

BUILT HERITAGE STATEMENT

Land at Spencers Wood, Basingstoke Road, Shinfield, Berkshire

794-PLN-HER-00208.2
Land at Spencers Wood
Berkshire
v.4
February 2025

**SPENCERS WOOD, BASINGSTOKE ROAD, SHINFIELD, BERKSHIRE:
BUILT HERITAGE STATEMENT**

Document status					
Version	Purpose of document	Authored by	Reviewed by	Approved by	Review date
1	Draft	TR	MF	MF	06.02.2024
2	Second issue for client review	TR		MF	31.10.2024
3	Third issue for client	TR		MF	18.02.2025
4	Fourth issue (Final)	TR		MF	27.02.2025

Approval for issue		
Myk Flitcroft MCIfA		28 February 2025

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Built Heritage Statement has been prepared by RPS for Richborough.

The Statement supports a planning application for a mixed-use development of a 72.04 acre parcel of land located to the east of Basingstoke Road and at the southern edge of Spencers Wood, Shinfield, Berkshire.

The report provides an assessment of the built heritage assets potentially affected through the development of the site, addressing the information requirements of the Government's National Planning Policy Framework, particularly paragraph 207, and Wokingham Borough Council's Local Plan in relation to built heritage.

Archaeological heritage assets have been considered separately in the accompanying Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (RPS, 2024, ref: 794-PLN-HER-00208.1).

There are no designated or non-designated built heritage assets located within the site. The assessment identifies and has considered the potential sensitivity of fifteen Listed Buildings (two Grade II* and remainder Grade II), one Registered Park and Garden (Swallowfield Park) and four non-designated built heritage assets located within a 1km search area surrounding the site. A Scheduled Monument located within the search area is considered separately within the Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment.

The assessment has also considered the potential sensitivity of ten Listed Buildings located outside of the search area, but which are associated and located with Swallowfield Park (Park & Garden), including Swallowfield Park and Adjoining Stable Block (Listed Building) located c.1.1km to the south-east of the site.

The report has established that of these heritage assets, the proposed development has the potential to affect the significance of the Swallowfield Park and Adjoining Stable Block (Grade II* Listed Building), Swallowfield Park (Registered Park and Garden) and Sheepbridge Court (Grade II* Listed Building) through changes within their respective settings.

The remaining fourteen Listed Buildings and four non-designated built heritage assets located within the search area and nine of the ten Listed Buildings located within Swallowfield Park are not considered sensitive to the proposed development.

The Statement has established that the site, in its undeveloped state forms a neutral element within the settings of Swallowfield Park and Adjoining Stable Block, Swallowfield Park and Sheepbridge Court, whereby it makes no contribution to their significance.

The proposed development will result in a visual change within the setting of Swallowfield Park and Stable Block, but this will not cause harm to how the significance of this Listed Building is appreciated or understood. However, this change has the potential to cause a low degree of harm to the significance of the Swallowfield Park. In the context of the NPPF, this harm would be less than substantial harm and therefore, engage the public benefit tests of paragraph 215.

The proposed development will lead to a visual change within the rural setting of Sheepbridge Court, but the design of the development and landscaping treatments will compensate for this change; and this will not result in a harmful impact on how the significance of this Listed Building is presently appreciated or understood.

The proposed development of the site is therefore in accordance with the statutory duties of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and conforms to the requirements of the NPPF and local planning policy with regard to built heritage.

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Built Heritage Statement has been researched and prepared by RPS, on behalf of Richborough.
- 1.2 Archaeological heritage assets have been considered separately in the accompanying Archaeological Desk- Based Assessment (RPS, 2024, ref: 794-PLN-HER-00208.1).
- 1.3 The report addresses built heritage considerations relating to the proposed mixed-use development of a 72.04 acre parcel of land located on the eastern side of Basingstoke Road and at the southern edge of Spencers Wood, Shinfield, Berkshire. The site (hereafter referred to as the 'Site') is centred at Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference SU 717 662 (Figure 1).
- 1.4 This Statement meets with the requirements of paragraph 207 of the NPPF in identifying and describing the significance of built heritage assets that may be affected the proposed development, including any contribution made by their setting; and assesses the impact of the proposed development on this significance. Relevant Historic England guidance notably '*The Setting of Heritage Assets*' (2017) has been consulted to inform the judgements made from a walkover survey of the site (13th December 2023) and from public rights of way in the surrounding area.
- 1.5 The report also refers to the relevant legislation contained within the Planning Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and reviews national and local planning policy. In the preparation of this report information from the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) and the Historic Environment Records (HER) for Berkshire has also been consulted. The conclusions reached in this report are the result of online and in-house historic research, a historic mapping exercise, the site visit and the application of professional judgement.
- 1.6 The findings of this report are based on the known conditions at the time of writing and all findings and conclusions are time limited to no more than 3 years from the date of this report. All maps, plans and photographs are for illustrative purposes only.

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 (Department for Levelling up Housing and Communities, 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

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.
 - 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).

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

- 2.21 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)

- 2.22 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.
- 2.23 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.

- 2.24 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.
- 2.25 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.
- 2.26 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.
- 2.27 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:
1. Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;
 2. 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;
 3. Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on the significance or on the ability to appreciate it;
 4. Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm; and
 5. Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

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

- 2.28 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).
- 2.29 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.
- 2.30 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

- 2.31 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.

- 2.32 The Local Plan policies relevant to the Site in respect of built heritage and any relevant supplementary planning documents are reproduced below. The reproduced policy has in places been edited '[...]' to focus on relevant policies related to the development of the Site.

Wokingham Borough Local Development Framework

Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document (January 2010)

CP3 - General Principles for development

a) [...]

b) [...]

c) *Have no detrimental impact upon important ecological, heritage, landscape (including river valleys) or geological features or water courses. Planning permission will be granted for proposals that:*

d) – j) [...]

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

Wokingham Borough Development Plan

Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (February 2014)

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 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.

- 2.33 In relation to the above planning policy - TB26 Buildings of Traditional Local Character and Areas of Special Character – Wokingham Borough Council's (online) Planning Constraint mapping tool does not show that the Site is within an Area of Special Character.

Supplementary Planning Documents

South of M4 Strategic Development Location SPD (Adopted 2011)

- 2.34 This document provides guidance on the Borough Council's expectations about the masterplanning and design quality for planning applications. It has no specific guidance relating to the historic environment, but advises that new development should be sensitive to its context and reflect an organic settlement growth pattern and local building styles.

Swallowfield Village Design Statement (2009)

- 2.35 The Swallowfield Village Design Statement was published in 2003 (updated in 2009) and highlights the characteristics of the village that make it distinctive. It is not an adopted SPD, but is a material consideration in planning applications. The Statement includes basic information on the character and type of traditional, domestic building materials and details within the area.

A Vision for Our Villages: Ryeish Green, Spencers Wood, Three Mile Cross (2009)

- 2.36 This document is a Village Design Statement for Ryeish Green, Spencers Wood and Three Mile Cross. It is not an adopted SPD, but is a material consideration in planning applications. The Statement includes examples of traditional (mostly domestic) buildings, materials and detailing and advice on the design of buildings and preferred landscaping and streetscape treatments for new development.

Emerging Local Plan Policy

- 2.37 The **Wokingham Borough Council Draft Local Plan 2023–2040**, which is proposed for submission, has reached Regulation 19 and consultation closed on Wednesday 13th November 2024. This will provide a planning framework to meet local development needs for this period.

- 2.38 The draft Local Plan contains the following policy which will be relevant to the site and the surrounding historic environment assets:

Policy DH5: The historic environment

1. *Designated heritage assets, including Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas and Registered Parks and Gardens, are irreplaceable resources that, subject to their significance, should be conserved for the benefit of future generations.*
2. *Development proposals should conserve and, wherever possible, seek to enhance, the archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest of all heritage assets, including the contribution made by their setting. This will be achieved through:*
 - a) *Identifying and understanding the heritage assets 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) *Retaining and/or incorporating existing features or details of historic or architectural interest and/or design quality into the scheme through the sensitive design of development.*
3. *Where development proposals have the potential to affect a heritage asset and/or its setting, a heritage assessment should be prepared in a level of detail proportionate to the asset's*

importance. This assessment should be submitted as part of a planning application and should describe the significance of the heritage asset and its setting, before assessing the potential impact of the proposal on its significance.

4. *Development proposals that would cause substantial harm to, or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm, or where all the following criteria apply:*
 - a) *The nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site;*
 - b) *No viable use of the heritage asset can be found through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation;*
 - c) *Conservation by grant-funding or another 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.*
5. *Where a development proposal would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, clear and convincing justification will need to be provided to demonstrate the public benefits of the proposal that could not otherwise be achieved. The level of public benefit must outweigh any harm to a designated heritage asset.*
6. *Local Historic Parks and Gardens and Areas of Special Character are included on the Policies Map. All non-designated heritage assets are identified and recorded on the council's website.*
7. *Development proposals should demonstrate how the traditional, historical, local and special character of a building, area, park or garden and its setting has been preserved and enhanced. This will enable an assessment of the degree of harm to, or loss of, non-designated heritage assets, balanced against their significance, the positive contribution made by the development and the extent to which any harm can be justified or mitigated.*

3 HISTORIC BUILT ENVIRONMENT APPRAISAL

Introduction

- 3.1 A site visit was undertaken on Wednesday 13th December 2023. There was some inclement weather, but this did not impede the assessment of the site and there no access issues.
- 3.2 The Site is accessed from the west, off Basingstoke Road and immediately to the south of Montford/Bicton Villa and the former farmhouse of Body's Farm. The Site comprises five main, irregular shaped fields and a couple of smaller enclosures.
- 3.3 The two largest fields are located within the northern and central parts of the Site and are partly divided by a c.480m length of hedgerow and ditch, which is runs on a roughly south-west-to-north-east alignment (Plates 1-10 and 13-14). This part of the Site is bound to the west by the rear gardens of residential ribbon development situated off Basingstoke Road; to the north by areas of mostly modern housing located on Barrack Lane, Larchside Close, Montgomery Drive and Century Drive; and to the east boundary by a couple of properties situated off Sussex Lane. The Site's southern boundary lies adjacent to similar fields and an area used as a solar farm (Plates 11-12).
- 3.4 The south-western part of the Site includes three smaller fields (Plates 15-17) which lie adjacent (to the east) of Basingstoke Road and surround the properties of Paddock Corner (Nos. 1 & 2, Basingstoke Road) and Sheepbridge Cottages and Three Pots (Nos. 1-3, Basingstoke Road). Agricultural land continues to the east of these three fields.

Historic Development

- 3.5 This Section of the Statement provides an overview of the historic development of the Site and the surrounding area through a map regression exercise and a review of online and inhouse resources.
- 3.6 A tracing of the Sheepbridge Manor map of 1625 (not reproduced) shows the Site in agricultural use. Several of the field boundaries marked on the map can be correlated to current surviving boundaries (Glover, C, SWLHG, 2024).
- 3.7 Rocque's map of 1761 (Figure 4) shows the Site covering parts of five or six fields. There is a settlement focus immediately to the west of the Site and within the proximity of Body's Farm; this reflects the location of buildings shown on the tracing of the Sheepbridge Manor map. A group of buildings are also shown clustered around the existing junction of Basingstoke Road and Beech Hill Road and also to the north of the Site. Spencers Wood is shown as an area of woodland situated to the north and west of this small settlement and the Site.
- 3.8 The 1806 Ordnance Survey Drawing (Figure 5) shows the Site as covering approximately ten fields with smaller, regular fields found adjacent to the northern boundary and larger fields across the southern parts of the Site. A building is shown at the western edge of the Site, adjacent with the Basingstoke Road (unlabelled). The settlement pattern of Spencers Wood reflects that as shown on Roque's 1761 map however, Spencers Wood is also labelled as a Common and fewer trees are depicted within this area.
- 3.9 The Shinfield (1838) and Swallowfield (1841) Tithe maps (shown together on Figure 6) show the Site covering eighteen fields and included a group of farm buildings situated at the western edge of the Site. The accompanying tithe apportionments (Appendix B, Tables 1 and 2) shows that except for Plot 199, the land parcels were owned by Henry Lanoy Hunter and tenanted to Joseph Marlow Jnr. Hunter also owned the neighbouring farm of Sheepbridge Court Farm, which was tenanted to

Joseph Marlow Snr; it is unclear whether the holdings were farmed together or independently at this time.¹

- 3.10 The Hunters originated as merchants from London and in the 1740s purchased an estate at Beech Hill, a village close to Spencers Wood. They became large local land owners and the estate, including the area of the Site, appears to have remained in their possession until the mid-20th century (NTA online ref: D/HER/T62).
- 3.11 The 1877 First Edition Ordnance Survey map (Figure 7) shows an amalgamation of the Site's fields to nine and the farm buildings located at the western edge of the Site are now labelled as 'Mullins Farm'. The Site remained situated within a wider rural area, but the map shows increased development in Spencers Wood.
- 3.12 There are no important changes to the Site by the 1913 Ordnance Survey (Figure 8), but Mullins Farm had been renamed as Body's Farm. Ordnance mapping during the first half of the twentieth century shows no significant changes within the Site, but the 1971-1976 Ordnance Survey shows the location of several field drains aligned on the field boundaries (Figure 9). Sometime after 1976, Body's Farm ceased operation and although associated buildings are shown on later mapping, the earliest aerial imagery (2003 – Figure 10) shows these had been demolished, leaving areas of hardstanding. The current condition of the Site is shown on aerial imagery from 2022 (Figure 11).
- 3.13 Outside the Site, Ordnance Survey mapping from 20th and 21st century and aerial imagery shows the gradual settlement development of Spencers Wood and along the Basingstoke Road; development surrounds the Site to the north and west. Aerial imagery from 2022 (Figure 11) shows the establishment of a solar farm, to the south-east of the Site and separated by single field.

Identification of Heritage Assets

Within the Site

- 3.14 Searches of the National Heritage List for England and Local Authority databases identify no designated or non-designated built heritage assets located within the Site.

Within the search area

- 3.15 There are fifteen Listed Buildings (two Grade II* and remainder Grade II), one Park and Garden (Swallowfield Park – Grade II) and four non-designated built heritage assets located within a 1km search area surrounding the Site (shown on Figures 2 and 3a).
- 3.16 A Scheduled Monument (Moated site at Sheepbridge Court) located within the search area is considered separated within the Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (RPS, 2024, 794-PLN-HER-00208).

Listed Buildings

- 3.17 The Listed Buildings located within the search area, in ascending distance from the Site follow:
- The Homestead, Hyde End Road. Grade II. NHLE: 1118137. Located c.170m to the north of the Site;
 - Fullbrookes, 202, Hyde End Road. Grade II. NHLE: 1312950. Located c.225m to the north of the Site;

¹ Joseph Marlow is recorded as farming from Knight Farm, Wilson Farm and Hall Farm in Swallowfield by 1853 and therefore, any farming partnership would not have been for long.

- Milestone at Spencers Wood, Basingstoke Road. Grade II. NHLE: 1246235. Located c.235m to the north-west of the Site;
- Sussex Lodge, 203, Hyde End Road. Grade II. NHLE: 1319125. Located c.265m to the north-east of the Site;
- Library, The School House, Basingstoke Road. Grade II. NHLE: 1312952. Located c.320m to the north-west of the Site;
- Barn approx. 80m north of Sheepbridge Court, Basingstoke Road. Grade II*. NHLE: 1135822. Located c.340m to the east of the southern-most boundary;
- Milestone north, north-west of Sheep Bridge, Basingstoke Road. Grade II. NHLE: 1389116. Located c.350m to the east of the southern-most Site boundary;
- Sheepbridge Court, Basingstoke Road. Grade II*. NHLE: 1313105. Located c.370m to the south of the southern-most Site boundary;
- Cottage in the garden of No.9 (Walnut Tree Cottage) approx. 20m north, Clares Green Road. Grade II. NHLE: 1312936. Located c.600m to the north of the Site;
- Girdlers, Basingstoke Road. Grade II. NHLE: 1135834. Located c.615m to south of the southern-most Site boundary.
- Nullis Farmhouse, Clares Green Road. Grade II. NHLE: 1118111. Located c.700m north of the Site;
- Wyvols Court, Basingstoke Road. Grade II. NHLE: 1135805. Located c.785m to the south of the southern-most Site boundary.
- Hill House, Basingstoke Road. Grade II. NHLE: 1319123. Located c.800m north of the Site;
- Hyde End Farmhouse, Hyde End Road. Grade II. NHLE: 1118138. Located c.800m to the north-east of the Site; and
- The Garden and Gate Walls approx. 75m north-west of the stable block to Swallowfield Park. Grade II. NHLE: 1118063. Located c.960m to the south-east of the Site.

- 3.18 The eight Grade II Listed Buildings located to the north of the Site (NHLE nos. 1246235, 1312952, 1118137, 1312936, 1319123, 1118111, 1312950 and 1319125) have no intervisibility with the Site and are located within Spencers Wood where they are already experienced within urban and suburban settings. In addition, four Listed Buildings (NHLE nos. 1118138, 1118063, 1135834 1135805) also have no intervisibility with the Site and are located distantly from it, separated by large areas of intervening development. The Site is not considered to form part of the setting of any of these twelve Listed Buildings, and their respective significances will not be sensitive to the development of the Site. They require no further consideration within this report.
- 3.19 The Milestone located on Basingstoke Road (NHLE: 1389116) has a limited setting, which will not be affected by the development of the Site and requires no further consideration within this report.
- 3.20 The Site is located c.340-370m to the north-east of Sheepbridge Court (Grade II*. NHLE: 1313105) and Barn approx. 80m north of Sheepbridge Court (Grade II*. NHLE: 1135822). The topography of the intervening fields rises from c.45m AOD at the Listed Buildings to approx. 55-57m at the Site and alongside vegetation and the modern, horse livery farmstead of Sheepbridge Farm, there is no clear, direct intervisibility between these areas (Plates 12 and 16). However, given the Grade II* designation of Sheepbridge Court, it is considered pertinent to assess whether the Site forms part of the setting of this designated heritage asset; and whether it contributes to the significance of this building.
- 3.21 The Barn at Sheepbridge Court adjoins and is surrounded by a variety of modern farm buildings, to the extent that only the roof of the building is visible from the farmstead (Plate 19). The barn does

not open on or is located close to any farmland. There is no intervisibility between the Barn and the Site and no direct functional association. Consequently, the Site is not considered to form part of the setting of the Barn and the Barn will not be sensitive to the development of the Site. It is concluded that this Listed Building requires no further assessment.

Registered Park and Garden

- 3.22 Swallowfield Park (Registered Park and Garden, Grade II, NLHE: 1000537) is located between c.500-700m to the south-east of the Site. The intervening area comprises fields, a solar farm and tree belts surrounding the park's edge with the River Loddon. Except for parts of the western (rear) elevations of the country house (also called Swallowfield Park, Grade II*, NHLE: 1313056), there is anticipated to be limited intervisibility from the park in the direction of the Site. There is also no clear evidence of a historic functional association between the Site and the park. Notwithstanding this, the country house and Swallowfield Park share an irrevocably functional association and given the anticipated intervisibility and the general size and alignment of the park with a large part of the Site, it is considered relevant to assess whether the Site, as part of the setting of the Swallowfield Park contributes to the park's significance.

Non-designated built heritage assets

- 3.23 Wokingham Borough Council has a local list for Buildings of Traditional Local Character and Areas of Special Character, which includes several Local Historic Parks and Gardens. An online search of the Wokingham Borough Council's Planning Constraints Checker identifies none of these non-designated heritage assets located within the Site or the search area of this study.² In addition, the Shinfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan (made February 2017) also does not identify any non-designated heritage assets.³
- 3.24 A search of the Berkshire HER records 128 monuments located within the search area, of which four relate to extant buildings, including 19th century cottages and three World War II pillboxes (shown of Figure 3). These buildings are located distantly from the Site (500m+) and share no intervisibility owing to intervening built development, topography and vegetation. The Site is not considered to form part of the settings of these buildings and their respective significance will not be sensitive to the development of the Site.

Outside of Search Area

- 3.25 The country house of Swallowfield Park and adjoining stable block (Grade II* Listed Building, NHLE: 1313056) is located c.1.1km to the south-east of the Site. Although this building lies outside of the search area, the rear (western) parts of the house are visible from across the north-west, central and south-western parts of the site (Plates 14 and 15). The historic narrative the country house and Swallowfield Park (Registered Park and Garden) are irrevocably associated together; and the Listed Building requires assessment within this report.
- 3.26 There are an additional eight Listed Buildings (excluding the country house and walled garden) located outside of the Site's search area, but located within Swallowfield Park (shown on Figure 2). This includes the Church of All Saints (Grade I Listed Building, NHLE: 1118061). The Site visit confirmed (where accessible) that there was no intervisibility between these designated heritage assets and the Site and no evidence of any historic functional association. The development of the Site is not considered to be sensitive to the significance of these eight Listed Buildings and they require no further consideration in this report.

² <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/planning/how-apply-permission/listed-buildings-heritage-and-conservation-areas>

³ Swallowfield Neighbourhood Plan is in its infancy, designated in February 2023

4 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 4.1 Paragraph 207 of the NPPF outlines the requirements for an applicant to describe the significance of heritage assets affected by the proposed development, and states that the level of detail supplied by an applicant should be proportionate to the importance of the asset and should be no more than sufficient to review the potential impact of the proposal upon the significance of that asset.
- 4.2 This Built Heritage Statement has identified that the development of the Site has the potential to affect the significance of the following built heritage assets through changes within their settings.
- Swallowfield Park and Stable Block. Grade II* Listed Building;
 - Swallowfield Park. Grade II Registered Park and Garden; and
 - Sheepbridge Court. Grade II* Listed Building.
- 4.3 This Section describes the significance of these built heritage assets, their settings and the contribution of this to their significance. The nature of the impact from the proposed development on their significance is assessed in Chapter 5.
- 4.4 Owing to the proximity, historic associations and crossover setting of Swallowfield Park and Stable Block and Swallowfield Park, the settings of these assets will be assessed together below.

Swallowfield Park and Adjoining Stable Block, Church Road

Grade II* Listed Building. NHLE: 1313056.

Historic Interest

- 4.5 From approximately the 14th century onwards the site of Swallowfield Park has contained a house/s of an affluent status, but the earliest origins of the existing country house are considered to date from c.1689-91. This late 17th century house was built for Henry Hyde⁴ and his wife – Fleur Backhouse, the heiress of Swallowfield Park. They engaged William Talman, Comptroller of the King's Works and a well-known architect and landscape designer within this period to renovate the estate. There is, however, limited documentary or physical evidence of Talman's house. The existing H-shape plan of the house and the western U-shaped service ranges are considered to potentially relate to his design. Similarly an oval niche vestibule situated within the northern part of the house and the former northern entrance, relocated as the entrance to the western walled garden are both considered the most likely surviving traces of his architectural work.
- 4.6 Descendants of Henry Hyde sold Swallowfield in 1718 to Thomas 'Diamond' Pitt who engaged architect John James to instigate substantial, but undocumented changes, possibly rebuilding or constructing the western service wings. Pitt died in 1726 and his heirs sold the estate in 1737.
- 4.7 Sylvanus Bevan, the founder of Barclay's Bank acquired the Estate in the mid-18th century and sold it in 1788. Although again undocumented, he is considered to have made important changes, including reconfiguration of the house's layout by relocating the main entrance from the north to the southern elevation.
- 4.8 Sir Henry Russell acquired the estate in 1820 and it remained within his family until 1965. Russell engaged architect William Atkinson to remodel the house, stables and wider parkland. Prior to Atkinson's alterations, he surveyed the house in 1823 whilst various plans from 1824-1825 demonstrate his planned and executed work.

⁴ The Viscount of Cornbury and subsequently the second Earl of Clarendon

- 4.9 The Russell family sold the estate in 1965 to the Mutual Housing Association, who subsequently subdivided the main house, service wings and stable into the existing retirement apartments.

Architectural Interest

- 4.10 As described above, the main house has an H-plan with the entrance located on the southern elevation. The southern, eastern and northern elevations have nine-bays. Adjoining the main house's western elevation is a U-shaped, two-storey service range surrounding a courtyard; the western side of the courtyard comprises a low wall. The courtyard is entered through an arch situated within the southern side of the service wing. The stables project off the south-western corner of this service wing.
- 4.11 The main house is of two-storeys (plus attics). It has a Georgian aesthetic derived from the stone effect rendered elevations to the south, east and north, decorated with a plinth, first floor stringcourse, plain stone frieze, cornice and panelled parapet. In addition, the southern, nine-bay sashed elevation has a central entrance which features a porte cochere, with pilasters and is supported by two pairs of Tuscan columns. The eastern elevation comprises nine bays of which the central three project forward and are divided by four Doric pilasters and an entablature. The northern elevation is similar to the southern elevation, but without the porte cochere and has several blind windows and blind niches with semi-circular heads.
- 4.12 Contrasting the main house, the western service wings and stable block are of red/orange brick. The wings are rectangular in plan, but the northern and southern elevations have several bays (usually in threes) which alternate between being recessed and projecting. The elevations feature platbands between the first floor and panelled parapet; the southern arched entrance to the courtyard is flanked by giant brick pilasters. The northern and southern service wings are two-storey and are connected on the eastern side by a single-storey. The elevations on the inner courtyard were historically arcaded, but these have been infilled with brick panels and windows. There are a mix of windows on the service wings (some with multi-pane glazing bars) and several infilled by brick, but most are set within segmented brick arches. The shallow slate roofs are largely screened by the brick parapet, although the roof of the southern service wing includes a tall, clock-faced turret and bell cupola. The former stables are similar to the service wings, but have an 'I' shaped layout of twelve bays and features a central archway.

Summary of Significance

- 4.13 Swallowfield is an example of a country house with a multi-period narrative, which extends earlier than the existing 17th century house. The subsequent alteration of the house reflects the classical fashions of Georgian architecture and sits within a popular period in the establishment of country houses. Although the architectural narrative of the house is largely undocumented, it is associated with several leading architects of their respective periods; and many of them have also influenced the design of the surrounding parkland. As a country house, Swallowfield reflects the status and wealth of its creators and occupants, helping to provide insight into the historic narrative and economic and social relationships of the privileged, gentry society of the local area.

Summary Setting of Swallowfield and Adjoining Stable Block

- 4.14 Swallowfield is located relatively central to a c.135ha area of parkland (as shown on Figure 2). The country house and parkland have close associations relating to their historic narrative, function and architectural design. The park forms the principal part of the setting to the house; and makes the most important contribution to understanding and appreciating its significance. The next section provides a description of the historic and architectural interest of the park and an assessment of its significance, before assessing the setting of the house and park together.

Swallowfield Park

Registered Park and Garden. Grade II. NHLE: 1000537.

Historic Interest

- 4.15 The first reference to a medieval park at Swallowfield dates to 1316, when it was described as containing a '*capital mansion house*', garden and farmland comprising arable, pasture and meadow. By 1354, the estate has been surrendered to the Crown and thereafter fully enclosed and repairs made to the mansion and lodge; Edward III (1312-1377) visited in 1361. The estate remained in the possession of the Crown until the 16th century when Henry VIII leased it to Christopher Littcott. The lease describes features in the park as including waters, fisheries, a heath dovecote, apple garden and enclosed area of land called 'Courte Gardeyn'. Wessex Archaeology's 2007 assessment of Swallowfield suggests that the features described in the lease means that a concept of a designed landscape was evident at this time and possibly established a foundation for the park's development from the 17th century onwards (2007: 11).
- 4.16 The park's development in the 17th century is attributed to William Talman, who was responsible for redesigning the house during this period (1689-91) and possibly with input from gardener and diarist John Evelyn (1620-1706). Evelyn described in 1685 the skill and effort to make the gardens flat and that they contained canals and fishponds, nurseries, two orangeries and kitchen and other gardens of "*the most desirable plants*". He also recorded there being many fruit trees and groves of elms, limes, oaks and other trees, a bowling green, meadows, pasture and woodland (HER: DBF66).
- 4.17 In c.1718-1726, architect John James (1673-1746) is considered to have added the existing parkland bridge (Grade II Listed Building. NHLE: 1118064), which is where the main drive to the house crosses over the River Blackwater.
- 4.18 Rocque's 1761 map of Berkshire shows the gardens and grounds in greater detail. At this time, the area to the south of the house was set out in a Patte d'oie form and bound by the River Blackwater (south and west), a canal to the east, ponds to the north and a kitchen garden to the west. The Patte d'oie gardens are not shown on Thomas Pride's 1790 map of Reading (and the surrounding ten miles) and therefore, are considered to have been removed by this time.
- 4.19 The parkland experienced greater changes during the 19th century and was simplified, creating large areas of pasture and probably introduced more tree planting. As part of these changes, the canal located to the east of the house was infilled by c.1850 and later, an eastern drive and lodge, accessed from Swallowfield Road was also removed.
- 4.20 The List entry describes the existing parkland as totalling 135ha and now comprises a mix of ornamental parkland and areas of agricultural land.

Architectural Interest

- 4.21 In addition to the country house of Swallowfield and All Saints Church (Grade I Listed. NHLE: 1118061), the designated park includes nine other designated heritage assets (churchyard tombs, icehouse, entrance lodge and gates, dovecotes and walled garden) which typify buildings and features often associated with parklands of country house estates and which relate to service functions, entertaining and symbols of wealth, status and influence.
- 4.22 Public access to the park is not permitted, however the Listing entry (reproduced in Appendix A) and this can be augmented through a review of historic mapping.
- 4.23 The existing main drive through the park (c.650m long) enters from the northern end of Church Road and opposite The Street in Swallowfield village. The entrance is marked by a Gothic styled 19th century lodge and gates (Red Lodge. Grade II. NHLE: 1135897 and Gates. Grade II. NHLE: 1118065). The drive approaches the house from the south-west and crosses the River Blackwater over a five arched brick bridge (Grade II. NHLE: 1118064). Close to the house, the drive bypasses Dovecote House, formerly a barn (Grade II. NHLE: 1319133) and a Dovecot (Grade II. NHLE: 1313062) before splitting to the west and north. The western spur runs along the southern side of the walled garden (Grade II. NHLE: 1118063). The northern spur heads to the west of the stables,

before heading east through the stable's central arched and arrives at the southern front of the house.⁵

- 4.24 A separate drive approaches from the south-east, also from Church Road, but arcs to the east of All Saints Church (located within the park), before heading roughly north and parallel with the main drive and also arrives at the southern front of the house.
- 4.25 The route of both driveways is relatively direct towards the house and therefore, they do not closely reflect the mid-18th and early 19th century fashions for more sweeping, curvilinear drives which wound through the park, raising anticipation of the house. However, both drives still pass through large areas of pasture, dotted and clustered with a variety of established trees; and the house appears to be partly screened in these views by some canopy screening. The main drive does, however, pass the dovecote, which historically was a demonstration of status and wealth.
- 4.26 The List description (reproduced in Appendix A – compiled in 1998) describes the parkland as divided into two halves (west) and (east). The division is informally identified by established tree planting aligned roughly north to south, from the banks of the River Loddon and decoy pond (north), around the eastern and southern aspects of the house and south towards the bridge crossing the River Blackwater.
- 4.27 Within the eastern half of the park, the house is surrounded to the north and east by a raised terrace and as from the southern elevations, these aspects of the house overlook lawns, dotted and enclosed by established trees. Large areas of pasture, containing clumps of trees and ponds continue to the south and east of the house. Paths to the north of the house remain evident and pass to the east of the decoy pond, run along the banks of the River Loddon (for c.150m) and into the Great Wood, located at the north-eastern edge of the park. Historic mapping shows a network of paths running, mostly southwards through the Great Wood.
- 4.28 The park, particularly the eastern half typifies architectural landscape fashions popular from the mid-18th to early-19th century, but implemented beyond these periods, for an 'idealised' natural landscape. The characteristics of these includes large areas of pasture running from the house, into grounds studded with tree clumps, ponds and other planting; and with the world beyond enclosed by plantations, shelterbelts or more formally through walls and gate lodges.
- 4.29 Within the western half of the park is the kitchen garden, surrounded by other areas of pasture. This garden is located c.100m to the west of the house's service wings and covers an area of c.1.5ha. The intervening area includes some ornamental gardens, including a yew tree avenue which leads into the service courtyard and is aligned with the main house. The kitchen garden's eastern entrance is entered through a doorway believed to have been the house's original northern entrance, designed by Talman and features pilasters with garlands and surmounted by a broken segmental pediment with swags and drapes. The List description of the walled garden describes its use as one third mature shrubs and trees and the remainder laid to lawns with borders and trees; and this broadly reflects its current state.⁶ Notwithstanding the reduce planting of the walled garden, its physical structure, size and scale continues to demonstrate its basic functions, but also its ornamental and status value to the house and park.
- 4.30 A mix of plantations, shelterbelts and hedgerows lie on the perimeter of much of the park and therefore provide the intended enclosure and privacy favoured by the designers of a naturalised landscape; and required for the flatness of the parkland. The 19th century alterations to the parkland

⁵ The existing main drive appears to have been altered after 1841. The 1841 Swallowfield Tithe map does not show the drive entering through the stables, rather splitting at the bridge, with one spur leading to the stables/farm buildings and another to the south-eastern corner of the house.

⁶ The walled garden is shown within sale particulars of the existing retirement apartments' grounds.

removed unfashionable features (e.g. canals), replacing them with more conventional pasture and tree planting, albeit this remained an important show of status and wealth.

Summary of Significance

- 4.31 Swallowfield Park has historic and architectural illustrative value in demonstrating a designed 'landscape' park imposed onto the natural topography and which reflects the 'naturalised' landscape architectural fashions of county house estates from the mid-18th and 19th centuries. This designed landscape also helps demonstrate that its occupiers were of high social status and wealthy enough to afford to maintain a park for pleasure, leisure and entertainment. The parkland has undergone some changes, but many of the architectural and landscape elements which contribute to the park's significance remain appreciable. The design narrative of the park is not completely substantiated, but broadly relates to the house's various architects and therefore, has historic associational value with nationally recognised designers of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Setting of Swallowfield (Listed Building) and Swallowfield Park (Registered Park & Garden)

- 4.32 The parkland is now in multi-ownerships, but it remains largely complete and retains features and the character of the historic landscape which contribute to understanding the significance of the country house. Within the immediate setting of the house there are ornamental gardens, a dovecote and the walled kitchen garden which are features which reflect status and can be appreciated for both their ornamental and functional uses. The terraces surrounding the house and overlooking lawns with a variety of tree species has an ornamental character, but also reflects the status of the house's owners.
- 4.33 The house is located roughly central to the surrounding parkland. The house is anticipated to be visible from across parts of the park, helped by the flat topography, which appears to have been created in the 17th century. Notwithstanding this, the house is mostly concealed in view from beyond its formal boundaries owing to established planting belts, plantations and other intervening vegetation. The park's planting has been deliberately designed and structured as to provide screening and privacy, but without the requirement or expense of fully enclosing the park; and therefore whilst The Great Wood provides enclosure and privacy to the north-east, thinner tree belts and hedgerows are used to good effect in other parts of the park. Over time, this screening has been altered, either deliberately or through thinning and this has led to opening up intervisibility between the park and to the landscapes outside. For example, a recreational play area off Swallowfield Street allows for intervisibility with the parkland, although there are fewer opportunities in which the house is visible from outside of the parkland.
- 4.34 The house does not appear to be visible from the park's south-western boundaries with Swallowfield village and from along Church Road. In addition, it is not anticipated to be visible from the north owing to the screening of The Great Wood and plantations outside of the park, to the east of Swallowfield Road.
- 4.35 The eastern elevation of the house, which overlooks a large area of pasture is distantly visible from breaks within the park's boundary planting located along its south-eastern edge, where a public right of way runs from Church Road to Swallowfield Road (Plate 18). It is unclear on whether these breaks are historic. However, given that the estate's ownership - and therefore the potential to control the landscape - continued to the east of the existing path, the visibility of the house may have either been designed or reworked to reflect the architectural landscape fashions of the 19th century picturesque. This design-ethos generally favoured a less explicit separation of the park from the surrounding countryside, by creating a structured composition of views from the main house of a foreground, middle-ground and far distance views of the surrounding countryside (Williamson, 1995). Support for this derives from the Swallowfield Tithe map, which shows a gamekeeper's cottage (now demolished), located beyond the park as surrounded by planting; a common characteristic of extending the design interface between the parkland into the surrounding area. Consequently, the historic ownership of the farmland to the south-east of Swallowfield's formal park

boundary can be considered to form part of its wider setting which positively contributes towards understanding the architectural significance of both the country house and the parkland.

- 4.36 The western elevations of the service wings, in particular the turreted cupola and part of the stables are also visible, distantly from outside of the parkland, including from parts of the Site. An understanding of the functional element of this part of the house is not understood from its visibility alone, although the alignment of the wings, with their shortest elevations outwardly facing the park suggests that they were not designed to be a focal point of inward looking views or to take advantage of the outward views obtainable from this part of the house. In addition, the western service wings are surrounded by large areas of canopy screening and therefore, are not clearly appreciated with any of other part of the parkland or other parts of the house.

Contribution of Site

- 4.37 The Shinfield (1838) and Swallowfield (1841) tithe maps and apportionments show that the land on the northern side of the river, including the Site, did not fall under the ownership of the Swallowfield Park estate; and it is distinctly possible that this separate ownership existing prior to the 19th century.⁷ As such, the Swallowfield estate had no control in the management, use or design of this area of farmland which lies adjacent to the north-west side of the parkland.
- 4.38 Swallowfield house is visible from the north-western, western central and south-western parts of the Site, but only as a distant feature, and limited to parts of the western elevations of the service wings, including the white turreted cupola and the roofs of the stables. Except for these parts, the surrounding area predominantly comprises dense tree canopies, which filter and restricts visibility in the direction of the parkland. This tree planting appears to relate to intervening hedgerow trees, trees along the River Loddon and River Blackwater, tree planting located within Swallowfield Park and adjoining The Great Wood. Specific areas of structured planting related to Swallowfield Park are not clearly discernible in these views, but the underlying intention of enclosure and separation between the house, the park and the outside landscape persists.
- 4.39 As discussed above, an understanding of the function of the service wings and stables of Swallowfield is not appreciable in views from the Site. In addition, the orientation of the buildings does not suggest that this elevation of the house was intentionally designed in response to a particular viewpoint or wider views of the landscape surrounding this part of the parkland.
- 4.40 There are no other opportunities from the Site to view the house or other parts of the parkland, but there is the potential for visibility of the Site from the park. For example from the main, south-western drive approach to the house, distant views of the existing solar farm and the existing built and tree-lined edge of Spencer's Wood are possible⁸. This visibility possibly results from alterations, thinning or felling of the park's boundaries or intervening land, but is considered to be incidental; it does not look out over a landscape of any great value in features, appearance and character and was not owned by the estate.
- 4.41 By virtue of the limited intervisibility between Swallowfield and Stable Block (Listed Building) and Swallowfield (Registered Park and Garden), the Site can be considered to form part of their wider setting, but is a neutral element that makes no contribution to understanding or appreciating their respective significance. Notwithstanding this, the development of the Site still has the potential to impact on the significance of the Listed Building and Registered Park and Garden and this will be assessed in Chapter 5 of this report.

⁷ See paragraph 3.9.

⁸ Existing solar farm visible from with Swallowfield Park, as shown in Plates 10-12 and 18-20 of Appendix 7.2 – Cultural Heritage Plates, related to AOC Archaeology's Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment for Spencer's Wood Solar Farm (Appendix 7.1, project code 26189, May 2023); part of Solar Farm planning application from landscape assessment related to planning application (Wokingham ref: 232653) 25ha Solar Farm.

Sheepbridge Court, Basingstoke Road

Grade II* Listed Building. NHLE: 1313105.

Historic Interest

- 4.42 Sheepbridge Court is situated on a moated site, itself a Scheduled Monument (NHLE: 1013336). The List entry (reproduced in Appendix A) considers the moated earthworks to be ornamental, rather than defensive. Archaeological finds close to the house also suggest possible occupation from the 13th century, which may suggest an earlier house. The existing Sheepbridge Court is considered to date from the late 16th century, but was extended in the 17th century by a single bay (southern front) and altered in the 18th century 20th centuries. The origins of the house are unclear, but from its size and moated position it would have been a house of status. The house has had a long association with agriculture, but is now a private residence.
- 4.43 The Shinfield (1838) Tithe map and apportionment record that Sheepbridge Court was owned by Henry Lanoy Hunter and tenanted to Jospeh Marlow Snr, who farmed c.200 acres. The Hunter family appear to have been large, local land owners from the 1740s onwards and therefore, it is possible that they owned Sheepbridge Court before the 19th century. Hunter also owned the neighbouring farm of Mullins/Body's Farm, which at the time of the tithe survey was tenanted to Joseph Marlow Jnr; it is unclear whether the holdings were farmed together or independently at this time, but Marlow Jnr had relocated farms by the 1850s. The two farms appear to have remained under a common ownership until the mid-20th century; and at this time Sheepbridge Court Farm amounted to 225 acres, farming dairy herds and poultry, and later pigs (Daily Telegraph, 1939).

Architectural Interest

- 4.44 Sheepbridge Court is of two storeys (plus attics) and has an L-shaped plan, but with a gabled extension in the internal angle. It is built in red brick, but has an eastern timber-framed wing, infilled with brick noggin; and has a plain tiled, pitched roof. The exterior is decorated simply with plain string courses between the floors, at eaves level and brick decoration to the gables.
- 4.45 The house is approached from the north. The western end of the northern elevation has a large brick gable, which has a ground floor sash, mullion and transomed window on the first floor, with a brick drip mould above; and within the apex of the gable a blocked circular light with quadrant blocks in tympanum. To the east of this gable is a doorway with a flat roofed porch, flanked by a sash and two casement windows above. Then follows a rendered gable with a ground floor, single-storey gabled projection, featuring a sash. To the east of this a separate doorway and diagonally above this is a casement window. The western return was not visible on the site visit and is not described within the listing entry, but from available floorplans has three chimney stacks (two external and one ridge mounted), a bay with two sash windows and three smaller casement windows.
- 4.46 The western end of the southern elevation's gable has a very similar to appearance to the northern front with a blocked oval light, with quadrant blocks in tympanum, but has first floor sashes and a ground floor French door. Projecting to the east of this is a 17th century, single bay extension with a ground floor (part glazed) door and a sash at first floor. The western return of this extension has a plain platband and potentially an infilled window with a hoodmould situated within the gable.
- 4.47 The eastern wing is setback and has a ground floor of brick, two timber transom and mullion windows and a modern French door. The first floor has an exposed, blackened timber frame, infilled with brick and two timber casements. The eastern return has a small ground floor casement and a tiled lean-to, featuring a brick chimney extending above the gable; the gable has an exposed timber-frame.
- 4.48 The List description (reproduced in Appendix A) describes the interior has having large, moulded beams on ground floor and a very fine late C16 framed newel staircase.

Summary of Significance

- 4.49 Sheepbridge Court's age is an important part of its significance and is understood from its fabric. The subsequent phases of alterations and extensions contribute to illustrating changes to domestic living and aesthetic design over time. Additionally, the generous size of the farmhouse demonstrates the wealth derived from farming from the post-medieval period onwards by likely yeoman owners. The overall effect of these changes creates an organic aesthetic, led by a vernacular style. The significance of Sheepbridge Court derives primarily from its historic value, but also has architectural value.

Setting

- 4.50 Sheepbridge Court is located at a topographical low point, adjacent to the River Loddon and is surrounded by a moated site. The Listing entry of the Scheduled Monument describes the earthworks as circular and has two causeways located on the western side; used as entrances. The moat is seasonally water-filled, but the eastern side forms part of the River Loddon. A separate island to the east has the remains of two silted up stew ponds or a fish pond.
- 4.51 The moated earthwork is considered to be ornamental and agriculturally functional in its use, rather than built as a defensive structure. The earthwork helps reflect the age and the higher status of Sheepbridge Court and as part of its setting makes the greatest contribution to the significance of the Listed Building. The close proximity of the road to Sheepbridge Court, and therefore the crossing point of the River Loddon is also an important element of Sheepbridge Court's historic narrative.
- 4.52 Sheepbridge Court and the moated earthwork are enclosed by established vegetation, which screens the house in most directions. To the south, another house on an obscures Sheepbridge Court from the road. Surrounding Sheepbridge Court to the north is its farmstead, comprising a mostly modern farmstead. Although this includes a Listed barn (Grade II*. NHLE: 1135822), the farmstead's plan is incoherent with a mix of modern and temporary buildings adjoining one and other. A separate range of modern, agricultural sheds is located to the north and is flanked by modern farmhouses. The farmstead provides an agricultural context to Sheepbridge Court, but owing to its predominantly modern age and incoherent plan, it is not of intrinsic importance to understanding the significance of the Listed Building.
- 4.53 Apart from a cluster of buildings located to the south of Sheepbridge Court, on Basingstoke Road, the Listed Building is relatively isolated and situated within a rural setting. A search of the Berkshire HER identifies small areas of ridge and furrow (HER ref: MRM16496) within the surrounding area, but these areas are located distantly from Sheepbridge Court, to the north-west of Basingstoke Road, separated by built development; and is not experienced visually, kinetically or in association with Sheepbridge Court. Instead, the immediate areas of farmland surrounding Sheepbridge Court, to the north and east is principally in pasture use; the areas to the north relate to a horse livery, now operated from the Sheepbridge Court farmstead. The character of this immediate farmland does not strongly relate to understanding or appreciating the significance of Sheepbridge Court. The topography of the farmland gradually increases on either side of the River Loddon and therefore, Sheepbridge Court is not always clearly experienced in association with this farmland; and to the north its character has changed by the construction of a solar farm.

Contribution of the Site

- 4.54 At its closest points, the Site is located c.350-550m to the north-west and north of Sheepbridge Court and is physically separated from it by the more, modern horse livery farmstead of Sheepbridge Court and domestic boundaries and planting associated with Sheepbridge Court's use as a private residence.
- 4.55 Although there appears to have been a common historic ownership between Sheepbridge Court (farm) and Body's Farm, they appear to have operated independently of one another; and therefore, limited weight can be attached to this historic association.

**SPENCERS WOOD, BASKINGSTOKE ROAD, SHINFIELD, BERKSHIRE:
BUILT HERITAGE STATEMENT.**

- 4.56 There is no direct intervisibility owing to intervening topography and screening from the modern horse livery farmstead and dense vegetation. In addition, the character of the Site's farmland does not reflect a historic landscape which supports or contributes to understanding the narrative and significance of Sheepbridge Court. More recent changes, including the construction of the solar farm have also reduced the rural character experienced between the Site and Sheepbridge Court.
- 4.57 Consequently, the Site, in its undeveloped state can be considered to form a small part of the wider, rural setting of Sheepbridge Court, but is a neutral element that makes no contribution to its significance.

5 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BUILT HERITAGE ASSETS

Proposed Development

- 5.1 Outline planning permission is sought with all matters reserved for future determination, save for the means of access via Basingstoke Road, for: up to 420 dwellings (Use Class C3), an 80 bed care home (Use Class C2), 1ha of employment land (Use Class E(g), primary school (Use Class F1), local centre (Use Classes E(a), (b), (c), (f)), GP Surgery (Use Class E(e)), sports pitch and changing facility, public open space, SANG provision and associated infrastructure.
- 5.2 A Development Framework Plan for the proposed development accompanies the planning application and will be used within the following assessment.
- 5.3 Except for the school, it has been anticipated that the housing will be of a conventional build and limited to 2.5 storeys high.

Assessment of Impact

Swallowfield and Stable Block (Grade II* Listed Building) and Swallowfield Registered Park and Garden (Grade II)

- 5.4 The assessment in Chapter 4 established that the Site, in its undeveloped state forms part of the wider setting of Swallowfield and Adjoining Stable Block and Swallowfield park, but is a neutral element that makes no contribution to their respective significance.
- 5.5 The proposed development is anticipated to be distantly visible from the western elevations of the former service wings of Swallowfield. The visibility of the Site, in its existing, undeveloped state is not considered to relate to a designed view associated with either the house or the parkland; and it does not contribute to understanding or appreciating the significance of either of these designated heritage assets. In views from the house, the Site may have a more urban appearance, but these will be experienced within the context of the existing built edge of Spencer's Wood and therefore, as a small extension to the existing visual baseline. The proposed landscaping treatments and buffers, particularly those along the southern boundaries of the Site and the retention of hedgerows as green corridors within the central parts of the Site, will help to soften and in time, filter and screen the development. In addition, the views from the house will remain appreciated with a buffer of fields separating the proposed development from the park's boundary with the River Loddon. Consequently, the proposed development is not considered to cause harm to how the significance of Swallowfield and Stable Block is appreciated or understood.
- 5.6 The proposed development will not alter views of the house from the Site; these will remain possible from the various newly created public rights of way and landscaped and open areas. Given the private ownership of Swallowfield Park, there may be the opportunity to provide heritage boards along the route of these new public rights of way as to help with placemaking and communicate to the public, the historic narrative of this country house.
- 5.7 The proposed development has the potential to be visible from within the wider area of Swallowfield park, including from on the south-western approach to the house; the existing solar farm is already visible. These areas of visibility are considered to be incidental and do not relate to any designed views. However, the proposed development, particularly higher elements (e.g. the school) has the potential to reinforce and/or increase the visibility of development located outside of the park's boundaries. In turn, this reduces experiencing the parkland as a mostly enclosed and purposively

controlled landscape, which forms an important element in understanding the significance of the park and its relationship with the house. The proposed landscape treatments along the southern boundary of the proposed development (e.g. country park and community orchard) should, in time, help to soften and reduce the potential visibility of the Site from the park. However, at this stage of the proposed development would cause a low degree of harm to the significance of the Swallowfield park. In the context of the NPPF, this low harm would be less than substantial, but still engage the public benefit tests of paragraph 215.

Sheepbridge Court (Grade II* Listed Building)

- 5.8 The assessment in Chapter 4 established that the Site, in its undeveloped state can be considered to form part of the wider setting of Sheepbridge Court but is a neutral element that makes no contribution to its significance.
- 5.9 The proposed development will reduce the rural setting surrounding Sheepbridge Court, but the proposed built edge is broadly in line with the existing settlement edge of Spencer's Wood found on the western side of Basingstoke Road and would be experienced within this context. The development being set back from the existing hedgerow boundaries and the retention and low impact use (e.g. allotments) of the south-western field will preserve the existing farmland character of the Site and help reduce the visibility of the development.
- 5.10 The use of the south-western field for community allotments, the retention of other hedgerows through green corridors and a community orchard situated in the central part of the Site's southern boundary will add landscaping treatments and buffers between the proposed development and Sheepbridge Court. This landscaping will broadly complement an agricultural context and also help with reducing the visibility of the proposed development. The proposed country park will also contribute to reducing the visibility and urban character of the proposed development.
- 5.11 The effect of these measures will help to reduce the visual change and transition from Spencer's Wood to Sheepbridge Court. Consequently, the Listed Building would remain experienced within a setting of rural character and therefore, the proposals will not cause harm to understand or appreciating the significance of this Listed Building.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This Built Heritage Statement has been prepared by RPS for Richborough.
- 6.2 Archaeological heritage assets have been considered separately in the accompanying Archaeological Desk- Based Assessment.
- 6.3 The Statement has provided an assessment of the built heritage assets potentially affected through the development of the Site, addressing the information requirements, particularly paragraph 207 of Government's National Planning Policy Framework and Wokingham Borough Council's Local Plan in relation to built heritage.
- 6.4 The report has established that of these heritage assets, the proposed development has the potential to affect the significance of the Swallowfield Park and Adjoining Stable Block (Grade II* Listed Building), Swallowfield Park (Registered Park and Garden, Grade II) and Sheepbridge Court (Grade II* Listed Building) through changes within their respective settings.
- 6.5 The assessment concludes that the Site, in its undeveloped state, forms a neutral element within the settings of Swallowfield Park and Adjoining Stable Block, Swallowfield Park and Sheepbridge Court, whereby it makes no contribution their significance.
- 6.6 The proposed development will result in a visual change within the setting of Swallowfield Park and Stable Block, but this will not cause harm to how the significance of this Listed Building is appreciated or understood. However, the proposed development has the potential to cause a low degree of harm to the significance of the Swallowfield Park. In the context of the NPPF, this harm would be less than substantial harm and therefore, engage the public benefit tests of paragraph 215.
- 6.7 The proposed development will lead to a visual change within the rural setting of Sheepbridge Court, but the design of the development and landscaping treatments will compensate for this change; and this will not result in a harmful impact on how the significance of this Listed Building is presently appreciated or understood.
- 6.8 The proposed development of the site is therefore in accordance with the statutory duties of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and conforms to the requirements of the NPPF and local planning policy with regard to built heritage.

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Cartographic

Tracing of 1625 Sheepbridge Manor Map - Spencers Wood Local History Group

1761 Roque's Map of Berkshire

1790 Thomas Pride's Map of Reading and Country 10 miles surrounding

1806 Ordnance Survey Drawing

c.1835 Old Series 1" mapping – Berkshire

1838 Shinfield Tithe Map

1841 Swallowfield Tithe Map

Ordnance Survey 1:2500 editions: 1872, 1899, 1911, 1937, 1968, 1974, 1983, 1986, 1994 and 1995

Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 / 1:10,560 editions: 1877, 1900, 1913, 1947-1968, 1961, 1971-1976, 1984, 1990, 1999, 2006, 2016 and 2023.

Google Earth Imagery: 1999-2022

PLATES



Plate 1: From the western boundary of the northern-most field looking east.



Plate 2: From the northern boundary looking south in the direction of Swallowfield Park.



Plate 3: From the southern boundary of the northern-most field looking west towards Basingstoke Road.



Plate 4: From approx. the midpoint of the northern boundary of the central field looking west in the direction of the Basingstoke Road.



Plate 5: From the position of Plate 4 looking south in the direction of Sheepbridge Court.



Plate 6: From the position of Plate 4 looking south-east in the direction of Swallowfield Park.



Plate 7: From the position of Plate 4 looking east in the direction of Sussex Lane.



Plate 8: Looking west across the northern and central parts of the Site
in the direction of Basingstoke Road.



Plate 9: From the position of Plate 8 looking east across the Site and in the direction of Sussex Lane.



Plate 10: From the eastern boundary of the Site looking west in the direction of Basingstoke Road.



Plate 11: From the southern boundary of the central field looking south-east, out of the Site and in the direction of Swallowfield Park.



Plate 12: From the southern boundary of the central field looking south in the direction of the horse livery farm at Sheepbridge Court.



Plate 13: From the southern boundary of the central field looking north-west in the direction of Basingstoke Road.



Plate 14: From the eastern boundary of the central field looking south. The arrow identifies the visible western aspect of Swallowfield Park (house).



Plate 15: Looking south-east across the Site's south-western field, in the direction of Swallowfield Park. The arrow identifies the visible western aspect of Swallowfield Park (house).



Plate 16: Looking south from the Site's southern boundary in the direction of Sheepbridge Court.



Plate 17: Looking south across the Site's southern-most field, adjacent to Basingstoke Road.

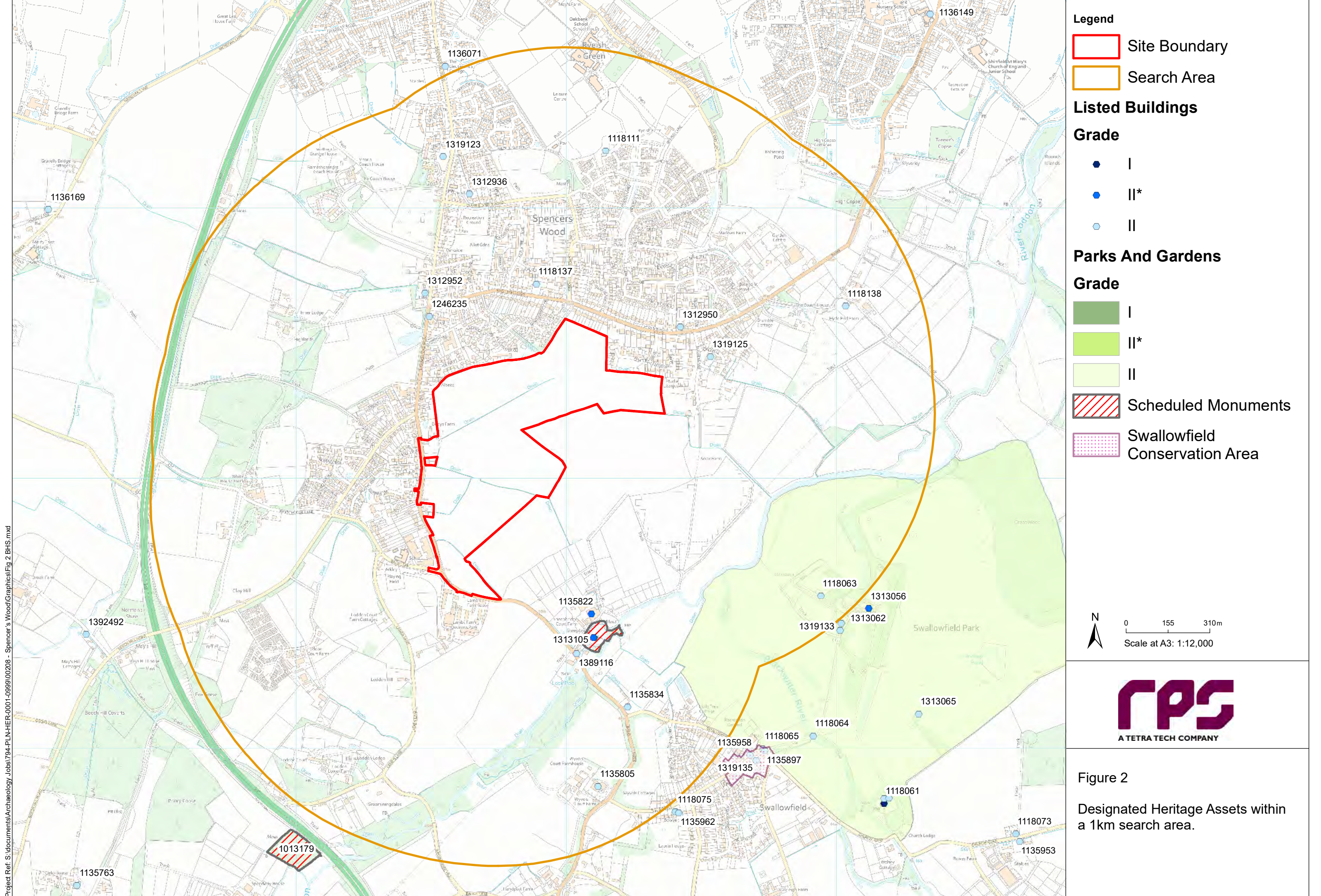


Plate 18: Swallowfield Park (eastern elevation of the house) looking west from the PRoW
along the south-eastern boundary of the park

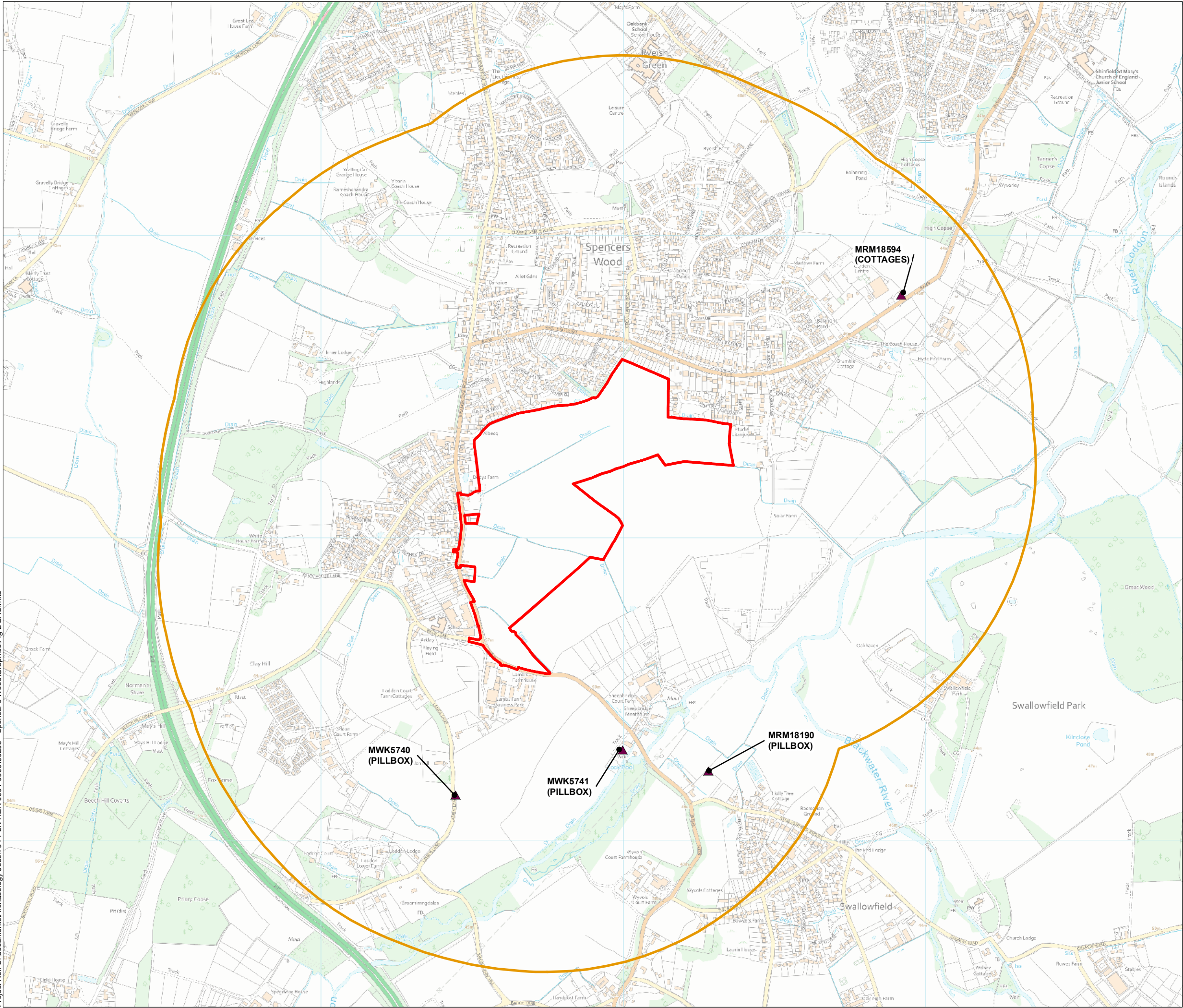


Plate 19: Barn (Grade II*) at Sheepbridge Court showing it amongst a modern farmstead.

FIGURES



Project Ref: S:\documents\Archaeology_Jobs\794-PLN-HER-0001-0999\02028 - Spencers Wood\Graphics\Fig 2 BHS.mxd

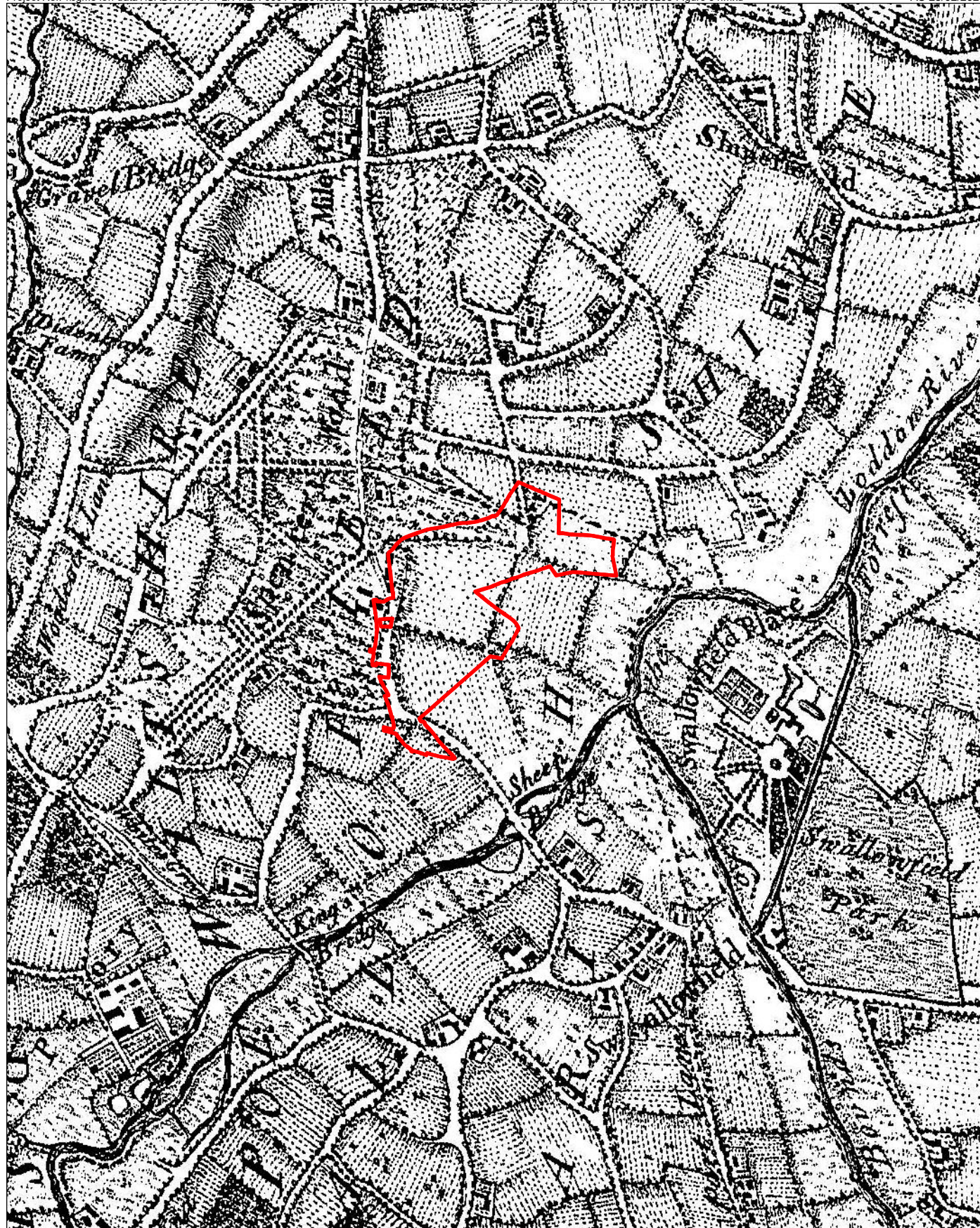


- Legend**
-  Site Boundary
 -  Search Area
 -  Non-Designated Built Heritage Asset

N
0 155 310m
Scale at A3: 1:12,000



Figure 3
HER Data
Non-Designated Built Heritage
Assets.



Approximate Site Location



Not to Scale.
Illustrative only.



Figure 4

1761 Rocque Map of Berkshire



 Site Boundary (approximate location)



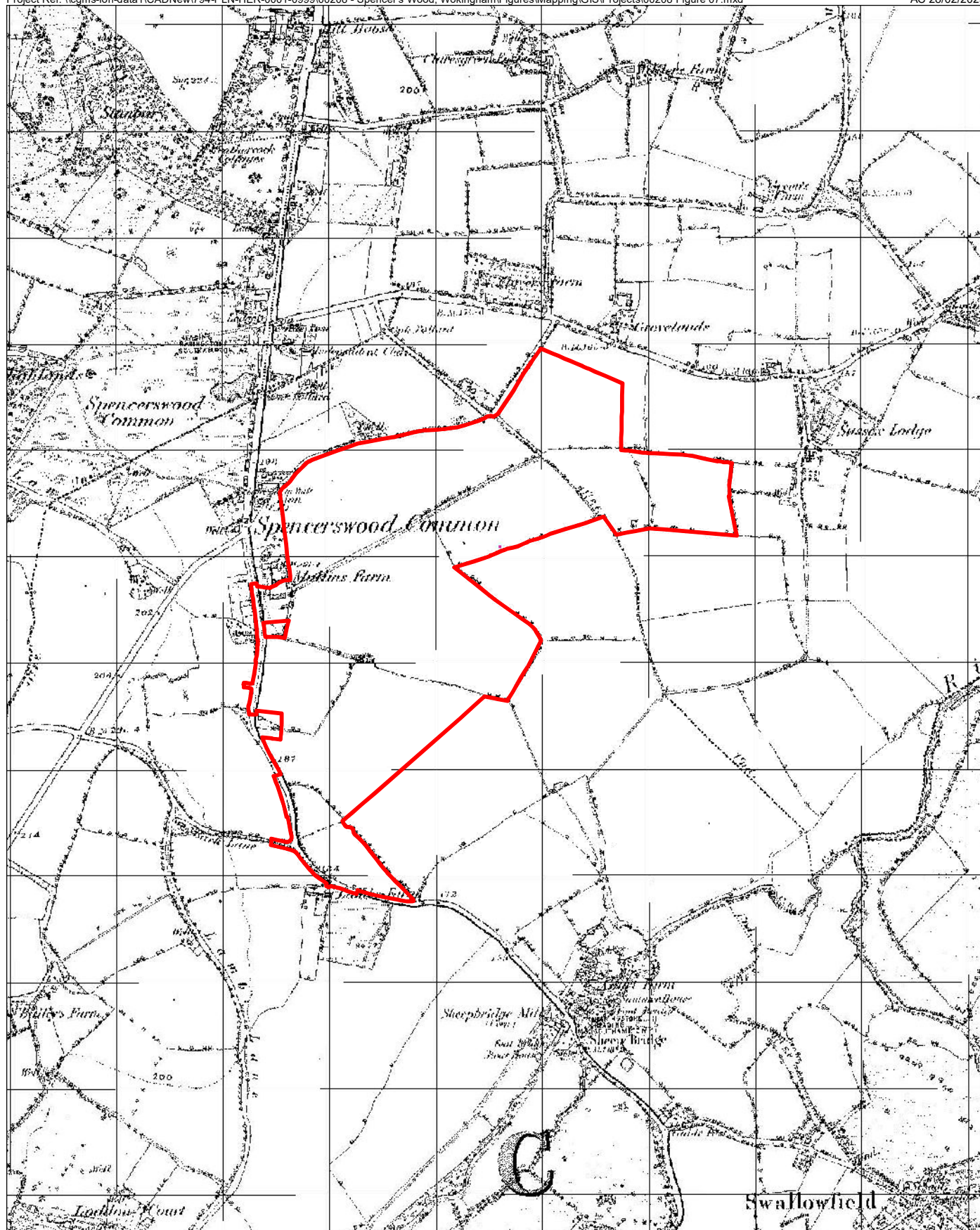
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Scale at A4: 1:15,000
(approximately)



Figure 5

1806 Ordnance Survey Drawing





 Site Boundary

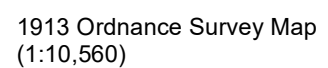


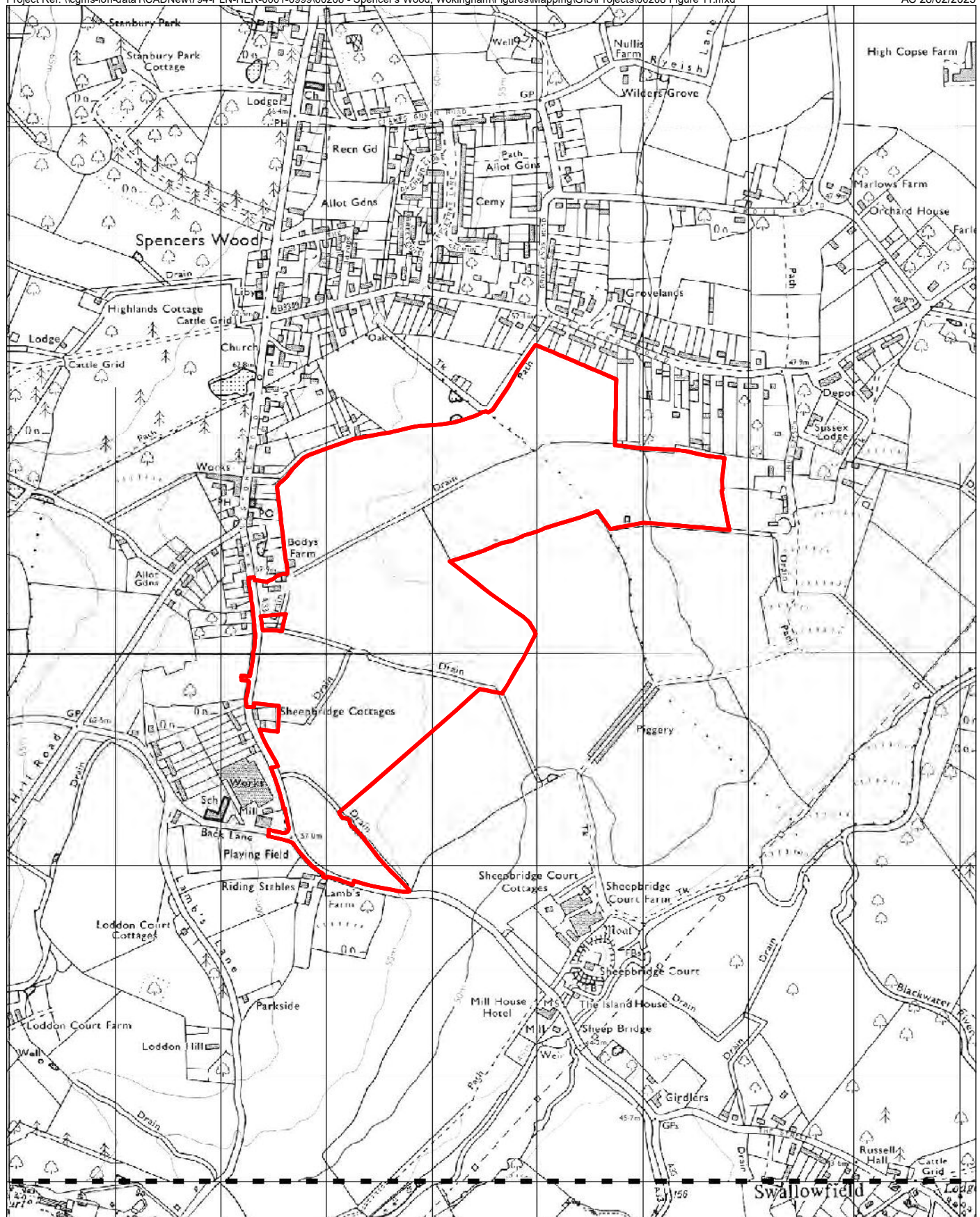
0 100 200 300m
Scale at A4: 1:10,000

rps
A TETRA TECH COMPANY

Figure 7

1877 Ordnance Survey Map
(1:10,560)





 Site Boundary

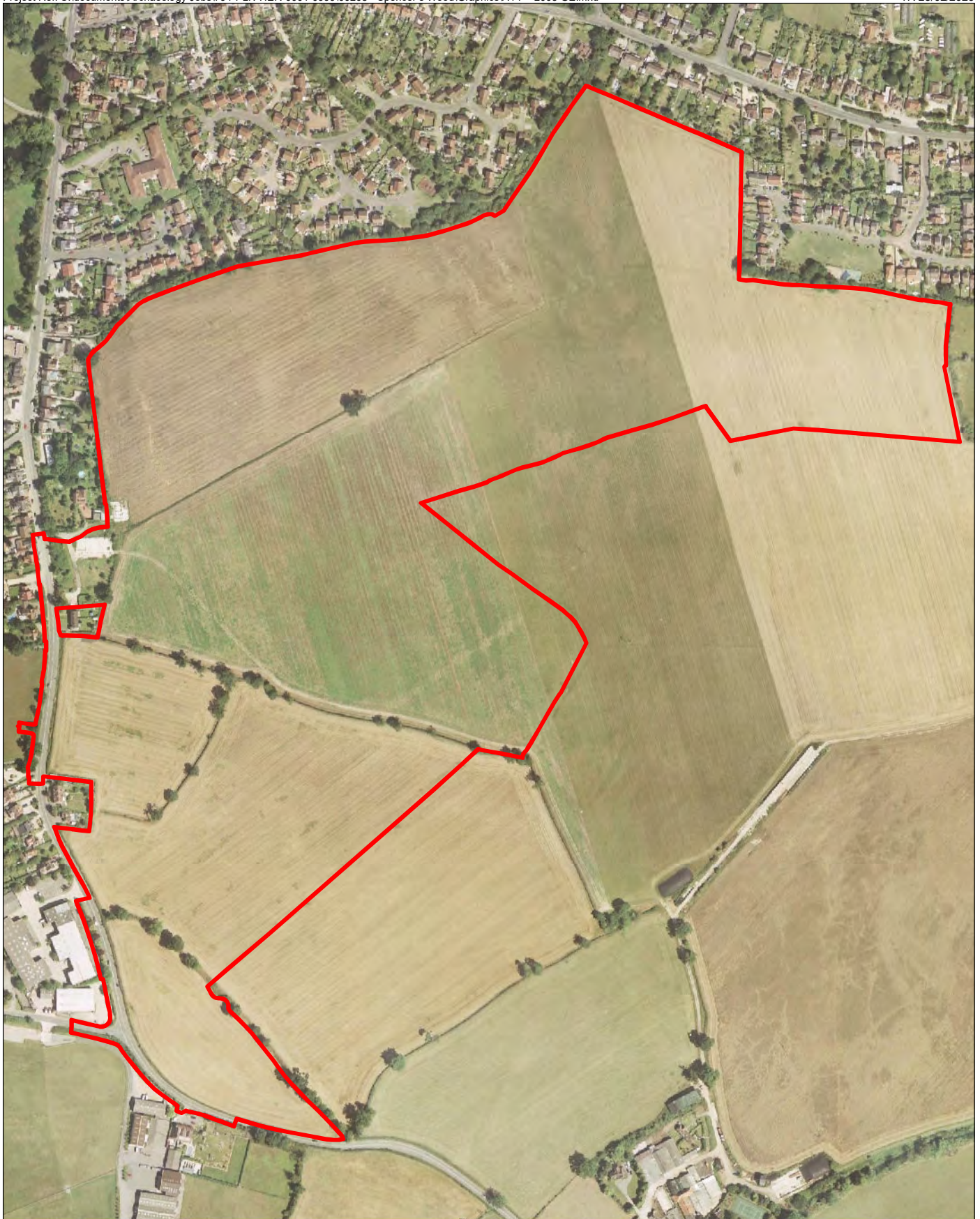


0 100 200 300m
Scale at A4: 1:10,000

rps
A TETRA TECH COMPANY

Figure 9

1971-76 Ordnance Survey Map
(1:10,000)



 Site Boundary

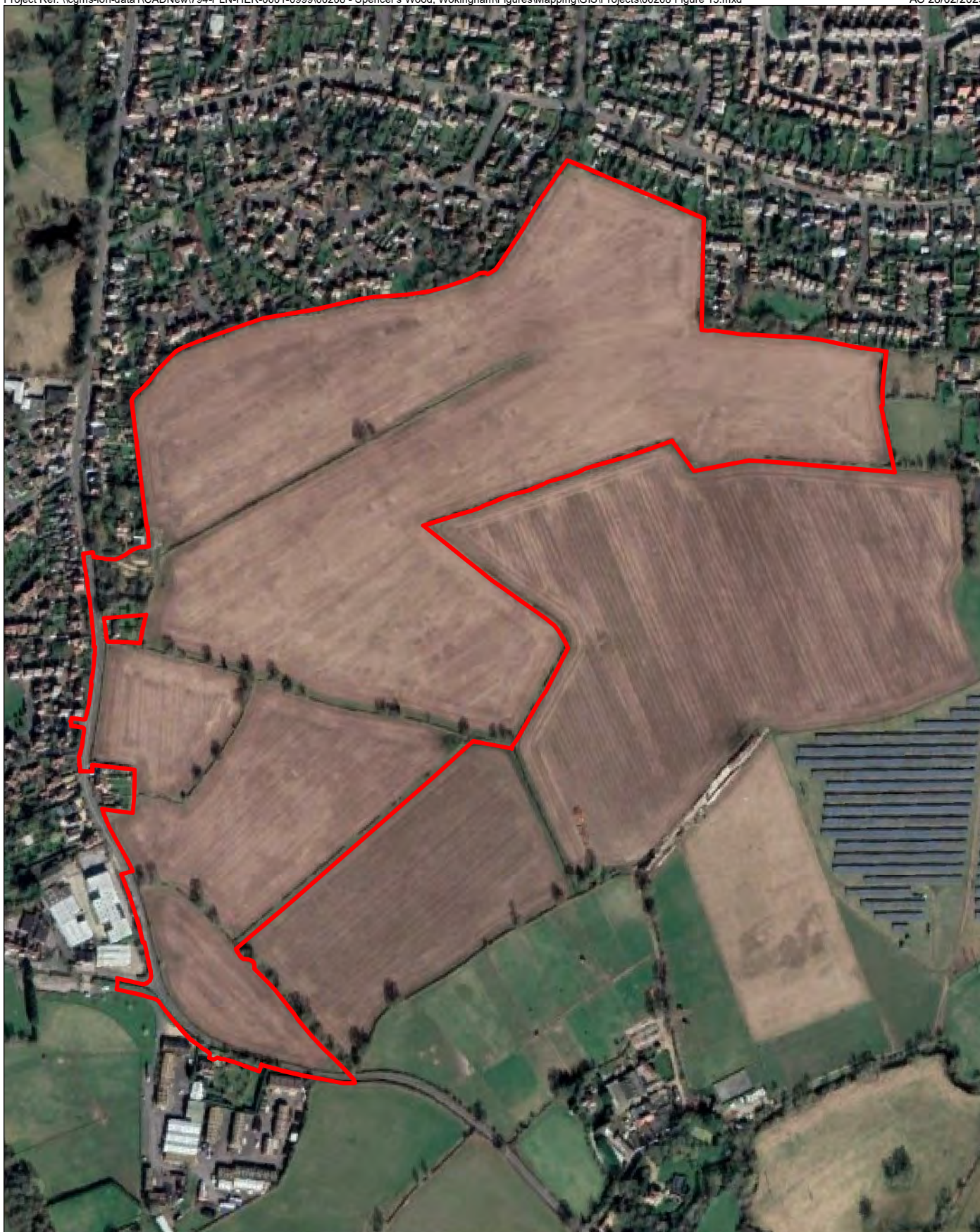


0 50 100 150m
Scale at A4: 1:5,200



Figure 10

2003 Google Earth Imagery



 Site Boundary

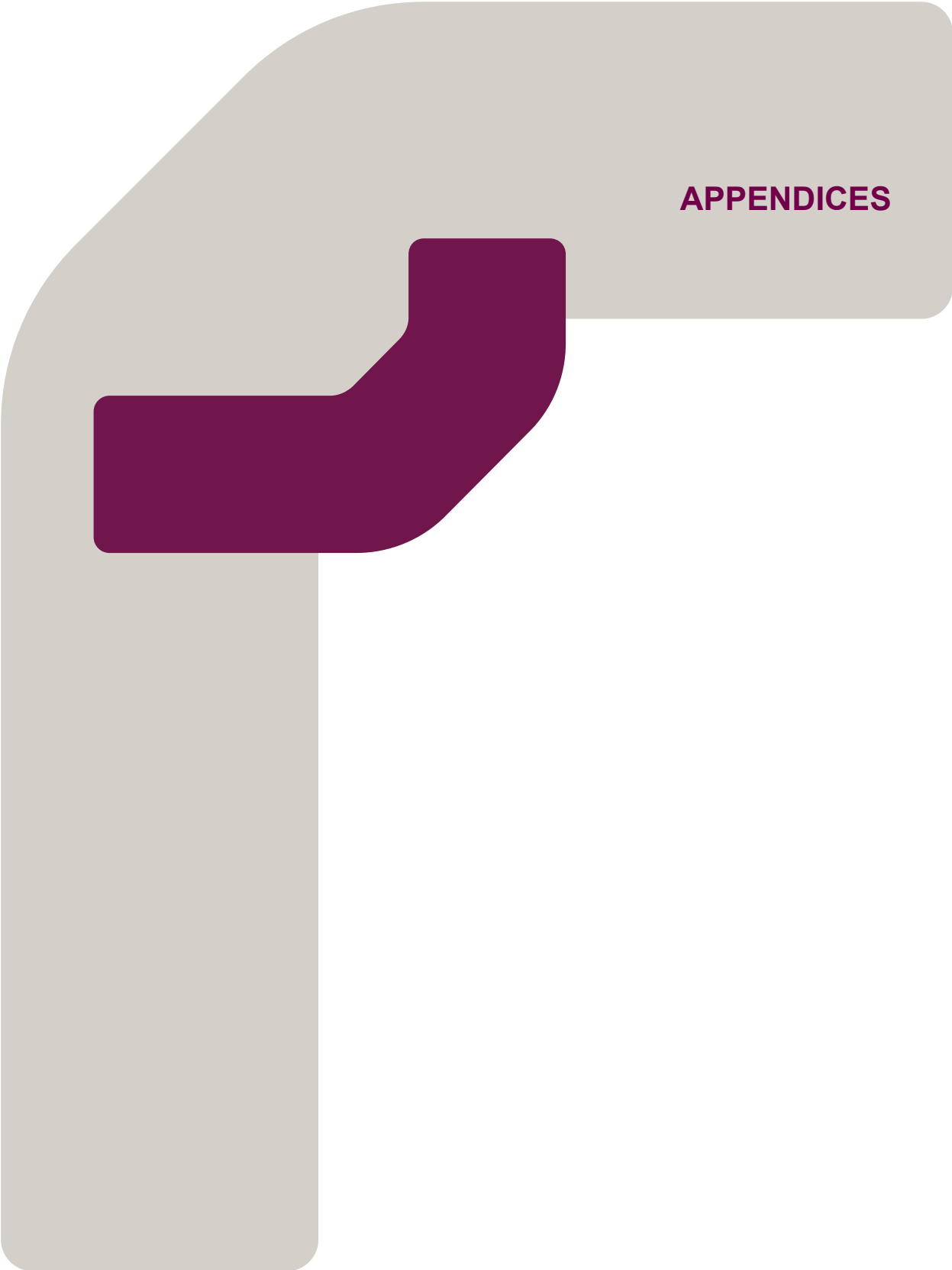


0 50 100 150m
Scale at A4: 1:6,000



Figure 11

2022 Google Earth Image



APPENDICES

Appendix A

National Heritage List for England – Listing entry for assessed Heritage Assets

Swallowfield Park and Adjoining Stable Block, Church Road. Grade II* Listed Building. NHLE: 1313056. Listed: Aug-1952. Swallowfield church road SU 76 NW (North-east side) 8/37 Swallowfield Park and adjoining 1.8.52 Stable Block (formerly listed as Swallow field Park and gateway from garden onto path leading to courtyard) G.V. II* Large country house and stables in parkland, now residential apartments. Late C17 by Talman for the second Earl of Clarendon, adapted and altered in 1820 by William Atkinson for Sir Henry Russell. Restored c1975. Rendered brick and brick, with hipped slate roofs of different heights. Main block is H-plan with wings projecting to the entrance front, and more at the rear; the stable block is centred round an arcaded courtyard open to the west and adjoining the main block on the north and south corners of the north west wing. 2 storeys. Numerous chimneys. Main block:- rendered with plinth, first floor string, frieze and cornice, and panelled parapet. Sash windows with glazing bars in architrave surrounds. South- west front has a 5-bay centre with central door and rectangular fanlight, under a Greek Doric porch with corner piers and entablature carried forward over pairs of columns. The centre is flanked by projecting wings, each of 2 bays. North-east front is generally similar but without a porch and has niches between windows. South-east front has 9 bays; the centre 3 bays project slightly with 4 Doric pilasters and entablature. Stables:- Brick 2 storeys. The southern section projects in front of the main block with plinth, strings at first floor level and over first floor windows; panelled parapet. Segmental headed sash windows with glazing bars. 4 bays, the right hand bay slightly set back with a half glazed door under arched radiating and wreathed fanlight. To the left of this is an arched stable entrance flanked by pilasters the whole height with stone caps and one casement window over arch. Above on the roof is a bell turret with cupola. This archway is repeated in the opposite wing. Both wings have arcaded corridors on the inner faces now enclosed with round headed windows with glazing bars. To the left of the archway is a southern wing, and at right angles running south-west is a long extension of 12 bays with arched entrance of similar design. Interior of house:- Entrance hall has marble floor, carved stone fireplace enriched with egg and dart and acanthus leaf mouldings, panelled door and window reveals; arched and radiating fanlights over 2 doors, through to an oval vestibule on the garden side, which has a marble floor, an ornate stucco ceiling with 8 panels enriched with swags, festoons and garlands. 4 niches with shell heads, moulded and curved wall panelling between; moulded ceiling cornice; 6-panelled doors with broken pediments over. This room is said to be part of Talman's work, and the stone doorway listed separately is Talman's and formed the doorway from the garden until 1820. A house has stood on this site since very early times. V.C.H. Vol.III p.267. B.O.E. (Berkshire) p.238. Listing NGR: SU7311965516.

Swallowfield Park. Park and Garden. Grade II. NHLE: 1000537. Listed Sept-1987.

A C17 and later country house with gardens and pleasure grounds, surrounded by a landscape park laid out in the C18.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Swallowfield Park was enclosed by Edward III in 1354, remaining in royal ownership until the C16. The estate was acquired in the late C16 by Samuel Backhouse (d 1626), passing through his family during the C17, and passing by marriage into the hands of Henry Hyde (d 1709) shortly before he became second Earl of Clarendon in 1674. In 1685 Lady Clarendon (d 1700) was accompanied to Swallowfield by John Evelyn who wrote an account of the estate in his diary for 22 October 1685, describing the features and plants he found, 'the gardens and waters as elegant as 'tis possible to make a flat [site] by art and industry and no mean experience ... the nurseries, kitchen garden full of the most desirable plants, two very noble Orangeries well furnished, but above all the canal and fishponds'. The second Earl rebuilt the house 1689-91, the designs being those of William Talman, Comptroller of the King's Works. Edward Hyde, the third Earl, sold the estate some time before 1718 to the nabob Thomas Pitt, late Governor of Madras, known as 'Diamond Pitt', who bought the estate with part of the proceeds of selling the Pitt or Regent diamond, and died there in 1726. Pitt employed John James to alter the house, and it is also thought that James designed the bridge in the park (Inspector's Report 1990).

The estate was sold out of the Pitt family in 1737, passing through various families during the remainder of the C18, and being sold to Sir Henry Russell, first Baronet in 1820. The formal landscape of rides present to the south of the house in the 1760s (Rocque, 1761), laid out in patte d'oie form, had disappeared by the 1790s (Pride, 1790), by which time the park had been entirely landscaped. In the early C19 (estate map, 1809) the estate was crossed by a network of ponds and canals, these being removed in the 1850s. The estate remained in the Russell family until 1965 when it was divided up and sold, the house and stables being converted into residential apartments for the Country Houses Association, in which use they remain (1998).

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Swallowfield Park lies 8km south of the centre of Reading, adjacent to the east edge of the village of Swallowfield. The 135ha site is bounded to the south-west by Church Road, to the north largely by the River Loddon and connecting drains, and on the other sides by agricultural land. The land is largely low lying and level, with a gentle slope north-westwards from the hillock on which the church stands at the south corner of the park. The setting is largely agricultural and wooded, with the village of Swallowfield to the south-west and Spencer's Wood village to the north-west.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main south-west drive enters off Church Road, close to the centre of Swallowfield village, 650m south-west of the house. Formerly the drive entered at Red Lodge (C19, listed grade II), lying 50m west of this entrance, a two-storey brick lodge built in Muscular Gothic style, the entrance being flanked by octagonal brick piers and curved, pierced brick walls (C19, listed grade II). The drive runs north-east to the Blackwater River, which extends north-west through the park from the south corner, the drive being carried across the water by a five-arched brick bridge (listed grade II) built for 'Diamond' Pitt by John James in 1722. Continuing north through the park, the drive passes east of the dovecote (C17/C18, listed grade II), an octagonal brick tower surrounded by a mid C19 open cow shed standing in a brick enclosure, continuing alongside the west side of the stables (C17 and later, listed grade II* with the house). The drive passes through the two-storey, brick-built stables via a central archway, emerging into the gravel forecourt on the south front of the house. A porte-cochère (William Atkinson 1820s) encloses the central entrance to the house, overlooking the adjacent carriage sweep, with beyond this the south lawn, planted with mature specimen trees including cedars of Lebanon, and beyond this the park. An archway at the west end of the south front leads into a service court enclosed by service buildings except on the west side which is bounded by a low brick wall and overlooks the Yew Walk to the Talman Doorway into the walled garden.

The south-east drive, now a farm track, enters 800m south of the house, off Church Road, adjacent to the east bank of the Blackwater River, past a former lodge (rebuilt C20). The drive curves around the hillock on which the church sits within the churchyard, 700m south of the house, curving north through the park, overlooking the Blackwater to the west, to arrive at the carriage sweep on the south front. The former east drive (gone, 1998) entered 1km east of the house, past the former Park Lodge (gone, 1998), before curving south-west and west across the eastern half of the park, joining the south-east drive 200m south of the house.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Swallowfield Park (1689-91 and later, William Talman and others, listed grade II*) stands towards the centre of the park, raised on a terrace adjacent to the north and east fronts. A house has stood on this site since at least the Middle Ages, William Talman building the present two-storey brick building (rendered in the C19) for the second Lord Clarendon, together with the adjacent stables and service court. The house was subsequently much altered, possibly having been entered from the north side when built. In the 1820s Talman's impressive entrance doorcase was removed to the entrance to the walled garden (listed building description). The two-storey stables (Talman 1690s, listed grade II* with the house) extend south from the service court to form the west side of the forecourt on the south front of the house.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The gardens and pleasure grounds surround the house, extending west around the walled garden and north in a narrow neck to the River Loddon.

A central door in the north front opens into a small, paved courtyard (laid out late C20) which leads to a raised grass terrace running along the north front and extending south along the east front. A gravel path runs along the top of the terrace, overlooking the informal east and north lawns planted with a variety of mature specimen

trees. The south end of the east arm terminates at the forecourt by the south front of the house, whilst the north end of this arm is terminated by a flight of stone steps leading down to a gravel path extending 150m north to a large London plane. The west end of the north arm is marked by a further flight of stone steps leading down to a cross path from the service court to the south, giving access to the pleasure grounds to the north. Steps lead west down from the path to a walk set in lawn flanked by mature trees, overlooking the park, which encloses the walled garden and returns to the service court on the west front of the house. A pets' cemetery, in which Bumble, a dog belonging to Charles Dickens is buried, lies along this walk, adjacent to the north wall. The walk continues around the outer side of the west wall past the bothies, returning east along the outer side of the south wall along Orchard Walk.

From the steps at the west end of the north terrace the cross path leads north along the west side of the north lawn, flanked by mature specimen trees including Indian bean trees, an Austrian pine and a cork oak. The path enters the narrow neck of the pleasure grounds separating the west park from the east park, leading first north-west, past the former Decoy Pond, then turning north-east 300m north of the house, flanked by mature trees including yews and limes. Some 500m north of the house the path runs along the bank of the Loddon for 150m, terminating at the west corner of Great Wood, with the silted-up remains of a former pool lying parallel to the east. Formerly (OS 1877, 1913) it appears that a path continued across a footbridge into Great Wood where it joined a network of paths running principally south to the southern edge of the Wood.

In the mid C18 (Rocque, 1761) a network of formal avenues in *patte d'oie* form radiated from a circular feature centred on the south front of the house, the principal avenue being aligned to the north on the south front, and to the south on the present (1998) site of the bridge, although no bridge is depicted by Rocque. North of the house a pond lay in the centre of what is now the north lawn, with what may have been the Decoy Pond to the west and a walk north from its north end to the Loddon. By the 1790s (Pride, 1790) the formal arrangement to the south had gone, and by the early C19 (estate map, 1809) the pleasure grounds had appeared, running north from the north lawn and referred to as 'grove'.

PARK The park encloses the house and pleasure grounds which divide it into west and east halves. The majority is now laid to arable, except for the areas west of the Decoy Pond, and south of the house flanked by the south-east and south-west drives, which are laid to pasture and also contain many specimen park trees. The park is low lying and inclined to flood. An icehouse (listed grade II) lies 400m south of the house in the east park. The north-east side of the east park is bounded by Great Wood.

By the 1760s (Rocque, 1761) Swallowfield Park existed as a landscape park occupying the southern half of the present east park, extending south to the Farley Hill lane. This park was divided from the formal garden to the west by a straight canal running north from the Blackwater River close to the church, connecting it with the Loddon at the north end of the riverside walk. By 1790 (Pride) the whole of the present park had been landscaped, with the canal still bisecting it. The 1809 map shows the park west of the canal crossed by a network of lesser canals or drainage ditches and other functional water features, presumably designed to drain the water meadows, these features having been removed in the 1850s.

KITCHEN GARDEN The 1.5ha, brick-walled kitchen garden lies 100m west of the house, enclosed by the ornamental garden walk. It is approached via an iron gate in the low, brick west wall of the service court which gives onto a gravel path flanked by clipped Irish yews, the Yew Walk. The Walk, aligned eastwards on the passage in the house connecting the main hall with the service court, extends 75m west, flanked by lawn, to the east wall of the garden, in which is set Talman's doorway enclosing a garden gate (C17 and later, listed grade II, restored 1998). The doorway, ornamented with pilasters with garlands and surmounted by a broken segmental pediment with swags and drapes, appears to have been moved from the main entrance to the house c 1820s and set into walls built by Thomas Pitt in the 1720s.

The eastern third of the garden is planted with mature trees and shrubs, the western two-thirds being laid to lawn with borders and specimen fruit and other trees. These two sections are separated by the remains of a yew hedge running from south to north across the garden, and connected by a central path which runs east to west. The gardener's cottage (C19) straddles the west wall towards the south end. Several doorways lead to the exterior garden walk. Formerly (OS 1911) a range of glasshouses stood against the inner side of the west

SPENCERS WOOD, BASKINGSTOKE ROAD, SHINFIELD, BERKSHIRE: BUILT HERITAGE STATEMENT.

wall, flanked by two free-standing glasshouses, these all now gone. A range of derelict C19 bothies stands against the outer side of the west wall.

John Evelyn refers to nurseries, orangeries and a kitchen garden in 1685, but it is not possible to relate this description to the walled garden present today. It seems that Pitt built the majority of the walls in the 1720s, the area being by the 1760s (Rocque, 1761) divided into six quarters with a central east/west path. Sir George Russell rebuilt the west end c 1885, widening it to north and south and building the gardener's cottage.

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OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1871-2, published 1877 2nd edition revised 1913 OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1911

Description written: September 1998 Amended: September 1999 Register Inspector: SR Edited: April 2000.

Appendix B

Tithe Apportionment Entries for Shinfield and Swallowfield

Table 1:

1838 Tithe Apportionments, Shinfield – Berkshire

Land Parcel	Landowner	Occupant	Description	Land Use/Cultivation
470	Henry Lanoy Hunter	Joseph Marlow Junior	The Five Acres	Pasture
471	Henry Lanoy Hunter	Joseph Marlow Junior	The Five and Half Acres	Arable
505	Henry Lanoy Hunter	Joseph Marlow Junior	Wheelers Eight Acres	Arable
506	Henry Lanoy Hunter	Joseph Marlow Junior	Wheelers	Arable

Table 2

1841 Tithe Apportionments, Swallowfield – Wiltshire

Land Parcel	Landowner	Occupant	Description	Land Use/Cultivation
287	Henry Lanoy Hunter	Joseph Marlow Junior	The Four Acres	Arable
288	Henry Lanoy Hunter	Joseph Marlow Junior	First Close by the Common	Arable
289	Henry Lanoy Hunter	Joseph Marlow Junior	Second Close by the Common	Arable
290	Henry Lanoy Hunter	Joseph Marlow Junior	Three Acres	Arable
291	Henry Lanoy Hunter	Joseph Marlow Junior	Ten Acres	Arable
292	Henry Lanoy Hunter	Joseph Marlow Junior	Six Acres	Arable
293	Henry Lanoy Hunter	Joseph Marlow Junior	Third Close	Arable
294	Henry Lanoy Hunter	Joseph Marlow Junior	Fourth Close	Arable
295	Henry Lanoy Hunter	Joseph Marlow Junior	The Barn Ground	Arable
296	Henry Lanoy Hunter	Joseph Marlow Junior	Home Close	Arable
297	Henry Lanoy Hunter	Joseph Marlow Junior	Matthews Close	Arable
298	Henry Lanoy Hunter	Joseph Marlow Junior	The Twelve Acres	Arable
299	Reverend John Athawes	Thomas Terry	Outer Field	Arable
300	Henry Lanoy Hunter	Joseph Marlow Junior	Matthews Pightle	Arable
301	Henry Lanoy Hunter	William Oakley and James Green	Cottages and Garde / Two Dwellings	-
302	Henry Lanoy Hunter	Joseph Marlow Junior	Frontage Pasture	Rough Pasture
303	Henry Lanoy Hunter	Joseph Marlow Junior	Farm House Barns Yards etc.	Homestead

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