

Archaeological Desk Based Assessment

Land at Higham, Gravesham, Kent

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Executive Summary

This archaeological desk-based assessment has been prepared by Tetra Tech (formerly known as RPS) on behalf of M Scott Properties Ltd.

The subject of this assessment is land at Higham, Gravesham, Kent and is around 2.6ha in area. The assessment provides a review of the site's below-ground archaeological potential and addresses the information requirements of national, regional and local planning policy.

In terms of relevant designated heritage assets, no World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Battlefields or Historic Wrecks lie on within the vicinity of the study site. Almost the entirety of the site lies within an Archaeological Notification Area (ANA) that is defined as: "moderate palaeolithic potential; an area of multi period background potential". The northwest corner of the site falls within a second ANA defined as: "some palaeolithic potential; an area of multi period background potential".

The Kent HER records a non-designated archaeological asset within the site comprising the earthwork remains of a Post Medieval field boundary, recorded from aerial photographs. In the context of the Secretary of State's non-statutory criteria for Scheduled Monuments (DCMS 2013), this asset can be identified as of negligible to minor archaeological significance.

In terms of further yet-to-be-discovered archaeological remains, the available evidence indicates the site has a low to moderate potential for Prehistoric remains to be present, and a low potential for significant remains from all other past periods of human activity. Should any such remains survive within the site, they can be anticipated to be of overall low/local significance and no more than moderate/regional significance. In view of the study site's known archaeological resource and its identified archaeological potential, development within the site boundary can currently be assessed as unlikely to result in significant harm.

Given the above, it is suggested that any archaeological investigation required by the Local Planning Authority could follow planning permission secured by an appropriately worded planning condition.

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Appendix 1 HER gazetteer

1. Introduction & Scope of Study

- 1.1 This below ground archaeological desk-based assessment has been prepared by Tetra Tech RPS on behalf of the client, M Scott Properties Ltd.
- 1.2 The subject of this archaeological assessment, also known as “the site” or “study site”, is land at Higham, Gravesham, Kent that comprises approximately 2.6ha of agricultural land (See Figs. 1 and 13).
- 1.3 In terms of relevant nationally designated heritage assets, as defined below in Section 2 and as shown on Figure 2, no World Heritage sites, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Wreck or Historic Battlefield sites have been identified either within the study site itself, or within the vicinity of the study site.
- 1.4 Almost the entirety of the site lies within an Archaeological Notification Area (ANA) that is defined as: “moderate palaeolithic potential; an area of multi period background potential”. The northwest corner of the site falls within a second ANA defined as: “some palaeolithic potential; an area of multi period background potential”.
- 1.5 In accordance with relevant government 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 study site.
- 1.6 This desk-based assessment comprises an examination of evidence on the Kent Historic Environmental Record (HER) and other sources, including the results of a comprehensive map regression exercise.
- 1.7 Built heritage issues are not a subject of this report and therefore the impact of the proposed development on built heritage assets is not considered here.

Limitations

- 1.8 A degree of uncertainty is attached to any desk-based assessment where invasive archaeological fieldwork has not previously been undertaken on the site, as the prevailing nature of the archaeological resource is that it is buried and therefore not visible. This means it can be difficult to accurately predict the presence and likely importance of below ground archaeological assets, and the likely impact (and resultant effects) of development upon such assets.
- 1.9 In such a scenario, the assessment represents a generally theoretical modelling of archaeological potential. The quality of the baseline data sources can affect the accuracy of the assessment, including for the following reasons:
 - The Historic Environment Record can be limited because it is dependent on timely updates and is also based on “random” opportunities for research, fieldwork and discovery;
 - Lack of dating evidence for sites;
 - Documentary sources are rare before the Medieval period and many historic documents are inherently biased;
 - The extent of truncation caused by previous development impacts and landscaping works cannot be fully ascertained.
- 1.10 HER data has a time limit of 12 months from the original search date and cannot be relied on after that.

2. Planning Background & Development Plan Framework

- 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.
- 2.2 In March 2012, the government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which was most recently updated in February 2025. 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.

National Planning Policy (NPPF)

- 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 that heritage makes to 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 207 states that local planning authorities should require applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by their development proposal, 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 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.
- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 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.
- 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.

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- 2.10 *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.
- 2.11 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.
- 2.13 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

- 2.15 The site is located within the boundary of Gravesham Borough Council. The Development Plan for Gravesham currently consists of: Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy and Local Plan Policies Map (2014), Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994) – saved Policies, and Kent County Council Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-30 (adopted March 2025).
- 2.16 Saved policy TC7 of the 1994 Gravesham Local Plan is relevant to archaeology and states:
- Throughout the Borough Plan Review area, development on important archaeological sites will not normally be permitted. On archaeological sites where permanent preservation is not warranted, applications will normally be refused unless arrangements have been made by the developer to ensure that time and resources are available to allow satisfactory archaeological investigation and recording of, by an approved archaeological body to take place in advance of or during development. The specification and programme of work for the archaeological investigation, including its relationship to the programme of development are to be submitted to and approved by the Borough Council. In order to determine a planning application, the Borough Council may require the developer to provide additional information, in the form of an assessment of the archaeological or

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historic importance of the site in question and the likely impact of development. In certain cases, such an assessment may involve an evaluation excavation. Planning permission may be refused without adequate assessment of the archaeological implications.

- 2.17 The Gravesham Local Plan Regulation 18 Stage 1 Consultation Part 2: Development Management Policies Document (April 2018) contains the following relevant proposed policy:

Proposed Policy DM 45: Archaeology

The archaeological and historic integrity of designated heritage assets and other important archaeological sites, together with the contribution made toward their significance by their settings, will be protected and, where possible, enhanced.

Planning applications on sites where there is or is potential archaeological interest must be supported by an appropriate desk-based assessment of the asset. Where important or potentially significant archaeological heritage assets may exist, developers will be required to arrange for field evaluations to be carried out in advance of the determination of planning applications in accordance with a specification to be agreed in writing with the council.

Where the case for development affecting a heritage asset of archaeological interest is accepted, the council's preference will be that the archaeological remains should be preserved in-situ. Where preservation in situ is not possible or justified, appropriate provision for preservation by record will be required. In such cases, a copy of the report detailing and interpreting findings shall be deposited with the council for its records.

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

3 Geology & Topography

Geology

- 3.1 The British Geology Survey (BGS Online 2020) records the underlying geology of the study site as Thanet Formation- Silt, Sand and Clay. Overlying this, a band of superficial Head deposits of Gravel, Silt, Sand and Clay are recorded extending north/south across the central portion of the site; corresponding with a curvilinear ridge of ground.
- 3.2 No site-specific ground investigation data is currently available.

Topography

- 3.3 A curvilinear ridge extends across the central portion of the study site, with a highpoint of approximately 61m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). The land falls gradually away from here to the western and eastern site boundaries to a low point of approximately 54m AOD. The central ridge extends north beyond the site for a further 60m, encompassing a wooded area known as 'The Mount', before it descends towards the Higham Marshes and Thames beyond.

4 Archaeological & Historical Background with Assessment of Significance

Introduction

- 4.1 This chapter reviews the available archaeological evidence for the study site and the archaeological/historical background of the general area, and, in accordance with NPPF, considers the potential for any as yet to be discovered archaeological evidence on the study site.
- 4.2 What follows comprises a review of known archaeological assets within a 1km radius of the study site (Figs. 2a & 2b), also referred to as the study area, held on the Kent Historic Environment Record (HER), together with a historic map regression exercise charting the development of the study area from the early 19th century onwards until the present day.
- 4.3 Chapter 5 subsequently considers the site conditions and whether the proposed development will impact the theoretical archaeological potential identified below.

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

Previous archaeological work

- 4.4 No previous invasive archaeological investigations are recorded on the Kent HER for the study site.
- 4.5 The site formed part of the area assessed for the Hoo Peninsula Historic Landscape Project (English Heritage/Historic England) which undertook systematic analysis, interpretation and mapping of archaeological sites and landscapes from aerial photographs and Environment Agency Lidar data across the peninsula (HER ref: EKE15020). That project identified a slight linear earthwork within the site; interpreted as the remains of a Post Medieval field boundary (Fig. 2a: TQ 77 SW 202).
- 4.6 The Historic Landscape Characterisation of the study site study site is recorded as 'Enclosures' (Fig. 2c).
- 4.7 It should also be noted that a relatively small number of invasive archaeological investigations have been undertaken in the study area to date. This increases the uncertainty in assessing the specific level of potential for survival of archaeological remains.

Early Prehistoric (Palaeolithic & Mesolithic)

- 4.8 The Kent HER records that almost the entirety of the site lies within an Archaeological Notification Area (ANA) that is defined as: “moderate palaeolithic potential; an area of multi period background potential”. The northwest corner of the site falls within a second ANA defined as: “some Palaeolithic potential; an area of multi period background potential” (see Figure 2d).
- 4.8 However, there are no Palaeolithic findspots recorded on the HER from within the study site or wider 1km radius study area. The ANAs are presumed to have been allocated on the basis of the underlying geology alone. If present, Palaeolithic material is likely to comprise isolated, residual lithics at depth.
- 4.9 The HER records no Mesolithic evidence on the site or wider study area. The paucity of any recorded evidence suggests a low potential can be ascribed to the site for Mesolithic activity; with the caveat as noted above in paragraph 4.6 regarding the limited number of invasive archaeological events in the study area.

Later Prehistoric (Neolithic, Bronze Age & Iron Age)

- 4.10 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.
- 4.11 The dated Later Prehistoric evidence within the 1km study area is entirely represented by dispersed, residual findspots recorded by the Portable Antiquities Scheme. Their plotted positions should be regarded with a degree of caution due to inaccuracy of the associated National Grid Reference (NGR); particularly in the case of treasure trove entries, which are only recorded to an accuracy of 1 sq. km.
- 4.12 The remaining evidence in the study area is derived from cropmarks where their form indicates a particular Prehistoric period, but that interpretation remains untested.
- 4.13 A probable Neolithic to Bronze Age flint blade findspot is recorded on the HER c200m northwest of the site; however, the location accuracy is limited to 1 sq. km (MKE11057).
- 4.14 A possible Neolithic flint-working site is recorded at Mid Higham, c600m south of the study site, on the basis of recovery of a polished flint axe and knife, along with worked flints from the immediate vicinity (TQ 77 SW 16). A Neolithic flint scraper is also recorded from c1km SSW of the study site (MKE66792).
- 4.15 A Bronze Age findspot for a complete cast bronze palstave axe with side loop and decorative rib is recorded c600m northwest of the site (MKE120885).
- 4.16 The HER records two further Bronze Age findspots c800m NNW of the site (MKE66778) and c900m northwest of the site (MKE66614), each for a fragment of a socketed axe head.
- 4.17 At Turk’s Hill c600m northwest of the site, an area of settlement is indicated by cropmarks of ditched enclosures and pits. A double row of pits could indicate the location of a large building or structure. The settlement, and associated boundaries, have a potential origin in the Bronze Age and the cropmarks indicate several phases of land division. A ring ditch, probably the site of a former Bronze Age burial mound, lies to the west (TQ 77 SW 25).
- 4.18 At Dusty Hill c900m east of the study site, two circular cropmarks have been interpreted as possible plough-levelled Bronze Age round barrows (TQ 77 SW 1138 & 1139).

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- 4.19 The HER records 11 Iron Age findspots identified via metal detecting in the study area, dominated by coins but also including brooch fragments (see Appendix 1). Examples in closest proximity to the site are a Late Iron Age copper alloy coin recovered c350 west of the site (MKE66665), and a middle Iron Age copper alloy brooch recovered c350m WNW of the site (MKE110601).
- 4.20 The cropmarks of a possible Iron Age or Roman enclosure with associated pits are recorded c1km southeast of the site close to Telegraph Hill (TQ 77 SW 174).
- 4.21 The absence of directly dated later Prehistoric settlement remains in the vicinity of the study site can be mainly attributed to the paucity of invasive archaeological fieldwork undertaken to date. The findspots and undated cropmarks in the study area do indicate a level of occupation in the landscape, although its density and distribution is uncertain.
- 4.22 On balance, a generally low to moderate potential can be ascribed to the site for later Prehistoric remains.

Roman

- 4.23 The only direct evidence of Roman activity in the study area is a burial excavated in 1900, 500m south of the site, for which the HER provides no associated contextual information (TQ 77 SW 41). The remaining Roman evidence comprises a small number of dispersed, residual findspots at least 500m distance from the study site.
- 4.24 At Turk's Hill c600m northwest of the site, recorded cropmarks indicative of settlement activity may include Roman elements (TQ 77 SW 25).
- 4.25 The cropmarks of a possible Iron Age or Roman enclosure with associated pits are recorded c1km southeast of the site close to Telegraph Hill (TQ 77 SW 174).
- 4.26 The lack of recorded Roman remains can be attributed in part to the paucity of archaeological fieldwork in the area. However, Roman material often appears in HERs because of the volume of cultural material relative to most other periods and because much of that material is readily identifiable. The dispersed nature of the findspots, all a substantive distance from the study site, suggests they represent chance loss. Cropmarks of possible Roman origin are also located at a distance from the study site. and it can be surmised and are not associated with a focus of any settlement in proximity to the site.
- 4.27 The available evidence indicates the study site was not a focus of Roman occupation and the potential for Roman settlement remains can therefore be considered as low. Evidence of agricultural activity is perhaps most likely to be represented.

Anglo-Saxon/Early Medieval & Medieval

- 4.28 Saxon settlement was established in the area at what is now Lower Higham, c850m north of the study site. 'Heh-Ham' is mentioned in a Charter of Offa, King of Mercia in AD 774.
- 4.29 The sole dated Saxon/Early Medieval evidence recorded in the 1km study area is a small number of findspots that were identified via metal detection.
- 4.30 An Early Medieval copper alloy strap end, buckle and stirrup were retrieved c800m northwest of the site (MKE67103, MKE67104 & MKE67109), while five Saxon silver pennies and a Merovingian gold tremissis were recovered "near Higham". The HER places them 800m south of the site, however this location is only accurate to one square km (TQ 77 SW 1058-1062).
- 4.31 At Turk's Hill c600m northwest of the site, recorded cropmarks indicative of settlement activity may include Early Medieval elements (TQ 77 SW 25).

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- 4.32 Domesday records Higham as comprising 56 households, with 12 ploughlands, 30 acres of meadow, pasture for 200 sheep, one mill, one fishery and one church (presumably St Mary's Church, located 2.5km north of the study site).
- 4.33 The location of the medieval village of Merston, deserted by AD 1445, is recorded c800m WNW of the study site. The location of the lost village has been surveyed from aerial photographs as part of the Hoo Peninsula Landscape Project, but no traces of the church or surrounding village have been detected (TQ 77SW 14).
- 4.34 The study site appears to be located a substantial distance from the focus of settlement during these periods, and is likely to have comprised unimproved or agricultural hinterland. As such, a low potential can be ascribed for Saxon/Early Medieval or Medieval settlement remains on the site. Evidence of agricultural activity and former land division may be present.

Post Medieval & Modern (including map regression exercise)

- 4.35 The HER records the earthwork remains of a Post Medieval field boundary within the study site (TQ 77 SW 202). The slight earthwork remains can be seen on LiDAR (Fig. 14) and are aligned east/west. The eastern section and a short northern extension possibly represent an earlier arrangement that was not depicted on Ordnance Survey mapping.
- 4.36 To the immediate east of the site on the east side of School Lane, the HER records the location of a Post Medieval outfarm with a regular L-plan range (MKE83236).
- 4.37 In this period, 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.
- 4.38 The 1769 Andrew & Dury Map (Fig. 3) shows the approximate location of the study site as open land set between precursors of the current Taylor's Lane to the west and School Lane to the east. The settlement of 'Higham' (now Lower Higham) is depicted to the north.
- 4.39 Faden's 1801 Map of Kent (Fig. 4) shows a similar outlook and the area of the site is presented as part of an enclosed field system.
- 4.40 The study site can be accurately located on the 1841 Higham Tithe Map (Fig. 5) which continues to show it as undeveloped ground, sub-divided into irregular plots. The associated Apportionment provides additional detail on land use and ownership, confirming its agricultural character:

Land Parcel	Landowner	Occupant	Description	Land Use/Cultivation
291	Frederick Easdown	Frederick Easdown	Little Winters	Plantation
292	John Drinkald	William Easdown	Slip under the Mount	Arable
293	John Drinkald	William Easdown	Slip under the Mount	Arable
294	John Cross	William Fuller	The Mount	Arable
295	John Cross	William Fuller	Field	Arable
296	James Sexton	William Easdown	House and Garden	Plantation
297	Thomas Bentley	William Barnes	Stiff Field	Arable

- 4.41 The 1896 Ordnance Survey (Fig. 6) shows that by this time most of the plots had been amalgamated within the study site and plantation rather than arable dominated cultivation. The southwest quadrant of the site is shown as an open plot bounded by a footpath, while the remainder is plantation.

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- 4.42 No changes are shown on the 1933 Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 7), whilst by 1960 (Figs. 8 & 9) the southwest plot was now also under plantation.
- 4.43 By 1990 (Fig. 10), plantation within the site had been entirely cleared for arable, but the footpath retained.
- 4.44 There are no further substantive changes within the site boundary up to the present day (Figs. 11-13).
- 4.45 The available evidence therefore indicates that the study site has comprised agricultural land throughout these periods. As such, a low potential can be ascribed for significant (i.e. non-agricultural) remains. Remnants of former field boundaries and agricultural activity are likely to be present.

LiDAR data

- 4.46 A review of Environment Agency DTM LiDAR data to 1m resolution (Fig. 14) shows the embanked former field boundaries recorded on the HER and historic mapping, along with the overall topographical character of the site (e.g. the central ridge extending north to The Mount).
- 4.47 Evidence of agricultural activity is also visible as a dense grid of channels that corresponds with the plantation pattern shown on the 1960 aerial photograph (Fig. 9).
- 4.48 There are no clear indicators for earlier remains of archaeological significance.

Assessment of Significance

- 4.49 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.
- 4.50 No relevant nationally significant designated heritage assets as defined in the NPPF are recorded within, or within the vicinity of, the study site.
- 4.51 The Kent HER records a non-designated archaeological asset within the site comprising the linear earthwork remains of a Post Medieval field boundary, recorded from aerial photographs. In the context of the Secretary of State's non-statutory criteria for Scheduled Monuments (DCMS 2013), this asset can be identified as of negligible to minor archaeological significance.
- 4.52 In terms of unknown, yet-to-be-discovered archaeological assets and based on current evidence, archaeological potential by period and 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	Low to Moderate	Low / Local to Moderate/Regional
Roman	Low	Low / Local
Anglo Saxon to Medieval	Low	Low / Local to Moderate/Regional
Post Medieval & Modern	Low	Negligible to Low (Local)

- 4.53 Any such archaeological remains, should they occur on the study site, would in the context of the Secretary of State's non-statutory criteria for Scheduled Monuments (DCMS 2013) most likely be of overall low/local significance and no more than moderate/regional significance.

5 Site Conditions, The Proposed Development & Review of Potential Development Impacts on Archaeological Assets

Site Conditions

- 5.1 The study site occupies agricultural land at Higham, Gravesham, Kent and is around 2.6ha in area. The site is located on the northern fringe of Higham and set between Taylor's Lane to the west and School Lane to the east.
- 5.2 Historic agricultural activity would have had a widespread negative impact on any underlying archaeological remains; particularly the establishment and subsequent clearance of plantation as shown on historic mapping.

Proposed Development

- 5.3 Detailed proposals are currently unknown.

Review of Potential Development Impacts on Archaeological Assets

- 5.23 Groundworks associated with the construction phase of a scheme, including site preparation, excavation for roads, foundations, services and landscaping, can be anticipated to have an extensive impact on near-surface archaeological deposits.
- 5.24 The proposed development will not impact on any designated archaeological assets.
- 5.25 Depending on the nature of future development proposals, the Post Medieval field boundary recorded within the site may be impacted, however it is considered to be an asset of negligible to minor archaeological significance.
- 5.26 In terms of unknown yet-to-be-discovered archaeological assets, a low to moderate archaeological potential has been identified at the study site for evidence of activity dating from the Prehistoric periods, and a low potential for evidence of all remaining past periods of human activity.
- 5.27 It appears that any surviving archaeological remains within the study site boundary would, in the context of the Secretary of State's non-statutory criteria for Scheduled Monuments (DCMS2013), most likely be of overall low/local significance and no more than moderate/regional significance.
- 5.28 As such, any future development within the site boundary is unlikely to have such a widespread or significant negative archaeological impact that unacceptable harm would be caused to the archaeological resource of the overall site.

6 Summary & Conclusions

- 6.1 This archaeological desk-based assessment has been prepared by Tetra Tech RPS on behalf of M Scott Properties Ltd.
- 6.2 The subject of this assessment is land at Higham, Gravesham, Kent and is around 2.6ha in area.
- 6.3 The assessment provides a review of the site's below-ground archaeological potential and addresses the information requirements of national, regional and local planning policy.
- 6.4 In terms of relevant designated heritage assets, no World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Battlefields or Historic Wrecks lie on within the vicinity of the study site.
- 6.5 Almost the entirety of the site lies within an Archaeological Notification Area (ANA) that is defined as: "moderate palaeolithic potential; an area of multi period background potential". The northwest corner of the site falls within a second ANA defined as: "some palaeolithic potential; an area of multi period background potential".
- 6.6 The Kent HER records a non-designated archaeological asset within the site comprising the earthwork remains of a Post Medieval field boundary, recorded from aerial photographs. In the context of the Secretary of State's non-statutory criteria for Scheduled Monuments (DCMS 2013), this asset can be identified as of negligible to minor archaeological significance.
- 6.7 In terms of further yet-to-be-discovered archaeological remains, the available evidence indicates the site has a low to moderate potential for Prehistoric remains to be present, and a low potential for significant remains from all other past periods of human activity.
- 6.8 Should any such remains survive within the site, they can be anticipated to be of overall low/local significance and no more than moderate/regional significance.
- 6.9 In view of the study site's known archaeological resource and its identified archaeological potential, development within the site boundary can currently be assessed as unlikely to result in significant harm.
- 6.10 Given the above, it is suggested that any archaeological investigation required by the Local Planning Authority could follow planning permission secured by an appropriately worded planning condition.

Sources Consulted

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Internet

British Geological Survey – <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>

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Domesday Online – <http://www.domesdaybook.co.uk/>

Historic England: The National Heritage List for England <http://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

[National Planning Policy Framework](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2) – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

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Cartographic & Imagery

Andrew & Dury's map of Kent - 1769

Faden's map of Kent - 1801

Higham (Kent) Tithe map - 1841

Ordnance Survey 1:2500 – 1896

Ordnance Survey 1:2500 - 1933

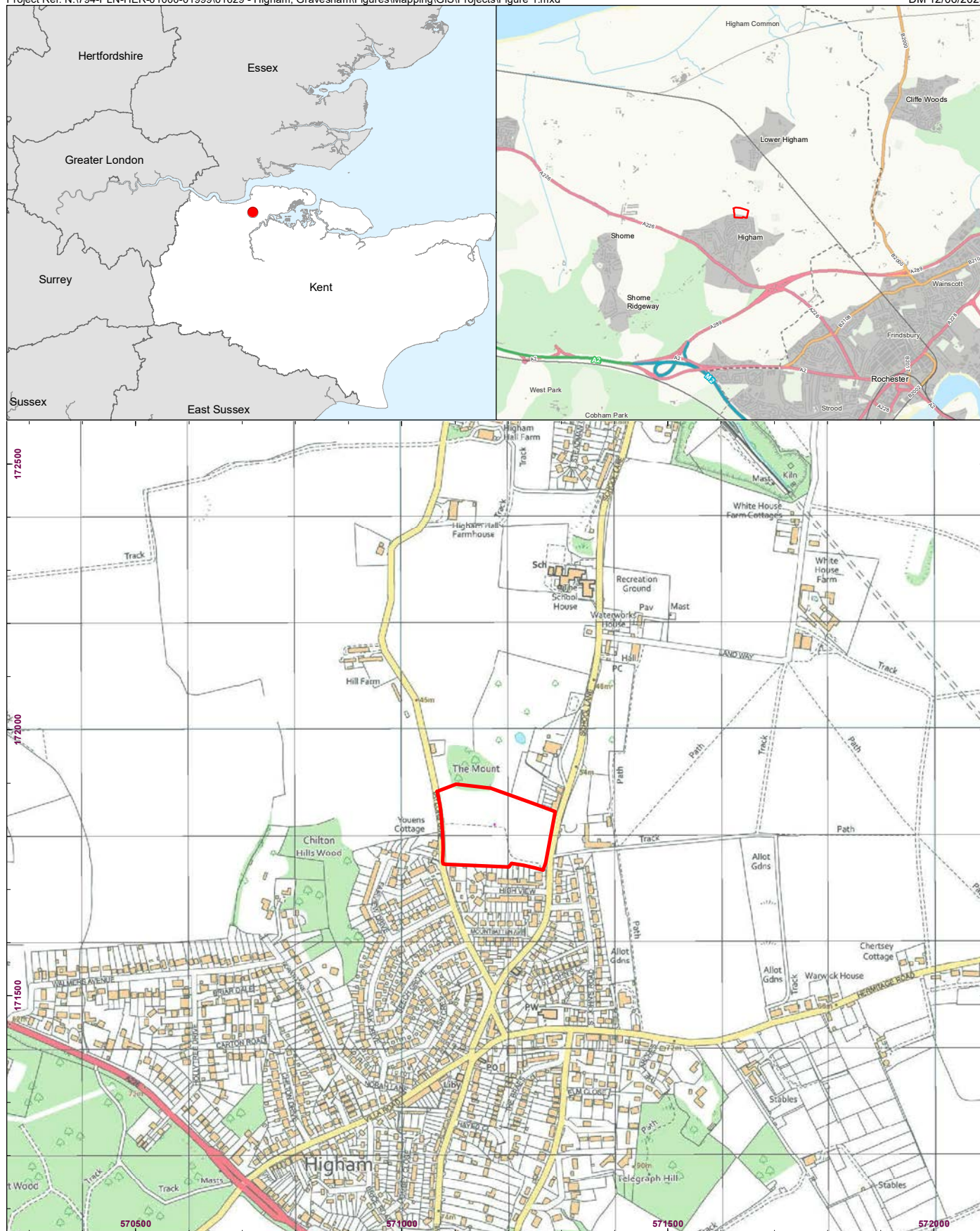
Ordnance Survey 1:2500 - 1960

Ordnance Survey 1:2500 - 1993

Ordnance Survey 1:10000 - 2024

1960-2025 Aerial photographs (Google Earth)

Figures



 Site Boundary

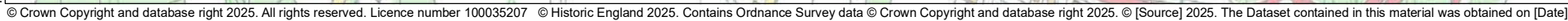


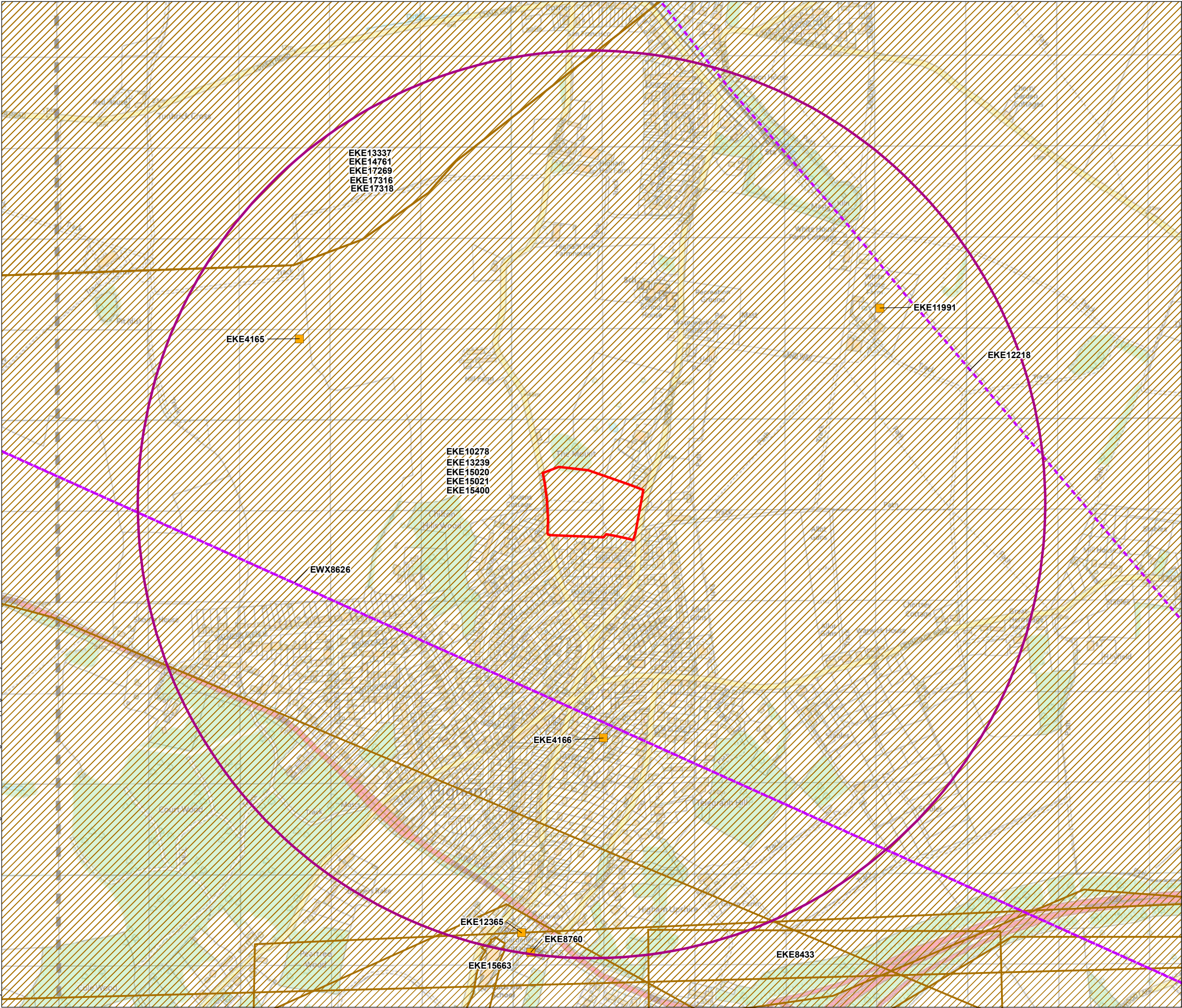
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Scale at A4: 1:10,000

rps
A TETRA TECH COMPANY

Figure 1

Site Location





Legend

- Site Boundary
- 1km Search Radius
- Previous Archaeological Work:
 - HER Event Lines
 - HER Event Points
 - HER Event Polygons

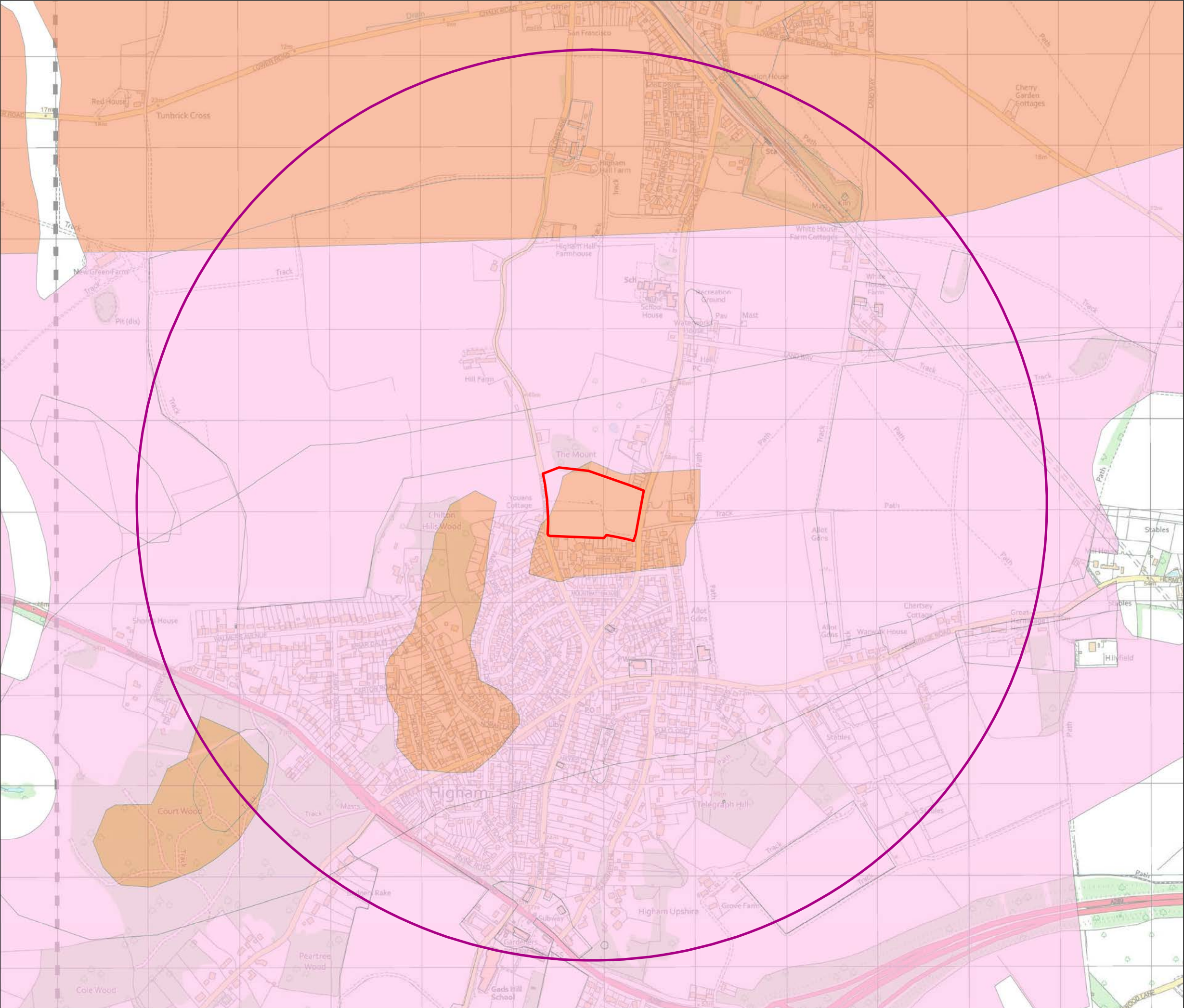


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Scale at A3: 1:8,000



Figure 2b
Historic Environment Records
Events Plot (data from Kent HER)

Project Ref: N1794-PLN-HER-01000-01999/01629 - Higham, Gravesham Figures\Mapping\GIS\Projects\Figure 2d ANA.mxd



Legend

 Site Boundary

 1km Search Radius

Archaeological Notification Areas

 Some palaeolithic potential

 Medium palaeolithic potential

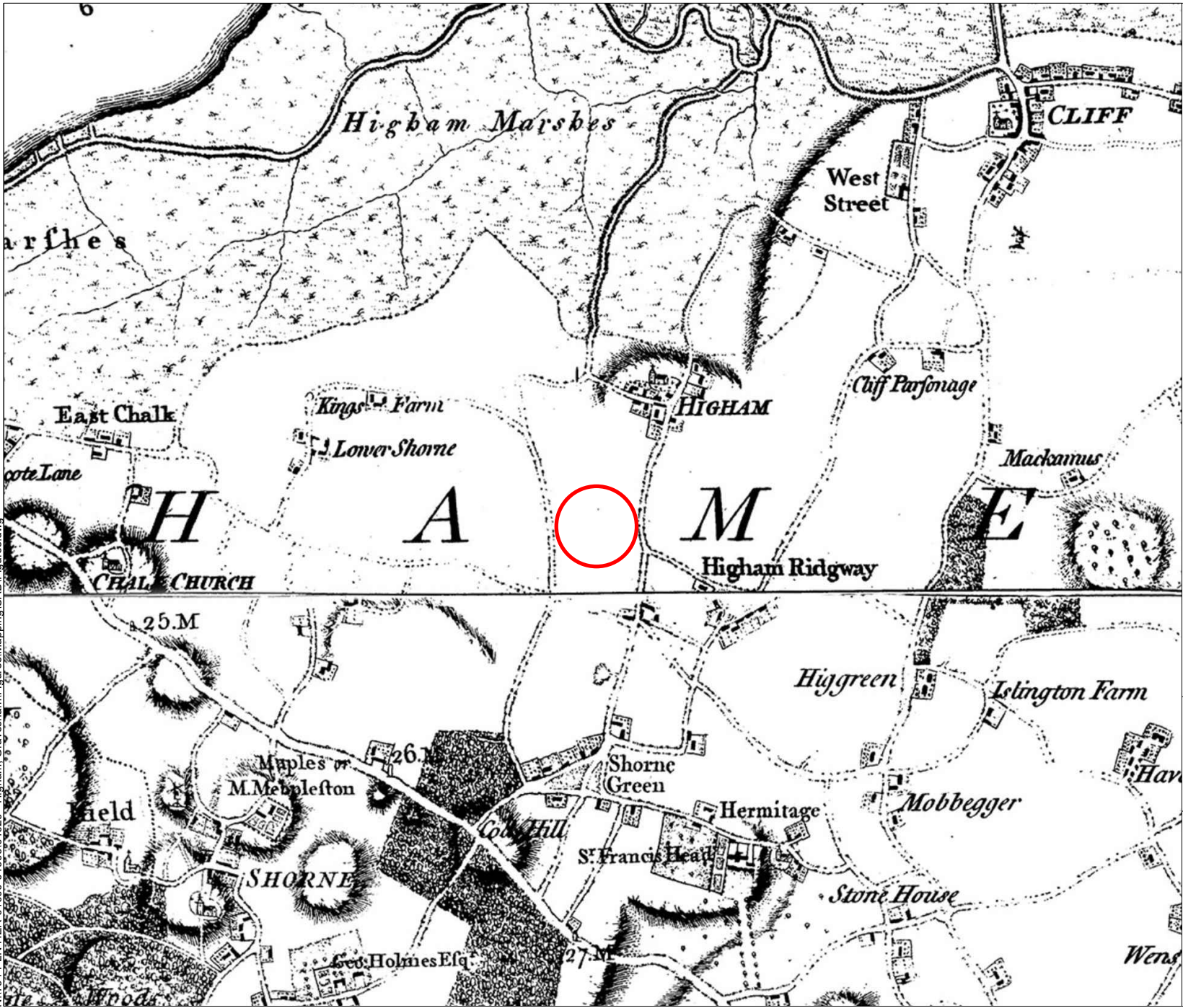


0 100 200m
Scale at A3: 1:8,000



Figure 2d

Archaeological Notification Areas
(data from Kent HER)



○ Site Location



Not to Scale
Illustrative Only



Figure 3
1769 Andrew & Dury's map of Kent

N:\704\PLN\HER-01000-01 999\01 629 - Higham, Gravesham\Figures\Mapping\CAD\Figures.dwg



○ Site Location

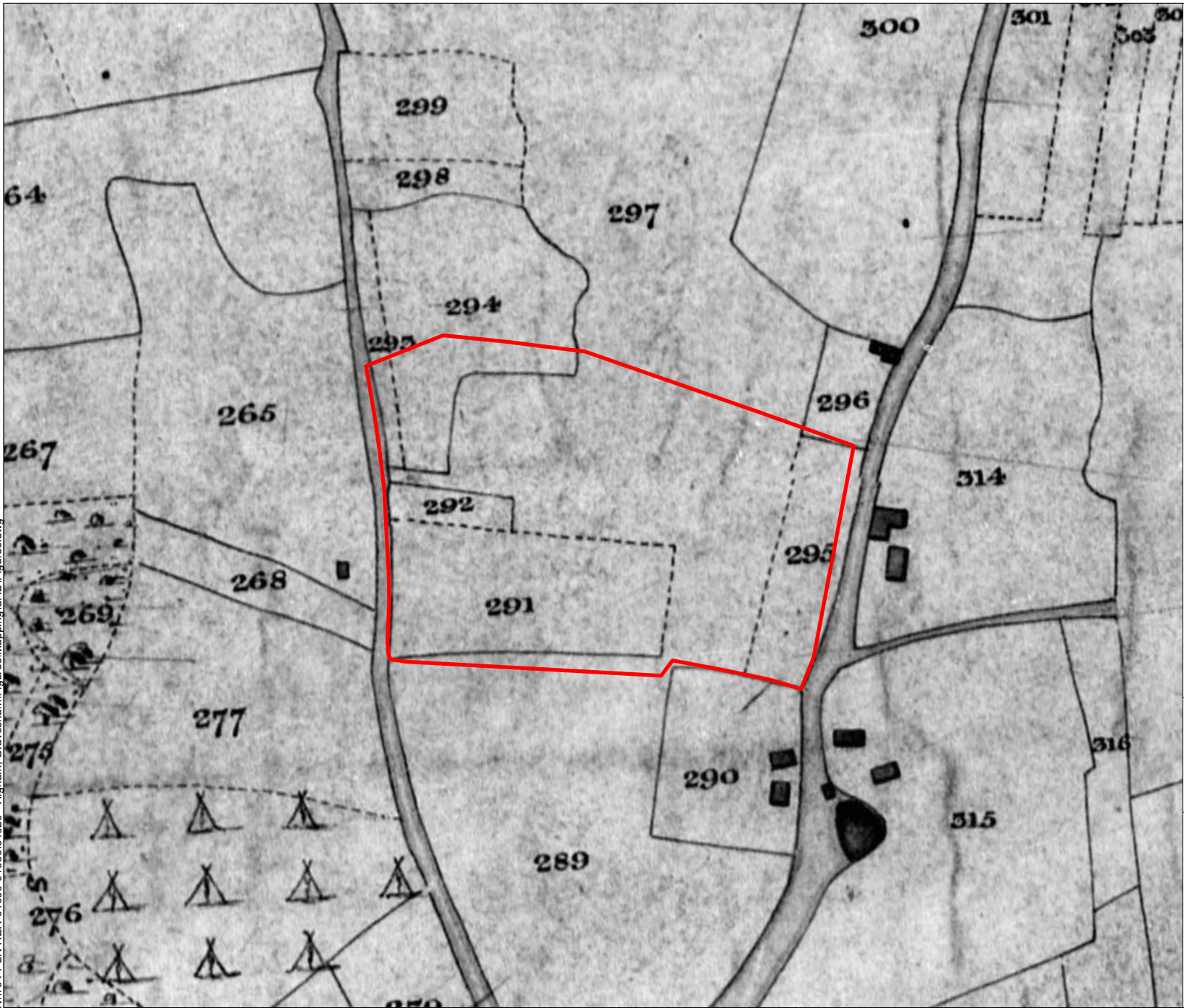


Not to Scale
Illustrative Only



Figure 4
1801 Faden's Map of Kent

N:\794-PLN-HER-01000-01999\01629 - Higham, Gravesham\Figures\Mapping\CAD\Figures.dwg



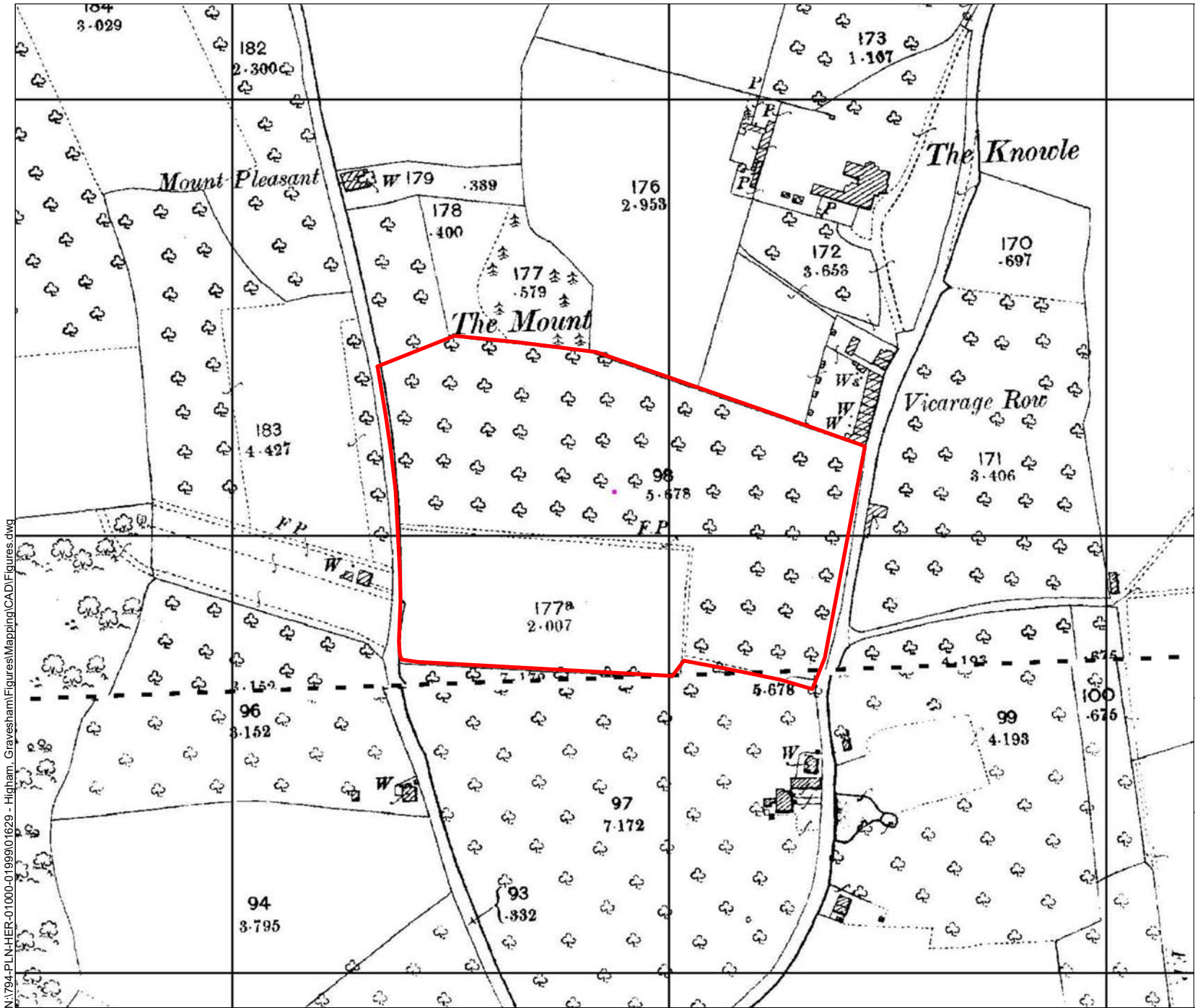
 Site Boundary



Not to Scale
Illustrative Only



Figure 5
Higham (Kent) Tithe map - 1841



 Site Boundary



0 25 50m
Scale at A4: 1:2,500

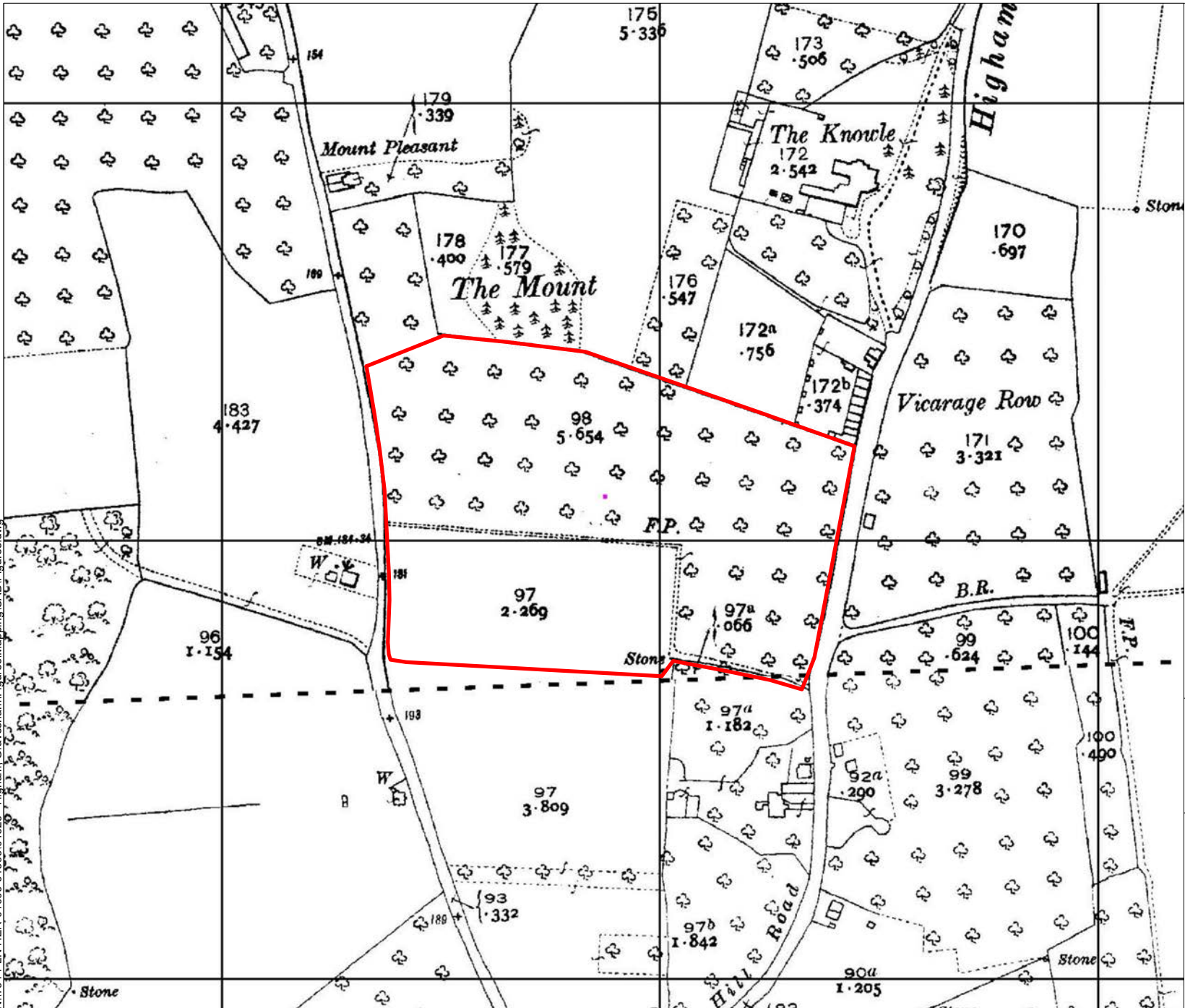


Figure 6

1896 Ordnance Survey

N:\704-PLN-HER-01000-01999\01629 - Higham, Gravesham\Figures\Mapping\CAD\Figures.dwg

N:\704\PLN-HER-01000-01\999\01629 - Higham, Gravesham\Figures\Mapping\CAD\Figures.dwg



 Site Boundary

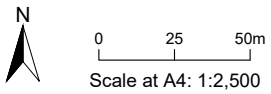
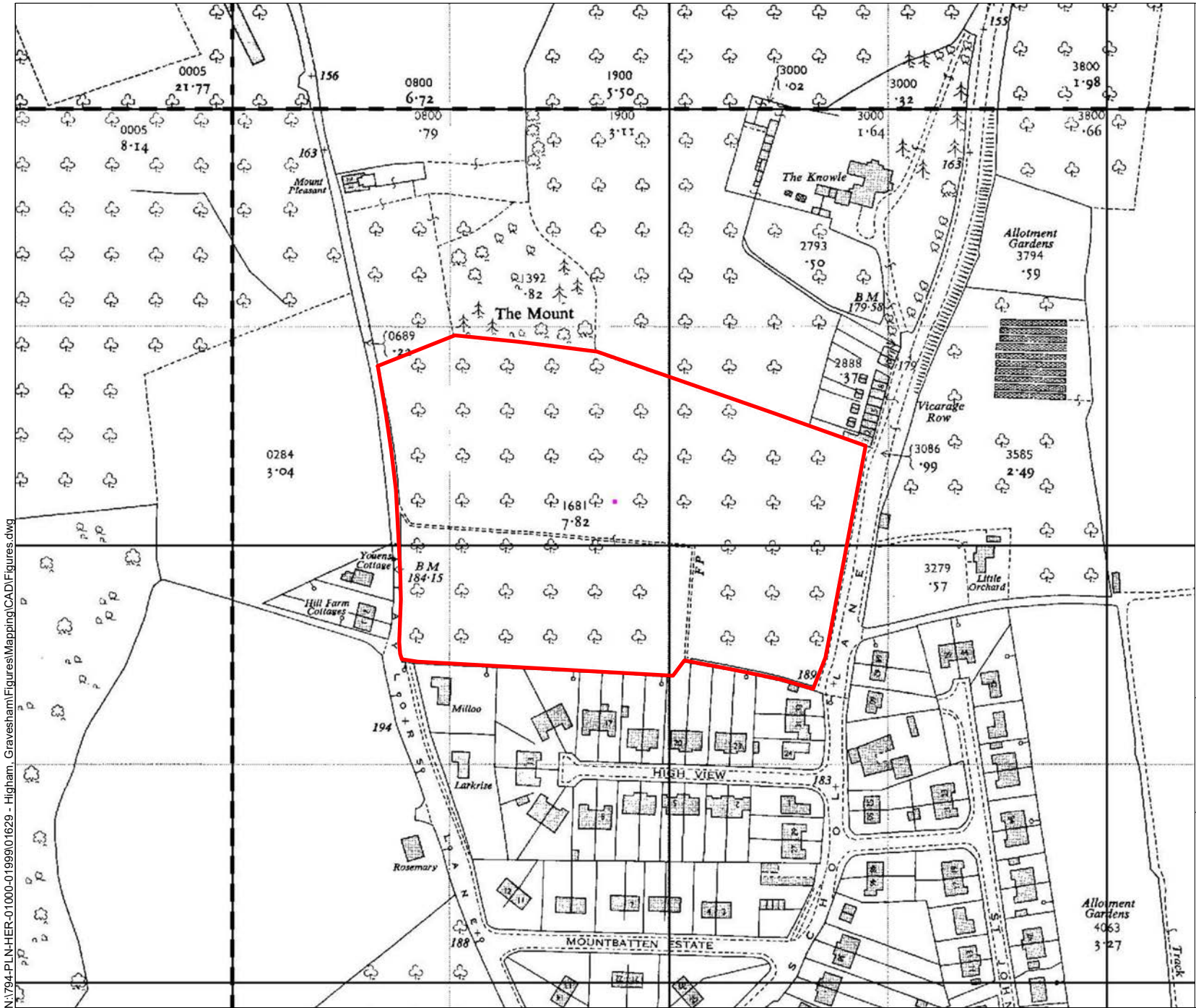


Figure 7
1933 Ordnance Survey



 Site Boundary



0 25 50m
Scale at A4: 1:2,500



Figure 8
1960 Ordnance Survey

N:\704-PLN-HER-01000-01999\01629 - Higham, Gravesham\Figures\Mapping\CAD\Figures.dwg



 Site Boundary

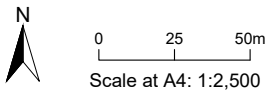


Figure 9
1960 Google Earth Aerial Image



 Site Boundary

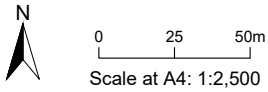
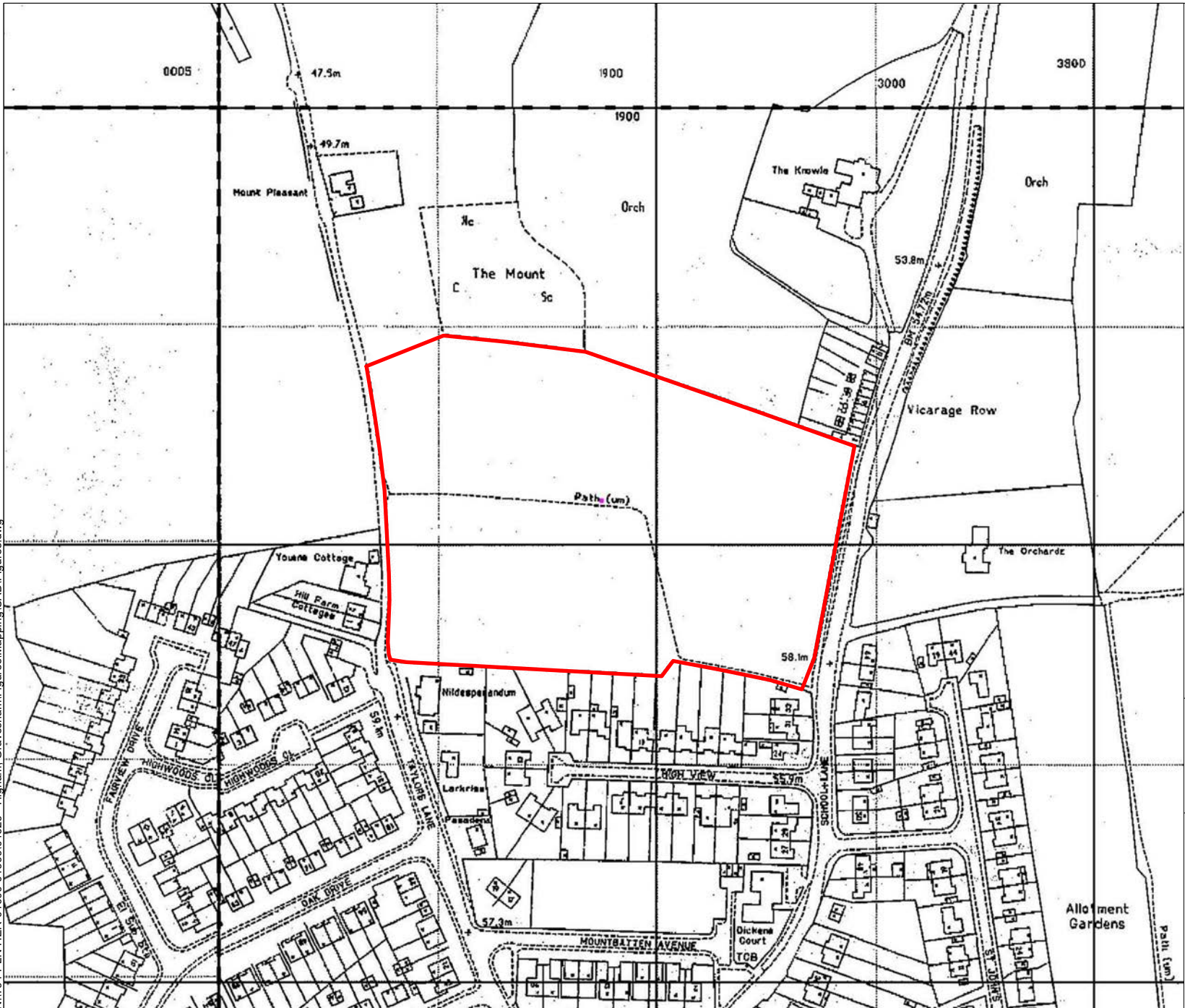


Figure 10
1990 Google Earth Aerial Image

N:\704-PLN-HER-01000-01999\01629 - Higham, Gravesham\Figures\Mapping\CAD\Figures.dwg



 Site Boundary

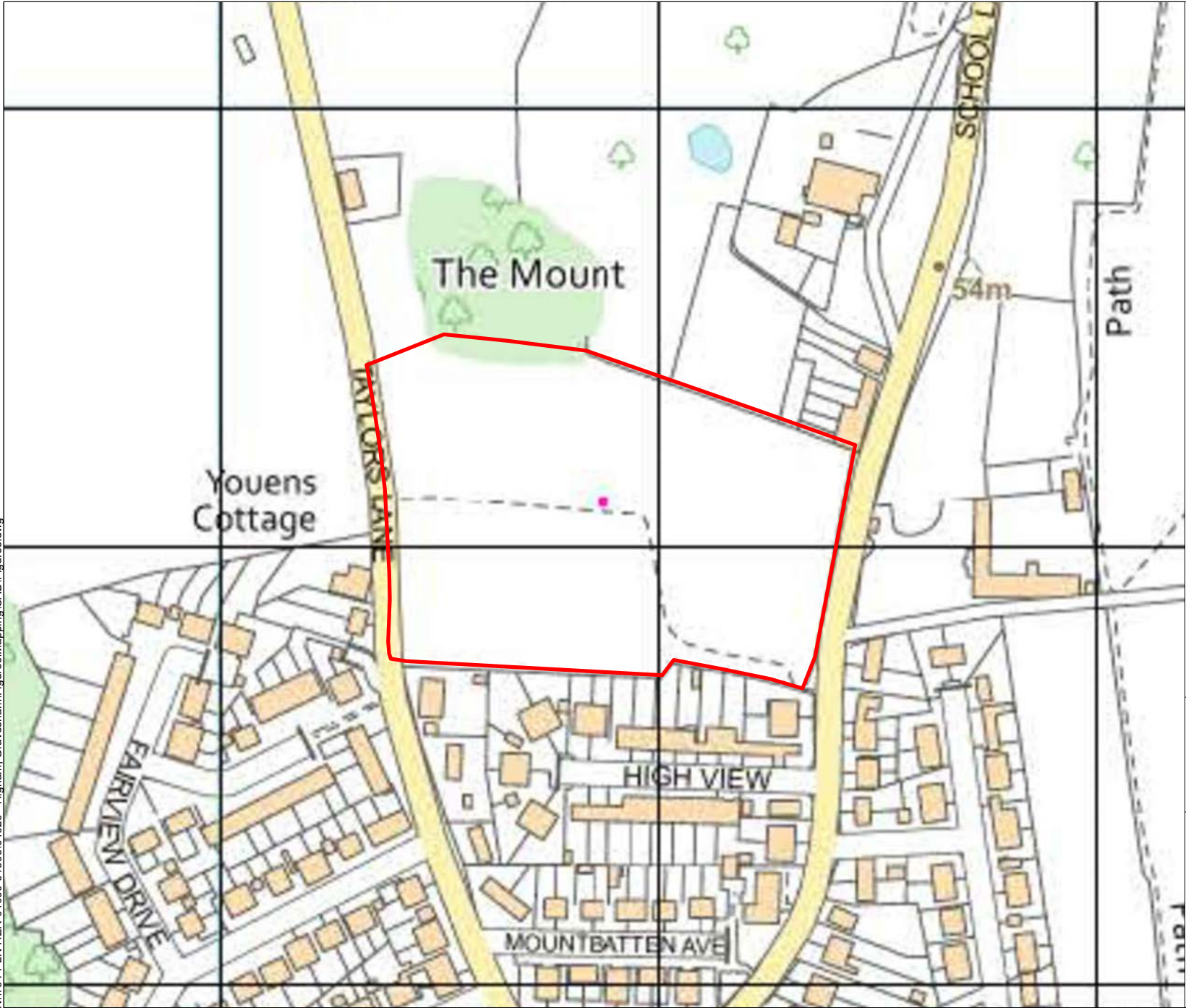


0 25 50m
Scale at A4: 1:2,500



Figure 11

1993 Ordnance Survey



 Site Boundary



0 25 50m
Scale at A4: 1:2,500



Figure 12

2024 Ordnance Survey

N:\794-PLN-HER-01000-01999\01629 - Higham, Gravesham\Figures\Mapping\CAD\Figures.dwg



 Site Boundary

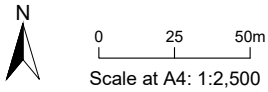


Figure 13
2024 Google Earth Aerial Image



Legend

 Site Boundary

LiDAR DATA

Source:
Environment Agency

Data Type: DTM

Resolution: 1m

Date Captured:
29/01/2018

Processing:
Multi-direction Hillshade overlaid on
simple Local Relief Model



0 25 50m
Scale at A3: 1:1,250



Figure 14

LiDAR Plot

Appendices

HER Monument Points

Record Type	Pref Ref	Name	Mon Type
BLD	TQ 77 SW 88	Higham station	RAILWAY STATION
MON	TQ 77 SW 74	Higham station lime kiln	LIME KILN
MON	TQ 77 SW 46	Occupation floor - cropmark	SETTLEMENT
MON	TQ 77 SW 45	Cropmark of pit(s)	PIT
MON	TQ 77 SW 41	Romano-British burial	BURIAL
MON	TQ 77 SW 32	Charles dickens' well	WELL
MON	TQ 77 SW 28	Curvilinear Feature, Pit, Cropmark	PIT; DITCH
MON	TQ 77 SW 25	Ring ditch	RING DITCH
MON	TQ 77 SW 24	Polygonal enclosed settlement - cropmark	ENCLOSED SETTLEMENT; TRACKWAY; DITCH; PIT; QUARRY?
MON	TQ 77 SW 195	Large enclosure revealed in cropmark north-west of higham	ENCLOSURE
FS	TQ 77 SW 186	Merovingian gold tremissis, Higham Upshire	FINDSPOT
MON	TQ 77 SW 177	Cropmarks of possible ridge and furrow	NARROW RIDGE AND FURROW?
MON	TQ 77 SW 175	Possible Barrow cemetery visible as crop marks	BARROW CEMETERY?
MON	TQ 77 SW 16	Poss Neolithic flint-working site (polished flint axe etc. fd. 1935)	LITHIC WORKING SITE
BLD	TQ 77 SW 118	Ebenezer Chapel, School Lane, Higham Upshire, Rochester	PLACE OF WORSHIP
BLD	TQ 77 SW 114	Oast house on the North side of Hermitage Road	OASTHOUSE
BLD	TQ 77 SW 1099	National School, School Lane, Higham, Rochester, Medway	NATIONAL SCHOOL
FS	TQ 77 SW 1062	Anglo-Saxon silver penny, near Higham	FINDSPOT
FS	TQ 77 SW 1061	Anglo-Saxon silver penny, near Higham	FINDSPOT
FS	TQ 77 SW 1060	Anglo-Saxon silver penny, near Higham	FINDSPOT
FS	TQ 77 SW 1059	Anglo-Saxon silver early penny ('sceat'), near Higham	FINDSPOT
FS	TQ 77 SW 1058	Anglo-Saxon silver penny, near Higham	FINDSPOT
BLD	TQ 77 SW 1053	Walmers Avenue Second World War garden air raid shelter, Higham, Kent	AIR RAID SHELTER
BLD	TQ 77 SW 1052	Home Farm Second World War Home Guard Battle Headquarters, Higham	BATTLE HEADQUARTERS
MON	TQ 77 SW 1050	Higham Hill First World War anti-aircraft battery, School Lane, Higham	ANTI AIRCRAFT BATTERY
MON	TQ 77 SW 1048	Waterworks Second World War Home Guard hut, School Lane, Higham	MILITARY HEADQUARTERS
BLD	TQ 77 SW 1046	Higham Working Men's Club Second World War First Aid Post	CIVIL DEFENCE BUILDING
BLD	TQ 77 SW 1044	The Knowle Second World War civil defence headquarters, School Lane, Higham	CIVIL DEFENCE BUILDING
MON	TQ 77 SW 1042	Upper Higham Second World War air raid siren	CIVIL DEFENCE BUILDING
BLD	TQ 77 SW 1041	Gadshill School Second World War air raid wardens post, Gravesend Road, Higham	AIR RAID WARDENS POST
FS	MKE95545	Medieval Copper alloy buckle	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE95513	Roman Copper alloy coin	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE95512	Post Medieval Copper alloy thimble	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE95459	Copper alloy socketed axehead	FINDSPOT
FRM	MKE88514	Outfarm west of Higham Hall	FARMSTEAD
FRM	MKE83443	Grove Farm	FARMSTEAD
FRM	MKE83250	Outfarm south west of Great Hermitage	FARMSTEAD
FRM	MKE83249	Farmstead west of Great Hermitage	FARMSTEAD
FRM	MKE83245	Farmstead north east of Gadshill	FARMSTEAD
FRM	MKE83244	Farmstead in Higham Upshire	FARMSTEAD
FRM	MKE83243	Outfarm in Higham Upshire	FARMSTEAD
FRM	MKE83242	Firtrees	FARMSTEAD
FRM	MKE83241	Farmstead in Higham Upshire	FARMSTEAD
FRM	MKE83240	Farmstead in Higham Upshire	FARMSTEAD
FRM	MKE83239	Outfarm north of Higham Upshire	FARMSTEAD
FRM	MKE83238	Farmstead north of Higham Upshire	FARMSTEAD
FRM	MKE83237	Post-medieval outfarm south east of Vicarage Row	FARMSTEAD
FRM	MKE83236	Post-medieval outfarm south of Vicarage Row	FARMSTEAD
FRM	MKE83235	Outfarm south west of White House Farm	FARMSTEAD
FRM	MKE83234	White House Farm	FARMSTEAD
FRM	MKE83233	Hill Farm (Highamhill)	FARMSTEAD
FRM	MKE83232	Higham Hall	FARMSTEAD
FS	MKE79642	Roman copper alloy coin	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE79641	silver coin	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE79640	copper alloy coin	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE79639	copper alloy coin	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE79638	silver coin	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE79637	copper alloy mount	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE79636	Roman copper alloy brooch	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE79635	Medieval copper alloy buckle	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE79634	Roman copper alloy brooch	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE79633	Early Medieval lead gaming piece	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE79632	Medieval lead token	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE79631	Post Medieval copper alloy ear ring	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE79630	copper alloy brooch	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE79629	Medieval copper alloy buckle	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE79628	Post Medieval copper alloy buckle	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE79626	Roman copper alloy coin	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE79623	Medieval copper alloy buckle	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE79621	copper alloy finger ring	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE79620	Roman lead alloy spindle whorl	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE79619	Roman lead alloy ingot	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE71714	Iron Age copper alloy coin	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE71713	Iron Age copper alloy coin	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE67490	Medieval silver coin	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE67377	Iron Age gold coin	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE67376	Iron Age silver coin	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE67368	Iron Age copper alloy coin	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE67363	Iron Age copper alloy coin	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE67109	Early Medieval copper alloy stirrup	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE67108	Medieval lead seal matrix	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE67107	Medieval lead seal matrix	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE67106	Post Medieval copper alloy bell	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE67105	Medieval copper alloy vessel	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE67104	Early Medieval copper alloy buckle	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE67103	Early Medieval copper alloy strap end	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE67102	Medieval copper alloy harness	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE66795	lead coin	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE66793	Roman copper alloy coin	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE66792	Neolithic flint lithic implement	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE66779	Roman copper alloy figurine	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE66778	Bronze Age socketed axehead	FINDSPOT

FS	MKE66739	Roman copper alloy coin	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE66699	Medieval lead ampulla	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE66665	Iron Age copper alloy coin	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE66615	Iron Age copper alloy bow brooch	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE66614	Bronze Age copper alloy socketed axehead	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE66612	Medieval lead seal matrix	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE66611	Medieval lead seal matrix	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE120917	Medieval Copper alloy Finger Ring	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE120915	Post Medieval Gold Finger Ring	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE120885	Bronze Age Copper alloy Palstave	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE120882	Modern Silver Pendant	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE120865	Roman Copper alloy Coin	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE113297	Iron Age silver coin	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE113296	Post Medieval copper alloy coin	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE113295	Post Medieval copper alloy jetton	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE113290	Medieval silver coin	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE113263	Modern silver button	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE113260	Post Medieval copper alloy coin	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE110608	Iron Age copper alloy brooch	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE110601	Iron Age copper alloy brooch	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE110593	Roman copper alloy coin	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE110583	Post Medieval copper alloy coin	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE110582	Medieval silver coin	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE110574	Neolithic flint knife	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE110555	Roman copper alloy pendant	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE110554	Roman copper alloy hair pin	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE110553	Post Medieval copper alloy whistle	FINDSPOT
FS	MKE110549	Medieval copper alloy harness mount	FINDSPOT

HER Monument Lines

Record Type	Pref Ref	Name	Mon Type
MON	TQ 67 SE 20	Thames and Medway Canal	CANAL
MON	TQ 57 SE 277	NORTH KENT RAILWAY	RAILWAY

HER Monument Polygons

Record Type	Pref Ref	Name	Mon Type
MON	TQ 77 SW 203	Remains of a post medieval field boundary can be seen on lidar taken in 2007. This bank is situated to the west of The Mount at Higham	FIELD BOUNDARY
MON	TQ 77 SW 203	A group of earthworks of uncertain date can be seen in Court Wood on lidar taken in 2007	BANK (EARTHWORK); DITCH; HOLLOW WAY
MON	TQ 77 SW 202	Earthwork remains of a post medieval field boundary, The Mount	FIELD BOUNDARY
MON	TQ 77 SW 201	The cropmark of a probable post medieval field boundary ditch, east of Higham	FIELD BOUNDARY; DITCH
MON	TQ 77 SW 201	The cropmark of a probable post medieval field boundary ditch, east of Higham	FIELD BOUNDARY; DITCH
MON	TQ 77 SW 176	System of enclosures aligned along a drove way running north-south	ENCLOSURE; POST HOLE?; TRACKWAY
MON	TQ 77 SW 174	The cropmarks of a possible Iron Age or Roman enclosure	RECTILINEAR ENCLOSURE?; PIT
MON	TQ 77 SW 14	Church of St Giles and the deserted medieval village of Merston?	DESERTED SETTLEMENT; CHURCH
MON	TQ 77 SW 1156	A group of linear cropmarks of uncertain date can be seen on aerial photograph taken in 2004	DITCH
MON	TQ 77 SW 1155	The cropmarks of a group of ditched features east of Higham can be seen on aerial photographs taken in 2004	DITCH?; DROVE ROAD?
MON	TQ 77 SW 1150	Cropmark of a possible post medieval ditch or hollow way	HOLLOW WAY; DITCH
MON	TQ 77 SW 1139	Possible plough-levelled Bronze Age round barrow located on the south-western side of Dusty Hill	ROUND BARROW
MON	TQ 77 SW 1138	Cropmark remains of a large spread of chalk 26m x 39m, possibly a plough-levelled Bronze Age round barrow, south-west of Dusty Hill	ROUND BARROW
MON	TQ 77 SW 1086	Wood bank enclosures, Court Wood	ENCLOSURE

HER Event Points

EvUID	Record Type	Name	Event Types
EKE8760	INT	Watching brief at Gad's Hill School	WATCHING BRIEF
EKE4166	INT	CHURCH STREET	
EKE4165	INT	ST GILES, MERSTON	
EKE12365	NON	Desk based assessment of Gads Hill School, Higham	DESK BASED ASSESSMENT
EKE11991	INT	Watching brief at White House Farm, Higham	

HER Event Lines

EvUID	Record Type	Name	Event Types
EKE12218	NON	Desk based assessment of the Thames and Medway Canal	DESK BASED ASSESSMENT
EWX8094	NON	North Kent Coast Rapid Coastal Zone Assessment Survey Phase II: Field Assessment (Pilot)	PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY
EWX8626	NON	Survey, North Kent Coastal Zone: Phase II, Year Two	FIELD OBSERVATION (VISUAL ASSESSMENT)

HER Event Polygons

EvUID	Record Type	Name	Event Types
EKE8433	INT	Watching brief along the Wainscott Medway Northern Link	WATCHING BRIEF
EKE17318	NON	Magnetometry survey along route of Grain to Gravesend gas pipeline	MAGNETOMETRY SURVEY
EKE17316	NON	Fieldwalking programme: Grain to Shorne Gas Pipeline	SYSTEMATIC FIELDWALKING SURVEY
EKE17269	NON	Desk-based assessment (component of Environmental Statement): Grain to Shorne Gas Pipeline	DESK BASED ASSESSMENT
EKE15663	INT	Archaeological Watching Brief at Gads Hill School, Higham, Kent	WATCHING BRIEF
EKE15400	NON	Hoo Peninsula, North Kent Coast, Thames Estuary:45 A Palaeoenvironmental Review of the Development of the Peninsula	DESK BASED ASSESSMENT
EKE15021	NON	Hoo Peninsula, Kent. Hoo Peninsula Historic Landscape Project	Historic Landscape Assessment
EKE15020	NON	Hoo Peninsula, Kent. Hoo Peninsula Historic Landscape Project	AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE; AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH INTERPRETATION; AIRBORNE LASER SCANNING (LIDAR) SURVEY
EKE14761	INT	Archaeological survey of mineral extraction sites around the Thames Estuary	
EKE13337	INT	Test pitting as part of a Palaeoenvironmental Evaluation, Isle of Grain (2008)	TEST PIT
EKE13239	NON	Historic landscape characterisation and historic seascape characterisation, Hoo Peninsula Historic Landscape Project	HISTORIC SEASCAPE CHARACTERISATION; HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION
EKE10278	NON	Historic Environment of the North Kent Coast: Rapid Coastal Zone Assessment Survey Phase 1, 1999-2000	DESK BASED ASSESSMENT

