

HERITAGE NETWORK



CENTRE FOR THE ARTS **Willian Road, Hitchin**

HN477

Desk-based Archaeological Assessment



THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

CENTRE FOR THE ARTS **Willian Road, Hitchin, Herts.**

HN477

Desk-based Archaeological Assessment

Prepared on behalf of North Hertfordshire College

by

Helen Ashworth BA AIFA

Report No.247

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The cover photograph shows the main entrance to the Centre for the Arts on the site of the Walsworth Farmhouse

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The research for this project was carried out Helen Ashworth. Illustrations were prepared by Karin Semmelmann, and the report was edited by David Hillelson.

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Summary

Site name and address:	Centre for the Arts, Willian Road, Hitchin SG4 0LS		
County:	Hertfordshire	District:	North Hertfordshire
Village/town:	Hitchin	Parish:	Hitchin
Planning reference:	N/A	NGR:	TL 2000 3010
Client name and address:	North Hertfordshire College, Cambridge Road, Hitchin.		
Project Reference:	HN477	Other reference:	N/a

Synopsis:

In order to assess the archaeological risk posed by a proposal to redevelop the site of the North Hertfordshire College Centre for the Arts, Willian Road, Hitchin, the Heritage Network was commissioned by North Hertfordshire College to undertake a desk-based archaeological assessment of the site.

On the basis of the evidence consulted, there would appear to be a low to moderate risk that remains of Iron Age, Roman, and Medieval date might be encountered on the present site, subject to disturbance by activity in the post-medieval and modern periods.

The map and aerial photographic evidence shows that the site has undergone significant changes since the early 19th century. The various phases of farm buildings which occupied the site prior to the construction of the present buildings, are also considered to be of potential interest.

The existing buildings are not cellared and do not appear to have significantly large or deep foundations, suggesting a reasonable potential for the preservation of archaeological remains across the whole site.

1. Introduction

1.1 This study has been prepared at the request of Messrs. Moulton Walker, acting on behalf of *North Hertfordshire College*, as a Desk-based Archaeological Assessment of a development site at the Centre for the Arts, Willian Road, Hitchin, Herts.

1.2 The study area comprises an irregularly shaped plot, measuring a little over 1 hectare. It lies on the north-eastern side of Willian Road, at the junction with Cambridge Road, centred at NGR TL 2000 3010, and is bounded to the south-west by the line of Willian Road; to the north-west by the line of Cambridge Road; to the north-east by properties fronting Cambridge Road; and on the south-east by the line of Hampden Road (see Figure 1). It is currently occupied by a group of buildings dating to the second half of the 20th century, and now used by the college for teaching purposes.

1.3 The Centre for the Arts is located on the north-eastern side of Hitchin, within the former hamlet of Walsworth. Although no known archaeological remains are known from the site itself, finds of late Iron Age and Romano-British date have been recovered from the vicinity.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.4 The aim of the present document has been to provide:

- A comprehensive overview of the development of land use on and in the vicinity of the study area from readily accessible sources;
- An assessment of the risk that development within the study area might encounter archaeological remains, and of the significance of such remains.

1.5 The research has followed the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-based Assessments* published by the Institute of Field Archaeologists, and includes reference, where appropriate, to:

- Archaeological databases
- Historical documents
- Cartographic and pictorial documents
- Aerial photographs
- Geotechnical information
- Secondary and statutory sources

1.6 Repositories consulted include:

- Hertfordshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record (HSMR)
- Hitchin Museum (HITM)

Centre for the Arts, Willian Road, Hitchin *Desk-based Archaeological Assessment*

- North Hertfordshire District Council Archaeological Archives
- Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS)
- National Monuments Record Air Photographic Library (NMR)

COMPETENCE

1.7 The Heritage Network is an independent practice specialising in archaeology and the historic environment. Founded in 1992, the company has undertaken a wide variety of commercial archaeological projects for clients involved in housing and industrial development, pipeline and road construction, agriculture and landscaping. As a *Registered Archaeological Organisation*, the company is monitored annually by the Institute of Field Archaeologists to ensure that its work meets the highest professional standards.

1.8 Projects are administered and co-ordinated by David Hillelson, the Heritage Network's Archaeological Director, an established archaeologist with extensive experience of the management of archaeological projects in both urban and rural environments. He holds an honours degree in archaeology from the University of Durham, and is a Member of the *Institute of Field Archaeologists*. He has been the practice's principal officer since 1992.

1.9 Research projects are managed by Helen Ashworth. She holds a degree in English and History from Middlesex Polytechnic, a Post-graduate Diploma in Librarianship, a Post-graduate Certificate in Field Archaeology from the University of Oxford, and she is an Associate of the *Institute of Field Archaeologists*. She has over twenty years of practical archaeological experience in local government, with the Royal Commission for the Historical Monuments of England, and in private practice.

2. Evidence

TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The present site lies within the Hitchin Gap, a glacially derived deep cutting, at approximately 56mOD. The solid geology is Lower Chalk, with a deep drift covering of fluvio-glacial sands and gravels of the Anglian phase of the Quaternary period. The chalk bedrock is present at considerable depths below the fluvio-glacial deposits. Locally the soils are derived from the St Albans Association and comprise a brown earth derived from the underlying sands and gravels (SSEW, 1968).

HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

Prehistoric

2.2 The archaeological evidence suggests that the area of the modern town was important in the prehistoric period. The proximity of the Icknield Way, a major prehistoric route between East Anglia and Wessex, would doubtless have drawn settlers to the region. The light fertile soils in the valley of the River Hiz would also have been attractive.

2.3 Most prehistoric activity in appears to have been concentrated on higher ground in the Highbury and Benslow areas, between 1km and 1.5km to the southwest of the study area. The majority of the evidence is in the form of chance finds of flint implements, many found during quarrying for gravel and brickearth in the 19th century. A number of flint implements of *Palaeolithic* date (c.450,00bc – 10,000bc), *Mesolithic* date (c.10,000bc – c.3,500bc), *Neolithic* date (c.3,500bc – c.2,000bc) and *Bronze Age* date (c.2,000bc – c.700bc) have also been recorded from this area (Palaeolithic: HSMR 279, 280, 283, 284, 1182, 1185 and 1186; Mesolithic: HSMR 288, 6454; Neolithic: HSMR 294 and 298; Bronze Age: HSMR 303, 307 and 308).

2.4 A small number of prehistoric artefacts have also been recovered from the area to the north and east of Hitchin, including numerous flint implements of Neolithic date from Letchworth (HSMR 539), within 1km to the northeast; a number of possible Neolithic flint scrapers from the Purwell area (HSMR 1194), within 1km to the southeast; and worked flints, of probable Neolithic date, from the garden of 35 Cadwell Lane (HSMR 11529), approximately 1km to the northwest. A flint scraper of late prehistoric date (HSMR 309) was found at Purwell Mill, approximately 800m to the south.

2.5 Aerial photography has revealed a number of cropmarks of probable prehistoric features in the fields to the south and east of the study area. These include a ring ditch of Bronze Age date approximately 800m to the southeast (HSMR 2558); undated rectilinear ditches approximately 1km to the southeast (HSMR 1641); linear ditches approximately 900m to the southeast (HSMR 1642); and a sub-rectangular enclosure, approximately 500m northeast, which forms the core of Archaeological Area 100 (HSMR 4397). Pottery and cremation burials, of unknown prehistoric date (HSMR 6194), were found at 'Fairfield', now part of the Purwell housing estate, approximately 500m southeast of the study area.

2.6 A number of potential new features were identified on aerial photographs during desk-based research on a site approximately 1km to the northeast (Hillelson, 2000). These include a group of at least 7 ring ditches and an enclosure, centred at TL 207 298, approximately 800m to the southeast (NMR 106G / UK / 1013, frame 7007). A further ring ditch was identified at TL 206 303, approximately 600m to the east (NMR OS / 73060, frame 337).

2.7 Although very few prehistoric artefacts are known from the immediate vicinity of the study area, cropmark evidence suggests the presence of a considerable amount of prehistoric activity in the locality. The lack of finds, such as flint implements, may be a reflection of the lack of archaeological investigation to the north and east of the modern town. During the 19th century the higher ground around Highbury and Benslow was disturbed by extensive quarrying, providing local antiquarians with the opportunity to recover prehistoric artefacts.

Iron Age

2.8 There is surprisingly little evidence for Iron Age activity in Hitchin. Sites of this period are known from the surrounding area, including hillforts at Ravensburgh Castle near Hexton and Wilbury Hill, Letchworth. A considerable late pre-Roman Iron Age settlement was also established at Baldock. Excavations at the eastern end of Portmill Lane, approximately 1.6km southwest of the study area, found slight evidence of Iron Age activity, including sherds of middle and late Iron Age pottery (HSMR 6455). A number of undated pits and postholes may represent the remains of structures dating to this period (G.Burleigh, pers. comm.). Other chance finds of late Iron Age artefacts have been recorded from the town, including a pottery urn (HSMR 4871) and a number of coins (HSMR 131; HSMR 4873).

2.9 Limited evidence for Late pre-Roman Iron Age activity has been recovered from the Walsworth and Purwell areas. High status pottery, including a butt beaker and two amphorae (HSMR 108) was found on the Purwell estate, approximately 550m to the southeast. These vessels possibly accompanied a burial of the same period (HSMR 6085). Coins issued by the Catuvellaunian chieftain *Cunobelin* (c.AD 10 – 40) have also been found in the locality, at Walsworth (HSMR 130), within 1km to the northwest, and on the site of a Roman villa (HSMR 466), approximately 1.2km to the southeast.

2.10 The lack of evidence may reflect a genuine lack of occupation, although the number of prehistoric findspots in the vicinity of the town suggests that it was an attractive spot for early settlement. It is more likely that remains of Iron Age occupation have yet to be uncovered.

Romano-British

2.11 The known settlement pattern of the Hitchin area in the Roman period suggests a landscape of farmsteads and villas, some of which undoubtedly had Iron Age antecedents. Evidence of occupation has been recorded from a number of sites around the town, including to the southeast of the Grammar School (HSMR 1420) and at Highbury Road, approximately 1.3km to the southwest (HSMR 1418). Settlement evidence, and an associated inhumation and cremation cemetery, has also been recorded at Foxholes, approximately 1km west of the modern town (HSMR 1184). Further cremation burials, with

accompanying pottery vessels, were found at Taylors Hill on the southern side of the town (HSMR 1201).

2.12 Archaeological fieldwork in the vicinity of the town centre has also recovered limited evidence of Roman activity. Residual pottery sherds and coins were recovered from later features during excavations at The Biggin in 1969 (NHDC archives) and at Portmill Lane (HSMR 6474). Excavations on the site of the former Hitchin Laundry on Queen Street uncovered a small number of Roman features, consisting of pits and postholes, which were located in the north-western corner of the site (Stirk, 2002). Large quantities of Roman pottery and building material were also recovered from later features on the site. Recent work by the Museum of London, on various sites in the town centre, has also revealed evidence for Roman activity in the town. A number of late Roman pits and ditches were identified during trial trenching in Portmill Lane and Biggin Lane (Aitken, 2003).

2.13 An area of intensive Roman occupation has been located approximately 1km to the southeast of the study area in an Area of Archaeological Significance (AS 150). The site of a substantial Roman villa at Ninesprings, Wymondley, (HSMR 467 / Scheduled Ancient Monument 38) was investigated in the 1884 (Ransom, 1888, 43-4) and again in 1921. A settlement site, lying approximately 200m to the north of the villa and possibly associated with it (HSMR 468) was first identified in 1921 and further investigated by fieldwalking in 1978. The fieldwalking revealed a spread of Roman pottery sherds and building material. It has been suggested that the present site lies immediately adjacent to the northeastern corner of the villa estate (Smith, NHDC Archives).

2.14 Other evidence of Roman activity in the vicinity of the study area includes a 2nd century coin, possibly of *Faustina Senior* who died AD 141, which was found in 1958 on the opposite side of Cambridge Road (HSMR 1416) approximately 100m to the southwest. Approximately 17 coins, ranging from *Gallienus* (AD 253-68) to *Helena* (AD 337-41), were found with a metal detector on spoil heaps during building along St Michael's Road in the 1970s (HSMR 460) approximately 500m to the southwest. A coin hoard, comprising approximately 8 coins ranging from *Victorius* (AD 269-71) to *Gratian* (AD 367-82) was found with a metal detector on the top of St Michael's Mount (HSMR 470) approximately 600m to the south. An inhumation burial, with associated 3rd century pottery, was found in a trench along Cadwell Lane (HSMR 1428) approximately 1km to the northwest.

2.15 The present site lies approximately 1km to the northwest of a villa site and associated dependent settlement, possibly just outside the villa estate. These appear to lie at the north-western end of a group of Roman settlements and villas in the Wymondley area, including an extensive settlement approximately 2km to the southeast of Ninesprings villa (HSMR 471) and a Romanised farmstead at Wymondley Bury, approximately 4.5km to the southeast of Ninesprings villa (HSMR 101). Further evidence of Roman occupation has been identified at Cadwell, approximately 1km to the northwest of the study area, along the River Purwell.

Anglo-Saxon

2.16 The name 'Hitchin' is believed to have stemmed from the name *Hicce*, the Anglo-Saxon tribe thought to have been established in this area by the 8th century AD. The Tribal Hidage, a Mercian

tribute list of 7th/8th century date, documents two tribes in the area, the *Gifle* and the *Hicce*. The *Gifle* appear to have occupied the valley of the River Ivel in Bedfordshire and the *Hicce* settled in the region of the River Hiz (Friel, 1982).

2.17 The limited documentary sources available indicate that Hitchin was a Mercian royal estate by the 8th century and the *Hicce* formed one of the smaller clan units within Mercia. It has been suggested that Hitchin was an important strategic stronghold for the Mercian rulers from as early as the mid 7th century, as it lay on the southern border of the Mercian kingdom and guarded the route to London via a gap in the Chilterns (Offer, 2002).

2.18 Recent archaeological fieldwork at the old Laundry site on Queen Street, approximately 1.8km to the southwest, has revealed evidence for significant activity, which appears to range in date from the 9th century to the 13th century AD (Stirk, 2002). The main occupation on the site apparently consisted of a late Saxon defended enclosure. The defences appear to have later been dismantled, possibly in the 10th century at a time that *burhs* (defended settlements) were being established at Hertford, Bedford and Ashwell. New buildings occupied the space left by the demolished defences.

2.19 It has been suggested that a settlement had been established in the early/ middle Saxon period, centred on the present High Street and Market Place, and to the west and north-west of the church (Burleigh & Stevenson, 1994). This may have been delimited on the northern side by a cemetery at the junction between Bancroft, Brand Street and High Street. A late Saxon planned town has also been postulated, located to the north and west of the earlier settlement and established on a square town plan. It has been suggested that the eastern boundary was marked by the line of a series of alleys, approximately in line with Hermitage Road, that survived into the early post-medieval period (ibid.). This would indicate that the area of the present site lay well outside the Saxon town, but within the hamlet of Walsworth.

2.20 Although no evidence for a Saxon settlement has, so far, been recovered from the vicinity of the study area, the place name *Walsworth* indicates occupation of this period. Medieval records refer to the hamlet as *Waltonesford* (in 1294) or *Waltonford* (in 1377), i.e. the ford at Walton (Gower et al, 1970, 10-11). As Walsworth lay close to an important Saxon estate it is likely that the name Walton comes from the Old English *weala tun*, the ‘farm of the serfs or Britons’ (ibid).

Medieval

2.21 The Domesday Book of 1086 records that Hitchin, which included the hamlet of Walsworth, was held by the king (Morris, 1978). It answered for five hides of land (approximately 600 acres). Two of these hides (approximately 240 acres) were in the hands of the minster church. Ninety one males are recorded as living on the 3 hides (approximately 360 acres) of the king’s land, comprising 41 villagers, 17 smallholders, 22 cottagers and 12 slaves. This gives an estimated total population of between 350 and 450. Eleven males are recorded on the two hides belonging to the church, giving an estimated total population of between 45 and 60. The total estimated population for the manor was therefore between 400 and 600. This is quite a high density and suggests that there was an established and thriving community on the manor by the 11th century. As a royal manor the town would have provided a focus

for people in the surrounding countryside, and an outlet for their produce. Four mills, worth 53s 4d, are recorded on the manor. Grove Mill, which was called *Shackling* or *Shotting* mill, on the River Purwell, was almost certainly one of these. Meadowland, pastureland and woodland for 600 pigs, are also recorded.

2.22 The manor continued to be held by the Crown until the 17th century. At various times it was granted to relatives or courtiers, but always reverted to Crown possession. William Rufus granted Hitchin to Guy de Balliol, whose family held it until 1295, when it was confiscated following the rebellion of John de Balliol, king of Scots. The de Kendale family were granted the manor from 1311 until 1376, when the male line failed. It was then granted to Alice Perrers, the king's mistress. Richard II granted Hitchin to his uncle, Edmund of York, in 1387. It reverted to the Crown in 1460, following Richard of York's death at the Battle of Wakefield during the Wars of the Roses. The following year Richard's son was crowned Edward IV and he granted the manor to his mother, Cecily. Following her death in 1495, Henry VII gave Hitchin to his queen, Elizabeth of York, as part of her jointure. This set a precedent, and through the 16th and 17th centuries the manor formed part of the queen consort's jointure. After Catherine of Braganza's death in 1705, the manor was granted on a series of leases until 1843 when the last lease expired and the manor of Hitchin reverted to the Crown (Howlett, 2000).

2.23 Two mills were established in the vicinity of the study area during the medieval period. Grove Mill (HSMR 5768) approximately 950m northwest of the present site, was variously known as Shotting, Shotlyng or Shackling mill on old maps. It was renovated in 1471 and again in 1676. Purwell mill (HSMR 5793) was located approximately 500m to the southeast of the study area. Remains of medieval ridge and furrow have been identified on aerial photographs of Letchworth Golf Course, approximately 1km to the southeast (Hillelson, 2000).

2.24 Little direct evidence of medieval activity has been recorded from the vicinity of the present site. A possible small moat (HSMR 11416) has been identified at the northern end of modern Millstream Close, to the north of Grove Mill and approximately 1km northwest of the study area. During this period it is likely that the hamlet consisted of a number of cottages along the Cambridge Road with scattered farms surrounded by fields and commons, a pattern which continued into the post-medieval period.

Post-medieval

2.25 Although the size of the population increased significantly in the town during the post-medieval period, especially in the 19th century, Walsworth remained a separate hamlet. Until the mid 19th century it consisted of cottages along the Cambridge and Woolgrove Roads, scattered farms and Walsworth House, which was just on the Hitchin side of the boundary between the township and the hamlet. The census of 1811 recorded 159 people in Walsworth, most of whom were agricultural labourers (Walker & Watson, 1997) which had grown to about 400 by the 1890s (Watson, 1994, 1).

2.26 The two mills in Walsworth were reconstructed in the late 18th or early 19th century. Grove Mill became a silk mill and was owned by the Ransom family between 1813 and c.1838. It later became a water corn mill and then a chamois leather dressers. The present buildings at Purwell mill, including the

mill house and associated cottage, are Grade II listed buildings (DoE, 1970). They were constructed during the 18th century and appear as Purwell Mill on Bryant's map of 1822 (Hodson, 1985, map 4).

2.27 Walsworth lay along Baldock Road (now called Cambridge Road), one of the main routes into Hitchin. The road bridge over the Purwell was apparently not built until 1834, suggesting that heavier traffic had to ford the river at that point (Foster, 1987, 91). This may have been the site of the early ford indicated in the name *Waltonesford*.

2.28 Industry came close to Walsworth in the mid to late 19th century. The railway station (HSMR 5529) approximately 750m southwest of the present site was built in 1850. A number of railway bridges, spanning local roads, were constructed at the same time, including one over Cambridge Road (HSMR 5609) approximately 700m west of the study area, and one over Woolgrove Road (HSMR 5617) approximately 750m northwest of the study area.

2.29 The coming of the railway meant that the raw materials for a number of industrial processes could be brought into the area. It also meant an increase of population in the Walsworth area, approximately 400 people were living in the village by the 1890s. In the late 19th century the works associated with lime burning, ironworking and gas production were constructed on the western edge of Walsworth Common, immediately adjacent to the railway. At least four lime kilns and several associated quarry pits, (HSMR 9217) approximately 750m south-west of the study area, were located to the south-east of the rail station. The area is now used as the station car park.

2.30 Herts Ironworks (HSMR 9215) approximately 600m southwest of the present site, was also located adjacent to the railway. The site is now partly occupied by Common Rise. The success of coal gas in providing light and heating in the 19th century meant that the old gasworks on Benge Mead (near the present day Bancroft Recreation Ground) could not cope and a new site was purchased in 1896 (HSMR 9216) approximately 600m west of the study area. This was located to the north of the ironworks on the western side of Walsworth Common, with its own rail sidings for bringing coal in from the midlands. By the end of the century, gas consumption had risen to thirty eight million cubic feet and in 1904 another gasometer had to be constructed on the site (Foster, 1987, 126-7). The gasworks moved to a new site in Cadwell Lane in 1964.

Modern

2.31 Walsworth became part of Hitchin Urban District Council in 1921. Its population doubled in the early 1930s as the result of the construction of a number of new estates, including the council estate called High Dane, the privately built Common Rise, the construction of Hampden Road, and the development along Cambridge Road (Walker & Watson, 1997). Further large estates were built in the years after the Second World War, including the Purwell Estate.

2.32 During the Second World War a number of pillboxes were constructed at significant junctions in the vicinity of the present site. These include one on Grove Road (HSMR 6910) at a point where road, rail and river ran close together, approximately 900m north-west of the study area. Two others were located on road junctions, one at the Walsworth Road/Verulam Road junction (HSMR 6912)

approximately 1.2km to the south-west, the other was at the junction between Walsworth Road and Nightingale Road (HSMR 6913) approximately 750m to the south-west.

SITE SPECIFIC

2.33 The study area is located on the Walsworth crossroads, between Cambridge Road, Willian Road and Woolgrove Road, on the north-eastern side of Willian Road (see Figure 1). It forms an L-shaped plot, located between Hampden Road, Willian Road and Cambridge Road, currently occupied by the North Hertfordshire College Centre for the Arts.

2.34 The line of the main road, the modern A505 Cambridge Road, was the main route between Hitchin, Letchworth and Baldock in the post-medieval period, and undoubtedly before that. It is likely to have been established as a trackway since at least the Roman period.

2.35 It has recently been postulated that in the Roman period the study area lay immediately adjacent to the north-eastern corner of the estate associated with the Ninesprings villa (Smith, NHDC Archives). The suggested boundaries to the estate extend northwards between the Wymondley Road and Cambridge Road, with the line of Purwell Lane and Willian Road forming the eastern boundary and the 200 foot contour, on the opposite side of the River Purwell, the western.

2.36 In the medieval period Walsworth formed a small hamlet on the northeastern side of Hitchin. It had its own open fields and meadows, but, although separate from the town, it formed part of the larger manor of Hitchin. The hamlet appears to have had three open fields until the 18th century, Great Field or White Field, Middle Field and Mill Field or Home Field (Howlett, 2000, xviii).

2.37 Although the Walsworth area is not shown on early maps of Hitchin, which concentrated on the urban area, the hamlet appears on early maps of the county. John Seller's map of 1676, shows Walsworth as a small settlement lying on both sides of the road from Baldock to Hitchin, the line of modern A505 which runs along the western side of the study area (Hodson, 1985, map 1). Eighteenth and nineteenth century maps show a farm, called Walsworth Farm on later 19th century maps, on the present site. The farm layout went through a number of changes during the 19th century.

2.38 By the late 1890s there was a planned farm established on the site. These buildings, including the farmhouse, largely survived until the early 1970s. During the 1950s the farmhouse was occupied as a private residence by Mrs I. Wallace, possibly a member of the family who ran the farm prior to WWII, but the farm buildings appear to have been used for industrial purposes.

2.38.1. Local directories indicate that they were occupied by firms called Bunn and Johnson, Townsend and Crowther, and Hitchin Rubber Works Ltd. Townsend and Crowther were apparently instrument makers and the Hitchin Rubber Works undertook tyre retreads. No information could be found regarding Bunn and Johnson.

2.38.2. By 1959 Bunn and Johnson occupied Walsworth Farmhouse and their former unit was taken by Fish Sales Ltd (Hitchin Directory, 1959-60). The single storey office block had

been constructed by this time and was occupied by Provident Mutual Life Assurance Association.

2.39 Provident Mutual Assurance had taken over the whole site by the mid 1970s, when they demolished the farm buildings and constructed a new office block on the eastern side of their existing offices. According to Walker and Watson (1997, plates 158 & 159) the only part of the farm that survived were two yew trees which grew outside the front door of the house and were incorporated into the alterations to the road layout. They still stand on the verge at the junction between Cambridge Road and Willian Road, outside the boundary of the present site. A site walkover confirmed that no part of the farm buildings had survived. North Hertfordshire College took over the existing buildings as a Centre for the Arts in the 1990s.

Cartographic

2.40 The earliest available map of the study area is dated 1767 and relates to the enclosure of the hamlet of Walsworth (HALS 58882). At that time the site, which formed a triangular plot which occupied an area between Cambridge Road and Willian Road, was owned by a Henry Cooper, who also owned the adjacent field (Figure 2a). A hedge is shown dividing the area into two, and this may mark the line of the present eastern boundary. Three buildings, comprising an L-shaped structure, possibly a farmhouse, on the western side and two long narrow buildings, possibly barns or stables, running parallel to each other on the eastern side, are shown in the south-western corner of the plot, close to the Willian Road. These structures appear to form the western, northern and southern sides to an enclosed yard. A number of trees, possibly representing an orchard, are shown to the rear of the buildings. The present northern and southern plot boundaries appear to have been established by this period.

2.41 An early 19th century map (HALS D/Eha P8) shows the study area in more detail (Figure 2b). Some slight changes are visible, although the three existing buildings apparently remained unchanged since 1767. A fourth building appears to have been erected on the eastern side, between the two long narrow ranges. An enclosed area is shown to the rear of the L-shaped building and the northern range, possibly representing a garden for the farmhouse. A further enclosed area appears to have been established on the eastern side of the farmyard. The hedge across the centre of the triangular area is not shown on this map, though it is possible that the northern side of the new small enclosure marks a part of its line.

2.42 Significant changes had occurred by the time the Tithe map was surveyed in 1844 (HALS DSA 4/53/2). The four existing buildings appear to have been demolished and replaced by new farm buildings set further back from Willian Road (Figure 3a). The farm consisted of two U-shaped yards, the northern one was flanked by the farmhouse along the northeastern side and by two long narrow ranges along the southeastern and northwestern sides. The southeastern range also formed the northwestern side of the southern yard. This was bounded on the northeastern side by another long narrow building and on the southeastern side by a wall. Two smaller buildings were located to the southwest of the yards and apparently separated from them by a wall. The small yard shown on the southwestern side of the farm on the earlier map still survived, as did the rear boundary to the former farmhouse garden.

2.42.1. The present site is identified as Plot 1991 on the Tithe map. The accompanying schedule (HALS D/P 27/1-13) states that the site was occupied by a farmhouse etc. and that the area measured 3 acres, 1 rood and 6 perches. It was owned and occupied by William Bowyer, who also owned the adjacent field, Plot 1990, which was called Home Field and is recorded as arable. He paid £1 to the vicar in lieu of tithes for Plot 1991 and £1 10s 2d for Plot 1990.

2.43 Further significant changes had occurred by the late 19th century. The OS 2nd edition map, dated 1898, shows a Victorian planned farm had replaced the mid 19th century farm (Figure 3b). The earlier buildings had apparently been demolished and the farmhouse rebuilt in the southwestern corner of the plot, on the junction between Willian Road and Cambridge Road. It was separated from the farm by a wall or fence and appeared to have a garden on the southwestern and eastern sides. The small yard, which first appeared in the early 19th century, still survived to the rear of the garden.

2.43.1. The farm consisted of a rectangular plot containing four buildings, three of which were aligned north-east to south-west, parallel with the Cambridge Road. The north-western boundary was formed by a long narrow range, divided into four bays, and open to enclosed pens on the south-eastern side. Beyond the pens was an L-shaped building, divided in two by an internal wall. To the south-east was a shorter range, built against the boundary wall, this apparently had no internal divisions and was open on the north-western side. The north-eastern boundary was formed by a north-west to south-east aligned building, divided into three sections. The middle section had a porch on the north-eastern side, with open lean-to structures on either side. The south-eastern end of this building was open on the north-eastern side. This building may have been a barn with a threshing floor.

2.43.2. The land between Cambridge Road and Willian Road remained open, but 6 cottages had been built along Willian Road, taking a small part of the southeastern corner of Home Field. These were apparently for the farm workers on Walsworth Farm (Walker & Watson, 1997, plate 154).

2.44 The OS 3rd edition map, dated 1922/23, shows that few changes had taken place on the site (Figure 4a). A small structure had been built in one of the pens on the northwestern side and an orchard had been established on the southeastern side of the farmyard. A new field boundary ran across Home Field towards Cambridge Road from the northern corner of the cottage gardens.

2.44.1. The northeastern edge of the present site extends beyond the field boundary to the north of the farm.

2.45 The OS 4th edition map, dated 1939, shows that the farm buildings had not changed (Figure 4b). Development had taken place on Home Field, with the establishment of Hampden Road to the south-east of the farm and the construction of houses along Cambridge Road. A garage and a line of terraced buildings, set back from the road, were located to the north-east of the farm. A pedestrian throughway

ran between Hampden Road and Cambridge Road on the line of the field boundary shown on the 1922 map.

2.46 By 1965 the farm appears to have become an industrial site, although the OS 1:1250 scale map shows very little change to the existing buildings (Figure 5a). The south-eastern range had been extended in length at either end, the pens on the north-eastern side of the yard had disappeared and the wall between the farmhouse and the yard was reduced a small length in the centre of the site. The northern building was labelled ‘works’ and appears to have been separated from the farmyard. An L-shaped building, possibly accommodation for a site caretaker, had been erected on a small triangular plot in the eastern corner of the site, against the northeastern boundary.

2.46.1. The most significant changes occurred in the southeastern side of the present site, where previously open farmland was now occupied by a large single-storey office block and a number of smaller associated buildings.

2.47 Recent Ordnance Survey mapping shows that the road layout at the junction has been altered since 1965, probably as part of the re-development of the site in the 1970s (Figure 5b). The western end of Willian Road, where the Victorian farmhouse stood, has been widened. The yew trees by the front door of the house now stand on the grass verge. A triangular traffic island has also been constructed on the opposite side of the crossroads, at the eastern end of Woolgrove Road.

2.47.1. The 1950s block, on the western side of the site, has been extended to the north, south and east, and a covered way runs from this block to the main block. The main building is located in the north-western quadrant of the present site, over the site of part of the former farmyard. The south-western end of the farm buildings lie in an open tarmac area, currently used for car parking and planting.

2.47.2. The southwestern boundary has changed, and now cuts across the northeastern corner of the Victorian farmhouse, most of which lies under the grass verge between the present boundary and Willian Road.

Aerial Photographs

2.48 In favourable circumstances, aerial photographs can reveal potential underlying archaeological features, in the form of cropmarks, soilmarks or as groundworks. They also show the changes to the site layout over that period. A number of aerial photographs, taken between the 1940s and 1980s, were consulted for the present study.

2.49 The earliest photographs date to 1943 and show that development had already begun in the vicinity of the site, with houses along Cambridge Road and the line of Hampden Road. The study area was still occupied by Walsworth Farm. Traces of the boundary around the small paddock on the southeastern side of the farmyard are visible, as is a dark line, possibly the line of a footpath running from the rear of the southern range towards Hampden Road (US/7PH/CP/LOC75, 1943). The remains of a hedge line, the last vestiges of the original boundary between Home Field and the farm, can also be

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seen on a photograph dated 1945 (RAF/106G/UK/961). A number of trees and shrubs are visible to the south of this line.

2.50 The field to the east of the farm was developed during the 1950s. Photographs taken in 1950 show it as open land (RAF/541/483), but photographs taken in 1957 show a new building on the site (RAF/58/2164). This was located towards the eastern side and fronted Hampden Road. A dark rectangular area, bordered by walls, is visible at the rear of the plot behind the properties on Cambridge Road. This may represent a garden area. By the late 1960s this building had been extended to cover much of the eastern side of the plot.

2.51 The Victorian farm buildings were still in existence on the study area until the mid 1970s. Photographs taken in 1973 and 1974 show them still standing (OS/73060 & OS/74172). By 1989 they had disappeared and been replaced by the Provident Mutual offices (OS/89064 & OS/ 89065). The site of the farmhouse had been landscaped as an open area facing the Willian Road and Cambridge Road junction. The former office block appears to have been incorporated into the new buildings.

2.52 Archaeological features were identified on aerial photographs within 1km of the study area. These included cropmarks of probable prehistoric features, such as ring ditches and enclosures, as well as the remains of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation.

2.53 No evidence for underlying archaeological features could be identified in the immediate vicinity of the present site on any of the photographs consulted. This may either reflect a genuine lack of such features, or that the ground conditions are not favourable for showing them.

Site Walkover

2.54 A site visit revealed that the main college block, dating to the mid 1970s, has largely been built on stilts over a ground level car park. This would indicate that it was constructed on pad foundations, rather than strip footings. Examination of the single storey block on the eastern side of the site, erected in the 1950s, would also suggest that this did not have deep foundations. A strip of land to the east of this, between Hampden Road and the 1950s offices, appears undisturbed, apart from a few mature trees.

2.55 The evidence would suggest that the construction of these buildings may have disturbed, but not destroyed, underlying archaeological remains.

3. Assessment of Risk

Prehistoric

3.1 The present site lies close to the River Purwell in an area that apparently attracted some prehistoric activity. To the east the ground rises from the valley and this terrain is likely to have been attractive to later prehistoric settlers. Evidence for activity of this period in the vicinity includes a number of Neolithic flints found within 1km to the south-east (HSMR 1194), a Bronze Age ring ditch (HSMR 2558) approximately 800m to the south-east and pottery and burials of unknown prehistoric date (HSMR 6194) approximately 500m to the south-east. No evidence of features that could be assigned to this date was identified on the aerial photographs.

3.2 On this basis, the risk of encountering features and finds of prehistoric date in the course of development on the present site may be considered to be *Low*.

3.3 The regional research framework has identified the development of farming, and the integration of settlements and their associated fields during the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods as an important research topic (Brown & Murphy, 2000, 10 – 12). Few sites of this type and period are known from the town. Therefore, the potential significance of any remains of prehistoric date on the present site, should be considered to be *High*.

Iron Age

3.4 Some evidence for Iron Age activity has been recovered from the immediate vicinity of the study area. A number of finds, including high status pottery (HSMR 108) a burial accompanied by pottery vessels (HSMR 6085) and coins of Cunobelin (HSMR 130 and HSMR 466) have been found in the Walsworth and Purwell area. No features dating to this period have yet been recorded from the area.

3.5 On this basis, the risk of encountering features of Iron Age date on the present site may be considered to be *Low*. However, the risk of encountering finds of Iron Age date on the present site may be considered *Low to Moderate*.

3.6 A number of research topics have been highlighted for the Iron Age in the regional research framework (Bryant, 2000, 16-17). These include the development of farming and settlement chronology. There is a dearth of Iron Age sites in the town, although archaeological evidence from other parts of the district shows that this area was well settled by this period. Therefore, the potential significance of any remains of this period on the present site should be considered to be *High*.

Romano-British

3.7 The accumulated evidence suggests that Roman occupation in Hitchin consisted of a developed rural landscape, comprising a series of villas and farmsteads lying close to rivers and springs (G.Burleigh, pers. comm.).

3.8 A number of chance finds and sites have been identified in the vicinity of the study area. Evidence for Roman settlement has been recovered from Hitchin to the south-west and from Wymondley to the south-east, showing that this region was well settled during this period. An area of intensive Roman settlement has been recorded approximately 1km to the southeast, including a substantial villa at Ninesprings (HSMR 467) and possible dependent settlement (HSMR 468). This may have provided accommodation for the farm workers and servants on the villa. Such an establishment is likely to have had a large estate, and it has been suggested that the area of this estate extended to the modern Cambridge Road, with its eastern boundary following Purwell Lane and Willian Road.

3.9 Finds of Roman coins have also been made in the vicinity of the present site. During the construction of the Poets Estate, approximately 500m to the south-west, in the 1970s at least 17 coins were found by a metal detectorist (HSMR 460). A group of 8 coins, ranging in date from the late 3rd century to the late 4th century AD, were also found in the same area (HSMR 470). A single 2nd century coin (HSMR 1416) was found on the opposite side of Cambridge Road, approximately 100m to the southwest.

3.10 On this basis, the risk of encountering features and finds of Roman date on the present site may be considered to be *Low* to *Moderate*.

3.11 Hitchin is thought to have lain in a rural, rather than an urban, landscape in the Roman period. A number of relevant topics, including the investigation of small rural settlements such as farmsteads and relationship between town and country in the landscape, have been identified in the regional research framework (Going & Plouviez, 2000, 21 – 22). Despite the recent extensive work in the town centre, relatively little evidence of Roman occupation has been so far recorded in Hitchin. As the present site lies close to the villa site at Ninesprings, and to the possible riverside settlement in the area of Hitchin town centre, the potential significance of any remains of this period on the present site should be considered to be *High*.

Anglo-Saxon

3.12 The documentary and archaeological evidence suggests that Hitchin was important during the Saxon period. It was a Mercian royal estate from at least the 8th century, which appears to have continued as a royal possession into the 10th century. Evidence from archaeological fieldwork along Queen Street, approximately 1.8km to the southwest, indicates that a substantial high status settlement was established on the eastern bank of the River Hiz, possibly representing part of the royal manor (Stirk, 2002).

3.13 Although chance finds of high status artefacts have been recovered from the town, none have been recorded from the Walsworth area. However, place name evidence suggests that there was a settlement in the vicinity during the Saxon period. This may have been located near to the ford on Cambridge Road, approximately 300m to the southwest, and to the Walsworth crossroads, immediately adjacent to the site. However, no trace of such a settlement has been recorded during the later development of the area.

3.14 On this basis, the risk of encountering features or finds of Anglo-Saxon date on the present site may be considered to be *Low*.

3.15 Chance finds of high status artefacts and recent archaeological excavations in the town centre, have demonstrated that Hitchin was clearly an important settlement by at least the 8th century AD. A number of relevant research topics have been highlighted in the regional research framework, including evidence for the transition between the Roman and Saxon periods, settlement patterns and the relationship between rural and urban settlements (Wade, 2000, 23-26; Ayers, 2000, 29-31). As the present site is thought possibly to lie close to a small rural settlement, probably associated with an important urban settlement, the potential significance of any remains of this period on the site should be considered to be *High*.

Medieval

3.16 The hamlet of Walsworth, although physically separate from the town, formed part of the manor of Hitchin. The River Purwell marked the boundary between the two settlements. During the medieval period Walsworth had its own commons and open fields, which bordered Purwell Field in Hitchin. Two mills are known to have been sited in the hamlet in the medieval period, Purwell mill approximately 1km to the southeast and Grove mill approximately 1km to the northwest.

3.17 Although few finds or features of this period have been recorded from the vicinity of the study area, the place name evidence suggests that settlement had been established in the area since the Saxon period. The Walsworth crossroads undoubtedly existed by this time and would have been a prime site for occupation.

3.18 On this basis the risk of encountering features and finds of medieval date on the present site may be considered to be *Low to Moderate*.

3.19 The relationship between Walsworth and the town of Hitchin suggests that the hamlet was engaged in agricultural activity, probably growing produce for the town. A number of relevant research topics have been highlighted by the regional research framework, including rural settlement diversity; medieval field systems; the evolution of the medieval house and farmstead and the relationship towns and their hinterlands (Wade, 2000, 23-26). As the present site was located in a rural hinterland to an urban area the potential significance of any remains of this period on the site should be considered to be *High*.

Post-medieval

3.20 Cartographic evidence has shown that the present site was occupied by a farmhouse and associated farm buildings from at least the mid 18th century and was subject to at least three phases of redevelopment since then. The earliest map consulted, dated 1767, showed a small farm with the farmhouse close to the Walsworth crossroads (Figure 2). The Tithe map of 1844 showed a completely different layout, with the farmhouse close to the rear of the plot (Figure 4). The Schedule attached to the Tithe Award describes the plot as a farmhouse and associated structures, and gives its measurement as 3 acres 1 rood and 6 perches. The listed owner occupied this property and the adjacent field. This

layout appears to have lasted for a very short time as by 1898 the site was occupied by a Victorian planned farm (Figure 5). Although the site is now occupied by 20th century buildings, these do not appear to be cellared neither do they appear to have significantly deep foundations.

3.21 On this basis, the risk of encountering finds and features, including farmyard surfaces, of post-medieval date may be considered to be *High*.

3.22 Cartographic evidence has demonstrated that the present site underwent significant changes in layout during the 19th century. The development of the farmstead between 1715 and 1914, including buildings, layout and design, has been highlighted as a research topic in the regional research framework (Gilman et al, 2000, 39). Therefore the potential significance of any remains of this period on the site is considered to be *High*.

Modern

3.23 Cartographic and aerial photographic evidence shows that although the farm buildings survived until the 1970s. Following WWII the site was used for industrial purposes, rather than farming. Office blocks were constructed on the field adjacent to the farmyard in the 1950s. It is likely that this development disturbed any underlying archaeological remains. The site was bought by an insurance company in the 1970s, who demolished the farm buildings on the Cambridge Road side of the plot and incorporated the office block on the Hampden Road side with the construction of their new offices. The existing buildings were taken over in the 1990s by North Hertfordshire College Centre for the Arts.

3.24 On this basis, the risk of encountering finds and features of modern date may be considered to be *High*.

3.25 During the later 20th century the present site was used as offices. A number of changes were made to the property as a result of this use, including the construction of large office blocks structures, with probable associated service trenches, and the landscaping of the site. No relevant research topics have been highlighted in the regional research framework and therefore the significance of any potential remains of this period on the site is considered to be *Low*.

CONCLUSION

3.26 On the basis of the evidence consulted, there would appear to be a low to moderate risk that remains of Iron Age, Roman, and Medieval date might be encountered on the present site, subject to disturbance by activity in the post-medieval and modern periods.

3.27 The map and aerial photographic evidence shows that the site has undergone significant changes since the early 19th century. The various phases of farm buildings which occupied the site prior to the construction of the present buildings, are also considered to be of potential interest.

3.28 The existing buildings are not cellared and do not appear to have significantly large or deep foundations, suggesting a reasonable potential for the preservation of archaeological remains across the

whole site. However, the study area lies at the same level as the river meadows on the opposite side of Willian Road, and local information suggests that the area may be subject to a high water table.

3.29 With the exception of the Victorian farm buildings, the overall probability is low that archaeological remains, of potential significance when considered in the context of the established research agenda for the region, are preserved on the site, and would be damaged, destroyed or otherwise affected by its development. The presence and nature of such remains can only be characterised accurately by intrusive investigation. It is likely that such an investigation would form an element in the requirements of the planning authority relating to the proposed development of the site, either before the determination of a planning application, or as a condition on consent being granted.

4. Sources Consulted

ARCHIVES

Hertfordshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record (HSMR)

North Hertfordshire District Council Archaeological Archives

Smith, D.W., May 2003, Map showing extent of Purwell Field and Roman estate, based on OS data

TL 1830/1930 150 Aerial photograph dated June 1973

W.P. Westell's handwritten notes for a talk on the 1921 excavations at Ninesprings Roman villa

Curteis, M., 1990, *The Coinage of Ninesprings Roman Villa*, unpublished report

Hitchin Museum

Map of Hitchin, 1818

Tithe Map, 1844, Surveyed by J. Bailey Denton

OS Board of Health Plan of the Township of Hitchin, 1851, scale 10 feet to 1 mile

OS Board of Health Plan of the Township of Hitchin, 1886, scale 10 feet to 1 mile

OS 1930 Hitchin Urban District Council Area, 6" scale

OS 1965, Sheet TL 1930 SE, 1965, 1:1250 scale

OS 1965, Sheet TL 2030 SW, 1965, 1:1250 scale

6687/18 October 1964 Aerial photograph

6687/19 October 1964 Aerial photograph

Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS)

OS 1898, Hertfordshire Sheet VII.14, 2nd Edition, 1898, 25" scale

OS 1923, Hertfordshire Sheet VII.14, 3rd Edition, 25" scale

OS 1966, Sheet TL 1828/ 1928, 1966, 1:2500 scale

58882 1767 Plan of the Estates of the Reverend Thomas Whitehurst and others in the hamlet of Walsworth in the parish of Hitchin

58869 c.1800 Plan of an estate in the Parish of Hitchin belonging to William Wilshere Esq.

D/EWs P15 1806 Fields in the Parish of Hitchin occupied by William Wilshere

D/Ews P16 1818 Land in Hitchin occupied by William Wilshere

D/Eha P8 c.1811-18 Map of Hitchin and Surrounding Areas

D/Ery P10 c.1850 Plan of Walsworth (same as the Tithe Map)

D/Z 72 P1 late 18th century Tracing of untitled plan, Hitchin area

D/Epm P1 1817 Plans and Terrar of an Estate in Hitchin, the Property of the Reverend Wollaston Pym. Surveyed by Zachariah George Neale

DSA 4/53/2 1844 Hitchin Tithe Map, surveyed by J. Bailey Denton

D/P 27/1-13 1860 Copy of the Tithe Award

English Heritage, National Monuments Record Air Photo Library (NMR)

Run	Frame	Date
US / 7PH / EP / LOC 75	7018	11.11.1943
US / 7PH / EP / LOC 75	7019	11.11.1943
RAF / 106G / UK / 961	3027	30.10.1945
RAF / 106G / UK / 961	3028	30.10.1945
RAF / 106G / UK / 961	3029	30.10.1945
RAF / 106G / UK / 961	4027	30.10.1945
RAF / 106G / UK / 961	4028	30.10.1945
RAF / 106G / UK / 961	4029	30.10.1945
RAF / 106G / UK / T / 15	6025	30.10.1945
RAF / 106G / UK / T / 15	6026	30.10.1945
RAF / 106G / UK / T / 15	6027	30.10.1945
RAF / 106G / UK / 1013	7007	16.11.1945
RAF / 106G / UK / 1013	7008	16.11.1945
RAF / 106G / UK / 1650	5177	10.07.1946
RAF / CPE / UK / 1897	3226	12.12.1946
RAF / 541 / 483	3021	07.04.1950
RAF / 541 / 483	3022	07.04.1950
RAF / 541 / 483	3023	07.04.1950
RAF / 541 / 483	4005	07.04.1950
RAF / 541 / 483	4006	07.04.1950
RAF / 58 / 1340	49	14.01.1954
RAF / 58 / 1340	50	14.01.1954
RAF / 58 / 1340	51	14.01.1954
RAF / 82 / 1006	189	31.08. 1954
RAF / 82 / 1006	190	31.08. 1954
RAF / 58 / 2164	49	08.05.1957
RAF / 58 / 2164	50	08.05.1957
RAF / 58 / 2164	51	08.05.1957
RAF / 58 / 4646	151	28.08.1961
MAL / 69031	145	05.04.1969
OS / 69362	4	22.07.1969
OS / 73060	337	30.04.1973
OS / 73060	338	30.04.1973
OS / 74172	94	21.07.1974
OS / 89065	16	30.03.1989
OS / 89065	17	30.03.1989
OS / 89064	135	30.03.1989
OS / 89064	136	30.03.1989
OS/89065	16	30.03.1989

INDIVIDUALS

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5. Illustrations

Figure 1	Site location
Figure 2a	Tracing of map of 1767
Figure 2b	Tracing of map of 1811-18
Figure 3a	Tracing of Tithe Map, 1844
Figure 3b	2 nd edition OS, 25” scale, 1898
Figure 4a	3 rd edition OS, 25” scale, 1922/3
Figure 4b	4 th edition OS, 25” scale, 1939
Figure 5a	OS, 1:2500 scale, 1965
Figure 5b	OS 1:1250 scale, 2004

Appendix 1

Extract from Hertfordshire Sites and Monuments Record

HSMR	NGR	Period	Remarks
108	TL 204 297	Late Iron Age	Butt beaker & 2 amphorae, found on Purwell housing estate (see also 6085).
130	TL 19 30	Late Iron Age	Bronze coin of Cunobelin (c.AD10 – 40), found at Walsworth in 1879. Evans type XII:9
131	TL 18 29	Late Iron Age	LPRIA coins from Hitchin, including a bronze stater of Tasciovanus & an uninscribed gold stater.
191	TL 20 30	Earlier Iron Age	Bone spindle whorls from Letchworth
279	TL 19 29	Palaeolithic	Palaeolithic flint implements, listed as: 2 Acheulian hand axes, a twisted ovate, 2 hand axes, 10 scrapers, 5 flint axes, 5 flint implement. Probably forms part of series of implements found at Hitchin c1880-1900.?Folly Pit
280	TL 193 288	Palaeolithic	Palaeolithic flint implements from Highbury Pit, listed as: 4 Acheulian hand axes, 2 hand axes, 29 flint scrapers & 6 flint implements
283	TL 189 288	Palaeolithic	10 Palaeolithic flint axes found at Highbury, Hitchin and located at Verulamium museum.
284	TL 19 29	Palaeolithic	Palaeolithic implements comprising: 8 axes, implement, 7 trimmed flakes, 2 arrowheads, 80 flint implements. Found by W. Ransom. Probably forms part of series of implements found at Hitchin c1880-1900.
288	TL 195 288	Mesolithic	Barbed arrowhead & 5 microliths from field where 'Riddy Shott' now stands.
294	TL 1914 2903	Neolithic	A Neolithic black flint axe, roughly shaped, was found in the garden of 'Crofton', The Avenue, Hitchin. Hitchin Museum
298	TL 19 29	Neolithic	Neolithic flint axe found at Highbury Avenue.
303	TL 192 292	Bronze Age	A Bronze Age axe was found when digging the foundations for a house about 300 yards from W Ransom's home, Fairfield, in 1896.
307	TL 194 294	Bronze Age	Bronze Age axe and 4 flints from Benslow
308	TL 192 289	Bronze Age	Flint borer, Riddyfield, Hitchin
309	TL 20 29	Prehistoric	Flint scraper from Purwell Mill, either Neolithic or Bronze Age
310	TL 193 293	Neolithic Bronze Age	The OS record states that a Neolithic flint fabricator was found at Fairfield in 1885. The Morris Gazetteer dates the flint to the Bronze Age.
344	TL 20 30	Palaeolithic	Sixty six flint implements found at Khryn & Lahy Works in Letchworth
460	TL 196 298	Roman	About 17 coins found by metal detector, c.1976-7, on spoil heaps of building site, St Michael's Road, near Hitchin College. Range from <i>Gallienus</i> (AD 253-68) to <i>Helena</i> (AD 337-41). The group includes a coin of <i>Claudius II</i> (AD 268-70), several barbarous radiates & several of the House of Constantine.
466	TL 2072 2920	Late Iron Age	Bronze coin of Cunobelin, found 1891 on site of Ninesprings villa
467	TL 2073 2916	Roman	Site of Roman villa, partly excavated 1884 when 7 rooms & 3 hypocausts were uncovered. Further excavated by Westell in 1921-2. Coins ranging AD 193 – 392 were recovered from the site.
468	TL 208 294	Roman	Settlement site c.200m N of Ninesprings villa. Westell noted pottery in this area in 1921. Fieldwalking in Nov. 1978 revealed extensive spread of occupation material, including pottery sherds & building material
470	TL 198 295	Roman	Coin hoard found on top of St Michael's Mount, 1976-7 by metal detector. Approx. 8 coins ranging from <i>Victorius</i> (AD 269-71) to <i>Gratian</i> (AD 367-82)

Centre for the Arts, Willian Road, Hitchin *Desk-based Archaeological Assessment*

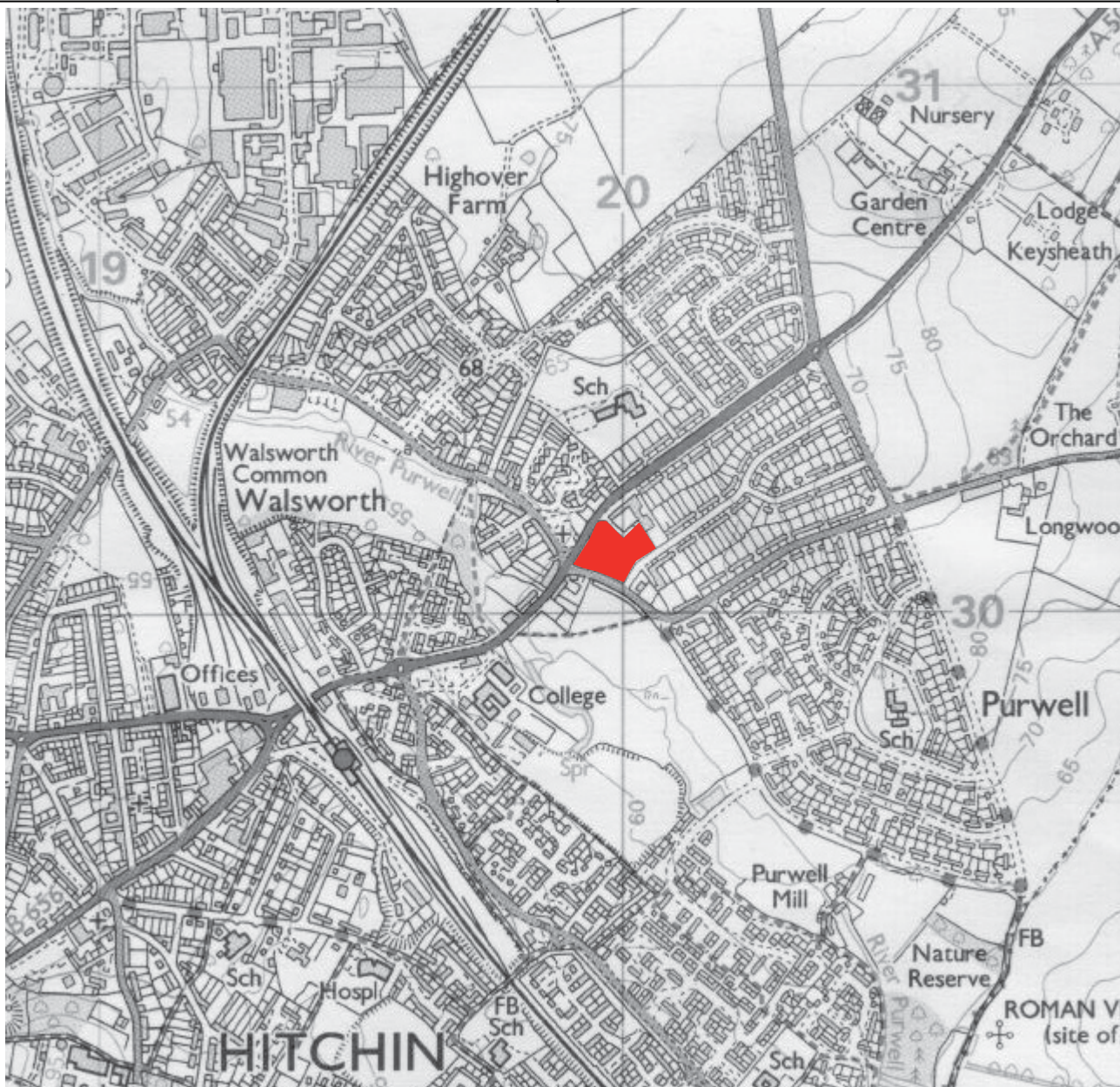
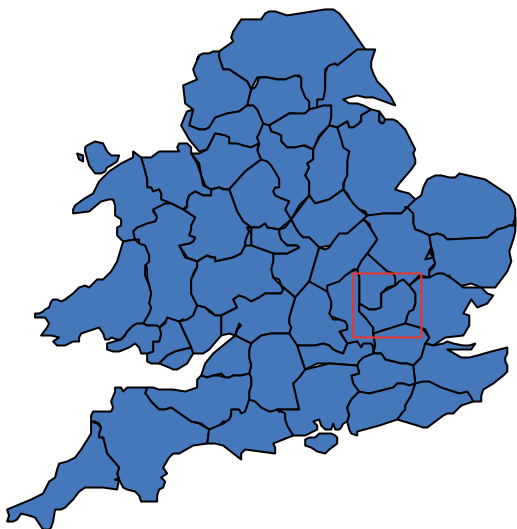
HSMR	NGR	Period	Remarks
539	TL 20 30	Neolithic	Numerous flint implements from Letchworth, including flint axe & arrowheads
1182	TL 19 29	Palaeolithic	Acheulian hand axes: Middle or Upper Acheulian with Clactonian influence. Probably forms part of series of implements found at Hitchin c1880-1900.
1183	TL 189 284	Palaeolithic	Implements of the early upper Acheulian period were discovered between 1880 and 1900 in Ransoms brickfield and Jeeves brickyard at Folly Path, Highbury. Finds include numerous Hoxne type hand axes, a few cordate and ovate hand axes, several cleavers and a number of flake tools of High Lodge type. (Probably includes 0279, 0284, 1182).
1184	TL 1729 2905	Roman	Settlement evidence and associated inhumation cemetery, Foxholes, Pirton Road.
1186	TL 194 294	Palaeolithic	Flint implements from Benslow, Hitchin
1194	TL 20 29	Neolithic?	Six to eight flint scrapers found at Purwell
1200	TL 18 29	Roman	Roman glass vessels at Bancroft, Hitchin.
1201	TL 186 287	Roman	A Roman cinerary urn with cremation was found at Taylor's Hill. A similar urn was discovered on adjoining land.
1284	TL 20 30	Late Iron Age	Late Iron Age coin, possibly of Tasciovanus, found in Letchworth, September 1915.
1301	TL 20 30	Unknown	Inhumation discovered in NE corner of factory owned by Shelvoke & Drewery Ltd during WWII. Skeleton removed by Cambridge University Archaeology Dept.
1302	TL 20 30	Palaeolithic	Acheulian ovate handaxe, found 1906, in Letchworth
1416	TL 1983 3007	Roman	A coin, possibly Diva Faustina, was found in Walsworth in 1958 (probably Faustina Senior, died AD 141)
1418	TL 1903 2923	Roman	Roman pottery or evidence of occupation, Highbury Road
1420	TL 1845 2940	Roman	Pottery and other evidence of occupation, SE of Grammar School
1428	TL 1918 3060	LPRIA/RB	Roman inhumation, found with 3 rd century pottery, in trench in Cadwell Lane. Sherds of LPRIA & early Roman pottery also found.
1459	TL 20 30	Roman	Roman pottery, 3 rd century in date, found in Letchworth. Described in SMR as on Graveley Road.
1464	TL 20 30	Roman	Lead spindle whorl
1610	TL 194 295	Early Medieval	Benslow is Benchelow Pece in 1556 (temp Ed VI Chantry, 1556 AOMB). This has been interpreted as the site of an Anglo-Saxon burial mound. Nothing visible in the area, which is now a housing estate.
1638	TL 2075 2922	Unknown	Cropmarks of 3 parallel, slightly curving, linear ditches aligned NE-SW. In immediate vicinity of ring ditch [6354], RB villa [467] & ditches [6122]
1641	TL 2085 2950	Unknown	Cropmarks of 3 rectilinear ditches, 2 of which have angled bends & may be part of same rectangular enclosure, which would be c.100m x 90m. To immediate S is RB settlement [468], villa [467], cropmarks [6122] & ring ditch [6354]
1642	TL 208 297	Unknown	Cropmarks of double, roughly parallel, linear ditch, aligned NE-SW. Length visible 270m. Interpreted as possible prehistoric trackway. Ring ditch [2558] in immediate vicinity
2558	TL 2079 2985	Prehistoric	Cropmark of small circular ditched enclosure, approx. 25m in diameter. Interpreted as ring ditch to plough-raised barrow. Possible trackway [1642] immediately to S.
4389	TL 1855 2900	Medieval	Site of the Gilbertine priory of The Biggin, founded in 1361-2 by Sir Edward de Kendale and dissolved in 1538.
4397	TL 205 303	Unknown	Cropmark of small sub-rectangular enclosure. Single ditch, no apparent entrance. Dimensions 30m x 20m. No internal features.

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HSMR	NGR	Period	Remarks
4605	TL 1855 2964	Roman	The length of the Viatores road 210 through Hitchin from TL 1868 2769 to TL 1833 3133, just south of the Icknield Way (for the whole road see 4600). Not been confirmed by excavation.
4857	TL 20 30	Late Iron Age	Bronze coin of Cunobelin, found between Hitchin & Baldock
4862	TL 1903 2923	Roman	Pottery or evidence of occupation
4874	TL 1928 2905	Prehistoric	Flint implements, comprising an arrowhead and 4 microliths, found 'The Chilterns', Chiltern Road.
4886	TL 20 30	Saxon	A late 8 th century silver penny from Letchworth
4893	TL 20 30	Late Iron Age	Gold stater of Cunobelin found near Baldock
5529	TL 195 297	Post-medieval	Railway station, mid 19 th century date
5384	TL 182 288	Post Medieval	Wratten Road maltings.
5609	TL 194 298	Post-medieval	Railway bridge over Cambridge Rd. Built 1850, reconstructed 1900, widened 1927 & 1941.
5610	TL 1905 3030	Post-medieval	Railway bridge over Grove Road. Built 1850, reconstructed 1900, widened 1927 & 1941
5617	TL 1930 3046	Post-medieval	Railway bridge over Walsworth Road
5768	TL 191 304	Med/ post-med	Grove Mill. Site of medieval water mill called <i>Shotting</i> or <i>Shackling</i> mill. Present building early 19 th C in date, built as a silk mill owned by J & J Ransom from 1813 to ?1838. Later a corn mill, then a chamois leather dressers.
5793	TL 204 295	Med/ post-med	Site of medieval water mill. Present building 18 th /early 19 th C. Group of mill, mill house & cottage listed Grade II.
6085	TL 20 30	Late Iron Age	Late pre-Roman Iron Age burial, with butt beaker and 2 amphorae, found on Purwell housing estate
6194	TL 205 298	Prehistoric	Pottery & cremated human bone found at 'Fairfield'
6354	TL 208 293	Prehistoric	Cropmark of ring ditch, diameter c.35m. In immediate vicinity of Roman villa [647] and ditches [1638] and [6122]
6452	TL 189 295	Early Bronze Age	Flint Arrowhead from Sacred Heart Convent School (now Convent Close)
6454	TL 19 29	Mesolithic	Mesolithic flint flake and graver found at Benslow, Hitchin (Benslow lodge TL 194 294).
6455	TL 186 291	Earlier Iron Age	Excavation in advance of redevelopment by G Burleigh for N Herts museum in Portmill Lane revealed slight evidence for Iron Age occupation. The excavation also produced evidence of Roman (see 6474) and Post Medieval (see 6456) occupation.
6456	TL 186 291	Post Medieval	Excavation in advance of redevelopment by G Burleigh for N Herts museum revealed a series of cobbled yards and timber framed buildings fronting medieval Portmill Lane. Most of the yard surfaces and structural remains dated to the 17 th and 18 th centuries. The excavation also produced Roman (see 6474) and Iron Age material (6455).
6474	TL 186 291	Roman	Excavation in advance of redevelopment by G Burleigh for N Herts Museum recovered Roman pottery and coins from residual contexts. The excavations also revealed slight evidence for Iron Age occupation (see 6455) and Post Medieval structural remains (see 6456).
6790	TL 1925 3040	Post-medieval	Small brick single arch bridge carrying railway embankment over R. Purwell
6910	TL 1908 3034	Modern	Pillbox to E of road/rail/river junction in Grove Road
6912	TL 1900 2947	Modern	Site of pillbox on W corner of Walsworth Rd/Verulam Rd junction
6913	TL 1933 2979	Modern	Site of pillbox, island in centre of A505/Nightingale Rd/Walsworth Rd junction
9215	TL 1941 2990	Post-medieval	Site of Herts Ironworks just N of Hitchin station. Late 19 th C
9216	TL 1933 3009	Post-medieval	Site of gas works, built 1896, on Walsworth Rd. Adjacent to ironworks [9215]

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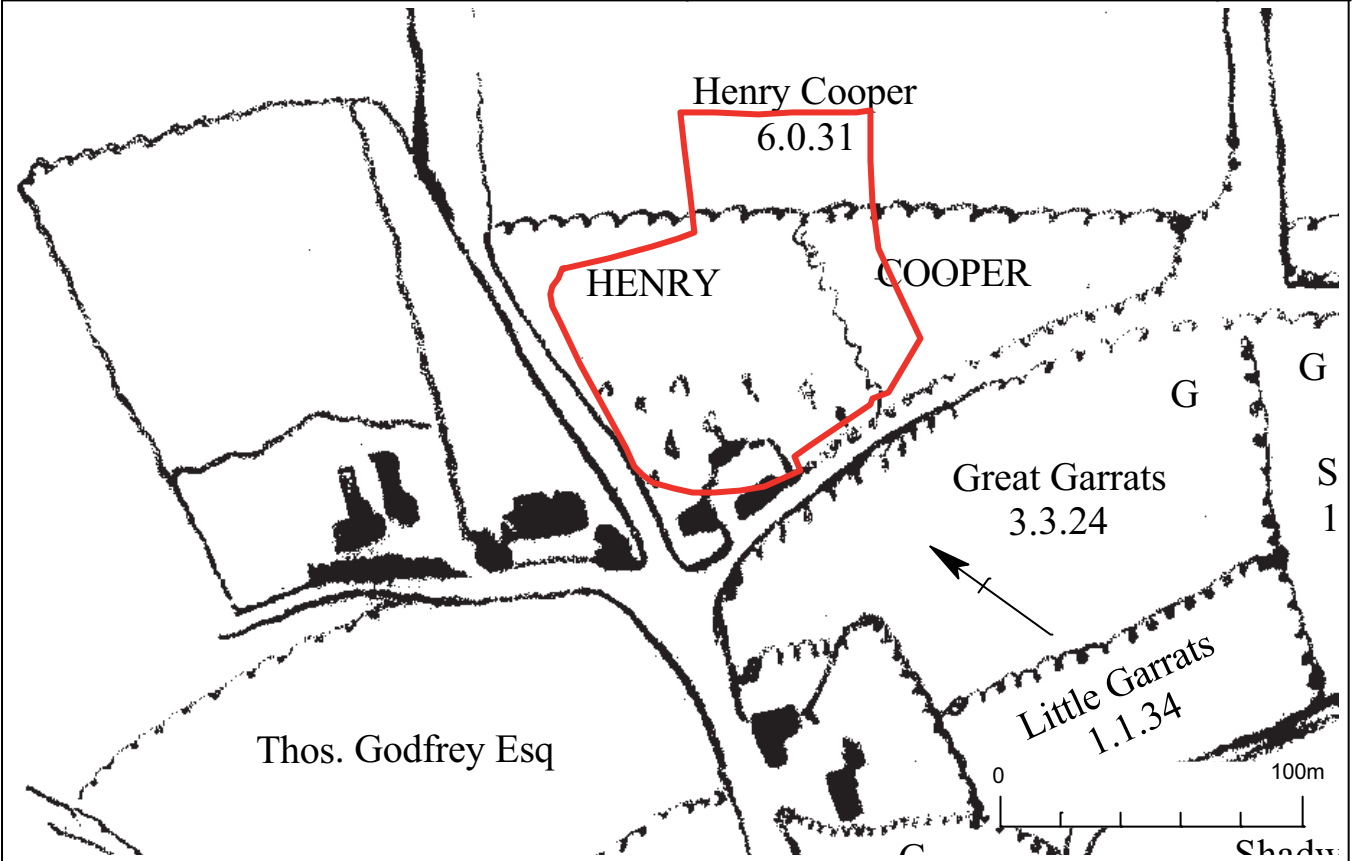
HSMR	NGR	Period	Remarks
9217	TL 1960 2945	Post-medieval	Site of chalk pits and lime kilns next to railway
11416	TL 1904 3055	Medieval	1 st edition OS map, 1884, shows site of possible small moat to N of Grove mill
11529	TL 1918 3062	Prehistoric	Worked flints from garden of 35 Cadwell Lane, including 2 scrapers & several flakes.



Site Location

Scale 1:500

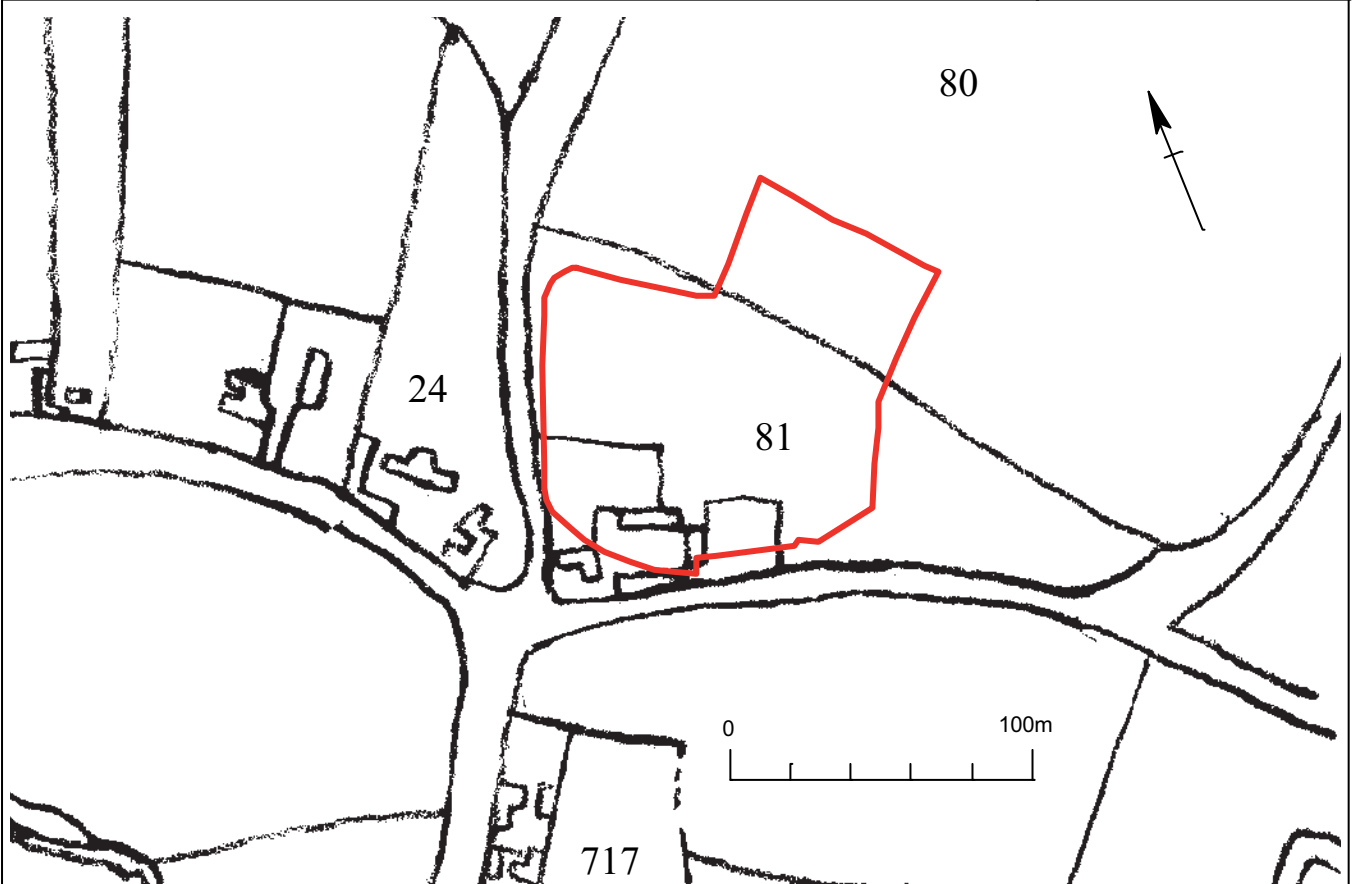
Figure 1



Tracing from Map of 1767

Scale 1:2500

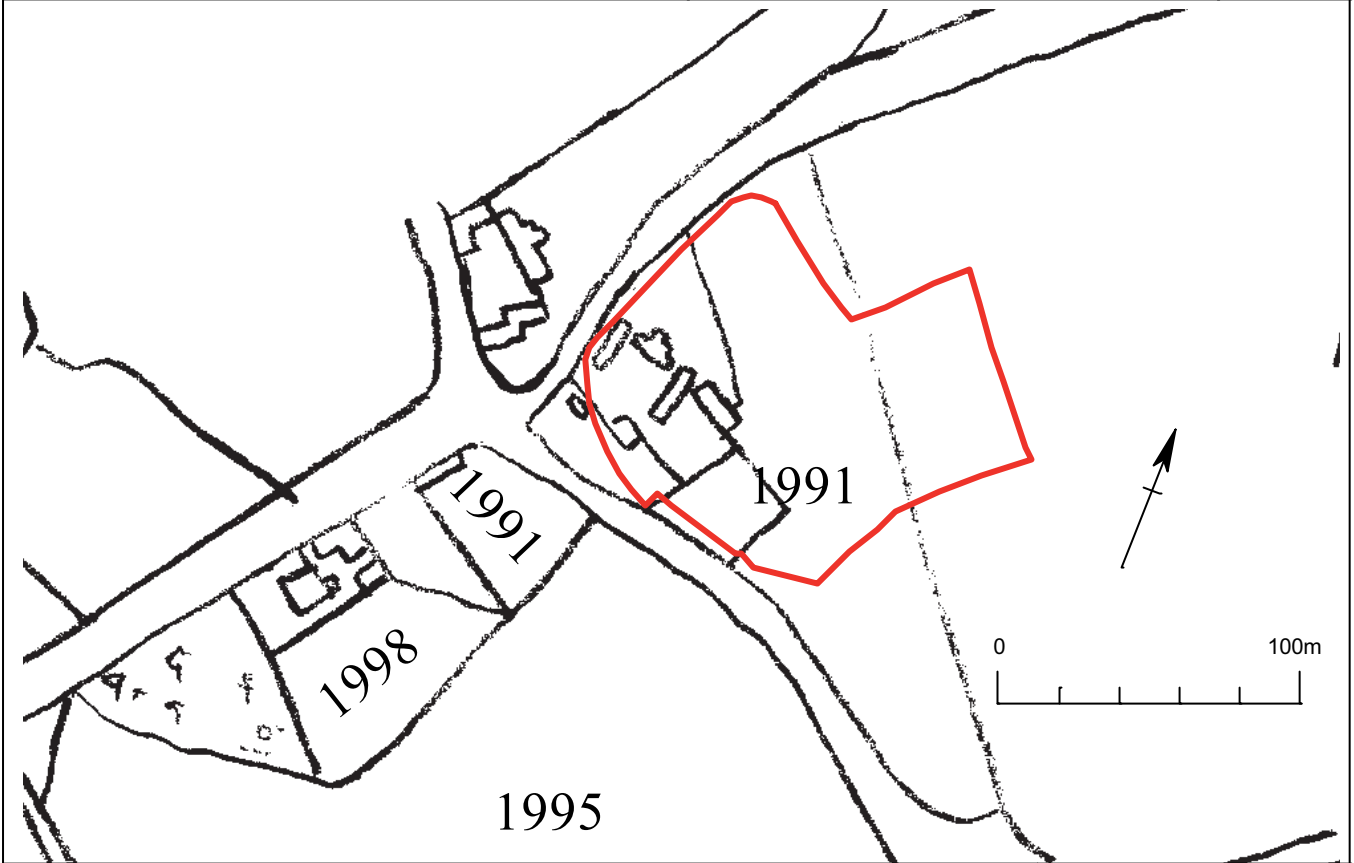
Figure 2a



Tracing from map dated between 1811 and 1818

Scale 1:2500

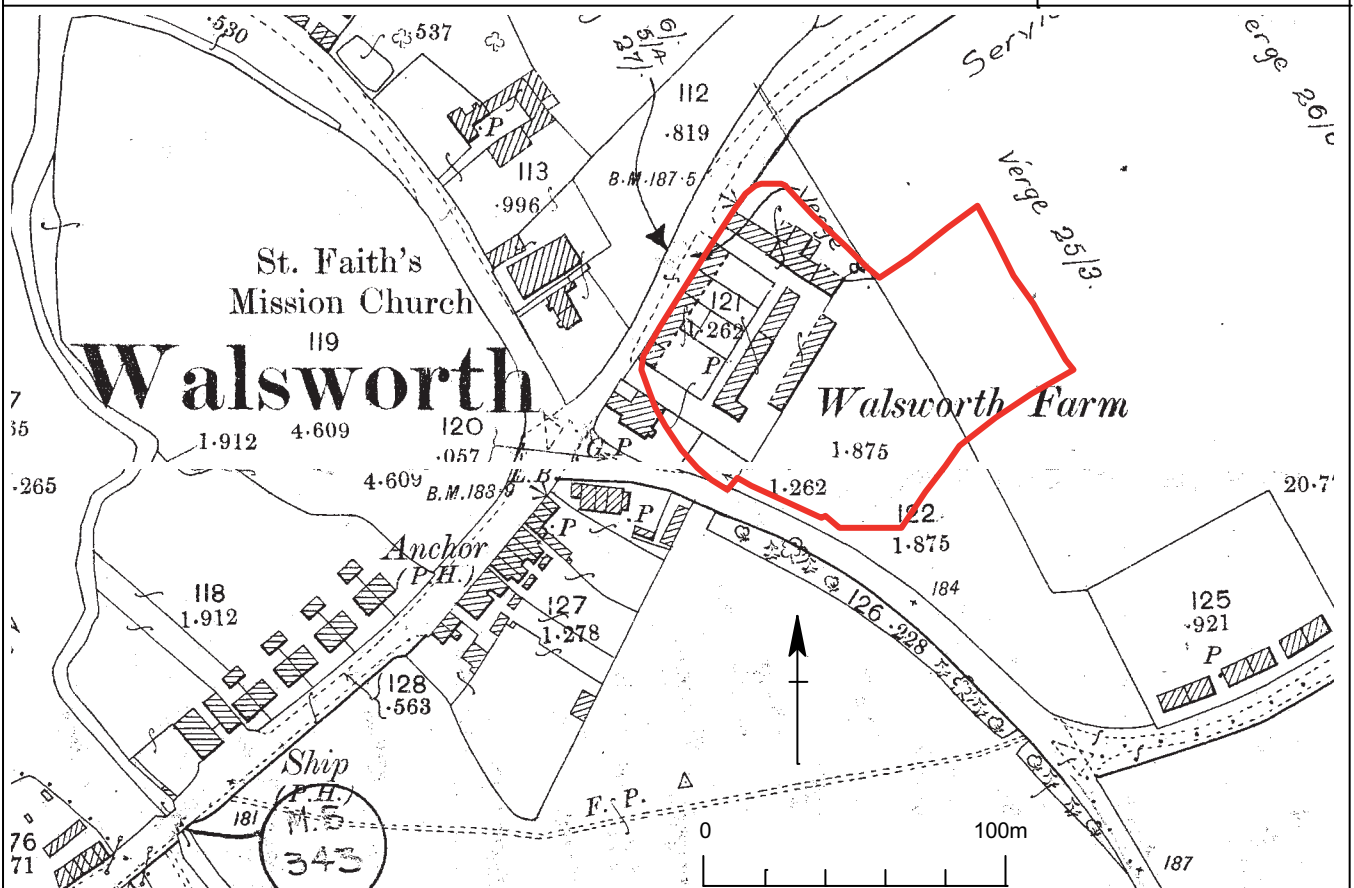
Figure 2b



Tracing from the Tithe Map (1844)

Scale 1:2500

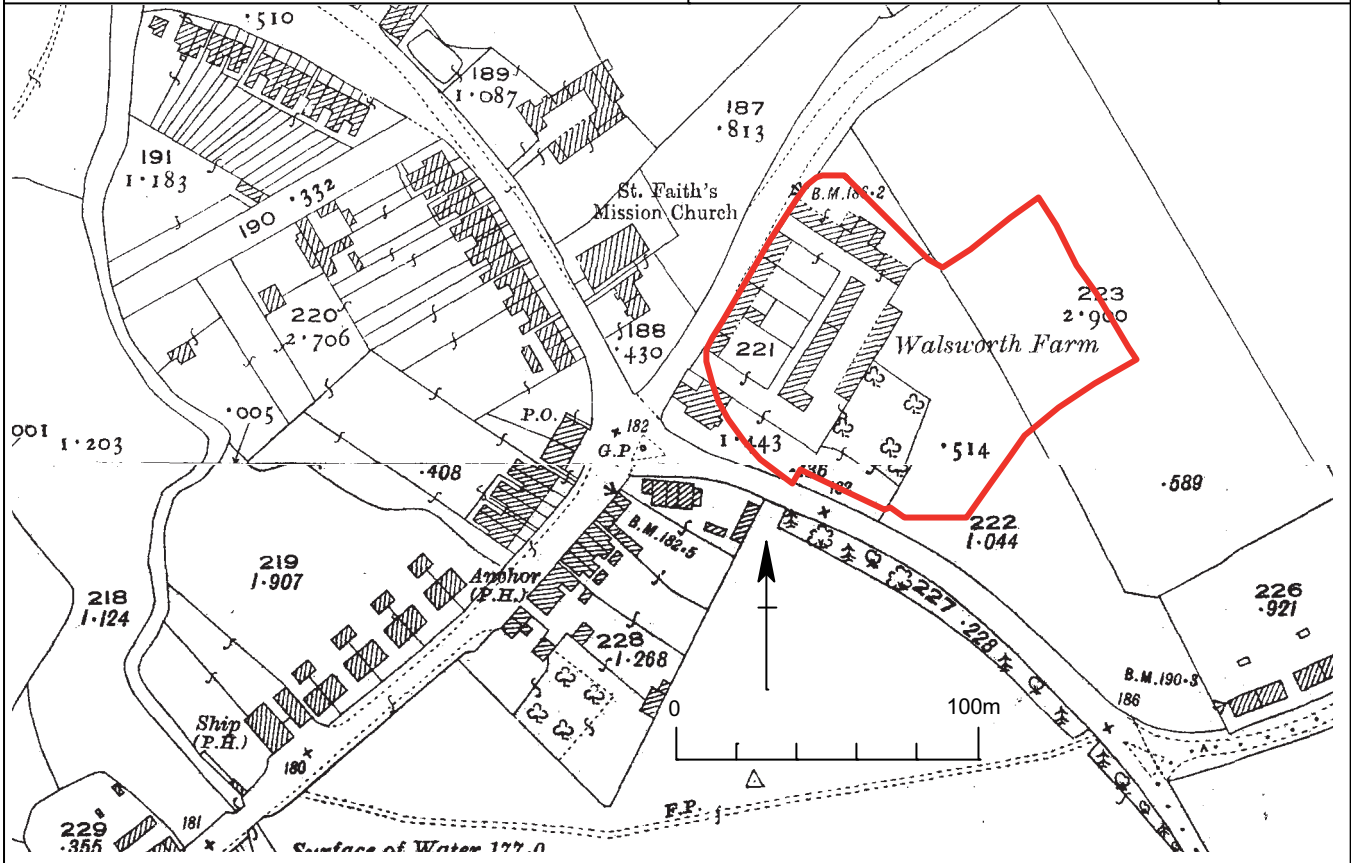
Figure 3a



1st edition Ordnance Survey Plan (1898)

Scale 1:2500

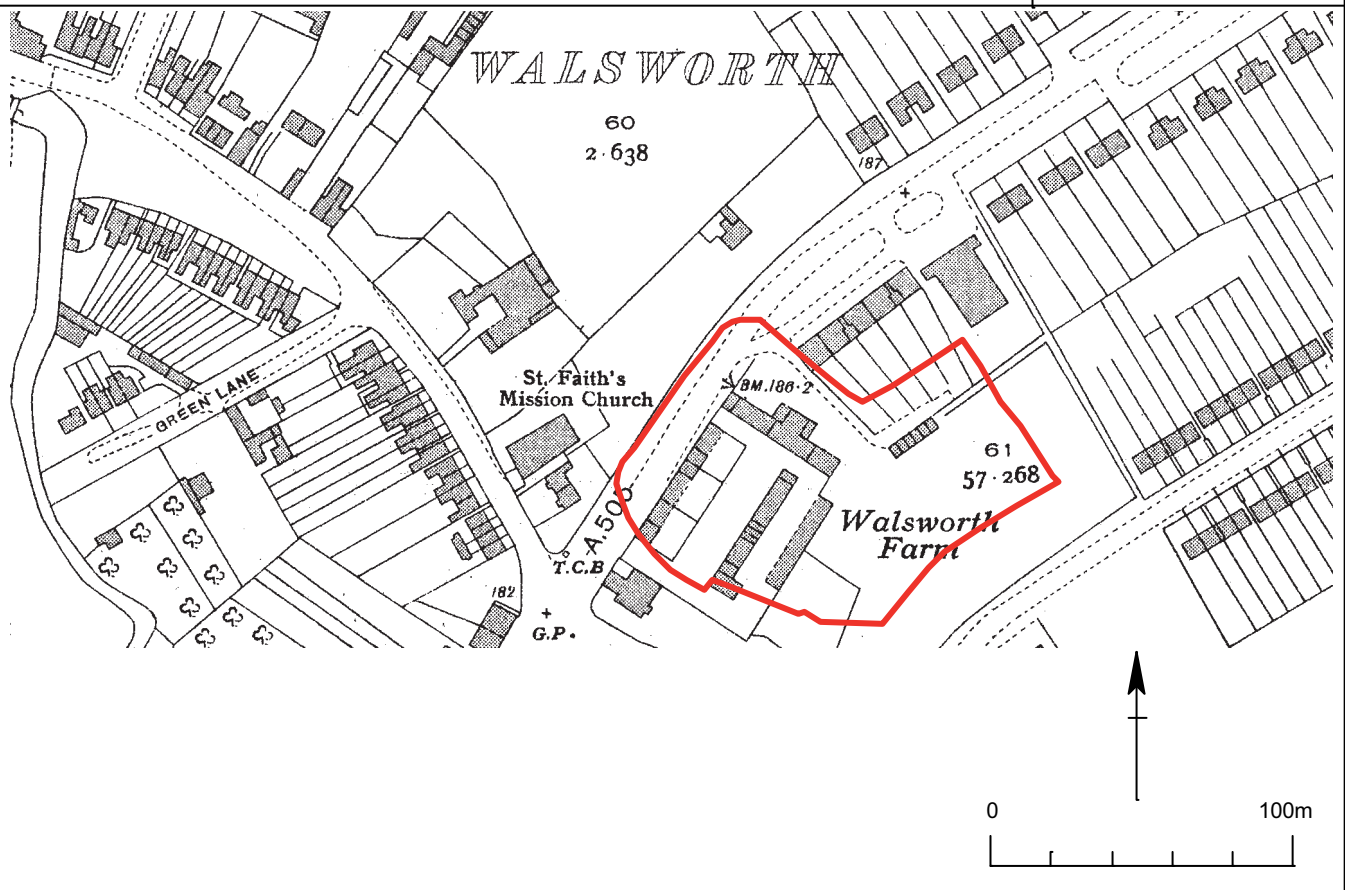
Figure 3b



Ordnance Survey Plan (1922/3)

Scale 1:2500

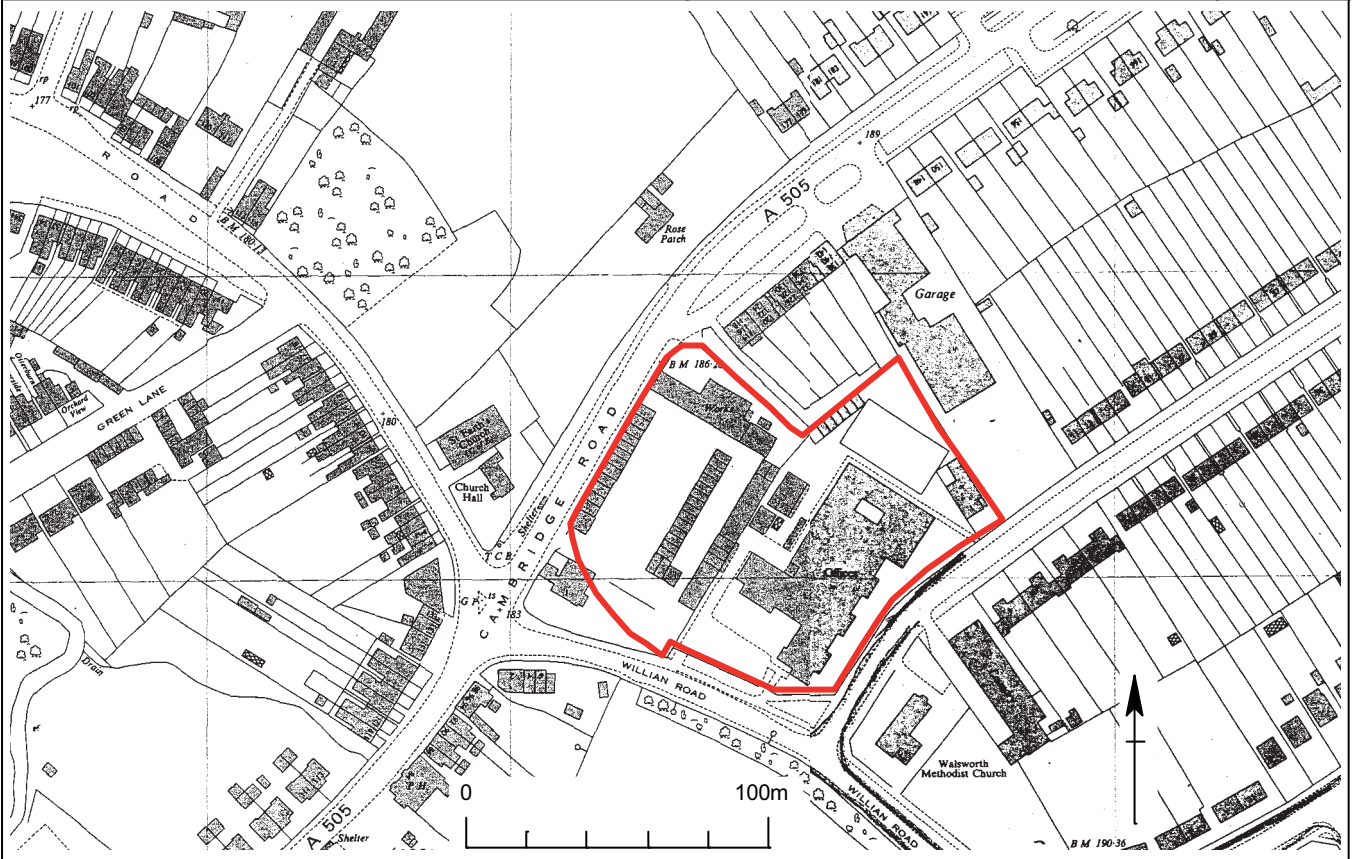
Figure 4a



Ordnance Survey Plan (1938)

Scale 1:2500

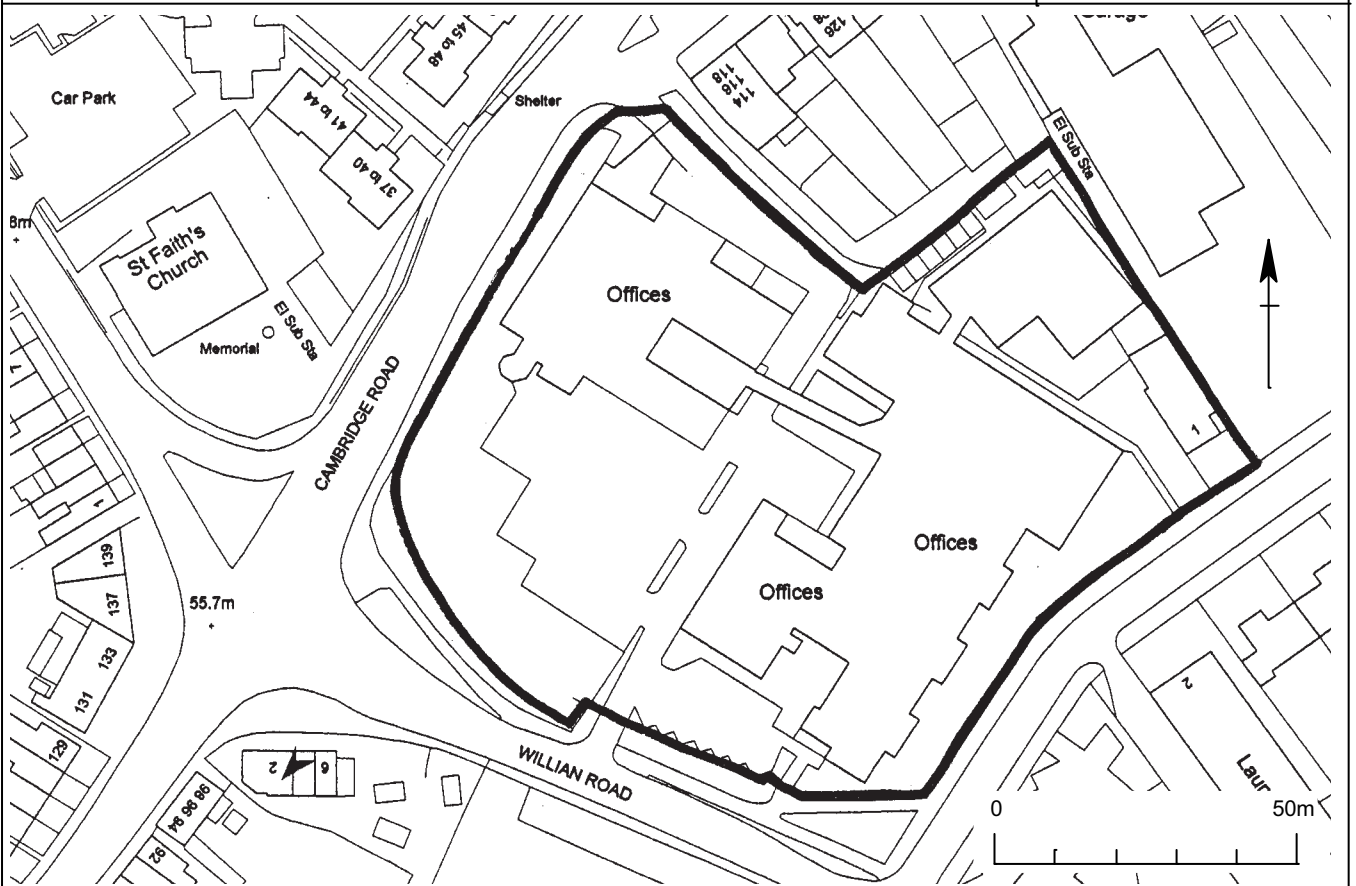
Figure 4b



Ordnance Survey Plan (1965)

Scale 1:2500

Figure 5a



Ordnance Survey Plan (2004)

Scale 1:1250

Figure 5b