



BUILT HERITAGE STATEMENT

**Caversfield Bicester,
Oxfordshire**

**On behalf of
SGR (Bicester 1) Ltd**

February 2018

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Built Heritage Statement has been researched and prepared by CgMs Heritage (part of the RPS Group) on behalf of SGR (Bicester 1) Ltd in order to consider the potential impacts on the historic built environment of the development of agricultural land to the south-west of the B4100 in Caversfield, Bicester, hereafter referred to as **'the Site'**. **The Site is centred at approximately NGR SP 57919 25151** and is located to the west of the main settlement of Caversfield. The Site is currently formed of agricultural fields which are in pastoral use. The surrounding land to the north, south and west of the Site is currently being developed, primarily for residential use.
- 1.2 This report addresses the requirement under Paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for the applicant to explain the significance of the particular heritage assets likely to be affected by development and demonstrate the impact that proposals will have upon that significance.
- 1.3 This assessment makes reference to the relevant legislative framework contained within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as well as national and local planning policy. In addition, relevant Historic England guidance has been consulted to inform the judgements made. It is further based on the findings of historical research, a Site walkover survey and assessment conducted from publicly accessible locations around the Site, map studies and the application of professional judgement.
- 1.4 The Site includes no built heritage assets within the boundary. There are nine listed buildings within 1km of the Site, however the majority of these will be unaffected by the proposed development due to the lack of any visual or functional connection with the Site. Of the listed buildings within 1km, only The Church of St Laurence (Grade II*) and Home Farmhouse (Grade II) are considered to be impacted. These are therefore discussed below. In addition, the complex of buildings at Caversfield House are considered within this report as being worthy of non-designated heritage asset status, and are also considered below.
- 1.5 A walkover of the Site and the surrounding area was conducted on 24th January 2018. The weather was wet and overcast, however this did not limit a clear appreciation and experience of the heritage assets surrounding the Site.

- 1.6 This Built Heritage Statement meets the requirements of the NPPF and local planning policy. No further information is required beyond this Statement in regard to built heritage considerations to inform the current planning application. The findings of this report are based on the known conditions at the time of writing and all findings and conclusions are time limited to no more than 3 years from the date of this report. All maps, plans and photographs are for illustrative purposes only.

2.0 LEGISLATION, POLICY AND GUIDANCE

2.1 The current national policy system identifies, through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), that applications should consider the potential impact of **development upon 'heritage assets'**. The term **'heritage assets'** includes designated heritage assets which possess a statutory designation, for example Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments and Conservation Areas. It also includes non-designated heritage assets, typically compiled by Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) and incorporated into a Local List or recorded on the Historic Environment Record.

Legislation

2.2 Where any development may affect designated heritage assets, there is a legislative framework in place to ensure that due regard is given to its impact on the historic environment. This extends from primary legislation under the **Planning (Listed buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990**.

2.3 Section 66 (1) further states that special regard must be given by the planning authority in the exercise of planning functions to the desirability of preserving or enhancing listed buildings and their setting.

2.4 The meaning and effect of these duties have been considered by the courts in recent cases, including the Court of Appeal decision in relation to Barnwell Manor Wind Energy v East Northamptonshire District Council [2014] EWCA Civ 137.

2.5 The Court agreed with the High Court's judgement that Parliament's intention in enacting Section 66(1) was that decision-makers should give **'considerable importance and weight'** to the desirability of preserving (i.e. keeping from harm) the setting of listed buildings.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Department of Communities and Local Government, March 2012)

2.6 The NPPF, published 27th March 2012, sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

2.7 When determining planning applications, the NPPF directs LPAs to apply the **approach of presumption in favour of sustainable development; the 'golden**

thread' that is expected to run through the plan-making and decision-making process.

- 2.8 Where a development plan is absent, silent or out-of-date, permission should be granted except where adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh those benefits, when assessed against NPPF policies as a whole; or where specific policies contained within the NPPF (including those with regard to designated heritage assets) indicate that development should be restricted to some degree.
- 2.9 The NPPF defines a **heritage asset 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". This includes both designated and non-designated heritage assets.**
- 2.10 Section 7 of the NPPF, '**Requiring Good Design' (paragraphs 56 to 68), reinforces the importance of good design in achieving sustainable development by ensuring the creation of inclusive and high quality places. Paragraph 58 affirms the need for new design to function well and add to the quality of the area in which it is built; establish a strong sense of place; and respond to local character and history, reflecting the built identity of the surrounding area.**
- 2.11 **Section 12, 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment' (Paragraphs 126-141)** relates to developments that have an effect upon the historic environment.
- 2.12 The NPPF advises LPAs to take into account the following points when drawing up strategies for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment:
- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and preserving them in a viable use consistent with their conservation;
 - The wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that the conservation of the historic environment can bring;
 - The desirability of new development in making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
 - Opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of place.

- 2.13 Paragraph 128 of the NPPF states that LPAs, when determining applications for development, should require applicants to describe the significance of the heritage assets affected and the contribution made by their setting. The level of detail provided should be proportionate to the significance of the asset and sufficient to understand the impact of the proposal on this significance.
- 2.14 Paragraph 129 states that LPAs should also identify and assess the significance of a heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal and should take this assessment into account when considering the impact upon the heritage asset.
- 2.15 Paragraphs 132 to 134 consider the impact of development proposals upon the significance of designated heritage assets. Paragraph 132 states that where a development is proposed that would affect the significance of the designated **heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation and that the greater an asset's significance, the greater this weight should be.**
- 2.16 Paragraph 133 states that where a development would lead to substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that such harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits or certain criteria are met.
- 2.17 Paragraph 134 advises that where a proposed development will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.
- 2.18 Paragraph 135 is concerned with the impact on non-designated heritage assets and states that where a proposal will affect a non-designated heritage asset, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss to the significance of the heritage asset.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (DCLG, March 2014)

- 2.19 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) has been adopted in order to aid the application of the NPPF. It reiterates that conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle.
- 2.20 It also states that conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change, requiring a flexible and thoughtful approach. It highlights that neglect and decay of heritage assets is best addressed through ensuring they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation.

- 2.21 Key elements of the guidance relate to assessing harm. It states that an important consideration should be whether the proposed works '*seriously affects a key element of the heritage asset's special architectural or historic interest*'. It adds that '*it is the degree of harm rather than the scale of development that is to be assessed*'. The level of 'substantial harm' is stated to be a high bar that may not arise in many cases. Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgement for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the NPPF.
- 2.22 Importantly, it is stated that harm may arise from work to the asset, or from development within its setting. Setting is defined as '*the surroundings in which an asset is experienced, and may be more extensive than the curtilage*'. A thorough assessment of the impact of proposals upon setting must take into account, and be proportionate to, the significance of the heritage asset and the degree to which proposed changes enhance or detract from that significance and the ability to appreciate it.

Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (Historic England, April 2008)

- 2.23 Conservation Principles outlines Historic England's approach to the sustainable management of the historic environment. While primarily intended to ensure consistency in Historic England's own advice and guidance, the document is recommended to LPAs to ensure that all decisions about change affecting the historic environment are informed and sustainable.
- 2.24 This document was published in line with the philosophy of PPS5, yet remains relevant with that of the current policy regime in the emphasis placed upon the importance of understanding significance as a means to properly assess the effects of change to heritage assets. The guidance describes a range of heritage values which enable the significance of assets to be established systematically, with the four main 'heritage values' being:
- **Evidential value:** which derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity. It can be natural or man-made and applies particularly to archaeological deposits, but also to other situations where there is no relevant written record.
 - **Historical value:** which derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present.

It can be illustrative (illustrative of some aspect of the past) or associative (where a place is associated with an important person, event, or movement).

- **Aesthetic value:** which derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place. Aesthetic values can be the result of the conscious design of a place, including artistic endeavour, or they can be the seemingly fortuitous outcome of the way in which a place has evolved and been used over time.
- **Communal value:** which derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. Communal values are closely bound up with historical (particularly associative) and aesthetic values, but tend to have additional and specific aspects. Commemorative and symbolic values reflect the meanings of a place for those who draw part of their identity from it, or have emotional links to it. Social value is associated with places that people perceive as a source of identity, distinctiveness, social interaction and coherence. Spiritual value attached to places can emanate from the beliefs and teachings of an organised religion, or reflect past or present-day perceptions of the spirit of a place.

Overview: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning

- 2.25 The PPS5 Practice Guidance was withdrawn in March 2015. This document has been replaced with three Good Practice Advice in Planning Notes (GPAs) published by Historic England (formerly English Heritage): '**GPA1: Local Plan Making**' (Published 25th March 2015), '**GPA2: Managing significance in Decision-Taking in the historic Environment**' (Published 27th March 2015) and '**GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets** (25th March 2015). A further document entitled '**GPA4: Enabling Development**' is yet to be adopted.
- 2.26 These GPAs provide supporting guidance relating to good conservation practice. The documents focus in particular on how the good practice can be achieved through the principles included within national policy and guidance. As such, the GPAs provide information on good practice to assist LPAs, planning and other consultants, owners, applicants, and other interested parties when implementing policy found within the NPPF and PPG relating to the historic environment.

2.27 These GPAs are complemented by the Historic England Advice Notes in Planning which includes HEA1: Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (February 2016), HEA2: Making Changes to Heritage Assets (February 2016), HEA3: The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans (October 2015), and HEA4: Tall Buildings (December 2015).

GPA2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (March, 2015)

2.28 This document provides advice on numerous ways in which decision making in the historic environment could be undertaken, emphasising that the first step for all applicants is to understand the significance of any affected heritage asset and the contribution of its setting to that significance. In line with the NPPF and PPG, the document states that early engagement and expert advice in considering and assessing the significance of heritage assets is encouraged. The advice suggests a structured, staged approach to the assembly and analysis of relevant information:

- understanding the significance of the affected assets;
- understanding 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 balanced with the need for change; and
- offset negative impacts to significance by enhancing others through recording, disseminating and archiving archaeological and historical interest of the important elements of the heritage assets affected.

GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Second Edition, December 2017)

2.29 This advice note focuses on the management of change within the setting of heritage assets. This document replaces the first edition of *GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets* (English Heritage, March 2015) and *Seeing the History in the View: A Method for Assessing the Heritage Significance within Views* (English Heritage, 2011 – previously withdrawn) in order to aid practitioners with the

implementation of national legislation, policies, and guidance relating to the setting of heritage assets found in the 1990 Act, the NPPF, and PPG. This guidance is largely a continuation of the philosophy and approach of the 2011 and 2015 documents and does not present a divergence in either the definition of setting or the way in which it should be assessed.

- 2.30 As with the NPPF the document **defines setting 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’**. Setting is also described as being a separate term to curtilage, character and context. The guidance emphasises that setting is not a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, and that its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset, or the ability to appreciate that significance. It also states that elements of setting may make a positive, negative or neutral contribution to the significance of the heritage asset.
- 2.31 While setting is largely a visual term, with views considered to be an important consideration in any assessment of the contribution that setting makes to the significance of an asset, setting, and thus the way in which an asset is experienced, setting also encompasses other environmental factors including noise, vibration and odour. Historical and cultural associations may also form part **of an asset’s** setting, which can inform or enhance the significance of a heritage asset. Further clarification on this matter has been provided by the High Court in relation to ***Steer v Secretary of State for Communities’ and Local Government and Others [2017]*** which stresses the potential importance and contribution of non-visual elements of setting.
- 2.32 This document provides guidance on practical and proportionate decision making with regards to the management of change within the setting of heritage assets. It is stated that the protection of the setting of a heritage asset need not prevent change and that decisions relating to such issues need to be based on the nature, extent and level of the significance of a heritage asset, further weighing up the potential public benefits associated with the proposals. It is further stated that changes within the setting of a heritage asset may have positive or neutral effects.
- 2.33 The document also states that the contribution made to the significance of heritage assets by their settings will vary depending on the nature of the heritage asset and its setting and that different heritage assets may have different abilities

to accommodate change without harming their significance. Setting should, therefore, be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

2.34 Although not prescriptive in setting out how this assessment should be carried out, noting that any approach should be demonstrably compliant with legislation, **national policies and objectives, Historic England recommend using the '5-step process' in order to assess the potential effects of a proposed development on the significance of a heritage asset, with this 5-step process continued from the 2011 guidance:**

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

Local Planning Policy and Guidance

2.35 The local planning context is currently prescribed by Cherwell District Council. 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.

Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) (re-adopted December, 2016)

2.36 On 19th December 2016, the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 was re-adopted following an alteration to Policy Bicester 13 (Gavray Drive). This document therefore supersedes the Plan that was first adopted in July 2015. The policies contained within the Local Plan that are of relevance are as follows:

2.37 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 15

'To protect and enhance the historic and natural environment and Cherwell's core assets, including protecting and enhancing cultural heritage assets and archaeology, maximising opportunities for improving biodiversity and minimising pollution in urban and rural areas.'

2.38 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 inter alia:

- 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, technical, 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 settings.*
- 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 harm or loss and the significance of the heritage assets 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.*
- *Limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.*
- *Incorporate energy efficient design and sustainable construction techniques, whilst ensuring that the aesthetic implications of green technology are appropriate to the context.'*

Draft Cherwell Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

2.39 Cherwell District Council are currently consulting on a draft Cherwell Design Guide SPD. This draft document sets out proposed guidance to support the delivery of high quality development across the District. Upon adoption, this SPD will be used to consider design issues in decision making by the Local Planning Authority. Whilst not yet adopted, this document has been considered whilst producing this report.

3.0 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Historic development

- 3.1 The Site is situated in the parish of Caversfield, around 2.5km north of the town of Bicester. Until the twentieth century, Caversfield was a rural, sparsely populated parish comprising agricultural land scattered with isolated farmsteads. At the centre of the parish lies **St Lawrence's Church**, Caversfield House and the associated Home Farm.
- 3.2 The Manor of Caversfield was first recorded before the Norman Conquest under the ownership of Edward, a man of Earl Tosti (VHC, 1928). However, in 1086 it was recorded in the Domesday Book as among the possessions of William de Warenne, in whose family it remained until the early fourteenth century. From 1780 the topography of the parish underwent significant change following an Inclosure Act, which ended the open field system of farming that had hitherto prevailed in the parish. Nonetheless, land in the parish remained almost exclusively in agricultural use throughout the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
- 3.3 In 1911, however, Bicester Airfield was constructed in the adjacent Launton parish. During the first world this became a military airfield, and as a result housing for Royal Air Force (RAF) personnel was constructed off Skimmingdish Lane in the eastern part of Caversfield parish. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries Caversfield has seen further residential development, as Bicester has expanded rapidly northward.

Map Regression of the Site

- 3.4 The 1854 Tithe Map of the Site (figure 3) shows that at this time it was a single undeveloped field parcel. The apportionment for the map shows the Site as Dairy Ground, grass. This indicates a similar use to today, however it is clear from this map that most of the surrounding area was also in agricultural use.
- 3.5 The 1885 Ordnance Survey (OS) map (figure 4) shows the Site to form part of a single undeveloped field parcel bounded by trees. At this date, the Site is surrounded to the south, west, and northwest by open fields arranged around scattered farmsteads. This land use pattern characterises much of the parish. However, **Caversfield House and St. Lawrence's Church** lie northeast of the Site

across the road that is now the B4100. The Home Farm is shown to abut the Site to the southeast.

- 3.6 In the 1900 OS map (figure 5) additional buildings and landscaping alterations are shown within the grounds of Caversfield House. Nonetheless, no changes to the Site itself are apparent. Likewise, no changes to the Site itself are apparent in the 1923 OS map (figure 6); although, a railway line is now shown to the southwest of the Site and the housing for RAF personnel to the southeast. The 1938 OS map (figure 7) shows subsequent development to have occurred on the site of the RAF housing, but no development elsewhere, and no changes to the Site.
- 3.7 In subsequent OS maps the Site remains undeveloped and unchanged, except for **the insertion of a 'track' east to west across the field** in which it is situated. However, by the 1982-1988 OS map (figure 8) the northward growth of Bicester is apparent, with significant residential development shown to have occurred to the south of the A4095 and east of Fingford Road.
- 3.8 In the 1999 OS map (figure 9), further development is apparent between Buckingham Road and Banbury Road, and the South Lodge Riding Stables are shown to the east of the Site. Further infill development is shown west of Banbury Road in the 2006 OS map (figure 10), and residential development is shown to the south of the Site off the B4100 in the 2017 map (figure 11).
- 3.9 Therefore, the Site itself has remained as undeveloped agricultural land for all of its recorded history, and there has been little change to its rural setting to the north and west. However, its surroundings to the south and east have undergone extensive change during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

4.0 SITE APPRAISAL

- 4.1 The Site is located to the north of Bicester, on the edge of Caversfield, a small settlement. It is centred at NGR SP 57919 25151 and is approximately 5.03 ha in area. The Site is currently made up of agricultural fields, which are grassed for grazing.
- 4.2 There is currently an access road which runs through the east of the Site and provides access to Home Farmhouse and the associated buildings. The use of some of these ancillary buildings means that the road has a number of vehicles which use it. This road is fenced off from the majority of the Site.
- 4.3 The Site is generally fairly level, although rises up slightly in the north-west corner. There are some gentle undulations of the ground over the Site. There are some trees and hedges located within the Site, but on the whole the area is open with limited vegetation.
- 4.4 To the south-east of the Site are Home Farmhouse and the associated buildings. These buildings are largely restricted from view by dense tree planting in the grounds of Home Farmhouse. To the south-west there is a large area of new development which is still in construction phase. To the north-west there is also new development which is at an earlier stage than that to the south-west. To the north-east is the B4100, a busy road out of Bicester. This creates a lot of traffic noise. Immediately on the other side of this road there is dense vegetation, which largely blocks from view the Church of St Laurence, Caversfield House and associated buildings.



Plate 1: View across the Site looking south-west towards new development



Plate 2: View across the Site looking towards Home Farm

5.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

5.1 There are no nationally or locally designated buildings located within the boundary of the Site. There are nine listed buildings within 1km of the Site, however due to the lack of any visual or functional connection with the Site, the majority of these will be unaffected by the proposed development and as such are considered no further in this report. It is considered that of the listed buildings only two, the Church of St Laurence (Grade II*) and Home Farmhouse (Grade II) have the potential to be impacted by the development. These are considered in detail below. In addition to the designated assets the complex of buildings at Caversfield House are considered to have the potential of being worthy of non-designated heritage asset status, although they have not been formally recognised as such by the LPA, and are also considered below. There are no Conservation Areas which will be impacted by the proposals.

Home Farmhouse (Grade II, NHL: 1200170)

5.2 **Description:** Home Farmhouse is an early-mid seventeenth century farmhouse, with eighteenth and nineteenth century extensions, which was designated as a Grade II listed building in 1987. The building is constructed from coursed squared limestone, with ashlar dressings, such as the window frames. The building has a gabled roof which is covered with old plain tiles, and at each gable end there is a large chimney projection, with red brick stacks. The building is two storeys in height and a three unit plan, in addition to the added rear extensions. The front elevation of the building has two-light ovolo moulded stone-mullioned windows at each end bay. The central bay has a door opening and a casement window. On the first floor there are three two-light ovolo moulded stone-mullioned windows. To the rear of the building there are some catslide outshoots, with timber casements in the gables of these projections. There is also a first floor weather boarded dormer.

5.3 **Significance:** The significance of the building is principally derived from the architectural and historic special interest of the asset, which is embodied within its historic fabric. It has a degree of evidential value, with it having the potential to yield evidence about historic farming practices and the association with accommodation in the seventeenth century. There is also illustrative value derived from the historical development of the building. The aesthetic value of the building has been maintained through the lack of alterations to the exterior of the building, particularly the front elevation.

- 5.4 **Setting:** The immediate setting of the heritage asset is quite extensive, including the gardens immediately to the west, and the farm buildings which surround it to the north, east and south. These farm buildings vary between stone built historic farm buildings and twentieth century buildings of limited architectural or historic value. The stone built farm buildings which are older and possess some architectural and historic value, contribute to the farmhouse through demonstrating the historic setting and the style of corresponding farm buildings at the time. Some of these buildings have been converted, mostly for office use, whilst others still appear to function as agricultural structures. They all contribute to the significance of Home Farmhouse. The twentieth-century farm buildings also contribute **to the listed building's historic interest**, through providing evidence of the continued use of the Site for farming purposes. Architecturally, they do not contribute to the significance of the asset. The gardens of the property appear as domestic gardens, which contribute to the aesthetic value of the building, rather than to the understanding as a historic farmhouse. The gardens are marked on the Tithe map and therefore show the continued use of this space as gardens since at least the mid-nineteenth century.
- 5.5 The wider setting of the asset is made up of the surrounding agricultural fields, as well as St Laurence's Church to the north-east, Caversfield to the south-east, and the new development which has taken place to the north-west, west and south-west of the farm. The farmhouse has lost much of its connection to the surrounding agricultural land due to later residential development, however those parts immediately surrounding it do still allow for some understanding of the building in its rural and agricultural context. These fields include the Site, which was historically functionally connected to the Farmhouse through forming part of the land associated with the farm. There is very limited experience of this from the Farmhouse, with the Site being physically divorced from the farmhouse by a dense tree belt. The high level of vegetation surrounding the farmhouse, some of which is historic planting presumably designed to separate the domestic building from its historical agricultural surrounds, means that there is very limited experience of these fields from the asset, and from the Site there are only glimpses of the roof of Home Farmhouse. Whilst historically there was a functional connection, the understanding of this is now relatively limited, and therefore the contribution this makes is lessened. The development which has taken place around the asset has reduced the contribution that the wider setting

makes to the significance of Home Farmhouse, through making the farmhouse appear as part of a larger settlement. Therefore, whilst the understanding of the functional link between the Site and the Farmhouse has been eroded by the surrounding modern development, the farmhouse and its farm buildings do still share some remnant functional connection to the Site. This lacks legibility due to the clear visual separation, and the domestic function that the building now serves. It is therefore considered that these remnant fields make a minor positive contribution to the overall significance of Home Farmhouse.

- 5.6 **Summary:** Home Farmhouse derives the majority of significance from its architectural and historic interest, embodied within the fabric of the building itself. It also derives value from its immediate setting, and some small value from the fields within the wider setting, which include the Site. Due to the general loss of rural setting however it is considered that the Site makes at most a minor contribution to the significance of the farmhouse, in part due to the loss of clear functional relationship between the Site and the asset, with the legibility of this also now severed by the intervening planting which limits any visual relationship between the listed building and the Site.



Plate 3: Home Farmhouse

Church of St Laurence (Grade II*, NHL: 1046533)

- 5.7 **Description:** The Church of St Laurence was designated as a Grade II* listed building in 1966. The building originally dates to the tenth/eleventh century, with alterations in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and a restoration and rebuilding programme in 1874. The building is formed of a number of gabled elements, covered with a mix of Stonesfield-slate and concrete plain tile. The Church consists of a simple plan, with a chancel, aisled nave and west tower. The tower of the Church is in three stages, with the base dating to pre-1066. This base has small windows to the north and south with external splays. All of the other windows in the tower and the stone quoins have been renewed, and the east and west facing gables have been rebuilt. The Chancel dates to the thirteenth century, although with large scale restoration in the nineteenth century, and has a pair of lancets in the east wall and a further lancet and two-light decorated window and square headed fifteenth century window in the south. The nineteenth-century vestry is located to the north of the chancel and includes a three-light decorated-style window below a gable. There is also a small door within the northern façade of the chancel. The aisles, which were rebuilt in coursed rubble in the nineteenth century principally have small lancets, and on the north side there is a short gabled porch projection with a re-used twelfth-century doorway of two orders with engaged shafts, an inner roll and an outer band of undercut chevrons. The interior of the church has a number of important features, all of which contribute to the overall significance of the listed building.
- 5.8 **Significance:** The significance of the listed building is principally embodied within its historic fabric, which provides the building with special architectural and historic interest. The development of the building over time demonstrates changing architectural styles and provides the building with a high level of evidential value. There is also the potential for further elements to be uncovered, which may have been obscured by later alterations. The building also has a high degree of illustrative value, showing the value of the church within society throughout its history, with continued investment and changes. The aesthetic value of the church is, unlike many other churches, appreciated more from the immediate surrounds. This is not apparent at greater distance due to the relatively small tower, and the flat surrounding landscape preventing long reaching views of the Church. There is also a high level of screening surrounding the churchyard which limits views. There is still a high level of aesthetic value

derived from the architectural quality of the Church. The Church has served as a community place of worship since the tenth century and as such it has a high level of communal value. Further communal value is derived from the 25 Commonwealth War Graves in the Churchyard connected with RAF Bicester dating to before and during the Second World War.

- 5.9 **Setting:** The immediate setting of the Church is made up of the small churchyard which surrounds it. This has a number of Commonwealth Graves, as mentioned above, which contribute to the significance of the Church through demonstrating its relationship to RAF Bicester. The churchyard is heavily treed which provides an enclosed and verdant character, contributing to the character of the Church as an isolated rural Church.
- 5.10 The wider setting extends to Caversfield House and the associated buildings to the north-west and north-east. These, whilst not contemporary with the Church, demonstrate the historic setting of the Church because, whilst Caversfield House itself is a late nineteenth-century structure, it replaced an earlier house, and illustrates the relationship between the Church and the Manor House in Caversfield. The wider setting also extends to include the wider agricultural landscape, including the Site. From some parts of the Site there are some views of the Church, however from ground level of the Church there is limited experience of the Site. Whilst the Site forms part of the open agricultural landscape, any contribution to the Church has been heavily reduced by the development to the east of the Site and the busy B4100 which separates the asset from the Site. Any contribution made to the overall significance of the asset is limited.
- 5.11 **Summary:** The significance of the Church of St Laurence is principally derived from its architectural and historic interest, which is embodied within its fabric. The setting of the listed building, notably its immediate setting, positively contributes to its significance, however the Site itself only makes a minor positive contribution, through providing some remnant part of the rural surrounds of the Church.



Plate 4: The Church of St Laurence

Caversfield House and Associated Buildings

- 5.12 **Description:** Caversfield House is located to the east of the Site, to the north-east of the Church of St Laurence. It dates to 1842-5, replacing an earlier manor house in the same location. The House itself shares no visual or apparent functional connection to the Site, however the buildings to the south-west of the house, some of which are older than the house itself, do share some visual link with the Site.
- 5.13 Caversfield House is not visible from the Site or publically accessible locations. There is a description within Pevsner (1974), however, from map imagery it appears that the building has changed dramatically in planform since the 1970s, and therefore it is likely that this description is outdated. Due to sharing no functional or visible link with the Site no description is attempted here, with this assessment focussing on those buildings associated with Caversfield House which do share a visible link with the Site.
- 5.14 To the south-west of the House there is a courtyard of buildings. These are glimpsed from parts of the Site, with their rooflines being visible. The building at the north-eastern side of the yard is the oldest part of the complex, dating to

pre-1854. At this time, this building formed a part of a courtyard, however it was then the south-westernmost building rather than the north-easternmost. The building is formed of a stone built outbuilding with a large central double height carriage way. It has a red tiled gabled roof.

- 5.15 The other buildings in the courtyard were constructed between 1881 and 1899. They appear to be constructed from a combination of stone and red brick and also have tiled roofs. The north-western front appears from glimpses to be residential in nature, with sash windows, large chimney stacks and a hipped roof. It is likely that this was built as some form of accommodation, either to supplement the main house or to form a rectory for the Church. The south-western front appears to be a single storey outbuilding, converted for residential use. This is stone built, with a gabled red tile roof and has timber casement windows. It also has lead capped pinnacles on the roof which were likely built as ventilation for the building prior to its conversion.
- 5.16 **Significance:** The significance of the building is derived from its architectural and historic interest. The development of the complex of buildings over time shows changing architectural and social practices. There is also aesthetic value derived from the architectural quality of the buildings, which can be seen even in the outbuildings. Any significance of the building is considered to be of local value and this is reflected in its lack of statutory designation.
- 5.17 **Setting:** The complex of buildings has a large immediate setting, with this being formed of the grounds that surround it. These grounds are made up of a variety of different areas, all used as gardens. They are heavily treed and this creates an isolated and secluded character, contributing to the significance of the assets as a self-contained complex. The wider setting extends to include the Church of St Laurence, in addition to the wider agricultural surroundings, including the Site. From the Site there are some glimpses available of parts of the complex, which allows for some understanding of the history of the buildings. These fields also place the complex within its rural surrounds and show the relative isolation. It is considered however that the Site itself only makes a limited minor positive contribution, with visual and functional connection between the Site and the assets being limited.
- 5.18 **Summary:** The complex of buildings at Caversfield House possesses a very low level of value, principally derived from the historical development of the complex over time, and the architectural value of the buildings. Whilst the immediate

setting contributes to this, the wider setting makes only a very limited positive contribution to the assets, through placing them within their isolated setting.



Plate 5: Buildings at Caversfield House viewed from the Site

6.0 PROPOSALS AND ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

Proposals

- 6.1 The proposals for the Site are for residential development concentrated at the north-western corner of the Site. Development area will total 2.15ha, with open space totalling 2.69 ha and Orchards and allotments totalling 0.49ha. The proposals are in outline form only and are for up to 75 homes.
- 6.2 The current indicative masterplan shows that the area around Home Farmhouse will be retained as open space, in order to allow for some separation between these buildings and the new development. Planting at the edge of the development will allow for some further separation.
- 6.3 A central spine road runs through the proposed development, in order to connect the development to the other development currently taking place to the north-west. This will be where vehicular access will be, with no need for further access off the B4100. This central road will allow for a vista from the development to the Church of St Laurence.
- 6.4 At the north-east of the Site, to the other side of the access road to Home Farmhouse, community orchards are proposed, in addition to allotments and car parking provision for the allotments and Church of Laurence, which currently has no parking.

Assessment of Impact

Home Farmhouse

- 6.5 Home Farmhouse is located to the south-east of the Site. It shares limited intervisibility with the Site, with some glimpses of the roofline of the Farmhouse being available from the Site. In addition there is some remnant historical functional association between the Site and the Farmhouse, with the Site forming part of the land historically associated with the Farmhouse.
- 6.6 The contribution that the Site makes to Home Farmhouse is reduced by the lack of clear understanding of the functional link that the farmhouse and Site shared. In addition, there is very little visual connection between the two. The proposed development will further erode the open space which once surrounded the farmhouse, and will bring development in closer proximity to the farmhouse. The proposals do however concentrate development at the north-western corner of the Site, leaving an area of open space around the Farmhouse. From the

farmhouse there is limited experience of the open field of the Site, however from the Site this will allow for some continued experience of the roofline of the farmhouse. Whilst development will be brought slightly closer to the house, the contribution that this field now makes to the significance of the farmhouse is limited, due to loss of understanding of the historic functional connection of the farmhouse and surrounding land, and therefore it is considered that the proposals will have less than substantial harm on the significance of Home Farmhouse, with this being minor within the less than substantial spectrum.

Church of St Laurence

- 6.7 The Church of St Laurence is separated from the Site by the busy B4100 road, which creates a separation between the Site and the Church. The Site does contribute to the significance of the Church through demonstrating its function as a rural and isolated church, and provides some views to the tower from parts of the Site.
- 6.8 The proposed development will bring built development slightly closer to the Church, however an area of open space will create separation between the new dwellings and the Church, retaining much of its immediate rural context. In addition, the proposed community orchard will create further separation. The central road running through the built up area will allow for a continued vista from this part of the Site to the Church of Laurence, which will therefore continue to demonstrate the importance of the Church in society. From the Church there is currently no experience of the Site due to the dense trees which surround and enclose the Church. Whilst there is therefore a sense of seclusion, this is already heavily impacted by the Road, and will not be further affected by the proposals. It is therefore considered that the proposed development will have at most a minor level of less than substantial harm on the significance of the Church of Laurence.

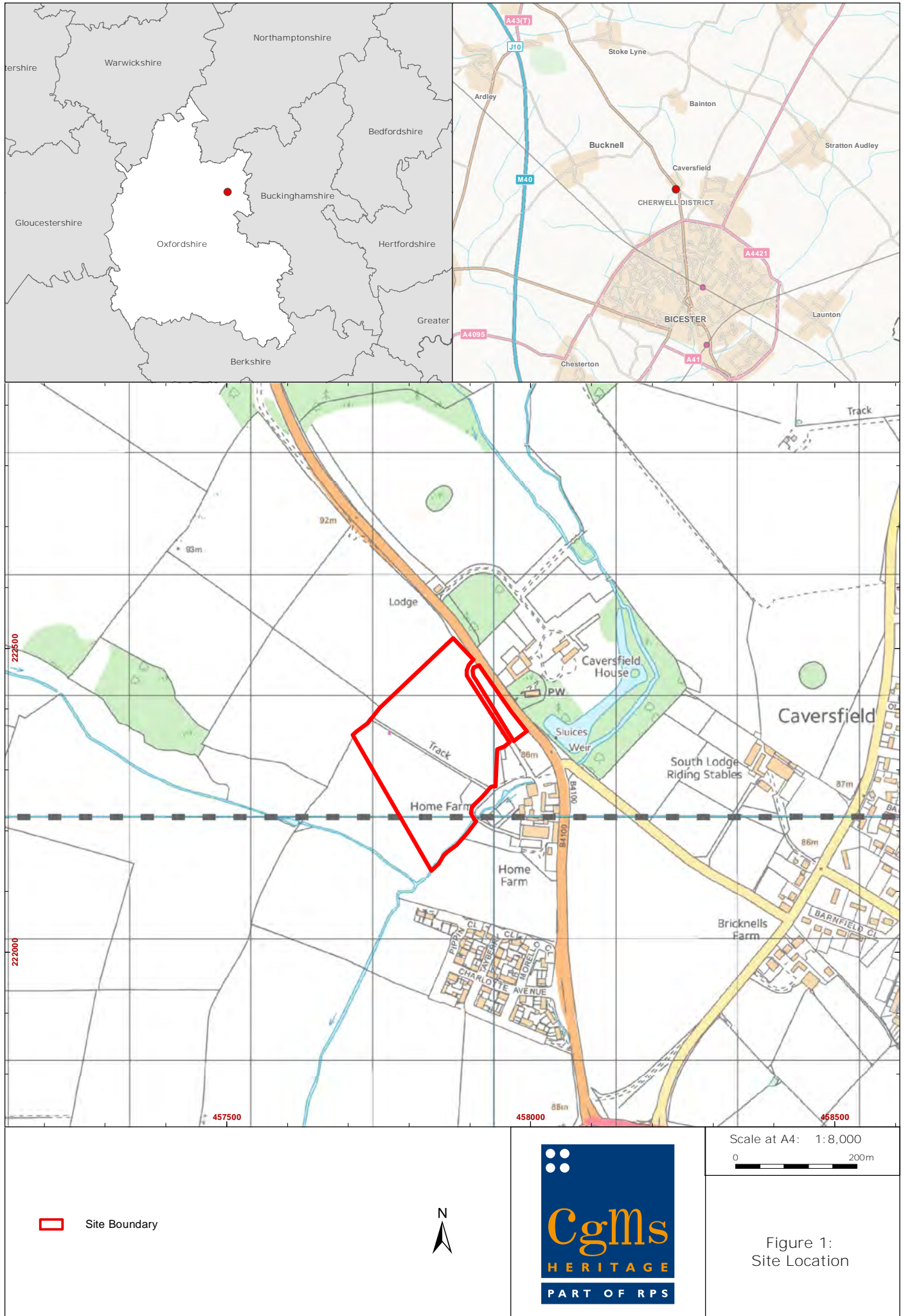
Caversfield House and Associated Buildings

- 6.9 Caversfield House itself shares no visual or apparent functional connection with the Site and will not be impacted by the proposed development. The buildings located to the south-west of the house are visible from the Site, and are considered to have the potential to be non-designated heritage assets. Only glimpses of the buildings were possible on the Site visit due to being heavily screened and enclosed. From parts of the upper storeys of the complex of

buildings it is possible that there will be some experience of the proposed development. Whilst this will to some extent result in the further loss of rural open surrounds, this has already been eroded by the development surrounding the Site. The proposed development will cause some further erosion of this, however it will have very limited impact on the asset. The proposed development will therefore cause at most a very minor degree of harm to the significance of the buildings at Caversfield House. This should be weighed, in a balanced judgement, against the very low local significance of the building in line with Paragraph 135 of the NPPF.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 This Built Heritage Statement considers heritage assets which have the potential to be impacted by the proposed development of the Site in Caversfield, Bicester and assesses the impact of the proposed development on the significance of these heritage assets in line with primary legislation, the planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the relevant heritage requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, and local policy and guidance.
- 7.2 The **statement's study area includes a 1 km radius from the Site, which includes** nine listed buildings. Due to the lack of any visual or functional connection with the Site, the majority of these will be unaffected by the proposed development. Only the Church of St Laurence (Grade II*) and Home Farmhouse (Grade II) have the potential to be impacted by the development, and impact to these will be less than substantial, and at the lower end of that spectrum. This should be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme in line with Paragraph 134 of the NPPF. Any harm should require clear and convincing justification, as set out in paragraph 132 of the NPPF, and this justification is set out within the accompanying planning application, which includes the provision of housing and parking for the Church.
- 7.3 In addition, the complex of buildings at Caversfield House have the potential to be considered non-designated heritage assets. Any harm to these buildings will be very minor, and should be weighed against the very low, local, significance of the asset in line with Paragraph 135 of the NPPF. There are no Conservation Areas which will be impacted by the proposals.
- 7.4 This Built Heritage Statement meets the requirements of the NPPF and local planning policy and provides sufficient information in regards to Built Heritage considerations at this stage of the process.



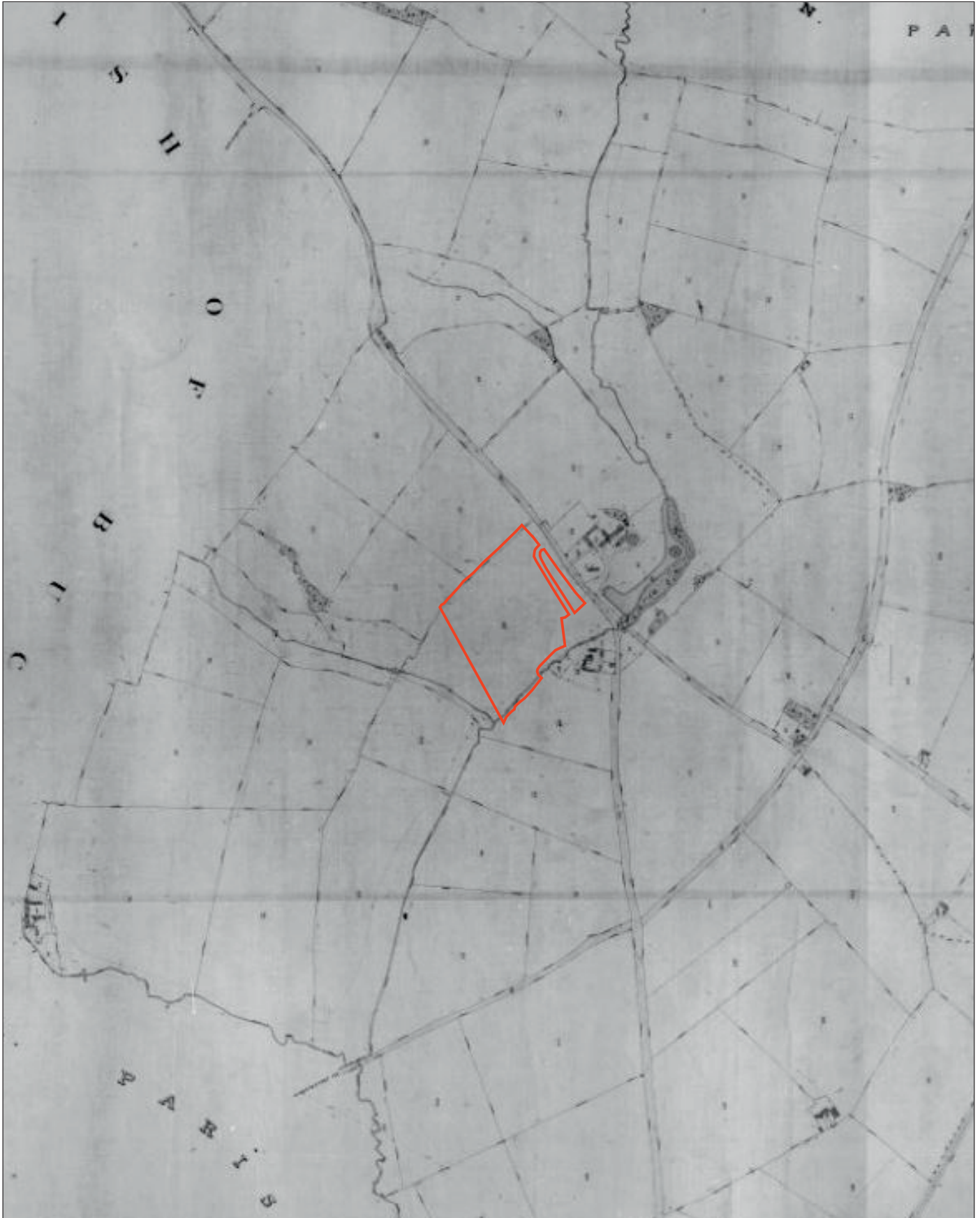


- ▭ Site Boundary
- ◆ Non-Designated Assets
- ◆ Listed Buildings



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

Figure 2:
Built Heritage
Assets



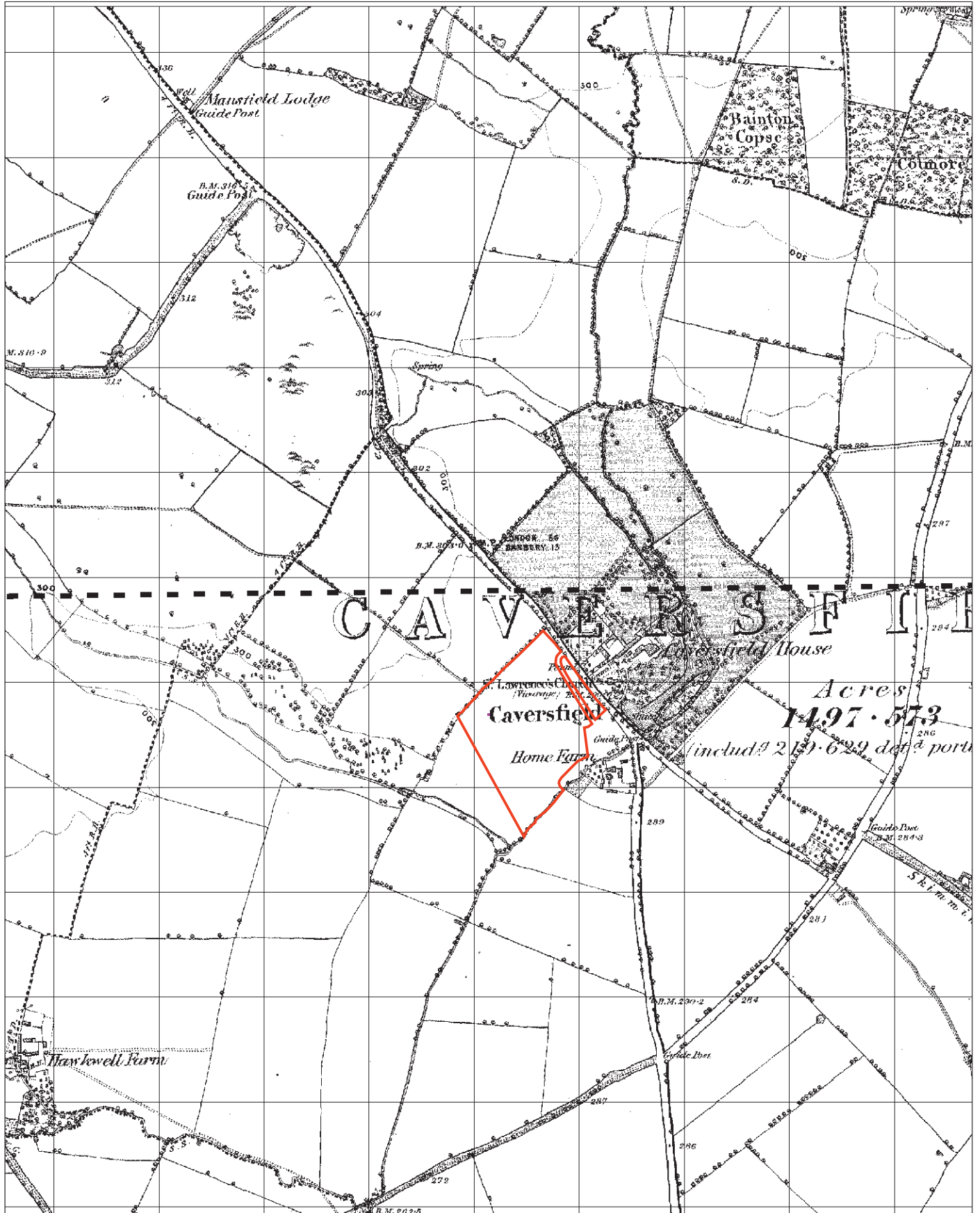
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— Site Boundary



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Figure 3:
1854 Caversfield Parish
Tithe Map



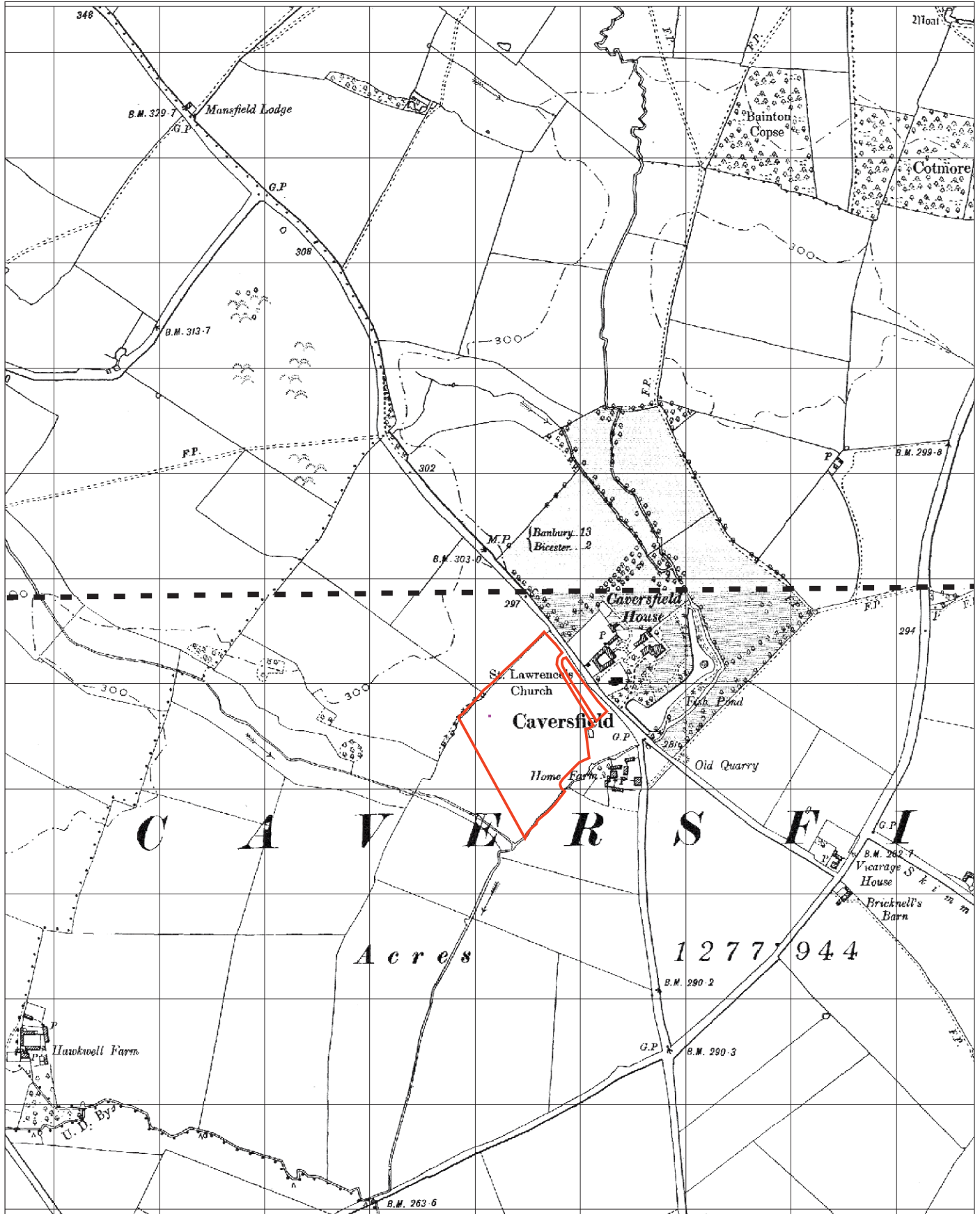
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— Site Boundary



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Figure 4:
1885 Ordnance
Survey Map



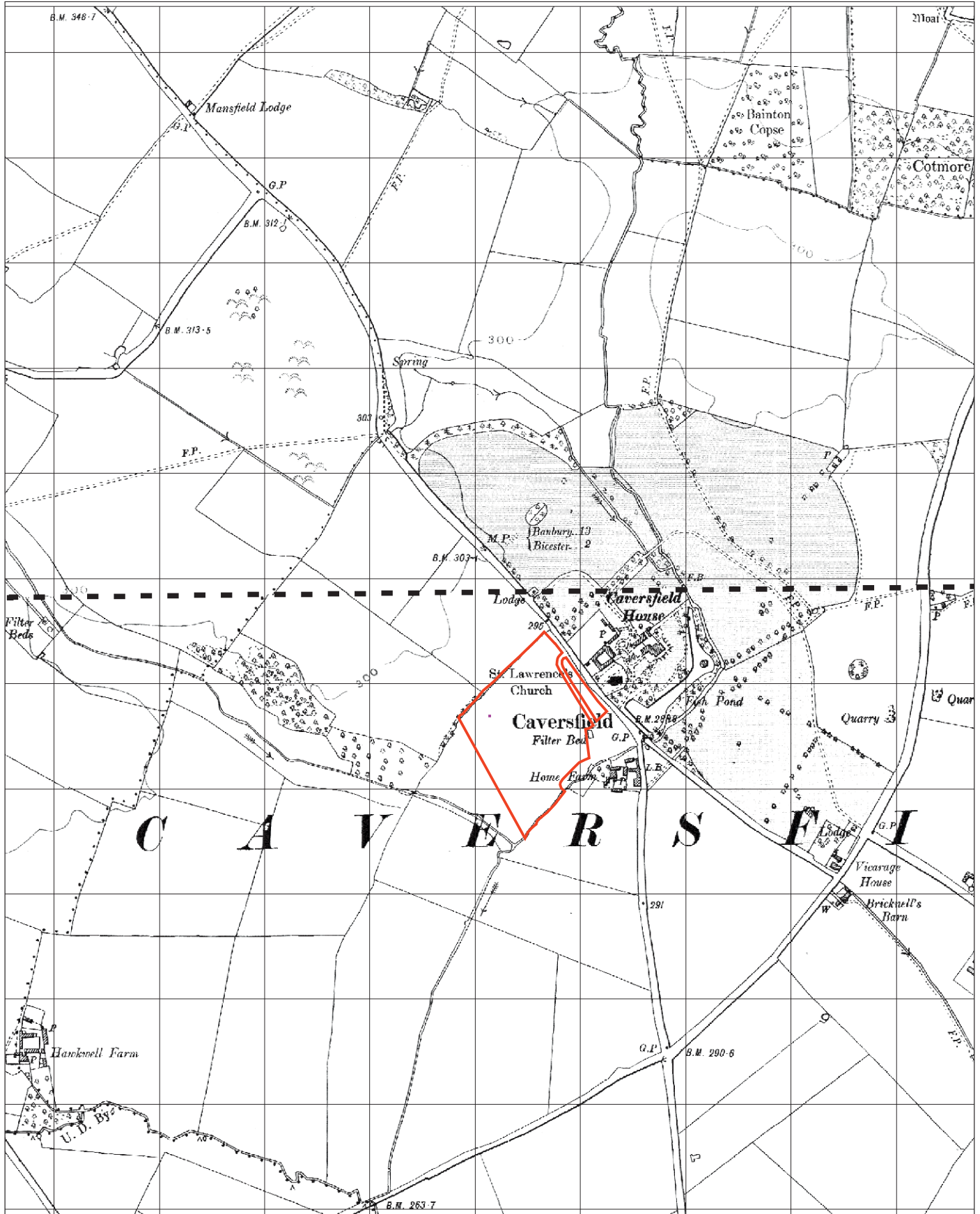
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Figure 5:
1900 Ordnance
Survey Map



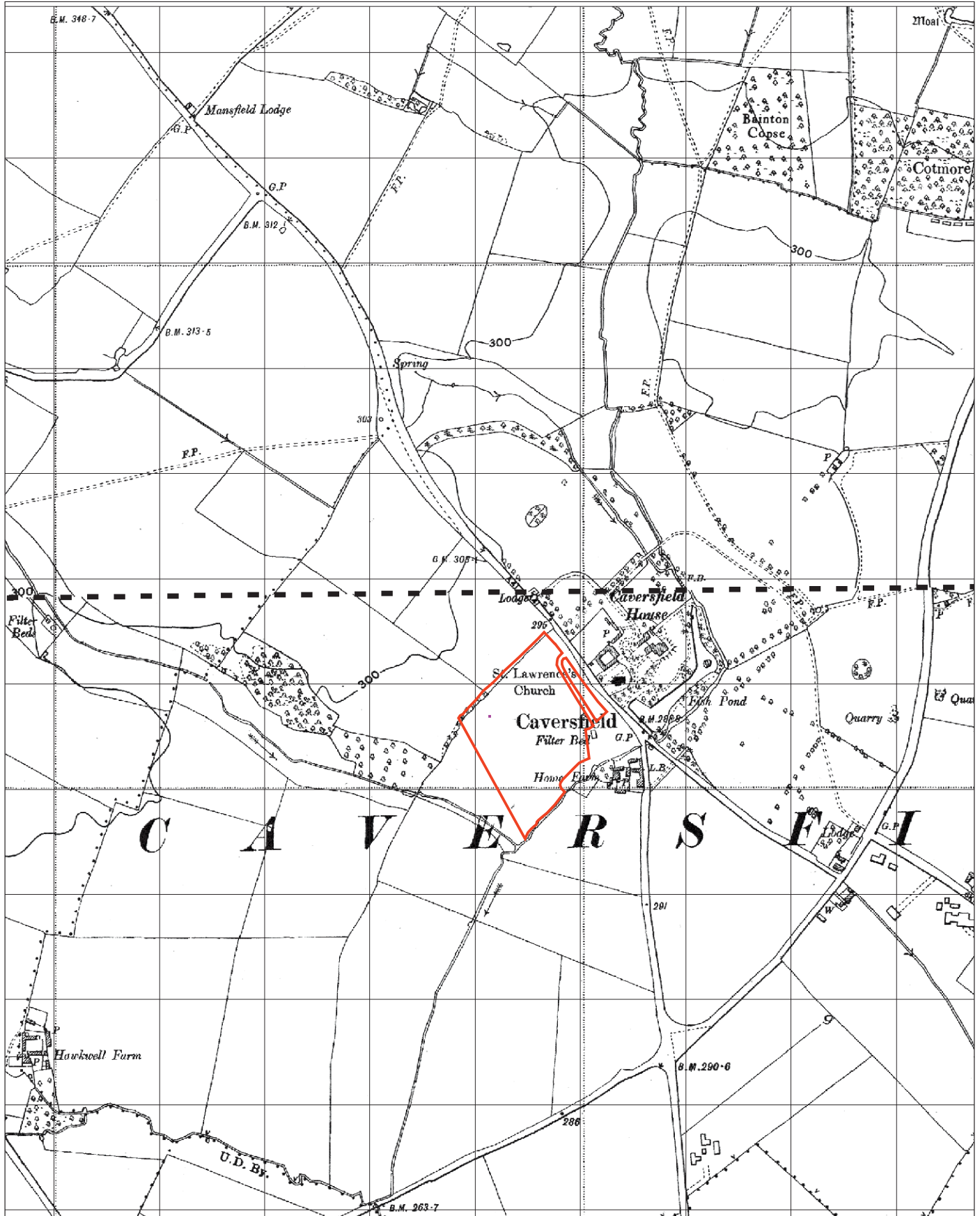
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— Site Boundary



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Figure 6:
1923 Ordnance
Survey Map



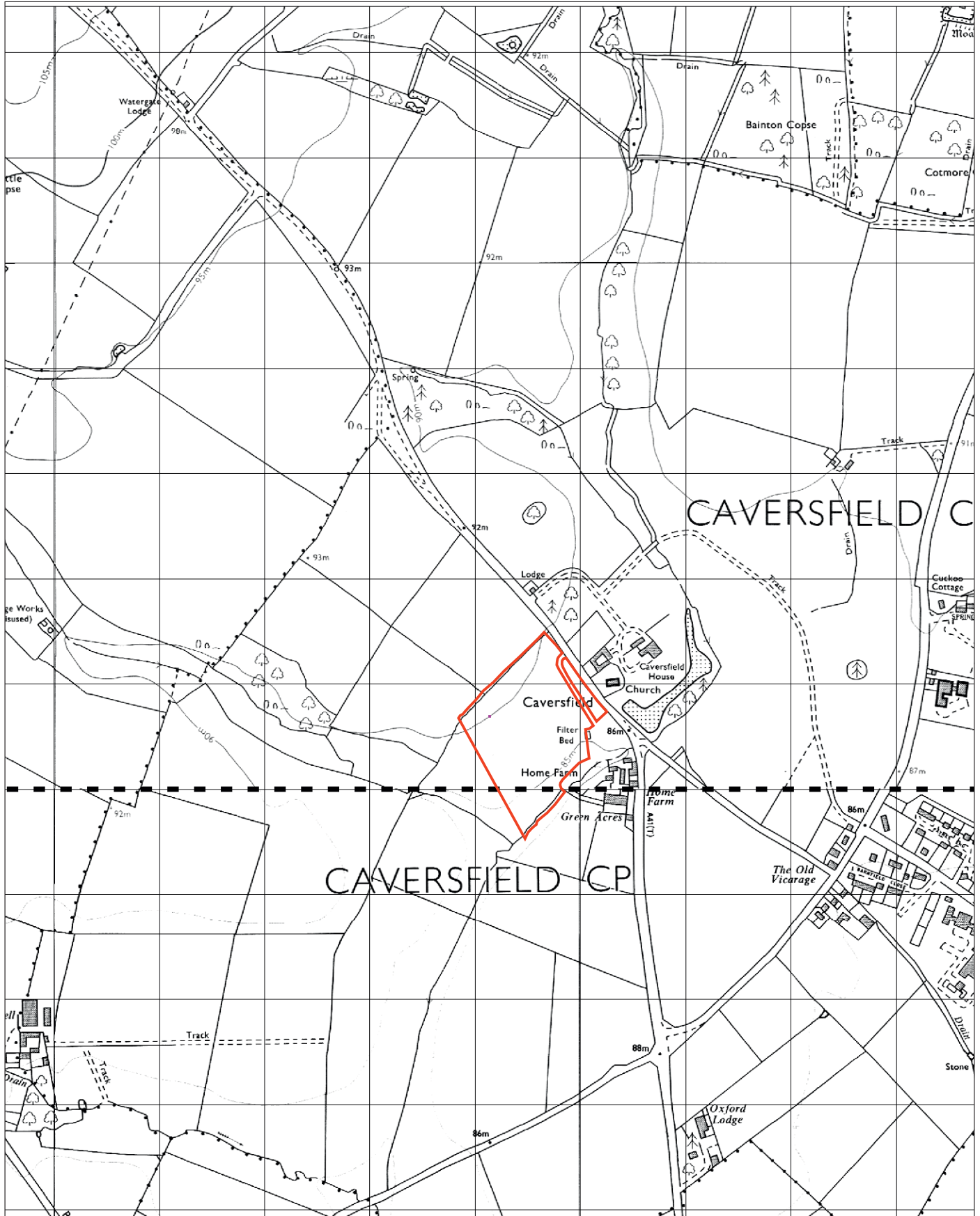
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— Site Boundary



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Figure 7:
1938 Ordnance
Survey Map



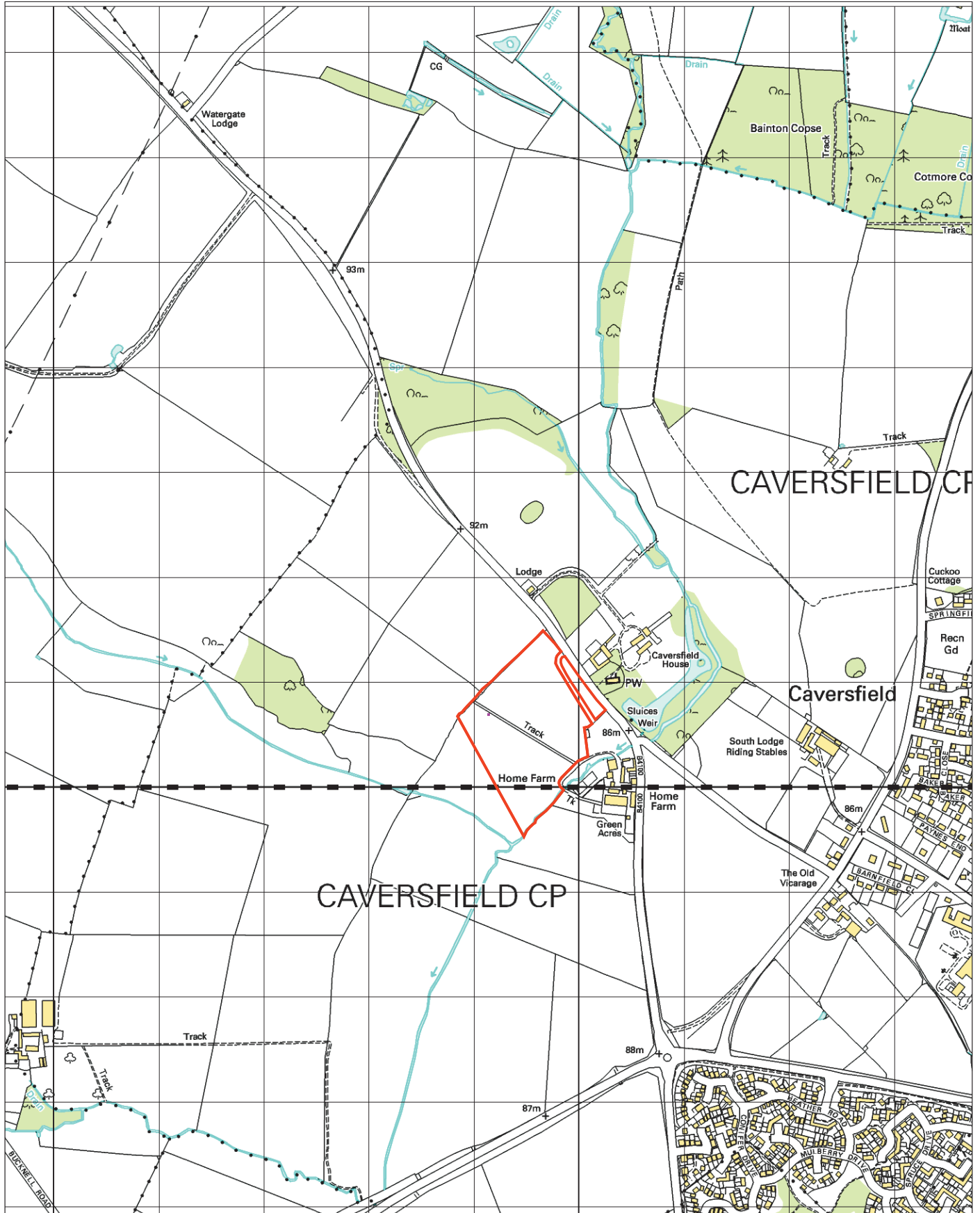
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— Site Boundary



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Figure 8:
1982 Ordnance
Survey Map



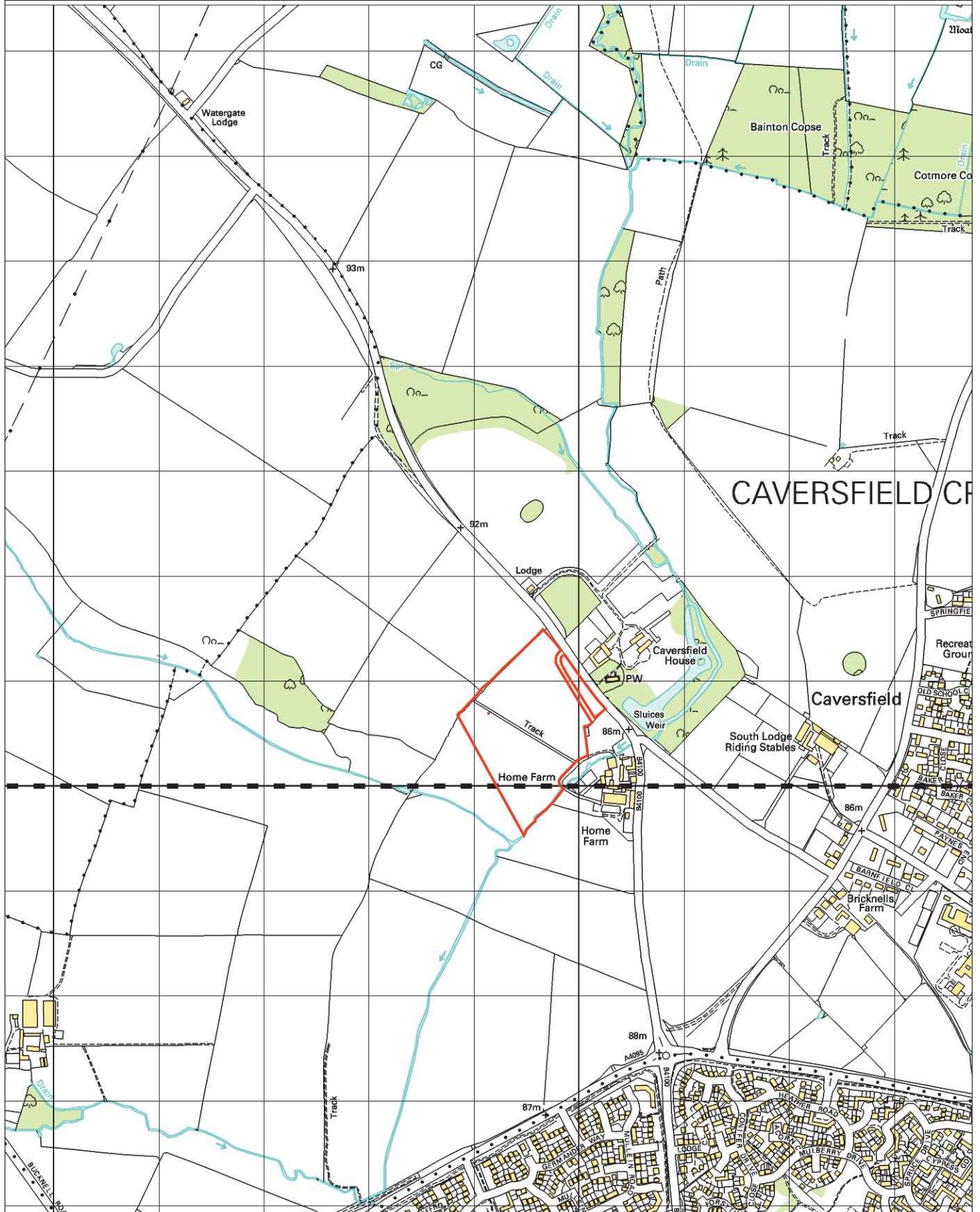
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— Site Boundary



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Figure 9:
1999 Ordnance
Survey Map



CAVERSFIELD CP

Caversfield

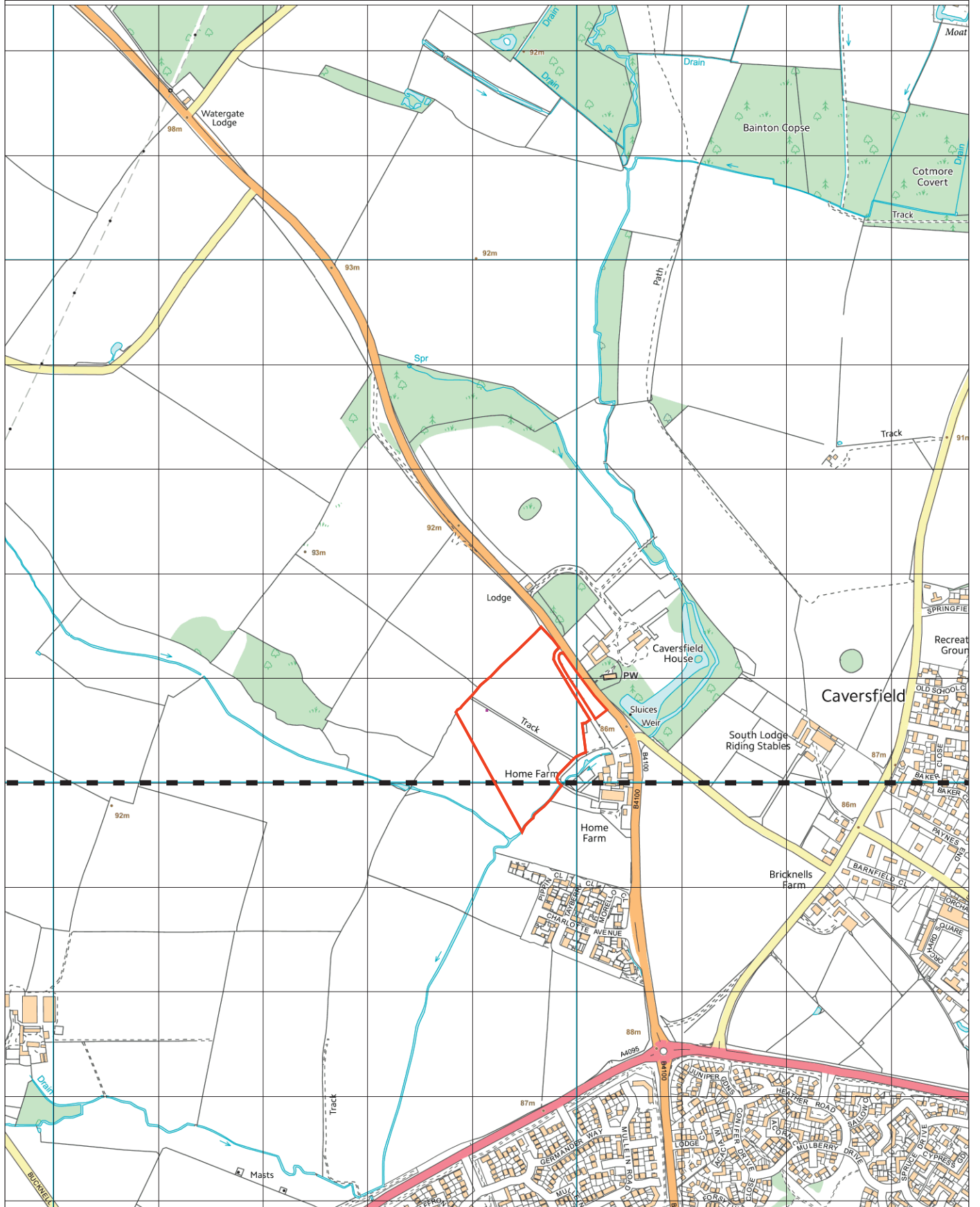
Legend

— 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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