

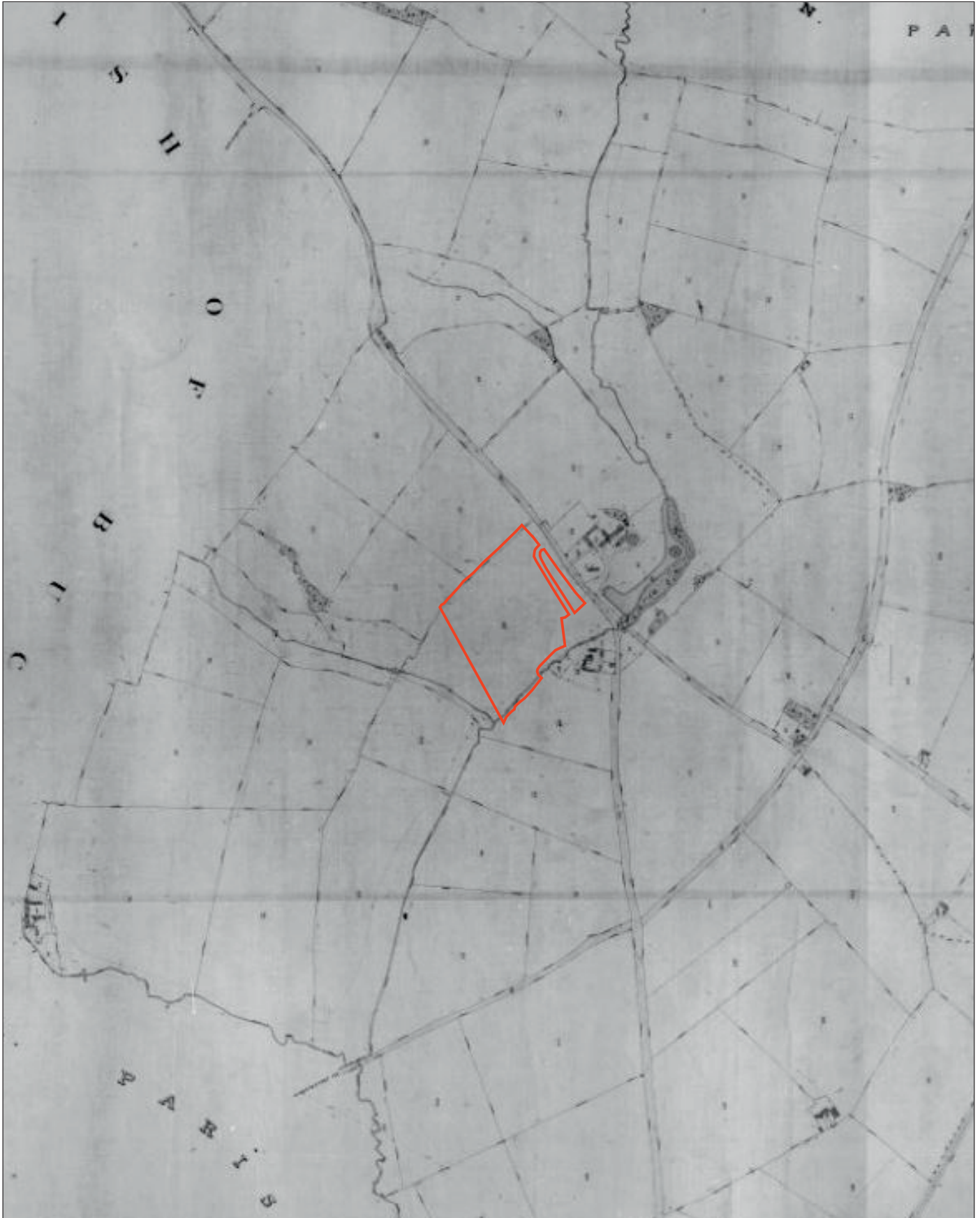


- ▭ Site Boundary
- ◆ Non-Designated Assets
- ◆ Listed Buildings



Scale at A3: 1:2,500
0 50m

Figure 2:
Built Heritage
Assets



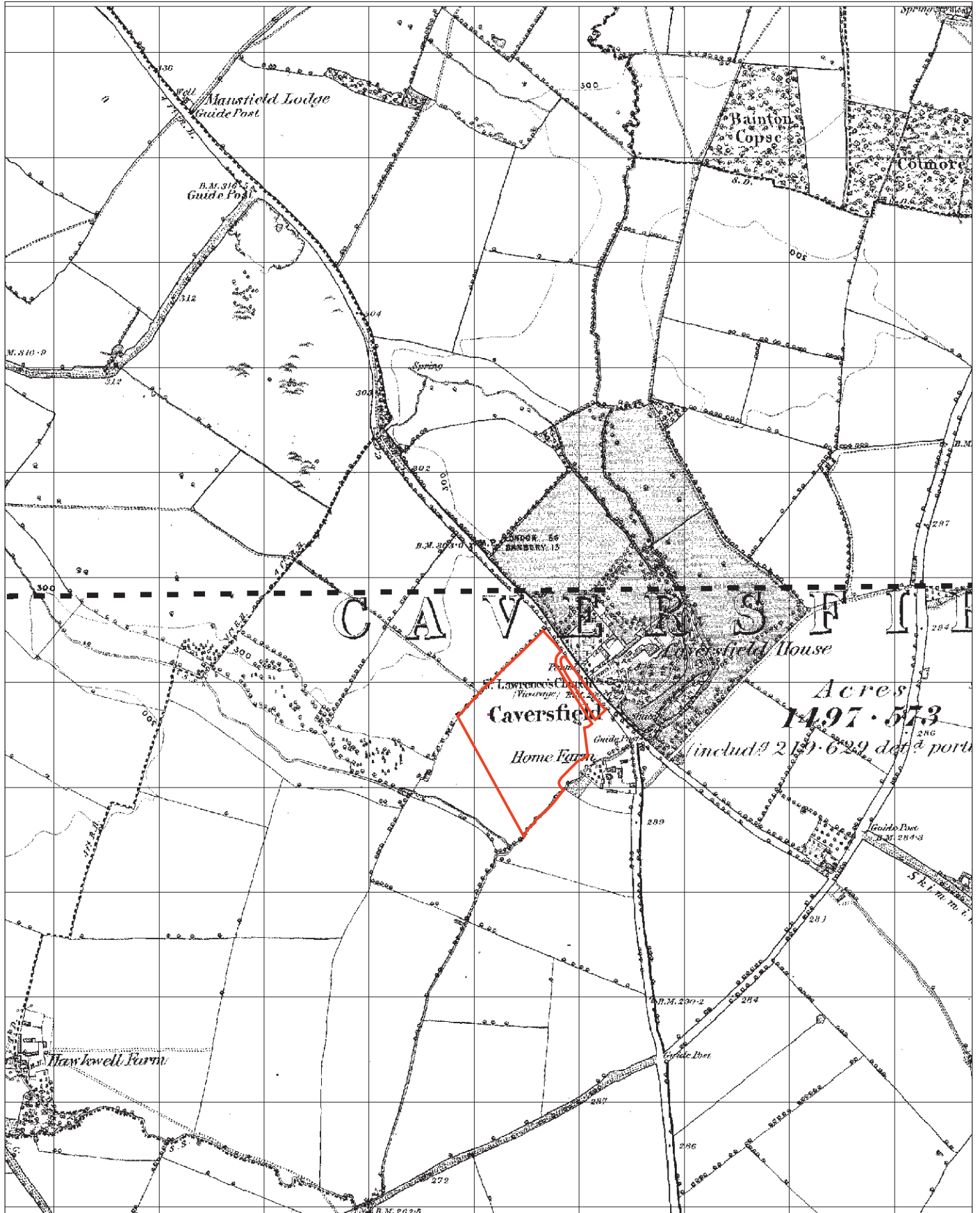
Legend

— Site Boundary



Not to Scale:
Illustrative Only

Figure 3:
1854 Caversfield Parish
Tithe Map



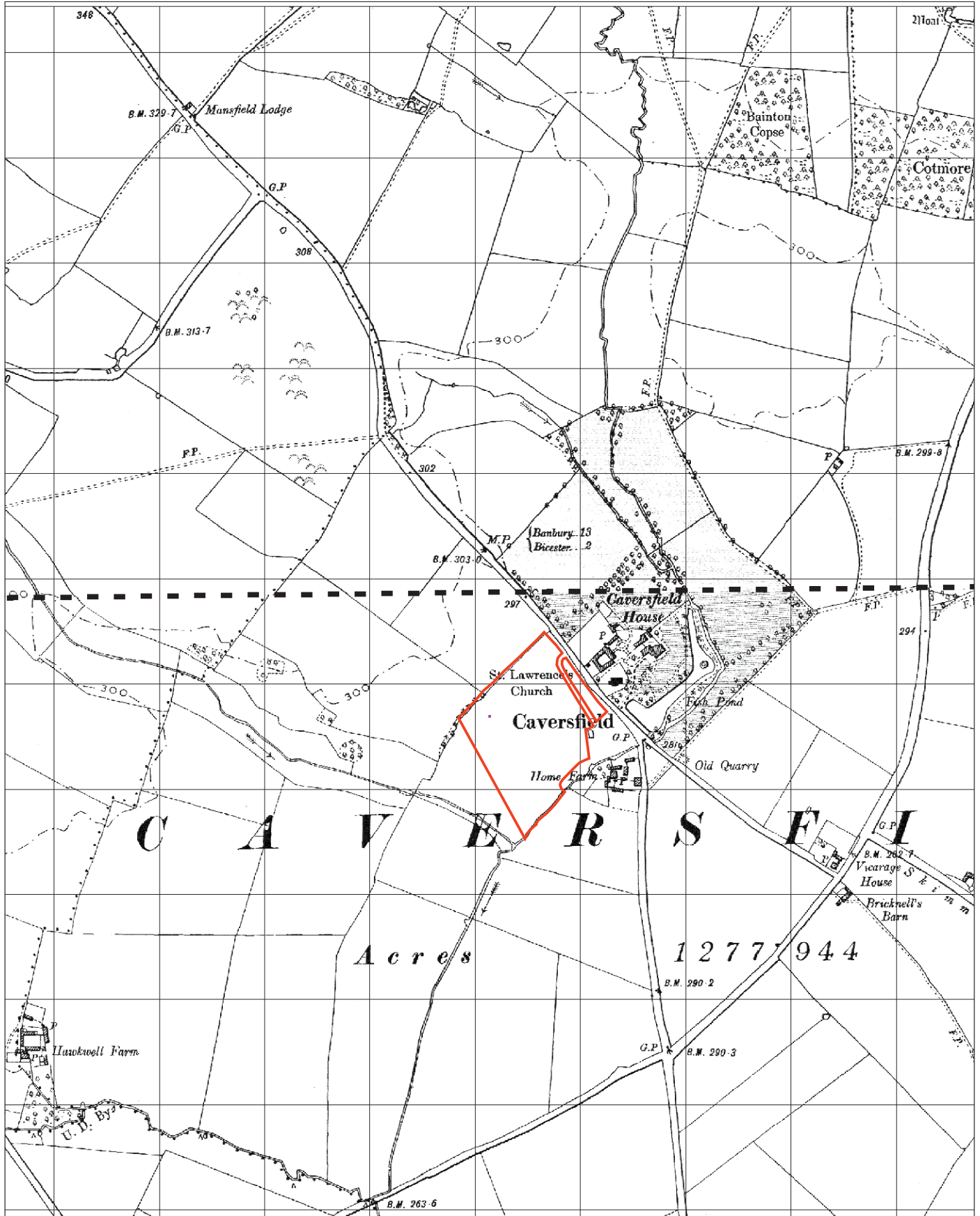
Legend

— Site Boundary



Not to Scale:
Illustrative Only

Figure 4:
1885 Ordnance
Survey Map



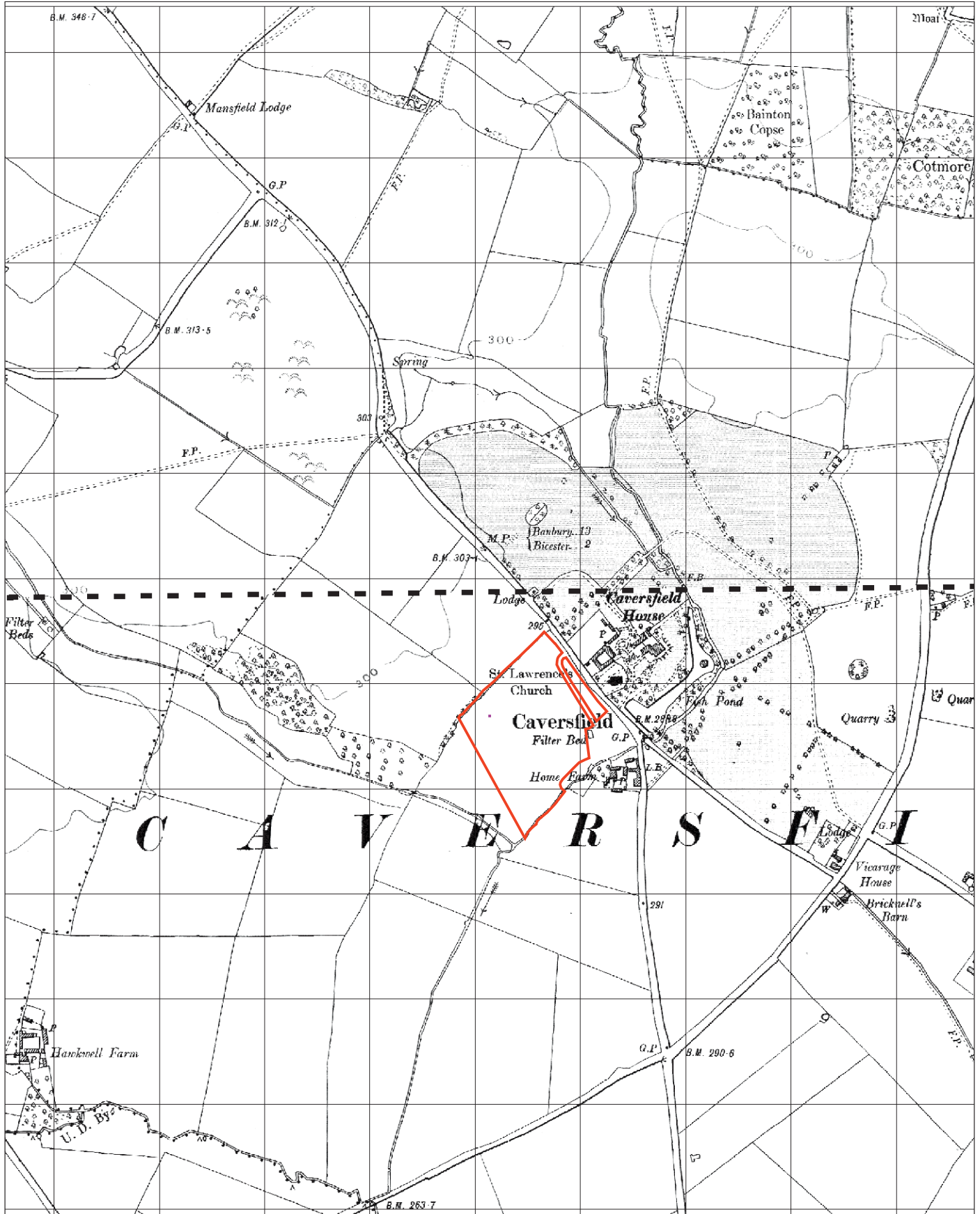
Legend

— Site Boundary



Not to Scale:
Illustrative Only

Figure 5:
1900 Ordnance
Survey Map



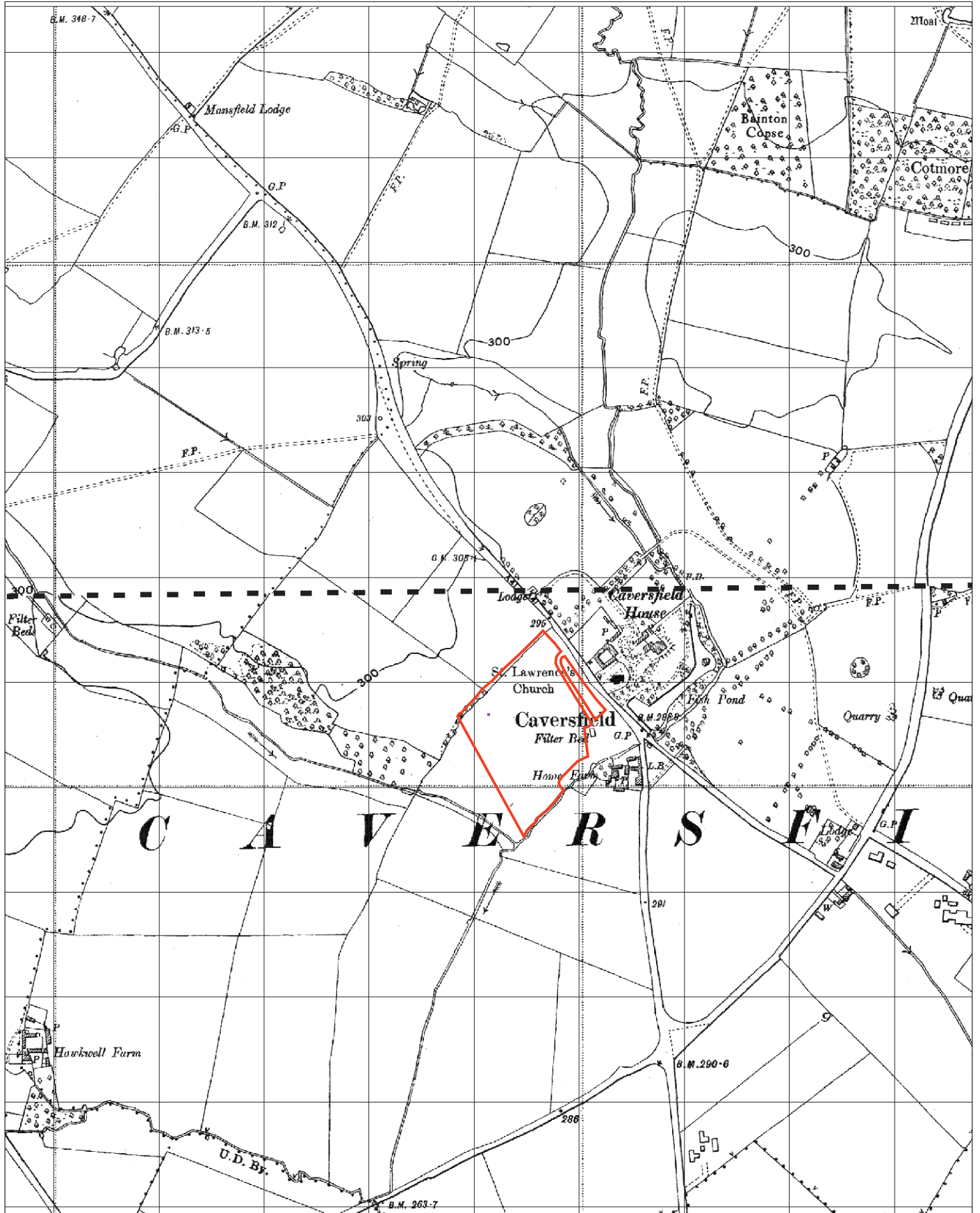
Legend

— Site Boundary



Not to Scale:
Illustrative Only

Figure 6:
1923 Ordnance
Survey Map



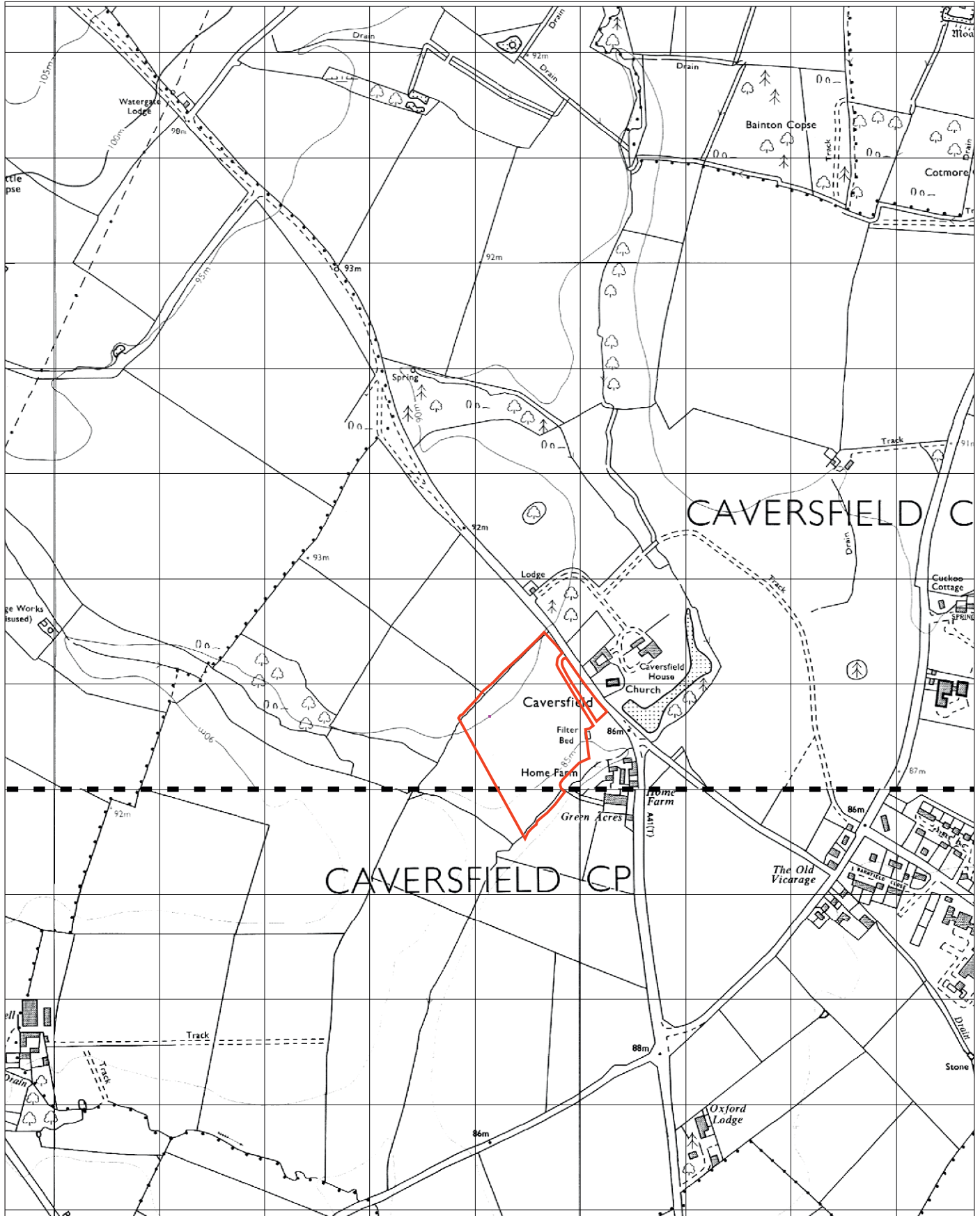
Legend

— Site Boundary



Not to Scale:
Illustrative Only

Figure 7:
1938 Ordnance
Survey Map



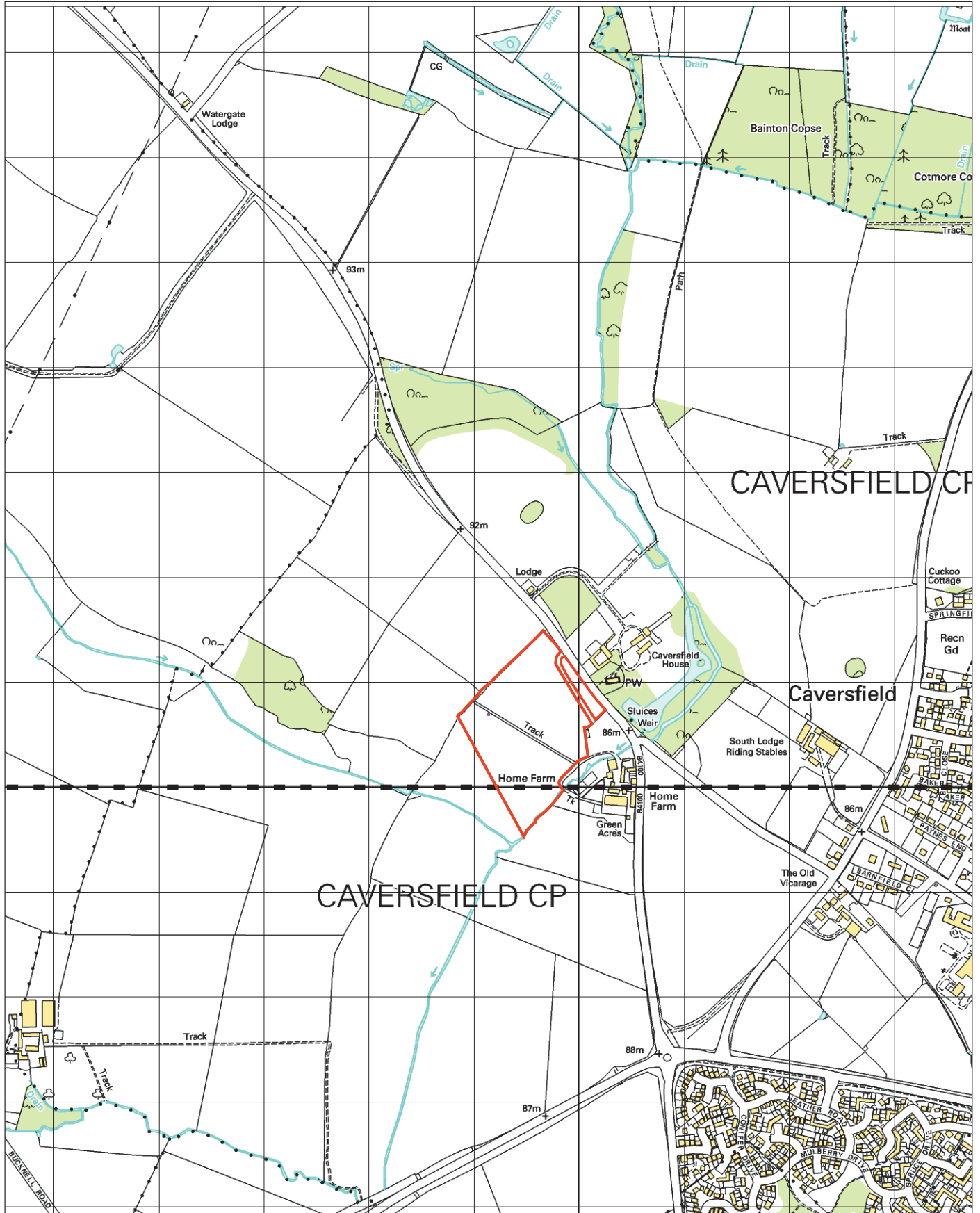
Legend

— Site Boundary



Not to Scale:
Illustrative Only

Figure 8:
1982 Ordnance
Survey Map



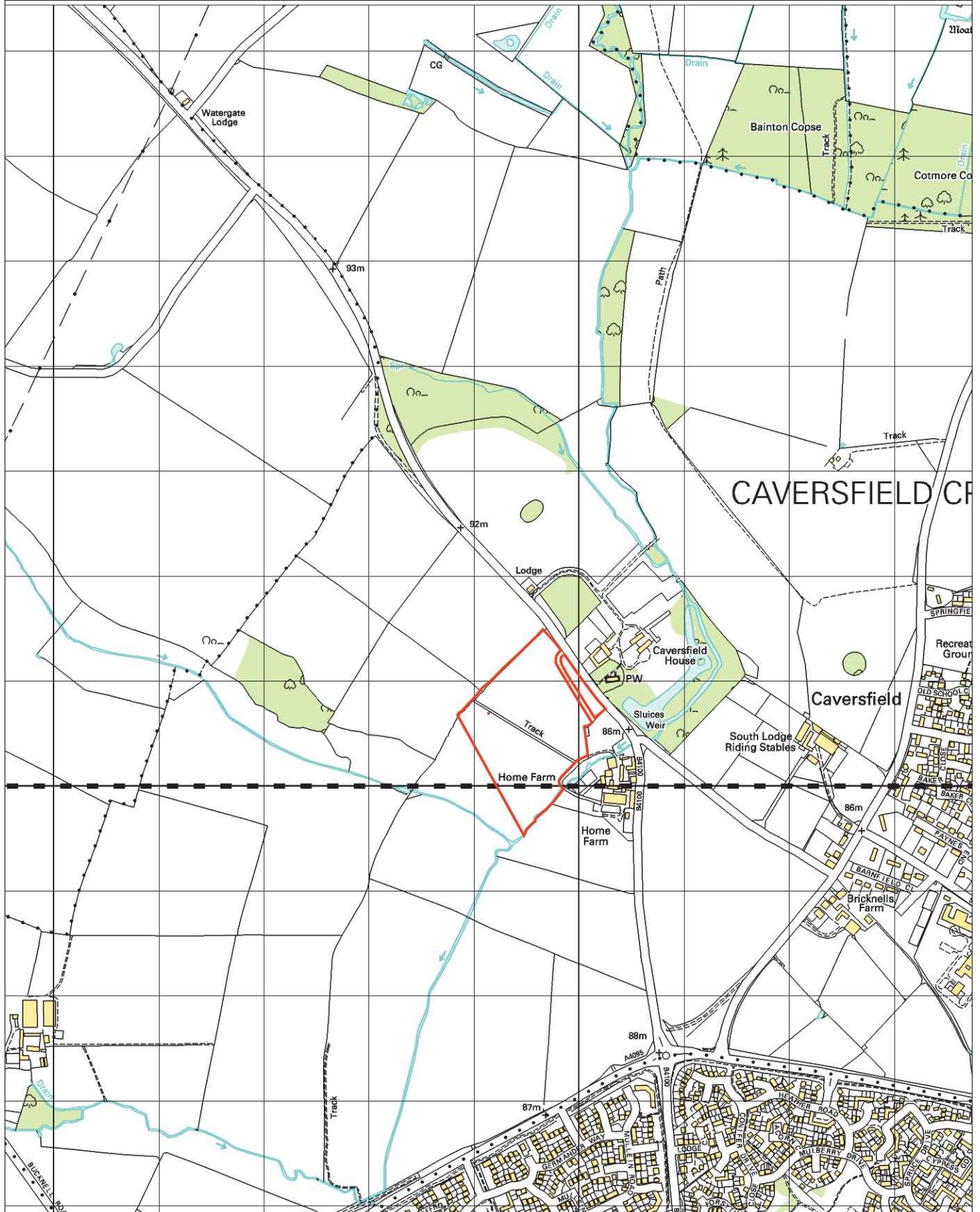
Legend

— Site Boundary



Not to Scale:
Illustrative Only

Figure 9:
1999 Ordnance
Survey Map



CAVERSFIELD CP

Caversfield

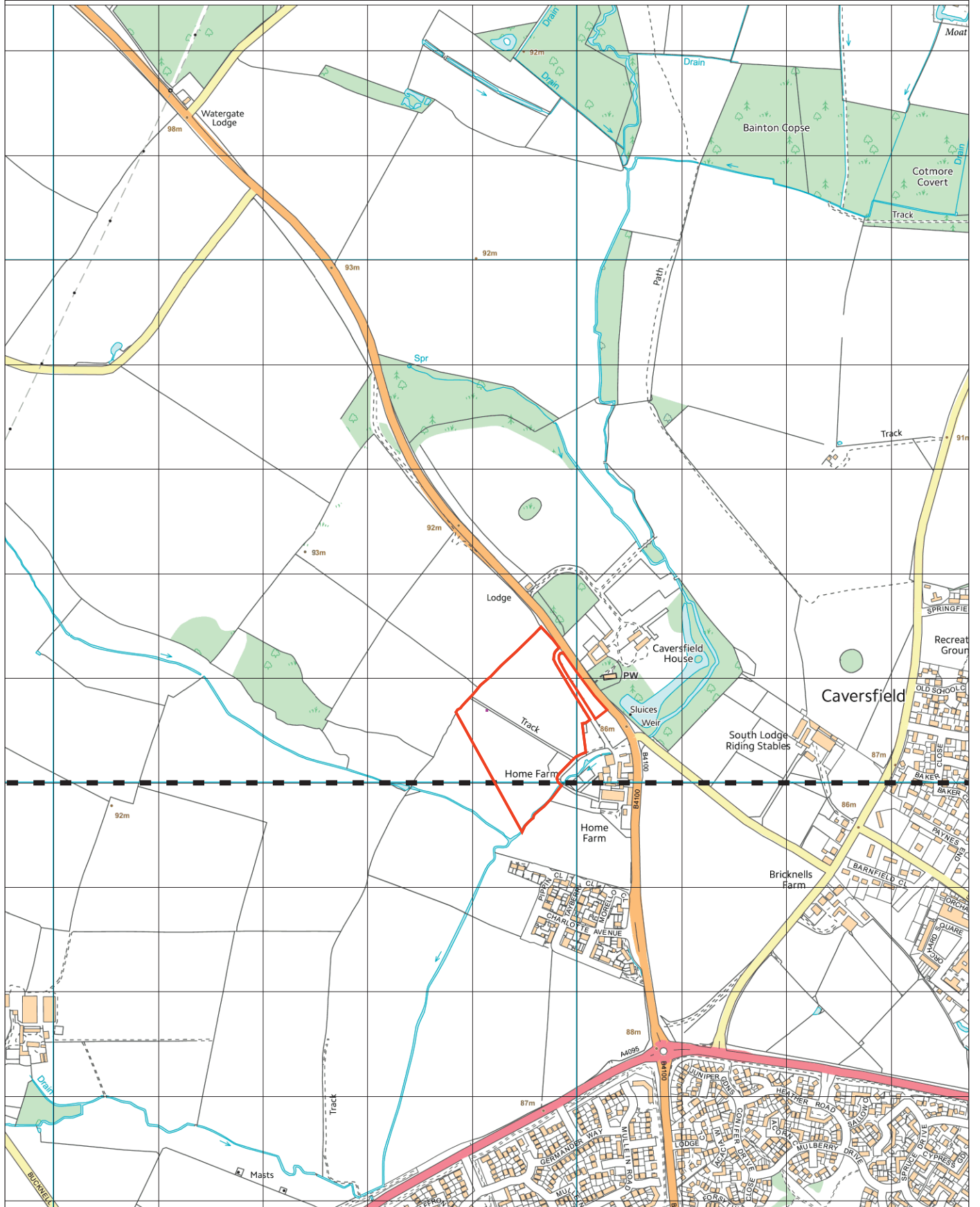
Legend

— Site Boundary



Not to Scale:
Illustrative Only

Figure 10:
2006 Ordnance
Survey Map



Legend

— Site Boundary



Not to Scale:
Illustrative Only

Figure 11:
2017 Ordnance
Survey Map

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Appendix 7.2

Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment



**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
DESK-BASED
ASSESSMENT**

**PLOT SGR1
BICESTER
OXFORDSHIRE**

MARCH 2018

**Local Planning Authority:
Cherwell District Council**

**Site centred at:
SP 57917 25122**

**Author:
Seth Price BA**

**Approved by:
Simon Mortimer MA(Oxon) MCI fA**

**Report Status:
FINAL**

**Issue Date:
March 2018**

**CgMs Ref:
SP/SM /24172/01**

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Executive Summary

This archaeological desk-based assessment considers approximately 5.03 hectares of land (Plot SGR 1) at Caversfield, Bicester, Oxfordshire, which is proposed for residential development.

The assessment identifies and provides a description of heritage assets potentially affected by the development of the site and addresses the information requirements of Government's National Planning Policy Framework and Policy ESD 15 of the Cherwell District Council Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) (CDC 2015). Built heritage assets are considered in a separate Built Heritage Statement (CgMs 2018).

The assessment has established that there are no designated heritage assets on the study site.

Oxfordshire County Council's Pre-Application Advice noted potential earthworks within the eastern part of the site (not recorded on the Oxfordshire County Council Historic Environment Record) which it is suggested may relate to a shrunken Medieval settlement, c.300m east of the site (17/00363/PREAPP).

LiDAR imagery shows the majority of the site as open field, ploughed flat and devoid of features. The lack of surviving traces of ridge-and-furrow, visible in the surrounding landscape on LiDAR, is telling of the impact of this ploughing. The earthworks identified in the Advice Note, within the east of the site, can be seen to coincide with modern features seen on the historic mapping and modern GoogleEarth imagery: the earthworks correspond with a recent treeline, a late 19th-century filter bed seen on the historic mapping, and a modern filter bed and associated drainage seen during the site visit. Additionally, the earthworks differ quite notably from those seen to the east of Caversfield House within the deserted Medieval village. It is implausible that the earthworks represent vestiges of surviving earlier earthworks which have been consistently avoided by later ploughing. The earthworks are therefore considered to be of Modern date and no archaeological interest.

From a review of the available data, the study site is considered to have a negligible potential for significant as-yet to be discovered archaeological evidence dating from all periods. Any such remains that are present would most likely be of local interest, and significant for their evidential value.

There is no suggestion that the study site is likely to contain archaeological remains that are nationally important, would prohibit development or require to be designed around. The heritage interest of the site can be secured by an appropriately worded planning condition.

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF STUDY

- 1.1 This archaeological desk-based assessment of Plot SGR 1, Caversfield, Bicester, Oxfordshire, has been researched and prepared by CgMs Heritage (part of RPS Group) on behalf of the applicant – SGR (Bicester 1) Limited.
- 1.2 The site, also referred to as the study site, is located to the west of the B4100, to the west of Caversfield. It comprises approximately 5.03 hectares of land centred at National Grid Reference SP 57917 25122 (Figure 1). The study site is bounded to the northwest and southwest by recent development along Cranberry Avenue, to the south by Home Farm, and to the east by the B4100, Caversfield House Estate, and the Grade II* Listed Church of St Laurence.
- 1.3 This assessment has been prepared in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, to identify and provide a description of the significance of archaeological assets on the site and the likely effects of future development. This study concentrates on identifying any archaeological interest in the site and assessing the potential impact of development on the archaeological significance of any identified assets.
- 1.4 The assessment comprises an examination of evidence in the Oxfordshire County Council Historic Environment Record (HER), Oxfordshire History Centre, and online resources. Information regarding Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and Listed Buildings was obtained from Historic England's National Heritage List for England. Information on Conservation Areas was obtained from Cherwell District Council. The assessment incorporates published and unpublished material and charts historic land-use through a map regression exercise. A site inspection was undertaken on the 30th January 2018.
- 1.5 The study provides an assessment of the archaeological potential of the site and the significance of any archaeological heritage assets within and around the site. As a result, the assessment enables relevant parties to identify and assess the impact of the proposed development.

2.0 PLANNING BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN FRAMEWORK

2.1 In considering any planning application for development, the local planning authority will be guided by the policy framework set by government planning policy, by current Development Plan policy and by other material considerations.

National Planning Policy Framework

2.2 In 2012, the Government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which replaced previous national policy relating to heritage and archaeology.

2.2.1 Section 12 of the NPPF, entitled *Conserving and enhancing the historic environment* provides guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the conservation and investigation of heritage assets. Overall, the objectives of Section 12 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, and
- Conservation of England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.

2.2.2 Section 12 of the NPPF recognises that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term. Paragraph 128 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 review the potential impact of the proposal upon the significance of that asset.

2.2.3 *Heritage Assets* are defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as: a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. They include designated heritage assets (as defined in the NPPF) and assets identified by the local planning authority during the process of decision-making or through the plan-making process.

2.2.4 Annex 2 also defines *Archaeological Interest* as a heritage asset which holds, or potentially could hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.

2.2.5 A **Designated Heritage Asset** comprises a World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area.

2.2.6 **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.

2.2.7 In short, government policy provides a framework which:

- Protects nationally important designated Heritage Assets (which include World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields or Conservation Areas)
- Protects the settings of such designations
- In appropriate circumstances seeks adequate information (from desk-based assessment and field evaluation where necessary) to enable informed decisions
- Provides for the excavation and investigation of sites not significant enough to merit *in-situ* preservation.

Planning Practice Guidance

2.2.8 The NPPG is a web-based resource which is to be used in conjunction with the NPPF. It is aimed at planning professionals and prescribes best practice within the planning sector. The relevant section is entitled Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Local Plan

2.2.9 The relevant Development Plan framework is provided by the Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) which was adopted by Cherwell District Council on 20th July 2015 (and re-adopted with a reincorporated section '13' in December 2016), with further guidance provided by the North West Bicester Supplementary Planning Document 2016. The Local Plan provides the strategic planning policy framework and sets out strategic site allocations for the district to 2031. The Local Plan Part 1 will in due course be supported by a Part 2 which will contain detailed planning policies used for considering planning applications.

2.2.10 In the meantime, the existing statutory Development Plan relies upon the Cherwell Local Plan 1996 and policies which were saved on the 27 September 2007. The policy which related to the requirement for archaeological evaluation of proposed development sites to inform applications, Policy C26, was not saved however.

2.2.11 A Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011 had been intended to replace the 1996 Local Plan, but due to changes by the Government to the planning system, it was discontinued prior to adoption. This non-statutory plan was approved as an interim planning policy for development control purposes and its policies are a material consideration. The policy which relates to the management of historic environment features in the planning process is EN47 below:

EN47 THE COUNCIL WILL PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT THROUGH CONSERVATION, PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE AND ITS INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION TO THE PUBLIC. IN PARTICULAR IT WILL:

(i) SEEK TO ENSURE THAT SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS AND OTHER UNSCHEDULED SITES OF NATIONAL AND REGIONAL IMPORTANCE AND THEIR SETTINGS ARE PERMANENTLY PRESERVED;

(ii) ENSURE THAT DEVELOPMENT WHICH COULD ADVERSELY AFFECT SITES, STRUCTURES, LANDSCAPES OR BUILDINGS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST AND THEIR SETTINGS WILL REQUIRE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE THROUGH A DESK-TOP STUDY, AND WHERE APPROPRIATE A FIELD EVALUATION;

(iii) NOT PERMIT DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS AND THEIR SETTINGS UNLESS THE APPLICANT CAN DEMONSTRATE THAT THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE WILL BE PHYSICALLY PRESERVED IN-SITU, OR A SUITABLE STRATEGY HAS BEEN PUT FORWARD TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS;

(iv) ENSURE THAT WHERE PHYSICAL PRESERVATION IN- SITU IS NEITHER PRACTICAL NOR DESIRABLE AND SITES ARE NOT SCHEDULED OR OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE, THE DEVELOPER WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING APPROPRIATE PROVISION FOR A PROGRAMME OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION, RECORDING, ANALYSIS AND PUBLICATION THAT WILL ENSURE THE SITE IS PRESERVED BY RECORD PRIOR TO DESTRUCTION. SUCH MEASURES WILL BE SECURED EITHER BY A PLANNING AGREEMENT OR BY A SUITABLE PLANNING CONDITION

Local Plan 2011-2031 (adopted July 2015)

2.2.12 The policy which is relevant to the management of historic environment features in the Cherwell District Council Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1), (Adopted, July 2015), is as follows:

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:

- **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. PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT THAT AFFECT NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS WILL BE CONSIDERED TAKING ACCOUNT OF THE SCALE OF ANY HARM OR LOSS AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HERITAGE ASSET AS SET OUT IN THE NPPF AND NPPG. REGENERATION PROPOSALS THAT MAKE SENSITIVE USE OF HERITAGE ASSETS, PARTICULARLY WHERE THESE BRING REDUNDANT OR UNDER USED BUILDINGS OR AREAS, ESPECIALLY ANY ON ENGLISH HERITAGE'S AT RISK REGISTER, INTO APPROPRIATE USE WILL BE ENCOURAGED**
- **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. 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**
- **DEMONSTRATE A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO THE DESIGN OF THE PUBLIC REALM TO CREATE HIGH QUALITY AND MULTI-FUNCTIONAL STREETS AND PLACES THAT PROMOTES PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT AND INTEGRATES DIFFERENT MODES OF TRANSPORT, PARKING AND SERVICING. THE PRINCIPLES SET OUT IN THE MANUAL FOR STREETS SHOULD BE FOLLOWED**
- **CONSIDER THE AMENITY OF BOTH EXISTING AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING MATTERS OF PRIVACY, OUTLOOK, NATURAL LIGHTING, VENTILATION, AND INDOOR AND OUTDOOR SPACE**
- **LIMIT THE IMPACT OF LIGHT POLLUTION FROM ARTIFICIAL LIGHT ON LOCAL AMENITY, INTRINSICALLY DARK LANDSCAPES AND NATURE CONSERVATION**
- **BE COMPATIBLE WITH UP TO DATE URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES, INCLUDING BUILDING FOR LIFE, AND ACHIEVE SECURED BY DESIGN ACCREDITATION**
- **CONSIDER SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND LAYOUT AT THE MASTERPLANNING STAGE OF DESIGN, WHERE BUILDING ORIENTATION AND THE IMPACT OF MICROCLIMATE CAN BE CONSIDERED WITHIN THE LAYOUT**
- **INCORPORATE ENERGY EFFICIENT DESIGN AND SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES, WHILST ENSURING THAT THE AESTHETIC IMPLICATIONS OF GREEN TECHNOLOGY ARE APPROPRIATE TO THE CONTEXT (ALSO SEE POLICIES ESD 1 - 5 ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY)**
- **INTEGRATE AND ENHANCE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND INCORPORATE BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT FEATURES WHERE POSSIBLE (SEE POLICY ESD 10:**

PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF BIODIVERSITY AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND POLICY ESD 17 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE). WELL DESIGNED LANDSCAPE SCHEMES SHOULD BE AN INTEGRAL PART OF DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS TO SUPPORT IMPROVEMENTS TO BIODIVERSITY, THE MICRO CLIMATE, AND AIR POLLUTION AND PROVIDE ATTRACTIVE PLACES THAT IMPROVE PEOPLE'S HEALTH AND SENSE OF VITALITY

- **USE LOCALLY SOURCED SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS WHERE POSSIBLE.**

THE COUNCIL WILL PROVIDE MORE DETAILED DESIGN AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT POLICIES IN THE LOCAL PLAN PART 2.

THE DESIGN OF ALL NEW DEVELOPMENT WILL NEED TO BE INFORMED BY AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONTEXT, TOGETHER WITH AN EXPLANATION AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE PRINCIPLES THAT HAVE INFORMED THE DESIGN RATIONALE. THIS SHOULD BE DEMONSTRATED IN THE DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT THAT ACCOMPANIES THE PLANNING APPLICATION. THE COUNCIL EXPECTS ALL THE ISSUES WITHIN THIS POLICY TO BE POSITIVELY ADDRESSED THROUGH THE EXPLANATION AND JUSTIFICATION IN THE DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT. FURTHER GUIDANCE CAN BE FOUND ON THE COUNCIL'S WEBSITE.

THE COUNCIL WILL REQUIRE DESIGN TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE PRE-APPLICATION PROCESS ON MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS AND IN CONNECTION WITH ALL HERITAGE SITES. FOR MAJOR SITES/STRATEGIC SITES AND COMPLEX DEVELOPMENTS, DESIGN CODES WILL NEED TO BE PREPARED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE COUNCIL AND LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS TO ENSURE APPROPRIATE CHARACTER AND HIGH QUALITY DESIGN IS DELIVERED THROUGHOUT. DESIGN CODES WILL USUALLY BE PREPARED BETWEEN OUTLINE AND RESERVED MATTERS STAGE TO SET OUT DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE. THE LEVEL OF PRESCRIPTION WILL VARY ACCORDING TO THE NATURE OF THE SITE.

2.2.13 Therefore in considering the heritage implications of any planning application for development, the local planning authority will be guided by the policy framework set by government policy, by Policy ESD 15 of the Cherwell District Council Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1), Policy EN47 in the non-statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011, and by the guidance set out in the North West Bicester Supplementary Planning Document 2016.

3.0 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

3.1 Geology

3.1.1 The British Geological Survey (BGS) 1:50,000 mapping records the solid geology of the northern part of the site as Cornbrash Formation limestone, giving way to Forest Marble Formation interbedded limestone and mudstone to the south, along the course of the stream. The superficial deposits comprise alluvial deposits along the stream course, comprising mixed clays, silts, sand, and gravel.

(<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>).

3.1.2 The Cranfield Soil and Agrifood Institute Soilscales website records the site as having type '5' free-draining lime-rich loamy soils. These soils belong to the Aberford Association (511a), described as calcareous loamy or clayey subsoils without significant clay enrichment.

(<http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscales/index.cfm>)

3.2 Topography

3.2.1 The study site lies within the eastern end of Natural England Character Area 107: Cotswolds. The Cotswolds area is described as a landscape of 'steep scarp crowned by a high, open wold... limestone creates a strong sense of place and unity which carries through to the buildings and walls which have been built using local limestone...'. The area is noted for its rich history, with important evidence of prehistoric, Roman, and medieval settlement.

3.2.2 The historic landscape character (HLC) data included with the HER records the site as an area of planned enclosure, dating to c.1798-1810, which replaced the former open field system.

3.2.3 The site is located to the west of the B4100, to the west of Caversfield. The site is situated on a slope, descending from approximately 90mAOD at its northwest, to 83mAOD to its southeast. A stream runs along the southern margin of the site.

3.3 LiDAR

3.3.1 The LiDAR imagery (Figure 4) shows the majority of the site as open field, ploughed flat and devoid of features. Within the east of the site is an area of slight earthworks that are not identified on the HER. A part of the earthworks appears to correspond with a recent treeline, while two other rectangular earthworks just outside the site margin correspond to a late 19th-century filter bed seen on the historic mapping (see section 4.9) and a modern filter bed and associated drainage seen during the site visit.

The earthworks differ quite notably from those seen to the east of Caversfield House within the deserted Medieval village (HER ref.1016, see below).

4.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND, INCLUDING ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

4.1 Timescales used in this report are as follows.

Prehistoric

Palaeolithic	450,000 BC	-	10,001 BC
Mesolithic	10,000 BC	-	4,001 BC
Neolithic	4,000 BC	-	1,801 BC
Bronze Age	1,800 BC	-	601 BC
Iron Age	600 BC	-	AD 42

Historic

Romano-British	AD 43	-	409 AD
Saxon/Early Medieval	AD 410	-	1065 AD
Medieval	AD 1066	-	1485 AD
Post-Medieval	AD 1486	-	1799 AD
Modern	AD 1800	-	Present

4.2 Introduction

4.2.1 This chapter reviews existing archaeological evidence for the study site and the archaeological/historical background of the general area, based on a consideration of evidence in the National Heritage List for England, Oxfordshire County Council HER, Oxfordshire History Centre, Cherwell District Council website and various on-line sources. Data was obtained for the study site and a surrounding 2km search area.

4.2.2 Chapter 5 subsequently considers site conditions and whether any theoretical potential identified in this chapter is likely to survive.

4.3 Designated Heritage Assets

4.3.1 Data obtained from Historic England and the Local Planning Authority confirms that there are no designated heritage assets (Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas, Registered Battlefields or Parks and Gardens etc.) within the study site (Figures 2 and 3).

Listed Buildings

4.3.2 There are 19 Listed Buildings within the search area (Figure 2). Within close proximity to the site are two listed buildings: the Church of St Lawrence (Grade II*, Report ref. 5106, Listed Building ref. 1046533) and Home Farmhouse (Grade II, Report ref. 19256, Listed Building ref. 1193268). The potential impact of the proposed

development upon these designated heritage assets is subject to a separate historic building assessment (CgMS 2018), and is therefore not discussed further within this report.

4.3.3 There are no other designated heritage assets in the search area.

4.4 **Non-Designated Heritage Assets and previous archaeological investigations**

4.4.1 No previous archaeological work has been conducted within the site.

4.4.2 Oxfordshire County Council's Pre-Application Advice noted potential earthworks within the eastern part of the site (not recorded on the HER) which it is suggested may relate to a shrunken Medieval settlement situated to the east of the 10th/11th-century Church of St. Lawrence, c.300m east of the site. The insubstantial earthworks were assessed during the walkover survey, and are considered below.

4.4.3 Adjacent to the north and west of the site archaeological field work was conducted ahead of development for the Bicester Eco Development (EOX3147 and EOX5589). The works involved an examination of aerial photographs and a geophysical survey. The geophysical survey confirmed and expanded upon the previous examination, identifying a feature c.500m west-southwest of the site (ref.15958), interpreted as a possible later-Prehistoric enclosure. Further Late Iron Age/Romano-British enclosures were posited c.1.30km west of the site (ref.27989).

4.4.4 Archaeological fieldwork within the search area which is relevant to assessing the archaeological potential of the site is discussed below. A gazetteer of all monuments and events is provided in Appendix 1, and shown on Figures 2 and 3 (relevant events only).

4.5 **Prehistoric**

4.5.1 There are no archaeological assets dating from the Prehistoric period recorded on the HER within the study site.

4.5.2 There are five HER records of Prehistoric activity in the wider 2km search area.

4.5.3 The closest recorded Prehistoric site comprises a possible ring ditch identified from aerial photography to the east of Caversfield (ref.17461), c.450m east of the site.

4.5.4 A possible late-Prehistoric enclosure (ref.15958), was identified during geophysical survey just over 500m west-southwest of the study site (EOX3147 and EOX5589). The same project recorded a possible Late Iron Age/Romano-British site c.1.30km west of the site (ref.27969).

4.5.5 Approximately 1km south of the site, in Bicester, is an Iron Age linear ditch, with associated oval ditches and possible palisade gullies. (ref.16025 and 16026). Further features included two ring gullies, and a number of stock enclosures. Later Iron Age evidence included a number of pits and an oven or kiln. The site also included tentative evidence of seasonal Mesolithic activity; an irregular sub-rectangular feature containing two microliths.

4.5.6 There is a general background spread of Prehistoric activity recorded within the study area. However, within the vicinity of the site there are no recorded sites, and a lack of any cropmarks within the site on aerial photography, GoogleEarth imagery, and LiDAR imagery suggests the site has a negligible potential for Prehistoric features.

4.6 **Romano-British**

4.6.1 There are no archaeological assets dating from the Romano-British period recorded on the HER within the study site.

4.6.2 The closest Romano-British activity comprises the Roman enclosures and finds southwest of South Farm (ref.9984), c.1.10km south of the site, which has been assessed as a possible villa site.

4.6.3 At a similar distance from the site, to the southeast, Romano-British inhumations (ref.1611) were recorded in 1813. Within close proximity to the inhumations is the projected line of the Alchester to Towcester Roman road (ref.8922).

4.6.4 Within the vicinity of the site there are no recorded sites, and the site has been ploughed flat. Roman material often appears in HERs because of the volume of cultural material relative to most other periods and because much of that material is readily identifiable. The general lack of Roman features and material recorded from the search area suggests that the absence of evidence may be genuine and not simply a reflection of the lack of fieldwork.

4.6.5 The site is considered to have a negligible potential for Romano-British features.

4.7 **Saxon/Early Medieval**

4.7.1 There are no archaeological assets dating from the Saxon/Early Medieval period recorded on the HER within the study site.

4.7.2 Bainton shrunken Medieval village is situated c.1.70km north of the site (ref.856). The site is recorded as being of Saxon/Early Medieval date. An evaluation to the north of

the village found evidence of two stone houses with pottery finds of 10th- to 12th-century date.

4.7.3 Caversfield is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 as a moderately large settlement of 21 households. That the settlement was well established implies that it had been established by at least the late Saxon period. The deserted Medieval village c.300m northeast of the site (ref.1016 and 13743) is therefore likely to be of at least late Saxon origin.

4.7.4 The study site is well removed from the Saxon/Early Medieval evidence to the east of Caversfield House, and is therefore considered to have a negligible potential for significant evidence dating to the Saxon period.

4.8 **Medieval**

4.8.1 There are no archaeological assets dating from the Medieval period recorded on the HER within the study site.

4.8.2 There are six entries of Medieval activity recorded in the search area. In addition there are three extant Medieval Listed Buildings within the study area (ref.5103, 5014, 5106). The Church of St. Lawrence (ref.5106) is situated c.50m east of the site. Built Heritage assets are assessed in a separate report (CgMs 2018).

4.8.3 The site would have formed a part of the open field system associated with the settlement of Caversfield during the Medieval period (as per the HLC data included in the HER). However, LiDAR imagery shows no sign of Medieval earthworks within the site and barely discernible traces of ridge-and-furrow in neighbouring fields. The closest fields showing clear signs of ridge-and-furrow earthworks are situated c.700m southwest of the site; a narrow remnant strip alongside a stream (Figure 4). The implication is that the former Medieval open field system in the area has been erased by modern ploughing.

4.8.4 A review of the data for the area and LiDAR imagery suggests that the site has been extensively ploughed, removing any trace of ridge-and-furrow earthworks, and any other possible Medieval earthworks, at the site. Any buried Medieval features at the site are likely to comprise ploughed out furrows of no archaeological interest.

4.8.5 The site is considered to have a negligible potential for significant (i.e. non-agricultural) evidence dating to the Medieval period.

4.9 **Post-Medieval/Modern**

- 4.9.1 There are no archaeological assets dating from the Post-Medieval period recorded on the HER within the study site.
- 4.9.2 Within the wider search area there are nine recorded Post-Medieval sites, as well as sixteen Listed Buildings of Post-Medieval date. The majority the recorded Post-Medieval sites are of no relevance to this study – the sites have well-defined extents which add little to the understanding of the study site’s archaeological potential.
- 4.9.3 The Post-Medieval fishponds (ref.5107), c.50m east of the site, form a part of the Caversfield house estate. The potential impacts of the proposed development to the significance Caversfield house estate is considered in a separate report (CgMs 2018). It is therefore not considered further in this report.

Historic Map Regression

- 4.9.4 The earliest mapping reviewed during this study was the 1574 Saxton’s Map (Figure 5). The mapping is of limited detail, though it shows Caversfield as an established settlement. Likewise, the 1759 Thomas Kitchin’s *A New Improved Map of Oxfordshire* shows Caversfield with its associated church (Figure 6). The mapping shows how, at that time, Caversfield formed an exclave of Buckinghamshire isolated within Oxfordshire. In 1844, the *Counties (Detached Parts) Act* eliminated most exclaves within the UK, including Caversfield – which became a part of Oxfordshire.
- 4.9.5 William Stanley’s Map of Bicester, 1815 (Figure 7), shows the site in greater detail, with Caversfield House to its east, and Home Farm to its south. The field system of large regular fields demonstrates that systematic enclosure of the former open field system was well underway by this time, having been set in motion by Act of Parliament in 1780.
- 4.9.6 By 1854, the Caversfield Parish Tithe Map (Figure 8) shows the site in far greater detail, forming part of a single large field. The field was bound to the east by the main road (recorded as ‘Part of Turnpike Road’), south by a small stream and Home Farm, north by a field boundary, and west by a continuation of the field. The field within which the site is situated is recorded in the Tithe Award as Lot 86, an area of arable land known as ‘The Home Ground’.
- 4.9.7 The 1885 Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping (Figure 9) shows no change to the site from the mid-19th Century. The north, south, and east boundaries of the site are shown to feature hedgerows.

4.9.8 By 1900, the OS mapping (Figure 10) shows a small rectilinear filter bed adjacent to the south of the site, within the field (corresponding with earthworks shown on the LiDAR data, Figure 4). The 1947 Aerial Photograph, and 1982-5 mapping (Figures 11 and 12) show no changes to the site, which remained a part of the same field enclosure, with the filter bed shown to its south. The 1947 aerial photography (Figure 11) clarifies the location of the filter bed, and shows a possible sub-circular feature partially within the eastern part of the site (presently beneath the access road). The site appears devoid of earthworks on the aerial photography – suggesting the earthworks seen at the site post-date 1947.

4.9.9 A review of the most recent GoogleEarth aerial photography shows the site in its present form, with an access track within its east, leading to Home Farm, and ongoing residential development to north and west. Within the site a northwest-southeast aligned field margin had been introduced by the early 21st Century, as well as a fence-line/treeline within the southeast corner of the field defining the limit of the site. A rectangular filter bed is visible just south of the site. The earthworks are not discernible.

4.9.10 The site has been shown to have comprised a single large field until the late 20th-century, and would have been ploughed throughout. The lack of surviving traces of ridge-and-furrow is telling of the impact of this ploughing. The earthworks within the east of the site can be seen to coincide with modern features seen on the historic mapping and modern GoogleEarth imagery. It is implausible that they represent vestiges of surviving earlier earthworks which have been consistently avoided by later ploughing.

4.9.11 The map review demonstrates that the study site has remained undeveloped through the later Post-Medieval period. The site is therefore considered to have a negligible potential for significant, non-agricultural, Post-Medieval remains. The earthworks within the east of the site are likely modern.

4.10 **Assessment of Significance**

4.10.1 Paragraph 128 of the NPPF 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 review the potential impact of the proposal upon the significance of that asset.

- 4.10.2 There are no designated heritage assets within the study site. The setting of the nearby Listed Buildings is subject to a separate report (CgMs 2018), and is not considered herein.
- 4.10.3 Oxfordshire County Council's Pre-Application Advice noted potential earthworks within the eastern part of the site (not recorded on the HER), suggesting that they may relate to a shrunken Medieval settlement situated to the east of the 10th/11th-century Church of St. Lawrence, c.300m east of the site (17/00363/PREAPP). The insubstantial earthworks were noted during the walkover survey and on LiDAR imagery.
- 4.10.4 The LiDAR imagery shows the majority of the site as open field, ploughed flat and devoid of features. The lack of surviving traces of ridge-and-furrow is telling of the impact of this ploughing. The earthworks within the east of the site can be seen to coincide with modern features seen on the historic mapping and modern GoogleEarth imagery: the earthworks correspond with a recent treeline, a late 19th-century filter bed seen on the historic mapping, and a modern filter bed and associated drainage seen during the site visit. Additionally, the earthworks differ quite notably from those seen to the east of Caversfield House within the deserted Medieval village. It is implausible that the earthworks represent vestiges of surviving earlier earthworks which have been consistently avoided by later ploughing. The earthworks are therefore considered to be Modern and of no archaeological interest.
- 4.10.5 From a review of the available data, the study site is considered to have a negligible potential for significant archaeological evidence dating from all periods. Any such remains would most likely be of local interest and significant for their evidential value.

5.0 SITE CONDITIONS, THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT & IMPACT ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSETS

5.1 Site Conditions

5.1.1 A site visit was undertaken on 30th January 2018. The whole site was accessible and comprises part of a rectangular field (Plates 1 - 3). Primary access to the site is from the west, via new road infrastructure at the Exemplar site off Cranberry Avenue, with secondary access to the west of the B4100 via an access road to Home Farm (Plate 4) and a farm gate in the northeast corner of the site.

5.1.2 The site is enclosed to the north and west by hedgerows and ongoing residential development associated with the adjacent Exemplar site. The site's eastern margin, along the B4100 is defined by a length of patchy hedgerow and estate fencing.

5.1.3 The southern margin of the site comprises hedgerow and self-sown vegetation along the banks of a small stream, and the rear garden of Home farm (Plates 5 and 6). To the eastern end of the southern boundary is a parcel of land, bound by fencing and a recent treeline, which is excluded from the site. The parcel contains a filter bed/soakaway to its northwest, fed by drainage from within the site (Plates 7 and 8). The drainage appears to run in a northerly direction.

5.1.4 Internal boundaries comprise a northwest-southeast aligned fence-line to the west of the site (Plate 9), and wooden post-and-rail fencing along the access road to Home Farm. The recent treeline demarcating the excluded area to the south of the site continues east across the southeast of the site.

5.1.5 A walkover survey was undertaken across the site; no significant finds, earthworks, or archaeological features were identified within the site. Within the east of the site, the earthworks seen on the LiDAR imagery were investigated, and found to be indistinct, and of modern date (Plates 10 and 11); coinciding with the treeline, historic and modern filter beds, and associated drainage.

5.2 The Proposed Development

5.2.1 The study site is proposed for residential development to the western corner, with open green space, including orchard and allotments, to the northern, southern and eastern areas.. An Illustrative Masterplan will be submitted to the Local Planning Authority with the Outline Planning Application.

5.3 **Impact on Archaeological Assets**

- 5.3.1 There are no designated heritage assets on the study site. The potential impact of the proposed development to the nearby Listed Buildings is subject to a separate Built Heritage Statement (CgMs 2018).
- 5.3.2 Modern ploughing at the site will have had a substantial impact on archaeological features at the site, removing all traces of former Medieval ridge-and-furrow.
- 5.3.3 The study site is considered to have a negligible potential for significant archaeological evidence dating from all periods. Any such remains would most likely be of local interest.
- 5.3.4 The construction techniques employed in modern development are such that any buried archaeological remains within the area proposed for development would not survive the development process.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 This Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment draws together the available archaeological, historic, topographic and land-use information in order to clarify the heritage significance and archaeological potential of Land at Caversfield, Bicester, Oxfordshire.
- 6.2 It addresses the information requirements set out in Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Policy ESD 15 of the Cherwell District Council Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1).
- 6.3 The assessment has established that there are no designated heritage assets on the study site.
- 6.4 Oxfordshire County Council's Pre-Application Advice noted potential earthworks within the eastern part of the site (not recorded on the HER) which it is suggested may relate to a shrunken Medieval settlement, c.300m east of the site (17/00363/PREAPP).
- 6.5 LiDAR imagery shows the majority of the site as open field, ploughed flat and devoid of features. The lack of surviving traces of ridge-and-furrow, visible in the surrounding landscape on LiDAR, is telling of the impact of this ploughing. The earthworks identified in the Advice Note, within the east of the site, can be seen to coincide with modern features seen on the historic mapping and modern GoogleEarth imagery: the earthworks correspond with a recent treeline, a late 19th-century filter bed seen on the historic mapping, and a modern filter bed and associated drainage seen during the site visit. Additionally, the earthworks differ quite notably from those seen to the east of Caversfield House within the deserted Medieval village. It is implausible that the earthworks represent vestiges of surviving earlier earthworks which have been consistently avoided by later ploughing. The earthworks are therefore considered to be of Modern date and no archaeological interest.
- 6.6 From a review of the available data, the study site is considered to have a negligible potential for significant as-yet to be discovered archaeological evidence dating from all periods. Any such remains that are present would most likely be of local interest and significant for their evidential value.
- 6.7 There is no suggestion that the study site is likely to contain archaeological remains that are nationally important, would prohibit development or require to be designed around. The heritage interest of the site can be secured by an appropriately worded planning condition.

SOURCES CONSULTED

General

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Cartographic

1574 Saxton's Map of Oxonii, Buckinghamiae et Berceriae Comitatum

1749 Thomas Kitchin's A New Improved Map of Oxfordshire

1815 William Stanley's Map of Bicester

1854 Caversfield Parish Tithe Map

1885 Ordnance Survey Map

1900 Ordnance Survey Map

1909-10 District Valuation Survey Map (DV-VIII-228_Oxfordshire_XXIII-2)

1923 Ordnance Survey Map

1938/52 Ordnance Survey Map

1947 Aerial Photograph

1982-5 Ordnance Survey Map



Plate 1: Overview of the eastern part of the site, facing north.



Plate 2: Overview of the site from its northeast corner, facing southwest.



Plate 3: View of the western part of the site, facing south.



Plate 4: View south along the access road to Home Farm.



Plate 5: View west along a part of the site's southern boundary.



Plate 6: View south into the rear garden of Home Farm.



Plate 7: View south across the modern filter bed.



Plate 8: Manhole seen within the site, for drainage to the filter bed.



Plate 9: View northwest along the internal field boundary.



Plate 10: View south of potential earthworks in the east of the site.