



**Symmetry Park,
Ardley**

**Archaeological
and Heritage
Assessment**

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

On behalf of:
**Tritax Symmetry
Ardley Ltd**

January 2024
Report Reference
edp2355_r014d

Contents

Non-technical Summary

Section 1	Introduction.....	1
Section 2	Legislation and Planning Guidance.....	3
Section 3	Methodology.....	9
Section 4	Existing Information.....	15
Section 5	Conclusions.....	47
Section 6	References.....	49

Appendices

Appendix EDP 1	Images
Appendix EDP 2	Geophysical Survey Report (ASWYAS, December 2021)
Appendix EDP 3	Archaeological Evaluation Report (Cotswold Archaeology, January 2023)

Plans

Plan EDP 1	Overview of Designated Heritage Assets (edp2355_d026b 16 December 2021 SW/RS)
Plan EDP 2	Overview of HER Records (edp2355_d027c 19 January 2024 PDr/EBR)
Plan EDP 3	Extracts of Historic Mapping (edp7451_d028b 16 December 2021 SW/RS)
Plan EDP 4	Extract of Historic Mapping (1888) (edp2355_d029c 19 January 2024 SWa/RSk)

This version is intended for electronic viewing only

	Report Ref: edp2355_r014			
	Author	Formatted	Peer Review	Proofed by/Date
014_DRAFT	EB	FM	RS	-
014a	EB	MW	RS	SC/DL 171221
014b_DRAFT	EBR	MWI	RSk	-
014c_DRAFT	EBR	CTi	RSk	-
014d	EBR	-	RSk	NHa 110124

This page has been left blank intentionally

Non-technical Summary

- S1 This archaeological and heritage assessment has been prepared by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP) on behalf of Tritax Symmetry Ardley Ltd, in support of an Outline planning application for commercial development on land at Symmetry Park, Ardley, Oxfordshire ('the site').
- S2 The assessment concludes that the site does not contain any designated heritage assets, such as world heritage sites, scheduled monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, registered battlefields or conservation areas, where there would be a presumption in favour of preservation and retention, and against development.
- S3 In accordance with Historic England settings assessment guidance (HE, GPA3, 2017), heritage assets within a 2km radius of the site have been assessed in order to understand whether the site forms part of their settings such that it contributes to their significance.
- S4 It was determined that the land at the site is only part of the setting of a single heritage asset (the Grade II* listed building Church of St Peter) but that it makes no contribution to the church's significance or to that of any other heritage asset. As such, the site's development is unlikely to conflict with relevant heritage legislation and the parts of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) that are concerned with impacts upon designated heritage assets.
- S5 In terms of non-designated assets, the Historic Environment Record (HER) records a possible Iron Age 'banjo enclosure', as well as a possible Iron Age ring ditch within the site. Geophysical surveys undertaken across the site in 2015 and 2021 identified linear features possibly related to the banjo enclosure in the eastern portion of the site. However, the archaeological evaluation undertaken in 2023 established this to be a series of features related to Romano-British settlement and land management. Neither of the geophysical surveys, nor the trial trenching, identified any features that correspond to the possible ring ditch, which is now believed to be located further to the north.
- S6 In the eastern part of the site, the trial trench evaluation identified features indicative of small-scale land management, funerary activity and potential localised settlement during the late Iron Age and transitioning into the Roman period. The evidence indicates that the settlement evolved throughout the Roman period with features indicative of localised Roman settlement and land management, including the remains of a farmstead or 'villa rustica' and associated field systems.
- S7 Also to the south (Field 1), the evaluation recorded features of early medieval date. These features comprised the remains of sunken buildings and indicate localised Saxon settlement.
- S8 The features described above are considered to be of no greater than moderate, regional value and, as such, are not considered to be of such significance as to warrant preservation

in situ. Instead, their loss could be appropriately mitigated through a programme of archaeological excavation to allow 'preservation by record', prior to development. The scope of this mitigation would be agreed in advance with the archaeological advisor to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and would be secured by an appropriately worded condition upon any planning permission granted.

- S9 Additional features were recorded across the site during the evaluation trenching but these are considered to be of no greater than negligible value. This includes remains of ridge and furrow cultivation, dating from the medieval and post-medieval period, as well as field boundaries of post-medieval to modern date and quarry pits, which are not definitively dated but are likely to have been at their most extensive in the post-medieval period. These features are not considered to be of such significance as to warrant further mitigation.
- S10 Consequently, it is considered that, in terms of the historic environment, the proposed development accords with current legislation, the planning policies contained within the NPPF and the policies of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031.

Section 1

Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP) on behalf of Tritax Symmetry Ardley Ltd and presents the results of an Archaeological and Heritage Assessment of land at Symmetry Park, Ardley, Oxfordshire (hereafter referred to as 'the site').
- 1.2 The aim of this assessment is to consider the available historical and archaeological resources for the site and to establish its likely potential in accordance with the requirements of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF, 2023) and local planning policy.
- 1.3 In accordance with good practice and guidance, desktop sources have been augmented through the completion of a walkover survey, which in this case was undertaken in November 2021.
- 1.4 The second aim of this assessment is to identify and assess possible changes to the setting of surrounding designated heritage assets, as a result of the proposed development, and to determine whether, and to what extent, those changes will affect their heritage significance.

Location, Boundaries, Topography and Geology

- 1.5 The site is located to the immediate east of the junction between the A43 and B4100, and 0.5km to the east/north-east of Junction 10 of the M40 near Ardley, Oxfordshire.
- 1.6 The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 455362, 229178 and its location is shown on **Plan EDP 1**.
- 1.7 The site (c.79.99 hectares (ha)) comprises two land parcels, the larger being located north of the B4100 road, and the smaller located to the south. These two land parcels are comprised of eight agricultural, arable fields which are defined by field boundaries and hedgerows.
- 1.8 The site is located in an area which is dominated by agricultural land, with sparsely located residential and commercial development. The surrounding landscape is generally low-lying agricultural land.
- 1.9 The nearest settlement is Stoke Lyne, approximately 873m east of the site(s). Ardley/Fewcott is located about 1.2km south-west and Fritwell is located circa 2km to the west, both of which are beyond the M40.
- 1.10 The Moto Cherwell Valley motorway services and the Travelodge Bicester Cherwell Valley within the service station are located within 100m of the southern boundary of the

southern parcel, and an Esso service station (Baynards Green Service Station) is located approximately 100m west of the northern parcel's western boundary on the A43/B4100 roundabout junction. Baynards Green Farm to the west, now converted to a commercial estate, is located immediately beyond the Esso service station.

Geology and Topography

- 1.11 The underlying geology within the site comprises limestone sedimentary bedrock of the White Limestone Formation, with Forest Marble Formation and Bladon member mudstone and limestone in the central eastern part of the site (www.bgs.ac.uk). There are no superficial deposits recorded.
- 1.12 The land within the site is largely flat (c.115m above Ordnance Datum (aOD)), although it gently slopes downwards towards the east, to a height of c.110m aOD along the eastern boundary road.

Proposed Development

- 1.13 The proposals seek Outline planning permission (all matters reserved) for the erection of buildings comprising logistics (Use Class B8) and ancillary office (Use Class E(g)(i)) floorspace.
- 1.14 Illustrative details of access, layout, scale, landscaping and appearance are submitted and are reserved for future approval. These details will be submitted for approval via future Reserved Matters applications. The proposals include an illustrative proposal for access to the site, which is shown as a new roundabout located on the B4100 providing access to both development parcels.

Section 2 Legislation and Planning Guidance

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

Current Legislation

- 2.2 In terms of effects on the historic environment, the following paragraphs summarise those principal legislative instruments and planning policy frameworks of relevance to this application.
- 2.3 Sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act* set out the duties of Local Planning Authorities in respect of the treatment of listed buildings and conservation areas through the planning process.
- 2.4 Section 66(1) of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act* of 1990 sets out the statutory duty of the decision-maker, where proposed development would affect a listed building or its setting.
- 2.5 The “*special regard*” duty of the 1990 Act has been tested in the Courts and confirmed to require that “*considerable importance and weight*” is afforded by the decision-maker to the desirability of preserving a listed building along with its setting.
- 2.6 Furthermore, insofar as conservation areas are concerned, Section 72(1) of the 1990 Act identifies the following: “*In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area...special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.*”
- 2.7 Once again, it must be recognised that: (1) there is **no** statutory duty to enhance the character or appearance of a conservation area – the Courts have confirmed that development that ‘preserves’ them is acceptable; and (2) the statutory duty only covers development that is within a conservation area –the ‘setting’ of a conservation area is addressed by planning policy.
- 2.8 Paragraph 206 of the NPPF (see DLUHC, 2023) transposes s66(1) and s72(1) of the 1990 Act into national planning policy.
- 2.9 The balancing exercise to be performed – between the harm arising from a proposal and the benefits which would accrue from its implementation – is then subsequently presented in paragraphs 201 and 202 of the NPPF.

National Planning Policy

2.10 The NPPF was revised in December 2023. Section 16 sets out the government's approach to the conservation and management of the historic environment, including both listed buildings and conservation areas, through the planning process. The opening paragraph, 195, recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner proportionate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

2.11 Paragraph 200 concerns planning applications, stating that:

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

2.12 Designated assets are addressed in paragraph 205, which states that:

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

2.13 Paragraph 206 continues:

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

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

2.14 With regard to the decision-making process, paragraphs 207 and 208 are of relevance. Paragraph 207 states that:

"Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse

consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

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

2.15 Paragraph 208 states that: “Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.”

2.16 The threshold between ‘substantial’ and ‘less than substantial’ harm has been clarified in the Courts. Whilst the judgement relates specifically to the impact of development proposals on a listed building, paragraphs 24 and 25 of *Bedford BC v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* [2013] EWHC 2847 remain of relevance here, in the way they outline the assessment of ‘harm’ for heritage assets:

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

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

2.17 In other words, for the ‘harm’ to be ‘substantial’ – and therefore require consideration against the more stringent requirements of paragraph 207 of the NPPF compared with paragraph 208; the proposal would need to result in the asset’s significance either being “*vitiated altogether or very much reduced*”. Quite evidently, this represents a very high threshold to be reached.

2.18 With regard to non-designated heritage assets, paragraph 209 states that:

“The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect

directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.”

Local Planning Policy

Cherwell Local Plan (2011 – 2031)

- 2.19 The Cherwell local plan (2011 – 2031) was adopted by the Cherwell District Council in July 2015.
- 2.20 With regard to the historic environment, the local plan includes Strategic Objective 15: *“To protect and enhance the historic and natural environment and Cherwell's core assets, including protecting and enhancing cultural heritage assets and archaeology, maximising opportunities for improving biodiversity and minimising pollution in urban and rural areas.”*
- 2.21 This objective is achieved through the implementation of policies Ensuring Sustainable Development. This includes Policy ESD15: The Character of the Built and Historic Environment, which states:

“Successful design is founded upon an understanding and respect for an area’s unique built, natural and cultural context. New development will be expected to complement and enhance the character of its context through sensitive siting, layout and high-quality design. All new development will be required to meet high design standards. Where development is in the vicinity of any of the District’s distinctive natural or historic assets, delivering high quality design that complements the asset will be essential.

New development proposals should:

- i) *Be designed to deliver high quality safe, attractive, durable and healthy places to live and work in. Development of all scales should be designed to improve the quality and appearance of an area and the way it functions;*
- ii) *Deliver buildings, places and spaces that can adapt to changing social, technological, economic and environmental conditions;*
- iii) *Support the efficient use of land and infrastructure, through appropriate land uses, mix and density/development intensity;*
- iv) *Contribute positively to an area’s character and identity by creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness and respecting local topography and landscape features, including skylines, valley floors, significant trees, historic boundaries, landmarks, features or views, in particular within designated landscapes, within the Cherwell Valley and within conservation areas and their setting;*
- v) *Conserve, sustain and enhance designated and non-designated ‘heritage assets’ (as defined in the NPPF) including buildings, features, archaeology, conservation areas and their settings, and ensure new development is sensitively sited and integrated in*

accordance with advice in the NPPF and NPPG. Proposals for development that affect non-designated heritage assets will be considered taking account of the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset as set out in the NPPF and NPPG. Regeneration proposals that make sensitive use of heritage assets, particularly where these bring redundant or under used buildings or areas, especially any on English Heritage's At Risk Register, into appropriate use will be encouraged;

- vi) Include information on heritage assets sufficient to assess the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. Where archaeological potential is identified this should include an appropriate desk based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation;*
- vii) Respect the traditional pattern of routes, spaces, blocks, plots, enclosures and the form, scale and massing of buildings. Development should be designed to integrate with existing streets and public spaces, and buildings configured to create clearly defined active public frontages;*
- viii) Reflect or, in a contemporary design response, re-interpret local distinctiveness, including elements of construction, elevational detailing, windows and doors, building and surfacing materials, mass, scale and colour palette;*
- ix) Promote permeable, accessible and easily understandable places by creating spaces that connect with each other, are easy to move through and have recognisable landmark features;*
- x) Demonstrate a holistic approach to the design of the public realm to create high quality and multi-functional streets and places that promotes pedestrian movement and integrates different modes of transport, parking and servicing. The principles set out in The Manual for Streets should be followed;*
- xi) Consider the amenity of both existing and future development, including matters of privacy, outlook, natural lighting, ventilation, and indoor and outdoor space;*
- xii) Limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation;*
- xiii) Be compatible with up to date urban design principles, including Building for Life, and achieve Secured by Design accreditation;*
- xiv) Consider sustainable design and layout at the masterplanning stage of design, where building orientation and the impact of microclimate can be considered within the layout;*
- xv) Incorporate energy efficient design and sustainable construction techniques, whilst ensuring that the aesthetic implications of green technology are appropriate to the context (also see Policies ESD 1 - 5 on climate change and renewable energy);*

xvi) *Integrate and enhance green infrastructure and incorporate biodiversity enhancement features where possible (see Policy ESD 10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment and Policy ESD 17 Green Infrastructure). Well designed landscape schemes should be an integral part of development proposals to support improvements to biodiversity, the micro climate, and air pollution and provide attractive places that improve people's health and sense of vitality; and*

xvii) *Use locally sourced sustainable materials where possible.*

The Council will provide more detailed design and historic environment policies in the Local Plan Part 2.

The design of all new development will need to be informed by an analysis of the context, together with an explanation and justification of the principles that have informed the design rationale. This should be demonstrated in the Design and Access Statement that accompanies the planning application. The Council expects all the issues within this policy to be positively addressed through the explanation and justification in the Design & Access Statement. Further guidance can be found on the Council's website. 118 Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 Section B - Policies for Development in Cherwell.

The Council will require design to be addressed in the pre-application process on major developments and in connection with all heritage sites. For major sites/strategic sites and complex developments, Design Codes will need to be prepared in conjunction with the Council and local stakeholders to ensure appropriate character and high-quality design is delivered throughout. Design Codes will usually be prepared between outline and reserved matters stage to set out design principles for the development of the site. The level of prescription will vary according to the nature of the site."

2.22 The plans and policies listed above have all been considered in the preparation of this Assessment.

Section 3

Methodology

- 3.1 This report has been produced in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment* issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA, 2020). These guidelines provide a national standard for the completion of desk-based assessment.
- 3.2 This assessment has also been produced in accordance with the scope of the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by EDP in 2021 (Report Reference: edp2355_r007a) and agreed with the Lead Archaeologist at Oxfordshire County Council, on 24 November 2021.
- 3.3 The assessment principally involved consultation of readily available archaeological and historical information from documentary and cartographic sources. The principal sources of information comprised:
- Information held by the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) on known archaeological sites, monuments and findspots, within the vicinity of the site (updated in September 2023);
 - Information from the Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Character study;
 - Information from the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS), available from the PAS website;
 - A previous desk-based assessment written by EDP, and the sources acquired for that study, for a closely comparable site (EDP, 2015_r004a);
 - The National Heritage List for England, curated by Historic England for designated heritage assets;
 - Fieldwork reports from previous archaeological investigations within and close to the site;
 - Geological maps held online by the British Geological Survey;
 - Maps and other relevant documents and books held by the Oxfordshire History Centre and online sources, including all editions of the Ordnance Survey;
 - LiDAR Data coverage of the site and its environs; and
 - Aerial photographs held by the Historic England Archive and, if relevant, those held by the HER.

- 3.4 This report provides a synthesis of relevant information for the site derived from a search area extending up to 1km from its center, hereafter known as the ‘study area’, for its consideration of potential physical effects on heritage assets and to allow for additional contextual information regarding its archaeological interest and/or potential to be gathered. A broader study area of 2km from the centre of site was adopted for the evaluation of potential effects upon the settings of designated heritage assets.
- 3.5 Given the nature of the local topography and proliferation of trees in field boundaries, wooded areas and hedgerows in the site’s wider vicinity, it was determined that the development would be unlikely to result in change to the settings of any assets beyond 2km from the site.
- 3.6 Nevertheless, whilst the setting assessment is focused on assets within a 2km radius of the site, the assessment presented in **Section 4** does consider designated assets in the wider landscape.
- 3.7 The information gathered from the repositories and sources identified above was checked and augmented through the completion of a site visit and walkover, carried out in November 2021. This walkover considered the nature and significance of known and/or potential archaeological assets within the site, identified any visible historic features and assessed possible factors that may affect the survival or condition of known or potential assets.
- 3.8 The report thereafter concludes with an assessment of the site’s likely archaeological potential, made with regard to current best practice guidelines.
- 3.9 The significance of heritage assets has been defined in accordance with the categories of heritage interest set out in Annex 2 of the NPPF (2023).

Assessment of the Setting of Heritage Assets

- 3.10 There are no designated heritage assets within the site; as such, any changes to their significance would be expressed in changes within their setting. When assessing the impact of proposals on designated heritage assets through changes within their ‘setting’, it is not a question of whether there would be a physical impact on that asset, but instead whether change within the ‘setting’ would lead to a loss of ‘significance’.
- 3.11 In simple terms, setting is defined as “*the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced*” (DLUHC, 2023). It must be recognised from the outset that ‘setting’ is not a heritage asset and cannot itself be harmed. Its importance relates to the contribution it makes to the significance of the heritage asset.
- 3.12 Historic England (HE) guidance identifies that “*change to heritage assets is inevitable, but it is only harmful when significance is damaged*” (HE, 2015).

- 3.13 In that regard, 'significance' is defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as *"the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic."*
- 3.14 As such, when assessing the indirect impact of proposals on designated heritage assets, it is not a question of whether setting would be affected, but rather a question of whether change within an asset's 'setting' would lead to a loss of 'significance' based on the above 'heritage interest' as defined in the NPPF.
- 3.15 Set within this context, it is necessary to first define the significance of the asset in question, and the contribution made to that significance by its 'setting', in order to establish whether there would be a loss and therefore harm. The guidance identifies that change within a heritage asset's setting need not necessarily cause harm to that asset and that it can be positive, negative or neutral.
- 3.16 In light of the above, the assessment of potential setting effects, arising from the proposed scheme, has followed the guidance set out in *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets* published by Historic England in 2017. This guidance (HE, 2017) observes that *"The NPPF makes it clear that the extent of the setting of a heritage asset is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve."*
- 3.17 The guidance also observes that *"elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate the significance or may be neutral."*
- 3.18 The guidance states that the importance of setting *"lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset or to the ability to appreciate that significance."*
- 3.19 It goes on to note that:
- "All heritage assets have significance, some of which have particular significance and are designated. The contribution made by their setting to their significance also varies. Although many settings may be enhanced by development, not all settings have the same capacity to accommodate change without harm to the significance of the heritage asset or the ability to appreciate it."*
- 3.20 Whilst identifying that elements of an asset's setting can make an important contribution to its significance, the guidance states that *"setting is not itself a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, although land comprising a setting may itself be designated."* It continues by adding that *"conserving or enhancing heritage assets by taking their settings into account need not prevent change; indeed change may be positive."*
- 3.21 On a practical level, the HE guidance (2017) identifies an approach to assessing setting in relation to development management that is based on a five-step procedure, i.e.:
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 the 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.

3.22 As far as Step 2 is concerned, the guidance makes the following observations:

“The second stage of any analysis is to assess whether the setting of a heritage asset makes a contribution to its significance and the extent and/or nature of that contribution...this assessment should first address the key attributes of the heritage asset itself and then consider:

- *The physical surroundings of the asset, including its relationship with other heritage assets;*
- *The asset’s intangible associations with its surroundings, and patterns of use;*
- *The contribution made by noises, smells, etc. to significance; and*
- *The way views allow the significance of the asset to be appreciated.”*

3.23 Thereafter, the guidance notes that: *“This assessment of the contribution to significance made by setting will provide the baseline for establishing the effects of a proposed development on significance, as set out in ‘Step 3’ below.”*

3.24 Having established the baseline, the following guidance is provided in respect of an assessment of the effect upon ‘setting’, i.e.:

“In general, the assessment should address the attributes of the proposed development in terms of its:

- *Location and siting;*
- *Form and appearance;*
- *Wider effects; and*
- *Permanence.”*

- 3.25 In light of the above, the assessment of potential setting effects, employed in the preparation of this report, focused on the completion of a site survey, which was undertaken in November 2021 and concentrated on the following three main areas:
1. Identifying those heritage assets that could potentially be affected by the proposed scheme and the manner (if any) in which they would be affected;
 2. Defining the contribution made to their *significance* by their setting; and
 3. Assessing the likely impact upon their *significance*, as a result of the form of development proposed being implemented.
- 3.26 As far as identifying the heritage assets potentially affected by the proposed scheme is concerned, due consideration has been given to the following factors which are considered to influence the potential for the settings of heritage assets to be materially affected: (1) the local topography; (2) distance between the asset and the site and; (3) intervening built and planted form within the immediate area.
- 3.27 In light of the above, the heritage setting assessment at **Section 4** of this report has been prepared in a robust manner, employing current best practice professional guidance and giving due regard to the methodology detailed above.

This page has been left blank intentionally

Section 4 Existing Information

Introduction

- 4.1 The following section details and contextualises the known heritage assets within a 2km study area of the site and known archaeological assets within a 1km study area. Designated and non-designated assets within the study area are shown on **Plans EDP 1** and **EDP 2** respectively.
- 4.2 In accordance with Step 1 of the HE settings assessment guidance (GPA3, 2017), it also includes a statement in relation to designated heritage assets in the wider landscape (beyond 2km) and their settings.
- 4.3 The site itself does not contain any designated heritage assets, such as scheduled monuments, listed buildings, historic parks and gardens, conservation areas or registered battlefields, where there would be a presumption in favour of physical retention or preservation *in situ* and against development proceeding.
- 4.4 There are 18 listed buildings within the 2km study area, the locations of which are shown on **Plan EDP 1**. These comprise four Grade II* listed buildings and 14 Grade II listed buildings.
- 4.5 There are two scheduled monuments, and two conservation areas within the 2km study area, as shown on **Plan EDP 1**.
- 4.6 There are three records within the site boundary, as recorded by the Oxfordshire HER, and a further 28 records in the 1km study area, spanning the prehistoric to modern period; their locations are shown on **Plan EDP 2**.
- 4.7 Three archaeological events are noted within the site boundary, these being the geophysical survey undertaken across a portion of the site in 2015, the geophysical survey undertaken across a portion of the site in 2021, and the evaluation trenching undertaken across the whole site in 2022; this will be discussed in full below. Eleven further archaeological interventions are recorded within the 1km search area; their locations are shown on **Plan EDP 2** and they are discussed below, where relevant to the archaeological potential of the site.

Designated Heritage Assets

Assets Located Beyond a 2km Radius of the Site

- 4.8 Because of the site's broadly level topography, the similar topography of the surrounding area and the proliferation of mature hedgerows and trees in the landscape surrounding the site, including numerous small pockets of woodland and wooded belts which curtail

views, it is assessed that the site's development would have no influence on the settings of more distant designated heritage assets.

- 4.9 For example, c.3.2km to the north-west is the village of Souldren, which is designated as a conservation area and which has a Grade II * listed Barn and Church. Beyond the village to the north-west (c.3.4km from the site) is the Grade II listed Registered Park and Garden at Aynho Park and the Grade I listed mansion of the same name (located c.5.1km to the north-west of the site). These highly rated assets are located on slopes either side of the valley of the Ockley Brook. The south-east side of the valley rises up to a low hill, Ploughley Hill (at 144m aOD), which forms a broad barrier between these assets and the lower land to the south-east that includes the site (situated c.115m aOD).
- 4.10 Given the presence of this hill there is no possibility for the development to be seen from the assets noted above, to the north-west, and the land at the site has no historic or functional association with them. As such, their significance will be unaffected and they are not considered any further in this assessment.
- 4.11 In a similar way, designated heritage assets at Croughton, that include a conservation area and Grade I listed Church located c.4km to the north of the site, are located within a valley, with rising land to the south that would screen any views from them to buildings within the site. As such, these assets have also been scoped out of further assessment.
- 4.12 Likewise, designated assets are located at Cottisford, c.3.1km to the north-east that include a conservation area and a Grade I listed Manor Farmhouse and a Grade II* listed Church. These assets are located within a valley, along which woodland proliferates to the south-west. There is more extensive woodland at Tusmore Wood further to the south-west and with further woodland beyond that, all of which lie between the assets and the site. Given the broadly level topography between the assets and the site and given the distance, this woodland would certainly act to screen any distant views to the site that might include development. As such, these assets have also been scoped out of further assessment.
- 4.13 To the east, south-east and south, listed buildings at Hethe (c.3km to the east of the site), Bainton (c.2.7km to the south-east of the site) and Bucknell (c.2.8 km to the south of the site) have all also been scoped out of the assessment at this point. They are all located in valley situations on land that slopes away from the direction of the site and with local high points (low hill summits) between them and the site, that would serve to block any distant views, notwithstanding the screening effect of intervening woodland and field boundaries.
- 4.14 To the south-west is the conservation area of RAF Upper Heyford, which includes several listed buildings and scheduled monuments that comprise 20th century structures dating from the Cold War. The conservation area's eastern boundary is located c.2.3km from the site, with the rest of its associated assets located further west, away from the site. The conservation area is primarily of interest due to its preservation of hardened Cold War structures which (in accordance with a Character Appraisal – CDC, 2006) communicate the atmosphere of the Cold War and have a functional character. Whilst the airbase is quite prominent, the surrounding landscape of agricultural fields is distinct from it and of little relevance to its significance.

- 4.15 It is not thought likely that views to the site would be possible from the airbase, as the villages of Ardley and Fewcott and Ardley Wood lie between it and the site, as well as the course of the M40 motorway and the A43, all of which comprise significant barriers in the landscape composed of buildings, woodland (at Ardley Wood) and tree lined boundaries. Regardless, a distant view to buildings within the site would be of no relevance to the significance of the conservation area, which does not derive any significance from distant agricultural land, being primarily on account of its internal structures and 20th century military character. As such, the conservation area and assets located within are not considered any further within this assessment.
- 4.16 To the west of the site, the village of Fritwell is located c.2.1km from the site boundary. The village is designated as a conservation area and contains several listed buildings, including a Grade II* listed Manor. The village is situated within a slight valley; between this and the site, the land rises up to c.125m aOD. It is separated from the site by the A43 as well as buildings and wooded belts at Baynard's Green to the immediate west of the site and, further west, by the course of the M40 as well as numerous field boundaries. The village also has some modern development on its eastern edge that is not within the conservation area and thus has a screening effect on fields viewed outwards.
- 4.17 Given the slight rise in the land between the village, coupled with the various obstacles in the landscape, it is considered very unlikely that any distant view to buildings within the site would be possible from the village and certainly not from the Grade II* listed Manor, which is entirely enclosed by surrounding buildings and boundaries. Regardless, distant farmland at the site has no historical or functional association with the village and is not part of its setting from where it is experienced; as such the presence of light industrial buildings on this land would have no implications for the conservation area's character and appearance. Therefore the assets at Fritwell are not considered any further within this assessment.
- 4.18 Given the assessment above it was concluded that a 2km study area for a detailed assessment of the settings of designated heritage assets is appropriate for the site and the type of development proposed.

Scheduled Monuments

- 4.19 There are two scheduled monuments (shown on **Plan EDP 1**) within 2km of the site. The significance of these assets is discussed below, along with the contribution made to that significance by their settings, as per Steps 1 and 2 of the HE settings assessment guidance (GPA3, 2017).

Tusmore Medieval Settlement

The Asset and its Significance

- 4.20 Approximately 1.3km north of the site boundary lies the scheduled monument of Tusmore medieval settlement (**1015548**), immediately west of Tusmore House and a Grade II* listed Granary/Dovecote.

4.21 The HE citation notes the monument as comprising:

“The remains of the medieval settlement of Tusmore, the original line of the road through the village, a moated enclosure and part of a boundary bank around the settlement. The remains survive in part as upstanding earthworks in the later landscaped layout of Tusmore Park, situated about 3km north of Ardley.”

4.22 The significance of the scheduled remains of the settlement is also referenced within the citation:

“The Tusmore settlement survives well and will contain archaeological and environmental evidence relating to its construction and the landscape in which it was built. In addition, it is well documented and is known to be one of a small number of sites which can be shown to have been abandoned as a result of the Black Death.”

4.23 The scheduled monument itself could not be visited due to its situation within the private grounds of Tusmore Park, with a public footpath crossing its northern edge unable to be located. However, it is apparent that the significance of the monument derives from its historic interest, providing an understanding of the organisation of medieval settlement, and the history of the Black Death, as well as the archaeological interest inherent within its associated deposits and earthworks.

The Contribution of the Monument’s Setting to its Significance

4.24 The Tusmore Medieval Settlement is set within the western extents of Tusmore Park. The monument is situated within open green fields, with woodland at Upper and Lower Rookery to the west and Hermitage Copse to the south, as well as Tusmore Lake and Tusmore house to the east.

4.25 As the archaeological remnants of a medieval village, the monument is no longer experienced within its historic context, rather being experienced as a feature of a much later designed landscape of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. As such, the present setting has little relevance to the history of the monument but contributes to its significance simply on account of representing an open space from which the earthworks can be experienced.

4.26 There are no historical or functional links between the medieval settlement and the land at the site (located c.1.3km to the south). Furthermore, the asset is well-separated from the site due to substantial blocks and belts of woodland to the south of the monument, including the park’s boundary belts which screen views to the south.

4.27 Therefore, the site does not form a part of the monument’s setting and does not contribute to its significance in any way, and the site’s development would cause no harm to its significance.

Ardley Wood Moated Ringwork

The Asset and its Significance

- 4.28 Approximately 1.7km south-west from the site boundary is the scheduled monument Ardley Wood Moated Ringwork (**1015554**), at the south-western extent of the Ardley Conservation Area (**Image EDP A1.14**).
- 4.29 The monument is described within the Historic England citation as a “*sub-rectangular earthwork enclosure representing an earthwork ringwork*”. This earthwork is believed to have originally been constructed as a Norman-era ringwork, and then reused as a dry-moated settlement site later in the medieval period.
- 4.30 The significance of the monument is noted within the citation as relating to the historic interest of the moated ringwork, with examples of such military strongholds being rare nationally. As such, the monument is recorded as “*one of a limited number and very restricted range of Anglo-Saxon and Norman fortifications*” which further the understanding of defensive organisation during this period.
- 4.31 The interest of the ringwork is therefore derived from its archaeological interest, as the monument is considered to contain “*archaeological and environmental evidence relating to its construction and the landscape in which it was built.*” This evidence can also provide further information for its re-use as a moated settlement later in the medieval period, and also its historical interest in relation to the area’s medieval history.

The Contribution of the Monument’s Setting to Significance

- 4.32 The Ardley Wood Moated Ringwork is set within dense vegetation in Ardley Wood. Views of the raised bank and moat area are dominated by vegetation (**Image EDP A1.15**).
- 4.33 Given that the monument was initially a defensive structure, it would have originally been designed with strategic views, which are no longer appreciable within this current woodland setting. As such, by screening the monument, the current setting detracts from its significance.
- 4.34 No historical or functional links are present between the ringwork and the land which forms the site. Furthermore, no views towards the site are possible from the monument due to the intervening woodland, as well as other landscape features between the monument and the site.
- 4.35 Therefore, the site does not form a part of the monument’s setting and does not contribute to its significance in any way, and the site’s development would cause no harm to its significance.

Listed Buildings

- 4.36 There are 18 listed buildings within 2km of the site (shown on **Plan EDP 1**), all designated at either Grade II* or Grade II.
- 4.37 Six of these buildings are located within the Ardley and Fewcott Conservation Areas, which broadly define areas of interest and provide the context within which their significance is appreciated, from their immediate streetscenes and proximity to other built form. As such, these buildings are not discussed individually within this report but rather considered in relation to the conservation areas below.
- 4.38 The 12 remaining listed buildings are discussed in more depth below due to their proximity to the site, and potential intervisibility with the site.

Granary/Dovecote at SP 5652 3068

The Asset and its Significance

- 4.39 The Grade II* listed building Granary/Dovecote at SP 5652 3068 (**1046450**) is located c.1.4km to the north of the site boundary and is situated within Tusmore Park, immediately north of Tusmore house. Neither the park, which was extensively re-modelled in the 20th century, or the house, which dates from 2000, are designated heritage assets. The Granary/Dovecote is described by the NHLE listing citation as follows (reproduced in its entirety):
- “Granary/dovecote. C16. Close-studded timber-framing and roughcast. Hipped stone slate roof laid to diminishing courses. Rectangular plan. 3 storeys. Ground floor is raised on rendered brick. Staddle stones. Entrance in gable end reached via short ladder. Plank door in heavy wood frame. 2 shuttered windows on both ground and first floors of front and rear elevations. Loft door in first floor. Jetties first floor has moulded wood overhangs with corner posts. Roof has renewed hipped lantern. Roughcast upper storey has rectangular openings. Approximately 25 feet 4 inches by 17 feet 7 inches. Nesting boxes on third storey.”*
- 4.40 The building was listed in 1966, and no amendments to the original citation are noted. Due to its location on private land, the Granary/Dovecote itself could not be visited, however the accessible elements of its environs within Tusmore Park were visited.
- 4.41 Through a desk-based analysis of available information, it is evident that the significance of this Grade II* listed asset is overwhelmingly derived from the architectural and artistic interest of its built form and fabric.
- 4.42 The building retains much of its original fabric which dates from the 16th century, with only minimal alterations for maintenance. As such, it remains a good example of an auxiliary agricultural building during this time.

- 4.43 The building also possesses a degree of historic interest in terms of its contribution to the understanding of late medieval/early post-medieval agricultural and settlement organisation.

The Contribution of Setting to Significance

- 4.44 The immediate setting of the Grade II* listed Granary/Dovecote is defined by the private grounds of Tusmore House. The central complex of Tusmore House includes the main house, to the south of the Granary/Dovecote, as well as a number of ancillary buildings to the immediate south and north. Private gardens, including intricately designed landscaped areas as well as tennis courts, also extend to the north.
- 4.45 The asset derives a level of significance from this immediate setting, as it allows the Granary/Dovecote buildings to be experienced within their historic location at the centre of the Tusmore House complex, albeit now modernised, as seen within early historic mapping (**Plan EDP 4**). This setting thus allows the asset to be experienced as part of this larger group, which in turn provides an element of historic integrity, although there have been changes to associated buildings and grounds.
- 4.46 The site visit, although not able to assess views from the asset itself, established that there is no visual relationship between the listed asset and the land which forms site. This is due to adjacent buildings and in the wider landscape, due to densely vegetated field boundaries on the northern edge of the site, as well as the intervening field boundaries and woodland blocks between the two (**Image EDP A1.1**).
- 4.47 From the site itself, glimpsed views of the non-designated Tusmore House were obtained from the easternmost field (**Image EDP A1.2**) however, no views of the listed Granary/Dovecote were achieved. Furthermore, there is no historical or functional association between the listed building and the site.
- 4.48 Therefore, the site does not form a part of the listed building's setting and does not contribute to its significance in any way, and the site's development would cause no harm to its significance.

Hardwick Manor House and Barn and Attached Stable

The Asset and its Significance

- 4.49 The Grade II* listed building Hardwick Manor House (**1046449**) and its associated Barn and Attached Stable Approximately 50 Metres East of Hardwick Manor House (**1192859**), area located approximately 1.42km east of the site boundary.
- 4.50 Hardwick Manor House is described in its NHLE listing citation as a late 16th century manor farmhouse, with later extensions and additions (**Image EDP A1.3**). The building is described as having a long rectangular plan, which was probably 2-unit buildings originally, before being extended to a 4-unit plan. The house comprises coursed limestone rubble walls with a half-hipped tiled roof, with a substantial stone ridge stack and a brick lateral

stack to the rear. Stone Mullion windows with “hood moulds and label stops throughout” are also noted, as well as a “gabled 2-storey staircase projection off-centre to left.”

4.51 Notable interior features such as a “late C16 stone fireplace with 4-centred arched head” within the parlour, and an “original late C16 staircase has a heavy moulded handrail without balusters and massive fleur-de-lys shaped newel posts” are also recorded, however these were not assessed during the site visit.

4.52 The Barn and Stable is described by the NHLE listing citation as follows (reproduced in its entirety) (**Image EDP A1.4**):

“Barn. C18. Coursed limestone rubble. Steeply pitched corrugated asbestos roof. Long rectangular range of 10 bays. 2 stable doors, 2 loft doors and 2 wide threshing floor entrances with wood lintels. Interior has a 10 bay butt-purlin roof. Stable. C18. Coursed limestone rubble. Steeply pitched corrugated asbestos roof. 3 bays. 3-window with shutters. Exterior stone steps to left door.”

4.53 The significance of these assets is derived primarily from the architectural interest of their built fabric and forms, representing good examples of a 16th century manor farmhouse as well as later 18th century ancillary agricultural buildings. The buildings also possess a degree of historic interest in terms of their contribution to the understanding of agricultural and settlement organisation during the post-medieval period.

4.54 The farmhouse itself also derives a level of artistic interest from its modest decorative features, best experienced from its principal frontage, as well as an element of archaeological interest from the phasing of the various building stages.

The Contribution of the Asset's Setting to its Significance

4.55 The immediate setting of the Hardwick Manor House and associated Barn and Stable is defined by the farmstead complex in which the buildings are situated. The two assets are situated on opposite sides of the range, with further associated agricultural buildings surrounding the farmstead.

4.56 The asset derives a level of significance from this immediate context, as it allows the assets to be experienced within their historic built setting, enabling their original functional context to be best understood. This setting also retains a level of historical integrity, given the minimal changes from its depiction on historic mapping (**Plan EDP 4**).

4.57 The manor house itself also derives a degree of significance from its private approach off Hethe Road, from where it is experienced within a secluded and rural setting, set back from the main road. The character of this setting is further enforced by private gardens which extend to the west and south and include a small lake and tennis courts. These gardens, including the lake, are noted on the historic mapping as part of the Manor grounds, and thus also retain a level of historic interest. The grounds are well enclosed by mature tree growth to the north-west and south-west, with the barn, stable and ancillary buildings

forming a further boundary to the east, thus engendering an enclosed character to the main house.

- 4.58 The wider setting of the two listed buildings also includes the settlement of Hardwick to the east and south. To the east, this comprises a small ribbon of domestic settlement. This element of the setting is not considered to contribute to the significance of the assets, other than by illustrating the continued growth of the village from its depiction on early historic mapping (**Plan EDP 4**), as well as allowing its former hierarchal role within the village to be understood. This is reinforced by the manor's close proximity to the Grade II listed Church of St Mary's immediately to the south, emphasising this location as a focal point within the village. This setting also allows the assets to be appreciated together, providing a group value to the individual assets. However, it is noted that the manor house is not oriented in such a way that there is a designed view towards the church.
- 4.59 Surrounding the assets at Hardwick on all sides is open agricultural land, with occasional intervening blocks of woodland. As an historic farmstead, this immediately surrounding agricultural land contributes to the significance of the assets through their historical functional association. However, due to the well enclosed boundaries, formed by the aforementioned tree growth and agricultural buildings, the experience of this land is almost entirely screened and these fieldscapes thus only contribute a minor contextual association to the significance of the listed buildings, rather than a visual one.
- 4.60 Through a visit to the assets and their immediate environs, it was established that there is no visual relationship between listed buildings at Hardwick and the land which forms the site, given the well vegetated boundary to the west of the manor house, as well as the intervening field boundaries and woodland blocks between the assets and site. Neither were any views obtained towards the listed buildings from within the site.
- 4.61 This assessment concludes that the Grade II* Hardwick Manor House and the Grade II Barn and Stable derive a degree of significance from their group setting within the agricultural farmstead and private grounds in which they are situated, as well as from the immediately surrounding agricultural fields, allowing their function to be best understood. No visual relationship between the assets and the site were obtained, and as such, the site is not considered to form part of the setting of either asset which contributes to their significance. Therefore, the site's development would cause no harm to the significance of either building.

Church of St Peter and Associated Headstones

The Asset and its Significance

- 4.62 The Grade II* listed building Church of St Peter (**1193248**) is located c.860m south-east of the site boundary, within the hamlet of Stoke Lyne. Within the church grounds, two Grade II listed structures are recorded; Headstone Dated 1699, Approximately 15 Metres South East of Tower, Church of St Peter (**1193262**) and Headstone Dated 16?? Approximately 14 Metres South South-east of Tower, Church Of St Peter (**1046401**).

- 4.63 The church is described in the NHLE listing citation as comprising a 12th century chancel and nave, with the north aisle dating to the 13th century and the south tower dating to the early 14th century (**Image EDP A1.7**). There is recorded to have been a major restoration by H. Woodyer in 1868, notably with much of the chancel being rebuilt. Further architectural details are also noted within the citation; “tower of 2 stages has a 3-light reticulated window on south and louvred round-arched windows to bell-turret. Diagonal buttresses, string courses and crenellated parapet. Pyramidal roof with lightning conductor. C19 south porch. C12 south doorway has a roll hoodmould with animal headstops and an arch decorated with zig-zag”, although no mention is made of the church’s location or setting.
- 4.64 The associated headstones are detailed within a limited citation (**1193262**) described as “Headstone. Dated 1699. Ironstone. Lugged architrave design” and (**1046401**) is described as “Headstone. Ironstone. Dated 16???. Boldly carved with heart, hour-glass and wreath of flowers” (**Image EDP A1.8**).
- 4.65 The church itself was listed in 1966, with the two headstones listed subsequently in 1988; none have received any amendments. Following the site visit it was ascertained that the listing is accurate, although the interior features of the church were not assessed.
- 4.66 The site visit concluded that the significance of the Grade II* listed church is derived predominantly from the architectural interest of its built form and fabric. The church retains evidence of its 12th century origins and, although it has undergone later renovations, remains a good example of a medieval church.
- 4.67 The church also derives significance from the artistic interest of its aesthetic detailing; this is also true of the two listed headstones, both of which are carved with intricate designs.
- 4.68 The significance of the church is also derived to some degree from its historic interest, providing an understanding of the organisation of religion during the medieval period onwards.
- 4.69 A level of archaeological interest can also be determined from the phases of construction of the church.

The Contribution of the Asset’s Setting to its Significance

- 4.70 The church is set within its churchyard, which surrounds it on all sides. The boundary of the churchyard consists of a mix of low drystone walling, dense hedges and large, mature trees (**Image EDP A1.9**). The two headstones are located within the churchyard. This immediate setting contributes to the significance of the assets, allowing them to be appreciated as a group, and within an enclosed, peaceful setting.
- 4.71 Beyond this, the church is set within the village of Stoke Lyne, where its relationship to the surrounding buildings contributes to its significance as a centre for religious community life (**Image EDP A1.10**). This is especially the case with regard to the relationship with the

old rectory to the west, a former farm to the east and traditional buildings to the south which are the older buildings within the settlement.

- 4.72 There is little interaction between the church, churchyard and the village's wider rural surroundings, these being visually and spatially separated from the church by surrounding structures and vegetation to the extent that no part of the wider rural surroundings of the village can be experienced from the church or churchyard. In this regard, no views towards any part of the site were obtained from within the churchyard and as such, the site is not part of the experience of the church from surrounding areas.
- 4.73 The tower of the church is low and is thus not visually prominent in the landscape, and is of equivalent height to the surrounding trees. As such, the church does not have a dominant presence in the landscape.
- 4.74 Although not visually prominent, glimpses of the upper part of the church tower are possible from the south-eastern fields within the northern parcel of the site. Therefore, in terms of the definition in Annex 2 of the NPPF, the site forms part of its setting (**Image EDP A1.11**) in that there is an experience of the church from it.
- 4.75 However, at 860m from the site, the church's architecture cannot be readily experienced or appreciated and there is no historical or functional association between the land at the site and the church, and no designed views to it from the site. Therefore, the sole experience of the church is through this incidental and partial visibility; such instances are discussed with specific regard to church towers and spires within *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition): The Setting of Heritage Assets* (GPA3; HE, 2017):
- "Being tall structures, church towers and spires are often widely visible across land- and townscapes but, where development does not impact on the significance of heritage assets visible in a wider setting or where not allowing significance to be appreciated, they are unlikely to be affected by small-scale development, unless that development competes with them, as tower blocks and wind turbines may. Even then, such an impact is more likely to be on the landscape values of the tower or spire rather than the heritage values, unless the development impacts on its significance, for instance by impacting on a designed or associative view."*
- 4.76 Given that no historical or contextual associations between the site and the church are identified, it is concluded that the site forms only a peripheral element of the setting of the Church of St Peter and is not considered to contribute to the listed building's significance.
- 4.77 In conclusion, the site does not contribute to the church's significance in any way and given the lack of views to the site from the church, the site's development would cause no harm to its significance.

Church of St Mary

The Asset and its Significance

4.78 The Grade II listed building Church of St Mary (**1192837**) is located c.1.5km east of the site boundary, within the hamlet of Hardwick (**Image EDP A1.5**).

4.79 The NHLE listing citation describes the church as follows (reproduced in full):

“Church. C13 chancel and chancel arch. Rest of church almost entirely rebuilt in 1878 to designs of G.G. Scott junior. South aisle and south porch added at this time. Re-used C13 north and south doorways and large Perpendicular west window. Coursed limestone and squared coursed limestone steeply pitched stone slate roof laid to diminishing courses. Aisled nave, chancel, south porch. 3-window range. Chancel has 3-light reticulated window on east. On north a pointed arched priest's door and 2-light Decorated window on south a 2-light similar window and a trefoiled lancet. South aisle has 2-light Decorated style C19 windows and gabled C19 porch. 3-light C19 west window. Pointed arched south doorway with hood mould and label stops. 3-light Perpendicular west window. Nave has a pointed arched north doorway with C19 door and a 2-light Decorated window. Buttresses on north. Stone coped gables. Bellcote on west. Interior. 3 bay south arcade of C19 restoration. C19 and C20 fixtures and fittings. Inscriptions to Captain Francis Hereman, d.1687; Ralph Hatton, d.1694 and Mary 1717; Ann wife of Nicholas Saers, d.1721; Samuel Todey, d.1721; C18 memorials to members of Freeman family; Brass to Henry Howard, 2nd Earl of Effingham, d.1889; East window has mid C14 tracery lights with St. John the Baptist and Christ in Majesty by Clayton and Bell. West window by Burlinson and Grylls with 2 inserted late C15/early C16 panels of the Crucifixion and Christ in Judgement.”

4.80 The site visit concluded that the significance of the Grade II listed church is derived predominantly from the architectural interest of its built form and fabric. Although the church underwent substantial renovations in the late 19th century, it still retains evidence of its 13th century origins and so remains a good example of a medieval church. The church also derives significance from the artistic interest of its aesthetic detailing.

4.81 The significance of the church is also derived to some degree from its historic interest, providing an understanding of the organisation of religion during the medieval period onwards. A level of archaeological interest can also be determined from the phases of construction of the church.

The Contribution of the Asset's Setting to its Significance

4.82 The church is set within its churchyard, which surrounds it on all sides, bounded by low drystone walling, as well as sporadic hedges and large mature trees (**Image EDP A1.6**). This immediate setting contributes to the asset's significance, allowing it to be experienced within an enclosed, peaceful setting.

4.83 Beyond the churchyard, the church is set within the hamlet of Hardwick, and immediately south of the Hardwick Manor House and farmstead. These farm buildings are clearly visible

from within the church yard (**Image EDP A1.6**). This relationship to the surrounding buildings contributes to its significance as a centre for religious community life and historic and functional association with the manor.

- 4.84 The wider setting of the church comprises extensive agricultural land to the west, however, this is visually separated from the church by the dense wooded boundary at the western extent of the church, as well as the woodland block at the western extent of Hardwick Manor House grounds. As such, no part of the wider rural surroundings of the village can be experienced from the church or churchyard, including no views towards the site.
- 4.85 The church is modest in scale, with no tower or steeple acting as a designed focal point or eye catcher from the surrounding landscape, and so it is not visible from any aspect within the site. It is therefore concluded that, on account of the lack of any functional or historical association between the site and the church nor any visual or contextual relationships, the site forms no part of the setting which contributes to the significance of the Grade II listed Church of St Mary, and the site's development would cause no harm to its significance.

Barn at SP 5487 2940

The Asset and its Significance

- 4.86 This Grade II listed barn is located c.100m west of the site boundary and is situated at Baynard's Green (**1046400**) (**Image EDP A1.12**).
- 4.87 The NHLE listing citation describes the building as follows (reproduced in its entirety):
"Barn. Late C18. Coursed squared limestone. Steeply pitched old-tile roof. 10 bays. 2 threshing floor entrances have C20 doors. Square ventilation holes and slits. Interior. Principal rafter roof with collars and ties, Some C20 repairs. Dividing wall at 5th bay."
- 4.88 The building was listed in 1988 and has had no further amendments to its citation. The site visit confirmed the modest range of features described within the listing. Through analysis of the available information as well as a site visit, it is concluded that the significance of the Grade II listed building is derived predominantly from the architectural interest of its built form and fabric, representing a good example of a late 18th century vernacular agricultural building.
- 4.89 The significance of the barn is also partially derived from its historic interest, allowing an understanding of the agricultural industry during the late post-medieval period.

The Contribution of the Asset's Setting to its Significance

- 4.90 The barn has an enclosed setting. It is located within a former farm complex comprising traditional farm buildings, of which the barn is located on the western side of a former farmyard. The former farm complex has now been converted for modern office use. Also, a large, 20th century light industrial workshop is located to the north-west of the barn, with

further light industrial buildings, car parks and yards to the west and north. To the south is a line of trees that define a field boundary.

- 4.91 The adjacent former farm buildings, comprising other barns and workshops and a former farmhouse, have a historical functional association with the barn and thus comprise elements of its setting that contribute positively to its significance to a moderate degree. As a building constructed with primarily a functional purpose, the barn's appearance and prominence in the landscape is of limited relevance to its significance. However, the modern development immediately adjacent to the barn to the north-west does contrast with its historic character and materials, distracting from it and thus having a negative influence on its setting, detracting from its significance to a minor degree.
- 4.92 The listed building is located to the immediate west of the old line of the A43 (**Image EDP A1.13**), which itself is located to the west of the modern A43 dual carriageway, from which it is separated by a broad belt of mature trees. The site lies to the east of this road, c.100m east of the listed building. Consequently, the listed building is visually screened from the site by the adjacent former farm buildings to the immediate east and by the broad line of trees between the two roads. This screening serves to visually separate the site from the listed building, with no views possible between the two.
- 4.93 As such, given the listed building's enclosed setting, lack of views to the site and lack of any known historical functional connection with the land at the site, the site does not form part of the setting of the barn or contribute to its significance. Given the screening between the listed building and the site, it is unlikely that the development would be visible from it or have any influence on any elements of its setting, such that would contribute to its significance.

Swifts House

- 4.94 Two Grade II listed buildings are located at Swifts House, c.850m south-east of the site, these being the Stable Range at Swifts House, A41 (**1369798**) as well as the Farm Office and Attached Cottage at Swift's House, A41 (**1046399**).
- 4.95 The NHLE listing citation describes the Stable Range as follows (reproduced in its entirety):

“Stable/groom's cottage. C18. One long range. Rendered, squared coursed limestone. Hipped C20-tile roof. Brick ridge stack to cottage on right. 2 storeys 9-window range altogether. 7 stable doors have moulded wood surrounds and cambered stone heads on stone flat arches. Two cast-iron ground floor windows have small centre hung casements and small glazing bars. Cottage on right has panelled/glazed door flanked by a casement and a sash window both with cambered stone heads. First floor has two C18 sash windows with small panes and stone flat arches, four openings with loft doors or latticed doors and two c20 windows and a sash window to cottage on right. Stone flat arches throughout. Limestone quins. Stables have recesses for cast-iron feeding racks, some feeding racks survive.”

- 4.96 The Farm Office is described in the NHLE listing citation as follows (reproduced in its entirety):

“Wash house/outbuilding range, now farm office and attached cottage. C18. Rendered, squared coursed limestone. Hipped slate roof. Brick end and ridge stacks. Long rectangular plan of one build. 2 storeys. 5-window range altogether. 3 entrances have plank or panelled/glazed doors with stone flat arches. One blocked entrance. Five 2-light wood casement windows with stone flat arches. Loft door on left with hood frame and stone flat arch. Five 2-light casements, two with lead comes and crown glass. Stone flat arches. Outshot on right end. Interior. Stone flag floors, panelled doors.”

- 4.97 Both buildings were first listed in 1988 and have had no further amendments. Due to their location on private land the buildings could not be visited, nor could views towards the assets be obtained from the public footpath to the north-west of Swifts House.
- 4.98 However, through analysis of the available information, it is concluded that the significance of the Grade II listed buildings is derived predominantly from the architectural interest of their built form and fabric, representing good examples of 18th century vernacular agricultural buildings.
- 4.99 The two assets also benefit from a degree of historic interest, contributing to the understanding of the agricultural industry during the late, post-medieval period.

The Contribution of the Asset's Setting to its Significance

- 4.100 The two listed buildings are well enclosed within the private grounds of Swifts House, with the main house to the east and further buildings to the west, as well as private gardens to the south and a wooded area to the north. The modernised complex largely follows the layout of an earlier farmstead range, as seen on historic mapping (**Plan EDP 4**) and remains within the extents set out within these cartographic sources. This setting comprises buildings and spaces that are closely associated with the listed buildings, both historically and functionally, where they are experienced as part of an integrated group of buildings and this contributes positively to their significance. Albeit with substantial modern changes to the complex, including new modern buildings to the west, as well as a swimming pool and tennis courts within the grounds.
- 4.101 The private grounds are defined to the east by woodland, with tree lined boundaries to the north and west. This tree growth acts as a screen between the buildings at Swifts House and the surrounding countryside to the north, including the land which forms the site. Evidently there is a historical functional link between the former agricultural buildings and some of the surrounding farmland, although this does not apply to the land at the site.
- 4.102 Given the enclosed setting of the two Grade II listed buildings at Swifts House and the subsequent lack of views to and from the site, as well as the absence of any known historical functional connection with the land at the site, the site is not considered to form part of the setting of the assets or contribute to their significance. Given the vegetation screening around the two buildings, it is unlikely that the development would be visible

from them and thus would not change any elements of their setting which contribute to their significance.

Other Listed Buildings

- 4.103 Two further buildings lie within the 2km study area, these being Pimlico Farmhouse (**1369785**) and its adjacent barn (**1192863**). The two buildings are located c.2km north of the site boundary.
- 4.104 Given the large distance from the site and the setting of the assets adjacent to a modern light industrial complex, as well as the substantial amount of intervening woodland between the site and the assets, the site is not considered to form any part of the setting of the assets which contributes to their significance. As such, it is very unlikely that the two buildings would be affected by the development proposals and they are not discussed further.

Conservation Areas and the Listed Buildings Therein

- 4.105 Two conservation areas lie within the 2km search area from site, these being the Ardley Conservation Area and the Fewcott Conservation Area. These assets are assessed with regard to their significance and the contribution of setting to this significance, as outlined within the GPA3 guidance.

Ardley Conservation Area

- 4.106 The Ardley Conservation Area (ACA) lies to the south-west of the site, with its closest point being c.1.3km away from the site boundary.
- 4.107 The conservation area was adopted in 2005 and comprises the historic core of the Ardley village. It is defined at its eastern extent by the B430, at its southern extent by agricultural fields and Ardley Wood, which includes the scheduled monument of Ardley Wood Moated Ringwork, and at its northern and western extent by the more modern expansion of Ardley Village.
- 4.108 The conservation area also includes four listed buildings, the Grade II* listed Church of St Mary (**1046881**), and the Grade II listed Headstone Approximately 5 Metres South-east Of Chancel Of Church Of St Mary (**1369565**) as well as the Grade II listed Hunters Cottage (**1369566**) and Manor Farmhouse (**1046882**), all lining Somerton Road which follows a sinuous course through the conservation area.
- 4.109 The special interest of the ACA is detailed within the Cherwell District Council (CDC) Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) adopted in November 2019 (CDC, 2019); these key defining characteristics are summarised below:

- *“Irregular, settlement scattered loosely along roads and lanes;*

- *The ‘double-loop’ form of the settlement around the church and the 17th century former rectory still exists in the form of lanes and a public right of way;*
- *Historic medieval core around the church, and east of the earthworks in Ardley Wood;*
- *The village largely comprises 17th, 18th and 19th century farmhouses, houses and cottages. It also has a strong agricultural base, alongside quarrying and inns;*
- *The village prospered as it lay at an important junction of historical routes, the B430 was once a road that served two inns in Ardley;*
- *There is a limited palette of building materials which visually unifies the village;*
- *Few buildings address the street directly but stone boundary walls are common; and*
- *There were a number of important institutions and families who had influence in Ardley, including the Duke of Marlborough and the Earl of Jersey.”*

4.110 In summary, the appraisal indicates that the special interest of the ACA is primarily experienced in an appreciation the village’s layout and lanes, the defining character of its built form and the presence of its historic buildings at the roadside, as well green spaces surrounding the church and the scheduled monument at Ardley Wood, Ardley Wood Moated Ringwork (**Images EDP A1.16** and **A1.17**).

4.111 Key views are identified within the appraisal (CDC, 2019, page 37) which are focused within the conservation area, primarily towards the focal point of the church tower, as well as across the notable green spaces to the north and south-west. Following a visit to the asset, it is apparent that none of these views include any part of the site, which is entirely screened from the conservation area by intervening buildings, field boundaries and major roads such as the M40.

4.112 With regard to the setting of the Ardley Conservation Area, this is partially defined by the modern settlement of Ardley which bounds it to the north-west, bridging the Ardley and Fewcott Conservation Areas, as well as to the north, lining Ardley Road. This setting is not considered to contribute to the special character of the ACA.

4.113 This well-developed setting of modern built form to the north of the ACA means that no views of site were therefore obtained out from the edges of the conservation area (**Image EDP A1.18**), neither were any views obtained towards the ACA from within the site.

4.114 To the south-west the setting is defined by the woodland block of Ardley Wood, and to the south and east by open agricultural fields. This landscape is considered to contribute positively to the ACA as it reflects its historic rural surroundings. Due to the presence of the M40 and the Cherwell Valley services, the land at the site is not experienced as part of the rural landscape of fields to the east of the village, and so contributes nothing to the conservation area in this regard.

4.115 As such, it is concluded that the site does not form any part of the setting of the conservation area which contributes to its character and appearance. It is therefore concluded that the Ardley Conservation Area would be unlikely to be affected by the site's development.

Fewcott Conservation Area

4.116 The Fewcott Conservation Area (FCA) also lies to the south-west of the site, with its closest point being c.1.17km away from the site boundary.

4.117 The conservation area was adopted in 2008 and comprises the historic core of the Fewcott village. It is defined at its southern extent by Water Lane, and modern built form which extends to Ardley village. Its other boundaries are defined largely by agricultural fields. The conservation area also includes two listed buildings, the Grade II listed Fewcott Farmhouse (**1046880**) and Manor Farmhouse (**1369564**). These are located along Fritwell Road, which forms the main historic axis of the conservation area.

4.118 The special interest of the FCA is detailed within the Cherwell District Council (CDC) Conservation Area Appraisal adopted in 2008 (CDC, 2008). The defining elements are its "*historically distinct*" street pattern, which is lined by 17th and 18th century buildings of local vernacular style (**Image EDP A1.19**), although Fewcott House is highlighted as a notable exception, "*displaying a pastiche Tudor style*" (**Image EDP A1.20**).

4.119 Towards the outskirts of the FCA are later 20th century dwellings, and conversions of agricultural buildings. The built form is limited to two storeys and is almost entirely constructed of "*the coursed limestone rubble common to the area, although the 20th century properties are mostly built in reconstituted stone*", with notable limestone walls flanking these buildings also contributing to the character of the area.

4.120 Vegetation and open green spaces are also noted within the appraisal as having a positive contribution; "*the paddocks to the south of the village are key to the character of Fewcott because as well as separating the two villages they are part of the original medieval field system.*" A notable silver birch tree, as well as beech trees surrounding Manor Farm are also noted, as well as the high hedgerow which divided Fewcott from Ardley, all of which contribute positively to the FCA's character and appearance.

4.121 The appraisal thus indicates that the special interest of the FCA is primarily experienced in its street pattern, the architectural interest of its built form and its green spaces, which define the village and continue to its rural character. Key views are identified within the appraisal (CDC, 2008, page 18) which are primarily along the central Fritwell Road and across the notable green spaces to the south, towards Ardley.

4.122 Regard the setting of the Fewcott Conservation Area, this includes the modern settlement to the south, which joins the two Conservation Areas. There is also an area of built form to the north-east of the conservation area, forming a small industrial estate. These modern elements do not impose upon the conservation area but do not contribute positively to its character and appearance.

- 4.123 Beyond the settlement to the east, and immediately to the north and west, the setting of the FCA is defined by open agricultural fields. Small blocks of woodland are also situated to the west and north. This adjacent agricultural landscape is considered to contribute positively to the character and appearance of the ACA by reflecting its historic rural setting.
- 4.124 Although the wider agricultural fields to the east and north-east are considered to contribute positively to the conservation area, views out in that direction are largely screened from the FCA by the built form at the eastern edge of the conservation area. These fields are divided from the site by the intervening route of the M40, A43 and associated Cherwell Services which form a partial and visual barrier across the landscape.
- 4.125 As such, due to intervening buildings, field boundaries and the motorway, no views to site are possible from the conservation area, and neither are any views obtained towards the FCA from within the site. None of the 'Key Views' identified in the Appraisal are towards or include the land at the site.
- 4.126 Consequently, it is concluded that the site does not form any part of the setting of the conservation area which contributes to its character and appearance. It is therefore concluded that the Fewcott Conservation Area would be unlikely to be affected by the site's development.

Non-designated Heritage Assets

- 4.127 The records described in this section are a summary of the entries from the Oxfordshire HER, as well as any entries submitted with the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) and other sources considered as per the list in **Section 3**.
- 4.128 There are three records within the site boundary, as recorded by the Oxfordshire HER, one of which relates to the results of the geophysical survey (ASWYAS, 2015) and trial trench evaluation (Cotswold Archaeology, 2023) undertaken across the site. There are a further 28 records in the 1km study area, spanning the prehistoric to modern periods. This includes records related to the six listed buildings discussed above, which are not discussed in the period-specific sections below.
- 4.129 Three archaeological events are noted within the site boundary, these being the geophysical survey undertaken across a portion of the site in 2015, the geophysical survey undertaken across a portion of the site in 2021, and the evaluation trenching undertaken across the whole site in 2023; these will be discussed in full below. Eleven further archaeological interventions are recorded within the 1km search area; they are discussed below, where relevant to the archaeological potential of site. The HER records are shown on **Plan EDP 2**.

Previous Archaeological Fieldwork

Within The Site

Geophysical Survey

- 4.130 A geophysical survey was undertaken across part of the site by Archaeological Services WYAS (ASWYAS) in March 2015. This is recorded by the HER as **E0X6619**. This comprised a detailed magnetometer survey of a previous application site comprising the greater part of the current site (see report at Appendix 10.2 of the Environmental Statement).
- 4.131 The 2015 survey detected individual anomalies consistent with cut linear features localised in the eastern portions of the survey area, close to the area of the recorded possible 'banjo enclosure' (which was located beyond the extent of the survey). If related to this, they are located well away from the main area of the enclosure and are likely to represent outlying peripheral boundary ditch features and not settlement enclosures.
- 4.132 Other features were identified, likely comprising evidence for extraction pits and aspects of former agricultural regimes, including evidence for buried furrows and former field boundaries, as well as modern drainage features. In this regard, it is considered that the survey is an accurate representation of the presence and absence of those features detectable by this method.
- 4.133 No other anomalies were identified within the site. On this basis, the survey suggests that the areas of the site that were surveyed have a low potential to contain significant archaeological remains, with a moderate potential in the eastern areas of the survey site for isolated linear ditches of low archaeological interest, which may relate to Iron Age settlement.
- 4.134 A second geophysical survey was undertaken by ASWYAS in 2021, to complete those areas excluded from the previous survey. The event is recorded by the HER as **E0X7103**, and the full report is included as **Appendix EDP 2**.
- 4.135 This survey covered the area at the east of the site, in which the HER identified a possible 'banjo enclosure' from aerial photographs. The survey revealed a complex of settlement features, including enclosure ditches along with other linear and discrete features, which may include a banjo enclosure. The anomalies were interpreted to represent multiple phases of use of the site and span the later Iron Age and Roman period.
- 4.136 The survey also covered the southern parcel of the site, which revealed a number of potential archaeological features including a double linear feature interpreted as a trackway, along with other linear features which were considered to represent a field system, possibly of prehistoric date. Features likely related to a former quarry were also identified in the southern parcel.
- 4.137 Medieval or later ridge and furrow cultivation was detected across the survey area, along with modern ploughing.

Evaluation Trenching

- 4.138 Following the two geophysical surveys undertaken across the site, a programme of archaeological trial trenching was undertaken between August and November 2022 (Cotswold Archaeology, 2023). The trenching is recorded by the HER as **EOX7375**, and the full report is included as **Appendix EDP 3**.
- 4.139 A total of 168 trenches were machine excavated across seven fields, although six of the originally planned trenches were not excavated in Field 3, to the north-east of the site, due to upstanding agricultural crop. This omission was agreed at the time with the archaeological advisor to the LPA.
- 4.140 Three main phases of archaeological activity were recorded by the trial trenching, each of which was predominantly focused to the east and/or south of the site.
- 4.141 The earliest phase recorded within the site, as dated by pottery, likely dates to the Middle or Late Iron Age, with indication that activity continued into the 1st century AD, suggesting a 'transitional period' into the Roman period.
- 4.142 This phase was most prevalent at the east of the site (Field 5). Four burials were identified in Field 5 and recorded in plan, but they were not excavated. This included a neonate/-infant inhumation and three cremation pits. Pottery sherds from the vessel of one of the cremations were analysed and dated to the 1st century AD. The remaining burials and cremations remain undated, but given their proximity, are considered likely to date to the same broad period. Several ditches containing Iron Age to 1st century AD pottery were also recorded in this location, along with a ring gully, which is indicative of an Iron Age round house. These features indicate a localised area of Iron Age land management, as well as funerary activity and potential settlement.
- 4.143 Further evidence of Iron Age activity was recorded in the southern parcel of the site (Field 1), including a pit/ditch containing Iron Age to 1st century AD pottery, animal bone and charcoal fragments, as well as a ditch terminus containing similar charcoal fragments. Similar charcoal deposits were also recovered from a gully terminus in Field 2, at the western edge of the site, and within several discrete posthole features in Field 4 to the north-east of the site.
- 4.144 Although a small assemblage of prehistoric worked flint was recovered, most were residual finds from within later datable contexts, located in Fields 1 and 5, and were assessed to be Iron Age in date. It was therefore concluded that the site contains evidence of land management, funerary activity and potential settlement activity dating from the Iron Age period, transitioning into the Roman Period. This activity was predominantly focused to the east and south of the site.
- 4.145 The majority of features recorded during the evaluation were dated to the Roman period and were again focused to the east and south of the site.

- 4.146 To the east (Field 5), a series of stone walls and ditches were found that were dated from pottery to the 2nd to 4th centuries AD, with many ditches showing evidence of re-cutting and reuse of an earlier ditch system.
- 4.147 The walls have been interpreted by Cotswold Archaeology (2023) as the remains of a “*villa rustica/farmhouse or large barn*” of the Roman period, as well as several smaller ancillary limestone buildings which are likely to be contemporary. The pottery types diversify from the 2nd to the 4th century AD, indicating an increase in domestic activities probably associated with the growth of the settlement. Destruction deposits associated with the walls were also dated to the 2nd–4th century AD. These features thus indicate a Roman farmstead settlement or ‘*villa rustica*’ along with associated agricultural land management features that appear to have evolved from the Late Iron Age and persisted throughout the whole Roman period.
- 4.148 At the southern end of the site (Field 1), evidence of early medieval activity was also recorded. This comprised two sunken feature buildings (SFB), which correspond to features identified by the earlier geophysical survey (ASWYAS, 2021). Saxon pottery and several loom weights were recovered from the fills of the SFBs, and the finds indicate that they can be broadly dated between the 7th and 8th century AD. Two additional potential SFBs were recorded in plan but were not excavated; these features are thought likely to also date to the early medieval period. The evaluation thus identified localised evidence of early medieval settlement, focused on the southern end of the site.
- 4.149 Also, within the southern parcel of the site (Field 1), a pair of double ditches were recorded forming a projected north/south trackway route, which was previously identified by the geophysical survey (ASWYAS, 2021). This trackway was tentatively dated by Cotswold Archaeology to the Romano-British period from pottery found in a single ditch section, although it is not clear if this ditch was related to the track or if it was an agricultural feature.
- 4.150 These features dating from the Iron Age to early medieval period predominantly relate to agricultural land management, as well as settlement, with limited evidence for Iron Age funerary activity. On the basis of the information from the evaluation, they are considered to be of no greater than moderate, or regional archaeological interest and, as such, are not considered to be of such significance as to warrant preservation *in situ*, and instead could be appropriately mitigated through a programme of archaeological excavation to allow ‘preservation by record’, prior to development. The scope of this mitigation would be agreed in advance with the archaeological advisor to the LPA and would be secured by an appropriately worded condition upon any planning permission granted.
- 4.151 Plough furrows were identified within Fields 6 and 7 at the centre and east of the site; these broadly correspond with the extensive linear anomalies identified during geophysical survey and are representative of ridge and furrow farming practices during the medieval and post-medieval period. A number of post-medieval to modern field boundaries were also identified across the site. These ditches were either established to pre-date the *Enclosure Act c.1773* (from which it is assumed the current field boundaries at the site

date to), or correlate with boundaries seen on historic mapping from the 19th century onwards.

- 4.152 A number of quarry pits were identified in the south (Fields 1 and 7) and west (Field 2) of the site, as well as two to the east (Field 5). Most of the quarry pits identified and recorded at the site were undated, although two contained Roman pottery (Field 5) which could have been redeposited when the pits were backfilled.
- 4.153 Field name evidence from 19th century mapping indicates the known use of the site for quarrying in the post-medieval period, before becoming enclosed in the 18th century (see period specific and **Cartographic Sources** section), Therefore, whilst there may have been stone extraction prior to the post-medieval period, as potentially indicated by the two pits in Field 5, it is noted that early quarry pits would have most likely been expanded by later efforts of extraction, which is evident by the records of quarrying within the site from cartographic sources. As such, it is most likely that the latest form of these quarry pits, as reflected in the archaeological remains, is post-medieval in date.
- 4.154 These quarry pits and agricultural features, including ridge and furrow cultivation and field boundaries, are unlikely to contain deposits of great archaeological significance. The quarry pit's oldest forms are likely to have been over-cut and destroyed by later quarrying, which is known to have taken place in the 19th century. As such, they are considered to be of no greater than minor or negligible archaeological interest and are not considered to warrant further archaeological mitigation.

Within the 1km Search Area

- 4.155 Prior to the upgrading of the A43, in 1993, a desk-based study followed by field walking and geophysical survey was undertaken by Wessex Archaeology, along the route corridor of the road improvement proposals. This included the course of the road where it runs adjacent to the western boundary of the site. Two flint tools were found during fieldwalking within the course of the proposed road (Wessex Archaeology, 1993), but subsequent geophysical survey along the route did not identify any archaeological features.
- 4.156 There have been few other archaeological investigations conducted in the area, with work undertaken comprising small-scale watching briefs and evaluation trenching in Stoke Lyne, 0.9km to the south-east of the site, which have little relevance to the site's archaeological potential.
- 4.157 As such, the archaeological work undertaken within the site's wider vicinity does not add much to the assessment of the overall archaeological potential of the site, aside from possibly indicating that the western areas of the site, adjacent to the A43, have little archaeological potential.

Prehistoric (500,000 BC–AD 43)

- 4.158 Within the site, there are two records relating to the prehistoric period contained within the Oxfordshire HER. A further six are also identified within the wider 1km study area.

- 4.159 The first record within the site relates to a possible 'banjo enclosure' (**MOX23339**), which lies within the northern parcel of land forming the site. This has been identified as a cropmark from aerial photographs. These types of enclosure are generally well understood and typically represent enclosed Iron Age settlement sites, often with surrounding peripheral ditches or trackways (McOmish, 2011).
- 4.160 The results of the trial trenching (Cotswold Archaeology, 2023), discussed above, identified the potential 'banjo enclosure' and determined that it forms a part of the sequence of activity that culminated in Roman settlement, with the presence of a Roman 'villa rustica' or large farmhouse. The 'banjo enclosure' likely relates to the earlier Iron Age phase of land management and settlement. A full account of the sequence and the nature of Iron Age settlement in this location could be provided by further archaeological excavation within this area.
- 4.161 A further record is noted at the northern boundary of the site and relates to a possible ring ditch (**MOX27036**), possibly dating to the Bronze Age. This possible archaeological feature was noted as a cropmark on aerial photographs taken in 1961; however, no evidence of the ditch was recorded by a geophysical survey carried out in 2015 (ASWYAS, 2015) which covered that part of the site, nor was the feature identified during the recent trial trench evaluation (Cotswold Archaeology, 2023). Instead, the ring ditch has now been proven to be situated further north, outside the site, following consultation with Victoria Green (Cotswold Archaeology, 2023).
- 4.162 The trial trenching (Cotswold Archaeology, 2023) has thus confirmed that the site does not contain evidence of the ring ditch identified by the HER as **MOX27036**. With regard to the potential 'banjo enclosure', the trenching identified a number of features in this location, including ditches and pits indicative of small-scale land management and potential localised settlement during the Iron Age period, and continuing into the Roman period.
- 4.163 To the west of the site, c.225m from its boundary, a magnetometry survey (**EOX7050**) and subsequent trial trench evaluation (**EOX7429**) revealed a number of features dated to the Iron Age (**MOX27990**). This included a series of ditches as well as pits containing Iron Age pottery and animal remains.
- 4.164 In the wider area, further evidence for prehistoric activity, in the form of earthworks of a possible Neolithic mortuary enclosure (**MOX12362**), has been identified at Stoke Lyne Wood, c.540m to the south of the site.
- 4.165 Further prehistoric activity has been identified from aerial photographs and recorded in the HER. This includes possible Bronze Age round barrows (**MOX4920**) c.525m to the north-east of the site and a crop mark interpreted as an Iron Age banjo enclosure, located c.900m south of the Site (**MOX4873**).
- 4.166 Two undated enclosures, identified from aerial photographs, may also have prehistoric origins; (**MOX23340** and **MOX23341**) located c.450m and c.350m north of site respectively. These features have not been tested through archaeological investigation.

- 4.167 The final record relates to a findspot of a Bronze Age palstave (**MOX4909**), located c.750m south-east of the site.
- 4.168 In summary, the results of the geophysics and trial trenching investigations within the site, as well as the HER data, indicate Iron Age archaeological remains to be present within the site, although they are focused at its eastern and southern extents. The results of the evaluation indicate the presence of small-scale land management, and potential localised settlement as well as evidence for funerary activity. These features thus accord with the wider picture provided by the HER data, which suggests a settled landscape during the Iron Age, continuing into the Roman period.

Romano-British (AD 43–410)

- 4.169 There is one record relating to Romano-British activity within the site on the HER, and only one in the 1km study area.
- 4.170 The record within the site is located at the east of the northern parcel (Field 5), and relates to evidence of Roman settlement identified during the geophysical survey (ASWYAS, 2021) and evaluation trenching (Cotswold Archaeology, 2023) undertaken across the site (**MOX28025**). The results of these investigations are discussed above.
- 4.171 The record within the study area relates to Roman coins (**MOX4747**), recorded in 1939, c.0.7km to the north-east of the site.
- 4.172 As such, the recorded evidence from the HER and previous investigations across the site indicate Roman archaeological remains to be present within it. These are located at the eastern and southern extents of the site whereby the results of the evaluation indicate the presence of localised Roman settlement and land management, including the structural remains of a farmstead or ‘villa rustica’ and associated field systems. These features thus accord with the wider picture provided by the HER data, which suggests a settled landscape which transitions from the Iron Age occupation into the Roman period.

Early Medieval and Medieval (AD 410–1485)

- 4.173 No early medieval or medieval archaeological sites or artefact findspots are recorded within the site on the HER, although the previous archaeological investigations within the site record evidence of Anglo-Saxon archaeological remains; the HER holds seven records in the wider study area.
- 4.174 As discussed above, the archaeological evaluation undertaken across the site (Cotswold Archaeology, 2023) revealed features of early medieval date, located within the southern parcel of the site (Field 1).
- 4.175 Within the study area, the HER records an open area at Baynard’s Green, c.150m to the west of the site, as having been associated with medieval tournaments and subsequently a racecourse (**MOX4853**). The record cites that it also may have been a camping ground or meeting place and is located close to a crossroads. Given the temporary nature of the

activity here, it seems unlikely that any below ground archaeological features would manifest from this activity and regardless, it is also unlikely this activity extended onto the site, which is set back from the record's location.

- 4.176 Other than the Grade II* listed church and associated headstones (discussed previously), around which a number of archaeological investigations have been carried out, although providing little additional information regarding to its date and formation (**EOX114, EOX791, EOX113 EOX2157**), six other records relate to medieval activity at Stoke Lyne, c.0.9km to the south-east of the site. These comprise earthworks representative of a shrunken medieval village (**MOX4910**), a well (**MOX4919**), a number of ditches observed in a watching brief in 2002 (**MOX12272/EOX959**), a linear ditch containing mid-16th century pottery identified during a 2017 watching brief (**MOX27083/EOX6237**) and medieval features, including another possible well, identified during an archaeological evaluation in 1993 (**MOX4918/EOX115**). Documentary evidence also suggests that Stoke Lyne is the possible site of a Saxon battleground, dating to AD 584 (**MOX27961**), however, two possible locations for this battleground are cited so the record is not certain. These records indicate a medieval settlement, located adjacent to the existing settlement at Stoke Lyne, which did not extend into the site.
- 4.177 The deserted medieval settlement of Cotes (**MOX4745**) is recorded C.440m to the north-west of the site, indicating a further area of activity. Similar to Stoke Lyne, it is unlikely that archaeological remains from Cotes extended into the site.
- 4.178 The previous geophysical surveys (AWYAS, 2015 and 2021) recorded evidence for broad areas of former ridge and furrow, suggesting that the land at the site was probably part of an agricultural open field during the medieval period. Such features were also identified by the trial trenching across the site (Cotswold Archaeology, 2023).
- 4.179 The evidence from the HER and geophysics and trial trenching across the site indicates early medieval archaeological remains to be present within the site, although they only occur at the southern end of the site (Field 1). The results of the evaluation indicate the presence of localised Saxon settlement, comprising the remains of a small group of sunken featured buildings. These features thus accord with the wider picture provided by the HER data, which suggests a settled landscape during the Saxon period and into the medieval period.
- 4.180 The available evidence does not suggest that any of the localities' medieval settlements extended into the site. Supported by evidence from geophysical survey and archaeological trial trenching, it is likely that medieval activity at the site was agricultural in nature and features present from this period are limited to agricultural features of negligible archaeological interest, such as infilled furrows and buried plough soils. These features are not considered to be of such significance as to warrant further mitigation.

Post-medieval and Modern (AD 1485–Present)

- 4.181 There are no records relating to these periods within the site recorded by the HER. In the wider 1km study area, there are three records, in addition to the listed buildings discussed above.
- 4.182 As discussed above, the previous archaeological investigations within the site identified a number of linear features which were interpreted as post-medieval field boundaries, which correspond to those seen on historic mapping from the 19th century (Cotswold Archaeology, 2023).
- 4.183 The geophysical survey (ASWYAS, 2015) also identified evidence for extraction pits in the site, which were also recorded during the trial trench evaluation. (Cotswold Archaeology, 2023). Although these pits were not securely dated, a post-medieval date appears likely given an assessment of cartographic sources. An estate map of 1860 records a field name within the site as ‘stone pit ground’ (Field 15 in the estate map schedule which equates to Field 7 of the trial trenching where pits were identified - see **Cartographic Sources** section below). The map therefore demonstrates that the land at the site was being used for stone extraction at this time.
- 4.184 Similarly, Field 13 within the estate map schedule is named ‘Lime Kiln Ground’, and this equates to Field 2 of the trial trench evaluation, where a number of large quarry pits were identified. No above-ground remains of a lime kiln are visible within the site and no buried remains were found during the evaluation that would have identified a kiln’s location. However, as noted by Historic England (2018) in their *Introduction to Heritage Assets – Pre-industrial Limekilns* document, “*The stone for burning was usually extracted from sources close to the kilns themselves, so extraction pits may sometimes lie nearby*”. On this basis it is likely that the limestone quarrying in that area probably relates to 19th century lime making. As such, these pits are most likely of 19th century date.
- 4.185 Within the study area, two records relate to milestones (**MOX4902** and **MOX4836**) recorded close to the course of the A43 to the north and south-west of the site, c.360m and 450m from the site boundary respectively. These were recorded in 1976 and there is no information that would suggest they survived the recent dualling of the A43.
- 4.186 The final two records comprise evidence of post-medieval field boundaries (**MOX23340** and **MOX27992**) revealed during a magnetometry survey (**EOX7051**). The boundary is located c.575m north of the site and correlates with a field boundary on the 1892 edition Ordnance Survey map.
- 4.187 Based upon the available evidence, it is likely that the site continued in use for agriculture and quarrying during this period, becoming enclosed by the 18th century (see sections on historic maps and **Historic Landscape Characterisation** below). The previous archaeological investigations across the site attest that it contains buried remains from the post-medieval and modern periods. These known features represent the buried remains of former extraction pits, field boundaries and drainage ditches and gullies, which

are of minor or negligible archaeological interest. Such features are not considered to warrant further archaeological mitigation.

Undated

- 4.188 The HER also holds two undated records within the 1km study area.
- 4.189 The first is located c.150m east of the site and relates to earthwork enclosures of unknown date which have been identified by LiDAR data (**MOX27151**).
- 4.190 The second relates to two ditches (**MOX27991**) revealed during a trial trench evaluation (**EOX7429**) located c.575m west of the site.
- 4.191 These undated records are not recorded to extend into the site and thus are not considered to enhance the knowledge of the archaeological potential of the site; they are not discussed further.

Portable Antiquities Scheme

- 4.192 The Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) records 32 archaeological finds within a 1km radius of the site, however, the exact location of their recovery is not available.
- 4.193 Of these, 28 are dated to the Roman period and comprise coins and brooches, which were likely the result of chance loss in antiquity, as well as two coin hoards. Although the hoards suggest a level of Roman activity within the area, the lack of recorded features within the HER indicates a low potential for features of this date.
- 4.194 The remaining records comprise a single Iron Age brooch, likely a result of casual loss and does indicate archaeological potential within the site, as well as three finds dating to the medieval period. These finds comprise two coins and a brooch, all likely reflecting chance loss. The sparsity of these records does not indicate any specific archaeological potential within the site beyond that discussed in the period-specific section above.

Cartographic Sources

- 4.195 Maps held by the Oxfordshire History Centre and online sources were consulted to inform this assessment. The earliest consulted map detailing the area of the proposed development was the Davis Map of Oxfordshire dating from 1797 (**Plan EDP 3**).
- 4.196 This map shows that the site was rural and undeveloped at this time. Indeed, the map depicts the northern part of the site as open land, crossed by tracks but with no well-defined boundaries, either comprising arable land (denoted by dashed furrows) or grassland that was presumably pasture or heathland. The southern part appears divided into two fields by a boundary, with arable land to the north and possibly pasture to the

south. The trackways depicted crossing the site bear no relationship to the current road or field boundary arrangement.

- 4.197 No Tithe map dating to the mid-19th century is available for Stoke Lyne, as the Tithe had already been commuted in an enclosure award at the end of the 18th century (Victoria County History, 1959).
- 4.198 An 1860 estate map of Stoke Lyne shows that the area had become enclosed during the period between 1797 and 1860 (**Plan EDP 3**). The regular, straight field boundaries and consistent field sizes are characteristic of planned enclosure, implemented in a single process, possibly by an Act of Parliament. These field divisions remain extant today, reflecting the current layout of the site, although the boundary between the westernmost fields has been removed in recent years. Another characteristic that probably dates from this period of enclosure is the straight northern road, which runs along the northern boundary of the site between the newly laid out fields. There is no sign of the earlier trackways crossing the site.
- 4.199 As discussed above, the map records a 'stone pit' in the south-east corner, and the schedule accompanying the map records Field 15 (corresponding to Field 7 of the evaluation trenching) as 'Stone Pit Ground', suggesting that the area was being used for stone extraction. Evidence of this was seen through the presence of extractive pits recorded during the evaluation (Cotswold Archaeology, 2023). Similarly, Field 13 of the schedule (Field 2 of the trial trenching) is recorded as 'Lime Kiln Ground', indicating the presence of a former kiln and associated activity. Several large extractive pits were seen in this location during the trenching (Cotswold Archaeology, 2023), and likely relate to extraction during the 19th century linked to this former lime kiln.
- 4.200 The first edition OS map of 1881 (not reproduced) shows no change to the site, nor does the second edition OS map of 1900 (**Plan EDP 4**). An old quarry is noted on the 1900 map in the southern part of the site.
- 4.201 The subsequent 1922 edition of the Ordnance Survey mapping (not reproduced) shows no change to the site, with the 1952 edition (not reproduced) showing the only change to be the cultivation of a small parcel of woodland at the southern edge of the southern parcel of the site. There is also little change to the surrounding areas until the most recent editions of 1982 (not reproduced), which depicts the upgraded A43, running as a dual carriageway on an alignment to the east of the old road, and 1993 (not reproduced) which illustrates the route of the M40 to the west of the site. The Cherwell Valley services, to the south of site, were then constructed in 1994, and the Baynard's Green services complex to the west of the site was constructed in more recent years.
- 4.202 The cartographic sources thus indicate that the site has remained as agricultural land from the late 18th century onwards, with the only notable change being the implementation of fields divisions in the early/mid-19th century, which remain reflected in the current division of the site. As such, the maps do not suggest any additional archaeological features that might be present within the site, other than post-medieval and modern agricultural and extractive features as described previously.

Aerial Photographs

- 4.203 A total of 46 vertical and 34 oblique aerial photographs, covering the application site and its immediate environs, were identified within the collection maintained by the Historic England Archive in Swindon. None of the photographs are reproduced here due to copyright restrictions.
- 4.204 The available images span the period from May 1946 to June 1996 and add detail to the land use and development sequence shown on those historic maps available at the Oxfordshire Archives.
- 4.205 The photographs demonstrate that, during the later-1940s, the layout and boundaries at the site appeared much as they did on the 19th and early 20th century historic mapping. The photographs show that the site has been in arable use since at least 1946.
- 4.206 The possible banjo-enclosure (**MOX23339**) was noted on the aerial photographs. This shows an apparent enclosure, with a trackway cutting through it. The trackway feature may or may not be associated with the enclosure, or, equally, may be coincidental and date from later periods. It is anticipated that further information on this archaeological feature will be obtained through geophysical survey and trial trenching carried out in support of the current application.
- 4.207 The only other cropmark feature is in the southern field and reflects a probable infilled quarry pit that is equivalent to that noted on historic mapping. No other cropmark or earthwork features, suggesting the presence of any form of archaeological activity, were identified on aerial photographs within the site.

LiDAR

- 4.208 LiDAR data comprising a 1m resolution Digital Terrain Model (DTM) was obtained from the Environment Agency website. This was processed using RVT software with multi-hill shades being the best visualisation for viewing earthwork features.
- 4.209 The data covered the eastern and southern extents of the site, however, was not available for the north-western portion.
- 4.210 The LiDAR did not show any surface expression around the potential banjo enclosure in the eastern part of the site, or any potential features surrounding it. This suggests that any archaeology in this area is entirely subterranean.
- 4.211 Near the southern edge of the northern part of the site, a series of slight sub-circular anomalies were noted which probably correlate with former quarry pits within this area, as suggested by the geophysical survey (ASYWAS, 2015). Also notable is another former quarry in the southern part of the site which corresponds to that noted on historic maps and aerial photographs.

- 4.212 Also within the southern parcel of the site, a linear earthwork is noted running broadly east to west. This is probably a former field boundary and appears to correlate with a boundary depicted on the map of 1860 (**Plan EDP 3**).
- 4.213 The LiDAR does not indicate any archaeological features within the site not already noted on historic maps, geophysical survey or aerial photographs.

Historic Landscape Characterisation

- 4.214 According to the Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Character (HLC) data, the site is derived from just one landscape type, this being 'planned enclosure'.
- 4.215 The HLC, however, divides the site into three examples of these planned enclosures, with the first encompassing the western and central portion of the site, the second encompassing the eastern corner of the site, and the third encompassing the southern parcel of the site as well as the adjacent fields west of the A43.
- 4.216 The HLC notes that the two northern enclosures are recorded from cartographic evidence dating from 1811, whereas the southern enclosure is dated from earlier 1798 mapping as seen on the 1860 map at **Plan EDP 3**. This interpretation broadly correlates with the historic map evidence viewed as part of this current assessment, that the site was enclosed and subdivided between the very late 18th and mid-19th centuries.
- 4.217 The landscape character types identified within the site are very common in this part of Oxfordshire and, in light of this, the site is not considered to have a historic landscape or be part of a historic landscape that possess any intrinsic heritage significance.

Site Visit

- 4.218 A visit to the northern parcel of the site was undertaken in March 2015, and the entire site was visited again in November 2021.
- 4.219 The visits aimed to assess the current ground conditions and topography, as well as to confirm the continuing survival of any known archaeological remains and to identify any hitherto unknown remains. In addition, a consideration was undertaken of any effects arising in terms of potential impacts on any designated heritage assets resulting from change within their settings.
- 4.220 During both visits the land was under arable use and had recently been cultivated at the time of the November 2021 site visit. The site was seen to contain mature hedgerows, with several of the north-east/south-west orientated hedgerows also comprising ditches on one side (**Image EDP A1.21**).
- 4.221 The site was seen to be largely flat with occasional slight undulations. A potential earthwork was noted running largely east to west across the southern portion of land

(Image EDP A1.22); this appears to correlate with the findings of the Lidar imagery and the 1860 estate map and is probably a former field boundary.

4.222 No above-ground evidence was seen of any archaeological features within the site, including those recorded by the HER or through aerial photographs (i.e. the banjo enclosure or possible ring ditch).

Section 5 Conclusions

- 5.1 This Archaeological and Heritage Assessment has been prepared to satisfy national planning policy (set out in the NPPF) and local policy. It concludes that the site does not contain any designated heritage assets, such as world heritage sites, scheduled monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, registered battlefields or conservation areas, where there would be a presumption in favour of preservation and retention, and against development.
- 5.2 In accordance with Historic England settings assessment guidance (HE, GPA3, 2017) heritage assets within a 2km radius of the site have been assessed in order to understand whether the site forms part of their settings such that it contributes to their significance.
- 5.3 It was determined that the land at the site is only part of the setting of a single heritage asset (the Grade II* listed building Church of St Peter) but that it makes no contribution to the church's significance or to that of any other heritage asset. As such, the site's development is unlikely to conflict with relevant heritage legislation and the parts of the NPPF that are concerned with impacts upon designated heritage assets.
- 5.4 The site itself, and wider study area, contains evidence for human activity dating from the prehistoric to modern periods. The HER records a possible Iron Age 'banjo enclosure', as well as a possible prehistoric ring ditch within the site. Neither of the geophysical surveys, nor the trial trenching, identified any features that correspond to the possible ring ditch, which is now believed to be located further to the north.
- 5.5 As discussed above, the trial trench evaluation established areas of archaeology located predominantly at the east (Field 5) of the site, as well as at the south (Field 1). The remains in Field 5 comprised a series of features representative of small-scale land management, funerary activity and potential localised settlement during the late Iron Age and transitioning into the Roman period. The sequence of activity culminated in a series of stone buildings and associated enclosures and field systems dated to the Roman period and interpreted as the remains of a large farmstead or 'villa rustica'.
- 5.6 In Field 1, the evaluation recorded features of early medieval date, comprising two SFBs, containing pottery and loom weights which provided a date of 7th and 8th century AD. Two further SFBs were recorded in plan but not excavated, however these features are likely of similar date. The trial trenching thus indicates the presence of localised Saxon settlement comprising the remains of sunken buildings. Also in Field 1, the remains of the roadside ditches of an undated trackway were recorded.
- 5.7 The settlement related features described above are considered to be of no greater than moderate, regional value and, as such, are not considered to be of such significance as to warrant preservation *in situ*, and instead could be appropriately mitigated through a programme of archaeological excavation to allow 'preservation by record', prior to development. The scope of this mitigation would be agreed in advance with the

archaeological advisor to the LPA and would be secured by an appropriately worded condition upon any planning permission granted.

- 5.8 Additional features were recorded across the site during the evaluation trenching but were considered to be of no greater than negligible value. This includes remains of ridge and furrow cultivation, dating from the medieval and post-medieval period, as well as field boundaries of post-medieval to modern date, and quarry pits which are not definitely dated but are likely to date to the post-medieval period, as is indicated by historic mapping sources available for the site. These features are not considered to be of such significance as to warrant further mitigation.
- 5.9 Consequently, it is considered that in terms of the historic environment, the proposed development accords with current legislation, the planning policies contained within the NPPF and the policies of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031.

Section 6 References

- Archaeological Services WYAS, 2015. *Junction 10, M40, Ardley, Oxfordshire; Geophysical Survey*.
- Archaeological Services WYAS, 2021. *Land at Symmetry Park Ardley, Oxfordshire; Geophysical Survey*.
- Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), 2020. *Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-based Assessment*. Reading.
- Cherwell District Council, 2008. *Fewcott Conservation Area Appraisal*.
- Cherwell District Council, 2015. *Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031*.
- Cherwell District Council, 2019. *Ardley Conservation Area Appraisal*.
- Cotswold Archaeology, 2023. *Symmetry Park Ardley Oxfordshire: Archaeological Evaluation*.
- EDP, 2015. *Symmetry Park, Ardley, Archaeological and Heritage Assessment. EDP_r004a*.
- Historic England (HE), 2017. *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets*,
- Historic England (HE), 2018. *Pre-industrial Lime Kilns: Introductions to Heritage Assets*.
- Mc Omish, D., 2011. *Banjo Enclosures, English Heritage, London*.
- Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), 2023. *National Planning Policy Framework*.
- Wessex Archaeology, 1993. *A43: M40 to B4031 Improvement, Preliminary Archaeological Investigation, Trust for Wessex Archaeology*.
- Victoria County History, 1959. *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 6*. London.

Websites

<https://www.bgs.ac.uk/> – accessed December 2021

List of Consulted Maps

1797 Davies Map of Oxfordshire
1860 Stoke Lyne Estate Map

1881 First Edition Ordnance Survey Map
1900 Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map
1922 Edition Ordnance Survey Map
1952 Edition Ordnance Survey Map
1982 Edition Ordnance Survey Map
1993 Edition Ordnance Survey Map

Appendix EDP 1 Images



Image EDP A1.1: View south towards site from the edge of Tusmore Park, illustrating how no visual relationship is obtained, given the intervening woodland blocks.



Image EDP A1.2: View north to Tusmore Park, illustrating glimpsed views of the roof and chimney stacks of the non-designated Tusmore house, but no view to the Grade II* Granary/Dovecote.



Image EDP A1.3: View east to the Grade II* listed building Hardwick Manor House, illustrating its architectural interest and its immediate setting.



Image EDP A1.4: View south-east to Grade II listed building Barn and Stable at Hardwick, illustrating its architectural interest.



Image EDP A1.5: View north to the Grade II listed building Church of St Mary, illustrating its architectural and aesthetic interest and low height.



Image EDP A1.6: View north to Grade II* Listed Church of St Mary, illustrating its churchyard, bounded by drystone walls, as well as its visual and contextual relationship with the surrounding hamlet; predominantly the Hardwick Manor House and farmstead which is in the background.



Image EDP A1.7: View north to Grade II* Listed Church of St Peter, illustrating its appearance and its immediate setting.



Image EDP A1.8: View south of Grade II listed Headstones within the churchyard of the Church of St Peter, showing their artistic interest.



Image EDP A1.9: View east from the Grade II* listed Church of St Peter, illustrating its enclosed setting within the confines of its bounded churchyard, with no views obtained towards the site.



Image EDP A1.10: View south from the Grade II* Listed Church of St Peter, illustrating its immediate setting within the village of Stoke Lynne.



Image EDP A1.11: View south-east from the eastern part of the northern land parcel of the site, illustrating the glimpsed and limited view of the tower of the Grade II* listed Church of St Peter amongst adjacent trees.



Image EDP A1.12: View west to the Grade II listed Barn at Baynard's Green, illustrating its architectural interest but also its modernised setting.



Image EDP A1.13: View east towards the site from Baynards Green from adjacent to the non-listed buildings to the east of the listed Barn, rather than from the Barn itself, illustrating the screening quality of the densely vegetated hedgerow boundary along the edge of the A43.



Image EDP A1.14: View south to scheduled monument Ardley Wood Moated Ringwork, illustrating the vegetation which dominates its setting.



Image EDP A1.15: View north from scheduled monument Ardley Wood Moated Ringwork, illustrating the vegetation which dominates its setting.



Image EDP A1.16: View north-west towards the Grade II*listed Church of St Mary within the Ardley Conservation Area, illustrating its appearance as well as its surrounding churchyard as an important green space in the conservation area.



Image EDP A1.17: View south-west to the Grade II listed Hunters Cottage within the Ardley Conservation Area, illustrating its appearance.



Image EDP A1.18: View north from the Ardley Conservation Area, illustrating the modern buildings which screen the area from views northwards in the general direction of the site.



Image EDP A1.19: View west across the Fewcott Conservation Area, illustrating the appearance of the vernacular buildings within it.



Image EDP A1.20: View south towards Grade II listed Fewcott House, illustrating its appearance.



Image EDP A1.21: View north-east across the northern parcel of site, illustrating its arable nature with hedgerow and ditch field divisions.



Image EDP A1.22: View south across the southern parcel of site, illustrating a slight earthwork running largely east to west that is a probable former field boundary.

Appendix EDP 2
Geophysical Survey Report
(ASWYAS, December 2021)

This page has been left blank intentionally



WYAS
**Archaeological
Services**

Land at Symmetry Park

Ardley

Oxfordshire

Geophysical Survey

Report no. 3526
December 2021

Client: Tritax Symmetry



Land at Symmetry Park, Ardley, Oxfordshire

Geophysical Survey

Summary

A geophysical (magnetometer) survey was undertaken on approximately 30 hectares of land located to the north east of Ardley, Oxfordshire. Anomalies of both a definite and a possible archaeological origin have been detected including a complex of settlement features which may include a banjo enclosure along with trackways, pits and field systems dating to the later Iron Age and Roman periods. Medieval or later ridge and furrow cultivation have also been detected along with modern ploughing. Geological responses can be seen within the south of the Site in which some relate to a former quarry. Based on the interpretation of the geophysical survey the archaeological potential of this Site is deemed to be high.

Report Information

Client: Tritax Symmetry
 Address: Unit B, Grange Park Court, Roman Way, Northampton, England, NN4 5EA
 Report Type: Geophysical Survey
 Location: Land at Symmetry Park, Ardley, OX27 8SF
 County: Oxfordshire
 Grid Reference: SP 5555 2872
 Period(s) of activity: Prehistoric - modern
 Report Number: 3526
 Project Number: XD98
 Site Code: SYM21
 OASIS ID: archaeo111-503400
 Date of fieldwork: November and December 2021
 Date of report: December 2021
 Project Management: Emma Brunning BSc MCIfA
 Fieldwork: Jake Freeman BA
 Marina Rose BA
 Jet Jansen MA MSc
 Haydn Evans BA MSc
 Illustrations: Alastair Trace BSc MSc
 Photography: Jake Freeman
 Research: Alastair Trace
 Report: Alastair Trace/Emma Brunning

Authorisation for distribution: _____



© Archaeological Services WYAS 2021
 Nepshaw Lane South, Morley, Leeds LS27 7JQ
 Telephone: 0113 535 0163
 Email: admin@aswyas.com



Document Issue Record

Ver	Author(s)	Reviewer	Approver	Date
1.0	AT/EB	EB	DW	December 2021

Contents

Report information	ii
Document Issue Record	iii
Contents	iii
List of Figures	iv
List of Plates	iv
1 Introduction	1
Site location, topography and land-use	1
Soils and geology	1
2 Archaeological Background	1
3 Aims, Methodology and Presentation	2
Magnetometer survey	2
Reporting	3
4 Results and Discussion	3
Ferrous anomalies and magnetic disturbance	3
Geological anomalies	4
Agricultural anomalies	4
Possible and definite archaeological anomalies	4
5 Conclusions	5

Figures

Plates

Appendices

Appendix 1: Magnetic survey - technical information

Appendix 2: Survey location information

Appendix 3: Geophysical archive

Appendix 4: Oasis form

Bibliography

List of Figures

- 1 Site location (1:50000)
- 2 Survey location showing processed greyscale magnetometer data (1:5000 @ A3)
- 3 Overall interpretation of magnetometer data (1:5000 @ A3)
- 4 Processed greyscale magnetometer data; Sector 1 (1:1500 @ A3)
- 5 XY trace plot of minimally processed magnetometer data; Sector 1 (1:1500 @ A3)
- 6 Interpretation of magnetometer data; Sector 1 (1:1500 @ A3)
- 7 Processed greyscale magnetometer data; Sector 2 (1:1500 @ A3)
- 8 XY trace plot of minimally processed magnetometer data; Sector 2 (1:1500 @ A3)
- 9 Interpretation of magnetometer data; Sector 2 (1:1500 @ A3)
- 10 Processed greyscale magnetometer data; Sector 3 (1:1500 @ A3)
- 11 XY trace plot of minimally processed magnetometer data; Sector 3 (1:1500 @ A3)
- 12 Interpretation of magnetometer data; Sector 3 (1:1500 @ A3)
- 13 Processed greyscale magnetometer data; Sector 4 (1:1500 @ A3)
- 14 XY trace plot of minimally processed magnetometer data; Sector 4 (1:1500 @ A3)
- 15 Interpretation of magnetometer data; Sector 4 (1:1500 @ A3)
- 16 Survey location showing processed magnetometer data from previous and recent surveys (1:7500 @ A3)

List of Plates

- 1 General view of Field 1, looking east
- 2 General view of Field 2, looking west
- 3 General view of Field 3, looking west
- 4 General view of Field 4, looking east

1 Introduction

Archaeological Services ASWYAS has been commissioned by Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP) on behalf of Tritax Symmetry (the client) to undertake a geophysical survey at land at Symmetry Park, Ardley, Oxfordshire. This was undertaken in line with current best practice (CIFA 2020; Schmidt *et al.* 2016). The survey was carried out between November and December 2021 to provide additional information on the archaeological resource of the Site.

Site location, topography and land-use

The Site is located at SP 5555 2872 (approximate centre), comprising *c.* 30ha over four irregularly shaped parcels of land situated approximately 1km north east of Ardley (see Fig. 1). At the time of survey the field conditions consisted of a young crop (see Plates 1-4).

The Site is situated either side of the B4100, with the northern fields being almost entirely constrained by agricultural land apart from the B4100 to the south. The southern field is constrained by the B4100 to the north, Cherwell Valley services to the south and agricultural land to the east and west. The Site is flat and situated approximately 120m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

Soils and geology

The underlying bedrock mainly comprises White limestone with Bladon Member and Forest Marble Formation – formed approximately 166 to 168 million years ago in the Jurassic period. No superficial deposits are recorded (BGS 2021). Soils are classified in the Aberford association, characterised as shallow, well-drained loams (SSEW 1983).

2 Archaeological Background

Information presented by EDP as part of a Desk-Based Assessment (Oakley 2015) has confirmed that there may be a possible ‘banjo enclosure’ located in the northern portion of the survey area (identified in the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER 17456)). In addition there is extensive cropmark evidence in the wider landscape interpreted as prehistoric activity, the nearest of which lie 0.5km to the north of the site and comprise of undated enclosures (HER 23340) and a possible Bronze Age round barrow (HER 4920) approximately 0.6km to the north east of the site.

Roman coins (HER 4747), first recorded in 1939 were collected approximately 0.7km to the north east of Site.

The HER records Baynard’s Green, recorded 0.2km to the west of the Site, as an open area associated with medieval tournaments and subsequently a race course (HER 4853). The

record cites that it may have been a camping ground or meeting place. Given the temporary nature of the activity here it seems unlikely that any below ground archaeological features would manifest from this activity and regardless it is unlikely that this activity extended onto the Site.

Two milestones (HER 4902 and 4836) are recorded close to the course of the A43 to the north and southwest of the Site. These were recorded in 1976, and there is no information that would suggest they survived the dualling of the A43.

A geophysical survey (Webb 2015) was undertaken by ASWYAS in conjunction with the DBA. Although no definitive archaeological features were identified, the survey detected some possible 'boundary type features' in the eastern part of the site which may be associated with the 'banjo enclosure'. These may represent peripheral features and are well beyond the main enclosure itself or may equally represent late medieval or post-medieval land division or trackway. The survey also revealed evidence for past agricultural in the form of ridge and furrow, former field boundaries and post-medieval extraction pits. No other anomalies of archaeological origin were identified within the Site.

3 Aims, Methodology and Presentation

The aims and objectives of the programme of geophysical survey were to gather sufficient information to establish the presence/absence, character and extent, of any archaeological remains within the specific area and to inform an assessment of the archaeological potential of the site. To achieve this aim, a magnetometer survey covering all amenable parts of the Site was undertaken (see Fig. 2).

The general objectives of the geophysical survey were:

- to provide information about the nature and possible interpretation of any magnetic anomalies identified;
- to therefore determine the presence/absence and extent of any buried archaeological features; and
- to prepare a report summarising the results of the survey.

Magnetometer survey

The site grid was laid out using a Trimble VRS differential Global Positioning System (Trimble R6 model). The survey was undertaken using Bartington Grad601 magnetic gradiometers. These were employed taking readings at 0.25m intervals on zig-zag traverses 1.0m apart within 30m by 30m grids, so that 3600 readings were recorded in each grid. These readings were stored in the memory of the instrument and later downloaded to computer for

processing and interpretation. Bespoke in-house software was used to process and present the data. Further details are given in Appendix 1.

Reporting

A general site location plan, incorporating the 1:50000 Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping, is shown in Figure 1. Figure 2 displays processed magnetometer data at a scale of 1:5000 whilst Figure 3 shows an overview of the interpretation at the same scale. Processed and minimally processed data, together with interpretation of the survey results are presented in Figures 4 to 15 inclusive at a scale of 1:1500. Figure 16 shows the current and previous surveys at a scale of 1:7500.

Technical information on the equipment used, data processing and survey methodologies are given in Appendix 1. Technical information on locating the survey area is provided in Appendix 2. Appendix 3 describes the composition and location of the archive. A copy of the completed OASIS form is included in Appendix 4.

The survey methodology, report and any recommendations comply with guidelines outlined by the European Archaeological Council (Schmidt *et al.* 2016) and by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2020). All figures reproduced from Ordnance Survey mapping are with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office (© Crown copyright).

The figures in this report have been produced following analysis of the data in processed formats and over a range of different display levels. All figures are presented to most suitably display and interpret the data from this site based on the experience and knowledge of Archaeological Services staff.

4 Results and Discussion (see Figures 4 to 15)

Ferrous anomalies and magnetic disturbance

Ferrous anomalies, as individual 'spikes', or as large discrete areas are typically caused by ferrous (magnetic) material, either on the ground surface or in the plough-soil. Little importance is normally given to such anomalies, unless there is any supporting evidence for an archaeological interpretation, as modern ferrous debris or material is common on rural sites, often being present as a consequence of manuring or tipping/infilling. There is no obvious pattern or clustering to their distribution in this survey to suggest anything other than a random background scatter of ferrous debris in the plough-soil.

Magnetic disturbance along the limits of the survey areas are due to be linked to metal fencing within the field boundaries and interference from the adjacent roads.

Geological anomalies

The survey has detected a number of anomalies that have been interpreted as geological in origin. It is thought that the responses have been detected because of the variation in the composition and depth of the deposits of superficial material in which they derive. These are particularly evident in the southern most area and most likely to be associated with topography in which bands can be seen running on an approximate north to south alignment.

The response in the northeast of Area 4 correlates to a former quarry and is marked on the 1898 Ordnance Survey as 'Old Quarry' (NLS 2021).

Agricultural anomalies

Parallel linear trends can be seen within all areas and are associated with both modern ploughing and medieval or later ridge and furrow cultivation. The interpretation figures show the direction of the modern ploughing, but not all have been digitised, unless especially prominent within the dataset.

Possible and definite archaeological anomalies

Anomalies of both a definite and possible archaeological origin have been recorded within the dataset. The most prominent of these lie in the centre of the Site in Area 2 and comprise a complex of features which are suggestive of settlement. The HER records a possible banjo enclosure (HER 17456) in this vicinity but the magnetic survey has detected many more anomalies that suggest a more complex and extensive settlement. The anomalies likely represent multiple phases of use of the site and span the later Iron Age and Roman period.

There are possible signs of this banjo enclosure with ditch responses (**A1**) making the enclosure. Although, with so many different responses, of likely different phases, within this area it is difficult to determine if this is indeed the banjo.

To the west of **A1** a rectilinear enclosure (**A2**) has been recorded. This measures approximately 62m by 43m and shows internal features. A smaller, partial square enclosure (**A3**) can be seen in the southeast corner measuring approximately 15m by 15m. Further square enclosures (**A4** and **A5**) can be seen to the south of **A2** in which **A4** appears to be cut or cuts through the southern ditch of **A2**. Whereas **A5** appears to append **A2**. Both the latter two enclosures are on the same alignment as each other but a slightly different one to **A2** and **A3** suggesting a different phase of occupation.

Archaeological responses to the south of **A1** appear to show multiple phases with ditches bisecting each other consisting of both straight and curving responses which makes it difficult to unravel the phases. A ditch in the east of the complex (**A6**) is magnetically strong and appears to be connected with **A1**.

A handful of magnetically strong pit-like features (**A7**) have been recorded surrounding the complex, these can be seen to the northeast of **A1** and in the southeast of the complex.

A long ditch (**A8**) to the east of the majority of the archaeological responses is most likely to be a boundary ditch. The feature weakens at its northern and southern ends but may continue in the south towards the weaker linear response **P1**.

Surrounding the main complex a number of magnetically weaker responses have been recorded that have been interpreted as possible archaeology. It is likely that they are associated with the occupational features, but due to the weaker magnetic strength caution has been taken. This lower magnitude of response could be as a result of less burnt and magnetic material entering ditches and suggests an area away from occupation and more likely to be field systems associated with the main settlement areas.

Linear trend (**P1**) can be seen running through Areas 3 and 2, possibly connecting up to the boundary ditch **A8**. It is possible that **P1**, along with **P2** further north represent prehistoric field systems as do not appear on any historic mapping and are not aligned to any of the current field boundaries or ploughing regimes.

In Area 4, a long double ditched response (**A9**) can be seen. The feature begins as a single ditch in the northwest leading to a second ditch approximately 200m from the start of this recorded feature. This response may represent a trackway and is approximately 15m in width. At its southern end the feature turns to the east and is represented by a single ditch. It is likely that **A10** is a continuation of **A9**.

A cluster of anomalies (**P3**) in the northwest of Area 4 may be of some archaeological interest and lie close to the possible trackway as mentioned above. It is also possible that they are of a geological or natural origin given the other geological anomalies in this area.

Linear trends (**P4**) in the south of Area 4 have been a possible archaeological interpretation and may represent part of a larger prehistoric field system.

5 Conclusions

The geophysical survey has detected a number of magnetic anomalies associated with archaeological and possible archaeological origins in the forms of a large settlement complex, a trackway, pits, field systems and a probable boundary ditch.

Geological anomalies have been recorded throughout due to variations within the soils and topography. A former quarry has also been detected which correlates to historic mapping.

Medieval or later ridge and furrow cultivation has been recorded along with modern ploughing. Magnetic disturbance around the periphery of the fields are due to metal fencing within the boundaries.

Based on the geophysical survey the archaeological potential of the Site especially in the centre of the surveyed area is deemed to be high.

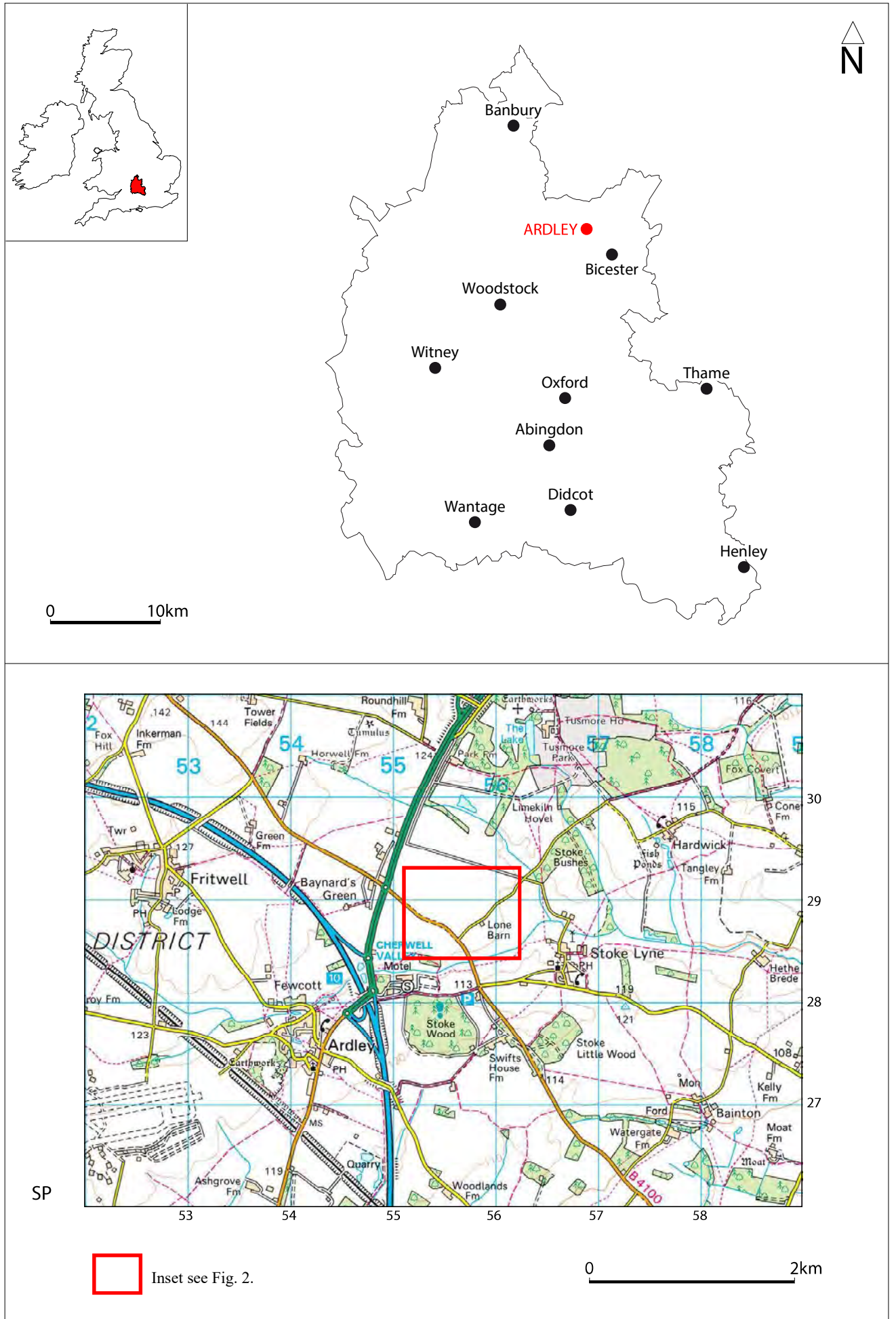
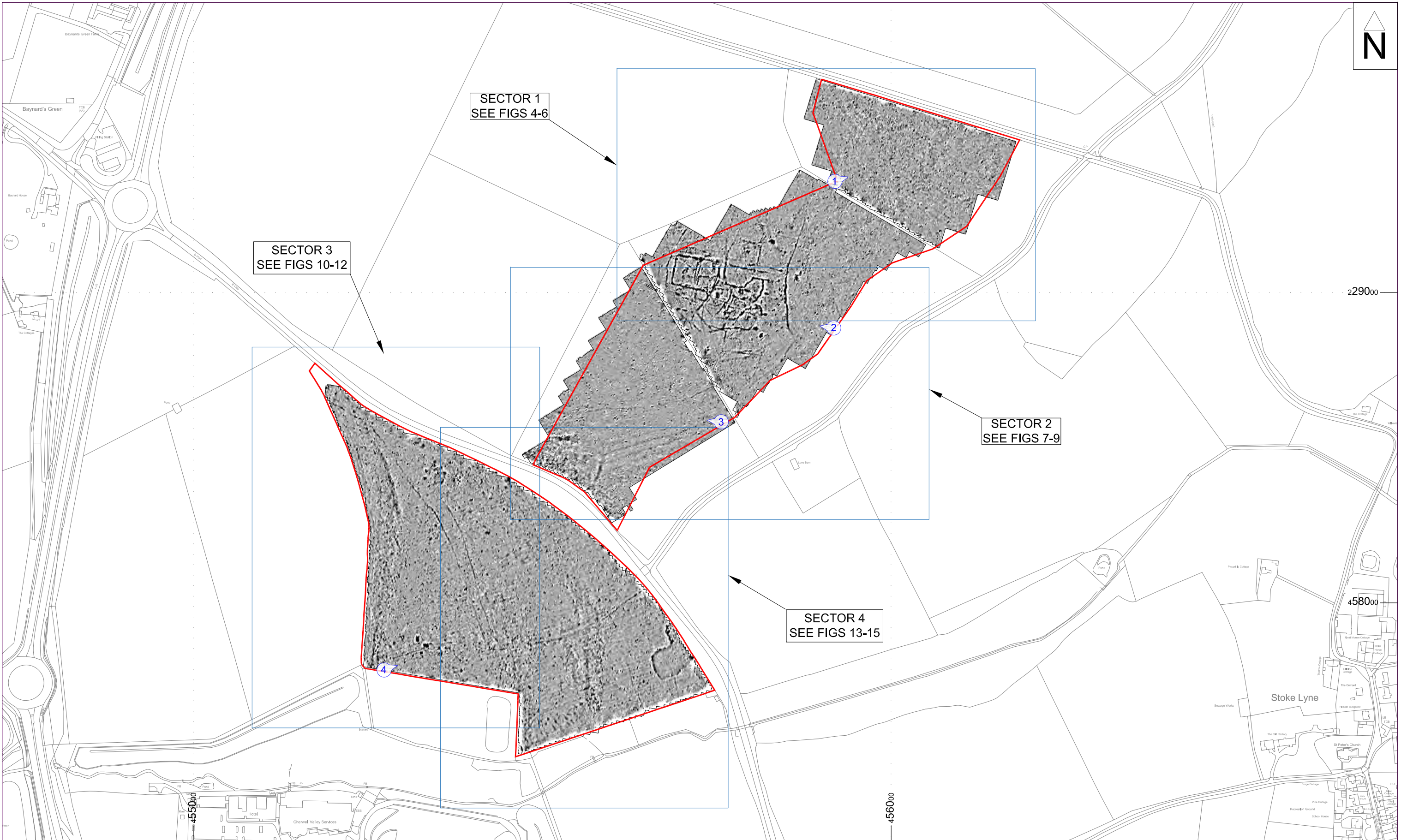



Fig. 1. Site location







 © ASWYAS 2021.
 Archaeological Services W Y A S,
 Nephaw Lane South, Morley, LS27 7JQ
 Tel: 0113 535 0163 Email: archaeology@wyjs.org.uk www.aswyas.com

Project ID: XD98_SYM21

Survey location showing processed greyscale magnetometer data

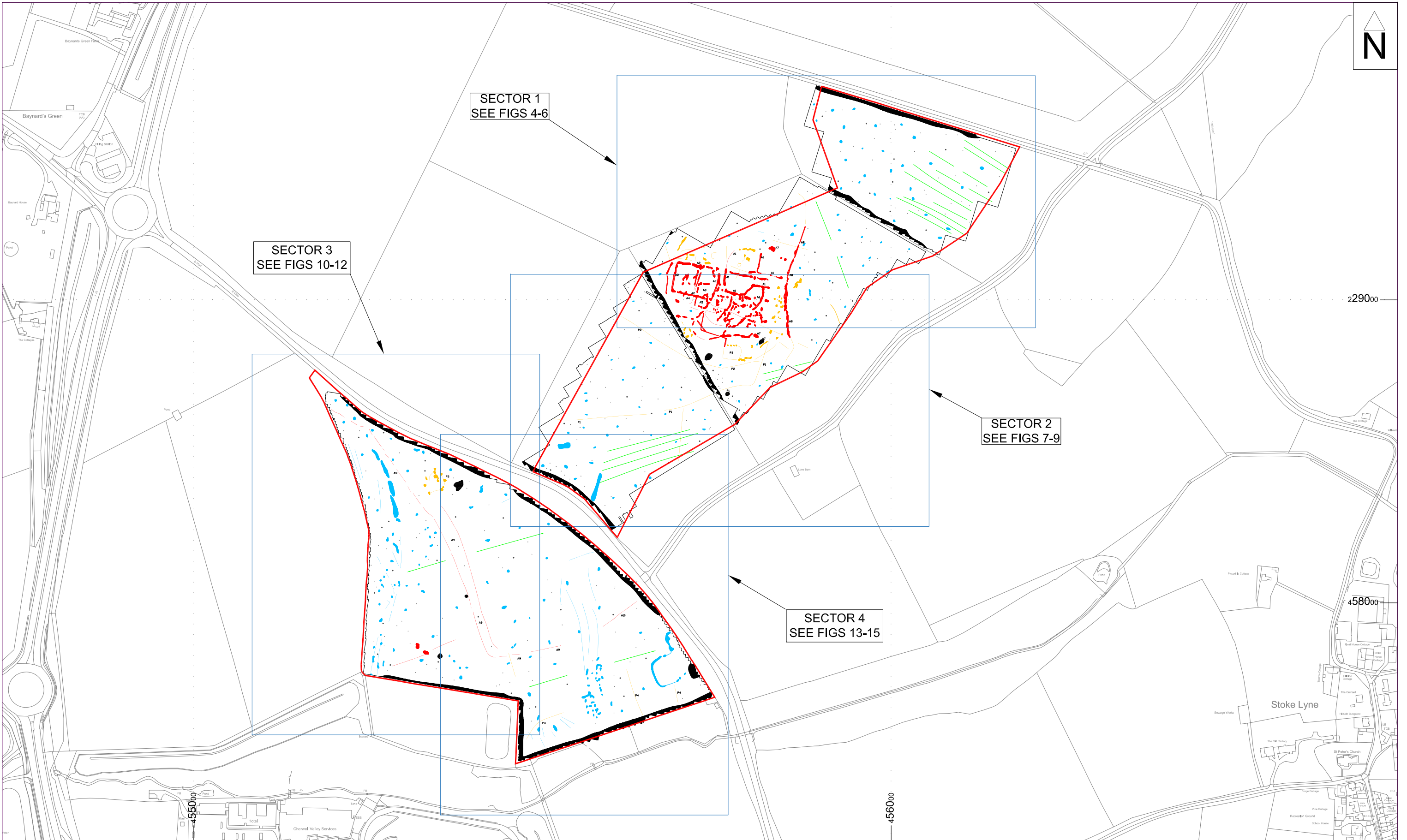
Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
 © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.
 Wakefield Metropolitan District Council licence 100019574, 2021.


Title	
	SURVEY AREA
	SECTOR BOUNDARY
	PHOTO LOCATIONS












1:5000 @ A3

Fig.2




 © ASWYAS 2021.
 Archaeological Services W Y A S,
 Nephaw Lane South, Morley, LS27 7JQ
 Tel: 0113 535 0163 Email: archaeology@wyjs.org.uk www.aswyas.com
 Project ID: XD98_SYM21
 Overall interpretation of magnetometer data
Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
 © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.
 Wakefield Metropolitan District Council Licence 100019574, 2021.

Title	
	SURVEY AREA
	SECTOR BOUNDARY

Interpretation			
	FERROUS		GEOLOGY
	MAGNETIC DISTURBANCE		ARCHAEOLOGY?
	RIDGE & FURROW		ARCHAEOLOGY
	AGRICULTURAL		


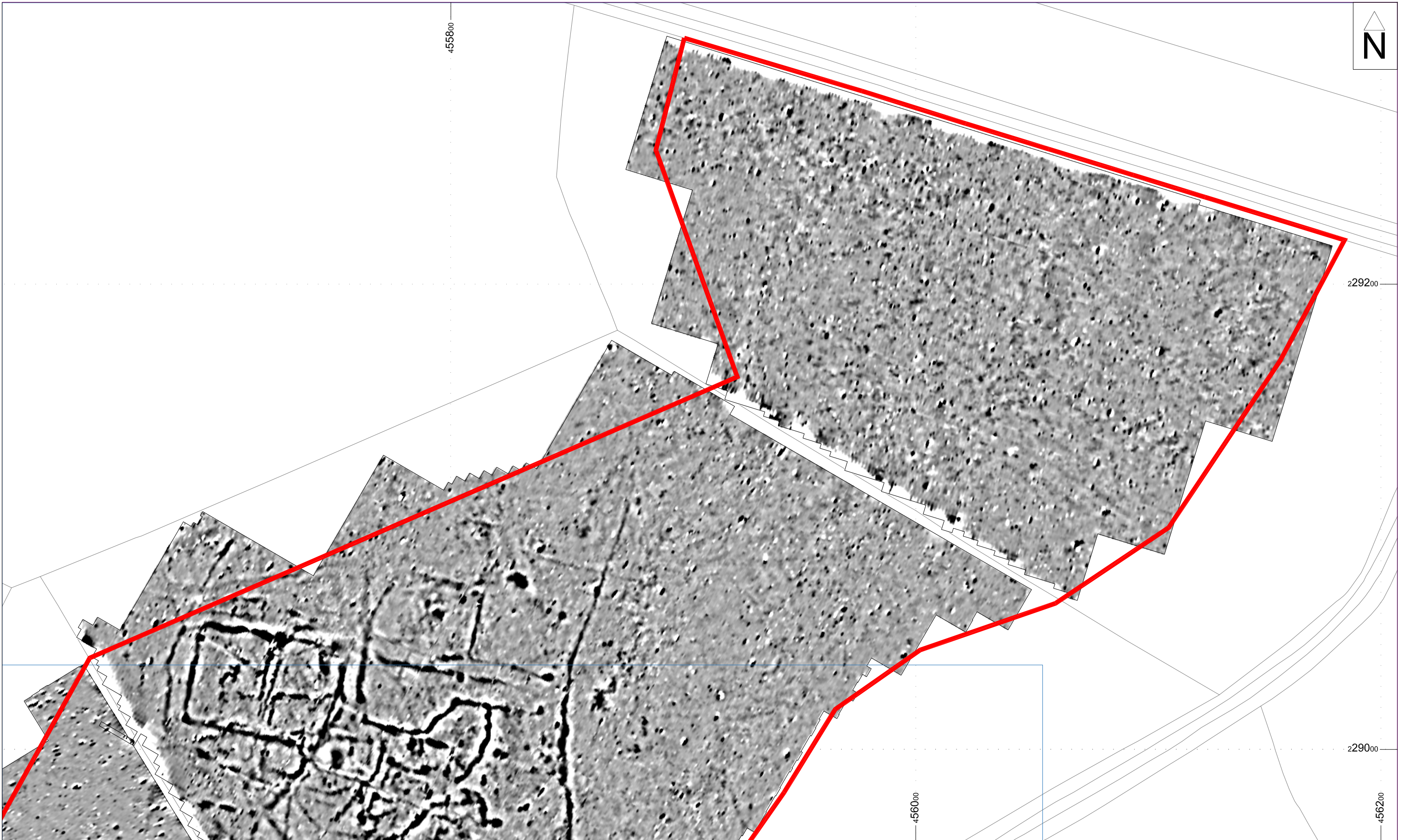

0  200m
 1:5000 @ A3

Fig.3






 © ASWYAS 2021.
 Archaeological Services W Y A S,
 Nephaw Lane South, Morley, LS27 7JQ
 Tel: 0113 535 0163 Email: archaeology@wyjs.org.uk www.aswyas.com

Project ID: XD98_SYM21

Processed greyscale magnetometer data; Sector 1

Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Wakefield Metropolitan District Council Licence 100019574, 2021.

Title	
	SURVEY AREA
	SECTOR BOUNDARY



1:1500 @ A3

Fig.4