

Newlands Farm, Arborfield

Cultural Heritage Statement

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Cultural Heritage Statement

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Executive Summary

Land at Newlands, Arborfield has been assessed for its below ground archaeological potential.

This assessment has determined that the study site does not lie within the setting of, nor contribute to the significance of, any designated archaeological assets. Therefore, the proposed development will have no impact on the significance of any designated archaeological assets.

This assessment has determined that, whilst there is a limited level of intervisibility between the study site and the Grade II listed Mole Bridge Farmhouse, the proposed development will have no impact on the elements of the asset from which it derives most of its significance. However, development on the study site will result in a change to a small part of the building's setting. The proposed development on the study site is considered to result in no more than a low level of less than substantial harm (minor at most) to the significance of Mole Bridge Farmhouse.

This site visit undertaken for this assessment has determined that the spire of St Bartholomew's Church is visible in parts of the study. However, there are no return views from the church to the study site. The proposed development on the study site is considered to result in no more than a negligible level of less than substantial harm to the significance of St Bartholomew's Church, through a change to the heritage asset's setting.

The study site is considered to form a small part of the extensive wider agricultural (and therefore rural) setting of the remaining designated built heritage assets discussed in Section 4. The contribution the study site is considered to make to the significance of these assets is negligible.

A high potential has been identified for Prehistoric and Roman activity on the study site. This is on the basis of the recovery of artefacts of these dates within the study site during a fieldwalking survey. A low potential is identified for Anglo-Saxon activity. A low potential is identified for significant Medieval remains on the study site; however, it is acknowledged that evidence for former agricultural activity of very limited significance is likely to be present.

Medieval and/or Post Medieval agricultural activity would have truncated any earlier archaeological remains which may have been present within the study site. At this stage, it is considered that any archaeological remains that may be present on the study site would not likely be of such significance to preclude development.

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Appendix 1 HER Gazetteer

1 Introduction & Scope of Study

- 1.1 This below ground archaeological desk-based assessment has been prepared by Richard Smalley on behalf of Gleeson Land Ltd.
- 1.2 The subject of this assessment, also known as the study site, is land at Newlands Farm, near Arborfield, Berkshire. The study site has an area of approximately 22.6ha and is centred on National Grid Reference 476179, 168009.
- 1.3 In accordance with relevant policy and guidance on heritage and planning, and in accordance with the 'Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessments' (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists October 2020), this assessment draws together the available archaeological, topographic and land-use information in order to clarify the heritage potential of the study site.
- 1.4 This desk-based assessment comprises an examination of evidence deriving from multiple sources, including the Berkshire Historic Environment Record and the Royal Berkshire Archives online catalogue. The report also includes the results of a map regression exercise, and site walkover undertaken in May 2025.
- 1.5 The assessment thus enables relevant parties to assess the heritage potential of various parts of the study site and to consider the need for design, civil engineering, and archaeological or built heritage solutions to the archaeological/built heritage potential identified.

2 Planning Background & Development Plan Framework

2.1 National legislation regarding archaeology, including scheduled monuments, is contained in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, amended by the National Heritage Act 1983 and 2002, and updated in April 2014.

2.2 In March 2012, the government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which was most recently updated in December 2024. The NPPF is supported by the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), which was published online 6th March 2014 and has since been periodically updated.
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>)

2.3 The NPPF and NPPG are additionally supported by three Good Practice Advice (GPA) documents published by Historic England: GPA 1: The Historic Environment in Local Plans; GPA 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (both published March 2015). The second edition of GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets was published in December 2017.

National Planning Policy

2.4 Section 16 of the NPPF, entitled Conserving and enhancing the historic environment provides guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the conservation and investigation of heritage assets. Overall, the objectives of Section 16 of the NPPF can be summarised as seeking the:

- Delivery of sustainable development;
- Understanding the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits brought by the conservation of the historic environment;
- Conservation of England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance; and
- Recognition that heritage makes to our knowledge and understanding of the past.

2.5 Section 16 of the NPPF recognises that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term. Paragraph 207 states that local planning authorities should require applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by their development proposal, and that the level of detail supplied by an applicant should be proportionate to the importance of the asset and should be no more than sufficient to review the potential impact of the proposal upon the significance of that asset.

2.6 *Heritage Assets* are defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as: a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. They include designated heritage assets (as defined in the NPPF) and assets identified by the local planning authority during the process of decision-making or through the plan-making process.

2.7 Annex 2 also defines *Archaeological Interest* as a heritage asset which holds or potentially could hold evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

2.8 A *Designated Heritage Asset* comprises a: World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area.

2.9 *Significance (for heritage policy)* is defined as: The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. This interest may be archaeological, architectural,

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artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

2.10 *Setting* 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.

2.11 In short, government policy provides a framework which:

- Protects nationally important designated Heritage Assets;
- Protects the settings of such designations;
- In appropriate circumstances seeks adequate information (from desk based assessment and field evaluation where necessary) to enable informed decisions;
- Provides for the excavation and investigation of sites not significant enough to merit *in-situ* preservation.

2.12 The NPPG reiterates that the conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle, requiring a flexible and thoughtful approach. Furthermore, it highlights that neglect and decay of heritage assets is best addressed through ensuring they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation. Importantly, the guidance states that if complete, or partial loss of a heritage asset is justified, the aim should then be to capture and record the evidence of the asset's significance and make the interpretation publicly available. Key elements of the guidance relate to assessing harm. An important consideration should be whether the proposed works adversely affect a key element of the heritage asset's special architectural or historic interest. Additionally, it is the degree of harm, rather than the scale of development, that is to be assessed. The level of 'substantial harm' is considered to be a high bar that may not arise in many cases. Essentially, whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the NPPF. Importantly, harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting. Setting is defined as the surroundings in which an asset is experienced and may be more extensive than the curtilage. A thorough assessment of the impact of proposals upon setting needs to take into account, and be proportionate to, the significance of the heritage asset and the degree to which proposed changes enhance or detract from that significance and the ability to appreciate it.

2.13 In considering any planning application for development, the planning authority will be mindful of the framework set by government policy, in this instance the NPPF, by current Development Plan Policy and by other material considerations.

Local Planning Policy

2.14 The study site is located within Wokingham Borough Council, which has adopted a Core Strategy.

2.15 The Wokingham Borough Local Development Framework Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document was adopted in January 2010. The following policies are relevant to the Historic Environment:

Policy CP3 – General Principles for Development

Planning permission will be granted for proposals that:

[...]

c) Have no detrimental impact upon important ecological, heritage, landscape (including river valleys) or geological features or water courses.

[...]

2.16 The Wokingham Borough Development Plan: Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan was adopted in February 2014. The following policies are relevant to the Historic Environment:

Policy TP24: Designated Heritage Assets (Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas)

1. Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Monuments and Conservation Areas are shown on the Policies Map.
2. The Borough Council will conserve and seek the enhancement of designated heritage assets in the Borough and their settings by:
 - a. Requiring works to or affecting heritage assets or their setting to demonstrate that the proposals would at least conserve and, where possible enhance the important character and special architectural or historic interest of the building, Conservation Area, monument or park and garden including its setting and views.
 - b. Supporting development proposals or other initiatives that will conserve and, where possible, enhance the local character, setting, management and historic significance of designated heritage assets, with particular support for initiatives that would improve any assets that are recognised as being in poor condition or at risk.
3. Proposals for building works shall retain or incorporate existing features or details of historic or architectural significance or design quality into the scheme.

Policy TP25: Archaeology

1. Areas of high archaeological potential are shown on the Policies Map.
2. In areas of high archaeological potential, applicants will need to provide a detailed assessment of the impact on archaeological remains.
3. Where development is likely to affect an area of high archaeological potential or an area which is likely to contain archaeological remains, the presumption is that appropriate measures shall be taken to protect remains by preservation in situ. Where this is not practical, applicants shall provide for excavation, recording and archiving of the remains.

Policy TP26: Buildings of Traditional Local Character and Areas of Special Character

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

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2.17 The Emerging Wokingham Borough Local Plan Update 2023-2040 contains the following policies relating to the Historic Environment:

Policy DH5: The Historic Environment

1. Designated heritage assets, including Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas and Registered Parks and Gardens, are irreplaceable resources that, subject to their significance, should be conserved for the benefit of future generations.
2. Development proposals should conserve and, wherever possible, seek to enhance, the archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest of all heritage assets, including the contribution made by their setting. This will be achieved through:
 - c. Identifying and understanding the heritage assets that may be affected by the proposed works, at an early stage in the design process;
 - d. Supporting works that secure the sensitive use, enjoyment, conservation and/or enhancement of heritage assets and their settings, particularly in relation to designated assets identified as being at risk; and
 - e. Retaining and/or incorporating existing features or details of historic or architectural interest and/or design quality into the scheme through the sensitive design of development.
3. Where development proposals have the potential to affect a heritage asset and/or its setting, a heritage assessment should be prepared in a level of detail proportionate to the asset's importance. This assessment should be submitted as part of a planning application and should describe the significance of the heritage asset and its setting, before assessing the potential impact of the proposal on its significance.
4. Development proposals that would cause substantial harm to, or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm, or where all the following criteria apply:
 - f. The nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site;
 - g. No viable use of the heritage asset can be found through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation;
 - h. Conservation by grant-funding or another form of not-for-profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
 - i. The harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.
5. Where a development proposal would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, clear and convincing justification will need to be provided to demonstrate the public benefits of the proposal that could not otherwise be achieved. The level of public benefit must outweigh any harm to a designated heritage asset.
6. Local Historic Parks and Gardens and Areas of Special Character are included on the Policies Map. All non-designated heritage assets are identified and recorded on the council's website.
7. Development proposals should demonstrate how the traditional, historical, local and special character of a building, area, park or garden and its setting has been preserved and enhanced. This will enable an assessment of the degree of harm to, or loss of, non-designated heritage assets, balanced against their significance, the positive contribution made by the development and the extent to which any harm can be justified or mitigated.

Policy DH6: Archaeology

1. Development proposals should be accompanied by a detailed archaeological assessment where:
 - j. The development has the potential to affect a scheduled monument or a non-designated heritage asset of archaeological interest;
 - k. The site is within or in proximity to an Area of High Archaeological Potential, or
 - l. The site is within a location where archaeological remains are known or suspected to exist.
2. The archaeological assessment should be in the form of a desk-based study that explains the significance of any archaeological remains, using suitable references such as the Historic Environment Record and, where necessary, a field evaluation. The assessment must explore and explain any likely impact of development upon the archaeological remains.
3. Development proposal should take appropriate measures to protect any archaeological remains by preservation in situ. Where an assessment of archaeological potential demonstrates this is not justified or proportionate, applicants will be responsible for the excavation, recording and archiving of remains.

2.18 In line with relevant planning policy and guidance, this desk-based assessment seeks to clarify the site's archaeological and built heritage potential and the likely significance of that potential and the need or otherwise for additional mitigation measures.

3 Geology & Topography

Geology

- 3.1 Bedrock geology is a term used for the main mass of rocks forming the Earth that are present everywhere, whether exposed at the surface in outcrops or concealed beneath superficial deposits or water. The underlying geology of the study site comprises clay, silt and sand of the London Clay Formation. This is a sedimentary bedrock formed between 56 million and 47.8 million years ago during the Palaeogene period (geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk).
- 3.2 Superficial deposits are the youngest geological deposits formed during the most recent period of geological time, namely the Quaternary which extends back to approximately 2.6 million years before present. No superficial deposits are recorded on the study site (geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk).

Topography

- 3.3 Arborfield is located centrally within the county of Berkshire, approximately 8km south-east of Reading and 6.5km west of Wokingham.
- 3.4 The study site itself is located at the junction of Church Lane and Mole Road. It has an area of approximately 22.6ha and is centred on National Grid Reference 476179, 168009.
- 3.5 The study site slopes downhill from south-west to north-east with a height above Ordnance Datum (aOD) ranging from 61m – 47m. A small watercourse meanders from south to north approximately 150m to the east of the study site. The River Loddon is located approximately 1km to the north-west.

4 Archaeological & Historical Background with Assessment of Significance

Timescales used in this report

Prehistoric

Palaeolithic	900,000 -	12,000 BC
Mesolithic	12,000 -	4,000 BC
Neolithic	4,000 -	1,800 BC
Bronze Age	1,800 -	600 BC
Iron Age	600 -	AD 43

Historic

Roman	AD 43 -	410
Saxon/early medieval	AD 410 -	1066
Medieval	AD 1066 -	1485
Post medieval	AD 1486 -	1799
Modern	AD 1800 -	Present

Introduction

- 4.1 This chapter reviews the available archaeological and built heritage evidence for the study site and the archaeological/historical background of the general area, and, in accordance with NPPF, considers the potential for any as yet to be discovered archaeological evidence on the study site.
- 4.2 What follows comprises a review of known archaeological assets within a 1km radius of the study site (Fig. 2a), also referred to as the study area, held on the Berkshire Historic Environment Record (HER), together with a historic map regression exercise charting the development of the study area from the 19th century onwards until the present day.
- 4.3 Chapter 5 subsequently considers the site conditions and whether the proposed development will impact the built heritage and theoretical archaeological potential identified below.

Previous archaeological work

- 4.4 The predominant previous archaeological fieldwork on the study site and in the 1km search area is the Loddon Valley (Berkshire) Fieldwalking Survey (HER ERM349). This comprised a systematic fieldwalking survey conducted over two seasons in 1990/1991. The survey identified 44 certain and possible clusters of struck flint and pottery ranging in date from the Mesolithic period to the Medieval period.
- 4.5 The fieldwalking survey covered a broad area of the 1km search area, and the western third (approximately) of the study site itself.

Prehistoric

4.6 The HER records the discovery of a number of Prehistoric flint implements within the western part of the study site (HER MWK151148, MWK15285, MWK15286). These artefacts were recovered as part of a fieldwalking survey undertaken within the wider Loddon Valley between 1990 and 1991 (HER ERM349). Several other flint artefacts were recorded in the wider local landscape by the survey.

4.7 A large number of undated cropmark enclosures are evident in the 1km search area, particularly to the north-west of the study site. Although currently undated, it is possible that some of these could date to the Prehistoric period.

4.8 Current evidence shows that the local landscape, including the study site was traversed and utilised during the Prehistoric period. A number of flint artefacts have been recovered from the study site itself. Therefore, a high potential is identified for the presence of Prehistoric evidence within the study site.

Roman

4.9 The HER records the recovery of a Roman coin hoard (HER MWK15549) within the western part of the study site. The hoard was discovered by a metal detectorist and comprised 35 Roman denarii dating to between the late Republican to late 2nd century.

4.10 A fragment of Roman pottery (HER MWK15401) was identified during a fieldwalking survey in the western part of the study site. Further fragments of Roman pottery were recorded by the survey over 400m to the north of the study site.

4.11 A large number of undated cropmark enclosures are evident in the 1km search area, particularly to the north-west of the study site. Although currently undated, it is possible that some of these could date to the Roman period.

4.12 Current evidence shows that the local landscape, including the study site was traversed and utilised during the Roman period. A number of Roman coins and a Roman pottery sherd have been recovered from the study site itself. Therefore, a high potential is identified for the presence of Roman evidence within the study site.

Anglo-Saxon and Medieval

4.13 No evidence of Anglo-Saxon activity is recorded on the study site or in the wider local landscape, and Arborfield is not recorded in the Domesday Survey of AD 1086.

4.14 The HER records the discovery of a sherd of Medieval pottery (HER MWK15399) in the western part of the study site. Linear features evident in aerial photography in the eastern part of the study site have been interpreted as possible ridge and furrow cultivation (HER MWK1153).

4.15 Several fragments of Medieval pottery were recorded in the wider local landscape by the Loddon Valley fieldwalking survey.

4.16 The study site is located in a landscape used for agricultural purposes in the Medieval period and evidence for such activity is recorded by the HER on the study site itself. Any Medieval activity is likely to be restricted to agricultural activity of very limited significance.

Post Medieval & Modern (including map regression exercise)

4.17 No Post Medieval evidence is recorded on the study site by the HER. However, Post Medieval pottery fragments are recorded approximately 165m east of the study site (HER MWK15335).

4.18 The 1840 Parish of Hurst Tithe Map (Figure 4) shows the study site comprising all or part of nine parcels of agricultural land. The accompanying tithe apportionment describes each of the parcels as being in a mixture of arable, pasture and woodland, and being in the ownership of John and Charles Simonds at this time.

4.19 The 1872-1873 Ordnance Survey Map (Figure 5) shows the removal of a number of internal field boundaries, particularly in the eastern part of the study site. The area of woodland in the north of the study site has extended to the north-east.

4.20 The 1899 Ordnance Survey Map (Figure 6) shows the further removal of field boundaries from within the study site.

4.21 The 1967 – 1968 Ordnance Survey Map (Figure 7) shows the introduction of a number of new field boundaries within the study site. The study site now comprises nine land parcels. An electricity pylon is now evident in the western part of the study site.

4.22 The 1999 Ordnance Survey Map (Figure 8) shows that the internal field boundaries have been removed once more, with the study site now comprising four land parcels.

4.23 The 2024 Ordnance Survey Map (Figure 9) shows the introduction of a new field boundary in the central part of the study site.

4.24 The historic mapping reflects the agricultural nature of the study site and its current surroundings, and that this has been the case from at least the 19th century. A low potential is identified for the presence of significant Post Medieval and/or Modern archaeology within the study site. Evidence of former field boundaries are likely; however, these would be of negligible archaeological significance.

LiDAR

4.25 LiDAR imagery (Fig. 3) shows a series of faint parallel linear features crossing the study site in both a north-east – south-west alignment. These are likely to be related to former ridge and furrow cultivation. No other features of a possible archaeological origin are evident.

Portable Antiquities Scheme

4.26 The Portable Antiquities Scheme records several coins from the Arborfield and Newlands area. These include examples from the Iron Age, Roman, Medieval and Post Medieval periods.

Aerial Photographs

4.27 Aerial photographs of the study site held by Historic England were viewed as part of this assessment. No features of an archaeological interest were identified.

Assessment of Significance (Designated Assets)

4.28 Existing national policy guidance for archaeology (the NPPF as referenced in section 2) enshrines the concept of the 'significance' of heritage assets. Significance as defined in the NPPF centres on the value of an archaeological or historic asset for its 'heritage interest' to this or future generations.

Archaeology

4.29 Existing national policy guidance for archaeology (the NPPF as referenced in section 2) enshrines the concept of the 'significance' of heritage assets. Significance as defined in the NPPF centres on the value of an archaeological or historic asset for its 'heritage interest' to this or future generations.

4.30 There are no designated archaeological assets, such as Scheduled Monuments, located on the study site.

4.31 The Scheduled site of St Bartholomew's Church (NHLE 1006975) is located approximately 900m west of the study site and is a designated heritage asset of national significance. The monument comprises the ruins of a 13th century church which was superseded by the existing St Bartholomew's Church built in 1863 in a different location.

4.32 The monument derives the majority of its significance from its physical remains, state of preservation and potential for the presence of archaeological features that can add to the nation's archaeological record. However, the monument also derives some significance from its setting.

4.33 The monument's setting is primarily related to the ruins themselves and the land parcel in which they are located. The monument also derives some significance in its relationship with the 19th century church which replaced it. It also derives some significance from its relationship with Hall Farm, forming a "settlement of power".

4.34 The study site is located almost 1km from the monument and the remains are not discernible from it. There are also no known contextual relationships between the two. Therefore, the study site is not considered to contribute to the significance of the Scheduled Monument.

Built Heritage

Church of St Bartholomew

4.35 **Significance:** The Grade II listed Parish Church of St Bartholomew was constructed in 1863 by J.A. Picton, a regionally noted architect from Liverpool. It was constructed in an Early Decorated style in flint with Bath stone dressings with a fishscale tiled roof. The construction of this church utilised building materials from the former parish church, which was partially demolished in the 1860s. The church has a five-bay nave, apsidal chancel, and a three-stage west tower and broached spire. Two and three-light traceried windows are noted. Allied to building materials from the earlier church, including altar rails. The church is moderately adorned with monuments inside. The church provides an evidential and aesthetic value as a nineteenth century church reflecting fashions of the time, in this case, its Early Decorated style. It has a communal value as a continuously operational place of worship since consecration in 1863. It shares a group value with the earlier former parish church, through the use of materials from that church, as well as internal fixtures and fittings. It also has a group value with the nearby Old Rectory, though the Old Rectory is no longer owned/occupied by the Church. It has an associative value with an architect of regional note, though with architectural input largely restricted to the north-west.

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4.36 **Setting:** The Church of St Bartholomew is primarily experienced from within its immediate setting of the burial ground from where one can best appreciate its architectural detailing. The church sits in a relatively enclosed burial ground with mature tree planting around parts of the periphery of the curtilage. This being said, views are granted north through much thinner boundary tree planting. The church has an extensive wider setting, by virtue of its broached spire which can be seen over much of surrounding tree cover. This intervisibility identifies the location of a parish church, though the treed enclosure is such that the body of the church cannot be seen from the study site. The wider surrounds help to define the rural context in which this parish church sits. Setting makes a positive, though secondary, contribution with the study site forming a small part of an extensive wider setting.

4.37 **Significance and Setting Summary:** The Church of St Bartholomew is a heritage asset of high (national) significance. Its significance is derived primarily from its architectural and historic special interest as a nineteenth century continuously operated place of worship, through its design and materials used. It shares a group value with the former parish church from which parts of its built fabric originates, as well as the Old Rectory. It is a rural parish church with an extensive wider setting, largely limited to longer distance views of the spire. Setting makes an important, though secondary, contribution to the overall significance. In this situation, the Site makes a negligible positive contribution to the significance of the heritage asset.

Mole Bridge Farmhouse (NHLE 1118121)

4.38 **Significance:** The Grade II listed Mole Bridge Farmhouse was constructed in the late seventeenth century and further extended in the nineteenth and twentieth century. The large twentieth century extension is deemed to of "no special interest" (listing citation). The heritage asset is now a private dwelling with the small previous farmstead to the rear having been demolished (to be replaced by the twentieth century extension) and private gardens. The heritage asset is constructed in brick with a plain tile roof over two-storeys with an attic. The building exhibits simple architectural detailing such as a string course and brick dentils to the eaves. Two and three-light windows are present with a central door with "Doric Pilasters, entablature with roundels in frieze and pediment" (listing citation). The cessation of an agricultural role has negatively impacted the overall significance of the heritage asset and the building has been visually 'domesticated' meaning that it is read as a house set in private grounds and enclosed from the wider rural surrounds as such. The loss of the wider farmstead has also changed the context in which the heritage asset is viewed. The later extensions (presumably following conversion to a private dwelling) means that now the built form comprising Mole Bridge Farmhouse is comprised of the heritage asset and the twentieth century extension in equal measure. This alters, to the detriment, the balance of the visual dominance of the heritage asset. Mole Bridge Farmhouse provides evidential value as a former late seventeenth century farmhouse, through its design and materials though with alterations which have lessened the overall significance, allied to a broader domestication.

4.39 **Setting:** The significance of Mole Bridge Farmhouse is primarily experienced from within its immediate setting of the private grounds which now surround the heritage asset and from where one can appreciate the architectural special interest. It is difficult to read the building as once forming part of a farmstead, which now forms its historic visual and functional setting only, given the demolition of any farm buildings and no known functional links to the wider surrounds. This is reinforced by the wider domestication of the private grounds: tennis court, equestrian facilities and boundary hedging and walls. Intervisibility is limited to those parts of the study site nearest to the heritage asset. Setting makes a reduced, though still positive contribution, limited to the rural context which the private dwelling is now interpreted as. In this, the study site makes a minor contribution.

4.40 **Significance and Setting Summary:** Mole Bridge Farmhouse is a heritage asset of high (national) significance. Its significance is largely derived from its architectural and historic special interest as a former seventeenth century farmhouse through its materials and design. The cessation of an agricultural role for the farmhouse, and indeed the loss of any earlier farm buildings, has eroded its significance to a degree. Any agricultural context to the surrounds forms part of the heritage assets historic setting only now. Setting, including the study site, makes a

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positive, though very much secondary contribution to the overall significance, in helping to provide a rural context to the former farmhouse.

The Glen

4.41 **Significance:** The Grade II listed The Glen was constructed in the seventeenth century and later altered in the nineteenth century. It is understood to now be referred to as Cordery Cottage. It has a partial timber frame (with painted brick infill) construction and partial brick. The building has a thatched gabled roof atop a one and a half storey building. Two-light casement windows are noted dating from the nineteenth century (listing citation). A twentieth century porch is present. Internally, the building retains some exposed beams (chamfered with stop ends – listing citation). A twentieth century rear brick extension, of no architectural interest, has been added, perhaps reflective of the diminutive size of the original host property. The Glen represents a simple rural workers' dwelling through its simple design and scale. In this, it provides evidential and aesthetic value as vernacular cottage architecture. The later extension appears to have been done as sensitively as possible, in design and scale, to minimise loss to the visual presence of the heritage asset, though it does erode a small degree of the overall significance.

4.42 **Setting:** The Glen is primarily experienced in its immediate setting of its private gardens which surround the property. Setting makes an important, though secondary, contribution to the significance of the heritage asset through the rurality that it provides in understanding this rural workers' dwelling. The site visit did not identify any visibility between the study site and The Glen, and the study site is only considered to make a negligible contribution to the asset's setting in that it forms a very small part of a wider rural landscape.

4.43 **Significance and Setting Summary:** The Glen is a heritage asset of high (national) significance. Its significance is primarily derived from its architectural and historic special interest as a seventeenth century former rural workers dwelling, represented through its style, diminutive scale and materials used. It has seen alterations including extensions which have eroded to a degree the overall significance, though it can still be read as a small vernacular cottage. Setting makes a secondary contribution to the overall significance, limited to the wider rurality which provides the context to this rural dwelling. No intervisibility between the study site and The Glen was evident during the site visit.

Carter's Hill House

4.44 **Significance:** Carter's Hill House was constructed in the late eighteenth century and originally served as a farmhouse to Newland Farm. The two-storey plus basement building is constructed in brick with a hipped tile roof over three bays. It has two gabled dormers on the east facing front elevation. The dormers are nineteenth century additions. Minor architectural flourishes are noted, including pilasters with small urn heads and moulded architraving around the front door. Painted toothed eaves and bracketed wooden cornice are also noted. The heritage asset sits in private grounds and performs no agricultural role. This has impacted its significance, as has the apparent conversion of many of the farm buildings which, in historically sitting away from the farmhouse, further reinforce the present-day appearance of Carter's Hill House as having only ever been a private dwelling.

4.45 The farmhouse appears to have been designed in such a way to suggest relative wealth, over smaller farmsteads nearby. It provides evidential and aesthetic value as an eighteenth-century farmhouse through its materials and design, though the loss of the agricultural role and indeed separation of ownership to the surrounding agricultural buildings and land has impacted the overall significance.

4.46 **Setting:** Carter's Hill House is primarily experienced from within its immediate surrounds of the private gardens, and to a lesser degree, the remaining (now residentially converted) farm buildings. The fact that the farm complex was separate to the farmhouse means that it has always retained a degree of visual importance, perhaps intentionally so. When allied to its more prominent design this separation reinforces the perception that it was meant to appear more as a private rural

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dwelling rather than agricultural dwelling. The conversions of former farm buildings and further new dwellings reinforce the domestic character now. An agricultural context forms part of its historic functional and visual setting only now; in which the study site forms a very small part. Setting makes a positive contribution though very much secondary, on account of the cessation of any farming activity at the heritage asset or adjacent former farm buildings.

4.47 **Significance and Setting Summary:** Carter's Hill House is a heritage asset of high (national) significance. Its significance is primarily defined by its architectural and historic special interest as a former farmhouse. The cessation of an agricultural role for the heritage asset and formerly associated farm buildings has impacted the significance. Setting makes a secondary contribution to the overall significance, limited the wider rurality which remains. The study site and Carter's Hill House are separated by a number of agricultural fields, woodland and mature field boundaries. No intervisibility between the study site and the asset was evident during the site visit.

The Old Rectory

4.48 **Significance:** The two-storey Old Rectory was historically associated with the remains of the former parish church of Arborfield, which lies to the north. It was later associated with the current church of St Bartholomew when the earlier church was demolished in the mid-nineteenth century. The heritage asset has been converted into two private dwellings and is not understood to no longer be associated with the church. It was constructed in the nineteenth century in brick with a slate hipped roof, and further altered and extended in the twentieth century. The principal range is rectangular with a rear extension, likely added in the twentieth century, in phases. The south-facing principal elevation has four bays of three-over-six sash windows. The ground floor has tripartite six-over-six sash windows with French windows also noted. In the twentieth century the house was rearranged with a new entrance created on the north elevation. The Old Rectory provides important evidential and aesthetic value as a nineteenth century dwelling for the incumbent, reflecting the elevated status of the Church through its design and construction in brick. Despite no shared ownerships, the heritage asset still shares a group value with the remains of the former parish church which is at a distance to the north and, similarly, with the current Church of St Bartholomew in the village. The heritage asset abutted up to the southernmost edge of the landscaped parkland associated with Arborfield Hall.

4.49 **Setting:** The Old Rectory is primarily experienced from within its immediate setting of the private grounds. It is heavily enclosed by mature tree planting on all flanks. The proximity of the ruined church which was served by the Rectory forms part of an historic visual and functional setting only now, given the degree of enclosure and the shallow and heavily screened remains of the former church. The Old Rectory was originally set in relative isolation, as befitting its status, though now forms part of the wider settlement of Arborfield due to twentieth century expansion of the village. The road leading to the former parish church was straightened and brought adjacent to the Old Rectory. This accentuates an historic religious association between the two heritage assets, though this was understood to have been done when the former church was demolished. Setting makes an important, though secondary contribution, largely on account of the cessation of a religious role and also the extensive treed enclosure surrounding which limits the interaction with the wider rural landscape. The site visit did not identify any visibility between the study site and The Old Rectory, and the study site is only considered to make a negligible contribution at most to the asset's setting in that it forms a very small part of a wider rural landscape.

4.50 **Significance and Setting Summary:** The Old Rectory is a heritage asset of high (national) significance. Its significance is primarily defined by its architectural and historic special interest as a nineteenth century church house associated with the parish church. Its design is reflective of the wealth of the church, as was its original relative isolation. Despite no longer being in Church ownership, the building shares a group value with the past and present parish churches in the village which formed part of its historic functional setting. The reworked drive up to the church and Hall Place Farm help to reinforce historic associations. Setting can be said to make a positive, though now secondary, contribution to the overall significance on account of the degree of functional and visual separation of the heritage asset and the associated parish churches in which the Old Rectory served. There is no intervisibility between the study site and The Old Rectory.

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Hall Place Farmhouse

4.51 **Significance:** The Grade II listed Farmhouse was constructed around 1840 in brick with a hipped slate roof with oversailing eaves. It was originally called Arborfield Hall Farm and may have been the home farm to the nearby Arborfield Hall (now demolished). It now forms part of Hall Farm. As the manorial seat, Arborfield Hall would also have had associations with the nearby parish church (now ruins), which together would have created a 'settlement of power', i.e., the church and feudal landlord. Both the farm and the church were sat within the parkland grounds of Arborfield Hall at the turn of the twentieth century. The farmhouse is two-storeys in height with a three-sash window range (1st floor and a central front door with a window each side). The building exhibits elements of minor architectural detailing including pilasters either side of the front door. There is a single-storey brick and tile gabled extension to the left-hand side with a tile roof and a further brick and tile single-storey extension attached to the rear of the house at a right-angle to the left hand extension. The farmhouse appears to have been constructed with an associated farm complex on land adjacent to nearby built development including Arborfield Mill on the River Loddon immediately north of the heritage asset and the remains of the old parish church of Arborfield (see below). Over time the farm has been expanded and is understood to remain in agricultural operation. Some buildings date from the nineteenth century, others are more contemporary and are of no architectural or historic interest.

4.52 The farmhouse provides evidential and aesthetic value as a moderately scaled farmhouse set near to an earlier church, through their use of materials and design. The farmhouse would have shared a group value with Arborfield Hall in potentially being the home farm and, by association, shares a group value with the remains of the parish church nearby which served as the church for the Arborfield Hall manorial seat; collectively seen as a settlement of power. The proximity to the hall would likely have been a strategic decision to build the farm close by, in order to embody the farm with a greater sense of presence and importance, alongside its proximity to the parish church. Its continued use as part of a farm also provides important value and contributes to the overall significance.

4.53 The farm also sat within close proximity to a now ruinous watermill located over the River Loddon which historically generated power for Arborfield Hall. This building in itself is understood to have been much altered and now only partly remains (Arborfield Local History Society). The only known remaining structure related directly to the now demolished Arborfield Hall is a boathouse and steps on the banks of the Loddon which was not viewed during the Site walkover as it sits in private grounds. A boat house is noted on the Arborfield Tithe Map (1840). Collectively they add to the overall group value of the remaining settlement of power features in which Hall Place Farmhouse forms a large part of now presently.

4.54 **Setting:** The farmhouse is primarily experienced from within the existing farm complex which provides the context in which one understands the role of the heritage asset. Some of these buildings are contemporaneous with the farmhouse and help to provide a context and share a group value with the heritage asset.

4.55 Historically the farmhouse is likely to have been the home farm to Arborfield Hall, and therefore would have historically been considered within this setting. This contextual view is now historic only given the loss of the manorial seat of Arborfield Hall. Evidence of the parkland remains (including boundary tree planting and mature specimen parkland trees), horse chestnut avenue, and which help to indicate the location (or historic location of) of a dwelling of some significance, when viewed alongside the remains of the former parish church (see below). Other remaining features such as the former water mill and boathouse also provide some historic functional setting and provide some contribution, to the initiated viewer, as to the overall significance of this settlement of power. In the absence of the primary residence however, the historic connotations to its original role (as part of a wider estate) are more difficult to ascertain. Setting remains an important, though secondary, contributor to the overall significance of the heritage asset as being part of a working farm. The site visit did not identify any visibility between the study site and Hall Place Farmhouse, and the study site is only considered to make a negligible contribution to the asset's setting in that it forms a very small part of a wider rural landscape.

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4.56 **Significance and Setting Summary:** Hall Place Farmhouse is a heritage asset of high (national) significance. Its significance is primarily defined by its architectural and historic special interest as a nineteenth century farmhouse with attached barn with elements of architectural flourish which perhaps stand it apart from smaller farmsteads. The farm and farmhouse remain in agricultural use which adds to its significance. Setting makes a positive secondary contribution to the significance of the farmhouse. There is no intervisibility between the study site and Hall Place.

Bearwood College Registered Park and Garden and associated assets (NHLE 1000414)

4.57 **Significance:** Access into the RPG is very restricted meaning that intervisibility into the heart of the designation from the study site or public domain is not possible. As such, the below assessment is based upon photographs that have been taken from the public domain and available online resources and research.

4.58 The Grade II* Registered Park and Garden – Bearwood College, is a nineteenth century landscaped park and woodland, with a Victorian country house in the centre. The Bearwood Estate was acquired in 1816 by John Walter II, proprietor of The Times newspaper (register citation) with a 'modest classical villa' (register citation) forming the centrepiece of the grounds. Early in its existence the services of William Sawney Gilpin (the nationally renowned artist and later garden designer) were engaged; Bearwood being one of his first landscaping commissions. In 1865-74 the house was rebuilt to the designs of Robert Kerr, creating a Jacobean-style country house. It was constructed in red brick with stone dressings. The building comprised a main domestic wing with a service wing. It remains in the centre of the RPG and is listed at Grade II* (NHL ref. 1135967). A separate 'U' shaped stable block sits near to the house (not listed but identified on the HER). A separately listed Bearwood Chapel and the Church of St Catherine also fall within the cluster of heritage assets which make up this estate. Further substantial changes to the wider grounds were also made at this time. This included the creation of the Wellingtonia Avenue, a new kitchen garden, a rock garden and the "gradual extension of the pleasure grounds in various directions" (The Garden, 1902, in the register citation). Large parts of the estate were sold in the early twentieth century, though the house failed to sell, becoming, instead a military convalescent home in the First World War. It later became the Merchant's Seaman's Orphanage and latterly a boarding school; a role it continues to perform alongside the immediate surrounds. A large part of the Registered Park and Gardens became playing fields and two golf courses in 1998.

4.59 The gardens associated with the RPG are located to the west and south of the house and comprise formal terraces adjacent to the house (and which form part of the listing for the Grade II* Bearwood). These formal terraces abut informal lawns and pleasure grounds with extensive areas of woodland beyond. The wider park comprises a 20ha lake, surrounded by woodland, often coniferous and interspersed, with open areas of parkland. Several formal drives were created in the nineteenth century throughout the parkland, these, in part, remain. Areas of the parkland have been converted to golf courses. Several entrances exist around the edge of the park with a number of lodges noted.

4.60 The kitchen gardens originally contained glasshouses, though all have been removed with new buildings constructed as part of a new football training facility along the western edge of the RPG. Several service buildings and yards exist near to the walled garden, including the Farm Cottages, Farm Cottage, sawmill and several separately listed lodges: Park Lodge and West Lodge. A further lodge (associated with a gas works) is present, Mole Lodge, which is not listed but is identified on the HER. Additional features include a former gas works, workshop area. These features, where not listed, are identified on the HER, and contribute to the overall significance of the wider RPG. A great many of these features are in the process of being restored, refurbished and repurposed. Collectively the various components of the wider former estate, including the house, stables, lodges and other utilitarian buildings all share a group value with each other and the wider RPG.

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4.61 The area of the RPG closest to the study site comprises the more utilitarian features, including the walled gardens, and farm cottages. The parkland here is given over to extensive sports pitches associated with the new football training centre and, to the north, with the school.

4.62 The boundary of the RPG is, in the main, heavily enclosed with mature woodland planting. The exception is the western boundary, which is more open, though does have a thin belt of boundary tree planting along the B3030, Mole Road. Beyond this linear extent of sports pitches and a more open landscape lies the main body of woodland planting in the RPG.

4.63 Bearwood College Registered Park and Garden provides an evidential and aesthetic value as a nineteenth century country estate with many of the original features remaining. Its significance is in part derived by the number of designated built heritage assets which lie within its boundary, and which form an integral part of its overall grouping. The change of use of the principal house, alongside the change of use to considerable parts of the wider parkland to golf courses and sports pitches has impacted the overall significance. The design of the buildings and materials used reflect the Victorian tastes and fashions of the time, in the case of the principal house; a Jacobean-style. Collectively each constituent part of the estate played and to some extent, still plays, an important part in defining the nineteenth century country estate, including gatehouses, walled gardens, gas works, sawmills and stabling.

4.64 **Setting:** Given the degree of enclosure surrounding much of the park, allied to a relatively level topography and extensive woodland planting throughout and surrounding the RPG, the special interest of the heritage asset is primarily experienced from within. It is from within that one can appreciate the group value of the house, stables and surrounding RPG. These views are all largely enclosed from the outside by mature tree planting. The breadth of wider woodland means that the extent of the parkland seamlessly blends with much of the wider landscape.

4.65 At inception, Bearwood was set in relative rural isolation, with small villages scattered around the edge of the parkland. Progressively with the wider urbanisation of Wokingham, Winnersh and Reading, the degree of isolation has reduced and built development now abuts up to the edge of the park, including around Sindlesham on the north-western edge of the RPG.

4.66 When viewed from the western edge, excepting the presence of the lodges, walled garden and other buildings along this boundary, the sports pitches confuse the viewer as to what exists east of the B3030. Irrespective of this, however, the western edge of the RPG does still present as a largely undeveloped open landscape. In respect of the remnant nineteenth century buildings on this western edge, it is important to note that these were located in what might be considered the productive part of the estate and included gas works, workers dwellings and the walled garden. These were the features, which, although necessary to the continued enjoyment and existence of the estate, were not necessarily desirable features, visually, when located within the wider parkland, hence why they were set off in the very south-west of the estate. That they sit visually separate from the wider estate, enclosed by woodland planting, is not therefore surprising.

4.67 The wider rural landscape which previously existed, helped to provide the context in which the estate evolved as the private grounds for the principal residence; Bearwood. Setting makes a small, secondary contribution, largely limited to the remnant rural landscape which surrounds the designation.

4.68 **Significance and Setting Summary:** Bearwood College RPG is a heritage asset of high (national) significance. Its significance is primarily derived from its architectural and historic special interest as nineteenth century landscaped grounds and parkland. Its significance also comprises the number of designated and non-designated built heritage assets which exist within its boundary, and which collectively help the viewer to read the asset as a whole. The changes to both the role of the principal house, and also much of the RPG to either sports pitches or golf courses, has impacted the overall significance. Setting makes a small, secondary contribution, largely limited to the remnant rural landscape which surrounds the designation. The physical changes to the use and layout of the parkland on the western edge, lessen this contribution here, however, as it remains difficult to read the RPG as such, presenting instead as extensive sports pitches

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surrounded by woodland planting further into the RPG. No meaningful intervisibility between the study site and the asset was evident during the site visit.

Assessment of Significance (Non-Designated Assets)

Archaeology

4.69 As identified by desk-based work, archaeological potential by period and the likely significance of any archaeological remains which may be present is summarised in table form below and mapped where possible on Figure 2a:

Period	Identified archaeological potential	Identified archaeological significance
Prehistoric	High	Low (Local)
Roman	High	Low (Local)
Anglo-Saxon	Low	Low (Local)
Medieval	Low other than agricultural	Low (Local)
Post Medieval	Low other than agricultural	Low (Local)

4.70 A high potential has been identified for Prehistoric and Roman activity on the study site. This is on the basis of the recovery of artefacts of these dates within the study site during a fieldwalking survey.

4.71 A low potential is identified for Anglo-Saxon activity. A low potential is identified for significant Medieval remains on the study site; however, it is acknowledged that evidence for former agricultural activity of very limited significance is likely to be present.

4.72 There is no evidence to suggest that any of the archaeological remains within the study site would be of any more than local significance.

Built Heritage

Reading Room Cottage

4.73 **Significance:** Reading Room Cottage is not identified on the Wokingham District Council List of Buildings of Traditional Character, nor is it identified on the HER. However, following the site walkover it is deemed worthy of consideration as a non-designated heritage asset. The heritage asset was originally known as the Reading Room and was constructed in 1881 as a library and community space as a memorial to a member of the village. The original building was linear in layout comprising single storey reading room to the right and a two-storey component to the left. The reading room itself appears to comprise the bulk of the remaining building and the two-storey element is no longer present. The reading room appears to be in residential use now. It is constructed in brick (header bond) constructed in red, white and brown brick courses. Rubbed brick arches over windows (effectively creating hoodmoulds) are noted and brick cornicing under the eaves. It has later twentieth century PVCu windows. A fishscale tile roof is present with a number of dormers. A small porch is present on the road facing elevation. It appears that several larger windows, designed to allow high levels of light into the reading room, have been replaced with smaller windows and additional later tile hanging. Reading Room Cottage provides evidential and aesthetic value as a Victorian communal building reflecting tastes and fashions of the period through the use of materials and its design as well as identifying the philanthropic priorities of wealthier members of the community towards the educational betterment of the wider population. As an earlier reading room, it provides an historic communal value. The loss of the original role has impacted its significance, as has the physical alterations, notably the loss of the two-storey element and the changes to fenestration. It is likely that the interior has been altered to reflect its current residential use.

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4.74 **Setting:** Reading Room Cottage is primarily experienced in its immediate setting of the private gardens in which it sits. It is from here that one is best able to appreciate its architectural interest. It was constructed as a communal facility and therefore a village location was, by its nature, likely to have been chosen to allow community access. Its proximity to the church may also have been appropriate as an additional village community facility. It therefore derives some contribution to its setting from its village location, although this is largely historic now as it is a private dwelling. The study site abuts up to the heritage asset. The heritage asset sits in a small rural village and therefore the village/rural surrounds help to define this as an historic village facility, though it cannot be said to make anything more than a very small positive contribution, particularly given that it is in residential use now. The study site can be said to make a very limited secondary contribution to the significance of the heritage asset in helping to define the village context in which the Reading Room served within historically.

4.75 **Significance and Setting Summary:** Reading Room Cottage is a heritage asset of low (local) interest only. Its significance primarily derives from its architectural interest, and to a lesser degree its historic interest as a former village reading room and community facility. The changes to its fabric have impacted to a high degree its significance, as has the conversion of the remaining reading room to a residential use. Setting can be said to make a secondary contribution, with any contribution largely defined by its village location to once serve its residents. The study site provides the rural context in which the village sits. This contribution is largely historic now, however.

5 Site Conditions, The Proposed Development & Review of Potential Development Impacts on Archaeological Assets

Site Conditions

5.1 A site visit was undertaken in May 2025. It comprised a number of parcels of agricultural land currently under an arable regime (see Plates 1-6).

5.2 No finds or features of an archaeological origin were identified during the site visit.

Proposed Development

5.3 Outline Planning Application for the comprehensive development of land at Newlands Farm as part of Loddon Valley Garden Village, comprising:

- Up to 430 dwellings;
- Vehicular, bus, cycle and pedestrian corridor between Mole Road and northern boundary of site, to connect with the proposed Loddon Garden Village spine road;
- New pedestrian and cycle link between Byway ARB03 (Carter's Hill Lane) and Byway ARB08 (Ellis's Hill);
- Comprehensive strategic landscaping and network of multi-functional green and blue infrastructure, biodiversity enhancements to achieve at least a net gain of 10%;
- Associated utilities, infrastructure, and engineering works

5.4 All matters reserved other than details for the approval of the principal vehicular access from Mole Road.

Review of Potential Development Impacts on Designated Assets

Archaeological Assets

5.5 This assessment has determined that the study site does not lie within the setting of, nor contribute to the significance of, any designated archaeological assets. Therefore, the proposed development will have no impact on the significance of any designated archaeological assets.

Built Heritage Assets

5.6 This assessment has determined that there is a limited level of intervisibility between the study site and the Grade II listed Mole Bridge Farmhouse. The proposed development will have no impact on the elements of the asset from which it derives most of its significance, namely its architectural and historic interest as a vernacular farmhouse. However, development on the study site will result in a change to a small part of the building's setting. Whilst setting is considered to make a positive contribution to the asset's significance, this assessment has determined that the contribution is very much secondary. The proposed development on the study site is considered to result in no more than a low level of less than substantial harm (minor at most) to the significance of Mole Bridge Farmhouse. This will engage Paragraph 215 of the NPPF, requiring any harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme.

5.7 This site visit undertaken for this assessment has determined that the spire of St Bartholomew's Church is visible in parts of the study. However, there are no return views from the church to the study site. The proposed development on the study site is considered to result in no more than a

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negligible level of less than substantial harm to the significance of St Bartholomew's Church. This will engage Paragraph 215 of the NPPF, requiring any harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme.

5.8 The study site is considered to form a small part of the wider generic rural setting of the remaining built heritage assets discussed in Section 4 above. However, the reason for this is restricted to the study site forming a small part of an extensive agricultural landscape. The contribution the study site is considered to make to the significance of these assets is, on aggregate, considered not to materially impact their overall significance.

Review of Potential Development Impacts on Non-Designated Assets

Archaeological Assets

5.9 Groundworks associated with the proposed development have the potential to impact on any archaeological remains that may be present.

5.10 A high potential for Prehistoric and Roman activity has been identified for the study site. However, there is no evidence to suggest than any archaeology on the study site would be of any more than local significance. Any remains that may be present are likely to have been truncated or removed by historic and modern agricultural activity.

Built Heritage Assets

5.11 The proposed development will have no physical impact on the non-designated former Reading Room, and therefore the key contributors to its significance will not be affected. However, the proposals will result in a change to its setting. This will give rise to a low level of harm to the significance of this non-designated heritage asset, at the lower end of the spectrum. Paragraph 216 of the NPPF is therefore engaged, which requires the harm to be weighed against the significance of the heritage asset, which in this case is low, at the most.

6 Summary & Conclusions

6.1 The study site has been assessed for its below ground archaeological potential.

6.2 This assessment has determined that the study site does not lie within the setting of, nor contribute to the significance of, any designated archaeological assets. Therefore, the proposed development will have no impact on the significance of any designated archaeological assets.

6.3 This assessment has determined that, whilst there is a limited level of intervisibility between the study site and the Grade II listed Mole Bridge Farmhouse, the proposed development will have no impact on the elements of the asset from which it derives most of its significance. However, development on the study site will result in a change to a small part of the building's setting. The proposed development on the study site is considered to result in no more than a low level of less than substantial harm to the significance of Mole Bridge Farmhouse.

6.4 This site visit undertaken for this assessment has determined that the spire of St Bartholomew's Church is visible in parts of the study. However, there are no return views from the church to the study site. The proposed development on the study site is considered to result in no more than a negligible level of less than substantial harm to the significance of St Bartholomew's Church.

6.5 The study site is considered to form a small part of the wider generic rural setting of the remaining designated built heritage assets discussed in Section 4. However, the reason for this is restricted to the study site forming a small part of an extensive agricultural landscape. The contribution the study site is on aggregate, considered not to materially impact their overall significance.

6.6 As identified by desk-based work, archaeological potential by period and the likely significance of any archaeological remains which may be present is summarised in table form below:

Period	Identified archaeological potential and significance
Prehistoric	High, local significance
Roman	High, local significance
Anglo-Saxon	Low, local significance
Medieval	Low, other than agricultural, low significance
Post Medieval	Low, other than agricultural, low significance

6.7 A high potential has been identified for Prehistoric and Roman activity on the study site. This is on the basis of the recovery of artefacts of these dates within the study site during a fieldwalking survey. A low potential is identified for Anglo-Saxon activity. A low potential is identified for significant Medieval remains on the study site; however, it is acknowledged that evidence for former agricultural activity of very limited significance is likely to be present.

6.8 Medieval and/or Post Medieval agricultural activity would have truncated any earlier archaeological remains which may have been present within the study site. At this stage, it is considered that any archaeological remains that may be present on the study site would not likely be of such significance to preclude development.

Sources Consulted

General

British Library

Berkshire Historic Environment Record

Berkshire Record Office Online Catalogue

The National Archive

Internet

British Geological Survey – <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>

British History Online – <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/>

Domesday Online – <http://www.domesdaybook.co.uk/>

Historic England: The National Heritage List for England <http://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

National Planning Policy Framework – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

Portable Antiquities Scheme – www.finds.org.uk

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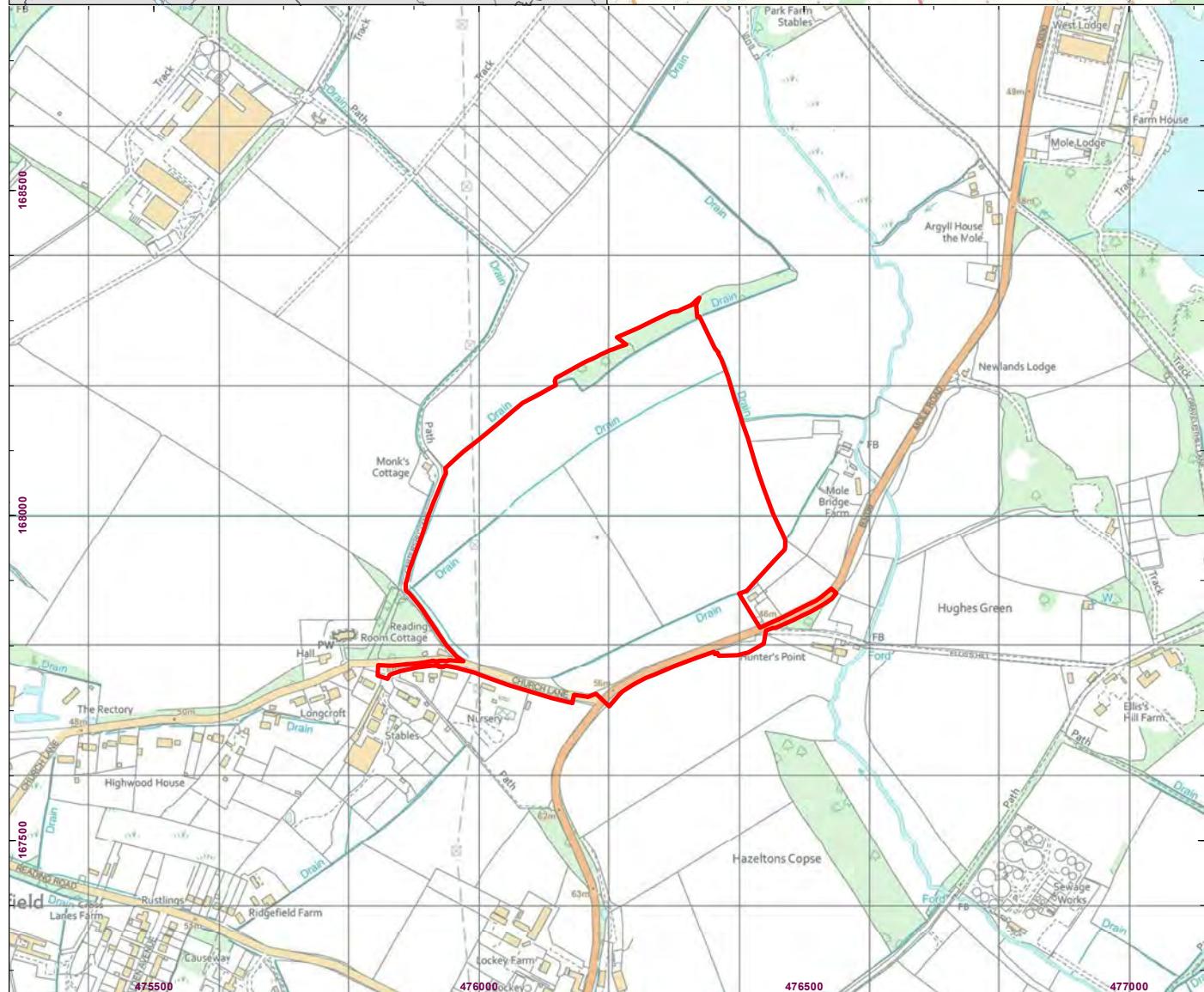
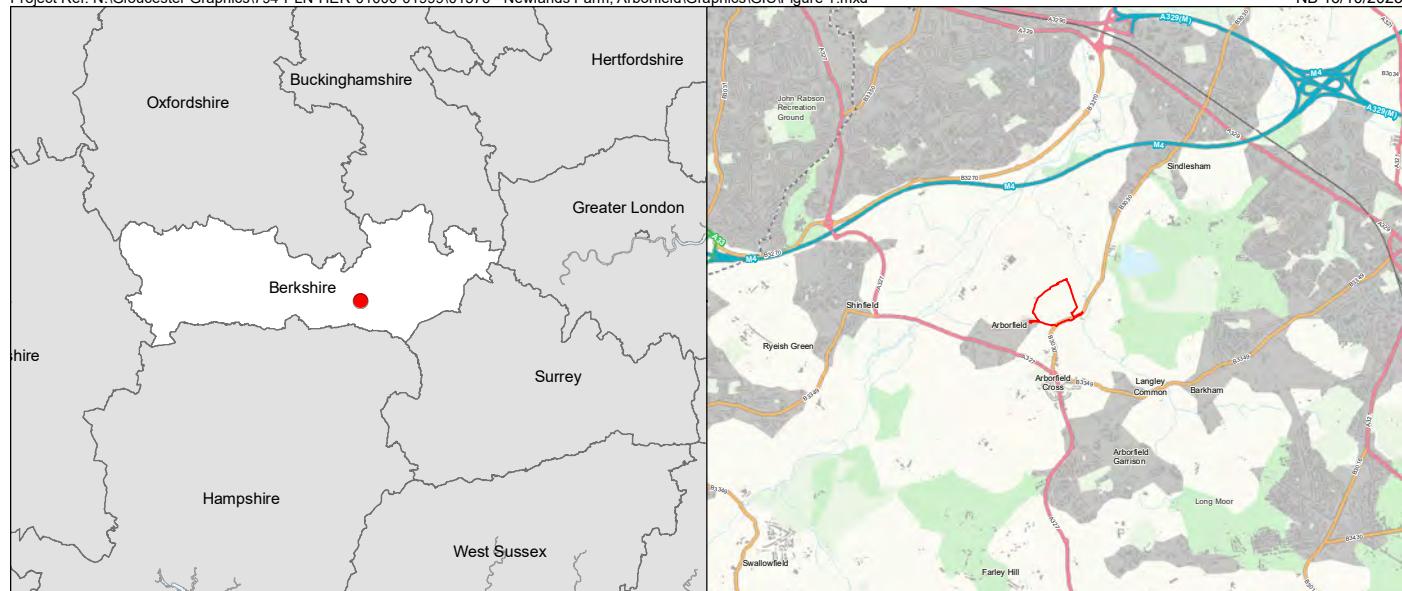
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Cultural Heritage Statement

Cartographic

1840 Parish of Hurst Tithe Map	
1872-1873 Ordnance Survey Map	1:2500
1876 Ordnance Survey Map	1:2500
1899 Ordnance Survey Map	1:2500
1911-1912 Ordnance Survey Map	1:2500
1933 Ordnance Survey Map	1:2500
1967-1968 Ordnance Survey Map	1:2500
1987 Ordnance Survey Map	1:2500
1993 Ordnance Survey Map	1:2500
1887-1883 Ordnance Survey Map	1:10560
1877 Ordnance Survey Map	1:10560
1900 Ordnance Survey Map	1:10560
1901 Ordnance Survey Map	1:10560
1912-1913 Ordnance Survey Map	1:10560
1932 Ordnance Survey Map	1:10560
1938 Ordnance Survey Map	1:10560
1961 Ordnance Survey Map	1:10000
1971 Ordnance Survey Map	1:10000
1976-1979 Ordnance Survey Map	1:10000
1984 Ordnance Survey Map	1:10000
1990 Ordnance Survey Map	1:10000
1999 Ordnance Survey Map	1:10000
2006 Ordnance Survey Map	1:10000
2024 Ordnance Survey Map	1:10000

Figures



Site Boundary

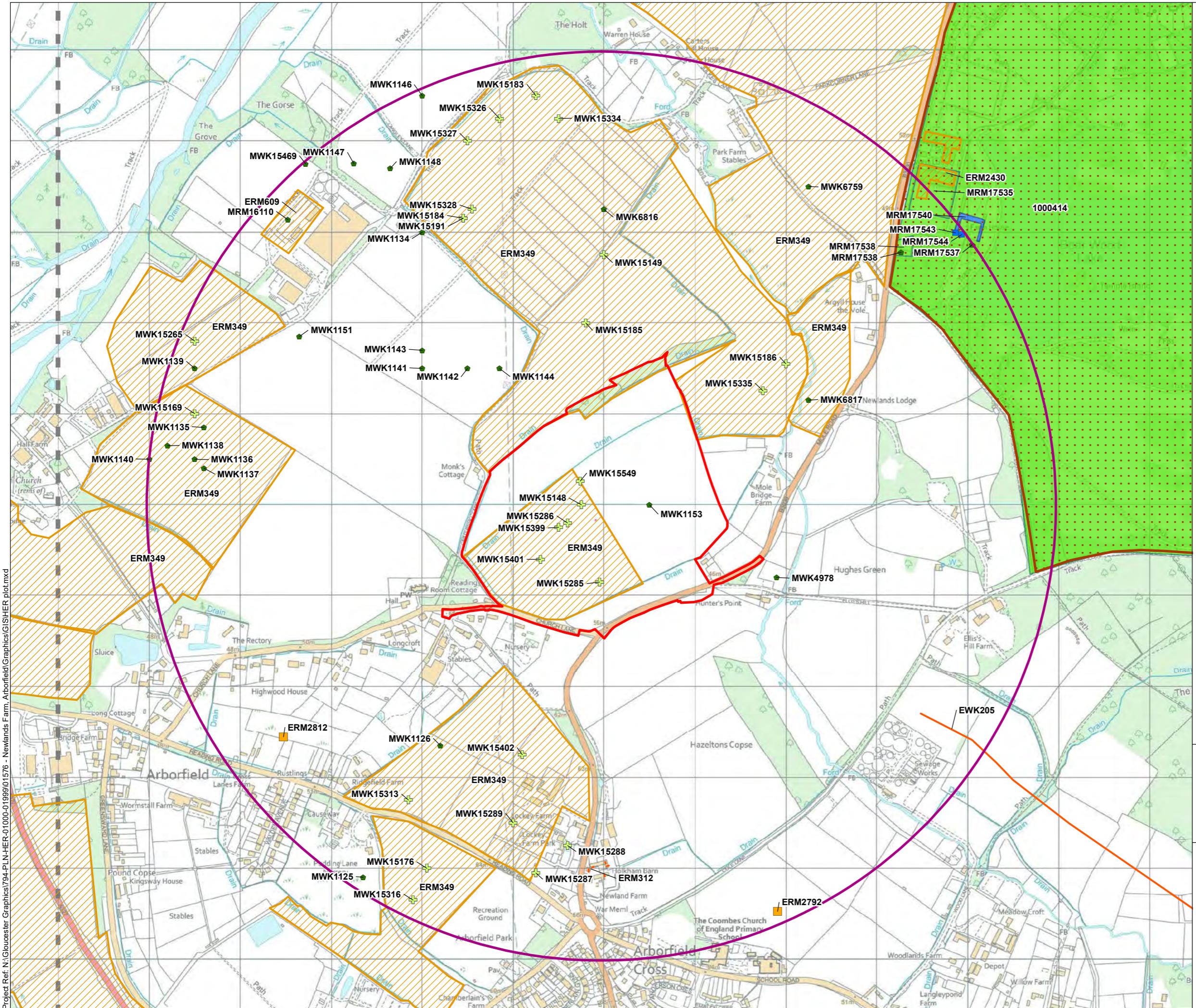


0 100 200m
Scale at A4: 1:10,000

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Figure 1
Site Location



Legend

- Site Boundary
- 1km search radius
- Registered Park or Garden
- Non-designated Heritage Assets:

HER Features Points

- Monuments
- Findspots
- Buildings

HER Features Polygons

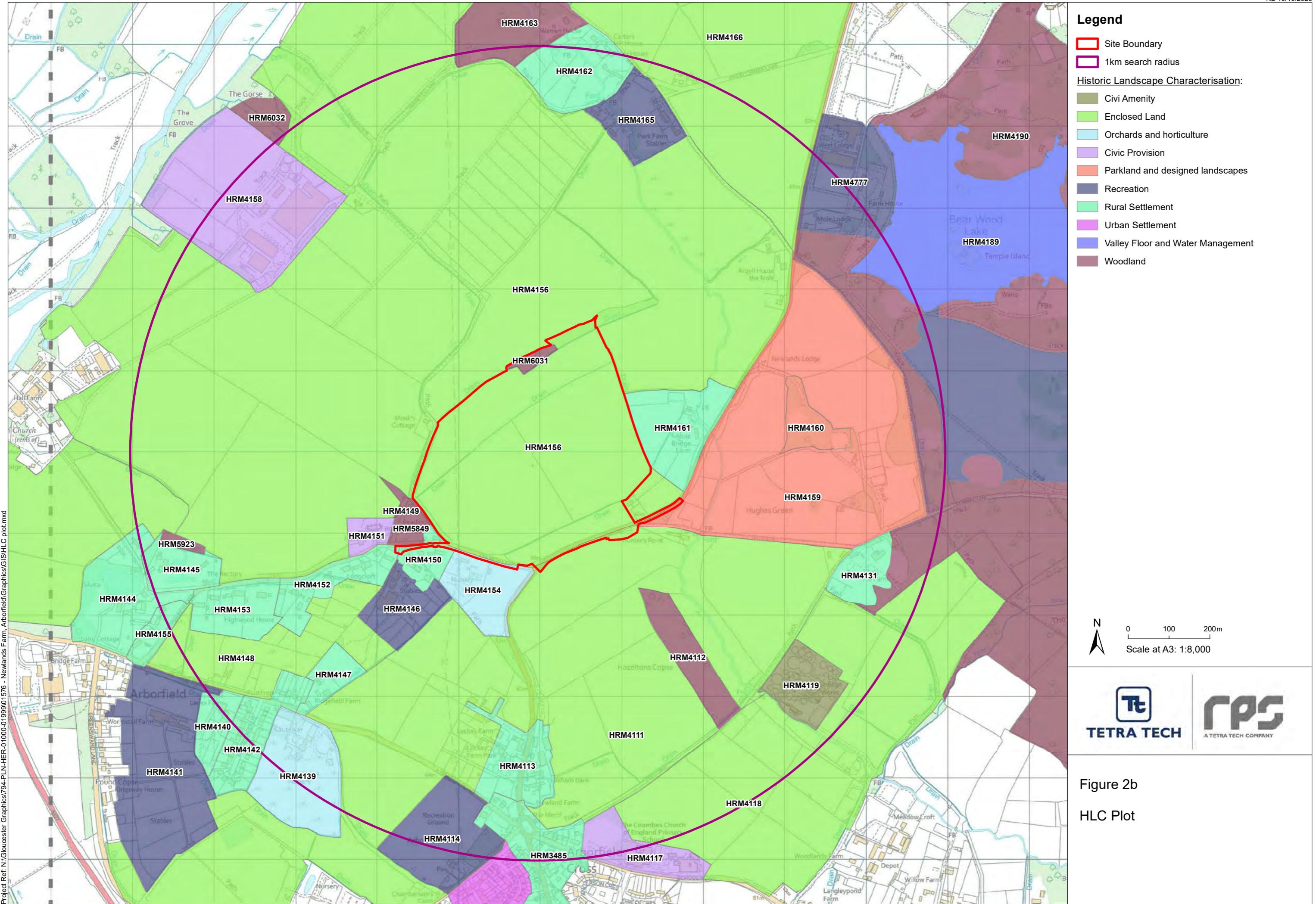
- Buildings
- Monuments
- HER Events Points
- HER Events Lines
- HER Events Polygons

Historic Landscape Characterisation:



Figure 2a

HER Plot







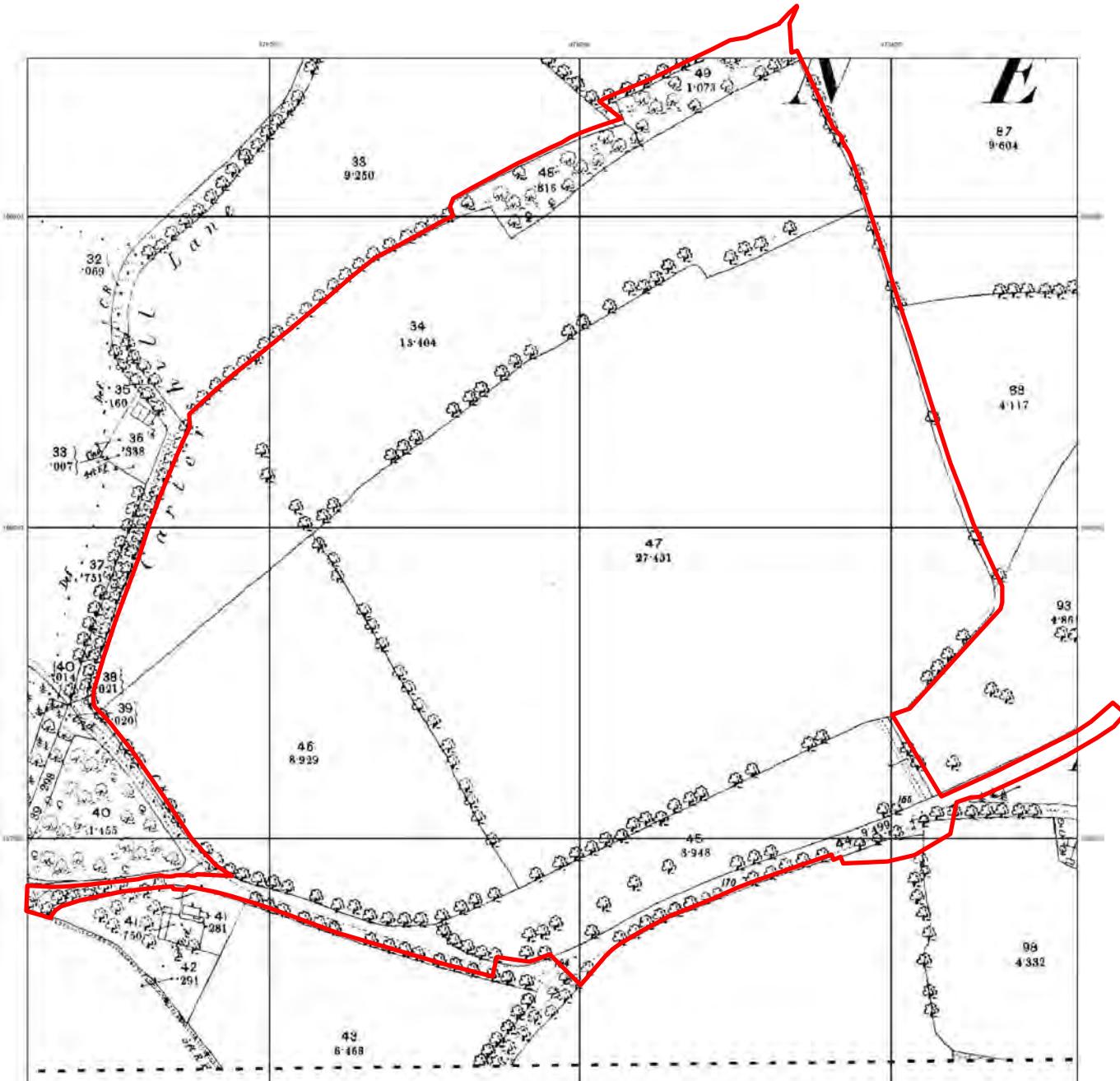
 Site Boundary

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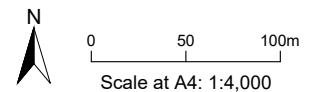

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Figure 5
1840 Parish of Hurst Tithe Map



 Site Boundary

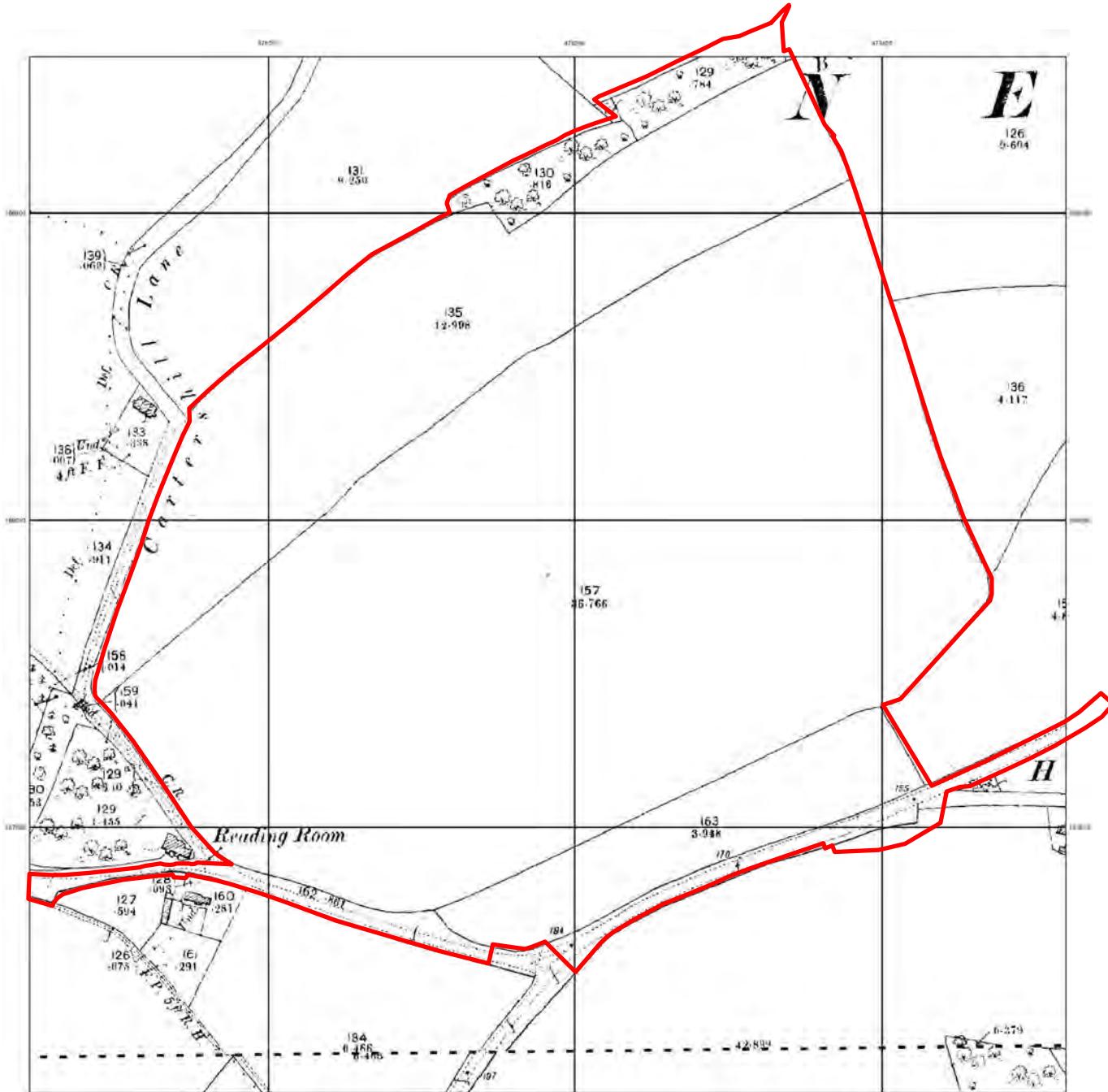




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Figure 5
1872-1873 Ordnance Survey Map



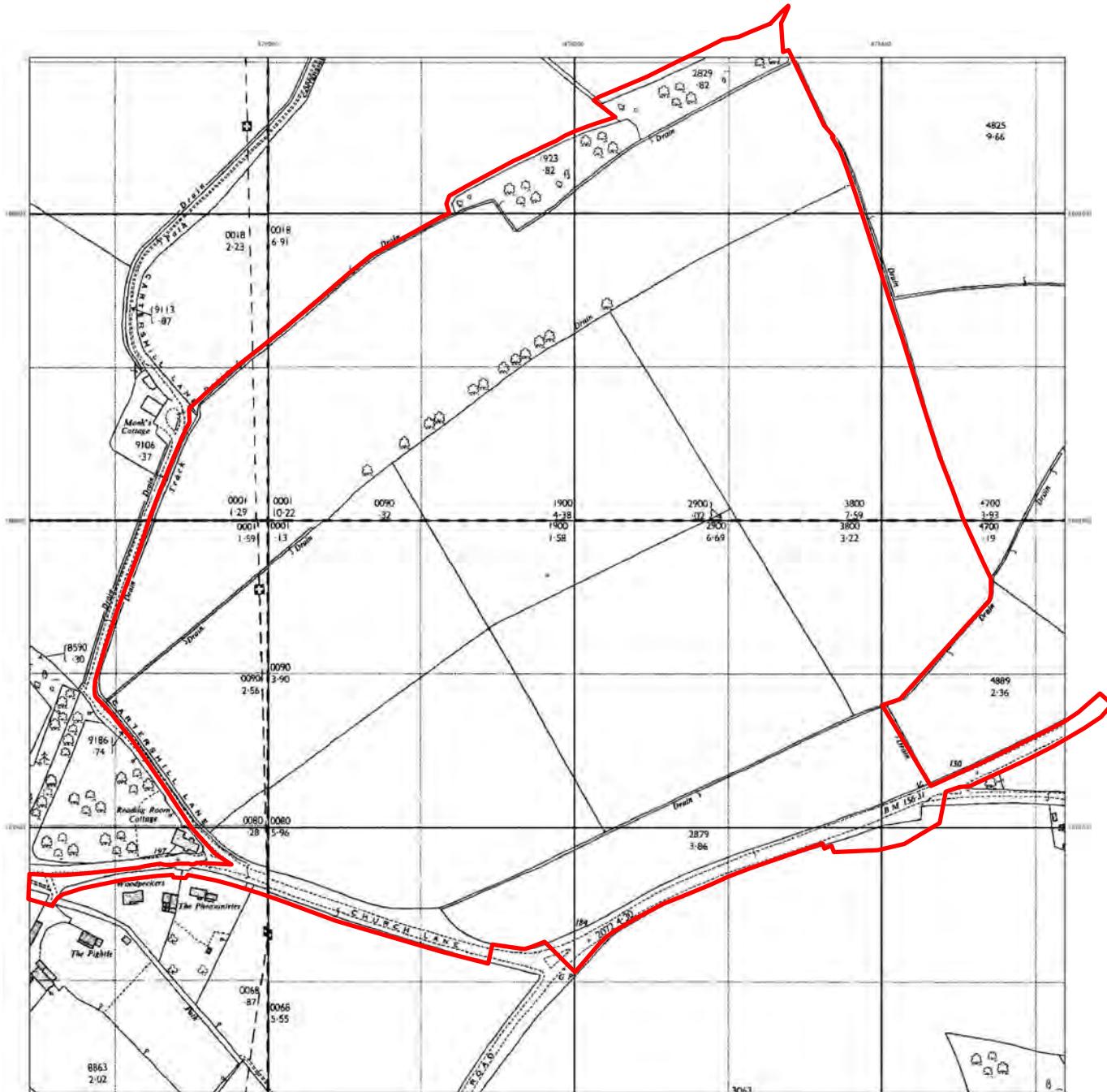
Site Boundary

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Scale at A4: 1:4,000

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Figure 6
1899 Ordnance Survey Map



 Site Boundary

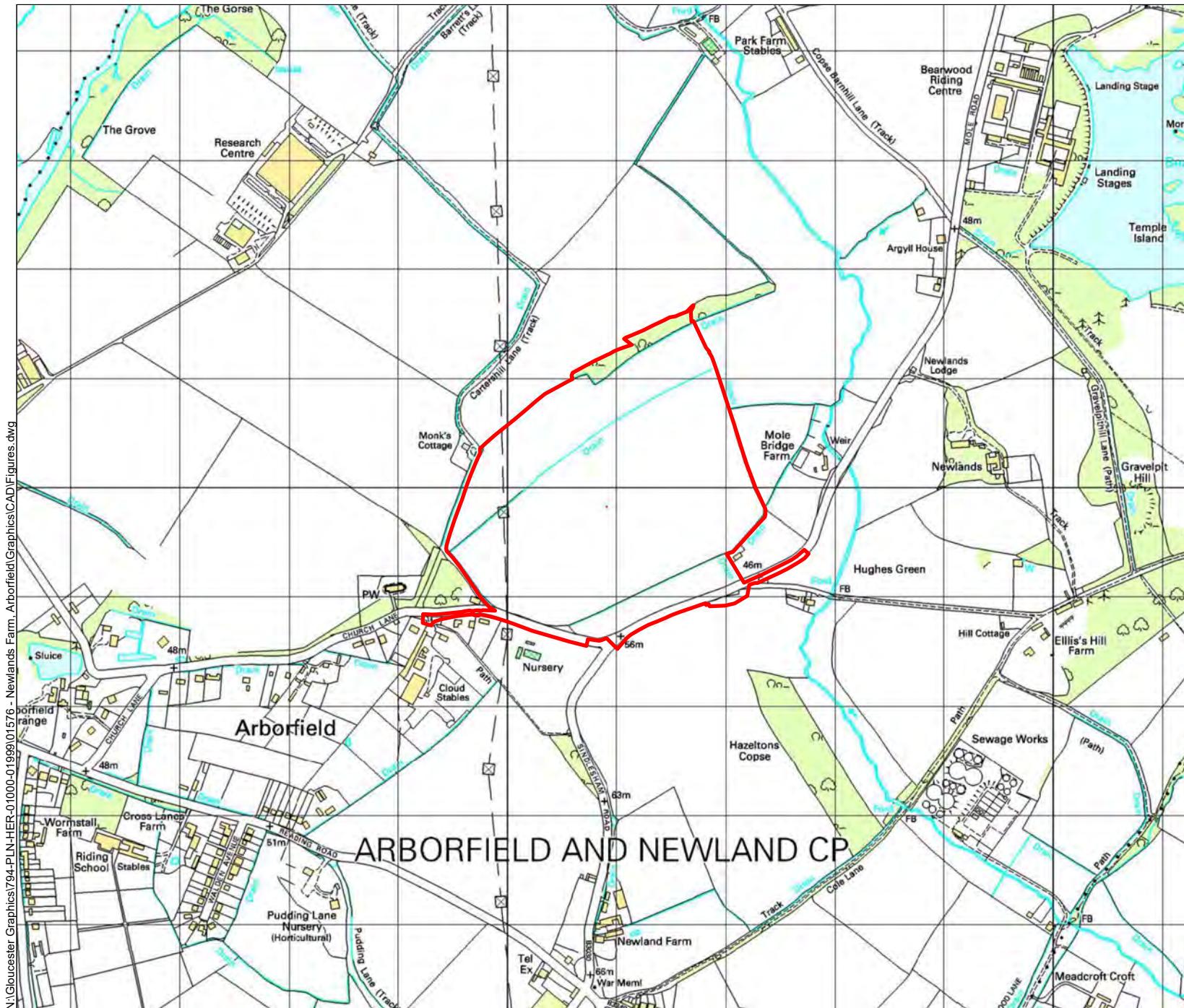


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Scale at A4: 1:4,000

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Figure 7
1967-1968 Ordnance Survey Map



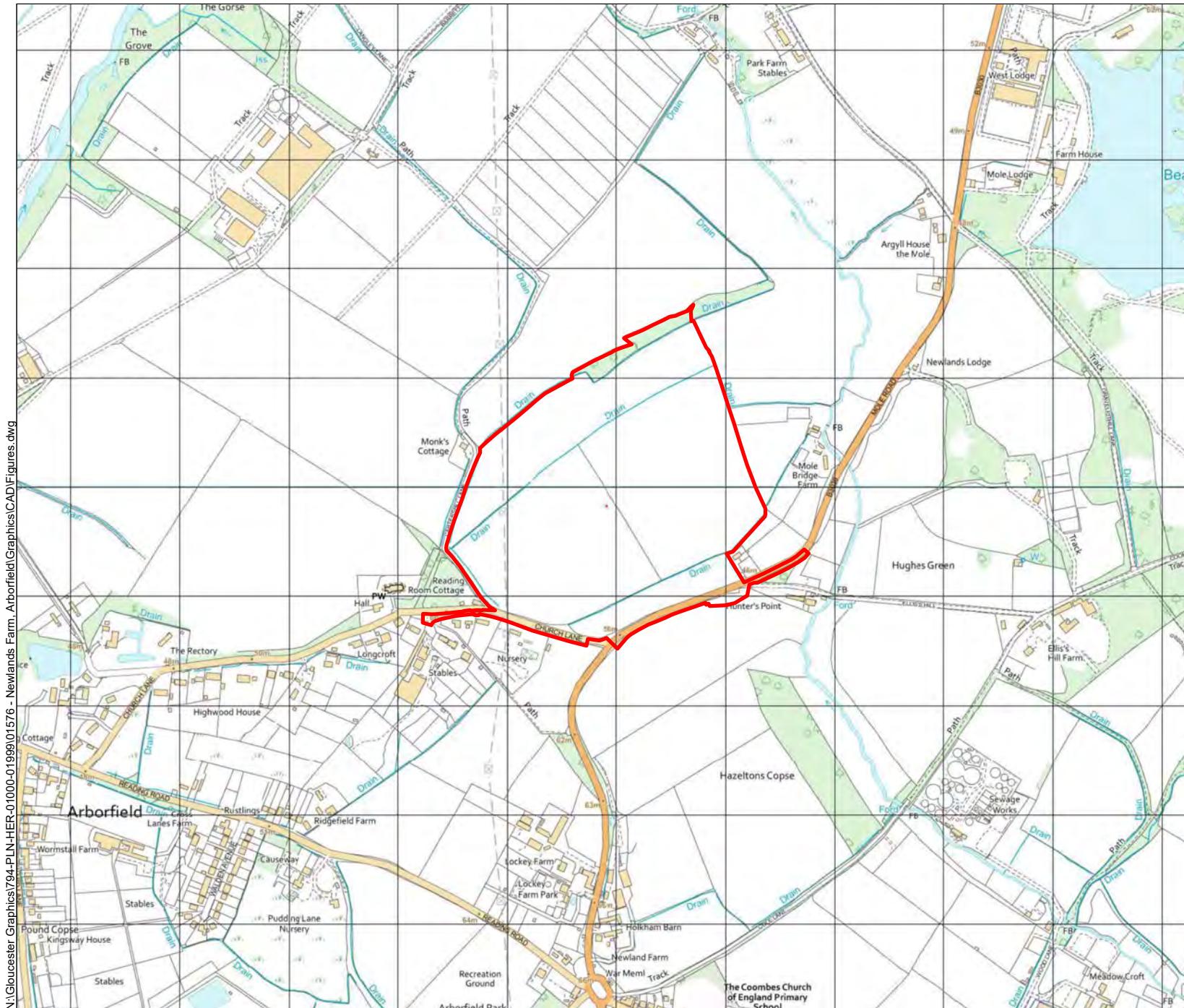
 Site Boundary

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

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Figure 8
1999 Ordnance Survey Map



Site Boundary



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

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Figure 9
2024 Ordnance Survey Map

Plates

Cultural Heritage Statement



Plate 1 – Looking east in the southern part of the study site



Plate 2 – Looking north across the study site

Cultural Heritage Statement



Plate 3 – Looking east in the northern part of the study site



Plate 4 – Looking south in the eastern part of the study site

Cultural Heritage Statement



Plate 5 – Glimpsed view to Mole Bridge Farmhouse



Plate 6 – Former Reading Room as seen from the study site

Appendices

Appendix 1

HER Gazetteer

MonUID	PrefRef	Name
MRM16110	MRM16110	Early Iron Age boundary ditch and pottery - Cedar Hall Farm, Arborfield, Reading, Berkshire
MRM17535	MRM17535	Walled kitchen garden at Bearwood Park, Arborfield, Berkshire
MRM17537	MRM17537	Sawmill at Bearwood Park, Arborfield, Berkshire
MRM17538	MRM17538	Mole Lodge (Former Gas Works) at Bearwood Park, Arborfield, Berkshire
MRM17540	MRM17540	19th century workshop area at Bearwood Park, Arborfield, Berkshire
MRM17543	MRM17543	Farm Cottage - Bearwood Park, Arborfield, Berkshire
MRM17544	MRM17544	Farm Bungalow - Bearwood Park, Arborfield, Berkshire
MRM18470	MRM18470	Medieval or early modern trackway from Swallowfield to Wokingham
MWK1125	00745.01.000	Cropmark of old gravel diggings - Pudding Lane, Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK1126	00746.00.000	Possible cropmark enclosure- Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK1134	00749.00.000	Cropmark site identified from aerial photographs- Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK1135	00749.01.000	Cropmark Settlement - Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK1136	00749.01.100	Cropmark field system - Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK1137	00749.01.200	Cropmark track? - Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK1138	00749.01.300	Cropmark trackway - Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK1139	00749.01.400	Cropmark ditches - Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK1140	00749.01.500	Scattered cropmark pits - Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK1141	00749.02.000	Cropmark settlement - Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK1142	00749.02.100	Cropmark field system - Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK1143	00749.02.200	Cropmark enclosure - Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK1144	00749.02.300	Cropmark enclosure - Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK1146	00749.03.100	Cropmark field system - Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK1147	00749.03.200	Cropmark enclosure - Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK1148	00749.03.300	Cropmark of trackway - Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK1151	00749.05.000	Cropmark enclosure - Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK1153	00750.00.000	Ridge and furrow crop marks - Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK15148	00749.07.000	Prehistoric flint core - The Loddon Valley Survey, Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK15149	06060.00.000	Flint flake - The Loddon Valley Survey, Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK15169	06082.00.000	Gunflint - The Loddon Valley Survey, Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK15176	06090.00.000	Prehistoric core - The Loddon Valley Survey, Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK15183	00749.07.001	Flint flake-Loddon Valley Survey, Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK15184	06097.00.000	Mesolithic blade - Loddon Valley Survey, Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK15185	06098.00.000	Prehistoric flint flake - The Loddon Valley Survey, Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK15186	06099.00.000	Prehistoric flint flake - Loddon Valley Survey, Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK15191	06105.00.001	Prehistoric flint flake - Loddon Valley Survey, Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK15265	06164.00.000	Prehistoric flint flake - The Loddon Valley Survey, Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK15285	06182.00.000	Prehistoric flint flake - Loddon Valley Survey, Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK15286	06183.00.000	Prehistoric flint flake - Loddon Valley Survey, Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK15287	06184.00.000	Flint flake - Loddon Valley Survey, Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK15288	06185.00.000	Prehistoric flake - The Loddon Valley Survey, Arborfield, Berkshire

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MWK15289	06186.00.000	Prehistoric flake - The Loddon Valley Survey, Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK15313	06212.00.000	Medieval pottery - The Loddon Valley Survey, Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK15316	06214.00.000	Medieval pottery - The Loddon Valley Survey, Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK15326	06224.00.000	Medieval sherd-Loddon Valley Survey, Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK15327	06225.00.000	Medieval sherd-Loddon Valley Survey, Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK15328	06226.00.000	Medieval pottery sherd - Loddon Valley Survey, Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK15334	06231.00.000	Roman sherd -The Loddon Valley Survey, Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK15335	06232.00.000	Medieval to post-medieval artefact scatter - LVS9, Loddon Valley Survey, Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK15399	06272.00.000	Medieval sherd - The Loddon Valley Survey, Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK15401	06273.00.000	Roman pottery sherd-The Loddon Valley Survey, Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK15402	06274.00.000	Medieval sherd - The Loddon Valley Survey, Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK15469	06496.00.000	Bombing decoy near Langley Lane, Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK15549	06543.00.000	Roman coin hoard - Newland Farm, Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK4978	03346.00.000	Cropmark features - Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK6279	04133.00.000	Bearwood College, Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK6759	06057.00.000	Prehistoric artefact scatter - Site LVS 7, Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK6816	06230.00.000	Roman pottery scatter at Site LVS10, Arborfield, Berkshire
MWK6817	06333.00.000	Medieval pottery scatter - Site LVS45, Arborfield, Berkshire