

**Land East of Trowes Lane, Swallowfield,
Wokingham, Berkshire**

Archaeology and Heritage Assessment

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Archaeology and Heritage Assessment

Client: City and Country
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Author: Ben Stephenson
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E: info@bsaheritage.co.uk **T:** 01235 536754 **Web:** www.bsaheritage.co.uk
7 Spring Gardens, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 1AZ.

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Section 1: Introduction and Methodology

- 1.1. This archaeology and heritage assessment has been prepared by BSA Heritage Limited on behalf of City and Country to support a future planning application for residential development on land east of Trowes Lane, Swallowfield, Wokingham.
- 1.2. The assessment considers land lying to the south of Swallowfield's centre, as shown on Figure 1. The site consists of a single arable field which appears to have most recently been used for a salad crop and woodland in its southern third. The site totals approximately 4.5 hectares in extent.
- 1.3. The site is bounded to the west by Trowes Lane. The gardens of houses off 'Foxborough' lie north of the site, whilst woodland lies to the south. The area to the east appears to be a disused market garden, with some structures still in use.
- 1.4. The site area lies immediately north west of a large area designated as an Area of High Archaeological Potential (AHAP) which has been designated given extensive likely prehistoric or Roman sub-surface archaeological remains identified as cropmarks on aerial photographs (Figure 1).
- 1.5. The site lies above Trowes Lane to the west and slopes gently down from the west to the east and from circa 47 metres AOD to circa 45 metres. Archaeological investigations in the vicinity of the site and the BGS Viewer confirm geology as river terrace gravels and sands above London Clay Formation clay, silt and sand.
- 1.6. A number of available sources of information have been consulted to inform desk based assessment. These include the Berkshire Historic Environment Record (HER) which holds records relating to known or suspected archaeological and heritage sites, findspots¹ and the results of past archaeological investigations. Berkshire Record Office was also visited and its collection of historic maps and secondary sources for the site and environs was viewed.
- 1.7. Both the HER, Historic England's online National Heritage List for England and the Wokingham Borough Council website hold details of designated heritage assets including listed buildings and conservation areas, and 'non-designated' assets including Buildings of Local Importance.
- 1.8. Section 3 summarises previously recorded heritage and archaeology for the site and a wider study area surrounding it and other useful sources and Section 4 the findings of a site walkover. Section 5 confirms the archaeological potential and level of heritage constraint affecting the site, the likely impact of the proposals and any mitigation of adverse impacts, as appropriate.

¹ Findspots are the location of the recovery of archaeological material only, without associated features.

Section 2: Policy Context

Legislation

- 2.1. The 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, as amended, confirms that in reaching planning decisions, the local planning authority should have special regard to preserving listed buildings and their settings (HMSO 1990).
- 2.2. A 2014 Court of Appeal ruling in *Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Ltd v East Northants District Council*, English Heritage and the National Trust made clear that to discharge this responsibility, decision makers must give considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings when carrying out the balancing exercise of judging harm against other planning considerations, as required under the National Planning Policy Framework.

National Policy

- 2.3. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has been revised three times in recent years, albeit the only updating since it was first published in 2012 (DCLG 2012, MHCLG 2021). The policy wording for Historic Environment remains very similar to the original, albeit that the order of certain paragraphs and numbering has changed.
- 2.4. Heritage assets are still defined in the NPPF glossary as any designated or undesignated element of the historic environment which is identified as being of such significance that it is a material consideration in the planning process. In determining applications which cause harm to heritage assets directly, or indirectly, through affecting a complementary setting, the NPPF now recommends that 'great weight' should be given to their conservation when reaching a planning decision (Paragraph 199).
- 2.5. The more important the asset, the greater the weight that should be ascribed. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, it is noted that any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. It notes that 'substantial harm' to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance should be wholly exceptional and exceptional for Grade II listed buildings and conservation areas (Paragraph 200).
- 2.6. Paragraph 202 clarifies that, where a development proposal will lead to 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing an optimal viable use.
- 2.7. Paragraph 203 notes that effects to the significance of non-designated heritage assets (which confusingly includes 'locally listed buildings') require a balanced judgement weighing the scale of impact on the significance of the heritage asset against the benefits of the proposed development. Where heritage assets are to be lost, Paragraph 205 confirms that an appropriate record of the elements to be lost should be provided and both disseminated and archived by the developer.

Local Policy

- 2.8. The current local policy includes that contained within the 2010 Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (WBC 2010). Parts of Core policies CP1 – Sustainable Development and CP3 – General Principles for Development. CP1 requires that proposals should ‘maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment’, whilst CP3 includes a requirement that proposals have no detrimental impact on heritage.
- 2.9. The 2010 Core Strategy is complemented by the 2014 Development Delivery plan which includes policies TB24 to TB26 relating to heritage (WBC 2014). Policy TB24 confirms that the Council will conserve and seek the enhancement of designated heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas and listed buildings.
- 2.10. Policy TB25 relates to archaeology and confirms that suitable archaeological assessment will be required in areas of designated or likely high archaeological potential and that significant remains will need to be preserved *in situ* or investigated appropriately. Policy TB6 relates to areas and buildings of special heritage character beyond conservation areas.

Guidance

- 2.11. The Department for Communities and Local Government has produced Planning Practice Guidance which supports the NPPF (DCLG 2019). This includes a section titled *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*. Historic England previously produced more detailed guidance on decision making: *Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment* (Historic England 2015). Where relevant, both sets of guidance have informed the assessment.
- 2.12. Historic England has also released an updated version of its *The Setting of Heritage Assets* which is designed to guide their own staff, local planning advisors and specialists in determining what forms a setting and how it adds to or detracts from the significance of a heritage asset or assets (Historic England 2017). This sets out a framework for assessing the effect of development proposals and also recommends, in general terms, how to avoid or minimise loss of or enhance significance.
- 2.13. The Guidance confirms that the consideration of setting is a matter of ‘informed judgement’ and sets out five stages involved in robust assessment of setting. The heritage assets which have a setting, whether designated or undesignated, have to be defined through a suitable level of research. However, the Guidance confirms that setting is not a heritage asset or designation in itself.
- 2.14. The Guidance highlights the fundamental basis of current policy; that although setting can cover a large area, not all of it is positive or anything other than neutral in relation to the significance of the heritage assets concerned. It sets out in detail the aspects of setting which may have a bearing on a heritage asset’s significance. This Guidance has been considered in completing this assessment.

Section 3: Existing Baseline

- 3.1. This section details key archaeological sites and finds recorded by the Berkshire Historic Environment Record (HER) for the site and its immediate environs, based on a kilometre radius search. These records were complemented by information available online from Historic England's National Heritage List for England and Wokingham Borough Council relating to designated built heritage, as well as other online sources. Figure 1 marks the location of key assets and records mentioned below.

Designated Heritage Assets

- 3.2. No designated heritage assets lie within the site. The closest are listed buildings lying circa 200 metres to the north. HERs 2218 and 2050 record the Grade II listed Bowyer's Farm farmhouse and an adjacent granary which are both Grade II listed. The farmhouse dates to the 17th century and is typically timber-framed with brick infill and tile roofed. The granary is timber-framed with weatherboarding and a tile roof, elevated on stone staddles.
- 3.3. More than half a kilometre north east of the site. All Saints' Church is Grade I listed and has 12th century and later fabric (HER 2036, Plate 1). The church also has two associated funerary monuments in the churchyard which are separately Grade II listed.
- 3.4. The church lies in the south east of a much wider area which is designated a Grade II Registered Park and Garden covering the medieval and later Swallowfield Park (HER 66, Figure 1). The park now retains a largely 18th century landscape and contains the 17th century and later main house and other structures which are separately listed.
- 3.5. The southern lodge of the park is a Victorian brick building called The Red Lodge which is Grade II listed (HER 2204, Plate 2). It lies circa 400 metres north of the site. South west of the lodge, two further Grade II listed buildings lie to either side of The Street: the Village Farmhouse and The Old Post House/Swallowfield Cottage. Both are late 18th or early 19th century houses in brick with tile roofs.
- 3.6. More than half a kilometre south of the site, adjacent to Part Lane, HERs 2046 and 2400 relate to the Grade II listed and 16th century 'Angel Sprints' and 'The Poors House' respectively. The former is marked as having been a beer house in the 19th century and was then called Angel Inn (Plate 3). The Poors House is believed to have originally been a late medieval open hall house, but has been extended and altered since.
- 3.7. North west of the site and Swallowfield's core, three large post-medieval houses are also Grade II listed, including 'Queen Anne's Mead', Wyvol Court and 'Girdlers' (HERs 2211, 2187 & 2185 respectively, Plate 4). No part of Swallowfield is designated as a conservation area and no Buildings of Local Importance lie close to the site.
- 3.8. A much larger area encompassing the site area itself in its north west is defined by Wokingham Borough Council as an 'Area of High Archaeological Potential' (AHAP). The basis for this designation is an extensive complex of cropmark features identified east of Part Lane as cropmarks apparent on aerial photographs.

- 3.9. Several concentrations of enclosures and ring ditches have been identified within the AHAP. One of these concentrations lies immediately east of Part Lane (HER 728.01). Here, a number of enclosures with internal features including ring ditches and pits have been noted. Given their form, these have been ascribed a later prehistoric or Roman date. Linear features associated with this concentration of cropmarks are noted to run from west to east and would pass close to the site area if they continued on the same trajectory west of Part Lane.
- 3.10. A concentration of similar cropmarks within the AHAP was tested by archaeological investigation in the 1980s, close to Riseley Farm, and approximately 750 metres to the south east of the site. A ring ditch type feature was of Bronze Age date and probably the remains of a ploughed out burial mound. Two enclosure features which were tested proved to be Iron Age in date, with one probably part of a field system, but the other associated with metal working. Mesolithic worked flint was also recovered during the fieldwork.

Other HER Records

- 3.11. There is some duplication between the HER's 'events' and 'monument' records, with some designated assets appearing several times. There has been considerable investigation close to the site ahead of redevelopment in recent decades, likely triggered by the AHAP designation.
- 3.12. The results of desk based assessment, records lying in Swallowfield Park and some post-medieval entries for the study area are not detailed below as they have no bearing on the archaeological potential of the site itself and would not be affected.
- 3.13. A general entry on the HER notes that Swallowfield is thought to have Anglo-Saxon origins, given the settlement's name, but the first recording of the settlement is noted to have been in the 11th century and it was listed in the Domesday Survey. The original Swallowfield deer park was in place by the early 14th century.
- 3.14. Although beyond the study area, the Devil's Highway, which marks the boundary between Berkshire and Hampshire and lies approximately a mile south of the site, follows the line of a Roman road running broadly east to west. Despite the extensive cropmarks close to the site and known Roman road, an extensive fieldwalking survey of the Loddon Valley in 1990 found very few prehistoric or Roman finds and little has come to light through chance finds. However, a small number of worked flints confirm human activity in the area from the Mesolithic.
- 3.15. HER 928 actually records past archaeological investigation within the site, recording a geophysical survey of an area in 1993 where new tree planting coincided with a linear cropmark feature (HER 928). The survey and checking of the stripped topsoil found nothing of note and it was concluded that no related features lay within the hectare survey area. HER 765 records other faint cropmark features west of the site which might reflect sub-surface archaeology, but could also be due to natural factors.
- 3.16. To the north west of the site, trial trenching by Foundations Archaeology in 1999 and 2015 ahead of proposed residential development found nothing of note in two separate locations (HERs 86 & 2021). As the ability to test the more recent site was limited, a watching brief was also maintained during development the next year, but this again revealed nothing of interest.
- 3.17. South of the site, HERs 1169, 648 & 1818 relate to watching briefs maintained on very small-scale extensions or single building construction. None of these interventions observed anything of note.

Other Sources

- 3.18. Roque's map of 1761 shows a recognisable pattern of roads at Swallowfield which allow the site to be located within an area marked as arable. However, the map is not detailed enough to show field boundaries.
- 3.19. The Tithe map of circa 1840 confirms that much of the site was in a larger field called 'Great Linghay' which extended further north, was arable and farmed by a man living at Handpost farm to the south west. Two smaller fields in the south west of the site were known as 'Hods Hither Pightle' and 'Hods Further Pightle', pightle meaning small field. Both were meadow at the time and owned and occupied by a James Simmonds who lived well to the south west.
- 3.20. The six inches to the mile Ordnance Survey map of 1877 confirms the site lay within a larger field which extended further north as well as incorporating a single smaller field in the south west, a merger of those on the Tithe map (Figure 1). The village pound is marked west of the site and Trowes Lane, whilst the surviving parcel lay south west of the site.
- 3.21. The situation was unchanged at the turn of the 20th century and in 1913. There was no woodland south of the site at this time or before the First World War either. By the 1900 OS map edition, the pound was no longer shown and the two smaller fields of the site had merged into that to the north.
- 3.22. The Victoria County History covers the parish, but provides little useful information beyond corroborating the HER's data. The settlement was first documented in the 11th century as 'Soanesfelt'. This corroborates information provided by the HER. Pevsner focuses on the church and Swallowfield Park, noting the lodges to be high Victorian (Pevsner 1966). None of the closer listed buildings are mentioned.
- 3.23. A recent aerial image of the site and its environs was available on Google Earth and it is possible to see a range of cropmark features in the field east of Part Lane and the site which led to this area being designated an AHAP.
- 3.24. A number of broadly east to west linear features are evident east of Part Lane and may well reflect part of a field system beyond the more concentrated cropmarks. These would run west towards the vicinity of the site, but the presence of pasture west of the road may obscure a continuation of these linear features. However, nothing was apparent within the site itself which was clearly being cultivated.

Section 4: Site Visit

- 4.1. The site was visited in late April 2022. The walkover confirmed that the site area consists of a single parcel of land which is not currently cultivated and woodland in the south (Plates 5 & 6). Sources indicate that the woodland is only a generation old and the trunk sizes would be consistent with that.
- 4.2. The field itself is largely bare earth and there are deep regularly spaced east to west gullies between wider areas (Plate 7). Some of these still contain irrigation pipes and there were other irrigation system elements apparent on site. It is possible that the site was used for growing asparagus. Nothing of heritage interest other than hedgerows on the western and eastern site boundaries was evident.
- 4.3. South west of the site, a separate land parcel marked on historic maps appears to have been used as a storage area (Plate 8). There was no indication of the site of the village pound opposite this and west of Trowes Lane.
- 4.4. The hedges and trees on the western and eastern boundaries, woodland to the south and houses north of the site make it very well enclosed. Visits to the listed buildings and south western edge of Swallowfield Park noted above confirmed that the site has no role in enhancing their significance and change within the site would in no way harm either the significance or an appreciation of the significance of any heritage asset.

Section 5: Impact Assessment and Conclusions

- 5.1. This archaeology and heritage assessment supports a future planning application for residential development and associated infrastructure and landscaping for land east of Trowes Lane, Swallowfield, Wokingham, Berkshire. The assessment has been completed for City and Country and accords with current policy and guidance.
- 5.2. The assessment has been informed by consultation with the Berkshire Historic Environment Record as well as Historic England and other online sources. Berkshire Record Office in Reading was also visited. The background research informed a site walkover in April 2022 which took in the site's surroundings too.
- 5.3. The area of the site lies on the edge of an Area of High Archaeological Potential (AHAP) given the known presence of likely prehistoric and Roman sub-surface archaeological remains to the east of Part Lane. As these features were identified as cropmarks on aerial images, land use west of the lane may have curtailed the visibility of related features. Such finds are to be expected in the area and on the fertile river terrace gravels between the rivers Loddon and Blackwater.
- 5.4. However, geophysical survey southern part of the site now under woodland did not indicate any significant archaeology. More recent archaeological investigation to the north west of the site also found nothing of note, as did more limited monitoring of works to the south east, within the AHAP.
- 5.5. Any remains within the site area are likely to have been disturbed by past cultivation of the field in which it lies as well as by a modern irrigation system. The current state of the open part of the site would also prevent geophysical survey. Given no indication of significant remains when the southern part of the site was surveyed, it is suggested that no further archaeological investigation need be required ahead of planning permission being granted.
- 5.6. Trial trenching secured as a condition of planning permission could be completed ahead of development. If significant remains are revealed during this evaluation, they could be subject to additional investigation ahead of or during construction.
- 5.7. The only features of any interest within the site are the hedged field boundaries marking the western and eastern site boundaries, albeit these are only of limited significance. Most hedgerow is likely to be retained as part of the site's development, but loss of short stretches would represent a negligible effect.
- 5.8. The closest designated heritage assets to the site include a small number of listed buildings to the north and south which all lie more than two hundred metres distant. The only other designated heritage asset within the study area is the Grade II Registered Swallowfield Park. Those closest to the site are surrounded by later development and there is also considerable intervening vegetation. None of the nearest heritage assets has inter-visibility or an enduring historic link with the site. Given this context, residential development of the well enclosed site would not harm the significance of any asset or an appreciation of that significance.

Section 6: References and Sources

Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) 2012 *National Planning Policy Framework* London

English Heritage 2008 *Conservation Principles* London

Historic England 2015 *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2 – Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment* London

Historic England 2017 *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 – The Setting of Heritage Assets* London

HMSO 1990 *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act* London

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) 2021 *National Planning Policy Framework* London (4th edition)

Pevsner N. 1966 *The Buildings of England: Berkshire* London

Page W & Ditchfield P. (eds.) 1923 *Victoria County History of the County of Berkshire*, vol. III, London

Wokingham Borough Council 2010 *Wokingham Borough Core Strategy* Wokingham

Wokingham Borough Council 2014 *Wokingham Borough Development Plan – Adopted managing Development Delivery Local Plan* Wokingham

Maps

Roque's map of Berkshire, 1761 (Sheet 3)

Swallowfield Tithe map and apportionment, circa 1840

Six inch to the mile Ordnance Survey maps of 1877, 1900 and 1913 (Berks. Sheet XLV SE)

Web Sources

Britain from Above website accessed at www.britainfromabove.org.uk

British Geological Survey Geology Viewer accessed at www.bgs.ac.uk

Google Earth aerial image of site accessed at www.google.co.uk/maps

Historic England's National Heritage List for England accessed at www.historicengland.org.uk/professional/protection/process/national-heritage-list-for-england

OS maps of site accessed at National Library of Scotland at www.nls.uk

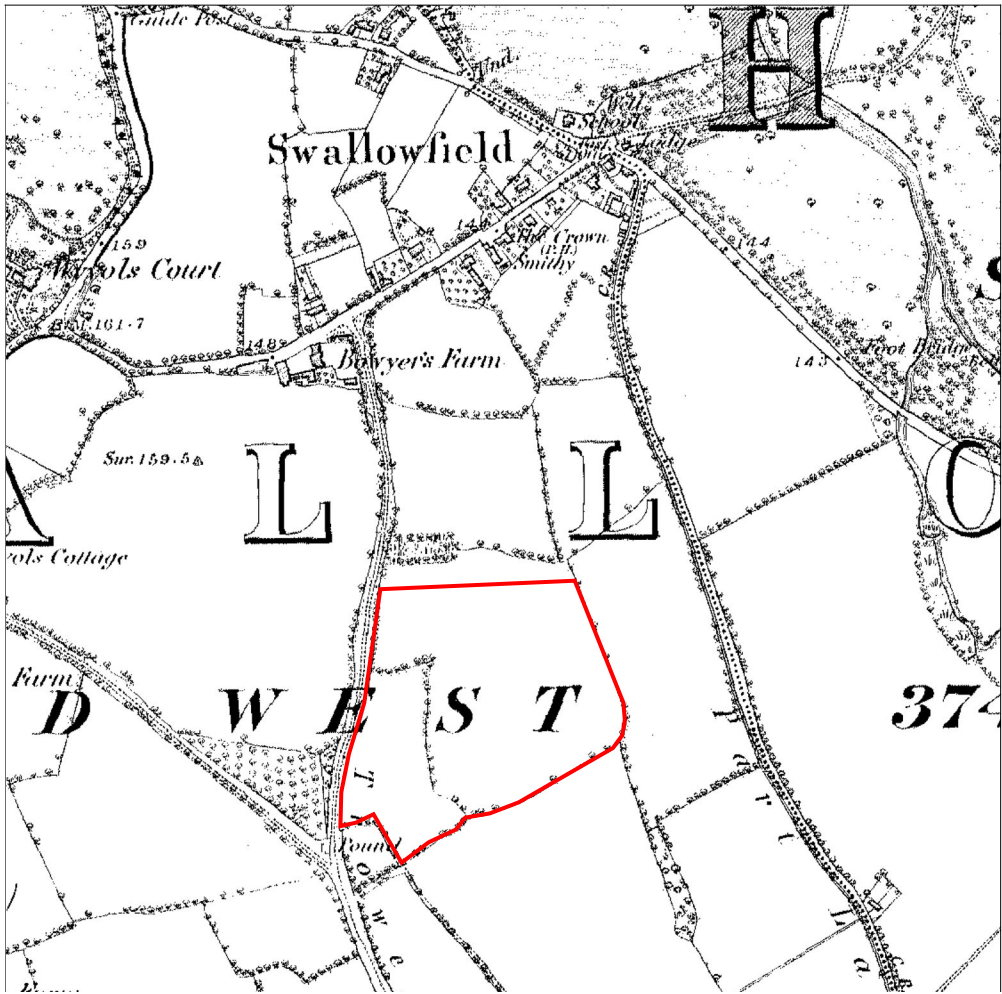
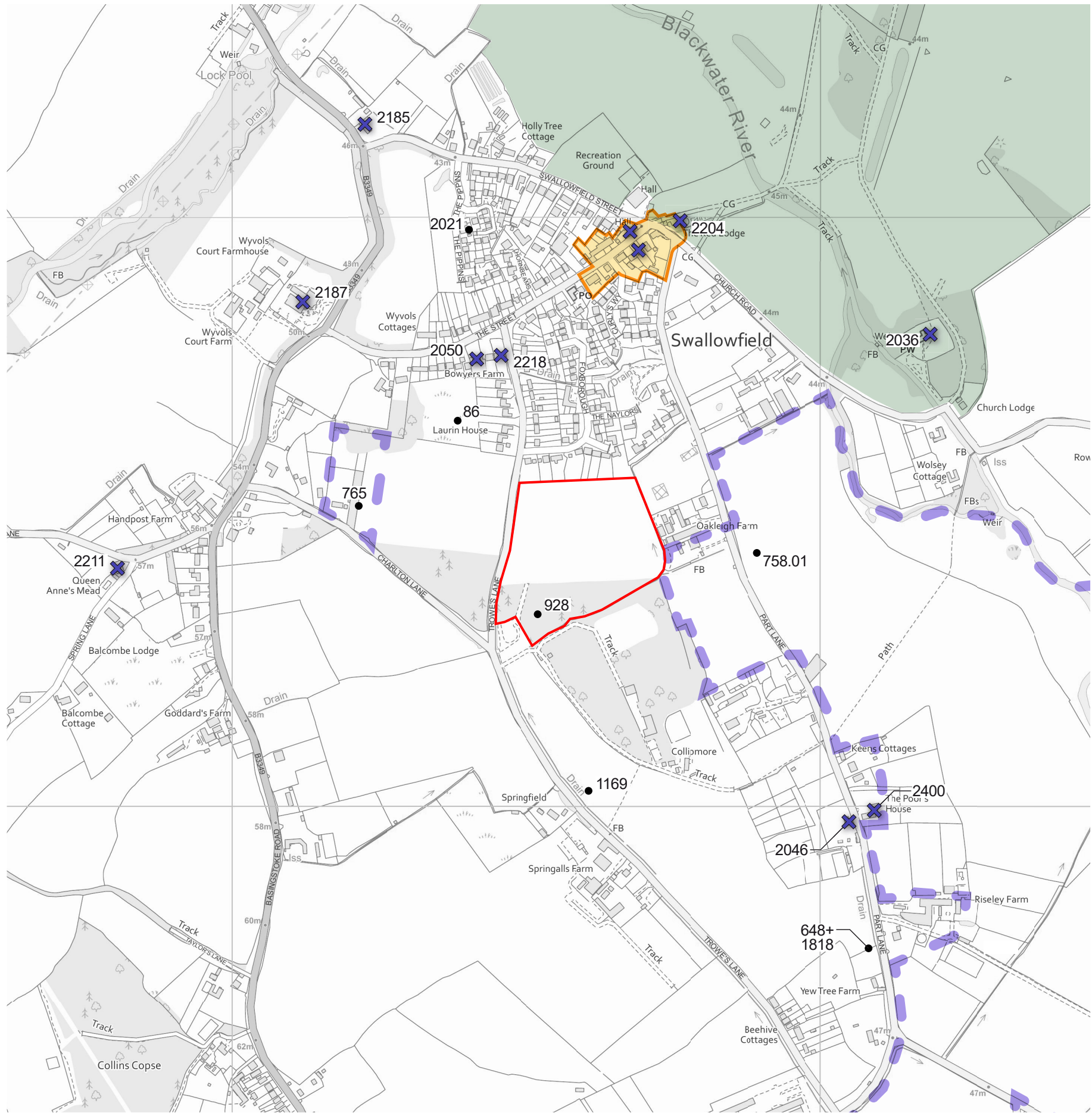
Street Map Ordnance Survey map of site and environs accessed at www.streetmap.co.uk

Wokingham Borough Council website accessed at www.wokingham.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Berkshire Historic Environment Record Gazetteer

HER ref.	NGR (SU prefix)	Period	Notes
66	7326 6476	Medieval on	Swallowfield Park was first enclosed in 14 th century by Edward III. House is 17 th century and listed and wider park is Grade II RPG of 18 th century and later date. Limited investigations of features within the park have occurred.
86	7236 6467	N/a	Trial trench evaluation by Foundations Archaeology in 1999 ahead of new housing found nothing of note in ten trenches.
648	7309 6369	N/a	A watching brief on a small extension at Yew Tree Farm by TVAS in 2006 observed nothing of interest.
758.01	7290 6445	Prehistoric or Roman	A complex of cropmarks lies in the north of a larger area which has several foci of cropmark enclosures (all HER 758), with BA to IA remains confirmed to the south at Riseley Farm (HER 259). The whole area is designated as an Area of High Archaeological Potential (AHAP). East of The Loft, several HER entries (all 758.01.xxx) relate to a number of enclosures, ring ditches, linears and pits which suggest a settlement or other non-agricultural focus and field system. The shape of these suggests a Bronze Age, Iron Age or Roman origin or a mix of these periods.
765	722 645	Undated	Faint cropmarks seen on aerial photographs may reflect sub-surface settlement, but could be natural.
928	7255 6435	Undated	A geophysical survey in 1993 ahead of tree planting confirmed the presence of an undated linear feature noted as a cropmark and that there were no other features or any indication of activity nearby.
1169	7254 6398	N/a	Watching brief at Springfields in 2010 by JMHS during construction of a new dwelling found nothing of note.
1818	7310 6369	N/a	Watching brief by TVAS at Yew Tree Farm on small extension identified nothing of note in 2015.
2021	7240 6298	N/a	Trial trenching ahead of redevelopment of a works by Foundations Archaeology in 2015 found nothing of note, although ground conditions restricted the evaluation. A WB in 2016 also observed nothing of interest.
2036	7318 6480	Medieval	All Saints' Church is Grade I listed and of 12 th century and later date. Stone and with shingled octagonal spire. Two funerary monuments in churchyard are Grade II listed.
2046	7305 6398	16 th century	'Angel Sprints' is Grade II listed and formerly a beer house. Of timber frame, painted brick infill and hipped thatched roof.
2050	7242 6476	18 th century	Granary adjacent to former farmhouse at Bowyer's Farm is Grade II listed and of timber and tile on nine staddle stones.
2185	7223 6516	16 th century	'Girdlers' is a Grade II listed timber, brick and tile large house with some fine early details.
2187	7212 6486	19 th century	Wyvols Court is Grade I listed and rendered and a slate-roofed large classical building.
2204	7273 6499	19 th century	'The Red Lodge' is a Grade II listed brick and tile 'muscular Gothic' lodge to Swallowfield Park. Associated walls and gate piers are separately GII listed.
2211	7181 7440	18 th century	'Queen Anne's Mead' is a classical brick and tile house.
2218	7245 6476	17 th century	Bowyer's Farmhouse is Grade II listed and of timber with brick infill and tile roof. Later additions and alterations.
2400	7298 6409	Medieval	'The Poors House' is an early 16 th century Grade II listed house of timber, plaster and brick infill and thatch.

Figure 1: Site and Identified Archaeology and Heritage



OS map of 1877

KEY

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| | Site boundary | | Swallowfield Conservation Area |
| | Listed building | | Other HER records |
| | Swallowfield Park Registered Park and Garden (HER 66) | | Area of High Archaeological Potential |



0 250m

Project Land East of Trowes Lane, Swallowfield, Wokingham, Berkshire

Drawing Title **Figure 1: Site and Identified Archaeology and Heritage**

Scale As shown (approximate at A3)

Drawing No. BSA2211-1

Date May 2022

Checked BS/KJ

BSA Archaeology & Historic Environment
HERITAGE Consultancy

7 Spring Gardens, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 1AZ
T: 01235 536 754 E: info@bsaheritage.co.uk W: www.bsaheritage.co.uk

Plates



Plate 1: All Saints' Church, viewed from south west



Plate 2: Red Lodge and the war memorial, looking east



Plate 3: 'Angel Sprints', looking west



Plate 4: Wyvols Court from south east



Plate 5: Looking north east across site field



Plate 6: Looking south west across site field



Plate 7: Typical field surface, looking east



Plate 8: Area south west of site, looking north