

Our ref: JAC29039

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Cultural Heritage Technical Note: MMT Site, Sayers Common, Mid-Sussex

Executive Summary

- Subject to a high quality, proportionate development scheme, there is not considered to be any Cultural Heritage constraint that would preclude the overall suitability and deliverability of the Site for residential development.
- The Local Plan Evidence Base documentation does not identify any significant or unusual Cultural Heritage constraints in relation to the Site. The constraints/considerations identified by the Local Plan Evidence Base are typical for a Site of this size within a historically evolved rural-agricultural landscape.
- Successful promotion through the Local Plan will require a suitable design evidence base, setting out how layouts, landscaping, heights, density and materials specifically respond to, and draw on, the character of the area and proximity of relevant built heritage assets.
- Based on the available historic mapping, the Site is highly likely to contain archaeological evidence of past farmstead occupation. The archaeological potential of the Site for evidence pre-dating the 18th Century cannot be assessed until an archaeological desk-based assessment is commissioned, utilising data held by the Sussex Historic Environment Record.
- A Site promotion submission pack will need to be supported by an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment and Built Heritage Impact Assessment.

Introduction

1. This Cultural Heritage Advice Note has been prepared by Tetra Tech Consulting Ltd, on behalf of Berkeley Strategic Land Ltd, to inform the evolving proposals for promotion of land at Sayers Common, Mid-Sussex (Fig.1) through the 2021-2039 Mid-Sussex Local Plan. The Site to which this advice note relates is named as Land South of Reeds Lane, Sayers Common (ref. 799) in the Mid-Sussex Local Plan Evidence Base.
2. This Cultural Heritage Advice Note provides a review of the Local Plan Evidence Base in relation to Built Heritage and Archaeological matters, an overview of the Site's Cultural Heritage opportunities and constraints and recommendations for design principles and next steps.
3. The Site comprises an expansive area of agricultural land lying a short distance west of the B2118, southwest of Sayers Common and northwest of Albourne. These built areas are relatively small and concentrated along principal thoroughfares. The Site forms an unremarkable part of an extensive rural-agricultural landscape.
4. The Site does not contain any listed buildings or conservation areas. One Grade II listed building (Wellington Cottage, NHLE ref. 1354780) lies close to the southwestern boundary of the northern Site parcel on Henfield Road. Four other Grade II listed buildings lie within c.250m of the Site. No conservation areas lie within 250m of the Site. The Albourne Conservation Area lies c.280m to the southeast of the Site.
5. The Site does not contain or lie in the immediate vicinity of any designated archaeological assets such as Scheduled Monuments, World Heritage Sites or Registered Battlefields.

6. Suitable embedded design measures will be required to minimise and avoid harm to the significance of proximate built heritage assets through the alteration of their setting. Such design measures will also be required as an element of placemaking and to respond to the presence of potentially historic field boundaries and other landscape features within the Site.
7. Further archaeological and built heritage assessment will be required to support the promotion of the Site in the form of a Built Heritage Impact Assessment and Archaeological Desk Based Assessment. No Cultural Heritage constraints that would preclude the overall suitability and deliverability of the Site for allocation for residential use have been identified at this initial stage.

Identification of Heritage Assets

8. Figures 2a and 2b illustrate designated built heritage and archaeological assets such as listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled monuments within a 250m and 750m radius of the Site respectively.
9. No designated archaeological assets have been identified as relevant to the promotion of the Site as a result of significant intervening distance.
10. Historic mapping dating to the late 18th Century (Figs 3 and 4) indicate that by 1798 two farmsteads had lain within the Site, though the earlier Gardner & Gream map of 1795 may only illustrate the largest farmsteads and residences across area at that time and so does not show any buildings within the Site. Ordnance Survey maps dating between 1879 and 1952 (Figs. 6 and 7) and the aerial photographs of 2001 (Fig.8) and 2021 (Fig.9) illustrate the demolition and loss of the 18th Century or earlier farmsteads within the Site and the alteration of others outside the Site, though some buildings of early 19th Century and earlier do survive and are now listed at Grade II. The cartographic and aerial photograph sources indicate the survival of some historic hedgerows within the Site.
11. Mid-Sussex District Council does not maintain a local list of formally identified non-designated heritage assets. A building or structure of historic and architectural interest does not have to be formally identified on a local list to be recognised as a non-designated heritage asset and a material consideration in the planning process. A Site visit carried out by RPS (now Tetra Tech) in June of 2023 has not identified any buildings likely to represent non-designated built heritage assets that would be relevant to the promotion of the Site for residential use.
12. Built heritage assets that are not considered to have the potential to be affected by the proposed development will not be carried forward for detailed individual assessment in a future Built Heritage Impact Assessment. Specifically, the proposed development is not considered to have the potential to affect the significance of a built heritage asset where, based on the available information and an exercise in professional judgement:
 - The Site has been identified as making no contribution to the significance of a built heritage asset and also forming no appreciable element of the experience of it within its setting; and
 - The proposals are assessed as not having the potential to alter the way in which that asset is presently experienced or understood.
13. Based on a Site and area walkover and initial desk-based research, the following listed buildings are considered relevant by Tetra Tech to the promotion of the Site for potential impacts to their significance arising from the alteration of their setting:
 - Potters Field (Potters Cottages), Grade II, NHLE ref. 1245936, located c.80m to the east of the Site boundary.
 - Wellington Cottage, Grade II, NHLE ref. 1354780, located on Henfield Road, immediately between the parcels of the Site.
 - Westhouse Farm, Grade II, NHLE ref. 1025825 and Barn to the southwest of Westhouse Farmhouse, Grade II, NHLE ref. 1354799, located c.305m south-southeast of the Site boundary at its closest point.
 - Potters Field, Grade II, NHLE ref. 1245936, located c.75m to the east of the Site boundary.
 - Inholmes Cottage, Grade II, NHLE ref. 1025782, located c.135m to the southeast of the Site boundary.

14. The 1840 title map (Fig.5) and apportionments indicate that Wellington Cottage and Westhouse Farm have a historical relationship with each other through a mutual owner in the early 19th Century and that parts of the Site formed part of the landholdings associated with these buildings. The Site therefore has a documented functional and historical relationship with these designated heritage assets
15. Other listed buildings shown on Figures 2a and 2b lie a sufficient distance from the Site or beyond sufficient intervening visual barriers such as modern development and wooded areas that a suitable development of the Site would be unlikely to notably alter the way in which they are experienced. It may be the case that built heritage assets without any visual or experiential, historical or functional relationship with the Site need to be included within a future Built Heritage Impact Assessment, where such assets have been identified as relevant by the Local Planning Authority.

Local Plan Evidence Base Review

16. The Site, land south of Reeds Lane, Sayers Common (SHLAAID: 799) is identified as a proposed allocation site within the *District Plan 2021 - 2039: Site Selection Conclusions Paper* (Mid-Sussex District Council, October 2022). The Site is identified as a 'significant' potential promotion site with a potential yield of 2000 homes and various public services and infrastructure.
17. The Local Plan Evidence Base identifies that:

There are no significant constraints on the site that would impact the deliverability of the site. There are no areas of the site affected by flood zone 2/3. There are no biodiversity designations, areas of ancient woodland within or close to the site. There are no heritage assets within the site.

Built Heritage Evidence Base Review

18. *Appendix 3: Site Selection Proforma* of the Site Selection Conclusions Paper sets out that:

Listed buildings are present on/within proximity of the site, Less than substantial harm –High impact. Wellington Cottage: Residential development of this substantial site, which straddles Henfield Road and would sit on two sides of Wellington Cottage to the north east and the south west, would have a fundamental impact on the character of a large part of the listed building's setting, including the approaches to it from both east and west along Henfield Road, and along the Public Rights Of Way which runs from the south past the eastern edge of one part of the site to Henfield Road, as well as views of and from the listed building. This would be significantly detrimental to the positive contribution which setting currently makes to the special interest of the heritage asset. NPPF: Less than substantial, high. Westhouse Farm: residential development on the site would fundamentally alter its currently open and rural character, removing and reversing the currently positive contribution which it makes to the setting of the historic farmstead, and causing harm to the manner in which the special interest of the associated heritage assets is appreciated. NPPF: Less than substantial, mid-high.

North & South Pottersfield Cottage: Residential development on this substantial site would fundamentally alter its character, such that it would become suburbanised. This would remove and reverse the positive contribution which it currently makes to a significant part of the setting and special interest of North and South Pottersfield Cottages and would potentially affect views from the building and its immediate setting, as well as the character of the approaches to it along the PROW. NPPF: Less than substantial, mid-high. Coombe Farm House: Residential development on the site would have a fundamental impact on its character, which would become suburbanised. Although there is a degree of physical and possibly visual (in the form of screening by trees) separation between the site and the historic farmstead at Coombe Farm, the site forms a significant part of its wider setting and affects the character of the approach to it along London Road. Development of the site would remove and reverse the positive contribution which it currently makes to the wider setting of the historic farmstead and this impact would be exacerbated by the size of the site in question. NPPF: Less than substantial, low-mid.
19. A range of impacts on the spectrum of less than substantial harm have been identified in respect of the Grade II Wellington Cottage, Westhouse Farm (comprising the Grade II Westhouse Farmhouse and separately Grade II listed Barn to the Southwest of Westhouse Farmhouse), the Grade II Pottersfield Cottages and Grade II Coombe Farmhouse.
20. It is noteworthy that the Local Plan Evidence Base does not identify some listed buildings situated in closer proximity to the Site, such as the Grade II Inholmes Cottage (NHLE ref. 1025782), as being relevant to the promotion of the Site; while others such as Coombe Farmhouse lie beyond considerable intervening distance and visual barriers from the Site are identified as relevant by the evidence base.

21. Harm to the significance of designated heritage assets is quantified in Chapter 16 of the NPPF using a spectrum of *less than substantial* and *substantial* harm. Significance is defined in the NPPF 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.

22. Additionally, The NPPF and Historic England's guidance is clear that harm does not occur to the setting of an asset, but to its significance, a setting may only undergo a change (which could itself be positive, negative or neutral). Historic England's *GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets* (Dec. 2017) provides the following clarification of the relationship of setting to heritage assets:

Setting is not itself a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, although land comprising a setting may itself be designated (see below Designed settings). Its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset or to the ability to appreciate that significance.

Setting is defined in the NPPF 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.

23. In accordance with paragraph 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) any less than substantial harm incurred to the significance of designated built heritage assets by a proposed development will be weighed against the public benefits of that development in the planning balance.
24. While the Local Plan Evidence Base identifies a number of designated built heritage assets as undergoing a range of impacts on the spectrum of less than substantial harm though the alteration of their setting, adequate design and landscaping measures, embedded within any future development could minimise or avoid harm to these designated heritage assets identified as relevant to the promotion of the Site by the Local Planning Authority.
25. The Local Plan Evidence Base documents do not identify any built heritage constraints that would preclude the suitability of the Site for allocation, subject to suitable embedded design measures. Based on a review of the available information, Tetra Tech broadly agrees with these findings, though suitable design advice/feedback and mitigation will be required.

Archaeology Evidence Base Review

26. The Local Plan Evidence Base does not identify any designated archaeological assets as being relevant to the promotion of the Site.
27. The scope and timing of any archaeological fieldwork work will be at the discretion of the Local Planning Authority and their Archaeological Advisors. It is therefore important that an archaeological desk-based assessment of the Site be carried out in order to negotiate and agree the need and extent of further work from an informed position.

Design Advice

28. Suitable design measures will ensure the maximum utility of the Site in development terms and limit the potential adverse impacts to the significance of relevant built heritage assets.
29. Residential development of the Site should seek to establish a loose grain of well-spaced residences concentrated to a number of distinct clusters or centres, each separated by landscaped spaces. Residential built areas should utilise varied orientation, varied building typologies/materiality and generous private garden space to break down the overall sense of visual impact and provide a strong sense of place both across and within the development scheme. The embedding of a spacious village type grain to the evolving proposals would reflect the loose knit character of development at the edge of Sayers Common and Albourne and villages in the wider area. This layout approach is one means of lowering the perceived intensity of built form in the wider setting of relevant built heritage assets in views across the Site.



Plate 1: Typical view southeast across central area of larger Site parcel.



Plate 2: View northwest from southeast end of Site. The Site has a generally strongly rural character with wide views possible to some parts of surrounding landscape, particularly from southern end of the Site.

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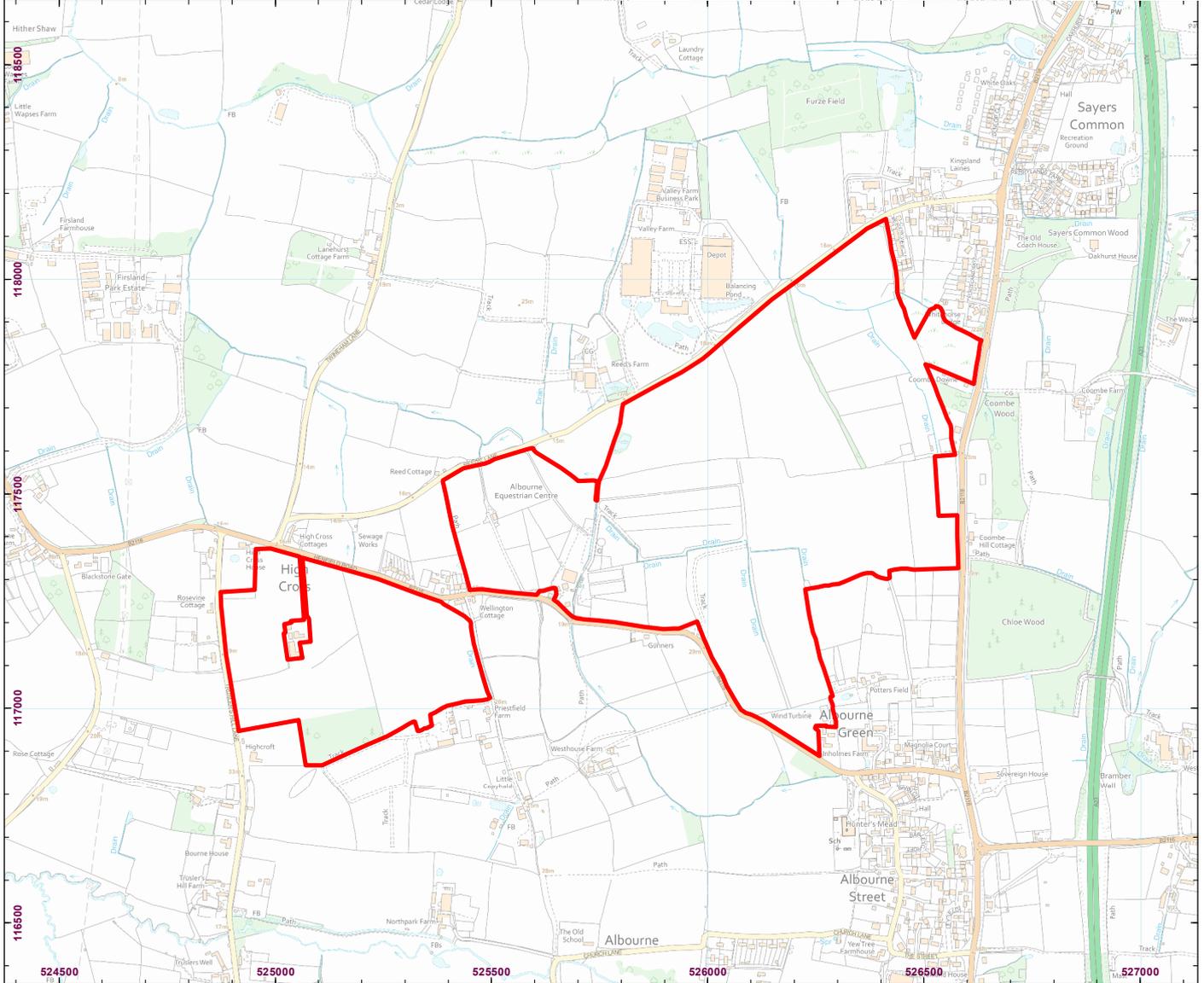
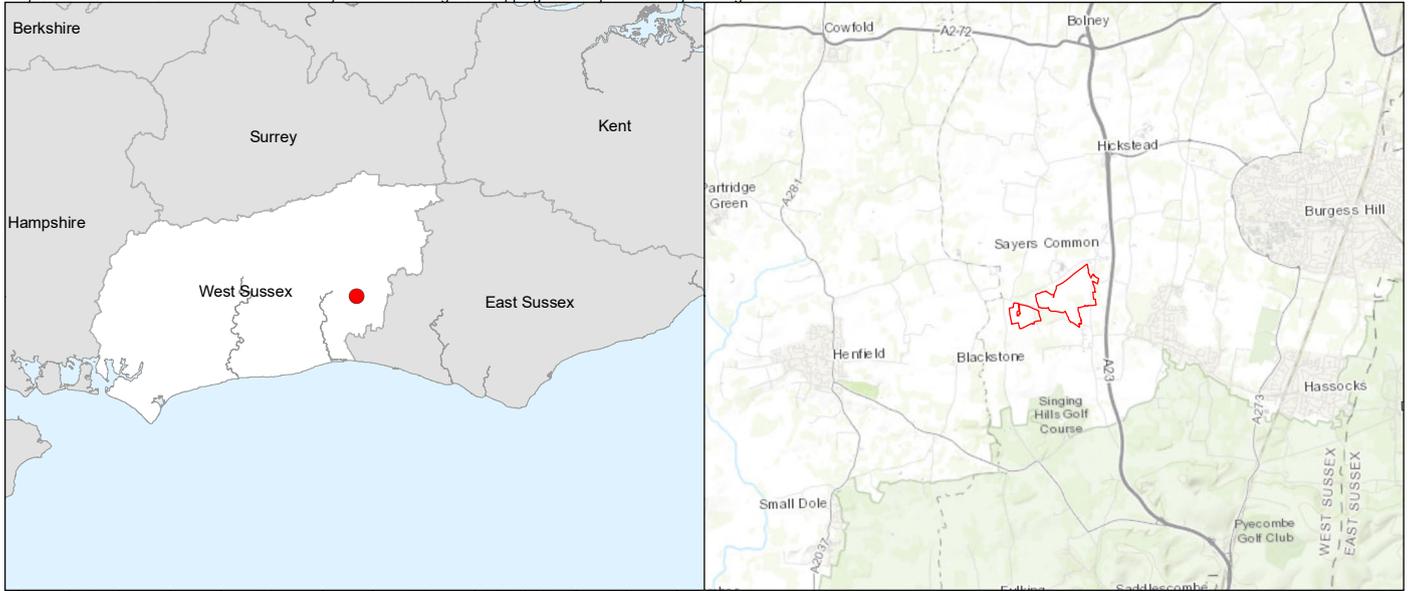
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establishing a suitable layout will be the generous provision of well planted private domestic gardens and landscaped public space across the development. Areas closer to listed buildings, with lower flexibility for built development, represent an opportunity to establish well landscaped transitional spaces from the future built areas within the Site to the immediate agricultural-rural settings of relevant built heritage assets.

31. The retention and enhancement of existing field boundaries and wooded spaces should be utilised to lower the profile of built form and break up its contiguity in views across the Site. This may also contribute to a future development's sense of place by embedding existing landscape features to its layout.
32. Access and routes through the Site should seek to ensure that the proposed development, and individual built areas within it, represents a destination or series of destinations without numerous or urbanised through routes. The suitable management of traffic within the Site will be an important element in the limiting noise and light levels within the Site to respond to the proximate rural character areas. Cycle and pedestrian transit routes should be prioritised as the means of traveling across the parcels of the Site.
33. In terms of scale and massing, heights of 2-2.5 would be most suitable, though there may be opportunities for a limited number of 3 storey buildings. Taller buildings should sit toward the centre of future built areas, with a clear hierarchy of scale that diminishes in height/massing closer to the boundaries of the Site and internal areas of landscaping, retained natural and agricultural space and public open space.

Conclusions/Next Steps

34. Based on the available information no archaeological or built heritage constraints that would preclude the suitability and deliverability of the Site for residential use have been identified, subject to a high quality, design and placemaking led scheme, which is fully informed by the history and architectural character of the local area.
35. The evolving proposed development should take its design basis from the organically evolved, historic villages of the wider landscapes, with a high degree of visual relief delivered through clustering of built areas, generous public and private landscaped spaces and use of varied scale, massing, articulation and materiality.



 Site Boundary



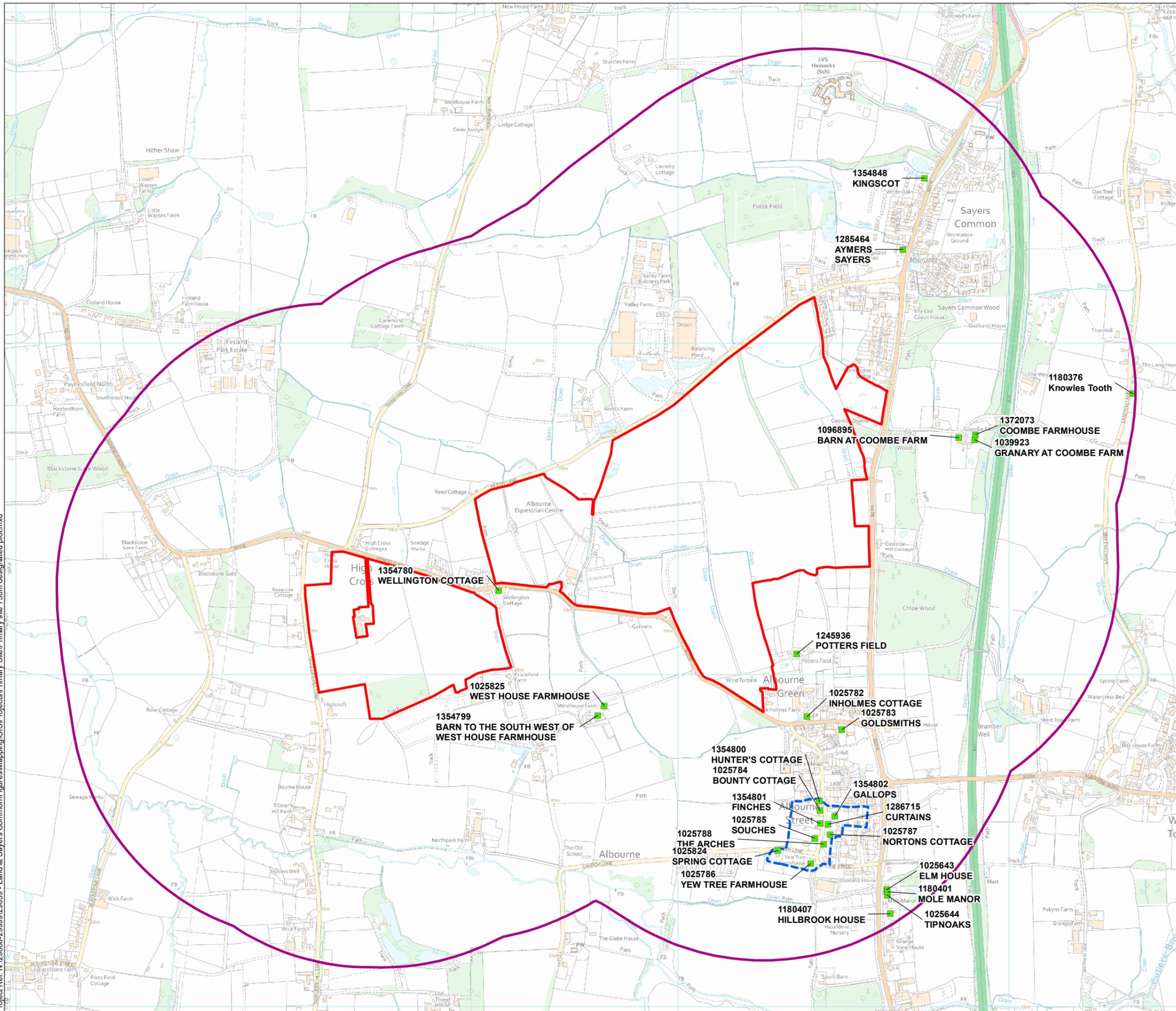
0 200 400m
Scale at A4: 1:15,000



Figure 1

Site Location

Project Ref: N129000-299999\29039 - Land at Sayers Common\GIS\Projects\Primary Site\Primary site_750m designated plot.mxd



Legend

- Site Boundary
- 750m site search radius
- Designated Heritage Assets:**
- Listed Buildings (Grade II)
- Albourne Conservation Area

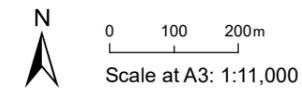
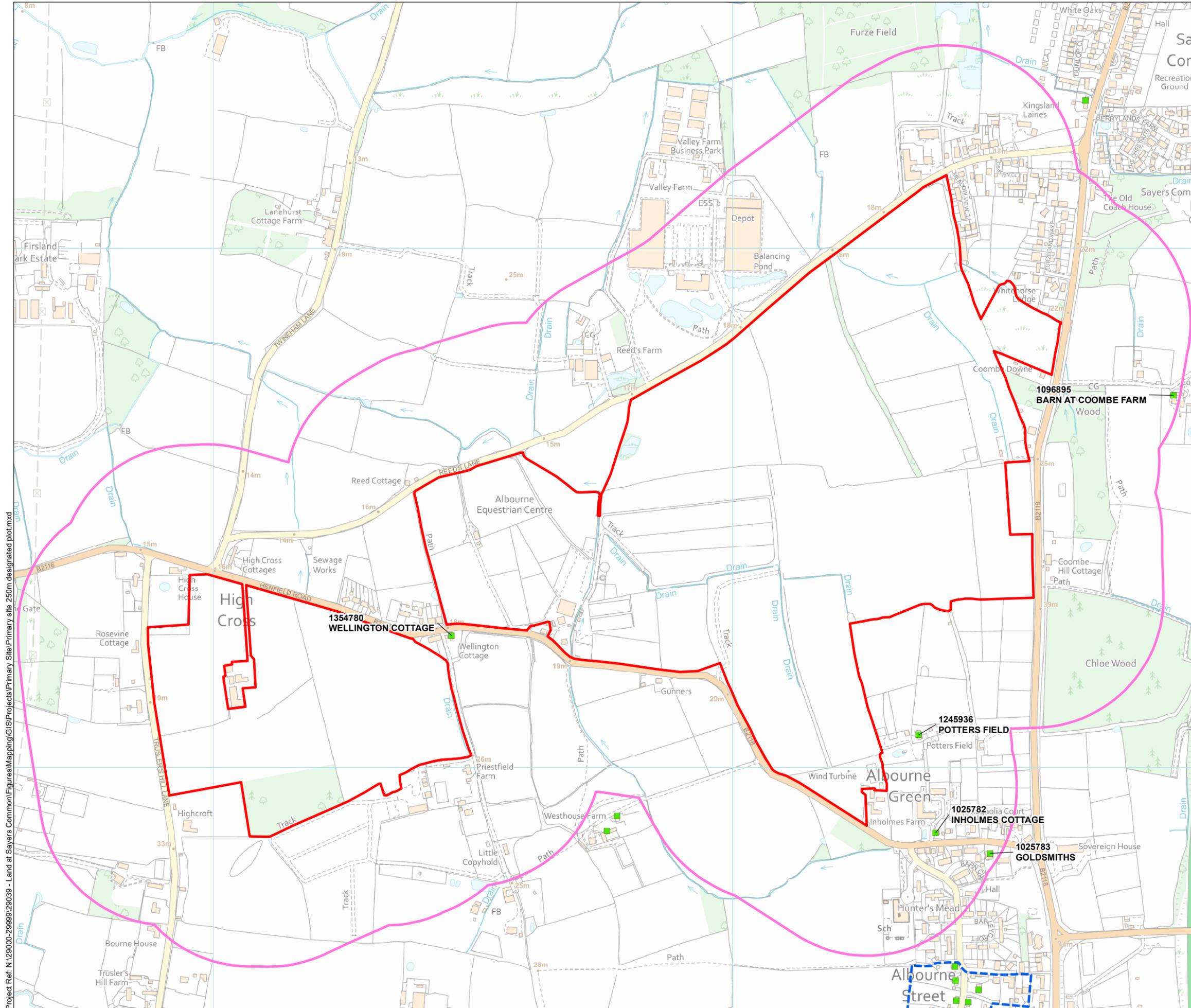


Figure 2a
Designated Heritage Assets within 750m radius of Site Boundary



Legend

- Site Boundary
- 250m site search radius
- Designated Heritage Assets:**
- Listed Buildings (Grade II)
- Albourne Conservation Area

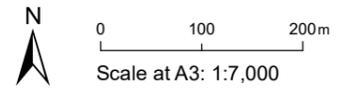
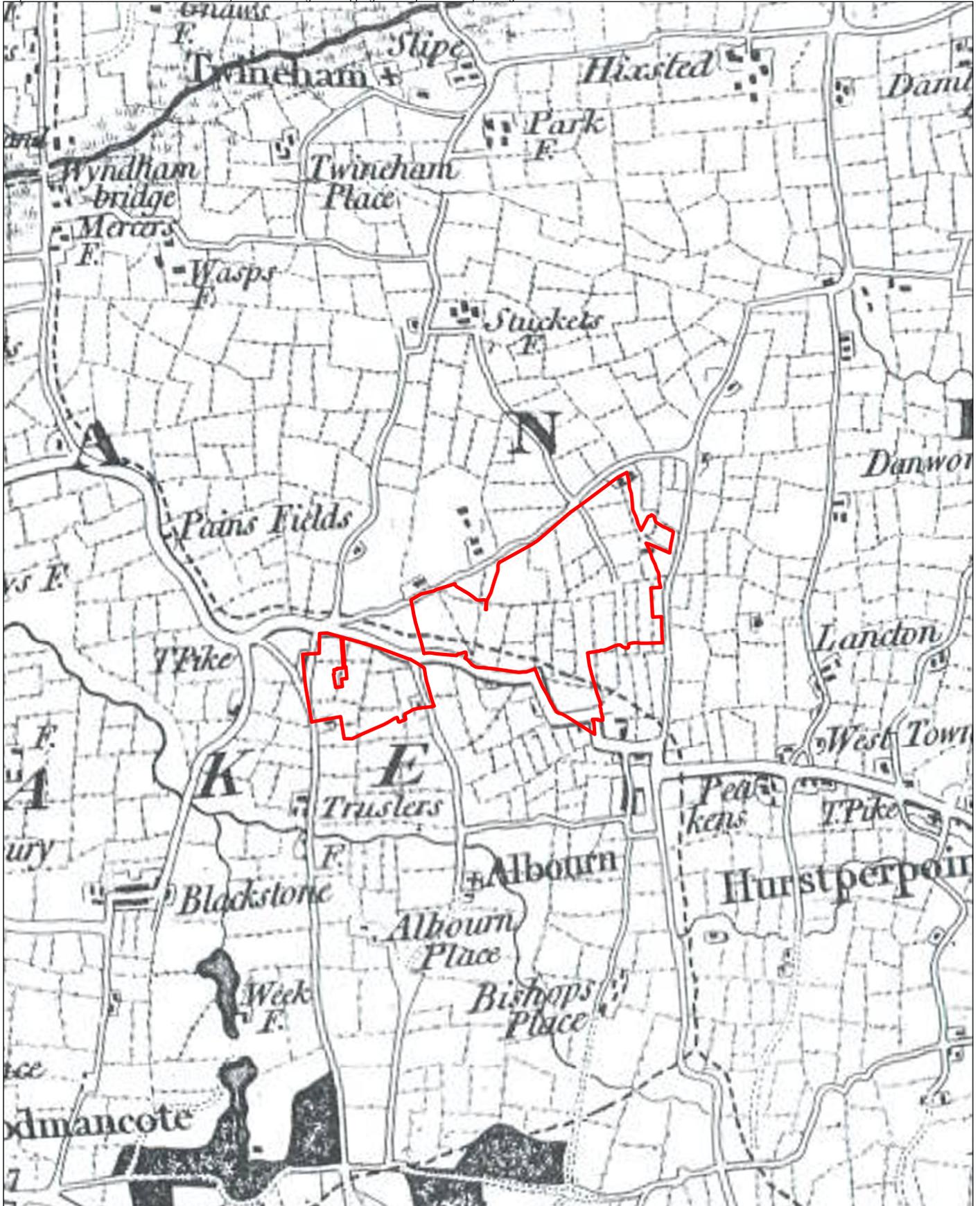


Figure 2b

Designated Heritage Assets within 250m radius of Site Boundary

Project Ref: N:\29000-29999\29039 - Land at Sayers Common\Figures\Mapping\GIS\Projects\Primary_Site\Primary site_250m designated plot.mxd



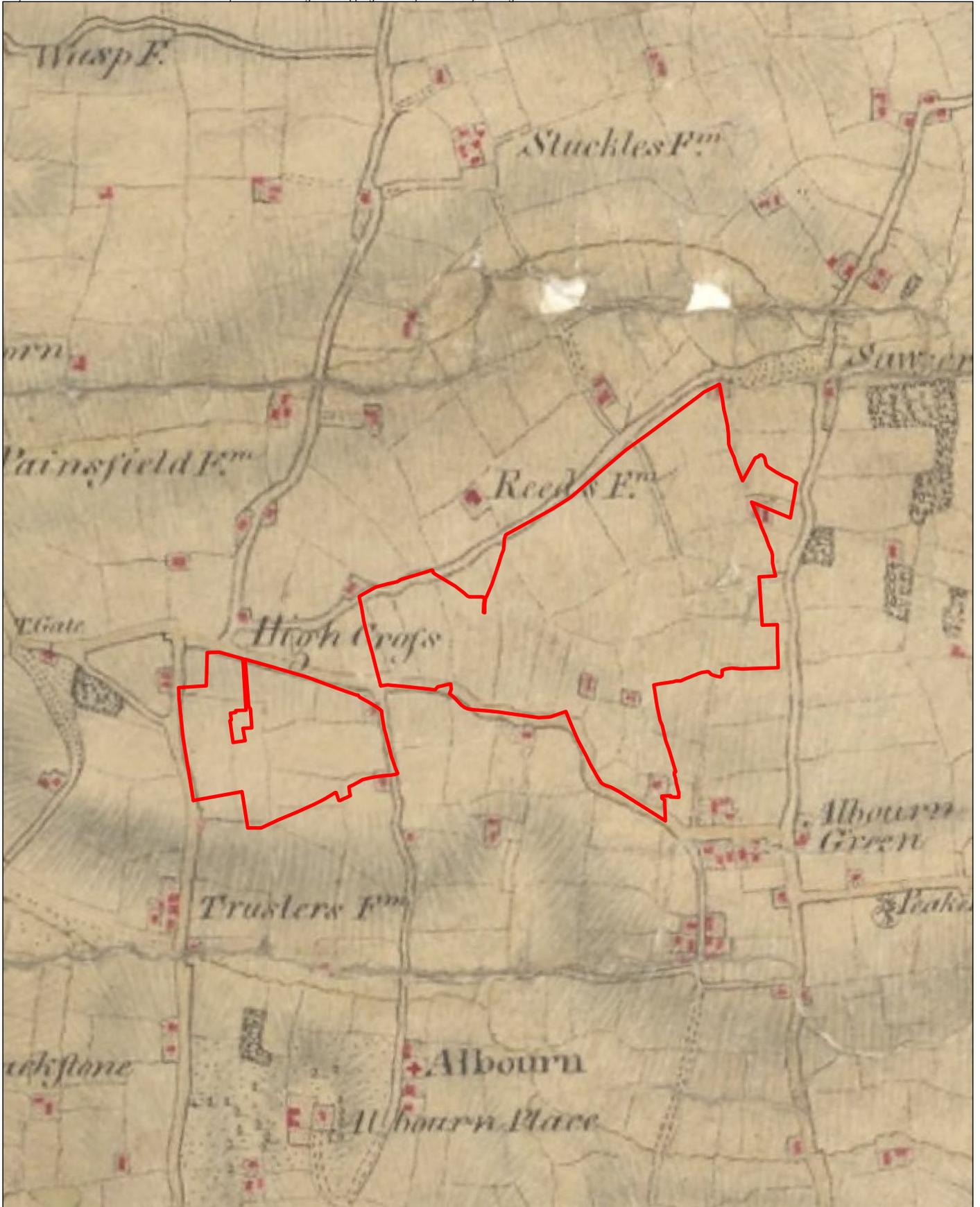
 Approximate Site Location



0 250 500 750m
Scale at A4: 1:25,000 approx.



Figure 3
1795 Gardner & Gream



 Approximate Site Location



0 150 300 450m
Scale at A4: 1:15,000 approx.



Figure 4

1798 OSD



 Approximate Site Location

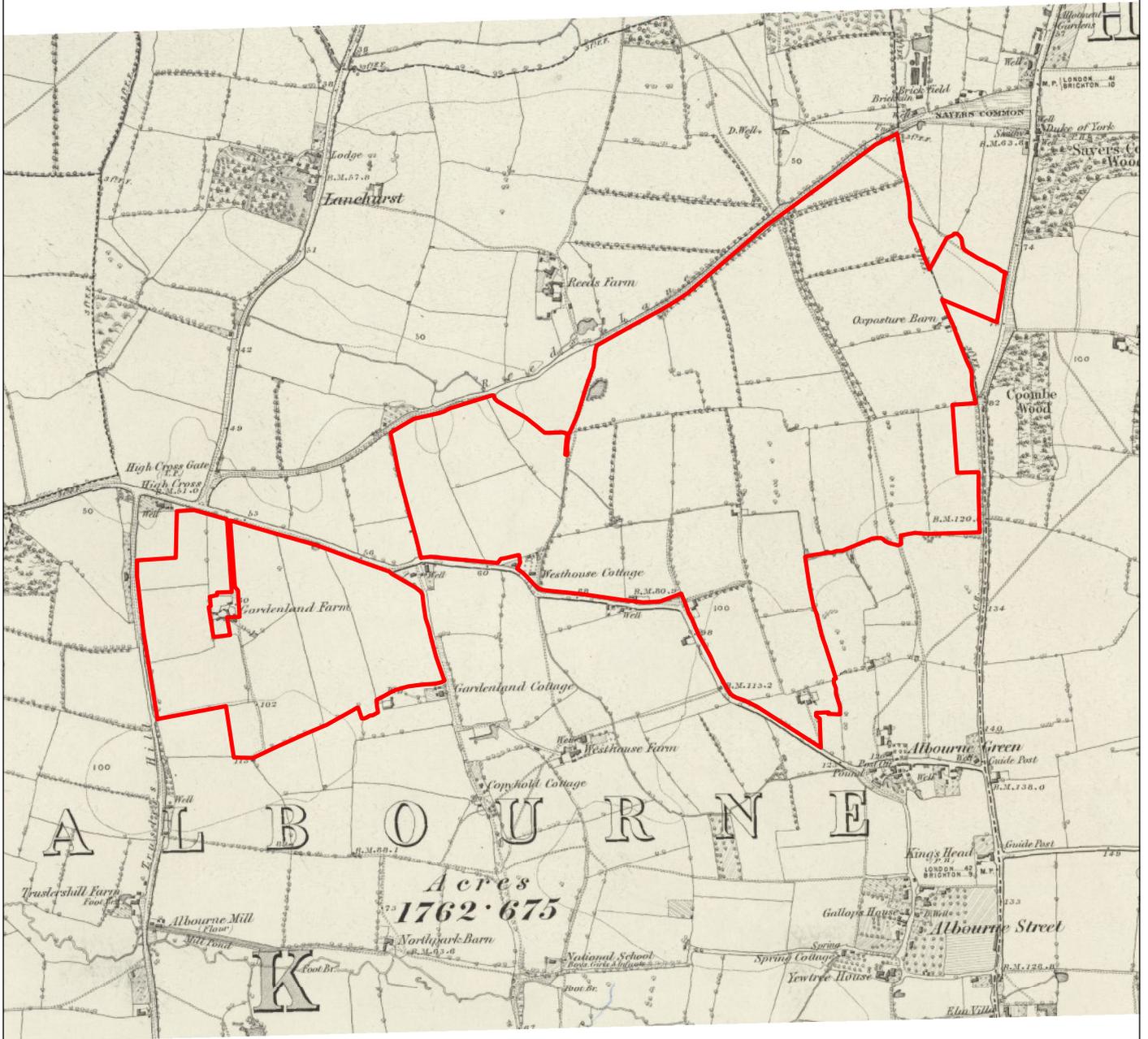


0 125 250m
Scale at A4: 1:12,500 approx.



Figure 5

1838 Tithe Map, Albourne Parish
and 1841 Tithe Map, Hurstpierpoint Parish



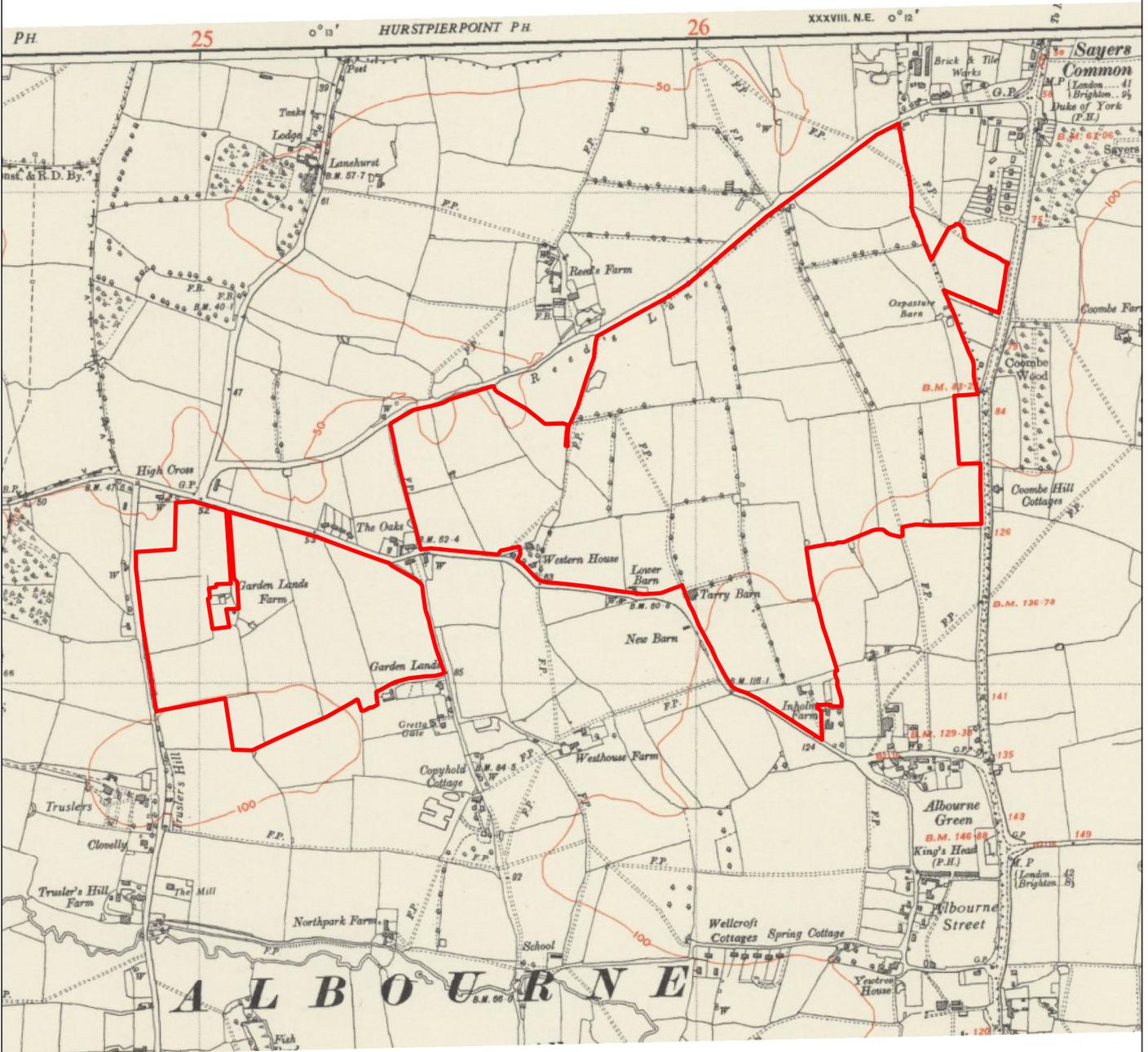
 Site Boundary



0 125 250m
Scale at A4: 1:12,500



Figure 6
1879 OS



 Site Boundary



0 125 250m
Scale at A4: 1:12,500



Figure 7
1952 OS



 Site Boundary



0 125 250m
Scale at A4: 1:12,500



Figure 8

2001 Aerial Photograph (Google Earth Image)



 Site Boundary



0 125 250m
Scale at A4: 1:12,500



Figure 9

2020 Aerial Photograph (Google Earth Image)