



Archaeological Desk Based Assessment

Blackthorne Farm,
Culverstone Green,
Kent

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Non-Technical Summary

This archaeological desk-based assessment has been prepared by HCUK Group, on behalf of Esquire Developments Ltd, to inform proposals for the construction of up to 100 residential dwellings as well as associated landscaping and installation of services at Blackthorne Farm, Culverstone Green, Kent (centred at NGR: TQ 63761 63416).

The assessment has confirmed that the Site contains no designated archaeological assets such as scheduled monuments or registered battlefields. The assessment identified 26 archaeological monument records, documented on the Kent County Council Historic Environment Record (KHER) within the 1km study area radius.

Based on information held by the KHER, supplemented by historic mapping, LiDAR and Satellite Imagery and documentary research it has been determined that there is a high potential for remains dating to the Post Medieval and Modern period and a low potential for archaeological remains dating to the Prehistoric, Roman, Early Medieval, and Medieval periods to be identified within the Site.

There is a paucity of evidence for remains dating to the Prehistoric, Roman, Early Medieval and Medieval periods. This is likely exacerbated by a lack of previous archaeological investigations within the study area.

Historic map regression shows the presence of former field boundaries within the Site. The Site itself has changed little from at least the mid-19th century to the present day. The Site visit conducted as part of this assessment also identified the remains of a probable former quarry in the northern part of the woodland within the Site, though the date of it is uncertain.

The scope of any further archaeological works that would be needed in advance or during development of the Site would need to be discussed and agreed with the nominated archaeological advisor to the local planning authority.

1. Introduction

Background

1.1 This archaeological desk-based assessment has been prepared by James Danter ACIfA of HCUK Group on behalf of Esquire Developments Ltd. The proposed development is for the construction of up to 100 residential dwellings as well as associated landscaping and installation of services (Appendix 1).

1.2 The site in question is known as Blackthorne Farm, Culverstone Green, Kent (Figure 1), occupying an area of c.5.46ha and centred at NGR TQ 63761 63416. It is hereafter referred to as the Site.

1.3 By way of introduction, the Site is formed of several fields utilised as paddocks for horses, stabling, a gravelled area for exercising the horses, an area of woodland, and an access track leading from Wrotham Road to the west of the Site.

1.4 The purpose of this assessment is to determine and assess the archaeological potential of the Site and to assess the significance of any relevant heritage assets identified. The report is informed by site inspection, historical information, and by data relating to heritage assets. It seeks to provide sufficient information to allow an informed understanding of the potential impact of the proposed development on the significance of those assets, and to consider the need for solutions (design, engineering etc) where necessary. The report will not address designated or non-designated built heritage.

1.5 The report considers heritage assets of archaeological interest, including finds/findspots of artefactual and ecofactual material (e.g. stone tools, bone), and locations, features or objects referenced from historic documents. Where appropriate, it refers to archaeological and palaeoenvironmental deposits, including sub-surface archaeological remains of features, buildings and structures.

1.6 This assessment has been prepared in accordance with Standards and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment¹ published by the Chartered Institute

¹ CIIfA 2022

for Archaeologists (CIIfA). It takes into account the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and other local planning policy and guidance where relevant.

1.7 This desk-based assessment comprises an examination of digital data held by the Kent Historic Environment Record (KHER) together with documentary research. It incorporates a map regression indicating the impact of change over time.

1.8 This data has been collected for an area comprising a 1km radius of the Site boundary, which is referred to as the 'study area'. This radius has been selected on the basis of professional judgment as being sufficient to determine the archaeological potential of the Site, taking into account its location, topography, and character.

Geology and Topography

1.9 The British Geological Survey identifies the underlying solid geology across the majority of the Site as being Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation, Seaford Chalk Formation and Newhaven Chalk Formation – Chalk and which is a sedimentary bedrock formed between 93.9 and 72.1 million years ago during the Cretaceous period. This is overlain by a superficial deposit of Clay-with-flints Formation – Clay, silt, sand and gravel which is a sedimentary superficial deposit formed between 23.03 million and 11.8 thousand years ago during the Neogene and Quaternary periods.

1.10 The easternmost field within the Site is recorded as having an underlying solid geology of Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation – Chalk. No overlying superficial deposit is recorded for this area.²

1.11 The soils of the Site are classified as being within the Soilscape 8 class which is described as being 'slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage'.³

1.12 The Site slopes gradually from west (166m aOD) to east except for the easternmost field which slopes sharply to the east (147m aOD) where there is a valley.

² British Geological Survey. 2025.

³ Cranfield University. 2025.

Site Visit

1.13 A site visit/walkover was undertaken on 27th March 2025 in clear, sunny conditions and with good visibility.

1.14 Photographs taken on the site visit:



Photograph 1: View south showing the easternmost field within the Site.



Photograph 2: View north showing the easternmost field within the Site.



Photograph 3: View east showing the southern boundary of the eastern field within the Site.



Photograph 4: View south showing the southernmost field within the Site.



Photograph 5: View south-east showing the southernmost field within the Site.



Photograph 6: View north showing the southernmost field within the Site.



Photograph 7: View east showing one of the stable blocks within the Site.



Photograph 8: View north-east showing one of the stable blocks within the Site.



Photograph 9: View north-east within the strip of woodland strip in the Site.



Photograph 10: View north-west showing a derelict agricultural structure in the northern part of the woodland area.



Photograph 11: View north showing the derelict quarry within the northern part of the woodland area.



Photograph 12: View south showing the exercise area for horses in the central part of the Site. Note the gravel area in the back left of the photograph (in front of the buildings).



Photograph 13: View west showing the access track leading from Wrotham Road.



Photograph 14: View north showing the southern field in the western part of the Site.



Photograph 15: View north-west showing the southern field in the western part of the Site.



Photograph 16: View south showing the northern field in the western part of the Site.



Photograph 17: View south-west showing the northern field in the western part of the Site.



Photograph 18: View west showing the northern field in the western part of the Site.



Photograph 19: View north showing the north-western part of the Site.



Photograph 20: View north-west showing the partially extant field boundary in the northern part of the Site.



Photograph 21: View north-east showing an east-west linear depression in the northern part of the Site.



Photograph 22: View south-east showing a stable building in the central part of the Site.



Photograph 23: View east showing a steel agricultural building in the central part of the Site.

2. Methodology

Sources

2.1 In preparing this assessment we have compiled readily available archaeological and historical information from documentary and cartographic sources, primarily:

- Kent HER for known archaeological sites, monuments and findspots within 1km of the Site (i.e. the study area).
- Maps and documents held by Kent Record Office and online.
- The British Geological Survey (BGS) onshore digital maps at 1:50 000 scale.
- Soils Survey of England and Wales.
- The National Heritage List for England (Historic England).
- Air photographs held by Historic England and other sources.
- Other relevant books, journals and grey literature reports that were identified in the course of the data collection.
- LiDAR data.

2.2 The information gathered from the above sources has been verified and augmented as far as possible by assessment and site inspection, in order to arrive at conclusions on the significance of the various heritage assets and archaeological remains that have been identified.

Assessment

2.3 The assessment seeks to understand and define the significance of heritage assets identified from the sources above, taking into account the categories of special interest defined in the NPPF, primarily archaeological interest, historic interest, architectural interest and artistic interest.

2.4 The importance of a heritage asset is the overall value assigned to it based on its heritage significance, reflecting its statutory designation or, in the case of undesignated assets, the professional judgement of the assessor (Table 1).

Table 1: Criteria for Assessing the Importance of Heritage Assets

Importance of the asset	Criteria
Very high	World Heritage Sites and other assets of equal international importance
High	Grade I and II* Registered Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Monuments, Protected Wreck Sites, Registered Battlefields, Grade I and II* Listed Buildings, and undesignated heritage assets of equal importance
Medium	Conservation Areas, Grade II Registered Parks and Gardens, Grade II Listed Buildings, heritage assets on local lists and undesignated assets of equal importance
Low	Undesignated heritage assets of lesser importance

2.5 The assessment also considers change to the setting and significance of heritage assets, where appropriate.

Archaeological Potential

2.6 The report includes:

- an assessment of the archaeological potential of the Site,
- an assessment of the significance of any archaeological remains that may be present, and
- an assessment of the likely effects of the proposed development on heritage assets, both in terms of physical impact and (where relevant) change to setting.

3. Relevant Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Framework

3.1 The significance of a heritage asset is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2025 as being made up of four main constituents, architectural interest, historical interest, archaeological interest and artistic interest.

3.2 Paragraph 216 of the NPPF describes the approach to be taken towards non-designated heritage assets, as follows:

"The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset."

3.3 Footnote 75 of the NPPF, which is attached to paragraph 213, states that "Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets." Further guidance on non-designated heritage assets is contained in National Planning Practice Guidance, as revised in July 2019, notably paragraph 040 which states that "Irrespective of how they are identified, it is important that the decisions to identify them as non-designated heritage assets are based on sound evidence", and paragraph 041 which in full reads as follows:

"What are non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest and how important are they?

The National Planning Policy Framework identifies two categories of non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest:

(1) Those that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments and are therefore considered subject to the same policies as those for designated heritage assets (National Planning Policy Framework footnote 63). They are of 3 types:

those that have yet to be formally assessed for designation.

those that have been assessed as being nationally important and therefore, capable of designation, but which the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has exercised his/her discretion not to designate.

those that are incapable of being designated by virtue of being outside the scope of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 because of their physical nature.

The reason why many nationally important monuments are not scheduled is set out in the document Scheduled Monuments, published by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. Information on location and significance of such assets is found in the same way as for all heritage assets. Judging whether sites fall into this category may be assisted by reference to the criteria for scheduling monuments. Further information on scheduled monuments can be found on the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport's website.

(2) Other non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest. By comparison this is a much larger category of lesser heritage significance, although still subject to the conservation objective. On occasion the understanding of a site may change following assessment and evaluation prior to a planning decision and move it from this category to the first.

Where an asset is thought to have archaeological interest, the potential knowledge which may be unlocked by investigation may be harmed even by minor disturbance, because the context in which archaeological evidence is found is crucial to furthering understanding.

Decision-making regarding such assets requires a proportionate response by local planning authorities. Where an initial assessment indicates that the site on which development is proposed includes or has potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, applicants should be required to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation. However, it is estimated that following the initial assessment of archaeological interest only a small proportion – around 3% – of all planning applications justify a requirement for detailed assessment.”

3.4 Paragraph 218 of the NPPF also makes provision for the recording of heritage assets that are likely to be demolished or destroyed by development.

Relevant Local Policies

3.5 The following local policies are relevant to the historic environment and this assessment. The Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy which sets out the planning framework for the area, this was adopted in September 2014.⁴

⁴ Gravesham District Council. 2014.

Table 2: Local Policies

Local Plan	Relevant Policy
<p>Gravesend Local Plan Core Strategy 2014</p>	<p>Policy CS20: Heritage and the Historic Environment</p> <p>5.16.10 The Council will accord a high priority towards the preservation, protection and enhancement of its heritage and historic environment as a non-renewable resource, central to the regeneration of the area and the reinforcement of sense of place. Particular attention in this regard will be focused on those heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. Securing viable, sustainable and appropriate futures for such assets at risk will need to be reconciled with the sensitivity to change that many present.</p> <p>5.16.11 Proposals and initiatives will be supported which preserve and, where appropriate, enhance the significance of the Borough's heritage assets, their setting where it contributes to the significance of the asset and their interpretation and enjoyment, especially where these contribute to the distinct identity of the Borough. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gravesend Town Centre, its development as a heritage riverside town, and its setting; • The Borough's urban and rural conservation areas; and • Surviving built features and archaeology relating to the Borough's maritime, military, industrial and transport history. <p>5.16.12 When considering the impact of a proposed development on a designated heritage asset, the weight that will be given to the asset's conservation value will be commensurate with the importance and significance of the asset. For non-designated assets, decisions will have regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.</p>

4. Archaeological Background

Introduction

4.1 There are no designated archaeological monuments, such as scheduled monuments or registered battlefields within the Site or wider 1km radius study area.

4.2 There are 26 archaeological monuments recorded on the KHER within the 1km study area, of which none are within the Site itself. (Figure 3)

4.3 The KHER contains records of one previous archaeological investigation within the 1km study area, but which was not within the Site itself. (Figure 4)

4.4 Assessment of potential impacts to non-designated or designated heritage assets of the built environment such as standing buildings are outside the scope of this archaeological assessment.

Timescales

4.5 Timescales used in this assessment:

Table 3: Timescales

Period	Approximate date	
Palaeolithic –	c.450,000 – 12,000 BC	Prehistoric
Mesolithic –	c. 12,000 – 4000 BC	
Neolithic –	c.4000 – 1800 BC	
Bronze Age –	c.1800 – 600 BC	
Iron Age –	c.600 BC – AD 43	
Roman (Romano-British) –	AD 43 – c. AD 410	Historic
Saxon / Early Medieval –	c. AD 410 – AD 1066	
Medieval –	1066 – 1485	
Post Medieval Period –	1485 – 1901	
Modern –	1901 – Present	

Designated Archaeological Monuments

4.6 There are no designated archaeological monuments (scheduled monuments) within the Site or 1km study area .

Scheduled Monuments

4.7 There are no Scheduled Monuments recorded within the 1km study area.

Registered Parks and Gardens

4.8 There are no Registered Parks and Gardens recorded within the 1km study area.

Listed Buildings

4.9 There are five Listed Buildings recorded within the 1km study area.

4.10 These constitute five Grade II listed buildings.

Non-Designated Archaeological Monuments

4.11 There are 26 non-designated archaeological assets within the 1km study area.

Prehistoric

4.12 The KHER holds records for one monument of Prehistoric date within the 1km study area, and which is not within the Site itself.

Table 4: Prehistoric monuments recorded on the KHER within the 1km of the Site.

Reference Number	Name/Description	Monument Type	Period
MKE58831	Iron Age copper alloy coin	Findspot	Prehistoric

Palaeolithic

4.13 The earliest phase of the Prehistoric period is the Palaeolithic. This is considered the earliest known period of human culture and evidence from this period often consists of lithic scatters, found within river gravels and terraces. In approximately 46,000BC, during the Anglian Glaciation, there were major variations in climate which affected where people settled. During the beginning of the Upper Palaeolithic (30,000-10,000 BC) Britain was still connected to Europe. The superficial geology of

the Site (clay-with-flint) is recorded as spanning into the Quaternary period and, therefore, has the potential to contain Palaeolithic artefacts within. No finds of Palaeolithic date are known within the Site or study area.

Mesolithic

4.14 During the subsequent Mesolithic period the ice sheets had receded, temperatures and sea-levels were rising, and Britain was still connected to the continent by land bridge. The hunter-gatherers who utilised the area were highly mobile, and due to the changing conditions often only settled seasonally. Finds from this period tend to come in the form of stray finds within disturbed deposits, and *in situ* settlement sites are a rare find. The superficial geology of the Site (clay-with-flint) is recorded as spanning into the Quaternary period and, therefore, has the potential to contain Mesolithic artefacts within. No finds of Mesolithic date are known within the Site or study area.

Neolithic

4.15 The subsequent Neolithic period in Britain is characterised by the advent of farming practices which signal a move away from the more itinerant hunter-gatherer type lifestyle of preceding periods. Although farming encouraged a more permanently, or at least seasonally, settled landscape during this period, this practice was still supplemented by the gathering and hunting of food in the wild. No finds of Neolithic date are known within the Site or study area.

Bronze Age & Iron Age

4.16 The Bronze Age saw a continuation of the shift towards more permanent settlement and with much less hunter-gatherer type activity. Funerary monuments such as round barrows begin to be constructed on a larger and more frequent scale and the advent of bronze metalworking saw a technological revolution which permeated into many aspects of people's lives. The subsequent Iron Age continued the trends of the preceding periods. The only find dating to this period is a Portable Antiquities Scheme findspot relating to a Late Iron Age coin (MKE58831) c.880m to the north of the Site. As this is an unstratified find this could have been lost whilst someone was passing through the area as opposed to being definitive evidence for settlement.

4.17 Due to a paucity of archaeological remains associated with the Prehistoric period, it is considered that there is a low potential for remains to be encountered, and such remains would be considered to be of *low (local) importance*. This may partly be a result of a lack of previous archaeological investigation within the study area.

Roman

4.18 The KHER holds records for two monuments of Roman date within the 1km study area, and which is not within the Site itself.

Table 5: Roman monuments recorded on the KHER within the 1km of the Site.

Reference Number	Name/Description	Monument Type	Period
MKE79884	Roman copper alloy coin	Findspot	Roman
MKE79885	Roman copper alloy coin	Findspot	Roman

4.19 There is a dearth of Roman activity recorded within the study area. Two copper alloy coins (MKE79884, MKE79885) c.945m to the west of the Site. In much the same way as the evidence for Prehistoric activity, these finds are unstratified and may not be taken as direct evidence for occupation within the area.

4.20 Due to a paucity of archaeological remains associated with the Roman period, it is considered that there is a low potential for remains to be encountered, and such remains would be considered to be of *low (local) importance*. This may partly be a result of a lack of previous archaeological investigation within the study area.

Early Medieval

4.21 The KHER holds no records for monuments of Early Medieval date within the 1km study area, or from within the Site itself.

4.22 During this period the Site at Culverstone Green was part of the parish of Meopham. The etymology of Meopham has its origins in the Early Medieval period and roughly translates to 'Meapa's Village'.⁵ In 940 AD, Meopham was given to

⁵ English Historical Society. 1839. pp. 183

Canterbury Cathedral by King Athelstan.⁶ The 1086 Domesday Survey for Meopham shows that, at the time of the 1066 Norman Conquest, the land was still in the possession of Canterbury Cathedral and was valued at £15,10s.⁷

4.23 Due to a paucity of archaeological remains associated with the Early Medieval period, it is considered that there is a low potential for remains to be encountered, and such remains would be considered to be of *low (local) importance*. This may partly be a result of a lack of previous archaeological investigation within the study area.

Medieval

4.24 The KHER holds records for two monuments of Medieval date within the 1km study area, of which neither are within the Site itself.

Table 6: Medieval monuments recorded on the KHER within the 1km of the Site.

Reference Number	Name/Description	Monument Type	Period
MKE27747	Merryweather	Site; Cross Passage House; Timber Framed House; Lobby Entry House;	Medieval
MKE79648	Medieval copper alloy seal matrix	Findspot	Medieval

4.25 The 1086 Domesday Survey shows that Meopham was a relatively large settlement of 113 households within an area of 3600 acres of ploughed land, 16 acres of meadow, woodland supporting 20 pigs and one church. Its annual value to Canterbury Cathedral was £26, 18s.⁸

4.26 The EHRS only records two monuments of Medieval date within the study area. One relates to an unstratified find of a copper alloy seal matrix (MKE79648) c.800m to the east of the Site and the other relates to the Late Medieval timber-framed house at Merryweather (MKE27747) c.910m to the north-east of the Site. It is likely that

⁶ <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-kent/vol3/pp356-367>

⁷ <https://opendomesday.org/place/TQ6466/meopham/>

⁸ <https://opendomesday.org/place/TQ6466/meopham/>

the Site formed part of the agricultural hinterland of the village of Meopham during this period, or that it was characterised by woodland. The manor remained in the possession of Canterbury Cathedral until the dissolution of the monasteries in 1540.

4.27 Due to a paucity of archaeological remains associated with the Medieval period, it is considered that there is a low potential for remains to be encountered, and such remains would be considered to be of *low (local) importance*. This may partly be a result of a lack of previous archaeological investigation within the study area. If remains were to be found then they would likely be of agricultural origin such as ridge and furrow farming remains.

Post Medieval & Modern

4.28 The KHER holds records for 19 monuments of Post Medieval and Modern date within the 1km study area, of which none are within the Site itself.

Table 7: Post Medieval and Modern monuments recorded on the KHER within the 1km of the Site.

Reference Number	Name/Description	Monument Type	Period
MKE27707	Ivy House	Site; Timber Framed House; House; Stable; Kitchen	Post Medieval
MKE27713	Owls Castle Barn	Site; Aisled Barn; Timber Framed Barn	Post Medieval
MKE27762	Owls Castle	House; Hall House; Timber Framed House; Inn	Post Medieval
MKE30732	Black Cottage Farmhouse	Site; Timber Framed House; House	Post Medieval
MKE84186	Ivy House post-medieval farmstead	Farmstead	Post Medieval
MKE84187	Black Cottage Farm	Farmstead	Post Medieval
MKE84188	South Street Farm	Farmstead	Post Medieval
MKE84189	Rockley House	Farmstead	Post Medieval
MKE84190	Owls Castle (Cook's Farm)	Farmstead	Post Medieval
MKE84191	Post Medieval farmstead south of Rockley House	Farmstead	Post Medieval
MKE84192	Farmstead south west of Owls Castle	Farmstead	Post Medieval
MKE84193	Culverstone Manor Farm (Upper Goose Farm)	Farmstead	Post Medieval
MKE84239	Merryweather	Farmstead	Post Medieval
MKE84240	Post Medieval outfarm in Upper Harvel	Farmstead	Post Medieval

MKE88566	Post Medieval farmstead south east of New Street Farm	Farmstead	Post Medieval
MKE88573	Outfarm north of Black Cottage Farm	Farmstead	Post Medieval
MKE110571	Post Medieval copper alloy bell	Findspot	Post Medieval
MKE117214	Former oasthouse Black Cottage Farm, New Street Road, New Ash Green, Sevenoaks	Oasthouse	Post Medieval
MKE89885	Crash site of Messerschmitt Bf110C-4	Aircraft Crash Site; Me110	Modern

4.29 The manor remained in the possession of Canterbury Cathedral until the dissolution of the monasteries in 1540 before being settled two years later onto the new dean and chapter of Canterbury in whose possession much of the parish continued until into the 19th century.⁹

4.30 The settlement at Culverstone Green appears to have begun to develop in the early 19th century and several buildings from this period survive including Rockley House (MKE84189) c.50m to the west of the Site, and a farmstead (MKE84191) c.40m to the west of the Site. All other Post Medieval and Modern monument records within the 1km study area are considered not to contribute further to the archaeological potential of the Site. Therefore historic mapping has been analysed to further understand potential archaeological remains which could be present within the Site.

4.31 The 1840 Meopham parish tithe plan (Figure 7) shows the Site split across six fields and several strips of woodland, with no buildings present.

Table 8: Land holdings on the Meopham Parish Tithe Apportionment, dated 26th March 1841.

Plot Number	Landowner	Occupier	Name and Description of Lands and Premises	Cultivation Type
131	Mary & Philip Buggs	Mary & Philip Buggs	Charles Croft	Hops
132	Rev. Glover Mungeam	Rev. Glover Mungeam	-	Arable
133	Mary & Philip Buggs	Mary & Philip Buggs	Hedgerow	Wood
134	Mary & Philip Buggs	Mary & Philip Buggs	Beechfield	Arable
135	Mary & Philip Buggs	Mary & Philip Buggs	Hedgerow	Wood
140	Mary & Philip Buggs	Mary & Philip Buggs	Hedgerow	Wood

⁹ <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-kent/vol3/pp356-367>

141	Rev. Glover Mungeam	Rev. Glover Mungeam	Shaw	Wood
142	Rev. Glover Mungeam	Rev. Glover Mungeam	Little Beech	Pasture
143	Rev. Glover Mungeam	Rev. Glover Mungeam	Shaw	Wood
144	Rev. Glover Mungeam	Rev. Glover Mungeam	Shaw	Wood
145	Mary & Philip Buggs	Mary & Philip Buggs	Cullins	Arable
146	James Fletcher	Augustus F. Bromley	Acre Piece	Pasture
152	Richard Willson Sheppard Willsonne	Richard Willson Sheppard Willsonne	Wilton Wood	Wood

4.32 The 1864-5 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 8) shows that the Site has not changed up to this point. This is similarly the case by the time of the 1895 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 9). The subsequent 1908 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 10), the 1936 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 11), the 1955 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 12), the 1964 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 13), and the 1977 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 14) all show an unchanged landscape.

4.33 The 1985 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 15) shows that the south-western field has been subdivided and that in the southernmost field a rectangular structure has been constructed and which likely relates to part of the present stables. No change is noted on the 2001 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 16). The subsequent 2010 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 17) shows additional structures within the Site as well as an established access track leading from Wrotham Road to the west of the Site. No further changes are noted after this point until the time of writing.

4.34 It is considered that the potential to encounter remains dating to the Post Medieval and Modern periods are high. It was noted at the time of the Site visit that only part of the east-west field boundary in the western part of the Site was still extant. As such, it is likely that the remainder of the boundary will be encountered during groundworks associated with the development. It was also noted that within the northern part of the strip of woodland in the Site there was a large depression which likely relates to historic quarrying, though this had been affected by Modern landscaping for the purposes of off-road driving. These remains would be considered to be of *low (local) importance*.

Undated

4.35 The KHER holds records for two Undated monuments date within the 1km study area, of which neither are within the Site itself.

Table 9: Undated monuments recorded on the KHER within the 1km of the Site.

Reference Number	Name/Description	Monument Type	Period
MKE1503	Undated circular enclosure	Circular Enclosure	Undated
MKE95620	Undated copper alloy unidentified object	Findspot	Undated

Previous Archaeological Work

4.36 The KHER holds records for one previous archaeological investigation within the 1km study area, that of a desk-based assessment and no field investigations are recorded.

Table 10: Previous archaeological investigations recorded on the KHER within 1km of the Site.

Event ID	Name	Event Type
EKE16082 / 10656	Culverstone Green Primary School, Wrotham Road, Meopham, Kent, Archaeological desk-based assessment	Desk-Based Assessment

Aerial Photographs

4.37 A review of modern aerial photographs through Google Earth shows little change to the Site in recent times. The gravelled area for exercising horses appears to have been constructed between 2001 and 2003.

4.38 An aerial photograph from 1940¹⁰ shows the Site as agricultural fields, as shown on the contemporary mapping. An aerial photograph from 1960¹¹ shows the Site as

¹⁰ Google Earth

¹¹ Ibid.

agricultural fields used for arable farming, again corresponding with the historic mapping. No stables are visible.

Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC)

4.39 The Site contains two historic landscape characterisation (HLC) types (Figure 5). The majority of the Site is covered by the 'Post 1810 settlement (general)' type. A small area on the eastern boundary is covered by the 'Pre 19th century Coppices' type.

LiDAR

4.40 LiDAR data (1m resolution from 2022, Figure 6) has been downloaded for the Site to enable interrogation through QGIS software using hillshade settings and variations of light angles and azimuth heights. This shows little clear evidence for archaeological remains beyond former field boundaries noted on historic map regression.

5. Impact Assessment

Proposed Development

5.1 The proposed development comprises the construction of up to 100 residential dwellings as well as associated landscaping and installation of services.

Factors Affecting Archaeological Survival

5.2 Archaeological remains can survive as earthworks and as below ground archaeological features, finds and layers. Part of the assessment process is to consider what factors may have affected archaeological survival. That is to say, what conditions would have enhanced the chances of survival and what conditions would have reduced the chances of survival.

5.3 The subject of archaeological preservation has been covered comprehensively elsewhere¹², and it is a subject which is subject to ongoing review as our understanding grows. The following addresses some familiar scenarios for assessment reports such as this, to allow the reader an insight into some 'typical' scenarios.

5.4 In rural locations, below ground remains are likely to be sealed by a relatively thin series of layers. Typically a topsoil of c.100-200mm and a subsoil of 100-300mm. Therefore, they may be sealed by 200-500mm of deposits. There are variations to this including landscapes affected by colluvial or alluvial deposits. There are also Peat rich area where soil deposits can be significantly deeper. Earthworks are most common in areas not subject to modern, mechanised ploughing, although earthworks can be preserved in hedgerows, wooded areas and even as plough-reduced remnants within arable fields.

5.5 Hydrology has a significant role to play in the preservation of remains and proximity to watercourses and wetlands should be considered as it affects the variety and type of artefacts/ecofacts that could be present on a site.

¹² Historic England 2016.

Assessment of Significance

5.6 This assessment of significance has been guided by the National Planning Policy Framework, which defines significance as:

*'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.'*¹³

Furthermore it will be guided by Historic England's guidance *Conservation Principles, Policies, and Guidance*. This states:

*'heritage values that can be ascribed to place' can be grouped into four values: Evidential, Historic (illustrative or associative), Aesthetic and Communal.*¹⁴

5.7 The potential for previously unknown archaeological remains from the Prehistoric, Roman, Early Medieval, and Medieval periods to survive within the proposed development area should not be discounted, and any such remains will have significance due to evidential value, as they would provide proof of earlier unknown human activity, and would possess *illustrative historical* value, as such remains would expand the current historical timeline of the area. The significance of such remains cannot be assessed without archaeological evaluation.

5.8 Historic map regression has shown that the Site has remained largely unchanged since the mid-19th century, with the exception of the subdivision of one field and the construction of structures relating to the use of the Site as horse paddocks. The Site visit identified the presence of a probable former quarry in the northern part of the wooded area of the Site. These remains would be of *evidential value* due to their ability to show how the Site was utilised during this period. They would also be of *historical illustrative value* as potential finds recovered from these features could assist in helping to identify a more precise date for when they were established and in use. These remains would likely be considered to be of *local significance*.

¹³ MHCLG 2023

¹⁴ Historic England 2008

Potential Effects

5.9 There is a potential for direct physical impacts to non-designated archaeological remains during the construction phase of any future development of the Site, as any ground moving activities associated with the proposed works would have the potential to expose, damage or destroy hitherto unknown remains. Such activities could include but are not exhaustive of; ground investigations, piling, topsoil stripping, ground reduction, digging of service trenches and landscaping as well as the construction of temporary compounds.

5.10 Historic map regression has shown that the proposed development has the potential to impact upon features dating from at least the Post Medieval period onwards.

6. Conclusions

6.1 The Site contains no known designated archaeological assets, where there would be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation *in situ* and against development.

6.2 Based on the information within the KHER, supplemented by historic mapping, the Site is considered to have a high potential for archaeological remains dating to the Post Medieval and Modern periods and a low potential for remains dating to the Prehistoric, Roman, Early Medieval and Medieval periods.

6.3 The following table details the archaeological potential ascribed to the Site by period and an assessment of the likely archaeological importance of any remains of those periods should they survive.

Table 11: Assessed Archaeological Potential and Importance by period

Period	Archaeological Potential	Archaeological Importance
Prehistoric	Low	Low (Local)
Roman	Low	Low (Local)
Early Medieval	Low	Low (Local)
Medieval	Low	Low (Local)
Post Medieval	High	Low (Local)
Modern	High	Low (Local)

6.4 There is a paucity of evidence for remains dating to the Prehistoric, Roman, Early Medieval and Medieval periods. This is likely exacerbated by a lack of previous archaeological investigations within the study area.

6.5 Historic map regression shows the presence of former field boundaries within the Site. The Site itself has changed little from at least the mid-19th century to the present day. The Site visit conducted as part of this assessment also identified the remains of a probable former quarry in the northern part of the woodland within the Site, though the date of it is uncertain.

6.6 On the basis of available evidence, it is considered that the proposed development accords with current legislation, the planning policies contained within the NPPF.

The site has been subject to desk-based assessment and the archaeological potentials and importance have been assessed.

6.7 The scope of any further archaeological works that would be needed in advance or during development of the Site would need to be discussed and agreed with the Archaeological Advisor to the local planning authority.

7. Bibliography

Primary Sources

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The Genealogists. 1841 Meopham Parish Tithe Apportionment

1864-5 County Series Ordnance Survey map

1895 County Series Ordnance Survey map

1908 County Series Ordnance Survey map

1936 County Series Ordnance Survey map

1955 Provisional Ordnance Survey map

1964 National Grid Ordnance Survey map

1977 National Grid Ordnance Survey map

1985 National Grid Ordnance Survey map

2001 National Grid Ordnance Survey map

2010 National Grid Ordnance Survey map

2025 National Grid Ordnance Survey map

2025 Google Satellite Image

Kent Historic Environment Record (KHER)

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8. Figures

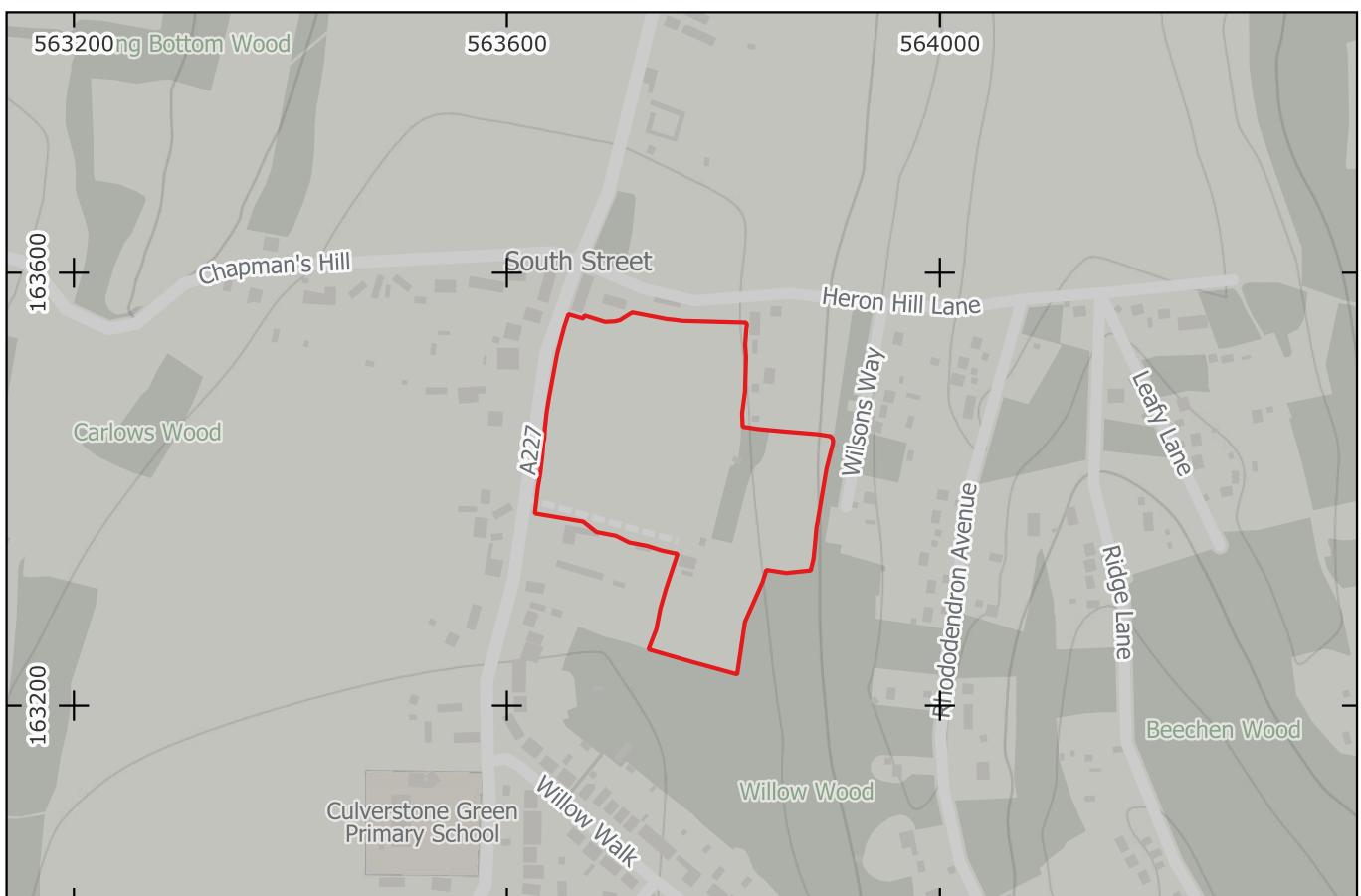
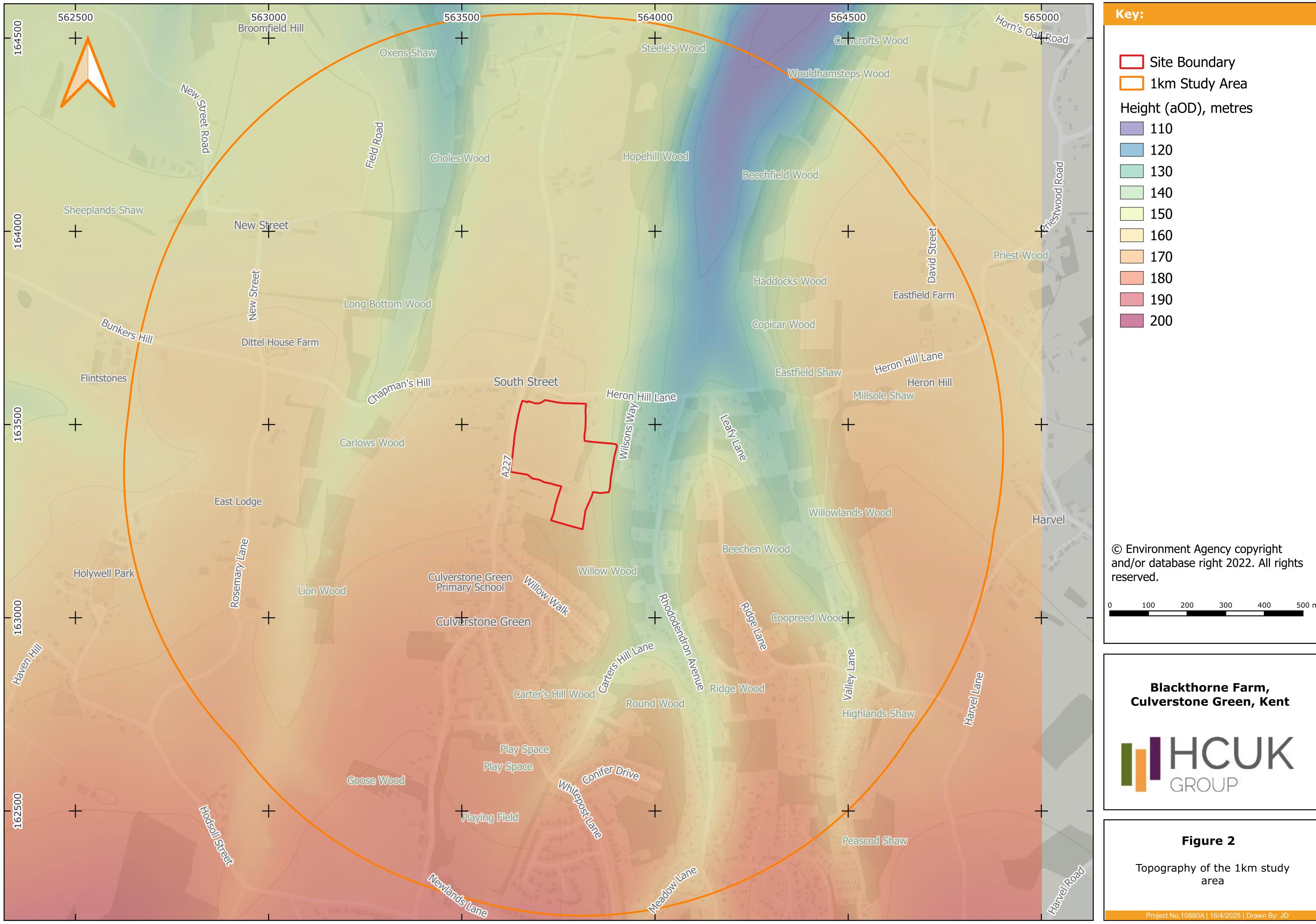
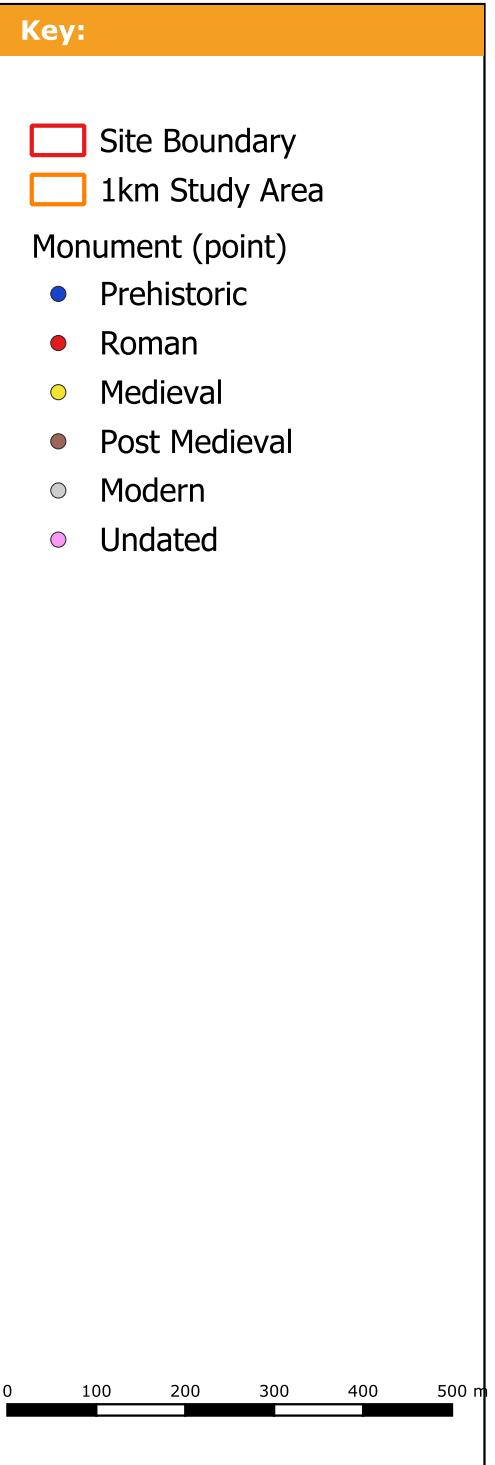
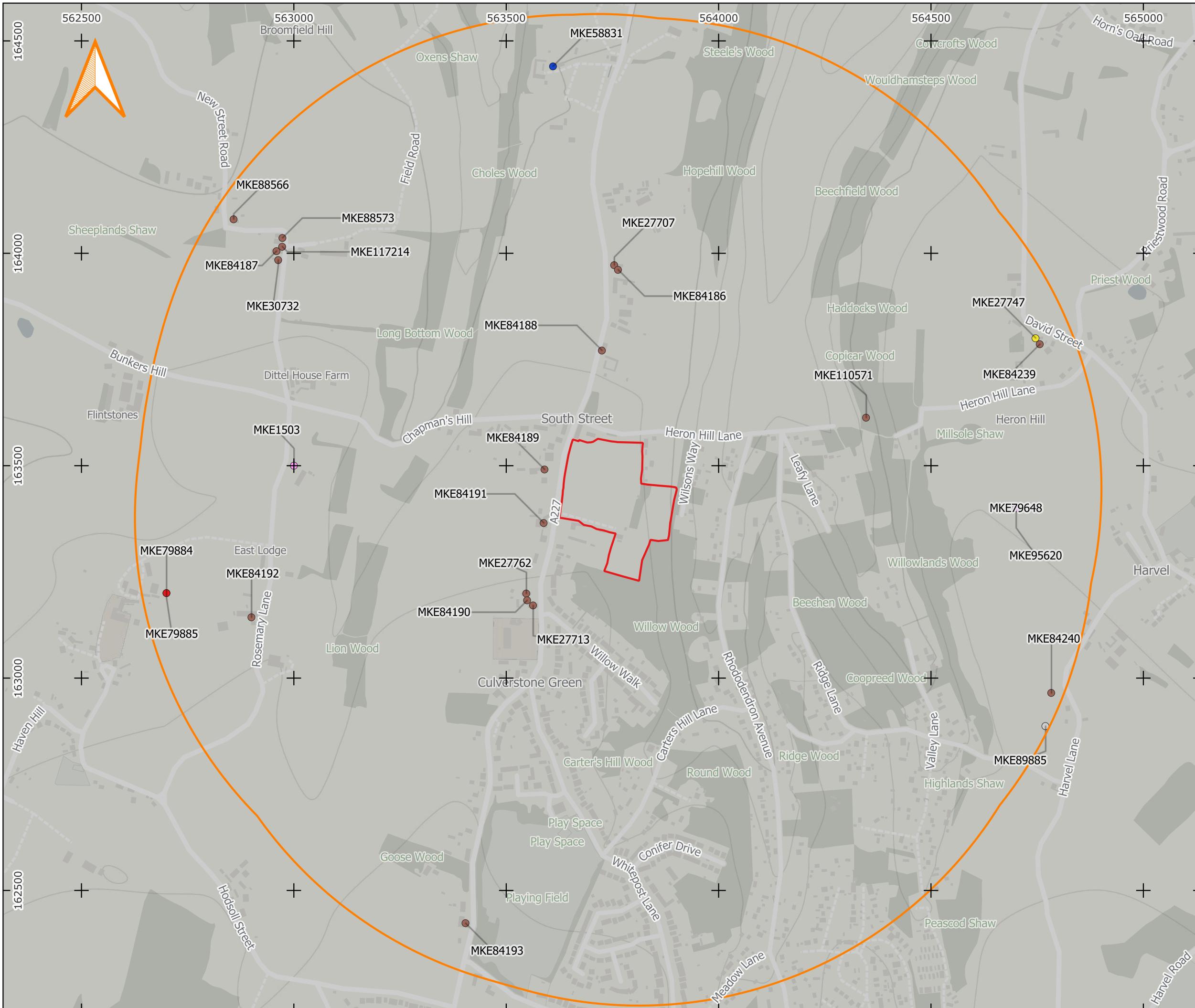


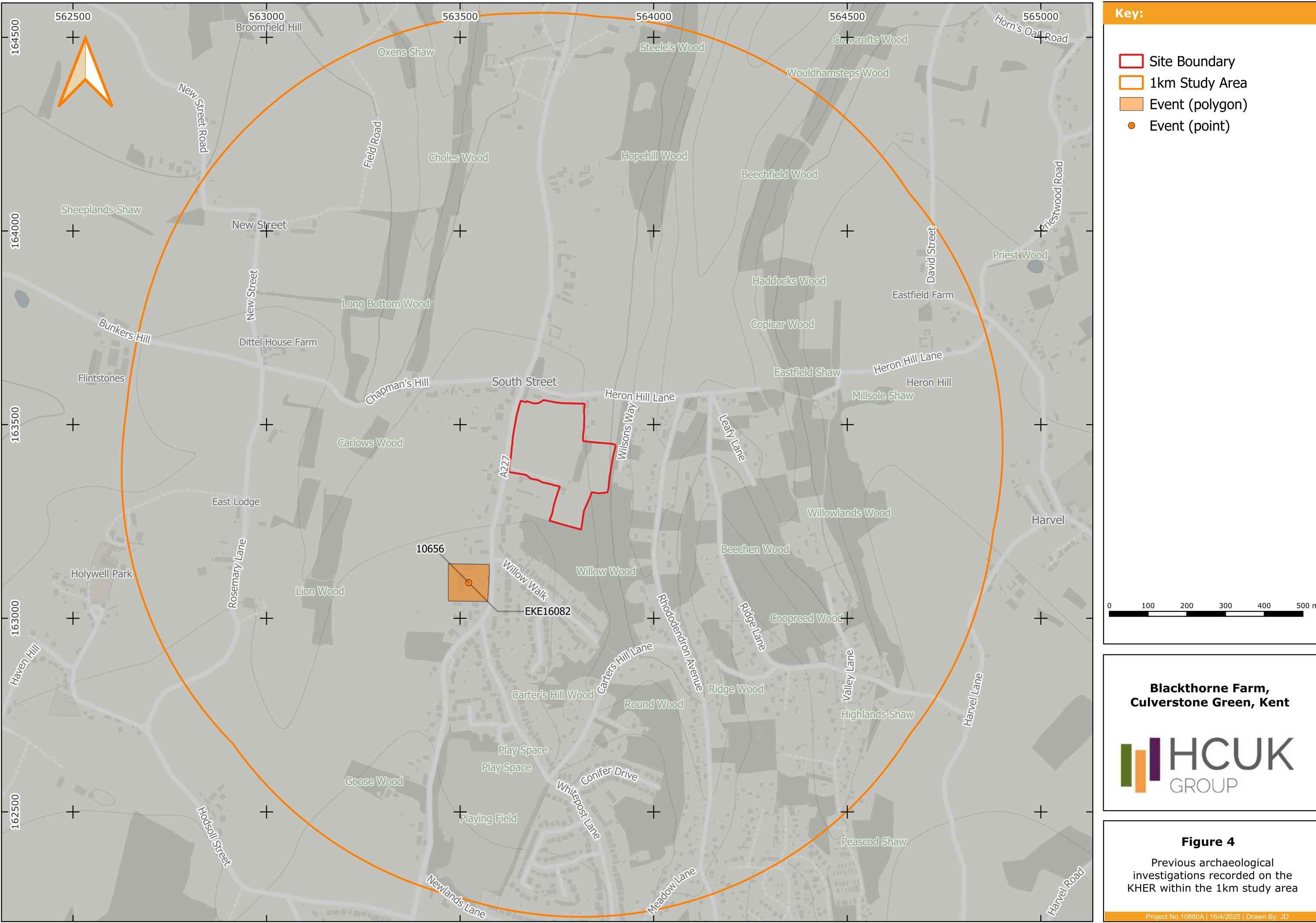
Figure 1: Site Location

April 2025

Blackthorne Farm,
Culverstone Green, Kent







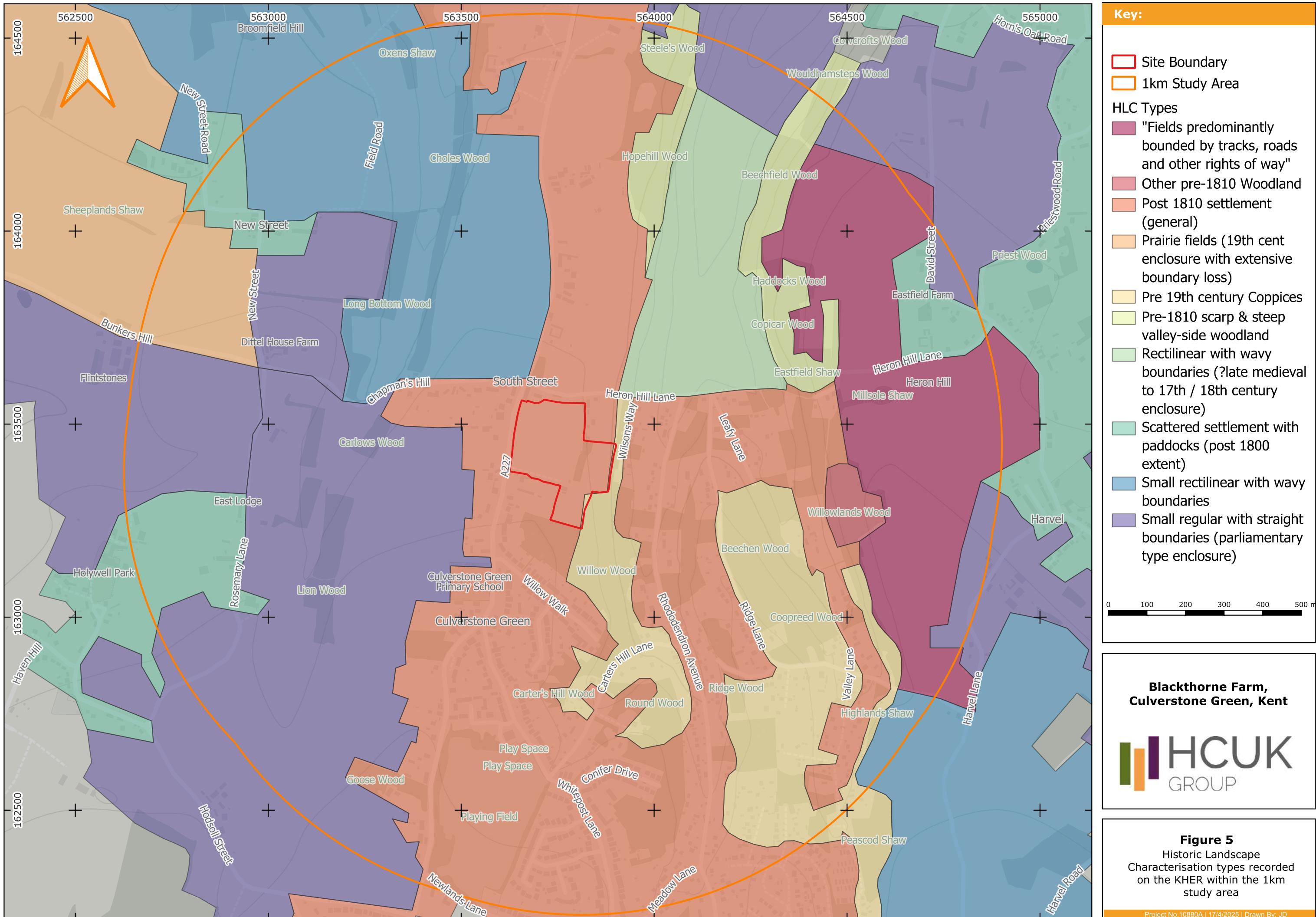


Figure 5
Historic Landscape
characterisation types recorded
on the KHER within the 1km
study area



**Blackthorne Farm,
Culverstone Green, Kent**

HCUK
GROUP

Figure 6

LiDAR coverage of the Site

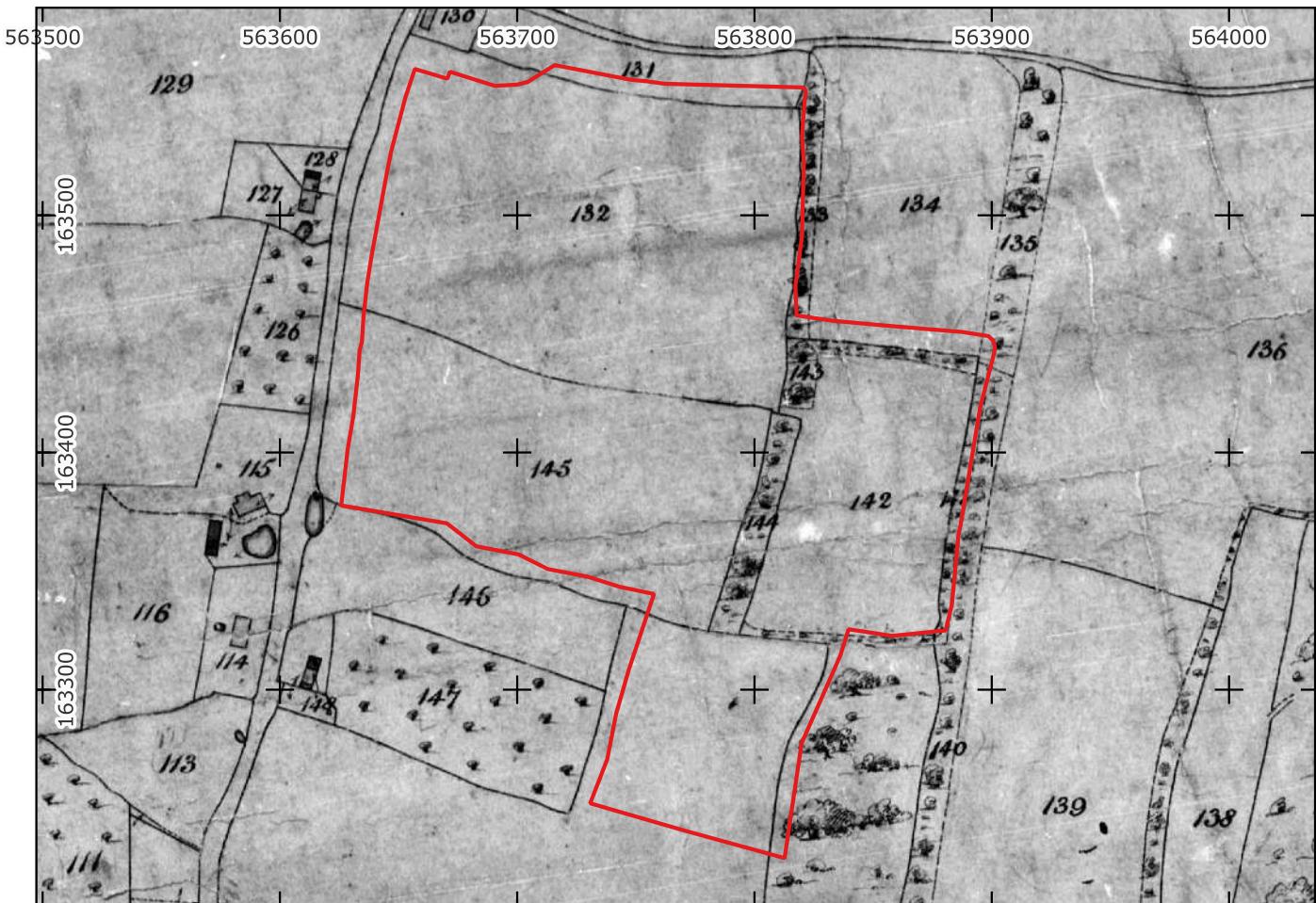


Figure 7: 1840 Meopham Parish Tithe Plan

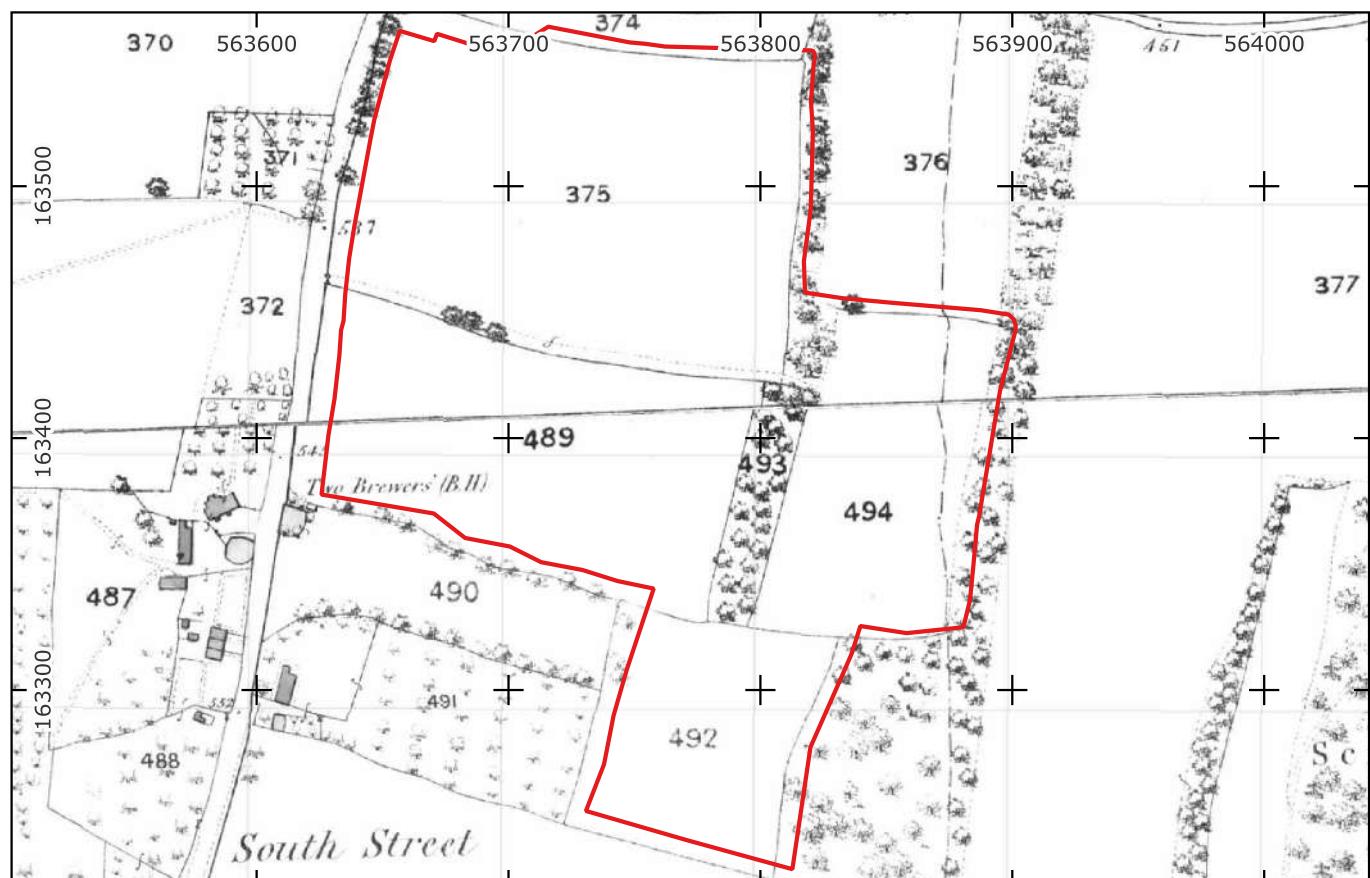


Figure 8: 1864-5 County Series Ordnance Survey map

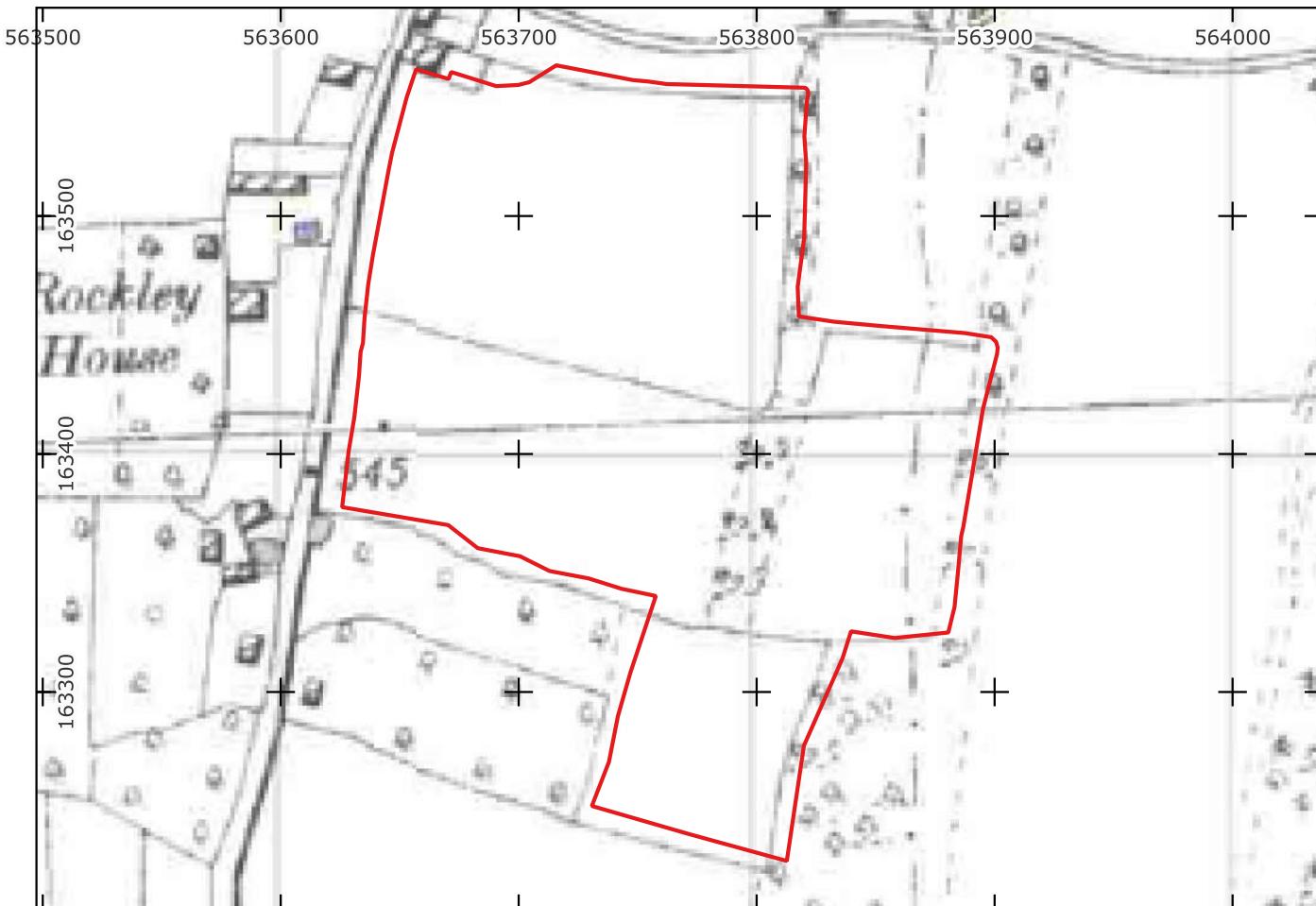


Figure 9: 1895 County Series Ordnance Survey map

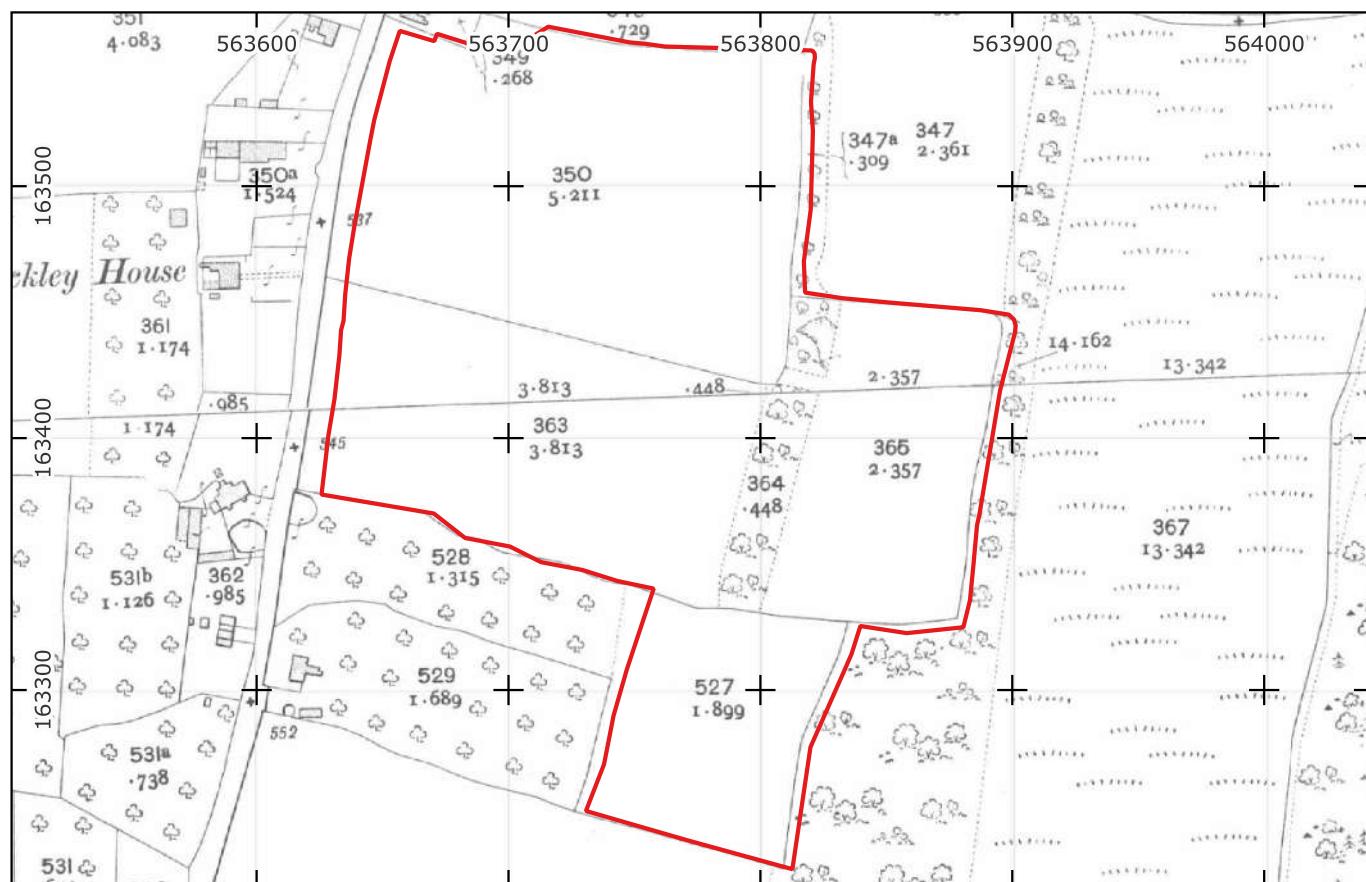


Figure 10: 1908 County Series Ordnance Survey map

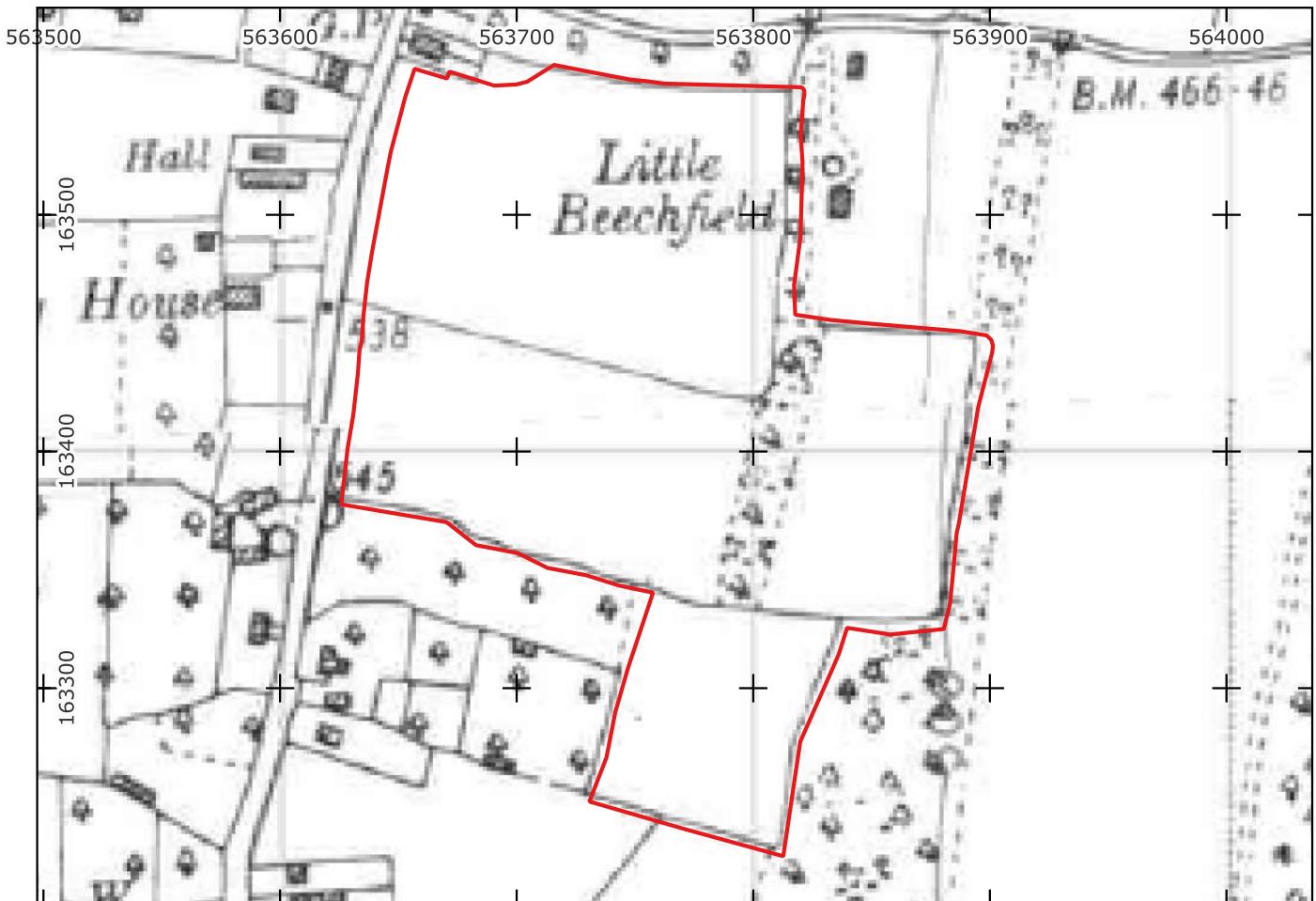


Figure 11: 1936 County Series Ordnance Survey map

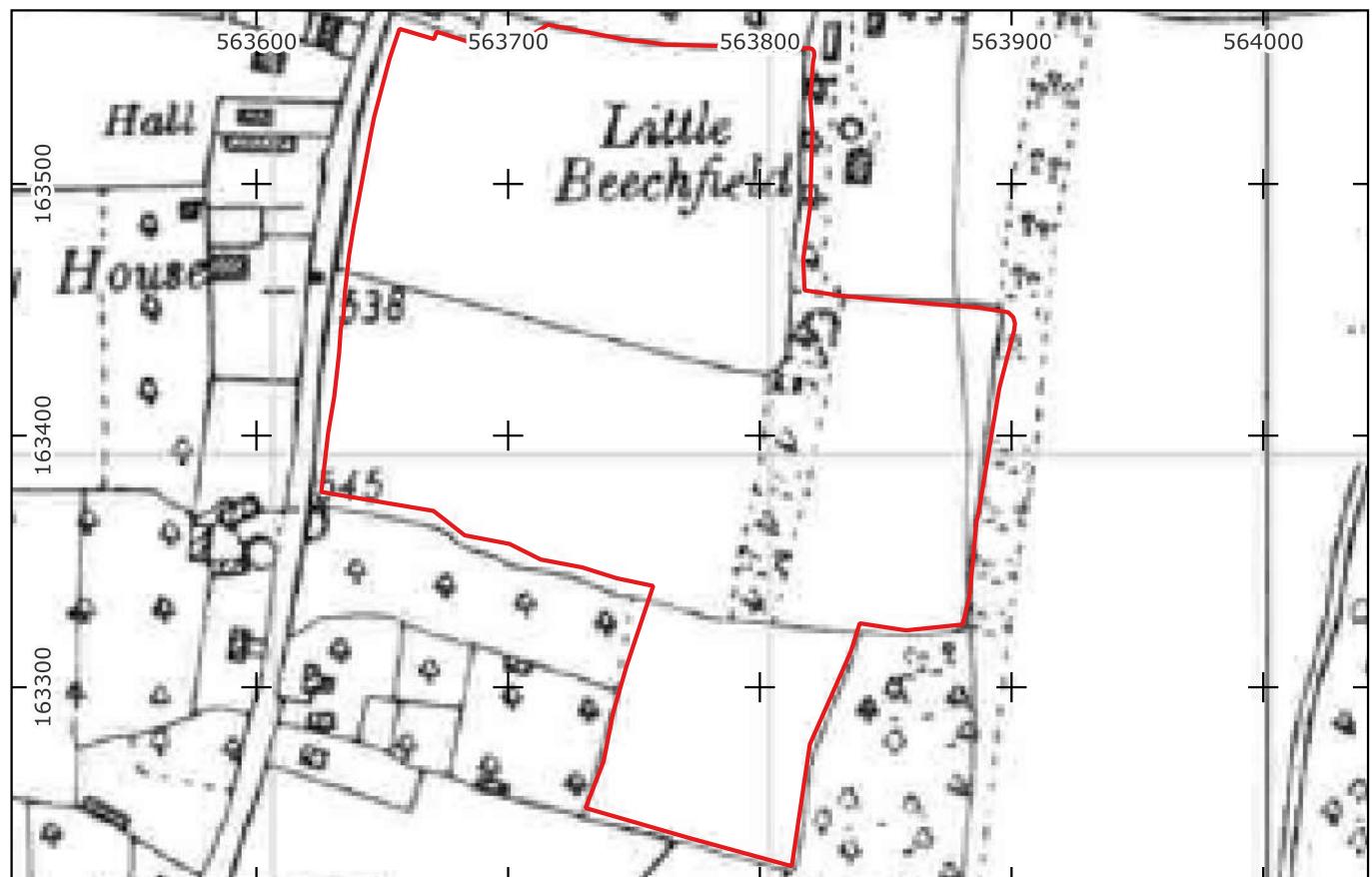


Figure 12: 1955 Provisional Ordnance Survey map

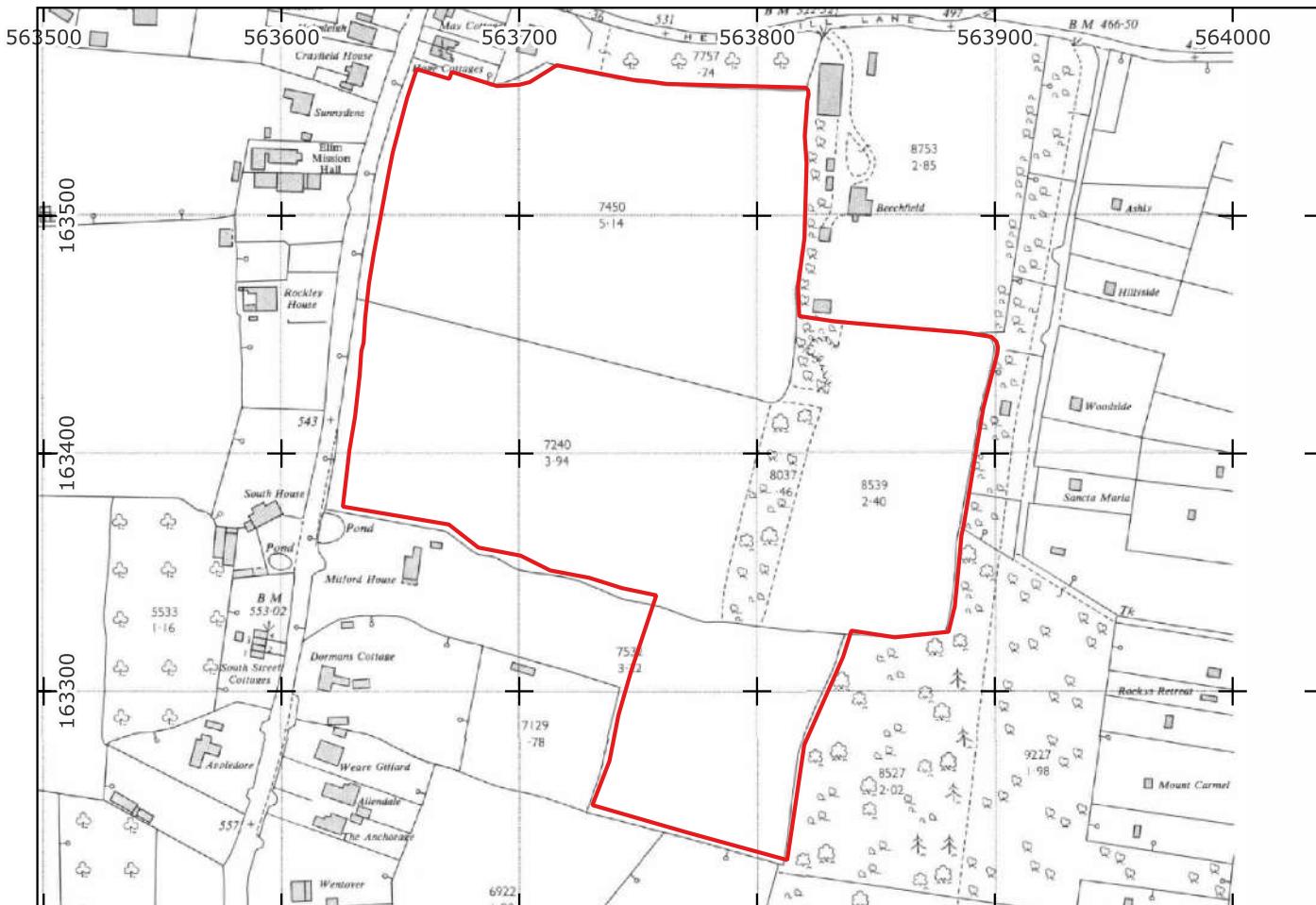


Figure 13: 1964 National Grid Ordnance Survey map

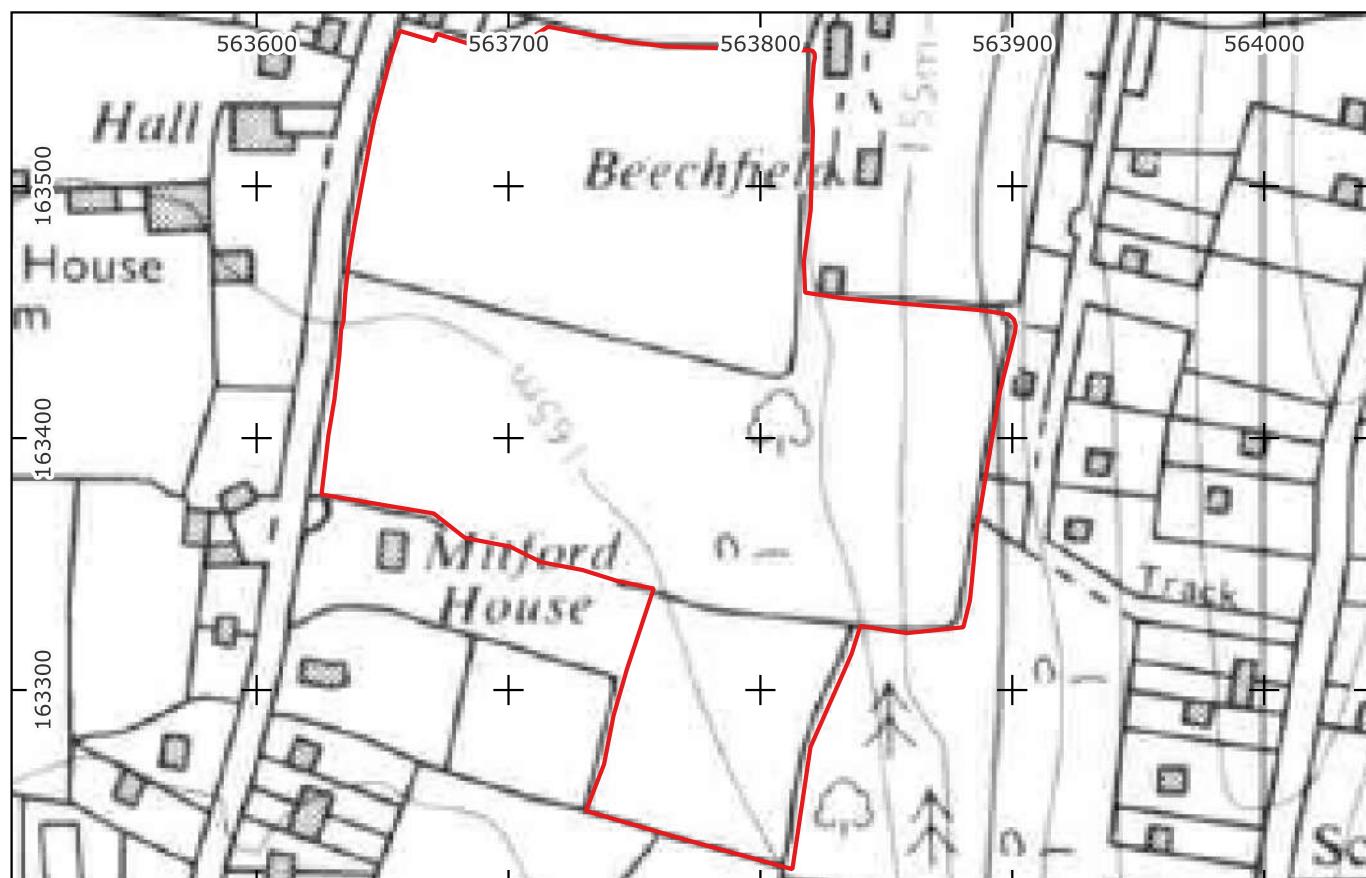


Figure 14: 1977 National Grid Ordnance Survey map

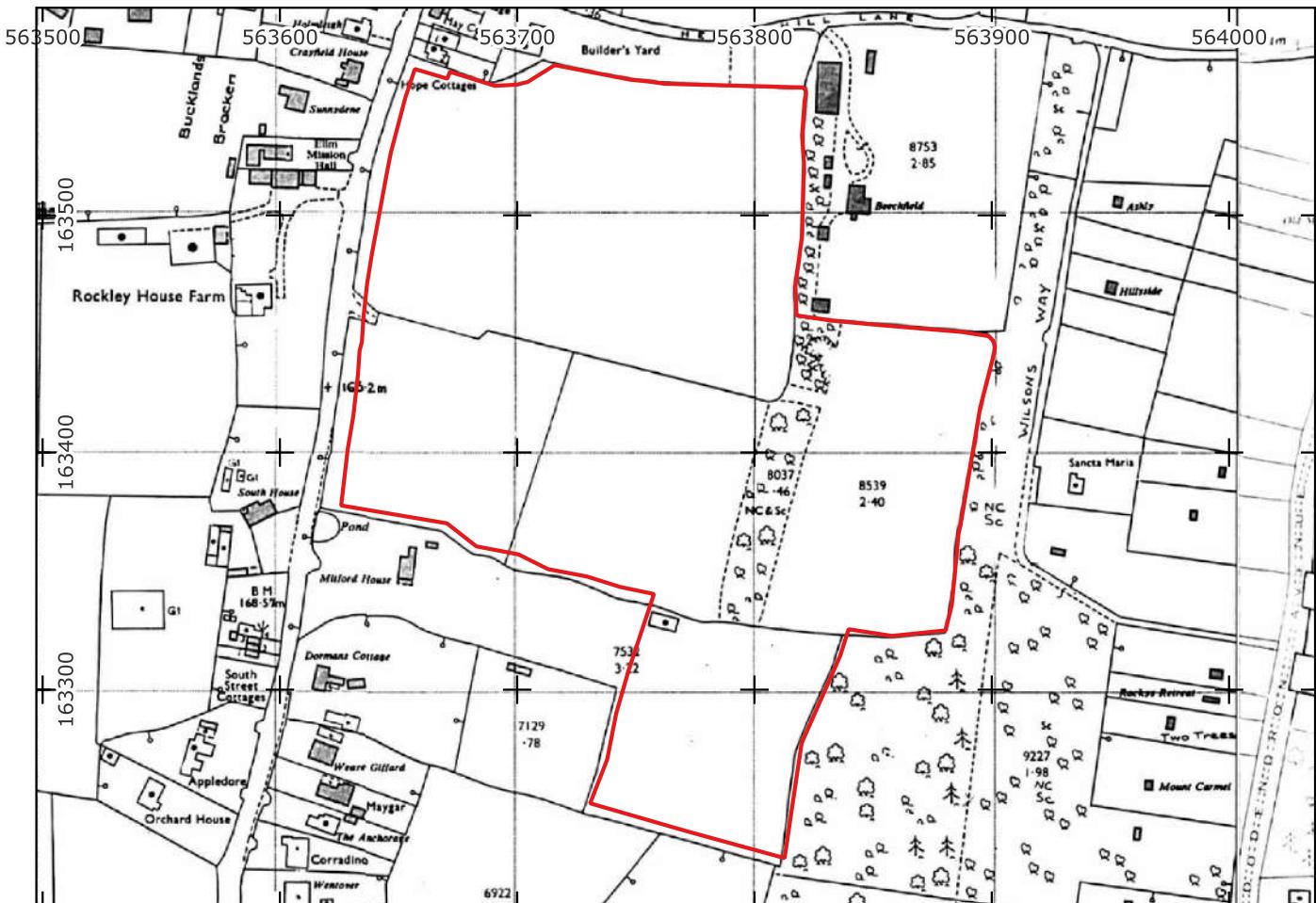


Figure 15: 1985 National Grid Ordnance Survey map

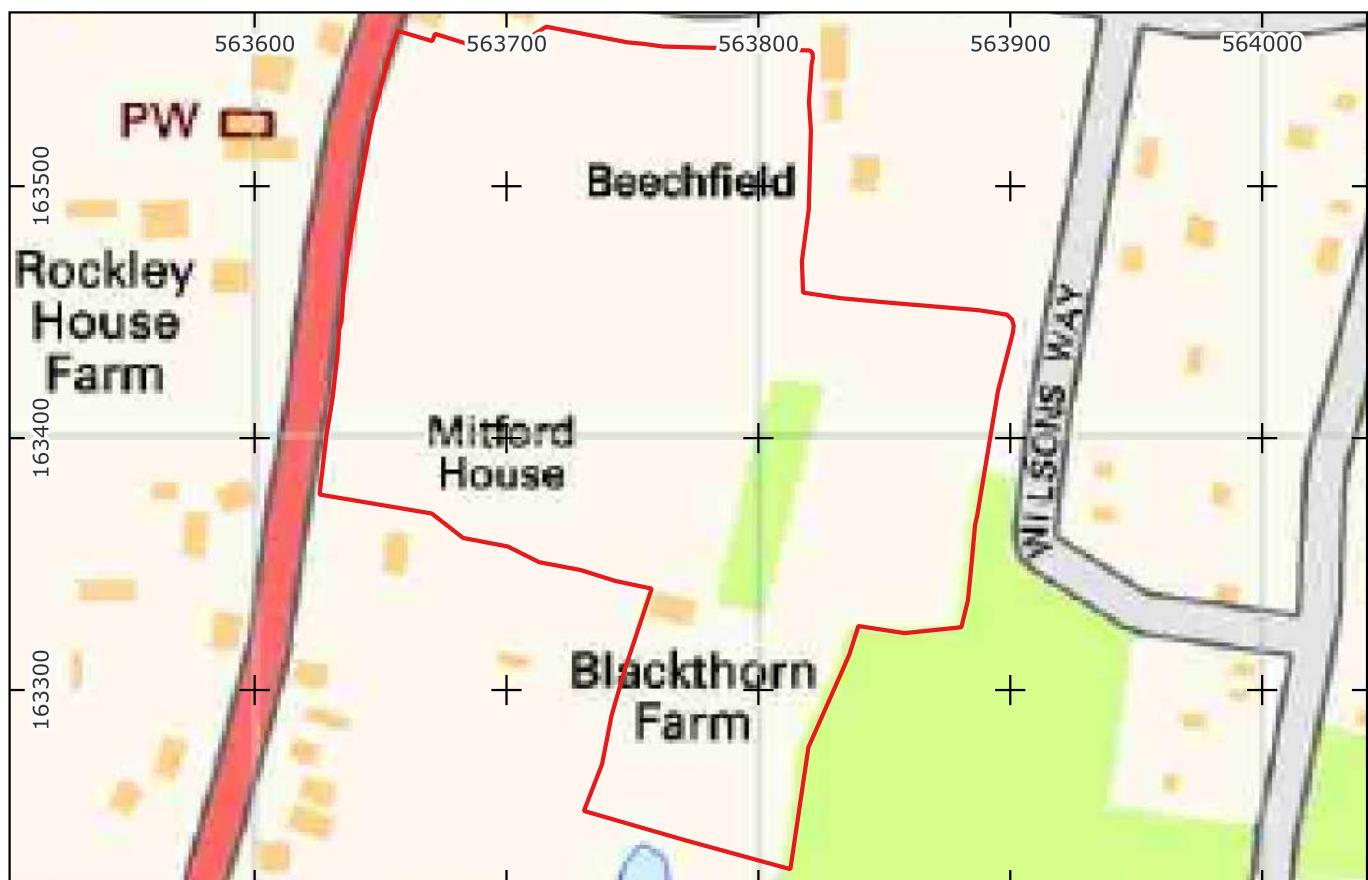


Figure 16: 2001 National Grid Ordnance Survey map

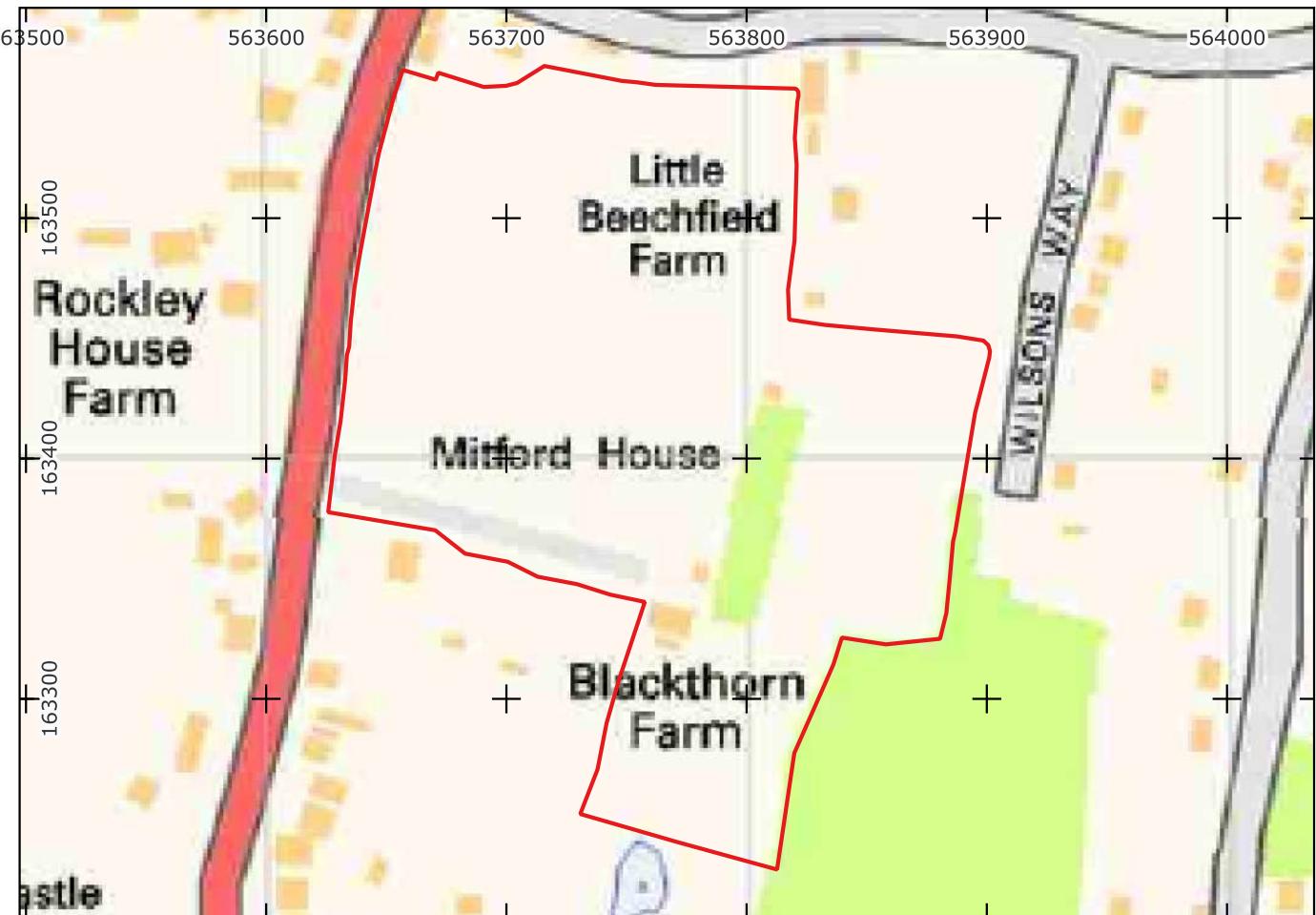


Figure 17: 2010 National Grid Ordnance Survey map

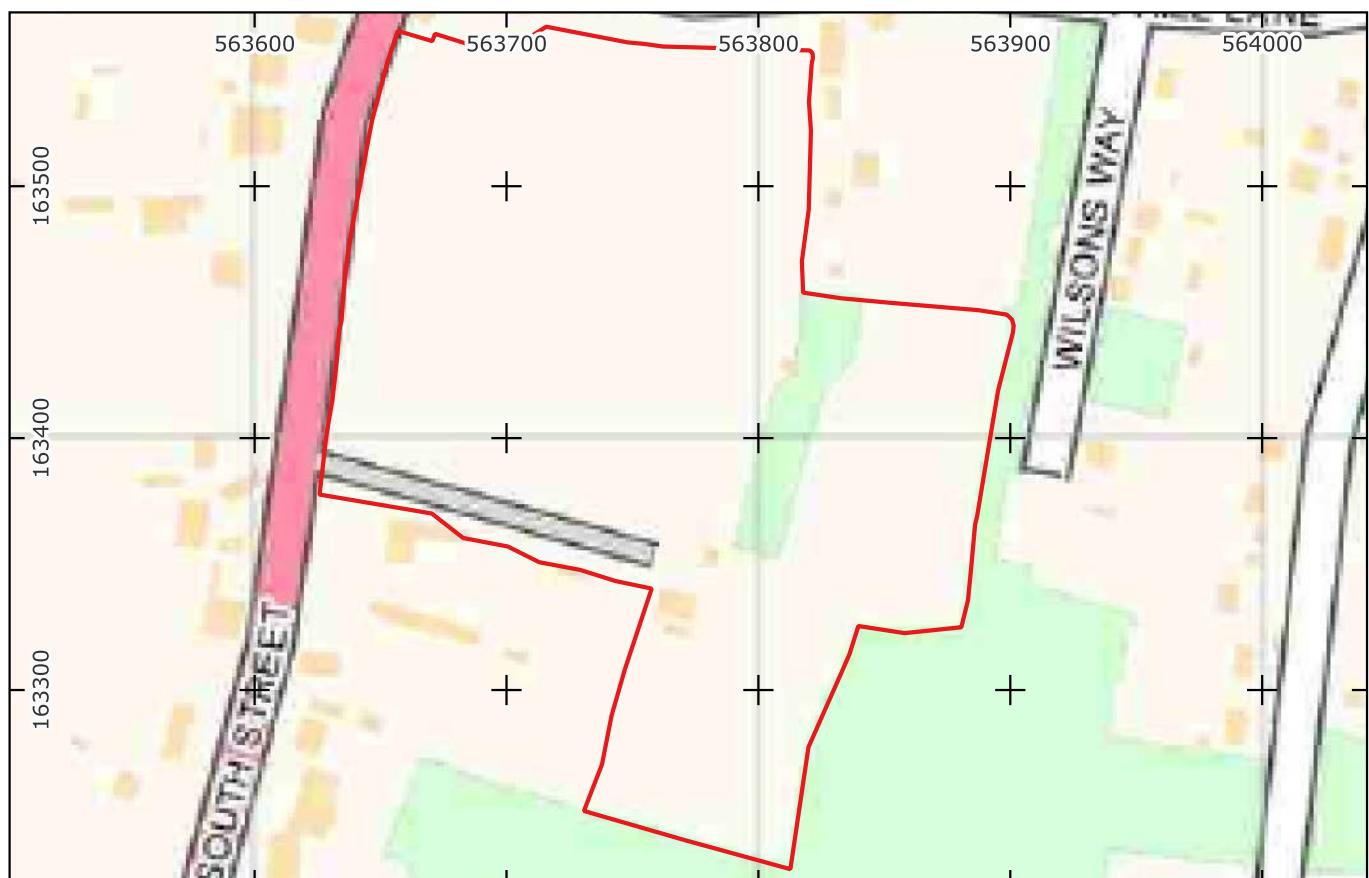


Figure 18: 2025 National Grid Ordnance Survey map



**Blackthorne Farm,
Culverstone Green, Kent**



Figure 19

2025 Google Satellite image of
the Site

Appendix 1: Proposed Development Plan

Esquire Developments

