

HERITAGE STATEMENT

Villa Farm, Norton Disney, Lincolnshire

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Villa Farm, Norton Disney
Heritage Statement
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This archaeological desk-based assessment has been prepared by RPS for GraceMachin Planning & Property on behalf of T.R. Holmes, in support of an outline planning application for the demolition of existing derelict buildings and erection of two detached dwellings, a driveway and landscaping at Villa Farm, Norton Disney (Application Reference 21/1426/OUT).

The assessment describes and assesses heritage assets potentially affected by the proposed scheme for the site and provides the Heritage Statement required by local planning policy.

The archaeological potential of the site and the significance of heritage assets in the area has been assessed through desk-based review of existing archaeological information, including previous archaeological work undertaken in the immediate vicinity of the application site.

Data available from Historic England and the Local Planning Authority show that there are no designated heritage assets within the site.

A scheduled monument – “*Roman villa west of Hill Holt Farm*” is located on the east side of Folly Lane directly northeast of the application site. The Scheduled Monument is completely screened by existing dense vegetation along the western side of Folly Lane. The current setting of the scheduled monument will not be adversely impacted by development within the site.

There are no further designated heritage assets in the surrounding area which are assessed as potentially affected by the proposed development of the application site.

The Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record (HER) identifies no non-designated assets currently located within the study site.

Based on the fieldwork carried out within the close vicinity of the site in 2017-18, and available archaeological data for a surrounding 1km search area, the application site is assessed to have had a moderate potential to contain Iron Age and/or Roman archaeological remains. However, these are most likely severely truncated or removed entirely within the footprints of the existing buildings and the potential additional impact of the proposed development on any remains within the application site is considered to be minor overall.

The potential for remains of all other periods for any significant remains (i.e. non-agricultural) to be present within the application site is assessed to be low/negligible.

Because of the nature and size of the study site and the assessment of potential above, no further field evaluation is considered necessary to support the submission of a planning application.

If the LPA required further measures to mitigate potential adverse effects on any surviving buried archaeological remains, this can be satisfactorily achieved through a limited programme of archaeological attendance during development groundworks. Such a programme of post-consent work could be secured by a suitably-worded condition attached to planning permission.

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Appendix 1 Gazetteer of HER Entries

1 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF STUDY

- 1.1 This Heritage Assessment has been researched and prepared by RPS for GraceMachin Planning & Property on behalf of T.R. Holmes, in relation to proposed residential development at Villa Farm, Norton Disney.
- 1.2 The roughly 0.6ha site, also referred to in this report as the study site, is located on the western side of Folly Lane, c.3km north-west of Norton Disney, Lincolnshire (NGR SK 8584 6009, Figure 1). It is bound by dense vegetation on all sides and beyond that by Folly Lane in the east and open fields to all other sides.
- 1.3 This document has been prepared in compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework and local planning policy – especially Policy LP25 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2012-2036.
- 1.4 The assessment comprises an examination of evidence in the Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and online resources. Information regarding Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and Listed Buildings was obtained from the Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record and Historic England's National Heritage List for England. The assessment incorporates published and unpublished material and charts historic land-use through review of 19th and 20th century map resources. A site visit was undertaken on 12th October 2021.
- 1.5 The study provides a description of the heritage significance of archaeological assets in the vicinity of the site, and an assessment of the site's potential for the presence of further archaeological assets. As a result, the study enables the Local Planning Authority to identify and assess the impact of the proposed development, and to identify any necessary mitigation measures.

2 PLANNING BACKGROUND AND 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), and it was last updated in July 2021. The NPPF is supported by the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), which was published online 6th March 2014, with the guidance on Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment last updated 23 July 2019. (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment>).
- 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

- 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 194 states applicants should provide a description of the significance of any heritage assets affected 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.

- 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. 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.
- 2.13 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

- 2.14 Relevant Local Planning policy for North Kesteven District is currently provided by the [Central Lincolnshire Local Plan](#) (adopted April 2017). Policy relating to archaeology and the historic environment is provided in Policy LP25:

Policy LP25: The Historic Environment

Development proposals should protect, conserve and seek opportunities to enhance the historic environment of Central Lincolnshire.

In instances where a development proposal would affect the significance of a heritage asset (whether designated or non-designated), including any contribution made by its setting, the applicant will be required to undertake the following, in a manner proportionate to the asset's significance:

a. describe and assess the significance of the asset, including its setting, to determine its architectural, historical or archaeological interest; and

b. identify the impact of the proposed works on the significance and special character of the asset; and

c. provide clear justification for the works, especially if these would harm the significance of the asset or its setting, so that the harm can be weighed against public benefits.

Unless it is explicitly demonstrated that the proposal meets the tests set out in the NPPF, permission will only be granted for development affecting designated or non-designated heritage assets where the impact of the proposal(s) does not harm the significance of the asset and/or its setting.

Development proposals will be supported where they:

d. Protect the significance of designated heritage assets (including their setting) by protecting and enhancing architectural and historic character, historical associations, landscape and townscape features and through consideration of scale, design, materials, siting, layout, mass, use, and views and vistas both from and towards the asset;

e. Promote opportunities to better reveal significance of heritage assets, where possible;

f. Take into account the desirability of sustaining and enhancing non-designated heritage assets and their setting.

The change of use of heritage assets will be supported provided:

g. the proposed use is considered to be the optimum viable use, and is compatible with the fabric, interior, character, appearance and setting of the heritage asset;

h. such a change of use will demonstrably assist in the maintenance or enhancement of the heritage asset; and

i. features essential to the special interest of the individual heritage asset are not lost or altered to facilitate the change of use.

Listed Buildings

Permission to change the use of a listed building or to alter or extend such a building will be granted where the local planning authority is satisfied that the proposal is in the interest of the building's preservation and does not involve activities or alterations prejudicial to the special architectural or historic interest of the Listed Building or its setting.

Permission to demolish or partly demolish a Listed Building will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Development proposals that affect the setting of a Listed Building will be supported where they preserve or better reveal the significance of the Listed Building.

Conservation Areas

Development within, affecting the setting of, or affecting views into or out of, a Conservation Area should preserve, and wherever possible enhance, features that contribute positively to the area's character, appearance and setting. Proposals should:

j. Retain buildings/groups of buildings, existing street patterns, historic building lines and ground surfaces;

k. Retain architectural details that contribute to the character and appearance of the area;

l. Where relevant and practical, remove features which are incompatible with the Conservation Area;

m. Retain and reinforce local distinctiveness with reference to height, massing, scale, form, materials and lot widths of the existing built environment;

n. Assess, and mitigate against, any negative impact the proposal might have on the townscape, roofscape, skyline and landscape;

o. Aim to protect trees, or where losses are proposed, demonstrate how such losses are appropriately mitigated against.

Archaeology

Development affecting archaeological remains, whether known or potential, designated or undesignated, should take every practical and reasonable step to protect and, where possible, enhance their significance.

Planning applications for such development should be accompanied by an appropriate and proportionate assessment to understand the potential for and significance of remains, and the impact of development upon them.

If initial assessment does not provide sufficient information, developers will be required to undertake field evaluation in advance of determination of the application. This may include a range of techniques for both intrusive and non-intrusive evaluation, as appropriate to the site.

Wherever possible and appropriate, mitigation strategies should ensure the preservation of archaeological remains in-situ. Where this is either not possible or not desirable, provision must be made for preservation by record according to an agreed written scheme of investigation submitted by the developer and approved by the planning authority.

Any work undertaken as part of the planning process must be appropriately archived in a way agreed with the local planning authority.

- 2.15 In line with Local Plan Policy LP25 above, this Heritage Statement provides the appropriate and proportionate archaeological assessment and clarifies the site's archaeological potential.

3 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

Geology

- 3.1 The British Geological Survey (BGS) 1:50,000 records the geology within the study site as mudstone and limestone of the Scunthorpe Mudstone Formation with superficial deposits recorded as sand and gravel of the Eagle Moor Sand and Gravel Member across the study site (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>).
- 3.2 The Cranfield Soil and Agrifood Institute identifies the soils within the study site as naturally wet very acid sandy and loamy (Soilscape 15; <http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscales/>).

Topography

- 3.3 The study site is located on the upper part of the north-west – south-east orientated ridge of higher ground, sometimes referred to as 'Potter Hill', between Collingham c.3km to the north-west, Swinderby c.2.7km to the north and Norton Disney c.3km to the south-east. The topography of the site itself is relatively flat at c.40m AOD.
- 3.4 The Trent river valley is located c.5km to the west of the study site. In Landscape Character terms, the site is located within the centre of the Trent and Belvoir Vales National Character Area (NCA). This Landscape Character Area is characterised by undulating, strongly rural and predominantly arable farmland, centred on the River Trent. A low-lying rural landscape with relatively little woodland cover, the NCA offers long, open views (Natural England 2013).

Site Conditions

- 3.5 A site visit was carried out on 12th October 2021.
- 3.6 The site is located on the western side of Folly Lane and comprises the derelict buildings and outbuildings of Villa Farm (comprising two existing semi-detached bungalows and eleven other nondescript former farm buildings and structures of mid 20th century date); an access road flanked by dense vegetation; and an overall surrounding area of plantation woodland (Plates 1-4).
- 3.7 The site was overgrown in places and contained extensive areas of dumped materials.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND WITH ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Timescales used in this report

Prehistoric

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

Historic

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

Introduction

- 4.1 This 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. 2-3), also referred to as the search area, based on information provided by the Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and other sources, together with a historic map regression exercise charting the development of the study area from the 19th century onwards until the present day.
- 4.3 Chapter 5 subsequently considers whether the proposed development will impact the theoretical archaeological potential identified below.

Designated Heritage Assets

- 4.4 Data obtained from Historic England and the Local Planning Authority confirms that there are no designated heritage assets (Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas, Registered Battlefields or Parks and Gardens) on the study site (Figure 2).
- 4.5 Within the surrounding 1km search area, the only designated heritage asset is the Scheduled Monument “*Roman villa West of Hill Holt Farm*” (National Heritage List Entry no 1005018) which is located on the opposite side of Folly Lane directly north-east of the study site. The asset comprises the below-ground remains of a small Roman villa set within a substantial ditched enclosure, leading to it being described by its excavator as a ‘fortified villa’.
- 4.6 Despite the absence of visible evidence, the study site is considered to form part of the setting of this asset because of its proximity and this is given detailed consideration in paras 4.61.-4.66.

- 4.7 There are no Listed Buildings within the 1km search area, and the Grade II listed assets of *Potter Hill Farm* (List 1360488), *Birch Holt Farmhouse* and associated *Pigeoncote and Outbuildings* (List 1360556 and 1061907) c.1.1km to the north-north-east and north-east are not inter-visible with the study site.
- 4.8 Because of their distance from the study site, the extent of intervening vegetation screening and the A46 dual carriageway, it is concluded that the study site does not form part of the setting of any of these assets; and that there is no potential for the proposed development to harm the above assets' significance. Further description and assessment of these assets is not required.

Non-Designated Heritage Assets

- 4.9 The HER identifies no non-designated assets within the study site.
- 4.10 Within the 1km search area, one asset required further assessment; Iron Age or Roman settlement at Brills Hill (LHER MLI82227), c.50m south-west of the study site. Although this asset has no visible component, because of its proximity to the study site and its probable relationship with the Scheduled villa site, its significance is discussed further in paras 4.68-4.71.
- 4.11 A gazetteer of HER records is included in Appendix 1. Their locations are shown on Figure 3.

Previous Archaeological Work

- 4.12 The HER data contains 18 records of archaeological 'events' in the 1km radius search area around the site, including archaeological excavation, trial trenching, watching briefs, collection of surface archaeological finds through fieldwalking, and more casual finds of individual artefacts.
- 4.13 Within the study site and its immediate surroundings, the HER records a site visit/field observation (ELI13151), undertaken as part of a previous desk-based assessment (CgMs 2017). No additional archaeological finds or features were noted during the site visit.
- 4.14 Geophysical survey (ELI13150) was carried out in 2017 within areas to the immediate south, west and north-west of the study site to inform a previous proposed development on land at Villa Farm. The survey (PCG 2017) recorded a number of previously undiscovered archaeological features - most notably in the form of clearly defined geophysical traces of a c.25m diameter sub-circular enclosure and c.6m wide circular ditch (potentially a round house or round barrow ditch) to the southwest of the study site. These features were considered likely to represent traces of a hitherto unrecorded area of Iron Age or Roman settlement remains. These features have since been incorporated on the Lincolnshire HER as an extension of the Brills Hill settlement site to the south (HER ref MLI82227).
- 4.15 The same areas were evaluated through trial trenching in 2018 (PCAS Archaeology 2018; no HER reference yet). 19 trenches were excavated, 15 of which contained archaeological features, including Iron Age features in the area of the geophysical traces south-west of the study site. In addition, the evaluation confirmed the presence of a probable minor Roman road to the north of the study site, leading to the villa itself.
- 4.16 The site of the scheduled Roman Villa on the opposite side of Folly Lane, was subject to excavations in the 1930s (Oswald 1937; ELI3985), fieldwalking programmes in the 1970s (ELI13119 and ELI3986) and more recently to fluxgate gradiometer and resistivity geophysical surveys, both in 2018 (PCG 2018; no HER reference yet). In addition to the 1930s excavation site, the surveys recorded hitherto unknown anomalies associated with the villa complex.
- 4.17 A review and assessment of aerial photographic sources was carried out by Air Photo Services in 2018 (APS 2018; no HER reference yet). The object of the assessment was to provide information on the location and extent of any traces of the scheduled Roman villa, and to identify any elements of this known villa which may be visible outside the modern field in which the remains of the villa are

buried. The assessment identified evidence outside of the villa site boundary and in the buffer areas for foci of likely (but not firmly dated) Iron Age or Roman 'rural' or farmstead type occupation, and agricultural activity since the prehistoric periods.

- 4.18 The previous archaeological investigations are recorded within the gazetteer of HER records included in Appendix 1.
- 4.19 Although no previous archaeological investigations are understood to have taken place within the study site itself, the multiple surveys undertaken in the immediately surrounding area - especially in the period 2017-18 - provide a good baseline dataset, and which enables a robust assessment of the study site's archaeological potential.

Archaeological Background and Assessment of Potential

Earlier Prehistoric (Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age)

- 4.20 There is no evidence of Prehistoric activity currently recorded in the HER for the study site.
- 4.21 Evidence from the surrounding search area relates to finds of individual prehistoric artefacts as surface finds: a flint scraper (HER MLI84047) and a number of redeposited Prehistoric flints (HER MLI125484) were discovered during fieldwalking on the Roman villa site east of Folly Lane; a Bronze Age axehead from the Potter Hill area c.200m north-west of the study site (HER MLI84054); the head of an early Bronze Age perforated stone mace c.250m north-east (HER MLI125483); a flint awl found near the A46 c.350m north-west of the site (HER MLI84056). No features or finds of confirmed earlier prehistoric date were recovered in the 2018 trial trenching adjacent to the study site.
- 4.22 The evidence from the search area is typical of a background pattern of prehistoric activity within the area, with no concentrations of finds known which might indicate more intensive focused activity. On topographical grounds, the elevated position of the ridge on which the study site sits can be seen as being potentially favourable for settlement particularly in the areas of more permeable sand and gravel geology to the east of the study site.
- 4.23 The 2017 geophysical survey and 2018 trial trenching identified a 6m diameter circular feature within a field to the immediate south-west of the current study site. The feature is conceivably interpretable as a small barrow ring ditch, although a more plausible interpretation is of a later, Iron Age or Roman period roundhouse. This interpretation is discussed in paragraph 4.26 below.
- 4.24 Based on the archaeological evidence from the immediate surrounding areas of the study site, it is considered to have an uncertain – but probably low – potential for more substantial prehistoric sites or monuments.

Iron Age & Roman

- 4.25 The data obtained from the HER does not contain any evidence for Iron Age or Roman activity on the study site.
- 4.26 The 2017 geophysical survey and 2018 trial trenching identified remains of three Iron Age ring ditches or enclosures within the fields to the immediate south-west of the current study site. These remains are now recorded in the HER as an extended north-western part of the cropmark Brills Farm site (HER MLI82227) in the area north of Brills Farm. Finds recovered from the enclosures in the trial trenching included relatively small assemblages of late Iron Age pottery and storage vessels. Plant macrofossil assemblages from recovered soil samples were characterised by a very low density of charred and mineral-replaced macrofossils, including common hedgerow/scrub species and a small amount of cereal grains. The specialist assessment in the trial trenching report described in the environmental results and the level of evidence present were considered to be average for a rural site.

- 4.27 Further evidence from the surrounding search area points to relatively widespread use and occupation of the local area, with other known or probable settlement sites identified to the east, south and north of the study site.
- 4.28 Evidence for Iron Age activity was also recovered in archaeological trial works adjacent to the A46 northwest of the study site: A substantial Iron Age ditch (HER MLI84101) and finds and shallow features were identified. An undated low earthwork bank (HER MLI84099) on the county boundary could also be related to this.
- 4.29 Several large blocks of Iron Age slag (HER MLI125345) were recovered in January 2018 c.300m east of the site. Analysis of samples taken from the blocks strongly indicated that they were pit-type iron smelting slags of probable mid Iron Age date, suggesting that the smelting of significant quantities of iron was being conducted somewhere in this vicinity at that time.
- 4.30 The site of a Roman villa is located around 20m north-east of study site (HER MLI60745 / Scheduled as National Heritage List entry 1005018). The site was discovered, and partly excavated, in the 1930s. The heritage significance of the villa site is discussed in greater detail below. Subsequent fieldwalking over and around in the villa site in the between 1970 and 1975 recovered further Roman pottery and a large number of coins spanning the 1st/2nd Century to the 4th Century. The distribution of finds, according to the description in the file notes in the HER, appeared to reflect the location and approximate extent of the villa buildings; and did not show a wider distribution across the field.
- 4.31 The modern A46 road follows the course of a major Roman road Fosse Way (HER MLI60943). The 2018 trial trenching identified a possible minor Roman road or trackway to the north of the study site. The possible road/trackway lies on the projected route of a suggested minor Roman road line extending from the River Trent valley floor via North Scaffold Lane and across the Fosse Way (A46) in the direction of the Roman villa.
- 4.32 Evidence of early Roman pottery and gullies were identified in the same archaeological trial works adjacent to Folly Lane and the A46 (HER MLI84100), with further Roman pottery recovered further south-west on the opposite side of the A46 / Fosse Way (HER MLI84049).
- 4.33 The findspot of a Romano-British copper alloy figurine of a horse and rider (HER MLI125319) is recorded roughly 900m south-west from the study site.
- 4.34 The geophysical survey and trial trenching suggest that the enclosures to the south-west of the study site cannot be seen as forming part of a wider area of Iron Age occupation contiguous with the site identified at Brills Farm. None of the features identified in the survey or trial trenching appear to extent into the study site. Nonetheless, due to its close proximity to the study site, a potential for additional Iron Age and/or Roman remains within the site cannot be discounted entirely. However, any such remains would have been severely truncated or perhaps removed entirely within the footprints of the existing buildings and the potential for survival is assessed to be low.

Saxon/Early Medieval

- 4.35 There is no evidence of Saxon activity on the study site or within the search area on the HER.
- 4.36 Given the paucity of Saxon and Early Medieval activity within the search area and the absence of any Saxon period finds in the previous archaeological trial trenching and the fieldwalking within and the close vicinity of the study site, the site is considered to have negligible potential for significant evidence dating to this period.

Medieval and Post-Medieval

- 4.37 The HER data does not contain any evidence of Medieval or Post-Medieval activity on the study site.

- 4.38 Ridge and furrow earthworks are noted in the HER c.100m north-west of the study site (HER MLI84097). However, this area is now cultivated, and no evidence for ridge and furrow earthworks appears to survive. The 2017 geophysical survey identified some evidence for former ridge and furrow strip cultivation (HER MLI125373) to the immediate west of the study site.
- 4.39 Other recorded Medieval and Post-Medieval sites within the search area include a third area of ridge and furrow earthworks (HER MLI86265) within later woodland at Hill Holt Wood to the north-east of the study site; finds of small quantities of Medieval and Post-Medieval pottery from fields beside the A46 (HER MLI125862); and a medieval silver penny (HER MLI84048) recovered in fieldwalking on the Roman villa site. Such pottery and single coin finds are typically have derived rubbish incorporated in manuring waste spread on the open fields or casual single losses.
- 4.40 The study site is well removed from the historic settlement core of Norton Disney and occupies a marginal location close to the parish (and county) boundary, which suggests that the site would have formed part of the open field system, or heathland/common grazing land associated with the village settlement.
- 4.41 The site is therefore, considered to have a high potential for ploughed-out evidence of former strip cultivation, as recorded in the HER immediately west of the site and the geophysical survey, but a negligible potential for significant (i.e. non-agricultural) remains dating to the Medieval and Post-Medieval periods.

Modern (including map regression exercise)

- 4.42 The data obtained from the HER does not contain any Modern period records on the study site.
- 4.43 HER records within the search area relate to extant 19th century farms such as Hill Holt Farm (HER MLI119772) and Brills Farm (HER MLI119783) to the east and south-west of the study site respectively.

Historic map regression

- 4.44 The earliest published map showing the study site and search area in any detail is the Ordnance Survey 1" 'Old Series' map, published in 1824 (Figure 4). This shows the study site lying to the south-west of what is now Folly Lane, a short distance south-east of the Newark – Lincoln road (Fosse Way). No details of internal features within the study site are depicted, although the map does indicate the local topography clearly.
- 4.45 Sanderson's 1835 map of Nottinghamshire (Figure 5) does show the field boundaries within and around the study site – which are virtually unchanged to the present day.
- 4.46 The Ordnance Survey 'County Series' 6" map published at the end of the 19th century (Figure 6), shows no change within the study site.
- 4.47 Beyond the study site boundary, the Roman villa site is first recorded and labelled as an antiquity on OS maps published from the 1950s onwards (maps not reproduced).
- 4.48 Villa Farm, the farm holding within the study site, has mid-20th Century origins, and is not shown on OS maps before the 1960s.
- 4.49 From the end of the 20th century the dualled course of the A46 Fosse Way is shown to the north-west of the study site. Dualling resulted in widening and straightening of the road to the east of its earlier - Post-Medieval - alignment, returning it to the line of the county boundary.
- 4.50 Based on the HER data and the historic map evidence, the site's potential for significant (i.e. non-agricultural) Modern evidence is therefore, considered to be negligible.

Assessment of Significance (Designated Assets)

4.51 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.

Roman villa West of Hill Holt Farm (National Heritage List Entry no 1005018)

4.52 The villa site is located c.20m north-east of the study site, on the opposite side of Folly Lane. The asset comprises the below-ground remains of a small Roman villa, described by its excavator as being a ‘fortified villa’ set within a substantial ditched enclosure. It is designated as a Scheduled Monument (List Entry 1005018) and is a heritage asset of high (national) importance.

Significance

4.53 The villa was discovered in 1933 and was designated as a Scheduled Monument in 1934. A series of archaeological excavations were undertaken between 1934 and 1937 (Oswald 1937). Although these excavations did not include full excavation of the earlier phases of construction on site, the results provide a good description of the outline history of the site. The excavation report describes a multi-phase development of the villa site from the middle of the 1st Century AD to the middle of the 4th Century, progressing from a simple structure to a winged corridor villa, with an attached bathhouse and a basilican building to the north. Decoratively, the later phases of the villa included geometric mosaic floors and foliage-decorated wall plaster. The villa buildings were surrounded, from the 3rd Century onwards, by two phases of a curvilinear double-ditched enclosure, with a substantial semi-circular gatehouse identified on the east side.

4.54 The villa survives solely in the form of below-ground archaeological features, with no visible indication at ground level – although a surrounding enclosure ditch has been identified as a cropmark on some aerial photographs and has been identified in the recent geophysical surveys.

4.55 The range & quantity of finds recovered from the ploughsoil around the villa site in the 1930s and in more recent archaeological fieldwork in the 1970s demonstrates that archaeological deposits within the site have suffered continued erosion through cultivation. Nevertheless, the monument retains considerable archaeological interest – reflected in its designation as a Scheduled Monument. The partial excavations in the 1930s have demonstrated the extent and nature of the surviving remains, and the chronological development of the site. The earlier, more deeply buried phases of the villa buildings were not fully investigated in the seasons of excavation in the 1930s, and well-preserved evidence for the 1st and 2nd century villa buildings are anticipated to survive as buried archaeological remains.

4.56 The excavated evidence demonstrates that the Hill Holt villa site contains many typical features of minor Roman villas - the range and form of structures present, the gradual increase in building size and complexity over a period of around 300 years, and the presence of characteristic Romanised architectural and decorative elements such as mosaic floors, decorated wall plaster, underfloor heating in some rooms, and an attached bathhouse suite. The substantial surrounding defensive enclosure ditches inferred on the 1930s plans are less common, but are not unparalleled. It is however noted that the 2018 geophysical survey did not produce any real corroborating evidence for these enclosing ditches.

4.57 The monument is likely to contain waterlogged archaeological remains in particularly deep features. Such waterlogged remains may retain valuable environmental evidence for the landscape around the villa site during the Roman period and preserve a wider range of artefacts under anaerobic conditions.

4.58 The information and finds from the 1930s excavations (the academic report published in 1937, and press reports at the time), supplemented by the 1970s surface finds and the 2018 geophysical surveys, provide a better level of documentation and information on the villa site than is often

available for Scheduled Monuments, as such designated sites are typically protected from disturbance and archaeological excavation.

4.59 The villa site is not readily apparent as a monument in the landscape, but a degree of public awareness of the villa can be assumed as a result of the information available in the records of the Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record and the National Heritage List, and the previous inclusion of the site as an Antiquity depicted on OS maps. A previous planning application for development at Villa Farm in 2018 has also led to a renewed and increased public interest in the villa.

4.60 In summary, the heritage significance of the Hill Holt villa can be expressed in terms of its:

Archaeological Interest

- the degree of survival of physical evidence for the villa - particularly for the early phases, not targeted in the 1930s excavations;
- the continued occupation of the site from the 1st Century AD throughout the Roman period;
- The unusual substantial defensive enclosure ditches inferred from the 1930s excavations
- potential for enhanced survival of evidence under waterlogged conditions in deep features

Historic Interest

- Information generated through the original archaeological investigations of the villa in the 1930s and the later 1970s surface survey;
- Information generated by the 2018 geophysical surveys

Architectural Interest

- the range and form of Roman building types identified within the villa complex;
- the architectural and decorative elements present, including mosaic floors, decorated wall plaster, underfloor heating in some rooms.

Setting

4.61 The immediate setting of the villa is provided by the rectangular arable field within which the archaeological remains are located. This is reflected in the extent of the Scheduling designation. The field is bounded on all sides by mature hedges, and these limit the extent to which the villa site is experienced as a specific feature or prominent element within the surrounding landscape. Certainly, in travelling along Folly Lane – which passes to the west of the field / villa site, between it and the proposed development site – the experience is of an enclosed country lane, with lateral views of the fields to either side of the road having little prominence.

4.62 This lack of wider views beyond the immediate surroundings of the villa site itself is increased by the presence of Hill Holt Wood to the north-east of the field, which acts as a clear backdrop and terminal in views across the villa site from Folly Lane, and prevents more extensive views out of the villa site towards Lincoln.

4.63 In a wider topographical setting, the villa site can be perceived as occupying a position on the ridge of high ground, in a relatively prominent position overlooking the A46, although the villa site itself sits slightly off the crest of the ridge. Within the modern landscape, the villa site itself is not clearly discernible in the longer distance views from the south, but adjacent Hill Holt Wood serves as a visual guide to the approximate location of the asset.

4.64 The presence of broadly contemporary (Iron Age – Roman) below-ground archaeological remains in the area around the scheduled villa site (to the immediate south-west of the study site) adds value to its setting by providing evidence of the contemporary landscape of the villa complex. These areas of archaeological remains include the undated (but anticipated to be Iron Age) settlement remains in the field containing the villa site; the extensive cropmark remains at Brills Farm (HER MLI82227); and the Iron Age enclosures and later field boundaries identified in trial trenching within surrounding fields of the study site.

Contribution of Setting to the Significance of the Villa

- 4.65 The contribution that the setting makes to the significance of the monument can be expressed in terms of the evidential value it provides for the conjectural reasons for the villa's siting, possibly allowing the villa site to be seen as having some implicit controlling relationship with the surrounding land and some intended prominence in the local landscape – albeit that any functional or tenural links between the villa site and the surrounding land are hypothetical and probably unprovable.
- 4.66 Setting provides a contribution to the values outlined above regarding the significance of this designated heritage asset, although the significance of the asset relates primarily to the archaeological interest present in surviving below-ground remains, and the historic interest already garnered through the original archaeological investigations of the villa in the 1930s and the 2018 geophysical surveys.

Assessment of Significance (Non-Designated Assets)

- 4.67 There are no heritage assets currently recorded within the study site.

Iron Age – Roman settlement site at Brills Hill, Norton Disney (HER MLI82227)

- 4.68 This non-designated heritage asset lies outside the application site and comprises a group of conjoined ditched enclosures and associated trackways located north and south of Brills Hill Farm, and extending to the fields southwest of the study site. A large double-ditched enclosure within this complex of features has been tentatively interpreted in the HER description as a possible Iron Age defended enclosure or hillfort.
- 4.69 This asset is assessed as being of moderate (regional) importance.
- 4.70 The significance of this non-designated heritage asset relates to its archaeological interest and the evidence that surviving below-ground features can provide for late Iron Age and/or Roman period rural settlement and agricultural practices.
- 4.71 Confirmation of the double-ditched enclosure as an Iron Age defended enclosure would be important in the context of local settlement hierarchy and a possible earlier expression of the higher status activity in the area which was later evidenced by the Roman villa west of Hill Holt Farm, only c.200m to the north.
- 4.72 Based on the recent fieldwork carried out within the close vicinity of the site, as well as the available archaeological data of the surrounding 1km search area, the study site is assessed to have previously had a moderate potential for further Iron Age and/or Roman archaeological remains. However, any such remains are most likely severely truncated or removed entirely within the footprints of the existing buildings and the potential for survival of any significant archaeological remains within the study site is considered to be low.
- 4.73 The potential for remains of all other periods for any significant remains (i.e. non-agricultural) to be preserved within the study site is assessed to be low/negligible.
- 4.74 The heritage significance of any such remains within the site relate to their evidential value and archaeological interest. Any surviving remains are likely be of local importance depending on their potential to contribute to relevant research agendas.

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

Proposed Development

- 5.1 The current planning application proposes demolition of two existing semi-detached dwellings and erection of two new detached dwellings within the site. Other existing former farm-buildings within the site will also be demolished. The existing vehicular access to the site from Folly Lane will be retained, and used for the two new dwellings.
- 5.2 Although submitted as an outline application with all matters reserved, the proposed block plan in the application suggests division of the site into two plots, with the two new detached dwellings each located in areas currently occupied by farm buildings. New vehicle parking areas are proposed for both dwellings.

Review of Potential Development Impacts on Designated Archaeological Assets

Roman villa West of Hill Holt Farm (National Heritage List Entry no 1005018)

- 5.3 The proposed development will be similar to the already existing dwellings within the study site and will have no direct physical impact on this designated heritage asset or indeed on its setting.
- 5.4 Screened by existing vegetation along the western side of Folly Lane, the new buildings will not be any more perceptible than the already existing buildings within the site and as such, the current setting of the Roman villa site will be unaffected.

Review of Potential Development Impacts on Non-Designated Assets

Iron Age – Roman settlement site at Brills Hill, Norton Disney (HER MLI82227)

- 5.5 The proposed development will have no physical impact on this non-designated asset at its current extent, as the proposed development will be similar to the already existing buildings within the study site.
- 5.6 The heritage significance of this asset lies principally in the archaeological interest present in the buried remains and the potential information they can provide on the nature and chronology of activity in the local area.

Further archaeological assets within the study site

- 5.7 The potential development impact on any additional – as-yet undiscovered – buried archaeological assets within the study is considered to be minor overall.
- 5.8 Construction of the existing buildings on the site in the middle of the 20th Century can be expected to have truncated or destroyed any earlier archaeology within the individual building footprints and surrounding areas to some degree.
- 5.9 The demolition of the existing buildings and construction of the proposed new detached dwellings in previously-developed parts of the site is assessed as having limited potential to cause significant further damage.

- 5.10 Theoretically, the potential for buried archaeology within current open spaces within the site is greater, although rooting from the dense trees and bushes, and formation of the existing access are both anticipated to have had some adverse effect on survival of buried remains.
- 5.11 The general landscaping for the new development and formation of a new drive and parking areas have the potential to impact on any remains that currently survive.
- 5.12 The constructional techniques employed in modern development are such that any other buried archaeological remains now present on the study site are unlikely to survive the development process. The sort of remains anticipated to survive within the undeveloped areas of the site are ephemeral pits and postholes that would not survive the anticipated further development impact and will not remain below the currently developed areas of the site.

6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 This archaeological desk-based assessment has been prepared by RPS in support of an outline planning application for the demolition of existing derelict buildings and erection of two detached dwellings, a driveway and landscaping at Villa Farm, Norton Disney (Application Reference 21/1426/OUT).
- 6.2 The assessment describes and assesses heritage assets potentially affected by the proposed scheme for the site and provides the Heritage Statement required by local planning policy.
- 6.3 The archaeological potential of the site and the significance of heritage assets within the site has been assessed through desk-based review of existing archaeological information, including previous archaeological works undertaken in the immediate vicinity of the study site.
- 6.4 Data available from Historic England and the Local Planning Authority shows that there are no designated heritage assets within the site.
- 6.5 A scheduled monument – “*Roman villa west of Hill Holt Farm*“ is located on the east side of Folly Lane directly northeast of the study site. The Scheduled Monument is completely screened by existing dense vegetation along the western side of Folly Lane. The modern setting of the scheduled monument will not be adversely impacted by the proposed development within the site.
- 6.6 There are no further designated heritage assets in the surrounding area which are assessed as potentially affected by the proposed development of the study site.
- 6.7 The Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record (HER) identifies no non-designated assets currently located within the study site.
- 6.8 Based on the fieldwork carried out within the close vicinity of the study site in 2017-18, and available archaeological data for the surrounding 1km search area, the study site is assessed to have had a moderate potential for Iron Age and/or Roman archaeological remains. However, these are most likely severely truncated or removed entirely within the footprints of the existing buildings and the potential additional impact of the proposed development is considered to be minor overall. The potential for remains of all other periods for any significant remains (i.e. non-agricultural) to be preserved within the study site is assessed to be low/negligible.
- 6.9 Because of the nature and size of the study site and the assessment of potential above, no further field evaluation is considered necessary to inform the current planning application.
- 6.10 If the LPA required further measures to mitigate potential adverse effects on any surviving buried archaeological remains, this can be satisfactorily achieved through a limited programme of archaeological attendance during development groundworks. Such a programme of post-consent works can be secured by a suitably-worded condition attached to planning permission.

Sources Consulted

General

Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record

LiDAR

Google Earth

Internet

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Pre-Construct Geophysics Ltd (PCG), 2018. *Archaeological Geophysical Survey. Ancient Scheduled Monument, Villa Farm, Folly Lane Norton Disney, Lincolnshire* (October 2018)

Cartographic

1824 Ordnance Survey 1" map

1835 Sanderson's Map

VILLA FARM, NORTON DISNEY, LINCOLNSHIRE; HERITAGE STATEMENT

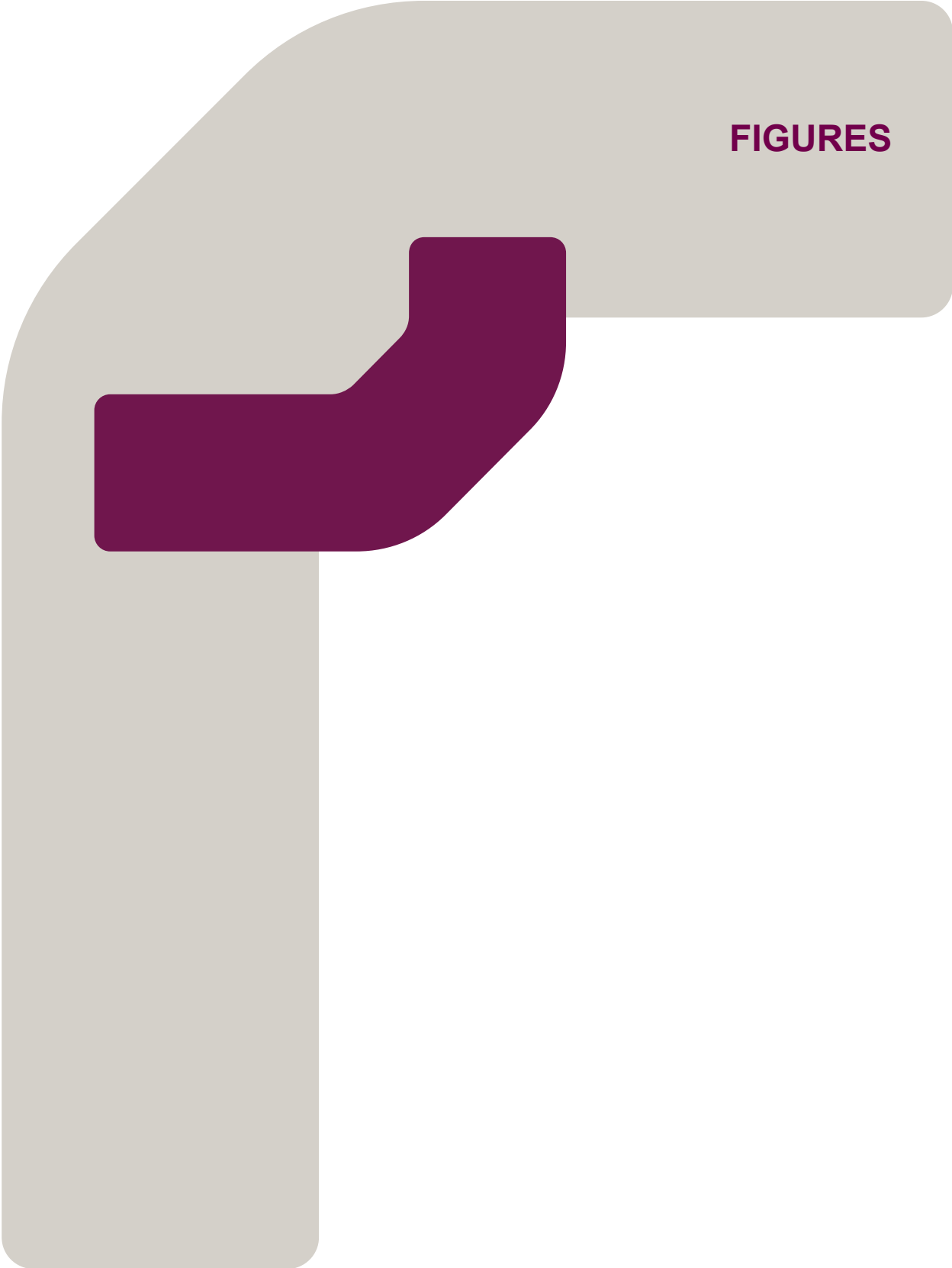
1899 Ordnance Survey 6" map

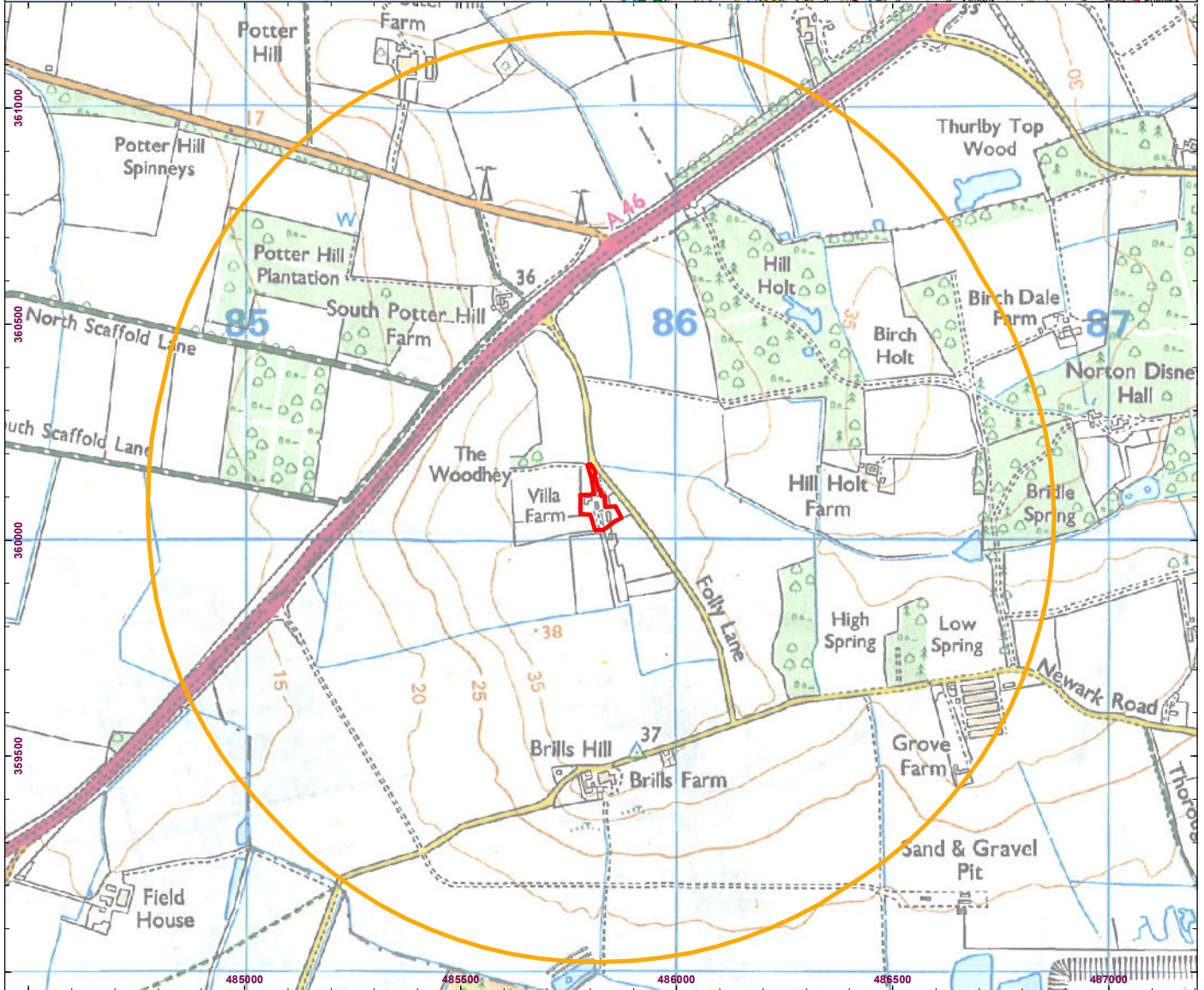
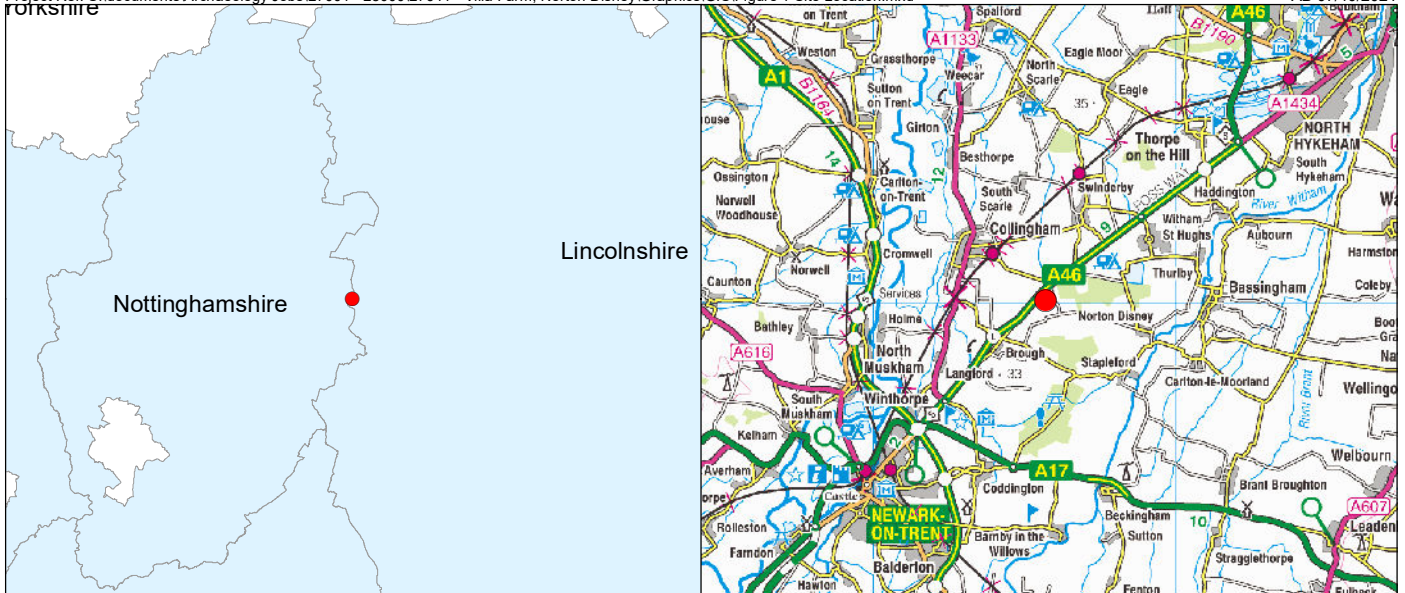
Ordnance Survey 1:2500 editions: 1887, 1900, 1919, 1969-1976



Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 / 1:10,560 editions: 1886, 1900, 1921, 1948, 1955-1956, 1964-1969, 1976-1992

Google Earth: 2000, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2007, 2012, 2017, 2018, 2020

FIGURES





-  Site Boundary
-  Search Area

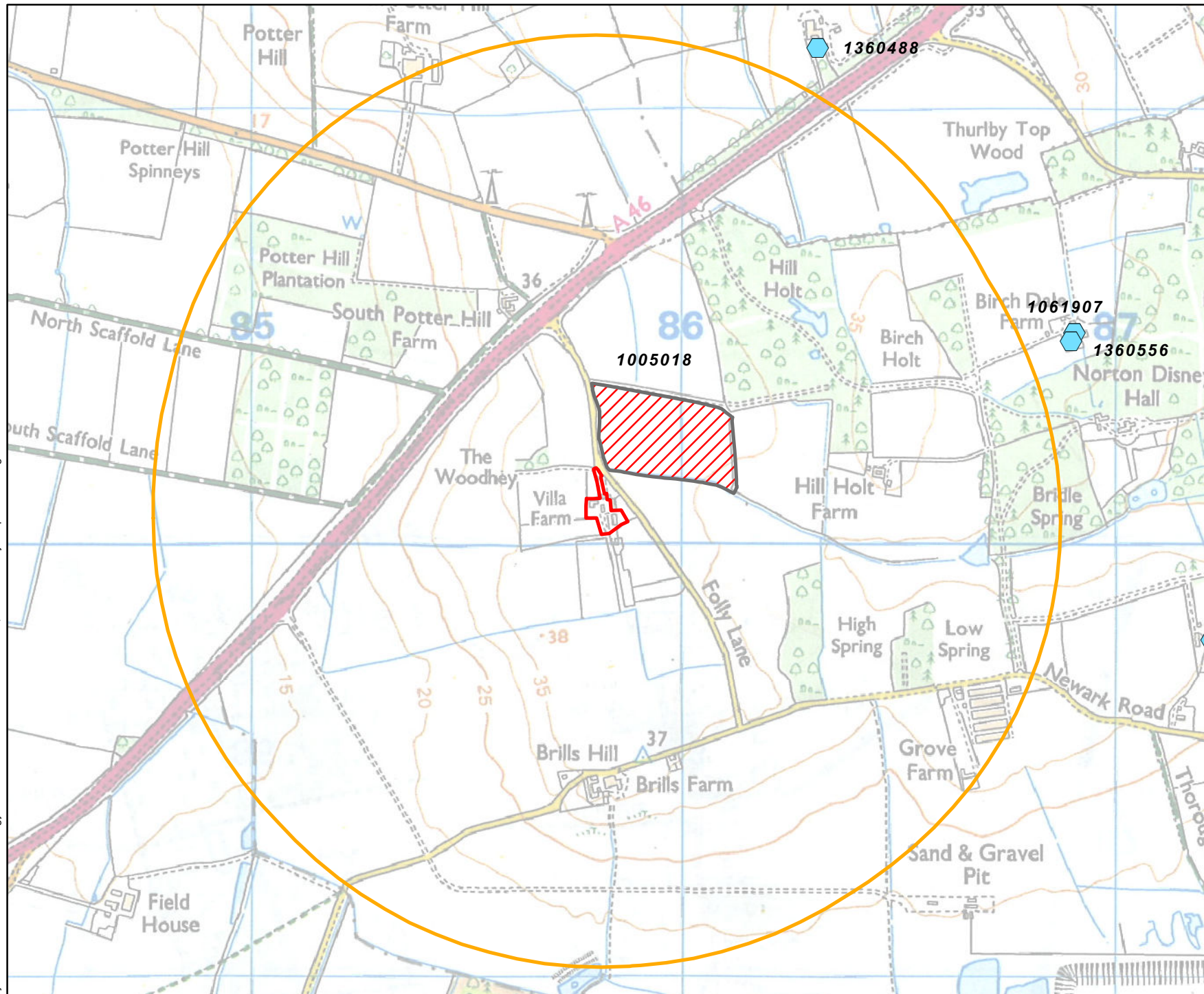


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Scale at A4: 1:15,000



Figure 1
Site Location

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- Site Boundary
- Search Area
- Listed Buildings**
- Grade**
- I
- ⬡ II*
- ⬡ II
- Scheduled Monuments

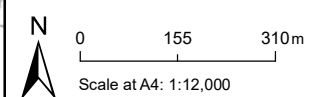
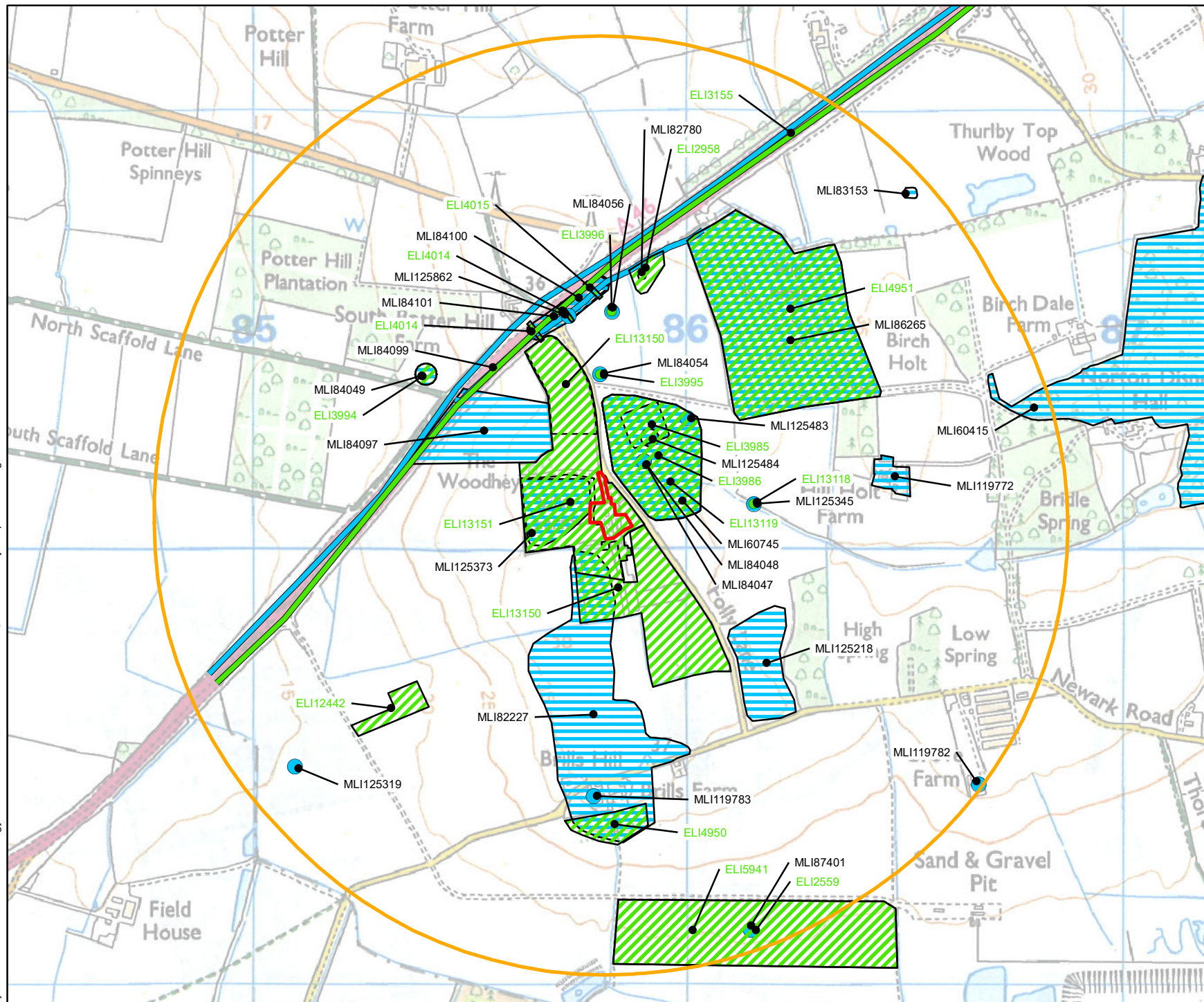


Figure 2
Designated Heritage Assets

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- Site Boundary
- Search Area
- Event
- Monument

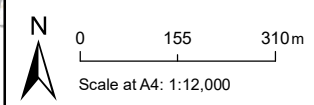
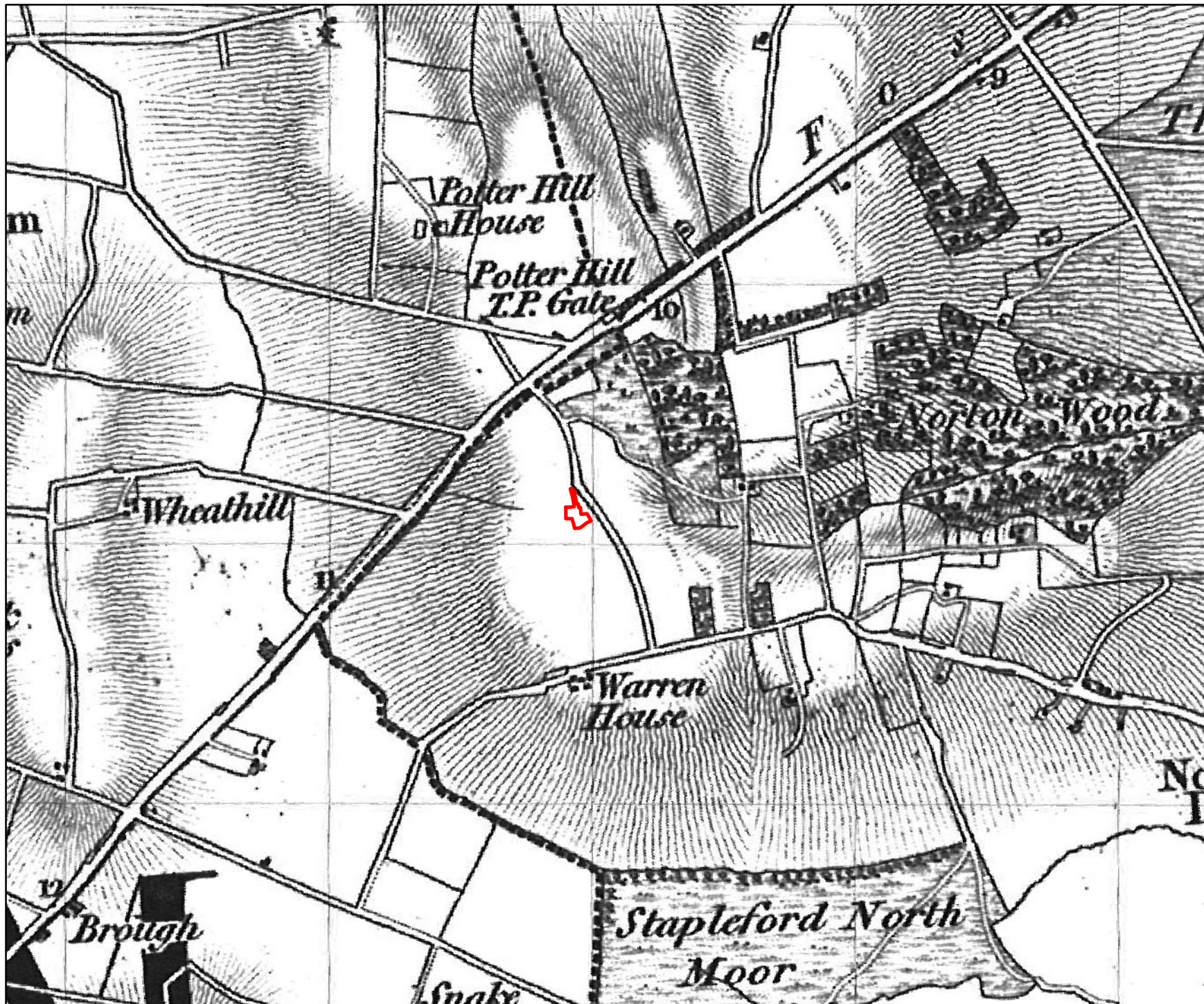


Figure 3
HER Data



 Site Boundary

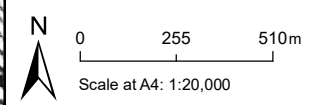
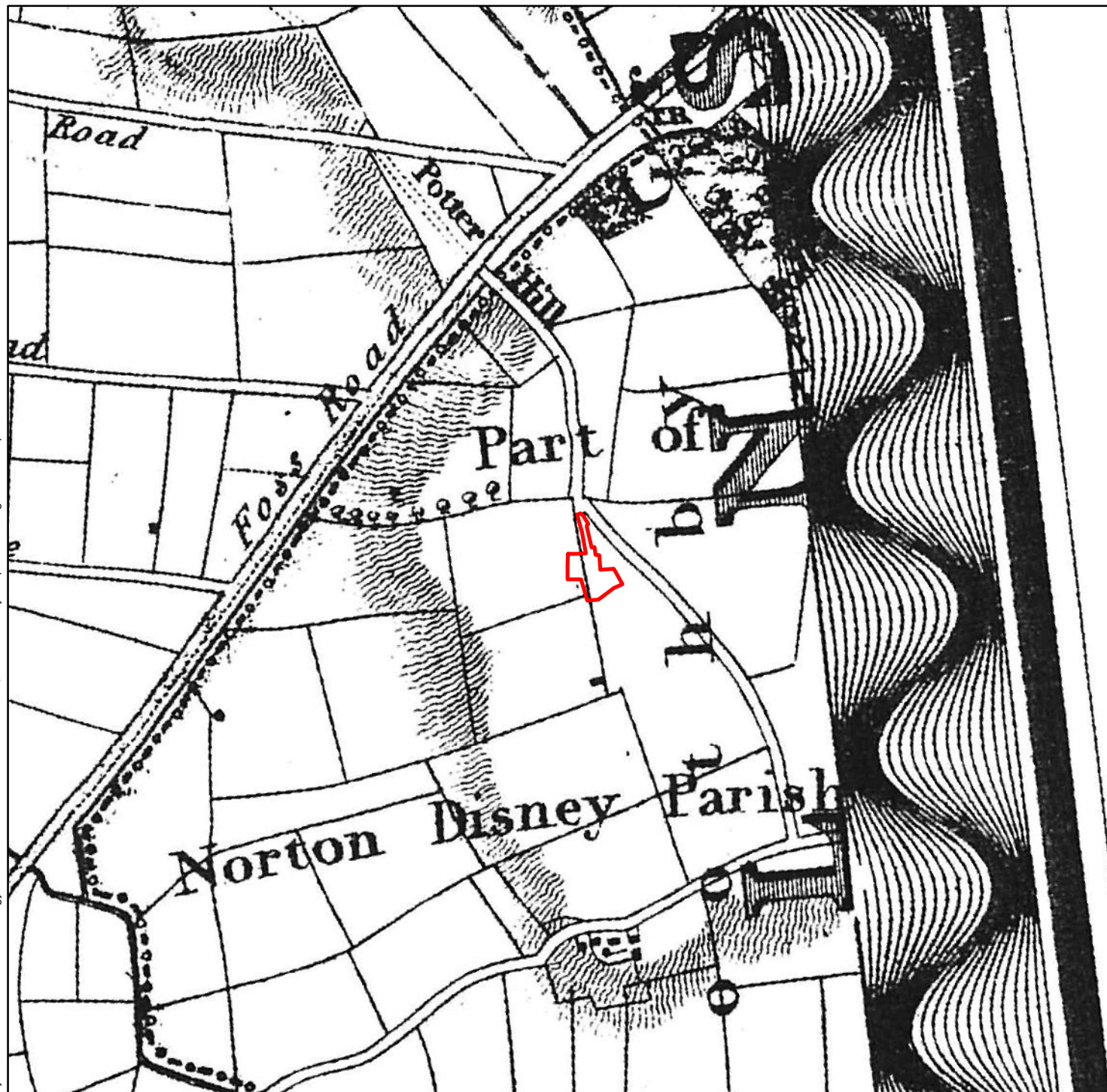


Figure 4
OS 1" map 1824

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 Site Boundary

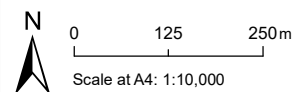
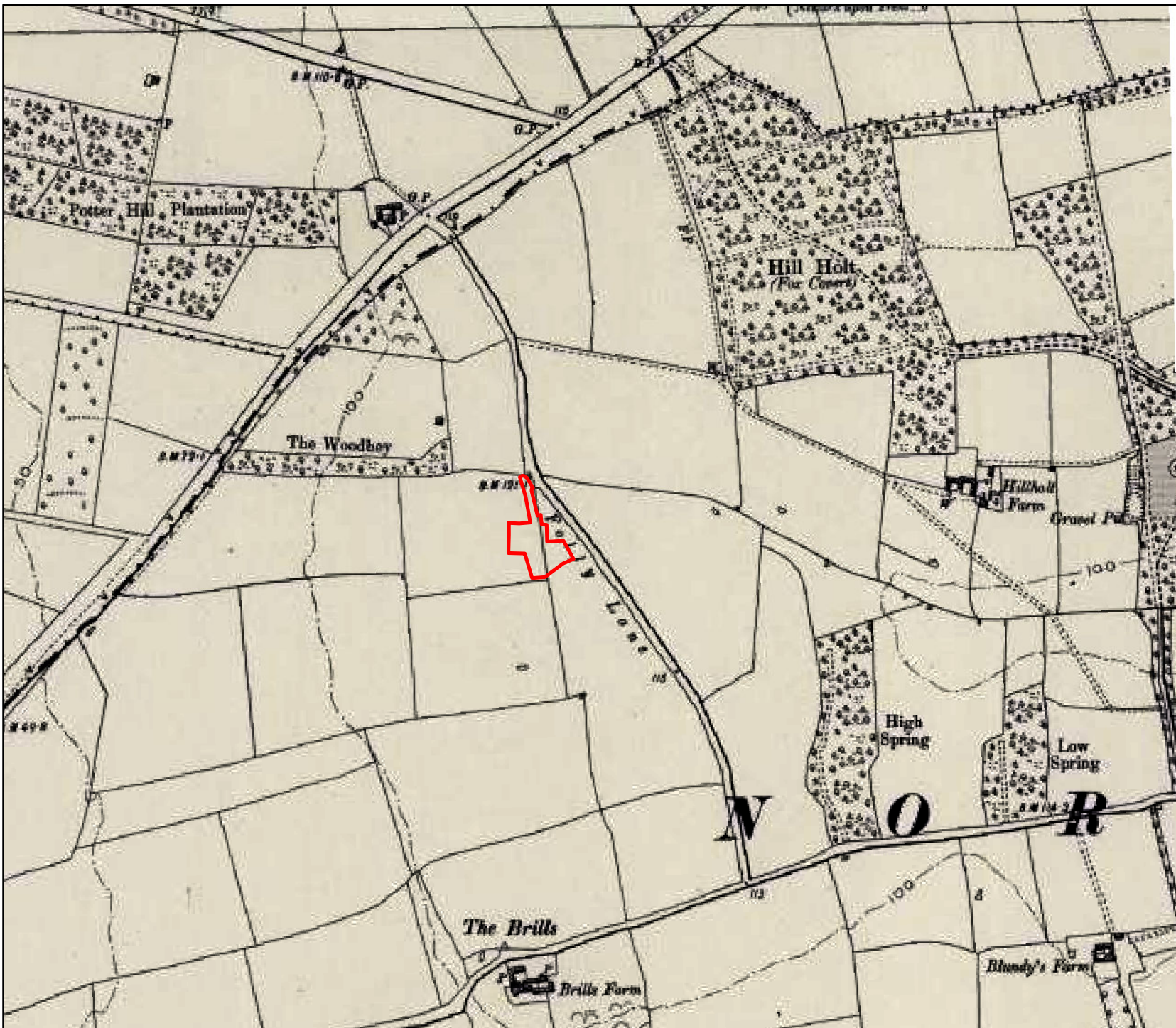


Figure 5
Sandersons Map 1835

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 Site Boundary

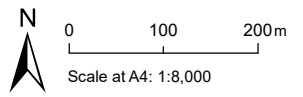


Figure 6
OS 6" Map 1899



PLATES



Plate 1: View towards the existing bungalows within the south-eastern corner of the site



Plate 2: View towards some of the outbuildings within the western extent of the site



Plate 3: View along the access road



Plate 4: View towards some of the outbuildings within the south-western extent of the site



APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Gazetteer of HER Entries

Lincolnshire historic environment records

HER No.	Name	Location	Date
	Monuments		
MLI60415	Hawdin's and Norton Big Woods, Norton Disney	SK 8756 6039	Medieval to Modern
MLI60745	Norton Disney Roman Villa - Norton Disney Roman villa, to the west of Hill Holt Wood	SK 8591 6021	Roman
MLI60943	The Fosse Way - Roman road known as the Fosse Way, thought to have run between Lincoln and Exeter	SK 926 657	Roman
MLI82227	Iron Age or Roman Settlement, Brills Hill, Norton Disney	SK 8582 5958	Iron Age to Roman
MLI82780	Undated Ditch, Gallows Nooking Common - on land adjacent to the Fosse Way at Gallows Nooking Common	SK 8589 6062	Unknown
MLI83153	Prehistoric cropmark enclosure, west of Thurlby Top Wood	SK 8651 6081	Later Prehistoric
MLI84047	Bronze Age Flint Scraper, Norton Disney - found in the area of the Roman villa site at Norton Disney	SK 859 602	Bronze Age
MLI84048	Silver Medieval Penny, Norton Disney - found on the Roman villa site at Norton Disney	SK 859 602	Medieval
MLI84049	Romano-British Pottery, Fosse Way	SK 854 604	Roman
MLI84054	Bronze Axehead, Potter Hill, Norton Disney - A late Bronze Age looped and socketed bronze axehead was found in 1910	SK 858 604	Bronze Age
MLI84056	Bronze Age Flint, Fosse Way, Norton Disney - A pointed flint tool of probable early Bronze Age date	SK 858 605	Bronze Age
MLI84097	Medieval ridge and furrow, adjacent to A46 and Folly Lane	SK 8552 6028	Medieval
MLI84099	Undated Linear Bank, Gallows Nooking Common - running along the former Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire county boundary	SK 8575 6053	Unknown
MLI84100	Romano-British Activity, Gallows Nooking Common - Probable Roman pit or pond and sherds of Roman pottery	SK 8576 6057	Roman
MLI84101	Iron Age Activity, Gallows Nooking Common - Iron Age ditch, pit and pottery sherds	SK 8572 6055	Iron Age
MLI86265	Ridge and furrow remains, Hill Holt Wood, Norton Disney	SK 862 605	Medieval
MLI87401	Medieval pottery sherd unstratified	SK 8614 5912	Medieval
MLI119772	Hill Holt Farm, Norton Disney	SK 8646 6015	Post Medieval to Modern
MLI119782	Grove Farm (Blundy's Farm), Norton Disney	SK 8666 5946	Post Medieval to Modern
MLI119783	Brills Farm, Norton Disney	SK 8578 5943	Post Medieval to Modern
MLI125218	Possible Boundaries and Enclosures, Folly Lane, Norton Disney - Cropmarks of possible boundaries and enclosures of unknown date	SK 8617 5973	Unknown

VILLA FARM, NORTON DISNEY, LINCOLNSHIRE; HERITAGE STATEMENT

MLI125319	Romano-British Figurine, Norton Disney	SK 851 595	Roman
MLI125345	Iron Age Slag, Folly Lane, Norton Disney - Several large blocks of mid Iron Age smelting slag	SK 8615 6010	Iron Age
MLI125373	Ridge and Furrow, Villa Farm, Norton Disney	SK 8569 6008	Medieval
MLI125483	Bronze Age Mace, Potter Hill, Norton Disney	SK 860 603	Bronze Age
MLI125484	Prehistoric Flints, Norton Disney - A number of redeposited prehistoric flints, found at the Roman Villa site	SK 859 602	Neolithic to Bronze Age
MLI125862	Medieval Pottery, Gallows Nooking Common	SK 8572 6053	Medieval
	Events		
ELI2559	Land at Norton Bottoms Quarry - Fieldwalking 2001	SK 8615 5911	
ELI2958	Potter Hill to Gallows Nooking Common Pipeline, Nottinghamshire/Lincolnshire - Watching Brief 2001	SK 8590 6063	
ELI3155	Archaeology of The Fosse Way - Fieldwalking 1990-1991	SK 8848 6248	
ELI3985	Excavation of Norton Disney Roman Villa, 1933-37	SK 8590 6028	
ELI3986	Field Walking on Roman Villa Site, Norton Disney - 1971-1975	SK 8591 6021	
ELI3994	Romano-British Pottery, Fosse Way - 1960	SK 854 604	
ELI3995	Casual Find of a Bronze Axehead, at Potter Hill, Norton Disney - 1910	SK 858 604	
ELI3996	Finding of a Bronze Age Flint, at the Fosse Way, Norton Disney	SK 858 605	
ELI4014	Gallows Nooking Common, Nottinghamshire - Trial Trenching 1991	SK 8565 6049	
ELI4015	The Fosse Way, Gallows Nooking Common, Nottinghamshire/Lincolnshire - Trial Trenching 2001	SK 8578 6059	
ELI4950	Site visit to Brill's Hill, Norton Disney	SK 887 568	
ELI4951	Site visit to Hill Holt, Norton Disney - 1998	SK 862 605	
ELI5941	Land adjoining Norton Bottoms Quarry Operations Centre, Norton Disney - Watching Brief 2002	SK 86155 59117	
ELI12442	Land North of Brills Farm, Newark Road, Norton Disney - 2014	SK 853 596	
ELI13118	Site Visit to Field off Folly Lane, Norton Disney - 2018	SK 8615 6010	
ELI13119	Site Visit to the Norton Disney Roman Villa Site - 2018	SK 859 602	
ELI13150	Land at Villa Farm, Norton Disney - 2017	SK 8585 6008	
ELI13151	Site Visit to Land at Villa Farm, Norton Disney - 2017	SK 8575 6020	



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