

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK BASED ASSESSMENT

School Road, Elmswell, Retirement Village



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The site of the School Road, Elmswell, Retirement Village has been assessed for its below ground archaeological potential in advance of proposed development.
- The proposed development will not impact on any designated archaeological assets.
- Previous metal detecting finds at the site and in the immediate area have indicated a settled landscape since the Bronze Age through to the present. Geophysical survey identified only a few "doubtful" archaeological anomalies at the site along with field boundaries, drains and made ground consolidation deposits.
- Overall, this assessment has concluded a low to moderate archaeological potential at the site for
 occupation evidence dating from the Bronze Age to the Medieval period, with the associated potential
 for stray finds dating to the Bronze Age to Medieval periods considered to be moderate. It is likely that
 evidence for a Post Medieval and Modern rural landscape will be present, comprising former field
 boundaries, agricultural activity, plantation and extraction activity. All other past periods of human
 activity are considered to hold a low potential at the site.
- Past ground disturbance is likely to have been generally widespread but shallow at the site as a result
 of historic plough activity. Areas of more severe disturbance appear to have been very localised and
 comprised areas of plantation and excavation of a ditch and possible weir.
- Given that the site is considered to retain a modest potential for archaeological remains, it is therefore possible that development of the site could impact upon archaeological finds and features of most likely up to a local significance. It is unlikely that this would provide a material design consideration or constraint. During pre-application consultation with the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, in their role as advisors to Mid Suffolk District, it was confirmed that archaeological evaluation and mitigation measures could be suitably undertaken as part of an appropriately worded planning condition.

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1 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF STUDY

- 1.1 This below ground archaeological desk-based assessment has been researched by Alex Slater, prepared by James Archer, and approved by Matthew Smith of RPS Heritage, on behalf of Christchurch Property Company Ltd.
- 1.2 The subject of this assessment, also known as the study site, is the site of the School Road, Elmswell, Retirement Village. The site is approximately 11ha in extent and is centred at National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 98243 63841 (Fig. 1) within the administrative area of Mid Suffolk District.
- 1.3 The extent of the red line boundary includes the development area to the north which will be the focus of this assessment. The southern part of the red line area is included for biodiversity net gain requirements. It is assumed that this would not include archaeological impacts and therefore has not been assessed within this report. If extensive landscaping were proposed across this southern area, then this approach would need to be re-assessed.
- 1.4 Christchurch Property Company Ltd has commissioned RPS Heritage to establish the archaeological potential of the site and to provide guidance on ways to address any archaeological constraints identified.
- In accordance with relevant policy and guidance on archaeology and planning, and in accordance with the 'Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessments' (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists October 2020), this assessment draws together the available archaeological, topographic and land-use information in order to clarify the archaeological potential of the site.
- 1.6 This desk-based assessment comprises an examination of evidence on the Suffolk Historic Environment Record (HER), and other sources, and includes the results of a comprehensive map regression exercise. An initial site visit was carried out in June 2022.
- 1.7 This assessment thus enables relevant parties to assess the archaeological potential of various parts of the site and to consider the need for design, civil engineering, and archaeological solutions to the archaeological potential identified.

2 PLANNING BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN FRAMEWORK

National Legislation

2.1 National legislation regarding archaeology, including Scheduled Monuments, is contained in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, amended by the National Heritage Act 1983 and 2002, and updated in April 2014.

National Planning Policy & Guidance

- 2.2 In March 2012, the government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which was most recently revised in July 2021. The NPPF is supported by the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), which was published online 6th March 2014 and has since been periodically updated.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 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 of the contribution that heritage makes towards our knowledge and understanding of the past.
- 2.5 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 the 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.
- 2.6 Heritage Assets are defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as: a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).
- 2.7 Annex 2 also defines *Archaeological Interest* as a heritage asset which holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
- 2.8 A *Designated Heritage Asset* comprises a: World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.
- 2.9 Significance (for heritage policy) 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.

- 2.10 Setting of a heritage asset 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.
- 2.11 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.
- 2.12 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.
- 2.14 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

Mid Suffolk District

2.15 The Mid Suffolk District Council Core Strategy was adopted in 2008 and contains the following relevant Policy:

Policy CS 5

Mid Suffolk's Environment

All development will maintain and enhance the environment, including the historic environment, and retain the local distinctiveness of the area....

Landscape: The Council will protect and conserve landscape qualities taking into account the natural environment and the historical dimension of the landscape as a whole rather than concentrating solely on selected areas, protecting the District's most important components and encourage development that is consistent with conserving its overall character.

Design: Development will be of a high quality design that respects the local distinctiveness and the built heritage of Mid Suffolk, enhancing the character and appearance of the district. It should create visual interest within the street scene and where appropriate encourage active uses at ground floor level, creating uses of public space which encourage people to walk and cycle.

Historic Environment: The Council will introduce policies in the other DPDs of the Local Development Framework to protect, conserve and where possible enhance the natural and built historic environment including the residual archaeological remains. These policies will seek to integrate conservation policies with other planning policies affecting the historic environment.

2.16 In addition, the Council considers the following policies from the Local Plan 1998 as having been saved:

POLICY HB13

THE DISTRICT PLANNING AUTHORITY WILL REFUSE PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT THAT ADVERSELY AFFECT SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS OR OTHER MONUMENTS OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE INCLUDING THEIR SETTINGS.

POLICY HB14

WHERE THERE IS AN OVERRIDING CASE FOR PRESERVATION, PLANNING PERMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD AFFECT AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE OR ITS SETTING WILL BE REFUSED.

HAVING TAKEN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ADVICE, THE DISTRICT PLANNING AUTHORITY MAY DECIDE THAT DEVELOPMENT CAN TAKE PLACE SUBJECT TO EITHER SATISFACTORY MEASURES TO PRESERVE THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS IN SITU OR FOR THE SITE TO BE EXCAVATED AND THE FINDINGS RECORDED. IN APPROPRIATE CASES THE DISTRICT PLANNING AUTHORITY WILL EXPECT A LEGALLY BINDING AGREEMENT TO BE CONCLUDED OR WILL IMPOSE A PLANNING CONDITION REQUIRING THE DEVELOPER TO MAKE APPROPRIATE AND SATISFACTORY PROVISION FOR THE EXCAVATION AND RECORDING OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS.

2.17 Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts are currently producing a joint Local Plan, of which the latest version is the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Local Plan Pre-Submission Document. This draft plan is now undergoing examination. The plan contains the following draft policy relevant to the historic environment:

Policy LP21 - The Historic Environment 1. Where an application potentially affects heritage assets⁴⁰, the Councils will: a. Depending on the nature of the works/development proposed, require the applicant to submit a heritage statement that demonstrates:

- i. The significance of the heritage asset is appropriately understood (statement of significance);
- ii. The potential impacts on the heritage asset's significance, including the contribution made by setting, are understood (impact assessment);
- iii. That the proposal has been fully justified in light of the significance and impact identified above (statement of justification);

- iv. If relevant, that the proposal has considered how preservation in situ of archaeological assets can be achieved through the design of the site;
- v. An effective conservation strategy, including details of recording, mitigation, repair, preservation, protection and management as appropriate;
- b. Where development includes (or has the potential to include) heritage assets with archaeological interest, an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation by a suitably qualified person is required.
- 2. The Councils will support:
- a. The re-use/ redevelopment of a heritage asset, including Heritage at Risk, where it would represent optimal viable use, including assets in isolated locations, and the proposal preserves the building, its setting and any features which form part of the building's special interest and complies with the relevant policies of the Plan;
- b. Development proposals that contribute to local distinctiveness, respecting the built form and scale of the heritage asset, through the use of appropriate design and materials;
- c. Proposals to enhance the environmental performance of heritage assets, where the special characteristics of the heritage asset are safeguarded and a sensitive approach to design and specification ensures that the significance of the asset is not compromised by inappropriate interventions.
- 3. In order to safeguard and enhance the historic environment, harm to heritage assets should be avoided in the first instance. Only where harm cannot be avoided should mitigation be considered. When considering applications where a level of harm is identified to heritage assets (including historic landscapes) the Councils will:
- a. Have regard (or Special Regard where appropriate) to the historic environment and take account of the contribution any designated or non-designated heritage assets makes to the character of the area and its sense of place. All designated and non-designated heritage assets must be preserved, enhanced or conserved in accordance with statutory tests41 and their significance, including consideration of any contribution made to that significance by their setting; and
- b. Have regard to the planning balance whilst considering the extent of harm and significance of the asset in accordance with the relevant national policies.
- 4. Proposals which potentially affect heritage assets should have regard to all relevant Historic England Advice and Guidance.
- 5. Where development is otherwise considered acceptable, planning conditions/obligations will be used to:
- a. Secure an appropriate programme of archaeological investigation, recording, reporting, archiving, publication, and community involvement; to advance public understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part); and to make this evidence and any archive generated publicly accessible.

Relevant National and Local Designations

- 2.18 In terms of relevant designated heritage assets, as defined above and as shown on Figure 2a, no designated World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Battlefield sites or Historic Wreck sites lie within the vicinity of the study site.
- 2.19 There are a number of listed buildings in close proximity to the site. Built heritage matters are addressed in separate reporting by RPS.

2.20	In line with relevant planning policy and guidance, this desk based assessment seeks to clarify the site's archaeological potential and the need or otherwise for additional mitigation measures.

3 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

Geology

- 3.1 The solid geology of the study site is provided by the British Geological Survey (BGS Online 2022) as Crag Group (Sand). This sedimentary bedrock was formed between 5.33 million and 11.8 thousand years ago during the Neogene and Quaternary periods. A small area of undifferentiated chalk bedrock is located at the south western site corner.
- The overlying superficial geology is heavily influenced by the topography of the site and the watercourse along its western boundary. The site slopes up away from that watercourse with an area of high ground shown to the immediate south east of the site. The superficial geology at that point comprises Croxton Sand and Gravel, which is a sedimentary superficial deposit formed between 480 and 423 thousand years ago during the Quaternary period. Head deposits are recorded on the hillside in the central northern area of the site, whilst Lowestoft Formation deposits are recorded at far northern parts of the site. Alluvial deposits associated with the adjacent watercourse are recorded to the immediate west of the site, with further deposits of Head, Lowestoft Formation, and Croxton deposits on the opposite slope.
- 3.3 No site specific or British Geological Survey borehole data is currently available for the study site.

Topography

As noted above, the site's topography comprises a valley side location adjacent to the watercourse to the immediate west. The watercourse is situated at circa 50m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), which slopes up to a height of between 60m OD and 70m OD at the eastern site boundary. The slope is more pronounced to the south of the site where it slopes up to 70m OD at the nearby church and where an area of high ground can be seen to the south east at c.73m OD. The site's natural topography can be seen on Figure 12.

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4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND WITH ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Time Periods

4.1 The following archaeological time periods will be referred to in this report:

Prehistoric

Palaeolithic	900,000 -	12,000 BC
Mesolithic	12,000 -	4,000 BC
Neolithic	4,000 -	2,500 BC
Bronze Age	2,500 -	800 BC
Iron Age	800 -	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

- This section reviews the available archaeological evidence for the study site and the archaeological/historical background of the study site and surrounding area. In accordance with the NPPF, it considers the potential for any as yet to be discovered archaeological evidence on the study site prior to any assessment of any later development or below ground impacts.
- 4.3 The review considers known archaeological assets within a 1km radius of the study site (Figs. 2a-b), also referred to as the study area, held on the Suffolk Historic Environment Record (HER), together with a historic map regression exercise charting the development of the study area from the 18th century onwards until the present day.
- In general, the majority of HER monument and event records within the study area comprise evidence for focused areas of Roman and Medieval activity to the south, east and north of the site, whilst there are large numbers of stray finds recorded dating from the later Prehistoric periods onwards. A full summary of all HER monument, event and findspot records is given at Appendix 1, and these records are shown on Figure 2a and discussed in the report where relevant to an assessment of archaeological potential at the site. Whilst finds recorded by the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) have been included within this assessment, their precise locations remain confidential and have therefore not been reproduced in this report, except where they have already been incorporated within the HER. A geophysical survey was conducted in 2014 on the site (ESF22488, MoLA 2014, and see Appendix 2), the results of which have been incorporated within this report.

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- 4.5 The map regression exercise has demonstrated that the study site comprised a series of arable and pastoral fields during its mapped history since at least the early 19th century, with a small area of localised plantation, gravel extraction and a pond / weir also shown.
- 4.6 Section 5 subsequently considers the site conditions, later development and below ground impacts, and whether the proposed development is likely to impact archaeological assets and potential archaeological assets identified below.

Previous Archaeological Work

Geophysical Survey

- A magnetometer survey was conducted across an area which included the site in 2014 (see Appendix 2 and MoLA 2014, HER Ref: ESF22488) and a number of anomalies were detected indicating the likely presence of archaeological features. The survey identified a large sub-rectangular enclosure containing a possible kiln or brick-built structure, as well as two possible quarry pits, to the immediate east of the site across Parnell Lane. Whilst the enclosure correlates with a field boundary depicted on the 1842 tithe map, it was suggested as a possible feature of earlier origin preserved within the 19th century landscape. Within the study site itself, a few small positive anomalies were identified which may represent two possible pits and short linear trends which may hint at possible further ditches.
- In addition, various instances of confirmed modern activity were identified, including ditches which correspond to historic mapping. Minor accumulations of ferrous material and disturbance were seen in the data, as well as linear features representing likely land drains. A large zone of magnetic disturbance adjacent to School Road coincides with an area upslope from a former pond and is likely an area of levelling of an area of former marshy ground. A large discrete anomaly at the western tip of this area of magnetic disturbance may represent the remnants of a weir depicted on 19th century mapping (see also Figures 7-8).
- 4.9 The overall conclusions of the survey suggested that there would be a focus of archaeological activity within the enclosure outside the site to the immediate east, whilst the results across the study site itself recorded only a few "doubtful" archaeological features along with field boundaries, drains and made ground. It was suggested that substantial archaeological features may be absent from the site although the survey did not preclude the possibility of smaller or ephemeral remains which may leave little or no discernible magnetic signature.

Nearby Works

- 4.10 A subsequent phase of evaluation trenching was undertaken across the area to the immediate east of the site across Parnell Lane (ASE 2018, HER Ref: ESF26024). The work confirmed a focus of 15-16th century activity in the area of the enclosure identified by the geophysical survey above. A tile-built structure was thought to represent a possible kiln or tile-lined cesspit. Other features within the enclosure included a large quarry pit, as well as smaller undated pits which likely relate to this same period of activity and may relate to Elmswell Hall to the immediate north.
- 4.11 A systematic programme of fieldwalking was undertaken across fields to the immediate west of the site (HER Ref: ESF24155). The work identified a prehistoric and a late Medieval to Post Medieval artefact scatter (HER Ref: EWL 035).
- 4.12 Archaeological monitoring of site clearance works, drainage and foundation excavation at land adjacent to Hillcourt Cottage to the immediate south east of the site has identified no archaeological finds or features (HER Ref: ESF2203).

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- 4.13 Evaluation trenching at the former Grampian Country Foods site c.400m to the north east recorded several undated and a single Roman ditch in the western area of the evaluation (HER Ref: ESF22471).
- 4.14 Metal detecting and geophysical survey on land circa 150m to the south east recovered finds of Medieval or early Post Medieval date attributed to casual loss, whilst an early Saxon hanging bowl was also recorded. The geophysical survey recorded possible pit and ditch anomalies although these were widely dispersed and formed no discernible pattern (HER Refs: ESF19795 and ESF20001).
- 4.15 Archaeological works at Gardeners Walk c.400m to the east recorded a Medieval open field system as well as Roman period finds (HER Ref: ESF18212). Monitoring of development groundworks in an area adjacent to this recorded no archaeological features (HER Ref: ESF19475).

Early Prehistoric - Palaeolithic

There are no finds of Palaeolithic date known from the nearby area. The presence of Palaeolithic material can be notoriously difficult to predict and is typically dependent upon the presence of an appropriate underlying geology sequence (such as terrace gravels or brickearth), as well as suitable topography and access to nearby resources and water. The underlying superficial deposits comprise Croxton Sands and Gravels, Head deposits, and Lowestoft Formation deposits. Due to the nature of their formation, it is unlikely that these deposits would contain any in situ material and any artefacts present are likely to be unstratified. The lack of finds from the nearby area, including during evaluation to the immediate east, would suggest that it would be reasonable to conclude a low potential for such artefacts at the site.

Later Prehistoric – Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze Age & Iron Age

- 4.17 A field walking survey carried out on land adjacent to the western site boundary recovered at least five worked flints dating between the Mesolithic and Bronze Age (MSF32666).
- A number of isolated Bronze Age artefacts have been recorded by metal detecting within close proximity to the site, including a spearhead tip adjacent to the southern site boundary (MSF18827) and a copper chisel to the north of the site (NGR protected). A Bronze Age copper pin and an Iron Age brooch were found to the east of the site (NGR protected). A small possible socketed axe blade fragment was found in a field at the far south western extent of the study area (MSF11622).
- 4.19 Metal detecting has also recorded a possible Iron Age brooch nearby to the south-east of the study site (MSF19709, PAS protected) and an Iron Age coin in the southern part of the study site (MSF28207, PAS protected).
- 4.20 An archaeological monitoring exercise on land at Church Road approximately 50m south east of the study site recorded a cremation pit containing human charred bone with associated sherds of pottery and worked flint dating to the late Bronze Age / early Iron Age (MSF26574).
- 4.21 In view of the paucity of Mesolithic and Neolithic sites and finds locally, the potential of the study site for evidence from these periods is considered to be low. The site's location on the edge of the floodplain of a tributary of the Blackbourn River and on the edge of the plateau of a hill may have made it an attractive / strategic location for settlement activity during the Bronze Age and Iron Age periods. However, there were no anomalies indicative of such activity identified during geophysical survey (MoLA 2014) and therefore, the archaeological potential of the study site for evidence of Bronze Age and Iron Age occupation activity is considered to be low to moderate. There is a potential for unstratified, isolated artefactual evidence in the plough soil.

Roman

- 4.22 Past metal detecting has taken place across the entire site and recorded a number of finds of Roman date particularly concentrated in the south of the study site. Roman metalwork, including coins and a brooch, were recorded (PAS protected), as well as a pair of tweezers, and two bow brooches (PAS protected). An artefact scatter of grey pottery sherds and a bronze finger ring were found during detecting in the central-eastern part of the site (MSF6894).
- 4.23 In situ evidence dating to the Roman period has been recorded in the vicinity of the site. A Roman kiln was recorded during investigations approximately 200m to the east (MSF6896), whilst archaeological investigations approximately 600m to the east recorded remains of a possible Roman enclosure with associated pottery sherds (MSF19088).
- 4.24 In addition, archaeological trial trenching approximately 400m northeast of the site recorded a probable Roman ditch containing a sherd of pottery, together with two undated ditches containing animal bone (MSF31487). These ditches are thought to be part of a former field system. Similarly, evaluation c.200m to the south east recorded a single Roman ditch (MSF37682).
- 4.25 An isolated Roman coin dating to the 4th century was also found c.120m east of the study site (MSF6898).
- 4.26 The site is located within circa 2.5km to the east of the projected alignment of a Roman road between lxworth to the north and Colchester to the south (Margary 1955).
- 4.27 The Roman period is well represented at Elmswell and the number of past stray finds recorded on the site are likely indicative of chance loss of finds to agricultural plough regimes within the hinterland of nearby occupation or industrial activity. Whilst there were no geophysical survey anomalies identified within the site that would be indicative of any substantial activity, the study site can be considered to have a low to moderate archaeological potential for Roman settlement evidence and a moderate potential for isolated finds within the plough soil.

Saxon/Early Medieval

- 4.28 A concentration of Saxon metalwork finds is recorded from the central part of the site as well as to the south nearer to the church (PAS protected, MSF17976). Many of the finds were late Saxon and included a bow brooch, stirrup terminal, hooked tag, bronze brooch, a finger ring, openwork disc with cross and a coin. The quality of these finds might suggest the location of a high-status Saxon settlement in the vicinity.
- 4.29 Metal detecting on a field approximately 150m southeast of the study site recorded a single find dating to the Saxon period, comprising a mount from an early Saxon hanging bowl. This find may be indicative of a cemetery site in the vicinity. A number of Medieval finds attributed to casual loss were also recorded (MSF24084).
- 4.30 The Domesday Survey of 1086 recorded the early Medieval estate at Elmswell as relatively large at 40 households. The estate was owned by the Abbey at Bury St Edmunds, and comprised land including ploughlands, meadow, woodland, church lands, and a church (Open Domesday Online 2022). The Medieval church of St John the Divine was built on the site of the earlier church to the south of the study site. The shaft of a late Saxon Stone Cross is located in St John's Churchyard, Elmswell (Birch, 2004, 117).
- 4.31 It is possible that an early Medieval settlement at Elmswell may have been concentrated on the church to the south of the study site and may be represented by the scatter of finds that have been recorded in the south of the site. These are likely to have been scattered during agricultural manuring activity and ploughing. There were no geophysical survey anomalies within the site that seemed to indicate a concentration of activity, however, given the proximity of the church, the archaeological

potential of the study site is considered to be low to moderate for evidence of Saxon / early Medieval settlement activity, and moderate for an agricultural hinterland and for isolated finds.

Medieval

- The HER records a 'thin scatter' of Medieval finds recorded in the central part of the study site, as well as to the south, as a result of metal detecting, including pottery sherds, coins (MSF17694, MSF17977) and strap fittings (EWL014). In addition, a small number of isolated finds were recorded in the north of the study site (PAS protected).
- 4.33 Elmswell Hall was originally a 14th century monastic Grange held by Bury St Edmunds Abbey. It was rebuilt as a moated hall in the 16th century and lies approximately 150m north of the study site (MSF6895). Geophysical survey has identified a likely 15-16th century enclosure to the immediate east of the site which appears to have included evidence for industrial kiln activity or alternatively a possible cesspit (ASE 2018).
- 4.34 The Medieval church of St John the Divine lies to the south of the study site (MSF6900). As noted above, it is possible that an early settlement at Elmswell focused on the church, and it may be that some of the finds recorded within the site are indicative of nearby settlement activity and agricultural plough regimes. However, at an unknown date the settlement around the church was abandoned and the historic focus of settlement moved to the east.
- 4.35 A field walking survey carried out on land adjacent to the western site boundary also identified a spread of late Medieval brick, tile and pottery (MSF32666). Archaeological monitoring of footing trenches at land to the south of Oliver House c.300m east of the site found no archaeological features but recovered two sherds of Medieval pottery and two Medieval buckles from the spoil (MSF23608).
- 4.36 Overall, it is likely that the site comprised an area of agricultural hinterland during the Medieval periods, although there were no anomalies indicative of significant activity identified during geophysical survey. The focus of activity during the Medieval period is likely to have been at the church to the south, at Elmswell Hall to the north, and at the associated enclosure to the immediate east. Therefore, the archaeological potential for evidence of in situ settlement activity at the site is considered to be low to moderate whilst the potential for land division, plough activity, and stray finds is considered to be moderate.

Post Medieval & Modern (including map regression exercise)

- 4.37 A number of the HER records within the study area refer to Post Medieval and Modern archaeological remains which are not discussed in detail here unless relevant to the study site. A small number of Post Medieval finds have been recorded on the site as a result of metal detecting including a token, buckle, spindle whorl and strap fitting in the south-east of the site (EWL014), along with a number of coins and tokens found in the central and northern areas of the site (PAS protected).
- 4.38 During the later Post Medieval and Modern periods, our understanding of settlement, land-use and the utilisation of the landscape is enhanced by cartographic and documentary sources, which can give additional detail to data contained within the HER.
- 4.39 The earliest such cartographic source reproduced here is the 1766 Kirkby Map of Suffolk (Fig. 4), which shows the site at a limited scale, although it is likely to have comprised open land to the north of the church that is depicted. The 1783 Hodskinson Map (Fig. 5) shows the site similarly in likely open land to the north of the church and to the west of the area of settlement at Elmswell. The

- occupation site at Elmswell Hall is shown to the north east. The track or road at the eastern site boundary likely depicts a precursor to the existing School Road and Parnell Lane.
- 4.40 The 1820 Ordnance Survey Drawing (Fig. 6) shows the site in greater detail, with it apparently split into two field parcels. These are bordered to the east by School Road / Parnell Lane, by open fields north of the church and Church Lane to the south, by the watercourse to the west, and by a trackway to the north.
- 4.41 The 1841 Elmswell Parish Tithe Map depicts the site across a series of field parcels which are described as follows by the associated Tithe Award:

Land Parcel	Landowner	Occupant	Description	Land Use/Cultivation
171	Sir George Seymour	John Stedman	House Pasture	Pasture
172	Sir George Seymour	John Stedman	House Pasture	Pasture
173	Sir George Seymour	John Stedman	Plantation	Plantation
174	Sir George Seymour	John Stedman	Slades Bottom	Pasture
175	Sir George Seymour	John Stedman	Allotment	-
176	Sir George Seymour	John Stedman	Pond Field	Pasture
177	Sir George Seymour	John Stedman	Allotment	-
178	Sir George Seymour	John Stedman	Church Field	Arable
179	Trustees For Alms Houses	Six Poor Widows	Cottage and Gardens	-
180	Reverend Joseph Thomas Lawton	Reverend Joseph Thomas Lawton	Church Yard	Pasture

- 4.42 It is clear that the site comprised open land utilised generally as pasture with a field of arable cultivation and a small area of plantation woodland. The church is shown to the south along with an area of almhouses (plots 179-180) (HER Ref: MSF24400). A likely pond with a connecting ditch to the adjacent watercourse is shown at the centre of the site.
- There is no clear change at the site on the 1883 Ordnance Survey plan (Fig. 8). The central pond is labelled as a weir, whilst the area to the immediate east of this is shown as an area of marshy ground and woodland. A large discrete anomaly in the geophysical results (Appendix 2) is thought to correspond to the location of the weir. The construction of the railway line (MSF34993) is shown to the immediate north of the site whilst the trackway along the northern boundary has likely undergone a degree of formalisation to form the northern site boundary.
- 4.44 The site remained unchanged throughout the 20th century until all internal field boundaries and trees were cleared by 1973 (Fig. 9). The watercourse along the western boundary appears to have been formalised and straightened by this time. The site has since comprised a single open field utilised for arable cultivation. The trackway to the immediate north appears to have been reduced in importance and now comprises only a footpath (Figs. 10-12).
- 4.45 Overall, historic mapping demonstrates that the site has comprised a series of arable and pastoral fields during its mapped history since at least the early 19th century, with a small area of localised plantation and a pond / weir also shown. The development of almhouses is shown adjacent to the Medieval church to the south.
- 4.46 Therefore, the archaeological potential of the site for the Post Medieval period is likely to be generally low for any remains other than land division and agricultural activity. The potential for remains of post-1800 date is likely to be similarly confined to features associated with agricultural activity and land division. Evidence for a possible weir may be present in the central area of the site.

Historic Landscape Characterisation

4.47 The Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) data for Suffolk records the site within an area of post 1950 agricultural landscape (Fig. 2b).

LiDAR Plot

4.48 There are no clear archaeological anomalies shown within the study site on available Environment Agency LiDAR data (Fig. 3). The data appears to have been obscured potentially as a result of the underlying geological sequence along the western boundary of the site associated with the adjacent watercourse, and in other areas of the site where made ground consolidation deposits may be present.

Undated Evidence

4.49 A field boundary to the immediate east of the site across Parnell Lane was identified by the previous geophysical survey (MoLA 2014). The clearer magnetic signal of this anomaly compared with other 19th century field boundaries is indicative of a possible earlier ditch enclosure (MSF31503). Two positive anomalies detected within this possible ditch enclosure were interpreted as cut features, possibly quarry pits.

Assessment of Significance

- 4.50 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.
- 4.51 No relevant nationally significant designated heritage assets as defined in the NPPF are recorded within, or within the vicinity of, the study site.
- 4.52 A number of metal detecting finds have been made within the site, indicative of activity in the area since the Bronze Age period. Previous geophysical survey has identified evidence for a few "doubtful" archaeological features along with field boundaries, drains and made ground. The survey concluded that it was unlikely that any substantial remains were present within the site. The survey did identify an enclosure to the immediate east on the opposite side of Parnell Lane, which was later confirmed as 15-16th century through evaluation trenching. This is likely to relate to the occupation site at Elmswell Hall c.150m to the north of the site.
- 4.53 Based on current evidence, a low to moderate archaeological potential has been identified at the site for evidence of occupation activity dating from the Bronze Age through to the Medieval period. The potential for stray finds and an agricultural hinterland dating to the Bronze Age to Medieval periods is likely to be moderate. It is likely that evidence relating to Post Medieval and Modern rural activity will be present. All other past periods of human activity are considered to hold a low potential at the site.
- 4.54 The significance of any archaeological remains which may be present would be derived from their evidential value and contributions that could be made towards local research agendas.
- 4.55 Whilst it is possible that currently unknown archaeological remains could be present within the site, in the context of the government's non-statutory criteria for Scheduled Monuments (DCMS 2013) any such remains are most likely to be of no more than local significance.
- 4.56 As identified by desk based work, geophysical survey and previous finds scatters, an assessment of likely archaeological potential by period and the likely significance of any archaeological remains which may be present within the study site is summarised in table form below:

Period:	Identified Archaeological Potential and Likely Significance (if present):
Palaeolithic	Low potential, Low (Local) Significance;
Mesolithic	Low potential, Low (Local) Significance;
Neolithic	Low potential, Low (Local) Significance;
Bronze Age & Iron Age	Low to moderate potential for occupation activity, moderate potential for stray finds, most likely to be of Low (Local) Significance;
Roman	Low to moderate potential for evidence of occupation activity and settlement with a moderate potential for stray finds and an agricultural hinterland, most likely to be of Low (Local) Significance;
Saxon	Low to moderate potential for evidence of occupation activity and settlement with a moderate potential for stray finds and an agricultural hinterland, most likely to be of Low (Local) Significance;
Medieval	Low to moderate potential for evidence of occupation activity and settlement with a moderate potential for stray finds and an agricultural hinterland, most likely to be of Low (Local) Significance;
Post Medieval	Generally Low potential (likely to be entirely invested in evidence of agricultural activity, land division and extraction activity), likely to be of Negligible to Low (None / Local) Significance;
Modern	Generally Low potential (likely to be entirely invested in evidence of agricultural activity, land division, extraction activity and a possible weir in the centre of the site), likely to be of Negligible to Low (None / Local) Significance.

4.57 This table is completed prior to any assessment of later development impacts or modern disturbance, which may have reduced the archaeological potential of the site and potentially the significance of any remains which may survive.

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

Site Conditions

- 5.1 The study site currently comprises a single open field parcel, bordered to the east by Parnell Lane and School Road, to the south by an open field to the north of Church Lane, to the north by the railway, and to the west by a watercourse and additional fields (Figs. 11-12).
- 5.2 Historic excavation at the site has been limited and localised on historic mapping, comprising a possible ditch and weir in the centre of the site.
- 5.3 Past agricultural land use will most likely have had a widespread but generally shallow below ground impact as a result of past ploughing and the later clearance and grubbing up of areas of former plantation.

Proposed Development

- The study site is proposed for development of a care home facility with associated hard and soft landscaping (see Figure 13). This is to be focused in the northern part of the site only. The southern part of the site is included within the red line to ensure biodiversity net gain requirements can be met. It is assumed that this would not require extensive landscaping across the southern area of the site.
- 5.5 The excavation to create foundations and service trenches for the new development could have an adverse impact upon any archaeological remains which may be present within the site.

Review of Potential Development Impacts on Archaeological Assets

- 5.6 The proposed development will not impact on any designated archaeological assets.
- 5.7 Previous metal detecting finds at the site and in the immediate area have indicated a settled landscape since the Bronze Age through to the present. Geophysical survey identified only a few "doubtful" archaeological anomalies at the site along with field boundaries, drains and made ground consolidation deposits.
- Overall, this assessment has concluded a low to moderate archaeological potential at the site for occupation evidence dating from the Bronze Age to the Medieval period, with the associated potential for stray finds dating to the Bronze Age to Medieval periods considered to be moderate. It is likely that evidence for a Post Medieval and Modern rural landscape will be present, comprising former field boundaries, agricultural activity, plantation and extraction activity. All other past periods of human activity are considered to hold a low potential at the site.
- 5.9 Past ground disturbance is likely to have been generally widespread but shallow at the site as a result of historic plough activity. Areas of more severe disturbance appear to have been very localised and comprised areas of plantation and excavation of a ditch and possible weir.
- 5.10 Given that the site is considered to retain a modest potential for archaeological remains, it is therefore possible that development of the site could impact upon archaeological finds and features of most likely up to a local significance.

6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- The site of the School Road, Elmswell, Retirement Village is under consideration for development of a care home facility with associated hard and soft landscaping. Therefore, in accordance with relevant government planning policy and guidance, a desk based assessment has been undertaken to clarify the below ground archaeological potential of the study area.
- 6.2 In terms of relevant designated heritage assets, no designated World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Battlefield sites or Historic Wreck sites lie within the vicinity of the study site.
- A number of metal detecting finds have been made within the site, indicative of activity in the area since the Bronze Age period. Previous geophysical survey has identified evidence for a few "doubtful" archaeological features along with field boundaries, drains and made ground. The survey concluded that it was unlikely that any substantial remains were present within the site. The survey did identify an enclosure to the immediate east on the opposite side of Parnell Lane, which was later confirmed as 15-16th century through evaluation trenching. This is likely to relate to the occupation site at Elmswell Hall c.150m to the north of the site.
- Based on current evidence, a low to moderate archaeological potential has been identified at the site for evidence of occupation activity dating from the Bronze Age through to the Medieval period. The potential for stray finds and an agricultural hinterland dating to the Bronze Age to Medieval periods is likely to be moderate. It is likely that evidence relating to Post Medieval and Modern rural activity will be present. All other past periods of human activity are considered to hold a low potential at the site.
- Past ground disturbance is likely to have been generally widespread but shallow at the site as a result of historic plough activity. Areas of more severe disturbance appear to have been very localised and comprised areas of plantation and excavation of a ditch and possible weir.
- Given that the site is considered to retain a modest potential for archaeological remains, it is therefore possible that development of the site could impact upon archaeological finds and features of most likely up to a local significance. It is unlikely that this would provide a material design consideration or constraint. During pre-application consultation with the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (emailed date 5th June 2023), in their role as advisors to Mid Suffolk District, it was confirmed that archaeological evaluation and mitigation measures could be suitably undertaken as part of an appropriately worded planning condition.

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Suffolk Historic Environment Record

The National Archive

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Historic England Historic Environment *Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2 Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment* July 2015 unpublished document

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Cartographic

1766 Kirby Map of Suffolk

1783 Hodgkinson's Map of Suffolk

1820 Ordnance Survey Drawing

1841 Elmswell Tithe Map

1883 Ordnance Survey (1:2500)

1903 Ordnance Survey (1:2500)

1950 Ordnance Survey (1:10560)

1973 Ordnance Survey (1:2500)

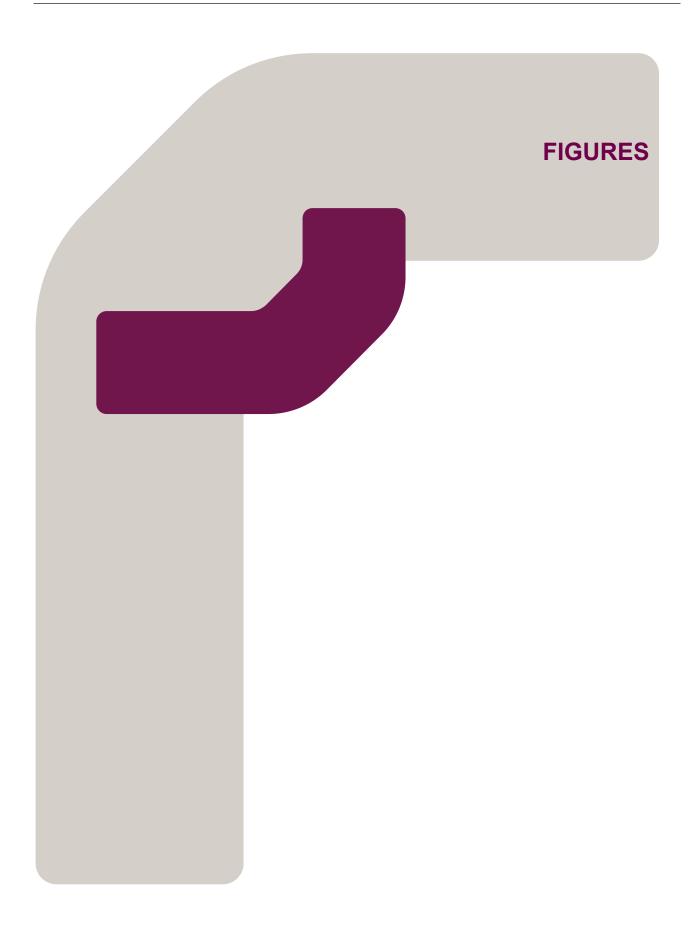
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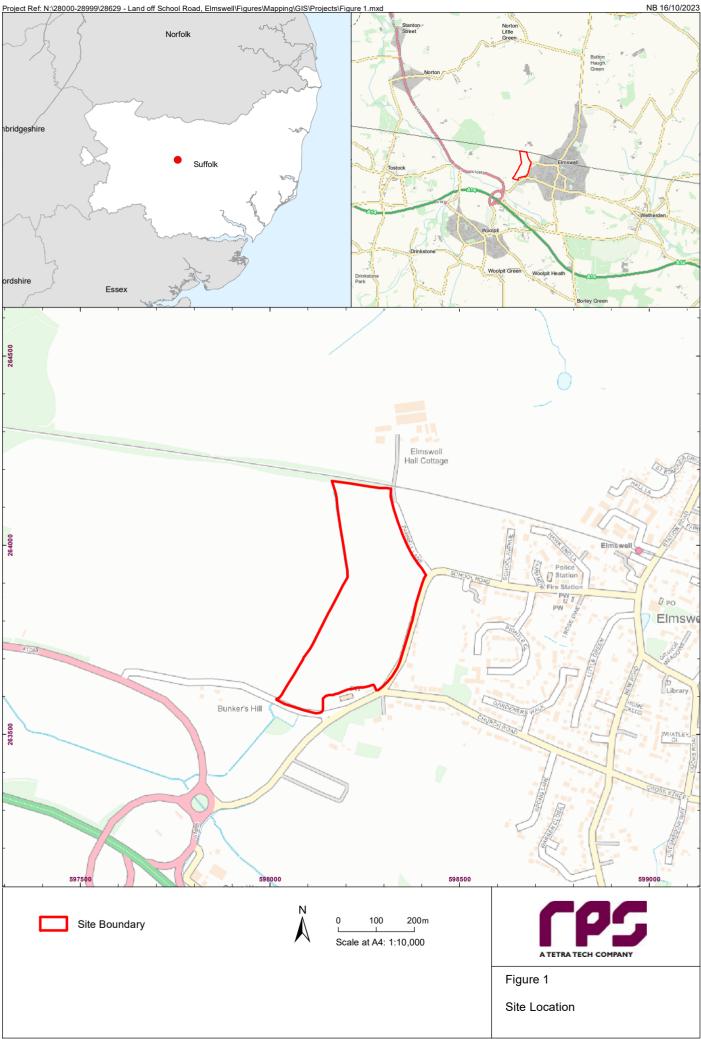
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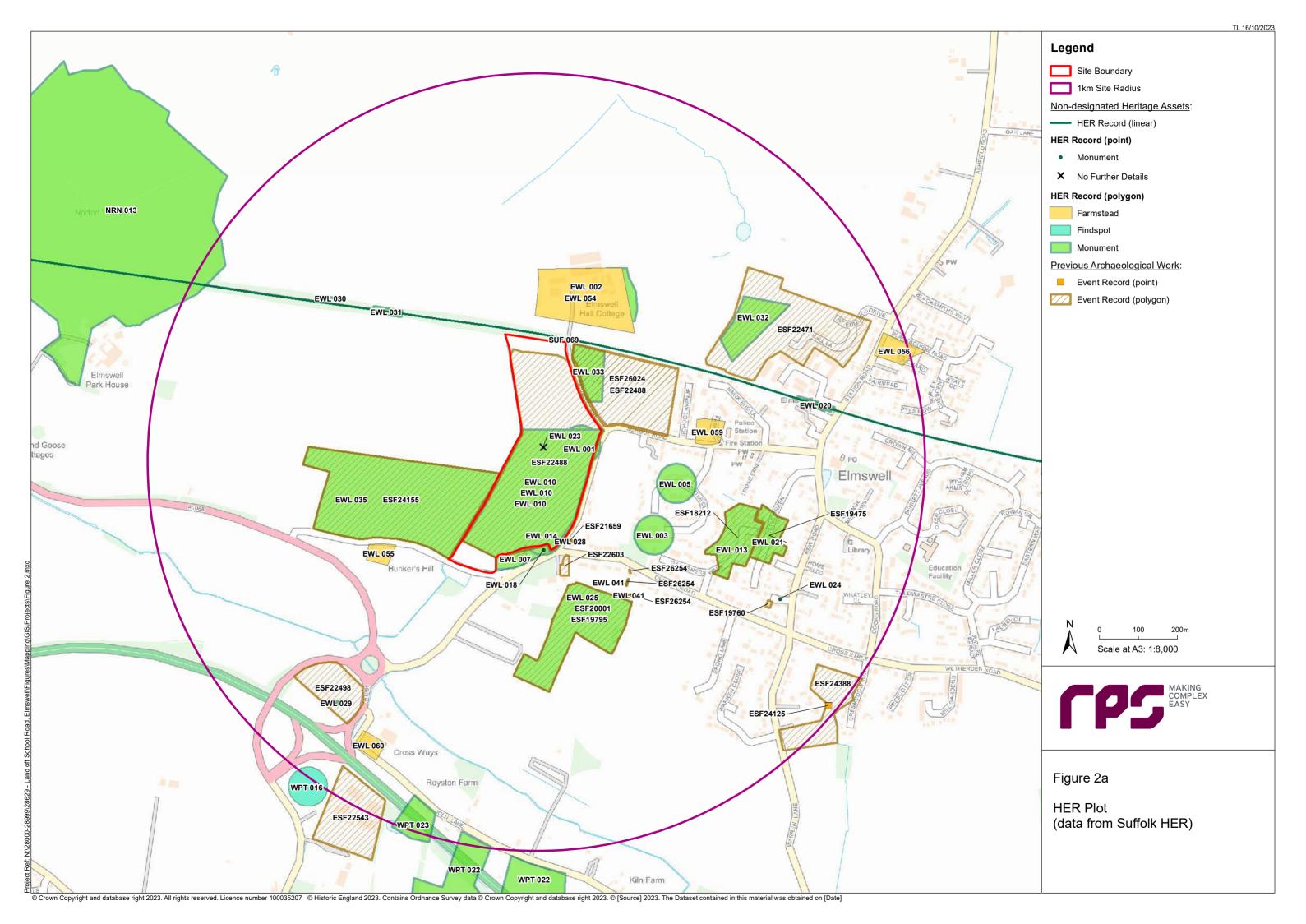
2018 Google Earth Image

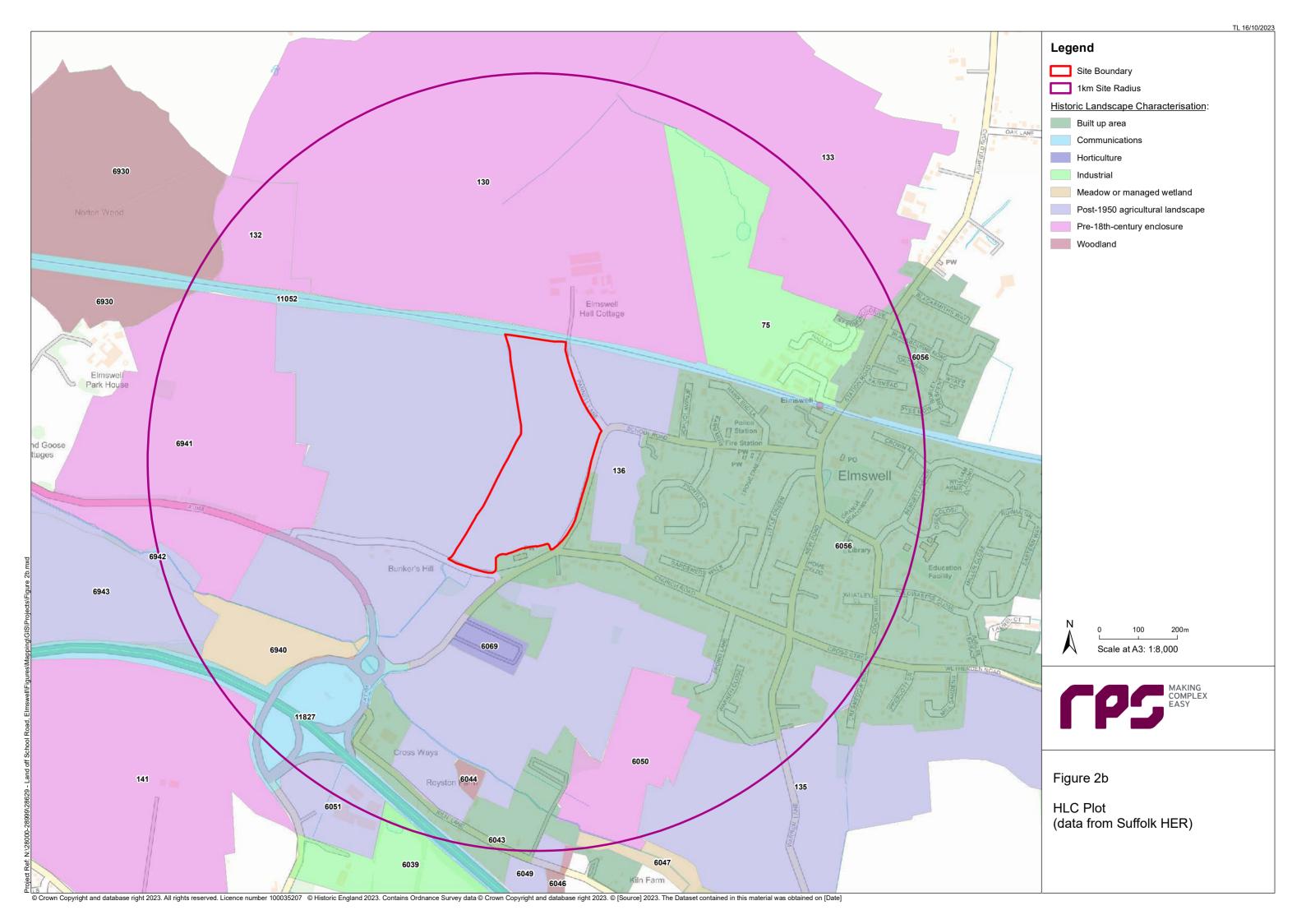
2021 Google Earth Image

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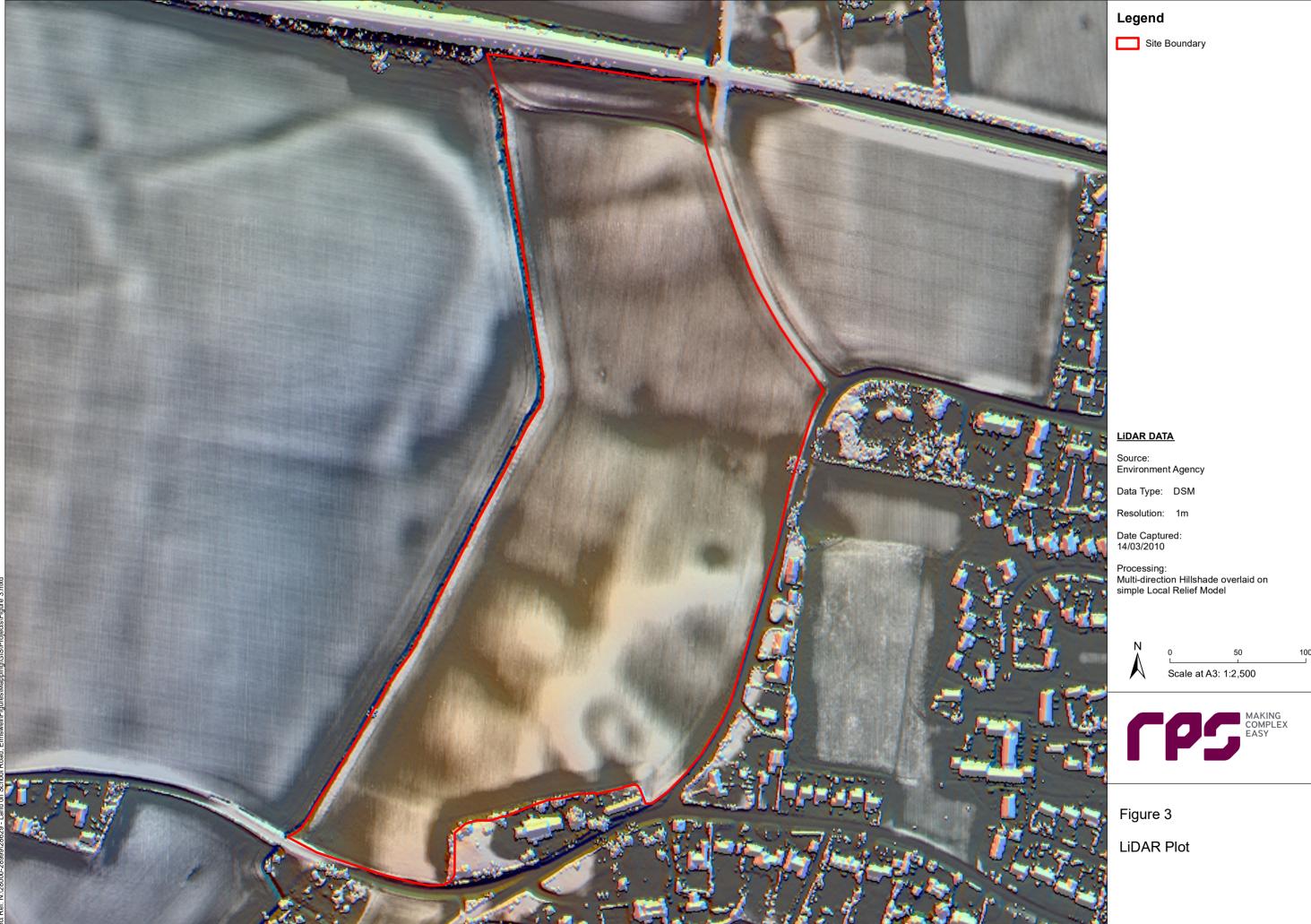






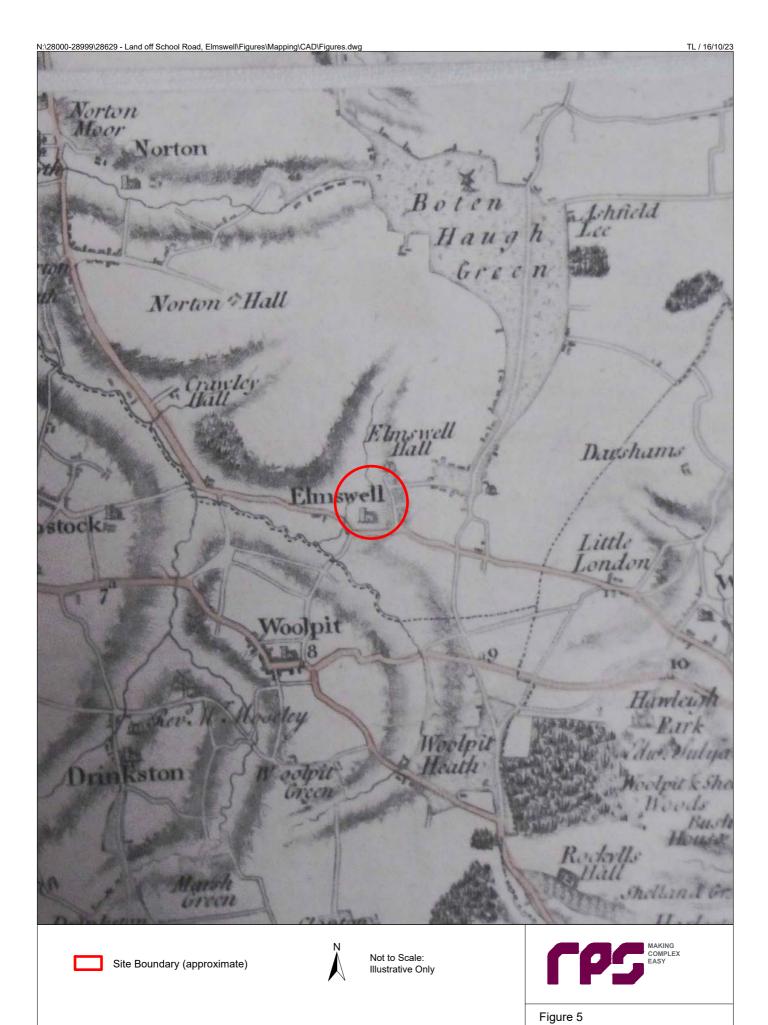




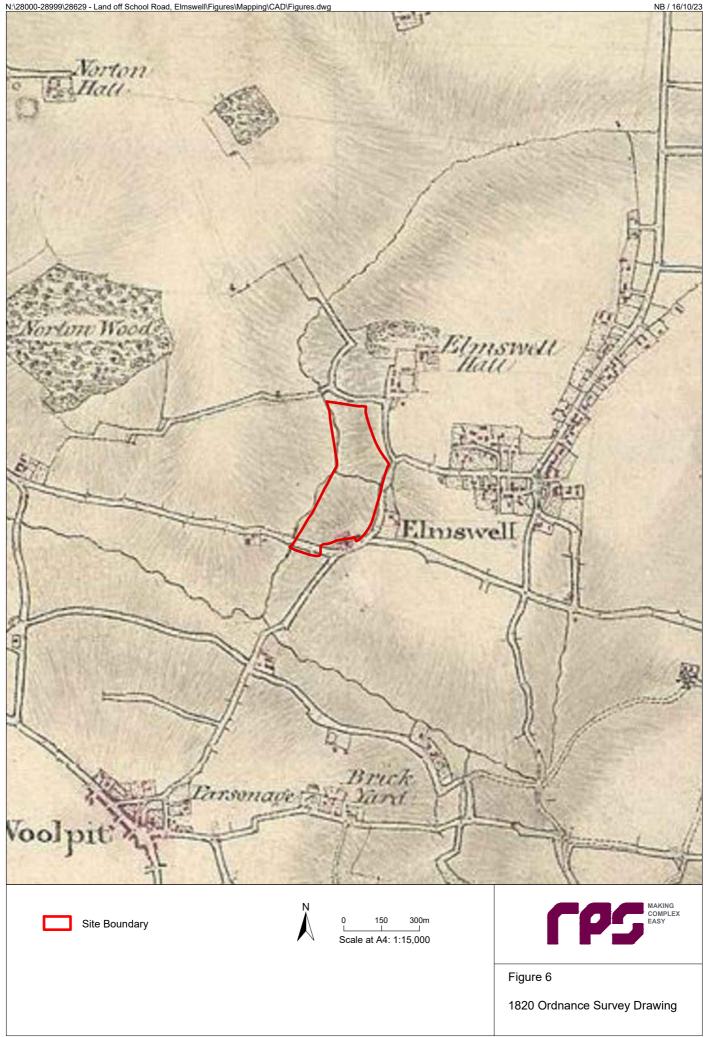


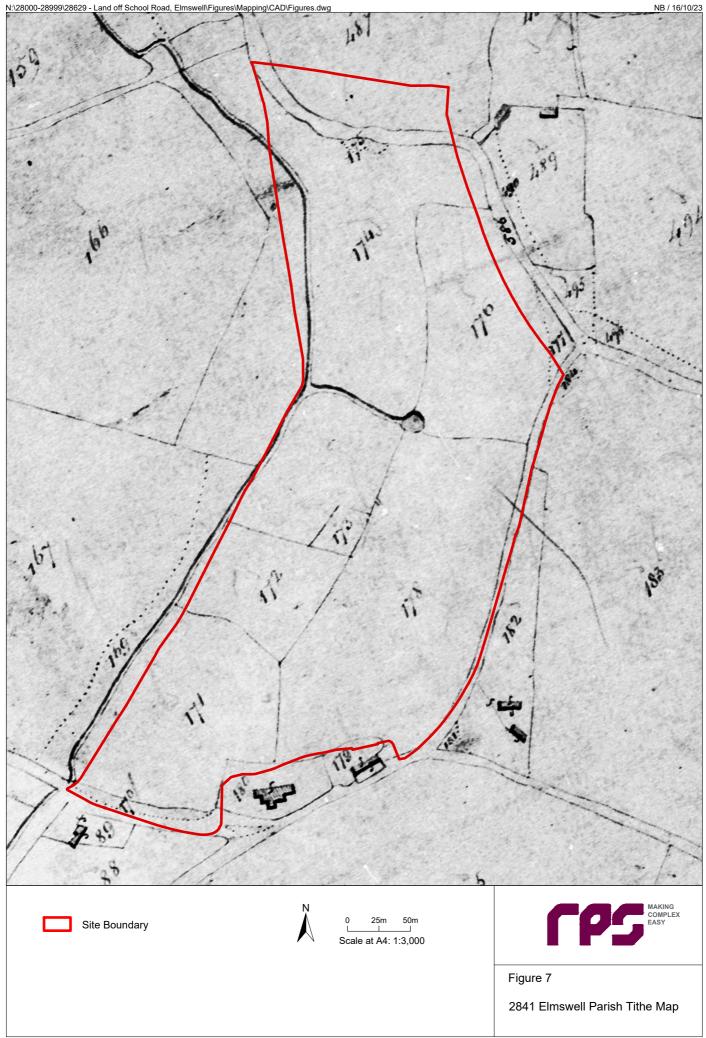
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1783 Hodskinson Map of Suffolk





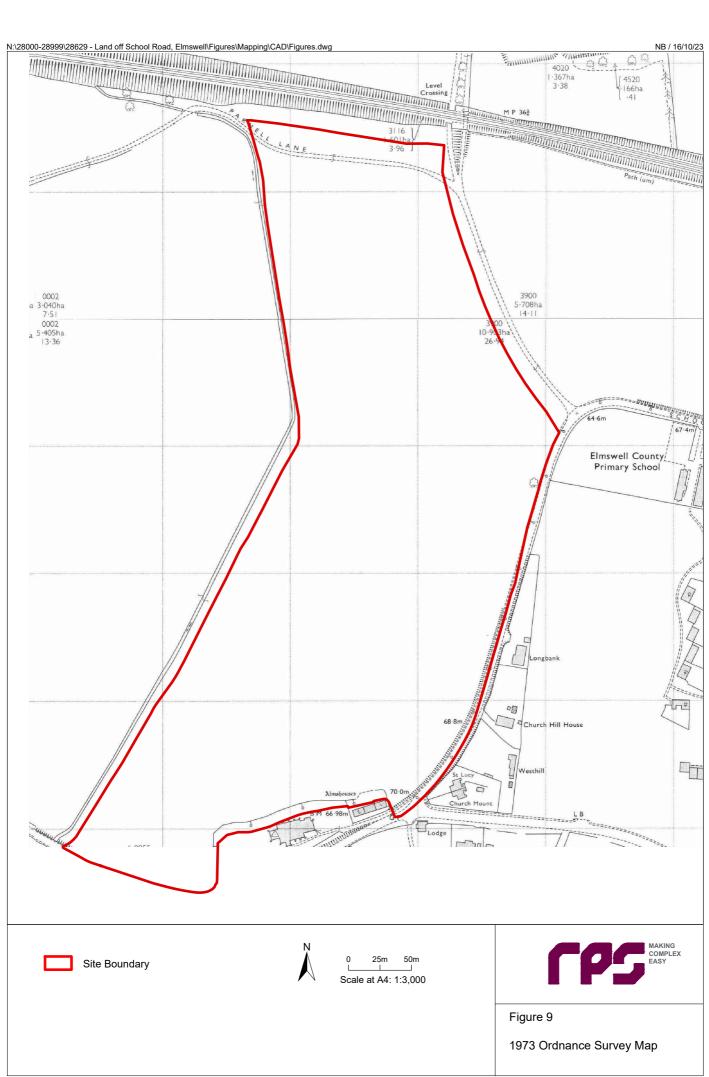




0 25m 50m Scale at A4: 1:3,000



Figure 8
1883 Ordnance Survey Map





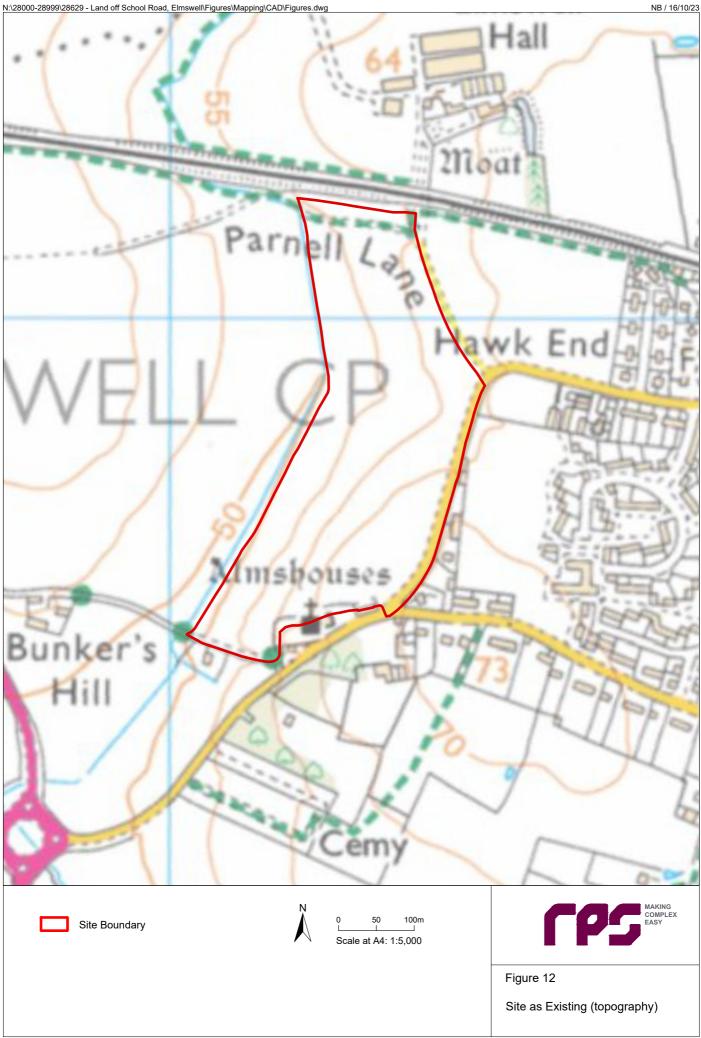
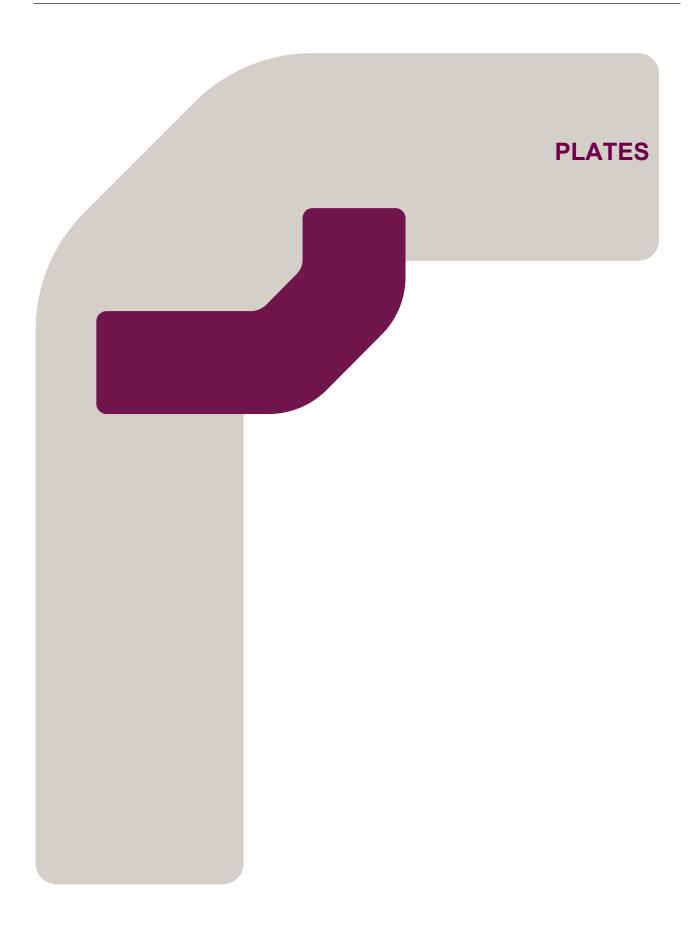




Figure 13
Illustaretive Landscape Masterplan



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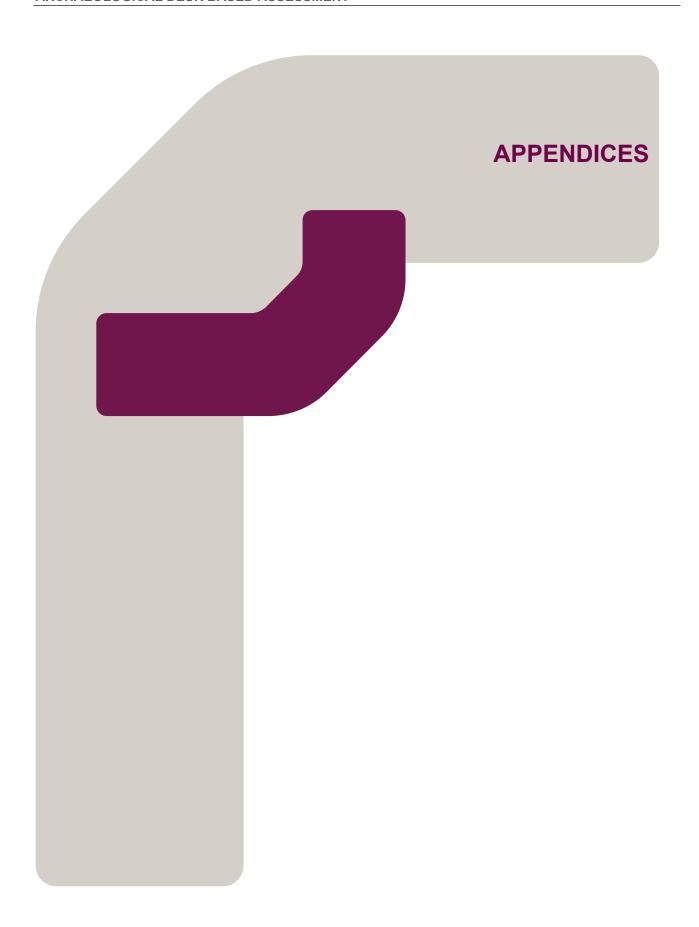


Plate 1: View facing north across study site



Plate 2: View facing south across study site showing the adjacent church and almhouses adjacent to southern site boundary





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Appendix 1

Gazetteer of Suffolk Historic Environment Record Data

HER Record (point)

MonUID	RecordType	PrefRef	Name
MSF24400	MON	EWL 018	Elmswell Almhouses
MSF28705	NFD	EWL 023	NO FURTHER DETAILS: SCATTER OF ROMAN, SAXON AND MEDIEVAL METALWORK
MSF24036	MON	EWL 024	Jewers Site, New Road

HER Record (linear)

MonUID	RecordType	PrefRef	Name
MSF34993	MON	SUF 069	Ipswich to Bury St Edmunds railway line

HER Record (polygon)

	HER Record (polygon)				
MonUID	RecordType	PrefRef	Name		
MSF19088	MON	EWL 013	Land off Gardeners Walk		
MSF19145	MON	NRN 013	Norton Wood		
MSF11622	FS	WPT 016	Small ?socketed axe blade fragment metal detected from field.		
MSF17038	MON	WPT 022	Kiln Lane Brick Works		
MSF17039	MON	WPT 023	New Kiln/Crossways (PMed)		
MSF6894	MON	EWL 001	Roman artefact scatter of grey pottery sherds and a bronze finger ring.		
MSF6895	MON	EWL 002	Elmswell Hall		
MSF6896	MON	EWL 003	Roman artefact scatter of pottery sherds and pottery kiln remains.		
MSF6898	MON	EWL 005	Findspot of a Roman coin.		
MSF6900	MON	EWL 007	Church of St John the Divine		
MSF18827	MON	EWL 014	Findspot of a Bronze-Age spearhead tip. (BA)		
MSF23608	MON	EWL 021	Monitoring, Land to the South of Oliver House		
MSF17694	MON	EWL 010	Large field boundaries of unknown date, visible as cropmarks. (Un)		
MSF17977	MON	EWL 010	Medieval artefact scatter of pottery and metalwork, including buckle and harness. (Med)		
MSF17976	MON	EWL 010	Anglo-Saxon artefact scatter of metalwork, including bow brooch, stirrup terminal, hooked tag, coin and bronze brooch. (Sax)		
MSF26574	MON	EWL 028	St Lucy, Church Road, Elmswell		
MSF26257	MON	EWL 030	World War II type 24 pillbox.		
MSF26171	MON	EWL 031	World War II parallel rows of anti-tank 'dragons teeth' concrete blocks, running in line with the railway.		
MSF28706	MON	EWL 029	Post-medieval ditch, Land Adjacent to Kiln Lane, Elmswell		
MSF28701	MON	EWL 020	Elmswell Railway Station		
MSF32666	MON	EWL 035	Land north of Bunkers Hill, Elmswell.		
MSF31503	MON	EWL 033	Possible enclosure at Land West of School Road		
MSF31487	MON	EWL 032	Roman and undated ditches at Former Grampian Country Foods Site		
MSF24084	MON	EWL 025	Elmswell Community Woodland		
MSF37682	MON	EWL 041	Single Roman ditch, St Johns House, Church Road		
MSF37682	MON	EWL 041	Single Roman ditch, St Johns House, Church Road		
MSF41345	FMS	EWL 054	Farmstead: Elmswell Hall		
MSF41347	FMS	EWL 055	Farmstead: Bunker's Hill		
MSF41349	FMS	EWL 056	Farmstead: Street Farmhouse (Street Farm)		
MSF41354	FMS	EWL 059	Farmstead: Hall Cottage (Hawk End)		
MSF41356	FMS	EWL 060	Farmstead: Cross Ways		

Event Record (point)

EvUID		Name
ESF24125		Desk-Based Assessment -Land east of warren lane, Elmswell

Event Record (polygon)

EvUID	Name
ESF19475	Sommers M, SCCAS monitoring 2005/153
ESF19760	Jewers Site, New Road, Elmswell
ESF20001	Geophysical Survey - Gleblands, Elmswell Community Woodlands, Elmswell
ESF19795	Metal detector survey, Elmswell Community Woodland, 2008
ESF18212	Land off Gardeners Walk: Evaluation (EWL 013)
ESF21659	Monitoring at St Lucy, Church Road, Elmswell
ESF22543	Watching Brief - Agricultural Building, Woolpit
ESF22498	Archaeological Evaluation at Land Adjacent to Kiln Lane, Elmswell, Suffolk
ESF22603	Watching Brief - adj. Hillcourt Cottage, Church Rd, Elmswell
ESF24155	Fieldwalking Survey - Land north of Bunkers Hill, Elmswell
ESF22488	Geophysical Survey, Land west of School Road, Elmswell
ESF22488	Geophysical Survey, Land west of School Road, Elmswell
ESF22471	Evaluation - Former Grampian Country Foods Site, St Edmund's Drive, Elmswell
ESF26024	Evaluation - Land off School Road, Elmswell
ESF26254	Evaluation - St Johns House, Church Road. Elmswell
ESF26254	Evaluation - St Johns House, Church Road. Elmswell
ESF26254	Evaluation - St Johns House, Church Road. Elmswell
ESF24388	Geophysical Survey - Elmswell site 1

Appendix 2

Geophysical Survey Results 2014

