

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK BASED ASSESSMENT

Land at Swanstree Avenue, Sittingbourne

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Land at Swanstree Avenue,
Sittingbourne
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Land at Swanstree Avenue, Sittingbourne is proposed for residential development with associated landscaping and infrastructure.

No designated or known non-designated archaeological assets have been recorded on the site. Recent geophysical survey on part of the site recorded anomalies most likely associated with modern horticultural and agricultural activity.

However, based on the available evidence the site has a moderate to good potential for evidence of Prehistoric agricultural activity and a good potential for late Iron Age/Roman archaeology particularly in the south-east of the site associated with the evidence of occupation recorded beyond the site boundary during recent archaeological investigations. As such any archaeological remains as yet to be identified are likely to be of local to at most regional significance.

The proposed development therefore has the potential to impact non-designated archaeological assets of at most regional significance and consequently we suggest that all further archaeological mitigation measures could follow planning consent secured by an appropriately worded planning condition. This is likely to comprise of a programme of trial trenching in the first instance.

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1 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF STUDY

- 1.1 This below ground archaeological desk-based assessment was prepared by Suzanne Gailey of RPS on behalf of Gladman Developments.
- 1.2 The subject of this assessment, also known as the study site, is Land at Swanstree Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent. The site is centred on National Grid Reference TQ 91208 62574.
- 1.3 In accordance with government policy on archaeology within the planning process (Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework) this assessment draws together the available archaeological, topographic and land-use information in order to clarify the archaeological potential of the study site.
- 1.4 Additionally, in accordance with the 'Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessments' (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) 2014), it incorporates an examination of evidence in the Kent Historic Environment Record (HER), and incorporates published and unpublished material and charts historic land-use through a map regression exercise.
- 1.5 As a result, the assessment enables relevant parties to assess the significance of any designated and non-designated heritage assets within the study site, assess the potential for as yet to be discovered archaeological assets and enables potential impacts on assets to be identified, along with the need for design, civil engineering or archaeological solutions.

2 PLANNING BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 In March 2012, the government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and it was last updated in July 2021. The NPPF is supported by the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), which was published online 6th March 2014, with the guidance on Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment last updated in July 2019. (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment>).
- 2.2 The NPPF and NPPG are additionally supported by three Good Practice Advice (GPA) documents published by Historic England: GPA 1: The Historic Environment in Local Plans; GPA 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (both published March 2015). The second edition of GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets was published in December 2017.

National Planning Policy

- 2.3 Section 16 of the NPPF, entitled Conserving and enhancing the historic environment provides guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the conservation and investigation of heritage assets. Overall, the objectives of Section 16 of the NPPF can be summarised as seeking the:
- Delivery of sustainable development;
 - Understanding the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits brought by the conservation of the historic environment;
 - Conservation of England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance; and
 - Recognition that heritage makes to our knowledge and understanding of the past.
- 2.4 Section 16 of the NPPF recognises that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term. Paragraph 194 states that planning decisions should be based on the significance of the heritage asset and that level of detail supplied by an applicant should be proportionate to the importance of the asset and should be no more than sufficient to review the potential impact of the proposal upon the significance of that asset.
- 2.5 *Heritage Assets* are defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as: a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. They include designated heritage assets (as defined in the NPPF) and assets identified by the local planning authority during the process of decision-making or through the plan-making process.
- 2.6 Annex 2 also defines *Archaeological Interest* as a heritage asset which holds or potentially could hold evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
- 2.7 A *Nationally Important Designated Heritage Asset* comprises a: World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area.
- 2.8 *Significance* is defined as: The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. This interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.
- 2.9 *Setting* is defined as: The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

- 2.10 In short, government policy provides a framework which:
- Protects nationally important designated Heritage Assets;
 - Protects the settings of such designations;
 - In appropriate circumstances seeks adequate information (from desk based assessment and field evaluation where necessary) to enable informed decisions;
 - Provides for the excavation and investigation of sites not significant enough to merit *in-situ* preservation.
- 2.11 The NPPG reiterates that the conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle, requiring a flexible and thoughtful approach. Furthermore, it highlights that neglect and decay of heritage assets is best addressed through ensuring they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation. Importantly, the guidance states that if complete, or partial loss of a heritage asset is justified, the aim should then be to capture and record the evidence of the asset's significance and make the interpretation publicly available. Key elements of the guidance relate to assessing harm. An important consideration should be whether the proposed works adversely affect a key element of the heritage asset's special architectural or historic interest. Additionally, it is the degree of harm, rather than the scale of development, that is to be assessed. The level of 'substantial harm' is considered to be a high bar that may not arise in many cases. Essentially, whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the NPPF. Importantly, harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting. Setting is defined as the surroundings in which an asset is experienced and may be more extensive than the curtilage. A thorough assessment of the impact of proposals upon setting needs to take into account, and be proportionate to, the significance of the heritage asset and the degree to which proposed changes enhance or detract from that significance and the ability to appreciate it.
- 2.12 In considering any planning application for development, the planning authority will be mindful of the framework set by government policy, in this instance the NPPF, by current Development Plan Policy and by other material considerations.

Local Planning Policy

- 2.13 The Swale Borough Council Local Plan was adopted in 2017 and contains the following relevant policies relating to archaeology and the historic environment:

Policy ST 1

Delivering sustainable development in Swale

To deliver sustainable development in Swale, all development proposals will, as appropriate:

12. Conserve and enhance the historic environment by applying national and local planning policy through the identification, assessment and integration of development with the importance, form and character of heritage assets (inc. historic landscapes).

Policy CP 7

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment - providing for green infrastructure

The Council will work with partners and developers to ensure the protection, enhancement and delivery, as appropriate, of the Swale natural assets and green infrastructure network and its associated strategy. Development proposals will, as appropriate promote the expansion of Swale's natural assets and green infrastructure, including within new and existing developments, by:

d. contributing to the protection, conservation and management of historic landscapes, archaeological and built heritage assets;

Policy CP 8

Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

To support the Borough's heritage assets, the Council will prepare a Heritage Strategy. Development will sustain and enhance the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets to sustain the historic environment whilst creating for all areas a sense of place and special identity. Development proposals will, as appropriate:

1. Accord with national planning policy in respect of heritage matters, together with any heritage strategy adopted by the Council;
2. Sustain and enhance the significance of Swale's designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings in a manner appropriate to their significance and, where appropriate, in accordance with Policies DM 32-DM 36;
3. Respond to the integrity, form and character of settlements and historic landscapes;
4. Bring heritage assets into sensitive and sustainable use within allocations, neighbourhood plans, regeneration areas and town centres, especially for assets identified as being at risk on national or local registers;
5. Respond positively to the conservation area appraisals and management strategies prepared by the Council;
6. Respect the integrity of heritage assets, whilst meeting the challenges of a low carbon future; and
7. Promote the enjoyment of heritage assets through education, accessibility, interpretation and improved access.

Policy DM 34

Scheduled Monuments and archaeological sites

1. Development will not be permitted which would adversely affect a Scheduled Monument, and/or its setting, as shown on the Proposals Map, or subsequently designated, or any other monument or archaeological site demonstrated as being of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments. Development that may affect the significance of a non-designated heritage asset of less than national significance will require a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
2. Whether they are currently known, or discovered during the Plan period, there will be a preference to preserve important archaeological sites in-situ and to protect their settings. Development that does not achieve acceptable mitigation of adverse archaeological effects will not be permitted.
3. Where development is permitted and preservation in-situ is not justified, the applicant will be required to ensure that provision will be made for archaeological excavation and recording, in advance of and/or during development, including the necessary post-excavation study and assessment along with the appropriate deposition of any artefacts in an archaeological archive or museum to be approved by the Borough Council.

- 2.14 There are no World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Registered Park and Gardens or Historic Battlefield designations within the study site or within its immediate vicinity. The closest Listed building is Chilton Manor which lies approximately 200m north of the site within a modern

suburban setting. Consequently, the study site is considered to have a neutral effect on the significance of this asset. Built heritage assets will not be discussed further in this assessment.

- 2.15 In line with relevant planning policy and guidance, this desk-based assessment therefore seeks to clarify the site's archaeological potential and the likely significance of that potential and the need or otherwise for additional mitigation measures in accordance with national planning policy and local planning policy particularly Policy DM34.
- 2.16 An outline planning application for Land At Swanstree Avenue Highsted Road Sittingbourne Kent ME10 4LU which included the study site and a much larger area was refused planning permission in 2016 (Ref 15/510254/OUT). Archaeology was not a reason for refusal.

3 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

Geology

- 3.1 The British Geological Survey (2013) indicate that the solid geology comprises an outcrop of Thanet Formation in the east and Seaford Chalk Formation to the west. Superficial Head Deposits overly the Seaford Chalk Formation.
- 3.2 No site-specific geotechnical data is currently available.

Topography

- 3.3 The site gently rises from north to south-east from approximately 30m AOD in the north of the site to approximately 33m AOD in the south-east.
- 3.4 No watercourses or naturally occurring bodies of water are evident in the immediate vicinity of the study site.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND WITH ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Timescales used in this report

Prehistoric

Palaeolithic	900,000 -	12,000 BC
Mesolithic	12,000 -	4,000 BC
Neolithic	4,000 -	1,800 BC
Bronze Age	1,800 -	600 BC
Iron Age	600 -	AD 43

Historic

Roman	AD 43 -	410
Saxon/Early Medieval	AD 410 -	1066
Medieval	AD 1066 -	1485
Post Medieval	AD 1486 -	1799
Modern	AD 1800 -	Present

Introduction

- 4.1 This assessment comprises a review of known archaeological assets within a 1km radius of the study site (see Appendix 1), also referred to as the study area, held on the Kent Historic Environment Records (HER), together with a historic map regression exercise charting the development of the study area from the late 18th century onwards until the present day. In addition, the results of previous archaeological fieldwork on and adjacent to the site provides the known archaeological baseline conditions (Stratascan 2015 and Archaeology South East 2015).
- 4.2 This chapter reviews existing archaeological evidence for the site and the archaeological/historic background of the general area and, in accordance with NPPF, considers the archaeological interest of the site.
- 4.3 Chapter 5 subsequently considers the site conditions and whether the proposed development will impact the theoretical archaeological potential identified in Chapter 4.

Previous Archaeological Work

- 4.4 A programme of archaeological geophysical survey was undertaken in the north-eastern quadrant of the site as part of a wider programme of survey to the east and south east in association with a previous outline planning application (Stratascan 2015). The survey did not include the entire study site due to the extent of horticultural activity across much of the site. Within the study site the survey recorded isolated anomalies of possible archaeological origin potentially representing isolated cut features which could relate to the removal of trees and the site's past history as an orchard. Evidence of modern agricultural activity and ferrous anomalies potentially relating to modern rubbish were also recorded. Approximately 50m south-east of the study site the survey recorded linear and rectilinear anomalies considered likely to be associated with the Roman cemetery recorded in this location (Fig. 2).

- 4.5 A programme of targeted archaeological trial trenching was undertaken to test the results of the geophysical survey discussed above (4.4) in association with an outline planning application. No trenches were excavated within the site instead the trenches targeted the linear anomalies located approximately 50m south-east of the study site and recorded several substantial ditches and pits along with burnt structural debris, evidence of metal-working, fragments of unidentifiable burnt bone and large amounts of pottery. These suggest evidence of a fairly short-lived Late Iron Age/Early Roman settlement. In addition, a small assemblage of prehistoric pottery and worked flint mostly considered to represent residual finds within Late Iron Age/Roman features were recorded (ASE 2015 Fig.3).
- 4.6 A programme of archaeological evaluation was undertaken during the Swanstree Avenue Road extension in 2005 bounding the site to the north (Wessex Archaeology 2005). Two low density concentrations of features were identified at the eastern and western ends of the road alignment consisting of a Bronze Age pit containing a buried vessel, and several Iron Age postholes and ditch which were excavated. In addition two Roman ditches one on a north-west/south-east alignment and one on a north-east/south-west alignment were recorded (Fig. 4). A second or third phase of excavation (EKE12311, TQ 9119 6267) and separate strip, map and sample exercise (EKE12310, TQ 9151 6274) prior to the construction of the road did not identify any features of archaeological interest.

Early Prehistoric (Palaeolithic, Mesolithic)

- 4.7 There is a record of a Palaeolithic handaxe being found at Rodmersham Green c1250m south-east of the site (TQ 96 SW 226, TQ 915 613).
- 4.8 An isolated find of a Mesolithic pick lies c1250m east of the site boundary although the precise provenance is unknown (TQ 96 SW 68, TQ 92 62).
- 4.9 A residual Mesolithic or Neolithic flint core was found during a watching brief c850m to the northeast of the site (TQ 96 SW 259, TQ 9219 6338).
- 4.10 Palaeolithic material is not anticipated on the site since deposits of the right age do not occur. Accordingly, a low archaeological potential is identified for Palaeolithic material at the site. Mesolithic evidence occurs at a very low density across the landscape and whilst an isolated lithic may be present, a significant concentration of material is not anticipated.

Prehistoric (Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age)

- 4.11 From around 4000 BC the mobile hunter-gathering economy of the Mesolithic gradually gave way to a more settled agriculture-based subsistence. The pace of woodland clearance to create arable and pasture-based agricultural land varied regionally and locally, depending on a wide variety of climatic, topographic, social and other factors. The trend was one of a slow, but gradually increasing pace of forest clearance.
- 4.12 A possible Neolithic burial was found by antiquarians in the 19th century approximately 750m north of the site (TQ 96 SW 36, TQ 9121 6336).
- 4.13 An isolated Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age pit was excavated c950m to the north east of the site (TW 96 SW 306, TQ 9228 6285) and a possible Neolithic handaxe was found further to the east (TQ 96 SW 21, TQ 9264 6290).
- 4.14 The recent archaeological evaluation undertaken approximately 50m south-east of the site recorded residual finds dating to the prehistoric periods. One of the pot fabrics identified was of a type typical in the Early Neolithic, while another was thought to date from the Middle or Late Bronze Age; there

were also flints of Early Neolithic date and of Neolithic to Bronze Age date, the assemblage suggests low-key activities during the prehistoric periods within the vicinity (ASE 2015 Fig. 3).

- 4.15 Evidence for Bronze Age and Iron Age activity was identified during archaeological investigation prior to the construction of the Swanstree Avenue road extension in 2005 immediately to the north of the site boundary (Fig. 4). Two low density concentrations of features were identified at the eastern and western ends of the road alignment consisting of a Bronze Age pit containing a buried vessel, and several Iron Age postholes and ditch which were excavated (Wessex Archaeology 2005; TQ 96 SW 230, TQ 91294 62682).
- 4.16 Several Bronze Age ditches were found during an evaluation at Fulston Manor, c350m south-west of the site (TQ 96 SW 270, TQ 9077 6223) which were interpreted as being part of a field system. Additional Bronze Age or Iron Age ditches were found to the north of this during further phases of evaluation (TQ 96 SW 269, TQ 9091 6242).
- 4.17 A Bronze Age cist burial and spearhead were found along side the possible Neolithic antiquarian burial to the north of the site during the 19th century (TQ 96 SW 36, TQ 9121 6336).
- 4.18 An excavation in 1955 identified the location of a small Iron Age cemetery c750m southwest of the site, which contained 20 inhumations and six cremations with associated grave goods (TQ 96 SW 20, TQ 9071 6185).
- 4.19 A cluster of late Prehistoric finds and features were identified c1km to the northeast of the site, consisting of multiple Iron Age pits (TQ 96 SW 307, TQ 9228 6285; TQ 96 SW 308, TQ 9227 6293), an Iron Age terret (TQ 96 SW 30, TQ 925 627), and an isolated ditch associated with this period in general (TQ 96 SW 277, TQ 9220 6318).
- 4.20 The Bronze Age and Iron Age features identified during extensive archaeological investigations to the north and west of the site in addition to evidence immediately bordering the site to the north and the recent investigations to the south-east suggest that the study site lay in the hinterland of a later prehistoric agricultural landscape. On this basis, the potential for the study site to contain later prehistoric features is moderate to good; features are likely to comprise field boundary ditches and pits associated with agricultural activity although the recent geophysical survey in the north-east of the site did not pick up any likely anomalies dating to this period.

Roman

- 4.21 Antiquarian investigation undertaken in 1828 found archaeological remains associated with a Roman burial ground which is recorded on the HER to lie approximately 75m south-east of the study site. The excavation discovered a single inhumation burial associated with four cremation urns accompanied by four bronze harp-shaped fibulae (TQ 96 SW 18, TQ 9131 6243). However, details concerning the exact location and description of the human remains recovered are limited and no evidence of the cemetery was found during the recent archaeological trial trenching adjacent to the site (ASE 2015).
- 4.22 A programme of targeted trial trenching undertaken approximately 50m south-east of the study site recorded extensive evidence for Late Iron Age/Roman activity (ASE 2015). A series of large enclosure ditches, several large pits filled with burnt material, and a few scattered smaller pits and post holes were recorded and some of the features tied in with those identified in the geophysical survey (Stratascan 2015) The Late Iron Age/Roman features all contained potsherds, and there were additional finds indicating metal smelting in the general vicinity of the site and some small-scale metal smithing within it. A large quantity of structural daub recovered from one pit suggests that there was at least one structure on the site and data from geophysics may hint at more. Roman CBM and glasswork were also retrieved. No funerary features were identified in the evaluation but unidentifiable burnt bone was retrieved from all but one of the 6 environmental samples taken from

various features. This could be animal, human, or both in origin and may, therefore, imply occupation activity rather than funerary activity. The activity seems to be predominantly focussed around Trenches 9 to 15 (Fig. 3). Extrapolation of the linear features, using both the results of the evaluation and those of the geophysical survey (Stratascan 2015), suggests that a possible bivallate enclosure, perhaps with further internal partitions, may exist in this part of the site. The projected alignment of a substantial enclosure ditch may extend into the study site and so there is a good potential that evidence of occupation continues into the southeast of the study site (Fig. 3).

- 4.23 Human remains associated with the Roman period have been found in two other locations within the study area during groundworks in the 19th and early 20th century. A series of graves, including a lead coffin were found c750m southwest of the site (TQ 96 SW 64, TQ 9068 6192), while a small group of cremation urns were identified c200m to the northwest (TQ 96 SW 19, TQ 9096 6275).
- 4.24 Two Roman ditches were also recorded during the excavation works prior to the construction of Swanstree Avenue immediately to the north of the site boundary (Wessex Archaeology 2005; TQ 96 SW 230, TQ 91294 62682 Fig. 4). These ditches were on a north-east/south-west alignment and north-west/south-east alignment and appear to extend into the north of the study site although no associated anomalies were recorded during the recent geophysical survey in this location (Fig 2 Stratascan 2015 and Fig 4).
- 4.25 The Roman Road (Watling Street) from London to Canterbury (now High Street/East Street) (TQ 86 SW 122), runs on an east-west alignment through the centre of Sittingbourne c750m north of the study site and a concentration of evidence of Roman settlement occupation has been recorded to the north of Sittingbourne around Milton, where extensive evidence for Roman buildings, settlement and cemeteries was found in the late nineteenth century (VCH, Volume 3, p96, 97 and 98).
- 4.26 Based on the available evidence it can be anticipated that archaeological remains dating to this period extend into the site suggesting that the potential of the study site for Roman activity is good. Evidence of peripheral activity associated with the occupation recorded to the south-east of the site can be anticipated in the south-east of the site whilst evidence of Roman agricultural activity can be anticipated in the north of the site associated with the likely field systems picked up during the investigations along the road to the north.

Anglo-Saxon and Medieval

- 4.27 Early Anglo-Saxon burials are recorded north-west of Sittingbourne Parish Church (St Michael's) and a more extensive early cemetery was recorded in 1881 in the Rondeau area of Sittingbourne, at the western end of the town north of the Roman Road (VCH, Volume 1, p373-374). A number of mid and late Saxon finds are recorded from the general area of the town.
- 4.28 A pit containing Anglo-Saxon pottery was excavated c750m to the northeast of the site (TQ 96 SW 303, TQ 9237 6295).
- 4.29 The potential of the study site for Anglo-Saxon evidence is identified as low.
- 4.30 An isolated undiagnostic Medieval feature was excavated prior to the construction of Swanstree Avenue immediately to the north of the site boundary (Wessex Archaeology 2005; TQ 96 SW 230, TQ 91294 62682 (Fig. 4).
- 4.31 During evaluation work to the west of the site, a series of Medieval features have been identified. The largest feature was an enclosure which contained multiple hearths and ovens, indicative of a bakery, located c350m west of the site (TQ 96 SW 268, TQ 9073 6275). A northeast-southwest orientated Medieval trackway was found c400m to the west (TQ 96 SW 271, TQ 9070 6226), while a small ditch and pit were excavated c250m to the west (TQ 96 SW 206, TQ 9083 6260).

- 4.32 The junction of Bell Road, Crown Quay, High Street and East Street is likely to have formed the central crossroads at the historic core of the late Medieval and early Post-Medieval settlement at Sittingbourne approximately 1km to the north of the site. It is probable that settlement was present along Bell Street by 1200 AD.
- 4.33 Evidence for Medieval activity in the vicinity of Sittingbourne consists of structural remains (TQ 96 SW 272, TQ 9119 6351), a well (TQ 96 SW 213, TQ 9099 6349), several pits (TQ 96 SW 212, TQ 9100 6351) and the isolated recovery of a metal dress hook (MKE73078, TQ 90400 63401).
- 4.34 During the Medieval period the site is thought to have been in the agricultural hinterland associated with nearby settlements. This suggests evidence for field boundaries and a low density of Medieval finds from manuring can be anticipated.

Post Medieval & Modern (including map regression exercise)

- 4.35 Andrews and Dury's map of 1769 (Fig. 5) is the earliest map depicting the area around Sittingbourne. The map indicates that in the mid-18th century the site lay in open ground to the south of Sittingbourne.
- 4.36 The 1797 Ordnance Survey Drawing (Fig. 6) shows that the site comprises enclosed fields in agricultural use, with the site divided up into three different field plots.
- 4.37 By the 19th century the north-western part of the site was in use as an orchard whilst the remainder of the site continued to comprise agricultural land (Fig. 7) and by the late 19th century the orchard had expanded eastwards. The former field boundaries within the site having been lost by this date (Fig. 8).
- 4.38 By the early 20th century the orchard expanded into the south-east of the site and two boundary stones are marked on the 1906 Ordnance Survey (Fig. 9) and by the mid-20th century all but the north-eastern corner of the site was occupied by orchard (Fig. 10) and there was no change by the 1973 (Fig. 11).
- 4.39 Between 1973 and 1979 the orchard was cleared across the site apart from the south-western corner and Chilton Manor Farm constructed in the west of the site accessed via Highsted Road (F. 12).
- 4.40 By 2002 the orchard had been reinstated across the site apart from the north-eastern and south-western corner (Fig. 13).
- 4.41 More recently (Fig. 14) all of the orchards have been removed, replaced by horticultural or agricultural plots.
- 4.42 The potential of the study site for Post-Medieval and Modern settlement evidence is identified as low.

Assessment of Significance (Designated Assets)

- 4.43 Existing national policy guidance for archaeology (the NPPF as referenced in section 2) enshrines the concept of the 'significance' of heritage assets. Significance as defined in the NPPF centres on the value of an archaeological or historic asset for its 'heritage interest' to this or future generations.
- 4.44 There are no designated archaeological assets on the site.

Assessment of Significance (Non-Designated Assets)

- 4.45 No known non-designated archaeological assets have been recorded on the site and the recent geophysical survey on part of the site recorded anomalies most likely associated with modern horticultural and agricultural activity.
- 4.46 However, based on the available evidence the site has a moderate to good potential for evidence of Prehistoric agricultural activity and a good potential for Roman evidence particularly in the south-east of the site associated with the evidence of occupation recorded beyond the site boundary. As such any archaeological remains as yet to be identified are likely to be of local to at most regional significance.
- 4.47 As identified by desk-based work, archaeological potential by period the likely significance of any archaeological remains which may be present is summarised in table form below:

Period:	Identified Archaeological Potential	Identified Archaeological Significance
Prehistoric field system	Moderate to Good	Local
Prehistoric isolated artefacts	Moderate to Good	Local
Prehistoric Settlement	Low	Local
Roman field system	Good	Local
Roman isolated artefacts	Good	Local
Roman settlement	Good	Local
Anglo-Saxon	Low	Local
Medieval Settlement	Low	Local
Post Medieval settlement	Low	Local
Medieval/Post Medieval buried agricultural evidence	Moderate to Good	Local

5 SITE CONDITIONS, THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT & REVIEW OF POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSETS

Site Conditions

- 5.1 A site walkover was undertaken in May 2014. The site is predominantly occupied by horticultural plots whilst two modern buildings associated with Chilton Manor Farm are located adjacent to Highsted Road (Plates 1-3). An arable field occupies the north eastern part of the site whilst a small triangular plot in the north-eastern corner of the site is covered in grass (Fig. 14).
- 5.2 Post-Medieval and Modern ploughing is likely to have had a widespread negative impact on any sub-surface horizons, as will the planting and subsequent removal of an orchard. The construction of the Modern buildings associated with Chilton Manor Farm is likely to have a localised negative impact on any sub-surface horizons within the footprint of the development.

Proposed Development

- 5.3 The proposed development comprises residential development with associated landscaping and infrastructure.

Review of Potential Development Impacts on Designated Archaeological Assets

- 5.4 No designated heritage assets lie within the site. Consequently, the proposed development would not have a direct physical impact on any designated archaeological assets.

Review of Potential Development Impacts on Non-Designated Assets

- 5.5 Based on the available evidence and in particular the results of the recent archaeological investigations undertaken adjacent to the site, the proposed development has the potential to impact non-designated archaeological remains of a local to regional interest.

6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 This archaeological desk based assessment has been prepared to assess the archaeological potential of the site at Swanstree Avenue, Sittingbourne.
- 6.2 Recent archaeological investigations undertaken approximately 50m south-east of the study site recorded the remains of a late Iron Age/Roman enclosure and a linear ditch associated with the Roman occupation may extend into the south-east of the site. Evidence of peripheral activity associated with the occupation recorded to the south-east of the site can therefore be anticipated in the south-east of the site whilst evidence of Roman agricultural activity can be anticipated in the north of the site associated with the likely field systems picked up during previous archaeological investigations along the road to the north. In addition the site has a moderate to good potential for later prehistoric evidence of agricultural activity.
- 6.3 Post-Medieval and Modern ploughing is likely to have had a widespread negative impact on any sub-surface horizons, as will the planting and subsequent removal of an orchard. The construction of the Modern buildings associated with Chilton Manor Farm is likely to have a localised negative impact on any sub-surface horizons within the footprint of the development.
- 6.4 The proposed development therefore has the potential to directly impact non-designated archaeological remains on the site of a local to regional significance. Consequently, we suggest that all further archaeological mitigation measures could follow planning consent secured by an appropriately worded planning condition. This is likely to comprise of a programme of trial trenching in the first instance.
- 6.5 With appropriate mitigation measures in place, it is considered that heritage assets do not present a constraint upon residential development of the site.

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Cartographic

1769 Andrew and Dury's Map of Kent

1797 Ordnance Survey Drawing

1866 Ordnance Survey

1896 Ordnance Survey

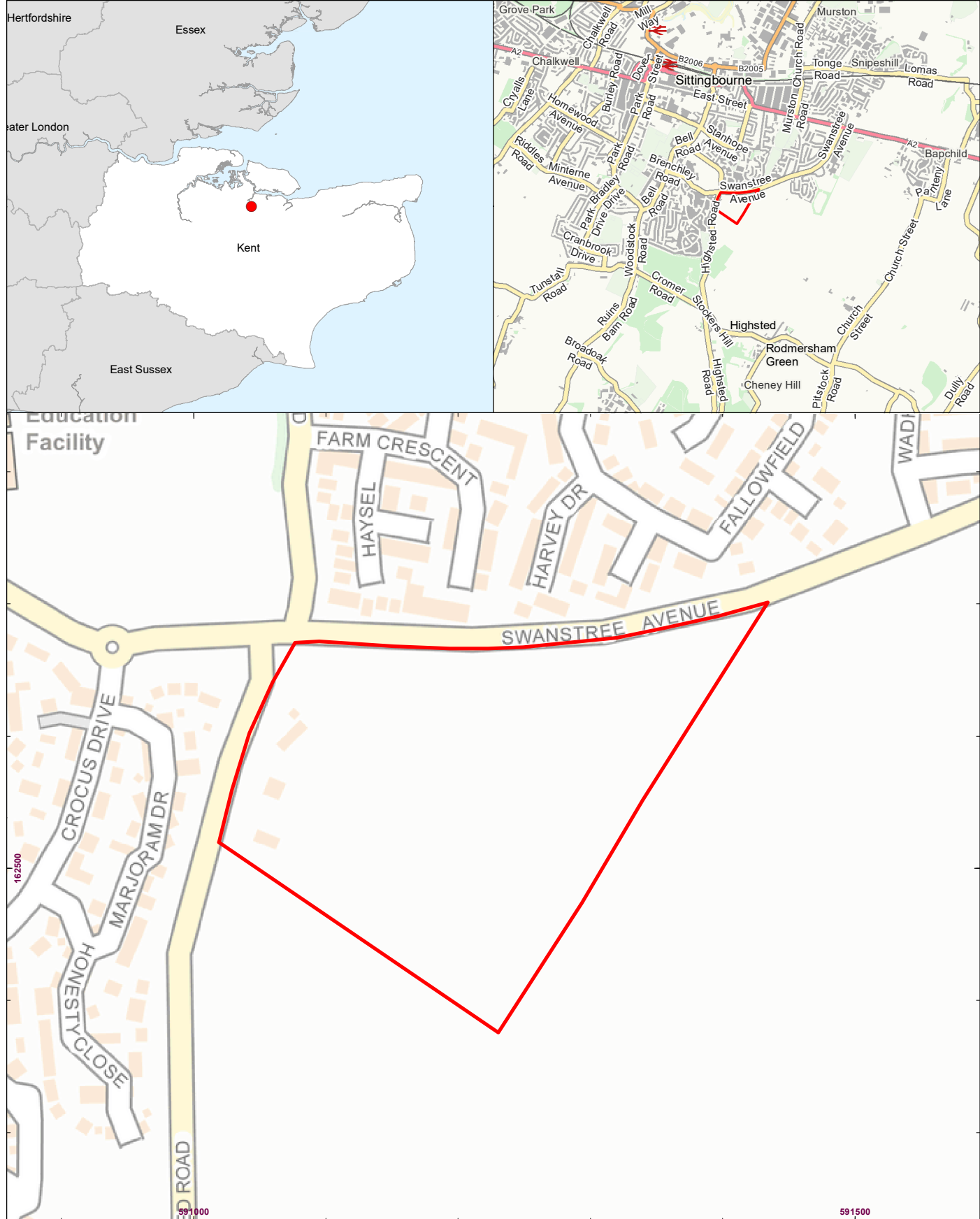
1906 Ordnance Survey

1955 Ordnance Survey

1973 Ordnance Survey

1979 Ordnance Survey

2002 Ordnance Survey



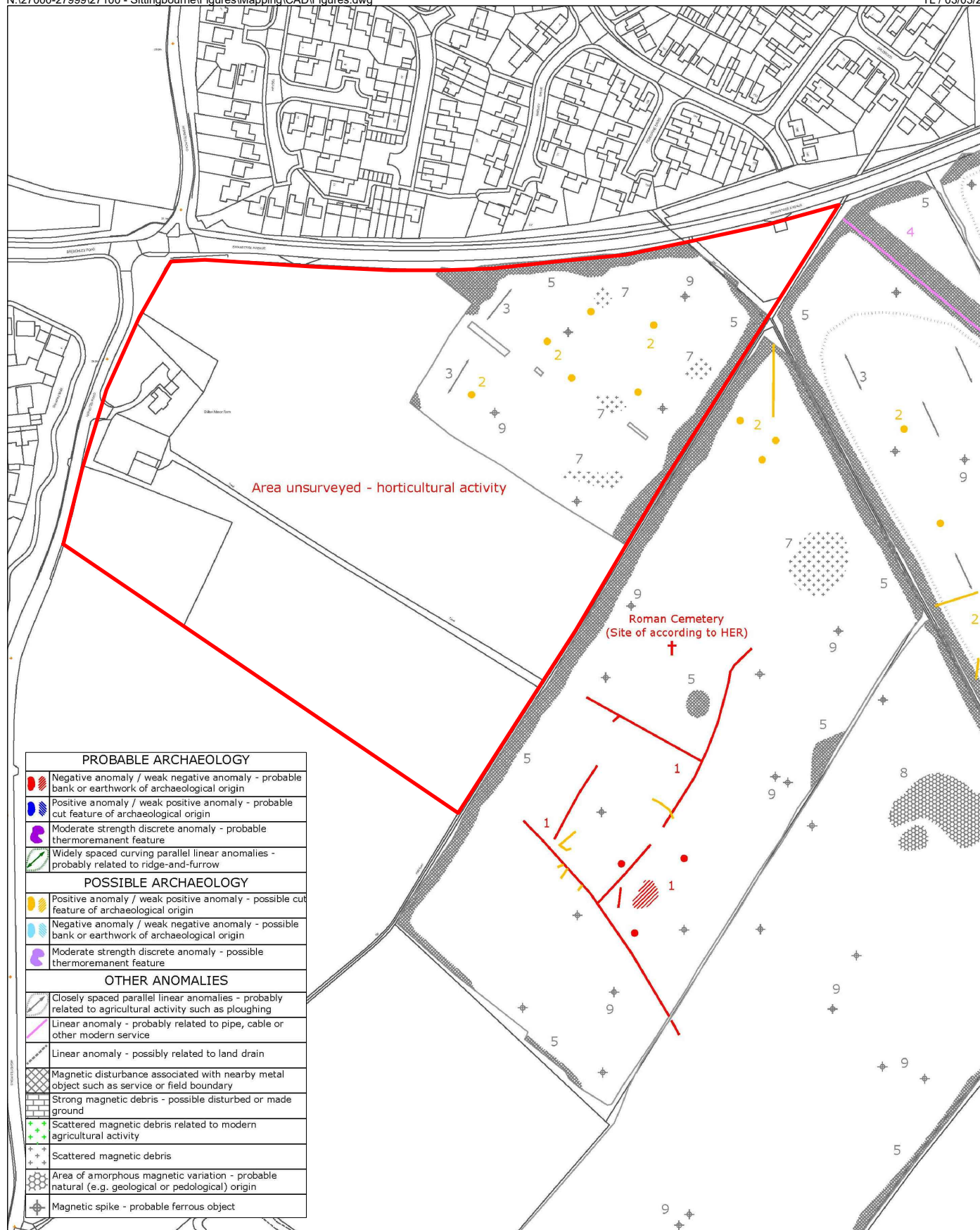
 Site Boundary



0 50 100m
Scale at A4: 1:4,000

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Figure 1
Site Location



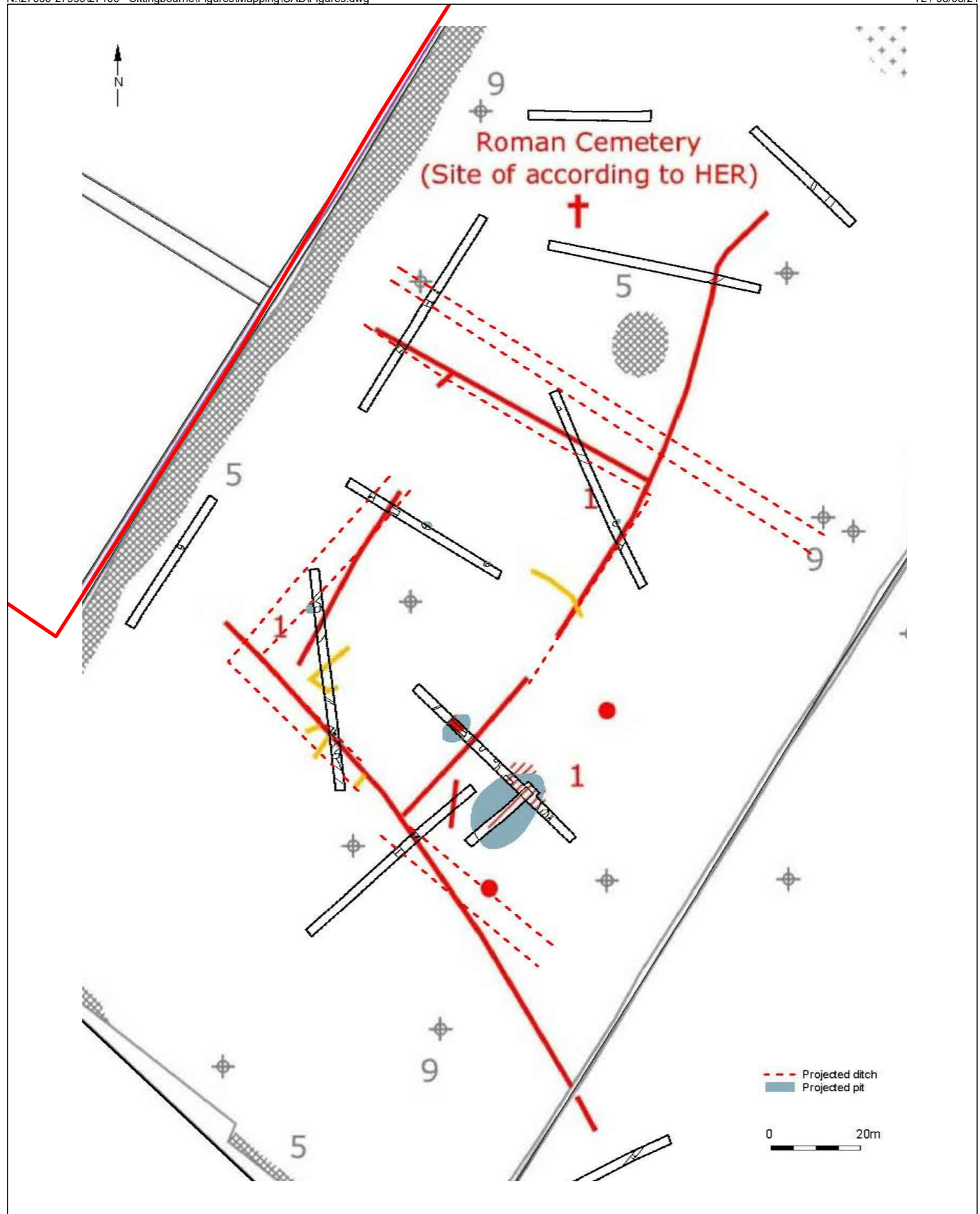
Site Boundary



Not to Scale:
Illustrative Only

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Figure 2
Plan of geophysical anomalies within
study site and wider area
(Stratascan 2015)



 Site Boundary



Not to Scale:
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Figure 3
Plan showing geophysical anomalies
and trial trenches on adjacent site and
projected archaeological features



Legend

Site Boundary

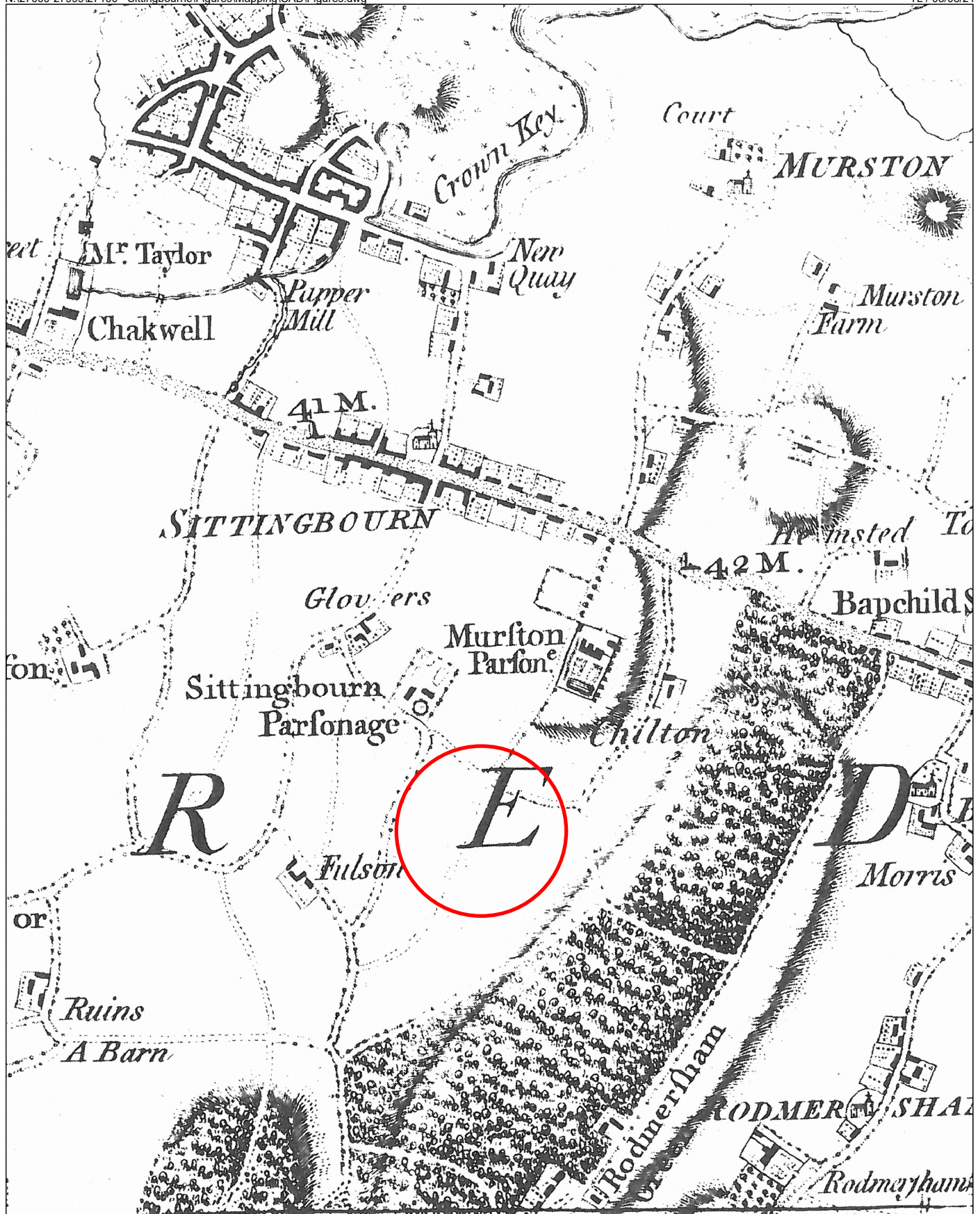



Not to Scale:
Illustrative Only



Figure 4

Archaeological features identified during the Swanstree Avenue Road Extension (Wessex Archaeology 2005)



 Site Boundary (approximate)



Not to Scale:
Illustrative Only



Figure 5

1769 Andrews and Dury Map of
Kent



Site Boundary (approximate)

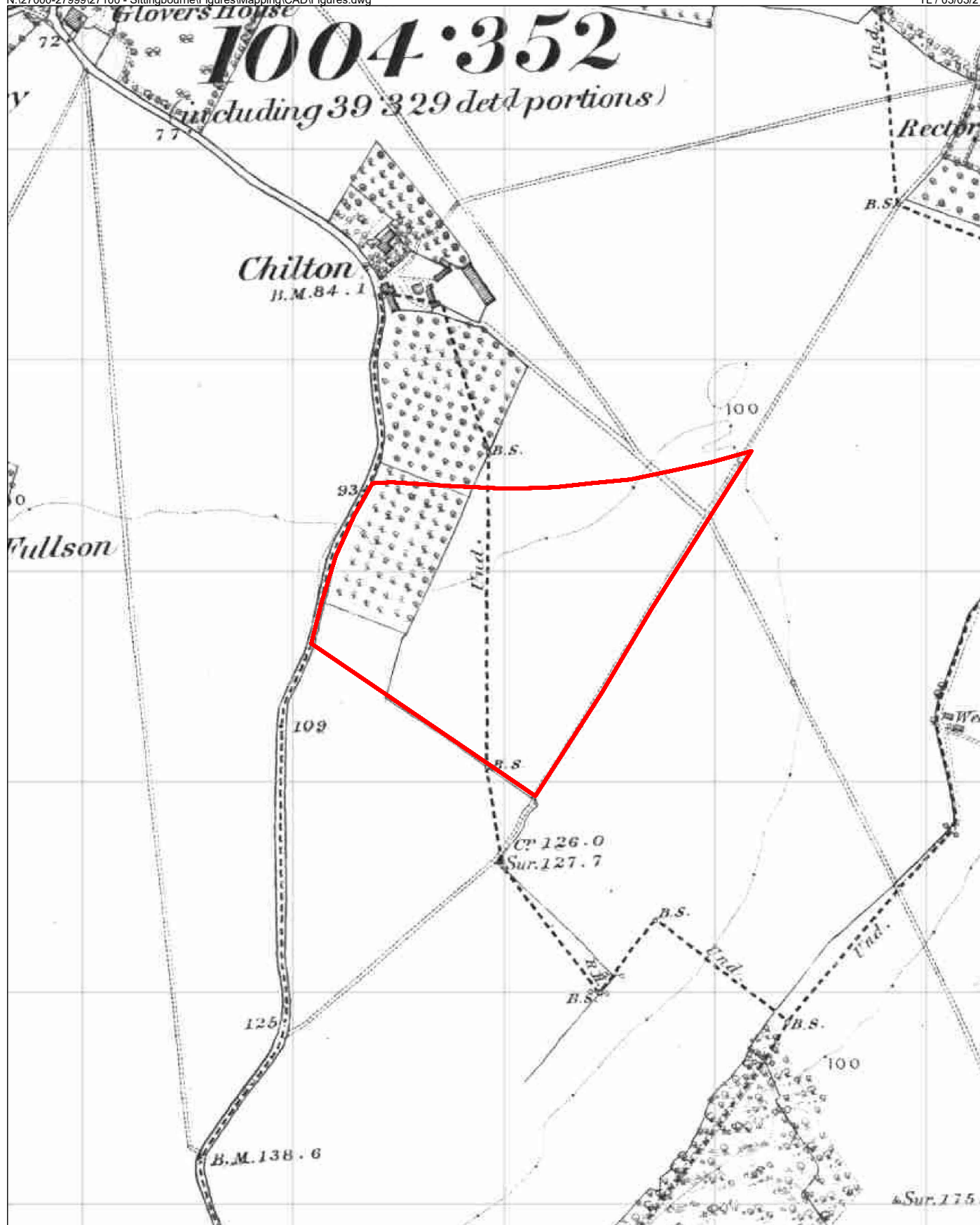


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Figure 6

1797 Ordnance Survey Drawing



 Site Boundary

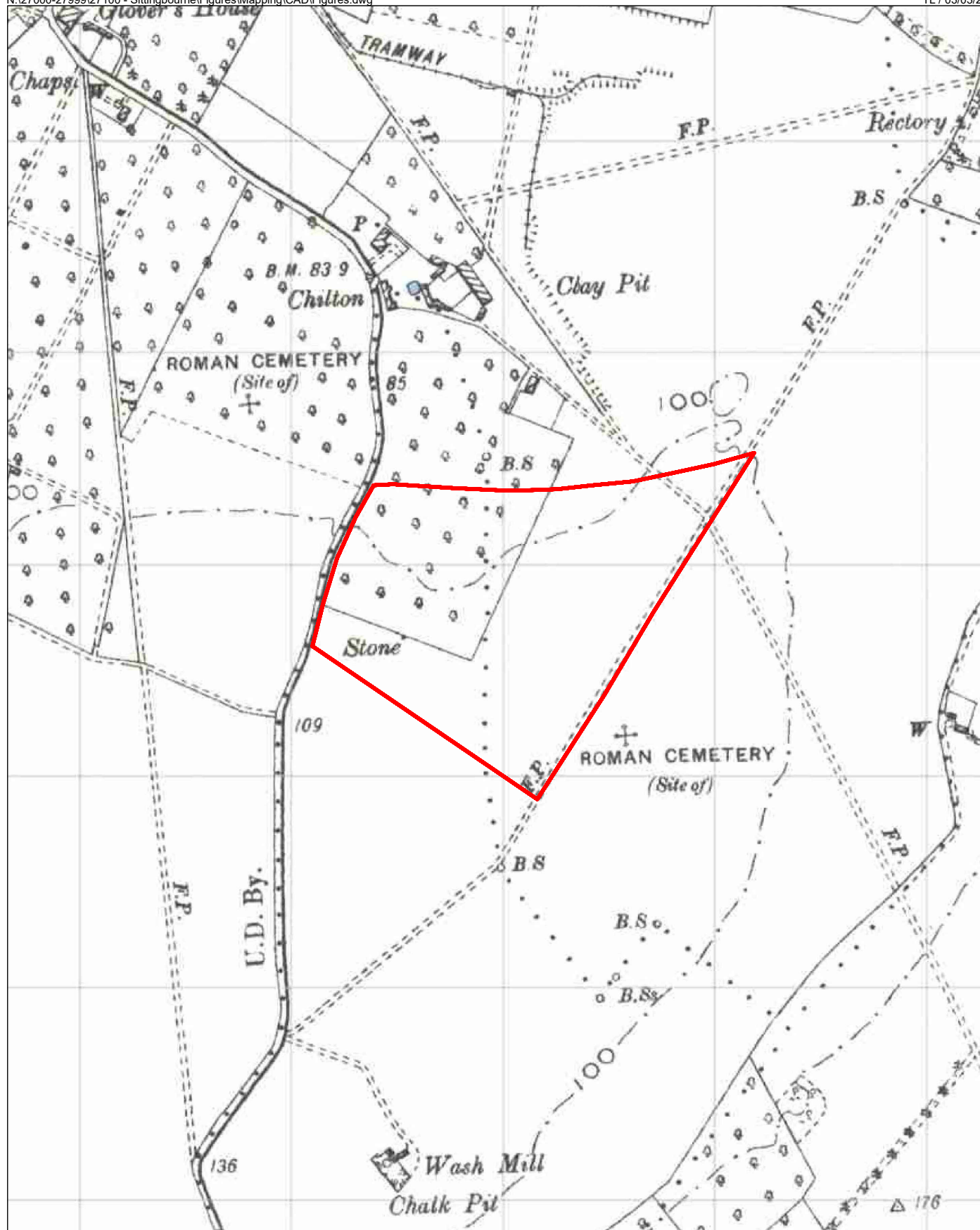


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Figure 7

1866 Ordnance Survey Map



 Site Boundary

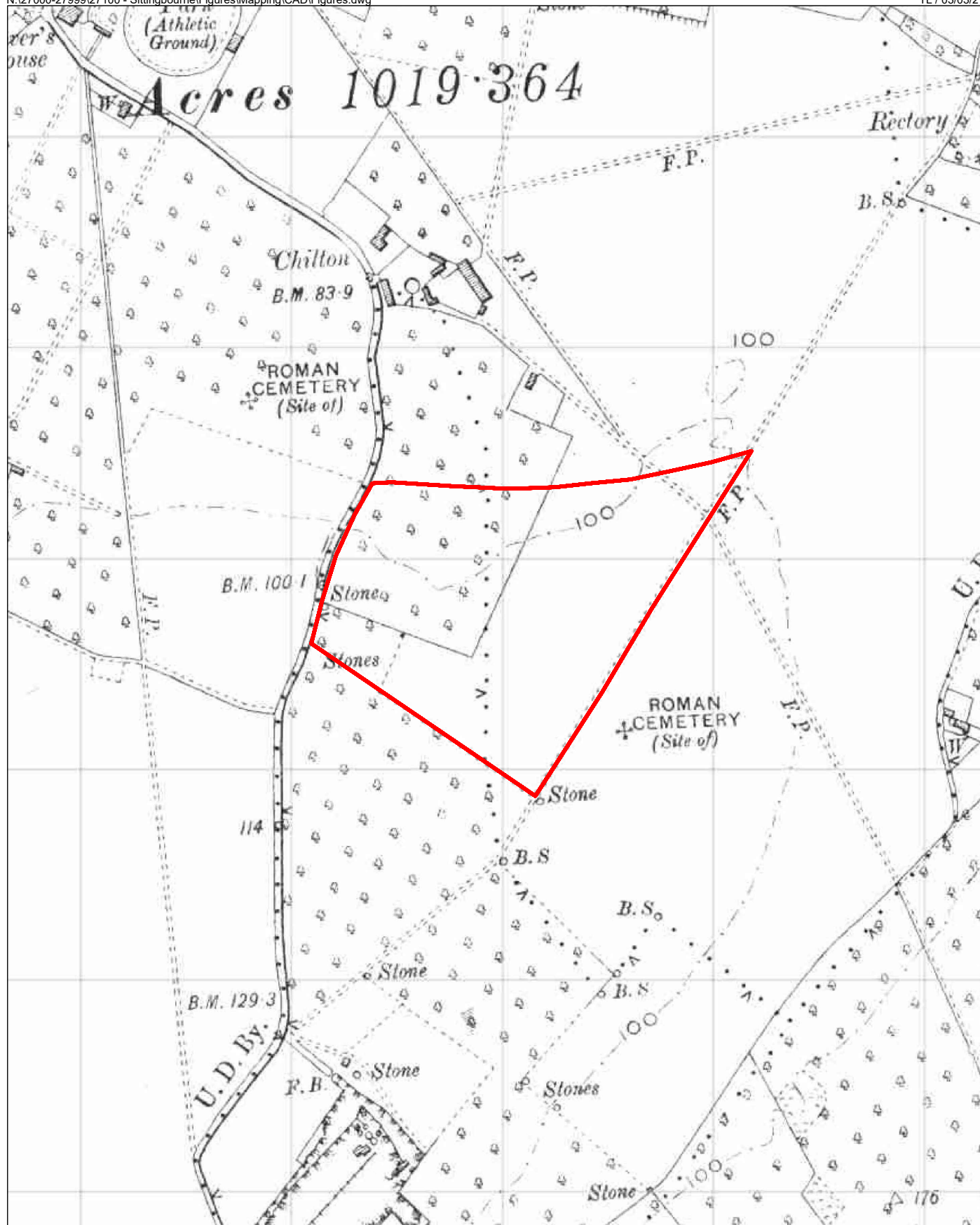


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Figure 8

1896 Ordnance Survey Map



 Site Boundary

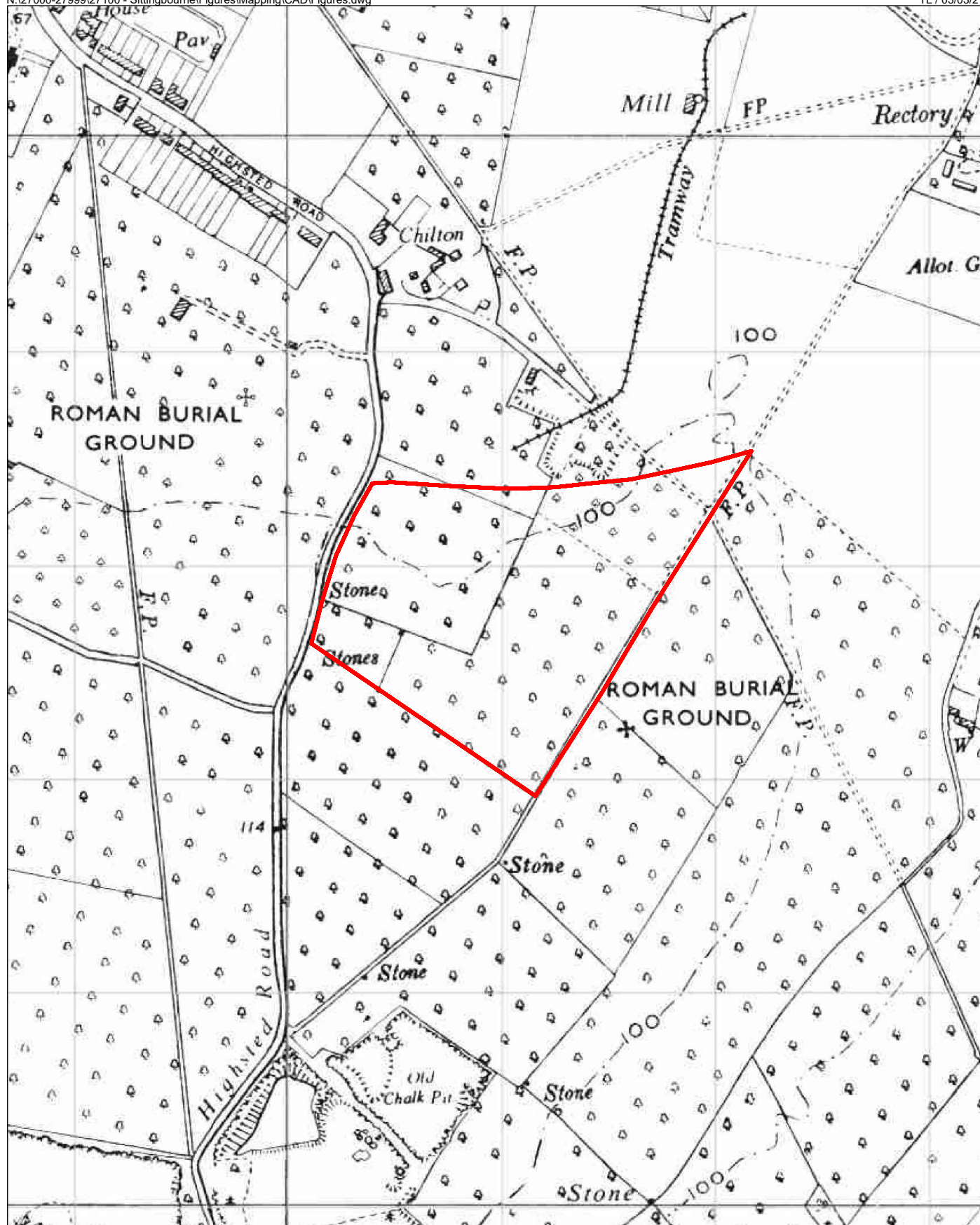


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Scale at A4: 1:5,000

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Figure 9

1906 Ordnance Survey Map



 Site Boundary

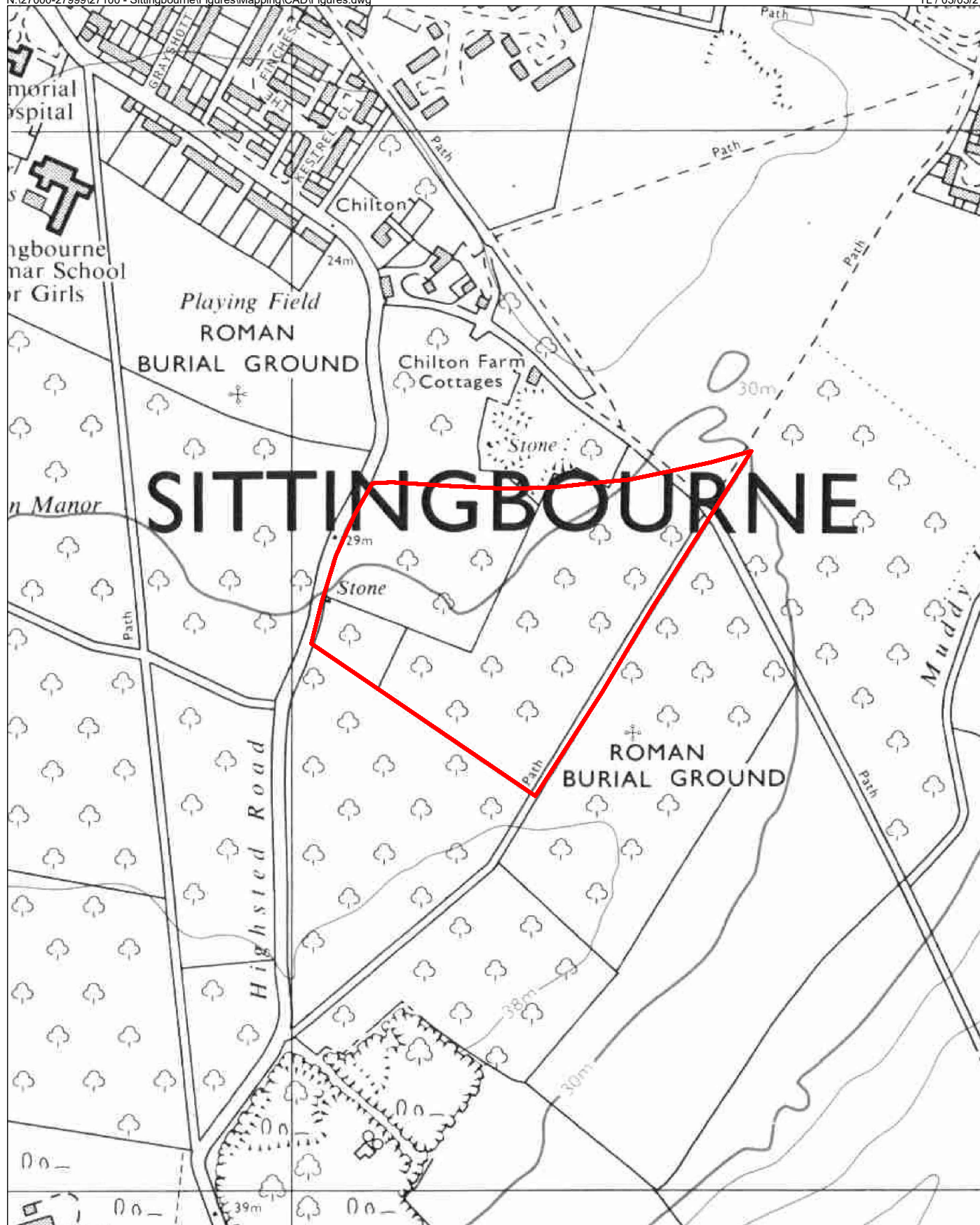


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Scale at A4: 1:5,000

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Figure 10

1955 Ordnance Survey Map



 Site Boundary

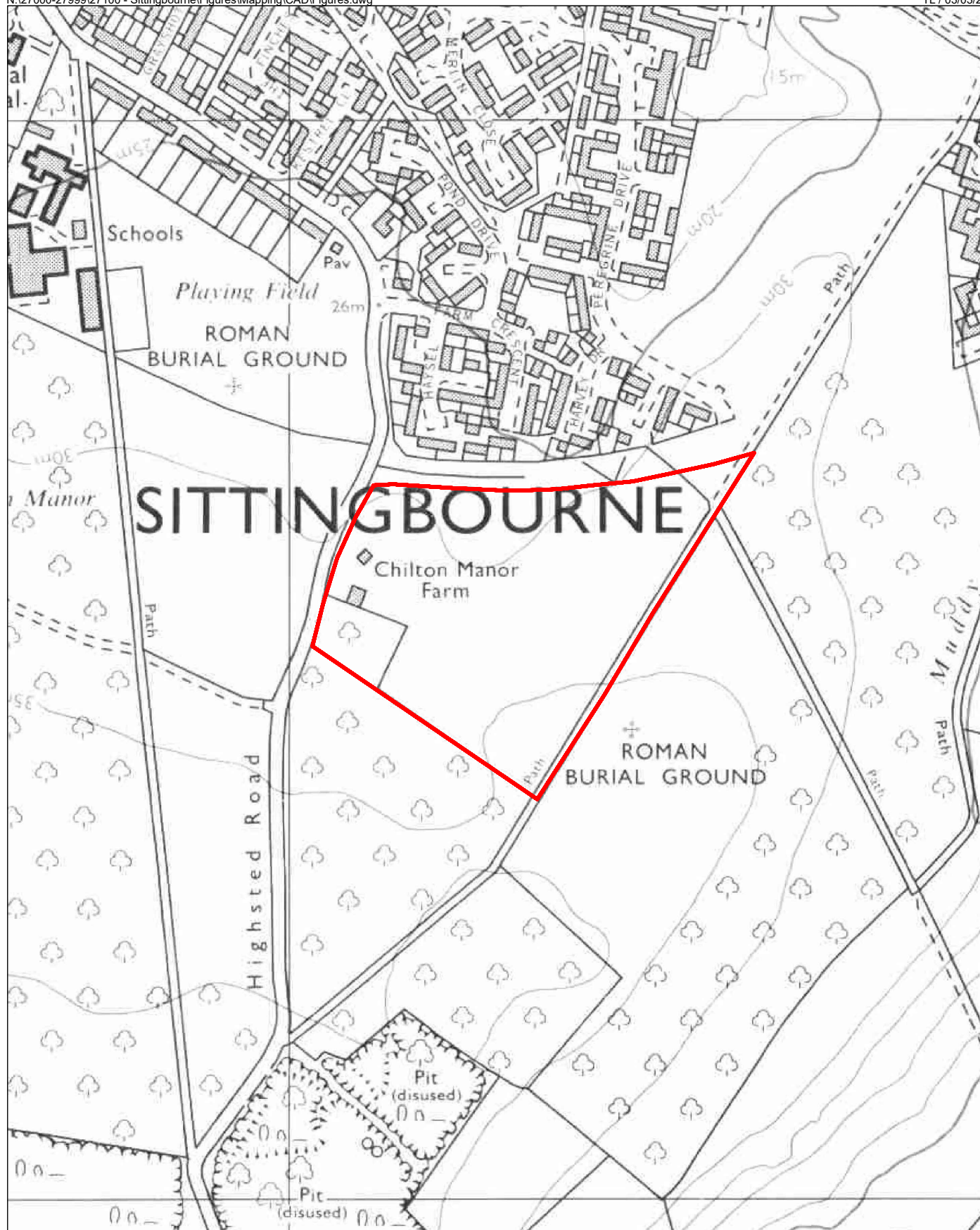


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Scale at A4: 1:5,000

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Figure 11

1973 Ordnance Survey Map



 Site Boundary

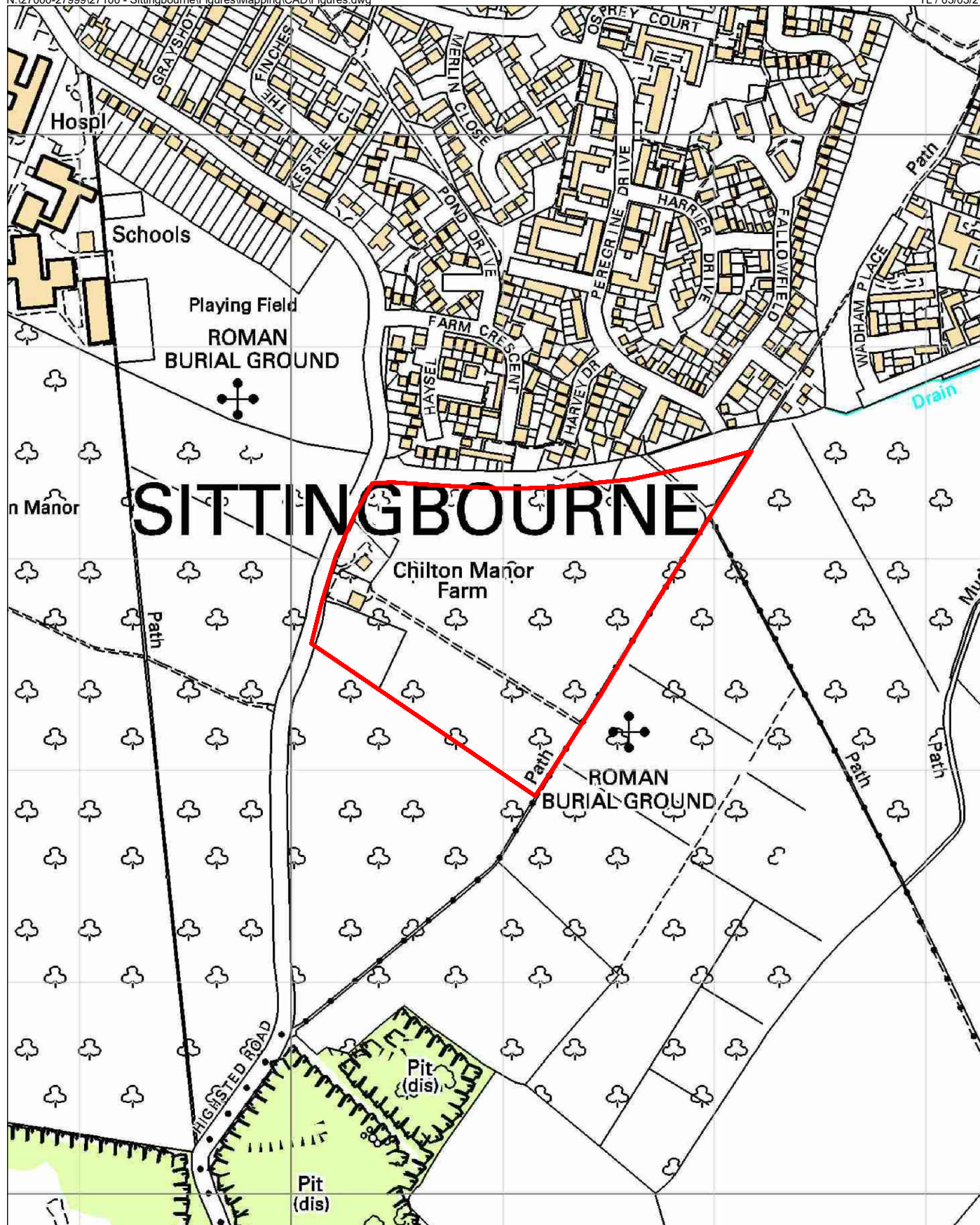


0 50 100m
Scale at A4: 1:5,000

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Figure 12

1979 Ordnance Survey Map



 Site Boundary



0 50 100m
Scale at A4: 1:5,000

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Figure 13

2002 Ordnance Survey Map



 Site Boundary



Not to Scale:
Illustrative Only



Figure 14

2020 Aerial Photograph
(Google Earth)



 Site Boundary



Not to Scale:
Illustrative Only



Figure 15

Site as Existing



Plate 1: Northwest area of the site looking northwest



Plate 2: Chilton Manor Farm - farmhouse

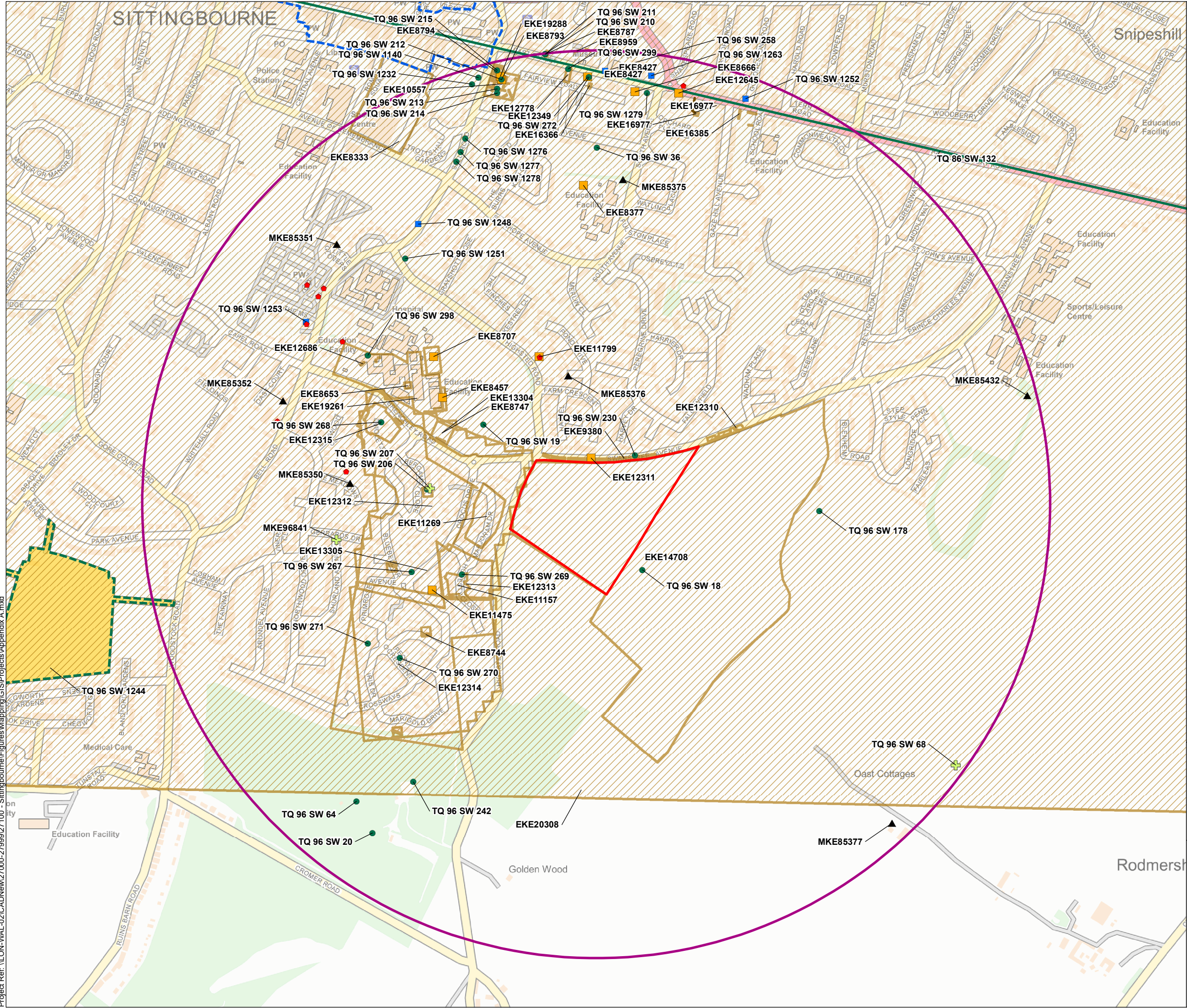


Plate 3: Chilton Manor Farm - farm building



APPENDICES

Appendix A
HER Location Plan (Kent Historic Environment Record 2020)



Legend

- Site Boundary
- 1km Site Radius

Designated Heritage Assets:

- Listed Buildings

Conservation Area

- Sittingbourne High Street, Swale

Registered Parks and Gardens

- DKE19516 King George V Playing Field, Sittingbourne

Non-designated Heritage Assets:

- HER Record (linear)

HER Record (point)

- HER Building
- Farmstead
- Findspot
- Monument

HER Record (polygon)

- Landscape

Previous Archaeological Work:

- Event Record (linear)
- Event Record (point)
- Event Record (polygon)



0 100 200m
Scale at A3: 1:8,000



Appendix A

HER Location Plan
(Kent Historic Environment Record
2020)