

## LITTLE HAVEN

### *Introduction*

Little Haven is an attractive sea side village whose plan form has been dictated by bold coastal geomorphology. This land-form combined with its relatively protected location at the south eastern side of St Bride's Bay, are the principal elements in dictating its layout and development history. Today a holiday village, Little Haven also has industrial antecedents based on coal deposits that were worked up until the third quarter of the 19th century. It was also a fishing village and sea-side resort. It had become a watering place by the late 18th century, with subsequent development phases in the early 1800s and again in the 1860s, when many of its present houses were built.

### *Early History and Name*

The locality is well represented with small defended enclosures and hillforts suggesting that the land was well settled and cultivated during the Iron Age. However no clear evidence exists to show what was happening in the area thereafter. Little Haven stood within the lordship of Walwin's Castle. The stream that divides the village forms the boundary between the parishes of Walton West and Talbenny, both of which are medieval in origin. Walton parish church contains an early Christian stone of 10th century date consisting of a fully-developed Latin wheel cross with monograms. Its existence suggests that the church predates the coming of the Normans. Very little seems to have been recorded about the village before the 18th century, so we cannot be sure if any settlement existed during the Middle Ages. A mill is recorded in 1789 (but when first built has not been established). The characteristic shape of the field pattern to the east and south-east of the village is suggestive of medieval open field cultivation, and it is therefore probable that corn was grown there during the Middle Ages. One of the two mills extant in the 19th century was known as Howelston Mill, (the Howell family of Howelston is recorded from c. 1250), so it is possible that a medieval mill may have existed within the village.

As a place-name Little Haven needs little explanation other than to note the obvious, that its north-west facing cove is clearly smaller than its neighbour Broad Haven. Its first appearance in written history is on Christopher Saxton's map of 1578, when the Tudor map maker recorded it as 'the Lytel haven', interestingly some years before Broad Haven's appearance in George Owen's map of 1602. The drying inlet that forms the 'haven' is open to the north west, but well sheltered from the NE to WSW. This allowed the cove to function in settled weather for the use of coastal craft. Outside the haven mouth, to the south-west, is a deeper all tide-anchorage within Borough Head. This is known as Goultrop Roads, a place-name of Scandinavian origin first recorded in 1422. B. G. Charles argues that it consists of two elements *galtic* 'boar' and *hop* 'inlet' or 'bay', suggesting that 'wild boars perhaps hunted the cliffs'. More interesting for Little Haven's early history is the fact that Vikings must have used the roadstead and perhaps the adjoining haven as an anchorage and port. Little Haven appears to have developed into its present form during the 19th century. As late as the 1830s (when the OS one-inch map was published) it consisted of just a few buildings huddled around a convergence of four roads at the head of the Haven, but increasingly expanded as the century progressed.

### *Economic History*

The village seems to have developed as a result of a number of economic activities: fishing, milling, coal extraction and as a seaside resort.

**Milling:** a mill is first recorded in 1789 and two mills are shown on the OS map of 1874 (1st edn. 6") both drawing water through leats from the village stream. The upper mill, known as Howelston Mill, is in Talbenny parish and the lower mill (?Little Haven Mill) in Walton West. It is uncertain if the upper mill was working in 1874 as its leat appears only as a hachured earthwork and is not named as a leat. Because the village stream forms the boundary between two parishes, the two halves of the village appear on respective tithe maps, making interpretation of map evidence difficult. (It would appear that both mill buildings are shown on the Talbenny map, but only the lower mill is on Walton West's). The lower mill leat, marked as 'Old Mill Race' by the OS, terminated at a small rectangular building which formerly stood at the widened entrance to the dinghy park/RNLI station from Grove Place (next to Mill House). The mill appears to have been demolished well before this redevelopment. The main body of the leat survives in part at the car park's eastern boundary and formerly had a secondary function in providing the village with water (supplemented by a well in the St Bride's Hotel). The tail race, where it re-enters the village stream, survives behind Bridge House. Either of these two mill sites could be considerably earlier than the 18th century.

**Fishing:** Milford Haven's proximity and its dominance in inshore and offshore fishing, meant that the small harbours and coves of St Bride's Bay could never develop significantly as fishing harbours. However in past centuries, when fishing stocks were still comparatively good, small craft would have plied St Bride's Bay and the off islands for white- and shell-fish. A few local boats still set pots, but this is a summer activity, and was probably always so. Fenton speaks of the abundance of local fish. Clearly there must have been numerous building and spaces around the haven mouth for the storage of nets, rope and pots, and for the maintenance and even building of vessels, which would be hauled well clear of high water during the winter months. Ships' carpenters and shipwrights are referred to in 19th century census returns.

**Coal** must have been worked in the area at a early date, for George Owen refers to one of Pembrokeshire two main seams as rising in Talbenny, and this is probably the area around Woodlands which was being worked in the 19th century. The history of this end of Pembrokeshire's coal industry is yet to be written. As a result very little documentation has been discovered to elaborate on coal working at Little Haven. Lewis Morris, writing in the mid 18th century, speaks of 'several coal-works in the neighbourhood'. Fenton, who speaks of the excellence of the coal, notes that the trade was carried on by 'country vessel' during the summer and that a customs' officer was resident 'to clear them out'. After the slump of the 1820s the Simpson Estate near Nolton was sold in 1836, and special mention is made then of coal pits. In 1837 a lease was signed for the Woodland pits. It is certain that numerous pits were being worked in the 1840s, for a tenant of the Goldmyer estate wrote stating that 12 new pits had been sunk 'without our knowledge' or the estates permission! Some of these seem to have been in the Woodlands area. In 1850 there were two drift mines at South Wood which were working until 1887. In 1854 there is yet another record of Little Haven pits being worked. On the large scale OS map of 1874 the fields east of Woodlands are marked with earthworks, hollows and rough ground, the remains of coal workings which today have been largely levelled by ploughing. No working pits are in evidence in 1874. The network of footpaths and lanes running down from Woodlands into the village are the vestiges of the transport infrastructure that must have been used to carry coal down to the foreshore, where coastal vessels dried out in settled weather. In the village some warehousing or storage yards must have existed for holding stocks (a yard where the village hall stands was apparently so used). Since little in the way of workers' housing survives or ever existed close to the actual workings we must surmise that housing was in the village itself.

**Tourism:** There are traditions of a pilgrimage route from St Ishmael's to St David's known as the 'Welsh Way'. It is also said that pilgrims travelling by sea would sometimes disembark here for St

David's (perhaps when the wind made entrance to Solva or Porth Clais difficult?). Little Haven appears to have become a resort by the first decade of the 19th century at a time when the Prince Regent had made seaside resorts fashionable. The most prominent building on the 1831 map is Manor House which by the 1841 tithe survey shows it was an inn. Built in 1814 for Rowland Laugharne of Orlandon, St Brides, a *Carmarthen Journal* advertisement of that date describes the village as a 'celebrated bathing place'. Fenton, writing about the same date waxes lyrical about Broad Haven's virtues (which can be applied to Little Haven): it was only seven miles from Haverfordwest where many of the 'gentry and fashionables of that place . . . pass the greater part of the summer'. Its air was 'remarkable salubrious, coming laden with salts wafted over St Bride's Bay, and the sea, being quite pure and unmixed' because it received 'no influx of fresh water'. He notes that bathing was admirable 'either in a machine on the fine sands, or in the retired coves'. However, the development of the village as a resort cannot be seen in isolation because coal mining and fishing would also have demands for workers' housing, stores and other buildings.

**Development in the 19th century** was thus motivated by the activities already noted, with tourism being the most dominant. By the second quarter of the century the rebuilding of St David's Cathedral by Gilbert Scott and the improvements in communication meant that the St Bride's Bay coastal villages saw increasing numbers of summer visitors. In the 1860s the Goldwyer family (who were the major owners of property in the Walton West tithe apportionment, including the lower mill) sold off the Broad Haven estate, which released many plots for development. The development towards Broad Haven clearly dates from this period, with the battlemented Haven Fort Hotel (formerly The Havens) exemplifying High Victorian Gothic. Most if not all the houses on the Broad Haven side also date from this period, including Pen Dyffryn, which was built has a guest house. On the steep road at Walton Hill stands Rock Terrace, a house which appears belong to an earlier style (cf. the Manor House). On the Talbenny side of the village we can see contemporary development. From the style of many of the buildings there was an equally major expansion in the third quarter of the century. Good examples are the three-storeyed Clifton House and its partners, which appear to be the work of the same architect/builder. Further up on the same side are the overgrown remains of terraced gardens. Beyond these, on St Bride's Road, is a row of four single-storied cottages whose proximity on the way down from the coal workings favours their use as colliers' houses. Their gardens are sufficiently large to keep the customary pig.

Within the village there is a profusion of small cottages which probably served as dwellings for the families of colliers and fishermen. Today the only undeveloped building representative of what must have been a storehouse, survives on the bank behind The Castle public house. Spiritual needs were met by the non-conformists: Tabernacle Baptist Chapel (alas replaced by architecturally inappropriate dwellings in 1973) was built in 1812 and rebuilt 1842 according to the date-stone that has been incorporated into the present maisonettes. A Wesleyan meeting house was also built at Wesley Road. Within the centre a single storeyed police cottage of 1850 in Pennant sandstone survives (as a dwelling). The bridge dates from 1816. There was a village lifeboat from about the middle of the 19th century (although originally launched in Goultrop Roads). The flag-staff towards The Point (which is shown in numerous old photographs and the large scale OS map), may well have functioned to display signals, like storm warnings, to mariners. The nearby cottage is said to have function as a store for the RNLI, but a coastguard store/lookout seems more logical. At The Point itself is rectangular stone structure. This functions as a seating place where shelter can be found from any quarter (there is no evidence for any beacon). By the end of the century the process of expansion had evidently slowed and the settlement matured. In 1895 Timmins was a little patronising when he noted: '...a few fishermen's cottages, a homely inn and a handful of lodging houses clambering up the nearward hill, form the sum of this most diminutive of watering-places'.

## ***Settlement Plan Form and Key Characteristics within the conservation area***

To some extent Little Haven is unique as a coastal village: it is perhaps more reminiscent of Cornwall than Wales with its narrow streets and cottages. It is fundamentally a route centre with four roads radiating from it with the sea providing a fifth and vital branch in the transport network. There is no church or early structure at its core (other than the bridge), so we must conclude that the haven itself formed the original attraction for these converging routes. The present street layout was therefore predetermined by the presence of existing roads. The village stream also played a critical part with its mill races, and the lower mill site, despite being flattened, still has some archaeological significance. (The upper mill, now a dwelling, and the coal pits are outside the conservation area). Because of the limits imposed on space, the only way the village could develop as a resort in the later 19th century was to move up hill on the slopes towards Broad Haven and St Bride's Road. This was in any case making a virtue out of necessity, because many higher properties have the best views of the bay and stand on lands released by the sale of the Broad Haven estate. The other elements of the conservation area are natural: the haven is formed by imposing sea cliffs with their caves. The only archaeological features of consequence here are possible shafts into the coal bearing rocks at a high level, which are safe from all but natural threats.

### **Maps:**

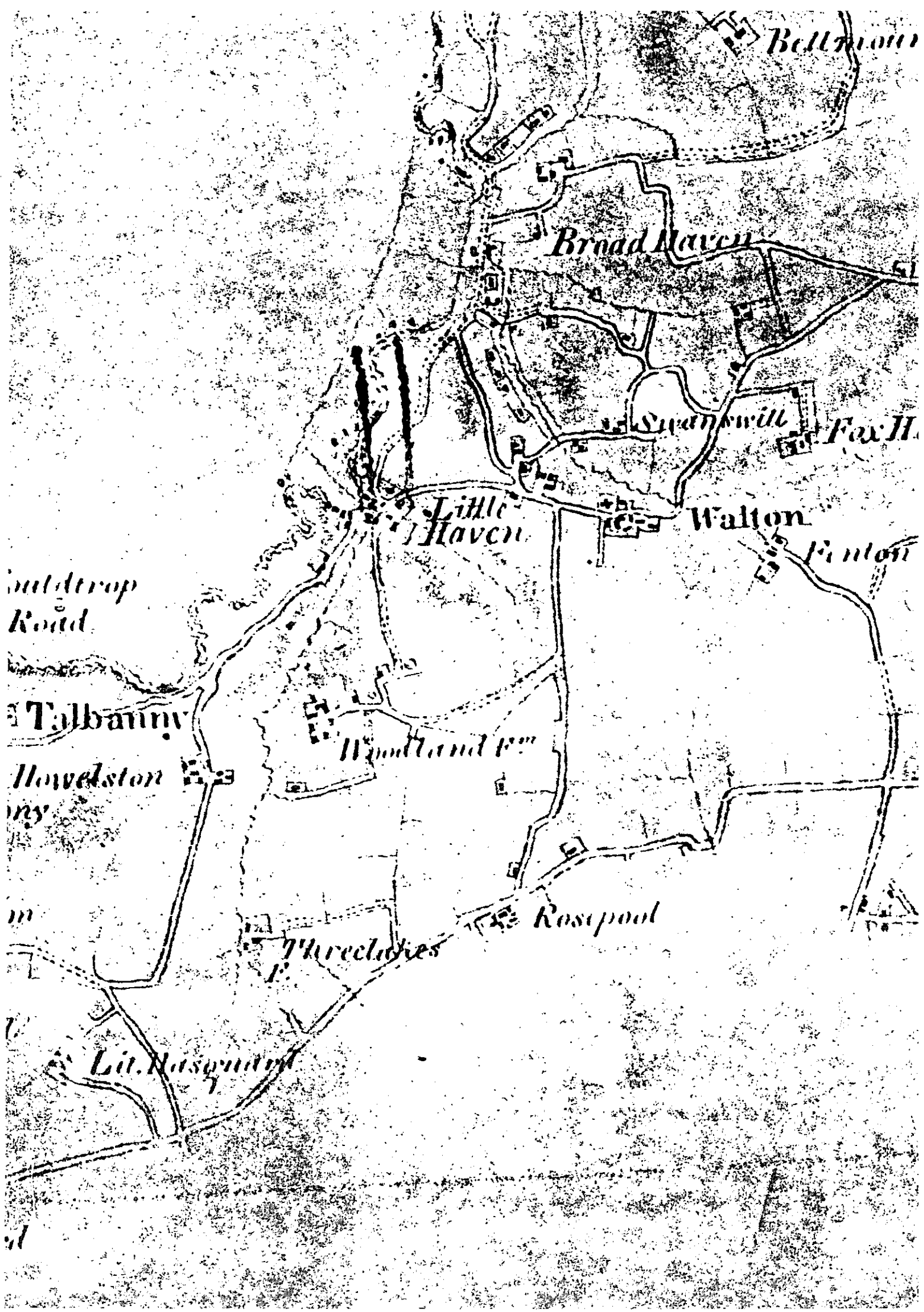
OS Surveyors Original Drawing 2" to the mile (enlargement)  
Tithe Maps (extracts) Walton West and Talbenny parishes.  
OS 6" 1st and 2nd editions.  
OS 25" 2nd edition  
Conservation Area (annotated)  
Listing Descriptions.  
SMR Map extract.

### **Bibliography:**

B G Charles: *The Place-names of Pembrokeshire*. 2 vols. NLW 1992  
R Fenton: *Historical Tour through Pembrokeshire* 1811.  
Pembrokeshire County History, vols. III and IV  
Little Haven and village (Little Haven and Talbenny Amenities Assn. Ladies' Guild (undated)  
H. Thornhill Timmins *Nooks and Corners of Pembrokeshire* 1895.  
John Harry *The Pembrokeshire Coalfield* DCC, 1990.

### **SMR Gazetteer:**

<i>primary record number</i>	<i>site type</i>	
13826	Common land	The Point
15317	chapel	Talbenny Congregational
15324	millrace	earthwork
32729	sea defences	modern & slipway
32730	bridge	small, stone.
32731	coal mining features	The Settlands
36179	mill	ident from OS 1895
36180	mill	..



Bellmouth

Broad Haven

Swanwill

Fox H.

Walton

Finton

Little Haven

Outdrop Road

Talbanny

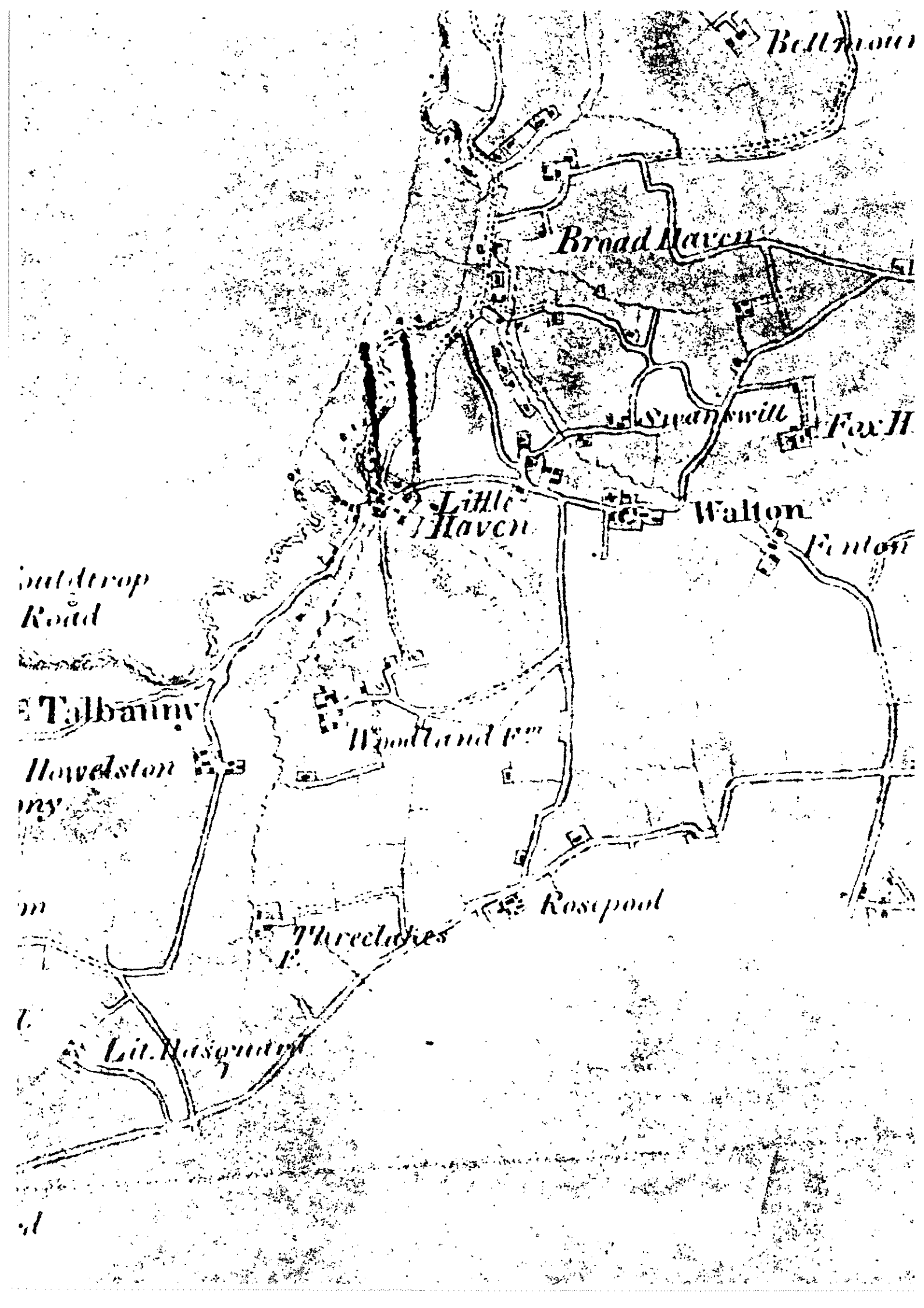
Howelston

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Rosepool

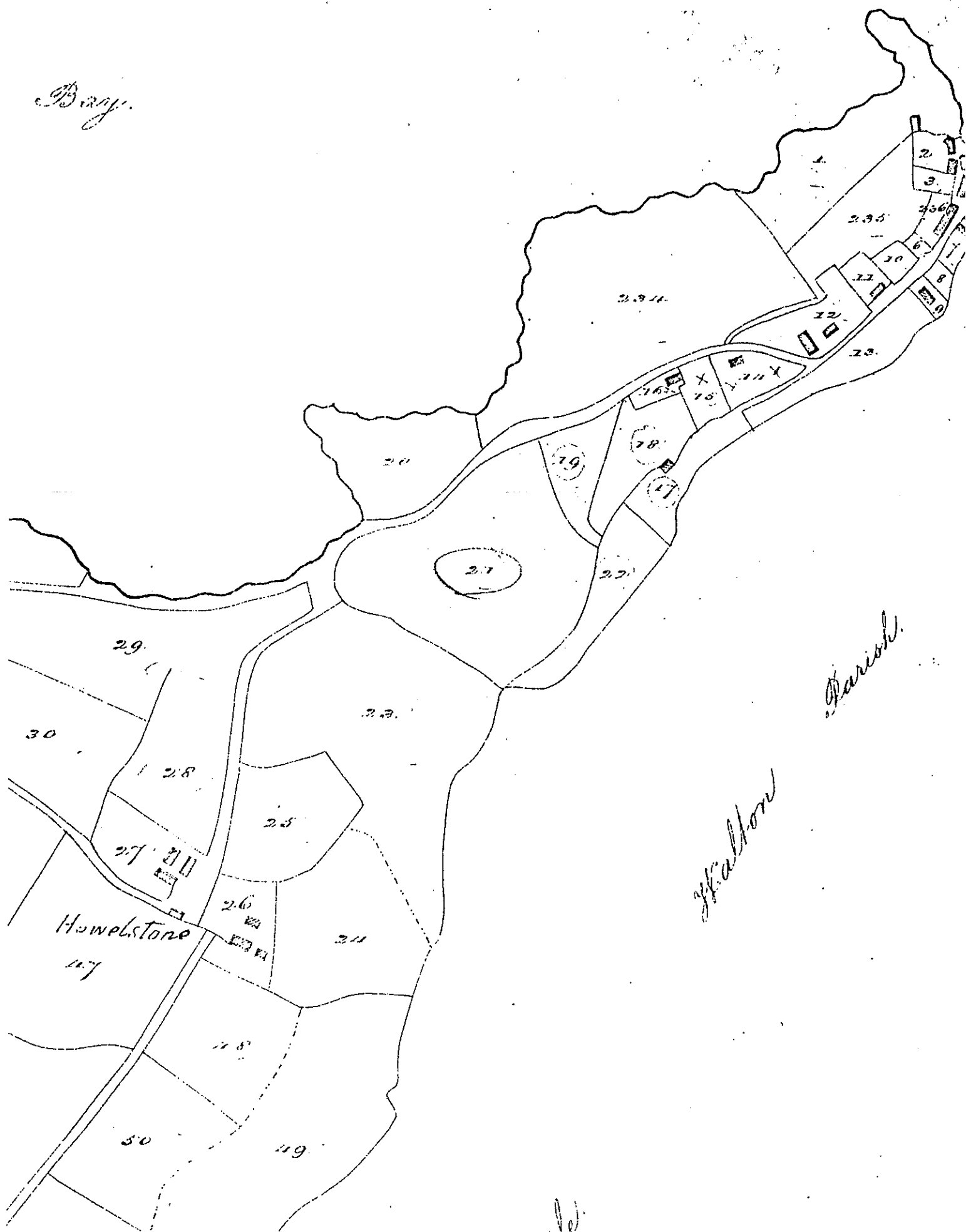
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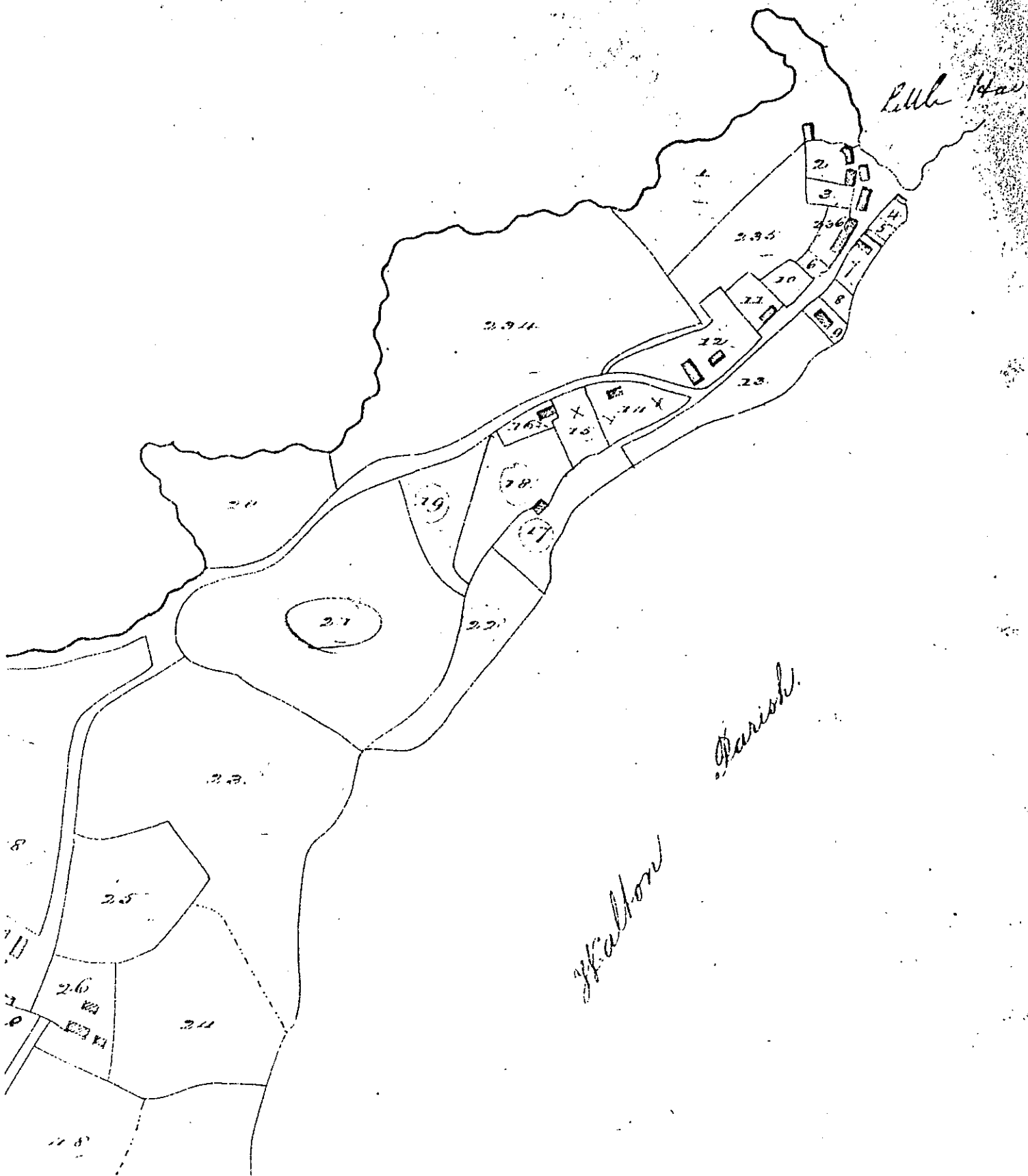


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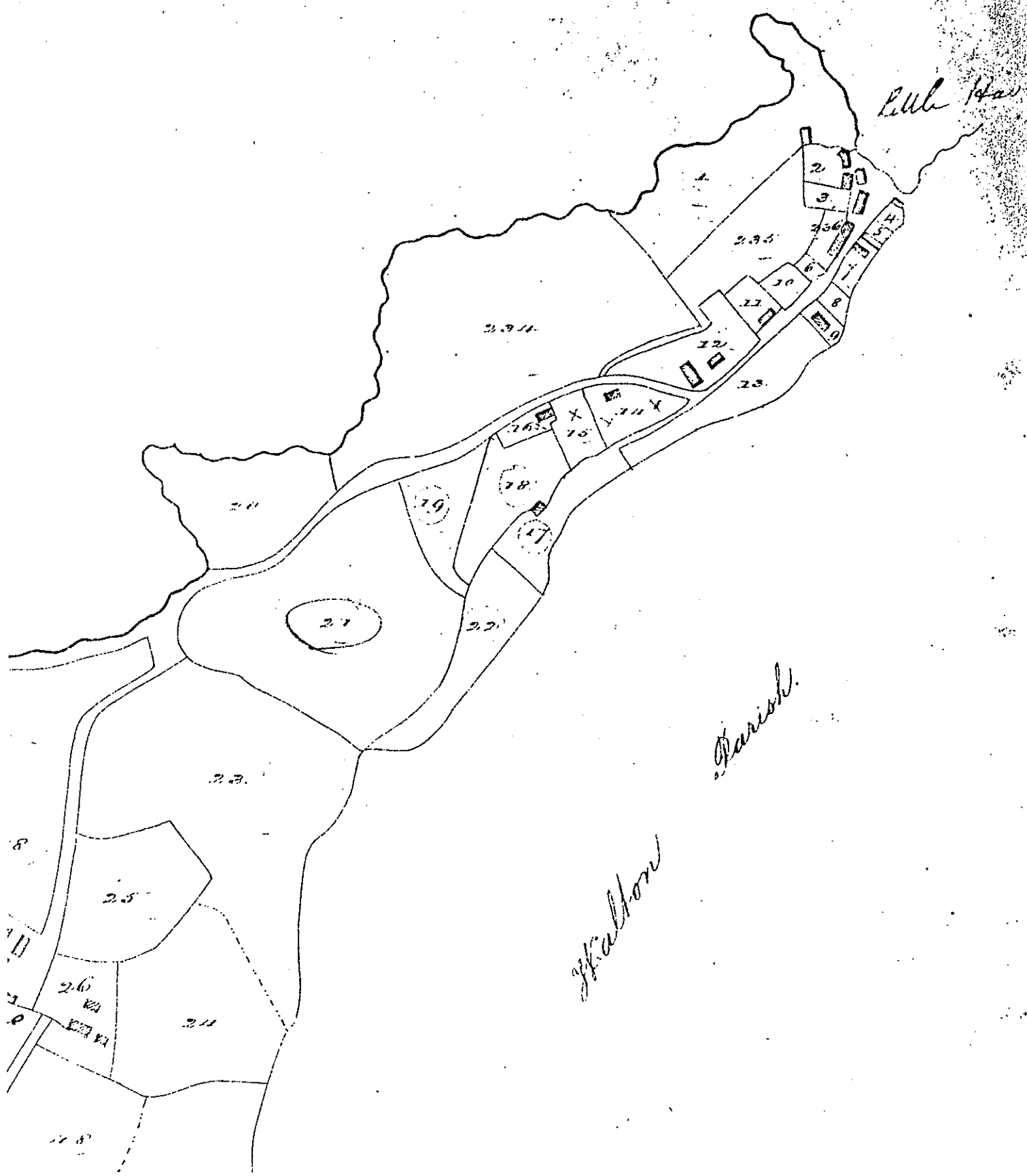


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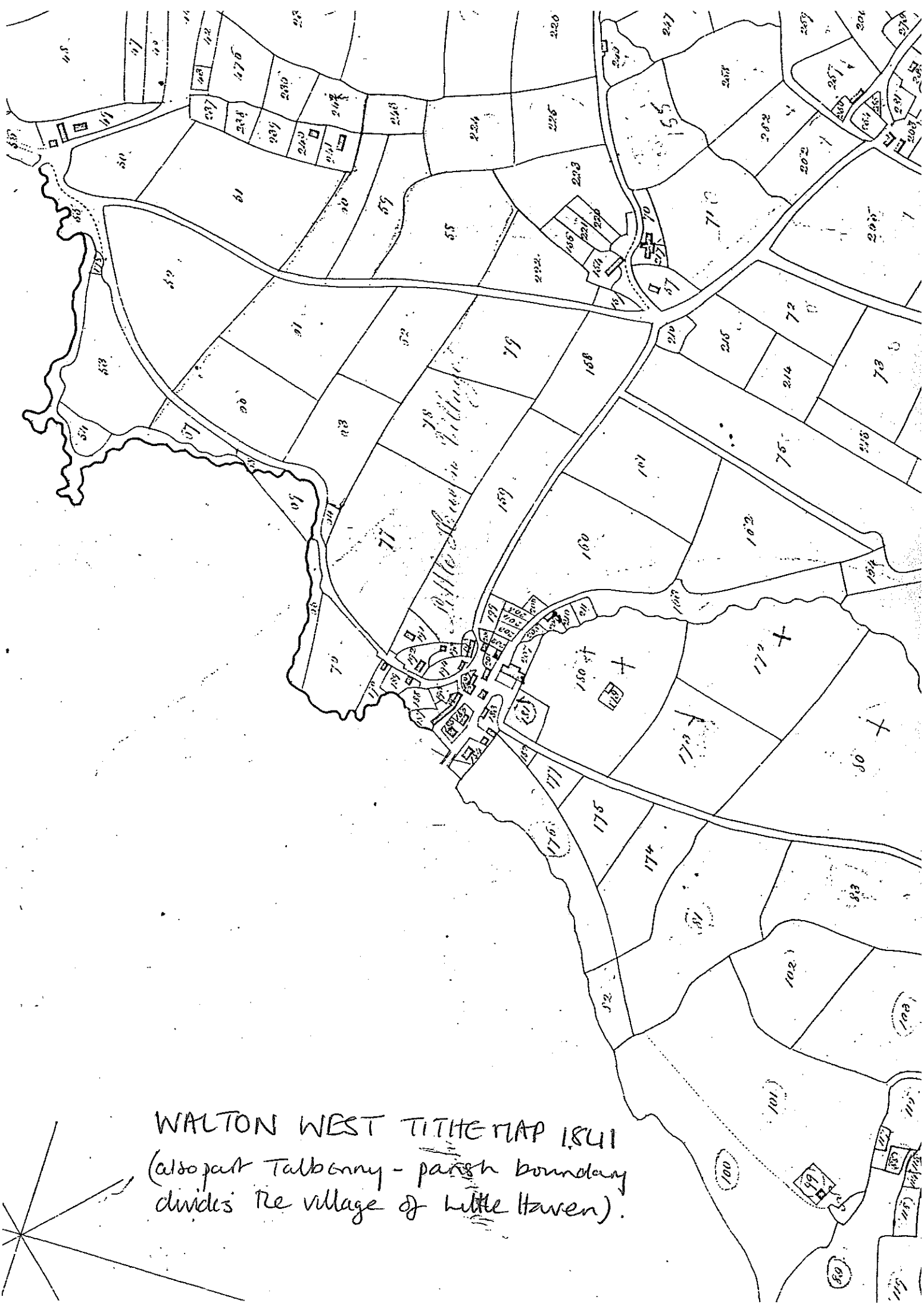


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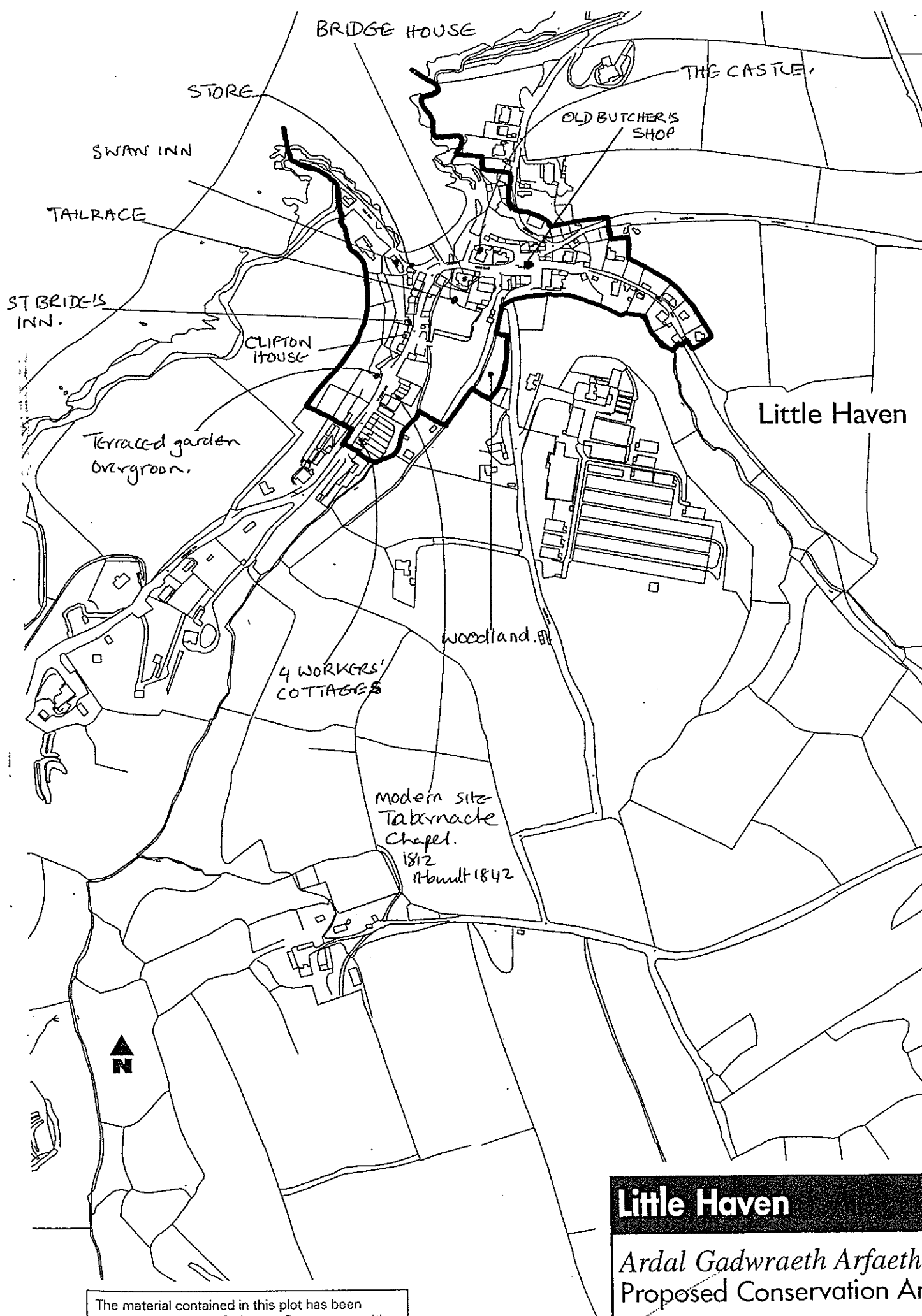
Talbenny Tithe Map 1839.  
The stream (highlighted in blue )  
through the middle of Little Haven  
marks the boundary between Talbenny and  
Walton West parishes.

Walton West Tithe Map 1841.  
The stream, highlighted in blue,  
marks the boundary with Talbenny Parish.



WALTON WEST TITHE MAP 1841  
(also part Talbenny - parish boundary  
divides the village of Little Haven).





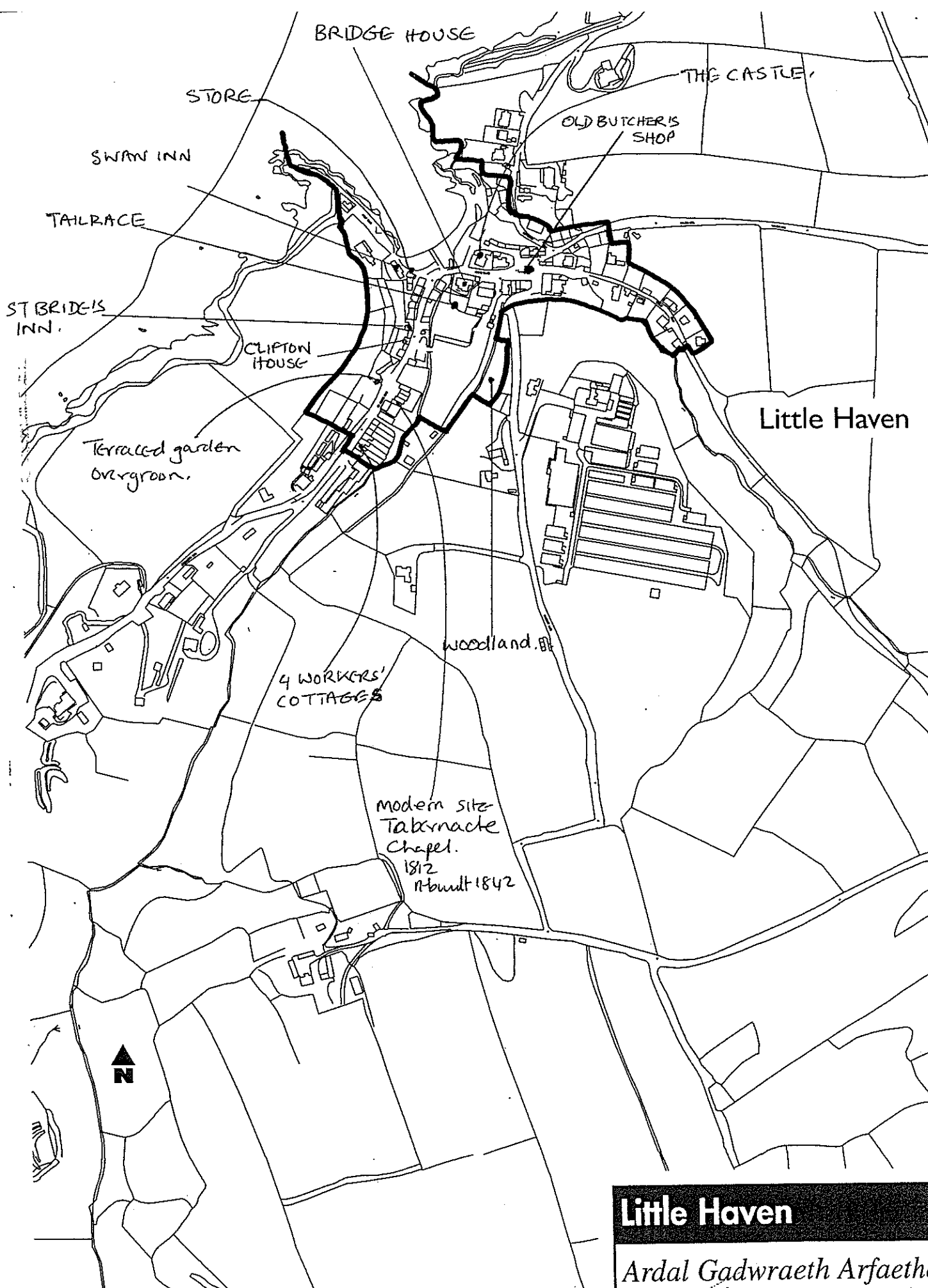
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## Little Haven

Ardal Gadwraeth Arfaeth  
Proposed Conservation Ar

Graddfa Scale 1:5000

Rhagfyr Decemb



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## Little Haven

Ardal Gadwraeth Arfaeth  
Proposed Conservation Area

Graddfa Scale 1:5000

Rhagfyr Decemb

Authority                   Pembrokeshire  
National Park           Pembrokeshire Coast  
Community              The Havens

Grade                    II  
Date Listed           26/11/1997

Locality                Little Haven  
Post Code               SA62 3LA

Grid Ref               1858 2131  
Record No              19098

Name                    Haven Fort Hotel

### Location

Situated on Settlands Hill, to the E of the road between Broad Haven and Little Haven.

### History

Prominent clifftop house in Gothic style, said to have been built about 1870 for a chairman of the Great Western Railway but the first records found, the 1871 Census shows the owner as Mrs Rebecca Goldwyer, of the Bristol family who owned the Broad Haven estate. It was then known as The Havens and it is marked on the 1875 O.S. map. The house seems to have been designed to have a picturesque fortress look when seen from the N.

### Exterior

Large marine villa. Rock-faced rubble stone in large squared blocks, and slate roofs. Chimneys removed. L-plan, 2 storeys and attic. W gable end, to sea, has heavy stepped corbelling to verges and raised cornerstones. Attic pointed window with Y-tracery to toplight to 2-light casement. 2 larger first floor pointed windows with Y-tracery toplights to casement pairs. Broad centre pointed ground floor window with triple casements and intersecting tracery to toplight. N front has 3-window range. Left side has cambered-headed triple casement with toplights each floor, ground floor window larger. Centre has large stone porch, flat roofed with parapets and coped taller angle piers. Two small pointed lancets to front, with lattice glazing, one similar to W and E side door. Above is pointed window with Y-tracery to casement-pair, and first floor right has similar window over two similar to ground floor right.

S side has single-storey dining-room C20 building in angle to SE rear wing. Rear wing has W side first floor two cambered-headed triple casements with top-lights. S gable is altered with C20 render. Cambered-headed windows, one to attic, two to first floor and one to ground floor. E side has flat roofed additions disguised by coped walls N and S.

A long corridor range runs NE with 4 similar pointed windows in the N wall, to link with a monopitch-roofed annexe. Annexe has N coped parapet and centre stone stack. N wall has iron-lattice lancets as on porch. Two to first floor left, three to ground floor left, one to ground floor right. Side walls have stepped coping, roof is of grouted slates and S front has window door window to left and altered pair of windows to right. Link range behind N wall is entirely rebuilt in C20.

### Listed

A substantial and largely unaltered Victorian marine villa in the gothic style and prominently placed on the clifftop.

### Reference

Information from the owners;  
Pembrokeshire Record Office, Census Records 1871 and O.S. map for 1875.

Authority	Pembrokeshire	Grade	II
National Park	Pembrokeshire Coast	Date Listed	26/11/1997
Community	The Havens		
Locality	Little Haven	Grid Ref	18580 21290
Post Code	SA62 3UG	Record No	19099
Name	Manor House		
Street No, Name	Grove Place		
Street Side	E		

#### Location

Situated in Grove Place, some 120m SE of the beach in Little Haven.

#### History

Early C19 house shown on the Walton West Tithe Map of 1841 as an inn, owned by Judith Phillips and occupied by William Crum. Little Haven was called a 'celebrated bathing place' in a sale advertisement of 1814 for a newly built substantial house of 2 bedrooms and 3 parlours, built for the late Rowland Laugharne of Orlandon, St Brides.

#### Exterior

Large village house with service wings. Rubble stone with concrete tiles and slates to roofs and end-wall stacks. Large three-storey, three-window main house with concrete tiles and stone end stacks, flanked asymmetrically by 2-storey wings with slate roofs. Outbuilding running W from front of S wing.

Main house has hornless sash windows with stone voussoirs and slate sills. 6-pane attic windows, 12-pane elsewhere and centre 6-panel door. Left wing, possibly originally a lofted carhouse has C20 rendered left end stack, two large C20 12-pane first floor windows and ground floor centre cambered-headed cart-entry and small 6-pane window to right. C20 glazing to cart-entry and to window.

Right wing is shorter, with rendered right end stack. One central 6-pane sash, ground floor left 12-pane hornless sash, and outbuilding to right.

Outbuilding has W gable end garage doors, inserted or altered in C20 and one N side 6-pane window.

#### Listed

A late Georgian house of unusual scale for the coastal villages of the region.

#### Reference

Carmarthen Journal, 19/8/1814;  
National Library of Wales, Walton West Tithe Map, 1841.



12000 Feet

ATLANTIC OCEAN

ST BRIDES BAY

LAT. 51° 47' 14"

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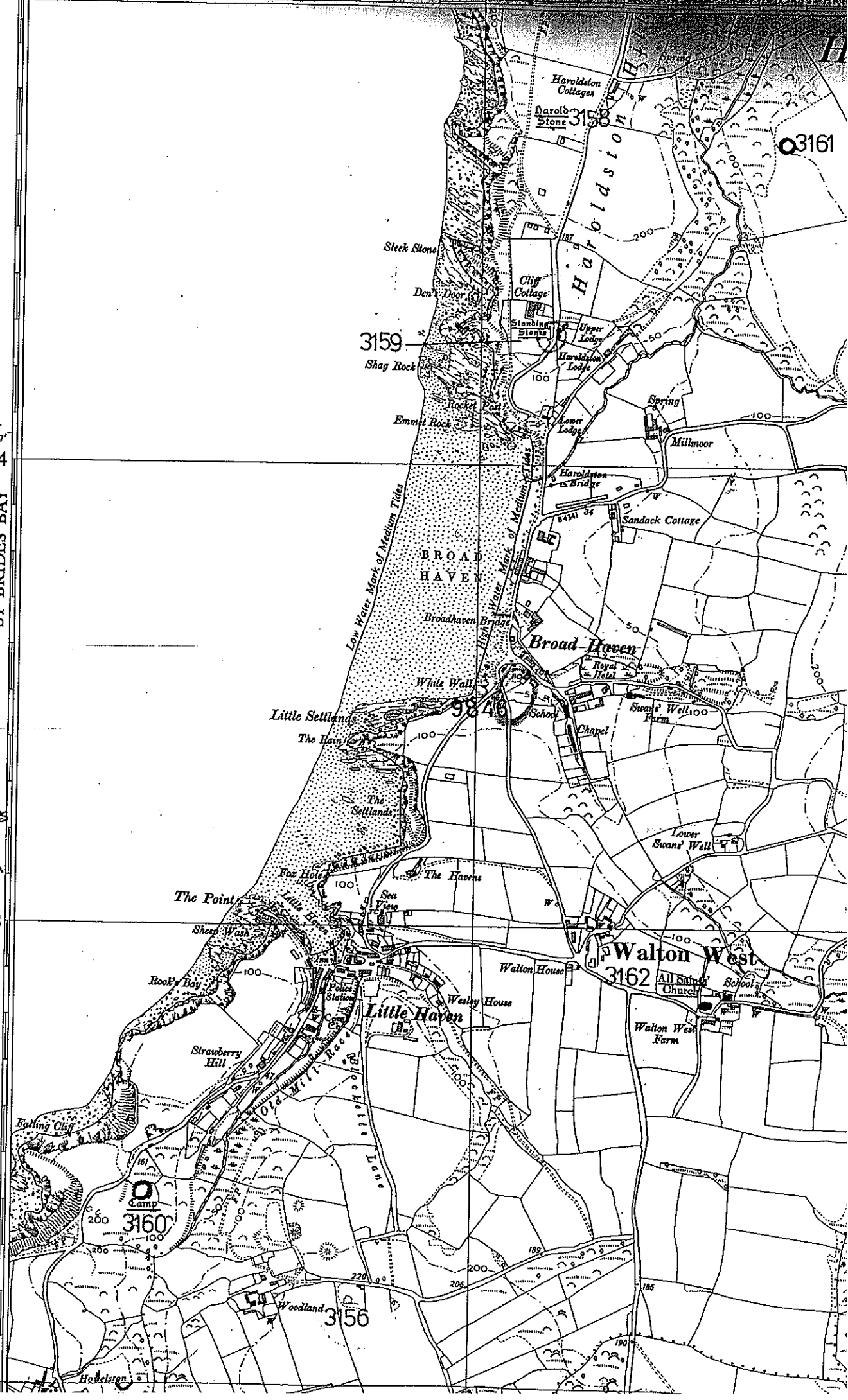
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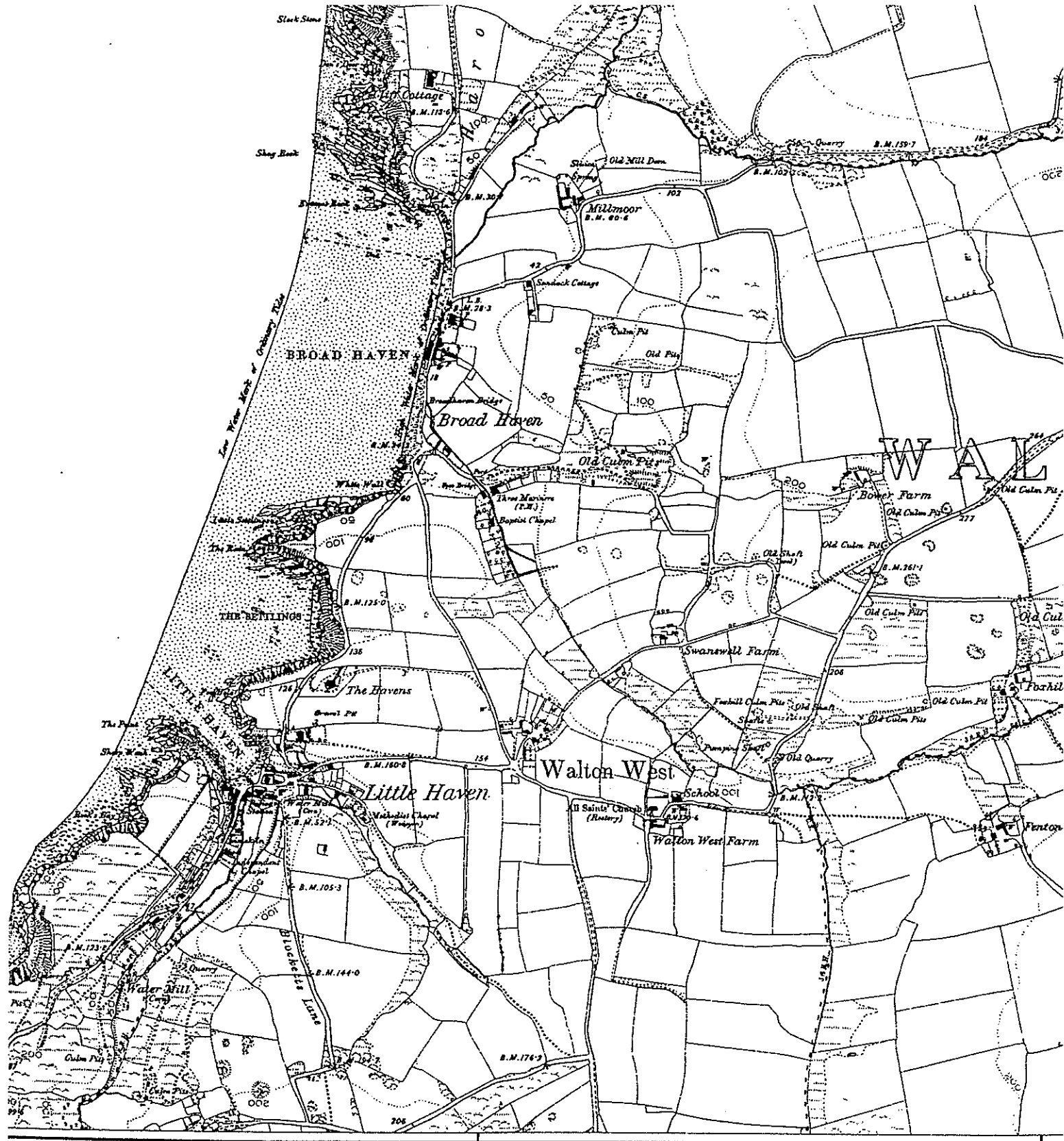
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NNY  
 (XII. N. E.)

WALWYN'S CASTLE

Price 1s  
 10 Chains 5  
 40 Perches 20

Scale — Six Inches to One Statute Mile or 880 Feet to One Inch —  $\frac{1}{10560}$

10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80  
 40 80 120 160 200 240 280 320

Published at the Ordnance Survey Office, Southampton.

1891

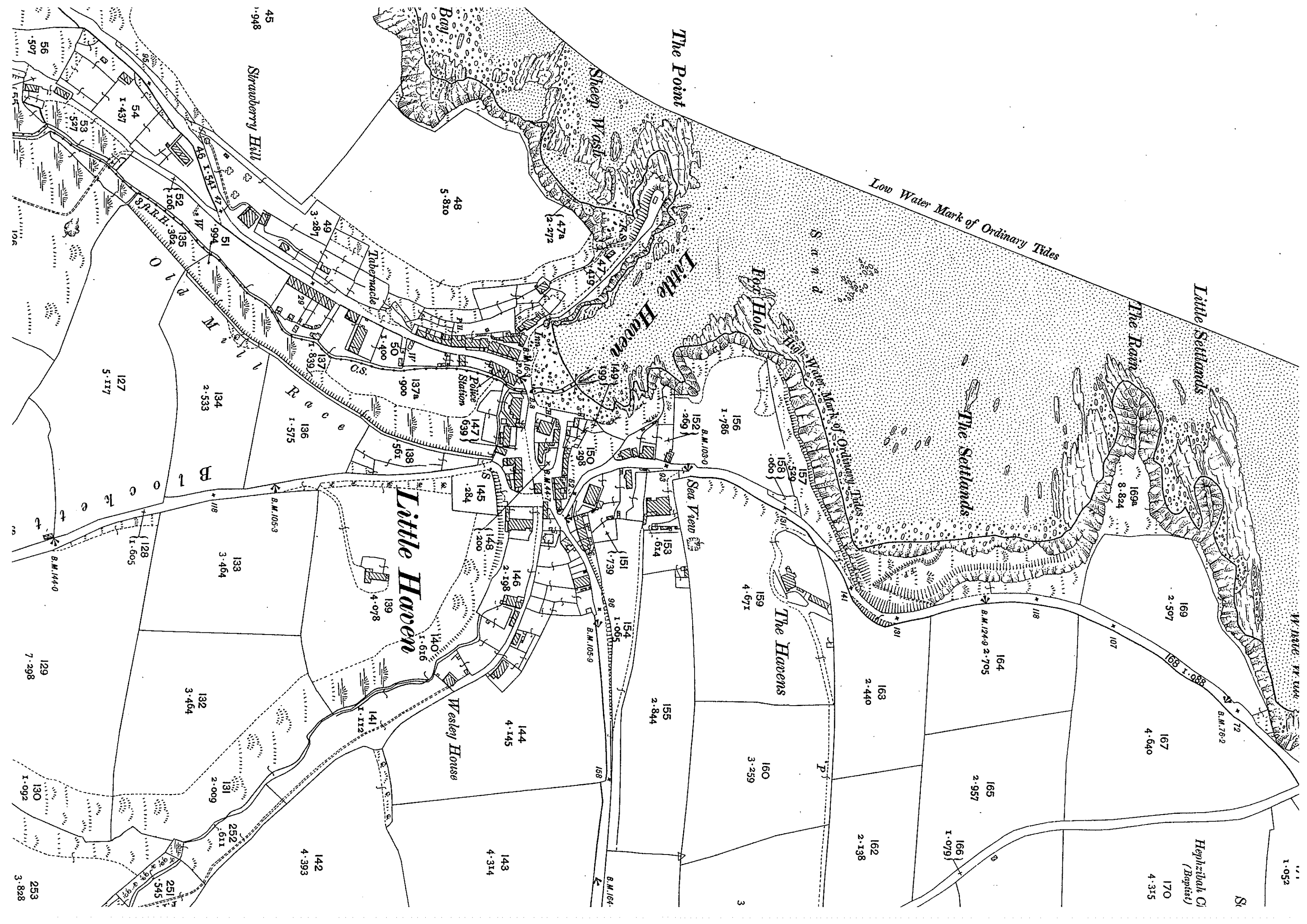
Pools, those indicated thus (B.M. 54.7) refer to Marks made on Buildings, Walls, &c.

If reproduction reserved.

Sheet XXV1.

N.W.	N.E.
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Surveyed 1874  
 1st ed 6"



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(Baptist)

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Little Settlands

The Point

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The Settlands

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Low Water Mark of Ordinary Tides

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Sea View

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