

DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT
AT
ORMISTON PARK ACADEMY,
NETHAN DRIVE, AVELEY,
THURROCK

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Desk-based assessment of Ormiston Park Academy, Nethan Drive, Aveley, Thurrock

Tom Rogers

Part 1 Project summary

A desk-based assessment for the historic environment was undertaken at Ormiston Park Academy, Nethan Drive, Aveley, Thurrock (NGR TQ 567 809). It was undertaken on behalf of Arthur Amos Associates whose client Thurrock Council intends to demolish the existing school buildings on the site and construct new school buildings.

This report describes and assesses the significance of the heritage assets (and potential heritage assets) that are potentially affected by the application. The setting of heritage assets is considered. The potential impact of the application, and the need for further on-site evaluation, is assessed.

The site is currently an academy on the northern edge of Aveley, a village in the borough of Thurrock. The site is rectangular in outline with the school buildings to the west and playing fields to the east. To the west of the site is the Kenningtons estate built in the 1950s and 1960s, while to the east and north are playing fields and a golf course.

Thurrock is an area in which Pleistocene gravels of national importance survive. The Thames terrace sequence in this area provides an important record of climatic conditions since the Anglian glaciation. At Sandy Lane to the west of the site, gravel workings in the 1960s uncovered fossilised mammoth and straight tusked elephant remains which are now in the Natural History Museum.

Prehistoric and Roman remains are relatively common in the area. A site spanning the Bronze Age to the Saxon period was excavated at Hall's Pit to the west of Aveley in the 1950s and another multi-period site was excavated ahead of widening works on the A13 to the south west of the village in the 1990s.

The school lies within a part of the Belhus Estate (SMR 7737), once one of the largest in Essex. The eastern part of the site is included in the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest maintained by English Heritage. The estate was built up in the medieval period initially by the family of Bellhouse from Ramsden Bellhouse near Billericay and their successors, the Barrett family who continued to add lands to the estate. The house was rebuilt by John Barrett who died in 1526 and in 1618 his grandson Sir Edward Barrett obtained a licence for the creation of a park. This is depicted on a map prepared in the following year and included a formal garden, wilderness and rock garden.

Extensive improvements were made to the site in the 18th Century by Thomas Barrett-Lennard, later Lord Dacre. His friend, the architect Sanderson Miller advised on the building while Lancelot 'Capability' Brown's remodelling of the grounds included the creation of a long pond and a shrubbery.

Sir Thomas Barrett-Lennard who inherited the estate in 1919 dispersed the contents of the house in 1923. In 1937 Essex Council bought 600 acres as part of the metropolitan Green Belt. Much of the remainder was bought by London County Council after the Second World War and developed to rehouse Londoners and for the provision of labour to factories at

Purfleet and West Thurrock. During the Second World War, the house was used as a military hospital and was bombed and it was demolished in 1957.

Map evidence shows that the site lay within the boundaries of the estate but did not form a part of the parkland surrounding the house. The 1839 Tithe award for Aveley records that the field was in arable at that time. No landscape features are shown on maps within the site area apart from a driveway which crossed to a lodge at the west of the site and some large trees which were fenced in the early 20th Century.

It is thought that the potential for the survival of landscape features related to Belhus Park within the site is slim but that there is a potential for the survival of prehistoric, Roman or Saxon remains within the site due to the relatively dense scatter of recorded sites and cropmarks in this area. There is also a potential that the development within the site will provide important information of Pleistocene deposits in the area.

It is recommended that consultation be carried out with English Heritage at an early stage in the planning process to seek advice on the setting of development within the landscape of the park. It is also advised that an archaeological evaluation be carried out within the footprint of the proposed development to establish the presence or absence of archaeological deposits and that furthermore a watching brief be carried out on any works likely to provide information on the significance of underlying deposits. A rapid photographic survey of academy buildings prior to demolition is also recommended.

Part 2 Detailed report

1. Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

A desk-based assessment for the historic environment was undertaken at Ormiston Park Academy, Nethan Drive, Aveley, Essex (NGR TQ 567 809). It was undertaken on behalf of Arthur Amos Associates for their client Thurrock Council, who intend a complete redevelopment of the existing site including demolition of existing buildings and the construction of new buildings, car parks, highways, hard play areas and playing fields together with the associated supporting infrastructure.

The proposed development site is considered to include heritage assets and potential heritage assets, the significance of which may be affected by the application.

1.2 Project parameters

The project conforms to the Standard and guidance for archaeological desk-based assessment (IfA 2008). The project also conforms to a specification supplied by Arthur Amos Associates and for which a project proposal (including detailed specification) was produced (HEAS 2010).

1.3 Aims

The specific aims of this desk-based assessment are to:

- Establish areas of archaeological potential
- Gauge possible survival or condition of remains
- Consider the significance of existing structures or landscape features
- Establish method statements for future works and surveys

2. Methods

2.1 Study area

The study area included the application site (Fig 1), though heritage assets were considered within 750m of the site in order to provide a broader understanding of the local context. In addition an extended area of search (1km) was made to encompass the settings of the designated heritage assets.

2.2 Documentary search

Prior to fieldwork commencing a search was made of the Essex Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) Essex County Records Office and relevant sections of Thurrock Museum. The following sources are relevant to the study area.

Cartographic sources

- Map of Belhus estate in Aveley, Wennington, Upminster and South Ockendon, ERO ref D/DL/P1 (or T2496)
- Chapman, J and Andre, P 1777 A map of the County of Essex, ERO ref C/DR 1/11
- Aveley tithe apportionment 1839, ERO ref D/ CT 12A
- OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1869
- Ordnance Survey 25" to one mile, Sheet 83.2, 1897
- Ordnance Survey 25" to one mile, Sheet 88.13, 1920
- Ordnance Survey 25" to one mile, Sheet 87.16, 1920
- Ordnance Survey 6" to one mile, Provisional Sheet 87SE 1938
- Ordnance Survey 1:2500 TQ5681 & TQ5781 1959
- Ordnance Survey 1:2500 TQ5680 & TQ5780 1959
- Ordnance Survey 1:1250 TQ 5680NE 1966

Documentary sources

- *A History of the County of Essex: Volume 8* (1983), pp. 1-16. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=63837> Date accessed: 2 March 2010.
- Sparkes, I.G. 1964 *Belhus and the Barrett-Lennard family* Thurrock local history reprints No 2
- Bird's-eye view of Belhus in the late C17/early C18 century (Thurrock Museum)
- Stroud, D, *Capability Brown* (1975) extract published in *Panorama Journal of the Thurrock Local History Society* 23, (1980)
- Briggs, N, 1980 in *Panorama Journal of the Thurrock Local History Society* 23, (1980)
- The following sources have also been cited in this assessment.
- Archaeological survey of the mineral extraction sites around the Thames estuary, Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund 1 Assessment report, March 2004
- DCLG 2010 Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the historic environment, Department for Communities and Local Government

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- DCLG/DCMS/EH 2010 *PPS5 Planning for the historic environment: historic environment planning practice guide*. Department for Communities and Local Government/Department for Culture, Media and Sport/English Heritage
 - English Heritage *Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest*, entry for Belhus Park, Essex, Site reference 1730
 - English Nature; Site of Special Scientific interest designation for the site at Purfleet Road, http://www.english-nature.org.uk/citation/citation_photo/2000268.pdf
 - IfA 2008 Standard and guidance for archaeological desk-based assessment, Institute for Archaeologists
 - HEAS, 2010 *Proposal for an archaeological desk-based assessment at Ormiston Park Academy, Nethan Drive, Aveley, Essex*, Historic Environment and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document dated 2nd March 2010, **P3480**
 - Thurrock Council Landscape Character Assessment 2004
 - Thurrock Council Thurrock Unitary Historic Environment Characterisation Project, 2009
 - Specification supplied by Arthur Amos Associates
 - Essex County Council, Kent County Council, English Heritage, 1999 *An archaeological research framework for the Greater Thames Estuary*

2.3 Other methods

A site visit was undertaken on 14th May 2010. A detailed specification has been prepared by the Service (HEAS 2010).

2.4 Results

The results are mapped on Figure 10 and the details of individual features of the historic environment are given in Appendix 1. Event records have been omitted where this would repeat information in other record types, and would not materially affect the assessment.

2.5 The methods in retrospect

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the assessment have been achieved.

3. Archaeological and historical context

3.1 Topography

The site lies on the north side of the village of Aveley, a large village on the western side of the Borough of Thurrock, a unitary authority within the ceremonial county of Essex. The

village is on rising ground to the north of the River Mardyke which joins the Thames to the south-west at Purfleet. The historic core of the village is centred on High Street, a section of an east-west route which continues as Purfleet Road to the west and Stifford Road to the east. Large areas of 20th century housing extend both north and south of High Street. Beyond Aveley to the north and west, the area is relatively undeveloped.

The application site is an academy which lies on the eastern side of Kenningtons housing estate, south of the Belhus Golf Club and is accessed from Nethan Drive to the west. To the south the A13 dual carriageway to London curves to the north-west while 600m to the east is part of the eastern stretch of the M25 running almost directly north-south. To the north of the golf course is Belhus Woods Country Park, an area of open ground and woodland crossed with footpaths within the former Belhus Park. The wider countryside is comprised of regular fields with thick hedgerows interspersed with former gravel workings, such as those to the north of Sandy Lane to the north west of Aveley. Much of the land in this area is reclaimed from former wetland such as Aveley Marsh which was to the west of the village. Moated farmsteads, some of which are described below are common in this area (Thurrock LLCA, 22).

The site itself is rectangular, with the long axis running east west. To the west it is bounded by a slightly curving stretch of Nethan Drive, part of the Kenningtons estate and to the north by a footpath, beyond which is Belhus Golf Club. To the east, is Park Drive which serves as the entrance to the Belhus Golf Club and to the south open ground used as paddocks between the site and the B1335 Aveley Bypass.

The site is largely flat but there is a general slight eastward facing slope which has been addressed by a series of slight terraces. The first of these is at the very western edge of the site where a slope is noticeable at the entrance to the school. The western third of the site is occupied by school buildings, largely dating from the mid 20th Century (Plate 1). These include the main school building, a rectangular structure of concrete and steel with glass and panelling, various temporary buildings, and wooden pagodas. Green areas within the buildings include a former garden to the south (Plate 5) and landscaped green areas (Plate 6) To the east of the buildings below another slight terrace the site is open, largely comprising playing fields and tennis courts (Plates 3-4). The playing fields are again divided in the centre by a slight terrace no more than 0.3m in height and bounded on three sides by vegetation comprising scrub, semi-mature and mature trees as well as a security fence. Immediately to the east, the land is open and there are public playing fields.

3.2 **Geology and soils**

Thurrock is known to contain Pleistocene (Ice Age) deposits of international significance (Thurrock HEC, 12). Prior to 450,000 years BP, the Thames flowed across north Essex and deposited the sands and gravels which now cover the southern part of the county. The Anglian ice sheet which pushed the course of the Thames southwards to its current position, did not reach Thurrock and the Pleistocene deposits here were preserved. The Thames in its current position has formed a series of depositional terraces and these now provide a record of climatic events since the Anglian glaciation. As a result the Thurrock area is a key region for Palaeolithic archaeology and studies of the Pleistocene.

The gravels in the area of Aveley and Belhus are described as Lynch Hill Gravels (Thurrock HEC, 116), which are part of the Corbetts Tey formation in which Clactonian, Acheulian and Levallois artefacts have been found (ALSF, 28). These overlie Tertiary (sometimes now

described as Paleogene) deposits, principally London Clay (Thurrock HEC, 130). Furthermore gravels in the Aveley/West Thurrock area are attributed to oxygen isotope stage 7, which was a warm period of the Pleistocene period associated with human activity (ALSF, Fig. 6).

3.3 **Archaeological, architectural and historic interest**

3.3.1 **Palaeolithic**

As outlined above, Palaeolithic deposits have been found in this area. The remains of two straight-tusked elephants (*Palaeoloxodon antiquus*) and one woolly mammoth (*Mammuthus primigenius*) were unearthed during quarrying north of Sandy lane, approximately 1km to the west of the site in the 1960's (Natural England Site SSSI notification for Purfleet Road) . These are now displayed in the Natural History Museum at Kensington.

Test pits excavated in the vicinity of Ponds farm to the south of Aveley (SMR 14577) ahead of the construction of the A13 showed that gravel deposits of Pleistocene origin were stratigraphically equivalent to deposits at Sandy Lane and to other Thames terrace sites that have produced important lower Palaeolithic artefact assemblages. No artefacts were found at Ponds farm, but important environmental data was recovered

3.3.2 **Later Prehistoric**

Later prehistoric deposits are well represented in the area. A multi period settlement site spanning the late Bronze Age (SMR 5070), Iron Age (SMR 5071) to the 5th Century AD (SMR 5072) was excavated at Hall's Pit in 1956/7 by Thurrock Historical Society at the junction of Sandy Lane and Mill Lane, some 800m west of the site. Bronze Age material largely consisted of finds, whereas Iron Age features included a palisade ditch and there were a number of undated features including hearths and pits (SMR 7319). Three swords and a spear were found in 1952 and another sword handle was found in 1953.

Cropmarks are common in the area, being found North of Watt's Wood (SMR 14566), in the grounds of Culverhouse School (SMR 14665), north of Culverhouse School (SMR 19874), south of Running Water Woods (SMR 5094, 5097) and east of Brick Kiln Wood (SMR 5095). Cropmarks of rectilinear enclosures (SMR 5104) and a ring ditch within Belhus Park (SMR 5102) were excavated in 1979 ahead of the construction of the M25 and found to include residual Bronze Age pottery (SMR 5103). To the west of Moor Hall approximately 1.5km to the west of the site is the cropmark of a possible double ditched enclosure (SMR 5107).

Individual find spots include a late Bronze Age founder's hoard comprising 110 bronzes found north of Sandy Lane to the west of the site in 1968 (SMR 5076) and fifty one pieces of worked flint located in a survey ahead of the A13 improvement including manufacturing tools and retouched pieces (SMR 14573).

Four tumuli are shown on the 1959 25" Ordnance survey of the area and three of these were recorded as surviving in an assessment ahead of proposed widening of the M25 undertaken in 1992 (SMR 5086). These are likely to be features related to the landscape of Belhus Park but there is a potential that they have prehistoric origins.

Over 5m of peat deposits (SMR 5113) were studied in advance of A13 works in the Mar Dyke valley. A Neolithic flint knife (SMR 5114) was found in the lower deposits and Iron Age sand tempered ware (SMR 5115) was also recovered.

3.3.3 **Roman**

Recorded Roman deposits in the area include the later phases of the Hall's Pit site (SMR 5072, section 3.32 above) which included finds spanning the Roman period to the 5th Century AD.

A series of trenches followed by open area excavation on the A13 improvement scheme revealed a Late Pre Roman Iron Age and early Roman settlement (SMR 14573, 14574) to the south west of Aveley. This included the remains of two round houses and a series of substantial settlement enclosure ditches. There is some evidence that at least one boundary from this period continued in use until the 13th/14th centuries and that the rectilinear field system in this area was a late prehistoric or Roman survival at that time.

Individual find spots in the area have included Roman glass bottle found to the east of Park Lane 40m south of the application site (SMR 5069), Roman tile from Belhus Woods Country Park to the north of the application site (SMR 5090) and Roman coins found by metal detectorists to the east and west of Ship Lane to the south of the village (SMR 19473 and SMR 19475). Roman bricks are to be found amongst the masonry of St Michael's Church, Aveley (SMR 9957).

3.3.4 **Saxon**

Saxon remains recorded in the Aveley area include artefacts found by metal detector east of Love Lane (SMR 19477), material from the Hall's Pit site (SMR 5073) which may have included Saxon red ware and peat deposits, probably of Saxon date (SMR 46240) found in the Mardyke Valley. Saxon deposits are known from the area and on the eastern side of Thurrock, a well preserved settlement was excavated at Mucking between 1965 and 1978.

3.3.5 **Medieval**

Medieval Aveley was a large and flourishing village (VCH, 1) centred on the present High Street. This pattern of settlement changed little before the 20th Century (VCH, 2) possibly curtailed by the expansion of the Belhus estate.

A scatter of medieval buildings including the Crown and Anchor Hotel (SMR 35267, listed building grade II, ref 119730,) survive but in general the core of the village retains little of its medieval character. However various medieval elements survive in the landscape. Aveley Manor to the south east of the village which had disappeared by 1593 survives as a moat (SMR 5079) and is a scheduled monument (TK 179). St Michael's Church (SMR 35265, listed building grade I, ref 119728) in Aveley dates from the 12th Century and was restored in the 19th Century.

Courts Farmhouse (SMR 35309, listed building grade II ref 119771) which stands 350m to the south of the site on the south side of the Aveley bypass is described as a late 14th or early 15th Century house with 17th century and later extensions at the rear. Other prominent farms in the area include Bretts Farm a 14th Century site (SMR 5059, listed building grade II, 119793) and (SMR 5060) which was altered in the 16th and 17th Centuries which lies 1km to

the north west of the site. Another prominent farm in the area is Kenningtons also to the north west of the site and also moated (SMR 5061). The house (listed building grade II, ref 119795) is a much altered 13th Century aisled hall. Another possible moated site is shown 130m north of the application site on the 1897 Ordnance Survey 25" map (SMR 5080). This depicts an irregular pond with an island, which is shown on the 1959 25" Ordnance Survey as a pond. However in the absence of documentary evidence for this site it seems unlikely to have medieval origins.

Some 500m to the northwest of the site is the site of a Chapel (SMR 19860) possibly 14th Century in date which survives only as a single length of ragstone rubble wall. This now lies within the Kenningtons housing estate. A fieldwalking survey along the line of the A13 improvement Scheme revealed Medieval pottery.

There were five estates in Aveley in the Domesday Survey of 1086, three called Aveley and two called Kenningtons (VCH, 4) but it was the Belhus estate which was to dominate the area between the 13th and 20th Centuries. Much of the following information relating to the estate, unless otherwise stated, is derived from the Victoria County History of Essex, Vol 8.

The Belhus family originated in Ramsden Bellhouse, east of Billericay about 20km north east of Aveley. Nicholas Belhus settled in the area of Aveley in c1327. His son Thomas received through marriage lands built up in the 1330s and 1340s by Richard Norton and the lands were divided between his two daughters, one of whom married into the Barrett family. In 1458, Robert Barrett bought his cousin's share of the estate. Between 1483 and 1644, the Barretts built the Belhus estate into one of the largest in Essex. John Barrett who died in 1526 left 1325 acres and a house referred to in his will 'newly builded'. The house he built was of brick ranged around a small courtyard with a porch surmounted by a four storey tower. His grandson Edward Barrett inherited the manor of Bretts which lay to the north west of the estate (SMR 5059) and added the manor of Bumpstead

3.3.6 **17th and 18th centuries**

Edward Barrett's grandson also Edward (later Lord Barrett of Newburgh) added Kenningtons Manor (SMR 5061) and Courts Farm (SMR 35309) to the estate. In 1618 he obtained a licence to make a park, which he achieved by adding Culverhouse and part of Bumpstead Farm. In the mid 17th Century this was stocked with 300 deer and the garden included a 'wilderness', rock garden' and pallsiadoe garden.

A plan of the estate was produced in the following year (Fig 2. ERO ref. D/DL/ P1). This shows the estate in considerable detail depicting individual trees, people and deer. The house is shown with formal gardens to the north and an avenue of trees running directly south. The application site is much in its present state crossed from north to south by a thin strip of trees with a slight dog-leg in the centre. Another line of single trees crosses east west from the centre of this strip to Park Lane. Slightly west of the application site another boundary or track crosses from north to south. In the parcel of land to the north a strip of trees (later adapted as 'The Shrubbery') is shown, with a branch to the east which leads to a square plantation. Park Lane, which currently bounds the site to the east and serves as the entrance to the golf club is shown forming a crossroads with Sandy Lane which forms the southern edge of the estate and the southern edge of the application site. To the east, this joins the avenue of trees from the house. The junction of Park Lane and Sandy Lane forms a characteristic triangle of land which still extends southward from the south eastern corner of the application site. A bird's eye view of the estate (Thurrock Museum) painted in the early

17th century shows the house as on the plan with detail of an elaborate parterre to the north of the house, but does not depict the application site.

In 1630 Lord Barrett obtained the permission to close the eastern side of Sandy Lane which formed the southern boundary of the park (and applications site) and in following years it was taken into the park.

None of Lord Barrett's children survived and at his death in 1644 he left the estate to a distant relative, Richard Lennard who took the name Barrett. The Barrett-Lennards held the estate until its demise in the 20th Century. Thomas Barrett-Lennard, later Lord Dacre, a keen antiquarian, inherited the estate in 'a state of neglect and disrepair (Stroud, 1950, 4). Beginning in 1744 with the removal of the walled gardens to the south of the house he began to improve both house and grounds with the help of his friend Sanderson Miller. Much is known about these works due to his correspondence with Miller amongst others, published in Sparkes (1964). Through Miller, he employed Lancelot 'Capability' Brown to work on the estate. Brown visited the site in October 1753 (Stroud) and in Lord Dacre's words 'slaved at setting out the road and the rest of the Shrubbery all day, and drew plans all evening' (Briggs 1980). Brown modified the stream to the north of the house to create a long serpentine lake known as the Long Pond (SMR 19481) and created the Shrubbery to the west of the house, although as noted above, woodland existed in a similar location on the 1619 map. From 1770 further works on the landscape were carried out by Richard Woods.

The landscape created by Lord Dacre is depicted in some detail on Chapman and André's map of Essex of 1777 (Fig. 3). Here the boundaries of the estate are well defined with the application site shown as an extension from the main body to the south west. The estate is depicted as being fenced. Sandy Lane no longer forms the southern boundary of the estate, as documented in 1630, and the avenue leading southward from the house now leads directly south west to the junction at Park Lane. The trees within the application site are no longer shown and the western side of the site is now crossed by a track or driveway which branches from the tree lined avenue to join the junction of what is now Mill Lane, the Romford Road and Sandy Lane. The windmill of Mill Lane is shown to the south east of this junction. The trees of the Shrubbery are shown with what might be a woodland path meandering through and the Long Pond is also depicted.

3.3.7 19th Century

The 1839 The Award Map for the parish of Aveley (Fig 4. ERO; D/CT 12B) shows little estate detail except for the Long Pond which is now depicted with an island, some ponds and the Shrubbery. The avenue of trees which was formerly the southern entrance to the estate is now gone and the main route to the house appears now to be the lane which crosses the application site and also continues to the north of the house. A building at the western entrance to the site corresponds with a building later labelled as 'Lodge' implying that at this time this was the formal entrance from this side. The parcel of land of which the application site is a part is described in the key to the Tithe award as 'Long Field', owned and occupied by Sir Thomas Barrett-Lennard and amounting to 24 acres and two roods of arable land. The large open area of land surrounding the house is referred to as The Lawn described as garden, so it is clear that at this time, although part of the estate, the application site was not considered part of the parkland. Fields surrounding to the north, south and west are also largely arable, except for The Shrubbery which is described as 'garden'. Park Lane at this time appears to simply serve as an agricultural track.

More detail is shown on the 1868 first edition Ordnance Survey sheet of the area (Fig 5). Here, the track crossing the application site is only one of a series of driveways into the estate which also link Park Lane and another entrance at the south east corner of the estate. The application site is shown largely unchanged except that there is now a branch from the trackway leading into the Shrubbery. To the north of this, there is a straight boundary from which some sort of square structure or paddock projects into the field to the north. Although the land to the west of the park, including the application site is shown as part of the estate, there is a clear strong division between this and the parkland to the east, which is shown in a slightly darker shade, giving the impression that this land is not part of the laid out landscape.

The 1897 Ordnance Survey at 25" to the mile (Fig 6) is the first very detailed survey of the estate and shows the application site little changed, still with its trackway forming the northern boundary of the site to the east and crossing the site southwestwards. A scatter of trees is shown, one with a small square structure surrounding, possibly a fence. This might imply that the land at this time was pasture and the fence to prevent livestock from grazing from the tree. In the centre of the western boundary of the site, a small pond is shown. This western boundary of the site, does not however equate with the current western end of the school and the pond would have been outside the school site.

To the north the land is more divided, perhaps into paddocks and an irregular oval feature with some form of structure or island is shown inside it. This has been interpreted as a possible moat on the Essex Sites and Monuments Record and is listed as Monument SMR 5080. Both the northern line of Park Lane and the path through the Shrubbery are shown as footpaths.

3.3.8 **20th Century**

After the death of Sir Thomas Barrett-Lennard in 1919, the estate passed to his son Sir Thomas who had long lived at Horsford Manor, the family estate in Norfolk and in the years following the estate was broken up. The contents of the house were auctioned in 1923 and in 1937 Essex Council bought 600 acres as part of the metropolitan Green Belt. Much of the remainder was bought by London County Council after the Second World War as part of 1220 acres of land in Aveley and South Ockendon developed to rehouse Londoners and for the provision of labour to factories at Purfleet and West Thurrock. The larger of two estates the Belhus estate lies to the east of the M25 while the smaller Kennington estate was completed in the 1960s to the west of Belhus Park and the application site.

The Ordnance survey 25" 1920 plan (Fig 7) shows the site little changed from the 1897 plan although more now trees are shown along the southern boundary of the site and the square structure around the tree is now shown as an oval containing two trees. Similarly the 1938 6" (Fig 8) survey shows little change, although at this point it is interesting to note that the village of Aveley, which up to this point had been depicted as a small village, little grown beyond its medieval core, has begun to expand with new roads appearing north and south of the village street.

During the Second World War the house was used as a military hospital and it was bombed during this time. Following an estimation of £35,000 for repair, the house was demolished in 1957.

The 1948 survey (not illustrated) shows the estate little altered but the 1959 25" survey (Fig. 8) shows the site utterly changed. Now streets of houses are shown immediately to the west

of the site and The Aveley Technical School, with the same layout of the current buildings are shown occupying the western third. To the east, close to the centre of the site another building is labelled the Dacre Primary School. This is accessed from the north, along the path, which still survives, which was once a main entrance to the Belhus estate. This building has now gone and the area, now a part of the playing fields. The remainder of the site is shown as open ground with a scatter of trees at the borders, presumably playing fields. Only the outline of Belhus House is shown and some outbuildings are depicted as ruins. The Shrubbery now forms the eastern edge of the large Belhus housing estate. Mill Field the ground of Aveley Football club has been built to the south west of the application site in otherwise open ground.

Essex County Council (EH, 1987) developed the estate as a recreation centre with swimming pool, gym and golf course and a country park as it remains. The outline of the house can still be seen as foundations within the golf course and an ornate stench pipe (SMR 15000), part of the sewerage system still stands to the north. It is a grade II listed building (ref 119728). Other survivals from the estate include the Long Pond (SMR 19481) which is now divided by the M25 and the remains of the kitchen garden built as a replacement to that demolished in 1744 (SMR 35280, listed building grade II ref. 119854) which survives within the Belhus estate to the east of the M25. As mentioned above (section 3.3.2) four tumuli are shown on the 1959 25" Ordnance survey of the area (SMR 5086) which are likely to be related to the park landscape. An ice house also survives within the grounds (SMR 5087) and is also thought to date from the second half of the eighteenth century. This was excavated in 1979 in advance of works for the construction of the M25 and found to be well preserved.

3.3.9 **21st Century**

An archaeological desk based assessment was undertaken for land to the south of the Aveley bypass 40m south of the application site (SMR 46879). This concluded that although quarrying to the west had removed the potential for the survival of archaeological remains, within the remainder of the site there was a moderate potential for the survival of Palaeolithic remains, moderate to good for Bronze Age Iron Age and Roman periods and a good potential for the survival of medieval remains.

4. **Significance**

4.1 **Designated heritage assets**

Belhus Park is included in the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest, maintained by English Heritage. It is assigned Grade II and the site reference number is 1730. Apart from the school buildings to the west (Fig 10) the application site forms a part of this designated heritage asset.

Other designated sites within the vicinity of the site are as follows. A stench pipe in Belhus Park is protected as a grade II listed building (SMR 15000, listed building ref. 420031) this stands on the northern side of the estate to the west of the Long Pond. Court's Farmhouse stands some 350m to the south of the application site on the east side of Park Lane to the south of the Aveley bypass (SMR 35309, listed building, grade II ref. 119771). Other listed buildings survive within the High Street of Aveley. To the south east of the village, the surviving moat of Aveley Manor (SMR 5079) is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (TK 179).

4.2 Assessment of significance

The site lies in an area in which deep excavations into the gravels through extraction or excavation of cuttings have proved of great importance in the study of Britain during the Pleistocene period. While it is considered unlikely that excavation of shallow building foundations would reveal significant Palaeolithic artefacts, activities such as geotechnical survey have the potential to reveal important information about the complex and important sequence of gravels in this area. The Greater Thames Archaeological Research Framework (Section 3.2) identifies the use of borehole and associated data to improve knowledge of geological features and their environmental and chronological context, to assess the artefactual content of the deposits and to identify specific sites.

Prehistoric and Roman sites are well represented in this area. The site lies only a kilometre distant to the large prehistoric, Roman and Saxon site excavated in the 1950s to the north of Sandy Lane (SMR 5070) a route which formerly ran immediately south of the application site. Another multi period site was excavated ahead of widening works on the A13 to the south west of Aveley in the 1990s (SMR 14573, 14574). Furthermore there are widespread cropmarks in the vicinity including a series thought to represent a double ditched enclosure some 1.5km west of the site (SMR 5107). There is therefore potential for the survival of sub surface prehistoric or Roman remains within the site. The entry for Belhus Park (14.1) in Thurrock Unitary Historic Environment Characterisation Project states that the 'potential for the discovery of further archaeological deposits within this relatively undeveloped landscape, now a golf course, is high'.

From at least 1619 and possibly earlier until the mid twentieth century, the application site formed a part of the Belhus Estate. On the 1619 map the site is depicted within the estate but is not included within the parcel of land surrounding the house depicted as a deer park and it is thought likely that this area was in agricultural use. Chapman and André's map of 1777 surveyed during the 18th century modernisation of the estate depicts the site as a part of the parkland but this large scale map of the entire county does not show individual field boundaries. More telling is the 1839 tithe award in which the site and neighbouring fields are described as arable while the large parcel surrounding the house is described as The Lawn. Again the implication is that the site and its neighbouring fields were at this time working land peripheral to the main landscaped area, although adjacent to the Shrubbery modelled by Lancelot Brown. Later Ordnance survey maps depict trees around the periphery of the site and dotted across it some of which are fenced. This may imply that at this stage the area was in pasture. It is thought unlikely that there are landscape features within this parcel of land unless related to the driveway which ran to the Lodge to the west. This track is now a public right of way which lies just outside the area of the site to the north. The section by which it crossed the site to the west is now occupied by school buildings.

The application site forms part of a designated heritage asset (Belhus Park) but this area has already been considerably changed by modern development. The application site retains little of the character of the park and there is limited continuity with the remaining parts of the Belhus estate. To the north the characteristics of the estate are entirely changed with the construction of the golf course, although immediately to the east the open ground which still has a scatter of mature trees retains a remnant of the nature of the park.

It is thought unlikely that development of this site would have a detrimental effect on listed buildings in the area. Courts Farmhouse (SMR 35309) which is the closest listed building lies to the southern side of the large Aveley bypass. The Stench Pipe which was formerly part of

the sewerage system of Belhus Park lies on the north side of the county park and is not visible from the application site. All other listed buildings in the vicinity are in the centre of Aveley or on the far (north-western) side of the Kenningtons housing estate.

While it is thought that there is little architectural worth in the existing academy buildings, they have a strong social history and association with the post-war development of the landscape. Greater Thames Archaeological Research Framework (Section 3.6.2) identifies, as a framework objective, the specific objective of examining the impact of London on settlement character and form in the area.

5. **Potential for archaeological sites within the application site**

No heritage assets are known to survive within the application site. The site has been terraced slightly to form the playing fields but this may not have had a significant impact on sub surface archaeology as the works would not have been extensive. Equally although the western side of the site including the area of the former Dacre School will have been disturbed by foundations there remains a potential for the survival of archaeological features.

There may be a potential for the survival of Pleistocene remains but deposits are likely to be deeply buried. Deep works such as geotechnical pits or piling have the potential to provide important information about the nature and importance of deposits in the area.

There is considerable evidence of prehistoric, Roman and Saxon occupation in the area. Settlement from the Bronze Age to the Saxon period is known from the Hall's Pit at Sandy Lane less than 1km to the west of the site and there is a relatively dense scatter of cropmarks in the area including what appear to be enclosures.

There is a potential for the survival of features related to the park. In the early 19th Century the road crossing the application site is shown on maps as the main entrance to the park from the west side.

6. **Recommendations**

The scale and nature of the proposed development is not known at this stage and analysis of potential impacts is not therefore possible but the following measures are recommended in order to clarify the significance of potential archaeology.

1. Consultation should be sought at an early stage with English Heritage to seek advice on the setting of development within the landscape of the park.
 2. Prior to development, an archaeological evaluation should be carried out in the footprint of proposed works to establish the presence and nature or absence of archaeological features
 3. Should development works or related investigation works, such as geotechnical survey be carried out which are likely to penetrate the substrate to some depth a watching brief on these works should be carried out by a specialist qualified to establish the nature and significance of the deposits.
 4. A rapid photographic survey of the school buildings should be undertaken prior to demolition.
-

The scope and specification of mitigation works will be agreed with the English Heritage Regional Inspector and archaeological curator.

Any site investigation works or watching briefs required would be concluded by production of an archaeological report (and appropriate publication) to be deposited for public consultation with the archaeological curator and a project archive to be deposited at a local museum.

7. **Publication summary**

The Service has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, the Service intends to use this summary as the basis for publication through local or regional journals. The client is requested to consider the content of this section as being acceptable for such publication.

A desk-based assessment for the historic environment was undertaken at Ormiston Park Academy, Nethan Drive, Aveley, Thurrock (NGR TQ 567 809). It was undertaken on behalf of Arthur Amos Associates whose client Thurrock Council intends to demolish the existing school buildings on the site and construct new school buildings.

The report describes and assesses the significance of the heritage assets (and potential heritage assets) that are potentially affected by the application. The setting of heritage assets is considered. The potential impact of the application, and the need for further on-site evaluation, is assessed.

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The site is currently an academy on the northern edge of Aveley, a village in the borough of Thurrock. The site is rectangular in outline with the school buildings to the west and playing fields to the east. To the west of the site is the Kenningtons estate built in the 1950s and 1960s, while to the east and north are playing fields and a golf course.

Thurrock is an area in which Pleistocene gravels of national importance survive. The Thames terrace sequence in this area provides an important record of climatic conditions since the Anglian glaciation. At Sandy Lane to the west of the site, gravel workings in the 1960s uncovered fossilised mammoth and straight tusked elephant remains which are now in the Natural History Museum.

Prehistoric and Roman remains are relatively common in the area. A site spanning the Bronze Age to the Saxon period was excavated at Hall's Pit to the west of Aveley in the 1950s and another multi-period site was excavated ahead of widening works on the A13 to the south west of the village in the 1990s.

The school lies within a part of the Belhus Estate (SMR 7737), once one of the largest in Essex. The eastern part of the site is included in the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest maintained by English Heritage. The estate was built up in the medieval period initially by the family of Bellhouse from Ramsden Bellhouse near Billericay and their successors, the Barrett family who continued to add lands to the estate. The house was rebuilt by John Barrett who died in 1526 and in 1618 his grandson Sir Edward Barrett obtained a licence for the creation of a park. This is depicted on a map prepared in the following year and included a formal garden, wilderness and rock garden.

Extensive improvements were made to the site in the 18th Century by Thomas Barrett-Lennard, later Lord Dacre. His friend, the architect Sanderson Miller advised on the building while Lancelot 'Capability' Brown's remodelling of the grounds included the creation of a long pond and a shrubbery.

Sir Thomas Barrett-Lennard who inherited the estate in 1919 dispersed the contents of the house in 1923. In 1937 Essex Council bought 600 acres as part of the metropolitan Green Belt. Much of the remainder was bought by London County Council after the Second World War and developed to rehouse Londoners and for the provision of labour to factories at Purfleet and West Thurrock. During the Second World War, the house was used as a military hospital and was bombed and it was demolished in 1957.

Map evidence shows that the site lay within the boundaries of the estate but did not form a part of the parkland surrounding the house. The 1839 Tithe award for Aveley records that the field was in arable at that time. No landscape features are shown on maps within the site area apart from a driveway which crossed to a lodge at the west of the site and some large trees which were fenced in the early 20th Century.

It is thought that the potential for the survival of landscape features related to Belhus Park within the site is slim but that there is a potential for the survival of prehistoric, Roman or Saxon remains within the site due to the relatively dense scatter of recorded sites and cropmarks in this area. There is also a potential that the development within the site will provide important information of Pleistocene deposits in the area.

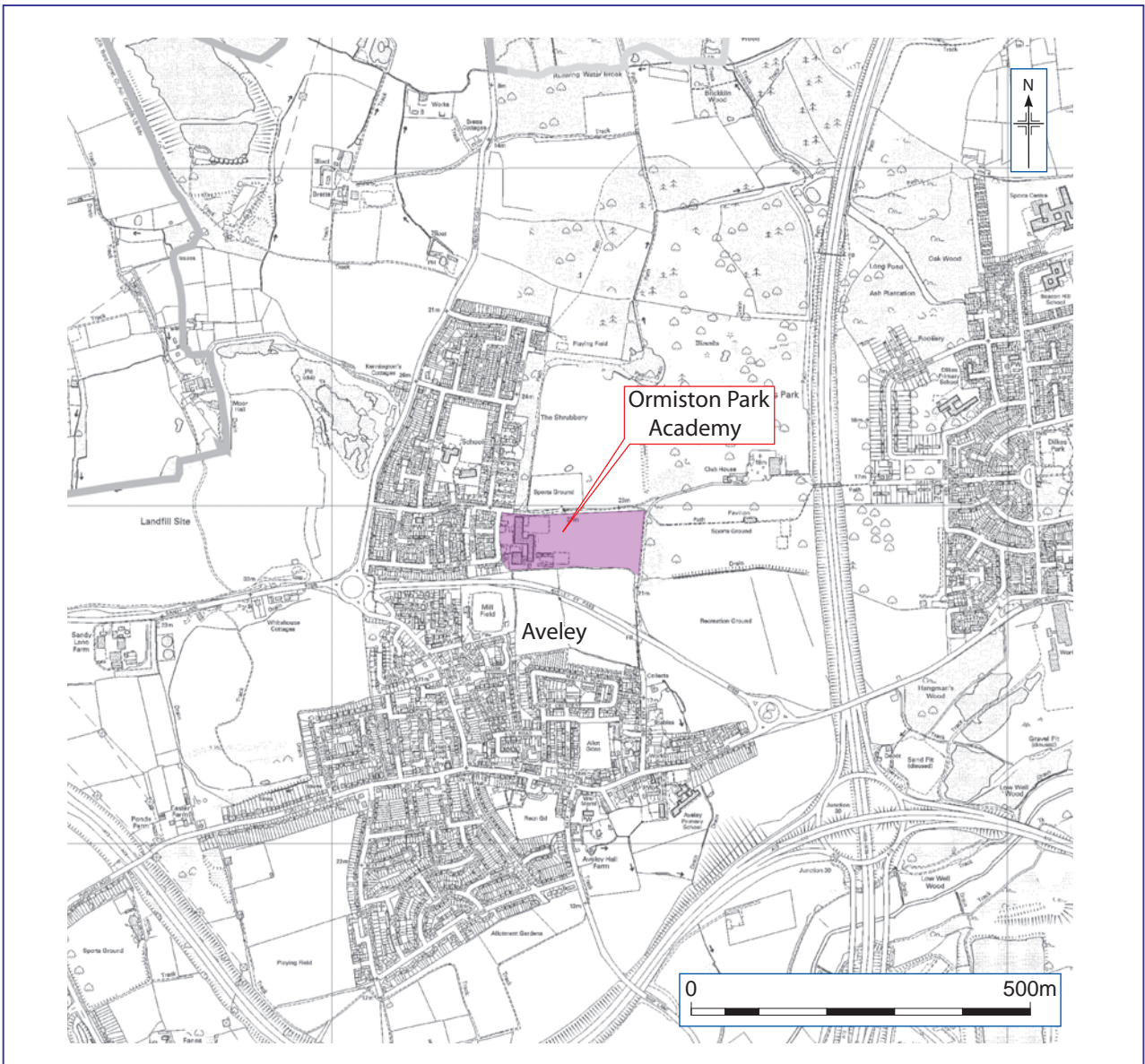
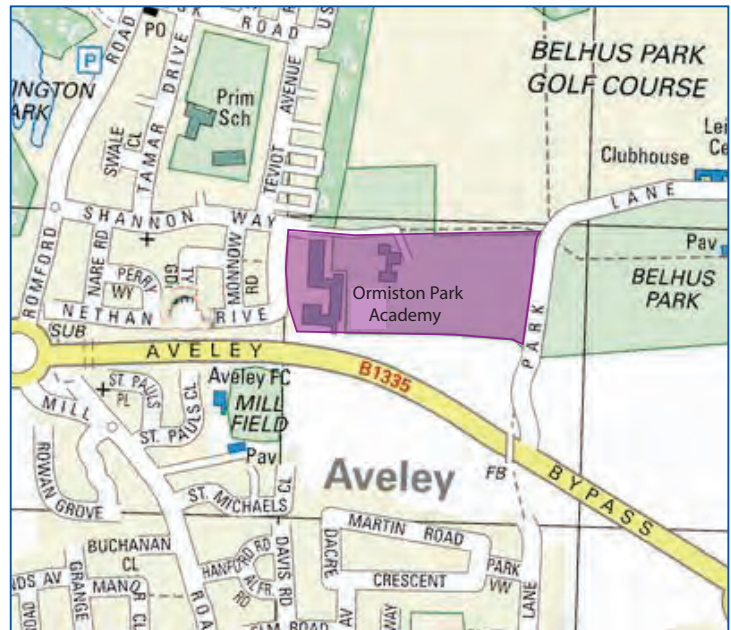
It is recommended that consultation be carried out with English Heritage at an early stage in the planning process to seek advice on the setting of development within the landscape of the park. It is also advised that an archaeological evaluation be carried out within the footprint of the proposed development to establish the presence or absence of archaeological deposits and that furthermore a watching brief be carried out on any works likely to provide information on the significance of underlying deposits. A rapid photographic survey of academy buildings prior to demolition is also recommended.

8. **Acknowledgements**

The Service would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Dave Pugh and Rae Lockett of Arthur Amos Associates, Lucinda Walker, National Monuments Record, Sally Gale, Essex Sites and Monuments Record, the staff of Essex Record Office and Thurrock Museum.

9. Personnel

The assessment was undertaken by Tom Rogers. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Hal Dalwood. Illustrations were prepared by Carolyn Hunt.



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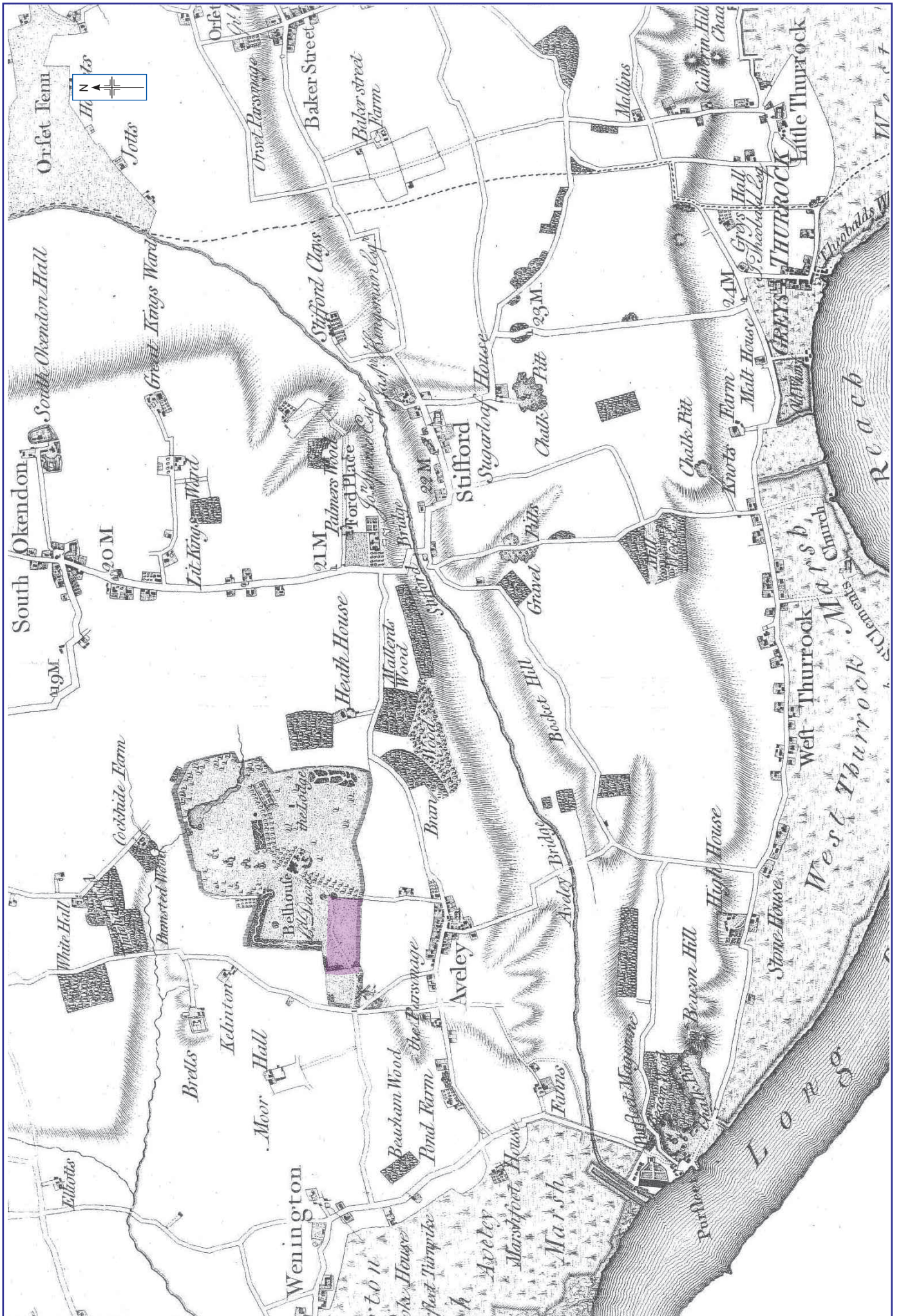
Location of the site

Figure 1



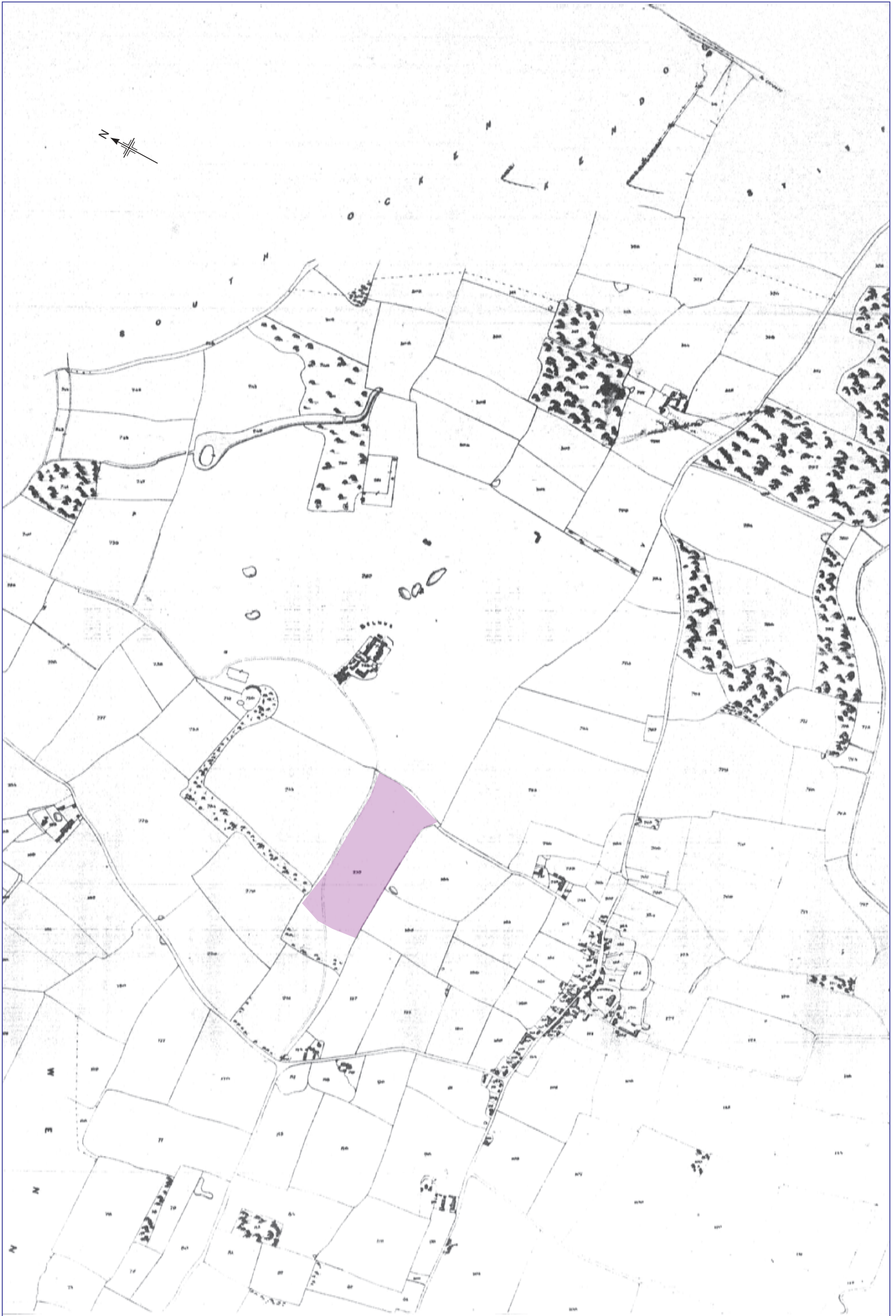
Extract from 1619 estate map of Belhus Park

Figure 2



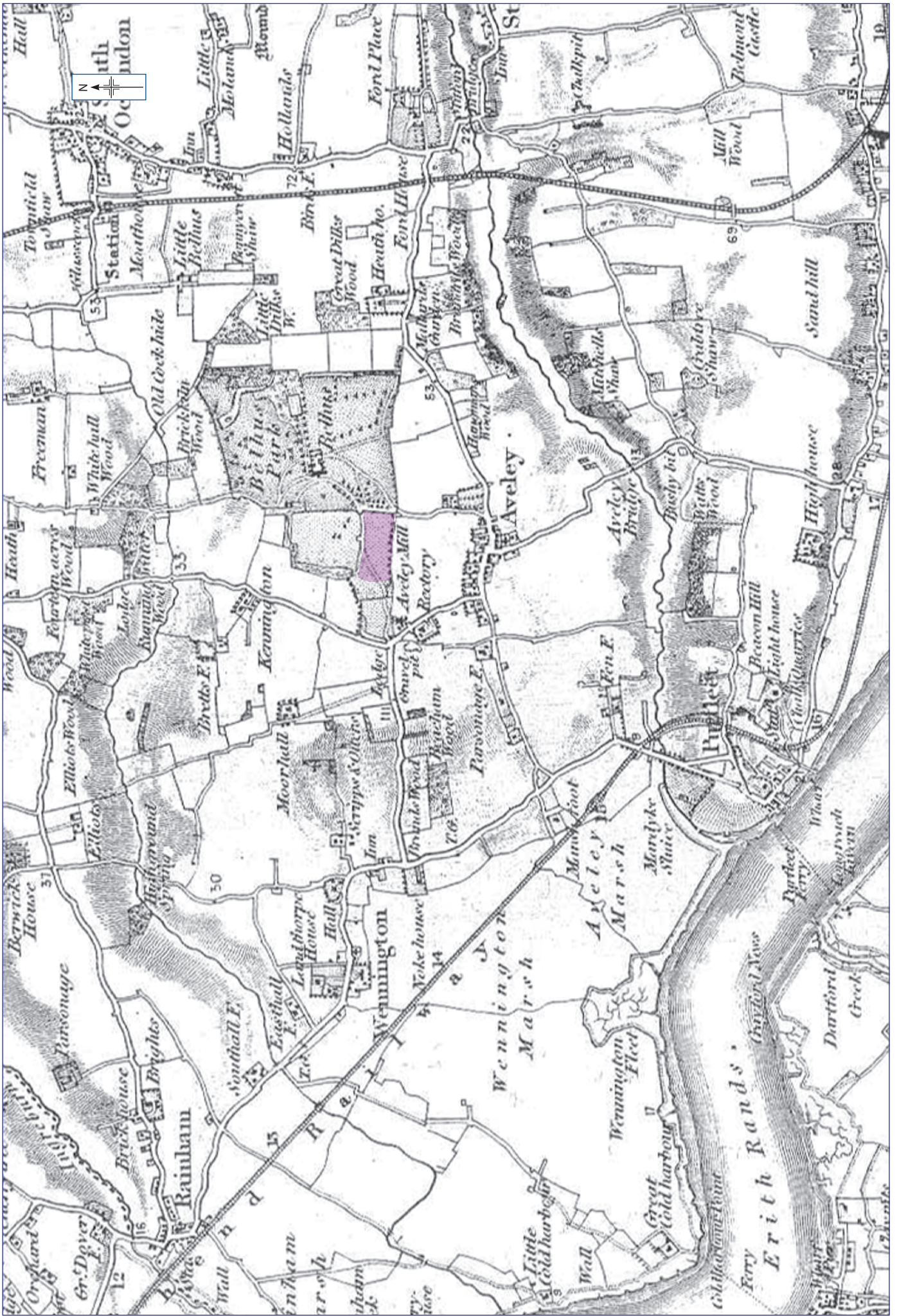
Extract from Chapman and Andre: A map of the county of Essex, 1777

Figure 3



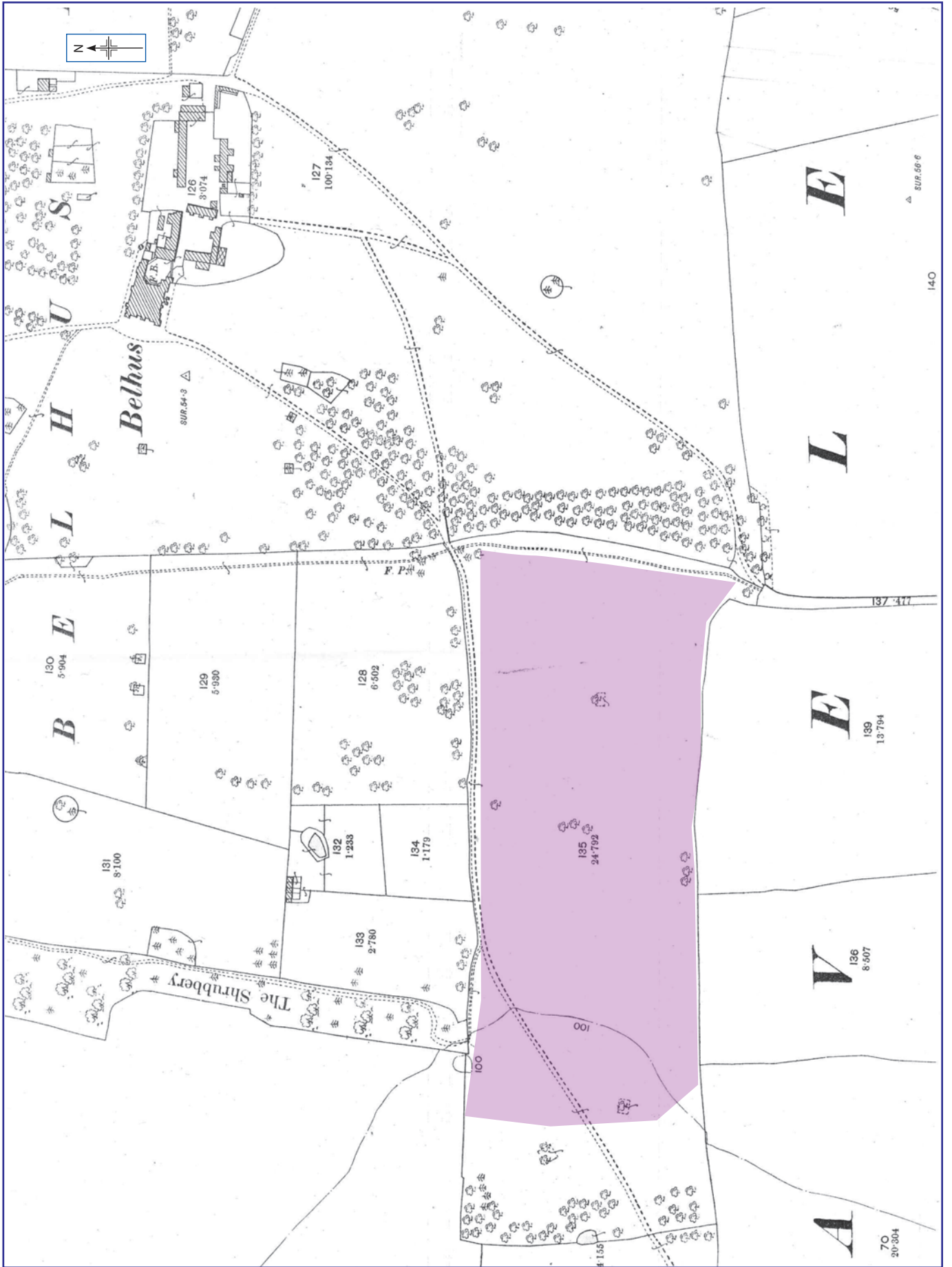
Extract from Aveley Tythe Apportionment, 1839

Figure 4



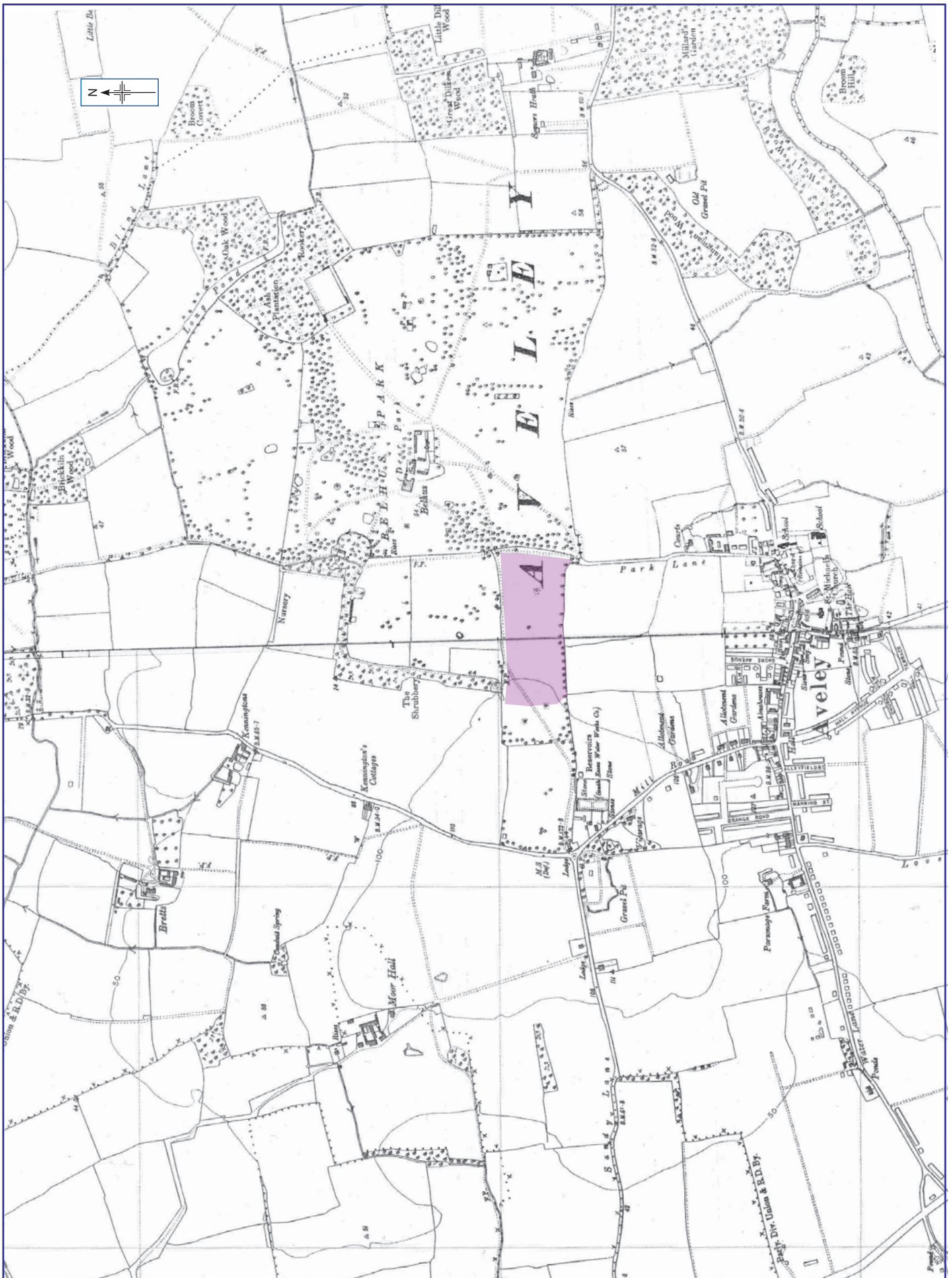
Extract from 1st Edition Ordnance Survey

Figure 5



Extract from 1897 Ordnance Survey

Figure 6



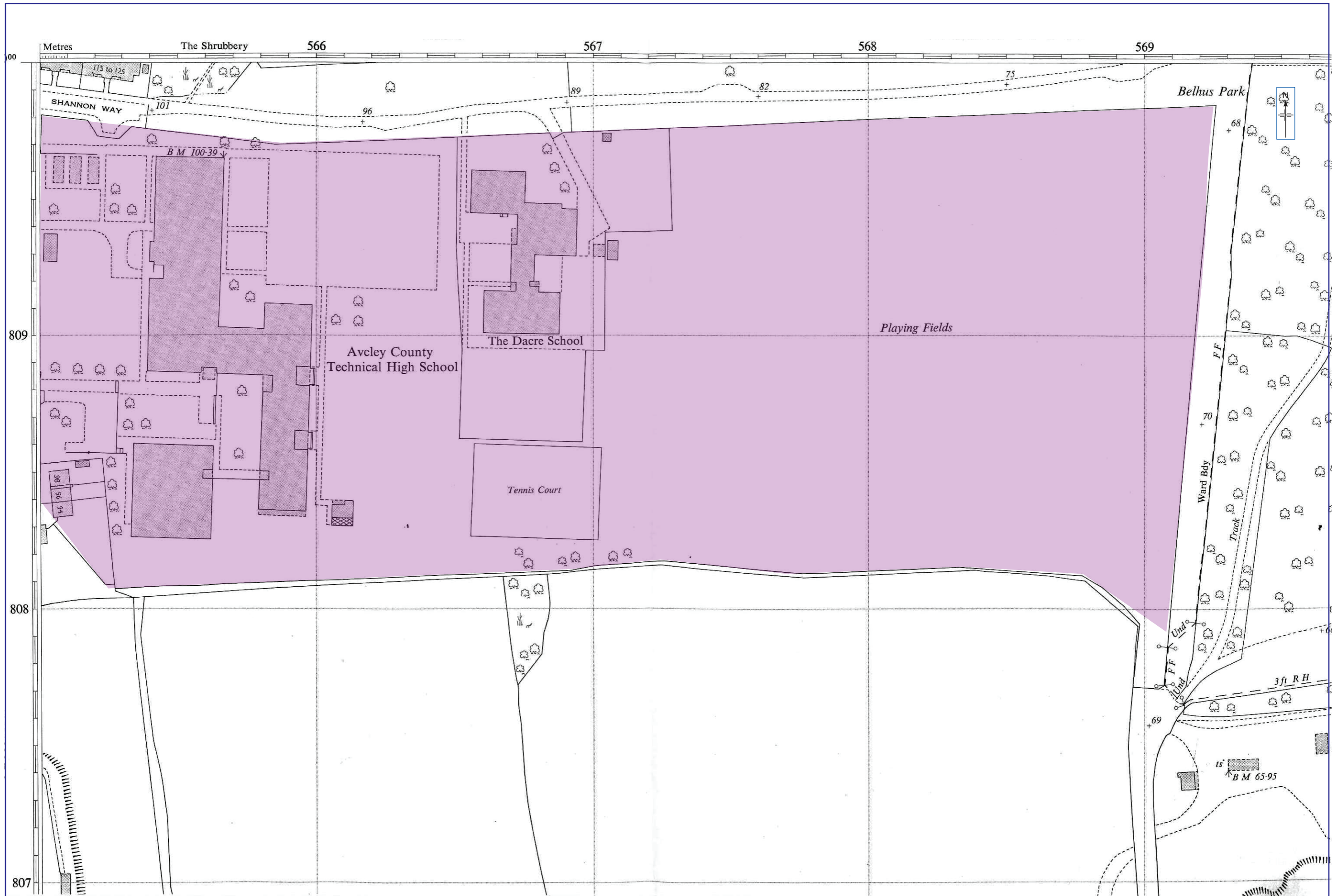
Extract from 1938 Ordnance Survey

Figure 7



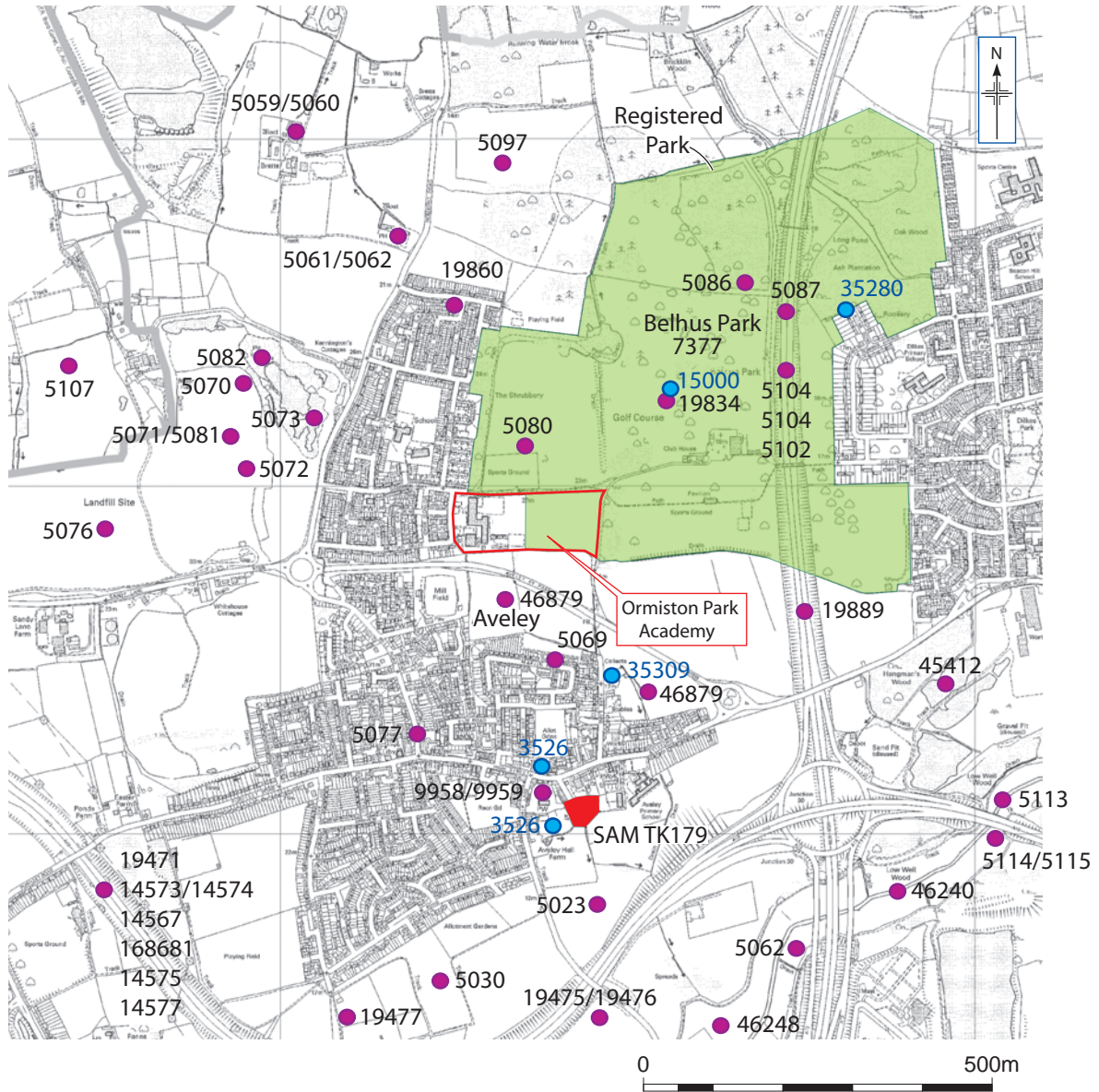
Extract from 1959 Ordnance Survey

Figure 8



Extract from 1966 Ordnance Survey

Figure 9



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Historic assets in the vicinity

Figure 10

Plates



Plate 1.

The main Academy building looking south west, slight terrace below wooden pagodas



Plate 2. Slight terrace to the east of main school buildings looking west.



Plate 3 The Academy playing fields looking east



Plate 4 Academy playing fields looking west towards the academy buildings



Plate 5 Former garden to the south of academy buildings, looking east



Plate 6 Green area within school buildings looking west

Appendix 1 Heritage assets registered with the Sites and Monuments Record referred to in the report

SMR number (and legal status)	Site name	Grid reference	Record type	Date	Description
5059, 5060 Listed Building (EH) (II*) - 119793	Bretts Farm	TQ 560 820	Monument	Medieval - 1066 AD to 1539 AD	House possibly 14th century, half-H with cross-wings
5061, 5062, Listed Building (EH) (II*) - 119795	Kenningtons Farm	TQ 563 817	Monument	Medieval - 1066 AD to 1539 AD	Medieval moat, timber-framed and plastered house. Possibly end wing of a 15th century house, most of which has been demolished.
5069	Park Lane, Aveley	TQ568 805	Find Spot	Roman 43 AD to 409 AD	Roman glass bottle in Thurrock Museum
5070	Hall's Pit, Sandy Lane, Aveley	TQ 558 812	Monument	Late Bronze Age - 1000 BC to 701 BC	Late Bronze Age settlement. Found in 1956 and excavated by Thurrock Local History Society.
5071	Hall's Pit, Sandy Lane, Aveley	TQ 561 812	Monument	Early Iron Age - 700 BC to 401 BC	Iron age pottery. In Thurrock Local History Museum. Excavated 1956-1957 by the Thurrock Local History Society.
5072	Hall's Pit, Sandy Lane, Aveley	TQ 561 812	Monument	Roman - 43 AD to 409 AD	RB pottery, 1st century and later 2nd century, also a sestertius of Antoninus Pius.
5073	Hall's Pit, Sandy Lane, Aveley	TQ 561 812	Find Spot	Early Medieval - 410 AD to 1065 AD	Saxon pottery

5076	Aveley-Sandy Lane	TQ 555 809	Find Spot	Late Bronze Age - 1000 BC to 701 BC	Late bronze age founder's hoard found 1968
5079 Scheduled Monument TK179	Aveley Manor	TQ 5689 8007	Monument	Medieval - 1066 AD to 1539 AD	Moated manor south east of the churchyard
5080	West side of Belhus Park	TQ 567 811	Monument	Undetermined	Possible moated mound with small island surrounded by water shown on the OS 25" 1897
5086	Belhus Park	TQ 5733 8156	Monument	Undetermined	3 tumuli recorded in Belhus Park
5087	Belhus Park	TQ 575 815	Monument	Post Medieval - 1540 AD to 1900 AD	Mid 18th century ice house confirmed in the grounds of Belhus Park
5090	Belhus Woods Country Park	TQ 5686 8240	Find Spot	Roman - 43 AD to 409 AD	Roman tile fragments
5094	South of Running Water Wood	TQ 5705 8220	Monument	Undetermined	Cropmarks of a small rectangular enclosure.
5095	East of Brick kiln wood	TQ 574 821	Monument	Undetermined	Faint cropmark of small sub-rectangular enclosure.
5097	South of Running Water Wood	TQ 5670 8200	Monument	Undetermined	Cropmarks-linear cropmarks and pits.
5102	Belhus Park, Aveley	TQ 575 812	Monument	Undetermined	Cropmarks-2 adjoining rectilinear enclosures,
5103	Belhus Park, Aveley	TQ 575 812	Find Spot	Bronze Age - 2000 BC to 701	Cropmark site. Excavated due to the construction of Grays Northern and Eastern

				BC	by-passes and the M25. Residual Bronze Age pottery was found
5104	Belhus Park, Aveley	TQ 575 812	Monument	Undetermined	Cropmarks of two adjoining rectilinear enclosures,
5107	West of Moor Hal	TQ 553 81	Monument	undetermined	Site of double ditched enclosure
5113	Mar Dyke	TQ 580 80	Find Spot	Prehistoric - 500000 BC to 42 AD	Foundations for the Mar Dyke viaduct were dug through over 5m of peaty deposits in the floor of the Mar Dyke
5114	Mar Dyke	TQ 580 800	Find Spot	Early Neolithic to Late Neolithic - 400	A neolithic flint knife found within the lower woody and marsh peat (5113).
5115	Mar Dyke	TQ 580 800	Find Spot	Middle Iron Age - 400 BC to 101 B	A small number of middle iron age sand tempered pottery sherd found in peat (5113)
7319	Sandy Lane, Hall's Pit	TQ 561 812	Monument	Bronze Age - Early Medieval	Multi-period site
7737	Belhus Park, Aveley	TQ 573 812	Monument	Post Medieval - 1540 AD to 1900 AD	Remnant of mid C18 landscape park, now a golf course
9957	Parish Church of St. Michael, Aveley	TQ 5675 8009	Find Spot	Roman - 43 AD to 409 AD	Roman brick in the walls of the church.
9958	Parish Church of St. Michael, Aveley	TQ 5675 8009	Monument	Medieval - 1100 AD to 1539 AD	Early C12 parish church with walls of roughly coursed flint and ragstone.
46879	Archaeological desk based assessment at	TQ 56899 80538	No finds or features	-	Archaeological desk based assessment of land west of Park Lane

	Land at Aveley, Essex				
14566	Cropmark N of Watt's Wood	TQ 573 793	Monument	undetermined	Cropmark of extraction pits
14573	A13 Improvement Scheme Wenningham to Mar Dyke	TQ 567 794	Monument	Roman - 43 AD to 409 AD	A small Late pre-Roman Iron Age and early Roman farmstead, of the 1st century AD
14574	Ship Lane	TQ 567 794	Monument	Roman - 43 AD to 409 AD	A fieldwalking survey carried out prior to the A13 Improvement Scheme
14665	Cropmark in grounds of Culverhouse School	TQ 582 819	Monument	undetermined	Cropmarks of linear features and pits
15000	Stench Pipe	TQ 57130 81266	Listed Building	Post Medieval - 1733 AD to 1766 AD	Part of the C18 sewage system of the former Belhus Hall.
19473	East of Ship Lane	TQ 5705 7946	Find Spot	Roman - 200 AD to 300 AD	About 20 bronze Roman coins found in this field
19475	West of Ship Lane	TQ 5694 7948	Find Spot	Roman - 161 AD to 363 AD	Two silver coins found to the west of Ship Lane
19477	East of Love Lane	TQ 5620 7945	Find Spot	Early Medieval - 410 AD to 1065 AD	A ring, cruciform brooch and a saucer brooch - all Saxon were found by metal detecting.
19481	Long Pond	TQ 574 819	Monument	Post Medieval - 1700 AD to 1799 AD	Northern part of the pond landscaped by Capability Brown in the latter half of the 18th century.
19860	Chapel de la Lee	TQ 5650	Monument	Medieval	Site of a chapel,

		8151		- 1300 AD to 1539 AD	possibly C14, about 150 yards NE of the church.
19874	North of Culverhouse School	TQ 580 824	Monument	Undeter- mined	Cropmarks of Field Boundaries
35265 Listed Building (EH) (I) - 119728	Church of St Michael, Aveley	TQ 56756 80088	Listed Building	Medieval - 1100 AD to 1199 AD	Church, Nave was built early in the 12th century
35267 Listed Building (EH) (II) - 119730	Crown and Anchor Hotel	TQ 56656 80196	Listed Building	Medieval - 1400 AD to 1499 AD	C15 timber framed house with C18 front.
35280 Listed Building (EH) (II) - 119854	Walled garden	TQ 57630 81506	Listed Building	Post Medieval - 1744 AD	Walled garden at Belhus Park, surrounding Irvine Gardens
35309	Courts Farmhouse	TQ 56956 80454	Listed Building	Medieval - 1367 AD to 1432 AD	Timber framed house
46240	Mardyke Valley, Thurrock	TQ 57891 79671	Monument	undeter- mined	A hand auger and walkover survey revealed an "upper peat" deposit, probably Saxon