

Built Heritage Statement

Loddon Garden Village

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BUILT HERITAGE STATEMENT

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Executive summary

Land at Loddon Garden Village, Berkshire has been assessed for the potential impacts to built heritage assets arising from the proposed development of the Site.

Bringing forward development proposed on the Site has the capacity to give rise to up to a less than substantial degree of harm to the significance of identified designated built heritage assets or a minor degree of harm to non-designated heritage assets through development within their settings. This harm will engage paragraph 215 of the NPPF for designated heritage assets which requires that harm be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal or paragraph 216 of the NPPF, requiring harm to be weighed against the significance of the heritage asset for non-designated heritage assets.

The Statement identifies constraints to bringing forward development but also opportunities to reduce levels of harm through sensitive design and landscaping. The Statement identifies that, based upon the current proposals, overall, there are no reasons why the proposed development could not come forward on the Site, though any harm would need to be weighed against public benefits of the proposals (designated heritage assets) and the significance of the non-designated heritage assets. Suggested mitigations can help to minimise the potential scope for harm.

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Built Heritage Statement has been researched and prepared by RPS, on behalf of the University of Reading to provide an assessment of built heritage opportunities and constraints to an emerging scheme at Loddon Garden Village.
- 1.2 This report refers to the relevant legislation contained within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and both national and local planning policy. In addition, relevant Historic England guidance, notably The Setting of Heritage Assets has been consulted to inform the judgements made. Relevant information, including the listing citations for the relevant heritage assets have also been consulted in preparing this Built Heritage Statement. The conclusions reached in this report are the result of detailed historic research, a walkover survey of the Site and publicly accessible locations in the surrounding area, map studies and the application of professional judgement.

2 Legislative and Planning Policy Framework

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

Legislation

2.2 Where any development may affect certain designated heritage assets, there is a legislative framework to ensure proposed works are developed and considered with due regard to their impact on designated heritage assets. This extends from primary legislation under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

2.3 The relevant legislation in this case extends from section 66 of the 1990 Act which states that special regard must be given by the decision maker, in the exercise of planning functions, to the desirability of preserving or enhancing listed buildings and their setting.

2.4 The meaning and effect of these duties have been considered by the courts, including the Court of Appeal's decision in relation to Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Ltd v East Northamptonshire District Council [2014] EWCA Civ 137.

2.5 The Court agreed within the High Court's judgement that Parliament's intention in enacting section 66(1) was that decision makers should give '*considerable importance and weight*' to the desirability of preserving (i.e. keeping from harm) the setting of listed buildings.

2.6 Section 69(1) of the Act requires LPAs to '*determine areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*' and to designate them as conservation areas. Section 69(2) requires LPAs to review and, where necessary, amend those areas '*from time to time*'.

2.7 For development within a conservation area section 72 of the Act requires the decision maker to pay '*special attention [...] to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area*'. The duty to give special attention is considered commensurate with that under section 66(1) to give special regard, meaning that the decision maker must give considerable importance and weight to any such harm in the planning balance. However, unlike the parallel duty under section 66, there is no explicit protection for the setting of a conservation area.

National Planning Policy

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

2.8 The NPPF is the principal document that sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

2.9 It defines a heritage asset as a: '*building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest*'. This includes both designated and non-designated heritage assets.

2.10 Section 16: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment relates to the conservation of heritage assets in the production of local plans and decision taking. It emphasises that heritage

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assets are '*an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance*'.

2.11 For proposals that have the potential to affect the significance of a heritage asset, paragraph 207 requires applicants to identify and describe the significance of any heritage assets that may be affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail provided should be proportionate to the significance of the heritage assets affected. This is supported by paragraph 208, which requires LPAs to take this assessment into account when considering applications.

2.12 Under 'Considering potential impacts' paragraph 212 states that 'great weight' should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets, irrespective of whether any potential impact equates to total loss, substantial harm or less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage assets.

2.13 Paragraph 214 states that where a development will result in substantial harm to, or total loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset, permission should be refused, unless this harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits, or a number of criteria are met. Where less than substantial harm is identified paragraph 215 requires this harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposed development.

2.14 Paragraph 216 states that where an application will affect the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, a balanced judgement is required, having regard to the scale of harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

2.15 Paragraph 219 notes that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. It also states that proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to, or better reveal the significance of, the asset should be treated favourably.

2.16 Furthermore, paragraph 220 states that not all elements of a conservation area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. When determining the impacts arising from the loss of a building or element that does positively contribute, consideration should be given to the relative significance of that building and the impact to the significance of the conservation area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

National Guidance

Planning Practice Guidance (DCLG)

2.17 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) has been adopted to aid the application of the NPPF. It reiterates that conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle.

2.18 The PPG defines the different heritage interests as follows:

- archaeological interest: As defined in the Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework, there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
- architectural and artistic interest: These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture.

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- historic interest: An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

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

Overview: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.23 This advice note focuses on the management of change within the setting of heritage assets. This document replaces GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (March 2017) and Seeing History in the View (English Heritage, 2011) in order to aid practitioners with the implementation of national legislation, policies and guidance relating to the setting of heritage assets found in the 1990 Act, the NPPF and PPG. The guidance is largely a continuation of the philosophy and approach of the 2011 and 2015 documents and does not present a divergence in either the definition of setting or the way in which it should be assessed.

2.24 As with the NPPF the document defines setting as 'the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve'. Setting is also described as being a separate term to curtilage, character and context. The guidance emphasises that setting is not a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, and that its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset, or the ability to appreciate that significance. It also states that elements of setting may make a positive, negative or neutral contribution to the significance of the heritage asset.

2.25 While setting is largely a visual term, with views considered to be an important consideration in any assessment of the contribution that setting makes to the significance of an asset, and thus the way in which an asset is experienced, setting also encompasses other environmental factors including noise, vibration and odour. Historical and cultural associations may also form part of the asset's setting, which can inform or enhance the significance of a heritage asset.

2.26 This document provides guidance on practical and proportionate decision making with regards to the management of change within the setting of heritage assets. It is stated that the protection of the setting of a heritage asset need not prevent change and that decisions relating to such issues need to be based on the nature, extent and level of the significance of a heritage asset, further weighing up the potential public benefits associated with the proposals. It is further stated that changes within the setting of a heritage asset may have positive or neutral effects.

2.27 The document also states that the contribution made to the significance of heritage assets by their settings will vary depending on the nature of the heritage asset and its setting, and that different heritage assets may have different abilities to accommodate change without harming their significance. Setting should, therefore, be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

2.28 Historic England recommends using a series of detailed steps in order to assess the potential effects of a proposed development on significance of a heritage asset. The 5-step process is as follows:

Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;

1. Assess the degree to which these settings and views make a contribution to the significance of a heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated;
2. Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on the significance or on the ability to appreciate it;
3. Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm; and
4. Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

HEAN12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets (October 2019)

2.29 This advice note provides information on how to assess the significance of a heritage asset. It also explores how this should be used as part of a staged approach to decision-making in which assessing significance precedes designing the proposal(s).

2.30 Historic England notes that the first stage in identifying the significance of a heritage asset is by understanding its form and history. This includes the historical development, an analysis of its surviving fabric and an analysis of the setting, including the contribution setting makes to the significance of a heritage asset.

2.31 To assess the significance of the heritage asset, Historic England advise to describe various interests. These follow the heritage interest identified in the NPPF and PPG and are: archaeological interest, architectural interest, artistic interest and historic interest.

Local Planning Policy

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

2.33 Local planning policy is prescribed by Wokingham Borough Council through their Wokingham Borough Council is in the process of preparing a Local Plan Update, with a consultation on Revised Growth Strategy held between 22 November 2021 and 24 January 2022. However, until such time as this is adopted the statutory development plan is the Adopted Core Strategy (Adopted January 2010) and the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDDLP) (February 2010). The relevant policy in the Core Strategy is set out below.

2.34 CP19 – South of the M4 Strategic Development Location identifies land around the settlement of Shinfield as being a strategic development location. Within this part of the Site falls (NW and SW Areas):

CP19 – South of the M4 Strategic Development Location

Within the areas identified South of the M4 motorway, a sustainable, well designed mixed use development will be delivered by 2026 including:

- 1) Phased delivery of around 2,500 dwellings including affordable homes in accordance with policy CP5;*
- 2) Appropriate employment;*
- 3) Appropriate retail facilities;*
- 4) Social and physical infrastructure (including provision for up to 2 new primary schools and the likely expansion of existing primary provision together with existing children's centre and youth facilities);*
- 5) Measures to maintain separation of these settlements from each other and from Green Park Business Park (Reading), settlements within the administrative Borough of Reading, Shinfield (North of M4) and Swallowfield;*
- 6) Necessary measures to avoid and mitigate the impact of development upon the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area in line with Policy CP8 to meet the requirements of the Habitats*

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Regulations and in accordance with Natural England's latest standards. This will include sufficient Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (subject to monitoring of the quality and quantity standards);

7) Improvements to highway capacity along the A327 (on routes to Reading and the M3, including Shinfield eastern relief road) and the A33 (route to Reading);

8) measures to improve accessibility by non-car transport modes along the A327 and A33 corridors and routes to the stations at Green Park and Winnersh Triangle; and

9) Provision of a Park and Ride in line with CP10.

The development will be guided by a Development Brief Supplementary Planning Document produced with the involvement of stakeholders including all interested landowners in the area covered by the Strategic Development Location as defined on the Proposals Map.

A co-ordinated approach to the development of the Strategic Development Location will be required to deliver the necessary infrastructure, facilities and services to meet the needs of the expanded community.

2.35 In respect of the MDDLP the following policies are relevant in regards to built heritage or specifically refer to the Site:

Policy TB13: Science and Innovation Park

1. The boundary of the University of Reading Science and Innovation Park is defined in policy SAL07.

2. Planning permission for the development of the remainder of the Science Park will only be granted where it demonstrates that the proposals:

a) Are only for purposes appropriate to the primary use of the site as a Science and Innovation Park, including research and development, laboratories and high tech uses together with ancillary and related uses and for no other purpose

b) Maintain the visual separation between the Science and Innovation Park and the settlements of Shinfield (North of M4), Earley and Shinfield Village

c) Provide high quality landscape

d) Provide for high quality design appropriate to its location and setting

e) Secure a programme of archaeological work.

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

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

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

a) Requiring works to or affecting heritage assets or their setting to demonstrate that the proposals would at least conserve and, where possible enhance the important character

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and special architectural or historic interest of the building, Conservation Area, monument or park and garden including its setting and views.

b) *Supporting development proposals or other initiatives that will conserve and, where possible, enhance the local character, setting, management and historic significance of designated heritage assets, with particular support for initiatives that would improve any assets that are recognised as being in poor condition or at risk.*

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

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

1. *Areas of Special Character are shown on the Policies Map.*

2. *Planning permission will only be granted for proposals to or affecting Buildings of Traditional Local Character and Areas of Special Character where they demonstrate that they retain and enhance the traditional, historical, local and special character of the building or area and its setting.*

3. *Proposals that involve the demolition of a Building of Traditional Local Character will require strong justification.*

2.36 Part of the NW Area of the Site is identified as an allocation for employment and commercial use under **Policy SAL07: Sites within Development Limits allocated for employment/commercial development**. Specifically, this policy states (inter alia):

The sites below (and as defined on the Policies Map) are allocated for the following uses. New employment/commercial uses will be permitted on the following identified sites:

7. *The University of Reading Science and Innovation Park, Cutbush Lane, Shinfield of around 55,000 sq m² for the purposes set out in Policy TB13: Science and Innovation Park (criteria 1).*

2.37 In respect of the emerging Wokingham Borough Council - Draft Local Plan Public Consultation (Feb to March 2020) the following emerging policy is relevant:

Policy DH5: The Historic Environment

1. *Development proposals should conserve and seek to enhance, wherever possible, the archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest of all heritage assets, including the contribution to this interest made by their setting. This will be achieved through:*

a) *ensuring that development proposals identify and understand the heritage interest(s) that may be affected by the proposed works, at an early stage in the design process;*

b) *supporting works that secure the sensitive use, enjoyment, conservation and/or enhancement of heritage assets and their settings, particularly in relation to designated assets identified as being at risk; and*

c) *securing the sensitive design of development which impacts on heritage assets and their settings, retaining or incorporating existing features or details of historic or architectural interest and/or design quality into the scheme.*

2. *Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource. Where development proposals have the potential to affect heritage assets, a heritage assessment should be prepared and submitted alongside the development proposal describing the significance of any heritage assets affected, including the*

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contribution to their setting. Where there is harm, information must be provided on whether the harm is assessed as being less than substantial or substantial.

3. Development proposals which would cause harm to the heritage interest of a heritage asset, or to its setting (whether statutorily designated or locally important), will not be permitted without a clear and convincing justification in the form of the public benefits of the proposal that cannot otherwise be achieved and which demonstrably outweigh any harm to the interest of the heritage asset in question, irrespective of the level of harm.

4. Development proposals that would cause substantial harm to, or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or all the particular circumstances to:

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
- d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.*

2.38 The Shinfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan (Made version February 2017) has been referred to in the preparation of this report as has the Arborfield Cross Neighbourhood Plan (ACNP) (Made Version April 2020). Of note, in respect of the ACNP, the following policy is relevant which also flags up a number of locations within the parish and indeed Site which are identified as '*locally valued heritage assets*', namely a chestnut avenue between the Old Rectory and remains of the former parish church in Arborfield and around Carter's Hill:

POLICY IRS4: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Character of the Area

1. Development proposals will need to demonstrate how they protect or enhance the historic and natural character of the area, specifically:

- a) Arborfield Cross Conservation Area*
- b) Chamberlain's Farm Area of Special Character*
- c) The Barkham Street Area of Special Character*
- d) The local historic environment, including the setting of Listed buildings, Scheduled Monuments and other historically significant buildings*

2. Locally valued heritage assets have been identified in the plan as follows (see Map K) and development proposals should protect and enhance them where possible:

- a) The historic chestnut avenue in Arborfield, linking The Old Rectory to the remains of the old church.*
- b) The lime grove at Nashgrove Ride in Barkham.*
- c) Carters Hill*
- d) The granary in Barkham Street*

2.39 Wokingham Borough Council has also prepared conservation area appraisals for both the Sindlesham Conservation Area (1994) and Arborfield Cross Conservation Area (2000). Both documents provide a brief summary of the special interest of the designations, though they are considerably out of date. They have both, however, been referred to in the preparation of this Built Heritage Statement.

3 Historic built environment appraisal

Introduction

- 3.1 The majority of the Site comprises farmland (arable and pasture) along with semi-natural and amenity grassland, copses and woodland, and associated isolated farms, dwellings and other buildings.
- 3.2 It is important to note that in respect of several identified built heritage assets, they don't fall within the identified Application Boundary; instead falling within land adjacent to these boundaries. In these cases, the Site forms part of the setting of these heritage assets only.

Historic development

- 3.3 Shinfield is noted in the Domesday Survey as 'Selingefelle'. Prior to the Norman Conquest (AD 1066), the parish was held by Saxy on behalf of King Edward (The Confessor), indicating a pre-Conquest settlement. In Saxon times, Shinfield was referred to as *Selingasfeld* (the fields owned by Selingas). It is suggested that areas had been cleared for agriculture associated with the settlements by this time.
- 3.4 While there was likely to have been a settlement in the wider area during this period, evidence suggests that settlement activity is focused away from the Site. It is therefore probable that during the Saxon/Early Medieval period the Site was used for agricultural purposes or woodland.
- 3.5 Shinfield settlement was well established by the Medieval period, and its historic core is situated 1km to the southwest of the Site. The Site is likely to have been an area of agricultural activity or woodland.
- 3.6 The Earl of Fingall's 1756 Estate Map shows the Site as consisting of a number of arable fields, orchards and pasture (Fig. 3). Several small holdings are noted, including Badger Farm (later referred to as Cutbush Farm) and Lane End Farmhouse, situated in close proximity to, but outside the western section of the Site is noted, representing a 16th century (altered and extended in the 18th, 19th and 20th century) farmhouse.
- 3.7 The 1836 Shinfield Tithe Map (Fig. 3) shows the Site as being largely in agricultural use with field parcels. Badger Farm is noted situated on Cutbush Lane. The accompanying tithe apportionment shows that the Site, and much of the surrounding land, was owned by Alexander Cobham.
- 3.8 The 1898-1900 OS Map (Fig. 4) shows Cutbush Farm and Shinfield Grange adjacent. Parkland is identified on land west of the Site surrounding Shinfield Manor.
- 3.9 The 1938 Ordnance Survey Map (Fig. 4) shows the southern expansion of Reading towards Shinfield Green.
- 3.10 Shinfield itself experiences further eastern and northern expansion in 1961 with Shinfield Green merging into wider Reading by 1969. At this time, the University of Reading have an agricultural and horticultural research facility to the west of the Site near Shinfield.
- 3.11 The 1979 OS Map (Fig. 4) shows the M4 motorway sweeping along the northern edge of this part of the Site and forms a tangible barrier between the Site and Reading to the north. Whilst the Site doesn't change throughout much of the twentieth century, the Shinfield Eastern Relief Road defines the western edge of the Site by 2025 (Fig.5), and the first development of the Thames Valley Science Park is now present to the north of Cutbush Farm and east of the Eastern Relief Road.
- 3.12 Origins of Arborfield are likely to date from the Roman period where evidence of settlement in the surrounds are noted. It is likely that this originates around Arborfield (rather than the larger Arborfield Cross) and the earlier settlement of power around Arborfield Hall with its remains of the original parish church. The name of Arborfield derives from the Saxon word for 'settlement' or 'clearing'.

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3.13 The 1839 Arborfield Tithe Map (Fig. 3) shows the development around Arborfield Hall and the former church of St Bartholomew adjacent. It also provides some context to the wider parkland surrounding the hall and, of note, the degree of roadside tree planting and screening along the southern edge of the Site adjacent to the present day A327 road. Clusters of woodland planting is also noted elsewhere in the Site and around the settlement of Arborfield.

3.14 In 1898 (Fig.4) the access road leading to Arborfield Hall, and the former parish church has now been realigned. It is suggested that this was straightened at the time when the original parish church was demolished, and the church stone was repurposed in laying a new road and in the construction of the new church on Church Lane to the south-east. Several lanes are noted to run through the Site, later becoming trackways which are largely present today. Woodland copses are noted dotted around the Site and also enclosing Arborfield around the present-day Old Rectory.

3.15 Little changes in this part of the Site throughout the first half of the twentieth century. By 1961 there has been a reduction in the degree of parkland planting around the former extent of parkland associated with the Arborfield Hall. By 1969, Arborfield Hall no longer appears on mapping having been demolished. Whilst the Site doesn't markedly change at this time, the landscape surrounding the Site is changing with a progressive expansion of Arborfield Cross to the south. This continues throughout the remaining twentieth and early twenty-first century, notably around Shinfield and culminating in the Shinfield Eastern Relief Road, which then marks the western edge of the Site here.

3.16 The 1809 Ordnance Survey First Edition shows the north-eastern part of the Site as comprising small field parcels and also the western extent of Sindlesham Common, extending as far west as Carter's Hill Farm. Sindlesham Mill is identified in the northern reaches of this Area, as is the small settlement of Sindlesham.

3.17 By the 1840 Hurst Tithe Map, the newly created Bearwood Estate is present, though set back from the present day B3030 road with a buffer of fields along the eastern edge of the road. The wider north-eastern part of the Site appears predominantly as fields with occasional areas of woodland planting. The Earley (Sonning) Tithe Map (1840) and the 1840 Woodley and Sandford Tithe Map (Fig.3), covering land north of the River Loddon, shows a similar land use, extending north into what is now the southern extent of Reading and outside of the Site. Sindlesham Mill is detailed alongside the River Loddon, set in isolation.

3.18 The Site remains largely in agricultural use with multiple field parcels progressing into the twentieth century. In 1898 (Fig. 4), there is evidence of the further expansion of the small settlement of Sindlesham along the northern edge of the Site along the present day B3030 road. The 1909-1910 OS Map (not shown in this report) also shows the progressive expansion of Winnersh north of the Site and along the course of the Southern Railway (reading Branch). This is most noticeable in the 1938 OS Map (Fig 4) and also in 1960-61 (not shown in this report).

By 1977-79 (Fig.4), the M4 Motorway is now cutting through the landscape and physically separates Sindlesham from Winnersh north of the motorway. The 1986-88 OS Map (not shown in this report) shows the present southern extent of Reading as being largely complete, up to the edge of the M4 motorway.

Assessment of heritage assets

3.19 There are three designated built heritage assets located within the Application Boundary of the Site.

3.20 Given the topography, high levels of woodland planting surrounding the Site and the edge-of-settlement context in which much of the Site sits, a 1km search radius has been used in order to identify built heritage assets potentially affected by the proposed development.

3.21 Within the 1km search radius of the overall Site there are several listed buildings: the majority at Grade II except one Grade I listed building and one Grade II* listed building. There are also buildings

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meriting consideration as non-designated heritage assets, either having been identified on Wokingham District Council List of Buildings of Traditional Local Character or on the Berkshire Historic Environment Record. One Grade II* registered park and garden falls within this search radius as do two conservation areas.

3.22 The site walkover survey and associated research demonstrates that the bulk of these identified heritage assets share no visual, functional or historic association with the Site. As such, the proposed development will have no impact on their setting, or significance, or have such a small impact as to not materially impact that significance and have been discounted from further assessment within this report. This includes all listed buildings within the settlement edges of Shinfield, Sindlesham, Arborfield Cross and within the urban edge of Reading.

3.23 It is considered, therefore, that the following built heritage assets (within 1km of the Site) will be assessed for the potential to be affected by the proposed development owing to their inter-visibility with the Site or through sharing a functional association with the Site.

- *Cutbush* (Grade II listed) (NHL ref. 1118135) (Plates 23-24);
- *Barn adjoining Cutbush* (Grade II listed) (NHL ref. 1136129 (Plate 23-24);
- *Shinfield Grange* is identified on the HER and merits consideration as a non-designated heritage asset (HER ref. WK15636) (Plate 25);
- *Oldhouse Farm* (Grade II listed) (NHL ref. 1118136), (Plate 26);
- Barn approximately 50 metres south of Oldhouse Farmhouse (Grade II listed) (NHL ref. 1136136) (Plate 27);
- *Hall Place Farmhouse* (Grade II listed) (NHL ref. 1135961) (Plates 28-29);
- *Remains of Old Church* (Grade II listed) (NHL ref. 1313014) (Plates 30-31);
- *Simonds Family Tomb* (Grade II listed) (NHL ref. 1319095)
- *Bridge House* (Grade II listed) (NHL ref. 1118159) (Plate 32);
- *The Old Rectory and The Rectory Close* (Grade II listed) (NHL ref. 1319096) (Plates 33-34);
- *The Church of St Bartholomew* (Grade II listed) (NHL ref. 1135983) (Plates 35-37);
- *Mole Bridge Farmhouse* (Grade II listed) (NHL ref. 1118121) (Plate 38);
- *The Glen* (Grade II listed) (NHL ref. 1118161) (Plate 39);
- *Bearwood College Registered Park and Garden (RPG)* (Grade II* registered) (Register ref. 1000414 (Plates 40- 42-). Within this RPG are a number of separately listed buildings and structures including, notably the Grade II* listed Former Bearwood College (principal house) (NHL ref. 1135967) and the Bearwood College Chapel (Grade II listed) (NHL ref. 1118160). Several separately listed lodge buildings exist and a number of other buildings which merit consideration as non-designated heritage assets including Mole Lodge (former gas works) (HER ref. MRM17538), Farmhouse (HER ref. MRM17541) and Farm Cottages (1-5) (HER ref. MRM17542). All will be considered collectively under the Bearwood College RPG assessment below. Park Lodge, West Lodge and Mole Lodge will however be considered separately as this face directly onto the Site on the B3030. They will be considered collectively under the title Mole Road Lodges to avoid repetition.
- *Park Lodge* (Grade II listed) (NHL ref. 1118163) (Plate 43);
- *West Lodge* (Grade II listed) (NHL ref. 1136015) (Plate 44);
- *Mole Lodge (Gas works)* (HER ref. MRM17538) (Plate 45);
- Reading Room Cottage (Plate46);
- *Arborfield Cross Conservation Area* (Plates 47-49).

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- *Carter's Hill House* (Grade II listed) (NHL ref. 1319098) (Plates 50-51);
- *Oak Cottage* (Grade II listed) (NHL ref. 1319149) (Plate 52);
- *Sindlesham Mill* (Grade II listed) (NHL ref. 1136288) (Plates 53-54);
- *Berkshire Masonic Centre* (Grade II listed) (NHL ref. 1136256) (Plate 55).
- *Sindlesham Conservation Area* (Plates 56-58).

3.24 In the interests of avoiding repetition, given the shared setting of both Cutbush (farmhouse) and Cutbush barn, they will be considered collectively under the title *Cutbush House and Farm*. Similarly, Old House Farmhouse and the nearby separately listed barn will also be considered under the collective title of *Old House Farmhouse and Barn*. The Remains of Old Church and the Simonds Family Tomb will be considered collectively under the title of *Former Parish Church*. Park Lodge, West Lodge and Mole Lodge will be considered collectively under the title *Mole Road Lodges*.

3.25 It is deemed that, in their own right, built heritage assets associated with the Bearwood RPG, namely the principal house, associated separately listed chapel and Church of St Catherine, share no intervisibility with the Site though sit within the Bearwood RPG. As such they will not be considered individually but will be considered more broadly under the Bearwood College RPG Assessment.

3.26 Heritage assets are noted to exist, in various states of repair, within and around the former Medieval settlement around Hall Place Farmhouse, the former parish church and remains of Arborfield Hall. Specifically, this relates to a former boathouse associated with Arborfield Hall (not identified on the HER), a former watermill situated over the River Loddon north of Hall Place Farmhouse (HER ref. MWK6264) and farm buildings associated with the farm. These heritage assets will not be considered individually though will be considered as part of a broader discussion of this earlier settlement below.

3.27 The Old Rectory and Rectory Close will be referred to as *The Old Rectory*.

Cutbush House and Farm

3.28 **Significance:** The Grade II listed Cutbush is now a private dwelling but was a farmhouse forming part of what was once known as Badger Farm. Any farming activity has ceased at the property. It was built in the sixteenth century with further alterations in the seventeenth and early twentieth centuries. The house is partly timber framed with rendered brick infill; elsewhere, the building is rendered. Plain tiles are noted on three separate (but attached) roofs of varying ridge height. The building has a long rectangular plan over six framed bays and in three stages. The building is one and a half and two stories in height. The fenestration is slightly irregular comprising two and three light leaded casements dating from the twentieth century. Three chimneys are present; one is at ridge height, one at eave height and one attached to the side with an exposed breast rising up to eave height.

3.29 The former farmhouse is attached (at a right-angle) to a separately listed Grade II barn to the south of the dwelling. It has now been converted to a separate residential dwelling, with associated domestic features such as roof lights, additional windows and satellite dish. The barn was previously used for domestic storage associated with Cutbush House following the cessation of farming operations at the property. This barn was also constructed in the sixteenth century with further alterations in the twentieth century. Like the house, it is timber framed with brick infill and a plain tile roof. At the time of listing, the barn had two cart entrances facing onto Cutbush Lane East which are hipped above. They now appear to have been reworked to provide additional windows above the retained doors. This barn has a rectangular layout over eight bays. The roof is arranged with queen post roof trusses with trenched purlins (listing citation). The roof is understood to have been partly rebuilt in the nineteenth century and appears to have been rebuilt again as part of the residential conversion.

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3.30 Cutbush House and Barn provide an evidential and aesthetic value as vernacular farm buildings and farmhouse through their design and materials used. The changes to their use and, in respect of the conversion to the barn, have eroded part of their significance, though they can still be read as farm buildings.

3.31 **Setting:** Cutbush House and Barn are primarily experienced from the immediate setting of the private gardens and road which abut the heritage assets; their immediate setting. Additional farm buildings were previously noted to the immediate west of the former farmhouse though these have been demolished. The historic setting of 'Badger Farm' in the nineteenth century appeared largely open, with fields surrounding, including an orchard to the north. By the turn of the twentieth century, Shinfield Grange was present to the east of the heritage assets which, allied to substantial landscaped grounds, and later dwellings, has reduced some of the agricultural context surrounding the former farm. The expansion of Shinfield, which is located to the west of the heritage asset, means that the once isolated former farm complex now sits close to the Eastern Relief Road which sits between the settlement and these heritage assets. Further, the Thames Valley Science Park development to the north-west and east, including recently completed Shinfield Studios buildings, as well as contemporary roadside landscaping have markedly changed the setting. Cutbush Lane is now a no-through road meaning that, from a vehicular traffic perspective, the road remains very quiet. The additional urbanising changes to the surrounds has been tempered somewhat by the high levels of mature tree planting which sit within the private grounds and near surrounds of the heritage assets which screen them from the intermediate and wider surrounds. The Site sits in the wider setting. Given its scale, much of the Site shares no intervisibility or historic functional association with the heritage assets and, whilst it shares limited to no intervisibility with the heritage assets, it still, in part, provides some element of an agricultural landscape. The rural surrounds now provide some rural context to what are seen as historic farm buildings but now serve as private relatively rural dwellings. Setting makes an important, though secondary contribution now to the overall significance. In this, the Site makes a positive contribution, tempered by the degree of mature tree planting which surrounds the heritage assets and the changes already seen to this rural landscape with the expansion of Shinfield with associated infrastructure and nearby commercial buildings.

3.32 **Significance and Setting Summary:** Cutbush House and Barn are heritage assets of high (national) significance. Their significance is primarily derived from their architectural and historic special interest as a former farmhouse and barn. The changes to the farmstead including the conversion to private dwellings, loss of associated buildings, and the visual separation from the wider rural landscape have impacted the overall significance, though the remaining heritage assets can still be read as former farm buildings. The bulk of the Site supports the historic functional and visual setting as a rural agricultural landscape, though its contribution is much reduced by the changes seen to the wider surrounds within and adjacent to the Site already. The bulk of the Site can however be said to still contribute to the overall significance, though largely limited to the landscape to the east of the heritage assets.

Shinfield Grange

3.33 **Significance:** Intervisibility with Shinfield Grange was very difficult to achieve from the public domain or Site. Accordingly, the assessment below is based upon the available views that are granted and accessible online resources. Shinfield Grange is identified on the HER and therefore merits consideration as a non-designated heritage asset. Available research suggests that Shinfield Grange was constructed in the second half of the nineteenth century, having replaced an earlier farm. It is understood that the Manor of Shinfield was held by the Cobham family in the late eighteenth century who later demolished the old manor house in the village before moving to a small dwelling associated with Cut Bush Farm. This house, which was renamed Shinfield House, was then considerably enlarged to the present extent and renamed again to Shinfield Grange. It is not clear what, if anything, remains of the earlier dwelling within the fabric of the current property, though the 'haphazard' layout of the building and its roof suggests that remnants of the earlier property may

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exist in the centre of the current building. This comprises a part of the building which appears to be timber framed with brick infill. This could not be confirmed, however.

3.34 Shinfield Grange is a substantial property, understood to no longer be in residential use. It is built over two storeys plus attic and is constructed of brick with a plain tile roof. Several prominent brick chimney stacks are noted. It has a very irregular fenestration with a range of window types and sizes, including several two-storey bays under dormers as well as an oriel window. The bulk appear to be timber casement windows. The building is relatively plain, architecturally, though there are some architectural flourishes noted including the oriel window. A later twentieth century flat roof extension is noted to the western side which negatively impacts upon the overall significance.

3.35 Shinfield Grange provides evidential and aesthetic value as a Victorian minor country house. It is relatively simple in its design and may have incorporated an earlier building into the overall property that presently stands. The heritage assets provide evidence of the tastes of Victorian minor gentry through their design and materials used. The fact that it is no longer used for residential purposes also impacts its overall significance, as do the later alterations.

3.36 **Setting:** Shinfield Grange is primarily experienced from within the large, landscaped, gardens in which it sits. Whilst the bulk of the gardens remain, parts have been lost to industrial/commercial development and car parking which lessen the overall contribution made by the landscaped gardens. These grounds are heavily treed which makes intervisibility into and out of the grounds difficult, and accordingly limited views of Shinfield Grange within. The surrounding land also forms part of the Site. The recently completed Shinfield Studios and emerging development to the north have markedly reduced the rural interface which previously surrounded the grounds and has very much reduced any scope for what would have likely been glimpsed views only. Given the scale of the wider Site, much of the Site shares no intervisibility with the heritage asset. The wider rural landscape is deemed to provide a context to the former country house, though later industrial/commercial development around the heritage asset markedly lessens this contribution. The wider Site can be said therefore to make a small contribution to the overall significance in helping to provide the rural context, and broader isolation, which characterises country houses; set within large, treed grounds, though the immediate surrounds serve to in parts divorce the heritage asset from its wider rural surrounds.

3.37 **Significance and Setting Summary:** Shinfield Grange is a heritage asset of low (local) significance. Its significance is largely derived from a low level of architectural and historic interest, including the possible inclusion of an earlier building into the current property, and the familial links with the Cobham family who were noted Shinfield residents and lords of Shinfield Manor. The building has seen some degree of change, including further unsympathetic alterations, not only to its fabric but also to the nearby grounds which have impacted the overall significance. Setting makes a small, secondary contribution, primarily limited to the large, landscaped grounds which surround the house. The Site forms the bulk of the wider setting though intervisibility is limited and it can be said that the overall Site makes a very small contribution to the overall significance in providing a rural context to this former country residence, much impacted by later commercial development abutting the private grounds of the heritage asset.

Oldhouse Farmhouse and Barn

3.38 **Significance:** The Grade II listed Oldhouse Farmhouse is now a private dwelling with cessation of any agricultural activity on the adjacent associated farm complex. It was constructed in the early seventeenth century but later rebuilt in the eighteenth century. The rebuilt property was then altered in the nineteenth and twentieth century. It is constructed in brick with a part gabled and hipped plain tile roof comprising a seventeenth century pent roof and a twentieth century extension to the rear (righthand side). The two-storey building is rectangular in plan with two and three-light casements noted. The changes to the building reflect the changing tastes and requirements of the farm. It is not clear how much of the original building remains in the eighteenth century rebuild.

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3.39 A short distance to the south of the farmhouse is a separately Grade II listed large timber framed detached barn with brick aisles and a half hipped plain tile roof. The barn is constructed over eight bays with aisles either side. Hipped cart entrances are present on the south facing side. The listing citation notes that the barn comprises a “*fine frame of large section timbers*”. The citation further states that it is included as a “*good complete example of an early nineteenth century barn*”.

3.40 The wider substantial farm complex appears to be of twentieth century construction, with later sheds and units likely added after an agricultural role ceased at the farm. It appears that the barn and wider former farm were latterly used for a variety of storage and small business uses, including vehicle storage, though the complex appeared largely empty now. Together, the former farmhouse and barn share a group value as the remnant buildings forming the once much smaller Oldhouse Farm, which comprised the barn and farmhouse and three smaller, now demolished barns (Shinfield Tithe Map 1838). Whilst some of the wider twentieth century farm buildings remain (though in other uses), the loss of an agricultural use for the heritage assets has impacted their overall significance.

3.41 Oldhouse Farmhouse and Barn provide evidential and aesthetic value as a vernacular farmhouse and barn dating from the seventeenth/eighteenth and nineteenth century, seen through their materials and design employed. The farmhouse has seen alterations, most notably in the twentieth century, which has lessened the overall significance, though the barn appears more complete.

3.42 **Setting:** Oldhouse Farmhouse and Barn are primarily experienced from the immediate setting of the private garden of the farmhouse and from the remnant farm buildings, though the alternative use of the farm complex, visual quality of these surrounds and later buildings detracts from the overall contribution that setting makes. The former farm complex is still surrounded by agricultural land on several flanks which helps to contribute to the historic functional and visual setting of the heritage assets, in once forming part of a working farm. However, the Shinfield Studios development now abuts up to the northern flank and much reduces a rural context. The house and barn are still read broadly as former farm buildings, though setting is much altered and, accordingly, makes a reduced contribution to significance. The near surrounds share an intervisibility with the heritage assets, though given the scale of the Site, in the wider extent of the Site, there is no intervisibility. Those field parcels which still flank the heritage assets (within the Site) form part of their historic functional setting in being owned and farmed by the owners/occupiers of Oldhouse Farm (Shinfield Tithe Map 1838). The fact that the former farm complex and remaining Site are all in the same ownership provides some tangible present-day association but does not contribute to present day functional association given the former farm no longer serves the wider agricultural landscape. Setting makes an important, though secondary, contribution to the overall significance.

3.43 **Significance and Setting Summary:** Oldhouse Farmhouse and Barn are heritage assets of high (national) significance. Their significance is primarily defined by their architectural and historic special interest as a period farmhouse and barn. This particularly relates to the nineteenth century barn which is understood to be relatively unaltered. The changes to the farmhouse have impacted its overall significance, as has the changes to the wider farm and loss of an agricultural use to the heritage assets and wider farm. The nearby parts of the Site contribute to helping to define an agricultural rurality, though this is tempered by the changes to the intervening farm complex and the recently constructed Shinfield Studios development, which go some way to divorcing the heritage assets from the rural landscape surrounding. The Site can be said to make a small positive contribution in supporting this landscape.

Hall Place Farmhouse

3.44 **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

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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.

3.45 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.

3.46 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.

3.47 **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. The farmhouse forms part of the Site, as does the surrounding agricultural land which also helps to provide the agricultural surrounds, thus defining the farmhouse's role. The remaining Site surrounding the farmhouse therefore makes a positive contribution to the overall significance in supporting the ongoing functional agricultural role of the farm and farmhouse. The near surrounds also share intervisibility with the heritage asset, though given the scale of the wider Site and intervening tree planting, much of the wider site shares no intervisibility. The tenancy regime of the surrounding fields relative to the farm are unclear. However, evidently the land is under the same ownership as the farm presently which provides the surrounding Site (field parcels) with a functional association to the farmhouse. 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 standing, 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.

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, within which the Site contributes to helping to define an agricultural role to the farmhouse.

Former Parish Church

3.48 **Significance:** The Grade II listed and Scheduled remains of the former Parish Church of Arborfield (formerly known as the Church of St Bartholomew) date from the thirteenth century, with probable eighteenth century additions. The thirteenth century church is constructed in flint with later additions in flint and stone. The church is very ruinous with the roof missing and much of the walls having collapsed. The remaining built fabric is very overgrown. It is understood to have been vacated and partially demolished in the 1860s (<http://www.arborfieldhistory.org.uk>). Monuments in the church were latterly moved to the new Church of St Bartholomew on the edge of the village. It is suggested that the church owed its existence in the thirteenth century to the lord of the manor; with the manor house (Arborfield Hall) being situated nearby (<http://www.arborfieldhistory.org.uk>). Separately listed (at Grade II) is a Simonds family tomb which sits in the burial ground of the church, and which shares a group value with the church fabric. The remains of the church also share a group value with the Old Rectory (see below) which is located a moderate distance to the south on the edge of Arborfield and the current Church of St Bartholomew nearby. There are no known associations now. The ruinous state of the church has markedly impacted its significance, which has been heavily eroded. This is allied to the loss of the manorial seat, Arborfield Hall, which was demolished in the 1950s. This much alters the ability to interpret the immediate surrounds as a settlement of power. The presence of the farmhouse provides some tangible association however, given its possible ties to Arborfield Hall, the home farm to this manorial seat. The remaining fabric of the church, where legible, provides some evidential value of the design and construction of a thirteenth century church with a degree of illustrative and aesthetic value in its role as part of a settlement of power, somewhat reduced by the loss of the associated manor house. It provides an historic communal value as a place of worship which existed from the thirteenth century up to the mid-nineteenth century.

3.49 **Setting:** The church is primarily experienced from its immediate setting of the surrounding burial ground which helps to define it as a place of worship. This forms a small part of the Site. Its diminutive scale, as a shallow ruin, and the extensive tree planting which now exists amongst the ruins, renders the ability to experience the heritage asset in the wider surrounds (the wider Site), almost impossible. Its role as part of a settlement of power and the ability to read this is very difficult to achieve and this role is now part of its historic setting only. The remnant Arborfield Hall parkland features provide a small degree of historic context, though it still remains difficult to visually bring together all the parts of the historic settlement of power.

3.50 The horse chestnut avenue leading up from the Old Rectory to the south, and the church remains are identified in the Arborfield Neighbourhood Plan as being of value and do provide a tangible visual link between the former place of worship, the Old Rectory and the settlement of Arborfield. The ruins of the former parish church do however remain a rural heritage asset, set within a cluster of buildings in relative isolation in the wider countryside. Overall, however, where setting would have made an important contribution to its significance, had it remained situated next to the manorial seat, it now is very much secondary, beyond the burial ground which provides the only real indicator of its original role. Whilst the church sits within the Site, as does the nearby farm and the location of the manorial seat, the changes to the settlement of power in the nineteenth and twentieth century means that the wider Site now makes only a limited contribution to understanding the special interest of the church.

3.51 **Significance and Setting Summary:** The ruins of the Parish Church are a heritage asset of high (national) significance. Its significance is primarily derived from its architectural and historic special interest as a thirteenth century parish church. The ruinous state has very much eroded much of its

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significance, as has the changes to the wider setting, including the loss of the nearby manor house; an important part of the 'settlement of power'. So much so that its setting, beyond the remains of the burial ground and separately listed family tomb, makes little contribution to the overall significance. It shares some limited group value with other nearby heritage assets.

Bridge House

3.52 ***Significance:*** The Grade II listed two-storey Bridge House was constructed in the sixteenth century with further additions and alterations in the seventeenth and twentieth century. The property is laid out in a 'T' layout. It is partially timber framed with brick infill; the remaining building being painted brick. The building has a plain tile roof. It has two framed bays in the centre with a further two on either side. The building has twentieth century leaded two and three-light casements. The principal elevation of Bridge House faces north over Arborfield Road towards the Site, which sits immediately north of the road, at approximately 15 metres away at its closest. The heritage asset provides some evidential value as a vernacular sixteenth century house with subsequent alterations, culminating in the replacement of windows with twentieth century casements. It provides an aesthetic value through its design and materials used, also reflective of its vernacular characteristics.

3.53 ***Setting:*** Bridge House is primarily experienced from its immediate setting of the private grounds and from the busy A327 Arborfield Road which the house sits close to. The Site forms part of the wider rural setting. The historic isolation that the house once occupied has been reduced by the addition of three further detached dwellings adjacent, though it is still viewed as a rural dwelling. Given the scale of the Site, it would only be the south-westernmost boundary that would share any intervisibility with the heritage asset. However, from here a thick belt of roadside tree planting, likely residual boundary planting from the parkland surrounding Arborfield Hall, provides a robust screen from this point. To the north of the heritage asset, robust established tree planting along the course of the River Loddon also provides screening. The rural surrounds help to provide some context to its role as a rural dwelling, though the progressively busy Arborfield Road, and the heritage asset's subsequent enclosure from the road, limits the rural contribution. Setting overall makes a positive, though secondary, contribution to the overall significance and within this, the Site helps to contribute to the wider rural context.

3.54 ***Significance and Setting Summary:*** Bridge House is a heritage asset of (high) national significance. Its significance is primarily derived from its architectural and historic special interest as a sixteenth century rural dwelling which has remained as such. Setting makes a positive, though secondary, contribution with the Site forming a large part of the wider rural setting. This helps to define the rural characteristics of the heritage asset.

The Old Rectory

3.55 ***Significance:*** Intervisibility with the Old Rectory from the Site or public domain was very difficult to achieve during the Site visit as a result of the extensive mature tree planting around the private grounds. As such, the below assessment is based upon those limited views that were available and available online resources.

3.56 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

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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.

3.57 **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, meaning that intervisibility is limited to glimpsed views only of the heritage asset through the mature trees in the near surrounds of the SW part of the Site. Intervisibility may be greater during winter months, however. 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. Intervisibility with the wider Site is limited on account of the mature tree screening around the heritage asset, though the Site can be said to form a part of the wider rural setting in which the Old Rectory sits, and which helps to inform the viewer of the rural characteristics of the living and the parish church in which the heritage asset served. 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 a 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.

3.58 **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. The degree of screening surrounding the heritage asset makes intervisibility difficult. 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. In forming a large part of the wider setting, the Site makes a positive contribution to understanding the historic role of the heritage asset as providing accommodation for the incumbent in a rural parish.

Church of St Bartholomew

3.59 **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, a number of internal features and monuments have also been relocated from this 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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3.60 **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. These views are granted out over part of the Site which forms much of the intermediate setting, but predominantly forming a larger part of the wider rural setting. 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 certain locations. The wider surrounds help to define the rural context in which this parish church sits. Setting makes a positive, though secondary, contribution with the Site forming a large part of an extensive wider setting.

3.61 **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 positive contribution to the significance of the heritage asset.

Mole Bridge Farmhouse

3.62 **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.

3.63 **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. The Site surrounds the heritage asset on all but the south-eastern flank overlooking Mole Road and, in being an agricultural landscape, the Site helps define the heritage asset as a rural dwelling only now. Intervisibility is limited to those parts of the Site nearest to the heritage asset. In the wider setting, which comprises the bulk of the Site, there is very limited, to no intervisibility. Setting makes a reduced, though still positive contribution, limited to the rural context which the private dwelling is now interpreted as. In this, the Site makes a contribution.

3.64 **Significance and Setting Summary:** Mile 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 Site, makes a positive, though very much secondary contribution to the overall significance, in helping to provide a rural context to the former farmhouse.

The Glen

3.65 **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.

3.66 **Setting:** The Glen is primarily experienced in its immediate setting of its private gardens which surround the property. Its relatively diminutive scale means that it is not particularly visible on the wider landscape meaning that views are granted from the Site, which surrounds most of the heritage asset, only in the near surrounds to the house. The scale of the Site means that the bulk of the Site shares no intervisibility with the heritage asset, though still contributes to a rural context in which the house has always served and indirectly supported. The Site falls within the intermediate and wider setting of the house. 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. Within this, the Site makes a contribution.

3.67 **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.

Bearwood College Registered Park and Garden

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

3.69 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

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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, detailed 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 fundamentally altering how they appeared (Including landscaping and sports infrastructure) and, indeed, how they were used.

3.70 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.

3.71 Near to the edge of the Site lies a kitchen garden enclosed by a brick wall. This 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. This has, in cases, resulted in changes to parts of the RPG including new office development within the walled garden which are noticeable from within the eastern edge of the Site. 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.

3.72 The area of the RPG closest to the 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.

3.73 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.

3.74 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.

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3.75 **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. The exception is perhaps on the western edge where the Site abuts up to the B3030 Mole Road, and the wider Site beyond which provides an interface between heavily manicured sports pitches and wider farmland. The Site forms part of the immediate through to wider setting of the heritage asset.

3.76 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.

3.77 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. This is compounded by twentieth century housing which sits between the RPG and the Site. 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.

3.78 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. Within this, the Site makes a positive contribution, though reduced, given the degree of change seen to the western edge of the park, which now presents as sports pitches rather than part of an historic designed landscape.

3.79 **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 surrounded by woodland planting further into the RPG. The Site can therefore be said to only make a small contribution to understanding the overall significance of the heritage asset.

Mole Road Lodges

3.80 **Significance:** The single-storey Grade II listed Park Lodge (formerly referred to as Arborfield Lodge), now utilised by Reading Football Club as part of the sports training grounds, was constructed in the mid-nineteenth century at one of the entrances into the Bearwood Estate. It was later extended in the twentieth century. It is the most architecturally accomplished of the lodges on this side of the estate, being built in red brick with contrasting white brick dressings, all under a hipped slate roof. Other architectural details include wide bracketed eaves, rubbed brick heads and key blocks over casement windows and semi-circular contrasting brick arches.

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3.81 The Grade II listed West Lodge was constructed around 1840 in brick with a fish scale slate hipped roof. It is built over two-storeys. Architectural detailing includes raised brick quoins, bracketed eaves and rubbed brick arches. Historic mapping suggests that it performed a role linked to the kitchen garden and associated 'industrial' elements of the estate rather than as a gate house.

3.82 Mole Lodge is identified on the HER and therefore merits consideration as a non-designated heritage asset. It is likely to have comprised a nineteenth century cottage which latterly formed part of the gas works built to serve Bearwood. The single storey building is of a simple design with limited architectural flourish. It is constructed in red brick with a slate roof. It has several prominent chimneys. A twentieth century flat roof extension is noted which detracts from the overall value of the building as a once being a relatively small gate house-style building. It is unlikely that this building ever formed a lodge at entrance to the estate, rather that it was a repurposed cottage which was latterly renamed Mole Lodge, having previously been referred to as forming part of the gas works. It is considered in the HER to be "*indicative of the industrial (productive) corner of the Bearwood Estate*".

3.83 Collectively, the lodges share a group value with each other and also with the wider features which remain, including farm cottages and walled garden. They share a group value with the wider RPG in which they sit and with Bearwood House itself. However, it is difficult to appreciate it in this context as one cannot see the main house due to the depth of woodland planting, and the changes to the RPG around these assets. From the immediate surrounds it is difficult to read these heritage assets as once forming part of a designed landscape. A number of associated features are no longer present which would have helped to provide further definition to their role and existence. This includes the gas works and in respect of West Lodge, the cessation of operations at the walled garden, sawmills or indeed wider workshops which once surrounded them. This has impacted their overall significance. They do provide important evidential and aesthetic value as forming part of a nineteenth century country estate, performing slightly different roles. In respect of both Park Lodge and West Lodge, their visual presence through their design and situation representing either an entrance to the wider estate (and the productive part of the estate), or the public face of the industrial corner of the estate; reflecting Victorian tastes and fashions, through their architecture. The provision of multiple gate houses into the estate would also add visual importance to the estate, perhaps more so, as it was of a relatively late construct when set against more established eighteenth century estates nearby.

3.84 **Setting:** All three lodges are fronting onto the B3030 Mole Road. They remain visually prominent (much less so for Mole Lodge) through their style and situation. They are principally experienced from their immediate setting of the grounds within which they sit, and this includes the walled garden for West Lodge. All three lodges form part of the wider Reading Football Club facilities and therefore have seen a reduction in their visual and functional connectively to the wider estate behind, through different uses and the contemporary forms of enclosure. They do however still visually tie in with the remnant features of the walled garden and farm cottages/sawmill remains behind, though the historic loss of such features as the gas works and indeed the sawmill and workshop operations, or indeed overall legibility of the roads and landscape, have impacted the overall ability to understand the role of these buildings. It is likely that these buildings were to be viewed as part of an overall cluster of less visually desirable features of an estate. The changes to their roles, allied to the greater historic screening of these buildings, means that this sense of visual and functional separation from the wider estate remains true today. The visual disconnect with the wider estate appears to contain these assets to being collectively experienced as part of the productive corner of the estate than perhaps with the wider estate beyond which is screened. These features on the western edge of the estate were perhaps not intended to be seen, in the main, from within the wider pleasure grounds.

3.85 The Site forms part of a wider rural landscape which helped to define most isolated country estates, though clearly the western reaches of the Bearwood estate were less desirable, visually, containing the productive building and facilities. To this end, perhaps the Site would have historically made a more limited contribution to understanding the significance of the Bearwood estate and in the present day this is further compounded by the presence of football training facilities along the entire

flank of the RPG where it faces onto the Site over the B3030. Setting can be said to make positive contribution to understanding the significance of these lodges, with the bulk of any contribution made from the remnant estate buildings and structures which remain, and which help to define their historic roles as part of the wider Bearwood estate. The changes in their ownership and use, as well as the immediate landscape surrounding them has nevertheless impacted the level of contribution made from setting to their overall significance.

3.86 **Significance and Setting Summary:** The Park Lodge and West Lodge are heritage assets of high (national) significance. Mole Lodge is an asset of low (local) significance. Their significance is largely derived from their architectural and historic interest as a components of a wider estate operation and each, respectively performing different roles. Setting makes an important, though secondary, contribution to their significance with the bulk of any contribution granted from their proximity to nearby remnant estate buildings and structures, as well as collectively a group value between all lodges and these additional buildings. The Site can be said to make a very limited overall contribution to their significance, limited to providing a rural context to the wider estate in which they formed part of. The changes to their setting as part of football club training facilities, has reduced the contribution, as has the loss of historic features individually associated with each respective heritage asset, such as the wider works or indeed an operational walled garden.

Reading Room Cottage

3.87 **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.

3.88 **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 Site abuts up to the heritage asset. Its diminutive scale means that the intervisibility is limited to the closest surrounds of the Site. The heritage asset sits in a small rural village and therefore the 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.

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3.89 **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. This contribution is largely historic now, however.

Monks Cottage

3.90 **Significance:** Monks Cottage is not identified on the Wokingham District Council List of Buildings of Traditional Character, nor is it identified on the HER. The building was not deemed to merit classification as a heritage asset during the Site walkover. Monks Cottage is assessed here simply due to it being raised by the Parish Council. The cottage is not shown on the 1840 tithe map; however, it is depicted on the 1872-1873 Ordnance Survey Map. It is not labelled as Monks Cottage until the 1967-1968 Ordnance Survey Map.

3.91 **Setting:** Monks Cottage is primarily experienced in its immediate setting of the private gardens in which it sits. It is from here that one would be best able to appreciate any architectural interest. The Site surrounds the heritage asset. Its diminutive scale means that the intervisibility is limited to the closest surrounds of the Site.

3.92 **Significance and Setting Summary:** Monks Cottage is a heritage asset of low (local) interest at best. Its significance primarily derives from its architectural interest. The changes to its fabric will have impacted to a high degree its significance.

Arborfield Cross Conservation Area

3.93 Arborfield Cross Conservation Area is a compact designation which encloses the historic core of Arborfield Cross. A Conservation Area Study was undertaken in 2000. Whilst it is outdated it provides a basic summary of the special interest of the designation. A summary is set out below. Where text is taken from the study, it is referenced in italic:

- Arborfield possibly dates from the Roman period, though the original settlement (now known as Arborfield) was located a short distance to the north-west of Arborfield Cross;
- The settlement had two coaching inns in the fifteenth century focussing on the crossroads in the hamlet, which was on a coaching route from Hampshire through to the Midlands. This crossroads has now been replaced by a large roundabout;
- The focus on the crossroads was deemed to set the Bull Inn and War memorial and immediate surrounds *“in contrast to the open farmland to the north and new housing to the south”* (Conservation Area Study). Whilst this still remains, in part, the construction of the roundabout erodes a part of the overall historic legibility of the crossroads which once existed, and therefore some the significance of the designation;
- The old street pattern is reinforced by a number of listed buildings which sit tightly up against the road network;
- The boundary of the conservation area is such that there are post-war houses which intersperse amongst the older buildings, even though they themselves are outside of the designation;
- Buildings vary in materials and design, from simple fifteenth century timber framed cottages to larger brick built houses often with more elaborate detailing.

3.94 **Setting:** The bulk of the conservation area is tightly enclosed by twentieth century housing estates, leaving the northern reaches more open towards farmland. It can be said that this farmland, outside of the designation, allows one to read this as being a rural village, though it remains difficult to

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interpret it as a hamlet, as referred to in the conservation area appraisal. The intermingling of post-war housing which sits alongside the historic core but outside of the conservation area, means that the full effect of this historic core is, in part, lost. The post-war housing forms part of the immediate setting of the heritage asset and negatively impacts upon the overall significance of the designation. The Site sits some distance from the conservation area and shares very limited intervisibility, limited to the northern most edge of the designation, within Newland Farm. Views from the Site are only granted from the southernmost reaches of the Site with the vast bulk of the Site not sharing any intervisibility. It supports the wider rurality of the conservation area, though forms a very small part of the visual setting of the designation.

3.95 **Significance and Setting Summary:** The interest and significance of the Arborfield Cross Conservation Area primarily derives from the evidential value of the historic settlement which evolved out of its situation at a crossroads and through the legibility of its historic settlement pattern around and funnelling out of development around this meeting point. It also gains some significance from the density and group value of historic buildings and the historic layout of the development and infrastructure. The roundabout which replaced the crossroads has much impacted the significance of the conservation area, through eroding some of this historic legibility. The conservation area's significance is also derived from some aesthetic value in terms of its rural surrounds, limited to the north of the village setting within the conservation area, though there is very limited intervisibility with the Site from within the boundary of the designation and vice versa. The significance of the conservation area is also derived from the architectural and historic interest of many of the buildings within the designation, which range in age and style from the fifteenth century to the nineteenth century, and the special interest of its listed buildings.

3.96 The degree of enclosure within much of the designation and the later roundabout which acts a visual 'stop' to views in and out, is such that the bulk of views of the designation are from within. Its setting, however, whilst important, offers a secondary contribution to its overall significance and this is limited to the farmland to the north of the village which makes a small contribution in helping to define the designation as forming part of a small village. Within the wider landscape, the Site can be said to make an overall very small contribution to the significance of the conservation area in supporting this rurality.

Carter's Hill House

3.97 **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.

3.98 The land surrounding the house was once farmed by Newland Farm and therefore has an historic functional association with the Site which surrounds much of the heritage asset (NE and SE Area). The farm and surrounding land were owned by the Simonds family in the mid-nineteenth century so shares a limited group value with the Grade II listed Simonds family tomb (above) in the former parish church of Arborfield. 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.

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3.99 **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 dwelling rather than agricultural dwelling. The conversions of former farm buildings and further new dwellings reinforce the domestic character now. The Site forms much of the intermediate and wider setting, though given the scale of the Site only the relatively near surrounds afford any meaningful views of the heritage asset and much of the Site shares no intervisibility with the heritage asset. An agricultural context forms part of its historic functional and visual setting only now; in which the Site also falls. Presently the Site helps to define the house as a rural dwelling only. 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. Within this, the surrounds, including parts of the Site provide the rural context to this rural heritage asset.

3.100 **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.

Oak Cottage

3.101 **Significance:** The Grade II listed two-storey Oak Cottage was constructed in the sixteenth century, extended in the seventeenth century and further altered in the twentieth century. The timber framed cottage was originally rectangular in plan though has been extended with a single-storey side extension on each flank respectively. The building is part rendered/part brick infill and built over two bays. Twentieth century leaded casement windows prevail throughout. Internally, it is understood (listing citation) that much of the timber frame is visible. The building presents as a vernacular rural workers' dwelling in its scale and simple design and use of materials, providing evidential and aesthetic value as such. The additional extensions alter the appearance of the building and lessen the significance slightly.

3.102 **Setting:** Oak Cottage is primarily experienced from its immediate setting of its private gardens where one can best experience the architectural interest of this rural dwelling. In the intermediate surrounds Oak Cottage sits next to a terrace of more contemporary dwellings which remove the greater sense of isolation that once surrounded the cottage. In the wider surrounds, the heritage asset is difficult to experience given the degree of enclosure from mature tree planting to the north and east when allied to its relatively diminutive scale. The Site forms a part of the intermediate and wider surrounds of the heritage asset, though intervisibility to the north and west is only granted in the near surrounds of the cottage within the Site. New housing estate development to the south also forms part of wider sequential views and removes some of the rurality surrounding the heritage asset. The wider surrounds do however provide a rural context to this small dwelling, including the wider Site. Setting (functional setting resulting from its rural situation) makes a positive contribution to the overall significance, though it is secondary in degree. Within this, the Site makes a contribution.

3.103 **Significance and Setting Summary:** Oak Cottage is a heritage asset of high (national) significance. Its significance is largely defined by its architectural and historic special interest as a vernacular sixteenth century rural worker dwelling as evidenced through its design and materials used. Setting helps to make a positive, though secondary, contribution to the overall significance through helping to provide the rural context to the dwelling and the Site forms part of this contribution.

Sindlesham Mill

3.104 **Significance:** The Grade II listed Sindlesham Mill was constructed in the mid nineteenth century as a water mill, powered by the River Loddon. It was further altered in the twentieth century. The mill now forms part of a hotel complex and comprises, amongst other uses, a restaurant facility. It is built over three-storeys in brick with a slate roof. The frontage (facing south-west) is over eight bays with sash windows of varying sizes depending upon the floor. Simple architectural details are noted over the windows comprising segmental headed brick recesses with a larger segmental arch built over the mill race and small arches over second floor windows. At the left hand gable end, a horizontal boarded hoist cover is noted over the top two floors, supported on plain brackets. It is likely that this structure was further extended downwards in the twentieth century as earlier photos (www.millsarchive.org) indicate that it was a much smaller structure limited to the top floor only. The building milled flour until 1967 when it was converted to its current use, which also saw several new buildings constructed; some of which attach directly to the heritage asset. These later buildings are of no architectural or historic merit and, indeed, impact detrimentally upon the significance of the listed building. The former mill provides evidential and aesthetic value as a nineteenth century mill, through its materials and design. Its design is reflective of an industrial role for the building with limited architectural flourish; limited to that which was absolutely necessary to perform its role as a water mill. The change to a hotel use has much eroded its significance, as has the later buildings and car parking. It was not possible to confirm internal changes to facilitate the new use, though it is likely that much of the mill gear and layout has been lost.

3.105 In the early twentieth century it was owned by the Simonds family and therefore shares an historic group value with both with the listed Simonds family tomb in the grounds of the former parish church at Arborfield, but also with Carter's Hill Farmhouse which was once owned by the Simonds family. Parts of the Site were also owned by the Simonds family and from which grain for milling may have, in part, been sourced. This link to the wider Site provides an historic functional association. The mill shares a group value with the adjacent Grade II listed Bridge at Sindlesham Mill which was likely built at the same time as the mill and provided means to convey traffic (including mill-bound traffic) over the River Loddon adjacent to the mill.

3.106 **Setting:** Sindlesham Mill is primarily experienced from its immediate setting of the River Loddon and the associated riverbanks. It is from here that one can appreciate the mill's historic reliance upon the River Loddon and how the building straddled the watercourse. The location of the heritage asset is entirely dependent upon its situation on a waterway and therefore the wider surrounds are more inconsequential. This said, to a degree, a relatively close proximity to the raw grains (for milling) would have been necessary and therefore some degree of contribution, historic only, is derived from the wider agricultural landscape in which the crop may have been sourced.

3.107 **Significance and Setting Summary:** Sindlesham Mill is a heritage asset of high (national) significance. Its significance is largely derived from its architectural and historic special interest as a nineteenth century former water mill, through its design and materials used. The later leisure uses for the heritage asset, as well as associated built development, negatively impact the former mill. The heritage asset shares a low degree of group value with other heritage assets within the Site through the historic association with the Simonds family, and also a group value with the nearby listed Bridge at Sindlesham Mill. Setting makes an important, though secondary, contribution to the heritage asset, with the vast bulk of any contribution derived from its situation over the River Loddon, which helps to define its historic role. The Site, in supporting a wider rural context, and in which may have yielded crop for the mill, makes a very small positive contribution through a more generic historic functional role in the milling operations.

Berkshire Masonic Centre

3.108 **Significance:** Formerly a large house, the Grade II listed building is now part of a Masonic centre. It is now referred to as 'Sindlesham Court' and is a banqueting and conference centre. It was constructed in the late eighteenth century and further extended in the twentieth century. It is a two storey building with painted stucco below a hipped slate roof. It has simple architectural adornments including a string course, plain frieze and cornice. A parapet with balustraded panels and a flanking central pediment (listing citation). A pseudo Doric enclosed porch with two columns, entablature and blocking course. Sash windows predominate. A smaller extension is present, though several larger twentieth century extensions are noted which are of no architectural or historic merit. The proportions of the built development now mean that the bulk of the twentieth century extension outweigh the original host property to the extent that it no longer exhibits residential proportions or indeed style, overall. It appears commercial in use, which has impacted its overall significance. It also sits amongst extensive twentieth century residential and commercial development and large surface carparks which compound this appearance. The building would once have enjoyed relative isolation though now largely lost. The Masonic Centre provides evidential and aesthetic value as an eighteenth century former large Georgian house. The changes to its role and further extensions have much impacted the significance.

3.109 **Setting:** The historic setting has been much eroded through later development which has urbanised the surrounds to such a degree that it can no longer be read as a former country dwelling. The gardens have been largely replaced by car parking and new development. The wider Site shares no intervisibility with this heritage asset, and while it could help to provide a rural context to the heritage asset, the intervening, and closely surrounding, later development is such that it can be said to make no contribution to the overall significance of this heritage asset.

3.110 **Significance and Setting Summary:** The Berkshire Masonic Centre is a heritage asset of high (national) significance. Its significance is largely derived from its architectural and historic special interest as an eighteenth century large rural dwelling. The loss of a residential use and the later extensions and surrounding car parking has much impacted the significance. Setting makes very little, if any, contribution now to the significance on account of these changes.

Sindlesham Conservation Area

3.111 The Sindlesham Conservation Area was designated in 1993. It is relatively small in extent; covering, in broadly equal measure, the village of Sindlesham around the central King George's Field, and the northern reaches of the Bearwood College registered park and garden. The Council has prepared a basic conservation area appraisal (adopted 1994) which, although outdated, is quoted below, where relevant. Below is a short summary of the character and appearance of the conservation area. Where taken directly from the appraisal it is quoted in italics below:

- *"The special character of the estate village associated with the Bearwood Mansion and its grounds is a good example of the historic relationship between the grand house and the supporting buildings.*
- *The distinct style of the heavily decorated Walter estate cottages associated them with the grand mansion, they all display brick diaper patterning, steep roof pitches and decorative bargeboards and are well set back from the road."*
- The conservation area is divided between the village of Sindlesham and parts of the Bearwood grounds and parkland;
- The village component focusses around the King George's Field which all houses front onto. Originally, the nineteenth century estate village (within the designation) was largely on the eastern side and represented the only development. Later twentieth century housing estates now enclose the western side of the playing field (outside of the designation). The southern

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flank of the playing field is heavily enclosed from the Bearwood College RPG by extensive woodland planting;

- The Bearwood College component focusses upon an established Wellingtonia Avenue and the Grade II* listed Bearwood College; the avenue creates a very imposing entrance to Bearwood College which is visible at the end of the avenue;

3.112 Bearwood's origins date to pre-Norman times later becoming part of the ancient Royal Windsor Forest. Bearwood belonged to the Bishop of Salisbury until Dissolution when it passed to the Crown. This ownership lasted until 1816 when John Walter II purchased 400 acres and built the Cottage Villa in 1822 within the estate. The nearby Church of St Catherine was also built. In 1860 a new mansion was constructed replacing the earlier dwelling which was designed in its "*eclectic style, part Jacobean, part Gothic, part French chateau*" (conservation area appraisal).

3.113 John Walter built most houses in Sindlesham at this time in the same Jacobean style, whilst at the same time building the workshops for brick making and stone and gas and timber mills for the construction of the village. At the same time, Walter redesigned the landscaped grounds and parkland at Bearwood including the formal Victorian Rock Garden as well as a number of formal Walks throughout the grounds to harness the pleasing views.

3.114 **Setting:** It is considered that the conservation area is primarily inward looking with limited meaningful views granted from its setting which comprises primarily the later twentieth century built development of Sindlesham, and repurposed former parkland associated with Bearwood College and also nearby farmland. The degree of woodland planting around Bearwood College RPG is such that this part of the conservation area is heavily enclosed. In the village component, the housing surrounding the central King Georges Field provide a robust barrier to any longer distance views out.

3.115 Given the depth of planting and the bulk of housing around much of the conservation area, setting can be said to make a limited contribution. If anything, the wider surrounds, where they remain rural, help to accentuate the former country house and estate, though this is very limited overall. The remaining RPG outside of the conservation area provides an historic functional setting to the conservation area, historically all in the same ownership. The Site boundary is at distance from the conservation area.

3.116 **Significance and Setting Summary:** The interest and significance of the Sindlesham Conservation Area derives from the evidential value which the largely planned Victorian village, surrounding a playing field, alongside the northern reaches of the former Bearwood estate through legibility of the historic settlement pattern and its relationship to the principal house; the relative density, planned nature and group value of historic buildings and the historic layout of the development and infrastructure; linking the village through to the house and estate. The conservation area's significance is also derived from some aesthetic value in terms of its heavily landscaped designed landscape setting within the conservation area, and the associated visual ties between the estate houses in the village and the main house. The significance of the conservation area is also derived from the architectural and historic interest of many of the Victorian buildings within the designation, built to provide accommodation to estate workers, and the special interest of its listed buildings and the planned nature of not only the parkland but the communal recreation ground onto which the estate workers houses were built to enjoy and make use of. The Site can be said to make no contribution to the overall significance of the conservation area.

4 Proposals and assessment of impact

Proposals

4.1 Application for the phased development of a new community at Loddon Garden Village, comprising, in outline:

- up to 2,800 residential units to include up to 100 custom and self-build plots;
- 2 primary schools (up to 3 forms of entry) to include early years provision and 1 secondary school (up to 12 forms of entry);
- one District Centre, to incorporate up to 11,000m² of Class E (Commercial, Business and Service, to include a including food store of around 2,500m²), and Class F (Local Community and Learning);
- one Local Centre; to incorporate up to 2,400m² of Class E;
- a Sports Hub to include sports pitches and pavilion space;
- up to 4,250m² of further Class E and Class F development to include commercial, health care and public house (sui generis);
- comprehensive green infrastructure including a Country Park, landscaping and public open space, and ecological enhancement measures;
- 20 gypsy and traveller pitches;
- comprehensive drainage and flood alleviation measures to include Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) and engineering measures within Loddon Valley for the River Loddon;
- internal road network including spine road with pedestrian and cycle connections and associated supporting infrastructure;
- new and modified public rights of way;
- associated utilities, infrastructure, and engineering works, including the undergrounding of overhead lines;
- Ground reprofiling to accommodate infrastructure, flood alleviation and development parcels;
- Up to 0.5ha of land adjoining St Bartholomew's church for use as cemetery;
- Electricity substation (up to 1.5ha)

4.2 All matters reserved other than access, incorporating:

- a new pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access to Lower Earley Way via a new 4th arm to the Meldreth Way roundabout;
- a new pedestrian, cycle and vehicular bridge over the M4;
- a new pedestrian, cycle and vehicular bridge over the River Loddon;
- a new vehicular access to the A327 Reading Road, via a new arm to the Observer Way roundabout;
- a new pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access to Thames Valley Science Park;
- an initial phase of internal roads with associated drainage, landscape and engineering works and ground reprofiling, between the A327 and the south eastern boundary of the site.

4.3 Application includes full permission for the change of use of 40.4 hectares of agricultural land to Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), 18.35 hectares of SANG link, and provision of

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Biodiversity Net Gain measures, the demolition and clearance of 20,809 m² of buildings and structures at the Centre for Dairy Research (CEDAR) and at Hall Farm, the demolition of 3 existing dwellings on Carter's Hill Lane, and the retention of specified buildings at Hall Farm.

Assessment of impact

- 4.4 Where identified heritage assets share similar settings, they have been collectively assessed and discussed below to avoid unnecessary repetition.
- 4.5 With all heritage assets it is unlikely that the proposed mitigations will reduce harm in entirety given the fundamental changes that would likely be seen to the wider setting arising from the proposed development on the Site.

Cutbush Farm and Barn

- 4.6 The proposed development will have no physical impact on Cutbush Farm and Barn. The proposals in the area of the Site closest to these assets undeveloped landscaped open space. Therefore, the proposed development will have no impact on the significance of these assets.

Shinfield Grange

- 4.7 The proposed development will have no physical impact on Shinfield Grange. The proposals in the area of the Site closest to these assets is undeveloped landscaped open space. Therefore, the proposed development will have no impact on the significance of these assets.

Oldhouse Farm and Barn

- 4.8 The proposed development will have no physical impact on Shinfield Grange. The proposals in the area of the Site closest to these assets is green open space. Therefore, the proposed development will have no impact on the significance of these assets.

Hall Place Farmhouse and Former Parish Church

- 4.9 **Setting:** Both the farmhouse and remains of the parish church sit in a rural context with visual ties, including the remaining Arborfield Hall parkland, and a link between these two assets themselves, as Hall Place Farmhouse was the home farm to the manorial seat, which itself was part of a settlement of power with the former parish church. These heritage assets sit within the south-western part of the Site.
- 4.10 The development of agricultural land will alter the setting. However, the proposals have been designed sensitively and include some heritage enhancements. For example, a footpath is proposed to link the former St Bartholomew's Church with the current one. A large area of park and garden is proposed, including the former moat-like feature, to retain a rural aspect. Furthermore, a view corridor to the current St Bartholomew's church has been designed.
- 4.11 Given its location, built development in the remainder of the Site will be unlikely to share any intervisibility with these heritage assets given the scale of the Site and intervening tree cover, though the loss of the wider agricultural land within the Site will erode the current functional setting of the farmhouse.
- 4.12 Development within the setting of the farmhouse and church remains has the capacity to result in a **less than substantial degree of harm** to the significance of these heritage assets given the change to their setting. This harm will engage paragraph 215 of the NPPF, requiring harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme.

Mitigations:

4.13 The former parish church presents an opportunity to become a feature of any development which could be accentuated with the careful repair and maintenance of the ruins with heritage information boards to help residents built a picture of the church, its role in the village and also as part of a settlement of power with Arborfield Hall. Features such as the Simmonds family tomb help to further define the church's role in, and relationship with, the surroundings.

4.14 **Conclusions:** Given the degree of public benefits arising from the proposed development, it is unlikely that development in the surrounds of these heritage assets would preclude development coming forward on the Site. There would however likely be a degree of harm through development in their setting though sensitive management of their settings can assist in reducing the degree of harm.

Bridge House

4.15 Bridge House sits outside of the Site. Development proposed on the Site is unlikely to visually impact the near surrounds of this heritage asset given its situation close to the River Loddon and outside of the Site. There may be additional vehicular traffic and light spill however and the provision of a road junction to the south will likely exacerbate both. Existing and proposed boundary tree planting along Shinfield Road will likely provide robust screening however, when viewing towards the residential development. Given the location of the heritage asset on the south-west edge of the Site and the scale of the Site, there is unlikely to be any intervisibility between built development in the south-eastern and north-eastern area or indeed much of the built development in general.

4.16 The setting has the capacity to change as a result of the proposed development and this could result in a **low level of less than substantial harm**, which reflects the degree of screening proposed and the relative distance from the currently proposed built development area.

Old Rectory and the Church of St Bartholomew

4.17 Development in the wider Site, notably in the north-western, north-eastern and much of the south-eastern area is unlikely to share any intervisibility with the Old Rectory, though likely to share greater intervisibility with the current parish church. Development on the Site will alter the functional setting of both heritage assets, as rural dwellings in eroding the wider rurality surrounding them.

4.18 There is capacity for the proposed development to result in a **less than substantial degree of harm** to the significance of the heritage assets, through development within their setting. This harm will engage paragraph 215 of the NPPF requiring harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme.

Molebridge Farmhouse and The Glen

4.19 The proposed development will have no physical impact on Molebridge Farmhouse and The Glen. The proposals in the area of the Site closest to these assets is green open space. Therefore, the proposed development will have no impact on the significance of these assets.

Bearwood College RPG and Mole Road Lodges

4.20 The proposed development will have no physical impact on the Bearwood College RPD, including Mole Road Lodges. The proposals in the area of the Site closest to these assets is green open space. Therefore, the proposed development will have no impact on the significance of these assets.

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Reading Room Cottage

4.21 **Setting:** Reading Room Cottage is now a residential dwelling. It derives much of its contribution to its remaining significance from setting from its village situation and near to the church, so that it could serve the local community as a community facility. Accordingly, the rural surrounds make less of a contribution, though, in supporting the village does provide some context. The relatively diminutive scale of the heritage asset means that intervisibility with much of the Site will be non-existent; limited to intervisibility with only the closest fields.

4.22 The current proposals suggest that the heritage asset would be set away from proposed built development, set within an area of open space and woodland planting. The proposals also see additional woodland screening around the proposed residential development.

4.23 The proposed development has the capacity to, at most give rise to a **negligible degree of harm**. This engages paragraph 216 of the NPPF requiring the harm to be weighed against the significance of the heritage asset.

Arborfield Conservation Area

4.24 **Setting:** Arborfield Conservation Area shares some limited intervisibility with the Site, primarily the southernmost reaches. Development on the wider Site could increase the degree of urbanisation in the wider surrounds, though it is recognised that there is a belt of rural landscape between the Site and the conservation area. There may be also additional intervisibility with parts of the Site presently screened from view dependent upon build heights proposed. It should also be noted that the designation itself has seen urbanising change, such as a roundabout in the core of the village, and previous twentieth century housing estates which have impacted the overall significance.

4.25 The current proposal sees a robust tree planting along the southern edge which will provide a strong screening and will help to preserve some degree of rurality. The proposed development will likely create additional light spill when viewing from the edge of the designation towards the Site and will give rise to a possible increase in traffic flows through the designation. It can be said that the development of the Site has the capacity to give rise to a level of **less than substantial harm**, but that this could be at the lower end of the spectrum.

4.26 **Mitigations:** The robust planting along the southern edge as currently proposed is supported. Any scope to provide clusters of tree planting within any residential development blocks will help to break up the massing of built form in any longer distance views that may be generated.

4.27 **Conclusions:** It is unlikely that development in the surrounds of this heritage asset would preclude development coming forward on the Site, though sensitive management of its setting can assist in reducing the degree of harm.

Carter's Hill House and Oak Cottage

4.28 The proposed development will have no physical impact on Carter's Hill House and Oak Cottage. The proposals in the area of the Site closest to these assets is green open space. Therefore, the proposed development will have no impact on the significance of these assets.

Sindlesham Mill

4.29 The proposed development will have no physical impact on Sindlesham Mill. The proposals in the area of the Site closest to these assets is green open space. Therefore, the proposed development will have no impact on the significance of these assets.

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Berkshire Masonic Centre

4.30 The proposed development will have no physical impact on the Berkshire Masonic Centre. The proposals in the area of the Site closest to these assets is green open space. Therefore, the proposed development will have no impact on the significance of these assets.

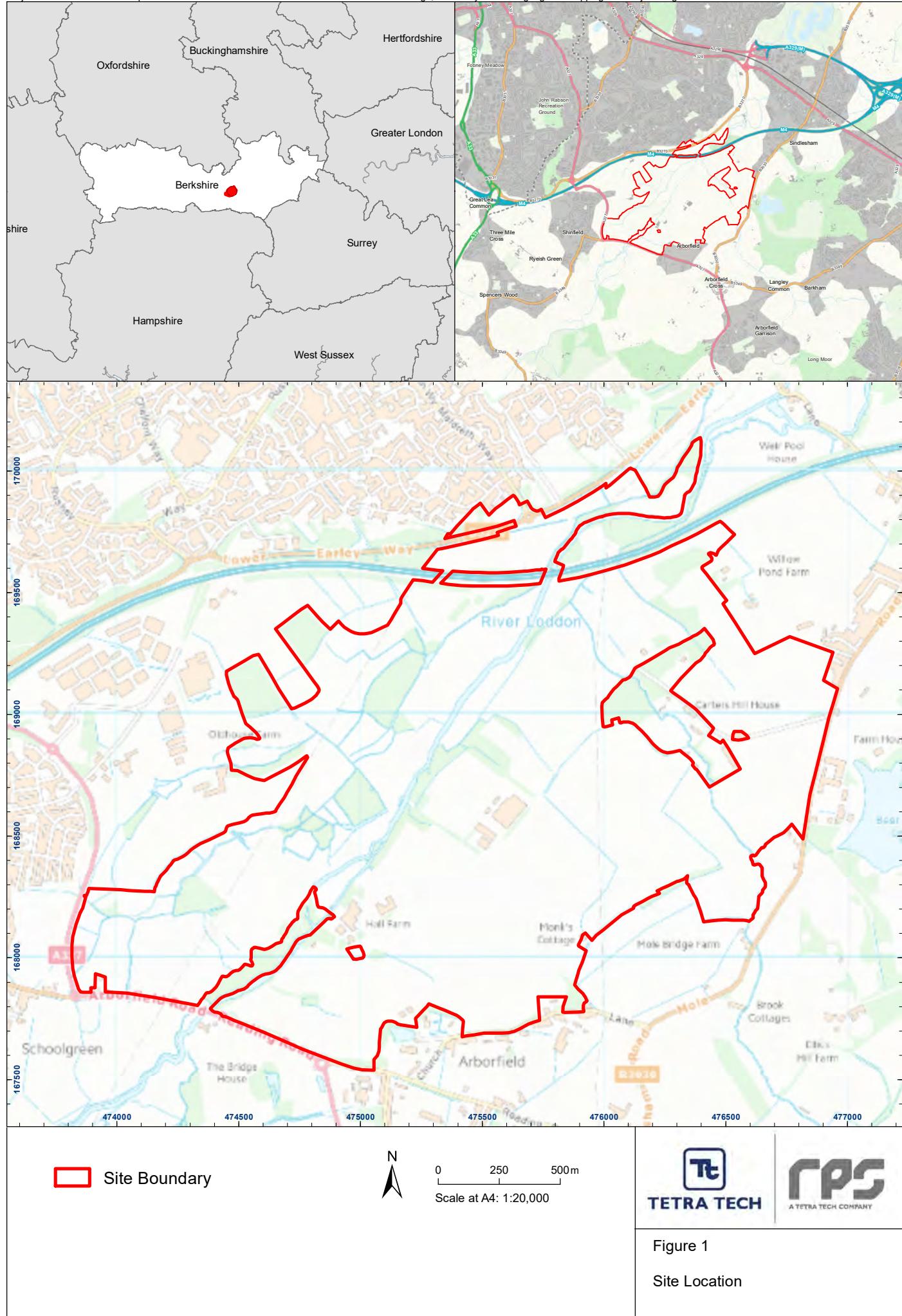
Sindlesham Conservation Area

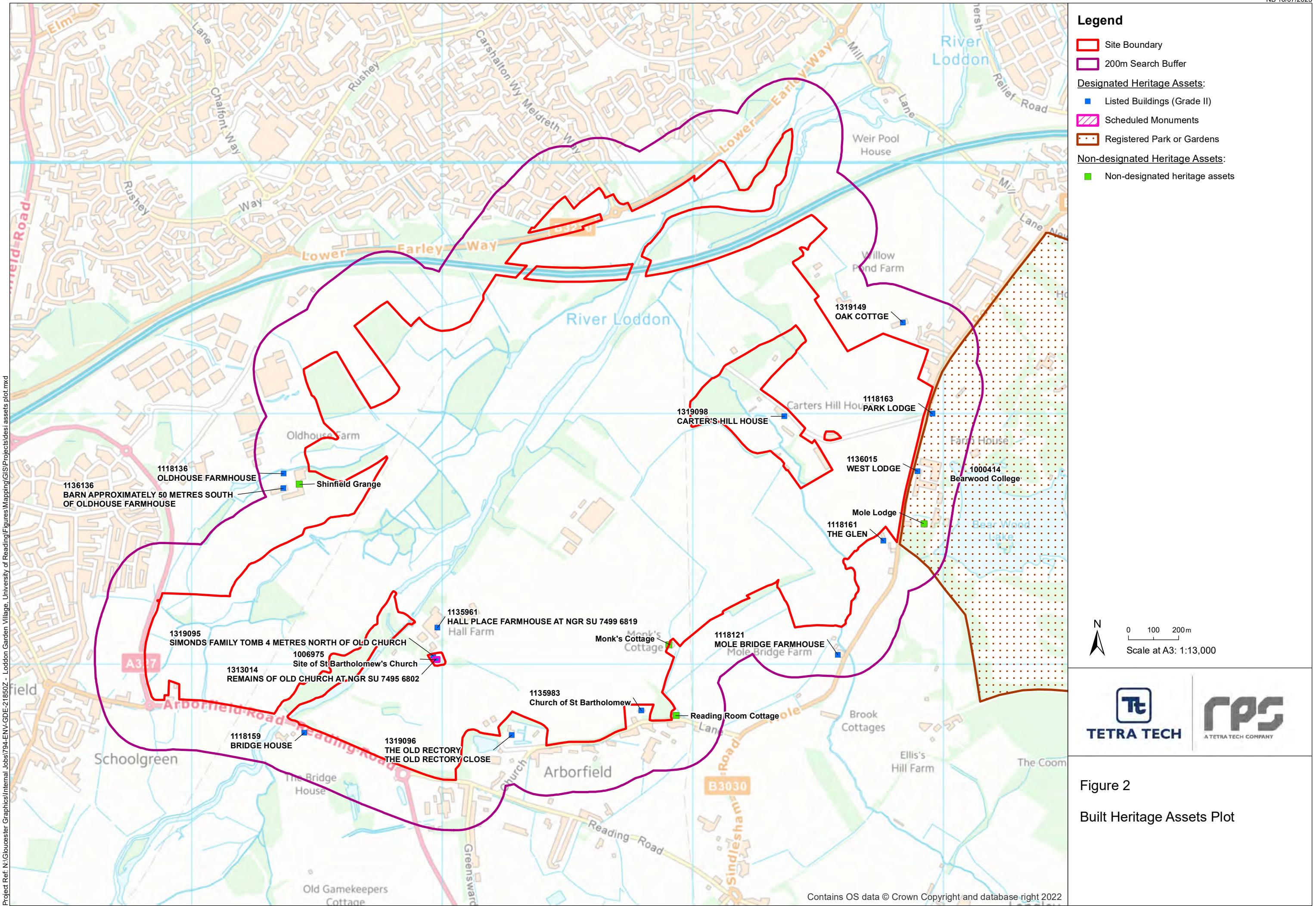
4.31 The proposed development will have no physical impact on Sindlesham Conservation Area. The proposals in the area of the Site closest to these assets is green open space. Therefore, the proposed development will have no impact on the significance of these assets.

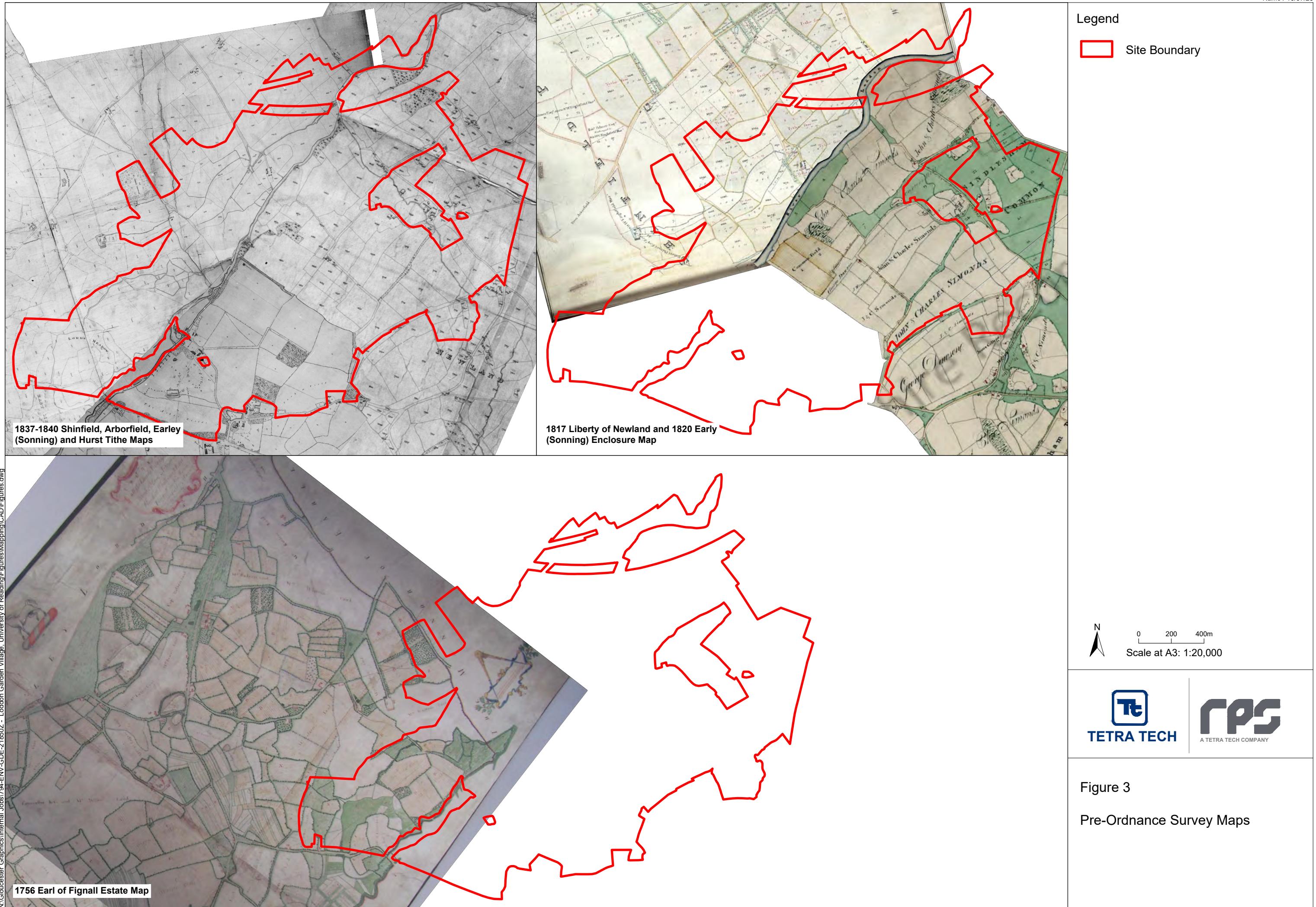
5 Conclusion

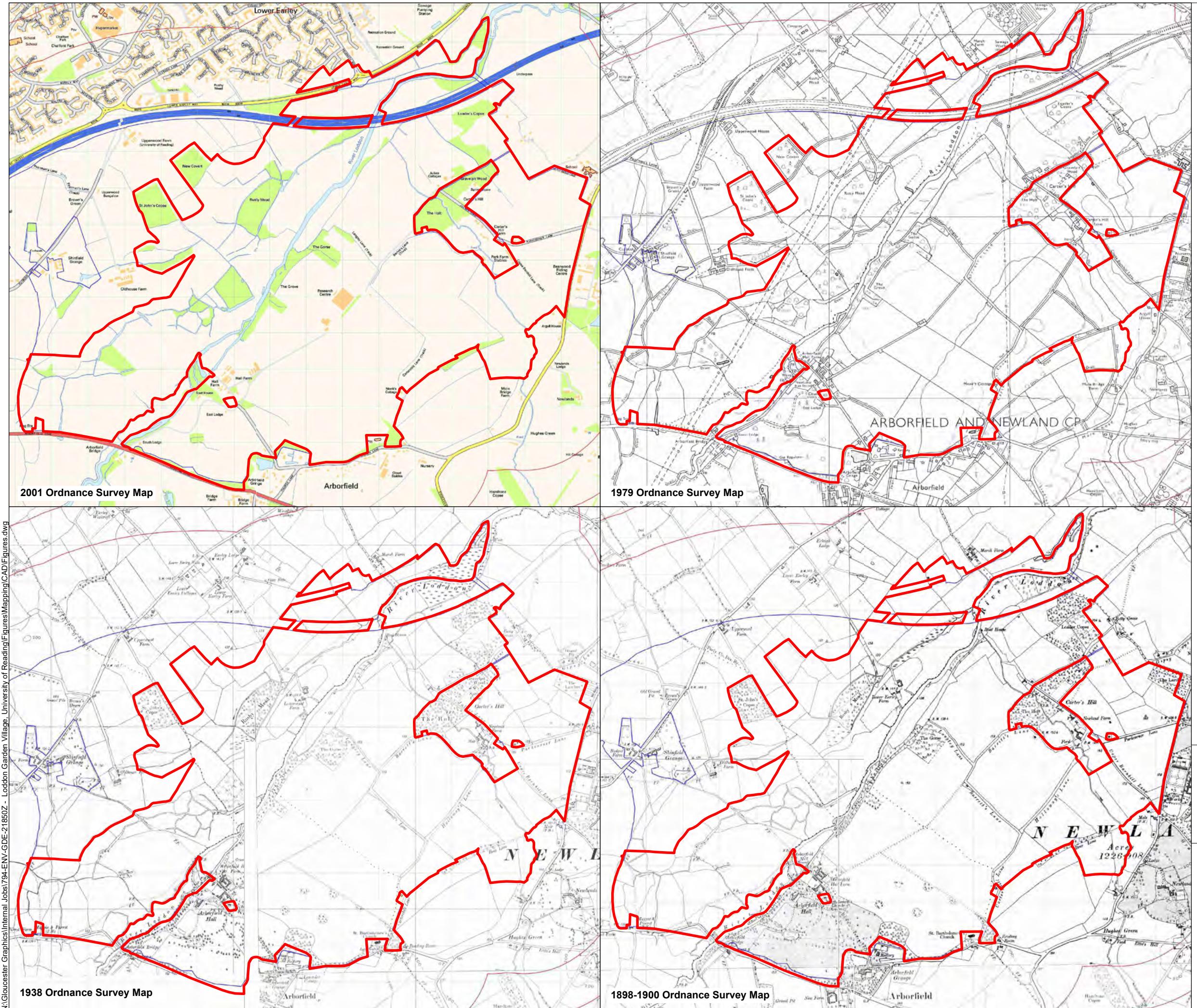
- 5.1 This Built Heritage Statement has been prepared by RPS Heritage on behalf of the University of Reading to assess the potential impacts to built heritage assets arising from the proposed development of the Site.
- 5.2 Bringing forward development proposed on the Site has the capacity to give rise to up to a less than substantial degree of harm to the significance of identified designated built heritage assets or a minor degree of harm to non-designated heritage assets within the Application through development within their settings. For designated heritage assets, this harm will engage paragraph 215 of the NPPF which requires that harm be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, or engaging paragraph 216 of the NPPF requiring harm to be weighed against the significance of the heritage asset for non-designated heritage assets.
- 5.3 The Statement identifies constraints to bringing forward development but also opportunities to reduce levels of harm through sensitive design and landscaping. The Statement identifies that, based upon the current proposals, overall, there are no reasons why the proposed development could not come forward on the Site, though any harm would need to be weighed against public benefits of the proposals (designated heritage assets) and the significance of the non-designated heritage assets. Suggested opportunities and mitigations can help to minimise the potential scope for harm.

Figures









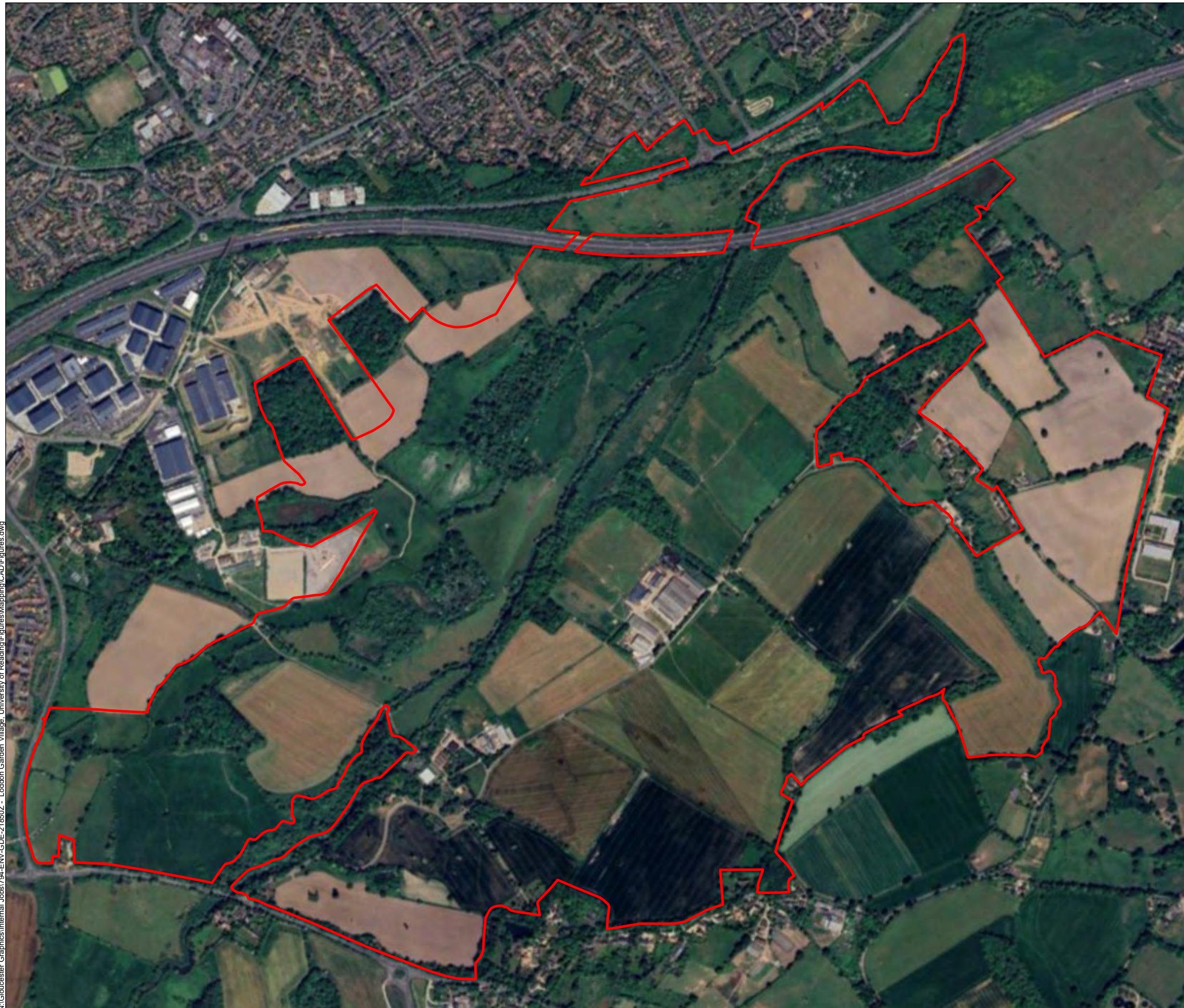
Legend

Site Boundary

N
0 200 400m
Scale at A3: 1:20,000



Figure 4
Ordnance Survey Maps

**Legend**

- Site Boundary

N
0 100 200m
Scale at A3: 1:10,000



Figure 5
2025 Aerial Photograph

Plates



Plate 1: The River Loddon.



Plate 2: Pasture land within the north-western part of the Site.



Plate 3: Trackway Leading from Hall Place Farm towards Old House Farm.



Plate 4: Cutbush Lane East looking to the east.



Plate 5: Cutbush Lane East looking west towards the Shinfield East Relief Road.



Plate 6: Looking south-east over the Site from motorway bridge on Cutbush Lane East.



Plate 7: Looking from Horse Chestnut Avenue leading towards Hall Place Farm over former Arborfield Hall parkland.



Plate 8: Avenue of horse chestnut trees within Site looking towards Hall Place Farm.



Plate 9: View north into Site from B3030 Mole Road.



Plate 10: View within Site looking south-east towards Bearwood College RPG (woodland in distance).



Plate 11: View south-west within Site in direction of Arborfield.



Plate 12: View north-east over Site from B3030.



Plate 13: View north-east from centre of Site adjacent to dairy research facility.



Plate 14: The dairy research centre.



Plate 15: View east along public byway by edge of Gravelpit Wood.



Plate 16: View north-west from edge of Gravelpit Wood towards M4 motorway.



Plate 17: View north-west from centre of the Site.



Plate 18: View from centre of the Site looking over River Loddon floodplain towards M4 motorway.



Plate 19: Cutbush Farmhouse and Barn viewed from Cutbush Lane East.



Plate 20: Cutbush Farmhouse viewed from rear on Cutbush Lane East.



Plate 21: Shinfield Grange. (Source: cc-by-sa/2.0 - © Pam Brophy - geograph.org.uk/p/17639).



Plate 22: Oldhouse Farmhouse viewed from access road.



Plate 23: Oldhouse Farm barn viewed from adjacent to farmhouse.



Plate 24: Hall Place Farmhouse.



Plate 25: Hall Place Farm barns viewed from entrance to farm.



Plate 26: Former Parish Church of St Bartholomew (ruins) viewed from access road to Hall Place Farm.



Plate 27: Former Parish Church of St Bartholomew (ruins).



Plate 28: Bridge House viewed from the A327.



Plate 29: Glimpsed views of the Old Rectory through extensive boundary tree planting.



Plate 30: Access lane leading to the Old Rectory and formerly onwards to the former parish church (ruins).



Plate 31: Church of St Bartholomew.



Plate 32: Church of St Bartholomew viewed SE through the Site from former Arborfield Hall parkland.



Plate 33: Church of St Bartholomew viewed from the north-east.



Plate 34: Mole Bridge Farmhouse viewed from the B3030.



Plate 35: The Glen viewed from the B3030.



Plate 36: Northern entrance into Bearwood College RPG from within Sindlesham.



Plate 37: Eastern entrance into Bearwood College RPG (Bearwood Lakes golf club).



Plate 38: View from the B3030 into the sports fields associated with Bearwood College in the RPG.



Plate 39: Park Lodge within the Bearwood College RPG viewed from the B3030.



Plate 40: West Lodge within the Bearwood College RPG viewed from the B3030.