

# Water Eaton

PR6a : Land East of Oxford Road

Archaeology and Heritage Assessment

**Bellway**

  
**STRATEGIC  
LAND**



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WE/HER1/P 02



**Water Eaton**

**Archaeology and  
Heritage  
Assessment**

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On behalf of:  
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## Contents

### Non-technical Summary

<b>Section 1</b>	Introduction.....	1
<b>Section 2</b>	Methodology.....	7
<b>Section 3</b>	Legislation and Planning Guidance.....	13
<b>Section 4</b>	Existing Information.....	21
<b>Section 5</b>	Assessment.....	39
<b>Section 6</b>	Conclusions.....	53
<b>Section 7</b>	Bibliography .....	55

## Images

### Images EDP 1–14

## Plans

<b>Plan EDP 1</b>	Known Heritage Assets (edp5650_d067a 12 January 2023 GY/SDo)
<b>Plan EDP 2</b>	Known Designated Heritage Assets (edp5650_d068a 12 January 2023 GY/SDo)
<b>Plan EDP 3</b>	Extracts from the Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1899 (edp5650_d022b 23 12 January 2023 GY/SDo)
<b>Plan EDP 4</b>	Extracts from the 1936 – 7 Edition Ordnance Survey Map (edp5650_d023b 12 January 2023 GY/SDo)
<b>Plan EDP 5</b>	Extract from Environment Agency LiDAR: 2005 1m Digital Terrain Model (edp5650_d024b 12 January 2023 GY/SDo)
<b>Plan EDP 6</b>	Locations of Archaeological and Heritage Assessment Images (edp5650_d073 08 November 2023 GY/EST)

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006g	SDc	-	ES	SCh 260224

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## Non-technical Summary

- S1 This report has been prepared by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP), on behalf of Bellway Homes Limited and Christ Church, Oxford, and presents the results of an Archaeological and Heritage Assessment of land east of Oxford Road, known as 'Water Eaton'. The purpose of this report is to inform the submission of an outline planning application for residential development of the site, which is allocated as PR6a in the adopted Cherwell Local Plan – Partial Review.
- S2 This report concludes that the site does not contain any designated heritage assets, such as world heritage sites, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, registered battlefields or listed buildings, where there would be a presumption in favour of their physical retention and/or preservation *in situ*.
- S3 A Grade II\* listed farmhouse and associated Grade II listed garden wall, although not located within the site itself, lie immediately adjacent, c.50–75m to the east. These both comprise the designated assets at St Frideswide's Farm.
- S4 Whilst there would be no potential for direct impacts on the physical fabric of these listed buildings, they require consideration within the masterplan process to ensure that, notwithstanding the loss of the historically associated agricultural land within the site, where possible, the positive aspects of the settings of these listed buildings that contribute to their heritage significance are preserved within the development proposals.
- S5 With this in mind, it is considered that proposals could be developed in a manner which complies with the statutory duties laid out in s66 of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*, Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework as well as the adopted policy of the Cherwell Development Plan.
- S6 The Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) records three non-designated heritage assets within the boundary of the site. They comprise two round barrows (recorded as funerary monuments of prehistoric date) and a post-medieval milestone on the western boundary. The milestone, however, could not be identified within the site or on the road boundary during walkover surveys.
- S7 The heavily eroded, diffuse earthwork remains of the two round barrows were observed within the site during the site walkover and were later recorded as buried remains during archaeological investigations, as well as showing positively on LiDAR imagery as subtle earthwork features.
- S8 The programme of archaeological investigations undertaken across the site to inform this assessment included a geophysical survey and two phases of trial trenching.
- S9 The earliest feature recorded during the archaeological investigations dated to the late Bronze Age and comprised a single pit in the vicinity of the barrows. Within the southern portion of the site a cluster of penannular ring ditches was interpreted as roundhouses

forming the remains of a small, unenclosed Iron Age settlement. These prehistoric remains are considered to be of local significance.

- S10 The recorded remains of the two round barrows comprised their surrounding ditches and parts of their internal mounds. Based on the recorded stratigraphy, finds and carbon 14 evidence, the barrows have been dated to the early Anglo-Saxon period. As such, they are a relatively rare phenomenon in Oxfordshire and are consequently considered to be of regional significance.
- S11 Evidence of medieval and/or post-medieval agricultural practice, including former field boundaries and the ploughed-out remains of ridge-and-furrow cultivation, was also identified across the site during the archaeological investigations. These remains are considered to be of negligible significance.
- S12 With regard to the barrows, consultation with the Archaeological Advisor to Cherwell District Council has determined that these non-designated heritage assets should be retained *in situ*. Accordingly, an area of preservation, including a buffer of 5m around the buried and earthwork remains of the barrows has been agreed as a suitable mitigation strategy.
- S13 For the remainder of the archaeological features recorded in the site, the Archaeological Advisor to Cherwell District Council has confirmed that they can be addressed through a programme of excavation in advance of development, to be implemented as a condition of any outline planning consent.
- S14 In terms of non-designated built form, the assessment identifies the presence of Pipal Cottage on Oxford Road, although outside the extents of the proposed development site. Pipal Cottage is likely to be of 18<sup>th</sup> century origin, albeit with substantial modern alterations and extensions. To the immediate north of Pipal Cottage, and within the extents of the proposed development site, around a central courtyard are associated redundant farm buildings and barns, which have 19<sup>th</sup> century and later origins.
- S15 Pipal Cottage and the associated farm buildings within the site are considered to be heritage assets of local significance, given their very limited historic and architectural interest, and the extent of alteration they have experienced. Development options for the farm buildings associated with Pipal Cottage, include their retention and reuse in the proposed development or, subsequent to a suitable record being made, their demolition and replacement with new buildings if an appropriate and viable use for the existing buildings is not practicable.
- S16 In taking all of the above into consideration, the masterplanning strategy for the site could be developed in a manner which complies with current legislation, the planning policies contained within the NPPF and Policies ESD15 and C25 of the Cherwell District Council Statutory Development Plan.

## **Section 1**

### **Introduction**

- 1.1 This Archaeological and Heritage Assessment has been prepared by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP), on behalf of Bellway Homes Limited and Christ Church, Oxford, and presents the results of an archaeological and heritage assessment of land east of Oxford Road, known as 'Water Eaton'. The purpose of this report is to inform development proposals for the site allocated as PR6a within the Cherwell Local Plan Partial Review.
- 1.2 The first aim of this assessment is to consider the available historical and archaeological resources for the site and to establish its likely potential in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and local planning policy.
- 1.3 In accordance with best practice guidance, desktop sources have been augmented through the completion of a series of site walkover surveys, undertaken between November 2017 and March 2022.
- 1.4 The second aim of this assessment is to identify and assess possible changes within the settings of surrounding designated heritage assets as a result of residential development on this site, and to determine whether, and to what extent, those changes will affect their heritage significance.

#### **Location and Boundaries**

- 1.5 The site is located c.4.5km north of Oxford City centre and measures c.45.8 hectares (ha) in area, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) SP 50442 11123.
- 1.6 The site is located to the east of the A4165, Oxford Road to the north of Oxford. The northern boundary adjoins Oxford Parkway Park and Ride site. To the east, the site boundary crosses an open field, then follows field boundaries around St. Frideswide's Farm to the south, where the southern boundary adjoins Cutteslowe Park, Banbury Road North Sports Ground, and an adjacent field. The land to the south of the site boundary is within the administrative area of Oxford City Council (**Plan EDP 1**). It is occupied by six agricultural fields to the east of the A4165 'Oxford Road'.
- 1.7 The northern site boundary is formed by the Water Eaton park and ride complex; the western boundary is defined by the Oxford Road; the residential suburbs of Cutteslowe lie to the south; whilst further agricultural farmland lies to the east, beyond St Frideswide's Farm.
- 1.8 The southern point of access also forms part of the public right of way (PRoW) which crosses the site in an east-west direction (Route 229/9/30), continuing eastwards towards the River Cherwell and westwards through Site PR6b. A second PRoW crosses the application sites in a northeast-southwest in the southern part of the site, ending at the



Oxford City boundary. A permissive footpath also runs along the southern boundary of the application site, located within Cutteslowe Park. These provide access from Oxford Road towards Water Eaton Manor and beyond.

- 1.9 These public rights of way give informal views across open farmland to the north-north-west and centre of the site. The northern path, the Bridleway PRoW 229/9/30 is bounded by high hedgerows to the south, which obscures views of the south of the site, the location of the barrows, and St Frideswide's Farm beyond. The southern footpath PRoW 229/8/10 passes to the south of St Frideswide's Farm from Oxford Road where it converges with the Bridleway and continues south of Water Eaton Manor towards Woodeaton.
- 1.10 The site is irregular in shape and mainly consists of agricultural land, used as arable fields. Pipal Barns are also located within the site and are accessed from, and with a frontage onto, the A4165 in the north-west of the site. Pipal Cottage is located just outside the site boundary adjacent to Pipal Barns and the A4165, and St Frideswide's Farmhouse and farm buildings are located just outside the eastern site boundary.
- 1.11 The highest aspect of the site is the undulating hills located within the lower fields of the site to the east of the A4165 'Oxford Road', which sits at c.70m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), with the landform falling to c.60m aOD at the far northern and eastern boundaries.
- 1.12 The British Geological Survey (BGS, 2017) records the underlying solid geology at the site as sedimentary bedrock of the Oxford Clay and West Walton Formation (undifferentiated). In terms of superficial geology, a narrow band of Wolvercote sand and gravel enters the site from the south, tracking along the 70m contour up to St Frideswide's Farm, whilst alluvial deposits (clay, silt, sand and gravel) are recorded on the eastern site boundary.
- 1.13 The presence of alluvium may have preserved archaeological deposits between episodes of flooding, whilst the Wolvercote terraces are known to offer favourable conditions for Palaeolithic faunal and artefactual remains (Beckley and Radford, 2012).

### **Planning Background**

- 1.14 The entirety of the site is located within the confirmed allocation Policy PR6a, Land East of Oxford Road in '*Partial Review of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 - Oxford's Unmet Housing Need*'. This review contains specific development proposals for helping to meet Oxford's housing needs, with 4,400 homes allocated to Cherwell District.
- 1.15 Cherwell District Council submitted the Local Plan Partial Review (*Oxford's Unmet Housing Need*) to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government for formal examination on 05 March 2018. This was formally adopted as part of the statutory Development Plan by the Council on 07 September 2020.
- 1.16 Policy PR6a concerns the site and contains key delivery requirements and obligations for any forthcoming development proposals. PR6a comprises an "*urban extension to Oxford City*", allowing for 690 dwellings. Another planning application 21/01449/FUL, has been approved adjoining the site to the south, for 134 dwellings by Croudace Homes Ltd.

- 1.17 With regard to the site (Policy PR6a), Cherwell District Council note that:

*“Although development in this area will result in the loss of agricultural land and a golf course, some landscape and heritage impact and the loss of/harm to Green Belt, we consider that first, the benefits of developing in this area far outweigh those adverse effects and second, that the developments can be provided in a form that minimises the impacts, secures mitigation and achieves social, environmental and economic benefits.*

*Development can be provided while avoiding the more sensitive landscape of the Cherwell Valley, planning for a soft urban edge to the east, protecting the Grade 2\* Listed St Frideswide Farmhouse and the existing public rights of way, providing for an extension to Cutteslowe Park, integrating with the existing built environment and creating green infrastructure so that it helps achieve high-quality development, net gains in biodiversity and clearly defined, permanent Green Belt boundaries. The land is available and deliverable”.*

### **Proposed Development**

- 1.18 The description of the proposed development, as identified in the planning application forms are as follows:

*“Outline application (with all matters except access reserved for future consideration) for the demolition of existing buildings and the erection of up to 800 dwellings (Class C3); a two form entry primary school; a local centre comprising: convenience retailing (not less than 350sqm and up to 500sqm (Class E(a))), business uses (Class E(g)(i)) and/or financial and professional uses (Class E(c)) up to 500sqm, café or restaurant use (Class E(b)) up to 200sqm; community building (Class E and F2); car and cycle parking; associated play areas, allotments, public open green space and landscaping; new vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access points; internal roads, paths and communal parking infrastructure; associated works, infrastructure (including Sustainable Urban Drainage, services and utilities) and ancillary development. Works to the Oxford Road in the vicinity of the site to include, pedestrian and cycle infrastructure, drainage, bus stops, landscaping and ancillary development.”*

### **Consultation**

- 1.19 Prior to the planning application, a specification for the assessment of archaeological potential was agreed between the representatives of EDP and Richard Oram, Lead Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Council (also the Archaeological Advisor to Cherwell District Council). This was to include a geophysical survey of the site, followed by trial trench evaluation. Prior to any archaeological investigations, a written scheme of investigation was produced by each of the appointed archaeological contractors (Oxford Archaeology (OA), Cotswold Archaeology (CA) and West Yorkshire Archaeological Services (AWYAS/WYAS) detailing the Local Authority’s requirements for work necessary to inform the planning process.

- 1.20 In June 2021 the Principal Planning Officer (Major Developments) responded to a scoping consultation request. The Officer collated responses from both Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council.
- 1.21 This outlined that the site is within an archaeological alert area in respect of Cutteslowe deserted medieval village (DMV) and there are ‘tumuli’ (i.e. the round barrows) within the site, which are to be retained within the landscape design. The report sets out a general methodology for assessing the impact of the development on the historic environment, which is appropriate in respect of archaeology. The scoping report stated that a programme of geophysical survey was undertaken, and a trenched evaluation would follow and therefore proposed to append these reports to the Environmental Statement. It stipulated results of these field evaluations will also need to be fully incorporated into the cultural heritage section of the EIA in order that they are used to fully inform the assessment.
- 1.22 It added that at that stage, the comments of Cherwell District Council’s Conservation Officer and Historic England were awaited. The further comments are summarised below.
- 1.23 As a result of the request from the Planning and Development Officer, a Scoping Opinion was sought from Cherwell District Council’s Conservation Officer in July 2021 (21/01635/SCOP). The Conservation Officer was of the opinion that this development was likely to impact upon designated heritage assets and their settings in the area around the site. It suggested that the works will also impact on non-designated heritage assets on or around the site.
- 1.24 A subsequent site visit was undertaken with the Cherwell District Council’s Conservation Officer in December 2021.
- 1.25 Historic England was consulted and in June 2021 it identified some designated heritage assets beyond the application site’s boundary whose setting may be affected by the proposed development. This included the listed buildings:
- St Frideswide’s Farm House, Grade II\* listed (List entry No. **1286525**), and the associated;
  - Wall approximately 10m to north-east of St Frideswide’s Farmhouse, Grade II (List Entry No. **1370050**); and
  - A group of six listed buildings at Water Eaton Manor.
- 1.26 Historic England also determined that the potential impact on the significance of the following non-designated sites and their setting should be considered:
- Pipal Cottage and Barns; and
  - The group of farm outbuildings falling within the curtilage of St Frideswide’s Farmhouse.

- 1.27 In general, however, the Historic England response deferred to the Archaeological Advisor and the District responses.
- 1.28 Further consultation responses were received from the CDC Conservation Officer and Historic England subsequent to the submission of a planning application for the site in April 2023. Further information was requested by CDC and Historic England to inform the decision-making process. In respect of heritage matters, this included the production of additional photomontages modelling the development parameters, focussing on views towards and from the Grade II\* Listed St Frideswide's Farm House. These photomontages are included as an appendix to the Environmental Statement that informs this current application.
- 1.29 The results of the field evaluations and geophysical surveys are included within **Section 4** of this report.
- 1.30 The designated and non-designated assets identified in the consultation responses above will be described and the potential impact of the proposed development will be evaluated within **Section 5** of this report.

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## Section 2 Methodology

### General Assessment and Data Collection Methodology

- 2.1 This report has been produced in accordance with the Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA, 2020). These guidelines provide a national standard for the completion of desk-based assessments.
- 2.2 The assessment involved consultation of readily available archaeological and historical information from documentary and cartographic sources. The major repositories of information comprised:
- Information held by both the Oxfordshire and Oxford City Historic Environment Records (HER) on known archaeological sites, monuments and findspots, within c.1km of the site;
  - Maps and documents held by the Oxfordshire History Centre and online repositories;
  - The National Heritage List for England (NHLE) curated by Historic England;
  - Aerial photographs held by the Historic England Archive (HEA);
  - Readily available LiDAR (light detection and ranging) imagery, provided by the Environment Agency (see specific methodology below);
  - The results of a geophysical survey undertaken by WYAS in 2020; and
  - Two archaeological trial trenching evaluations in December 2020, undertaken by Oxford Archaeology for the southern (Phase 1) parts and Cotswold Archaeology in April–May 2021 for the northern (Phase 2) parts of the site.
- 2.3 This report provides a synthesis of relevant information for the site derived from a search area extending up to 1km from its boundary (for non-designated heritage assets, see **Plan EDP 1**), hereafter known as the ‘study area’, to allow for additional contextual information regarding its archaeological interest and/or potential to be gathered. For designated heritage assets, a 1km study area, expanded to include the adjacent Water Eaton Manor, was considered appropriate (see **Plan EDP 2**).
- 2.4 The information gathered from the repositories and sources identified above was checked and augmented through the completion of site visits and walkovers. These walkovers considered the nature and significance of known and/or potential archaeological assets within the site, identified visible historic features and assessed possible factors, which may affect the survival or condition of known or potential assets.



- 2.5 This report thereafter concludes with an assessment of the site's likely archaeological potential, made with regard to current best practice guidelines.

### ***LiDAR Data***

- 2.6 Airborne LiDAR data was utilised as a source of primary data for this assessment. LiDAR scanning records height data and has applications in the recording of archaeological earthworks.
- 2.7 A Digital Terrain Model (DTM) for the site was acquired from Environment Agency Data available online. Resolution of the data is at one data point for each 1m<sup>2</sup>, therefore comprising a useful resolution for archaeological prospection, however, more so for the identification of larger earthworks.
- 2.8 The DTM was processed using the Relief Visualisation Toolbox (ver. 1.3 ZRC SAZU, 2016). This software allows for a range of visualisation techniques to be applied to the data. Different techniques have varying degrees of successful application, depending on the nature of the environment where the data was collected. As such, the whole suite of visualisations was produced, and then the individual images appraised as to their usefulness in the current context. This appraisal identified that of the visualisation techniques, multiple direction hill-shades produced the best quality and most useful imagery for the assessment.

### ***Multiple Direction Hill-shades***

- 2.9 Relief shading or hill-shading is the most commonly used LiDAR visualisation technique. It illuminates the DTM from a specific angle, imitating the sun and as such, produces the most 'natural' and intuitively readable imagery. However, it has limitations, in those areas facing directly towards or away from the illumination source are saturated (homogeneously bright or dark respectively) and little detail can be perceived, plus features that lie parallel to the light source can be imperceptible.
- 2.10 This effect can be overcome by combining hill-shades from different directions in three different colour bands (RGB) into a single image. This technique was used to produce useful images for the assessment, providing an additional source of data on the site's archaeological potential, and which was used for guiding the walkover survey.
- 2.11 In addition to assessing archaeological potential, this report also considers the nature and significance of any effects arising beyond the boundary of the site, i.e. in terms of the settings of designated heritage assets, as defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF.

### ***Setting Assessment Methodology***

- 2.12 When assessing the impact of proposals on designated heritage assets beyond the boundary of a development site, it is not a question of whether there would be a direct

physical impact on that asset, but instead whether change within its 'setting' would lead to a loss of 'significance'.

- 2.13 In simple terms, setting is defined as *"the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced"*. It must be recognised from the outset that 'setting' is not a heritage asset and cannot itself be harmed.
- 2.14 Historic England guidance (see below) identifies that, whilst change within the setting of a heritage asset is all but inevitable, it will only result in harm when significance is lost or damaged.
- 2.15 In that regard, 'significance' is defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as *"the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic"*.
- 2.16 As such, when assessing the impact of proposals on designated heritage assets beyond the boundary of a development site, it is not a question of whether setting would be affected, but rather a question of whether change within an asset's 'setting' would lead to a loss of 'significance' based on the above 'heritage interest' as defined in the NPPF.
- 2.17 Set within this context, where the objective is to determine the impact of proposals on designated heritage assets beyond the boundary of a development site, it is necessary to first understand the significance of the asset in question (and the contribution made to that significance by its 'setting'), in order to establish whether there would be loss, and therefore harm. The guidance identifies that change within a heritage asset's setting need not necessarily cause harm to that asset - it can be positive, negative or neutral.
- 2.18 In light of the above, the assessment of potential setting effects, arising from proposed development on this site, has followed the guidance set out in *'Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition'* published by Historic England in 2017. This guidance observes that:

*"The NPPF makes it clear that the extent of the setting of a heritage asset 'is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve,"*

And that:

*"Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate the significance or may be neutral."*

- 2.19 The guidance states that the importance of setting *"lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset or the ability to appreciate that significance"*.

- 2.20 It goes on to note that:

*"All heritage assets have significance, some of which have particular significance and are designated. The contribution made by their setting to their significance also varies."*

*Although many settings may be enhanced by development, not all settings have the same capacity to accommodate change without harm to the significance of the heritage asset or the ability to appreciate it.”*

- 2.21 Whilst identifying that elements of an asset’s setting can make an important contribution to its significance, the guidance states that:

*“Setting is not a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, although land comprising a setting may itself be designated”. It continues by adding that: “Conserving or enhancing heritage assets by taking their settings into account need not prevent change; indeed change may be positive....”.*

- 2.22 On a practical level, the Historic England guidance (2017) identifies an approach to assessing setting in relation to development management which is based on a five-step procedure; i.e.:

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

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

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

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

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

2.25 Having established the baseline, the following guidance is provided in respect of an assessment of the effect upon 'setting'; i.e.:

*"In general... the assessment should address the key attributes of the proposed development in terms of its:*

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

2.26 Furthermore, the potential effects of a proposed development on the historic core of the city of Oxford, as a heritage asset itself, with reference to the ten 'Oxford View Cones', as identified in the 'Assessment of the Oxford View Cones' (AOVC) (OPT 2015) document, has been undertaken.

2.27 In assessing the implications of change with reference to the heritage assets identified within the ten View Cones, the AOVC identifies the standard approach to the consideration of setting advocated by Historic England, as set out above.

2.28 In line with the guidance detailed above, the investigative process – employed in the preparation of the heritage setting assessment, focused on the completion of site survey, which was undertaken across a series of site visits between 2017 and 2021 and concentrated on the following three main areas; i.e.:

1. Identifying those heritage assets, which will potentially be affected by a proposed scheme and the manner in which they will be affected;
2. Defining the contribution made to their 'significance' by their settings; and
3. Assessing the likely impact upon their setting and significance as a result of the form of development proposed being implemented.

2.29 In light of the above, the heritage setting assessment conducted as part of this report has been carried out in a robust manner employing current best practice professional guidance, giving due regard to the methodology and guidance detailed above.

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## **Section 3**

### **Legislation and Planning Guidance**

- 3.1 The following section summarises the key legislative and planning policy context, relevant to a proposed development at the site, at both national and local levels.

#### **Current Legislation**

- 3.2 Sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* set out the duties of Local Planning Authorities in respect of the treatment of listed buildings and conservation areas through the planning process.
- 3.3 In particular, Section 66(1) of the 1990 Act sets out the statutory duty of the decision-maker, where proposed development would affect a listed building or its setting.
- 3.4 The ‘*special regard*’ duty of the 1990 Act has been tested in the courts and confirmed to require that ‘*considerable importance and weight*’ is afforded by the decision-maker to the desirability of preserving a listed building along with its setting.
- 3.5 Furthermore, insofar as conservation areas are concerned, Section 72(1) of the 1990 Act identifies the following:

*“In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area...special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area”.*

- 3.6 It must be recognised that: (1) there is **no** statutory duty to enhance the character or appearance of a conservation area, the courts have confirmed that development which ‘preserves’ them is acceptable; and (2) the statutory duty only covers development that is within a conservation area, the ‘setting’ of a conservation area is addressed by planning policy.
- 3.7 Paragraph 205 of the NPPF transposes Section 66(1) and Section 72(1) of the 1990 Act into national planning policy.
- 3.8 The balancing exercise to be performed – between the harm arising from a proposal and the benefits that would accrue from its implementation – is then subsequently presented in paragraphs 206–209 of the NPPF.

#### **National Planning Policy**

- 3.9 The NPPF sets out national planning guidance concerning archaeological remains and other elements of the wider historic environment (DLUHC, 2023).



3.10 The opening paragraph of Section 16 [195] emphasises the need for local authorities to set out a clear strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, where heritage assets are recognised as an “*irreplaceable resource*”, to be preserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

3.11 Paragraph 200 addresses planning applications, stating that:

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

3.12 Designated assets are addressed in paragraphs 205–206, which state that:

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

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

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

3.13 Annex 2 of the NPPF defines a ‘designated heritage asset’ as:

*“...a World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation”.*

3.14 Annex 2 of the NPPF defines ‘significance’ as:

*“...the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.” (MHCLG 2021).*

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

*“The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.”*

### **Local Planning Policy**

- 3.15 The entirety of the site falls within the Cherwell District Council administrative area, however, given the proximity of the site to the Oxford City administrative area (defined by the southern site boundary), planning policy relevant to both planning authorities has been considered as part of this assessment.
- 3.16 The Cherwell Local Plan 2011–2031 (Part 1) was formally adopted in July 2015, being readopted in December 2016 following an allocation policy amendment for Bicester. Cherwell Local Plan Adopted November 1996 (saved policies) are also relevant.
- 3.17 The Plan provides the strategic planning policy framework and sets out strategic site allocations for the District to 2031. The Plan forms part of the Statutory Development Plan and provides the basis for decisions on land use planning affecting Cherwell District. A new local plan is currently in development up to 2040.
- 3.18 Policies contained within the adopted Local Plan, relevant to the historic environment, includes ‘Policy for Ensuring Sustainable Development (ESD)’, specifically:

#### **Policy ESD 15: The Character of the Built and Historic Environment**

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

*New development proposals should:*

- *Contribute positively to an area’s character and identity by creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness and respecting local topography and landscape features, including skylines, valley floors, significant trees, historic boundaries, landmarks, features or views, in particular within designated landscapes, within the Cherwell Valley and within conservation areas and their setting;*
- *Conserve, sustain and enhance designated and non-designated ‘heritage assets’ (as defined in the NPPF) including buildings, features, archaeology, conservation areas and their settings, and ensure new development is sensitively sited and integrated in accordance with advice in the NPPF and NPPG. Proposals for development that affect*

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

- *Include information on heritage assets sufficient to assess the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. Where archaeological potential is identified this should include an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation;*
- *Respect the traditional pattern of routes, spaces, blocks, plots, enclosures and the form, scale and massing of buildings; and*
- *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.*

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

- 3.19 Cherwell District Council have stated in the Local Plan Part 1, that they will provide more detailed design and historic environment policies in the Local Plan Part 2 (which was under preparation at the time of writing this report).
- 3.20 The Adopted Cherwell Local Plan (Part 1) 2011–2031, also has an existing local plan, comprising the Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996. The saved policies from this plan presently remain part of the Statutory Development Plan, until they are replaced by the Local Plan Part 2.
- 3.21 The saved policies within the Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996, which are relevant to the historic environment, comprise:

*Policy C25 – "In considering proposals for development which would affect the site or setting of a scheduled ancient monument, other nationally important archaeological sites and monuments of special local importance, the Council will have regard to the desirability of maintaining its overall historic character, including its protection, enhancement and preservation where appropriate."*

*Policy C28 – "Control will be exercised over all new development, including conversions and extensions, to ensure that the standards of layout, design and external appearance, including the choice of external-finish materials, are sympathetic to the character of the*

*urban or rural context of that development. In sensitive areas such as conservation areas, the area of outstanding natural beauty and areas of high landscape value, development will be required to be of a high standard and the use of traditional local building materials will normally be required.”*

- 3.22 Furthermore, Policy C18 relates to listed buildings and their alteration. Although principally concerned with development affecting the building itself, the policy does make reference to the setting of listed buildings, implying that the effect on the setting of a listed building will be a consideration in the decision-making process.

### **The Cherwell Local Plan 2011–2031 (Part 1) Partial Review - Oxford's Unmet Housing Need**

- 3.23 The Cherwell Local Plan 2011–2031 (Part 1) Partial Review – Oxford's Unmet Housing Need was formally adopted as part of the statutory Development Plan by the Council on 07 September 2020.
- 3.24 The Plan provides the strategic planning framework and sets out strategic site allocations to provide Cherwell District's share of the unmet housing needs of Oxford to 2031.
- 3.25 The site is included in the Cherwell Local Plan Partial Review as a Strategic Allocation (Policy PR6a). Policy PR6a allocates the site for mixed-use development including around 690 dwellings, a two form entry primary school, a local centre and recreation space. The Planning Application Requirements in respect of the historic environment included in the site-specific policy include the following:

*“15: The application shall be supported by a Heritage Impact Assessment which will identify measures to avoid or minimise conflict with the identified heritage assets within the site, particularly the Grade 2\* Listed St Frideswide Farmhouse. These measures shall be incorporated or reflected, as appropriate, in any proposed development scheme.”*

*“18. The application(s) shall be supported by a desk-based archaeological investigation which may then require predetermination evaluations and appropriate mitigation measures. The outcomes of the investigation and mitigation measures shall be incorporated or reflected, as appropriate, in any proposed development scheme.”*

*“25. The provision of a landscaped green infrastructure corridor at the eastern settlement edge which links Cutteslowe Park to Oxford Parkway, minimises the visual and landscape impact of the development, creates an appropriate setting to the Listed St. Frideswide’s Farmhouse and Wall, and provides a clear distinction between the site and the Green Belt.”*

*“29. The location of archaeological features, including the tumuli to the east of the Oxford Road, should be incorporated and made evident in the landscape design of the site.”*

### **Oxford City Council Planning Policy**

3.26 Oxford City Council are in the stages of preparing a new local plan, to cover the period 2016–2036. Until the new Oxford Local Plan 2036 is adopted, the Core Strategy 2026 and saved policies from the Local Plan 2001–2016 will guide development in the district.

3.27 Policy CS18 of the Core Strategy 2026 considers the Historic Environment and notes:

*“Development proposals should respect and draw inspiration from Oxford’s unique historic environment (above and below ground), responding positively to the character and distinctiveness of the locality. Development must not result in loss or damage to important historic features, or their settings, particularly those of national importance and, where appropriate, should include proposals for enhancement of the historic environment, particularly where these address local issues identified in, for example, conservation area character appraisal or management plans. Views of the skyline of the historic centre will be protected”.*

3.28 Of the ‘Saved Policies’ taken from the Oxford City Council Local Plan 2001–2016, the following is potentially relevant to the proposed development:

#### **Policy HE.10 – View Cones of Oxford**

*“The City Council will seek to retain significant views both within Oxford and from outside, and protect the green backcloth from any adverse impact. Planning permission will not be granted for buildings or structures proposed within or close to the areas that are of special importance for the preservation of views of Oxford (the view cones) or buildings that are of a height which would detract from these views. The View Cones of Oxford are indicated on the Proposals Map”.*

3.29 The AOVC (2015) represents Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) to the Oxford Core Strategy. The AOVC (2015) was conducted by the Oxford Preservation Trust and Historic England on behalf of Oxford City Council (OCC), which is part of a suite of studies being undertaken as an evidence base for the forthcoming Heritage Plan. The Oxford View Cones Study describes and evaluates *“the heritage significance of the 10 Oxford View Cones, as protected by the Oxford Local Plan (2001- 2016) and the Oxford Core Strategy, in order to fully understand how they can be most effectively managed in the future”.*

3.30 Focusing on the ‘dreaming spires’, the AOVC identifies the city in heritage terms (1.5.2):

*“The View Cones were conceived as a means of assessing and managing the impact of change on the views of the historic core of the city and skyline. In the language of modern planning the city is experienced in these views as a single large heritage asset formed of numerous buildings, areas and landscape features (such as open spaces, belts of trees, rivers) each of which gains significance from its contribution to the heritage interest of the city as a whole and the historic experience of viewing it. The landscape surrounding the city is seen and understood, partly through its contrast with it”.*

- 3.31 The AOVC identifies the standard approach to the consideration of setting advocated by Historic England. In planning policy terms, the requirement exists to determine the contribution the setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset – and then to assess the effect of any proposed development on that contribution (however, it so manifests).
- 3.32 The plans and policies identified above have all been considered in the preparation of this assessment.



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## Section 4 Existing Information

### Introduction

- 4.1 The site does not contain any designated heritage assets, such as world heritage sites, scheduled monuments, listed buildings, historic parks and gardens or registered battlefields; nor does it fall within a conservation area. The nearest conservation areas are Oxford Canal and Wolvercote with Godstow Conservation Areas (situated c.1.7km west and c.1.3km south-west respectively).
- 4.2 Within 1km of the site there are no scheduled monuments, eight listed buildings (comprising one listed at Grade II\* and six listed at Grade II). Just outside the 1km line to the north-east of the site is a small cluster of six listed buildings, a Grade I Chapel, a Grade II\* Manor House, and four Grade II associated walls and buildings related to the manor.
- 4.3 Searches returned by the Oxfordshire and Oxford City Historic Environment Records have identified four records within the site, ranging in date from the prehistoric to post-medieval periods. In the wider study area 34 records are identified and those of relevance to this assessment are discussed by period in the following sections. The locations of non-designated heritage assets are shown on **Plan EDP 1**.

### Designated Heritage Assets

- 4.4 There are no designated heritage assets within the boundary of the site, where there would be a presumption in favour of physical preservation *in situ*.

### Scheduled Monuments

- 4.5 An initial scoping exercise (informed by the results of the Landscape Visual Assessment – see **Plan EDP 2**), has identified that the nearest scheduled monument, Port Meadow (**1010717**) is situated c.1.3km to the south-west, at Upper Wolvercote.
- 4.6 This scheduled monument comprises a number of buried and low-lying archaeological features, mainly dating to the later prehistoric period. Historic England note that “*although some of the items are visible from the ground, the majority can only be seen from the air. Indeed, the range and number of items present on Port Meadow was not fully realised until air photographs were first taken in 1933*”.
- 4.7 In this regard (i.e. on account of the features low-lying and/or buried nature), the setting of the scheduled monument, or the ‘surroundings in which it is experienced’, is heavily restricted by the surrounding built form of the Oxford suburbs and the A34 ring road.
- 4.8 Indeed, this monument is not visible from the site due to intervening built form, topography and vegetation (i.e. mature trees and hedgerows), and, as such, it has no potential to

experience any indirect effect from a development in the site, as a result of change within its 'setting'. This position was verified in the field during the course of the field visits and assessment of the site's wider environs.

- 4.9 Accordingly, as this scheduled monument is not considered to have the potential to be affected by the form of development proposed within the site, it is not discussed further within this assessment report.

### **Listed Buildings**

- 4.10 The identification of those listed buildings selected for further assessment (which follows in **Section 5**), was undertaken following the methodology set out in **Section 3**.

- 4.11 Following initial desk-based analysis, including recourse to a Landscape Site Visibility Plan (EDP, 2021 Landscape Assessment) and confirmed through site visits, it was established that eight listed buildings are either sufficiently close to the site and/or potentially share intervisibility with it, such that the site could potentially form part of their setting(s).

- 4.12 The listed buildings with the potential to be affected by development within the site are concentrated in the immediately surrounding environment and within the wider agricultural landscape to the east and north-east of the site, where there is a more undeveloped, open aspect, and therefore, where there is a greater potential for the site to form part of their setting(s) and/or contribute to significance in this way.

- 4.13 The significance of each asset, and the contribution made to significance by its setting are considered in **Section 5**. The assessed assets comprise:

- The Grade II\* listed St Frideswide's Farm House (**1286525**), situated c.50m east of the site;
- The Grade II listed St Frideswide's garden wall (**1370050**), situated c.75m east of the site;
- The Grade II\* listed Water Eaton Manor (**1046562**), situated c.1.05km north east of the site;
- The Grade I listed Chapel at Water Eaton Manor (**1046563**), situated c.1.09km north east of the site;
- The Grade II listed South Pavilion and attached walls at Water Eaton Manor (**1369721**), situated c.1.07km north east of the site;
- The Grade II listed Gateway at Water Eaton Manor (**1046564**), situated c.1.08km north east of the site;
- The Grade II listed North Pavilion and attached walls at Water Eaton Manor (**1046565**), situated c.1.1km north east of the site; and

- The Grade II listed Dovecote at Water Eaton Manor (**1046566**) situated c.1.14km north-east of the site.
- 4.14 The remaining five listed buildings plotted on **Plan EDP 2** comprise two farmhouses, a former turnpike tollhouse, a 19<sup>th</sup> century townhouse, and a turnpike milestone. The character and location of the majority of these buildings indicates that their settings are defined by the fieldscapes and settlements immediately surrounding them and not the wider agricultural land within the site.
- 4.15 The positions of these listed buildings, not only in relation to the site, but also in relation to their surroundings (i.e. street scenes or agricultural landscapes), are such that it is considered highly unlikely that they would experience a loss of significance as a result of a development scheme being implemented.
- 4.16 In each case, their functions, forms and locations are such that they clearly do not possess any inter-relationships of potential significance or inter-visibility with the site.
- 4.17 It was determined during the site visits and visits to its wider environs, that the site does not form part of the surroundings in which these assets are experienced due to intervening built form, topography and/or vegetation (i.e. mature trees and hedgerows). As such, it is considered that none of the assets could potentially experience an indirect effect from a development, as a result of change to their 'setting'.
- 4.18 Accordingly, as none of the remaining five listed buildings are considered to have the potential to experience any form of change to their setting, in terms of the form of development proposed within the site, they are not considered further within this assessment report.

#### ***Views of the Historic Core of Oxford and its Skyline (Oxford View Cones)***

- 4.19 The potential for impacts on the heritage significance of the city of Oxford, as a single highly graded heritage asset, through reference to the AOVC (OCC 2015), has also been undertaken.
- 4.20 The AOVC is part of a suite of studies being undertaken as an evidence base for the forthcoming Heritage Plan. The Oxford View Cones Study describes and evaluates *"the heritage significance of the 10 Oxford View Cones, as protected by the Oxford Local Plan (2001-2016) and the Oxford Core Strategy, in order to fully understand how they can be most effectively managed in the future"*.
- 4.21 For each view, the AOVC provides a thorough analysis of the viewer, the place and the landscape, including any identified archaeological and historical values that contribute to the experience, before finally providing a commentary with regard to the 'sensitivity to change' of the view and its various contributing elements (including heritage assets) at various distances/scales (streetscape, middle distance, city centre and background).

- 4.22 For each of the ten View Cones, the initial assessment concluded that a typical residential development would not form any part of the specific field of view represented in the AOV, and that none of the heritage assets within the View Cones were sensitive to change in this respect. Consequently, the Oxford City View Cones are not discussed further in this assessment report.

### **Conservation Areas**

- 4.23 As for the Oxford Canal and Wolvercote with Godstow Conservation Areas (situated c.1.7km west and c.1.3km south-west respectively), given the distance between the site and these conservation areas, combined with the effects of intervening built form (i.e. settlement, roads and railways), topography and vegetation, it is considered that there is no potential that they would be adversely impacted by a residential development within the site.
- 4.24 Indeed, it was determined during the site visit and visits to its wider environs, that views between the site and the conservation areas (and vice versa) are screened by the intervening built form of North Oxford, including the A34 dual carriageway and mainline railway. As such, the site does not form part of the setting of these assets.
- 4.25 The conservation areas are not 'experienced' from within the site and neither does the site form part of the experience of either of these conservation areas. Therefore, development of the form proposed within it will not affect either conservation area's character and appearance, or the setting and significance of the listed buildings within them. Consequently, both the Oxford Canal and Wolvercote with Godstow Conservation Areas (and the listed buildings they contain), are not considered further within this assessment report.

### **Non-designated Heritage Assets**

#### ***Palaeolithic-Iron Age (c.500,000 BC-AD 43)***

- 4.26 The findspot of six Palaeolithic handaxes (**12912**) is recorded by the Oxford City HER, c.360m south-west of the site, along Oxford Road. The finds were recovered from a drainage trench in c.1968. No further detail is provided on the HER, hence it is unknown whether the finds came from one location or along the course of the trench, which itself, may have covered some distance.
- 4.27 The Oxford City HER records further Palaeolithic finds within the study area, comprising numerous flint implements (**1379**), flakes (**6783**) and a broken handaxe (**14271**), all of which were found some distance to the south of the site, either within, or along the edge of the Wolvercote gravel terraces and/or the ancient channel of the Thames.
- 4.28 Two Mesolithic maceheads (**1325** and **1315**) were found within the study area during the mid to late-20<sup>th</sup> century, however, the exact find locations are unknown, being plotted by a general grid square reference, to the south-west of the site. A Mesolithic

micro-burin (**26215**) and a Neolithic cushioned macehead (**9243**) have also been recovered from the same general area.

- 4.29 A Neolithic polished stone axe (**4944**) was recovered from the surface of a ploughed field in 1975, c.450m east of the site, and a Neolithic to Bronze Age antler hoe (**4979**) was found immediately south of this location in 1977.
- 4.30 Other lithic findspots within the study area include a fragment of a Neolithic flint adze blade (**6163**) found c.150m south of the site; a later prehistoric flint flake (**2389**) found in the general grid square to the south-west of the site; and a later prehistoric lithic scatter (**15557**) found c.600m south-east of the site.
- 4.31 The number and typology of prehistoric artefacts recovered from the study area is a clear indication that the landscape was continually utilised during the prehistoric period. The artefact evidence is supported by archaeological features, some of which are indicative of settlement, albeit attributed to the later-prehistoric epoch.
- 4.32 The Oxfordshire HER records three prehistoric assets within the site and these comprise the ploughed remains of two Bronze Age round barrows (**1324** and **1354**), located on higher ground within the site. Outside of the site the western side of Oxford Road the HER identifies a further Bronze Age round barrow (**1323**).
- 4.33 The two round barrows within the site are located within an arable field on the eastern side of the A4165 Oxford Road and south of the bridleway. Little description is provided on the HER for these monuments, but the HER postulates that they may comprise the '*twam lythan beorgam*' of the bounds of 'Eatun', which is thought to relate to the documenting of these barrows in the Anglo-Saxon period. In the 1930s, the site of the barrows was identified by aerial photographs and on the ground (BHO 2022; Cam and O.G.S.C. 1935; 96–98). The HER does note that the remains have been ploughed over, as confirmed during the site walkover and subsequent evaluation (see below) and they have clearly experienced a significant degree of truncation.
- 4.34 The results of geophysical survey (ASWYAS 2018; EOX6737) were in part used to establish the positions of 126 archaeological trial trenches that were investigated by Oxford Archaeology in 2020 (OA 2021; EOX6939). The evaluation revealed that two of the trenches (115 (eastern barrow) and 119 (western barrow)) contained material relating to the barrows with their surrounding ditches and parts of the internal mounds surviving. Trench 115 revealed the first (eastern) barrow with a mound height of 0.24m and 33m in diameter. Within this trench the mound material was recorded as sealing a pit, containing a cremation burial with a near-complete Anglo-Saxon urn. Other finds included Iron Age Pottery and charcoal. Trench 119 contained possibly one side of the second (western) round barrow, with a mound height of 0.24m and an indeterminate diameter. It contained Iron Age pottery and animal bone. Carbon 14 samples were taken from features within trench 115 (eastern barrow). Carbon 14 samples were taken from the fill of a pit under the barrow mound, which revealed a date of the late Bronze Age, and a sample of pyre material within an Anglo-Saxon cremation vessel found in the eastern barrow of trench 115, which

gave an Anglo-Saxon date. From this, Oxford Archaeology concluded that the barrows were likely of an Anglo-Saxon date rather than being prehistoric as previously assumed.

- 4.35 Within the centre of the site (c.200m to the south-west of St Frideswide's farm) a cluster of penannular geophysical anomalies identified in the geophysical survey (ASWYAS 2018; EOX6737) were examined by Oxford Archaeology. These revealed four curved and round features, which contained Iron Age pottery, fired clay and animal bone. These were interpreted as roundhouses forming a small, potentially unenclosed settlement. Less dense activity extended to the east, with a further gully in trench 19, pits in trenches 18 and 27 and a linear ditch in trench 18 all containing Iron Age material.
- 4.36 In April and May 2021, Cotswold Archaeology (EOX6938) carried out an archaeological evaluation of the northern field within the site. A single worked flint flake of broad prehistoric date was recovered from the subsoil within a trench excavated in the central-eastern part of the site. Otherwise there was no evidence for datable prehistoric activity recorded across the north extents of the site, nor north of the bridleway.
- 4.37 In the wider study area, the HERs record 21 prehistoric assets and a further six undated assets, which could reasonably be attributed to this period.
- 4.38 A probable Bronze Age ring-ditch (**17433**) is recorded from aerial photographs, c.520m east of the site, close to the River Cherwell. In the same general area, there is an undated mound with associated flints (**1332**) and a number of rectilinear and curvilinear enclosures with associated trackways (**17430**, **17434** and **17435**).
- 4.39 A 'long-lived settlement' spanning the Iron Age/early Roman period, to the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD (**28426**) is recorded c.870m south-west of the site, adjacent to the A40 and A34 western bypass. Following excavation by Foundations Archaeology in 2008 (**EOX5627**), the settlement was found to be a 'non-intensive, low-status rural site'.
- 4.40 A second possible Iron Age to Roman settlement complex (**17431**) is recorded c.575m north-east of the site, however, this has been identified via historic aerial photographs and not evaluation or excavation. Nonetheless, the complex of conjoined rectilinear and curvilinear enclosures, with associated trackways, is suggestive of a settlement of possibly late Iron Age or Roman date. This site may be associated with an aggregate field system identified immediately to the north (**9654**).
- 4.41 Iron Age artefacts recovered from the study area include pottery sherds (**6180**), a *La Tene* bronze dagger scabbard (**26374**) and two bronze coins of Greek origin (**1326**). All of these artefacts are recorded in the general grid square to the south-west of the site.
- 4.42 Whilst undated, there are a number of assets within the wider study area that could reasonably be attributed to this period.
- 4.43 The final recorded asset attributable to this period comprises an undated long barrow in the vicinity of Cutteslowe (**1331**), the location of which is unconfirmed and based entirely

on conjectural evidence. Consequently, it is not considered to influence the archaeological potential of the site.

- 4.44 The potential of the site to contain archaeology of prehistoric date has been confirmed through geophysics and evaluation trenching. These investigations confirm the presence of a single Bronze Age pit and Iron Age settlement remains in the southern portion of the site. Prehistoric activity of this nature is relatively common in the Oxfordshire context, and the remains are therefore considered to be of local significance. It has also been established that the two barrows previously thought to be of prehistoric date are in fact of Anglo-Saxon origin.

#### ***Romano-British (AD 43–410)***

- 4.45 No features of Romano-British date are recorded in the site by the HER.
- 4.46 However, within the centre of the site (c.200m to the south-west of St Frideswide's Farm) the occupation of the Iron Age settlement identified during the archaeological investigations may have continued into the Romano-British period.
- 4.47 Cotswold Archaeology (CA 2021 EOX6938) carried out an archaeological evaluation of the northernmost field of the Site. A single sherd of pottery of broad Romano-British date was recovered from a gully, identified in the north-western part of the site. Two further, albeit undated, gullies were identified in nearby trenches and may be broadly contemporary. The function of these gullies remains unclear, although they are considered most likely to be associated with small-scale agricultural activity. Two further sherds of pottery and a fragment of Ceramic Building Material of broad Romano-British date were recovered from topsoil and subsoil deposits within trenches excavated in the north-western and central-eastern parts of the site.
- 4.48 Perhaps the most noteworthy Roman record within the study area, is the site of a possible villa at Cuttleslowe (**16253**). The site was identified in parched cropmarks in 1989, c.530m east of the site. When investigated on the ground, it is noted that 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century coins were found, however, there was no evidence for foundations.
- 4.49 The only other archaeological features attributed to the Roman period within the study area (notwithstanding the aforementioned Iron Age to Roman settlement sites), comprises several ditches c.120m north of the site (**16191**), beneath the Water Eaton park and ride complex. Evaluation of this site in 1998 (**EOX783**) revealed several ditches, one of which was of 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> century date, the remainder being post-medieval in origin. A subsequent watching brief carried out in 2003 (**EOX1091**) failed to encounter any further Roman remains at this site.
- 4.50 The remaining assets attributed to the Roman period within the study area comprise artefact findspots. These include coarse pottery sherds (**4645**) found at **28426**, Roman mortaria (**1637** and **1381**) from Peartree Hill, c.480m west of the site; various sherds (**6487**) found in a garden c.840m south of the site; Roman coins (**1317**, **1319** and **3572**)



from the same general location; and a possible net sinker (**11247**) found c.480m east of the site, close to the River Cherwell.

- 4.51 The evaluations by Oxford Archaeology and Cotswold Archaeology have confirmed that evidence of Iron Age to Romano British settlement activity survives within the southern portion of the site, in addition to evidence of discrete small-scale agricultural activity, with these remains considered to be of local significance.

#### **Early Medieval and Medieval (AD 410–1485)**

- 4.52 As have been described above, the two round barrows located within the centre of the site have been identified as being of Anglo-Saxon, i.e. early medieval, date.
- 4.53 British History Online (BHO 2022) states that “*The barrow from which Cutteslowe takes its name was associated with Cutha, possibly the West Saxon leader of that name killed in 584, but it is unlikely to have been his burial place, as its later use as a robbers' hideout suggests that it was a chambered long barrow. It was destroyed c. 1261 on the orders of the justices.*” This suggests that the barrow associated with the Anglo-Saxon leader Cutha was likely to have been a chambered long barrow (which are usually of a Neolithic date e.g. Wayland’s Smithy, near Uffington, Oxfordshire). However, as has been shown above, the two small round barrows uncovered at the site showed no evidence of a chamber and were of an Anglo-Saxon date. Therefore, it is unlikely that the barrows revealed at the centre of the site are the same long barrow described in British History Online. It is possible that they are associated with the Saxon leader Cutha, but there is no direct evidence for this.
- 4.54 The evaluation by Oxford Archaeology (OA 2021 EOX6939) included trial trenches across the barrows, identifying that their surrounding ditches and parts of the internal mounds survive. Within the centre of one barrow burnt charcoal rich deposits overlaid the mound material and may represent *in situ* pyre material. A pottery vessel containing cremated human bones had been inserted into the possible pyre material. The pot dated from AD 400–750 and exhibited fabric impressions and staining from an iron object, suggesting grave goods could remain within the barrow mound. Carbon 14 samples were taken of the pyre material within the Anglo-Saxon cremation vessel found with the barrow, and returned an Anglo-Saxon date. From this evidence, it is concluded that the barrows themselves were likely constructed in the Anglo-Saxon period.
- 4.55 None of the archaeological evaluations within the site indicate the presence of any other remains dating to the Anglo-Saxon period.
- 4.56 The two Anglo Saxon round barrows within the site are considered to be of regional significance.
- 4.57 Elsewhere in the study area, evidence of this date is limited to records of an ornamental bronze strap fitting (**26214**) and a weaving batten (**26367**), both recorded in the general grid square to the south-west of the site – i.e. their exact locations are unknown.
- 4.58 There are four heritage assets recorded in the wider study area of medieval date.

- 4.59 A DMV is recorded immediately east of the site (**1094**), at St Frideswide's. A medieval moat (**5869**) is also recorded at this location, noted as 'much ploughed down'. This site is thought to comprise an earlier site of Cutteslowe, defined by 'poor quality earthworks' dated by quantities of mostly 15<sup>th</sup> century pottery. The farm building remains and is listed at Grade II\*. It is postulated that the 'village' was deserted at some time between 1350 and 1450.
- 4.60 Further north, a second medieval settlement is recorded, comprising the shrunken village of Water Eaton (**1109**). An earthwork survey of the DMV found it to be much reduced by ploughing and encroached upon by buildings.
- 4.61 The final recorded asset attributed to this period within the study area comprises a field system (**6702**), c.520m south of the site.
- 4.62 It is evident (via aerial photographs, LiDAR and the site walkover survey), that large parts of the site were under the plough from at least the medieval period, evidenced by widespread ridge and furrow (see below and **Plan EDP 5**). This would suggest that the site comprised the farmed 'hinterland' of nearby settlements and was not utilised for occupation during this period.
- 4.63 During the 2021 evaluation by Cotswold Archaeology (EOX6938), a possible medieval-post medieval shoe was uncovered within the northern triangle of the site. There was also evidence of medieval and/or post-medieval agricultural practice, comprising the ploughed-out remains of ridge-and-furrow cultivation, identified in the south-eastern parts of the site.
- 4.64 Consequently, the evaluations by Oxford Archaeology and Cotswold Archaeology have confirmed that the barrows within the site are of the Anglo-Saxon period, and that the agricultural field systems on the site have their origins in the medieval period. Overall, there is considered to be a low potential to encounter any further significant buried remains of medieval date within the site, aside from remains of negligible value relating to the agricultural exploitation of the site throughout the medieval period.

#### ***Post-medieval to Modern (AD 1485–Present)***

- 4.65 There is one asset attributed to these periods within the site, as recorded on the Oxfordshire HER. This comprises a milestone (**10081**), positioned along Oxford Road, to the west of the site. The HER records that the broken stone reads 'Oxford 2, Banbury 20'. However, during the site walkovers this milestone could not be located.
- 4.66 A second milestone (**10044**) is recorded c.750m west of the site, along the A44. Neither asset is considered to influence the archaeological potential of the site, but rather attests to the presence of significant post-medieval thoroughfares in the site's surrounds
- 4.67 Indeed, a large number of post-medieval assets within the study area are related to industrial processes and transportation into and out of Oxford and are not considered to influence the archaeological potential of the site. These comprise:

- A brickworks (**41**) and brick pit (**5146**) at Peartree Hill, c.1.2km west of the site;
  - A brick kiln, clay pit (**1601**) and well (**288**) c.870m – 930m south of the site;
  - A length of private canal (**8942**), a canal wharf (**866**), drawbridge (**867**), lock (**12649**) and milestone (**4655**) along the course of the Oxford Canal, c.1.5km west of the site at its closet point;
  - A railway crossing house (**868**), signal box and weighbridge (**869**), c.590m west of the site; and
  - The site of Gosford grain silos (**26313**), c.210m north of the site.
- 4.68 The remaining asset attributed to the post-medieval period comprises a circular enclosure (**13479**), c.980m north-east of the site.
- 4.69 A Second World War pillbox (**MOC26942** and **EOC6303**) is recorded c.160m south of the site, just off Oxford Road. The structure is recorded as in good condition, noted in the garden to the rear of flats 580–588 Banbury Road.
- 4.70 On the western edge of the site along the Oxford Road, is Pipal Cottage and its associated barns to the immediate north. Pipal Cottage consists of a rectangular residential house at least twice extended to the north with further outbuildings within the garden (**Image EDP 16**). To the north and east is an L-shaped barn range, which consisted of a mixture of combination barn, and shelter sheds, such as cart sheds, and stables (**Image EDP 17**). The farmyard associated with the cottage was in place by 1876 (**Plan EDP 3**).
- 4.71 Pipal Cottage is likely to be of late 18<sup>th</sup> -early 19<sup>th</sup> century origin, with the courtyard of associated farm buildings to the north developing in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The characteristic vernacular features of the house include the use of local stone, a double ended chimney, and casement windows. The farmyard was orientated to the west towards the Banbury/Oxford Road, and has mature trees and hedging around it, largely screening it from the majority of the site to the south garden (**Image EDP 18**), while the cottage itself addresses an access off the road to the immediate south.
- 4.72 Pipal Cottage has experienced significant alteration and extension in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, since its construction on the Oxford/Banbury Road in the later post-medieval period. A large rectangular two storey extension of stone was built to the north of the cottage (mirroring the dimensions of the original cottage) with a two-storey link, as well as other additions to the north and west. These were added probably in the 1980s–1990s.
- 4.73 Pipal Cottage and the associated farm buildings to the north are considered to possess only limited heritage interest in view of their very limited historic and architectural interest, and the extent of alteration they have experienced. As such, they are considered to be heritage assets of only local significance.

- 4.74 It is likely that the wider site remained as agricultural land throughout the post-medieval and modern periods, as suggested by the historic mapping (see below), where it was farmed from St Frideswide's and the Water Eaton Estate.

#### **Undated**

- 4.75 The single undated asset recorded by the HERs (notwithstanding those discussed in the period specific sections above), comprises un-associated human and animal bones (**5745**), found c.950m south-east of the site. These records are not considered to influence the site's archaeological potential.

#### **Previous Archaeological Investigations**

- 4.76 The Oxfordshire and Oxford City HERs record 14 archaeological investigations with 1km of the site, beyond those discussed in the period specific sections above. The location and extent of the investigations are shown on **Plan EDP 1**.
- 4.77 Further to this, through consultation with the County Archaeological Advisor, it was established that there has been an evaluation and geophysical survey (EOX6737) over parts of the site as part of a proposed route to the A40 (which was never adopted), however, this was in the early 1990s and the reports have not been incorporated into the HER.
- 4.78 In 1985, pottery and bone from a possible Iron Age ditch were reported during the extension of No. 90 Linkside Avenue (**EOC6086**), c.550m west of the site. The identification was made by a former employee of the Oxford Archaeological Unit and only reported by a member of the public in 2016, no further information is available.
- 4.79 An excavation at Kidlington in 1995 (**EOX1304**), c.920m north-west of the site, produced a substantial assemblage of late Mesolithic to early Neolithic flint, as well as small, ditched enclosure.
- 4.80 A watching brief in 2000 at the site of the A34 services (**EOX84**), c.905m west of the site, did not reveal any finds or deposits of archaeological interest.
- 4.81 A number of investigations are recorded c.650m south-west of the site, in the vicinity of the Peartree interchange, park and ride and A40/A34 main western junction. A first phase of evaluation in 2001 (**EOX2787**) revealed nothing of interest. In the same year, an archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Thames Valley Archaeological Services at Oxford Hotel (**6191**). No significant archaeology was recorded and over 1m of made ground over mid brown silty clay geology was observed.
- 4.82 In 2012, an archaeological watching brief was carried out during the construction of a new underground fuel tank storage pit at the BP garage, Woodstock Service Station (**EOX5763**). Whilst it was thought there would be potential for important Pleistocene deposits and Palaeolithic remains to be present (due to the proximity of the old Wolvercote brick pit

Palaeolithic site), no such deposits were observed. Modern disturbance across the site ranged from 60cm below ground surface level to several metres.

- 4.83 In 2014, a magnetometer survey was undertaken by Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) on land between the Peartree and Wolvercote roundabouts (**EOC6093**), within the extent of the proposed 'Northern Gateway' development site. The survey detected medieval or post-medieval ridge and furrow and some areas of recently disturbed ground. Later that year, an earth resistance survey was undertaken (**EOC6092**), again by MOLA. Five sample areas were examined, and the survey detected medieval or post-medieval ridge and furrow, a possible outcrop of terrace gravel and some small rectilinear anomalies.
- 4.84 A subsequent archaeological evaluation (**EOC6280**) was undertaken by MOLA in 2015. Fifteen trenches were located across the site in three separate parcels of land. Several sherds of post-medieval pottery and a clay-tobacco pipe were recovered from some of the furrows, otherwise no archaeological remains or finds were identified during the evaluation.
- 4.85 An evaluation was undertaken by Oxford Archaeology in April 2017 (**EOC6194**), on land to the north of the A44 Woodstock Road and to the east of the A40 Northern Bypass. The work was undertaken as part of the Phase 1a Northern Gateway Project. An array of 12 trenches were excavated and the evaluation identified deposits and a linear feature representing the remains of a medieval field system, which appeared to have been truncated by later 19<sup>th</sup> century plough horizon. No other significant archaeological remains were identified.
- 4.86 Test pitting was undertaken at the site of Oxford North, near Wolvercote by Oxford Archaeology in July 2020 (**EOC6502**). Six 1x1m test pits were hand excavated in 10cm spits (to natural) through six separate ridges of the ridge and furrow. An earthwork survey was undertaken to ground-truth the results of the existing LiDAR data providing a contour survey of the upstanding ridge and furrow preserved in the north-east field covering c.4.5 hectares. Two orientations of ridge and furrow were identified, potentially of different date. The test pits identified three agricultural layers were present; topsoil, former ploughsoil and subsoil, but no evidence of significant manuring spreads was recovered. Finds from the test pits were mostly of later post-medieval date apart from a few fragments of possibly medieval ceramic based material and pottery.
- 4.87 Following on from the above test pitting, evaluation trenching was undertaken in July 2020 (**EOC6503**). A total of 19 trenches were excavated across the site. No significant archaeology was recorded.
- 4.88 A magnetometer survey was undertaken in 2020 (**EOC6537**) by Archaeological Surveys Ltd on land to the south of the site. The results demonstrated the presence of a weak, fragmented, positive linear anomaly that could relate to a cut, ditch-like feature, which has been truncated by ridge and furrow. Other short, positive linear and discrete positive responses were located, but generally lacked a coherent morphology. The site also contained a zone of strongly magnetic debris, which is surrounded by weakly positive amorphous responses, which could relate to former clay pits.

- 4.89 Following on from the geophysical survey an 11-trench evaluation was undertaken in November 2020 (OA 2020) within the site (**EOC6559**). A single trench revealed an undatable feature. It was very shallow and contained no dateable material and may relate to a former trackway to nearby farm buildings.
- 4.90 Isolated, negative investigations within the study area comprise:
- A nine-trench evaluation in 2008 (**EOX2348**), carried out c.960m west of the site, where no archaeological deposits were recorded;
  - A watching brief carried out in 2010 c.30m south of the site (**EOX3069**), where no archaeological finds or features were present at the site; and
  - A five-trench evaluation within the grounds of Elsfield Hall in 2013 (**EOX5699**), c.500m south of the site, which recorded no archaeological finds or features.

### **Cartographic Sources**

- 4.91 No title or enclosure map for the site is held at the Oxfordshire History Centre.
- 4.92 The earliest map consulted dates to 1876 and comprises the First Edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map (not reproduced). In this, the site is shown as in agricultural use, with the fields arranged in large, regular parcels. The map shows the Oxford Road running to the west with a pair either side of the access along the track leading east from Oxford Road to the Water Eaton Estate over 1km beyond the site.
- 4.93 The St Frideswide's Farm complex, including the farmhouse, is identified beyond the eastern edge of the site where, as at present, it was accessed from Oxford Road via a trackway heading east through the site. Immediately to the north of the main farmhouse this map depicts an enclosed orchard, while to the south of the farmhouse is a large pond, beyond which is a rectangular courtyard arrangement of agricultural buildings and an outlying building further south.
- 4.94 To the north of the Water Eaton Lodge buildings this map indicates the presence of Pipal Cottage and its associated courtyard of farm buildings adjacent to the Oxford Road. There is no mention of the round barrows or tumuli and their existence is not displayed on the mapping of this date.
- 4.95 A number of paths or tracks traverse the site on this mapping, branching off across the site from Oxford Road and heading in an eastwards or north-eastward direction. These provided access from Oxford Road towards Water Eaton Manor, St Frideswide's Farm and beyond.
- 4.96 The north-east boundary of the site is partially defined on this map by Water Eaton Copse, which lies north of St Frideswide's Farm and its associated orchard.

- 4.97 The London and North-Western Railway (L and N.W.) lies to the west of the site, beyond the Oxford Road. Surrounding the site are open agricultural fields bounded by hedgerows.
- 4.98 The Second Edition OS map of 1899 is reproduced as **Plan EDP 3** and this shows limited changes from the First Edition, but depicts the site and its surroundings in better detail.
- 4.99 The two round barrows are first mentioned as tumuli on the 1936 – 7 Edition OS map (see **Plan EDP 4**), otherwise no other changes are evident within the site.
- 4.100 At St Frideswide's Farm, this early 20<sup>th</sup> century map shows some reconfiguration of the courtyard buildings to the south of the farmhouse, and the addition of a linear range of outbuildings to the south-west of the courtyard, adjacent to the eastern site boundary. It is notable that the Water Eaton Copse to the east of the site had expanded southwards by this time, to meet the orchard to the immediate north of St Frideswide's Farm.
- 4.101 More widely, residential development of Cutteslowe had been established to the south of the site by this time.
- 4.102 The two small buildings comprising Water Eaton Lodge had been demolished by 1957 (not reproduced). By 1973 (not reproduced), residential development had been introduced up to the southern boundary of the site, however, aside from this, changes to the site and its surroundings are minimal, with it remaining in agricultural use throughout.
- 4.103 Changes shown on mapping from 1982 (not reproduced) involve the removal of Water Eaton Copse to the north of St Frideswide's Farm, leaving only a vestigial hedge line that now defines part of the north-east boundary of the site, and the introduction of further residential and industrial buildings to the south of the site, as the Oxford suburbs expanded northwards.
- 4.104 The available maps demonstrate little change within the site from the late-19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, and the site has remained as agricultural land farmed from Pipal Cottage associated with the Water Eaton Estate to the east as well as the St Frideswide's Farm immediately east of the site. Considering this sustained arable use, the site will have endured years of ploughing, most likely resulting in high levels of truncation to any existing archaeology.

### **Aerial Photographs**

- 4.105 Aerial photographs within the collection maintained by the Historic England Archive in Swindon were consulted to inform this report.
- 4.106 The available images span the period from September 1929 to July 2011 and show the agricultural use of the site from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

- 4.107 The standout features noted comprised ridge and furrow earthworks, which were clearly observable on photographs dated 1946–1975. The features become very faint after this date, suggesting significant reduction due to intensive modern ploughing.
- 4.108 The round barrows within the site were faintly visible on photographs dated 1946.
- 4.109 Beyond the site boundary, the moat at St Frideswide’s was clearly visible as a darker linear feature and a dense area of rectilinear and curvilinear cropmarks were noted to the north-east of the site, as recorded on the HER.
- 4.110 The available photographs support all that can be seen on the historic map regression, as mentioned above, and the LiDAR imagery (see below), but do not indicate the presence of any previously unidentified archaeological features within the site.

### **LiDAR Analysis**

- 4.111 A LiDAR extract is presented on **Plan EDP 5** and this has been enhanced for the purpose of identifying potential archaeological earthworks within the site.
- 4.112 From this, the immediately obvious features are ridge and furrow earthworks, which are shown to survive best in the land to the south of St Frideswide’s Farm.
- 4.113 The two round barrows show positively, however, the imagery suggests that they survive better above ground than is actually the case (see **Image EDP 2**). The evaluation results revealed that there are faint earthworks remains of the barrows still surviving, albeit to a very limited height.
- 4.114 There is documentary reference to a possible Roman ‘ridgeway’ within the site (**8861**), however, neither the LiDAR imagery or trial trenching within the site was able to confirm any evidence for its presence (CA 2021). Other field boundaries relating to post-medieval enclosure are, however, evident within the site.
- 4.115 Two linear depressions are observable, and these directly correlate with the course of the two footpaths on the site. A recognisable hollow way can be seen extending northwards from St Frideswide’s, beyond the site boundary. In the northern tip of the eastern site area, pitting or scarring is shown, however, the evaluations of the site did not reveal any conclusive evidence for significant archaeological features in these locations (CA 2021).

### **Historic Landscape Characterisation**

- 4.116 The Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Characterisation data for the site is available via the archaeology data service and identifies that the site formed part of areas, HOX3997 (20<sup>th</sup> century prairie/amalgamated enclosure) and HOX3996 (19<sup>th</sup> century reorganised enclosure).



4.117 Therefore, this is considered to be a 'low value' landscape character, resulting from 20<sup>th</sup> century reorganisation of earlier fieldscapes.

### **Site Walkover**

4.118 The site was visited on a number of occasions between 2017 and 2023 to assess the current ground conditions and topography, as well as to confirm the continuing survival of any known archaeological remains and to identify any hitherto unknown remains.

4.119 At the time of the visits the ground conditions comprised winter crops or unplanted ploughed fields.

4.120 The heavily eroded, diffuse remains of two of the round barrows were observed within the east of the site during the site walkovers (**Image EDP 1**).

4.121 The site visits also considered the potential change to the wider setting(s) of designated heritage assets (see **Section 5**).

### **Geophysical Survey**

4.122 A geophysical (magnetometer) survey of the site was undertaken in January and February 2018 by Archaeological Services WYAS (ASWYAS 2018 EOX6737;). The results of the survey show that there is considered to be a high potential for below-ground archaeological remains to survive within southern part of the site, while it was considered to be of low potential in the other areas.

4.123 The main aim for survey was to assess the extent of the remains of the two round barrows known from historic mapping (**1324** and **1354**), and the wider landscape (WYAS 2018).

4.124 A curving linear ditch and trends have been categorised as having a possible archaeological origin. The ditch is magnetically strong and has a magnetic signature that is akin to archaeological features, however, the responses correspond to a footpath marked on old mapping from 1876 to 1955 (OM 2018). This feature lies to the immediate north of several ring ditches, and it may be a prehistoric route way that has been reused through time to the modern era.

4.125 Two curvi-linear responses were approximately located in the vicinity of the two Bronze Age round barrows. It is clear that the ploughing within the vicinity, has been on at least two different alignments and may have either masked the full extent of the barrows or have truncated them.

4.126 A definite ring ditch was located to the south of a possible prehistoric ditch. It measures approximately 16m in diameter. Another ring ditch could be seen to the north-east. The magnetic response shows only part of the feature, measuring approximately 14m in diameter, there also appears to be a central ditch.

- 4.127 A cluster of anomalies, to the south-west of the ring ditch may suggest at least another two ring ditches. Located in the north-east was a 'D' shaped anomaly. The feature measures approximately 27m east-west and 24m at its widest point, north-south.
- 4.128 Possible archaeological remains were also identified including a possible prehistoric route way, which also corresponds to a track shown on the first edition OS mapping and also the curvi-linear trends, some of which are likely to represent Bronze Age round barrows.
- 4.129 Former field boundaries were recorded which correspond to historical mapping. Agricultural trends of both modern ploughing and medieval ridge and furrow were also seen throughout, along with modern services and areas of disturbance.
- 4.130 The results of the geophysical survey corroborate the findings of the review of archaeological evidence from the immediate environs of the site; i.e. that, while there is no indication that the site will contain remains of such significance to constrain its development, there is nonetheless the potential that it will contain features and deposits relating to late prehistoric, Romano-British and medieval agricultural activity, and potentially discrete and isolated settlement activity.

#### **Trial Trench Evaluation**

- 4.131 The results of geophysical survey (EOX6737) were in part used to establish the positions of 123 archaeological trial trenches of the southern (Phase 1) parts of proposed development were investigated by Oxford Archaeology in December 2020 (OA 2021 EOX6939).
- 4.132 A single worked flint flake of broad prehistoric date was recovered from the subsoil within a trench excavated in the central-eastern part of the site (CA 2021).
- 4.133 In December 2020, Oxford Archaeology carried out an evaluation of the central and southern parts of the site, including the area where the barrows were located (OA 2021). A total of 126 trenches were excavated. Among the earliest features uncovered were three discrete features in the north of the Phase 1 site. These comprised single pits in trenches 115 and 120, both containing Iron Age pottery, and a posthole in trench 119 containing early Iron Age pottery. Within the centre of the site a cluster of penannular geophysical anomalies also contained Iron Age pottery, fired clay and animal bone and were interpreted as roundhouses forming a small, potentially unenclosed settlement (OA 2021).
- 4.134 The evaluation also revealed that two of the trenches, 115 and 119, contained material relating to the barrows (**1324** and **1354**) with their surrounding ditches and parts of the internal mounds surviving. Within trench 115 the mound material was recorded as sealing a pit, containing a cremation burial and urn. Within the centre of the barrow burnt charcoal rich deposits overlaid the mound material and may represent *in situ* pyre material. A pottery vessel containing cremated human bones had been inserted into the possible pyre material. The pot dated from AD 400–750 and exhibited fabric impressions and staining from an iron object, suggesting grave goods could remain within the barrow mound. Carbon 14 samples were taken from the fill of a pit under the barrow mound, which revealed a

date of the late Bronze Age, and a sample of the pyre material within the Anglo-Saxon cremation vessel found with the barrow, gave an Anglo-Saxon date. From this, Oxford Archaeology concluded that the barrows were likely of an Anglo-Saxon date (OA 2021).

- 4.135 In April and May 2021, Cotswold Archaeology (CA 2021 EOX6938) carried out an archaeological evaluation of land at Phase 2, North Oxford Triangle East, (the northernmost field of the site). A total of 53 trenches were excavated; some of which were targeted on anomalies identified by the same preceding geophysical survey (WYAS 2018).
- 4.136 The evaluation identified a small number of archaeological features, comprising ditches and gullies, within trenches excavated in the northern and western parts of the development area. The majority of these features remained undated.
- 4.137 A single sherd of pottery of broad Romano-British date was recovered from a gully, identified in the north-western part of the site. Two further, albeit undated, gullies were identified in nearby trenches and may be broadly contemporary. The function of these gullies remains unclear, although they are considered most likely to be associated with small-scale agricultural activity. Two further sherds of pottery and a fragment of Ceramic Building Material of broad Romano-British date were recovered from topsoil and subsoil deposits within trenches excavated in the north-western and central-eastern parts of the site.
- 4.138 Four fragments of horseshoe of medieval/post-medieval date were recovered from a possible fluvial feature, identified in a number of trenches excavated in the north-western half of the site. The location and alignment of this feature broadly correlate with a linear anomaly depicted by the preceding geophysical survey, which also corresponds to a field boundary depicted on the 1876 First Edition OS map. A number of ditches, also identified in trenches excavated in this part of the site, also appear to correspond to the broad location/orientation of this field boundary and they may therefore represent the later re-use, remodelling or extension of this boundary.
- 4.139 Evidence of medieval and/or post-medieval agricultural practice, comprising the ploughed-out remains of ridge-and-furrow cultivation, was identified in the south-eastern parts of the site.

## Section 5 Assessment

- 5.1 In accordance with paragraph 194 of the NPPF, this section identifies those heritage assets that may be affected by a proposed development on this site.
- 5.2 **Section 4** has also identified those heritage assets that could potentially be affected in terms of development within their setting.
- 5.3 This section assesses the likely impact of the implementation of a proposed development upon the significance of the heritage assets whose settings it is determined are capable of being affected, specifically addressing Steps 3 and 4 of the five-step approach to setting assessment described in the guidance (HE, 2017).
- 5.4 The locations of all designated heritage assets identified in this section are detailed on **Plan EDP 2**. Supporting images that illustrate the findings of the assessment are included, where appropriate (see **Images EDP 2 - 17**), with the locations of the viewpoints shown in the images depicted on **Plan EDP 6**.

### Listed Buildings

#### ***St Frideswide's Farm***

##### *St Frideswide's Farm House and Associated Garden Wall*

- 5.5 St Frideswide's (**1286525**) is a Grade II\* listed building situated c.50m east of the site at its closest point. The listing citation describes it as a farmhouse dating to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, with later additions and alterations in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The list entry also describes in some detail the external and internal features which helps to identify its special architectural interest.
- 5.6 The Grade II listed garden wall (**1370050**) is located c.10m to the north-east of the farmhouse and was built in the late 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> century.

##### Description – Architectural, Artistic, Archaeological and Historic Interest

- 5.7 The farmhouse (now house) is built of limestone rubble with ashlar dressings, set beneath a hipped Stonesfield-slate roof with brick stacks. It is orientated to the south on a through-passage plan, with a rear (northern) wing. The principal southern façade (**Image EDP 2**) has a moulded stone doorway with a four-centred arch, within a rectangular surround. The fenestration on this elevation comprises a mix of three, four and five-light stone mullioned and transomed windows, all of which have concave chamfers and leaded glazing. The northern, rear elevation is flanked by a 20<sup>th</sup> century wing and a 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century lean-to extension, returning from the right end.

- 5.8 The interior was not inspected; however, the listing citation notes features such as moulded wooden doorways and cornices, fine 17<sup>th</sup> century oak panelling, heavy chamfered beams and a large 16<sup>th</sup> century arched-stone fireplace.
- 5.9 With regard to the adjacent garden wall, this is also built of limestone rubble and is topped with tiled coping. It is approximately 2.5m high and extends for approximately 60m to the east, returning southwards for a few metres, to enclose the garden (**Image EDP 3**). The list entry notes that it is 'included for group value'.
- 5.10 There is no evidence to suggest these buildings possess any 'artistic interest'.
- 5.11 The Oxfordshire HER records a DMV immediately south of St Frideswide's Farm and a medieval moat is also recorded at this location. Both features lie within an open pasture field to the south of the farmhouse (still beyond the site boundary) and extant, albeit reduced earthworks were noted here during the field visits.
- 5.12 The site of St Frideswide's Farm and the DMV site is thought to comprise an earlier site of the settlement of Cutteslowe, defined by 'poor quality earthworks' dated by quantities of mostly 15<sup>th</sup> century pottery. It is postulated that the 'village' was deserted at some time between 1350 and 1450 and this may suggest an earlier foundation (i.e. pre-16<sup>th</sup> century origins) for St Frideswide's Farm House.
- 5.13 The First (1876) and Second Edition (1899) Ordnance Survey Maps (see **Plan EDP 3** for the latter), show the main farmhouse range, as well as a courtyard of farm outbuildings to the immediate south-west, all accessed via a track leading east from the Oxford Road. An orchard lies immediately north of the farmhouse and its remaining boundaries are well-vegetated, particularly as shown on the First Edition (not reproduced). The historic maps also reveal the presence of Water Eaton Copse to the north of the farmhouse, which expanded south towards the orchard in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, before being removed to just a hedge line by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### Setting and Contribution made to Significance

- 5.14 The significance of these listed buildings is predominantly derived from the special architectural and historic interest of their standing fabric, however, their association/group value, and, to a similar degree, their relationship to the adjacent moat and DMV earthworks, also contributes to their significance. The principal building is no doubt listed at Grade II\* due to its survival as a medieval moated farmstead, and this site is particularly noteworthy, demarcating the location of an earlier Cutteslowe settlement.
- 5.15 St Frideswide's Farm House and its adjacent gardens, including the listed wall to the north-east and pond to the immediate south-west are well-enclosed and sheltered by trees and vegetation (**Images EDP 3-4**). Indeed, the approach to the house from the access across the site from Oxford Road crosses farmland defined by and adjacent hedgerow to the north, before the approach turns to the north to enter a densely wooded copse, with the overgrown pond present on arrival at the west of the house (which likely fed the moat). This enclosure is reinforced by the natural topography of the area, with the farmstead

sitting within a hollow. This sheltered setting makes a positive contribution to these assets, as it serves to enclose them well from the wider landscape. Consequently, it is from the immediate private garden surroundings that the heritage significance of the buildings is best 'experienced', there being limited opportunities to appreciate it from the wider landscape.

- 5.16 The enclosed nature of the listed buildings was confirmed during the site visit, with mature trees and dense vegetation present to the west (**Image EDP 5**), north and east of the property. The northern boundary of the farmstead is defined by an orchard, which is an historic feature (as noted in the Second Edition OS 1899 map (**Plan EDP 3**)), which spans the full width of the farm complex and which the northern frontage of the farmhouse addresses. The orchard may once have been larger, perhaps extending to Water Eaton Copse to the north (now replaced as arable fields (**Plan EDP 3**)), and perhaps further to the west into the land within the site. The southern aspect of the farmhouse's garden is more open, and a shallow, curving ditch affords outward views southwards across a pasture field (**Image EDP 6**), comprising the purported moat and DMV site.
- 5.17 However, these views are significantly curtailed by the rising topography, nonetheless, the intervisibility with this pasture field makes a positive contribution to the farmhouse's heritage significance, as there is a visual link with the site of the deserted medieval settlement, with which the farmstead (or an earlier version of) likely formed a focus. As **Image EDP 6** demonstrates, however, there are no physical features or earthworks in this pasture field that reveal the presence of any such historic features to the casual observer.
- 5.18 The St Frideswide's farm house was likely constructed by the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and was remodelled in the 17<sup>th</sup> century as a two-storey building with a through-passage plan. It was extended to the (rear) north with a 20<sup>th</sup> century wing and a 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century lean-to extension, returning from the right end. Records and field names suggest that the surrounding farmland (including the southern extents of the site) was primarily in use as an arable and grass farm for grazing livestock, particularly sheep (Baggs *et al* 1990, p. 314–320). Gradually, the focus of the farm switched from pastureland to arable fields. There was a copse of woodland to the north-west of the farmhouse (Water Eaton Copse), which was later replaced by arable fields.
- 5.19 The access track to the farmhouse and the public right of way that crosses the site to the south and heads towards the farm were certainly present in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and remain today as the main historical approaches to the farm from the west and south.
- 5.20 Historic mapping shows that the farmyard was fully developed by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (**Plan EDP 3**), featuring a long east–west range of stone barns, with flanking stone buildings running north–south and opposite east–west forming a square yard. These buildings are of a mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> century date, and are therefore of limited historic interest. There were additional smaller 19<sup>th</sup> century outbuildings of brick and stone to the west of the yard. The farmyard had its own separate entrance split from the same drive from Oxford Road as St Frideswide's Farm albeit separated from the farmhouse by the pond ringed by vegetation.

- 5.21 An access to the associated farm buildings to the south from the curtilage of the farmhouse is also obtained through a set of stone gate piers to the immediate south of the farmhouse (east of the pond). The farmyard was later added to in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with a large Dutch barn inserted to the south, now in poor condition and partially demolished. Similarly, the range of brick-built buildings in the south-west of the farm complex closest to the site boundary, appear to be early 20<sup>th</sup> century additions that have fallen into disrepair.
- 5.22 There is limited intervisibility between the farmhouse and its (later) associated agricultural buildings to the south-west, due to the enclosing vegetation, save for a single barn, which has been significantly modified to form a workshop. As such, the wider farmstead complex (which is in various states of disrepair and is not contemporary with the main farmhouse), makes a limited contribution to the significance of the listed buildings, albeit the recognisable agricultural character of this group of buildings, and their broadly vernacular material and form do contribute to an appreciation of the listed building's historical agricultural origins and an understanding of the farmhouse's historical role as the principal focus of the farmstead, which has evolved around it.
- 5.23 It is considered that the primary setting of St Frideswide's Farm House and its associated wall as listed buildings, is restricted to the immediate surrounding gardens in which they are experienced, including the pond to the south-west, as well as the small orchard to the north and the garden extending into the open pasture field to the south, where the DMV is situated - neither of which location falls within the site boundary. The later buildings of the farmyard complex to the south-west of the farmhouse, which are deliberately separated from the farmhouse curtilage both physically and visually, form a secondary element of the immediate setting of the farmhouse, which contributes less to the significance of the asset for the reasons set out above.

#### Relationship to the Site

- 5.24 By virtue of its topographic hollow location and well-vegetated grounds, the farmhouse and garden wall have minimal presence in the landscape and consequently only views of the upper storey and roofline of the house are visible from within the southern part of the site (**Image EDP 7**). However, there is no real appreciation of its special architectural or historic interest in these views. The listed wall is all but entirely screened from beyond the curtilage of the main house.
- 5.25 From Oxford Road, there is a single access to St Frideswide's; the direct route via the trackway leading east to the farm complex; the bridleway to the north does not provide a route to the farm complex. The experience of the listed building via the trackway is extremely limited as views of its built form are masked by trees and vegetation in combination with the building's low-lying position relative to its surrounding farmland to the west. Access to the building itself beyond the trackway through the site is via a curved lane, which also shields the visitor's views. The farmyard and gable end of the westernmost stone barn and brick outbuildings are more obvious from the trackway, as they are not shielded by vegetation (**Image EDP 5**). There is no tangible experience of the farmhouse from the northern bridleway through the site, as views of the house are also obscured by a

tall hedgerow south of the bridleway and enclosing vegetation around the farmhouse, even in winter.

- 5.26 The farmhouse, as a functional building, would not typically have designed views outwards over the landscape. Rather as a residential building at the heart of the working farm, the modestly proportioned windows were principally designed for ingress of light, instead of for opportunities for outward views. The house is also aligned north–west/south–east to take full advantage of the passage of the sun during the day and therefore is not orientated on an alignment that offers views outwards onto the land within the site, aside from the very south-east fields of the site (**Images EDP 7 and 8**). The enclosing vegetation and low-lying position of the farmhouse further militates against any views of the land within the overwhelming majority of the site from the farmhouse.
- 5.27 As a listed farmhouse St Frideswide’s will inevitably have had a functional association with the surrounding farmland/agricultural fields. Indeed, the southern parcels of the site comprise part of the wider setting of St Frideswide’s that also retain a functional association having formed part of the agricultural landscape farmed under the control of this historic farmstead. However, overwhelmingly across the site there is no opportunity to appreciate this relationship as the farmhouse is only experienced from the northern edge of the fields directly south of the farmstead.
- 5.28 Nonetheless, it is acknowledged that the land within the site forms a part of the surrounding agricultural land that has been farmed continually from the farmhouse since its establishment in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Similarly, the southern extents of the site continue to function as part of the wider agricultural context to the farmhouse and surrounding farm complex as one approaches along from Oxford Road to the east along the trackway bordered by a hedgerow to the north (**Image EDP 5**).
- 5.29 Furthermore, the site visit established that the site does play a role in the setting or ‘experience’ of the listed buildings in an agricultural landscape when experienced in the approach to the farmstead from the lower-lying landscape to the east (**Image EDP 8**), where the eastern extents of the site south of the farmhouse provide an undeveloped backcloth of fields in these views. Such views to and from the farmhouse across this agricultural landscape have been experienced since the late medieval period, notwithstanding the modern outbuildings of the surrounding farm complex and the presence of modern infrastructure and built form in the wider landscape.
- 5.30 As such, the loss of part of the associated agricultural land within the asset’s wider setting (i.e. the land within the site) and the encroachment of built form onto historically agricultural open land within the immediate environs of the listed farmhouse will cause a degree of harm to the significance of the heritage asset, and the ability to appreciate its significance. Those elements that are the principal reason for the building’s designation (i.e. its intrinsic architectural and historic interest) and the key elements of its setting (i.e. its enclosing gardens and moat/DMV site immediately to the south) would remain unaffected by any proposed development within the site. While these qualities will still be appreciable through development of the site beyond, the masterplan should seek to retain



an appropriate offset to these features, and the listed complex, in order to respect its currently isolated and enclosed setting.

#### Summary and Suggested Mitigation

- 5.31 The Grade II\* listed St Frideswide's Farm House lies immediately east of the site boundary, where its curtilage is enclosed by the eastern extents of the site, which form part of the agricultural land historically associated with the farm house and where it has historically been accessed through an agricultural landscape along the track from Oxford Road.
- 5.32 Any loss of this agricultural land surrounding the farmhouse through development is predicted to result in a limited loss of significance to the listed building, through the erosion of the ability to appreciate the farmhouse in its historical agricultural setting.
- 5.33 However, the following considerations and principles could be implemented within the design of future development in order to remove or reduce adverse effects on the significance of the Grade II\* listed St Frideswide's Farm House:
- Retention of the eastern edge of the site as open space to allow the continuation of the appreciation of the farmhouse in an open, undeveloped setting;
  - Retention of the site's south-eastern field as open space, in order to avoid introducing new built form in to the views south from the listed building;
  - Retention and strengthening of extant field boundaries, where they follow historic alignments, in order to retain historic landscape fabric;
  - Retention of the existing trackway to the farmhouse across the site, as well as the bridleway to the north and public footpath to the south-east, which together form either the historical approaches to the farmstead or routes within its wider setting that retain a degree of historic integrity;
  - Retention and strengthening of existing well-vegetated boundaries around the farmhouse curtilage to screen/filter development within the site and retain the sense of enclosure and isolation to the listed building's setting;
  - Restriction of building heights to two storeys where development encroaches closest to the farmhouse, in order to respect its vernacular scale and the appreciation of its role as an historical focal point in the surrounding landscape; and
  - Reinstatement of woodland or orchard to the north of the farmhouse, in the general location of historical copse (Water Eaton Copse).

## **Water Eaton Manor**

### *Group of Six Listed Buildings at Water Eaton Manor*

#### Description

- 5.34 Water Eaton Manor House (**1046562**) is listed at Grade II\* and is situated c.1.05km north-east of the site, close to the River Cherwell (**Images EDP 12 and 13**). This asset was constructed in c.1586 for William Frere and was enlarged and altered during the late 17<sup>th</sup> century; then restored in 1881-2 by T.G. Jackson, and again c.1905 by G.F. Bodley.
- 5.35 The building is built of coursed squared limestone with ashlar dressings and it has Stonesfield-slate roofs with ashlar stacks. The eastern facing front has a central two-storey porch with a four-centred archway, flanked by Doric columns on pedestals, below a plain entablature, above which rise Ionic pilasters. The bay windows and porch are crowned by very shallow gables with obelisk finials.
- 5.36 There are many features surviving within the house which contribute to the asset's significance. These comprise 17<sup>th</sup> century oak and gilded panelling and doorways, timber framed partitions, ornamental plasterwork in the hall and dining room (Tudor roses, fleur-de-lys and arabesques) and Tudor-arched stone doorways and fireplaces throughout.
- 5.37 Immediately to the north-east of the house is a Grade I listed Chapel (**1046563**), described as a 'domestic chapel', built c.1600 and restored 1884 by W. Wilkinson and H.W. Moore, and c.1905 by G.F. Bodley. This is built of coursed squared limestone with ashlar dressings and the evidently vernacular Stonesfield-slate roof. The west gable has a small bellcote. The listing citation notes that the chapel is 'a remarkably complete survival of a rare type'.
- 5.38 The remaining four assets at the manor are all located to the east of the main house and chapel and comprise a north pavilion (**1046565**), a south pavilion (**1369721**), wall and gateway (**1046564**) and a dovecote (**1046566**).
- 5.39 The two pavilions may have comprised guesthouses and were built in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century of coursed squared limestone with ashlar dressings and Stonesfield-slate roofs. The main gateway lies approximately 30m east of the manor house and dates to the late 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> century. The square limestone ashlar piers have hanging faces with scrolled tops. Stone ball finials are supported on moulded bases and the wrought iron gates were likely added during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The 17<sup>th</sup> century dovecote is also built of coursed squared limestone with ashlar dressings and a Stonesfield-slate roof. It is of a square plan with pyramid roof and a pyramid-roofed glover.
- 5.40 The presence of a 'fine' eastern gateway would suggest that the main entrance to the manor house was originally designed to be approached from the east and has since fallen out of use.
- 5.41 There is no evidence to suggest these buildings possess any 'artistic interest'.

- 5.42 The significance of these listed buildings is primarily derived from the special architectural and historic interest of their physical fabric, which includes local, (and high status) vernacular materials including limestone ashlar, Stonesfield slate and an array of ornamental features.

#### Setting and Contribution made to Significance

- 5.43 The elements of these assets' settings that contribute to their significance are principally defined by their surrounding spacious landscaped (and walled) garden grounds and their physical relationship and historic association with each other, although principally their relationships as part of a Manor complex, subservient to the main house.
- 5.44 The main focus of views from Water Eaton Manor House is to the east (away from the site) and this appears quite intentional, with the river Cherwell being located in this direction, c.100m east of the complex (**Image EDP 12**). The presence and location of the river contributes to the significance of the assets as it was undoubtedly chosen as a settlement site due to the proximity of the water course and it has provided the manor's namesake.
- 5.45 The areas of pasture that surround the complex to the north and east (**Images EDP 13 and 14**) contain substantial earthworks relating to former farming regimes (ridge and furrow) and water management, in the form of drainage channels for water meadows. These elements positively contribute to the significance of the assets and there is a direct visual link with the former landscape that supported the manor.

#### Relationship to the Site

- 5.46 It was determined during the site visit, that due to distance and intervening vegetation, the listed buildings at Water Eaton are not visible or discernible from within the site (**Images EDP 10 and 11**). Rather, it is only from the east of the manor complex (such as at Sparsey Bridge) that distant views of the site may be possible (**Image EDP 14**), and these would be in 'combination' with the manor complex, as opposed to comprising any clear or direct visual link 'by design'.
- 5.47 The views are very much long-distance, and any proposed residential development may only be visible on account of the ridgeline, however, any 'in-combination' views with the assets here would be experienced in the context of an existing urban fringe, already comprising built form, sports pitch lighting, pylons and a park and ride complex associated with the modern expansion of Oxford.
- 5.48 In this regard, whilst the site does form a very small part of the wider setting of the Water Eaton listed buildings (in as much as it comprises part of the distant and much wider backcloth of agricultural landscape), the very limited experience of the site in combination views with the assets, does not contribute to their significance. This significance, or rather their 'architectural and historic interest', is only appreciable at close distance, and particularly from the south, east and north, where there are pasture fields and less boundary vegetation in direct proximity to the listed buildings (**Images EDP 11-13**).

- 5.49 Nonetheless, there is evidence for historic links between the site and Water Eaton Manor, through the northern extents of the site forming part of its former landholding. There is also an extant bridleway (PRoW 229/9/30) noted in the 1899 Second Edition Ordnance Survey mapping, which linked the now demolished Water Eaton Lodge off the Oxford Road through the site and connected to Water Eaton Manor from the west; the lodge is no longer present within the site and therefore no longer functions to control access to the wider manor estate. However, despite these historical associations, the site visit established that, in reality, there is no tangible experience of the listed buildings at Water Eaton as one traverses along the bridleway as it passes through the site.
- 5.50 In light of the above, it is considered that there is no potential for development of the form proposed in the site to result in change to the elements of these asset's setting that contribute to their special architectural and historic interest. Therefore, their significance, and the ability to appreciate that significance, is likely to remain undiminished.

#### Summary and Suggested Mitigation

- 5.51 The Grade II\* listed Water Eaton Manor and associated buildings lies c.1.05km north-east of the site, close to the River Cherwell.
- 5.52 There is evidence for historic links between the site and Water Eaton Manor. There is an extant bridleway (PRoW 229/9/30) noted in the 1899 Ordnance Survey mapping, which linked the now demolished Water Eaton Lodge off the Oxford Road through the site and connected to Water Eaton Manor from the west. However, as set out above, there is no tangible experience of the listed buildings at Water Eaton as one traverses along the bridleway as it passes through the site and therefore, despite the experience of the approach through the site changing from an approach across farmland to an approach through residential development, there is not predicted to be any fundamental change to the experience of the Water Eaton Manor listed buildings themselves through the development proposed within the site. Beyond the site's eastern boundary, there will still be an approach to the listed manor across an expanse of open farmland.
- 5.53 Nonetheless, it is recommended that the route of the bridleway remains preserved in the proposed masterplan for the development so that the alignment of this historical route to the Water Eaton Manor is maintained in the landscape.
- 5.54 The following considerations and principles could also be implemented within the design of future development in order to remove or reduce changes to the wider landscape setting of the Grade II\* listed Water Eaton Manor:
- Retention of the eastern edge of the site as open space to allow the continuation of the appreciation of the views towards Water Eaton Manor in an open, agricultural setting;
  - Retention and strengthening of extant field boundaries, where they follow historic alignments, in order to retain historic landscape fabric on the historical approach to the manor complex from Oxford Road;

- Retention and strengthening of existing bridleway (PRoW 229/9/30) from the A4165 Oxford Road and access to Water Eaton Manor; and
- Retention and strengthening of existing well-vegetated boundaries around the site to screen/filter development within it when viewed across the landscape from the environs of the listed buildings to the east;

### ***Pipal Cottage and Associated Farm Buildings***

#### *Description*

- 5.55 Pipal Cottage and its associated farm outbuildings are non-designated heritage assets that lie c.800m to the north-west of St Frideswide's Farm, and along the western boundary of the site. They are located on the eastern side of the Oxford Road A4165 and are visible from the public bridleway within the site (**Images EDP 15–17**).
- 5.56 The buildings consist of a rectangular residential house (Pipal Cottage), which has been extended at least twice to the north with further outbuildings within the garden. To the north and east is an L-shaped barn range, which consists of a mixture of combination barn, and shelter sheds, such as cartsheds, and stables. The property was not accessible at the point of the site survey. The name "Pipal" is likely not historic, as it is another name for the Fig Tree (*Ficus religiosa*). It is a species of fig native to the Indian subcontinent and Indochina that belongs to *Moraceae*, the fig or mulberry family.
- 5.57 Pipal Cottage is likely to be of late 18<sup>th</sup> -early 19<sup>th</sup> century origin, with the courtyard of associated farm buildings to the north developing in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The characteristic features of such vernacular architecture include stone walls, bookended by chimney stacks, a symmetrical frontage with a central door flanked by (later) casement windows (Brunskill 2000; 2004: 28). The farmyard was orientated to the west towards the Banbury/Oxford Road, and has mature trees and hedging around it, largely screening it from the majority of the site to the south, while the cottage itself addresses an access off the road to the immediate south, which historically continued past the cottage and through the site to the landscape to the east (**Plan EDP 3**).
- 5.58 Pipal Cottage originally formed a rectangle in plan, now much extended. It is of two storeys, with the walls of stone, with narrow angled brick chimneys at each gable end (two to the east, and one to the west) with clay pots, and a pitched slate roof. The main front façade is south facing with a small weatherboarded and stone porch with as slate roof.
- 5.59 Pipal Cottage has experienced significant alteration and extension in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A large rectangular two storey extension of stone was built to the north of the cottage (matching the dimensions of the original Cottage) with a two-storey link. These were added probably in the 1980s–1990s. There was also a catslide roof added to the west of the property, and a further single-storey flat felted roofed extension and flue added to the west of the property behind the western chimney. At this point, all the windows in the original cottage were updated to brown wooden casements to match those in the new extensions. To the north a further single storey outbuilding with flat roof was added, together with a more traditional wooden shed.

5.60 The farmyard associated with Pipal Cottage was in place by 1876. It originally had an entrance off the Banbury/Oxford Road, which has since been filled in (**Image EDP 17**). The farmyard consists of approximately four buildings. The largest is a stone, brick and weatherboard combination barn in the centre of the yard, which has a slate roof. To the north of the combination barn is a single storey L-shaped cartshed and stable block. This is formed of stone, of which the stone gable end is prominently visible on the Oxford Road. Some wooden Y-shaped column posts are apparent in the cartshed element of the western side of the L-shape. The roof is now of aluminium, but this is likely a more recent addition (perhaps in the 1940–1960s). To the south of the central barn is a smaller stone barn, with a wooden upper door, which suggests it may have contained the hayloft. To the south of the smaller stone barn, is a stone-built garage.

5.61 The cottage and the associated farm buildings are assets of local significance. The courtyard of farm buildings are within the red line of the site, although the cottage itself is outside of the development site boundary.

*Significance, Setting and Relationship to the Site*

5.62 Pipal Cottage and associated farmyard lie on the westernmost border of the site boundary. The site visit established that, due to intervening tall vegetation and undulations in the topography, where the cottage and farmyard is set on falling ground in the north of the site neatly tucked into the topography (**Image EDP 15**), they are experienced only from the northern site extents and the Oxford Road.

5.63 The site visit established that the farmyard associated with Pipal Cottage can be experienced as one traverses along the bridleway as it passes through the site. However, Pipal Cottage itself is largely obscured by intervening tall vegetation.

5.64 The limited significance of the Pipal Cottage lies in its value as a vernacular cottage of 19<sup>th</sup> century, key features include the stone walls bookended by chimneys and symmetrical frontage with a central door flanked by (later) casement windows, albeit this character is compromised by the significant modern extensions and alterations that have affected its vernacular proportions and fabric.

5.65 The building also derives some significance from its setting on Oxford Road, backdropped by the surrounding agricultural fields within the site, as well as its clear association and relationship with the 19<sup>th</sup> century and later farmyard to the north. However, again the significant alterations and extensions to the building have to a degree disrupted and obfuscated these relationships.

5.66 The limited significance of the buildings that form the disused farmyard lies also in their value as a vernacular agricultural buildings of 19<sup>th</sup> century origins, albeit this is compromised by the disuse and decay of these buildings, and the alterations to the fabric that they have experienced over time.

5.67 Again, the buildings derive some significance from their setting on Oxford Road, backdropped by the surrounding agricultural fields within the site, which reinforce their historical agricultural function.

- 5.68 There is evidence for historic links between the site and Pipal Cottage and the barns, with the northern extents of the site containing the agricultural fields, which would likely have been worked by the occupants of Pipal Cottage and farmyard.
- 5.69 The development of the site has the potential to erode the wider agricultural setting of these non-designated heritage assets of local significance, through the introduction of residential and mixed use development across the fields within the northern portion of the site.
- 5.70 Development options for the farm buildings associated with Pipal Cottage include their retention and reuse in the proposed development. Alternatively, the buildings may be demolished and replaced with new buildings if an appropriate and viable use for the existing buildings is not practicable. This would result in the loss of these low value non-designated heritage assets and some limited harm to the Pipal Cottage itself through the erosion of elements of its historical setting.

*Summary and Suggested Mitigation*

- 5.71 Pipal Cottage and its associated farm outbuildings are non-designated heritage assets that lie c.800m to the north-west of St Frideswide's Farm, and along the western boundary of the site.
- 5.72 There are historic links between the site and Pipal Cottage and its associated farm complex, with the site containing the agricultural fields, which would likely have been farmed by the occupants of Pipal Cottage and farmyard.
- 5.73 However, the barns and outbuildings are presently redundant and not in use for their original purpose as a farm by the current occupant(s) of Pipal Cottage and it is acknowledged that they may not possess sufficient structural integrity or useable space to be viably converted and reused. The barns and outbuildings are considered to be of local significance, associated with now defunct farming practices.
- 5.74 The following considerations and principles could also be implemented within the design of future development in order to remove or reduce changes to the wider landscape setting of the non-designated cottage and associated farm buildings, subject to their retention:
- Retention and strengthening of extant field boundaries, closest to the buildings where they follow historic alignments, in order to retain historic landscape fabric on the historical approach along the bridleway from Oxford Road; and
  - Restriction of building heights where development encroaches closest to the cottage and farm complex, in order to respect its vernacular scale.
- 5.75 Should the non-designated barns and outbuildings be proposed to be demolished, it is recommended that a suitable programme of building recording is implemented in advance of their loss.

## **Archaeological Features within the Site**

### *Description of Key Findings*

- 5.76 A geophysical survey (WYAS 2018) and two archaeological evaluations by Oxford Archaeology and Cotswold Archaeology have been undertaken within the site. In particular the two barrows known from historic mapping and other surveys were targeted by Oxford Archaeology. Two of the trenches contained material relating to the barrows. Within one of the trenches, the barrow mound material was recorded as sealing a pit which contained a cremation burial and urn. Within the centre of the barrow burnt charcoal rich deposits overlaid the mound material and may represent *in situ* pyre material. A pottery vessel containing cremated human bones had been inserted into the possible pyre material. The pot dated from AD 400–750 and exhibited fabric impressions and staining from an iron object, suggesting grave goods could remain further within the barrow mound.
- 5.77 Carbon 14 samples were taken from the fill of a pit under the barrow mound, which revealed a date of the late Bronze Age, and a sample of the pyre material within the Anglo-Saxon cremation vessel found with the barrow, gave an Anglo-Saxon date. From this, Oxford Archaeology concluded that the barrows were likely of an Anglo-Saxon date (OA 2021).
- 5.78 Within the centre of the site a cluster of penannular geophysical anomalies identified in the geophysical survey were revealed to contain Iron Age pottery, fired clay and animal bones and were interpreted as roundhouses forming a small, potentially unenclosed settlement (OA 2021).
- 5.79 A single sherd of pottery of broad Romano-British date was recovered from a gully, identified in the north-western part of the site. Two further, albeit undated, gullies were identified in nearby trenches and may be broadly contemporary. The function of these gullies remains unclear, although they are considered most likely to be associated with small-scale agricultural activity. Two further sherds of pottery and a fragment of Ceramic Building Material of broad Romano-British date were recovered from topsoil and subsoil deposits within trenches excavated in the north-western and central-eastern parts of the site.
- 5.80 Four fragments of horseshoe of medieval/post-medieval date were recovered from a possible fluvial feature, identified in a number of trenches excavated in the north-western half of the site. The location and alignment of this feature broadly correlate with a linear anomaly depicted by the preceding geophysical survey which also corresponds to a field boundary depicted on the 1879 First Edition OS map. A number of ditches, also identified in trenches excavated in this part of the site, also appear to correspond to the broad location/orientation of this field boundary and they may therefore represent the later re-use, remodelling or extension of this boundary.
- 5.81 Evidence of medieval and/or post-medieval agricultural practice, comprising the ploughed-out remains of ridge-and-furrow cultivation, was identified in the south-eastern parts of the site.



### Significance and Value

- 5.82 The evaluations by Oxford Archaeology and Cotswold Archaeology have shown limited evidence for Bronze Age activity. Carbon 14 samples were taken from features within trench 115 (the eastern barrow). Carbon 14 samples were taken from the fill of a pit under the barrow mound, which revealed a date of the late Bronze Age, and a sample of pyre material within an Anglo-Saxon cremation vessel found in the eastern barrow of trench 115, which gave an Anglo-Saxon date. From this, Oxford Archaeology concluded that the barrows were likely of an Anglo-Saxon date rather than being prehistoric as previously assumed. However, the Bronze Age date shows that there was earlier activity in the area.
- 5.83 The evaluations by Oxford Archaeology and Cotswold Archaeology have confirmed that evidence of Iron Age to Romano British settlement activity survives within the southern portion of the site, including potential roundhouses, in addition to evidence of discrete small-scale agricultural activity. The remains considered to be of local significance, since Iron Age-Romano-British settlement is relatively common in this area (Lambrick 2010; 15-16).
- 5.84 Of all of the artefacts and ecofacts uncovered during the evaluations within the site, it is the Anglo-Saxon material that is of the most significance. The Carbon 14 dating of the pyre material within one of the barrows was revealed to be of an Anglo-Saxon date, these features are therefore considered to be of regional significance.
- 5.85 The post-medieval horseshoe fragments, ditches and ploughed-out remains of ridge-and-furrow cultivation show evidence of more recent farming practices when the area was extensively farmed from farms such as those at St Frideswide's Farm, Pipal Cottage and Water Eaton Manor. Field names suggest that the land was mostly used for sheep pasture, but it is evident that there was some cultivation taking place in this period too. Therefore, this activity should be considered to be just of local significance.

### Summary and Suggested Mitigation

- 5.86 The following considerations and principles will be implemented within the design of future development in order to remove or reduce changes to the wider landscape setting of the archaeological remains (as agreed with the Archaeological Advisor for Cherwell Council):
- Retention of the two Anglo-Saxon barrows within the centre of the site as they are considered to be of regional significance, with a 5m buffer to protect them *in situ*; and
  - Excavation as mitigation for the other remains, to a programme agreed in accordance with the archaeological advisor to Cherwell District Council.

## Section 6 Conclusions

- 6.1 This report has been prepared by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP), on behalf of Bellway Homes Limited and Christ Church, Oxford, and presents the results of an archaeological and heritage assessment of Water Eaton. The purpose of this report is to inform the submission of an outline planning application for residential development of the site, which is allocated as PR6a in the adopted Cherwell Local Plan – Partial Review. It concludes that the site does not contain any designated heritage assets, such as world heritage sites, scheduled monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, registered battlefields or conservation areas, where there would be a presumption in favour of preservation and retention *in situ*.
- 6.2 The assessment establishes that St Frideswide's is a former moated farmhouse originating in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, although it may have an earlier foundation, given its association with a DMV site located to the south of the listed building, which is located c.50m from the site boundary. Its significance lies predominantly within its architectural and historic interest of its external fabric as well containing internal features which add to the significance of the building.
- 6.3 Those elements which are considered to make a positive contribution within its setting comprise its immediate garden grounds (including a Grade II listed garden wall), being the associated domestic curtilage as well as the area from which the significance of St Frideswide's can readily be understood, and the adjacent supposed Deserted Medieval Village. The wider experience, including from within the site's southern fields (only), is restricted to glimpsed views, from where its significance cannot readily be appreciated. There is an historical association between the farmhouse and wider farmland across the site, which makes a positive contribution to the listed building, and forms part of its setting. In this regard, the masterplan should seek to retain an appropriate offset to the aforementioned features (garden setting and DMV site), and the listed complex, in order to respect its currently isolated and enclosed setting.
- 6.4 In terms of the complex at Water Eaton Manor, these six listed buildings do not draw any significance from the land within the site and the assessment has established that their significance lies within the architectural and historic interest of their upstanding fabric and strong group value they maintain. Whilst the site does form part of their setting (in as much as it comprises part of the distant and much wider backcloth agricultural landscape), the very limited experience of the site in 'combination views' with the assets, does not contribute to their significance. Consequently, it is unlikely that there will be any adverse impacts on these designated assets as a result of a typical residential development scheme being implemented.
- 6.5 There is limited evidence for historic links between the site and Water Eaton Manor. There is an extant bridleway (PRoW 229/9/30) noted in historic mapping which connected the Oxford Road to Water Eaton Manor from the west. The proposed development should consider retention of these historic routes.

- 6.6 It is considered that a residential development at the site could be achieved in a manner which preserves the significance of the nearby heritage assets, including the listed buildings at St Frideswide's Farm. There will, however, be a limited loss of significance inevitable due to the loss of historically associated agricultural land and encroachment of modern built form into their wider settings.
- 6.7 The Oxfordshire HER records four non-designated heritage assets within the boundary of the site and these comprise the ploughed remains of two Anglo Saxon round barrows, a possible Roman Ridgeway, and a post-medieval milestone.
- 6.8 Historic aerial photographs, maps and LiDAR imagery have demonstrated that the majority of the site was subject to extensive ploughing from at least the medieval period, evidenced by widespread ridge and furrow, visible on photographs dated c.1946–1975, and verified by LiDAR imagery.
- 6.9 Archaeological investigation across the site has identified the presence of Iron Age settlement remains and the remains of the Anglo-Saxon barrows, as well as features associated with medieval and later agricultural practices, i.e. furrows and ploughsoils. The remains of the barrows are considered to be of regional significance and considered to warrant preservation *in situ*. The mitigation strategy for these included a buffer of 5m around the barrows. The remaining archaeological features identified in the site are of local significance and do not form a constraint to development and the archaeological advisor has agreed that they can be addressed through a programme of excavation in advance of development.
- 6.10 On the western edge of the site along the Oxford Road are the non-designated assets of Pipal Cottage and its associated farm complex. The recorded milestone now longer appears to be extant in this location. Pipal Cottage and the associated farm building complex within the site are considered to be heritage assets of local significance.
- 6.11 Development options for the farm buildings associated with Pipal Cottage include their retention and reuse in the proposed development or, subsequent to a suitable record being made, their demolition and replacement with new buildings if an appropriate and viable use for the existing buildings is not practicable.
- 6.12 In taking all of the above into consideration, the masterplanning strategy for the site could be developed in a manner which complies with current legislation, the planning policies contained within the NPPF and Policies ESD15 and C25 of the Cherwell District Council Statutory Development Plan.

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### **List of Consulted Websites**

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>  
<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

## Images



**Image EDP 1:** View north towards the two round barrows in the east of the site. Note their very reduced and diffuse nature due to continued ploughing.





**Image EDP 2:** View of the principal southern façade of St Frideswide's Farm House, Grade II\* listed building. The associated Grade II listed garden wall lies to the right of frame and this image illustrates the immediate and enclosed garden setting of the farmhouse.



**Image EDP 3:** General view west from within the front (southern) garden of St Frideswide's Farm House. This image further demonstrates the enclosed and well-vegetated nature of the garden, particularly to the west (i.e. in the direction of the greater part of the site).





**Image EDP 4:** General view of the dense woodland planting at the main western approach to St Frideswide's Farm House, looking west. This image demonstrates the lack of intervisibility with the site in this direction.



**Image EDP 5:** General view east toward St Frideswide's Farm from within the site, looking along the main access track. Note the listed farm house and walls are entirely screened by dense woodland (even in winter), with only the wider farmstead buildings visible, of which these are in varying states of disrepair and age.





**Image EDP 6:** General view south from within St Frideswide's garden. Note outward views in this direction are curtailed by the rising ground, such that there is minimal experience of the wider landscape (including the site).



**Image EDP 7:** View north towards St Frideswide's Farm House from within the southern part of the site. Note only the roofline and upper storey is visible, however, the architectural interest of the building cannot be appreciated at such distance.





**Image EDP 8:** View north-east towards St Frideswide's Farm House from within the south-eastern part of the site. Although the later outbuildings are clearly visible, just the roofline and a small part of the St Frideswide's Farm House are visible. However the architectural interest of the building cannot be appreciated at such distance.



**Image EDP 9:** Zoomed view east across agricultural fields towards Water Eaton Manor. This view was taken from the site's eastern boundary, looking along the course of the footpath to the south of St Frideswide's Farm. Note the individual buildings at Water Eaton are not discernible, even in winter.





**Image EDP 10:** The listed buildings at Water Eaton Manor are not discernible, even when in close proximity to the complex. View from outside the site's boundary along the public Bridleway.



**Image EDP 11:** View of Water Eaton Manor from the immediate south, from where the site forms no part of the experience of the listed buildings.





**Image EDP 12:** View of Water Eaton Manor from the immediate east, from where the site forms no part of the experience of the listed buildings.



**Image EDP 13:** View of Water Eaton Manor from the immediate north, from where the site forms no part of the experience of the listed buildings.





**Image EDP 14:** Long-distance view west towards the site, taken from the southern edge of the Water Eaton Manor complex (see **Image EDP 11**). A residential development in the site would likely be visible along the ridgeline in the far distance, however, any 'in-combination' views with the assets here would be experienced in the context of an existing urban fringe, already comprising built form, sports pitch lighting, pylons and a park and ride complex.



**Image EDP 15:** Long-distance view of the site to the north-east taken from the bridleway towards Pipal Cottage and farmyard. The buildings are largely obscured by high hedgerows and trees which obscures most of the main windows from the site





**Image EDP 16:** The south-facing historic façade and frontage of Pipal Cottage showing the brick angled chimneys and large rear northern 1980–1990s extension



**Image EDP 17:** The west-facing elevations of Pipal Barns and outbuildings and the rear elevation of Pipal Cottage from Oxford Road.

## Plans

- Plan EDP 1** Known Heritage Assets  
(edp5650\_d067a 12 January 2023 GY/SDo)
- Plan EDP 2** Known Designated Heritage Assets  
(edp5650\_d068a 12 January 2023 GY/SDo)
- Plan EDP 3** Extracts from the Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1899  
(edp5650\_d022b 12 January 2023 GY/SDo)
- Plan EDP 4** Extracts from the 1936 - 7 Edition Ordnance Survey Map  
(edp5650\_d023b 12 January 2023 GY/SDo)
- Plan EDP 5** Extract from Environment Agency LiDAR: 2005 1m Digital Terrain Model  
(edp5650\_d024b 12 January 2023 GY/SDo)
- Plan EDP 6** Locations of Archaeological and Heritage Assessment Images  
(edp5650\_d073 08 November 2023 GY/Est)

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