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# **Higham Lane North School, Nuneaton**

Preliminary Archaeological Survey

November 2022

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Preliminary Archaeological Survey

November 2022

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# Executive summary

This Preliminary Archaeology Survey has been produced by Mott MacDonald on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE). The aim of the survey is to help inform the delivery of Higham Lane North Academy (the 'scheme'). The scheme is located west of Higham Lane, north of Nuneaton, Warwickshire and south of the A5 ('the site', centred at National Grid Reference: SP373941). The site lies within land allocated for residential development at Top Farm, Nuneaton, which has been granted outline planning consent (Planning Reference: 035279, subsequently referred to as the 'masterplan area'). This survey provides an indication of possible archaeological constraints which should be considered to inform the development of the scheme. It also provides a summary of the preliminary results of archaeological investigations undertaken as part of the outline planning permission for the masterplan.

There are no designated assets within the site or study area. The site has been subject to previous geophysical survey, trial trenching and excavation and contains Iron Age and Romano-British occupation. There therefore remains the potential for remains from these periods to survive in areas not subject to Archaeological Excavation.

Although built heritage is not the focus of this preliminary survey, no built heritage constraints have been identified on the construction of the school except for the potential for change in the setting of Top Farm, which may be considered a non-designated heritage asset. This was considered as part of the outline planning application for the masterplan.

Within areas which have been excavated any archaeological features, remains and deposits are assumed to have been fully recorded and removed, in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the work. This preliminary survey also assumes that all activities required by the Written Scheme of Investigation for the previous Archaeological Excavation will have been carried out in full by Warwickshire County Council and Archaeology Warwickshire. This includes requirements for post-excavation archiving and the publication and dissemination of the Final Excavation Report.

Outside of the excavated areas, there is the potential for further remains associated with the Mesolithic, Iron Age and Romano-British activity in the site. Features identified by the excavation, including an Iron Age pit alignment and Romano-British enclosure ditches, are anticipated to extend beyond the excavated areas. These remains have the potential to be removed or truncated by the proposed scheme.

Therefore, although archaeological excavation has been undertaken targeting the results of trial trenching, there remains the potential for further archaeological mitigation to be required to comply with local and national planning policy and national legislation, depending on the final design chosen.

The design should place buildings, and other elements with the greatest potential to impact buried remains, within the excavated areas where remains have already been recorded and removed. Less intrusive elements, such as sports pitches and play areas, should be sited outside of the excavated areas. If this is not achievable, it is likely that further excavation may be required. The archaeological advisor to Warwickshire County Council should be consulted as the design of the scheme develops, to discuss any further mitigation requirements for the scheme.



# 1 Introduction

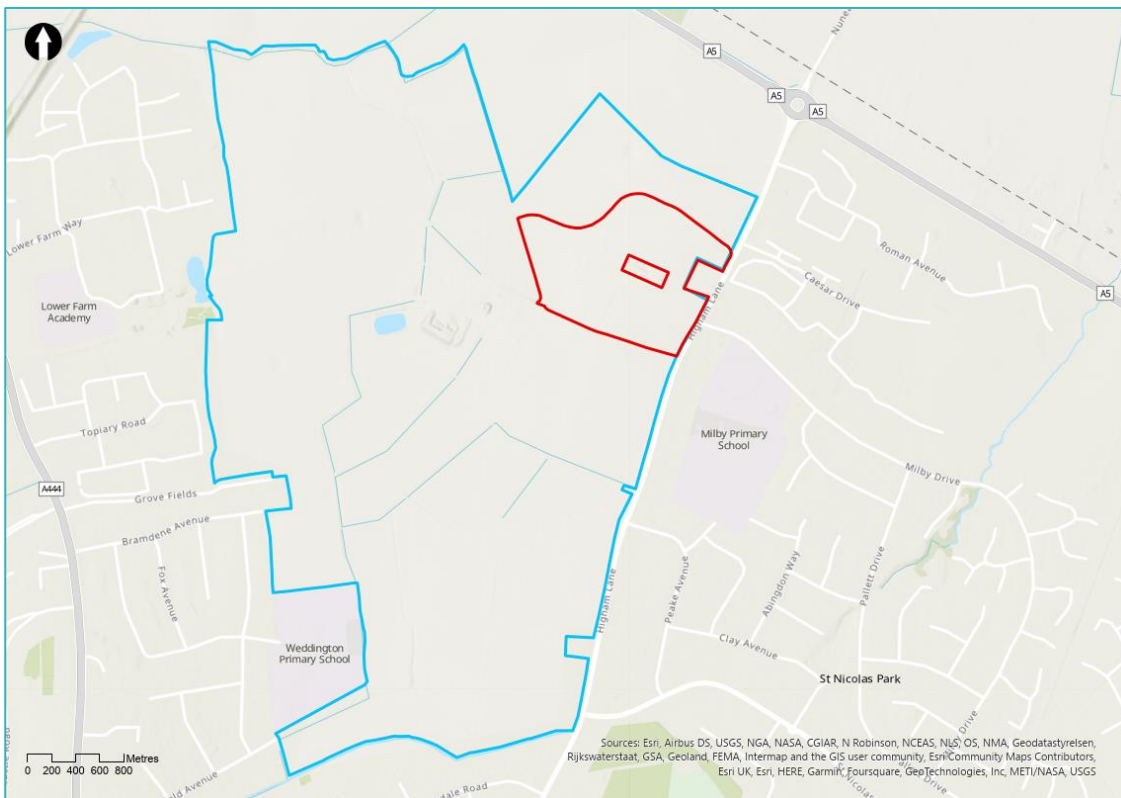
## 1.1 Overview

This Preliminary Archaeology Survey has been produced by Mott MacDonald on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE). The aim of the survey is to help inform the delivery of Higham Lane North Academy (hereafter referred to as the 'scheme'). This survey provides an indication of possible archaeological constraints which should be considered to inform the development of the scheme. It also provides a summary of the archaeological investigations undertaken to date as part of the Top Farm Development Masterplan.

## 1.2 Scheme Location and Background

The scheme is located west of Higham Lane, north of Nuneaton, Warwickshire and south of the A5 (hereafter referred to as 'the site', centred at National Grid Reference: SP373941). The site lies within land allocated primarily for residential development at Top Farm, Nuneaton, which has been granted outline planning consent (Planning Reference: 035279, subsequently referred to as the 'masterplan area'). The site is in Warwickshire, located near the border with Leicestershire. The land was historically agricultural land, belonging to Top Farm, located south-west of the site. It remained in this use until permission was granted for the development of the masterplan area; agricultural activity has ceased and the site currently remains as unused fields. The site and masterplan area are shown below, figure 1.1.

**Figure 1.1: Site (red) and Masterplan Area (blue)**



Source: Mott MacDonald (2022)

The site is surrounded by fields within the masterplan area, these are at varying stages of construction; some are now active construction sites. To the north lies the A5, on the route of the Roman Road of Watling Street (MM 11) and beyond this the former RAF Lindley. The village of Higham on the Hill is located to the north-east. To the east, south and south-east is residential development on the fringes of Nuneaton, Weddington and St Nicholas Park. To the west is a public footpath lined with mature trees and agricultural fields beyond.

The entire masterplan area, as allocated by Warwickshire County Council, has been subject to desk-based assessment, including EIA, and a programme of archaeological geophysical survey and trial trenching. In addition, parts of the school site has been subject to targeted archaeological excavation (further described in Section 4.3.2). The Archaeological Investigations were undertaken by Archaeology Warwickshire, sub-contracted to Wood (now WSP) on behalf of Warwickshire Council. The excavation on site has concluded, however post-excavation assessment is ongoing. Archaeology Warwickshire are responsible for completing the post-excavation requirements as detailed in the Written Scheme of Investigation. Only preliminary results of the archaeological excavations have been available to inform this assessment.

The responsibility for archaeological risk was initially assumed by Warwickshire Council, who have funded the excavation undertaken by Archaeology Warwickshire and managed by Wood. These excavations have been completed and reporting is currently in production. Preliminary results of the excavation have informed this assessment. The site will now be transferred to the DfE for the construction of the new school site. It is assumed the Final Excavation Report will have been completed in advance of this and the archive deposited in line with the Written Scheme of Investigation. The DfE will not take responsibility for any outstanding archaeological work within the four areas of excavation already completed.

### 1.3 Scheme Description

Within the land allocated for the masterplan area, approximately 6.5 hectares has been allocated to the DfE to deliver a school; Higham Lane North Academy ('the scheme'). The scheme will provide permanent secondary school teaching accommodation for 900 pupils. The masterplan also includes provision for a primary school, as well as housing and a community facility, none of which are considered in this assessment. The site is proposed to include a main teaching block and a sports block, both new builds and potentially joined by a covered link. The site would also include outdoor sports pitches and parking spaces and landscaping. The design of the scheme is not fixed at this (feasibility) stage of project. The final design will be informed by the results of this assessment and other preliminary surveys.

## 2 Legislation and Planning Policy

This section outlines the Legislation and Planning Policy of relevance the Scheme with regard to the historic environment.

### 2.1 Overarching Legislation

#### 2.1.1 The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979

Act to consolidate and amend the law relating to ancient monuments; to make provision for the investigation, preservation and recording of matters of archaeological or historical interest and (in connection therewith) for the regulation of operations or activities affecting such matters.

#### 2.1.2 The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Act to consolidate certain enactments relating to special controls in respect of buildings and areas of special architectural or historic interest with amendments to give effect to recommendations of the Law Commission.

#### 2.1.3 The Burial Act 1857 (amended 1981)

Act which covers all exhumations and makes the removal of buried human remains, including archaeological human remains, an offence under Section 25 of the Act unless a licence is obtained from the Ministry of Justice.

### 2.2 National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2012, revised most recently on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2021. This replaced all previous national planning policy documents. Chapter 16 pertains to the Historic Environment. Paragraphs 189 – 208 of the NPPF address the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment; these set out the local planning authority's responsibilities when dealing with planning proposals which have the potential to impact on cultural heritage assets. These policies emphasise the importance of balancing the need for the conservation of heritage assets with the desirability of new development. Those relevant to the scheme are as follows:

*189. Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.*

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

*197. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:*

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

*199. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.*

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

*205. Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.*

## **2.3 Local Planning Policy**

### **2.3.1 Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Plan: 2011-2033**

The Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Plan: 2011-2033 was adopted on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2019. The plan, produced by Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, sets out the spatial vision and strategic objectives for development in the borough, alongside the strategy and policy to deliver these. It contains the following policy of relevance to the scheme with regard to the historic environment.

#### *Policy BE4 – Valuing and conserving our historic environment*

*Development proposals which sustain and enhance the borough's heritage assets including listed buildings, conservation areas (Appendix B), scheduled monuments (Appendix H), registered parks and gardens, archaeology, historic landscapes and townscapes, will be approved.*

*Development affecting a designated or non-designated heritage asset and its setting will be expected to make a positive contribution to its character, appearance and significance. To conserve and enhance the borough's heritage assets, development proposals must:*

#### **1. Understand the asset**

*Applications affecting the significance of a heritage asset will be required to provide sufficient information and assessment (such as desk-based appraisals, field evaluations, and historic building reports) of the impacts of the proposal on the significance of heritage assets and their setting, in order to demonstrate how that proposal would contribute to the asset's conservation. The level of detail should be proportionate to the importance of the asset.*

*The Warwickshire Historic Environment Record, the borough's Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Plans, the local list of non-designated heritage assets and Historic Landscape Characterisation Project are examples of sources of information that will be used to*

*inform the consideration of future development, including potential conservation and enhancement measures.*

*Applicants should take account of the heritage asset's communal, aesthetic, evidential and historical values.*

## **2. Conserve the asset**

*Great weight will be given to the conservation of the borough's heritage assets, with greater weight being given to assets of higher importance. Any harm to the significance of a designated or non-designated heritage asset must be justified. Proposals causing harm will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal in the following ways:*

- *Whether it has been demonstrated that all reasonable efforts have been made to sustain the existing use, find new uses, or mitigate the extent of the harm to the significance of the asset*
- *Whether the works proposed are the minimum required to secure the long term use of the asset.*

*Scheduled monuments and non-designated archaeological sites of equivalent importance should be preserved in-situ.*

*Where harm to any heritage assets can be fully justified, and development would result in the partial or total loss of the asset and/or its setting, the applicant will be required to secure a programme of recording and analysis of that asset, archaeological excavation where relevant, and ensure the publication of that record to an appropriate standard.*

### **2.3.2 Concept Plans for Strategic Allocations: HSG1, North of Nuneaton Supplementary Planning Document**

This supplementary planning document was issued in 2020 by Nuneaton and Bedworth Council to cover the masterplan area and an area west of Highfield Lane also earmarked for development. The document does not contain specific requirements relating to the historic environment but does contain the following description of the baseline environment as understood in 2020. This understanding has since been developed and enhanced, as described below in section 4. However, this baseline information remains relevant and provides context to the designation of HSG1 for development by the Local Planning Authority. The document also contains recommendations from a previously produced heritage assessment, which continue to have relevance to the scheme.

#### **2.9 Heritage and Archaeology**

...

2.9.3 There are two areas of ridge and furrow and a ... rectangular enclosure of unknown date recorded [in HSG1], but these features are considered to be of low heritage significance.

2.9.4 The ECUS Heritage Assessment notes there is potential for as yet unknown archaeological remains on the site associated with the ridge and furrow and identified enclosure. A programme of archaeological investigation designed to preserve by record any remains that may be damaged or lost by development within the strategic site and increase our understanding of the heritage resource should be undertaken.

2.9.5 The ECUS [heritage statement] notes that the development of HSG1 should address the following matters to minimise the impact on heritage:

- Historic farmsteads should be retained and where possible a buffer of fields should be preserved so as to retain their dispersed and isolated character;

- The current settlement is defined by dispersed farmsteads and the design requirement of the strategic site could create separate dispersed 'village centres' with intervening areas of historic landscape between areas. This would assist in retaining historic landscape elements and reference the underlying settlement pattern;
- Where possible field boundaries should be retained through their incorporation into green spaces;
- Where possible, new green spaces will reflect the irregular field patterns and boundaries;
- Development should be restricted along the northern edge of the strategic site so as to retain undeveloped land between the suburban edge of Nuneaton and the rural boundary of the borough; ...
- It is recognised that additional assessment in the form of fieldwork evaluation may be required in those areas where there is a lack of existing information on the archaeological resource. It is likely that further work in the form of desk-based assessment to further understand the significance of the heritage resource, followed by a programme of archaeological investigation, would be required prior to the determination of any planning application submitted for the strategic site (HSG1); ...
- Any proposal which is likely to affect a historic farmstead should include a historic building appraisal and where appropriate a programme of historic building recording to increase our understanding of the heritage resource, confirm the heritage significance of any affected buildings and inform an appropriate programme of mitigation.

## 3 Methodology

This section outlines the methodology and guidance used to produce this Preliminary Archaeological Survey.

### 3.1 Assessment Methodology

The study area for the assessment encompasses the area over which the scheme could be reasonably expected to have an effect. With respect to archaeology, this generally only relates to the areas anticipated to be directly disturbed by the proposed works. However, consideration of a wider study area outside the site is necessary as outlined below:

- Designated heritage assets (see Section 4.2) have been assessed within the site, plus a 1km buffer. This is considered a wide enough area to take into account any impacts on designated heritage assets and/or changes to their setting.
- Non-designated heritage assets (see Section 4.3) have been assessed within the Site plus a 500m buffer. This has allowed a consideration of all known archaeological remains, which may indicate the potential for further unrecorded archaeological remains within the Site.

The following actions have been undertaken for this assessment:

- An examination of the local and national planning policies in relation to the historic environment;
- A search of the National Heritage List for England<sup>1</sup> (NHLE) for Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Monuments, World Heritage Sites and Registered Battlefields within the study area;
- A search of the Warwickshire Historic Environment Record (HER) for archaeological sites, archaeological findspots and other non-designated heritage assets within the study area;
- A review of the relevant documents relating to the masterplan and archaeological investigation undertaken within the masterplan site to date.
- An examination of the relevant published and unpublished archaeological and historic sources e.g. journals and historic records;
- An examination of topographical and geological evidence; and
- A map regression exercise using historic maps, as available online, to determine previous land use of the site.

### 3.2 Guidance

This preliminary survey has been produced in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Code of Conduct: professional ethics in archaeology<sup>2</sup>. Mott MacDonald are a CIfA Registered Organisation.

This report has been produced in accordance with all relevant guidance, including the following.

- The 2020 CIfA Standard and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment<sup>3</sup>;

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<sup>1</sup> Historic England 2021, Search the list. Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/> (accessed 08/04/2022).

<sup>2</sup> CIfA (2014) Code of Conduct: professional ethics in archaeology. Available online at: [www.archaeologists.net/codes/cifa](http://www.archaeologists.net/codes/cifa).

<sup>3</sup> Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2020. Standard and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment. Available at: [CIfAS&GDBA\\_4.pdf \(archaeologists.net\)](#)

- The 2015 Historic England Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision – Taking in the Historic Environment (GPA2)<sup>4</sup>;
- The 2017 Historic England Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (GPA3)<sup>5</sup>; and
- The 2019 Historic England Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets (Advice Note 12)<sup>6</sup>;
- The 2021 Principles of Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment in the UK, Institute of Environmental Assessment and Management (IEMA), Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) and CIFA<sup>7</sup>.

### 3.3 Assumptions and limitations

Designated and non-designated heritage data is up to date, as of November 2022. Information provided by the HER can be limited because it depends on previous opportunities for research, fieldwork and discovery. Where nothing of historic interest is shown in a particular area, this can be down to lack of targeted research or investigation rather than the genuine absence of sub-surface archaeological deposits.

Documentary sources are rare before the medieval period, and many historic documents are inherently biased. Older primary sources often fail to accurately locate sites and interpretation can be subjective. Historic maps provide a glimpse of land-use at a specific moment. It is therefore possible that short-term structures or areas of land-use are not shown and therefore not recorded within this assessment.

Due to the archaeological investigations undertaken on the site, a site visit was not undertaken to inform this assessment. Additional non-designated assets were deemed very unlikely to be identified by an additional walkover survey, due to previous walkovers, geophysical surveys and archaeological investigations. The results of these prior surveys have informed this assessment to ensure non-designated assets are captured (see also section 4.3). Built heritage is not the primary consideration of this assessment, however no designated built heritage assets are present within the study area (see section 4.2) and the one non-designated built-heritage asset within the study area has been previously assessed. Therefore, additional setting assessments were not considered to add benefit to this assessment. Therefore, the lack of site survey undertaken specifically for this assessment does not affect its ability to report on the archaeological constraints of the scheme.

A final report on the archaeological investigations undertaken on site was not available at time of writing. This assessment is based on the preliminary results made available in communication from the Archaeological Clerk of Works (ACoW) October 2022<sup>8</sup>. This is sufficient to inform the updated baseline and constraints appraisal contained within this

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<sup>4</sup> Historic England, 2015. Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2. Available at: [Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment](https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/managing-significance-in-decision-taking-in-the-historic-environment/) ([historicengland.org.uk](https://historicengland.org.uk))

<sup>5</sup> Historic England, 2017, *Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (GPA3) – the setting of heritage assets*. Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/heag180-gpa3-setting-heritage-assets/>

<sup>6</sup> Historic England, 2019, *Historic England Advice Note 12 (HEAN12) – Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets*. Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/statements-heritage-significance-advice-note-12/heag279-statements-heritage-significance/>

<sup>7</sup> Available online at: <https://www.iema.net/myiema/login?redirect=resources/reading-room/2021/07/20/principles-of-cultural-heritage-impact-assessment>.

<sup>8</sup> Email communication dated 5<sup>th</sup> October 2022 between WSP and Mott MacDonald. Weekly Clerk of Work Reports from throughout the excavation.



assessment, however this assessment should be understood in conjunction with the Final Post-Excavation Report, when available. Some interpretation of features may be subject to change in the Final Post-Excavation Assessment, following specialist analysis of finds and processing of samples. Any recommendations for further work should be informed by the Final Excavation Report. This preliminary survey assumes that all activities required by the Written Scheme of Investigation for the previous Archaeological Excavation will have been carried out in full by Warwickshire County Council and Archaeology Warwickshire. This includes requirements for post-excavation archiving and the publication and dissemination of the Final Excavation Report.

The site is located approximately 485m from the border with Leicestershire, meaning a small part of the study area for non-designated assets falls within the Leicestershire County boundary. Due to the small size of this area and the negligible potential for impacts on assets there as a result of the scheme, it was not considered necessary to purchase the Leicestershire HER data for this survey.

## 4 Baseline

### 4.1 Geology and Topography

The underlying geology of the site and of the study area is predominantly Mercia Group Mudstone, a sedimentary bedrock which formed between 252.2 and 201.3 million years ago. There are also several broadly east-west linear inclusions of Gunthorpe Member dolomitic siltstone. This is also a sedimentary bedrock which formed between 247.1 and 237 million years ago.

There is no superficial geology recorded within the site, however inclusions of Anker Sand and Gravel and Alluvium around the river beds have been recorded west of Top Farm. These superficial deposits formed up to 2.588 million and 11.8 thousand years ago respectively, in the Quaternary period. The more recent alluvial deposits are recorded only around the course of streams and rivers in the area. Trial trenching in 2021 (MM27, see Section 4.3.2) revealed natural clay in all trenches. Soilscape indicates slightly acidic loamy and clayey soils with slightly impeded drainage throughout the site. It is likely that the superficial geology throughout the site is formed of clayey soils.

The site lies at approximately 80-95m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), on the slopes of the valley of the River Anker (to the south) and Higham on the Hill to the north. It rises gently from south to north, with some gentle undulation within the masterplan area. Due to the relatively flat and open surrounding landscape; there are long views in the study area wherever there is no intervening built environment. This allows views southwards towards the rising topography beyond the Trent Valley Railway Line and Coventry Canal, including the landmark feature of the manmade Mount Judd (also known as the Nuneaton Nipple) approximately 2.5km south-west (outside the study area).

### 4.2 Designated Heritage Assets

A designated asset is one that has been recognised to be of particular significance giving it formal status under law or policy intended to sustain those values. These include World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Protected Wreck Sites, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and Conservation Areas. They are designated under the relevant legislation, as defined in Annex 2 of the Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

There are no designated assets within the 1km study area. There are assets outside the study area and not anticipated to be impacted by the scheme but do provide context to the historical development of the wider area. These are;

- The nearest listed building is located approximately 1.3km south-west; The Church of St James (NHLE: 1185771), Grade II listed.
- The nearest Scheduled Monument is located approximately 1.8km north-west; the remains of a chapel in Lindley Park (NHLE: 1005075).
- The nearest Conservation Areas are at Higham on the Hill (approximately 1.2km north) and Nuneaton Town Centre (approximately 2km south).
- The nearest Registered Battlefield is the site of The Battle of Bosworth Field 1485 (NHLE: 1000004), approximately 2.5km north.

### 4.3 Non-designated heritage assets

A non-designated asset is a site, building, monument, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance consideration in planning decisions, but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets.

In this assessment, non-designated assets have been identified from the HER, but assets have also been identified as a result of previous Archaeological Investigations on site. Both are reported below. Some assets identified in previous Archaeological Investigations on site are already included in the HER, these have been counted once under Section 4.3.1.

Previous Archaeological Investigations of the site have been undertaken as part of the Outline Planning Application for the masterplan. This has included desk-based assessment, geophysical survey, Archaeological Trial Trenching and Archaeological Excavation. These events are further detailed in Section 4.3.2 below.

All assets in the study area have been assigned a report reference number, formatted MM 01, for consistency and ease of cross-referencing. A summary of assets within the study area is provided here, a complete list is given in the gazetteer in Appendix A. Assets are shown spatially in Appendix B.

#### 4.3.1 Non-designated assets

The HER identifies 19 non-designated assets within the study area, including findspots which are discussed below under 4.3.1.1.

Three assets are identified by the HER as within the site, these are:

- Mesolithic - Neolithic flint scatter, Top Farm, Nuneaton (MM 13). This is partially within the north of the site.
- Middle Iron Age settlement activity, Top Farm, Nuneaton (MM 14). This is located within the site, additional evidence relating to this activity was identified during trial trenching and targeted excavation and is detailed below.
- Romano-British settlement, East of Top Farm, Nuneaton (MM 16), additional evidence relating to this activity was identified during trial trenching and targeted excavation and is detailed below.

One further asset, MM 10, is close to the boundary of the site (approximately 75m north-west). The asset is a Romano-British cremation, which was identified during trial trenching and likely associated with other Romano-British activity recorded in the site and study area.

In addition, four further assets are identified in the HER outside the site but within the 500m study area. These are;

- Romano-British Activity, Top Farm, Nuneaton (MM 15), approximately 470m west of the site.
- Post-medieval marl pits, 145m north-east (MM 17).
- Watling Street Roman Road (MM 11) which crosses the study area east to west approximately 480m north of the site.
- Undated Possible Enclosure (MM 12), approximately 145m south of the site.

In addition, the principal farm building at Top Farm could be considered a non-designated heritage asset. This building pre-dates the earliest available historic mapping (see section 4.4) and does not appear heavily altered since construction. It also continued to be used as a farmhouse until the allocation of land for housing under the masterplan, it continues to be used as a residential property.

Ridge and furrow is identified by Warwickshire HER throughout the northern half of the study area, surviving well in more rural areas. This is not identified within the site; the closest recorded area is approximately 200m to the west and approximately 450m east (MM 30 and MM 31). Ridge and furrow is the result of early medieval, medieval and/or post-medieval farming practices and indicates historic agricultural land use in the study area. Ridge and furrow within the study area is shown in Appendix B. Events within the study area have identified additional ridge and furrow throughout the masterplan area and site, this is described below in Section 4.3.2.2.

#### 4.3.1.1 Findspots

A findspot is the record of a location at which an isolated artefact, or sometimes groups of artefacts, have been identified. Findspots are not normally in situ remains but are typically surface finds resulting from, for example, ploughing disturbing buried remains and bringing artefacts to the surface. These are therefore not necessarily considered an asset, as they have typically been removed from their context. However, findspots can be indicative of archaeological activity of a certain type or from a certain period within an area.

There are two findspots recorded on the HER within the site; two post-medieval artefacts found by metal detecting (HER: MM 07 and MM 05).

Within the 500m study area, the following additional findspots are identified by the HER:

- Palaeolithic roughout (MM 04, 200m north).
- Palaeolithic handaxe (MM 03: MWA12762, 270m north).
- Roman artefacts from metal detecting (MM 08, 220m south-east).
- Two early medieval artefacts recovered during metal detecting (MM 06, 220m south-east) and MM 09 60m south-west).
- Two medieval coin hoards, one including some Roman coins (MM 01 and MM 02) both 270m north.

#### 4.3.2 Events and Results of investigation within the site

There are three events identified within the site and a further four events recorded in the 500m study area in the HER. In addition to the record in the HER, further information is known regarding archaeological events that have been undertaken at the site, as described below.

##### 4.3.2.1 Investigation within the site

The following events have been undertaken within the site;

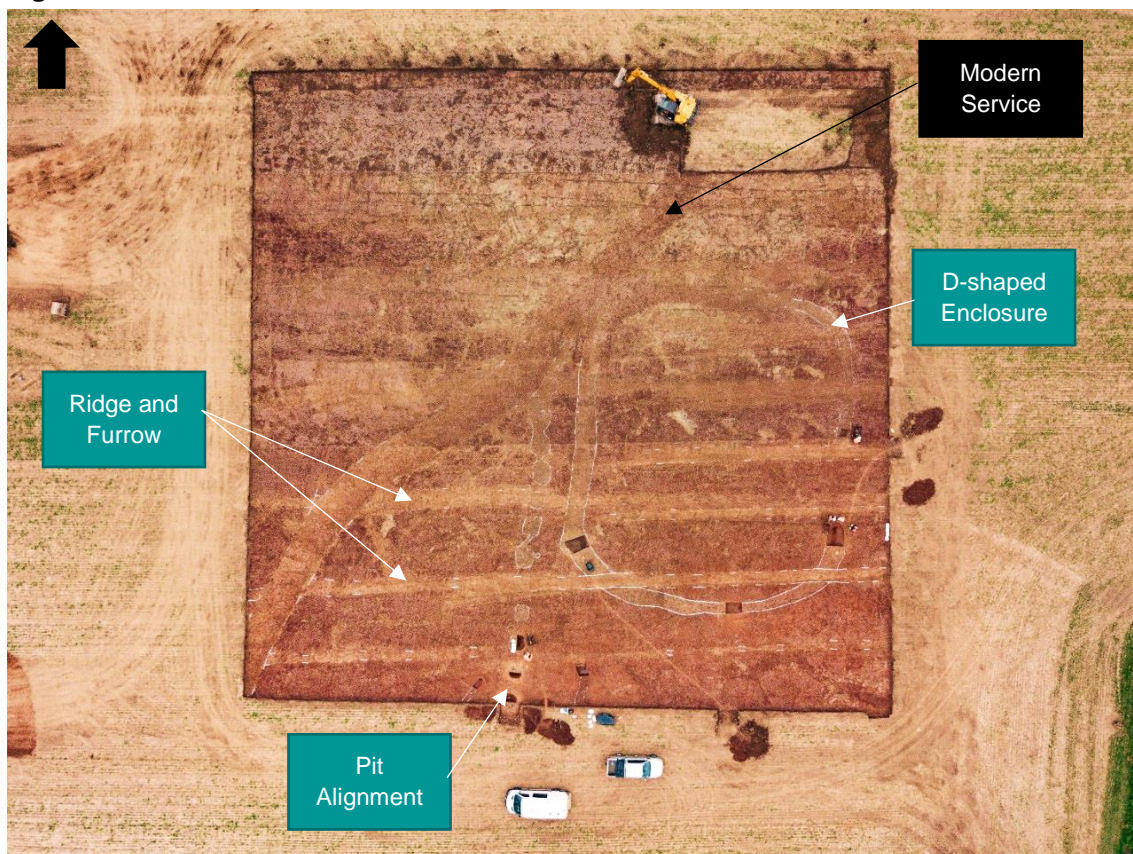
- **Geophysical Survey at Top Farm, Nuneaton (MM 28).** A geophysical (magnetometry) survey was conducted from the 11<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> May 2014 by Stratascan across the 77ha masterplan area. The survey identified former field boundaries and areas of ridge and furrow. A number of other anomalies were considered natural in origin.
- **Archaeological Evaluation, Top Farm, Higham Lane, Nuneaton (MM 27).** 312 trial trenches were excavated between May and July 2021 by Archaeology Warwickshire across the masterplan area. In the north-east of the masterplan area was where most of the archaeological activity was identified. This included; a Late Mesolithic flint scatter, middle Iron Age features, including a roundhouse and pits, pottery and heat-cracked stones. Activity continued into the Romano-British period where remains of buildings, pits, boundary ditches and a cremation burial were identified.
- **Archaeological excavation at Top Farm, not yet recorded within the HER (MM 30).** Four areas amounting to 2.52ha were targeted for Archaeological Excavation at the request of Warwickshire County Council following on from the results of the Trial Trenching. Excavation

was undertaken by Archaeology Warwickshire in 2022 on behalf of Warwickshire County Council. A clerk of works role was provided by WSP (formerly Wood). Four of the excavated areas (Areas 1-4) were located within the site. The preliminary results of the excavations are summarised below, and shown on a figure in Appendix C.

### Area 1

Area 1 is located in the north of the site. The excavation area targeted a series of discrete Iron Age pits identified during trial trenching. When topsoil was stripped a more substantial Iron Age site than anticipated was uncovered. This comprised a D-shaped Iron Age enclosure and a section of an Iron Age pit alignment (seen continuing into areas 2 and 4) running approximately north-north-east to south-south-west. Ridge and furrow, believed to be medieval, was also identified. A modern service trench intersected the site and appears to truncate the northern end of the pit alignment. There was limited but sufficient artefactual material recovered to date the features.

**Figure 4.1: Area 1**



Source: Adapted by Mott MacDonald from WSP E&I UK Ltd 2022

### Area 2

Area 2, the largest area of excavation, was located in the south-east of the site. In this area the Iron Age pit alignment that was seen in Area 1 continued into and across Area 2. A series of superimposed rectilinear Romano-British enclosure ditches were also identified. While there was little evidence for structures, the volumes of finds suggest that trace remains for structures may have been truncated over time. Notably surviving were three well-preserved possible pottery kilns in the west of Area 2. There was little artefactual material associated with them suggesting that they were either regularly cleaned out and were only

used for occasional firings or were instead corn dryers. Their date is early, however, and if they are pottery kilns these may have influenced the Mancetter ceramic production site, a short distance away

**Figure 4.2: Area 2**



Source: Adapted by Mott MacDonald from WSP E&I UK Ltd 2022

**Figure 4.3: Presumed Kiln during excavation**

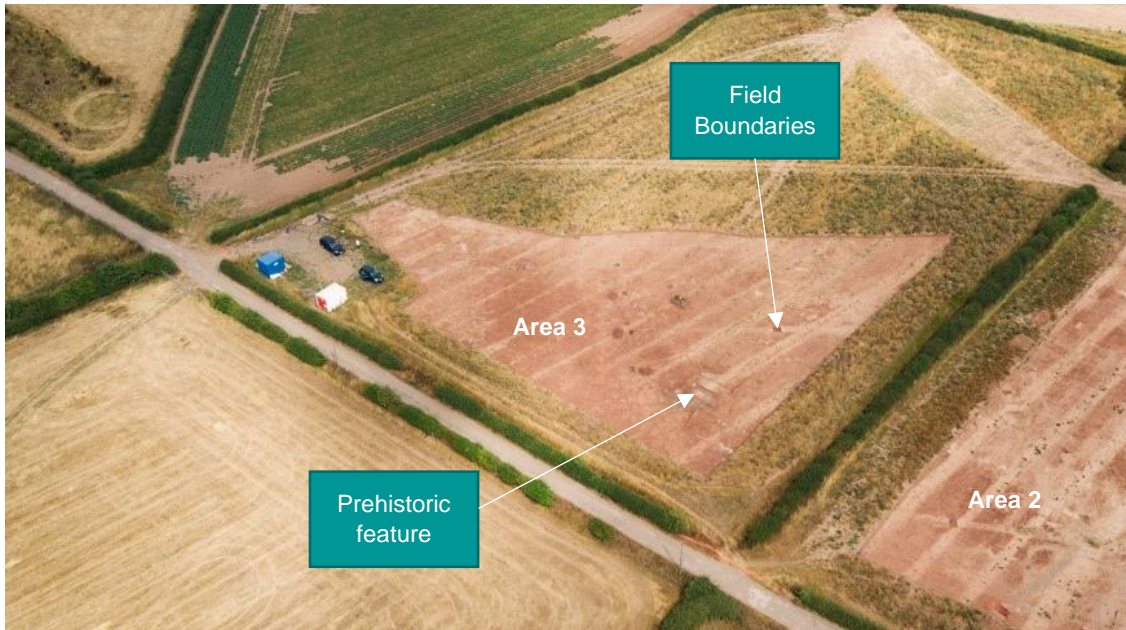


Source: WSP E&I UK Ltd 2022

### Area 3

Area 3 was a small excavation area in the west of the site. A small number of isolated features from the prehistoric, possibly Iron Age, were identified here. The Romano-British field system from Area 2 continued into Area 3.

**Figure 4.4: Area 3**



Source: Adapted by Mott MacDonald from WSP E&I UK Ltd 2022

### Area 4

Area 4 contained the continuation of the Iron Age pit alignment identified in Areas 1 and 2 and the southern extent of the Romano-British enclosure settlement.

**Figure 4.5: Area 4**



Source: Adapted by Mott MacDonald from WSP E&I UK Ltd 2022

#### 4.3.2.2 Other events in the study area

Within the 500m study area the HER also records the following events:

- Two Geophysical surveys on land east of Higham Lane, Nuneaton (MM 18 and MM 19). Neither survey identified potential archaeological features.
- Two archaeological evaluations on land at Higham Lane (MM 20-26 and MM 29). Neither identified significant archaeological remains, apart from ridge and furrow (MM 29) remains.

## 4.4 Historic Map Regression

Table 4.1 provides a review of the historic cartographic and aerial imagery information available online for the site.

**Table 4.1: Historic Mapping and Aerial Imagery Regression**

Title	Year	Description
Ordnance Survey, 25 Inch: Mile. Warwickshire XI.5.	1886	The site and its surrounds are shown as a series of agricultural fields. The boundaries of the large fields are mostly straight and regular, divided by hedgerows with mature trees. Top farm is shown south-east of the site. A small building, presumably a farm outbuilding, is shown centrally within the site. The buildings are arranged around a central yard and there are access tracks from the west (Higham Lane) and south-east (Weddington Road). These roads follow modern-day alignments. Watling Street to the north is also shown on its modern alignment and labelled 'Roman Road'. There is little development in the wider area. Isolated farmsteads and large houses, alongside Weddington Castle to the far south-west and Higham Grange to the far north-east are depicted. These farmsteads include Lower Farm to the east and Whitehouse Farm to the west. The London and North Western Railway Trent Valley Section and Ashby and Nuneaton Railway are shown in the west.
Ordnance Survey six inch: mile. Warwickshire Sheet XI.NW.	1887	There are no notable changes in the site or study area from the above map.
Ordnance Survey six inch: mile. Warwickshire Sheet XI.NW.	1901	A field west of Top Farm is now shown as rough ground and labelled 'Fox Covert'. There are no other notable changes in the site or study area from the above map.
Ordnance Survey, 25 Inch: Mile. Warwickshire XI.5.	1902	There are no notable changes in the site or study area from the above map.
Ordnance Survey, 25 Inch: Mile. Warwickshire XI.5.	1913	A windpump is labelled within the site, east of the small outbuilding. An additional area of rough ground is shown in a field in the south of the study area. There are no other notable changes in the site or study area from the above map.
Ordnance Survey, 25 Inch: Mile. Warwickshire XI.5.	1923	Within the site the small outbuilding is no longer depicted. There is some small-scale residential development within the study area. To the immediate east of the site boundary, two houses are shown on Higham Lane (today numbered 431 and 433). At the southern end of Higham Lane there are a small number of new houses. Outside the study area to the south, Weddington castle is now labelled 'Weddington Hall'.
Ordnance Survey six inch: mile. Leicestershire Sheet XLII.NW.	1938	The site and its immediate surrounds are unchanged on this map. In the south, residential expansion has occurred north of Nuneaton and north-east of Weddington. Planned housing is shown in outline around Brookdale Road Carisbrook Avenue, Glenfield Avenue, Castle Road and the south and east of Higham Lane. Castle Road is located on the former site of



Title	Year	Description
		Weddington Castle, which is no longer shown. Two new schools are shown. North of Watling Street a new school, 'Lindley Lodge School for Boys', is shown. At the south of Higham Lane a building is labelled 'school'.
Aerial Photograph Mosaic Image	1950	This aerial photograph shows the planned housing indicated on the above map as constructed, with significant suburban expansion in the south of the study area and houses on the east side of Highfield Lane. New houses are also shown north of Watling Street. Scattered trees are shown in the hedgerows on site. The agricultural land within the site and its surrounds appears to be used for a mixture of crop and pasture.
LiDAR Data	2015	LiDAR data depicts the Ridge and Furrow recorded in the HER (MM 37) and shows the marl pit to the east clearly (MM 17). There are several similar depressions in the study area, with one possibly similar feature centrally within the site.

Source: Ordnance Survey via National Library of Scotland and Environment Agency LiDAR data (2015)

## 4.5 Archaeological and Historical Background

This section sets out the historical and archaeological development of the site and study area. Understanding the history of the site and study area and chronology of development helps to determine its archaeological potential, and whether there are any features of heritage significance within the study area which may pose constraints on the scheme.

**Table 4.2: Archaeological and historical Periods (England)**

Prehistoric Period Dates	Historic Period Dates
Palaeolithic 500,000 to 10,000BC	Roman AD 43 to 410
Mesolithic 10,000 to 4,000 BC	Early Medieval AD 410 to 1066
Neolithic / Early Bronze Age 4,000 to 1,600 BC	Medieval AD 1066 to 1550
Bronze Age 1,600 to 700 BC	Post-medieval AD 1540 to 1900
Iron Age 700 BC – 43 AD	Modern AD 1901 to modern

Source: Forum on Information Standards in Heritage

### 4.5.1 Palaeolithic

Palaeolithic activity in Britain relates to the periodic occupation and exploitation of the landscape by homo sapiens and other early hominins, in between ice-ages. Evidence for this activity is densest around the southern coast, especially earlier in the period, where caves, mudflats and marshes were used by hunter-gatherer groups. However, during warmer interstadial periods when ice sheets retreated, hominins occupied areas farther north in Britain including Warwickshire<sup>9,10</sup>. Evidence of human activity from this period is typically derived from lithic finds, such as handaxes. There are two findspots within the relating to this period, relating to worked flint (MM 03 and MM 04). These are both located in the north of the study area, outside the site. Neither were recovered in situ, however their presence does indicate exploitation of this landscape during the Palaeolithic period.

<sup>9</sup> University of Warwick (2021) *Palaeolithic Britain*. Available online at: <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/classics/warwickclassicsnetwork/romancoventry/resources/prehistoricbritain/palaeolithic/>.

<sup>10</sup> University of Birmingham (2011) *West Midlands Regional Research Framework*. Lower and Middle Palaeolithic. Available online at: <https://researchframeworks.org/wmrf/earlier-prehistory/lower-middle-palaeolithic/>.

### 4.5.2 Mesolithic and Neolithic

In the Mesolithic period climactic changes made Britain more habitable and rising sea levels cut it off from Mainland Europe. Human activity remained predominantly as nomadic hunter-fisher-gatherer groups, although there is some evidence for seasonal re-occupation of the same sites<sup>11</sup>. In the Neolithic there was greater migration into Britain, bringing cultural changes which altered the way of living. The adoption of agriculture gradually led to more permanent settlement, as well as the development of new material cultures like pottery, new funerary practices and new monuments<sup>12</sup>.

There is no evidence relating to the early or mid-Mesolithic in the site or study area, however a scatter of flints (MM 13) was identified in the north of the site dating to the Late Mesolithic and/or early Neolithic. The flints were found in the topsoil, likely having been disturbed by ploughing. They included a backed blade, a retouched blade, a side/end scraper, a composite scraper/notched flake and a retouched pointed tool with blade detachments on its dorsal, there were also two unretouched flakes. The notched flake is likely later than the others, possibly early Neolithic.<sup>13</sup> The archaeological excavation of this area has not identified any further remains from the Mesolithic and Neolithic.

These finds likely indicate the use of the surrounding area by nomadic groups in the Late Mesolithic to early Neolithic period. It is unlikely the site itself was a temporary or seasonal camp, given the low density of finds. It is more likely that these finds are demonstrative of peripheral activity.

There is no evidence of activity later in the Neolithic period, including any evidence of permanent settlement.

### 4.5.3 Bronze Age

The Bronze Age also includes key migrations into Britain, which brought the start of metalworking, initially copper, tin and therefore bronze. This led to further developments, such as the evolution of a more organized and hierarchical society. It is often subdivided into shorter cultural periods, including earlier 'beaker' cultures and a later period representing the transition to the Iron Age<sup>14</sup>. Sites in the region vary with the landscape conditions but the most visible are typically funerary/ritual monuments such as barrows, burnt mounds and flat cemeteries, the latter being more common in Warwickshire. A small number of unenclosed settlements have also been identified in the region. The sparsity of identified settlements could be due to minimal occupation, or to the nature of these settlements making them challenging to identify. A lot of the country, including the study area, was also still forested in the Bronze Age. There is good environmental evidence in the wider area, typically allowing for the reconstruction of local palaeoenvironments<sup>15</sup>. The site itself may have been favourable for occupation due to the rising topography. However, there is no confirmed evidence for human activity relating to the Bronze Age in the site or in the study area.

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<sup>11</sup> University of Warwick (2021) *Mesolithic Britain*. Available online at: <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/classics/warwickclassicsnetwork/romancoventry/resources/prehistoricbritain/mesolithic/>.

<sup>12</sup> University of Warwick (2021) *Neolithic Britain*. Available online at: <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/classics/warwickclassicsnetwork/romancoventry/resources/prehistoricbritain/neolithic/>.

<sup>13</sup> Warwickshire HER. Record MWA32177.

<sup>14</sup> University of Warwick (2021) *Bronze Age Britain*. Available online at: <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/classics/warwickclassicsnetwork/romancoventry/resources/prehistoricbritain/bronzeage/>.

<sup>15</sup> University of Birmingham (2011) *West Midlands Regional Research Framework*. Bronze Age and Iron Age. Available online at: <https://researchframeworks.org/wmrf/middle-bronze-age-to-iron-age/>.

#### 4.5.4 Iron Age

The Iron Age represents the period in which iron working techniques arrived in Britain from southern Europe. This brought improved technologies as the strength of the metal allowed for improved ploughs and axes resulting in an increase in tillable agriculture land. Britain also became organised into groups, often with a ruler. Towns and larger settlements grew in the period, although rural settlements still continued throughout<sup>16</sup>. The iconic monuments of the Iron Age are hillforts; defended enclosed towns, usually on high points in a landscape. However, these are not especially common in Warwickshire. The nearest to the site is Oldbury Camp<sup>17</sup>, around 5km west of the site. Iron Age settlements become more identifiable in the region, especially from the middle of the period, as they become enclosed. By the middle Iron Age, enclosures were in widespread use often associated with roundhouses, and this pattern remains consistent throughout the Late Iron Age into the Roman period as well<sup>18</sup>.

A Middle-Iron Age settlement (MM 14) has been identified within the site. This comprises a D-Shaped Iron Age enclosure, roundhouse, pit alignment as well as further pits and ditches. The archaeological remains identified indicate that the site was used in the Middle-Iron Age as a small farmstead. The pit alignment is a more unusual feature. Pit alignments have been interpreted in a variety of ways; their function is not obvious as they do not create an effective boundary, do not typically relate to drainage and are not easily recognised as storage or rubbish pits. Other pit alignments have been found lined with clay and may have a function relating to water. Sometimes they have been interpreted as agricultural or ownership boundaries, given the number aligning with later parish boundaries. Alternately they may have had a more ambiguous function as part of a wider ritual landscape with other monuments, such as henges and curses. However, this latter interpretation typically applies to double pit alignments.<sup>19</sup>

#### 4.5.5 Roman

The Roman period is recognised as the time from the first successful Roman invasion of Britain to the collapse of the empire and retreat. The change would have been a gradual influence, outside of key towns and fortresses. Roads were constructed across the country, including Watling Street Roman Road (Margary Number 1, MM 11) which is recorded north of the site, on the route of the modern day A5<sup>20</sup>. The road was built by the Roman army and leads to the Mancetter pottery site north of modern-day Birmingham, along its length it links Dover to Wroxeter and has likely remained in use as a transport route since its construction<sup>21</sup>. There are no known remains of the Roman road where the route crosses the study area.

Romano-british activity has been identified throughout the north-east of the masterplan area, including within the site. Archaeological evaluation and excavation has identified a series of enclosure ditches, as well as several buildings and associated features such as pits. A cremation was also identified west of the site, likely associated with this same site. The settlement does not appear to have been continuous from the Iron Age, as many Romano-

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<sup>16</sup> University of Warwick (2021) *Iron Age Britain*. Available online at: <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/classics/warwickclassicsnetwork/romancoentry/resources/prehistoricbritain/ironage/>

<sup>17</sup> Our Warwickshire. *Oldbury Camp*. Available online at: [https://www.ourwarwickshire.org.uk/content/catalogue\\_her/oldbury-camp](https://www.ourwarwickshire.org.uk/content/catalogue_her/oldbury-camp).

<sup>18</sup> University of Birmingham (2011) *West Midlands Regional Research Framework*. Bronze Age and Iron Age. Available online at: <https://researchframeworks.org/wmrf/middle-bronze-age-to-iron-age/>.

<sup>19</sup> Rylatt, J and Bevan, B. (2007) Realigning the world: pit alignments and their landscape context. *The Later Iron Age In Britain and Beyond*. Available online at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333109087\\_Realigning\\_the\\_world\\_pit\\_alignments\\_and\\_their\\_landscape\\_context](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333109087_Realigning_the_world_pit_alignments_and_their_landscape_context).

<sup>20</sup> Our Warwickshire (2022) *Watling Street Roman Road*. Available online at: [https://www.ourwarwickshire.org.uk/content/catalogue\\_her/watling-street/](https://www.ourwarwickshire.org.uk/content/catalogue_her/watling-street/).

<sup>21</sup> Historic England (2022) *Watling Street Roman Road*. Available online at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1412692?section=official-list-entry>.

British settlements are. Instead, it appears to represent a distinct, different phase of activity. The Romano-British activity within the site may have been periphery to Watling Street (MM 11), and comprised a fairly small rural, roadside settlement. Pottery recovered was of high quality for this kind of site, however the accessibility of Mancetter pottery along Watling Street may account for this<sup>22</sup>. Another area of activity (MM 15) was identified to the far west of the study area. This may have been another isolated farmstead, activity associated with the former, or could show a succession of this same settlement moving across the landscape over time.

#### 4.5.6 Early Medieval

The early medieval period is characterised by a series of migrations into Britain and sparse archaeological evidence. Archaeological remains from the early medieval are rare nationally. There are two records of isolated finds from the early medieval period in the study area (MM 06, 220m south-east) and MM 09 60m south-west). These may indicate activity peripheral to a settlement. Settlements were recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 at nearby Weddington and at Nuneaton Further to the south, this indicates the origin of these villages in the early medieval period. Weddington was a moderate sized settlement of 21 households, but Nuneaton was substantial, with 85.<sup>23</sup>

#### 4.5.7 Medieval

The medieval covers the period from the victory of William the Conqueror at the Battle of Hastings to the beginning of the Tudor dynasty. Settlement in Britain consisted of smaller villages to larger, market towns, with rural hamlets and farmsteads between. Nuneaton was one such comparatively large town in the medieval period. It was granted to the French Abbey c.1155, and a Benedictine priory was constructed. In 1226 The king granted the nuns the right to hold a weekly market in Nuneaton, bringing prosperity and growth to the town<sup>24,25</sup>. Craftsmanship was supported; 'Nuneaton Wares' was the name given to the local style of medieval pottery.

The site and its surrounds were not part of the township but may have been farmed since the medieval to support the market and the towns inhabitants. Ridge and furrow (MM 30 and MM 31) identified by the HER and by excavation (see sections 4.3.1 and 4.3.2.1) is demonstrative of farming in the landscape. They are formed by the type of ploughing that was used at the time, which created grooves and rises in linear patterns. These marks have been tentatively interpreted as medieval but may date to the post-medieval period.

A medieval settlement was also present at Weddington, though much smaller. The settlement at Weddington was deliberately destroyed between 1491 and 1517, when at least ten houses were pulled down by the first Marquis of Dorset and the land turned into pasture. A mansion may have first been built at the location of Weddington Castle at this time<sup>26</sup>.

The site of the 1485 Battle of Bosworth Field, which was the culmination of the Wars of the Roses and installed the Tudor dynasty to the throne, is officially recorded approximately 2.5km north and outside of the study area<sup>27</sup>. However the exact location is debated. There is no indication of this battle being within the site or study area. Medieval coin hoards (MM 01 and

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<sup>22</sup> Warwickshire HER. Record EWA11382.

<sup>23</sup> Powell-Smith, A. *Open Domesday*. Available online at: <https://opendomesday.org/>

<sup>24</sup> Our Warwickshire (2022) *Nuneaton Medieval Settlement*. Available online at: [www.ourwarwickshire.org.uk/content/catalogue\\_her/nuneaton-medieval-settlement](http://www.ourwarwickshire.org.uk/content/catalogue_her/nuneaton-medieval-settlement).

<sup>25</sup> Lambert, T (2022) *A history of Nuneaton*. Available online at: <https://localhistories.org/a-history-of-nuneaton/>.

<sup>26</sup> Cook, A. F. (2022) *Weddington Castle: Timeline*. Available online at: [www.weddingtoncastle.co.uk/post-domesday-timeline.html](http://www.weddingtoncastle.co.uk/post-domesday-timeline.html).

<sup>27</sup> Historic England (2022) *Battle of Bosworth (Field) 1485*. Available online at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1000004?section=official-list-entry>.

MM 02) have been recorded in the study area north-west of the site, however these were recovered in the early post-medieval period and therefore the location may not be exact.

#### 4.5.8 Post-Medieval

The post-medieval period captures increasingly rapid change, from the dissolution of the monasteries, through the agricultural and industrial revolutions to the end of the Victorian period. There was significant population growth, expansion, technological revolution and cultural change in the post-medieval.

Weddington Castle was built in 1566 and occupied throughout the post-medieval period. The building was not strictly a castle, but a manor house decorated with features such as crenulations and towers which gave a similar appearance<sup>28</sup>. Conversely, by 1763 the former priory site is known to have been in ruins, with the house scheduled for demolition<sup>29</sup>.

In the Civil War (1642-1651) the area was predominately in support of parliamentary roundheads and suffered damages from royalists, such as the burning of St James' church. There were local skirmishes recorded along the Leicestershire-Warwickshire border, but no evidence of activity relating to this has been recorded in the site or study area<sup>30</sup>.

The market in Nuneaton continued to thrive in the early part of the period. This production was supported by local mining industries. Local coal mining records show coal mining was a prominent industry from at least the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century<sup>31</sup>. In the north of the study area open cast mining for marl has also been recorded in the study area during the post-medieval period (MM 17). Marl is calcium-carbonate rich mud (sometimes called 'bog lime') and was historically spread on agricultural fields to improve soil conditions<sup>32</sup>.

Top Farm was in existence by the earliest available historic mapping (1886), and on this mapping the site is shown as agricultural fields belonging to the farm<sup>33</sup>. The large field sizes and fairly regular boundaries suggest this field pattern mostly dates to the post-medieval period, however some of the fields may be amalgamated from earlier fields. Two fields in the east of the site are longer and smaller, indicating a possible medieval origin.

#### 4.5.9 Modern

The modern period captures the time from the end of the Victorian era through to the present day, encompassing both World Wars as well as more recent history.

During the First World War Weddington Castle was one of many houses utilised by the war effort, in this instance the Red Cross. When they withdrew in 1919 it was put up for auction but failed to find a buyer. In 1922 it was finally purchased by Howard Howe, with plans to convert it to flats, but by 1928 the estate was in ruins and the castle demolished<sup>34</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> Cook, A. F. (2022) *Weddington Castle: Timeline*. Available online at: [www.weddingtoncastle.co.uk/post-domesday-timeline.html](http://www.weddingtoncastle.co.uk/post-domesday-timeline.html).

<sup>29</sup> Cook, A. F. (2000) *The history of the Nuneaton area*. Available online at: [http://www.nuneatonhistory.com/uploads/1/8/6/8/18680466/nuneaton\\_history\\_alan\\_cook.pdf](http://www.nuneatonhistory.com/uploads/1/8/6/8/18680466/nuneaton_history_alan_cook.pdf).

<sup>30</sup> Cook, A. F. (2000) *The history of the Nuneaton area*. Available online at: [http://www.nuneatonhistory.com/uploads/1/8/6/8/18680466/nuneaton\\_history\\_alan\\_cook.pdf](http://www.nuneatonhistory.com/uploads/1/8/6/8/18680466/nuneaton_history_alan_cook.pdf).

<sup>31</sup> Cook, A. F. (2000) *The history of the Nuneaton area*. Available online at: [http://www.nuneatonhistory.com/uploads/1/8/6/8/18680466/nuneaton\\_history\\_alan\\_cook.pdf](http://www.nuneatonhistory.com/uploads/1/8/6/8/18680466/nuneaton_history_alan_cook.pdf).

<sup>32</sup> Mindat (2022) *Marl*. Available online at: [www.mindat.org/min-49153.html](http://www.mindat.org/min-49153.html).

<sup>33</sup> Ordnance Survey, *25 Inch: Mile. Warwickshire XI.5*. 1886.

<sup>34</sup> Our Warwickshire. (2022) *The End of Weddington Castle*. Available online at: [www.ourwarwickshire.org.uk/content/article/end-weddington-castle](http://www.ourwarwickshire.org.uk/content/article/end-weddington-castle).

To the north of Watling Street, 1km from the site, RAF Lindley (outside the study area, also known as Nuneaton II) opened in February 1943 and was operational until October 1948. The land was then purchased for use by the Motor Industry Research Association (MIRA). Today some of the infrastructure remains from the RAF base, such as runway alignments.

During the modern period Nuneaton has substantially expanded. This is especially notable on historic mapping from 1938 onwards<sup>35</sup>. These maps show new suburban streets being planned and constructed gradually closer to the site, on the edge of Weddington, North Nuneaton and the whole of St Nicholas Park. This suburban construction gradually changed the character of the study area from rural fringe to suburban town, with the site itself being the remaining rural landscape before the A5. The A5 was constructed on the route of Watling Street in the 1990s, creating a much more substantial road near the site.

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<sup>35</sup> Ordnance Survey six inch: mile. *Leicestershire Sheet XLII.NW*. 1938

## 5 Archaeological Potential and Significance

### 5.1 Survival Potential

The prior historic use of the site for agriculture indicates earlier archaeological remains will have a good chance of survival, as the area has not been subject to prior development likely to have removed or truncated them.

A marl pit is recorded to the east (MM 17), however no further pits are noted within the site. The process of open-cast mining for marl can remove earlier archaeological deposits. The historic pond within the centre of the site may be an old marl pit.

Where Archaeological Excavations across the site have been undertaken, archaeological remains, features and finds will have been recorded and preserved by record. Elsewhere, there is the potential that archaeological remains survive and extend outside the four areas of excavations.

### 5.2 Archaeological Potential

The below, Table 5.1, provides a summary of the archaeological potential by period within the site and a summary assessment of the possible significance of any remains present.

Table 5.1 Archaeological Potential of the study area <b>Historic Asset</b>	Significance	Potential
Paleoenvironmental remains	Low	<b>Low potential</b> – The site lies on a slight rise and, while the surrounding area contains small water courses, it is unlikely there is alluvium within the site. However, some of the archaeological features within the site may contain evidence of earlier environments and environmental samples have been taken for processing. These may especially inform on the processes of historic subsistence and agriculture.
Palaeolithic Remains	In-situ remains would be medium to high depending on nature and extent. Residual remains would be low to medium	<b>Low potential</b> - There is low potential for in situ remains, as there is no significant evidence of palaeolithic occupation of the area. There is a precedent of isolated finds and therefore the precedent is low.
Mesolithic and Neolithic	In-situ remains would be medium to high depending on nature and extent. Residual remains would be low to medium.	<b>High potential</b> – a scatter identified as late Mesolithic to early Neolithic has been identified within the north of site during the previous archaeological evaluation and excavations. This does not appear to be an occupation site, however there remains the potential for further flint tools to be found in the north of the site. There is no indication that archaeological remains such as pits, ditches or structures are likely to be present. There is no indication of this activity extending into the south of the site.
Bronze Age	In-situ remains would be medium to high depending on nature and	<b>Low potential</b> – There is no record of Bronze Age activity within the site or study area and little activity of this period known in the wider landscape.

**Table 5.1**  
**Archaeological**  
**Potential of the study**  
**area** **Historic Asset**

**Significance**

**Potential**

	extent. Residual remains would be low to medium.	Therefore, a low potential of remains of this period are anticipated.
Iron Age	In-situ remains would be medium to high depending on nature and extent. Residual remains would be low to medium.	<b>High potential</b> – The site contains a Middle Iron Age farmstead and pit alignment. It is likely that further remains relating to this site are present outside the excavated areas. There is therefore high potential for further in-situ remains, although the focus of the site is believed to have been identified at the D-shaped enclosure. Therefore, based on the results of the trial trenching, remains are likely to be less dense and on the periphery of the enclosure settlement.
Roman remains	In-situ remains would be medium to high depending on nature and extent. Residual remains would be low.	<b>High potential</b> – A Romano-British farmstead has also been identified within the site, comprising an enclosure field system relating to domestic occupation. There is the potential for further remains, especially relating to the field systems throughout the site. In the north-west of the site there is the potential for additional cremation burials to be recovered. The proximity to the Roman Road and other findspots in the study area dating to the Roman period also suggest a likelihood of further remains.
Early medieval remains	In-situ remains would be medium to high depending on nature and extent. Residual remains would be low to medium.	<b>Low potential</b> – The HER records two find spots of early medieval date within the 500m Study Area. However, there is no indication of occupation of the study area or activity within the site.
Medieval remains	In-situ remains would be low to medium depending on nature and extent. Residual remains would be low.	<b>Low-medium potential</b> – there is evidence for ridge and furrow which may be of medieval date. Other than that, there is no evidence for medieval remains recorded on the HER within the site or 500m study area.
Post-medieval remains	In-situ remains would be low to medium depending on nature and extent. Residual remains would be low.	<b>Low-medium potential</b> – there is evidence for ridge and furrow within the site. A small farm building and a wind pump are also shown on historic maps. Any archaeological remains which survive from this period are likely to relate to former agricultural activity and practice associated with Top Farm.
Modern remains	Low or negligible depending on nature and extent.	<b>Low potential</b> – there is no evidence for modern activity within the site or 500m study area, outside of continued agricultural activity.

Source: Mott MacDonald (2022)



## 6 Key Constraints

### 6.1 Introduction

This section identifies the heritage constraints to be considered regarding development within the site. Heritage constraints are considered to be key elements of the historical, architectural or archaeological significance of the Study Area, which may pose constraints on the design of the scheme. Although built heritage is not the focus of this preliminary survey, no built heritage constraints have been identified on the construction of the school except for the potential for change in the setting of Top Farm, which may be considered a non-designated heritage asset. This has been considered as part of the outline planning application for the masterplan area. The proposals for the school are the first phase of development close to Top Farm.

### 6.2 Archaeological Constraints

The site contains several periods of occupation, including known remains from the Middle Iron Age and Romano-British periods, and the potential for additional remains.

The potential for additional human remains is present in the north-west of the site, closest to the identified Romano-British cremation. In accordance with national legislation human remains may only be disturbed or removed under licence. There is also the potential for further remains associated with the Mesolithic, Iron Age and Romano-British activity in the site to be present in the areas not subject to excavation. The Iron Age pit alignment continues throughout the excavated areas and is anticipated to extend beyond these. Roman enclosures in the south of the excavated area are also anticipated to extend beyond the stripped and recorded areas. These remains may be removed or truncated by the proposed scheme.

Therefore, although archaeological excavation has been undertaken targeting the results of trial trenching, there remains the potential for further archaeological mitigation to be required to comply with local and national planning policy and national legislation.

Areas where archaeological excavation has been undertaken may be considered to be less sensitive. In accordance with the WSI, archaeological remains, features and deposits within these areas are assumed to have been fully recorded. Therefore these are not anticipated to survive in situ within the site.

# 7 Conclusion and Recommendations

## 7.1 Conclusion

There are no designated heritage assets within the site or study area.

There are archaeological remains within the site, as identified by archaeological investigation. The Iron Age D-shaped enclosure and Romano-British field system pit alignment are of potentially moderate significance. Archaeological remains, features and deposits within these areas have been recorded, in accordance with the WSI, and no remains are anticipated to survive in situ in these areas.

There remains a residual risk of impact to unknown buried remains within the site outside of the excavated areas, particularly associated with the Middle Iron Age and Romano-British phases of settlement. This includes the potential for further human remains to be recovered in the north west, where a cremation burial was identified.

Although built heritage is not the focus of this preliminary survey, no built heritage constraints have been identified on the construction of the school except for the potential for change in the setting of Top Farm, which may be considered a non-designated heritage asset. This has been considered as part of the outline planning application for the masterplan area.

## 7.2 Recommendations

The design should place buildings, and other elements with the greatest potential to impact buried remains, within the excavated areas where remains have already been recorded and removed. Less intrusive elements, such as sports pitches and play areas, should be cited outside of the excavated areas. If this is not achievable, it is likely that further excavation may be required. The archaeological advisor to Warwickshire County Council should be consulted as the design of the scheme develops, to discuss any further mitigation requirements for the scheme.

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# Appendices

A.	Gazetteer of Assets	31
B.	Figures	34
C.	Initial Excavation Results with approximate site boundary shown in red	39

# A. Gazetteer of Assets

## A.1 Gazetteer of Non-Designated Heritage Assets

MM Number	HER Reference	Record Type	Name	Summary	Monument Type(s)	Period
MM 01	MWA1653	Findspot	Findspot - Medieval coin hoard & Roman coins	Findspot - a coin hoard comprising Roman and Medieval coins was found 800m south west of Harper's Hill.	Findspot	Medieval
MM 02	MWA5141	Findspot	Findspot - Medieval Coin Hoard including a few RB coins	Findspot - a hoard of coins was found at the junction of Watling Street and Nuneaton Lane. The coins were largely of Medieval date but there were also three Roman coins amongst the collection.	Findspot	Medieval
MM 03	MWA12762	Findspot	Palaeolithic handaxe found in Weddington Meadows Field	Flint pointed handaxe from Weddington Meadows Field	Findspot	Early Lower Palaeolithic to Upper Palaeolithic
MM 04	MWA12789	Findspot	Palaeolithic roughout from Weddington Meadows, Nuneaton	Andesitic (Tuff?) roughout from Weddington Meadows, Nuneaton	Findspot	Early Lower Palaeolithic to Upper Palaeolithic
MM 05	MWA21364	Findspot	Nuneaton and Bedworth (Post Mediaeval) Field 33	Post Mediaeval artifact found during metal detecting	Findspot	Post-medieval
MM 06	MWA21394	Findspot	Nuneaton & Bedworth (Migration) Field 100	Migration artifact found during metal detecting	Findspot	Early Medieval
MM 07	MWA21408	Findspot	Nuneaton & Bedworth (Post Mediaeval) Field 28	Post Mediaeval artifact found during metal detecting	Findspot	Post-medieval
MM 08	MWA21422	Findspot	Nuneaton & Bedworth (Romano-British) Field 11	Romano-British artifacts found during metal detecting	Findspot	Late Iron Age to Romano-British
MM 09	MWA21423	Findspot	Nuneaton & Bedworth (Migration) Field 11	Migration artifacts found during metal detecting	Findspot	Early Medieval

<b>MM Number</b>	<b>HER Reference</b>	<b>Record Type</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Monument Type(s)</b>	<b>Period</b>
MM 10	MWA32182	Monument	Roman cremation at Top Farm, Nuneaton	An isolated cremation was identified during an evaluation at Top Farm in 2020.	Cremation	Romano-British
MM 11	MWA420	Monument	Watling Street Roman Road	Watling Street, a Roman road running from London to Wroxeter which passes through Warwickshire.	Road	Romano-British
MM 12	MWA6790	Monument	Possible Enclosure 200m SE of Top Farm, Weddington	An enclosure of unknown date which is visible as a cropmark on aerial photographs. It is situated 1km north east of Weddington.	Enclosure	Unknown
MM 13	MWA32177	Monument	Mesolithic - Neolithic flint scatter, Top Farm, Nuneaton	A number of Mesolithic to Neolithic flints were found in the topsoil at Top Farm, Nuneaton in 2020 during an evaluation.	Artefact Scatter	Late Mesolithic to Early Neolithic
MM 14	MWA32179	Monument	Middle Iron Age settlement activity, Top Farm, Nuneaton	Probable settlement activity from the Middle Iron Age period was identified during an evaluation in 2020 at Top Farm.	Ditch; Gully; Pit; Structure?	Middle Iron Age
MM 15	MWA32180	Monument	Roman Activity, Top Farm, Nuneaton	Roman activity comprising ditches and pits was identified during an evaluation in 2020.	Pit; Ditch	Romano-British
MM 16	MWA32181	Monument	Roman settlement, East of Top Farm, Nuneaton	Roman settlement activity including five possible buildings was identified during an evaluation in 2020 at Top Farm.	Building?; Pit; Ditch; Gully; Enclosure?	Romano-British
MM 17	MWA32303	Monument	18th/19th Century Marl Pits, Higham Lane, Nuneaton, Warwickshire	The remains of marl pits dating from the 18th/19th Century were identified during archaeological investigations in 2018.	Marl Pit	Post-meideval
MM 30	N/A	N/A	N/A	Record of Ridge and furrow	Ridge and furrow	Medieval/Post-Medieval
MM 31	N/A	N/A	N/A	Record of Ridge and furrow	Ridge and furrow	Medieval/Post-Medieval

Source: Warwickshire HER

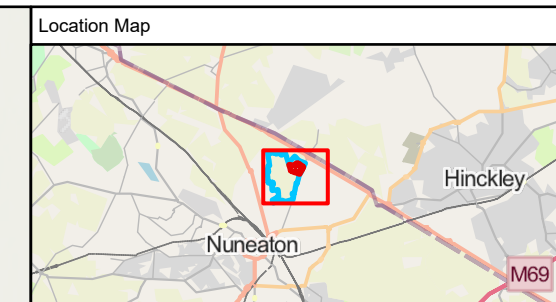
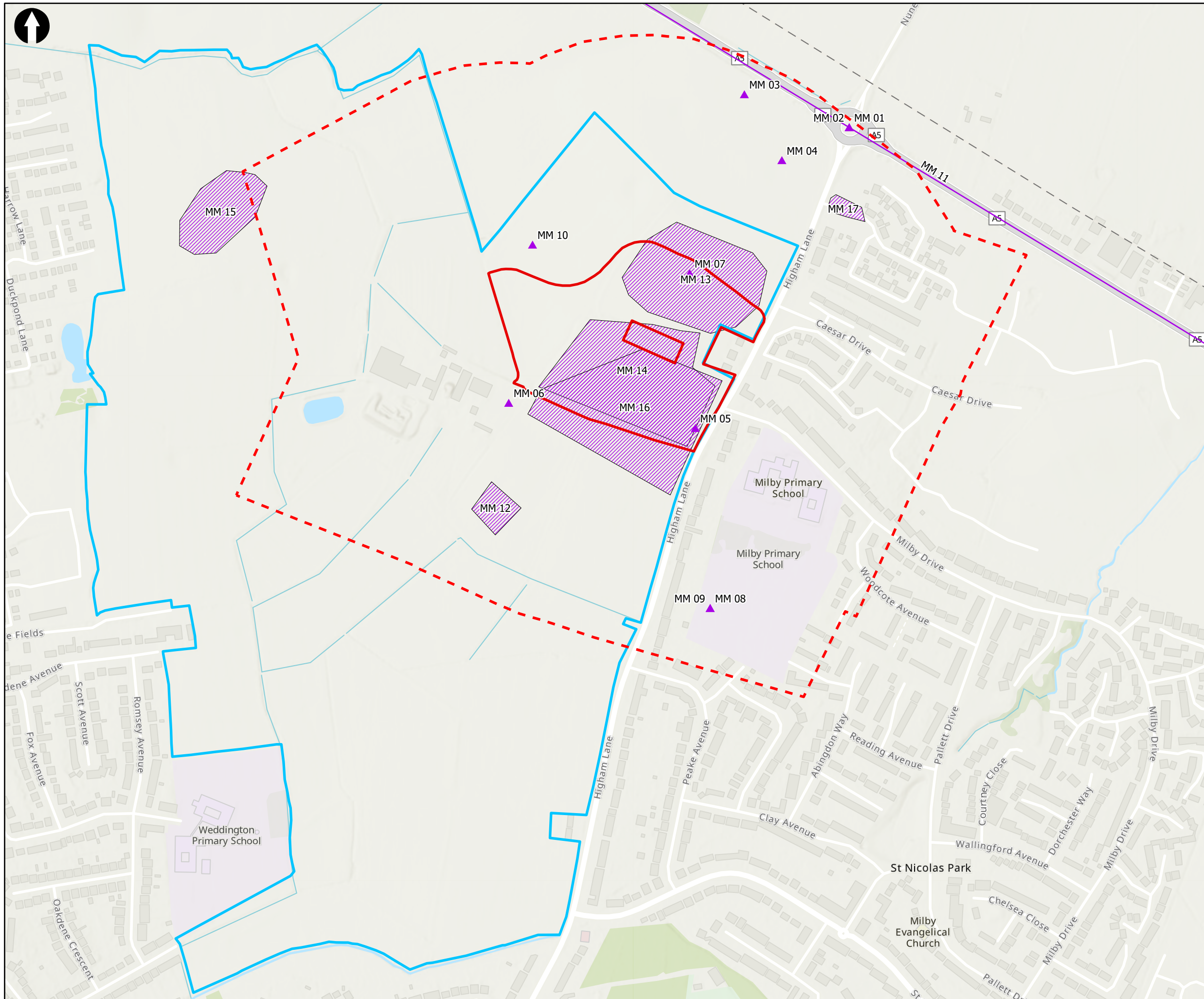
## A.2 Gazetteer of Events

<b>MM Number</b>	<b>HER Reference</b>	<b>Record Type</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>
MM 18	EWA10932	Geophysical Survey	Geophysical Survey on Land at Higham Lane, Nuneaton	Land at Higham Lane, Nuneaton	February 2018
MM 19	EWA11012	Geophysical Survey	Geophysical Survey on land east of Higham Lane, Nuneaton	Land east of Higham Lane, Nuneaton	November 2015
MM 20-26	EWA11325	Archaeological Evaluation	Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation on Land at Higham Lane, Nuneaton, Warwickshire, May 2019 trenches 68-74).	Higham Lane, Nuneaton	May 2019
MM 27	EWA11382	Archaeological Evaluation	Archaeological Evaluation, Top Farm, Higham Lane, Nuneaton	Top Farm, Higham Lane, Nuneaton, CV11 6BD	May-July 2020
MM 28	EWA11594	Geophysical Survey	Geophysical Survey at Top Farm, Nuneaton	Top Farm, North of Nuneaton	May 2014
MM 29	EWA11670	Archaeological Evaluation	Archaeological Evaluation at Land at Higham Lane, Nuneaton, Warwickshire	Land at Higham Lane, Nuneaton, Warwickshire	August and September 2018
MM 30	N/A	Archaeological Excavation	Excavation at Top Farm, Nuneaton	Top Farm, Higham Lane, Nuneaton, CV11 6BD	2022

Source: Warwickshire HER



## **B. Figures**



**Key to Symbols**

**Legend**

- Site
- 500m Study area
- Masterplan Area
- ▲ Monuments Point
- Monuments Line
- Monuments Region

**Notes**

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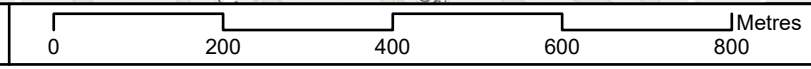
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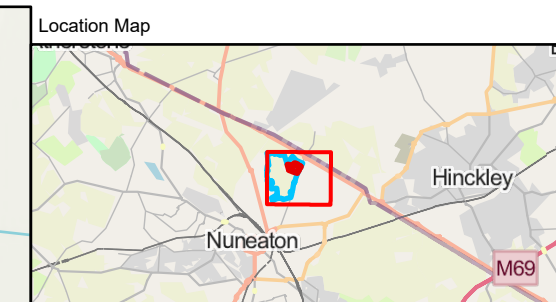
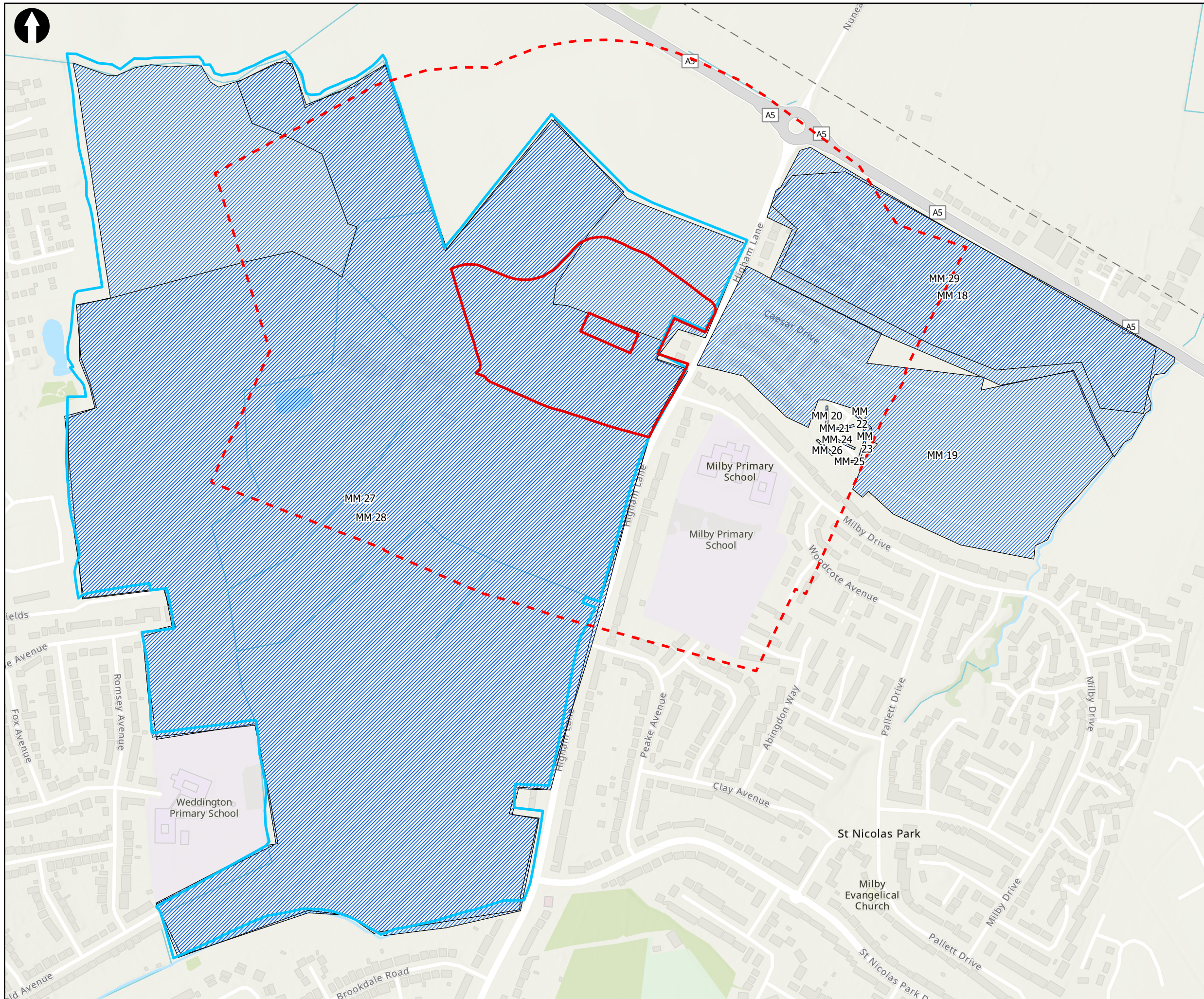
NT22 Higham Lane North, Nuneaton  
 Non-designated Heritage Assets  
 Monuments  
 Figure 1

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Key to Symbols

- Legend
- Site
  - 500m Study area
  - Masterplan Area
  - Events Region

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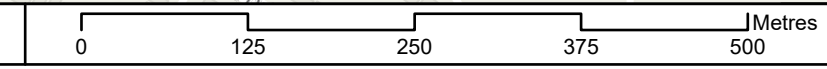
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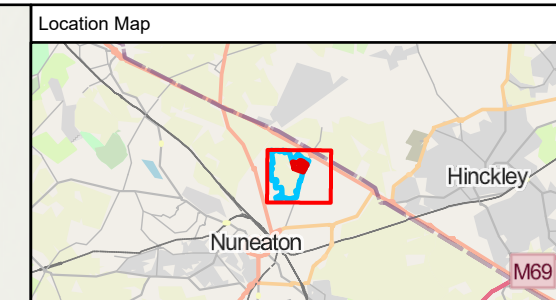
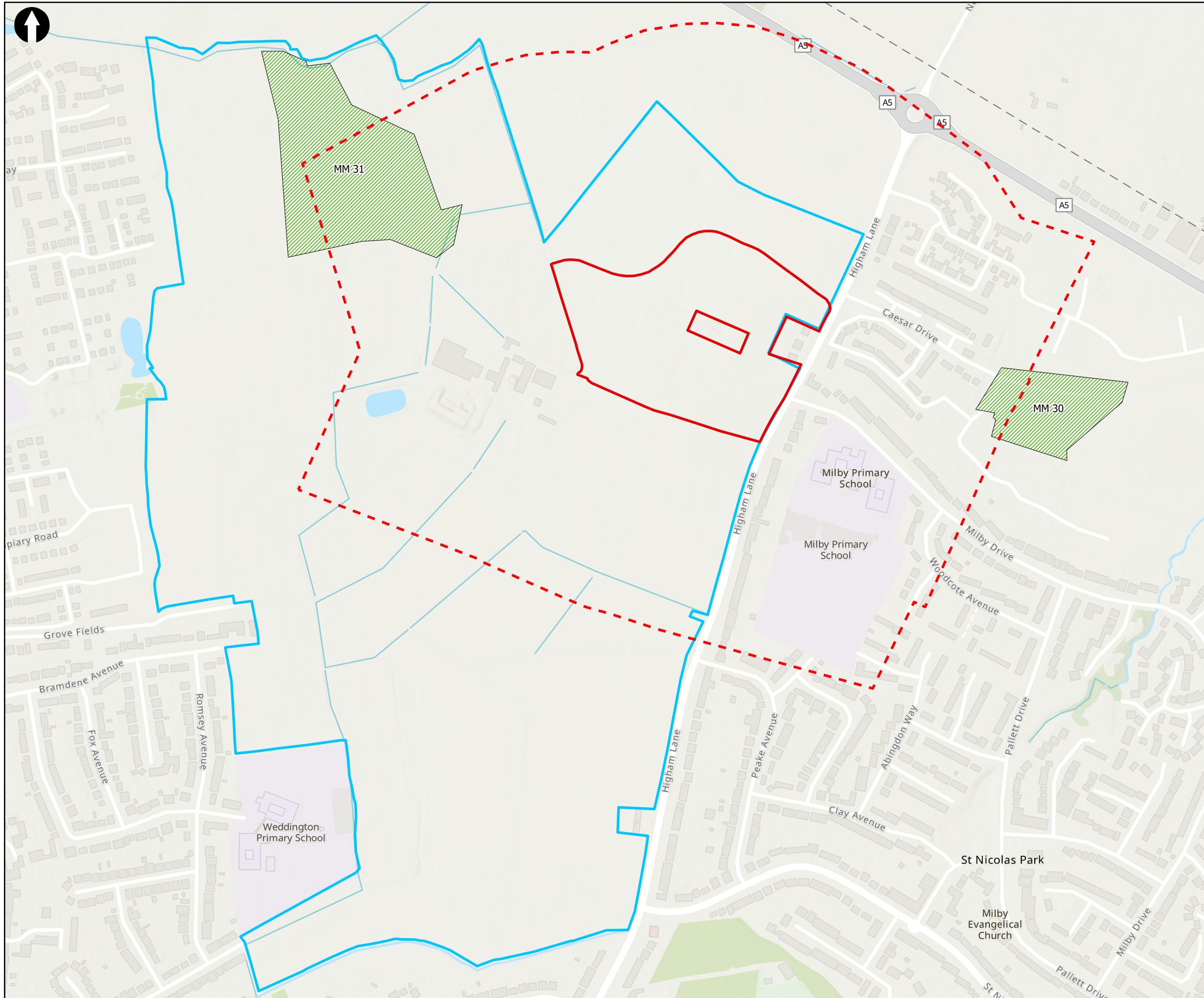
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NT22 Higham Lane North, Nuneaton  
 Non-designated Heritage Assets  
 Events  
 Figure 2

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Key to Symbols

Legend

- Site
- 500m Study area
- Masterplan area
- Ridge and Furrow Region

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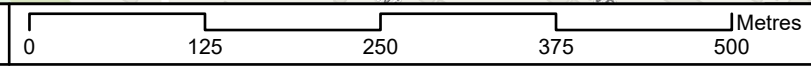
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 Non-designated Heritage Assets  
 Ridge and Furrow  
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## **C. Initial Excavation Results with approximate site boundary shown in red**

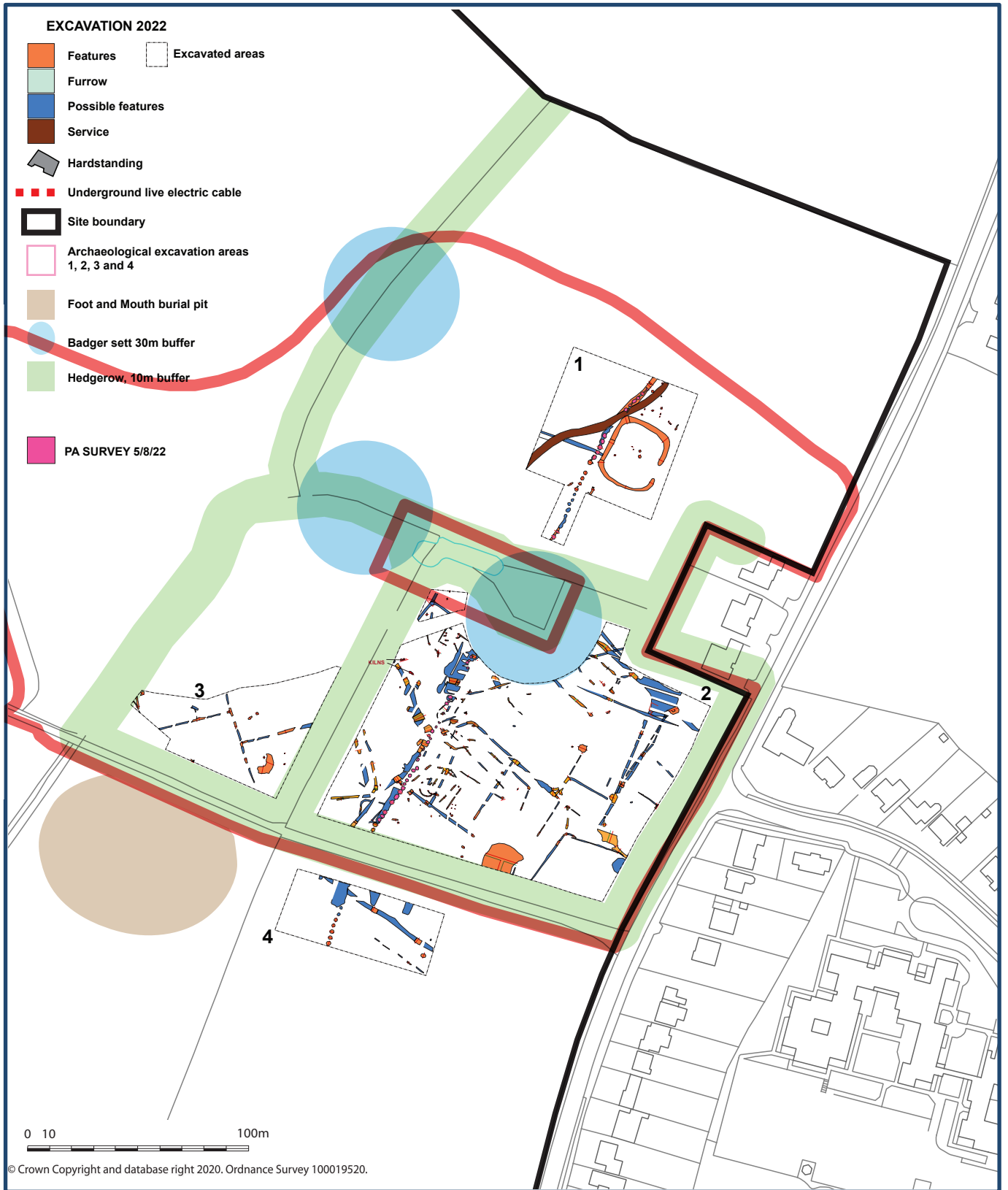


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