



prospect archaeology

Client: Bishopdyke Estates LLP

The Proving Ground, Sherburn-in-Elmet

Cultural Heritage Assessment

Report No. GEG01-01
NGR: SE 523 333

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bishopdyke Estates LLP are making a planning application for the redevelopment of the eastern end of Sherburn Airfield's runway for B2 and B8 use. The site measures approximately 34.68ha centred on NGR SE 523 333.

The site has been used as an airfield since the First World War, and although it is now in use as an HGV vehicle testing facility, the runway remains in use for vehicle testing.

The 14th century Bishops Dyke, a canal used for transporting stone from quarries to the west of Sherburn to the River Ouse at Cawood, forms the northern boundary of the site. Roman material and evidence for medieval occupation are recorded to the south of the site and further medieval activity is attested to the north and possibly the east. The current village of Sherburn-in-Elmet was an important administrative centre from the Saxon period and a market town during the medieval period. From the 19th century its importance declined and it is now a large village.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, a small settlement called Lennerton existed within and around the site. In the 19th century this included a Wesleyan chapel. The properties that stood within the site were cleared for the airfield in the first half of the 20th century. The airfield was of importance during the First World War as a construction site for Blackbird Cuckoos. Following a spell as the base of the Yorkshire Aeroplane Club in the inter-war years, the airfield came back into use during the Second World War for the construction of Fairey Swordfish and for use by the Airborne Forces Experimental Establishment.

The site has the potential to contain evidence of post-medieval and possibly medieval activity relating to the settlement and chapel at Lennerton. Although there is no direct evidence for any such activity on this site, the potential for pre-medieval activity is also recognised. The numerous aircraft crashes that took place and the 20th century use of the site as an airfield are considered to preclude it from geophysical survey. A limited programme of trial trenching will be required to determine the presence / absence of archaeological deposits, particularly with regard to the settlement of Lennerton.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report considers the known or suspected archaeological remains lying within and adjacent to the proposed Development Site at SE **523 333** in support of a planning application.
- 1.2 The Site is currently in use for a mixture of arable farming and as an HGV vehicle testing station. It is a largely level site with the former runway (now a test track) extending nearly the full length of the site from south-west to north-east.

2.0 STATUTORY AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 National Policy

- 2.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012, coming into immediate effect and replacing all previous Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGs) and Planning Policy Statements (PPSs). Set out below is a summary of the relevant NPPF guidance in Section 12 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' as it relates to archaeology only.
- 2.1.2 Section 12 provides guidance on the treatment of archaeological remains within the planning process. Whilst it is recognised that important remains should be retained, the benefits of development may be considered to outweigh the benefit of retention, especially where remains of less than national importance are concerned. Early consideration of the potential for 'heritage assets' is advised.
- 2.1.3 Paragraph 129 states: 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. 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.
- In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

2.1.4 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 loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
- conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
- the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

2.1.5 Local planning authorities should make information about the significance of the historic environment gathered as part of plan-making or development management publicly accessible. They should also require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible.

2.1.6 The Highways Act 1980 (and later amendments), The Electricity Act 1989, Water Resources Act 1991, Environment Act 1995 place a duty of care on the relevant government departments, agencies and companies to consider the historic environment whilst conducting their business.

2.2 Local Policy Guidance

2.2.1 The Selby District Local Plan (SDLP) is being replaced by a Local Development Framework (LDF) although SDLP policies remain in force for the time being.

Amongst the saved policies from the SDLP are those relating to the historic environment. Relevant to this site are ENV27 and ENV28, dealing with archaeological sites. These recognise that archaeological remains are a finite and non-renewable resource. ENV27 identifies the presumption in favour of physical preservation of scheduled monuments and other nationally important archaeological sites and their settings. ENV28 requires evaluation excavation to determine the impact of a development proposal on known or suspected sites of archaeological interest and requires either preservation in situ through a redesign of a development of investigation and recording where this is not possible.

3.0 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY AND SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

3.1 Buried Heritage

3.1.1 The buried heritage (archaeology) has been considered through desk-based assessment and a site visit. A full list of referenced sources is provided and references are given. Staff at North Yorkshire Historic Environment Record gave advice and information about known archaeological sites of interest in the vicinity of the study area, and where relevant these were further investigated. As Selby District was formerly in West Yorkshire, both the West and North Yorkshire Records Offices have been consulted. Additional sources consulted included:

- information available on a variety of internet sites including University of Leicester Historical Directories (www.historical-directories.org/), Access to Archives (www.a2a.org.uk) and the Archaeology Data Service (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/>); the Heritage Gateway (www.heritagegateway.org.uk) and data from PastScape (www.pastscape.org.uk). A full list of sites accessed can be found in the Bibliography section
- cartographic sources held by the Ordnance Survey;
- A site visit and walkover survey was undertaken by Nansi Rosenberg on 12th August 2011.

3.1.2 The historical development of the site has been established through reference to these sources and is described in the Baseline Conditions section of this report. This has been used to identify areas of potential archaeological interest. Each area of archaeological potential has been assessed for its archaeological significance in geographical terms, although it should be noted that despite the national policy

guidance's reliance on geographical significance, there is no statutory definition for these classifications :

- International – cultural properties in the World Heritage List, as defined in the operational guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention;
- National – sites or monuments of sufficient archaeological/historical merit to be designated as Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Other sites or monuments may also be considered of national importance but not appropriate for scheduling due to current use(s) or because they have not yet been fully assessed;
- Regional – sites and monuments of archaeological or historical merit that are well preserved or good examples of regional types or that have an increased value due to their group associations, regional rarity or historical associations.
- Local – sites and monuments of archaeological or historical interest but that are truncated or isolated from their original context and are of limited use in furthering archaeological or historical knowledge.
- Negligible – areas of extremely limited or no archaeological or historic interest. These commonly include areas of major modern disturbance such as quarries, deep basements etc.

3.1.3 The concluding chapter of this document summarises the findings, and provides an opinion on the potential for archaeological remains to be identified, the likely importance of such remains should they exist and the likely impact of the proposed development. Recommendations for further work are provided.

3.2 Built Heritage

3.2.1 No listed or otherwise historically significant buildings are present within or visible from or to the Site.

4.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

4.1 Geology

4.1.1 The site lies on Devensian Galciolacustrine deposits comprising clay and silt overlying sandstone from the Sherwood Sandstone Group (iGeology app, British Geological Survey).

4.2 Topography and setting

- 4.2.1 The site is located to the east of the town of Sherburn-in-Elmet, adjacent and to the east of an existing industrial estate. To the north it is bounded by the Bishop's Dyke canal beyond which lies Bishop Dike Road. To the east is further farmland and to the south is a sewage works and the property called Lennerton Lodge.
- 4.2.2 The land falls very gently from 8m aOD at the south-west end of the site to 6m aOD at the north east. Areas of tarmac and hardstanding mark the position of the former runway and its associate access tracks. A building belonging to Bishopdyke Estates LLP and leased to TMD Friction is located in the centre of the site, north of the runway. All areas not occupied by hard standing or built development are under arable agriculture.

5.0 BASELINE CONDITIONS

- 5.0.1 No archaeological investigations are known within the site but work has taken place close by. Known and suspected archaeological remains are summarised and discussed in the following section. Monuments from the North Yorkshire Historic Environment Record are identified by the MNY signifier; entries from the National Heritage List are identified by NHL; and where these fall within the site, they are indicated in **bold**.

5.1 Designated Heritage Assets

- 5.1.1 There are no designated heritage assets within or within 1km of the site.
- 5.1.2 A single listed building has been identified within 2km of the site. The Barn to the North-East of Croft Farmhouse, Biggin (Grade II, NHL1148449) is not visible to or from the site.

5.2 Prehistoric & Roman Periods (<410AD)

- 5.2.1 There is little evidence for prehistoric activity in the immediate environs of the site. A Bronze Age mace was found at Milford Hagg Farm in 1971 (MNY10358).
- 5.2.2 Field walking undertaken in 1995 in advance of the Gascoigne Wood Spoil Disposal plans identified quantities of 'pot-boilers' which are indicative of prehistoric and/or Roman activity. Roman pottery was also recorded in the same programme of works (WYAS 1995).

5.2.3 Other prehistoric and Roman activity is attested from aerial photographic evidence, geophysical surveys and excavations from near the village of Sherburn-in-Elmet, but this area is largely untested. It has been suggested that the main north-south road through Sherburn was based on a Roman route, and stone sarcophagi found in the village are indicative of a wealthy Roman population but their settlement has not yet been identified.

5.3 Medieval (5th – 16th centuries)

5.3.1 Sherburn lay within the Kingdom of Elmet, formed by King Mascuid the Lame in AD 440. The kingdom was absorbed by Northumbria in AD 617 when King Ceretic was killed in battle. The name Elmet is relatively rare within the kingdom (Barwick in Elmet being the only other example) and it has been suggested that this may have been appended to the name to indicate that it was a late acquisition by the kingdom, perhaps lying on the outer edge of the kingdom.

5.3.2 The manor was owned by King Athelstan (AD 925-940), possibly acquired when Athelstan gained York from the Scandinavians in 927. The king granted the manor to the Archbishop of York in 937 as thanks to God for his defeat of the Scots and Scandinavians in the Battle of Bananburh that year.

5.3.3 The Saxon 'King Athelstan's Palace' is a scheduled monument (NHL 1017486), located adjacent to the church in Sherburn (which also has Saxon origins). It was most likely a manorial centre rather than a palace as we understand them today and was used by the archbishops as a hunting lodge until 1361.

5.3.4 A new planned town was established to the east of the Saxon centre by the Archbishop of York in the 13th century. This new town was located where the present Low Street and Finkle Hill lie today and remains the centre of the modern settlement.

5.3.5 The Bishop's Dyke (**MNY 10351**) is believed to have been constructed to transport stone from Huddlestone Quarry to the River Ouse at Cawood, although it's possible that a watercourse had already been constructed to help with drainage.

5.3.6 A manor house is reported to have existed to the north of the Bishops Dike Road, called Manor Garth (MNY10305, 10310). Very little information is available about

this site. A possible moated site has also been suggested to be identifiable as earthworks to the east of the site at Castle Hill (MNY10315). A trackway (MNY17172) identified from cropmarks running east from the site boundary to the site of 'Castle Hill' may be related to that feature.

- 5.3.7 Ridge and furrow earthworks have been recorded to the south of the site, indicating these areas were under arable agricultural regimes for at least part of the medieval period (MNY10289).

5.4 Post-medieval – Modern Periods (mid-16th – present)

- 5.4.1 Sherburn remained an essentially agricultural centre throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods. A minor battle was fought within the town in 1645 during the English Civil War.
- 5.4.2 The town avoided much of the impact of the industrial revolution but it is during this period that we have the first evidence for a settlement at Lennerton. A number of properties are shown on the Jeffrey's Map of Yorkshire (1775). The nature and precise position of these buildings is unknown but it is notable that two bridges across the Bishop's Dyke are shown, indicating that Lennerton Lane was probably in existence, at least as a rough track, at this time.
- 5.4.3 The parish was enclosed by Act of Parliament in 1770. Unfortunately no map accompanying this award survives.
- 5.4.4 The layout of the site is clearly agricultural as seen in the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1850 (Figure 2). Lennerton Lane is shown leading from Bishops Dike through the site with a small group of properties called Ratten Row marked within the site. This name suggests a terrace of houses – possibly cottages occupied by the farm workers. The Lane crosses Green Dike before splitting to provide access to Lennerton House and Lennerton Farm.
- 5.4.5 By 1891 (Figure 3), Ratten Row is renamed Lennerton and a Wesleyan Methodist Chapel (**MNY 10291**) is marked as one of the 8 or 9 properties. Wesleyan Chapels tended to attract more urban and wealthier non-conformist, however, this would appear to be a small rural community that is unlikely to have been particularly

wealthy. It is also notable that there was also a Wesleyan chapel in the centre of Sherburn at this time.

- 5.4.6 The 1908 map shows the site largely unchanged. A total of 15 buildings can be identified plus two glass houses, although some of the roofed buildings may also be ancillary structures.

5.5 Sherburn Airfield (MNY10281; MNY 10282)

- 5.5.1 The Site was part of an RFC/RAF Aircraft Acceptance Park during the First World War that covered 177 acres by 1918. The Blackburn Aircraft Factory (MNY 10285) was constructing their folding wing, torpedo-carrying biplanes called the Blackburn Cuckoo in a factory located to the west of the Site. The airfield wasn't retained by the armed forces after World War but in 1926 it was back in use by the Yorkshire Aeroplane Club until they moved to Yeadon in 1931. It continued to be used for light aircraft until it was acquired by the Ministry at the start of the Second World War. Initially under Fighter Command, it was also used by Bomber Command as a 'scatter' field, safely storing aeroplanes for redistribution to the operational bases in the area. Because of its excellent rail and road links, Sherburn Airfield was considered ideal for the construction of aircraft rather than as an operational base. Blackburn continued with their production of military aircraft and commenced construction of the Fairey Swordfish torpedo biplane in a new factory at the western end of the airfield in 1940. It continued production of the Swordfish over the next four years, turning out a total of 1,700 complete aircraft parts for a further 1,000.
- 5.5.2 The main runway, which runs through the site, was tarmac, whilst the two additional runways were grass. Although the Ordnance Survey did not record the operational airfield in their 1953 edition, an Air Ministry plan drawn in 1944 and amended in 1945 provides excellent detail of the layout of the site towards the end of its use as a military base (see Plate 2). The 'frying pan' hardstandings shown within the site and in other locations off the runways were the positions in which the aeroplanes parked when they were not in hangars or in use.
- 5.5.3 In 1942 the Airborne Forces Experimental Establishment (AFEE) was moved to Sherburn. This division explored experimental equipment, including air-towed

gliders, the Hafner Rotachute (a one man glider fitted with two auto rotating blades) and the Hafner Rotabuggy, (a rotor equipped jeep). Much of the work done at Sherburn included dropping heavy loads from aircraft, such as tanks and jeeps.

5.5.4 The No 7 Air Transport Auxiliary Ferry Pool was also based at Sherburn, with both male and female pilots ferrying planes around the country.

5.5.5 Numerous aircraft are known to have crashed within the study area. These include:

HER Number	Aircraft	Serial Number
MNY26050	Tutor	K6101
MNY26517	Magister	P2392
MNY26650	Blenheim	N3561
MNY26725	Spitfire	ER947
MNY26746	Hurricane	KX411
MNY26750	Typhoon	DN243
MNY26805	Hampden	AD857
MNY26810	Lysander	V9814
MNY26832	Hudson	V9228
MNY26836	Hamilcar Glider	DR851
MNY26851	Beaufighter	LZ317
MNY26935	Argus	HM179
MNY26977	Argus	FK344
MNY30680	Chipmunk	WB661

5.6 Post-War

5.6.1 The site remained in use for flying after the Second World War, although once again used by civilian flying clubs rather than the military. TMD Friction currently use the main runway as a test track for HGV vehicles.

6.0 ASSESSMENT

- 6.0.1 There is little evidence for pre-medieval activity on the site, although there is evidence in the general area that suggests pre-medieval activity may yet be identified here.
- 6.0.2 The medieval period is focused on the town centre to the west. However, the Bishops Dyke is of archaeological interest and whilst a 14th century date has been broadly accepted, there is a suggestion it may have earlier medieval origins as a drainage feature. Repeated cleaning out of the dyke since the 14th century is likely to have resulted in a significant impact to the survival of evidence for its origins and use during the medieval period.
- 6.0.3 The settlement of Lennerton has 18th century origins and may be earlier. The presence of a chapel in the late 19th century raises the prospect of burials associated with the chapel. The settlement was cleared to make way for the runway and there may be little surviving as a result.
- 6.0.4 The use of the airfield is well documented and is further recorded in aerial photographs, maps. There have been numerous aircraft crashes which will have scattered metal debris across the site. This, and the presence of 'frying pan' hardstandings, reduces the potential to use geophysical survey to evaluate the site for archaeological activity.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.0.1 There is potential for archaeological activity dating to the post-medieval period and earlier on the site. However, the impact of the 20th century use as an airfield, particularly for experimental work resulting in a large number of aircraft crashes, means the site would be unsuitable for geophysical survey. It is also likely that the 20th century use of the site would have had a significant impact on the potential for survival of archaeological features.
- 7.0.2 It is concluded that whilst the site has some potential for features of archaeological interest to exist, it is unlikely that any such archaeological activity would be of national importance. As such there should be no reason to refuse planning permission on archaeological grounds. A field evaluation in the form of a limited

programme of trial trenching would be required to determine the presence / absence of archaeological features and to allow an appropriate mitigation strategy to be developed if necessary.

8.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cartographic / Archival Sources

Ordnance Survey 1850

Ordnance Survey 1891

Ordnance Survey 1908

Ordnance Survey 1953

Ordnance Survey 1961

Ordnance Survey 1986

Internet Sites

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www.heritagegateway.org.uk

www.genuki.org.uk

www.pastscape.org/homepage/

www.multimap.co.uk

9.0 ILLUSTRATIONS



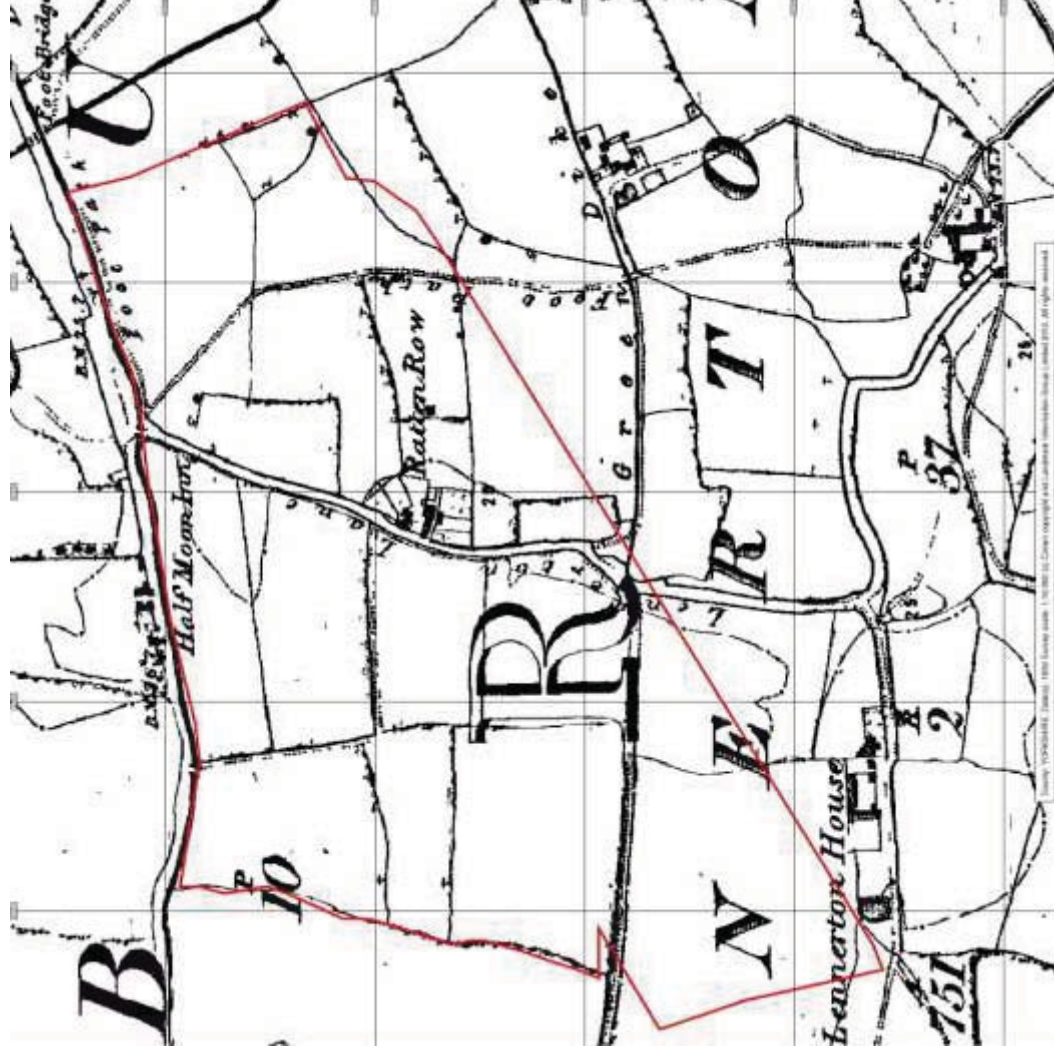


Figure 2: Ordnance Survey 1850

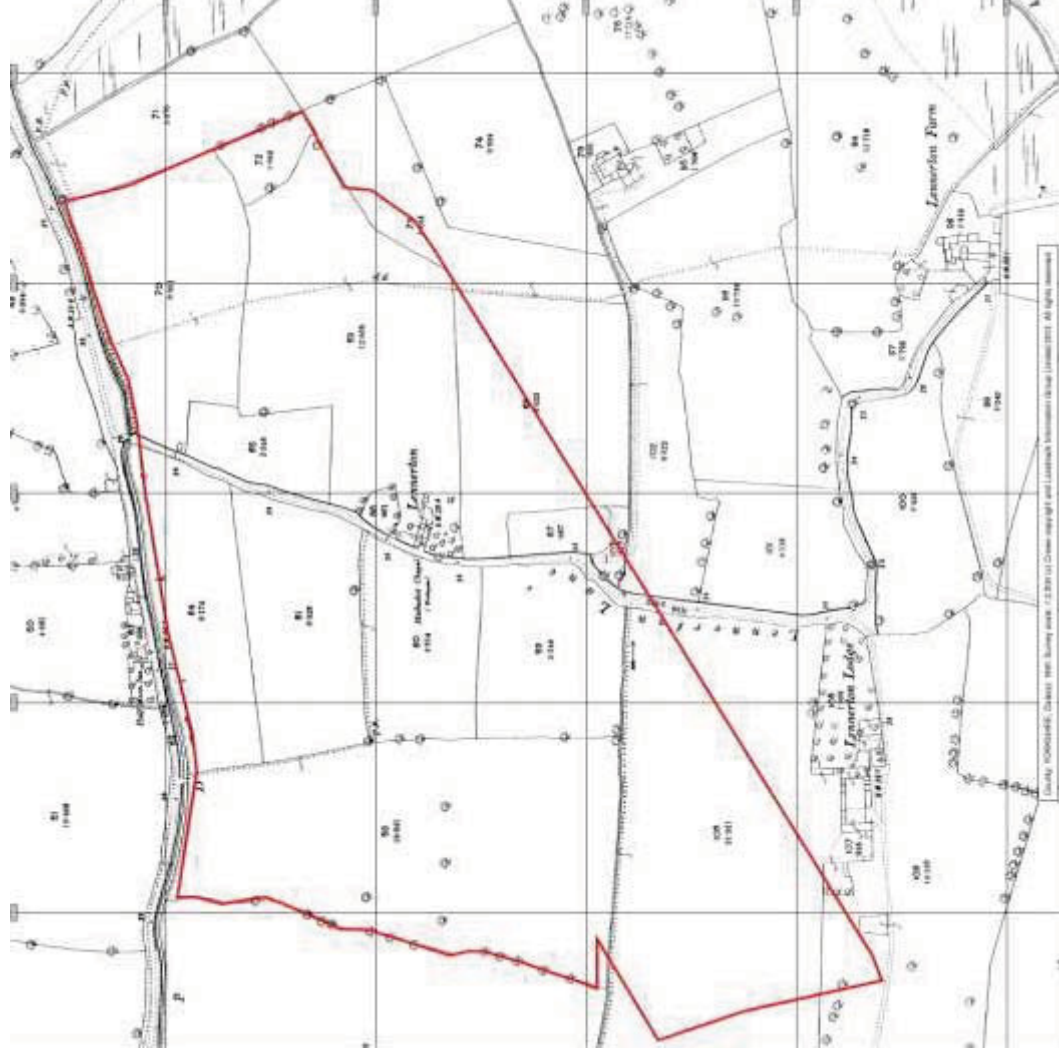


Figure 3: Ordnance Survey 1891



Figure 4: Ordnance Survey 1908

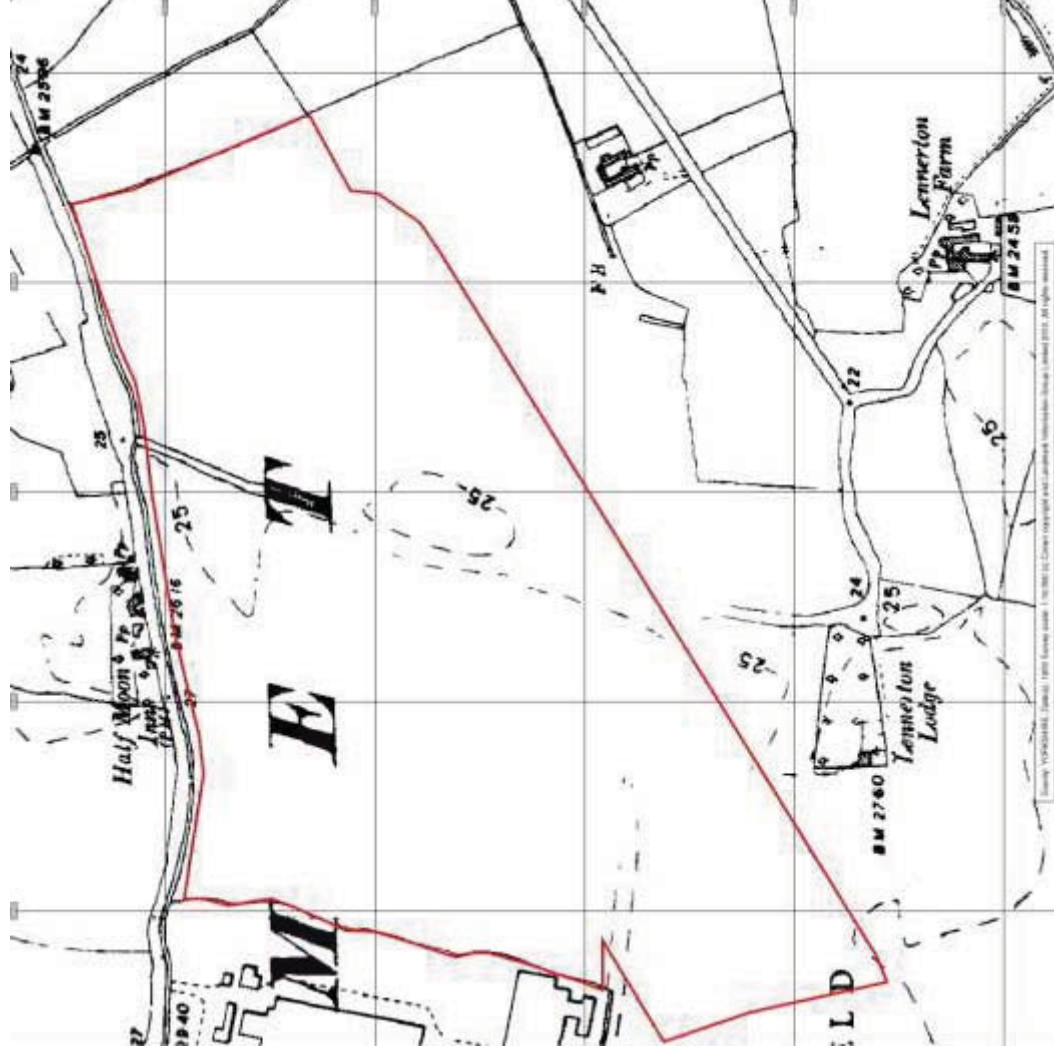


Figure 5: Ordnance Survey 1953



Figure 6: Ordnance Survey 1961

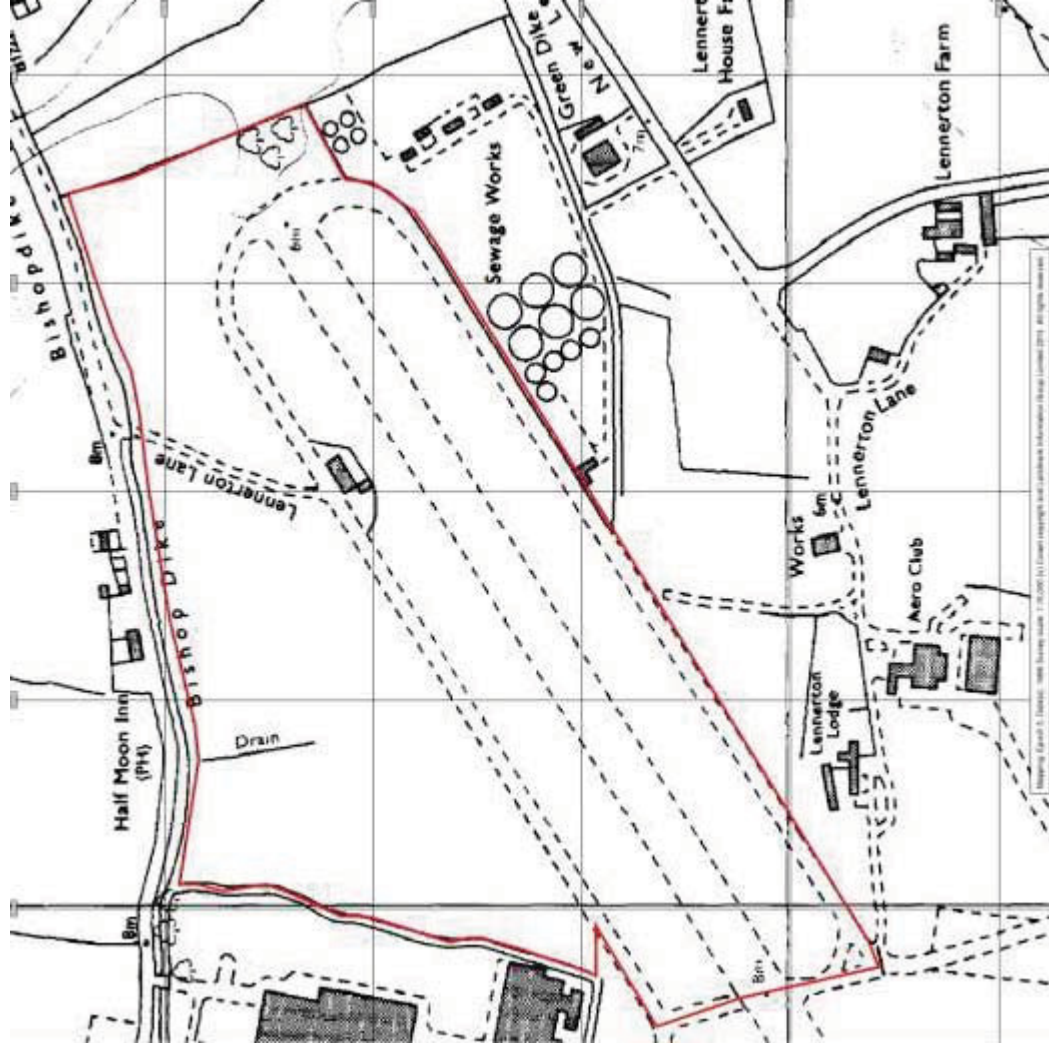


Figure 7: Ordnance Survey 1987



Plate 1: Aerial photograph taken 24/01/2008 from north-west

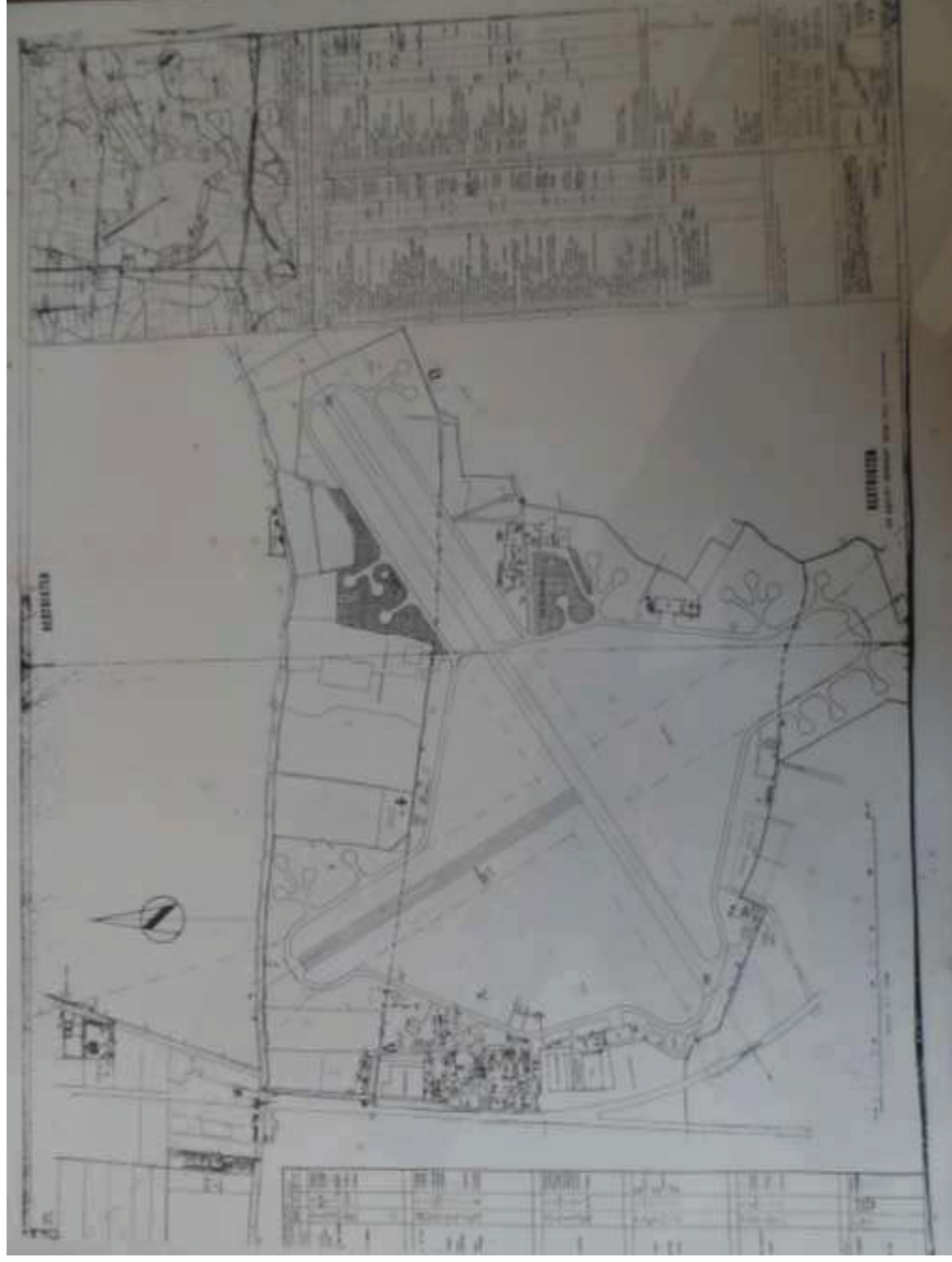


Plate 2: Air Ministry Plan, November 1944



Plate 3: The Bishop's Dyke looking west towards Sherburn



Plate 4: View south along Lennerton Lane towards Mintex facility



Plate 5: View west along runway