

**ST ANDREW'S HOUSE, ST ANDREW'S PLACE,  
HITCHIN, HERTFORDSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD**

**ST ANDREW'S HOUSE, ST ANDREW'S PLACE,  
HITCHIN, HERTFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT**

HER request No. 103/11

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NGR: TL 18724 28917	Report No. 3866
District: North Hertfordshire	Site Code: N/A
Approved: Claire Halpin MIFA	Project No. 4453
Signed:	Date: July 2011

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**OASIS SUMMARY SHEET**

<b>Project details</b>			
Project name	<i>St Andrew's House, St Andrew's Place, Hitchin, Hertfordshire</i>		
Project description (250 words) <i>In July 2011, Archaeological Solutions Limited conducted an archaeological desk-based assessment of land at St Andrew's House, St Andrew's Place, Hitchin, Hertfordshire. The assessment was commissioned in support of a planning application to be submitted to redevelop the existing sheltered housing complex on the site with new residential units. Based on the known evidence, the site has only a low potential for archaeological remains dating from the prehistoric, medieval and post-medieval periods, a low to moderate potential for early modern archaeology and a moderate potential for remains dating to the Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon periods. The site also has a high potential for modern remains associated with the construction of St Andrew's House and the associated course of St Andrew's Place, neither of which existed in 1966 and are judged to be approximately 20 – 30 years old. Extensive groundworks, levelling and truncation are associated with the construction of St Andrew's House, which was revealed to have been cut into the natural ground level of the site during the course of the site visit. It is very unlikely that any archaeological remains or deposits existing within the site would have survived the late 20<sup>th</sup> century ground disturbance, although it is possible that a relatively intact stratigraphy may have survived in the westernmost section of the site. The proposed development will occupy a significantly smaller footprint than the existing buildings and therefore the impact of the proposed development of the site is judged not to be greater than that which has previously occurred.</i>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>13/07/2011 – 29/07/2011</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work (Y/N/?)	<i>?</i>
P. number	<i>4453</i>	Site code	<i>-</i>
Type of project	<i>Archaeological desk-based assessment</i>		
Site status	<i>None</i>		
Current land use	<i>Sheltered housing complex</i>		
Planned development	<i>New residential units</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>-</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>-</i>		
<b>Project location</b>			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Hertfordshire</i>	<i>North Hertfordshire</i>	<i>Hitchin</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Hertfordshire HER (request No. 103/11)</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>-</i>		
Area of site	<i>c. 2,000m<sup>2</sup></i>		
NGR	<i>TL 18724 28917</i>		
Height AOD (max/ min)	<i>c. 75m AOD</i>		
<b>Project creators</b>			
Brief issued by	<i>n/a</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Archaeological Solutions Ltd</i>		
Funded by	<i>Vincent &amp; Gorbing Planning Associates on behalf of North Hertfordshire Homes</i>		
Full title	<i>St Andrew's House, St Andrew's Place, Hitchin, Hertfordshire. An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment</i>		
Authors	<i>Higgs, K.</i>		
Report no.	<i>3866</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>July 2011</i>		



# ST ANDREW'S HOUSE, ST ANDREW'S PLACE, HITCHIN, HERTFORDSHIRE

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

### **SUMMARY**

*In July 2011, Archaeological Solutions Limited conducted an archaeological desk-based assessment of land at St Andrew's House, St Andrew's Place, Hitchin, Hertfordshire. The assessment was commissioned in support of a planning application to be submitted to redevelop the existing sheltered housing complex on the site with new residential units.*

*Based on the known evidence, the site has only a low potential for archaeological remains dating from the prehistoric, medieval and post-medieval periods, a low to moderate potential for early modern archaeology and a moderate potential for remains dating to the Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon periods. The site also has a high potential for modern remains associated with the construction of St Andrew's House and the associated course of St Andrew's Place, neither of which existed in 1966 and are judged to be approximately 20 – 30 years old.*

*Extensive groundworks, levelling and truncation are associated with the construction of St Andrew's House, which was revealed to have been cut into the natural ground level of the site during the course of the site visit. It is very unlikely that any archaeological remains or deposits existing within the site would have survived the late 20<sup>th</sup> century ground disturbance, although it is possible that a relatively intact stratigraphy may have survived in the westernmost section of the site.*

*The proposed development will occupy a significantly smaller footprint than the existing buildings and therefore the impact of the proposed development of the site is judged not to be greater than that which has previously occurred.*

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In July 2011, Archaeological Solutions Limited (AS) conducted an archaeological desk-based assessment of land at St Andrew's House, St Andrew's Place, Hitchin, Hertfordshire (TL 18724 28917; Figs. 1 & 2). The assessment was commissioned by Vincent & Gorbing Planning Associates on behalf of North Hertfordshire Homes in support of a planning application to be submitted to redevelop the existing sheltered housing complex on the site with new residential units.

1.2 The assessment was conducted according to a specification (Written Scheme of Investigation) prepared by AS (dated 16<sup>th</sup> June 2011) and advice provided by Mr. Andy Instone of Hertfordshire County Council Historic

Environment Unit (HCC HEU). It also adhered to a consultant briefing note issued by Vincent & Gorbing Planning Associates (dated 14<sup>th</sup> June 2011; Ref: 4841/SS). The archaeological desk-based assessment conformed to the relevant sections of *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*, East Anglian Archaeology Paper 14/ALGAO (Gurney 2003), which provides guidance for the adjacent East Anglian region, and the document *Research and Archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties* (Brown & Glazebrook 2000). The desk-based research was conducted according to the Institute of Archaeologists (IfA) *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment* (1994, revised 2008).

1.3 The principal objectives of the archaeological desk-based assessment were:

- to collate, verify and assess all information relevant to presence, survival and character of archaeological remains/structures within the study area,
- to provide a predictive model of the sub-surface deposits likely to be present on the site and assess their archaeological significance,
- to assess the impact of development proposals for the site on any identified archaeological remains,
- to assess any previous impacts on the site and the impact on any potential archaeological remains by the current proposed development, and;
- to provide sufficient information to enable the formulation of a suitable management/investigation strategy for the site's historic environment in the light of the current planning proposal.

#### *Planning context*

1.5 PPS5 states that those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are heritage assets. The Planning Policy Statement aims to deliver sustainable development by ensuring that policies and decisions that concern the historic environment recognise that heritage assets are a non-renewable resource, take account of the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of heritage conservation, and recognise that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term. It aims to conserve England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. It states that opportunities to capture evidence from the historic environment and to contribute to our knowledge and understanding of our past, and to make this publicly available, should be taken, particularly where a heritage asset is to be lost.

## **2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE**

2.1 The St Andrew's House site is situated within the historic town of Hitchin, which lies within the district of North Hertfordshire and within the county of Hertfordshire (Fig. 1). The settlement of Hitchin lies 4.5km to the south-west of the town of Letchworth Garden and 6km to the north-west of

Stevenage's Old Town. The smaller village of Pirton is located 4.5km to the north-west of Hitchin, whilst Ickleford lies 2km to the immediate north of the town's historic core and St Ippolitts 2.5km to the south. Hitchin is traversed by the south-west to north-east aligned A505 trunk-road, whilst Junction 8 of the A1(M) motorway lies 5km to the south-east. The north-west to south-east aligned A602 trunk-road also runs south-eastwards out of Hitchin and joins the A505 trunk-road at a roundabout 550m to the south of the site.

2.2 The site is located within the centre of the settlement of Hitchin, but to the immediate south-east of its historic core. The site does not lie within Hitchin's Conservation Area (CA) or the Area of Archaeological Significance that designates the medieval core of the town to the north-west of the site. The site is situated at the junction of Kershaw's Hill and Storehouse Lane (Fig. 2). Its northern section incorporates St Andrew's Place, which is an adopted highway extending south-south-eastwards along the site's eastern boundary. To the immediate south of the site lie residential properties associated with both Storehouse Lane and St Andrew's Place.

2.3 The site occupies an irregular plot of land covering an area of approximately 2,000m<sup>2</sup> (Figs. 14 & 15). Its northern section incorporates St Andrew's Place, with a small strip of undeveloped rough hardstanding at its northernmost extent. To the immediate south of the site's section of St Andrew's Place is an area of block paving consisting of eight car parking spaces. The central and southern sections of the site are occupied by St Andrew's House, a vacant sheltered housing complex for the elderly comprising 32 self-contained flats in two connected blocks. Surrounding the building are mown lawn areas, mature trees and small areas of paving slabs. The proposed development will comprise the demolition of the existing structure and the construction of ten new residential units comprising a mix of 3, 4 and 5-bedroom dwellings (Fig. 15).

### **3 METHOD OF WORK**

Information was sought from a variety of available sources, and reference was made to the Institute of Field Archaeologists' (IFA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-based Assessments* (1994, revised 2008). The following material was consulted as part of the assessment:

#### **3.1 Archaeological databases**

3.1.1 The standard collations of all known archaeological sites and spot-finds in the surrounding area are the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER). In order to provide a representative sample, the Hertfordshire HER database was searched for all known entries within a 250m radius of the site. Entries within this approximate 250m radius of the site are listed in Appendix 1, and plotted in Fig. 3. Their significance, where relevant, is discussed in Sections 5 & 6.

## **3.2 Historical & cartographic documents**

3.2.1 The principal source for historic and cartographic documents was the Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS), based in County Hall, Hertford. Relevant cartographic sources are listed in Appendix 3 and reproduced in Figs. 4 - 13.

## **3.3 Secondary sources**

3.3.1 The principal source of secondary material was the Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS), based in County Hall, Hertford, as well as AS's own library. Relevant material is listed in the bibliography.

## **3.4 Geological/geotechnical information**

3.4.1 A description of the superficial and solid geology of the local and surrounding area was compiled in order to assess the likely presence and potential condition of any archaeological remains on the site. This information was drawn from appropriate maps published by the Geological Survey of Great Britain (BGS 1978) and the Soil Survey of England and Wales (SSEW 1983). The site has been subject to a number of geotechnical investigations (QDS Environmental Limited 2001; 2002; Delta-Simons Environmental Consultants Ltd 2004; 2008).

## **3.5 Site inspection**

3.5.1 In the course of the archaeological desk-based assessment, a physical walkover of the site was undertaken on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2011. The inspection had the following purposes:

- to examine the areas of archaeological potential identified during the impact assessment, in particular, with a view to gauging likely survival or condition of the archaeological remains, and
- to consider the significance of the above ground structures, historic buildings and historic landscape features, their settings and potential impacts for the proposed development.

## **4 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY & SOILS**

4.1 The site is located on gently sloping land that slopes downwards to the roughly north to south aligned River Hiz flowing 210m to the east (Fig. 1). It lies at approximately 75m AOD, whilst a trigonometry spot height of 95m AOD is located at Windmill Hill 300m to the north. The Hitchin area has a unique geology because of its position within the Hitchin gap in the Chiltern Hills, believed to have derived from the presence of a glacial lake. Geologically, the area is characterised by fluvio-glacial deposits of sand, clayey silts and gravel overlying Upper Cretaceous Lower Chalk. The site is also thought to lie on a chalky and gravel drift.

4.2 Much of the southern section of the town of Hitchin, including the St Andrew's House site, is located on soils of the Sonning 1 Association, which are described as well drained flinty, coarse, loamy and sandy soils, mainly over gravel (SSEW 1983). Archaeological work undertaken the rear of 36 – 40 Bancroft and 500m to the north of the site, however, revealed natural gravel drift at between c.0.40 – 0.90m below existing, and overlain by a series of deposits of recent overburden, levelling layers and hardcore (Williams 2006). No detailed geotechnical information was available at the time of writing to quantify the stratigraphy present on the site, but it likely comprises deposits of made ground, above gravel deposits derived from the River Hiz, and overlying a solid geology of chalk.

## 5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### 5.1 Prehistoric

5.1.1 Prehistoric flint artefacts dating from the Palaeolithic period onwards have been found throughout Hitchin and are perhaps indicative of early exploitation favouring the light fertile soils in the valley of the River Hiz. The majority of Palaeolithic finds comprise Acheulian handaxes in good condition (Oakley 1947, 250), whilst the Mesolithic period is represented by finds of arrowheads (Thompson 2005), as well as by a periodically flooded water-meadow dated to the early Mesolithic period (Morley 2003). An early Mesolithic deposit, consisting of dark brown organic material contained a high proportion of molluscs and a number of charred grains, was recorded to the west of Biggin Lane and 250m to the west of the site (HER 13614). Finds at 33 Queen Street and 80m to the north-west of the site also included a late Mesolithic/Neolithic flint core, residual in a later post-hole; and a pit truncated by Roman features (HER 13717).

5.1.2 Neolithic finds are also recorded in the wider area of Hitchin, a number of which were made from non-local flint and appear to have come from much further afield (Thompson 2005). Cropmarks representative of Bronze Age ring ditches, particularly to the west of Wilbury Hill at the northern extent of the town, attest to the occupation of the Hitchin area during the Bronze Age period. Bronze Age axes have also been found within the town, whilst a founder's metalwork hoard discovered in Periwinkle Lane (Williams 2006). Despite the scarcity of early or middle Iron Age finds found in Hitchin, late Iron Age urns were discovered along Bancroft and a major late Iron Age *oppidum* was located at Baldock 8km to the north-east. The proximity of the Icknield Way, a major prehistoric route between East Anglia and Wessex, would also have attracted prehistoric activity from at least the Neolithic onwards (Ashworth 2004).

### 5.2 Romano-British

5.2.1 Romano-British finds of pottery, metalwork and coins from the historic core of Hitchin indicate small-scale Roman occupation of the town. The medieval church tower of St Mary's is known to incorporate some Roman



brick, whilst the health of a 13<sup>th</sup> century house uncovered during the excavations at 33 Queen Street also incorporated Roman bricks. Excavations on the site of the former Hitchin Laundry on Queen Street, approximately 80m to the north-west of the site, uncovered a small number of Roman features, consisting of pits and postholes, which were located in the north-western corner of the site (HER 11350). Large quantities of Roman pottery and building material were also recovered from later features on the site. An evaluation at 40 Queen Street and 90m to the west of the site revealed two Romano-British inhumation burials, one supine and one prone (HER 11351), whilst a Roman cinerary urn with cremation was found at Taylor's Hill (HER 1201). Further Roman remains from the area include a ditch (HER 13615), 3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> century pottery (HER 1415) and a dump containing Roman pottery (HER 13612).

### 5.3 Anglo-Saxon

5.3.1 The place-name Hitchin is believed to derive from the territory of the tribe called the *Hicce* and possibly originated as a Saxon word for the River Hiz (Gover, Mawer & Stenton 1938). It was a Mercian royal estate from at least the 8<sup>th</sup> century, which appears to have continued as a royal possession into the 10<sup>th</sup> century, when it was granted to Harold of Wessex by Edward the Confessor. Remains of a major middle to late Saxon settlement has been identified approximately 80m to the west of the site in Queen Street, revealing several phases of building, the earliest being six sunken-features buildings and two probable large rectangular high status wooden buildings. A large ditch of probable later Saxon date has been recorded in the town, indicative of an early majority boundary or possible defended settlement (*burh*), and it is possible that further evidence of the boundary may be present within the site (Thompson 2005).

5.3.2 Evidence for Anglo-Saxon occupation in the town, from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, has come from a number of finds of high status artefacts, including a decorated bronze pin of 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> century date from the site of St Andrew's Hall, which stood 100m to the north of the site (HER 1612). As previously, excavations at 33 Queen Street 80m to the north-west revealed evidence for significant activity, which appears to range in date from the end of the middle Saxon period to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Much of the pottery assemblage recovered from the site has been dated to between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. The main occupation of the site was initially thought to date to the late Saxon period, when it was apparently fortified by the construction of a ditched palisade, with a wall-walk (HER 12350).

5.3.3 A total of six inhumations burials were discovered during the evaluation at 40 Queen Street and 90m to the west (HER 11465; Davies 2001). Two of the graves were aligned approximately east to west, suggesting that they may be Christian, but no evidence for coffins or shrouds was identified. The burials have been dated to the Anglo-Saxon period and possibly represent part of a cemetery associated with the middle and late Saxon settlement excavated at 33 Queen Street. No other Saxon features were identified at 40 Queen Street, indicating either that the settlement to the north did not extend this far south or

that post-medieval landscaping associated with properties along Queen Street has destroyed earlier evidence. Additional Saxon finds from the area of the site include an iron implement and two spears, all of which were found in Hollow Lane (HERs 1613, 2301 & 4869).

## **5.4 Medieval**

5.4.1 The Domesday Book reveals that the manor of Hitchin was held by William the Conqueror and was occupied by 48 villagers, 17 small-holders, 29 cottagers and 12 slaves (Page 1912). The settlement is thought to have been created a borough in the mid 12<sup>th</sup> century, yet was not recorded as such until 1268. The medieval core of the town incorporates the 12<sup>th</sup> century St Mary's Church, which was originally dedicated to St Andrew and Hitchin's Priory of the Carmelites (Williams 2006). The Biggin, on the western side of Queen Street and only 150m to the north-west of the site, is the site of a Gilbertine Priory founded in 1361 by Edward de Kendale (HER 4389). It is possible that some of the original building has survived as two crown posts are extant of the Seebohm Gardens, revealed evidence of medieval and early post-medieval surfaces and a human burial, possibly one of the Gilbertine canons.

## **5.5 Post-medieval & later**

5.5.1 By the 16<sup>th</sup> century Hitchin was becoming renowned as a market for grain, particularly corn, and malting and brewing became important industries. The development of the town during the post-medieval period is shown in a extensive series of maps, which reveal that the town plan remained the same as the postulated early medieval town layout (Burleigh & Stevenson 2000). The aforementioned excavation at 33 Queen Street, for example, recorded Roman, Saxon and medieval occupation, but revealed that the site reverted to agricultural use until three structures were built in the late medieval or early post-medieval period (HER 12351). The early 17<sup>th</sup> century Biggin Almshouses, which stand 200m to the north-west, are thought to incorporate part of the medieval priory church associated with the Gilbertine priory (HER 12341), whilst an Independent Chapel built in 1690 and its 19<sup>th</sup> century successor stood 100m to the south-west (HER 12580).

5.5.2 During the early modern period, Hitchin became a frequent staging post for London coaches providing further custom for the inns, and later encouraged the growth of industries such as Russell's tannery, the herb distillery of Messrs. William Ransom and Sons Ltd and the Hitchin Gas Co. The town is also renowned for its British School, which was founded in 1810 100m to the south-west (HER 11194), although Hitchin remained renowned as a major centre for grain trade (Ashworth, Hutchings & Hillelson 1998; Wilson & Ashworth 1998). A standing building survey of 40 Queen Street, located 90m to the west, recorded a series of largely brick buildings constructed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, by the Jeeves family, a successful building company who used and lived on the site from c.1830 until sometime between 1915 and 1926 (HER 11565). A waterworks at the rear of Queen Street and by the River Hiz is also recorded as early modern in date (HER 10185).

## 6 THE SITE

6.1 Despite its location within the historic and well-documented town of Hitchin, very little is known about the early history of the site and no documents concerning the site directly were found in the Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS). The site lies beyond the medieval core of the town and is thus not situated within Hitchin's Conservation Area (CA) or Area of Archaeological Significance. Historic cartographic sources (see Section 7, below) reveal that the site lay beyond the extent of the town at the time of the 1844 tithe map and the Board of Health map in 1852, but had been incorporated into the larger early modern town by the time of the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map in 1881 (Thompson 2005). There is thus little to suggest that the site was developed until at least the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

6.2 The early history of the site and its immediate area remains relatively unknown, particularly given that the parish of Hitchin tithe award, which dates to 1841, was being conserved and was thus not available for consultation (Ref. DSA4/53/1). It is likely that St Andrew's House and St Andrew's Place took their name from the original dedication of Hitchin's church, now St Mary's, in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century (Thompson 2005). A draft sub-lease dated 29<sup>th</sup> November 1895 also reveals that a '*messuage known as St Andrew's House*' existed at Hitchin the early modern period, but its location '*on north side of St Andrew's Street*' confirms that it cannot be associated with the site itself (Ref. DE/L/4019).

6.3 The development of Storehouse Lane, which forms the western boundary of the site, is virtually unknown, other than for a medieval reference to a messuage called '*le Storehouse*' (Howlett 2000). It is likely that Kershaw's Hill, at the northern boundary of the site, took its name from the Kershaw family, who ran stagecoaches out of Hitchin from 1731 until the arrival of the railway (Hine 1927, 306 - 7). The extant St Andrew's House the site and the accompanying St Andrew's Place adopted highway are known to be modern in date. They were not depicted in the final historic cartographic source of 1966 and the building is judged to be approximately 20-30 years old (Vincent and Gorbing Planning Associates briefing note). It was purpose built as a sheltered housing complex and is red brick built semi-clad in red tiles, but has been condemned as 'not fit for purpose' by the Hertfordshire County Council (*ibid.*).

## 7 CARTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

### 7.1 Dury & Andrews' map of Hertfordshire, 1766

7.1.1 The site was not depicted on either the 1650 map of Hitchin or Drapentier's 1690 view of Hitchin, as it lay well beyond the post-medieval boundaries of the town. The earliest cartographic source to depict the site comprises Dury and Andrews' map of Hertfordshire, which dates to 1766 (Fig. 4). At the end of the post-medieval period the site lay beyond the south-eastern extent of the town of Hitchin and beyond the historic medieval core. In



1766 the site thus formed agricultural land situated to the south-east of Hitchin and was possibly owned by the landowner John Radcliffe Esq. indicated in the surrounding area.

## **7.2 Township of Hitchin, 1816**

7.2.1 The earliest 19<sup>th</sup> century map consulted, surveyed by H.S. Merrett, dates to 1816 and depicts the township of Hitchin (Fig. 5). As previously, in 1816, the site remained beyond the south-eastern extent of the town of Hitchin and consisted of undeveloped agricultural land in the area of *Purwell*. The map is significant, however, in that it suggests that both the northern and western boundaries of the site had been formed by 1816 and consisted of a west-north-west to east-south-east aligned and north to south aligned field boundary respectively.

## **7.3 Plan of Hitchin, 1820**

7.3.1 The 1820 plan of Hitchin also confirms the site's location on the periphery of the town (Fig. 6; Clutterbuck 1827). By 1820, the site lay just beyond the town's south-eastern extent, but remained as undeveloped agricultural land. As previously, its northern and western boundaries were demarcated by 1820 and consisted of a west-north-west to east-south-east aligned and north to south aligned field boundary respectively.

## **7.4 Bryant's map of Hertfordshire, 1822**

7.4.1 Bryant's map of Hertfordshire dates to 1822 depicts no significant early 19<sup>th</sup> century development (Fig. 7). The site remained beyond the south-eastern extent of the town of Hitchin and remained as undeveloped agricultural land. Bryant's map was drawn to a very small scale and thus it was not possible to identify the exact location of the site or even its boundaries.

## **7.5 Parish of Hitchin tithe map, 1844**

7.5.1 The parish of Hitchin tithe map dates to 1844 (Fig. 8; Ref. DSA4/53/2). The tithe map confirms that the site lay beyond the south-eastern extent of the town of Hitchin and consisted of undeveloped agricultural land situated just beyond its mid 19<sup>th</sup> century extent. By 1844, the two former field boundaries at the northern and western boundaries of the site had been developed into small roads, whilst the site itself was spread over two plots of land (#503 & 504). The accompanying parish of Hitchin tithe award, which dates to 1841, was being conserved and was not available for consultation (Ref. DSA4/53/1). It was thus not possible to reveal any further information about the site regarding its owners, tenants or land use.

## **7.6 Board of Health map, 1852**

7.6.1 The two parish of Hitchin enclosure awards, which date to 1877 and 1886 are not accompanied by a relevant enclosure map (Refs. QS/E/37 &

QS/E/38), so the next cartographic source to depict the site comprises the Board of Health map, which dates to 1852 (Fig. 9). In 1852, the site still lay beyond the south-eastern extent of the town of Hitchin and consisted of undeveloped agricultural land situated at the south-eastern corner of Storehouse Lane and an un-named road, later to become Kershaw's Hill. A west-north-west to east-south-east aligned trackway was also depicted across the centre of the site, whilst a small shed-like structure stood to its south, within the site's central southern section. In 1852, the northern section of the site was divided into a number of agricultural fields, with its southern section consisting of a newly planted woodland covert or possible nursery garden.

## **7.7 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map, 1879**

7.7.1 The 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map dates to 1879 and is the first cartographic source to suggest that the site lay within the town of Hitchin (Fig. 10). The 1879 map also depicts extensive early modern development of the expanding town in the 29 years since the previous cartographic source, particularly along the course of St Andrew's Place to the north of the site. However, in 1879 the site still consisted of undeveloped agricultural land situated at the south-eastern corner of Storehouse Lane and an un-named road, later to become Kershaw's Hill. The west-north-west to east-south-east aligned trackway was still depicted across the centre of the site with the small structure to its south, whilst a second, slightly larger structure had been built along the trackway's northern frontage. In 1879, the northern section of the site was still divided into a number of agricultural fields, with its southern section consisting of part of an unidentified *Nursery* further to the south.

## **7.8 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map, 1898**

7.8.1 The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map dates to 1898 depicts significant late 19<sup>th</sup> century development within the area surrounding the site (Fig. 11). Extensive early modern development had taken place to the north of the site, particularly along St Andrew's Place and the newly named Kershaw's Hill, as well as along Storehouse Lane to the west. In 1898 the site still consisted of undeveloped agricultural land situated at the south-eastern corner of the two roads. The west-north-west to east-south-east aligned trackway was still present, yet both of the small late 19<sup>th</sup> century structures within the site had been removed. The 1898 map suggests that the northern section of the site was still divided into a smaller number of agricultural fields, but no longer depicts the former nursery further to the south.

## **7.9 3<sup>rd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map, 1924**

7.9.1 The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map dates to 1924 depicts significant early 20<sup>th</sup> century development within the area of the site (Fig. 12). As previously, further development had taken place along Kershaw's Hill to the north and north-east, and further along Storehouse Lane to the south-west of the site. However, in 1924 the site still consisted of undeveloped agricultural land situated at the south-eastern corner of the two roads. The west-north-west to east-south-east aligned trackway was still present, whilst the second

structure noted along the trackway's northern frontage had re-emerged and been extended to form an L-shape in plan. A third, smaller structure lay towards the south-eastern corner of the site in 1924.

## 7.10 Ordnance Survey map, 1966

7.10.1 The final historic cartographic source comprises the Ordnance Survey map of 1966, which dates to 43 years after the previous map (Fig. 13). As previously, further modern development had taken place in the area surrounding the site, particularly to the east with the construction of *Queen Street Junior Mixed & Infant School*. To the immediate south, the former nursery and agricultural land had become a *Playing Field* and *Allotment Gardens*. In contrast, by 1966, the site remained as undeveloped agricultural land situated to the south-east of the junction between St Andrew's Place, Lyle's Row, Storehouse Lane and Kershaw's Hill. The west-north-west to east-south-east aligned trackway was still present, yet none of the former structure remained within the site and the southern section of St Andrew's Place was yet to be extended into and the south-east of the site.

## 8 SITE VISIT

8.1 A physical walkover of the site was undertaken on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2011 in order to examine the areas of archaeological potential identified during the desk-based assessment, and to consider the significance of above ground structures. The site visit confirmed that the site is located within the centre of the settlement of Hitchin, but to the immediate south-east of its historic core. It lay in a dominantly residential area and to the immediate south of Kershaw's Hill, whilst the narrow, private road of Storehouse Lane lay to the immediate west. The north-western corner of the site comprised the adopted highway of St Andrew's Place and lay to the immediate south of its junction with Storehouse Lane, Lyle's Row and Kershaw's Hill (DP 1). St Andrew's Place continued eastwards to the north-eastern corner of the site, where it has a second junction with Kershaw's Hill (DP 2).

8.2 At the northern boundary of the site lay an area of overgrown shrubs and a rough hardstanding area in use as informal car parking for local residents (DP 3). To the south of St Andrew's Place lay access to the extant but vacant and disused St Andrew's House which occupied the central and southern sections of the site (DP 4). Entrance to St Andrew's House consisted of a wide pathway of block paving with an area of grass landscaping to the immediate east (DP 5). An area of extensive groundworks and a high brick retaining wall topped with railing was clearly visible in the centre of the site revealing that the lower level of St Andrew's House had been built cutting into the natural ground level of the site (DP 6).

8.3 To the immediate south of St Andrew's Place and within the site's northern section also lay an extensive area of block paving, which ran to the site's western boundary, and was formerly used for resident's/visitor car parking (DP 7). The northern frontage of St Andrew's House comprising a two

storey, red brick built building partially cut into the natural ground level, which was evidently of late 20<sup>th</sup> century construction (DP 8). At its north-western corner was an area of shingle, confirming it had been cut into the natural ground level in comparison to the parking area (DP 9). In contrast, the western boundary of the site comprised a large established hedge beside a large area of grass formerly in use as a resident's garden (DP 10). Beyond the former garden stood the western frontage of St Andrew's House, which comprised a red brick built building ranging over three storeys (DP 11). The opposite eastern boundary of the site consisted of the eastern frontage of St Andrew's House, an extensive brick retaining wall with the southern course of St Andrew's Place beyond, and a small area of grass between (DP 12).

## **9 CONSTRAINTS**

**9.1 Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs)** – The site does not incorporate any SAMs and no Scheduled Ancient Monuments are known in the immediate surroundings of the site.

**9.2 Areas of Archaeological Significance** - The site does not lie within Hitchin's Area of Archaeological Significance, which designates the medieval core of the town.

**9.3 Listed Buildings** -There are no listed buildings on the site, but a number are known in the surrounding area.

**9.4 Conservation Areas** - The site does not lie within the Conservation Area incorporating the historic core of Hitchin.

**9.5 Historic Parks & Gardens** –The site does not lie within a designated historic park and garden and none are recorded in the area immediately surrounding the site.

## **10 DISCUSSION**

### **10.1 Archaeological potential**

10.1.1 The archaeological desk-based assessment was undertaken in support of a planning application to be submitted to redevelop the existing sheltered housing complex on the site with new residential units. The development proposals will cause extensive disturbance to the underlying stratigraphy, and thus it is necessary to consider the archaeological potential of the site. Based on the known evidence, the site has a potential for archaeological remains as follows:

- *Prehistoric – low.* Prehistoric remained limited to a Mesolithic deposit and a single late Mesolithic/Neolithic findspot.
- *Romano-British – moderate.* Extensive Romano-British remains recorded in the area.
- *Anglo-Saxon – moderate.* Extensive Anglo-Saxon remains recorded in the area.
- *Medieval – low.* The site lay beyond the medieval town and consisted of undeveloped agricultural land.
- *Post-medieval– low.* The site lay beyond the post-medieval town and consisted of undeveloped agricultural land.
- *Early modern – low to moderate.* Site remained as undeveloped agricultural land but a series of four small, shed-like structures stood within the site.
- *Modern – high.* Site subject to extensive modern development approximately 20 – 30 years ago with the construction of St Andrew's House and the associated course of St Andrew's Place.

10.1.2 Prehistoric flint artefacts dating from the Palaeolithic period onwards have been found throughout Hitchin, confirming early exploitation of the light fertile soils in the valley of the River Hiz. Within the area surrounding the site, an early Mesolithic deposit recorded to the west of Biggin Lane and 250m to the west of the site indicates Mesolithic activity as does the residual late Mesolithic/Neolithic flint core found 80m to the north-west of the site. No later prehistoric finds or features are recorded in the area of the site, yet numerous Neolithic finds are also recorded in the wider area. The site therefore has a low potential for prehistoric remains, but it is possible that further Mesolithic occupation evidence may be found.

10.1.3 Small-scale Roman occupation is known throughout the town of Hitchin, with re-used Roman bricks even recorded at 33 Queen Street and only 80m to the north-west of the site. Extensive Romano-British remains are also recorded in the area of the site, including pits, post holes, large quantities of Roman pottery and building material, all recovered at 33 Queen Street. Two Romano-British inhumation burials were found along the same street, whilst a Roman cinerary urn with cremation was found at Taylor's Hill. The site thus has a moderate potential for further Romano-British remains.

10.1.4 The major middle to late Saxon settlement of Hitchin lay only 80m to the west of the site in Queen Street, and consisted of several phases of building, the earliest being six sunken-features buildings and two probable large rectangular high status wooden buildings. Extensive Anglo-Saxon remains are also recorded in the area of the site, including a decorated bronze pin from the site of St Andrew's Hall 100m to the north of the site, and significant activity dating from the end of the middle Saxon period to the 13<sup>th</sup> century recorded at 33 Queen Street 80m to the north-west. A total of six inhumations burials were discovered along the same street, whilst an iron implement and two spears were found in Hollow Lane. The site therefore has a moderate potential for further Anglo-Saxon remains, which would reveal further information about the Saxo-Norman occupation of Hitchin.



10.1.5 The site lay beyond the medieval core of the town and was not encompassed into Hitchin until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The site therefore has only a low potential for medieval and post-medieval remains, particularly given that it remained as undeveloped agricultural land throughout and beyond those periods. There is, however, a low to moderate potential for early modern remains within the site, specifically associated with the series of four small, shed-like structures depicted within the site by historic cartographic sources. The site also has a high potential for modern remains associated with the construction of St Andrew's House and the associated course of St Andrew's Place, neither of which existed in 1966 and are judged to be approximately 20 – 30 years old.

## **10.2 Previous ground disturbance**

10.2.1 Historic cartographic sources have consistently revealed that the site remained as undeveloped agricultural land, and lay beyond the extent of the town of Hitchin until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Previous ground disturbance at the site dating until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century will therefore not have been extensive and almost exclusively agricultural. It is possible that the construction of Storehouse Lane and Kershaw's Hill, both of which were depicted in the 1844 tithe map, will have caused more extensive road-side disturbance along the northern and western boundaries of the site.

10.2.2 The most extensive ground disturbance within the site will be associated with the construction of St Andrew's House and the associated course of St Andrew's Place. As noted previously, very little is known about the development of St Andrew's House, other than it did not exist in 1966 and is judged to be approximately 20 – 30 years old. The site visit revealed that much of the footprint of the structure, particularly its central northern and eastern sections had been cut into the natural ground level of the site. Extensive groundworks, levelling and truncation would therefore been necessary prior to the construction of St Andrew's House and it is thus very unlikely that any archaeological remains or deposits existing within the site would have survived the late 20<sup>th</sup> century ground disturbance. There is a possibility, however, that a relatively intact stratigraphy may have survived in the westernmost section of the site, where the ground level remains consistent with that of Storehouse Lane and the former resident's garden will have caused little, if any, ground disturbance.

## **10.3 Impact of the proposed development**

10.3.1 The proposed development will comprise the demolition of the existing St Andrew's House structure and the construction of ten new residential units comprising a mix of 3, 4 and 5-bedroom dwellings (Fig. 15). It is noted that the proposed development will occupy a significantly smaller footprint than the existing. It will also leave virtually undisturbed the westernmost section of the site, which is judged to have been subject to little, if any, previous ground disturbance, and thus has the highest potential to reveal any archaeological remains. The proposed development will also retain the existing location of

the adopted highway of St Andrew's Place, which provides access to residential properties further along its course and to the south-east of the site.

10.3.2 The development proposal will enhance access to the site from St Andrew's Place, which is currently a congested road dominated by parked cars, whilst car parking spaces will be provided in front of each of ten new residential units by means of a new minor access road running southwards off St Andrew's Place partially down the centre of the site. The proposed ten new residential units will be consistent with the character of the surrounding residential area, which the extant St Andrew's House is not. The majority of the new residential units will comprise detached, two or three storey houses surrounded by gardens, whilst the north-western section of the site to the south of St Andrew's Place will be occupied by two semi-detached, two storey houses (Fig. 15). The impact of the proposed development at the site is thus judged not to be greater than that which has previously occurred.

## **11 CONCLUSION**

11.1 On the basis of the known archaeological evidence, the site has only a low potential for archaeological remains dating from the prehistoric, medieval and post-medieval periods, a low to moderate potential for early modern archaeology and a moderate potential for remains dating to the Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon periods. The site also has a high potential for modern remains associated with the construction of St Andrew's House and the associated course of St Andrew's Place, neither of which existed in 1966 and are judged to be approximately 20 – 30 years old.

11.2 Extensive groundworks, levelling and truncation are associated with the construction of St Andrew's House, which was revealed to have been cut into the natural ground level of the site during the course of the site visit. It is very unlikely that any archaeological remains or deposits existing within the site would have survived the late 20<sup>th</sup> century ground disturbance, although it is possible that a relatively intact stratigraphy may have survived in the westernmost section of the site.

11.3 The proposed development will occupy a significantly smaller footprint than the existing buildings and therefore the impact of the proposed development of the site is judged not to be greater than that which has previously occurred.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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<http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk>

Heritage Gateway website;  
<http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>

Historical Directories website;  
<http://www.historicaldirectories.org>

## APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATABASE (HER)

A search of the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) was carried out for a 250m radius of the site. The locations of the sites are shown in Fig. 3. Their significance, where relevant, is discussed in Section 5.

HER	NGR TL	Description
<b>Prehistoric (before AD 43)</b>		
13614	18480 28940	A dark brown organic deposit west of Biggin Lane contained a high proportion of molluscs and a number of charred grains, dated by radiocarbon dating to the early Mesolithic
13717	18639 28979	Finds at 33 Queen Street, excavated in 2001, include a late Mesolithic/Neolithic flint core, residual in a later post-hole; and a pit truncated by Roman features
<b>Romano-British (AD 43 – 410)</b>		
1201	186 287	A Roman cinerary urn with cremation was found at Taylor's Hill 'in the grounds of Mr W T Heard', and a similar urn in an adjoining field
1415	1870 2910	A small Roman pot of the 3rd or 4th century found at St Andrew's Hill
11350	1864 2898	Evaluation and excavation of the former laundry complex at 33 Queen Street recorded a number of small pits and post-holes containing Roman pottery and building material in the NW corner of the site
11351	1864 2891	Evaluation at 40 Queen Street established that the western half of the site had been truncated by construction of the buildings at the front of the property, and the eastern part landscaped in the 19 <sup>th</sup> century, whilst the central northern part of the site, contained two inhumation burials, one supine and one prone
13612	18622 29126	Dump containing Roman pottery east of the river Hiz dated to 150 – 300 AD
13615	18496 28963	'A large north-south ditch...parallel to the river' found in an evaluation trench on the west side of Biggin Lane; this was apparently also identified further north, in a ground penetrating radar survey of the market area south of the churchyard
<b>Anglo-Saxon (AD 410 – 1150)</b>		
1612	1875 2904	An 8th or 9th century Saxon pin, three inches long, found at St Andrew's Hall
1613	1885 2900	A broad leaf-shaped implement of silvered iron found in a 'gravel site' in Hollow Lane with a fishing spear
2301	1885 2900	Barbed (fishing ?) spear found with silvered iron implement [1613] in a 'gravel site' in Hollow Lane
4869	189 290	A Saxon spear or medieval trowel found in gravel pits, south of Hollow Lane
11465	1864 2904	Six burials at 40 Queen Street might be interpreted as mid-Saxon, but are likely to be late or post-Roman, whilst the discovery of a large ditch [12584] of probable Saxon date on the west side of the medieval town suggests that the minster church, on the west bank of the river, had a precinct

		boundary which may also have functioned as a burh boundary, and was approached from the east by Hollow Lane
12350	1864 2898	Remains recorded at 33 Queen Street during excavation of the former laundry complex in 2001 were originally interpreted as mid-late Saxon sunken-featured buildings, and a north-south slot at the west end of the site viewed as the remains of a large rectangular timber building (perhaps two)
<b>Medieval (AD 1150 – 1500)</b>		
4389	1855 2900	Site of a Gilbertine Priory, founded in 1361-2 by Sir Edward de Kendale and dissolved in 1538
<b>Post-medieval/early modern (AD 1500 – 1900)</b>		
10185	1852 2897	Waterworks at the rear of Queen Street and by the River Hiz are shown on the 1898 OS map, which also marks 'Wells' adjacent to the works
11194	1862 2887	The complex of buildings at the British School comprises a Boys school, Master's House, Mistress's House and Girls and Infants school and was originally founded in 1810 by William Wilshere, a Hitchin lawyer
11565	1861 2891	Standing building survey of 40 Queen Street recorded a series of largely brick buildings constructed in vernacular form, mainly in the 19th century, by the Jeeves family, a successful building company who used and lived on the site from c.1830 until sometime between 1915 and 1926
12341	1855 2900	The Biggin Almshouses are thought to incorporate part of the medieval priory church associated with the Gilbertine priory
12351	1864 2898	Excavation of the former laundry complex at 33 Queen Street in 2001 recorded Roman, Saxon and medieval occupation, but reverted to agricultural use until three structures were built in the late medieval or early post-medieval period, on the long narrow plots between Queen Street on the west and Stokehouse Lane on the east
12580	1862 2885	Site of Independent Chapel built in 1690 and its 19C successor, with burial ground at 43 Queen Street

## APPENDIX 2 CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES

Date	Description	Fig. No.	Scale	Location
1766	Dury & Andrews' map of Hertfordshire	4	-	AS
1816	Township of Hitchin	5	-	HALS
1820	Plan of Hitchin	6	-	Clutterbuck 1827
1822	Bryant's map of Hertfordshire	7	-	AS
1844	Parish of Hitchin tithe map	8	-	HALS
1852	Ordnance sheet IV; Board of Health map	9	2ft:1 mile	HALS
1881	Hertfordshire sheet XII.1; 1 <sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map	10	25":1 mile	HALS
1898	Hertfordshire sheet XII.1; 2 <sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map	11	25":1 mile	HALS
1923	Hertfordshire sheet XII.1; 3 <sup>rd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map	12	25":1 mile	HALS
1966	Sheet TL 1828 1928; Ordnance Survey map	13	1:2,500	HALS
1999	Ordnance Survey Explorer Sheet 193; site location	1 & 3	1:25,000	AS
2011	Detailed site location plan	2	1:500	Client
2011	Topographic survey	14	1:200	Client
2011	Proposed development plan	15	1:500	Client

### Documents consulted at HALS;

Parish of Hitchin tithe award, 1841	Ref. DSA4/53/1
Parish of Hitchin tithe map, 1844	Ref. DSA4/53/2
Parish of Hitchin enclosure award, 1877	Ref. QS/E/37
Parish of Hitchin enclosure award, 1886	Ref. QS/E/38
Draft sub-lease for a messuage known as St Andrew's House, 29 <sup>th</sup> November 1895	Ref. DE/L/4019



## PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



**DP 1**  
*North-western corner of the site comprising St Andrew's Place with its junction with Storehouse Lane, Lyle's Row & Kershaw's Hill beyond, view north-west*



**DP 2**  
*North-eastern corner of the site comprising the adopted highway of St Andrew's Place with its junction with Kershaw's Hill beyond, view north*



**DP 3**  
*Northern boundary of the site comprising an area of overgrown shrubs and a rough hardstanding area in use as informal car parking*



**DP 4**  
*Access to the extant but vacant and disused St Andrew's House via the adopted highway of St Andrew's Place, view south-south-east*



**DP 5**  
*Entrance to St Andrew's House consisting of a wide pathway of block paving with an area of grass landscaping to the immediate east*



**DP 6**  
*Area of extensive groundworks and high brick retaining wall in the centre of the site depicting the lower level of St Andrew's House*





**DP 7**  
*Extensive area of block paving located to the south of St Andrew's Place and within the site's northern section, formerly used for resident's/visitor car parking*



**DP 8**  
*Northern frontage of St Andrew's House comprising a two storey, red brick built building partially cut into the natural ground level, view west-north-west*



**DP 9**  
*North-western corner of St Andrew's House with an area of shingle at its base, confirming it had been cut into the natural ground level in comparison to the parking area*



**DP 10**  
*Western boundary of the site comprising a large established hedge beside a large area of grass formerly in use as a resident's garden, view south*

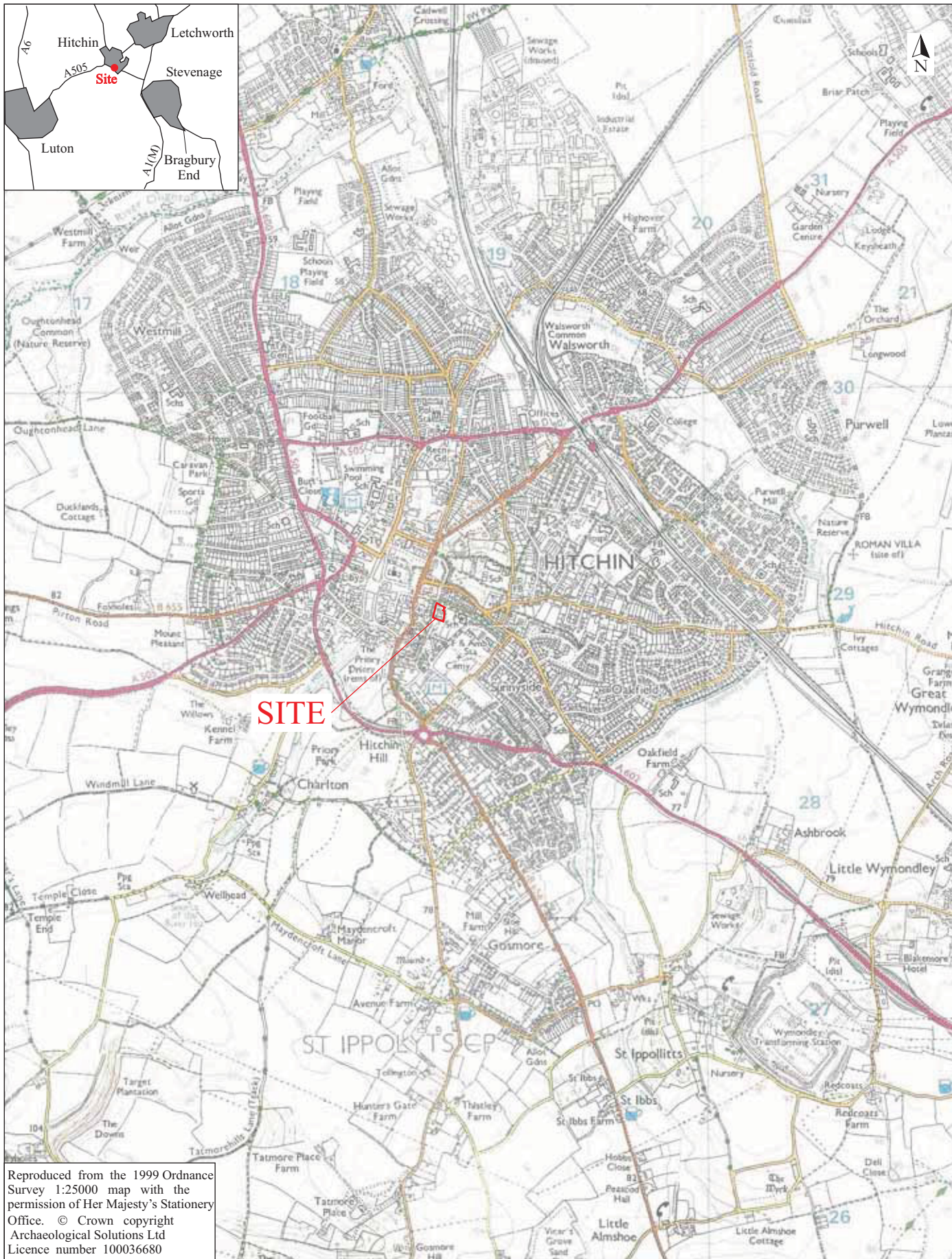


**DP 11**  
*Western frontage of St Andrew's House comprising a red brick built building ranging over three storeys, view south-east*



**DP 12**  
*Eastern boundary of the site comprising the eastern frontage of St Andrew's House, an extensive brick retaining wall and a small area of grass between*





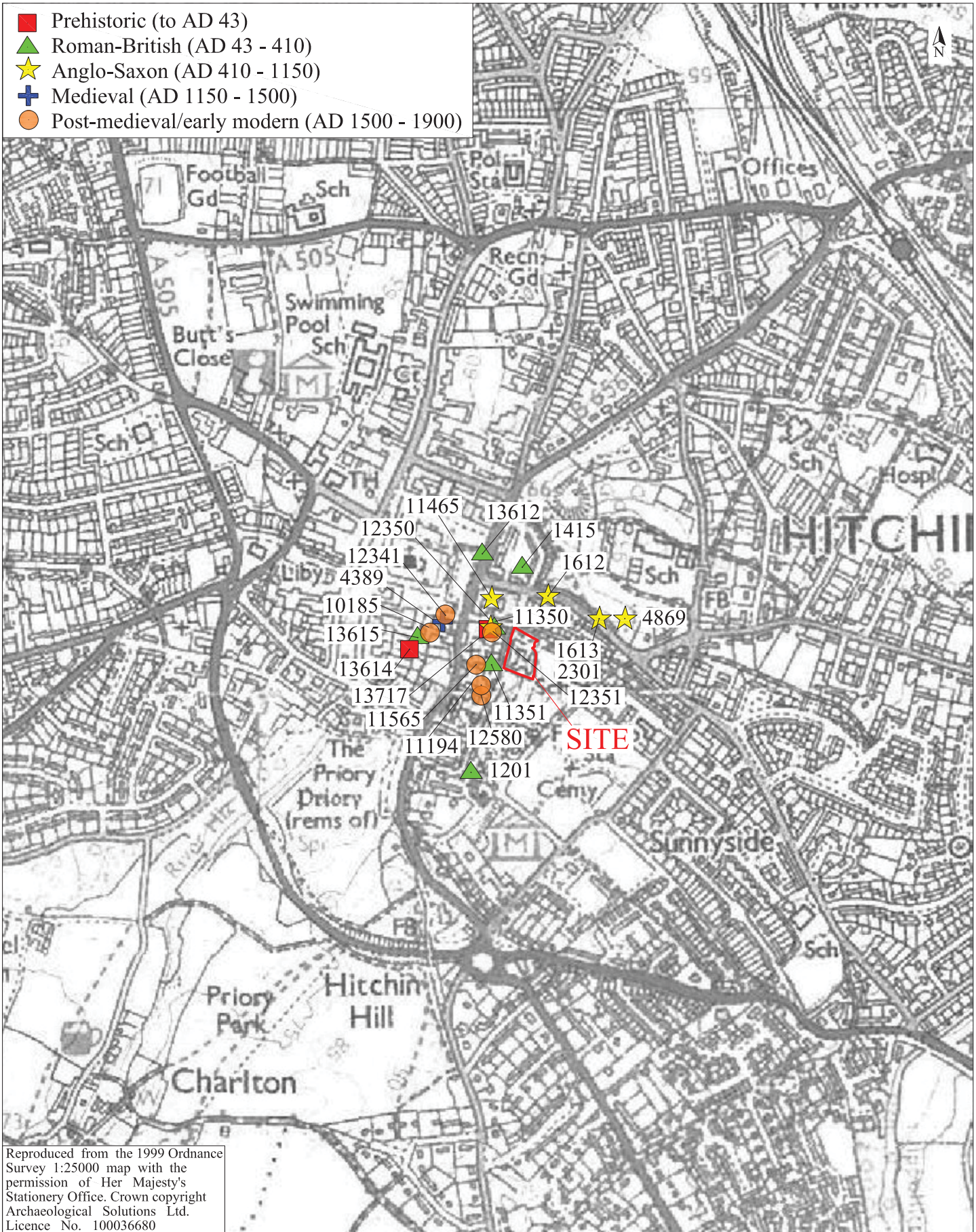
Reproduced from the 1999 Ordnance Survey 1:25000 map with the permission of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright Archaeological Solutions Ltd Licence number 100036680

Archaeological Solutions Ltd  
**Fig. 1 Site location plan**  
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4



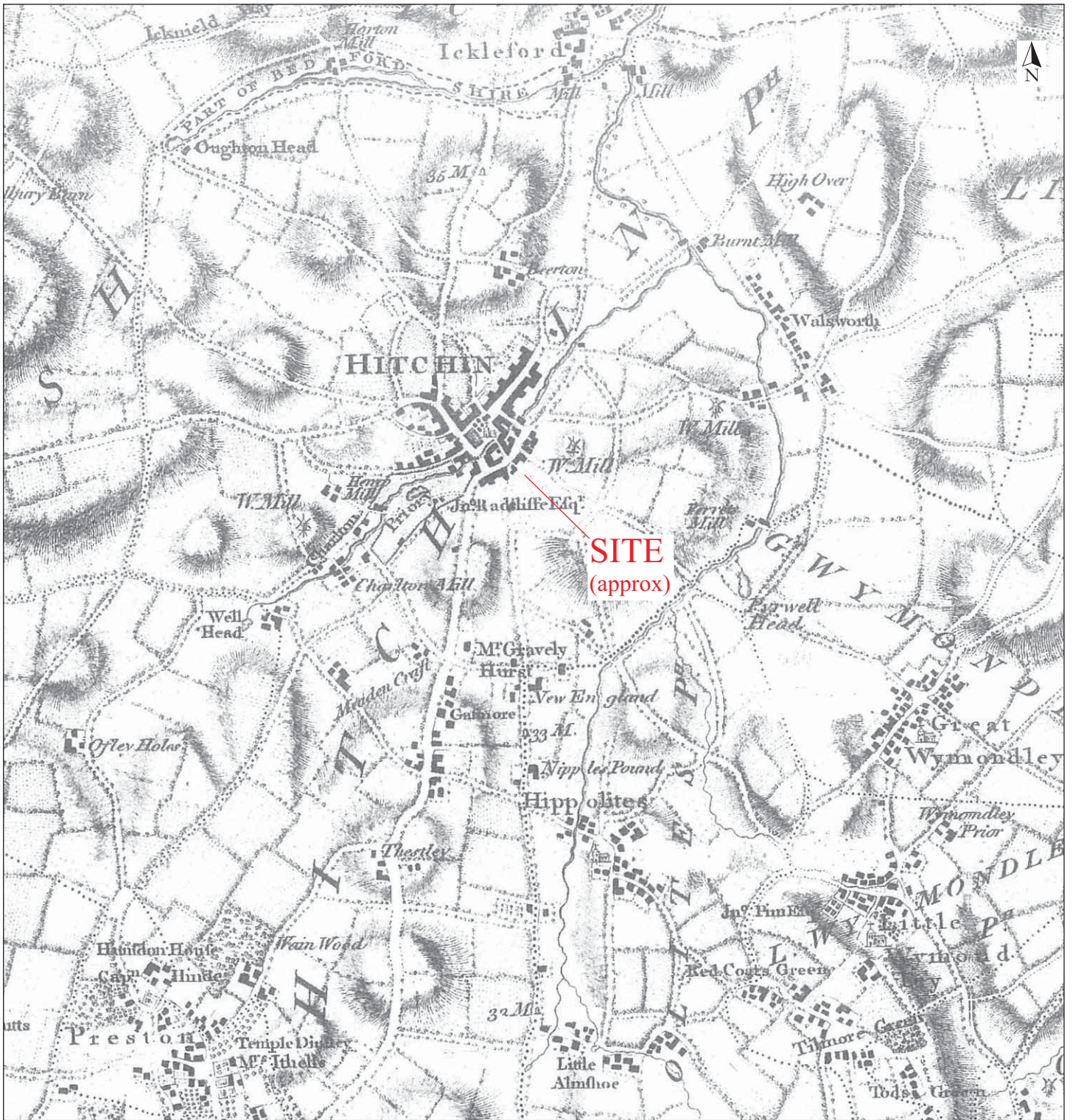






Archaeological Solutions Ltd  
**Fig. 3 HER Data**  
 Scale 1:10,000 at A4



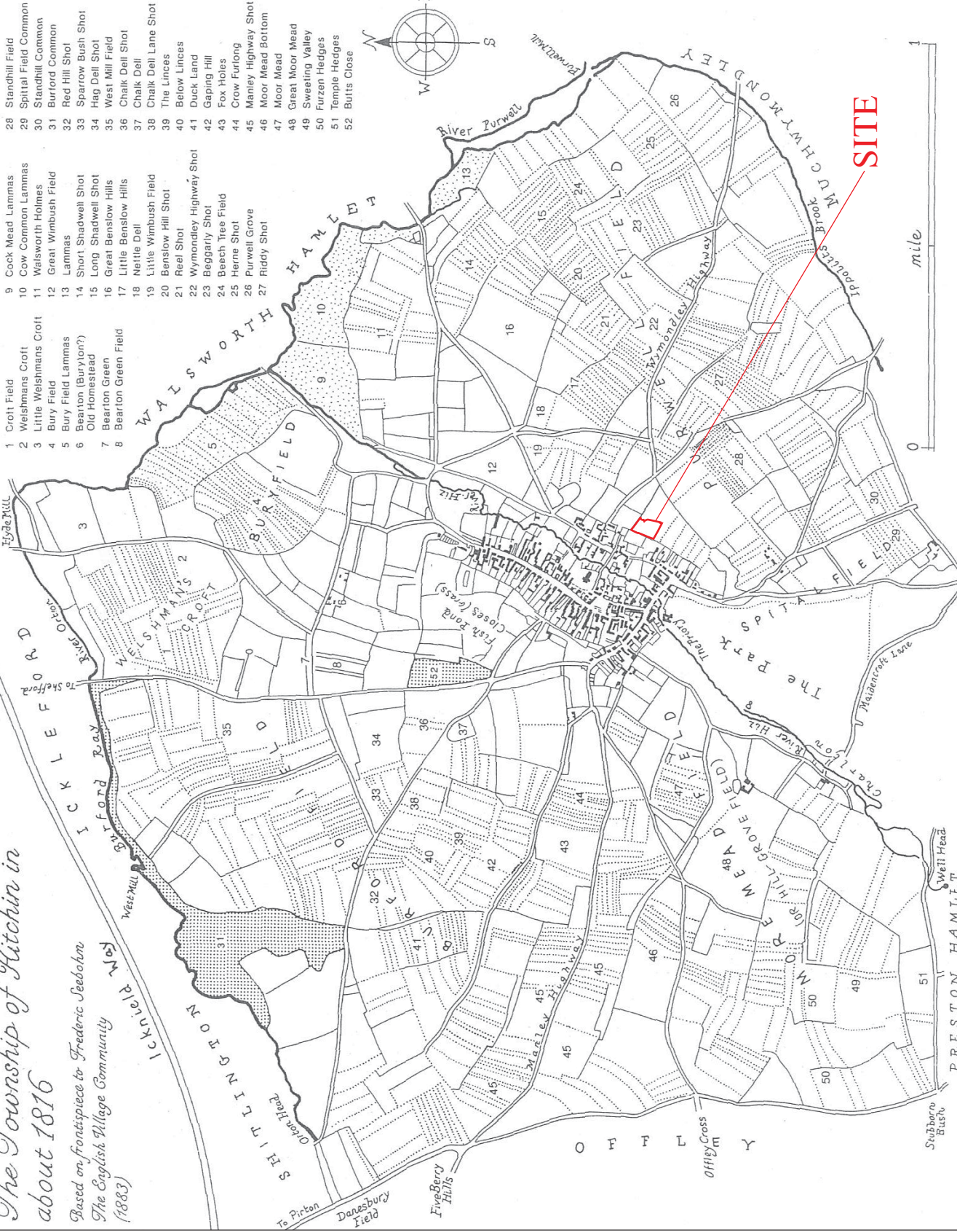


Archaeological Solutions Ltd  
Fig. 4 Dury and Andrew's map of Hertfordshire, 1766  
Not to scale



*The Township of Hitchin in  
about 1816*

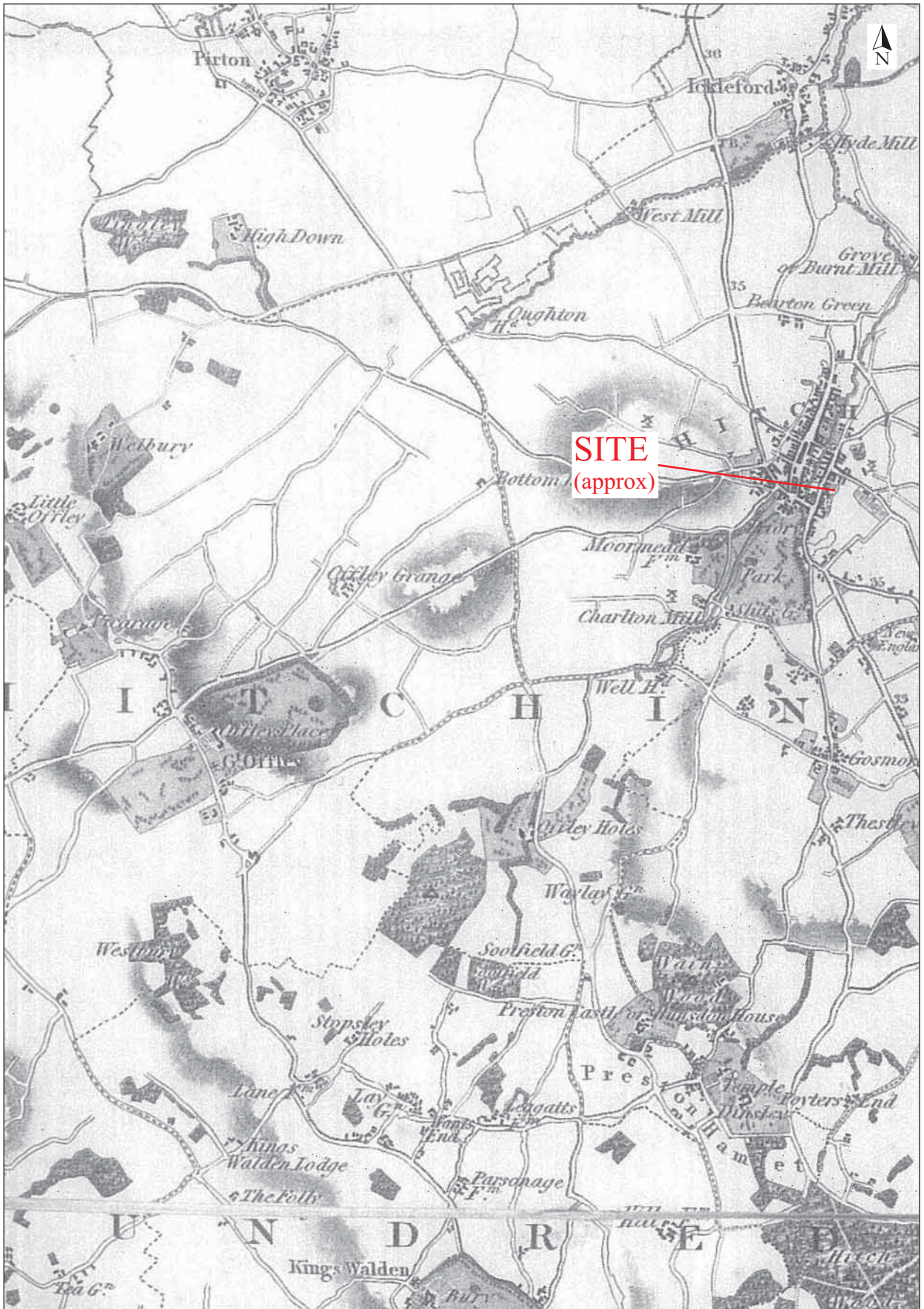
*Based on frontispiece to Frederic Seebohn  
The English Village Community  
(1883)*





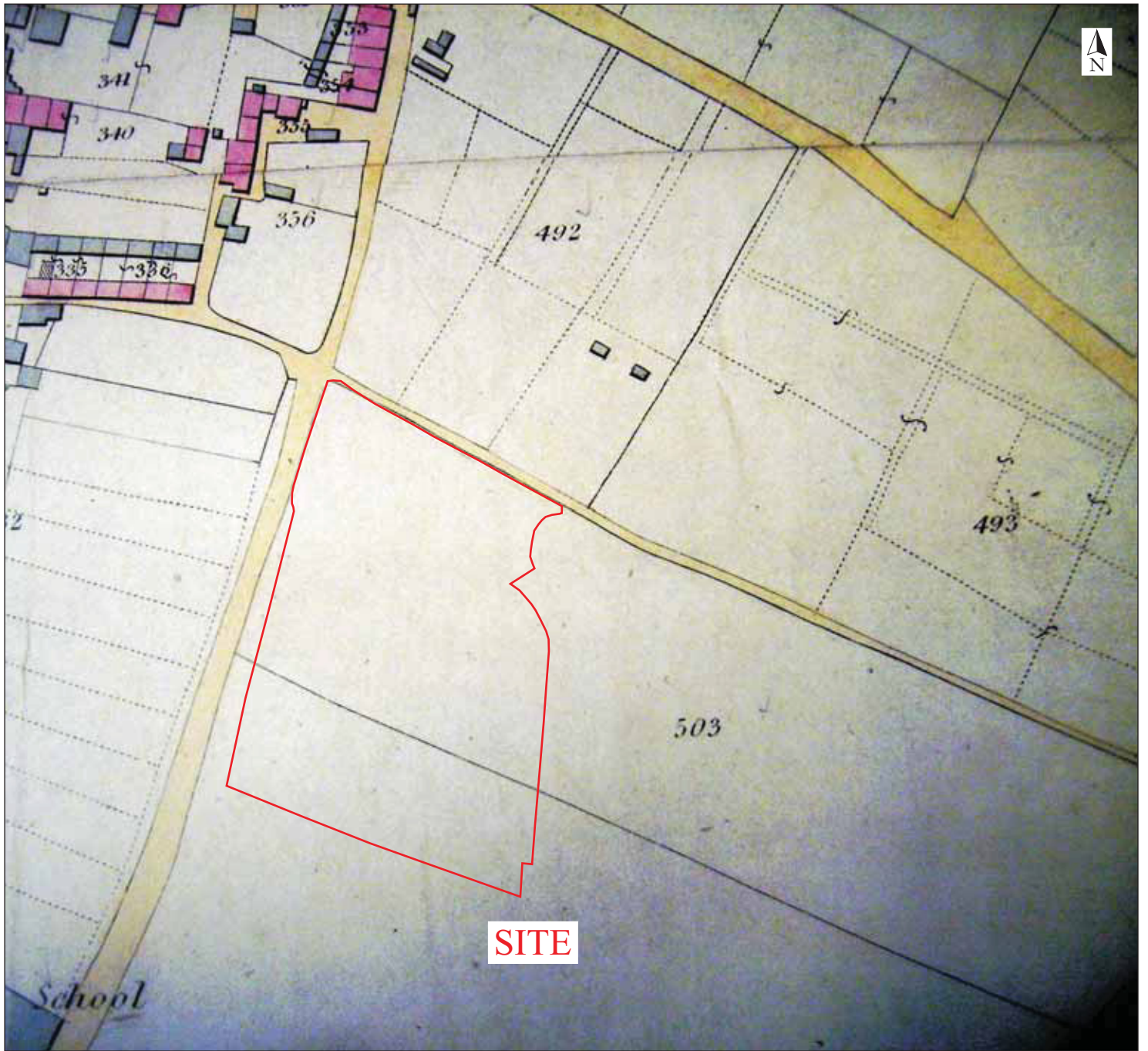






Archaeological Solutions Ltd  
Fig. 7 Bryant's map of Hertfordshire, 1822  
Not to scale





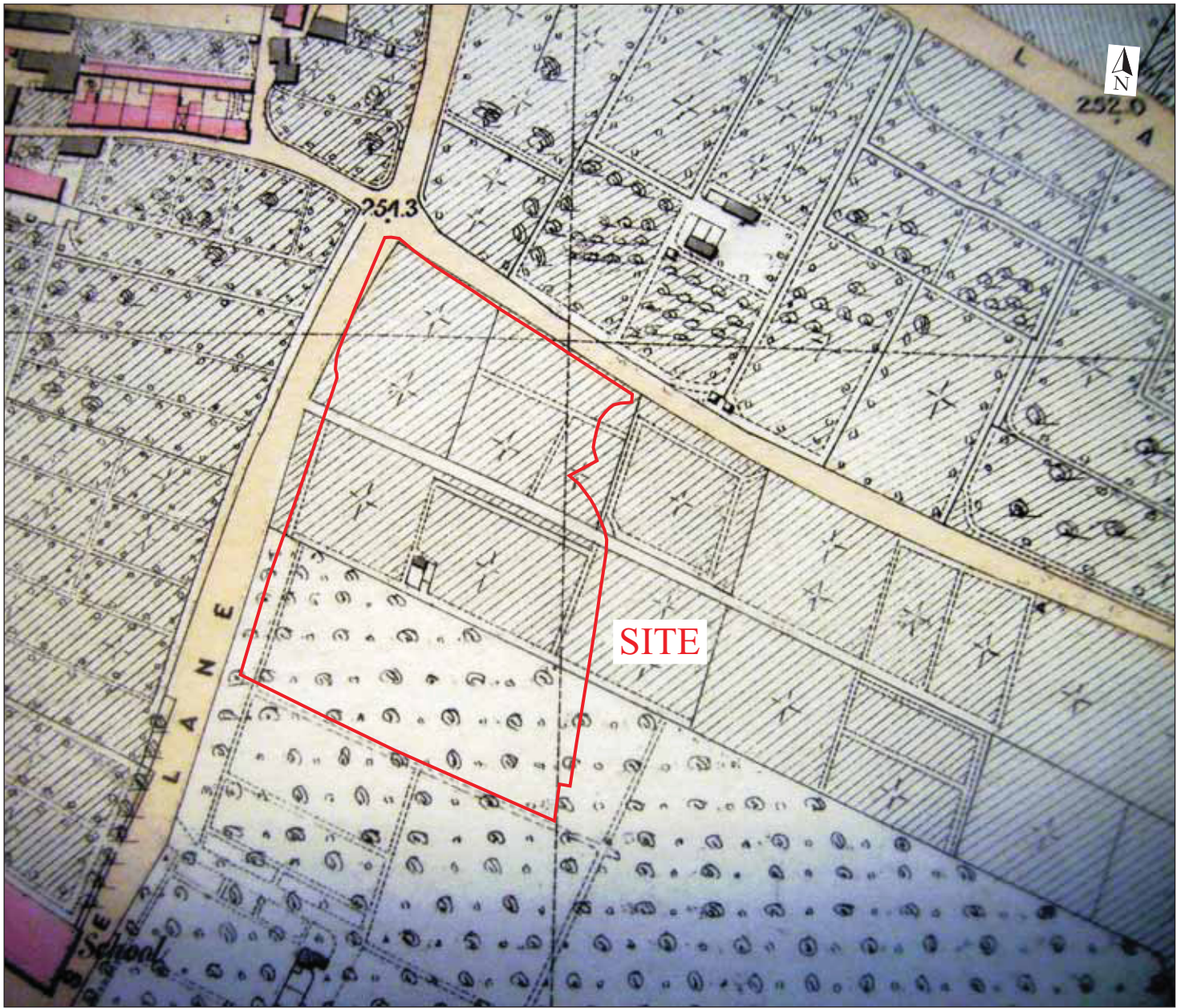
**SITE**

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**Fig. 8** Parish of Hitchin tithe map, 1844

Not to scale





*Archaeological Solutions Ltd*  
Fig. 9 Board of Health map, 1852  
Not to scale





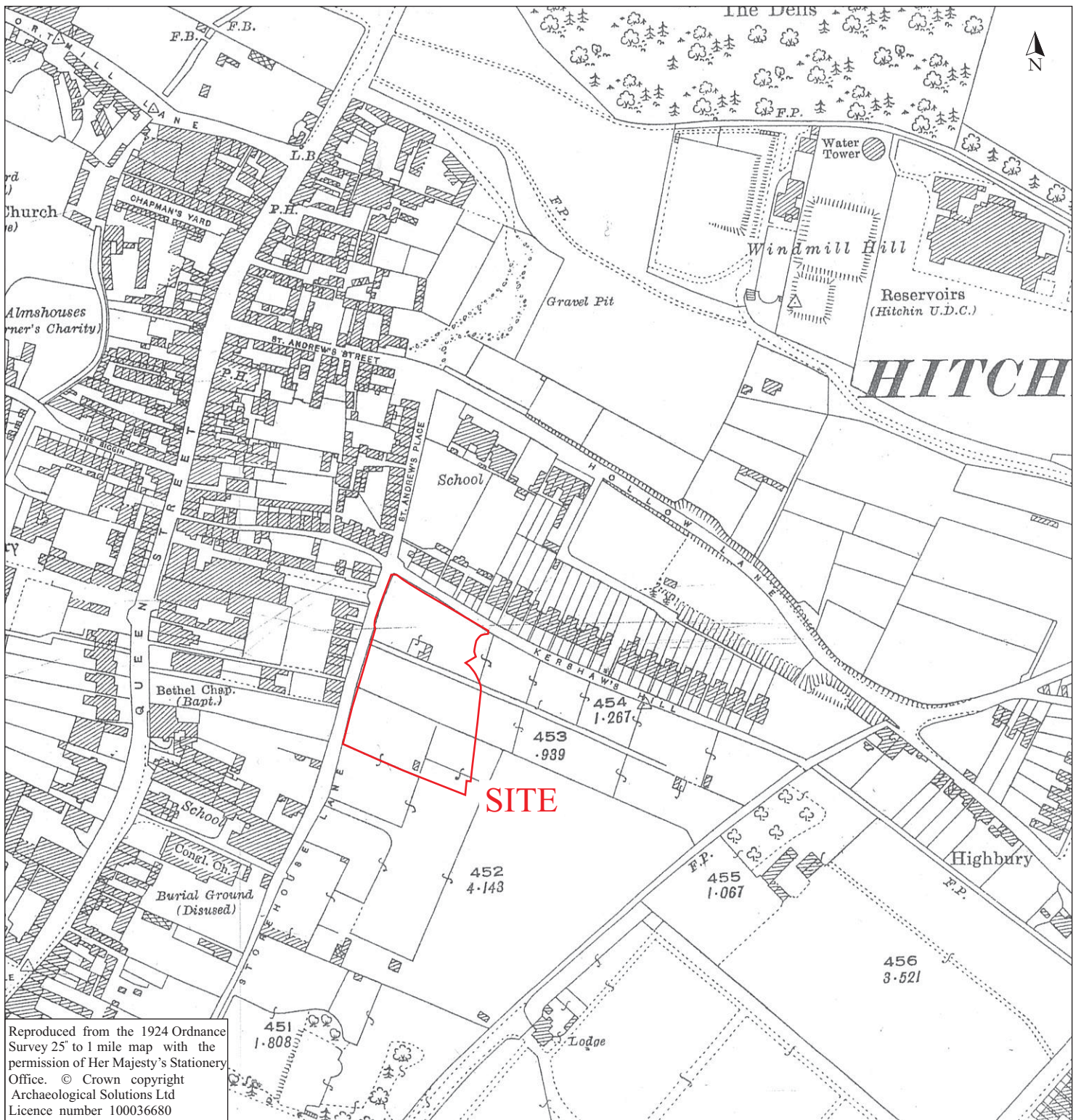
Reproduced from the 1879 Ordnance Survey 25 to 1 mile map with the permission of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright Archaeological Solutions Ltd Licence number 100036680

Archaeological Solutions Ltd  
 Fig. 10 1st edition OS map, 1879  
 Scale 25":1 mile at A4





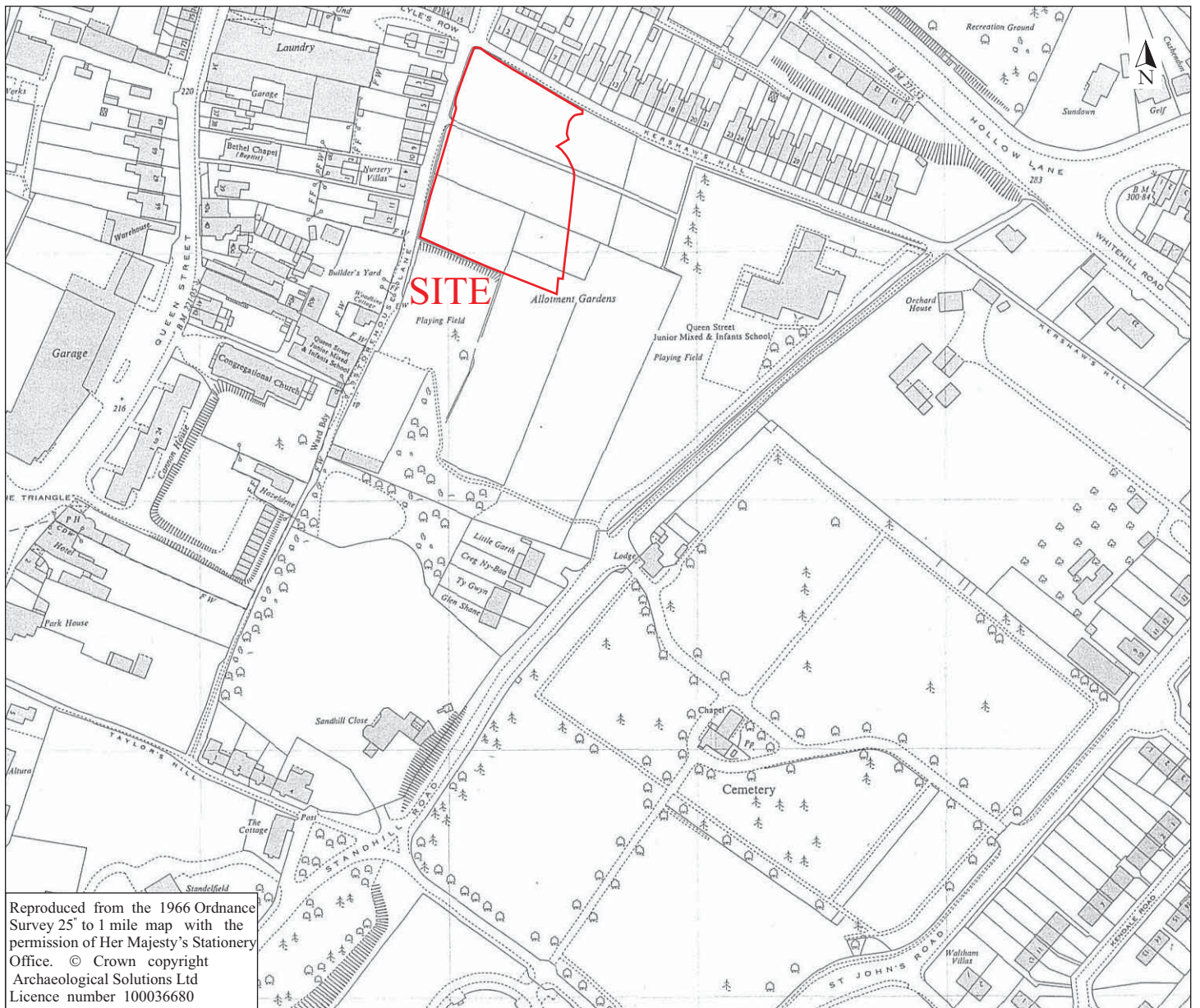




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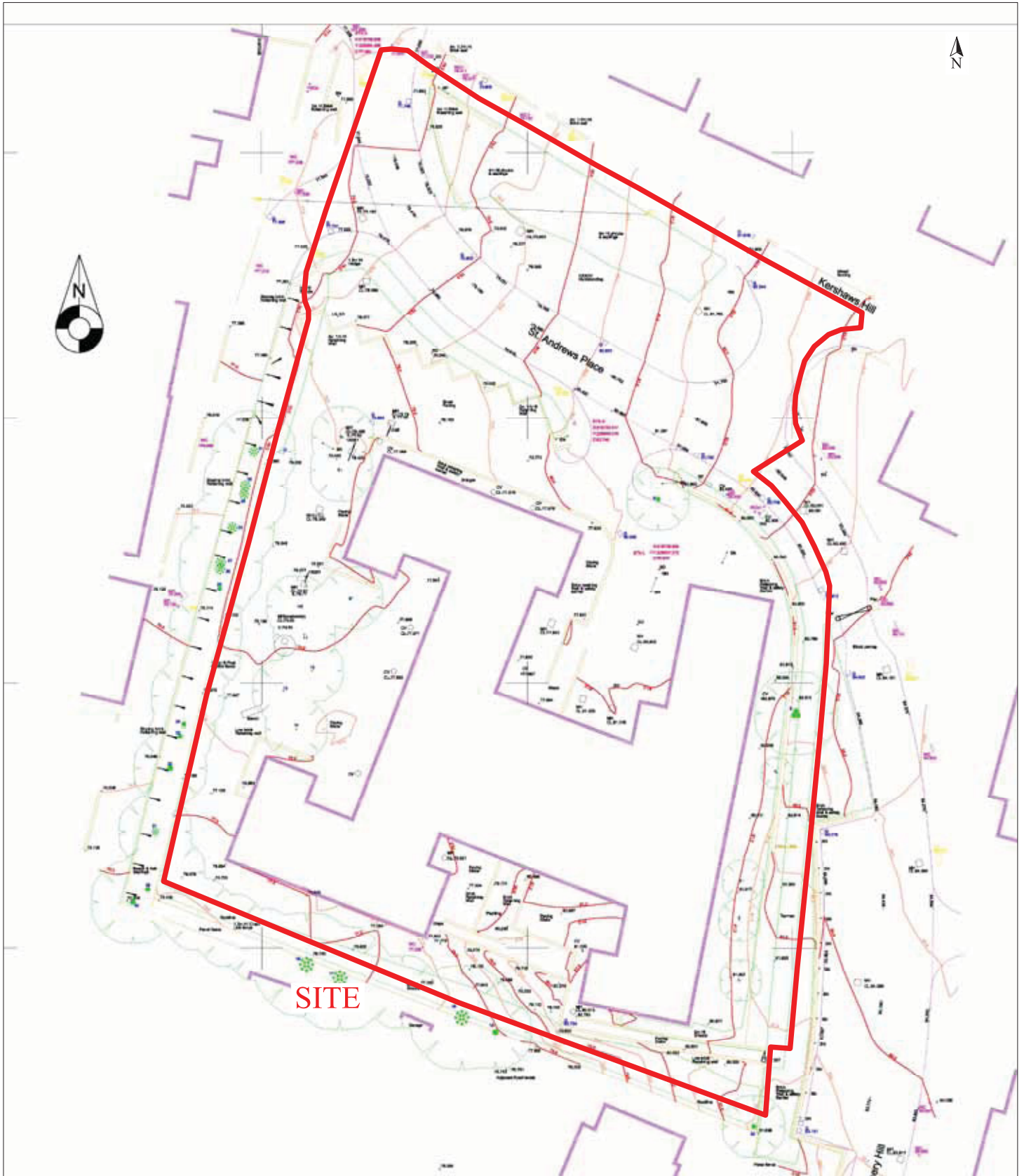
*Archaeological Solutions Ltd*  
**Fig. 12 3rd edition OS map, 1924**  
 Scale 25":1 mile at A4





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**Fig. 13 OS map, 1966**  
 Scale 1:2,500 at A4



0 25m

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Fig. 14 Topographic survey  
Scale 1:500 at A4





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**Fig. 15 Proposed development plan**  
 Scale 1:750 at A4