



aeon archaeology

The Royals, Whitchurch Road, Aston, Cheshire.

April 2018

V 1.0



Archaeological Assessment
Project Code: A0159.1
Report no. 0163





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Project Code: A0159.1
Date: 13/04/2018
Client: Mr and Mrs N. Goodwin
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1.0 NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Aeon Archaeology was commissioned by J10 Planning on behalf of Mr and Mrs N. Goodwin (landowner) to carry out an archaeological assessment and field visit of The Royals farm, Aston, Cheshire and surrounding fields as part of a study carried out to identify any archaeological constraints to potential future development at the Site.

The assessment identified 9 archaeological sites within the Site boundary including the post-medieval buildings associated with the farmstead, post-medieval clay extraction pits, historic field boundaries, extant boundaries, and the site of a former house and garden. In addition a linear earthwork of unknown identity, but suspected to be medieval or possibly Roman in origin, was identified at the south-eastern corner of the Site, as well as the location of a suspected medieval trackway at the south-western end of the Site.

Site specific recommendations have been made for these features if they are to be impacted upon.

The assessment has also established that the potential for the discovery of unknown buried remains dating to the prehistoric and Roman periods within the Site boundary is unknown but suspected to be low. The exception to this is at the south-eastern corner of the Site where the linear earthwork of possible Roman date is located.

The potential for preserved remains of the early medieval period is expected to be very low.

The potential for preserved buried remains of the medieval period is also considered to be low with the exception of the south-western corner of the Site where the route of a suspected medieval road or trackway has been identified, and also in the south-eastern corner of the Site which lies in close proximity to the medieval manor and mill site at Newhall. Indeed, it is possible that the aforementioned linear earthwork may be associated with this medieval activity as either a feeder leat to the moat or as a road / trackway.

The post-medieval period is well represented within the Site boundary through the post-medieval buildings of the farmstead as well as historic field boundaries, and clay extraction pits. Moreover, there is a potential for preserved buried remains within the Site boundary of extant post-medieval field boundaries as well as place-name evidence of a brick-kiln located at the south-western corner of the Site. As such the potential for preserved remains of the post-medieval period is expected to be medium to high.

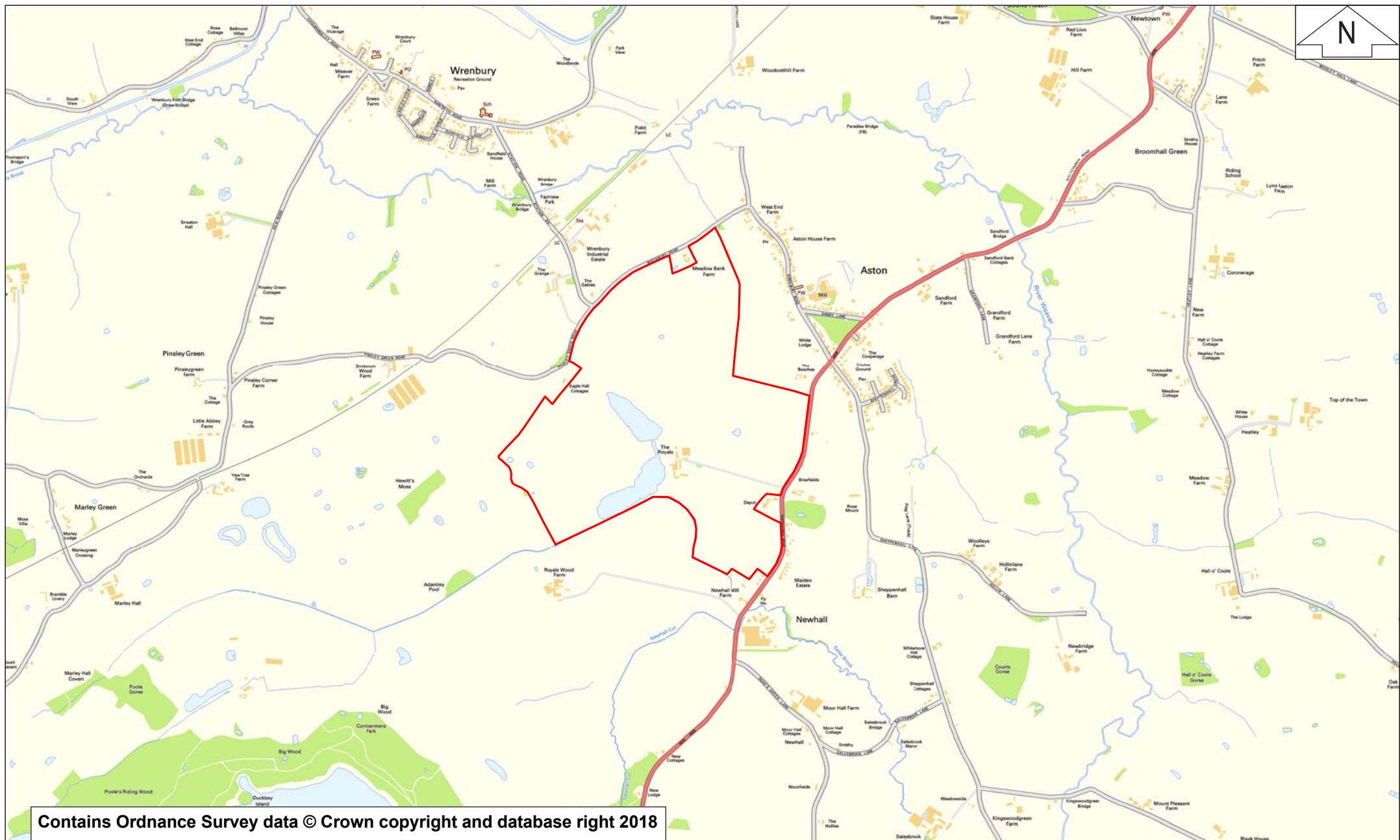
2.0 INTRODUCTION, AIMS AND PROJECT DESIGN

Aeon Archaeology was commissioned by J10 Planning on behalf of Mr and Mrs N. Goodwin (landowner), hereafter the Client, to carry out an archaeological assessment and field visit of The Royals farm and surrounding fields as part of a study carried out to identify any archaeological constraints to potential future development at the Site. The assessment area includes the farm proper as well as seventeen enclosed fields measuring 96.185 hectares and located at The Royals, Whitchurch Road, Aston, Cheshire CW5 8DJ (centred on **NGR SJ 60596 46344**) (figures 1 and 2).

The assessment is being undertaken in advance of planning application, although preliminary pre-determination advice has been sought from Cheshire East Council (ref: PRE/3479/17) regarding proposals to subdivide the main dwelling, convert the outbuildings to accommodation, demolish five existing outbuildings, and to relocate the farm within the landowner boundary. For the purposes of this assessment report the preferred locations of the new relocated farm have not been considered, but rather the entirety of the landowner site boundary has been assessed for the potential for archaeological constraints to development.

As part of the archaeological assessment a 1.5km search area centred on the Site was utilised for a search of the Cheshire Historic Environment Record (CHER). This provided a background historical narrative of the area and included source material from the Cheshire Archives and Record Office, Chester. Information on statutorily protected sites including Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, World Heritage Sites, and Historic Battlefields was obtained from Historic England.

The following report conforms to the guidelines specified in *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-based Assessment* (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014).



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Figure 01: Location of assessment area at The Royals, Aston, Cheshire.
Scale 1:20,000 at A4.

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3.0 METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

3.1 Archival research

The archaeological assessment involved the study of the following records:

The archaeological assessment involved the study of the following records:

- The regional Historic Environment Record (Cheshire HER, The Forum, Chester, Cheshire, CH1 2HS.) was examined for information concerning the study area. This included an examination of the core HER, and secondary information held within the record which included unpublished reports.
- The Cheshire Archives and Record Office (Cheshire Record Office, Duke Street, Chester, Cheshire CH1 1RL) was examined for information concerning the study area which included the Astbury tithe map and schedule, the 1:2500 County Series Ordnance Survey maps, and associated published secondary information.
- Information about World Heritage Sites, Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments was obtained from Historic England.
- Results from previous archaeological work within the area was also reviewed.

3.2 Site walkover

The site walkover was carried out on 10th April 2018 by Richard Cooke BA MA MCIfA, archaeological contractor and consultant at Aeon Archaeology. The weather conditions were ideal for the field search being both bright and clear. All archaeological sites and viewpoints were photographed using a digital SLR (Canon 600D) set to maximum resolution.

3.3 Assessment report

All features identified from the archival research and site walkover were assessed and allocated to categories of international, national, regional/county, local and none/unknown importance as listed in section 7.0. These are intended to place the archaeological feature within a geographical context of importance and thus help inform the most suitable level of mitigatory response. The criteria used for allocating features to categories of importance are based on existing statutory designations and, for non-designated assets, the Secretary of State's non-statutory criteria for Scheduling Ancient Monuments; these are set out in Paragraph 141, Section 12 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), published by the Department for Communities and Local Government and Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2 (Historic England 2015).

3.4 Project archive

A full archive including plans, photographs and written material was prepared. All plans, photographs and written descriptions were labelled and cross-referenced using Aeon Archaeology pro-formas. A draft copy of the report was sent to the Client and upon written approval from them paper and digital copies of the report will be sent to the regional HER and will be lodged with the Oasis online database. Copies of all notes, plans, and photographs from the assessment are stored at Aeon Archaeology under the project code **A0159.1** with the originals being lodged in a suitable repository to be agreed with the archaeological curator.

4.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Topographic Description

The site includes The Royals farm as well as seventeen enclosed fields measuring 96.185 hectares in total and centred on NGR SJ 60596 46344. The farm is accessed via a private drive running from west to east and connecting with Whitchurch Road.

The fields are primarily enclosed by hedgerow field boundaries at the perimeter with wooden post and wire fences internally, as well as temporary electric fencing subdividing larger fields. Most of these are given over to pastoral grazing of dairy herds although a minority of the fields were put to arable use.

The land locally undulates within the fields but generally drains southward from 71.0m OD in the north to 64.0m OD in the south and into an unnamed stream, which marks the southern boundary, and likely drains into both Sales Brook and Newhall Cut in the southeast via a former leat at Newhall Mill Farm.

The farm itself constitutes a large L-shaped brick-built farmhouse with attached dairy cottage at the west end. The range is orientated east to west with a projecting north-south wing at the eastern end. It is surrounded by an additional ten outbuildings including a stables, barn, drift house, shippon, and piggery - to be converted to accommodation; and a milking parlour, outrigger, dutch barns (north and south), silage clamp, and agricultural shed – to be demolished.

Towards the eastern end of the Site the bedrock geology is that of the Branscombe Mudstone Formation, a sedimentary bedrock that formed approximately 201 to 228 million years ago in the Triassic Period when the local environment was dominated by hot deserts. Towards the centre of the Site a north-south band of Blue Anchor Formation mudstone runs beneath the location of the farm, a sedimentary bedrock that formed approximately 201 to 228 million years ago in the Triassic Period when the local environment was dominated by lakes. At the northern end of the Site the bedrock changes again to that of the Wilkesley Halite Member, a halite-stone and mudstone sedimentary bedrock that formed approximately 228 to 237 million years ago in the Triassic Period when the local environment was dominated by hot deserts.

The superficial deposits are of Devensian – Diamicton till, which formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period within a local environment previously dominated by Ice Age conditions (British Geological Survey).

4.2 Statutory and non-statutory designations

4.2.1 Non-designated monument points from the Cheshire Historic Environment Record (figure 03)

The Cheshire Historic Environment Record (HER) maintains a register of non-designated archaeological sites represented as single point data, line data or as polygons. These are identified through their Preferred Reference Number (PRN). These include sites which are of archaeological/historical interest, artefact find spots, documentary evidence, and locations of past events such as archaeological projects.

There are 17 non-designated monuments within 1.5km of the centre of the Site (see appendix I) but none lie within the site boundary. The Site boundary lies within 100.0m of the following non-designated monument points:

- (i) Approximately 1.0m north of the medieval / post-medieval *Site of Newhall Mill* (PRN: 2116/1);
- (ii) Approximately 1.0m north of the medieval *Newhall Earthworks* (PRN: 2116/2);
- (iii) Approximately 1.0m north of the medieval *Newhall Manor* (PRN: 2116/3).

There are no other non-designated monuments within 100.0m of the Site boundary.

4.2.2 Scheduled Ancient Monuments

Scheduled monuments are those considered to be monuments of national importance. The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 supports a formal system of Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) for any work to a designated monument. Any works within a Scheduled area will require SMC; this includes non-invasive techniques such as geophysics or field-walking.

There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments within 1.5km of the assessment area. The nearest Scheduled Ancient Monument to the Site is that of *Wrenbury Wooden Lifting Bridge* (List entry: 1,004,639; Ch98) located approximately 1.79km to the northwest.

4.2.3 Listed Buildings (figure 04)

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport holds a List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, considered to be of national importance. Compiled under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the List includes structures from boundary walls and telephone boxes to cathedrals. Listing gives statutory protection and restrictions apply. Consent may be required for works to, or that affect the setting of, a Listed Building and the Local Planning Authority conservation officer should be consulted if in doubt.

There are 8 Listed Buildings within 1.5km of the centre of the Site (see appendix I) but none lie within the site boundary. The Site boundary lies within 500.0m of the following Listed Buildings:

- (i) Approximately 180.0m southwest of the grade II Listed Building of *West End Farmhouse* (DesigUID: DCH3093);

- (ii) Approximately 220.0m southwest of the grade II Listed Building of *Aston House Farmhouse* (DesigUID: DCH3092);
- (iii) Approximately 220.0m southwest of the grade II Listed Building of *Telephone Kiosk* (DesigUID: DCH2705);
- (iv) Approximately 220.0m west of the grade II Listed Building of *Lychgate at Aston Burial Ground* (DesigUID: DCH3374);
- (v) Approximately 220.0m southeast of the grade II Listed Building of *The Grange* (DesigUID: DCH2754).

There are no other Listed Buildings within 500.0m of the Site boundary.

4.2.4 Locally Listed Buildings

Local Lists of Historic Buildings recognise locally distinctive historic or architecturally significant buildings and structures. Typically these lists identify buildings and structures that are of local importance yet without another form of national historic environment designation, such as a Listed Building of Special Architectural or Historic Interest.

Cheshire East Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council maintain Local Lists as Supplementary Planning Documents which are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The depiction of a local list building should be regarded as indicative only and should not be regarded as constituting any legal definition.

There are no Locally Listed Buildings within 1.5km of the centre of the Site.

4.2.5 Areas of Archaeological Potential

The shape and form of a modern town is the product of hundreds, sometimes thousands of years. Much of its history is to be seen in its historic buildings or its street plan. Elsewhere it may survive as buried archaeological deposits. These remains are highly vulnerable to destruction by modern development.

Although there has been a great deal of work at major towns and cities such as Chester and York, the minor historic centres have been less well studied. The HER in partnership with English Heritage carried out a survey of the archaeological potential and historic development of 37 historic towns in Cheshire, Halton and Warrington.

The survey was divided into three phases - data gathering, assessment and strategy. During data gathering a wide range of sources was examined, collated and entered on to the Cheshire Historic Environment Record Database. This data was assessed and used to write a component based summary of the history and archaeology of each town. This information was mapped on to a Geographic Information System, enabling the production of period based time-slice maps for each town.

Finally a strategy for the protection of the historic features of each town was devised, identifying, where possible, an Area of Archaeological Potential based on the assessment. The strategy reports are intended to act as Supplementary Planning Document to the archaeological policies in the Local Development Framework. They include a defined Area of Archaeological Potential consisting of one or more Archaeological Character Zones.

There are no Areas of Archaeological Potential within 1.5km of the centre of the Site.

4.2.6 Historic Landscapes (figure 05)

The Cheshire Historic Landscape Characterisation Project (HLC) aims to improve the understanding of the County's landscape, and provide a context for its archaeological sites and monuments. Historic landscape characterisation provides a framework for informed landscape management strategies, spatial planning, development control and conservation issues at a local, regional and national level. HLC underpins historic environment advice given to planners, district councils and other environment or conservation agencies, enabling future changes within the historic environment to be monitored. HLC promotes a framework, a background understanding and a better informed starting point from which to consider issues and proposals. It provides information, not judgements, and does not identify the "best" areas, rather allowing appropriate decisions to be made in the light of proposed change. HLC seeks to identify surviving time-depth - the legibility and past within the present landscape; thus, facilitating the sustainable management of the historic components and setting of the contemporary landscape.

The site lies within the following historic landscape character areas:

- (i) The *Post Medieval Fieldscapes* Historic Character Area (HLCUID: HCH7001);
- (ii) The *Post Medieval Fieldscapes* Historic Character Area (HLCUID: HCH6997);
- (iii) The *C20th Industry* Historic Character Area (HLCUID: HCH7177).

4.2.7 Historic Township Boundaries (figure 06)

Townships (often the precursor to the modern parish) were the building blocks of social and ecclesiastical organisation in the countryside and can date from the Anglo-Saxon period. They are often marked by banks, ditches, stones and species rich hedgerows and may be associated with sub-surface archaeological remains.

The historic townships of pre 1974 Cheshire were digitised from a geo-referenced and rectified digital image of the Map of Ancient Parishes and Townships published in The New Historical Atlas of Cheshire. A map of the same, published by Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies was used to inform this process.

There are six Township Boundaries within 1.5km of the centre of the Site but none lie within the Site boundary. The Site boundary lies within 100.0m of the following township boundaries:

- (i) Approximately 50.0m east of the *Dodcott cum Wilkesley, Acton, Cheshire and Newhall, Acton* township boundary (ObjectID: 477).

4.2.8 Conservation Areas (figure 07)

A Conservation Area is an area considered worthy of preservation or enhancement because of its special architectural or historic interest, "the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance," as required by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (Section 69 and 70). There are additional planning controls over certain works carried out within the Conservation Area. The designation does not preclude development from taking place, but does require that developments preserve or enhance the historic character of the area, for example by ensuring that newly constructed buildings are of a high quality design. Conservation Area status also removes some permitted development rights that apply in undesignated areas.

There is 1 Conservation Area within 1.5km of the centre of the Site but it does not lie within the site boundary. The Site boundary lies within 500.0m of the following Conservation Areas:

- (i) Approximately 160.0m southwest of the *Aston Conservation Area* (DesigUID: DCH1451).

4.2.9 Events (figure 07)

The assessment Site has not been included within any past archaeological assessment or mitigatory works.

The area to the immediate southeast of the Site boundary was included within an archaeological assessment and survey of the earthworks associated with the medieval Newhall Manor and Mill site by Archaeologist Michael Fradley in 2009 (EvUID: ECH5722 and ECH5723). The findings of these reports have been utilised within the historical narrative section of the report.

In addition the land approximately 700.0m to the southwest of the Site boundary was included within an archaeological assessment by Cotswold Archaeology in 2015 as part of the proposed development for a solar farm (EvUID: ECH6072). No archaeological features of note were observed aside from the potential for unknown prehistoric and Roman sites associated with the nearby mere, and of post-medieval clay extraction pits associated with localised brick manufacture.

Further to the southwest and approximately 1.0km from the Site boundary the area was included within a Parkland Plan for Combermere Park as part of a Natural England Environmental Stewardship Scheme by Chris Burnett Associates in 2012 (EvUID: ECH5435).

4.2.10 Historic Parks and Gardens

Historic England holds a Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. These Registered landscapes are graded I, II* or II, and include private gardens, public parks and other green spaces. They are valued for their design, diversity and historical importance. Inclusion on the Register brings no additional statutory controls, but there is a presumption in favour of conservation of the designated site. Local authorities are required to consult Historic England on applications affecting sites Registered as grade I or II* and the Garden History Society on sites of all grades.

There is 1 historic park and garden within 1.5km of the centre of the Site but it does not lie within the Site boundary or within 500.0m.

4.2.11 World Heritage Sites

World Heritage Sites are places that the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO has inscribed on a list of international sites because of their outstanding universal value, the importance of which is so great as to transcend national boundaries. Countries with world heritage sites are required to afford the highest level of protection to these places, which means not only looking after the sites themselves but also their setting. This inevitably results in some constraints upon development within or adjacent to world heritage sites.

There are no World Heritage Sites within 1.5km of the Site boundary.

4.2.12 Registered Battlefields

Historic England's Register of Historic Battlefields identifies 46 important English battlefields. Its purpose is to offer them protection through the planning system, and to promote a better understanding of their significance and public enjoyment.

There are no Registered Battlefields within 1.5km of the Site boundary.

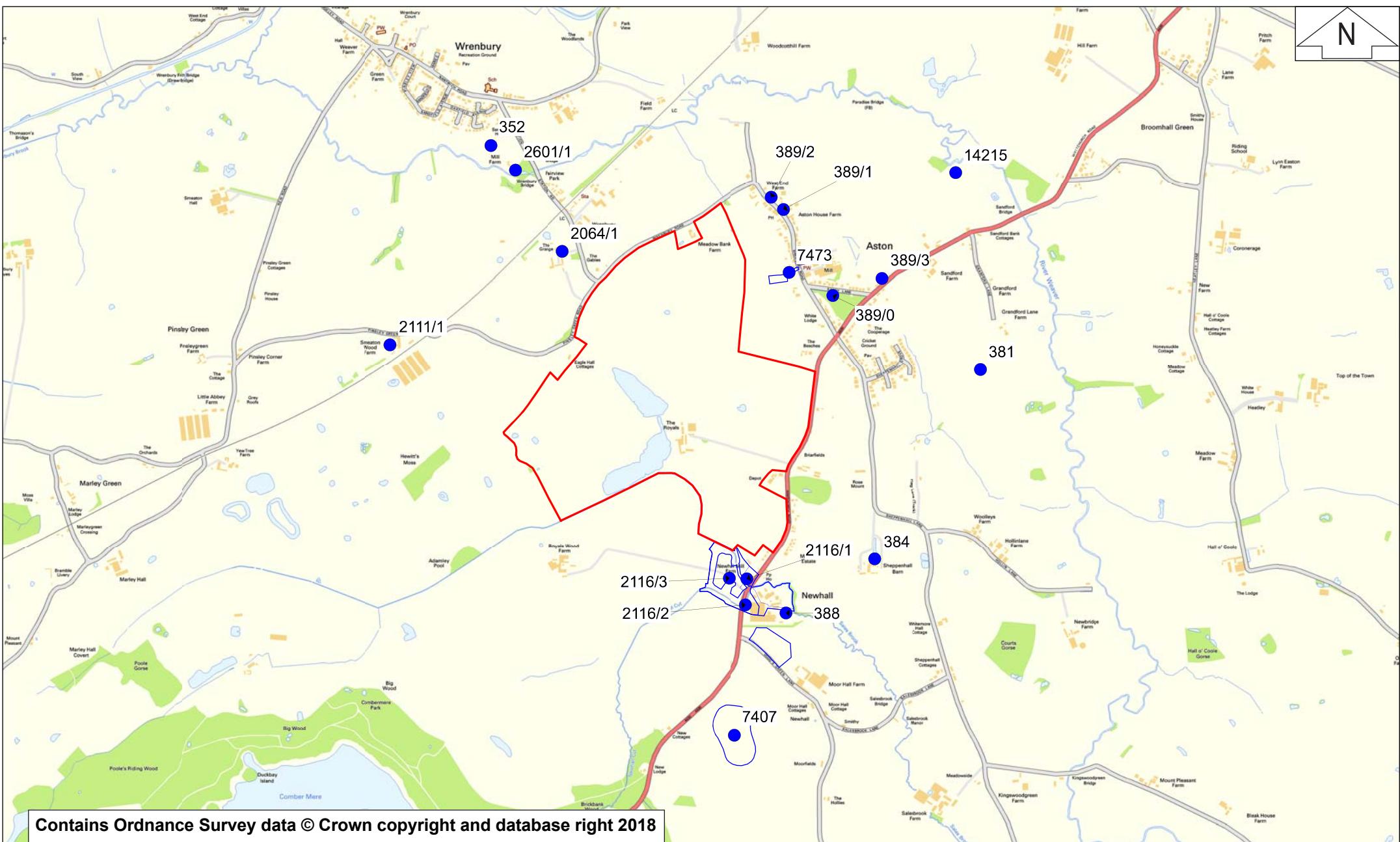
4.2.13 Lidar

Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) is an airborne mapping technique, which uses a laser to measure the distance between the aircraft and the ground. Up to 100,000 measurements per second are made of the ground, allowing highly detailed surface and terrain models to be generated at different spatial resolutions.

The Site is not included within the available Lidar coverage at any resolution.

4.2.14 Historic Aerial Photographs

Aerial photographs taken by the Royal Air Force in 1945 as well as more recent coverage from 2005 and 2010 (Google Earth) were inspected for sites additional to the desktop and site visit, however no additional sites were found.



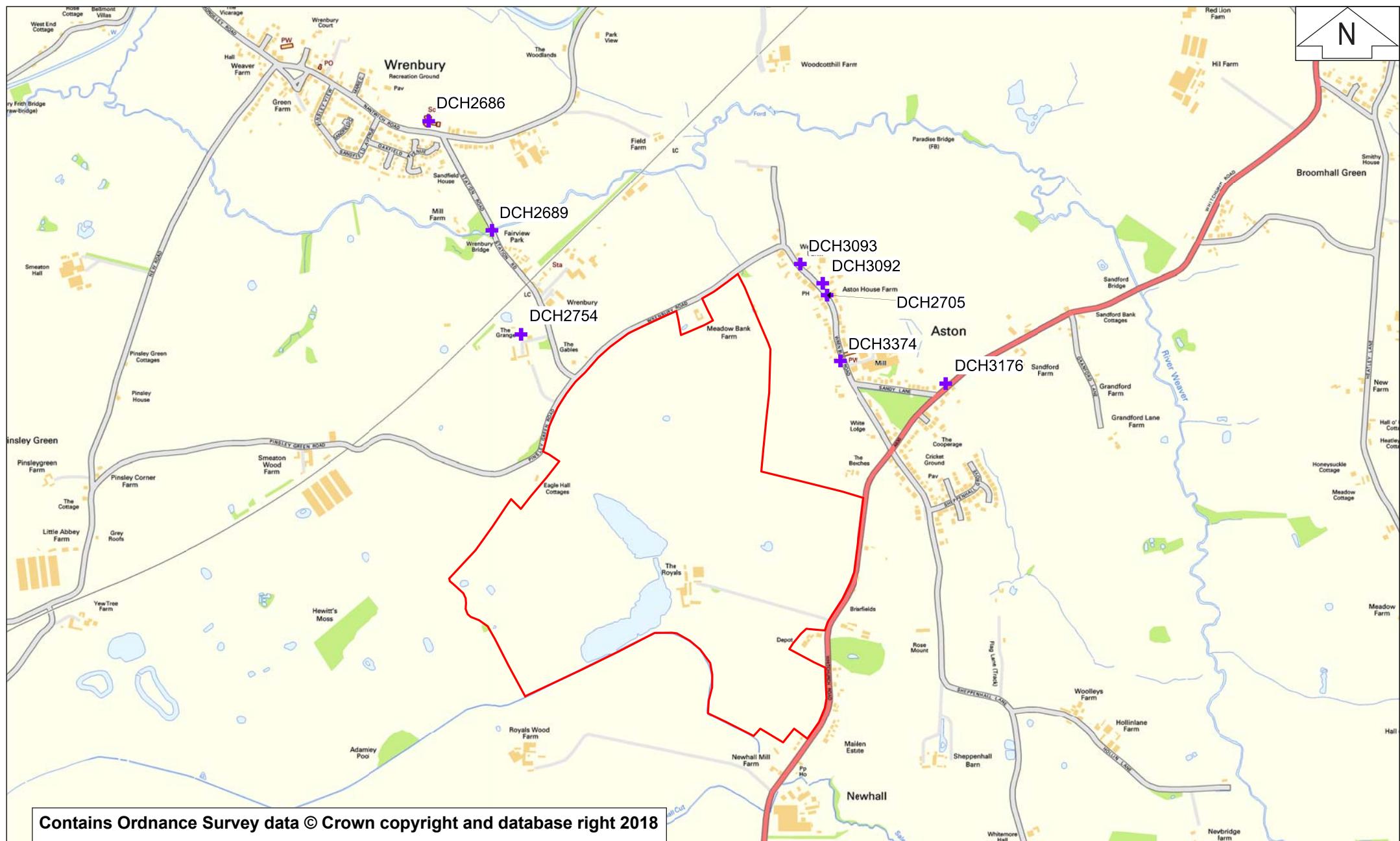
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Figure 03: Location of non-designated monument points and polygons.
Scale 1:20,000 at A4.

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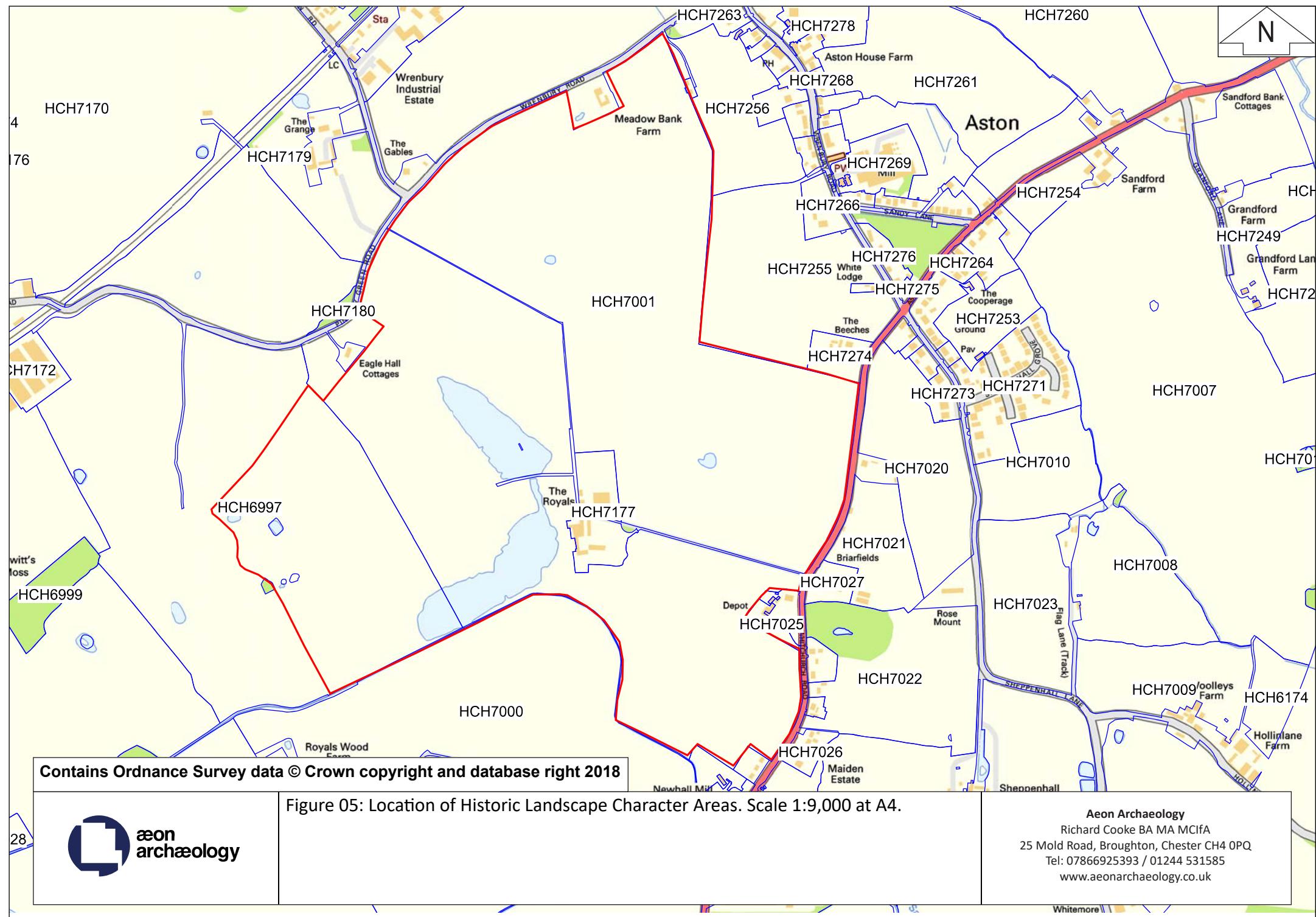


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Figure 04: Location of Listed Buildings. Scale 1:15,000 at A4.

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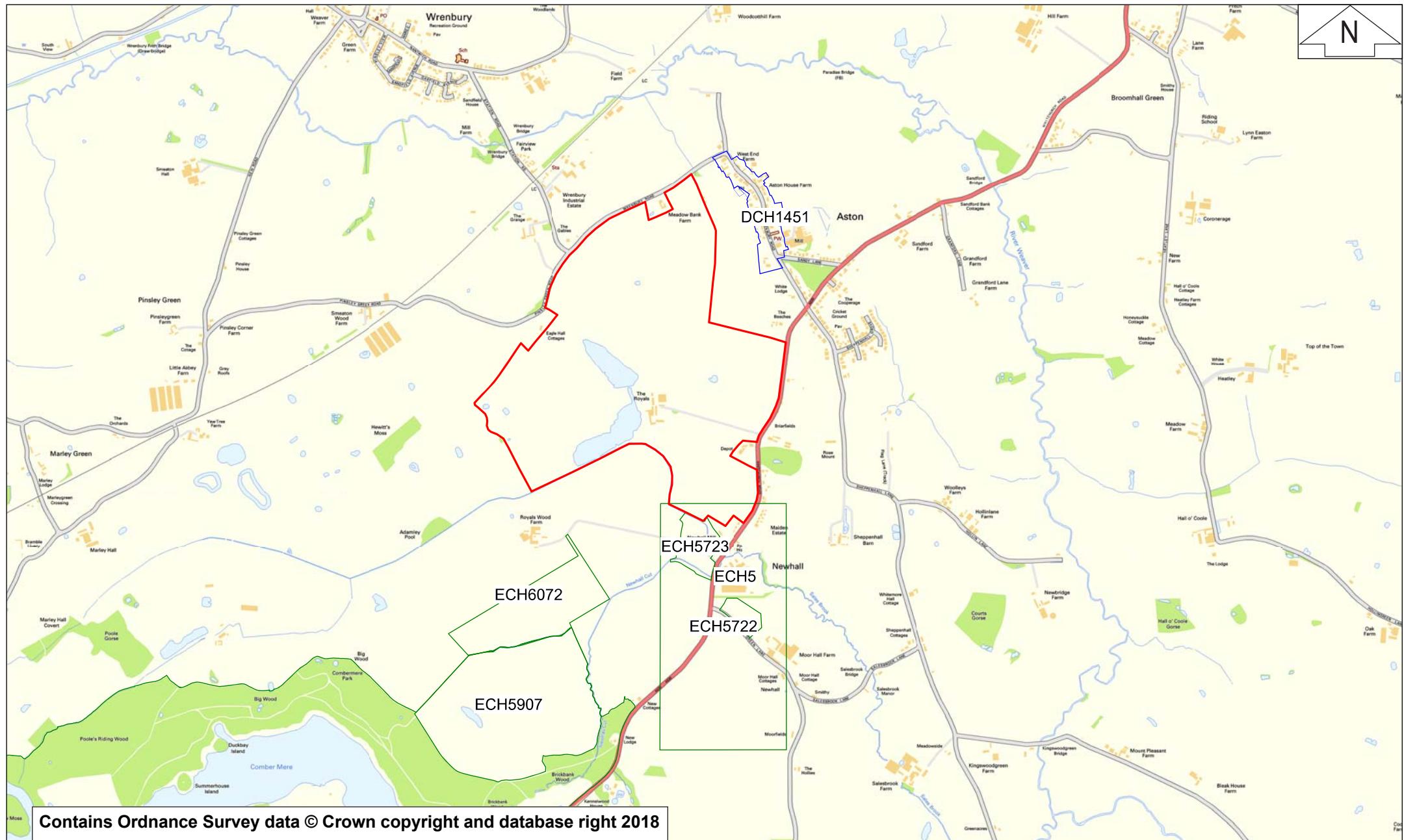


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Figure 06: Location of Historic Township Boundaries. Scale 1:20,000 at A4.

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Figure 07: Location of Conservation Areas (outlined blue) and archaeological events (outlined green). Scale 1:20,000 at A4.

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5.0 THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The following sections describe the known archaeological record within the general area of the proposed development. Sites are identified by their Preferred Reference Number (PRN) which is the number by which they are identified in the Cheshire Historic Environment Record (HER), or by their Scheduled Ancient Monument reference or Listed Building reference if applicable. The intention of this section is to provide a historic and archaeological context to the site. This aids in establishing the relative importance of an archaeological feature within its landscape, as well as assessing the potential for unknown buried archaeological remains on the proposed development site.

The beginning and end of certain periods is a contentious issue. In the Cheshire Historic Environment Record (HER) the following dates are used. This is a standard convention across all of the English HERs.

Table 1. Historic periods

Palaeolithic (prehistoric)	500,000 BC – 10,001 BC
Mesolithic (prehistoric)	10,000 BC – 4,001 BC
Neolithic (prehistoric)	4,000 BC – 2,351 BC
Bronze Age (prehistoric)	2,350 BC – 801 BC
Iron Age (prehistoric)	800 BC – 42 AD
Romano-British	43 AD – 409 AD
Post-Roman (Early Medieval)	410 AD – 1065 AD
Medieval	1066 AD – 1539 AD
Post-Medieval	1540 AD – 1900 AD
Modern	1901 AD – 2050 AD

5.1 Prehistoric and Roman Period

There are no known prehistoric or Roman sites within the Site boundary, however Bronze Age activity has been recorded within the localised environment with the discovery of a spear head (PRN: 14215) approximately 920.0m to the northeast of the Site boundary, as well as an axe head (PRN: 381) approximately 680.0m to the east. In addition, an earthwork previously identified as a possible prehistoric tumulus (PRN: 352) is located approximately 690.0m to the northwest of the Site.

A sub-circular cropmark (PRN: 7407) was identified from aerial photographs approximately 760.0m south of the Site boundary and tentatively identified as a possible prehistoric enclosure, however later analysis suggests that it was merely a photographic artefact.

The Roman period is poorly represented within the localised environment and there are no known sites within 1.5km of the centre of the Site. However to the immediate southeast of the Site boundary a complex of medieval earthworks located either side of Whitchurch Road at Newhall Mill Farm (PRN: 2116/1, 2116/2 and 2116/3) and thought to represent the site of Newhall Manor and Mill, have been suggested to have Roman origins, perhaps as a fort or practice camp (Medieval Settlement Research Group, 2009).

Despite the lack of Roman sites and find-spots within the immediate environment, the surrounding landscape is one of a sloping valley within the vicinity of a natural mere (Comber Mere) lying 1.24km to the southwest of the Site, the sort of landscape favoured by prehistoric and Roman communities. Indeed, it likely that the wetland areas in vicinity of Comber Mere would have provided ideal hunting grounds and the waterlogged upper soil horizon would have provided ideal conditions for the preservation of organic remains associated with these

time periods. Although the underlying soil conditions are favourable to preservation of buried remains, the presence of such remains within the Site boundary is unattested and as such the potential for encountering them is currently unknown.

5.2 Early Medieval, Medieval and Post-Medieval Periods

The early medieval period is poorly represented within this part of Cheshire and there are no known sites within 1.5km of the centre of the Site.

The village of Aston appears as *Estune* in the Domesday survey of 1086 where it is recorded that 'in all it had land for four ploughs and was worth 10sh' (Harris, 1987). The village of Newhall however, as might be expected from the import of its name, is unnoticed in the Domesday survey, but was almost certainly part of the Wich Malbank, and the head of the estates which passed by partition to Eleanor de Malbank (Ormerod, 1882).

To the immediate southeast of the Site boundary lies the probable site of the manor of Newhall (PRN: 2116/3) from which the village derives its title, and which comprised a fortified manor house which incorporated a pele tower similar to that which survives at Doddington. Newhall is said to have been built around 1227 by the lords Audley (Leland, 1536). A sub-circular mound enclosed by a rectangular moat was the probable location of the tower and this lay within a larger rectangular enclosure which may have incorporated an ornamental garden, but which has also been suggested as being of Roman origin. Furthermore, there is place name evidence from the tithe award of a windmill at the site, but given the size of the mound it is probable that the motte on which the tower was built was reused for the windmill. Further place name evidence includes a field plot known as 'the parks' suggesting that there may have been a larger medieval park in the vicinity.

In 1959 a hoard of medieval short-cross pennies (PRN: 388) were found during building extensions to Newhall Dairies at a depth of about 5ft by workmen digging a deep drain. The coins were apparently in a bag which disintegrated and the quantity was estimated at a "shovelful", which has been estimated at 1 ,000 to 2,000 coins. The majority of the coins were thrown back with the exception of a few retained by three of the workmen. The coins date from the reigns of Henry II and Richard I and were deposited around the year 1193, suggesting that a pre-existing building, most likely in possession of the Malbank family, was located at the site.

By 1547 the site of the Newhall earthworks had been adapted to accommodate a watermill, with the moat of the former manor site forming part of the mill pond (PRN: 2116/1) (Dodgson, 1981). The mill building, tail race and mill pond are clearly depicted on the Acton and Audlem parish tithe map of 1845 with the mill building located to the immediate east of the Whitchurch Road (not on the modern alignment) and the mill pond to the immediate west. The mill pond is shown as almost enclosing a small island which is recorded as *Windmill Bank* and *Mill Pond* in the accompanying award. The award records the name to the mill's plot as *Water Mill, Steam Mill and Garden*. A large plot to the south of the tail race is called *Moat Meadow and Mill Field*. The mill was converted to steam power in the late nineteenth century, facilitating the realignment of the road and the draining of the mill pond. The levels of the two watercourses may have been deepened at this time to improve drainage.

The assessment Site is first depicted (partially) on the 1804 *Survey of Dodcott cum Wilkesley Smeaton Wood and Wrenbury etc* (figure 8) where the farm is first referred to as *The Royals*. Despite first appearances the use of this name is not associated with the monarchy but rather stems from the Old English words *ryge* and *halh* which means *Rye Nooks*. This map shows The Royals farmhouse and dairy cottage as an L-shaped range, and outbuildings are shown in the location of the stables and the barn, with an enclosed garden or orchard to the immediate north. The parts of the Site that are shown on this map are depicted as being occupied by

smaller enclosed fields to what exists today and the following plot names are provided in the accompanying schedule:

Plot	Plot Name
1	House, garden, orchard, lane
2	Crofs Field
3	Poole Field
4	Royals Field
5	Way Field
6	Aston Meadow
7	Taylors Crofts
8	Sidderdine Meadow
9	Sidderdine Field
10	Further Field
11	Middle Field
12	Long Field
13	Horse Pasture
14	The Moors
15	Orchard Bank

Of interest is the use of the word *Sidderdine* for field plots 8 and 9 which Dodgson suggests could be of age and meaning ‘an enclosure’ (Dodgson, 1981). It is however not clear if this refers to an earlier enclosure earthwork that was present at the Site, or merely refers to the enclosure of the two field plots.

The assessment Site is again depicted on the Acton and Audlem parish tithe map of 1845 (figure 9). The Royals farmhouse had by this point in time been extended northwards at its eastern end, forming the shape in plan which the house currently occupies. Moreover, outbuildings are shown in the location of the stables and the barn, and the shippon had been constructed to the east. At the location of the orchard depicted on the 1804 map an L-shaped building had been constructed at the location of what is now the Agricultural Shed. This building is clearly not the building that currently occupies the Site, which is of modern construction, however it is not immediately clear whether it functioned as an agricultural building or as an additional dwelling. The farm is shown as being accessed via a linear drive from Whitchurch Road in the east but it is also shown as having a trackway running northwest and connecting with Pinsley Green Road. The tithe map shows the Site as occupying 29 enclosed field plots with the following information provided for each within the accompanying tithe schedule:

Plot	Landowner	Tenant	Plot Name
230	Viscount Combermere	John Nevett	Croft
229	Viscount Combermere	William Etches	Lane Field
294	Viscount Combermere	William Etches	Big Field
337	Viscount Combermere	William Etches	House, Outbuildings, yard, gardens, road
336	Viscount Combermere	William Etches	Meadow

345	Viscount Combermere	William Etches	Big Meadow
346	Viscount Combermere	Richard Bennett	Gorsey Bank
373	Viscount Combermere	William Etches	Bricklin Field
374	Viscount Combermere	William Etches	Big Hall Field and Road
381	Viscount Combermere	William Etches	Little Hall Field and Road
343	Viscount Combermere	William Etches	Meadow
382	Viscount Combermere	William Etches	Field
342	Viscount Combermere	William Etches	Meadow
383	Viscount Combermere	Viscount Combermere	Plantation
384	Viscount Combermere	William Etches	Far Meadow
341	Viscount Combermere	William Etches	Long Field
338	Viscount Combermere	William Etches	Little Royals Field
293	Viscount Combermere	William Etches	Royals Field
391	Viscount Combermere	William Etches	Further Field
340	Viscount Combermere	Viscount Combermere	Plantation
339	Viscount Combermere	William Etches	Sidderdine
291	Viscount Combermere	William Etches	Meadow
290	Viscount Combermere	John Robinson	Aston Meadow
289	Viscount Combermere	John Robinson	Ball Moor
392	Viscount Combermere	John Robinson	Black Croft
393	Viscount Combermere	George Evanson	Croft
394	Viscount Combermere	George Evanson	House and Garden
395	Viscount Combermere	George Evanson	Croft
344	Viscount Combermere	Viscount Combermere	Plantation

As can be seen from the Acton and Audlem parish tithe apportionment all of the field plots within the Site boundary were owned by Viscount Combermere, with a large proportion tenanted by William Etches who resided at The Royals. The majority of the plot names

merely refer to the agricultural use of the field or its appearance. Of interest however is plot 373 which is recorded as *Brickiln* suggesting that localised brick manufacture took place within this field, although no structures are shown on the tithe map in this area.

Also of interest are plots 374 and 381 which are named *Big Hall Field and Road* and *Little Hall Field and Road* respectively. Neither of these fields border on to Pinsley Green Road in the west, however the tithe map appears to show a road linking the northwest corner of *Little Hall Field and Road* with Pinsley Green Road. Moreover the first edition six inch Ordnance Survey map of 1882 (figure 10) does indeed depict a trackway running north to south across these two fields and connecting Royalswood Farm in the south with Pinsley Green Road in the north, but is not shown on the later maps. This trackway is now only visible as a shallow hollow-way running across the field, however buried preserved remains may well persist at foundation level. The origins of this trackway are unclear but it may have originally connected to the manor and/or mill at Newhall and therefore be of medieval date.

Three separate small field plots (383, 340, and 344) are labelled as *Plantation* and are shown as tenanted and owned by Viscount Combermere. It is unusual that within an area of land tenanted by a single farmer, William Etches, that three small plots are recorded as tenanted by their owner. It is also unusual that they are labelled as Plantations as they are too small to provide a supply of timber, as usually alluded to by the use of the word. These three plots however appear to correspond with the location of clay extraction pits and it therefore appears likely that once the clay had been extracted for brick making, the plots were unsuitable for farming and as such were planted with trees and remained un-tenanted but within the ownership of Viscount Combermere.

At the north-western end of the Site a small dwelling with two associated crofts are depicted on the tithe map within plots 393, 394 and 395. This dwelling was inhabited by George Evanson who was likely a smallholder with an additional profession. This dwelling is not shown on the first edition six inch Ordnance Survey map of 1882 (figure 10) and the three small plots appear to have been amalgamated into the larger enclosed *Further Field* by this point in time. The amalgamation of smaller field plots into larger ones is further evidenced on the first edition map with seventeen internal field boundaries removed since the production of the 1845 tithe map. This map also depicts a footpath running from southeast to northwest across the Site, to the north of The Royals, which appears to have changed very little since the tithe map.

The Royals is listed in Morris and Co.'s Directory of 1874 where it is recorded as being occupied by Benjamin James Esq under the category of Clergy and Gentry. Kelly's Directory of 1892 also records the same individual at The Royals as well as at Royals Wood farm. By the production of Kelly's Directory of 1914 the farm is recorded as being tenanted by Charles Dain (farmer), and by the production of the 1939 Directory it had passed to Donald Goodwin.

The assessment Site is again shown in detail on the second and third edition Ordnance Survey six inch maps of 1899 and 1912 (figures 10 and 11 respectively), both of which depict The Drift House as having been built at the north-western end of the farm complex since the production of the first edition map. There are however no other features of note.

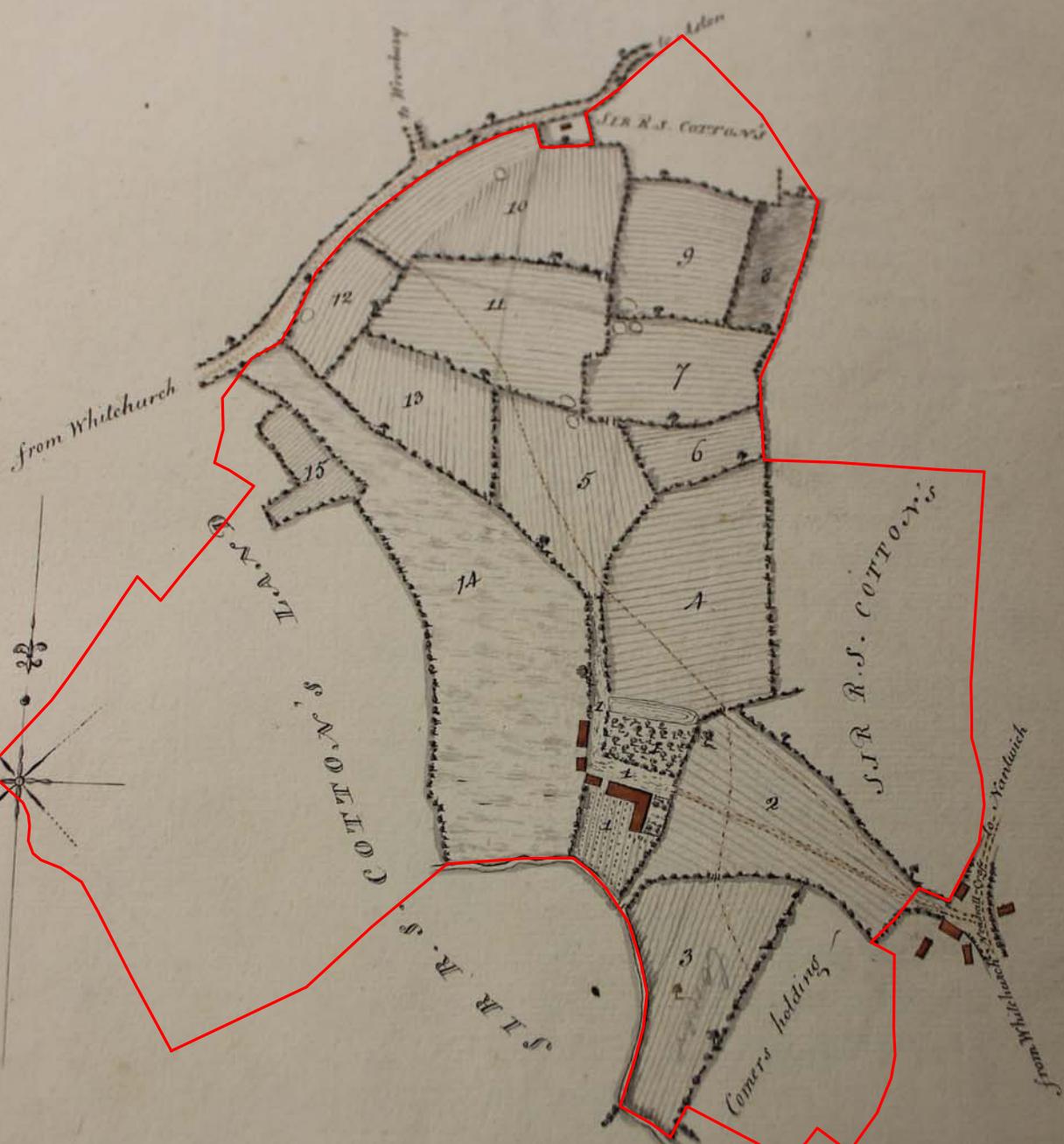


Figure 08: Location of the assessment area on the 1804 Survey of Dodcott cum Wilkesley Smeaton Wood and Wrenbury etc - Map (G) 'The Royals'.

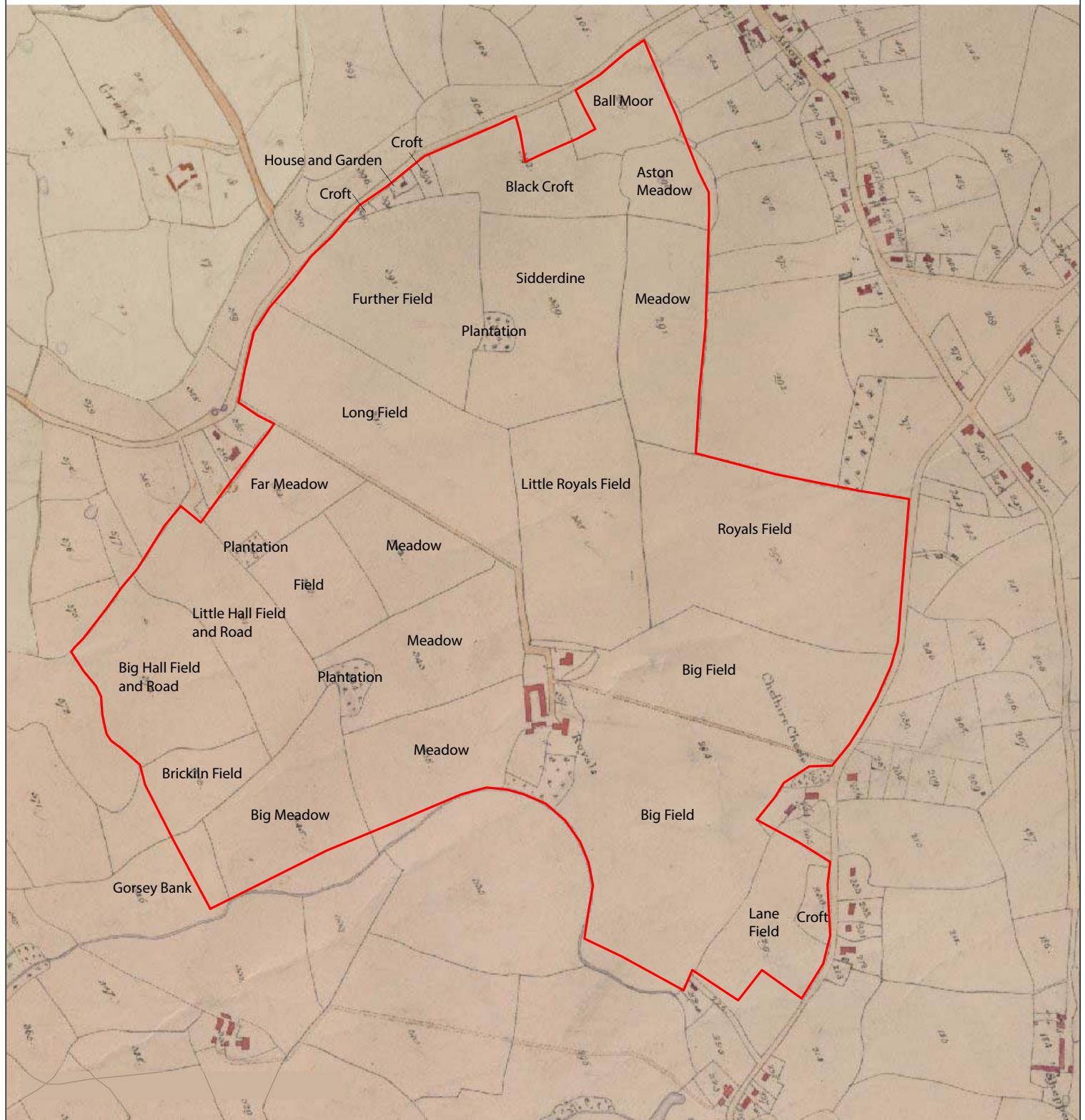


Figure 09: Location of the assessment area on the Acton and Audlem parish tithe map of 1845.

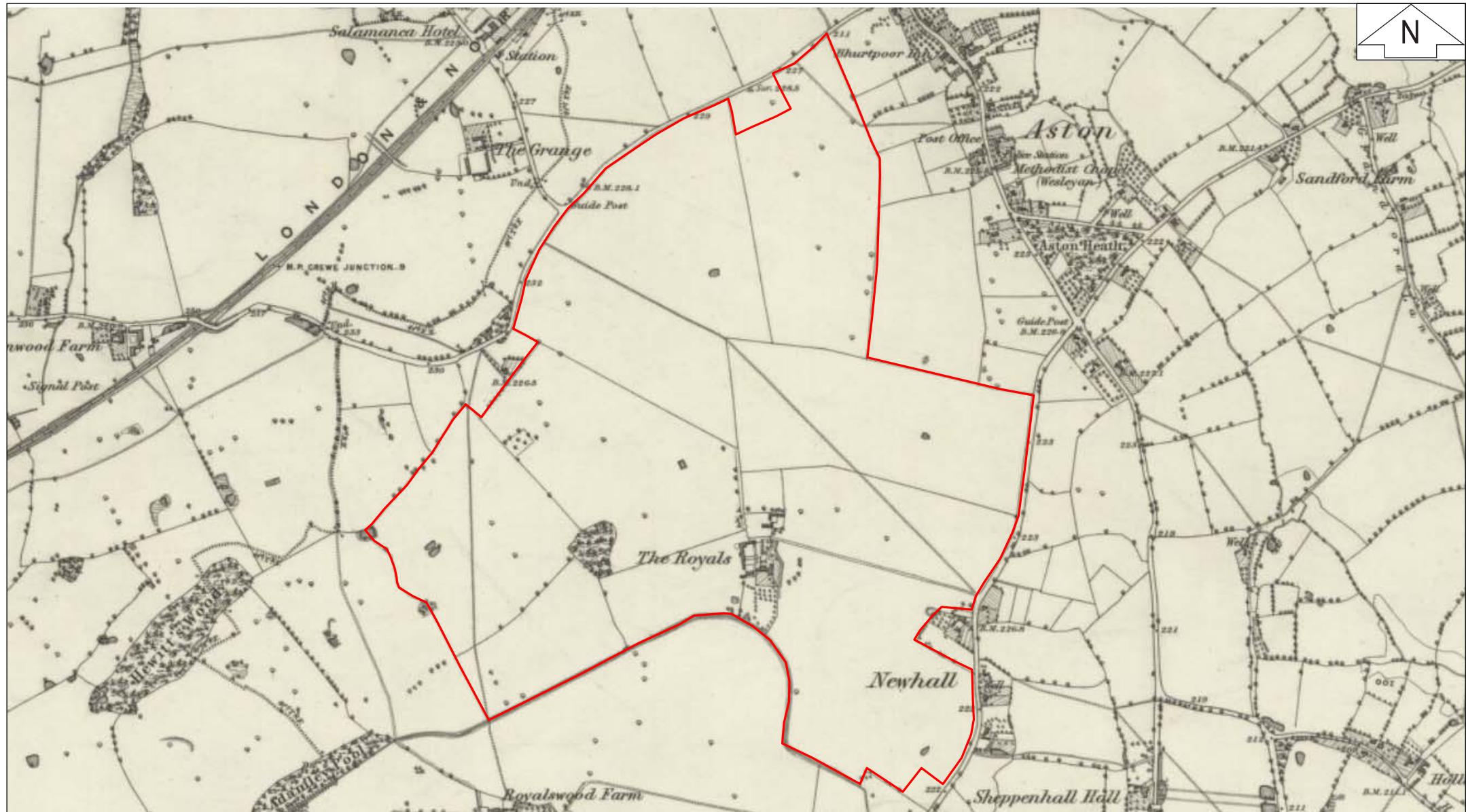


Figure 10: Location of the assessment area on the First Edition 6" County Series Ordnance Survey map of 1882.

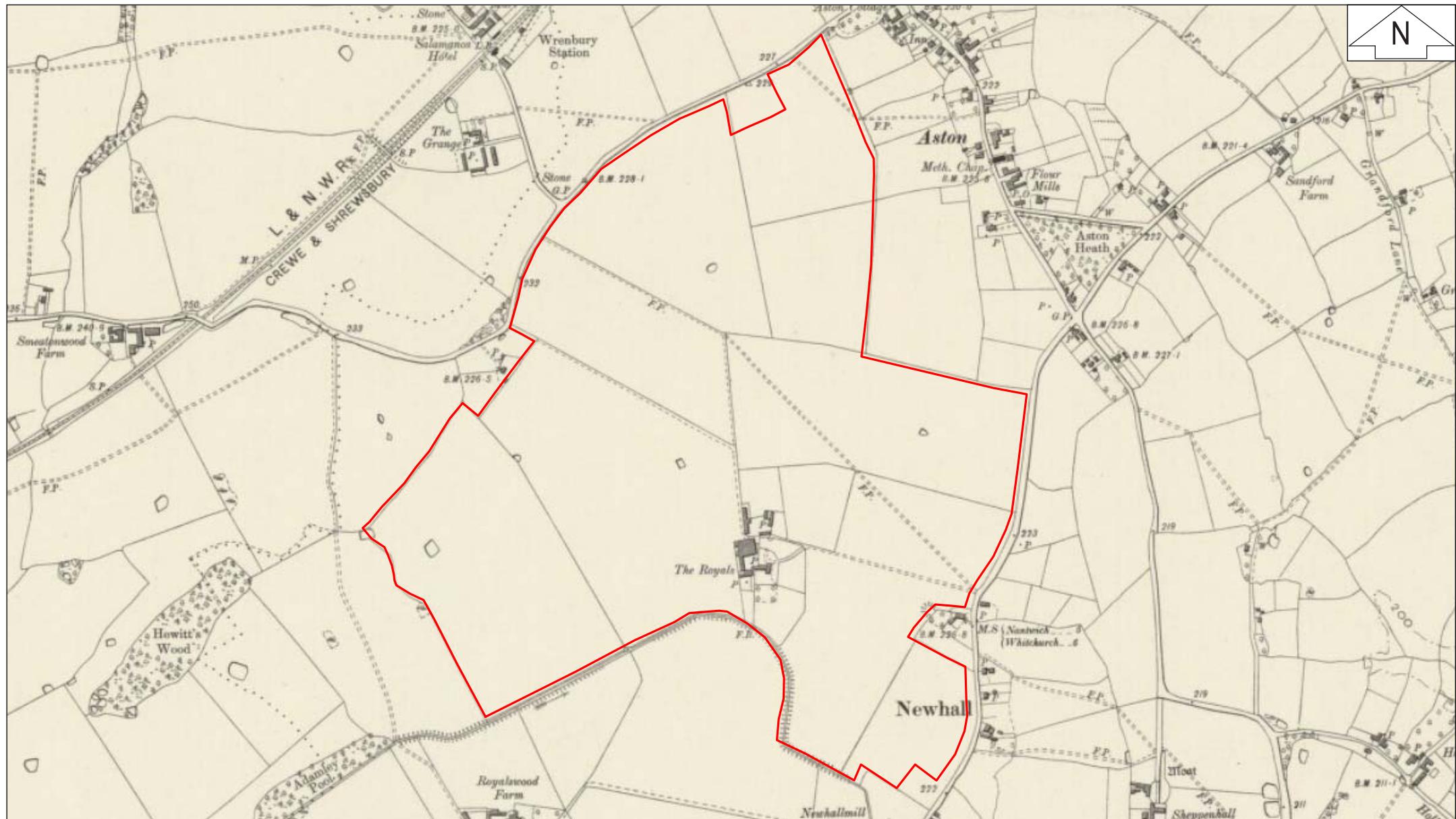


Figure 11: Location of the assessment area on the Second Edition 6" County Series
Ordnance Survey map of 1899.

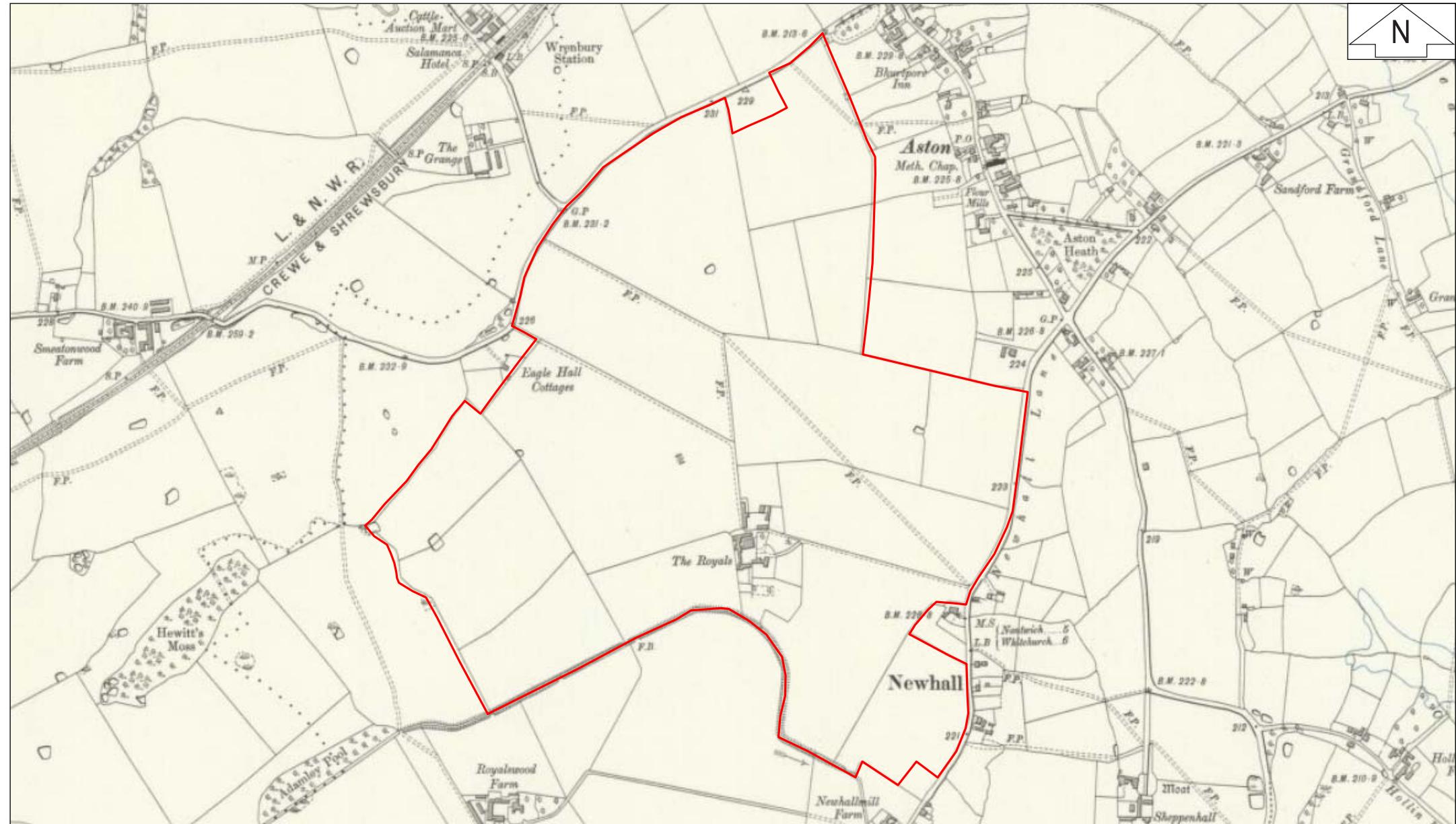


Figure 12: Location of the assessment area on the Third Edition 6" County Series Ordnance Survey map of 1912.

6.0 ASSESSMENT OF HISTORICAL ASSETS

6.1 Definitions

Definitions of importance, impact, and significance of effect as used in the gazetteer (section 7.2) are listed below.

1. Definition of Categories of importance

The following categories were used to define the importance of the archaeological resource.

Significance	Description
International (Very High)	Archaeological sites or monuments of international importance, including World Heritage Sites. Structures and buildings inscribed as of universal importance as World Heritage Sites. Other buildings or structures of recognised international importance.
National (High)	Ancient monuments scheduled under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, or archaeological sites and remains of comparable quality, assessed with reference to the Secretary of State's non-statutory criteria. Listed Buildings. Undesignated structures of national importance.
Regional/ County (Medium)	Conservation Areas Archaeological sites and remains which, while not of national importance, score well against most of the Secretary of State's criteria.
Local (Low)	Archaeological sites that score less well against the Secretary of State's criteria. Historic buildings on a 'local list'.
Negligible/None	Areas in which investigative techniques have produced no or only minimal evidence for archaeological remains, or where previous large-scale disturbance or removal of deposits can be demonstrated.
Unknown	Archaeological sites whose importance cannot be determined with the information currently at hand. This can include sites where the extent of buried remains is unknown.

2. Definition of Impact

The direct impact of the proposed development on each site was estimated. The impact is defined as follows:

Magnitude	Direct Impacts	Indirect Impacts
High Adverse	Complete removal of an archaeological site. Complete destruction of a designated building or structure.	Radical transformation of the setting of an archaeological monument. A fundamental change in the setting of a building.
Medium Adverse	Removal of a major part of an archaeological site and loss of research potential. Extensive alteration (but not demolition) of a historic building or feature, resulting in an appreciable adverse change.	Partial transformation of the setting of an archaeological site (e.g. the introduction of significant noise or vibration levels to an archaeological monument leading to changes to amenity use, accessibility or appreciation of an archaeological site). Partial adverse transformation of the setting of a designated building.
Low Adverse	Removal of an archaeological site where a minor part of its total area is removed but the site retains a significant future research potential. Change to a historic building or feature resulting in a small change in the resource and its historical context and setting.	Minor change to the setting of an archaeological monument or historic building.
Negligible/Neutral	No impact from changes in use, amenity or access. No change in the ability to understand and appreciate the resource and its historical context and setting.	No perceptible change in the setting of a building or feature.
Low Beneficial	Land use change resulting in improved conditions for the protection of archaeological remains or understanding/appreciation of a historic building or place	Decrease in visual or noise intrusion on the setting of a building, archaeological site or monument. Improvement of the wider landscape setting of a building, archaeological site or monument.
Medium Beneficial	Land use change resulting in improved conditions for the protection of archaeological remains, or understanding/appreciation of a historic building or place, including through interpretation measures (heritage trails, etc). Removal of harmful alterations to better reveal the significance of a building or structure, with no loss of significant fabric.	Significant reduction or removal of visual or noise intrusion on the setting of a building, archaeological site or monument; and Improvement of the wider landscape setting of a building, archaeological site or monument Improvement of the cultural heritage amenity, access or use of a building, archaeological site or monument.
High Beneficial	Arrest of physical damage or decay to a building or structure;	Exceptional enhancement of a building or archaeological site, its cultural heritage amenity and access or use

3. The significance of effect

The significance of effect is derived from the importance of the resource and the magnitude of the impact upon it.

Very large - A serious impact on a site of international or national importance with little or no scope for mitigation. These effects represent key factors in the decision making process.

Large - Lesser impacts on sites of national importance and serious impacts on sites of regional importance, with some scope for mitigation. These factors should be seen as being very important considerations in the decision making process.

Moderate - Moderate or minor impacts on sites of regional importance and minor to major impacts on sites of local or minor importance. A range of mitigatory measures should be available.

Slight - Negligible impacts on sites of regional, local or minor importance and minor and moderate impacts on minor or damaged sites. A range of basic mitigatory measures should be available.

Neutral - No perceptible effect or change to sites of all categories.

The significance of effect will be determined using the table below, a basic matrix combining archaeological value and magnitude of impact.

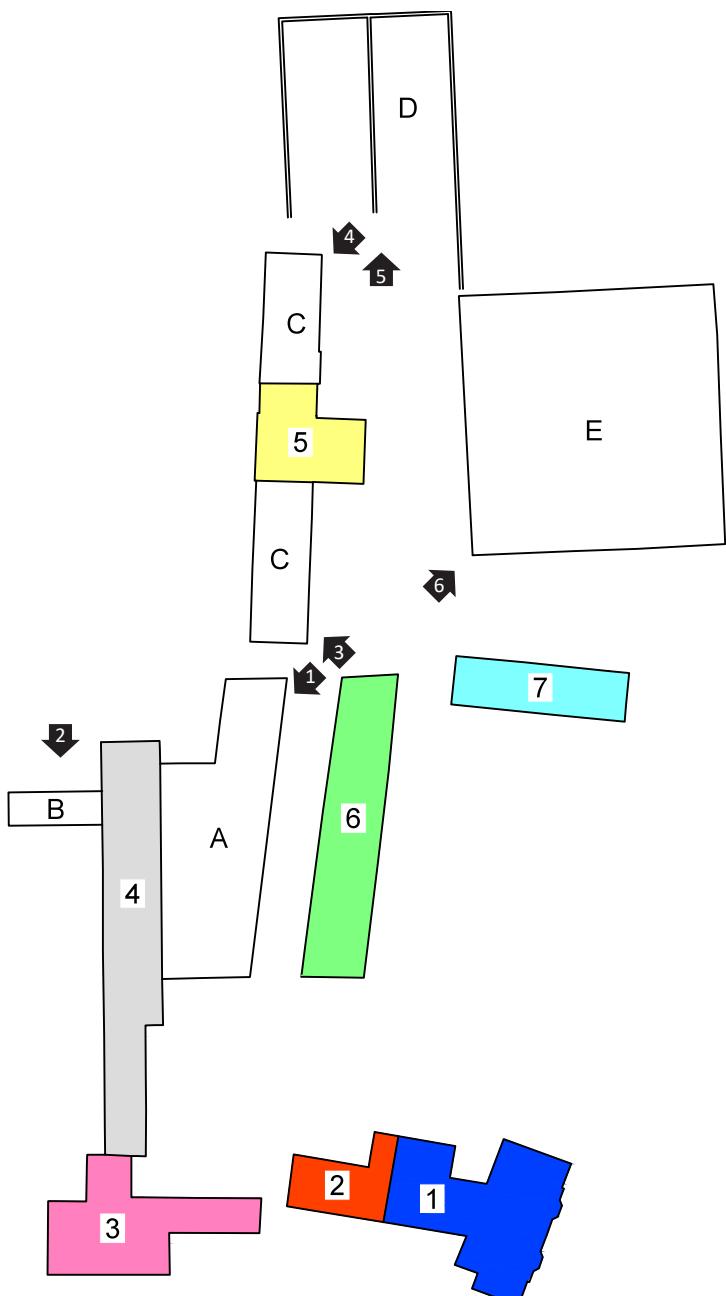
Determination of Significance of Effect

Archaeological Value	International	Neutral	Moderate or Large	Large or Very Large	Very Large
	National	Neutral	Moderate or Slight	Moderate or Large	Large or Very Large
	Regional	Neutral	Slight	Moderate	Moderate or Large
	Local	Neutral	Neutral or Slight	Slight	Moderate or Slight
	Negligible	Neutral	Neutral or Slight	Neutral or Slight	Slight
	None	Low	Medium	High	
	Magnitude of impact				

7.0 SITE GAZETTEER – PHYSICAL IMPACTS

In accordance with Paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework each heritage asset has been assigned a level of importance ranked from International through to National, Regional/County, Local, and None. If it is not possible to assess the importance of the site from the visible remains, then it is ranked Unknown with the suspected importance level placed in brackets if possible. Identified sites were also assigned a level of impact ranked from High through to Medium, and Low. Levels of impact can be considered as both adverse or beneficial, and can be direct (physically impacting upon a site) or indirect (indirectly physically impacting upon a site). The significance of effect is determined from the importance level of the resource and the magnitude of the impact upon it. Where it is expected that a site will be impacted upon by the proposed works then mitigation/assessment recommendations are provided. All archaeological/historical sites identified are depicted on figure 12 and 13 along with the location and orientation of photographs.

1. The Royals Farm – Outbuildings to be demolished (Milking Parlour, Outrigger, Dutch Barns, Silage Clamp, Agricultural Shed)	PRN: N.A.
Figures: 8 - 13	Plate: 1 - 6
NGR: SJ 60601 46113	Period: Post-medieval
Description	
<p>As part of the proposals for the Site the existing farm at The Royals will be developed into accommodation with the following outbuildings demolished:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The Milking Parlour (b) The Outrigger (c) The Dutch Barns (north and south) (d) The Silage Clamp (e) The Agricultural Shed <p>All of these buildings, with the exception of the milking parlour, are of modern construction utilising breeze block and steel portal frame and as such are considered to be of negligible importance. The milking parlour is of red-brick construction and appears to be first depicted on the third edition Ordnance Survey map of 1912. This building is of a simple utilitarian design and is also considered to be of negligible importance.</p> <p>There are no archaeological constraints to the demolition of these five structures and no further assessment or mitigatory measures are proposed.</p>	
Category of importance: Negligible	
Level of impact: High adverse direct physical (construction phase)	
Significance of effect: Slight adverse	
Recommendations for further assessment: None	
Recommendations for further mitigatory measures: None	



- 1_The Farmhouse** 
- 2_Dairy Cottage** 
- 3_The Stables** 
- 4_The Barn** 
- 5_The Drift House** 
- 6_The Shippon** 
- 7_The Piggery** 

to be demolished:

- A_Milking Parlour**
- B_Outrigger**
- C_Dutch Barns**
- D_Silage Clamp**
- E_Agricultural Shed**

Figure 13: Location of buildings at The Royals farm and location / orientation of photographs. Not to scale.



Plate 01: The Royals - Milking Parlour, from the northeast. Scale 1.0m.



Plate 02: The Royals - Outrigger, from the north.



Plate 03: The Royals - Dutch Barn (south), from the southeast. Scale 1.0m.



Plate 04: The Royals - Dutch Barn (north), from the northeast. Scale 1.0m.



Plate 05: The Royals - Silage Clamp, from the south. Scale 1.0m.



Plate 06: The Royals - Agricultural Shed, from the southwest. Scale 1.0m.

2. The Royals Farm – Buildings to be developed into accommodation (The Farmhouse, the Dairy Cottage, the Stables, the Barn, the Drift House, the Shippon, the Piggery)	PRN: N.A.
Figures: 8 - 13	Plate: N.A.
NGR: SJ 60601 46113	Period: Post-medieval
Description	
<p>As part of the proposals for the Site the following buildings at The Royals will be developed into accommodation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) The Farmhouse (2) The Dairy Cottage (3) The Stables (4) The Barn (5) The Drift House (6) The Shippon (7) The Piggery <p>Structures at the location of the farmhouse, dairy cottage, stables and barn are first depicted on the 1804 Survey of Dodcott cum Wilkesley Smeaton Wood and Wrenbury etc, with the shippon having been constructed by the production of the Acton and Audlem Parish tithe map of 1845. The drift house and piggery buildings are not depicted until the production of the second edition six inch Ordnance Survey map of 1899.</p> <p>Although it is difficult to ascertain the exact date that a farm was first constructed at The Royals, the construction, materials and form of the farmhouse and dairy cottage are of post-medieval construction and a mid-18th century date is proposed for these buildings.</p> <p>Farm buildings are of great historical importance. The period 1750-1880 has been recognised as the most important period of farm building development in England (Historic Farmsteads: Preliminary Character Statement – North West region, English Heritage 2006, p. 6). They record, by the siting of the farmstead, the pattern of rural settlement and the making of the historic landscape. They record the historic farming systems and methods of the area and they show the vernacular or traditional building materials and methods of their locality. Conversion and dereliction are steadily eroding the numbers of functional historical farm buildings in the county.</p> <p>The Council for British Archaeology's 'An Archaeological Research Framework for North West England: Volume 2, Research Agenda and Strategy' (Brennan 2007) has indicated that farm buildings are "an important historical research resource" (p. 140), that "there is an urgent need for all local authorities to ensure that farm buildings undergoing adaptation are at least considered for recording" so that "a regional database of farm buildings can be derived and variations across the region examined." (ibid.)</p>	

The proposed development will have a significant impact on the character and appearance of the buildings and will result in the loss of some historic fabric. A drawn and photographic record of the building will preserve by record information which is lost during alteration. It is intended that the Information derived from this recording exercise will contribute to the creation of a regional database of farm building types and from which variations across the region examined (Brennand, ed. 2007, 140).

Category of importance: Local / regional

Level of impact: Medium adverse direct physical (construction phase)

Significance of effect: Slight / moderate adverse

Recommendations for further assessment: None

Recommendations for further mitigatory measures: Historic building record prior to alteration.

3. Earthwork (palaeo-channel? / feeder-leat? / Hollow-way? / road?)	PRN: N.A.
Figures: 8 - 14	Plate: 7
NGR: SJ 60924 45893 – SJ 60818 45689	Period: Unknown
Description	
<p>A linear earthwork orientated northeast to southwest runs across the field at this point and measures approximately 250.0m in length by 10.0m in width by 0.5m in depth. At its southern end it appears to drain into the moat associated with the medieval Newhall manor site suggesting that it may be a palaeochannel or possibly a feeder leat for the moat. Its linear form is however intriguing and it may also possibly represent a hollow-way of a former road connecting to the medieval manor. The feature is shown as a field boundary on the 1804 survey as well as on the parish tithe map of 1845. Curiously the feature is not depicted on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1882 but is then again depicted on the second edition map of 1899. The large dimensions of the earthwork however make it unlikely that it is simply a former field boundary.</p>	
<p>It has been suggested that the site of the medieval manor at Newhall may have utilised pre-existing earthworks from a Roman fort or practice camp and although this theory is unattested, if true it would raise the possibility that this feature is a Roman road or trackway.</p>	
<p>The identity of this feature is unknown and as such so is its level of importance. If it is to be impacted upon it is recommended that further assessment take place in the form of an archaeological evaluation trench in order to ascertain the identity and importance of the feature.</p>	
Category of importance: Unknown	
Level of impact: Unknown	
Significance of effect: Unknown	
Recommendations for further assessment: Evaluation trench if it is to be impacted upon.	
Recommendations for further mitigatory measures: Dependent upon the results of the further assessment.	



Plate 07: Earthwork - feature 3, from the northeast. Scale 1.0m.

4. Palaeo-channel	PRN: N.A.
Figures: 8 - 14	Plate: 8
NGR: SJ 60624 45951	Period: Unknown
Description	
A former palaeo-channel measuring approximately 100.0m in length by 4.0m in width by 0.3m in depth meanders from southwest to northeast between the unnamed stream at the southern limit of the Site and The Royals farm. The age of the palaeo-channel is unknown however it may retain the conditions required for the preservation of organic remains associated with all time periods. As such it is recommended that if any impact is to occur in this area then a watching brief be maintained during groundworks.	
Category of importance: Unknown - increased potential for preservation of organic remains	
Level of impact: Unknown	
Significance of effect: Unknown	
Recommendations for further assessment: None	
Recommendations for further mitigatory measures: Watching brief at this location if impact is to occur.	



Plate 08: Palaeo-channel feature 4, from the south. Scale 1.0m.

5. Former trackway	PRN: N.A.
Figures: 8 - 14	Plate: 9
NGR: SJ 60050 46380 – SJ 60100 45800	Period: medieval? Post-medieval
Description	
<p>A former trackway depicted on the first edition six inch Ordnance Survey map of 1882 and referred to in the tithe apportionment of 1845 ran across the field at this location. The trackway is no longer in existence but is visible as a shallow linear earthwork orientated north to south and measuring approximately 600.0m in length by 10.0m in width by 0.4m in depth. It is anticipated that buried remains of this feature may persist at foundation level.</p> <p>The age of the trackway is unknown but the 1845 tithe apportionment names the two field plots as <i>Big Hall Field and Road</i> and <i>Little Hall Field and Road</i> suggesting that it may have originally run to the medieval manor and/or mill site at Newhall. As the age of the trackway is unknown the importance of the feature is also unknown, but is suspected to be of local/regional importance. If this area is to be impacted upon then it is recommended that further assessment take place in the form of an archaeological evaluation trench in order to ascertain the identity and importance of the feature.</p>	
Category of importance: Unknown (local/regional)	
Level of impact: Unknown	
Significance of effect: Unknown	
Recommendations for further assessment: Evaluation trench if it is to be impacted upon.	
Recommendations for further mitigatory measures: Dependent upon the results of the further assessment.	



Plate 09: Former trackway feature 5, from the north. Scale 1.0m.

6. Clay extraction pits	PRN: N.A.
Figures: 8 - 14	Plate: 10
NGR: Various – see fig 14	Period: Post-medieval
Description	
<p>The desktop study and field visit identified eleven clay extraction pits within the Site boundary. These vary in size from 5.0m to 30.0m in diameter, with the largest ones recorded on the Ordnance Survey maps. There is a concentration of these pits at the south-western end of the Site due to the location of a former brick-kiln within the field.</p> <p>These features are considered to be of negligible / local importance as earthworks associated with post-medieval industrial activity. If any of these features are to be impacted upon it is recommended that a basic record be taken of them prior to disturbance.</p>	
Category of importance: Negligible / local	
Level of impact: Unknown	
Significance of effect: Unknown	
Recommendations for further assessment: None	
Recommendations for further mitigatory measures: Basic record if to be impacted upon.	



Plate 10: Clay Extraction Pit feature 6, from the north. Scale 1.0m.

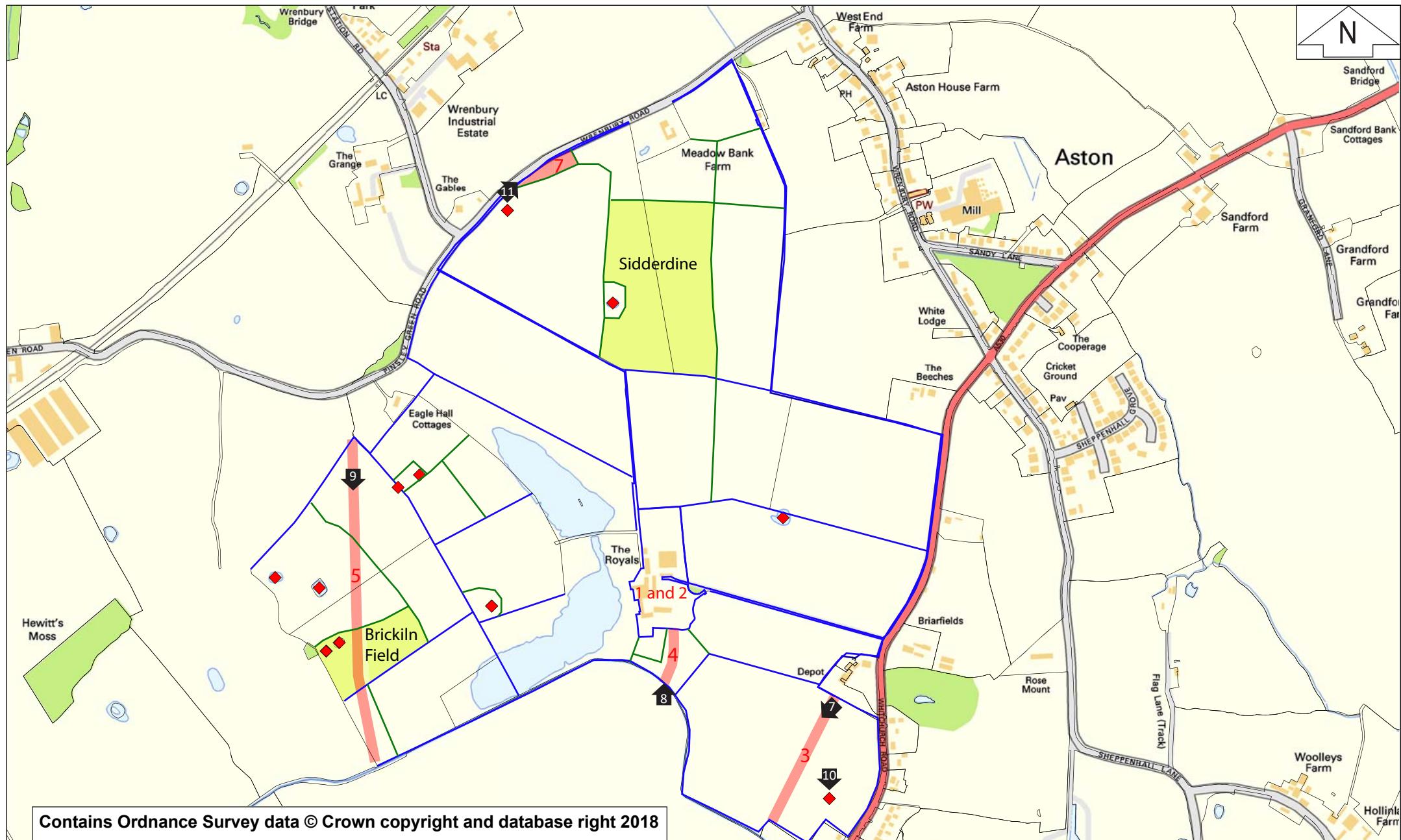
7. Former house and garden location	PRN: N.A.
Figures: 9 - 14	Plate: 11
NGR: SJ 60425 46905	Period: Post-medieval
Description	
<p>The 1845 tithe map depicts a house and garden, as well as two enclosed crofts at the north-western limit of the Site. These plots are recorded on the accompanying tithe apportionment as being tenanted by George Evanson. The features are however not depicted on the first edition six inch Ordnance Survey map of 1882 and it appears that they had been demolished by this point in time and the land amalgamated with the larger enclosed field to the east.</p>	
<p>The age of the former house is unknown but it is likely to be of post-medieval date and of local importance. If this area is to be impacted upon then it is recommended that further assessment take place in the form of an archaeological evaluation trench in order to ascertain whether any buried remains are present.</p>	
Category of importance: Local	
Level of impact: Unknown	
Significance of effect: Unknown	
Recommendations for further assessment: Evaluation trench if it is to be impacted upon.	
Recommendations for further mitigatory measures: Dependent upon the results of the further assessment.	



Plate 11: Location of former house and garden feature 7, from the southwest. Scale 1.0m.

8. Historic field boundaries	PRN: N.A.
Figures: 8 - 14	Plate: N.A.
NGR: Various – see fig 14	Period: Post-medieval
Description	
<p>A large number of the existing boundaries at the Site are depicted on the survey map of 1804 as well as on the tithe map of 1845, and as such pre-date the Enclosure Acts 1845-1882. Some of these boundaries are hedgerows and although the actual age of the hedge is unknown, under The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 a hedgerow is considered “important” if it is greater than 30 years old and is recorded in a document held at the relevant date at a Record Office as an integral part of a field system pre-dating the Enclosure Acts.</p> <p>These boundaries are considered to be of local importance and as such it is recommended that they be retained where possible and a basic record taken of any boundaries that are to be breached by development at the Site.</p>	
Category of importance: Local	
Level of impact: Unknown	
Significance of effect: Unknown	
Recommendations for further assessment: None	
Recommendations for further mitigatory measures: Retention of field boundaries; basic record of any boundaries to be breached.	

9. Extant field boundaries	PRN: N.A.
Figures: 8 - 14	Plate: N.A.
NGR: Various – see fig 14	Period: Post-medieval
Description	
A large number of extant field boundaries have been identified from the survey map of 1804 as well as on the tithe map of 1845, and as such pre-date the Enclosure Acts 1845-1882.	
As these boundaries no longer have up-standing remains they are considered to be of negligible/local importance, and as such no further assessment or mitigatory measures are proposed.	
Category of importance: Negligible / local	
Level of impact: Unknown	
Significance of effect: Unknown	
Recommendations for further assessment: None	
Recommendations for further mitigatory measures: None	



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Figure 14: Location of archaeological features and photographs (all red diamonds are clay extraction pits feature 6; blue lines are historic boundaries feature 8; green lines are extant boundaries feature 9; shaded yellow areas have plot names possibly relating to archaeological remains). Scale 1:9,000 at A4.

Table 2: Summary of archaeological features.		GREEN = no action required; RED = Action required				
Number	Name	Importance	Impact	Significance of effect	Further Assessment	Mitigation Recommendations
PHYSICAL DIRECT AND INDIRECT IMPACTS						
1	The Royals Farm – Outbuildings to be demolished (Milking Parlour, Outrigger, Dutch Barns, Silage Clamp, Agricultural Shed)	Negligible	High adverse direct physical (during construction phase)	Slight adverse	None	None
2	The Royals Farm – Buildings to be developed into accommodation (The Farmhouse, the Dairy Cottage, the Stables, the Barn, the Drift House, the Shippion, the Piggery)	Local / regional	Medium adverse direct physical	Slight / moderate adverse	None	Historic building record prior to alteration.
3	Earthwork (palaeo-channel? / feeder-leat? / Hollow-way? / road?)	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Evaluation trench if it is to be impacted upon.	Dependent upon the results of further assessment
4	Palaeo-channel	Unknown – increased potential for preservation of organic remains	Unknown	Unknown	None	Watching brief at this location if impact is to occur.
5	Former trackway	Unknown (local / regional)	Unknown	Unknown	Evaluation trench if it is to be impacted upon.	Dependent upon the results of further assessment

6	Clay extraction pits	Negligible / local	Unknown	Unknown	None	Basic record if to be impacted upon
7	Former house and garden location	Local	Unknown	Unknown	Evaluation trench if it is to be impacted upon.	Dependent upon the results of further assessment
8	Historic field boundaries	Local	Unknown	Unknown	None	Retention of field boundaries; basic record of any boundaries to be breached.
9	Extant field boundaries	Negligible / local	Unknown	Unknown	None	None

8.0 IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Direct physical impact

Construction phase

The proposed development scheme is expected to have a *high adverse direct physical* impact upon one site of archaeological importance (The Royals Farm – Outbuildings to be demolished feature 1) and a *slight adverse direct physical* impact upon one site of archaeological importance (The Royals Farm – Buildings to be developed into accommodation feature 2) during the construction phase.

Feature 1 consists of five modern outbuildings considered to be of *negligible* importance resulting in an overall *slight adverse* significance of effect.

Feature 2 consists of seven post-medieval buildings associated with The Royals farmstead are considered to be of local/regional importance resulting in an overall *slight/moderate adverse* significance of effect.

An additional seven archaeological features (features 3-9) have been identified within the Site boundary although specific development proposals have not been submitted and as such the impact upon these features is unknown.

Completion phase

The proposed development scheme is not expected to have any direct physical impact upon any known sites of archaeological and historical significance upon completion.

8.2 Indirect physical and non-physical (visual) impact

Construction phase

The proposed development scheme is not expected to have any indirect physical or non-physical impacts upon any known sites of archaeological and historical significance during the construction phase.

Completion phase

The proposed development scheme is not expected to have any indirect physical or non-physical impacts upon any known sites of archaeological and historical significance upon completion.

8.3 Site Specific Recommendations

Site specific recommendations have been made for an historic building record of the seven post-medieval farm buildings at The Royals (feature 2) prior to conversion to accommodation.

Site specific recommendations have also been made for feature 3 (earthwork), feature 4 (palaeochannel), feature 5 (former trackway), feature 6 (clay extraction pits), feature 7 (former house and garden location), and feature 8 (historic field boundaries) if these features are to be impacted upon as part of the development proposals.

8.4 General recommendations and Conclusion

On the balance of evidence the known archaeological resource belonging to the prehistoric period is limited to chance find-spots and unconfirmed sites within the localised environment. Indeed, no sites of suspected prehistoric origin have been identified as part of this assessment within or in close proximity to the Site boundary. The wider environs however would have provided fertile hunting grounds for prehistoric communities and settlement sites are known in the vicinity of meres, such as that seen at Comber Mere to the south of the Site. As such the presence of prehistoric remains within the Site boundary cannot be entirely dismissed and it is acknowledged that the frequently waterlogged ground is conducive to the preservation of organic remains.

It should also be acknowledged however that development at the Site will be limited to the footprint associated with the construction of the new farmstead, which is relatively small when considered as part of the Site as a whole. As such the potential for preserved buried remains from the prehistoric period to be encountered during the works is considered to be unknown but suspected to be low.

The potential for the preservation of buried remains of the Roman period is also unknown, but suspected to be low across the majority of the Site. The exception to this is at the south-eastern corner of the Site where a linear earthwork (feature 3) has been identified. The identity of this feature is unknown, however it appears to run straight to the site of the medieval manor / mill at Newhall which has previously been theorised to have reused earthworks associated with a former Roman fort or practice camp. This theory is entirely unattested but if confirmed would increase the potential of this earthwork being a Roman road or trackway leading to the fort/camp. As such the potential for buried Roman remains at the south-western part of the Site is considered to be unknown but of an increased potential.

The archaeological potential for preserved buried remains of the early medieval period is considered to be very low and there are no known sites within the localised landscape. Furthermore, the potential for buried medieval remains within the Site boundary is also considered to be low with the exception of the south-western corner of the Site where the route of a suspected medieval road or trackway (feature 5) has been identified, and also in the south-eastern corner of the Site which lies in close proximity to the medieval manor and mill site at Newhall. Indeed, it is possible that the linear earthwork (feature 3) may be associated with this medieval activity as either a feeder leat to the moat or as a road / trackway.

The post-medieval period is well represented within the Site boundary through the post-medieval buildings of the farmstead (feature 2) as well as the field boundaries (feature 8), and clay extraction pits (feature 6). Moreover, there is a potential for preserved buried remains within the Site boundary of extant post-medieval field boundaries (feature 9) as well as place-name evidence of a brick-kiln located at the south-western corner of the Site. As such the potential for preserved remains of the post-medieval period is expected to be medium to high.

The assessment has shown that there are no statutory limitations to development at the Site, however it is acknowledged that five Listed Buildings and the Acton Conservation Area lie within 500.0m of the Site boundary. As such it is recommended that once a location is chosen within the Site boundary for the development of the new farmstead that the visual impact of the development upon any Listed Buildings or Conservation Areas within 500.0m is assessed.

This assessment enables an informed, sustainable and responsible approach to the proposed scheme. The information provided meets the expectations of NPPF in that the Client has described the significance of known archaeological assets that may be affected by the proposed scheme. It is considered that the level of detail provided is proportionate to the assets' importance and provides sufficient information to understand the potential impact of

the proposal on the significance of archaeological remains and therefore, there is sufficient information on which to establish a suitable mitigatory response.

Ultimately, therefore, and without prejudice to the findings of any future archaeological, or other investigations at the Site, it is considered that the archaeological interest at the Site could be safeguarded through a suitably worded condition to be applied to the planning consent.

9.0 SOURCES

Maps

1st edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map of 1882.

2nd edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map of 1899.

3rd edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map of 1912.

1804 *Survey of Dodcott cum Wilkesley Smeaton Wood and Wrenbury etc* - Map (G) 'The Royals'

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APPENDIX 1: SCHEDULED AND NON-SCHEDULED SITES WITHIN 1.0km

Non-designated monuments within 1.5km of the centre of the Site as listed on the Cheshire HER (figure 03)

Prn	Name	Type
352	Possible burial mound	Mound; enclosure
381	Bronze Age axe from Newhall	Findspot
384	Alleged Moat, Sheppenhall Hall	Moat?; ornamental lake
388	Coin Hoard	Findspot
7407	Oval Enclosure East of New Cottages	Ditched enclosure?; oval enclosure?
7473	St Andrews Methodist Church (Wesleyan) and Burial Ground, Aston, Wrenbury Road	Wesleyan methodist chapel; cemetery
14215	Bronze Age Spearhead from Broomhall	Findspot
2064/1	The Grange, Wrenbury Road	Farmhouse; timber framed building; farm; grange
2111/1	Molendinum de Smetheton	Mill
2116/1	Site of Newhall Mill	Mill dam; mill pond; tail race; feeder channel; steam mill
2116/2	Newhall Earthworks	Rectangular enclosure?; motte?; ditch; moat?; windmill mound?; windmill?; mill pond; hollow way; feeder channel
2116/3	Newhall Manor	Moat; pele tower?; fortified manor house; tower keep?; garden?; motte?
2601/1	Wrenbury Mill	Watermill; mill; industrial site
389/0	Aston Village	Village green; village
389/1	Aston House Farmhouse, Wrenbury Road	Farmhouse; timber framed building; farm
389/2	West End Farmhouse, Wrenbury Road	Farmhouse; timber framed building; farm; village
389/3	Cottage adjacent to the Telephone Exchange, Whitchurch Road	Farmhouse; timber framed building; farm; village

Listed Buildings within 1.5km of the centre of the Site (figure 04)

Number	Name	Grade
DCH2686	School	II
DCH2689	Wrenbury mill bridge	II
DCH2705	Telephone kiosk	II
DCH2754	The grange	II
DCH3092	Aston house farmhouse	II
DCH3093	West end farmhouse	II
DCH3176	Yewtree house	II
DCH3374	Lychgate at aston burial ground	II