



**Herefordshire
Council**

**A Conservation Management Plan for Rotherwas House
Scheduled Area, Rotherwas, Herefordshire.**

November 2015



**A BASIC MANAGEMENT PLAN
TO ASSIST IN GUIDING THE MANAGEMENT
OF THE MONUMENT**

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**Scheduled Monument No. 1014880
NGR: SO 5355 3839
Event Number: EHE80167
Herefordshire Archaeology Report No. 354**

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Cover Illustration: "S.W View of Rotherwas House. M.7th June 1799" by James Wathen.

Herefordshire Archaeology is Herefordshire Council's county archaeology service. It advises upon the conservation of archaeological and historic sites and landscapes, and carries out conservation and investigative field projects.

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Summary:

Considerable quantities of rubble and other material had been deposited on the site of Rotherwas House and Formal Gardens (Scheduled Monument No. 1014880), Rotherwas, Herefordshire.

During the deposition of this material, localised areas of the ground surface had become rutted by machinery. These works were undertaken without Scheduled Monument Consent and therefore Historic England instructed the property owner to put in place a methodology for the removal of the material and the reinstatement of any areas of disturbance. Historic England required that these works should be undertaken under archaeological supervision and that these works are documented appropriately.

The archaeological work comprised the following elements:

- The supervision of the removal of all material making up the bunds on the Scheduled Area.
- The supervision of works associated with the reinstatement of the areas of ground affected by rutting
- The production of a written and illustrated archaeological report documenting the works.

These reinstatement works were documented in Herefordshire Archaeology Report 353

In order to assist the landowner in the future management of the monument, Historic England also required the production of a Conservation Management Plan (this document).

Disclaimer: It should not be assumed that land referred to in this document is accessible to the public. Location plans are indicative only. National Grid References are accurate to approximately 10m. Measured dimensions are accurate to within 1m at a scale of 1:500, 0.1m at 1:50 and 0.02m at 1:20m

Figures contained within this report contain material from the Ordnance Survey. The grid in this material is the National Grid taken from the Ordnance Survey map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office (OS Licence 100024168). This material has been reproduced in order to locate the site in its environs.

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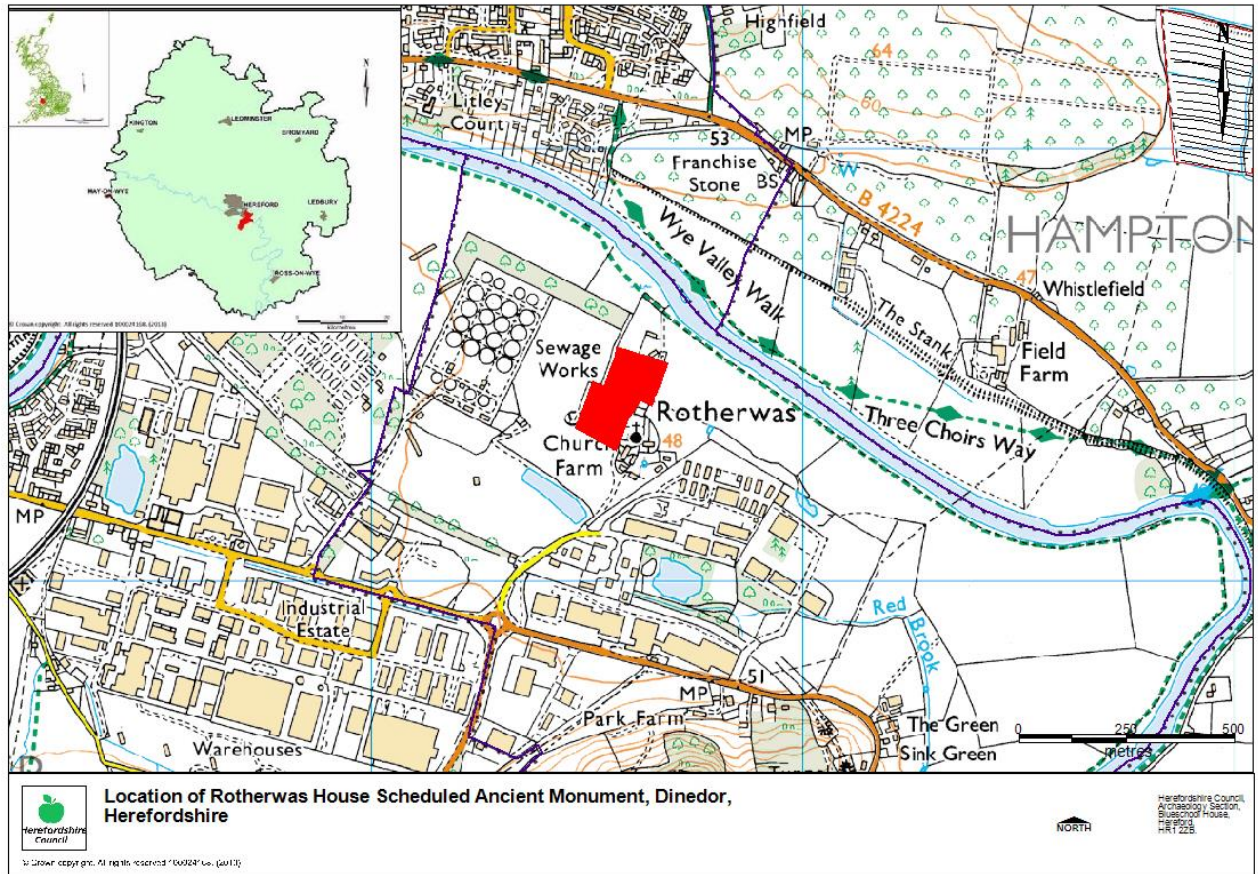


Figure 1: Site location, Dinedor Parish, Herefordshire, © Crown copyright. All rights reserved 100024168.

Introduction

This report (HAR 354), forms a basic Conservation Management Plan for the future management of Rotherwas House Scheduled Ancient Monument, (Monument No. 1014880). This has been produced after unauthorised works were found to have been undertaken on the monument. The area covered by this plan is not the entire area designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument but is confined to the area affected by the unauthorised Works (see Figure 1).

Historic England were notified of the unauthorised works on 10th April 2015 and visited the site with Herefordshire Archaeology and the land owner on 13th April. On 15th April, Historic England formally contacted the land owner, informing him of the contraventions and instructing him to cease any further works.

As part of the reinstatement works, Herefordshire Archaeology was contracted by the landowner to prepare and submit a Written Scheme of Investigation to Historic England. This set out the methodology to be used and the archaeological provision in place during the removal of banded material which was placed within the Scheduled Ancient Monument

without consent. It also described the types of machinery to be employed during these works together with a description of how the reinstatement of the affected areas of the site would be achieved. This was approved by Historic England with the additional request for the preparation of a management plan for the site once the re-instatement works had been completed. The landowner then commissioned Herefordshire Archaeology to monitor and report on the re-instatement works and to produce a management plan. The reinstatement works were completed on 31st August 2015 (Hoverd, 2015, HAR 353).

Site Location, Topography, Geology

The scheduled monument that is the site of Rotherwas House (HER 9438) is situated within the north of Dinedor Parish, Herefordshire (SO 5355 3839) at approximately 45m above sea level. Some 300m to the north the site is bounded by the River Wye, to the south, east and west the site is surrounded by the Rotherwas Enterprise Zone, an industrial estate located on the site of Rotherwas Royal Ordnance Factory established during the First World War.

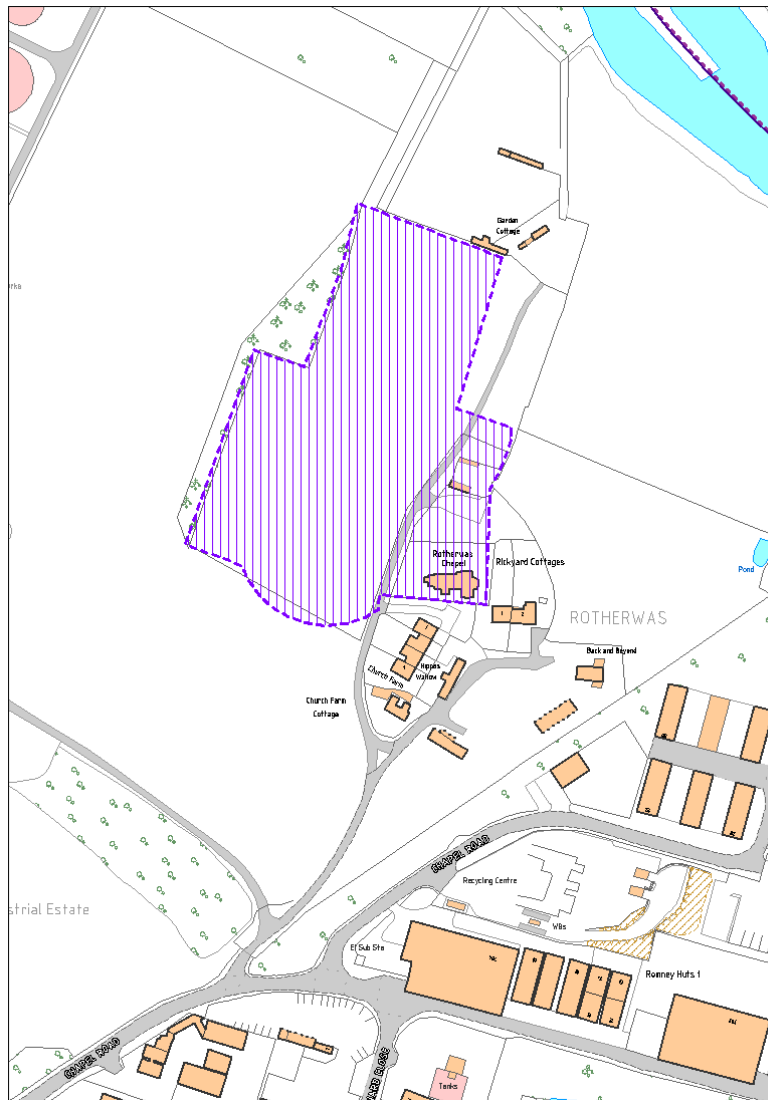


Figure 2: Area and extent of scheduled area. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved 100024168.

The solid geology is of Raglan Mudstone formation which is made up of interbedded siltstone and mudstone formed during the Silurian period. The site of Rotherwas House is located upon a gentle slope that extends down towards the River Wye to the north of the site.

Historical and archaeological background

One of the earliest accounts of the manor of Rotherwas (Retrowas) comes from the Domesday Book which states that Rotherwas Manor was owned by Gilbert, son of Thorold (Thorn, 1983). Prior to this the manor was held by Sigeric.

The origins to the name Rotherwas is likely to take its-self from the Old English “*hryther*” meaning cattle and “*waesse*”, a west-midlands place name for land by a major river (in this case the River Wye) liable to sudden flooding (Coppelstone-Crow, 1989).

The house was later owned by the Walshes who preceded the Bodenhams. The Bodenhams owned the manor from about the middle of the fifteenth century, from which time it was their principal seat. Thomas Blount described the house in 1675 as “*a delicious seat, situate near the river Wye and within two myles of Hereford, abounding with store of excellent fruit rich meadows, and fertyle arable; having also a Park within less than half a myle of the House where-there is a neat Lodge, upon a Hill ...*” (Botzum). The hill in question is that of Dinedor Hill, a prominent northeast to southwest aligned ridge. Rotherwas Park Wood is located upon the eastern end of the ridge; the site of the Lodge is currently unknown. By this date however, Blount notes the building and estate to be in a state of disrepair. The reason for this appears to have been the Bodenham’s loss of wealth due in part to their support of King Charles I during the Civil War.

It was not until the 1700’s that the Bodenham family regained their wealth and in 1731 they built a new house in a different location out of red brick. The house passed through marriage to the Lubienski family and in 1907 the mansion caught fire but survived with minimal damage. In 1912 the manor was put up for auction and was tenanted, during the First World War the building was used as a barracks and was finally demolished completely in 1926.

Much of the walled garden remains to the south together with a number of related buildings. The site of the house is still visible as an area of slightly raised ground. The western drive is still visible as an earthwork as are a number of subtle earthworks relating to the south facing formal gardens.

The area was the subject of a geophysical survey (resistivity) during 2012 as part of The Dinedor Heritage Project, (Atkinson 2013). The outline of the building and its principal rooms were clearly visible as was the top terrace immediately to the south of the house.

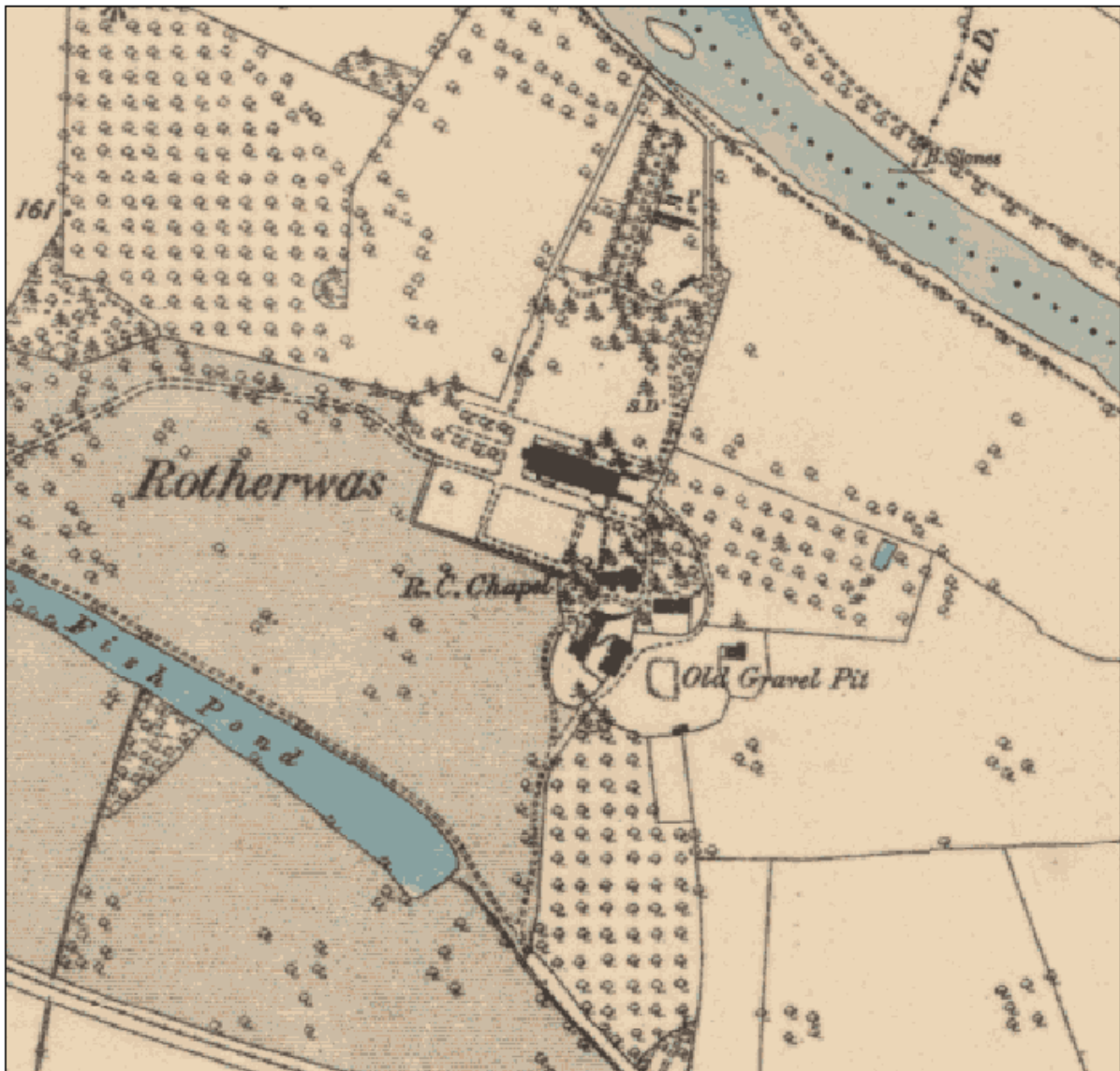


Figure 3: Extract from the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1886-7, showing Rotherwas house, gardens and setting. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved 100024168

Historical Land Use

Documentary evidence shows that the area has been house and formal or semi-formal gardens since at least the 16th century. The House and gardens have undergone a number of rebuilds and re-designs, used as a military barracks during World War I, and were finally demolished in 1926. Much of the parkland immediately to the west and south of the house and grounds survived into the early 2000's.

Current land use and management

Since being designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument the entire area has been managed as permanent pasture, the principle , open area being grazed and / or cut for hay whilst the smaller parcels around Rotherwas Chapel and other buildings being mowed at regular intervals. Up until approximately 2007-8 there was no physical boundary on the southern side of the scheduled area, the site apparently still being open parkland (figure 4).



Figure 4: Aerial Photograph of 2000 showing retained parkland and lack of southern boundary to site. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved 100024168.

This had changed radically by 2009 (figure 5), by which time a straight fence and hedge had been inserted running from the southern end of the shelter belt in a south easterly direction to the access road. This did not follow the line of the scheduled boundary and effectively cut

off part of the southern, curved, boundary of the scheduled area leaving it in, what in 2009 was a cultivated field. The 2009 aerial photograph also clearly shows the scar associated with the renewal of a water main within the scheduled area. It is understood that the holding, including the scheduled area is currently farmed under an Entry Level Stewardship Scheme.



Figure 5: Aerial Photograph of 2009 showing new, straight southern boundary, parkland under cultivation and scar for a replacement water main. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved 100024168.

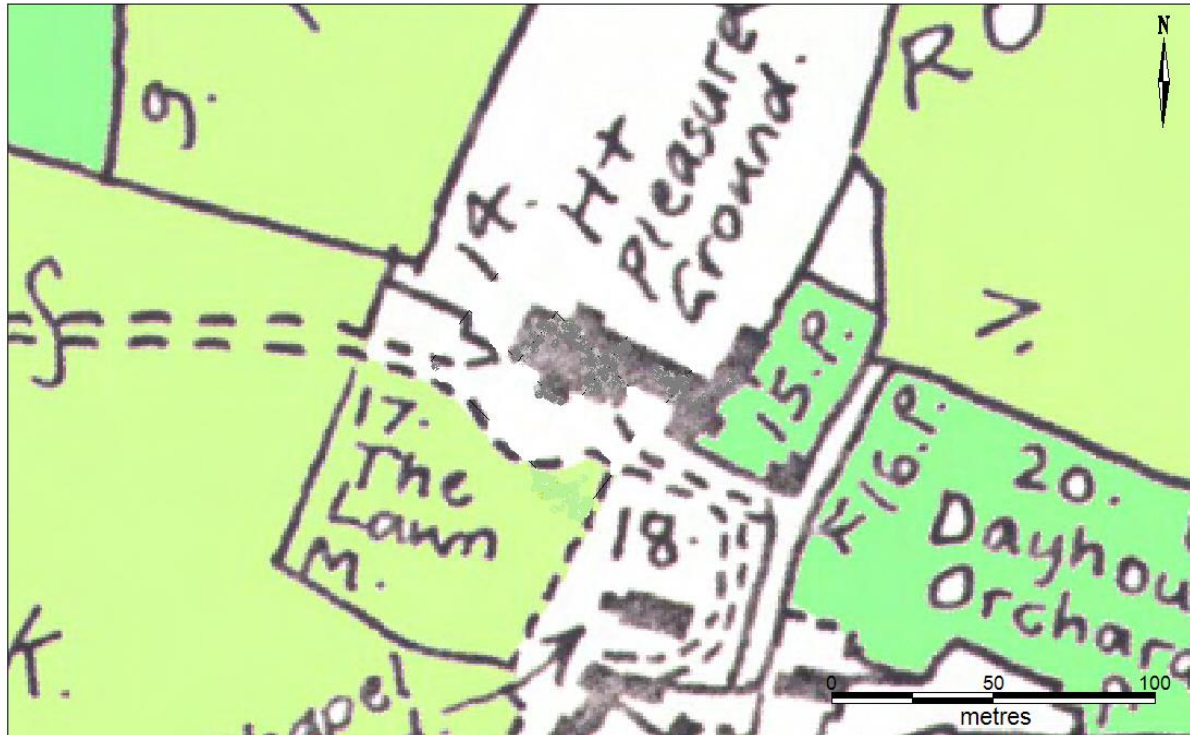


Figure 6: Extract from the 1840 Tithe Map showing Rotherwas House with “Pleasure Grounds” to the north and “The Lawn” to the south. © Geoff Gwatkin. All rights reserved.

The extent and shape of the Scheduled Area was assumed by the author to represent the shape and extent of the house, Chapel and formal / semi-formal gardens, the curved, southern boundary perhaps representing the southern terrace or some other “hard” landscape feature. However, map regression analysis suggests that the southern curve appears to represent (approximately at least) the “bulge” which forms the southern boundary of “The Lawn” as shown on the 1840 Tithe Map, (figure 6), rather than anything more formal.

Management risks and opportunities for the monument and proposed resolutions.

The monument is generally in good condition. The “Pleasure Ground” earthworks are still visible suggesting some form of sunken garden whilst the small enclosed areas around the Chapel and other ancillary buildings have changed little since the 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1904. Subtle earthworks exist which relate to the site of Rotherwas House, it’s principal driveway (to the west) and the formal gardens immediately to the south of the house.

Three management risks have been identified for the scheduled area:

1. The presence of two mature Poplar trees to the north of the site of Rotherwas House. These are approximately 25m in height with full canopy (Plate 1). Whilst to a degree are protected by the shelter belt to their west it is possible that they could be prone to wind blow under certain circumstances.



Plate 1: The two mature Poplar trees to the north of the site of Rotherwas House.

2. The water main terminal close to the south-eastern corner of the scheduled area (Plates 2 & 3). This appears to be contained within a concrete block “box” and has a length of yellow plastic pipe protruding from it, presumably as a marker in order for it to be avoided when mowing.
3. The area of the scheduled monument which has been included within the 2008 / 9 area of cultivation. This represents a small (approximately 8m at its widest point) area of the southern curved boundary to the scheduled area and has been regularly cultivated since 2008, (Plate 4). This includes the insertion of a hedge and post and wire fence line.



Plate 2: Location of 2009 water main terminal within scheduled area.



Plate 2: Detail of housing for 2009 water main within scheduled area.



Plate 4: “new” hedge and post and wire boundary (left side of picture) cutting across the southern boundary of the scheduled area.

Proposed Actions:

1. Commission a survey of the two poplar trees in order to ascertain their integrity.
2. Cap or seal water main terminal in order to make it less prominent within the scheduled area.
3. Remove modern hedge and associated post and wire fencing and move the boundary 10m to the south in order that the whole of the scheduled area is under a single and more appropriate, management regime.

Constraints to better management

There are two principle constraints to the better management of the site, which include statutory or regulatory constraints.

- **Scheduled Monument Consent** – Works within the Scheduled Ancient Monument are controlled by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. As

such there can be no unauthorised ground disturbances, no tipping or flooding. Proposals for such works must be the subject of an application for Scheduled Monument Consent to English Heritage. The replacement and installation of new field gates, pedestrian gates and fencing would require Scheduled Monument Consent as would the removal of fencing and hedging.

- **Felling Licence** – The felling of timber is controlled by the Forestry Act 1967. As such a felling licence from the Forestry Commission may be required to fell timber and where it is required it is an offence to do so without authorisation.

Actions required in order to achieve successful management outcomes.

Management of the monument- It is clear that the majority of the monument has been well managed over the years. There is no evidence of overgrazing, very limited evidence of rabbit activity and, with the exception of the recent un-authorised works (dumping and rutting), little damage to the earthworks within the scheduled area is evident.

The circumstances regarding the water main renewal are, at present unclear. If the renewal involved the removal of the original pipe and the insertion of a new pipe within the original cut this would have had little effect upon the buried archaeology. This however has not been demonstrated.

The removal of the southern boundary hedge and fence line is desirable in order to bring the scheduled area under a single type of management which is more appropriate to the site. Again, the circumstances surrounding the planting of the hedge (approximately 7 years ago), together with the erection of the post and wire fence, are unclear.

It is understood that the landowner is supportive of these actions and desires to use the main, open part of the scheduled area as light horse livery in the near future. This would be acceptable from a management point of view as long as the stocking density was light and that areas for watering / feeding were agreed with Historic England.