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Heritage Assessment

Prepared by:
**The Environmental Dimension
Partnership Ltd**

On behalf of:
Raft Technologies

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Executive Summary

- S1 This report has been prepared by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP), on behalf of Raft Technologies ('the client') and presents the results of a Heritage Assessment of land off Nelson's Lane, Hurst, Reading (hereafter referred to as 'the site') to inform forthcoming planning proposals for a High Frequency (HF) Receive Site development.
- S2 The Heritage Assessment concludes that the site does not contain any world heritage sites, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, registered battlefields or listed buildings and therefore there would be no direct impacts in that regard, as a result of the site's development. However, there are several designated heritage assets within the environs of the site, comprising listed buildings of varied grades as well as the Hurst Conservation Area.
- S3 The assessment concluded that the proposed development of the site would not give rise to any loss of significance from any of the designated heritage assets which are located within its wider surroundings.
- S4 This assessment has been prepared as per the requirements of paragraph 207 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF; 2024, as amended in February 2025), which requires that an applicant should describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their settings in appropriate detail. The assessment therefore demonstrates how the proposed development of the site is capable of according with current legislation, the planning policies contained within the NPPF and the policies of the Local Plan, in respect of the historic environment.

Section 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP), on behalf of Raft Technologies (hereafter referred to as 'the client') and presents the results of a Heritage Assessment of land off Nelson's Lane, Hurst, Reading (hereafter referred to as 'the site') to inform forthcoming planning proposals for a High Frequency (HF) Receive Site development.
- 1.2 The first aim of this assessment is to identify and assess the potential for development within the site to cause change to designated heritage assets, either directly or through changes within their setting, and to determine whether, and to what extent, those changes might affect their heritage significance.
- 1.3 The second aim of this assessment is to consider the available historical information for the site and its immediate environs and to establish the site's heritage significance and capacity for redevelopment in accordance with the requirements of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) and local planning policy. A discussion of the archaeological potential of the site is not included within the scope of this assessment.
- 1.4 In accordance with best practice guidance, desktop sources have been augmented through the completion of a site walkover survey, which was undertaken in April 2025. The Berkshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and Archives were consulted amongst other sources of information.

LOCATION, BOUNDARIES, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 1.5 The site is located off Nelson's Lane, c.1.2km to the south-east of Hurst, near Wokingham, and is centred approximately at Ordnance Survey Grid Reference (OSGR) 480960 172581.
- 1.6 The site measures approximately 0.26 hectares (ha) and it comprises areas of hedgerow and scrub adjacent to a small sized industrial estate (see **Appendix EDP 1** and **Plan EDP 1**). The site is bound:
 - To the north and east by agricultural fields under pasture for horses;
 - To the south by a mixture of parts of agricultural fields under pasture and the commercial estate; and
 - To the west by a mixture of parts of agricultural fields under pasture and an animal rescue centre.
- 1.7 The landscape surrounding the site already includes a number of HVP and electricity posts, some across the agricultural fields, others lining the roads either on or adjacent to residential and commercial properties in the area (see images on **Appendix EDP 1** for reference).

- 1.8 The topography of the site is generally flat, averaging c.38m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).
- 1.9 The geology¹ of the site comprises a sedimentary bedrock of clay, silt and sand of the London Clay Formation, formed between 56 and 47.8 million years ago during the Palaeogene period.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 1.10 The proposed development comprises the erection of 2 no. receiver masts (lattice telecom masts (LTM)) with antennae and associated infrastructure, parking and landscaping (**Appendix EDP 2**).

¹ BGS Geology Viewer (BETA).

Section 2

Legislation and Planning Guidance

- 2.1 This section sets out existing legislation and planning policy governing the conservation and management of the historic environment, of relevance to this assessment.

CURRENT LEGISLATION

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

- 2.2 Sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* set out the duties of Local Planning Authorities (LPA) in respect of the treatment of listed buildings and conservation areas through the planning process.
- 2.3 Section 66(1) of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* sets out the statutory duty of the decision-maker where proposed development would affect a listed building or its setting. It sets out the statutory duty as follows:
- “In considering whether to grant planning permission [or permission in principle] for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”*
- 2.4 This ‘special regard’ duty has been tested in the Court of Appeal and confirmed to require that *“considerable importance and weight”* should be afforded by the decision-maker to the desirability of preserving a listed building along with its setting. The relevant Court judgement is referenced as *Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Ltd v East Northants DC, English Heritage and National Trust* [2014] EWCA Civ 137.
- 2.5 However, it must be recognised that Section 66(1) of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* does not identify that the local authority or the Secretary of State must preserve a listed building or its setting. Neither is it the case that a proposed development that does not ‘preserve’ is unacceptable and should be refused. It is for the decision-maker to evaluate and determine.
- 2.6 Although expressed in relation to setting, the discussion of ‘harm’ is of relevance in the judgement in respect of *R (Forge Field Society) v Sevenoaks District Council* [2014] EWHC 1895 (Admin), which also makes this clear at paragraph 49 when it states that:

“This does not mean that an authority’s assessment of likely harm to the setting of a listed building or to [the character or appearance of] a conservation area is other than a matter for its own planning judgement. It does not mean that the weight the authority should give to harm which it considers would be limited or less than substantial must be the same as the weight it might give to harm which would be substantial. But it is to recognise, as the Court of Appeal emphasised in Barnwell, that a finding of harm to the setting of a listed building or to [the character or appearance] of a conservation area gives rises to a strong

presumption against planning permission being granted. The presumption is a statutory one. It is not irrebuttable. It can be outweighed by material considerations powerful enough to do so. But an authority can only properly strike the balance between harm to a heritage asset on the one hand and planning benefits on the other if it is conscious of the statutory presumption in favour of preservation and if it demonstrably applies that presumption to the proposal it is considering.”

- 2.7 This key point is also made in paragraph 54 of *Forest of Dean DC v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* [2013] EWHC 4052, i.e.:

“Section 66(1) did not oblige the inspector to reject the proposal because he found it would cause some harm to the setting of the listed buildings. The duty is directed to ‘the desirability of preserving’ the setting of listed buildings. One sees there the basic purpose of the ‘special regard’ duty. It does not rule out acceptable change. It gives the decision maker an extra task to perform, which is to judge whether the change proposed is acceptable. But it does not prescribe the outcome. It does not dictate the refusal of planning permission if the proposed development is found likely to alter or even to harm the setting of a listed building.”

- 2.8 In other words, it is up to the decision-maker (such as the local authority) to assess whether the proposal that is before them would result in ‘acceptable change’.
- 2.9 Paragraph 212 of the NPPF (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), December 2024, as amended in February 2025) transposes Sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* into national planning policy. The balancing exercise to be performed, between the harm arising from a proposal and the benefits which would accrue from its implementation, is then subsequently presented in paragraphs 214 and 215 of the NPPF.

National Planning Policy

- 2.10 The revised NPPF was published in 2024. Section 16 sets out the government’s approach to the conservation and management of the historic environment through the planning process.
- 2.11 The opening paragraph (202) recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.
- 2.12 Paragraph 207 concerns planning applications, stating that:

“In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require

developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation."

2.13 NPPF paragraph 210 is relevant when it states that:

"In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of: a. the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; b. the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and c. the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness."

2.14 Paragraph 212 considers the weighting given within the planning decision, with regard to impacts on designated heritage assets, stating that:

"When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance."

2.15 Paragraph 213 considers the level of harmful effects on designated heritage assets and states that:

"Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a. Grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional; and*
- b. Assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional²".*

2.16 With regard to the decision-making process, paragraphs 214 and 215 are of relevance.

2.17 Paragraph 214 states that:

"Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- 1. The nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site;*

² Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets.

2. *No viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation;*
3. *Conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
4. *The harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.”*

2.18 Paragraph 215 states that:

“Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.”

2.19 The threshold between substantial and less than substantial harm has been clarified in the Courts. Paragraphs 24 and 25 of *Bedford BC v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* [2013] EWHC 2847 are of relevance here in the way they outline the assessment of ‘harm’ for heritage assets:

“What the inspector was saying was that for harm to be substantial, the impact on significance was required to be serious such that very much, if not all, of the significance was drained away.

Plainly in the context of physical harm, this would apply in the case of demolition or destruction, being a case of total loss. It would also apply to a case of serious damage to the structure of the building. In the context of non-physical or indirect harm, the yardstick was effectively the same. One was looking for an impact which would have such a serious impact on the significance of the asset that its significance was either vitiated altogether [i.e. destroyed] or very much reduced.”

2.20 In other words, for the ‘harm’ to be ‘substantial’, and therefore require consideration against the more stringent requirements of paragraph 214 of the NPPF compared with paragraph 215, the proposal would need to result in the asset’s significance either being “*vitiated altogether or very much reduced.*”

2.21 Paragraph 216 refers to non-designated heritage assets, identifying that:

“The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly effect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.”

2.22 In relation to non-designated heritage assets, footnote 75 explains the exemption to the ‘balanced judgement’ exercise outlined in paragraph 216 in cases where:

“Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets.”

2.23 Paragraph 219 of the NPPF sets out that:

“Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.”

Local Planning Policy

- 2.24 The site is located within the administrative boundary of Wokingham Borough Council (WBC). The current Local Plan for WBC is the Core Strategy Development Plan Document, adopted in January 2010, which sets out the key elements of WBC's vision for development until March 2026. Of relevance, Core Strategy Policy 3 (CP3 - General Principles for Development) states the following:

“Planning permission will be granted for proposals that:

- a. Are of an 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;*
- b. Provide a functional, accessible, safe, secure and adaptable scheme;*
- c. Have no detrimental impact upon important ecological, heritage, landscape (including river valleys) or geological features or water courses.*
- d. Maintain or enhance the ability of the site to support fauna and flora including protected species;*
- e. Use the full potential of the site and contribute to the support for suitable complementary facilities and uses;*
- f. Contribute to a sense of place in the buildings and spaces themselves and in the way they integrate with their surroundings (especially existing dwellings) including the use of appropriate landscaping;*
- g. Provide for a framework of open space in secure community use achieving at least 4.65 ha/1,000 population provision together with recreational/sporting facilities in addition to private amenity space;*
- h. Contribute towards the provision of an appropriate sustainable network of community facilities;*
- i. Do not lead to a net loss of dwellings and other residential accommodation or land; and*
- j. Do not lead to a loss of community or recreational facilities/land or infrastructure unless suitable alternative provision is available.*

Development proposals will be required to demonstrate how they have Responded to the above criteria through the submission of Design and Access Statements, clear and informative plans, elevations and streetscenes and where required Masterplans, Development Briefs, Concept Statements and Design Codes."

Managing Development Delivery Local Plan

- 2.25 The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan, adopted February 2014, provides additional information to the policies set out in the Core Strategy (WBC, 2014). Three relevant policies are detailed under the 'Heritage' section of the DPD, comprising of Policies TB24-26.
- 2.26 Policy TB24: Designated Heritage Assets (Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas), states that:
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."*
- 2.27 Policy TB25: Archaeology, states that:
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."*
- 2.28 Policy TB26: Buildings of Traditional Local Character and Areas of Special Character, states that:

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.”*

Local Plan Update

- 2.29 The currently adopted Local Plan for WBC is in the process of being updated. The Local Development Scheme (LDS) 2023-2026 document details the updates, progress and timetable for the Local Plan Update (WBC, 2023). According to the LDS 2023-2026 document, a Local Plan Update is not anticipated to be formally adopted until December 2025.
- 2.30 The plans and policies listed above have all been considered in the preparation of this assessment.

Section 3

Methodology

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 This report has been produced in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-based Assessment* issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA, 2020). These guidelines provide a national standard for the completion of desk-based assessments.

General Methodology

- 3.2 The assessment principally involved consultation of readily available historical information from documentary and cartographic sources. The major repositories of relevant information comprised:
- Information held by the Berkshire HER on known archaeological sites and monuments, within and for a 1km study area around the site;
 - Maps and documents held by the Berkshire Archives and Local Studies, The Genealogist³, Envirocheck and other online sources;
 - The National Heritage List for England⁴ (NHLE) curated by Historic England; and
 - Previous assessments of the locality undertaken by EDP (if available).
- 3.3 It should be noted that this assessment reproduces only the data that is deemed to be relevant for its scope.
- 3.4 HER data was collated for completion and historical research, however, the scope of this assessment is, as mentioned in **Section 1**, to consider direct or indirect effects on built heritage only (i.e. both designated and non-designated heritage assets), and buried archaeology is not a part of the scope and therefore will not be discussed.
- 3.5 The assessment provides a synthesis of relevant historical information for the site derived from a search area, hereafter known as the 'study area', to allow for additional contextual information regarding its historical interest and/or potential to be gathered.
- 3.6 Based on the size and type of proposals, a study area of 1km radius from the site boundary was considered proportionate and appropriate for the gathering and analysis of data.

Site and Study Area Walkover

- 3.7 Having collected, collated, and considered the background sources, the site was then visited. The site walkover was undertaken in April 2025. The weather conditions were clear

³ <https://www.thegenealogist.co.uk/>.

⁴ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>.

and dry and there was sufficient visibility to assess the site and its surrounding area. The entire site was visited.

- 3.8 The objectives were to understand whether the site contained any built features of heritage interest, as well as to understand the site's contribution (if any) to the setting of surrounding heritage assets.

Setting Assessment Methodology

- 3.9 In addition, the report also considers the nature and significance of any effects arising through potential changes to the settings of designated heritage assets, as defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF (see below).
- 3.10 In that regard, the site walkover (completed April 2025) also considered, where appropriate, the contribution (if any) made by the land within the site to the settings of designated heritage assets situated within its wider zone of influence.
- 3.11 As set out above, the assessment process has given due consideration to Historic England (HE) guidance on setting, as set out in *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning, Note 3, The Setting of Heritage Assets* (HE, 2017) and *Historic England Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets* (HE, 2019).
- 3.12 In light of the above, this report has been prepared in a robust manner, employing current best practice professional guidance and giving due regard to the methodology detailed above.
- 3.13 On a practical level, the Historic England guidance (2017) identifies an approach to assessing setting in relation to development management which is based on a five-step procedure, i.e.:
- Identify which heritage assets are capable of being affected;
 - Assess whether, how and to what degree setting makes a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s);
 - Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance;
 - Explore ways of maximising enhancement and avoiding or minimising harm; and
 - Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.
- 3.14 As far as identifying the heritage assets potentially affected by the proposed scheme, this was determined in the first instance through desk-based assessment, then verified during the subsequent field visit. Although the data collation relied on a 1km study area for the purposes of the setting assessment, assets beyond this were also considered during the scoping exercise and the walkover. A ZTV was produced by Pro Vision which has informed on the extent of the area, or on the assets that should be taken into consideration during

the assessment. Given the site's location, the local topography and the nature of the proposals, the 1km study area is considered appropriate to scope assets for assessment.

- 3.15 The report concludes with an assessment of the likely effects of the proposed development upon designated and non-designated built heritage assets, whether direct or indirect.
- 3.16 In light of the above, the assessment has been carried out in a robust manner employing current best practice professional guidance, giving due regard to the methodology and guidance detailed above.

Section 4 Heritage Resource

INTRODUCTION

- 4.1 This section details and contextualises the known designated and non-designated heritage assets within and around the site.
- 4.2 The site does not contain any designated heritage assets such as scheduled monuments or listed buildings and does not extend within any world heritage sites, conservation areas, registered parks and gardens or registered battlefields. Several designated assets are located within the study area, which were mapped (**Plan EDP 1**) and are discussed in further detail below and in **Section 5** as appropriate.
- 4.3 Historic cartographic sources and aerial photographs are included as **Plans EDP 2 to 4**.

DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

- 4.4 As noted above, there are no designated heritage assets within the site. Within the study area there are eight Grade II listed buildings. These comprise:
- Grade II listed Heriot (NHLE reference **1117415**) c.280m to the west;
 - Grade II listed Long Acres (NHLE reference **1319477**) c.575m to the south-west;
 - Grade II listed Church Farmhouse (NHLE reference **1312912**) c.545m to the north-west;
 - Grade II listed Barn 50m to north-west of Church Farmhouse (NHLE reference **1117414**) c.560m to the north-west;
 - Grade II listed Barn 60m to south-west of Church Farmhouse (NHLE reference **1319448**) c.570m to the north-west;
 - Grade II listed Cattle Shelter 75m north-west of Church Farmhouse (NHLE reference **1136178**) c.600m to the north-west;
 - Grade II listed Willow Cottage (NHLE reference **1136187**) c.745m to the north-west;
 - Grade II listed Barn 850m south-west of Haineshill (NHLE reference **1136210**) c.810m to the north-east; and
 - Hurst Conservation Area c.960m to the north-west of the site.
- 4.5 There are no other classes of designated heritage assets within the site or the study area. The assets above and the detailed assessment in relation to their setting and contribution to significance are discussed in further detail in **Section 5**.

NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

- 4.6 There are numerous non-designated heritage assets in Hurst, as identified by the HER. These do not have any statutory framework underpinning their protection but do represent recognised heritage assets of local significance or value.
- 4.7 There is no current local list of buildings of local heritage interest adopted by WBC.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND⁵

- 4.8 The site is located within the historical parish of Hurst, formerly described as a parochial chapelry. The parish is flat and well-wooded, and its western boundary is the River Loddon. Its physical structure shows three well-defined divisions, a narrow strip of alluvial meadow land bordering the river and liable to floods; running parallel with this is a slightly raised terrace of gravel, on which most of the numerous hamlets and farms are built, and beyond this terrace and rising rapidly from it is a bank of higher ground, connected with the forest country to the east and cut into a number of separate hills by a series of small streams tributary to the Loddon (i.e. the Embrook and the Broadwater). An almost isolated hill of London Clay, not far from the centre of the parish, is the site of the church and manor house.
- 4.9 The village of Hurst lies to the north of the church, is somewhat scattered, and comprises mostly red brick houses and cottages with roofs of slate and tile. Several of the older cottages, however, are timber-framed with brick filling, and a few are thatched. Opposite the south side of the church is a row of almshouses. They were erected and founded in 1664 by William Barker of Hurst and form a low range of brick buildings with a return wing at each end.
- 4.10 The name 'Hurst' means wooded hill, a description of the village as it would have been in the days when it was part of the Royal Windsor Forest.
- 4.11 There are a number of 17th to 18th century maps of the area, including one from James Norden, but the large scale does not provide enough detail in respect of the site to reproduce in this report. They show the site mostly as within large areas of agricultural land or woodland depending on the editions⁶. The first available map to accurately show the site is the 1841 Hurst Tithe Map⁷ (**Plan EDP 2**). The site occupies two plots of land described within the associated apportionment, as per **Table EDP 4.1**.

⁵ 'Parishes: Hurst', in *A History of the County of Berkshire: Volume 3*, ed. P H Ditchfield, William Page (London, 1923), *British History Online* <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/berks/vol3/pp247-260> [accessed 29 April 2025].

⁶ https://www.oldmapsonline.org/en/Borough_of_Wokingham?gid=b40e3b91-844d-4a62-a1e0-f64397e60b0e#position=13.7352/51.44758/-0.84511&bbox=-0.7968438579785158%2C51.385695924477176%2C-0.7137299079785159%2C51.42884242380549&q=&date_from=0&date_to=9999&scale_from=&scale_to=&year=1790.

⁷ *Plan of the Parish of Hurst*. In the Counties of Berks and Wilts, surveyed by W. H. Fuller, Land Surveyor. Reading. 1840. *The Genealogist*.

Table EDP 4.1: Summary of 1841 Apportionment

Plot No.	Ownership	Tenant	Name	Land Use
735a	Robert Reginald	Various	Rascalls Field	Arable
735a	Fairfax Wade Palmer		Adjoining Field	

The Genealogist

- 4.12 The apportionment confirms the site's use as arable at this time and the fieldnames indicate past ownership references only.
- 4.13 The Ordnance Survey (OS) maps that follow (**Plan EDP 2** and **3**) from 1872-73 to 1960 do not show any variation from the tithe map within the site. However, from the 1960's OS editions (**Plan EDP 3**) the commercial estate adjacent to the site started to develop, and the first buildings are shown.
- 4.14 Throughout its recorded history the site remained undeveloped and in some type of agricultural use.

SITE WALKOVER

- 4.15 A site walkover was undertaken in April 2025. The weather conditions were sunny, clear and dry and there was sufficient visibility to assess the site and its surrounding landscape. The entire site was visited as well as its surrounding area (see **Appendix EDP 1; Images EDP A1.1 to A1.8**).
- 4.16 As mentioned in **Section 1**, the site comprises areas of field and scrub adjacent to a small commercial estate, that includes a number of units housing commercial businesses, a coffee shop/restaurant and some agricultural functions. These units are all modern and of a fairly non-descript appearance.
- 4.17 There is nothing of any heritage interest on-site or in its immediate surrounding area.
- 4.18 The immediately surrounding area of the site comprises agricultural fields and smallholdings, mostly in residential use as well a second small commercial estate a little further to the north-east along Nelson's Lane. An animal rescue centre is located immediately to the south-west of the estate where the site is located.
- 4.19 The site and the surrounding area are mostly flat and views across the site into the surrounding area are limited to gaps between vegetation or through the gates that give access into the fields from the A321, Nelson's Lane and Islandstore Lane. In these gaps most elements of the landscape are visible, such as glimpses of the many smallholdings, the commercial units of the site's estate, and others in the surrounding area, as well as elements of public furniture such as HVP, electricity posts, wire and wooden fences, etc. (see **Appendix EDP 1** for images).

Section 5

Settings Assessment

- 5.1 This section identifies and assesses potential non-physical effects upon the significance of susceptible heritage assets within the study area. Non-physical effects are those that derive from changes to the setting of heritage assets, as a result of new development.
- 5.2 All heritage assets included within the following setting assessment are shown on **Plan EDP 1** and have been listed in **Section 4**. This section will identify those assets that are potentially susceptible to non-physical effects and provide a detailed assessment of them.
- 5.3 Step 1 of the Second Edition of Historic England's *2017 Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 3* (GPA3) is to *"identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected"*.
- 5.4 As defined in GPA3, setting is the *"surroundings in which an asset is experienced"* and *"setting is not itself a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation...its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance or the ability to appreciate that significance"*. Attributes of setting may make a positive, negative, or neutral contribution to the significance of the heritage asset and it is not automatically assumed that all aspects of the setting of a heritage asset contribute to its value. Furthermore, a clear distinction must be made between the positive elements of setting which contribute to significance (i.e. enhancing the understanding and appreciation of history through the asset) and those elements of setting which are valued for other, non-heritage related reasons, such as landscape beauty or amenity.
- 5.5 The methodology advocated by GPA3 seeks to encourage an understanding of 'what matters and why' to the significance of an asset. This is broadly assessed in two areas; firstly, the physical surrounds of the asset, including its functional and visual links, these are very much the 'facts' of the current and historic setting, and secondly, the experience of the setting, which can offer sensory interpretative information on how it feels to experience the asset and what understanding that gives of it, and how it may have historically been experienced.
- 5.6 All assets within the surrounds of the site have been considered, using a combination of GIS analysis, NHLE data and the examination during the walkover survey, which considered (amongst other factors) the surrounding topographic and environmental conditions, built form, vegetation cover, and lines of sight, within the context of the assets' heritage significance.
- 5.7 An extensive array of photographs was compiled, and a summary of relevant photographs is included within **Appendix EDP 1**. Some assets were on private land and therefore were assessed from the nearest public right of way, but to make sure observations were as accurate as possible, alternative routes around the assets were taken when possible. Each selected photograph includes a caption summarising the direction of view and visible landscape elements of note, as well as their relation to the site.

- 5.8 Relevant heritage assets are assessed below, either individually or in their spatial groupings, as appropriate.
- 5.9 The site walkover identified that there are unlikely to be any non-physical impacts upon the significance of any heritage assets in the wider area, as a result of the development of the site (locations of designated heritage assets are shown on **Plan EDP 1** and listed in **Section 4**).
- 5.10 The designated and non-designated assets located within the site's environs comprise cottages, barns, a farmhouse and a conservation area, which are sufficiently physically and visually removed such that the site does not form part of the surroundings in which they are experienced. Hence, the site is not considered to make a contribution to their significance or be a part of their setting. These assets can be summarised as follows:
- Grade II listed Heriot (**Image EDP A1.7; 1117415**⁸) is located c.280m to the west of the site. It comprises an early 17th century timber framed cottage with some modern alterations adjacent to the side of the A321. The asset derives most of its significance from its built form, layout and historic, architectural and archaeological interests. The site is not considered to form any part of the setting of this asset or make any contribution to its significance due to the intervening distance and vegetation, with the asset having no intervisibility with the site (**Image EDP A1.2, A1.7 and A1.8**) as well as having a lack of any physical or associative relationships;
 - Grade II listed Long Acres (**Image EDP A1.5; 1319477**⁹) is located c.575m to the south-west of the site. It comprises a 17th century roughcast and colour-washed timber frame cottage, with a 17th century chimney with bread oven on west gable and some modern alterations, located on a slightly isolated area adjacent to Lines Road. It includes a number of outbuildings in slight disrepair. The asset derives most of its significance from its built form, layout and historic, architectural and archaeological interests. The site is not considered to form any part of the setting of this asset or make any contribution to its significance due to the intervening distance and vegetation, with the asset having no intervisibility with the site (**Image EDP A1.5 and A1.6**) as well as having a lack of any physical or associative relationships;
 - Grade II listed Church Farmhouse (**1312912**¹⁰) is located c.545m to the north-west of the site. It comprises a 16th century timber framed farmhouse that was re-fronted in the late 18th century. The asset derives most of its significance from its built form, layout and historic, architectural and archaeological interests. The site is not considered to form any part of the setting of this asset or make any contribution to its significance due to the intervening distance and vegetation, with the asset having no intervisibility with the site as well as having a lack of any physical or associative relationships;

⁸ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1117415?section=official-list-entry>.

⁹ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1319477?section=official-list-entry>.

¹⁰ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1312912?section=official-list-entry>.

- Grade II listed Barn 50m to north-west of Church Farmhouse (**1117414**¹¹) is located c.560m to the north-west of the site. It comprises a 16th century timber framed and weatherboarded barn mostly in its original condition. The asset derives most of its significance from its built form, layout and historic, architectural and archaeological interests. The site is not considered to form any part of the setting of this asset or make any contribution to its significance due to the intervening distance and vegetation, with the asset having no intervisibility with the site as well as a lack of any physical or associative relationships;
- Grade II listed Barn 60m to south-west of Church Farmhouse (**1319448**¹²) is located c.570m to the north-west of the site. It comprises an 18th century timber framed barn, that has been listed due to associations to the other assets at Church Farm. The asset derives most of its significance from its built form, layout and historic, architectural and archaeological interests. The site is not considered to form any part of the setting of this asset or make any contribution to its significance due to the intervening distance and vegetation, with the asset having no intervisibility with the site as well as a lack of any physical or associative relationships;
- Grade II listed Cattle Shelter 75m north-west of Church Farmhouse (**1136178**¹³) is located c.600m to the north-west of the site. It comprises a 19th century timber framed cattle shelter with some timber boarding, which was listed due to its unusual form and construction for the county. The asset derives most of its significance from its built form, layout and historic, architectural and archaeological interests. The site is not considered to form any part of the setting of this asset or make any contribution to its significance due to the intervening distance and vegetation, with the asset having no intervisibility with the site as well as a lack of any physical or associative relationships;
- Grade II listed Willow Cottage (**1136187**¹⁴) is located c.745m to the north-west of the site. It comprises a 17th century timber frame cottage with colour-washed brick infilling with 19th and 20th century alterations. The asset derives most of its significance from its built form, layout and historic, architectural and archaeological interests. The site is not considered to form any part of the setting of this asset or make any contribution to its significance due to the intervening distance and vegetation, with the asset having no intervisibility with the site as well as a lack of any physical or associative relationships;
- Grade II listed Barn 850m south-west of Haineshill (**1136210**¹⁵) is located c.810m to the north-east of the site. It comprises a late 16th century timber frame, weatherboard, brick rubble and flit base barn with a 19th century extension to south gable. The asset derives most of its significance from its built form, layout and historic, architectural and archaeological interests. The site is not considered to form any part of the setting of this asset or make any contribution to its significance due to the intervening distance

¹¹ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1117414?section=official-list-entry>.

¹² <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1319448?section=official-list-entry>.

¹³ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1136178?section=official-list-entry>.

¹⁴ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1136187?section=official-list-entry>.

¹⁵ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1136210?section=official-list-entry>.

and vegetation, with the asset having no intervisibility with the site as well as a lack of any physical or associative relationships; and

- Hurst Conservation Area (HCA) located c.960m to the north-west of the site. The HCA was designated in 1971 to preserve and enhance the special character and appearance of the village of Hurst. The current HCA appraisal document is a leaflet¹⁶ published by the Wokingham District Council which characterises the HCA as follows:
 - *“The oldest surviving building in the village of Hurst is the Church of St Nicholas which dates from the 12th Century. The main body of the Church is built in flint, which is typical of other local churches, and has a later brick tower. The Church forms the focus of the hamlet conservation area and the nucleus of the village, which is scattered around the rural lanes in small groups and ribbons of houses and cottages built through succeeding centuries. The village displays a sense of unity with buildings of similar ages. The materials reflect the local vernacular: red brick, with blue brick decoration, and clay tiles. The Barker Almshouses, opposite St. Nicholas's displays mellow brick work typical of the period in Berkshire.”*

- 5.11 The HCA extends to cover the historical core of the settlement, focused around the church and encompassing spaces and buildings of significance (i.e. historically and architecturally). It was designated to protect the character and appearance of the village, which includes historic, archaeological and architectural interests embodied by the built form, layout and buried archaeological remains present. The setting of the HCA comprises areas of modern settlement expansion to the north and east (beyond which the site is located) and agricultural land to the south. The site is not considered to form any part of the setting of the HCA or make any contribution to its significance due to the intervening distance and vegetation, with the HCA having no intervisibility with the site as well as having a lack of any physical or associative relationships.
- 5.12 The site is not part of the setting of any of the assets considered above, and is not experienced from or in combination with any of these assets, due to distance and being obstructed/heavily screened by topography and modern built form. In each case there are no other discernible (non-visual) historical or landscape associations of significance between any of these assets and the site (see **Images EDP A1.1 to A1.8**).
- 5.13 The proposals have been designed to take advantage of the existing built form within the estate adjacent to the site, to hide the more substantial built form elements (i.e., the compound and office unit), and the HVP are elements already extant within the landscape which will not block views or significantly alter the landscape, or have any effect on any of the key contributors to the significance of the assets above.
- 5.14 As such, having considered the assets above, their significance and setting, and their relationship to the site, it is considered that there is no potential for any to be adversely affected by the implementation of development within the site. The site does not form part of their setting and makes no contribution to their experience or significance. There is no

¹⁶ <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/sites/wokingham/files/2023-06/Hurst%20CA%20leaflet.pdf>.

reason to believe that the proposed development would result in any harm to the significance of these assets.

SUMMARY

- 5.15 Given the above, there is no reason to believe that the redevelopment of the site would result in harm to the significance of any designated or non-designated heritage assets.

Section 6

Conclusions

- 6.1 This Heritage Assessment concludes that the site does not contain any world heritage sites, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, registered battlefields or listed buildings and therefore, there would be no direct impacts in that regard as a result of the site's development. However, there are several designated heritage assets within the environs of the site, comprising listed buildings of varied grades and a conservation area.
- 6.2 The assessment concludes that the proposed development of the site would not give rise to any loss of significance from any of the designated heritage assets which are located within its wider surroundings.
- 6.3 This assessment has been prepared as per the requirements of paragraph 207 of the NPPF (2024, as amended in February 2025), which requires that an applicant should describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting in appropriate detail. The assessment therefore demonstrates how the proposed development of the site is capable of according with current legislation, the planning policies contained within the NPPF and the policies of the Local Plan, in respect of the historic environment.

Section 7 References

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Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), 2024 (as amended in February 2025). *The National Planning Policy Framework*. London.

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Act of UK Parliament.

Wokingham District Council (WDC), 1993. *Hurst Conservation Area Appraisal*.

Appendix EDP 1 Images



Image EDP A1.1: The site facing north from the yard of the commercial estate adjacent. This image shows the approximate location of one of the proposed LTM.



Image EDP A1.2: The site facing north-west from the yard of the commercial estate adjacent. This image shows the approximate location of one of the proposed LTM and faces towards the Grade II listed Heriots.



Image EDP A1.3: The site facing south-east from the yard of the commercial estate adjacent. This image shows the approximate location of one of the proposed LTM. In the background some residential and commercial units are visible, which are located along Nelson's Lane to the north. Some posts and high voltage cables are visible in the background.



Image EDP A1.4: The site facing north-west from the yard of the commercial estate adjacent. In the background some residential and commercial units of the estate and of the animal rescue centre, as well as existing LTM are visible.



Image EDP A1.5: Grade II listed Long Acres (**1319477**) facing north-west from its access on Lines Road. Electricity poles are visible.



Image EDP A1.6: View from the access of Grade II Listed Long Acres (**1319477**) on Lines Road, facing north-east towards the site. Electricity posts and LTM are visible in the image but the site itself is obscured by vegetation.



Image EDP A1.7: View of the Grade II listed Heriot (**1117415**) from the eastern side of the A321 road, facing north.



Image EDP A1.8: View from the eastern side of the A321, a few metres south of the Grade II listed Heriot (**1117415**) facing the site. The A321 is very well treed and only in field entrances such as this can some views across the landscape to the east be obtained. The commercial estate where the site is located is visible in the background, and a number of posts and LTM are also visible.

Appendix EDP 2
Proposed Development Layout
(Drawing Ref: 51689-XX-P1-02)

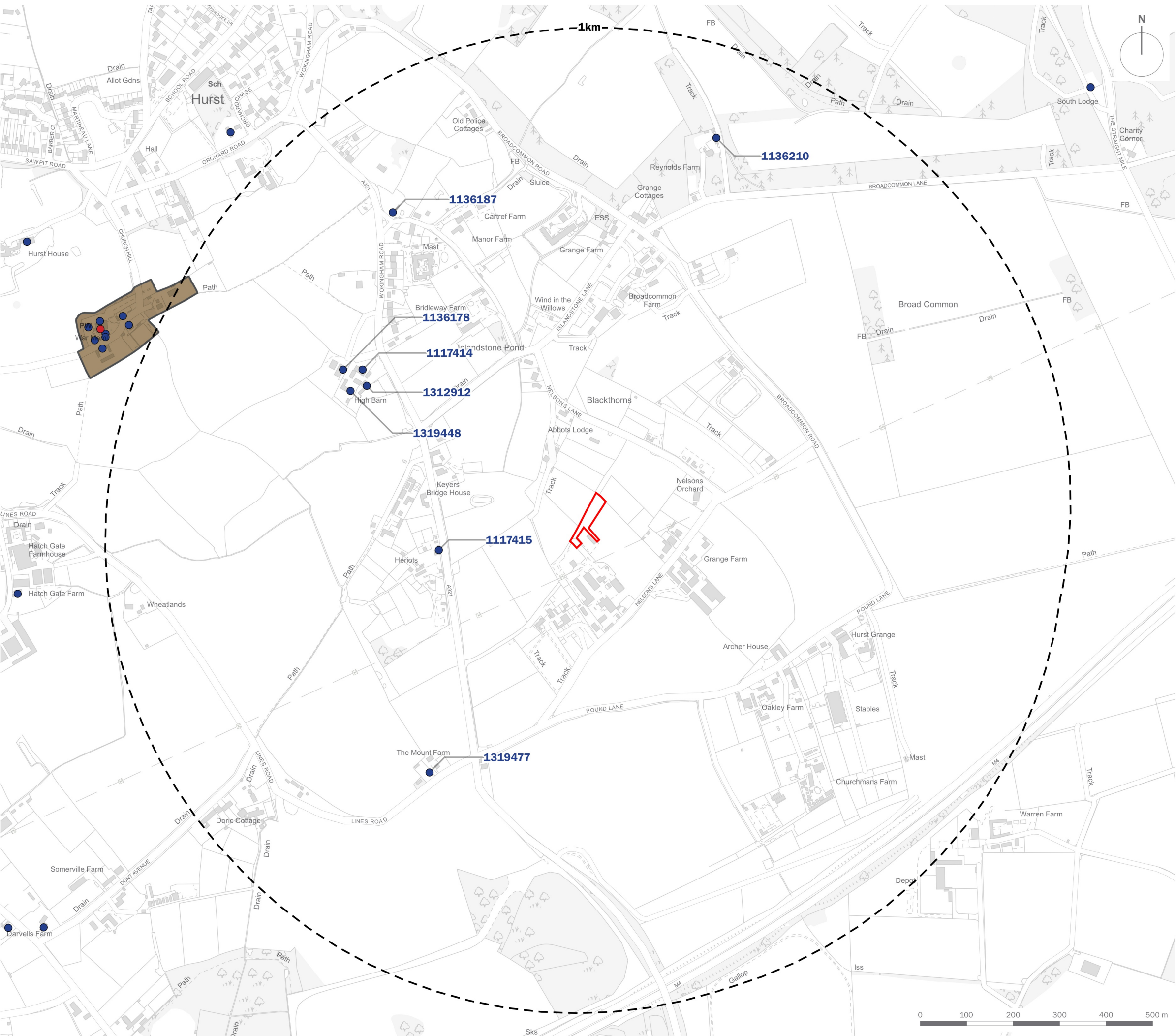
Plans

Plan EDP 1: Site Location and Designated Heritage Assets
(edp9263_d001a 21 May 2025 JGr/CJo)

Plan EDP 2: Extracts of Historic Maps (1841 and 1872-73)
(edp9263_d002a 21 May 2025 JGr/CJo)

Plan EDP 3: Extracts of Historic Maps (1899 to 1993)
(edp9263_d003a 21 May 2025 JGr/CRo)

Plan EDP 4: Extracts of Aerial Photographs (1948 to 2025)
(edp9263_d004a 21 May 2025 JGr/CJo)



Site Boundary

1km Study Area

Grade I Listed Building

Grade II Listed Building

Hurst Conservation Area

client			
Raft Technologies			
project title			
PPxLDN4Rx			
drawing title			
Site Location and Designated Heritage Assets			
date	21 MAY 2025	drawn by	JGr
drawing number	edp9263_d001a	checked	CJo
scale	1:8,000 @ A3	QA	Gyo

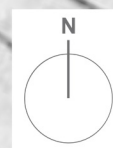
1841 Hurst Tithe Map

740

738

735a

748



1872-1873 Ordnance Survey Map

296

298

300

481

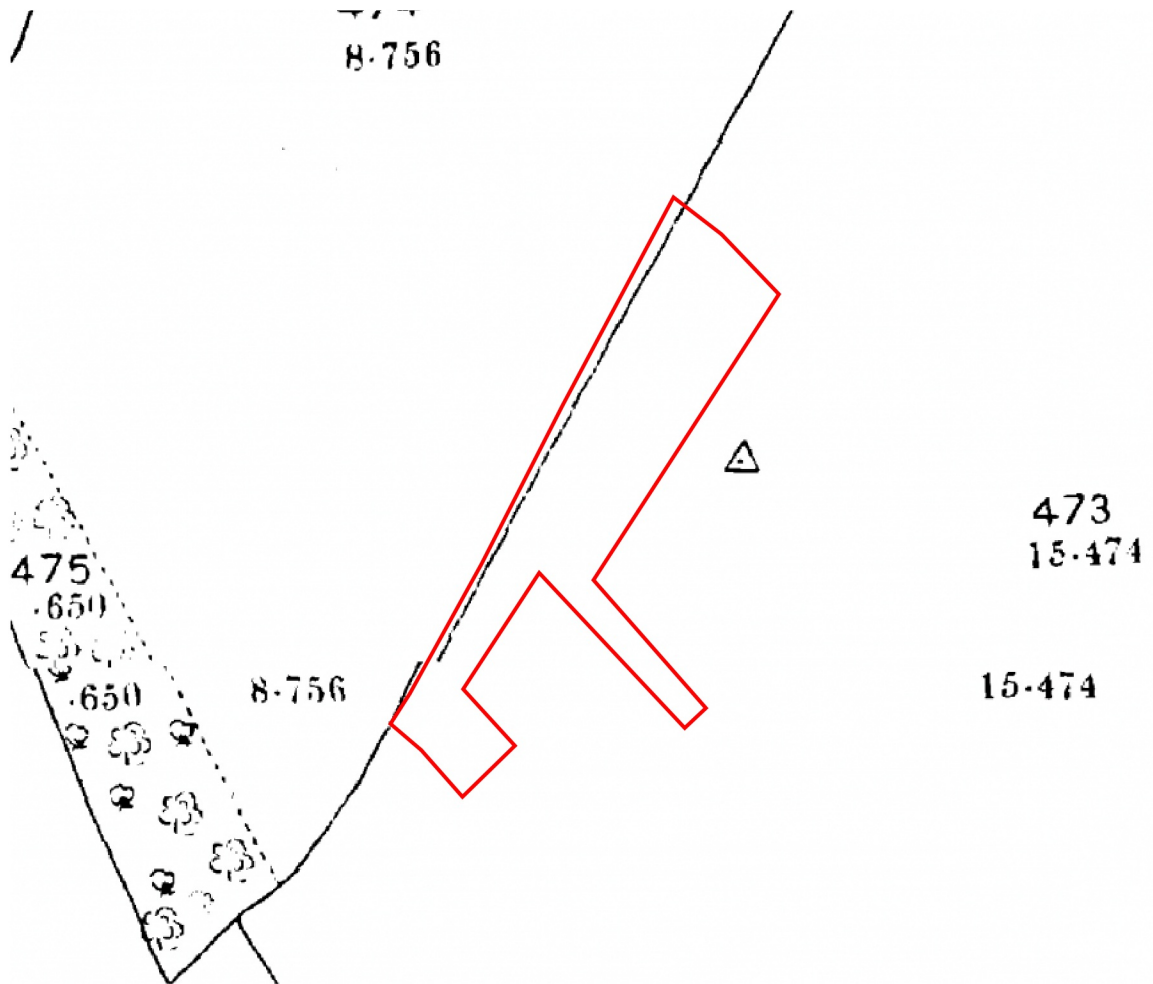
Approximate Site Boundary

0 20 40 60 80 100 m

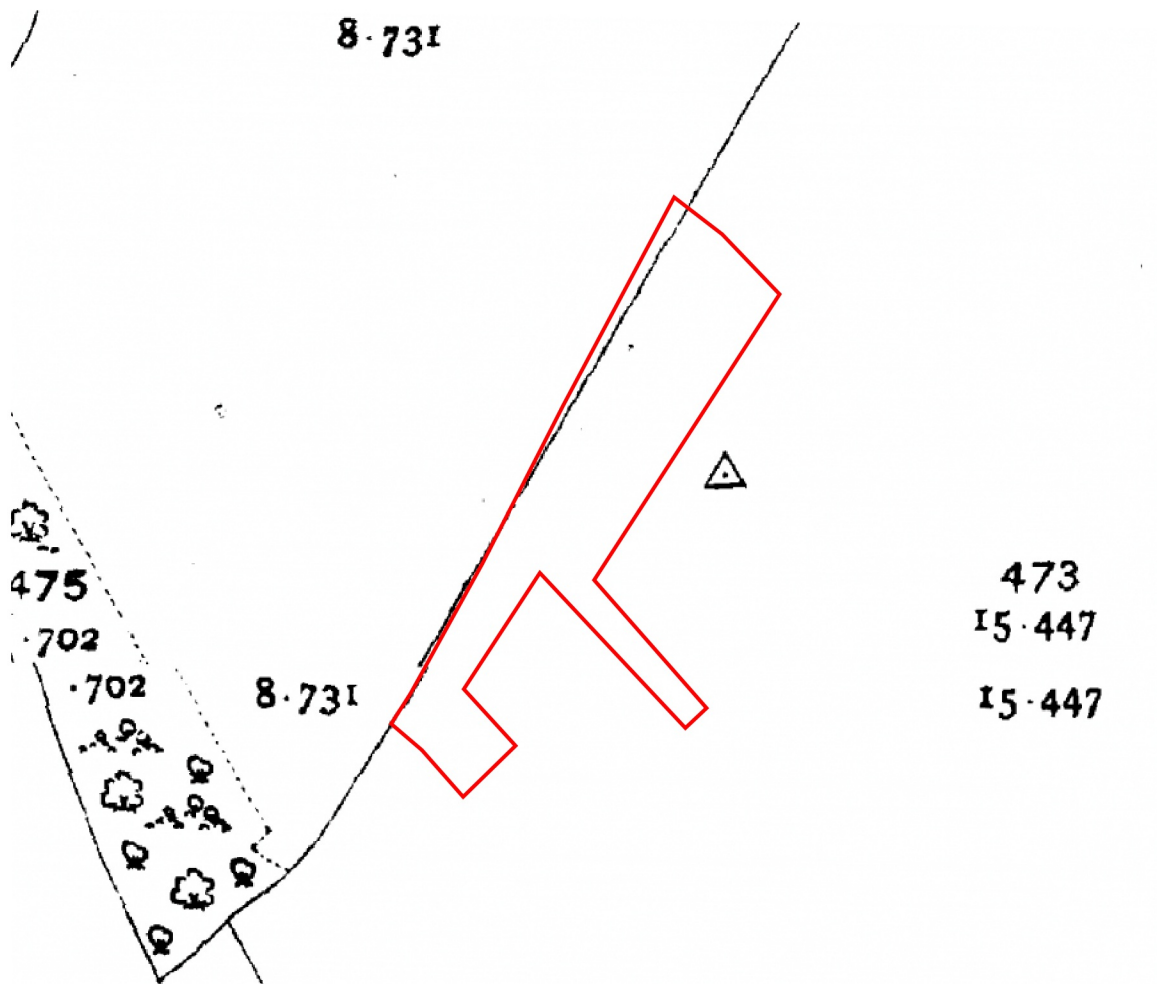


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drawing title
Extracts of Historic Maps (1841 and 1872-73)



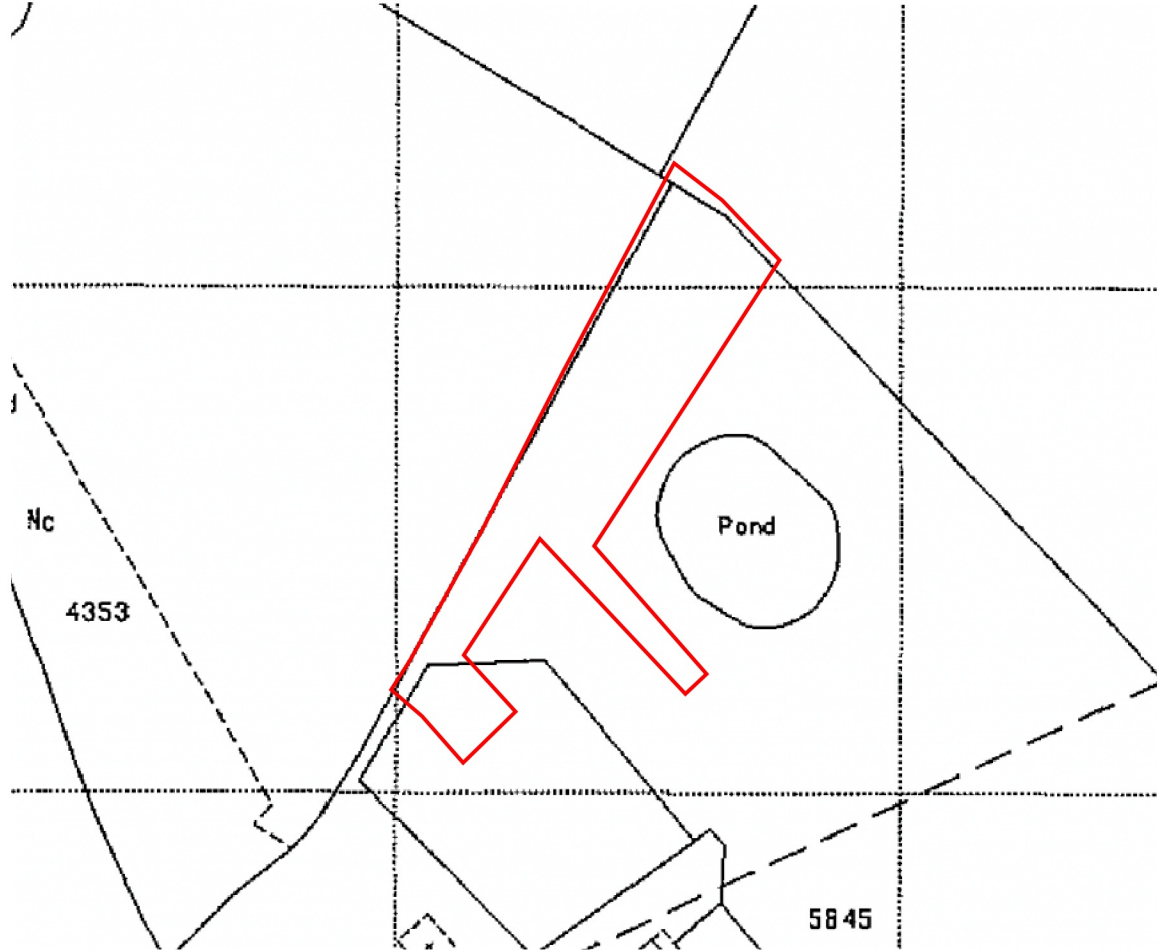
1899 Ordnance Survey Map



1911-1912 Ordnance Survey Map

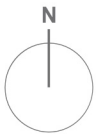


1960 Ordnance Survey Map



1993 Ordnance Survey Map

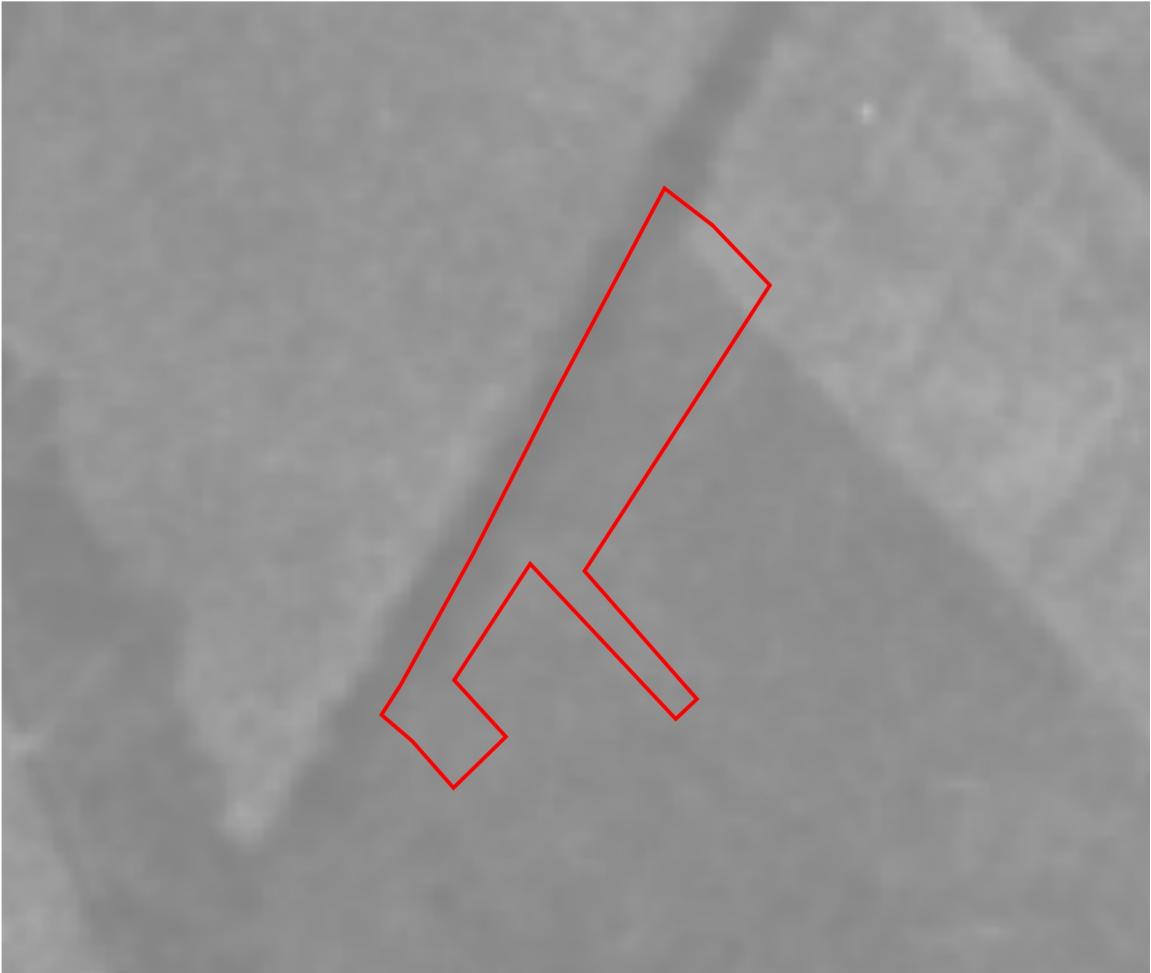
 Approximate Site Boundary



client	Raft Technologies		
project title	PPxLDN4Rx		
drawing title	Extracts of Historic Maps (1899 to 1993)		
date	21 MAY 2025	drawn by	JGr
drawing number	edp9263_d003a	checked	CJo
scale	1:1,500 @ A3	QA	GYo



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1948 Aerial Photograph



1999 Aerial Photograph



2025 Aerial Photograph

 Approximate Site Boundary



client			
Raft Technologies			
project title			
PPxLDN4Rx			
drawing title			
Extracts of Aerial Photographs (1948 to 2025)			
date	21 MAY 2025	drawn by	JGr
drawing number	edp9263_d004a	checked	CJo
scale	1:1,500 @ A3	QA	GYo



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