

Built Heritage Statement

Loddon Garden Village/Thames Valley Science Park Link
Road (LGV/TVSP Link Road)

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REPORT

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Executive summary

This Built Heritage Statement has been prepared by RPS Heritage on behalf of the University of Reading to assess the potential impacts to built heritage assets arising from the proposed access road of the Site on land at Upperwood Farm, Reading in Berkshire (hereafter referred to as the 'Site'). This Built Heritage Statement has been prepared to accompany a planning application for a foul pumping station, associated access track and access road off the spine road.

The Site is centred on NGR SU 74739 69423. Within a 1km search area of the Site there are five designated built heritage assets, all of which are Grade II Listed. Archaeological investigations are dealt with under the separately prepared Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (September 2023, RPS ref JAC29205) and not considered further in this report. It has been identified that the proposed development has the capacity to impact upon three built heritage assets within the vicinity, namely: the Former Upperwood Farmhouse with two associated contemporaneous former farm barns. These buildings have not been identified by the LPA or indeed on the Historic Environment Record but, following the Site and surrounds walkover merit consideration as heritage assets of very low local interest only.

There is a requirement under paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for the applicant to explain the significance of the heritage assets likely to be affected by development, including consideration of their settings. This report also demonstrates the likely impact that proposals will have on that significance.

This assessment makes reference to the relevant legislative framework contained within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as well as national and local planning policy. In addition, relevant Historic England guidance has been consulted to inform the judgements made. It is further based on the findings of detailed historical research, a Site walkover survey and assessment conducted from publicly accessible locations around the Site, map studies, and the application of professional judgement.

The findings of this report are based on the known conditions at the time of writing. All conclusions are time limited to no more than three years from the date of this report. Maps, plans and photographs are for illustrative purposes only.

Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Legislative and Planning Policy Framework	2
	Legislation	2
	National Planning Policy	2
	National Guidance.....	3
	Local Planning Policy	6
3	Historic built environment appraisal	8
	Introduction.....	8
	Historic development.....	8
	Assessment of heritage assets	8
4	Proposals and assessment of impact	12
	Proposals	12
	Assessment of impact	12
5	Conclusion	13

Figures

Figure 1 - Site Location Plan

Figure 2 - Heritage Assets Plan

Figure 3 – Pre-Ordnance Survey Maps

Figure 4 – Ordnance Survey Maps

Figure 5 – 2022 Aerial

Plates

Plate 1: Later access drive to Upperwood Farm alongside motorway bridge up-ramp.

Plate 2: View south-east across Site from Upperwood Farm access lane towards Upperwood Farm.

Plate 3: Location of proposed roundabout south of Upperwood Farm.

Plate 4: View looking back from roundabout location towards the new development at beginning of farm drive.

Plate 5: Trackway within Site running south along edge of St John's Copse.

Plate 6: View north towards Upperwood Farm within Site to east of St John's Copse.

Plate 7: Upperwood Farmhouse.

Plate 8: South gable end of Upperwood Farmhouse.

Plate 8: The rear of Upperwood Farmhouse viewed from wider farm complex.

Plate 9: Cutbush Farmhouse viewed from adjacent motorway bridge in 2010

REPORT

Plate 10: Adjacent former barn likely forming part of the original farmstead, now heavily altered.

Plate 11: Barn formerly associated with the original farmstead.

Plate 12: Post-war farm buildings associated with Upperwood Farm.

Plate 13: Southern boundary of farmhouse private curtilage with modern farm buildings left.

Plate 14: Adjacent builders yard to north of Upperwood Farmhouse.

Plate 15: Skip storage facility now within later farm complex at Upperwood Farm.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Built Heritage Statement has been researched and prepared by RPS, on behalf of the University of Reading, to provide an assessment of impacts to the significance of built heritage arising from the proposed foul pumping station, associated access track and access road off the spine road. The document will assess the significance of built heritage assets deemed to have the capacity to be impacted by the proposed development, the contribution made to this by the setting of the heritage assets, and within this, the contribution made by the Site.
- 1.2 This report refers to the relevant legislation contained within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and both national and local planning policy. In addition, relevant Historic England guidance, notably The Setting of Heritage Assets has been consulted to inform the judgements made. Relevant information, including the listing citations for the relevant heritage assets have also been consulted in preparing this Built Heritage Statement. The conclusions reached in this report are the result of detailed historic research, a walkover survey of the Site and publicly accessible locations in the surrounding area, map studies and the application of professional judgement.
- 1.3 The findings of this report are based on the known conditions at the time of writing and all findings and conclusions are time limited to no more than 3 years from the date of this report. All maps, plans and photographs are for illustrative purposes only.

2 Legislative and Planning Policy Framework

- 2.1 The current national legislative and planning policy system identifies, through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), that applicants should consider the potential impact of development upon 'heritage assets'. This term includes: designated heritage assets which possess a statutory designation (for example listed buildings and conservation areas); and non-designated heritage assets, typically identified by Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) and incorporated into a Local List and/or recorded on the Historic Environment Record.

Legislation

- 2.2 Where any development may affect certain designated heritage assets, there is a legislative framework to ensure proposed works are developed and considered with due regard to their impact on designated heritage assets. This extends from primary legislation under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 2.3 The relevant legislation in this case extends from section 66 of the 1990 Act which states that special regard must be given by the decision maker, in the exercise of planning functions, to the desirability of preserving or enhancing listed buildings and their setting.
- 2.4 The meaning and effect of these duties have been considered by the courts, including the Court of Appeal's decision in relation to Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Ltd v East Northamptonshire District Council [2014] EWCA Civ 137.
- 2.5 The Court agreed within the High Court's judgement that Parliament's intention in enacting section 66(1) was that decision makers should give '*considerable importance and weight*' to the desirability of preserving (i.e. keeping from harm) the setting of listed buildings.
- 2.6 Section 69(1) of the Act requires LPAs to '*determine areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*' and to designate them as conservation areas. Section 69(2) requires LPAs to review and, where necessary, amend those areas '*from time to time*'.
- 2.7 For development within a conservation area section 72 of the Act requires the decision maker to pay '*special attention [...] to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area*'. The duty to give special attention is considered commensurate with that under section 66(1) to give special regard, meaning that the decision maker must give considerable importance and weight to any such harm in the planning balance. However, unlike the parallel duty under section 66, there is no explicit protection for the setting of a conservation area.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government December 2024)

- 2.8 The NPPF is the principal document that sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- 2.9 It defines a heritage asset as a: '*building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest*'. This includes both designated and non-designated heritage assets.
- 2.10 Section 16: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment relates to the conservation of heritage assets in the production of local plans and decision taking. It emphasises that heritage
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assets are *'an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance'*.

- 2.11 For proposals that have the potential to affect the significance of a heritage asset, paragraph 207 requires applicants to identify and describe the significance of any heritage assets that may be affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail provided should be proportionate to the significance of the heritage assets affected. This is supported by paragraph 208, which requires LPAs to take this assessment into account when considering applications.
- 2.12 Under 'Considering potential impacts' paragraph 212 states that 'great weight' should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets, irrespective of whether any potential impact equates to total loss, substantial harm or less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage assets.
- 2.13 Paragraph 214 states that where a development will result in substantial harm to, or total loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset, permission should be refused, unless this harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits, or a number of criteria are met. Where less than substantial harm is identified paragraph 215 requires this harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposed development.
- 2.14 Paragraph 216 states that where an application will affect the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, a balanced judgement is required, having regard to the scale of harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
- 2.15 Paragraph 219 notes that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. It also states that proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to, or better reveal the significance of, the asset should be treated favourably.
- 2.16 Furthermore, paragraph 220 states that not all elements of a conservation area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. When determining the impacts arising from the loss of a building or element that does positively contribute, consideration should be given to the relative significance of that building and the impact to the significance of the conservation area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

National Guidance

Planning Practice Guidance (DCLG)

- 2.17 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) has been adopted to aid the application of the NPPF. It reiterates that conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle.
- 2.18 The PPG defines the different heritage interests as follows:
- archaeological interest: As defined in the Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework, there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
 - architectural and artistic interest: These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture.
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- historic interest: An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

- 2.19 Key elements of the guidance relate to assessing harm. It states that substantial harm is a high bar that may not arise in many cases. It also states that while the level of harm will be at the discretion of the decision maker, generally substantial harm is a high test that will only arise where a development seriously affects a key element of an asset's special interest. It is the degree of harm, rather than the scale of development, that is to be assessed.

Overview: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning

- 2.20 Historic England have published a series of documents to advise applicants, owners, decision-takers and other stakeholders on managing change within the historic environment. These include Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning (GPAs) documents and Historic England Advice Notes (HEANS).

GPA1: The Historic Environment in Local Plans (March 2015)

- 2.21 This advice note focuses on the importance of identifying heritage policies within Local Plans. The advice echoes the NPPF by stressing the importance of formulating Local Plans based on up-to-date and relevant evidence on economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area, including the historic environment.

GPA2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (March 2015)

- 2.22 This document provides advice on numerous ways in which decision making in the historic environment could be undertaken, emphasising that the first step for all applicants is to understand the significance of any affected heritage asset and the contribution of its setting to that significance. In line with the NPPF and PPG, the document states that early engagement and expert advice in considering and assessing the significance of heritage assets is encouraged. The advice suggests a structured, staged approach to the assembly and analysis of relevant information:

1. Understand the significance of the affected assets;
2. Understand the impact of the proposal on that significance;
3. Avoid, minimise and mitigate impact in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF;
4. Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance;
5. Justify any harmful impacts in terms of the sustainable development objective of conserving significance balanced with the need for change; and
6. Offset negative impacts to significance by enhancing others through recording, disseminating and archiving archaeological and historical interest of the important elements of the heritage assets affected.

GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Second Edition; December 2017)

- 2.23 This advice note focuses on the management of change within the setting of heritage assets. This document replaces GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (March 2017) and Seeing History in the View (English Heritage, 2011) in order to aid practitioners with the implementation of national legislation, policies and guidance relating to the setting of heritage assets found in the 1990 Act, the NPPF and PPG. The guidance is largely a continuation of the philosophy and approach of the 2011 and 2015 documents and does not present a divergence in either the definition of setting or the way in which it should be assessed.
- 2.24 As with the NPPF the document defines setting as 'the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve'. Setting is also described as being a separate term to curtilage, character and context. The guidance emphasises that setting is not a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, and that its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset, or the ability to appreciate that significance. It also states that elements of setting may make a positive, negative or neutral contribution to the significance of the heritage asset.
- 2.25 While setting is largely a visual term, with views considered to be an important consideration in any assessment of the contribution that setting makes to the significance of an asset, and thus the way in which an asset is experienced, setting also encompasses other environmental factors including noise, vibration and odour. Historical and cultural associations may also form part of the asset's setting, which can inform or enhance the significance of a heritage asset.
- 2.26 This document provides guidance on practical and proportionate decision making with regards to the management of change within the setting of heritage assets. It is stated that the protection of the setting of a heritage asset need not prevent change and that decisions relating to such issues need to be based on the nature, extent and level of the significance of a heritage asset, further weighing up the potential public benefits associated with the proposals. It is further stated that changes within the setting of a heritage asset may have positive or neutral effects.
- 2.27 The document also states that the contribution made to the significance of heritage assets by their settings will vary depending on the nature of the heritage asset and its setting, and that different heritage assets may have different abilities to accommodate change without harming their significance. Setting should, therefore, be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- 2.28 Historic England recommends using a series of detailed steps in order to assess the potential effects of a proposed development on significance of a heritage asset. The 5-step process is as follows:
- Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;
1. Assess the degree to which these settings and views make a contribution to the significance of a heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated;
 2. Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on the significance or on the ability to appreciate it;
 3. Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm; and
 4. Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.
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HEAN12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets (October 2019)

- 2.29 This advice note provides information on how to assess the significance of a heritage asset. It also explores how this should be used as part of a staged approach to decision-making in which assessing significance precedes designing the proposal(s).
- 2.30 Historic England notes that the first stage in identifying the significance of a heritage asset is by understanding its form and history. This includes the historical development, an analysis of its surviving fabric and an analysis of the setting, including the contribution setting makes to the significance of a heritage asset.
- 2.31 To assess the significance of the heritage asset, Historic England advise to describe various interests. These follow the heritage interest identified in the NPPF and PPG and are: archaeological interest, architectural interest, artistic interest and historic interest.

Local Planning Policy

- 2.32 In considering any planning application for development, the planning authority will be mindful of the framework set by government policy, in this instance the NPPF, by current Development Plan Policy and by other material considerations.
- 2.33 Local planning policy is prescribed by Wokingham Borough Council through their Wokingham Borough Council is in the process of preparing a Local Plan Update, with a consultation on Revised Growth Strategy held between 22 November 2021 and 24 January 2022. However, until such time as this is adopted the statutory development plan is the Adopted Core Strategy (Adopted January 2010) and the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDDLDP) (February 2010). The relevant policy in the Core Strategy is set out below.
- 2.34 In respect of the MDDLDP the following policies are relevant in regards to built heritage or specifically refer to the Site:

Policy TB24: Designated Heritage Assets (Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas)

1. Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Monuments and Conservation Areas are shown on the Policies Map.

2. The Borough Council will conserve and seek the enhancement of designated heritage assets in the Borough and their settings by:

- a) Requiring works to or affecting heritage assets or their setting to demonstrate that the proposals would at least conserve and, where possible enhance the important character and special architectural or historic interest of the building, Conservation Area, monument or park and garden including its setting and views.
- b) Supporting development proposals or other initiatives that will conserve and, where possible, enhance the local character, setting, management and historic significance of designated heritage assets, with particular support for initiatives that would improve any assets that are recognised as being in poor condition or at risk.

3. Proposals for building works shall retain or incorporate existing features or details of historic or architectural significance or design quality into the scheme.

Policy TB26: Buildings of Traditional Local Character and Areas of Special Character

1. Areas of Special Character are shown on the Policies Map.
2. Planning permission will only be granted for proposals to or affecting Buildings of Traditional Local Character and Areas of Special Character where they demonstrate that they retain and enhance the traditional, historical, local and special character of the building or area and its setting.
3. Proposals that involve the demolition of a Building of Traditional Local Character will require strong justification.

Policy DH5: The Historic Environment

1. Development proposals should conserve and seek to enhance, wherever possible, the archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest of all heritage assets, including the contribution to this interest made by their setting. This will be achieved through:
 - a) ensuring that development proposals identify and understand the heritage interest(s) that may be affected by the proposed works, at an early stage in the design process;
 - b) supporting works that secure the sensitive use, enjoyment, conservation and/or enhancement of heritage assets and their settings, particularly in relation to designated assets identified as being at risk; and
 - c) securing the sensitive design of development which impacts on heritage assets and their settings, retaining or incorporating existing features or details of historic or architectural interest and/or design quality into the scheme.
 2. Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource. Where development proposals have the potential to affect heritage assets, a heritage assessment should be prepared and submitted alongside the development proposal describing the significance of any heritage assets affected, including the contribution to their setting. Where there is harm, information must be provided on whether the harm is assessed as being less than substantial or substantial.
 3. Development proposals which would cause harm to the heritage interest of a heritage asset, or to its setting (whether statutorily designated or locally important), will not be permitted without a clear and convincing justification in the form of the public benefits of the proposal that cannot otherwise be achieved and which demonstrably outweigh any harm to the interest of the heritage asset in question, irrespective of the level of harm.
 4. Development proposals that would cause substantial harm to, or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or all the particular circumstances to:
 - a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
 - b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
 - c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
 - d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.
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3 Historic Built Environment Appraisal

Introduction

- 3.1 The majority of the Site comprises farmland (arable and pasture) (Plates 1-6). The settlement of Shinfield lies to the west. The Site primarily comprises two field parcels with a small part comprising elements of the existing access lane serving Upperwood farm as well as parts of St John's Copse.

Historic development

- 3.2 The bulk of the Site remains broadly consistent in land use terms over the period of available mapping, namely in agricultural use. However, where relevant changes occur, these have been identified below.
- 3.3 The Pre-Ordnance Survey maps at Figure 3 shows the Site as being in agricultural use. Notably, The 1820 Early Sonning Enclosure Map (Fig 3) identifies the Site as being made up of parts of six field parcels weaving through the wider agricultural landscape south of Cutbush Lane crossing several trackways. Upperwood Farm is noted on this map. Several of the field parcels are identified as being 'tithe free' at this time.
- 3.4 Like the 1820 mapping, on the 1840 Liberty of Earley in the Parish of Sonning Tithe map (Fig. 3), the Site flows through six field parcels, again all set over to arable use.
- 3.5 The agricultural make-up of the Site remains as previously found in the first half of the nineteenth century at the end of the century (Fig 4) and onwards into the early twentieth century (Fig 4); though the wider surrounds show signs of urbanisation with housing being built along routes into Shinfield but also east along Cutbush Lane, a short distance east beyond Upperwood Farm.
- 3.6 By 1979 (Fig 4), the M4 motorway has been built running to the north of the Site. Upperwood Farm is now referred to as Upperwood House and a small bungalow is referred to as Upperwood Farm. It is suggested that this may be incorrectly applied and their names are in fact vice versa. The Site still runs through six parcels, though the broader make-up of the parcels has been altered by the motorway. In addition to this, the New Covert, woodland copse is also present to the east of the Site, near to St John's Copse.
- 3.7 By 2001 (Fig 4) the Site is broadly as found today (Fig.5) and made up of parts of three parcels of land. The wider surrounds have seen a marked urbanisation with new development to the west of the Site including the British Museum Archaeological Research Collection building and the largescale development associated with the Shinfield Studios.

Assessment of heritage assets

- 3.8 Within the 1km search radius of the Site there are five listed buildings: all at Grade II. There are also several buildings meriting consideration as non-designated heritage assets, having been identified on Wokingham District Council List of Buildings of Traditional Local Character, on the Berkshire Historic Environment Record or through the application of professional judgement during the Site walkover.
- 3.9 The Site walkover survey and associated research demonstrates that the bulk of these identified heritage assets share no visual, functional or historic association with the Site. As such, the proposed development will have no impact on their setting, or significance, or would have such a small impact as to not materially impact that significance. Consequently, they have been discounted from further assessment within this report. This includes all listed buildings associated with Oldhouse Farm, Cutbush and Hall Farm as well as the non-designated heritage asset, Shinfield Grange. In respect of these buildings, the scale of development that has already taken place between these
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heritage assets and the Site, is such that the proposed development is unlikely to materially impact their significance and any views or additional light spill or activity is likely to be inconsequential to their setting.

- 3.10 It is considered, therefore, that the following three built heritage assets (within 1km of the Site) have the potential to be affected by the proposed development owing to their intervisibility with the Site or through sharing a functional association with the Site. These heritage assets are not identified on either the Council's List of Buildings of Traditional Local Character, or on the Berkshire Historic Environment Record. During the Site visit it was deemed that they merited consideration as a non-designated heritage asset of low local interest, at the very most. Further assessment is required to establish whether the Site, as part of their setting, contributes to the significance of these heritage assets, and any impact from the proposed development:

- o *Former Upperwood Farmhouse and associated contemporaneous former farm buildings* (Plates 7-15). Located approximately 150 metres north-east of the Site at its closest. This collection of heritage assets comprises one former farmhouse and two detached small barns. Later twentieth century farm buildings to the south of the farmhouse have no architectural or historic interest and are not included in this assessment. These heritage assets will be considered collectively under the title *Former Upperwood Farm* in proceeding text.

Former Upperwood Farm

- 3.11 **Significance:** Very limited information is available as to the date that Upperwood Farm was constructed. Earliest available mapping, in any detail, suggests that Upperwood Farm was present from 1809 at the latest (Robert Dawson's Map of Reading sourced at www.oldmapsonline.org). However, it is not clear what built form existed at this time from the mapping. The farm is also noted on the 1820 Early Sonning Enclosure Map. It would be reasonable to suggest therefore that, in the absence of further information, and based upon an assessment of the remaining built fabric, that a late eighteenth, early nineteenth century construction date would be a reasonable assumption for the farmhouse. The farmhouse appears to be a private dwelling now, with the wider, and later, farm complex to the south seemingly in multiple non-associated uses, including agricultural storage, skip storage and scaffolding and builders' yards.
- 3.12 The two-storey farmhouse is faced in brick on the southern gable end and principal west facing front elevation. Historic imagery (www.geograph.org.uk) dating from 2010 shows the north facing gable end with render partially removed, showing a timber framed building with brick infill. The building has a plain red tile catslide roof with two ridge height brick chimneys: one on the south gable, the other off centre. A single rear dormer is also noted. The building has a three window front range with the ground floors under shallow brick arch lintels and a front door located to the right of centre also. A later timber frame porch is noted. It is understood from the applicant that the building was considerably repaired in 2011, notably to remedy lateral spreading of the building. The 2010 photograph suggests that the building was in a very poor condition prior to these repairs. Further clarification from the applicant indicates that an entire gable end was rebuilt behind in blockwork with a brick facing to remedy structural failings alongside the building being underpinned. The building also exhibits extensive use of wall anchor plates primarily on the front elevation but also on the south gable end. Evidence of structural cracking on this gable end is also still evident. A steel anchor bar has also been placed over an entire lintel above a ground floor window on the front elevation. Allied to this, the building has new PVCu windows throughout.
- 3.13 It is also understood from the applicant that an application for listing was made to English Heritage (EH) (now Historic England) in 2009 for the building to be listed. Following a robust assessment by EH the building was identified as not being of sufficient architectural or historic interest to merit consideration for inclusion on the Statutory List of designated heritage assets.
- 3.14 The adjacent barns appear to be all that now remain of the original farmstead. These barns, timber framed with various unsympathetic alterations, appear in relatively poor condition. They have either
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a brick or timber frame construction with plane tile roofing. The building furthest from the farmhouse, now lying on the access road, is likely to be contemporaneous with the farmhouse; that which is closest appears a later addition, though present by the 1843 Sonning Tithe Map. Neither barns are in agricultural use and are of very low local interest only, limited to their architectural interest and the association they have with the farmhouse adjacent as former farmer buildings.

- 3.15 Collectively, the three remaining buildings share a limited group value in forming part of the original farmstead though are now quite disparate. It is not apparent that there is any present link between these buildings and the wider farm complex built in the later twentieth century to the south, though it is likely that this was all part of one operation originally. The buildings have seen considerable changes, and have deteriorated to various degrees, resulting in repairs to the farmhouse. Later alterations including PVCu windows have also impacted the overall significance. The cluster of these three buildings forming part of the original farmstead provide an evidential and aesthetic value as a late eighteenth/early twentieth century vernacular farmstead exhibited through its design, layout and materials used. The hardstanding base of remains of another of the earlier barns associated with the original farmstead now form part of the trackway serving these later farm buildings. The cessation of an agricultural role for the farmhouse and barns has also impacted the overall significance to the detriment.
- 3.16 **Setting:** The Upperwood Farm heritage assets are primarily experienced as part of a wider cluster of later farm buildings despite no longer performing any agricultural role associated with these later buildings. This is their immediate setting. The changes seen to the two remaining associated barns in the cluster and their slightly detached nature from the later farm buildings is such that, to the initiated they share a limited group value with the former farmhouse as forming the remains of the original smaller farmstead, but it is difficult to now 'visually' appreciate them as once forming a part of this complex; instead appearing now as residential outbuildings.
- 3.17 In addition to this, the near surrounds of Upperwood Farm have changed markedly in the later twentieth century with the construction of the M4 motorway as well as an adjacent motorway bridge immediately adjacent to the farm. These works resulted in the original Cutbush Lane running alongside the farm in the direction of Reading being relocated onto the new bridge and a new dedicated access track being constructed from the foot of the motorway bridge and concluding at the farm. The degree of embankment planting up the side of the bridge and along the motorway which directly abuts the curtilage of the farmhouse provides a high degree of screening; however, the motorway is still very audible. In the wider surrounds to the west and north of the heritage asset along, and beyond, Cutbush Lane East, the wider Shinfield Studios and commercial development is present which creates an urban context looking west and east from the near surrounds of Upperwood Farm.
- 3.18 Looking south and south-east from Upperwood Farm, the landscape returns to an agricultural setting which ties in to the operations which have previously, and still do to a degree, exist at the wider farm complex. However, intermixed with any agricultural role are the ancillary commercial activities taking place in parts of the farm complex. This further divorces the earlier former farmstead from the wider rural landscape on top of the motorway and urban development to the north and west. The Site forms part of this wider rural landscape in its intermediate and wider setting and therefore makes a positive contribution to understanding the role that the farm performed and why it was originally constructed. In return views back towards Upperwood Farm from the rural surrounds to the south and east, the presence of recently completed commercial development as well as the visual presence of traffic (and associated noise) on the motorway however reduce any rural perception.
- 3.19 It is understood that parts of the Site were owned and farmed by an occupier of Upperwood Farm in the nineteenth century, which embodies a functional historic setting on the Site, which still remains to a degree due to the same present ownership, though this is much reduced given the limited agricultural activity taking place at the farm. The presence of the later farm complex does provide some visual link to any historic use as well as the remaining rural landscape.
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REPORT

- 3.20 Recognising the limited agricultural activity at the wider farm and the private non-agricultural use of the farmhouse and barns, as well as the changes seen with regards to the motorways and modern commercial development, setting can be said to make very much a secondary contribution now.
- 3.21 ***Significance and Setting Summary:*** Upperwood Farm is a heritage asset of low (local) significance at the very most. Its significance is primarily derived from its architectural and historic interest in comprising the remains of a late eighteenth/early nineteenth century farmstead. The degree of physical interventions and alterations seen to these buildings, allied to cessation of an agricultural role for the buildings has impacted the overall significance. The scale of the changes seen is such that the cluster of buildings merits a very low local interest at the most as remnant parts of a former vernacular farmstead. Setting has changed markedly to the detriment and this means that setting makes a much reduced contribution also to the overall significance. Within this, the Site forms part of the nearest remaining rurality, though, itself heavily impacted by existing recently constructed built commercial development which impacts any rural perception already.
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4 Proposals and assessment of impact

Proposals

- 4.1 Reference should be made to the accompanying planning application submission documents including the Planning Statement, Masterplan and Design and Access Statement. The proposals are for a foul pumping station, associated access track and access road off the spine road.

Assessment of impact

- 4.2 Whilst the Site is expected to form a part of the wider Loddon Garden Village development spanning south-west towards Shinfield, this wider development is in the early stages of design. Therefore, the context in which this assessment is made is that of the present 'on-the-ground' situation for the wider land identified for the Loddon Garden Village scheme in respect of the surrounding landscape, namely fields, woodland and intervening hedgerows, with scattered houses and farms. Suggested mitigations to any harm also reflect the current situation.
- 4.3 Evidently, were the wider landscape to be built out, this would affect the degree of impact seen to several heritage assets; in some cases, reducing the impact that development on the Site would subsequently have.

Former Upperwood Farm

- 4.4 Given the degree of screening around the three original components of the original farmstead, including later farm buildings, storage facilities and wider tree planting, the degree of intervisibility will be reduced. However, the access road will further divorce the heritage assets from the wider rural landscape to the south. Recognising the changes that have already been seen, which have considerably reduced the significance of the heritage assets including physical alterations to the buildings themselves and changes already seen to their setting, it can be said that the wider setting will change again and the change will give rise to a very low level of harm to the Upperwood Farm heritage assets. This will amount to a **negligible degree**, at most, engaging paragraph 215 of the NPPF requiring any identified harm to be weighed against the significance of the heritage assets.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 This Built Heritage Statement has been prepared by RPS Heritage on behalf of University of Reading to assess the potential impacts to built heritage assets arising from the proposed foul pumping station, associated access track and access road off the spine road.
- 5.2 This Built Heritage Statement has demonstrated that the proposed development has the capacity to potentially impact upon one built heritage asset: the Former Upperwood Farmhouse and two associated barns which have been identified in this report as being of very low local interest, at most and therefore meriting non-designated heritage asset status , though is not identified by the LPA or Berkshire Historic Environment Record.
- 5.3 The road will further urbanise the once rural surrounds to Upperwood Farm and this, in turn, will give rise a negligible degree of harm, at most, to the significance of the heritage assets. This harm reflects the harm already seen to their significance, including marked changes already to their setting, not least the M4 motorway and recently completed nearby commercial development. This harm will engage paragraph 215 of the NPPF which requires that harm be weighed against the significance of the heritage assets in question.
- 5.4 This Built Heritage Statement meets the requirements of the NPPF and local planning policy and provides sufficient information in regard to Built Heritage considerations relating to the planning application for a new Natural History Museum Access Road on Land south of Upperwood Farm, Shinfield, Berkshire.

REPORT

REFERENCES

General

Berkshire Historic Environment Record
Historic England Archive, Swindon (HEA)
National Heritage List England (NHLE)
National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
Wokingham Borough Council Adopted Core Strategy
Wokingham Borough Council Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDDLDP)
Shinfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan

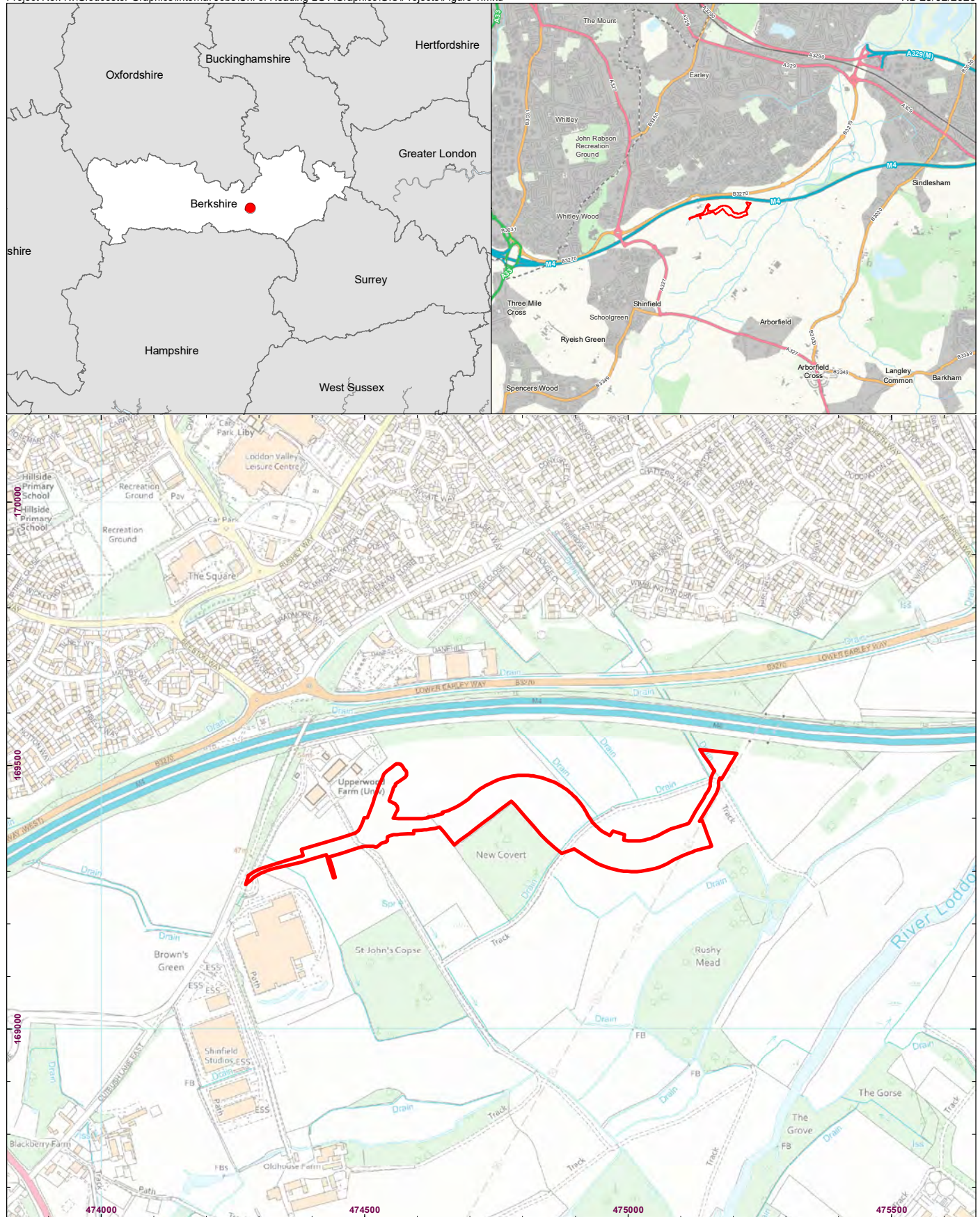
Bibliographic

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Historic England - <http://list.historicengland.org.uk/>
National Archives – www.nationalarchives.gov.uk
British Library - <http://explore.bl.uk>
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PastScape- www.pastscape.org.uk
[Historic mapping – www.oldmapsonline.org](http://www.oldmapsonline.org)
[Geograph -www.geograph.org.uk](http://www.geograph.org.uk)

Figures



 Site Boundary

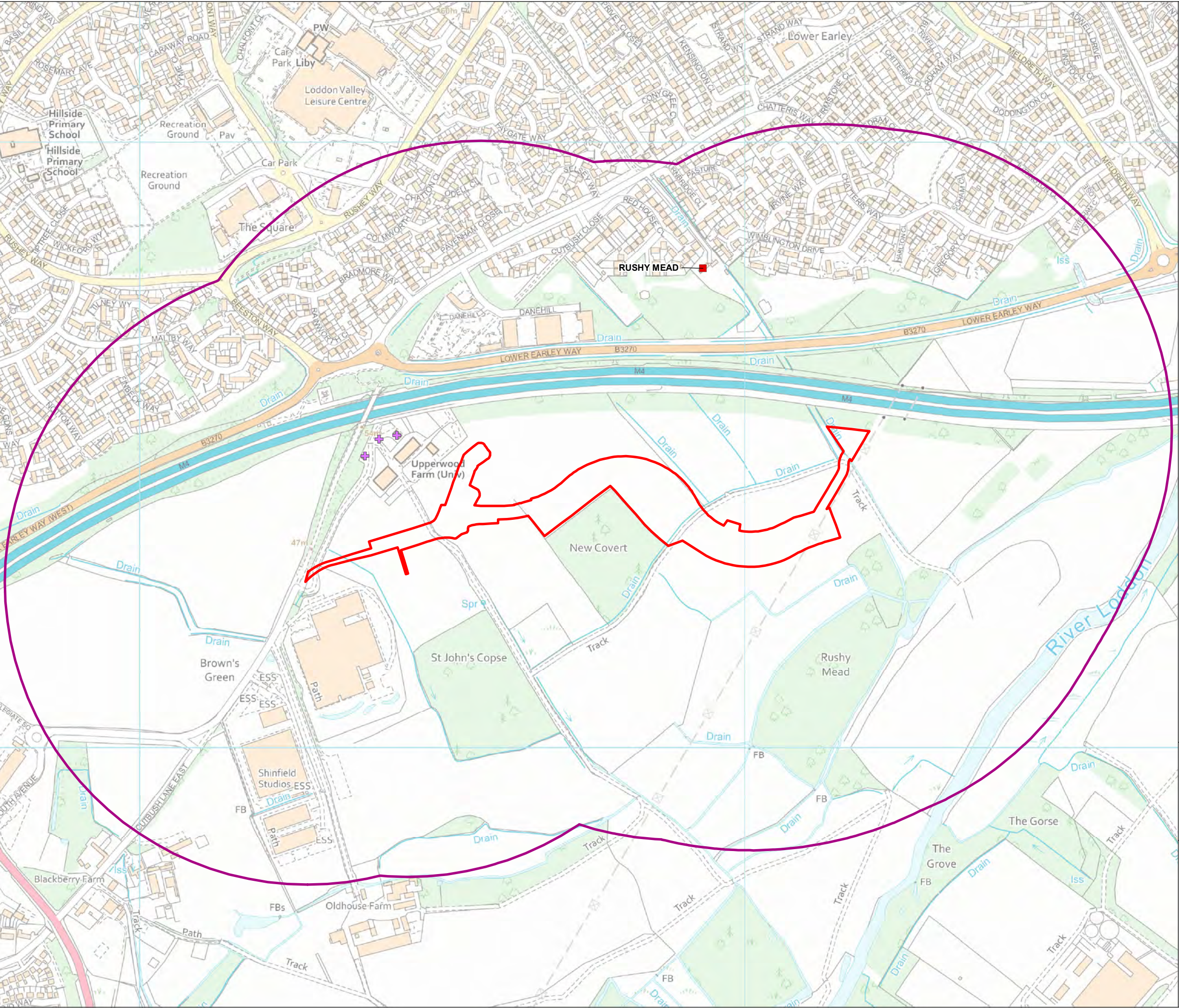


0 100 200m
Scale at A4: 1:10,000



Figure 1

Site Location



Legend

Site Boundary

500m Search Radius

Designated Heritage Assets:

Listed Buildings (Grade II)

Non-designated Heritage Assets:

Upperwood Farm and Barns



0 100 200m
Scale at A3: 1:6,000



Figure 2

Heritage Assets Plan



Legend

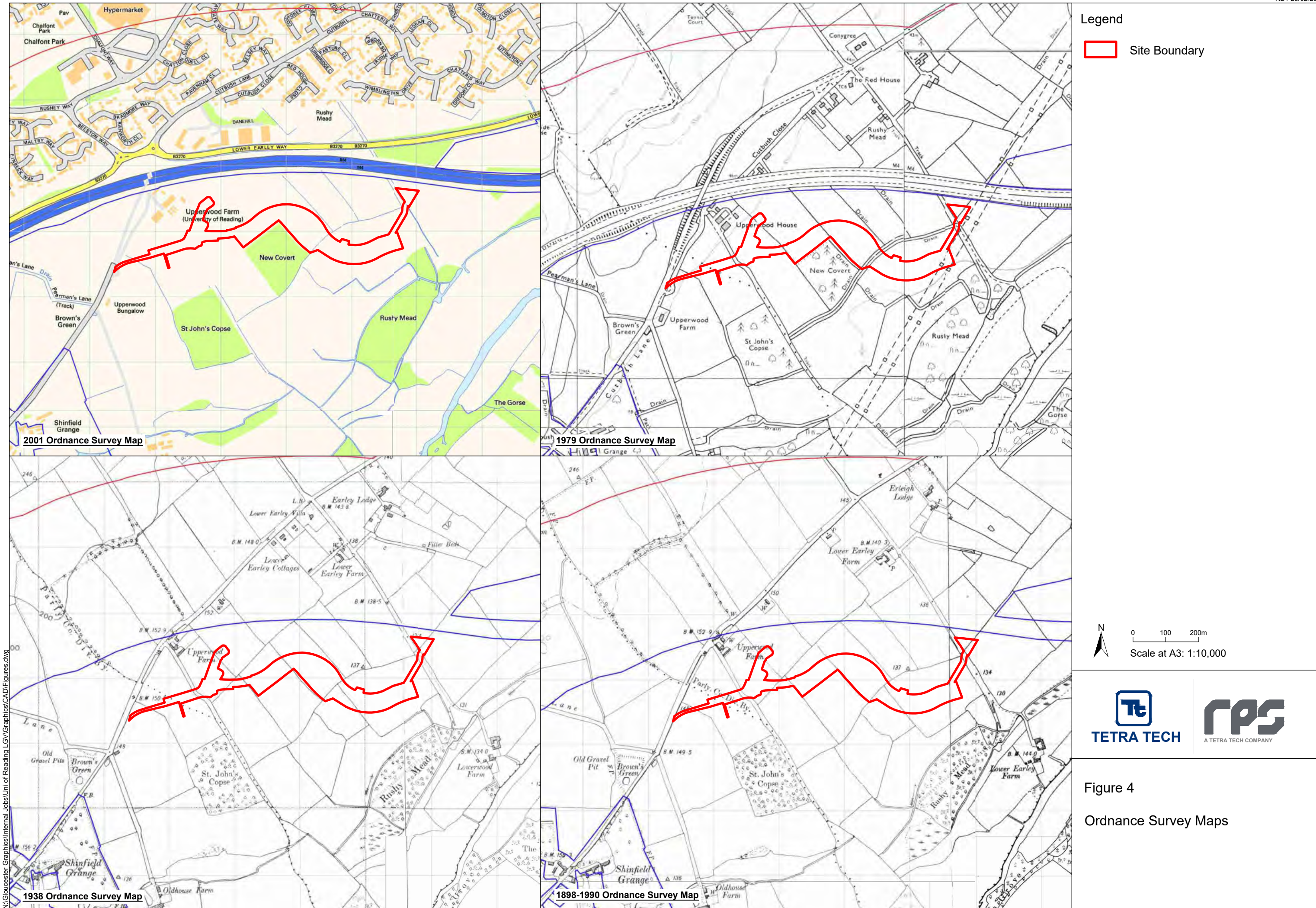
 Site Boundary



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Scale at A3: 1:10,000



Figure 3
Pre-Ordinance Survey Maps





 Site Boundary

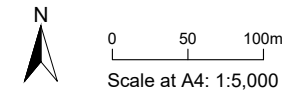


Figure 5

2022 Aerial Photograph

Plates



Plate 1: Site viewed from east-west trackway running across Site looking north towards motorway within Site.



Plate 2: View looking south-east from east-west trackway looking into Site.



Plate 3: Looking north-west from trackway on Site back towards Upperwood Farm white building in centre of picture.



Plate 4: Culmination of access road as proposed adjacent to motorway, beyond hedgerow.

