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HERITAGE STATEMENT

In respect of

**Proposed Development:
Land at Stratfield Farm, Kidlington,
Oxfordshire**

On behalf of

Manor Oak Homes

AHC REF: SW 9589

Date: February 2022

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report has been prepared and written by Sarah Watt, MCIfA, Director of Asset Heritage Consulting Ltd. (AHC), on behalf of Manor Oak Homes (MOH). Its purpose is to provide an assessment of the potential impact on the historic built environment of outline proposals for the residential development of an area of land at Stratfield Farm, west of Oxford Road on the southern edge of Kidlington in Oxfordshire (hereafter referred to as the Site).
- 1.2 The Site has been identified as a strategic site allocation in the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) Partial Review – Oxford’s Unmet Housing Need (adopted 7th September 2020) (‘the LPPR’) for a residential development of 120 homes (Policy PR7b).
- 1.3 Policy PR7b sets out the key delivery and planning application requirements for the Site. Cherwell District Council instructed Alan Baxter Associates to prepare a development brief for the site, in consultation with the landowner’s representatives, Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council and the Canal and River Trust. The planning application has been prepared in accordance with Policy PR7b and the Development Brief.
- 1.4 Paragraph 17 of the Policy requires that any planning application for the Site *‘shall be supported by a Heritage Impact Assessment which will identify measures to avoid or minimise conflict with the identified heritage assets within and adjacent to the site, particularly Stratfield Farmhouse. These measures shall be incorporated or reflected, as appropriate, in any proposed development scheme.’*
- 1.5 Paragraph 25 of the Policy refers to the Oxford Canal Conservation Area which runs along the western boundary of the Site, noting that appropriate place-shaping principles of layout, design and appearance should seek to protect and enhance the conservation area.
- 1.6 Paragraph 28 of the Policy states that, *‘The character and appearance of the Grade II listed Stratfield Farmhouse and its setting is to be enhanced through appropriate building restoration and landscaping.’*

- 1.7 This Heritage Statement is a revised and updated version of the Heritage Statement prepared for MOH in February 2019 during the Local Plan process. This revised version provides an assessment of the heritage constraints and opportunities pertaining to the Site and, informed by this assessment, considers the submitted scheme for the residential development of the Site in terms of its potential impact on heritage assets.
- 1.8 In November 2018, AHC prepared a Statement of Significance for the Grade II listed Stratfield Farmhouse, which stands in the central part of the Site. The detailed information about the listed building provided in that report is not duplicated here, but informs the assessment of impact on the building's setting contained here and will be submitted, alongside a separate Heritage Impact Assessment, with the parallel application for listed building consent for the restoration and alteration of the farmhouse and the conversion of its 'curtilage listed' outbuildings for residential use.
- 1.9 In summary, this report provides an assessment of the contribution made by the Site to the setting, character and appearance of the conservation area and the listed building. Informed by this assessment, it then goes on to consider the impact that the proposed development of the Site is likely to have upon these assets and their settings.
- 1.10 The approach of assessing significance and then the impact of proposals on them in order to inform decision-making is in line with paragraphs 194 and 195 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the accompanying Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

2.0 THE SITE: DESCRIPTION AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

*For the purposes of this report and ease of reference, the Site is divided into five 'parcels' A-E as dictated by its principal internal field boundaries. These are shown on the plan at **Appendix 1**.*

- 2.1 The village of Kidlington lies four and a half miles north of Oxford between the River Cherwell on the east and the Oxford Canal on the west. The village is recorded in Domesday as 'Chedelintone'. Until the enclosures of 1818 the village was known as Kidlington-on-the-Green and the southern part of the parish consisted of a large area of common land. Stratfield Farm lies on the southern edge of the modern-day Kidlington, which has expanded southwards towards Oxford.
- 2.2 The Site occupies c.10.4 hectares of agricultural fields extending between the Oxford Road (A4260) and Kidlington roundabout to the east and the Oxford Canal to the west. To the north lies the 'Garden City' residential development, most of which was constructed from c.1960, and to the south the Stratfield Brake Sports Ground. In the central-eastern part of the site stands the Grade II listed Stratfield Farmhouse, an early 19th-century building with a number of outbuildings to its north and orchards to its west and south; the orchard to the west was present in the 19th century, while that to the south is a mid/late 20th-century plantation and includes a greenhouse of similar date.
- 2.3 The Site's boundaries are lined with hedging and trees, while an old hedged field boundary along a drainage ditch (marked on the 1810 map) divides Parcel E from the rest. Access is taken off the Kidlington roundabout via a slip-road that gives access onto a service road into the Garden City development.
- 2.4 The name 'Stratfield' may derive from the Old English *straet* ('Roman road') and *feld* ('open country'), resulting in 'open land by a Roman road'. Gelling (1984) suggests that, while the Roman road translation is sound when it occurs in major settlement names (such as Stratford), it cannot automatically be applied to field names and minor settlement names, where it may just refer to a main road or village dispersed along one. However, as Eberhard Sauer says, in an article in *Oxoniensia* (1998), *'It is widely accepted that Banbury Road in Oxford and*

Oxford Road, its northward continuation to Kidlington, follow the port-way' (in its incarnation as a paved Roman road). As Stratfield Farm lies just west of this route, this derivation of the name is possible.

- 2.5 Alternatively, Crossley & Elrington (1990) say that, '*a large arable field called Statfield (later Stratfield) in the south had been brought into cultivation by the later 13th century; its medieval form 'stodfold' (stud fold) suggests that it was once pasture'*. This suggests a different derivation for the name.
- 2.6 The Kidlington Enclosure Map of 1810 (**Fig.1**) and accompanying award do not show any buildings on the site of Stratfield Farm or the form of enclosure immediately surrounding the buildings that was present in the later 19th century. As buildings in general are otherwise recorded on the map, this strongly implies Stratfield Farm had not yet been constructed.
- 2.7 The map does show that the land on which the farm now stands formed part of enclosures to be allotted to the Vicar of Kidlington, the Revd. John Cole DD, for vicarial tithes and vicarial glebe. In the Award, part of the allotted land is referred to as being within 'Stat Field'. Cutting across two of the allotments, a dotted line can be seen on the plan, which corresponds to the present-day northern boundary of the allocation site and its return to the south-west as a ditched vegetated boundary crossing the western part of the site.
- 2.8 The map also shows the Oxford Canal, which was one of the earlier canal cuts, initially designed by James Brindley and finished by Samuel Simcock and Robert Whitworth in 1772 on Brindley's death. It was constructed between 1769 and 1789 and finally opened on 1st January 1790 (having been opened in sections from 1774). Its original purpose was to facilitate the transportation of coal from Coventry to Oxford and the River Thames and it was very profitable for its first 15 years, providing the main route between Birmingham and London via the Thames.
- 2.9 However, in 1805, the Grand Junction Canal (now the Grand Union Canal) was opened, providing a faster route and ultimately leading to the decline of the Oxford Canal. Although it resulted in more traffic on the northern part of the

canal (which was upgraded in the 1830s by Marc Brunel and William Cubitt, who straightened the original line), it effectively bypassed its southern half.

- 2.10 The Old Series 1833 1 inch to the mile Ordnance Survey (OS) map (Sheet 45; **Fig.2**) labels 'Stratfield Farm' and clearly shows a group of buildings here, indicating that the farm was built between 1810 and 1833. John Amor, in his 'A history of Oxford Road Kidlington' (1996), says that Stratfield Farm was built in 1837 at a cost of £500, and that fences and farm buildings were erected at the same time, but he does not state the source of this information and, given the buildings appear on the 1831 map, it can probably be presumed inaccurate. A date range between 1810 and 1833 is, however, compatible with the appearance of the farmhouse.
- 2.11 The buildings are shown within an enclosure roughly equidistant from the road to the east and the canal to the west. Two separate driveways led off Oxford Road to the buildings, linked together along their east side and continuing around the northern and southern sides of the enclosure respectively. Stratfield Brake, an area of woodland, is shown to the south. At this time, the southern edge of Kidlington village was distant from the farm. Gosford Hill Farm lay to the north, on the eastern side of the Oxford Road, with the hamlet of Gosford to the north-east.
- 2.12 Stratfield Farm was one of the five main farms in Kidlington and Thrupp in the 19th century. Amor (1996) says that Gelis Rose farmed at Stratfield from c.1861 followed by Felix Rose in 1868; the latter was still a tenant (presumably of the church) in 1880 but in the 1881 Census James Hutt is recorded as the farmer. In 1890-1, William Freeman is recorded.
- 2.13 The 1876 1:2500-scale OS map (**Fig.3**) shows the farmhouse and outbuildings with a wedge-shaped enclosed orchard to the west, as currently. The group of buildings, numbered 235 on the map, is recorded in the OS Area Book as 'Houses, yards, gardens, etc'. These were encompassed by a large field enclosure (No.250 on the map), which included parcels B, C and D and the southern part of parcel A (see **Appendix 1**). This is recorded as arable, its western boundary formed by the tree-lined ditch shown on the 1810 map. Another enclosure east of the buildings and north of the driveway (the northern

part of parcel A) also formed part of the land (No.251, also arable). The field enclosure north of the buildings (No.234) was in use as pasture, as was No.249 alongside the canal. The southern boundary of Field No.250 extended well beyond the southern boundary of the present Site.

- 2.14 **Fig.4**, the 1:10,560-scale OS map of 1884-7 shows the wider context, revealing how the land divisions now forming the Site have changed since this time, with the one constant being the Site's northern boundary and the boundary dividing parcel E from parcels B, C and D.
- 2.15 The northern of the two driveways shown on the 1833 map had been largely removed by this date, with only a short spur remaining at the western end by the farmyard, lined with trees, but continuing eastwards to the road only as a field boundary. A footpath ran north from the spur across field No.234 to the Oxford Road. The linking section of drive connecting the northern to the southern driveway, which remained in place, is also shown. The southern driveway took a more linear form than it does today. Another footpath ran south from the western end of this driveway, crossing field No.250.
- 2.16 The farm complex is shown divided into three enclosed areas with the farmhouse at the south-western corner of the group. A belt of deciduous trees screened the south entrance front of the house and its garden from the fields to the south (parcel D) and another belt screened the buildings from the field (No.251; part of parcel A) to the east.
- 2.17 The 1899 OS map (**Fig.5**) shows a similar arrangement to the 1876 map, except that the southern footpath across field No.250 is no longer present and the surviving driveway had been realigned with a more curving form so that it entered the farm complex more conveniently. A pair of attached houses had been built at the bottom of the drive by Oxford Road.
- 2.18 The Kelly's Directories record James Edward Hollis as the farmer at Stratfield between 1896 and 1923. In c.1920, the farm was bought from the church by Harold Bishop. The Bishop family have remained at the property until the present day.

- 2.19 Amor (1996) says that at one time some of the land belonging to the farm was on the other side of the Oxford Canal, accessed via a drawbridge (this is marked on the OS maps between 1887 and 1938). He also records that *'in recent years the land has been used as a market garden'*.
- 2.20 By 1936 (**Fig.6**), Field No.250 had been subdivided into several enclosures. The pair of houses at the foot of the driveway had been demolished and a pair of new houses had been built, perhaps in direct replacement, just outside the Site to the north on Oxford Road.
- 2.21 By 1947, the construction of the 'Garden City' residential estate north of the site (over what had been the pasture field No.234 in 1876) was underway (see **Figs.7 & 8**). In fact, the first houses on this estate were built by Taylor Woodrow Estates Ltd. in c.1937-8. The advent of the Second World War and the economic situation in 1945 led the developer to abandon their original plans for the estate and work seems to have been paused while the new Kidlington roundabout and A43 were built (both shown as being under construction on the 1960 OS map; **Fig.9**). The roundabout and new road encroached across and truncated the eastern end of the land associated with Stratfield Farm.
- 2.22 The 1969 OS map (**Fig.10**) shows the rest of the new roads finally laid out for the Garden City development (including on the eastern side of the Oxford Road north of the roundabout), with housing in place by 1971 (**Fig.11**). A large garage building had been erected on land north of the roundabout, its site redeveloped with a large Sainsbury's supermarket and car park by the mid-1990s.
- 2.23 By 1978 (**Fig.12**), the access to Stratfield Farm off the roundabout had been remodelled to form the present slip-road.
- 2.24 By the 1970s, the land associated with the farm appears to have been truncated, moving the southern boundary further north to its current position. The present glasshouse seems to have been erected in the 1970s.

3.0 HERITAGE ASSETS AND THE PROPOSALS

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 This section of the report considers the potential impact of the scheme on the identified heritage assets and their settings, these assets being the Grade II listed Stratfield Farmhouse, its 'curtilage listed' outbuildings, and the Oxford Canal Conservation Area. For the purposes of this report and ease of reference, the Site is divided into five 'parcels' A-E as dictated by its principal internal field boundaries (see **Appendix 1**).
- 3.1.2 The proposed scheme is for a development of 118 new homes on the Site (excluding the new dwellings that will be formed from Stratfield Farmhouse and its outbuildings, which are enclosed within a separate red-line site area and will be the subject of separate applications).
- 3.1.3 The application is in outline with all matters reserved except for access. However, the submitted illustrative proposal plan shows how a development of 118 homes could be successfully achieved on the Site in accordance with the Development Brief and Policy PR7b. The layout shows where the new dwellings could be located, and the positions of the proposed access and internal roads.
- 3.1.4 Critically, in terms of heritage impact, the distinct curtilage of the listed building and its outbuildings is retained at the centre of the scheme, including the historic orchard to its west. Open space (including the later orchard) is preserved to the south of the farmhouse, and the small woodland area east of the farm complex is also retained, providing a buffer between the farm complex and new development.
- 3.1.5 The illustrative layout includes development in parcels A, B and C only. This is in accordance with the developable areas identified in the Development Brief. Parcel E, at the western end of the Site adjacent to the canal, will be retained as open land and preserved as a wildlife habitat, while Parcel D, in the southern part of the Site, will comprise publicly accessible informal green space, including the orchard south of the farmhouse, which will be preserved as a community

orchard for the development. An attenuation basin will be sited at the western end of this parcel.

- 3.1.6 The main access road will enter the Site from further north than the present farm access and then take a gradual curve to the south-west to a point outside the south-eastern corner of the farmhouse garden, from where a private drive will branch off to the farmhouse site, following the current arrangement. The access road then runs parallel to the southern boundary of the farmhouse garden, turning north-west to follow the boundary of the old orchard. Where it passes through parcel A, the main access road will be lined with a grass verge and street trees. Beyond here, the Site already benefits from existing mature trees and hedgerows that will be retained.
- 3.1.7 In parcel A, secondary roads will run north and south off the main access road to provide access to new dwellings. In parcels B and C, secondary roads will open off the main access road to the development there. This includes a secondary road along the northern edge of the historic orchard, which will provide access to the courtyard containing the farm outbuildings to be converted to dwellings, as well as to new dwellings on the northern edge of the Site between the orchard and the Site's northern boundary.
- 3.2.1 A shared pedestrian and cycle route will traverse the whole of the Site, from its south-eastern corner, skirting the southern community orchard, running west through the edge of parcel D, the informal green space, and then crossing the wildlife habitat in parcel E to link to the Oxford Canal and a new bridge over it to connect to the towpath along its western side.
- 3.2.2 The Design & Access Statement suggests the natural division of the development into four distinct character areas: the Eastern Gateway (parcel A); the Central area (eastern half of parcel B); the Western area (parcel C and western half of parcel B); and the Green Corridor (parcels D and E).
- 3.2.3 Although the application is in outline only, the D&AS suggests that the respective character areas could be developed using their own distinct style and palette of materials, with an overall traditional approach, and goes on to set out how this might be achieved: in the Eastern Gateway area, Cotswold stone

buildings could be used on the primary streets (with key buildings using red-brick dressings to window openings), with brick used on the secondary streets, using 'cottage'-style doors and flush-fitting casement windows with a vertical emphasis.

- 3.2.4 In the Central area, on the approach to the converted farm courtyard and listed farmhouse, Cotswold stone would again be used with dressed stone quoins and mainly grey stone slate roofs. Georgian-style windows of vertical emphasis could be used on these houses, the materials and style reflecting those of the listed building. In the Western area, Cotswold stone buildings could be used on the primary streets, with a mix of stone and render used on the secondary streets.
- 3.2.5 The traditional vernacular approach to the Site's architecture is intended to respect the character of the listed building.

3.2 The listed building

Setting

- 3.2.6 The immediate setting of the Grade II listed Stratfield Farmhouse is very well-defined by the enclosure around its front garden, the old orchard to the west, the walled farmyards and outbuildings to the north, and the garden wall and continuation of the access drive to the east. This enclosure is further reinforced by a tree belt to the south (along the garden boundary wall), by a pocket of woodland to the east (between the farm access drive and parcel A), and by the trees enclosing the old orchard to the west.
- 3.2.7 This enclosure by trees provides strong definition for the farm grouping in views across the Site and demarcates it in the landscape (see **Plates 1-7**, which illustrate the level of screening and definition even at the sparsest time of year in terms of leaf cover, in February).
- 3.2.8 These elements of the building's setting are those which contribute the most to its significance as a listed building. They define the historic extent of the gardens and farmyards and illustrate how the farmhouse functioned in relationship to the spaces around it. The farmhouse faced south, away from the farmyards, with its

important reception rooms to the front, overlooking the front and west lawns, and service rooms to the rear, overlooking the yards. The later, unenclosed orchard to the south, beyond the garden boundary, extends the open outlook in front of the farmhouse and, although not a 'historic' plantation, contributes to the sense of space around the building, providing some screening against the Stratfield Brake Sports Ground beyond the Site's southern boundary (**Plate 8**).

- 3.2.9 The farmyard enclosures to the rear appear to have been established at the same time as the farmhouse, originally built in a single phase as a planned farm, all enclosed by walls. The enclosed courtyard forms contribute to the significance of the listed building. The farm buildings themselves, as individual structures, are of varying date and have varying degrees of survival and significance (as discussed in the separate Statement of Significance).
- 3.2.10 The wider Site once formed part of the land associated with the farming, and later market garden, operation. While it currently provides the wider physical setting for the listed building and outbuildings, it is of less value than the areas referred to at paragraph 3.2.6 above in terms of the contribution it makes to revealing the significance of the listed building.
- 3.2.11 In part this is because of the historic truncation of the original extent of the land for the construction of the large roundabout to the east and the developments to north and south; the houses in the Garden City development are very visible from the Site, as are the structures and lighting associated with the sports ground to the south. In short, the historically rural character of this piece of land has been significantly diminished (**Plates 9-15**).

Potential impact

- 3.2.12 It is inevitable that any housing development on the Site will transform its character because the land is currently open. However, there are ways in which the impact on the listed building can be mitigated, and the proposed outline scheme employs such measures; the principal of these is the retention of the well-defined curtilage around the building, with its mature and established planting and landscape structure, comprising its important setting. This includes the orchards to west and south and the pocket of woodland to the east of the

buildings, all of which serve as effective screens against the surrounding land as well as contributing to the setting and significance of the building in their own right.

- 3.2.13 The retention of the historic orchard to the west (as part of the private garden to the farmhouse, which is to be refurbished as a single dwelling) is important as it provides a key element of the setting of the listed building both in visual/aesthetic terms and in terms of historical association (it appears to be present on the 1833 map at **Fig.2**). The western boundary of the orchard is lined with a dense belt of trees which provides definition to the farm group in the landscape and an effective screen between the farmhouse and parcels B and C.
- 3.2.14 Under the proposals, the retained western orchard and the eastern woodland will provide effective physical separation and visual screens between the listed building and the new development. The development in parcel B will be contained within the existing landscape structure and separated from the farmhouse curtilage by the western orchard, while the development in parcel A will be separated from it by the retained woodland/wetland belt east of the farmhouse, with the additional buffer provided by the southern orchard.
- 3.2.15 The proposed development comes closest to the listed farm group at the eastern end of parcel B, adjoining the north-western corner of the courtyard of farm buildings. The two new houses at the eastern end of the new secondary road here will be oriented so that they are at right-angles to their neighbours to the west, avoiding a continuous line of south-facing built form between new-build and converted outbuildings – this will ensure that the inward-looking courtyard form remains distinct and that its buildings are ‘read’ separately from the new dwellings to the west.
- 3.2.16 The retention of the southern orchard will ensure the preservation of an open aspect beyond the tree-lined southern boundary of the farmhouse garden, curtailed further south by the presence of the Stratfield Brake sports facilities and associated lighting.

- 3.2.17 The Development brief advises that the main access road should cross the Site immediately south of the garden, i.e. between the garden and the retained orchard.
- 3.2.18 Although the principal front of the farmhouse faces south, it primarily overlooks its garden with only glimpses through the existing tree screen along the latter's boundary through to the orchard beyond. In order to ensure that the road does not impinge greatly on the sense of openness here, the illustrative masterplan shows how this section could have a shared surface and be of a more informal character. Further mitigation could be achieved through the use of sensitive lighting and associated planting/landscaping such that the impact on the outlook from the listed building will be minimised and there will be no adverse effect on its intrinsic significance.
- 3.2.19 In general terms, the retention of the southern orchard also means the retention of a relatively well-established feature that will continue to contribute to a sense of place as part of the public open space within the scheme.
- 3.2.20 In addition to this, other elements of the general structure of the landscape of the Site will be incorporated into the development. The substantial hedged ditched boundary between parcels E and C/D (shown on the 1810 map) will be retained, as will the hedged boundaries between parcels B and C and between parcels C and D respectively.
- 3.2.21 There are clear opportunities to ensure that the detailed layout of the scheme can be developed so that it engages positively with the existing landscape and planting.
- 3.2.22 Similarly, the suggested traditional style and materials palette for the proposed new dwellings will be sensitive to the character and materials of the listed building and, more widely, to the local vernacular.
- 3.2.23 In summary, it is my view that the Site can be developed as illustrated while preserving the important setting of the listed building. While there will of course be some loss of the wider setting of open farmland surrounding the farmhouse,

which will alter its relationship with the land, the preservation of the key elements of its setting and the retention of open space to the south and south-west and the woodland to the north-east preserves a sense of its historic situation and the key elements that contribute to its significance and the ability to understand that significance. The associated repair and refurbishment of the listed building (which is in poor structural condition) and the reinstatement and conversion of the farm outbuildings (some of which are ruinous) as part of the overall development of the Site will also bring benefits to the listed building, securing for it a future in its optimum viable use.

3.3 The conservation area

Character and setting

- 3.1.8 The Oxford Canal Conservation Area is a linear canal-based conservation area which, in the section relevant to this assessment, includes only the canal and its towpath without extending to either side to include any other buildings or adjoining areas of land. The conservation area covers the route of the canal as it passes through Cherwell District and a small part of South Northamptonshire District near Aynho.
- 3.1.9 The Site lies roughly equidistant from two access points down onto the canal towpath, Yarnton Bridge to the north and King's Bridge to the south. The towpath (here little more than a muddy, uneven track through a sloping grass verge) is on the west side of the canal, separated from open fields by a generally low hedgerow incorporating some trees (**Plate 16**).
- 3.1.10 The approach from the north from Yarnton Bridge is characterised by housing developments on the east side, including the Garden City development which extends to the boundary with the Site. The canal-side is lined on this side with a vegetated bank and trees through which the houses are visible. In some places (for instance on Lock Crescent close to Kidlington Green Locks) the houses have a direct relationship with the canal, with rear gardens opening directly onto the canal-side, while other parts (including Croxford Gardens adjoining the Site boundary) have houses side-on to the canal and are fenced off from it (**Plates 17 & 18**).

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- 3.1.11 On the approach to the Site, the Croxford Gardens (Garden City) development is highly visible just beyond the canal bank which is, however, relatively heavily vegetated, including with mature trees (**Plates 18-20**). When level with the Site, parts of parcel E can be glimpsed through the trees in the winter months but even at this time of year these are only fleeting glimpses because of the overgrowth of ivy and other vegetation (**Plates 21 & 22**). These views are generally direct ones looking east across the canal, with the Site barely if at all visible in the more linear views along the canal (**Plate 23**). The tree-lined boundary generally provides a strong form of enclosure which channels the view in linear fashion along the canal, with the focal point of the Kidlington Green Locks to the north (**Plate 23** and see **Plate 24**).
- 3.1.12 The Council's Conservation Area Appraisal (October 2012) acknowledges that, in a linear canal-based conservation area, the natural viewpoints in the rural sections of canals are along the canal itself, often framed by a hedge to one side and open country on the other, with focal points usually provided by bridges and locks or a bend in the line of the cut. Where there is no hedge or woodland, the views over open countryside can be more extensive.
- 3.1.13 The section of the canal bordered by the Site falls within 'Route Assessment Area 19: Kidlington Green Lock to the Oxford By-pass' in the Appraisal. Of this section, the Appraisal says that, *'South of Kidlington Green lock is another long straight section of canal with fairly scrubby fields and overgrown hedges on both sides, but few houses. Beyond the offside fields, however, the Oxford bypass becomes visible and audible. Nevertheless, this is still rural rather than suburban in character... The terrain is much flatter in this area, where the Cherwell valley merges with that of the flat meadows of the Thames. The views are mainly to the offside, where there are breaks in the trees, and of large open fields with the earthworks and bridgeworks of the by-pass visible in the background. Beyond the hedge on the towpath side, the railway gradually rejoins the canal and the very limited views through the hedge are terminated by earthworks'*.
- 3.1.14 In fact, in the first part of this section, south of the mid-19th-century Kidlington Green Lock (which is statutorily listed at Grade II), it should be noted (as already described above) that the modern housing estates are highly visible from the canal-side.

3.1.15 On the mapping in the Character Appraisal, the section of canal alongside the Site rather falls between Route Assessment Areas 18 and 19, with nothing of note identified here specifically, except the 'important line of trees' along both sides of the canal, including a short stretch against the south-western corner of the Site.

3.1.16 No 'positive vistas' are identified that take in the Site. In Area 18, positive vistas are identified from the Yarnton Lane Bridge looking south-west and from further south-east along the canal looking south across fields. In Area 19, the positive vistas identified all take vantage points south of the Site, with only one looking north, but directed north-west across the fields west of the canal (see **Appendix 2** for the relevant extract from the Appraisal).

Potential impact

3.1.17 There is unlikely to be any visibility from the canal and conservation area of the proposed scheme – the development would be physically distant from the canal and screened by existing hedgerows and trees, including the trees and other vegetation lining the eastern side of the canal against parcel 3 and, further into the Site, the substantial hedgerow and trees dividing parcel E from parcels B, C and D. If there are any glimpses of development in parcels B and C, it would be seen in context with the existing Garden City development rather than as isolated new development in a rural setting.

3.1.18 Even where glimpses of the proposed development are available, this will have no impact on the existing character of the canal at this point, which is mixed; open land of rural character lies to the west (albeit with the interloper of a large solar farm opposite the Stratfield Brake sports grounds and part of the Site) with, on the east, a mix of suburban development with pockets of interspersed semi-rural character bounded by major roads on the way into north Oxford.

3.1.19 The existing boundaries to the canal will remain unchanged and there will be no intrusion of built form into the general sense of openness to either side in the linear vistas available up and down the canal.

3.1.20 The possibility of a connection from the Site to a new bridge over the canal represents an opportunity to connect the existing and new residential areas with the canal towpath and to encourage an increased positive engagement with the canal and thus an appreciation of its history and recreational benefits. This would represent a benefit to the conservation area, helping to better reveal the significance of the canal.

4.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

- 4.1 This report has assessed the potential heritage impact (in relation to the historic built environment) of the proposed outline residential development of a Site at Stratfield Farm, Kidlington.
- 4.2 The Site contains the Grade II listed Stratfield Farmhouse and adjoins the Oxford Canal Conservation Area.
- 4.3 This report has therefore considered the potential impact of the development of the Site, as set out in an illustrative masterplan, on the significance of the listed building and on the character and appearance of the conservation area through developing within their physical settings. It has concluded that the development of the Site can be achieved without significant impacts on these heritage assets or their settings.
- 4.4 For all the reasons given in this report, I am therefore of the view that the development of the Site can be achieved while complying with the policies on conserving and enhancing the historic environment contained in the NPPF, relevant local planning policies and, most importantly of all, the statutory tests set by Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

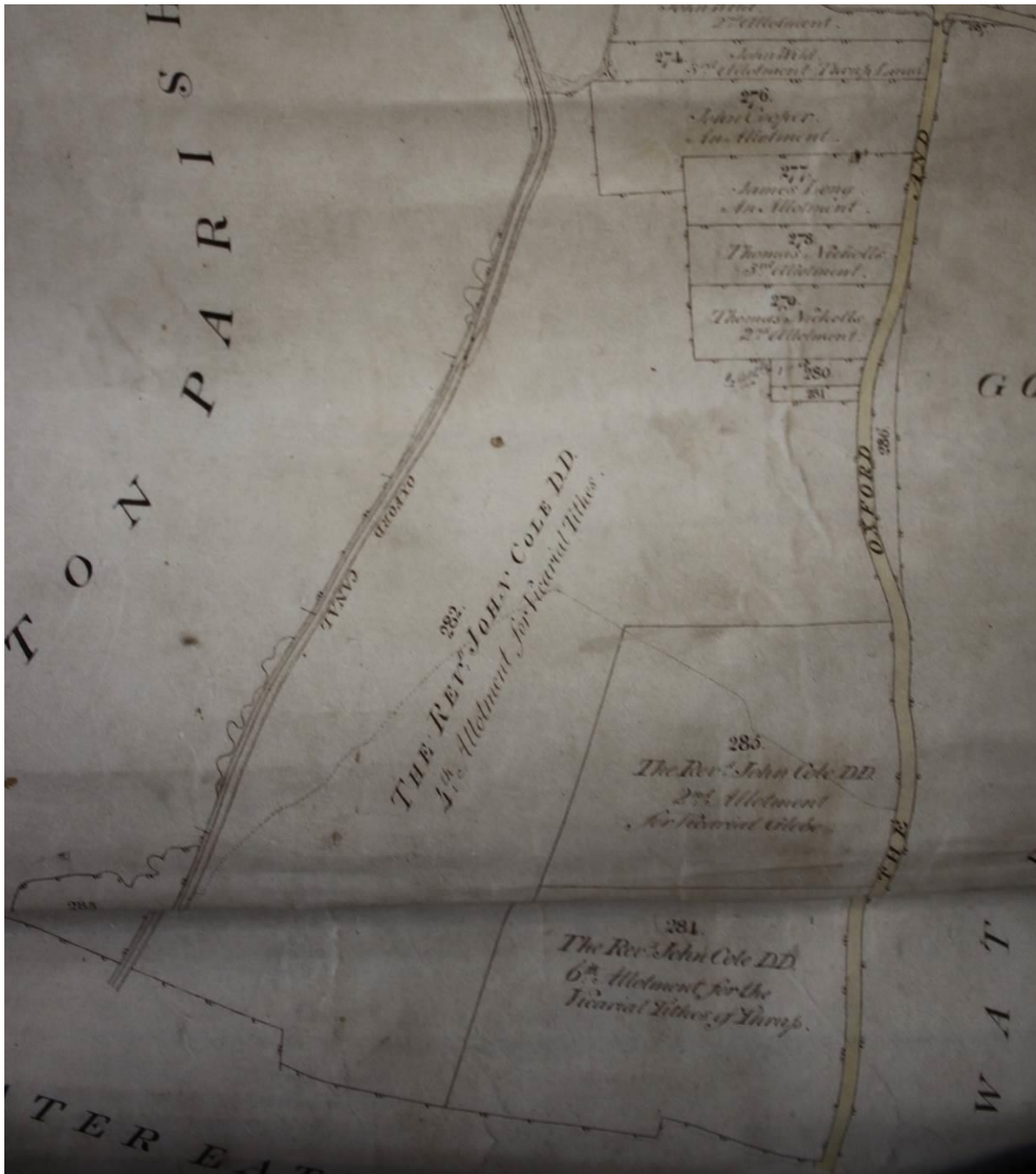


Fig.1: 1810 enclosure map

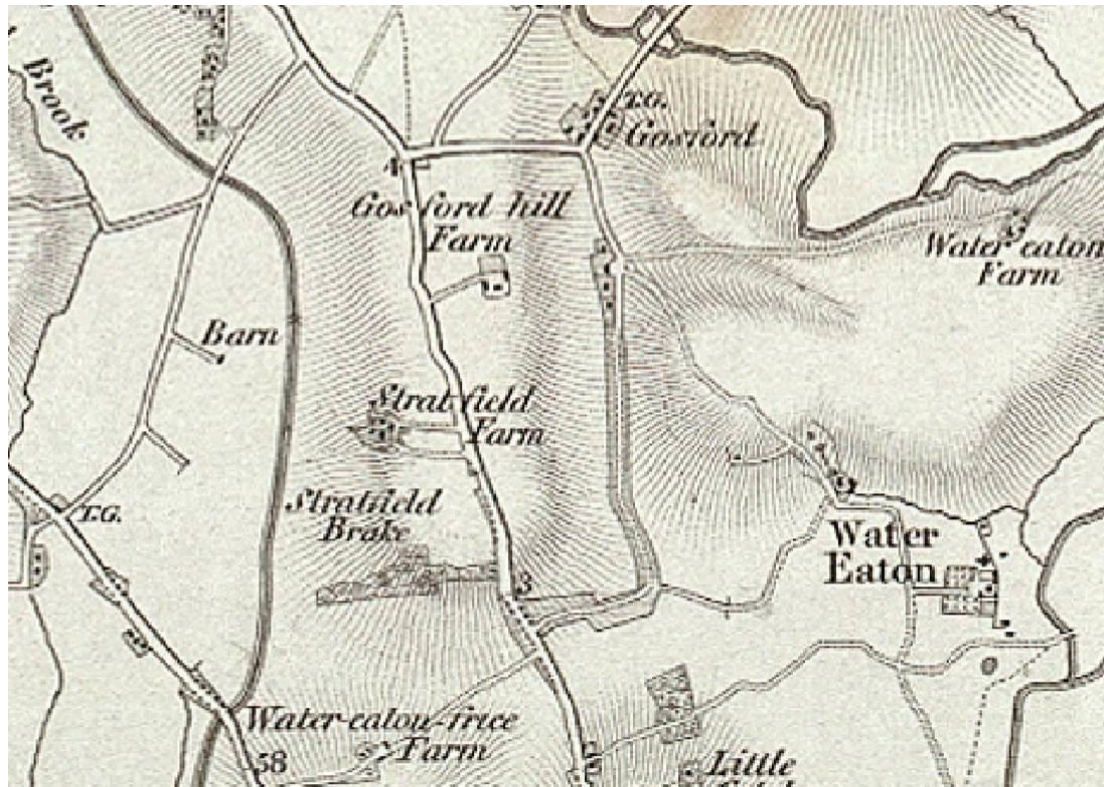


Fig.2: 1833 Old Series 1 inch to 1 mile OS map

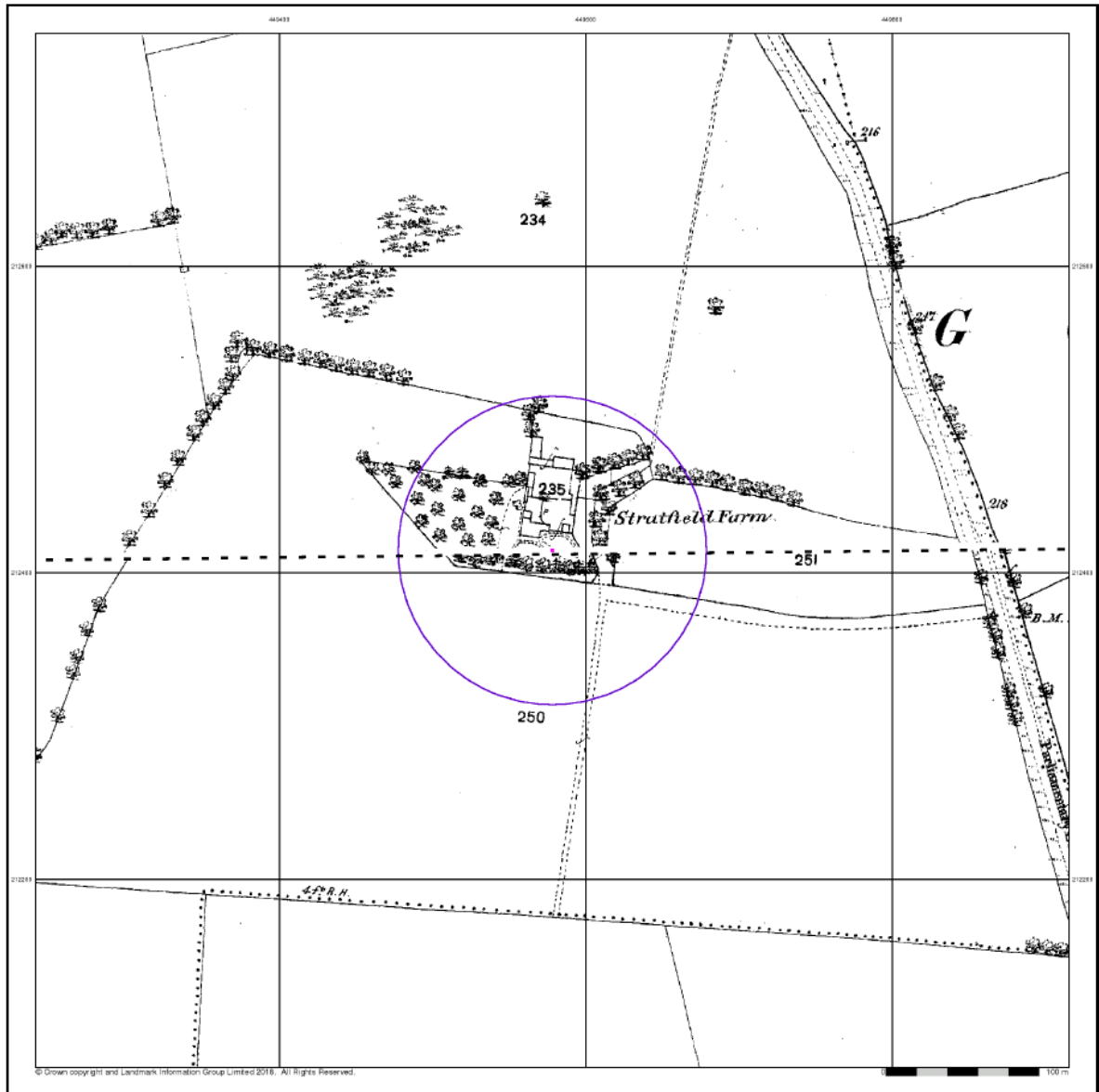


Fig.3: 1876 1:2500-scale OS map

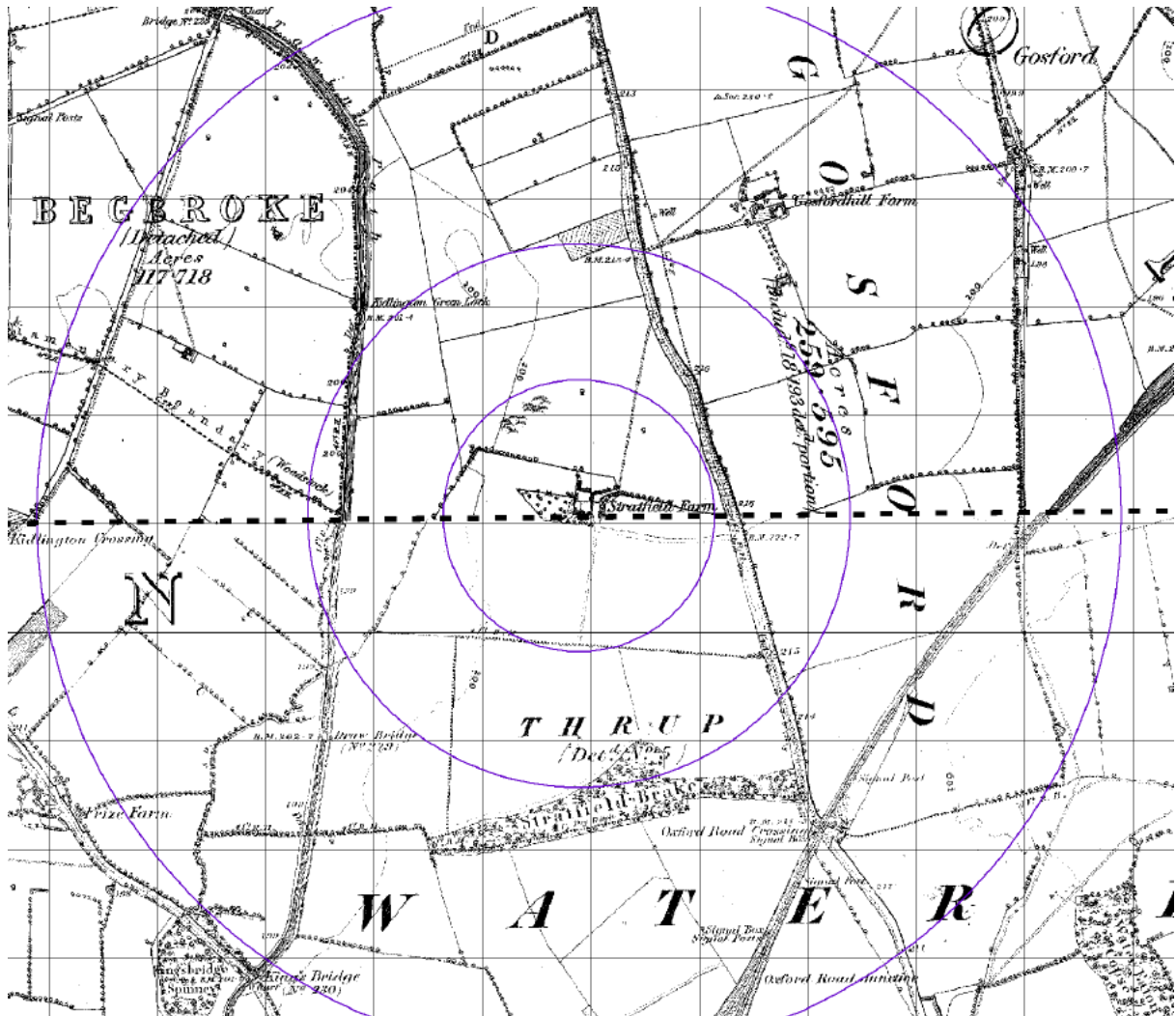


Fig.4: 1884-7 1:10,560-scale OS map

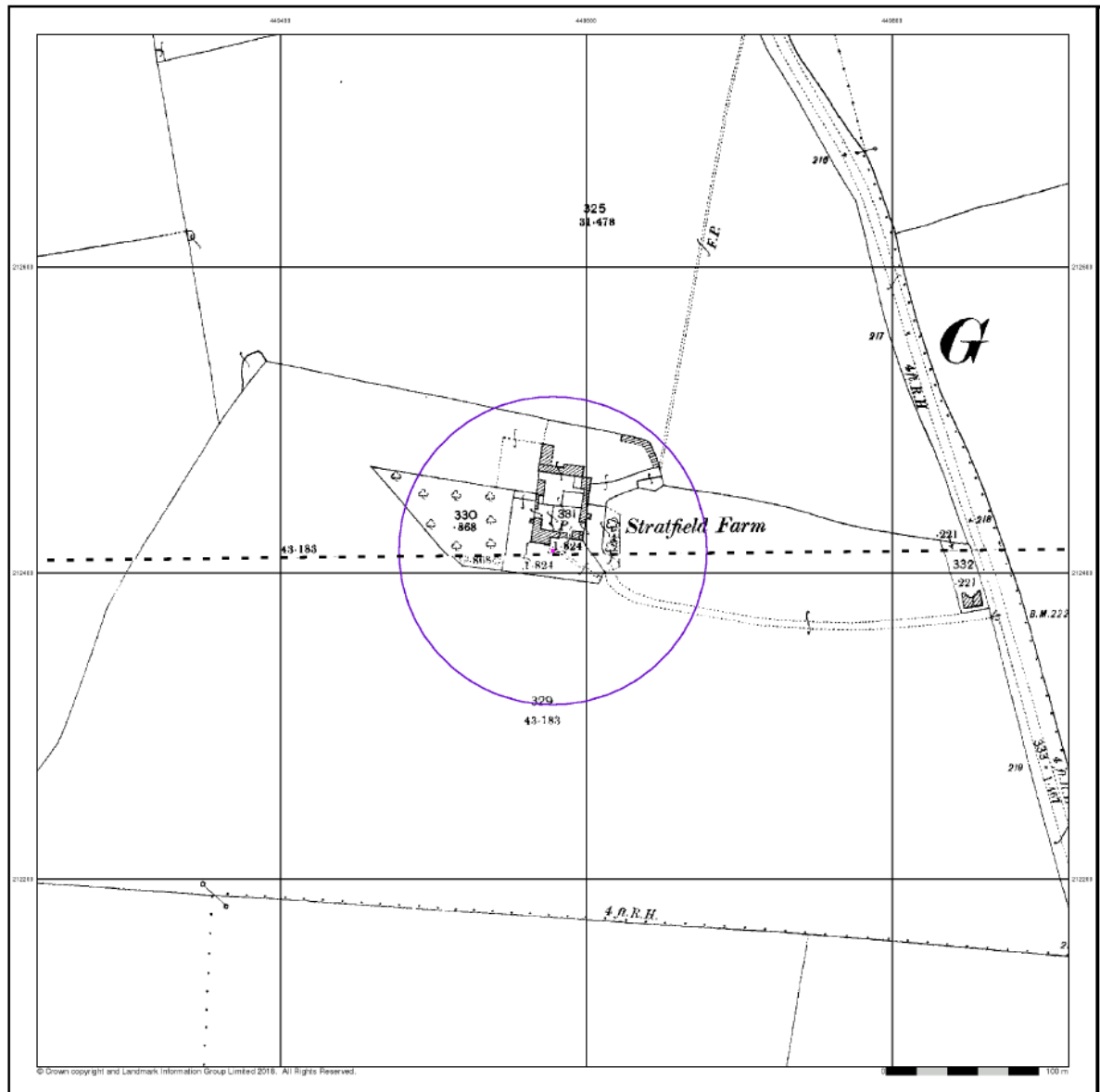


Fig.5: 1899 1:2500-scale OS map

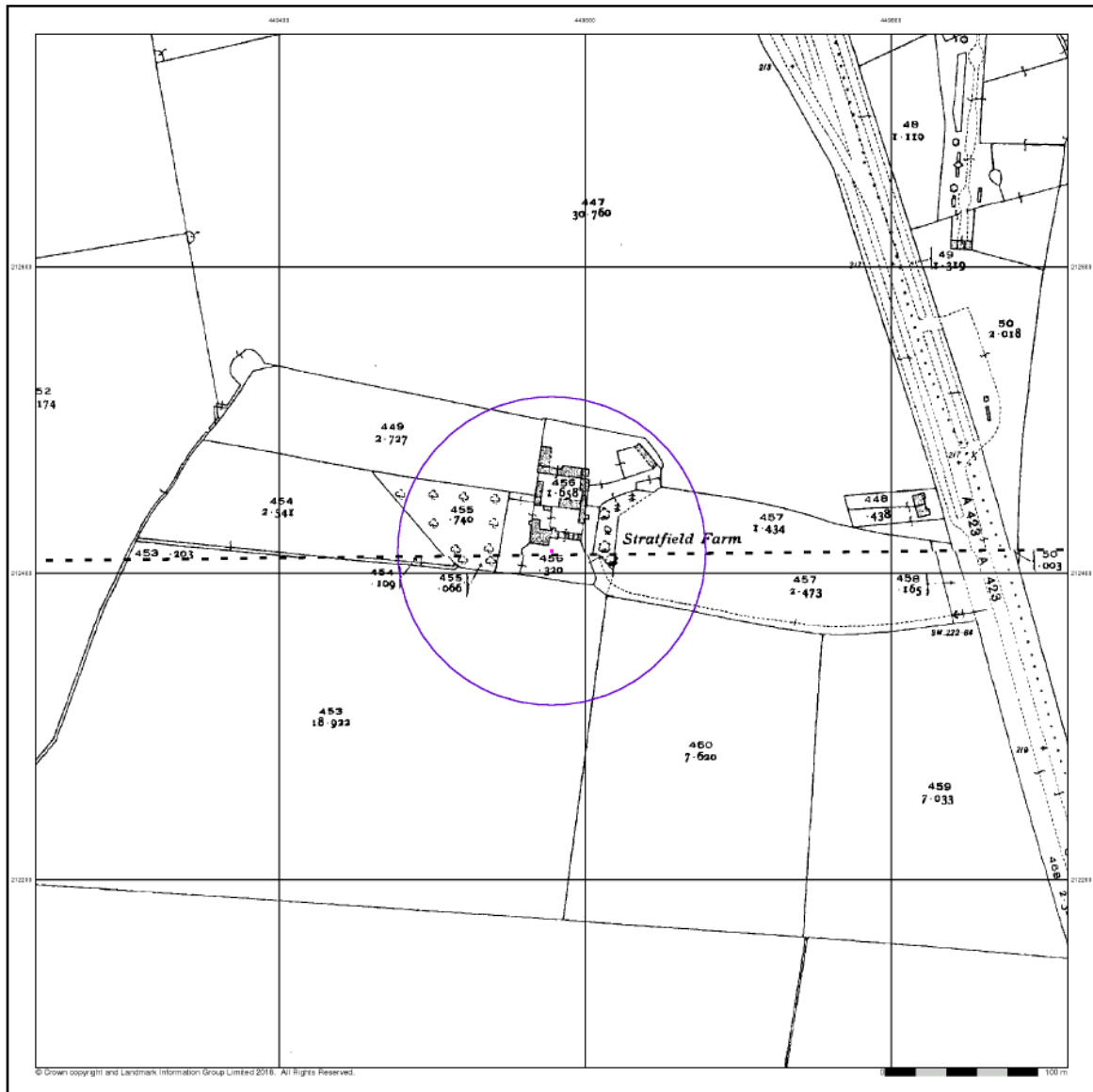


Fig.6: 1936 1:2500-scale OS map



Fig.7: 1947 1:10,560-scale OS aerial photograph

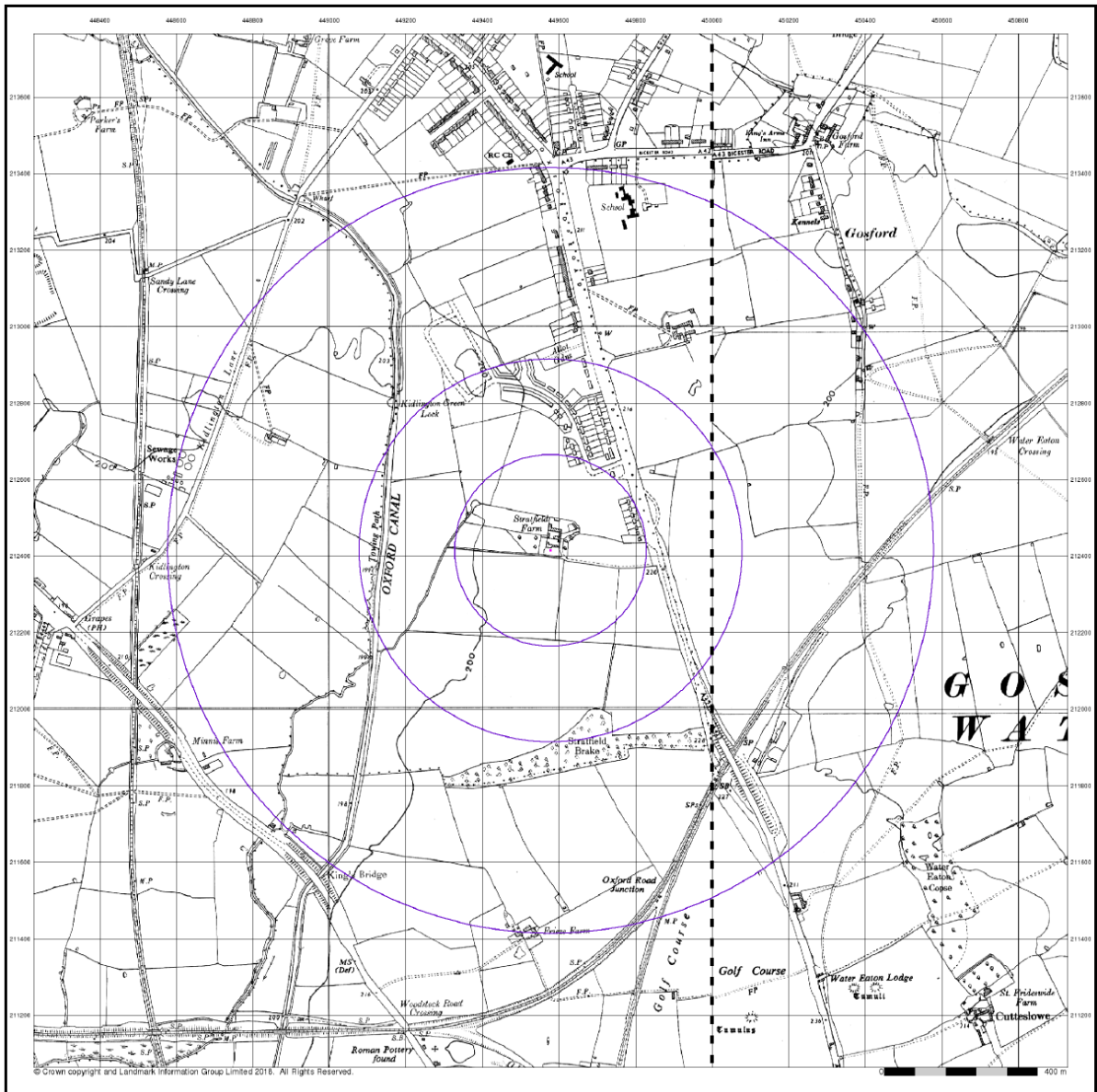


Fig.8: 1955 1:10,000-scale OS map

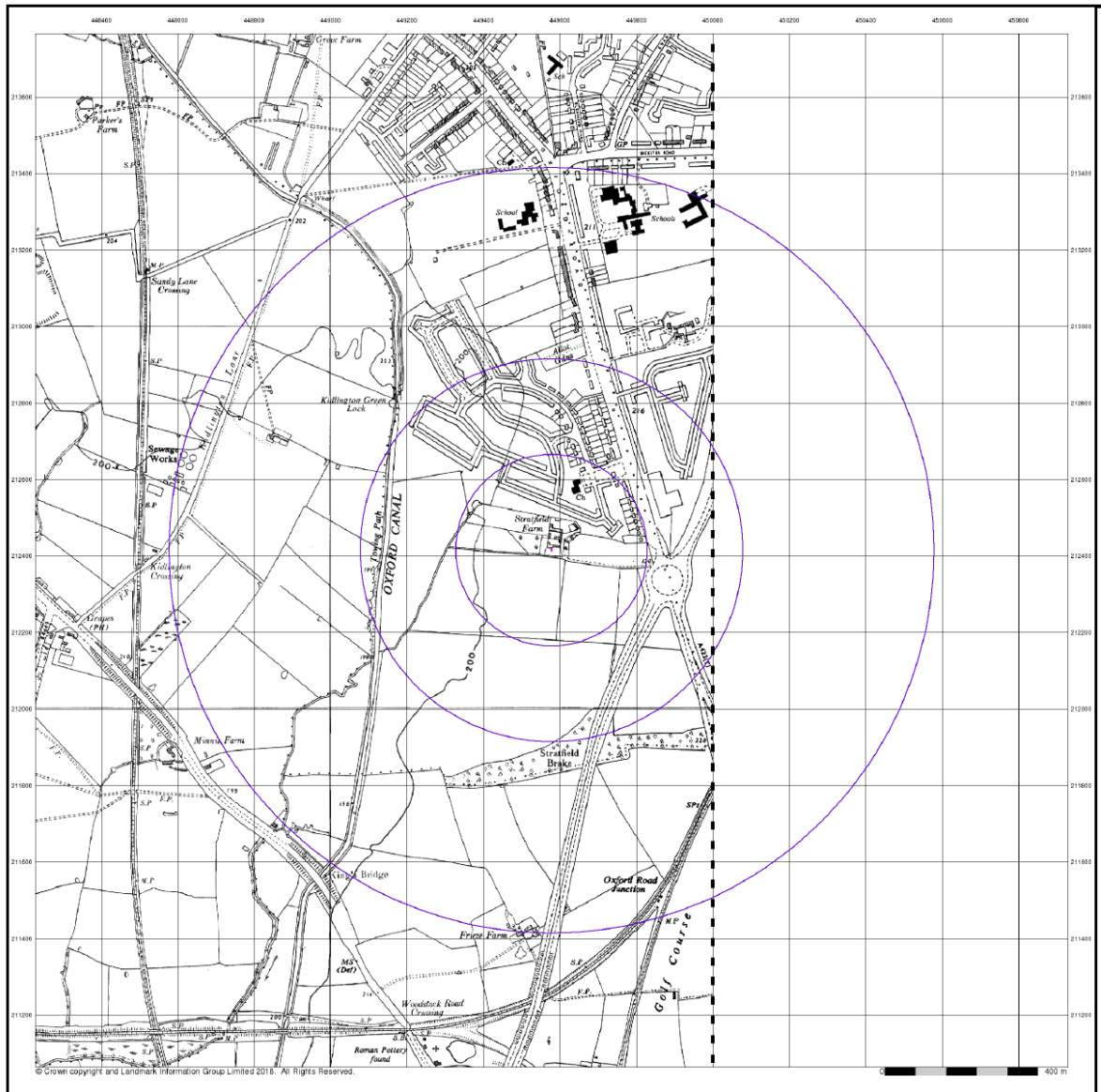


Fig.10: 1969 1:10,000-scale OS map

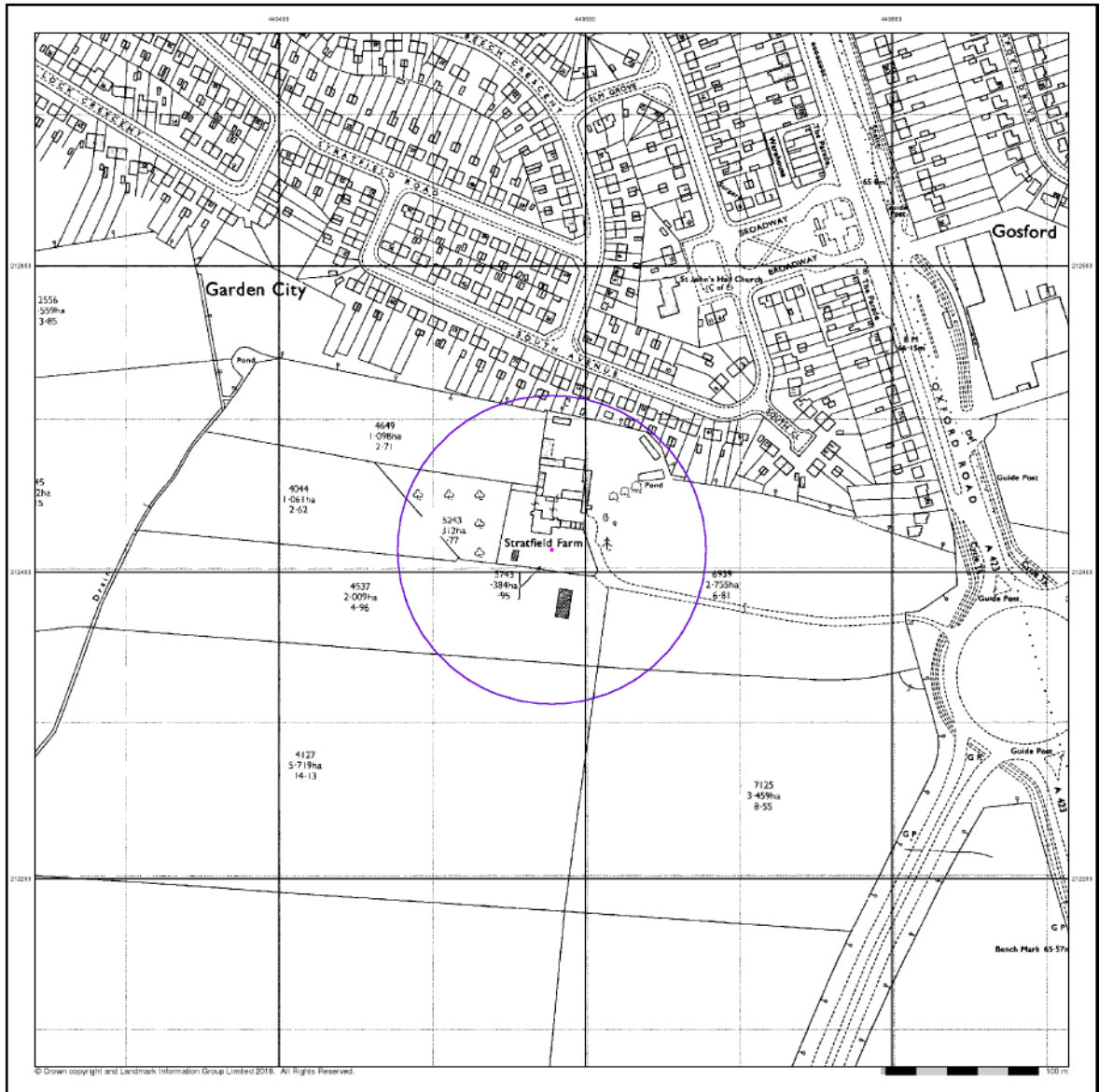


Fig.11: 1971 1:2500-scale OS map

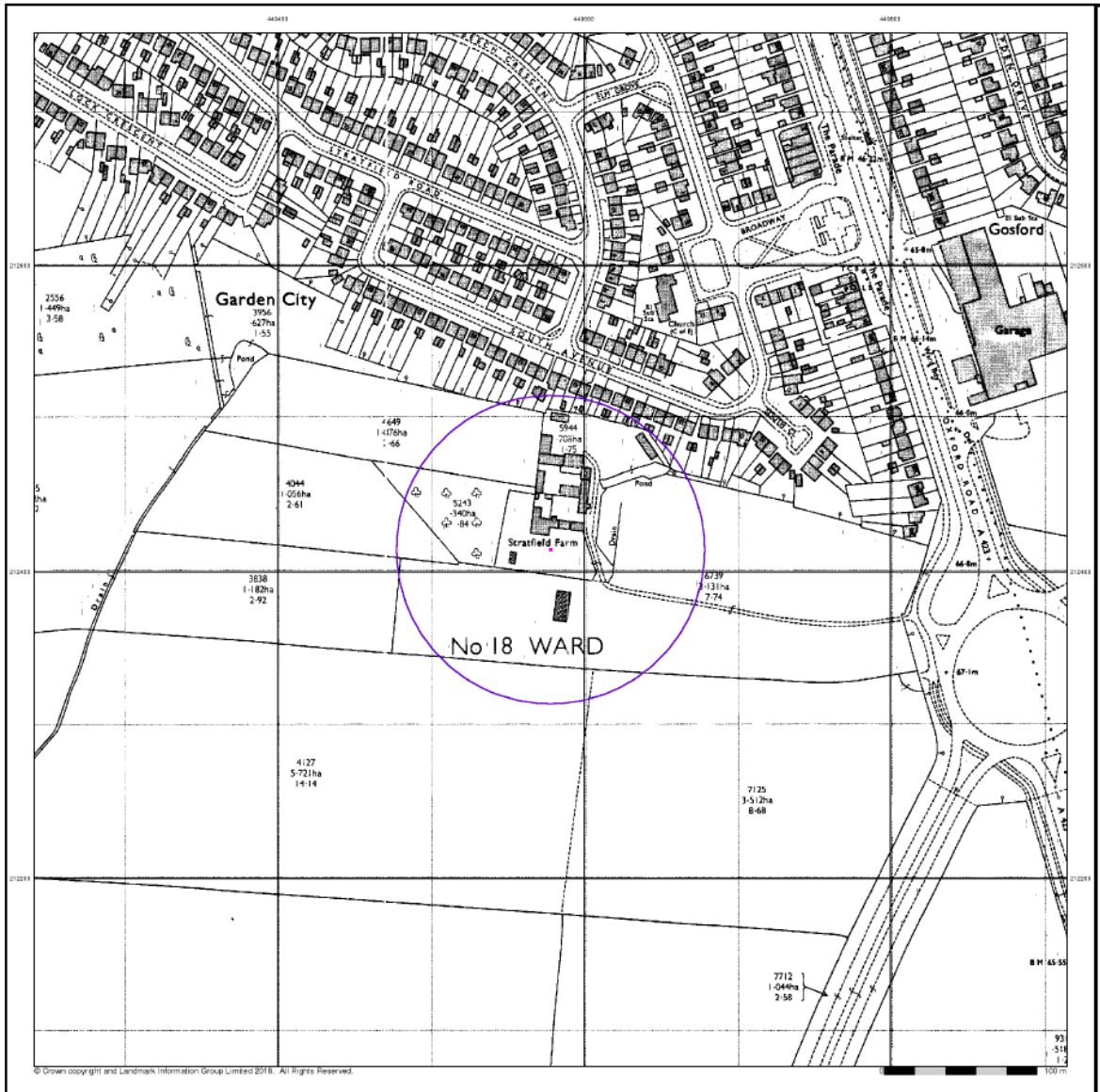


Fig.12: 1978 1:2500-scale OS map



Plate 1: View west from the existing Site entrance; the belt of trees terminating the view are those east of Stratfield Farm



Plate 2: Looking north past the farm (farm to left, tree plantation to right)



Plate 3: Looking west along the southern boundary of the farmhouse garden



Plate 4: Looking north-east from southern boundary of parcel D towards southern boundary of farmhouse garden and old orchard



Plate 5: Looking east from north-west corner of parcel C towards trees enclosing orchard west of farmhouse



Plate 6: The western tip of the old orchard enclosure, looking south-east



Plate 7: Looking south-west from north-east corner of parcel B, towards the northern boundary of the old orchard, defined by hedge and trees



Plate 8: Looking south across the later orchard from the southern boundary of the farmhouse garden



Plate 9: Looking east from north-west corner of parcel C towards northern boundary of Site, with Garden City development beyond



Plate 10: Looking north-west along informal footpath across parcel E, with Croxford Gardens houses along northern boundary of Site (trees along canal to left)



Plate 11: Looking north from footpath across parcel E towards northern boundary of Site and houses on Croxford Gardens



Plate 12: Looking north from entrance drive across parcel A to houses in Garden City (slip-road behind trees to right)



Plate 13: Looking north-west across parcel A to houses in Garden City



Plate 14: Looking north-east from western boundary of parcel A towards houses in Garden City



Plate 15: Looking south from western end of driveway by farmhouse towards southern boundary of Site and Stratfield Brake sports grounds infrastructure beyond



Plate 16: Looking south-west from the canal towpath close to Yarnton Bridge



Plate 17: Looking north along the canal towards Kidlington Green Locks where rear gardens extend down to the canal-side



Plate 18: The Garden City development, looking east from the canal



Plate 19: The Garden City development, looking south-east along the canal



Plate 20: Looking east towards the Garden City development, showing the most westerly house adjoining the Site's northern boundary



Plate 21: Glimpsed views east from the towpath into the Site



Plate 22: Glimpsed views north-east from the towpath into the Site



Plate 23: View north along the canal, with Site concealed behind trees to right



Plate 24: Looking north-west across parcel E of the Site towards tree-lined boundary against the canal

Appendix 1:
Aerial photograph showing parcels A-E



Appendix 2:
Extract from Oxford Canal Conservation Area Appraisal

7.18 Route Assessment Area 17: South of Langford Lane to Roundham Lock

7.18.1 To the south of a modern road bridge the setting of the canal becomes fairly rural again as far as Roundham Lock. There are overgrown shrubs and hedgerows on both sides and, for about the first time within the study area, the canal line is consistently straight for several quite long stretches.

7.18.2 Views are still limited, mainly due to the overgrowth on the offside, which also has the benefit of hiding modern urban developments further away from the canal, and the overgrown towpath hedge. Occasionally there are gaps in the hedge to allow views over quite scrubby fields.

7.18.3 By the surviving abutments of former lift bridge No.225 is a World War Two pill box on the offside; this presumably dates from 1940 and the only one actually on the line of the canal to survive.



Pillbox and bridge abutments



Roundham Lock

7.19 Route Assessment Area 18: Roundham Lock to Kidlington Green Lock

7.19.1 Evidently, until the second half of the 20th century, the next section as far as Kidlington Green Lock would have been very similar in character to Areas 17 and 19, and, indeed, large sections of the canal.



The canal sits between it's the open fields and modern housing; similarly to Banbury, this area sees great activity levels due to this heightened interaction

7.19.2 However, there have recently been major housing developments on the offside, and the canal becomes the boundary between modern housing estates on the east and the water meadows to the west, beyond which is the railway.

7.19.3 As there are very few crossing points, this boundary is almost impermeable and the differences between the two landscapes is quite marked. There are few opportunities for views through the towpath hedge. The views across to the housing show how near to the canal the land has been developed.



View west from Bullers Bridge across the fields

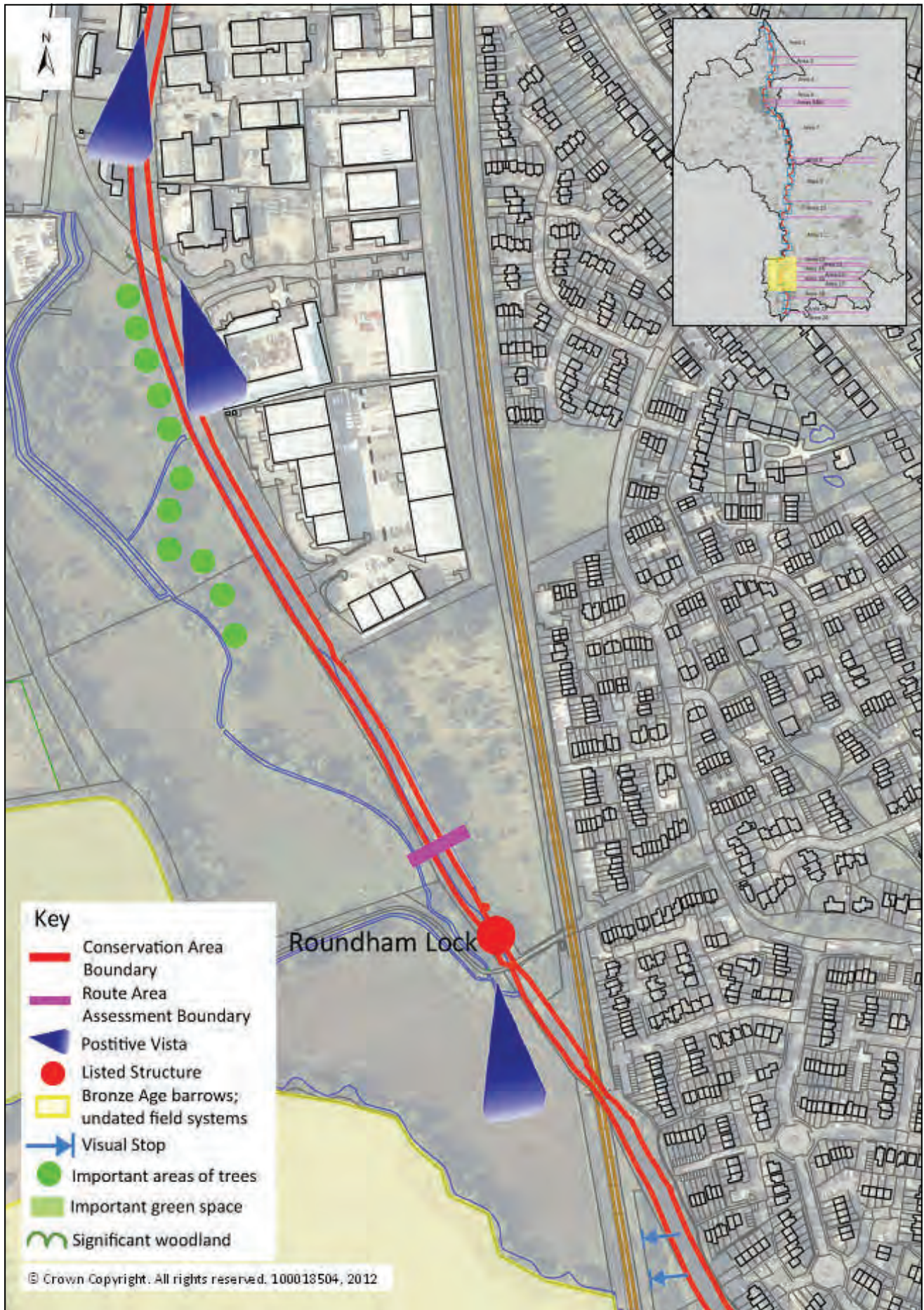


Fig. 45 Route Assessment Area 17 & 18: South of Langford Lane to Roundham Lock; Roundham Lock to Kidlington Green Lock



Fig. 46 Route Assessment Area 18: Roundham Lock to Kidlington Green Lock

7.20 Route Assessment Area 19: Kidlington Green Lock to the Oxford By-pass

7.20.1 South of Kidlington Green lock is another long straight section of canal with fairly scrubby fields and overgrown hedges on both sides, but few houses. Beyond the offside fields, however, the Oxford bypass becomes visible and audible. Nevertheless, this is still rural rather than suburban in character. Moored live-aboard boats appear on the towpath side above Duke's Lock.



Rural stretch south of Kidlington

7.20.2 The terrain is much flatter in this area, where the Cherwell valley merges with that of the flat meadows of the Thames. The views are mainly to the offside, where there are breaks in the trees, and of large open fields with the earthworks and bridgeworks of the by-pass visible in the background. Beyond the hedge on the towpath side, the railway gradually rejoins the canal and the very limited views through the hedge are terminated by earthworks.



King's Bridge



Junction with Duke's Cut

7.20.3 The vistas open out slightly to the south of Duke's Lock and the junction with the Duke's Cut, forming an attractive canalscape in its own right with the locks and the lock-keeper's cottage. However, most views are mainly of fields on the offside with 20th century earthworks and viaducts of roads as a back drop.



View from Bridge 231



Remains of King's Wharf

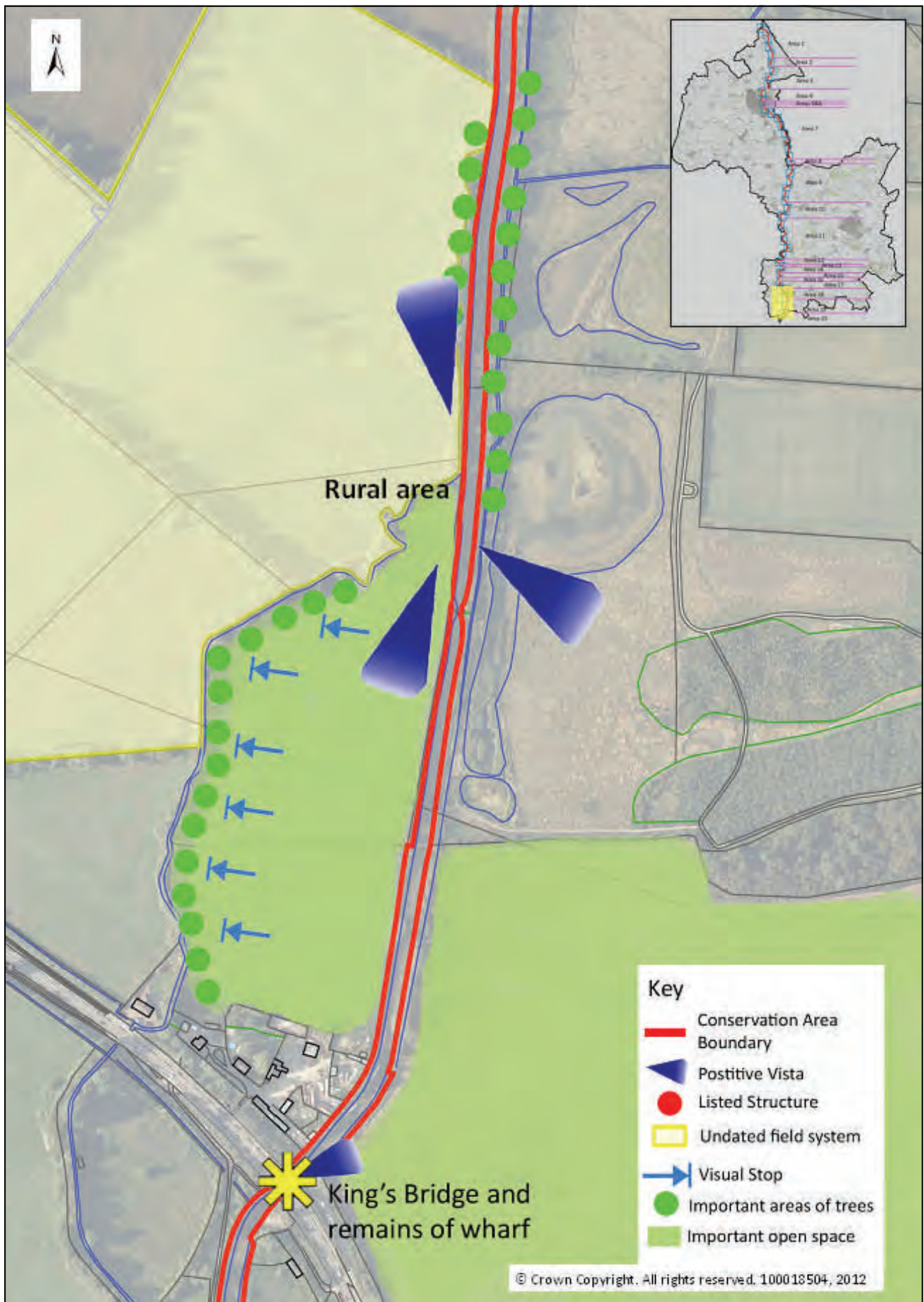


Fig. 47 Route Assessment Area 19: Oxford Bypass