

Pixford Fruit Farm, Ash Priors, Taunton Deane, Somerset Archaeological Desk Based Assessment

Client: ASPIRE PLANNING

AB Heritage Project No:10492

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AB Heritage Limited has been commissioned by Aspire Planning Ltd to produce an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment for a proposed development at Pixford Fruit Farm, Ash Priors, Taunton Deane, Somerset.

There are no statutory heritage features located within the bounds of the proposed development site.

Evidence from historic maps and aerial photographs has identified two former field boundaries [AB 40 & 42]; a possible L-shaped earthwork feature [AB 41], the location of three former Modern buildings [AB 34] and a former Turnpike road [AB 39] within the bounds of the proposed development site. Therefore, there is considered to be a high potential for the survival of features dating at least to the Post-Medieval and Modern periods. These heritage features are considered to be of local importance at most and the impact upon these features, if present, is thought to be low with a minor overall significance of impacts

Historic map evidence has also identified the line of a possible routeway [**AB 38**], potentially of some antiquity, which may have been used over a long period. This lies immediately adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site and there is concluded to be a medium-low potential for the survival of archaeological features associated with this, relating to the potential for roadside activity etc. The significance of such activity is currently unknown but, as with the routeway, is likely to be of local importance at most, should such evidence survive. Where development crosses this area there is considered to be a low impact on potential remains, with an overall minor significance of impact.

Given the relative density of Medieval archaeology within the wider 1km study area, there is considered to be a low potential for the survival of complex/significant archaeological features of this date within the bounds of the proposed development site. These features, if present, are likely to be of local importance at most. Any impact upon heritage features of Medieval date, should they survive is also considered to be low with the overall significance of impacts thought to be minor.

A Preliminary Visual Appraisal was carried out for the key designated heritage features located within the ZTV (Zone of Theoretical Visibility) (i.e. the Northern Lodge [AB 11] and Ash Priors Conservation Area [AB 36]), with the addition of the Combe Florey Conservation Area [AB 35] based on the request of the local planning authority's Conservation Officer. Overall, based on the natural topography of the land, tree cover, and structural remains, there is limited / no intervisibility between these heritage assets / areas, and the proposed development site. Therefore, there was considered to be no significant visual impact upon designated heritage features.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 AB Heritage Limited (hereinafter AB Heritage) has been commissioned by Aspire Planning Limited to produce an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment to support a forthcoming planning application for a proposed development at Pixford Fruit Farm, Ash Prior, Taunton Deane, Somerset.
- 1.1.2 This report includes a description of the baseline conditions; an examination of available documentary, cartographic and known archaeological evidence; and identifies any known and potential cultural heritage receptor(s) within the application site and its surrounding area. It proposes a suitable mitigation strategy for archaeology, where such a works are deemed appropriate.

1.2 Site Location & Description

- 1.2.1 The proposed development site covers one field with a total area of c. 8.2 hectares, located at ST 15107 30165. The proposed development site is situated c. 400m to the north of the village of Ash Priors and is bounded on the west side by a narrow road. The proposed development site is bounded by agricultural fields to the eastern, northern and southern sides.
- 1.2.2 A footpath runs approximately north-south along the eastern boundary of the proposed development site. A pond is situated towards the southern boundary of the proposed development site. A small farmyard is located immediately adjacent to the south-east corner of the proposed development site. This contains a number of modern breeze block and corrugated iron built farm buildings.

1.3 Geology & Topography

- 1.3.1 The underlying solid geology within the proposed development site comprises sandstone of the Otter Sandstone Formation. This was laid down 229–246 million years ago in an environment previously dominated by rivers.
- 1.3.2 No additional superficial geological deposits have been recorded across the proposed development site (BGS 2015).
- 1.3.3 The topography of the proposed development site slopes down from the west towards the east. The western end of the proposed development site is located c. 105m above OD and the eastern end of the proposed development site is situated c. 97m above OD.

1.4 Proposed Development

1.4.1 The proposed development consists of the installation of a 7 MW solar farm. This will include the insertion of solar panels, associated inverter housing sub stations, transformers, access roadways from the south-western corner to the inverter housing sub stations and a perimeter fence. The solar panels will avoid the area immediately surrounding the existing pond towards the southern boundary of the proposed development site (See Figure 2).

2. AIMS & METHODOLOGY

- 2.1.1 Early consultation on the results of archaeological research and consideration of the implications of proposed development are the key to informing reasonable planning decisions.
- 2.1.2 The aim of this report is to facilitate such a process by understanding the historical development of the proposed development site and the likely impact upon any surviving archaeological resource resulting from the proposed development, devising appropriate mitigation responses where necessary.

2.2 Aims of Works

- 2.2.1 The assessment has been carried out, in regard to the collation of baseline information, in line with the Institute for Archaeologists' Standard and Guidance for Desk-Based Assessment (1994, latest revision November 2012).
- 2.2.2 This assessment includes relevant information contained in various statutory requirements, national, regional and local planning policies and professional good practice guidance, including:
 - Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act, 1979
 - Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990
 - The National Planning Policy Framework, 2012

2.3 Methodology of Works

- 2.3.1 The Somerset Historic Environment Record (HER) is the primary source of information concerning the current state of archaeological and architectural knowledge in this area. For reporting purposes the HER information has been re-numbered with AB numbers, which can be viewed in Appendix 1. The information contained within this database was supported by examination of data from a wide range of other sources, principally:
 - The Heritage Gateway (www.heritagegateway.org.uk) for information from English
 Heritage National Monuments Record (NMR), Pastscape and other research resources,
 including the Access to Archives (A2A)
 - The English Heritage website professional pages, particularly the National Heritage List For England (NHLE)
 - A site-walk over was carried out on the 22nd April 2015
 - A visit to the Somerset Archives held at the Somerset Heritage Centre was undertaken on the 13th April 2015
 - Additional relevant documentary and online historic sources
- 2.3.2 Information from these sources was used to understand:
 - Information on statutory and non-statutory designated sites
 - Information on heritage assets recorded on the Somerset HER

- Readily accessible information on the proposed development site's history from readily available historic maps and photographs
- Any information on the proposed development site contained in published and unpublished archaeological and historical sources, including any previous archaeological investigations undertaken within the study area
- A greater understanding of key cultural heritage issues of the proposed development site
 and surrounding area, developed through the onsite walkover, including information on
 areas of past truncation within the proposed development site boundary
 - The impact of the proposed development on the known and potential archaeological resource, resulting in the formulation of a mitigation strategy, where required, which appropriately targets any future works to those required to gain planning consent.
- 2.3.3 The Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment has examined heritage records within 1km of the centred point of the proposed development site. This agreement was made by Kerry Kerr-Peterson (AB Heritage, Assistant Project Archaeologist) with the Taunton Deane Conservation Officer (Nigel Pratt) via telephone on the 13th April 2015 and the Taunton Deane Senior Historic Environment Officer (Steve Membery) via email on the 14th April 2015 and.

2.4 Assessment of the Cultural Heritage Resource

2.4.1 This desk-based assessment contains a record of the known and potential cultural heritage resource of an area. In relation to buried archaeological remains, where there is a potential for encountering a particular resource within the proposed development site this is assessed according to the following scale:

Low - Very unlikely to be encountered on site

Medium - Possibility that features may occur / be encountered on site

High - Remains almost certain to survive on site

2.4.2 There is currently no standard adopted statutory or government guidance for assessing the importance of an archaeological feature and this is instead judged upon factors such as statutory and non-statutory designations, architectural, archaeological or historical significance, and the contribution to local research agendas. Considering these criteria each identified feature can be assigned to a level of importance in accordance with a five point scale (Table 1, below).

Table 1: Assessing the Importance of a Cultural Heritage Site

SCALE OF SITE IM	SCALE OF SITE IMPORTANCE					
NATIONAL	The highest status of site, e.g. Scheduled Monuments (or undesignated assets of schedulable quality and importance). Grade I and Grade II* Listed Buildings. Other listed buildings that can be shown to have exceptional qualities in their fabric or historical associations not adequately reflected in the listing grade. Conservation Areas containing very important buildings. Undesignated structures of clear national importance. Extremely well preserved historic landscape, whether inscribed or not, with exceptional coherence, time depth, or other critical factor(s).					
REGIONAL	Grade II Listed Buildings or other designated or undesignated archaeological sites (in addition to those listed above), or assets of a reasonably defined extent and significance, or reasonable evidence of occupation / settlement, ritual, industrial activity Examples may include areas containing buildings that contribute significantly to its historic character, burial sites, deserted medieval villages, Roman roads and dense scatter of finds.					
LOCAL	Evidence of human activity more limited in historic value than the examples above, or compromised by poor preservation and/or survival of context associations, though which still have the potential to contribute to local research objectives. Examples include sites such as 'locally designated' buildings or undesignated structures / buildings of limited historic merit, out-of-situ archaeological findspots / ephemeral archaeological evidence and historic field systems and boundaries etc.					
NEGLIGIBLE	Assets with very little or no surviving archaeological interest. Examples include destroyed antiquities, structures of almost no architectural / historic merit, buildings of an intrusive character or relatively modern / common landscape features such as quarries, drains and ponds etc.					
UNKNOWN	Insufficient information exists to assess the importance of a feature (e.g. unidentified features on aerial photographs).					

- 2.4.3 The importance of already identified cultural heritage resources is determined by reference to existing designations. Where classification of a receptor's value covered a range of the above possibilities or for previously unidentified features where no designation has been assigned, the value of the receptor was based on professional knowledge and judgement.
- 2.4.4 For some types of finds or remains there is no consistent value and the importance may vary, for example Grade II Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. For this reason, adjustments are occasionally made, where appropriate, based on professional judgement.

2.5 Impact Assessment Criteria

2.5.1 The magnitude of impact upon the archaeological and heritage resource, which can be considered in terms of direct and indirect impacts, is determined by identifying the level of effect from the proposed development upon the baseline conditions of the site and the cultural heritage resource identified. The criteria for assessing the magnitude of impact are set out in Table 2 (below).

2.5.2 In certain cases it is not possible to confirm the magnitude of impact upon a cultural heritage resource, especially where anticipated buried deposits exist. Where possible a professional judgement as to the scale of such impacts is applied to enable the likely 'Significance of Effects' to be established; however, a magnitude level of 'uncertain' is included for situations where it is simply not appropriate to make such a judgement at this stage of works.

Table 2: Criteria for Determining Magnitude of Impact

IMPACT LEVEL	DEFINITION
HIGH	Major impacts fundamentally changing the baseline condition of the receptor, leading to total or considerable alteration of character or setting – e.g. complete or almost complete destruction of the archaeological resource; dramatic visual intrusion into a historic landscape element; adverse change in the setting or visual amenity of the feature/site; significant increase in noise; extensive changes to use or access.
MEDIUM	Impacts changing the baseline condition of the receptor materially but not entirely, leading to partial alteration of character or setting – e.g. a large proportion of the archaeological resource damaged or destroyed; intrusive visual intrusion into key aspects of the historic landscape; or use of site that would result in detrimental changes to historic landscape character.
LOW	Detectable impacts which alter the baseline condition of the receptor to a small degree – e.g. a small proportion of the surviving archaeological resource is damaged or destroyed; minor severance, change to the setting or structure or increase in noise; and limited encroachment into character of a historic landscape.
NEGLIGIBLE	Barely distinguishable adverse change from baseline conditions, where there would be very little appreciable effect on a known site, possibly because of distance from the development, method of construction or landscape or ecological planting, that are thought to have no long term effect on the historic value of a resource.
UNCERTAIN	Extent / nature of the resource is unknown and the magnitude of change cannot be ascertained.

- 2.5.3 In relation to settings assessment, the impact of the proposed development upon selected inter-visible heritage assets within the proposed development site have been assessed based on English Heritage guidance on the settings of heritage assets and planning (English Heritage 2014b). As such, the settings assessment will consider the following:
 - The location and siting of the development in relation to size, proximity, landform, key views, and potential asset isolation
 - The form and appearance of the development, with consideration for its prominence, size, and distraction from heritage assets
 - The changes to the surrounding area, including character, access routes, land use, and pollution
- 2.5.4 A template copy of the table that was filled in for those heritage assets examined for settings impact is included in Appendix 2 of this document.

2.5.5 The overall Significance of Effects from the proposed development upon the Cultural Heritage Resource is determined by correlating the magnitude of Impact against value of the Cultural Heritage resource. Table 3 highlights the criteria for assessing the overall Significance of Effects. Where effects are moderate or above these are classified as significant.

Table 3: Significance of Effects

IMPORTANCE	MAGNITUDE						
IMPORTANCE	HIGH	MED	LOW	NEG			
NATIONAL	Severe	Major	Mod	Minor			
REGIONAL	Major	Mod	Minor	Not Sig.			
LOCAL	Mod	Minor	Minor	Not Sig.			
NEGLIGIBLE	Minor	Not Sig.	Not Sig.	Nt.			

2.6 Limitations

- 2.6.1 It should be noted that the report has been prepared under the express instruction and solely for the use of Aspire Planning, and any associated parties they elect to share this information with.
- 2.6.2 Measurements and distances referred to in the report should be taken as approximations only and should not be used for detailed design purposes.
- 2.6.3 All the work carried out in this report is based upon the professional knowledge and understanding of AB Heritage on current (April 2015) and relevant United Kingdom standards and codes, technology and legislation. Changes in these areas may occur in the future and cause changes to the conclusions, advice, recommendations or design given. AB Heritage does not accept responsibility for advising the client's or associated parties of the facts or implications of any such changes in the future.
- 2.6.4 This report has been prepared utilising factual information obtained from third party sources. AB Heritage takes no responsibility for the accuracy of such information. It should also be noted that this report represents an early stage of a phased approach to assessing the archaeological and cultural heritage resource of the proposed development site to allow the development of an appropriate mitigation strategy, should this be required. It does not comprise mitigation of impacts in itself.
- 2.6.5 When visiting sites for the settings assessment, the assessment was made from the best possible position with regard to viewpoint, safety, and remaining on public land. No private property was entered as a part of the settings assessment, and therefore the assessment was made at ground level. A personal judgement of the validity of the position of assessment was made during the visit. This was highlighted in the results where necessary, and considered when providing an indication of the potential impact of the proposed development on the setting of each individual heritage asset, in line with Table 2.
- 2.6.6 The outline boundary for the proposed development site was altered by the client after the HER data had been ordered and collated, with the removal of an additional field on the

western side Therefore, the 1km study area is based on the original centre point (ST 15310 30131) of the proposed development site.

3. PLANNING & LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The following section highlights the key planning and legislative framework relevant to this project. Legislative framework, national planning policy and relevant sector guidance.

3.2 Statutory Protection for Heritage Assets

- 3.2.1 Current legislation, in the form of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, provides for the legal protection of important and well-preserved archaeological sites and monuments through their addition to a list, or 'schedule' of archaeological monuments by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. This necessitates the granting of formal Scheduled Monument Consent for any work undertaken within the designated area of a Scheduled Ancient Monument.
- 3.2.2 Likewise, structures are afforded legal protection in the form of their addition to 'lists' of buildings of special architectural or historical interest. The listing of buildings is carried out by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990. The main purpose of the legislation is to protect buildings and their surroundings from changes that would materially alter the special historic or architectural value of the building or its setting. This necessitates the granting of formal Listed Building Consent for all works undertaken to our within the designated curtilage of a Listed Building. This legislation also allows for the creation and protection of Conservation Areas by local planning authorities to protect areas and groupings of historical significance.
- 3.2.3 The categories of assets with some form of legal protection have been extended in recent years, and now include Registered Parks and Gardens, and Historic Battlefields. While designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site is not a statutory designation under English planning law, such a designation is regarded as a material consideration in planning decisions, and World Heritage Sites are in practice protected from development that could affect any aspect of their significance including settings within the Site and a buffer zone around it.

3.3 National Planning Policy

- 3.3.1 The NPPF sets out government policy on the historic environment, which covers all elements, whether designated or not, that are identified as 'having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest'.
- 3.3.2 One of the over-arching aims is to 'Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations'. To achieve this, local planning authorities can request that the applicant describe "the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting". The level of detail required in the assessment should be "proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance". It goes on to say that "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."
- 3.3.3 A key policy within the NPPF is 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. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be.
- 3.3.4 With regard to non-designated heritage assets specific policy is provided in that a balanced judgement will be required having due regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset affected.

3.4 Local Policy

Taunton Deane Adopted Core Strategy 2011-2028

Policy CP 8: Environment

- 3.4.1 Policy CP 8 on environment is consistent with the NPPF, and states the council will decline planning permission which will cause harm the historic environment, including settings, unless other material factors are sufficient to override their importance.
- 3.4.2 It also refers to the importance the historic environment and its heritage assets for the enjoyment and improved for the quality of life for this and future generations.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE BASELINE

4.1 Statutory Designated Heritage Features

Within the Proposed Development Site

4.1.1 There are no statutory designated heritage features within the bounds of the proposed development site.

Within the 1km Study Area

- 4.1.2 There are a total of 16 designated heritage features located within the 1km study area [AB 6, 9, 11-12, 14-19, 25-8 & 35-6].
- 4.1.3 The northern tip of the Ash Priors Conservation Area [**AB 36**] is located c. 400m to the south of the proposed development site. The southern tip of the Combe Florey Conservation Area [**AB 35**], is situated c. 460m to the north of the proposed development site.
- 4.1.4 There are 3 Grade II* Listed heritage features within the 1km study area. These include Northern Lodge [AB 11], located c 360m to the north-east of the proposed development site. This is associated with Sandhill Park House [AB 14], located c. 380m to the south-east of the proposed development site. In addition, the parish Church of the Holy Trinity at Ash Priors [AB 6], is located c. 560m to the south of the proposed development site
- 4.1.5 The remainder of the designated heritage features [AB 9, 12, 15-19 & 25-8] are all Grade II Listed and consist mostly of houses, cottages and farmhouses located in the village of Ash Priors located c. 400m to the south of the proposed development site or within the southern tip of the village of Combe Florey, located c. 560m to the north of the proposed development site.

4.2 Non Statutory Designated Features & Historic Environment Record Data

Within the Proposed Development Site

4.2.1 There are no non designated heritage features located within the proposed development site that have been recorded on the Somerset HER.

Within the 1km Study Area

- 4.2.2 There are a total of 20 non designated heritage features located within the 1km study area [AB 1-5, 7-8, 10, 13, 20-4, 29-33 & 37-42] that have been recorded on the Somerset HER. These provide evidence of settlement, industrial and agricultural activity within the region dated almost exclusively to the Medieval Modern periods.
- 4.2.3 The Historic Landscape Character [**AB 37**] that covers the proposed development site is described as anciently enclosed land that was enclosed prior to the 17th Century.

4.3 Previous Archaeological Works in the Study Area

4.3.1 A number of previous archaeological works have been undertaken within the 1km study area. These are mostly watching briefs that have focused within the area immediately surrounding the village of Ash Priors, c. 500m to the south of the proposed development site.

- 4.3.2 A watching brief carried out c. 480m to the south of the proposed development site identified a buried soil containing 12th/13th Century pottery [**AB 2**] beneath a 19th Century farmyard surface.
- 4.3.3 A watching brief undertaken c. 570m to the south of the proposed development site also produced evidence of Medieval occupation in the form of a timber structure [**AB 4**]. This was associated with a colluvium deposit that produced further pottery dating to the 12th/13th Century and some flint flakes [**AB 1**].
- 4.3.4 An additional watching brief carried out c. 580m to the south of the proposed development site identified the site of a possible bell foundry [**AB 10**].

4.4 Archaeology & History Background

The Prehistoric Periods (c .500, 000 BC - AD 43)

- 4.4.1 There are no heritage features of Prehistoric date located within the bounds of the proposed development site.
- 4.4.2 Evidence for Prehistoric activity is limited within the 1km study area. Prehistoric activity has been identified within the study area in the form of some residual flints [**AB 1**] recovered from a layer of colluvium c. 570m to the south of the proposed development site.

The Roman Period (AD 43 – AD 410)

4.4.3 There are no heritage features of Roman date located within the proposed development site and there are no heritage features of Roman date located within the 1km study area.

The Medieval Period (AD 410 - AD 1536)

- 4.4.4 There are no heritage features of Medieval date located within the bounds of the proposed development site.
- 4.4.5 There are however, five heritage features [**AB 2-6**] located within the 1km study area that date to the Medieval period. These relate to Medieval occupation and religious activities within the region of the proposed development site.
- 4.4.6 Medieval occupation has been identified within the 1km study area in the form of an area of shrunken Medieval settlement at Combe Florey [**AB 3**], located c. 750m to the north of the proposed development site.
- 4.4.7 Evidence for Medieval religious activity within the 1km study area can be identified in the form of references to a Church at Ash Priors from the 12th Century [**AB 6**], located c. 550m to the south of the proposed development site. In addition, the site of a chantry chapel [**AB 5**] is located c. 900m to the south-east of the proposed development site.
- 4.4.8 The place name elements contained within the name Ash Priors include the Old English word 'aesc' meaning 'at the ash tree' and 'prior' meaning 'held by the prior'.
- 4.4.9 As early as the 9th Century AD, the area of Ash Prior was part of the manor of Bishops Lydeard (Collinson, 1791).

- 4.4.10 In 1086 the manor of Ash Priors was held by Roger Arundel, prior to this it has belonged to the Bishop of Bath and Wells (Martin et al, 2003).
- 4.4.11 Sometime before 1291 a son of Roger Arundel gave land and the church at Ash to the Priory of Taunton and it was thereafter called Ash Priors (Page, 1911). The ancient country residence of the Prior of Taunton is thought to have been located at Ash Priors; this may have been situated at the location now occupied by the house known as The Priory [AB 15] (Lewis, 1848).
- 4.4.12 A medieval bell foundry was located in the region of Ash Priors Common, located c. 900m to the south of the proposed development site (Baynham, 1908), although this is not recorded on the Somerset HER.

The Post - Medieval Period (AD 1537 – AD 1800)

- 4.4.13 There are no heritage features located within the proposed development site dating to the Post-Medieval period that have been recorded on the Somerset HER.
- 4.4.14 There are however, six heritage features of Post-Medieval date located within the 1km study area [AB 7-8, 10, 13-14, & 20]. These relate to a variety of Post-Medieval activities within the 1km study area associated with agriculture, industry and enclosure.
- 4.4.15 Post-Medieval agricultural activity has been identified in the study area in the form of a possible water meadow [AB 7], located east of Pixford Farm, c.700m to the north-east of the proposed development site. A corn mill was located at Combe Florey [AB 20], c. 900m to the north of the proposed development site.
- 4.4.16 An area of parkland was established at Sandhill Park during the early 18th Century [AB 14]. This was associated with Hill House, later Sandhill House that was built by John Periam in c. 1720. This parkland is located immediately adjacent to south-east of the proposed development site. The parkland is not a statutory Registered Park and Garden and has been subject to large scale residential development is the recent past.
- 4.4.17 Several Turnpike Roads were constructed in the region during the later Post-Medieval period [AB 8 & 13], including those from Hartrow to Ashill, located c. 940m to the east and from Washford to Bishops Lydeard, located c. 220m to the north of the proposed development site respectively.

The Modern Period (AD 1801 – Present)

- 4.4.18 There are no heritage features of Modern date recorded on the Somerset HER within the bounds of the proposed development site.
- 4.4.19 There are however, 10 heritage features located within the 1km study area that date to the Modern period [AB 14, 21-24, 29-33]. These relate mostly to industry, infrastructure and enclosure within the region of the proposed development site dating to the Post-Medieval period.
- 4.4.20 Sandstone was quarried in the region such as at Denbury quarry [AB 23], located c. 630m to the south-west of the proposed development site. A lime kiln was also located at Denbury quarry associated with the quarry [AB 23]. A corn mill [AB 30] was formerly located at Ash Prior, c. 650m to the south of the proposed development site.

- 4.4.21 A further area of parkland [**AB 29**] was created during the late 19th/early 20th Century associated with the former Watts House, now known as Cedar Falls, located c. 900m to the east of the proposed development site.
- 4.4.22 The Great Western Railway's Taunton to Minehead branch was constructed through the parishes of Bishops Lydeard and Combe Florey in 1862 [AB 24], it is located c. 900m to the east of the proposed development site. This provided additional transport links to the area.
- 4.4.23 Sandhill House [**AB 14**], located c. 430m to the south-east of the proposed development site, played an important role in the region during the First and Second World Wars. The building acted as a Prisoner of War camp and later a military and mental hospital.

4.5 Historic Map Sources

Plan of the Proposed New Road at Sandhill Park and the Existing Turnpike Road, c. 1826

- 4.5.1 The earliest detailed plan that depicts the proposed development site is dated c. 1826 (Plate 1). The plan shows the proposed development site as made up of 2 square fields and part of an oval plantation to the south of a former Turnpike road [AB 39] that is located within the southern part of the proposed development site. A footpath [AB 38] is shown running along the eastern boundary of the proposed development site.
- 4.5.2 The fields are called Samson's Close and Ridgway [**AB 38**] .The name Samson is a personal name and probably relates to landowner (See Plate 1).
- 4.5.3 The term Ridgway [**AB 38**] is suggestive of the location of a roadway running along the ridge located along the eastern side of the field, also suggestive that this roadway may be of some antiquity. It is likely that the present footpath in this location was the original routeway between the villages of Combe Florey and Ash Priors.
- 4.5.4 A former crossroad with the Ridgway is suggested by the name Ridgway Cross, located immediately to the south of the proposed development site, where the former Ash Road meets the footpath [AB 38].
- 4.5.5 Other field names surrounding the proposed development site are suggestive of the hilly topography of the region, such as the name *Coombe*, indicating a valley and *Hemborow* that is also suggestive of a hill. The term *Glebe* indicates that the area to the north of the proposed development site was owned by the Church (Field, 1989).

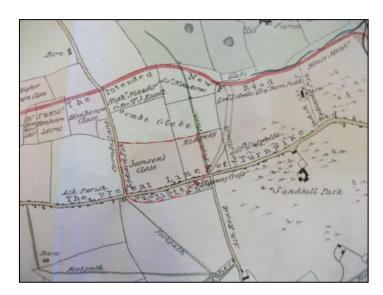


Plate 1: Plan of the Proposed New Road at Sandhill Park and the Existing Turnpike Road, c. 1826. Proposed development site indicated in red (Somerset Heritage Trust ref. A\BTS/1/1)

Bishops Lydeard Parish Tithe Map 1838 and Apportionment 1837-8

4.5.6 The proposed development site was mostly located within the parish of Bishops Lydeard in 1837-8 (Plate 2). The southern part of the proposed development site, south of the pond, was located within the parish of Ash Priors. It is shown as a large rectangular field with a narrow, oval shaped plot located along the southern boundary. The field boundary [AB 42] shown separating the field into two on the previous map is no longer extant. The information from the 1837 Tithe Apportionments are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Information from the Tithe Apportionment 1837

Field Reference Number	Parish	Tenement	Land Owner	Land Occupier	Field Name	State of Cultivation
85	Ash Priors	-	Sir Thomas Buckler Lethbridge Baronet	Sir Thomas Buckler Lethbridge Baronet	The Island Plantation	Plantation
888	Bishops Lydeard	East Coombe Farm	Sir Thomas Buckler Lethbridge Baronet	Sir Thomas Buckler Lethbridge Baronet	Plantation	Plantation
889	Bishops Lydeard	Denbury	Sir Thomas Buckler Lethbridge Baronet	Thomas Knight	Sampsons & Ridgway	Arable

4.5.7 The location of the footpath running along the eastern boundary of the proposed development site is indicated towards the south-east corner. The former Turnpike road [AB 39] that is shown within the southern part of the proposed development site on the previous plan (See Plate 1) is no longer extant. The line of the former road is shown as the parish boundary between Bishops Lydeard in the north and Ash Priors to the south.



Plate 2: Bishops Lydeard Parish Tithe Map, 1838. Proposed development site indicated in red (Somerset Heritage Trust ref. D\D/Rt/M/26)

1st & 2nd edition 25" OS maps 1888-9 & 1904

4.5.8 The 1st and 2nd editions of the 25" OS map show the proposed development site as a large rectangular field with a narrow, oval shaped wooded plot along the southern boundary called Highland Covert. A pond is shown on the northern side of the wooded plot. The footpath is shown running along the eastern boundary of the proposed development site.

1944 & 1971 Aerial Photographs

- 4.5.9 Two aerial photographs covering the proposed development site have been analysed. On the 1944 aerial photograph the proposed development site is shown as a large rectangular field with a narrow, oval shaped plot along the southern boundary with a complex of three buildings [AB 34] located immediately to the west of the pond on the proposed development site. The trees have mostly been cleared from the wooded plot shown on the OS maps.
- 4.5.10 The former Turnpike road [**AB 39**] is visible running south-west north-east through the centre of the oval plot within the southern part of the proposed development site.
- 4.5.11 The 1971 aerial photograph shows the proposed development site much the same as the previous photograph. The northern boundary of the narrow, oval shaped plot along the southern boundary is still just about visible as a shallow earthwork [AB 40]. An additional L-shaped earthwork is visible within the plot, located adjacent to the northern plot boundary [AB 41]. The former Turnpike road [AB 39] is visible as a track within the southern part of the proposed development site.

4.6 Site Visit

- 4.6.1 A site visit was carried out on 22nd April 2015 by Kerry Kerr-Peterson (Assistant Project Archaeologist, AB Heritage).
- 4.6.2 The purpose of this visit was to gain a greater understanding of the existing land use and past impacts within the current site limits, along with an appreciation for the potential survival of below ground archaeological deposits.

4.6.3 The proposed development site consists of a large rectangular field that was under short grass pasture at the time of the site visit (Photo 1-3).



Photo 1: View across the proposed development site, taken from the east

- 4.6.4 The boundaries consist of a shallow ditch and bank with established hedge vegetation along the southern boundary and wooden fences with short hedges along the western and northern boundaries. There was no boundary along the eastern edge of the proposed development site at the time of the site visit.
- 4.6.5 The topography rises gently from the centre of the field towards the western and eastern ends of the field (Photo 1).
- 4.6.6 A pond is located towards the southern boundary of the field. This is surrounded by mature trees (Photo 2 & 3).
- 4.6.7 There was no above ground evidence identified during the site visit for the footpath, located along the eastern boundary of the proposed development site and shown on the 1826 plan (Plate 1) and the 1st and 2nd editions of the OS map. In addition, there was no above ground evidence for the former Turnpike road [AB 38], field boundary [AB 40] located in the southern part of the field, or the L-shaped earthwork [AB 41] visible on the 1971 aerial photograph or the former buildings located to the west of the pond shown on the 1944 aerial photograph.



Photo 2: View across the proposed development site, from the north-west



Photo 3: The proposed development site, viewed from the west

4.7 Preliminary Visual Appraisal

- 4.7.1 An early review of potential visual links was carried out for statutory heritage features within the 1km study area. In addition, the Conservation Area within the village of Combe Florey [AB 35] was included in the review of potential visual links, after consultation with the Taunton Deane Conservation Officer (Nigel Pratt).
- 4.7.2 The purpose of this preliminary appraisal was to gain an early understanding of potential future constraints associated with any development (as outlined in Table 2) upon designated features.
- 4.7.3 A ZTV (zone of theoretical visibility) was supplied by the client. This was an image of the potential areas that would be inter-visible with the solar panels at 2.4m above ground level at the proposed development site, based on the land form (Figure 2). This area was compared with the distribution of designated heritage assets within the 1km study area.

- 4.7.4 Those designated features that fell within the ZTV (Figure 4) were visited in order to make an assessment of the level of potential impact that the proposed development may have on each of them. At each site, a heritage settings assessment pro-forma was completed in mind of the English Heritage guidance on the settings of heritage assets (Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets, 2014). The limitations of the settings assessment are given in section 2.5.
- 4.7.5 Table 5 outlines those cultural heritage features that have been included in the settings assessment, which are also shown in Figure 4. Other designated heritage features located within the 1km study area that did not fall within the ZTV have been omitted. For example, the Grade II* Sandhill Park House [AB 14] is located c. 500m to the south-east of the proposed development site, however this heritage feature does not fall within the ZTV.

Table 5: Cultural Heritage Features to be Assessed for Settings Impact

AB No.	Description	Status	Reason
11	Northern Lodge, Sandhill Park	Grade II* LB	Designated & within ZTV
35	Combe Florey Conservation Area	CA	Requested by Taunton Deane Conservation Officer & Designated
36	Ash Priors Conservation Area	CA	Designated & within ZTV

LB: Listed Building

ZTV: Zone of Theoretical Visibility

CA: Conservation Area

Northern Lodge, Sandhill Park [AB 11]

- 4.7.6 Northern Lodge associated with Sandhill Park [**AB 11**] is located c. 360m to the north-east of the proposed development site and within the ZTV. As a Grade II* Listed Building, it is a heritage feature of National importance (see Table 1).
- 4.7.7 There is limited intervisibility with the western part of the roofline of Northern Lodge [**AB 11**]. This is only visible from the north-west corner of the proposed development site (Photo 4).



Photo 4: View towards Northern Lodge [AB 11] - viewed from the north-west corner of the proposed development site

4.7.8 Northern Lodge is surrounded by mature trees on the western, northern and southern sides (Photo 5). A hill rises steeply to the south and west. A road leading into the Lethbridge Park is situated on the eastern side of the Lodge. A small front garden is screened from the adjacent main road by a bank of mature trees. A car park and small garden area are located to the south of the Lodge.



Photo 5: View from Northern Lodge [AB 11] towards the south-west

4.7.9 The surrounding trees and topography result in limited intervisibility with the roofline of the Lodge, only from the highest point of the proposed development site in the north-west corner of the field. Therefore, the setting and character of the Lodge is not considered to be significantly altered by the proposed development.

Combe Florey Conservation Area [AB 35]

- 4.7.10 The Combe Florey Conservation Area [**AB 35**] is not included within the ZTV. However, the southern tip of the Conservation Area is located within the 1km study area, located c. 460m to the north of the proposed development site. The Conservation Area is a heritage asset of National importance.
- 4.7.11 The historic core of the village of Combe Florey is located within a narrow, wooded valley that rises up steeply to the north and south on either side of the village (Photo 6). The road from the south is a hollow way, up to c. 5m deep and surrounded by tree covered banks.
- 4.7.12 As a result, there is no intervisibility between the Combe Florey Conservation Area and the proposed development site (Photo 6). Therefore, there is considered to be no significant impact upon the Conservation Area by the proposed development.



Photo 6: View from the centre of Combe Florey towards the proposed development site, taken from the north facing south

Ash Priors Conservation Area [AB 36]

- 4.7.13 The southern tip of the Ash Priors Conservation Area [**AB 36**] is located c. 400m to the south of the proposed development site and within the ZTV. The Conservation Area is a heritage asset of National importance.
- 4.7.14 The historic core of the village of Ash Priors is located within a shallow valley, with a hill rising moderately steeply to the north of the village. There are a number of mature trees that screen the village from the proposed development site, resulting in limited intervisibility with the northern tip of the Conservation Area, the northern limit of which is located c. 400m to the south of the proposed development site (Photo 7).



Photo 7: View from the proposed development site towards Ash Priors, from the north

4.7.15 Therefore, there is limited intervisibility between the proposed development site and the northern tip of the Ash Priors Conservation Area [AB 36]. This is created by the existing trees cover the surrounding topography and modern development that is currently under construction in the intervening area between the Conservation Area and the proposed development site. As a result, the setting and character of the heritage feature is not considered to be significantly altered by the proposed development.

5. ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL & MITIGATION

5.1 Known Heritage Resource

- 5.1.1 There are no statutory listed heritage features located within the bounds of the proposed development site.
- 5.1.2 There are no non statutory heritage features located within the proposed development site that have been recorded on the Somerset HER.
- 5.1.3 However, evidence from a range of historic maps and aerial photographs has identified two former field boundaries [AB 40 & 42]; a possible L-shaped earthwork feature [AB 41] and the location of three former Modern buildings [AB 34] and a former Turnpike road [AB 39] within the bounds of the proposed development site.
- 5.1.4 There are a number of heritage features located within the 1km study area. These represent settlement, industry and agricultural activity within the region from the Prehistoric and Medieval to Modern periods.

5.2 Past Impacts within the Site Boundary

- 5.2.1 Historic map and aerial photograph evidence suggest that the area of the proposed development site has been under cultivation as agricultural land since at least the beginning of the Modern period.
- 5.2.2 The insertion and removal of field boundaries [AB 40 & 42], buildings [AB 34] and Turnpike Road [AB 39] within limited parts of the field and relatively prolonged agricultural activity across the proposed development site is likely to have had an unknown impact upon surviving below ground heritage features.

5.3 Potential Archaeological Resource

- 5.3.1 Historic map evidence has also identified the line of a possible a routeway [AB 38], potentially of some antiquity, which may have been used over a long period. This lies immediately adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site and there is concluded to be a medium-low potential for the survival of archaeological features associated with this, relating to the potential for roadside activity etc. The significance of such activity is currently unknown but, as with the routeway, is likely to be of local importance at most, should such evidence survive.
- 5.3.2 Given the relative density of Medieval archaeology within the wider 1km study area, there is considered to be a low potential for the survival of complex/significant archaeological features of this date within the bounds of the proposed development site. These features, if present, are likely to be of local importance at most.
- 5.3.3 It is concluded that there is a high potential for the survival of the evidence for former field boundaries [AB 40 & 42], three former buildings [AB 34], a former Turnpike road [AB 39] and an L-shaped earthwork [AB 41] identified on the 1944 aerial photograph within the proposed development site, dating back to at least the Post-Medieval & Modern periods. These features, if present, are likely to be of local importance at most.

5.4 Predicted Impact of Proposed Development

- 5.4.1 In relation to any surviving below ground archaeology dating to the Prehistoric period, should it survive, there is considered to be a low impact and the overall significance of impact is thought to be minor.
- 5.4.2 The impact upon any below ground surviving evidence of the former field boundaries [AB 40 & 42], former buildings [AB 34], the former Turnpike road [AB 39] and the L-shaped earthwork [AB 41] identified on the 1944 aerial photograph within the proposed development site is also thought to be low and the overall significance of impacts is considered to be minor.
- 5.4.3 Where development crosses the area relating to the potential for roadside activity associated with the routeway [**AB 38**] adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site, there is considered to be a low impact on potential remains, with an overall minor significance of impact.
- 5.4.4 Any impact upon additional archaeology of Medieval date, should they survive is also considered to be low with the overall significance of impacts thought to be minor.

5.5 Outline Recommendations

- 5.5.1 A geophysical survey is scheduled to take place as part of an ongoing scheme of archaeological works. This will inform on the archaeological potential of the site and be used to understand the need for / location of any future investigation / mitigation works, which may include evaluation trenching.
- 5.5.2 These recommendations will need to be confirmed by the Local Planning Authority Archaeologist.

6. REFERENCES

6.1 Documentary & Cartographic Sources

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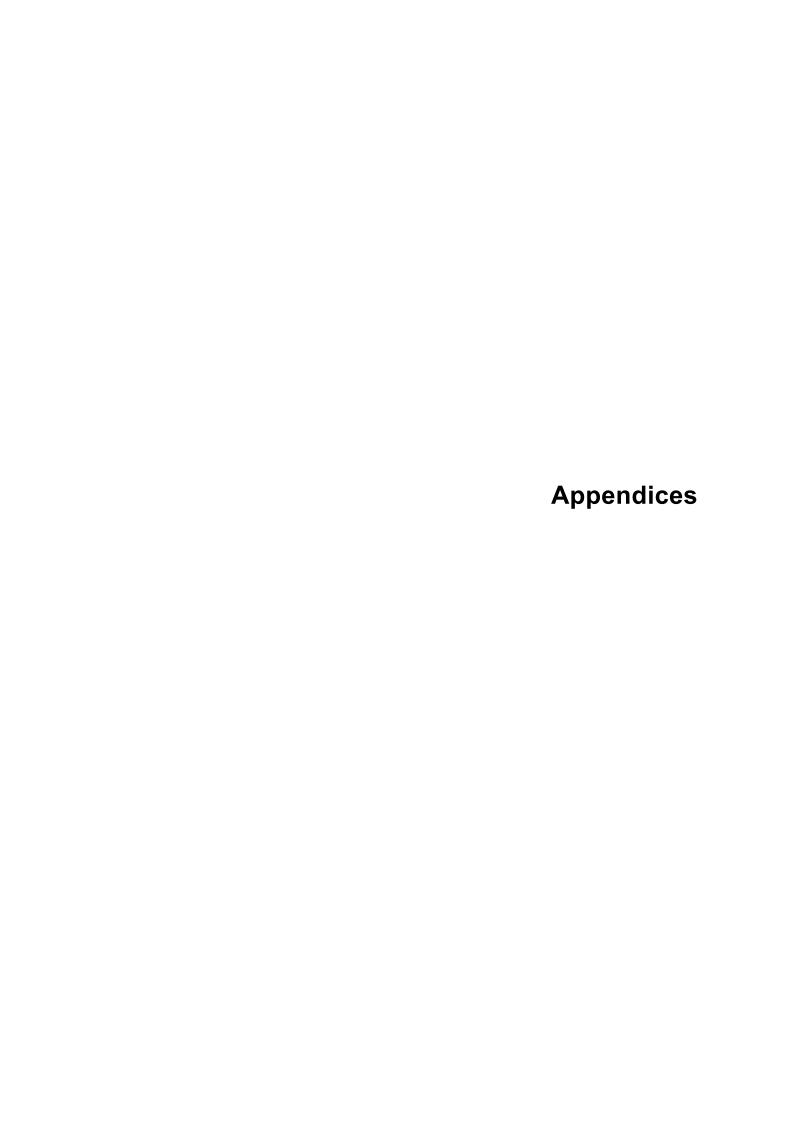
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Appendix 1 **Gazetteer of Cultural Heritage Features**

HER= Somerset HER reference NHLE= National Heritage List for England reference

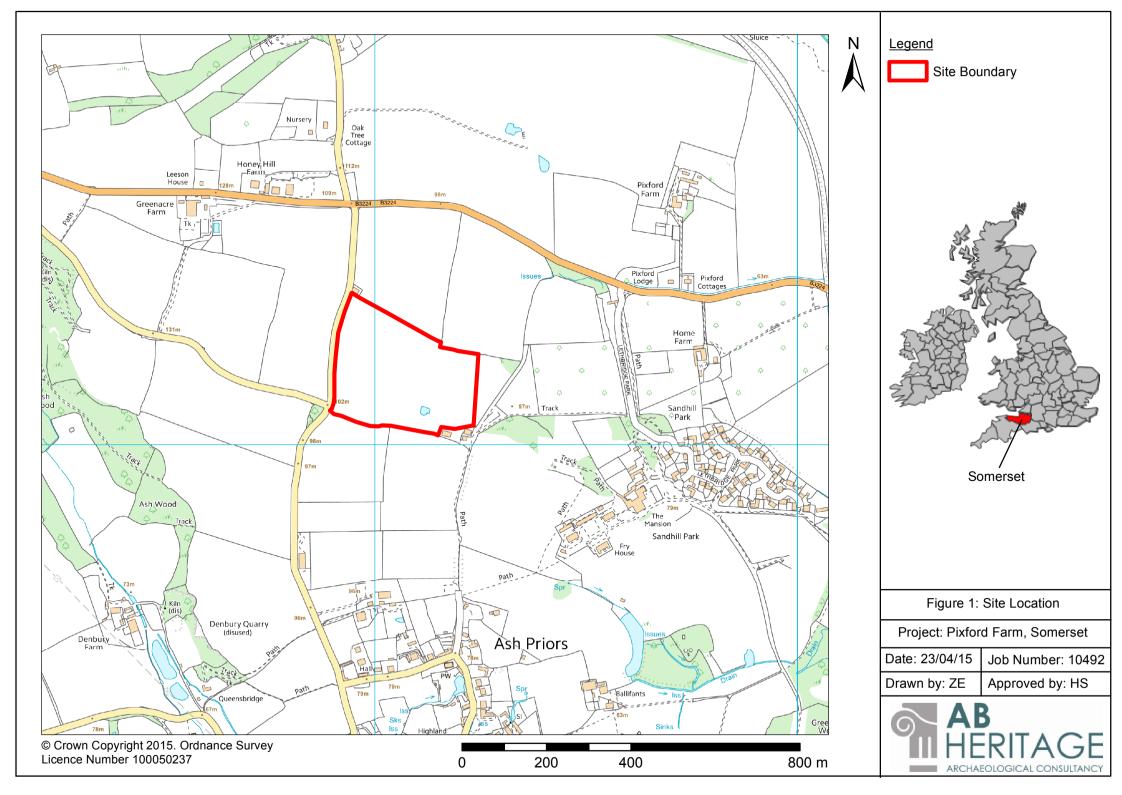
LB= Listed Building

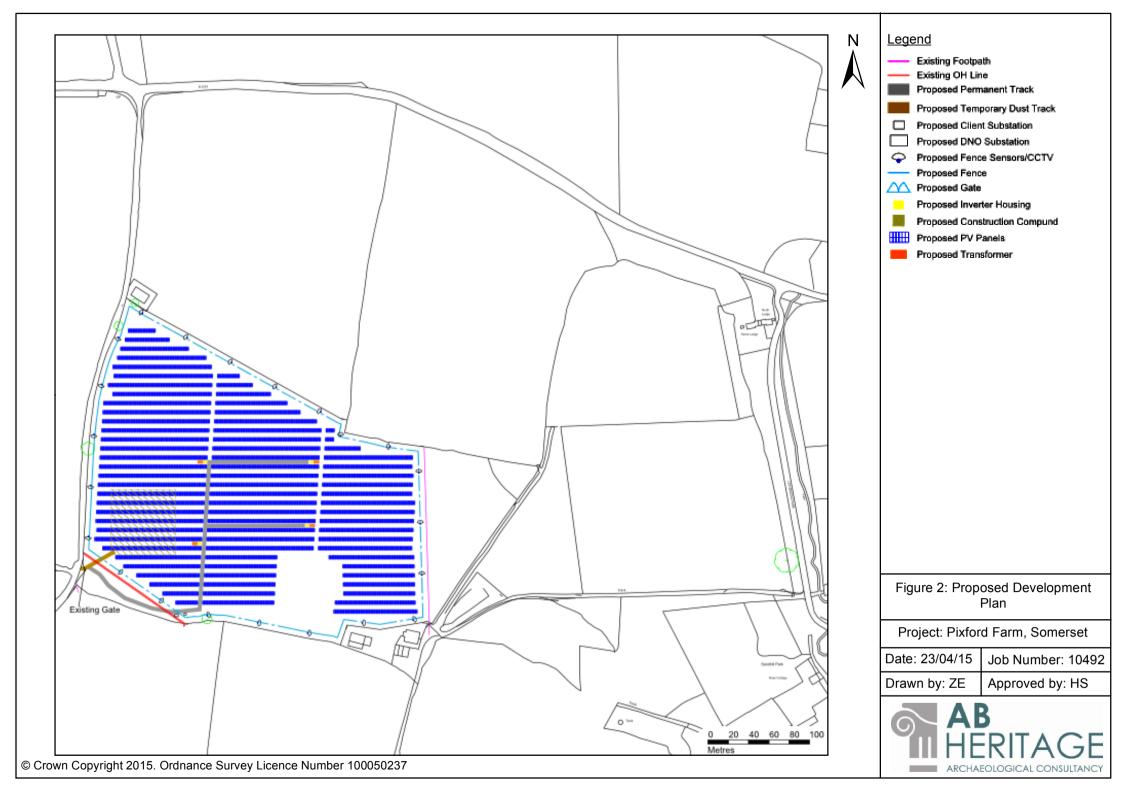
CA= Conservation Area

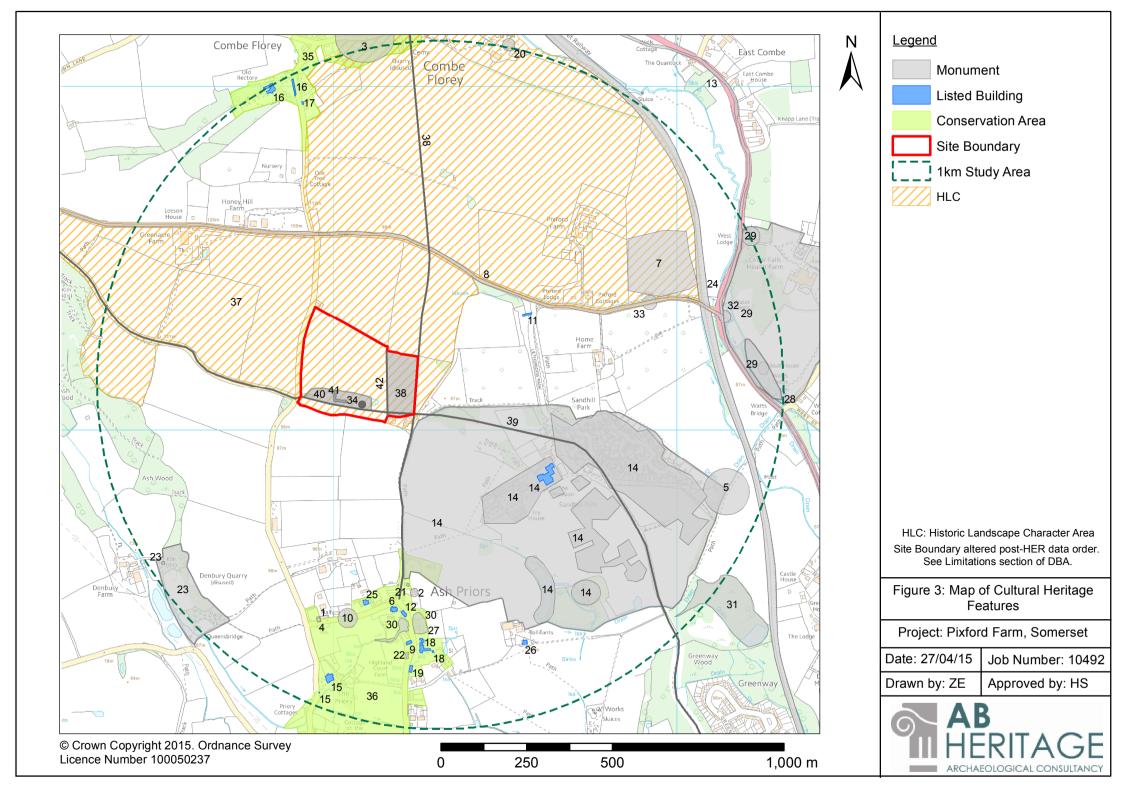
AB NO.	Period	Туре	Name & Description	Status	NGR	Reference
1	Prehistoric	Findspot	Flint flakes were recovered from a colluvium deposit during a watching brief at Park Gate House, Ash Priors.		ST 1495 2946	HER 28204
2	Medieval	Buried Soil	A buried soil containing 12th/13th Century pottery sherds was noted during a watching brief.		ST 1523 2953	HER 17797-8
3	Medieval	Shrunken Village	Shrunken area of the village of Combe Florey.		ST 150 311	HER 43196
4	Medieval	Structure/ Findspot	Remains of a timber and stone rectangular structure along with a hard packed clay floor, possible hearth and a pit were identified during a watching brief at Park Gate House, Ash Priors. In addition, abraded 12th/13th Century pottery was recovered from a layer of colluvium.		ST 1495 2946	HER 28204 & 28517
5	Medieval - Post-Medieval	Chapel/ Documentary	Site of a chantry chapel dedicated to St Mary mentioned as an ancient chapel in 1548 & 1642. Probably located in the region of the eastern tip of Sandhill Park.		ST 1610 2981	HER 43001
6	Medieval - Modern	Church	Church of The Holy Trinity and churchyard, Ash Priors. A church is first mentioned in 1159, the tower of the present Church might be 13th Century in date. The remainder of the Church was almost entirely rebuilt in 1874.	Grade II* LB	ST 1518 2948	HER 43094 & NHLE1344823
7	Post-Medieval	Water Meadow/ Earthworks	A possible Post-Medieval catch water meadow irrigations system is visible as earthworks situated to the east of Pixford Farm, defined by a series of at least 5 parrallel curving drains.		ST 159 304	HER 26795
8	Post-Medieval	Road	An 18th Century Turnpike road of the Taunton Trust, from Hartrow to Ashill.		ST 1542 3129	HER 26221
9	Post-Medieval	Cottages	Pair of cottages (Rose Cottage and Sona Cridche), Ash Priors. Early 18th Century.	Grade II LB	ST 1521 2938	HER 40178 & NHLE1344824
10	Post-Medieval	Bell Foundry/ Documentary	There is documentary evidence for bell founding in Ash Priors from 1559. Bronze working debris and pottery dating to the 17th Century was identified during a watching brief.		ST 1504 2945	HER 44548
11	Post-Medieval	Lodge	Northern Lodge, Sandhill Park. An 18th Century lodge is located to the north of Sandhill Park House.	Grade II* LB	ST 1556 3033	HER 40401& NHLE1059222
12	Post-Medieval - Modern	Cottage	Spring Cottage, Ash Priors. A 17th Century cottage of sandstone with a thatched roof. Remodelled 20th Century.	Grade II LB	ST 1520 2946	HER 40172 & NHLE1059242
13	Post-Medieval - Modern	Road	An 18th Century turnpike road of the Minehead United Trust. The Washford-Williton-Bishop's Lydeard road was turnpiked in an Act of 1807.		ST 1393 3563	HER 26210
14	Post-Medieval - Modern	Parkland/ Pond/Camp/Hospit	Sandhill Park Hospital is a former Country House built c. 1720, rebuilt during 19th Century, now a hospital. The House was used as a Prisoner of War camp during WW1 and a military	Grade II* LB	ST 1561 2987	HER 15354, 15361,

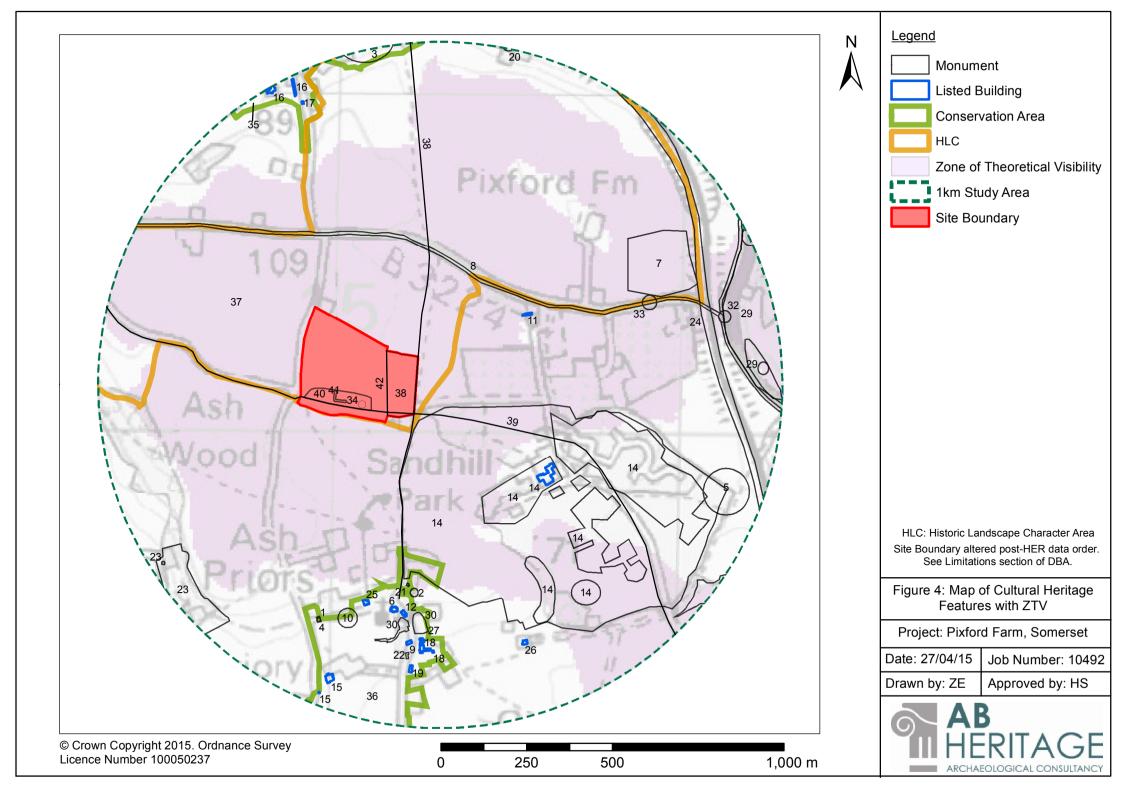
		al/ Sewage Works/Lodge	hospital from 1940 until 1944. In was opened as a mental hospital in 1948. The house was originally located within 3984 acres of parkland containing a pond. An associated inter-war sewage works was located to the south.			15363-4, 40402, 43372, 44037 NHLE1295317
15	Post-Medieval - Modern	House	The Priory, gate piers & gate, Ash Priors. Probably 17th Century, remodelled c. 1830. Of a pre-Reformation house only the two storied porch survives.	Grade II LB	ST 1498 2927	HER 40174-5, 44054, 44054, NHLE1059240 & 1059241
16	Post-Medieval - Modern	House	The Old Rectory, boundary wall & gate, Combe Florey. Dated 1742, enlarged early 19th Century, probably the rebuilding of an earlier dwelling. Boundary wall early 19th Century.	Grade II LB	ST 1480 3099	HER 40189, 40345, NHLE1059223 & 1295311
17	Post-Medieval - Modern	Cottage	Shutterne Cottage, Combe Florey. 18th Century rendered cottage with a thatched roof.	Grade II LB	ST 1490 3095	HER 40191 & NHLE1175548
18	Post-Medieval - Modern	House	Court House & granary, Ash Priors. Red brick farmhouse c. 1700, restored late 20th Century. Granary located 2m to the east of the house, late 18th - early 19th Century.	Grade II LB	ST 1526 2936	HER4 0354-5, 44059, NHLE1059247 & 1174993
19	Post-Medieval - Modern	Cottages	Lockyer's Cottage and Bryant's Cottage, Ash Priors. Pair of cottages. Dated 1632.	Grade II LB	ST 1522 2930	HER 40357 & NHLE1175010
20	Post-Medieval - Modern	Mill/ Documentary	Corn mill, Combe Florey. 'Combe Florey Mill' and 'Old mill stream' marked on 1904 OS map. Overshot wheel pit extant but partly filled in. Leat infilled. The mill house has a date stone of 1620.		ST 1551 3112	HER 43189
21	Modern	School/ Documentary	A school is marked on the 1904 OS map at Ash Priors. Shown as the 'Old School House' on the modern map.		ST 1522 2955	HER 19817
22	Modern	Smithy/ Documentary	A smithy is marked on the 1904 OS map at Ash Priors. Building extant on the modern map.		ST 1521 2934	HER 19818
23	Modern	Quarry/Lime kiln/ Documentary	Denbury quarry is marked on the 1904 OS map along with a disused lime kiln.		ST 1459 2952	HER 19819 & 43095
24	Modern	Railway	GWR Taunton-Minehead branch passes through Bishops Lydeard and Combe Florey parishes, built in 1862.		ST 0970 3990	HER 33462
25	Modern	House	Hallgate, Ash Priors. An 1835 house built by Richard Carver.	Grade II LB	ST 1509 2949	HER 40173 & NHLE1344822
26	Modern	Farmhouse	Ballifants, Ash Priors. Early 19th Century sandstone farmhouse with a slate roof.	Grade II LB	ST 1555 2938	HER 40353 & NHLE1059243
27	Modern	Stable/House	Little Court & wall enclosing courtyard, Ash Priors. Early 19th Century stable, now dwelling.	Grade II LB	ST 1525 2938	HER 40356 & NHLE1059246

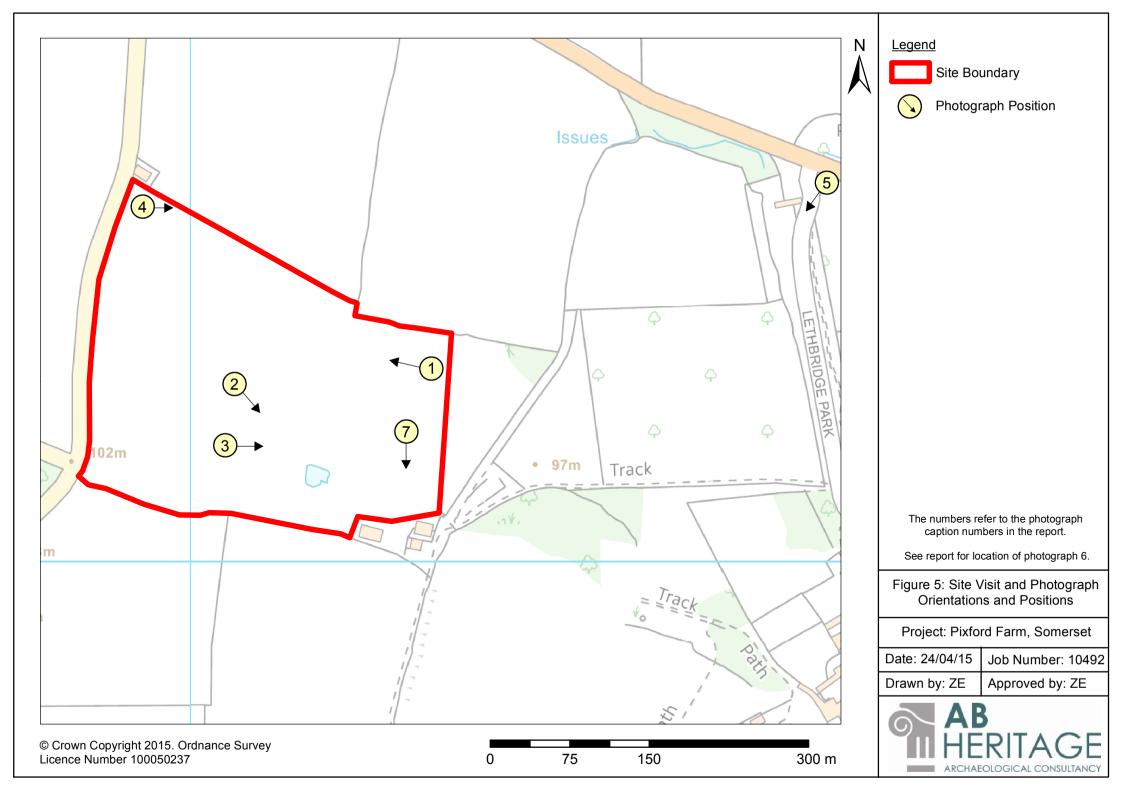
28	Modern	Gate & Piers	Gate piers and gates to Cedar Falls, mid-19th Century.	Grade II LB	ST 1631 3010	HER 40389 & NHLE1059218
29	Modern	Parkland/ Pond/ Boathouse/ Lodge/ Documentary	Parkland containing a fish pond & boathouse are marked on 1905 OS map associated with Watts House, along with 'West Lodge'.		ST 162 301	HER 43007, 43828, 43833 & 44036
30	Modern	Mill/ Documentary	Corn mill, Ash Priors. Mill pond and partly infilled wheel pit visible. Overshot 12ft diameter wheel. Mill now a dwelling. Marked on 1904 OS map.		ST 1526 2940	HER 43096
31	Modern	Pond/ Documentary	'Fishpond' marked on 1905 OS map at Greenway.		ST 1625 2940	HER 43894
32	Modern	Milestone/ Documentary	A milestone is marked on the 1905 OS map at Water Meets, Bishpos Lydeard.		ST 1614 3033	HER 44035
33	Modern	Milestone/ Documentary	A milestone is marked on the 1905 OS map north of Home Farm, Bishpos Lydeard.		ST 1592 3037	HER 44038
34	Modern	Site of Buildings	Site of three former buildings identified on 1944 aerial photograph. Probably agricultural buildings.		ST 1508 3008	
35	Undated/Multi- period	Conservation Area	Combe Florey Conservation Area	CA	ST 1488 3103	
36	Undated/Multi- period	Conservation Area	Ash Priors Conservation Area	CA	ST 1512 2938	
37	Undated/Multi- period	Historic Landscape Character	Historic Landscape Character - Anciently Enclosed Land pre-17th century. General field size, 6-12ha. Between 25% and 50% boundary loss since 1905.		ST 15095 30161	
38	Undated	Field name/ Footpath	Field name 'Ridgway' identified on 1826 plan of proposed new road at Sandhill Park, corresponds with the location of a footpath running along a ridge between the villages of Ash Priors to Combe Florey.		ST 1522 3013	
39	Undated	Road	Former Tumpiked road and parish boundary, orientated south-west – north-east, shown on 1826 plan of proposed new road at Sandhill Park.		ST 1504 3006	
40	Undated	Earthwork	Former field boundary of oval wooded plot shown on Bishops Lydeard parish tithe map of 1838 and as an earthwork on aerial photographs of 1944 and 1971.		ST 1498 3010	
41	Undated	Earthwork	L-shaped earthwork visible on 1971 aerial photograph.		ST 1498 3009	
42	Undated	Field Boundary/ Documentary	Former field boundary orientated north-south shown on 1826 plan of proposed new road at Sandhill Park.		ST 1514 3015	













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