

**Land off Magpie Bottom Lane, Hanham
Archaeological Desk Based Assessment**

NGR ST 64204 72867



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Bristol: May 2017



CONTENTS

Abstract
Acknowledgements
Notes
Copyright
Abbreviations

- 1 Introduction,**
- 2 Methodology**
- 3 Site Location, Topography and Geology**
- 4 Historical and Archaeological Background**
- 5 List of relevant local authority planning policies**
- 6 Conclusion**
- 7 Bibliography**

Figures

- 1** Location of the Study Area
- 2** Site Location Plan with Boundary of the study Area
- 3** Map of Kingswood 1610
- 4** Extract from 'Mapp of Kingswood Chace' 1642
- 5** Extract from 'Plan of Mr Player's Manors and that of Sr John Newton's &c lying in the Parishes of Bitton and Mangotsfield truly transcribed from Mr Player's original plan dated 1750 by Daniel Cook, 1779
- 6** Extract from Taylor's Map of Gloucestershire, 1777
- 7** Extract from 'Plan of the Parish of Bitton in the County of Gloucester showing that part prepared to be made An Ecclesiastical District attached to the New Church on Kingswood Hill' 1820
- 8** Extract from 'The Hamlet of Oldland in the parish of Bitton in the County of Gloucester' 1833
- 9** Extract from 'Map of the Parish of Bitton, Gloucestershire, from the Ordnance map by Cotterells and Cooper 1842'
- 10** Extract from 'The Hamlet of Oldland in the Parish of Bitton, Gloucesters[hire] 1844'
- 11** Extract from Ordnance Survey 1st Edition 25" 1880
- 12** Extract from OS 2nd edition (revised 1902)
- 13** Extract from OS 3rd edition (revised 1912)
- 14** Extract from Ordnance Survey (1973)
- 15** 1946 Aerial photograph of Study Area
- 16** 2009 Aerial photograph of Study Area

Plates

- Cover** General view of the Study Area looking north-west.
Plate 1 View of Study Area looking north-east
Plate 2 View of Well looking north-east



Abstract

Avon Archaeology Limited was commissioned by GCP Architects to undertake an archaeological desk-based assessment of land at Magpie Bottom Lane, Hanham, South Gloucestershire, as part of a pre-application for development of the site for housing.

The study area is centred on NGR ST 64204 72867, is of irregular shape, and encompasses an area of about 0.7 hectares. It lies to the north of the former hamlet of Hanham, once part of the ancient parish of Bitton, and on the southern side of the plateau that was formerly Kingswood Forest. Formerly a Royal Forest, Kingswood was downgraded to a Royal Chase in the 13th century. Subsequent development of the area was piecemeal and largely fuelled by the presence of coal deposits at or near the surface, and by the late 17th century Kingswood Chase had been unofficially carved up between the local landowners.

There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments or Listed Buildings within the bounds of the study area or in the immediate vicinity. A study of the cartographic evidence indicated that the study area had been undeveloped land well into the 20th century, however with several early maps showing coal pits in the vicinity, there is a possibility of mining activity dating from the 17th to 19th centuries being present within the study area, in particular a chance of bell pits. A review of the archaeological evidence within a 500m radius of the study area found no records relating to the site; however no archaeological intervention has been carried out in the area, so the presence or absence of buried archaeological remains cannot be ascertained from a review of the documentary evidence alone.



Acknowledgements

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Notes

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Abbreviations

AAL	Avon Archaeology Limited
aOD	Above Ordnance Datum
HER	Historic Environment Record
NGR	National Grid Reference
OASIS	Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations
PRN	Primary Record Number



1. Introduction

It is proposed to develop an area of land measuring approximately 0.7 hectares off the north-east side of Magpie Bottom Lane, Hanham, South Gloucestershire, centred on NGR ST 64204 72867.

Avon Archaeology Limited were commissioned to undertake a Desk Based Archaeological Assessment of the Study Area by GCP Chartered Architects to assess the potential for the preservation of significant archaeological deposits on the site.

2. Methodology

Searches were made of all indices of the collections of the Bristol Record Office and Gloucestershire Archives. A trawl of the local authority HER was carried out on behalf of AAL by Paul Driscoll, Archaeology and HER Officer for South Gloucestershire Unitary Authority, and the most salient results of that search have been incorporated into this report. A visit to the site was made by the author on the 4th of April 2017, and a digital photographic record made, of which **Plates 1** and **2**, and the cover photograph, form a part. All photocopies, manuscript copies and notes, including still photographs, are preserved in the project archive to be stored at Avon Archaeology Ltd.

3. Site Location, Topography and Geology

The Study Area is located at Hanham, South Gloucestershire. It lies approximately six kilometres east of the centre of the City of Bristol. The underlying geology of the Study Area is comprised mainly of Pennant Sandstones of the Carboniferous Upper Coal Measures (OS 1962).

The Study Area lies on land ranging between 78-82m aOD. At present it currently consists of a bungalow with associated garden to the south, with a mostly ploughed field to the north of the bungalow, an agricultural building in the centre, and three smaller structures to the north, east and north-east. A well is located at the mid-point of the northern boundary. There is a badgers' sett to the south-west of the site.

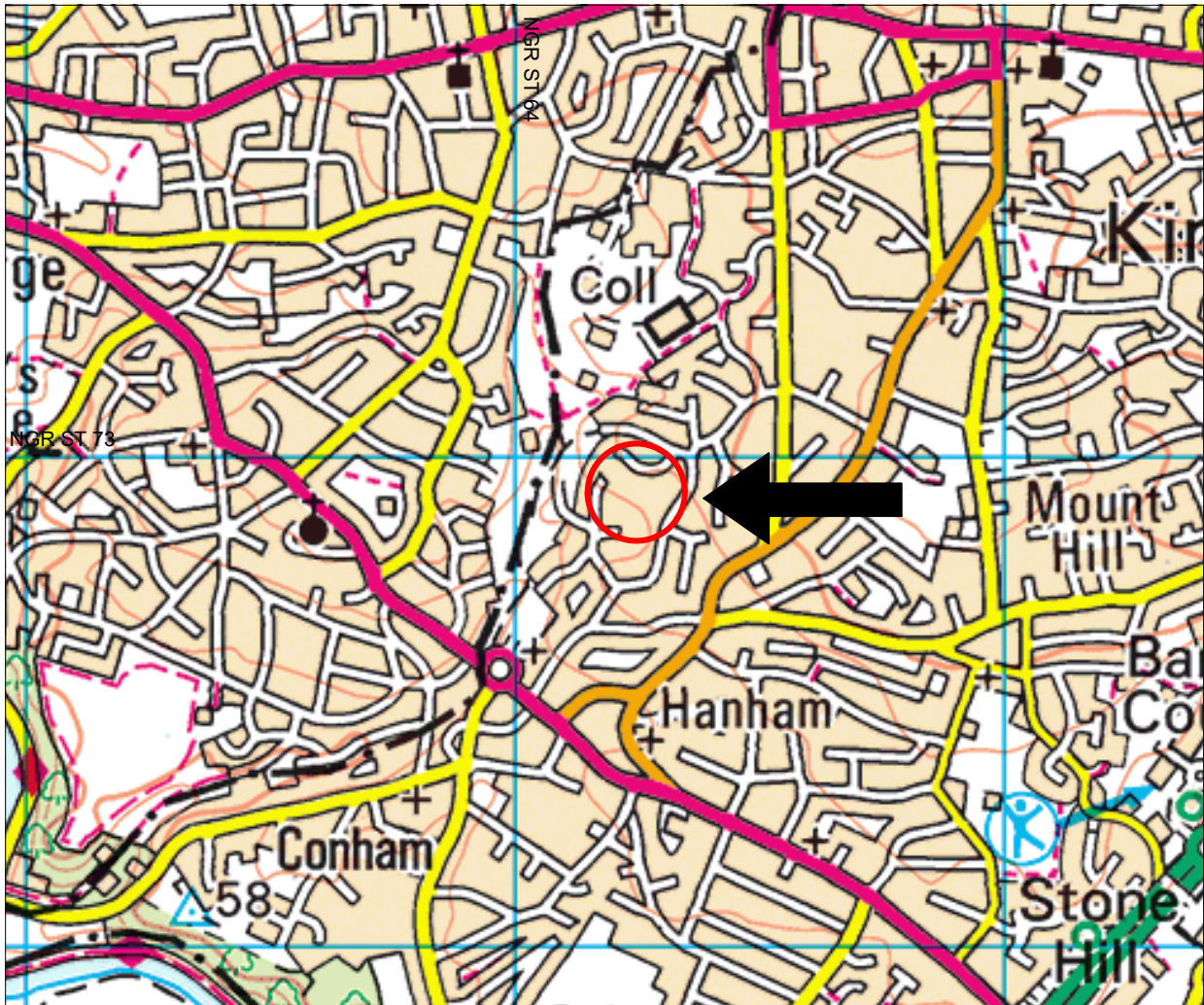
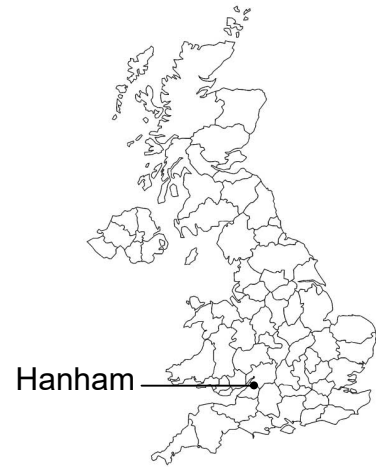


Figure 1

Location of the Study Area



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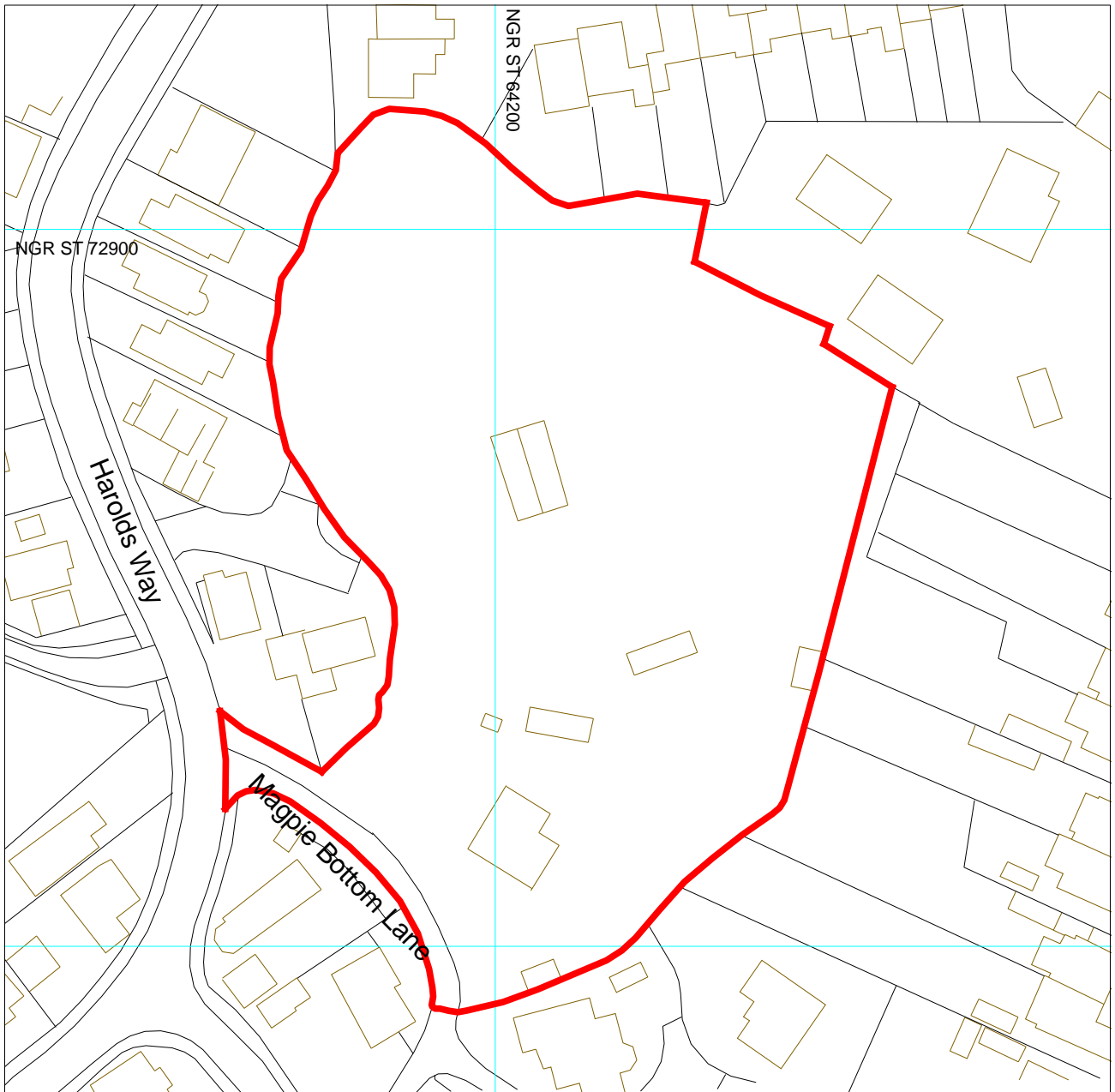
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Figure 2

Site location and boundary of the study area (outlined in red)



4. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Documentary Evidence

Parish History

The Study Area lies within the ancient parish of Bitton, which was part of Swinehead Hundred in Gloucestershire. The place-name of Bitton means 'farm on the [River] Boyd' (Smith 1964, 75). Although the name may only be traced back as far as Domesday, the area has a much longer history. The Roman road from Bath (Aquae Sulis) to Sea Mills (Abonae) ran along what is now the modern A431.

By the late Anglo-Saxon period, Bitton was a royal manor, and is suspected to have had a Minster church (Aston and Iles 1987, 83-4) due to remains of an earlier Anglo-Saxon church being incorporated into the fabric of the present structure, the large size of the parish and the manorial structure of Bitton at the time of the Domesday Survey of 1086. Bitton is mentioned twice in the Domesday survey (Moore, 1982). The King held 36 hides, paying one night's revenue; while in the second entry, a further 2 hides are held from the King by Dunn, who had held it himself before 1066. The value then had been £6, while by 1086 it was half that sum.

Unlike the hinterlands attached to many former minsters, which were sub-divided between the manorial estates in the 11th and 12th centuries to form parishes, Bitton seems to have survived as a whole unit until the 19th century. However, even by the early 18th century it was acknowledged that Bitton was far too large a parish to be operating effectively. The parish included two hamlets or tithings, Hanham and Oldland, containing chapels-of-ease to Bitton parish church (Ellacombe 1881). Atkyns notes that Oldland was considered to be a parish in all but name (1712, 286-7). The Study Area was considered to lie within the hamlet of Oldland by 1833 (see below), although it lies physically closer to Hanham.

With the growth of the population of Kingswood, a separate ecclesiastical parish of Kingswood was created in 1821 (although it remained within the civil parishes of Hanham and Oldland, and Mangotsfield ancient parish until 1894). Hanham became a separate parish in 1841, while the remainder of Oldland was established as an ecclesiastical parish in 1861 (Youngs, 1979). The late development of these parishes may be in part due to the strong non-conformist community in the area from the 1740s onwards, which probably attracted most of the religious energies of the population away from the established church.

Manorial History and Kingswood Chase

Unlike the parish history, Bitton, Oldland and Hanham were separate manors by the 13th century (Ellacombe 1881). Strictly speaking the Study Area probably lay within none of these manors, as it was almost certainly within the bounds of the Royal Forest of Kingswood, later reduced in status to that of a Royal Chase (AD 1228; Braine 1891, 28-9; Moore 1982).

Unlike that part of the forest in the neighbouring parish of Stapleton, which was formally enclosed in 1781, there appears to be no enclosure act of award for the part of the chase which lay in Oldland. Several local magnates agreed to divide the forest between them in 1672 (see figures 4 and 5); it is therefore probable that piecemeal enclosure of the forest took place after that date, and was complete before the 1827 Bitton Inclosure Award (Tate, 1943).

Developing as it did along a main arterial route from Bristol through Kingswood Forest, the prosperity of the area around Hanham was based on coal mining and associated industries. Rudder (1779, 294) states that 'Great quantities of coal are dug... out of pits which are fifty yards deep, and some of them more. Here is also plenty of iron-ore, and rich cinders of the same metal, for smelting of which a furnace hath lately been erected where they use coke instead of charcoal'.



Coal mining was taking place within Kingswood Forest near Hanham from the 13th century, and by the 17th century the local manorial lords had assumed rights to exploit the forest for stone and coal, and had parcelled up the whole forest between them. A coal wharf is recorded at Conham in 1657. During the eighteenth century, coal pits generally became deeper, but there were numerous shallow pits still in existence in the Hanham area as in places the coal seams run close to the surface. Hanham pit, which was opposite Launceston Avenue, closed in 1926 (ibid). Cool's Level at Magpie Bottom drained an area of mining which is thought to date from the late 17th and early 18th century (Cornwell, 2003, 11 and 21).

During the 17th and 18th centuries, the colliers of Kingswood Forest lived scattered across the district in poor cottages and the area had become a refuge for criminals. The inhabitants of the area were neglected by the Church of England but in defiance of a law which prohibited 'non-conformists' from holding services within 5 miles of Bristol's city limits, had been ministered to by Baptist preachers since the mid 17th century. George Whitfield was the first Anglican minister to pay serious attention to the inhabitants of the forest and was soon joined by John Wesley, also an Anglican minister. The two men preached at various locations within the district but particularly on Hanham Mount to crowds up to 10,000 strong. Their work heralded a religious revival throughout Britain and America. There is now a replica pulpit on Hanham Mount in Wesley's honour (<http://www.methodistheritage.org.uk/hanhammount.htm>).

History of the Study Area (see Figures 3-13)

The earliest cartographic depiction of the location of the Study Area is a 1610 map of Kingswood (see **Figure 3**). The map is not sufficiently accurate to place the Study Area precisely, but it lies between the 'Bathe way' (modern A431) and the 'London waye' (modern A420), slightly to the north-east of Stradbrook bridge. Conham Hill to the south-west is still known by that name. The Study Area and its surroundings at that time are depicted as forested.

A 'Mapp of Kingswood Chace' dated to 1672 (Ellacombe, 1881, Plate IX; see **Fig. 4**) contains the approximate location of the Study Area, which appears to fall within either the 'Earl of Roch[ester's] 3rd Liberty' or 'Sir John Newton's 3rd Liberty'. This map also shows bell pits for coal in the vicinity of Magpie Bottom, between the Study Area and the Bath road (A431).

The 'Plan of Mr Player's Manors and that of Sr John Newton's &c lying in the Parishes of Bitton and Mangotsfield truly transcribed from Mr Player's original plan dated 1750 by Daniel Cook, 1779' (Ellacombe, 1881, Plate XI; see **Fig. 5**), records the location of Magpie Bottom itself (a Nature Reserve at the present time) and shows that by 1750 the Study Area was most probably within St John Newton's 3rd Liberty. Numerous coal pits 'with owner's Names annexed' are depicted in the Study Area and its surroundings, as well as nearby 'Hillocks' for coal pits, presumably slag heaps.

Taylor's 1777 map of Gloucestershire (**Fig. 6**) is of too small a scale to show the Study Area in detail, however the course of the Stradbrook along Magpie Bottom is charted, to the south of 'Westley's School', the Kingswood School founded by John Wesley in 1748 (shown on the 1st edition OS as 'Kingswood Reformatory', and now an Academy). The site is to the east of the Stradbrook, an area which appears on this map as empty apart from four circular features which may represent pits.

The 'Plan of the Parish of Bitton in the County of Gloucester showing that part prepared to be made An Ecclesiastical District attached to the New Church on Kingswood Hill' of 1820 (**Fig. 7**), shows the new ecclesiastical district was taken out of the Hamlet of Oldland (Ellacombe, 1881). The Study Area appears to have been located within this ecclesiastical district, which became a new parish in 1825 (see above) (Youngs, 1979, 178).

The 1833 map of 'The Hamlet of Oldland in the parish of Bitton in the County of Gloucester'

by Henry Creswicke junior of Hanham (BRO 19836) (**Fig. 8**), is the first to give a detailed plan of the area, and shows the Study Area as part of a plot labelled '929', to the south of plot 927 which includes a building. No features are recorded.

A 'Map of the Parish of Bitton, Gloucestershire, from the Ordnance map by Cotterells and Cooper 1842' (Ellacombe, 1881, Plate 1 see **Fig. 9**), shows the Study Area as part of a larger plot bounded approximately by the current roads of Footshill Road to the east, Harolds Way to the west and Bailey Drive to the north. It does not depict the field boundaries shown in the 1833 map described above or the following tithe map. Within the larger plot a short road leads to a building, corresponding to that shown on the 1833 as within plot no 927.

Figure 10, traced from the tithe commutation map of 'The Hamlet of Oldland in the Parish of Bitton, Gloucesters[hire] 1844' (BRO 37918/MAPS/2/2) depicts the Study Area within a plot labelled 1328. This plot is identical (other than the number) to that on the map of 1833. The number 1328 refers to the following entry in the Tithe Apportionments (BRO P.B/SD/2c):

Landowner	Occupier	Description
William Bateman	William Bateman	Adjoining the Orchard

The orchard is plot 1327 to the east. The building referred to above is on the tithe map as 1325 (House and Garden occupied by John Stone) That plot also contains nos 1324 and 1326 which are both 'House and Garden' occupied by Samuel Haskins and Robert Waters respectively; all three belong to William Bateman.

The Ordnance Survey 1st Edition 25" (**Fig. 11**) was surveyed in 1880-1881 and shows the Study Area as an open piece of ground labelled '741' with a pathway along the northern boundary and a spring in the north-west corner.

The OS 2nd edition (revised 1902, **Fig. 12**) shows the existing well on the northern boundary, the only changes being that the pathway stops at the well, and a second spring has been added at the middle of the western boundary.

The 3rd edition OS (revised 1912, **Fig. 13**) retains only the two springs, and no other features are recorded.

1973 OS map (**Fig. 14**) shows the Study Area with the current bungalow and large outbuilding now present, and a single field boundary dividing the north-eastern corner of the site from the remainder.

Aerial Photographic Evidence

An aerial photograph taken in 1946 (Know Your Place <http://maps.bristol.gov.uk/kyp>) (**Fig. 15**) shows 7 small outbuildings on the Study Area, and the eastern half of the site divided into small plots. There are no other obvious features. An aerial photograph from 2009 (Google Earth) (**Fig. 16**) shows the Study Area in its present layout and appears to display a circular feature in the north-west corner which might represent coal mining or related activity.

Archaeology of the Study Area

No previous archaeological work has taken place on this site. A 500-metre radius trawl of the South Gloucestershire Historic Environment Record (HER) returned no items recorded within the bounds of the study site. No prehistoric finds are recorded within the bounds of the trawl, and only one Roman record of significance, which refers to the Roman road from Bath to Sea Mills referred to above (PRN 6051). There is also only one medieval entry, which records the medieval Settlement of Hanham (PRN 10751) 400m to the south of the Study Area.

The majority of the entries relate to the post-medieval period. Within 50-100m of the Study Area, the SMR records the post-medieval settlement of Potterswood, Kingswood (16041), as depicted on the 1st edition OS, closely bordering the Study Area on all sides. The settlement of Hanham East lies approximately 450m to the south-east.

There are no listed buildings close to the Study Area within South Gloucestershire, although Richmond Villa, a grade III listed building, formerly stood approximately 330m to the east, prior to its demolition before 1990. Within the Bristol Area, the Grade II listed Wesley Memorial Methodist Church is situated approximately 580m to the west of the Study Area. Neither has any direct impact on the Study Area. There are no locally listed buildings with any implications for the Study Area.

The Study Area is situated very close to Magpie Bottom, currently a Nature Reserve, which is also designated under Historic Landscape Characterisation as a 'landscape derived from heathland known as 'heaths', 'commons', or 'greens', much of which once constituted the Forest of Kingswood of which Kingswood Chase was a remnant'.

Coalmining

According to the Coal authority, there are 'no known coal mine entries within, or within 20 metres of, the boundary of the property'; however, it is acknowledged that records may be incomplete (SLR 2014).

The nearest recorded coaling shafts lie 30 metres and 45m to the south; further shafts lie 60m to the west, 76m to the south-east, 85m to the north-west and 88m to the west (ibid.) There are two water levels close to, but not beneath the property, which are both believed to be blocked. Cools Water Level (mentioned above) runs east to west, 30 metres to the south, and a second level passes north to south 90 metres to the west.

A coal mine shaft (SMR 18689) is recorded in the SMR at the Douglas Motorcycle Works which is approximately 460m to the north-east of the Study Area.

Hanham Colliery (SMR 1404, also recorded as HLC Large Scale Utility Landscape) is over 900m away to the SW, however the Study Area is thought to be situated over the extent of the workings of the colliery; plans of the colliery show that these workings will be present at a depth of 1,500 feet (ibid).

According to communication from Bristol Coalmining Archives (ibid.), bell pits were discovered in the Magpie Bottom area during site investigations prior to the construction of housing in the district. No shafts are recorded within the boundary of the site, although the presence of shallow shafts, the location of which have long been lost, cannot be discounted. Bell pits are described as 'primitive shafts that worked the coal down dip of earlier crop workings. Generally these shafts were narrow, three or four feet in diameter and were sunk to a depth of 15-30 feet.... the coal being won from the bottom of the shaft from a radius of about 10 feet' (SLR, 2014, Appendix B)



5. List of relevant local authority planning policies

South Gloucestershire Local Plan: Core Strategy (adopted 2013) states:

2.5 Relics of historic settlements and the industrial past (coal mining and manufacturing) texture the landscape. A rich and varied heritage of historic buildings, settlements, parks and gardens and archaeological features make an important contribution to the character of the area. South Gloucestershire also has a rich natural environment and an array of ecological assets, from international designations in the Severn Estuary to species of critical importance for local biodiversity. The Severn Levels is also an area of high archaeological potential.

5.4 The policy sets out criteria for the assessment of high quality design in new development. In particular, through Design & Access Statements, development proposals should demonstrate a clear understanding of both the site and locality's historic, archaeological, ecological and landscape context in drawing up development proposals. The policy also sets out key design priorities and a standard against the established national assessment methodology, 'Building for Life' (BfL12), that residential development proposals will be expected to achieve.

8.8 South Gloucestershire has an important legacy of heritage and cultural assets, including over 2000 listed buildings, approximately 1500 locally listed buildings, 30 conservation areas, 8 registered historic parks and gardens, and 37 scheduled monuments. There are a wide range of undesignated historic buildings, archaeological sites and remains, and historic parks and gardens as well as places, areas and landscapes of historic interest. Information about heritage assets can be found in the South Gloucestershire Historic Environment Register (HER). These assets make a significant contribution to the identity of the locality in which they are set, helping to create a sense of place. Applications for development which affect heritage assets and their settings directly or indirectly will need to describe the nature of the significance of the assets affected, and set out how development will maintain and enhance heritage assets and their settings in a manner appropriate to that significance. New development should seek opportunities to draw on the historic environment in order to maintain and enhance local character and distinctiveness.

6. Conclusion

There is no detailed history available for this site, but it does appear that this land has never been previously developed. The parish of Bitton is of some antiquity, and indeed Bitton and, closer to the study area, Hanham, both lie on a Roman road. Hanham itself was a hamlet of at least early medieval origin.

At present the site consists of one plot of land of irregular shape, with a modern bungalow and four agricultural structures. No evidence exists for any structures within the site prior to the mid-twentieth century, other than two springs and a well. However, as the study area is within the former Bristol Coalfield, there is always a possibility of shallow underground workings and mine shafts being present within the study area, in particular a chance of bell pits. There is an area in the north-western corner that may be of interest; a circular feature showing on aerial photographs might indicate mining activity, however it is at least as likely to be a pond associated with the nearby spring. No other features of note could be detected on the site.

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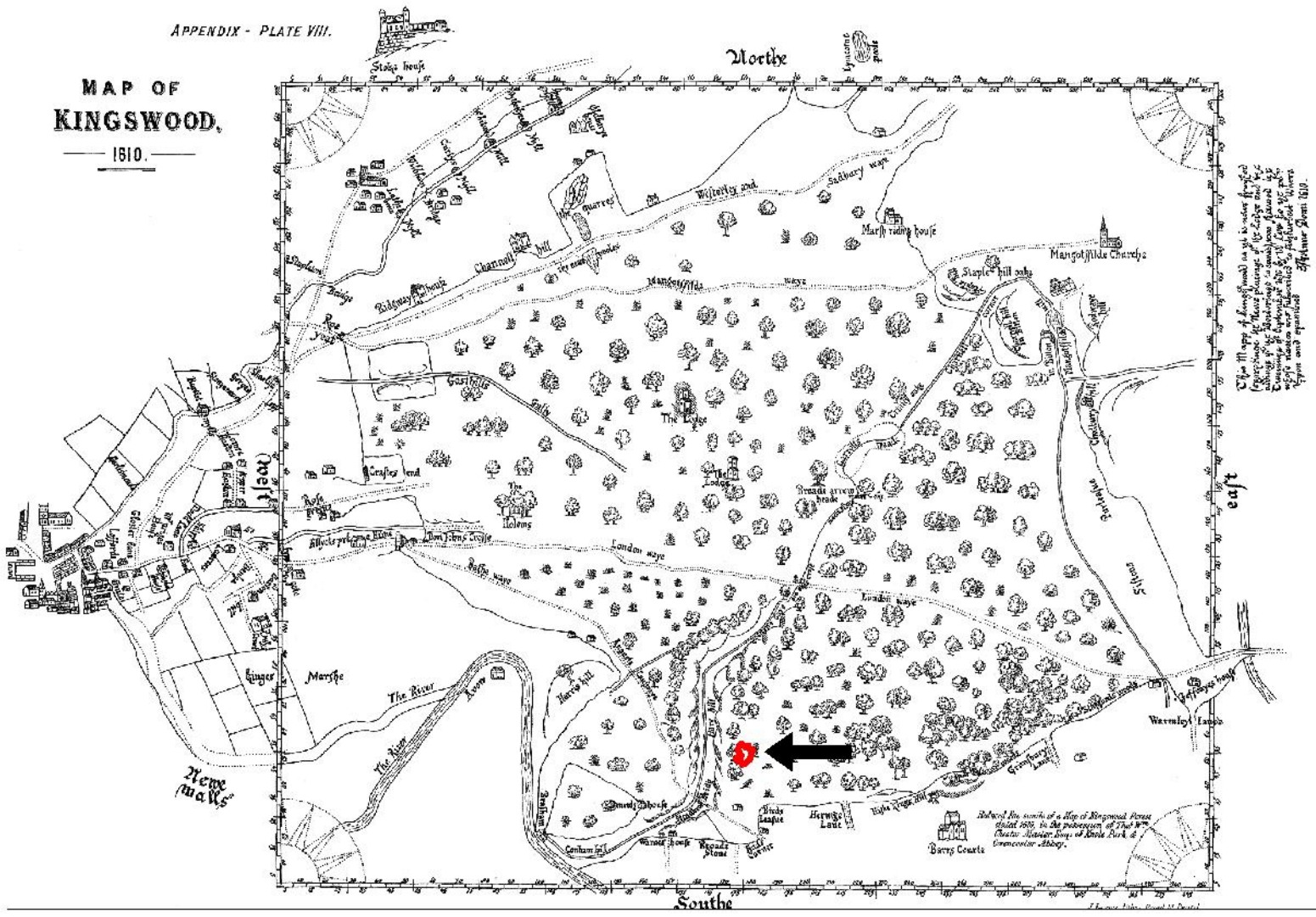
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<http://maps.bristol.gov.uk/kyp/>

'Map of Kingswood 1610, By Fitzherbert Warre'
(Plate 8, Ellacombe, 1881)

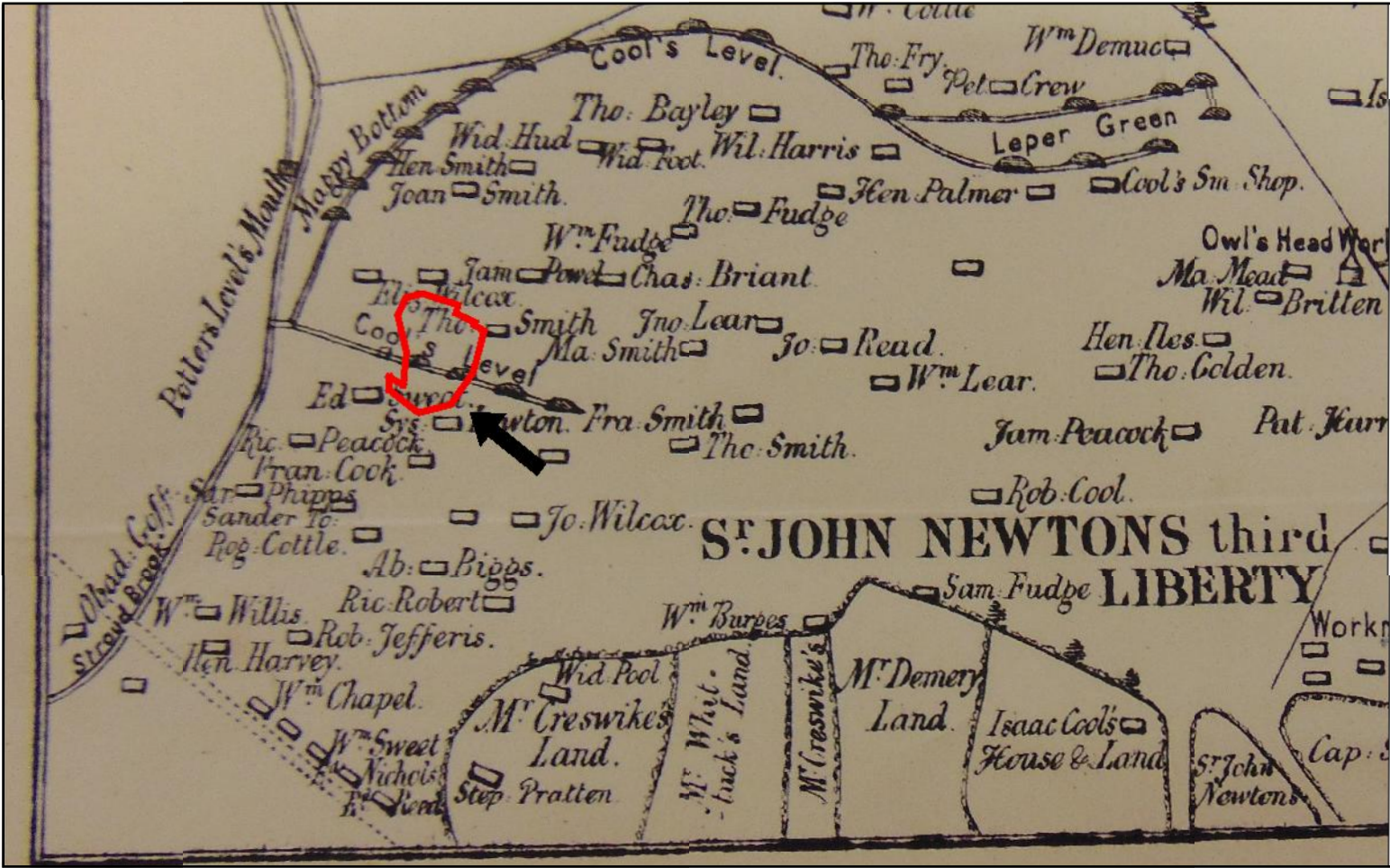
Figure 3



Extract from the 'Plan of Mr Player's Manors and that of Sr John Newton's & lying in the parishes of Bitton and Mangotsfield truly transcribed from Mr Player's original plan dated 1750 By Daniel Cook, 1779'.
(Plate 11, Ellacombe, 1881)

Figure 5

← Approximate location of the Study Area



0m 500m

Approximate Scale



Figure 6

Extract from Taylor's Map of Gloucestershire 1777. GRO Clifford/536

← Approximate location of the Study Area



0m 1km

Approximate Scale



Plan of the 'Parish of Bitton in the Parish of Bitton in the County of Gloucester
Showing that part (coloured Red) Proposed to be made In Ecclesiastical District
attached to the New Church on Kingswood Hill 1820'.
BRO EP/A/22/K/1

Figure 7

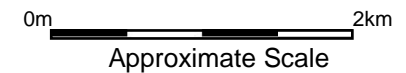
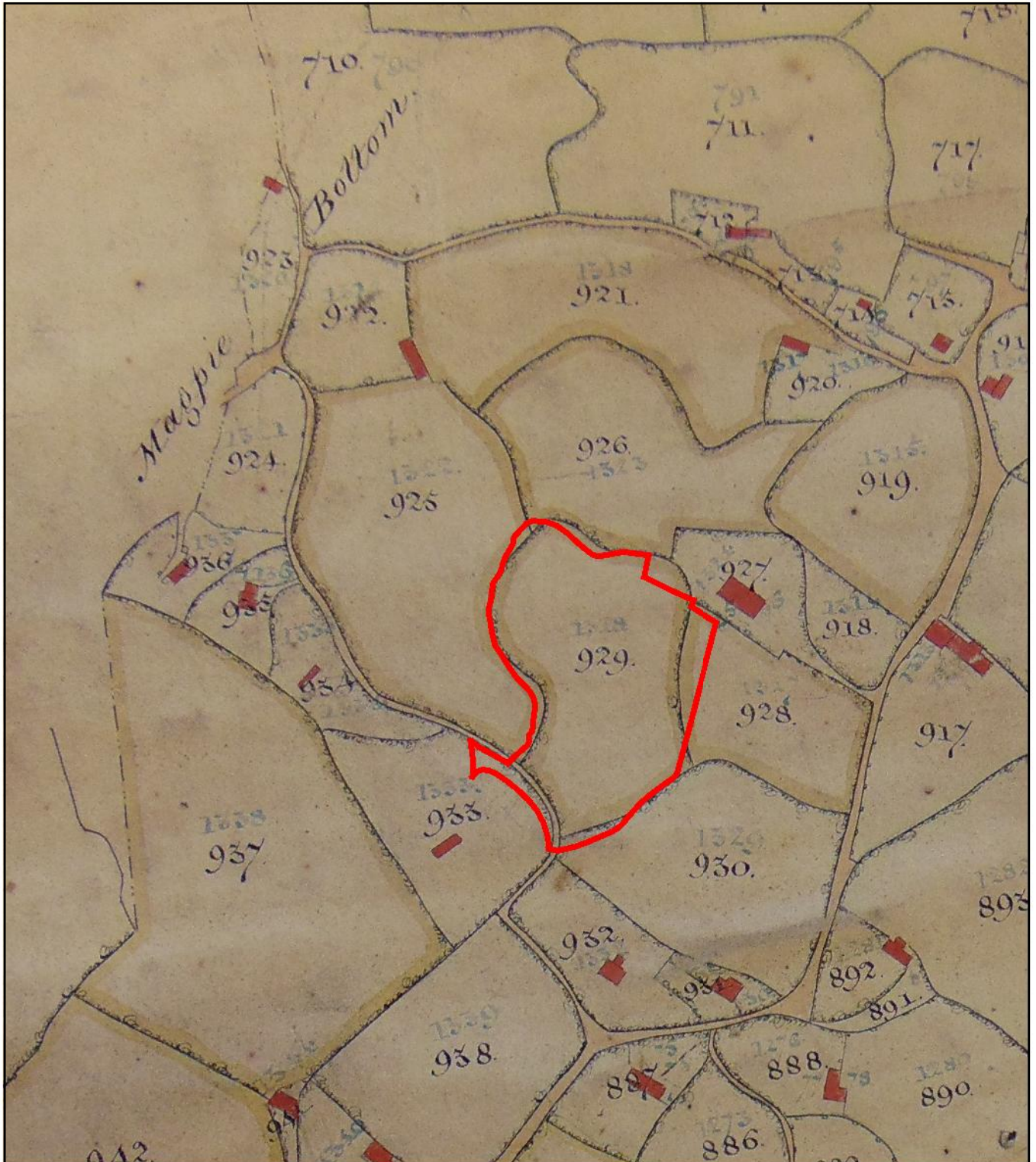


Figure 8

Extract from 'The Hamlet of Oldland in the Parish of Bitton
in the County of Gloucester'. 1833.
(BRO 19836)



0m 100m

Approximate Scale



Figure 9

Extract from 'Map of the Parish of Bitton, Gloucestershire,
from the Ordnance map by Cotterells and Cooper 1842'.
(Plate 1, Ellacombe, 1881)



0m  100m

Approximate Scale



Figure 10

Extract from 'The Hamlet of Oldland in the Parish of Bitton, Gloucesters. 1844'
(BRO/37918/MAPS/2/2)

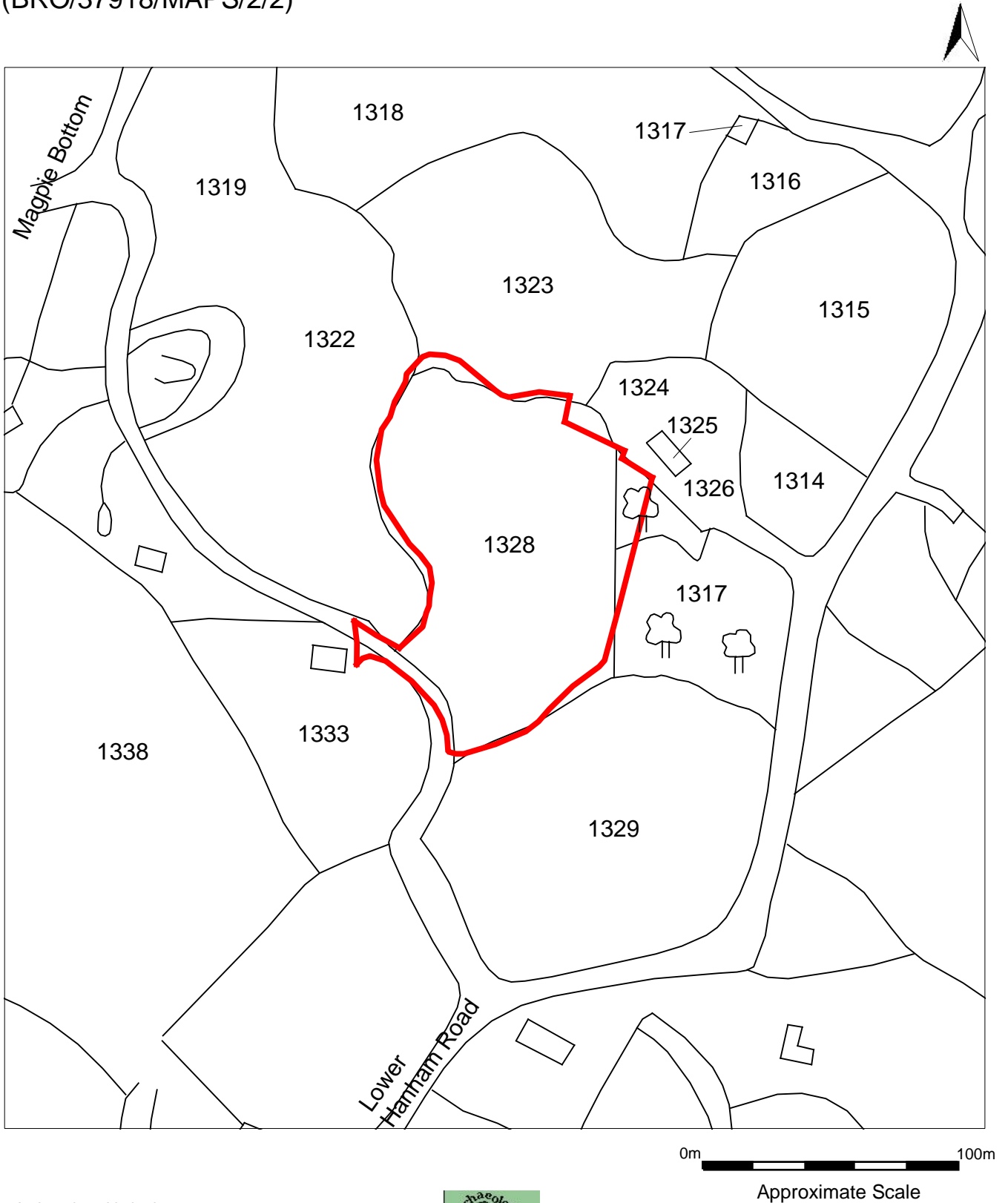


Figure 11

Extract from the OS 1880 1:2500 map of Gloucestershire
Sheets LXXVI.3 and LXXII.15

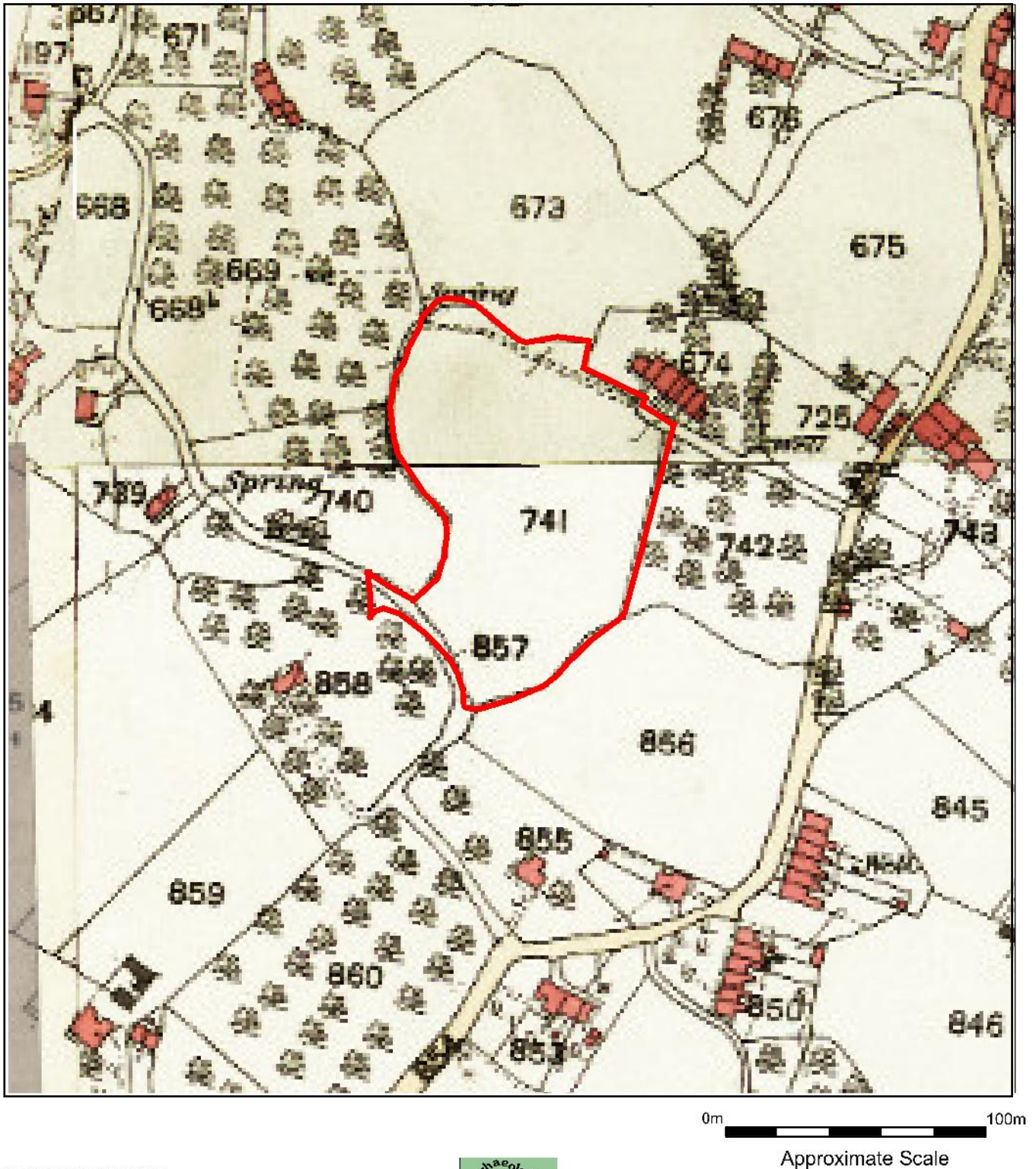
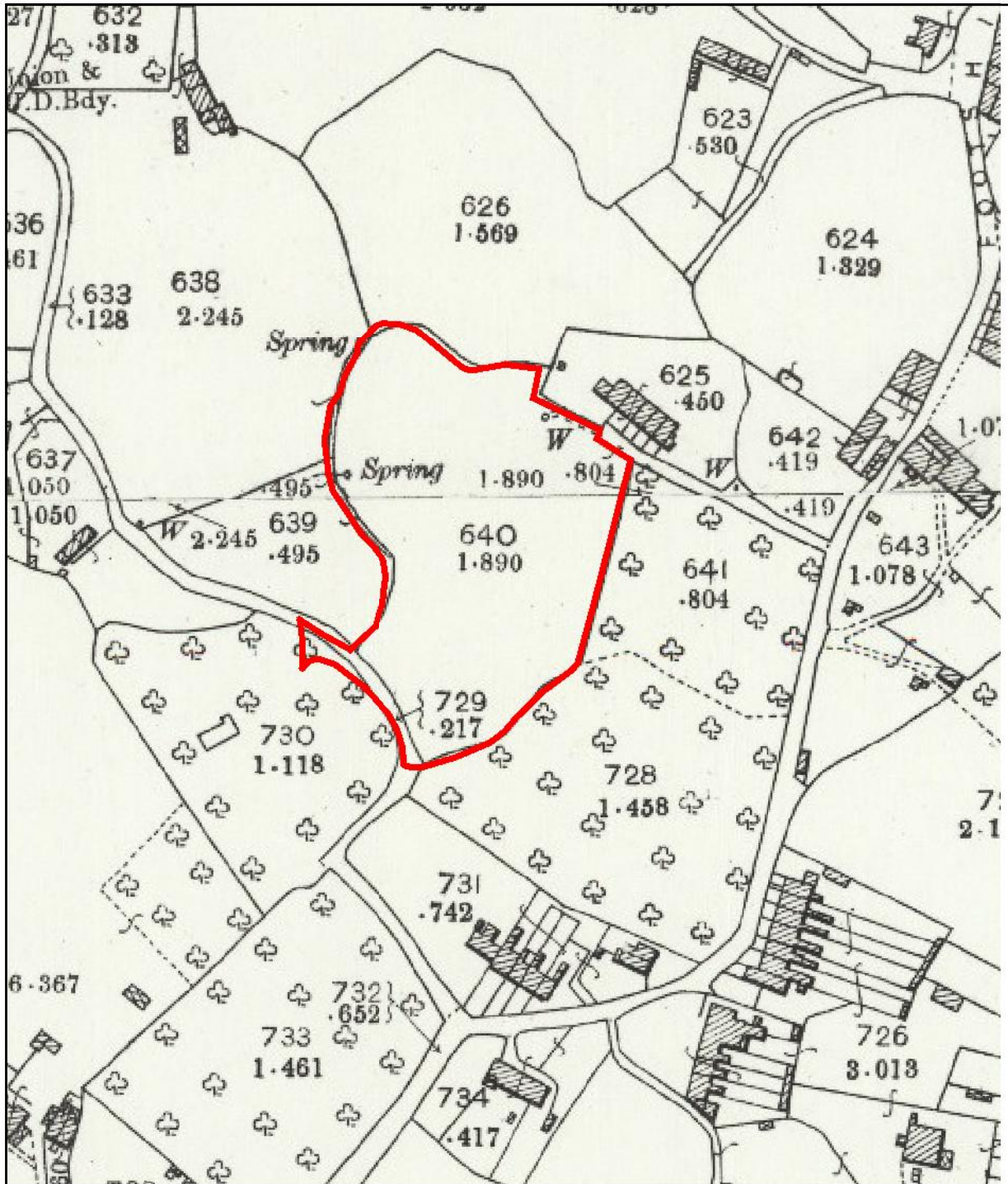


Figure 12

Extract from the OS 1902 1:2500 map of Gloucestershire
Sheets LXXVI.3 and LXXII.15



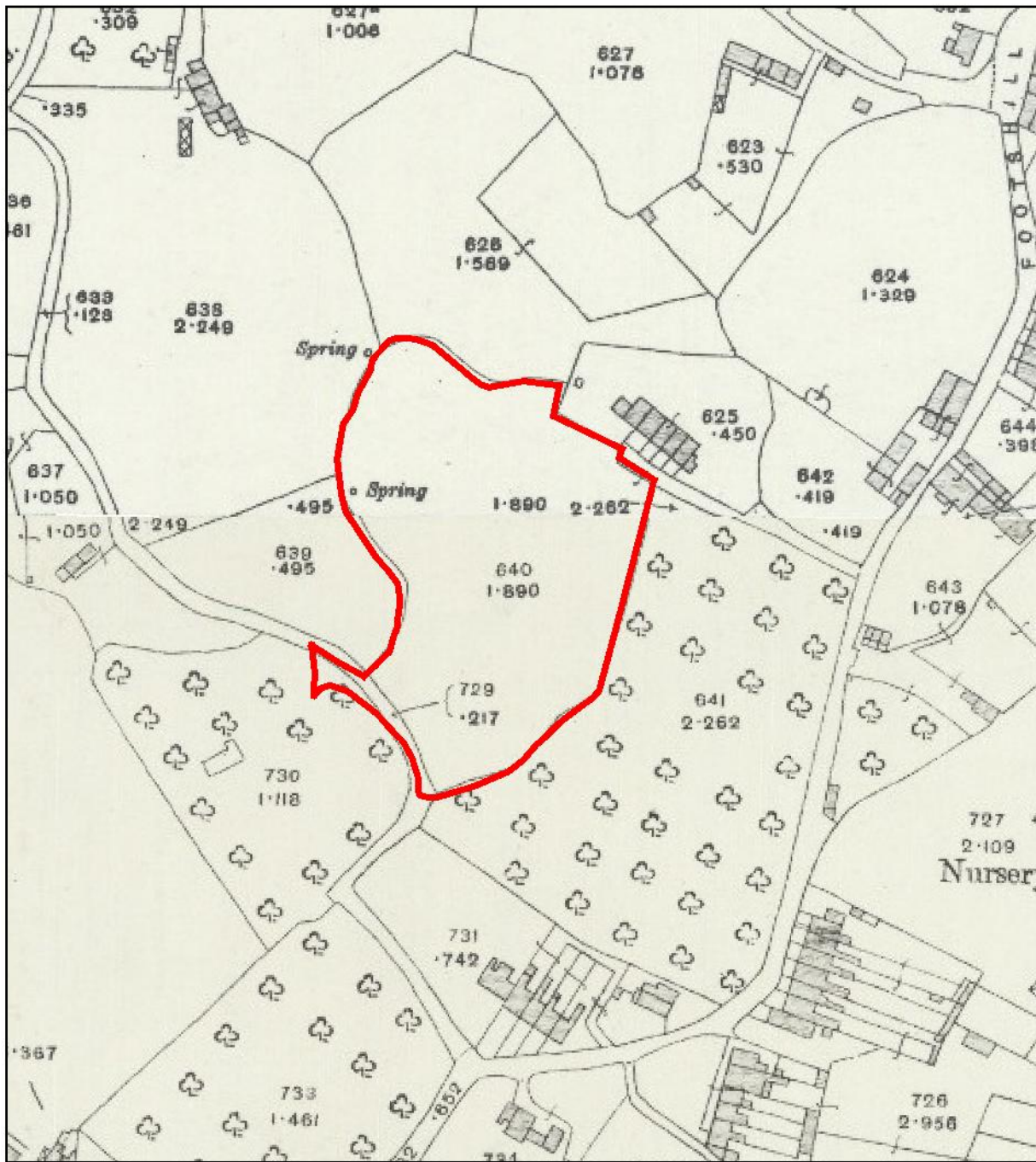
0m 100m

Approximate Scale



Figure 13

Extract from the OS 1912 1:2500 map of Gloucestershire
Sheets LXXVI.3 and LXXII.15



0m 100m

Approximate Scale



Figure 14

Extract from the OS 1973 1:10000 map of Gloucestershire
Sheet ST 67 SW

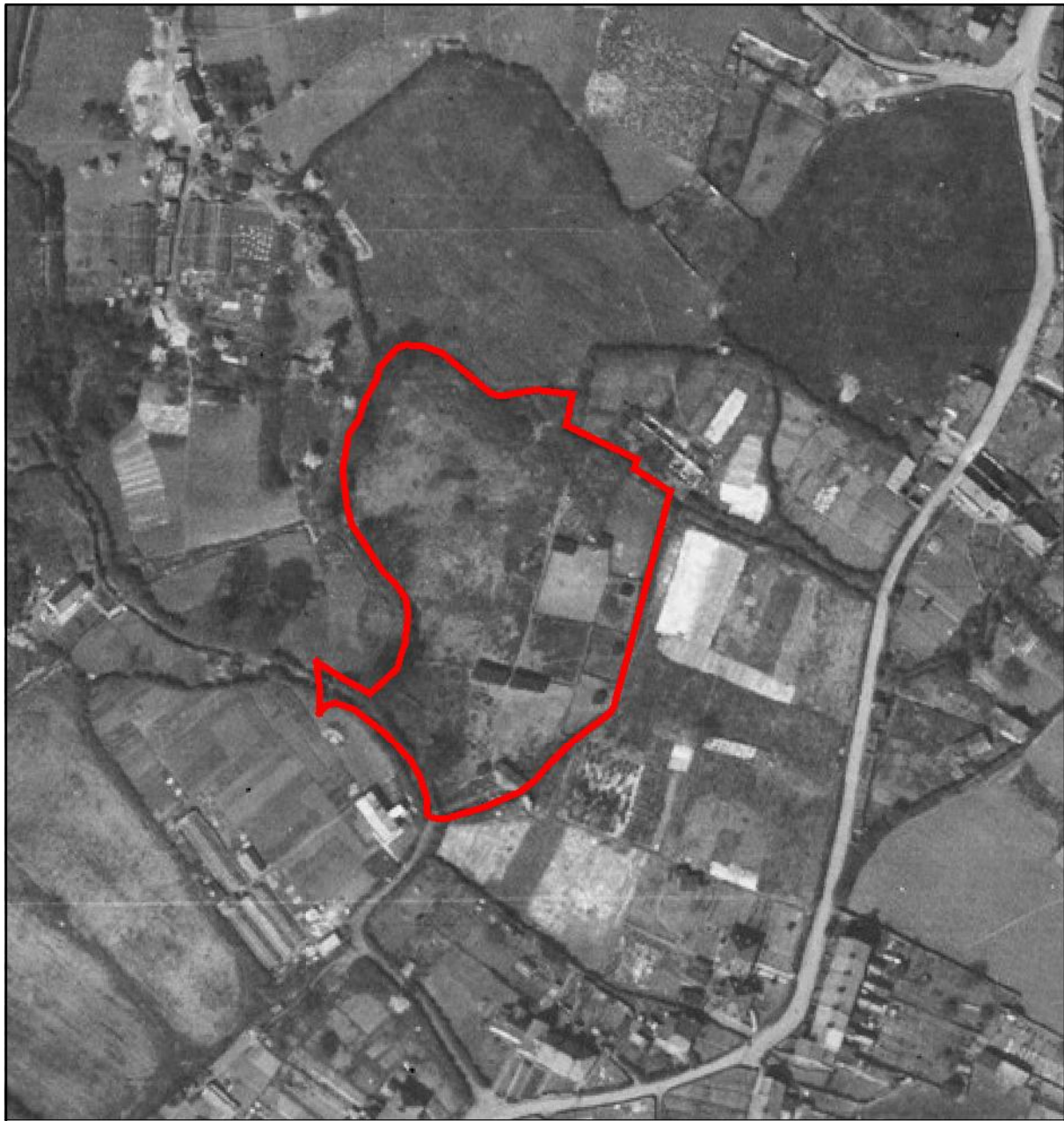


Approximate Scale



Figure 15

Extract from 1946 Aerial Photograph
www.maps.bristol.gov.uk/kyp



0m  100m

Approximate Scale



Figure 16

Extract from 2009 Aerial Photograph
(googleearth)




0m  100m
Approximate Scale





Plate 1: View of study area looking north-east



Plate 2: View of well, looking north-east