

Himley Village, Bicester
Heritage Statement
June 2023

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Report

Heritage Statement

Site

Himley Village, Bicester

Client

Cala Homes (Cotwolds) Limited

Planning Authority

Cherwell District Council (CDC)

Grid reference

SP 55656 23353

Prepared By

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Report Status

Approved

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Contents

Executive Summary

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Planning Background and Development Plan Framework
- 3.0 Historical Context and Location of Heritage Assets
- 4.0 Proposed Development and Potential Impact on Heritage Assets
- 5.0 Summary and Conclusions

Sources Consulted

Appendix A: List of Illustrations

Figure 1 Site Location

Figure 2 Location of Listed Buildings in vicinity

Figure 3 1881 1:2,500 OS Map

Figure 4 1884-1885 1:10,560 OS Map

Figure 5 1899 1:2,500 OS Map

Figure 6 1900 1:10,560 OS Map

Figure 7 1922 1:2,500 OS Map

Figure 8 1923 1:10,560 OS Map

Figure 9 1938 1:10,560 OS Map

Figure 10 1970 1:10,560 OS Map

Figure 11 1982-1988 1:10,000 OS Map

Figure 12 1996 1:10,000 OS Map

Figure 13 1999 1:10,000 OS Map

Figure 14 2020 1:10,000 OS Map

Figure 15 c.1910-1914 Valuation Office Survey (DV/VIII/231 Oxfordshire XXIII.5)

List of Plates

Plate 1 Looking north-west along hedgerow which forms the northern boundary of the western field parcel.

3

- Plate 2** Looking south-west across western field parcel with Lovelynch House beyond tree line.
- Plate 3** At centre of site looking south along trackway with Himley Farm Bungalow within the tree line.
- Plate 4** Looking north-east across eastern field parcel.
- Plate 5** Looking north-west across eastern field parcel with glimpses of Himley Farm beyond the tree line.
- Plate 6** North-east site boundary looking north up trackway to Himley Farm with modern barn obscuring views of the listed asset.

Executive Summary

This heritage statement considers Himley Village, Bicester (the study site) and the potential impact of the proposed development on the setting and significance of those designated heritage assets located in its vicinity.

This heritage statement is an updated version of an earlier report produced by Orion Heritage Ltd in 2021. It has been updated to assess the Reserved Matters Application (RMA) (shown in blue hashes Figure 1 – 15). The 2021 document assessed the Outline Planning Area, referred to as ‘study area’ and shown in red on Figures 1 – 15.

In accordance with Paragraph 189 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2021) and Local Plan policy ESD 15 – The Character of the Built and Historic Environment, this report first identifies and describes the historical development of the study site and outlines the significance of the designated and non-designated heritage assets before going on to consider the impact of the proposal on that significance.

In summary, the proposal is compliant with the relevant heritage paragraphs contained in Section 16 of the NPPF 2021 and relevant local heritage policy including policy ESD 15 – The Character of the Built and Historic Environment, in as far as it has taken into consideration the surrounding built heritage, assessed its significance and considered levels of impact arising from the proposed development as understood at the present time.

There is one Grade II listed building within the vicinity of the study site, this being the ‘2 Barns Approximately 700 metres North East of Himley Farmhouse, Chesterton (Not Included) (NHLE 1046883) and c. 270 metres from the northern boundary of the wider site boundary. There is currently limited intervisibility between these assets and the RMA. Through the addition of further planting along the northern and eastern boundary of the RMA, those key views from the south of the asset will be maintained.

This report has demonstrated that a low level of less than substantial harm will be occasioned on the asset. The harm arises from the partial loss of the historic landscape to the south of the asset and the loss of the rural/agricultural context of the asset within this. It is considered that the strength of the associative value of the landscape has been partially eroded by the conversion of one of the barns into a residential dwelling and this factor, together with the retention some of the historic field boundaries, and limited intervisibility are the reasons that the harm arising from the proposals is considered to be at the low end of the less than substantial category.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1** This heritage statement considers Himley Village, Bicester (Figure 1). The site (hereinafter referred to as the “Study Site”) is located at National Grid Reference SP 55656 23353
- 1.2** In accordance with the Paragraph 189 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2021) and the requirement for applicants to describe the significance of heritage assets including contribution to setting, the report draws together available information on designated and non-designated heritage assets. The assessment includes the results of a site survey, an examination of published and unpublished records, charts historic land-use through a map regression exercise and considers relevant local and national policy and guidance.
- 1.3** The Historic Environment Record has been consulted (online) and the relevant designated heritage assets located in the immediate vicinity are identified in Figure 2.
- 1.4** A site visit was undertaken on 16th February 2021 when the conditions were overcast, but clear.
- 1.5** The report enables relevant parties to assess the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets within and in the vicinity of the site, thus enabling potential impacts on these assets to be identified along with the need for design solutions.

Location and Description

- 1.6** Situated to the north-west of Bicester, Oxfordshire, the wider study site is approximately 20.8 ha in area, sub-rectangular in shape and is comprised of hedgerow enclosed flat agricultural land. The site is bounded to the south by the B4030. There is one building within the site boundary, Himley Farm Bungalow which is c. 77 m north of the B4030 in the southern most part of the site. The building dates from the mid-late 20th century and is of no value in heritage terms. Located c. 114 m beyond the south-west corner of the site boundary is Lovelynych House which dates from the early-mid 20th century and is of no value in heritage terms. Running through the centre of the site is a trackway which is the access to Himley Farm situated approximately 270 m from the wider sites northern edge. The study site is shown in (Plates 1-6).

2.0 Planning Background and Development Plan Framework

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

2.1 The *Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* sets out broad policies and obligations relevant to the protection of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas and their settings.

2.2 Section 66(1) states:

In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

2.3 Section 69 of the Act requires local authorities to define as conservation areas any *areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance* and Section 72 gives local authorities a general duty to pay special attention *to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area* in exercising their planning functions. These duties are taken to apply only within a Conservation Area. The Act does not make specific provision with regard to the setting of a Conservation Area, that is provided by the policy framework outlined below.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

2.4 Government policy in relation to the historic environment is outlined in Section 16 of the *National Planning Policy Framework 2021* (NPPF), entitled *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*. This provides guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the conservation and investigation of heritage assets. Overall, the objectives of Section 16 of the NPPF can be summarised as seeking the:

- Delivery of sustainable development;
- understanding the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits brought by the conservation of the historic environment;
- conservation of England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance; and
- recognition of the contribution that heritage assets make to our knowledge and understanding of the past.

- 2.5 Section 16 of the NPPF recognises that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term.
- 2.6 Paragraph 194 states that planning decisions should be based on the significance of the heritage asset, and that the level of detail supplied by an applicant should be proportionate to the importance of the asset, and should be no more than sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal upon the significance of that asset.
- 2.7 *Heritage Assets* are defined in Annex 2 as a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets include designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).
- 2.8 *Designated Heritage Assets* comprise: World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Protected Wreck Sites, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and Conservation Areas.
- 2.9 *Significance* is defined as: the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. This interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.
- 2.10 *Setting* is defined as: the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.
- 2.11 The NPPF is supported by the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG). In relation to the historic environment paragraph 18a-002 makes a clear statement that any decisions relating to Listed Buildings and their settings and Conservation Areas must address the statutory considerations of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as well as satisfying the relevant policies within the National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Plan.
- 2.12 Paragraph 18a-013 outlines that the assessment of the impact of a proposed development on the setting of a heritage asset needs to take into account and be proportionate to the significance of the asset being considered, and the degree to which the proposed development enhances or detracts from the significance of the asset and the ability to appreciate the significance.
- 2.13 The NPPG outlines that although the extent and importance of setting is often expressed in visual terms, it can also be influenced by other factors such as

noise, dust and vibration. Historic relationships between places can also be an important factor stressing ties between places that may have limited or no intervisibility with each other. This may be historic as well as aesthetic connections that contribute or enhance the significance of one or more of the heritage assets.

2.14 Paragraph 18a-013 concludes:

The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights of way or an ability to otherwise access or experience that setting. The contribution may vary over time. When assessing any application which may affect the setting of a heritage asset, local planning authorities may need to consider the implications of cumulative change. They may also need to consider the fact that developments which materially detract from the asset's significance may also damage its economic viability now, or in the future, thereby threatening its ongoing conservation.

2.15 The key test in NPPF paragraphs 199-202 is whether a proposed development will result in substantial harm or less than substantial harm. However, substantial harm is not defined in the NPPF. Paragraph 18a-018 of the NPPG provides additional guidance on substantial harm. It states:

What matters in assessing if a proposal causes substantial harm is the impact on the significance of the heritage asset. As the National Planning Policy Framework makes clear, significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

Proposed development affecting a heritage asset may have no impact on its significance or may enhance its significance and therefore cause no harm to the heritage asset. Where potential harm to designated heritage assets is identified, it needs to be categorised as either less than substantial harm or substantial harm (which includes total loss) in order to identify which policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 194 to 196) apply.

Within each category of harm (which category applies should be explicitly identified), the extent of the harm may vary and should be clearly articulated. Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision-maker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting.

While the impact of total destruction is obvious, partial destruction is likely to have a considerable impact but, depending on the circumstances, it may still be less than substantial harm or conceivably not harmful at all, for example, when removing later additions to historic buildings where those additions are inappropriate and harm the buildings' significance. Similarly, works that are moderate or minor in scale are likely to cause less than substantial harm or no harm at all. However, even minor works have the potential to cause substantial harm, depending on the nature of their impact on the asset and its setting.

The National Planning Policy Framework confirms 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). It also makes clear that any harm to a designated heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification and sets out certain assets in respect of which harm should be exceptional/wholly exceptional (see National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 194).

- 2.16** Paragraph 202 of the NPPF outlines that where a proposed development results in less than substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset, the harm arising should be weighed against the public benefits accruing from the proposed development. Paragraph 18a-020 of the NPPG outlines what is meant by public benefits:

Public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental progress as described in the National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraph 8). Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and should not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefit.

- 2.17** Paragraph 203 states:

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.

- 2.18** In considering any planning application for development, the planning authority will be mindful of the framework set by government policy, in this instance the NPPF, by current Development Plan Policy and by other material considerations.

- 2.19** The Cherwell District Council Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 (Adopted 2015) is the relevant development plan. The local plan contains the following relevant policies including:

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 proposed developments should:

Be designed to deliver high quality safe, attractive, durable and healthy places to live and work in. Development of all scales should be designed to improve the quality and appearance of an area and the way it functions.

Deliver buildings, places and spaces that can adapt to changing social, technological, economic and environmental conditions.

Support the efficient use of land and infrastructure, through appropriate land uses, mix and density/development intensity.

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. Proposed developments 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 proposed developments that make sensitive use of heritage assets, particularly where these bring redundant or under used buildings or

areas, especially any on English Heritage's At Risk Register, into appropriate use will be encouraged.

Include information on heritage assets sufficient to assess the potential impact of the proposed development 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. Development should be designed to integrate with existing streets and public spaces, and buildings configured to create clearly defined active public frontages.

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.

Promote permeable, accessible and easily understandable places by creating spaces that connect with each other, are easy to move through and have recognisable landmark features.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 2.20** Supplementary guidance also referred to in the compilation of this report includes the Cherwell Residential Design Guide (SPD) Masterplanning and architectural design guidance (adopted 16th July 2018). The Design and Conservation Strategy for Cherwell (2012–2015), although the date of which implies it may now have lapsed.

Other Guidance

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice In Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (Historic England 2015)

- 2.21** The purpose of this document is to provide information to assist local authorities, planning and other consultants, owners, applicants and other interested parties in implementing historic environment policy in the NPPF and NPPG. It outlines a six-stage process to the assembly and analysis of relevant information relating to heritage assets potentially affected by a proposed development:

- Understand the significance of the affected assets;
- Understand the impact of the proposal on that significance;

- Avoid, minimise and mitigate impact in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF;
- Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance;
- Justify any harmful impacts in terms of the sustainable development objective of conserving significance and the need for change; and
- Offset negative impacts on aspects of significance by enhancing others through recording, disseminating and archiving archaeological and historical interest of the important elements of the heritage assets affected.

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice In Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England 2017)

- 2.22** Historic England’s Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 provides guidance on the management of change within the setting of heritage assets.
- 2.23** The document restates the definition of setting as outlined in Annex 2 of the NPPF. Setting is also described as being a separate term to curtilage, character and context; while it is largely a visual term, setting, and thus the way in which an asset is experienced, can also be affected by noise, vibration, odour and other factors. The document makes it clear that setting is not a heritage asset, nor is it a heritage designation, though land within a setting may itself be designated. Its importance lies in what the setting contributes to the significance of a heritage asset.
- 2.24** The Good Practice Advice Note sets out a five-stage process for assessing the implications of proposed developments on setting:
1. Identification of heritage assets which are likely to be affected by proposals;
 2. Assessment of whether and what contribution the setting makes to the significance of a heritage asset;
 3. Assessing the effects of proposed development on the significance of a heritage asset;
 4. Maximising enhancement and reduction of harm on the setting of heritage assets; and
 5. Making and documenting the decision and monitoring outcomes
- 2.25** The guidance reiterates the NPPF in stating that where developments affecting the setting of heritage assets results in a level of harm to significance, this harm, whether substantial or less than substantial, should be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme.

3.0 Historical Context and Location of Heritage Assets

Introduction

- 3.1** The following section presents a historical development of the site and wider area through the results of a map regression exercise and review of relevant background documentation.
- 3.2** The location of designated heritage assets within and surrounding the site are also discussed below; these are shown on Figure 2.

Historical Background

Summary: Himley Village, Bicester

- 3.3** Tracing land ownership of the area of the site prior to c.1910 is difficult to undertake remotely with the available sources, especially the lack of historic maps. Additionally, although most archive material held at Oxfordshire History Centre (OHC) appears on the online catalogue, other material can only be identified from within the archive search room which is currently closed to researchers under current Covid-19 restrictions.
- 3.4** Thomas Williams' 1752 pre-enclosure map of Bicester A new map of the two Manors of Bicester, call'd Market End and King's End; in which are delineated the lands of Sir Edward Turner and Mr John Pardoe; as they are situated in each Manor. Plotted in the year 1752 and drawn in the year 1753 by Thos. Williams, the map is held at OHC (POX0251013) has been digitised and is available to view at; https://pictureoxon.com/frontend.php?keywords=Ref_No_increment;EQUALS;POX0251013&pos=1&action=zoom&id=1338979 but may not be reproduced without permission: The map shows the area of the site as part of the vast tracts of land labelled 'Kings End Arable.' The King's End Fields were not surveyed. The site lies south of Hale Furlong and north of the road to Middleton Stoney. Hale Furlong is recorded in the map key as in the ownership of Mr Pardoe. A dotted boundary line is shown dividing Market End manor in the east from Kings End in the west.
- 3.5** Kings End was enclosed by the enclosure award of January 1794 [QS/D/A/vol A] under a 1793 private Act for 'dividing and inclosing the Open and Common Arable Meadow, Ley Pasture, and Waste Lands, lying and being within the Township of Burcester-Kings-End, otherwise Bicester-King's-End, in the parish of Burcester, otherwise Bicester, in the County of Oxford' (Houses of Commons 1803). No enclosure maps have survived. No later parish or estate maps have been identified, and there is no tithe map for the parish of Bicester.

- 3.6** King's End was administered as a separate township for most of its history and was divided from Bicester Market End by the Bure Brook (Lobel, 1959). Confusingly the names Bignell Field and King's End Field were both used in the Middle Ages for the common field of the two townships, when the hamlet chiefly comprised the nuns' grange and their tenant's cottages (Ibid.). The open fields of King's End were managed in the traditional way in the Tudor period, and 'the treatment of the common arable land seems to have been conservative,' and holdings were apparently mostly minutely subdivided (ibid.).
- 3.7** The Valuation Office Survey of c.1910-1914 produced maps and field books that record ownership, occupancy, and extent of land holdings for tax purposes. The local records produced by this survey are held at OHC. The map (DV/VIII/231 Oxfordshire XXIII.5) (Figure 15) shows the site divided between two hereditaments, assigned assessment numbers 3 and 75 (pt).
- 3.8** Assessment No. 3 is recorded in the accompanying valuation book (DV/X/20) as being in the ownership of Henry Quatermaine and occupancy of the Reverend Walter O'Reilly of The Vicarage, Bicester. The field is unnamed, and is described as 'land' and the location as 'Kings End.' Estimated extend is recorded as 24 acres.
- 3.9** Assessment 75 is recorded as the land comprising Himley's Farm at Kings End, in the ownership of William Bonner and occupancy of Lewis E. Coker. The estimated extent of the entire farmland is 108 acres.
- 3.10** It has not been possible to trace Bonner's ownership of Himley Farm back further using available sources and resources. The farm may have been in the possession of Richard Phillips until his death in or before 1873; a newspaper notice informing of a sale of farm stock by auction mentions that the Representatives of the later Mr Richard Phillips were leaving 'the Himley Farms.' (Oxford Journal 23 August 1873).
- 3.11** Himley Farm is not mentioned in Lobel, 1959. No references to were found within searches of OHC's online catalogue (or in other archive catalogues) using various search terms. A reference to the farm in 1873 within the Bicester Herald, referring to the auction sale of corn crops is the earliest mention of the farm identified during this research (Bicester Herald 25 July 1873).
- 3.12** Identifiable references to King's End Field using available resources seems restricted to just two. The archive of the Bicester Estate belonging to the Dashwood family of Kirklington Park is held at OHC. King's End Field is mentioned within two terriers within this collection, according to OHC catalogue records. A terrier contained within a 1585 bundle of deeds relates to a messuage, farm, cottage and 3 ¼ yard lands in Bicester, Kings End: 'two yard

land belonging to the tenement late in the occupation of John Clarck, als Baker' (Dash XVIII/iii/10). A 1728 terrier of land within a bundle of deeds Dash XVIII/ii - Deeds for Lamas Close, land called New Digging, 8 acres and 4 leys in Foxhill Leys, in Bicester Kings End belonging to a John Walker (Dash XVIII/ii/7). It is not known from this information whether the former might relate to the site, although the latter probably does not.

Historic Map Regression

- 3.13** The 1881 map (Figure 3) illustrates the isolated and rural location of Himley Farm, surrounded on all sides by open agricultural land, divided into field parcels. At the centre, Himley Farm can be seen in its current layout with the north and south barns connected at an off-set junction. Running east from the north barn is a further range of building(s) creating an L shaped courtyard area to its south with a further small, isolated building to the east. The current trackway which runs through the centre of the study site is clearly visible running from the south up to the farm as are the field boundaries which make up the north and north-east study site boundary.
- 3.14** The mapping of 1884 - 1885 (Figure 4) shows Himley Farm in context with its wider environs. Surrounded on all sides by open agricultural land which is subdivided into individual field parcels. There is little in the way of development apart from other isolated farmsteads and the main road to the south. The east and west field parcels that make up the study site can clearly be seen at this point through the configuration of field boundaries.
- 3.15** The mapping of 1899 (Figure 5) shows little change to the layout of the farm buildings but further south, beyond the main road, the 1900 map (Figure 6) shows the farmland here has now been developed into an area of parkland with boating lake and isolated copses of trees. Known as Bignell Park, it formed part of the estate of Bignell House which was demolished circa 1900.
- 3.16** By 1922 the mapping (Figure 7) shows little change to the development of the farm buildings apart from the addition of a couple of small, detached structures in the south-east corner of the courtyard and a more substantial building running northwards on the other side of the track to the farms east-west range.
- 3.17** The 1923 map (Figure 8) shows little change to Himley Farm or to the land in its immediate vicinity. However, to the north-west and running south-east to north-west, a new branch of the Great Western Railway has been constructed. At the point where this crosses what is now the A4095, a new industrial area is marked consisting of a lime kiln, quarry and pumping station.

- 3.18** To the south-west of the study site, the mapping of 1938 (Figure 9) now shows a building in an area of the plot that Lovelynch House is located and a further detached building to the west of the two barns at Himley Farm.
- 3.19** The 1970 map (Figure 10) has the building located on the Lovelynch plot labelled as Himley Farm and there is now a building located on the west side of the trackway running through the centre of the study site. The configuration of buildings on the site of Himley Farm has slightly changed with the building to the north of the east-west range now reduced in size. Further to the east, beyond the A4095 new development west of Bicester is now evident.
- 3.20** By the time of the 1982 – 1988 mapping (Figure 11), Bicester’s development now bounds the east side of the A4095 and by 1996 (Figure 12) the building located on the west of the trackway running through the centre of the study site is labelled as Himley Farmhouse and the name Lovelynch House appears next to its current plot.
- 3.21** Mapping from 1999 (Figure 13) shows a new building on the site of Himley Farm running east-west and forming a southern range to its courtyard. The building to the west of the barns has now gone and there is a trackway leading to a piggery to the north-east. The M40 motorway is also now clearly shown to the west.
- 3.22** The 2020 mapping (Figure 14) illustrates the most recent mapped record of structures on the site of Himley Farm with little development in the immediate and wider environs maintaining its isolated rural setting. However, since then a new modern steel framed barn has been constructed at the southern end of the south barn (Plate 6).

Heritage Assets

Listed Buildings

- 3.23** There is one Grade II listed building within the vicinity of the study site, this being the 2 Barns Approximately 700 metres North East of Himley Farmhouse, Chesterton (Not Included) (NHLE 1046883).

Non-Designated Heritage Assets

- 3.24** There are no non-designated heritage assets within the vicinity of the study site.

4.0 Proposed Development and Potential Impact on Heritage Assets

Background

- 4.1 This section identifies and assesses the impacts of the proposal on the significance of the heritage assets located within and in the vicinity of the study site. In assessing the heritage impacts of the proposal, the relevant policies cited in section 2.0 have been referenced.

The Proposed Development

- 4.2 The study site forms part of Himley Village North West Bicester, which received outline planning permission on the 30th January 2020 for:

Development to provide up to 1,700 residential dwellings (Class C3), a retirement village (Class C2), flexible commercial floorspace (Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1, C1 and D1), social and community facilities (Class D1), land to accommodate one energy centre and land to accommodate one new primary school (up to 2FE) (Class D1). Such development to include provision of strategic landscape, provision of new vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access routes, infrastructure and other operations (including demolition of farm buildings on Middleton Stoney Road) (OUTLINE 14/02121/OUT)

- 4.3 The proposed built form of the RMA is a mixture of residential development and supporting infrastructure which range in height from 1 – 2 storeys in height.

Potential Impacts on Heritage Assets

- 4.4 As noted in paragraph 3.23, there is one listed building located in the immediate vicinity of the study site. The proposed development, therefore, has the potential to impact on the settings and significance of the heritage assets identified.

Listed Buildings in the vicinity

- 4.5 In order to understand how any new development could affect the significance of these heritage assets, it is important to understand the specific heritage values which combine to inform that significance. An understanding of the contribution setting makes to its significance is also considered.

Description and setting

2 Barns Approximately 700m North-East of Himley Farmhouse, Chesterton (not included) (NHLE 1046883)

- 4.6 Located c. 270 m from the northern boundary of the study site, this Grade II listed building is described as follows in its listing:

2 barns. 1760 on datestone; one barn possibly slightly later. Coursed limestone rubble with wooden lintels; corrugated-asbestos roofs. 4-bay plans in staggered alignment with small altered link. Dated barn has full-height opposed doors, and has slits to other bays plus 3 slits and a triangular apex vent to the north gable wall. Second barn has lower doors but is otherwise similar. Interiors: Butt-purlin roof with through tenons; trusses have tie beam, collar and short raking struts.

- 4.7 The significance of this Grade II listed building is derived primarily from the age of its fabric and its physical and functional relationship with its immediate and wider rural environs. The construction of the walls, in a coursed limestone rubble, is a good example of the local agricultural vernacular and the retention of much of the original timber roof structure adds to the architectural interest of the buildings. Other retained features such as the full height opposed barn doors and ventilation slots in the walls add to the historic interest in the buildings by illustrating their connection with past agricultural practices in the area including the harvesting, drying and storing of cereal crops. Historically, the roof covering of the barns would have been thatch or clay tile, but at some point, this has been replaced with asbestos sheet, negatively impacting its significance. The northern barn has undergone a degree of re-purposing in that it has been converted to a residential property. Although it was not possible to access the barn, through its conversion, a certain amount of partitioning and internal alteration would have been necessary to have made it habitable. These alterations may well have significantly altered the internal configuration and character from its historic purpose.
- 4.8 The immediate setting of the asset relates principally to the layout and orientation of the isolated barns and their ancillary buildings set in a U shape around a central courtyard and is easily legible as a collection of farm buildings. The buildings' orientation and layout have not drastically changed from when they appear on the earliest available mapping and positively contribute to the significance of the asset. The wider environs that the asset is experienced in are of an open rural/agricultural landscape which has changed little since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Many of the historic field boundaries marked by hedgerows and isolated trees are still in existence and positively contribute to the rural setting of the asset and its link to its agricultural past. The asset is largely experienced through northward views from the trackway which runs through the centre of the study site but is impacted substantially by the presence of a modern twentieth century barn at the southern end of the south barn. (Plate 6). The low-lying nature of the land and the position of the asset within it means glimpses of it are possible from a reasonable distance but the glimpses are largely broken up by the presence of the intervening hedgerows. The wider rural environs have a historical

association to Himley Farm as detailed in sections 3.7-3.11 above and in particular the western field parcel that makes up part of the study site. In its present state the study site is considered to make a positive contribution to the setting and significance of the asset.

Impact of Development Proposal

- 4.9** The proposed RMA indicates that areas of new planting along its northern and eastern edges which will help to filter views of the new development when approaching the assets from the south. The proposed development in the northern part of the RMA currently includes a buffer of open land between it and the study site's northern boundary. Beyond this there is a further area of open land between the boundary and the assets. The proposed development will occupy a portion of the study site formerly in the possession of Himley Farm. However, the historic east and west boundaries of the field parcel that form the east and west boundaries of the RMA will be broadly retained allowing the historic land ownership to remain legible to an extent. The asset lies c. 270m from the northern edge of the wider study site boundary which is presently separated by open fields and hedgerows across which, given the distance and lack of intervisibility, it is difficult to ascertain the asset's special interest and significance. The immediate setting, layout and orientation of the barns will not be affected by the development leaving them legible as a farm. However, the proposed development will have an impact on the sense of isolation of the asset within its open agricultural setting through the removal of some of this historic rural / agricultural context. The significance of the asset has been compromised in the past by the adaption of one barn for residential use and the addition of a large modern farm building which screens the barns from the south, one of the key views in which they are experienced. It is considered that the proposals will generate a low level of less than substantial harm to the designated asset through the erosion of its wider historic rural / agricultural context.

5.0 Summary and Conclusions

- 5.1** In summary, the proposal is compliant with the relevant heritage paragraphs contained in Section 16 of the NPPF 2021 and relevant local heritage policy including policy ESD 15 – The Character of the Built and Historic Environment, in as far as it has taken into consideration the surrounding built heritage, assessed its significance and considered levels of impact arising from the proposed development as understood at the present time.
- 5.2** There is one Grade II listed building within the vicinity of the study site, this being the '2 Barns Approximately 700 metres North East of Himley Farmhouse, Chesterton (Not Included) (NHLE 1046883). There is currently limited intervisibility between these assets and the RMA. Through the addition of further planting along the northern and eastern boundaries of the RMA, those key views from the south of the asset will be maintained.
- 5.3** This report has demonstrated that a low level of less than substantial harm will be occasioned on the asset. The harm arises from the partial loss of the historic landscape to the south of the asset and the loss of the rural/agricultural context of the asset within this. It is considered that the strength of the associative value of the landscape has been partially eroded by the conversion of one of the barns into a residential dwelling and this factor, together with the retention some of the historic field boundaries, and limited intervisibility are the reasons that the harm arising from the proposals is considered to be at the low end of the less than substantial category.

Sources

General

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The National Archives

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Oxfordshire History Centre

Cherwell District Planning and Building Control Service

Cartographic

1752	Thomas Williams' pre-enclosure map of Bicester
1881	1:2,500 OS Map
1884-1885	1:10,560 OS Map
1899	1:2,500 OS Map
1900	1:10,560 OS Map
1910-1914	Valuation Office Survey map (DV/VIII/231 Oxfordshire XXIII.5)
1922	1:2,500 OS Map
1923	1:10,560 OS Map
1938	1:10,560 OS Map
1970	1:10,560 OS Map
1982-1988	1:10,000 OS Map
1996	1:10,000 OS Map
1999	1:10,000 OS Map
2020	1:10,000 OS Map

Websites

British History Online – <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/>

Historic England National Heritage List for England - <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

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Historic England. 2017. Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 – The Setting of Heritage Assets



Plate 1

Looking north-west along hedgerow which forms the northern boundary of the western field parcel.



Plate 2

Looking south-west across western field parcel with Lovelynch House beyond tree line.



Plate 3
At centre of site looking south along trackway with Himley Farm Bungalow within the tree line.



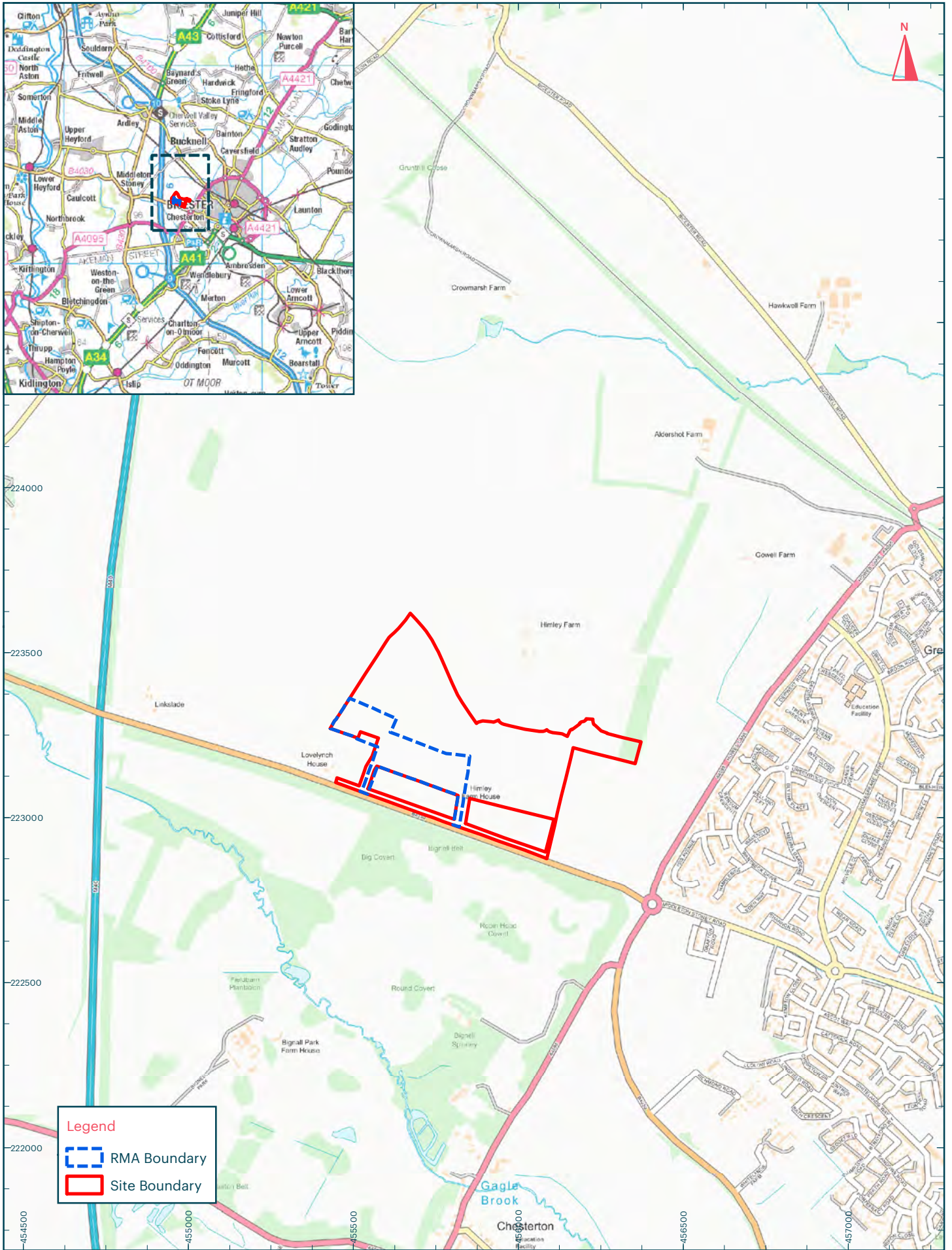
Plate 4
Looking north-east across eastern field parcel.



Plate 5
Looking north-west across eastern field parcel with glimpses of Himley Farm beyond tree line.



Plate 6
North-east site boundary looking north up trackway to Himley Farm with modern barn obscuring views of the listed asset.

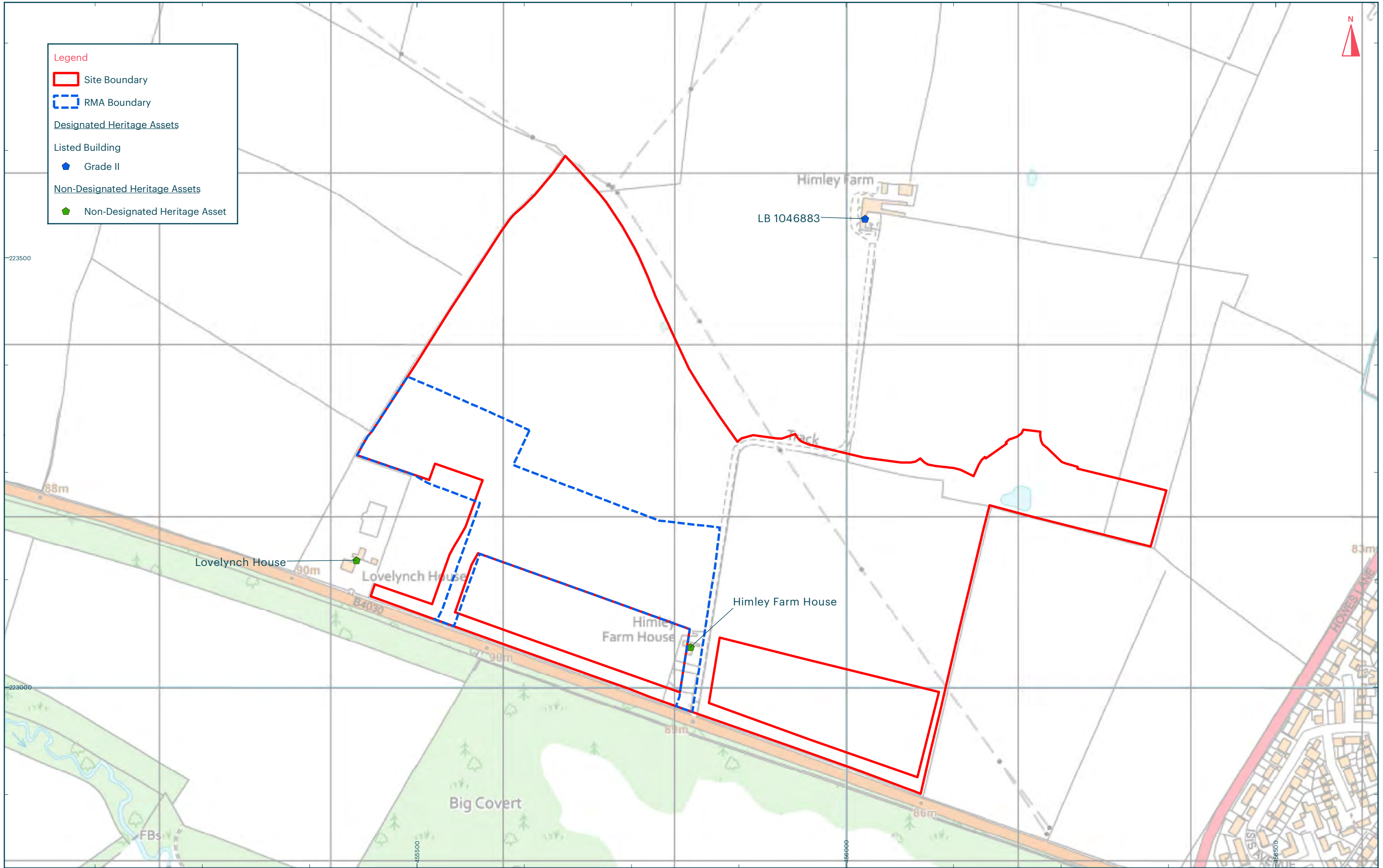


Title:
Figure 1: Site Location

Address:
Himley Village

Scale at A4: 1:15,000





Legend

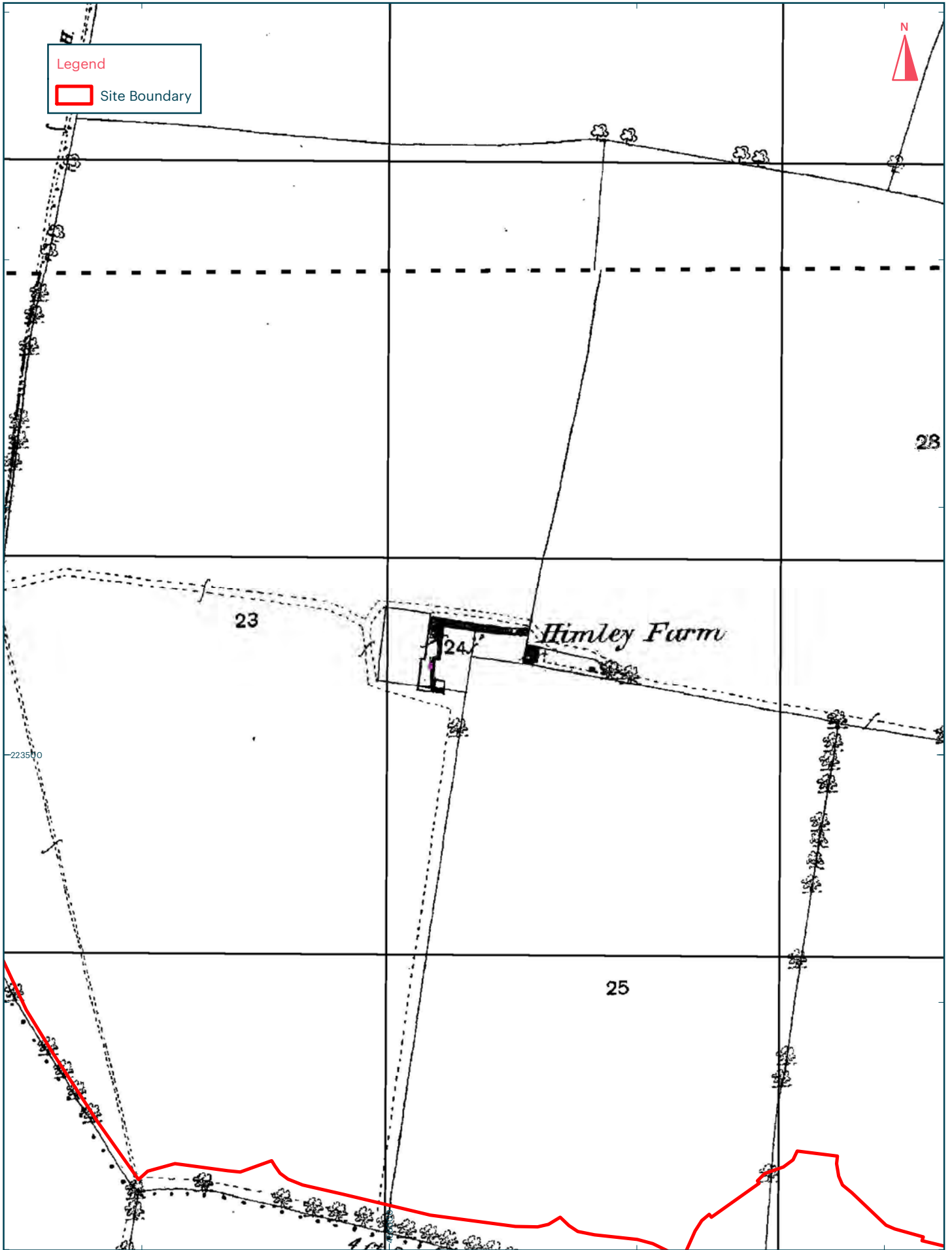
- Site Boundary
- RMA Boundary
- Designated Heritage Assets**
- Listed Building
- ◆ Grade II
- Non-Designated Heritage Assets**
- ◆ Non-Designated Heritage Asset

Title:
Figure 2: Heritage Assets
Address:
Himley Village

Scale at A3: 1:4,000
0 125m



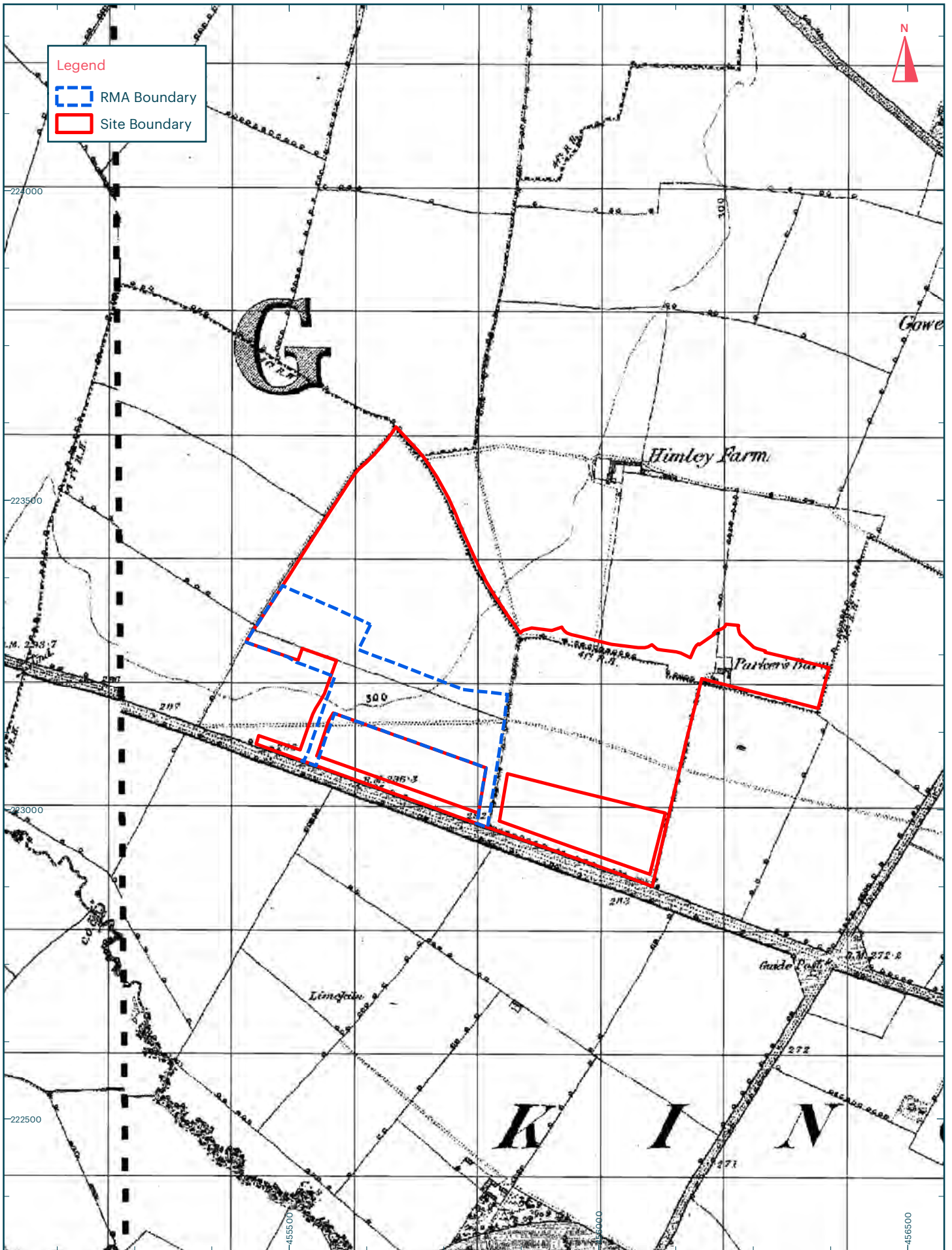
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Title:
Figure 3: 1881 1:2,500 OS Map
Address:
Himley Village

Scale at A4: 1:2,500
0 80m

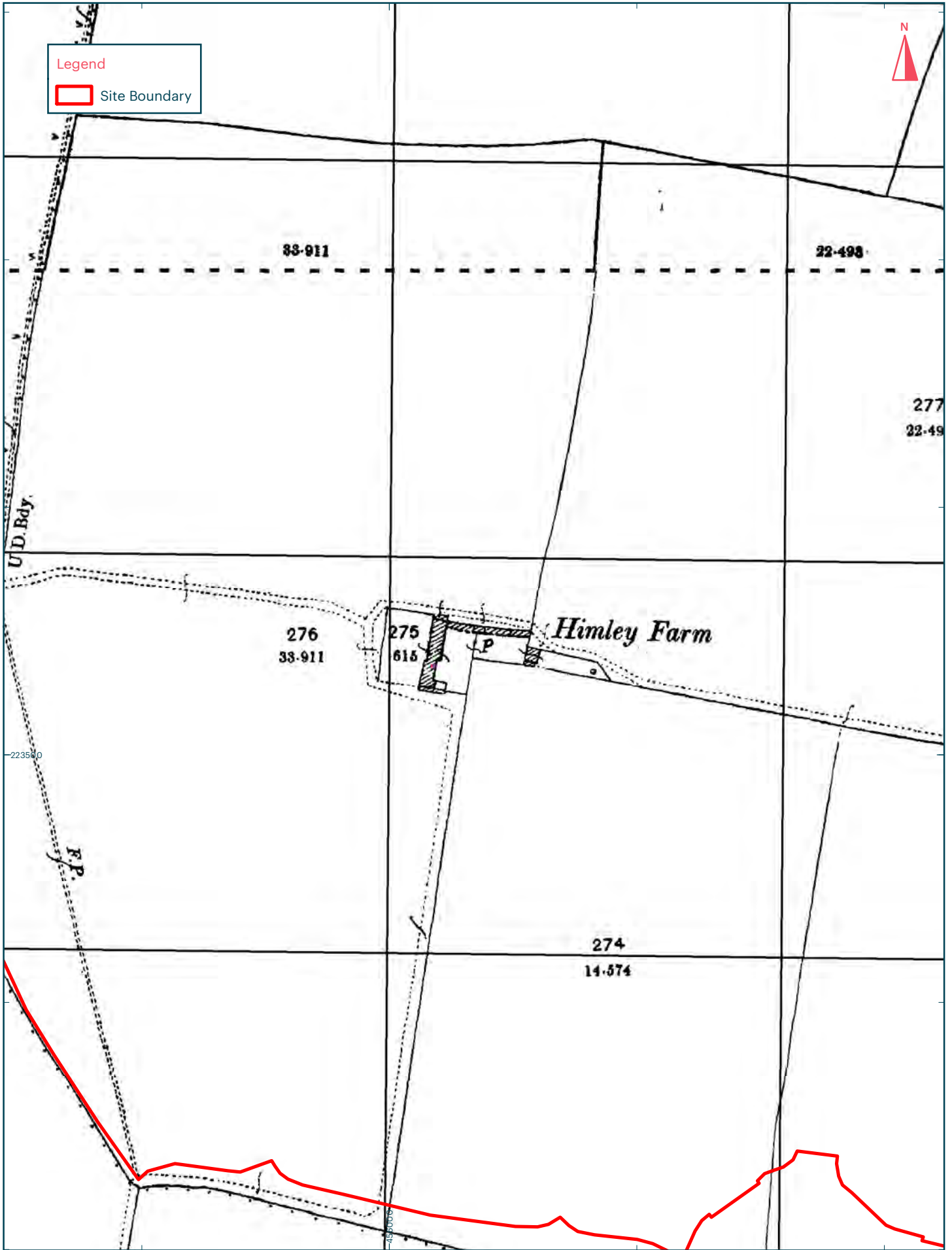




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 Figure 4: 1884-1885 1:10,560 OS Map
Address:
 Himley Village

Scale at A4: 1:8,000
 0 250m

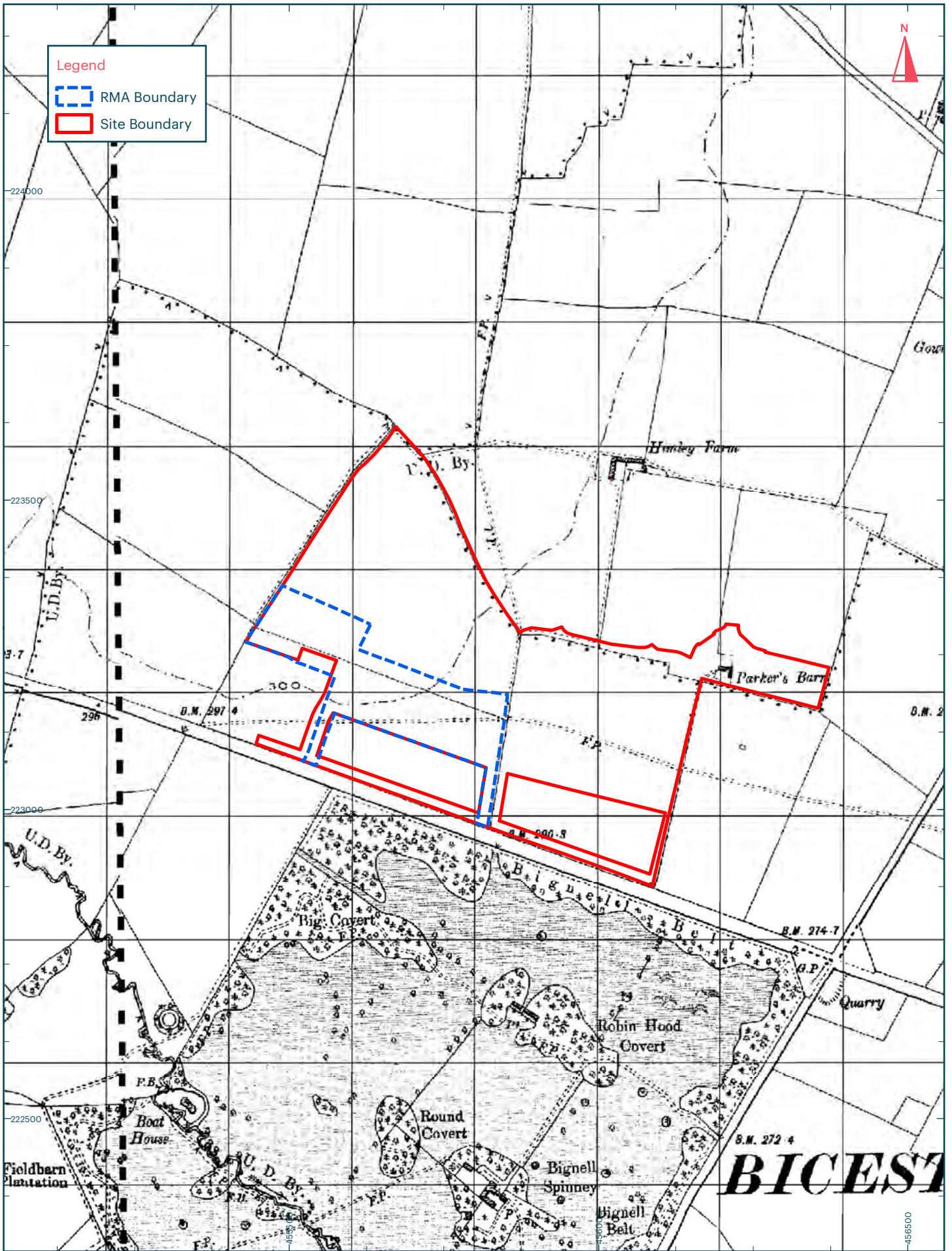




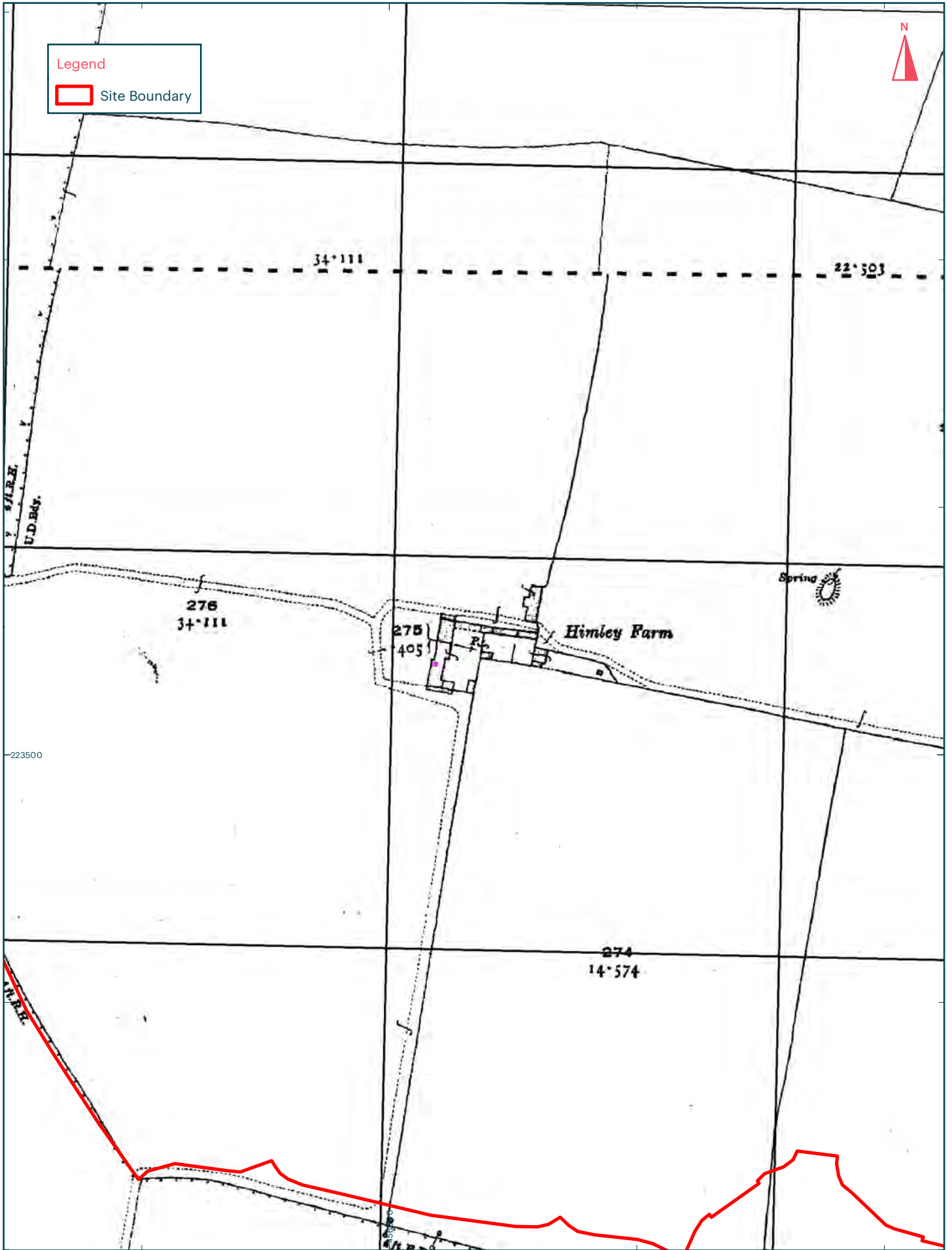
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Figure 5: 1899 1:2,500 OS Map
Address:
Himley Village

Scale at A4: 1:2,500





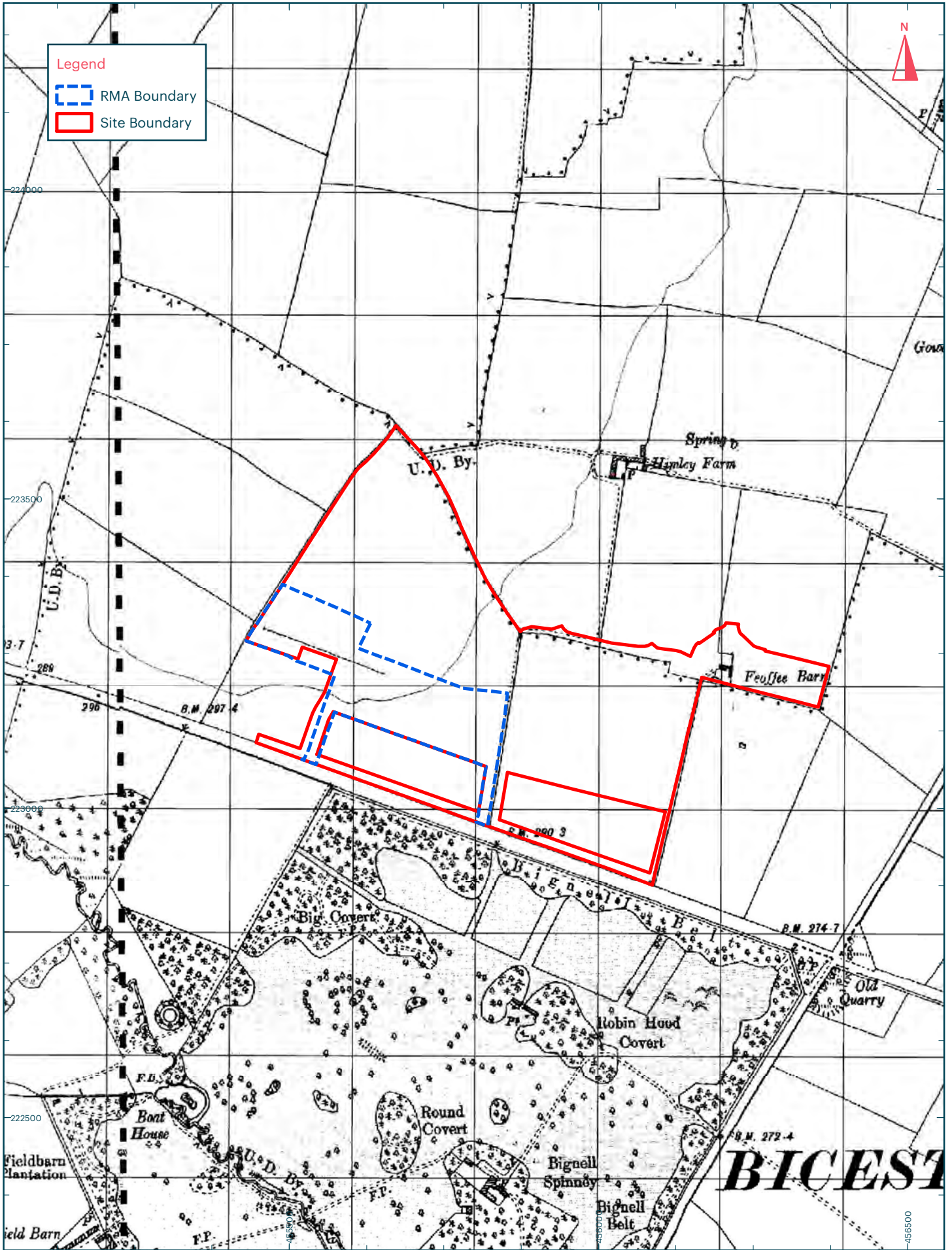
<p>Title: Figure 6: 1900 1:10,560 OS Map</p> <p>Address: Himley Village</p>	<p>Scale at A4: 1:8,000</p> <p>0 250m</p>	
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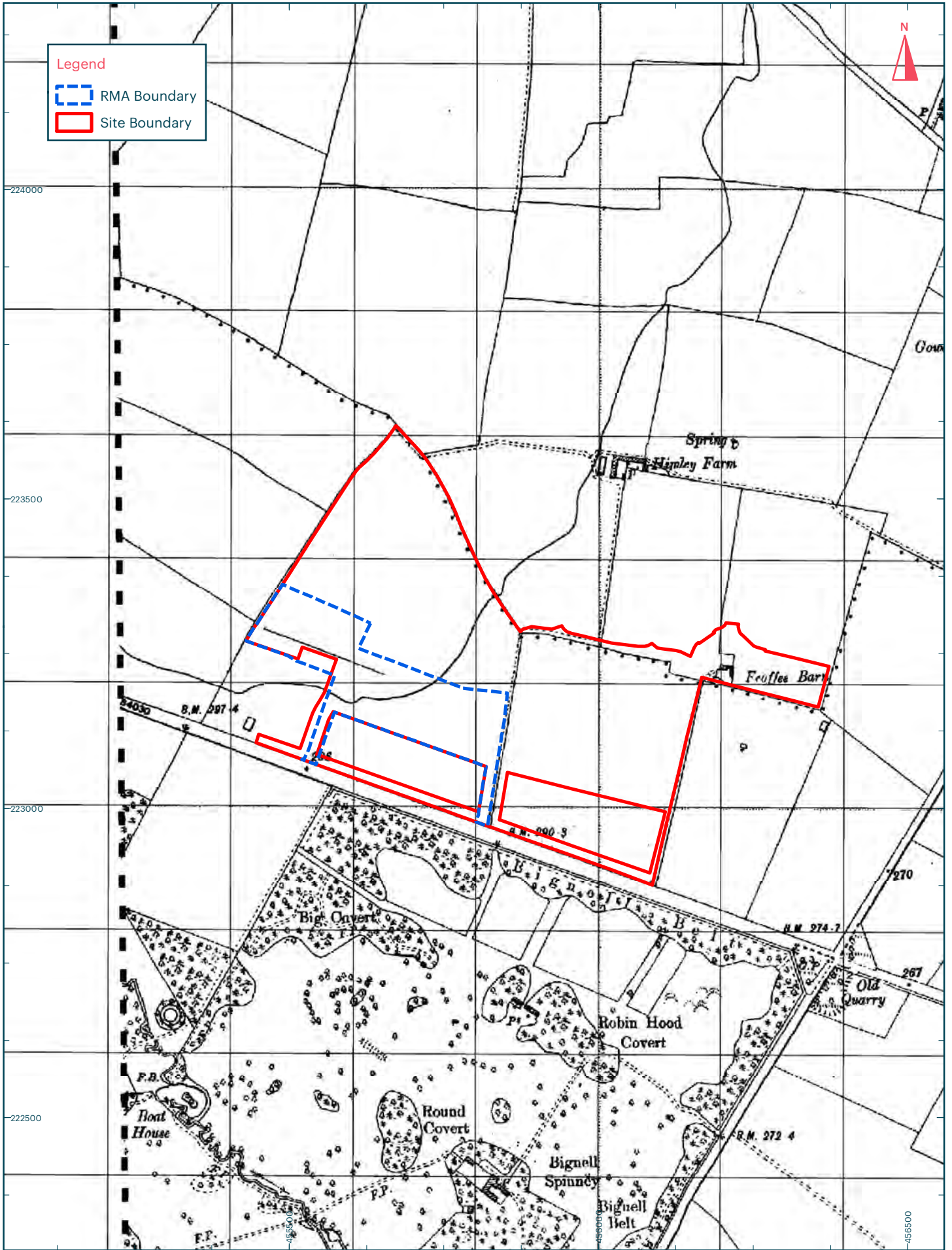
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Figure 7: 1922 1:2,500 OS Map
Address:
Himley Village

Scale at A4: 1:2,500





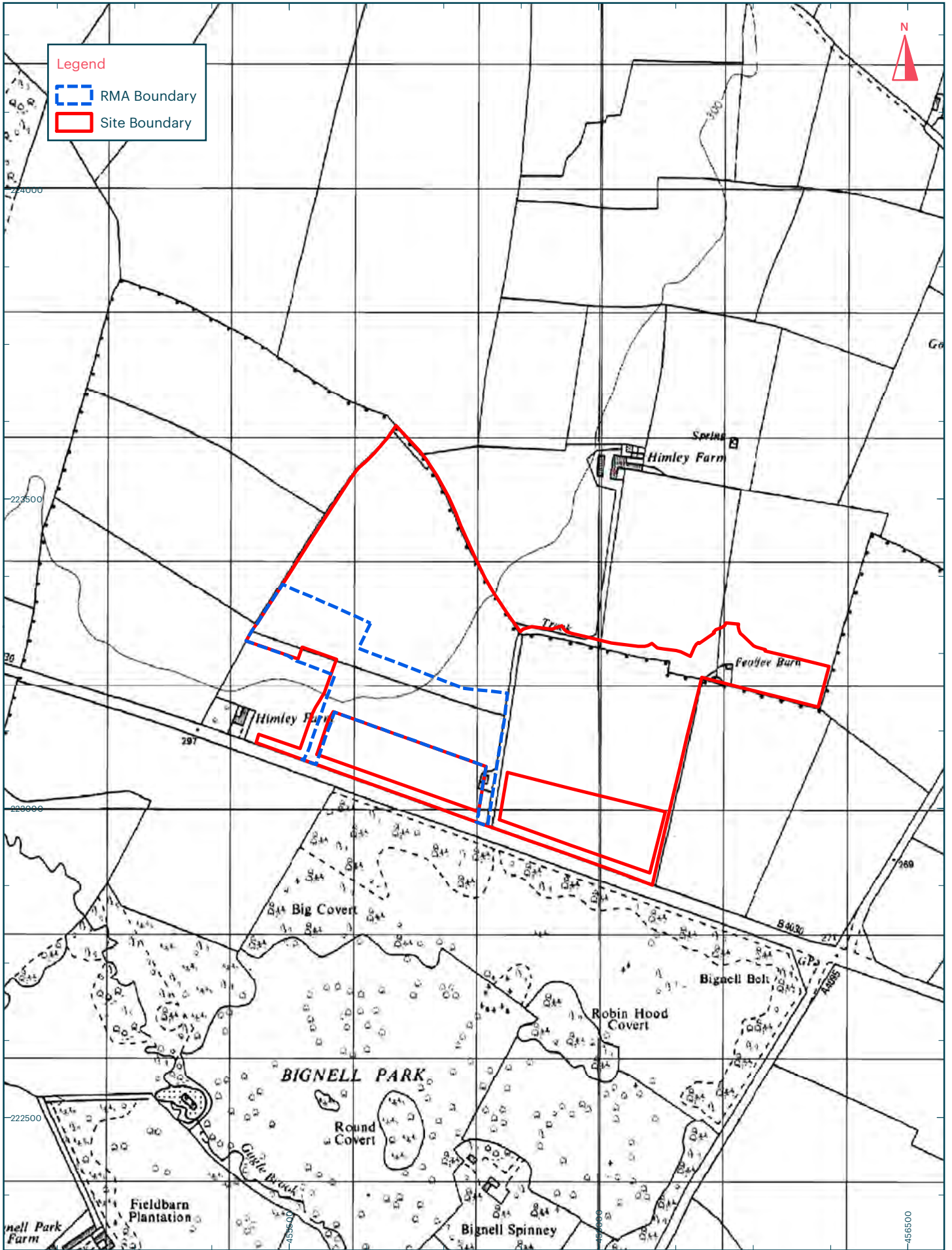
<p>Title: Figure 8: 1923 1:10,560 OS Map</p> <p>Address: Himley Village</p>	<p>Scale at A4: 1:8,000</p>	
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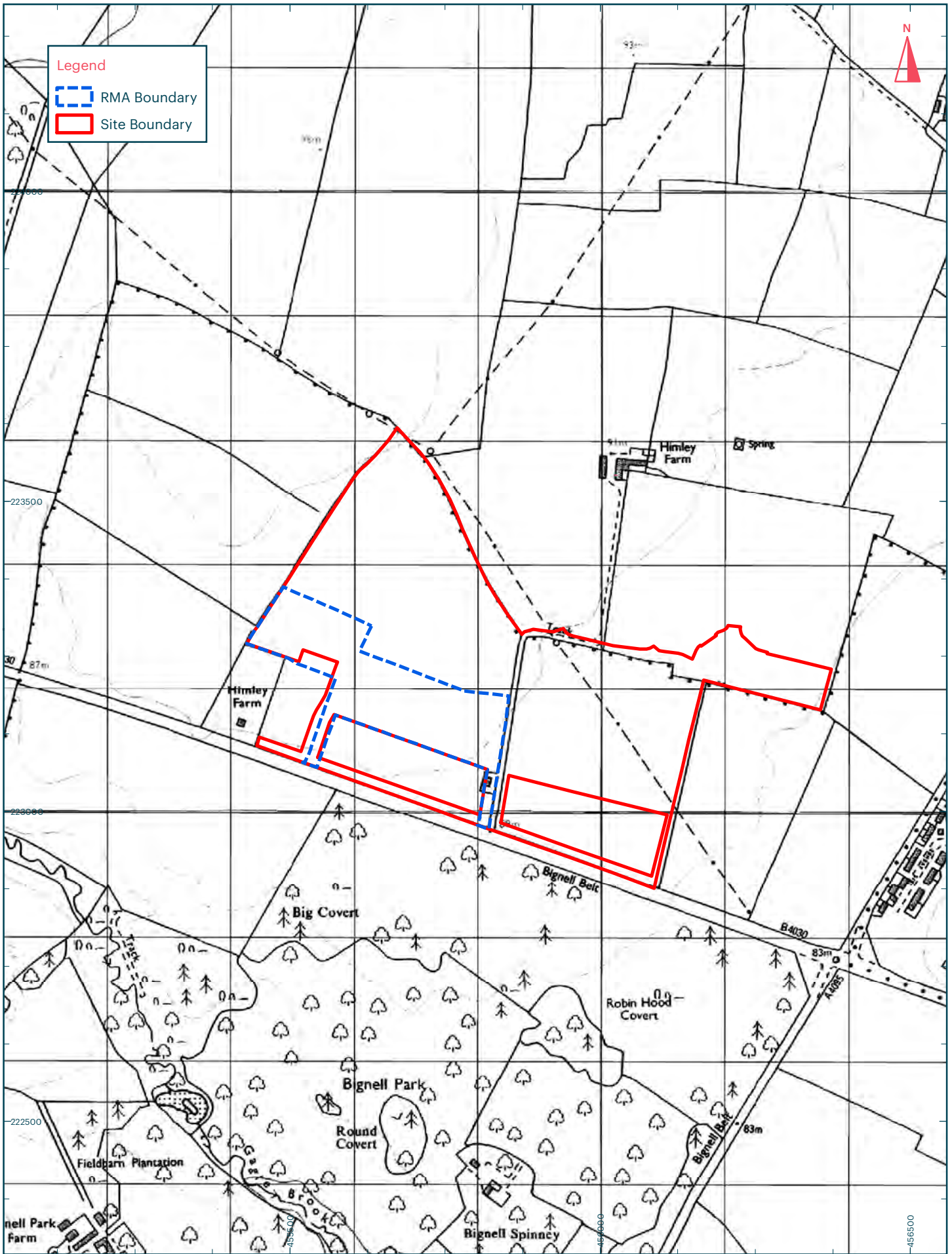
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 Figure 9: 1938 1:10,560 OS Map
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 Himley Village

Scale at A4: 1:8,000
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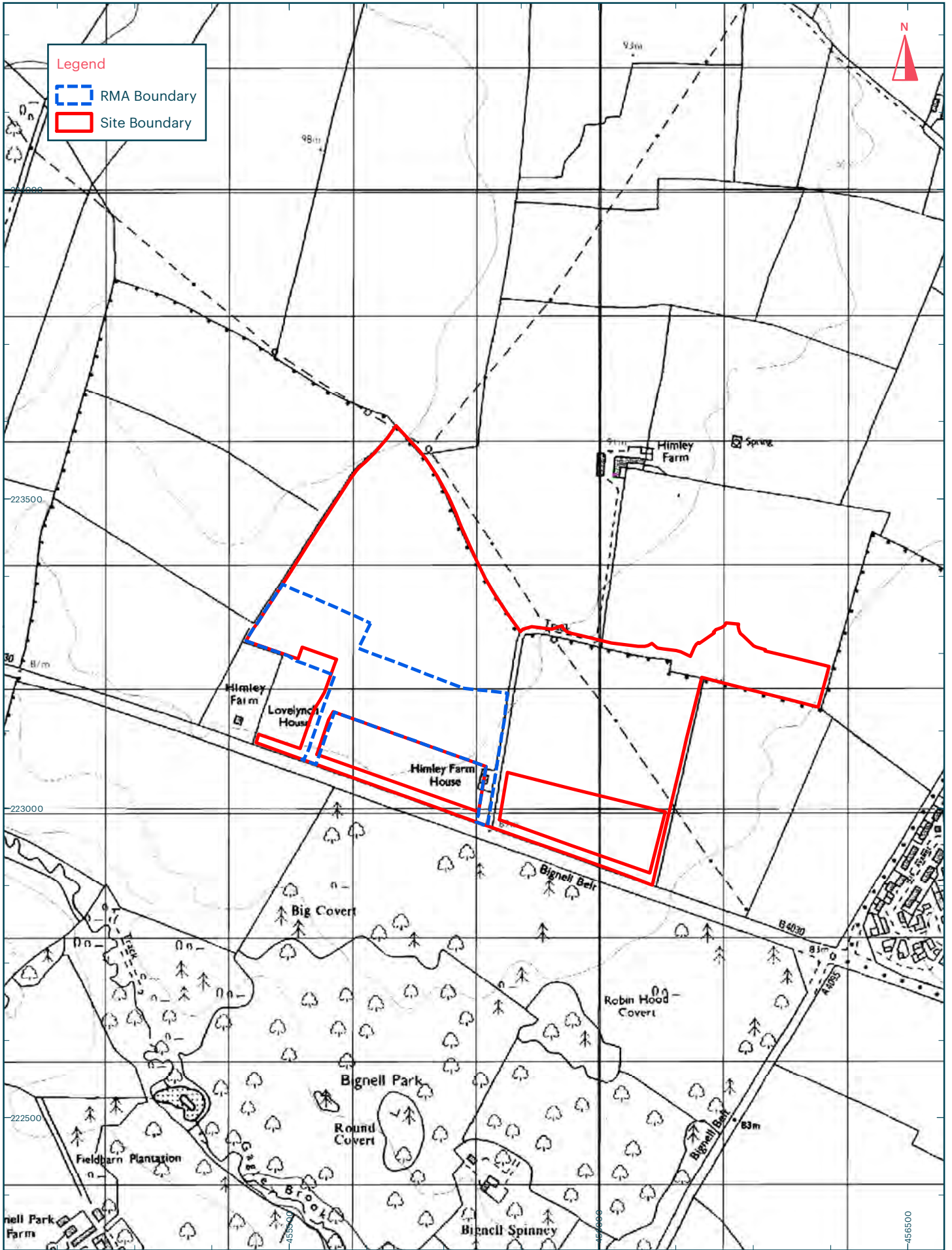
<p>Title: Figure 10: 1970 1:10,560 OS Map</p> <p>Address: Himley Village</p>	<p>Scale at A4: 1:8,000</p> <p>0 250m</p> 	
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Title:
 Figure 11: 1982-1988 1:10,000 OS Map
Address:
 Himley Village

Scale at A4: 1:8,000
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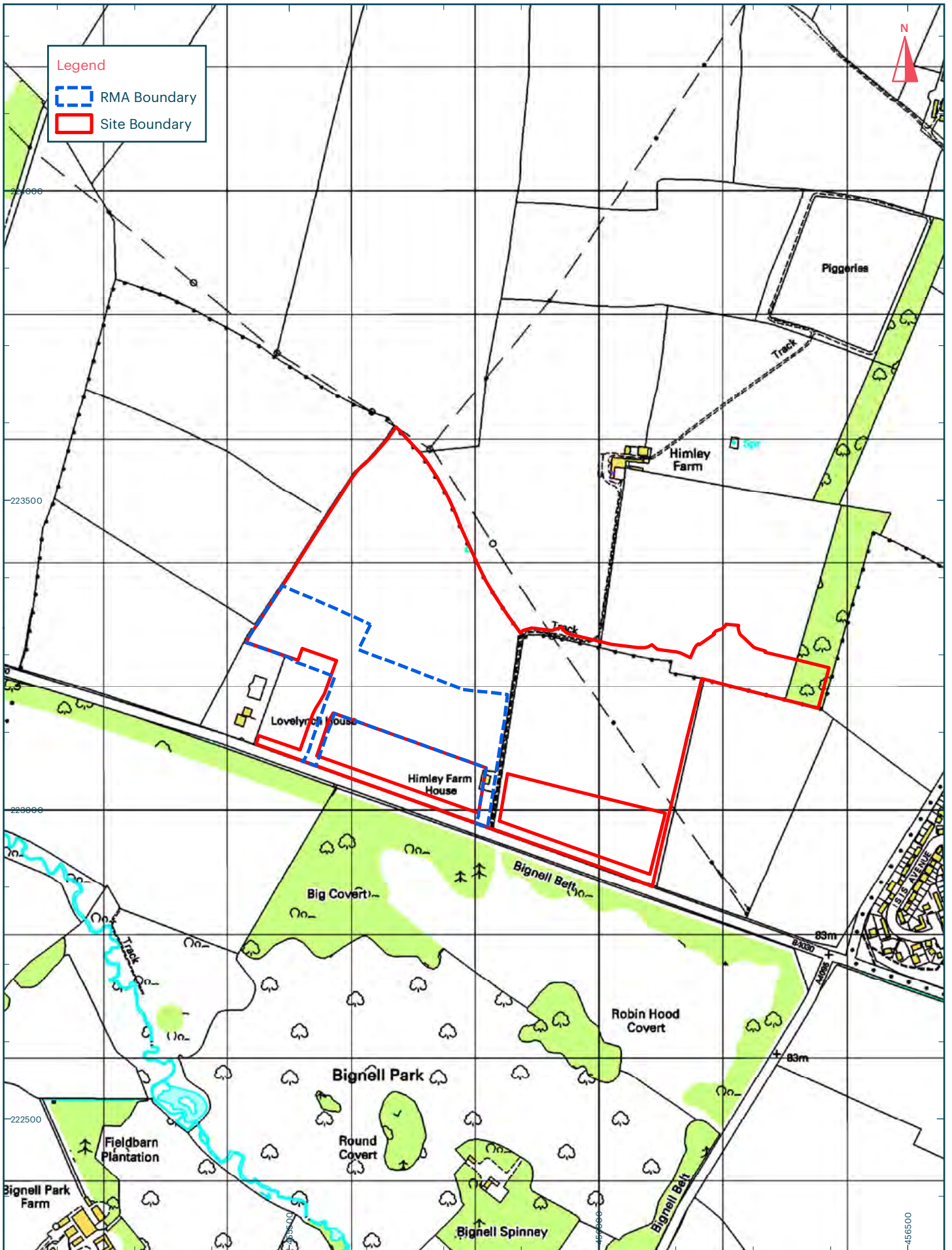




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Figure 12: 1996 1:10,000 OS Map
Address:
Himley Village

Scale at A4: 1:8,000
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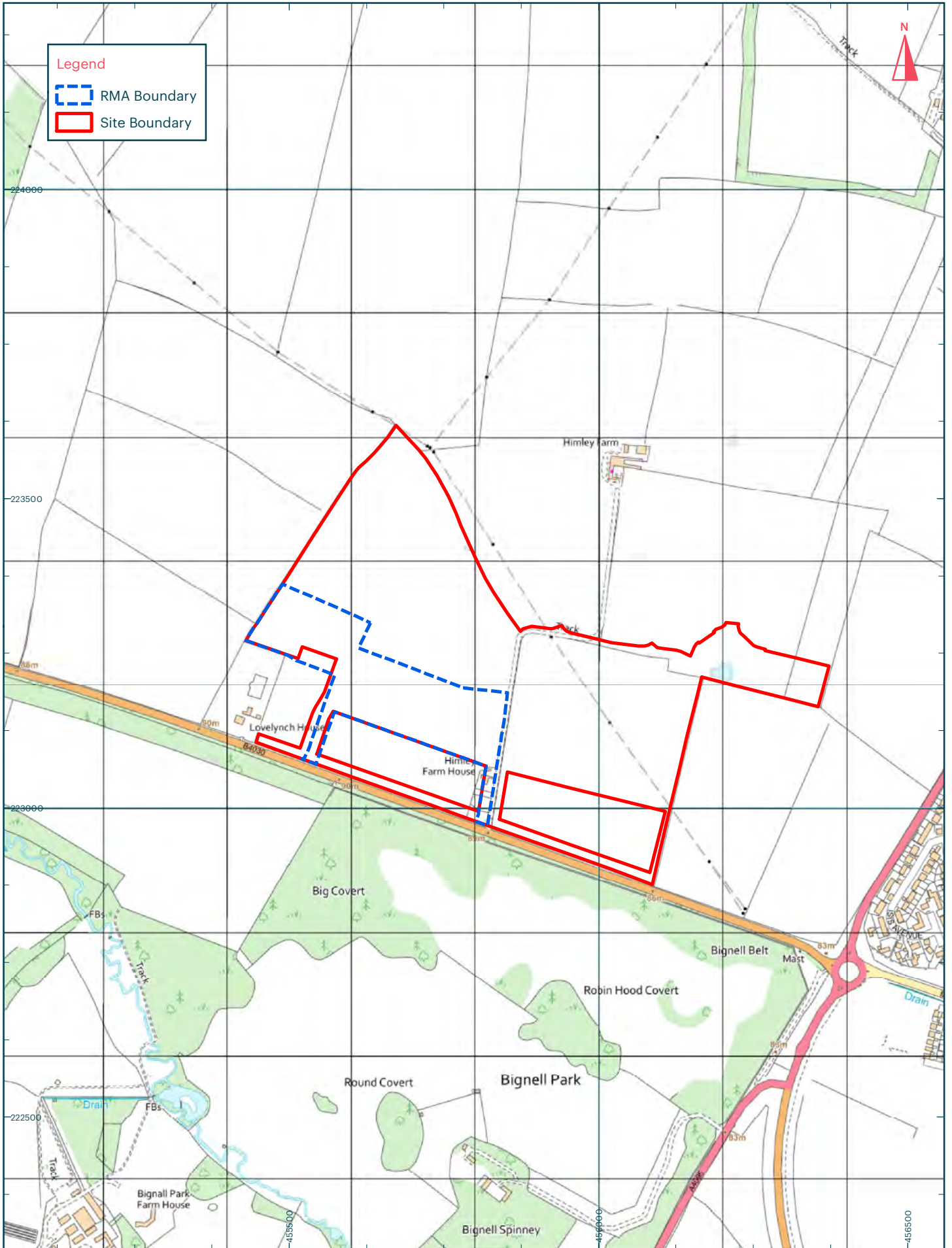




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Figure 13: 1999 1:10,000 OS Map
Address:
Himley Village

Scale at A4: 1:8,000
0 250m





Title:
 Figure 14: 2020 1:10,000 OS Map
Address:
 Himley Village

Scale at A4: 1:8,000
 0 250m





Title: Figure 15: c.1910-14 Valuation Office Map (DV-VIII-231_Oxfordshire_XXIII-5)

Address:
Himley Village

Scale at A4: 1:5,000

