

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK BASED  
ASSESSMENT**

**LAND AT THE FORMER RAF  
HARRINGTON,  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

**ROB BOURN BA MA MIFA**

**MAY 2008**

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ASSESSMENT**

**LAND AT THE FORMER RAF  
HARRINGTON,  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

**LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY  
COUNCIL**

**SITE CENTRED AT: SP 766 781**

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF STUDY**

- 1.1 This archaeological desk-based assessment has been researched by Maurice Hopper and Mike Dawson and prepared by Rob Bourn of CgMs Consulting on behalf of Nuon Renewables.
- 1.2 The assessment considers land to at the former RAF Harrington, Northamptonshire, at grid reference SP 766 781 (centred). It is located to the south of the A14, the north of Draughton and to the east of the B576 (Fig. 1).
- 1.3 The purpose of this study is to assess the presence/absence and extent of any archaeological constraint likely to affect the proposed redevelopment and, if appropriate, to scope relevant archaeological mitigation measures.
- 1.4 The assessment comprises an examination of evidence in the Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record (HER), Northamptonshire County Record Office, the Carpetbagger Aviation Museum, published and other sources and a map regression exercise.
- 1.5 As a result, the assessment enables relevant parties to assess the archaeological potential of the site and to consider the need for design, civil engineering or archaeological solutions to the archaeological potential identified.



## **2.0 PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN FRAMEWORK**

- 2.1 In November 1990 the Department of the Environment issued Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16) "Archaeology and Planning", providing guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the preservation and investigation of archaeological remains. In short, government guidance provides a framework which:
- Protects Scheduled Ancient Monuments
  - Protects the settings of these sites
  - Protects nationally important un-scheduled ancient monuments
  - In appropriate circumstances seeks adequate information (from field evaluation) to enable informed decisions
  - Provides for the excavation and investigation of sites not important enough to merit in-situ preservation.
- 2.2 In considering any proposal for development, including allocations in emerging development plans, the local planning authority will be mindful of the policy framework set by government guidance, in this instance PPG16, by current Development Plan policy and by other material considerations.
- 2.3 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) allows for adopted structure and local plans to be 'saved' for a period of three years from the commencement of the Act in September 2004, to enable a smooth transition from the old system under the 1990 Planning & Compensation Act and the new spatial planning system. For plans in preparation the three year period will start from adoption of the draft plan. Following the commencement of the Act, policies in local plans will, however, continue to form part of the development plan for a period of 3 years (or 3 years from adoption if the plan was in preparation at the time of commencement of the Act) unless they are either replaced by more up-to-date policy in a development plan document included in the Local Development Framework or extended for a further period by the Secretary of State.

- 2.4 The draft East of England Plan contains the following policy relating to the historic environment:

**POLICY ENV5: THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT**

**PLANNING AUTHORITIES AND OTHER AGENCIES IN THEIR PLANS, POLICIES AND PROPOSALS WILL IDENTIFY, PROTECT, CONSERVE AND, WHERE APPROPRIATE, ENHANCE THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT OF THE REGION, ITS ARCHAEOLOGY, HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND AREAS AND HISTORIC LANDSCAPES, INCLUDING THOSE FEATURES AND SITES (AND THEIR SETTINGS) ESPECIALLY SIGNIFICANT IN THE EAST OF ENGLAND:**

- **THE INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED HISTORIC CITIES OF CAMBRIDGE AND NORWICH**
- **THE EXCEPTIONAL NETWORK OF HISTORIC MARKET TOWNS**
- **THE MAJOR CONCENTRATION OF MEDIEVAL CHURCHES**
- **COASTAL FORTIFICATIONS, HISTORIC PORTS AND TRADITIONAL SEASIDE RESORTS**
- **THE EARLY GARDEN CITIES OF THE 20TH CENTURY**
- **LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS – DOMESTIC AND INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS, AND THE SETTLEMENTS AND SETTINGS WHICH DEFINE THEIR CHARACTER**
- **THE WIDER HISTORIC LANDSCAPE THAT CONTRIBUTES TO THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF THE REGION, INCLUDING SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS AND OTHER NATIONALLY IMPORTANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND MONUMENTS.**

- 2.5 The development plan policy framework is provided by the Northamptonshire Structure Plan 1996 – 2016. However, no policies relating to archaeology or the historic environment have been saved.
- 2.6 The relevant Development Plan framework is provided by the Local Plan for Kettering Borough and South Norfolk Local Plan 2003. The Kettering Local Plan has no saved archaeological policies. The Daventry District Local Plan contains the following policies, which provides a framework for the consideration of development proposals affecting archaeological and heritage features.

**EN15**

**WHERE IMPORTANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS ARE KNOWN TO EXIST OR MAY EXIST, THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL NORMALLY REQUIRE THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS TO BE EVALUATED BEFORE PLANNING APPLICATIONS ARE DETERMINED. PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NOT NORMALLY BE GRANTED WHERE THE COUNCIL DEEMS SUCH EVALUATION TO BE INADEQUATE AND THE PROSPECTIVE DEVELOPER DOES NOT SUPPLY FURTHER INFORMATION.**

**EN16**

**PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NOT BE GRANTED FOR DEVELOPMENT THAT ADVERSELY AFFECTS NATIONALLY IMPORTANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES, WHETHER SCHEDULED OR UNSCHEDULED, OR THEIR SETTING.**

**EN17**

**PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NORMALLY BE GRANTED FOR DEVELOPMENT PROVIDED THAT IT DOES NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES OF MORE LOCAL IMPORTANCE AND THEIR SETTING AND IT ENSURES PRESERVATION IN SITU OF IMPORTANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS. WHERE PRESERVATION IN SITU IS DEEMED INAPPROPRIATE, CONDITIONS MAY BE IMPOSED SECURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A PROGRAMME OF WORKS IN ACCORDANCE WITH A SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION AGREED BY THE DISTRICT COUNCIL.**

- 2.7 This desk-based assessment will enable both the archaeological potential and the potential impact of development on any remains that may be within the site to be assessed. It will enable all parties to consider the need for design, civil engineering, and/or archaeological solutions to the potential identified and the relevance of the archaeological policies of the East of England RSS and Daventry Local Plan.

### **3 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

#### **3.1 Geology**

- 3.1.1 The geology of the site Till and glaciofluvial sand and gravel overlying Grantham Formation at the east of the site, a band of Northampton Sand Formation in the centre of the site and Whitby Mudstone at the western end of the site (British Geological Survey map sheet 170 – Market Harborough & 185 - Northampton).

#### **3.2 Topography**

- 3.2.1 The eastern end of the site where the former airfield was located is flat lying at 160m OD. The rest of the site (to the west of the surviving perimeter track) lies on a west facing slope falling from c. at the perimeter track to c. 114m OD at the western site boundary.

## 4.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Timescales used in this report.

### Prehistoric

Palaeolithic	450,000	-	12,000	BC
Mesolithic	12,000	-	4,000	BC
Neolithic	4,000	-	2,200	BC
Bronze Age	2,200	-	700	BC
Iron Age	700	-	AD 43	

### Historic

Roman	AD	43	-	410
Saxon/Early Medieval	AD	410	-	1066
Medieval	AD	1066	-	1485
Post Medieval	AD	1486	-	Present

- 4.1 The archaeological background of the site was established by reviewing all archaeological records for a radius of 2km from the centre of the proposed wind farm. The location of sites referred to in the text are shown on Figure 3.

### 4.2 Prehistoric

- 4.2.1 There are number of possible prehistoric settlement/occupation sites located within and in close proximity of the study site. An unspecified quantity of late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age worked flints have been recorded toward the central southern part of the site (4306). This has been interpreted as being indicative of possible settlement site. A large quantity of late Neolithic/early Bronze Age flint artefacts (4307) have been recorded c. 100m to the north of the previous flint scatter. These two flint scatters could be indicative of two separate settlements/activity areas or, bearing in mind their close proximity, could be part of a single larger settlement.
- 4.2.2 Several irregular adjoining enclosures, linear features and pits have been recorded as cropmarks in the central northern part of the site to the south of Blue Covert (4309). These cropmarks have been interpreted as being of a prehistoric settlement.
- 4.2.3 An excavation of an Iron Age settlement on immediately to the west of the site comprising a circular ditch and bank enclosure was undertaken just ahead of the

construction of Harrington airfield during WWII (4298). Remains recorded comprised three round houses, Iron Age pottery, a 'miner's pick', loom weight, spindle whorl, iron fragments and a bronze belt fastener. The full extent of the site is unknown but it is considered unlikely to have extended as far west as the closest wind turbine.

#### 4.2.4 Further afield remains...

4.2.5 On the basis of the available evidence, the central part of the site along the top of the west facing slope has high potential for prehistoric remains. All three of the known prehistoric sites are located on the relatively flatter part of the slope overlooking the stream to the west. While it is possible that there could be further prehistoric remains within the site, the topography is less favourable for settlement and therefore, the potential within the rest of the site is moderate. On the available evidence the remains known within the site are likely to be of local importance.

### 4.3 Roman

4.3.1 There are no Roman remains recorded within the site or within a 250m radius of the site boundary. Therefore, while the presence of Roman remains cannot be entirely ruled out, the site is considered to have low potential for remain of this period.

### 4.4 Saxon/Early Medieval

4.4.1 There are no Saxon remains recorded within the site or within a 250m radius of the site boundary. Therefore, while the presence of Roman remains cannot be entirely ruled out, the site is considered to have a low potential for remains of this period.

### 4.5 Medieval

4.5.1 Within the site there are two records of possible medieval remains. These are a medieval/post-medieval mill in the north eastern corner of the site (based on a documentary reference to the 'Millfield') (4296) and a site of possible medieval and post-medieval 'activity' (possible closes) (4297). Neither site is well defined or precise and there is no definite evidence for either such features. However, the presence of these possible remains in the north eastern corner raises the possibility of remains of local interest in this area. There are records of Medieval remains in the rest of the site.

4.5.2 In the wider environs of the wind farm, the main recorded medieval features are the village of Draughton (4304) and Maidwell (4332). While both viallges are important features in the medieval and later landscape, there is no suggestion that they ever extended into the proposed wind farm site.

4.5.3 The site would have been within the agricultural land of Draughton throughout the medieval period and therefore is considered to have low potential for remains of this period with the exception of the north eastern corner which has a moderate potential.

#### 4.6 **Post-Medieval**

4.6.1 The only record of post-medieval remains within the site is that of a group of enclosures recorded as soilmarks in the western end of the site (4308). These enclosures appear to cut through medieval ridge and furrow and therefore, have to post-medieval in date.

4.6.2 The earliest map that depicts the site clearly at a reliable scale is Foden's map of 1797 at which time the site was in fields to the north of Draughton and Maidwell and to the south of Harrington (Fig. 4). No structures are noted.

4.6.3 The Draughton Tithe map (1837) depicts the site as being agricultural fields with Draughton Lodge marked on the north side of a pond in the centre of the site (Fig. 5). The site was an essentially a 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure landscape.

4.6.4 The site remained unchanged from the Tithe map on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map (1885) (Fig. 6). It remained unchanged until 1942 when Harrington airfield was constructed on the eastern side of the site. It was built by the 826<sup>th</sup> and 852<sup>nd</sup> Engineer Battallions of the US Army for heavy bombers (B-17 Flying Fortresses). It comprised of three runways, the longest of which was orientated north south and the two shorter ones orientated north west - south east and also north east – south west with a perimeter track, dispersal points and hangers around the periphery (Fig. 7 & 8). The offices were located in the north west side of the airfield and the bomb stores at the south east. Initially it was used as a satellite station by the RAF 84<sup>th</sup> Operational Training Unit. However, in 1944 it was taken over by the USAF 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force's Special Operations group for 'Carpetbagger' operations delivering supplies for the Resistance and agents into occupied Europe. As the War progressed, the Carpetbaggers were transferred to Brindisi but operations continued with planes undertaking missions such as recording messages from agents in Germany and Austria until the end of WWII.

The 42<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Group were transferred to Albuquerque on 7<sup>th</sup> July 1945. The airfield was used as a storage facility for 25 Maintenance Unit between 1947-1948, after which it fell into disuse.

4.6.5 In 1957, the British Government decided to agree to the stationing of the nuclear Thor Intercontinental Ballistic Missile in the UK. Twenty Thor missile bases were established in the late 1950s each holding 3 missiles each. Harrington became an operational Thor missile base manned by RAF 218 (SM) in late 1959. The following is a brief description of the Thor missile site.

4.6.6 The site comprised of three launch pads and was constructed in the following way:

- Construction of concrete launch pads, allied standings, connecting cable ducts and approach roads.
- Construction of storage buildings
- Construction of water and power supplies
- Fencing
- Conversion of a hangar at the main base for maintenance and technical uses.
- An astro-geodetic survey

4.6.7 The layout of the launch pads was standardised (Fig. 9). At Harrington, the three launch pads were orientated with the building marked as no. 4 on Fig. 9 being at the south west. Fig. 10 is an aerial photograph of a Thor launch pad in the US but as the layout of the launch pads was standardised, this is as the launch pads at Harrington would have looked.

4.6.8 The Thor missiles were phased out of operation in 1963 as they were deemed to be too vulnerable to a first strike by the USSR. After this date, Harrington fell into disuse again and reverted to agricultural use.

4.6.9 The three launch pads and the former WWII western perimeter track still survive on site. At each of the launch pads, the surviving features are the cross shaped concrete pad on which all the structures were located, along with the concrete revetment walls (no 8 on Fig. 9 & Plates ? - ?). Of the 20 Thor sites, six have been totally demolished and only four survive in any near complete form. Harrington is one of these four.

4.6.10 On the basis of the available information, the site has low potential for pre WWII post-medieval and modern remains and high potential for WWII and Cold War remains.



The Thor missile launch pads are of national importance and are being considered for Scheduling.

## **5.0 SITE CONDITIONS AND THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

### **5.1 Site Conditions**

- 5.1.1 The site was visited on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2008. It is currently arable farmland. No visible traces of archaeological remains were noted.

### **5.2 The Proposed Development & Potential Archaeological Impact**

- 5.2.1 The proposed development comprises the construction of a wind farm comprising six 2.0 megawatt turbines (Fig. 10)
- 5.2.2 The desk-based assessment has established that the study site is considered to have very High potential for Roman remains of and associated with a villa. The area immediately wither side of Patten Lane has high potential for remains associated with the former Roman road. The remainder of the site has moderate potential for Roman remains. The area of the villa also has high potential for Iron Age and Saxon remains. The site has low potential for remains of all other periods although chance finds may be present. The current landscape has its origins in 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure but there has been a significant level of field boundary removal since the late 1950s. This has resulted in the landscape retaining the broad outlines of the enclosure system within an essentially modern agribusiness layout.
- 5.2.3 Turbines 1, 2 5, and 7 and their associated construction bases will not impact upon any known archaeological remains although the presence of archaeological remains cannot be entirely ruled out. Should such remains be present within these locations, the construction of the turbines and crane base will impact remains within their footprint. Any remains outside of the footprint will not be impacted upon.
- 5.2.4 Turbine 3 lies either within or in very close proximity to Tivetshall Roman villa and the route of a presumed Roman road. Although the extent and layout of the villa is not known, it is considered highly likely that the construction of Turbine 3 and its associated crane will impact upon remains associated with the villa. These remains are considered to be of regional importance.
- 5.2.5 There are no remains recorded in the immediate vicinity of Turbine 4 but it is located relatively close to the villa and therefore, it is possible that there could be remains

associated with the villa present. If this were to be the case, such remains would be impacted by the construction of the turbine and construction crane.

- 5.2.6 In the light of the potential for remains of a villa and Roman road, it is anticipated that the local planning authority's archaeological advisors will require further evaluation in advance of a planning application being determined. This is particularly the case in the area of Turbine 3. This requirement would be in line with Local Plan policy ENV 9.

## **6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1 The desk-based assessment has established that the site contains the remains of a Roman villa and a Roman road. It also has moderate potential for Iron Age and Saxon remains, especially in the area of the villa. The site has low potential for remains of all other periods. Turbine 3 of the proposed development is highly likely to have an impact upon the remains of the villa and/or the road. The villa is considered to be of regional importance and therefore, consideration should be given to the relocation of this turbine. Although no remains are recorded in the vicinity of the other 5 turbines, it is possible that further remains could be located nearby and therefore would be impacted. However, should such remains be present they are likely to be of local importance. Therefore, there are no archaeological reasons to relocate the turbines.
- 6.2 In the light of the potential for remains of a villa and Roman road, it is anticipated that the local planning authority's archaeological advisors will require further evaluation in advance of a planning application being determined. This is particularly the case in the area of Turbine 3. This requirement would be in line with Local Plan policy ENV 9. Should remains be present at the location of the other 5 turbines consideration should be given to either resiting the turbine or undertaking mitigation excavation and recording ahead of construction.

## **SOURCES CONSULTED**

### **General**

Norfolk Historic Environment Record  
Norfolk Record Office  
British Library

### **Cartographic**

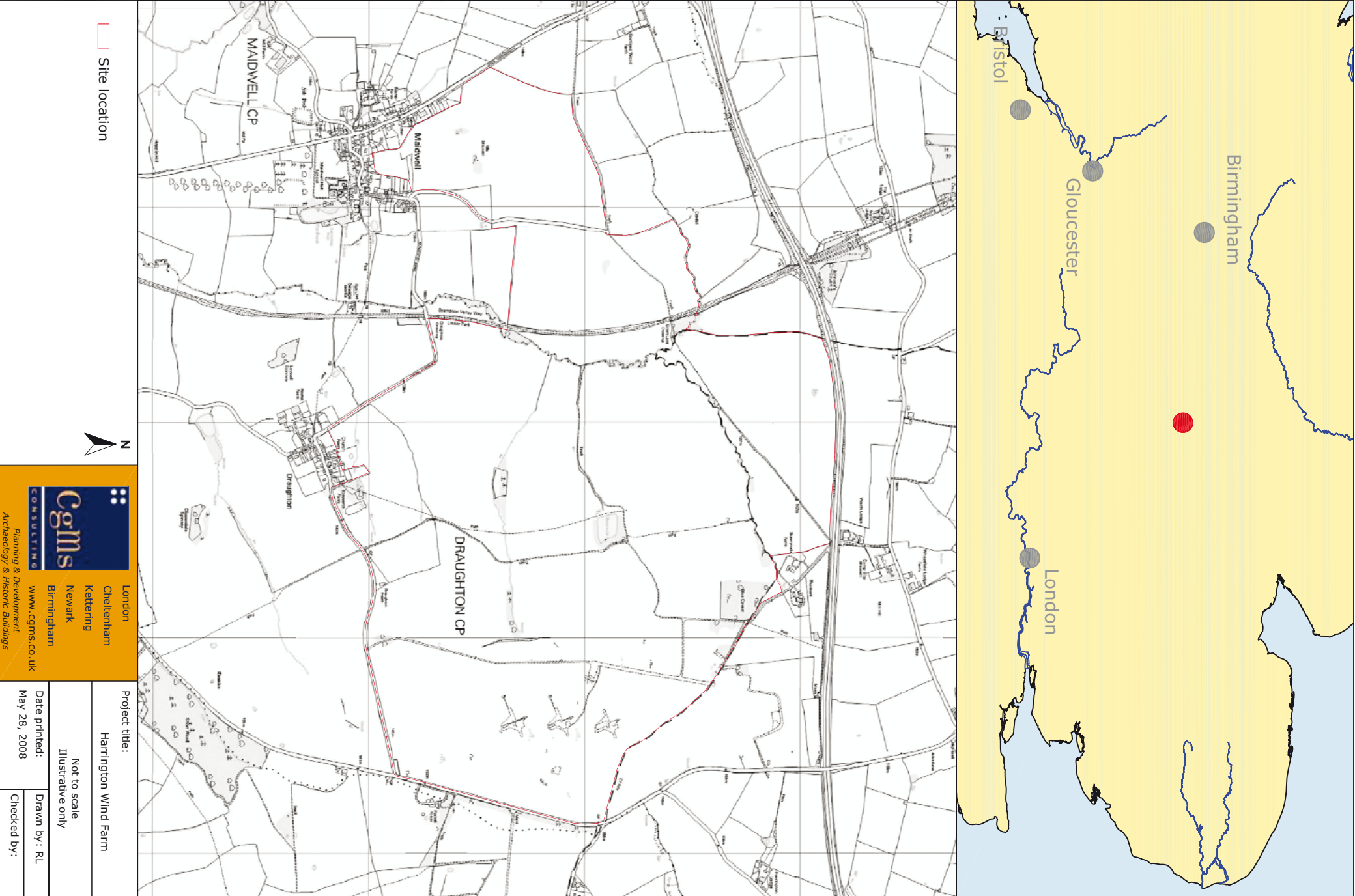
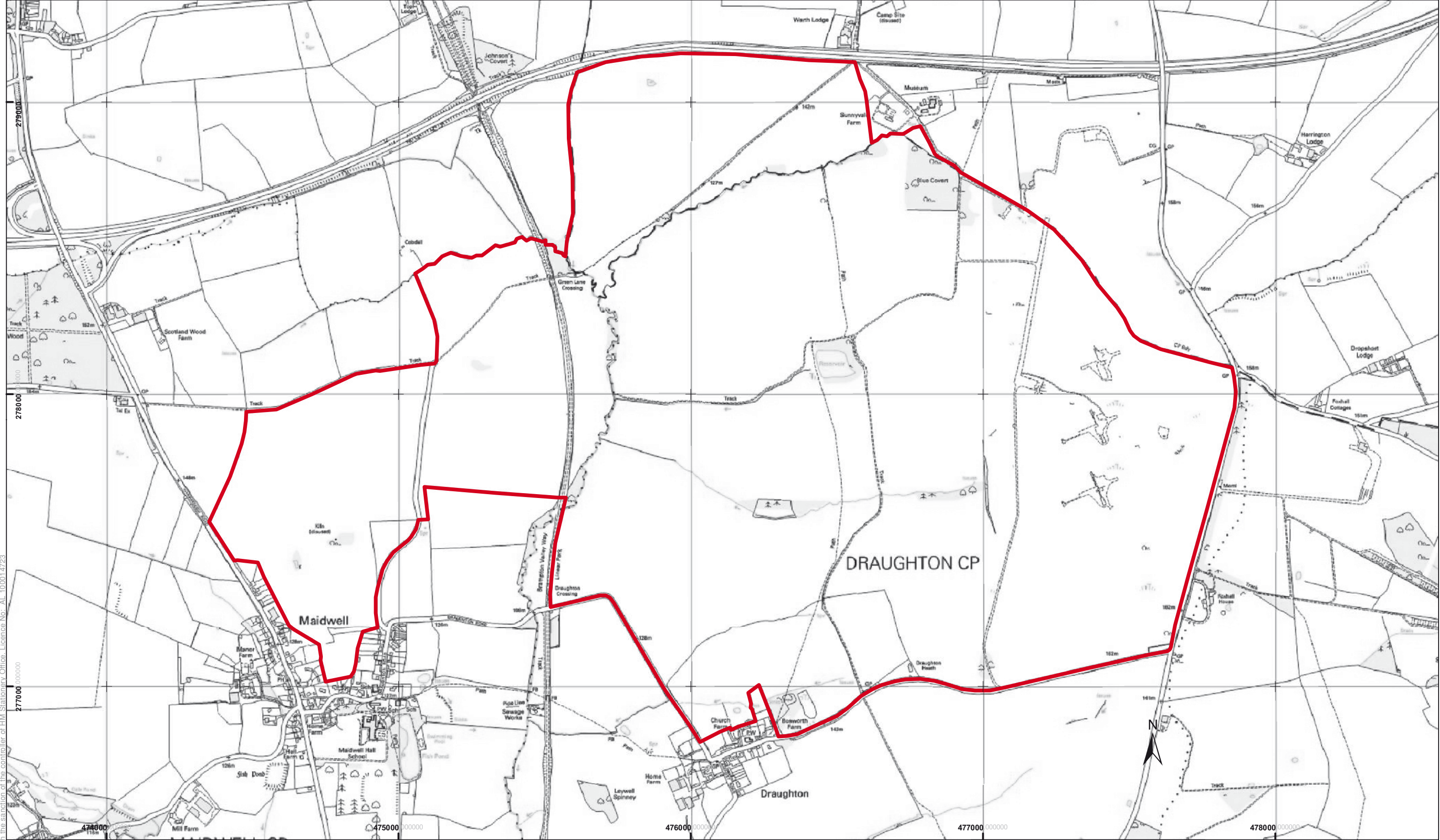


Figure 1 : Site location





**Key**

 Development area



London  
Cheltenham  
Kettering  
Newark  
Birmingham  
www.cgms.co.uk

Planning & Development  
Archaeology & Historic Buildings

Project title:

Harrington Wind Farm

Scale at A4 - 1:12,500

0 500 m

Date printed:

30.05.08

Drawn by: RL

Checked by: xxxx

Figure 2: Site details



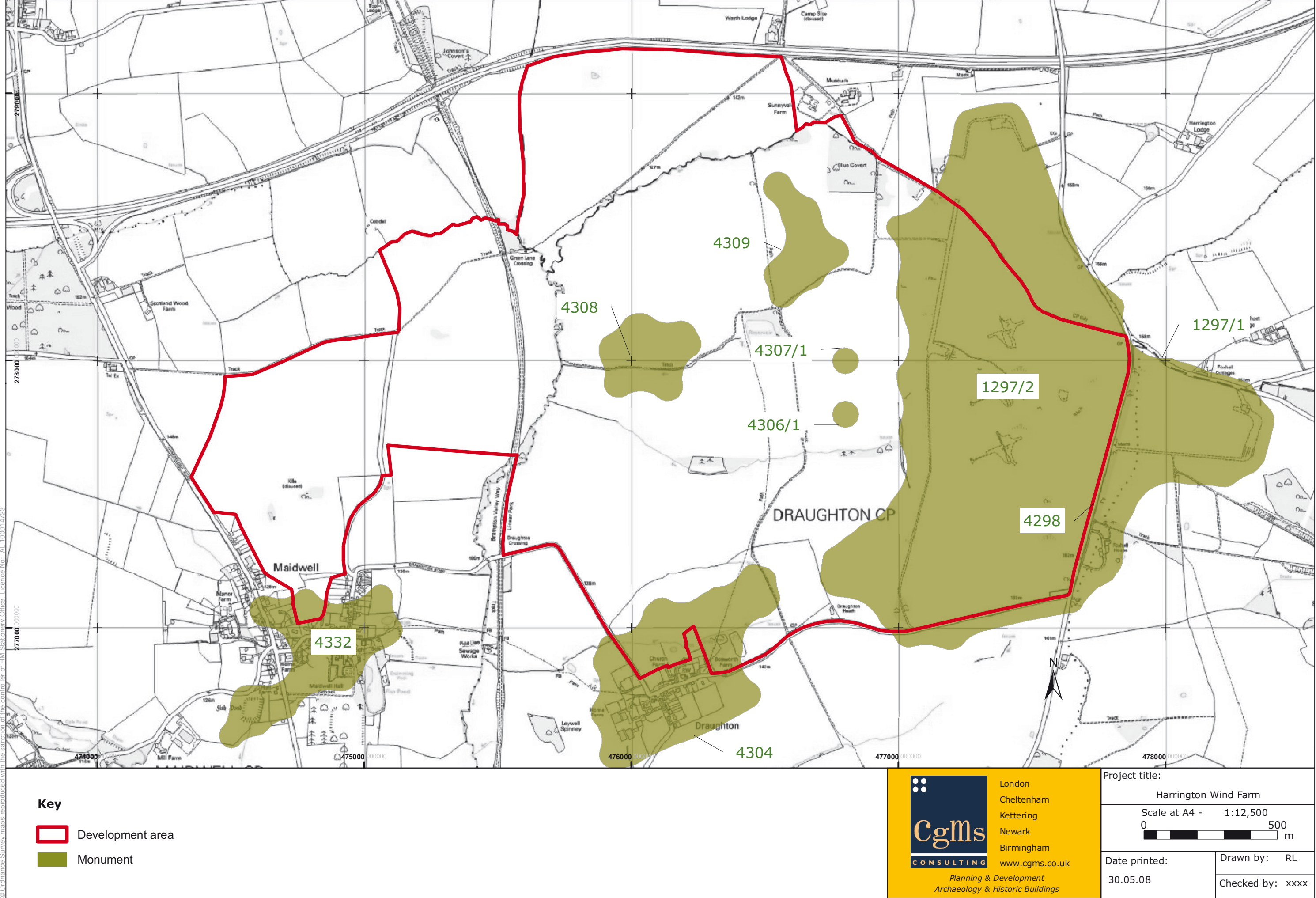


Figure 3: Sites mentioned in the text