

Barkham Square

Borough of Wokingham

HERITAGE STATEMENT | MARCH 2026

On behalf of Crest Nicholson Ltd



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Assessment Methodology



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Section 1

Introduction.

1 | Introduction

Overview

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared on behalf of Crest Nicholson Ltd ('the Applicant') to support a Outline planning application at land at Barkham Square ('the Site') within the Borough of Wokingham. It provides an assessment of the anticipated heritage impacts of the proposed development.
- 1.2 The proposed development can be summarised as follows:
- Outline application (with all matters reserved except for access) for residential development (Use Class C3), plus elderly care dwellings (Use Class C2/C3), associated open space, allotments, green and blue infrastructure including the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and other associated works.*
- 1.3 This report will:
- Set out the relevant legislative and policy framework within which to understand the proposed development of the Site;
 - Provide a proportionate and robust analysis of the Site and surrounding area's historic development;
 - Describe the Site and identify relevant heritage assets, their significance and the contribution of their setting to significance;
 - Provide an assessment of the potential effects to the significance and setting of identified heritage assets resulting from the proposed development.
- 1.4 The methodology used in this assessment is set out in Appendix 1. The baseline was prepared using ongoing desk-based research and fieldwork undertaken in February 2024.
- 1.5 The report has been produced by Icen Projects. Specifically, it is authored by Edward Wollaston Senior Consultant, Rebecca Mason Associate Director, with review by Laurie Handcock, Director.

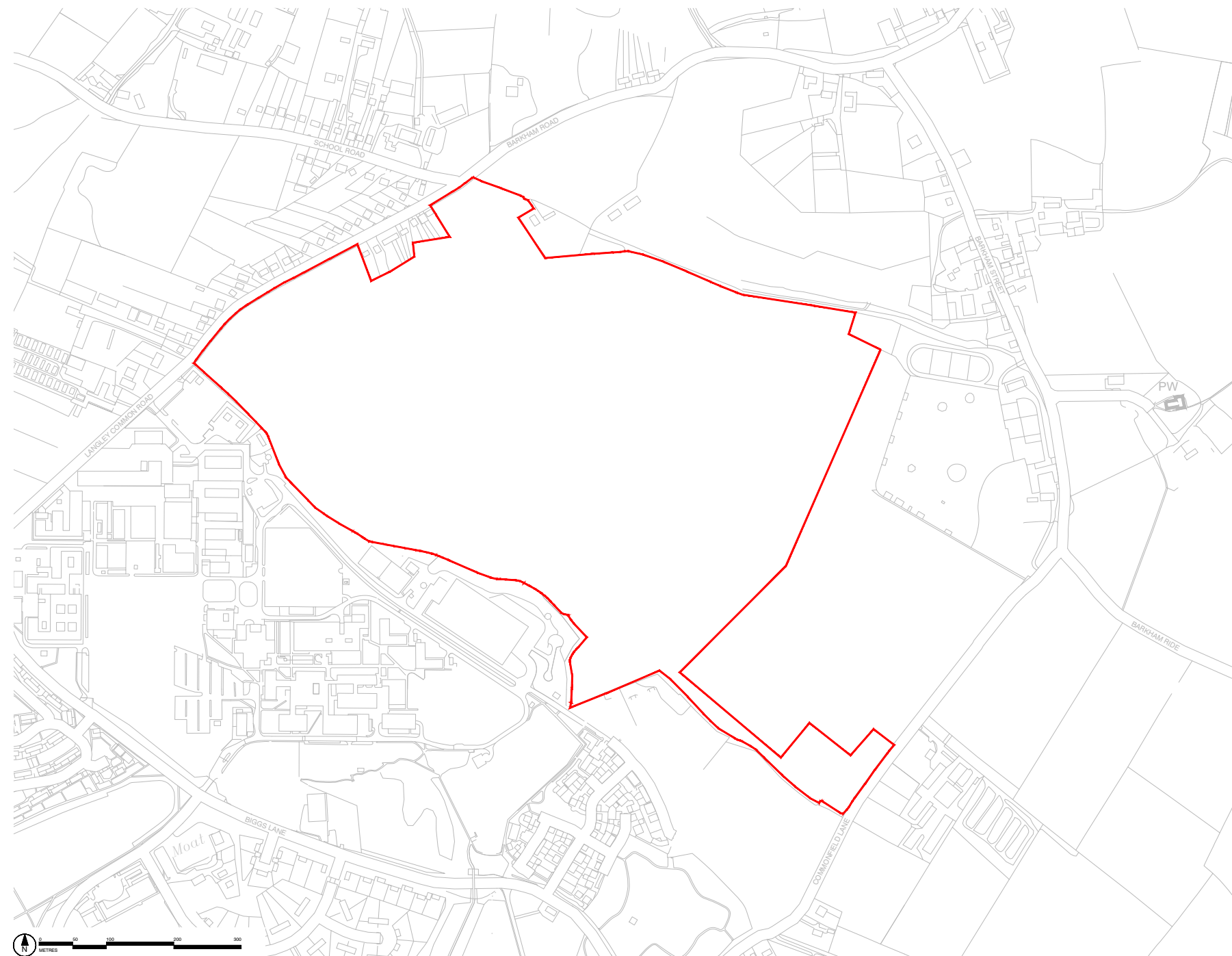


Figure 1.1 Site Location (site boundary in red)

1 | Introduction

Heritage Scoping

1.9 A Baseline Heritage Assessment was submitted with the ES Scoping Opinion for the Site

1.10 Application Number: 243114 Dated: 28 January 2025

Historic Environment – Built Heritage With respect to the section headed ‘Historic Environment- Built Heritage and Archaeology’ (paragraphs 6.39 to 6.56), the assessment of the potential impact on designated heritage assets is considered to be a fair. In terms of the proposal under paragraph 6.59 – 6.60 (that the built heritage be scoped out of the EIA) this is also considered reasonable.

However, it should be noted identification and assessment does not include non-designated heritage assessments directly adjacent to the site such as the former Langley Common Farmhouse and those ‘sick line buildings’ that had been part of the Army Remount service. It should also be noted that the photograph labelled figure 45 on page 11 of the Historic Statement would appear not that of the listed Langley Pond Farmhouse.

1.11 Langley Common Farmhouse and ‘sick line building’ (Former Stabling block located beyond the southern boundary of the Site) are not recorded on the Draft 2024 Local List. They have previously been consented for demolition and the future of this building is currently being determined under a separate application in connection with the adjoining land parcel. In reference to the above photograph the Figure reference has been corrected.



Figure 1.2 Site Photos taken from Site Visit



Figure 1.3 Site Photos taken from Site Visit



Figure 1.4 Site Photos taken from Site Visit



Figure 1.5 Site Photos taken from Site Visit

Identification of Heritage Assets

- 1.6
- The scope of this assessment is considered to be proportionate to the significance of identified heritage assets and the nature of change proposed, in line with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2025 paragraph 207.
- 1.7
- GIS software has been used to identify heritage assets within a 500m radius of the Site, alongside reviewing the National Heritage List for England ('NHLE').
- 1.8
- The following designated heritage assets include;
- Arborfield Cross Conservation Area
 - Barkham Square (Grade: II, List UID: 1118115)
 - Langleypond Farmhouse (Grade: II, List UID: 1118117)

Group 1: Barkham Manor

- Barkham Manor (Grade: II, List UID: 1313101)
- Wall to Barkham Manor (Grade: II, List UID: 1118112)

Group 2: Sparks Farm and The Bull

- Sparks Farmhouse (Grade: II, List UID: 1118114)
- The Bull Public House and Smithy (Grade: II, List UID: 1118113)

Group 3: Church of St James

- Church of St James (Grade: II, List UID: 1118116)
- Church Cottage (Grade: II, List UID: 1319114)
- Moated Site and Associated Enclosure at Church Farm (Scheduled Monument, List UID: 1013181)

Key

- Grade II listed
- Scheduled monument
- Arborfield Cross Conservation Area

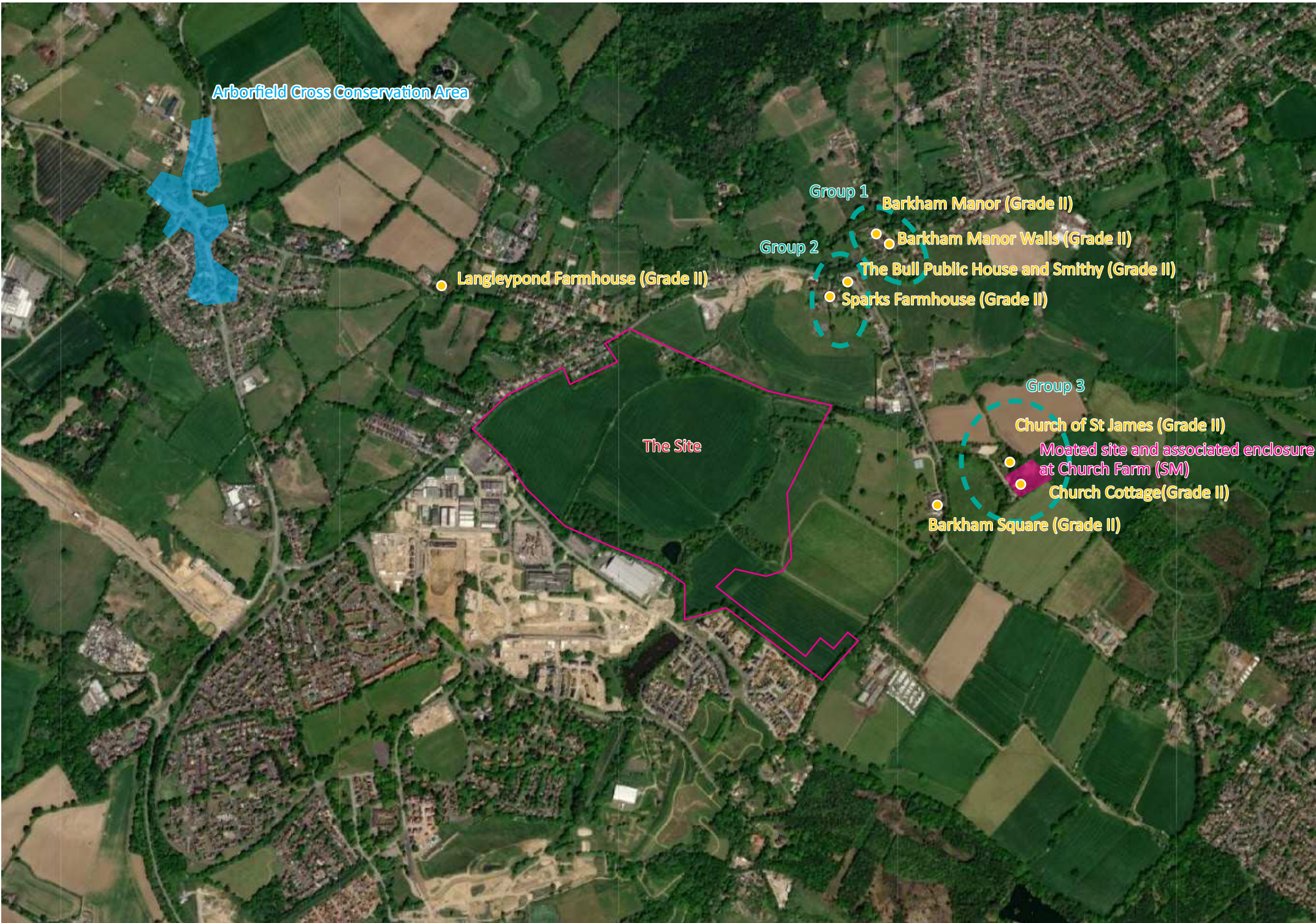


Figure 1.6 Heritage Asset Mapping

Section 2

Relevant Planning Policy, Legislation & Guidance.

Legislation

- 2.1 Where any development may have a direct or indirect effect on designated heritage assets, there is a legislative framework to ensure the proposals are considered with due regard for their impact on the historic environment.
- 2.2 Section 66 (1) Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990) states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the Local Planning Authority or Secretary of State, as relevant, shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.
- 2.3 Section 72(1) of the Act states that in relation to Conservation Areas, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. As the site is not located within a conservation area and there is no legal requirement to consider the setting of a conservation area, s72 is not engaged.

Local Policy

- 2.4 The local Statutory Development Plan includes the following documents relevant to this report:
 - Wokingham Core Strategy (2010)
 - Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan (2019-2036)
- 2.5 The relevant policies to this report are summarised in Table 2.1 adjacent.
- 2.6 Relevant national guidance and policy is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework, Planning Practice Guidance and National Design Guide.
- 2.7 The Wokingham Emerging Local Plan (2023–2040) is currently unadopted and therefore carries only limited weight in the determination of planning applications. While its policies may provide useful guidance on future development aspirations and design principles, they do not yet have full statutory effect. Consequently, emphasis is placed on the adopted Development Plan, including the Wokingham Core Strategy (2010) and the Arborfield & Barkham Neighbourhood Plan (2019–2036), alongside the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), in assessing the acceptability of the proposed development.

Local Policy		
Policy Document	Relevant Policy	Summary
Wokingham Core Strategy (2010)	Policy CP3: General Principals for Development	This policy states that proposals should be of appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area together with a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life. They should have no detrimental impact upon important ecological, heritage, landscape (including river valleys) or geological features or water courses.
	Policy AD3: High Quality Development with Generous Open Space, Properly Landscaped	This policy states that all new developments must reflect the rural character and historic context of existing dwellings within the Plan Area. New development must deliver good quality design. In order to achieve this, all new development must wherever possible: a. Recognise, in the design of developments, the distinctive local character of the area and contribute sensitively in order to create dwellings of a high architectural and rural quality, referring to the published Village Design Statements. b. Consider the density of any new development which must be in character with the surrounding area, respect the rural nature of the area and be designed to give an impression of spaciousness and variety with uniform houses and plots being avoided. c. Recognise possible impacts of climate change and consequently reflect sustainable development standards.
Wokingham Emerging Local Plan (2023-2040) - Unadopted	Policy DH1: Place making and quality design	New developments must achieve high-quality design to create enduring, distinctive, and inclusive places. This involves respecting and enhancing local character through careful consideration of context, including siting, layout, scale, materials, and detailing. Developments should integrate natural features and green infrastructure, prioritizing biodiversity and sustainable drainage systems. Public spaces and streets must be attractive, safe, and functional, encouraging active lifestyles and fostering social interaction. Efficient land use, adaptability, and energy efficiency are essential, alongside accessible designs accommodating all users. High-quality materials and finishes should ensure longevity, while masterplans and design codes guide larger projects to maintain a cohesive vision.
	Policy DH5: Historic Environment	Development proposals should aim to conserve and enhance the significance and setting of these assets through early identification, sensitive design, and integration of historic features. A proportionate heritage assessment must accompany proposals that may affect heritage assets, detailing their significance and evaluating potential impacts. Substantial harm or loss is only permissible if outweighed by substantial public benefits or if all alternative options have been exhausted. For less than substantial harm, clear public benefits must outweigh the harm. Local and non-designated heritage assets must also be preserved, with harm justified and mitigated as appropriate.
	Policy IRS1: Preservation Of Separation Of Settlements	In order to protect the separation of settlements, development proposals outside of development limits designated in the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014 will be required to comply with Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy and: a) Preserve the character and appearance of the countryside; and b) Not lead to the physical, visual or perceived coalescence of existing settlements.
	Policy IRS2: Recognise, Respect And Preserve Identity And Rural Setting Of Settlements	Development proposals must recognise, respect and preserve the identity and rural setting of settlements, with regard to: a) Scale and form of the development b) Density of the development c) Materials used in the development to reflect local character d) Tree and hedgerow planting that reinforces and reflects local biodiversity in the parishes and e) The distinctive character of the varied landscapes of the area and outstanding views.
	Policy IRS3: Protection And Enhancement Of The Natural Environment And Green Spaces	Development proposals should conserve and enhance the natural environment and green spaces of the area
	Policy IRS4: Protection And Enhancement Of The Historic Character Of The Are	Development proposals will need to demonstrate how they protect or enhance the historic and natural character of the area.

Table 2.1 Summary of Local Policy

2 | Relevant Planning Policy, Legislation & Guidance

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, Dec 2024)

- 2.8 The NPPF affirms, in paragraph 135, the need for new design to: function well and add to the quality of the surrounding area; establish a strong sense of place; and respond to local character and history, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities).
- 2.9 Paragraph 139 requires development that is not well-designed to be refused, whilst significant weight should be given to development which reflects local design policies and/or is outstanding, innovative and helps raise the design standards in the area.
- 2.10 Paragraph 207 states that local planning authorities should require applicants to describe the significance of heritage assets affected and any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail provided should be proportionate to the significance of the asset.
- 2.11 Paragraph 210 emphasises that local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.
- 2.12 Paragraphs 212 - 215 address the balancing of harm against public benefits. If a balancing exercise is necessary (i.e. if there is any harm to the asset), great weight should be applied to the statutory duty where it arises, and any harm to significance should require a clear and convincing justification. Where substantial or less than substantial harm will arise as a result of a proposed development, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of a proposal, including for less than substantial harm, securing its optimum viable use (para.215). In the case of substantial harm, this must be necessary to achieve substantial public benefits, or a number of criteria set out in paragraph 214 apply.
- 2.13 Paragraph 216 requires a balanced judgment for proposals that affect non-designated heritage assets, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
- 2.14 Paragraph 219 encourages opportunities for new development within, and within the setting of, Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Whereas paragraph 220 notes that loss of an element which makes a positive contribution to these should be assessed according to paragraphs 207 and 208, taking into account its contribution to the whole.

Planning Practice Guidance (Last Updated June 2021)

- 2.15 Paragraph 002 states that conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change that requires a flexible and thoughtful approach.
- 2.16 Paragraph 006 sets out how heritage significance can be understood in the planning context as archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic.
- 2.17 Paragraph 018 explains that, where potential harm to designated heritage assets is identified, it needs to be categorised as either less than substantial harm or substantial harm (which includes total loss) in order to identify which policies in the NPPF (paragraphs 207-208) apply. It goes on to state that whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision-maker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the NPPF. In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases.
- 2.18 The PPG also provides clear guidance in paragraph 020 on the meaning of 'public benefits', particularly in relation to historic environment policy, including paragraphs 207 to 208 of the NPPF. The PPG makes clear that public benefits should be measured according to the delivery of the three key drivers of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental outcomes, all of which are reflected in the objectives of the planning system, as per Paragraph 8 of the NPPF.

Other Relevant Guidance

- 2.19 The following is considered to be relevant national and local guidance and has informed this report:
 - National Design Guide (2021)
 - National Model Design Code (2021)
 - Housing Design (adopted January 2007)

Section 3

Historic Development of the Site & Surroundings.

3 | Historic Development of Site & Surroundings

Historic Development of the Area

Barkham

- 3.1 The settlement of Barkham derives its name from the Anglo-Saxon word 'bercheham' meaning Birch Tree Home, or Birch Tree Village. This refers to the edges of Windsor Forest. Indeed, during King Edward III's reign, the manor of Barkham provided income for the rebuilding of Windsor Castle. The ancient part of Barkham is around the old parish church and Barkham Cottages, however, in the present day the population is centre around Barkham Manor and Arborfield Garrison.
- 3.2 In the 13th century, the manor of Barkham passed from the Bishops of Hereford to the Neville family, and from them to the Bullocks, who were a locally important family of the 14th century. During this period, Barkham became part of the commercial activity of timber trading, with wood from the local forests transported via the manor to Westminster Abbey in the 1350s, where it was used for the construction of its roof.
- 3.3 The Bullocks built for themselves two late 15th century moated hall houses, one of which was called Barkham Court, and which survives today as the core of Church Cottages, which is located to the east of the Site, beyond the Grade II listed Barkham Square. An additional moated house was constructed at Barkham Manor (not to be confused with Barkham Square) to the northwest, but which does not survive. Nonetheless, this became the site of the later Barkham Manor, an 18th century house which in 1783 was purchased from the Waterman family by the Dowager Countess Gower, the third wife of the 1st Earl Gower.
- 3.4 As can be deduced from the landscape around Barkham and Wokingham, the primary economic activity of the landscape was agriculture, which carried through from the medieval period into the present day, with the town of Wokingham functioning as the local market centre for the selling and purchasing of produce. An open field system of farming prevailed in the parish until the early 19th century, when Parliament passed the Enclosure Act for Barkham in 1813.



Figure 3.1 1842 map of surrounding area by James Pigot & Co. Approximate Site location circled



Figure 3.2 The former parish church of Barkham - possibly converted from a medieval hall house owing to its unusual form and inserted wooden tower. It was pulled down in 1860 to make way for the present church of St James



Figure 3.3 A drawing of Barkham Street c. 1920. This view looks north along the road. The granary and hut on the left and the brick farmhouse on the right still exist today.



Figure 3.4 Tithe map of the Site and surrounding area, c. 1840

Barkham Square

- 3.5 Barkham Square, located to the east of the Site, was built by Charles Gery in the mid 18th century, though the exact date is unclear - court records record the sale of 'a certain freehold messuage called the Square'. In any case, by 1717 around 600 acres of the parish, including Barkham Farm and the land which would become Barkham Square estate, had been sold by William Waterman to John Davenport of Chelsea. 525 of these acres were purchased in 1743 by Charles Gery from the Davenport family, who took up residence at Barkham Farm (the moated site which would later become Church Cottages). Gery borrowed considerable sums of money from a variety of people to finance his purchases of the estate, which he failed to repay leading to considerable reputational damage.

Arborfield Garrison

- 3.6 This area, now built out as a housing estate, is located to the west of the old Barkham settlement, and to the south of the Grade II listed Barkham Square manor house. It was developed c. 1900 by the Army Remount Service and supplied the military with horses for both operational and ceremonial purposes. It was operational during the First World War and most of the inter-war period before closing in 1937. During the Second World War, part of the garrison functioned as the Army Technical School and the rest of the garrison was occupied by Royal Artillery units which moved out prior to D-Day in June 1944.
- 3.7 After the war the south-west part of the garrison, known as Poperinghe Barracks, became the depot of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers ('REME'). The barracks consisted of wooden huts mostly grouped in 'spiders', each spider being made up of six huts joined by corridors to central washing and utility rooms. After the Army Apprentices College at Hadrian's Camp closed in 1969, all REME apprentice training was concentrated at Arborfield.
- 3.8 In July 2011, RAF Lyneham was to be the new site of the Defence Technical Training Change Programme (DTTCP) and as such Arborfield Garrison was closed. In 2016 planning permission was given to demolish existing buildings for the present residential development built out by Crest Nicholson.

3 | Historic Development of Site & Surroundings

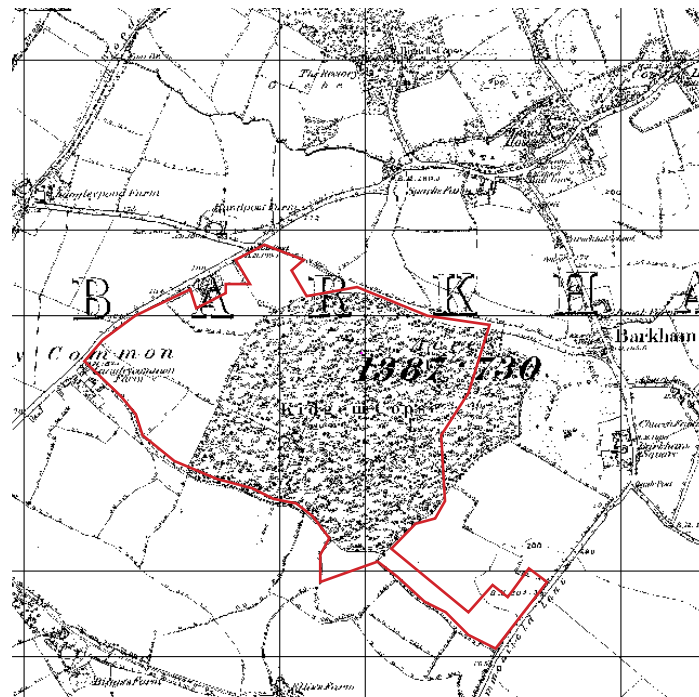


Figure 3.5 1876-1883 OS map
Source: Landmark

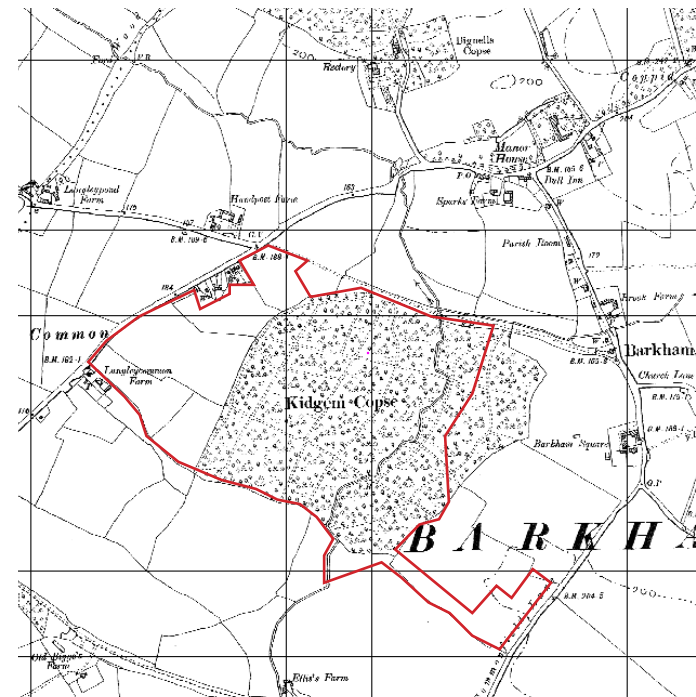
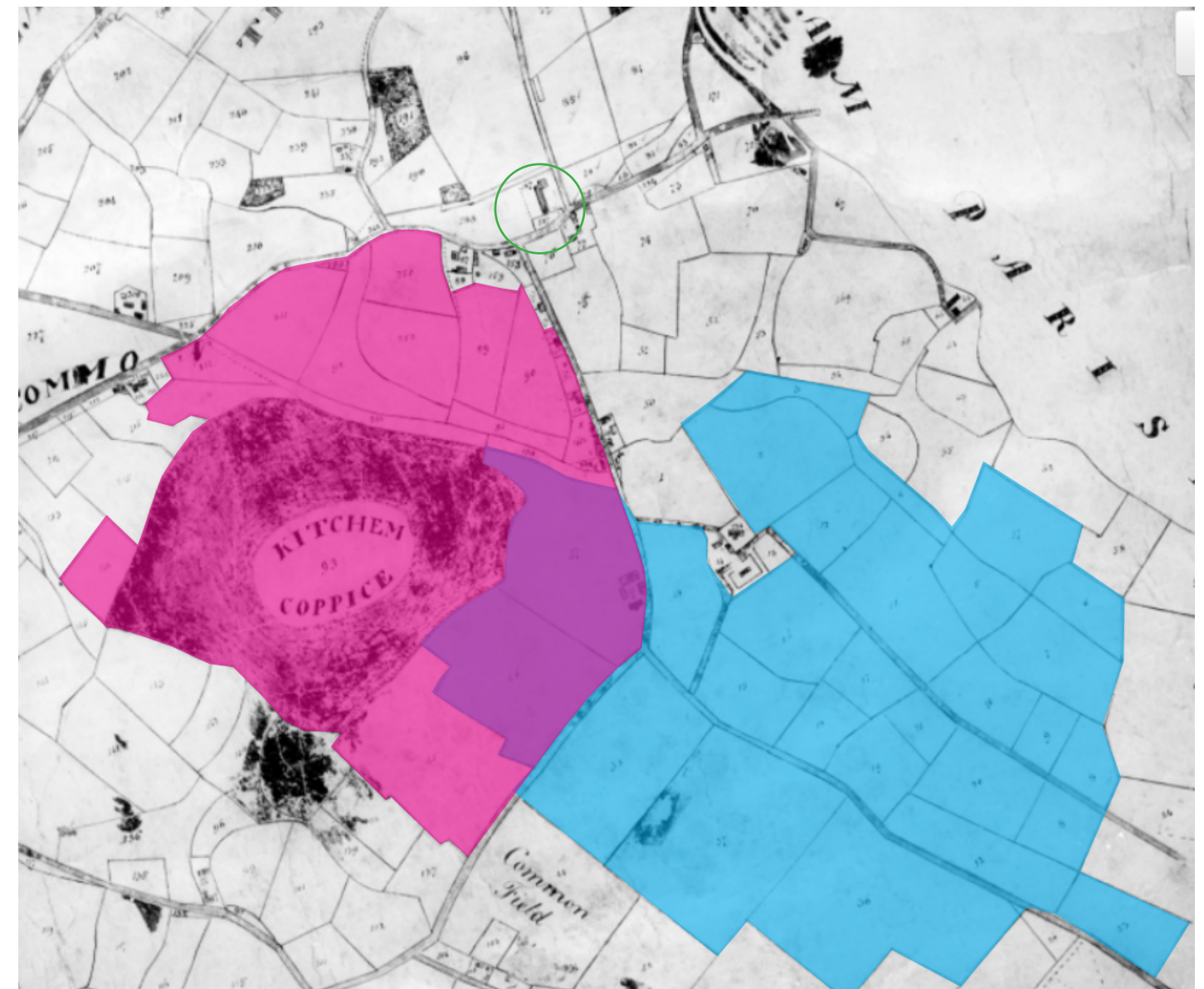


Figure 3.6 1900 OS map
Source: Landmark

History of the Site

- 3.9 As can be seen in the maps above, the Site was, for the majority of its history, occupied by a mixture of woodland and farmland. The woods were then known as Kidgem Copse, or Kitchem Coppice in even earlier mapping. It may have been a remnant of the wider woods from which Barkham had derived its Anglo-Saxon name: 'Bercheham' and which was used in the medieval period for timber.
- 3.10 It was originally part of the Barkham Manor estate, belonging to the Leveson-Gower family, the Earls of Gower who were based at Barkham Manor to the north. This ownership shifted by the early 20th century, having passed into the hands of the Barkham Square estate, which had gradually extended its holdings from primarily east of Barkham Street, to now encompass the majority of the present day Site (see figure 3.7).
- 3.11 The majority of the Site was therefore historically fairly inactive, with only the eastern and western portions of it used for farming. The Garth Hunt, a well known and popular hunt in Berkshire, was hosted at Barkham Square in 1904 by Edward Sturges. It was a point to
- point, and traversed the border of the copse to flush out foxes.
- 3.12 During the first half of the 20th century, the Site was gradually cleared and by 1961 it was almost completely devoid of trees (see figure 3.9), with only a thin line now remaining, which follow the route of the stream. The clearing coincided with the expansion of the Remount Depot, which was established at what became known as Arborfield Garrison in 1904 to the south of the Site.
- 3.13 Up to present day, the Site remained largely the same as it does now, however, with a continuing evolution of the landscape around it. Most relevant is the redevelopment of the garrison to the south, now built out by Crest Nicholson with housing. The has resulted in an emerging character of modern suburban housing, catalysed by proximity and pressure from the expansion of Wokingham to the north and Arborfield village to the west.



Key

- Ownership in 1839 by the Cook Family
- Altered ownership by the Sturges Family

Figure 3.7 Ownership map of Barkham Square. This shows the 1839 tithe map and later alteration of the apportionments dated 1915. Approximate Site boundary in red. Barkham Manor, which owned the land within the Site during the 19th century, is circled in green.

3 | Historic Development of Site & Surroundings



Figure 3.8 1932 OS map
Source: Landmark

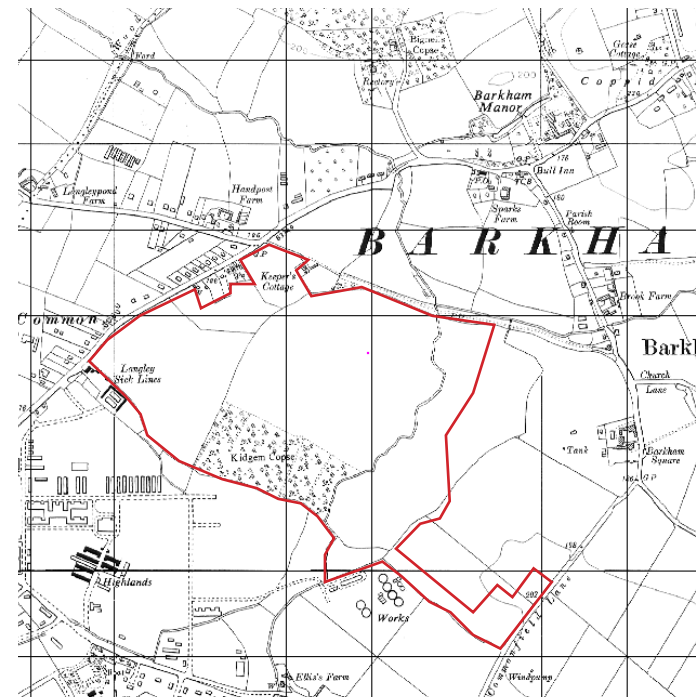


Figure 3.9 1961 OS map
Source: Landmark

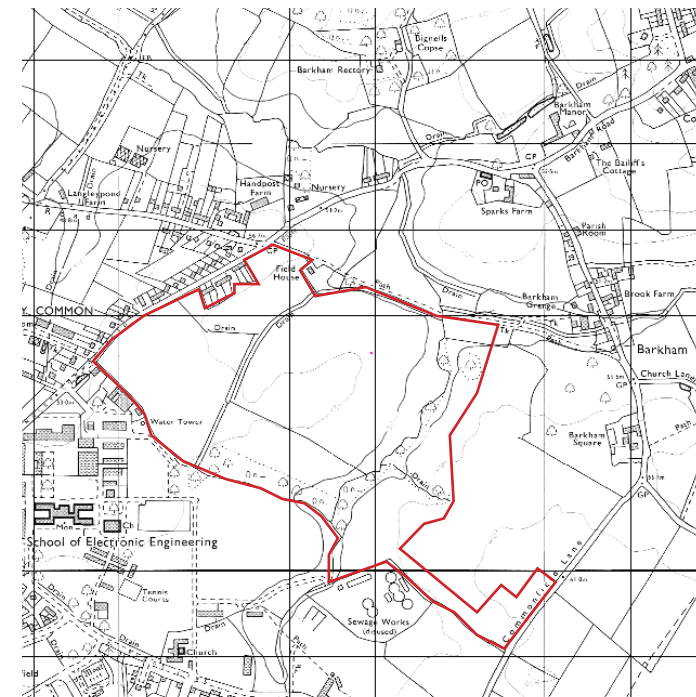


Figure 3.10 1971 OS map
Source: Landmark

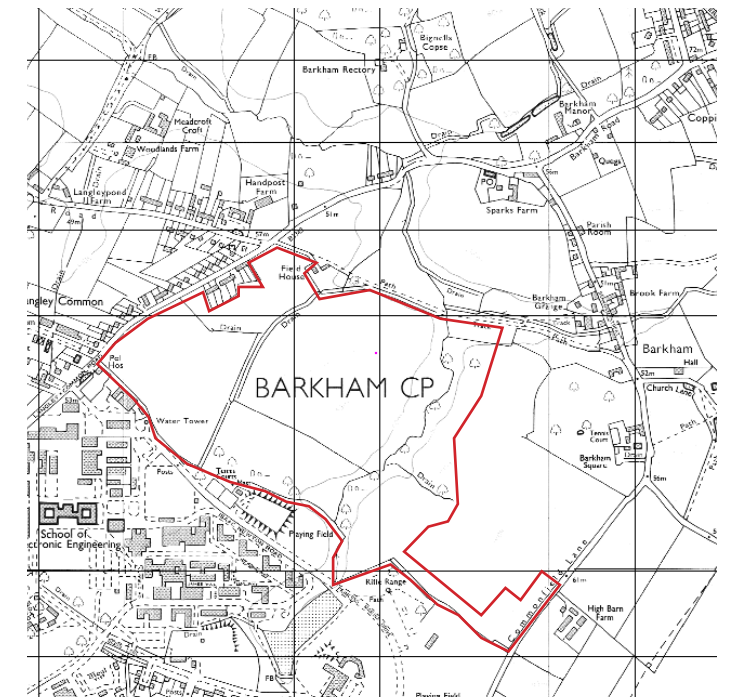


Figure 3.11 1990 OS map
Source: Landmark

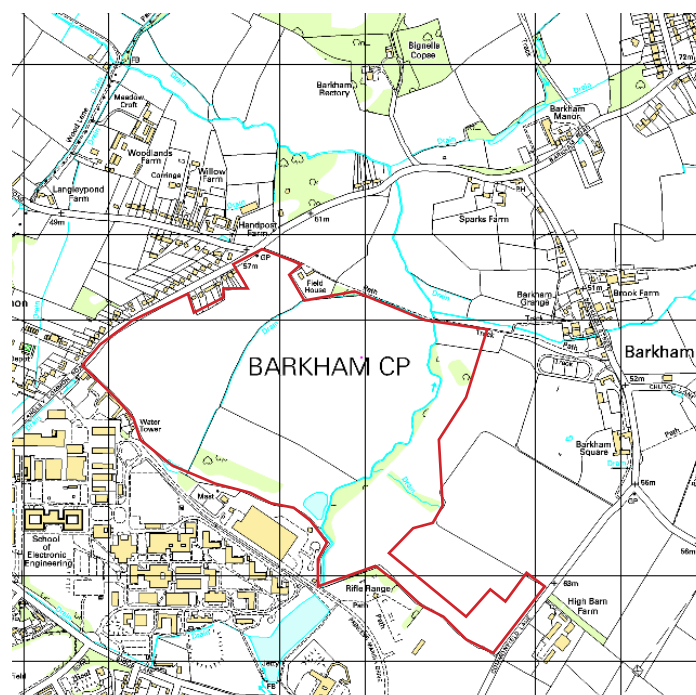


Figure 3.12 2006 OS map
Source: Landmark

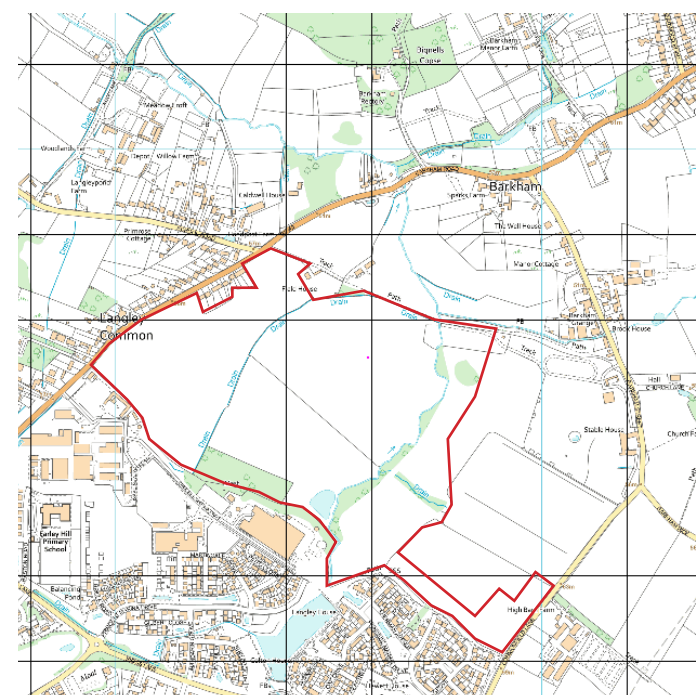


Figure 3.13 2024 OS map
Source: Landmark

Map regression

- 3.14 The OS maps here, dating from the 1930s through to present day, illustrate the significant change to the landscape around the Site, including the Site itself, throughout this period.
- 3.15 The key changes here are the loss of the ancient woodland within the Site, known as Kidgem Copse, and the development of the army garrison south of the Site, which later become the present residential development.
- 3.16 During this period, Kidgem Copse was largely cleared of greenery. Post-war housing appears to the west of the Site, with increasing development within the village of Arborfield.
- 3.17 To the south of the Site, the garrison can be seen, with limited addition of buildings between 1932 and 1961. Sewage works have also been added.

1970-1990

- 3.18 During this period, the garrison has expanded considerably, with a large school of engineering expanding into the 1990s. Residential development has continued around the village of Arborfield, with additional housing now also in the old village of Barkham, east of Barkham Square.
- 3.19 Housing can be seen creeping down southwards from Wokingham towards Barkham Manor. The post-war housing along the road west of the Site has further expanded and now connects Arborfield village to the developments around the garrison to the south.
- 3.20 Within the Site, the remnants of Kidgem Copse have been wholly removed. Drainage has been expanded and a water tower added.

2006-2024

- 3.21 By this period, the most relevant evolution is the removal of most of the buildings within the former garrison and the building out of the residential scheme by Crest Nicholson, establishing the development of modern residential housing in this area. This involved the addition of landscaping features such as a lake.

Section 4

Assessment of Significance.

4 | Heritage Assets & Significance

Arborfield Cross Conservation Area

- 3.22 The Arborfield Cross Conservation Area lies at the historic centre of the Arborfield & Newland Parish, at the crossroads of the A327 (Eversley Road / Reading Road). It encompasses a small but cohesive group of historic buildings and spaces that remain illustrative of the village's rural origins, 18th–19th century phase of development, and local vernacular architecture and sense of distinctiveness. The area's significance derives principally from its architectural character, historic development, and social and communal value to the local community.
- 3.23 Arborfield Cross developed as a rural crossroads settlement, serving surrounding farms and estates from at least the 17th century. Its location on a key route between Reading and Eversley encouraged the establishment of inns, cottages, and small workshops. During the Victorian period, modest brick dwellings and public buildings were added, reinforcing the linear pattern along Eversley Road.
- 3.24 There has been 20th-century expansion around the village, although when designated as a conservation area, the Cross largely retained the compact, traditional form and human scale of a rural Berkshire settlement (Figure X). In the present, this has been heavily disrupted by the presence of the roundabout. Which has eradicated the former road layout and heavily altered the buildings relationship to the roadway, this intensive road works has also increased the volume of traffic, which has heavily disrupted the rural quietude of the village and impacted upon its sensitivity to change.
- 3.25 The area includes a range of listed and non-listed heritage assets, including;
- The Bull Inn – a Grade II 17th-century timber-framed building with later brick facings.
 - The Old Post House and Magnolia Cottage – vernacular cottages with red brick, clay tile roofs, and casement windows.
 - The Village Hall and War Memorial – focal points of community identity.
- 3.26 Buildings are generally two storeys or less, constructed in red/orange brick with clay tiled or slate roofs. The area is defined by enclosed frontages, small gardens, and mature trees, creating a coherent and intimate streetscape.

Setting

- 3.27 Views are available along the main arterial routes leading to and from the crossroads, although these are somewhat disrupted by the presence of the busy roundabout. While the semi-rural setting continues to contribute to the area's significance, this quality has been partially eroded by increasing urbanisation on the village fringes. The impact is most pronounced to the south, where newer development now provides a degree of buffering between the historic core and the surrounding open agricultural fields.
- 3.28 Arborfield Cross Recreation Ground forms a substantial parcel of open land within one of the radial approaches to the village. This open space reflects the area's historic relationship with the wider rural landscape. Mature trees, hedgerows, and grass verges soften the transition between built form and countryside, maintaining some of the visual and environmental qualities that define the village's rural character.



Figure 4.2 Barkham Square land, showing the parkland character



Figure 4.3 Barkham Square land, showing the parkland character



Figure 4.4 Barkham Square land, showing the parkland character

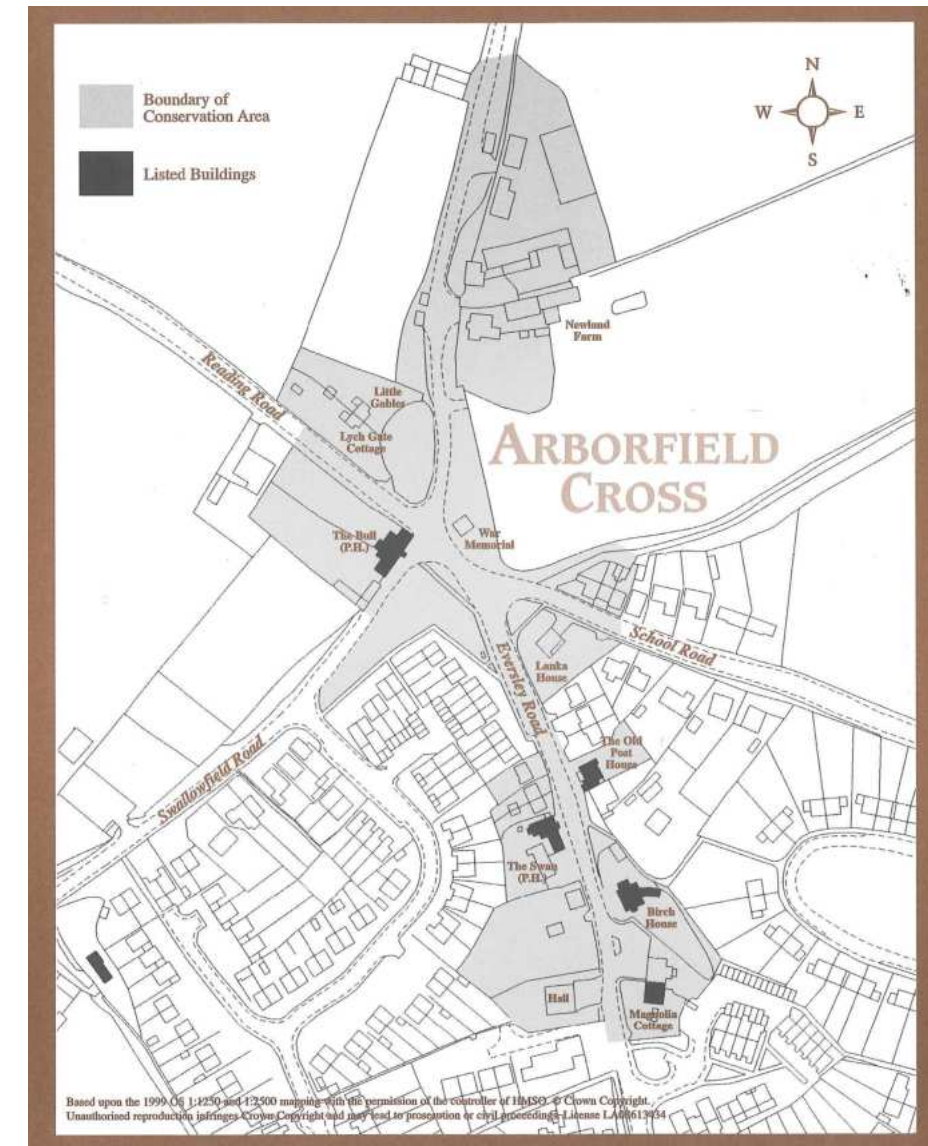


Figure 4.1 Barkham Square land, showing the parkland character

4 | Heritage Assets & Significance

Significance

4.1 For the purposes of this assessment, the identified heritage assets have been grouped to reflect their historic and spatial relationships. The groups and individual assets are as follows:

- Group 1: Barkham Manor (Grade II)
- Group 2: Sparks Farm and The Bull (Grade II)
- Group 3: Church of St James (Grade II), Church Cottage (Grade II), including scheduled monument
- Individual assets: Barkham Square (Grade II), Langleypond Farmhouse (Grade II)

Group 1 - Barkham Manor

Significance

- 4.2 This cluster comprises of the Grade II listed Barkham Manor (not to be confused with Barkham Square) and its associated Grade II listed walls.
- 4.3 The manor dates from the 17th Century with later alterations of the 18th, 19th and 20th Centuries. It is interesting for this phased development which is evident in its rambling form, providing some legibility of period architectural styles. Its significance is further supported by its considerable and attractive setting within mature gardens encircled by a tall boundary brick wall (listed Grade II), however, this has been harmed by residential developments immediately to its east. Its location on a former moated site suggests considerably earlier occupation and further contributes to its historic significance.

Setting

- 4.4 The setting of the manor is largely its mature gardens, which are set behind a Grade II listed brick wall. This gives it a sense of privacy and inwardness, creating a strong sense of separation between the domestic and public spheres. This significantly limits inter-visibility with the wider setting beyond its garden, making it very difficult to appreciate its special interest from this perspective. This has the added effect of limiting the contribution its setting makes to the appreciation of its significance.
- 4.5 Beyond the grounds of the manor, the setting has not significantly changed. Whilst there is some modern development to the north, it is well concealed from the asset by mature greenery along the boundaries of the road, and the sense of rurality is well preserved here. This contributes positively to the appreciation of the manor as set within a historically rural context, even though legibility of its architectural interest is screened behind the privacy of its walls and gardens.

Contribution of Site to setting

- 4.6 The Site is too distant and too well screened to be visually appreciable. In any case, it has no legible historic association.



Figure 4.5 Barkham Manor 2025



Figure 4.6 Barkham Square land, showing the parkland character Aerial View 2025 Barkham Manor

4 | Heritage Assets & Significance

Group 2 - Sparks Farm and the Bull

Significance

- 4.7 These assets are both Grade II listed and date from the 17th Century but with significant alterations since. They therefore have a group value, being part of a small hamlet of structures (with Barkham Manor further to the north) and a shared setting with similar potential effects.
- 4.8 The Bull was formerly a smithy and public house, located on a key junction for passing trade and derives much of its historic significance from this commercial activity. It has gone through various periods of development, with considerable 19th and 20th Century remodelling making it difficult to read its earlier architectural significance.
- 4.9 Sparks Farm is somewhat better preserved, with the detailing of its vernacular timber framing more apparent. It is historically significant for its history of agricultural activity within the area, which has been, up until recently, characterised by rurality and diffuse small settlements. Its rural setting is contributed to by its extensive grounds to the rear, which preserve good buffering with more modern settlement growth around it.

Setting

- 4.10 The setting of the assets is semi-rural in character, with the busy Barkham Road adding a conspicuous sense of noise and activity. The dense greenery which borders this road makes visibility of the assets difficult, and the lack of pedestrian access reduces accessibility and contributes to a hostile vehicular environment.
- 4.11 To the rear of the assets are large open gardens in the character of fields, though their relationship with this open space is quite different. In the case of Sparks Farm, these contribute to the legibility of its historic function as a farm house, though this legibility has been much reduced by the domestication of the asset and the redevelopment of buildings for private residential use. Whilst the relevance of these open spaces has subsequently declined, there remains a sufficient and generous sense of the historic agricultural character that their contribution to the former farm house's significance can be appreciated.
- 4.12 The Bull was probably a house before it became a pub. Unlike in Sparks Farm, its relationship with the fields to the rear are not based on its historic function and this is demonstrated in the visual separation created by the mature greenery and fences which largely screen it from these open

spaces. Having functioned for much of its history as a pub, understanding its significance lies more in the legibility of its relationship at the junction of historic routes leading into and out of the villages of Barkham and Arborfield and the principal settlement of Woking.

Contribution of the Site to setting

- 4.13 The Site's contribution to the setting of the assets is secondary and does not provide key legibility of their significance.
- 4.14 It is important to note that in the case of Sparks Farm, the Site historically was Kidgem Copse, an area of remnant ancient woodland that was used in the 19th century for hunting. It was not, therefore, functionally used by Sparks Farm as agricultural land and how it appears today is as a result of clearing during the early 20th century. Its present appearance as fields should therefore not be inaccurately seen as historically significant to Sparks Farm.
- 4.15 In any case, the land was part of the estate of Barkham Square by the time of the c.1900 tithe, having been extended from the 1839 tithe (figure 3.7 shows the changing ownership). On this basis, the Site has a very limited contribution to the appreciation of the farm's significance.
- 4.16 As stated above in relation to The Bull, the Site has no functional historic relationship and is both too well screened and too distant from the asset. Historically, the Site has changed considerably in its character, having been a remnant of ancient woodland cleared at the beginning of the 20th century.



Figure 4.7 Sparks Farm, Grade II



Figure 4.8 The Bull, Grade II

4 | Heritage Assets & Significance

Group 3: Church of St James (Grade II), Church Cottage (Grade II) including scheduled monument

Church of St James

4.17 The church is historically significant for its indication of Barkham’s earliest settlement pattern. It is, however, a later iteration, being built in 1862 in the early English style on top of an earlier and very unusual looking church (appearing more like an adapted medieval hall house) which has been lost. It is therefore of lesser historic and architectural significance, being typical of 19th Century revivalist architecture, and this is reflected in its relatively low listing of Grade II. It does, however, contain some earlier fittings and memorials presumably transferred from the earlier church.

Church Cottage

4.18 Adjacent to the church is Church Cottage. This is significant as a hall house, demonstrating vernacular medieval construction and spatial organisation which has been later modified with brick of the 18th and 19th Centuries, with associated fenestration. This phased approach provides a good illustration of building evolution and styles within a vernacular rural setting, and contributes positively to its architectural significance. However, the later modifications and separation into two residential units reduces the legibility of its medieval origins and spatial hierarchies.

4.19 The building shares a group value with the moated enclosure, which is scheduled as an ancient monument. This is historically significant for possibly identifying the location of an earlier manor and is well preserved.

Setting

4.20 The setting of the assets is conspicuously devoid of much built form, as they are located on what was probably the medieval manorial complex now occupied by Church Cottage and the scheduled monument, with good survival of a medieval moat and an adjacent farmyard enclosure.

4.21 This separates the assets from the historic settlement of Barkham to the north and is typical of medieval settlement planning, but the shift in development patterns leaves them, particularly the church, feeling somewhat isolated within the parish it serves.



Figure 4.10 Church of St James



Figure 4.9 The Bull, Grade II

4.22 Their setting is therefore a very private one, with a sense that this was once an area of greater significance which has subsequently declined. They are set within a strongly rural character and have important group value to each other, being linked historically on the site of earlier important medieval structures.

4.23 There is little to no discernible modern development within their immediate context. Modern housing exists approximately 700m to the southeast but is well screened by intervening greenery and hedges.

4.24 Barkham Square, located to the west, cannot be easily seen due to screening of mature greenery but nonetheless adds a degree of architectural interest to their setting.

Contribution of Site to setting

4.25 The Site lies at a sufficient distance from the church, Church Cottage, and the moated enclosure, and has no historic or functional association with these assets. Given the separation and intervening vegetation, the Site does not contribute to the significance of the assets’ setting,

4 | Heritage Assets & Significance

Barkham Square, Grade II

Significance

- 4.26 Barkham Square is a polite 18th Century country farm house of moderate size. It has 19th Century alterations on its south elevation which elevate the grandness of the otherwise relatively modest Georgian form. To the north are agricultural buildings which have been modified and adapted for residential use. It is historically significant for its association with the Sturges Family who themselves were associated with Arborfield Hall through marriage.
- 4.27 It is architecturally significant for its attractive architecture, featuring typical sash windows and a heavy dentil/modillion cornice characteristic of early Georgian architecture. It is not an exceptional execution of this period of architecture, appearing more typical of a yeoman farming family, with a quite modest earlier form adapted through 19th Century alteration to give it a greater sense of politeness.
- 4.28 Modern extensions have been added to the building to its north and there is a more rambling character here, resulting in a variation in its special interest from the polite southern facade and the later adaptations to the north.

Setting

- 4.29 The house is set within generous grounds which form a semi-parkland, semi-agricultural setting. The house was the centre of a small farming estate which was largely focussed to the east of the manor by the time of the 1839 tithe, but which expanded to encompass the present day Site (then Kidgem Copse) by the time of c.1900, which was used for hunting.
- 4.30 Some appreciation of this activity is possible through the agricultural structures located north of the manor house, however, they are quite small in scale. The parkland character of the land suggests that it was probably used for the grazing of animals and for the recreation of the manor.
- 4.31 The landscape is more open today than it was historically, with Kidgem Copse (presently the Site) cleared in the early 20th century resulting in a loss of the definition between Barkham Square's land to the west of the manor and rural woodland that had been here for many centuries.
- 4.32 The rural character of the surrounding area has evolved from c.1900 through to present day, with modern development expanding but largely well screened from view. This is most relevant with Crest Nicholson's Arborfield Garrison development to the southwest. Built forms here are well established from

its development as an army garrison at the beginning of the 20th century and then latterly to residential housing. This change reflects also the wider expansion of settlements around Barkham Square, in particular Wokingham to the north and Arborfield to the west.

- 4.33 The generous open space around the manor, however, creates a sufficient visual buffer, with mature trees, greenery and topography combining to largely screen development from view when situated at the edges of the manor, and to almost completely conceal it when located at the house itself. As a result, generally speaking, the immediate setting of the manor has remained unchanged and is unlikely to change further, with the generous parkland/pasture land around the manor comfortably setting it within an historically appropriate context.

Contribution of Site to setting

- 4.34 As in the case of the assets above, the contribution of the Site needs to be considered within its much changed modern appearance. Historically, the Site was a woodland which came into the ownership of Barkham Manor c.1900. It was not used for anything other than hunting and would have created a distinct separation between the parkland/pastoral setting of the manor's grounds and surrounding agricultural character. Today, as open fields, it could be mistaken as historically part of an active agricultural hinterland but this is a recent development post 1930s. It therefore does not contribute to the significance of the manor beyond what it contributes to the wider semi-rural character.



Figure 4.11 Langleypond Farmhouse, Grade II

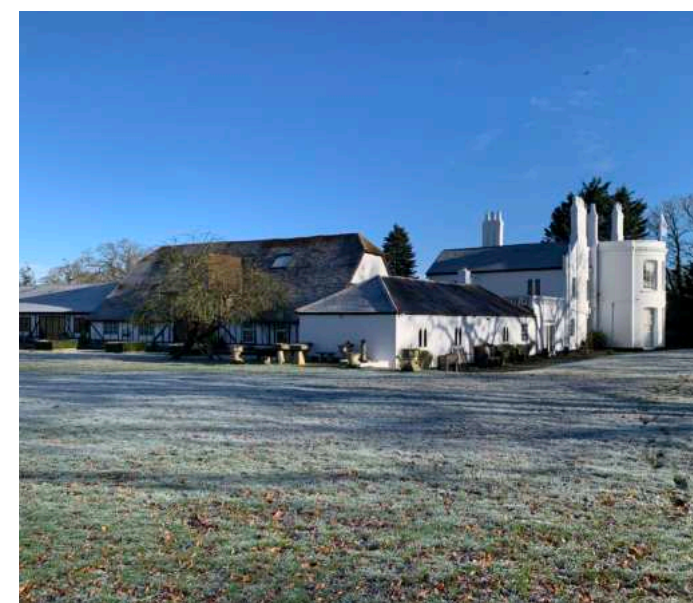


Figure 4.12 Barkham Square manor house, Grade II



Figure 4.13 Barkham Square manor house, Grade II

4 | Heritage Assets & Significance

Langleypond Farm House

- 4.35 The building is significant as a Tudor farm house from the 16th Century, with timber framing encased in later brickwork. Typical of many of the aforementioned assets, it has undergone various alterations and developments during later centuries, contributing to the richness of its architectural significance. Its setting, despite urbanisation to the east and west, maintains a semi-rural character which contributes positively to its historic significance as a farm house.

Setting

- 4.36 The semi-rural character of School Road and the mature greenery surrounding the farm house contribute positively to its sense of place. The presence of high boundary treatments and dense tree cover enhances a feeling of privacy, creating a domestic character that is distinct from its historic openness. These features, combined with the modern suburban housing along School Road, have shifted the farm house's experience from one of rural remoteness to a more enclosed and suburbanised setting.
- 4.37 While the farm house's historic function as an agricultural building is still legible through its architecture and the preserved barn structures, the context has changed notably. The expansion of Arborfield village eastward has introduced a considerable degree of modern development, including primarily 20th-century bungalows with mature gardens. This modern housing maintains a relatively low visual and physical impact, preserving an attractive suburban character without overwhelming the farm house's architectural interest, though appreciably altering its context.
- 4.38 The busy Barkham Road, separating the farm house from the Site, introduces consistent vehicular activity, noise, and a strong sense of division, isolating the farm house from the Site and the landscape to the east.

Contribution of Site to setting

- 4.39 The Site, located to the east of Langleypond Farm house, does not make a meaningful contribution to the asset's significance. The high boundary treatments and mature greenery along Barkham Road, as well as those around the farm house itself, effectively screen the Site from view. These features, combined with the noise and visual barriers of Barkham Road, create a strong sense of separation between the farm house and the Site.
- 4.40 Additionally, the suburban housing along School Road already defines the character of the farm house's immediate context, forming the endpoint of Arborfield village.



Figure 4.14 The Bull, Grade II



Figure 4.16 Looking east from Langleypond Farmhouse to the Site



Figure 4.15 Looking east from Langleypond Farmhouse to the Site

Section 5

Assessment of Effects.

5 | Assessment of Effects

Masterplan Design Principles

- 5.1 The masterplan has been developed to create a cohesive, sustainable, and visually sensitive development that responds to the site's natural features, heritage context, and connectivity opportunities. Key design principles include;
- The existing ancient woodland blocks, mature trees, hedgerows, brook and pond network will be conserved and enhanced.
 - Connect to Arborfield Green and extend the multifunctional Linear Park centred on the Barkham Brook corridor and associated wetland and woodland habitats, which provide important ecological networks and greater recreational opportunities.
 - Create a new vehicular gateway entrance into the development from Langley Common Road.
 - Provide new landscape screening in key locations to help minimise visual impact from Barkham Street 'Area of Special Character' and adjacent properties, and provide an attractive setting for new development.
 - A network of focal points, connected by a new green spine at the heart of the development, will provide safe and accessible hubs with opportunities to learn, play and grow food.
 - Create safe active travel streets with new and improved pedestrian and cycle links that connect to the wider movement network
 - Define residential parcels with varied but cohesive characters that respond to their location and specific nature of the site



Figure 5.1 Proposed Parameter Plan

5 | Assessment of Effects

Proposed Development

- 5.2 The proposed development for Barkham Square aims to create a vibrant and attractive living environment that integrates seamlessly with its surroundings. The vision focuses on enhancing permeability across the site while offering high quality housing, elderly care accommodation and green spaces that benefit both new and existing residents.
- 5.3 For a detailed description of the proposals, please refer to the associated design pack. A summary is outlined below:
- Up to 660 new homes including affordable homes
 - Elderly Care units
 - Around 12 hectares of SANG (Sustainable Alternative Natural Greenspace)
 - Allotments and play areas
 - Areas of public Green openspace and landscaping
 - The parameter plan in Figure 5.1 shows generous areas of open space, buffering to the most sensitive parcels of the site and a considered approach to the overall layout, building mix and building height strategy (Figure 5.3)



Figure 5.2 SANG illustrative plan

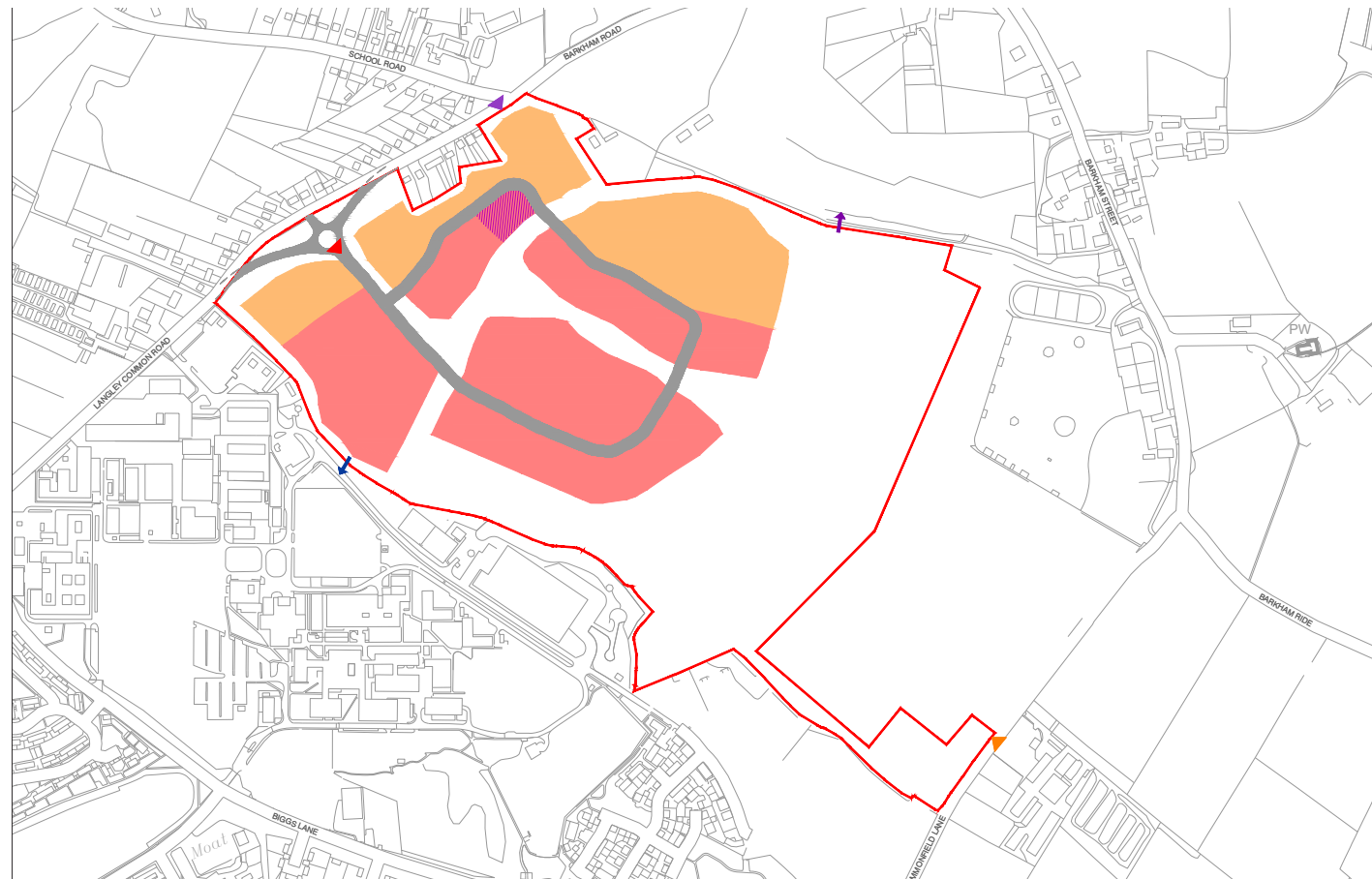


Figure 5.3 Proposed building heights Plan

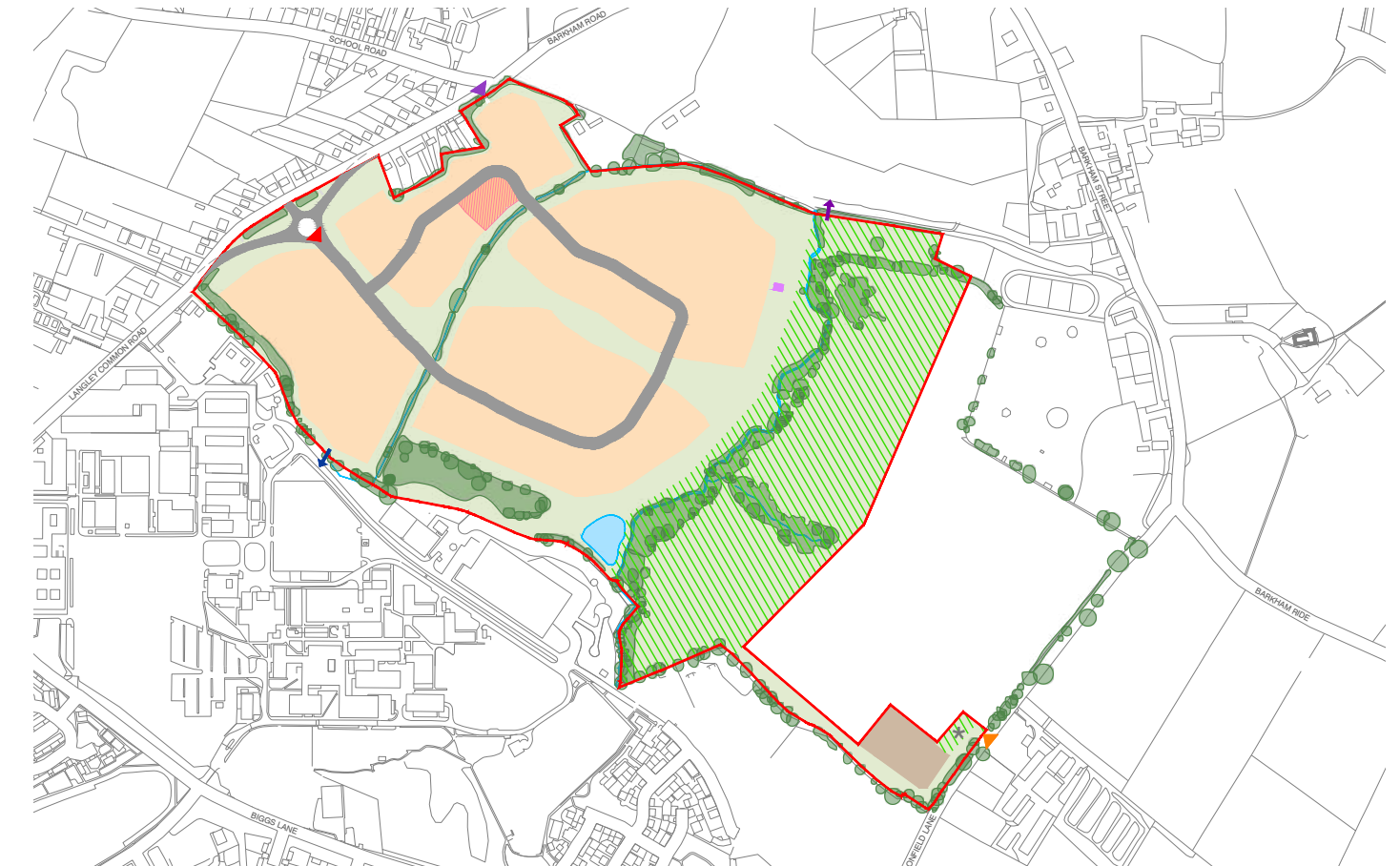


Figure 5.4 Proposed Land Use Plan

Building Heights

- 5.4 The proposed development is designed with building heights of 2 to 3 storeys, carefully distributed across the Site as shown in the above parameter plan. The tallest buildings are located towards the centre of the Site, and the design follows the natural topography to minimise visual intrusion into the surrounding landscape and maintain appropriate scale relative to the wider setting.
- 5.5 The layout incorporates clear viewing corridors and respects areas of height sensitivity, ensuring that key sightlines to and from heritage assets, including Barkham Square, Sparks Farm, The Bull, and Langley Pond Farmhouse, are preserved. By stepping building heights down towards the Site boundaries and existing vegetation, the design mitigates potential visual impacts on adjacent heritage assets and neighbouring residential areas.

- 5.6 This approach allows the development to integrate with the semi-rural character of the area while maintaining legibility and openness in views from sensitive locations. The combination of height zoning, topographical responsiveness, and strategic screening ensures that the Site delivers a coherent, visually balanced scheme consistent with the principles set out in the early engagement with the LPA.

Land Use

- 5.7 The parameter plan in Figure 5.6 establishes a sensitive land use strategy to ensure compatibility with the surrounding landscape and heritage assets. This follows the natural topography of the Site. The western part of the Site is retained for screening, green buffering, and open space, incorporating tree belts, landscaped corridors, new watercourses, and public open space to enhance biodiversity and protect sensitive boundaries.
- 5.8 Residential dwellings are concentrated in the eastern parcel, where visual sensitivity is lower, allowing the buildings to integrate naturally with the landscape. The elderly care facility, which requires greater scale

- and massing, is located centrally and is effectively screened and integrated within the wider residential development, supported by surrounding open space, allotments, and landscaping.
- 5.9 This land use strategy prioritises buffers and open space around sensitive areas, while concentrating built form in less sensitive locations. It ensures a cohesive residential scheme that respects landscape character, heritage settings, and ecological impact is therefore minimised. This approach ensures that the development delivers a cohesive residential neighbourhood while preserving key elements of landscape character, heritage asset settings, and ecological value.

5 | Assessment of Effects

Assessment of Effects

5.10 The proposed development at Barkham Square aims to create a vibrant and attractive living environment that integrates seamlessly with its surroundings. The vision focuses on enhancing permeability across the site while delivering high-quality housing, elderly care accommodation, and green spaces that benefit both new and existing residents.

- The proposals include:
- Up to 660 new homes, including affordable housing
- Elderly care units
- Approximately 12 hectares of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG)
- Allotments and play areas
- Landscaped public open space
- A detailed description of the proposals is provided in the associated design pack.

5.11 This assessment is proportionate to the significance of identified heritage assets and the nature of the proposed change, in line with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 207.

- Arborfield Conservation Area
- Group 1 - Barkham Manor
- Group 2 - Sparks Farm and the Bull
- Group 3 - Group 3: Church of St James (Grade II), Church Cottage (Grade II) including scheduled monument
- Barkham Square (Grade II)
- Langley Pond Farmhouse (Grade II)

Arborfield Conservation Area

5.12 The Arborfield Cross Conservation Area lies to the north-west of the proposed Barkham Square development. It is separated from the Site by intervening fields and some built form, which act as a visual buffer. The northern part of the Conservation Area is where the rural character and agricultural setting are most clearly appreciated, illustrating the historic relationship between the village and its surrounding landscape.

5.13 The significance of the Arborfield Cross Conservation Area derives primarily from its historic role as a rural crossroads settlement, its cohesive vernacular architecture, and the intimate scale of its streetscape. The setting makes a contributory but secondary contribution to significance, providing context and reinforcing the semi-rural character of the village.

5.14 Views from the Conservation Area towards the Barkham Square site are limited by distance and intervening landscape and built form. While the development would introduce urbanisation into the wider landscape, the immediate experience and key components of the Arborfield Cross Conservation Area including the crossroads, the arrangement of historic buildings, and its internal townscape would remain unchanged.

5.15 The layout and landscape design of the proposed development, including green buffers, mature planting, and intervening open spaces, means that the Proposed Development would be obscured from within the setting within the Conservation Area, particularly from the northern areas where the agricultural setting is most appreciated. This maintains the legibility of the historic rural origins and preserves the principal significance of the village.

5.16 In conclusion, the setting of the Arborfield Cross Conservation Area would be preserved, particularly those elements that illustrate its historic development and rural context. The proposed development at Barkham Square would therefore result in no harm to the significance of the Conservation Area, consistent with NPPF paragraph 208 and local heritage policies.



Figure 5.5 Proposed Land Use Plan - marked up to show listed building and buffering

5 | Assessment of Effects

Group1 - Barkham Manor

- 5.17 Barkham Manor is set within its own enclosed grounds and derives its significance primarily from its architectural qualities and its role as a historic high-status residence. The Site is located at a considerable distance and its setting of the asset has changed considerably, notably with the development of a number of residential dwellings within the Manor grounds. The now forms a residential enclave and is heavily screened by mature vegetation, resulting in no intervisibility between the Manor and The Site, and with the Manor occurring as a speculated pocket of development set back from the road. There is also no historic or functional association between the Site and the Manor.
- 5.18 The Manor's immediate setting is clearly defined by its boundary walls, running along Barkham Road this form a high barrier which was intended to separate the garden from the road and create a privacy. These walls form a strong enclosure, restricting outward views from within the grounds and reinforcing the separation between the Manor and the wider landscape. This arrangement is an inherent aspect of the historic landholding, with the Manor set back and experienced largely within the confines of its walled grounds. Given this physical and visual containment, the proposed development would not introduce any visual or spatial intrusion into the Manor's setting. The asset's key elements, including its architectural interest and the experience of its historic, enclosed setting, would remain entirely unaffected.
- 5.19 Although the former wider landholding contains some areas which now fall within the Site boundary, the principal area of development is that land which fell outside Barkham Square's ownership historically. Therefore the effect upon any legibility of the wider estate holding would be diminutive. The proposals would therefore result in no harm to the ability to understand, experience, or appreciate the significance of Barkham Manor.

Group1 Summary

- 5.20 The proposed development would not give rise to any harmful effects on Barkham Manor or its associated boundary walls. The walls provide a strong sense of enclosure to the principal dwelling, and their significance is intrinsically linked to that of the Manor and its historic landholding. The Site lies beyond this enclosed setting and does not contribute to the asset's significance or to the way it is experienced in context. As such, the proposed development would have no influence over the appreciation or understanding of Barkham Manor or its walls, and the effects would not be harmful.

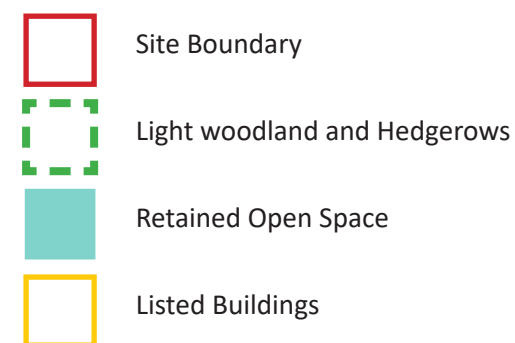


Figure 5.6 Marked Up Axiom Plan showing extent of landscaping scheme and the proximity of nearby listed buildings

Group 2: Sparks Farm and The Bull

5.21 The Site lies a significant distance south of Sparks Farm and The Bull, providing sufficient separation to preserve the semi-rural character of their surroundings. Existing landscape features and open space, along with modern suburban development, have already influenced the area’s character without diminishing the significance of these assets.

Sparks Farm, Grade II

5.22 Sparks Farm, a 17th-century former farmhouse, has evolved from its agricultural origins into a private residential property. The converted farm buildings and enclosed gardens now create a domestic, inward-looking character, distinct from its historic farmstead function. Open space to the rear will remain largely intact, ensuring that the semi-rural character continues to contribute positively to its significance. The Site, historically Kidgem Copse, lies beyond the setting of the farm and was never part of Sparks Farm’s agricultural landholding. It has no functional or associative connection with the farmstead, meaning there would be no associative harm to the farm’s historic significance and no effect on the significance derived from its setting.

The Bull, Grade II

5.23 The Bull, is a 17th-century building which holds both historic and architectural significance primarily as a public house situated at a historic road junction. Its location is central to its historic role as a social and functional hub for travellers and locals moving to and from Wokingham. This relationship is largely defined by the building’s position along the roadside rather than the surrounding landscape, and significance is closely tied to its functional and social context.

5.24 The proposed development will not impact the key elements that contribute to The Bull’s significance. The building is well-screened by existing greenery, including hedgerows and boundary vegetation, as well as alterations to site boundaries, which together provide an effective visual buffer.

5.25 This ensures that the development would not introduce visual or spatial intrusion that could compromise the asset’s setting. The Bull’s primary significance, which is architectural and associated with its historic role as a roadside public house, will therefore remain fully intact. The Site lies beyond the historic context of the pub and has no functional or associative ties with it. Consequently, the proposed development would not diminish or affect the ability to understand, experience, or appreciate the significance of The Bull.

Group 2 Summary

5.26 The distance of the Site to the south of Sparks Farm and The Bull provides a sufficient degree of separation between the proposed development and these Grade II listed assets. Combined with existing landscape features, this separation effectively preserves the semi-rural character of their immediate surroundings, which has evolved over time and is now increasingly defined by the wider perception of suburban development.

5.27 Both Sparks Farm and The Bull are located along a busy road, introducing vehicular activity and noise. This means their setting, while retaining a semi-rural character, is influenced by modern infrastructure and the outskirts of Wokingham. The broader context includes established modern housing, which has already introduced elements of contemporary development without diminishing the ability to appreciate the significance of these assets.

5.28 The proposed development would result in only minor changes to the wider setting of Sparks Farm and The Bull. The key elements of their respective settings will be preserved, ensuring that there is no harm to the ability to appreciate the special interest of either asset from their principal vantage points. Both assets will continue to maintain the same relationship to their surroundings as at present. At Sparks Farm, the retention of rear open space safeguards the semi-rural character that contributes to its significance, while at The Bull, the roadside setting and architectural character will remain unaffected due to effective screening and the absence of any functional or associative connections with the Site.

5.29 The development’s sensitive placement and design, combined with the creation of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and a strong emphasis on biodiversity, will help to soften the perception of modern development within the landscape. These measures will also contribute positively by restoring elements of the historic character of the former Kidgem Copse, reinforcing the contextual setting without diminishing the heritage value of either listed asset.

Group 3 - Group 3: Church of St James (Grade II), Church Cottage (Grade II) including scheduled monument

5.30 The Church of St James, Church Cottage, and the associated scheduled monument are located on what was likely the medieval manorial complex, with the survival of a medieval moat and an adjacent farmyard enclosure. Their setting is largely free of built form, separating them from the historic settlement of Barkham to the north and creating a sense of isolation typical of the evolution of medieval settlement patterns. The assets retain a strongly rural character and hold important group value, being historically linked on the site of earlier medieval structures.

5.31 There is minimal modern development in their immediate context. The nearest housing, approximately 700m to the southeast, is well screened by intervening greenery and hedges. Barkham Square, to the west, is largely obscured by mature vegetation, though it contributes a degree of architectural interest to the wider setting. The Site is distant from these assets and has no historic association with them.

5.32 Due to the combination of distance and mature planting, the proposed development would be entirely imperceptible from the immediate setting of the Church and Church Cottage, which remain private and enclosed. Any effect would be negligible, largely limited to a very minor urbanisation of the wider parish context, and would not amount to harm. The Church is primarily appreciated from within its close proximity, and its experience would remain unchanged. The principal components of the assets’ significance; their architectural interest and social historic value as the spiritual centre of the parish, would be preserved, along with the immediate rural setting and the relationship of the buildings to the surrounding landscape.

Group 3 Summary

5.33 The effects of the proposed development on the Church of St James, Church Cottage, and the scheduled monument would be diminutive and would not constitute harm. The substantial distance between the Site and these assets ensures there would be no visual or experiential impact. The proposals incorporate green buffering and maintain ample spatial separation, ensuring the assets’ setting is preserved. Consequently, there would be no change to the way the assets are appreciated, and no harm would arise to their special interest as derived from their setting.

Barkham Square, Grade II

5.34 The proposed residential development has been carefully structured to minimise its impact on the setting of Barkham Square. Under the parameter scheme, residential buildings are arranged with generous spatial separation and largely positioned beyond the existing Barkham Brook and tree line. These natural features provide an effective visual buffer, limiting views of development from the manor while maintaining a clear sense of separation. The existing vegetation will be enhanced and complemented by the creation of a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), which expands vegetative cover, promotes biodiversity, and supports woodland restoration, reintroducing elements of the historic landscape character and contributing positively to the broader visual and ecological setting of the manor.

5.35 A generous buffer of open space will be retained around Barkham Square’s grounds. Combined with the existing parkland and pasture within the curtilage, this open space reinforces a strong sense of separation between the development and the heritage asset. These measures ensure that the key elements contributing to the manor’s historic and architectural significance remain intact. The development has been positioned to avoid perceptual or physical encroachment, maintaining a sense of openness around the manor and allowing it to continue to be experienced within its historic context, which has evolved since the 19th century and can accommodate sensitive change without adversely affecting its significance.

5.36 The layout also ensures that the development will not visually merge with the existing residential areas of Arborfield Garrison to the south. This spatial separation preserves the semi-rural character of the area and prevents Barkham Square from appearing enclosed or overwhelmed by modern housing. The Arborfield Garrison development demonstrates that contemporary residential schemes can integrate successfully into a semi-rural landscape without detracting from the character of nearby heritage assets. The proposed development follows a similar approach, using sensitive design, careful placement, and landscaping to maintain compatibility with Barkham Square’s wider setting.

5.37 Historically, the Site formerly Kidgem Copse was densely wooded but has transitioned into open space over the past two centuries. Importantly, the land was not used for active agriculture and has no functional or associative relationship with Barkham Square as an agricultural farmstead. Therefore, the development does not risk harming any historic agrarian associations, and the significance of the manor derived from its historic setting will remain unaffected. The parameter-based layout ensures that both the spatial and visual qualities of the manor’s setting are preserved while allowing for a carefully designed contemporary residential scheme that responds to landscape, heritage, and ecological considerations.

Barkham Square Summary

5.38 On the basis of the above assessment, the proposed development would have no harmful effect on the significance of Barkham Square. The combination of spatial separation, buffering, and sensitive design ensures that the manor’s historic and architectural interest is preserved, along with the experience of the asset within its setting.

Landgleypound Farmhouse, Grade II

5.39 The proposed development within the Site would not have any appreciable impact on the ability to experience the historic and architectural significance of Langleypond Farmhouse. Physical screening provided by existing vegetation, the separation afforded by Barkham Road, and the already evolved suburban character of the surrounding area ensure that the development will not intrude upon or detract from the farmhouse’s setting. The scheme would therefore represent a contextual and sensitive addition to the wider landscape.

5.40 Although the Site is relatively close to Langleypond Farmhouse, its influence on the setting of the asset is minimal due to the lack of both visual and functional relationships. The historic function of Langleypond Farmhouse as a farmstead is no longer directly tied to its surrounding land, and the Site does not contribute to the legibility of its special interest. Consequently, the development will not compromise the ability to understand or appreciate the farmhouse in its historic context, and no harm to its significance is anticipated.

Landgleypound Farmhouse Summary

5.41 There would be no harm to the special interest of Langleypond Farmhouse (as derived from its setting). The asset would continue to be appreciated in its historic context, which would remain largely unchanged and preserved.

Summary of Effects on Heritage Assets

5.42 The proposed development at Barkham Square has been carefully designed to respond to the landscape, heritage, and ecological context of the Site. Across all identified heritage assets the proposals are assessed to have no harmful effects on their significance. The Site is sufficiently distant from all assets, and existing vegetation, topography, and built features provide effective visual landscape screening buffers. Open space, boundary features, and natural screening around the assets are retained, preserving their historic and architectural context. Buildings are sensitively positioned to avoid perceptual or physical encroachment, respecting semi-rural character, viewing corridors, and areas of height sensitivity. The Site has no historic or functional connections with the assessed assets, ensuring their setting and contribution this makes to their overall significance and legibility remain uncompromised.

5.43 Enhancements such as Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), landscaping, and biodiversity measures restore elements of historic character and reinforce the wider setting without detracting from heritage values.

5.44 Overall, the proposals are fully compatible with the significance of the heritage assets. There would be no harm, no less than substantial harm in totality to any designated or non designated heritage assets. The design and layout ensure that each asset can continue to be experienced and appreciated within its historic context, and no harm would arise from the proposed development.

Section 6

Conclusion.

Summary

- 6.1

This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Iceni Projects on behalf of Crest Nicholson to assess the potential impacts of the Outline development on identified heritage assets. The assessment considers the layout, scale, and design principles set out in the approved parameter plan, which establishes the framework for the location, height, and massing of buildings across the Site. This layout has been informed by visual sensitivity, topography, heritage sensitivity.
- 6.2

Based on this assessment, it is concluded that the Proposed Development will not result in harm to the Special Interest of any heritage assets or compromise the ability to appreciate their significance from within their respective settings.
- 6.3

The Proposed Development has been carefully designed and sited to ensure no adverse impact on the significance of the assessed heritage assets, which include Arborfield Conservation Area, Barkham Square, Barkham Manor, Sparks Farm, The Bull, and Langleypond Farmhouse. The parameter plan ensures that residential buildings are strategically located and scaled to respect the key views, spatial relationships, and openness that contribute to the significance of these assets.
- 6.4

For Barkham Square, the retention of a generous buffer zone to the east, the enhancement of green infrastructure through the creation of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), and the sensitive placement of development beyond existing tree lines and Barkham Brook maintain the key elements that contribute to the manor’s setting. These measures preserve the historic landscape character and prevent any perceptual or physical encroachment, ensuring the manor’s historic and architectural significance is retained.
- 6.5

For Sparks Farm and The Bull, the absence of any historic association with the Site, the retention of generous rear open spaces, and the presence of effective screening, particularly for The Bull mean that their settings are preserved. The semi-rural character of Sparks Farm’s surroundings and the roadside context of The Bull remain unaffected, ensuring that the ability to appreciate their special interest is retained.
- 6.6

Langleypond Farmhouse and the Arborfield Conservation Area located to the north east will similarly remain unaffected by the Proposed Development. The combination of existing physical screening, separation by Barkham Road, and the evolved suburban character of the surrounding area ensures that the farmhouse retains its legibility and historic character as a former 16th-century farmstead. The parameter plan ensures that no buildings are positioned in a manner that would result in perceptual or physical intrusion on the farmhouse’s setting.
- 6.7

The proposals therefore comply with the policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly paragraphs 202 and 207, which emphasise the importance of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and avoiding harm to their settings proportionate to their importance. The provisions set out in paragraphs 212-15 regarding harm are not triggered. The development also aligns with the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010) and the Arborfield & Barkham Neighbourhood Plan (2019–2036), specifically policies CP3 and AD3, by ensuring that new development is sensitively integrated within the landscape while preserving the character and significance of nearby heritage assets.
- 6.8

In conclusion, the parameter plan approach, combined with careful siting, buffering, and landscape enhancements, ensures that the Proposed Development preserves the heritage value of Barkham Square, Sparks Farm, The Bull, and Langleypond Farmhouse, while allowing for a well-designed residential scheme that is compatible with the wider historic and semi-rural setting.

Policy Compliance

- 6.9

The Proposed Development would result in no harm to identified heritage assets, an assessment of which has been carried out proportionate to their significance.
- 6.10

The Proposed Development therefore conforms with;

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

- Section 66
 - Section 72 (not engaged)

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024)

Wokingham Core Strategy (2010)

- Policy CP3: General Principles for Development

Wokingham Emerging Local Plan (2023-2040)

- Policy DH1: Place making and quality design
 - Policy DH5: Historic environment

Arborfield & Barkham Neighbourhood Plans (2016-2036)

- Policy AD3: High Quality Development with Generous Open Space, Properly Landscaped.

Appendix 1

Methodology.

Assessment Methodology

- 6.11

This report provides an assessment of the significance of identified heritage assets and the potential effects of the proposed development. It has been informed by:

 - Relevant legislation, and national and local planning policy (see Section 2); and
 - Best practice guidance set out in:
 - Principles of Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment in the UK (IEMA/IHBC/CiFA, 2021)
 - Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (Historic England, 2008)
 - Good Practice Advice in Planning Notes (Historic England, various).
- 6.12

Heritage Assets are defined in Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 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. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)’
- 6.13

The scope of this assessment is considered to be proportionate to the significance of identified heritage assets and the nature of change proposed, in line with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 194.
- 6.14

While IEMA’s Principles identifies that there is no ‘one-size fits all’ methodology for assessing impacts on cultural heritage, it provides guidance on heritage impact assessment. It identifies the need to understand cultural heritage assets by:

 - Describing the asset;
 - Ascribing cultural significance; and
 - Attributing importance.
- 6.15

And evaluate the consequences of change by:

 - Understanding change;
 - Assessing impact (on significance or contribution of setting to significance); and
 - Weighting the effect.

Understanding Significance and Importance

- 6.16

The methodology used here for ascribing the significance of the identified heritage assets draws from the approach set out in Historic England’s Conservation Principles and NPPF Annex 2 by identifying significance based on heritage value or interest. As defined in the Planning Practice Guidance (Historic Environment, para 06), the heritage interest may be:

 - Archaeological;
 - Architectural and artistic; and/or
 - Historic.
- 6.17

The methodology for attributing importance is set out in Table H1. IEMA’s Principles identifies that unlike significance, importance is scaled and *‘It is therefore appropriate to refer to ‘high’, ‘medium’ or ‘low’ importance or any other simple scale that offers a form of gradation’*. As such, designation is an obvious way of attributing importance.
- 6.18

IEMA’s Principles clarifies that: *‘in relative terms, impacts on the cultural significance of assets of higher importance will be given greater weight than those of lower importance’* (para. B.12). This aligns with NPPF para.199 on the weighting of impacts.
- Non-designated Heritage Assets
- 6.19

Non-designated Heritage Assets (‘NDHAs’) are defined in Planning Practice Guidance (PPG, 2021) as buildings, structures and places which have a degree of heritage significance but do not meet the criteria for designation.
- 6.20

In paragraph 039 of the PPG, it notes: *‘A substantial majority of buildings have little or no heritage significance and thus do not constitute heritage assets. Only a minority have enough heritage significance to merit identification as non-designated heritage assets’*.
- 6.21

IEMA’s Principles notes that where heritage assets are not designated, *‘it will be up to the practitioner to make an informed judgement on the level of importance to be ascribed’* (IEMA et al).

Heritage Importance	Designation of Receptor
Very High	Site acknowledged of international importance World Heritage Site
High	Grade I or Grade II* Listed Asset Scheduled Ancient Monument
Medium	Grade II Listed Asset Conservation Area
Low	Locally Listed Asset Designated Heritage Assets compromised by poor preservation
Very Low	Non-Designated Heritage Asset (not recognised as locally listed) Locally Listed Asset with little or no surviving interest

Table H1: Heritage Importance

Setting

- 6.22

The setting of a heritage asset is defined 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. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral’ (NPPF, Annex 2)
- 6.23

Historic England’s GPA 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (2nd Edition, December 2017) gives general advice on understanding setting and how it may contribute to the significance of heritage assets. This report follows the staged approach set out in this guidance to making decisions on the level of the contribution which setting and related views make to the significance of heritage assets.



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