

# THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE MEDIEVAL TOWNS OF SOUTHWEST WALES

## TEMPLETON



*1993 aerial photograph of Templeton (DAT AP93-35.59)*

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By

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# TEMPLETON

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Templeton is a planned village, planted in the eleventh or twelfth centuries soon after the Anglo-Norman conquest of southwest Wales. It was never a town. The original village consisted of houses on long, narrow plots on the west side of a main north/south road. At an unknown time houses were built on the east side of the road. It remained small with many vacant plots until the mid/late twentieth century when new houses began to be built. Small-scale archaeological investigations have demonstrated that significant medieval and later archaeological deposits survive on undeveloped plots.

## KEY FACTS

Status: Not a town.

Size: Unknown. In 1532 16 freeholders and three leaseholders were recorded.

Archaeology: Archaeological investigations have revealed medieval deposits.

## LOCATION

Templeton is a linear village in inland Pembrokeshire straddling the main north/south A478 Tenby to Cardigan road (SN 113 115). The A4115 runs to the west from the village and the B4315 to the east (Fig. 1). Narberth lies 3 km to the north and Tenby 11 km to the south. It lies at 120m above sea level in a pastoral-dominated agricultural landscape.

## HISTORY

Templeton is thought to derive its name from 'the farm (tun) of the Templars'. By tradition a religious house of the Order of the Templars stood at Templeton, but apart from the place-name there is no evidence to support this. The Order was dissolved in the early fourteenth century and the Knight's Hospitallers of St John took over many of their possessions. The Hospitallers had a commandery at Slebech, 10 km to the west, but there is no evidence that they ever held land at Templeton.

It was never a town, although some authorities include Templeton in their lists of towns; it did not have a charter, a market or a fair. It is, however, a good example of a medieval planned village.

The earthen Sentence Castle (Figs 2-4), immediately to the west of the village, is the earliest element of Templeton. The date of its foundation is unknown, but its ringwork form suggests it was constructed in the twelfth century. In 1282 Templeton was known as *Villa Templarii* (village of the Templars). A year later the name had become *Villa*

*Templariorum Campestris* (village of the Templars in the fields) and in the same year 'burgesses of the wind' (de vento) are recorded each paying the standard 12d a year. Also in the late thirteenth century Sarah and Walter le Cole acquired two adjacent plots, which perhaps can be interpreted as amalgamation of house plots and that decline had already set in. It is assumed that along with other settlements in southwest Wales Templeton's population declined as the Black Death swept across Europe in the mid-fourteenth century.

Surveys made in 1532 and 1609 both record 16 freeholders and three leaseholders in Templeton, with one freeholder holding two plots, giving a total of 20 plots. The earliest large-scale map of the village made in 1829 shows a linear village with buildings on both sides of main north/south road. Later nineteenth-century Ordnance Survey maps show a similar pattern. Indeed the layout was unchanged until the second half of the twentieth century when new houses appeared within and on the outskirts of the village.

St John's Church on the southeast end of the village was built in 1859. There is no evidence to support the tradition that it was built on the site of a Knights Templar building, although the site had been used previously as a Unitarian meeting house. A medieval cross in the churchyard was relocated from its original site elsewhere in the village.

## **MORPHOLOGY**

Templeton is a linear village straddling the main north/south A478 Tenby to Cardigan road. Jonathan Kissock has argued that the first phase of the village consisted of a series of 170m-long plots laid out on the west side of the road defined by a large boundary bank on their western side separating the plots from Sentence Castle (Fig. 7). The 1889 Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 3) shows the basic plan of these plots allowing for amalgamation since the thirteenth century. Plots and houses on the east side of the road being a second phase. It is uncertain when houses were built on the east side of the road, but an 1829 map shows houses on both side of the road.

Templeton has experienced a considerable amount of housing development since the mid/late twentieth century as shown on Figure 4, including the construction of individual houses and small estates both within the village's historic core and on its periphery.

Figure 8 shows the possible extent of Templeton c.1320, with houses on both sides of the main road.

## **BUILDINGS AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND MONUMENTS**

### **Scheduled Monuments**

There is one scheduled monument in Templeton (Fig. 4):

Sentence Castle – a medieval ringwork (PE110).

### **Listed Buildings**

There are three listed buildings in Templeton (Fig. 4):

All three are domestic structures listed Grade II.

### **Conservation Area**

Templeton is not in a conservation area.

### **Registered Parks and Gardens**

There are no registered parks and gardens in Templeton.

### **Registered Historic Landscape**

Templeton is not in a registered historic landscape.

### **Undesignated Historic Environment Assets**

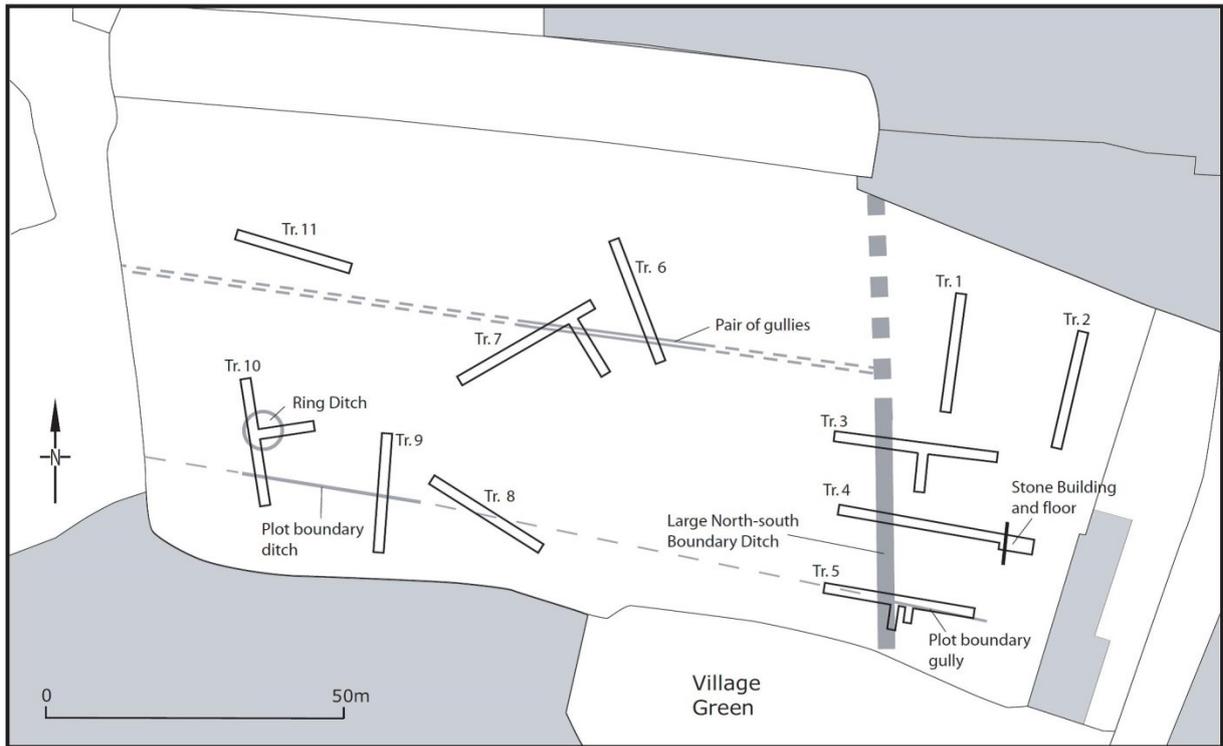
There are approximately 40 undesignated assets in Templeton listed on the Dyfed Historic Environment Record. (Fig. 5), including a medieval holy well, known as Margaret's Well, located on the west side of the village. However almost all of the rest are of post-medieval (mostly nineteenth century) houses and farm buildings.

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS**

Included in this section are excavations, evaluation excavations and watching briefs. Building surveys and desk-top assessments are not included unless they add to the known archaeology (Fig. 6).

Numbers in parentheses below refer to records in the Dyfed Historic Environment Record.

1. A geophysical survey, evaluation, excavation and watching briefs were undertaken on land north of the village green between 2014 and 2018 in advance of house building. A large ditch was recorded in one of the proposed house plots; this was interpreted as being an outer defensive feature to Sentence Castle. Linear ditches seemed to be property/plot boundaries. Watching briefs maintained along the street frontage identified gullies, terraces and possible structural features, but these were difficult to characterise and date due to the paucity of artefacts. A prehistoric ring ditch was excavated to the rear, west, of the site. References: Poucher 2010; Enright 2015; Enright and Wilson 2019 (98686, 107550).



*Plan showing the trial trenching layout north of the village green.*



*View of ground reduction on the east, street frontage, side of the village green site.*



*A section across the large ditch possible associated with Sentence Castle.*



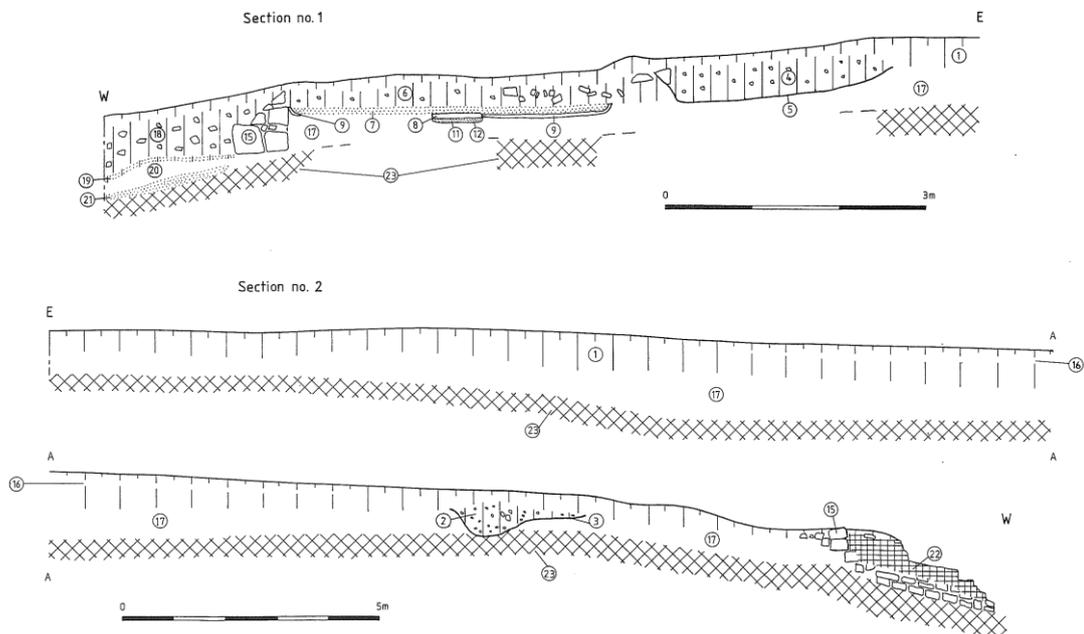
*View of Trench 4 showing wall with floor in foreground (scale 1m).*

2. A watching brief in conjunction with building recording was carried out at Poyers Arms Farm (a listed building) during renovation works and construction of several new houses in 1999. It was discovered that much of the site had been terraced some 30 years previously. Nothing of archaeological significance was noted. Reference: Tavener 1999 (38745).
3. A watching brief was maintained during rebuilding of the west wall to St John's churchyard. The original wall dates to the mid-nineteenth century. Nothing of archaeological interest was noted. Reference: Ramsey 2000 (40600).



*Rebuilding the wall at St John's Church.*

4. An evaluation on land to the north of Ogmore House in 1995, following on from a 1993 assessment, revealed significant archaeological deposits. Several phases of buildings were recorded spanning several centuries prior to the plot becoming vacant in the mid-nineteenth century. Reference: Darke 1995; Dyfed Archaeological Trust 1993 (29535, 48156).



*Section drawing of the work at Ogmore House showing the complex, stratified archaeological deposits.*

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL**

Templeton has high potential for addressing some of the key research agenda items for research into the medieval period, including village plantation and castle building. It also has the potential to address post-medieval research theme on settlements.

Evaluations and excavation on vacant plots in the village have demonstrated that significant archaeological deposits survive associated with the medieval and later settlement. There have been, however, housing developments within the historic core of Templeton with no archaeological intervention. The number of vacant plots in the village is diminishing – these should be regarded as having high archaeological potential.

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Tavener N 1999. Poyers Arms Farm, Templeton, Pembrokeshire: archaeological watching brief, Cambrian Archaeological Projects unpublished report 101.

### **Databases and online references**

Dyfed Historic Environment Record <https://www.archwilio.org.uk/arch/>

Cof Cymru <https://cadw.gov.wales/advice-support/cof-cymru>

Coflein <https://coflein.gov.uk/en>

LiDAR <https://lle.gov.wales/catalogue/item/LidarCompositeDataset/?lang=en>

Research framework for the Archaeology of Wales  
<https://www.archaeoleg.org.uk/areasouthwest.html>

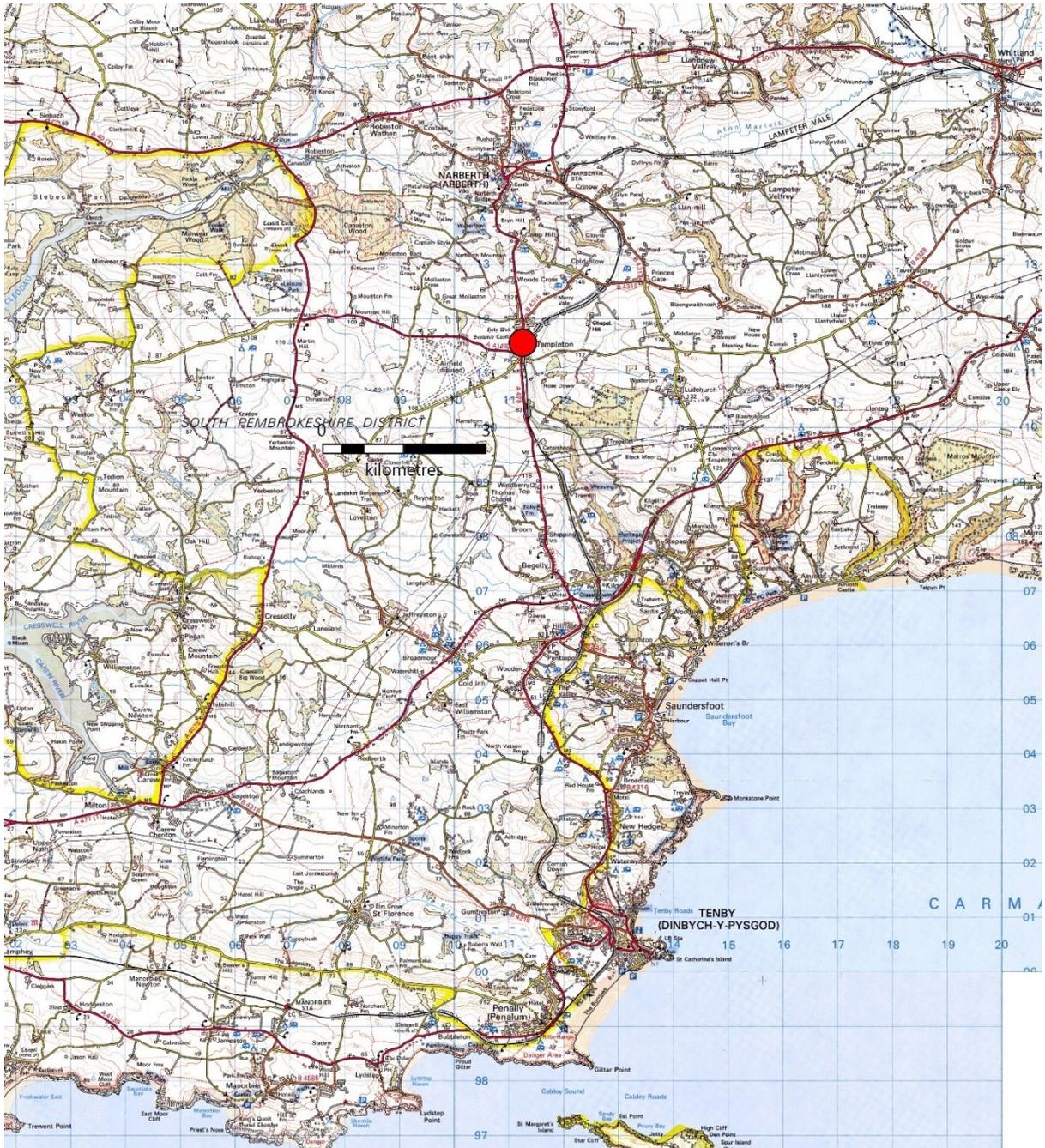


Figure 1. Location map.



Figure 2. Extract from 'Copied from an Original Survey made by Mr. A. Thomas, by D Jones, Pembroke 1829'.

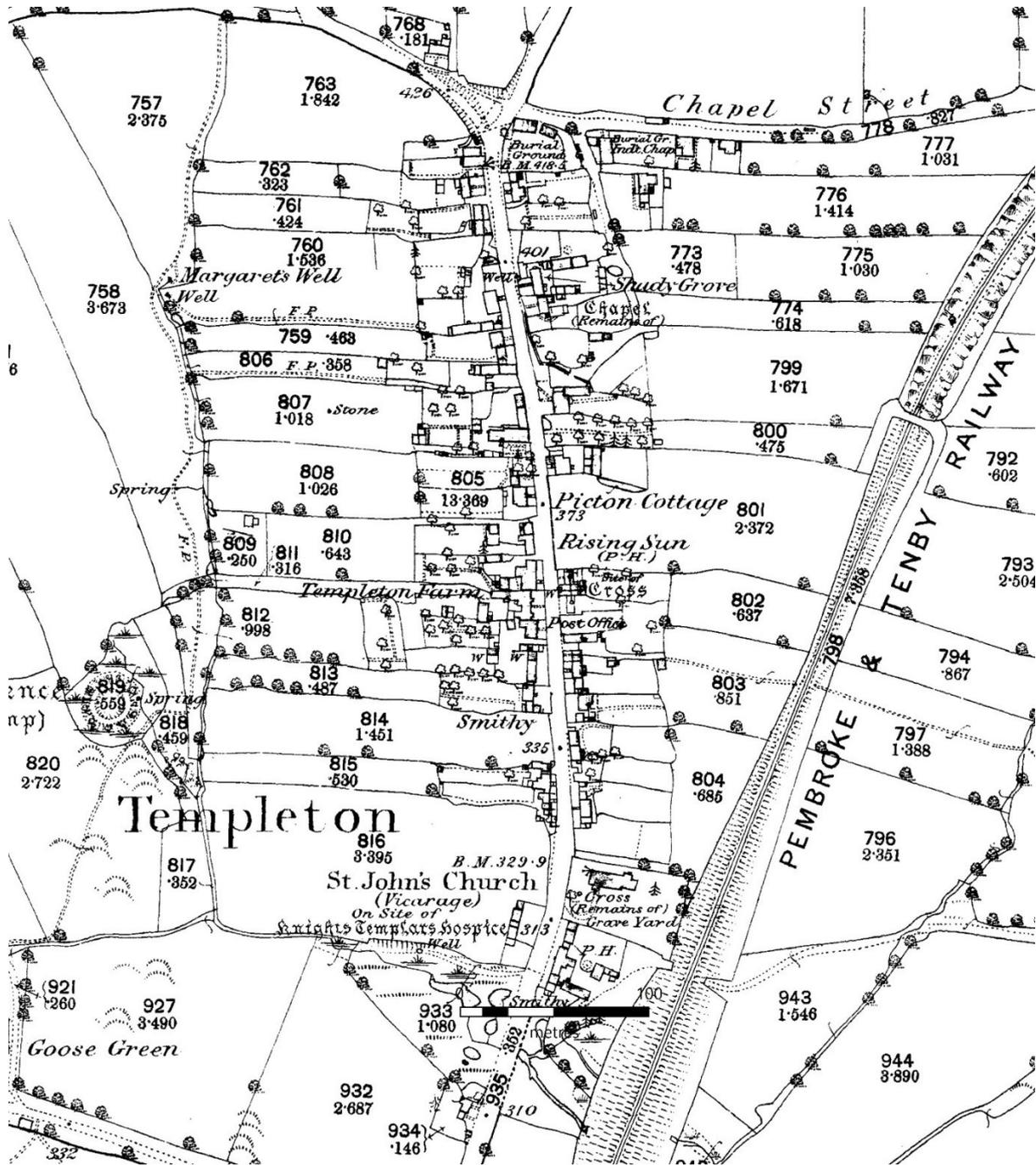


Figure 3. Extract from the 1889 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 1<sup>st</sup> Edition map (Pembroke 1<sup>st</sup> map 1889 29.14).

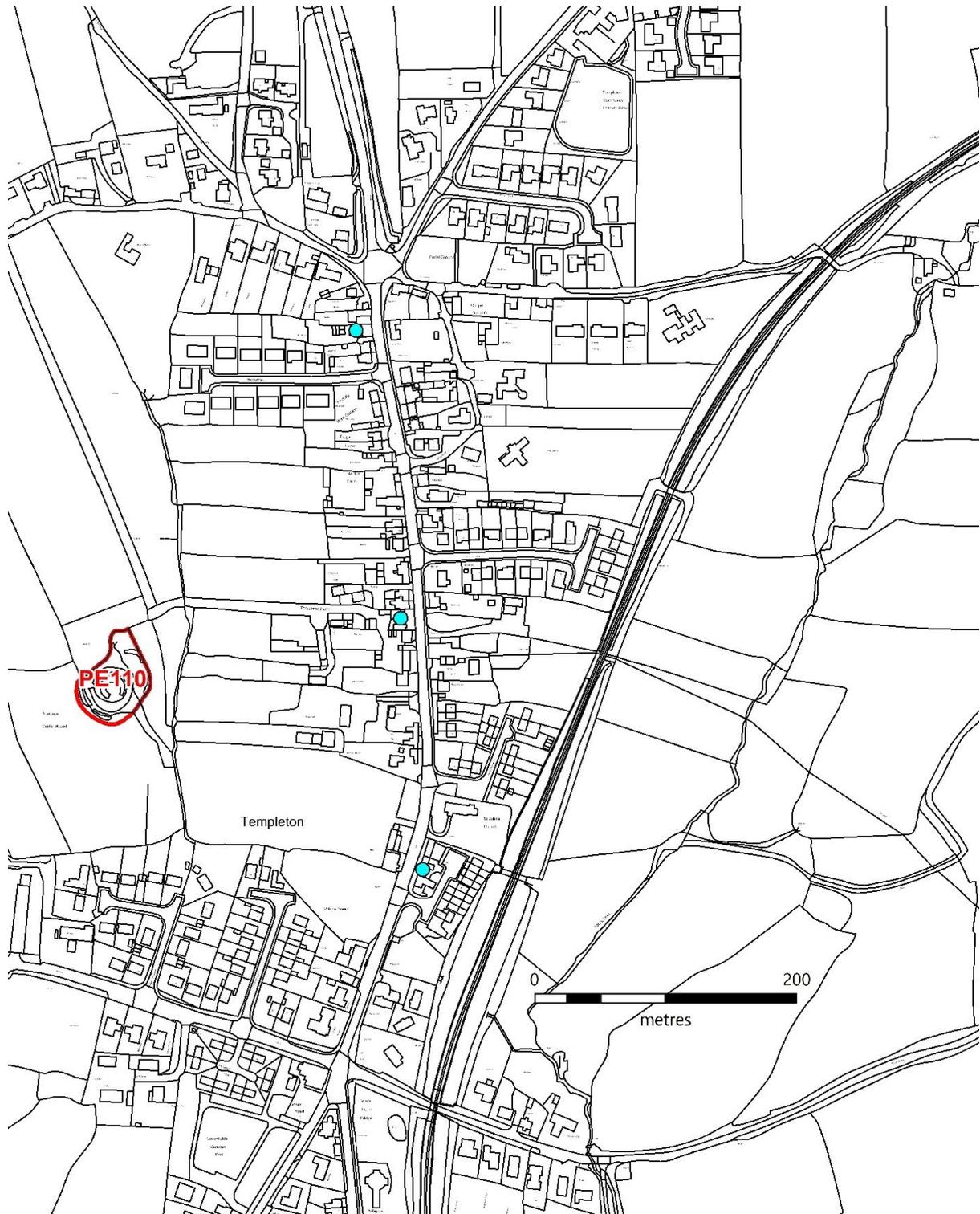


Figure 4. Listed buildings (blue circles) and scheduled monuments (outlined in red).

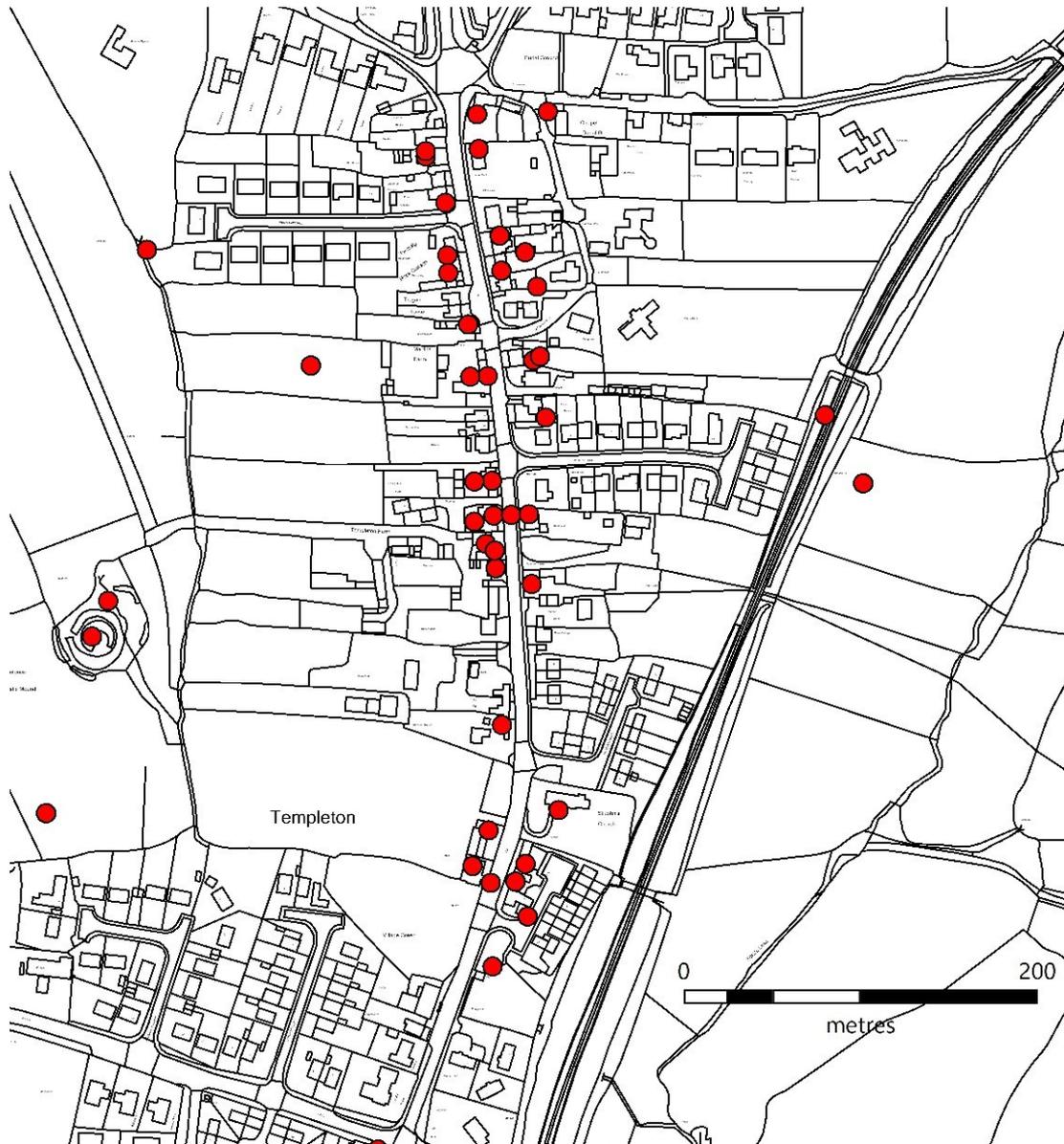


Figure 5. HER records.



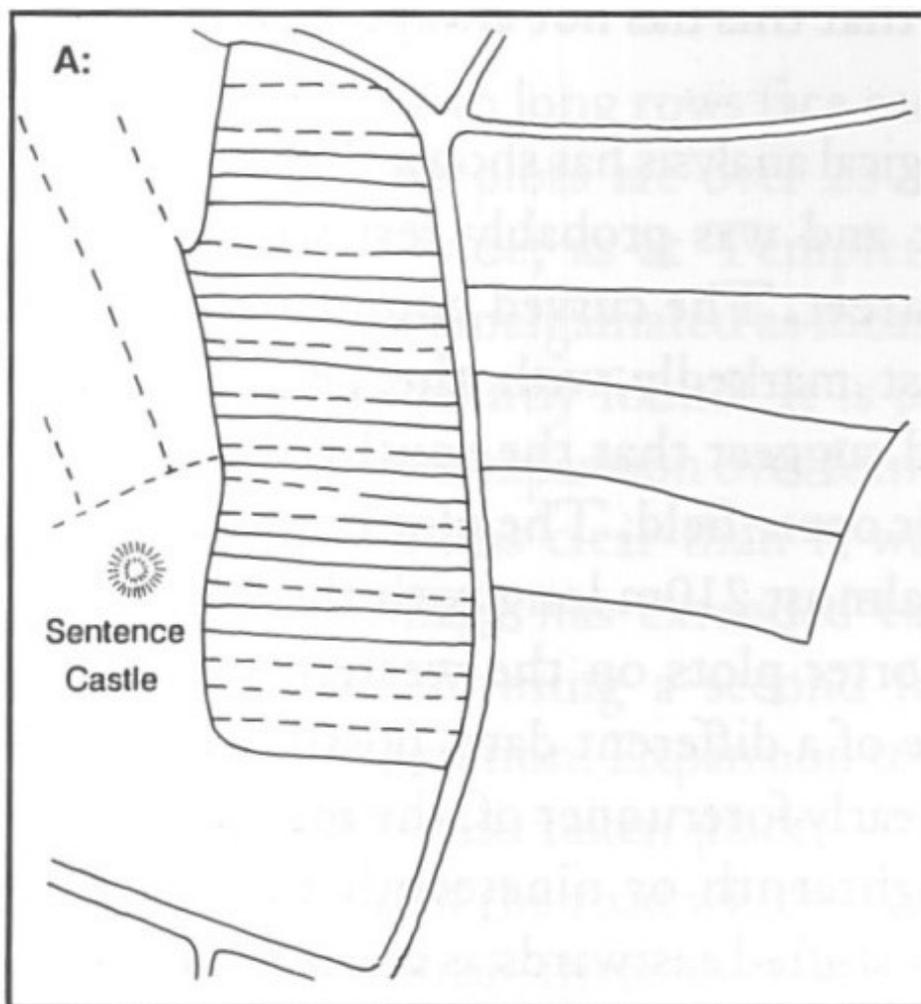


Figure 7. Kissock's suggested twelfth/thirteenth century layout of Templeton (from Kissock 1997).

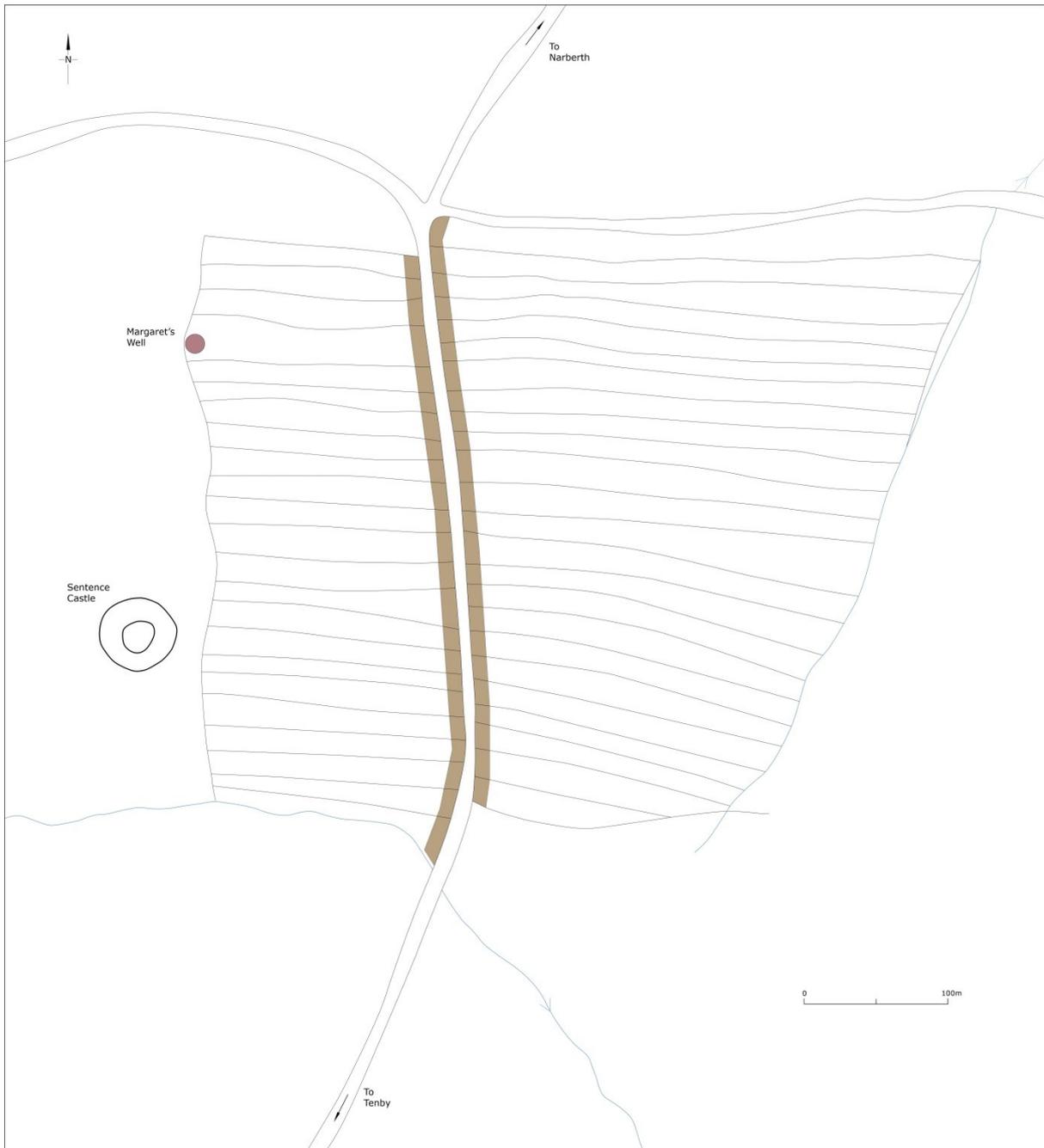


Figure 8. Conjectural layout of Templeton, c.1320.