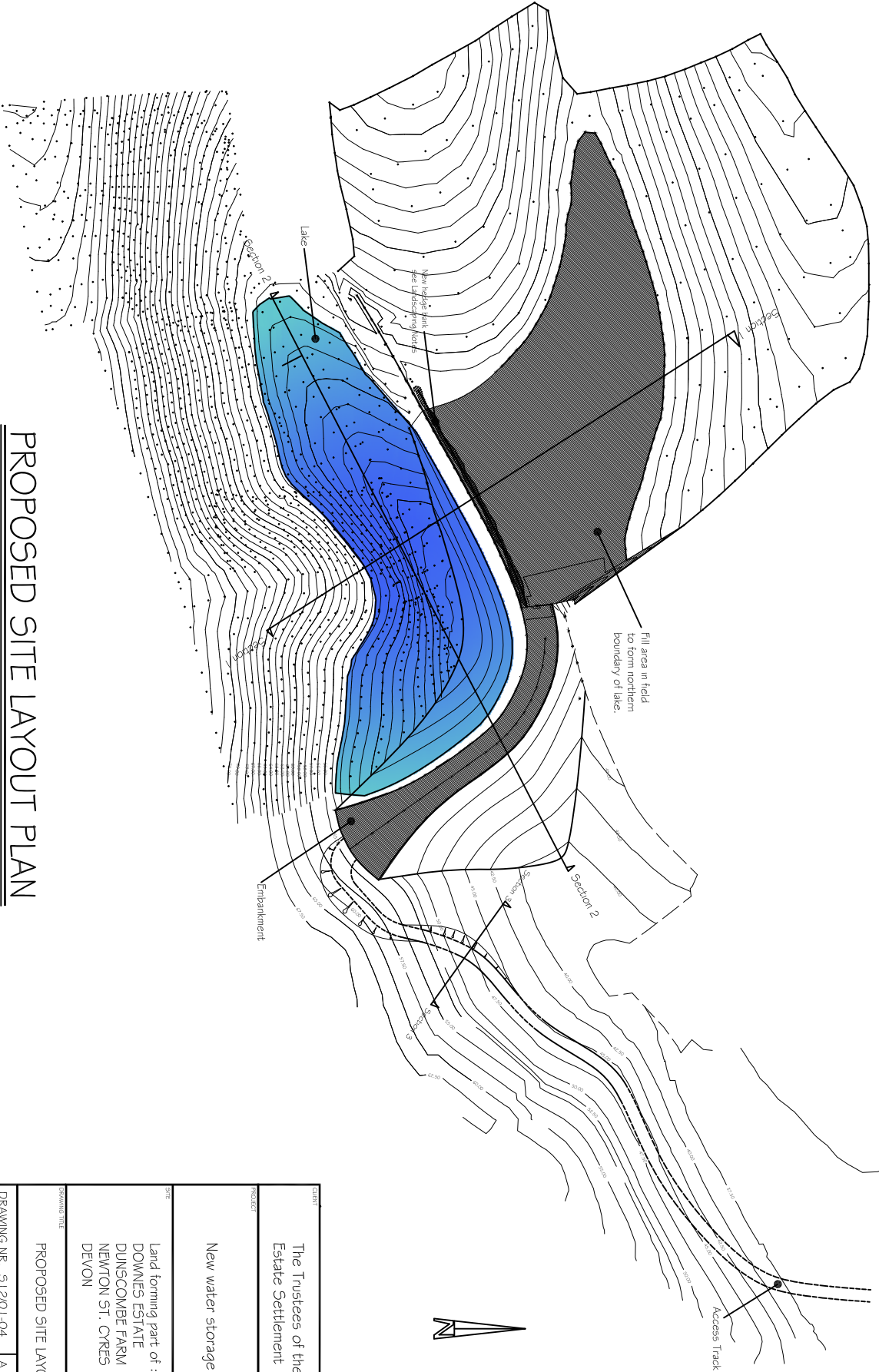


Site land : part of Dowries Estate Duncombe Farm Newton St Cyres	Project Water Storage Lake	Date : Jan. 2012	Drawing Nr. S12/01-02	A	Drawing Title SITE LAYOUT PLAN
<small>Reproduced from Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office (© Crown Copyright number AL2776.</small>		<small>Scale 1 : 2,500 @ A3</small>			

1. All dimensions are in metres. All levels are in metres, relative to AOD, unless otherwise stated.
2. Construction must detail all dimensions on site. Only a signed statement is valid and is to be reported to the Council Administrator immediately.
3. This drawing must be read in conjunction with S1 (201) - Section 46(4)(g).
4. This drawing is the copyright of S J & C Sherry. It may not be reproduced in whole or part without the written agreement of S J & C Sherry.

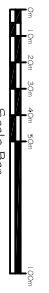
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REVISIONS	
Number	Description
1	Issue
2	Initial issue released. No content of data released.



PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT PLAN

1 : 1,000



OWNER	The Trustees of the Doves Estate Settlement		
PRODUCED BY	New water storage Lake		
DATE	Land forming part of: DOWNES ESTATE DUNSCOMBE FARM NEWTON ST. CREES DEVON		
DRAWING TITLE	PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT PLAN		
DRAWING NR.	S1/201-04	A	
DATE	March 2012	Scale	1 : 1,000 @ A1
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