



BLENHEIM ESTATE

HOMES

Land East of
Park View
Woodstock

Environmental Statement
Main Report

5 Cultural heritage

Introduction

- 5.1 This chapter considers the effects of the proposed development on the historic environment, covering designated and non-designated heritage assets such as archaeological remains, historic buildings and conservation areas, registered parks and gardens, and the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site (WHS). This chapter and its associated figures and appendices should be read in conjunction with chapter 2 (site description and proposed development), chapter 6 (landscape and visual effects) and the information submitted in support of the planning application.

Legislation and policy

- 5.2 National legislation and policy recognises the value and significance of cultural heritage, and the public interest in the preservation of particular assets, and sets out mechanisms to ensure that it is taken into account in planning decision-making. Sites and features of identified interest are protected by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended), and within the planning system through the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 5.3 Section 66(1) of the 1990 act states that, in considering whether to grant planning permission for development that affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or Secretary of State “*shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses*”. Section 72(1) in respect of conservation areas states that “*special attention*” shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. Case law has made it clear that it is necessary to give any harm to the setting of a listed building considerable importance and weight when making planning decisions.
- 5.4 National planning policy and guidance on conserving and enhancing the historic environment is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the online National Planning Practice Guidance, and the Good Practice Advice published by Historic England (GPA1 Local plan making, GPA2 Managing significance in decision-taking in the historic environment and GPA3 The setting of heritage assets). Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations (NPPF, paragraph 189).
- 5.5 The detailed policies in the NPPF on development management concern the need to clearly define the significance of any potentially affected site or area, the pre-application information requirements for any proposals, including for archaeological field evaluation, and the principles to be considered in determining any proposal for change potentially affecting heritage assets. There is an overall requirement to gather sufficient information to ensure an adequate understanding of the significance of an asset before any decisions affecting its future are made. The objective is to avoid or minimise conflict between a heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal (paragraph 195).

5.6 Paragraph 197 states that in determining planning applications:

“Local planning authorities should take account of:

- *The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- *The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- *The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.”*

5.7 *“Great weight”* should be given to the objective of conserving designated heritage assets, irrespective of the degree of harm, and local planning authorities are required to take the significance of an asset into account when considering proposals (paragraph 199). All harm requires *“clear and convincing justification”* (paragraph 200).

5.8 Paragraphs 201 and 202 define the judgement to be made in cases of harm to designated heritage assets, based on public benefits that could outweigh the harm, taking into account the weight to be given to conservation, and whether the conflict between the provision of such public benefits and heritage conservation is necessary. A key concept in the NPPF is proportionality; that the information required, efforts to preserve, and degree of public benefits necessary to justify any harm or loss of an asset should be based on an understanding of its significance.

5.9 The *National Design Guide: Planning practice guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places* (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2019) provides the following guidance at C2 in relation to context:

“Value heritage, local history and culture

45 When determining how a site may be developed, it is important to understand the history of how the place has evolved. The local sense of place and identity are shaped by local history, culture and heritage, and how these have influenced the built environment and wider landscape.

46 Sensitive re-use or adaptation adds to the richness and variety of a scheme and to its diversity of activities and users. It helps to integrate heritage into proposals in an environmentally sustainable way.

47 Well-designed places and buildings are influenced positively by: the history and heritage of the site, its surroundings and the wider area, including cultural influences; the significance and setting of heritage assets and any other specific features that merit conserving and enhancing; the local vernacular, including historical building typologies such as the terrace, town house, mews, villa or mansion block, the treatment of façades, characteristic materials and details – see Identity.”

5.10 The setting of an asset is not a heritage asset or a designation in itself, and its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset and its appreciation. The approach to identifying those heritage assets likely to

be affected by a development proposal is given in the guidance by Historic England, which states that *“The setting of a heritage asset is ‘the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced’ (NPPF, Annex 2: Glossary). Where that experience is capable of being affected by a proposed development (in any way) then the proposed development can be said to affect the setting of that asset.”* (GPA3, paragraph 20). The guidance notes the differing capacity of the setting of assets to accommodate change without harm to their significance or the ability to appreciate it (paragraph 17). The guidance aims for a consistent approach to the assessment of setting and the range of historic, visual and functional relationships that can define the contribution of adjoining land to the significance of any single asset or group of assets. These include physical attributes and perceptual values, depending on the nature of an asset and its past and present surroundings. Potentially significant views can be deliberately designed or incidental, or the result of later changes.

Local planning policy

- 5.11 The local planning policy in relation to heritage assets is provided the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) adopted July 2015, and the saved policies of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996. Policy ESD 15: The Character of the Built and Historic Environment, of the 2015 local plan states:

“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 will be essential.

New development should:

- *Respect 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.*
- *Preserve, sustain and enhance designated and non-designated ‘heritage assets’ (as defined in the NPPF) including features, archaeology, areas and their settings, and ensure new development is sensitively sited and integrated. Regeneration proposals that make sensitive use of heritage assets, particularly where these bring redundant or under used buildings and areas into appropriate use will be encouraged.*
- *Respect the traditional pattern of routes, spaces, blocks, plots, enclosures and the form, scale and massing of buildings.*
- *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.*
- *Demonstrate a holistic approach to the design of the public realm following the principles set out in the manual for streets.”*

- 5.12 Part of the study area falls within West Oxfordshire district. The relevant section of the West Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan 2031, adopted September 2018, considering heritage states that *“The Council’s aim [is] to conserve and*

enhance the historic environment and local distinctiveness, and to positively manage change.” Policy EH9: Historic environment states that *“All development proposals should conserve and/ or enhance the special character, appearance and distinctiveness of West Oxfordshire’s historic environment”* and lists requirements for the information to be provided about heritage assets, including archaeological survey, and the need to avoid or minimise any adverse effects.

- 5.13 Other policies on specific aspects of the historic environment are policy EH13 on development potentially affecting the historic character of the landscape or townscape, and policy EW9 on the WHS, which states that:

“The exceptional cultural significance (Outstanding Universal Value) of the Blenheim World Heritage Site will be protected, promoted and conserved”.

- 5.14 The Woodstock conservation area designation covering the planned town of New Woodstock and Old Woodstock to the north was made in 1975. There is no published appraisal. The Bladon conservation area designation was made in 1990 and the appraisal was published in 2007. The designation boundary was extended to the north in 2017. The West Oxfordshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 2016 also includes a brief general section on conservation areas.

Blenheim Palace WHS

- 5.15 The Blenheim Palace WHS is inscribed under the UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and National Heritage 1972, which was ratified by the UK in 1984. As stated in the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (UNESCO, 2021) *“The Convention aims at the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of cultural and natural heritage of Outstanding Universal Value”* (paragraph 7). As a party to the World Heritage Convention, the UK recognises *“the collective interest of the international community to cooperate in the protection of this heritage.”* It has a responsibility to *“ensure the identification, nomination, protection, conservation, presentation, and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage found within [its] territory”*, and to *“integrate heritage protection into comprehensive planning programmes”* (paragraph 15).
- 5.16 The guidelines state at paragraph 96 that *“Protection and management of World Heritage properties should ensure that their Outstanding Universal Value, including the conditions of integrity and/or authenticity at the time of inscription, are sustained or enhanced over time”.*
- 5.17 In relation to the setting of a WHS, which may be one of the attributes that convey or express outstanding universal value (OUV), the guidelines refer specifically to the potential to establish buffer zones:

“For the purposes of effective protection of the nominated property, a buffer zone is an area surrounding the nominated property which has complementary legal and/or customary restrictions placed on its use and development to give an added layer of protection to the property. This should include the immediate setting of the nominated property, important views and other areas or

attributes that are functionally important as a support to the property and its protection” (paragraph 104).

National planning policy and guidance

- 5.18 WHSs are protected through the operation of the planning system, as stated in the online National Planning Practice Guidance: *Historic environment*:

“England protects its World Heritage Sites and their settings, including any buffer zones or equivalent, through the statutory designation process and through the planning system.

The Outstanding Universal Value of a World Heritage Site, set out in a Statement of Outstanding Universal Value, indicates its importance as a heritage asset of the highest significance to be taken into account by:

- the relevant authorities in plan-making, determining planning and related consent applications (including listed building consent, scheduled monument consent, development consent orders and Transport and Works Act Orders)

- and, where relevant, by the Secretary of State in determining such cases on appeal or following call -in

Effective management of World Heritage Sites involves the identification and promotion of positive change that will conserve and enhance their Outstanding Universal Value, authenticity, integrity and with the modification or mitigation of changes which have a negative impact on those values.”

(Paragraph: 026, reference ID: 18a-026-20190723, revision date: 23.07.19.)

- 5.19 The NPPG confirms that *“World Heritage Sites are defined as designated heritage assets in the National Planning Policy Framework”* (paragraph: 027, reference ID: 18a-027-20190723, revision date: 23.07.19).

The WHS management plan

- 5.20 The *Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site Revised Management Plan 2017 – 2027* was adopted in 2017¹. The management plan provides an outline of the historic development and principal phases of the designed landscape and reproduces the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SoOUV) and set of attributes that help to convey OUV that were adopted by UNESCO in 2013. It includes a Setting Study (as appendix III) and refers to the detailed Parkland Management Plan produced in 2014.

- 5.21 The management plan identifies a series of 32 management objectives for the WHS. The most relevant to this assessment are the objectives relating to the setting of the WHS:

¹ This was produced by the Blenheim Palace WHS Steering Group, which is made up of representatives from Blenheim Palace Senior Management Team, Department of Culture, Media and Sport, Historic England, ICOMOS-UK, Natural England, Oxfordshire County Council and West Oxfordshire District Council.

“Objective 7: Maintain the park wall and perimeter plantations as the boundary to the World Heritage Site, and as the physical historic boundary to the park.

Objective 8: Ensure that Blenheim Palace is adequately protected from development that is incompatible with the unique status and character of the World Heritage Site and national heritage assets.

Objective 9: Maintain a high quality environment for Blenheim Palace by promoting the highest possible standards of design, materials and execution during restoration and renovation, new development, and alterations to existing buildings, that may impact on the World Heritage Site and its OUV - both within the WHS boundary and within the setting.

Objective 10: Ensure that appropriate policies to protect the World Heritage Site are included in the draft West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031.”

Guidance

- 5.22 The ICOMOS *Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties* (2011) provides advice on evaluating the impacts of development on WHSs. It states in section 1, background, that *“World Heritage properties need to be seen as single entities that manifest OUV. Their OUV is reflected in a range of attributes, and in order to sustain OUV it is those attributes that need to be protected.”* It is emphasised that the assessment should be *“clearly and directly tied to the attributes of OUV”*.
- 5.23 On the setting of WHSs, the guidance states that *“Direct impacts can result in the physical loss of part or all of an attribute, and/or changes to its setting – the surroundings in which a place is experienced, its local context, embracing present and past relationships to the adjacent landscape”* (paragraph 5-3). The assessment of the impacts on setting also *“refers to perceptible visual and aural (noise) effects that can be appreciated at a given time”* (paragraph 5-5).
- 5.24 The guidance notes that change may be adverse or beneficial, and that both should be assessed. In relation to the need to balance harm and public benefits, paragraph 2-1-5 states that *“It is therefore also important to know who benefits from the proposed change and for what reasons”*, and paragraph 5-13 is explicit that, given the potential range of benefits and dis-benefits of development:
- “the question of who receives the benefits (or misses out through the benefits) is important. Often the property itself and the associated communities do not receive the benefits flowing from development. Financial consequences of the assessment are also important and often directly influence decisions. The analysis must reveal rather than disguise these complexities. The conservation of the property should be counted within the benefits of a project, so that projects that are supportive of conservation can be weighted more than those that do not.”*
- 5.25 This chapter includes the narrative of the development of Blenheim Park and description of the predicted effects on the designated assets and sections of the WHS that fall within the study area. The consideration of the potential effects in aggregate in relation to the OUV and the adopted attributes of the WHS is given

in the assessment in technical appendix C3. That has been based on the structure given in the ICOMOS guidance, based on scales of importance / sensitivity (Appendix 3A: Example Guide for Assessing Value), the levels of change (Appendix 3B: Example Guide for assessing magnitude of impact) and the effect on values, which is directly related to OUV.

Methodology

Introduction

- 5.26 The chapter assesses the cultural heritage resources of the site and its environs as they are identified through designation, the national or local archaeological record, documentary sources or other studies.
- 5.27 The Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by Oxfordshire County Council was consulted⁽²⁾ for information on the known archaeological features and designated assets within the site and a 1 km study area⁽³⁾. The recorded archaeological sites and features and previous investigations are shown in figure 5.1, figure 5.2 shows the designated and non-designated built heritage and historic landscape, and figure 5.3 shows the historic landscape characterisation (HLC) data. A series of historic OS maps from 1876-80 to 1979-81 are reproduced as figures 5.7a-d to illustrate change through time. The results of the geophysical survey of the site and the aerial photograph analysis undertaken in 2014 as part of a previous application are given in figures 5.8 and 5.9. The results of the subsequent archaeological investigation are shown on 5.10. A number of photographs of the site and the WHS taken in November 2021 form figure 5.11. The gazetteers in technical appendix C1 list the sites and built heritage in the study area and provide extracts from the HER and the National Heritage List for England. The adopted SoOUV and attributes for the WHS are reproduced in the assessment in technical appendix C3.
- 5.28 The archaeological interest of the site was evaluated as part of the previous application (application reference: 14/02004/OUT) and promotion through the Cherwell Local Plan, particularly in relation to the scheduled monument that falls within the site area. This is identified as a monument at risk, with extensive significant problems and currently declining condition.
- 5.29 The data sources consulted for the assessment are outlined in table 5.1.

² Data received by email 28 April 2022.

³ The study area used for the HER data on figure 5.1 extends 1 km from centre of the site; for the built heritage and WHS shown on figure 5.2 the study area extends to 1 km from the boundary to ensure all potential effects are covered.

Air Photo Services, 2014, Land at Shipton Road, Woodstock, Oxfordshire: Assessment of aerial photographs for archaeology
Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014, Standards and guidance for historic environment desk based assessments
Cherwell District Council, 2015, Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) adopted July 2015
English Heritage, 2008, Conservation principles – policies and guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment
Historic England, 2015, Good Practice Advice notes GPA1 Local plan making; GPA2 Managing significance in decision-taking in the historic environment
Historic England, 2017, GPA3 The setting of heritage assets
Historic England, 2017, Conservation principles for the sustainable management of the historic environment, consultation draft
Historic England, 2018, Roman Settlements: Introductions to Heritage Assets
Historic Landscape Management Ltd, 2017, Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site Revised Management Plan 2017-2027 and appendices (including Setting Study)
Historic Landscape Management Ltd, 2014, Blenheim Palace and Park, Parkland Management Plan
ICOMOS, 2011, Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2021, National Planning Policy Framework
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2019, Planning Practice Guidance (online)
Thames Valley Archaeological Services, 2014a, Land at Shipton Road, Woodstock, Oxfordshire: Geophysical survey (magnetic)
Thames Valley Archaeological Services, 2014b, Land at Shipton Road, Woodstock, Oxfordshire: Archaeological evaluation
UNESCO, 2021, Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention
West Oxfordshire District Council, 2007, Bladon conservation area appraisal and proposals for preservation and enhancement
West Oxfordshire District Council, 2016, West Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD
West Oxfordshire District Council, 2018, West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031
Websites www.british-history.ac.uk for historic background and documentary sources including Victoria County History http://list.historicengland.org.uk for the National Heritage List for England www.pastscape.org.uk/ for records in the Historic England Archives database www.pictureoxon.com Oxfordshire County Council History Centre photographic collections online archive
Table 5.1: References and data sources

5.30 This chapter makes use of the zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV), representative viewpoint photographs, and photowire visualisations produced for the landscape and visual effects assessment in chapter 6, figures 6.7 to 6.25. The methodology for the production of these images is outlined in technical appendix D. All photographs were taken from publicly accessible locations.

Scope of work

5.31 This assessment provides a description of the likely value, extent, state of preservation and potential significance of heritage assets within the site and the study area that could potentially be affected by the proposals. It includes consideration of all nationally and locally identified buildings and areas and their settings. The archaeological element of the study was undertaken with reference to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct and appropriate standards (revised 2014).

Scoping opinion

- 5.32 The EIA scoping report was issued to Cherwell District Council in December 2021 in support of an EIA scoping opinion request. Responses from consultees were received in January and February 2022. ICOMOS noted the need to reference the views from the A44 as it enters Woodstock, and that the assessment should cover views both to and from the WHS as a protected and designated landscape. The detailed comments from the Planning Archaeologist at Oxfordshire County Council (OCCA) agreed that this assessment is required to take account of the results of the 2014 evaluations in the context of the development proposals. Further information on the scoping process and responses can be found in chapter 3 and technical appendix A.
- 5.33 A formal request was made to Historic England for pre-application advice and the response received on 12 May 2022 is appended to this chapter as technical appendix C2. This related primarily to the scheduled monument and related archaeological remains, but also gave advice on the WHS and registered park and garden and the Woodstock conservation area.

Limitations of the study

- 5.34 The conclusions of this assessment are limited by the level of detail about the development included in the outline planning application. The proposals for the site are described in chapter 2 of this ES and the parameters for the EIA are shown in figures 2.2a to 2.2e. Additional information on the design rationale for the overall development and the likely appearance of the buildings and landscape areas is provided in the design and access statement. This also includes illustrative material showing the form the development could take.
- 5.35 Although the application is in outline, there is sufficient information about the development to enable a properly informed judgement to be made about the likely effects on the designated and non-designated heritage assets that are identified in this assessment.

Impact assessment

- 5.36 The definitions of the importance or sensitivity of the heritage assets that may be affected by the proposed development, and the magnitude or scale of the predicted change, are shown on figures 5.4 and 5.5 respectively. The generic definitions of the degree of the potential effects can then be generated by feeding the results into the degree of effect matrix (figure 5.6). Effects of moderate degree and above are classed as significant effects for the purposes of the EIA. Chapter 3 explains the assessment methodology used throughout this ES. The assessment in this chapter is a qualitative one, and the evaluation of significance is ultimately a matter of professional judgement.
- 5.37 This chapter first makes an assessment of the components, qualities and level of importance or value of all heritage assets identified within the chosen study area, and the contribution to their significance made by their settings. The contribution of the surroundings in which an asset is experienced and the range of historic, functional or visual relationships, as evident in both physical attributes and perceptual values, to the significance of any single asset or group of assets will depend on the nature of the asset and its past and present setting. The

importance of the setting of an asset, or of particular views or vistas (both deliberately designed, and the result of incidental or fortuitous changes over time) to its significance, and to how it is understood and appreciated, can therefore vary greatly.

- 5.38 The assessment of value, coupled with reference to national and local legislation, relevant policy statements and best professional practice, allows a judgement to be made of the significance of the asset and its sensitivity as a receptor. The focus is the inherent value and importance of the historic asset itself, which is clearly separated in the assessment from any public amenity value particular sites may have, or potential contribution to tourism or other interests.
- 5.39 The judgement of the magnitude of change likely to occur is based on the available information on the attributes of the proposed development; for example, immediate changes such as ground disturbance for site preparation and construction, the landtake and the removal of existing structures, routes or trees; changes to drainage and land form, or the addition of new structures and transport networks; and changes to views of, from or across heritage features, or to perceptions of their priority in the landscape. The likely effects of a development on the settings of heritage assets depend primarily on the fundamental characteristics of the development, although detailed design can also have an influence.
- 5.40 Guidance produced by Historic England provides advice on a consistent framework for the assessment of the effects of development on heritage assets and their settings. In relation to the staged approach given in the guidance, the assessment in this chapter encompasses the identification of assets that may be affected, of the contribution of setting to the value of those assets, the description of the attributes of the proposed development and the assessment of likely significant effects.
- 5.41 The methodology relating to the assessment of potential effects on the WHS and the specific guidance from ICOMOS is given in technical appendix C3.

Baseline

- 5.42 The scheduled monument at the western edge of the site (Blenheim Villa, a Roman villa and associated field system 200 m north east of Little Cote, ref. 1021367, see figure 5.1) was the subject of several phases of assessment as part of the previous application and local plan promotion, and the agreement of an approach to its removal from the risk register (see the Historic England pre-application advice in technical appendix C2). The information has been updated as necessary, principally to take account of the subsequent archaeological surveys.

Geology

- 5.43 Geology and topography can provide an indication of the suitability for early human settlement and of former ground levels, which might have implications on the potential for archaeological survival.

- 5.44 The majority of the site is located on Cornbrash geology, but the south western portion is mapped as being Forest marble (clay with limestone). The site lies at a height of c.90 m AOD, sloping from west to east.

The heritage resource

- 5.45 The evidence is presented in chronological order in broadly accepted chronological periods such as Palaeolithic–Neolithic. The HER data provided by Oxfordshire County Council list 21 non-designated archaeological sites or features within the study area, three of which lie within the site boundary (figure 5.1). The data also record the previous phases of archaeological investigation at the site. The scheduled area of the Roman villa within the site extends to 2.29 hectares on the south west. Beyond the site the closest designated assets are the grade II listed park wall of Blenheim Park registered park and garden (RPG) and WHS, which at its closest is c.33 m away across the A44 Oxford Road.

Prehistoric

- 5.46 The earliest archaeological records in the study area are for three flint scatters, two of which were revealed through systematic fieldwalking by Oxford Archaeology on the route of the Woodstock Bypass road corridor in 1992 (TOR2, TOR3) and the third found during fieldwalking near Sansom's Lane on the west of the site (TOR6). A total of eight flint flakes, a flint core, a microlith and a scraper were found during the 1992 evaluation, with all the late prehistoric artefacts indicative of general activity as opposed to settlement evidence.
- 5.47 The wider landscape contains attributes such as the confluence of two River Thames tributaries (the Evenlode and Glyme) that would have theoretically made the area around Woodstock attractive for prehistoric settlers, but there are relatively few records in the study area from the prehistoric period. Some Bronze Age activity is possibly indicated by the remains of a disc barrow monument c.30 m in diameter recorded in Campsfield Wood to the south of the site (TOR6), but as there is no marking for a '*tumuli*' on the first edition Ordnance Survey map (see figure 5.7a) this feature may well be an ornamental landscape feature.
- 5.48 Prior to the residential development immediately to the west at Park View, focussed excavation by Cotswold Archaeology (EV8) identified three Iron Age ring ditches, a boundary ditch and medieval / post-medieval furrows, along with a highly corroded, plough damaged Yeltham type Bronze Age shield recovered from a shallow pit (TOR13).
- 5.49 A number of ditches and pits were evaluated by Cotswold Archaeology in 2019 on land north of Shipton Road to the north of the site (EV9) to investigate probable archaeology identified in a preceding geophysical survey by AOC Archaeology in 2018 (EV10). A late prehistoric / Roman rectilinear enclosure with a possible well and a cremation burial were revealed, along with c.60 sherds of prehistoric and Roman pottery (TOR14). These related to a settlement focus that was not confirmed by the evaluation and may have suffered truncation by modern ploughing of the field parcel.

Roman

- 5.50 The study area comes to prominence in the Romano-British period, as Akeman Street, the road between the towns of Alchester (south of Bicester) and Cirencester, passed to the north of the study area, with roadside settlements and countryside villas recorded close to its alignment.
- 5.51 The site of Blenheim Roman Villa and field system scheduled monument (TOR17) lies on the south west side of the site. A site of such significance within close proximity warrants detailed description for its designation information, as set out in Historic England's national heritage list⁴:

"The site of the villa can be seen from a distance as a low mound outlined against the northern boundary of the field. It was first identified by aerial photography in the summer of 1971, when the buried stone walls and surrounding enclosure ditches showed clearly as cropmarks. The outline and internal arrangement of rooms were clearly visible, and the plan and dimensions were subsequently confirmed by limited excavation in 1985 (Event 5), when the walls were traced by trial trenching. Pottery found in the course of excavation, and in the following year, when the field surface was systematically fieldwalked, was dated to the third and fourth centuries AD.

All the pottery was of local manufacture, except for one sherd of imported Samian ware. The house is a simple cottage form, aligned north east-south west, measuring 41.5m long by 10.8m wide. Its single range is made up of six rooms, with a corridor 2.7m wide on the south east side. The villa building lies within a ditched enclosure three sides of which can be seen on aerial photographs. Ditches also define a further six or seven fields and paddocks of varying size on the same alignment, which lie to the north of the villa building. The villa enclosure and its associated field system are visible over an area about 180m by 100m. Although the main concentration of tile, stone and pottery found in the course of fieldwalking lay over the area of the building, there was a thinner spread of pottery and some tile over the fields to the north: this was not of sufficient quantity to suggest the presence of further buildings, but is more likely to be the result of manuring from the villa's middens.

The villa and its estate were well placed for access to river and road transport to major centres of the region. Akeman Street, the road between the Roman towns of Cirencester and Alchester, lay only 3km to the north, with Alchester itself only 12km to the north east. It formed one of a number of villa estates extending along the tributaries of the Thames from the Windrush to the Cherwell, a pattern of Romanised settlement in contrast to the lower gravels of the Upper Thames Valley, an area of native villages and small farms. The third century saw a growth in numbers and an increase in size of some existing villas, and an apparent expansion of the villa estate economy. Although relatively small, particularly in comparison to some of the larger villas of the Cotswolds, it is comparable in size to the earlier phases of, for instance, Ditchley villa at Enstone."

- 5.52 Further detail on the arrangement and extent of this villa site was provided as a consequence of the evaluations undertaken for the 2014 application (EV6 & 7).

⁴ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1021367>.

The evaluation identified two areas of archaeological potential. The first of these is a linear zone aligned approximately north-south, which includes the scheduled monument and corresponds with the main spread of geophysical anomalies (see figure 5.8; shaded red on figure 5.10). Immediately adjacent to and south of this zone was an area with no clear geophysical anomalies. However, trenching here confirmed that this location also contained deposits of Roman date. A second area of geophysical anomalies, including a rectilinear arrangement orientated north from the scheduled villa area, was confirmed as being of Roman origin and included a crouched burial. A complex of geophysical anomalies in the north eastern corner of the site were revealed as a series of linear features of Late Iron Age and Romano-British date representing a focus of occupation (TOR5; shaded yellow on figure 5.10).

- 5.53 Also of note is the Roman settlement excavated in 1949 just north of Campsfield Farm (TOR7) and close to Rowel Brook on the edge of the southern portion of the study area. Another possible contemporary settlement with similar ditches, gullies and pits, but no datable finds, is recorded to the west of Campsfield Wood (TOR16).

Early medieval

- 5.54 The overall settlement pattern and land organisation across the study area were first established in the late Saxon period. Placenames reflect the divisions by geology and land use, showing the association with woodland in the west and north at Woodstock and Wootton, and the derivation from the open land dominated by sheep pastures to the east at Shipton (where some later names indicate a medieval shift to arable cultivation). Kidlington and Hensington both relate to individual farmsteads. The village and the large parish of Bladon take their name from the former name of the River Evenlode.
- 5.55 The study area is on the edge of the area of Wychwood Forest that was in use as a royal hunting ground by the late Saxon period. Based on a number of laws issued at Woodstock by Ethelred II (AD978-1016), the royal residence at Woodstock on the edge of the forest was in existence by the late 10th century, as part of a large estate administered from Wootton to the north.
- 5.56 Evidence of the Saxon network of roads based on the Roman reuse of older routes survives in the record of the route of *Heh Straet*, part of a south west route from the Witney ridgeway, in the boundary charter dated 1005 granting the estate at Shipton-on-Cherwell to the newly founded Benedictine Abbey at Eynsham. The route continues south towards Eynsham where it is named Port Street, again using the term that referred to a paved Roman road. This alignment remains as the parish (and district) boundary along the west side of the site (TOR20).
- 5.57 The HER data for the study area include no other records of the Anglo-Saxon period.

Historic development

- 5.58 The Domesday survey records Woodstock with Shotover, Stowford, Cornbury and Wychwood as part of the king's demesne forest and it is not described individually. Bladon is recorded with a large amount of woodland and two mills

on the river, and three manors were recorded in the separate township of Hensington. The entries for Shipton and for Kidlington both record large areas of pasture and meadows and no woodland.

- 5.59 The land organisation as recorded at Domesday was subject to disruption as a result of the expansion of the pre-Conquest royal estate to create a hunting lodge or manor and the enclosed deer park in the reign of Henry I, at the beginning of the 12th century. A central portion of the large parish of Bladon, which extended north to the Roman road at Akeman Street and south along the river valley, was taken into the enclosed, and walled, deer park created around the royal manor on the west side of the River Glyme, just within Wychwood Forest. The parkland to the north within the old royal estate at Wootton may have been already imparked before the 12th century phase of expansion. The park boundary was walled, probably at least partly in stone, and was repaired in 1194-5.
- 5.60 The manor was developed into a major royal residence in the later 12th century in the reign of Henry II, with later descriptions referring to a large aisled hall and to the circular chapel that had formed part of the 12th century manor, and there was a separate building group to the west that was referred to as Rosamunds. The deer park was also expanded, as land within Hensington township that had been granted to the Knights Templar by 1142 was swapped with other holdings to allow the enclosure of the land to the south east of the River Glyme within the deer park. This part of the medieval and later deer park was referred to as Hensgrove and retained a separate identity.
- 5.61 The form of the late Saxon and early medieval deer park on the edge of Wychwood Forest, of the manor centrally located on the River Glyme, the area to the south west predominantly wooded and the division created by the river valley, has remained the overall spatial framework of the parkland through the later phases of changes.
- 5.62 The early settlement area at Bladon is to the south, beyond the study area, forming a focus just off the road along the valley from Witney. A church was in existence by the 11th century. The second township at Hensington was a smaller agricultural hamlet on the road towards Banbury. To the north, Old Woodstock was part of Wootton, and grew up outside the east boundary of the deer park on the river crossing on the main Oxford to Stratford road. Its origins are uncertain, and it has been claimed as either the settlement that was displaced when the deer park was first enclosed or as an early phase before the formal founding of the borough to the south at the end of the 12th century. The area beyond the river crossing was distinguished by name from the planned town of New Woodstock by the late 13th century.
- 5.63 The new planned town on the edge of the deer park was probably founded soon after the death of Henry II. It was brought into the same administration as the other royal demesne towns in 1203, fees were charged to access the market by 1204, and it was referred to as a borough by 1230. The most common interpretation of its origins is that it was intended as accommodation for the court and overspill of officials and visitors from the royal manor. The land was transferred from the township of Hensington and the borough boundaries defined a broadly square area to the south of the causeway of the river crossing, determined on the west by the deer park boundary.

- 5.64 The layout of the principal roads of Park Street, High Street, Market Street and the central triangular market place were established in the first phase, which included the construction of the church on Park Street, the earliest fabric of which dates to the late 12th century. The church was a chapel of ease as Woodstock remained part of Bladon parish until the 18th century. The area along Oxford Road was a later addition that was in existence from the 13th century, laid out as a series of long, regular burgage plots and possibly extending the borough boundaries eastwards. An account dated 1279 stated that at that date there were around 140 houses in existence in the borough.
- 5.65 There is some evidence of the medieval agricultural landscape. The site area falls within the large area of land to the north west of Kidlington that was known as Campsfield, an area of permanent pasture that served as the sheep commons of Kidlington and Thrupp and Shipton parishes. It remained as such until formal parliamentary enclosure at the beginning of the 19th century.
- 5.66 Settlement at Bladon was restricted to the single nucleated village around the church. There is no clear evidence for the layout of the medieval open fields, but it is likely they were cultivated on a three-field rotation, and there were extensive areas of meadows along the river. There was also some short-lived assart land within the woodland. The organisation of the agricultural land was amended by later medieval additions to the deer park at Woodstock; there was a dispute over the annexation of land into the park in the 1320s. Hensington is known to have been farmed initially on a two-field pattern in the 12th and 13th centuries and later to a rotation across three fields. The extent of the medieval village remains legible in the survival of the earthworks of a hollow way, preserving one of the lanes of the village leading north off the main road, and including a section on a causeway between two fishponds served by a wide channel or leat to the west. The 1512 survey of one of the three estates records houses extending east up to the corner where Banbury Road turns sharply north, though by that date some house sites had already been converted to barns or stables.
- 5.67 There are no buildings with known medieval fabric in the study area and the HER records only two findspots of medieval date: some pottery found near the Saxon route (TOR1) and an iron arrowhead (TOR9) found to the north west of Oxford Road.
- 5.68 The manor house at Woodstock was in frequent use as one of the principal royal residences until the early 14th century, remaining in more occasional use into the 16th century. There is evidence of a loss of status of the manor as part of the network of royal estates by that time, though a payment was made in 1576 to construct the wall around a significant addition to the deer park to the south west, at Bladon Wood, formerly within Wychwood Forest, which became the area known as The Straights, now part of now High Park.
- 5.69 The only listed buildings of possible late 16th century date in the study area are on High Street at nos. 14 (LB14) and 30 (LB16).
- 5.70 There was renewed interest in the royal manor and frequent visits by the early Stuart monarchs, with expenditure on works to the buildings and particularly to the deer park. The main manor complex was extensively repaired, in 1608 and again in 1624, by which time the three-courtyard house occupied an area of three acres. A survey in 1609 described the deer park as comprising around

1,600 acres within the boundaries of Wychwood Forest and c.450 acres outside. There was a major reconstruction of the walls of the internal subdivisions within the park from 1621, and spending from 1633 on a scheme to merge the park to the west (named Queen's Park, now High Park), Hensgrove and the meadows on the River Glyme into a single enclosure for red deer.

- 5.71 Woodstock was a royal garrison during the Civil War, until it was surrendered after a siege in 1646. The manor was subdivided and sold between three owners during the Commonwealth period, two of whom demolished the buildings and sold the materials, only portions of the large complex remaining habitable. The survey in 1649 prior to the intended sale of the deer park described the division into four areas each provided with a lodge for the keeper: the two northern parks of more than 500 acres each, the 333 acres of the separately walled area at Hensgrove in the south east and the 255 acres of the wooded area of the Straights. At that date there were still c. 1,000 deer in the park. Other resources recorded in the survey were the c.150 acres of the park meadows along the Glyme valley from near Woodstock mill to the Bladon boundary, and the timber in the woodland concentrated in the southern part of the park at the Straights (Queen's Park) and Hensgrove.
- 5.72 A period of urban recovery and rebuilding of the town centre is evident in the number of listed buildings of 17th century date, showing the consistent use of coursed limestone rubble construction and with gables that are often obscured behind later fronts or remodelling. Those within the study area at the south end of the town are on High Street (LB10, LB11, LB17) and Oxford Street (LB18, LB20-22) leading to the infilled market square.
- 5.73 The process of the gradual desertion or shrinking of the hamlet of Hensington continued in the post-medieval period, as it was reduced to the linear group of the main farmsteads and their extensive courtyards of buildings on Banbury Road. The large area of meadow along the river valley to the north had been enclosed into small parcels by the late 16th century and piecemeal enclosure of the arable land by the dominant landowners was underway by the later 17th century. The extant farm buildings relate to this phase of consolidation of holdings; Hensington Farmhouse (LB32) is of late 17th century date, as is part of the barn range (LB30). The later stables (LB31) and the farmhouse to the east at no. 21-23 Banbury Road with the attached barn range (LB33) are of early 18th century date.
- 5.74 By the late 17th century the royal manor at Woodstock was largely neglected by the crown, descriptions referring to the buildings as in ruins, though a further addition to the deer park was made in 1660, of a small area of land to the west at Combe, and there were works to the meadows and plantations and to the lodges. Its primary role in the later century was for horse racing, across a four-mile course laid out in the open northern parkland.
- 5.75 The account here gives only a brief summary of the history of the development of the designed landscape at Blenheim Palace from the parliamentary grant in 1705 of the manor of Woodstock to John Churchill, 1st Duke of Marlborough. Work by John Vanbrugh on the new house on the river at a site opposite the old manor, and by Henry Wise, gardener to Queen Anne, began immediately after

the grant, funded by the crown until 1712, then paused before continuing into the later 1720s.

- 5.76 The layout and earthworks for the formal landscape by Wise included the new formal gardens to the east and west fronts of the house, the military-inspired parterre to the south front, the walled kitchen garden, the creation of the forest garden or wilderness at Hensgrove, and the avenues leading from the main axes of the house to the east and across the north park. Later additions in the 1720s were the formal canals on the river either side of the Grand Bridge and the rebuilding of the circuit of the enclosing park wall.
- 5.77 In the section of the park that falls within the study area, at Hensgrove, the existing mature trees of the deer park were reinforced by new planting of oaks and limes to create the formal forest garden or wilderness with paths radiating through the trees, which extended south to the new walled kitchen gardens established near the old Hensgrove Lodge. The buildings in the study area relating to this phase of the parkland are the walled garden of c.1710 (LB4), the sundial designed by Nicholas Hawksmoor (LB5) and the rebuilt park walls of 1720-29 (LB1) alongside the newly-turnpiked Oxford Road. The set of gatepiers designed by Hawksmoor for the new eastern entrance from Oxford Road were not installed in their final position as Hensington Gate (LB7, grade I) until the end of the 18th century because of difficulties acquiring the land.
- 5.78 The construction of Blenheim Palace and establishment of the monumental new landscape were a catalyst for development of the town. The study area includes the edge of the town centre at Oxford Street, which is a sequence of buildings of principally early 18th century date (LB17, LB21, LB24-28), and some high-status buildings incorporate features deliberately referencing the baroque style of Blenheim Palace, such as Hope House built in 1708 (LB23, grade II*).
- 5.79 The phase of major change by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown in the 1760s and 1770s is the main source of the international prominence of Blenheim as the English Versailles and the exemplar of the English landscape park style that was disseminated internationally. The changes included the creation of the lakes unifying the landscape around the Grand Bridge; the replacement of the formal gardens and parterre with lawns and naturalistic planting, allowing long views to the south towards Bladon; the simplification of the planting of the avenue and the extensive woodland boundary plantations. Brown was also responsible for the design of the buildings at Park Farm and High Lodge. The enclosure of the open fields at Bladon in 1767 allowed the southern extension of the park and creation of a further sinuous lake above the confluence of the rivers Glyme and Evenlode. The dense formal woodland at Hensgrove or Lower Park was retained by Brown.
- 5.80 The county maps published from the later 18th century⁵ show the developing landscape. The map by Thomas Jeffreys published in 1766 shows the walled outline of Blenheim Park, the boundary in the south on the pre-enclosure alignment to the north of the street at Bladon, just before the additional land was imparked. There is no clear depiction of the gardens and the Lower Park, which is shown only with outlines of the lines of trees; elsewhere the map shows the wooded High Park, the outline of the lake and new plantations by Brown on the

⁵ See https://www.oxfordshirehistory.org.uk/public/maps/county_maps.htm.

east boundary of the northern park, which is otherwise fairly open. Outside the park, the site area is part of the large area of the unenclosed sheep commons at Campsfield either side of the Oxford Road, extending west up to the old Saxon route. Two tollhouses and a milestone are shown to the north on the turnpike road to the town (TOR10-TOR12). The map by Richard Davis published in 1793/4 gives more detail of the park, showing the wide woodland belts on the park edges, and the dense woodland across Lower Park divided by a geometric pattern of paths. The new south park boundary is shown, along the road through Bladon.

- 5.81 The mapping of the surrounding land shows the clear division between the areas of recently enclosed fields to the north and south at Shipton and Bladon, and the unenclosed Campsfield and open fields to the east in the parish of Kidlington and Thrupp. The township at Hensington was already fully enclosed by 1753 when it became part of the Marlborough estate, and at that time was divided into three principal farms. The open fields at Shipton were enclosed in 1768, when the new farm was established at Cotmans, now Shipton Slade Farm (LB35), at the location of an older barn (LB34).
- 5.82 Within the town, Caroline Court (LB8) was constructed as almshouses in 1797 alongside the Hensington Gate at the main park entrance. The late 18th and early 19th century buildings, both newly constructed and refronting of older structures, form a group along Oxford Street and High Street (LB9, LB12-15, LB18, LB20, LB21, LB28). An example of the smaller form of cottages of late 18th century date (LB29) survives on Union Street, which was laid out across the open land of Common Acre in the late 18th century. The 19th century urban expansion of Woodstock outside the very tightly developed medieval town centre was all focused eastwards beyond the borough boundaries along Hensington Road and Banbury Road, which replaced an older route towards Banbury along the north east side of the river valley.
- 5.83 A process of land acquisitions by the Marlborough estate in the later 18th and early 19th century to assemble a large holding beyond the original 1705 grant included the land at Kidlington, which was enclosed in 1818. The former commons at Campsfield were divided into two large farms and a simplified layout of wide straight enclosure roads was laid out.
- 5.84 The work to the park into the early 19th century continued Brown's approach, with the addition of new classical temples and features across the park, largely the work of William Chambers, who also oversaw the re-erection of the Hawksmoor-designed gatepiers as Hensington Gate, and the reintroduction of flower gardens into the pleasure grounds to the south front. The major change to the Lower Park occurred after 1817 following the inheritance by the 5th duke, who initiated the large-scale removal of trees for sale as timber, amending the formal woodland garden at Lower Park to a more open parkland.
- 5.85 New buildings constructed in the park in mid-century are the replacement lodge at the gate on the south, Eagle Lodge (LB3), built in 1860, at the same time as the similar lodge on the northernmost edge of the park at Ditchley Gate. A larger lodge was also added to the group at the main entrance at Hensington Gate (LB6). In an indication of the changed character of the Lower Park, by 1860 the new foldyards at The Cowyards (LB2) had been built at the east, with direct access to the main road, probably on the site of an earlier building at the

location of a former carriage drive through the formal woods. The buildings were converted to office use in 2006. A 19th century stone-fronted icehouse to the north (HER1) was restored in 2014.

- 5.86 The OS map of the study area published in 1876-80 (figure 5.7a) shows the site divided into two large rectangular fields, with the new roads established at enclosure on the boundaries to the north and east. To the west, the Saxon route remains a strong boundary, though only the portion to the north beyond the site remains an open path. Part is occupied by a building named as Pest House, an isolation hospital for infectious diseases built in 1719. The approach to Woodstock on Oxford Road is bounded to the south by a continuous woodland plantation from the new Campsfield farm complex, connecting to Campsfield Wood and the park edge planting. Further sections enclose the area of Bladon Chains, which is outside the park. The Lower Park, or Little Park, is shown as open parkland with scattered trees, crossed by the major avenue of the south drive to Eagle Lodge and several routes converging on the double courtyard on the east edge, which is labelled as Home Farm. There are also several large pits or ponds shown in this area. To the south of the walled kitchen garden the former line of the old park edge remains as the parish boundary of Bladon. The northern edge of Bladon, which occupies the narrow band of land between the road and the park edge, appears on the map as Hensington, as does the group of farms on Banbury Road.
- 5.87 The estate dominance is evident in the later development of Bladon. The church was rebuilt in 1804, when the tower height was raised to emphasise the function in the designed view south for Blenheim and was largely rebuilt again in 1891. The school and school house were built in 1858, a row of estate cottages on Park Street by 1860 and 19 model cottages as a mix of semi-detached pairs and short terrace rows. The large complex of the Blenheim Home Farm marked the north edge of the village.
- 5.88 There was a further major phase of development of the designed landscape at Blenheim at the turn of the 20th century for the 9th duke, who inherited in 1892. Work included the reinterpretation and restoration of the elements of the early formal landscape, extensive tree planting and the creation of new formal gardens designed by Achille Duchene to the east and west of the house, creating the terraced Italian gardens and water gardens.
- 5.89 The OS map published in 1919-23 (figure 5.7b) shows a new isolation hospital at the north of the site and the loss of the central field boundary, as part of the simplification of the layout of the fields evident across the former Campsfield to the east. The woodland belts around the site margin had been established by 1898, connecting to Campsfield Wood, replacing the previous line along the road to the south. The edge of the parkland is also shown extending across Bladon Chain, which was provided with a new lodge at the corner. The courtyard at Cowyards is shown within a series of enclosed paddocks on the park edges, related to its use as part of a stud farm. The new Blenheim Home Farm is to the south, on the edge of Bladon. To the north of the site, the farmland is crossed by the branch line from Oxford, which opened in 1890, running parallel to Banbury Road to a railway station on the edge of the town (TOR21). The section of Hensington Road along the railway became a focus for some industrial development, including a glove factory, cattle pens and a saw mill, as well as the expansion of the housing area on the edge of the town.

- 5.90 The open farmland at Campsfield was part of the area of land purchased by Oxford City Council in order to establish an airfield, which opened as Oxford Municipal Aerodrome in 1935. It transferred to military use in 1938 and operated as RAF Kidlington through WWII. It is still operational as London Oxford Airport. The former location of a series of stanton air raid shelters is recorded on the north edge of the airfield (TOR15).
- 5.91 The expansion of the housing areas east of Woodstock accelerated from the 1930s, with the construction of the council houses at Bear Close around the cemetery, and ribbon development along Banbury Road and Shipton Road. After WWII housing development continued along Green Lane, Shipton Road and on the site of the demolished Hensington House, and in the 1960s and 1970s at Hensington Gate estate, at the site of the former workhouse on Banbury Road and at the former gasworks on the edge of the watermeadows to the north.
- 5.92 The 1950-55 OS map (figure 5.7c) shows the new housing areas to the east of Woodstock, including the new school on Shipton Road. There is an area of ribbon development to the south of the park on the approach to Bladon on Grove Road and six pairs of cottages are shown under construction to the north of Home Farm, with others around the disused quarry at Bladon Pits. To the south is the perimeter road, hangars and other structures on the edge of the airfield, alongside the widened Oxford Road. Blenheim Palace had been open to the public since 1950 but as yet no new facilities are visible. The 1979-81 edition (figure 5.7d) shows the car park at the walled gardens, which is in use as a garden centre, and the caravan park at Bladon Chains.
- 5.93 The early 18th century walled gardens now act as the second main focus of the parts of the park that are open to the public after the Palace itself. They are the site of one of the main car parks and a station on the miniature train route, and are in use as a café, exhibition space, the Butterfly House, Lavender Garden, the Marlborough Hedge Maze and adventure playground. The south drive past the walled gardens is the one-way route to the main vehicular exit at Eagle Lodge. A further pedestrian route loops around the Lower Park and past the enclosed paddocks at The Cowyards. The caravan park at Bladon Chains is accessed from the link road to the south.
- 5.94 The historic landscape characterisation data (figure 5.3) illustrate the time depth of the present landscape. The site area is categorised as an area of prairie amalgamated enclosure, reflecting the loss of the field boundaries established across the former sheep commons at enclosure. The fields to the north of Shipton Road largely retain the late 18th century enclosure field patterns around the two main farms. Much of the study area is dominated by the large areas of Blenheim Park to the west and the airfield to the south, which contrast with the more fragmented categories of the mixed modern development of the edges of Woodstock and Bladon.

Archaeological investigations

- 5.95 Further detail on the arrangement and extent of the scheduled villa site was provided as a consequence of a number of evaluations undertaken in response to the 2014 and 2016 planning applications for the adjacent Park View site. The evaluations undertaken in 2014 (EV6) identified two areas of archaeological

potential. The first of these is a linear zone aligned approximately north-south, which includes the scheduled monument and corresponds with the main spread of geophysical anomalies (see figure 5.8). Immediately adjacent to and south of this zone was an area with no clear geophysical anomalies. However, trenching here confirmed that this location also contained deposits of Roman date (trenches 253-255 on figure 5.10). A second area of geophysical anomalies including a rectilinear arrangement orientated north from the scheduled villa area was confirmed as being of Roman origin and included a crouched burial (shaded red on figure 5.10). A complex of geophysical anomalies in the north eastern corner were revealed as a series of linear features of Late Iron Age and Romano-British date representing a focus of occupation (shaded yellow on figure 5.10).

- 5.96 An assessment of aerial photographs was undertaken in 2014 by Air Photo Services to provide an independent appraisal of the evidence for archaeological features within the combined Park View and present site area. Aerial photographs taken between 1942 and 1998 were examined and features plotted, with only those of relevance to the current application site described here. Possible features were seen in crops over former boundaries (annotated J on figure 5.9). A likely ditched curvilinear enclosure and some fragmentary ditches and pits (K) are discernible as cropmarks on Google Earth, with an area of ridge and furrow also recorded (L). A comparative Lidar image is included alongside the aerial photography interpretation, but no clearly discernible outline of building foundations associated with Blenheim Villa or associated contemporary features north and south can be seen.

Trenching

- 5.97 A total of 265 evaluation trenches were investigated across the larger 2014 application area, but for the purposes of this assessment only a summary of those within the application site, a total of 198 evaluation trenches, will be discussed (see figure 5.10). There were three areas of low archaeological potential and one area of high archaeological potential, but the majority of the site evaluated revealed stratigraphy consisting of either topsoil overlying subsoil, or topsoil directly overlying the natural Cornbrash geology, with little or no archaeological evidence to record.
- 5.98 The north eastern corner of the site (trenches 83-92 on figure 5.10) revealed features and artefacts of Late Iron Age / Early Roman date that were clearly discernible on the geophysical survey (see figure 5.8). Several trenches in this area revealed a complex series of intercutting ditches, pits and gullies that may reflect several phases of occupation over a number of generations. A second area north of the Blenheim Villa site was classified as being of low potential (trenches 225, 226, 229-232) and appears as the northern extent of the 'ladder' settlement, with defined enclosures or paddock-type areas orientated perpendicular to the western site boundary. Roman pottery dominated the finds in this area, along with a single crouched burial in trench 232, evidence of butchered animal bone and a number of pieces of slag pointing to small scale iron smithing in the area. A third area of low potential was classified around the evidence from trenches 252-255 to the south east of Blenheim Villa that appeared to lie outside the main north-south focus of the Roman 'ladder' settlement.

- 5.99 The area of high archaeological potential is focused upon the designated area of Blenheim Villa but extends north and south to reflect the evidence revealed during the 1985 trenching (EV5), the evidence gleaned from the geophysical survey in 2014 (EV7) and the subsequent trench evaluation (EV6). The pottery assemblage recovered in 2014 suggests a main phase of activity at the site in the early Roman period, which continued into the later 3rd century, but no artefacts suggest the site continued in use into the 4th century.

Future baseline

- 5.100 For the purposes of this assessment, the adjacent development at Park View (application reference: 16/01364/OUT) has been considered as part of the baseline studies and future baseline as the scheme is under construction and partially complete. Off-site works consented as part of the application included the planting of semi-mature trees alongside the site's existing southern boundary hedgerow adjacent to the A44 Oxford Road. These are shown on the landscape parameter plan in figure 2.2b.

Assessment of importance

Archaeology

- 5.101 The relatively small number of non-designated archaeology sites within the application site and across the study area are largely known as a result of archaeological fieldwork. When development work triggered the need for archaeological site investigations, as was the case with evaluating the extent of Blenheim Roman villa, areas of low and high archaeological potential were revealed. The site has been subject to all levels of non-intrusive (geophysical and aerial photograph) and intrusive (evaluation trenching) surveys, and in general the majority of the site is devoid of archaeological interest. In the few localised areas where unrelated features have been recorded, no clear function or settlement use can be inferred. Collectively, the findings of the surveys, along with two chance discoveries of prehistoric flints and medieval pottery, represent non-designated archaeological interest and value of local interest and low importance according to the criteria in figure 5.4.
- 5.102 The nationally designated scheduled Blenheim Roman villa site (TOR17) occupies 2.29 hectares at the south west side of the site. Extensive archaeological evaluations have shown other contemporary Roman settlement areas north and south of the scheduled area, as well as Late Iron Age and Roman evidence in the north eastern field corner. Collectively, the findings that extend along the western site boundary are referred to as a linear village or 'ladder settlement', with a clearly defined axis street or trackway and rectilinear enclosures utilised for individual settlement, livestock paddocks or small-scale industry contemporary with the occupation of Blenheim Villa (Historic England 2018, 2). Whilst the scheduled monument is recognised as of national interest and high importance, the areas identified north and south of the villa site are likely to be of county or regional interest and medium importance according to the criteria in figure 5.4.

Built heritage and historic landscape

- 5.103 The following consideration of the relationship of the site to the designated assets in the study area, and of its potential contribution to their significance, makes use of the photographs in figure 5.11, which provide views of the site, the A44 approaches and from within the parkland and, where relevant, the representative viewpoint photographs included in the landscape and visual effects assessment in chapter 6, figures 6.8-6.22.
- 5.104 The principal significance of the nationally listed buildings in the study area lies in the historic and architectural and aesthetic interest of the fabric and their obvious time depth, either as examples of the prevalent local vernacular, both rural and urban, or as part of the monumental designed landscape at Blenheim Palace. None of the listed buildings fall within the site area so there is no potential for effects to these aspects of their significance, which are therefore not considered further. The assessment that follows is concerned only with their setting and any relationships to the site area.
- 5.105 A number of the assets in the study area have been scoped out of the assessment at this point because the site does not currently form part of their setting and it is considered that there is no potential for effects on their significance as a result of the proposed development. This is because of the absence of direct historic or functional connections to the site area, the distance from the site, and the spatial, physical and visual separation created by the topography and the intervening vegetation or built development. The designated assets that are not considered further for these reasons are the former farmsteads on Banbury Road (LB30-LB33) and the post-enclosure farm at Shipton Slade Farm (LB34, LB35), the buildings lining the enclosed streets of the town centre (LB9-29) and Bladon conservation area.
- 5.106 The site area is a single intensively cultivated field and the only extant historic landscape features are on the boundaries. The western edge is the Saxon route recorded in 1005 as Heh Straet, which has remained as an administrative boundary and is now the boundary of the housing at Park View. The north and east boundaries on Shipton Road and the A4095 Upper Campsfield Road were established at enclosure at the beginning of the 19th century, and the woodland belts were in existence by c.1898. These are identified in the WHS management plan as among the woodlands and plantations that contribute to its setting. Those on the east boundary, beyond the cattery, combine visually with Campsfield Wood in the long approach to Woodstock from the south on the A44, obscuring some of the current built edge of Woodstock and the WHS. In accordance with figure 5.4 the majority of the site area is of negligible importance for historic landscape character, but the woodland planting of the north and east boundaries is of low to medium value because of its role in the wider setting and approach to the WHS.
- 5.107 The closest listed buildings are within Lower Park across the A44 from the site. At this point in the nine-mile circuit the stone built park wall (LB1) is relatively low and at points allows some views of the parkland within, through the boundary planting (though the photographs in figure 5.11 and chapter 6 show some recent planting in this area that will reinforce the visual screening over time). The wall is essential to the integrity and definition of the park, as an expression of the status and enclosure of the designed landscape, and in this location also reflects

the earlier history of Hensgrove as a distinct part of the medieval and later deer park. The setting of this section of the park wall is defined by the relationship to the A44 and the long green approach to Woodstock and Blenheim, where views are gradually funnelled and framed by the vegetation.

- 5.108 The site area forms the eastern setting of the approach, becoming visible from the A44 / A4095 roundabout opposite the walled woodland at Campsfield Wood, seen across the strong hedgerows along the road, and as the foreground to the built edge marked by the Littlecote and by the completed phases of Park View. Moving further north towards Hensington Gate, the low park wall is reinforced by a second, higher, internal wall, and the setting is strongly influenced by the mature trees and adjacent housing on the edge of Woodstock, emphasising the strength of the protective barrier created by the boundary walls and associated planting. The contribution of the site to the rural character of the wider setting of the park, as experienced from the main approach, is a minor, positive component of the setting of this section of the park wall.
- 5.109 The converted former foldyards at The Cowyards (LB2) on the edge of the park are set within a further walled enclosure, and are accessed from the A44, with a secondary access through the park. The former agricultural and stud buildings appear as a group on the edge of the park in views across Lower Park, partially obscured by the parkland trees and seen against the backdrop of the boundary planting. From the A44 frontage the access road allows some views into the parkland, particularly in winter. The site area is experienced as a peripheral part of the wider setting of the listed building, as part of the agricultural land on the town edge just visible beyond the park. There are some very limited visual connections to the south edge of the site from the access drive to the group and the pavements either side, framed by the completed edge of Park View.
- 5.110 Eagle Lodge (LB3) on Grove Road is one of the six extant lodges on the park boundary, and is now the main exit for visitor vehicular traffic. The principal setting relationship is to the park wall and to the entrance on Grove Road, framed by a wide grassed splay and the large mature trees either side. The modern housing area extending Bladon almost up to the A44 / A4095 roundabout is prominent opposite the park entrance, set back beyond the wide verges. There is no intervisibility and the site area is not currently experienced as part of the setting of the listed building.
- 5.111 The early 18th century walled kitchen garden (LB4, LB5) is one of the focal building groups of the park, as part of the original formal gardens laid out by Henry Wise. It now accommodates a range of gardens and public attractions. The site area at a minimum of c.650 m away is not currently experienced as part of the setting of the listed building.
- 5.112 The Hensington Gate (LB7, grade I) and lodge (LB6) at the edge of the study area mark the main entrance to the estate, and with the adjacent former almshouses (LB8) also mark the beginning of the historic town centre after the long approach on the A44. At this point views are tightly funnelled by the adjacent mature trees. The contribution of the site to the character of the wider setting of the park, as experienced from the main approach, is a minor, positive component of the setting of the listed buildings at the park entrance.

- 5.113 In accordance with figure 5.4 the listed buildings in the study area are of high importance.
- 5.114 The Woodstock conservation area designation is tightly defined around the urban centre, beginning at the entrance to the town marked by Hensington Gate at the entrance to the park. The approach to the historic core from the south is contained by the mature trees on both sides, and the centre has an enclosed, urban character. The site area is experienced only as part of the long gradually-funnelled approach on the A44; there are no views or other awareness of the rural setting once within the extent of the modern town. The contribution of the site to the rural character of the wider setting as experienced in the approach from the south on the A44 Oxford Road is a minor, positive component of the wider setting of the conservation area. In accordance with figure 5.4 the Woodstock conservation area is of medium importance.

Blenheim Palace WHS and RPG⁶

- 5.115 Blenheim Palace WHS is inscribed as an outstanding example of an 18th century European princely residence, unique in England, set within a monumental landscape park that was central to the development of the naturalistic English landscape garden style in the later 18th century. It has been open to the public since 1950 and is a major tourist attraction. Parts of three of the character areas identified in the adopted WHS management plan fall within the 1 km study area: character area 4, Lower Park, character area 5, Bladon Park, and character area 8, the gardens and pleasure grounds.
- 5.116 The history of the c.2,500-acre designed landscape is summarised in the Parkland Management Plan (2014), which identifies the main phases: the early royal chase and deer park to the end of the 17th century; the creation of the formal landscape after 1705; the phase of changes by Brown in the 1760s creating the more naturalistic landscape park; the early 19th century works continuing and developing his design; the mid 19th century interest in new plant introductions; the new formal gardens and major programme of tree planting at the turn of the 20th century and the conservation and development since the mid-20th century.
- 5.117 The plan identifies the key phases in that history that have “*fundamentally affected the parkland’s character, contributed to its significance and are still evident today*” as:

“The areas of former medieval deer park at High Park together with the scatter of veteran trees in Lower Park;

The exceptional landscape parkland created by Lancelot Brown as a setting for Blenheim Palace, especially the lakes, carriage drives and boundary shelterbelts; and

The reinterpretation of historic planting and the new additions provided by the 9th Duke in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, of which the formal

⁶ The sections of the designations that fall within the study area coincide except for a small area at the caravan park at Bladon Chains.

landscaping around the Palace is of pre-eminent importance.” (Paragraph 6.9.1).

5.118 The Parkland Management Plan gives detailed consideration of the main views and vistas within the park and several views from points outside the boundaries. None are identified within Lower Park, though a former lost or obscured view is noted just to the north of the walled gardens, from the south east edge of the pleasure grounds, formerly across Brown’s ha-ha towards the woods at Hensgrove.

5.119 The 2017 WHS Management Plan includes the Setting Study (appendix III), which is described as bringing together all local and national landscape character descriptions in order to *“help define the character of the setting of Blenheim Palace WHS and to show how the OUV of the WHS is largely defined by what lies within the park wall, rather than by what lies outside it. ... The WHS at Blenheim Palace is enclosed by a park wall and boundary plantations which together create an obvious barrier of protection between the inside and the outside.”* (Page 65.)

5.120 The Setting Study summarises the value of the setting as:

“-The importance of the village clusters, farmed countryside and woodlands/ trees in enhancing local distinctiveness and fostering a sense of place;

-The use of local stone in the vernacular buildings which is very distinctive of the area as well as creating a contrast to the high quality architecture of the Palace and its associated buildings;

-The contribution it makes to the distinctive quality of the landscape and environment around Blenheim, making it an attractive place to live, this having significant benefits for the economy;

-The opportunities the setting provides for recreation and leisure which contributes to a healthy lifestyle;

-The opportunities for landscape to contribute to the green infrastructure of the area by supporting a wide range of wildlife habitats which, in addition to the nature conservation benefits, allows people to experience wildlife close to where they live and work” (Paragraph 3.01).

5.121 Those elements of the OUV that the setting relates to most directly are:

“- The connection with the River Glyme - the management of this river as it runs through the setting of the WHS directly affects the character, ecological value and water quality of Lancelot Brown’s lakes within the WHS;

- The links with the much larger and ancient Wychwood Forest area;

- The value of the boundary wall and plantations which mainly hide the park from outside views, but also form important woodland elements in the wider landscape;

- The key visual linkages between Blenheim and its setting - to Bladon church in the south and from Old Woodstock to the Column of Victory in the east;

- *The character of the setting as traditional English countryside, dotted with picturesque villages mainly built using a uniform palette of materials.*"
(Paragraph 5.02).

- 5.122 There are few external views out of the park, because of its scale and the topography, and the extensive boundary shelterbelts, and few views in the opposite direction into the park. The function of the park wall is to act *"as both a physical and visual protective barrier between the inner park and the outer setting. This means there are few views, and those that exist were very carefully contrived"*. (Paragraph 4.04). The identified external viewcones⁷) are one focused on the church tower at Bladon from the south front of the Palace, and one focused on the Column of Victory from the section of Oxford Road that slopes down towards the River Glyme, in which the full height of the monument to the 1st Duke of Marlborough is visible, with the trees of the Grand Avenue around it.
- 5.123 The site area does not fall within either of the two main viewcones to and from the WHS; however, the Setting Study does identify a view towards the WHS from Shipton Road looking south west towards The Cowyards and Campsfield Wood (see VP14, figure 6.21 chapter 6, landscape and visual effects). As part of section 4 describing the setting of the WHS, the site is included in one of the areas from which there are views into the WHS, the East-South-East - Airport and Kidlington area, which is characterised by *"busy roads, more intensive larger-scale farming with low hedges and trees lines, and fewer woodlands"* and includes the open airport and business park. The tree lines along Upper Campsfield Road and Shipton Road *"close any views towards the WHS, and remove any perception of its proximity"*.
- 5.124 The site area is part of the wider setting of the WHS and of the long approach on the A44 to the park entrance at Hensington Gate, which first obscures then gradually funnels views from a distance. The woodland plantations on the north and east boundaries are noted for their role as part of the setting of the WHS and the open land of the site is visible to the east of the road opposite Campsfield Wood, illustrating the connection to the wider countryside. Direct intervisibility is limited to points within the south east corner of the park and to glimpses from the drive to the offices at The Cowyards.
- 5.125 In accordance with figure 5.4 the Blenheim Palace WHS and RPG is of high importance.
- 5.126 Table 5.2 summarises the importance of the heritage assets within the site and study area.

⁷ WHS Management Plan, Appendix I figure 5, character of the setting.

Receptor	Importance of receptor
On site	
Blenheim Roman Villa SM 35545	High
Archaeology	High-low
Historic landscape character	Negligible
Boundary tree belts (part of WHS setting)	Low to medium
Study area	
Archaeology	Low
Listed buildings (LB1-LB8)	High
Woodstock conservation area	Medium
Blenheim Palace WHS and RPG	High
Table 5.2: Summary of importance	

Potential effects

5.127 The proposed development could be a source of impacts on the cultural heritage value or significance of heritage assets within the site and the surrounding area through:

- Ground disturbance during construction
- The landtake and removal of existing site features
- Effects of construction processes, e.g. visual presence, noise, vibration, potential damage to trees or structures
- The presence of the new built form, its siting, scale, extent, appearance and character
- The new road layouts, access and patterns of circulation
- Changes to the visual qualities of the site
- Induced effects

5.128 All but the last are direct effects.

5.129 Mitigation of adverse effects through the developing scheme design is integral to the iterative process of EIA; these primary mitigation measures are included in the proposals described in chapter 2 and shown in the plans in figures 2.2a–2.2e, and are summarised in paragraph 6.96 in chapter 6, landscape and visual effects. The standard construction measures proposed to avoid potential effects on heritage assets, for example through accidental damage, will be outlined in the construction method statement covering all construction activities that would be conditioned as part of any grant of planning permission. The assessment of effects considers the effects without additional secondary mitigation. An appropriate programme of mitigation could reduce the severity of an adverse effect or remove it completely.

5.130 The primary mitigation measures that are relevant to the assessment of effects on cultural heritage are:

- The preservation of the Blenheim Roman villa scheduled monument, the related areas of archaeological interest and its setting within the approximately 21.72 ha of public open space across the south and west of the site
- The careful location of the built development in the north of the site and the use of appropriate set backs in order to minimise potential impacts on the setting of the Blenheim Palace WHS and to retain the open semi-rural approach to Woodstock. These vary in width from 312 m to 335 m

from the southern boundary and from 155 m to 235 m from the western boundary. At its closest the built development will be c.360 m from the edge of Blenheim Park

- The retention of the historic alignment of the Roman route recorded in the late Saxon period as Heh Straet
- Consideration of the massing, height and scale of development to respond to that of Woodstock, the development at Park View to the west of the site and the sensitivity of the WHS setting
- The retention of the existing site boundary hedgerows, hedgerow trees and woodland belts, apart from a section of 0.39 ha on the eastern boundary that is to be removed to create the site access and small sections to allow footpath and cycle access
- New and replacement woodland and hedgerow planting to extend the existing woodland belt at the new access, to strengthen the south eastern corridor for ecological enhancement and as small informal woodland groups to the south and west of the development edge to help assimilate the development into the landscape from close proximity views

Effects during construction

Archaeology

- 5.131 The proposed development will involve groundworks, which will inevitably have an impact on below ground archaeological remains where they are yet unknown and unrecorded. The risk of impacts from the proposed development would come from the possible damage to any below ground sites / features / localised findspots.
- 5.132 There are two areas of identified low archaeological potential that will be directly impacted as a consequence of the proposals, but to varying degrees. The Late Iron Age and Roman features in the north eastern corner of the site (TOR5 figure 5.1) that are seen as a series of linear features (figure 5.8) that certainly represent a focus of occupation are proposed for an area of allotments and play space. A large physical change is predicted to occur as a result and the effect, without applying any form of mitigation, will therefore be moderate. This effect is classed as significant for the EIA. The second area of low potential, to the north of the Blenheim Villa area of high potential, will be impacted by a road carriageway from the Park View development to the west. The large physical change will occur only within the defined width and length of road but, without applying any form of mitigation, the effect will be moderate and again is classed as significant for the EIA.

Built heritage and historic landscape

- 5.133 The landtake required for the development will result in the loss of the agricultural land, and the present use. The woodland belts on the east and north boundaries that were established at the end of the 19th century will be retained, except for a section of approximately 0.39 ha that will need to be removed to accommodate a new vehicular access from the A4095 Upper Campsfield Road. Areas of new and replacement woodland planting are proposed to the south of the new access to retain the function of these plantations in the wider landscape, and the approach to Woodstock. The south

and west of the site will remain free of built development as part of the open space that will occupy more than half of the site area (to include amenity greenspace, natural and semi-natural greenspace, parks and gardens, tree and structure planting, ecological enhancement and natural play). The effect of the construction phase on the integrity and legibility of the historic landscape of the site will be a large magnitude of change to an asset of negligible importance, which will result in a permanent slight to negligible adverse effect that is not significant. The removal of a short section of the woodland plantation on the east of the site and replacement planting will be a negligible magnitude of change to these landscape features of low to medium value, which will be a slight to negligible adverse effect that is not significant.

- 5.134 The visible construction activity, and related noise and other disturbance, will be evident in those parts of the study area in closest proximity to the site for a long period (approximately 11 years), at different locations and intensity at different times. The presence of the construction works will be a feature of the wider setting of the assets that are closest to the site boundary (LB1, LB2) and the east edge of Blenheim Park WHS and RPG, although they will be separated from the construction work by the wide area on the south and west of the site proposed as open space. The works would also form part of the character of the approach to Woodstock on the A44, similarly to Park View currently. Effects may include the occasional visibility of cranes above the mature trees of the park edge. The changed experience of the setting of these designated assets because of the presence of construction activity will be a negligible magnitude of change to assets of high importance, which will result in a temporary negligible adverse effect that is not significant. The two groups of listed buildings at the walled garden (LB4, LB5) and at Hensington Gate (LB6-8) are both more distant from the site and there is no potential for effects on the setting of these assets during construction.

Effects post-construction

- 5.135 The assessment that follows takes account of any effects of lighting of the proposed development. The assessment of the potential for effects of lighting in chapter 6 concludes that any increase in lighting across the site will be seen in the context of the existing lighting associated with the A44, A4095 and Bladon roundabout, the existing edge of Woodstock and the completed phases of Park View.

Archaeology

- 5.136 The remains of Blenheim Villa (TOR 17, SM 35545) are completely buried with no physical manifestation above ground. Aerial photography analysis (Airphoto Services 2014), geophysical survey (TVAS 2014a) and limited trial excavation by Oxford Archaeology in 1985 (EV5; figure 5.1) have added greatly to our knowledge of the villa's formal ground plan and the extent of associated features concentrated to the north and south of the scheduled area (see figure 5.10). Historic England (under its former guise as English Heritage) previously stated that "*The villa appears to have been designed to face east-south east, perhaps in the direction of the agricultural estate it was sited to take advantage of extensive views over its dependent land. It is our contention that the villa would*

have faced east-south east and would have enjoyed long views, which were normally seen as important to this ambitious building type⁸.”

- 5.137 The buried remains of Blenheim Villa, which cannot be readily appreciated by a casual observer, nonetheless retain a presence in the landscape and therefore have a setting (Historic England 2015). Such buried archaeological remains as the Blenheim Villa site have been afforded the long term continuity in the agricultural land use that immediately surrounds and covers the remains. Maintaining the immediate, above ground agricultural setting and the wider landscape views east-south east from this scheduled monument will effectively avoid interference or alteration of the setting of this scheduled monument.
- 5.138 The nearest built edge of the proposed development lies c.45 m north east of the northern edge of the villa designation. Such proximity is still within the setting of this scheduled monument, but will be viewed in relation to the extensive undeveloped green open space to the east and south east. Archaeological evaluations have clearly shown the expansion, or multi-period use, immediately north and south of the villa designated area. The presence of the new built form, its siting, scale, the likely increase in noise, introduction and proximity of light spill, and the general suburbanisation of what is currently an agricultural field will result in a change to the present setting, albeit a continuation of the residential context currently experienced as a result of the proximity of Park View to the west. A medium to small change to the setting of this nationally designated villa monument is predicted. The effect, without applying any form of mitigation, will therefore be moderate. This effect is classed as significant for the EIA.

Built heritage and historic landscape

- 5.139 The following assessment refers where relevant to the ZTV (figure 6.7) and the photowire visualisations produced as part of the assessment of landscape and visual effects in chapter 6. Figures 6.23-6.25 illustrate the likely views of the proposed development as it would be seen from the approach on the A44 from the south, from the edge of the park near The Cowyards and from Shipton Road to the north.
- 5.140 The section of the enclosing park wall (LB1) within the study area is just across the A44 from the south west corner of the site, beyond the link road at Campsfield Wood. This part of the nine-mile circuit of the park boundary wall is relatively low, in places allowing some visual connection to the interior of the parkland, and some external views beyond the park edge through the screening woodland. The open space that extends across the south of the site will maintain the open aspect as part of the long approach to Woodstock and is designed as part of the transition to the more funnelled character of the closer approach to Blenheim, announced by the walled and wooded park edge as the first visible feature. The landscape strategy includes the planting of the south boundary of the site approved as part of the mitigation of the development at Park View, and other planting of woodland groups that is intended to soften the built development edge, which will be a minimum of c.360 m from the edge of the parkland. The changed character and appearance of the site as part of the setting of the park edge marked by the wall, will be a negligible change to an

⁸ Letter dated 27.2.15 from English Heritage to Cherwell District Council, ref. P00443984.

asset of high importance, which will be a permanent slight effect that is not significant.

- 5.141 The south edge of the site is around 200 m away from the former agricultural and stud buildings, now offices, at The Cowyards (LB2). The area of open space across the south and the focused landscape planting will maintain the character of the site as part of the wider rural setting beyond the park edge, and the limited visual connections as experienced from the access road. The photowire from just within the park alongside the building group (figure 6.24) illustrates the separation from the built development at the northern edge of the site. There will be no change to the character or experience of the setting of the listed building as a result of the proposed development and no effects are predicted.
- 5.142 The site area is not currently experienced as part of the setting of Eagle Lodge at the end of the south drive on Grove Road (LB3). The ZTV (figure 6.7) illustrates the effect of the woodland block at Campsfield Wood in preventing visibility of the site, either the new open space or the built development, from the southern park edge and the land beyond towards Bladon in the river valley. The closest points from where the changed character and appearance of the site will be perceived will be at the A44 / A4095 roundabout, at some distance from the lodge and the park edge. There will be no change to the character or experience of the setting of the listed building as a result of the proposed development and no effects are predicted.
- 5.143 The site is not currently experienced as part of the setting of the walled gardens (LB4, LB5), which are integrated within the Lower Park, and have no connection to the land beyond the well-defined park boundaries. The ZTV (figure 6.7) illustrates the effectiveness of the enclosing woodland in preventing views of the proposed development beyond the screen of the park edge. There will be no change to the character or experience of the setting of the listed buildings as a result of the proposed development and no effects are predicted.
- 5.144 The building group at the main entrance to the Palace at the edge of the historic planned town at Hensington Gate (LB6, grade I, LB7, LB8) is the furthest point on the long approach to Woodstock from the south on the A44 Oxford Road. Views are controlled by the woodland plantations at Campsfield and on the east site boundary, which prevent awareness of the presence of Blenheim, then, once the park edge and the town are visible by the roundabout, by the park boundary woodland and roadside hedgerows. Once within the modern town, the focus narrows to the road corridor flanked by the park wall and the tall mature trees on both sides.
- 5.145 The open and green aspect of the site as part of this approach will be maintained by the large area of public open space across the south of the site, the planting on the roadside to the south and by the woodland groups, to soften and provide screening of the development edge at approximately 325 m from the road. The proposed replacement planting on the site boundary by the new access road will ensure that the function of the plantations on Upper Campsfield Road in controlling views towards Blenheim from a distance is maintained. The photowire from the A44 (figure 6.23) illustrates the form of the built development in this distant view, largely obscured by the woodland and set back from the road corridor. In closer views the built development will be glimpsed through the

layers of planting on the site boundary and the woodland groups, offset from the focus of the designed approach. The changed character and appearance of the site as part of the setting of the listed buildings at the entrance to Blenheim Palace will be a negligible change to assets of high importance, which will be a permanent slight effect that is not significant.

- 5.146 The role of the site as part of the approach is of similar value as part of the setting of the Woodstock conservation area. The changed character and appearance of the site as part of the setting of the conservation area will be a negligible change to an asset of medium importance, which will be a permanent slight to negligible effect that is not significant.
- 5.147 The predicted effects of the proposed development on Blenheim Park RPG overall correspond to the assessment for the individual assets and the role of the site in the main approach to Woodstock, and the absence of significant direct intervisibility of the proposed development across the parkland. The only part of the parkland that could potentially be affected by the proposed development is the Lower Park, which has a distinctive identity within the designed landscape as the former formal woodland established by Henry Wise and the medieval deer park at Hensgrove. The other two character areas that fall partially within the study area at Bladon Park and the central gardens and pleasure grounds have no connection to the site area.
- 5.148 External views beyond the park boundary are restricted to points on the south east edge by The Cowyards, where the new housing at Park View is seasonally visible. The Park View development is under construction, and the supplementary hedgerow tree planting (in accordance with the approved mitigation measures) and along the southern boundary hedgerow will provide additional screening and add to the wooded backdrop of the outward views. The photowire visualisation in figure 6.23 confirms that the built development element of the proposals set back in the northern part of the site will not be visible within the parkland. The recent planting within the park apparent on this edge will also reinforce the visual enclosure of the park boundary.
- 5.149 In the views towards the park on the approach on the A44, the open space across the southern part of the site and the landscape strategy will ensure that the approach remains dominated by the vegetation, with potential only for glimpses of the built development set back over 300 m from the road corridor and softened by the planting on the edge. Looking towards the edge of the park from the surrounding rural land at the edge of the town, the view line from Shipton Road towards the wooded park edge will remain unimpeded. Additionally, the new areas of public open space across the site will allow new views towards the park edge marked by the tall mature trees of the boundary woodland, enhancing the potential for appreciation of the links of the designed landscape to the surrounding estate countryside.
- 5.150 The changed character and appearance of the site as part of the setting of Blenheim Park RPG, and the increase in built development perceptible will be a negligible change to an asset of high importance, which will be a permanent slight effect that is not significant. The potential change to public appreciation of the asset and its setting because of the new areas of open space across the site will be a negligible change to an asset of high importance, which will be a permanent slight beneficial effect that is not significant.

- 5.151 The assessment of effects on the Blenheim Palace WHS, which aggregates the identified effects of the proposed development and relates them specifically to the adopted attributes and OUV, is given in technical appendix C3. This concludes that the development will result in an overall slight adverse effect on the OUV of the Blenheim Palace WHS. Based on the methodology used throughout this ES, given in chapter 3, this effect is not significant.

Induced effects

- 5.152 As a condition on any planning consent, a legally binding mechanism will be put in place to secure a contribution of relevant proceeds from the development to the conservation, maintenance and restoration of the Blenheim Palace WHS via the Blenheim Heritage Foundation, whose sole purpose is to repair and maintain the WHS. The WHS is an asset of high importance, and the direct financial contribution from the development will be a small magnitude of change, which will result in a permanent moderate beneficial effect that is significant.

Mitigation and monitoring

Archaeology

- 5.153 The predicted moderate effect on archaeology can be wholly mitigated through a further stage of archaeological site investigation, in this instance in two distinct phases: strip, map and record of the allotment area that corresponds with the Late Iron Age / Roman occupation site in the north eastern corner (TOR5) and a watching brief of the road carriageway that will traverse a part of the area of low potential north of Blenheim Villa. Preservation by record, i.e. excavation, of any features uncovered, is a sufficient and policy-recognised form of mitigation that can adequately mitigate any predicted moderate effect.
- 5.154 While the very process of excavation can be viewed as destructive, it yields the most reliable evidence and can lead to an expression of the past for those that live, or are planning to live, close to the site of the discovery. The known archaeological resource would be destroyed through erosion, dewatering processes and other varying levels of development infrastructure, and therefore excavation is justified, as much data that would otherwise be lost will be recorded.
- 5.155 All necessary and agreed archaeological mitigation work should take place at least four weeks in advance of the construction programme. The agreed areas for closer examination by either a watching brief or strip, map and sample exercise are to be agreed in consultation with OCCA. A detailed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) will need to be approved ahead of the groundworks.
- 5.156 In the unlikely event that additional features of archaeological interest are uncovered during construction outside of investigation areas, further appropriate surveys will be undertaken. In the first instance, OCCA will be informed and the methodology will be discussed and agreed. These investigations will fully mitigate the predicted moderate effect and will themselves result in a moderate, significant beneficial effect from the knowledge gained through the work.

Setting of Blenheim Villa

- 5.157 The predicted moderate adverse effect to the east / north east extent of the setting of Blenheim Villa can be mitigated through positive future heritage interpretation and management of the site. The wider landscape to the south east of the Villa, as well as a continuous green buffer applied to the north and south along the western boundary, are primary mitigation measures applied to the proposals that aim to minimise potential adverse effects on its setting and preserve the contemporary 'ladder settlement' layout.
- 5.158 For a number of years, Historic England has monitored the gradual deterioration of the integrity of Blenheim Villa, primarily as a consequence of crop rotation and modern ploughing methods. This villa is identified as a monument at risk, with extensive significant problems and currently declining condition. The primary mitigation will effectively take this vulnerable nationally designated scheduled monument 'out of the plough', put a stop to further degradation and the extensive green open space provides an ideal setting for future beneficial enhancement, along with increased appreciation and awareness.
- 5.159 Blenheim Villa should not be viewed as merely a series of below ground earthworks, but as a cultural, educational and social resource that can help create a rich sense of place for the new proposed community. Increasing awareness of the layout, structures and history of Blenheim Villa is a good way of creating an enduring sense of place for the proposed development.
- 5.160 With no further site investigations envisaged upon or in the immediate vicinity of Blenheim Villa, it is proposed to offer a range of alternatives to better reveal this monument and increase future public awareness. These have been discussed with Historic England on site and are endorsed in its pre-application response, which is appended to this chapter at technical appendix C2:
- The site should be promoted as part of a heritage trail of Woodstock and its early origins. Successful applications utilise treasure hunt scenarios that explore the archaeology and history of the town and immediate environs, whilst positively exploring green open spaces around the town / proposed development site's perimeter
 - Production of a conservation management plan for the villa monument to gain approval for the best management principles to ensure future safeguarding as part of a successful landscape strategy that will see the site revert from being under arable cultivation to grassland
 - Erection of interpretation panel(s) to promote awareness of the Blenheim Villa site, countryside and wildlife of the area. A QR code could be present on the board(s) to allow ease of interaction with enhanced visualisation of how the villa site looked
 - Provision of information about the on-site heritage assets in welcome packs provided to new homeowners
 - Future engagement strategy with local interest groups and schools

5.161 These measures to maximise heritage enhancement will mitigate the predicted moderate effect on the setting of the villa, but will also collectively result in a moderate to substantial, significant beneficial effect from the increased awareness of the heritage resource.

Built heritage and historic landscape

5.162 The identified significant effects of the proposed development on the built heritage and historic landscape assets are beneficial so no mitigation is required. However, there is the potential for further secondary mitigation measures, as outlined in paragraphs 6.132–6.139 in chapter 6, to reduce or offset the identified slight adverse effects that remain after the consideration of the primary mitigation, although at this outline stage, and without detailed design, it is not possible to be certain of their implementation. These measures are likely to come forward during detailed design at the reserved matters application stage.

Residual effects

Archaeology

5.163 If archaeological finds are uncovered during development, the measures set out in the mitigation section will ensure that no significant adverse residual effects will result. Any agreed archaeological investigation at the site will be, by its very nature, a destructive process, but the benefit to the current body of knowledge for this site will be effectively filled through the material and artefact assemblage uncovered. Any measures set out in a future WSI to be endorsed by OCCA in a planning condition will be in line with best practice and the Chartered Institute of Archaeologists’ code of practice. A suitably qualified archaeological contractor will produce the WSI required and undertake the necessary site investigations. This will ensure that the archaeological resource at the site will be properly safeguarded and suitably disseminated.

Built heritage and historic landscape

5.164 The significant residual effects remain as assessed above and are summarised in table 5.4.

Topic	Significant residual effect	Receptor importance	Impact magnitude	Nature	Duration	Degree of effect	Level of certainty
Cultural heritage	Construction effects: Knowledge gained through excavation required to mitigate effect upon the on-site archaeology	Low	Large	Beneficial	Long term	Moderate	Absolute
	Post-construction effects: Future interpretation of Blenheim Villa would advance knowledge and awareness of this nationally importance site	High	Medium	Beneficial	Long term	Moderate / substantial	Reasonable
	Post-construction effects: Blenheim Palace WHS: Induced effects (financial contribution to the conservation, maintenance and restoration of the WHS)	High	Small	Beneficial	Long term	Moderate	Absolute

Table 5.4: Residual effects

Cumulative effects

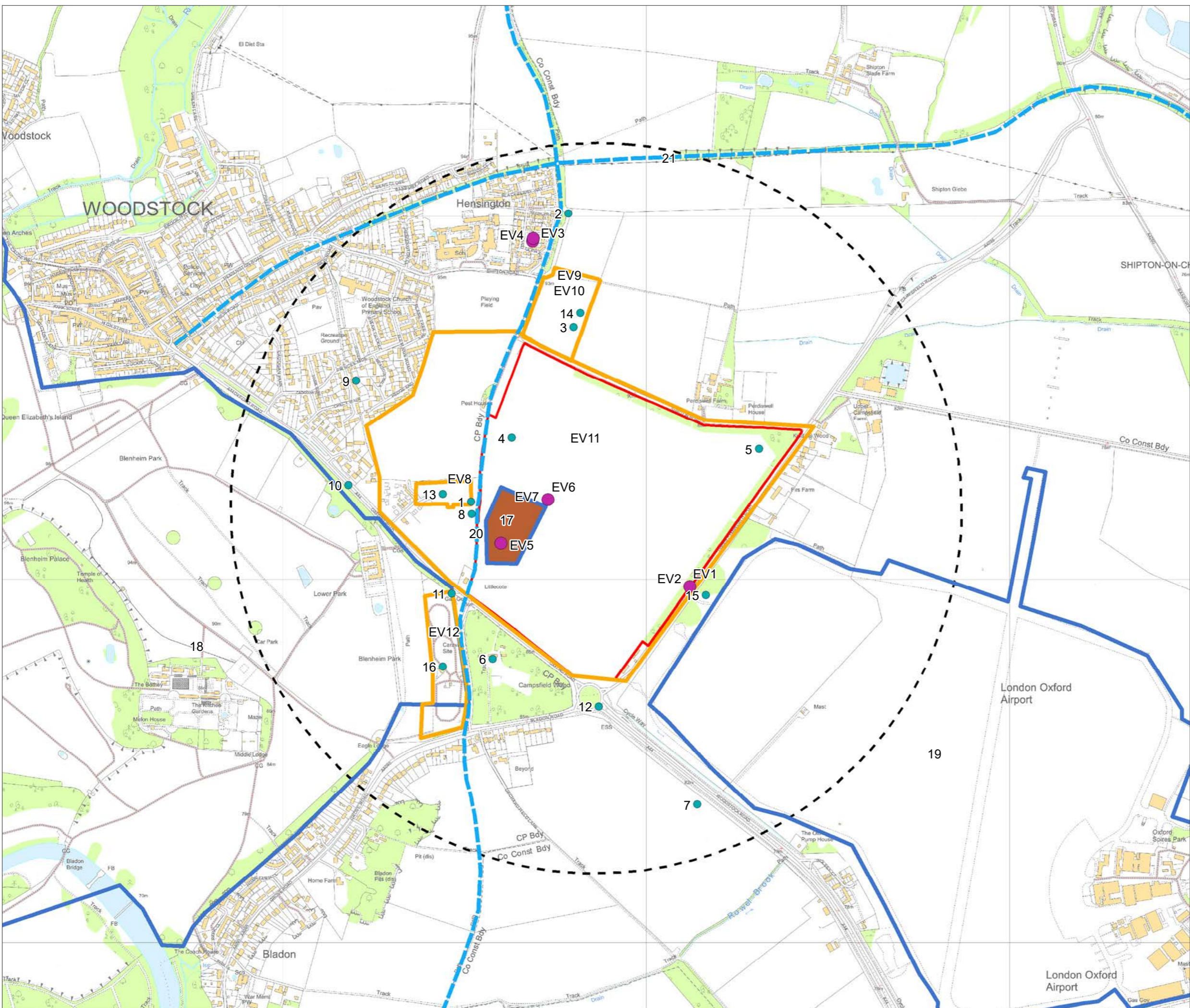
- 5.165 As set out in chapter 3 and figure 3.2, the potential for cumulative effects with a number of other consented and proposed developments needs to be considered.

Archaeology

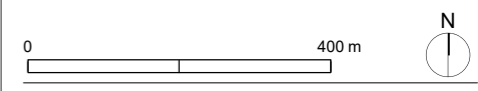
- 5.166 The proposal gives rise to a moderate adverse effect to the known archaeological resource that will be directly impacted on the western boundary as a consequence of the road and the north eastern corner as a result of the allotments and play space. However, adverse effects can be fully mitigated through the appropriate and agreed levels of evaluation and recording, as set out above. There is the potential for further adverse cumulative effects on the archaeological resource of the local area as a result of the other developments. A similar approach in terms of archaeological evaluation and preservation by record may also be applied in order to inform and mitigate potential effects.
- 5.167 The archaeological resource of the other proposed developments will be considered as opportunities to enhance the archaeological record and further our knowledge of the local resource. Such work will be considered on a site by site basis and in relation to the degree of adverse impact on the identified archaeological resource. There would therefore be no cumulative effects.

Built heritage and historic landscape

- 5.168 There is no potential for the proposed development to result in cumulative effects on heritage assets in combination with the majority of the other schemes in the area, if they proceed, because of their location and distance from the site, their scale, or the nature of the development. The Land East of Woodstock (Park View) development has already been taken into account in the assessment as part of the future baseline.
- 5.169 The Land North of Hill Rise, Woodstock (application reference: 21/00189/FUL): up to 180 dwellings, 120 m² of community space, parking barns and public open space (awaiting determination) and Land North of Banbury Road, Woodstock (application reference: 21/00217/OUT): up to 250 dwellings, 195 m² of community space, parking barns and public open space (awaiting determination) are also promoted by Blenheim Estate Homes. As an induced effect these can be expected to make a similar financial contribution to the conservation, maintenance and restoration of the WHS. This would be a moderate, significant, beneficial cumulative effect.
- 5.170 The Oxford Park & Ride site on the A44 corridor, with an indicative car parking capacity of around 1,100 spaces (no application submitted), lies to the east of the site adjacent to London Oxford Airport. This area forms part of the long approach to Woodstock and the WHS from the south, and the considerations relating to potential effects on the setting of the WHS would apply to any proposals. The Park & Ride site is separated from the Land East of Park View site by the A4095 Upper Campsfield Road and by the boundary plantations on the site edge. No cumulative effects are predicted.

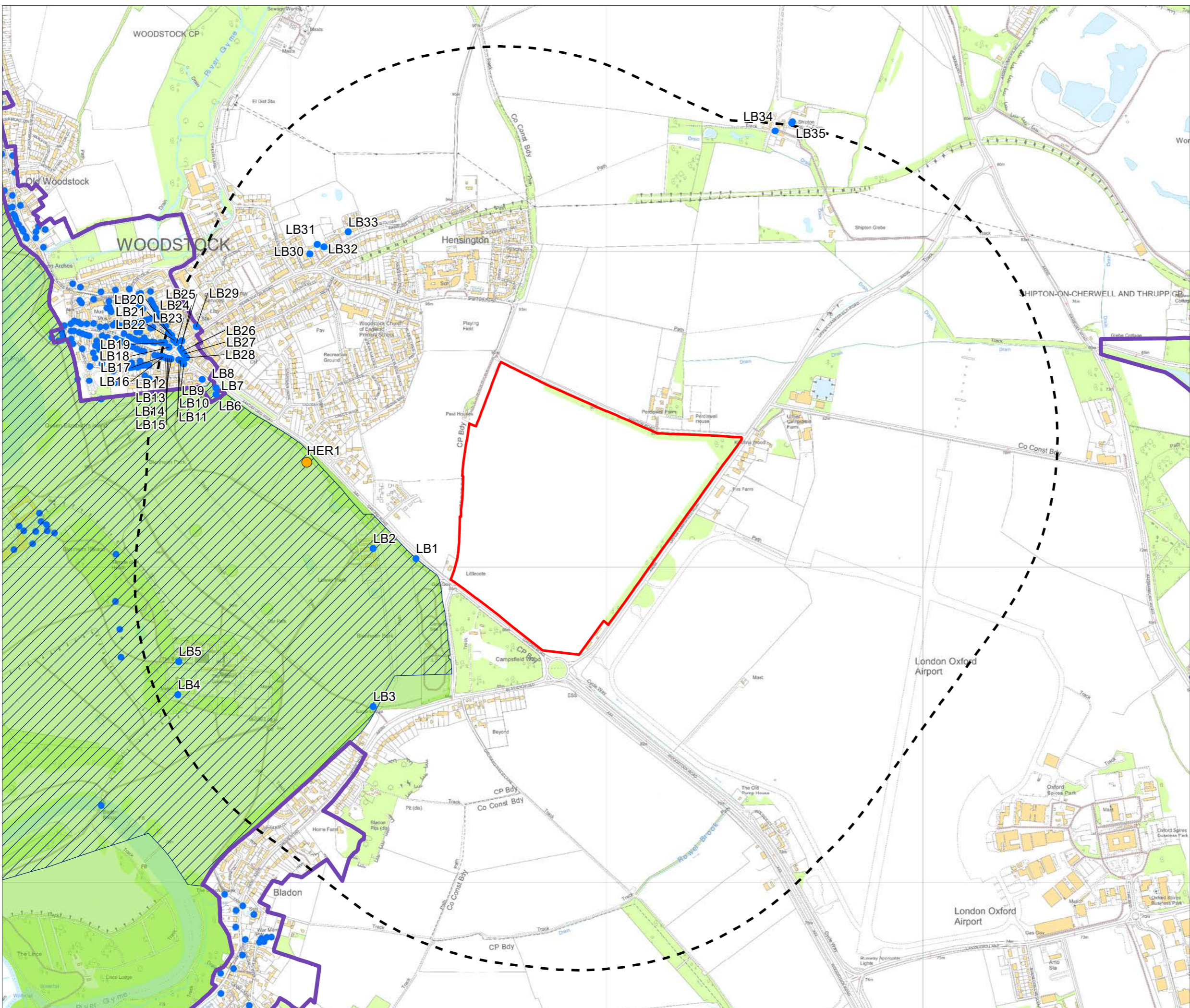


- Monument points
- Event points
- Monument lines
- Events areas
- Monuments area
- Scheduled monuments
- 1km study area
- Site boundary

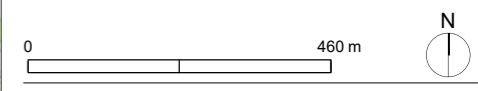


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Figure 5.1 Designated and non-designated heritage assets (archaeology)

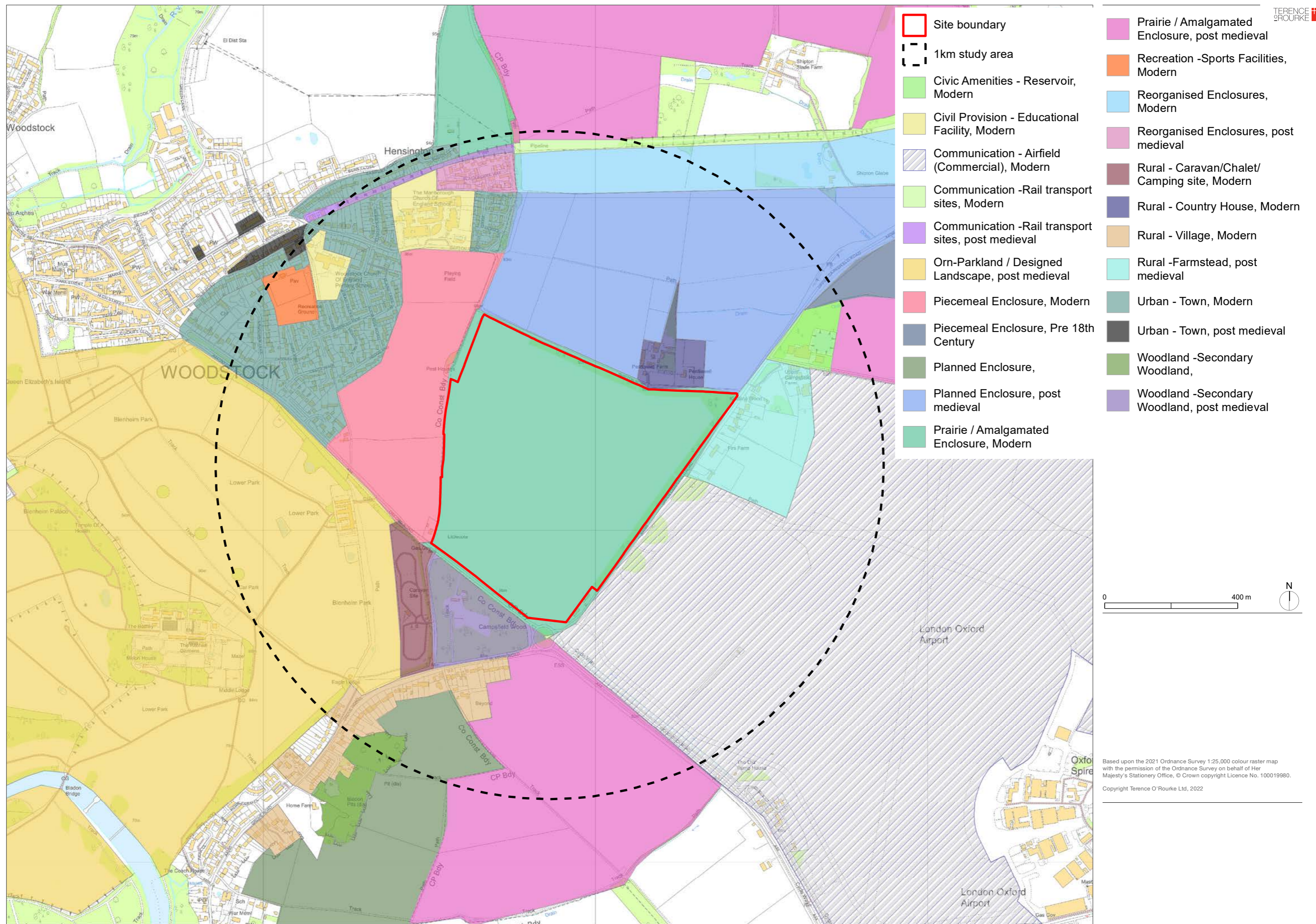


- Site boundary
- 1km study area
- Listed buildings
- Building from the HER
- Conservation areas
- World Heritage site
- Registered parks and gardens

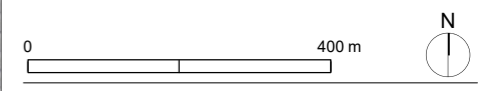


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Figure 5.2 Designated and non-designated heritage assets (Built heritage and historic landscape)



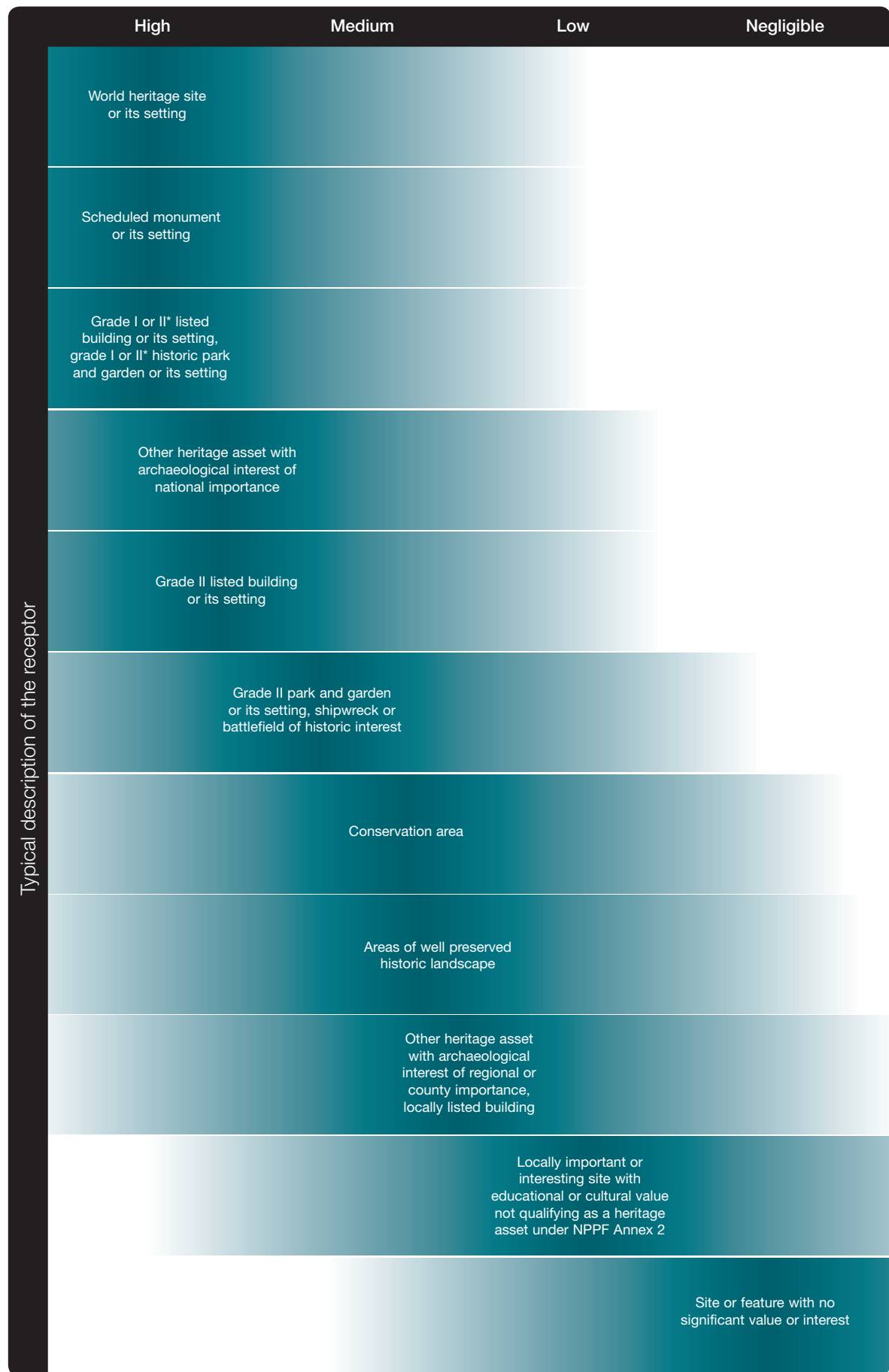
- Site boundary
- 1km study area
- Civic Amenities - Reservoir, Modern
- Civil Provision - Educational Facility, Modern
- Communication - Airfield (Commercial), Modern
- Communication - Rail transport sites, Modern
- Communication - Rail transport sites, post medieval
- Orn-Parkland / Designed Landscape, post medieval
- Piecemeal Enclosure, Modern
- Piecemeal Enclosure, Pre 18th Century
- Planned Enclosure,
- Planned Enclosure, post medieval
- Prairie / Amalgamated Enclosure, Modern
- Prairie / Amalgamated Enclosure, post medieval
- Recreation - Sports Facilities, Modern
- Reorganised Enclosures, Modern
- Reorganised Enclosures, post medieval
- Rural - Caravan/Chalet/Camping site, Modern
- Rural - Country House, Modern
- Rural - Village, Modern
- Rural - Farmstead, post medieval
- Urban - Town, Modern
- Urban - Town, post medieval
- Woodland -Secondary Woodland,
- Woodland -Secondary Woodland, post medieval



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Figure 5.3
Historic landscape characterisation

Sensitivity of receptor – Cultural heritage



Magnitude of change – Cultural heritage

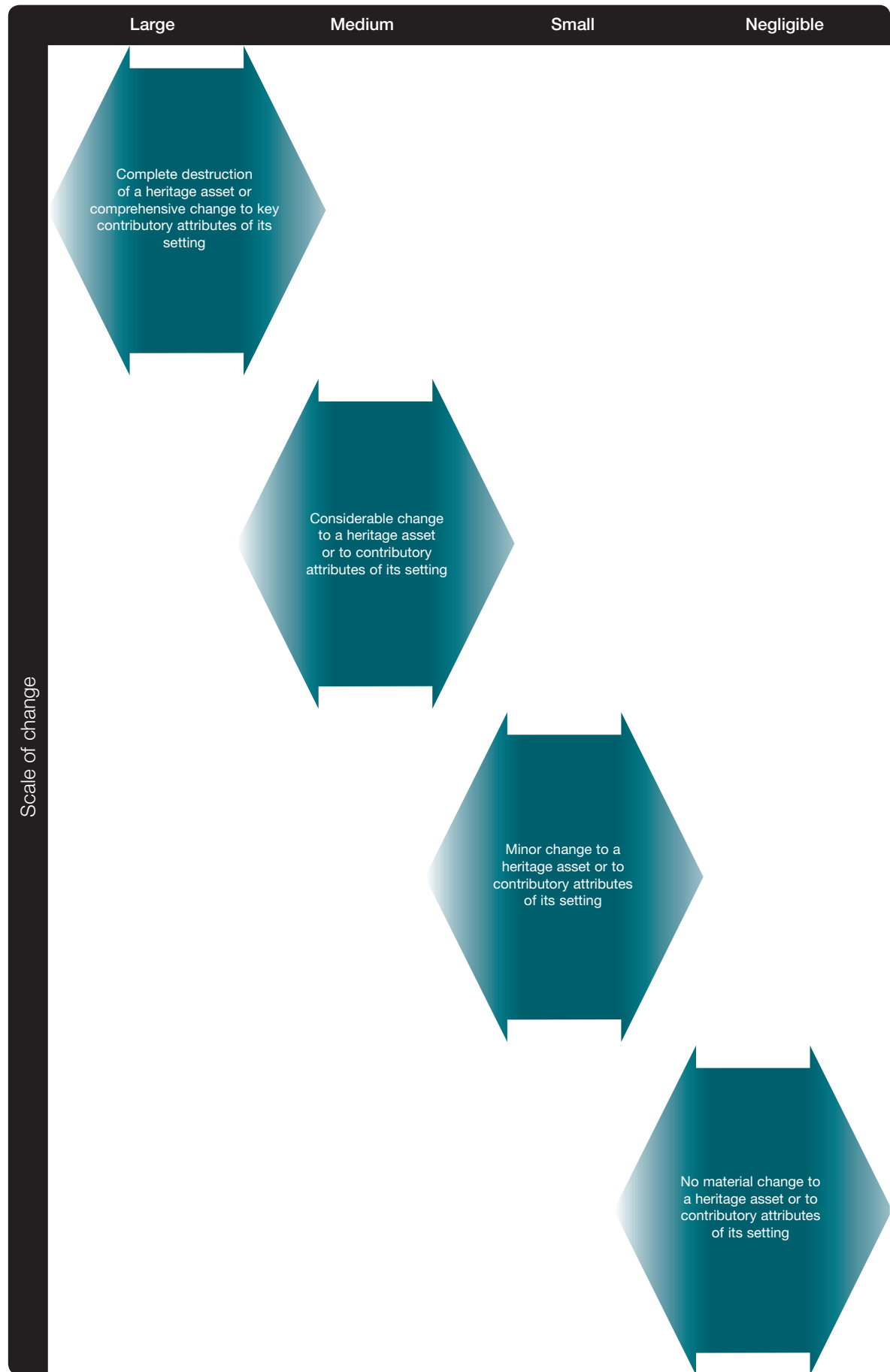
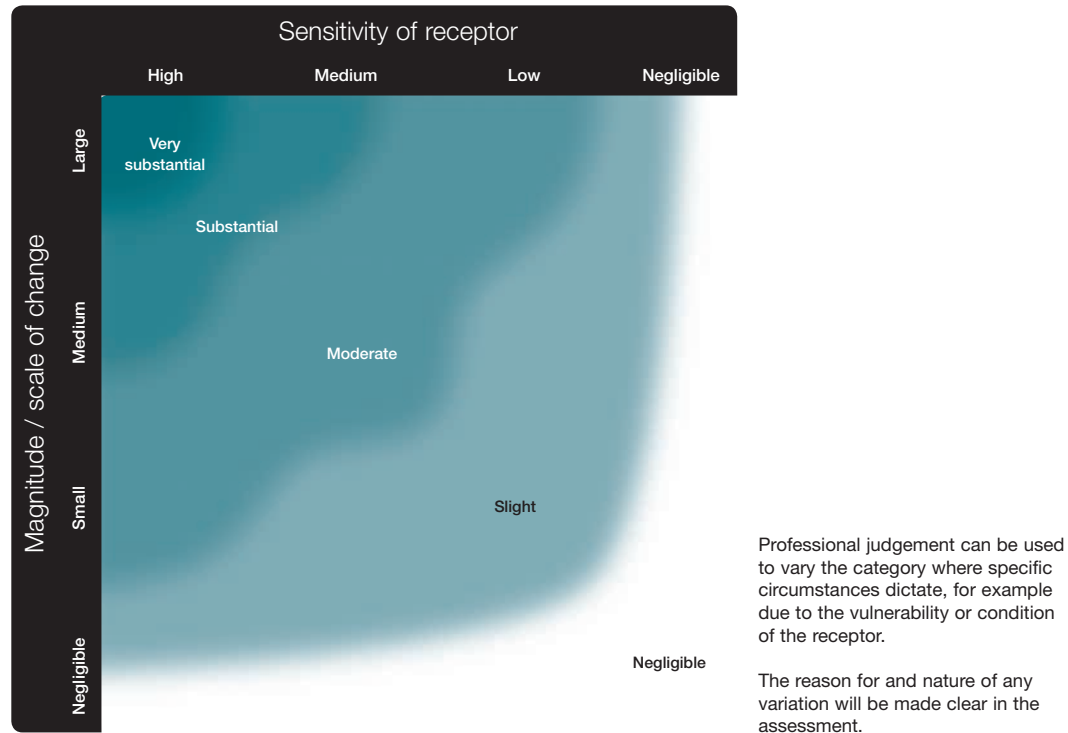


Figure 5.5 Impact magnitude
(cultural heritage)

Determination of significance matrix – Cultural heritage



Degree of effect

Very substantial

Adverse effects: Complete destruction of a heritage asset of high importance, or comprehensive change to its setting, so that the significance of the asset, or the ability to understand and appreciate that significance, are greatly altered or lost.

Beneficial effects: Major restoration or enhancement of a heritage asset of high importance, or comprehensive positive change to its setting, so that the significance of the asset, or the ability to understand and appreciate that significance, are revealed or greatly enhanced

Substantial

Adverse effects: Complete destruction of a heritage asset of less than high importance, or comprehensive change to its setting, or considerable change to an asset of high importance or its setting, so that the significance of the asset, or the ability to understand and appreciate that significance, are greatly altered or lost

Beneficial effects: Major restoration or enhancement of a heritage asset of less than high importance, or comprehensive positive change to its setting, so that the significance of the asset, or the ability to understand and appreciate that significance, are revealed or greatly enhanced

Moderate

Adverse effects: Considerable change to a heritage asset or its setting so that the significance of the asset, or the ability to understand and appreciate that significance, are altered

Beneficial effects: Considerable positive change to a heritage asset or its setting so that the significance of the asset, or the ability to understand and appreciate that significance, are enhanced

Slight

Adverse effects: Minor change to a heritage asset or its setting so that the significance of the asset, or the ability to understand and appreciate that significance, are altered

Beneficial effects: Minor positive change to a heritage asset or its setting so that the significance of the asset, or the ability to understand and appreciate that significance, are enhanced

Negligible

No material change to a heritage asset or its setting or to the ability to understand and appreciate its significance

Significance of effects

If the degree of effect is moderate or above, then the effect is considered to be significant.

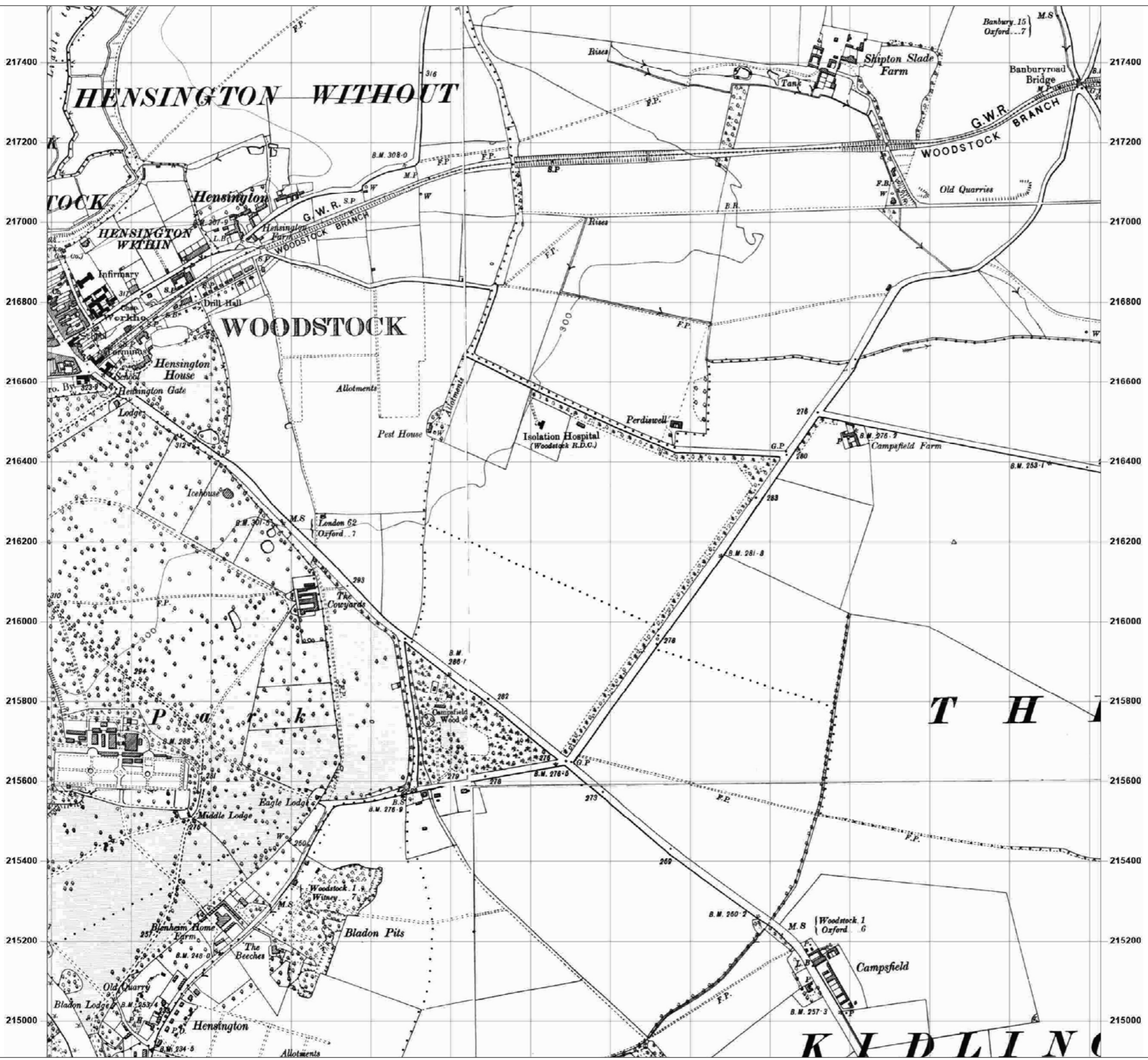


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Land East of
Park View
 Woodstock

Figure 5.7a
 Ordnance Survey map 6" to a mile
 scale, dated 1876-80

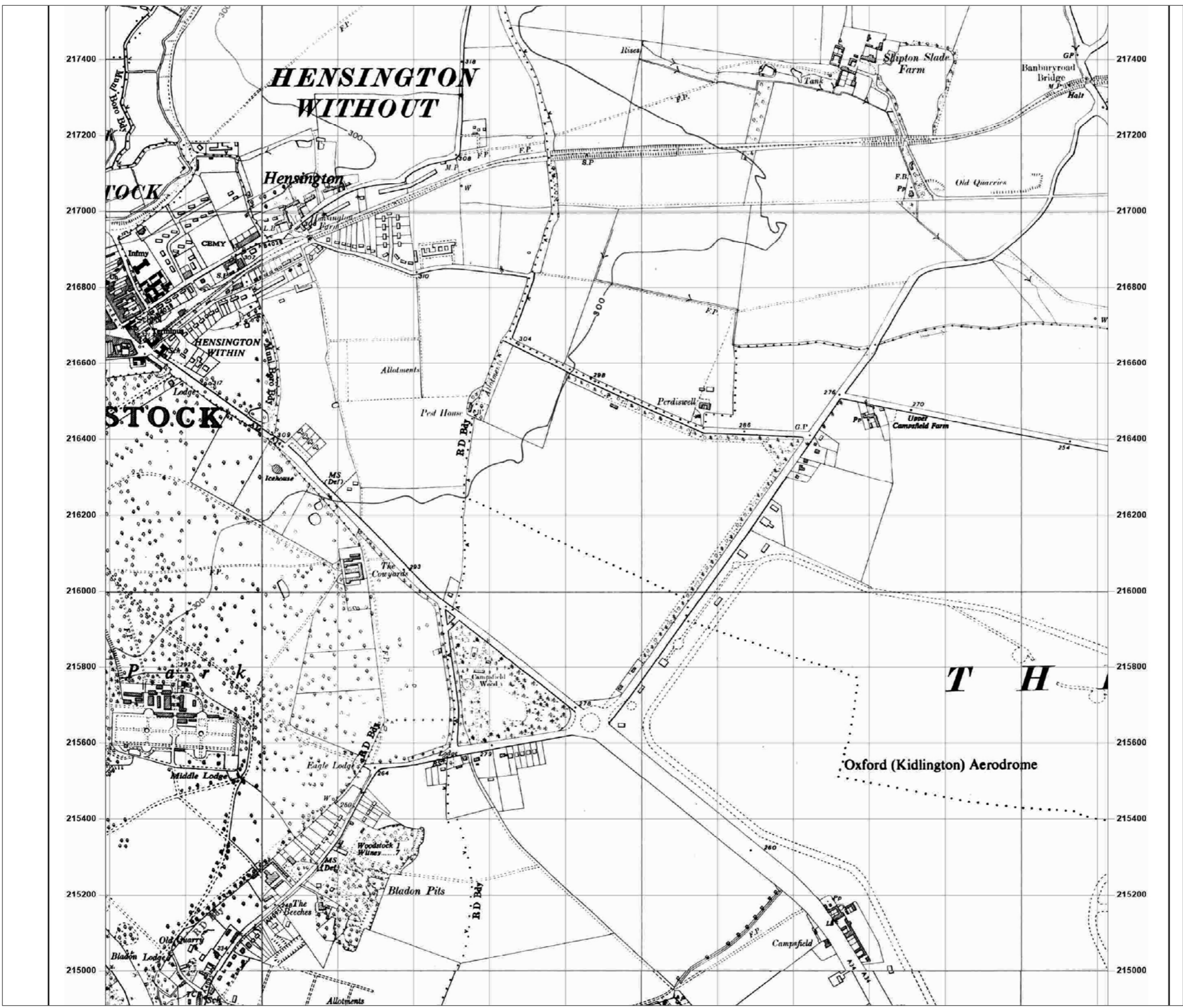


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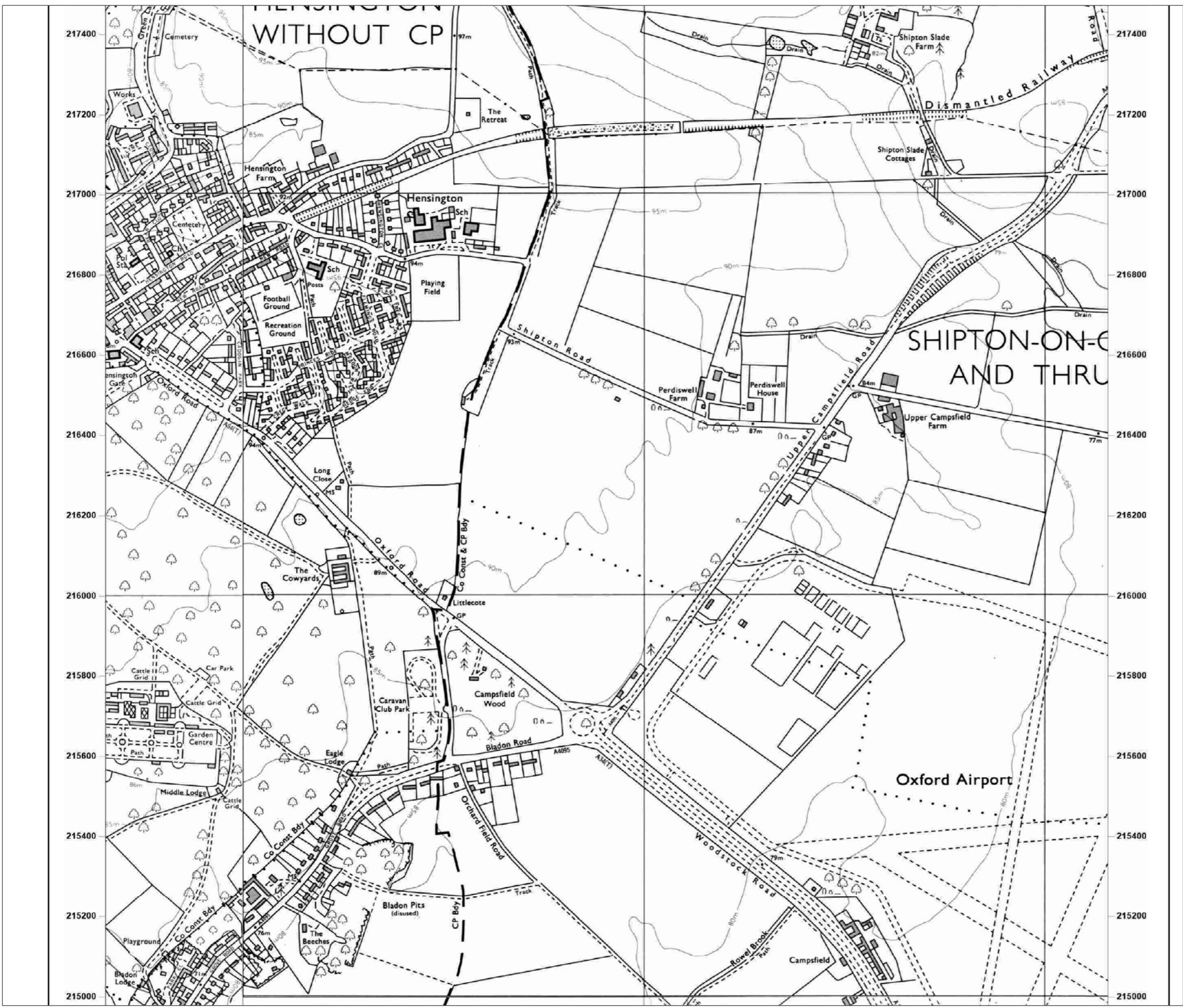


Land East of
Park View
 Woodstock

Figure 5.7b
 Ordnance Survey map 6" to a mile
 scale, dated 1919-23

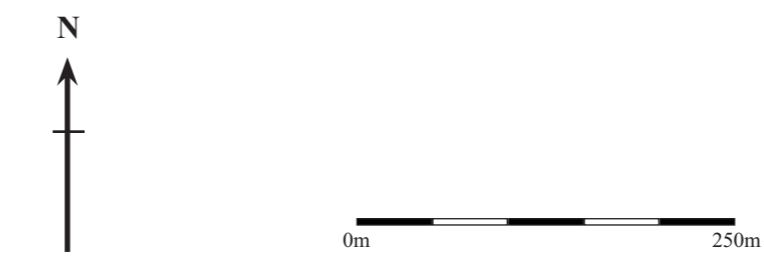
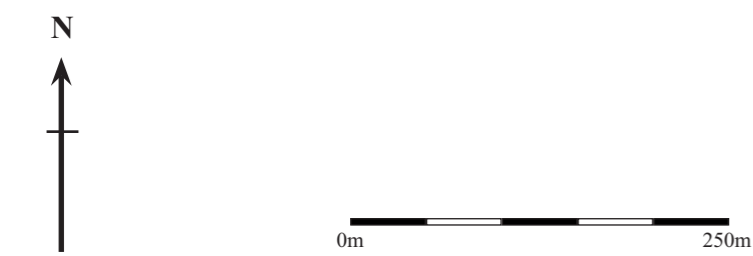
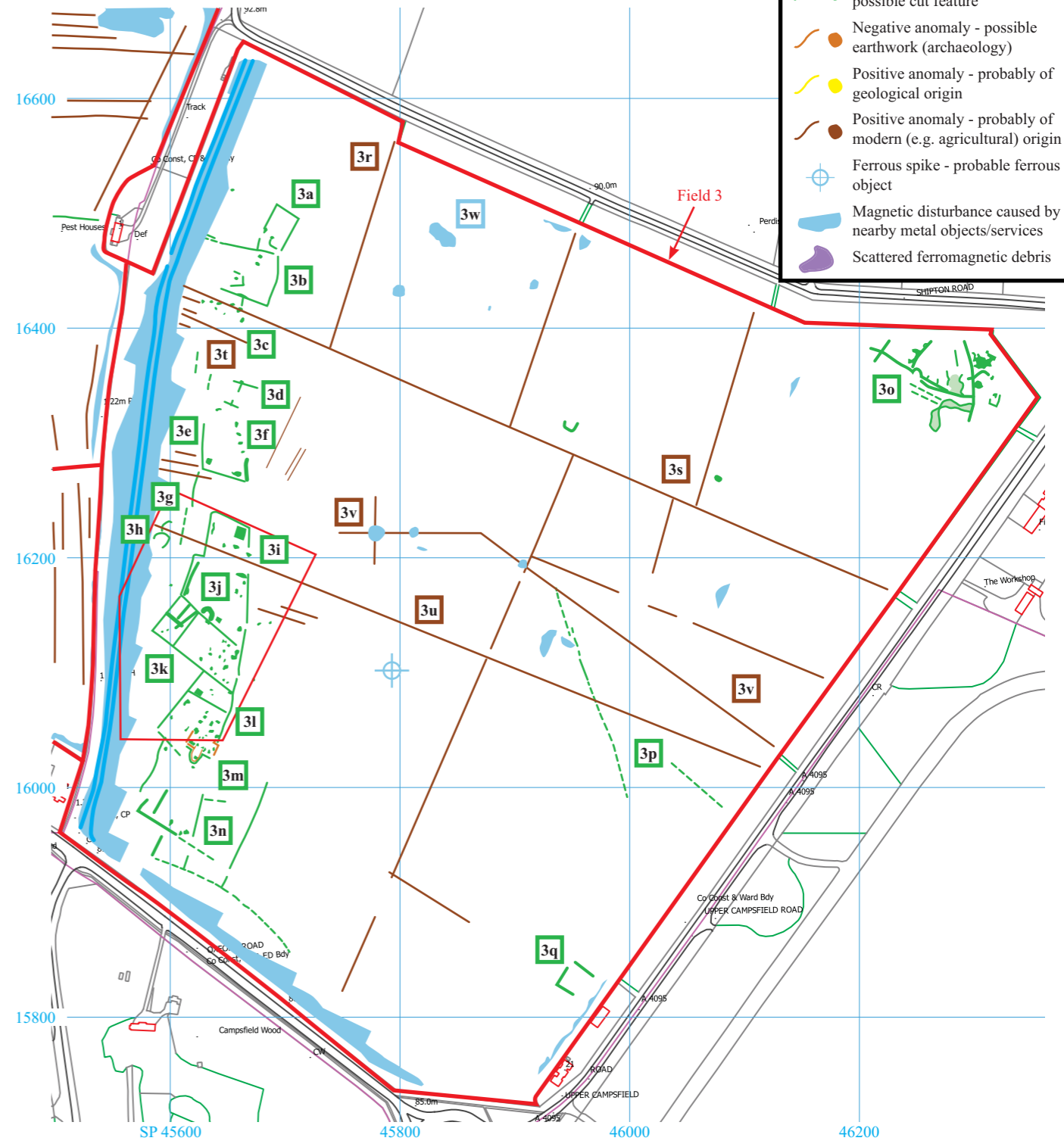
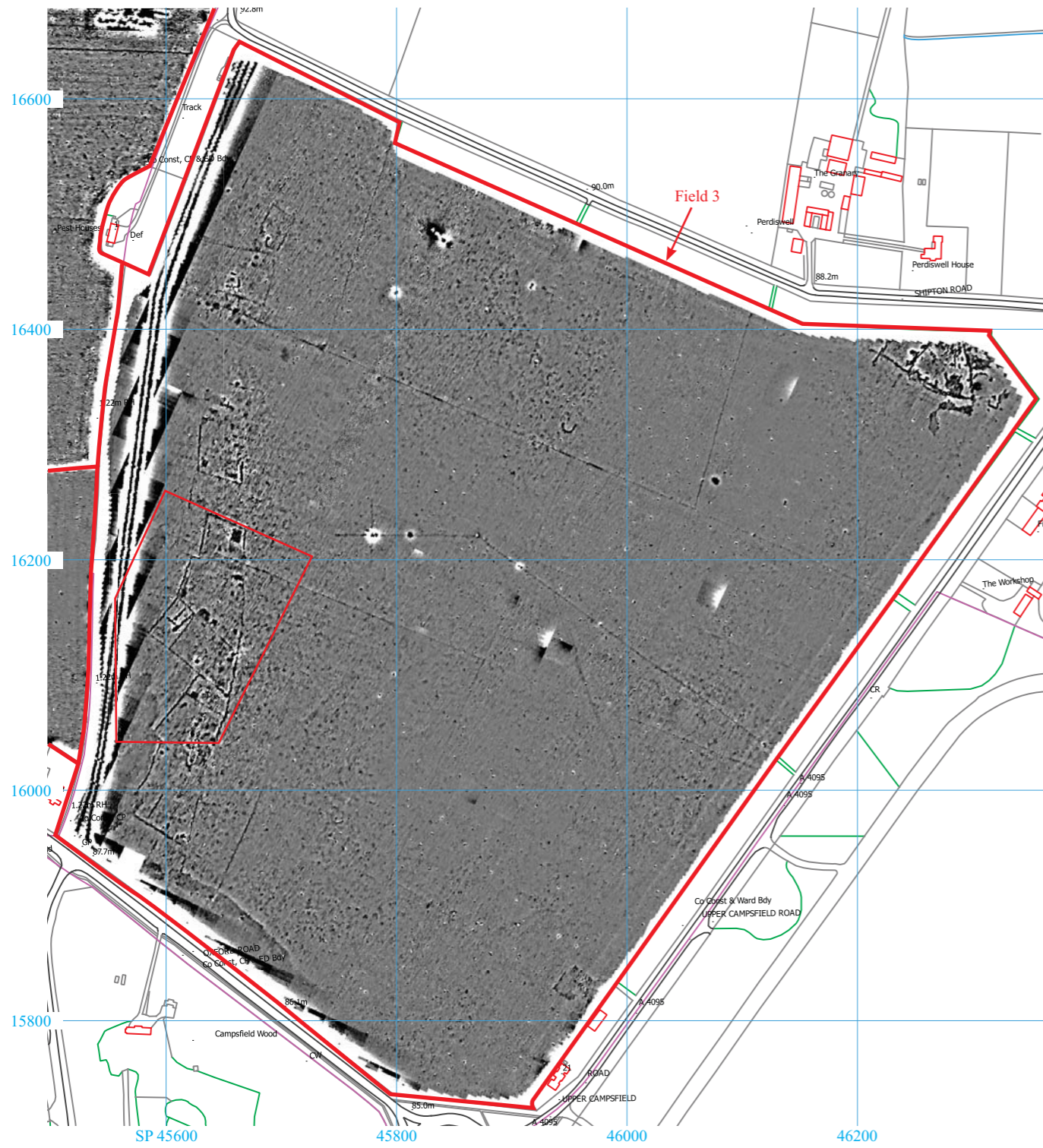


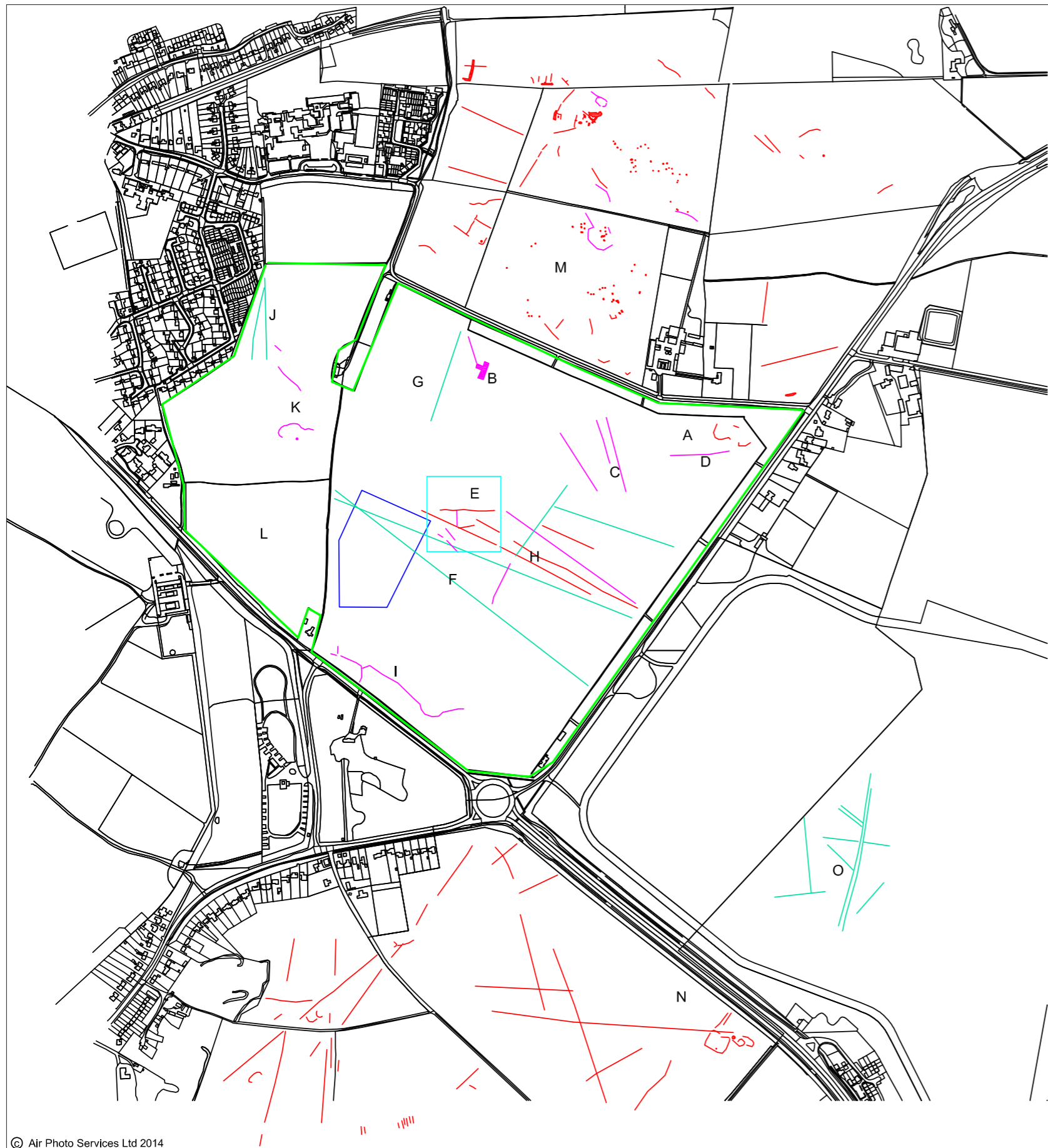
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- | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
|  | The site |  | Area of archaeological potential |
|  | Buried cut features | A | Sites and areas discussed in the text |
|  | Likely modern boundaries |  | Presently Scheduled area |
|  | Possible archaeological features | | |

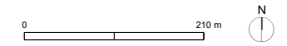
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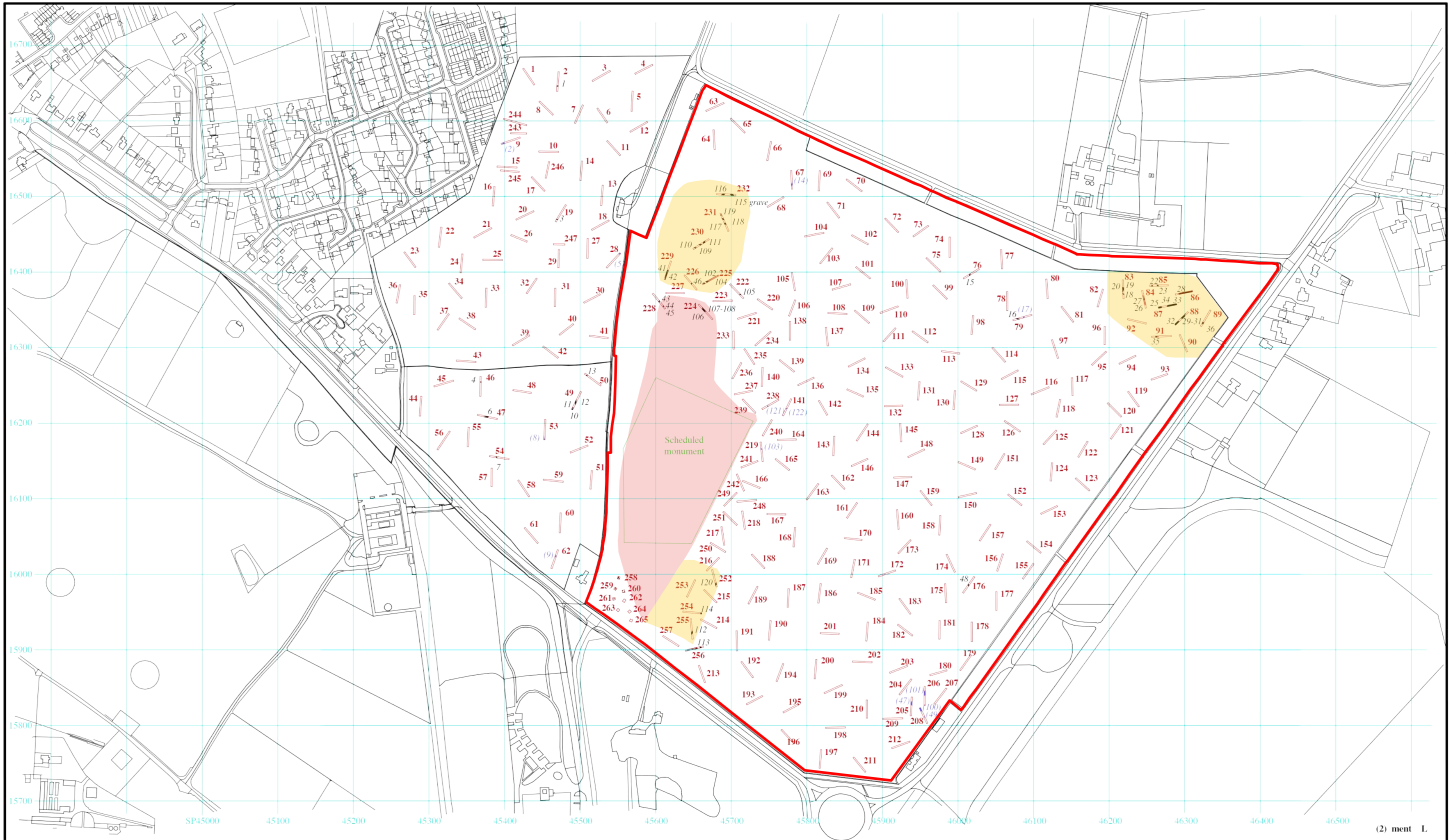
 Site boundary

Figure 5.9 Aerial photo analysis in relation to 1-metre digital surface LiDAR mapping



Land at Shipton Road, Woodstock, Oxfordshire, 2014 Archaeological Evaluation

- ▬ Application site boundary
- Areas of high archaeological potential
- Areas of low archaeological potential

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1) The view from the north east corner of the site looking towards the A44 Oxford Road and the park edge



2) The edge of Park View



3) View from the field gate on the A44 looking north across the site and towards Park View (under construction)



1) The approach to Woodstock on the A44 Oxford Road



2) The view east towards the site from the roundabout on the A44 and A4095 Witney Road



3) The view from the corner of Blenheim Park at the edge of Bladon Chains and Campsfield Wood



4) The site seen from the entrance to The Cowyards



1) The view towards the park edge from The Cowyards



2) The view across the Lower Park from the car park by the walled gardens