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Land at Rectory Farm (North), Yatton, North Somerset

Heritage Statement

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On behalf of:
Persimmon Homes Severn Valley

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Executive Summary

S1 This report has been prepared by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd, on behalf of Persimmon Homes Severn Valley, and presents the results of an Archaeological and Heritage Assessment of Land at Rectory Farm (North), Yatton, North Somerset (hereafter referred to as 'the Site').

S2 The assessment concludes that the Site does not include or form any part of a designated heritage asset. Its proposed development would therefore not result in a direct effect upon a designated heritage asset.

S3 Regarding designated heritage assets located within the Site's surroundings, the application of national guidance set out in GPA 3 (2017) shows that the Site's development as proposed would not cause any change within the settings of any designated (or non-designated) heritage assets such that might affect their significance.

S4 Hence, in terms of impacts upon designated heritage assets, the proposed development of the Site would comply with the relevant national and local planning policies which cover the conservation and management of the historic environment.

S5 The assessment has identified that the Site has a low degree of heritage significance derived from its preservation of a historic landscape related to enclosure and drainage of low-lying former fenland, which probably occurred from the late medieval period onwards. Approval and implementation of the proposed development would result in the partial loss of these historic landscape features, even if the drainage ditches (rhynes) that divide the Site's fields would be retained within the completed scheme. This partial loss of a non-designated heritage asset of low value would need to be considered in respect of Paragraph 203 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in that "*a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset*".

S6 The proposed development is likely to result in the disturbance of the ground surface to a relatively shallow level. Such disturbance may truncate, or result in the loss of, presently unrecorded buried archaeological remains which are located in its footprint. With respect to the known geological sequence on the North Somerset Levels, impacts are expected to be focused on buried remains of the Roman and post-Roman periods because prehistoric deposits are anticipated to be buried more deeply.

S7 Archaeological remains of these periods are likely to be of low significance, based on the available information, and the geophysical survey which was completed at the Site this autumn has not identified the presence of any probable archaeological anomalies. Consultation with the Principal Archaeologist at North Somerset Council has established that pre-determination trial trenched evaluation is not required in support of the application. Further phased investigation of the Site will take place in response to a pre-commencement condition of any planning consent granted.

S8 Therefore, whilst the implementation of the proposed development would result in the loss of shallow archaeological features and deposits (if they are present), but given they are

expected to be of just 'low' interest or significance, this is assessed as generating no more than a limited impact as a consequence.

S9 Once again, the acceptability of this 'loss' of archaeological remains within the Site would need to be considered against Paragraph 203 of the NPPF, as well as the relevant policies at the local level. Even so, there is no reason to believe or expect that this exercise would fall in favour of the physical preservation in situ of (potential) archaeological remains and against the implementation of the development.

Section 1
Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd, on behalf of Persimmon Homes Severn Valley, and presents the results of an Archaeological and Heritage Assessment of Land at Rectory Farm (North), Yatton, North Somerset (hereafter referred to as 'the Site'). This document has been produced to support an application to develop the Site for housing.

1.2 The first aim of this assessment is to identify and assess whether the development of the Site would cause change to heritage assets, either directly or through changes within their setting, and to establish whether, in what way(s) and to what extent, those changes might affect their significance.

1.3 The second aim is to consider the available historical and archaeological information for the Site and its immediate environs and to establish its likely archaeological potential in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and local planning policy.

1.4 In accordance with best practice guidance, the available desktop sources of information have been augmented by a walkover survey which took place in October 2022.

SITE DESCRIPTION

1.5 The Site is situated across a group of fields to the immediate west of the village of Yatton, the centre of which lies circa. 570m to the east.

1.6 The Site extends to cover some 13.6 hectares (ha) in area and is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 343375, 165672. It comprises pastoral land that is on the edge of the North Somerset Levels used for grazing livestock and is divided into ten irregular fields that are defined by drainage ditches (**Image EDP 1.1**), a system of 'rhynes' employed to drain marginal land on the levels to make it suitable for farming. All of the fields within the Site are also crossed by drainage furrows and gullies known colloquially as '*gripes*'.

1.7 Hedgerows within and around the Site are scant (with only a few small trees), apart from the small, southernmost field that is defined and enclosed by dense mature hedges and the Site's western boundary which is defined by a large, wooded hedgerow and large ditch.

1.8 The Site is bounded to the east by the urban edge of the village, which is characterised by modern housing and garden boundaries. To the south is Rectory Farm, a modern house surrounded by a collection of modern sheds, yards and other structures. To the west is the route of the Strawberry Line, a former railway line that is now a public footpath and cycle route bounded by drainage ditches and dense mature hedgerows. To the north are further pastoral fields of a similar character to those in the Site.

1.9 Topographically, the Site is located on low-lying land that is almost level. The highest point is located in the south-east corner against the edge of the town at c. 7m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The lowest point is on the western boundary at c. 5m aOD.

Image EDP 1.1: View across part of the western fields at the Site, illustrating how they are divided by drainage ditches (rhynes), part of a wider system of land drainage on the North Somerset Levels.

LOCAL GEOLOGY

1.10 The British Geological Survey (BGS) records the underlying solid geology of the Site as Mudstone of the Mercia group. Superficial deposits, comprising Tidal Flat deposits of clay and silt are also recorded across the whole Site area (www.bgs.ac.uk).

1.11 The North Somerset Levels consist of c. 100 km^2 of low-lying land, which is hemmed in by limestone hills to the south, east and north. Although the modern landscape consists of farmland, prior to reclamation, the Levels were subject to frequent tidal inundations and throughout the prehistoric period would have represented a marginal, wetland landscape interspersed with by occasional 'islands' of higher ground. The North Levels are slightly lower in elevation than the Central Levels to the south and this implies that sedimentation ceased earlier than in Central Somerset (Rippon 1997, 33).

1.12 Alluvial deposition, on low-lying land bordering the Severn Estuary (to the west), was caused by fluctuating sea levels, with layers of clay settling during times of high sea level (marine transgressions) and peats being formed under coastal marshland conditions during times of low sea levels (Crowther *et al* 2008). A depositional model, known as the

Wentlooge Formation (after the Wentlooge Level in Gwent), has been devised (Allen 1987) which can be, with respect to local variation, broadly applied to the fenlands surrounding the estuary.

1.13 The sequence divides the sediments into several horizons, summarised in **Table EDP 1**, which are associated with certain periods. The formation of deposits began after sea-level rise following the end of the last ice age, and (for most locations) ended with human reclamation of the fenlands which began in the Roman period.

Table EDP 1.1: Simplified drift geological sequence around the Severn Estuary (after Rippon 1997).

Unit	Description	Period
I	Topsoil	Post-medieval/Modern.
II	Desiccated layer/brown clay	Roman reclamation – stable land surface c. 1st – 5th century AD – followed by alluvium prior to medieval reclamation – c. 5th – 12th century AD.
III	Upper blue clay (upper part of Wentlooge Formation)	Iron Age marine transgression – c. 1000 BC – c. 1st century AD.
IV	Peat/clay layer (middle part of Wentlooge formation)	Neolithic/Bronze Age – c. 3600 – c. 1000 BC.
V	Lower blue clay (lower part of Wentlooge Formation)	Post-glacial marine transgression – c. 4500 – c.3600 BC.
VI	Basal sands/gravels/peats	Post-glacial – c. 5000 – c. 4500 BC.
VII	Bedrock	-

1.14 The Site is located on the edge of the former fenland and so it may be that the alluvial sequence is relatively shallow. The BGS does not record any borehole data as having been obtained from the land within the Site.

1.15 The nearest record of a borehole is from c. 300m to the north-west and on land that is topographically similar. This was, however, relatively shallow and only went to 2.9m Below Ground Level (BGL) and recorded only alluvial clays.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

1.16 The development proposed for the Site will comprise the preparation and then submission of an outline planning application covering:

"Outline planning application for the development of up to 190 homes (including 50% affordable homes), 0.13ha of land reserved for Class E uses, allotments, car parking, earthworks to facilitate sustainable drainage systems, open space and all other ancillary infrastructure and enabling works with means of access from Shiners Elms for consideration. All other matters (means of access from Chescombe Road, internal access, scale, layout, appearance and landscaping) reserved for subsequent approval."

1.17 An Illustrative Masterplan is included here at **Appendix EDP 1** and should be reviewed in conjunction with **Sections 4**, **5** and **6** of this report.

CONSULTATION

1.18 Consultation has been carried out with the Principal Archaeologist at North Somerset council during November and December 2022.

1.19 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was agreed that sets out the methodology employed within the current assessment and its scope. This report is appended at **Appendix EDP 2**.

1.20 A geophysical survey of the Site was requested which was completed in November 2022 (Headland Archaeology, 2022). The report related to this work is appended at **Appendix EDP 3**.

1.21 Consultation in December 2022 established that, based on the results of the geophysical survey that no further pre-determination evaluation (such as trial trenching) would be required. Further archaeological investigation of the Site would come forwards as a phased response to a pre-commencement condition of any planning consent granted.

Section 2
Legislation and Planning Guidance

INTRODUCTION

2.1 The following section summarises the key legislation and national/local planning policies which are of relevance to this assessment.

SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

2.2 In relation to archaeology, the relevant legislation concerning the treatment of scheduled monuments is the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (HMSO 1979). This act details the designation, care and management of scheduled monuments, as well as detailing the procedures needed to obtain permission for works that would directly impact upon their preservation. The act does not confer any statutory protection on the setting of scheduled monuments, although this is considered as a policy matter in the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT 1990

2.3 Sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 set out the duties of Local Planning Authorities in respect of the treatment of listed buildings and conservation areas through the planning process.

2.4 Section 66(1) of the 1990 Act sets out the statutory duty of the decision-maker where proposed development would affect a listed building or its setting. It sets out the statutory duty as follows:

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

2.5 This '*special regard*' duty has been tested in the Court of Appeal and confirmed to require that "*considerable importance and weight*" should be afforded by the decision maker to the desirability of preserving a listed building along with its setting. The relevant Court judgement is referenced as Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Ltd v East Northants DC, English Heritage and National Trust [2014] EWCA Civ 137.

2.6 However, it must be recognised that Section 66(1) of the 1990 Act does not identify that the local authority or the Secretary of State must preserve a listed building or its setting. Neither is it the case that a proposed development that does not 'preserve' is unacceptable and should automatically be refused. It is for the decision maker to evaluate and then determine.

2.7 Although expressed in relation to setting, the discussion of 'harm' is of relevance in the judgement in respect of R (Forge Field Society) v Sevenoaks District Council [2014] EWHC 1895 (Admin) which also makes this clear at paragraph 49 when it states that:

"This does not mean that an authority's assessment of likely harm to the setting of a listed building or to [the character or appearance of] a conservation area is other than a matter for its own planning judgement. It does not mean that the weight the authority should give to harm which it considers would be limited or less than substantial must be the same as the weight it might give to harm which would be substantial. But it is to recognise, as the Court of Appeal emphasised in Barnwell, that a finding of harm to the setting of a listed building or to [the character or appearance] of a conservation area gives rises to a strong presumption against planning permission being granted. The presumption is a statutory one. It is not irrebuttable. It can be outweighed by material considerations powerful enough to do so. But an authority can only properly strike the balance between harm to a heritage asset on the one hand and planning benefits on the other if it is conscious of the statutory presumption in favour of preservation and if it demonstrably applies that presumption to the proposal it is considering."

2.8 This key point is also made in paragraph 54 of Forest of Dean DC v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government [2013] EWHC 4052, i.e.:

"Section 66(1) did not oblige the inspector to reject the proposal because he found it would cause some harm to the setting of the listed buildings. The duty is directed to 'the desirability of preserving' the setting of listed buildings. One sees there the basic purpose of the 'special regard' duty. It does not rule out acceptable change. It gives the decision-maker an extra task to perform, which is to judge whether the change proposed is acceptable. But it does not prescribe the outcome. It does not dictate the refusal of planning permission if the proposed development is found likely to alter or even to harm the setting of a listed building."

2.9 In other words, it is up to the decision maker (such as the local authority) to assess whether the proposal that is before them would result in 'acceptable change'.

2.10 Section 69 of the 1990 Act therefore requires local authorities to define as conservation areas "*areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*". Section 72(1) then gives them a statutory duty to pay:

"special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area".

2.11 In addition to the case law discussed above, it must be recognised that, as established by the Courts (South Lakeland DC v Secretary of State for the Environment, (1992) 2 WLR 204): (1) there is no statutory duty to enhance the character or appearance of a conservation area – the Courts have confirmed that development that 'preserves' them is acceptable; and (2) the statutory duty only covers development that is within a conservation area – the 'setting' of a conservation area is addressed by planning policy.

2.12 Paragraph 200 of the NPPF (MHCLG, 2021) transposes these sections of the 1990 Act into national planning policy as they come under the category of designated heritage assets. The balancing exercise to be performed, between any harm arising from a development proposal and the benefits which would accrue from its implementation, is then subsequently presented in paragraphs 201 and 202 of the NPPF.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

2.13 The revised NPPF was published in July 2021. Section 16 sets out the government's approach to the conservation and management of the historic environment through the planning process.

2.14 The opening paragraph (Paragraph 189) notes that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

2.15 Paragraph 194 concerns planning applications, stating that:

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

2.16 NPPF paragraph 197 is relevant when it states that:

"In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;

b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and

c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness."

2.17 Paragraph 199 considers the weighting given within the planning decision with regard to impacts on designated heritage assets, stating that:

"When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of

whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance."

2.18 Paragraph 200 considers the level of harmful effects on designated heritage assets and states that:

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

a) Grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional; and

b) Assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional."*

2.19 With regard to the decision making process, paragraphs 201 and 202 are of relevance. Paragraph 201 states that:

"Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

a) The nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site;

b) No viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation;

c) Conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and

d) The harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use."

2.20 Paragraph 202 states that:

"Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use."

2.21 Under the heading Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, the Government's Planning Practice Guidance highlights the following details in respect of the identification of substantial harm:

"Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact

seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting."

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

2.23 The key points are that substantial harm is a 'high test' that 'may not arise in many cases', highlighted by the example whereby 'partial destruction' may not necessarily result in there being substantial harm. It is a question of whether that 'adverse impact seriously affects a key element of [the specific listed building's] special architectural or historic interest' and so its contribution to the building's significance is an important question.

2.24 Paragraphs 24 and 25 of the High Court judgement in respect of Bedford BC v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government [2013] EWHC 2847 also reiterate the high threshold required for a development proposal to constitute substantial harm, and also serve to emphasise the very broad spectrum of 'less than substantial harm' in terms of proposed development:

"What the inspector was saying was that for harm to be substantial, the impact on significance was required to be serious such that very much, if not all, of the significance was drained away. Plainly in the context of physical harm, this would apply in the case of demolition or destruction, being a case of total loss. It would also apply to a case of serious damage to the structure of the building. In the context of non-physical or indirect harm, the yardstick was effectively the same. One was looking for an impact which would have such a serious impact on the significance of the asset that its significance was either vitiated altogether or very much reduced."

2.25 In other words, for the 'harm' to be 'substantial', and therefore require consideration against the more stringent requirements of paragraph 201 of the NPPF compared with paragraph 202, the proposal would need to result in the asset's significance being "*vitiated altogether or very much reduced*."

2.26 Paragraph 203 refers to non-designated heritage assets and identifies that:

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

2.27 In relation to non-designated heritage assets, Footnote 69 of the Framework sets out that there is an exemption to the 'balanced judgement' exercise outlined in paragraph 203 in cases where:

"Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets."

2.28 Paragraph 206 of the NPPF sets out that:

"Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably."

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

2.29 Local planning policy for North Somerset is contained within the Local Policy Framework. Key documents, of relevance to the Site, consist of the Core Strategy (adopted April 2012) and the Sites and Policies Plan (SPP), which contains development management policies and was adopted July 2016.

2.30 The Core Strategy (2012) contains over-arching, strategic policies for the District. Policy CS5 *Landscape and Historic Environment* is of relevance to the current assessment. This is outlined below.

Policy CS5 Landscape and Historic Environment

Historic Environment

"The council will conserve the historic environment of North Somerset, having regard to the significance of heritage assets such as conservation areas, listed buildings, buildings of local significance, scheduled monuments, other archaeological sites, registered and other historic parks and gardens.

Particular attention will be given to aspects of the historic environment which contribute to the distinctive character of North Somerset, such as the Victorian townscapes and seafronts in Weston and Clevedon."

2.31 Relevant development management policies contained in the SPP include Policy DM4 *Listed Buildings* and DM6 *Archaeology*. These are outlined below.

Policy DM4 Listed Buildings

"Development will be expected to preserve and where appropriate enhance the character, appearance and special interest of the listed building and its setting. Opportunities will be sought to repair or remove harm caused from past unsympathetic alterations and additions.

In some cases, contributions may be sought towards enhancement of the setting of the listed building in order to mitigate other unavoidable harm caused.

Where a building is identified to be at risk the council will seek to secure the protection of the building to prevent its continued deterioration, such as through the use of enforcement powers to protect the building.

Applicants should provide the council with sufficient information to enable an assessment to be made of the impact of the proposals on the special architectural or historic interest of the Listed Building and its setting. A high standard of design and detailing will be expected where alterations to a Listed Building are proposed."

Policy DM6 Archaeology

"Archaeological interests will be fully taken into account when determining planning applications.

Where an initial assessment indicates that the development site includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interests, the council will seek an archaeological assessment and field evaluation. This is to establish the extent and importance of the remains and the potential harm of the proposals to their significance before the planning application is determined. An initial field evaluation as opposed to a desk-based assessment will only be required where necessary.

It is nearly always preferable that archaeological remains are preserved 'in situ' as even archaeological excavation means the total destruction of evidence, apart from removable artefacts. In some cases, applicants will be required to modify their proposal to take account of the archaeological remains, for example by using foundations which avoid disturbing the remains or by the careful siting of landscaped or open areas.

In cases where the council decides that it is not necessary to preserve remains 'in situ', developers will be required to make appropriate and satisfactory provision for the excavation and recording of the remains before development commences. Planning conditions will be attached to the grant of planning permission requiring an approved programme of archaeological work to be undertaken before development commences, which may include the submission of geotechnical information. Alternatively, legal agreements may be sought with developers, before permission is granted, to excavate and record the remains and to publish the results.

Where archaeological assets are considered to be at risk, the council will seek to secure their protection to prevent continued deterioration."

Section 3
Methodology

INTRODUCTION

3.1 This report has been produced in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment* issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2020). These guidelines provide a national standard for the completion of desk-based assessments.

3.2 It also identifies and assesses the nature and magnitude of any 'indirect' impacts arising from proposals for development of the Site on heritage assets as a result of changes to their setting and hence their significance, employing the national guidance prepared and published by Historic England (HE) and commonly known as GPA 3 (HE 2017). It similarly takes account of other relevant national guidance (e.g. HE 2015).

3.3 The assessment methodology was agreed in advance with the North Somerset Principal Archaeologist via a WSI in December 2022. The WSI is appended at **Appendix EDP 2**.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.4 The assessment principally involved consultation of publicly available archaeological and historical information from documentary and cartographic sources. The major repositories of relevant information included the following:

- The North Somerset Historic Environment Record (HER) for known archaeological sites, monuments, findspots and previous archaeological investigations within a 1km radius of the Site;
- Historic Maps derived from online sources (Envirocheck);
- Aerial photographs held at the Historic England Archives (HEA);
- The National Heritage List for England curated by HE; and
- LiDAR data from the Environment Agency (EA).

3.5 The assessment provides a synthesis of relevant archaeological information for the Site derived from a search area, hereafter known as the 'study area', to allow for additional contextual information regarding its archaeological interest and/or potential to be gathered. A study area of 500 metres diameter from the site boundary was considered proportionate and appropriate in order to define the Site's archaeological interest, as well as to establish the development's likely impacts.

3.6 The desktop information gathered from the repositories and sources identified above was checked and augmented through the completion of a site visit and walkover undertaken in good weather conditions in mid-October 2022.

3.7 This site visit and walkover survey assessed the nature and significance of known and/or potential archaeological assets within the Site, sought to identify/characterize any visible historic features and assessed possible factors that may affect the survival or condition known/recorded and/or potential archaeological assets.

3.8 The report thereafter concludes with an assessment of the Site's likely archaeological interest or potential, made with regard to current best practice guidelines.

SETTING ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

3.9 In addition, this report also considers the nature and significance of any effects on the settings of designated heritage assets located within the wider influence of the Site. In this regard, the site walkover included visits to designated heritage assets beyond the site boundary and considered, where appropriate, their significance, setting and the existing contribution made by the land within the Site to their significance.

3.10 The setting assessment process employed current HE guidance which is set out in *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets* (HE 2017). This provides best practice guidance for the identification and assessment of potential setting issues in the historic environment.

3.11 When assessing the 'indirect' impact of proposals on heritage assets, it is not a question of whether there would be a physical impact on that asset, but instead whether change within its '*setting*' would lead to a loss of '*significance*'.

3.12 Setting is defined in the NPPF as "*the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced"* (MHCLG 2021). It must be recognized from the outset that 'setting' is not a heritage asset and cannot itself be harmed. Its importance relates to the contribution it makes to the significance of the asset.

3.13 HE guidance identifies that *"change to heritage assets is inevitable, but it is only harmful when significance is damaged"* (HE 2015).

3.14 In that regard, 'significance' is defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as "*the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic."*

3.15 As such, when assessing the indirect impact of proposals on designated heritage assets, it is not a question of whether setting would be affected, but rather a question of whether change within an asset's 'setting' would lead to a loss of 'significance' based on the above 'heritage interest' as defined in the NPPF.

3.16 Set within this context, it is necessary to first define the significance of the asset in question, and the contribution made to that significance by its 'setting', in order to establish whether there would be a loss and therefore harm. The guidance identifies that change within a heritage asset's setting need not necessarily cause harm to that asset and that it can be positive, negative or neutral.

3.17 The guidance also observes that *"elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate the significance or may be neutral."*

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

3.19 It goes on to note that: "*…all heritage assets have significance, some of which have particular significance and are designated. The contribution made by their setting to their significance also varies. Although many settings may be enhanced by development, not all settings have the same capacity to accommodate change without harm to the significance of the heritage asset or the ability to appreciate it*."

3.20 Whilst identifying that elements of an asset's setting can make an important contribution to its significance, the guidance states that "*setting is not itself a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, although land comprising a setting may itself be designated*". It then continues by adding that "*conserving or enhancing heritage assets by taking their settings into account need not prevent change; indeed change may be positive…*".

3.21 On a practical level, the HE guidance (2017) identifies an approach to assessing setting, which is based on a five-step procedure; i.e.:

Step 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;

Step 2: Assess the degree to which these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated;

Step 3: Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or the ability to appreciate it;

Step 4: Explore ways of maximising enhancement and avoid or minimise harm; and

Step 5: Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

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

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

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

3.23 Thereafter, the guidance notes that: "*This assessment of the contribution to significance made by setting will provide the baseline for establishing the effects of a proposed development on significance, as set out in 'Step 3' below.*"

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

"In general, the assessment should address the attributes of the proposed development in terms of its:

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

3.25 In light of the above, the assessment of potential setting effects, employed in the preparation of this report, focused on the completion of a site survey, which was undertaken in October 2022 and concentrated on the following main aspects:

- Identifying those heritage assets that could potentially be affected by the proposed development and the manner (if any) in which they would be affected;
- Defining the contribution made to their significance by their setting;
- Assessing whether the Site forms a part of their setting, and therefore whether it contributes to their significance or to an ability to appreciate it; and
- Assessing the potential effects of development on their setting and whether that would result in harm to their significance or to an ability to appreciate it.

3.26 Step 4 of the assessment process is reflected in the development design and Step 5 of the assessment process is not within the remit of this report.

3.27 The report then assesses the potential for development within the Site to harm the significance of the heritage assets considered through change within their settings, and to what extent.

3.28 In light of the above, this assessment has been prepared in a robust manner, employing current best practice professional guidance and giving appropriate regard to the methodology detailed above.

LIDAR DATA

3.29 Airborne LiDAR data (light detection and ranging) was utilised as a source of primary data for the current assessment. LiDAR scanning records height data and has applications in the recording of archaeological earthworks.

3.30 A Digital Terrain Model (DTM) for the Site was acquired from the EA Data available online. Resolution of the data is at one data point for each 1m², a low resolution which, for archaeological prospection, has fairly limited application, aside from in the identification of larger earthworks.

3.31 The DTM was processed using the Relief Visualisation Toolbox (ver. 1.3 ZRC SAZU, 2016). This software allows for a range of visualisation techniques to be applied to the data. Different techniques have varying degrees of successful application, depending on the nature of the environment where the data was collected. As such, the whole suite of visualisations was produced and then, the individual images appraised as to their usefulness in the current context. This appraisal identified that of the visualisation techniques, *Multiple direction hill-shade*s produced the best quality and most useful imagery for the archaeology assessment.

Multiple Direction Hill-shades

3.32 Relief shading or hill-shading is the most commonly used LiDAR visualisation technique. It illuminates the DTM from a specific angle, imitating the sun and as such, produces the most 'natural' and intuitively readable imagery. However, it is limited in that areas facing directly towards or away from the illumination source are saturated (homogeneously bright or dark respectively) and little detail can be perceived plus, features that lie parallel to the light source can be imperceptible.

3.33 This effect can be overcome by combining hill-shades from different directions in three different colour bands into a single image. This technique was used to produce images for the assessment and provide an additional source of data on the Site's archaeological interest/potential, and which was used for guiding the walkover survey.

Section 4
Existing Information

INTRODUCTION

4.1 The Site does not contain any designated heritage assets such as world heritage sites, scheduled monuments, listed buildings, conservation areas, registered parks and gardens or registered battlefields.

4.2 The designated heritage assets in the Site's wider surroundings have been identified and assessed, in order to identify any that have the potential to experience change to their setting in a way and/or to an extent which could result in harm to their significance. The locations of the relevant assets are illustrated on **Plan EDP 1**.

4.3 With regard to actual or potential non-designated heritage assets, there are 133 entries comprising archaeological and historical sites, findspots and buildings of local interest recorded on the North Somerset HER within 500m of the Site (**Plan EDP 2**).

4.4 In addition, the HER identifies 25 'events' in the form of archaeological desk-based assessments or fieldwork investigations and archaeological observations within a 500m radius (**Plan EDP 3**). The records and events considered to be relevant to this assessment are discussed below, therefore not all the returned HER records are included within the text that follows or identified on the associated plans.

DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

4.5 The following addresses Step 1 of the five-step approach to setting assessment described in the HE guidance (HE 2017).

4.6 The identification of designated heritage assets that may potentially be affected by the proposed development (Step 1 of GPA 3) was completed through an initial map analysis which was followed by a visual inspection carried out during the Site visit. As such, the initial assessment was not based on a defined radius study area and instead by judging which designated assets might have a visual relationship with the Site or a non-tangible relationship such as a historic link with the land at the Site.

4.7 In this regard, it was identified during the Site visit that there are very limited visual associations between the land at the Site and any designated heritage asset. The tower of the Grade I listed building *Church of St Mary* (**1137349**) is visible from much of the Site and so this heritage asset and its setting are discussed below. At the same time, the scheduled monument *Large univallate hillfort on Cadbury Hill* (**1011258**) is also visible from the Site (or rather its location is identifiable) and so it too is discussed.

4.8 In respect of non-visual associations between the Site and designated heritage assets, the land within the Site area was, in the mid-19th century and according to the Apportionment that accompanies the Yatton Parish tithe map, partly held by the Yatton Rectory as part of

the parish's glebe and partly held by James Parsons who appears to have been based at a house at 123 High Street in Yatton, a non-designated historic building (MNS8588).

4.9 The Old Rectory (a Grade I listed building – List Entry **1137331**) is located next to the Church of St Mary. As such, there is an historical and functional association between the Site and these historic buildings. However, this connection is now historic, with the Site no longer glebe land and now farmed from the modern Rectory Farm that is not a historic asset. As such, the association with the two historic buildings is entirely historical, with no visual or spatial connection between these buildings and the Site.

4.10 Hence, the Site itself is of little or no relevance to the significance of these two buildings, neither would be adversely affected by proposals for residential development of the land at the Site and accordingly they will not be considered any further.

4.11 Within Yatton are a further 28 listed buildings and another nine are located within the formerly detached hamlet of North End, which is located c. 1.5km to the north of the Site and now part of the same village.

4.12 There is also a conservation area which encompasses the historic core of the village[1]. It and the listed buildings it contains are entirely screened from the Site area by intervening modern development along the western side of the village.

4.13 The western edge of the conservation area is located 335m to the east of the site boundary. The conservation area is broadly linear in form, comprising historic settlement along High Street (**Image EDP 4.1**) which runs as a spine road through the village from south-east to north-west. It also encompasses a core historic area to the south-west of High Street around the Church of St Mary. These areas contain the conservation area's special interest in the form of historic buildings and the village's layout, with its character and appearance defined by the streetscapes on High Street and on its adjacent lanes, as well as the area around the church, which contains many mature trees, green open spaces and stone boundary walls (**Image EDP 4.2**).

[1] It is notable that no Conservation Area Appraisal or Management Plan exists for the Yatton Conservation Area.

Image EDP 4.1: View south-east along part of High Street, illustrating its character and proliferation of historic buildings.

Image EDP 4.2: Part of the green, open space adjacent to the Church of St Mary, further illustrating the character and appearance of the Yatton Conservation Area.

4.14 The Site is not visible from High Street or on any approach to the conservation area from any of the side streets off High Street, nor does it have any presence in the area around the church which is well enclosed by modern housing in the wider village. The Site comprises agricultural fields located on the periphery of the modern village that are not experienced or appreciable from within its historic core.

4.15 The tower of the Church of St Mary is visible from the Site (**Image EDP 4.3**) and it is a key heritage asset within the conservation area. However, no other aspect of the conservation area's special interest can be experienced from the Site and so a view of the tower does not constitute an experience of the conservation area such that its underlying character or appearance can be experienced or in fact appreciated.

4.16 Prior to 20th century development, the Site would have been separated from the historic core of the village by farmland and so it would never have formed a part of its immediate rural surroundings, instead being a part of the wider agricultural hinterland.

4.17 Considering these factors, the Site makes no contribution to the special interest of the conservation area and neither does it have a particularly strong historic association with it. Its development would not result in any change to the conservation area's wider setting that would affect its significance and hence it is not considered further in this report.

Image EDP 4.3: View across the western part of the Site to the church tower, illustrating its general prominence in views from across much of the Site.

4.18 None of the other listed buildings in Yatton have an association with the Site that makes a contribution to its significance and are all entirely screened and separated from it by modern development. As such, development of the Site would not result in any change within their settings that might affect their significance.

4.19 This includes the Grade II listed Cadbury Farmhouse (**1129142**) which is located beyond the extent of the settlement c. 470 m to the south-east of the Site. Due to the intervening buildings at Rectory Farm, as well as hedgerows and the hedges on either side of Biddle Street to the south of the Site, there is no visual connection between the listed building and the Site, nor was the land historically associated with it. As such, the Site does not form part of the building's setting and contributes nothing to its significance. None of these listed buildings are considered any further in this report.

Grade I Listed Building Church of St Mary

4.20 The Church of St Mary (**1137349**) (**Image EDP 4.4**) is a parish church of the 13th and 15th centuries that was extensively restored in 1872. The Perpendicular style church exhibits an array of highly decorative stonework and a central three-stage tower where the upper stage is an octagonal truncated spire. The building is an 'asset of the highest significance' in terms of the NPPF and of high significance principally because of its architectural, artistic and historical interest which is contained in its built form and fabric.

Image EDP 4.4: The Church of St Mary from its churchyard illustrating its appearance.

4.21 The building's setting also contributes to its significance, but to a lesser degree than its physical form and fabric. In this regard, the building is large and prominent and dominates its immediate setting that comprises an extensive churchyard bounded by and containing mature trees. The churchyard contains numerous monuments, of which four are Grade II listed and one, a 15th century churchyard cross, is also a scheduled monument.

4.22 It also contains a Grade II listed water pump and in the north-east corner, a 15th century row of former alms-houses called Church House that are also Grade II listed. The churchyard and the group of heritage assets therein are closely associated, historically and functionally, with the Grade I listed church, and their presence contributes moderately to its significance as a designated asset.

4.23 The parish church is also closely associated with the neighbouring Old Rectory and Old Rectory Cottage, the grounds of which lie directly to the south-east of the churchyard. The house (whereby Old Rectory Cottage is a rear wing since divided from the main building as a separate dwelling) is Grade I listed, with the main house a prebendal house dating from the 15th century. The house has a close historical and functional association with the church, and it contributes moderately to its significance.

4.24 The parish church is a central historic building within the confines of the village and the surrounding historic streets, including the spinal High Street to the north-east and the various historic buildings along it that form the historic core of the village that grew up around the church and are thus historically associated with it, representing a part of its wider setting that contributes positively to its heritage significance to a minor degree.

4.25 The church is especially prominent in views to the south-west along Church Street as it is approached, but it is also visible from many locations in the historic core as a prominent building on account of its height (**Image EDP 4.5**).

Image EDP 4.5: View across part of Yatton's centre, illustrating how the church tower is a locally prominent feature of the village.

4.26 Further afield, the church's setting beyond the historic core of the village comprises modern housing which has grown up on the edge of the village occupying fully the spur of higher ground it is located on. Modern houses and their gardens are especially visible from the southern end of the churchyard; although, by being of a much smaller scale than the church, being set back from it by the churchyard and partially screened by trees, they do not impinge upon its setting and are neutral in their contribution to its significance.

4.27 From the Site, the church's tower is visible from most locations (i.e. **Image EDP 4.3**), apart from some of the eastern side where views are screened by adjacent houses and trees that lie between the Site and the church (**Image EDP 4.6**). In such views, the tower rises above the modern houses, being visible on account of its much greater size in comparison with surrounding buildings.

4.28 In terms of church towers and spires specifically, GPA3 notes that:

"Being tall structures, church towers and spires are often widely visible across land- and townscapes but, where development does not impact on the significance of heritage assets visible in a wider setting or where not allowing significance to be appreciated, they are unlikely to be affected by small-scale development, unless that development competes with them, as tower blocks and wind turbines may. Even then, such an impact is more likely to

be on the landscape values of the tower or spire rather than the heritage values, unless the development impacts on its significance, for instance by impacting on a designed or associative view."

Image EDP 4.6: View towards the church from the south-eastern part of the Site, illustrating how its tower becomes less visible in the nearer, eastern areas due to screening by intervening trees and buildings.

4.29 In other words, the ability to see a church tower does not necessarily mean that the location from where a view is possible, makes a contribution to the church's significance, and similarly, the loss of these views does not necessarily result in an impact. Whilst the church was evidently designed to be seen from afar, the view to the church tower from the Site is entirely incidental and on account of the size of the building rather than due to a designed view intended to be had from this specific location. A similar view can be achieved from many locations in the wider landscape.

4.30 As such, the Site is not a feature of the areas identified as making a positive contribution to the significance of the church and neither can it be experienced from the church or its churchyard setting. The top of the church tower can be experienced from within parts of the Site, but these views are not an aspect of the church's heritage significance.

4.31 As noted previously, the land at the Site (or at least part of it by the 1838 Tithe map) was part of the historic glebe land; i.e. it was used historically to support the parish priest. This past economic association is with the rectory and its holdings more so than the church itself and, as noted already, is now entirely historic with no present functional association. As such, this historic association is not considered to translate to a contribution to the significance of the church building.

4.32 In conclusion, the Site does not contribute to the church's significance as a heritage asset and the proposed development, being housing of a scale that would not complete with the church tower for prominence in the wider landscape, is deemed very unlikely to generate a loss of significance and cause harm to its special architectural or historic interest. Thus, it is not considered further.

Scheduled Monument: Large Univallate Hillfort on Cadbury Hill

4.33 The scheduled monument comprises a large hillfort (**1011258**) that occupies the western spur of a ridge of high ground running roughly from east to west. The monument is mostly univallate and with a single rampart and ditch, although multiple ramparts are present in locations where the natural topography made the location less defensible; such as to the north-east further along the ridge.

4.34 The monument was subject to archaeological excavation between 1959 and 1970 and it recorded a long history of occupation. Evidence was found for the use of the hilltop from the Neolithic period and early Bronze Age with the main ramparts, and internal features such as hut circles dated to the Iron Age. The hillfort was occupied again during the Roman period and during the post-Roman period (5th and 6th centuries AD) and evidence for further buildings was recorded, with a suggestion that it was the site of a post-Roman temple.

Image EDP 4.7: View across the western part of the Cadbury Hill fort, illustrating how it is enclosed by trees with only glimpsed views through gaps to the wider landscape possible.

4.35 The monument's heritage significance is primarily derived from the archaeological interest contained within its extant and buried archaeological remains. Its setting also contributes to its significance but to a lesser degree than its physical form and features.

4.36 Situated at an elevated location in the landscape overlooking low lying land to the north, west and south, it is almost certain that this situation was deliberate on the part of the builders of the hillfort's ramparts and its various occupiers. Its hilltop location is likely to have been intended to be defendable and probably to give a vantage point over the surrounding landscape, as well as to make the settlement and its ramparts prominent as a statement of power and territorial control. The location would probably have enabled long distance visual links with other similar enclosures on both sides of the Bristol Channel. The ridge may also have had some degree of spiritual significance given the suggestion that it was the location of a post-Roman temple.

4.37 The monument is now surrounded on all sides by woodland and is itself partially colonised by trees and other vegetation both on its ramparts and interior spaces. At present, a view of the ramparts from the wider landscape is not easily achieved due to the screening effect of the trees and the monument lacks prominence in views from beyond its immediate surroundings.

4.38 Likewise, views out from the scheduled monument comprise glimpses through gaps in the vegetation (**Image EDP 4.7**) and only a limited perspective is possible of the surrounding landscape. Nonetheless, its hilltop position is appreciable, and its topographic situation is a key aspect of its setting that contributes highly to its significance.

Image EDP 4.8: View directly towards the Site from Cadbury Hill fort, illustrating how the view is screened by woodland.

4.39 The hillfort is one of several broadly contemporary defended enclosures seated on high spurs and hills around the edge of the North Somerset Levels. The nearest such monument is on the hill above Cleeve c. 2km to the north-east on the same ridge. The monuments form a loosely related group that illustrate the nature and organisation of the Iron Age landscape in the region and contribute to the significance of each other to a moderate degree. It is also probable, as noted above that views were achievable from the hillfort to other similar hill-top enclosures across a wide area, even to the other side of the Bristol Channel. Whilst this association exists, due to the surrounding woodland, it is not possible to gain a view to any other hillfort from the monument.

4.40 A view of the Site is not possible from the scheduled monument due to the adjacent woodland (**Image EDP 4.8**) and, it is doubtful whether a view would be possible during the winter months as the woodland is fairly dense.

4.41 With regard to the 'experience' from the Site (**Image EDP 4.9**), whilst the hilltop where the monument is located can be seen, it is only experienced as an area of woodland and the monument's earthworks cannot be understood or appreciated; it is not possible to make out that it is an archaeological earthwork feature. Due to the lack of any visual connection and, due to there being no historical or functional association between the land at the Site and the monument, it is concluded that the land at the Site does not form a part of the monument's setting that makes a contribution to its significance.

4.42 The development of the Site as proposed would therefore not affect the monument and it is not considered any further in this report.

Image EDP 4.9: View towards Cadbury Hill from the Site (with the church tower also visible) illustrating how the monument is indistinct and experienced from the Site as a wooded hilltop.

4.43 To sum up, it is assessed that the proposals for development of the Site would not cause any adverse impacts (or cause 'harm') to any of the various designated heritage assets in its wider surroundings.

NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

North Somerset HER Data

4.44 The following paragraphs describe the North Somerset HER entries within the 500m study area and how they relate to non-designated heritage assets. This evidence is discussed in order of chronological period and the HER records are illustrated on **Plan EDP 2**.

Prehistoric (Palaeolithic–Iron Age, c.500,000 BC–AD 43)

4.45 There are no records on the HER relating to the prehistoric period documented within the Site, although two entries are located within the 500m radius study area.

4.46 One such record (**MNS789**) relates to a find of flint tools dating from the Neolithic/Bronze Age during building work in 1982 at a location close to Cadbury Farm c. 380m south-east of the Site.

4.47 The other record (MNS1298) relates to the find of a late-Bronze Age socketed gauge axe found in Yatton, c. 330m to the east of the Site.

4.48 The North Somerset HER data, in tandem with the data from the Cadbury Hill excavations, suggests that there was some activity throughout the prehistoric periods at and around Yatton. The locality of the present village would have represented an area of higher ground on the edge of the fenland and would have offered a resource of food, water and building materials for early settlement.

4.49 The Principal Archaeologist at North Somerset Council has provided further information on other archaeological sites in the vicinity of Yatton which confirm this understanding, and which are not yet recorded on the HER. For example, as a very brief summary, excavations on Land at North End/Wheatear Road in 2017/18 by Wessex Archaeology and AC Archaeology, on land on the ridge of higher ground that Yatton is located on, but to the north-west of the village and of the study area, recorded Late Bronze Age pits, including bivalve moulds utilised to produce bronze swords as well as roadside ditches, burial and industrial remains of the Iron Age, settlement archaeology of the Roman period and burials of the post-Roman era. This evidence further supports the interpretation that the ridge of land at Yatton was an important area for settlement from the Bronze Age.

4.50 The Site itself would have been within the former fenland, albeit at the edge. It was most likely reclaimed and drained in the medieval or post-medieval period, although it may also have been part of the earlier landscape reclaimed by the Romans. Nevertheless, during prehistory it is likely to have been marginal land on the edges of the marshes and would at times have been subject to tidal inundation.

4.51 As such, it is unlikely that archaeological remains related to prehistoric settlement are present within the Site and the great likelihood is for remains related to ephemeral activity

such as hunting or fishing which would leave little trace, and have little legibility, in the archaeological record.

4.52 There is considered to be just a low potential for settlement or agricultural remains, such as infilled ditches, pits or postholes, of Bronze Age date and these would most likely be of low or moderate significance and associated with Unit IV of the Wentlooge sequence, when drier local conditions prevailed (if deposits of this nature are present within the Site). However, such remains would most likely be deeply buried beneath later alluvial material and are unlikely to be encountered in a development of this nature.

4.53 It is likely that ground investigation work that may need to take place in support of the current proposals will provide further detail on the depth and age of the alluvial deposits within the site footprint, and thus further information on the potential for and heritage significance of deeply buried, prehistoric archaeological remains.

Roman-British (AD 43–410)

4.54 There are no HER records related to the Roman period recorded within the Site, but eight are recorded within the 500m radius study area.

4.55 The nearest record to the Site is located c. 30m to the west. This comprises a record for a Romano-British settlement (**MNS8769**). Unfortunately, the North Somerset HER contains little information and identifies only the remains of a Roman building 'at Biddle Street' derived from a checklist for the parish. As the record is located within a field c. 150m to the north of Biddle Street, it may well in fact be misplaced.

4.56 Another record (**MNS8957**) is located c. 90m south of the Site. This records finds made during an archaeological evaluation carried out in 1999 in advance of the widening of a ditch and creation of a pond. The recorded finds comprised Roman pottery, a coin, metalwork and part of a stone structure in the side of the ditch. The finds indicated settlement activity in close proximity to the ditch.

4.57 Another HER record records the discovery of Roman era rubbish pits (MNS318) c. 200m north of the Site. Again, the HER has limited information on the provenance of this record and therefore its relevance to the development remains uncertain.

4.58 The other five records all relate to findspots of Roman material at Yatton. Roman pottery sherds were found during building work (**MNS304**) carried out in 1965 near to the railway station c. 380m north of the Site. Near to Cadbury Farm, the Farm owners reported finding a Roman coin (**MNS1966**) c. 420m south-east of the Site. Another coin (**MNS320**) was reported from Elborough Avenue in Yatton c. 200m east of the Site. Roman pottery was also found during development work near to Cadbury Farm (**MNS1625**). Finally, a piece of Roman tesserae (MNS8648) was found at Horsecastle c. 470m north of the Site.

4.59 The HER data suggests there was widespread Roman activity in the vicinity of Yatton. It is evident that such activity extended onto the former fenland to the west of the village and suggests that such areas were probably first reclaimed during the Roman period, possibly using rhynes dug from the River Yeo to the south. Indeed, there is a known Roman villa located c. 1.7km west of the Site adjacent to the river and it may be that the old route of

Biddle Street originated in this period, as the route is aligned on the villa and ran towards Cadbury Hill which is known to have also been occupied in the Roman period.

4.60 As such, given the local evidence for Roman activity, it is assessed that there is moderate potential for buried remains related to the Roman period to be present at the Site. Such remains would most likely occupy the upper layers of any alluvial deposit, possibly overlaid by alluvial material deposited during the post-Roman inundations after the Roman flood defences broke down. Such archaeological remains could potentially comprise settlement archaeology (such as infilled pits, postholes or ditches or stone structures) and could be of low or moderate significance.

Early Medieval (AD 410–1066)

4.61 There are no HER records relating to the early medieval period recorded within the Site or within the 500m radius study area.

4.62 Limited information from online sources suggests that Yatton developed as a roadside settlement on a north-west – south-east route across higher ground, with lower lying land on either side. The route (now formalised by High Street) was probably aligned on the settlement at Cadbury Hill fort which is known to have been occupied in the post-Roman period and earlier. In fact it is considered highly possible that the settlement and parish at Yatton evolved from a Roman settlement and territorial pattern with the village becoming further established in the early medieval period.

4.63 The settlement is recorded in the Domesday Book as a large estate of twenty hides, belonging to Giso, Bishop of Wells, and a slightly older record from during the reign of Edward the Confessor records the transfer of the Manor of Yatton to the Bishop. Evidently, an Anglo-Saxon era settlement existed at Yatton that then evolved into the modern village, possibly evolving itself through a settlement shift from the older settlement on Cadbury Hill up on the elevated ground to the south.

4.64 During the post-Roman era, Roman flood defences were compromised and tidal flooding took place in many low-lying areas of the North Somerset Levels. However, in the later Anglo-Saxon period, recolonisation took place on the fens, whereby rhynes were re-dug, flood banks raised, and former farmland was reinstated.

4.65 As such, it is possible that the Site was farmland in the wider hinterland of the village of Yatton in the latter part of the early medieval period even if there is no recorded evidence such as Saxon field names to suggest that the present system of rhynes that divides the fields at the Site dates from this period.

4.66 Saxon reclamation in the locality may have simply comprised the maintenance of flood banks on the River Yeo (Rippon, 1997, 182) and the land at the Site may have been part of a more open landscape of arable and pastoral usage.

4.67 Given the lack of records, and the known history of the North Somerset fens, the Site has a very low potential for the presence of hitherto unidentified or unrecorded archaeological remains from the early medieval period.

Medieval (AD 1066–1485)

4.68 There are no records relating to the medieval period recorded within the Site, but there are some 21 within the surrounding study area.

4.69 During the medieval period the settlement at Yatton grew in importance, with the present church built in the 13th century. Also, during this period, extensive works were undertaken to further reclaim the fenlands of the North Somerset Levels and so the HER entries in the study area generally refer to medieval features of the village or the wider levels.

4.70 The closest North Somerset HER entry to the Site (**MNS2260**) relates to a former medieval field name of 'Elboro' located c. 130m east. The HER identifies that the etymology of the name suggests a reference to a defensive structure or 'old, fortified place'. No such place is known from the archaeological record, and it is likely that a defensive feature would now lie under the modern village. Whilst the Site may have formed part of a medieval open field, there is no evidence that it contains the archaeological remains of a fortified site.

4.71 Located c. 200m south-west of the Site is a record related to Biddle Street (**MNS8620**). The route, noted as a medieval droveway, ran from the church westwards passing the Site on its southern boundary before widening and heading west into fields. As mentioned above, the route may have evolved from an earlier route of the Roman era.

4.72 Two other records relate to other features of the landscape of medieval provenance. One is the Gang Wall (**MNS2245**). This feature comprises a bank with drainage ditches either side that ran from Biddle Street to the River Yeo and which served as part of the medieval drainage system to separate Yatton Moor to the west from Congresbury Moor to the east. The structure interacts with other Rhynes including Rennie's Siphon which was built in the 19th century as part of a new drainage system on Congresbury Moor. The bank has a footpath along the top of it. The Gang Wall ends at Biddle Street c. 100m south of the Site and does not continue into it.

4.73 The other record relates to Land Lane (**MNS8625**). This was another historic route that ran from Cadbury Hill to join Biddle Street, and which is now preserved in the road layout of the village.

4.74 The other medieval HER entries all relate to either medieval features or historic references within the village of Yatton or to settlements that may be of medieval date in the wider surrounding landscape (such as at Cadbury Farm – (**MNS5543**). None of these records have any relevance to the history of the Site and so they are not detailed any further in this section.

4.75 It is likely that during the medieval period the Site had some sort of agricultural usage. The field boundary ditches (rhynes) at the Site have curved forms and dog legs between fields producing irregular field enclosures. These characteristics are typical of enclosed furlongs of a medieval open field which would suggest that the land was part of an open medieval field that was then enclosed in the late medieval or post-medieval periods, probably to create individually owned fields of pasture.

4.76 There is no evidence for the presence of medieval ridge and furrow earthworks in the Site, with a later *gripes* system of drainage ditches being prominent. It is nevertheless possible

that remains of medieval furrows could be preserved as below ground remains at the Site, but they would be of very low archaeological interest.

4.77 Located on probable agricultural farmland of the medieval era, it is assessed as being very unlikely that the Site contains any buried remains related to medieval activity other than possible buried infilled furrows.

Post-Medieval and Victorian (AD 1485–1901)

4.78 There are no records of the post-medieval or Victorian period within the Site, but there are some 95 within the 500m radius study area.

4.79 Of the records, the majority comprise buildings and other structures within Yatton that reflect the village's growth during this period. A key catalyst for growth, particularly around Horsecastle and North End at the north-western end of the village was the construction of the Bristol and Exeter railway (**MNS2359**) which was completed in 1842. Records related to features within the core areas of the village have little relevance in understanding the Site's archaeological potential and are therefore not considered in more detail.

4.80 Running along the Site's south-western boundary is the Strawberry Line, now a public right of way. This is the course of the former Cheddar Valley and Yatton railway line (**MNS2356**) which was opened in 1869 and closed in 1963. Two HER entries near to the Site seem to relate to features associated with the railway. A building is recorded c. 70m north-west of the Site and comprises earthwork remains, and the site of a former turntable is similarly recorded (**MNS6737**) c. 170m to the north-west. No known features related to the railway are recorded within the Site and the site visit/walkover survey did not identify any remains related to the railway within the boundaries. As such, it is unlikely that the Site contains any remains related to the railway.

4.81 None of the other records on the HER have any relevance to the Site and its archaeological potential. It is likely that the Site was divided into the enclosures seen at present during the post-medieval era and was in agricultural use for pastural grazing throughout this and the subsequent Victorian period. Such land use is unlikely to have resulted in any remains of archaeological interest being present in the Site other than drainage ditches. Further information on the layout of the Site and the drainage features noted within it are given in the sections below on cartography, aerial photographs, LiDAR and the site walkover.

Modern (AD 1901–Present)

4.82 There are no records of modern date within the Site, but there are seven within the 500m radius study area.

4.83 Five of the modern era records included in the HER relate to activity within the village of Yatton during and after the Second World War and mainly involving the requisition of buildings for wartime usage. The other records relate to other buildings within the village. None of these entries has relevance to the Site's archaeological interest or potential.

4.84 There is no evidence that the land at the Site was used during the Second World War and no features related to this era were seen during the site visit. It is notable that the wider North Somerset landscape was used to create a decoy for the City of Bristol further north,

so as to misdirect German bombers. Whilst the Site would have been part of this wider area, there are no known features related to form of activity within the Site area.

4.85 During the 20th century, the Site continued to be used for pastoral agriculture and has no potential to contain archaeological remains of the modern era that possess any archaeological interest.

PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

4.86 There are no HER 'event' records located within the Site. Within the 500m radius study area there are 25 records (see **Plan EDP 3**).

4.87 Of these, ten records relate to non-intrusive works such as building surveys, desk-based assessments and dendrochronological and photographic surveys that hold no relevance to the Site's interest or potential.

4.88 Three relate to small-scale geophysical surveys that were carried out in locations that are distant from the Site and therefore of little or no relevance to its archaeological potential. In addition, six of the entries are recorded as 'null' and suggest that they are erroneous or have no specific purpose.

4.89 Four of the records relate to a test-pitting project carried out at 14 garden locations within the historic core of Yatton in 2007-8 (**ENS2197**). The HER records show that the test pits did not find any archaeological remains or finds pre-dating the 'modern village'.

4.90 Only two of the HER event records relate to commercial archaeological investigations. One of these (**ENS1955**) relates to the ditch widening works that recorded the Roman remains discussed above in 1999 c. 90m to the south-west of the Site. The other relates to a small, six trench evaluation carried out in 2017 at Stowells' Concrete works c. 350m north-west of the Site. This work recorded no archaeological remains, aside from rubble related to a post-medieval building. Its small scale and its distance from the Site mean that it does not provide any information related to assessing the Site's archaeological interest/potential.

4.91 A geophysical survey report is also available from a proposed development site located directly to the south of the Site. The report (AC Archaeology 2021) is too recent to be recorded on the HER. The geophysics accompanies a Heritage Assessment for the field in which Rectory Farm is located and that to the south. It recorded only a few possible archaeological features in the southern field (c. 200m south of the Site). These comprise a group of sinuous anomalies that are probably buried infilled ditches, one of which was interpreted as part of a possible enclosure. None of the features extend to or are aligned on the Site and so they do not represent potential archaeological features that extend into the Site. The AC Archaeology report also notes that the ditches are close to a farmstead or outfarm recorded on the historic OS maps and so it could be related to that, rather than representing much earlier features.

4.92 In conclusion, aside from the Roman remains found c. 90m to the south-west of the Site, previous archaeological investigation in the surrounding study area has not provided any additional information relevant to understanding the Site's archaeological interest.

CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES

4.93 The earliest map consulted that shows the Site in detail is the 1838 Tithe Map of Yatton parish (**Plan EDP 4**). This map shows it as having a very similar layout of fields as it has at present. The fields are clearly demarcated by drainage ditches in the way which is typical for fields elsewhere on the North Somerset Levels. The map pre-dates the construction of the Cheddar Valley and Yatton railway and so the fields on its western edge are larger than at present whereby they were cut by the railway when it was constructed.

4.94 Field names are given in the Apportionment that accompanies the Tithe Map. They are all named by their acreage (with one field named as a croft) and hence this provides no detail on their archaeological interest.

4.95 As discussed previously, the irregular layout of the fields with some curved boundaries and dog legs at boundary junctions is indicative of the private enclosure of the furlongs of an open medieval field. This suggests that the ditches were first dug in the late medieval or post medieval period as parts of a wider common landholding were sold off and improved with drainage.

4.96 The next map to show the Site is the 1885-6 Ordnance Survey map (**Plan EDP 5**). This map shows the same layout as the Tithe map, albeit with the Cheddar Valley and Yatton railway illustrated defining the western edge of the Site and cutting across the pre-existing field system. The map shows that many of the field boundaries were tree lined but it does not illustrate any other features within the Site.

4.97 The map appears to name the wider area of which the Site forms a part as 'The Batch'. In the 19th century vernacular dialect of Somerset, a Batch is described as being a low hill or sand bank (Piggott-Williams, 1873) and is a common place name element. As such, the name on the map probably refers to the 'Batch' on which the village of Yatton lies, comprising a strip of higher ground running from north-west to south-east to the east of the Site and thus does not actually refer to the land at the Site which is on the Levels or at their margins.

4.98 Later Ordnance Survey maps show little change at the Site. The 1903 map (**Plan EDP 5**) shows a similar layout of fields to the map of 1885-6, albeit with two fields amalgamated in the southern part of the Site to form a larger enclosure. By the 1970s, historic maps, such as that of 1973-8 (**Plan EDP 5**) show the modern encroachment of the village's urban development reaching the land to the immediate east of the Site. The 1970s map is also the first which illustrates the modern Rectory Farm to the south.

4.99 The analysis of cartographic sources underlines that the Site has comprised pastoral fields since at least the mid-19th century and with most of its boundaries defined by this date. Otherwise, the maps considered do not identify any previously unrecorded features of archaeological or heritage interest within the Site.

AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS

4.100 A total of four oblique photographs and 24 vertical photographs that show the Site were viewed from the collection of historic aerial photographs held at the HEA in Swindon. They date from between 1946 and 2003 and with the oblique images all taken in 1953-1954. The obliques are from the Aerofilms collection and appear to illustrate the Yatton train station and railway junction, as well as an area of housing development positioned to the north of the Site.

4.101 None of the images consulted show any evidence for buried archaeological remains within the Site (such as crop marks or soil marks). Nor do they show any former buildings or other structures within the Site that might have left archaeological remains.

4.102 The images confirm the cartographic evidence that the Site was used as pastoral farmland throughout the mid-late 20th century. They also illustrate well the arrangement of drainage *gripes*, ridges and furrows that cross the Site and reflect land drainage and improvement probably from the post-medieval – modern periods.

LIDAR ANALYSIS

4.103 LiDAR data (see **Plan EDP 6**) provides the best and clearest impression of the drainage system across the fields within the Site. Rippon (1997: 19-21) identifies different types of drainage system used on the Levels around the Severn Estuary that are often combined. This includes *grips* or *gripes* which are widely spaced, spade-dug shallow ditches that form a cross pattern on fields. Another system was to dig *rig and vurrow* whereby more regular gullies were dug with slight mounding in between, often between the *gripes*. These systems are distinct from 'ridge and furrow' that was formed by the action of medieval and post-medieval ploughing, which typically has a curved form and is rare in North Somerset. The later drainage gullies are typically straight and were intentionally dug and laid out as land was improved and drained after its enclosure. Such ditch systems have to be regularly re-dug as they silt up and this would have occurred up to the present in order to maintain the fields.

4.104 The LiDAR illustrates very regular *rig and vurrow* type gully systems across all of the fields in the Site. The gullies run between arterial gullies (known as blind ditches) forming a gripe system. The gullies then drain into the boundary ditches that define the fields. The gullies are well defined in all but one field on the eastern side suggesting that they have mostly been well-maintained, probably to relatively recently. In one of the westernmost fields, a system of grips appears to overlay a fainter series of gullies suggesting a phased development of the system in this field with an older system that was then re-cut at a different angle. All of the gullies are very straight and there is no suggestion that the field retains extant evidence for an older field system predating the drainage.

4.105 The drainage system at the Site, indicated by the LiDAR evidence probably originated in the post-medieval period, and is typical for the North Somerset levels and in common with most other fields in the wider locality that are of a similar topography. In this regard, the drainage ditches possess little archaeological interest, especially considering that they are likely to

have been recut in the modern era. The system is considered separately below in respect of its historic landscape character.

SITE WALKOVER

4.106 The site walkover was undertaken in October 2022 to assess the current ground conditions and topography, as well as to confirm the continuing survival of any known archaeological remains and to identify any hitherto unknown remains of significance.

4.107 The Site was seen to comprise fields of pasture that are divided by water filled drainage ditches (**Image EDP 1.1**), some of which are lined by shrubs, modern fences and some occasional mature trees. The gullies (*gripes*), ridges and furrows seen on the LiDAR data were noticeable across all of the fields as shallow features; where examples are visible in **Image EDP 4.3** and **Image EDP 4.9**; but were not themselves water filled at the time of the visit, nor do they appear to have been recently re-dug. No other features of heritage interest were seen within the Site.

4.108 The Site's western boundary was seen to comprise a dense, mature, tree lined hedgerow set out along a substantial ditch that separates the Site from the Strawberry Line footpath, albeit in two locations it is crossed by causeways, one at a field entrance in the north-west corner and again by the route of Biddle Street to the south-west of the Site. This boundary originates with the former railway in the mid-19th century.

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

4.109 The North Somerset HER data did not include Historic Landscape Characterisation information, however the Site is included in the Avon Historic Landscape Characterisation (AHLC) project of 1995-8, the data from which is available online [2].

4.110 The AHLC categorises the Site as G4: *Post medieval (15th - 17th C) organised enclosure of anciently reclaimed inland moors*.

4.111 This category is described as originating as inland moor and marsh enclosed at the end of the medieval period through organised community action rather than individual processes. The characteristics are described as '*Mainly strip-field pattern of hedged enclosure with relict ridge and furrow*' and it is stated to occur surrounding peat moor and salt marshes.

4.112 Whilst this is a likely origin for the enclosure pattern seen at the Site, the aerial evidence does not suggest early ridge and furrow is present in the Site, rather being a later pattern of straight *rig and vurrow* and *gripes*, dug for drainage, as described earlier.

4.113 Whilst it originated in the post-medieval period, the AHLC notes that this type of landscape is fairly common to the North Somerset Levels and with various blocks ascribed the same category number around Yatton alone. As such, the landscape at the Site, which is defined by its subdivision into irregular fields by drainage ditches and its remnants of *rig and vurrow*

[2] https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/avon_hlc_2014

and *gripe* gullies, is ascribed only a low degree of historic landscape value which is retained in these relict features.

GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY

4.114 A geophysical survey (magnetometry) was carried out across the suitable land at the Site in November 2022 (Headland Archaeology, 2022). The survey report which was produced is appended at **Appendix EDP 3** and concludes the following:

- That geological anomalies related to the Tidal Flat alluvial deposits that lie across the Site are the predominant response and that they do not preclude the identification of anomalies potentially related to buried archaeology, (I.e. they would not mask them). As such, the survey provides a reliable indicator of the Site's archaeological potential;

- Anomalies have been detected that relate to modern services and to the known drainage gullies that form the post-medieval gripe system; and

- No probable archaeological anomalies were identified, but 'uncertain' features were. These consist of a group of four discrete anomalies interpreted as possible sites of burning, located close to Rectory Farm (B?1), as well as faint linear anomalies in the eastern part of the Site area that could potentially represent buried archaeological ditches (D?1, 2 and 3).

4.115 In conclusion, the geophysical survey does not indicate any overt, probable archaeological features within the Site that might change the assessment of its archaeological potential set out in the sections above.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SUMMARY

4.116 In summary, the consideration of baseline sources has identified the following in respect of the Site's potential to contain heritage assets including its potential for unrecorded, buried archaeological remains.

4.117 The Site has a low potential to contain deeply buried archaeological remains of the Bronze Age that could be of low or moderate significance.

4.118 The Site has a moderate potential for Roman period remains located at relatively shallow depths but also most probably beneath some alluvium, which could be of low or moderate significance.

4.119 Buried archaeological remains of later periods (medieval/post-medieval) have a moderate potential to be found within the Site and comprise remains related to land drainage and agriculture, such as infilled furrows or gullies of very low significance.

4.120 Known earthwork features are present in the Site that relate to land drainage, comprising a system of drainage gullies and furrows related to the Site's field boundary ditches that probably originated in the late medieval or post-medieval periods but whereby ditches and gullies have been recut in modern times. These features are visible on aerial photographs

and at ground level and, although they possess little archaeological interest, they form an area of historic landscape character of low significance.

4.121 Geophysical survey has not identified any evidence for probable archaeological remains in the Site, but some uncertain features comprising areas of possible burning and linear features have been identified in the southern and eastern parts of the Site. In this regard, the results of the geophysical (magnetometer) survey do not change the assessment of the Site's archaeological interest or potential set out above.

Section 5
Impact Assessment

5.1 This section outlines the potential impacts of the proposed development of the Site on the historic environment with reference to the plan at **Appendix EDP 1**.

5.2 The assessment identifies effects on the significance of heritage assets located within and outwith the Site through direct impacts and changes within their setting. In this regard, in respect of the settings of heritage assets, it is apparent that, following Step 1 of the five-step approach, which is identified by HE in its guidance (GPA 3, 2017), and detailed in **Section 4** above, the implementation of the proposed development would not result in any impacts on designated heritage assets.

5.3 Consequently, **Section 5** only focusses on the potential for the proposed development to impact upon non-designated heritage assets within the Site and on previously unrecorded buried archaeological remains.

IMPACTS ON NON-DESIGNATED HISTORIC ASSETS

5.4 With respect to the assessment presented in **Section 4**, it was concluded that the land at the Site comprises irregular fields defined by boundary ditches (rhynes) and crossed by a system of drainages ditches (comprising *rig and vurrow* and *gripes*). In this respect, these features are typical for land reclaimed from low-lying fenland on the North Somerset Levels and probably date from the enclosure and drainage of the Site from the late-medieval period, but re-cut in modern times. These landscape features, whilst possessing no intrinsic archaeological interest, together form an area with a degree of historic landscape character which does possess a low degree of heritage significance.

5.5 The proposed development would result in the total loss of the in-field drainage features that lie within the footprint of development, although gullies and furrows will probably be preserved to a degree in the western parts of the Site that are proposed as public open spaces. The field boundary ditches would also be preserved in their entirety. As such, the proposed development will cause a high degree of impact upon the historic landscape at the Site, although it would not result in total loss and the existing historical layout of fields would still remain legible within the development.

5.6 Otherwise, no known or recorded non-designated heritage assets would be affected by the proposed development's implementation.

IMPACTS ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS

5.7 Whilst it is likely that the final development design would involve considerable fill and thus the raising of ground levels across the Site, this is still nonetheless anticipated to involve topsoil stripping in preparation. As such, it is likely that any buried archaeological remains located at a relatively shallow depth would be subject to truncation possibly resulting in their total loss.

5.8 Considering the Tidal Flat alluvial deposits thought to be present across the Site and the known Wentlooge sequence, it is only likely that deposits related to the Roman period or post-Roman and historic periods (Units I and II in the sequence) would be affected by the proposed development. Prehistoric deposits would be likely to be buried beneath deep alluvial deposits that are unlikely to be affected by the proposed development.

5.9 As such, there is a moderate potential for Roman period features within the Site that are susceptible to being truncated by development and a low potential for prehistoric features that would be unlikely to be affected due to their likely depth, if present.

5.10 The geophysical survey has not identified any probable archaeological remains in the Site and suggests the likelihood for highly significant remains to be disturbed by development is very low. In this regard, it is considered very unlikely that the Site contains archaeological remains that represent a determinative matter for a planning application or be worthy of preservation in situ and thus represent a significant constraint to the development.

5.11 In conclusion, the greatest likelihood is for development to impact on buried archaeological remains that are no earlier than of the Roman period (due to the depths of superficial deposits on the Site). Such remains would, at the most, be of moderate significance (if settlement remains occur) but the geophysical survey does not identify any such remains within the Site. As such, it is more likely that remains might comprise linear ditches related to Roman era (or later) agricultural activity that would be at most of low significance. Any remains of this nature located in the footprint of development would most likely be damaged or destroyed.

Section 6
Conclusion

6.1 The assessment concludes that the Site does not include or form any part of a designated heritage asset. Its proposed development would therefore not result in a direct effect upon a designated heritage asset.

6.2 Appropriate consideration has nonetheless been given to the various designated heritage assets located within the Site's surroundings and whether the development could have an indirect impact upon them as a result of changes to their setting.

6.3 With that in mind, the application of national guidance set out in GPA 3 (2017) shows that the Site's development, as proposed, would not cause any change within the settings of any designated (or non-designated) heritage assets such that might affect their significance.

6.4 Hence, in terms of impacts upon designated heritage assets, the proposed development of the Site would comply with the relevant national and local planning policies which cover the conservation and management of the historic environment.

6.5 The assessment has identified that the Site has a low degree of heritage significance derived from its preservation of a historic landscape related to enclosure and drainage of low-lying former fenland, which probably occurred from the late medieval period onwards. Approval and implementation of the proposed development would result in the partial loss of these historic landscape features, even if the drainage ditches (rhynes) that divide the Site's fields would be retained within the completed scheme. This partial loss of a non-designated heritage asset of low value would need to be considered in respect of Paragraph 203 of NPPF in that "*a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.*"

6.6 The proposed development is likely to result in the disturbance of the ground surface to a relatively shallow level. Such disturbance may truncate, or result in the loss of, presently unrecorded buried archaeological remains which are located in its footprint. With respect to the known geological sequence on the North Somerset Levels, impacts are expected to be focused on buried remains of the Roman and post-roman periods because prehistoric deposits are anticipated to be buried more deeply.

6.7 Archaeological remains of these periods are likely to be of low significance, based on the available information, and the geophysical survey which was completed at the Site this autumn has not identified the presence of any probable archaeological anomalies. Consultation with the Principal Archaeologist at North Somerset Council has established that pre-determination trial trenched evaluation is not required in support of the application. Further phased investigation of the Site will take place in response to a pre-commencement condition of any planning consent granted.

6.8 Therefore, whilst the implementation of the proposed development would result in the loss of shallow archaeological features and deposits (if they are present), given they are expected to be of just 'low' interest or significance, this is assessed as generating no more than a limited impact as a consequence.

6.9 Once again, the acceptability of this 'loss' of archaeological remains within the Site would need to be considered against Paragraph 203 of the NPPF, as well as the relevant policies at the local level. Even so, there is no reason to believe or expect that this exercise would fall in favour of the physical preservation *in situ* of (potential) archaeological remains and against the implementation of the development.

Section 7
References

Allen, J and Fulford, M, 1987, *Romano-British settlement and industry on the wetlands of the Severn Estuary*, Antiq. J. 67, 237-89

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Piggott-Williams, 1873, *A Glossary of Provincial Words and phrases in use in Somersetshire*

Rippon, S. 1997 *The Severn Estuary, Landscape Evolution and Wetland Reclamation*. London.

LIST OF CONSULTED WEBSITES

https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/

http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html - accessed 2022

Environment Agency via https://environment.data.gov.uk/ds/survey/#/survey

LIST OF CONSULTED MAPS

Tithe Map of Yatton Parish 1838

1885-6 25" to the mile First Edition Ordnance Survey Map

1903 25" to the mile Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map

1973-8 1:2500 Ordnance Survey Map

Appendix EDP 1
Illustrative Masterplan
(edp7842_d003g 14 March 2023 OSh/GHo)

Land at Rectory Farm (North), Yatton, North Somerset

Illustrative Masterplan

edp

- date **14 MARCH 2023** - drawing number **edp7842_d003g** - scale **1:1,250 @ A1** - drawn by **OSh** - checked **GHo** - QA **PDa**

www.edp-uk.co.uk

Appendix EDP 2
Written Scheme of Investigation

Land at Rectory Farm (North), Yatton, North Somerset

Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological and Heritage Assessment

Prepared by:
The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd

On behalf of:
Persimmon Homes Severn Valley

March 2023
Report Reference
edp7842_r003

Contents

Appendix

This version is intended for electronic viewing only

	Report Ref: edp7842_r003			
	Author	**Formatted**	**Peer Review**	**Proofed by/Date**
003	RSk	CLa	-	MWI 160323

Section 1
Introduction

1.1 This Written Scheme of Investigation has been prepared by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP) for approval by the archaeological advisor to North Somerset Council.

1.2 This document sets out the methodologies to be employed in the preparation of an Archaeological and Heritage Assessment. The aim of the proposed assessment is to assess the nature, extent and significance of the historic environment which has the potential to be affected by the proposed development. The assessment is in support of a proposed residential development on land at Rectory Farm (North), Yatton, North Somerset.

1.3 The assessment will address the requirements of Paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2021).

1.4 The assessment will also conform to additional guidance for archaeological desk-based assessment contained in the *Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment* issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2020).

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Section 2
The Site

Location and Boundaries

2.1 The Site is situated across a group of ten fields defined by drainage ditches to the immediate west of the village of Yatton, the centre of which lies circa. 570m to the east. It measures approximately 13.6 hectares (ha) in size and comprises pastoral land that is on the edge of the North Somerset Levels, used for grazing livestock.

2.2 The Site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 343375, 165672. Its location is illustrated on the plan at **Appendix EDP 1**.

Geology and Topography

2.3 The British Geological Survey records the underlying solid geology of the Site as Mudstone of the Mercia group. Superficial deposits, comprising Tidal Flat deposits of clay and silt are recorded across the whole Site (www.bgs.ac.uk).

2.4 An understanding of the nature of the Site's superficial geology will be essential to understand its archaeological potential and the report will reference the known Wentlooge sequence as it relates to archaeology, as well as any data from local borehole records or other geotechnical work that might be available.

2.5 Topographically, the Site is located on low-lying land that is almost level. The highest point is in the south-east corner against the edge of the adjacent conurbation at c. 7m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The lowest point is on the western boundary at c. 5m aOD.

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Section 3
Methodology

3.1 The report will be produced in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment* issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (ClfA, 2020). These guidelines provide a national standard for the completion of desk-based assessments.

3.2 The assessment will adopt a 500m radius from the Site boundary study area for its consideration of potential physical effects on heritage assets. A broader study area will be adopted for the evaluation of potential effects upon the setting of designated heritage assets.

3.3 This radius is justified on the basis that the study area will capture information on the landscape areas of a similar character to the Site which adjoin it to the north, west and south (being low-lying areas at the edge of the North Somerset Levels), as well as data on the fringes of the settlement of Yatton that is also of relevance to understanding the Site's potential to contain archaeology. A larger area would encompass all of Yatton and its neighbouring settlements and thus produce considerable amounts of Historic Environment Record (HER) data that would be largely irrelevant to the assessment of the Site's archaeological potential, as it would mostly relate to features of the urban areas. As such, a larger study area would be disproportionate to the needs of the assessment in terms of the extent of data collection.

3.4 The assessment will involve the consultation of readily available archaeological and historical information from documentary, cartographic, aerial photographic and LiDAR sources. The principal sources of information will comprise:

- Information held by the North Somerset HER on known archaeological sites, monuments and findspots, within the vicinity of the Site;
- Information from the Avon Historic Landscape Character study;
- The National Heritage List for England curated by Historic England (HE) for designated heritage assets;
- Fieldwork reports from previous archaeological investigations close to the Site;
- Geological maps held on-line by the British Geological Survey;
- Geotechnical reports (if available);
- Historic mapping from online sources;

- LiDAR Data coverage of the Site and its environs. To be acquired from the Environment Agency as a Digital Terrain Model (DTM) and then processed into visualisations using the Relief Visualisation Toolbox (ver. 1.3 ZRC SAZU, 2016). The most effective visualisation(s) would then inform the assessment; and

- Aerial photographs held by the Historic England Archive and, if relevant, those held by the HER.

3.5 The information gathered from these sources will be complemented by a site walkover. This walkover will consider the nature and significance of known and/or potential archaeological assets within the Site, identify visible historic features, and assess possible factors which may affect the survival or condition of known or potential assets. The Site walkover will also consider, where appropriate, the contribution made by the land within the Site to the settings of designated and non-designated heritage assets situated within its wider zone of influence and the value of the historic landscape resource more generally.

3.6 A report will be produced which will provide a synthesis of relevant information for the Site and thereafter will conclude with, (1) an assessment of its likely archaeological potential, made with regard to current best practice guidelines, and (2) an assessment of the likely effect of the proposed development upon designated assets. With regard to (2) above, the assessment process will be undertaken with reference to the HE guidance *Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Second edition)* (HE 2017).

Section 4
Report Content

4.1 The report structure will be dependent on the findings of the research, the needs of the project, and the stage within the planning process. The report will, as a minimum, contain the following sections:

- Non-technical summary;
- Introduction;
- Context of project;
- Site location and description;
- Geological and Topographical description;
- Aims and purpose of the assessment;
- Methodology;
- Baseline archaeological and heritage information presented as a period-based archaeological and historical background, consisting of:
    - Designated heritage assets;
    - Non-designated heritage assets;
    - Cartographic, aerial photographic and LiDAR evidence (if data is available to a sufficient resolution to be useful for the purposes of the assessment); and
    - Site walkover.
- Assessment of the potential for archaeological remains within the Site considering previous/known impacts;
- Assessment of the potential physical impact of the proposed development on the significance of archaeological remains within the Site;
- Assessment of the potential effect on the significance of designated heritage assets through changes to their settings;
- An assessment of the impact of development on the character of the historic landscape;

- Conclusions;
- Supporting data in appendices, as necessary;
- References; and
- Supporting illustrations, including reproduction of relevant HER data, LiDAR data (if available) and historic maps.

4.2 Provided that there are no issues of commercial confidentiality, a copy of the archaeological and heritage assessment will be submitted to the North Somerset HER. Considering the standard process of client review and editing, this will most likely be broadly contemporary with the submission of the planning application.

Section 5
Bibliography

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), 2020. *Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-based Assessment*. Reading.

Historic England (HE), 2017. *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Second Edition).* London.

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Appendix EDP 1
Site Location Plan

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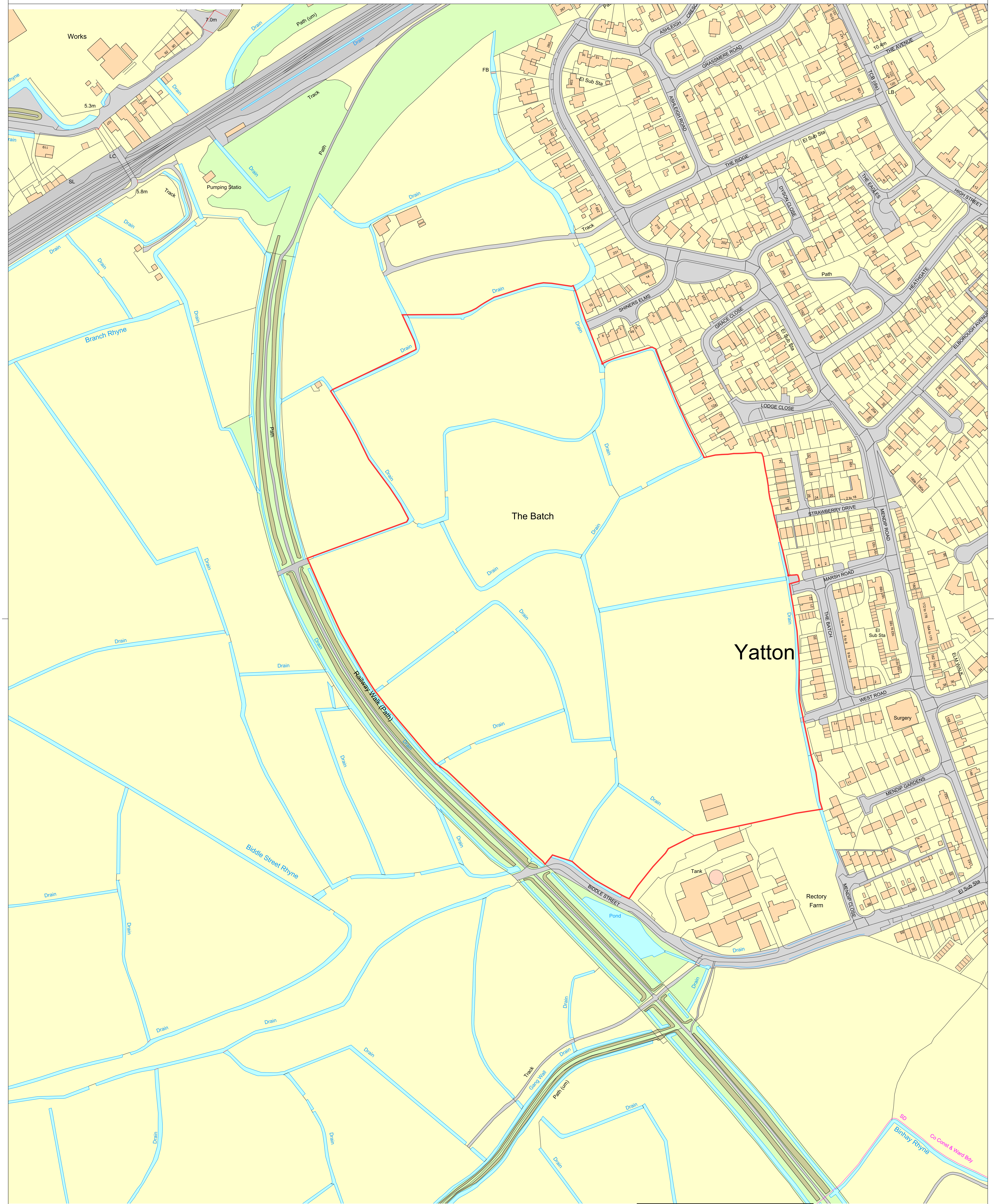
Drawing Revisions

ISSUE	DATE	REVISION	BY
A	09/03/23	Northern boundary amendment along 'Drain'	CW
B	10/03/23	Eastern boundary alteration	CW



KEY

Site Boundary

N

PERSIMMON

Persimmon Homes (region)

Development: Land at Rectory Farm
Yatton
Redline Plan

Drawing Title	Date	Scale	Drawn
Land at Rectory Farm - Redline Plan	10/22	1/1000@A0	CW

Drawing Status	Drawing Ref	Rev
Redline Plan	Rectory Farm_RLP01	B

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URBAN DESIGN GROUP REGISTERED PRACTICE

IEMA CORPORATE PARTNER

Landscape Institute
Registered practice

Appendix EDP 3
Geophysical Survey

RECT22

LAND AT RECTORY FARM, YATTON, SOMERSET

GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY

commissioned by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd
on behalf of Persimmon Homes Severn Valley

December 2022

HEADLAND ARCHAEOLOGY

REGISTERED ORGANISATION CIfA

LAND AT RECTORY FARM, YATTON, SOMERSET

GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY

commissioned by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd
on behalf of Persimmon Homes Severn Valley

December 2022

This report adheres to the quality standard of ISO 9001:2015

PROJECT INFO:

HA Project Code **RECT22** / NGR **ST 42495 65528** / Parish **Yatton Moor** / Local Authority **North Somerset Council** / Fieldwork Date **21.11.22 – 22.11.22** / OASIS Ref. **headland1-511578**

PROJECT TEAM:

Project Manager **Alistair Webb** / Author **Matthew Berry** / Fieldwork **Nathan Crozier, Ross Bishop** / Graphics **Marc Zubia-Pons, Matthew Berry**

Approved by **Alistair Webb** .....

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REGISTERED ORGANISATION CIfA

PROJECT SUMMARY

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd was commissioned by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (the Consultant) on behalf of Persimmon Homes Severn Valley (the Client), to undertake a geophysical survey on approximately 14 hectares of land at Rectory Farm, Yatton, Somerset, to inform a planning application for a housing development at the site. The results of the survey may also inform future archaeological strategy, if required.

The survey has identified few magnetic anomalies outside of those caused by overlying tidal flat deposits which cover large parts of the proposed development area (PDA). The spread and strength of responses from these deposits may preclude the identification of responses from anomalies of possible archaeological potential, if present.

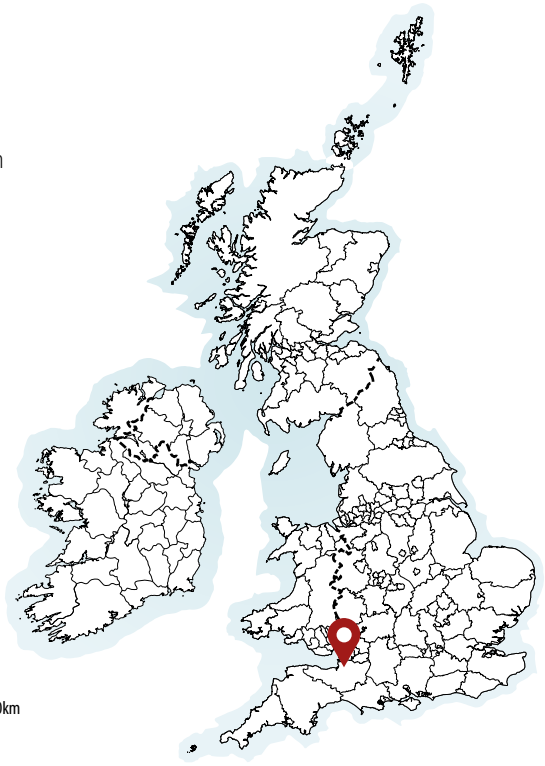
Outside of the responses from the tidal flat deposits, high magnitude linear anomalies identify buried service pipes and/or field drains and much weaker linear trend anomalies correspond to the direction of drainage channels forming a gripe system evident in LiDAR data, satellite imagery and as shallow earthworks on the ground. A cluster of four discrete, very high magnitude anomalies indicative of localised burning and faint linear trend anomalies at the eastern extent of the tidal flat deposits are of uncertain origin and the only other anomalies of note in the survey data.

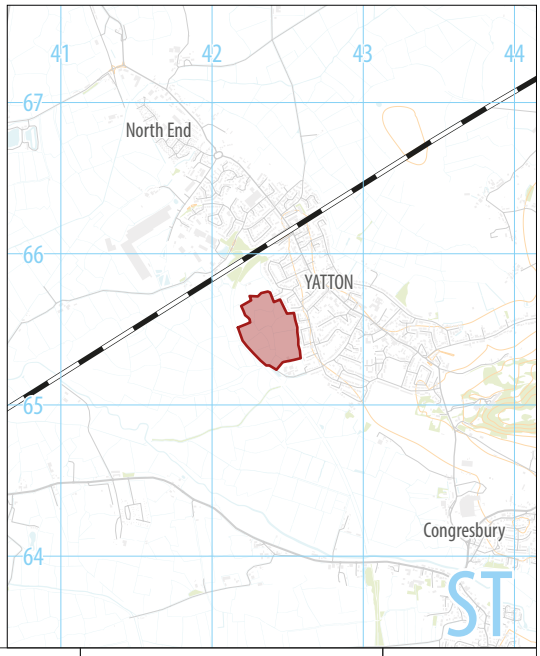
The results of the magnetometer survey are consistent with findings of a heritage assessment which identifies there are no designated heritage assets within PDA and that the PDA has likely been in agricultural use since drainage of the land. Consequently, based on the results of the survey the archaeological potential of the PDA is assessed as low.

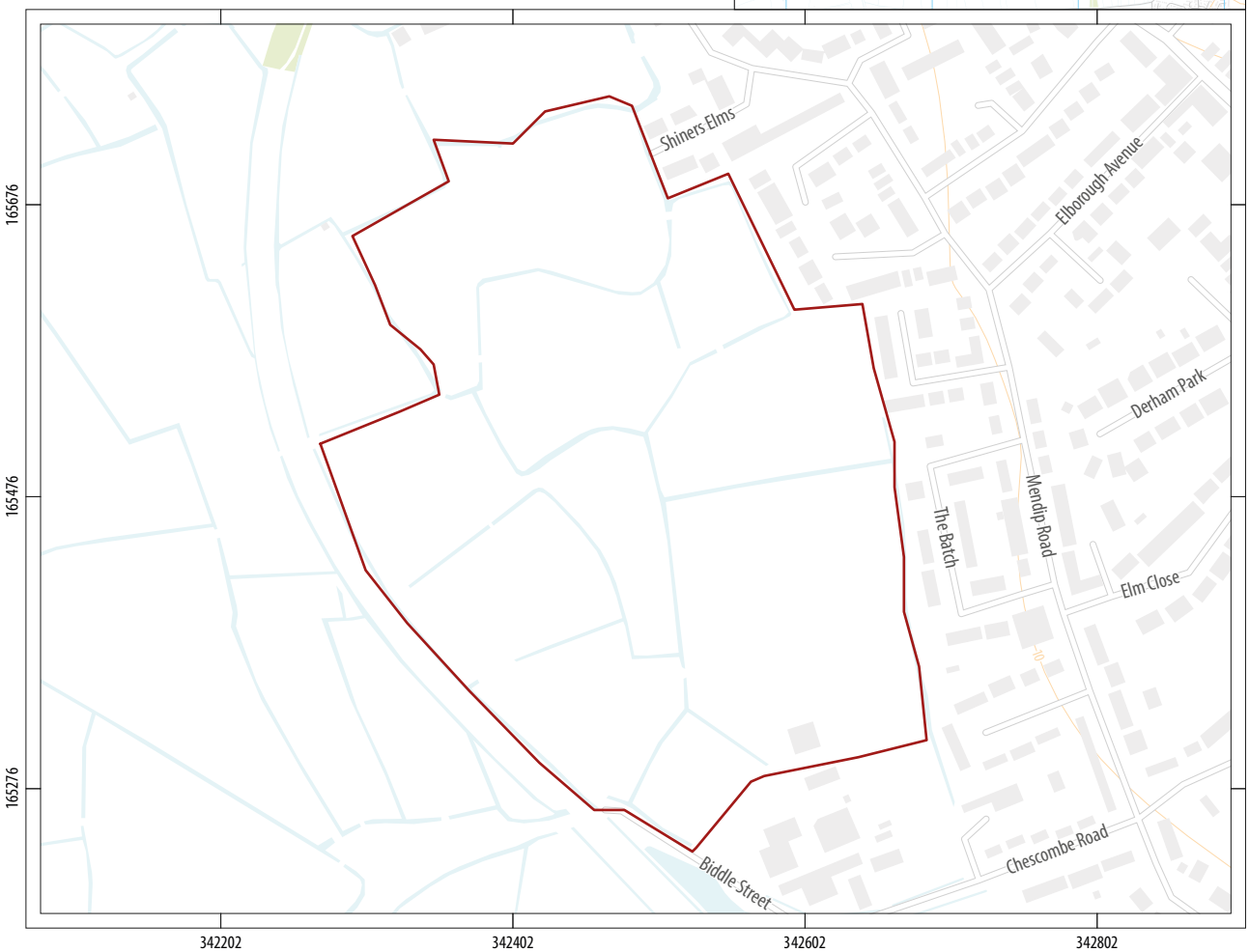
CONTENTS

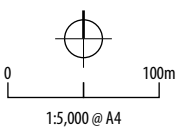
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Land at Rectory Farm
Yatton
Somerset









proposed development area

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ILLUS 1 Site location

LAND AT RECTORY FARM, YATTON, SOMERSET

GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY

1 INTRODUCTION

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd was commissioned by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (the Consultant) on behalf of Persimmon Homes Severn Valley (the Client), to undertake a geophysical survey on land at Rectory Farm, Yatton, Somerset (Illus 1) to inform a planning application for a housing development at the site. The results of the survey may also inform future archaeological strategy, if required.

The scheme of work was undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2021) and with the Written Scheme of Investigation for Geophysical Survey (WSI) (Headland Archaeology 2022).

The WSI was produced to the standards laid down in the European Archaeological Council's guideline publication EAC Guidelines for the Use of Geophysics in Archaeology (Europae Archaeologia Consilium 2016), and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Geophysical Survey (CIfA 2014). The survey was also carried out in line with the same best practice guidelines.

The survey was carried out between November 21st and 22nd, 2022.

1.1 SITE LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND LAND-USE

The proposed development area (PDA) lies on the south-western edge of Yatton, Somerset and covers 11 adjoining pasture fields comprising a single block of grassland, covering approximately 14 hectares, north of Rectory Farm. The PDA is centred at NGR ST 42495 65528 and bounded by Rectory Farm to the south, residential properties to the east, further agricultural fields to the north and a disused railway, now footpath, to the west (Illus 2 – Illus 5 inclusive).

The PDA is generally flat lying at approximately 5–6m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) and lies within an area of former marshland on the edge of the North Somerset Levels. The irregular shaped fields within the PDA are defined by drainage ditches, a system of 'rhynes' employed to drain marginal land on the levels to make it suitable for farming. All of the fields are also crossed by drainage furrows and gullies forming a gripe system.

1.2 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

The underlying geology comprises sedimentary Mercia Mudstone – mudstone and halite stone. The bedrock is overlain by superficial Tidal Flat deposits comprising clays and silts (NERC 2022).

The soils comprise loams and clays of coastal flats with naturally high groundwater and are classified in the Soilscape 21 Association (Cranfield University 2022)

ILLUS 2 F6, looking north

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The following is a summary of a Heritage Statement (The Environmental Dimension Partnership 2022) for this proposed scheme and an Historic Environment Assessment produced to support an earlier proposed development also at Rectory Farm but on land immediately adjacent to and south-east of the currently proposed site (AC Archaeology 2021).

Prehistoric activity prior to the Roman period within the vicinity of the PDA is limited to findspots of a Neolithic flint scatter (HER (MNS789) and a late Bronze Age socketed gauge (MNS1298) approximately 750km and 330m from the PDA to the south-east and east respectively.

No evidence of Romano-British activity is recorded within the PDA but is identified in the surrounding area. This includes settlement evidence (HER MNS8769) to the immediate west of the PDA, an occupation site (HER MNS8957) approximately 230m south-west of the PDA, the discovery of Roman era rubbish pits (HER MNS318) located c 200m north of the site and as scattered findspots of coins (HER MNS1966 and MNS320) and pottery (HER MNS304 and MNS1625) in the wider vicinity of the PDA.

Evidence for occupation activity (HER MNS8957) is identified from large quantities of Roman pottery, worked stone and animal bone recovered during an archaeological evaluation carried out in 1999 in advance ditch widening and pond creation work. The evidence for further settlement (HER MNS8769) and rubbish pits (HER MNS318) is however more circumspect as the North Somerset HER contains little detail about either asset. Asset MNS8769 records the remains of a Roman building 'at Biddle Street' derived from a checklist for the parish, but as the record is located within a field c 150m north of Biddle Street it may be misplaced.

No evidence of early-medieval activity is recorded close to the PDA. However, Yatton is recorded as a settlement in the Domesday Survey of 1086 and with a population of 72 households, was one of the largest 20% of settlements recorded.

Heritage assets from the medieval and post-medieval periods recorded within a wider study area outside the PDA largely comprise former drove roads, drainage banks, earthworks, a church and historical farmsteads. The irregular nature of the field boundary ditches (rhynes) at the site are typical of enclosed furlongs of a medieval open field which would suggest that the land was part of an open medieval field that was then enclosed in the late medieval or post-medieval periods. The site is included in the Avon Historic Landscape Characterisation (AHLC) project of 1995-8 and categorised as post-medieval (15th – 17th century) organised enclosure of anciently reclaimed inland moors.

The route of the former Cheddar Valley Railway (HER MNS2356) which forms the western boundary of the PDA was opened to Yatton station in August 1869 and eventually closed in 1966. The former line is now used as a public walkway known as the Strawberry Line. No known features relating to the railway are recorded within the PDA

ILLUS 3 F3, looking ESE

but HER entries pertaining to earthworks, a building and the site of a turntable (HER MNS6737) are recorded c 70m north-west of the site.

A previous geophysical survey on land adjacent to the current PDA to the south (Lefort Geophysics 2020) identified several anomalies interpreted as of possible archaeological origin. These included possible ditches appearing to partly define an enclosure and associated field system that may relate to an enclosure and buildings shown outside the application area on the first edition OS map. No evidence for any activity associated with the nearby Romano-British site to the south was identified.

The earliest map of the PDA is the 1838 Tithe Map of Yatton parish which shows the site within a very similar layout of fields as it has at present, after the construction of a network of rhynes and drainage ditches but before the construction of the railway which disrupted or truncated a number of the drainage channels.

LiDAR data illustrates very regular rig and furrow type gully systems across all the fields in the site. The drainage gullies run between arterial gullies (known as blind ditches) forming a gripe system. The gullies then drain into the boundary ditches that define the fields. This drainage system likely originated in the post-medieval period and is typical for the North Somerset levels and is in common with most other fields in the wider locality that are of a similar topography.

3 AIMS, METHODOLOGY & PRESENTATION

3.1 AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The principal aim of the geophysical survey was to gather information to establish the presence/absence, character, and extent of any archaeological remains within the PDA. This will enable an assessment to be made of the impact of the proposed development on any sub-surface archaeological remains, if present, and thereby inform any further investigation strategies, as appropriate.

The specific archaeological objectives of the geophysical survey were:

- to provide information about the nature and possible interpretation of any magnetic anomalies identified,
- to therefore determine the likely presence/absence and extent of any buried archaeological features, and
- to prepare a report summarising the results of the survey.

ILLUS 4 F9, looking ESE

3.2 METHODOLOGY

Magnetic survey methods rely on the ability of a variety of instruments to measure very small magnetic fields associated with buried archaeological remains. A feature such as a ditch, pit or kiln can act like a small magnet, or series of magnets, that produce distortions (anomalies) in the earth's magnetic field. In mapping these slight variations, detailed plans of sites can be obtained as buried features often produce reasonably characteristic anomaly shapes and strengths (Gaffney & Gater 2003). Further information on soil magnetism and the interpretation of magnetic anomalies is provided in Appendix 1.

Magnetometry is the most widely used geophysical survey technique in archaeology as it can quickly evaluate large areas and, under favourable conditions, identify a wide range of archaeological features including infilled cut features such as large pits, gullies and ditches, hearths, and areas of burning and kilns and brick structures. It is therefore good at locating settlements of all periods, prehistoric field systems and enclosures and areas of industrial or modern activity, amongst others. It is less successful in identifying smaller features such as post-holes and small pits (except when using a non-standard sampling interval), unenclosed (prehistoric) settlement sites and graves/burial grounds. However, magnetometry is by far the single most useful technique and was assessed as the best non-intrusive evaluation tool for this site.

The survey was undertaken using four Bartington Grad601 sensors mounted at 1m intervals (1m traverse interval) onto a rigid frame. The system was programmed to take readings at a frequency of 10Hz (allowing for a 10–15cm sample interval) on roaming traverses (swaths) 4m apart (Illus 6). These readings were stored on an external weatherproof laptop and later downloaded for processing and interpretation. The system was linked to a Trimble R12 Real Time Kinetic (RTK) differential Global Positioning System (dGPS) outputting in NMEA mode to ensure a high positional accuracy for each data point.

MLGrad601 and MultiGrad601 (Geomar Software Inc.) software was used to collect and export the data. Terrasurveyor V3.0.37.0 (DWConsulting) software was used to process and present the data.

3.3 DATA PRESENTATION & TECHNICAL DETAIL

A general site location plan is shown in Illus 1 at a scale of 1:5,000. Illus 2 to Illus 5 inclusive are site condition photographs. Illus 6 shows the GPS swaths, and the location and direction of the site condition photographs at 1:2,500. Fully processed (greyscale) data, minimally processed data (XY trace plot) data and an interpretative plot are presented, at a scale of 1:2,500, in Illus 7, Illus 8 and Illus 9 respectively.

Technical information on the equipment used, data processing and magnetic survey methodology is given in Appendix 1. Appendix 2 details the survey location information and Appendix 3 describes the composition and location of the site archive. Data processing details are presented in Appendix 4. The OASIS Ref. is included as Appendix 5.

ILLUS 5 F8, unsuitable area for survey looking south-east

The survey methodology, report and any recommendations comply with the Written Scheme of Investigation (Headland Archaeology 2022), guidelines outlined by Europae Archaeologia Consilium (EAC 2016) and by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014). All illustrations from Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping are reproduced with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office (© Crown copyright).

The illustrations in this report have been produced following analysis of the data in 'raw' (minimally processed) and processed formats and over a range of different display levels. All illustrations are presented to display and interpret the data to best effect. The interpretations are based on the experience and knowledge of Headland management and reporting staff.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 SITE CONDITIONS

Magnetometer survey is generally recommended over any sedimentary bedrock (English Heritage 2008; Table 4) although the presence of overlying superficial deposits, as is the case here, can lead to variability of results. Nevertheless, magnetometry was assessed as the most appropriate non-intrusive geophysical technique for evaluating the PDA, taking account of the limitations noted in Section 3.2 above.

Broad, sinuous, and amorphous areas of magnetic enhancement derived from the overlying tidal flat deposits cover large parts of the PDA, particularly towards the centre and northern parts of the site. Although these responses dominate the data set this does not necessarily preclude the identification of any sub-surface features of possible archaeological potential, if present.

Outside of these areas, mainly the eastern third of the PDA, the magnetic background is relatively homogenous containing few randomly distributed, discrete, low magnitude anomalies.

Against this varied magnetic background few magnetic anomalies of note have been identified by the survey. These are discussed in more detail below according to their interpreted origin.

Surface conditions were good across the site which was under short pasture at the time of survey. Consequently, data quality was also good with only minimal post-processing required. No problems were encountered during the fieldwork.

Only two small areas were unsuitable for survey within the PDA. This included the location of a manure heap and static caravans in the southern part of F8 (Illus 5) and where polytunnels are located immediately north of the farm at the southern boundary of F9.

4.2 GEOLOGICAL/NATURAL ANOMALIES

As stated above responses from overlying superficial tidal flat deposits cover large parts of the PDA, in particular fields F1, F5, F6 and F8 but only partly in fields F2 to F4, F7 and F9 to F11. These responses take the form of low magnitude, broad, sinuous, and amorphous anomalies identifying former channels and/or depositions of natural silt and clay material.

4.3 FERROUS AND MODERN ANOMALIES

Ferrous anomalies, characterised as individual 'spikes', are typically caused by ferrous (magnetic) material, either on the ground surface or in the plough-soil. Little importance is normally given to such anomalies, unless there is any supporting evidence for an archaeological interpretation, as modern ferrous debris is common on most sites, often being introduced into the topsoil during manuring or tipping/infilling. There is no obvious clustering to the ferrous anomalies across the PDA more generally which might indicate an archaeological origin. Far more probable is that the 'spike' responses are likely caused by the random distribution of ferrous debris in the upper soil horizons.

Five high and very high magnitude linear anomalies (Illus 9; SP1 – SP5) located in fields F1, F3 and F8, identify the location of buried service pipes and/or field drains. Given the strength of magnetic response and location adjacent to the housing development, anomaly SP1 in the north-east corner of the PDA likely identifies a modern service. Very high magnitude anomalies SP2 and SP3 contained within F3 are more likely to record field drains with a ferrous component.

4.4 AGRICULTURAL ANOMALIES

In areas not dominated by the responses from the tidal flat deposits faint parallel linear trend anomalies are identified in fields F2, F3, F5, F7 and F9. These anomalies coincide with the direction of regular rig and furrow type drainage gullies forming a gripe system evident in LiDAR data, satellite imagery and which are still evident as shallow earthworks on the ground noted by the survey team.

A linear, right-angled arrangement of discrete low magnitude responses likely records the presence of a field drain in F4.

4.5 ANOMALIES OF UNCERTAIN ORIGIN

A cluster of four discrete, very high magnitude anomalies (Illus 9 - B?1) located close to the farm in F11 have magnetic signatures indicative of localised burning. The anomaly response suggests the presence of four discrete anomalies rather than a spread of magnetic disturbance however there is little context for these anomalies to offer a more confident interpretation and their cause remains uncertain.

Faint linear trend anomalies and linear arrangements of weakly magnetically enhanced discrete anomalies (Illus 9 - D?1 – D?3) spanning fields F7, F9 and F11 appear more regular in nature and define the eastern extent of the amorphous superficial tidal flat deposits. The slightly more regular nature of these anomalies may identify an anthropogenic cause but could similarly identify further tidal flat deposits with a weaker magnetic signature and therefore remain of uncertain origin.

5 CONCLUSION

The survey has identified few magnetic anomalies other than those due to the presence of the overlying superficial tidal flat deposits which cover large parts of the PDA. The spread and strength of responses from these deposits does not preclude the identification of responses from anomalies of possible archaeological potential if present within the PDA and it is therefore determined that the survey results provide a reliable indicator of the archaeological potential of the site.

High magnitude linear anomalies recorded in three fields identify buried service pipes and/or field drains and much weaker linear trend anomalies correspond to the direction of drainage channels forming a gripe system evident in LiDAR data, satellite imagery and which are still evident as shallow earthworks.

A cluster of four discrete, very high magnitude anomalies indicative of localised burning and faint linear trend anomalies at the eastern extent of the tidal flat deposits are of uncertain origin and the only other anomalies of note in the survey data.

No anomalies have been recorded by the survey which might relate to heritage assets of Romano-British settlement and occupation evidence (HER MNS8769 and HER MNS8957) previously identified to the immediate west and south of the PDA.

The results of the magnetometer survey are consistent with findings of a heritage statement (The Environmental Dimension Partnership 2022 forthcoming) which identified there are no designated heritage assets within the PDA and that the land has likely remained in agricultural use since the medieval period. Consequently, based on the results of the survey the archaeological potential of the PDA is assessed as low.

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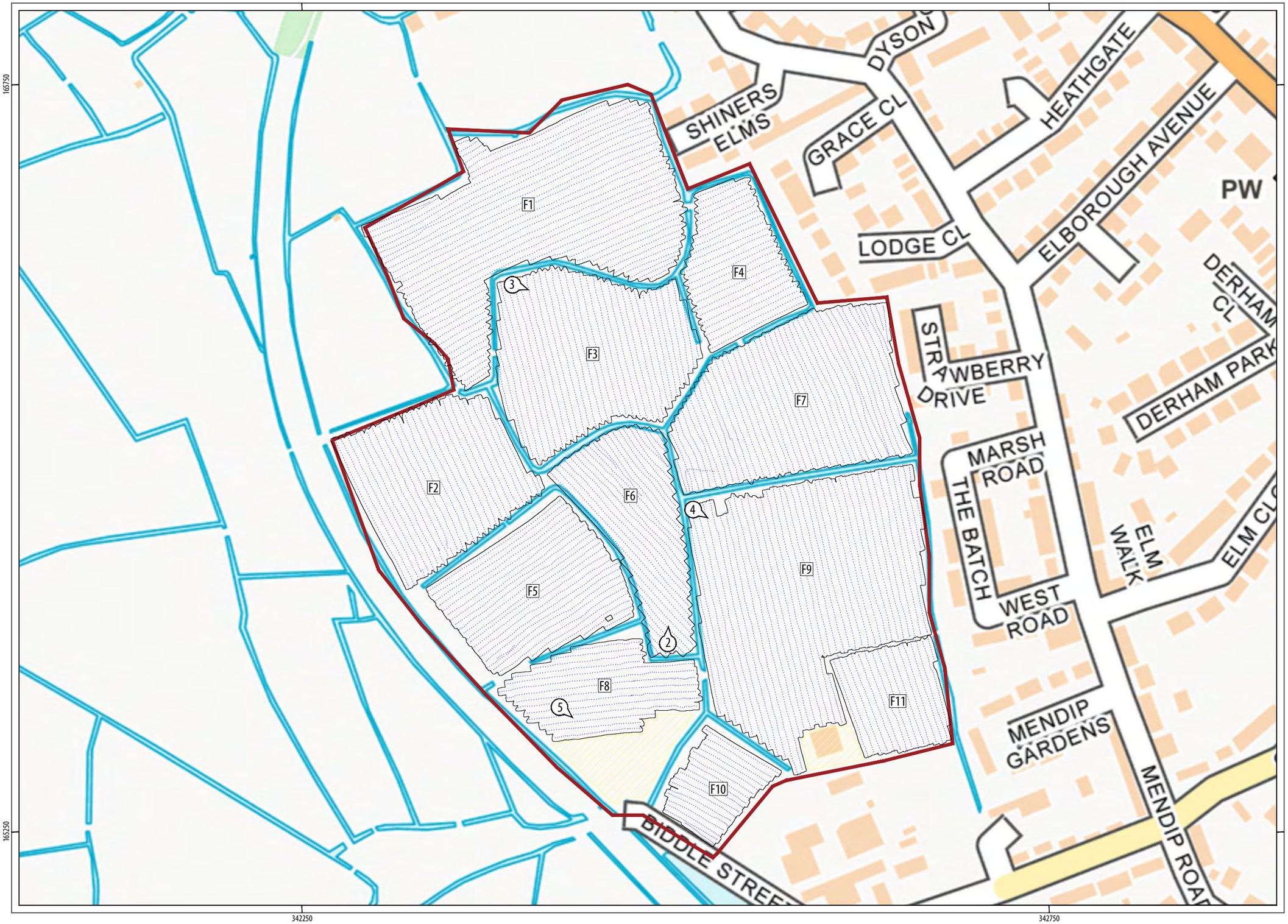

proposed development area
GPS swaths
area unsuitable for survey
location and direction of ILLUS 2 - ILLUS 5

0 50m
1:2,500 @ A3

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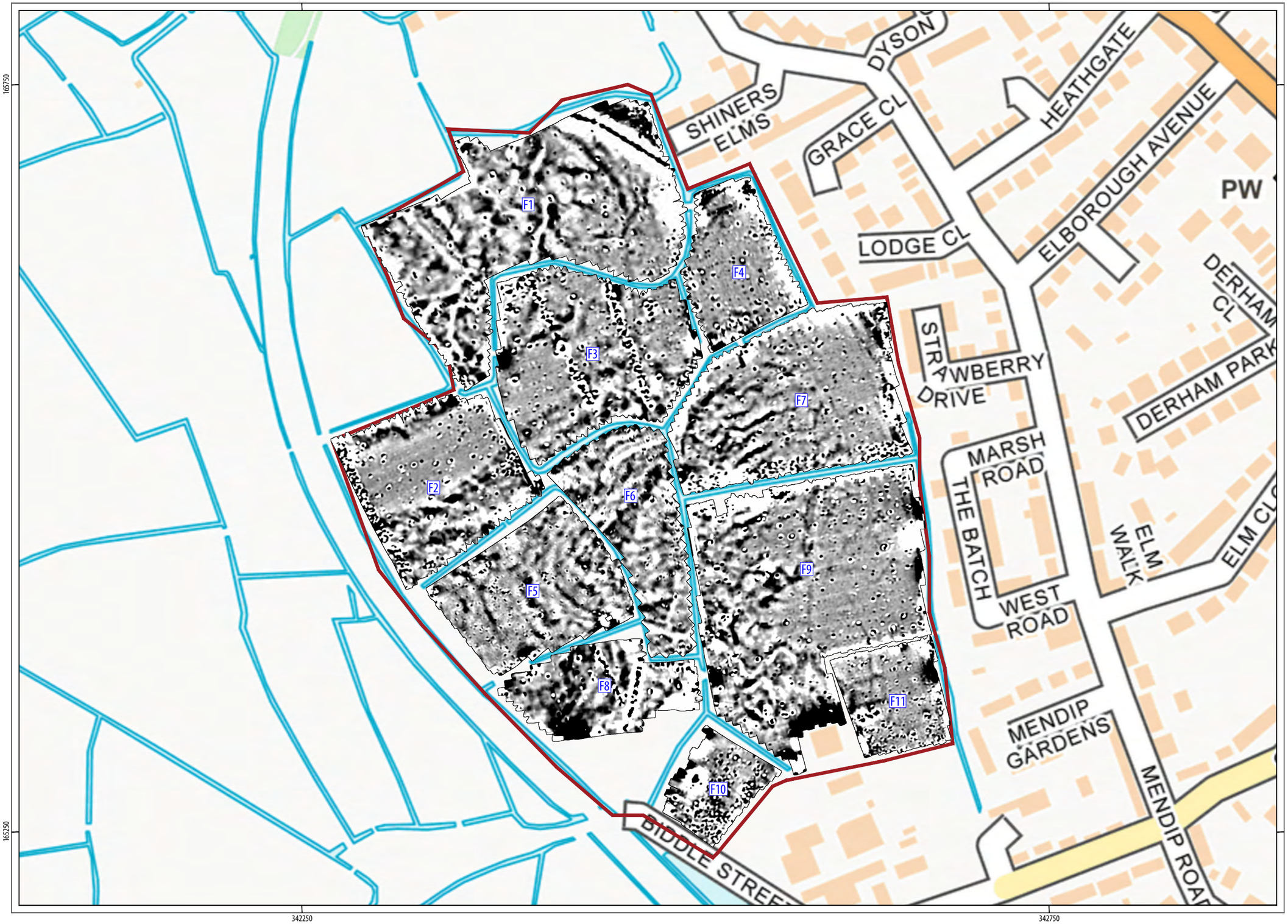
ILLUS 6 Geophysical survey area showing GPS swaths and photograph locations



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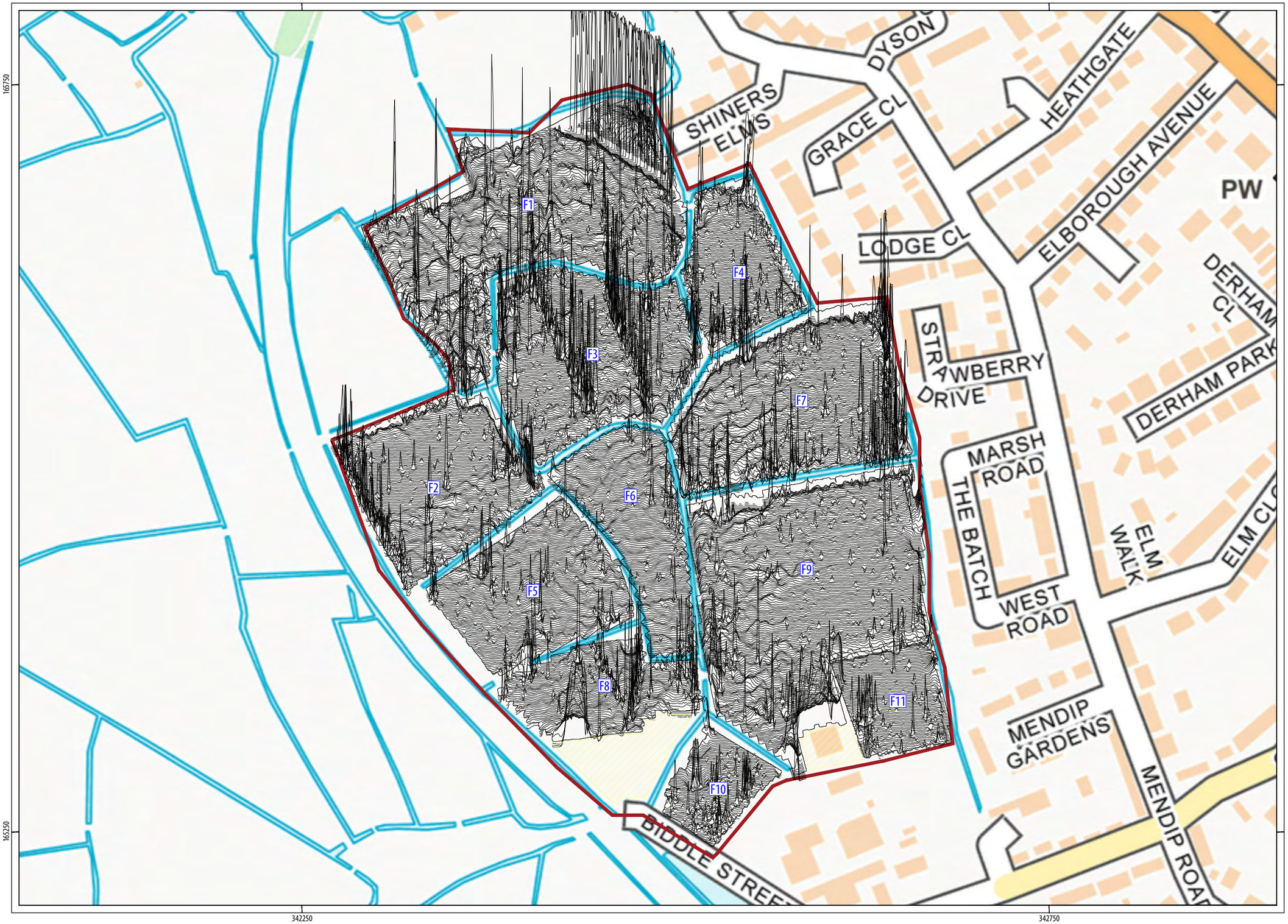
ILLUS 7 Processed greyscale magnetometer data



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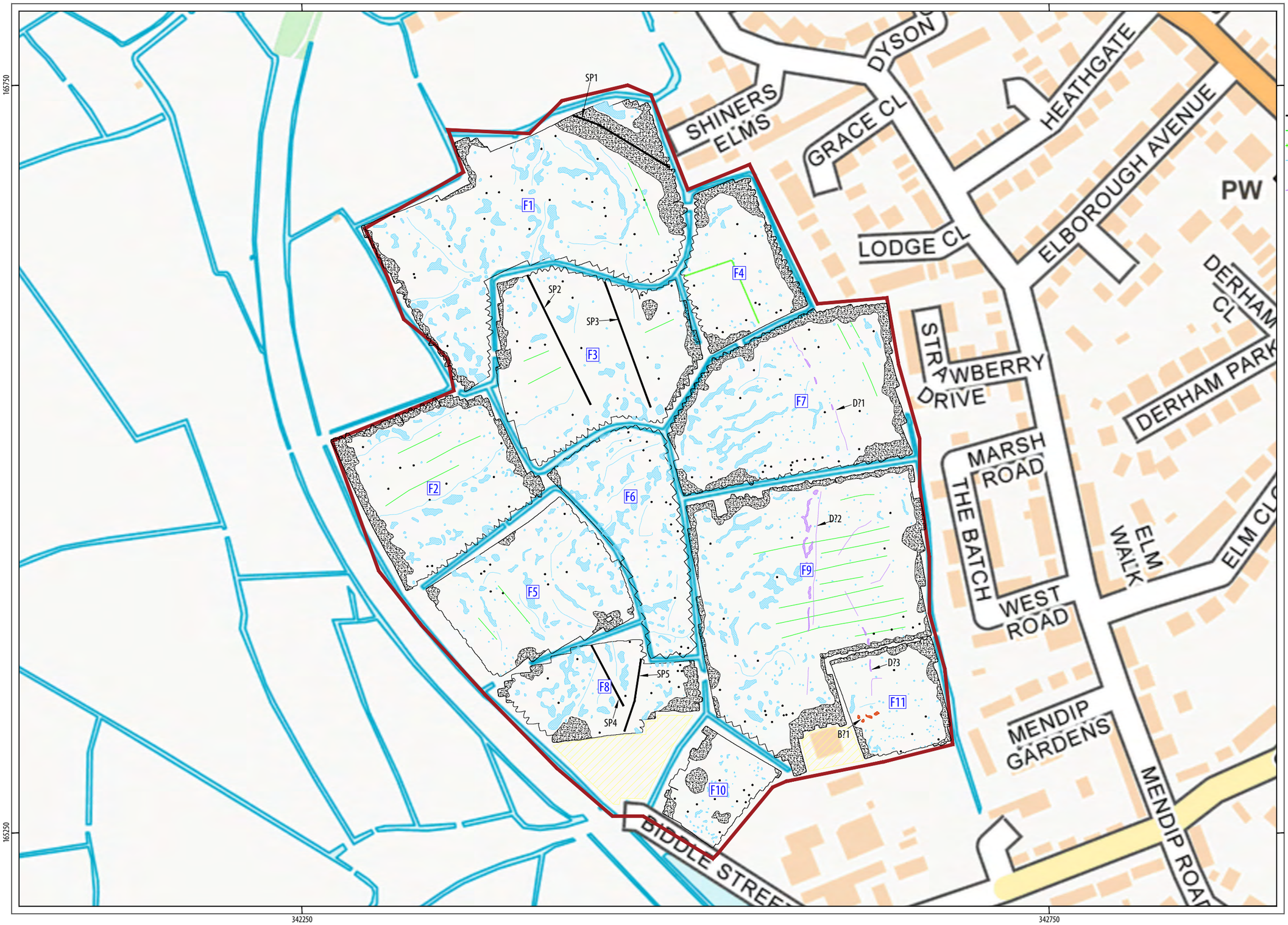
ILLUS 8 XY trace plot of minimally processed magnetometer data



ILLUS 9 Interpretation of magnetometer data

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7 APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 MAGNETOMETER SURVEY

Magnetic susceptibility and soil magnetism

Iron makes up about 6% of the earth's crust and is mostly present in soils and rocks as minerals such as maghaemite and haematite. These minerals have a weak, measurable magnetic property termed magnetic susceptibility. Human activities can redistribute these minerals and change (enhance) others into more magnetic forms so that by measuring the magnetic susceptibility of the topsoil, areas where human occupation or settlement has occurred can be identified by virtue of the attendant increase (enhancement) in magnetic susceptibility. If the enhanced material subsequently comes to fill features, such as ditches or pits, localised isolated and linear magnetic anomalies can result whose presence can be detected by a magnetometer (fluxgate gradiometer).

In general, it is the contrast between the magnetic susceptibility of deposits filling cut features, such as ditches or pits, and the magnetic susceptibility of the topsoil, subsoil, and rock, into which these features have been cut, which causes the most recognisable responses. This is primarily because there is a tendency for magnetic ferrous compounds to become concentrated in the topsoil, thereby making it more magnetic than the subsoil or the bedrock. Linear features cut into the subsoil or geology, such as ditches, that have been silted up or have been backfilled with topsoil will therefore usually produce a positive magnetic response relative to the background soil levels. Discrete feature, such as pits, can also be detected.

The magnetic susceptibility of a soil can also be enhanced by the application of heat. This effect can lead to the detection of features such as hearths, kilns, or areas of burning.

Types of magnetic anomaly

In most instances anomalies are termed 'positive'. This means that they have a positive magnetic value relative to the magnetic background on any given site. However, some features can manifest themselves as 'negative' anomalies that, conversely, means that the response is negative relative to the mean magnetic background.

Where it is not possible to give a probable cause of an observed anomaly a '?' is appended.

It should be noted that anomalies interpreted as modern in origin might be caused by features that are present in the topsoil or upper layers of the subsoil. Removal of soil to an archaeological or natural layer can therefore remove the feature causing the anomaly.

The types of response mentioned above can be divided into five main categories that are used in the graphical interpretation of the magnetic data:

Isolated dipolar anomalies (iron spikes) These responses are typically caused by ferrous material either on the surface or in the topsoil. They cause a rapid variation in the magnetic response giving a characteristic 'spiky' trace. Although ferrous archaeological artefacts could produce this type of response, unless there is supporting evidence for an archaeological interpretation, little emphasis is normally given to such anomalies, as modern ferrous objects are common on rural sites, often being introduced into the topsoil during manuring.

Areas of magnetic disturbance These responses can have several causes often being associated with burnt material, such as slag waste or brick rubble or other strongly magnetised/fired material. Ferrous structures such as pylons, mesh or barbed wire and buried pipes can also cause the same disturbed response. A modern origin is usually assumed unless there is other supporting information.

Lightning-induced remnant magnetisation (LIRM) LIRM anomalies are thought to be caused in the near surface soil horizons by the flow of an electrical current associated with lightning strikes. These observed anomalies have a strong bipolar signal which decreases with distance from the spike point and often appear as linear or radial in shape.

Linear trend This is usually a weak or broad linear anomaly of unknown cause or date. These anomalies are often caused by agricultural activity, either ploughing or land drains being a common cause.

Areas of magnetic enhancement/positive isolated anomalies Areas of enhanced response are characterised by a general increase in the magnetic background over a localised area whilst discrete anomalies are manifest by an increased response (sometimes only visible on an XY trace plot) on two or three successive traverses. In neither instance is there the intense dipolar response characteristic exhibited by an area of magnetic disturbance or of an 'iron spike' anomaly (see above). These anomalies can be caused by infilled discrete archaeological features such as pits or post-holes or by kilns. They can also be caused by pedological variations or by natural infilled features on certain geologies. Ferrous material in the subsoil can also give a similar response. It can often therefore be very difficult to establish an anthropogenic origin without intrusive investigation or other supporting information.

Linear and curvilinear anomalies Such anomalies have a variety of origins. They may be caused by agricultural practice (recent ploughing trends, earlier ridge and furrow regimes or land drains), natural geomorphological features such as palaeochannels or by infilled archaeological ditches.

APPENDIX 2 SURVEY LOCATION INFORMATION

An initial survey base station was established using a Trimble VRS differential Global Positioning System (dGPS). The magnetometer data was georeferenced using a Trimble RTK differential Global Positioning System (Trimble R8s model).

Temporary sight markers were laid out using a Trimble VRS differential Global Positioning System (Trimble R8s model) to guide the operator and ensure full coverage. The accuracy of this dGPS equipment is better than 0.01m.

The survey data were then super-imposed onto a base map provided by the client to produce the displayed block locations. However, it should be noted that Ordnance Survey positional accuracy for digital map data has an error of 0.5m for urban and floodplain areas, 1.0m for rural areas and 2.5m for mountain and moorland areas. This potential error must be considered if coordinates are measured off hard copies of the mapping rather than using the digital coordinates.

Headland Archaeology cannot accept responsibility for errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by a third party.

APPENDIX 3 GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY ARCHIVE

The geophysical archive comprises an archive disk containing the raw data in XYZ format, a raster image of each greyscale plot with associate world file, and a PDF of the report.

The project will be archived in-house in accordance with recent good practice guidelines (http://guides.archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/g2gp/Geophysics_3). The data will be stored in an indexed archive and migrated to new formats when necessary.

APPENDIX 4 DATA PROCESSING

The gradiometer data has been presented in this report in processed greyscale and minimally processed XY trace plot format.

Data collected using RTK GPS-based methods cannot be produced without minimal processing of the data. The minimally processed data has been interpolated to project the data onto a regular grid and de-striped to correct for slight variations in instrument calibration drift and any other artificial data.

A high pass filter has been applied to the greyscale plots to remove low frequency anomalies (relating to survey tracks and modern agricultural features) to maximise the clarity and interpretability of the archaeological anomalies.

The data has also been clipped to remove extreme values and to improve data contrast.

APPENDIX 5 OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: ENGLAND

OASIS ID (UID): headland1-511578

Project Name:	Geophysical Survey, Magnetometry Survey at Land at Rectory Farm, Yatton, Somerset
Activity type:	Magnetometry Survey, Geophysical Survey
Project Identifier(s):	p22-296
Planning Id:	[no data]
Reason for Investigation:	Planning: Pre application
Organisation Responsible for work:	Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd
Project Dates:	21-Nov-2022 – 22-Nov-2022
HER:	North Somerset HER
HER Identifiers:	[no data]
Project Methodology:	The survey was undertaken using four Bartington Grad601 sensors mounted at 1m intervals (1m traverse interval) onto a rigid frame. The system was programmed to take readings at a frequency of 10Hz (allowing for a 10-15cm sample interval) on roaming traverses (swaths) 4m apart. These readings were stored on an external weatherproof laptop and later downloaded for processing and interpretation. The system was linked to a Trimble R12 Real Time Kinetic (RTK) differential Global Positioning System (dGPS) outputting in NMEA mode to ensure a high positional accuracy for each data point. MLGrad601 and MultiGrad601 (Geomar Software Inc.) software was used to collect and export the data. Terrasurveyor V3.0.37.0 (DWConsulting) software was used to process and present the data.
Project Results:	The survey has identified few magnetic anomalies not likely caused by overlying tidal flat deposits which cover large parts of the proposed development area (PDA). The spread and strength of responses from these deposits may preclude the identification of responses from anomalies of possible archaeological potential, if present. Outside of the responses from the tidal flat deposits, high magnitude linear anomalies identify buried service pipes and/or field drains and much weaker linear trend anomalies correspond to the direction of drainage channels forming a gripe system evident in LiDAR data, satellite imagery and as shallow earthworks on the ground. A cluster of four discrete, very high magnitude anomalies indicative of localised burning and faint linear trend anomalies at the eastern extent of the tidal flat deposits are of uncertain origin and the only other anomalies of note in the survey data. The results of the magnetometer survey are consistent with findings of a heritage assessment which identifies there are no designated heritage assets within PDA and that the PDA has likely been in agricultural use since drainage of the land. Consequently, based on the results of the survey the archaeological potential of the PDA is assessed as low.
Keywords:	–
Archive:	–

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Plans

Plan EDP 1: Designated Heritage Assets
(edp7842_d011a 16 March 2023 VMS/RSk)

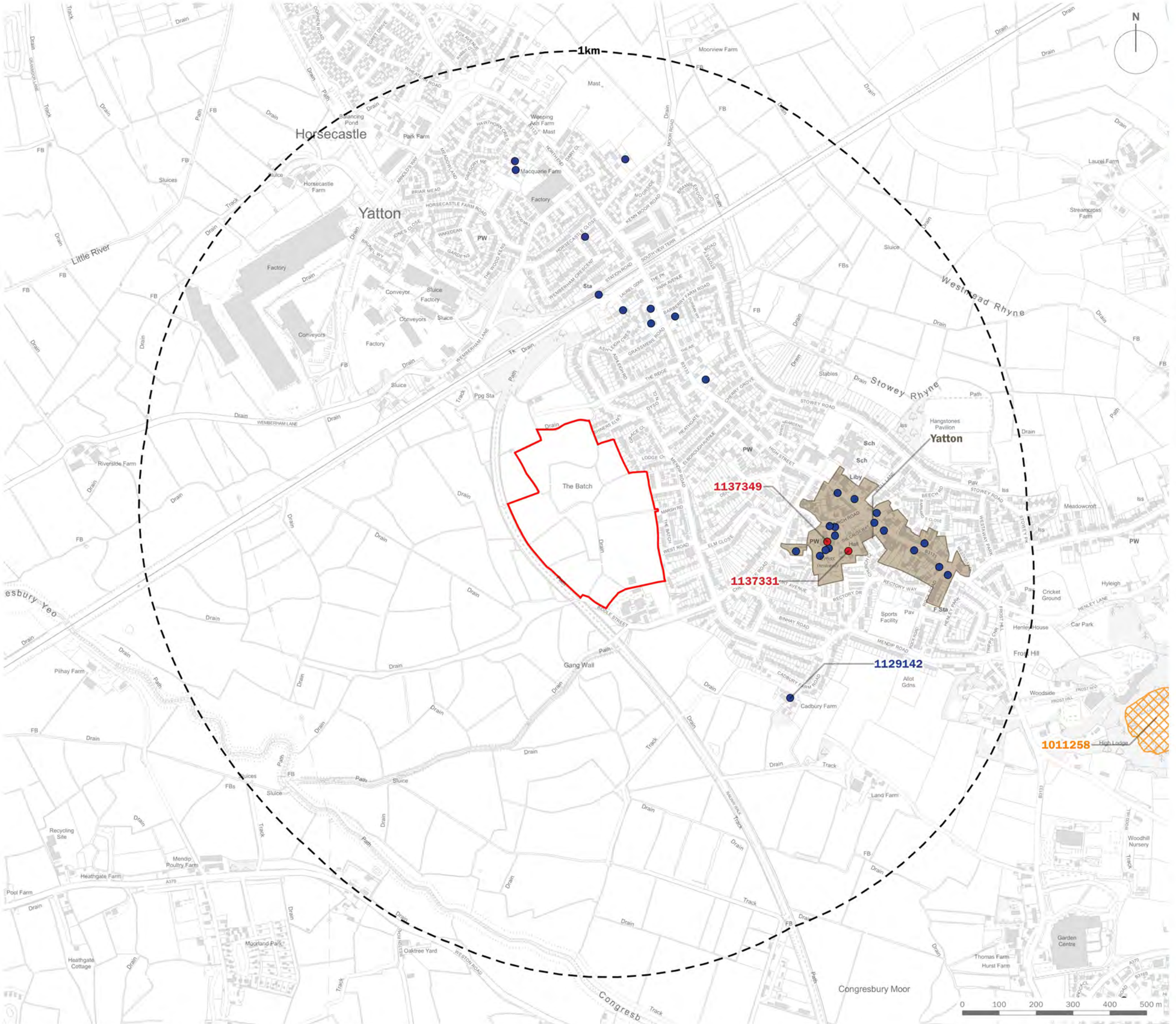
Plan EDP 2: HER Monument Records
(edp7842_d012a 16 March 2023 VMS/RSk)

Plan EDP 3: HER Event Records
(edp7842_d013a 16 March 2023 VMS/RSk)

Plan EDP 4: Extract from Tithe Map of Yatton Parish 1838
(edp7842_d014a 16 March 2023 VMS/RSk)

Plan EDP 5: Historic Maps
(edp7842_d015a 16 March 2023 VMS/RSk)

Plan EDP 6: LiDAR Data
(edp7842_d016a 16 March 2023 VMS/RSk)



Site Boundary

1km Range Ring

Conservation Area

Scheduled Monument

Listed Buildings

Grade I

Grade II

client

Persimmon Homes Severn Valley

project title

Land at Rectory Farm (North), Yatton, North Somerset

drawing title

Designated Heritage Assets

date	**16 MARCH 2023**	drawn by	**VMS**
drawing number	**edp7842_d011a**	checked	**RSk**
scale	**1:10,000 @ A3**	QA	**GYo**

the environmental dimension partnership

Registered office: 01285 740427 - www.edp-uk.co.uk - info@edp-uk.co.uk

Site Boundary

500m Study Area

HER Monument

N

0 50 100 150 200 250 m

client

Persimmon Homes Severn Valley

project title

Land at Rectory Farm (North), Yatton, North Somerset

drawing title

HER Monument Records

date	**16 MARCH 2023**	drawn by	**VMS**
drawing number	**edp7842_d012a**	checked	**RSk**
scale	**1:7,500 @ A3**	QA	**GYo**

the environmental dimension partnership

Registered office: 01285 740427 - www.edp-uk.co.uk - info@edp-uk.co.uk

Site Boundary

500m Study Area

HER Event

N

0 50 100 150 200 250 m

client

Persimmon Homes Severn Valley

project title

Land at Rectory Farm (North), Yatton, North Somerset

drawing title

HER Event Records

date	**16 MARCH 2023**	drawn by	**VMS**
drawing number	**edp7842_d013a**	checked	**RSk**
scale	**1:7,500 @ A3**	QA	**GYo**

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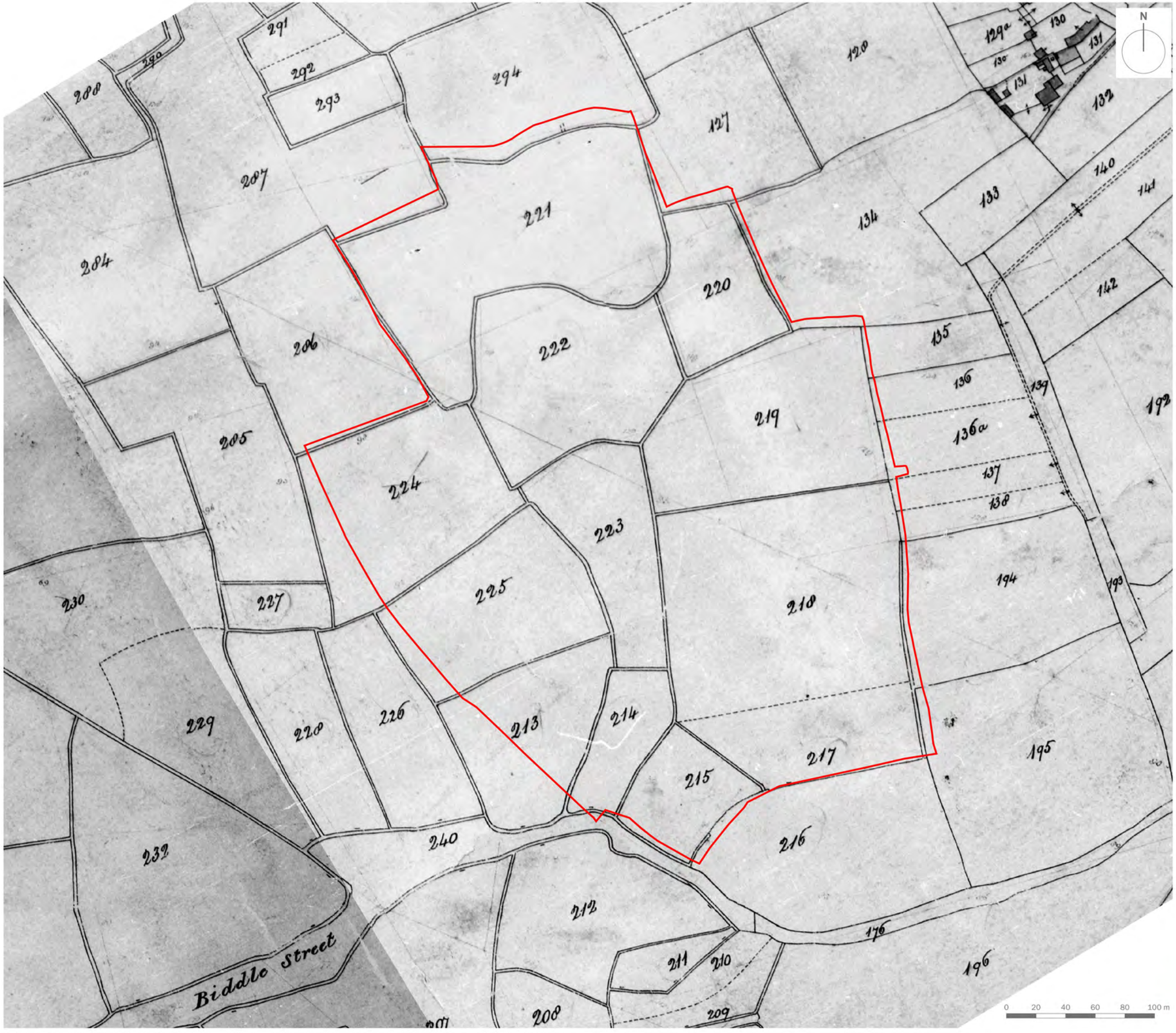
Registered office: 01285 740427 - www.edp-uk.co.uk - info@edp-uk.co.uk



Approximate Site Boundary

client

Persimmon Homes Severn Valley

project title

Land at Rectory Farm (North), Yatton, North Somerset

drawing title

Extract from Tithe Map of Yatton Parish 1838

date	**16 MARCH 2023**	drawn by	**VMS**
drawing number	**edp7842_d014a**	checked	**RSk**
scale	**1:2,500 @ A3**	QA	**GYo**

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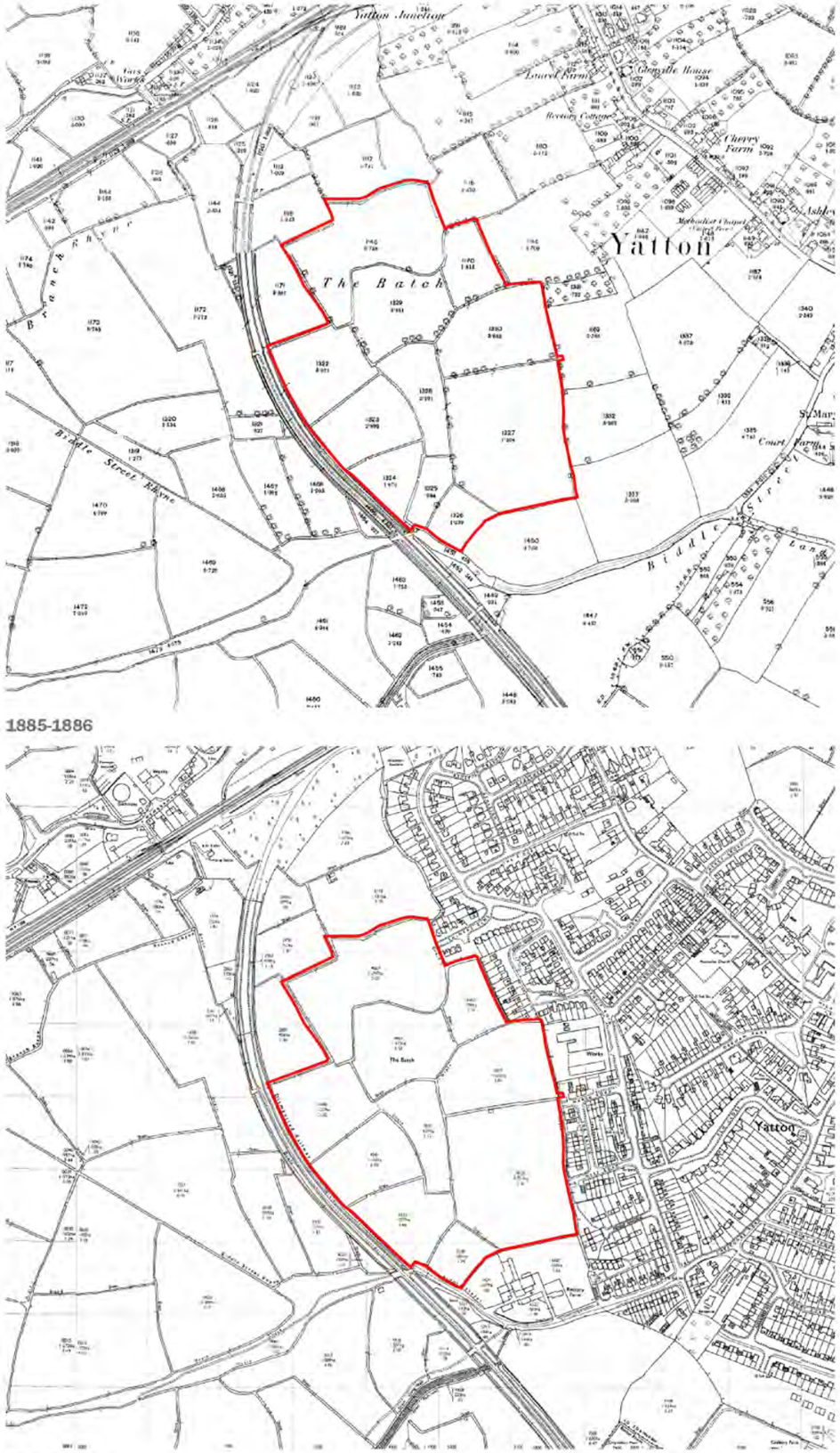
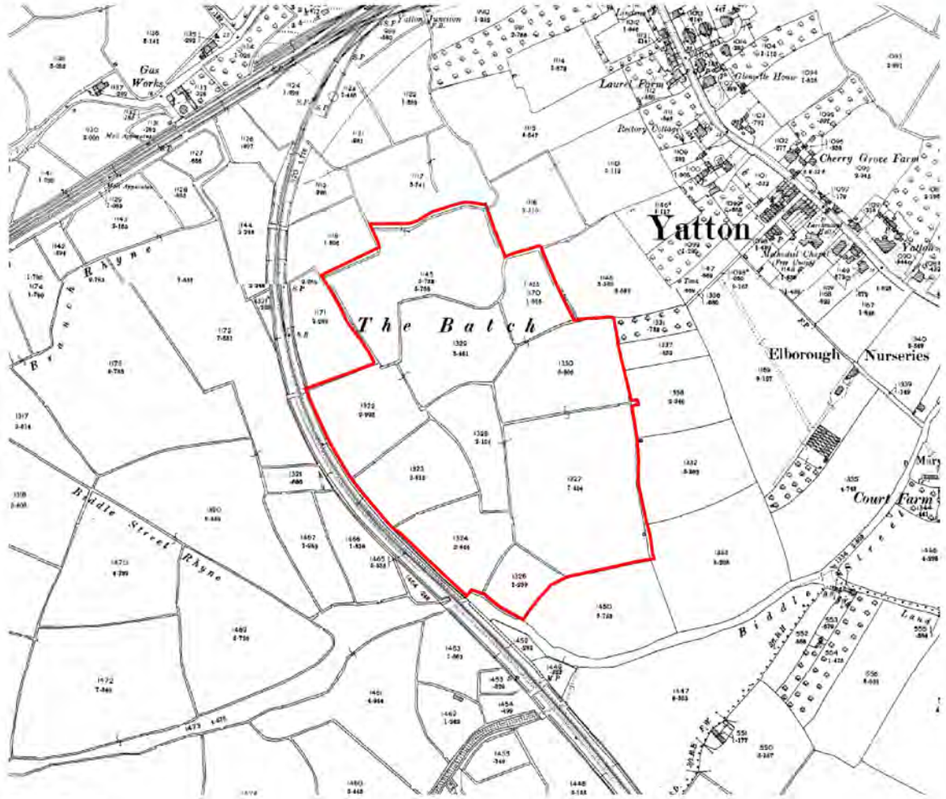
1885-1886



1973-1978



1973-1978

Approximate Site Boundary

0 100 200 300 400 500 m

N

client

Persimmon Homes Severn Valley

project title

Land at Rectory Farm (North), Yatton, North Somerset

drawing title

Historic Maps

date	**16 MARCH 2023**	drawn by	**VMS**
drawing number	**edp7842_d015a**	checked	**RSk**
scale	**1:7,500 @ A3**	QA	**GYo**

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Site Boundary

LiDAR Data Using 1m Digital Terrain Model (DTM) Using Multi-directional Azimuth Shading

client

Persimmon Homes Severn Valley

project title

Land at Rectory Farm (North), Yatton, North Somerset

drawing title

LiDAR Data

date	**16 MARCH 2023**	drawn by	**VMS**
drawing number	**edp7842_d016a**	checked	**RSk**
scale	**1:3,500 @ A3**	QA	**GYo**

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URBAN DESIGN GROUP REGISTERED PRACTICE

IEMA CORPORATE PARTNER

Landscape Institute
Registered practice